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THREE OFFICIALLY COMMISSIONED WOMEN WAR ARTISTS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: ETHEL GABAIN, EVELYN GIBBS AND EVELYN DUNBAR

Volume I

by

ALICE MARINA STRICKLAND

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth

in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract Alice Marina Strickland

Three Officially Commissioned Women War Artists of the Second World War:

Ethel Gabain, Evelyn Gibbs and Evelyn Dunbar.

This thesis has been written with the intention of providing an account of the work of Ethel Gabain (1883-1950), Evelyn Gibbs (1905-1991) and Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960). All three were commissioned as war artists during the Second World War by the War Artists Advisory Committee and are probably best known today for the work they performed as war artists, indeed, the major repository for their work is the Imperial War Museum. All three were selected on the strength of their work prior to the war and all produced work during their commissions that received critical recognition in the press. Yet their war work did not lead to an increased call in demand for their work by galleries and collectors, and their commissions did not act as catalysts in a change of style. Their work was raised on a platform that offered the chance to garner critical significance, yet only Dunbar's war work has received the attention it deserves, and this admiration for her war work has only grown over time.

Arguably their role in World War Two, as part of the war effort, gave them the first opportunity to participate in the same broad arena as their better known contemporaries. When these three became war artists in a sense they joined the populist mainstream that embraced a whole spectrum of avant-garde and conservative artists. This moment (for that's what it was) doesn't sustain them after the war, so the question must be raised as to the relationship between artistic ability, professional success and critical significance.

My research seeks to appraise these artists' achievements and give them a place within the art world of the first half of the twentieth century, alongside their more critically acclaimed contemporaries. As art historians we need to look at all the components in a much larger picture of twentieth century art than that which has been widely disseminated within art historical practice.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

Relevant conferences and seminars were attended at which work was presented. Of particular note was the paper given at the Association of Art Historians Conference held at Bristol University in 2005 in the session entitled 'Agency and Mediation: Women's Contribution to the Visual Culture between the Wars, 1918-1939'. The paper resulted in an invitation to contribute a chapter to a book of the same name as the session edited by Karen Brown of Queen's University, Belfast to be published by Ashgate in 2007. A paper was also given at the AAH's Student Conference held at Plymouth University in 2004. Three papers have been given over the four years of research at the weekly History of Art seminars held at the University. In 2004 I attended a course held by the University for General Teaching Associates.

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Signed..Alice M Strickland.....

Date..24th July 2006.....

Introduction

There are many unsung heroes of the twentieth-century art world. Some artists won the admiration of their contemporaries only to be forgotten by subsequent generations, others produced too small a volume of work to gain a reputation and some refused to tread the fashionable path.

The number of women artists for whom this is true is disproportionate and it is reflected in the historiography of British art. There are a large number of general and specialist studies on British twentieth-century art but very few of these deal with women artists. The women artists of this period, who are regularly singled out number less than a dozen and include Gwen John, Barbara Hepworth and Vanessa Bell. More recently some recuperation has occurred for Marlow Moss, Winifred Knights and others, yet examination of the Royal Academy's British Art in the twentieth-century: the modern movement (1987) or the more recent Macmillan Dictionary of Art (1996) reveals that the canon is still almost exclusively male. A large number of women artists working in this period for a living but not necessarily advancing a Modernist agenda still remain neglected. The work that those in groups outside of the avant-garde conducted was not artistically inferior; it did however, lack the novelty and excitement that avant-garde groups offered to hungry critics. It has been easier to view British art of the first half of the twentieth century as a time of radical practice, a breeding ground for the avant-garde, yet this view serves only to neglect those artists who practised in areas that were widely respected and supported at the time and made an important contribution to the art culture of the twentieth century.

This thesis will look at three women artists and ask how they can be incorporated in an account of art practice in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century. All three entered prestigious art educational institutions and exhibited within well-regarded clubs and societies of the day. They were exposed to a wide range of art and artistic influence, allowing them the time

to develop their own identity and lead successful artistic lives in varying spheres of art practice. However, they were ignored in standard historical accounts of British art until very recently. Over the last few years signs of increased interest in their work have emerged, so it is now timely to offer an account and an assessment of these once-marginalised figures.

The artists who form the subject of my research are Ethel Gabain (1883 – 1950), Evelyn Gibbs (1905- 1991) and Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960). These artists made their reputations in the categories of lithography, art education and painting, including mural painting, respectively. All three of them are probably best known today for the work they performed as officially-commissioned war artists in the 1940s and, indeed, the major repository for their work is the Imperial War Museum.

My own interest in the women war artists of the Second World War initially arose out of a visit to the Imperial War Museum. The history of the British war art of the Second World War is dominated by the production of male artists including Stanley Spencer, John Piper, Graham Sutherland, Henry Moore, Edward Ardizzone, Anthony Gross and Leonard Rosoman. Women war artists are ignored in all but the most exceptional cases: Laura Knight is championed as the exceptional woman war artist, when in fact eleven women artists were commissioned by the War Artists Advisory Committee to produce works and a further seventeen sold work to the WAAC. This thesis seeks to demonstrate that the women artists commissioned by the WAAC are worthy of scrutiny, especially insofar as they tended to concentrate on women's contribution to the Home Front.

The selection of Ethel Gabain, Evelyn Gibbs and Evelyn Dunbar came about through looking in the IWM's artists archive at the amount of primary material held on each woman artist commissioned by the WAAC and whether any previous research had been carried out on their

war work. Some of the women had very little primary material held on file and others, like Laura Knight, had already received an appraisal of their war work. Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar were selected on the basis that no substantial investigation had been carried out on their war work before, that the work they produced during the war was of artistic and historical interest and that there was enough material held on them to warrant an investigation into their work and lives. Each of these three artists were commissioned by the WAAC on a different contract, Evelyn Dunbar was one of only two women who were employed as an Official War Artist on a salaried basis over a number of years, Ethel Gabain was specially employed for a number of specific works over a number of years and Evelyn Gibbs was specially employed to undertake a few specific works over a short period.

The war work of Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar forms the last chapter of the thesis. The variety of their WAAC contracts means that Dunbar's war work constitutes the biggest oeuvre and Gibbs' the smallest and this is reflected in the space allocated for its discussion. However, the WAAC's commissions were informed by their appraisal of all three artists' potential. The thesis therefore offers extensive discussions of their careers and evaluations of their contributions to the art world of the first half of the twentieth century. This, after all, was how they secured the reputations that prompted the WAAC to employ them.

The first chapter of the thesis, 'Making Women Artists Visible', serves as an introductory chapter discussing feminist interventions in the history of art over the last thirty years, the different forms these take and the position of feminist art historians today. The chapter addresses the ways in which women artists can be made 'visible' through theoretical debate and historical recuperation without losing sight of their works' artistic merit. The chapter proposes a context for evaluating the work of Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar as a means of judging their artistic achievement.

The second chapter of the thesis, 'Education and Exhibiting' begins by looking at Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar's respective artistic educations and then considers their patterns of exhibiting. By establishing how they were trained and the influences that they experienced whilst at art school their early artistic lives are reconstructed. The chapter also briefly discusses the societies and groups in which they became involved and how these choices influenced their careers. This chapter thus provides the professional context for their art. Their careers are summarised in Appendix One which contains the artists' brief chronologies.

The following chapters discuss the art that each artist practised in, both before and after the Second World War, in order to better understand and evaluate the work they produced during the war. The first of these chapters, Chapter Three, 'Ethel Gabain and the Artistic Revival of Lithography' discusses Ethel Gabain's lithographic work set within the lithographic revival occurring at the turn of the twentieth century. Gabain's academic training at the Slade and in Paris equipped her with the skills that allowed her a fruitful career as a lithographer and founding member of the Senefelder Club. With the connections and contacts needed to exhibit her work to collectors and thereby the ability to gain financial support from her work, Gabain successfully made a living out of her lithographs as one of the most consistently distinctive printmakers of the first half of the twentieth century. A technically brilliant lithographer and one of the key revivers of lithography as a serious medium, her work was well received critically and she achieved commercial success from the 1910s onwards. A full list of Gabain's lithographs is printed in the Fine Art Society's 2003 exhibition catalogue, which demonstrates the output of her lithographic work and serves as a particularly useful reference guide. This chapter also briefly discusses Gabain's work in oils which form a small part of her output but is an important reference point for her later war work.

Chapter Four, 'Evelyn Dunbar and the Brockley School and Bletchley Park Training College Murals', evaluates the mural paintings Evelyn Dunbar executed on either side of her work as a war artist. The Brockley School Murals (c.1933-1936) have recently received some limited critical attention but they have not been discussed alongside the panels that Dunbar produced for Bletchley Park Training College (c.1958 – 1960), which have themselves never received any art historical critical attention. This chapter seeks to show how Dunbar developed artistically after her training at the Royal College of Art whilst working on the murals at Brockley, contributing to the mural revival in Britain between the wars. Dunbar's position in the art world of the twentieth century has been under-evaluated due to the limited amount of work she produced during her relatively short life and if she is known at all it is for her WAAC paintings. This appraisal of her mural work at Brockley and Bletchley shows that Dunbar contributed successfully to the mural painting movement of the twentieth century.

Chapter Five investigates the illustration work of all three artists, with an appreciation of Evelyn Gibbs' prints 1927-1936. The chapter shows how all three artists explored other sources of revenue, in addition to their main source of income, as they developed as professional artists. The illustrative work of Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar is set in relation to one another and to their contemporaries. The chapter offers the first appraisal of Dunbar's illustration work. The illustration work of Gabain is also included as well as the limited amount of work produced by Gibbs. This chapter also includes an in-depth appraisal of the prints that Gibbs produced as a student in London and Rome and shortly afterwards. This account demonstrates Gibbs' talent as a printmaker and shows how if it had not been for a depression in print sales Gibbs could have been a commercially successful artist. Instead, the economic problems of the 1930s resulted in Gibbs having to abandon print-making as a career.

Chapter Six 'Evelyn Gibbs and the Teaching of Art in Schools', investigates the contribution made by Evelyn Gibbs to children's art education. Like many Rome scholars, there is a sense that Gibbs never fulfilled the remarkable promise of her early work. But her work as an art educationalist, born out of the necessity to support herself, is an important part of Gibbs' career and one which deserves to be assessed. The reason her role within the art education movement has been underplayed is due to the neglect that art education itself has suffered. During the first half of the twentieth century children's art education was a widely regarded and discussed area of art; its practitioners and their pedagogical innovations now deserve a reappraisal. This chapter discusses the work of art educationalists during the first half of the twentieth century and places Gibbs 1934 publication The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft, within its wider context.

The chapters discussing the lithographic, mural, illustration and art educational work of Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar demonstrate that the artistic ability and professional success of these three artists was not negligible. Irrespective of any final analysis of their contribution to British twentieth-century art what the careers of these three artists demonstrate is that access to good art schools and commitment to their practice opened up the possibility of working professionally. Their status as artists was sufficiently notable to secure commissioned work from the WAAC.

Chapter Seven 'The War Art of the Second World War and the Role of the Woman War Artist' discusses the role of art and artists in wartime. The chapter serves as an introduction to the following chapter and its analysis of the war work of Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar. The general developments regarding the recording of warfare during the First and Second World Wars and the involvement of artists in this process are discussed here. The chapter also highlights the position of women during the two World Wars and how their wartime activities were to be recorded

alongside those of their male contemporaries. The war gave commissioned women artists the chance to work alongside their male counterparts on an equal basis, both genders making appropriate responses to their wartime experiences, with women recording the work performed by women on the Home Front.

Chapter Eight 'The War Art of Evelyn Dunbar, Ethel Gabain and Evelyn Gibbs' seeks to set the war work of these three artists within the general contribution made by women to the war effort and the organisations that played a vital role in organising women's work on the Home Front. The war work produced by these three artists is a direct personal response to women's experience of war guided by the terms of their commission from the WAAC. Arguably their role in World War Two as part of the war effort gave them the first opportunity to participate on equal terms with their better-known male contemporaries in the art world of the time. When these three became war artists they joined a populist mainstream that embraced a whole spectrum of avant-garde and conservative artists. This moment (for that's what it was) didn't sustain them after the war. Their war work did not lead to an increased call in demand for their work by galleries and collectors, and their commissions did not act as catalysts in a change of style, so the question must be raised as to the relationship between artistic ability, professional success and critical significance. The 'Conclusion' of the thesis offers some thoughts on these matters.

Chapter One:

Making Women Artists Visible.

This chapter is concerned to set out a context for thinking about the recovery of the work of Ethel Gabain, Evelyn Gibbs and Evelyn Dunbar, significant artists in the inter-war period. In one sense, however, that recovery has already started, for each of these artists has begun to receive renewed attention in the last twenty years.

Ethel Gabain's profile as an accomplished and admired lithographer resulted in Garton and Cooke of Bond Street holding a show in 1985, entitled 'Exhibition of the Prints of John Copley and Ethel Gabain'. And in 2003, over fifty years after Gabain's death in 1950, The Fine Art Society held an exhibition 'Ethel Gabain 1883-1950'. Gabain's work also appears in print dealers catalogues for example Campbell Fine Art's 'British Prints 18th-20th Centuries Catalogue No.2' for February 1990. The enduring appeal of Gabain's lithographic work is reflected in the specialist dealers' exhibitions that include her work, such as these, but she has had no retrospective exhibition of her work in a museum or gallery since the posthumous memorial exhibition of 1950.

Interest surrounding Evelyn Dunbar's mural and war work has intensified over the last twenty years. Alan Powers in a 'Labour of Love: Murals of the 1930s at Brockley School', Country Life, 30th April 1987, investigated Dunbar's mural work and raised awareness of her skill as a muralist in relation to her early twentieth-century fellow practitioners. Dunbar's mural work has appeared more recently in a popular context in Annabel Freyberg's article 'The Heroine of Hilly Fields', The World of Interiors, January 2004. And Evelyn Dunbar's preliminary oil sketch for the 'View of Brockley School in Hilly Fields', circa 1932, is catalogued in Liss Fine Art's 2005 Exhibition Catalogue 'British Paintings and Works on Paper'. Dunbar has not however, received a solo show since that held in December 1953, 'Evelyn Dunbar – Paintings and Drawings 1938 – 1953', held at Swanley Hall, Withersdene, Wye College, Kent. However,

Dunbar's paintings have appeared in three shows between 2003 and 2005. 'The Queue at the Fish Shop' (1944) hung at the Imperial War Museum's exhibition 'Corsets to Camouflage: Women and War', 15th October 2003 – 18th April 2004. Dunbar's 'Winter Garden' (c.1929-1937), was shown at 'Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the present day', 3rd June – 30th August 2004. And 'Land Girl and Bail Bull'(1945) was on show at Tate Britain's 'Picture of Britain', 15th June – 4th September 2005. Dunbar's presence within these major shows and the articles that have appeared, suggest that her place within the art world of the first half of the twentieth century is becoming better known.

Evelyn Gibbs' exhibiting career continued up until her death in 1991 with exhibitions of her current work and work from earlier in her career including 'Evelyn Gibbs: Early Etchings (1927 – 1930) An Exhibition', Garton and Co., 12th – 30th September 1988. Katy Deepwell included Gibbs in '10 Decades: Careers of 10 Women Artists born 1897-1906', held at The Norwich Gallery in 1992. The Morley Gallery, London held 'Evelyn Gibbs (1905-1991) an Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Etchings', April 1994. Since her death, Gibbs' profile has been raised by the work of her executor Pauline Lucas, who published Evelyn Gibbs, Artist and Traveller in 2001 to coincide with an exhibition 'Evelyn Gibbs: Artist and Traveller', held at the University of Liverpool Art Gallery, in 2002. Recently, Gibbs' original drawing for the line etching 'The Expulsion' of 1929, was catalogued in Liss Fine Art's 2004 Exhibition Catalogue British Paintings and Works on Paper. And 'The Departure – Design for an Etching', 1928 and 'The Departure', 1928 were catalogued in Liss Fine Art's 2005 Exhibition Catalogue British Paintings and Works on Paper.

Yet this work of recuperation needs to be considered itself as part of a broader context within art historical debates. Feminist art historians of the past thirty years have been exploring ways in which women's art can be reinstated into the male dominated discipline of history of art.

'The number of women artists, their invasion of the art schools, their raised profile in the periodicals (first as 'surplus' women needing a discreet alternative to governessing, but then as a 'new' woman determined on independence as a career), their role as consumers of the new 'art' furnishings, 'art' needlework, 'art' everything: all this contributed to an uneasy sense that art, a predominantly masculine, activity was being feminised and domesticated.'[1] In 1976 Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin published Women Artists 1550 – 1950 in which they asserted that 'The story of Art is an illustrated Story of Man.'[2] Harris and Nochlin's text initiated the construction of an art history in which the woman artist occupied her rightful space. In doing so they sought to displace previous art histories in which 'feminine inscriptions are not only rendered invisible through exclusion or neglect but made illegible because of the phallocentric logic which allows only one sex.'[3] Moreover, Harris and Nochlin sought to end the separate categorisation of women artists. They highlighted the fact that art was not the preserve of masculinity and that women held an important place in the history of art. The time had come to release women artists from the restrictions of masculine power and more importantly to recognise that social, political and cultural differences influence women's work which must, moreover, be set in relation to theories of race, class, sexual preference and ethnic and religious difference.

Harris and Nochlin's seminal work sought to bring to an end the 'separatist' ideas of the (male) 'Artist' and the 'woman artist'. The 'emancipation' of women artists was continued through the work of Roszika Parker and Griselda Pollock in Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology (1981). Parker and Pollock followed the line that the feminine stereotype was the result of a patriarchal culture, an excess of the Victorian era in which men occupied the public sphere of work and women the private sphere of 'hearth and home.' The ideology of distinct spheres penetrated every realm of society, 'women artists were represented as different, distinct and

[1] Tickner, L., Modern Life and Modern Subjects: British Art in the Early Twentieth Century (2000), p.199.
[2] Sutherland Harris, A and Nochlin, L., Women Artists 1550 – 1950 (1976), p.23.

separate on account of their sex alone.'[4] The ideology of the day resulted in the creation of words and their meanings that carried through into the twentieth century, 'artist' being equated with 'masculinity', whilst the 'woman artist' was seen as 'distinct and clearly different from the great artist.'[5] Parker and Pollock commented that 'Women's practice in art is limited to its function as the means by which masculinity gains and sustains its supremacy in the important sphere of cultural production.'[6] Inspired by the work of Parker and Pollock feminist art historians sought to make women's cultural position 'visible'. The feminist art historians Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard in Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany (1982), sought to make women's cultural position 'visible' by rediscovering and re-evaluating the art of women which they saw as typically being considered low art in contrast to the male production of high art. And Janet Wolff in an article of 1985 entitled 'The Invisible Flaneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity' states that 'The recovery of women's experience is part of the project of retrieving what has been hidden.'[7]

There were concerns, however, that the project of retrieving women's contribution to the arts ran the risk of inscribing even deeper the working assumptions of the traditional histories of art, notably in the creation of a canon of great female artists. As noted by Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews in 1987, feminist art history of the 1970s and 1980s in its quest to 'recover' a female history of art came 'dangerously close to creating its own canon of white female artists (primarily painters), a canon that is almost as restrictive and exclusionary as its male counterpart'.[8] Feminist art history had now reached a point in its development when

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[3] Sutherland Harris, A and Nochlin, L., Women Artists (1976), p.40.
[4] Parker, R and Pollock,G., Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology (1981), p.44.
[5] Parker, P. and Pollock, G., Old Mistresses (1981), p.114.
[6] Parker, P. and Pollock, G., Old Mistresses (1981), p.170.
[7] Wolff,J., 'The Invisible Flaneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity', Theory, Culture and Society, 2:3 (1985), pp.37-46 at p.45.
[8] Gouma-Peterson, T and Mathews, P., 'The Feminist Critique of Art History', The Art Bulletin, vol. 69. no.3, Sept 1987, pp.327-356 at p.327.

adaptation was needed if it wasn't to follow the exclusionary 'path' that art history had adopted in its tendency to 'overlook' the work of women artists. Radical methods needed reworking if women's work was to be given its rightful place in the art world of the twentieth century. Feminist art historians now recognised that their own exclusionary methods were beginning to mirror those which had previously sought to exclude women from art history. Nochlin's work of the 1970s was recognized as groundbreaking, but Gouma-Peterson and Mathews recognised that placing women in an historical framework alongside men would be 'ultimately self-defeating, for it fixes women within pre-existing structures without questioning the validity of these structures.'[9] In their article they assert that women's experiences of the world are very different from those of men and therefore that 'To force the art of women into a male tradition can result only in an uneasy fit at best.'[10]

Gouma-Peterson and Mathews see Griselda Pollock holding the 'most radical position in feminist art history.'[11] In her Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the histories of Art (1988) she asserts that the image of the artist embodies 'the bourgeois ideals of a masculine persona.' Pollock reinforces her argument by quoting from Germaine Greer in The Obstacle Race(1980) in which she views 'the artist as the archetypal masculine personality structure, egomaniacal, posturing, over-identified with sexual prowess, sacrificing everything and everyone for something called his art.'[12] The woman artist is viewed within a 'masculine' world which according to Pollock has led to restrictions and thereby discrimination. The female artist is viewed as 'incompetent and obstructed from without and within ... an illustration of women in

[9] Gouma-Peterson, T and Mathews, P., 'The Feminist Critique of Art History', The Art Bulletin, vol. 69. no.3, September 1987, pp.327 – 356 at, p.327.
[10] Gouma-Peterson, T and Mathews, P., 'The Feminist Critique of Art History', The Art Bulletin, vol.69. no.3, September 1987, pp. 327 – 356 at p.356.
[11] Gouma-Peterson, T and Mathews, P., 'The Feminist Critique of Art History', The Art Bulletin, vol.69., no.3, September 1987, pp.327 – 356 at p.355.
[12] Pollock, G., Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the histories of Art (1988), p 40.

patriarchy.'[13] Following in the wake of Pollock's feminist art history Theresa Grimes, Judith Collins and Oriana Baddeley in Five Women Painters (1989) continue the argument presented by Pollock. They discuss how women artists have been deprived of 'opportunity, encouragement, publicity, patronage, finance, critical attention and validation' and that this has led to women being viewed as unprofessional and unimportant. They head the call for women artists to be 'reconsidered' and 'rediscovered.'[14]

Feminist art historians of the early 1990s began to recover women's history with increasing methodological sophistication. Whitney Chadwick in Women, Art and Society (1990) called for the 'stripping away of layers of patriarchal culture and conditioning.'[15] Chadwick notes how the first publications on feminist art history sought to re-establish the histories of long-neglected or forgotten women artists and the historical circumstances in which these women worked and lived, but she criticises such work for the 'ahistoricity of writing about women artists as if gender were a more binding point of connection between women than class, race, and historical context.'[16] Contemporaries of Chadwick sought to explore how the lives of women and their work were the result of their class, race, sex and ultimately the power they held, the result of a set of conditions.

In the light of these developments the last decade has seen the publication of numerous theoretically-informed studies of women's art. As Griselda Pollock noted in 1996, feminist art historians 'could not begin to speak of the women artists we would re-excavate from dusty basements and forgotten encyclopaedias using the existing languages of art history or criticism.'[17] The task facing today's scholars is to find ways of recovering the obscured work of women artists

[13] Pollock, G., Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the histories of Art (1988), p.40.
[14] Grimes,T, Collins, J and Baddeley, O., Five Women Painters (1989), p.22.
[15] Chadwick, W., Women, Art and Society (1990), p.9.
[16] Chadwick, W., Women, Art and Society (1990), p.9.

in ways that acknowledge their specific circumstances. A good example of this, with respect to early twentieth-century art in Germany is Marsha Meskimmon's We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism (1999). As Meskimmon notes 'the modernist canon, as it has been constructed, leaves women (and 'woman') outside its frame as not modern enough.'[18] The position of women artists in the Weimar Republic was restricted during the deteriorating situation post 1930, a time in which the social construct of the artist did not easily coincide with the reality of being a married woman, 'In the subsequent establishment of the art-historical canon, their contributions were entirely neglected', a situation feminist art historical discourse seeks to rectify. [19] In Germany a substantial body of feminist art history has been done on the marginalisation of women artists. It has found that although women appear absent from German modernism, women articulated their position from outside the masculine 'canon': 'the polyvocality of the modern period has been emphasised to show that women artists did find a voice within the varied languages of modernism.'[20] Meskimmon looks at the way women were asserting their artistic credentials in Germany in much the same way that art historians in England have sought to resurrect women artists. 'Women articulated their unique situations in many diverse voices which can neither be overlooked nor explained with reference only to masculine – normative histories.'[21] In order to assess the impact of women artists within Germany their art must be removed from a masculine framework and the framework in which they existed must be constructed. In Germany and Britain women artists often joined movements which gave them a platform from which to voice their ideas. In Germany the Berlin Women Artists' Union established in 1867 and the German Austrian Women Artists Union founded in

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[17] Pollock, P., Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings (1996), preface xv.
[18] Meskimmon, M., We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism (1999), p.3
[19] Meskimmon, M and West,S., Visions of the 'Neue Frau': Women and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany (1995), p. 40.
[20] Meskimmon, M., We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism (1999), p. 3.

1927 provided the platform on which to establish a public presence. The way that Meskimmon seeks to construct German women artists by exposing the framework in which they existed and being careful not to impose our own limits from outside can be seen to respond to Whitney Chadwick who noted in 1990: 'We have been unable to hear the different voices of women in history not only because women were materially and historically made marginal but because 'woman' was structurally denied access to voice.'[22]

Within these overall concerns, what are the salient questions for the historian of British art? At first sight, it would appear that women's contribution to the history of modernism in Britain has been acknowledged, insofar as Gwen John, Vanessa Bell, Barbara Hepworth and others are relatively well known. Yet, when looking at arts publishing and one-person retrospective exhibitions it is still largely the case that a canon of British twentieth-century art exists and that this canon is predominantly masculine. For example, between 1910 and 1986 only eight out of the Tate Gallery's 214 one-person exhibitions were dedicated to the work of women, a staggeringly small - 4%. Women may have experienced greater freedom in regards to education and exhibiting; however, as the statistics regarding the Tate indicate, this was not reflected in official and widespread critical recognition.[23]

The key issue here is that established definitions of historical significance which, in the early twentieth century, would imply a contribution to the development of modernism, automatically debar serious consideration of artists whose styles were not especially avant-garde. Deepwell in her PhD thesis entitled 'Women Artists in Britain 1918-1940' (1991) states that

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[21] Meskimmon, M., We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism (1999), p.4.
[22] Meskimmon, M., We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism (1999), p. 9.
[23] Deepwell, K., Ten Decades: Careers of Ten Women Artists born 1897 – 1906, exhibition held in 1992 at The Norwich Gallery, (n.p.)

'powerful cultural stereotypes used against women artists homogenised women's work in a category separate from Art (a male cultural activity)'.[24] Deepwell argues that whereas Modernity brought political and legal emancipation for women, in artistic circles, women remained marginalised in all but a few 'magnificent exceptions', in stark contrast to the invisibility of the large numbers of women artists working in this period.[25] Similarly, Griselda Pollock in 'Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity' notes that, 'what modern art celebrates is a selective tradition which normalizes, as the only modernism, a particular and gendered set of practices.'[26] For Pollock, the art historians role is to 'discover how women producers developed alternative models for negotiating modernity and the spaces of femininity.'[27] Pollock's stance is adopted by the feminist art historians Bridget Elliott and Jo-Ann Wallace in Women Artists and Writers: Modernist [im]positionings (1994) who view women artists as occupying 'a precarious cultural position – outside of mainstream bourgeois culture but not fully within the recognized alternative/oppositional camps of the avant-garde.'[28]

It is clear that women artists were present in considerable numbers in Britain in the early twentieth century. And it is equally clear that their very success, as a majority in the art schools and as regular exhibitors, did not see them break through professionally to command the same respect as their male peers. The three artists discussed in this thesis are of interest for precisely this reason. All three artists were commissioned by the War Artists Advisory Committee during the Second World War and throughout their careers each one of them made marked contributions to their specific areas of art practice. Although there has been a small revival of interest in their work, what has been lacking hitherto is a more rounded account that

[24] Deepwell, K., 'Women Artists in Britain between the Two World Wars 1918-1940' (1991), p. 103.
[25] Deepwell, C., Ten Decades: Careers of Ten Women Artists born 1897 - 1906, exhibition held in 1992 at The Norwich Gallery (n.p.)
[26] Pollock, G., Art in Modern Culture (1992), p.13.
[27] Pollock,G., Art in Modern Culture (1992), p.34.
[28] Elliott, B and Wallace, J.A., Women Artists and Writers: Modernist [im]positionings (1994), p.134.

seeks to examine the structures and context in which they worked and to provide detailed studies of the work they produced. Feminist art historians such as Deepwell have examined the careers of women artists within the first decades of the twentieth century, investigating their education, 'patterns of exhibition' and their subsequent careers, but often these accounts have concentrated more on facts and figures than the art work produced itself. By looking in detail at their careers and the art work they produced, concentrating not just on their obvious successes but including those occasions when their potential was not fully developed, such as Dunbar's work in murals, Gibbs' etchings and Gabain's book illustration, the thesis aims to reveal the way the British art world functioned for these talented and individual artists. The re-establishment of these structures and contexts is designed to establish better historical grounds for, judging their achievement than judging them against a limited, modernist canon. As Meskimmon concluded of women artists working in Weimar Germany 'The work exists and was successful in the period. They were professional artists and they examined the crucial debates of their time within their practice. If we cannot 'see' this work, this is the fault of our methods, our paradigms, and our theoretical predispositions.'[29]

[29] Meskimmon, K., We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism (1999), p. 3.

Chapter Two:
Education and Exhibiting.

Evelyn Dunbar, Ethel Gabain and Evelyn Gibbs all practised as artists during the first half of the twentieth century, they all attended traditional art schools and following their education, they went on to exhibit within various clubs and societies. In this chapter I will examine their training and their artistic careers. In so doing I will reveal whether the three artists at the centre of this dissertation can be regarded as typical of the majority of women artists of their generation. The chapter will begin with an outline of Ethel Gabain's (1883 – 1950) training, early career and the societies and clubs she exhibited in. Then it will consider Evelyn Gibbs (1905 – 1991) and Evelyn Dunbar (1906 – 1960), artists of a subsequent generation, born 22 and 23 years respectively after Gabain, to explore whether opportunities for women artists had improved.

Born in Le Havre in 1883, Ethel Gabain's (fig.2.1) art education was initiated in 1902 at the Slade School of Art within University College, London which she attended from the age of 19. The University's Art School had opened in 1871 and distinguished itself from those already established in the capital by offering a new and refreshing standard of figure drawing. Stuart Macdonald in The History and Philosophy of Art Education states that the Slade School was founded in circumstances of widely felt dissatisfaction with contemporary teaching methods.[1] The Slade was free from the often restricting regulations of Cole's state system and benefited from sound financing that private schools often lacked. The School's affiliation to the University of London also brought additional status. The environment within which Gabain was trained was regarded as serious, scholarly and dedicated in nature and maintained this reputation for the next fifty years. An article in The Studio for September 1946 stated that 'the basis of the Slade tradition is the intense study of constructive drawing – that drawing which is good drawing throughout the ages'. The Slade offered a classical training where women were able to study from

[1] Macdonald, S., The History and Philosophy of Art Education (1970), p. 270.

the antique, from the nude and to attend lectures, a breadth of study only open to women who attended the Slade.[2] During the time that Gabain studied at the Slade women students outnumbered the male students by a ratio of 3:1. This situation had existed from the School's foundation and did not cease until long after the Second World War, giving the Slade a higher proportion of women than in most other art schools of the time. Women attending the Slade during the opening decades of the twentieth century were taught by an all – male staff, a situation that changed only with the appointment in 1928 of a female assistant teacher, Margaret Alexander. Katy Deepwell in 'Ten Decades' states how 'Sex discrimination was institutionalised at the Slade and a rigorous hierarchy and system of inequality persisted amongst the student population.'[3] If such sexism towards its female students did exist, Gabain's work and progress did not suffer; indeed, her work flourished under the guidance she received.

