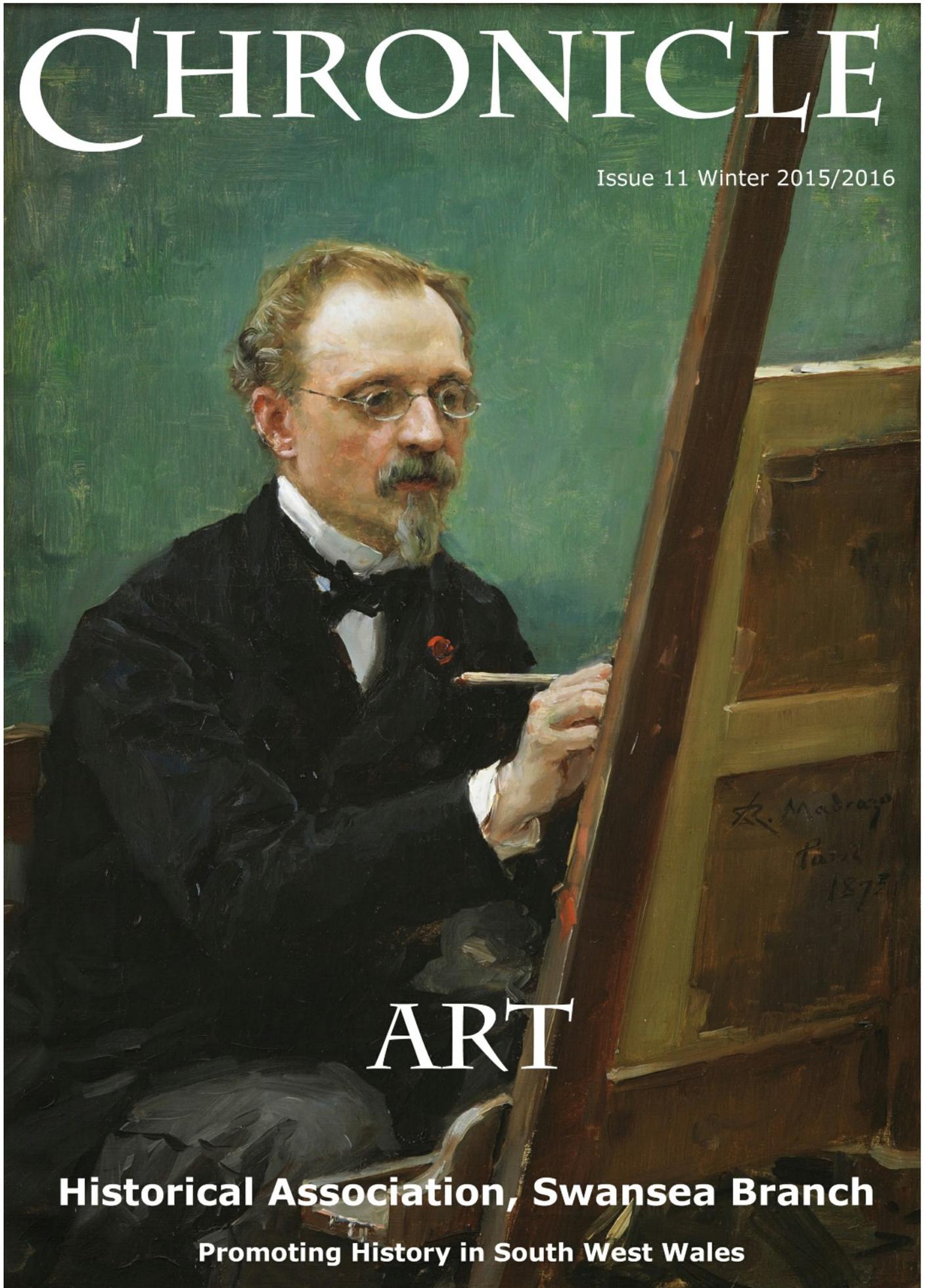


CHRONICLE

Issue 11 Winter 2015/2016



ART

Historical Association, Swansea Branch

Promoting History in South West Wales

Issue 11 Winter 2016

Contents

3 From the Editor

4 Renaissance Art

Carol David

6 Finding My Inspiration

Lucy Dean

10 Sanu's last Voyage

Ray Balkwill

13 Glynn Vivian

Andrew Green

15 A Vision of Angels

Dr John Law

17 Gwen Johns

Kenza Eastwood

18 A Gift of Sunlight

Trevor Fishlock

20 A Portrait of an Artist

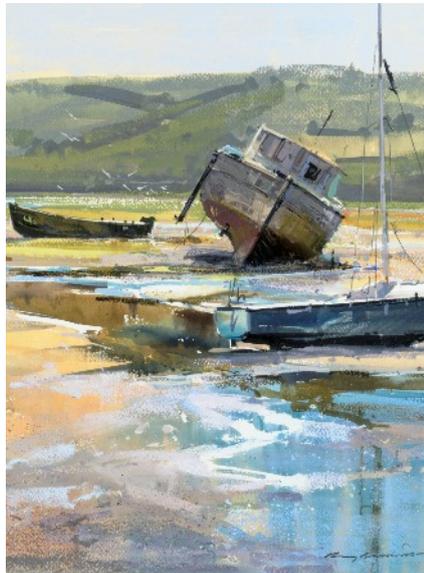
Margaret McCloy

22 Poster Girl

Helena Vaughan



ART



Sanu by Ray Balkwill



Sandro Botticelli



Poster by Horace Taylor

"Art is not what you see, but what you make others see".

Degas

**'Colour is my day-long obsession, joy and torment'.
Claude Monet**



Red Admiral by Lucy Dean

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."

— Pablo Picasso



Artist Michael Noakes in his studio as seen in the Worcester News

From the Editor

margaret.mccloy@sky.com



But is it Art?

The experimental plywood sculptures that Charles Eames created in his Californian studio in the 40s brought together Art and the furniture that later made them amongst the most famous and influential designers of the 20th century. A sculpture made from a single sheet of plywood was pressed, glued and moulded for many hours, before being ready to exhibit at the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1944. This can be seen on the web, but the rights for free reprinting are forbidden. Charles Eames was frustrated at his lack of plywood moulding facilities, but this was to change when he received a contract from the US Navy to produce splints and stretchers for transporting soldiers injured in WW2. The splints were made out of moulded plywood and had to be lightweight and strong.



Thanks to the government, Eames now had the use of industrial moulding apparatus and was able to experiment with the shapes and forms that could be produced. Art and technology combined.

The iconic lounge chair and ottoman that the Eames' designed in 1956 has become a classic of modern furniture. Eames had a part time job as a set designer at the Hollywood MGM studios where he met and became a close friend of Billy Wilder. **The first chair was presented to Wilder on his birthday.**



Some people receive a portrait on their birthday and some are lucky enough to have it painted by Michael Noakes. In the summer, I sat next to Michael at a wedding. He told me he was a portrait painter. 'Painted anyone famous'? I light heartedly asked. 'Yes' he replied, 'The Queen three times, President Clinton, the Pope, Margaret Thatcher and ...' it was then that I refrained from mentioning that I dabble with paint in my spare time, painting boats, badly, even though Ray Balkwill did his best to teach me. I'm definitely better at asking gifted artists to write for 'Chronicle'.

I hope you enjoy the pieces that they have written and their painting and sketches.

A shame that we can't show them all in the colour that they deserve.



Renaissance Art through a student's eyes (albeit rather mature ones)

Little did I know when I started my part-time degree course as a mature student at Swansea University where it would lead me! My first four years (it was a six year course) covered Medieval Europe and the diaspora that lead to the foundation of many of the centres of excellence for learning and the arts.

