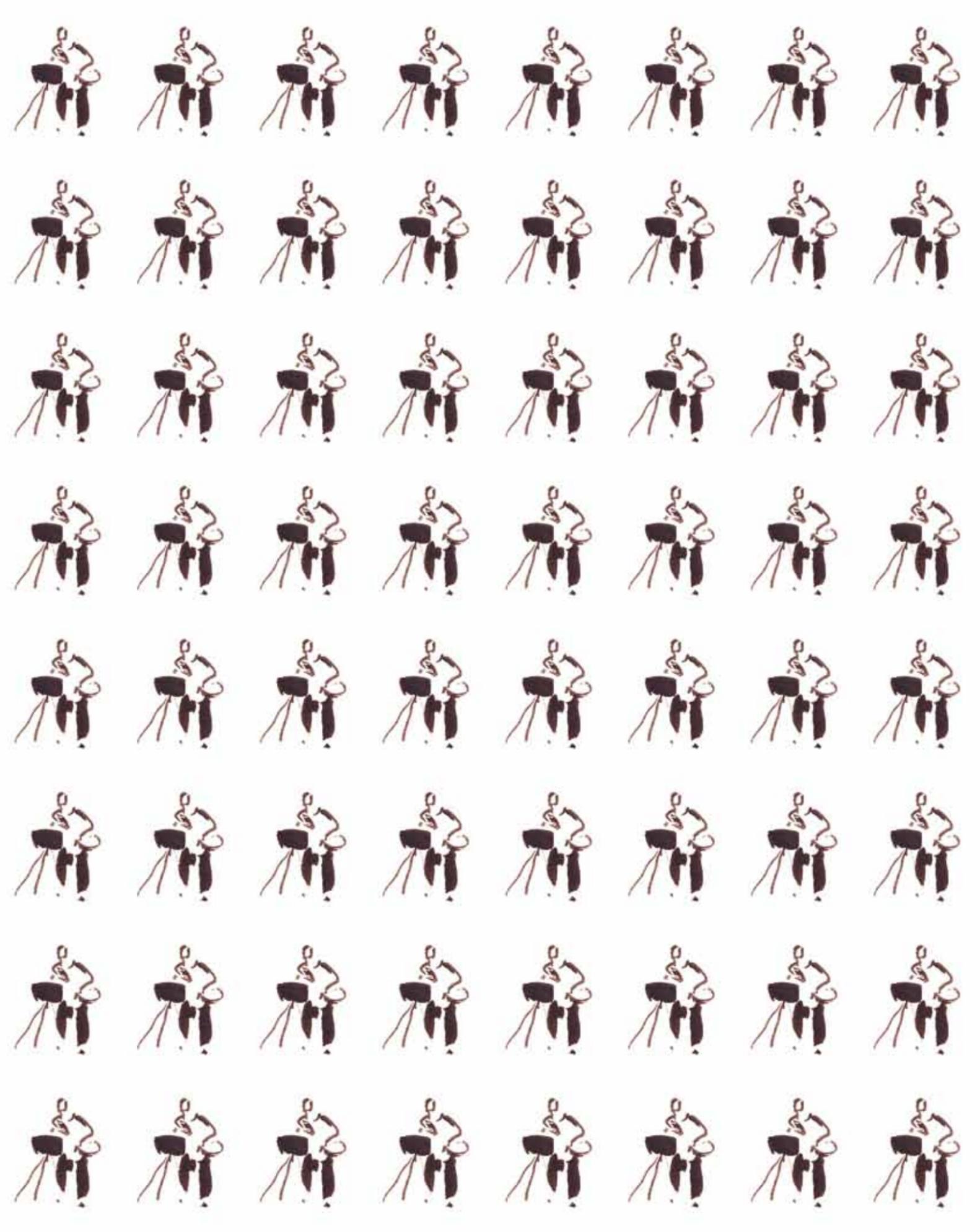


Charles Cundall

Edited by Sacha Llewellyn & Paul Liss



This catalogue is published on the occasion of the exhibition :

Charles Cundall

A Working Method

Young Gallery Salisbury
Market Place – Salisbury SP1 1BL

12 March - 21 April 2016

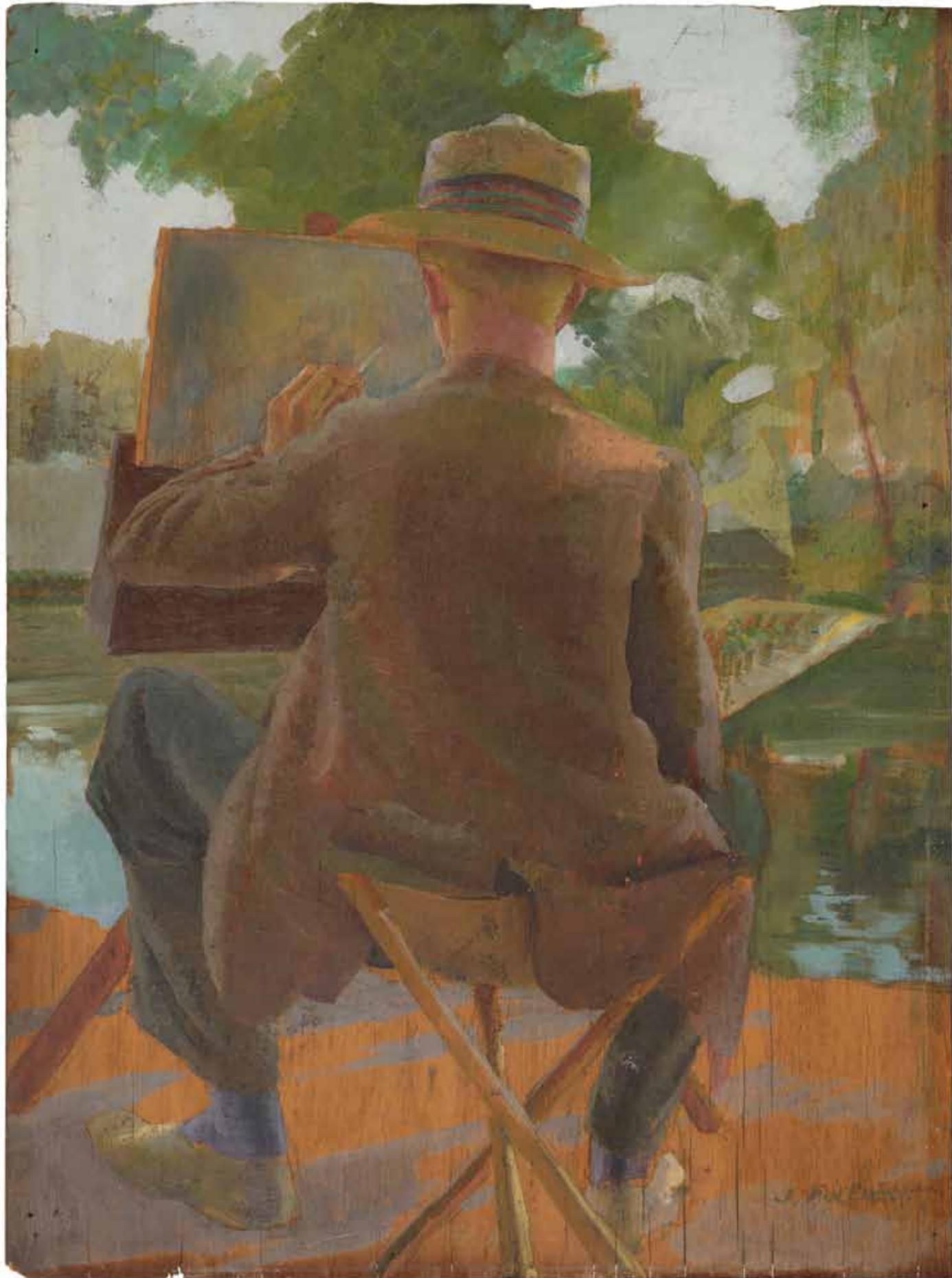
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28 April - 7 May 2016



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FINE ART
ESTABLISHED 1991

Young Gallery Salisbury



Charles Cundall

1890 - 1971

Edited by Sacha Llewellyn & Paul Liss



Fig. 1a – Jacqueline Pietersen (1899-1984) *Charles Cundall in France*, c.1920, oil on panel, 14 x 9 ½ in. (34.5 x 24 cm)
Fig. 1b – Charles Cundall painting at Honfleur, France, 1923

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have come to fruition without the support of Annabel Jacqueline ('Jackie') Setter and her encouragement in allowing unlimited access to the Cundall archive and to those works remaining in her father's studio.

The provenance of all works reproduced in this book, unless otherwise stated, is from the artist's studio.

We are grateful to Sylvia Reilly for granting permission to reproduce William Gaunt's text.

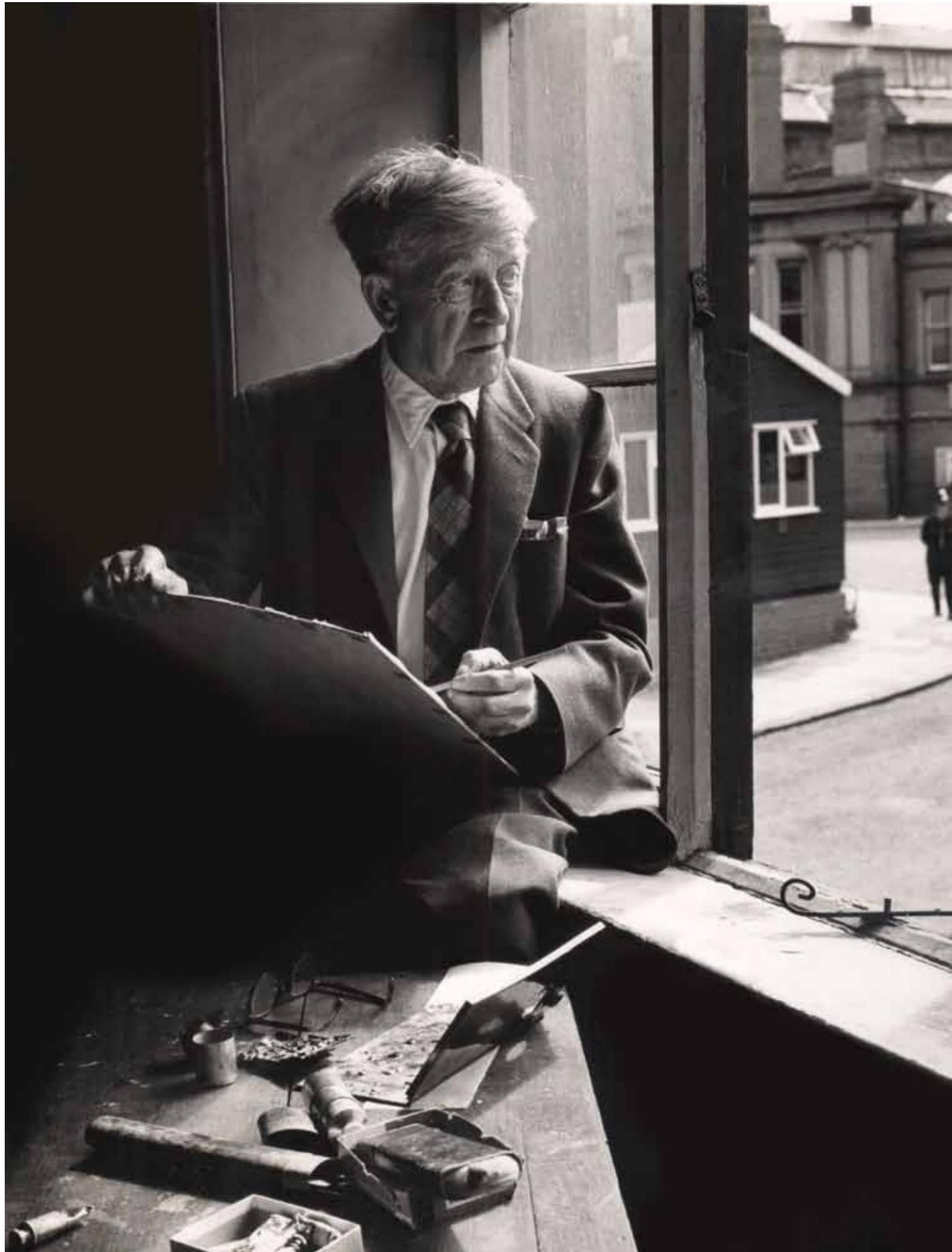
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Grant Scanlan (Kirklees Museums and Galleries)
Stephen Smith
Winnie Tyrell (Glasgow Museums)
Helen Welford (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art)

For Marion & Barrie



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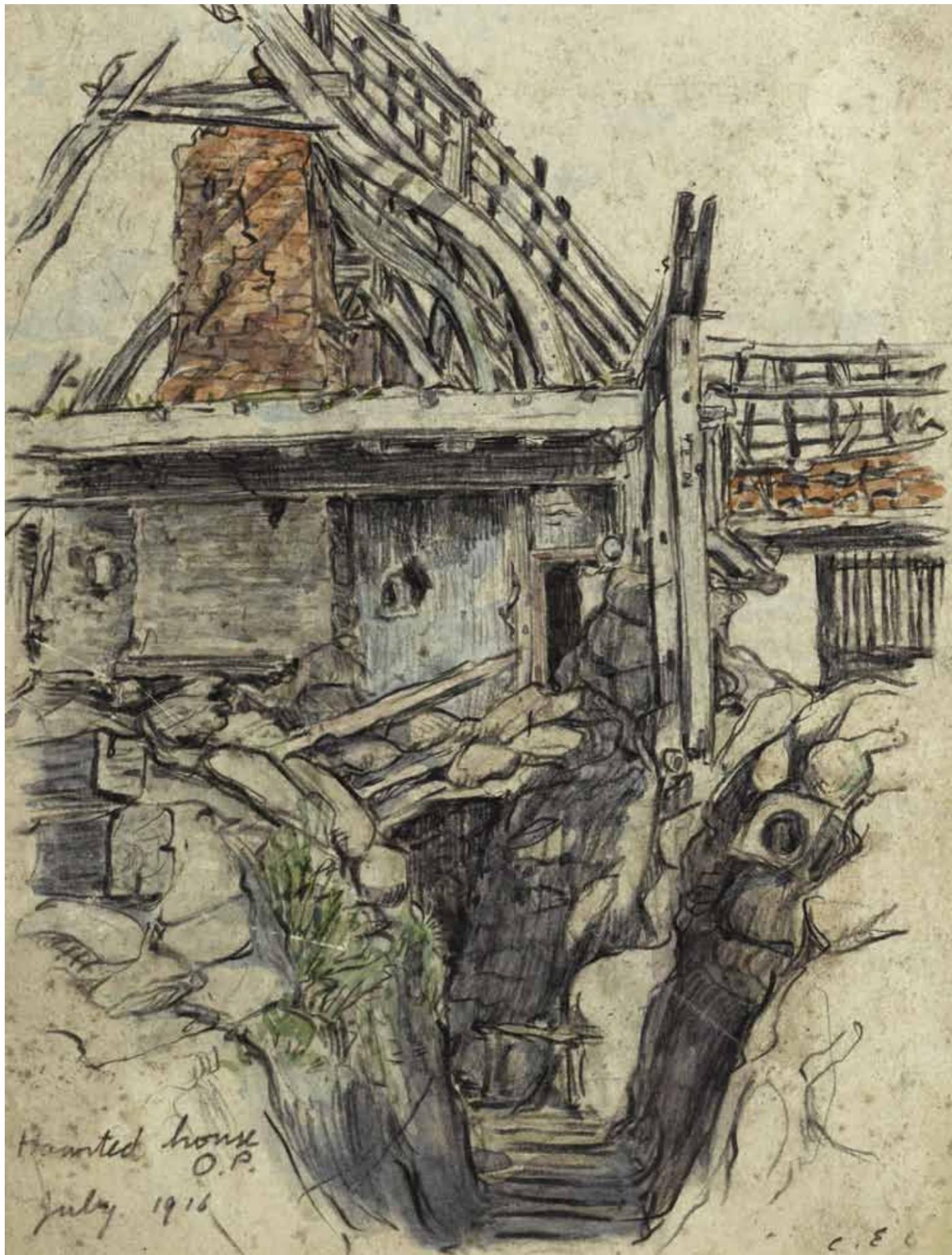
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Fig. 2 – Charles Cundall at work, making preliminary drawings of
Coventry Cathedral from the window of an empty house opposite, early 1960s (see page 132)



Introduction

By Paul Liss

"...the quick movement, the dance of colour, and the feeling that these are happening in open air, which make it so brilliant an impression"

T.W. Earp reviewing Cundall's exhibition at the Leicester Galleries, *The Daily Telegraph*, 1938

Between 1918 and 1970 Charles Cundall (1890-1971) exhibited nearly two hundred and fifty pictures at the Royal Academy and a further one hundred and seventy-five at the New English Art Club. One hundred and forty-nine of his oil paintings – and countless works on paper – found their way into British public collections. Statistics alone do not argue that an artist is important but it is surprising that this is the first publication on Cundall's life and work.

That a monograph did not appear in Cundall's lifetime is an accident of history rather than a consequence of critical selection – in the mid 1960s the industrialist and collector Harald Peake commissioned William Gaunt (the art historian and author best known for *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy*, 1942) to produce a book, *The Life and Work of Charles Cundall*. Cundall assisted in the project and Gaunt acknowledged that the text produced was 'indebted to the artist himself for much of the information.' The project appears to have been abandoned after Cundall's death in 1971. The original typescript, rediscovered amongst Cundall's papers, is included in this publication. (See pages 105-143.)

After a century of innovation characterized by an ever-increasing appetite for modernism, the figurative pictures of Cundall might seem rather dull or at best, to a contemporary audience, little more than quaint. Stylistically they belong to the 19th century impressionist tradition of painting *en plein air*. As Gaunt pointed out, 'Cundall never felt the compulsion to look inwards rather than outwards. ...Style for him was a quality that developed subconsciously.' Should the fact that his paintings are easy to engage with be seen as a weakness? The visual argument presented in this publication would suggest otherwise.

Cat. 1 – *Haunted House, Observation Post*, 1916, signed with initials, inscribed 'Haunted House, O.P.' and dated July 1916, coloured pencil and pencil on paper, 6 ½ x 5 in. (16.5 x 12.5 cm)



Cat. 2 – *Calm in the Baltic*, 1935,
Signed and dated,
inscribed with title on reverse,
watercolour, on paper,
10 x 8 ¾ in. (25.5 x 22.5 cm)



Cat. 3 – *Approaching the Bridge*, 1935,
signed and dated,
bodycolour on paper,
10 ¼ x 9 in. (26 x 23 cm)

The thirty-two museum works reproduced here, almost all for the first time, testify to a twentieth-century Grand Tour on an unprecedented scale. On his travels Cundall witnessed Mussolini's rise to power in Italy, the beginning of Civil War in Spain, and the consolidation of Stalin's power in Russia. (Cat. 2 and 3) Closer to home Cundall recorded the construction and destruction of a variety of national landmarks (from the demolition of Old Waterloo Bridge, 1935, to the building of Park Lane, early 1960s), whilst also recording a plethora of national events including the Coronation of George VI, 1937 and the withdrawal from Dunkirk, 1940. 'He has applied', Gaunt commented, 'the same zest to pictures of the Seine at Paris as to the skyscrapers of Manhattan (Fig. 3), the great modern steelworks in South Wales, an ancient hill-town in Italy, a dam in Scotland, the spectacle of a cricket match or a cup final.'



Fig. 3 – *New York, Coenties Slip*, c.1940, watercolour over pencil on paper, 15 x 22 ½ in. (38 x 57.2 cm)
Provenance: Phoenix Gallery, Lavenham, Suffolk, 1988

In two genres Cundall excelled – he was a master of painting crowd scenes – whether at Irish cattle markets or sporting events such as Derby Day. He was also a master of painting industrial scenes, with compositions spanning half a century recording sites in England, Scotland, Wales and Greece.

A *résumé* of Cundall's career bears out Gaunt's assertion that: 'as is often the case with painters, a good deal of his life, is inseparable from his art.' Although born in Lancashire Cundall's early childhood was spent in the Philippines and Australia, giving him a life-long love of travel.

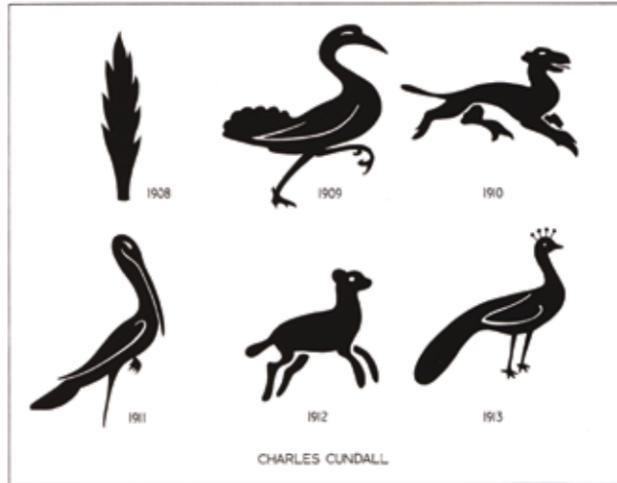


Fig. 4 – Cundall's year marks at Pilkington's and one of his vases
© A.J. Cross, *Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian pottery and tiles*, Richard Dennis, London, 1980

Returning to England as a teenager from the age of seventeen he worked as an apprentice to Pilkington's Pottery Company, painting lustre-ware in the ceramic workshop near his birth place, Stretford. (Fig. 4) In 1912 he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art, where he was taught by W.R. Lethaby and Edward Johnston. His training was interrupted by the war (Cat. 1) and having enlisted in the army he was badly injured in the battle for the Bois de Fourceaux, 1916, which deprived him of the use of his right hand; he was obliged to paint for the rest of his life with his left hand.

After resuming his training at the Royal College of Art he transferred to the Slade School of Fine Art, London, studying under Henry Tonks and Philip Wilson Steer. (Fig. 5) In 1923 Cundall married Jacqueline Pietersen, a student at the Royal College of Art. Pietersen continued her career as a professional artist throughout her life, exhibiting regularly at the NEAC (18 works between 1921 and 1951) and the Royal Academy Summer Exhibitions (40 works between 1939 and 1970) (Fig. 1a). Her husband's career was, however, always to take precedence.



Fig. 5 – Cundall (top left) and fellow students at the Royal College of Art



Cat. 4 – Lockheed Hudson, c.1942, thinned oil on paper, 13 ½ x 19 ¾ in. (34 x 50 cm)
(This is probably a study for *Prestwick Airport* now in the collection of the Imperial War Museum – see page 44)



Cat. 5 – Lancaster Bombers, watercolour on paper, 9 ½ x 24 in. (24 x 61 cm)

Cundall's first RA exhibit in 1918 was rapidly followed by a succession of regular appearances at the Summer Exhibition. His first one-man show in 1923 at the Grosvenor Galleries was followed by five solo shows that spanned a fifty-year career. At the beginning of the Second World War he was appointed an official war artist, one of only thirty-seven to be salaried by the War Artists' Advisory Committee. It was in this capacity that Cundall first met Air Commodore Harald Peake, who as director of RAF Public Relations, was responsible for choosing Cundall's assignments. (Cat. 4 and 5) This association was fortuitous – Peake, who was hostile to the modernist tendencies of some of the other war artists, enthusiastically promoted Cundall, in spite of resistance on the part of Kenneth Clark.

After the war, as Chairman of the Steel Company of Wales, Peake commissioned Cundall to paint a series of paintings of the burgeoning production plants centered on Port Talbot in Glamorganshire – used in a series of advertisements (Fig. 6). In combining grand scale traditional landscapes with epic modern day industrial subjects these paintings are amongst Cundall's most original works.



Fig. 6 – *Brick Making, Service to Industry (British Railways)*, c.1955
lithograph in colour, 39 x 49 1/2 in. (99 x 126 cm) Printed by John Waddington Ltd. London

Like the masters whom he most admired, among them Constable, Gainsborough and Stubbs, Corot and the Impressionists, Cundall's working technique was dependent upon sketching on the spot – 'aids to memory' as Gaunt called them – to create images with colour notes that might later be worked up into larger paintings in the studio. Using transparent medium such as tracing paper and celluloid, Cundall often developed compositions by overlaying consecutive images. (Fig. 7) In the process he was sometimes obliged to add two and then three sheets as the image spilled over (Cat. 40, pages 74-75). An admirer of innovative techniques, Cundall acquired in 1938 a celluloid by Walt Disney, from the very first animated film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and kept it all his life. (Figs. 8 and 9)



Fig. 7 – a *Apsley Gate from Hyde Park*, oil on panel, 10 1/4 x 6 in. (26 x 15 cm)
b *Apsley Gate from Hyde Park*, ink & watercolour on tracing paper, 10 1/4 x 6 in. (26 x 15 cm)
a + b *Apsley Gate from Hyde Park*, oil on panel superposed with ink & watercolour on tracing paper, 10 1/4 x 6 in. (26 x 15 cm)



Fig. 8 – Walt Disney Studios, *Raccoons*, work purchased by Cundall from an exhibition of original paintings for 'Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs' held at the Leceister Galleries, November 1938.

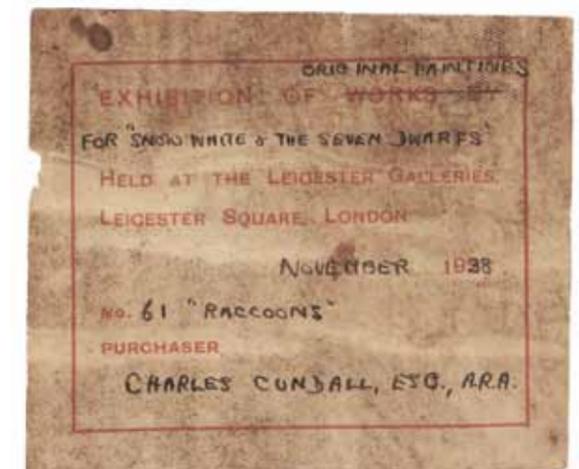


Fig. 9 – Back label of *Raccoons*



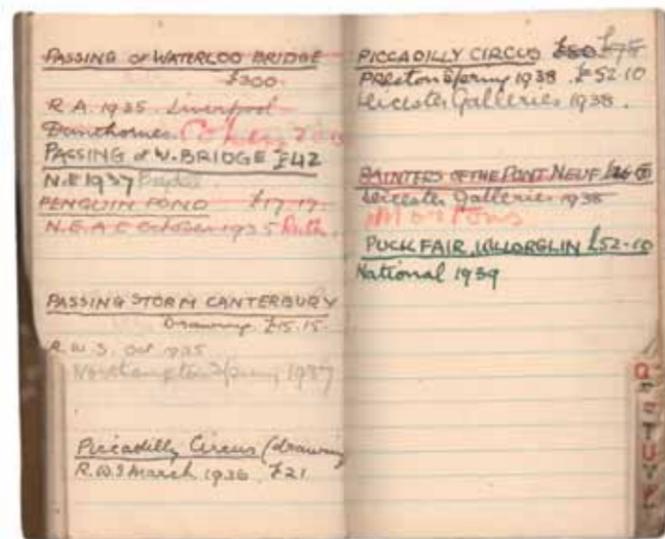
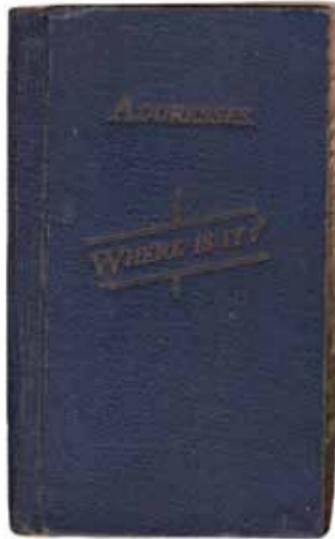
Cat. 6 – *Passing traffic*, pencil and oil on paper, 8 x 11 ¼ in. (20.3 x 29 cm) Left: detail

To stage a full scale Cundall retrospective would require the kind of wall space that the galleries of the Royal Academy might suitably afford. To mark the publication of this book, a more modest exhibition examining Cundall's technique, *Charles Cundall – A Working Method*, has been organized at Young Gallery, Salisbury and Sotheran's of Sackville Street. Whilst the dazzling scale of *Derby Day* might be missed, Cundall's working sketches – which display a vitality rarely rivalled by his contemporaries – remain amongst his most engaging works. (Cat. 6) Whether in the theatre of war, or more favoured haunts of the left bank of the Seine or a quayside of Manhattan, they all share the quality that the critic T.W. Earp praised in 1938 as 'the quick movement, the dance of colour, and the feeling that these are happening in open air, which make it so brilliant an impression'.

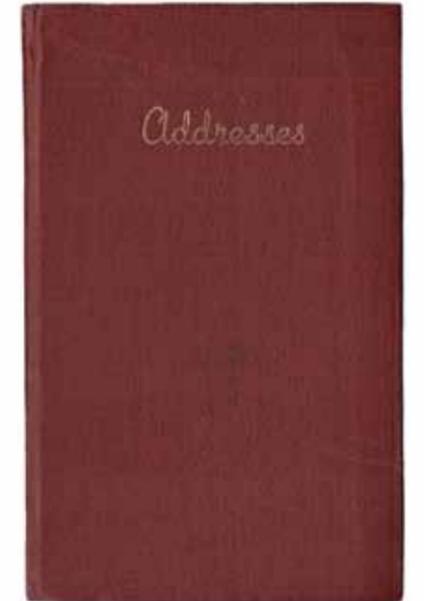
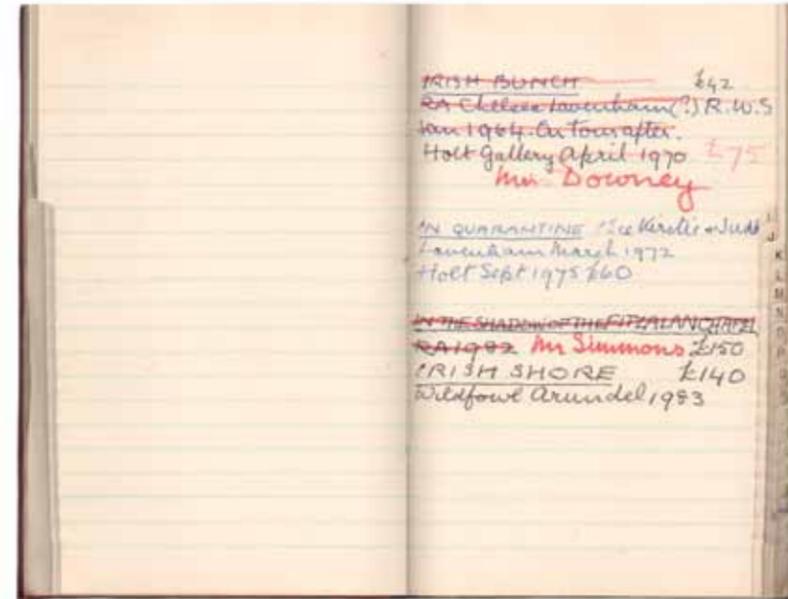
In a century that saw the flowering of photography and film, which to some degree challenged the pre-eminence of painting, Cundall's unerring commitment to traditional brushwork has left a remarkable legacy: a pageant recording the changing panorama of landscapes and events that marked the half century to which Cundall bore witness.

