



# **BULB** MAGAZINE

AUTUMN/WINTER 2022 ISSUE # 6

**FREE**

**ART, CULTURE, SCIENCE & MORE ....**

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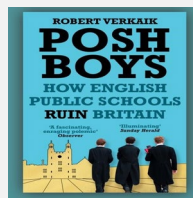
Cathy Bell (Editor)



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# FEATURES

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# THE JOURNEY – JEANNE HOLMES

It was always a thought in the back of my mind. Teaching yoga wasn't something that I could actually do, I just had to be content with practising it. After all, to be a yoga teacher, you need to understand human anatomy, have competent teaching skills, business acumen and a whole bundle of confidence as well as personal fitness. After years of practising yoga with various teachers, attending workshops and retreats abroad, I kept wishing that I could do the things they were doing, teaching, and I also desired to look as lithe and fit as some of them did. When I first started to practice yoga, it was very different to today's culture, where Western practice is mainly concentrated on exercise and asana and You Tube is instantly accessible. Yoga teachers were non-existent, perhaps only one or two could be found in my local area at that time, teaching alongside their full-time regular employment, as not much profit could be made. The availability of teacher training courses was limited and very expensive, far out of reach for most, and not considered as a chosen career. Still my ambition was there and I kept thinking "what if?" I always like to study during the winter months when it's cold and dark outside, and we are inside more, in the warmth, often looking for things to occupy the mind. Over several winters I completed various courses with the Open University, and another with the British School of Yoga (BSY), purely for self-development personal interest. As I browsed through the BSY courses one day, I decided to take the plunge into the unknown, what did I have to lose? A course application was sent off and accepted and I started my new yoga teacher training course. It could be done online, (or written) without any deadline dates and seemed perfectly accessible and affordable too, how easy could this be? My initial thoughts were that I could complete the course, gain a teaching qualification but not necessarily teach classes. After all, being well into my sixties and retired for a couple of years from full time work, it really was just another course to complete. The course lessons were organised in ten stages, each one marked and graded and I progressed until I was half way through.

I was always interested in anatomy from my high school years and was happy to be engrossed with my new learning. Then the self-doubt slowly crept in. I started to question why I was doing this, and what was it going to achieve in the long term? What was the point of doing this at my age? In any case, people aren't going to be interested. I considered abandoning the course and continued to think negatively about studying anything at all. Then came Covid. Every excuse I could find was used to avoid completing the course lessons. After all, everyone was living with restrictions because of this horrendous pandemic situation. Businesses were shutting down overnight and no one was going out socially, due to establishments such as restaurants and pubs closing. News reports all over the world were announcing that people were dying by their thousands, and infection was rife. Government ruling was that everyone had to wear face masks and avoid close contact with each other. Scientists advised that specially created vaccines would be necessary as a solution to this virus. The negativity was spreading to everyone like wild fire. I didn't "look" like a yoga teacher anyway, it was a stupid idea in the first place, and probably the more challenging postures were unachievable, what was I thinking? As there was no course deadline, I was under no pressure to complete my next lesson, so why bother? My self-set deadline of finishing everything by March 2021 was unmet, the self-sabotage mindset took further control and the procrastination continued. As online yoga practice became more available, this seemed the only way forward for teachers to continue having some financial stability. Looking back, it was an excellent coping mechanism for me personally throughout the pandemic. I had found an amazing teacher that I had previously practiced with, twice in person, when she was standing in for a local teacher doing temporary holiday cover. This teacher really stood out from all the rest and I could sense immediately she offered something very special. I looked her up and was given the opportunity to practice with her throughout Covid on an online basis. I feel very blessed and privileged to experience her wonderful teaching knowledge, thoroughness, variety,

professionalism, compassion and commitment. I still practice with her today. Then something happened. I had felt guilt and failure over not completing the course that I had started so enthusiastically, and (less importantly) had also paid the study fees. In October 2021 I picked up where I had left off and finished the rest of the course lessons with a smile, encouraged by some great comments from the tutors. Then came the final examination. My current yoga teacher advised that she would be moving north to pastures new, so I am grateful for that extra push and motivation I needed to finish. Everything seemed to fall into place, and the timing was perfect. I particularly wanted her to carry out my final assessment as being so intuitive, she knew my capabilities. We then arranged a date before her forthcoming house move for my final exam, a challenging time for both of us. The night before was a sleepless one, going over and over my posture preparation then repeating it to myself again and again. With much trepidation, the next day I set off on the thirteen-mile journey to her studio for my first physical teaching assessment. I arrived early and gave it everything that I had pre planned and practiced. An hour or so later I was relieved when it was all over, and we took some photos. The preparatory work paid off and I was given much encouragement and praise from my teacher. I felt completely elated and high as a kite afterwards, and found it all quite overwhelming and surreal. In fact, I almost crashed my car driving back home. Feeling ever so pleased with myself, I gaily approached the first roundabout, then I remember having to brake very sharply indeed, as the sound of a deafening horn halted me to a sudden stop. I did get a bit of a fright and felt embarrassed, but I put this down to the endogenous opioid neuropeptides, (more commonly known as endorphins) and waved apologetically to the other (rather annoyed) driver. After a positive outcome from the final assessment, one week later I received a phone call from BSY whilst walking to my local library. A lovely English lady, (one of the BSY lecturers) spoke to me saying “I am just ringing to let you know that you passed your yoga teacher exam”. I thanked her enthusiastically and after a short pause she added “with distinction”. I stopped and leaned against the library wall feeling very emotional. I said to her that I felt I could cry, and she replied “I hope it's with happiness” and of course it was. I received my yoga teacher training certificate in November 2021 from BSY and immediately kissed it then framed it. I finally did it. My journey is complete. The point is: perseverance wins despite all the odds presented – mainly in the mind I might add, certainly in my case, the battle was within. I now teach my own class and at time of writing I am preparing the next practice for my students.

***My final message is that if I can do it, anyone can. Trust yourself implicitly and never doubt your own ability to succeed!***

***Namaste***





# REALITY, DO WE REALLY EXIST? – GORDON WEIR

The medical doctor in Marcel Proust's epic novel, 'In Search of Past Time,' was called Doctor Cottard. A real-life Doctor Cotard (just one 't') did exist in France around the early part of Proust's life and it is a name that may have stuck with Proust, if only for the strange syndrome that bears his name. In 1882 Jules Cotard identified an extremely rare neuropsychiatric condition where sufferers believed that they did not exist. Some even believed themselves to be immortal since, believing that they were already dead, meant that, for example, a long fall, not eating or entering a burning building would have no effect.

For the rest of us, our own existence is driven by a sense of being, a sense of consciousness, a sense of being able to think freely and make decisions as well as the presence of a physical self. Descartes considered the existence of two distinct states: the body and the conscious mind: the material and immaterial. He elaborated by stating that our sense of being and our consciousness comes about by our brain's constant interaction with its environment: something that, as a species, we have developed over hundreds of thousands of years.

Others, however, question whether consciousness is real or else a mirage. The problems arise from, how is it possible for neurons in our brain to produce immaterial experiences such as love. Is it, instead, something which is purely material, coming entirely from the physical nature of our brain i.e., thoughts and feelings, such as love, are purely biological phenomena.

