

CONFERENCE & AGM - 8TH/10TH April 2016

Reaseheath College, Nantwich, Cheshire. CW5 6DF

Practicalities

I can't believe how quickly the need to prepare this note comes round! For 2016 we are returning to Reaseheath College where we held the 2012 conference, but this time they have a brand new building for us to use and a newer accommodation block. The college website is www.reaseheath.ac.uk for those of you who want to check out location and travel details, but it is about 15 mins drive from junction 16 on the M6. If planning to travel by train the college is about a 15 min taxi ride from Crewe Station (estimated cost £10- £15) or a 30-40 minute walk from Nantwich station.

Accommodation is in single en-suite rooms. A limited number of rooms can have an extra single bed added to 'twin' them, but these will be allocated on a 'first come' basis where a preference for a twin room is indicated. Adapted rooms are available for those with limited mobility. The rooms are arranged in groups of 8 with a communal kitchen/sitting area with a fridge for milk, snacks, etc. A mini welcome hamper of tea bags etc. will be provided in each kitchen, but serious tea/coffee drinkers may prefer to bring their own supplies. Towels & bed linen will be provided but please bring your own toiletries (including soap). Parking close to the accommodation block and the main conference building is limited so there will be a need to unload then move elsewhere on site (except for those with restricted mobility). The accommodation is about 5 minutes pleasant walk along the lakeside from the main facilities (a vehicle route is available for those with restricted mobility). Additional nights can be booked for Thursday if required. Thursday evening will be B&B basis. Local pubs are recommended for Thursday evening meal & Friday lunch.

The workshops, suppliers, exhibitions and tea & coffee breaks are in one building, where lunch on Saturday (soup & sandwiches) will also be provided. Not every workshop will have running water. We will allocate workshops to rooms where we think their needs can be best met. We will provide water butts, bowls and buckets. Please note that only items being provided for the workshops will be PAT tested, as we will be paying an external contractor for this service.

What goes on?

For those of you who have not been at a conference before, a little more detail might be helpful. The conference starts on Friday evening and continues until Sunday lunchtime. The programme includes a speaker and the AGM on Friday after dinner. All day Saturday is spent in a workshop (the Chair details these in this journal) and we enjoy a more formal dinner that night with yet another wonderful speaker afterwards. On Sunday morning awards are presented and we then have a masterclass demonstration before lunch and departure. Throughout the weekend two exhibitions of members work are held and suppliers also attend to showcase and sell their products. The Guild Library is present and there is also an 'Exchange & Mart' where members can sell equipment and supplies that are surplus to their requirements, space for this must be booked in advance and may be limited.

How to apply

In 2015 applications came in very quickly and some workshops were fully booked by day one. To avoid disadvantage to people whose journals are delayed in the post or are away from home, details of the workshops and conference cost are available on the website from the same time as the journal should be received (Dec 28th).

I would like the majority of applications to continue to be submitted by post. However, I will accept e-mail notification of workshop preferences. Payment can be made by cheque or by direct transfer (**not** paypal) to the Guild's bank account. A completed application form to confirm all other details will need to follow, but this can also be sent electronically (a download is also available from the website).

To try and keep allocation as fair as possible and avoid timing discrepancies, I will not 'open' for applications until **Monday 4th January** and although workshop places will then be provisionally allocated, these will not be confirmed unless payment has been received and will not be held for more than 10 days. If by any chance a workshop is over-subscribed on the 4th then a ballot will be held.

Because of the 'provisional' period confirmation of places will not be sent until Jan 20th. Conference packs will be sent out late Feb/early March. All notifications and information will be sent by e-mail wherever possible to keep

print & postage costs to a minimum, so please ensure I have your correct e-mail address on the application form. (This does not apply to the few, that I am already aware of, who do not have internet access).

Please read the application document carefully as some points have changed, and do not hesitate to call (01900 823095) or e-mail me (jane@no8jane.plus.com) if you have any queries. I look forward to seeing you in April and hope you bring plenty of work for the exhibitions. There will also be opportunities to visit our suppliers and indulge in some 'retail therapy'.

Jane Sheppard, Conference Secretary.