The situation in regard to the treatment of women art students during the pre-Great War period, did not deter Gabain from pursuing a career as an artist. Following her time at the Slade Gabain travelled to Paris in 1903. Due to her financial independence (her father had been a coffee merchant in France) Gabain was able to train at Raphael Collin's Studio in Paris. In doing so Gabain was following a large proportion of 'Sladers' who continued their studies in Paris. The academic painting curriculum which Gabain would have undertaken was based on the period's artistic philosophies and aesthetics which led the student from the fundamental elements of drawing (dessin) through to the creation of finished paintings (tableaux).[4] By studying in Paris Gabain was following in the footsteps of many of the best known women artists of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Annie Swynnerton and Paula Modersohn-Becker from Germany, Mary

[2] Studio, September 1946, Volume 132, p. 114.
[3] Deepwell, K., Ten Decades: Careers of Ten Women Artists born 1897 – 1906, exhibition held in 1992 at The Norwich Gallery, p.4.
[4] http:/www.tobunken.go.jp/kuroda/English/life_e.html, 'The Life and Arts of Kuroda Seiki' by Tanaka Atsushi, Researcher, Tokyo National Institute of Cultural Properties, p. 1-12.

Cassatt from America and Sonia Delaunay from Russia, to name but a few. Art students were attracted to Paris by the progressive state of the arts in France, the regime of the Academies and the centralised student life.[5] By 1900 the cultural and political context for women's artistic training was changing and the pattern of professional exclusions had relaxed. A reviewer in The Studio of 1903 stated how women artists were 'flocking' to the city which 'offered them a stimulating artistic environment and better opportunities for exhibiting and training than those in many provincial French towns, or indeed in some other European art centres.'[6] Clive Holland in an article entitled 'A Lady Art Student's Life in Paris' for the 1904 edition of 'The Studio' writes that 'English schools of painting (with a few exceptions) do not appear to encourage individuality of the woman artist, however good the technical instruction might be'. Lady art students are going to Paris in 'increasing numbers' where 'they can lead an independent and serious working existence without outraging public opinion.'[7] Most of the Parisian academies held regular exhibitions in which women's work was hung alongside their male colleagues.

Private Academies, often segregated and extremely expensive, attracted a large proportion of women artists looking for the preparation necessary to gain a career as an artist. Kathleen Kennet (1878 – 1947) studied at the Slade before travelling to Paris in 1901. She trained at the Académie Colarossi (Gwen John studied there in 1907) where she was taught by Rodin and became friends with Alice B.Toklas, Gertrude Stein and Isadora Duncan. From Paris she wrote, 'In the first years of the twentieth century to say that a lass, perhaps not out of her teens, had gone

[5] Yeldman, C.F., 'Women artists in nineteenth century France and England. Their Art Education, Exhibition Opportunities and Membership of Exhibiting Societies and Academies, with an assessment of the subject – matter of their work and summary biographies' (PhD thesis Courtauld Institute, University of London, 1980), p.60

[6] Perry, G., Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-Garde: modernism and 'feminine' art, 1900 to the late 1920s (1995), p. 16.

[7] Clive Holland, 'A Lady Art Student's Life in Paris', Studio (1904), cited in Yeldman, C.F., 'Women artists in nineteenth century France and England. Their Art Education, Exhibition Opportunities and Membership of Exhibiting Societies and Academies, with an assessment of the subject – matter of their work and summary biographies' (PhD thesis Courtauld Institute, University of London, 1980), p.37.

prancing off to Paris to study art was to say that she had gone irretrievably to hell.'[8] Yet the bohemian reputation of Paris was not so dominant as to encourage art students to practise in avant-garde idioms or to explore anti-bourgeois life styles. Kennet herself provides a good example. Never a rebel she became highly regarded as a sculptor of male nudes and portraits of the leading men of her day, becoming the first woman member of the council of the Royal Society of British Sculptors.[9]

. The course of instruction in Paris was similar to that in London. Pupils progressed from elementary drawing to drawing from the antique and finally to studies from the living model, 'but for the study of anatomy and drawing from the living model the opportunities provided are far greater than in the average English art schools. Moreover, the individual talent and bent of each pupil is more carefully studied and fostered than with us.'[10] The fees for attending Parisian Academies ranged from 60 francs for one month of half-day study to 700 francs for one year of whole-day study, plus an entry fee of 10 francs at Julian's. Fees at other schools were similar. Holland estimated that the total annual cost for a woman art student in Paris in 1904 was about £94.[11] Women met these costs either thorough a private income or modelling for artists. Collin's studio, where Gabain trained, should be regarded as a typical example of this general situation.

Raphael Collin (1850 – 1916) is almost totally forgotten today, his name only appearing in the briefest terms amidst the scholarly work reconsidering the place of Academic art within the overall history of nineteenth-century painting. Collin was a friend of Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848

[8] Clive Holland, 'A Lady Art Student's Life in Paris', Studio cited in Yeldman, C.F., 'Women artists in nineteenth century France and England. Their Art Education, Exhibition Opportunities and Membership of Exhibiting Societies and Academies, with an assessment of the subject – matter of their work and summary biographies' (PhD thesis Courtauld Institute, University of London, 1980), p.37.
[9] Foster,A., Tate Women Artists (2004), p.125.
[10] Clive Holland, 'A Lady Art Student's Life in Paris', Studio cited in Yeldman, C.F., 'Women artists in nineteenth century France and England. Their Art Education, Exhibition Opportunities and Membership of Exhibiting Societies and Academies, with an assessment of the subject – matter of their work and summary biographies' (PhD thesis Courtauld Institute, University of London, 1980), p.37.
[11] Ibid p.37.

– 1884), an Academic painter under whose influence Collin began to bring greater naturalism into his works. Both Bastien-Lepage and Collin created an eclectic style which combined academic realism with an awareness of plein-air painting procedure and a looser overall facture. In 1886 Collin's reputation was established when he exhibited 'Floréal' at the Salon, marking his debut in artistic society. Collin's idealized image of a nude young woman reclining by a lake, was tempered with a handling of light and space that owed something to Impressionist procedure. 'Floréal' was subsequently purchased by the French government and deposited in the Musée de Luxemburg. With Collin's critical success his studio now began to attract students from all over the world. Collin also held two sessions a week at the Academie Colarossi; these consisted of an hour-long review of the students' works and then individual advice on their progress. (It seems possible that Gabain also attended these classes at the Colarossi.)

Gabain's need for sound artistic training did not cease following her return from Paris; indeed, her time abroad seems to have brought about a need to further her development, to find a medium which best expressed her artistic abilities. This led to a further period of study within the British art education system commencing in 1904 at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London which she attended until 1906. The Central School was established in 1896 by the London County Council in Upper Regent Street with William Richard Lethaby as its first Principal. Lethaby was arguably the leading Arts and Crafts teacher of the period. Around him gathered a group of expert craftsmen-teachers, thus founding a school which quickly became the largest centre for craft education in Britain.[12] The Central School of Arts and Crafts' teaching philosophy differed from other art schools in its belief in the advanced teaching of applied art. Herman Muthesius, the founder of the Werkbund, called the Central 'probably the best organised

[12] Macdonald, S., The History and Philosophy of Art Education (1970), p.297.

contemporary art school.'[13] The Hambledon Report – Report of the Committee on Advanced Art Education in London of 1936 stated that 'All the important branches of Applied Art are taught in the school, staff consists almost entirely of practising artists and craftsmen, specially selected for their eminence in their respective spheres, and a very high standard is attained.'[14] Here Gabain must have learnt the craft skills that made her so technically competent as a lithographer. Following her two years at the Central, Gabain attended lithography classes in 1906 at Chelsea Polytechnic where she obtained practice in drawing direct upon the stone from the model. Gabain's natural endowment for drawing and her time at the Slade, which promoted an artist's ability to draw well, led her to lithography, which was to prove the medium that she was to find the most expressive and receptive to her talents. In 1909 Gabain returned to Paris to live in the rue Boissonade in the 14th arrondissement. During this time her skills as a lithographer were aided by a master French printer. Gabain's lithographic accomplishments and her endeavours to promote lithography as an artistic medium are discussed in Chapter Three.

Ethel Gabain was now equipped with the artistic training to begin her life as an artist, exhibiting in the appropriate clubs and societies of the day. Women artists participated in male-dominated exhibiting groups and societies, in an attempt to promote their work. However, women remained 'alienated' within these male domains and in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century exhibition societies were formed by women catering exclusively for women artists. The oldest of these was the Society of Women Artists, founded as the Society of Female Artists in 1857, which attempted to remedy the limited exhibiting opportunities offered to female artists and which also benefited from royal patronage. The Society of Women Artists emerged at a time when it was unthinkable that women should have careers, or seek recognition outside of the

[13] Foster, A., Tate Women Artists (2004), p.126. Mary Kessell (1914 – 1977) a fellow Commissioned War Artist attended the Central after training at Clapham School of Art. Her time at the Central as 'centre for craft education' must have played a part in her later work as an illustrator, graphic designer, jewellery designer and print maker.

[14] The Hambledon Report - Report of the Committee on Advanced Art Education in London (1936), p. 16.

home.[15] With breaks from exhibiting occurring only during the General Strike of 1926 and the war years 1941-1946, the Society is both the earliest and oldest surviving exhibiting society for women artists established in Great Britain.[16] Women's exclusion or their limited numbers in more highly regarded and male dominated Societies influenced those who became members of the SWA both in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The SWA provided women with an opportunity to show their work on a regular basis in the capital. The Society also maintained strong links with many of the Royal Societies and the Royal Academy through the joint membership of members and exhibitors.[17] In the first half of the twentieth century a large percentage of women who were members of the SWA were also elected to the Royal Society of British Artists, these included Edith Granger-Taylor, Mabel Bruce-Low, Marcella Smith and Ethel Gabain. SWA members were also members of Royal Societies including the Royal Institute of Oil Painters, the Royal Watercolour Society and the Royal Society of Miniature Painters. Members of the SWA who were also members of the Royal Society of British Artists (RBA) and ROI included Dorothea Sharp, Constance Bradshaw, Helen Stuart Weir and Ethel Gabain.[18]

Gabain was elected Vice-President of the SWA serving 1934-1939 and was elected President in 1940, but the war intervened and the Society broke from exhibiting from 1941 until 1946. The Presidents during the inter-war years were all professional oil painters, exhibiting at the RBA, ROI and RA. However, compared with other developments in British art, the SWA was anything but a dynamic institution in these years. In the 1930s the position of the SWA as a significant group for women artists to join was destabilized by the static nature of the

[15] Baile de Laperriere, C (ed.)., The Society of Women Artists Exhibitors 1855 – 1996: A Dictionary of artists and their works in the Annual Exhibitions of the Society of Women Artists. Vol. 1, A –D (1996), p.i.
[16] Baile de Laperriere, C (ed.)., The Society of Women Artists Exhibitors 1855 – 1996: A Dictionary of artists and their works in the Annual Exhibitions of the Society of Women Artists. Vol. 1, A –D (1996), Introduction by Katy Deepwell Ibid, Introduction by Katy Deepwell, p.xxv.
[17] Ibid, Introduction by Katy Deepwell, p. xxv.
[18] Ibid, Introduction by Katy Deepwell, p. xxv. Gabain also worked for the Artists' General Benevolent Fund.

membership and the fact that relatively few of its associates were ever promoted to full membership.[19] Women artists who were involved in modernist movements, abstract or surrealist art during the 30s appear absent from the membership of the SWA, possibly due to the nature of exhibitions which sought to promote 'craftsmanship, figurative and representational drawing and painting and particularly, the development of traditional genres and media.'[20] In the late 1940s and 1950s the SWA's membership began to be filled with women artists in the later stages of their artistic careers, as younger generations of women artists felt detached from the Society. During this period the Society offered professional respect to often outmoded artists during a period of stagnation for the Society.

The other female-only exhibiting society through which Gabain exhibited (1906-1950) was founded in 1898, the Women's International Art Club (WIAC). In its organisation and ethos the WIAC was comparable to the New English Art Club (NEAC), offering exhibiting opportunities for more advanced work than that shown typically at the Society of Women Artists. Both the WIAC and the SWA, though similar in their aim to promote the work of women artists, 'considered each other as different in aim and as representing different constituencies amongst women artists.'[21] However, for all of their stated differences their membership was often remarkably similar. Indeed, although Ethel Gabain was a leading figure of the more conservative Society of Women Artists and elected to its Vice-Presidency in 1934, she also exhibited with their 'opposing' group the WIAC.

The Women's International Art Club opened on 1st June 1898. The Art Journal stated that it was brought into existence due to the difficulty in getting a fair start if one had been trained in

[19] Ibid, Introduction by Katy Deepwell, p. xxix.
[20] Ibid, Introduction by Katy Deepwell, p. xxvii.
[21] Oldfield, S., This Working-Day World (1994), p.240.

Paris, as had almost all women.[22] The objectives of the Club were to unite together women artists for reciprocal help in exhibiting in different countries, and, by means of centres, to reduce the cost of sending pictures; to create club–rooms for the use of members; and to help forward the cause of international women artists in every way. Two qualifications only were necessary for membership, 'first that each member must have studied in Paris, and second, that they must do strong work.'[23] Members were also required to have exhibited twice in the three years anterior to joining, in the Salon or the principal exhibition of the country to which they belonged. Among the founder members were Lucy Kemp-Welch, Rose Barton and Mrs. Jopling (England), Kate Carl (America), Cecilia Beaux (France) and Anne Nordgren (Sweden). By 1900 the Club had more than 100 members representing 17 different countries. Centres were formed in London, Paris, Philadelphia, Melbourne and Toronto. The London centre served as the head of all the centres.

Ethel Gabain's dedicated involvement in the Society of Women Artists and therefore to the promotion of women artists runs parallel to the tireless work that she did for the Senefelder Club with her husband John Copley and their promotion of lithographic artists. Founded in 1908, four years after Gabain's return from Paris, the Senefelder Club sought to provide an opportunity for artistic expression in lithography.[24] The group of artists that founded the Society included A.S.Hartrick, Joseph Pennell (the Club's first president), John Copley (the Club's first secretary), E.J.Sullivan and Ethel Gabain. Gabain contributed regularly to the Senefelder's exhibitions. By 1924 the Senefelder Club had held 80 exhibitions of lithographs in Europe and America and in the process encouraged important public galleries to start collections of contemporary

[22] Yeldman, C.F., 'Women artists in nineteenth century France and England. Their Art Education, Exhibition Opportunities and Membership of Exhibiting Societies and Academies, with an assessment of the subject – matter of their work and summary biographies' (PhD thesis Courtauld Institute, University of London,1980), p.95.

[23] Yeldman, C.F., 'Women artists in nineteenth century France and England. Their Art Education, Exhibition Opportunities and Membership of Exhibiting Societies and Academies, with an assessment of the subject – matter of their work and summary biographies' (PhD thesis Courtauld Institute, University of London, 1980), p. 96.

[24] Garton and Co., British Printmakers – 1855- 1955 – A Century of Printmaking from the Etching Revival to St.Ives (1992), p.191.

lithographs. Gabain's involvement with the Club not only played an important role in developing her lithographic work but also gave her an important professional forum and international exposure. Gabain's work within the Senefelder Club is expanded upon further in Chapter Three.

Gabain also exhibited at the Royal Academy making her first showing with an oil painting entitled 'Zinnias' in 1927, the forerunner of many flower studies. She became a frequent exhibitor, showing some 52 works at the RA. Gabain also began showing at the Royal Society of British Artists from 1932 until her death in 1950. In 1950 the RBA held a posthumous exhibition of Gabain's work, a 'welcome opportunity for seeing the full scope of her art in about 50 paintings and lithographs undisturbed by noisy or unfriendly neighbours.'[25] Gabain also showed 26 works at various Paris salons between 1907 and 1932. In Paris Gabain was elected early as an Associate of the Salon des Artistes Français. She was also an Associate Du Salon Des Beaux Arts and an Honorary member of the Pulchri Studio in the Hague.

Gabain's work was first adopted by the commercial art gallery the Goupil Gallery. Then in December 1914 Harold Wright, after seeing Gabain's print 'The Striped Petticoat', suggested that her work might be better represented by his firm, Colnaghi's, resulting in an association for forty years. With her husband John Copley she also held exhibitions in 1914, 1915, 1920 and 1921, the last at Albert Roullier Art Galleries in Chicago. Despite moving to Colnaghi's Gabain regularly had prints selected for 'Fine Prints of the Year' held at the Goupil Gallery right through the 1930s. Both Gabain's lithographs and oils were also exhibited at the Goupil Gallery, Regent Street, in its summer and winter exhibitions. From 1934 – 1937, her work hung at the Goupil

[25] Ethel Gabain, Posthumous exhibition held at the Royal Society of British Artists in 1950, foreword, p.2.

Gallery alongside leading artists of the day including Stanley Spencer, Duncan Grant, Ethel Walker, John Nash and Lucien Pissaro.[26]

In reviewing this summary of Gabain's career one is struck by how well her London art school training and early experiences in Paris prepared her for a professional career. Although she played no part in the more advanced art groupings of the time, her technical expertise in drawing and painting and especially her knowledge of lithography provided her with the means to make a living as a professional artist from the 1910s to the 1940s. Gabain's marriage in 1913 to a fellow lithographic practitioner, John Copley, inextricably linked both her career and her life with his. They formed a remarkable artistic partnership which enabled them to follow very different paths, even though they were both equally devoted to lithography. Gabain and Copley had two children together and both suffered from bouts of ill health, but both continued to produce works throughout their lifetimes. For many female artists of Gabain's generation who enjoyed a similar training, marriage and children often prevented them from continuing their artistic development, losing involvement with the art world soon after the birth of their children. To take three other artists trained at the Slade as comparisons we can see the extent to which Gabain's ability to make a successful career as an artist should be seen as especially noteworthy. Mary Spencer McEvoy (1870 – 1941) met Ambrose McEvoy at the Slade. In the years 1899 – 1910 Mary McEvoy exhibited regularly at the NEAC, but then she stopped exhibiting abruptly. It seems likely that her time became devoted to raising children and supporting her husband's career as an incredibly successful society portrait painter.[27] Other women artists ceased painting whilst bringing up children but returned to it later in life including Edith Grace Wheatley (1888 – 1970) who trained at the Slade (1906 – 1908) and then in Paris at the Atelier Colarossi and established a career as a painter of figures, flowers, animals and birds. She saw her husband the painter, John

[26] Gabain also exhibited at the Leicester Galleries in the Summer of 1941 'Artists of Fame and Promise', showing 'Snow in Winter'.
[27] Foster, A., Tate Women Artists (2004),p. 138.

Wheatley appointed an Official War Artist during the 1914-1918 conflict and later become Director of the National Gallery of South Africa, and Professor of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town. Grace Wheatley did become however, Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at the University from 1925-1937, at which time they returned home to England.[28] Many women artists of Gabain's generation did not marry and devoted themselves to their artistic production. A contemporary of Gabain's, Elsie Marian Henderson (1880 – 1967) was encouraged by her mother, an amateur painter; she trained at the Slade during the early 1900s and then went to Paris where she worked in various ateliers including Colarossi's. Henderson remained unmarried and throughout her lifetime exhibited with the Women's International Art Club, the Royal Academy and the Society of Women's Artists. Gabain's artistic career was neither overshadowed nor neglected by her marriage to a fellow artist and her role as a mother did not prevent her from flourishing artistically.

Gabain was fortunate to have both the freedom to develop herself as an artist whilst also fulfilling her role as a wife and mother. The expectations of women and the opportunities for women artists in the generation following Ethel Gabain and her contemporaries benefited from the achievement of their predecessors as Victorian ideas of masculine and feminine spheres gave ground to a wider field of possibilities. Both Gibbs and Dunbar were twenty years younger than Gabain and in reviewing their careers we can make some judgments about the extent to which the British art world had truly developed more opportunities than those available to Gabain.

Evelyn Gibbs (1905 – 1991) and Evelyn Dunbar (1906 – 1960) both initiated their art education by attendance at local art schools. Evelyn Gibbs (fig. 2.2), born in Liverpool on the 3rd May 1905, began her training by attending her local art school, the Liverpool Art School, from 1922-1926. The establishment in 1855 of the Liverpool School of Art followed the

[28] Foster, A., Tate Women Artists (2004),p. 169.

implementation of Henry Cole's art education reforms which led to the most rapid increase of art institutions in British history. Stuart Macdonald in The History and Philosophy of Art Education comments that the Liverpool Art School 'grew so fashionable that a special Private Day Class for Ladies was opened by the Headmaster, in which they were taught branches of art – they desired to acquire – without the tedium of the more disciplinary method laid down in the Art Directory.'[29] During the time that Evelyn Gibbs attended the school, its work was held in the highest national regard. In the Studio of February 1924 an article told how the school dealt with all sides of art and craft and that the recent school show gave evidence of far-reaching results, representing sculpture, painting, etching, metalwork, illustration and printing and all branches of commercial art. The school's records for 1922 show that Gibbs followed a course of 'Drawing and Modern Design' in Year 1, 'Studies from the Antique and from Life' in Years 2 and 3, and 'Etching and Advanced Illustration' in Year 4.[30] Following the successful completion of her course at Liverpool, Gibbs entered the Royal College of Art's Engraving School in the Autumn of 1926 having gained a Travelling Scholarship and Royal Exhibition to the RCA.

Evelyn Dunbar (fig.2.3) was born in Rochester, Kent on the 18th December 1906 and attended her hometown Rochester School of Art from 1925-1927 before realising her artistic abilities further at the Chelsea College of Art. In 1927 Dunbar attended Chelsea School of Art for two days a week, studying lettering and illustration. The history of Chelsea School of Art dates back to the late nineteenth century when the old academies of fine art were being challenged and new vocational courses in the arts, crafts and design were being introduced. The first Chelsea School of Art was a significant faculty of the South-West London Polytechnic later to become Chelsea Polytechnic, opened in 1895 on Manresa Road and Chelsea Square, an area of London which had become a thriving artistic community following the Great Exhibition of 1851. During

[29] Macdonald, S., The History and Philosophy of Art Education (1970), p. 288.
[30] Information recorded on a visit to Nottingham in October 2003 to see Pauline Lucas.

Dunbar's time at the School the curriculum was predominantly vocational offering illustration, textiles, etching, lithography and architecture. The School later employed distinguished artists of the day, including Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and Ceri Richards, alumni from the period include Elizabeth Frink, Edward Burra and Ethel Walker.[31] In 1929 the awarding of a Kent Scholarship allowed Dunbar to spend four years at the Royal College of Art from 1929 to 1933. The move from local art schools to art schools in London by Gibbs and Dunbar shows that London schools were perceived as at the top of an art-education hierarchy, particularly the Slade, Royal Academy Schools, and Royal College of Art, it was at these top art schools that a student with ambitions towards becoming a professional artist sought to enrol.

Gibbs and Dunbar's entry into the London schools began at the Royal College of Art, in 1926 and 1929 respectively. Originally the RCA offered a distinctive training and has recently been described as 'Ideologically oriented towards the training of industrial art workers of artisans, and designers, although for the most part they produced teachers not practising professionals', a very different kind of education offered by fine art institutions, for example the Slade or RA schools.[32] However, at the time that both Dunbar and Gibbs attended, the RCA was undergoing a period of transition through the work of William Rothenstein. Rothenstein's appointment as Principal in 1920 transformed the College from an institution that produced design and art teachers and the occasional inventive practitioner into a fully-fledged art school. 'His personality and reputation as an artist attracted students in increasing numbers and from a wider field, and in a short time the membership had doubled; a striking feature being the great increase in the number of fee payers.'[33] Rothenstein shifted emphasis away from teacher-training and the aim of the RCA now became to give advanced students a full opportunity to equip themselves for the

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[31] http://www.universityoftheartslondon.co.uk., History page.
[32] Sharp, N., Modernity, Art and Art Education in Britain, 1870 – 1940 (Unpublished D.Phil, University of Sussex, 1999).
[33] The Hambledon Report - Report of the Committee on Advanced Art Education in London (1936), p. 8.

practice of Art. This led to the employment of practising artists and designers in place of the previously employed traditional career art masters. Christopher Frayling in 100 Years at the Royal College of Art: Art and Design regards this move as an 'innovation of the time'. However, 'Rothenstein's approach was a controversial departure from the historical mission of the RCA, and it took time to settle.'[34] Rothenstein followed the Board of Education's advice that 'new blood and new ideas should at once be infused into the staff of the College.'[35] During the times that Rothenstein was acting Professor to the Painting School in 1922 and again in 1930 he appointed Leon Underwood, Edward Allston, Randolphe Schwabe, Charles Mahoney, Barnett Freedman, Alan Sorrell, Percy Horton and Gilbert Spencer, all past students of the College, as well as Allan Gwynne-Jones (from the New English Art Club) and Walter Monnington. For the first time the Fine Art School was almost entirely staffed from the College's own graduates. In the 1920s the RCA's students included Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth (both from Leeds School of Art), Edward Bawden, Eric Ravilious, Raymond Coxon and Enid Marx.

Gibbs' time at the College 1926 – 1929, was spent under the tutelage of Professor Malcolm Osborne, who had taken over the Professorship of the Engraving School in 1924. It also seems quite possible to assume that Gibbs was taught at the RCA by Robert Austin RA, PRE and PRWS (1895 – 1973). Austin had attended the RCA 1914 – 1916 and 1919 – 1922, winning the Rome Scholarship for engraving in 1922, the third holder of the scholarship. In 1926, the year that Gibbs enrolled, Austin began to assist Malcolm Osborne at the RCA. Through his teaching, Austin influenced several generations of artists, teaching students what he did best himself: life drawing and printmaking.[36] The College's Engraving School had grown out of the 'etching class'

[34] Frayling, C., 100 Years at the Royal College of Art: Art and Design (1999), p.23.
[35] Huxley,P., Exhibition Road: Painters at the Royal College of Art (1998), p.21.
[36] Paintings and Drawings by Robert Austin 1895 – 1973, The Fine Art Society in association with Paul Liss Fine Art Ltd, 4th October – 18th October 2002. Austin's skill as a craftsman – engraver and meticulous draughtsman is displayed in the series of drawings of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and ballooning activities he did as a Second World War Artist

of the Arts and Crafts period, which Frank Short had directed from 1891 onwards. The School developed into an environment in which original prints were created, and where wood engraving and lithography were offered. The knowledge and experience that Gibbs attained during her time at the College resulted in her winning a Rome Scholarship in Engraving, attending the British School at Rome between 1929 and 1931. In 1929 Gibbs also became an Associate of the Royal Society of Painter–Etchers and Engravers and her entry for 'Fine Prints of the Year' was praised as a 'beautiful little etching 'The Road', with its emotional significance – two tramps, a man and a woman are sitting crouched by the roadside, their heads upon their knees, utterly tired out – but the sunny road winds on through banked meadows away over the country...this etching promises well for Miss Gibbs' future, more even than her accomplished line engravings.'[37] Gibbs' move to Rome did not materially disrupt her RCA training for the British School at Rome seems to have functioned as the RCA's continental outpost, another institution in which Rothenstein could implement his own artistic ideals.

The establishment of the British School at Rome in 1901 originated from an idea formulated by Henry Pelham (1846-1907), Camden Professor of Ancient History at Oxford University, in 1898. Pelham aimed for the school to promote the study of Roman and Graeco-Roman archaeology and palaeography, and through a School of Roman and Italian studies, to consider every period of the language, literature, antiquities, art, and the history of Rome and Italy. Prince Arthur of Connaught described the British School at Rome on its foundation as 'An institution which will place us on a level with other nations in the matter of artistic education.'[38] Building on the importance of Italy as a destination for artists, scholars and connoisseurs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the British School at Rome provided the means for students

[37] Letter to Evelyn Gibbs 1929 from the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers quoted in P.Lucas, Evelyn Gibbs:Artist and Traveller (2001), p. 34.
[38] British Artists in Italy, Rome and Abbey Scholars 1920 – 1980 ,Exhibition Catalogue Canterbury College of Art (1985), p.16

and academics to benefit from lengthy exposure to Italian art and architecture. The foundation of Rome Scholarships in Architecture, Painting and Sculpture in 1912 coincided with a recognisable need for state patronage of the arts. Engraving was to be added in 1921. A Faculty of distinguished practitioners in the different arts managed each scholarship and in the words of a 1911 Memorandum was to be 'free from sectional control'. In the same Memorandum of 1911 the school's scope is outlined, 'It is essential that some measure of guidance and supervision should be available for the students during their residence abroad, and it is the object of the school to meet these needs rather than to be in any sense a teaching institution.'[39] Debate often arose over the amount of supervision that students were to receive. However, other than the occasional visit from Faculty artists, no teaching was administered, and students were left to their own means in their artistic development.

One scholarship per year was awarded in each category, following a rigorous examination progress, with two shortlists and the making of an examination piece. In order to progress to the next year the students had to submit to more examinations, pass the scrutiny of the 'distinguished' board of artists and obtain a character reference from the Director. Behaviour was strictly monitored. The thorough selection process reflected the politics of the art school establishment. Between 1913 and 1939 sixty one scholarships were offered: 53% went to the RCA, 15% to the Slade, 13% to the R.A. Schools and a mere 11% represented the rest of the nation's art schools.[40] The composition of the Faculties themselves was strongly connected to the RCA and the RCA's Principal William Rothenstein was highly influential both directly and indirectly. The Engraving (later Printmaking) Faculty, established in 1920 by the generosity of Stephen Courtauld, was the most consistently successful of all the faculties. Its success was a reflection of the period in which printmaking seized the public imagination, with booming prices

[39] British Artists in Italy, Rome and Abbey Scholars 1920 – 1980, Exhibition Catalogue Canterbury College of Art (1985), p. 16.
[40] Wallace-Handrill, A., The British School at Rome: One Hundred Years (2001), p.154.

and an active market. As one recent commentator has noted 'prints were like internet shares, with editions being bought and sold before issue and ending up in bank vaults.'[41] The Engraving School itself, appears as an offshoot of the RCA, for of 22 scholars, all were from the RCA save one scholar who represented the Slade. The Chairman of the Engraving Faculty, Frank Short also established the Engraving Department at the RCA. Those who came to teach within the Faculty, D.Y.Cameron, Muirhead Bone, Campbell Dodgson and Charles Shannon were all associated with Short, either through his time at the RCA or his presidency at the Royal Society of Painter Etchers. The Faculty of Engraving appears as a very closed book over which the RCA had a controlling hold, an environment in which those like Gibbs who had attended the RCA must have felt very much at home.