But conscious thought is real, in as much as I can use it to move my arm to lift my cup of tea. This, however, may be nothing but a trick of the mind: an illusion created by the brain to give us a material and immaterial sense of our existence. In other words, the immaterial part of us does not really exist. So why does the brain do this? One reason may be that for a species to survive and prosper it needs to have a consciousness: to feel loved and valued: to have a sense of achievement.

Another possibility is that, what we call consciousness, is simply our response to the bombardment of signals arriving at our bodies each and every second of our existence. This, coupled with how we perceive and interact with our environment, knowing how to respond by way of past experiences locked safely away in our memory, all combines to give us the impression of conscious thought, when the truth is, that all that is happening is our brains responding in a way similar to a hard wired piece of electronics i.e. information in; controlled, predictable response out; no 'thought', just a series of biological logic gates firing to give us a 'conscious' sense of existence.

But one thing is clear and that is that we all experience what's going on differently. Our eyes may detect colour due to differences in particular electromagnetic waveform characteristics, our hearing through sensitivity to the vibration of air molecules and our mouth and nose detect tastes and smells as a result of molecular volatility. In other words, our perception of what's out there will differ from person to person as they see a slightly different shade or fail to hear a high frequency sound. My own situation, as someone who is severely colour blind, being just one example. And, extending the argument to the rest of the animal kingdom, where some animals can see and hear far better than us, then the idea of what is there can become very different.

Consciousness and perception then make us exist; within ourselves but also within a place; each of us effectively living entirely independently and alone in our own universe. Proust suggests that it is in art that we are able to look into someone else's universe.

And what of reality? In quantum mechanics, the existence of particles is only confirmed when they are observed. Before then, they simply exist as a field of possibilities: they may be there or there or somewhere else. Only when observed, can it be said with confidence, that it is real.

Integrated Information Theory removes the human factor as the deciding factor as to what is real and what is not by the introduction of a mathematical level of consciousness for all matter. The often-quoted example of the tree falling in the forest not making any sound if there is no one around to hear it, is solved by the trees themselves having consciousness i.e., it makes a sound. Regarding reality and subjectivity, it now seems to be the case that the two are merged-together, in that reality becomes a subjective estimation of what we experience; again, confirmation that we all have our own universe and our own sense of reality. Mix in information and probability theory and we have the complete picture of where we exist.

Many have also proposed, again from similar ideas in the quantum world, that we are not alone but instead one of many. In other words, you are not the only you; instead, there are an infinite number of 'yous' existing in other parallel universes. And yes, this is a serious branch of research carried out by several renowned physicists. A further extension of this idea is that we are all entangled with the other versions of us, much like the way in which particles, originating from the same place and time are said to be somehow linked even if they end up at opposite ends of the universe. So, how you feel on a particular day may not be just down to what is going on in your immediate neighbourhood but what's happening to the other versions of you.

So, why are we here in the first place? The theory of Agency suggests that some systems have intentional states – a desire or need to achieve something. We, it goes on to say, are such a system. Such a theory, if correct, has consequences for what we consider free will and even consciousness itself. The main problem, with us, is that we are very complicated systems. Consider how well we can predict scientific phenomena such as a chemical reaction or the position of a planet, however, with us it is a different story, as criteria, such as, psychological factors, cultural factors, nurture and lots more have to be considered. And try as you might, it is only on a large scale that the theory works, that is the intention of the system, as far as I can see, is simply to survive.

Returning to an earlier viewpoint, that we exist as both material and immaterial, then the obvious conclusion, for the material part at least, which is simply a collection of atoms or molecule arranged into a human being, is that this bit should obey the laws of physics. So, in a way, we are half way to explaining us. But what about my mental or immaterial self? Does it also obey the same laws and, if so, how does the laws of physics explain free will, love, loneliness and emotion – to name but a few! One idea, from a thought experiment by the brilliant Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell, showed that if an intelligent being, using information about the temperature of individual gas molecules, and using this information to separate the molecules into certain locations, then the second law of thermodynamics, known as entropy, could be violated. Why this is important is in the fact that entropy is supposed to be a one-way street – getting bigger but never smaller. We are the same in that we are also one-way; able to change the future but never the past. The link between Maxwell's thought experiment and what we think of as free will is information. Information about the past, through memory, helps not only predict the future but may also be the death of free will since, when making a decision about something, is it simply the case that whatever we decide is already predetermined by information stored away based on similar or identical past events; it is material and not immaterial because it just comes down to biology.

Many scientists believe that given the correct information all events can be predicted, although suggesting that we are no more than a mathematical algorithm may be going a bit too far. Perhaps this is because scientists have gotten into the habit of living this way themselves. Some scientific experiments have shown that the brain begins to initiate activity long before the owner decides to perform them – an auto-pilot if you will; once again suggesting that the 'free' part of free will is flawed. Maybe the concept just needs to be renamed, after all it is from us that our decisions come, whether automatically or by way of some consciousness that cannot be described by biology alone, it is our thought and as such different from what someone else would come up with. It is therefore a thought, a decision, that is uniquely ours based on our culture, where we live and what information we have gathered. And, as with quantum mechanics, knowing all of this can allow us to create the same probabilities, as is the case with a sub-atomic particle, so allowing reasonably accurate predictions about how we think and behave. Furthermore, if parallel

universes really do exist, every probability will give rise to another universe and, if there is some sort of entanglement going on, then what we eventually do will be a combination of all possible outcomes.

To conclude then, does consciousness and free will exist? Free will certainly has the most problems as it seems to be influenced by too many things that we do not have control over, such as biological, psychological and sociological influences. Consciousness is more difficult and may be something we need to believe in to keep going. As for reality, it is different for every living creature on the planet and this, is I feel, the only thing we can say for sure.

## LONG WALK TO FREEDOM – PART 3 Graham Clark

*“There can be no greater gift than that of giving one’s time and energy to help others without expecting anything in return” - Nelson Mandela*



Nelson Mandela made many sacrifices, spent a long time incarcerated and distanced from his family and his people but he never stopped believing. He would never give up the fight for freedom and yet he always found it within himself to help others.

Being over towered by a great man on Mandela Square, Johannesburg, was a privilege and I could look out on the square sharing the dream his statue will eternally look over, a South Africa which is free.

If anyone gave their all for South Africa and asked for nothing in return, it was by far this great man

The first democratic elections took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1994 and although the nation created liberation - without the conflict or political violence, and change - without the threat from the white far right wing, the transition to democracy was not without its challenges. Nelson Mandela’s reconciliation policies defused situations and prevented civil war. Believing Education was the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world, the government went about ensuring this was a priority in the development of a new South Africa with opportunity for all.

My Next stop was Pietermaritzburg, founded in 1838 and the capital and second-largest city in the Kwazulu-Natal region.

Apartheid played a very prominent role in the introduction of a young 24-year-old Mahatma Ghandi to Pietermaritzburg. While travelling on a first-class train ticket to Pretoria, a white man objected to him being in the first-class cabin. Ghandi was ordered to move but refused and was subsequently removed from the train in Pietermaritzburg. He made the decision at this point to stay and fight the racial discrimination against Indians there. It is so amazing when you find so many influential people are intertwined.

