

## Discussion Day Creativity and Best Practice

Friday October 14<sup>th</sup> 2022

Glaziers Hall, 9 Montague Close, London SE1 9DD

This year we are returning once again to Glaziers Hall to refresh our own ideas and to discuss the perennial joys and difficulties encountered in the designing and making of stained-glass windows in the company of like-minded artists. After the lock down time under Covid, we all need the refreshment gained from the views and opinions of other artists, as well as their ongoing knowledge and experiences. So please come and join our four guest speakers on October 14<sup>th</sup> for this very special Discussion Day and enjoy listening and looking and asking questions in the comfortable accommodation most kindly provided by the Worshipful Company of Glaziers!

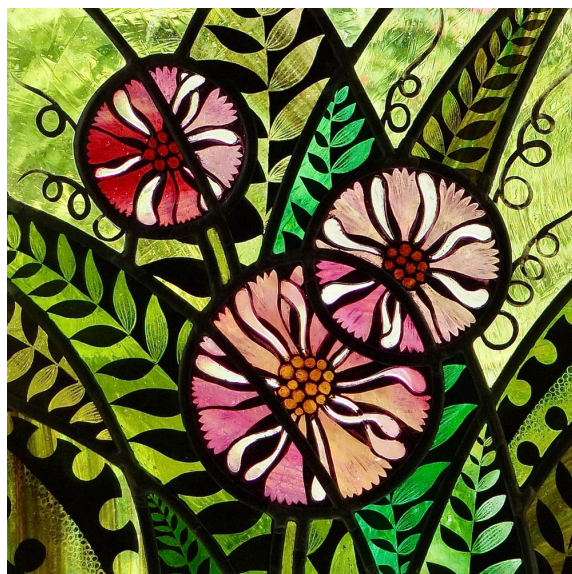


**Alfred Fisher** MBE began his career as a very young man, working his way up through the intricacies of the studio system with the renowned Whitefriars Studio, for whom he designed and supervised the creation of an enormous number of windows both here and overseas. In 1973 he left Whitefriars and, with Partner, Peter Archer, established a new workshop, 'Chapel Studio', in King's Langley, Hertfordshire. Here, they converted an old Chapel into a thriving Studio and continued designing and making windows, besides introducing and overseeing the complex crafts required in the conservation of early stained-glass

windows. Alf also trained many young practitioners, now running their own studios. He knew almost everyone in the stained-glass world and still does and his work can be seen all over the world. In his youth he became assistant and friend to Ervin Bossanyi and in recent years has worked in India, training students to enable the recovery of the lost art of stained-glass creation and conservation and for us, he will describe the joys and difficulties of a life in glass, working in challenging situations and for demanding clients. This will indeed be a fascinating lecture.

Our second speaker, **Helen Robinson**, will be well known to members of the Society through her dynamic management of the Society's lecture series held at the Art Worker's Guild in pre Covid days. Life as a nurse preceded her adventures in stained glass which she studied on

the 'Glass and Architecture' course at Central Saint Martins some twenty years ago. All her work has the boundless liveliness of a cheerful and competent craftswoman, combining the Art and Craft of stained glass and fiercely defending the importance of both in designing and making windows. She was a member of the BSMGP Council for more than ten



years when she initiated this programme of Discussion Days, giving practising members the opportunity to exchange ideas and practical tips, the sort of Master/Pupil conversations lost with the demise of the studio system. She will be describing the ups and downs of running a small but active studio in the Welsh Marches, having escaped the London bubble some five years ago.

These two lectures and the questions they inspire will happen in the morning. There will be a break for Lunch, which on these occasions is usually held in Southwark Cathedral's own café or in one of the nearby eateries of the local Market.

We will then return to Glaziers Hall for the presentation by **Ben Finn** who decided to embark on a career in the arts after graduating with a degree in Marine Biology. In 1988, an opportunity arose which led him to attend the post-graduate diploma in stained glass at the 'Central School of Art' under Amal Ghosh. After completing the two-year course and after a further 'scholarship' year in 1990, he set up his own studio in Essex, completing commissions for churches. These included new windows as well as conservation of (mostly) Victorian glass. Winning the competition to make a window for the Millennium Extension at Southwark Cathedral was something of a breakthrough, and Ben has since gone on to design and make new windows for over twenty churches and several houses, besides new work for exhibition.

His interest in the Eastern Orthodox Church and the tradition of icon paintings has also influenced his work and he has been commissioned



to make stained glass icons for two churches and he has documented the latest of these, with a view to writing a manual on the technique of icon painting in stained glass. For the Discussion Day, he will be talking about his development as an artist and the creative and technical difficulties he has struggled to overcome in the thirty years he's

been working with stained glass. Southwark Cathedral have kindly



allowed us to visit the Garry Weston Library at some stage during the day, to see Ben's beautiful 'Millennium' window.



The fourth speaker will be the landscape painter, stained glass artist and BSMGP Council Member, **Andrew Taylor**, whose visionary wooden 'Ark' formed the (moveable) framework for the exhibition of so much beautiful work, submitted by so many talented artists. It was a joy to see the wide range of talent displayed in this original way for the

Society's 'Centenary Year'. I had the privilege of attending the Festival of Glass at Stourbridge on August 27<sup>th</sup> where the 'Ark' was displayed. It looked so tempting, the lighting worked well, the exhibits were fascinating and many of the visitors wanted to know where they could see more and expressing the hope that they too might be able to work in the craft one day.

Those of us organising this special 'Discussion Day' at Glaziers Hall in the City of London, hope that we shall be able to meet some of the talented artists who have participated in the touring exhibition.

There will be some time to discuss 'What is best practice?' for a new section on our website, and we will look at how artists can build on the success of the touring exhibition and contribute to the work of the Society.

Please come to London and join us for this unique day, learn from four lively artists in glass and meet new friends in the fascinating world of glass.

Caroline Swash & Rachel Mulligan