Dr John Law (our Branch President Elect) was one of my lecturer s who instructed us on everything to do with the Italian Renaissance. John introduced me to the art, architecture, people, landscapes, politics, daily life and the evolving sense of self that humanism was bringing to the people as they delved into their classical past at this exciting time. And then he took us to Florence.

The Italian Renaissance – roughly 1300 to 1500 or trecento to cinquecento as the Italians say (no mix-ups with fourteenth cen-

tury to sixteenth century for them) – was a time when painting changed from being bought by the foot – just like wallpaper - to being commissioned from specific acknowledged artists and sculptors. Patrons of these artists sought to enhance their own image by showing their scholarship, erudition, influence and wealth.

These works would illustrate directly, or by allegory, a spectacular battle victory, a moral dilemma, a religious event or memorialise a specific event or person of note. The Church was also particularly busy at this time, commissioning elaborate, gold encrusted, altarpieces, acres of teaching frescoes, expensive and elaborate bronze doors and exquisite statuary to glorify and beautify their new cathedrals and churches, though frequently more of the commissions were given by the various charitable

Guilds which adopted different churches, created chapels within them and used art to publicise their works and good deeds.

Most of Italy's well known works were produced at this time and I was (and still am) astounded by the range of subject matter, sheer size of panel or canvas and brilliance of colour which confronted me on my first visit. Although we were advised by John what to see and where to go, we (a group of eight 'mature' students) were allowed to do it in our own time.

We could wander about and just stand and gaze at the incredible frescoes, exquisite paintings, beautiful sculptures and monumental buildings. We visited the Duomo, the Baptistry, an incredible number of churches, both large and small, museums holding treasures, piazzas, bridges, gardens and palaces. Here we were introduced to 'the real thing'. Fabulous things we had only seen in books or on film were now there in front of us. We met Giotto, Cimabue, Masaccio, Donatello, Ghiberti and Michelangelo and many, many more.

In the Uffizi we were introduced to paintings by artists such as Fra Lippi, Botticelli and Uccello, to name only three of the great Renaissance artists whose works are hung in this Florence's premier gallery. We crossed the Arno via the Ponte Vecchio to visit the Pitti Palace and the Boboli Gardens, and learned that the Grand Duke Cosimo de Medici travelled from the Pitti Palace to his office (the Uffizi) by way of an enclosed corridor built for him by his artist in residence, Giorgio Vasari. This second floor corridor was created to give him privacy and, no doubt, safety on his daily commute.

We took the opportunity to walk to the Piazzale Michelangelo which featured full-size copies of Michelangelo's 'David' and his reclining figures that adorn the Medici tombs in San Lorenzo. From here we had a magnificent view of the whole, wonderful, city spread before us.

To be able to wander around Florence and Sienna and see your text books come to life is truly a memorable experience. To see a statue carved by the hands of Michelangelo, frescoes by Ghirlandao and Fra Angelico or a painting by Piero

della Francesca is a life-changing experience. Everywhere you turn in Florence you meet art. In its buildings, on its streets in tiny tabernacles, in and on its churches, even its bridges – the whole city is a work of art and appears to be preserved in a Renaissance time capsule.



Head of a woman, Leonardo da Vinci

The only fly in the ointment is that it's so good, there are a lot of tourists and if you're only five feet tall, they do get in the way, especially if you're trying to study a particular portrait. Being a student, meant I had to turn this unforgettable experience into essays when I returned to university, so plenty of notes and really good guides were an invaluable help.

They (along with a comprehensive selection of books 'I just had to have'), have also helped to keep alive an abiding interest in Italian Renaissance art which has stayed with me ever since and has been the only excuse needed for going back to Italy three more times, Paris twice – the Louvre of course and to undertake an Open University course on 'Rediscovering Renaissance Art', which led to a weeks' Summer School in London with daily lectures on a wide range of ages and genres of painting, visits to the National Gallery and lectures mostly in the Sainsbury Wing in front of individual paintings. Bliss.

Already planning my next jaunt. Venice this time, I think. Got an absolutely fantastic guide.....

Carol David

Finding My Inspiration

A swirling fog encloses me as I walk through the park leaving 20th C Wimbledon behind me.

In the moody greyness I could be anywhere, in any time.

I see the rainbow arc in the sky and then it splashes down in the park, colour puddling on the ground, the end of the rainbow not 500 yards away, but my bus is coming, do I miss the bus and run to the end of the rainbow or go home safely?

The snowy clouds rising up in the distance invite me to carry on walking, to pass by my school, to climb into the white and grey mountains, like the children who followed the piper.

All three choices and more I was presented with as a child, to potentially enter other realities. I could have climbed through the wardrobe and found my possible "Narnias", but fear of losing my way and not getting back to my family held me in the here and now. This notion of other worlds and decisions I could have made has stuck with me. In later life when I have taken roads that then leave me with a sense of regret, the "what if" and "if only" moments, I fantasise that there is another me who made an alternative decision and is following the life that that decision has led to in a parallel world to mine. I sometimes have glimpses of these worlds, from the corner of my eye, strange and random things can be seen sometimes. A monkey running around the fence of a playground, which turns out to be a carrier bag on second glance. This fascination with other worlds, parallel universes, was created and fed by the books I loved to read as a child,

The Narnia Chronicles (C.S. Lewis), Red Moon and Black Mountain (Joy Chant), and Tom's Midnight Garden (Philippa Pearce). In my teens it became science fiction, Asimov, Anne McCaffrey and the mythical worlds of Tolkien and Terry Pratchett, continuing on with books I read with my own children Harry Potter (J K Rowling) The Dark Materials trilogy (Phillip Pullman) and Skulduggery Pleasant (Derek Landy) to name but a few. This is a thread that has run through my literary experience quilting together a patchwork of ideas and interests.



It is not just the imaginary that interests me, it is the physical world too. Pattern intrigues me, especially patterns in nature, spirals in the seed patterns of a sunflower, in the unfurling curl of a bracken leaf. From the supposed chaos and randomness of nature we actually find order and mathematics, the Fibonacci numbers that appear in the spirals, fractal patterns in snowflakes.



Once you start to look at small things, it's easy to keep on going smaller and smaller, and then you get hooked into the ideas and theories of quantum mechanics, a branch of physics that studies the infinitesimal worlds, and tries to predict the behaviour of the nano object. And from here we walk into the fog in the park and come out of the other side into 1954 and the parallel universe theory proposed by a young scientist Hugh Everett, and his "Many Worlds Theory" (MWT).

I am no scientist or mathematician, but in an attempt to show support to my son who did have an interest in these subjects, I started to widen my reading to include beginners' guides to quantum mechanics. Here I found an astonishing world of outrageous proposals, inviting me to believe that a particle can be in one place and also anywhere else it wanted to be in the universe at the same time, a cat may or may not be in a box. It seems that in the worlds of physics, if like Einstein you make a mathematical theory which leads to you making certain predictions, if some of the more reasonable predictions are realised, then it goes that your

more outlandish predictions could be considered as plausible too. Everett's theory suggests that observed quantum matter creates a split in the universe, which leads to the universe to duplicate itself, infinitely. He could be right. Ideas of multi verses are not a new concept. In 1600 the Vatican ordered Giordano Bruno (an Italian Dominican friar, philosopher, mathematician, poet and astrologer) to be burnt at the stake for his heretical ideas, one of which was the multiverse. Hieronymous Bosch, the Dutch painter, 1450 -1516 gave us insights into strange and frightening worlds in his paintings, inspired by religious concepts and folklore. Otherworldliness, whether taken from religious teachings like Bosch, or from folklore and fairy tales, like Richard Dadd, has been the inspiration behind many artists' work.