My own interest in education is very strong and in Pietermaritzburg I was able to engage more and more with students and learn so much about their own dreams, aspirations, desires and plans and see how this new freedom changed lives and made a difference to their country.

Opportunity for all, meant for all. The first student group I met, a class of apprentice plumbers, had interest in the environment, water supplies, sanitation and in the emerging technology in renewable energy. Many would complete their studies and return home to improve and develop the resources in their own villages, sharing their skills and making the lives of others better.



With many schools and tertiary education colleges in Pietermaritzburg, it was a great place to experience the learning and development of the young South African in this free democratic society they had become. This amazing transformation broke the racial divide and created a flourishing, well mixed gender balance in all the artisan trades, something in the west we have tried to achieve for a very long time.

With each college visited I could not resist the opportunity to work with students and share experiences, from trainee accountants and plumbers to engineers.

Listening to how their educational and learning journey was developed with such minimal resources but with an abundance of passion and commitment filled me with great joy. Whenever my hosts at the college lost me, they knew I would not be far away from the nearest group for I too was keen to learn.

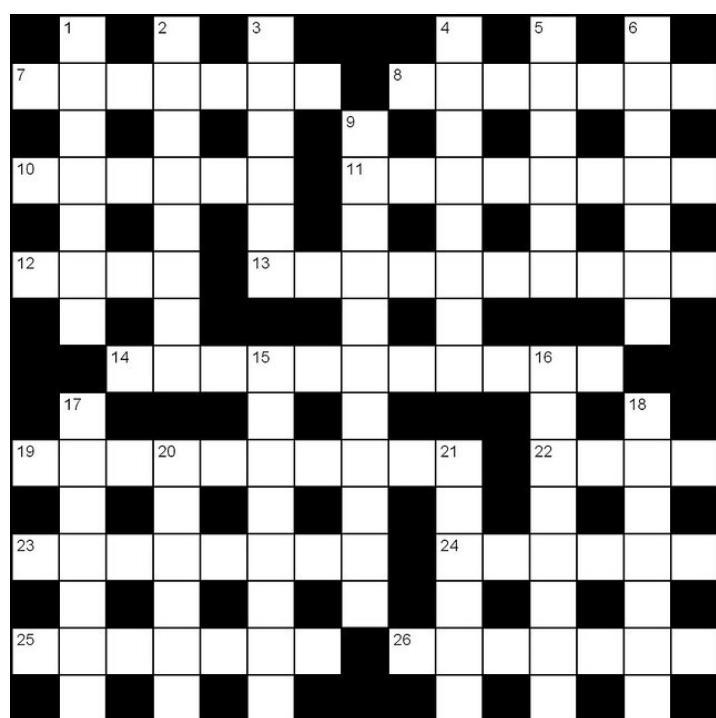
As I wandered into classes, I was offered such a warm welcome and given the chance to share something of Scotland and in return they shared their work, their progression, their towns, villages and families. in the heart of an engineering and cultural debate. I listened with such great interest (as the photo on the right shows) to all the amazing stories and how the abolishment of apartheid opened opportunity and allowed South Africa to develop such hidden talents to continue changing their own country, their villages and towns and the wider world's impression of South Africa, a young democratic evolving nation.



*"Education is the great engine of personal development and It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another."* Nelson Mandela

To be Continued.....

## CROSSWORD

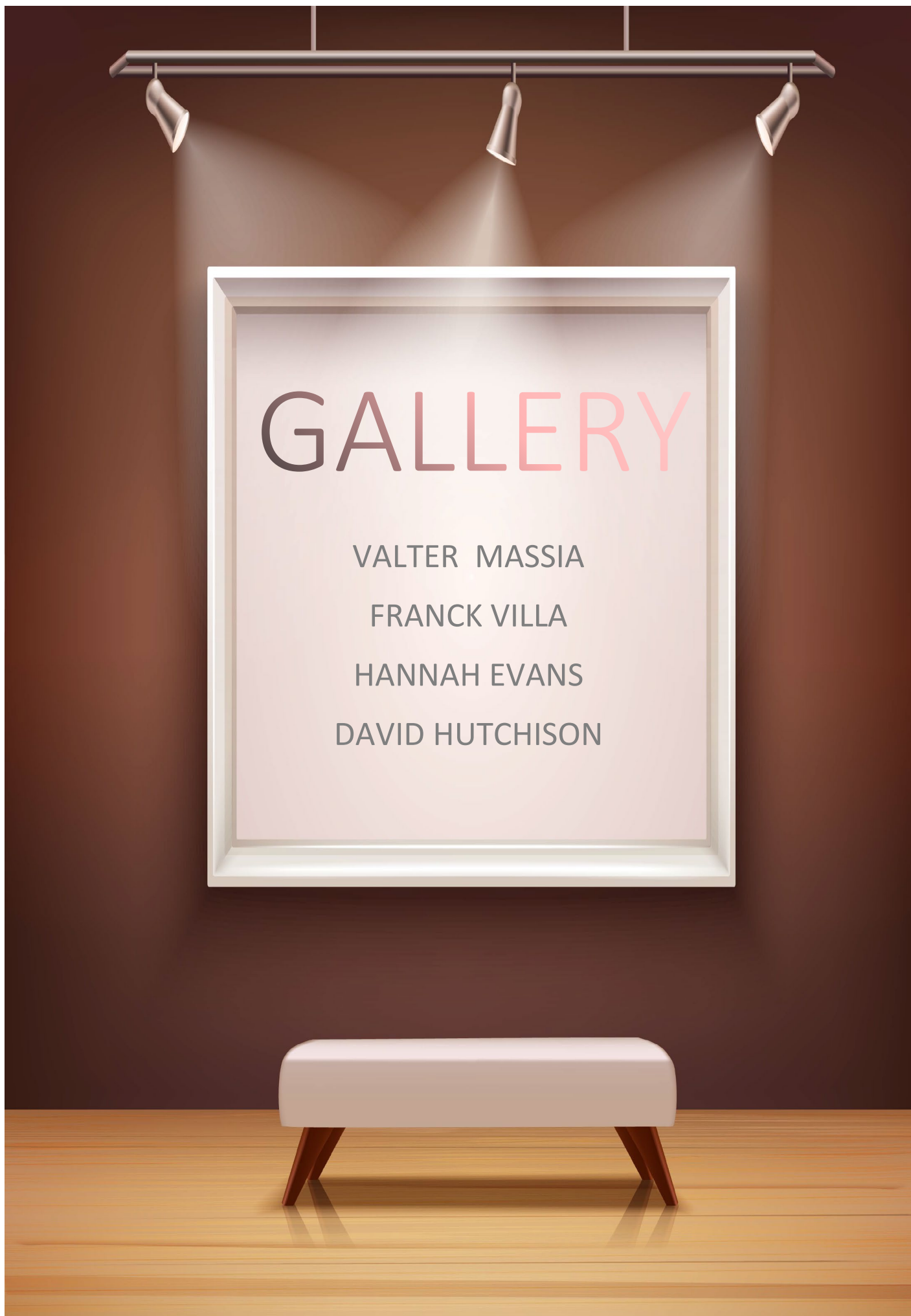


### Clues across:

7. Record of past events 8. Best possible way  
10. Neither to the left or to the right  
11. Loss of licence followed by college heads  
12. Use this to make choices 13. No beating about the bush here!  
14. Sounds like cutting off a bird 19. A caution with hesitation for high science  
22. Continent 23. Indirect or passing reference  
24. European ended – essential requirement 25. Late 26. Positive gain

### Clues down:

- 1 Split into two or more 2. Tynecastle, Ibrox, etc..  
3. Abbreviate day followed by conclusion for ally 4. Moving forward 5. Green space  
6. Combines – whisky? 9. Deceiving or perhaps making  
15. Becomes fully aware of 16. Consumed inside lout  
17. Untruths from travelling salesman brings answers  
18. Family, perhaps European, with confirmation mark for type of energy  
20. Connected to the eyes  
21. Abolish or annul.







