

We were sorry not to see any of our members other than the Committee at our Zoom AGM. However thank you to those who returned their postal vote. At the end of October we will be looking at a new programme of events from April 2022. Why not tell us what you would like to see on the programme?

Details of how to contact us are at the bottom of page 2. Meanwhile we hope you enjoy reading our main article this month - John Wynn Hopkins' account of his military commissions.

Some while ago I was asked the question "When did I start painting military and aviation scenes"? It so happened that Brian Davies who is writing a book on the art work of John Bowen and the artists of Llanelli Art Society, on seeing the list of military commissions I have completed over the years, asked if he could write about my military aviation paintings. At first I could not answer the question as to when I started, but then I came across a little sketch of Spitfires and Hurricane aircraft, that my mother had kept. This gave me an early date and it reminded me of when I bought my first Airfix models from Mrs Lewis in Llanelli Market. That would have been 1963 and I distinctly remember saving my pocket money, by saving on the bus fare and walking to town from Morfa. I loved the illustrations on the model packaging of the aircraft by Roy Cross and was hooked.

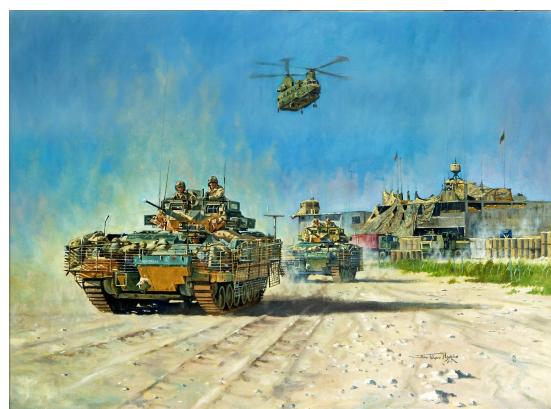
These early sketches were interspersed with drawings, pastels and oil paintings as I got older in Africa and wildlife painting predominated, but I always had an interest in military aviation subjects.

My first military commissions occurred in 1979 and included the 1st Bn. Rhodesian Light Infantry, and two paintings for the 1st Battalion Rhodesian African Rifles. On my return from Africa in 1982 I started producing prints of military scenes which were bought by Cranston Fine Arts Prints and I was soon commissioned by successive British Army regiments including 1 Regiment Army Air Corps in Germany., 4 Regt Army Air Corps, 7 Regt Army Air Corps., 9 Regt Army Air Corps, 5 Regt Army Air Corps (Northern Ireland) , R Sqn 22 SAS, A Coy 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Wales, The 1st Battalion the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, The Royal Netherlands Marine Corps and 1 Transport Regiment Royal Logistics Corps.

1995 was an interesting year as I was commissioned by the 1st Battalion the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment to do a painting in Bosnia. I spent a number of days on Mt Igman overlooking Sarajevo, The Royal Netherlands Marine Corps also commissioned Bosnian paintings. In August 1995 I returned to Zimbabwe to spend three weeks painting in the bush, in the area of Chizarira. In 1997 I visited 5 Royal Irish Regiment in BallyKelly, Northern Ireland to do research for a series of Northern Ireland military paintings. The Transport Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps commissioned me to do a montage painting of their operations in Northern Ireland in 1998.

In 1999, 665 Squadron Army Air Corps commissioned a painting of their operations in Northern Ireland and 659 Squadron Army Air Corps invited me out to Kosovo to gather information for a painting of their operations.

In 2001 and 2002 a number of paintings were completed for 9 Regt Army Air Corps and 4 Regt Army Air Corps, which included a painting of Prestina Airport, Kosovo, Macrahanish, Wotton Airfield and the Freedom of Ipswich parade.



In 2006 I completed a commission for 9 Regiment Army Air Corps of the latest attack helicopter the Apache AH1. From 2006 until present I have completed numerous painting commissions. Each of these are a story in their own right and meant exciting times travelling to various trouble spots, in various countries, usually flown in Army Air Corps aircraft or helicopters, going on exercise or operations and sketching in various military vehicles and situations, which could only be told in a book and not in this short article. To see my work exhibited in numerous officer's messes across the UK and other parts of the world, along side the paintings of well-known military aviation artists, is quite a thrill.



Blast from the Past 'Local Artists on Display' Summer 1992

Art is flourishing in Llanelli - and visitors to the borough's Parc Howard Mansion this week can see the evidence for themselves.

A display of 173 paintings by local artists was opened there at the weekend and runs until June 27.

