ARTS' Word

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Online Gallery Exhibition

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HERE AND NOW ...

The Gallery is dead, long live the Gallery. Although it was heart-wrenching to close the Conservatory Gallery after 20 years, a new 'online gallery' is in the process of being born, and we are feeling very positive and enthusiastic about the new format. The enlarged website (www.businessarts.co.uk) will soon feature an increasing number of paintings and prints by a variety of artists across the region and we urge you to check it out frequently as it will be updated regularly.

In addition, a new 'exhibition' will be held on it every quarter, where works by a prominent artist will be especially highlighted. This first Spring exhibition will feature **Anneli Boon** and her colourful and strong collages. Some of you may remember her work from previous displays in the gallery, when it was much complimented. She achieves her unique style by layering observations, memories, thoughts, and dreams, with atmospheric and seasonal qualities of nature and landscape, which she then reduces to basic elements. Although she has lived in Hertfordshire for 30 years, her work is still inspired by her native Finland.

We also have a brand new Newsletter, now re-named ARTSWord. Contributors will include old favourites, with the addition of some new faces to increase the chatty ideas and observations. We would like to grow this Newsletter into a fully fledged magazine, albeit online, and to this end we intend to add even more contributors in the coming months.

If you would like to contribute any news or information, or if you think any of your friends or relations would like to subscribe to a copy, (£10 per year) please let us know. Most importantly, if you change your **email address** for any reason, do not forget to notify us or we will be unable to contact you.

Red Garden, paper collage on paper, acrylic paint, stitching 38 x 28 cm by Anneli Boon

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And now, let us proceed with this brand new title for a new Magazine and a new era for Business Arts and its 'online gallery'!

RECALLING ERIC RAVILIOUS (1903-1942)
A Tribute...
by (firstly) Anthony Day

A watercolour exercise I completed in 1948, a few months into my first year of full-time art training, a study of ivy leaves meant to test my resolve with the medium, came out of the darkness recently as fresh as it went in. I found it acceptable only because I discarded watercolour soon after and have never gone back to it and am left wondering whether I should not have persisted with it, at least before conceding primarily to the more flexible gouache. Intimidatingly high standards in this country from the 18th century may well have steered me off.

So soon after its introduction here watercolours burgeoned into great art and it is small wonder there then followed a long decline.

The late Victorians and Edwardians smothered the medium and the smug coteries of the watercolour societies combined to maintain comparative mediocrity. It was not until the

Nordic Blue - 3 parts - Paper collage on raised boards, acrylic paint
11 x 61 cm, 11 x 61 x 4 cm, 30 x 61 x 4 cm
bu Anneli Boon

1920s that high quality and strong individuality re-emerged in the hands of **Eric Ravilious**, **Edward Bawden**, **Paul Nash**, **David Jones** and the New Zealand-born **Frances Hodgkins,** artists very much of their time finding full expression in pure watercolour.
I was reminded of this forcibly in the autumn when a superb Ravilious watercolour came up for auction in a Cambridge saleroom and was sold, thankfully, to the Fry Gallery in Saffron Walden, the archive for Essex artists, for £30,000. I was a little surprised at the price only because I thought it might have made more. The artist died tragically young and after long neglect his works now rarely surface on the open market.
Ravilious firmly declared watercolour to be his primary medium but he also designed furniture and glassware, was a fine illustrator and lithographer, painted large murals and was at the centre of the revival of wood engraving in the 1920s. Like his lifelong friend Bawden, he ambled the Essex countryside from his home in Great Bardfield and made much of it, seeing it essentially as if for the first time, rejoicing in modern excrescences sooner than shrinking away.
Inevitably, like Bawden, he was caught up in the second world war, but only as a war artist appointed by the War Artists' Advisory Committee who directed him firstly to the Admiralty and the Nore Command. Could he turn his inspired sense of design and his penchant for poetically understated colour to portraying naval craft in ominous preparation or action or life in the rough company of active servicemen? The truth is he revelled in it, if no recorder of war at sea. Such as *Midnight Sun* and *Submarine in Dry Dock* are fine examples from this time of emergency, both accessible to all at the Tate Britain. That fine caressing of gentle colours combined with his energetic patterning, sense of structure and joy in the fact of fresh air and light while grasping all that was new and strange to him resulted in some of the most covetable images of that poignant time. He outstripped many another war artist for revelation.
For his interest in seaplanes he was re-directed to the Royal Air Force and this was to prove his undoing. He was rather anxious that Paul Nash had covered the subject too much in his own inspired way but he had little time left to contemplate that. On September 2nd 1942 he went on an operational flight to Iceland and the plane, inexplicably, was lost. He was 39 and he left a legacy of sheer beauty and refinement in the purest terms of his medium and is secure in the annals of British art. It was money well spent for the Fry Gallery.
It is time, surely, for another renaissance in the choice medium of watercolour?