I am creating my own stories based on parallel universe theories, around which I can develop my artwork. As an artist trained in theatre design, I find it helpful if not essential to have a narrative to explore, and I have decided I want this to be my own, not someone else's. So I am writing down my thoughts, my rules and my ideas about how my worlds work. In my worlds small birds and butterflies can flit between the parallels, through the slivers of gaps that come and go.



The bigger birds, the crow family of birds

are my guardians, the sentries.

Snow and misty weather I find inspiring, I love the silence of falling snow, the way light changes, and foggy days do open up mysterious options. Where are the doorways? I like to include doorways, either real or suggested by fragmented imagery in my artwork. Sometimes it is just something out of place that is the link to the parallel world, the monkey in the park, a butterfly in the wrong habitat.

It has taken me some time to come to this moment when I feel I have a direction in my work. My many interests, which I used to think were a distraction that watered down my focus, are now converging into a distinct project that I find intriguing and that I want to explore visually, in more than one media. I cannot get away from the “fliberty gibbert” in me, so I will use all the different skills, old and new that I have acquired to explore the many worlds that are at my door.

Lucy Dean

Contributors

Carol David, is Vice Chair of the HA Swansea branch and a former member of staff at Swansea University in the Administration Department. One of her main interests is the Renaissance art of Italy.

Lucy Dean studied Fine Art at University . After teaching art in schools for many years, she now runs her own on line craft business, *Holly Blue* , where she shows works inspired by British wildlife. She has just become one of three finalists in the ‘*Design a Beach Hut*’ competition in Eastbourne. She can be found on Face book, Holly blue.

Ray Balkwill SWAc is a well-known West Country artist and author of seven books. Halsgrove published his latest book ‘*Travelling Light*’ in October 2014. He is also a regular contributor to art magazines, has made two art instruction films and runs painting courses throughout the UK.
www.raybalkwill.co.uk

Trevor Fishlock is an author, broadcaster and foreign correspondent. He has travelled to over 60 countries writing for The Times and The Telegraph. His latest book on the Davies Sisters of Llandinam, ‘*A Gift of Sunlight*’ is published by Gomer Press.

Michael Noakes was elected to both the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and the Royal Institute of oil painters. He has painted most of the Royal family at least once and is one of Britain’s living portrait painters.

Andrew Green is the former CEO of The National Library of Wales. Though his first language is English, he is a fluent Welsh speaker and in 2009 the Gorsedd of Bards honoured him with bestowal of the white bardic robes of a druid. He is the chair of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea.

Helena Vaughan teaches art part time at a sixth form college. Her paintings and prints, which cover numerous subjects and styles can be seen and purchased on line.

Wales China

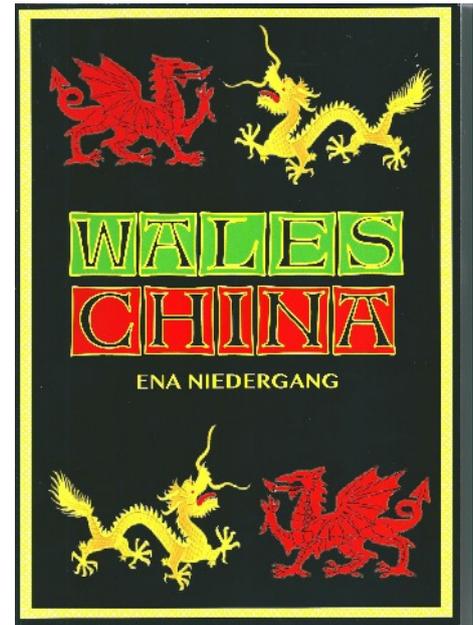
Ena Niedergang

A Warning from the Editor

It was mid-morning when I sat down with a cup of coffee and decided to browse through Ena's book, before finding someone to review it. Lunchtime, I was still there 'browsing'. I couldn't stop reading. Except for a few days spent in Hong Kong and the occasional dish of Peking Duck, I had no other association with China but I found that this book made riveting, compulsive reading.

So, make sure you have plenty of time when first you open this book, once started, you won't be able to put it down. It's not a thriller or a who-dun-it, but an A-Z of 250 years of the history between Wales and China.

From *Ah Chow*, a merchant seaman from Port Tennant, the first Chinese national to be married in Swansea in 1910 up to *Dr Zhao Yanxia* a Director of Daoist studies at the University of Wales TSD, there are hundreds of fascinating facts about remarkable people, events, missionaries, miners and opium dealers. It took Ena over 20 years to accumulate the entries and with husband Barry they have produced an amazing book, which is a delight to read.

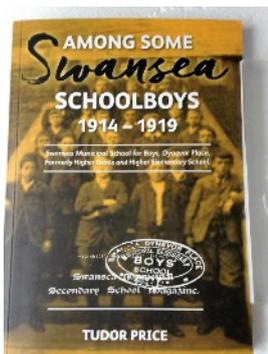


Publisher Ying Hua Books

Info: yinghuabooks@gmail.com

Printed by Cambrian Printers,

Aberystwyth



'Among Some Swansea Schoolboys 1914-1919,' Tudor Price,

Published by The Historical Association Swansea Branch,

Here is a labour of love written with great care and affection making good use of the recently-digitized collection of school magazines. At one level its focus is narrow, pinpointing the brief lives of a small group of servicemen who died in the Great War from a single school; at another, it a poignant account of everyman and of an archetypal institution. Refreshingly, it is faithful to the beliefs and understandings of the period it recounts. The author refuses to insinuate into the text the values and possibly more cynical views of our contemporary age. Pride in country, concepts of loyalty, and acceptance of the place of religion were clearly all taken for granted. In consequence, though the barbarity of war is ever present, as it accounts for what seems

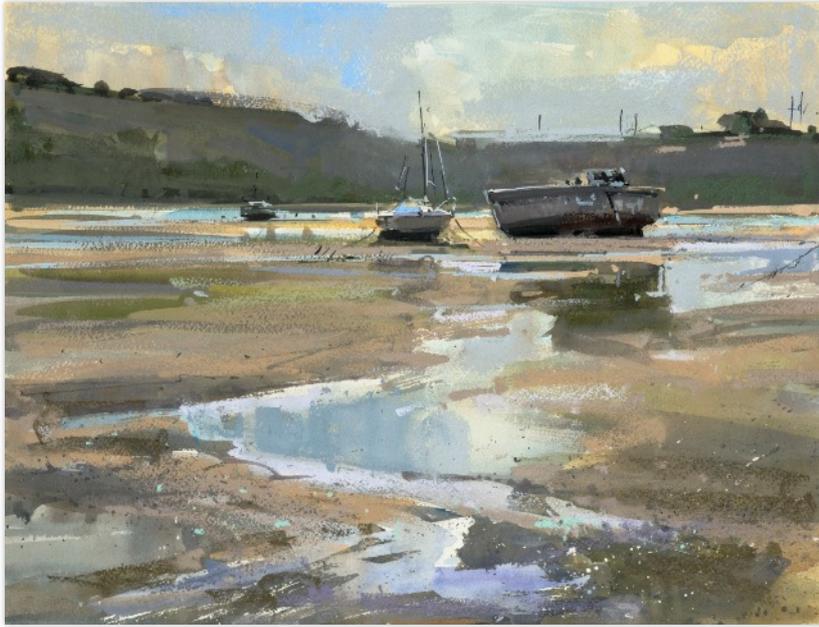
a disproportionately high percentage of former pupils, the narrative seems to speak of a more assured and psychologically stable world than the present age.