The experiences that those successful in attaining a scholarship enjoyed were varied and personal to each scholar, but Winifred Knights (1899 – 1947), the first woman to become a Rome Scholar in 1920, at the age of twenty-one, commented in letters sent home during her time in Rome on the mixture of academics and artists which made for a journey of personal exploration. Contemporary critics regarded the school as conservative in outlook, neither too modern nor controversial. Artists fortunate enough to pass through the School often went on to contribute to society and to art with distinction, many becoming teachers of art and some becoming leading principals of art schools. Indeed, following her time at the RCA and BSR, Gibbs herself was to become a leading light in children's art education with her 1934 publication The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft, and later lecturing at Goldsmith's, University of London. Gibbs' contribution to art education is explored in further detail in Chapter Five.

[41] Wallace-Handrill, A., The British School at Rome: One Hundred Years (2001), p.156.

Gibbs was twenty-three when she won her Rome scholarship. Although three other students from the Liverpool School of Art had won the scholarship in previous years, she was the first woman from Liverpool to do so. As regards engraving, only one other woman had won the Rome Scholarship before her. Gibbs was awarded the sum of £250 for two years, with free accommodation at the School. The official announcement of all the Rome scholars for 1929 filled fifteen column inches in *The Times*. The paper's art critic went on to comment that 'Miss Evelyn Gibbs, of the Liverpool School of Art, who takes the scholarship in this subject, is the most promising of the engravers in both range and quality. She suggests the future illustrator, and her work – the admirable design of figures in a churchyard, for instance, has a distinct affinity with that of the 'sixties'(1860s).'[42]

Many students during their time in Rome kept diaries which give an interesting insight into their time spent abroad, Gibbs was no exception. Gibbs' thoughts and travels are recorded in a miniscule leather bound diary. Though Gibbs' diary is brief, detailing the first five months of her stay in Italy, her entries nonetheless serve as an interesting insight into her time at the School. The places and sights that Gibbs describes help to explain the reasoning behind the subjects that she undertook during her Rome years and, indeed, themes that she returned to over her long artistic career. An Easter expedition of some three weeks in 1929 took her to Assisi, via Narni and Piediluco, staying for at least a week at Assisi, visiting the Chiesa de Francesco and returning to Rome via Perugia and Arezzo, where she saw the Piero frescoes. Gibbs also visited Orvieto where she looked around the Duomo admiring the Signorelli and Fra Angelico frescoes. During this time Gibbs made numerous sketches of the frescoes that her party saw on their travels and the countryside through which they travelled. Italian landscapes often came to serve as backdrops to

[42] Lucas, P., Evelyn Gibbs: Artist and Traveller (2001), p.89.

Gibbs' work throughout her career and she referred to the Italian primitives exemplars in The Teaching of Art in Schools.[43]

The postcards that Gibbs wrote to family and friends back home are also full of highly descriptive accounts of her travels. In a postcard to fellow student Catherine Deane[44] Gibbs describes her stay in Orvieto 'This place has a most extraordinary position on a great flat plateau and my window has an amazingly extensive view...The cathedral must be one of the most wonderful in Italy and is full of frescoes by Signorelli and some by Fra Angelico and School of Giotto. I have never seen anything so rich and beautiful as the interior and yet so simple.'[45] For a woman travelling for the first time in a foreign country, the experience of visiting such places must have had a tremendous impact upon an impressionable young mind.

The 1920s and early 1930s, the time of Gibbs and Dunbar's artistic education, was a period in which 'Renaissance art was being reinvented in a modernist idiom; its rigorous construction, clarity of design and simplification of form, its sense of plasticity and exploration of mass and volume were all abstracted from the works of art in which they inhered to become independent values.' The 1920s witnessed an increasing interest in the Italian Renaissance, looking back to the purity and simplicity of the early Renaissance and the art critic R.H.Wilenski asserted in 1926 'that a study visit to Italy at the right moment was an essential part of a modern painter's development.'[46] At the British School in Rome the works of Giotto, Fra Angelico and Piero della Francesca were widely admired and copied. Indeed, the first painting that Gibbs

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[43] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools (1934), p, 36.
[44] Foster, A., Tate Women Artists (2004) ,p.89. Catherine Deane (1905 – 1983), born in the same year as Gibbs, and also trained at the Liverpool School of Art and then at the Royal College of Art during the 1920s, possibly at exactly the same time at Gibbs. Dean met and married the painter Albert Houthuesen and until his death in 1979 she devoted her time to supporting his work and teaching in art colleges.
[45] Postcard to 'Signorina Catherine Deane', January 13th 1930.
[46] Smiles, S and Pratt, S., Two Way Traffic: British and Italian Art 1880 – 1980 Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, 1996, p. 12-13.

produced during her scholarship was a copy of Fra Angelico's 'Annunciation', a theme that occupied him over the whole course of his career, and a theme to which Gibbs also returned during her time in Nottingham as President of the Midland Group when she carried out a mural painting in St. Mary's church, Nottingham. The Renaissance-derived techniques and figurative styles that Rome scholars adopted were part of a wider process occurring in modern art of the first half of the twentieth century. The artistic journey that Gibbs experienced across the Continent to Rome was a journey only open to those fortunate and talented enough to be awarded scholarships or those with financial independence. Despite the undoubted problems faced by a young woman in Italy during this time and the arrogance of some academic scholars at the British School in Rome, Gibbs made full use of both the place and the facilities to produce an impressive set of etchings. The dealer Paul Liss considers that her prints of this period are 'amongst the most outstanding produced by any of the Rome Scholars.'[47]

Evelyn Dunbar's training at the Royal College of Art would also allow her the scope to produce some of the best work of her career. The Royal College of Art's change of direction in regards to the employment of staff coincided with a revision of the curriculum the students were to follow during their time at the College. Rothenstein firmly believed that instead of students spending their final year in preparation to become art teachers that they should be involved with 'public art' through their involvement as exhibitors or muralists, to become 'community artists'. Between 1928 and 1930 Rothenstein organised a series of public projects for student participation within London, for example murals for St.Stephen's Hall, India House, the Council Chamber in County Hall, employment bureaux in Docklands and Morley College, the last of these being a commission carried out by Edward Bawden, Eric Ravilious and Charles (also known as Cyril)

[47] Liss, P., Liss Fine Art exhibition catalogue for 2004 British Paintings and Works on Paper 1880-1980(n.p.)

Mahoney, a protégé of Rothenstein's.[48] Mahoney's enthusiasm for mural painting kept the tradition alive not only within the College, but also in the public arena, where regular commissions were carried out over several years by the students.[49] The Royal College's involvement in these public projects bolstered the College's reputation; the Mural Room in Exhibition Road was the site for a major revival in mural painting occurring in the 1930s. Indeed, for many of the most accomplished British painters of the period 1930 – 1935, 'mural painting was the activity towards which their training and aspirations were directed. Difficulties of patronage frequently frustrated their idealism, but the period cannot be seen as a whole without giving murals a prominent place.'[50] A new generation of painters flourished under the Professorship of Rothenstein at the RCA, existing in contrast to the anti-romantic tone of much art writing of the 1920s and before the Neo-Romantics of the 1940s. Rothenstein was upholding the idea of a national romantic tradition following in the footsteps of the Pre-Raphaelites whom he much admired.

One of Rothenstein's 'new generation' of romantic painters, Evelyn Dunbar, during her time at the RCA was tutored by Gilbert Spencer, Allan Sorrell, Alan Gwynne-Jones and Randolphe Schwabe (a friend of Gabain's) within the School of Drawing and Painting. In The Times reviews of the 'Royal College of Art Exhibition of Students' Work' for both 1931 and 1932 Evelyn Dunbar's work is singled out for praise. In 1931 The Times reporter writes 'Miss Evelyn Dunbar to whom has been awarded the Augustus Spencer prize, makes a particularly good impression by breadth of treatment and appreciation of atmospheric envelopment – the special concerns of the painter as distinct from the draughtsman.'[51] And in 1932, 'In the life

[48] Mahoney (1903-1968) was trained at the Royal College of Art and returned soon after graduating to teach between 1928 and 1953.
[49] Huxley, P., Exhibition Road: Painters at the Royal College of Art (1988), p.23.
[50] Christian,J., The Last Romantics: The Romantic Tradition in British Art: Burne-Jones to Stanley Spencer (1989), p.63.
[51] 'Royal College of Art Exhibition of Students' Work', The Times, Saturday, July 18th, 1931, p.10.

drawings – the group by Miss Evelyn Dunbar deserves special attention – grasp of form is put before surface description, and laborious exercises with the "stump" which taught the student little except how to produce a pleasing texture, are absent.'[52] Dunbar's talent as a student artist, as highlighted in the quotes above, help to explain why in 1933, during her final year at the RCA, she was invited to join Mahoney's team in the mural scheme at Brockley School, Lewisham, depicting Aesop's Fables.

Dunbar was fortunate to be one of the chosen students to work alongside Mahoney. 'Teaching, for him, was not just a means of earning a living; it was a calling to which he devoted a major part of his life and an enormous amount of physical and nervous energy. With his appreciation of history he may have been able to afford to take a long view of the development of style, but he was passionate that students should learn their craft from the bottom up. Provided the skills were passed on the future was assured.'[53] Mahoney's artistic path began at the Beckenham School of Art, where he met Hugh Finney who, according to Mahoney's daughter, wrote of her father's early admiration for the work of the Italian Renaissance painters, Piero della Francesca, Crivelli and Fra Angelico. In 1922 he won a Royal Exhibition in Drawing to the Painting School at the Royal College of Art. Due to Rothenstein's influence Mahoney's love of drawing flourished, 'He came to see life drawing as the most challenging of exercises for the student, for if you could draw the human body, you could draw anything. Drawing in turn he believed to be a vital basic skill which underpinned other disciplines and which would be of use whether an artist worked figuratively or otherwise.'[54] By the end of his time at the Royal College of Art Mahoney had begun to explore his growing interest in mural painting and theatre design. Soon after he started work at the RCA he was commissioned to paint a thirty-foot-long mural, 'The Pleasures of

[52] 'Royal College of Art Exhibition of Students' Work', The Times, Thursday, July 21st, 1932, p.10.
[53] Charles Mahoney: 1903 – 1968 The Fine Art Society Plc in Association with Paul Liss, 1999, p.7, preface by Peyton Skipworth.
[54] Charles Mahoney: 1903 – 1968 The Fine Art Society Plc in Association with Paul Liss, 1999, p.11, monologue written by Elizabeth Bulkeley.

Life' for the back of the stage at Morley College for Working Men and Women, a project sponsored by Sir Joseph Duveen.

Throughout Mahoney's time as a teacher at the College, Rothenstein did much to direct his career. Following the success of the Morley Murals, in 1932 Mahoney was asked to organise a mural scheme at Brockley County School for Boys with three of his senior students from the RCA. One of them was Evelyn Dunbar. Mahoney painted two of the main panels at Brockley whose quality is imposed by his Pre-Raphaelite attention to detail.[55] Mahoney, whose murals are considered his greatest artistic achievement, was to be a major influence upon the work of Evelyn Dunbar, whose style closely resembled her mentor's. Dunbar's execution of murals at Brockley School was an important contribution to Rothenstein's romantic counter attack, and led him to comment in a letter dated 19th September 1934 that she is 'one of the most promising of the younger painters'. The murals at Brockley remain Dunbar's largest and most significant body of mural work the impact of which upon the mural revival of the first half of the twentieth century is explored further in Chapter Four. Although her best-known work was produced during the Second World War as part of the War Artists Advisory Committee scheme, Dunbar's training in the production of murals helped to produce the simplified designs for which she is known. Although successful as a mural painter at Brockley, Dunbar was only involved in one further mural scheme, at Bletchley Park Training College in 1958. And although she was a founder member of the Society of Mural Painters, established in 1939, her work was only shown in the Society's third show held at the Victoria and Albert Musuem after her death in 1960.[56] The opportunities that the Royal College of Art offered Evelyn Dunbar thus led directly

[55] Christian,J., The Last Romantics: The Romantic Tradition in British Art: Burne-Jones to Stanley Spencer (1989), p.64.

[56] Members of the Society included Mary Adshead (Secretary 1953 – 1960s), Edward Bawden, Vanessa Bell, Hans Feibusch, Duncan Grant, Ivon Hitchens, John Minton, Graham Sutherland, Dame Ethel Walker, Augustus John (President 1950), Evelyn Dunbar and her mentor Charles Mahoney.

on only two occassions to her fulfilling the 'promise' which Rothenstein had witnessed during her time there.

Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar all followed a similar path as regards the art education that each received, in as far as part of their education was based within London schools of art, and in the case of Dunbar and Gibbs the same London art school, the Royal College of Art. However, would their membership and exhibition of their work in clubs and societies mirror the similarities that existed in their art education, would their training bear any influence on their choice of clubs and societies? Deepwell states in Ten Decades: Careers of Ten Women Artists born 1897 – 1906 that 'Artists exhibiting groups dominated the professional practices of this period, and membership of such groups was an important part of professional recognition and status.'[57] All three artists strove to attain this recognition and status, but close examination of the opportunities open to them reveals as many differences as similarities.

Gibbs and Dunbar both followed a similar pattern of exhibiting on their graduation from the Royal College of Art. One of the first clubs in which they both exhibited was the New English Art Club. The NEAC was founded in 1886. The outcome of several meetings held in the 1880s by young artists who had studied in Paris and wanted to start an exhibiting society upon French lines, paintings were selected for exhibition by the votes of all exhibiting artists and not as at the Royal Academy, by a privileged committee. The NEAC's foundation was a reflection of the split occurring in France between the work of the 'Academic' and 'Progressive' painters during the 1880s and 1890s. As Charles Harrison notes in Modern Art and Modernism: 1930-1939 'The formation of a new group or society can be seen as a practical expression of some definite interest

[57] Deepwell, K., Ten Decades: Careers of Ten Women Artists born 1897 – 1906 ,1992 at The Norwich Gallery, p.34.

or change of intent among a community of practitioners.'[58] In writings that focus on the NEAC, a link is often made between artists attending the Slade and their exhibiting within the NEAC. In the words of Simon Watney, by 1900 the NEAC had become the Slade's 'unofficial shop window to the world.'[59] This view seems, however, to refer to mainly male artists of the time. Indeed, Sybil Oldfield in This Working-Day World highlights the plight of women 'Sladers' and women artists within the NEAC, offering statistics that highlight both the limited opportunities for women compared to their male peer group as well as the general invisibility of women both as members and as exhibitors.[60] The only artist out of the trio who attended the Slade, Gabain, was the only artist out of all three who did not exhibit within the NEAC. It seems likely that Gabain's work was either rejected by the NEACs selection committee or that she decided not to exhibit with the club. If she had wanted to or had had the opportunity to exhibit within the NEAC she would have been doing so within the first decade of the twentieth century, a time when the NEAC was riding high on the back of its recent founding, and access to the club was difficult, especially for women. Vanessa Bell, both a graduate of the Slade and an exhibitor at the NEAC described her situation as a woman painter at the NEAC within the first decade of the twentieth century, as being prepared to be 'silent and afraid' in the face of the NEAC's exclusively male universe. Vanessa Bell was one of many women at this time who developed an interest in the 'decorative' in modern art. 'Decorative' has often been seen as 'trivial, pretty, feminine' in comparison to a modernism defined as 'serious, stripped – down and masculine.'[61]

Gibbs and Dunbar exhibited at the NEAC during the 1930s by which time it had become clear that the NEAC had not 'developed the kind of identity or organisation which might have

[58] Harrison, C., English Art and Modernism: 1930-1939 (1981), p.11.
[59] Watney, S., English Post-Impressionism (1980), p.26.
[60] Oldfield,S., This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture (s) in Britain 1914 – 1945 (1994), p.149.
[61] Foster, A., Tate Women Artists (2004), p.61.

allowed it to function as an umbrella for younger and more radical talents.'[62] The experience of Gibbs and Dunbar serve as examples to the following observation by Oldfield 'The 'advancement' of women artists within the NEAC, as with the Royal Academy, is also an extremely good example of the sociological trend in which women advance in recognised institutions as those institutions decline in critical importance.'[63] Women's entry to the NEAC may have become 'easier' as the NEAC's 'critical importance' declined but it does not appear that they were treated with any more respect. Indeed, Oldfield asserts that they 'were praised for their colour but not their facture, design, or composition. The subjects they undertook were trivialised and where they were discussed, it was to criticise their approach as unimaginative and derivative.'[64] Women such as Gibbs and Dunbar may have gained entry to the NEAC on account of the club's need for members. The NEAC realised that women were required in order to swell their ranks, but it appears that this forced need led to resentment and the alienation of women, a suppression of their artistic voice; they were to remain 'sleeping partners'. Few women became elected members or Associates of the NEAC. The NEAC's membership was originally targeted at those artists who had become discontented with the Royal Academy, many artists later in the NEAC's life exhibited with both. For example Evelyn Gibbs also exhibited at the RA late in her career between 1951-1965. The opportunity to exhibit with both the NEAC and RA was due to the former's decline as an 'elitist' club. The opportunity for women of Gibbs and Dunbar's generation to exhibit within Societies and Groups that had long fought to keep women out, came at a price. Whilst more women were being allowed to show their works in exhibitions long regarded as bastions of male power, the exhibitions themselves were becoming regarded as less prestigious.

[62] Watney, S., English Post Impressionism (1980), p.26.
[63] Oldfield, S., This Working-Day World (1994), p.149.
[64] Oldfield, S., This Working-Day World (1994), p.150.

One exhibiting group of the day to which both Evelyn Gibbs and Evelyn Dunbar belonged and which had a high number of women artists who were recognised as members within a very specific model of professional practice, was the Artists International Association (referred to as AIA). Evelyn Gibbs was an active member of the Association and dedicated a large amount of her time to the organisation, whose primary concern lay in providing a place for art in the new social and economic circumstances of the twentieth century. Indeed, Gibbs' lack of involvement with women exhibiting groups may be explained by the work she was involved in with the AIA. Gibbs also founded and was the driving force for seventeen years behind the Midland Group, a regional group of the AIA.[65] Women were active participants at all levels within the AIA and formed around 40% of its membership; women were also frequently represented to the same extent on its committees. The Association appears as a unique place in which the achievements of women were placed on an equal footing to their male contemporaries.

Like Gabain, but much more briefly, Gibbs exhibited at the WIAC from 1954-1956. She also successfully exhibited at a number of commercial galleries throughout her career. She showed at the Leicester Galleries 'Artists of Fame and Promise' in 1949, 1953 and 1955 respectively. Gibbs exhibited in a large number of commercial galleries during her long artistic career and for this reason a comprehensive list of the galleries and the exhibitions her work was hung in, appears in the appendix.

In comparison to the exhibitions that Gabain and Gibbs were both involved in, Dunbar's commitment to clubs and societies was very limited. Dunbar's artistic production throughout her lifetime was consistently low and this could account for her relative lack of involvement. She does not appear to have been represented by a dealer at a commercial gallery. The only records of Dunbar offering work for sale appear at the 'S.E.A. (Society for Education and Art) Pictures for

[65] Oldfield, S., This Working – Day World (1994), p.381.

Schools' exhibition held at the Tate Gallery June 18th – July 8th 1948 where 'Joseph's Dream' was for sale for £36. Dunbar also sold or donated a picture to the JCR at an Oxford College which was subsequently stolen. In 1949 Dunbar exhibited in 'Five Painters' an Exhibition held at Black Hall, Oxford, held between November 26th and December 10th, at a time when she was teaching part-time at the Ruskin College of Art in Oxford. In December 1953 at Swanley Hall, Withersdene, an annex of Wye College in Kent, where Dunbar had worked as an Official War Artist, an exhibition was held entitled: 'Evelyn Dunbar – Paintings and Drawings 1938 – 1953.'[66] After her death in 1960, the preliminary oil sketches for Dunbar's two mural panels for Bletchley Park Training College were exhibited at the Society of Mural Painters 1960 show held at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Dunbar's reputation as an artist remains based on the work she executed as an Official War Artist owing to its public profile, critical success and large volume. Her mural work and work outside the war has remained relatively neglected.

[66] Both exhibition catalogues give names of paintings exhibited but no illustrations accompany the titles and tracing their whereabouts has proved open-ended.

Chapter Three:

Ethel Gabain and the artistic revival of Lithography

Alois Senefelder is generally regarded as the inventor of lithography in 1798. Artists in England and America were quick to recognise the medium's many practical applications and possibilities for expression. Experiments in lithography were made in England as early as 1801 and the process was soon used in the US with merit.[1] Following Senefelder's discovery lithography was widely employed for commercial purposes, for example the printing of music, the reproduction of portraits and views and the printing of designs upon calico. Weber in his authoritative work A History of Lithography (1966) questions the 'significant artistic development' of lithography, stating how it is closely linked to the progression and style of successive epochs, of neo-classicism and romanticism for example, but how in the early nineteenth century its adoption as a cheap reproductive medium lowered its artistic credentials, resulting in negative accounts of lithography as an artistic medium.[2] By the 1920s the Print Collectors Quarterly reviewing its revival as a serious artistic medium in the twentieth century, commented on the predicament of lithography in the nineteenth century. 'The canker of mechanic skill ate into the heart of the enterprise, and skill degenerated to cleverness and cleverness to machine, and the whole history of the commercialisation of lithography unrolled itself.'[3] The article continued by noting how this commercialisation had 'undoubtedly caused many well-known and capable artists to fight shy of it, or despise it, or refuse to go on with it,' within the first half of the nineteenth century.[4] The purpose of the article, however, was not to dismiss lithography as a medium hopelessly compromised by commercial and mechanical purposes but to celebrate its revival since the later nineteenth century as a valid print medium for artistic expression. The 'Cinderella of the arts' could now be championed as a 'worthy and delightful medium' and 'well worth while as an end in itself.'[5]

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[1] Weber, W., A History of Lithography (1966), p. 7.
[2] Ibid, p. 12.
[3] 'Some Lithographs of the Past and Future', Print Collectors Quarterly, 1921, 12, pp. 41-66 at p.50.
[4] Ibid, p.54.
[5] 'The Lithographs of Ethel Gabain', Print Collectors Quarterly, 1923, 10, pp. 255 – 287 at p.256.

In A History of Lithography Max Weber states that both Britain and the United States 'played dual, significant roles in the development of lithography in the early twentieth century.'[6] Those who did their best to revive lithography in England included Alphonse Legros who had settled in England, William Strang, William Rothenstein, Charles Ricketts, Frank Brangwyn, Charles Edward Conder, Ethel Gabain, John Copley, F.Ernest Jackson and the Americans John Singer Sergeant, J.M.Whistler and Joseph Pennell. In 1860 James McNeil Whistler moved to England and soon began to create his first lithographs under the direction of the English printer Thomas Way. Joseph Pennell settled in London in 1884 and over the course of his career produced six hundred lithographs. He became the founder and first president of the Senefelder Club in 1908, an artist-lithographers' association, whose members included several of London's most distinguished artists.

The founding of the Senefelder Club in 1908 'provided a forum for artistic expression in lithography.'[7] A.S. Hartrick, one of the founding members of the Senefelder Club, in an essay entitled 'Lithography as a Fine Art' written for The Little Craft Book (1932), discusses the Club's efforts to instruct artists and their patrons in the possibilities of lithography as an art, rather than a trade. At the heart of the society lay more than a dozen artists, including women artists Ethel Gabain, Elsie Henderson and Lily Blatherwick who were the pupils of F.Ernest Jackson (1872-1945) painter, draughtsman, poster designer and lithographer who studied in Paris at the Académie Julian and École des Beaux Arts. In 1902 Jackson joined Lethaby as a teacher at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, were he taught until 1921. Gabain and Henderson were according to Hartrick, 'the first women artists of real talent in this country to acquire the whole craft of lithography, owning their own presses and printing their own proofs.'[8] The Senefelder

[6] Weber, W., A History of Lithography (1966), p. 133.
[7] Garton and Co in association with Scolar Press., British Printmakers – 1855-1955 – A Century of Printmaking from the Etching Revival to St. Ives (1992), p.191.
[8] A.S. Hartrick in Burridge, F.V(ed.)., The Little Craft Book (1932), p.39.

played an important role in promoting the work of lithographs through annual exhibitions which helped to foster the public's interest in the lithographic medium, holding the first in 1910. Their considerable efforts to bring lithography to the art buying public's attention through the press and by exhibitions met with remarkable success. F. Ernest Jackson wrote in 1924 that 'a thoroughly lively interest had been aroused in the art; and since then no fewer than 80 exhibitions have been held by the Senefelder Club in Europe and America, and collections of contemporary lithographs have been made by many of the important public galleries.'[9]

John Copley and his wife Ethel Gabain were among the first artists to print their lithographs on their own press, eliminating the often mechanical look of the commercial printers' work.[10] Ian Pears in his Introduction to the Fine Art Society's exhibition Ethel Gabain: 1883-1950, comments that no-one in England had been foolhardy enough to try and make a living out of lithographs when up to the 1930s etching was a much more obvious way of earning a living as a print-maker, and few anywhere had troubled to learn the business of printing them personally. Between the wars and through the 1940s two founding members of the Senefelder Club, Ethel Gabain and her husband John Copley were the most successful lithographers of the era. Harold J.L.Wright in an article entitled 'The Lithographs of Ethel Gabain' for Print Collectors Quarterly states how he cannot recall any artists of their generation who were able, unlike them, to exist upon the sale of his/her lithographs exclusively. Wright comments that most artists had a second or third string to their artistic bow from which their income derived, for example painting, and that lithography was usually regarded as a sideline or hobby.

[9] Garton and Co. in association with Scolar Press., British Printmakers – 1855-1955 – A Century of Printmaking from the Etching Revival to St.Ives (1992), p.195.
[10] Weber, W., A History of Lithography (1966), p.133.

In 1921 John Copley commented that 'Lithography is an art in its youth, with a great future before it.'[11] The 'path' to this 'great future' had according to Copley not been a smooth one: 'Its very amicability and yielding grace have harmed it. Too often it has been frivolously played with and brutal people have bullied it, till at times it has seemed but a "sorry jade", the commodity of the world.'[12] Copley was born in Manchester and received his early training from the local art school, he came completely under the spell, personal and artistic, of Madox Brown – then engaged on the mural paintings for the Town Hall. In 1892 he entered the Royal Academy schools from which he travelled to Italy. On returning home he was presented by a friend with a lithographic press which signalled a turning point in his career, 'evident that he had found the right outlet for his energies.'[13] Copley's enthusiasm for the lithographic medium resulted in his appointment as Honorary Secretary of the Senefelder Club. It was through the Senefelder Club that Copley met the 'distinguished fellow practitioner', Ethel Gabain.[14]

It was during Gabain's time at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in 1906 that she made her first lithograph, under the tutelage of F.Ernest Jackson. Gabain's career was supported by Harold Wright, head of the print department at Colnaghi's, who acted as her dealer from 1915 until her death. According to Wright in a 1923 article published in Print Collectors Quarterly Gabain was determined not to 'fritter away her time dabbling in every medium,' and would apply her artistic talents to whichever medium appealed to her most. This proved to be lithography as it offered a wide scope and more importantly emphasised good drawing as its basis.[15] By the end of 1906 she had produced thirty lithographs. These included some printed in colour which she later dismissed in preference for black. 'For her, as for most of us, the charm of a lithograph lies in the

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[11] Wright, H.,'Some Lithographs of the Past and the Future', Print Collectors Quarterly, 12, 1921, pp.41-66 at 41.
[12] Ibid, p. 41.
[13] Ibid, p. 66.
[14] Studio, Volume 135, Jan-June 1948, pp.86-89 at 86.
[15] 'The Lithographs of Ethel Gabain', Print Collectors Quarterly, 10, no.3, Oct. 1923, pp.255-287 at 257.

misty grey intermediate tones, which it is possible to obtain in this medium and in it alone.'[16] Wright goes on to comment how her prints 'possess that brilliant technical quality, and apart altogether from the additional appeal of their attractive subjects, this would have been bound to secure for them, sooner or later, the universal notice and appreciation they have obtained.'[17] 1906 signalled the year of Gabain's first exhibition held at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. She exhibited three lithographs entitled 'The Muff', 'Scaffolding' and 'University College London'. In 1906 she also exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Francais in Paris. One of these three exhibited works 'The Muff' (fig.3.1) is the embodiment of a theme Gabain made particularly her own, of adolescent girlhood, timid and contemplative, puzzled by uncertainties, hopes and fears.[18]

In 1908 her prints began to embody a sense of maturity and confidence with the lithographic process, in part due to her return to Paris that year. Gabain took a small studio in Paris were she worked and also attended 'croquis' classes so as to gain more experience of drawing from the model. Wright in his article for Print Collectors Quarterly tells of one of Gabain's 'proudest recollections', when one evening the painter and printmaker Théophile Steinlen visited her class and stopped to look at her drawing, at which he exclaimed 'Tiens! C'est un dessin de lithographie!' She knew that he hadn't been told she was working at lithography and his comment encouraged her enormously. Whilst in Paris she served a casual apprenticeship under an old lithographic printer who had been recommended to her by a London print-seller who had told her that 'Lithographs were not in demand yet, in England; but he thought there might be more chance of placing them in Paris.'[19] During her apprenticeship Gabain was able to study a wide spectrum of both old and modern prints; her mentor showed her his portfolio of lithographs by Daumier and others which made a lasting impression upon her. The print-seller encouraged

[16] Ibid, p.259.
[17] Ibid,p.260.
[18] Ethel Gabain memorial exhibition held by the Royal Society of British Artists in 1950, p. 3.
[19] Ibid, p.261.

Gabain's lithographic work by purchasing a number of her lithographs. For Wright, the 'very pronounced French atmosphere' of Gabain's prints derives not from the lithographs that she saw and studied during her Parisian student days but it is 'More likely it is her French ancestry asserting itself.'[20] This comment, in its reductive explanation, ignores the importance of Gabain's experience in Paris. Doubtless her British-French ancestry made her at home on both sides of the Channel and her bilingualism allowed her to participate fully in French artistic circles, but the 'French atmosphere' of her prints is better explained by context than by a genetic predisposition. In the Preface to the 1920 joint Exhibition of Original Lithographs by John Copley and Ethel Gabain Members of the Senfelder Club Campbell Dodgson writes:

> Usually she is quite of her own time and as modern in choice of subject as in method. Yet it is not of the advance French school that Miss Gabain reminds us. She does not derive from Degas or Cezanne; still less is she a cubist, or futurist, or an adherent of any special 'ism' of the 20th century. She has learned from France itself, rather than any French artists in particular, the secret of grace and charm, of beauty that does not degenerate into "prettiness" or conform to any common standard, of emphasis and accent laid in the right place and not in the wrong place, and of the value of a light touch and a sense of atmosphere and space.[21]

In 1911 Gabain travelled to Paris again where she rented her own studio and experimented with washing lithographs. From Paris she travelled to Italy where she spent six weeks in and around Florence after which time she returned to England via Switzerland. In 1911 Gabain produced one of her most striking lithographs and the print which first drew Harold Wright's attention, 'The Striped Petticoat' (fig.3.2). This print was produced in two colours, black

[20] 'The Lithographs of Ethel Gabain', Print Collectors Quarterly, 10, No.3, Oct.1923, pp.255-287 at p.262.
[21] Campbell Dodgson in Exhibition of Original Lithographs by John Copley and Ethel Gabain, held January 22nd – February 8th 1920 at the Albert Roullier Art Galleries, 410 South Michigan Boulevard, 701 Fine Arts Building, Chicago, n.p.

and a bright blue applied to the girl's hairband, the mattress and the cup and jug on the bedside table. The coloured print encapsulates the very best of what Gabain strove to achieve, capturing her subject's state of contemplation in the midst of the daily routine. The solitary figure of a young girl, her feet hovering just off the floor, sits on a bed wearing a striped petticoat. She occupies the space between the dark head and footboard of the bed, set in contrast to the paleness of the walls behind the girl's figure. The girl's head is tilted down; she looks as though she is reading a book or letter, deep in concentration. This lithograph is one of the earliest of Gabain's depictions of the female form set in an isolated setting, of melancholic girls often fearful or bored.

