

Arts & Crafts Exhibition at DOVER MUSEUM

Deborah Colam

ON a cold and dismal afternoon between Christmas and the New Year my daughter Thea and I visited the Art and Craft Exhibition at Dover Museum. It was the second year running that this format had been used, showing the work of local artists both professional and amateur. As might be expected at this time of year, the Museum was quiet and we were able to wander around the mezzanine gallery enjoying the work in a relaxed and uninhibited way.

The first work that caught our attention as we came through the door was the case of wood sculptures by Terry Warren. Terry's work once again showed his great interest in animal forms. His use of the natural grain of the wood to suggest various textures is quite exquisite. A little further along we came to a second case of Terry's work, containing his beautiful wooden jewellery, which I understand was very popular with the ladies, myself included.

We then looked at the work of the Dover Art Group. Members of the town's amateur art society had as usual produced a splendid variety of pictures, employing an interesting mixture of media and subject matter. I do feel that the one factor which unites the work of the group is the joy and enthusiasm of its members. I would have liked to have been able to comment on all the paintings done by the group for the exhibition but I will choose just three for special mention.

In her three pastel portraits Eve Dewhurst is able to use this medium to achieve a very realistic end result. The blend of colours is rich and sensitively worked.

Jean Sutcliffe's oil painting, "Beech Trees" interested me very much. I have seen a number of this artist's paintings before and this is by far the best one I have seen. Her use of colour to capture the fleeting effects of light around the leaves of the trees, shows a marvellous freedom and confidence.

Miss Woodland's watercolour entitled "St. Martin's Priory" shows a very controlled use of the medium – the end result being a scene full of light and freshness reminiscent of the work of John Sell Cotman. The impression of sunlight in the painting is gained by the use of very light tones in the foreground, heightened by darker shadowed patches at the side of the gatehouse.

Moving on from the work of the Art Group we were very amused by the paintings of Roger Starr. His very jolly, satirical and almost cartoon-like quality of working was both colourful and refreshing. I particularly enjoyed the painting of all the different types of shipping which use Dover's harbour, superimposed onto an impossibly blue sea at ridiculous angles, as if a small boy were floating a hotch-potch collection of model boats in the bath.

The work of Alice Woods has always fascinated me. She works in watercolour in a style that is almost verging on that of the "Pointalists". Small areas of pigment are applied layer upon layer building up a textural image of trees and fields and buildings in a way that is both meticulous and confident. Many of the rural scenes which Miss Woods has chosen to portray, seem to me to be steeped in an aura of magic and timelessness. The shape and patterns of the trees, their leaves, roots, trunks and branches hide a myriad hidden images for those with the imagination to see.

Reviews

Philip Nichols is an artist whose work seems to go from strength to strength. His stark, almost monochrome images have a haunting and nightmarish quality to them. The very clever aspect of his work is in what he chooses to leave out, leading the mind to ponder on what lurks behind or within the darkness. If you are fond of storms or moonlight, gothic novels and have romantic inclinations, I am certain that Philip's paintings will hold you spell-bound.

I really enjoyed this exhibition and I hope it will continue to be a regular feature of the Museum's programme. We have a lot of talent in this area within the Arts. Let us all make sure that we attend these exhibitions and show our support to the artists and the staff of the Museum, who all employ a good deal of time and energy for our benefit.

'From GARDEN to GATEWAY'

THE CHANGING FACE of KENT – E. W. Cookson

Photographed by the People of Kent. ISBN 1 874344 00 0

———— MERRIL LILLEY ————

This is a picture book with a difference. All the photographs have been chosen from those sent in by photographers in Kent and there is an appeal for more photographs for a future book of the same kind. The call is for photographs of any scene in the county that, for good or bad, is facing change. "Let this book be less a coffee-table curiosity, more a call to action" says the compiler of the collection.

The book will be of interest to anyone interested in the county of Kent, and particularly to photographers. The emphasis is on change. The range and variety of photographs is fascinating. The entries are grouped into six categories; Agriculture; Once Quiet Spots close to Town; In Town; On the Waterfront; Transport Infrastructure; and Miscellany of Masts and Minerals.

Four prizes were awarded to the judges's choice of photographs, the first prize going to a view of the Channel Tunnel Railway Terminal at Cheriton, taken by D.W. Clark of Herne Bay. Mr Clark also submitted a series of photographs forming a panorama of the Channel Tunnel Site, a remarkable achievement.

There are fascinating photographs of all shapes, sizes, views, angles, sizes and perspectives. In our locality there are splendid views of the sweep of the new A20 into Dover via Shakespeare Cliff, submitted by Martin Trelawney and Frank Jepson.

Any of our readers who have been 'snapping' locally, catching some of the more unusual details of the changes in the face of Dover, may be tempted to submit some of their best efforts for the next issue of this publication. Remember the photograph must depict some aspect of change, perhaps it might represent the last opportunity to take a view of a particular scene. There is also a challenge to nominate a 'Quiet Spot' close to a town where one can still enjoy peace and quiet away from the traffic noise.

But buy or borrow the book for yourself. It is very well worth a close perusal.