The generously illustrated narrative offers an account of the role Swansea Municipal School for Boys played in a wider society: an institution very much cast in the task of changing that society, of bridging the gap between classes, of enabling the aspiring to reach and attain higher status. Vignettes concerning personalities and features of the town make for a fascinating read.

Dr Robert McCloy, ex Dynevor student.

All books have been sold but there are copies in the public library.

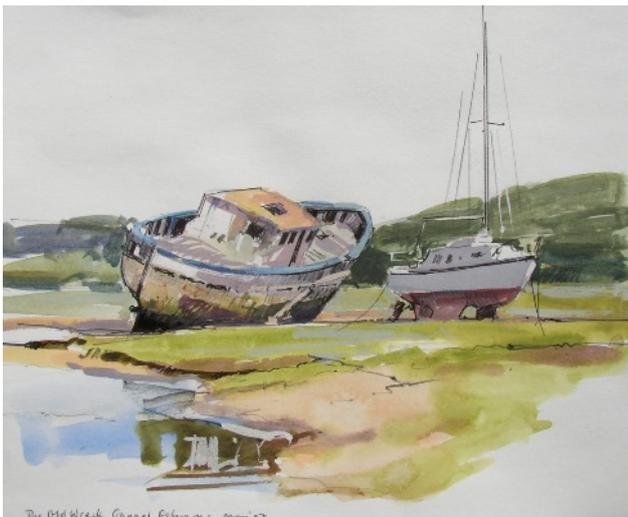
Sanu's Last Voyage



As a professional painter I believe great art is not merely made by description alone and it isn't enough just to go to a place and set up an easel. For the full understanding of a landscape, painters must submerge themselves in it, thus making it a multi-sensory experience. This also means getting '*under the skin*' of a place as it were, learning something of its people, its culture and its history. One of my favourite subjects to paint has to be estuaries and boats, particularly when they are old and have a story to tell. This is typical of many such stories and features the Gannel estuary in Cornwall. Looking at the estuary today it is hard to imagine that in medieval times the pretty village of Crantock, sitting on its banks, was a thriving port. The Gannel was the only

sizeable inlet between Hayle and the Camel estuary. Equally hard to believe is that during the 19th century there was also a thriving shipbuilding industry at the head of the creek. Then schooners and lighters were poled, or rowed up the river channel on the incoming tide, carrying coal, timber or sand to its head to be distributed inland. No longer navigable, today very few boats are moored here, but for many years there was an old boat that always drew my attention. For over a decade I made numerous trips to paint here from my home in Exmouth, but surprisingly, none of the locals I asked seemed to know much about her. That is until a few years ago when I found out that the name of the boat was '*Sanu*' and indeed she had an intriguing story to tell.

'*Sanu*' was an old ex-navy supply tender built in 1942 at Curtis and Pope Ltd in Looe and was one of fifty Motor Fishing Vessels then built to the orders of the British Admiralty. In 1964 the Cornish writer and novelist Denys Val Baker (1917–1984) purchased her from Southampton with a legacy from his late mother for £4,500. He was a prolific writer and as well as his works of fiction, he wrote many autobiographical books. These often documented his eventful and colourful life during the years in which he lived in Cornwall from where Denys and his family had many far-flung adventures at sea in the converted '*Sanu*'.



Trips were made to the Channel Islands, Isles of Scilly, up the Seine to Paris, to Brittany, Scotland, Scandinavia and finally across the Bay of Biscay to the Mediterranean. She was an inspiration to him and his adventures were outrageously chronicled in such books as '*To Sea with Sanu*' (1967) and '*The Petrified Mariner*' (1972). The tales of Denys' and '*Sanu*'s' incredible brushes with disaster were guaranteed to harrow

the blood of even the most experienced seamen. This short extract here will give you a flavour of his many adventures:

“You mean you had the wrong charts Denys, and you headed up channel regardless? A quiet chuckle and that self effacing smile, followed by.... well ‘Sanu’ knew exactly where she was going.’

The author sold the boat in 1982, just two years before his death and her last voyage in April 2002 was to sail along the North Cornwall coast bound for dry dock in Bristol for a major restoration. Unfortunately she suffered engine failure during the journey and took refuge in the Gannel estuary. Lack of engine power and high spring tides washed her up the estuary to her final resting place at the head of the creek at Tregunnel. Soon afterwards and despite her oak frames, the seams opened up, so on each high tide she partly filled with water and would not float. Any attempts at restoration proved impossible and the National Trust even offered it for sale at £1, but to no avail. In June 2013 television presenter Kevin Mc Cloud contacted the National Trust and they agreed he could remove some of the timber to build a beach hut for his Channel 4 programme 'Man Made Home'. It was hoped that by featuring in the television show it would encourage more reuse of things that might otherwise end up in landfill.

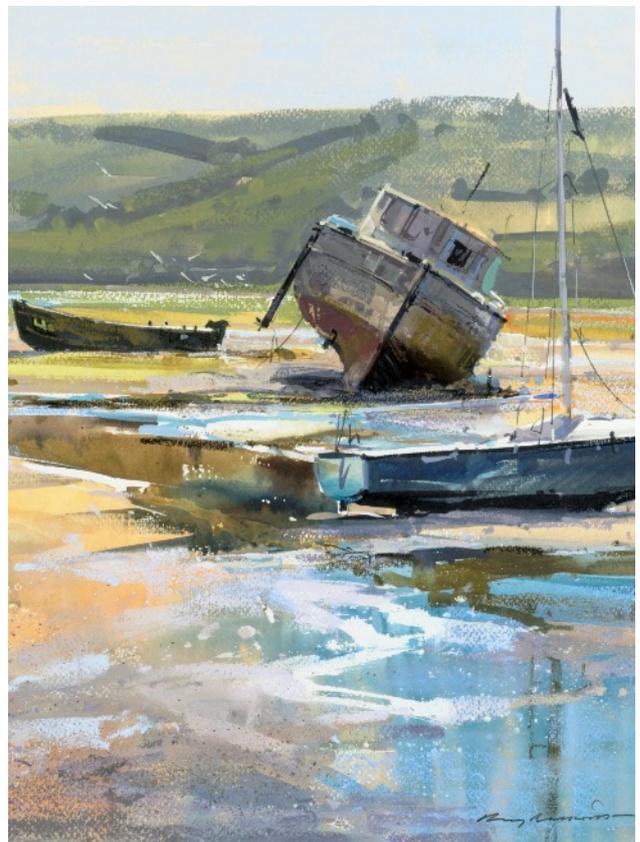


Sanu not only represented the last major phase of wooden boat construction in the UK, but she also played a major role in Cornwall's literary history. Working between tides, it took just six hours for the boat to be broken up and for all trace of her to be removed. Although many regarded her as an eyesore, I know of many painters, photographers and locals alike who will miss this grand old lady. I have lost count how many times I must have sketched and painted her over the years and whilst this may sound a touch over-sentimental, I feel I've lost a good friend.

Ray Balkwill

Ray painting his last picture of *Sanu* and having to dodge the incoming tide in the Gannel estuary

Then in October of the same year the National Trust took the decision to remove her completely. The dismantling was filmed and MAST (Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust) took a complete section of the hull, where it meets the keel, so that it could be studied and compared to the plans for this type of vessel, by Bournemouth University.





This Autumn one of Swansea's jewels, the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, will reopen its doors to the public

It's been a long time, almost five years, since the building closed for renovation and extension, and many Swansea residents, not to speak of visitors, may almost have forgotten what a wonderful building and collection awaits them when they return.

