

### Contents:

1. AOTM Membership Secretary's 2009 Annual Report.
2. Summary of the 2009 National Open Studios Network Conference.
3. End Of Year Show for West Lindsey Cluster Group - Preview Invite.
4. Obsidian Art - Entries Invited for Exhibitions in 2010.

### AOTM Membership Secretary's 2009 Annual Report:

It was another extremely busy year since the 2008 AGM. The first six months (from October 2008 to March 2009) were spent designing and introducing the new AOTM website, which now includes an admin database to record details of all AOTM members. The following three months (from April to June 2009) involved initial membership registrations for the AOTM year 2009 – 2010. That was followed immediately (from June to July) with the design, co-ordination, proof-reading, printing and distribution of the AOTM 2009 - 2010 Brochure, ready for the first AOTM Open Studios at the end of July. The membership details for the new brochure were all extracted directly from the new AOTM website database, based on pre-selected data from each member's AOTM website page.

In May 2009 we started to plan for the future of AOTM and we registered AOTM, as a Social Enterprise, with the Lincolnshire Co-operative Development Agency (LCDA). Angela Porter, from LCDA, is now facilitating a series of meetings to develop an AOTM Five Year business plan.

In the meantime (from August to October 2009), the returned AOTM 2008 – 2009 Open Studio questionnaires were analyzed and summary reports were produced showing that, on average, each member had 46 visitors and received £322 from sales during the autumn / pre-Christmas 2008 and spring 2009 Open Studios. In addition, reports from 45 members for the recent summer 2009 Open Studio have been received. Analysis of those returns indicates that it was another good AOTM season, with 630 visitors to 41 studios, spending a total of £6,007. That gives an average of 15 visitors, and sales of £147, for each participating member for just the Summer 2009 Open Studios.

The AOTM Steering Group agreed, in August 2009, to break the above ongoing voluntary, unsustainable, two-year workload. That will be achieved by extending the current AOTM year by four months, at no extra costs to members, to now run from 01 June, 2009 to 30 September, 2010. It was also agreed that the current AOTM 2009 - 2010 Brochure would last until the end of September 2010, leading up to the AOTM AGM in October 2010. The next Steering Group, to be appointed at the 2010 AGM, will then start the new membership registration for 2010 – 2011. They will also select the dates for the 2011 Open Studios and will start the design of the 2010 - 2011 AOTM Brochure, including advertisements to help cover production costs, to be ready for distribution before the first AOTM Open Studios in 2011. In subsequent years the AOTM year will continue to run from 01 October to the 30 September in the following year.

During the last two years we were in regular contact with the National Open Studios Network. The aim was to see how we could improve the profile and publicity for AOTM, both within Lincolnshire and beyond. One of the outcomes of those discussions, in July 2009, was to register the AOTM website with an additional domain name of [www.lincolnshireopenstudios.org.uk](http://www.lincolnshireopenstudios.org.uk), as well as retaining the original domain name of [www.artonthemap.org.uk](http://www.artonthemap.org.uk). The AOTM website 'Home' page and headers were also altered slightly, in August 2009, by placing 'Lincolnshire Open Studios' more prominently (on the left) and by moving the AOTM logo to the right. Moreover, AOTM was represented at the National Open Studios Network conference in Coventry [see following article], at the end of October 2009. There was an opportunity at the conference to display our Lincolnshire Open Studio / AOTM website, as an example of a proposed Open Studios Software option, to be available nationally from our website designer at UKHosts.com.

Finally, I am delighted to let you know that AOTM now has 96 members for 2009-2010 and that more applications are in the pipe-line. The Steering Group have agreed that any successful new applicants during the year will pay a one-off pro-rata rate of £5 per remaining month of the year. For example, if a new member joined in November 2009, the fee would be £50, to be valid until 30th September, 2010. In conclusion, it has been a busy and exciting time for AOTM during the last two years, but I firmly believe that AOTM now has a very strong potential for future sustained growth.

Peter Montgomery (AOTM Membership Secretary)

## **Summary of the 2009 National Open Studios Network Conference:**

(Compiled by Peter Montgomery)

Lincolnshire Open Studios (Art On The Map) was represented at the National Open Studios Network Conference, held at Coventry University on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2009. The main topics were:

1. Running an Open Studios Event : A draft handbook is now in preparation; contents:
  - a. Introduction.
  - b. Setting Up.
  - c. Finance.
  - d. Information Technology.
  - e. Accessibility.
  - f. Marketing.
  - g. Public Relations.
  - h. Publicity.
  - i. Monitoring & Evaluation.
  - j. Further Information Sources.
  - k. Appendices.
2. Website Development and On-line Applications.
3. Event Evaluation and Open Space Forum.
4. PR and Media Training / Marketing Workshop.
5. Conference Overview.

Thirty-five delegates attended the conference, from all over the country, and it was reassuring to find that all of the problems that we struggle with here in Lincolnshire were the same as those raised by the other delegates. During the conference session on Website Development, AOTM was asked to give a software demonstration of our AOTM Website, which was well received. My

general feeling, after leaving the conference, was that we are probably ahead of the game and that we are certainly no worse off than anyone else.