and (secondly) by Mark Handley

Eric Ravilious took particular delight in fireworks and ball games and I think the wood-engraved devices he cut for **J.M. Dent**'s *Everyman* books are like little fireworks. These exhilarating abstractions are for most of us the first glimpse of his work, as they were printed and embossed on *Everyman* books for 30 years or so after they were first engraved in 1936-37.
Ravilious was one of a gifted group of young men and women selected to attend the Royal College of Art in its earliest days by **Sir William Rothenstein**. He studied book illustration, and the design discipline inculcated at the College gave him the confidence to tackle almost anything, including murals, decorations for Wedgewood china and designs for furniture and fabrics. Wood engraving became his particular speciality but his greatest personal satisfaction, I think, came from the making of watercolour drawings.
The centenary exhibition at the Imperial War Museum earlier this Spring (*Eric Ravilious: Imagined Realities*) displayed a large number of his watercolours. It showed what a serious effort he made to extend a great English tradition, the pursuit and capture of the picturesque in watercolour, inspired particularly by **Francis Towne** (1739/40-1816) whose manner of depicting alpine scenery with sepia lines and broad planes of colour looks strangely modern to us, and of course by the 20th century pioneer in the field, **Paul Nash**, who taught Ravilious at the Royal College. He had a cool, linear designerly approach and yet often succeeds wonderfully in summoning up the *genius loci*. His friend **J.M. Richards** wrote: *His feeling for the Sussex landscape, especially that of the chalk downs behind Eastbourne, with their bony outlines clothed in tawny grass shimmering in the wind, never left him, and his distinctive dry, precise but evocative style evolved as part of the process of portraying it.* His designer's eye was particularly attracted to the more startling marks made by man on the landscape such as chalk cut figures, abandoned machinery, cement works, railways and fences. He could also create a masterpiece of atmospheric perspective from a greenhouse full of cyclamen and tomatoes.

Though officially employed as a war artist in 1940 his paintings of warlike subjects seem to proclaim a kind of disbelief in what he was seeing. His military hardware looks very much as if it has been carved out of wood and painted for a child to play with. But he loved the sensations of flying and being at sea and that love can be felt in his lyrical drawings of *Tiger Moths, Walruses,* warships and even submarines. The precise sinuosities of a ship's propeller were as seductive to his eye as the flowing feminine curves of the South Downs.

His most substantial creation, the elegant and meticulously designed murals for half the refreshment room at Morley College not far from the War Museum (the other half being decorated by his great friend and rival **Edward Bawden**), was destroyed by German bombs in 1940. These beautifully drawn and staged fantasies full of vitality were mainly inspired by Elizabethan drama. Two years later at the age of 39 the artist himself vanished, into the sea off Iceland while carrying out his duties as a war artist, an observer on a search and rescue plane.

I do believe, though, that his spirit must have presided over the 1951 Festival of Britain nine years later, which seemed to me, at the age of eight, a visual marvel of mysterious shapes and bright colours, an almost weightless, spindly world likely to take off at any moment and leave the heavy realm of London's blackened granite and smothering smog behind, the *Skylon* ascending first, followed by the *Dome of Discovery*, a huge flying saucer, and finally **Rowland Emett**'s marvellous train which I am certain would have amazed Eric Ravilious and set him whistling.

OUT AND ABOUT ...

VUILLARD: from Post-Impressionist to Modern Master, at the Royal Academy, London: review by Robin Stemp

Édouard Vuillard (1868 - 1940). The name is well known, the work more so, the face hardly at all. What kind of a man was this creator of brilliant interiors and languid park-scapes, of women sitting around in chairs talking, or at the piano, in bed reading their letters or walking their children? He painted men, but only as a supporting cast surrounding the principal players - women. **Vuillard** loved women, adored them, found them endlessly fascinating and not just as sexual beings. He had a long-term mistress, **Madame Hessel** and fell in love with the intoxicating charm of **Misia Nathanson** - but then, in turn-of -the-century Paris, who did not? But the woman he loved above all was his **Mother**. From the beginning, she encouraged him, sat for him, supported him in all his ventures, and when he took up photography, she was in charge of developing his negatives, submerging them in soup plates. ‘My mother is my muse,’ he told **Jacques Salomon**. She was his muse and his constant companion and the co-inhabiter of his past and his present.