The Gallery owes its existence to one man in particular, Richard Glynn Vivian. The fourth and youngest son of the industrialist John Henry Vivian and his wife Sarah, Richard was born in 1835 and educated at Eton and Trinity College Cambridge. He failed to follow his brothers into the industrial and political life of Swansea and instead, with the considerable help of a quarter of his father's copper fortune, spent his life travelling the globe and collecting art. From 1898 he lived at Sketty Hall and adorned it with the objects he collected on his travels. In 1902 the loss of most of his sight seems to have stimulated his philanthropy. He gave money to many Christian causes, but he's probably best remembered today for his decision in 1905 to endow a new art gallery in Swansea through a gift of £10,000 to Swansea Corporation, and to leave his collections to it.

In 1909 the Corporation employed a local architect, Glendinning Moxham, to design the new building in Alexandra Road. He used a basically classical design but enlivened it with

French-derived decorative features, saving his best for the interior top-lit hall, with its balcony supported on giant consoles. Sadly, Richard died in June 1910 and didn't live to see the building, 'small but monumental' in the words of the Glamorgan 'Pevsner', officially opened in July 1911.

At the core of the initial collection were the items Richard Glynn Vivian had amassed during his travels around the world. His gift included paintings, drawings, prints, glassware and metalwork, and it was especially strong in ceramics. When the building reopens visitors will be able to view many examples from the collection and to appreciate Glynn Vivian's activity as a collector, which he documented in his many diaries. And there will be plenty more to see. Since 1911 the Gallery's curators have enriched the original collection with works in many media, and the Glynn Vivian has examples of the work of all the notable artists of the Swansea region, past and present, including J.D. Innes, Evan Walters, Ceri Richards, Glenys Cour and Sue Williams. The first curator, W. Grant Murray, was a phenomenally energetic character. As well as being a talented painter himself he combined his Glynn Vivian duties with being head of the School of Art for an amazing 34 years. All his successors have built on his achievements, including the current director Jenni Spencer-Davies, who has extended the Gallery's reputation as a venue for exciting contemporary art.

What will you see when you enter the 'new' Glynn Vivian?

Thanks to funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Arts Council of Wales, the City & County of Swansea and others, and to the imaginative work of the architects, Powell Dobson, the answer is bound to be: a lot! The existing building has been upgraded and thoroughly cleaned, with care taken to preserve original detail.

The entrance will be directly from the street – disabled access to the whole building is transformed – into a new welcome area with reception, café and shop. There will be new spaces for exhibitions, and for education and learning, one of the Gallery's main strengths. Behind the scenes, accommodation for the collections has been greatly improved, and new conservation facilities have been created.



Richard Glynn Vivian, 1905



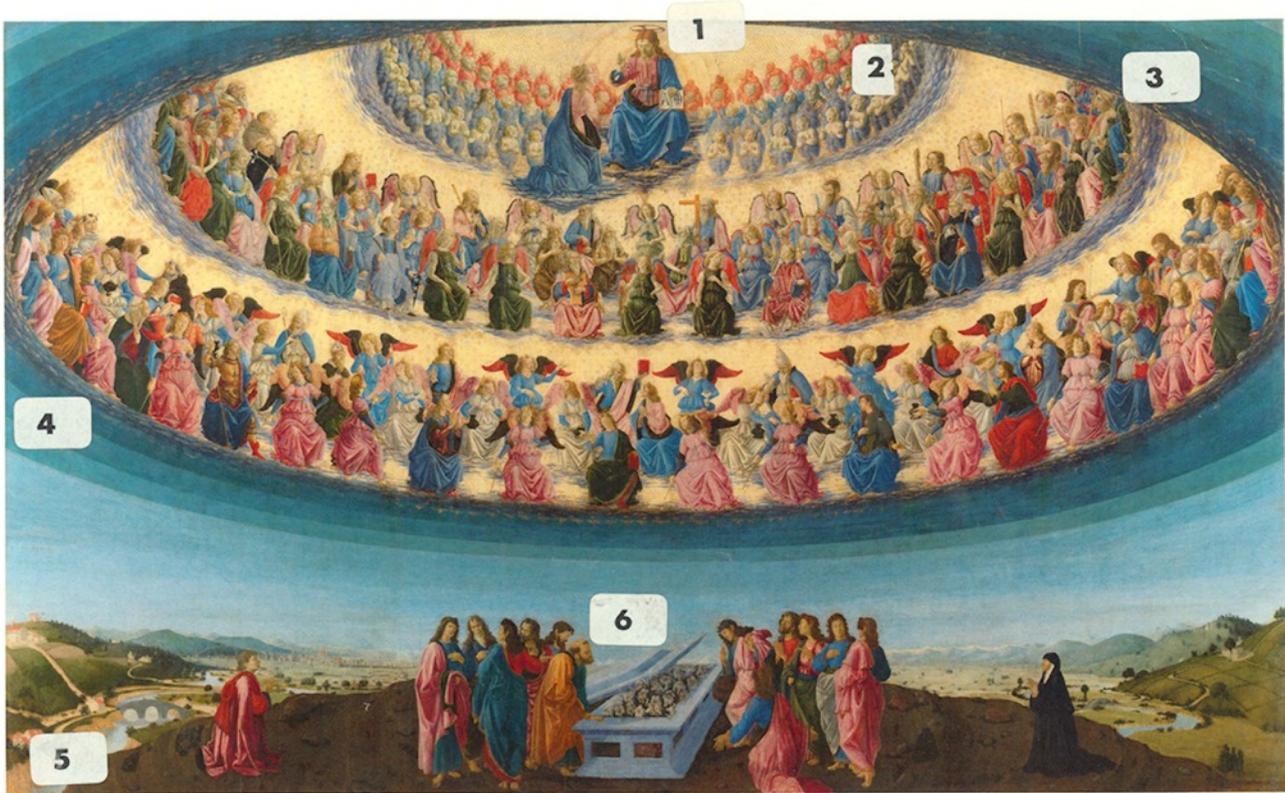
Portrait of Laughing Man by Evan Walters

If you think you might like to join, take a look at the Friends website, www.friendsoftheglynnvivian.com/index.php). We'd love to welcome you!

The future funding and management of the Glynn Vivian are uncertain, as its owner, the City & Council of Swansea, looks for large savings in its recurrent cultural services budgets. We can only hope that Councillors can be encouraged to understand what the Glynn Vivian means, to the well-being of its citizens and the health of its visitor economy, as they make important decisions affecting its future.

Whatever the future holds, one thing is certain: that the Gallery will need its supporters. It already has a group of people which exists to do exactly that, the Association of Friends of the Glynn Vivian. The Friends raise funds and other resources to help the Gallery in its work – a special campaign is being planned this spring to add value to the facilities available when Gallery reopens – and to promote the visual arts in the area, especially through an annual programme of talks and other events.

Andrew Green
Chair, Friends of the Glynn Vivian



Visions of Paradise

Among the things the National Gallery does very well, are small, focused, exhibitions on works of art in its collection, and this contribution certainly fits into that category.

Matteo Palmieri (1406-1475) was a prominent member of the Florentine ‘establishment’. A scholar, statesman and apothecary, allied to the Medici. His profession may have helped in this alliance as the Medici adopted saints associated with medicine among their patron saints and protectors.