In 1912, the year following her travels in Europe, Gabain produced nineteen prints the most noteworthy of which are 'Caprice', 'Depart fantastique', 'Le Petit Dejeuner', 'Aux Bords de la Seine' and 'The White Door' (fig.3.3). The girl in 'The White Door' is most probably the same model Gabain used for 'The Striped Petticoat' of the previous year. Indeed, the girl's top has slipped off her shoulder and she wears the striped petticoat as in 'The Striped Petticoat'. This time the young model is seated on the floor, her legs are curled behind her and her arm is positioned to support the weight of her body. The girl's legs are cast in shadow whilst her top half is shown against the pale background of the wall. In this lithograph Gabain plays with the depiction of shadows and how they can be used to frame elements of the picture, an approach that is typical of her mature work.

1913 signalled a year of personal fulfilment through her marriage to fellow lithographer and Senefelder member John Copley. Their common bond of lithography signalled the commencement of a partnership of both professional and private unity. Copley provided Gabain with advice and assistance towards the printing of her editions, which brought about a new freshness to her work. Laurence Haward in an article for the Studio in March 1948 'John Copley and Ethel Gabain' comments how the 'Marriage led to the frequent and fruitful exchange of ideas

and comparisons of methods between husband and wife', the suitability of printing-papers, the consistencies and tones of ink, the gearing of the press and the graining and etching of the stones for example.[22] However, 'though they worked in the same medium and in the same studio, their styles remained distinct and entirely individual.'[23] Following their marriage they settled at Longfield, Kent. Gabain's connection with her surroundings found fertile ground during this time, the garden at Longfield became a source of inspiration.[24] She published thirteen lithographs in 1913 several of which were started at her Brook Green Studio in London. During 1913 she also experimented with drawing on a zinc plate in a piece entitled 'The Etcher'. However, she disliked the result and it remains the only experiment of its kind.

The following year of 1914 was to be a year of unrivalled production for Gabain producing thirty one lithographs in total including two portraits of Copley: 'The Printer', which portrays the details of the lithographic process, with the heavy press, the rollers and bottles of chemicals and the stones in the foreground, and 'Portrait of Mr John Copley (The Blue Jersey)'. Copley is set in profile and sketched simply. In 1914 Gabain produced some of her finest compositions: 'The Mirror' (fig.3.4) illustrates Gabain's favourite theme that of the figure either standing or seated in a spacious room, 'a subject offering the mystery and contrast provided by light and shadow and graceful silhouette,' components of which also occur in 'The Linen Cupboard' (1914).[25] In 1914 Gabain also produced 'The Striped Chair' (fig.3.5), a standing nude of a young girl with a fur wrap around her neck and a pile of clothes by her feet, marking the passing over from girlhood into womanhood, a girl embracing her femininity. In the same year Gabain printed 'The Wedding Morn' (fig.3.6). The veiled bride is turned away from the viewer looking out through the window in front of her. A sense of uncertainty fills the picture, portraying

[22] Studio, vol. 135, March 1948, pp. 86-89, p. 86.
[23] John Copley and Ethel Gabain, Exhibition held at Garton and Cooke, Bond Street, 1985 13th November-6th December, p.2.
[24] 'The Lithographs of Ethel Gabain', Print Collectors Quarterly, 10, No.3, Oct.1923, pp.255-287 at p.268.
[25] Ethel Gabain, memorial exhibition held by the Royal Society of British Artists in 1950, p.3.

this woman's concerns at becoming a wife. The subject of women as brides is explored by Gabain again in the 1930s in oils. Gabain's adoption of showing a window in her interior scene gives a sense of the world outside of her portrayals of the domestic, the world of the woman and the feminine.

One of the most technically competent lithographs that Gabain produced during her career is, 'Stripes and Black' (fig.3.7) of 1914. The lithograph shows Gabain's great ability as a skilled technician, the print having the feel of a watercolour, so painterly is the application of ink. Whilst Gabain has previously depicted young women dressed in their undergarments she now dresses her model in the formal wear of the day. The girl whose form is highlighted by the large window she is placed in front of and the curtains that lie to either side of her is dressed in a heavy looking striped skirt, black jacket over a white blouse and a hair piece in her hair. She perches on a window ledge, glancing down at the floor in a submissive manner looking away from the gaze of the viewer. In this image the sitter is turned away from the curtained window (the presence of curtains framing the window in Gabain's images will also be explored later in the chapter) facing the world of femininity to which she belongs.

Gabain's strong use of black is also applied in 'Profil Fin' (fig.3.8) of 1914, with the bold black expanse of door acting as a frame around the model. The lithograph displays her interest in French art of the time and particularly her admiration for the painter Manet, echoed in her strong use of black.[26] The profile of the model dressed in male attire of top hat and tails is a radical departure for Gabain, away from her depictions of women within the private sphere of the home and into the public sphere of the theatre. Gabain presents a 'modern' woman, a woman dressed in male dress at a time when such behaviour was considered as both daring and shocking, crossing the lines of 'appropriateness.' The form and pose of the model is enhanced by Gabain's

[26] Harvey-Lee, E., Mistresses of the Graphic Arts, entry for Ethel Leontine Gabain 1883-1950.

clever use of a black border which frames the model and further highlights the blackness of her top hat and shoes at opposite ends of her body. Gabain's use of arches to pull the viewer's eye into the depths of the picture is also a device which isolates and exaggerates the figure presented to the viewer. The theatrical elements of this image, the stance of the model and black framing that surrounds the model, are further explored in Gabain's lithographs of the theatre first produced in 1916.

In April 1914 Gabain held a joint exhibition with Copley at the Goupil Gallery in Regent Street, London, producing a promotional poster as a joint endeavour. However, the advent of the Great War in 1914 hampered Gabain's production with a dwindling amount of work being produced, totalling seven prints in 1915, thirteen in 1916, ten in 1917 and seven in 1918. The prints which Gabain produced during the years of World War One display a detachment from contemporary events, and instead a fascination with the world of the stage, and of theatrical poses.

In 'Lady Knitting' (fig. 3.9) of 1915 a lady with bobbed hair (a radical haircut of the time) sits perched on a high stool, her legs tucked beneath her, staring down at a bundle of knitting. To the left of the model is a large French armoire which looms above her head. Gabain creates a series of different heights from the top of the tall armoire, to the lady sitting on the stool and then to the knitting at the base of the stool. Gabain's skilful use of contrasting black with white is cleverly put to work in this lithograph. The lady's figure is placed next to the dark armoire, which acts as a block of black against the whiteness of her skirt. Gabain also creates a line in the horizon which separates the bottom half of the picture from the top half of the picture, thus separating the viewer's attention and allowing the lady's forlorn face to be presented in strong contrast to the white background and in contrast to the detail present in the bottom half of the picture.

As mentioned earlier, in 1915 Gabain and Copley had moved from Goupil's to Colnaghi's, at the suggestion of Harold Wright, head of the print department there. 1916 signalled the commencement of Gabain's fascination with Pierrot and Columbine subjects which continued for many years, resulting in some of her most technically brilliant and striking images. Gabain became interested in depicting unworldly Pierrot pictures - part of the revivalist interest in the *Commedia dell'arte* also taken up by Rouault, Picasso, Derain, Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Gabain's interest in the sad (always androgynous) Pierrot was matched and perhaps exceeded by depictions of Columbine – seduced by Pierrot but never loving him.[27] The first of these prints depicting the French pantomime was simply entitled 'Pierrot' (fig. 3.10) of 1916. The image highlights Gabain's acute awareness of the space which her figures inhabit. The figure of Pierrot dressed in a large white coat and a long pair of trousers, a large ruff at the neck and oversized black buttons on the coat is set in contrast to the black curtain behind. The stark black surround highlights Pierrot's form, a lonely figure on a darkened stage. The relationship of space and proportion are elements to which Gabain pays particular attention.

Gabain's series of French pantomime lithographs are finely balanced displays of charm, emotion and poignancy. In 'Pierrot Delaisse' of 1916 Gabain introduces the figure of a young ballerina, the same model which she uses in 'Une Coryphée', 'Ballerine' and 'A Dancer Resting' all produced in 1916. Although Campbell Dodgson denied any influence of Degas on Gabain, it is easy to understand why he might have felt it necessary to say this. Formally, the artists are completely distinct, but in terms of subject matter Gabain does seem to have picked up themes explored by Degas. Thus, Gabain's fascination with the Ballet may stem from the interest that Degas showed in portraying dancers. More than half the total numbers of works of art produced

[27] Pears, I., The Lithographs of Ethel Gabain 1883-1950, The Fine Art Society 29 November – 19 December 2003, p.6.

by Degas are concerned with the ballet, they form part of his more general interest in the documentation of contemporary life. Degas' possible influence upon the work that Gabain produced can also be seen in her 1914 lithograph 'La Repasseuse' (fig. 3.11) which depicts a woman ironing. Degas produced a number of pictures of laundresses, the one most similar in composition to Gabain's own depiction of a laundress belongs to the Walker Art Gallery of Liverpool. Entitled 'Woman Ironing' and produced c.1892, Degas' image is far removed from the popular imagery of laundresses of the time, 'Degas' laundresses... are substantial working women involved in hard physical labour, quite unlike the simpering adolescents who affect an ironing posture in more popular imagery.'[28] Gabain's own depiction of a woman ironing also displays the physical labour involved in this woman's work. Gabain's work of 1916 entitled 'The Silken Wrap' (fig.3.12) again engages with Degas' work, and his interest in the private world of the dressing-room. Degas was fascinated with the rituals of washing, drying and preening. Gabain's image portrays her model swathed in a towel perched on the side of a bath, portraying a particularly private moment.

In 1917 Gabain produced a lithograph of accomplished design entitled 'Madame Figaro' (fig. 3.13). This is a good example of the artistic partnership enjoyed by Gabain and Copley, for in the second state of the lithograph the wall in the background is patterned with a design of foliage and birds, the work of John Copley and bearing his initials. One picture of the following year,1918, of particular note is that entitled 'A la Belle Etoile' (fig. 3.14) in which the positions of the stars in the sky are positioned according to those of a star map, which reflects Gabain's perfectionist nature in dealing with subjects in her lithographs and possibly an interest in the night sky and astrology. 'Madame X' (fig. 3.15) of 1918 is a noteworthy example of Gabain's use of contrasting black and white. A veiled woman sits at a black round highly polished table with her hands crossed in front of her holding a pair of gloves. The blackened table, black outfit and veiled

[28] Richard Kendall in Degas: Images of Women, Tate Gallery Liverpool,1989, p.41.

hat of her model are set in contrast to the white interior behind her. Gabain has outlined faintly the curtain and door behind the seated model, creating a light large space behind her which focuses the attention away from the room's interiors and onto 'Madame X'. 'The Chequered Scarf (Portrait of John Copley)' (fig. 3.16) of 1918 also displays Gabain's fascination with the effect of contrasting black and white. In this lithograph however, Gabain uses a black background seen in 'Pierrot' of 1916. The black and white cheque on the scarf of the model, her husband John Copley, are used to great effect in this lithograph, an idea that Gabain uses again in a lithograph of 1923 'The Draught Players' (fig. 3.17). 'The Draught Players' is a successful departure for Gabain away from the feminine subject matter already discussed. The lithograph is an austere study of two men facing one another across the draught board, one reaching to make a move. The men who are posed in deep concentration are contrasted with the darkness of the night seen through the many panes of glass. The design is striking, making full use of black and white and the squared elements in the picture, the squares on the board are echoed in the square panes of the window.

Gabain's artistic production during World War One displays a marked development in her mastering of her lithographic technique and her ability to deal with the subtle and dramatic effects the lithographic medium allows. Gabain's work during the war does not however, actively engage with the events occurring at home and on the Western front. It seems probable that at a time when her success as a commercial artist was developing, Gabain felt the need to continue producing work that would sell. The only lithograph that Gabain produced dealing with the war was produced late on in 1917, 'A Munition Worker' (fig. 3.18). The image's subject is only made clear by the title, for it appears to be a picture of a gypsy, a woman wrapped in a stripy shawl with dark hair and large earrings.[29]

[29] Wright, H., 'The Lithographs of Ethel Gabain', Print Collectors Quarterly, 10, no.3, Oct.1923, pp.255-287 at p.268.

Following the war years Gabain's production of prints continued to remain small in number. In 1919 she produced only eight prints. However, the number is almost double if you include the second and third states of many of her lithographs are included. 1919 was to be a year of concern and anxiety for Ethel Gabain due to the serious illness of her husband. As Harold Wright observed, one of Gabain's lithographs produced in 1919 'represents obliquely both her anxiety regarding her huband's health and her devotion to him; it represents an aged couple playing Spillikins in the peaceful evening of their days.'[30] This picture appears to be the embodiment of Wright's comment that 'Theirs has been a delightful union, mutually beneficial, its happiness frequently represented in their respective prints.'[31] Gabain's continuing fascination with the theatre resulted in 'Le Lorgnon' (fig. 3.19) of 1919. A woman leans against a door dressed in evening dress with opera glasses in her hand, she appears to have just returned from an evening at the opera or theatre but she looks melancholy. The woman dressed in a large dark opera coat stands contrasted against a pale interior, a technique of black on white also used in 'Madame X' of 1918. The sense of sadness that permeates 'Le Lorgnon' is also evident in some of Gabain's images of the 1920s.

The twenties were marked by private concern regarding her husband's state of health contrasted with the professional success that the decade heralded. Gabain's career took on an international setting with an Exhibition of Original Lithographs by John Copley and Ethel Gabain. Members of the Senfelder Club held January 22nd – February 8th 1920 at the Albert Roullier Art Galleries, 410 South Michigan Boulevard, 701 Fine Arts Building, Chicago. This was followed by further joint exhibitions in Chicago again in 1921 and 1924. In the preface to the exhibition held March 28th to April 11th 1921 S.Moulyn discusses the artistic relationship between the couple:

[30] Ibid, p.271.
[31] Ibid, p.266.

> Of Copley's influence other than technical there is no sign in Gabain's work...Both know how to make large white spaces tell in contrast with dark shadows, and by overflooding ink-tones over the chalk lines; but whereas in Copley this leads to a great division of light and shade, his wife finds in it the motive of some accessory, wittily sat down, always attaining thereby a subtle and balanced composition...She knows how with a clean and pure line to draw a simple nude figure, and to suggest by a single stool and the silhouette of a pair of ladies' shoes, the spaciousness of a luxurious boudoir.[32]

And in the preface to Gabain's work in the exhibition of Copley and Gabain's work at Albert Roullier Gallery in Chicago in 1924, Harold Wright comments:

> Her natural gifts have been developed by her constant practice of lithography, often amid great discouragements and formidable odds. Now, as then, therefore, she assuredly deserves the "Bravo! Ethel Gabain" with which Le Matin acclaimed her when she first exhibited in the Paris Salon...Her joyousness is infectious, reviving in us 'ces espoirs auxquels nous convie le clair matin ensoleille'. Long may it continue to charm us.[33]

Considering the international profile Gabain was gaining her artistic production for 1920 was relatively small. In her 1920 image 'The Rattle' (fig. 3.20) Gabain embraces the subject of the Mother and Child, in a distinctly middle class setting, a subject to which Copley also dedicated a series of prints in the early 1920s. As early as 1908 Gabain showed an interest in the image of the mother and child, it did not however, hold a deep fascination for the artist, and only a few images of this subject were produced throughout her career. At the turn of the twentieth century in Germany, Modersohn-Becker and Kathe Kollwitz had both produced images of motherhood in the context of fierce debates about the role of women, sexuality and motherhood.

[32] S.Moulyn in Exhibition of Original Lithographs by John Copley and Ethel Gabain, 1921, Albert Roullier Gallery, n.p.
[33] Harold Wright in Exhibition of Original Lithographs by John Copley and Ethel Gabain, 1924, Albert Roullier Gallery, p.84.

Between 1890 and 1914 in Germany, France and Britain concern was voiced about the decline in the 'quantity' and 'quality' of the population. Women artists both faced opposition in combining their role as a mother with that of a professional artist and struggled themselves to unite both roles. Kathe Kollwitz wrote in her diaries about the tensions between motherhood and work, committed to the well-being of her two sons but mindful of the time that their caring took.[34] Ethel Gabain also had two sons, Christopher and Peter, born in 1914 and 1917 respectively. The care and attention devoted to her two children must have greatly affected Gabain's artistic output during their earlier years, and hence the small amount of work Gabain produced during 1920. Gabain's fulfilment as a wife and mother is shown in the thoughtfully executed lithograph of 1922 entitled 'Christopher asleep' (fig. 3.21) a drawing of her younger son portrayed with extreme economy. The lithograph measures only 6 x 8cm and depicts just the head and hand of her young son, devoid of unnecessary detail or background. Indeed, throughout Gabain's artistic career her work offers the observer a glimpse into her life and its surroundings, the gardens she walked in, sunlit terraces she sat on and dancers, pierrots and columbines she saw perform.

In 1920 Gabain was commissioned by the London Underground Railways to produce a poster entitled 'The Art of Travel' (fig. 3.22), a commission which must reflect her standing within the contemporary art world as an artist of particular note and talent. A.S.Hartrick, a founding member of the Senefelder Club, in an essay entitled 'Lithography as a fine art' in The Little Craft Book saw such commissions as 'probably more effectual than all the galleries and the art critics put together. The hoardings and the Underground are the people's galleries, whether we like to acknowledge it or not.'[35] Gabain's resulting poster depicts a family of five on a high piece of land looking down at the surrounding countryside. To the left hand-side of the image stands the father, mother and baby and young son who is pointing into the unseen distance. The other

[34] Pollock, G (ed.)., Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings (1996), p.165.
[35] A.S. Hartrick in F.V.Burridge (ed.)., The Little Craft Book (1932), p. 4.

son and daughter are seated on the ground; the girl sits in the foreground looking towards the viewer whilst the boy is faced away looking into the distance. All members of the family are bare foot, the mother in the forefront of the image, looking down at her cradled baby, wears a striped shawl reminiscent of the one worn by the 'Munition Worker' of 1917. Gabain's skills at composition, her arrangement of the figures and her attention to detail are displayed to good effect in this lithograph. The image is accompanied by a quote which Gabain may have been given, upon which to base her lithograph:

> Surely you seem to cover vaster spaces with Lavengro,
> footing it with gipsies or driving his tinker's cart
> across lonely commons with many a globe-trotter
> or steam-yachtsman with diary or log?
> – but get a good start by Motor Bus.

Some thirty years after Gabain produced the poster, John Copley received a letter of condolence from the British Transport Commission on Gabain's death which reads: 'She was a wonderful person and a most delightful artist and I shall never forget the fun we had over the underground poster she did – at the same time as you did one. I learnt a lot from her; she was an example to many of us.'[36]

The summer months of 1921 were spent in Wye, Kent whilst Copley convalesced from his illness. The cottage in which they stayed and the surrounding countryside provided Gabain with a fresh supply of inspiration upon which to base her lithographs. Indeed, five out of the twelve lithographs produced that year are landscapes of the land bordering their cottage. The seven remaining lithographs were executed in her London studios in Hampstead. Gabain's 1921 image 'L'Aube' (fig. 3.23), depicts two girls in the street, one standing smoking, the other

[36] Letter of sympathy to John Copley from the British Transport Commission, 1950.

wearing a top - hat sitting on the pavement. 'L'Aube' portrays the behaviour of modern women in the 1920s out in clubs and bars at night, which met with condemnation by older generations. Gabain's images of this period highlight the prejudices that women of her own generation were facing, the need to fulfil your social and moral responsibilities within society and your own wishes as a modern woman, the need to embrace the modern world.

In 1923 Gabain produced 'Choix de Bottes' (fig. 3.24) one of her most striking vertical compositions. This work displays Gabain's ability to make large white spaces tell, in contrast with dark spaces. Her command of all the range of "colour" that lies between blackest black and whitest white is a striking feature of this particular lithograph. This image also portrays her favourite theme a figure standing or in this case seated, seen against a tall window in a spacious room, or on a balcony; it was a subject offering the mystery and contrast provided by light and shadow and graceful silhouette. Scenes realised with charm, facts and realities transported into a world of poetic imagination. This image is typical of the kind of work that built her reputation. At first sight, perhaps, merely a stylish illustration of French chic, her control of the medium is evident throughout, especially in her use of dramatic contrasts and her reduction of any mise-en-scène paraphernalia to the bare minimum. Like this image a large number of her lithographs represent solitude, of women isolated, often fearful and bored, staring into mirrors in empty rooms, diminutive figures in large and bleak spaces.[37]

The early 1920s had been a time of poor health for her husband and so in 1925 the family left England for Italy. 'My mother organised the business of moving us all for an indefinite period to Italy where the pound then bought a great many lire... Alassio, then a friendly little Ligurian

[37] 'A Summer Room' of 1923 is a further demonstration of Gabain's ability to convey women in reflective pose.

town, had been decided on as our destination.'[38] The family rented a small villa on a hillside overlooking the Mediterranean and appear to have adapted well to the way of life in Italy, eased by the fact that the town housed a great many British families. In order to bring the family in some form of revenue, Gabain gave art lessons to the small British community. Gabain's lithographic production during these years abroad, though limited, drew on her surroundings as many of their titles suggest including 'Pierrot en Italie' and 'Ligurian Alps'. One of Gabain's most noteworthy lithographs from this period was entitled 'Reverie Venitienne' (fig. 3.25) of 1931, a vertical composition, in which the figure of a lady, staring out towards the Doge's Palace in San Marco, and the curtains are almost continuous. The treatment of her clothing is very painterly and it was during this period in Italy that Gabain turned increasingly to painting. Indeed, the dress of the lady in 'Reverie Venitienne' is echoed in Gabain's portrait of 'Edith Evans in Restoration Costume'.

In 1927 Gabain made her first appearance at the Royal Academy as a painter in oil with 'Zinnais', the first of many flower studies. During the 1930s Gabain worked increasingly in oils. Gabain's temporary abandonment, for around ten years, of the lithographic medium and her adoption of oil painting came about after a long and commercially successful career as a lithographer. Maybe the time had come to embrace a new medium, to experiment with her art now that she had established a good reputation. On average most of Gabain's lithographic editions were in the low twenties, once she had established a wide reputation through the sale of these editions she then had the opportunity to expand her production. 'Two Black Bows' (fig. 3.26) of 1932 was the last work she produced in the lithographic medium for some years, only returning to lithography when she was appointed an Official War Artist in 1940. The lithograph is a depiction of her favourite model, Carmen Watson, who after the war would be a source of inspiration for Gabain's oil paintings. The detailed depiction of the model's facial features, the

[38] Peter Copley in John Copley and Ethel Gabain,Garton and Cooke, New Bond Street, 1985, p.2.

locks of hair which curl around her face and the 'Two Black Bows' in her hair are highlighted by the simplicity of design and lack of attention Gabain gives to the model's surrounds. Gabain's focus lies in the depiction of the model's face, who glances away from the viewer, caught in a moment of reflection.

Gabain's talents as a painter are best expressed by Martin Hardie in his Foreword to the RBA's 1950 exhibition of Gabain's work following her death:

> As a painter she approached her task with depth of feeling, with entire sincerity, and with humility of spirit. Seeing with her eyes or with inner vision the beauty given by some blending of form and line and colour, she concentrated every faculty, with complete honesty, to search out and reveal what underlay the beauty, and interpret it clearly so that other eyes might share her pleasures. The gentle harmony and the flower-like bloom of her colour, rich in musical undertones, seemed to be a gift of nature, but she never exploited it; she was a stern uncompromising worker. By whatever means the result was produced, there is what the painter knows as 'quality' in all her art.[39]

In the thirties Gabain's subjects for her oils were mostly portraits and the occasional landscape. Gabain's favourite model of the time was Carmen Watson, whom she painted over fifty times. Carmen's sylph-like beauty is captured in Gabain's many portrayals of a bride, two of which are reproduced in the RBA's 1950 catalogue 'The Bride' in Manchester City Art Gallery and 'Bride with a bouquet'. In an article in the Daily Sketch of 1936, Gabain discusses her reasons behind painting brides, commenting 'All Brides are Beautiful'. Gabain states 'On her wedding day she leaves her care-free girlhood in order to undertake new responsibilities, fearless of all the future may hold. However, because she is going to share it with one whom she has learned to love and trust her faith, her courage and above all, her happiness transform even the

[39] Martin Hardie in Ethel Gabain Royal Society of British Artists, 1950, p.3.

plainest girl's face.'[40] Gabain's portrayal of adolescent girlhood in many of her lithographs is a theme used in her oil paintings entitled 'The Nymph' (1935-36), 'The Woodland Nymphs', 'Spring and Deux Filles' (1935). The model in 'Sunburnt Nymph' (fig. 3.27) of 1935-38 holds herself; her arms wrapped around her, with daisy-like flowers ties around her waist and in her hair. Gabain depicts a woman in a domestic environment looking melancholy, a subject that she used in many of her earlier lithographic works including 'The Striped Petticoat' (1911) and 'A Summer Room' (1923).

Gabain's feeling for design and colour are displayed effectively in her portraits of some of the best known actresses of the day, sitting for her in the roles they had made familiar and lending themselves to lasting records. Gabain's interest in the theatre, as seen in her earlier 'theatrical' lithographs of 'Pierrot' (1916) and 'Colombine à Paris' (1916), and her son Peter Copley's training as an actor brought her into close contact with many of the leading actors and actresses of the day. Gabain's portrait of 'Flora Robson as Lady Audley' (1933) won the de Laszlo silver medal in 1933, later purchased by the Manchester City Art Gallery. Gabain's portrait of 'Edith Evans in Restoration Comedy'(date unknown) was allocated to Stoke-on-Trent Art Gallery, 'Diana Wynyard in the Silent Knight' (1938) to the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool and that of 'Lilian Baylis' (date unknown) hangs at Sadler Wells Theatre. In Gabain's depiction of Dame Peggy Ashcroft as 'Juliet in "Romeo and Juliet"'(1935) (fig. 3.28), the use of a simple palette of red, green, gold and white, the attention Gabain pays to the 'star' fabric of the dress and the curtained backdrop, display both Gabain's skilful use of oil and the debt that her paintings owe to her proficiency as a lithographer.

Due to the outstanding nature of her work in oils Gabain was elected a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Oils, in 1935. In 1934 Gabain had been elected Vice President of the

[40] "All Brides are Beautiful and so are mothers", Daily Sketch, July 10th 1936, p.13.

Society of Women Artists. Her position within such an influential society reflects Gabain's standing as an artist and her role as an inspiration for women artists, whose artistic suppression remained throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. If Gabain was receiving increasing recognition within the art world of the first half of the twentieth century, this was not reflected in the family's economic situation which had been deteriorating following years of her husband's poor health. Throughout the thirties Gabain lectured on art history in schools, reading from scripts written by her husband, in a much needed attempt to boost family funds. Recollecting these times of hardship Peter Copley, Ethel's son, in the introduction to Garton and Cooke's retrospective exhibition of the couple's work in 1985, comments that 'mother had the idea to tour girls' schools giving lectures on the art history of whichever country was the subject of the current Royal Academy winter exhibition. She knew no history so my father, who did, wrote the lectures and she learnt them by heart ... delivered them with theatrical panache.'[41]

In 1940 Gabain returned to the lithographic medium following her appointment as an Official War Artist on a short term contract. After working for around a decade in oils it is interesting that the WAAC commissioned Gabain primarily as a lithographer. Though Gabain had attempted to move away from lithography and experiment in another medium, the previous success of her lithographic work gained her the commission from the Committee. The WAAC also however, commissioned Gabain to work in oils later in her commission, her skill as a successful lithographer and oil painter must have been important factors in the awarding of a commission. Gabain was sent to draw evacuees from the East End of London as they left the capital's railways stations and also in their rural foster homes. She subsequently produced lithographs of working women, but unlike her fellow female war artist Dunbar, Gabain depicted them in traditionally male occupations. She travelled the country in order to gather material for

[41] Peter Copley in John Copley and Ethel Gabain, Garton and Cooke, Bond Street, 13th November – 6th December 1985, p.1.

women working as ferry pilots and lumberjacks or clearing bomb damage and filling sandbags. Gabain's war lithographs are a departure from her earlier prints, less decorative and adapted successfully to their purpose. The change of subject matter did not diminish Ethel Gabain's ability to design and compose, which remained as individual and inventive as always.[42]

When I met with Peter Copley at his home in Bristol he talked of his mother as a passionate and spontaneous person but also sensible. This image of a woman of great determination and strength is conveyed throughout her life by both her artistic work and through her role as a wife and mother, her ability moreover to adapt and survive. Following the death of their youngest son, Christopher, in 1940, after a childhood of illness, Copley developed a new and intensely personal subject matter in his prints largely withdrawing from the public world, whilst Gabain's response was to immerse herself in her work. In Peter Copley's 'A Memoir of John Copley and Ethel Gabain' he writes of his mother:

> as beautiful, French, ebullient, crazy, a petite figure who organised our lives, cooked marvellously, cared for my sick father and who painted flowers and portraits because they were easiest to sell, thus leaving my father free to create master-works which didn't have to sell because hers, though no master-works, did. Much of this crudity I now realise was the truth as I wanted to see it – my father a noble god, my mother a lovely handmaiden- rather than as it was...the artistic image of my father as a protected, patriarchal genius, of my mother as a charming lightweight, making whatever was commercially convenient. This is absurd: both were superb printmakers, master lithographers, worthy members of the Senefelder Club.[43]

Gabain achieved critical and commercial success within the first half of the twentieth century when many women were largely restricted to the domestic sphere and considered

[42] Gordon Cooke in John Copley and Ethel Gabain, Garton and Cooke, Bond Street, 13th November – 6th December 1985, p.28.
[43] Peter Copley in John Copley and Ethel Gabain, Garton and Cooke, Bond Street, 13th November – 6th December 1985, p.1 – 2.

dependents. Throughout Gabain's career her art engaged with women and their circumstances within society, her central theme was that of femininity. In image after image, she dwelt on the female body and condition - youth, marriage, children, work. Gabain's lithographic work develops the concern with the 'forme feminine' that pervaded the art world of Paris in which she studied. Many artists' work, like Gabain's, associated with the School of Paris developed 'a marketable style of portraiture...in which women's bodies were stylised, elongated and depicted in fashionable dress and make up', known as 'forme feminine.'[44] In addition, the quality of reverie in Gabain's isolated figures brings to mind the subtle adumbration of a woman's world seen in the work of her contemporary, Gwen John. This connection is not intended to suggest any influence, nor indeed any personal contact, but rather to propose that Gabain's work is susceptible to some of the readings now deployed for those artists who took themes of the domestic and the feminine as sites for the production of significant imagery.