Valter Massia is a painter from Piedmont, he uses the ancient oil on glass technique to carry on the *naïf* tradition reinterpreting it with unusual subjects taken from the medieval world (castles and fortified towns, joust tournaments, pilgrims, etc...). With a specific attention to details he is able to create oneiric and still atmospheres in which History is often mixed with epic tales and fables.





MORE  
FROM  
FRANK  
VILLA!





# AN ART/SCIENCE COLLABORATION

## *RIVER OF PAINT*

My first project after graduating in engineering science from Loughborough University in 1965 was to attempt to use fluids instead of electricity to make digital switches which had no moving parts. The subject was called “Fluidics”. By way of a series of open-ended experiments I stumbled upon a novel design of sensor which could be used for accurate positioning of the cutting head in machine tools. I immediately applied for a patent on behalf of my employer and the application was successful. Indeed, the project was so successful that I was allocated a Japanese researcher who was on sabbatical from his institute in Japan to work with me for a year. As a young researcher this was a great honour. Naomi was ten years older than me and we remained friends until his death. The core focus of my work was preventing turbulence destroying the performance of digital switches but at the same time harnessing turbulence in the operation of my sensor. Among other things Naomi devised a statistical plan to narrow down the number of experiments needed to optimize the design of the sensor.

Imagine my surprise when our artistic, fifteen-year-old, granddaughter who also loves to experiment devised an experimental art project which took me straight back to my experiments all those years ago! For some time, she had been experimenting with mixing together everyday kitchen materials to produce her art. I introduced her to the work of Jackson Pollock and Sir Anish Kapoor. Both artists excited her. Kapoor had experimented with using very large quantities of paint to produce his sculptures. This culminated in his exhibition in which he took over the entire Royal Academy in London and filled its rooms with paint! This greatly excited Hannah and fortunately we had a studio created out of an old lockup garage which we could use. I bought her several kilos of cheap paint in a wide range of colours. Now it was over to Hannah. We had no further discussion. She was the young experimenter. I would observe, record whatever she did on my iPhone and analyse the results, if any.

She started, Kapoor style, by throwing and squirting paint, one colour at a time, at the studio wall and vigorously mixing it when it reached the floor. We were both amazed when suddenly the seeming mess of paint on the studio suddenly organised itself into a turbulent “river course” branching and broadening into an “estuary” at the studio door. Paint was continually drawn from the edges of the “river” producing an amazing series of images which made beautiful digital prints. The rough concrete floor was of key importance in providing texture. Hannah continued, Pollock style, by dripping individual colours of paint directly on to the floor and watching what happened.

### **Fractals and Turbulent Flow**

Putting on my engineering science hat I soon realised that what Hannah had created with her bold experiment was a form of stratified turbulence very similar to what I had observed as a young researcher. This emerges when a thin layer of liquid or gas flows over a layer of higher density or degree of roughness. This happens all the time in our atmosphere and is often seen in clouds, aircraft contrails, and most spectacularly on the surface of Jupiter. What emerged here was turbulence in a thin layer of liquid paint flowing over a rough concrete floor.

This brings me to “fractals” which are thought to explain why abstract impressionists such as Jackson Pollock have produced work which is so pleasing to look at. The gestural approach in making his drip paintings involving sweeping body movements are thought to be the cause of this. Such paintings look similar at several levels of magnification. Some of Hannah’s art, which involves throwing paint, also appears to be fractal. Truly amazing to me, a scientist turned artist!

These two subjects have long interested me. Turbulence, in certain circumstances is suspected to be fractal. With chance acting upon and distorting pure fractal structures. Fractals alone are fascinating mathematical objects generated from extremely simple equations being applied over and over again a huge number of times. When I was working in the 1960's sufficiently cheap computing power was not available and fractals were largely unknown. It was only in the late 1970's that the patterns which appear endlessly complex and pleasing could be easily visualised. One particular class looks a bit like Paisley Patterns. A defining characteristic of fractals is that they look similar at different levels of magnification, cauliflower being a particularly good example. But when it comes to aesthetics there is perhaps something missing. Although endlessly complex they also appear uniform and predictable. It is only when the element of chance is introduced that, in my opinion, they become art. That is also why fractal structures like clouds, trees in natural forests, mountains and turbulent rivers are so endlessly fascinating to painters and photographers. Trees are, for example, fractal structures but when operated on by growing conditions no two look alike. In our case the flow of thin paint over the rough floor, equivalent of a roughly textured canvas, producing a continuous series of pleasing abstract images like "paintings". Hannah also successfully pulled a series of mono prints from the studio floor some of which were clearly fractal. So many images were produced that day that I am still analysing them! Hannah, the artist here, is slowly making a small selection from them of what she considers art worth showing. Watch this space! **AM**

## HANNAH EVANS



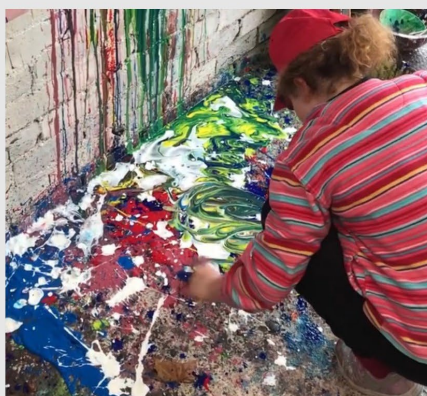
Hannah's River



Jupiter from Juno spacecraft



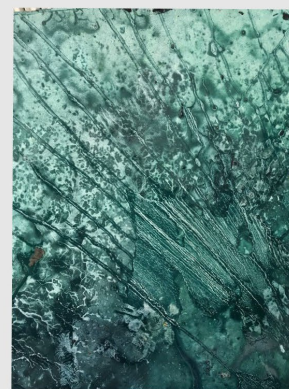
Striking similarities to Jupiter



Hannah at work, mixing



Selected by Hannah



Fractal mono-print

*Hannah has been awarded 1<sup>st</sup> prize in West Lothian Council Achievement Awards (2022) in the Art category.*