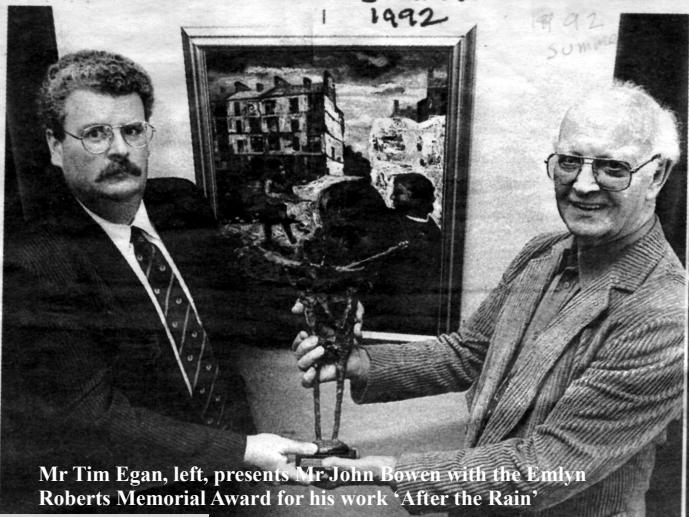
The show is the summer exhibition of Llanelli and District Art Society, now in its 66th year.

Demand for membership is so great that the numbers now top 180.

Exhibition adjudicator Mr Ossie Osmond, a lecturer at the art college in Carmarthen, had to choose from more than 200 entries.

"The adjudicator was presented with a real problem," said society chairman Mr John Taylor.

Society members Mr Bill Nicholas, Mrs Wendy Lewis and Mrs Sylvia Lewis were highly commended for their work. Mr D B Phillips, Mrs Rhoda Hancock and Mrs Betty Hurden were all commended by Mr Osmond.

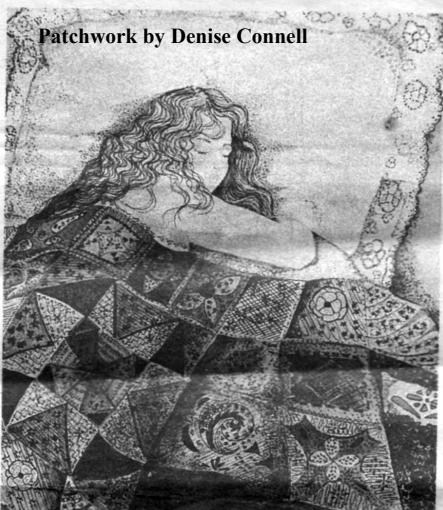


Mr Tim Egan, left, presents Mr John Bowen with the Emlyn Roberts Memorial Award for his work 'After the Rain'

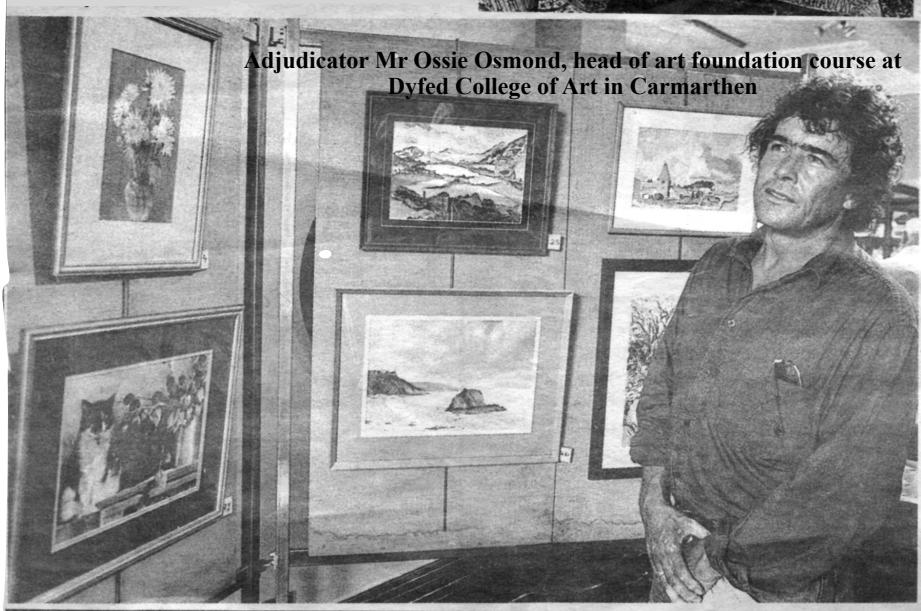
The exhibition was opened by Mr Tim Egan, art registrar at the National Museum of Wales.

The Emlyn Roberts Memorial Award for the best painting was presented to retired Craig School art master Mr John Bowen, who is regarded by many as one of Llanelli's finest artists in oils.

Llanelli Borough Council has bought many of his paintings in the past and some of these were already displayed at Parc Howard.



Patchwork by Denise Connell



Adjudicator Mr Ossie Osmond, head of art foundation course at Dyfed College of Art in Carmarthen



In memory of Edith Thomas

To contribute to the newsletter, whether it's an article, a letter, a quiz, news, or examples of paintings you're working on please Email us at llanelliartsociety@gmail.com or write to 10 Waun Deri, Pembrey, Llanelli SA16 0LF. We would love to hear from you.