[44] Perry, G., Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-Garde (1992), p. 107.

Chapter Four:

Evelyn Dunbar and the Brockley School and Bletchley Park Training College Murals.

'The angular clamour of Vorticism and the Parisian avant – garde of Roger Fry's Post – Impressionist Exhibition may appear to dominate English art on the eve of the First World War. Yet there were other quite different movements afoot which stirred the imagination of young artists at the time.'[1] One of these was mural painting, a movement considered by its exponents as the height of artistic achievement, sealing reputations and sometimes promising social status.[2] As we saw in Chapter Two, Evelyn Dunbar's early reputation was secured by the work she produced for the mural scheme at Brockley School. The purpose of this chapter is to place that work and the mural panels Dunbar produced for Bletchley Park Training College (1958-1959) within more general considerations of the mural revival in early twentieth-century Britain.

In Mural Painting in Britain 1840 – 1940: Image and Meaning (2000) Clare Willsdon has documented the problem of a variety of mural schemes executed between 1840 and 1940. The quantity and quality of these schemes, coupled with the fact that mural painting can be shown to have been part of the modern British art world for at least one hundred years, is remarkable. Just as remarkable, perhaps, is the fact that serious study of this tradition has only begun to emerge in the last ten years. 'Mural painting is a fact which has to be taken into account in any rational appraisal of British art as a whole...there was a significant amount of it; it was the subject of serious critical attention in its day; and a very wide range of different artists, including painters of stature, turned their hand to it, with the support of a similar diversity of patrons and architects.'[3] And yet mural paintings executed within the first half of the twentieth century by some of the most skilled practitioners of the period have escaped the critical attention they deserve due to the beliefs and ideals which they often displayed, considered unfashionable by their more avant-garde minded contemporaries. The fact that they often have a permanent presence within

[1] Powers,A., 'Honesty of Purpose: Painters at the British School in Rome', Country Life, February 27 (1986), pp.512-514, p. 512.
[2] Willsdon, C.A.P., Mural Painting in Britain 1840 – 1940: Image and Meaning (2000), p.3.
[3] Willsdon,C.A.P., Mural Painting in Britain 1840 – 1940: Image and Meaning (2000), p.3

buildings only seen by small groups of people has not helped their fate. Mural paintings' existence as large, often immovable works of art serves only to exaggerate their isolation from the art world. Moreover, as Clare Willsdon states 'Bridging painting and architecture, murals have tended not to be seen as part of the history of either.'[4] Their neglect and even destruction, such as the destruction during the Second World War of Morley College, has pushed these art works and their practitioners to the periphery of the art world.

The increasing interest in 'decorative painting' in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century was promoted by the formation in 1901 of the Society of Painters in Tempera, amalgamating with the newly formed Mural Decorators' Society in 1912, because 'It was no longer a question of egg-tempera versus oil medium but the consideration of all known media other than oil by practical tests founded on intimate knowledge of the raw material.'[5] The Editor of the 'Papers of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera' was the muralist Mary Sargant-Florence, regarded by Alan Powers as the most original painter in the fresco revival.[6] In the Preface to the Society's Third Volume of Papers published in 1936, Sargant-Florence condemns 'An academic art world which officially refuses to recognise decorative painting, whether on walls or on panels and moveable surfaces as a fine art, condemns it in the eyes of the public. Hence its neglect in the curriculum of the art schools – with consequent decay.'[7] Members of the Society hoped that their endeavours would re-establish a form of craftsmanship which had been destroyed in the wake of artists earning their living through the easel picture sold at a dealer's gallery.

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[4] Willsdon, C.A.P., Mural Painting in Britain 1840 – 1940: Image and Meaning (2000), p. 7.
[5] Papers of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera. Third Volume. 1925 – 1935. Edited by M. Sargant – Florence (1936),p. 139.
[6] Mary Sargant – Florence (1857 – 1954) was one of the 'purists' who ran the Society. Politically, she was a Suffragette; creatively, she was passionate enemy of oil painting and a strong adherent of colour theory. Like many of her contemporaries, little of her work has survived. In 1994 her frescoes at Oakham School depicting Thomas Malory's Le Mort d'Arthur were covered over.

The belief of the Society in placing murals in both educational and welfare institutions in the twentieth century had been gaining ground since the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1859 John Ruskin claimed in his lecture 'Modern Manufacture and Design' given in Bradford that 'The only essential distinction between Decorative and other art is the being fitted for a fixed place; and in that place, related, either in subordination or in command, to the effects of other pieces of art.'[8] Ruskin at first was sceptical of the introduction of mural painting as part of the curriculum in art schools but by 1864 he was advocating that mural painting 'should form a branch of the teaching in the [Royal] Academy, possibly the principal branch.'[9]

Mural Painting as a distinct art form began to receive a new 'impetus' in 1881 when a prize for mural decoration at the Royal Academy was introduced. In 1901 the Royal College of Art established its own Decorative Painting School. The Slade followed shortly afterwards introducing decorative painting into its curriculum. But it was the Royal College of Art, especially with William Rothenstein at its helm, that did most to develop training in mural painting in the twentieth century. In 1912 Rothenstein had sat on the committee for the 'Exhibition of Designs for Mural Painting and for the decoration of Schools and Other Buildings' in Chelsea and in 1916 he published Plea for a Wider Use of Artists and Craftsmen in which he asserted the need for civic patronage of artists as a way of reshaping and renewing a world torn apart by war. He was also concerned to promote the idea of a practical approach to painting. In a broadcast 'Whither Painting' in 1931, he stated that 'the English genius early expressed itself through poetry, and English painters have usually given to their objective vision a poetical or illustrative quality.'[10]

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[7] Papers of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera. Third Volume. 1925 – 1935. Edited by M. Sargant - Florence (1936), Preface.
[8] Cook and Weddersburn., Works of John Ruskin (1984), p.108.
[9] Willsdon, C.A.P., Mural Painting in Britain 1840 – 1940: Image and Meaning (2000), p.297.
[10] Frayling, C., The Royal College of Art: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art and Design (1987), p. 69.

The most well-known public commission of the sort Rothenstein envisaged is the cycle of murals painted by Stanley Spencer at Burghclere (Sandham Memorial Chapel) from 1927 to 1932 (fig.4.1). Spencer, of course, was not a pupil of Rothenstein but of Tonks at the Slade but Tonks was also convinced of the value of large-scale decorative painting insofar as it kept the modern artist in touch with the traditions of the Renaissance. Arthur M. Hind (Slade Professor of Fine Art at the University of London) discussing the plans for Burghclere Chapel in the Studio for June 1925 comments that 'I can think of no artistic project of the last few years which shows more promise than this of repaying a patron a hundredfold if he cares for noble art for posterity.'[11]

The art schools' enthusiasm for Mural Painting reflected its desirability as an important training tool for students. Mural painting offered art students the chance to design on a large scale, using techniques and media other than oil on canvas, and also the chance of public service, serving a useful role within society. The campaign undertaken by the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera was not fought in vain. In the period 1900 - 1935 some of the best British painters, including Frank Branwyn, George Clausen and Percy Wyndham Lewis, were decorating the walls of both public and private buildings. The increase in numbers of both educational and welfare murals in Britain during the first decades of the twentieth century reflects art schools' attempts to train artists to become mural painters.[12] Artists' ideals and those of their teachers however, were often frustrated by monetary difficulties, for mural painting relied heavily upon patronage and moreover, the walls on which to execute works were in relatively short supply.

Rothenstein's pupils at the RCA included Edward Bawden, Eric Ravilious, Barnett Freedman and Charles Mahoney. In Mahoney, Rothenstein felt that he had a champion of

[11] Studio Volume 89, June 1925, p.13.
[12] Willsdon, C.A.P., Mural Painting in Britain 1840 – 1940: Image and Meaning (2000), p.256.

painting who could restore to it its intellectual dignity, craftsmanship and vigour which since the middle of the nineteenth century had been subject to the demands of an uneducated art market. Artists of Mahoney's generation often mistrusted the older generation of mural painters; they wanted to replace what had gone before with 'an art that combined observation with imagination, and historical perspective with alertness to contemporary needs.'[13] In 1928, Rothenstein as Principal of the RCA, found mural work for Bawden, Ravilious and Mahoney to decorate Morley College in South London; the scheme was to become one of the most noteworthy training schemes of its time and had it survived would have joined Spencer's work at Burghclere as an example of the importance of mural painting between the wars.

The murals at Morley College were funded with £1,300 obtained by Charles Aitken (Director of the Tate Gallery) from Sir Joseph Duveen. All three artists commissioned to paint the murals were freshly graduated RCA students. Edward Bawden and Eric Ravilious won praise for their humorous scenes from Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas in the Refreshment Room and Charles Mahoney decorated the wall above the Concert Hall stage depicting 'The Pleasures of Life in Work and Play (Scenes of London life)' (fig.4.2). Mahoney's mural panel successfully makes use of the space provided by creating two horizontal tiers. In the top tier Mahoney depicts people playing musical instruments and dancing and collecting apples from the orchard. In the bottom tier women sit in their heavily draped dresses drawing, writing and playing musical instruments. Throughout the mural Mahoney's interest in horticulture is abundant, evident from the flowers lying at the feet of the women in the first tier to the heavily laden apple tree in the upper tier. Mahoney's love of depicting plants and flowers would remain present in his work throughout his lifetime. Mahoney's work at Morley College displayed his skill as a draughtsman. His design brought together figure drawings taken from life with drawings of trees and plants in a highly formalised composition. The beauty of this work, now sadly destroyed, is captured through John Rothenstein's article in the Studio of 1930 entitled 'The Mural Decorations at Morley'. 'His

[13] Alan Powers in Charles Mahoney 1903-1968, 1999, Fine Art Society London, p,37.

decoration is singularly impressive in its combination of impersonal dignity with energy sternly controlled. Most contemporary mural painters look for guidance to the Italian decorations of the early renaissance, and what they see in them too often overwhelms their work. With Mr.Mahoney it was otherwise; for he has assimilated all he has learnt with masterly completeness.'[14]

As we shall see, Mahoney was to have a decisive impact on the work of Evelyn Dunbar in the 1930s. Clare Willsdon asserts that the murals at Morley College ignited noteworthy contemporary interest for they were inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and Queen Mary who was said to be inspired by the work. However, the Morley College frescoes, like Spencer's at Burghclere, were not commissions that would attract large groups of visitors, one being a training college, the other a private chapel. For all their success as decorative schemes, their reputation would chiefly grow at second-hand, through illustrated descriptions, rather than as a result of first-hand observation. Rothenstein was clearly aware of the difficulties he faced in trying to make such site-specific work better known. In a paper read before the Royal Institute of British Architects in February 1931 he quotes from a conversation he had had with Max Beerbohm on the Morley College murals. When Beerbohm visited Morley he exclaimed 'Good gracious! If these things had been done in other countries, all the papers would have been full of them... whereas I should not suppose that more than fifty, or at most a hundred, have been to see these decorations.'[15]

Evelyn Dunbar first met Charles Mahoney in 1933, when he acted as both supervisor and contributor on the commission for a cycle of murals in Brockley School, London, arranged by William Rothenstein. In a broadcast of December 1931, Rothenstein sought more walls upon which his students could gain vital training. In response to his request, the headmaster of a

[14] Rothenstein, J., 'The Mural Decorations at Morley College, Studio, XCIX, 1930, p.430.
[15] Rothenstein, W., 'The Decoration of Buildings' Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Vol. 38, No.7 (1931), pp. 199 – 212 at 207. [The murals were only unveiled in the winter of 1931 so it is fair to assert that visit numbers increased].

London school volunteered for his school to receive a cycle of murals illustrating Aesop's fables. The origins of the scheme are described in the Brockley School's magazine The Raven (April 1936):

> No one mind conceived the project. A former colleague of our Headmaster, an admirer of Mahoney's work at Morley College, must accept a share of parenthood. An Old Brockleian, who had his flat muralled by a contemporary of Mr.Mahoney, and whose walls were seen by Sir William Rothenstein, was equally responsible. And, thirdly, the artist who beautified his walls, and who camped four years ago with one of our Staff, made the concrete suggestion, which our Headmaster acted upon at once. There were thus several minds with but a single thought, and we reap its rich harvest.[16]

The idea of decorating a school with murals made evident sense, just as it had at Morley College. As Sir Patrick Geddes had noted in 1889 'no minds can be developed in the stupefying blankness of whitewashed schoolrooms.'[17] Geddes' comment reflected the strong continental tradition of placing murals in schools, universities and museums. He cited with approval the way in which 'the new Sorbonne is this year being frescoed by the greatest masters; while more magnificent still, the Paris Municipal Council proposes to begin the thorough mural decoration of the Paris schools.'[18] It was widely held that murals executed in places that served educational and welfare purposes benefited the mind of those who entered the buildings.

The headmaster of Brockley offered five recessed panels with arched heads. The painting scheme was originally to be restricted to these and shared between the scheme's supervisor Mahoney, who, following his exemplary work at Morley, had been appointed a tutor at the RCA, and a senior student Evelyn Dunbar. However, the scope of the project expanded to include the

[16] The Raven, April 1936, cited in Brockley School Murals pamphlet by Ian Lowe, November 1975, n.p.
[17] Winifred Knights 1899 – 1947 held between 18th September – 16th October 1995, Fine Art Society Plc and Paul Liss held in association with the British School at Rome p.256.
[18] Willsdon, C.A.P., Mural Painting in Britain 1840 – 1940: Image and Meaning (2000), p. 255.

front and underside of the gallery and two younger RCA students joined the team to complete their own panels: Violet Martin and Mildred Eldridge.[19]

Charles Mahoney completed two of the five recessed panels, illustrating 'Joy and Sorrow' and 'Fortune and the Boy' (fig.4.3). In 'Fortune and the Boy', Mahoney raises the horizon line to tilt the image forward towards the viewer. Mahoney has divided the mural into three sections. At the forefront of the picture nearest to the viewer, a boy who has fallen asleep by an open well is protected from falling by the lady of Fortune at his side. In the second scene in the centre of the mural the boy's mother hurries down to where her son lies. And the third scene depicts the countryside surrounding the garden, a land of plenty. The success of this mural panel at Brockley lies in Mahoney's meticulous depiction of botanical detail, a quality typical of inter-war murals, the equivalent of illustrations on a large scale. Indeed, the three separate areas of the mural are pulled together by the meticulously executed sunflowers towering over the lady of fortune at the left-hand side of the panel, a flower which Mahoney used repeatedly in murals and paintings throughout his career. In Mahoney's garden scene of 'Fortune and the Boy' the combination of allegorical figures and botanical detail creates a visionary world reminiscent of Stanley Spencer's.

Evelyn Dunbar (fig.4.4) undertook the painting of one of the recessed panels illustrating the fable entitled 'The Country Girl and the Pail of Milk' (fig.4.5). The high horizon line and the tree in the centre of the mural panel, whose branches extend to the circumference of the arch, help pull the image forward towards the viewer. The tree is simultaneously in the middle ground at its base and close to the foreground plane where its branches touch the real wall of the schoolroom. This device in effect flattens the apparent depth between the girl at the front of the image and the lane winding away over the hill in the distance. Dunbar's ability to manipulate space offers a

[19] In 1950 Mildred Eldridge painted a major but now unremembered mural cycle 'The Dance of Life' in hospital in Oswestry.

different approach to mural painting than Mahoney in 'Fortune and the Boy'. In a 1939 article for the Studio the author discusses Dunbar's relationship to Mahoney:

> Of the three collaborators she approximates most closely in both spirit and method to Mr.Mahoney, though this is not to suggest that her own artistic personality has been submerged. Far from it. Between these two artists there is a clear affinity of vision, and Mr. Mahoney's influence upon her, has, I should judge, had an inspiring rather than a repressive effect, inasmuch as it has revealed to her certain elements latent in herself which, without it, she might have taken long to discover. In the work of both them is manifest that grand austerity linked with an intense devotion to Nature which has been the inspiration of so large a part of our greatest poetry, but which, curiously enough, is rarely met with in our painting.[20]

Dunbar's work owes a debt of influence to Mahoney, but it also demonstrates her ability to adapt methods and techniques to suit her own needs. The 'country girl' who stands stooping over her spilt pail of milk just inside the garden gate is dressed at odds with her countryside surroundings. She has a loose blue overall over her floral dress and on her feet she is wearing a pair of laced up ballet shoes, a strange choice of footwear considering her surroundings and the work in which she is engaged. Around the girl Dunbar displays her botanical knowledge by the depiction of an array of flora. Outside the garden the viewer's eye is drawn up the road which runs away in the distance and beyond the hill. A short distance away from the Country Girl, stand a group of two men and one woman. Dressed in heavy tweeds, they stand in the middle of the picture, with the girl in front of them and the ploughed field to their right and on their left a field of roaming chickens. Although her style is comparatively academic and orthodox, there are hints of other influences, notably the Post Impressionists promoted by Roger Fry. The shed in the field, for example, seems to acknowledge a debt to Cézanne or early Cubism in the handling of volumes.

[20] Studio, Volume 117, February 1939, pp. 145 – 149 at p.149.

Dunbar also illustrated a number of other fables on the spandrels under the Gallery (fig.4.6 a,b,c,d). These were some of the most awkward spaces to fill and it is evident that Mahoney must have respected her talent to give her the responsibility, although still only a senior student at the RCA. The spandrels depict an 'Aesop world' of birds, animals and insects and the domestic world of tea tables and chess boards. Dunbar has successfully harnessed all the available space creating scenes that appear to have neither a narrative nor moral message. She also executed a large mural on the front wall of the Gallery showing Brockley School itself viewed from afar (fig.4.7). On a hot day Dunbar climbed a watertower to get the elevated viewpoint she needed and made an elaborate cartoon, 15ft long, bought by Rothenstein for the Carlisle City Art Gallery. Dunbar's view of the school itself amidst its setting at Hilly Fields, with its schoolboys going home after school, their kites stuck in bushes and their heads seen over railings, glimpsed through a hedge of wild plants and flowers, makes the association of nature, education and well-being explicit. The foreground is a botany lesson in itself, while the symbolic female figures of learning restore the sense of otherworldliness.

The mural panel executed by Mildred Eldridge at Brockley, 'Birdcatcher and the Skylark. The Traveller and the River. The Farmer and the Cranes' (fig.4.8) and that by Violet Martin 'The King and the Two Shepherds' (fig.4.9) share much in common with each other. Both pupils' works are heavily indebted to their tutor Charles Mahoney not only in their composition but also in their botanical detail. Both artists have used high horizon lines in order to avoid too rapid a recession into depth and positioned the main centre of activity at the forefront of the panel.

The article in The Raven already cited, provides important information on the techniques used at Brockley. The surface was prepared with an absorbent coating of oil and white lead, covered with non-absorbent zinc white. Ordinary oil colours were used, but their surplus oil was removed by blotting paper. The colour was then mixed with an emulsion of paraffin wax and turpentine to form a very fluid consistency. The paintings once completed were varnished with

beeswax. The paintings were undamaged by the war, although their colour has faded. In 1995 Hirst Conservation (Art Conservators and Historic Building Consultants) undertook conservation work on instruction by English Heritage. The conservation work shed light on the techniques used by the artists. The report states that all of the murals except one are painted in oils on plaster, the technique being to 'paint thinly in glazes over a squared up transferred underdrawing... The paint was oil mixed with paraffin wax and the first varnish itself was a beeswax varnish.'[21] The other mural was oil painted on marouflaged canvas. Marouflage is a procedure for attaching a painted canvas permanently to a wall by means of white lead in oil spread both over the plaster or panel and the back of the canvas. The technique became dominant in Britain after Lord Leighton's demonstration of the modern French version of it at the Royal Exchange in 1895.[22]

This helps to position the Brockley School murals at the centre of a contemporary debate. In essence, the marouflage technique was regarded as inferior to painting on plaster. As a contributor to the third volume of the Papers of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera noted: 'Merely to try to solve the difficulty by painting on canvas in his studio and then offering up the decoration stretched on a frame, or by fixing it to the wall with white lead is to shirk the problem. If the architecture is to be governed by the law of functionalism so must the decoration. The decoration therefore must of necessity be done on the wall in situ and be painted directly either into the plaster or on to it.'[23] The date of this article is not stated but it must have been written between 1925 and 1936 as the inter-war mural revival gathered pace. Stanley Spencer's work at Burghclere, even more than the RCA group at Brockley, used a variety of techniques quite at odds with any insistence on direct application to the wall. Spencer used oil on canvas, sometimes marouflaged and sometimes on stretchers. Yet he had taken the trouble to take

[21] Hirst Conservators Report on the conservation works carried out to the murals in the Assembly Hall, Hillyfields/ Prendergast School, Brockley, London, SE4, August 1995, n.p.
[22] Papers of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera Second Volume 1907 – 1924. Edited by John D.Batten, p. 74.
[23] Papers of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera Third Volume 1925 – 1935. Edited by M.Sargant – Florence, p.122.

lessons from Mary Sargant-Florence, who was at the centre of the mural revival was and the editor of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera's publications. Sargant-Florence, in her turn was not an unbending purist. In 1914 she had used the marouflage technique herself, contributing a tempera on canvas panel to the decoration of Chelsea Town Hall.

The debate surrounding wall decoration included not only a consideration of support but also medium. Just as marouflage was frowned on by some as a hybrid technique, so the oil medium was deemed inferior to tempera and other more traditional media. In executing the murals at Brockley by painting oil on plaster, Mahoney and his pupils' technique ran counter to the recommendations of the Society of Mural Decorators who stated in 1936, the same year the Brockley Murals were completed: 'Oil, it is true, is the most convenient medium so far placed at the disposal of the painter. After all there is nothing sacrosanct in oil. It may be the best, as it certainly is, the most convenient medium yet discovered, but it has only a relatively short history of five centuries, while some of the loveliest works of ancient art both in the West and East were done before oil was generally known, and these works have retained their freshness and brilliance undiminished.'[24]

The Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera felt that modern structures had given a traditional medium new possibilities for expression, as appropriate to appear 'in the light soaring constructions of steel, concrete and glass which we erect to-day, as on the gigantic heavy walls of earlier architecture.'[25] The Society's membership was made up of a group of purists who sought to encourage wall decoration by 'all known media other than oil by practical tests founded

[24] Papers of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera Third Volume 1925-1935. Edited by M.Sargant – Florence. 1936, p.123.

[25] Papers of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera, Third Volume 1925-1935. Edited by M.Sargant Florence. 1936, Preface. Hans Feibusch himself a well known mural painter of churches, houses and public buildings in Britain in an article entitled 'Mural Painting' in the Studio for March 1948 explains how this interest in one of the oldest forms of art should not be seen as a revival but as 'the struggle for a new integration between Architecture, Sculpture and Painting'. Feibusch goes on to explain how the artist

on intimate knowledge of the raw materials.'[26] Although Dunbar and Mahoney were not members of the Society, in taking on the challenge at Brockley they too were adapting an old technique to a new situation. And it is fair to say that the generally good condition of their murals as reported by the art conservators exactly sixty years after they were completed, demonstrates the oil medium's longevity. The Brockley School murals have stood the test of time. The same cannot be said for much work carried out by members of the Society of Mural Decorators and Tempera Painting. The frescoes completed by Mary Sargant-Florence in 1910 after seven years of labour at the Old School, Oakham, suffered from deterioration within years of completion.

The Brockley School murals were unveiled on February 21st 1936 in the presence of the President of the Board of Education (Mr.Oliver Stanley) and Sir William Rothenstein, A.R.C.A. The Brockley mural cycle was considered an unmitigated success and in an article entitled 'Scope for Young Artists' printed in the Studio in March 1936 John Rothenstein reflected that 'The general plan, in addition to being remarkably harmonious, coherent and closely knit is highly ingenious.'[27] Percy Horton in the Studio's July edition for 1939 states that the decorations at Brockley School 'set a high standard for murals in schools.'[28]

The outbreak of World War Two in 1939, soon after the completion of the Brockley murals, prevented Dunbar from participating in further mural commissions during this period. Dunbar's attention now turned to the recording of war on the Home Front and her commission as an Officially Commissioned War Artist. Following her activities as a war artist, Dunbar taught at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford. Twenty-two years after Dunbar's mural work at Brockley, in 1958, Dunbar started work on two mural panels for Bletchley Park Training College in

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must 'develop his feelings for the relationship between wall and room, to learn to make one the echo of the other'.

[26] Papers of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera Third Volume 1925 – 1935. Edited by M.Sargant – Florence. 1936, p.139.

[27] Studio, Volume 117, March 1936, pp. 145 – 149 at p.149.

[28] Studio, Volume 118, July 1939, p.6.

Buckinghamshire. Dunbar's work at Brockley and Bletchley gives us an important insight to her work as a muralist. Her work at Brockley is testimony to her skills as an artist and to Dunbar's need to develop her own ways and means of exploring the mural medium at the outset of her artistic career. Critics looking at Dunbar's mural work at Brockley have been quick to emphasise Charles Mahoney's influence upon her work instead of highlighting Dunbar's own ways and means of using the media. The murals at Bletchley provide the opportunity to show how Dunbar developed as a muralist in the post-war years.

In 1957 Evelyn Dunbar had been appointed artist in residence at Bletchley Park Training College, completing two mural panels for the library between 1958 and 1959. Bletchley Park Training College had opened to students in January 1948, the last of the 'Emergency Colleges' that the Government in 1944 had considered necessary to establish to deal with the demand for teachers after the war.

The first Principal of the College, who commissioned Evelyn Dunbar, Dora Cohen (1904-1989) had very explicit religious and moral values, believing teaching to be a spiritual vocation, a calling. She sought to produce women teachers of excellence who had received a broad and thorough education and who could provide a good education to the children they taught. Dora Cohen looked to art and architecture, music and drama as the pinnacle of civilised society and as important to an academic institution. 'Books and reading, language and literature, were at the heart of College life...Words and poetry, the beauties of the English language to be instilled first into the minds of teachers and then into the lives of pupils; the new generation who would take the world from the devastation and hostilities of wartime into an age of promise that was dawning.'[29]

[29] Forsaith, P., 'in my end is my beginning' Dora Cohen and the Bletchley Park Training College, The Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University, 2004, p. 8.

From the College's founding the theme of Alpha and Omega 'in my end is my beginning' became symbolic. T.S. Eliot's 'Four Quartets' published in 1944 encapsulated the mood of the post war period, both reflective of the loss caused by war and of future hopes:

'In my beginning
is my end...
What we call the
beginning is often
the end.
And to make an end
is to make a beginning.
The end is where we
Start from...
In my end is my
beginning.'

The College and its Principal, in looking to the future sought to surround its pupils with objects that inspired hope; they received gifts which included exhibits from the Festival of Britain, pictures and English furniture with which to furnish the rooms of the College. The library which stood at the centre of College life, created by Josephine Hodge the Vice-Principal, became a model example for other college libraries and in 1958 the library received two mural panels 'Alpha' and 'Omega', beginning and end, painted by Evelyn Dunbar. (Mural panels measure 40 x 26 inches and are oil on board.)

Evelyn Dunbar was appointed as artist in residence by Dora Cohen for a number of possible reasons. In the early 1950s Dunbar was a part-time lecturer at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford, not far from Bletchley and in 1951 Bletchley Park Training College became affiliated with the University Of Oxford School Of Education. And Dora Cohen's parents were Christian Scientists as were Evelyn Dunbar's. Both women were religious and this could also have been an

additional reason for appointing Dunbar. Cohen also shared with Dunbar a love of flowers and plants. Within the College itself flowers were everywhere, from the canteen to the library, outside in troughs and hanging baskets and in the two mural panels painted by Evelyn Dunbar.

The panels, through the reading of personal correspondence, appear to have taken around a year to complete. In a letter to Dora Cohen dated October 24th 1957 Dunbar writes 'the two all-important library panels...I feel that I must concentrate wholly on the two pictures now... The best news is that they are going on steadily; and equally (that's to say I keep them both going together) but they are a big job and quite a handful as it were. However, I hope to hand them over, all fresh and glowing, in good time to put into place for the "occasion". It may be that I shall need to do some things to them "in situ" in which case I would like to make my visit then... a very delightful thought. So please be patient with me till the work is done... I often think of you all with great affection, so please give everyone my love.'[30] By October 9th 1958 Dunbar had finished the panels and wrote to Dora Cohen explaining what she now hoped to do '(The pictures in the library must be attended to – finished and waxed) It will be so good to see you all again.'[31]

The panels titled 'Alpha' (fig.4.10) and 'Omega' (fig.4.11) respectively, owing to their bold composition and colours work well from across a room and importantly within the environment of a library. In 1966 Bletchley Park Training College moved from its original site to a rural site at Wheatley, near Oxford, and the panels are currently situated in the library at the Wheatley Campus of Oxford Brookes University. The mural panels now hang facing one another with the bookshelves built around them. Both panels demonstrate how Dunbar learnt to omit the naturalistic clutter of Brockley (1933-1936) and adopt a far more simplistic, decorative style, where the forms and colours have their own abstract power. The panels have much in common

[30] Letter from Evelyn Dunbar to Dora Cohen dated October 24th 1957, File on Evelyn Dunbar in the Dora Cohen Archive at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.
[31] Letter from Evelyn Dunbar to Dora Cohen dated October 9th 1958, File on Evelyn Dunbar in the Dora Cohen Archive at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.

with Dunbar's war work for example 'A Canning Demonstration' (fig.8.5) of 1944, the way she works the recession via bands of activity parallel to the picture plane. The panels also show the continuing influence of Charles Mahoney, Dunbar's tutor at Brockley. His painting 'The Garden' (fig.4.12) of 1950 is also simplified and uses the same sorts of decorative composition, in which he works the recession via bands of activity parallel to the picture plane. But whereas Mahoney is still adopting a realist presentation of floral details, Dunbar is working much more decoratively. The similarities between Dunbar's war work, Charles Mahoney's work of the 1950s and the panels for Bletchley Park Training College, are discussed in detail later.

The composition of the 'Alpha' and 'Omega' panels compare to Dunbar's monumental war work of 1945 entitled 'Land Girl and Bail Bull' (fig.8.14). In both works the foreground figures are placed right up against the picture plane confronting the viewer. These monumental, detached and uninvolved figures at the front of the composition perhaps owe a debt to Piero della Francesca. In 'Omega' the studious girl in blue in the left-hand foreground, dominates the front of the picture just as the land girl does in Dunbar's war painting. The girl is surrounded by plants of blue and red which show Dunbar's continuing inspiration drawn from gardens. Opposite her, and helping to frame the image, is a vibrant depiction of different types of flowers continuing up the right hand side of the picture. To the right of the girl reading stands a girl in a red jacket and blue skirt, the arrangement of the two girls show their heads almost meeting one another creating an arch shape which is echoed in the fruit tree arch towards the back of the image. The vibrancy of the colours used by Dunbar is both decorative and naturalistic. The use of colour is acutely observed; note how the figure in red and blue is midway between the figure in blue on the left and her blue surroundings and the red flowers on the right.