The Charles Cundall Archive

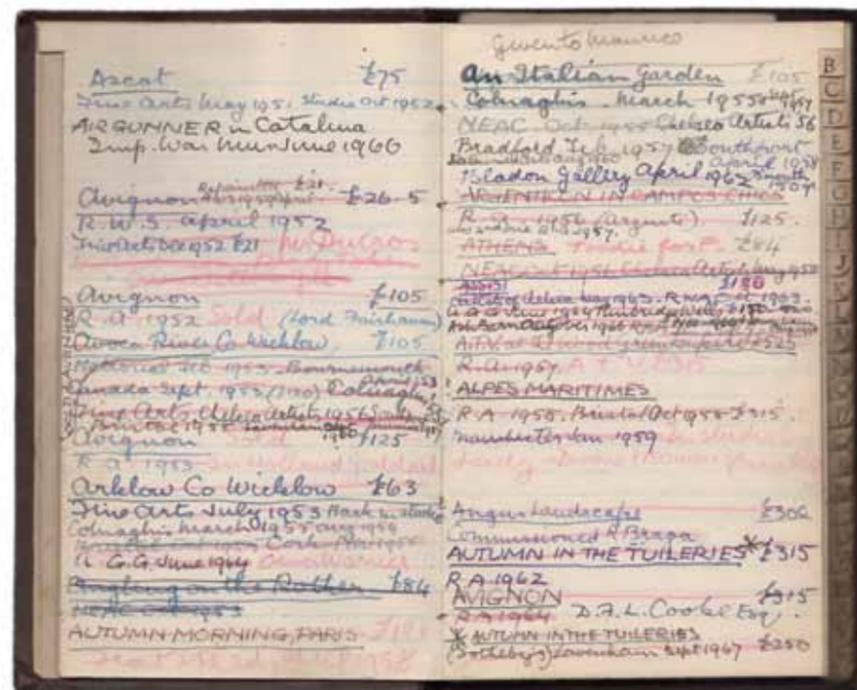
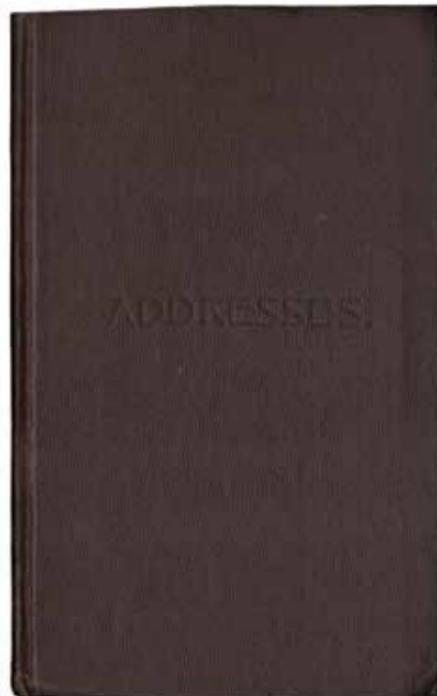
Maintained by Cundall and Jacqueline Pietersen, the Charles Cundall Archive comprises letters (from artists including Job Nixon, Henry Rushbury and Richard Eurich), extensive reproductions of paintings, newspaper cuttings, photographs and ephemera. Of particular interest are the four studio books in which the titles, prices and dates of pictures painted from the mid-1930s onwards are recorded.



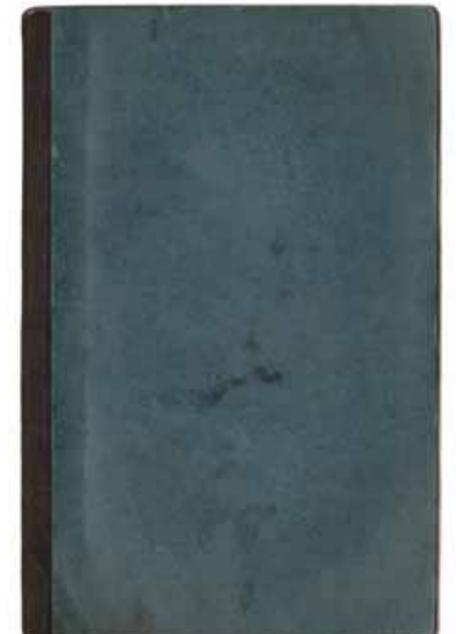
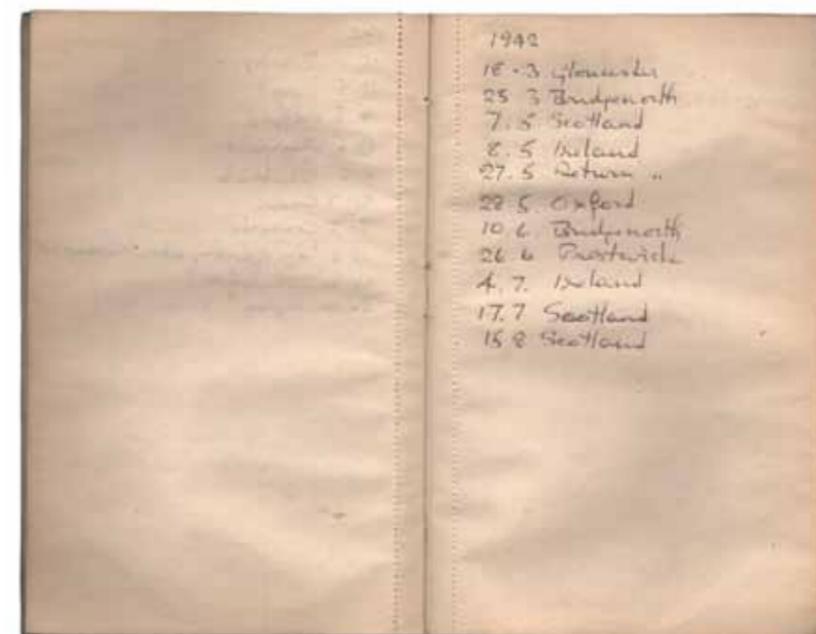
Small blue address book; entries from the 1930s, including 'Evening Anticoli (see cover) £21, 1935 Goupil Gallery'.



Red address book; entries from 1964 to 1983.



Large brown address book; entries from 1947 to 1981; Ends with a list of items on s/r to Phoenix Gallery, Lavenham and Ashbarn Gallery



Light blue note book contains 32 pages listing the dates and subjects of his painting trips from 1940-1970, a few key sales and events such as Cundall's election to the Royal Academy on 15.2.1940. At the front there are four pages listing canvases, boards, watercolour, most of which are marked UF (unframed or unfinished?) – probably works left in his studio on his death.

Charles Cundall, my father

By Annabel Jacqueline ('Jackie') Setter

Both my parents were artists, and so were most of their friends, and until I went to school I imagined that everyone led similar lives.

The Cundall family came from the North of England, where many of its members were involved in small businesses of various kinds. Charles's father, Charles Hellyar Cundall, chose not to go into the family cotton business as his father wished, but got a job on a tea plantation in the Philippines. His fiancée, Elizabeth Fletcher, followed him to the other side of the world and they were married in Hong Kong Cathedral. I think it is likely that she returned to England for the births of their five children. The older ones seem to have remained in England, but the two youngest, Charles and his brother Herbert, spent their early childhood in Manila. The life and colour there made a big impression on Charles, and it was probably an idyllic part of his life. Unfortunately it was cut short when his father became ill with the tropical sprue disease, which was incurable at that time. Before returning to England the family spent some time in Australia where the boys had their first experience of school. Until then they had been taught by their mother. They also saw pictures in an art gallery for the first time, a memorable experience for the future artist.

The return to Manchester must have been a gloomy contrast to life in Manila, although Charles developed some affection for the city later on. For a short time he and Herbert went to Ackworth Quaker School, which Charles hated. However, financial difficulties led to their removal and he spent the last part of his school life at Manchester Grammar School. This was followed by a period of apprenticeship in pottery design with the firm Pilkington. At the same time he went to night classes at the Manchester School of Art where he did so well that he won a gold medal in the National Competition and then, in 1912, a scholarship at the Royal College of Art.

His time at the Royal College was interrupted in 1914 by the outbreak of war, and like most young men he joined the army – The Artist's Rifles – and served in France. I can imagine that he enjoyed the camaraderie of service life, but the horror of war disgusted him and he almost never spoke about it. In 1916 he was one of the "lucky" ones who got wounded and sent back to military hospital in Britain. Unluckily though, the wound was to his right arm.



Fig. 10 – Charles Cundall and his daughter 'Jackie', c. 1930

To a right-handed painter this could have been a catastrophe, but he must already have been fairly ambidextrous because he soon adapted and learnt to paint with his left hand. When the war was over he returned to the Royal College, from where he won a scholarship to the Slade, which was also in London at that time. As a result of being wounded he received a small army pension, and when he left the Slade he arranged for this to be paid to him in Paris, where he rented a small studio in the Place de la Sorbonne. Living there was cheap, and he and other young artists, Henry Rushbury and Job Nixon, travelled to many places in France and Italy, painting and sketching as they went.

My parents met as students at the Royal College and were married in the early 1920s. My mother's name was Norah Jacqueline, but everyone called her Pieter, never Norah, and she signed her paintings N.J. Pietersen. She and my father travelled together in France and Italy and it's possible they spent their honeymoon in Honfleur. Certainly there are photos of them there. They had particularly happy memories of a time spent in Anticoli, where I believe they shared a house with other ex-students. I think my arrival was welcome, but it did curtail their freedom to travel. I know that on returning to live in England they rented a rather dilapidated studio in Whiteheads Grove, Chelsea, and when I was about a year old they rented a cottage near Stroud, which was called "The Scrubbs". That was another happy time, as the photos show. I know they took me to Amalfi when I was about 18 months. The Italians love babies, so that went well. But they didn't talk about past times very much, and the information I have is mostly guesswork and hearsay.

My first real memories of my father date from the time when he had a studio in the further reaches of Chelsea at 1a Cathcart Road, not far from the Fulham Road. His studio and a couple of small bedrooms were upstairs, the living room and kitchen in the semi-basement, and a tiny, sooty yard outside. Across the road from the front door was the way into a studio belonging to the sculptor Charles Wheeler, future president of the Royal Academy. They probably knew each other already as fellow members of the Chelsea Arts Club so it was natural for the families to become friendly, and I often used to play with his daughter. A few doors along the road lived the Morton family, who became lifelong friends, a friendship which has carried on into the next generation. While we were in Cathcart Road my father was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and I remember the excitement. His work was becoming known. In those days it was possible to join a cuttings agency which searched the papers for mention of one's name, and I saw many of these come in the post, newspaper cuttings mounted on green paper.

My father continued to travel, looking for subjects both at home and abroad. One very memorable trip was to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This was arranged by a left-wing friend, whom he may met at the Chelsea Arts Club, and was the cause of some anxiety to my mother. However, all went well. He got home safely, bringing with him sketches for a painting of the Kremlin.

My mother longed to have a garden, and in about 1938 my father's career was going well enough to be able to spend £500 on a stone-built, thatched cottage at Fairlight near Hastings. Water there had to be pumped by hand, there was no mains drainage, and lamps and candles provided light. None of this mattered too much, the position was ideal, it was not too far from London, and the garden had great possibilities. At first it was a weekend cottage, but as time went on my mother spent more weekdays there, working on the garden. Eventually a school was found for me in St Leonards-on-Sea, and when it was necessary for my mother to be in London I boarded there, instead of going by bus every day.

This was the routine we were following when war broke out in 1939 and for some months after that. As things got more threatening, and children were being evacuated from south coast areas, my father wanted to find somewhere safer for my mother and me to go. My school was being evacuated to Somerset, and in a stroke of luck my father had a Chelsea Arts Club friend who owned Cothay Manor, near Wellington also in Somerset. The chauffeur's flat was empty, the chauffeur having been called up, and we could stay there for the duration, which was a great relief to my father. It was easier for him to leave us there, while he, as an Official War Artist, was sent all over the country to paint aeroplanes, ships, training camps and anything else someone at the Air Ministry or the Admiralty decided needed to be recorded.

My father's preferred dress was a tweed jacket, pockets bulging with his pipe and tobacco pouch, and flannel trousers. However, in his new official position he was given the smart uniform of an honorary captain in the Royal Marines. The uncharacteristic image caused some amusement, but didn't last very long for when he was able to get home he would quickly change into something comfortable.

Home at Cothay was ideal in many ways, particularly as he was able to use part of the gatehouse as a studio. It wasn't too far from my school at Dulverton, where I boarded in term time. It was also a very lovely place to be. We were very lucky.

As my father was away a lot of the time and I was at school, my mother took on war work in Wellington, making clothes for servicemen. She also worked in the kitchen garden at Cothay, which had been turned over to producing much needed vegetables for the home front.

Towards the end of the war the opportunity arose for my father to buy a studio in Cheyne Row, Chelsea. A chance too good to miss, and a fellow artist kindly lent him some of the purchase price. Unfortunately the Cathcart Road studio, which they had rented before the war, had been bombed out during the Blitz.

Cheyne Row suited my parents very well, having a big studio with good light on the ground floor, and a small flat upstairs. It was ideally situated, with other artists living and working nearby, Green and Stone's Framers a short walk away, and, best of all, within easy reach of the Chelsea Arts Club. The routine of life at Great Cheyne Studio became one of regular days irregularly interrupted by travel. My father found the poor daylight of winter hard to work in and very depressing, so almost every winter my parents would travel to southern Europe, where he was able to work. He was never happy if he couldn't work. He justified the expense of going abroad by balancing the amount of work he did when abroad against the loss of work on winter days in England, and he was quite right to do so. If they had remained in England through the dark winter days he would have spent most of the time fretting about the lack of light. My mother made all the travel arrangements, leaving my father to get his work materials together. Their luggage was complicated, and much too much to take by air, even if they had wanted to do so, which I doubt. Travel was by taxi, train and boat so the plans had to be worked out carefully.

When at home the days had a calm regularity. Daylight permitting, my father worked in the studio from after breakfast until lunch, had a twenty minute sleep after lunch and then worked on until 6 or 7, with a brief stop for a cup of tea. Work over for the day, he would walk to the Chelsea Arts Club where he would stay for an hour or so and return home for supper.

I have a mental picture of my father standing at the easel in the studio, mahl stick in his right hand, the big window with William Morris curtains behind him. He would be working on a painting using preparatory sketches as reference. These were done on the spot. He devised an ingenious system for working out of doors. A large subject would be divided into several sections, each of which was sketched in oils on tracing paper mounted on a handy-sized piece of hardboard. Back in the studio the tracing paper sections

were fitted together to make a full sized picture, he would then square this up and transfer it onto canvas, which he would work on at the easel.

In the years after the war he was commissioned to do a lot of industrial paintings, and he was skilled at finding a good subject to paint, from what seemed initially to be rather unpromising buildings. He was away frequently, travelling to various sites. Usually he went on his own, but when he went to New York, where he painted the harbour, among other subjects, my mother was able to go too.

At some point the cottage at Fairlight was sold and my mother lost her beloved garden. However they, or rather she, managed to create a nice little roof garden on the flat roof above the living quarters of the studio. Later they bought a thatched cottage at Houghton, near Amberly, a short walk from the River Arun, and they spent most weekends there, and many weeks as well. There was a small studio in the garden, and my father did a number of paintings of the Sussex countryside. His health was deteriorating and he was less able to work long hours as he had in the past.

I think my parents decided that it would be better to find a small flat in London, without a studio. Any work that he was able to do, would be done in Sussex so they sold the Cheyne Row studio and moved into a very nice flat in Airlie Gardens, Notting Hill. However, after moving there he became quite frail, and unable to work at all, but he read a lot, and life went on as well as it could in the circumstances until one day, aged 81, his heart gave up and he just keeled over while doing up his shoelaces. I am sure this was just the way he would have chosen to go.

My mother went to a lot of trouble trying to track down all his paintings. This was a near impossible task as there were so many and they were spread far and wide. She gave up the flat in Airlie Gardens and moved back to the cottage at Houghton where she stayed for nearly ten years until the garden and the property became more than she could manage. My mother then arranged to go into a warden-attended flat in Arundel, where she had an excellent view of her next door neighbour, Arundel Castle, and stayed there until she died in 1984.



Charles Cundall: 'A kind of imaginative concentration'

By Andrew Lambirth

Charles Ernest Cundall (1890-1971) was a landscape, townscape and portrait painter, also a pottery and stained glass artist. Like L.S. Lowry, Cundall was born in Stretford, Lancashire, near Salford, and rather unexpectedly the two artists have much in common. But, unlike Lowry, Cundall's peripatetic early life in the Philippines and Australia established a pattern of foreign travel that was to become almost as important to him as painting. As a successful and hard-working artist, he claimed that his hobbies were travel and reading. With some justification, his friend, the historian Ernle Bradford, called Cundall's passion for travel 'a happy form of cosmopolitanism'. His art was equally sophisticated.

He is known principally for his panoramic pictures such as *Bank Holiday, Brighton, 1933* (Tate) (Figs 11 and 12) and *Coronation Day, 1937* (Royal Collection). Both are great human celebrations, differing only in their degree of formality. The latter was painted from the top of Admiralty Arch, after Cundall had obtained permission from the Office of Works to perch there, and he remained in position from 6 am to 8pm. Similarly, the tightly constructed and vigorous panorama of *Bank Holiday, Brighton*, was painted from a point overlooking the bandstand at the Kemp Town end of the main promenade, east of the pier. Cundall specialized in crowd paintings, and his other subjects included regattas, football and cricket matches, the Lord Mayor's show, horse races, Central Park in New York, river pageants, and *Coronation Day, 1953*. As the painter and writer Adrian Bury observed: 'Such subjects are not aesthetic in themselves, and can only be made so by a kind of imaginative concentration, plus an insatiable curiosity in democracy at play.' (*The Studio*, April 1955)

Again like Lowry, Cundall was prepared to enlarge the definition of what was a suitable subject, or indeed what was beautiful and worthy of painting. Lowry, besides painting mills, was famed for his crowd scenes (he too painted football matches), but there is always a recognizable style to them, Lowry's figurative shorthand, his distinctive calligraphy of what have become known (rather erroneously) as his 'matchstick men'. Cundall never adopted such an easily identifiable mode. He concentrated on his subject matter rather than the manner of its depiction. As William Gaunt wrote in his unpublished monograph on Cundall: 'Style for him was a quality that developed subconsciously.'

Fig. 11 – *Bank Holiday, Brighton 1933* (detail), 1933, oil paint on canvas, 34 x 44 in. (86 x 112 cm)
Photo Credit: © Tate, London 2016



Fig. 12 – *Bank Holiday, Brighton 1933*, 1933, oil paint on canvas, 34 x 44 in. (86 x 112 cm)
Photo Credit: © Tate, London 2016

Cundall was not interested in theory and never felt the need to look inwards and bare his soul to his audience. Instead he looked with great attention outwards, to the world around him, to its varied surfaces and textures, and to the structures behind it. He felt no need for self-conscious Modernism and a life of stylistic experiment. In effect, he was a traditional painter specialising in the personal interpretation of place, a topographer with a pictorial and human touch. He listed his influences as follows: Constable, Gainsborough and Stubbs; Renoir and the Impressionists; Rembrandt, Brueghel and the Dutch School. He was essentially an independent, and very English in this, taking inspiration where he found it, but maintaining his artistic individuality in the face of all fashionable 'isms'. His work can have the pastoral richness of early Corot or the *plein-air* pulse and breeziness of Boudin, but it is always Cundall.

Modest and detached by temperament, he was a man who liked to work and to travel, and he was drawn to a middle way, not a radical or avant-garde position. But equally he was not just a traditional English nature-lover, as his range of subjects demonstrates. Certainly

he was a social historian and painter of spectacles, a skilful recorder of national events, but he was also a pioneering painter of post-war British industry, of new factories and plant, not the more picturesque views of age-blackened chimneys and monumental warehouses.

However, his earliest professional artistic experience was not as an easel painter, but as a pottery artist. In 1907 Cundall began an apprenticeship with Pilkington's Pottery Company at Clifton Junction near Manchester. He was engaged to paint floral patterns on 'Lancastrian' lustre-ware and glazed tiles, and remained there for five years. During this time, he was fortunate in coming under the influence of a powerful triumvirate: Gordon Forsyth was his teacher, advisor and director, whose own style was much influenced by Persian, Spanish and Grecian designs; William Burton who, as works managing director, helped Cundall gain entrance to Manchester School of Art and contributed to the cost of his evening classes; and Lawrence Pilkington, musician, poet and patron. All encouraged the young artist, recognizing his talent and keen to see it prosper. He also learnt much from Richard Joyce, another highly accomplished pottery artist, specializing in fish, animal and bird designs.

Cundall was soon known for his own stylized animal designs, painted on panels and tiles as well as bowls, but more on pots than anything else (Fig 13). After a mere year's experience, he was already flying high and, entering the 1908 National Competition for Applied Art, he won the gold medal. *The Studio* magazine commented: 'In the pottery section the chief honours were taken by Mr Charles E Cundall ... for a punch bowl and two vases in silver and ruby lustre of exceptional excellence. They were the work of a very young student [Cundall was 18], but there was no sign of immaturity in their design or execution.'



Fig. 13 – Three examples of Cundall's decorations on Pilkington's lustreware, c. 1910

In 1912 he won a scholarship to the Design School of the Royal College of Art in London on the strength of his work in pottery and stained glass, and left Pilkington's. Twenty years later, in 1932, he painted William Burton's portrait, posing him white-haired and distinguished, seated in front of some of his pots. (This is now in Manchester City Galleries.) In some ways, by painting this portrait, he was paying a debt of gratitude for all the support he had received at such a crucial juncture of his young life. At the RCA, he studied stained glass and lettering under the celebrated Edward Johnston, and architecture under Beresford Pile, though he probably gained most from that disciple of William Morris, W.R. Lethaby, first professor of Design at the College. But study was cut short by war, and in 1914 Cundall enlisted in the Public Schools Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers.

He served with the British Expeditionary Force in France until severely wounded in the right arm in 1916 at the Somme battle for High Wood and was invalided out after a spell in hospital in 1917. (Fig.14) The following year he returned to the RCA to take up his scholarship again and began to paint, learning to do so with the left hand, as his right was now literally *hors de combat*. However, it seems from the testimony of one of his workmates at Pilkington's, that Cundall had always painted his lustre-ware with his left hand, so he began with this advantage: although right-handed, he was by nature ambidextrous.



Fig. 14 – Cundall at military hospital, c.1916-17

He soon transferred to the Slade where he studied for two years under Professors Tonks and Brown, but picked up more from the less intrusive teaching methods of Philip Wilson Steer. Certainly in 1920 he was writing to his brother: 'I am really learning to draw this time, up to now I have been in a fog!' In 1920 he went to Paris and worked at the Académie Colarossi. The following year he visited Italy for the first time, and his travelling years may be said to have fairly begun.

Cundall's first London success as a professional artist came in 1923 when he exhibited at the Grosvenor Galleries. The show attracted considerable attention, including one painting reproduced in *The Connoisseur* and another in *The Studio*. His tour-de-force, *Derby Day 1923*, (Fig. 51, page 118) was bought by Edward Marsh, great patron of the arts, whose rooms in



Fig. 15 – *Derby Day*, 1933, 1933, oil on canvas, 39 ¾ x 50 in. (101x127 cm) © UK Government Art Collection.

Gray's Inn were covered in paintings by the best young British artists of the day. Cundall was bidden to Marsh's famous breakfast parties there in the 1920s, along with such masters-in-the-making as Mark Gertler, David Bomberg and John and Paul Nash. *Derby Day 1923* is now in the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA). In this painting and the 1933 version of the same subject (now in the Government Art Collection) (Fig. 15) the actual event of horses running is entirely peripheral to the human pageant, all banners and brollies, which was clearly of more interest to Cundall. In this he resembles Lowry, who loved to paint the crowds at the side-shows of the northern agricultural or Easter fairs, such as *Daisy Nook* (eg *Good Friday, Daisy Nook*, 1946).



Fig. 16 – A Chelsea Cup-Tie, Stamford Bridge, 1923, oil on plywood, 15 x 18 in. (38 x 46 cm)
 Courtesy of Manchester City Galleries

Another ambitious panorama in the exhibition was *A Chelsea Cup-Tie, Stamford Bridge*. (Fig. 16) This was described in *The Manchester Guardian* as 'a remarkable picture of an almost untouched subject ... seen from the top of the highest stand, with the bare little green space closed in by the human sierras and in the immediate foreground three or four figures straining over a partition. A curved shadow from one of the great banks lies across the field and intensifies its isolation and strange focal importance. The figures on which minds and eyes are concentrated look as small as grasshoppers. There is much more in this picture than good painting and curious interesting colour.' Now in Manchester City Galleries, this remarkable picture set the benchmark for the clearly-designed but intriguing spectacles that were to make Cundall's name.

He followed up that first show with a four-hander of paintings and drawings at Manchester Art Gallery in July 1924, with E.M. O'Rorke Dickey, Allan Gwynne-Jones and Henry Rushbury. Then in 1926 came his second solo show, at Colnaghi Galleries in New Bond Street, accompanied by a catalogue with a foreword by the distinguished etcher Muirhead Bone.

Bone wrote: 'Cundall is not the easiest artist to place at first sight – the traditional look of his low mellow tones may perhaps hide the keen zest and uncommon shrewdness of his observations of life – for he places things as they really are, the habitual background to the lives of ordinary people.'

Included in the show was Cundall's 1925 panorama *Boat Race Day, Hammersmith*, which nicely illustrated this contention. Steamboats crowded with spectators are out on the river. On land, more people have clambered onto their rooftops to get a good view of the race, and are perched among the chimneypots and trees. *The Sunday Times* art critic Frank Rutter described it as 'more than a faithful record of a memorable aquatic event; it is a tenderly felt expression of the glory of light in a leaden sky under which the Thames looks more than ever a thread of silver.' The exhibition was praised in *The Manchester Guardian* as 'one of the freshest and most individual shows seen in London this season.'

The noted critic R.H. Wilenski commented in *The Observer* that Cundall had learnt much from Cézanne and the Impressionists. He was not just a painter of details, like W.P. Frith; Cundall's *Derby Day* was 'a general descriptive impression of the scene'. He was 'detached, intelligent and sympathetic'. Wilenski summed up: 'In a word, Mr Cundall's subjects are, on paper, Victorian subjects. But he does not paint them in the Victorian way.' The same critic, this time writing in the *Evening Standard* emphasized his approval: 'There is no trace of affectation or artistic flummery in his work; nothing is faked or fumbled, and ... nothing is evaded in the realisation of the subject.'

Comparison with Frith, the great Victorian painter of crowds, famous for his pullulating scenes of Victorian middle class life, *Ramsgate Sands* (1854) and *Derby Day* (1858), was inevitable. But Wilenski's comments were valid and to the point: Cundall did not paint relentless detail, a strategy that Frith borrowed from the Pre-Raphaelites, following Ruskin's admonition: 'Go to nature, rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing.' Cundall was far more selective than that, and singularly aware of the importance of focusing on certain aspects and leaving others out – the legacy of his design training in pottery and stained glass. He was, in fact, a highly skilled designer of paintings (note the way he balanced and offset his shapes in a composition), who may have wanted to communicate a lifelike impression of a scene, but also wanted to make a good, formally structured, painting.

Cundall, unlike Frith, was not primarily a narrative painter or story-teller. Although he did paint stations, ports and crowded city streets, and though there was nearly always a recognizable subject to his scenes, the way the paint was handled (the orchestration of marks and colours) was also important. His paintings of sporting events are not illustrations so much as evocations of mood – of the match or regatta (Cat. 7, 8, 9 and Fig. 17) – and the dynamics of the space depicted. In one football match painting he even managed to omit the referee. Revealingly, *The Manchester Guardian* noted that 'the solid banks of intent spectators, properly immobile' of Cundall's football pictures, were like 'irrelevant details of a formidable machine'. There is something there that's more complex than pure reporting.



Cat. 7 – *Henley Royal Regatta*, 1959, oil on canvas, 27 x 50 in. (68.5 x 127 cm)
Provenance: Frost & Reed; purchased by the current owner in 1970 Exhibited: Royal Academy, 1959 (245)
This scene depicts an eights race during the late 1920s, probably a Grand Challenge Cup final. A companion pair to this oil, commissioned by Harold Rickett and looking towards the start of the race, is owned by Henley Royal Regatta.



Cat. 8 – Study for *The Thames at Windsor – A Regatta Scene (A)*, 1953, pencil and oil on paper, 9 ½ x 29 ½ in. (24 x 75 cm)



Cat. 9 – Study for *The Thames at Windsor – A Regatta Scene (B)*, 1953, pencil and oil on paper, 9 ½ x 29 ½ in. (24 x 75 cm)



Fig. 17 – *The Thames at Windsor – A Regatta Scene*, oil on canvas, 35 x 59 in. (89 x 150 cm)
Courtesy of Goodenough College

Although solo shows every two or three years are today regarded as the bread-and-meat of artists' lives, these were not so frequent for an earlier generation, and Cundall enjoyed only six in a career spanning more than 50 years. He exhibited again at Colnaghi's in 1930. *The Times* remarked: 'What Reynolds called "particularity" is the essence of his art.' This time, sales didn't go particularly well, according to a letter from Rushbury in Genoa to Cundall, dated 8th March 1930. Lamenting how difficult it is to make a living from painting he wrote: 'I should feel damn bitter if I were in your position...' The more reliable shop window for many artists was the Royal Academy, and Cundall made sure that he made a splash at every Summer show at Burlington House. In 1930, for example, he exhibited *Victoria Station*, the huge semi-circular arch of the building and pillared colonnade framing the steam trains and their hurrying passengers, with a vignette of bowler-hatted businessmen paused at bottom left for a shoe-shine.

His work was much reproduced. In 1936 Littlewoods Pools published a fold-out colour reproduction of his Wembley Cup Final, and the following year *Tatler* illustrated his Chelsea v. Arsenal match in colour on a double page spread. (Fig. 18) Some of his paintings were also made into reprographic prints and sold to the public. Such a one was the 1957 Marlowe Regatta, published that year by Frost & Reed. The next year, the Medici Society chose to reproduce Cundall's painting of the Burnham-on-Crouch Regatta.



