

# Press Release

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## **Flower Power to celebrate the wit and wisdom of Oscar Wilde**

Reading Museum in collaboration with Jelly, Reading Guild of Artists (RGA), Two Rivers Press, Whiteknight's Trail, and many independent artists and 'makers' celebrate the wit and wisdom of Oscar Wilde by commemorating his birthday on Monday 16 October.

Local Reading artists and 'makers' joined forces to create some stunning lilies – using a range of materials, from ceramics to fabric, paper and plastic, found objects and recycled ones, to create a unique 'bouquet', designed and staged by award winning florist Marc Allridge. The flowers will be debuting at Haslams, Friar Street, Reading on Monday 16 October.

Clive Duncan, president of the Reading Guild of Artists (RGA), sums up Oscar Wilde's wit and wisdom, saying: "An additional facet to Oscar Wilde's personality was his brilliant wit. Not only wit but Dublin Irish wit; instant, clever, sarcastic and sometimes caustic, ironic, sardonic and so swift that others needed time to catch up. The sort of wit that most of us wish we had!"

Marc Allridge from Cherubs Floral Design in Caversham designed the installation which will be going into Haslams front window on the morning of 16 October. Marc's company has been in Reading for 13 years and employs 16 people. The award winning florist, said: "I am delighted to be involved with this project. It was like Christmas morning opening all the lily boxes. What an eclectic mix of artistic expression! The lilies come in every material imaginable and some gave me cause to smile as I unfurled them from their wrapping. Drop by Haslams on Monday morning and be one of the first to see them displayed."

Carole Pembroke, one of the artists celebrating Oscar Wilde, and member of the RGA, said: "The symbolic meaning I took from Oscar Wilde's tale – The Good Friend – centres on Hans; a materially poor man, who has great inner strength and generosity of spirit. This in turn enables him, out of friendship, to keep giving to others who are materially wealthy but mean in spirit."

“This in turn led me to thinking about, and being touched by learning that many refugees who have so little materially left of their former lives generously welcome guests and care for others. The ragged ‘lily’ fabric was constructed by laying down torn strips of silk and wool fabric. These represent the torn lives of the people who had to leave their own country because of the horrors they faced. I bonded together these precious fragments using machine stitching, to make glorious petals. I hope this encourages all who are suffering to know that they can be whole and beautiful again, as inevitably, they will have been remoulded and shaped by their experiences. My lily hopefully represents their inner strength, generous qualities, and newly formed friendships.”

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**Photo Opportunity**

Reporters and photographers are warmly invited to the debut showing of the ‘lilies’ bouquet, at Haslams, Friar Street, Reading, Monday 16 October, 6.30 – 8pm.

There will be the opportunity to interview the artists about their work. Please confirm attendance by calling 07503 156128 or emailing [publicity@rga-artists.org.uk](mailto:publicity@rga-artists.org.uk) who are working on behalf of the lilies for Oscar Wilde partnership.

**Photo of Carole Pembroke at the ‘hand-in’ attached with her lily.**