

Collage Collective

If you wish to see a veritable cornucopia of creative art in all its variety locally, just take a dander to the *Collage Collective* at The Buttermarket in Enniskillen. Actually, don't wish – just will yourself to go and look. On sale there most days of the week is the work of a range of local artists and artisans.

The project began in May 2015 and was situated initially in Nugent's Entry, just off Church Street, in the town centre. The steering group that led to its foundation included Genevieve Murphy, her husband Jon, Jill Stronge, Tailie Maur, Wayne Hardman, his wife Louise, Jill Mullen and others... They worked together under the auspices of *The Hub* based in The Clinton Centre, from where they obtained the seeding money to hire exhibition, office and meeting venue premises.

Within six months an opportunity presented itself for more suitable premises in the Buttermarket, and Collage Collective has grafted smoothly onto a traditional range of studios, ateliers and an adjoining coffee house. Merchandise on sale embraces textiles, photography, jewellery, pottery, papier-mâché figures, designer clothes and decorative pieces where taste originality and refinement is the appeal to customers.

From the outset of Collage Collective I have participated as an active supporter, participant and purchaser of items suitable for wedding presents and gifts for specific occasions. From time to time I have staffed the payment point and dealt directly with customer's enquiries. Nowadays few people ask directions from a policeman, but many passers-by call in to ask guidance to local touristic points of interest. There is no 'hard sell' business approach; the continuous emphasis is on attractive display and projecting a welcoming, comfortable retail environment.



For a monthly stipend of £50.00 to the Collective I maintain a niche for the display of books by local writers. I call it *Tobias-books*. By calling myself a promoter, rather than a seller, I avoid the

attentions of the Inland Revenue. Once a month, I am informed of what titles have been sold and the income is passed to the author. There is no charge to the exhibitor. Shall I reveal a personal secret? I fancy myself as a kind of modest Guggenheim/Saatchi. Scratch me and you will find inscribed skin deep: 'Aspiring Art Patron'.

I appeal to all who read this contribution to Corncrake, please do seriously consider offering some – once a month – dedicated time in Collage Collective as a sales assistant, meet and greeter.

Go On... You can do it...

I do: despite all the pressures that daily crowd in on me. If you (or a young person you know of) are looking to gain retail experience you will find highly satisfactory – though unpaid – employment.

Tony Brady