

Closing the Gap

Dear Supporters,

As trustees going into Rowan for whatever reason we try to do a tour of the workshops to say hello to the staff and volunteers and especially to speak to the students. Thus it was that last week I encountered Carol in the ceramics studio. Seeing a visitor, she immediately insisted on taking me off to the kitchen, to display with a huge smile and great and justifiable pride its transformation into a party room, with colourful banners everywhere declaiming 'Happy Birthday!' It was only then I noticed that Carol was wearing a very special frock and recalled that this Birthday party had been announced, by her, from the floor of the AGM, back in January. Regrettably I left before lunch was served, but went away well satisfied that Rowan, as ever, continues to be so much more than the sum of its parts.

And its parts are constantly extending. This newsletter describes creative Rowan initiatives, offering the students new

paths to explore with their tutors and visiting artists. The garden continues to be a source of pleasure and activity: last week saw the students planting out and tidying up.

None of these, however, has taken the place of the creative work for which Rowan is so well known to its friends and supporters and which informs the daily programme of activity. Students in the woodwork studio have just finished a dragon-fly mirror as a commission, a butterfly design has just been approved and an owl mirror is being created for display at our Open Studio on 14th-15th July. New equipment funded by the Rowan Foundation is soon to be joined by a new tutor in woodwork.

Rowan in growing remains true to its roots.

With warmest regards,

Margaret Phillips,
Chairman of trustees

Once upon a time



Our Telling my Story project was a huge success. Having originally planned this project for 7 students, it was so popular that a total of 29 Rowan students participated. Some chose to tell real stories and others, imaginary. A range of media was used; the written word, graphic story-boards, ceramics, 3D mixed media, the spoken word and stop-frame animation. Telling my Story culminated in a wonderful week-long exhibition of everyone's work at the end of March when members of the public and Friends of Rowan visited. This project was partly funded by Cambridge City Council.

An interview with Janette



Janette is one of our newest students who joined the Wood Studio. Janette chatted with Judith about her experience of being a student at Rowan. She told Judith that she learned about Rowan through one of her friends, Ashleigh, who also attends. Janette came to look around Rowan a few months ago and thought it would give her a bit more to do if she came to Rowan. She has done woodwork before at Cambridge Regional College and enjoyed it so much that she wanted to do woodwork at Rowan because it is her favourite. She said that she might like to do pottery one day if there is room in Ceramics. Janette says, "I like to come to Rowan. It's good to have something to do and make some new friends as well as meet some old friends; John, Mark, David and Andrew. When I go home I feel happy."

Rowan Creative

Print-making with Susie

Cambridge Printmaker Susie Turner provided an inspirational day for our students. Using an etching process and Susie's specialist tools and materials Rowan's students became print-makers for the day.



Textiles with Hilary

Textile artist Hilary Sugai is providing her expertise to introduce textile art to Rowan. Each Thursday Rowan's students experiment with colour, texture and techniques to produce beautiful unique textile artefacts.



Rowan Exhibition

30 June 2012

1pm to 5pm.

Rowan at Chesterton Festival.

Chesterton Recreation Ground.

Cambridge Open Studios Weekend at Rowan.

14 - 15 July 2012

11am to 6pm.

(including sport-themed Art Trials, 11am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm each day, drop-in events, no booking required)

Anglian Potters Exhibition.

19 August - 5 September 2012

10am to 5pm.

The Old Library, Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

5 December 2012

Rowan's Evening Winter Warmer

Creative Plans

The Ceramics Studio is working towards participating in Anglian Potters Summer Exhibition. The Wood Studio has been undertaking some commission work and both these studios have been preparing work to exhibit and sell during our Open Studio weekend as well as carrying out maintenance work on our signage at Anglesey Abbey. In June we are looking forward to meeting members of our local community at The Chesterton Festival.



During our Cambridge Open Studio weekend (14th & 15th July) visitors to Rowan will have the chance to join in and have some fun during our Art Trials; sport themed art workshops between 11am and 1pm plus 2pm and 4pm each day.

We are planning to join Cambridge Drawing Society's Sketching Group over the summer as well as spend some creative time at Anglesey Abbey. September will bring our second Walking for Rowan sponsored fundraising event along the River Cam. In October we are hoping to participate in The Big Draw and Festival of Ideas with our Cambridge Drawing Together project, subject to funding being in place, and we will finish 2012 with our Winter Warmer at Rowan.

Do we still believe in the welfare state?

Des Trollip, Rowan's Director of Operations, considers this question and others.

Should the 'bottom line' about which we hear so much determine how much we 'care' for those with disabilities?

William Beveridge, who paved the way for the welfare state, believed that the state should take the lead in slaying the five 'giants' of want, disease, squalor, ignorance and idleness.

In November 2011 it was estimated that 2.4 million people in the UK received incapacity benefits. Out of a total population of 70 million this represents 3.4%, and at an annual cost to the tax payer of £12.5 billion this represents 2.3% of the total annual UK Government's spending. This is a modest figure compared to the bailout of RBS and Lloyds TSB, estimated to cost the tax payer up to £1.5 trillion.

The Government has begun a programme of reduction in spending on welfare and public services for sick and disabled people. This means that your County Council has been put in the invidious position of having to choose, for example, between fixing a road and effectively supporting someone with disabilities.

In addition, up to 25% savings have been made through the introduction of *SDS. Too often now the SDS process appears to involve an insidious erosion of individual funding through the regular 'review' of a person's 'needs', changing the criteria for

assessment of those needs or freezing funding levels. The 'Care Manager' (Social Worker) has not only become the assessor of personal need but also the arbiter of whether the costs of meeting those needs are 'affordable.'

William Beveridge did not believe it desirable that people should leave everything to the state or that the state could do it on its own. He believed that simply providing services was not enough to make a good society; citizens themselves should participate.

Citizens have stepped up to the plate through the work of charities but are being asked more and more to pick up where the state leaves off. The big society and social enterprise are the current buzz phrases, however charities across the country are finding it more and more difficult to fund the services they provide - very often former, welfare- state services - because of over-subscription and lack of funding.

The questions are:

Do we still believe in the welfare state?

Are we prepared, and can we afford, to support the needy in society?

Is the government abandoning Beveridge's ideal and devolving all responsibility for the welfare of those in need?

Questions that require answers. And soon.

* (Self Directed Support, a vehicle for giving people choice, where a person goes through a formal assessment process and if he or she meets the criteria has an annual personal budget allocated for provision of services and shelter.)

Who makes the artwork?

This is a question we are often asked.

The answer is simply that we work collaboratively in line with the art world's common studio practice of having an 'Artist' to whom the work is attributed who then directs a team of artists and crafts-people, some skilled and established in their own right and others who are serving apprenticeships, to make the artwork.

'The Artist' in our case is Rowan. The team of artists and crafts-people at Rowan is our students, art tutors and volunteers who all

contribute different skills, abilities and techniques to make our works of art.

Rowan students learn the techniques to produce each piece of work to a high quality finish through our art tutors' guidance and expertise. This challenges and raises our students' expectations of their own abilities as well as the expectations of our wider audience who often ask the original question "who makes the artwork?" in response to their amazement at the design and quality of our work.

Venue & Studio Hire

Rowan regularly hires out its gallery and studios for workshops, courses, exhibitions and events. If you are interested, please do contact us for information on prices and availability.

If you would like to receive information about Rowan by email, including future newsletters, please contact Judith by sending an email to: Judith@rowanhumberstone.co.uk, or use our contact form on our website.

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