The show at the RA explores the extraordinary range of his work, from large-scale decorations to drawings, prints and

The Striped Blouse 1895 (oil on canvas 65.7 cm x 58.7 cm) by Vuillard

photographs, easel paintings and prints and designs for the theatre and it is, perhaps, the theatre work which is the greatest influence. Vuillard designed some of the first sets for the Paris productions of **Ibsen** and **Strindberg**, and even the most domestic of interiors, have, some of them, the atmosphere of *avant garde* theatre. An experimentalist, a member of the *Nabis* (Hebrew for Prophet), he eschewed the overly naturalistic and, influenced by **Gauguin**, he employed not only intense colour and simplified form, but an idiosyncratic sense of composition. In a painting of Misia and **Thadée Nathanson**, Misia, on the left of the canvas, is playing the piano, with her husband seated extreme right. He has his back to his wife and the space between them is as vast and empty as space can be. She is reduced in size, but she dominates. It is to her that we look, ignoring the man with his pipe, seeming almost to shuffle out of view. Vuillard has painted an ordinary domestic scene, but the overlaying ambiguities and atmosphere are so highly charged that you look away, as if intruding on a marital row. We see a world looking simultaneously inward to a small, contained circle of friends and out to a wider cultural sphere. Objects - *things* - abound, take on a life of their own. People and objects inhabit a democratic space with their surroundings playing a fully supporting role. Nothing exists on its own. There is a generosity of spirit in the work, a kind-hearted acceptance of humankind with all its foibles. Marriages collapse, friends fall out, the world changes and his friends change with it; growing old, moving on, returning home - and Vuillard is there with his paint and his camera, recording without censure. There is nothing priggish or sentimental about the images. Life is as it is. At the end of her life, he photographed his mother in bed, toothless and hairless, in a nightgown. Then, dressed in her best, she stands on the balcony of their apartment, looking down on the street, about to go out - or perhaps not. Nothing escaped his notice. Lunch parties were snapped in the lens of his

Kodak, the scene cropped to show hands and a glass, half a face, a mouth in mid conversation, with Madame Hessel leaning back, smiling at the artist. And always, his mother, serving her famous boiled beef, dressed in black, part of the company, his muse. Walking round the galleries at the RA, one is taken in and utterly captivated with this world which one wishes did not have to end. But it did end. In 1940, the year Vuillard died, the Germans occupied Paris and France fell. It could be said that his real world stopped in 1928, with the death of his mother. The antithesis of the overbearing and possessive mama doting on her son, Madame Vuillard, described as 'remarkable' was held in almost filial esteem by Vuillard's friends. It was a relationship based on absolute equality. They were not so much mother and son, but friends. Vuillard had a genius for friendship and it is this gloriously generous quality that imbues all the work. To view him as a *petit maître* is to do him a gross disservice. So how do we see Vuillard? Is he a modern master? Yes, he is. Without a doubt, he is both modern and a master.

Vuillard: from Post Impressionist to Modern Master is on at the Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London until April 18

Five Panel Screen for Miss Marguerite Chapin: Place Vintimille 1911 (distemper on paper, mounted on canvas, 230 cm x 60 cm each panel) by Vuillard

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IMAGES OF EASTER by Jenny Chapman

For many people the over-riding images they associate with Easter are those the shops supply: foil-covered chocolate eggs and Easter bunnies. Even that most traditional Good Friday symbol, the hot cross bun, can now be found for sale all year round.

Looking back to the Medieval artists of Europe, one great and overpowering image of Easter week seems to dominate. Since the thirteenth century, the crucifixion of **Christ** and its symbolic representation, the empty cross, have been a focus of Christian worship. The early 'cut out' crosses were intended to be fixed to the rood screen facing down the nave towards the congregation. Of these, the crucifix by **Giotto** in the Santa Maria Novella, Florence, stands out as the first great image of Christ to take on a realistic form rather than the stylised Byzantine images still used by his contemporary **Duccio**.

Perhaps the next suite of crucifixions which stand out from the mass of religious paintings are those by the German **Matthias Grünewald** some two hundred years later. Here, in the Isenheim Altarpiece (now in the Unterlinden Museum, Colmar) and several other paintings, Grünewald portrays not the beautiful, almost serene, Christ of earlier works, but a body, showing graphically the results of the Romans' treatment, unattractive and very dead. One wonders if some of the comments attached to **Mel Gibson**'s film *The Passion of Christ* were also made about these images when they were first unveiled!

