

Vicar vents disgust at shock church painting

A 'SHOCKING' painting of one of the town's most famous landmarks will anger town church goers, a vicar says.

The public image of St Chad's Church was painted by artist Mark Oliver-Brawn, a Shrewsbury man of ten years, now living in Wem.

But vicar at the church, the Rev Mark Thomas, this week labelled the oil painting a "pathetic attempt to shock", saying it would offend members of his congregation.

"Art should be beautiful and it should lift the soul - this

By Alex Hardie

does neither," Mr Thomas added. "I have no time for art that is designed to shock. "I would hope that anyone who paints St Chad's - which has been done hundreds of times before - would wish to show some truth of the building's remarkable construction.

"There will be members of the church community who will be angered and offended by this painting. Why waste an obvious talent on painting shocking pictures?"

The painting - just one of Mr Oliver-Brawn's collection, which include paintings of Wyle Cop, the English Bridge and Grope Lane - will go on show at the Bear Steps Gallery in February, 2006.

He said: "I don't really know why nobody's thought of doing this before, because St Chad's is one of the most obvious structures in Shrewsbury. It was really just a bit of fun, there's no greater meaning behind it.

"Once people get over the initial shock, I think they quite like all of my paintings. They're not to everyone's taste but you've got to have an alternative to traditional water

colours," he added.

And there are other parts of the town which Mark says he can't wait to put his unique stamp on - the town centre clock tower and the view from the Salopian pub on the River Severn are his next targets.

He's even extending his brush further afield, targeting Wem's beleaguered Old Mill.

A date for the February exhibition of Mark's paintings at the Bear Steps is to be finalised and an exhibition at the Gateway is also in the pipeline.

You can see the pictures at the website www.markoliverbrawn.com

our guard: Home rning to residents

to be distrib- pt to clamp r it was had been

night when property was stolen from homes in Lambourne Drive. Police have released a description of one suspect, who was disturbed by a resident in Carlton Close.

He is described as white, in his late twenties or early thirties and around 5ft 4ins tall with a slim build with dark, short-cropped hair and wearing navy blue trackuit boots, a grey zip-up jacket with three stripes down each arm and white trainers and possibly a dark green beanie hat.

Police have made several arrests in connection with the offences but are appealing for further information on 0847 444885.

MP didn't help us, says num of lost boy

THE mother of missing cadet Blake Firtley has said she was froed to contact the town's former MP because Paul Marsden has silled to support the family. The former Shrewsbury school pupil fir, went missing five weeks ago in the Alps at Chaponix. His parents say hat they



Mark Oliver-Brawn with one of his paintings, entitled Grope Lane.

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Huge rise in town's