

# Mum fulfils lifelong wish

by **Leanne Porritt**

A MOTHER of three has recently graduated with flying colours from a fine art degree after studying for five years.

Claire Phillips, from Partridge Green, has graduated with a first class honours degree from Northbrook College, Worthing, after enrolling on the part-time course when her youngest daughter started school.

It has been a lifelong ambition for Mrs Phillips to take up her passion for painting but she has never had the opportunity to do it before.

She said: "It's something I always did as a child and something I did at O-level. My father was an artist, part-time, so it was something I've been brought up with but never had the chance to do."

Among the portfolio of work she produced for the course were bold, expressive portraits of local characters in Partridge Green including the window cleaner and dairyman.

"I have always been interested in people and in faces," she said.

"I just think that there is nothing more interesting than painting characters in a village, trying to find something out about their characters through spending time with them that I can bring out in the painting."

Mrs Phillips has three daughters - Sophie, ten, Sally, 12, and Emma, 14 - who were all under ten years old when she started the course, which made it difficult at times to balance studying and parenting.

She said: "It was quite difficult stretching from one role to another role."

"There were times when I thought it would never end but it was really good to have something

that I find really stimulating."

The course covered three units on fine arts with a dissertation at the end as well as additional modules including photography, sculpture and art history.

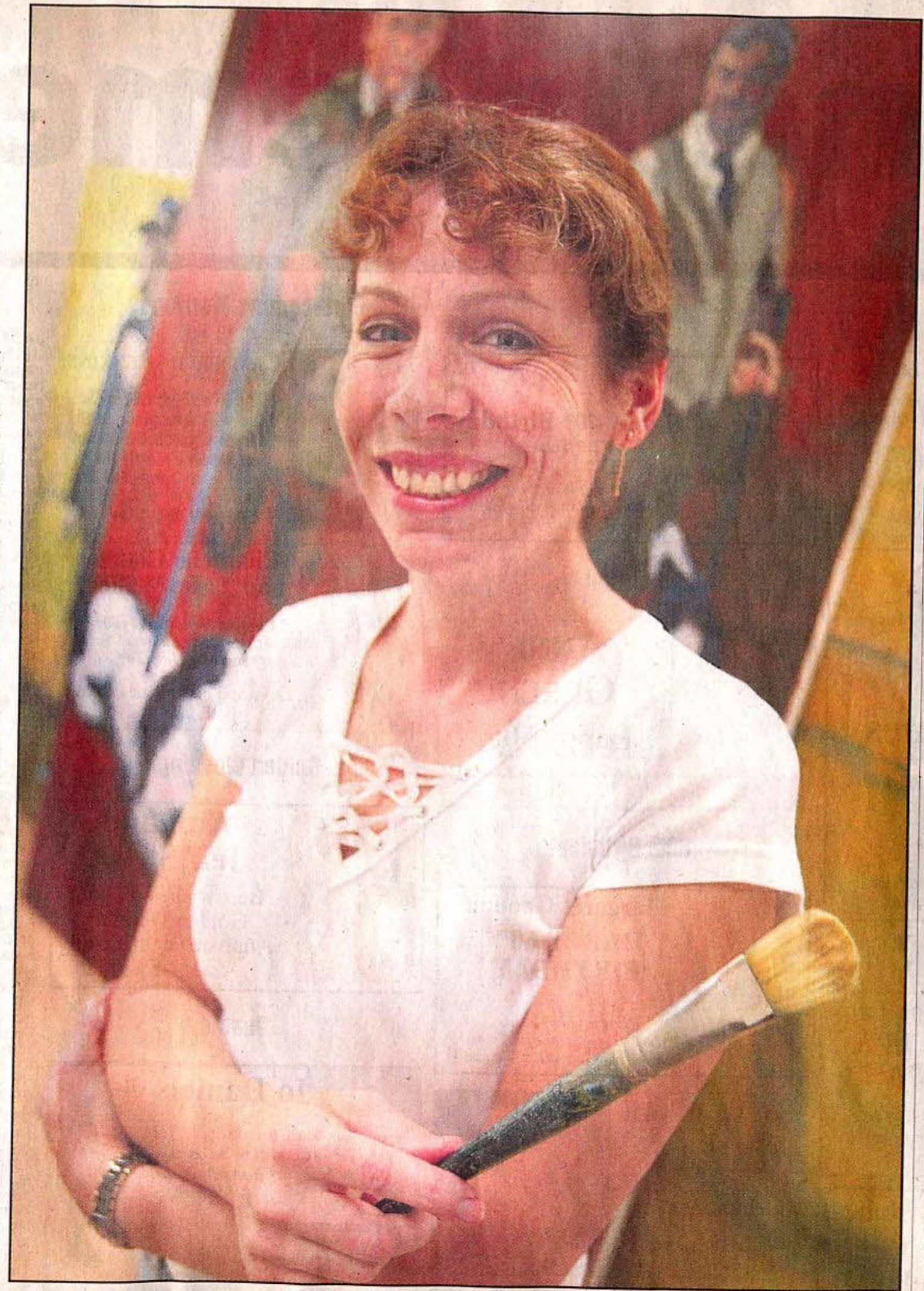
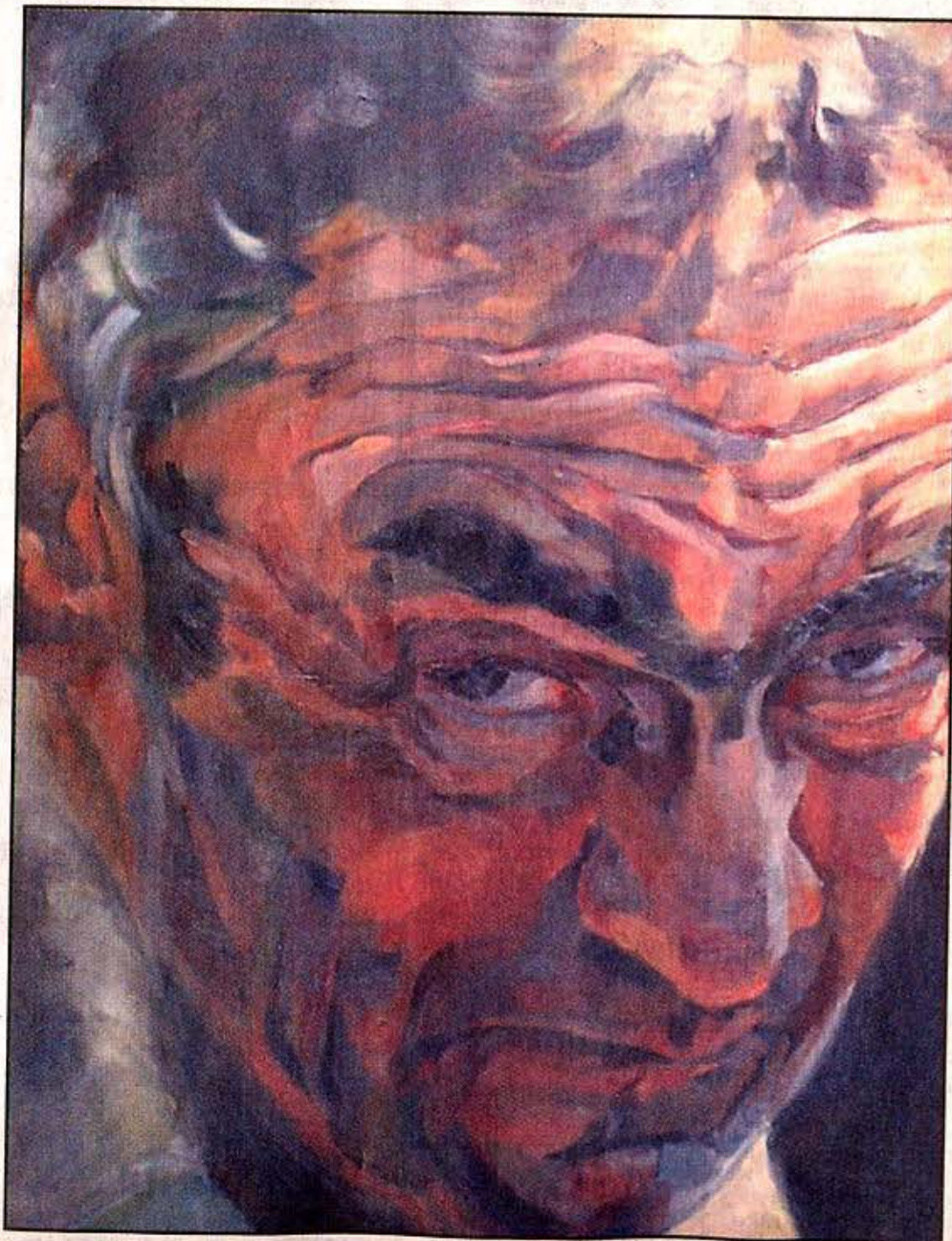
Mrs Phillips and the other students on her course recently showcased their artwork at an exhibition organised by the university in

Brick Lane in London.

She said: "It was a really exciting venue and we had a really good response."

She is currently looking for a suitable venue to exhibit her work locally in the near future.

Anyone interested in viewing her work can visit her website [www.clairephillips.com](http://www.clairephillips.com).



First class artist Claire Phillips (C4291614) and (left) one of her portraits, entitled 'Kevin'.