Fig. 18 – Reproduction of double-page spread of *Chelsea vs Arsenal at Stamford Bridge, 1937*
Courtesy of Annabel Jacqueline Setter



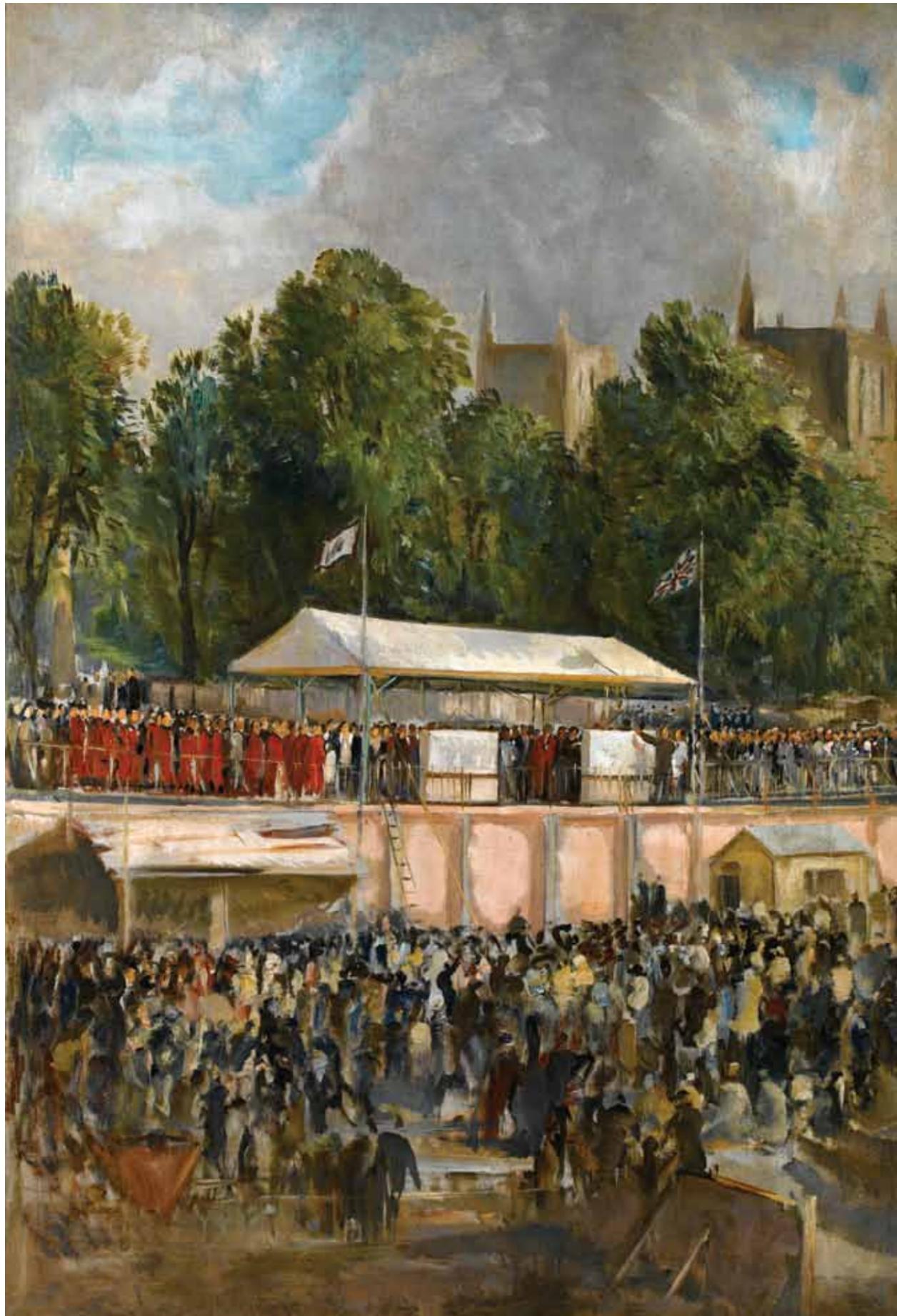
Cat. 10 – Study for *The Demolition of Waterloo Bridge, London, 1935*, 1935, oil on panel, 9 ¼ x 15 ¾ in. (23.5 x 40 cm)

There seemed a never-ending source of subjects for a painter who was so evidently engaged by what he was doing. For example, he painted horse fairs: in 1932 his *Stow-on-the-Wold* horse fair was shown at the RA – slightly Brueghelesque with a high sky above – and in 1937 it was the turn of *Barnet Fair*. In 1935 his *Demolition of Waterloo Bridge* (Cat. 10) was exhibited at the RA, a powerfully emotive subject, the removal of this much-loved 18th-century bridge to make way for a modern replacement. Cundall was even taking on Muirhead Bone, acknowledged master of the demolition subject, in this painting, and with his soft rich colour coupled with strength of design, managed to do something Bone had not achieved.

In 1938 Cundall held his fourth one-man show, this time at the Leicester Galleries. The redoubtable T.W. Earp in the *Daily Telegraph* praised his renditions of history as it was happening, focusing on 'the quick movement, the dance of colour, and the feeling that these [events] are happening in open air, which make it so brilliant an impression'. That year Cundall painted another demolition, this one in *Berkeley Square*, a subject which offers at least two interesting comparisons. Here was Cundall painting a kind of artificial ruin just before the real ruins brought about by bombing were to become so poignant a subject under the brush of such war-time artists as John Armstrong. Another comparison can be made with Frank Auerbach's grand post-war theme of building sites. All offer similar subjects of extreme change, of destruction and renewal (implicit in the paintings of bombed buildings), sites of considerable energy and drama. (Cat. 11)



Cat. 11 –
Study for 'Excavation in Park Lane', early 1960s,
pencil and gouache on tracing paper,
18 ½ x 24 ½ in. (47 x 62.5 cm)



Who were Cundall's colleagues and contemporaries? Undoubtedly his closest friend was Henry Rushbury, who he met at the Slade and who shared many of his travels over the years. Job Nixon (a name not very familiar these days) was another close painter-printmaker associate from early days. As a denizen of Chelsea (Cundall had a studio there for most of his adult life, occupying Great Cheyne Studio, Cheyne Row, from 1940 – 1970), he used the Chelsea Arts Club as his headquarters and a convenient place to meet cronies. Essentially, his exhibiting life was centred around the Royal Academy: he first showed there in 1918, in 1923 became a regular exhibitor, was elected Associate in 1937 and a full Academician in 1944. Besides the RA, Cundall was a member of various exhibiting societies: he was elected to the New English Art Club (NEAC) in 1924, the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 1933 and the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours in 1941. And he was loyal to the institutions that cradled him, being particularly active at the RA behind the scenes.

Bernard Dunstan (born 1920), recalling the landscape painters of the NEAC that he came to know – a group that included Cundall along with Richard Eurich, Rodney Burn, Vincent Lines and Ethelbert White – wrote that they 'seemed to belong to a generation admirable for its integrity and lack of pretension or competitiveness. They needed little in the way of worldly possessions; they lived simply; and they sold their pictures to a circle of faithful collectors. None of them taught, nor were they involved in the competitive business of portrait painting, and this may have had a lot to do with their serenity. They lived mostly in the country, and appeared to be quite free from the sometimes anxious "keeping up", often noticeable in their colleagues based in art schools.'

As a painter, Cundall is most revealingly seen in the company of such artists as Lowry, Gilbert Spencer and John Nash. All are sometimes sneered at for being 'unprogressive', and yet all are solid painters who enjoyed a real degree of popularity and success – and considerable artistic achievement. In Lowry's case, his very fame has gone against him, and the supposed guardians of art's sacred flame have decided that an artist so widely cherished cannot be any good. Clearly this is nonsense, but is yet another example of how the art world is dominated by the notion of an avant-garde. Inevitably, Cundall did not fit this blueprint, as his work was not fashionably modern. By contrast, among his peers he was highly regarded. Alfred Munnings, who gave anti-Modernists such a bad name, certainly thought that Cundall was a better landscape painter than John Nash. (This is on the evidence of an undated letter from Munnings to Cundall in the artist's estate.) Intriguingly, Cundall's painting *Surrey Hills* (in Manchester City Galleries) has something of the dash and expansiveness of Munnings' own landscapes.

Apart from his voyages and his London base, from 1929 Cundall kept a cottage in the country, for many years in Sussex. In a letter to Rushbury dated 9th March 1929, Cundall was just about to leave for the Cotswolds and wrote: 'I shall not spend much time in Chelsea this year – but a quiet one in the country perhaps.' That was the essential rhythm of his existence: town, country cottage and travel abroad. He travelled to find subjects, and accumulated work to sell on his return. Despite the precariousness of this way of life, it

Cat. 12 – Study for *Laying the Commemoration Stones of the new Municipal Buildings – Bristol, 1939* (see page 132), oil on canvas, 40 x 27 in. (101.6 x 68.6 cm)

enabled him to live as he chose. Unlike some Modern British artists he enjoyed no private income, but he did manage to make a living from his work. It was life on a shoestring – hazardous but stimulating, and very like Mr Micawber: Cundall always said that 'something will turn up', and usually it did.

He doesn't seem to have had a favourite landscape subject – his artistic curiosity could be aroused almost anywhere. Portraits are relatively rare in his output, though one of his mother attracted considerable attention when it was first exhibited in 1925 (it's now in the Ferens Art Gallery, Hull), and Richard Eurich always remembered a painting of what he described as a local man plucking a turkey. (This is *Christmas Preparations at Beaulieu*, in Southampton City Art Gallery.) Of the 149 paintings by Cundall currently listed on the BBC website *Your Paintings* (a venture initiated by the Public Catalogue Foundation and listing all oil paintings in public collections) nearly half are war pictures (Fig.19) – including the famous *Withdrawal from Dunkirk* (see pages 59-60) and seven depictions of RAF flyers in the Imperial War Museum, which count as portraits as well as war paintings.



Fig. 19 – *Prestwick Airport*, 1942, oil on canvas, 39 x 74 ½ in. (99 x 189.2 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 4803)

There are only two flower paintings listed (one in Kirklees, the other in Goodenough College, Bloomsbury), a genre Cundall does not seem to have much pursued. Both feature patterned vases filled with bright blossoms and are decorative without being particularly memorable. Watercolours finished for exhibition are also comparatively rare: Cundall used watercolour and gouache mainly for preliminary studies, but seems to have preferred oil as a medium, even using it in a thinned form in some of his compositional sketches. Occasionally he used a palette knife, but tended to prefer brushes, with which he laid in the colour instinctively rather than methodically.



Cat. 13 – *Sketch for Prospect Mills*, pencil and oil on paper, squared, 13 ¾ x 20 ½ in. (35 x 52 cm)

In a manuscript of rough answers to a (lost) series of questions, Cundall described his method thus: 'I work from many drawings and colour notes and memory. Palette all over the place, not methodical. Apart from primary colours, I really don't know! Raw umber, Payne's Grey, Terre Verte – when I'm painting I don't think about what colours I'm using. Fairly fine canvas, soft hog and sable brushes. Scale on the small side apart from large commissioned work. I have done etching, stained glass, pottery, lettering and some posters. ... The main direction in which I have worked is towards greater quality of light in my painting.' He also maintained that his experience as a War Artist, which he described as 'the discipline involved in making a picture out of what seemed an impossible subject', had been of great value to him.

After the war, Cundall held two more one-man shows, at Colnaghi's again in March 1955, and in 1964 back at the Grosvenor Galleries. *The Times* noted that 'a sensitive response to place and atmosphere' distinguished Cundall's work. 'Though subject counts for much', the anonymous reviewer continued, 'it is conveyed with an admirable freshness and lightness of paint.' The big new development for Cundall was the modern industrial subject. In 1950 he was commissioned to paint *Prospect Mills* (Cat. 13), owned and built by Bulmer & Lumb Ltd of Wibsey, near Bradford, Yorkshire, worsted spinners. Although he made no attempt to prettify the facts of the building, he did choose to depict the factory as it would look on a sunny June afternoon, thus making the most, rather than the least, of his subject.

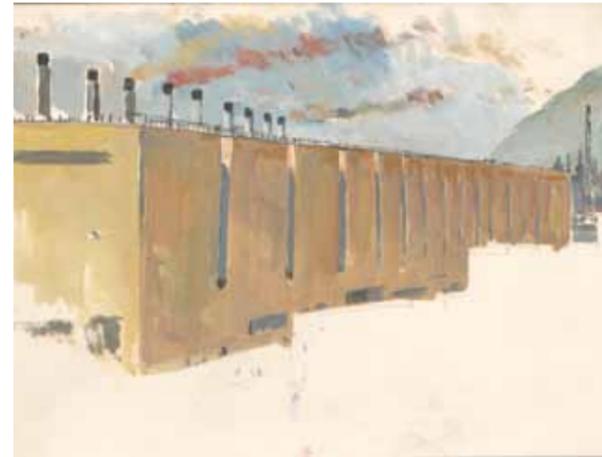
For Cundall, painting war-time industry had led on with a certain inevitability to similar peace-time subjects, and eventually to the massive modern effort of regeneration and new industrial plant. His long-standing interest in architecture, coupled with early experience of industrial design at Pilkington's, was applied to post-war growth, and in the late 1950s he became sought-after as a chronicler of industrial buildings. Cundall treated his new subjects as he had done his old, and pointed out that 'I'm not trying to "express the machine age" as I suppose a painter like Léger wished to do, which seems to me to lead to a kind of decoration instead of picture painting.' Always thoughtful, he was an artist who gave serious consideration to the broader artistic implications of a new subject. (Fig.20, Cat. 14-24)

Adrian Bury, writing in *Impulse* (May 1959), in an article devoted to Cundall entitled *A Painter of Industry*, described his painting of the tinsplate plant in *New Look, West Wales* (1959) as follows: 'Seen from a distance with the trees in the foreground and the sea on the horizon it composes a dignified ensemble. The artist has not shirked the difficulty of rendering the cubistic uniformity of the brick buildings, and the painting therefore has a documentary as well as artistic value. The white tint and austere shape of the factory contrasts admirably with the surrounding topography, and the scene as a whole generates an optimistic sentiment.'



Fig. 20 – *Abbey Works, Margam*, c.1958, oil on canvas, 30 x 60 in. (76 x 152 cm)
© National Museum Wales

Power stations and factories were the new cathedrals: Cundall painted Stourport in 1956, the Abbey Works, Port Talbot in 1957 (actually a steel plant), then a great new dam at Glen Moriston in Scotland. In 1959 he commented: 'I think there is a large field awaiting painters in this genre – providing they can satisfy the patron that they are able to produce what he wants.' And who were Cundall's own industrial patrons? 'Personally I've been extremely lucky in my dealings – with Mr F.G. Mitchell and Mr Harald Peake, for example – men of vision and great appreciation of the artist's value or potential value in the world of industry.'



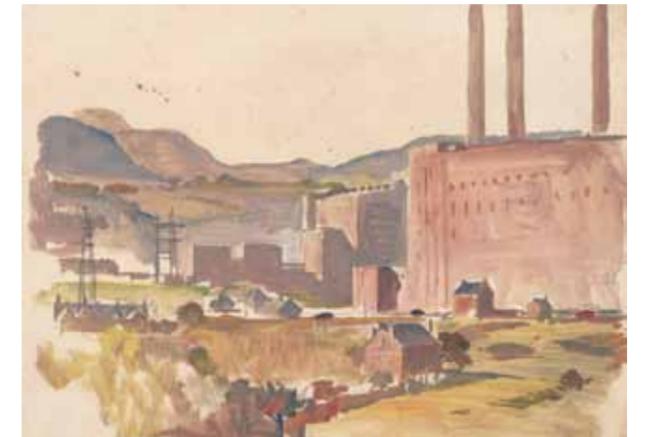
a



b



c



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- a Cat. 14 – *Steel Company of Wales, Abbey Works Port Talbot I*, pencil and oil on paper; 6 ¾ x 9 ¾ in. (17 x 25 cm)
- b Cat. 15 – *Steel Company of Wales, Abbey Works Port Talbot II*, pencil and oil on paper; 6 ¼ x 9 ½ in. (16 x 24 cm)
- c Cat. 16 – *Sketch for Stourport Power Station I*, 1956, oil on paper; 13 ¼ x 18 ¾ in. (34 x 48 cm)
- d Cat. 17 – *Sketch for Stourport Power Station II*, 1956, pencil and oil on paper; 8 ¾ x 11 ½ in. (22.5 x 29.5 cm)



e



f



g



h



i



j

- e Cat. 18 – *Abbey Works Port Talbot*, pencil and oil on paper, 6 ¾ x 9 ¾ in. (17.5 x 25 cm)
- f Cat. 19 – *Steel Company of Wales, Abbey Works Port Talbot*, pencil and oil on paper, 6 ¾ x 9 ¾ in. (17 x 23.5 cm)
- g Cat. 20 – *Sketch for Stourport Power Station*, 1956, pencil and oil on paper, 9 ½ x 13 in. (24.5 x 33 cm)
- h Cat. 21 – *Loading freight trains*, pencil and oil on paper, 6 ¾ x 9 ¾ in. (17 x 24.7 cm)
- i Cat. 22 – *Steel Company of Wales, Abbey Works Port Talbot*, pencil and oil on paper, 6 x 8 ¾ in. (15 x 22.5 cm)
- j Cat. 23 – *Industrial Scene*, pencil and watercolour on paper, 7 ¾ x 13 ¼ in. (20 x 33.8 cm)



Cat. 24 – *Study for a painting of the Steel Company of Wales, Newport*, c. 1958, oil on canvas, 26 x 30 in. (66 x 76.2 cm)

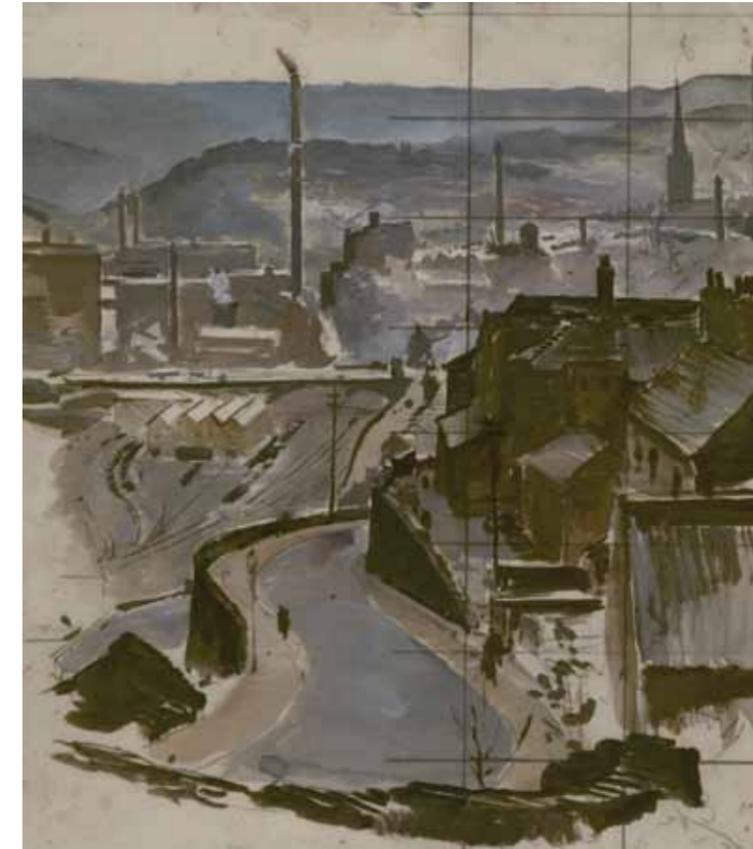


Fig. 21 – *Industrial Landscape*, 1932, oil on canvas, 10 ¼ x 13 ¾ in. (26 x 35 cm)
 Courtesy of Kirklees Collection: Huddersfield Art Gallery



Fig. 22 – *Mills and Moors*, 1932, oil on canvas, 25 x 30 ¼ in. (64 x 77 cm)
 Courtesy of Kirklees Collection: Huddersfield Art Gallery

Tastes change, and today we often admire the immediacy of a sketch over the hard work of the finished exhibition piece – the grand machine. In Kirklees Museums & Galleries, for instance, there is a pair of Cundall paintings: *Industrial Landscape* and *Mills and Moors*. (Fig. 21, 22) The first is a much more freely painted study for the second, and to a contemporary eye it is more

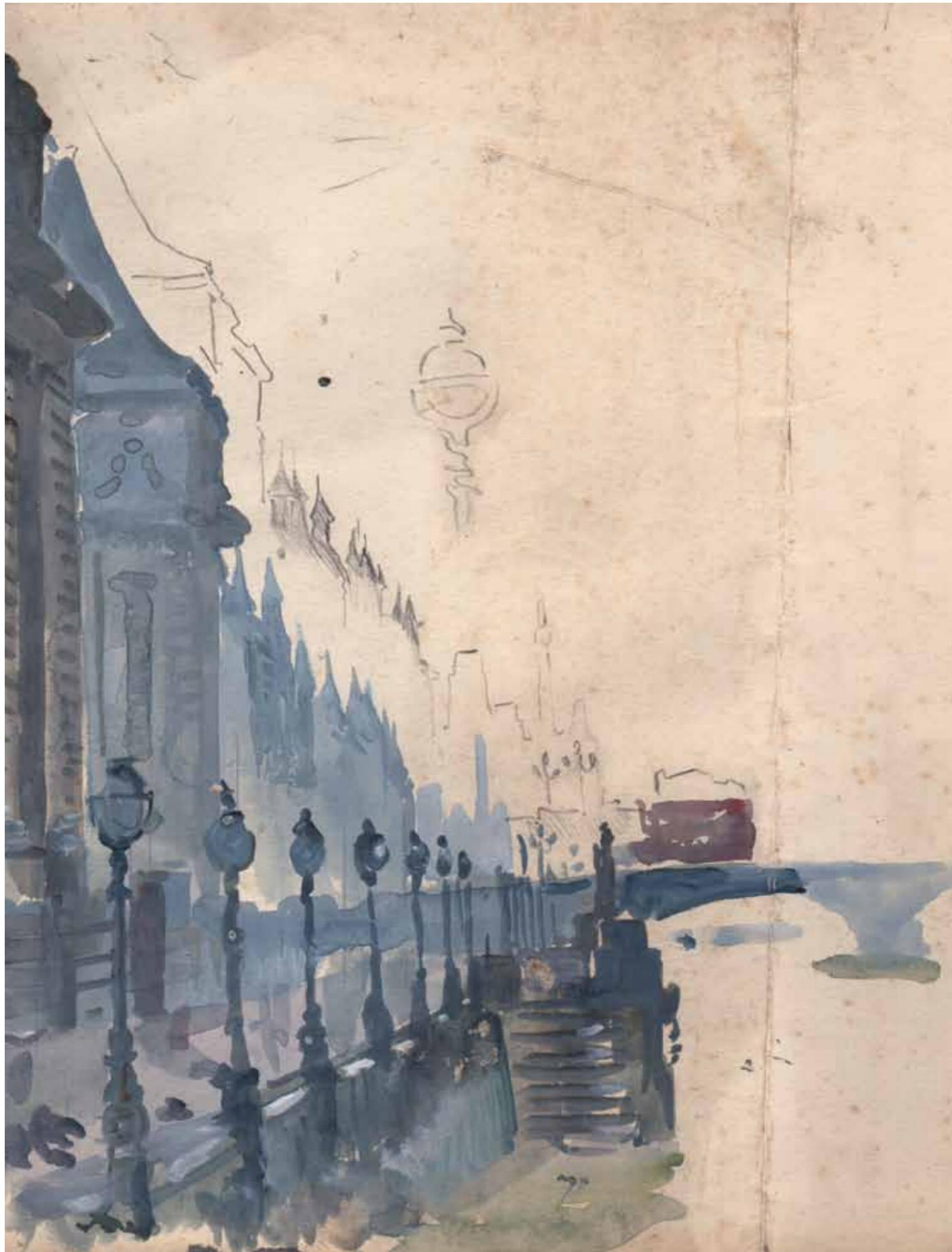


Cat. 25 –
Industrial View, c. 1930
 pencil and gouache on paper,
 11 x 9 ½ in. (28 x 24.5 cm)

vital and engaging in its spontaneous expressiveness than the more carefully finished *Mills and Moors*. From its title, it would appear that Cundall wanted to make a larger point with the more finished painting – a universal statement about the uneasy relationship between landscape and industrial building perhaps – as against the on-the-spot observation of the oil study.

Nearly always Cundall's working studies have this spontaneity and directness – a tremor of life as if caught on the wing – that is lost under the careful measurement and studied finish of the exhibition picture. Cundall's drawings and preparatory sketches, a number of them in gouache or thinned oil on tracing paper, are reaching new audiences today through the sheer invigorating freshness of their painterly attack. (Cat. 26-29) If, as is to be hoped, the interest that these less significant works command can also be extended to Cundall's more considered canvases, then a real revival of this unjustly neglected artist can get under way.

Charles Cundall can be celebrated for his particular way of looking, his craftsmanship, honesty of purpose, and consistent imaginative creation. His may be prose painting that does not seek to draw attention to itself by stylistic quirks or pyrotechnics, but in its understated appeal it fulfils a different role of quiet celebration. And, at its finest, it rises to true poetry. The work was all of a piece with the man. John Ward wrote to Cundall's daughter Jackie Setter in 1985: 'I doubt whether there was ever a more popular artist amongst his fellows than your father.'



Cat. 27 – *Palace of Westminster*, pencil and watercolour on tracing paper, 8 ¼ x 13 ½ in. (21 x 34.5 cm)



Cat. 28 – *Sketch for Demolition of St Thomas*, 1968, pencil and watercolour on paper, 9 ¼ x 6 ¾ in. (23.2 x 17 cm)



Cat. 29 – *Sketch for Demolition of St Thomas*, 1968, pencil and watercolour on paper, 7 x 6 ¼ in. (17.5 x 16 cm)

Cat. 26 – *The Embankment*, pencil and watercolour on paper, 9 ¾ x 8 ¾ in. (25 x 22.2 cm)

‘A detached observer we feel we can trust’: Charles Cundall as a War Artist

By Brian Foss

The Second World War was a difficult time for artists. Commercial and private patronage suffered, materials became difficult to obtain, and appropriate jobs were few and far between. National Gallery director Kenneth Clark estimated that between eight and nine thousand artists had fallen into unemployment by mid-November 1939¹, when he spearheaded the creation of the War Artists' Advisory Committee. Housed within the Ministry of Information, the WAAC dedicated itself to purchasing and commissioning artworks to form a visual record of British involvement in the war. Amongst the approximately four hundred artists who contributed work to the project were thirty-six men and one woman who were given multi-month full-time employment to document the personnel, facilities and pursuits of the three armed services and selected government ministries. One of those artists was Charles Cundall. (Fig. 23)

As a result, Cundall was one of the few artists for whom the war provided a busy professional life. Early in 1940 he produced for the Ministry of Information a poster, *Our Mechanised Army* (Fig. 24), showing massed tank movement. At the same time he was considered by the WAAC for a six-month, £650 appointment as artist to the Air Ministry. That position was finally awarded to Keith Henderson, and Cundall settled instead for a few months of more casual dealings with the committee, including the purchase of a painting of the triumphant return to Britain of the HMS *Exeter* following its role in the December 1939 battle that had destroyed Germany's *Admiral Graf Spee* pocket battleship. (This was a theme Cundall addressed again later that year in his *HMS Exeter at Plymouth in 1940: Back from the Graf Spee Action*. (Fig. 25)) Finally, in July 1940, the WAAC offered him a salaried six-month contract with the Admiralty, focusing on the work of the Merchant Navy: a timely subject that had been urged on the Admiralty by the Chamber of Shipping the previous spring.² Cundall, an enthusiastic peacetime traveller, continued to be on the move during the next six months, working on naval subjects seen on the Thames and the Medway, in Cornwall (at Falmouth and St Mawes), and in the West Country: a project that



Fig. 23 – Charles Cundall, Official War Artist, c.1940



Fig. 24 – *Our Mechanised Army: Tanks in action*. Image used for Ministry of Information poster (1940)
oil on canvas, 33 x 49 in. (84 x 124 cm) © Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 15)



Fig. 25 – *HMS Exeter at Plymouth in 1940: Back from the Graf Spee action*, (1940),
oil on canvas, 36 x 52 in. (91 x 132 cm) © Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 1848)

was overly ambitious in conception because he mistakenly thought that his contract was for twelve rather than six months. In 1941, after a brief lull following the end of his Admiralty employment early in the year, he was at last transferred to the Air Ministry, where he remained on salary until 1945. From 1941 until the end of the war his destinations included several English cities (notably Blackpool, Manchester, Liverpool and London) and counties (Kent, Somerset, Oxfordshire, Lancashire, Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Sussex, Yorkshire), various sites in Scotland (Oban, Orkney, Gourock, Rothesay, Edinburgh, Glasgow), Wales (Pembroke), Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, and even Germany, where he recorded the wrecked bulk of the German pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* (Fig. 26) in the summer of 1945.³



Fig. 26 - *The German Heavy Cruiser 'Admiral Scheer' at Kiel* (1945)
oil on canvas, 28 x 50 in. (71.1 x 127 cm) © Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 5679)

The gusto that Cundall brought to his employment endeared him to members of the WAAC. So did his credentials; by 1940 he had a reputation on the national art scene as a member of the New English Art Club, the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours. He had been made an associate member of the Royal Academy in 1937 (he would become a full academician in March 1944), and was a veteran of well-received solo exhibitions at London's Colnaghi gallery. He also had solid experience of what battle was like. From 1914 to 1917 he had fought with the Royal Fusiliers and had suffered so severe an injury to his right hand that he was forced to paint thereafter with his left.

However, the most attractive factor for the WAAC was that in the years since the mid-1920s Cundall had specialized in creating unified compositions out of complex, potentially confusing scenes – initially sporting matches, although his repertoire had expanded to embrace other events (such as *Bank Holiday, Brighton*, purchased for the Tate Gallery in 1933) involving large numbers of people spread over panoramic landscapes. “Such subjects are not aesthetic in

themselves," wrote one critic in a later appreciation, "and can only be made so by a kind of imaginative concentration, plus an insatiable curiosity in democracy at play."⁴ Modern warfare, with its vast fields of action, must have seemed the next logical step for an artist with these pictorial skills. Cundall's work was admired not only by the WAAC's armed services representatives, but also by the committee's three artist members. Muirhead Bone, Percy Jowett and Walter Russell were all, like Cundall, skilled academic artists. (Bone, whose drawings matched Cundall's paintings for their compositional scale and complexity and for their wealth of precisely rendered detail, had written the catalogue foreword for his friend's 1927 Colnaghi exhibition, praising him as a "detached observer we feel we can trust".⁵) The WAAC ultimately accepted fifty-seven of Cundall's paintings, on subjects ranging from naval installations to aerodromes; from aircraft under repair to flotillas of ships; from Women's Auxiliary Air Force mechanics, to the landing of Bordeaux refugees in Falmouth in 1940 and the arrival of American troops in Northern Ireland in 1942; and from behind-the-scenes events at armed services installations, to actual combat.

But Kenneth Clark, although he recognized the scrupulous observation and the documentary value of Cundall's work, was skeptical about the artist's academic painting at a time when war was characterized by a speed and physical scale that dwarfed its traditional depiction. In his unsigned flyleaf introductions to a series of 1942 booklets reproducing WAAC pictures, Clark wrote: "What did it [the war] look like? They will ask in 1981, and no amount of description or documentation will answer them. Nor will big formal compositions like the battle pictures which hang in palaces..."⁶ Nevertheless, Clark also knew that Cundall's particular skills, proved over the preceding two decades, could serve an important purpose in a project that aimed to compile a faithful visual record of the kingdom at war. In addition, to justify its existence and to differentiate itself from organs of state art patronage in totalitarian countries, the WAAC needed to position its collection as a mirror of British multiplicity united in the war effort. Incorporating academic art alongside more frankly modernist styles was an important aspect of that self-presentation.

In May 1940, a few weeks before the start of Cundall's employment with the Admiralty, the WAAC entertained the possibility of asking him "to carry out an imaginative reconstruction of a subject such as the [April 1940] battle of Narvik fiord".⁷ This was a rare consideration for a committee that recognized the need to chronicle crucial military events but that was nervous that artists who had not been present at the events might slip into stereotypical, heroicizing battle painting. In the event, the Narvik proposal was overtaken by history less than three weeks later when, in late May, the brief but epic evacuation from Dunkirk to England of some 340,000 troops began.



Fig. 27 – *The Withdrawal from Dunkirk, June 1940* (detail), 1940, oil on canvas, 40 x 60 ¼ in. (102 x 153 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 305)



Fig. 28 – *The Withdrawal from Dunkirk, June 1940*, 1940, oil on canvas, 40 x 60 ¼ in. (102 x 153 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 305)



Fig. 29 – Richard Ernst Eurich, *Withdrawal from Dunkirk, June 1940*, 1940, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 in. (76 x 102 cm)
Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Although Prime Minister Churchill warned at the time that wars were not won by evacuations, Dunkirk was a spectacular (if improbable) success that left Britain – after the fall of France – in defiant isolation amongst European nations. Edward Ardizzone, Edward Bawden and Barnett Freedman, all salaried War Office artists, were among those plucked from the beaches and returned to Britain during the evacuation, but none of them had experience portraying subjects on a grand physical scale. On 20 June 1940, therefore, Cundall was offered 100 guineas to paint *The Withdrawal from Dunkirk, June 1940* (Fig. 27 and Fig. 28) relying on photographs, news reports and participant interviews.