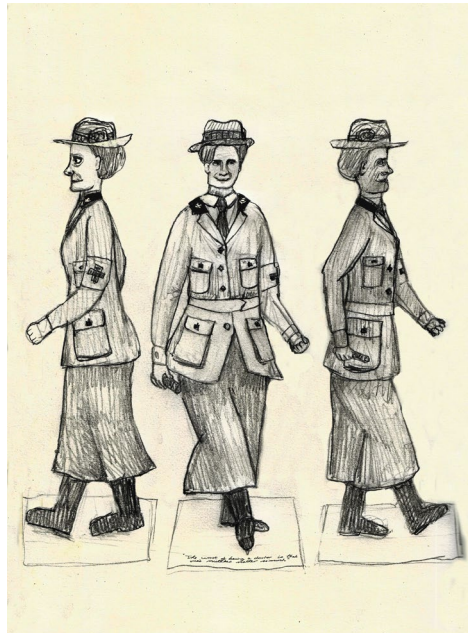
# DAVID HUTCHISON

I'd been on two bronze casting courses run by Edinburgh College of Art and was excited to try working on a larger scale so I was excited when I saw a competition in 2022 to create a bronze statue of Elsie Inglis.

I've included the two sketches and a summary of my design brief:

"I first heard about Elsie Inglis when I was researching ideas for my original [Medical Inspirations](#) exhibition that I put on at Edinburgh University in 2019. However I didn't have space to include Elsie Inglis at the time and reading up more about her achievements for the statue commission, I wish that I had. I also found out that my mother-in-law Anna Wheeler was born in the Elsie Inglis Maternity Hospital.

Elsie Inglis always seemed to move forward, not only taking everything in her stride, but striving to create new opportunities for females and not to "to go home and sit still" as she was notoriously told to do. In her dealings with [Sophia Jex-Blake](#), rather than give in she took control of the situation and set up her own school. So rather than a standing still statue I thought that it should be of her striding forward. She is also called "The Lady with the Torch", with a nod to Florence Nightingale's "The Lady with the Lamp".



I couldn't find any images of her holding a torch, although I found that poor Edinburgh families between Morrison St and High St "clubbed together to buy a torch for her to light the way up dark tenement stairs" (Elsie Inglis and the Scottish Women's Hospitals, flipbook, page 8) but I like the symbolism and the moving on of technology, so I've added a WW1 torch into her right hand. I've included her in the army clothes that she is mainly shown in with the red cross band, and chose the wider hat with the tartan band and rosette. It is more formal than bare-headed and although she was noted for being kind, eg setting up a maternity hospital for poor people, I think the extra height a hat gives will make her stand out to passers-by on the street. Her figure should definitely not be put on a raised plinth. She should be on the same level as onlookers and this will help to display that she had the common touch.

On the subject of mottos I'd prefer Elsie's comment on being a doctor: "The worst of being a doctor is that one's mistakes matter so much. In everything else you can just throw away what you have messed up and begin again, but you cannot do that as a doctor." Perhaps just use the first sentence. It could be embedded into the base in front of the feet."

Disappointingly not long after entering my design, the competition was suddenly cancelled. I enjoyed doing the research so at least there's that, and I've now added the sketches to my mini exhibition **Book of Skulls** at The Living Memory Association, Wee Hub, Ocean Terminal in Leith, on until end of Feb 2023.

## **“AS A MATTER OF FACT”.**

**A prose poem by Ann McClintock**

I found a fact the other day.  
It was dancing with glee  
On Tik-Tok.  
Of course I didn't believe it.  
Tik-Tok is for fun not facts.

But the same fact popped up again  
yesterday.  
This time it was lounging happily  
On Facebook  
Between a photo of my friend  
And a plea to feed the world.  
Of course I didn't believe it,  
But I wondered.

Then lo and behold there it was again  
today,  
Looking very disconsolate  
On Twitter -  
The subject of an acrimonious debate  
On veracity.

My wondering turned to doubting.  
My doubting turned to confusion.  
And my poor little joyful fact -  
The one I hadn't believed-  
Morphed into a veritable Battalion of  
facts.

Everywhere I looked there were more of  
them.  
Fact, upon fact, upon fact.  
An army of facts,  
Coming at me from all directions.  
A verbal assault I was powerless to resist.

But then, Salvation,  
Just as I was losing my mind  
An adage came along.  
It was my mother's - oft quoted.  
“Facts are chieftains that winna ding  
And daurna be disputed.” ##

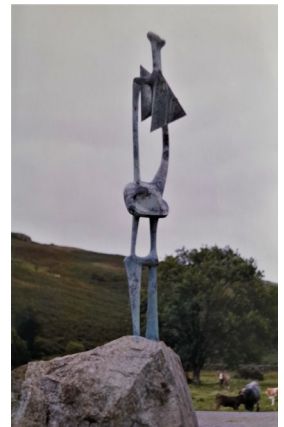
So now, when a fact pops up on my social  
media page  
I just give it a ding.  
An if it disna ring true  
A dinna believe it!

##(For the benefit of our foreign friends,  
this translates very roughly as “facts can  
be backed up by solid, scientific proof  
which is difficult or impossible to refute”.)

## **STANDING NO MORE**

I recently rediscovered a photograph I had taken of Henry Moore's bronze “Standing Figure”(1950) which was sited at Glenkiln Sculpture Park (established by Sir William Keswick in 1951) near Shawhead, Dumfriesshire. I first stumbled upon it around 2002 and immediately had a great affinity for the piece, having all the attributes of Moore's idiosyncratic style, but stripped back and assertive; a duality of aesthetics and location. The sculpture park held a total of six sculptures including works by luminaries: Rodin and Jacob Epstein. Glenkiln, in rural Dumfriesshire, was one that

Moore delighted in and his Standing Figure had stood unobtrusively, by the side of a single-track road since the early 1950's, near the reservoir, only to be stolen in October 2013 by, as yet, unknown thieves. The estimated value of the work at the time was circa £3 million pounds. The very nature of public art works through its commissioning, accessibility and sustainability brought into sharp relief following this incident. Only two of Moore's sculptures remain at Glenkiln: “Two- Piece Reclining Figure” and “Glenkiln Cross”. **RM**