There are nearly 100 Open Studio organizations in England registered with the National Open Studio Network. Brief details from about half of those organizations have just been analyzed, in order to give some perspective to future plans (for 2011 and beyond) for Lincolnshire Open Studios (Art On The Map). Those notes should help us when considering future AOTM Open Studio dates, the type of annual brochures we need and any other AOTM events that we may wish to hold.

The majority of the 44 organizations analyzed were open at weekends only - ranging from one to four weekends each year. Only three very large organizations were open for a whole week, ranging from one week to four weeks, with each member nominating the actual dates that they would be open (AOTM members open on 4 weekends each year). The number of members in each organization ranged from 34 to 400, with an average membership of 114 (AOTM currently has 96 members). From a small sample of eleven organizations, the average age since establishment was 15 years - ranging from 4 years to 30 years (AOTM is in its 11<sup>th</sup> year). Many large counties also have Cluster Group areas and they also hold 'taster' joint exhibitions, similar to AOTM, as well as workshops, to help promote the individual members' Open Studios.

Although Open Studios across the country were opened on nine months of the year, from March to November, the most common Open Studio months were May, June and September (AOTM appear to be the only organization to have Open Studios in both spring and autumn). The majority appear to have A5 size annual brochures (AOTM have had 1/3<sup>rd</sup> x A4 annual brochures for the last two years, but if we wish to add additional details for each member, such as selected opening dates, then we will probably need to have a larger A5 brochure).

The majority of organizations do not have a selection procedure for members, and their annual fees range from £65 to £200 per member. The National Open Studio Network have advised that, from their experience, unless they are heavily subsidized by grants, organizations are not likely to remain viable in the long term unless they charge an annual fee to each member of at least £85 per year. However, there are also strong arguments from some organizations who wish to keep fees as low as possible and who wish to be as inclusive as possible and not become an organization of self-proclaimed 'elitists' (AOTM has always had a selection procedure in an attempt to keep membership standards high. For the last four years the AOTM membership fee has been only £65 per year).

This is just a brief summary, but it should help all AOTM members to understand how we fit in to the national Open Studio system, as well as helping with our future AOTM development plans.

### **End Of Year Show for West Lindsey Cluster Group:**

The West Lindsey Cluster Group of AOTM has organised an end of year show, displaying work made solely during 2009. The show, entitled 'AOTMic Clock', will take place at the Forge Arts Gallery in Hackthorn from 12.12.09 until 10.01.2010. Extended opening times are Wednesdays to Sundays 11-6pm, except Christmas Day and New Years Day. Depending on the success of the venture, it is hoped that this will become a yearly event. All AOTM artists and associates are invited to the preview (and some festive cheer) on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> of December between 6pm and 9pm. For more details tel: 01673 860441.

## Obsidian Art - Entries Invited for Exhibitions in 2010:

Obsidian Art are inviting submissions for a number of selling exhibitions during 2010, and they are trying to reach new artists and makers who might be interested in showing with them. Obsidian Art welcomes submissions for the following selling exhibitions in 2010:

Exhibition Dates	Title	Theme	Entry Deadline
7 Jan - 7 Feb	"Trees, Woods, Land & Sea"	Landscapes, seascapes, trees, woods & forests - all media.	15-Dec
18 Mar - 18 Apr	"All the World's a Stage"	A themed exhibition of selected fine & applied art inspired by music, dance, stage, screen, poetry & prose.	22-Feb
22 Apr - 16 May	England - Coast & Country, Bird & Beast	Selected fine & applied art inspired by the English countryside, coast & nature - including native wildlife, flowers, plants & trees	29-Mar
15 July - 22 Aug	"Out of Africa"	African inspired work - all media - life, landscape, wildlife, colours & designs, etc.	21-Jun
26 Aug - 19 Sep	"The Horse in Art"	Horses, ponies, donkeys & zebra - all media.	26-Jul
4 Nov - 2 Jan	"Winter Wonders"	Loosely themed Xmas / Winter show - size limited - max 50cm. All media.	11-Nov

All artforms welcome - painting, printmaking, photography, textiles, glass, ceramics, sculpture, jewellery, etc.

To apply, email from 1 to 10 images along with details of sizes, media & prices to [info@obsidianart.co.uk](mailto:info@obsidianart.co.uk) or send CD or photos along with a suitably stamped self-addressed envelope to: Trisha Woodcock, Obsidian Art, Layby Farm, Old Risborough Road, Stoke Mandeville, Bucks, HP22 5XJ. Tel: 01296 612150 [www.obsidianart.co.uk](http://www.obsidianart.co.uk)

\* \* \*

That's all for this month, but we wish AOTM chairman, Bob Oakes, a speedy recovery - break a leg, Bob! Season's greetings to all members, and here's to the welcome return of the daylight - let's hope this transition from the 'noughties' to the 'tenners' will be as profitable as it sounds!

Please send your news for next month's January issue to the Newsletter Editor:  
[graham@forgearts.co.uk](mailto:graham@forgearts.co.uk)