Cundall rose to the occasion with the largest oil painting to enter the WAAC's collection up to that point. From the billowing smoke that invades the sky, to the confusion of land, sea, ships and hundreds of servicemen in the lower half of the canvas, the painting is filled with incident, objects and bodies. So important was Dunkirk for the national psyche that the WAAC commissioned not one but two large reconstructions of it. Thus, when Cundall's *Withdrawal* was featured in the ongoing display of war art at the National Gallery in late August, it was paired with a second visual interpretation by Richard Eurich. The latter's *Withdrawal from Dunkirk, 1940* (Fig. 29) is smaller than Cundall's painting, from which it also differs in the balance it strikes between the chaos of reality (Cundall's strength) and the imposed order of art. Eurich placed a dominant and artificially shaped cloud of smoke near the centre of his canvas, and rhymed its unnaturally straight left edge with other verticals, including the explosion to the left, the lighthouse near the centre of the painting, and even the patterns of the waves in the harbour.

The Times blandly but accurately observed that “[b]oth pictures are of great interest, not only as records of a historical event, but as fine examples of the styles of the two artists.”⁸ Elsewhere the critics Eric Newton and Douglas Cooper were more specific, arguing that Cundall had squeezed too much unresolved detail into his version, although Newton later amended his claim that the composition was “weak and spotty” by suggesting that “[i]f the picture conveys adequately the scene at Dunkirk then its composition doesn't matter.”⁹ Newton nonetheless implicitly continued to prefer the Eurich, comparing Cundall's painting to a Hollywood spectacular, and Eurich's to Greek tragedy (“which avoids, wherever possible the murder and the blood”). Clark, too, favoured Eurich's version for its balance of emotional conviction and pictorial effect.¹⁰ None of this, however, prevented the Cundall from enjoying press coverage as the more accurate historical document through its projection of a believable sense of immediacy.¹¹ That judgment was reinforced by a Ministry of Information publicity photograph showing two servicemen, one of them apparently verifying the lifelikeness of the painting by pointing approvingly at one of its many details.

Both Cundall and Eurich, with their different strengths, received a small amount of additional WAAC work painting reconstructions. However, when Cundall later became aware of Clark's dislike of one of the resulting canvases – his *U570 Surrenders to a 269 Squadron Hudson Aircraft, 27 August 1941* (Fig. 30) (a painting that shows an up-to-the-minute theme treated in a decidedly unmodernist way) – he struck back in a letter to the WAAC. "Of course I dislike doing that type of picture," he wrote. "It would be nice to please oneself entirely & perhaps by so doing get me appreciation from K.C." Two weeks later, however, Cundall viewed the painting on display in the National Gallery and conceded that Clark had been right: "I wish I had not done it."¹²

By the spring of 1941 it had become clear that the Admiralty's preference was to engage Eurich as its next war artist rather than to renew Cundall's contract, which had ended in January 1941 after six months. At the same time the WAAC's Air Ministry representative, Harald Peake, was eager to hire Cundall on a full-time basis.¹³ Peake was Kenneth Clark's bête noire. He was overtly hostile to the pictures that Paul Nash submitted during his six months as an Air Ministry artist in 1940 and had demanded that Nash's contract not be renewed. Clark regarded Nash's anthropomorphizing representations of British and German aircraft as being highlights of the war art collection, and was as furious about the refusal to renew Nash's contract as he must have been despairingly bemused by Peake's statement that Nash's views of crashed German bombers were objectionable to the RAF "for the same reason that pictures of horses are much more attractive to hunting men than are pictures of the dead fox!"¹⁴ In the end, though, Peake got his way and Cundall found a home with the Air Ministry for the remainder of the war.



Fig. 30 –
U570 Surrenders to a 269 Squadron Hudson Aircraft, 27 August 1941, 1941,
oil on canvas,
44 x 34 in. (112 x 86 cm)
© Imperial War Museums
(IWM Art LD1561)



Fig. 31 – *St Paul's and London from the Thames during the Blitz*, 1943, oil on canvas, 15½ x 21½ in. (38.5 x 54 cm)
Royal Air Force Museum Collection

Throughout his time as a war artist, Cundall's most visually satisfying work was that which allowed him either to indulge his interest in bringing cohesion to scenes of people engaged in war-related activities, or to punctiliously document the appearance of things he had seen with his own eyes while also hinting at the subjects' latent psychological or symbolic power. For that reason it is unsurprising that the WAAC did not acquire such works as *St Paul's and London from the Thames during the Blitz* (Fig. 31): an unoriginal painting, seemingly based on Blitz photography from two or three years earlier. Conversely, *No. 11 Fighter Group's Operations Room, Uxbridge* (Fig. 32) shows WAAF's tracking aircraft positions at a map table while being surveyed by other women and men in an elevated viewing gallery. Its profusion of detail carries the conviction of a scene personally witnessed and synthesized by the artist. The multi-level composition of *No. 11 Fighter Group*, the approximately fifty female and male figures' variety of gestures, the detailed map, and even the small clock on the wall (the time is clearly visible) produce a scene both visually stimulating and narratively convincing. The same may be said of other paintings such as *RAF Morse School at Olympia [Blackpool]* (1940) (Fig. 33), with its hundreds of human figures arranged into structured groups but also implying fragility by being dwarfed within a cavernous and slightly surreal interior.

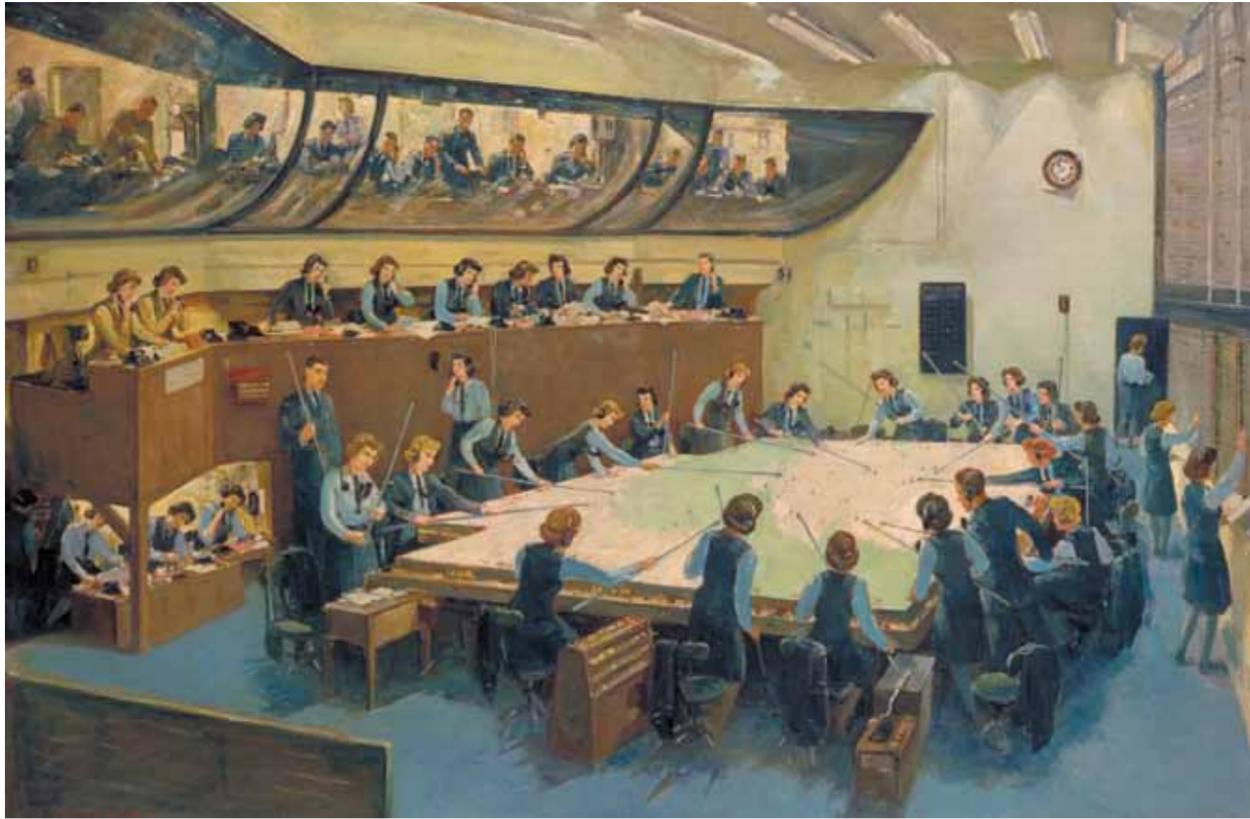


Fig. 32 – No 11 Fighter Group's Operations Room, Uxbridge, 1943, oil on canvas, 35 ½ x 53 ½ in. (90 x 136 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 4140)



Fig. 33 – RAF Morse School at Olympia, 1940, oil on wood, 39 ½ x 49 ¼ in. (82.5 x 125 cm)
© The Artist's Estate / Bridgeman Images Photo Credit: Royal Air Force Museum

Although Cundall was adept at presenting the ideal of a united population by focusing on crowds of anonymous people engaged in shared activities – a theme that reached its thematic peak late in the war with the very large *Exterior of St Paul's Cathedral on Thanksgiving Day, 13 May 1945* (Fig. 34) – he also on rare occasions resorted to lone figures. This is the case with the unidentified man in *Air Gunner Prepared for Action* (Fig. 35): a study in which the complicated architecture of the gun turret seems to have been as important to the artist as was the gunner himself. Elsewhere, in a series of full-length portraits of individual airmen (none of which was acquired by the WAAC), the concentration is solely on the men themselves and thus on the contributions of ordinary people to the war effort. One of the images, *Sergeant Pilot R.H. Higgins, Royal New Zealand Air Force, RAF Wyton* (Fig. 36), additionally draws attention to the crucial support given to Britain by the citizens of Commonwealth countries: a theme that also appears in portraits by another Air Ministry artist, Eric Kennington.



Fig. 34 – *The Exterior of St Paul's Cathedral on Thanksgiving Day, 13th May 1945*, 1945, oil on canvas, 48 x 72 in. (122 x 183 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 5773)



Fig. 35 – *Air Gunner Prepared for Action*
oil on paper; 14 ¼ x 16 in. (36 x 40 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 6051)



Fig. 36 – *Sergeant Pilot R. H. Higgins*,
Royal New Zealand Air Force, RAF Wyton, 1941-45
oil on paper; 20 ½ x 14 in. (52 x 36 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 7262)



Fig. 37 – *Sheerness*, 1940, oil on canvas, 23 x 36 in. (58 x 91 cm) © Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 745)

Cundall's art was well represented in the ever-changing WAAC display at the National Gallery (1940-45), at the WAAC's swan-song show of 1,028 artworks at Burlington House in the autumn of 1945, and in a number of the exhibitions that were sent on tour in Britain and abroad. Five of his oils – including *Sheerness* (Fig. 37), which in Cundall fashion shows a busy Thames estuary scene with a distant horizon, plentiful shipping, barrage balloons and several factory buildings – were reproduced in a cheap and cheerful 1942 booklet showing WAAC images of the war at sea and published by the Oxford University Press.¹⁵ Critical reaction, however, varied. A 1945 commentator probably annoyed Kenneth Clark by complaining that the work of John Piper and Eric Ravilious was superficial, that of Stanley Spencer too distant from the war, and that of Graham Sutherland and Henry Moore too abstract. Cundall's paintings, however, "leave no doubt that [he was] on the spot, and they convey that wealth of detail which a child would admire, combined with an impression of that vastness and busy activity which must overwhelm any visitor to war ports or factories."¹⁶ Art historian Paul Oppé was also impressed, writing in 1941 that Cundall's richness of documentation endowed his paintings with a "lively atmosphere".¹⁷ Partisans of a more ardent visual modernism, however, complained that Cundall's sizeable canvases failed to suggest "an authentic scrap of experience plucked red-hot from an epic too big for any man to grasp":¹⁸ a charge exemplified in another writer's assertion that Cundall's art had "the value of a good photograph, neither more nor less".¹⁹ In the final analysis, however, Cundall – an artist fascinated as much by the big events of the war as by its cornucopia of detail, and predisposed to celebrating the involvement in it of crowds of his fellow-citizens – brought to Second World War art his empathy, his self-assured style, his documentary instincts, and above all his intense absorption in everything he saw.

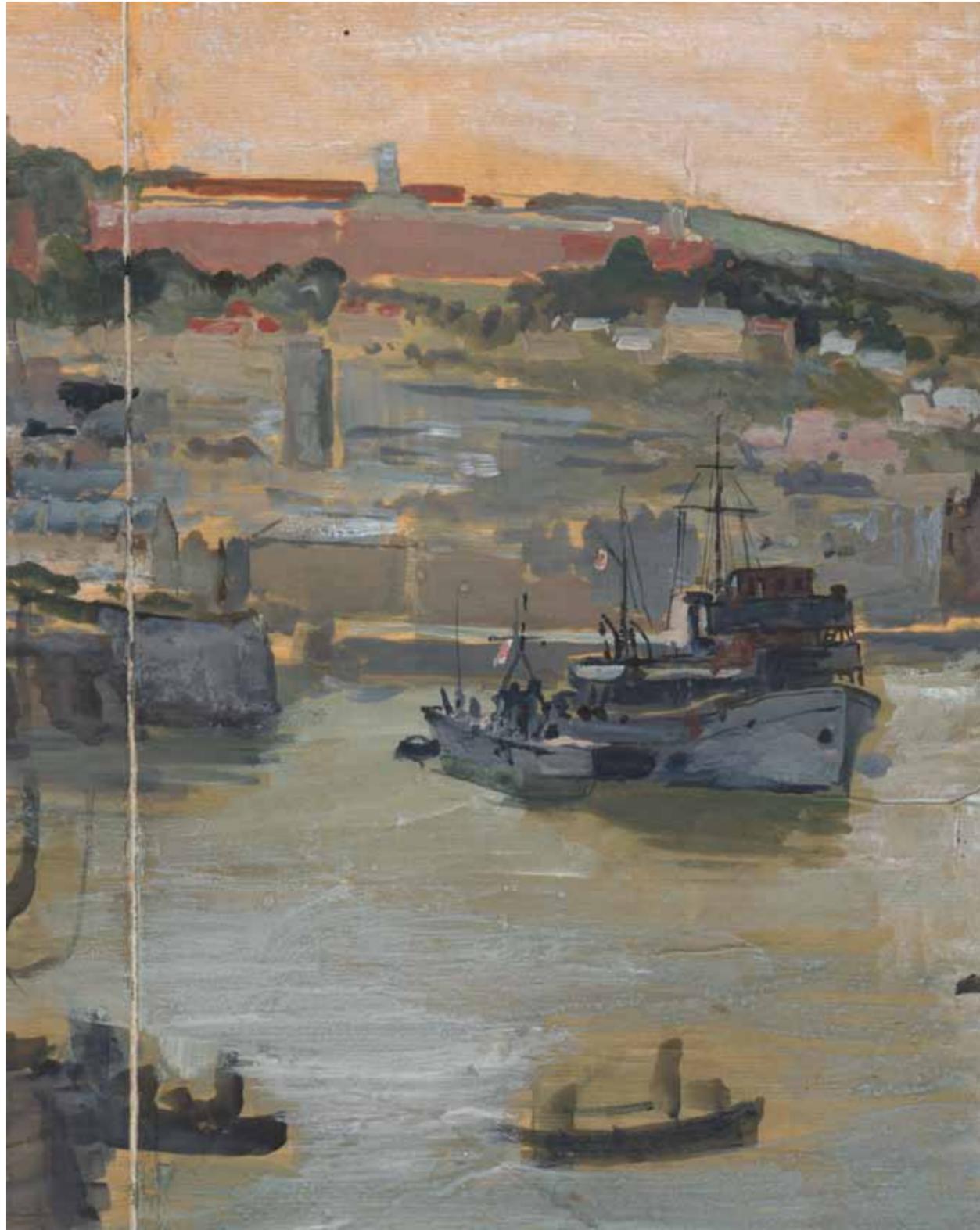
I am grateful to Jenny Wood for her generous assistance researching the Cundall papers held by the Department of Art of the Imperial War Museum.

Endnotes

- 1 Kenneth Clark, *The Other Half: A Self-portrait* (London: John Murray, 1977), p22.
- 2 WAAC, Minutes of the 10 April 1940 meeting (Imperial War Museum, Dept of Art Archive).
- 3 These lists are compiled from Cundall's personal notebooks in the possession of his daughter Annabel Jacqueline Setter and from his correspondence with the WAAC (IWM Dept of Art Archive:WA/55-21: Charles Cundall).
- 4 Adrian Bury, "Charles Cundall, R.A.," *The Studio* 149, no.745 (April 1955): p118.
- 5 Quoted in William Gaunt, "The Life and Work of Charles Cundall," p117 of this publication.
- 6 Printed in all four volumes of the first *War Pictures by British Artists* series (London: Oxford University Press, 1942).
- 7 WAAC, Minutes of the 8 May 1940 meeting (Imperial War Museum, Dept of Art Archive).
- 8 "Pictures by War Artists: Records of Historical Events," *The Times* (24 August 1940).
- 9 Eric Newton, "War Painters Again," *Sunday Times* (11 August 1940); Newton, "Paul Nash's War Paintings," *Sunday Times* (1 September 1940); Douglas Cooper, "War Artists' Exhibition at the National Gallery," *Burlington Magazine* 77, no.451 (October 1940): p133.
- 10 Kenneth Clark, "War Artists at the National Gallery," *The Studio* 123 (January 1942): p9.
- 11 Douglas Cooper, "War Artists' Exhibition at the National Gallery," *Burlington Magazine* 77, no.451 (October 1940): p133.
- 12 Charles Cundall to E.M.O'R. Dickey (Secretary, WAAC), 12 January 1942; and Cundall to Dickey, 27 January 1942 (IWM Dept of Art Archive:WA/55-21: Charles Cundall).
- 13 E.M.O'R. Dickey to R.M.Y. Gleadowe (Air Ministry representative on the WAAC), 24 April 1941 (IWM Dept of Art Archive,WA/55-21: Charles Cundall).
- 14 Harald Peake to Paul Nash, 10 November 1940 (Tate Archive: Paul Nash papers,TGA 7050.47).
- 15 *War Pictures by British Artists, No.1: The War at Sea* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942).
- 16 E.H., Review of *War Pictures by British Artists, Number 1: War at Sea*, in *Burlington Magazine* 86, no.505 (April 1945): p104.
- 17 Paul Oppé, "Painting in War Time," *Britain Today*, no.49 (21 March 1941): p4.
- 18 "War Pictures at National Gallery," *Manchester Guardian* (2 July 1940).
- 19 "Art: British War Artists," *Time and Tide* (13 July 1940).

Cat. 30 – Avro Anson of Coastal Command above a convoy in the North Sea, 1941, signed and dated, oil on paper, 10 ½ x 8 ½ in. (27 x 22 cm)





Cat. 31 – Royal naval vessels in harbour, gouache on tracing paper mounted on paper, 11 ½ x 9 ¼ in. (29.5 x 23.5 cm)



Cat. 32 – Study for *Hipper at Kiel*, c.1945, pencil and gouache on paper, 13 x 20 ¾ in. (33 x 53 cm)
(Painting now in the collection of the Glasgow Museums)



Cat. 33 – Possibly a study for *Bordeaux Refugees, at Falmouth*, pencil and gouache on paper, 10 ½ x 15 ¾ in. (27 x 40 cm)
(Painting now in the collection of the Imperial War Museum)



Cat. 34 – Study for *Motor Launches, Dartmouth*, c.1942,
oil on paper, 9 1/4 x 14 in. (23.5 x 35.5 cm)
(Painting now in the collection of the Imperial War Museum)



Cat. 35 – A Royal Fleet Auxiliary
oil tanker of the Wave class, c.1942,
oil on paper, 10 1/4 x 19 3/4 in. (26.5 x 50.5 cm)



Cat. 36 – Study for *Scapa Flow*, c.1943,
gouache on paper,
7 3/4 x 14 1/4 in. (20 x 36.5 cm)
(Painting now in the collection of
the Imperial War Museum)



Cat. 37 – Flagship of the anti-submarine training school at
Tobermory with a small steam yacht alongside, c.1942,
pencil and gouache on paper, 6 3/4 x 9 1/2 in. (17 x 24.2 cm)



Cat. 38 – Study for *Motor Launches, Dartmouth*, c.1942, gouache on paper, 15 1/4 x 22 1/4 in. (39 x 56.5 cm)
(Painting now in the collection of the Imperial War Museum) (see page 126)



Cat. 39 –
Study for *Tobermory from the
Admiral's Flagship*, c.1942,
watercolour on paper,
14 x 18 1/2 in. (36 x 47 cm)



Cat. 40 – Study for *Hipper at Kiel*, c.1945, incised with title, oil on thick paper; across three sheets, 14 x 60 ½ in. (36 x 154 cm)
 (Painting now in the collection of the Glasgow Museums)



Cat. 41 – Possibly a study for *Serving Station, Gourrock*, c.1942, pencil and watercolour on paper, 7 x 9 ½ in. (17.5 x 24.5 cm)
 (Painting now in the collection of the Paisley Museum & Art Gallery)



Cat. 42 – *Men on a Submarine*, oil on paper, 14 ½ x 21 in. (37 x 53 cm)
 Submarine N72 was HM Submarine *Sealion*. The one tied up alongside it, outboard, appears to be Dutch.



Cat. 43 – Study for *Coastal Operational Training Unit* (Limavady, Northern Ireland), c. 1942, (see Fig. 38)
oil on paper, 14 x 42 in. (35.6 x 106.7 cm)



Cat. 44 – Study of a Sunderland, inscribed Western House, Fleming,
watercolour and gouache over pencil on paper; 11 x 20 in. (28 x 51 cm)



Cat. 45 – Study for *Lancasters*,
wash on paper; 6 x 13 ¾ in. (15 x 35 cm)
(Painting now in the collection of the
Royal Air Force Museum)



Fig. 38 – *(Coastal) Operational Training Unit, Limavady, Northern Ireland, 1943*,
oil on canvas, 23 ½ x 39 ¾ in. (59.7 x 101 cm) © The Artist's Estate / Bridgeman Images
Photo Credit: Royal Air Force Museum (FA03032)



Cat. 46 – *Pont Neuf*, 1952, oil on paper, 14 x 20 in. (35.5 x 50.8 cm)



Cat. 47 – *Quai des Grands Augustins, Paris*, 1950s, oil on paper, 16 x 24 in. (40.7 x 61 cm)

'Everything seemed to conspire to make pictures': Charles Cundall Abroad

By Michael Barker

Charles Ernest Cundall was probably the most widely-travelled and prolific artist of his generation, his panoramic landscapes, town and crowd scenes, rich with texture, light and movement providing a unique twentieth-century record of many of the notable cities, towns and landscapes in Europe and beyond: in Russia, America, and royal events in Canada and South Africa.* As a child he had lived with his family at Manila in the Philippines and then in Australia where at Melbourne his interest in art was awakened by visiting its Art Gallery. It perhaps prepared him for his life-long fascination for foreign travel.

By 1918 he was a trained artist and exhibited 'Somewhere in France', a souvenir of his wartime service, at the Royal Academy. As early as July 1916 he had produced two versions of 'Haunted House' showing a ruined building with a trench in the foreground. (Cat. 1, page 8) There was also a sketch of soldiers playing cards by candlelight and 'Billets at Ferme du Roi', all clearly of the same era.

After the Great War, despite his bitter experience as a soldier in the trenches, Cundall returned to France in 1920, where, thanks to the highly advantageous exchange rate, life was inexpensive. France and Italy became his countries of preference. In France, he attended the Academie Colarossi in Montparnasse which had been founded to compete with the too academic École des Beaux Arts. This was an influential school that accepted female artists and gathered students – many later to be famous – from all over the world, including some of the Scottish Colourists. Cundall rented a small studio in the Place de La Sorbonne and enjoyed the free and easy café life and good, cheap meals in Parisian restaurants.

In 1922, Cundall undertook a trip with his artist friends Henry Rushbury (1889-1968) and Job Nixon (1891-1938). They started in Normandy, passed through the small town of Caudebec-en-Caux, visited Rouen, which left a deep impression on him, and went on to Paris, sketching all the while. Most of his Parisian subjects (over some 40 years) were to be found on the Left Bank of the Seine (Cat. 46, 47 and 48), an exception was depicting in 1922 the demolition of the near-century-old city walls, made obsolete by the development of long-range artillery and the arrival of aircraft (Cat. 49).

* For the Royal Visit to Africa, Cundall accompanied the King and Queen only as far as Freetown.

Overleaf: Cat. 48 – *Seine Bookstalls & Fishermen*, oil on paper, 12 x 18 ½ in. (30.5 x 46.5 cm)





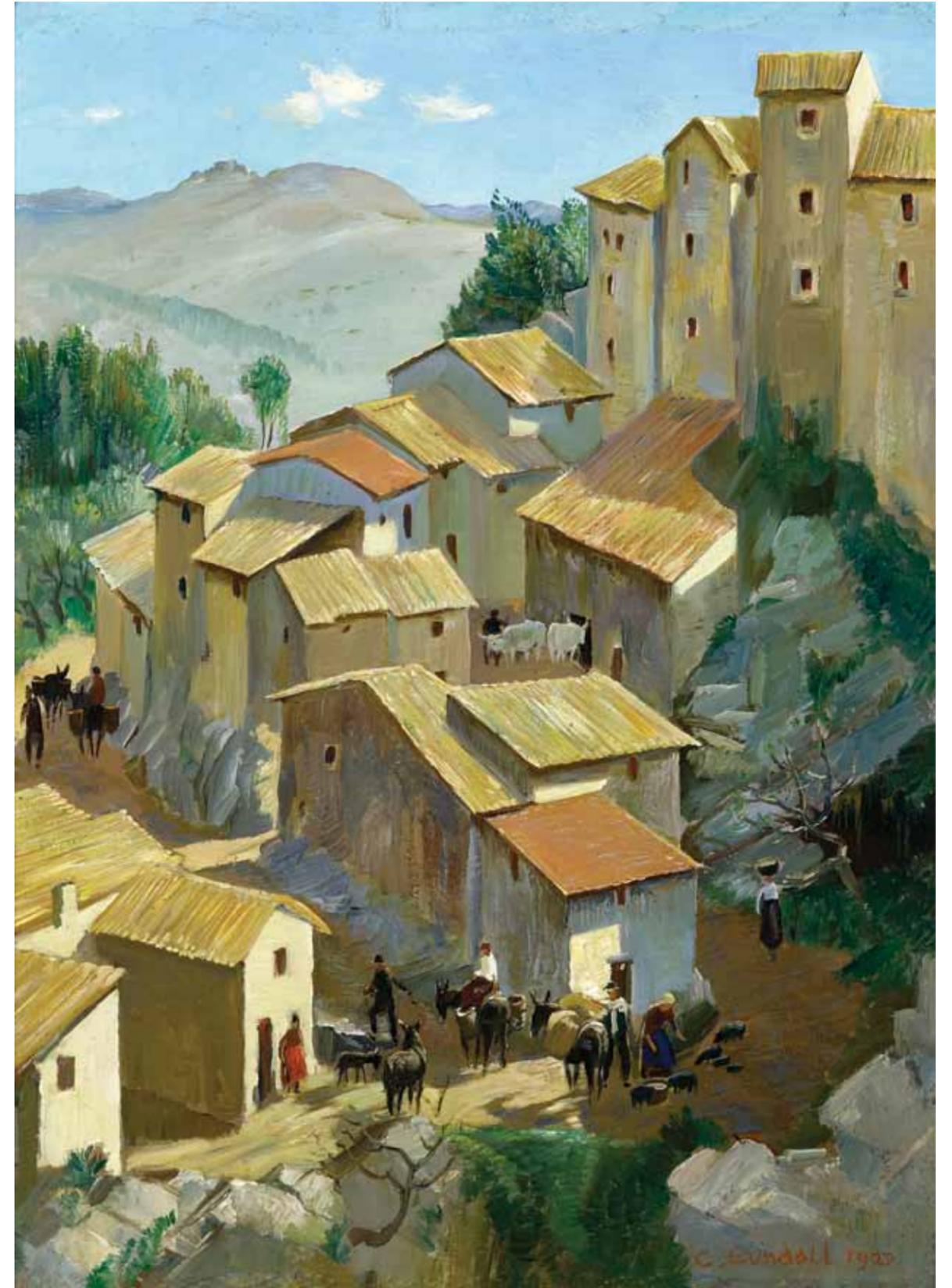
Cat. 49 – *Demolishing the Walls of Paris*, 1922, oil on panel, 15 ½ x 22 in. (39.4 x 55.9 cm.)

It is true to say that over his long and distinguished career – as a member of the Royal Academy – elected RA in 1944, the New English Arts Club, the Royal Society of Painters, the Royal Watercolours Society and the National Society of Painters, Sculptors and Engravers, his style as an Impressionistic artist hardly changed over the years. He was particularly fond of townscapes framed by hills or mountains. Many of his paintings were worked up in his Chelsea studio from his copious sketch-books, though there are photographs of him at his easel. (Fig. 39).