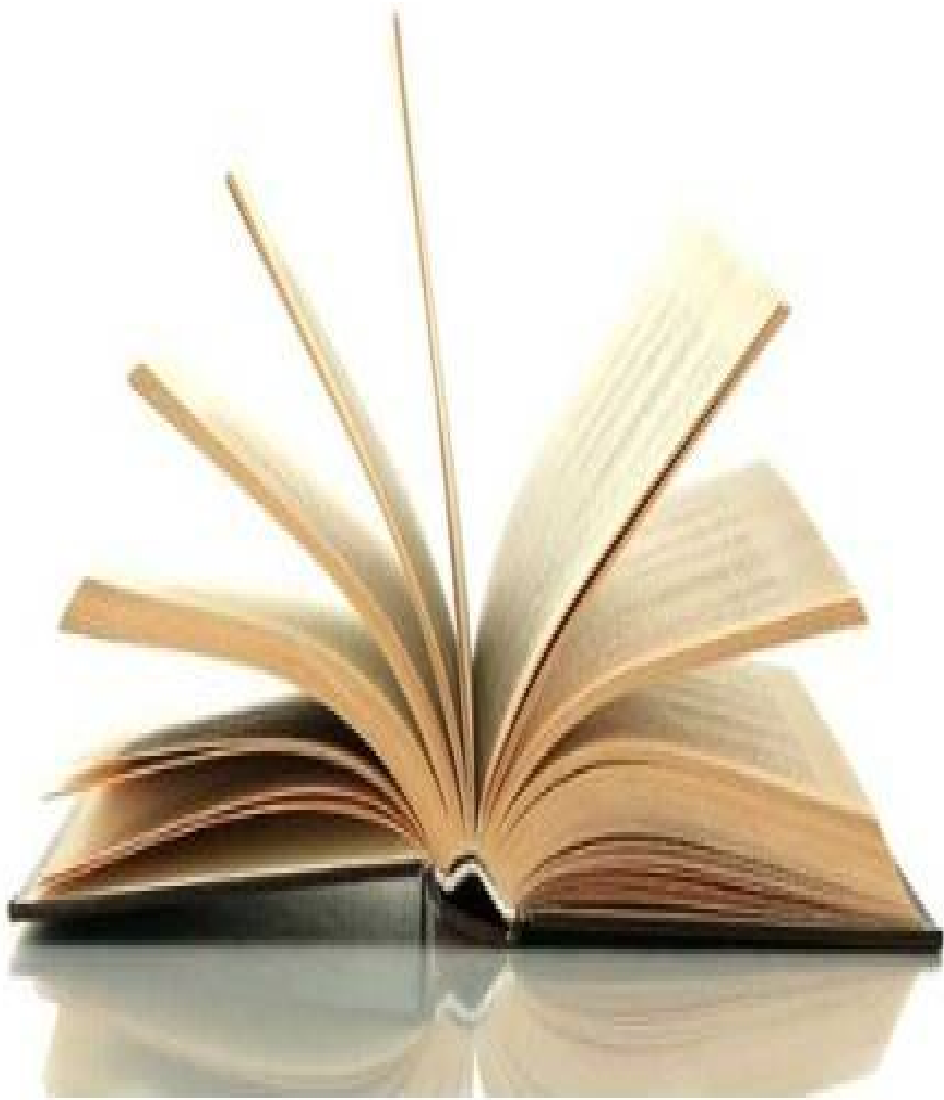


## **FACT OR FICTION?**

Not very long ago in a Kingdom not far away from here a very important man who was the Duke of somewhere lived a very important life. This important man had the important job of arranging to have a crown put on the new king's head. He was so important that when he got into trouble with the law, the story was spread across the entire land. This Duke of somewhere, it was told, had been caught driving his car (and what is more driving it through a light that was red) while holding a mobile phone to his ear. While driving through a very important city, the Duke (who had been caught doing this before) wanted to tell his wife something, making you wonder why he couldn't wait till he got home or at least use a hand-free device. But this important Duke was unabashed, he pleaded “exceptional hardship” if he was banned from driving his BMW – the king wouldn't be able to have a crown put on his head – but there was worse! This Duke was so important (he believed) that, without his help, the planet would die. Yes, this is what he told the magistrates to get off his driving ban. You see, the important Duke was in charge of saving the little wild birdies in his manor (the South Downs) who were becoming extinct (or maybe just flown off for a better life – who knows)?

“Super-toff” as he is now known to me, made the extraordinary claim that, without his very important, bird-saving conservation work there would be a complete collapse of nature leading to “the end of mankind”. Luckily, the magistrates (along with everyone else in the kingdom) knew that the Duke of Norfolk was talking nonsense and banned him from driving for six months. **CB**

# REVIEWS



TRAUMA ZONE – LIVING THROUGH THE COLLAPSE OF  
COMMUNISM AND DEMOCRACY

THE SANCTUARY OF OUR LADY ROCAMADOUR  
THE ART OF IRA ANDREICHUK

POSH BOYS – HOW ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS RUIN BRITAIN

## 1985 – 1999: TRAUMAZONE

### **(What it Felt Like to Live Through the Collapse of Communism and Democracy)**

Traumazone is a series of seven, one hour documentaries, by Adam Curtis which provides a unique insight into life in Russia as it went from a vast soviet republic, ruled by old-style communist ideology, to a collection of independent democratic states. The documentaries use footage from all over the former Soviet Union. The footage, shot by BBC film crews throughout this period, shows the stark reality of how a super power was turned to chaos due to the political and economic changes taking place. Key, seems to have been the dream to run the country along western lines, where capitalism flourished and government was ultra-efficient, leading to greatly improved living conditions for its citizens.

The documentaries are presented in an eye-witness type of format, without any voice-over or background music. Instead each new scene is introduced by a simple caption, usually telling the viewer where they are with respect to the capital Moscow. There is no background music; it is not needed, the voices of the people in each scene and the noises from around them is all that the viewer hears; these sounds, the sound of a dog barking, a factory machine or people arguing is all that is needed. This is realism stripped bare of the accoutrements often employed by less skilled documentary makers in order to make their work more exciting or interesting. This is brutal reality without any limits: shocking, appalling, heart-breaking and informative all in equal measure. Definitely adults only viewing.

The series begins in 1985, with Perestroika, Mikhail Gorbachev's attempt to reform and restructure the republics political and economic systems. Cue the beginning of the chaos and corruption. To begin with, the ideas around Perestroika seemed reasonable: modernisation of industry, introducing the type of automation that the west now had to improve productivity and efficiency, and de-centralisation of planning thus allowing each region, each state run plant to make its own plans and decisions. When this happened to a large car plant, as many cars went out the back door in deals with local gangsters as went out the front door to paying customers. The managers, and gangsters, got rich, the plants went broke, people lost their jobs and went hungry. This in turn, gave birth to, what has now become distinctly Russian: the oligarch. And also around this time: Chernobyl. Here, men in paper suits, taped up by scotch tape, went into highly radioactive environments to try to control the leftovers from an exploding nuclear reactor. Paid well, at least by Russian standards, they all died soon after.

As if everything did not seem surreal enough, Moscow was soon celebrating the opening of its first McDonalds. Gorbachev's popularity had plunged as life for the average Russian became more and more desperate and a rival for the presidency, in Boris Yeltsin, had now emerged. Yeltsin, at first, heralded in a short period of promise and belief that things would get better. An attempted coup and the bombing of the parliament building, with members of parliament inside (on Yeltsin's orders) put Russia on the brink of complete anarchy. Money (US Dollars if possible) became the be all and end all. Society was a mess, shops were empty and people now starving, often getting paid in whatever they produced, were forced onto the streets to sell everything they owned in order to buy what little food they could find.

Despite all of this, Yeltsin, desperate to turn things around, not least of all his popularity, decided to invade Chechnya (echoes of Putin and Ukraine) in a move that would somehow (?) restore national pride and, effectively, make everyone feel better (!!!). The oligarchs, in the meantime, have now taken complete control over the economy, buying up previously state owned companies for a fraction of their real worth. This period is the most violent.