Behind the two girls in the foreground, two other girls stand in conversation, one facing the viewer the other turned away. Dunbar depicts both the learning side of the girls' attendance at the teacher training college and the friendships that they formed whilst training. Behind the girls a

family groups sits on a bench, representing the new generation they are going to teach. Dunbar places an archway of fruit trees behind the family group which creates a sense of depth drawing the viewers' interest further into the image. The archway and the man pruning up a ladder is an image that Charles Mahoney used in 'Autumn' (fig.4.13) of 1951 exhibited at the Society of Mural Painters. It seems likely that Dunbar was still in contact with Mahoney or at least saw this painting.

Throughout both their careers Charles Mahoney and Evelyn Dunbar continued to display their love of the garden and in both panels Dunbar illustrates the important part plants and flowers play in her work. In the left hand foreground of the 'Alpha' panel, a young boy stands holding a bugle. The static quality of the bugle boy, like the two foreground women in 'Omega', brings the Italian quatrrocento to mind. The bugle appears in the centre of the College's flag as do the colours red and blue seen throughout 'Omega' and in the boy's swimming trunks. The bugle boy is towered over by the plants behind him which act as a screen, separating him from the scene behind him. The flowers dominating the foreground appear larger than they actually are and dwarf the young boy's figure, pushing forward Dunbar's idea of being immersed in nature. In this respect it is tempting to speculate that she was aware of the German romantic tradition in painting, especially the work of Philipp Otto Runge (fig.4.14). The sprawling plants, their position at the very front of the panel, create a sense of distance to the scene glimpsed through their stems. A narrative is developing behind the boy on the beach, which involves a horse and a group of men attempting to fly a kite and around them men with fishing nets held high. Directly in front of this scene two women bathers stand in a pool of water and behind the central scene out in the sea, a circular group of three bathers stand.

The mural panels at Bletchley Park Training College were not however, the only works that Dunbar produced for Dora Cohen during the late 1950s. In the October 1958 correspondence between Dora Cohen and Evelyn Dunbar, two portraits are discussed 'I do hope you have felt

satisfied about the drawings. I would have liked to give you them in the circumstances, but I have a practical business manager who insists we should be businesslike.'[32] The letter is accompanied by a receipt from Evelyn Dunbar to Dora Cohen for 'Two Portrait drawings for £21'. And on January 7th 1960 Dunbar wrote to Dora Cohen:

'Yes, I must certainly inspect the panels, do one or two things, and varnish if they are ready for it... Your portrait – my little one of you that is to say – is developing, and I would love you to see it when done* if you want to. I was rather tentative about it as it was for your mother, but if it turns out well I'm sure she would have enjoyed it.
*I shall work on it.'[33]

The portrait Dunbar produced of Dora Cohen hangs at her home in Frinton-on-sea, now lived in by her niece.

Evelyn Dunbar also introduced Dora Cohen to a fellow artist John Ward RA who painted her portrait in 1958 for the College's tenth anniversary (fig. 4.15). Dunbar wrote to Cohen 'I am all agog to see the Ward picture...it's funny that you should choose two people in the throes of house removal to do your paintings for you – well at least they shouldn't be dull and complacent.'[34] The Ward portrait is a realistic and sensitive portrayal of Dora Cohen, a woman of vision and principles who sought the best ways of providing teacher training to women. A woman who remained wedded to her role as an educationalist throughout her life and who dedicated her life to others.

[32] Letter from Evelyn Dunbar to Dora Cohen dated October 9th 1958, File on Evelyn Dunbar in the Dora Cohen Archive at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.
[33] Letter from Evelyn Dunbar to Dora Cohen dated January 7th 1960, File on Evelyn Dunbar in the Dora Cohen Archive at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.
[34] Letter from Evelyn Dunbar to Dora Cohen dated October 24th 1957, File on Evelyn Dunbar in the Dora Cohen Archive at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.

The mural panels painted at Bletchley Park Training College were to be the last mural works Dunbar produced. In May 1960, at the relatively young age of 54, she died whilst out walking with her husband near her home in Kent. Dr. Roger Folley, Dunbar's husband wrote to Dora Cohen 'It was very kind of you to write in sympathy and support last week, and to speak of Evelyn in such generous terms...I have had masses(?) of letters, all saying how Evelyn helped them always to be their better selves, and I must try to keep on this tradition...There is a Cohen portrait, and I would like you to see it...Evelyn was working on it latterly and signed it, so she must have thought it was good. It is not so flamboyant as the Ward, being quiet or low in tone, but it has more depth and a greater sense of repose.'[35] Then on June 26th 1960 Dr. Folley wrote again to Dora Cohen 'The Mural Painters Society has asked to show some work of Evelyn's in the forthcoming show, and I am having the oil sketches for the Bletchley panels mounted (fig.4.16 and 4.17). They will look lovely, I think.'[36] The preparatory oil sketches for the panels are now held on the Wheatley Campus at Oxford Brookes University and are very interesting examples of how Dunbar worked to produce the two panels. The preliminary oil sketches depict children being taught within the indoor and outdoor environment. It seems likely that Dunbar observed some of the teachers from Bletchley Park Training College and their pupils in order to gain a sense of the College and its ethos and thereby execute the two panels. The sketches are mounted in two frames, four images in one frame and six images in the other. The subject matter does not relate to the panels directly themselves, but the colours red and blue are used effectively in the sketches as they are in the panels. The panels were exhibited at the last Society of Mural Painters Exhibition in 1960 held at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Evelyn Dunbar's death came as a particular loss to her friend John Ward, in a letter to Dora Cohen he expresses his deep sympathy at Dunbar's death and his special regard for her as

[35] Letter from Roger Folley to Dora Cohen dated May 31st 1960, File on Evelyn Dunbar in the Dora Cohen archive at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.
[36] Letter from Roger Folley to Dora Cohen dated June 26th 1960, File on Evelyn Dunbar in the Dora Cohen archive at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.

both artist and friend. 'How very kind of you to write about Evelyn. I feel that I ought to have written to you but I thought you might have seen the notice and the obituaries in the 'Times'. It is sad beyond belief, sad because it is impossible to realize fully since she came and went at odd times – some times we would do things together. She was out walking with Roger one evening after a very peaceful day and he turned to speak to her and she had collapsed and died immediately. So like her to die without fuss. She had not been ill. I went to the funeral with Percy Horton but there was nothing of Evelyn there. We were very fortunate to have known her.'[37]

In one sense Dunbar was unlucky. Her skills as a mural painter both before and after the war did not receive enough support for her to realise her potential. At the time she was working on the Brockley School project the mural movement in Britain achieved real momentum. In 1935 Edward Wadsworth had produced work for the tea room in Mendelsohn and Chermayeff's De La Warr Pavilion at Bexhill-on-Sea. Dunbar's contemporaries Mary Adshead and Rex Whistler were both receiving plentiful commissions throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The launch of the Queen Mary in 1936 led to commissions for Wadsworth, Adshead, Stephen Bone and the Zinkeisen sisters. Adshead again, produced wall panels for the British Pavilion at the Paris International Exhibition in 1937. In 1939 the Tate Gallery devoted a special exhibition to photographs of modern mural painting produced over the last twenty years. Following this a new Society of Mural Painters was established including Mary Adshead, Edward Bawden, Vanessa Bell, Ivon Hitchens, John Minton, Graham Sutherland, Dame Ethel Walker, Duncan Grant and Hans Feibusch. Both Mahoney and Dunbar were also members. The war intervened before the Society could hold its first exhibition and it was not until 1950 that it did so. It received patronage for the Festival of Britain in 1951 but Dunbar does not appear to have benefited. Dunbar's preliminary oil sketches for Bletchley were the only works by her shown at the Society of Mural Painters exhibition in 1960, and these were shown posthumously. With the exception of the 1958

[37] Letter from John Ward to Dora Cohen dated June 2nd 1960, File on Evelyn Dunbar in the Dora Cohen archive at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.

Bletchley Park Training College commission she made no further contribution to what was a genuine flourishing of wall decoration before and after the war.

Chapter Five:

The illustration work of Evelyn Dunbar, Ethel Gabain and Evelyn Gibbs and an appreciation of Gibbs' prints 1927-1936.

'Book illustration is no longer a pretty complement (and compliment) to an author's work. It is itself a branch of aesthetics, which, in a wide sense, introduces the literary as well as the visual appeal. No longer does an illustrator sit down to draw a place or a person, or compose a set scene. He tries by his line or his colour, aided by the hundred modern devices of reproduction, to present the Absolute, or at least the almost timeless essence of what inspired the author...We may well, with to-day's advance in book-craft, be only at the beginning of an entirely new theory and practice in illustration – a new philosophy of the graphic art.'[1]

In 1931 The Studio published Modern Book – Illustrated in Great Britain and America which sought to raise the profile of book illustration and its practitioners, some of the most well-known and respected artists of the period. 'What an illustrated book ought to be, in the abstract, is a matter of opinion which would lead to endless discussion. What it has been – that is, a great number of different things – is easily perceived from history, which shows two or three main principles perpetually in conflict. What it is to-day is also, to a very great extent, demonstrable with the aid of history. The idea of illustration has changed as society has changed.'[2]

This chapter serves to discuss the illustration work that Evelyn Dunbar, Ethel Gabain and Evelyn Gibbs produced and the prints Gibbs produced between 1927 and 1936. Initially the idea was to discuss the commissions that each artist received to illustrate books. However, the illustrative talents of Evelyn Dunbar were not restricted to the printed book alone and with this in mind this chapter also includes any illustrative work that amplifies the case for these three women's inclusion within the art world of the first half of the twentieth century. Gabain and Gibbs' illustrative output is overshadowed in volume by Dunbar's work which forms a large part of her artistic production whilst their illustrative work is a small addition to their overall

[1] Modern Book – Illustrated in Great Britain and America, published by the Studio (1931), p.79.
[2] Modern Book – Illustrated in Great Britain and America, published by the Studio (1931), p.12.

production. As the largest body of illustrative work was produced by Dunbar, the chapter is heavily weighted towards a greater understanding of the work she produced. The chapter also includes an account of the individual prints Gibbs produced in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The illustrative work that Dunbar, Gabain and Gibbs produced has been neglected in part due to the emphasis placed on wood engraving as an illustrative medium at this time. David Bland's A History of Book Illustration: The Illuminated Manuscript and the Printed Book (1958) and Brigid Peppin and Lucy Micklethwait's Dictionary of British Book Illustrators: the 20th Century (1983) are weighted heavily towards the consideration of the wood engraving tradition and the appraisal of its practitioners. This emphasis on wood engraving has occurred because in the first decades of the twentieth century the private presses dominated the production of illustrated books, with the chief medium of illustration being wood engraving. In 1920 the Society of Wood-Engravers was formed, whose original members included Lucien Pissarro, Gordon Craig, Eric Gill, Robert Gibbings and John Nash. Eric Gill and Noel Rooke, teachers of book illustration at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, were chiefly responsible for the revival of wood engraving. In 1924 the foremost private press in the country, the Golden Cockerel Press was taken over by Robert Gibbings, an enthusiastic wood engraver, which led to a notable growth in books being illustrated by this method. Eric Gill's three best books were done by wood engraving for the Golden Cockerel Press, Troilus and Criseyde (1927), Canterbury Tales (1929) and the Four Gospels (1931). Other notable publications of the period include work by Agnes Miller-Parker who illustrated The Fables of Aesop in 1931 and Gertrude Hermes and Blair Hughes-Stanton's joint contribution The Pilgrim's Progress in 1928, considered 'one of the landmarks of the period', which brought the attention of the ordinary publisher to the appeal of the wood-block.[3] One new feature of this revival in wood – engraving was the high proportion of

[3] Bland, D., A History of Book Illustration: The Illuminated Manuscript and the Printed Book (1958), p.375.

women engravers, among them Claire Leighton. General publishers also began to commission wood engravings: Ethelbert White illustrated Richard Jeffries Story of My Heart (1923), Douglas Percy Bliss illustrated Samuel Johnson's Rasselas (1926) and Eric Ravilious illustrated John Armstrong's Desert (1926) by this method.

However, by no means all the book illustration of this period was wood engraved. The economic depression of the 1930s led to the closure of many private presses which had greatly helped to raise the standard of British book design. Apart from the Golden Cockerel Press which continued and survived the Second World War, almost all the illustrated books now came from commercial publishers. The Second World War, which cut short the lives of some of Britain's best known illustrators including Eric Ravilious and Rex Whistler, also had a dramatic effect on the publication of illustrated books.[4] British publishers imposed strict economy rules on themselves in order to save paper, making it difficult although not impossible to produce illustrated books to a high standard both during and immediately after the war.

The literature on the illustrated book does however give women illustrators a place alongside their male contemporaries, unlike many areas of artistic production. Indeed, women illustrators were well regarded and admired during their day. Two prominent women muralists, Mary Adshead and Anna Zinkeisen, achieved critical success through their work as illustrators. Anna Zinkeisen is known best for her society portraits, flower paintings, murals (including commissions for the liners Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth) and sculpture, but she also designed book jackets and magazine covers. Her work including designs for Noel Stratfield's Party Frock (1946) are mostly done in black and white with shading in the manner of John

[4] Rex Whistler who undertook the murals for Tate's Refreshment Room also gained success as a prolific illustrator and designer. Gulliver's Travels published by Cresset Press in 1935 with full plates by Whistler in fine pen and ink with colour washes applied by hand, remains one of the great illustrated books of the twentieth century.

Austen and other 1930s illustrators. Mary Adshead, best known for her murals, produced illustrations for In the Beginning by Eva Farleigh (1926) and The Little Boy and his Horse (1936), with her husband Stephen Bone, which demonstrate her compositional skills and use of bold outlines. The link between mural painting and book illustration was not, of course, inevitable, but it is worth remarking that Adshead, Zinkeisen and Dunbar saw no problem in working on the largest and smallest scale as artists.

As we saw in Chapter Two, Dunbar had studied lettering and illustration when attending Chelsea School of Art for two days a week in 1927. Her studies at the Royal College of Art between 1929 and 1933 broadened her range of skills. As discussed in Chapter Four, Rothenstein regarded her not as an illustrator but as a gifted muralist. Her work at Brockley School demonstrated her abilities in that medium but, surprisingly, the Brockley commission led Dunbar not to more mural commissions but to book illustration.

During the three years spent completing the mural scheme at Brockley, Dunbar and Charles Mahoney developed a friendship owing to their shared interest in formal gardens and plants such as auriculars and old roses, interests that were considered unfashionable at the time. Dunbar and Mahoney's enthusiasm for plants was shared by a circle of friends which included Edward Bawden, Geoffrey Rhoades and John Nash: 'Excited by the collective rediscovery of the English landscape, they grounded their enterprise not only in their visual response, but also in the attainment of horticultural expertise and the cultivation of their own country gardens.'[5] In 1930 Edward Bawden, then embarking on a career in London as an artist and illustrator, wrote to Charles Mahoney, Percy Horton and Geoffrey Rhoades suggesting they start up an artists' colony in north-west Essex. Bawden took up residence at Brick House in the village of Great Bardfield.

[5] Postle, M., Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the present day, Tate Publishing, exhibition catalogue edited by Nicholas Alfrey, Stephen Daniels and Martin Postle, essay 'Country Gardens' by Martin Postle, p.16.

Bawden had gained his diploma in Book Illustration in 1925 and continued to study engraving and book binding at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. He worked regularly for the Curwen Press in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Today, Bawden is considered a designer and illustrator of great originality who experimented with a wide range of different techniques and methods of reproduction. In 1932 he illustrated Ambrose Heath's Good Food and in 1933 its successor More Good Food. Bawden also produced numerous black and white drawings, drawings for A Gardener's Diary (1937) and The Week-End Book (1939). Bawden, his wife and his close friend Eric Ravilious and his wife stayed at Brick House along with various artist friends who occasionally lodged there. Charles Mahoney stayed at Brick House throughout the 1930s developing his interest in horticulture. Bawden and Mahoney corresponded regularly. In a letter dated August 1934 Bawden writes: 'What is your gardening news? Are you in the same feverish enthusiasm – I feel worn and thin and enervated by constant excessive study of plant lists.'[6]

John Nash became a leading figure in this new generation of young British artists who turned to the country garden as a source of inspiration during the 1920s and 1930s. The two principal activities of Nash's life were drawing and wood engraving, making illustrations for no fewer than 26 books during his lifetime. Until the mid-1920s his drawings were mainly comical, but from around 1924 he began to engrave on wood his illustrations for Poisonous Plants published three years later. Plants became his chief preoccupation; his illustrations for R.Gathorne-Hardy's Wild Flowers in Britain (1938), English Garden Flowers (1948) and The Natural History of Selborne (1951) have become classics. In the 1920s Nash shared friendships with the horticulturalists Clarence Elliott and Anthony Hampton, and illustrated several of the latter's gardening books which he wrote under the pseudonym Jason Hill, including the 1933

[6] 'Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the present day', Tate Publishing, exhibition catalogue edited by Nicholas Alfrey, Stephen Daniels and Martin Postle (2004) ,p. 18

classic The Curious Gardener. Nash also contributed to horticultural magazines and became recognised as a skilled botanist.

Over the years Great Bardfield became the centre of an artistic community which included the painters Barnett Freedman and John Aldridge, the art critic John Rothenstein, and the textile designer Marian Straub. Barnett Freedman became a prominent member of this loosely knit group of students. Within the stimulating environment of this group of friends Freedman developed his abilities as a draughtsman, painter and designer. His book illustrations were his 'bread and butter work'. In 1927 he received his first commission to illustrate Lawrence Binyon's The Wonder Night. At the time of this commission he was still only in his mid twenties having only just left the Royal College of Art, where he had taken no specialised training in illustration. One of the first English artists to use lithography for book illustrations, Freedman's skills as a craftsman were ideally suited to the designing and illustrating of books. A skilful lithographer, he was influenced more by the nineteenth-century French trade lithographers than by the contemporary School of Paris. John Rothenstein considered Freedman 'the foremost artist in Britain using lithography as his method of illustration, drawing straight on the stone and working out his own series of stones for colour separation.'[7]

Evelyn Dunbar's involvement as a young artist in her early twenties within this community of artists, must have made her very receptive to the ideas and work in which this group of enthusiasts were involved. Indeed, her friendship with Mahoney and her closeness to this circle of friends would influence her artistic output for the rest of her life. They exchanged plant cuttings by post and sought each other's advice on the design of gardens. 'The correspondence between this circle is full of exchanges about the discovery, nurturing and

[7] Rothenstein, J., Modern English Painters, Vol II 'Nash to Bawden', (1952), p.270.

drawing of potential subjects.'[8] In a beautifully illustrated letter (fig.5.1) to Mahoney from Dunbar at her house the Cedars, Strood, Kent, September 1935, she writes 'Special vegetable garden, designed by Evelyn Dunbar for the young man who would be most likely to appreciate it. This is only a little part. There are limitless angles and prospects.'[9] The letters which Dunbar and Mahoney wrote to one another are testimony to the significance of horticulture among this loosely associated group of artists. The letters are peppered with detailed descriptions of the plants and often lovingly illustrated.[10]

In 1936 Dunbar illustrated her first book The Scots Weekend published by Routledge and similar in style to the Nonesuch Press Weekend Books. Dunbar's interest in publishing this book may have arisen out of her interest in her Scottish heritage, as her father was a Scotsman. In the foreword the editors praise Dunbar's 'witty and accomplished pencil decorations' which 'amusingly decorate' the text.[11] The editors acknowledge that this work originates from the Nonesuch Press The Week-End Book which 'has delighted the English – speaking world for these dozen years and is likely to go on doing so for another generation.'[12] 'Yet, rightly or wrongly, for good or ill, Scotland has some reputation as a holiday country, and it is only reasonable that it should have its own holiday book.'[13] Dunbar's sketches are used at the beginning of each new chapter. They display a sense of humour apparent in much of Dunbar's illustrative work, particularly in her illustration for the chapter 'Non – Human Natives' (fig.5.2). In a sketch that takes up less than a tenth of the page she combines in a witty grouping the Loch Ness monster with a Scotty dog perched on his back and a pair of grouse seated on his tail which

[8] Paul Liss in Charles Mahoney, 1903 – 1968, Fine Art Society, 1999, p. 59.
[9] Elizabeth Bulkeley in Charles Mahoney, 1903-1968, Fine Art Society, 1999, p.13.
[10] Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the present day, Tate Publishing, edited by Nicholas Alfrey, Stephen Daniels and Martin Postle, essay 'Country Gardens' by Martin Postle, p. 18.
[11] Carswell, D and C (eds.)., The Scots Weekend (1936), p. 11.
[12] Carswell, D and C (eds.)., The Scots Weekend (1936), p. 12.
[13] Carswell, D and C (eds.)., The Scots Weekend (1936), p. 12.

has sprouted leaves and the emblematic thistle. Her work in this book displays a feeling for composition and the ability to utilise a small area which amply demonstrate her talents as an illustrator.

In the same year as the publication of The Scots Week-End and the unveiling of Dunbar's murals at Brockley School an article appeared in Signature for November 1936: 'A Note on the Illustration to Wuthering Heights' by Kenneth Clark. Three artists' work are illustrated: Graham Sutherland, Madeline Anderson and Evelyn Dunbar (fig 5.3). Clark praises the work of Sutherland who produced 'the most distinguished drawing' and Anderson who executed 'a most direct and sympathetic rendering of the text'. However, Dunbar's work, an artist Clark would later commission in the Second World War as an Officially Commissioned War Artist, comes in for criticism:

> Of Miss Dunbar's drawing I cannot write with the same enthusiasm. It is done with taste and skill, but it lacks Miss Anderson's emotional impulse. In consequence the design is stiff. It gives the impression of having been put together on a receipt once taught in the Slade School, a good receipt, but an unfortunate one in this instance, because the drawing's best quality is a certain naïveté, a frozen simplicity appropriate to the subject, and this naïveté is contradicted by the very artificial devices of the gravestones. The artist has evidently wished to give these accessories something of the symbolic force often achieved by Mr. Stanley Spencer, but to my feeling she has not quite succeeded in doing so, and the accumulation of wreaths lacks significance both as design and literature. But I am criticising Miss Dunbar's drawing by severe standards. Compared to those in the average illustrated edition of an English classic it is the work of a thoughtful and genuine artist.[14]

[14] Clark, K., 'A note on the illustration to 'Wuthering Heights', Signature, 4, Nov 1936, pp. 12 – 15, p.15.

The stiffness of design which Clark refers to in Dunbar's illustration is evident in both the murals she painted for Brockley School, completed in the same year as this illustration, and in her paintings of Land Girls during World War Two under commission from the WAAC. Dunbar's figures have a 'frozen' quality which Clark highlights, they are often in poses reminiscent of Spencer's soldiers at Sandham Memorial Chapel, their bodies have an angular, often uncomfortable, contorted feel to them. But what distinguishes the Brockley Murals and the Wuthering Heights illustration is an uncomfortable juxtaposition of 'naïve' simplicity and an abundance of naturalistic detail. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Eight, the WAAC work, in contrast, is more successful by virtue of its relative reduction of detail, simplifying the resulting image.

In John Rothenstein's notes on Dunbar held at the Tate Gallery's Archive, he records that she read the Brontes' novels, showing that Dunbar was interested in their work, but no further connection has yet been found between Dunbar and Wuthering Heights, no commission to illustrate the book arose out of this piece or at any other time in her career. It seems that Signature commissioned these three artists to depict a scene and then asked Kenneth Clark to discuss the work produced. His criticism seems to have had an impact on Dunbar, possibly a negative one. The illustrative work that Dunbar produced following Clark's remarks is on a smaller scale and uses a pared-down graphic style. Once Dunbar received hostile criticism she retreated to doing small scale illustrations which were less emotive.

The criticism that Dunbar received from Kenneth Clark did not deter her from publishing in co-authorship with Charles Mahoney Gardener's Choice in 1937. Dunbar and Mahoney, with their shared love of the garden and in recognition of the joy and pleasure it brought to them, worked together on the text and illustrations for the book. Their horticultural expertise was honed by visits to Kew Gardens, the Royal Horticultural Society shows at Vincent Square and their

constant exchange of plants and cuttings and regular correspondence. Their book was compiled at Dunbar's home in Kent. In a gesture that would have reinforced the communal ethos of Brick House, Edward Bawden agreed to write the preface but in the end failed to do so. Gardener's Choice was published by George Routledge and Son in London. The book is divided into three chapters, the first entitled 'Community of Plants', the second 'Plant Essays', and the third 'Planning a Garden'. Elizabeth Bulkeley, Mahoney's daughter believes that the text was written jointly.[15] Their words at the beginning of the 'Community of Plants' chapter perfectly express the co-authors' shared enthusiasm:

> In this book we present a small selection of plants which our practical knowledge of gardening and our personal outlook have led us to make. In addition to our natural pleasure in beautiful plants, and our experience in raising and cultivating them, we have gained a close intimacy through drawing and painting them. We have observed them as artists as well as gardeners, and have necessarily been made aware not only of the garden value of a plant and the intrinsic beauty of its flower, but of proportions and forms and contrasts, of the subtle relations of the leaf to bloom, or the plant to its neighbour. These observations have bred in us an animate point of view which is the inspiration of our experimental gardening and the basis of our writing.[16]

The book is heavily illustrated, with Mahoney illustrating the major part of the book and Dunbar executing only the vignettes at the end of chapters and sub-chapters.[17] The vignettes however, are a delightful and humorous addition to the book, they include a man and woman working on their vegetable garden, a man potting out plants, women chatting in their garden and a man asleep in a deck chair surrounded by his wheel barrow, watering can and baskets (fig. 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7). The response that the book received at the time of its publication must be seen as positive since it

[15] Elizabeth Bulkeley in Charles Mahoney 1903 – 1968 , 1999, p.13.
[16] Dunbar,E and Mahoney, C., Gardener's Choice (1937), p. 2.
[17] Letter received from Mahoney's daughter, Elizabeth Bulkeley on the 5th July 2004.

was chosen as one of 'Fifty Books for 1937' by the First Edition Club. It appears that the book was never re-published.

In the following year, 1938, Dunbar was commissioned by Country Life to design and illustrate A Gardener's Diary. Edward Bawden had designed and illustrated the 1937 edition. The illustrations demonstrate Dunbar's skill at clever design and her ability to contain in a small space a rich narrative. Looking at Dunbar's illustration in A Gardener's Diary for the month of April, the text is echoed in the illustration. The branches of the small shrub in the pot balanced on the right knee of the young lady spells out 'April' (fig.5.8). The birds in the nest, the daffodils and primroses in bloom, the cloud looming in the background (April showers) tell us that it is Spring a time of birth and growth in the garden and a time to plant out seeds for the summer. The diary allows Dunbar to communicate her interest as an artist-gardener and shows the influence that her mentor Charles Mahoney and his contemporaries had upon her work at this time. The subject matter of the illustrations used to depict the months in the Country Life diary are present in her large oil (1936) which hangs at the Agricultural College in Wye, entitled 'English Calendar' (60" x 60"), in which each month of the year is depicted (fig.5.9).[18] In the centre of the canvas, which sits above a stairwell at Wye looking down on its viewers like Dunbar's murals at Brockley School, the anthropomorphic sun smiles out at the viewer. Dunbar has divided the canvas into twenty five squares, twelve squares depict the months of the year and the remaining squares are filled with sky. The months are read from left to right and each month is easily discernible owing to the depictions of seasonal horticultural produce, tulips in May, pinks in June and sunflowers in September and the clothes which each of the figures are wearing, a summer dress in May and a winter coat and scarf in December.

[18] Wye College now refer to this painting as 'The Gardener's Year' of the mid-1950s, however, in The Evening Standard 6th September 1943, the author describes Dunbar's 'English Calendar' which he dates to 1936 as 'a sort of chessboard in the squares of which little figures of gardeners and girls symbolized the months'. Percy Horton in Dunbar's obituary for The Times 19th May 1960 mentions 'The Seasons' at Wye College, which must be this painting.

'The English Calendar', in its stylised representation and simplicity of means can be usefully compared with the 'Country Girl and the Pail of Milk' mural painted at Brockley in the same period. Although not as large, and produced in a different medium, the painting at Wye undertakes something of the same function, introducing a decorative image into an educational context. But whereas at Brockley Dunbar produced a composition with a largely coherent space and naturalistic depiction of detail, at Wye she adopts a stylised presentation whose strength lies in its avoidance of excessive naturalism. This also allows her use of colour to register in a more evidently decorative, rather than descriptive way.

The outbreak of World War Two in 1939 and Dunbar's work as a war artist brought her into close contact with agriculture, resulting in the commission to illustrate A Book of Farmcraft published in 1942 by Longmans, Green and Co. Arthur G.Street in the foreword writes:

> Townspeople generally consider that farm-work requires little or no training, certainly no brains, and that any fool can do it quite adequately. The truth is that there is a right and a wrong way to perform the most simple task on every farm, and proficiency in the *right* way demands as much, and I think more, brains and application than do most town jobs...Here, then, at last, is a book that tells and shows by most apt illustrations the right way to the novice. Studying this book will not make the novice into a skilled farm – hand, but it will enable the newcomer to the farm quickly to become a real help instead of continuing as an expensive nuisance.[19]

Evelyn Dunbar's sketches are used to illustrate the text written by Michael Greenhill, Instructor in Agriculture at the Farm Institute, Sparsholt, Kent. Dunbar had been sent to the agriculture college by the War Artists Advisory Committee to record the training of Land Girls. Dunbar's work shows her skill as a draughtswoman, her ability to present simple sketches which illuminate

[19] Greenhill, M., A Book of Farmcraft (1942), foreword by Arthur G. Street.

the text and make the instructions given easier to follow. In Section II 'Cows, Milking and Dairy Work' Dunbar gives two illustrations one above a page entitled 'Milking – Right Position' and the other above a page entitled 'Milking – Wrong Position' (fig 5.10), both simple, easy to follow illustrations for the novices. The sketches are also useful comparisons to the commissioned war work which Dunbar was doing at this time. In A Book of Farmcraft we see the same Land Girls sketched in their oilskin aprons with stool and milking bucket in hand as we see worked up in oils in 'Milking Practice with Artificial Udders' (1940) (fig.8.2). And in Dunbar's war work 'Women's Land Army Dairy Training'(1940) we witness Land Girls rolling churns of milk, a task that Dunbar sketches in a sequence of events above the title 'Rolling a Churn' (fig.5.11) in A Book of Farmcraft. It seems likely that the sketches Dunbar produced under commission from the WAAC in order to execute her oil paintings were used as the basis for her illustration work in this farm manual for novices.

As with Gardener's Choice, Dunbar's work in agricultural illustration needs to be put into context. A Book of Farmcraft was well received not just because Land Girls and others had need of it but also because it maintained a development of the 1930s which saw the publication of a number of books explaining agriculture to the layman or woman. They include The Farming Year (1940) by J.A.Scott Watson, published by Longmans Green and Co, Round The Year on The Farm (1941) by A.G.Street the author of the foreword to A Book of Farmcraft, and The Seasons and the Farmer (1939) by F.Fraser Darling and illustrated by C.F. Tunnicliffe. Thomas Hennell a fellow Second World War artist and close friend of Edward Bawden, Eric Ravilious and Charles Mahoney, wrote and illustrated Change in the Farm in 1934 an 'extraordinarily informative description of the old and disappearing tools of husbandry'. John Rothenstein describes Hennell's

illustrations in the book as 'impressive: a simple drawing of some very ordinary object, the nuts of a wheel or a wagon for example, portrayed very precisely, rivet the attention.'[20]

Dunbar's work in A Book of Farmcraft is much simpler than one would normally expect from an illustrator, but given its requirement to be easy to understand, it had to be. The line drawings are purged of all unnecessary detail to become cartoon-like how-to-do-it illustrations. The practicality of this approach, with its stress on didactic clarity, demonstrates the demands of an educational context and how Dunbar could adapt her style accordingly.