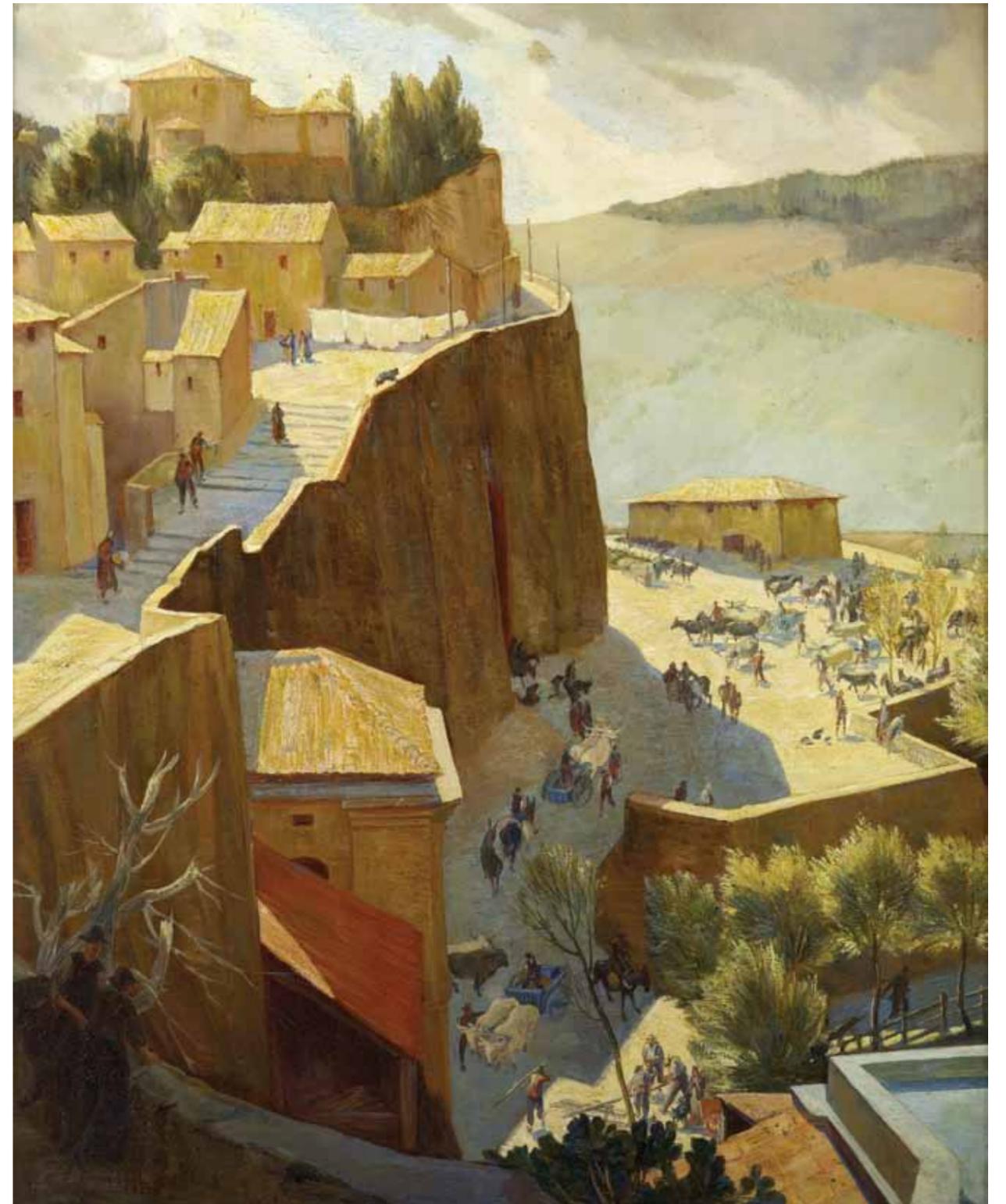
In 1921 and 1922 he travelled to Italy – landing at Anticoli Corrado, a picturesque town 40 kilometers north-east of Rome. The town had been favoured by artists, including Corot and Kokoschka, since the 19th century and painters from Rome would travel there to engage their models among the pretty young local women. In Cundall's case it was a sunny canvas of the town and two atmospheric views at dusk of the old houses climbing the hill. (Cat. 50 and 51) His other ports of call were the city of Naples to paint the Porta Capuana, a 15th-century marble arch flanked by two mediaeval towers (also sketched by J.M.W. Turner) – its tabernacle structure on top since removed – the Bay of Naples with Mount Vesuvius in the background and Orvieto, a mediaeval town perched on a rock in Umbria with a view of the cattle market below the walls. (Cat. 52)



Fig. 39 Painting in Honfleur, France, c.1923



Cat. 50 – *Anticoli Corrado*, 1922, signed and dated, oil on panel, 13 x 9 ½ in. (33 x 24 cm) Provenance: Margaret Stanfield



Cat. 52 – *The Cattle Market Orvieto*, 1922, signed and dated, oil on panel, 21 ¼ x 17 ½ in. (54 x 44.5 cm)

Cat. 51 – *Dusk, Anticoli Corrado*, 1921, oil on canvas, 16 ½ x 11 in. (42 X 28 cm)
A painting entitled 'Evening Anticoli' was exhibited at the Goupil Gallery in 1935



Cat. 53 – *The Duomo, Assisi*, early 1920s, signed and dated, oil on panel, 17 ¾ x 21 ¾ in. (45 x 55 cm)
Provenance: with Grosvenor Galleries, London, where purchased by T.S.A. Lingard.
Exhibited: London, Whitechapel Art Gallery, April - May 1939, London, Arts Council, 1954, no. 5.

Travelling further north, he painted a panorama of Florence viewed from Fiesole and a misty view of Assisi. (Cat. 53) Other more intimate scenes in Umbria and Tuscany were of grape-pickers (Cat. 54) and oxen ploughing a vine-yard, the oxen also seen in a photograph. (Fig. 40)



Cat. 54 – *Italian Vineyard*, c. 1922, signed, titled on a label to the reverse, oil on panel, 17 ¾ x 21 ¾ in. (45 x 55 cm)



Fig. 40 – Photograph taken by Cundall on the way to Rocca.

Married in 1923 to the artist Jacqueline Pietersen, they honeymooned in Honfleur and Paris. En route in Normandy he painted 'Jumièges,' the great, ruined abbey and 'Les Grands Andelys' (home town of Nicolas Poussin). Among his Parisian subjects were 'Théâtre des Guignols, Champs Élysées' (a French sort of Punch and Judy), 'Le Pont des Arts' and 'Les Bains Chauds' – hot baths on boats on the banks of the Seine – when private bathrooms were rare. Favourite, often repeated subjects, were the Pont-Neuf, the oldest bridge in Paris, built for King Henri IV, whose nearby statue Cundall also depicted later, and the lively well-peopled banks of the Seine with its booksellers and fishermen. At the picturesque town of Moret-sur-Loing in the Île-de-France, he paid due tribute to the Anglo-French Impressionist artist Alfred Sisley. At St Cloud he colourfully painted a busy fairground with various stalls, a bandstand with musicians playing and horses being groomed. During the 1920s he painted at the old walled Breton city of St Malo, at St Servan-sur-Mer nearby, and the many-turreted château of Josselin in Brittany. In Provence: the roof-tops of Cagnes, Monaco and the nearby mediaeval hill village of La Turbie – 'Morning' and olive gatherers, the sea front at Menton, and stevedores in le Vieux Port of Marseille, the spectacular church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde above. One curious study was of Monsieur Brétemps, a butcher, presumably in France.

The late 1920s and 1930s were epic years of travel to France – Paris as usual and Albi – and to Italy, where he returned to Orvieto. He also travelled to Russia, Ireland, Sweden and Spain. In Sweden he painted Stockholm under the midnight sun, depicting the modernist City Hall with boats moored alongside. In Spain, where he found himself at the outbreak of the Civil War, he visited the great walled city of Avila, Toledo – its palace of Alcázar and the El Greco's – Segovia, and Madrid. In Madrid he visited, of course, the Prado to look at the Goya's. Attributed to Cundall is a view of the Algerian port of Oran, perhaps an extension to his Spanish trip.

His pictures of Soviet Russia under snow (including the vividly-coloured onion-topped towers of the Kremlin), were shown in an exhibition at Preston, Lancashire in January 1942 during an Anglo-Russian week. In Leningrad he visited the Hermitage. He returned to Italy and travelled in a train full of armed Mussolini supporters between Orvieto and Rome. He painted the Forum in Rome and the ruins of the ancient Roman fountain of Meta Sudans by the Colosseum which was destroyed by Mussolini soon afterwards. He also depicted the fine, recently erected, equestrian statue of Anita, wife of Giuseppe Garibaldi.

Dieppe, the port-town in Normandy, ancient and picturesque but actually largely rebuilt after destruction by the Anglo-Dutch fleet in 1694, was painted by innumerable artists, notably Sickert. It found great favour with Cundall, who painted it several times between 1922 and the late 1940s. One such was a panoramic view from the cliff-tops of the town around the harbour with its ferry-boats arrived from England, the Rue Notre-Dame and its flanking eighteenth-century arcades, the inner harbour with a crowd of fishermen gossiping in the foreground, the great Gothic cathedral of St Jacques in the background, the harbour with the Poissonnerie in 1939 and again the steam train running along the quay to the gare maritime. (Fig. 41) In 1929 he painted a similar scene of the port of Boulogne-sur-Mer with the Express steam train in the foreground.



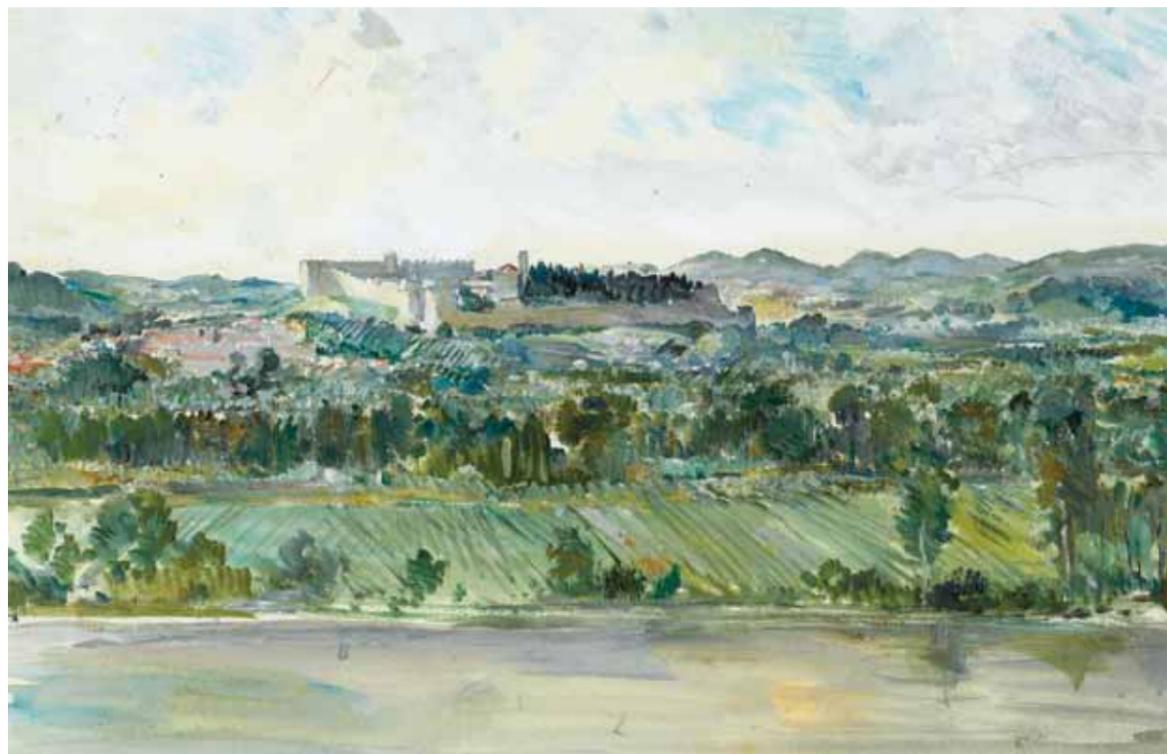
Fig. 41 – Dieppe Harbour, 1939, oil on board 21 ½ x 11 ½ in. (55 x 29 cm) Private collection

In 1934 Cundall was included in a group show at the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, held despite tensions with the Fascist regime. In 1938 he recorded the triumphant Royal State Visit to Paris. The French put on a tremendous show and the Queen dazzled with her white wardrobe designed by Norman Hartnell. His painting of this visit depicted a view of the royal barge proceeding along the Seine. The following year he accompanied the Royal Visit to Canada. He painted the Royal Family's arrival at Quebec which included a panorama of the city.

During the Post-War period he continued his extensive and intrepid foreign travels. Life must have been a bit pinched with the stringent currency restrictions of the time, though perhaps less so when he accompanied the Royal Visit to South Africa in 1947 where the King and Queen and their daughters were rapturously received. During the voyage he was spotted by the Queen who espied him painting behind a screen. Remarking his red mop she exclaimed "he must be Mr Cundall". Cundall only accompanied the Royal Family as far as Freetown, Sierra Leone, where he took the opportunity to paint a view of the town below mountains, with the battleship in the harbour and natives paddling their boats in the foreground.

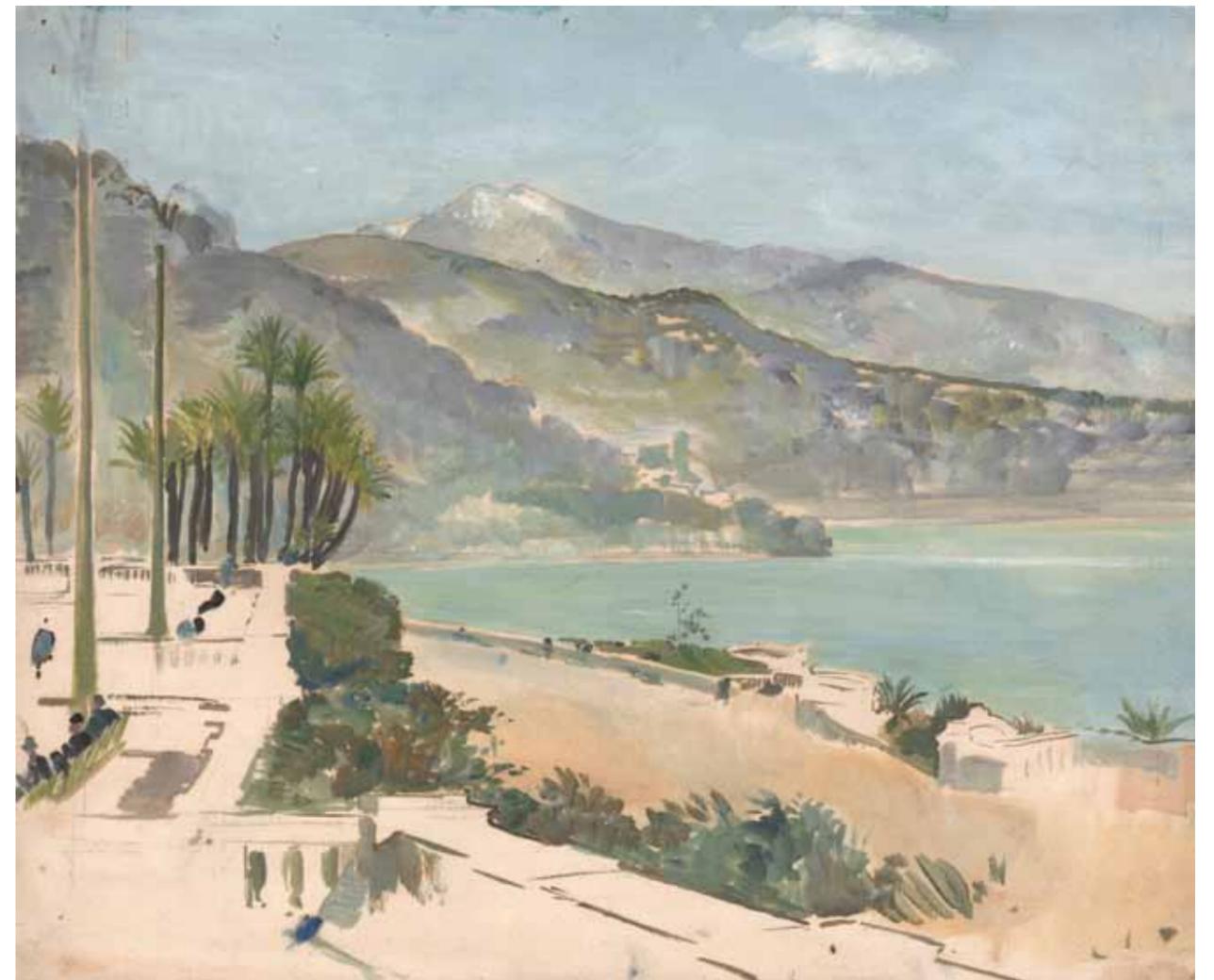


Cat. 55 – *Le Pont d'Avignon*, 1963, oil on paper; 12 ½ x 17 in. (31.6 x 43.1 cm)



Cat. 56 – *Chateau de St Andre, Villeneuve-des-Avignons*, 1963, oil on paper; 12 ½ x 17 in. (31.6 x 43.2 cm)

In the South of France he again painted extensively over many years: the holiday house of his patron Sir Harald Peake (1899-1978) at Le Bois de Peygros at Mougins, the Palace of Popes, the famous ruined twelfth-century bridge (Cat. 55) and the ramparts at Avignon and, across the Rhône, the ancient château of St André at Villeneuve-lès-Avignon. (Cat. 56) He also painted a panorama of the scent capital of Grasse and various sketches in the town, including the statue of Fragonard, its most famous son. Other subjects were a beach at Monte-Carlo (Cat. 57), views of Cannes including the Cottage de la Cava (in fact a quite grand 19th-century villa), a panorama of Antibes (Cat. 58), Menton, the railway station at Roquebrune-Cap Martin (including its mediaeval hill village above) and, uncharacteristically, the fin-de-siecle Villa Les Mouettes at Cap d'Ail, built for a rich Parisienne. At St Paul-de-Vence, one of the loveliest villages in Provence, he painted *la Maison Payne*.



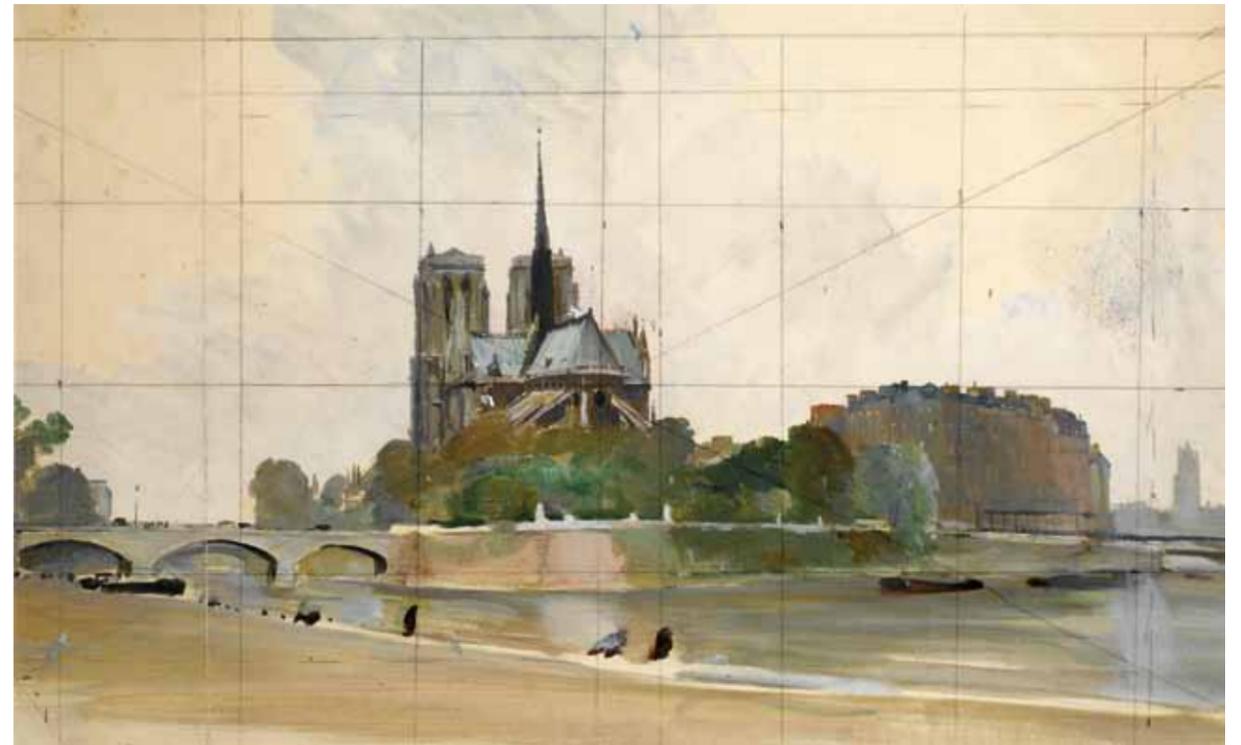
Cat. 57 – *From the Terrace, Monte Carlo*, 1956, pencil and oil on paper; 14 ½ x 17 ¾ in. (37 x 45.2 cm)



Cat. 58 – *Antibes*, 1955, oil on canvas, 18 x 30 in. (46 x 76 cm)

Again in Paris several times he painted the grandeur of the cathedral of Notre-Dame with the Pont de l'Archevêché (Cat. 59), the Tuileries Gardens (Cat. 60), the Seine bankside with its bookstalls and fishermen (Cat. 48), the spacious Luxembourg gardens and by contrast the grand seventeenth-century mansion Hôtel Lambert, Quai d'Anjou on the Île-St Louis, the Quai des Grands Augustins (Cat. 48), the church of St Germain-des-Prés, the oldest church in the city, and the lovely 17th-century bridge of Pont-Marie and the Pont St Michel from various viewpoints.

In Italy again numerous times over the years, he painted in Florence (its justly celebrated Ponte Vecchio and San Frediano), the port of Genoa, an early morning view in Venice, the basilica of San Marco and the Rio San Trovaco – a back-streets canal, Verona, Lake Garda, the island of Monte Isola, several of Perugia, much sketching in Umbria, San Gimignano (with cattle in the foreground), Siena, Rome (including the Piazza del Popolo, the Spanish Steps and Keats House and weddings in Michelangelo's Campidoglio), Assisi (its beautiful Piazza del Comune), Lucca (the church of San Frediano and nearby Massa Macinaia) and Amalfi – with a view of High Mass on Palm Sunday in its baroque cathedral and the Easter procession departing on the cathedral steps.



Cat. 59 – *Notre Dame and Pont de l'Archevêché*, oil on paper; squared in pencil, 13 x 22 in. (33 x 55.9 cm) (see overleaf)



Cat. 60 – *Tuileries Gardens*, 1955, oil on paper; squared in pencil, 15 x 21 in. (38.1 x 53.3 cm)

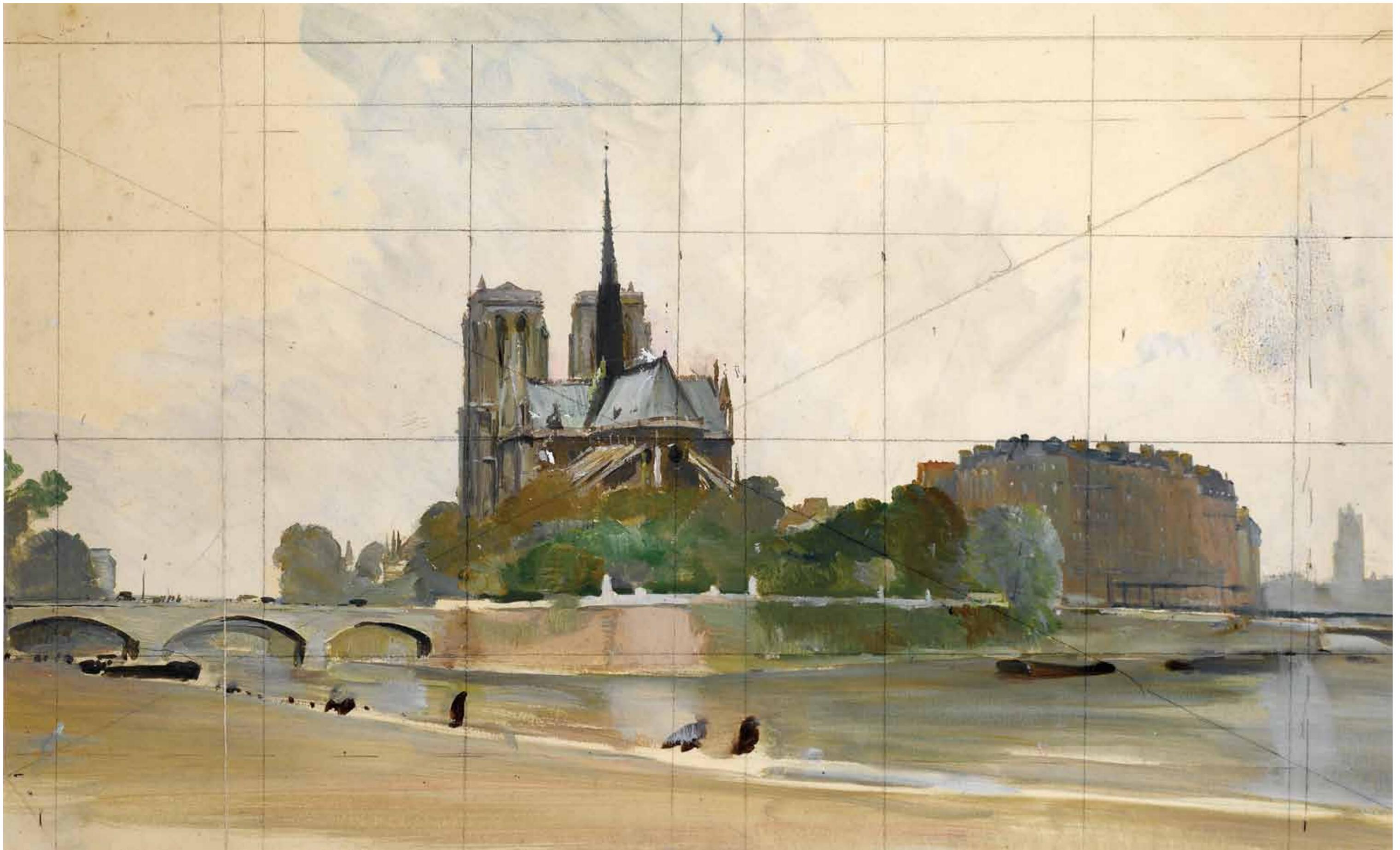
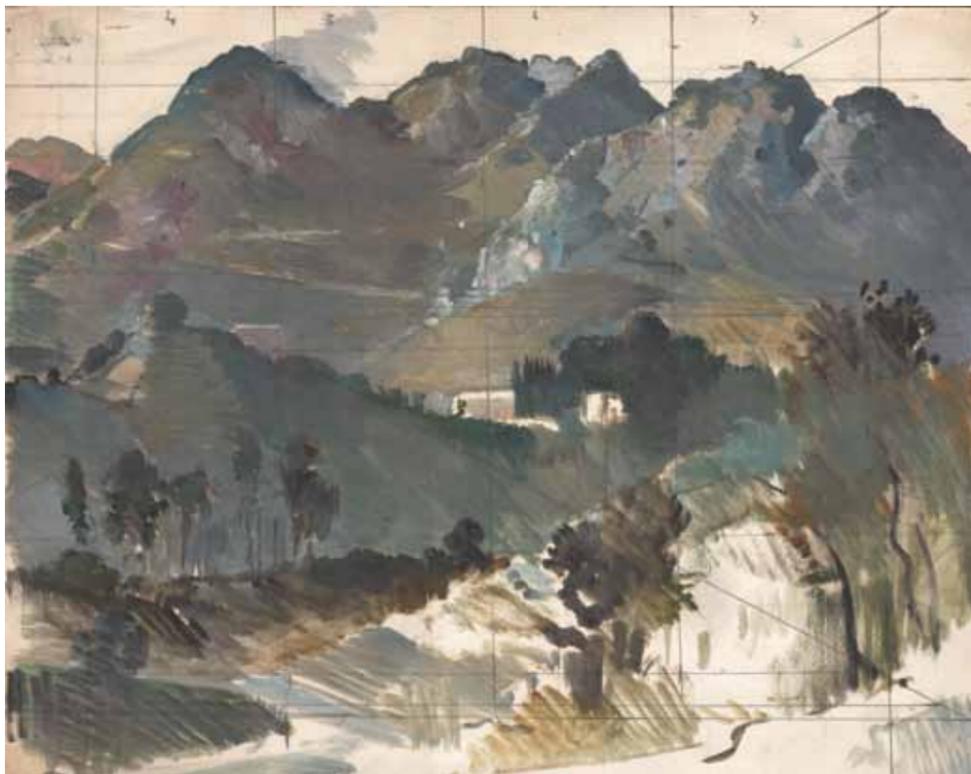




Fig. 42 – *Hamburg Docks*, oil on panel, 10 ¼ x 14 in. (26.3 x 35.1 cm)
 Courtesy of Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne (Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums)



Cat. 61 – *Faial, Madeira*, pencil and oil on paper; squared, 14 x 18 ¼ in. (35.5 x 46 cm)

In 1955 he was commissioned by Mr F.G. Mitchell to paint local British-owned factories in Greece. He extended his stay to visit and paint Delphi and Athens, with a sunny view of the Parthenon from the old Plaka quarter and then the exotic Italian-built 16th-century palace of Argentikon on the Greek island of Chios. Other travels took him to Copenhagen (where he executed a watercolour of the sculpture of the Little Mermaid on a rock in its harbour; inevitably featuring boats in the background), the ruined docks at Hamburg in Germany (Fig. 42) and to the village of Faial on the mountainous Portuguese island of Madeira in the Atlantic (Cat. 61) and its capital Funchal. He also visited Salzburg, Austria, where he painted a grand Baroque fountain, and then New York – he had already visited the city in 1939 (Fig. 43) – where he executed several paintings including skyscrapers viewed from the boating pond in Central Park and the recently constructed United Nations Building. One of these, originally presented to investment banker Sir Siegmund Warburg, was sold in 1983 by Sotheby's for the substantial sum of \$65,649. He also visited Boston, with a view of the Charles River Yacht Club in full sail.



Fig. 43 – *New York, from Brooklyn*, 1939, oil on canvas, 14 x 21 ¼ in. (35.5 x 54 cm) © UK Government Art Collection



Cat. 62 – *Newport*, 1963, pencil, watercolour and ink on tracing paper, 11 ¾ x 30 in. (30 x 76 cm)

Cundall was often in Southern Ireland (Fig. 44), before and after the Second World War, depicting some of its picturesque towns and lively scenes of local life – a panorama of Newport (Cat. 62), Ballybricken Fair (Cat. 66), a Fair at Waterville, County Kerry (Cat. 63), a Horse Fair at Killorglin, County Kerry, Melcombe Bay, Newport (Cat. 64) as well as cattle markets at Newport, County Mayo (Cat. 65) and at Clifden, County Connemara. He also painted the quays at Waterford, County Limerick, the River Lee, County Cork, ruins on the Island of Innisfallen, Queenstown, County Cork, Clare Island from Achill, County Mayo, a farmstead in County Wicklow, Bantry Bay, County Cork, Cork harbour and an urban view of the banks of the Liffey in Dublin.

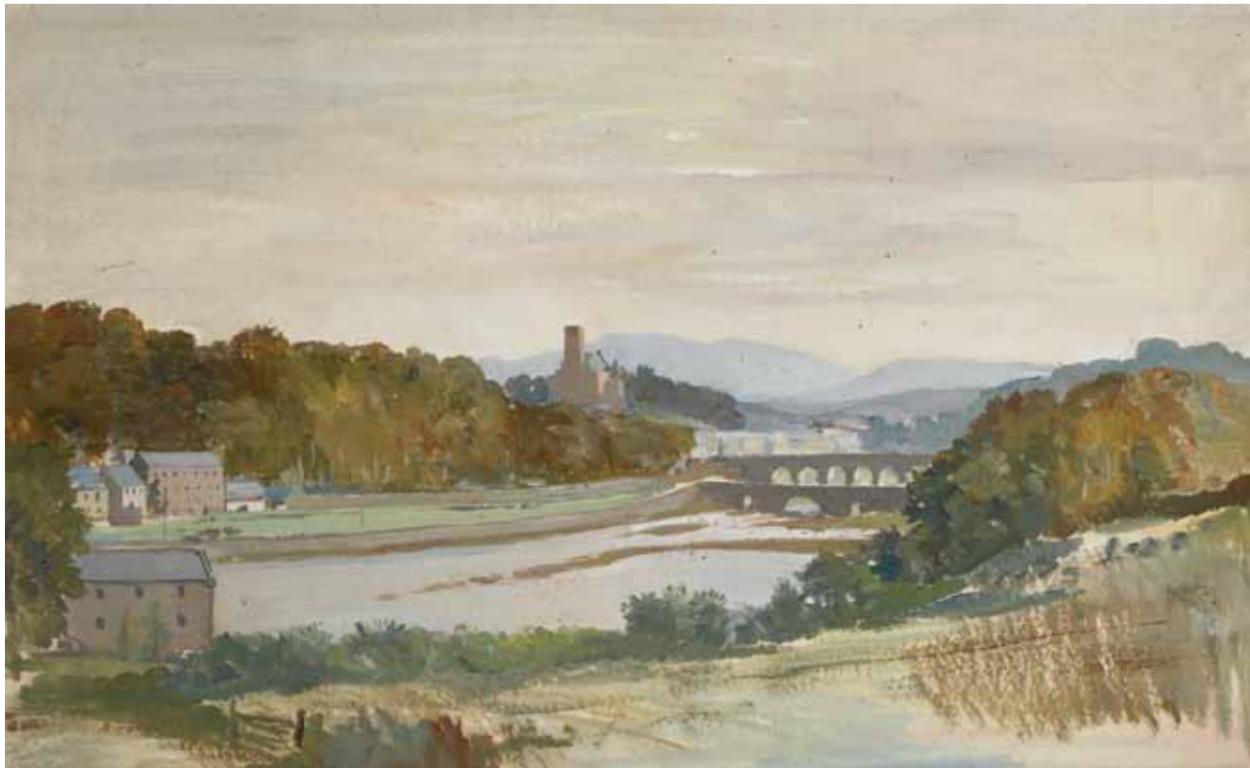
Cundall exhibited at the Royal Academy most years until 1970. He died aged 81 in 1971, leaving behind a substantial body of work, many in public collections, perhaps the last of the artists of the Grand Tour, celebrating the beauty of historical architecture and ever an adept master of topographical depiction, albeit imbued with his delight to include crowded figures, cattle and boats in harbours.