The final part includes the introduction of Putin, at first as a puppet of the oligarchs and the abandonment of democracy. Life is still hard for the average Russian but a wealthy middle-class has sprung up and it is this growing part of Russian society that will show the most support for the oligarch controlled country.

The series then is an adult-only, riveting, at time shocking, exploration of Russia as it tried to change direction to a more western style society. To say they went about it did not work is an understatement. Perhaps the changes were too fast. After all, Russia had gone from feudalism to communism only sixty years before. Two world wars, famines, political unrest and, most recently, a disastrous war in Afghanistan meant that Russia had never really settled, never really found its true destiny and, what is clear from this series of documentaries, is that, in such a large and diverse country, that there is no single system of government that works – at least communism kept most people warm and reasonably well fed.

Traumazone is a unique and fascinating glimpse of life in Russia. Gorbachev and Yeltsin no longer appear as the heroes the west made them out to be. Corruption, chaos and kleptocracy reigns and probably still does to this day. And the people, who had a voice for a short period, have now lost it again and are now silent once more.

**Traumazone – a series, in seven parts, by Adam Curtis is available to watch on the BBC iPlayer.**

## THE SANCTUARY OF OUR LADY ROCAMADOUR (FRANCE)

*Two reviews by Matis Leggiadro*

The artwork was painted in the twilight of the twelfth century and the dawn of the thirteenth century by an anonymous painter, in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Rocamadour (Lot, France). It is located several meters above the viewer who is located either on the central square of the sanctuary or at the level of the passageways.

This medieval fresco splits into two panels separated by a red ochre straight line. To the right of this thick line, two arches welcome the panel of the Annunciation. To the left of this line, an arch frames the scene of the Visitation. However, it is the composition that is under study because if the hyphenation between the two scenes is present, the colorimetric and stylistic coherence does not allow a total comparison - elements being common.



The first cardinal element of the pictorial composition is the subject itself: the Virgin Mary. Presented twice by the artist, it is the most imposing character on the one hand and the highest also. His symbolic authority is *de facto* based on height and breadth. The painting of the Annunciation depicts the Virgin Mary, seated on a stool in the manner of a sovereign, and the angel Gabriel, who offers her a phylactery on which it is possible to read in particular «AVE MARIA». The other biblical scene exposes the Virgin Mary continuing her way and meeting Elizabeth who, as evidenced by the curve of the rock, projects herself in adoration on the Virgin and hugs her.

The shapes painted by the artist are stylized: the limbs are stretched and the figures are slender which gives them a very noble, elegant abnormality. Nothing seems immutable in these biblical characters who are characterized by emotions – astonishment, surprise, rapture, fullness – and twisting movements. This non-hieratic character is rather unexpected because it moves the protagonists away from their perfect definition is therefore sacred while bringing them closer to the believers: the movement is the beginning

of the living. But this distance does not end in the desecration of the Virgin, as the study of the background reveals. This one is rather intense blue and in fact evokes the celestial world, a space above man that also symbolizes the location of the composition, that is to say an end of the sanctuary. This cosmic background is reinforced by cabochons – polished stones in relief – that function as celestial bodies. So, the artist presents us characters made imperfect but staged as astral, immersed in a celestial abstraction. Recall that the artist painted his composition at the beginning of the thirteenth century, that is to say long before the works of Giotto who is considered as the first western painter to set in motion biblical characters. It is therefore a question of conceiving the composition under study as a work in advance of its time or should we review the history of the arts? Moreover, like Giotto, the anonymous craftsman seems to draw from the Orthodox tradition, because if the figures are not hieratic, they radiate because they are haloed with nimbus. The greatest nimbus is that of the Virgin Mary on the panel of the Annunciation.

Finally, it is a question of re-identifying the precocity of the anonymous artist who has succeeded in tipping an invariable subject into the sublime. On the one hand, thanks to a stylisation, forms are produced that move the protagonists and on the other hand, by staging an astral universe. If the imperfection of the angel Gabriel could simply bring him closer to man, his immersion in a cosmic sea places him rather as an exceptional being. This tension between divine and imperfection of gesture seems to exist in a *consensus*: the search for the Beautiful.

## IRA ANDREICHUK / UNE OEUVRE

Through this illustration, the Ukrainian artist Ira Andreichuk seems to fit in the line of the creators who build themselves artistically on a very primary paradox and yet quite symptomatic of the complexity of the look: the beautiful horror. It is indeed clear that if this building penetrated with darkness exposes in the foreground the chaotic state of a dying Ukraine, the visual metaphor of the incurable disease that nibbles, swallows, destroys, annihilates and gnaws at materiality, the solidity, of the concrete has a poetic dimension that sublimates the subject. To grasp the full scope of Ira Adreichuk's message we must analyse this image as if

it were a piece of literature. The contrast evoked could therefore be akin to an aesthetic zeugma, that is to say to the unexpected association of an abstract idea and a concrete idea: the sick concrete. Disease is a clear metaphor for the invader. And this building is to be understood as a synecdoque: it is the inhabitants of the building – and by extension of the country – of which the artist speaks. Therefore, this necessary decoding of these poetic filters reveals the distance taken necessarily by the artist to distance a reality too cruel, viscerally contemporary. It is certainly thanks to this distance that the artist manages to say all the depth of her thought, in this venom that flows, in this nothingness that it forms and from which it comes, in this sublime and inexorable destruction. But beyond the mitigation of a violence that would finally allow the artist to say more, a reflection around the *mimêsis* of art confirms the intelligence of this choice. And for good reason, the immediacy of reportage photography will never have the depth of this realization because art is condemned to be only the mirror of the world. So there are those who do not want to believe and who cheat in the appearance of the true and there are those who drape themselves in abstraction to build a more powerful art in its assumed irrational.





## POSH BOYS, HOW ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS RUIN BRITAIN – ROBERT VERKAİK

The British playwright Alan Bennet began attending Oxford University in 1951, as a grammar school pupil (Leeds Grammar) his background was not the norm at Oxford. Speaking at Cambridge University in 2014, sixty three years after his first encounter with his fellow students at Oxford, Bennet said he had been “appalled.” He claimed, public school they might be but they were louts”. Then, years later in 2016, an unnamed undergraduate wrote in the Oxford University student newspaper *Cherwell*, “going to Oxford from an inner-city comprehensive is like living on another planet, one populated by strange people with bow ties with no concept of what it’s like to live in the real world.” This student claimed how difficult it was to study at Oxford since, being outside the public school network, they did not know where to fit into, as they called it, “this posh puzzle.”

Robert Verkaik’s book **Posh Boys, How English Public Schools Ruin Britain** examines this “posh puzzle” extremely thoroughly. It is unapologetic in its portrayal of the public school system indicating that nothing has changed since Bennet’s condemnation of the types in 1951 until the present day when state school pupils find they are disadvantaged by their background. Verkaik’s meticulously researched book reveals the concerning extent to which this unfair system impacts on society. This is not merely an opinion; the author backs up his theory with page upon page of evidence encompassing the entire education system in Britain.