Dunbar remained in close contact with colleagues at the agricultural college at Sparsholt after the war and in 1953 she illustrated A Farm Dictionary compiled by D.H. Chapman and published by Evans Brothers.[21] The Dictionary was intended as a simple reference book for those working in agriculture. The book is generously illustrated with simple sketches reminiscent of both A Book of Farmcraft (1942) and Gardener's Choice (1937).

Ethel Gabain and Evelyn Gibbs' illustrative work, like Dunbar's, also deserves to receive more interest. The small volume of illustrative work they produced has been pushed aside by their lithographic and educational work respectively. Like Dunbar they explored illustration on occasion, though never as their main source of income. Gabain's work was produced during the 1920s when her reputation as a lithographer was well established. Gibbs' work in illustration developed after the war.

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[20] Rothenstein, J., Modern English Painters, Vol III, Hennell to Hockney (1952) ,p.15.

[21] It appears that A Farm Dictionary was the last book that Dunbar illustrated, however, archival research has shown that Dunbar possibly wrote and illustrated The Everyday Book, Dean's Playhour Series no. 4. As yet no copy of this book has been found.

In 1923 Gabain illustrated Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre and in 1926 Anthony Trollope's The Warden. Both books are in the French tradition of the edition de luxe. The French made a speciality of the picture book, particularly the edition de luxe, and from the beginning of the twentieth century the most sumptuously illustrated books came from France.[22] As Lewis has observed 'French painters turn freely to etching and lithography as a means of expression; and the great contribution made by France to the art of the modern book has been the willingness of her finest painters to move so naturally into the realms of book illustration.'[23] The illustrated edition de luxe books, printed on hand-made paper, were often illustrated by the most illustrious of French contemporary painters. It is a testament to the high regard in which her work was held that Gabain was commissioned to produce illustrations for publications of this quality.

Jane Eyre (1923) was produced in a limited edition of 495 copies by the Parisian printer Leon Pichon for the Edition d'Art. Pichon was an editor, printer and type designer in Paris during the opening decades of the twentieth century. He would later serve on the director's committee of the journal Arts et Metiers Graphiques first published in 1927.[24] The journal drew its editors and contributors from the wealthy, well educated and sophisticated world that supported the production of editions de luxe. Gabain's dual French and British ancestry, coupled with her training in both Paris and London, made her an apt choice for this edition of Jane Eyre. The production of this volume was undertaken on the initiative of a group of distinguished French collectors who 'wished to prolong into the working days of peace the friendship and alliance born in an hour of tragedy' between Britain and France.[25] Charcoal sketches were used for the lithographs with their draped figures and textured effects of light and shade. In Jane Eyre, Gabain's statuesque figures in interior settings contrast markedly with her portrayal of wind

[22] Lewis, J., The 20th Century Book: Its Illustration and Design (1984), p.78.
[23] Ibid, p. 81.
[24] The journal published articles on Book and Printing History, Illustration, Bibliophily, Graphic Arts Techniques and Contemporary Graphic Design.
[25] 'Reviews' in The Studio, September 1924, p.238.

and sky in the exterior scenes (fig.5.12). Her illustrative work thus has a clear affinity with the written word. Gabain also deploys illustrative techniques reminiscent of Arthur Rackham. In the novel's proposal scene Gabain places the midsummer moon behind the two lovers who are entwined like a plant in the shape of the letter 'S'.[26] The book was well received. As The Studio commented in 1924 'It would have been an impertinence in an illustrator to embark on "decorative" flights at the expense of Miss Bronte. Miss Gabain has chosen the better way of realistic illustration for a realistic novelist, and has entered into the true spirit of the tale.'[27] The review went on to praise all those concerned in its making, describing it as 'a joy to the eye and hand' and one of the foremost illustrative works of a Bronte novel executed in the twentieth century.[28]

Gabain's illustrations for Anthony Trollope's The Warden published in 1926 by Elkin Mathews and Marrot Ltd demonstrates the regard her talents were held in following on from the success of Jane Eyre. The illustrations include an original lithograph and eight illustrations in facsimile. Gabain's original lithograph of 'The Warden' is a sympathetic depiction of Mr.Harding, Barchester Cathedral's Warden (fig.5.13). Mr.Harding stands at the forefront on the right, Gabain places his hands outside of the fine lined frame she has created, which places Mr.Harding in closer proximity to the viewer, in effect he steps out of the image's plane. Gabain pays particular attention to the overcoat and top hat he wears, a departure from her depictions of feminine subjects in domestic settings. Gabain places him in an exterior setting in front of Barchester Cathedral amidst the trees, whose shadows fall on the ground. Gabain's depiction of her subject in an exterior setting can be related to the work that she was doing in Italy in 1925 and

[26] Spence, M., 'Illustrating the Brontes', Art and Artists, no.236, May 1986, pp. 7 – 10, p.10.
[27] 'Reviews' in The Studio, September 1924, p.239.
[28] 'Reviews' in The Studio, September 1924, p.238. In the twentieth century Charlotte Bronte's novels were illustrated by some of the leading illustrators of the day including: Edmund Dulac (1905), Clare Leighton (1931), Edna Clarke Hall (1900-1902), Lynton Lamb (1955).

1926, having moved over there with her family. During this period in Italy, Gabain began to depict her exterior surroundings including 'An Italian Terrace' of 1926. Plate II 'His daughter stood sad and thoughtful by the empty fireplace' sees Gabain returning to her familiar depiction of a woman within an interior setting (fig 5.14). Gabain's skill as an illustrator, her ability to engage with the written word is seen to good effect in this image. The young girl's emotions are seen through her downcast eyes and the way she stands next to the hearth. This image also displays Gabain's ability to display light and shade, the way she creates large white areas in contrast to heavily shaded areas is deployed effectively in this image.

Evelyn Gibbs' training at the Royal College of Art and British School at Rome prepared her for illustration work but it was not to be a major part of her output. Gibbs' limited amount of illustration work, coming late in her career, has been obscured by her better known work as an art educationalist. Yet her training in print-making at the Royal College of Art and the British School at Rome would have prepared her for the production of illustrative engravings.

The Etching Revival in the last half of the nineteenth century gave impetus to original printmaking and commercial intaglio printers like Goulding in London, Delatre in Paris and Felsing in Berlin. The establishment of art colleges with printing facilities and tuition enabled a wider demographic of women to take up printmaking, though they tended largely to come from the professional middle and upper classes, who could afford the fees. From the 1880s women artists of international stature like Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot in France interested themselves in printmaking and in Germany Kathe Kollwitz made it her primary mode of expression. In England, more than in any other country, the early years of the twentieth century saw a surge in output of graphic art among women art students. Through the years of the etching boom, 1900-1930, successive generations specialised in etching at the Engraving School of the Royal College of Art under the guidance of first Frank Short and Constance Pott and later

Malcolm Osborne and Robert Austin. The Slade School produced more Modernist painters who also had a related interest in etching. The Central School with the classes of Noel Rooke and Leon Underwood's School had a bias toward wood engraving. Fewer women took up lithography. With the etching crash at the end of the 1920s the disappearance of a market for black and white prints encouraged the making of colour prints from wood blocks and particularly in linocut.

Evelyn Gibbs can be considered a representative example of the ways in which etching had developed as an area of creative practice which women artists could choose for a career. She studied under Malcolm Osborne at the Royal College of Art, won the Rome Scholarship for Engraving, and developed a strong and recognisable style. The quality of her work is unquestionable and it received recognition at the time with her election in 1929 to Associate membership of the RE (the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers), the most important society in Britain promoting engraving. Had the market for prints not disintegrated shortly after her election she might well have made print-making her livelihood. As it was, the Depression closed off this possibility and Gibbs relinquished print-making for teaching.[29] In what follows, a representative sample of her engravings is provided to show the development of her work as a print-maker from 1927 to 1936.

Evelyn Gibbs' 'Self – Portrait' of 1927 (fig. 5.15) was produced during Gibbs' time at the Royal College of Art (1926 – 1929). The self-portrait in drypoint, which has the immediacy of a drawing, is a highly detailed piece of work. The attention given to every strand of hair and the folds in Gibbs' shirt helps to show why in 1926 she gained a Travelling Scholarship and Royal Exhibition to the Royal College of Art.

[29] In January 1930 Gibbs had sent prints and drawings to the XXI Gallery, London, but no sales were made. In 1931 on her return home from Rome she exhibits at the XXI Gallery, but the Depression reduces sales.

Executed in the same year as 'Self Portrait', 1927, whilst in her second year at the RCA, 'The Adoration of the Shepherds'(fig 5.16), engraving, displays the compositional ability and technical skill that Gibbs demonstrates in her later works. The nativity scene is brought into a contemporary setting, rural England of the 1920s. At the front of the image a woman, with an oval face and feline eyes - facial features characteristic of Gibbs' women - sits with her newly born child on her lap. To the left hand side of the image, her husband stands looking over them, and to the right of the mother and child a group of three shepherds kneel to admire the child. Gibbs' attention to the figures in this image is matched by that taken to depict their surroundings. The open sided barn behind the figures and the countryside beyond is as much part of the image as the figures, in later works Gibbs' figures and surroundings become integral to one another. The style of this image evokes the simplicity of early Italian and German print-making and it is likely that she was aware of the exhibitions mounted at the British Museum in the 1920s by Campbell Dodgson and Arthur Hind on these early masters.[30]

'The Graveside'(fig 5.17), etching of 1928, demonstrates Gibbs' compositional ability. In the foreground a group of figures surround a grave. New life is signalled in the form of the baby and the stages of life are represented by the children and the adults. Death is represented by the grave the figures tend and the background of blank, stark tombstones which create a sense of loss in a space congested by graves. The boy and girl stoop over the grave as they attend to the flowers, the boy holds a watering can and the girl kneels arranging the tulips in a vase. The solemnity of the occasion is touchingly dealt with it, as is the notion of new life – the presence of

[30] Campbell Dodgson published Albercht Dürer: The Master of Engraving and Etching Medici Society, 1926, Flemish and Belgian Art Exhibition held at the RA in 1927 with an essay by Campbell Dodgson 'Guide to the woodcuts, drawings and engravings of Albercht Dürer', British Museum 1928. Arthur Hind published Early Italian Engraving in 1930 and produced the Catalogue of engravings by Italian and Flemish artists preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum in 1923.

a baby and the representation of Spring, the buds on the trees and the flower bulbs in the neighbouring plot.

In 'The Departure' (fig. 5.18) also of 1928 Gibbs depicts her figures again with large hands, which are markedly out of proportion. The dominant position of the hands in this image also draws attention to their large size, and the resulting dwarfing of the figures. Gibbs' ability to convey the emotions of her figures through the depiction of their body language is shown to powerful effect in this image. The composition of the image owes a debt to the Italian Primitives in its simplicity of form and the careful arrangement of the figures. To the right hand side of the image a man and woman stand their heads bowed in sadness, reminiscent of the family group in 'The Graveside'. The large oversized hands which appear in 'The Graveside' are more obvious here, particularly the female figure, her arms crossed in front of her. And the hand of the older male figure holding the younger male's hand as he walks away from the older couple, appear out of proportion to their bodies, only adding to the significance of their contact. In contrast to the sadness experienced by the older couple the young man is walking away from them confidently, his head held high, into a new life. The young man's head and shoulders are set in profile and against a blank expanse of sky which help to highlight his form in contrast to the couple who are set amongst a heavily detailed scene. The detail and consideration given by Gibbs to her figures is matched by the care taken in depicting the surroundings. The patchwork fields in the distance, the hill and the rocky ground are skilfully dealt with. The pathway in the foreground is given particularly close attention adding to the overall effect of the etching which demonstrates both Gibbs' ability to portray people and the landscapes which surround them.

'Girl Seated: Elisabeth Vellacott' (fig.5.19), etching, of 1928, is one of two etchings of Elisabeth Vellacott, a painting student one year above Gibbs at the Royal College of Art. The sitter is positioned in profile against a blank background facing away from the viewer,

emphasising Vellacott's features and pose. Gibbs' ability to produce meticulously detailed and true to life work is displayed to effect in this work which demonstrates her abilities as a draughtswoman, which at this time were being developed at the RCA.

'The Expulsion' (fig.5.20), an engraving of 1929, was produced during Gibbs' last year at the Royal College of Art. Gibbs' confident composition of the two figures and the surrounding landscape display her marked artistic ability and show why in 1929 she was awarded the Rome Scholarship in Engraving. Adam and Eve appear set amongst the landscape of Scotland, thistles growing at their feet. The positioning of their right hands across their chests and their left hands holding the others portray a sense of unity upon their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Both of the figures also have their eyes shut as if in deep concentration. In the 'Expulsion' Gibbs again gives equal attention to the detail of the figures and their surrounding landscape, the undulating hills and trees in bud are present in both this image and 'The Departure'. Again, the simplicity of early Italian art seems to be evoked in the composition and the treatment of the figures.

The stylisation of Gibbs' figures can be compared to the sitters recorded in her drawings. 'Fubelli, Italian Boy' (fig 5.21), graphite and sanguine pencil, of November 1930, demonstrates Gibbs' immersion within Italy during the years of her Rome Scholarship. Gibbs focuses her attention on the boy's facial features, the large almond eyes prominent in Gibbs' depictions of women at this time are also shown here. Indeed, the oval shaped head of the boy and his almond shaped eyes are facial characteristics which Gibbs uses throughout her career, particularly evident in her war work recording the process of Blood Infusion (fig.8.45). The attention that Gibbs pays to the boy's head alone, sketching his body loosely and in scant detail allows the viewer to fully absorb the boy's facial features.

'Morning' (fig. 5.22), an etching of January 1930, was the first piece of work Evelyn Gibbs did in Rome having received a Rome Scholarship the previous year and it was dedicated to her sister Molly. 'Morning' can perhaps be compared to the composition of 'The Departure'. It shows two figures and a child, the man setting off to work in the fields beyond their gate. As can be seen from this image, in Italy Gibbs begins to investigate the dramatic bony landscape of central Italy and the fresco paintings of trecento and quattrocento artists. The statuesque figures set against a brightly lit landscape may owe something to Gibbs' experience of Italian primitives.

'The Tratorria' (fig. 5.23), etching, of 1931, produced during Gibbs' final year at the British School in Rome illustrates how Italian culture and Italian landscape impacted upon her work and how the tuition Rome Scholars received developed their artistic ability. This image successfully marries the depiction of figures with their surroundings. The image is possibly the depiction of a tratorria beside a roadside that Gibbs came across on her travels through Italy. The travellers who occupy the benches around the table look tired from their travels; on the left-hand side of the image a couple rests their heads on their hands, the other travellers do not seem to engage with one another, their faces are expressionless. Gibbs depicts the women in heavily draped dresses and headscarves. The two women leaning against one another in front of a tree are the same figures which appear in a preparatory drawing entitled 'Two Women Resting' of the same year.

In the 'West Garden' (fig.5.24), an etching also of 1931, Gibbs perhaps attempts to embrace the inter-war Classicism adopted by artists in both Italy and Britain. In Italy artists of the Novecento movement, heeded the demand for a 'return to order', and sought to recapture the solidity of form found in Quattrocento Italian painting. The movement's work 'triumphed' with the first national showing of Fascist art at the Rome Quadriennale of 1931, which it seems possible Gibbs saw whilst in Rome. Mario Sironi's work of this period, which embraced

Classicism, depicts figures not dissimilar in build and features to those present in this work.[31] Sironi's figures often have large, oversized hands which also occur in much of Gibbs work of this period. Similarly, William Roberts (1895 – 1980) during the late 1920s and early 1930s began to move away from the limitations of rigid geometrics present in his early work and towards a more rounded Classicism. Roberts' 'Boat Pond' of 1927 has a plasticity and sculptural quality that Gibbs' work echoes.[32] By taking part in inter-war Classicism Gibbs may have been trying to be more of a Modernist. The awkward positioning of the figures and their large size in comparison to their surroundings give this work a quality unlike her other work of the period.

Gibbs produced four wood engravings between 1927 and 1936. 'The Chapel' of 1928, 'Repose' of 1928, 'The Startled Shepherds' of 1931 and 'Sheep Shearing' of 1936. 'The Chapel' (fig. 5.25), of 1928 is Gibbs' first known wood engraving of her time at the RCA and a confident and visually effective image. Gibbs' skilful handling of the wood engraving medium is evident in the highlighting of the Madonna and Child statue by the lit candles below. The most striking feature of the group participating in prayer is the large size of their hands, strikingly out of proportion to their bodies.

'The Startled Shepherds' (fig. 5.26) of 1931, is Gibbs' interpretation of a biblical scene comparable to her earlier work 'The Adoration of the Shepherds' of 1927. The shepherds are depicted staring into the brightly light night sky from underneath the blankets they hold above their heads. Compared to the deliberation and detail of the 1927 print, this image is much more expressive. The facial features are rendered very broadly and the linear hatching used to provide highlights is notable. Compared to the technical refinement possible with wood engravings this seems to be deliberately crude, as though Gibbs found in the medium an alternative to the

[31] Braun, E (ed.), Italian Art in the Twentieth Century, Painting and Sculpture 1900 – 1988 (1989), pp.173-180.
[32] Williams, A.G., William Roberts: An English Cubist (2004), p.82.

precision of her etchings. The fact that this was produced in an edition of three prints is also notetworthy, given that her etchings were produced in editions of fifty. It is possible that 'The Startled Shepherds' was intended to be experimental as Gibbs sought to diversify her practice in response to the collapse of the print market.

'Sheep Shearing' (fig. 5.27), a wood engraving of 1936, demonstrates Gibbs' confident use of the medium although she executed only four such prints between 1927 and 1936. The image is divided up into a series of smaller scenes. The wall around the sheep and the handlers creates an image within an image, while at the gate stands a young woman observing the activity within. To the right hand of the inner image three figures prepare the sheep for the dip and a man stands observing the activity. At the sheep dip a man stands dipping the sheep and to his right hand-side two men are removing the sheep. This print combines some of the experimental vigour of 'Startled Shepherds' with a more refined execution, notable especially in the foreground details at bottom right. The mannered pose of the farm-hand dipping the sheep, the abbreviated forms of the figures behind him and the relatively cursory treatment of the landscape background all show that Gibbs was attempting to produce an expressive style of wood engraving very different to the controlled execution associated with her older contemporaries Gwen Raverat (1885-1957), Clare Leighton (1898-1989) and Agnes Miller-Parker (1895-1980). 'Sheep Shearing' is the last wood engraving Gibbs' ever produced. In 1938 Gibbs produced a lithograph entitled 'Les Baux', the last work before the outbreak of war in 1939. Gibbs' did not return to etching until the 1960s and the work of this later period developed her interest in landscape. The work that Gibbs produced between 1927 and 1936 is an important grouping produced by a Rome Scholar which deserves to generate critical attention in the re-evaluation now occurring of works of art produced in this period. This appreciation of Gibbs' early work shows that her talents as a printmaker would have been well suited to illustration work. It is possible that the collapse of the print market in the 1930s removed this potential source of income and led to Gibbs' concentration on teaching.

It would not be until the 1950s that Gibbs' ventured into producing designs for publication. One of the earliest of these was the design for the dust jacket of I, Jacqueline (1957). The author was Hilda Lewis, one of Gibbs' friends in Nottingham, and the subject of one of her drawings. Gibbs' illustrated the front cover with a lady dressed in medieval dress, her hair up in an elaborate headdress (fig. 5.28). The oval face with its almond shaped eyes is reminiscent of both the people Gibbs' depicted in her early work whilst a Rome Scholar for example 'The Expulsion' of 1929 and in her later work for example 'Young Boy' 1962. In 1966 Gibbs produced the dust jacket and illustrations for Hilda Lewis' The Gentle Falcon published by the Oxford Children's Library.[33] Gibbs also did the illustration for Lewis' children's classic The Ship that Flew (1939).

In 1958 Gibbs produced the jacket cover for the 1958 edition of for her own art education book The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its Effect on Craft first published in 1934 (fig. 5.29). The image on the jacket cover, 'Memory Painting in 10 Minutes' was developed from a design produced by one of Gibbs' pupils Pamela Davis, aged 11. Davis' original image drawn on kitchen paper in brown chalk and painted with powder colour is reproduced in black and white as figure 29 in Gibbs' book. Gibbs adds large sweeps of blue and red colour that are absent in the original sketch, but otherwise reproduces the essence of Pamela Davis' painting. Even though the educational reforms with which Gibbs has been associated were becoming widely accepted in the 1950s, this dust jacket would still have appeared quite unconventional for an educational book. The crude drawing and relatively strident use of colour forcefully advertise the radical message of the book itself.

[33] The Gentle Falcon tells the story of Isabella of France, the princess who became the second wife of King Richard of England, told through the medium of her namesake Isabella Clinton her lady-in-waiting.

The illustrative work of Dunbar, Gabain and Gibbs is evidently a minor, and in Gibbs and Gabain's case a very minor, element of their work as artists. Yet it is worthwhile taking note of it, not merely to complete the record of their achievement but also to reveal the extent to which they were prepared to diversify their careers and take advantage of commercial opportunities. It helps build up a picture of the artist as entrepreneur, willing to explore working contexts rather different to those they are now known for.

Chapter Six:

Evelyn Gibbs and the Teaching of Art in Schools

The early decades of the twentieth century were an extremely exciting and innovative time for all those involved in art education. As an article in Teacher's World declared in 1935 'The movement that has got itself labelled "The New Art Teaching" sweeps through the land like rain after drought, or like the Black Death (your simile will depend on your personal experience and reaction).'[1] Evelyn Gibbs made a distinctive contribution to the teaching of art during this time of renewal, and her involvement in the art education establishment of the first half of the twentieth century is explored in this chapter. Gibbs' path into teaching and later as an art educationalist came about in part through economic necessity, following the collapse of the print market in the 1930s. Nonetheless, Gibbs' need to earn a living did not require her to make the radical contribution to art education that she did. To that extent, this chapter explores something more creative in Gibbs' approach than simply making ends meet.

The contribution that Gibbs made to Britain's art education system was both a reaction to the form of art education that had been devised in the nineteenth century and her experience as a student. In the Introduction to her 1934 publication The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft Gibbs launches her attack on the art education system:

> The old method of teaching was unimaginative, and being organized within narrow academic limits, stifled the child's natural creative impulse. The art class was like any lesson in which a certain number of rules and theories had to be learnt. The chief error

[1] Archibald Sanderson., 'I Will Try To Be Impartial ... But It Is Hard', Teacher's World, May 22nd 1935, p.281.

was the assumption that it was necessary to teach the child to "draw", i.e. mechanically to copy the appearance of objects. This was done by imposing a formula, a dull conventional abstract of what artists in the past have discovered about perspective and colour, and the rendering of light and shade. Geometrical shapes, such as skeleton cubes and prisms, had to be drawn scientifically and shaded with great neatness and care. Children were taught the construction of common objects, and as an exercise for testing their grasp of the rules and their capacity for taking pains, they copied these either singly or in groups. Objects such as teapots, buckets, and jugs were chosen, and because of the unimaginative approach to the work, they became dull and uninspiring to the children... Occasionally the class was allowed to illustrate a nursery rhyme or favourite poem or to make a Christmas card. Here, surely, was a chance to do something creative; but the children were by this time listless or in despair, because any creative urge they may have had was repressed. Moreover, the children were allowed references to books which were often unsuitable and set up false standards of excellence. Nor did the materials given for such work do anything to inspire enthusiasm, consisting as they did of inadequate pieces of paper, bad water-colours, spidery paintbrushes, unsympathetic pencils and the inevitable rubber.

This sort of thing could hardly be called art education. Nothing real was achieved. The child left school with his imagination, sense of colour, and feeling for pattern still undeveloped and, what is more important, with no understanding, interest, or appreciation in matters relating to art.

Most children to-day start life under conditions of environment calculated to stifle their native artistic sensibility... It is by developing the children's native taste, by bringing out their sense of beauty and delight in colour, and, more important still, by making them utilize their work in every possible way, that they will realize the relation of good design, and of art, to everyday life.[2]

Gibbs' criticism of the art education system asserts that the system as it stands is failing children, that measures must be introduced which will improve the situation. Gibbs acknowledges the problems that lie at the heart of art education in her introduction, and proposes solutions for these problems in the following chapters of her book. In doing so, she can be considered as part of a

[2] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools (London, 1934), pp.13-15.

more widespread group of art practitioners and thinkers who wanted to change the way children received their artistic education.

In the eighteenth century, Rousseau had revolutionised thinking on education by claiming that the natural tendencies of children should be encouraged, initiating the debate on the relationship between the child and art. The first writer to study in any great detail children's drawings was the Swiss artist and educator, Rudolphe Topffer, devoting two chapters to this interest in his 1848 Reflections and Remarks of a Genevan Painter. Two great nineteenth-century thinkers Ruskin and Baudelaire both advocated that genius involves the gift of seeing with childlike objectivity. Ruskin advocated that the artist needed to maintain a "condition of childhood" paralleling Baudelaire's thoughts on a "state of newness". At the turn of the century, publications, exhibitions and conferences were all devoted to child art. The first systematic study of children's untutored drawings was probably made by the art historian and critic Corroda Ricci in his L'Arte dei Bambini of 1897, after discovering children's graffiti under a bridge. The interest in child art remained anthropological, psychological or pedagogical in character, until Franz Cizek a Viennesse artist and teacher became interested in the idea that 'Child art is an art which only the child can produce'. In conversation with Wilhelm Viola, recorded in Viola's Book Child Art (1944), Cizek states his belief that 'I have liberated the child. Previous to me children were punished and scolded for scribbling and drawing. I have saved them from this treatment. I said to them: What you do is good. And I gave mankind something which until I came had been spurned.'[3] In 1897 Cizek had initiated 'Juvenile Art Classes' with the 'express aim of providing children with creative liberty and the chance to work from imagination.'[4] In a 1926 article in The Studio entitled 'Professor Cizek's Classes for Children in Vienna' by A.S.Levetus, Levetus cites the reform in the teaching of drawing and designing in Arts and Crafts schools in Vienna in 1897

[3] Viola, W., Child Art, (1944), p,34.
[4] Steveni,M., Art and Education (London, 1968), p.67.

which Cizek was instrumental in bringing about, 'Under his guidance the children instinctively are led to observe; he does not say "Draw this or that subject" but "set down what you see". And that this is life and movement, they conceive gradually for themselves.'[5]

The increasing interest in the 'condition of childhood' led in the 1890s to exhibitions of child art and studies of children's artistic development. In 1898 the exhibition *Das Kind als Kunstler* was held in Hamburg, and from this year on exhibitions of children's art appeared almost every year until 1914 in major European cultural centres.[6] In the first room of the 1908 Vienna Kunstschau (at which Oskar Kokoschka debuted) hung works from the children's art classes of Franz Cizek. In Cologne in 1919 the Dada exhibition hung child art alongside African art, the art of psychotics and that of Max Ernst and other Dadaists. Artists began to show an increasing interest in the work being carried out by Cizek and his followers. 'For the artists of the twentieth century, a serious interest in the art of children became as remarkably varied and complex from one artist to the next as it was pervasive.'[7] Many of the great artists of the twentieth century began to amass collections of child art, Kandinsky and Munter began collecting children's drawings together in 1908, an interest shared with those in their circle including Klee. Vasily Kandinsky neatly summarises this interest when he wrote in 1912 that 'The child is indifferent to practical meanings since he looks at everything with fresh eyes, and he still has the natural ability to absorb the thing as such... Without exception, in each child's drawing, the inner sound of the subject is revealed automatically.'[8] Kandinsky believed that adults, and in particular teachers, tried to force 'practical meaning' upon children, when in fact children's art offered the possibility of spiritual meaning from which we could all learn. The centre of the debate revolved

[5] Studio, No. 91, January 1926, p. 137.
[6] Malvern, S., 'The Ends of Innocence: modern art and modern children', Art History, vol.23, no.4, November 2000, p. 627.
[7] Steveni, M., Art and Education (London, 1968), p. 103.
[8] Kandinsky, V., cited in Steveni, M., Art and Education (London, 1968), p.88.

around the belief that the child is capable of its own form of expression, 'one that is just as meaningful in its own way as an adult form.'[9]

The increasing interest in child art was not restricted to continental Europe. Alfred Stieglitz organised four exhibitions of children's art at his 291 Gallery in New York from 1912 to 1916 and in 1917 and 1919 Roger Fry showed child art at the Omega Workshops in London. Marion Richardson, one of Britain's key proponents of Franz Cizek's aims, attended Roger Fry's 'Exhibition of Children's Drawings'. In Art and the Child Richardson comments 'Roger Fry had nothing but contempt for the drawing ordinarily taught in schools. It destroyed a child's faith in his own art and offered him a sterile skill in its place.'[10] Richardson also pays homage in her work to Professor Cizek whom she regarded as a 'great pioneer of enlightened art teaching.'[11] The work of Continental art educationalists at the beginning of the twentieth century thus began to gain support from their British counterparts in the late 1910s and 1920s, a delay of some twenty years in adopting new methods. Schools in Continental Europe were felt to be ahead of England's art education philsosphy.[12] However, there were a small contingent of art educationalists in Britain who followed the example set by their Continental cousins. This group of art educators amongst them Ebenzer Cooke, Rosalind Eccott, Marion Richardson, R.R. Tomlinson, Robin Tanner and Evelyn Gibbs, agreed with Cizek's beliefs that good art instruction stirred the creative powers of children by the encouragement of free drawing and imagination.[13] In Cizek's definitive text The Child as Artist (1944) he asserts that 'All children have something to express, and it is the effect on them and on their development that is important, and not the finished product.'[14] Cizek led the movement which aimed at freeing the creative spirit of the child. Much of his

[9] Steveni, M., Art and Education (London, 1968), p.56.
[10] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948), p. 31.
[11] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948), p.51.
[12] 'Evelyn Gibbs: Artist and Traveller', held between 25th February – 28th March 2002 held at University of Liverpool Art Gallery, p. 50.

theory is revealed indirectly in his advocacy of the Paper Cut as a medium of expression. The decorative qualities of this craft and its easy handling soon brought teachers to recognise its importance in art classes. In an interview of 1934 with the editor of Teacher's World Cizek comments 'Your English Art is too much tied to tradition. It is not free enough. The more culture, the less freedom. Shakespeare and the Greek tradition, and etc.., have dominated culture. We are afraid to try anything new, and we must free Youth from these chains.'[15]

Hundreds of British teachers visited Professor Cizek's Juvenile Art Classes in Vienna, but it was his exhibitions of children's art held in London in 1934 and 1935 which 'first attracted the attention of educationalists in this country and gave an added impetus to changing methods and outlook.'[16] These exhibitions prepared the ground for the change in methods used to teach children art but it wasn't until the Exhibition of Children's Drawings and Paintings at County Hall in 1938 that the majority of art teachers became convinced that the new methods were desirable.