Cat. 63 – Sketch for *Fair at Waterville Co Kerry*, pencil and oil on tracing paper, 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (20 x 34.8 cm)



Cat. 65 – Sketch for *Cattle Market Newport*, 1949, watercolour on paper, 7 x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (17.7 x 32.7 cm)

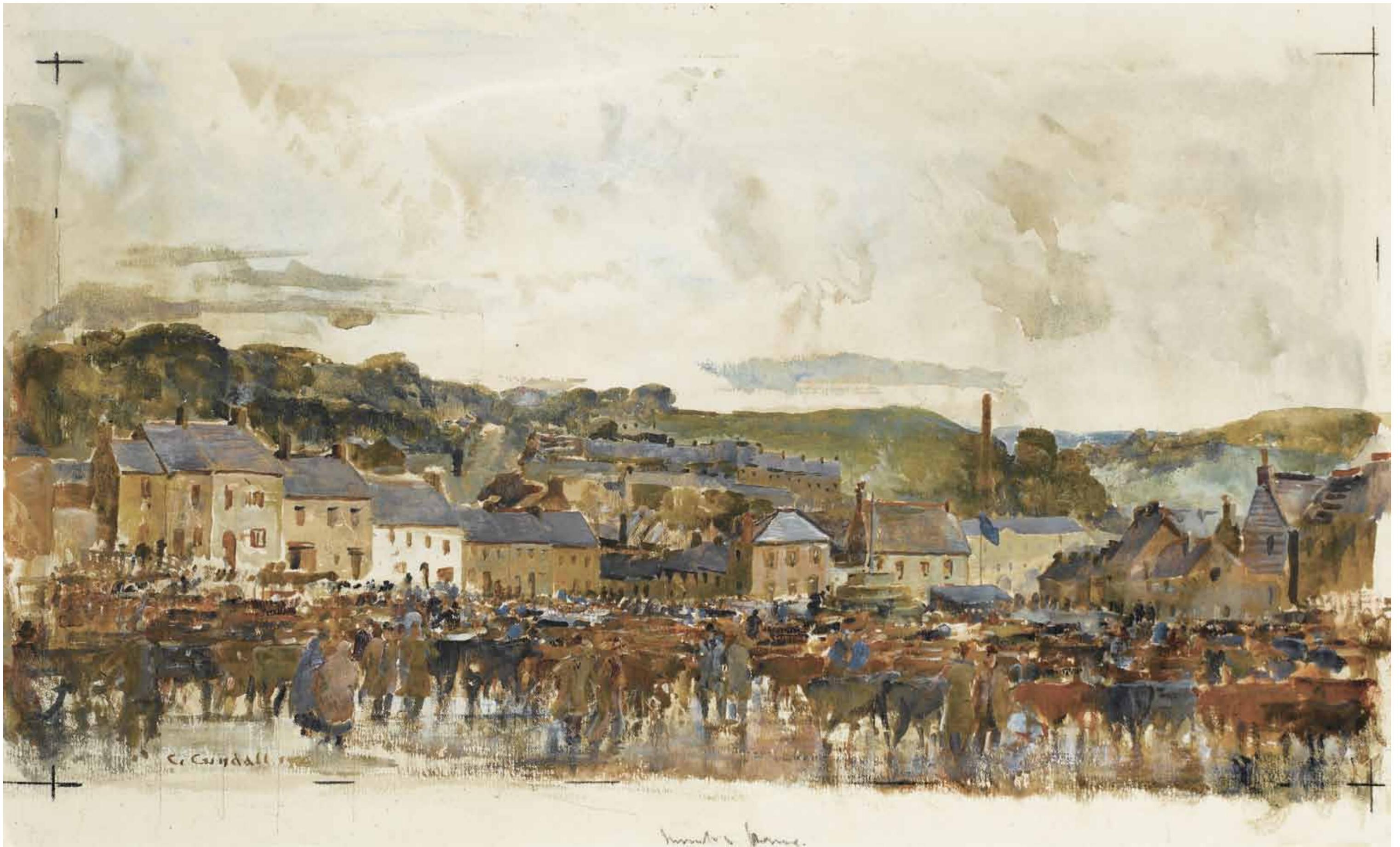


Cat. 64 – *Melcombe Bay, Newport*, 1930s, signed with studio stamp, title on reverse, oil on card, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (37 x 54 cm)



Fig. 44 – Cundall painting in Ireland

Overleaf: Cat. 66 – *Ballybricken Fair, Waterford*, 1936, signed and dated, gouache on paper, 10 x 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (25.3 x 45 cm)



C. G. G. G. G.

Amsterdamsche Schiedamsche dijk.

2, SHEPHERDS CLOSE,
LEES PLACE,
NORTH AUDLEY STREET, W.I.
MAYFAIR 1264.

17th August, 1966.

My dear Charles,

For your information I enclose a copy of my acknowledgement of William Gaunt's agreement to write the book. From this you will note that I have sent him a photographic copy of the list of your pictures exhibited at the Royal Academy; also a copy of the list of your pictures in Public Galleries.

I am enclosing herewith two copies of the abovementioned lists to keep with your records.

Felicity and I plan to be at Les Bois de Peygros from August 26th to September 16th inclusive.

Yours sincerely,

Harald Peake

Charles Cundall, Esq., R.A.,
Great Cheyne Studio,
Cheyne Row,
Chelsea,
London, S.W.3.

Encls

The book that never was: *Charles Cundall, R.A.* *A Study of his Life and Works*

By William Gaunt

Editor's note:

Sometime around 1966 Cundall's principal patron, Harald Peake, came up with the idea to put together an ambitious monograph of Cundall's life and work. William Gaunt (1900-1980), British artist and art historian known for his book *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* (1942), was chosen to write the text (Fig. 45) and the book was to be lavishly illustrated. By August 1967 the overall structure of the book was well defined, Cundall had supplied a list of works to be reproduced, five potential publishers were singled out and Peake, Gaunt and the Cundalls formally agreed that the book should appear no later than September 1968. For reasons which remain a mystery, it never saw the day.

When Harald Peake first approached Gaunt, it was agreed that he should write 10,000 words which would be later expanded to 40,000, presumably if those concerned were satisfied with his first draft. This first draft was probably completed early 1967. The year which followed saw the project fall apart and Gaunt's first draft was put aside. Cundall's daughter, Jackie Setter, recently came across the manuscript and with her permission and that of Gaunt's daughter-in-law, Sylvia Reilly, it is reproduced in the following pages. We have taken the liberty to include a number of the works Gaunt refers to in his text in an attempt to recreate a mock layout for 'The book that never was'.

Fig. 45 – Letter from Harald Peake to Cundall confirming William Gaunt's agreement to write the text for a projected monograph. Courtesy of Jackie Setter.

CHARLES CUNDALL, R.A.

.....

A Study of his Life and Works

by

William Gaunt



Fig. 46 - At 14c Whitehead's Grove, 1917

INTRODUCTION

The suggestion that I should write some account of the life and work of Charles Cundall was one to which I was glad to agree, knowing him as a friend whose personal qualities I admire and having derived much pleasure from his paintings over a long period of time. As is often the case with painters, a good deal of his life is inseparable from his art. The record of his travels and experiences is "written" with brush on canvas. It makes a surprisingly wide panorama. He is a cosmopolitan in the sense of having travelled in many countries, though remaining loyally attached to the British Isles as a source of pictorial inspiration.

The visible world has been an inexhaustible fund of interest and he has never felt the compulsion to look inwards rather than outwards so that the variety of subject is a striking feature of his work. He is a painter of cities, of London, Rome, Athens, Paris, New York. He is a painter of landscape, in England, Scotland, Ireland, Italy, France, Spain. He is noted for scenes of festival, pageantry, sport. He has made an original departures in pictures of industry. He has applied the same zest to pictures of the Seine at Paris as to the skyscrapers of Manhattan; to a great modern steelworks in South Wales as to an ancient hill-town in Italy; to a dam in Scotland as to the spectacle of Henley Regatta or a Cup Final.

In writing this chronicle of his career I am indebted to the artist himself for much information, also to his brothers Philip and Herbert. His wife has given much valuable assistance in the collection and collation of material. Special thanks are due to Mr. Harald Peake, whose great interest in the artist's work and sense of the importance of industrial patronage led to the series of commissions carried out for the Steel Company of Wales. The present book owes its inception to Mr. Peake and has benefited at every stage by his encouragement and suggestions. Thanks are due also to Sir Henry Rushbury for reminiscences of a friendship with Charles Cundall of long standing.

EARLY YEARS

Charles Cundall was born on September 6 1890 at Stretford, Lancashire. His father and mother were both from Cheshire families. Charles Hellyer Cundall, who died in Shere, Surrey, in 1903 at the age of 55, leaving his widow with five young children, was the eldest son of Benjamin Cundall, who had a thriving business in the Manchester cotton trade. His three sons found the prospect of going into the family business little to their liking. His eldest brother, Herbert Cundall, recalls the gloomy impression made on him as a small boy by the old-fashioned office in Manchester with its high desks and stools and rows of musty ledgers.

One by one they left England. One of Charles's uncles went to Jamaica, the other to Australia. His own father went out to Manila to start a tobacco planting business. Before then he had become engaged to Elisabeth Fletcher, one of a large family at Northwich, Cheshire, of the professional class, her brothers taking to the law and medicine. She travelled out to the East alone to join Charles Hellyer and they were married in the Cathedral at Hong Kong. The strong character of Elisabeth Cundall appears in the portrait her son was later to make of her. She was quick to see the early signs of his talent and give encouragement to his efforts. She lived until 1932 and the age of 78 to see him well established in his career.

Charles's earliest memories were of a tropical paradise, luxuriant in vegetation and fruits. Life for the English colony in the capital and principal seaport of the Philippine Islands was easy and spacious, servants were plentiful. To a small English boy Manila was marvellous. In effect it was an old and picturesque Spanish town, with a native life full of colour. He watched the Filipino workers rolling cigars and at their favourite sport of cock-fighting. He was consoled for breaking his arm in some youthful exploit by the gift of a medal from General Agonaldo himself. Americanization was still to come, but he saw the American warships enter Manila Bay at the time of the Spanish-American War (1898-1901)

when the Philippine Islands came under the protection of the United States. He witnessed the landing of the marines, advance guard of the engineers and planners who were to convert Manila into a fine modern city. He was given his first taste of alcohol at this time, being given a tot of rum by one of the American sailors!

Life was not without other excitement. An earthquake one night was a vivid memory. The tropical paradise had its drawbacks. Not yet drained by American effort were the malarial swamps in the environs of the town. Charles's father was affected by the tropical ailment, sprue, affecting throat, tongue and digestive organs, for which no specific cure was then known. It led to the family's departure for Australia, another new series of impressions for the small boy. Sydney Harbour was a marvel, the Zoo at Sydney fascinating to explore (the artist speaks of always having "collected zoos"). At Melbourne where they settled for a while his interest was first aroused in painting by pictures in the Melbourne Art Gallery, and he had his first experience of going to school.

The family was only in Australia for a year, however. They returned to England and Charles was sent to the Quaker school of Ackworth in the West Riding. He had only two terms in its spartan discipline. Financial difficulties now beset his father, let down by the partner whom he left to manage the business in Manila. Taken away for Ackworth, Charles went for a time to the Sale Grammar School. He was now beginning to draw.

The Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the Manchester City Art Gallery - Ford Madox Brown's "Work", Holman Hunt's "Scapegoat", Millais's "Autumn Leaves" amongst them - had their stimulating effect.

There followed a period of apprenticeship in pottery design with the firm of Pilkington. This was after some discussion of his being apprenticed to the sculptor, Sir Thomas Brock, which came to nothing. Instead, and from 1907 to 1912, he was employed (at 2s.6d a week) in painting lustre-ware pottery with adaptations of Mauresque and other designs in the ceramic workshop near the industrial city of Salford. He was much encouraged by Lawrence Pilkington and William Burton, the potter.

A photograph of this time shows the youthful Charles with a company of jovial and heavily moustached workers in a moment of relaxation, the ornamental products of their craft ranged on the shelves behind them. During this apprenticeship he went to night classes at the Manchester School of Art. His proficiency in design gained him a gold medal in the National Competition and in 1912 he won a scholarship (of the value of £60 a year) at the Royal College of Art.



Fig. 47 - At Pilkingtons Lancastrian Pottery & Tiles (bottom left), c. 1908
© A.J. Cross, 'Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian pottery and tiles',
Richard Dennis, London, 1980

From Manchester he was transported to the Design School at South Kensington. Architecture was a compulsory subject which he studied under Beresford Pite. In lettering he had an exceptional master in Edward Johnston. He owed most of all, however, to that influential follower of William Morris, William Richard Lethaby, the first professor of design at the Royal College, and an enlightened exponent of the nature of medieval art. Charles's special subject was stained glass. All this seems a very different aspect of art from the picture painting to which he took later though after many years his early training came to aid in designing a stained-glass window for the Congregational church at Sale. (Norman)



Fig. 48 - A selection of pottery decorated by Charles Cundall, c. 1910
© A.J. Cross, 'Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian pottery and tiles',
Richard Dennis, London, 1980

Before he had finished his course of study at the Royal College of Art the declaration of war in 1914 swept him into the army. He was one of the volunteers of that year and joined the University and Public Schools Battalion at Manchester. He was to be one of the few survivors of a company that was wiped out, though what was in store could not be foreseen in the year of training of a pleasant group of young fellows of much the same age and type. In 1915 he was in France, billeted first at the tobacco factory in Béthune.

It has never been easy to get him to talk of his later experience in the First World War. He knew the mud, the misery, the sharp excitements and long periods of boredom of trench warfare. There were intervals in the trenches during which he drew. But this time was the prelude to the fury of the Battle of the Somme. During the wait that allowed of his filling a sketch-book with pencil notes, the Allied commanders were planning their joint offensive to drive the Germans towards the coast.

The months of indecisive fighting which began in July 1916 when small advances were made at the cost of appalling casualties had one nightmare concentration in the battle for the Bois de Fourceaux (High Wood). Charles, who took part, could only describe it in the one word "Hell". It was here that he received the wound that deprived him of the use of his right hand. (Fortunately naturally ambidextrous, not encouraged in those days.)

After a year in hospital at Lincoln and a period of convalescence in Leeds, he went back to the Royal College to complete his scholarship years. His training in "design" as the word as then understood, suggested that in some way he should follow it up. Robert Anning Bell, the Professor of Decorative Art at the Glasgow School, offered him a teaching post there at £400 a year. It was tempting enough in those days, but Charles turned it down, having made up his mind that teaching was not his metier. Nor was he content with design as represented by the handicrafts favoured by the Art Workers' Guild.

He was now turning towards painting. He transferred his army grant from the Royal College to the Slade School which was exclusively devoted to painting and drawing. The grant amounted to £90 a year. Here he studied under Henry Tonks, "a frightening sort of man" as he recalls that martinet of graphic art, and under Wilson Steer whom he liked and admired, not least, perhaps, because he did not unduly interfere. Yet there was a spirit of real enthusiasm in the Slade. He found it of great benefit. Equipped as a painter he began the young artist's usual wander years. The war had made his beginning as a painter some years later than it would have otherwise been, but there was much to compensate for the delay in the early post-war period.

There was the relief after the period of storm and the fact also that it was possible to live both happily and cheaply. In London after the war he rented a studio in Whitehead's Grove, Chelsea, a loft over a disused stable, from an old Chelsea character, the same one with whom he went in the caravan, who charged him 7s. a week. And Paris held out its attractions - a Paris in which one could live for next to nothing, when francs were 75 to the £. He set out for Paris in 1920, had a studio in the place de la Sorbonne and painted at that typical French atelier, Colarossi's.

From Paris he went on to Italy, staying at Anticoli Corrado outside Rome and in the Sabine Hills. This was an Italy in which it was possible to live comfortably on £1 a week. In the early 1920s he explored both France and Italy with some thoroughness, often in the company of his friend, Henry Rushbury, now Sir Henry, and the topographical draughtsman and etcher, Job Nixon. Sir Henry Rushbury gives a happy picture of these times together.



Fig. 49 - Pont Neuf, Paris, 1925
oil on canvas, 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 25 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (50.2 x 65.4 cm)
Courtesy of Manchester City Galleries

He says, "Charles and I spent many weeks in France, on the Seine, making our way to Paris, drawing and painting as we went, finding small hotels where the lodgings were cheap and the food good. How we enjoyed the food, coming in at night after hours of work. Our enthusiasm for France grew and grew and we became fatter and fatter on good French dishes and wine. Everything seemed to conspire to make pictures in the small towns we stopped at, such as Caudebec - and the sight of Rouen was amazing."

"I think Charles was always happy in Paris. The river with all its activities fascinated him. He sat hour after hour painting the bridges and the wonderful buildings on the banks of the Seine. He returned to Paris year after year and some of his subjects were full of its history and drama. The long night hours spent in gay talk in the cafés were always enjoyable to him. I sometimes thought he wished he were the owner of a French café in which he could have the whole night alone with his thoughts. Charles has a quiet mind as well as a great gift for friendship, always contented, I think, in his own work and in contemplation."

The two friends were working in Orvieto in 1928 when it became clear that the strife between Fascists and Communists was coming to a head. The two sides were marching about the ancient city in explosive mood.

"One morning", says Rushbury, "there was such a great commotion that we decided to leave for Rome. We arrived at the railway station, loaded with our painting gear, to find Fascist youth in possession. They received us with shouts of welcome and we were bundled into the carriage. The 'march' on Rome had begun!"

"The young Fascisti in the compartment trained their guns through the windows in the hope of finding something to shoot. As we passed a barn from which two bullocks looked out, the whole train fired a volley - and missed!, which inwardly gave us both great satisfaction. On arriving at Rome at night we found ourselves greeted by crowds of singing Fascisti. Being taken for English supporters we were given an extra cheer. Then there was an electricity failure and in the ensuing darkness Charles and I took the opportunity of escaping up a side street. We managed to find a carrozza and reached the British School to find a dance in progress and students, oblivious of the revolution, foxtrotting to the

strains of jazz. Charles took it all easily - I never saw him ruffled then - or at any other time."

Charles had by now overcome his wartime disability to the extent of being adept in painting with his left hand. While enjoying his experience of Europe he was also devoting himself to landscape with that single-mindedness which his friend, Rushbury, remarked on. He was little concerned with theories and the new, or comparatively new, ideas of art discussed by the habitués of the Montparnassian cafés. He had no wish to be "in the movement". Style for him was a quality that developed subconsciously. The masters whom he admired especially were, among English painters, Constable, Gainsborough and Stubbs; and among the French, Corot and the Impressionists. If anything he had the Impressionist attitude in his feeling for light and habit of painting in the open air, but his interest in scene and pleasure in recording it were always governing factors.

He contributed in the 1920s to the New English Art Club, which still retained something of the Impressionist character with which it had begun towards the end of the last century, and favoured work of this tendency. It was not until 1923 that he became a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy of typical landscapes, though in 1918 he contributed a souvenir of war, "Somewhere in France", and in 1920 and 1921 designs for the Ashton-on-Mersey stained glass window. His paintings first attracted notice in an exhibition at the Old Grosvenor Galleries in Bond Street which he shared in March, 1923 with three other artists, Harold Knight, Fairlie Harmer and H.M. Livens.

His paintings in this exhibition were mainly French and Italian views. They included reminiscences of his travels along the Seine and in Normandy, of his stay at Anticoli in Italy, of Assisi and Rome and its environs. He paid his respect to the memory of Sisley in paintings of Moret-sur-Loing made by the famous Anglo-French Impressionist. But already he had an eye for the English sporting spectacle. Rather as Arnold Bennett saw the football stadium as an insular equivalent of the bull-ring in his Matador of the Five Towns he painted a "Chelsea Cup-tie at Stamford Bridge" with its great crowd and sun throwing a dramatic division of light and shade across the field.



Cat. 53 - The Duomo, Assisi, early 1920s,
oil on panel, 17 1/2 x 21 1/2 in. (45 x 55 cm)

His works were singled out for notice in the Manchester Guardian with large reproductions. The critic "J.B." (James Bone) found "a beautiful sensitiveness of shape and space within its large design" in his chief picture "The Duomo, Assisi", with the buildings silhouetted against mist and rain. "A remarkable picture of an almost untouched subject", James Bone went on to say, was the "Cup-tie", "seen from the top of the highest stand; with the bare little green space closed in by the human sierra . . . a curved shadow from one of the great banks lies across the field and intensifies its isolation and strange focal importance".

The Contemporary Art Society acquired his "Les Bains Chauds, Seine" and "Temeside, Ludlow", another work in in the Grosvenor Galleries exhibition, was presented to the Manchester Art Gallery by T.D. Barlow. In July 1924 these and other paintings were shown at the Manchester Art Gallery together with works by E.M. O'R. Dickey, Allan Gwynne-Jones and Henry Rushbury. With a further successful exhibition in January 1926 at Colnaghi's Galleries, Bond Street, the artist could now be said to have "arrived".



Fig. 50 - A Chelsea Cup-Tie, Stamford Bridge, 1923,
oil on plywood, 15 x 18 in. (38 x 46 cm)
Courtesy of Manchester City Galleries

He was encouraged to pursue the illustration of sporting events by the success of his painting of the football match at Stamford Bridge. The paintings that attracted special notice in the Colnaghi exhibition were his "Boat Race Day, Hammersmith, 1925" and "Derby Day, 1923". Muirhead Bone remarked on the former picture in an introduction to the Colnaghi catalogue, "I well remember the pleasure," he said, "some delightful football pictures of his gave me with their solid banks of intent spectators, properly immobile, like irrelevant details of a formidable machine; and in the present exhibition there is a "Boat Race Day, Hammersmith, 1925", full of the same fresh, quaint naivety which we are all striving nowadays to capture - or it to recapture?"

Quaintness and naivety are not perhaps the words one would choose exactly to describe the realistic impression the picture gives though the appreciation had sensible things to say about the artist as "detached observer we feel we can trust" and one

whose pictures with " a sound probity at the bottom of them . . . wear well". The press generally was favourable. The critic of The Observer, R.H. Wilenski, remarked that "Mr. Cundall, who is not yet forty and is practically a newcomer, is already an important artist and exceptional in the sense that his pictures are not painted to look like other pictures and will not recall other pictures either to the student or the ordinary man".

"Derby Day" inevitably provoked some comparison with Frith's celebrated painting, though there was an obvious difference between the anecdotal multitude of details in Frith's panorama and the general impression Charles Cundall gave. Wilenski summed up by saying, "In a word, Mr. Cundall's subjects are, on paper, Victorian subjects. But he does not paint them in a Victorian way . . . If he drifts towards the Victorian standpoint he will achieve, I have no doubt, popular success. If he drifts more in the direction of aesthetic experiment his pictures from the standpoint of the most cultivated spectators will improve. If he does nothing more than maintain his present level he will still be a figure, head and shoulders above 90 per cent of the painters of his particular generation".



Fig. 51 - Derby Day, 1923, 1923,
oil on board, 14 x 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (36 x 44 cm)
Collection of Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art

Frank Rutter, whom Charles had known during his after-war convalescence at Leeds when Rutter was at the Leeds Art Gallery, found in "Boat Race Day" "more than a faithful record of a memorable aquatic event; it is a tenderly felt expression of the glory of light in a leaden sky under which the Thames looks more than ever a thread of silver. The power of handling a crowd displayed in this picture is also seen in "Derby Day, 1923", and here again the passing event is made the excuse for painting weather, the rain sweeping across the course being a feature of the picture that abides in the memory".

By now he had a number of greatly interested patrons. The Manchester Art Gallery, which already had two of his paintings, bought his "Pont Neuf, Paris" from the Colnaghi exhibition, one of the best works of this period in its contrast of a delicately atmospheric background and well-defined incident of bridge and passers-by seen at close quarters. "Derby Day" had been bought by Sir Edward Marsh, the former secretary to Churchill, man of letters and a patron of the arts who made a special point of encouraging talented English painters. Their work enlivened the walls of his rooms in Grays Inn. Charles was one of those who were invited to his breakfast parties in Grays Inn, an institution of the 1920s at which "Eddy" Marsh entertained a chosen circle with witty discourse.

Lord Blanesburgh and the barrister, later Q.C., D.N. Pritt were other buyers who lent works in their possession to this exhibition. D.N. Pritt was to give continued evidence later of his interest in Charles's paintings. Another patron was Francis Berry of the old-established St. James's firm of wine merchants, who entertained the artist at his house in Wimbledon.

Various portraits of the artist appeared about this time. His photograph was reproduced in one of the 'glossy' weeklies with a note headed "An Artist from the North" which commented "So remarkably boyish is the appearance of Mr. Charles Cundall . . . that he might easily be taken for a decade younger than his real tale of years". He was, said the notice, "another of the north countrymen who seem bent on coming south to capture London", though this journalistic conception of a provincial invader considerably simplified the career to date of a widely-travelled painter.

A bronze head by the sculptor, William McMillan, was shown at the Royal Academy in 1926. An etching by the graphic artist, Francis Dodd, in 1927 showed Charles at his easel, his hand resting on a mahlstick, though like the sculptured head, it lacked something of the benign individuality and the hint of quiet amusement that gave his features character.

He had by now moved far from the kind of design he first studied, but its final product was the stained glass window for the Ashton-on-Mersey Congregational Church for which designs were included in the Royal Academy of 1920 and 1921.

The window, a memorial to members of the congregation killed in the Great War, depicted the Angel of Peace with sheathed sword. Executed at his studio, it was unveiled in 1923, harmonizing in style with the window by Burne-Jones to which it was adjacent.

It was in this year that Charles married Miss Jacqueline Pietersen, also a painter, then a student at the Royal College of Art, a marriage which has happily continued through the many years of work and travel. The loft in Whitehead's Grove was exchanged for quarters more suitable to a married couple in the same region. A rhythm of life was established between town, country cottage and journeys abroad, a rhythm continued until the present time.



Fig. 52 - Jacqueline Pietersen, c.1920



Fig. 53 - Jacqueline Pietersen, 1923

There can be few artists who have travelled more extensively than Charles Cundall or with more pictorial result. At one time or another he has visited Australia, Austria, Africa, Denmark, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden and the United States. There are few parts of the British Isles he has left unexplored. He has found it hard to say what kind of landscape he prefers. He admits a special liking for the soft light and changing effects of Ireland and on the same account for the West Coast of Scotland. France and Italy, however, have been the subjects of more pictures. He has been drawn to France and Italy, and Spain also, by the variety of scene they offer and the richness of architecture which has always been one of his main concerns.

He and Pieter, as his wife has always been affectionately known to her husband and their friends, spent their honeymoon in Paris. The course of their yearly journeys and the intervals spent on home ground are most conveniently followed in a later chapter through the resultant paintings, though some silent features may be noted in a mainly biographical chapter. Even a painter with no thought but of art and landscape was inevitably made aware of the seething political turmoil of Europe. As Charles had been the innocent bystander and witness of the coup which brought Mussolini into power in the 1920s, so in the 1930s he saw the beginning of civil war in Spain after the confusions, plots, riots and formation of extremist parties of the Right and Left that followed the overthrow of the monarchy.

Madrid for him meant Velasquez and Goya - and the works of Goya in the Prado were a revelation to him. Toledo meant El Greco and he paid a reverent visit to the master's studio with its array of paintings. But it was impossible to ignore the clamour of unrest, the signs of impending battle, the roar of revolutionary debate in the cafés. The war was on before he left - a week before the Alcazar was blown up.

Spain in any case, apart from this tragic phase of its modern history, was not so much to the artist's liking as France and Italy. The sombre grandeur, the intensities of climate were less to his taste than the more equable conditions to the north of the Pyrenees. Yet during the 1930s he was again on unfamiliar ground and in another



Fig. 54 - Painting near Avila, Spain, c.1928

extreme, northern this time, of politics and climate, the Russia of Stalin. Charles's patron, D.N. Pritt, asked him to undertake this voyage of pictorial exploration. It cost, he recalled, £20 by Intourist.

Russia was a great adventure. Leningrad made a great impression on him by its architecture as well as by the masterpieces to be seen in the Hermitage. Moscow, snow-covered, dominated by the Kremlin, was a fairy-tale city of spires and onion domes, which he reconstructed from memory and sketches in the painting exhibited at the Academy in 1936.

Some note is in place at this stage of the steps by which he approached the industrial subjects which have a special niche among his paintings.

Much as he travelled in more golden realms there was something that drew him back to the industrial north of his early days. He spoke to me once of going back to Stockport, as he put it, "to lay the ghost", that is, to give pictorial definition to a haunting memory. In his second exhibition at Colnaghi's Gallery in 1930 he had a painting of Wolverhampton which the critic of The Times singled out as one of his best, "in which, without any idealization, all that there is of beauty in an industrial landscape is faithfully observed".

In 1933 he was commissioned to paint a mill at Huddersfield. The discipline imposed in making a picture out of what some might think an impossible subject was stimulating he found. He was the more amenable to the suggestion of Mr. F.G. Mitchell that he should go out to Greece to paint the factories of the Mitchell Engineering Company. As one might have expected, this was also an opportunity for painting the Parthenon as well as the factory, for an expedition to Delphi and to Chios where Charles felt the sinister atmosphere of the massacre painted by Delacroix still lingered.

He was busy in England also during these years. He painted more of the football matches which were very popular, though for one he was taken to task by followers of the game for having omitted to put in the referee.

His "Coronation Day, 1937" was bought as a birthday present for the King. The picture was taken from the walls of the Academy during the summer exhibition, a rare exception to the general rule, so that it might be presented to the King at Buckingham Palace after the Trooping of the Colour. On being told of this Charles's daughter remarked "Oh well, I suspect he had some other presents didn't he?"



Fig. 55 - Sketch for 'The Coronation of George VI'

By now he had several letters after his name. portraits are rare in his work, but the portrait of his mother had attracted considerable attention in 1925 and he was elected member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 1933. In the same year he was elected member of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colour. In 1937 he became A.R.A. In 1940 he established as London headquarters the pleasant studio house towards the river end of Cheyne Row, Great Cheyne Studio, (the former house and studio in Cathcart Road having been bombed) which he and his wife have kept to as a town residence.

The signs of war to come were many in the late 1930s. Artists were among the numbers of people made homeless by expulsion or flight from Nazi-ruled Germany. After the fall of Czecho-Slovakia in 1938 an urgent appeal for help for these artist victims was signed by many English men and women distinguished in the arts, Charles Cundall among them. This was only one aspect of the growing menace, though in some respects things in England seemed as usual. No threat seemed to hang over Lords Cricket Ground where the artist painted the Test Match in its leisurely course in the summer of 1939.