Entering the 21st century, the images this year are again of the crucifixion. *The Passion of Christ* seems to have taken Grünewald's graphic portrayal of torture to new levels. It is perhaps, as were the earlier paintings, intended to make people think, to help us understand what Christ did for the world, and to act as a focus for faith. Also this year, we have an image which may only have the first of these intentions: **Sarah Lucas**' *Christ You Know It Ain't Easy* is a Christ made out of cigarettes on a large painted red cross (in Tate Britain's In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida exhibition). Maybe it is intended just to shock, but who knows what effect such a reworking of the old image will have to those who go to see it.

The many images of the descent from the cross and the Pietà are really extensions of the theme of the crucifixion. For Christians these events of Good Friday are the terrible low point which had to happen to fulfil God's purpose, but they have little meaning without their resolution on Easter Day. There are few memorable images of Christ in the tomb although that of **Hans Holbein** the younger (in Basle Museum) has a similar power to those of his contemporary, Grünewald. In trying to think of a work of art which fully expresses that time of waiting, the one coming to mind is not a religious image at all. **Cornelia Parker**'s *Cold Dark Matter: Exploded View*, now in a room of its own in Tate Modern, is a blown-up garden shed. The fragments of the shed and its damaged contents, suspended around a light gently swinging in the breeze of passing people, graphically testify to a terrible disaster which has torn them apart. However, they also appear suspended in time, as if waiting for something to happen. If time was re-activated would they continue to fly apart in the blast of their destruction? Somehow, the feeling they convey is of anticipation, of coalescing around the light, of forming something new and wonderful.

This brings us to Easter Sunday; with Lent finished the chocolate eggs can be eaten and the greetings *Christ is risen*, *He is risen indeed* exchanged. The great triumph of the resurrection starts quietly in a garden with **Mary Magdalene** mistaking Christ for a gardener, but his exclamation *Touch me not* hints at the gulf which now separates him from ordinary mortals. Surely the intensity and intimacy of this moment as depicted by **Titian** (*Noli me Tangere* in the National Gallery, London) cannot be improved upon.

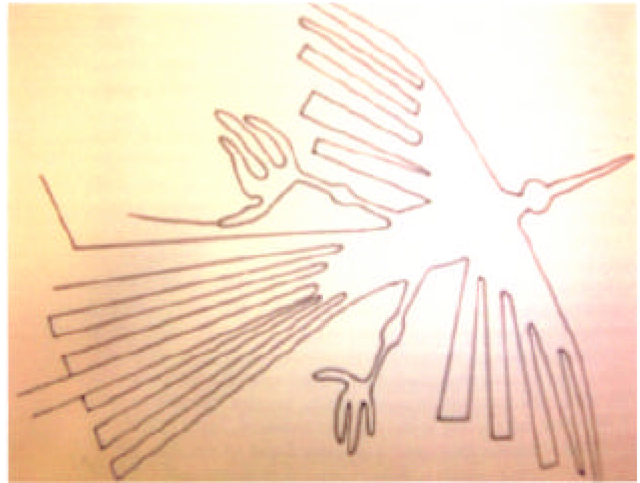
Christ risen and in glory is the culmination of the resurrection. The image most familiar in Britain is probably the tapestry of *Christ in Glory*, by **Graham Sutherland**, behind the high altar in Coventry Cathedral. Some find this image a little stiff and formal and so we return to Grünewald and his risen Christ in the resurrection scene on a wing of the early 16th century Isenheim Altarpiece. Grünewald has again shown a remarkable and daring imagination. Gone

are the terrible marks of the crucifixion, except for the five wounds in hands, feet and side which Christ shows to us. He rises above the disarray of the tomb and the unconscious soldiers and appears to be blending into the light of glory behind him. This triumphal image of salvation has a wondrous inevitability about it, calmness and immeasurable power blend in what is to many the greatest image of Easter ever painted.

MUSINGS ...