As should be the case, in order to establish an accurate history of the situation, he begins at the beginning when public schools were actually set up in medieval times as institutions to educate the poor. He explains that, because they were so successful, they were taken over by the aristocracy and the then merchant middle-classes to educate their children. Ever since that time public schools have enjoyed charitable status (which seems ridiculous). Verkaik goes into great detail to explain how successive governments have tried to tackle this (i.e., take away the charitable status loophole) by introducing legislation, however, so far, they have failed. Even well-known figures from outside of politics such as the writer George Orwell have commented on the subject. At the outset of World War II Orwell declared, “it is all too obvious that our talk of defending democracy is nonsense while it is a mere accident of birth that decides whether a gifted child shall or shall not get the education it deserves.”

Closer to the present time Teresa May deserves a mention as one of the few high-ranking politicians to take on the public schools. As Prime Minister she advocated the removal of public school’s charitable status which would have led to the schools being treated as an income-generating business, thus making them liable for millions of pounds in corporation tax. Also, at the same time Labour called for parents of public-school pupils to pay VAT on their school fees. Unfortunately, politics dictated that this did not happen. In his book Verkakte addresses the reasons why this has never happened with the result of making the reader understand why the public school system is so rotten and destructive to British society. His findings make it clear that the education system does not operate on a level playing field in Britain. He describes with thoroughly researched accuracy why the country is dominated by old Etonians et.al who seemingly identify each other by asking (in a secret code type of way like spies) “did you go to school?” By this, of course they mean “*did you go to the right school?*”

With chapter headings such as *For The Few, Not The Many, The Entitlement Complex, The Class Ladder* and *Bad Charity*, it is clear that the author means business. He is setting out to discredit the public school system and, throughout the pages of this book he makes a compelling case for (something he discusses in the concluding chapter of the book) *The Dissolution of Public Schools*.

**POSH BOYS etc. by Robert Verkaik. One World 2018. £10.99. pp. 392**

## FAMILY QUIZ

**Literature** - Identify the famous books from the first sentence.....

1. 'Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much.'
2. "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen."
3. "Call me Ishmael"
4. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."
5. "It was love at first sight."
6. "Somewhere in la Mancha, in a place whose name I do not care to remember, a gentleman lived not long ago, one of those who has a lance and ancient shield on a shelf and keeps a skinny nag and a greyhound for racing."
7. "Time was, when I always went to bed early."
8. "Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies, with Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and Aunt Em, who was the farmer's wife."
9. 'Most motorcars are conglomerations (this is a long word for bundles) of steel and wire and rubber and plastic, and electricity and oil and gasoline and water, and the toffee papers you pushed down the crack in the back seat last Sunday.'
10. "Down in the valley there were three farms. The owners of these farms had done well. They were rich men. They were also nasty men. All three of them were about as nasty and mean as any men you could meet. Their names were Farmer Boggis, Farmer Bunce and Farmer Bean."

**Geography** - Which countries are the following cities the capital of.....

1. Montevideo
2. Abuja
3. Baku
4. Beirut
5. Caracas
6. Hanoi
7. Kingston
8. Lima
9. Nairobi
10. Zagreb

**Science** – Name the elements from their chemical symbols.....

1. He
2. Li
3. N
4. Al
5. Si
6. Kr
7. Ag
8. Hg
9. Pb
10. Po

## Sport

1. The World Cup is taking place in Qatar at the moment but where was the first tournament?
2. Which is the number lying in between 5 and 9 in the British dart board?
3. In which sport did Ben Hogan win the British championship?
4. In sport, what is black, 1 inch thick, 3 inches in diameter, and weighs between 5.5 and 6 ounces?
5. How high is the basketball hoop in feet?
6. To which country does Novak Djokovic belong to?
7. Who is the winner of 2013 tour de France?
8. The mulekick and stale fish are term of which sport?
9. Which sport is played in the biggest ground in terms of area?
10. Which country hosted 2008 Olympics?

## Television

1. In which year did Coronation Street first air?
2. Tom Baker, Peter Davison and Colin Baker have all played the same character...
3. Which comedy star had a sketch where he held a giant mobile phone and shouted 'HELLO'?
4. In which town is The Office set?
5. In which two countries is the crime drama The Bridge set?
6. The comedy show 'Open All Hours' is about Arkwright, a miserly shop keeper and his hapless errand boy nephew, Granville, played by David Jason. What nationality does Arkwright say that Granville's father was?
7. 'EastEnders' character Robbie Jackson adopted a pet dog in 1994 and gave it a name derived from a British slang term for 'tough' or 'violent'. Who was this fictional dog that went on to have a 14 year tenure on the show?
8. English star Hugh Laurie is perhaps now best known as Doctor Gregory House, but which British series would you be watching if he was playing Lieutenant the Honourable George Colhurst Saint Barleigh?
9. Renowned for its difficulty and presented by Bamber Gascoigne and later Jeremy Paxman, which quiz show tested students' knowledge of all things academic?
10. Starring Martin Clunes as the grumpy title character, the television show 'Doc Martin' was set in which English county?

**Famous People** – identify each of the well-known (or not) faces below.....



**Art** – Who painted the following.....



## QUIZ AND CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

**SCIENCE** 1. Helium 2. Lithium 3. Nitrogen 4. Aluminium 5. Silicon 6. Krypton 7. Silver 8. Mercury 9. Lead 10. Polonium

**SPORT** 1. Uruguay 2. 12 3. Golf 4. Ice Hockey Puck 5. 10 feet 6. Serbia 7. Froom 8. Snow-boarding 9. Polo 10. China

**GEOGRAPHY** 1. Uruguay 2. Nigeria 3. Azerbaijan 4. Lebanon 5. Venezuela 6. Vietnam 7. Jamaica 8. Peru 9. Kenya 10. Croatia

**1.** Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by JK Rowling  
**2.** Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell  
**3.** Moby Dick by Herman Melville  
**4.** A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens  
**5.** Catch 22 by Joseph Heller  
**6.** Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes  
**7.** In Search of past Time by Marcel Proust  
**8.** The Wonderful Wizard of Oz L. Frank Baum  
**9.** Chitty Chitty Bang Bang by Ian Fleming  
**10.** Fantastic Mr. Fox by Roald Dahl

**Crossword Solutions**

**Across:** 7. history 8. ideally 10. middle 11. abandons 12. menu 13. directness 14. ostracising 19. aeronaut 22. Asia 23. allusion 24. needed 25. delayed 26. benefit

**Down:** 1. Divided 2. Stadiums 3. Friend 4. Advances 5. Garden 6. Blends 9. Fabricating 15. Realises 16. Neatened 17. Replies 18. kinetic 20. Connected to the eyes 21 abolish or annul

**FACES** 1. James Clerk Maxwell 2. Charles Rennie McIntosh 3. Ursula Von Der Leyen 4. Barack Obama 5. Bill Gates 6. Ruth Bader Ginsburg  
**ART** 1. Vincent Van Gogh 2. Jackson Pollock 3. J. W. Turner 4. Giorgio De Chirico 5. Tintoretto 6. Henri Matisse

**TV** 1. 1960 2. Dr. Who 3. Dom Jolly 4. Slough 5. Denmark and Sweden 6. Hungarian 7. Wellard 8. Blackadder Goes Forth 9. University Challenge 10. Cornwall



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