It was then also that he painted the launching at John Brown's shipyard of the great new Cunarder, the Queen Elizabeth, the world's largest liner. It was soon to take a strange and lonely maiden voyage without any passenger on board, when war had been declared, prior to that busy period of war service when the Queen Elizabeth and the older companion vessel, Queen Mary carried millions on wartime duties across the Atlantic between 1940 and 1945.

The period immediately before the war and had been full of varied incident. Commissions had taken Charles to Sheffield where he painted coke ovens at night - the night watchman sympathized with him on having a lonely job like his own - then to paint the St. Leger for a devotee of sport. He was one of the party that travelled up the Seine in launches, accompanying the King and Queen on the Royal visit to Paris. Finally, he went to Quebec to paint the visit of the King and Queen to Canada, returning on the Queen Mary in May 1939.

Leaving the cottage at Fairlight, Sussex, which was then the Cundalls' country home, he came up to London and was shortly appointed an official war artist to the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, with a commission as captain in the marines.

The studio in Cheyne Row, its large toplight now blacked out, was a wartime base whence, as telephone orders came, he would go off to paint on a battleship or produce such other records of the time as can be seen in the Imperial War Museum. He recalls that the glass in the studio was blown out as a result of the bomb that wrecked Chelsea Old Church. The cottage at Fairlight also suffered from bombing.

At the Air Ministry Charles was assigned a variety of pictorial tasks. He travelled about the country painting R.A.F. training centres and stations on assignments arranged by Mr. Harald Peake, with whom he came in contact of the first time at the Ministry. His first Air Force picture was of the New Zealand Squadron (Wellingtons).



Fig. 56 - Stirling Bomber Aircraft: Taken Off at Sunset, 1942
oil on canvas, 31 1/2 x 50 in. (80 x 127 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 1849)



Fig. 57 - Motor Launches, Dartmouth, 1940
oil on canvas, 26 x 49 in. (65.7 x 124.4 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 1215)

In addition to the records of work and training in the war factories, aerodromes and the picture of naval craft in harbour, he gave vivid illustration of dramatic episodes and action. He saw and depicted the return of the cruiser, the Exeter, riddled with shells, after the great exploit in which it had led the attack on the German pocket-battleship, Admiral Graf Spee in the Battle of the River Plate. He made a dramatic reconstruction of the scene at the Dunkirk beachhead of historic evacuation on May 26, 1940.

When the long struggle was at its end in 1945 he went on a destroyer to Kiel and saw the results of the constant and massive air attacks on the naval port, the derelict ships floating upside down in the harbour, the submarine sheds battered to bits.

At the return of peace, a full R.A. since 1944, when he was elected at the same time as the enthusiast for Georgian architecture, Professor Albert Richardson, the artist quietly resumed his former routine and turned with renewed vigour to landscape and the periodic scenes of ceremony which has always been amongst his subjects. The Chelsea studio, with its easels and stacks of canvases; its array

of such properties as artists like to have about them, including a model of a full-rigged sailing ship; its trim upstairs sitting-room lined with Morris wallpaper and reproductions of favourite Venetian pictures, was again the base for extensive travel.

Here one would find him working from many drawings and colour notes accumulated during some recent journey. He prefers working with such aids to memory, on a fine canvas with soft hog and sable brushes, occasionally using a palette knife, and laying on colour instinctively rather than by methodical system. A main trend in his painting has been towards an increased effect of light, notable in paintings of the Arundel region.

After Fairlight another country cottage was found at Houghton near Arundel and Amberley, on the slope of a lane going down to the bank of the river Arun and with views of the higher ground over the valley which have provided a number of paintings.

One enterprise that especially interested him in the post-war years was the industrial genre of which he had produced some earlier examples. The factory, the blast furnace, the steel mill were for him an interesting variety of landscape which he approached in the same way as any other composition. He found of great value the discipline involved in making pictures out of subjects that many painters were inclined to regard as outside the scope of art. He was fortunate also in having as a patron in Harald Peake, who admired his work in several aspects and was also convinced of the uses of a pictorial view of industry.

This suggested itself during the Second World War when they came into contact in the record of wartime industry. As a private collector Mr. Peake has had a keen interest in landscape and topography. Among artists of the past, the painter of London and the Thames, Samuel Scott, and the painter of the Normandy coast, Eugène Boudin, were two favourites of whose art he has characteristic examples. It is possible to see affinities between them and Charles Cundall. There is a relation with Scott in his always strong feeling for architecture, and with Boudin in his sense of open-air. As Chairman of the Steel Company of Wales, Mr. Peake was able to propose that the artist should paint views of the vast undertakings that had grown up at the industrial centre of Port Talbot in Glamorganshire, the amalgamation of Aberavon and Margam. Here the Steel Company

of Wales had built the miles of modern works that formed the great industrial city in themselves, as strong and simple in line as the landscape that was their background. The eight views of the Abbey and Velindre Works now set in the panels of the Board room at the London headquarters of the Steel Company, Margam House, St. James's Square, and the others hung elsewhere in the building, convey the extent of this giant modern enterprise. They occupied the artist for three years, from 1957 to 1960.

His patron was interested also, in a way that recalls the practice of the eighteenth century, in views of the landscape and buildings with which he had personal links, the seventeenth century Tackley Manor, his country house in Oxfordshire and the adjoining village of Tackley; and his villa in the south of France at Mougins, near Cannes, with its mountain setting. Paintings of Tackley and Mougins are of note among the productions of the 1960s in which the general pattern as ever was divided between English country, France and Italy. In this decade the artist's mature talent was employed as vigorously as ever.

SUBJECT AND STYLE

A survey of Charles Cundall's work falls naturally into several divisions. There are the paintings of English landscape; of London; of ceremonial occasions; of sport; of war; of the industrial scene; of Paris; of a variety of impressions of travel. A subdivision in the first category would be his paintings of Sussex. Here one sees him sometimes attracted by a busy scene as in the "Brighton, Bank Holiday" (Tate Gallery), a Chantrey purchase of 1933, in which without any of the humorous or anecdotal incident a Victorian painter would have introduced, he gives a vivid impression of a general stir to which not only the crowds but the awnings, stalls, flags and even the curious design of lamp standards contribute.

At Hastings he is fascinated by the shore incident of "Net Houses and Luggers". There is a breeziness that brings Boudin to mind in another picture of Hastings, "Approaching Storm". Some of the best of the Sussex paintings are of the environs of Arundel. "The Clearing, Arundel Park" of 1966 would rank high as an example of his pure landscape and study of tree forms. The Impressionist side of his work appears in the rendering of wintry atmosphere in



Cat. 67 - The Artist's Garden at Barnyard Cottage, Houghton, c.1960
oil on canvas, 20 x 30 in. (51 x 76 cm)

"Frosty Morning, Houghton" in which, incidentally, the artist's own thatched cottage figures.

Winter has inspired other paintings of special note, such as his "Snow in Sussex", a spacious view of downland, and "Frosty Morning, Somerset" with its varied silhouettes of trees, but he has been equally responsive to the idyllic quality of a stream in summer as in his "Whirlipool, Ickford, Bucks.", the placid "River Kennet at Hungerford" and "Invermoriston Bridge" with its sparkling gleams of light on leaves and water. The tranquillity of an English village in summer is well rendered in "Tackley, Oxfordshire", exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1966 and now in Mr. Peake's collection. The artist has also displayed a liking for the detail and animation of horse and cattle fairs in various parts of the land, as well as in Ireland. Examples of this genre are his "Waterville, Co. Kerry" and "Barnet Fair" (Southampton Art Gallery).

In London he has pictured both the familiar aspects of park and river and the changes of demolition and reconstruction. Two of his



Cat. 68 - Study for 'The Demolition of Waterloo Bridge, 1935
oil on panel, 9 ¼ x 15 ½ in. (23.5 x 40 cm)

most striking compositions are the paintings of the demolition of the old Waterloo Bridge in 1935 when so much regret was voiced at the loss of Rennie's masterpiece among bridges. The version now in the London Library makes particularly effective use of the contrast between the majesty of still-standing columns and arches and the web of girders and movement of cranes. James Bone in the Manchester Guardian was moved to comment on "the epic of the old bridge, dark and stubborn, in its last struggle with the myriad of destroyers, the tall white new buildings looking down on its death throes". In addition to their documentary interest both pictures captured a great deal of the London atmosphere.

The London paintings range from a view of the rural-looking Broad Walk, Kensington Gardens before its great elms were cut down, Piccadilly Circus, the subject of one of his rare watercolours, Regents Park, where the Zoo claimed his interest, to bustling scenes of post-war reconstruction. Among the latter a dramatic example is the "Excavation in Park Lane". The building of the underpass at Hyde Park Corner provided him in 1961 with a complex scene of work in progress of the kind in which he has always found a stimulus to design.

He has painted such subjects in other English cities. One of the most striking examples is "Building the Catholic Cathedral at Liverpool" featuring the Lutyens crypt. An outstanding painting in which architecture and landscape are combined was a work of 1955 which showed the Cathedral Church of St. David in the impressiveness of its lonely site on the Pembrokeshire coast, with the ruined Bishop's Palace, unoccupied since the Civil War, beside its West door and on the hill to the south the Keep which serves as belfry.

CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS

In the paintings of ceremonial occasions which form a valuable historical record Charles Cundall has produced some tours-de-force in the combination of crowd, spectacle and architecture. His "Coronation Day, 1937" is an example, with Trafalgar Square as a setting and the royal procession as a river of colour through a dense mass of spectators on either side. His point of vantage was the top of the Admiralty Arch where he worked from six in the morning until eight at night.

The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was the subject of the painting exhibited at the Academy in 1954, depicting the arrival at Westminster Abbey and doing justice to the pageant elements of Royal Coach and the decor of heraldic beasts designed for the event. "The Consecration of Coventry Cathedral" of 1960, now in the Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry, brought into view the shell of the old Cathedral remaining from the devastation of the notorious bombing raid of the Second World War in relation with the new building designed by Sir Basil Spence and, newly unveiled on the east wall, the sculptured figure of St. Michael victorious over the Devil commissioned by the architect from Jacob Epstein.

Another good example of his ability to handle a great amount of detail is given by his "Laying the Foundation Stone of Bristol Town Hall" commissioned by E. Vincent Harris, now in the Town Hall, Bristol. One of the most successful paintings of the special event was "Launching of the 'Queen Elizabeth'" in which he contrived to give an impressive idea of the majestic proportions and beauty of line of the great ship.



Fig. 58 - The Consecration of the New Coventry Cathedral, 1962,
oil on canvas, 36 x 50 ½ in. (91.5 x 129 cm)
Courtesy of Herbert Art Gallery & Museum



Fig. 59 - New Council House Foundation Stone Ceremony, 10th June 1938
oil on canvas, 22 ½ x 29 ½ in. (57.5 x 75.5 cm)
Courtesy of Bristol City Council

SPECTACLE AND ENTERTAINMENT
(A.T.V. at the Wood Green Empire) R.A. 1957

The attractions and pictorial problems presented by the ceremonial occasions were closely related to those of the sporting events of which the artist has painted a long series beginning in the 1920s. "A Chelsea Cup-Tie Stamford Bridge", referred to earlier, was a striking departure of 1923. It was followed in 1925 by "BOAT RACE DAY, Hammersmith" and a number of later versions of similar subjects. He was one of the 93,000 spectators of the Cup Final at Wembley in 1933 and with some difficulty because of the crowds managed to make sufficient pencil notes and small watercolours during the match to take away the impression realized in the painting exhibited at the New English Art Club in the following year.

"Manchester wins the Cup" lacked the strong element of design of the earlier football picture and was criticized by Frank Rutter in the Sunday Times for the dispersal of interest and the great distance from which the game was viewed, but Eric Newton referred to it in the Manchester Guardian as an "amazing technical feat" suggesting not only an incredible number of human beings but the wan sunlight of the day.



Fig. 60 - Derby Day, 1933, oil on canvas, 39 ½ x 50 in. (101x127 cm)
© UK Government Art Collection

"The Derby, 1933" was another of these panoramas, the distant course being seen behind a multitude of tents and stands. "Chelsea v. Arsenal at Stamford Bridge", "Cup-Tie: Corinthians versus Manchester City" with the Crystal Palace in the background, "The Test Match at Lords" in the summer of 1939 and the cricket match of "Festival Week, Hastings", 1952 were other pictures of sport. Aquatic festival again interested him in the "Thames Regatta, Teddington Reach", with its fleet of sailing boats (in the collection of Sir S.G. Warburg) and the "Henley Regatta" of 1959, in which the racing eights, punts and assembly of spectators made up one of his liveliest compositions. The Durham Miners Gala of 1964, with its procession bearing banners and the Cathedral in the distance was an open-air spectacle to which he did justice.

Entertainment has been his theme in many forms. Though the artist is essentially a realist there was a touch of fantasy derived from the subject in an early painting of the diversions of Blackpool. In "the Ring Entrance" he pictures the circus as a spectacle brilliant in light and shade as well as in the equestrian performance shown. He has even painted a competition game of billiards and his "Thurston's" of 1938 showing the celebrated player, Newman in action, though not among the most successful of his works, attracted notice and was made an excuse by the cartoonist Tom Webster for a series of humorous suggestions as to how other sports and sportsmen might be portrayed.



Cat. 69 - Olympic Rowers at Hammersmith Wharf, 1958, oil on canvas, 18 x 34 in. (46 x 86 cm)



Cat. 70 - Study for Hastings Cricket Ground, Festival Week, Hastings, c.1952, pencil and oil on squared paper, 12 1/2 x 14 in. (32.2 x 35.8 cm)



Cat. 71 - Study for Cricket match, pen and ink, 7 x 10 1/2 in. (18 x 27 cm)

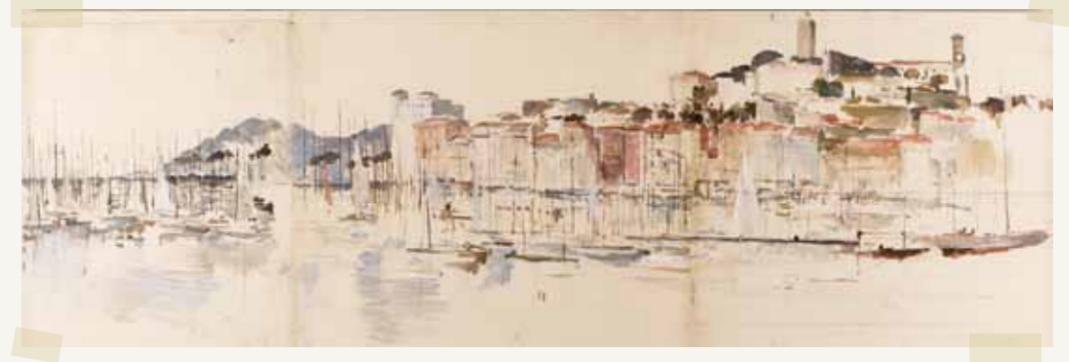
FRANCE AND ITALY

A sensitive response to place and atmosphere appears in his many paintings of town and country in France and Italy. His paintings of Paris have a special place in his work and he has many times returned to the theme of the Seine and its bridges and the tranquility of the row of fishermen on its banks, from the "Pont Neuf" of 1926 to the "Concours de Pêcheurs" of 1951 (acquired by the late Sir Albert Richardson). His affection for Paris extends to a variety of its aspects, the "Théâtre Guignol" in the Champs Elysées, the Medici Fountain in the Luxembourg Gardens, the historic rue de la Bièvre.



Fig. 61 - Le concours des Pêcheurs, Paris,,
oil on canvas, 15 x 24 in. (38 x 61 cm)

His early painting expeditions in Normandy and Brittany were followed by more frequent stays in the south of France. He has several times painted the medieval walls, the palace of the Popes and the ruined twelfth century bridge of Avignon. The region of the Alpes Maritimes has been favourite ground. He has found many congenial subjects among the olive groves and the



Cat. 72 - Panorama of the Harbour at Antibes,
pencil and oil on tracing paper, 10 x 31 1/2 in. (25 x 80 cm)



Cat. 73 - Landscape study,
oil on tracing paper,
12 1/4 x 6 1/2 in. (31 x 17.3 cm)

flower gardens that contribute to the perfume industry of Grasse, and has not failed to pay tribute to the town's illustrious artist in a painting that includes the statue of Fragonard. Some principal landscapes are the "Alpes Maritimes", bought by Lady Dunne for the Beaverbrook Art Gallery; the "Cap Martin-Roquebrune Station" (Blackpool Art Gallery), "From Mougins", a vista of wooded heights and valley (Collection of Mr. Harald Peake). Though he has tended to seek out the less frequented country inland rather than the resorts of the Riviera coast Cannes and its harbour are among his themes.

As he has painted in Italy at frequent intervals during more than forty years there are many pictures also of Italian cities and landscape. Paintings in the exhibition of 1923 showed his delight in the architecture of Assisi.

He has worked in Rome, Florence, and Venice and a painting of the Forum, bought by Queen Elizabeth, was admirably in the tradition of classical landscape. The Italian cities with which he has had most intimate sympathy are Lucca with its many reminders of the past, of ancient Rome and the Middle Ages and Perugia, once Etruscan, with its later memories of the rise of Italian art, both places inspiring a number of works.

In the long topographical record farther afield, one might single out his views of New York, "Central Park" of 1960, with its surround of tall buildings being a good example; his views of Moscow, Stockholm and Athens. But this indefatigable traveller has always returned to the British Isles with renewed appreciation. In contrast with his paintings of cities his pictures of local fairs in Ireland bring out his enjoyment of an entirely rural scene, with a stir of local incident.



Cat. 74 - Sketch for Cattle Market Newport, 1949,
oil on paper, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (19.5 x 36.5 cm)

PAINTINGS OF WAR

In the Second World War, the War Artist Advisory Committee was guided by several considerations. There was the need felt for a record, as distinct from the photograph, allowing for an artist's personal interpretation of what was going on; the question of who would fit best in which service; the desirability of keeping English art alive. There was little expectation that great works of art would be a consequence. Tragic and dramatic comment was achieved by a few and elicited especially by the devastation and misery of bombing. The shelter sketch-books of Henry Moore, the results of bombing as seen by John Piper and Graham Sutherland, the "dead sea" of wrecked enemy planes by Paul Nash were in this category.

Experience on the Somme in the earlier war had left a deep impression on Charles Cundall, so deep that he found it hard to speak of it, but his abilities did not naturally tend towards the tragic and intensely dramatic. That he was capable of vivid illustration is shown by his "Withdrawal from Dunkirk", but this is exceptional among the sixty or more paintings he made between 1940



Fig. 62 - The Withdrawal from Dunkirk, June 1940, 1940,
oil on canvas, 40 x 60 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (102 x 153 cm)
© Imperial War Museums (IWM Art LD 305)

and 1945 as artist for the Air Ministry. He has said that the discipline involved in having to make a picture out of an impossible subject was very valuable in later years. They were and able series of documentary works often concerned with the routine preparation and organization of wartime, as for instance in such a scene of truing a styer "R.A.F. Morse School" in 1941 with its multitude of figures busy in a long arc-lamp lit perspective. He objectively records the concourse of boats under a dawn sky in the "Bordeaux Refugees at Falmouth", 1940, and with equal objectivity the "Homecoming of H.M.S. Exeter".



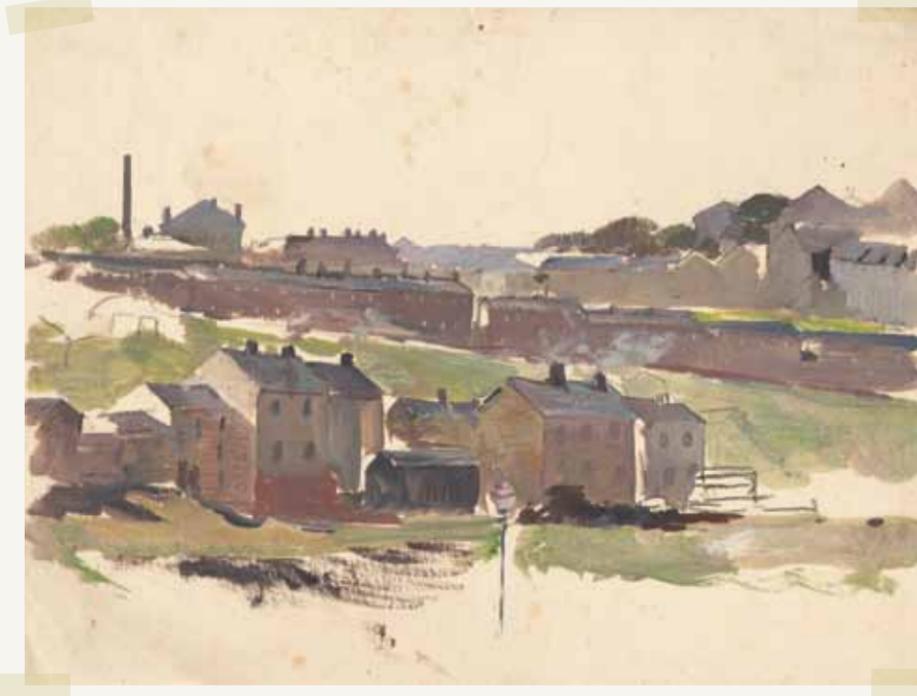
Fig. 63 - Fig. 33 - RAF Morse School at Olympia, 1940,
oil on wood, 39 1/2 x 49 1/2 in. (82.5 x 125 cm)

© The Artist's Estate / Bridgeman Images Photo Credit: Royal Air Force Museum

A number of pictures were views of wartime harbours and descriptive of various types of craft from the aircraft-carrier to the minesweeper. He gives a day-to-day picture of wartime, as in his view of the American Air Station in Windsor Great park, the castle making a background for a row of anti-aircraft guns. His skill in ceremonial composition came to his aid in depicting the march past at Buckingham Palace in "The Battle of Britain Anniversary Celebrations", 1943.

THE INDUSTRIAL SCENE

Painting wartime industry had a special value in directing the artist towards the possibilities offered by industry in peace time. It was not a genre which had much historical background, though Joseph Wright of Derby had painted the cotton mills along the Derwent valley and the iron forge of industry in the late 18th century, and Turner had painted the glow of blast furnaces at Birmingham. Charles Cundall has disclaimed any attempt to "express the machine age" as a painter like Léger might do. For him the industrial scene was a landscape to be turned like any other into pictorial composition from a series of studies made on the spot and a full-sized cartoon as a preliminary to the finished work. "The Prospect Mills, Wibsey, Bradford" 1950 was a study of the typical West Riding factory scene, but great new engineering works were also his theme like the "Glen Moriston Dam" painted



Cat. 75 - Sketch for Prospect Mills, (studio stamp verso),
pencil and oil on paper, 8 1/2 x 11 1/2 in. (22 x 29.3 cm)



Fig. 64 - Abbey Works, Margam, c.1958
oil on canvas, 27 x 60 in. (68.6 x 152 cm)
© National Museum Wales

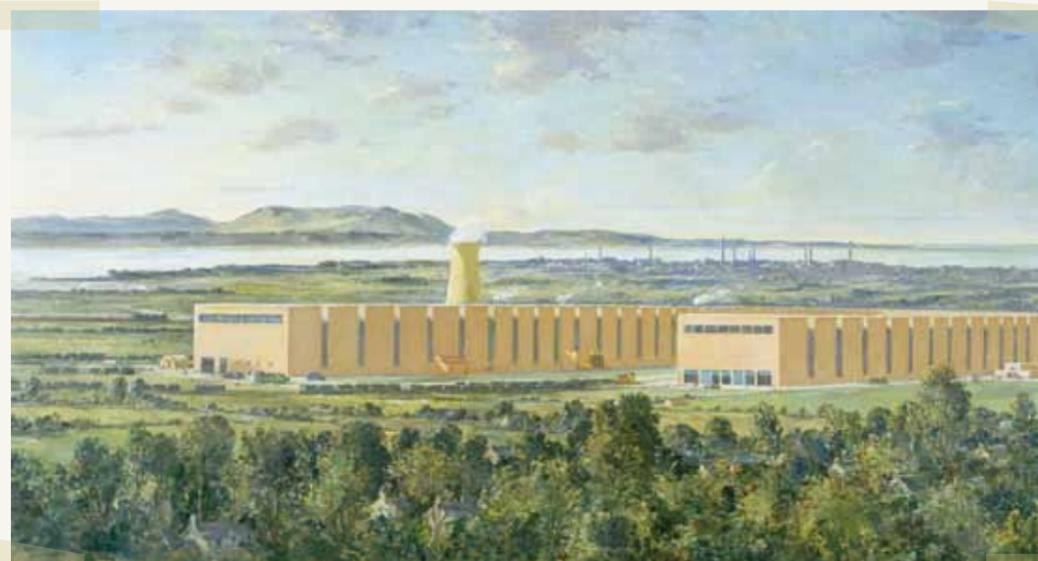


Fig. 65 - Trostre Works, Llanelli, 1959
oil on canvas, 29 1/2 x 59 1/2 in. (75 x 151 cm)
© National Museum Wales

for the Mitchell Engineering Company, 1954 and impressively seen against a mountainous background. The series of paintings for the Steel Company of Wales now at Margam House, St. James's Square, London, which have been previously referred to, represent his most ambitious undertaking.

Here there is the sense of giant modern effort rather than the homely feeling for the 19th century legacy of factory chimneys and rows of small terrace houses such as L.S. Lowry paints. The two artists have something in common in their link with Lancashire and liking for a multitude of figures, though in other ways they contrast. the humorous sense of character, the stay-at-home affection of Lowry for his own region are distinct from Cundall's impersonal crowds and his excursions in search of landscape, his eye for the variety of visual pleasures different countries afford.

It is a kind of satisfaction many painters now are apt to forego in concentrating on manner rather than matter. Charles Cundall is not of those artists whom one can really fit in with the mode of the current movements of the day, but his unaffected realism is of a kind likely to retain its value, and wear well in the future in the full representation it gives of the world he knew.

Appendices



Cat. 76 – Study for *St Paul's Cathedral*,
pencil and watercolour on paper, 10 ½ x 17 in. (27 x 43.3 cm)

Chronology

- 1890 Born Stretford, Lancashire.
Childhood in Manila, Philippines and Australia.
Educated Ackworth Quaker School in Yorkshire and Sale Grammar School.
- 1907 Apprenticed as designer of pottery at Pilkingtons Lancastrian Pottery & Tiles, working under the guidance of Gordon Forsyth. Night classes at Manchester School of Art.
- 1908 Three of his bowls illustrated in *The Studio*.
- 1911 4 of his works created at Pilkingtons are exhibited at the Manchester Art School exhibition.
- 1912 Wins scholarship to the Royal College of Art.
- 1914 Leaves Pilkingtons and joins the Royal Fusiliers (University and Public Schools Battalion).
- 1916 Wounded at High Wood in right arm. Returns to hospital in England.
Learns to paint with left hand.
Returns to RCA but soon transferred to the Slade.
Rents studio in Chelsea for 7 shillings per week.
- 1920 Paris, where he rents a studio in Place de la Sorbonne and paints at Colarossi's atelier.
Commissioned to design stained glass window for Sale Congregational Church. The designs were exhibited at the RA in 1920-21 and the window unveiled in 1923.
- 1920s Extensive travel in France (especially Paris) and Italy. Works with Henry Rushbury and Job Nixon.
- 1923 Marries Jacqueline Pietersen ("Pieter").
Exhibition with three other artists – Harold Knight, Fairlie Harmer and H.M. Livens – at the Old Grosvenor Galleries in Bond Street.
The Contemporary Art Society acquires *Les Bains Chauds, Seine* and *Temeside, Ludlow*.

- 1924 Exhibition at the Manchester Art Gallery with E.M. O'Rorke Dickey, Allan Gwynne-Jones and Henry Rushbury.
Elected member of the New English Art Club.
- 1926 Exhibits at Colnaghi & Co Galleries.
The Manchester Art Gallery acquires *Pont Neuf*.
Derby Day, 1923 is bought by Edward Marsh, the former secretary to Churchill, man of letters and a patron of the arts who made a special point of encouraging talented English painters.
- 1929 Travels to Sweden.
- 1930 Birth of his daughter Annabel Jacqueline ('Jackie').
Exhibits at Colnaghi & Co Galleries.
- 1930s Travels and paints in France, England, Italy, Russia, Spain and Ireland.
- 1932 Paints portrait of William Burton (manager of Pilkingtons from 1891 to 1915). The portrait now hangs in Wythenshawe Hall, Manchester.
- 1933 Elected member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters.
Commissioned to paint a mill at Huddersfield.
- 1935 Elected member of the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours.
Elected member of The National Geographic Society in America.
Travels to the Soviet Union.
- 1937 Elected associate member of the Royal Academy (ARA).
Coronation Day, 1937 is bought as a birthday present for the King.
- 1938 Exhibition at the Leicester Galleries, Leicester Square, London



Fig. 66 – Charles Cundall c.1910-11



Fig. 67 – Cundall's mark at Pilkingtons



Fig. 68 – Charles Cundall during WWI



Fig. 69 – In Meudon, France, 1923



Fig. 70 – Pieter in Honfleur, France, 1923



Fig. 71 – Annabel Jacqueline, c.1932

- 1939-45 Paints *King & Queen's Visit to Quebec*.
Becomes Official War Artist.
The former house and studio at Carthcart Road having been bombed, Cundall and his wife establish London headquarters towards the river end of Cheyne Row, Great Cheyne Studio (1940).
Elected member of The Arts Club (1940).
Elected full member of the Royal Academy (RA) (1944).
- 1945-46 Painting in Great Britain. Battle, Portmadoc. Oxford.
- 1947 Paints Royal Visit to Africa.
- 1948 Roosevelt Memorial in Grosvenor Square.
Paris, Rome Orvieto.
- 1949-54 Painting trips to Florence, Venice, Verona, Lake Garda, Paris, Avignon, Arles, and to Norfolk, Huddersfield, Westport, Newport, Bradford, Shropshire, Ireland, Wales.
- 1955 Painting trips to Venice, Athens, Scotland, Paris.
Exhibits at Colnaghi & Co Galleries.
- 1956-57 Painting trips to Scotland, Wales, Paris, Italy, Monte Carlo, Henley.
- 1957-60 Works on eight views of the Abbey and Velindre Works, Wales, now set in the panels of the Board room and other areas of the London headquarters of the Steel Company of Wales, Margam House, St. James's Square.
- 1958-63 Painting trips to Monte Carlo, Menton, Paris, Avignon, Perugia, Florence, Salzburg, Vienna, New York, Madeira and Sussex, Ireland, Wales, Henley, Hammersmith, River Arun, Arundel, Coventry, Scotland.
- 1964 Painting trips to Menton, Roquebrune, Cannes, Italy, Grasse and Arundel.
Exhibits at Upper Grosvenor Galleries.