GIGANTIC DRAWINGS
by Mike Roe

Imagine, as an artist, you were given a huge canvas about six times the size of Cambridge on which to leave your mark to posterity. What would you draw and why, and how would you accomplish the task?
Well, it has already been done – around 2000 years ago by the Nazca and Paracas civilisations, two of the many pre-Inca cultures. I saw this remarkable phenomena by taking a flight in a light aircraft over a 200 square kilometre plateau between two river valleys in the arid desert coastal strip of Peru, about 20km north of the modern settlement of Nazca. As the plane climbed to about 3,000 feet I began to make out huge figure drawings, shapes and lines stretching across into the distance on the flat pampa below.
There are in all about three dozen giant biomorphic animal drawings including a 90 metre long monkey, a 180 metre lizard, a spider, several killer whales, birds including a humming bird and a condor with a 130m wide wingspan. There are also plant drawings and at least one human that looks like an astronaut. The monkey figure is the odd one out as monkeys weren’t indigenous to the coastal area. They came from the rainforest on the other side of the Andes, which confirms that trading between the many local groups of Amerindians was taking place over vast distances in those early years. Some of the figures overlap, and the markings on the pampa have been made at different times during the existence of the Nazca culture.
But the most prolific and dominant compositions are the 1,300 km of straight lines with some lengths reaching 20 kilometres or more, together with the 300 geometric figures comprising elongated trapezoidal shapes, that appear like runways, measuring about 40m by 400m. Other shapes include rectangles, zigzags, spirals and triangles. All these geoglyphs cover 3.6 million sq. m being around 2% of the pampa surface. Many of the lines converge towards and focus upon the summits of nearby hills and peaks of the higher sierra beyond.
So how were these gigantic figures made, and why?
The ‘how’ is the easier question. Extended straight lines can easily be made with a few individuals using simple sighting poles. These lines are mostly in the form of pathways about one metre wide lined with stones. The dark surface stony surface is removed revealing the lighter gypsum material beneath. The geometric shapes have all the surface material removed within their boundaries. How the curved lines of the irregular figures were formed is still debated but many are made with a continuous single line.
Since the lines were discovered in the 1930s there have been numerous theories as to why they were made and their purpose, including the theory from **Eric von Danikin**. The author of the 1960s bestseller *Chariots of the God*, which claimed to solve the world’s great mysteries, thought that some of the trapezoidal shapes were extra-terrestrial landing strips! Of course there are other geoglyths along the coasts



Condor Biomorph

of Peru and Chile, and indeed in other parts of the world, but none of those sites has such a concentration or size as those at Nazca. They are indeed remarkable for their variety and scale.
Unfortunately none of the pre-Columbian civilisations in Peru developed the written word so we do not have any direct explanation for the lines. What information we do have comes from either geological or archaeological investigations, or from the Spanish chroniclers who recorded what the conquered Incas told them about their Andean ancestors.
The answer, I believe, relates directly to the fact that the Nazcas lived in a very inhospitable desert environment, one without any precipitation except from the very occasional El Nino floods. They had to rely upon the valley rivers for water for the survival of themselves, their animals and their crops. They apparently developed sophisticated water management techniques and irrigation including subterranean aqueducts –underneath some of the lines. They knew that this water came initially from the sky and through the Andes mountains that rose to the east. During the 500 years of the Nazca and Paracas civilisations there were extended periods of drought which finally resulted in their extinction.
It is now thought that the lines, rather than having strong astronomical significance, were ceremoniously walked by the Nazcas. It is surely logical to conclude that the biomorphic figures were the ancients' way of reminding their gods of the sky that they needed the vital rainfall. Similarly their lines and geoglyphs pointed towards high points in the hills and mountains, from whence the precious water came. Andean peoples have always regarded these high points as ‘huacas’ meaning sacred places.
The Nazca lines have generated volumes of research and numerous theories over the last 70 years since their discovery, but they remain an unsolved and awe-inspiring mystery to all those who gaze upon those remarkable figures drawn on that part of Peru’s vast coastal desert.

THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY...

Photographing Reflections: Rivers, Lakes and Ponds by Peter Bendall

The surface of a river, pond or lake varies in smoothness according to the speed of the water's flow, the strength and direction of wind, the amount of boat-traffic and the number of ducks, swans and other aquatic birds swimming, skimming or diving in search of fish, bread or the secret of existence. The water's transparency will be affected by rubbish, weeds and leaves, as well as by the volume and colour of the silt it contains. The amount of glare will depend on the size and number of surface ripples as well as the type of sunlight present. When taking a photograph these conditions of the medium need to be taken into account from the outset.

The second major factor to be considered is the reflectability of the subject. This depends not only on its size, shape, relief and colour, but also on the nature, intensity and angle of the light that hits it. Morning and evening sunlight usually bring out the colours of buildings better than midday sun. Colours in the red-brown range tend to be warmer in evening light, while blue and white are brighter and more contrasted in morning light. Green and yellow are difficult colours and often suffer from over-exposure when reflected. Trees full of foliage are difficult to photograph successfully as reflections, since they rarely offer sufficient variety of colour and shape.