The altarpiece Matteo commissioned from Francesco Botticini (1446-1497) was probably intended for the Florentine church of San Piero Maggiore. That church, to the east of central Florence, no longer exists, but, fortunately a team of art and architectural historians have been able to ‘reconstruct’ it from visual and contemporary evidence, and from patient research in the area. Their suggested, plausible, reconstruction was presented at the National Gallery exhibition. As churches and

monasteries were demolished or secularised in the nineteenth century, their works of art - sometimes in fragments - came onto the “market”. This is, partly, how the NG was able to acquire such a distinguished collection of Italian masterpieces.

Botticini is a relatively obscure Florentine painter, but his status in his day is confirmed by Palmieri’s discerning and informed patronage and by his skill as an artist. He grasped, for example, the ability of Flemish painters to create a convincing sense of landscape as demonstrated by his use of winding roads and rivers towards a gradually fading horizon. Such a device leads the viewer into a convincing sense of space. However, more traditionally, he set the heavenly scene on a gold background.

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As the exhibition and its excellent catalogue made clear, this altarpiece has a lot to offer those living in a more secular age. The exhibition is entitled *Visions of Paradise* and to an extent that is accurate. However, the focus of Botticini's altarpiece is the reception in Heaven of the Virgin by her son (1) That event is surrounded by spheres, the first (2) representing Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. It also includes saints, among them St Peter to whom the Florentine church was dedicated, and St John the Baptist, one of the main patron saints of Florence. The second sphere (3) represents heavenly Dominions and Powers, and again some key saints. The third sphere (4) represents Principalities, Archangels and Angels. It also includes the Cumaean Sibyl - without a halo - a classical figure believed in the Middle Ages and Renaissance to have foretold the coming of Christ. Perhaps this represents a 'renaissance' element. Here too St George makes his appearance.

Below are the kneeling and praying figures of the patron and his wife Niccola de' Serragli (5). Matteo is represented on the 'side of honour', to our left, on Christ's right. That is very traditional; however, what is 'newer' is the fact that both the patrons are portraits and painted to a scale on a level with those of the 'heavenly host'. Also of interest is the closely observed Tuscan landscape, with Florence as central, its cathedral, the Duomo, very prominent.

The donors flank the Apostles gathered round the now empty tomb of the Virgin (6) after her Assumption into heaven. The tomb is full of lilies, representing her purity and one of the emblems of Florence, the 'city of the flower'. The city's cathedral was dedicated to her.

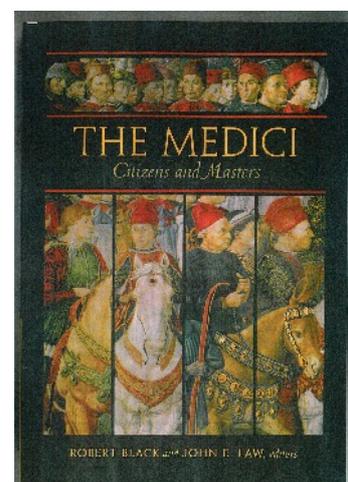
Much more could be made of the iconography of this remarkable painting - the 'colour-coding' of the heavenly host, the choice and representation of saints, for example - and its patrons, well discussed in the exhibition's catalogue. Perhaps this could be made the focus of a meeting of the Swansea and South West Wales branch of the H.A.?

Galleries and museums in South Wales should be encouraged to follow the National Gallery's example in terms of choice, scholarship and access. The London exhibition was free.

Dr John Law

Dr Law , our President Elect, would like to invite all members of the HA Swansea Branch to the launch of his new book on the Medici.

This will be held at the Uplands Bookshop, one evening at a date in March to be announced shortly. Dr Law will be giving a short talk on the subject. Light refreshments will be available .



Gwendolen Mary John (1876 –1939)

Born in Havordfordwest, Gwen John lived and worked in France for most of her active career, dying there in 1939. She is especially known for her fine portraits of anonymous females. During her lifetime she was overshadowed by her younger brother, the artist Augustus John - as well known for his numerous tempestuous affairs – most notable with Caitlin Thomas, (wife of Dylan Thomas). However, since her death in 1939 her reputation has steadily grown and she is now widely considered, of the two, the finer artist.

From 1895 to 1898, she studied at the Slade School of Art, which was at the time the only art school in the United Kingdom that allowed female students.

Like her younger brother, Augustus, who had begun his studies there in 1894, she studied figure drawing under Henry Tonks. While at the Slade she and her brother, to save money, shared living quarters, and to further reduce their expenses they survived on a diet of fruit and nuts. She became close to the woman who would become her brother's first wife, Ida Nettleship. In her final year at the Slade she was awarded the newly created Melvill Nettleship Prize for Figure Composition.

After graduating in 1898 she made her first visit to Paris with two friends from the Slade, and while there studied under James McNeill Whistler at his school the Académie Carmen. Returning to London in 1900 she prepared for her first exhibition at the New English Art Club (NEAC). Sadly, fame and fortune did not follow and for a couple of years she was reduced to living as a squatter.

Disillusioned with London she returned to France in 1903 with her friend Dorelia McNeill (later to become Augustus John's second wife). Landing in Bordeaux the ladies set off on a walking tour, complete with art equipment in hand. Their stated aim was to reach Rome. Sleeping in fields and living on money earned along the way by selling portrait sketches, they made it as far as Toulouse. In 1904 the two headed north to Paris where Gwen found work as an artist's model. It was about this time she met and began to model for the sculptor Auguste Rodin, soon becoming his lover. Their relationship continued for ten years and her devotion to the much older artist is well documented in the thousands of fervent letters she sent to him. As her affair with Rodin ended she sought comfort in the Church and around 1913 she became a Catholic.



During her years in Paris she met many of the leading artistic personalities of the time, including Matisse, Picasso, Brâncuși, and Rainer Maria Rilke who became a close friend and confidant. In 1910 she moved to Meudon, a suburb of Paris where she remained for the rest of her life.

Kenza Eastwood

A Gift of Sunlight

On their twenty-fifth birthdays in 1907 and 1909 Gwendoline and Margaret Davies inherited wealth that placed them among the richest young women in Britain. How they spent it is at the heart of their remarkable story. Their love for art and for Wales was inspirational; and they believed in the power of beauty.

The brilliant collection of paintings and sculptures they bequeathed to the national museum made Wales an art destination. With their eye for artistic talent went a pioneering courage. As Welsh Nonconformist spinster sisters they were rare women in the male-dominated art world.

Always modest they shrank more than any violet. 'So shy,' said a friend, 'that they seemed to fade from view.'

They grew up in their beloved home in Llandinam, in mid-Wales. Their grandfather, David Davies, a strict Calvinist, started as a farm boy and made his fame and fortune from railways, coal and docks. His granddaughters followed his philanthropic beliefs.

After the deaths of their mother and father they were raised by their stepmother and governess and had a cultural education, becoming fluent in French, travelling widely in Europe to study art and music.

They became serious collectors in 1908, buying paintings by Corot, J M W Turner, Constable, Meissonier, Millet, Whistler and Daumier. They had professional advice but they chose pictures themselves.

Essentially they bought for their own enjoyment, for their own walls. Theirs was 'new money' and they spent it on works they loved. One of the pleasures of their art is that it is their personal choice. In 1912 they bought their first

Impressionists, a Manet and two of Monet's magical studies of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice. They also Rodin's striking sculpture *The Kiss*. In 1913 they bought another Rodin, a Thames view by Monet, and three of Monet's magnificent water lily studies. In London Gwendoline bought Renoir's enchanting *La Parisienne* for £5,000, a popular emblem of the Davies collection in Cardiff. In 1914 they bought more works by Renoir, Rodin and Daumier. They bought nothing in 1915, the year their beloved cousin Edward Lloyd Jones was killed at Gallipoli. His death strengthened their resolve to help soldiers. They volunteered to run a French Red Cross canteen at Troyes, south-east of Paris, a busy military crossroads with troops heading for the front, weary and wounded men heading back.