- 1965-69 Painting trips to Cannes, Grasse, Roquebrune, Lucca, Florence, and to Sussex, Windsor, Oxfordshire, Ireland.
- 1969 London paintings.
- 1970 Paints *Dartmouth from Kingswear*, large version of which is bought by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.
- 1971 Dies in London (November 4th).
- 1973 Exhibition Phoenix Gallery, Lavenham, Suffolk.
- 1986 *FA Cup Final 1936, Arsenal v. Sheffield United* makes £14,300 at public auction (Christie's).
- 1988 Exhibition Phoenix Gallery, Lavenham, Suffolk.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Tate Gallery (Chantrey Bequest), Contemporary Art Society, Manchester City Art Gallery, Southampton Art Gallery, Bristol City Art Gallery, Imperial War Museum, Preston Art Gallery, Herbert Art Gallery – Coventry, Huddersfield Art Gallery, The London Library, National Maritime Museum – Greenwich, The Guildhall Museum, Royal Academy of Arts, City of London, Corporation, Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Goodenough College, National Museum of Wales, Kirklees Museums & Galleries, Government Art Collection, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, University of Hull Art Collection, Salford Museum & Art Gallery, Museum of London, Brighton and Hove Museums & Art Galleries, Royal Air Force Museum, Laing Art Gallery

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

HM The Queen, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, HM The Queen Mother, Beaverbrook Gallery, Sir John Howard & Partners, Mitchell Engineering, Medici Society, Steel Company of Wales, Lord Forte, The Lord's Taverners, Chelsea Football Club, Leander Rowing Club, Associated Television, The Haberdashers Company (3), The Marylebone Cricket Club



Fig. 72 – Official War Artist, c.1940



Fig. 73 – At one of his exhibitions

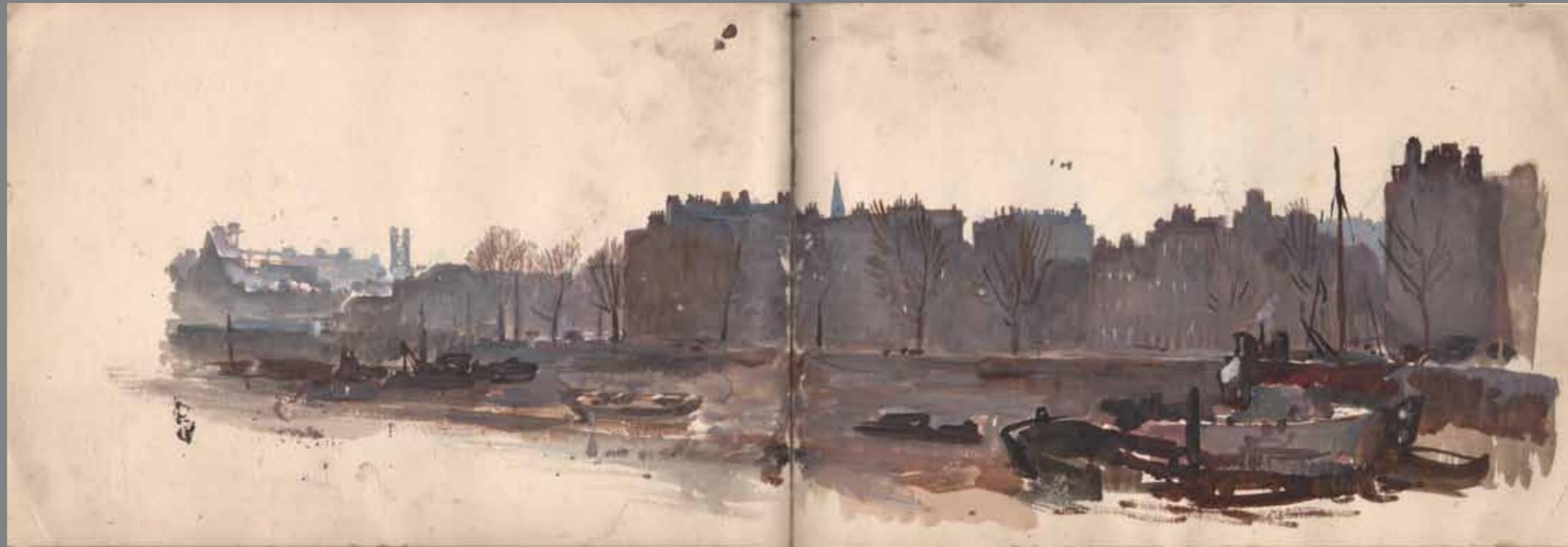


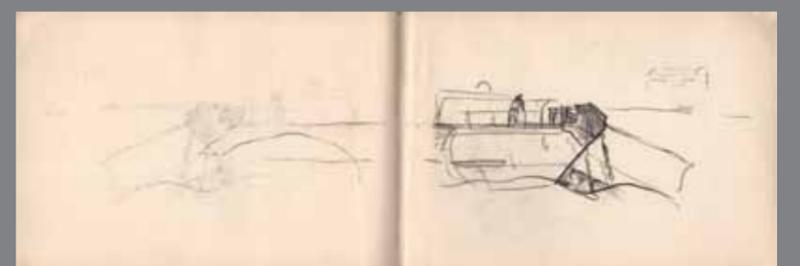
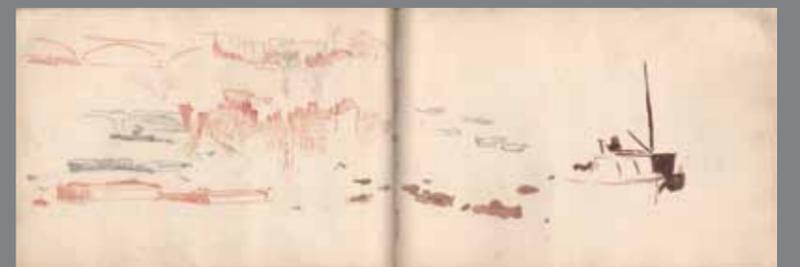
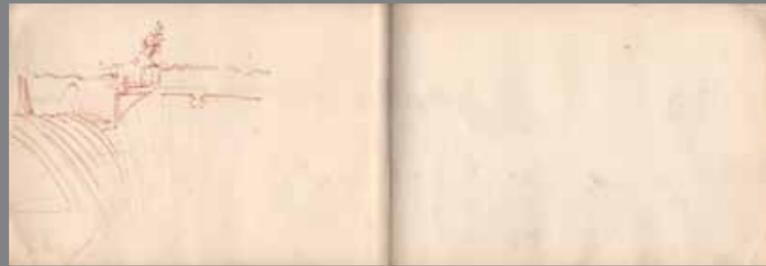
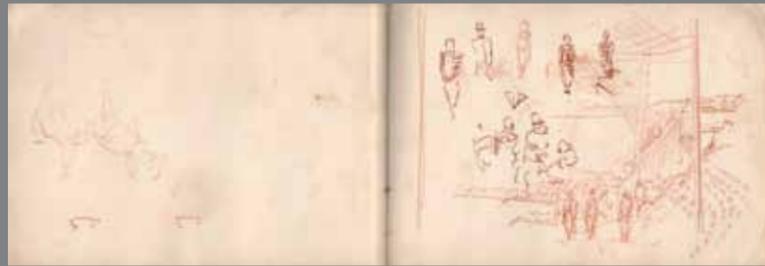
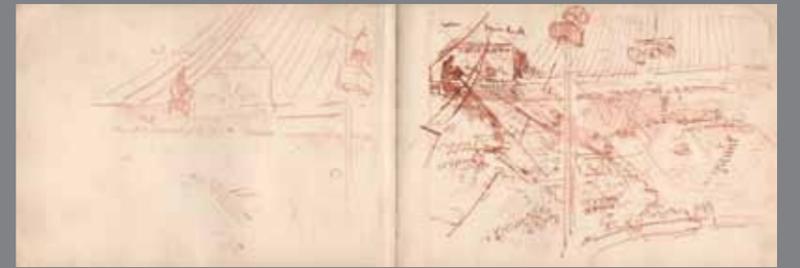
Fig. 74 – Charles Cundall, 1960s



Fig. 75 – Charles Cundall (with papers) and other members of the RA hanging committee

London Sketchbook





List of works exhibited at the Royal Academy

14 Whitehead's Grove, Chelsea S.W.3

- 1918 1162 Somewhere in France.
 1920 1169 Design for stained glass.
 1295 Design for stained glass windows.
 1921 1915 Design for Memorial Window,
 Mersey Congregational Church,
 Grand Andelys.
 1923 70 Les Andelys, Normandy.
 619 Monaco.
 729 Edinburgh.
 1924 33 La Turbie.
 1925 459 Luxembourg Gardens.
 428 Place Chateaubriand, St. Malo.
 1926 742 Quai des Grand Augustins, Paris.
 86 The Lord Mayor's Show.
 1927 317 Canterbury.
 922

25a Glebe Place, S.W.3

- 1928 274 Blackpool.
 298 A Berkshire garden.
 554 Promenade de Midi, Menton.
 1929 91 Stevedores, Marseille.
 95 The Boulogne Express.
 291 St. Giles' Fair, Oxford.
 1930 38 Stockholm.
 442 Victoria Station.
 676 Rochester.
 1931 110 Folkstone.
 614 The Fish Market, Brighton.
 711 Tobogganing at Hampstead.
 1932 366 Horse Fair, Stow-on-the-Wold.
 479 Studies of Rome.
 1933 213 King's Mill, Huddersfield.
 230 Bank Holiday, Brighton, (Chantry Work).
 398 The "Skylark", Brighton.
 1934 364 Piccadilly Circus.
 713 The Derby, 1933.
 1935 81 London from Vigo Street.
 447 The demolition of Waterloo Bridge.
 628 The passing of Waterloo Bridge.
 1936 244 London Bridge.
 439 Moscow.
 198 Sunday on the Seine, Paris.
 267 Stirling bombers take off at sunset.
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 1942 271 Return of Stirling bombers: "MacRobert's Reply".
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 1943 12 Bomber by Bow, 1943.
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 25 London Bridge.
 32 Summer in Somerset.
 59 O.C.T.U. Station.
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 210 Servicing a Liberator.
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 412 The Isle of Innisfallen.
 (Elected R.A. 1944)

1944 10 Winter: Somerset.
 25 Dieppe.
 200 Battle of Britain Anniversary, 1943.
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 479 Early Morning, New York.
 494 Waterloo Bridge, 1943.
 768 W.A.A.F. Mechanics.
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 1945 769 Aircraft Carrier.
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 11 Westminster.
 176 R.A.F. Airfields Training No. 15, of T.T., Halton.
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 180 Marine craft and Sunderlands.
 Painted for the Nation's War Records.

1a Cathcart Road, S.W. 10

(Elected A.R.A., 1937)

- 1937 194 Southampton Water.
 260 Chelsea v. Arsenal at Stamford Bridge.
 475 Barnet Friar.
 489 Winter in Eastcombe.
 633 Avila.
 638 Cotswold landscape.
 1938 32 The Derby from St. Dunstons Stand.
 163 Coronation Day, 1937.
 242 Thurston's.
 266 Building the Metropolitan Cathedral.
 362 Building in Berkeley Square.
 400 Demolition in Berkeley Square.
 1939 102 The St. Leger.
 148 The Royal Visit to Paris, July 1938.
 160 The launching of the "Queen Elizabeth".
 264 Test Match at Lords.
 365 Laying the Commemoration Stones of the New Council
 Buildings, Bristol.
 437 Coke Ovens.

Great Cheyne Studio, Cheyne Row, S.W. 3

- 1940 172 New York.
 231 "Exeter" Home.
 277 Coenties Slip, New York.
 475 Quebec.
 609 New York from Brooklyn.
 667 The King and Queen arrive at Quebec, May 17th, 1939.
 1941 208 R.A.F. Morse School. Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 216 The British Railways carry on.
 393 Falmouth, 1940. Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 420 Dieppe, August 1939.
 473 Advanced Riggion. Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 477 Bombing up a Hampden. Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 1942 133 Servicing a "Sunderland". Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 188 Servicing a "Stirling" in Winter. Painted for the Nation's War Records.
 196 Moscow, 7th November.
 265 Lancasters taking off.
 497 Virginia Water, 1944.
 590 Sussex oast-house.
 654 The demolition of Waterloo Bridge, 1935. (Diploma Work).
 1946 11 Queen Anne's Ride, Windsor Great park, 1944.
 27 Cherry Tree Farm, Sussex.
 82 Hastings Luggers.
 99 Killorglin Horse Fair, Ireland.
 244 Lancasters at Messrs. A.V. Roes Aerodrome, Woodford, Cheshire.
 626 The Clearing.
 1947 253 Market Day, Battle, Sussex.
 340 The departure of the Royal family to South Africa, 1st February 1947.
 346 H.M.S. St. Kitts with the Royal Escort.
 371 H.M.S. Vanguard at the Bay.
 379 Portmadoc, North Wales.
 420 The Royal Family visit H.M.S. Implacable.
 1948 22 Oast Cottage, Fairlight.
 89 Hastings net houses and luggers.
 140 Early spring: Fairlight, Sussex.
 219 Chelsea Reach.
 593 The Forum.
 671 Keat's House: the Spanish Steps, Rome.
 1949 50 Snow in Sussex.
 96 Huddersfield.
 314 The Unveiling of the Roosevelt Memorial.
 326 London River.
 379 Piazza del popolo, Rome.
 497 Dieppe.
 1950 14 Early Morning, Tuscany.
 108 Prospect Mills, Wibsey, Bradford.
 159 Approaching Storm, Hastings.
 257 Clare Island from County Mayo.
 261 Ponte Vecchio, 1949.
 482 Cattle Market, Newport, Co. Mayo.
 1951 33 Concours de Pecheurs, Paris.

- 92 Early Morning, Tuscany.
 97 Melcomb House, Newport, County Mayo.
 140 Halifax.
 223 By the Seine.
 231 Frosty Morning, Somerset.
 1952 40 Le Pont Neuf, Paris.
 107 Festival Week, Hastings.
 113 Bradford from Prospect Mills.
 146 Preston.
 275 Avignon.
 280 Le Pont des Arts, Paris. 1953
 1953 38 Avignon.
 83 Newcastle upon Tyne.
 110 St. David's, South Wales.
 115 Gravesend from Tilbury.
 246 St. James's Park.
 260 Fair at New Ross, County Wexford.
 1954 22 Oast Cottage.
 87 River Pageant, July, 1953.
 153 The Coronation: arrival at the Abbey.
 167 Building Glen Moriston Dam.
 554 The Round Pond: February, 1954.
 641 Irish Farmstead, County Wicklow.
 1955 41 Venice.
 117 Tuscan Landscape.
 148 On the Left Bank, Paris.
 251 Lake Garda.
 287 Thorncombe Park.
 601 In County Wicklow.
 1956 19 The Parthenon.
 183 Argenticon in Campos Chios.
 187 Evening, Athens.
 190 Morning in Paris.
 229 The Oval.
 240 The Terrace, Monte Carlo.
 1957 36 Verona from the Amphitheatre.
 166 Henley Royal Regatta.
 190 Monte Isola (Stott purchase) Italy.
 394 Margam Works, Port Talbot.
 624 Argenticon Campos Chios.
 655 A.T.V. at the Wood Green Empire.
 1958 11 Henri Quatre, Paris.
 107 Burham-on-Crouch, Regatta.
 145 Glen Moriston Dam.
 352 Rotten Row.
 427 Alpes Maritimes.
 432 Concours de Pecheurs, Paris.
 1959 23 On the Left Bank, Paris.
 233 Tamesis regatta, Teddington Reach.
 245 Henley Royal Regatta.
 268 Les Mouettes, Cap d'Ail.
 320 Rottal Lodge, Clova Valley, Angus.
 512 New Look: West Wales.
 1960 11 Central Park, New York.
 71 Strathvaich, Ross-shire.
 79 Farm in Umbria.
 342 New York.
 348 United Nations Building.
 556 Winter Morning, Perugia.
 1961 27 Quai Malaquais, Paris.
 80 Early Morning, Salzburg.
 159 Excavation in Park lane.
 217 Near Perugia.
 431 Ponta Vecchio, Florence.
 518 Building the new Forth Road Bridge.
 1962 2 Winter Morning near Arundel.
 114 Near Faial, Madeira.
 225 Autumn in the Tuileries.
 228 London Zoo Elephant Walk.
 247 Hyde Park Corner, 1961.
 495 Funchal, Madeira.
 1963 50 Salzburg.

- 167 Medici Fountain, Luxembourg Gardens.
 171 Piazza del Comune, Assisi.
 188 Italian Landscape.
 190 Early Autumn, Paris.
 226 Monte Carlo from Roquebrune.
 1964 36 Avignon.
 57 The Palace of the Popes, Avignon.
 60 Floods on the Arun.
 64 Roquebrune, France.
 191 Durham Miners' Gala.
 321 Newport, County Mayo, Ireland.
 1965 36 Achill Sound, County Mayo.
 136 Roquebrune Station, Cap Martin.
 140 Waiting for the Bus, Perugia.
 268 Cannes Harbour.
 348 Autumn in Arundel Park.
 397 Above Grasse.
 560 Fair at Waterville, Co. Kerry.
 1966 564 Waterville, Co. Kerry.
 565 The Clearing, Arundel park.
 574 Lucca Lambs, Massa Macinaia.
 575 Tackley, Oxfordshire.
 579 San Frediano, Lucca.
 1967 705 The Road to Cannes.
 707 To the Market at Perugia.
 708 Florence from Fiesole.
 709 Grasse.
 710 Statue to Fragonard, Grasse.
 712 The Arun Valley.
 1968 119 Cottage de la Cava, Cannes.
 944 Renvyle, County Galway.
 948 Massa Macinnia, near Lucca, Italy.
 951 Early Morning: Cannes.
 1061 Cattle Fair, Clifden, Connemara.
 1065 Clifden, Connemara.
 1969 13 Pont Neuf, Paris.
 450 Demolition of old St. Thomas's.
 461 By the Arun, Sussex.
 1476 Winter in Green Park.
 477 Monte Carlo.
 515 Umbrian Farm.
 1970 3 After Milking, Houghton, Sussex.
 61 Yarmouth, Isle of Wight.
 62 Parham Park, Sussex.
 65 By Bantry Bay.
 66 Arundel, Sussex.
 172 From Apsley House.

List of works exhibited at the New English Art Club

CUNDALL, Charles ARA HNEAC Painter Engraver

14c Whitehead's Grove, SW3

1921s	67	St Martha's Mount, Surrey
1922w	28	Temple of Vesta, Tivoli
1922s	31	Evening, Anticoli
1923w	94	The Arena, Assisi
1923s	84	Seine Wash-Houses
1924w	32	Cats and Ladders
	68	Le Théâtre Guinol, Champs Elysées
1924s	84	The Forum, Rome
	103	Weddings at The Campidogli
	104	The Colosseum
1925w	82	Honfleur (lent by E H Marsh, Esq., C.B.)
1925s	3	Passing of Devonshire House
	61	Supper Time
	66	The Elephant Walk
	82	Early Morning, Assisi
	87	Boat Race Day, 1925
	120	La Fête de St Cloud
	124	P L Joubert, Esq.
	139	Jordan
1926s	18a	Blackheath, Surrey
	137	Cavalleria Rusticana
	164	Miss Margaret Pilkington
	177	Easter in Kent
1926w	19	A Bear Pit
	194	Pigs in Kent
	197	Windmill Near Canterbury
	203	Chartres
	223	Gardens on the Loni
	245	The Loire Valley
1927s	134	Putney Common
	138	A Cup-tie
	189	Evening in Sussex
	194	The Old Empire
	222	Perugia – Watercolour or Drawing

14b Whitehead's Grove, SW3

1927w	9	"The Blue Train" at Montecarlo – Watercolour or Drawing
	38	The Terrace, Monte Carlo – Watercolour or Drawing
	80	Edinburgh
	151	Place St. Michel, Paris
1928a	109	Wolverhampton
	200	A Wayside Station in Italy

25 Glebe Place, SW3

1928w	133	La Rochelle
	231	October Morning
	236	Connemara
1929s	9	Albi – Watercolour, Drawing or Etching
	33	The Promenade, Cheltenham – Watercolour, Drawing or Etching
	157	Etruria Vale
	178	The Capital of Connemara
	197	Berne
1929w	171	Bisley
	213	The Boat Race
	219	Hamburg Docks
	303	Tourists at Stockholm
	309	Stockholm

25a Glebe Place, SW3

1930w	127	Sheep in Clover
	131	Norwich
	213	Whitmonday, Blackheath
	295	Oxford - Watercolour
1931w	156	Summer Morning, Sussex
	173	The Ferry, Sunderland
	228	Sunderland
1932w	124	Mills and Moors
	160	Amalfi
	188	The Forum, Rome
1933w	192	Edinburgh
	373	A Buckinghamshire Farm

391 The Spanish Steps, Rome
1a Cathcart Road, South Kensington, SW10

1934w	59	Huddersfield – Watercolour
	175	Spring in Buckinghamshire
	233	Manchester City Win the Cup
1935w	242	Frosty Morning, Beaulieu
	54	Dover from "The Lord Warden"
	69	Penguin Pond
1936w	86	The Boat Race from Putney
	92	Jubilee Day, Trafalgar Square
	4	Lourdes
	26	The Aqueduct, Segovia
1937w	66	The Guadarrama Range from Avila
	237	Toledo - Watercolour
	183	The Demolition of Waterloo Bridge – Watercolour, Drawing or Etching
	226	Ballybricken Fair
	233	The Passing of Waterloo Bridge
	304	Early Morning, Avila
1938		Paris Exhibition
	27	Foire Irlandaise
	28	Lourdes
1939		Canadian Exhibition
	29	Islington Circus, Royal Agricultural Hall £52
	30	Horse Fair, Killorglin, Ireland £63
1939w	13	The Golf Links, St Briac
	126	Embarkation, Venice
	185	The Isle of Innisfallen Rossbeigh, County Kerry

c/o Bank of Montreal, 9 Waterloo Place, SW1

1941w	187	St Jacut de la Mer, Brittany
	191	The Isle of Innisfallen
	312	From Central Park, New York

Great Cheyne Studio, Cheyne Row, SW3

1942w	119	Grand Canal, Venice
	145	New York from Brooklyn
	169	Kerry Farm
1943w	138	Kittisford, Somerset - Oil or Tempera
	171	Dieppe, Summer, 1939 - Oil or Tempera
	175	Southampton Water - Oil or Tempera
1945s	40	Frosty Morning
	79	Somerset Farm
	83	Irish Homestead
	185	On the Brittany Coast - Oil or Tempera
1945w	136	Hastings Luggers
1946s	18	Net Houses, Hastings
	50	Nutworth Farm, Wensleydale
1946w	131	Port Madoc
	139	Morning on Romney Marsh
	163	In our Garden
	188	A Dieppe Laundry
1947s	16	Hastings Net Houses £75
	18	Sussex farm £75
1948w	106	In County Cork
	110	Bantry Bay, County Cork
	311	Bantry Fair, Co Cork
1949s	27	Early Morning, Orvieto
	42	Early Spring
	276	In the Borghese Gardens, Rome
1950s	20	Dorset Landscape
	25	Rain in Rome
	40	Bantry Bay, Co Cork
	68	Burnham Overy, Norfolk 1951s
1951s	93	Evening, Tuscany
	112	Croagh Patrick, Co Mayo
	134	In the Borghese Gardens, Rome
	176	Autumn, Paris
	308	Chelsea Reach - Watercolour or Drawing
1952s	7	Vasco de Gamma's House, Tuscany
	18	The Pont Neuf
	63	The Tuileries
	71	Sunday Evening, Paris

1953w	134	Zoo, Notre Dame £42
	137	St David's, South Wales £75
	187	Competition on the Rother £100
	199	Passing Storm, Dorset £60
1955w	141	Regatta at Wells by the Sea £275
	168	Gravesend from Tilbury £105
	174	An Italian Garden £105
	304	Café Della Posta, Torri del Benaco - Oil or Watercolour £62
1956w	148	In the Tuileries £84
	153	Spring Morning £105
	201	Athens £84
	204	Honington Bridge, Warwickshire £42
1957w	139	Piazza Erbe, Verona £158
	145	Fort Augustus £131
	287	Paris £158
1960w	52	Polstead, Suffolk £158
	95	Fair in Menton £210
	102	Old Town, Menton £158
	310	The Tiber in Umbria £84
1961w	14	Serpentine Regatta £158
	107	Near Perugia £84
	117	Farm in Umbria £84
1962s	13	Concours de Pecheurs, Paris £263
	36	Chelsae Arts Club Garden £158
	81	Near Arundall £158
	101	Old Moscow £84
1963s	17	Olive Gathers, Menton £263
	36	Winter in Sussex £263
	75	Summer in Sussex £105
	97	Summer Flowers £105
1967w	9	Fishermen on Seine £105
	34	Spring in Paris £105
	50	The Arun Valley £263
1968w	22	St David's, South Wales £315
	102	Clew Bay, Co. Mayo, Ireland £263
1969w	64	The Edge of the Wood £158
	241	Cattle Market, Clifden, Connemara £105

Flat G4, Airlie Gardens, W8

1970w	21	Lucca Lambs, Manassa Macinaia £326
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The Late

1971w	63	November 5th, Lewes £125
	64	Grasse £350
	65	Durham Miners' Gala £400
	66	Hyde Park Underpass in Construction £600
	67	Green Park from Arlington House £35
1986		Centenary Exhibition
	207	Festival on the Seine, Paris NFS

Featured Distinguished Past Member

2001s		Members Only Exhibition (1890-1944 elected 1924)
	145	The Old Town, Hastings NFS

A Personal Tribute to Charles Cundall
R.A., R.W.S., R.P., N.E.A.C., Hon R.B.A., Governor of the F.B.A.
September 6th 1890 - November 4th 1971

Charles Cundall's work is so well-known – especially to readers of the Quarterly – that I write now of him as Charles Cundall the man who honoured me with his friendship for very many years.

Of course to know Charles was to love him. His was the simple honesty of the completely dedicated artist who loved nature and all he saw with a directness which he typified in his painting, often transmuting the facts of the world about him from prose into poetry. But "simple" is not a word to use in the context of Cundall. The modest, serene, youthful exterior hid depths of awareness, both aesthetic and social. Many's the time I've seen him on the perimeter of some argument and discussion among artist friends, listening, sometimes smiling, but apparently contributing little to the debate. Then, when the others had talked themselves to a standstill, suddenly Charles would say something which not only showed that he had "taken" all the points made, but could sum them all up with devastating brevity and accuracy. I recall one such occasion when we were discussing "scale", and it was suggested that above a certain size a water-colour went "beyond the medium". We instanced the work of a contemporary whose paintings got bigger and bigger: "What do you think, Charlie?" we said. "Not too big", said he, "Too many."

He brought this "simple" directness, too, to his work for the A.G.B.I. as a member of its Council and later as a Vice-President. I see him now sitting at the end of the green-baize table in the Council Room at Burlington House, with his friends Henry Rushbury, Cosmo Clark and Randall Jackson, forming with them a cabal of realistic yet very sympathetic understanding of cases, often disconcerting for a Chairman coping as best he could with opposing opinions voiced at the other end of the table.

Like all great artists, Charlie was modest about his own work. His high standards made it impossible for him to believe that he had achieved all we knew he had. And if he had any "hates" they were focussed on the gushing "Art-lovers" (he called them "Gadgets") who tried to button-hole him and cover him with compliments and adoration. As he painted almost entirely out of doors, often in crowded streets and piazzas in Italy and Spain (not to mention London, New York and even Moscow!) these "Gadgets" were a vocational hazard from which he literally fled in terror: on the approach of an onlooker, I've seen him pack up his paints and paper and retire quickly into anonymity. As an official War Artist – particularly with the R.A.F. and the Royal Navy – and as a painter of great occasions, this shyness might have been a grave drawback, but apparently not – for what wonderful records he has left for posterity.

Charles Cundall was a fine judge of pictures. As a "hanger" he was superb and any hanging committee was lucky which had him as a member. The show would go up quickly and without fuss and he could be relied on so to place paintings that one would enhance the other – a rare gift.

What am I personally to do without his helpful criticism? What are we all to do without the company of this ever-youthful, smiling, lovable man? And what is Pieter, his wife to do? We may be sorry for ourselves, but for her goes out our deepest sympathy.

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Fig. 76 – Charles Cundall at work, making preliminary drawings of Coventry Cathedral from the window of an empty house opposite, early 1960s (see page 132)



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Founded in 1991 by Paul Liss and Sacha Llewellyn, Liss Llewellyn Fine Art specialises in the unsung heroes and heroines of British art from 1880 to 1980. For over 20 years Liss Llewellyn Fine Art has worked in association with museums to develop a series of in-depth exhibitions to encourage the reappraisal of some of the lesser known figures of 20th century British Art.

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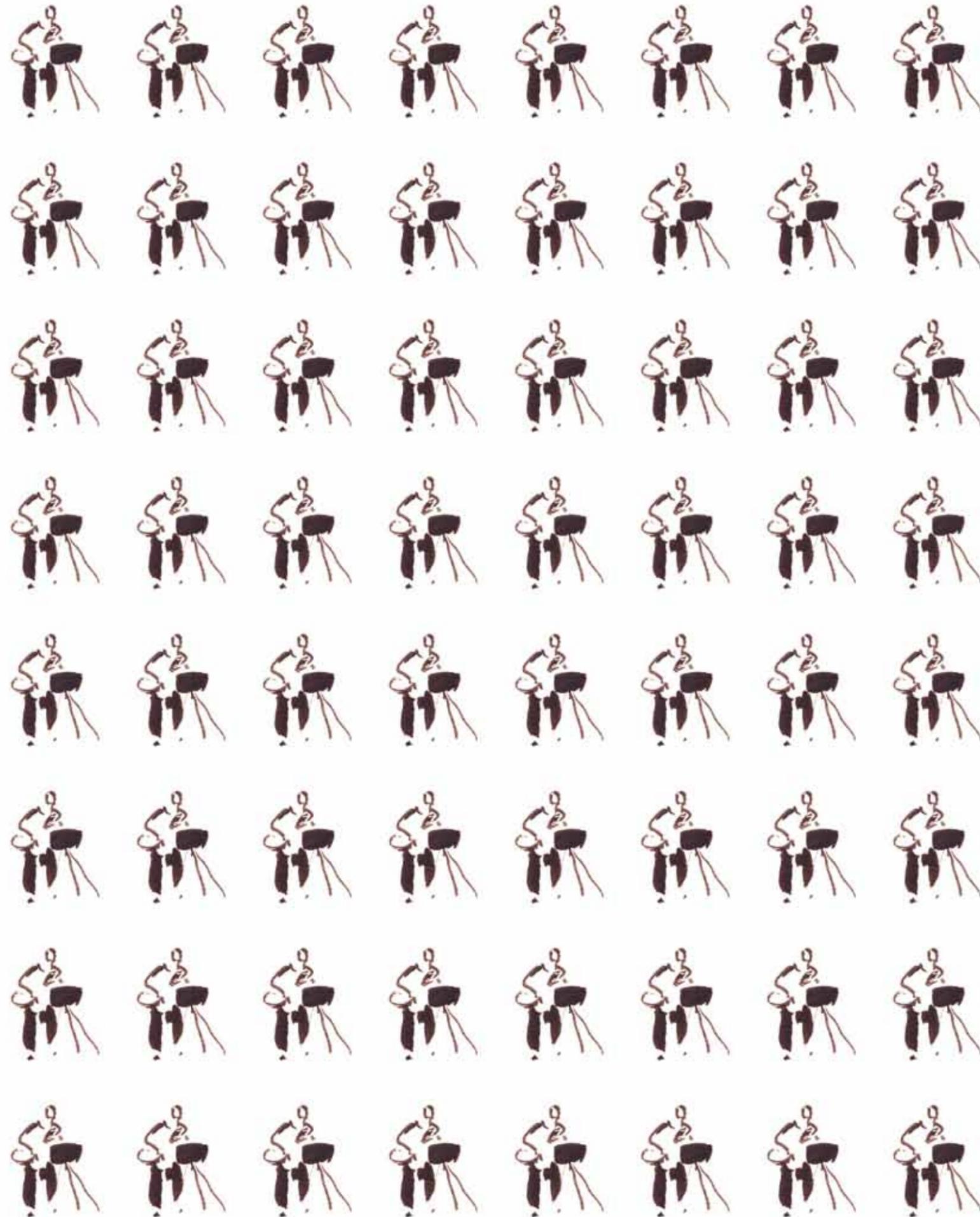
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