The distance between the photographer and the object to be photographed for reflection, crucially affects the type of image obtained: too near, and the reflection becomes dull in tone as a result of greater refraction; too far, and the reflection often becomes less distinct in form. These effects do, however, depend on the size and height of the reflected object: if it is a mountain reflected in a lake, then distance is much less important than if it is a clump of daffodils reflected in a pond. Relatively narrow rivers such as the Cam are ideal for taking reflections of buildings, particularly as there are many interesting boathouses and colleges along much of its length. To obtain a good reflection of a passing boat, or of people on the opposite bank, it is necessary for the camera lens to be as near as possible to the plane of the water's surface. Strong haunches and well-lubricated knee-joints are a pre-requisite for this highly specialised type of photography!From the compositional viewpoint, the reflection on its own of a building can produce a satisfying image; the turbulence of the water can also lend a strong abstract element, particularly if a fast shutter speed (1/250th or higher) is used. Longer lenses can also be used to pick out details of a reflection, such as a window, door, balcony or chimney. Where the object together with its reflection is photographed there may be problems with over-exposure of the sky: the 'real' sky will often appear much paler than the reflected sky, and so a polarising lens may need to be used.

Woman in a Red Dress, photograph of reflection by Peter Bendall

Many photographers try to obtain the same kinds of reflected image: the most common cliché is the snow-capped mountain reflected in a lake, which seems to feature in just about every issue of some photography magazines. The best advice is to try and obtain as many different types of reflected image as possible, which may lead to something striking and original; even if it does not, the process is a good deal more interesting than trying to emulate previous photographers.

THE WRITTEN WORD ...

by Teresa Ransom

One Day I Would *Like* to Write a Book

Sound familiar? Almost everyone I know has said it at some time or thought about doing it. Why not? Ever since our ancestors scratched their first rough pictures on cave walls we have felt a need to pass on information, to tell stories, to record our lives. Before words we did it with pictures, then words and pictures. Myths and religious beliefs were passed down from one generation to the next; stories from returning travellers opened up new worlds. But stories were mainly oral, little was written, and that little was available to very few.

With the discovery of the printing press, the nature of books began to change as they became more accessible. No longer just religious or historical records, a different kind of writing swept out into the world. The advent of novels and romances in the 17th and 18th centuries broadened the readership; the breaking of the lending library's stranglehold on the market in the late 1800s allowed cheap and affordable editions to be published. This was the beginning of the era of the 'best seller.'

Today most people can afford to buy books, and there is a seemingly endless choice; but the nature of the book *selling* is changing. Whereas before, there were many small intimate book shops, dark and smelling comfortingly of

libraries and leather, where the choice was eclectic and the owner friendly - today, we are subjected more and more to large over-lit supermarkets of books, where publishers must pay the book-selling chains to display the books which they choose to promote. Those tables of '3 for 2' books are not there by public demand, they are there because the publishers have paid for them to be there. Selling is a business. We know that in today's world you can sell anything to anybody - if you do it properly. However, when the book becomes a commodity - like a lump of cheese - then I suggest there is a danger that the art of writing is being overwhelmed by the art of marketing.
It is the book-selling chains which now have a stranglehold on the market. However, enough of that. Most of us write because it is a skill we enjoy exercising, and we will keep on doing so. To misuse an old platitude: it is the journey which counts, even if the destination is changing.

One Day I *Will* Write That Book

Like most people, I have always scribbled down thoughts and poems, but had never thought about actually writing a book until spurred on by a discovery in a box in my attic. I had some Trollope cousins, considerably older than me: Cousin Charlie Trollope was a clergyman who shared his house with, and was looked after by, his sister, Nelly. They died in the 1960s. I was at that time living in Australia, and when my mother came out on a visit she brought me a cardboard dress-box filled with some papers from the Trollope's house. I was very busy with three small children, so I stowed the box away in the attic and forgot all about it.
20 years later, when my children had grown up and left home, I decided the time was right to explore the family tree. I remembered the box in the attic, and after much moving of old suitcases and piles of junk, there it was, stowed right at the back and covered with 20 years of neglect. Pulling it out, I dusted it off and opened the lid. Inside were some bits of family trees neatly written out by cousin Nelly. It was only then that I learned they/we were distant cousins of the novelist **Anthony Trollope**. I dug deeper. Right at the bottom under numerous letters, poems, and recipes for 'soup for the poor' was a small grey booklet, printed in 1909 advertising an English guest house in Florence, 'The Villa Trollope'. On the first page it boasted the house had 'once been the home of the famous novelist Mrs Trollope'.
Now I knew that Anthony Trollope had written numerous books - but *Mrs* Trollope. Who was she? I decided to find out.
It was the start of a very exciting investigation, of which more later, and a journey which took me from Sydney to Cambridge, Paris and Vienna, and which ended, after many adventures, with the publication in 1995 of my first book, *Fanny Trollope, A Remarkable Women.*
*Ed: Teresa Ransom trained and worked as an occupational therapist, actor, and teacher of the Alexander Technique. She founded the Zodiac Theatre Company in Sydney, kept a theatre shop called Mrs Worthington's, and worked as administrator for the Sydney Acting School. Now living in Cambridge, she writes and, very occasionally performs. Biographies include Fanny Trollope, a Remarkable Life 1995; **Marie Corelli**, Queen of the Victorian Bestsellers 1999; **Madame Tussaud**, A Life and a Time 2002; and she is currently working on a biography of **Prunella Scales**.*