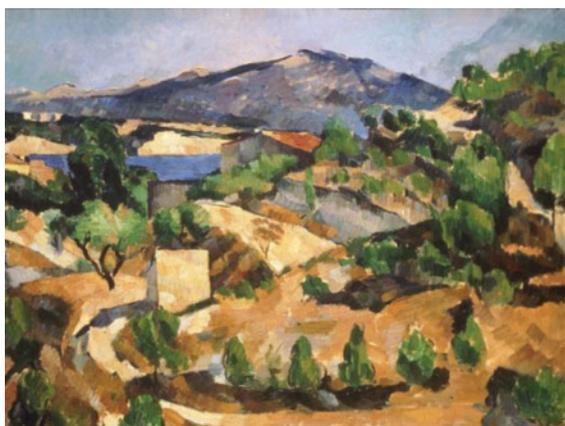
La Parisienne by Renoir

Gwendoline was thirty-four when she went to run the canteen in 1916. Margaret joined her in 1917. At the Cantine des Dames Anglaises they served coffee, soup, and cigarettes to thousands of French soldiers. The chief blessings in the canteen, Margaret wrote in her journal, were a water tap and a gramophone. 'The former makes life bearable for us and the latter makes life bearable for the poilu.' Hour after hour they turned the gramophone handle to play popular songs like Tipperary and, a favourite with the troops, Un Peu d'Amour.

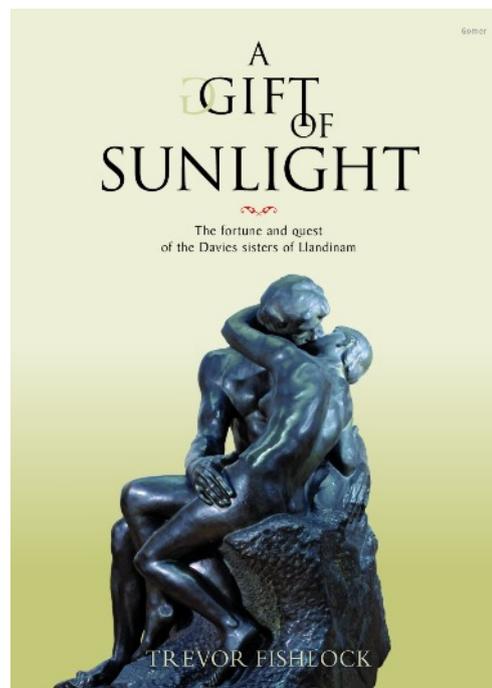
In April 1917 Gwendoline took a train to Paris and bought Daumier's lovely *Lunch in the Country* from the Bernheim gallery. She returned at the end of the year to buy Renoir's *Conversation*. She also bought a Manet and Monet's *Rouen Cathedral: Setting Sun*.

She returned to Paris in February 1918 and bought two masterpieces by Cézanne: the *François Zola Dam* and *Provençal Landscape*, a coup marking Gwendoline's confidence.

In London in 1921 both the National Gallery and the Tate refused to display *The François Zola Dam*.



Francois Zola Dam by Cezanne



Critics divided into camps.

Gwendoline's supporters commended her 'faith and passion' and eventually, in 1923, the Tate gallery displayed the painting on loan, the first Cézanne exhibited at a national gallery in Britain. It inspired Samuel Courtauld, the textile magnate, to create the Courtauld Institute of Art. The Davies sisters led the way in bringing Impressionist painting to the British public.

Gwendoline ended her collecting in 1926. She felt she should spend her money helping people in Wales during the Depression. She and Margaret gave far more of their inheritance to education, health, music and social causes.

She died in 1951, Margaret in 1963. Ever reticent, they had stood out in Britain as collectors following their own enlightened instincts. A curator opening an exhibition of their paintings in Paris in 1980 noted that the art they gave to the people of Wales was 'a consequence of acts of love'.

Trevor Fishlock

Portrait of an Artist

Not only has Michael Noakes been President of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters and Chairman of the Contemporary Portrait Society and Governor of the Federation of British Artists but he designed the double-sided record sleeve for a Frank Sinatra long playing record that achieved platinum status. Making him the only portrait painter to have been awarded a platinum disk for work on a record-sleeve.



Famous people and royalty are no strangers to Michael. He is a leading portrait and landscape painter. The book, *The Daily Life of the Queen: an Artists Diary*, was written by his late wife Vivien Noakes. In 1999, Michael made many sketches of the queen to illustrate the book. He has painted portraits of the Queen several times. Once, getting tired of all the interruptions by foot servants at the palace while the Queen was sitting for him, and forgetting where he was, so immersed in his work, he angrily snapped, 'Who is it', when there was a knock at the door and threw down his paintbrush'. **An apologetic face appeared around the door and Prince Charles asked 'could I have a word with the Queen please'?**

Anne, Princess Royal, the Prince of Wales, the Queen Mother and most members of the Royal family have been painted by him.. Whilst he was in the yellow drawing room, painting the queen, a servant brought in a silver tray bearing two glasses and a bottle of still mineral water. It must feel rather terrifying splashing oil paints around in a yellow drawing room in Buckingham palace. Even the thought of knocking over a glass of water must be scary.

As well as the royal family, Michael has painted dignitaries from the military, religion, arts, ambassadors and scientists and even pope Benedict XVI. At present he is working on portraits of Dame Judy Dench and Lord Bragg, but he doesn't just paint celebrities,

Michael also enjoys painting ordinary families and for a change, when he has the time, he enjoys painting landscapes.

Unfortunately, with a long list of people waiting for portraits, he has very little spare time to indulge himself.

His travels, to paint commissioned portraits, have taken him worldwide. He travelled to America to paint President Clinton and was allowed to make his preliminary sketches in the White House, a rare privilege for an artist.

Michael tells of how the president drank glasses of coke throughout the sitting, but it was quickly whisked away when a visitor entered, in case it was thought to be whisky.

A change for Michael from painting in oils, was the chance to design the crown sized £5 coin for the Royal Mint to celebrate the Prince of Wales 50th Birthday in 1988. This was produced in three different metals. The one shown was made in gold.



Margaret Thatcher was a close friend of Michael Noakes and in 1996, 6 years after her resignation, he painted a massive portrait of her, showing her standing in front of no 10 Downing Street. The giant painting, that stands over 12 feet tall, took Michael 18 months to complete. After the commission, Michael visited Chequers for the sittings. The portrait was finished in Michael's own studio in his house in St John's Wood in London. It has been in storage ever since but there has been recent interest from a Kuwaiti buyer.

I think Michael, when painting his portraits, would agree with Aristotle that 'The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance'. As one of Britain's leading portrait painters, Michael does both of these things beautifully.
Margaret McCloy



Two of the many artistic features of Swansea that can be seen in the Marina.



Stop Press

At the time of going to press we were still waiting for a report on the Outreach activity. We hear that it is doing really well and a full report will be in the next issue. The Editor.