English brocaded ivory silk taffeta shoes, c.1735

COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON, Review by Robin Stemp

David Saywell and **Jacob Simon** 290x260mm, 852 pages, over 8,000 illustrations ISBN 1 90394 200 4, £50 (hardback)

The joy of this book is that ownership is like having your own mini NPG to hand. Most portraits are in small black and white format, with details underneath, with a few in full-page colour. It is large and heavy and utterly time absorbing. Like a dictionary, you open it to look up one entry and an hour later you are still there, still browsing, having forgotten who you wanted to look up in the first place. The gallery, opened in 1856, has grown - is growing - and now has over 10,000 images. All of them are listed, with over 8,000 illustrated. How does one begin to comprehend the task of amassing the definitive collection of British luminaries? Who ought to be in and who out? Times and fashion change and what is even more fascinating than the fashionable status of the sitters, is the way in which they are depicted. Take, for example '**Gardiner**'. **John Eliot G**. (1943 -) is all direct stare and hands in a bromide print by **Jérôme de Perlinghi**. His clothes do not define the man and he could be any professional, possibly an academic. In short, there is nothing to suggest his status of leading conductor, whereas **Sir Robert William G** (1781 - 1864) is arrayed in his official finery and we are left in no doubt as to his position as Governor of Gibraltar. The conductor is seen as an individual, the Governor more as a representative of a certain time and place - in this instance, as one of the sketches for The Waterloo Banquet at Apsley House, 1836, by **William Salter**. In 1927, **Cecil Beaton** saw **Madge Garland** as an art deco creation, hands crossed, kohled eyes raised, lips not quite on the pout. As a recorder of fashion, she is part of fashion - she was fashion. Unlike **Maggi Hambling**'s **Dorothy Hodgkin** (1910 - 1994) who is all flying hair and myriad hands, working, working, working, apparently unaware that someone is trying to paint her portrait. As a painting of the academic at work, without any regard to outward appearance, it is a brilliant evocation of a certain type of woman utterly absorbed, completely at ease. The famous are here and the unknown; sometimes the artist is better known than the sitter, sometimes the artist is anonymous. Not everyone is a 'name,' but all have an allocated slot in the history of the British face, the British way of life, the mysterious creation that is an Englishman. **William Wilberforce**, humane and dedicated - and handsome, a trio of **Bronte** women, standing stiff and attentive under

their brother's less than proficient brush, **Virginia Woolf**, the **Beatles**, **Darcy Bussell**, **Allen Jones** in a glossy sheath of blue and yellow, a gruesome **Harold Wilson** seen by **Gerald Scarfe** as a kind of lumbering crustacean. And so we go on, round the galleries and through the book. If I said that it would be a desirable addition to any library that would be an understatement. It is essential.

Autumn Hues I, acrylic by Anneli Boon

POETRY CORNER...

UNTITLED

You were not invited to this poem
But I see you knocking on the first syllable
Nibbling on a lupin and accompanied by other unwanted guests
The 50s 60s 70s
I wanted to write about the state of the household drains amusingly
But there you are in a dress like a silver fish
Trailing distant rage and one of those long amphetamined laughs
You already know that the Japonica is early this year
(I wanted to notice by myself)
That my eyebrows are unplucked
You watch the sparrows throwing gutter moss onto my doorstep
Must be early March you say
Yes but not quite
You haunt my plans
Bend rules droop snowdrops freeze azaleas
Drive a renault four so slowly
that you are stopped by a country policeman
Who hears that you haven't had a drink since 1957
And leaves confused
Alsatian smiling in the passenger seat
His mouth full of thistles
Bees bouncing on the bonnet
A paisley skirt in a hot gust
Go away. I want to play alone
I find you rummaging in my memories
Showing my childhood to one of my guests
Who is bewitched by your pretty lies
And I run down the frosty path in gold slippers
To post a poem you haven't been in
To a friend who never reads.

From 'Painkillers' (2001) by ***Marina Yedigaroff****, painter and writer*

UNDECIMBER

Undecimber the unenviable,
thirteenth month of the
thirteenth year
that levels our eternity
with Sirius the dogstar:
your music ghostly with distant cymbals,
your feast-days rustling with sad willows,
your weather damp, stormfenedged
like cloudwaves in a crystal globe.
I hunt the deer in Undecimber,
that cruciferous stag.
I aim ruthlessly with the last arrow,
too close
ever to miss.