'Filling a space in a beautiful way. That's what art means to me'. Georgia O'Keefe

Poster Girl

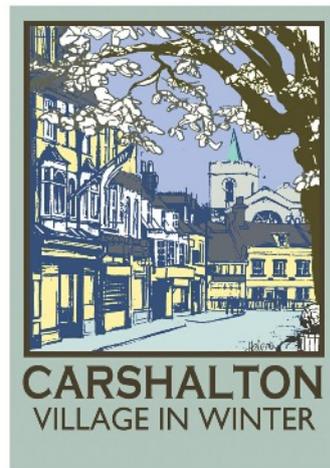
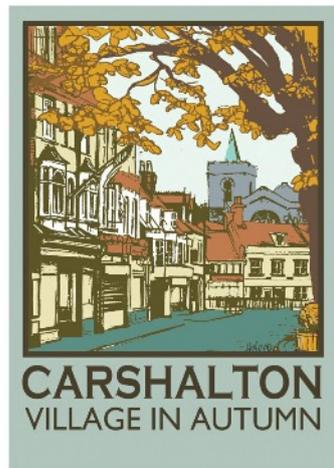
A few years ago I was surrounded by friends who were successful painters, printers, photographers, web designers and gallery owners. In my heart I was an artist but the problem was I wasn't producing any artwork. The occasional sketch or attempt at a painting but that was about it.

Nowadays it's a whole different picture. I've got a range of designs that are selling well, with regular orders, requests for commissions, new designs being added, social network buzz and articles in the local press...I've even been stopped in the street by a woman who gushed about how much she loves my work (this is lovely but takes some getting used to).

to a wide age range and I've consciously tried to make them timeless which I think helps. So far I've heard they've gone to Cornwall, Ireland, South Africa and America.

The posters have so far extended into Christmas versions and tote bags. I've had regular requests for new poster designs and keep researching where to go next. I've got tons of ideas, I just need to find the time. I'm very fortunate to have a great support network around me which certainly makes producing and selling my artwork easier and more enjoyable.

So far, 2016 looks like it'll be another busy year. I was recently given a new calendar for my



A good friend of mine who owns a gift shop in Carshalton bought me a calendar of vintage transport posters for Christmas last year. Over a glass of wine we agreed that a Carshalton poster would be good. I love these style of posters, so revamped a view I'd previously done of Carshalton High Street and bingo.

My designs start with a pencil drawing from photographs, which I then colour and edit in Photoshop. Working this way allows me to combine my love of drawing with the ability to edit easily on my computer.

The first poster design I produced was Carshalton Winter which I started selling in January. The first one sold within an hour of being delivered to the shop. They started selling faster than I could deliver them. It took me completely by surprise, I thought I might sell a few ,so really wasn't prepared for the demand.

birthday, this time it's vintage travel posters from around the world. So I'm going to dig out my old holiday photos from Morocco, Thailand, Australia and Barcelona and see what I can come up with .I studied art at college to degree level and have always enjoyed playing round with a wide range of creative ideas and techniques. I moved to Carshalton in Surrey in 2004 with my husband, who's also an artist. After 10 years working in the media industry, I trained as an art teacher and now teach part time in a sixth form college. I love sharing ideas with my students and helping them to explore materials and techniques which sometimes feed back into my own work.

My long term my plan was to try to make some money from my artwork when my kids were both at school so I didn't have to return to teaching full time. That's not until Sept 2016 so this has all happened much quicker than I ever imagined.

People who've bought the posters often tell me how much they like them. Couples seem to agree on them which is good to hear. They seem to appeal

Helena Vaughan

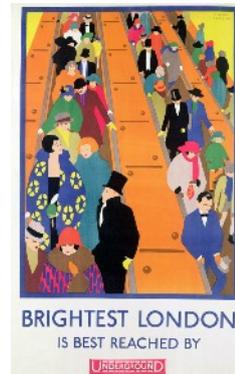
London Transport, Patron of the Arts

A while back, **Helena Vaughan** worked on a project with the London Transport Museum and was lucky enough to be able to view their poster archive. She poured through drawer upon drawer of beautiful hand produced posters that are proving to be as popular as ever these days.

The early ads on the underground had been ineffective and new ideas were needed. Frank Pick, who was a British transport Administrator with a strong interest in design, realised that earlier advertising was inefficient and that not enough people were using the underground. Pick also realised that most of London's attractions were easily reached by the tube.

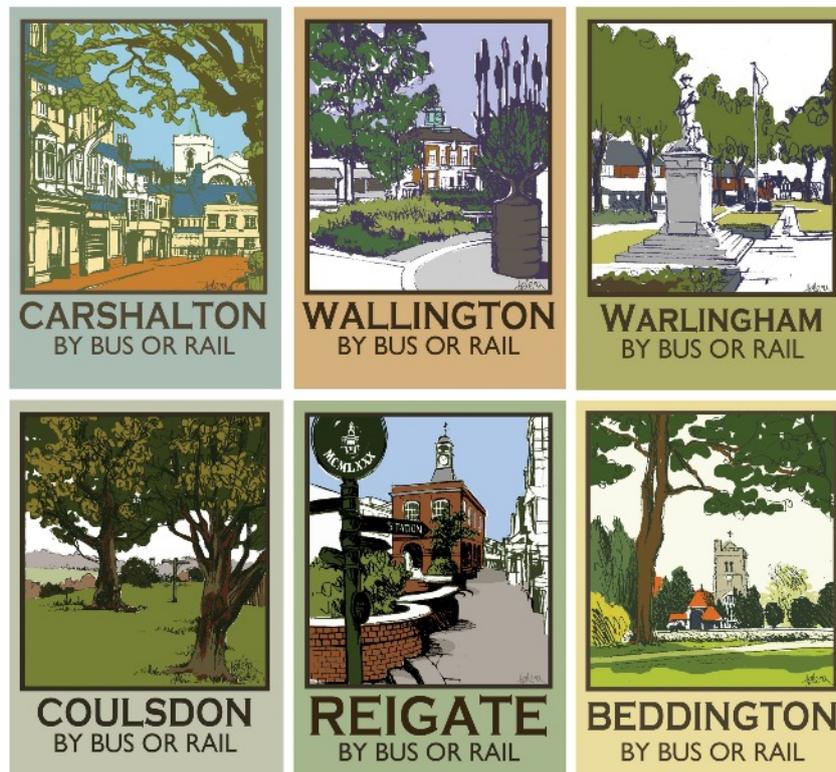
In 1916 he commissioned Edward Johnston to create a new typeface exclusive to the underground stations. Pick decided on a campaign of posters that would show pictures of the country side, shopping and sports events to encourage the

use of the underground. He commissioned many designers and artists, both internationally famous and newcomers, including Edward McKnight Kauffer who alone designed 140 posters. He also commissioned work from over 150 women artists.



Designed by Horace Taylor 1924

Subjects featured on the posters varied from sports, such as test matches at the Oval, rugby at Twickenham, tennis at Wimbledon and the boat race on the Thames. The zoo was a popular subject as were pastoral scenes like Kew gardens, Hampstead Heath and the Hop Gardens of Kent. With artists producing excellent work such as Reginald Rigby in 1915, Laura Knight in 1921 and Alfred Leate in 1927, posters reached a peak of artistic quality and the underground had found a strong corporate identity. By 1933 London Transport was regarded as a Patron of the Arts.



Designs by Helena Vaughan

HA Swansea Branch Programme 2016

Talks on Saturdays at 11.00, National Waterfront Museum, Ocean Room



Branch AGM 5th March 2016

venue to be confirmed

19th March 2016

Professor Caroline Franklyn

and Jack Orchard

Fiddle & Fidget: the Friendship of Hester Thrale and Elizabeth Montagu

16th April 2016

Bleddyn Penny

Post-war Society in Port Talbot



21st May 2016

Stephen Jones

Isambard Kingdom Brunel

The Story of a 19th Century Giant of the Industrial Revolution



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Membership Form

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Individual membership: £10

Concessionary membership: £5

Family (household) membership: £15

Student (to 30 September 2015): £5

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HA Membership Secretary, 156 Chemical Road,

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