By ***Philip Ward****, founder of Private Libraries Association, based on* ***Pisanello's*** *'Vision of St Eustace' in the National Gallery and featured in his 8th collection of poems entitled 'His Enamel Mug' (2003).*

TWO ALUMNI RETURN TO CAMBRIDGE AFTER 40 YEARS ABSENCE

What's this? The Whim we knew is gone,
It's little turret all forlorn,
Its windows decked with *haute couture*
Don't seem to have the same allure
As breakfasts did in days of yore,
With cubic pots of tea galore.
Let us go to Brothers Bacon,
Cigars and snuff, long forsaken,
Will set us up and cure our pique.
Good God! Another damned boutique!
Books, ah books cure such ills as these.
Still Heffer's oaken galleries
May harbour volumes passing old
We knew in youth, as yet unsold.
Let's brave the violet seller's roar,
Rampant at the old Lion's door,
With betting slips in either paw,
And browse in peace from floor to floor.
But first we'll drink in Gothick shade
Of market fountain, lemonade,
Then down to Tutankhamen's Tomb
(Or Gentlemen's refreshment room)
With wondrous copper pipes in bloom.
From thence, relieved and purged of gloom,
We'll amble on quite leis urely
Down picturesque Petty Cury ...

Ed: Purely wishful thinking by ***Mark Handley***

COLLECTIONS ...

Continuing our quirky and eclectic alphabet of 'Collections':

'G'

Jeweller **Laurence Graff** ranks ninth in the world's list of biggest art collectors with works by **Francis Bacon** and **Andy Warhol**. He recently spent more than $2.5 million on two paintings by Andy Warhol at a New York sales auction after buying *Ladies and Gentlemen* from Warhol's 1975 drag-queen series, for £168.000 in London.

And for **Cora Ginsburg**, late founder of the Manhattan-based gallery specialising in antique textiles, embroidery and costumes. Amongst her estate recently sold was a pair of English brocaded ivory silk taffeta shoes dating from about 1735 with a reserve price of £5,300. The original owner would have been an extremely wealthy person who could afford to have silk cut up for shoe decoration. The shoes would have been worn with a matching dress at smart indoor occasions.

'H' is for **William Hogarth** (1697-1764), founding governor of the Foundling Hospital in Bloomsbury, London. As well as giving three paintings himself, he persuaded many of his contemporary British artists to donate the works of art that now form the hospital's collection. The Foundling Museum has recently been established by the Coram Family, present owners of the collection, who are making it accessible to the general public.

THANK YOU

I would particularly like to thank all the wonderful people who sent in kind and thoughtful letters wishing me well on my retirement from the Conservatory Gallery, and very complimentary they were too. I shall treasure them all.

ESTATE OF PAMELA HUGHES

£3,080 was donated by Jenny Chapman to the Arthur Rank Hospice from the successful exhibition and sale of Pamela Hughes' etchings and watercolours at her late retrospective in the Conservatory Gallery

Pamela Marshall Barrell

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WE CAN STILL FRAME YOU, FRAME YOU, FRAME YOU

ART ON A PLATE ...

by Katharine Macpherson DA

Food fashions come and go, but pate goes on forever. The only difference is in the accessorising.

When I first made this boozy chicken liver version twenty years ago, I served it simply with crusty baguette and butter. It still tastes just as good like that, though these days I prefer to dress it up with the contrasting flavours and textures of sweet toasted brioche, tangy onion marmalade and peppery wild rocket leaves.

This makes enough for 8 - 12 servings.

CHICKEN LIVER PATE

400g chicken livers
100g butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
50g mushrooms, sliced
3 tablespoons double cream
5 tablespoons sherry
1 teaspoon sweet mixed herbs
bay leaves
salt and freshly-ground pepper

* Melt half the butter in a frying pan and cook the garlic and onion until softened and golden.
* Add the mushrooms and drained chicken livers and cook for around 5 minutes.
* Add the mixed herbs, season to taste and cook for a further few minutes until the livers are cooked through.
* Remove from the heat, stir in the cream and sherry (any type is fine, though I have a sneaking preference for a sweet one) and leave until cool.
* Blend the mixture in a food processor until smooth, then spoon into pots. Add a bay leaf to the top of each pot, together with a little freshly-ground pepper.
* Melt the remaining butter, plus - depending on the size of the pots - a little more if required, and pour over the top of the pate to seal.
* Refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.

LAST WORD...

"I paint as a bird sings." **Claude Monet** (1840-1926)