One of the key proponents of the new methods of art teaching in Britain, Marion Richardson, began her career as an art educationalist during the 1920s. Her student days at Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts coincided with the teachings of its Head, Mr. Catterson Smith, who used the method of memory training at the turn of the century, producing a well known book in 1921 entitled Drawing from Memory and Mind Picturing. Marion Richardson became a disciple of Catterson Smith's methods. Catterson Smith taught children to rely on their visual powers, never beginning to draw until the student had established a clear image of the

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[13] Malvern, S., 'The Ends of Innocence: modern art and modern children', Art History, vol.23, no.4, November 2000, pp. 627 – 632 at 628.
[14] Steveni, M., Art and Education (London, 1968), p.54.
[15] 'Cizek at Home: An Interview with the Famous Austrian Teacher', Teacher's World, June 13th 1934, p. 397.
[16] Tomlinson R.R and Fitzmaurice Mills, J., The Growth of Child Art (1966),p.20.

subject. Richardson also became convinced that children produced their best artistic work when they produced vivid mental images rather than accurate copies, 'that they worked with much greater confidence and security when the inner eye directed them than when they were depending upon the vision of the physical eye', and that 'unless a child is expressing his own vision he is expressing nothing at all.'[17] Richardson adopted innovative ideas for art teaching following her first art teaching at a school in Dudley, Worcestershire, in the early 1920s. Richardson's writings led her to great critical acclaim and to a position in the London Day Training College in 1924 and subsequently her appointment as an Inspector of Schools in 1930. Richardson taught that 'children needed positive stimulation by the teacher before they could realize how to express their ideas.'[18] In Education Through Art Herbert Read explains the methods that Richardson was advocating, how 'Each teacher finds his individual solution to the problem and those who can spare time to visit the schools will be struck by the variety and flexibility of modern methods. One essential is established. The good art teacher will always take his children and their drawings completely seriously. Perhaps this counts for more than anything else and is the means of inducing the children to demand the very best of themselves,' rejecting the ready-made and second-hand which surrounds them.[19]

In the 1930s London schools began to embrace the "New Art Teaching" inspired by Marion Richardson and R.R. Tomlinson's work. As Teachers World commented in 1934, 'To-day there is a vigorous new growth in this country of the movement which aims at freeing the creative spirit of the child.'[20] Richardson praises art teachers: 'With renewed faith they have been the means of reviving spiritual values, and in doing so they have brought about a renaissance in

[17] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948), pp.19-59.
[18] Macdonald, S., The History and Philosophy of Art Education (1970), p. 350.
[19] Read, H., Education Through Art (1958), p. 234.
[20] Teacher's World, June 13th 1934, p. 397.

their schools.'[20] Looking back on these developments in 1966, Tomlinson and Fitzmaurice Mills wrote of how 'The need of the young child to express himself is paramount. If this desire, which is a perfectly natural one, is unnecessarily or unreasonably thwarted, the child quickly adopts aggressive or protective shields... The relationship of teacher and pupil should be one that will encourage the flowering of the child's imagination.'[21] Like Richardson, they were convinced that once liberated from false instruction in art a child's natural talent would blossom. Richardson, for her part, believed that a genuine understanding of art processes would result in a much more open-minded appreciation of art, especially modern art. In the Annual Report of the London County Council in 1936 Marion Richardson wrote 'There is no more certain way of understanding painting than by trying to paint sincerely. In the light of their own struggle with the artist's problem the boys and girls begin to understand pictures, fine pictures of the kind that are now bought by schools. They begin to be able to choose between the real and the sham because their own work, to themselves unmistakably sincere or otherwise, is giving them the touchstone.'[22]

Published posthumously in 1948 Marion Richardson's Art and the Child sought to broadcast her innovative ideas. In the introduction written by Kenneth Clark, he summarised her work as 'the story of a great reform in education.'[23] The publication of this work followed a series of hugely popular courses Marion Richardson gave to teachers on her modern methods of colour games, rag pictures and fairy flowers, all of which are fully described in her book. Richardson's work informs the reader that 'artists had already become aware of the vivid, expressive painting which children could produce if allowed to work in their own ways.'[24] She discouraged 'the shallow day – dream pictures into which children so easily subside' and encouraged children to

[20] Richardson, M. Art and the Child (1948), p.86.
[21] Tomlinson, R.R and Fitzmaurice Mills, J., The Growth of Child Art (1966), p. 29.
[22] Viola, W., Child Art, p.61.
[23] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948), p.7.
[24] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948), p.7.

paint an original and individual vision.[26] Clark saw Richardson as 'a teacher whose aim was the self-realisation of her pupils; and her success was due to the fact that she not only recognised the value of the child's vision, but contrived the most ingenious ways of projecting and focussing it.'[27] Clark goes on to state that it was 'Marion Richardson alone who recognised that this power of imaginative expression could be developed in almost every child as part of his education, and, thanks to her vision and tenacity, this discovery did not remain a mere experiment, an educational freak, but spread throughout this country, Canada and America.'[28] Richardson's work forms part of a body of thought on child art education that was moving away from the orthodox technique of children imitating adult conventional art and towards children producing their own original images free from the taint of both copying and artistic expectation. 'Let us teach him to discover all he can about materials, and make the very handling of them an interest and a delight. *And what is the use of it all?* I cannot find an answer to this, nor need we try. But the good of it? Yes. Anyone who will give children the spiritual freedom in which to paint will find in it a thing to be esteemed for its own sake, a thing that is outside and above all would-be workaday worthwhileness.'[29]

It is clear, therefore, that Britain was entering a period of great transition in art education between the wars. Various organisations were established which published articles on the improvements in teaching and also organised conferences on their proposed new methods. The revolution that took place in art teaching between 1930 – 1939 in Britain and Canada is primarily associated with methods that both Marion Richardson and R.R. Tomlinson (Inspectors of the London County Council) developed and which were embraced by contemporary teachers as 'New Art Teaching Methods'. Marion Richardson toured Canada in 1934 at the request of the Carnegie

[25] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948), p.7.
[26] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948), p.10.
[27] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948), p. 8.
[28] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948), p.7.

Trust, giving lectures illustrated by the work of English children. The publication of R.R.Tomlinson's Picture Making by Children (1934) brought about the dissemination of knowledge regarding the new methods of art teaching 'the first serious attempt to describe and adequately illustrate the new spirit in art teaching that is pervading the schools not only in this country, but throughout the world.'[30] Stuart MacDonald in The History and Philosophy of Art Education regards Tomlinson as a 'pioneer of intelligent and artistically illustrated books on child art.'[31] Yet despite the salience of Richardson and Tomlinson's names in retrospective histories of children's art education, contemporary journals and texts of the time remind us that there were many practitioners involved in art education reform. As Wilhelm Viola noted in 1944 'In England names like *Tomlinson, Richardson, Gibbs, Eccott*[32] are familiar to everybody interested in Child Art ... There is still much to be done by those who fight for Child Art, and that means for the child against the so often very stupid adult.'[33]

"New Art Teaching" generated considerable press attention and discussion opposing and supporting the change in art education. The new teaching methods were not welcomed by all involved in art teaching and Viola captures some of the intensity of the debate. A London headmaster wrote in 1932 to the Schoolmaster: ""The children love it" is hardly satisfying. Of course they do. What normally active child would not welcome the opportunity to revel with brush and colour, large spaces of paper to cover and "go as you please?""[34] The hostility felt towards the new teaching methods is described at first hand by Robin Tanner, art educationalist and engraver, in his autobiography Double Harness. In 1936, Tanner was asked by the National Union of Teachers to give a talk to its members about 'Child Art' at Sheffield University. Tanner

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[29] Richardson, M., Art and the Child (1948) ,p.87.
[30] Macdonald, S., The History and Philosophy of Art Education (1970), p.355. As Richardson noted of Tomlinson, his 'unfailing interest in the children's own art, in even the efforts of the very youngest child, are among the things that I remember with gratitude and appreciation'.
[31] Macdonald, S., The History and Philosophy of Art Education (1970), p. 352.
[32] Rosalind Eccott – art educationalist and columnist for Teacher's World in the 1930s.

presented the audience with works of art executed by the children he taught, for he had discovered that 'even the least endowed among the children I taught could be helped to make beautiful patterns.'[35] 'I told my simple story, illustrating my points by referring to particular pieces of work. But I was howled down by angry teachers who protested that this was not the work of children. At first I light-heartedly laughed them off, but the more I revealed of my story the more violent became their refusal to believe me. It was nonsense to pretend that children were artists, they shouted: I had cooked up all these paintings myself.'[36] Tanner's reception is testament to the difficulties faced by these educational pioneers in the 1930s. As we have seen, their detractors either believed that the new methods encouraged excessive freedom or that the results could not possibly have resulted from that very freedom. The advocates of the new art teaching were thus at pains to emphasise its pedagogical rigour. Supporters of the new methods believed that 'Very skilful teaching is required, but it differs from the teaching of previous years in that it serves the needs of the children as those needs arise...children must live as children before they can function as adults.'[37] And 'Can it be agreed that the main aim of teaching art to children should be individual artistic expression? If so, surely the new methods have come nearer to the achievements of that end than did any of the earlier methods.'[38]

In 1934, the year Gibbs' book was published, one of the leading teaching journals of the day, Teacher's World, published articles discussing the current methods of art teaching. In the June 20th edition appeared an article entitled 'The New Art Teaching. A Puzzling Doctrine Preached with almost Religious Fervour. Teacher's World Opens an Impartial Investigation'. J.Littlejohns writes: 'The New Art Teaching has not by any means become generally accepted,

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[33] Viola, W., Child Art, p. 15.
[34] Viola, W., Child Art (1944) ,p.102.
[35] Tanner,R., Double Harness – an autobiography (1987), p.74.
[36] Tanner,R., Double Harness – an autobiography (1987), p. 100.
[37] Viola, W., Child Art (1944), p.103, comments made by George E.Mackley. and F.W.Burrows, ARCA, formerly HM Inspector of Art respectively.

but it has definitely taken root. Many teachers are using the new methods, and some local education authorities have become sympathetic and encouraging. The London County Council is perhaps the most notable example'. The article continues 'To teachers who were trained upon orthodox lines, the revolution thus revealed is extremely puzzling. They may or may not like the drawings, but they are willing to consider the new idea without bias and are anxious to know on what lines the practical teaching proceeds.'[39] In the following week's publication of Teacher's World Littlejohns continues in an article of the same heading 'It is now held, by the advocates of what I am calling the New Art Teaching, that technique and observation, especially technique, should occupy a minor place or none at all as a purpose of specific study. It does not matter if the child's lines are thick and clumsy or its perspective faulty or absent, as long as it expresses its reactions frankly and spontaneously in its own way.'[40] Not all schools were implementing the ideas disseminated by Cizek and his fellow practitioners. Indeed, Teachers World of 13th June 1934 states how in at least one district in Outer London the schools were following the less radical methods of the American artist Pedros J. Lemos who had published The Art Teacher: A Book of Children and Teachers.[41] Lemos' methods were not in the spirit of Cizek and completely at variance with those of Marion Richardson. As Teacher's World commented, it would be teachers who 'will ultimately decide between the two schools, and London, at all events, is coming down heavily on the side of Cizek, who after ten or a dozen years of only very limited success in this country seems, near the end of his career to be coming into his own.'[42]

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[38] Viola, W., Child Art (1944), p. 104, comment made by F.W.Burrows, ARCA, formerly HM Inspector of Art.
[39] Teacher's World, June 13th 1934, p.439.
[40] Teacher's World, June 20th 1934, p. 439.
[41] 'Every child with a growing art knowledge, from his first kindergarten or primary year through his finishing years of schooling, will have his eyes and mind and hands attuned and receptive to the thousand and one beauties which nature displays everywhere, often hidden for those only who have not had their eyes opened'... 'It is important that the child be started correctly, for it is difficult to undo the habits of early years. To dictate is an error; to avoid all direction is equally wrong. To suggest methods, to allow personal expression with more freedom, to surround the pupil with good productions by others, to develop imagination and creative ability – all is necessary, tempered by good judgement', Lemos, P.J., The Art Teacher: A Book of Children and Teachers, foreword.
[42] Teacher's World, June 13th 1934, p. 397.

Evelyn Gibbs' treatise on art education The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft elucidates 'the new spirit in art teaching' and was published at the height of these debates. Gibbs had returned to England in 1931 refreshed from her two year scholarship in the rarefied atmosphere of Rome. She returned however, to an art market experiencing severe depression. In The Studio's annual retrospective review of the art market of 1931, the editor Geoffrey Holme talked of the changing attitude of artists and their reduced production due to the lack of confidence in the art market.[42] 1932 was the worst year of the slump for commercial galleries and artists alike. Artists survived by turning their hands to a variety of means of employment, be it commercial illustration, writing articles or teaching.[43] Gibbs' venture into art education seems primarily to be born out of necessity, she needed to be self-supporting. And with her qualifications from the Royal College of Art, regarded as the provider of the nation's art teachers, Gibbs knew she could turn to teaching as a source of income.[44]

In 1931 Gibbs signed on as a teacher of art with the London County Council who subsequently sent her to two schools for physically disabled children, one in Kennington, South London and one in Fulham, West London. Gibbs' involvement with the 'renaissance' in art education thus came about through necessity, a way of finding the best methods through which she could teach art to her disabled students. Her personal challenge led to the formation of a highly successful set of solutions.

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[42] Studio, November 1931, p. 105.
[43] Stephenson, A., 'Strategies of Situation: British Modernism and the Slump c.1929 – 1934', The Oxford Art Journal, 14:2, 1991, pp. 30-51.
[44] 'Evelyn Gibbs: Artist and Traveller', held between 25th January – 28th March 2002 at the University of Liverpool Art Gallery, p.49.

Gibbs was fortunate to enter an arena of art in which as a woman she could excel. Yet the art teaching profession of the mid twentieth century, which many women like Evelyn Gibbs joined, is regarded by Katy Deepwell in her PhD thesis 'Women Artists in Britain between the Two World Wars' (1992) as lacking in opportunities due to 'sex discrimination.'[46] Deepwell states that women were dissuaded from combining teaching and art practice, 'Teaching art ...[was] rarely recommended (*to women*) as a means of earning an income to support one's practice as an artist.'[47] Indeed, in opposition to women teaching in schools, teaching was restricted to single women in the inter-war years through the implementation of marriage bars, introduced by local authorities in the 1920s at a time when more than fifteen per cent of teachers were married. Married women were regarded as financially supported by their husbands and in effect not needing of a job and financial reward. Women teachers were also paid less as they were presumed not to have dependents. Equal pay, a reflection of equality between the sexes, was not introduced until after 1945.

There existed a double standard in regard to men and women artists entering the teaching profession. For male artists occupying a teaching post at an art college brought both status and the security of an income, a status, moreover, that men were keen to protect from the entry of women into the profession which could potentially lead to a dilution of male superiority.[48] Men remained and fought to remain the 'gatekeepers' of those entering the teaching profession. Women's presence within the teaching profession at the beginning of the twentieth century is summarised by Deepwell as forming 'a minority at the top of the profession where prestige is high and a

[46] Deepwell, C., 'Women Artists in Britain Between the Two World Wars', unpublished PhD Thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1991, p. 97.
[47] Deepwell, C., 'Women Artists in Britain Between the Two World Wars',unpublished PhD Thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1991, p. 97.
[48] Deepwell, C., 'Women Artists in Britain Between the Two World Wars', unpublished PhD Thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1991, p.97.

cluster at the bottom where both pay and status rewards are considerably less.'[49] The place of women within the teaching profession reflects women's place within the art world more generally, a world where a minority of women received critical acclaim and where the majority led an artistic existence of relative critical neglect and disregard. Women found themselves often categorically excluded from teaching within Art Schools, the domain of the male art teacher, but, many single women did find work within both secondary and elementary education as a means of supporting their art. This limited career path was true of Evelyn Gibbs who continued to exhibit her work in major professional exhibiting groups whilst teaching. Gibbs' involvement in art education demonstrates that there did exist room for women, generally single women, to make their own individual contribution to the art education system through the utilisation of 'mouthpieces' that men often regarded as inferior: primary and secondary schools.

Gibbs acknowledged the old methods through which she had gained her art education but she embraced the need for change through a new way of teaching, allowing the child's mind to explore rather than the teacher implementing his/her own artistic experiences upon the child's artistic experimentation. As Deepwell notes, 'Her influential style was unusual in that it took girls' education as the way for both her critique of old academic methods and the model of a new programme in art education.'[50] In this respect Gibbs' methods of art education mirror many aspects of the work carried out by Cizek. It appears unclear however, as to whether Gibbs' had read any of Cizek's publications, or indeed, studied his methods in any great detail. Indeed, it may be the case that Gibbs developed her form of working through a more generalised appreciation of Cizek's work, or, the more likely hypothesis, that Gibbs developed her own particular method from teaching children with learning disabilities. By developing and mastering

[49] Deepwell, C., 'Women Artists in Britain Between the Two World Wars', unpublished PhD Thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1991, p.102.
[50] Deepwell, C., 'Women Artists in Britain Between the Two World Wars' unpublished PhD Thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1991, p. 103.

a method of art education that Gibbs could use when teaching disabled children, Gibbs found a way of teaching all children, a way of harnessing children's artistic capabilities.

Between 1932 and 1933 Schools Inspector, Mary Glasgow (later to become the first Secretary of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, C.E.M.A, and then of the Arts Council) suggested that Evelyn Gibbs should write a book on her innovative teaching methods. In 1934 Gibbs' methods for teaching children of all abilities The Teaching of Art in Schools:An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft was published by Williams and Norgate Ltd. and later by Ernest Benn Ltd. with an Introduction by Edwin Glasgow (Mary Glasgow's father). Edwin Glasgow (1874 – 1955) was Keeper and Secretary of the National Gallery from 1st October 1932 until he retired on 5th December 1934.[51] His introduction encapsulates in a small paragraph the new method of teaching children. They 'must be taught as surely as they ever were; and, though the kind of teaching outlined in this book may seem new and strange to some of us, it is teaching for all that. The children are certainly not to be left to themselves, to flounder aimlessly while the teacher looks on, passive and aloof. The message of the new gospel is anything but laissez-faire. And it is a harder, not an easier, job to stimulate children to such drawings as are here reproduced that it used to be to demonstrate the foreshortening of a cube. It demands the highest qualities of imagination and sympathy.'[52] The book was illustrated by Gibbs and the pupils that she taught and sets out descriptions with examples of art and printmaking produced in several London schools.

Published in the same year as Tomlinson's Picture Making By Children, 1934, Evelyn Gibbs' first and only published work The Teaching of Art in Schools seeks to promote the new teaching methods and places her ideas at the heart of a changing art education system. Gibbs

[51] Lowe, I., 'Evelyn Gibbs, Print Quarterly, June 2003, vol xx, no.2 pp 175 – 176 at 175.

twice quotes Cézanne that 'Genius finds its own methods' – that a child when tackling a craft should be given the tools and materials necessary, and, with as little stress on the technical difficulties, or dictating of methods as possible, be allowed to find his own way of expressing himself through the new material. In doing so, she is advocating the ideology of Cizek and his belief in the inherent artistry within children, which will escape upon the page if children are left to express themselves freely. The book was published before both Herbert Read's Education Through Art (1943) and Marion Richardson's Art and the Child (1948). Indeed, Gibbs' ideas often predated those of her contemporaries, but she lacked the public profile of many of her contemporaries, particularly Britain's best known and respected female art educationist during the early decades of the twentieth century, Marion Richardson.

The work that Gibbs undertook in relation to art education played an important role in modernising art teaching. She proposes that 'the child is naturally endowed with all the qualities necessary for creative work.'[53]

> Quite consciously the artist arranges his colour and shapes and selects those things most essential to the complete expression of his idea. The child, on the other hand, often with astonishing speed and assurance works by instinct. The wonderful sense of pattern and the feeling for colour which develops so early in the child's work, is the purely instinctive result of the effort to put down the often subconscious image in his mind...there seems no reason why the child, thus naturally equipped, and in the right atmosphere, should not work as an artist works. The teacher's position then calls for great subtlety. He must do all in his power to create the atmosphere of spontaneity and freedom so necessary for creative work. He will develop "the artist" in the child, not by imposing rules and theories, and dictating methods, but by realizing that the child is naturally endowed with all the qualities necessary for creative work, and that his function

[52] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft (London, 1934), p.5.

> is to bring out these qualities, by encouragement, sympathy and, when necessary by suggestion. He must find suitable materials with which the child will be able to express his ideas readily, and above all, understand that he must not teach the child how to *draw* so much as help him to *see*. In short, he must set the child working as an artist, as an individual.[54]

Gibbs states that 'the younger the child, the more readily he will express himself; not because he has more to express, but because he is not hampered by imposed standards and ideas.' Indeed, 'As their creative usage strengthens and their ideas develop, so instinctively will their feeling for pattern and their sense of colour and perspective.'[55] Gibbs' insistence on the child's ability to make art unaided by examples of traditional standards of achievement is noteworthy. She sees the introduction of young children to the heritage of the past as misguided, doomed only to make them feel inadequate. Her position here can be usefully contrasted with Ana M. Berry's Art for Children published five years earlier in 1929. Owing to its success a second edition was published the same year as Gibbs' book in 1934. In the Preface to the second edition Berry asserts that 'A new method or some form of guidance is now sought. For we are awakening to the fact that an understanding of art does not demand that long and arduous study possible only to the leisured few, but is largely a matter of familiarity with great works and the realisation of a few general principles. It follows then that children should be given every opportunity to become acquainted with good pictures from an early age. For looking at pictures is the best visual training possible. Modern methods of education which stress the need of developing perception can no longer afford to ignore it.'[56] The pedagogical difference between Berry's approach and Gibbs' can be summed up in two quotations. For Berry, 'Good pictures are themselves education. If the eye is to become more sensitive and the imagination quickened we must turn to the masters. This

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[53] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools (1934), p. 19.
[54] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft (1934), p.19.
[55] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p.19.

has been the guiding principle in the choice of illustration in this book', where works by Albercl Dürer and other Old Masters are used as illustrations.[57] Gibbs, on the other hand, states that: 'The teacher who is to guide young children in their early drawings, will wisely leave them alone to express what they want as freely as possible; giving them adequate materials, large sheets of cheap paper, big brushes, and plenty of bright colours. Once they discover they can express their ideas through the medium of paint, they will go on doing so, with enjoyment, fearlessly convinced of the naturalness of what they draw.'[58]

Gibbs also addresses the problems that teachers of the 'new method' may experience when they teach a child 'stifled and repressed by the old methods.'[59] 'The teacher will find that it is by making pictures of incidents connected with everyday lives, within their own experience, that the children will begin to express something personal, that they know and understand. Then they will get their inspiration not from their picture-books and somebody else's ideas, but from *reality*, and begin to store up in their minds for future work.'[60] Throughout the book Gibbs offers practical pieces of advice; her book is an informative manual of teaching that seeks to offer the best solutions available to both teacher and child alike. Indeed, Gibbs' ideology does not totally reject the 'external suggestions' of the teacher, she proposes that 'If the teacher and children can work together and share in a discussion as to what is to be attempted, and if the teacher really can understand the needs and experiences of each child and suggest accordingly, then there is likely to be real progress.'[61] Gibbs refers to the teacher later as 'a sympathetic adult.'[62]

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[56] Berry, A., Art for Children (1934), p.5.
[57] Berry, A., Art for Children (1934), p. 5.
[58] Gibb, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft (1934), p.30.
[59] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft (1934), p.30.
[60] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft (1934), p.31.
[61] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft (1934), p.19

The ideas that Gibbs outlines in her first chapter are explored in greater detail in the chapters that follow. In Chapter Three 'The Relation of Imaginative Painting, Pattern-Making and Craft' is discussed with useful examples being given. Chapter Four discusses 'Imaginative Painting and its effect on crafts', and subsequent chapters deal with how these theoretical ideas can be applied in practice. In Chapter Five, Gibbs discusses how children's imaginative paintings can be translated into appliqué, 'which depends for its beauty on colour and pattern, both of which are outstanding features of picture-making by children.'[63] Gibbs explains how children must be encouraged to evolve their own way of translating their pictures into appliqué using the materials available. Preliminary paintings have to be analysed and simplified, as appliqué must be very simple in its pattern, 'the subconscious thought involved in doing work of this kind develops an increasing understanding of the qualities of pattern in picture-making.'[64] The child begins to realize the importance of the pattern and colour, a feeling for the design as a whole develops. Appliqué work on a curtain and screen made by groups of children are illustrated in Gibbs' book. Reproduced here is one of the illustrations included in the book, 'A Nursery Screen, illustrating the Pied Piper of Hamelin, Group Work in Appliqué by Children age 12 to 15' (fig.6.1), which shows the children's 'feeling for design' that Gibbs discusses.

In Chapter Six, Gibbs discusses 'Pattern-Making', 'which is so inborn that he needs very little suggestion before he will grasp the principle readily and develop in his own way.'[65] Gibbs recommends that the teacher develops the child's feeling for simple abstract pattern, from which the child will be able to elaborate and construct patterns from shapes suggested by something in

[62] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect of craft (1939), p.67.
[63] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p. 42.
[64] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p. 42.

nature. The medium of potato cuts is used to introduce children to pattern-making, Gibbs describes how to use potato blocks to make the pattern required, and pages 48 and 49 reproduced here demonstrate these methods (fig.6.2). Gibbs goes on in the chapter to discuss brush patterns and the construction of patterns by means of a mask cut from paper and the use of a stencil brush for applying the colour: 'The child will find all manner of ingenious ways of producing a pattern by such methods.'[66] Using the design produced for a specific purpose such as the cover of a book or on a piece of fabric will allow the child to fully appreciate its possibilities. The reproduction here of fig. 45 in Gibbs' book illustrates 'A Pattern made with Cut Paper Shapes, and Developed by Painting with a Brush' (fig.6.3) which was subsequently turned into a two-colour lino-block pattern and printed on silk.

In Chapter Seven Gibbs's discusses Lino-Cutting. Linoleum is recommended as a material for making prints because it is easy to cut and because children can manipulate the tools easily but also because the child 'will express his idea on the lino with the same freedom with which he expresses himself in paint on paper.'[67] Indeed, lino-cutting 'must be approached with the same freedom and spontaneity as a painting. For this reason, it is best for the child to work from a preliminary picture or pattern in colour. This means that the main shapes of the design are there, but the preliminary painting in colour must be translated into terms of black and white. The treatment will suggest itself instinctively as soon as work on the lino is started.'[68] The successful use of linoleum by children as a printing medium is evident in the prints that Gibbs illustrates, one of the most outstanding is illustrated here entitled 'Making a Bed' (fig.6.4) by Mary Cook, age 14.

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[65] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p. 47.
[66] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p.55.
[67] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p. 59.

In Chapter Eight 'Lino-Block Printing on Paper and Fabrics', Gibbs goes back to the 'primitive method of printing fabric - that of printing from the block straight on to the material, using ink made up of certain pigments mixed with oil...The aim is to give the child an appreciation of the qualities of the block print and a realization of the beauty that lies in simplicity of pattern and colour, all of which will develop so much more easily if the results can be used for some definite purpose.'[69] The example of a 'Stencilled Fabric, Printed in Three Colour' (fig.6.5) made by Edna Young, aged thirteen, illustrates the successful printing on fabric that Gibbs discusses.

In Chapter Nine 'Lettering', Gibbs gives simple suggestions for teaching lettering 'the aim being to foster an *appreciation* of good lettering rather than to develop technique.'[70] The teacher is advised to teach the child to appreciate really simple forms and to realize the individual character and charm and simplicity of such lettering as that used for the announcements of the London Passenger Transport Board, who use a uniform alphabet designed by Edward Johnston. Throughout her book Gibbs' champions her belief that:

> ...if they can approach a linocut or a piece of appliqué work in the same spirit, it is not going to be *craft* for *craft's* sake; but their idea expressed through different material. They will translate it into something concrete with the same freedom and spontaneity with which they paint their pictures. So we will get craft work which means something more than just acquiring of skill and a knowledge of technique; something creative, and as much an expression of their children as the paintings. It will also mean something to them, for it is only by working at a craft freely and imaginatively that it will have any

[68] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p. 62.
[69] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p.66-67.
[70] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p.72.

progressive effect on their other work, and they will understand and develop an appreciation for the true qualities of the craft.[71]

In Teacher's World of December 5th 1934, the reviewer of Gibbs' book writes: 'Another extremely able book has just been published which affords fresh proof, if any were needed, that the articles by Miss Wellock and her collaborator, in the Junior edition of this journal, and by Mr. and Mrs. Eccott in the Senior Edition are teaching aright'. Considered 'the most competent presentation of the new outlook that we have yet read in book form', the journal explains how Gibbs dismisses the 'Old Way' as an unimaginative approach to art work and how art teachers need to 'understand that he must not teach the child how to draw so much as help him to see... Just as the teacher should be free to suggest, so should the child be free to reject the suggestion in favour of his own ideals... she connects it up with the crafts and shows how the new spirit, wisely guided, gains contact with the everyday, workaday world which the child eventually enters.'[72]

Gibbs' work is her own unique evaluation of Continental thought and shows how Continental methods could be adapted for the British system. Both Tomlinson and Richardson aired similar hypotheses to Gibbs and it is hard therefore to speculate on the relationship of influence each educationalist had upon each other. It is clear however, that each was making their own valued contribution to a system in the throes of a 'renaissance' during the first half of the twentieth century. And it is also clear that their combined contributions were to change the structure of the British art education system. Indeed, as Herbert Read noted in 1958, Evelyn Gibbs' teaching of physically disabled children led her to 'evolve bold, free methods to solve the practical problems these children had.'[73] 'The challenge provided the impetus for her highly successful solutions, incidentally revealing an understanding and responsiveness to modern

[71] Gibbs, E., The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting (1934), p.41.
[72] 'Teacher's World', December 5th 1934, p.389.

idioms not seen in her own work at this time.'[74] Gibbs was an art education pioneer introducing and advocating new methods of both training teachers and teaching art to children.

Art education during the first half of the twentieth century was a movement containing many visionary practitioners each with their own individual ideals; ultimately however, they all had one aim in mind, the releasing of children's creative energies through artistic expression. But children still needed a skilled art teacher if this was to happen and Marion Richardson taught that 'children needed positive stimulation by the teacher before they could realise how to express their ideas.'[75] If the interference that had existed in previous methods of art education had gone, the teacher now had a far more complicated balancing act to undertake. In an article in the Studio for October 1934 entitled 'The Child-Artist' the author recommends that 'A tribute should be paid to the work of the teachers who are so patiently and enthusiastically engaged on the task of establishing this continuity and of seeing that the talent of the child is not thwarted or deflected but fulfilled.'[76] The results of the new methods are shown through the illustrations that Tomlinson, Richardson and Gibbs use in their books to demonstrate the validity of their methods. These illustrations are the real key to understanding the success of the methods proposed by this group of educationalists. Indeed, as the embodiment of a theory, they are the true test of its success. The outstanding level of achievement by children of all age groups only serves to justify the new teaching methods.

The originality and success of her book led to Gibbs' appointment as lecturer at Goldsmiths' College, Teacher Training Department in the autumn of 1934. Throughout her life Gibbs dedicated herself to the promotion of art education at every level, from the school

[73] Read, H., Education Through Art (1958), p.51.
[74] Read, H., Education Through Art (1958), p.51.
[75] Macdonald,S., The History and Philosophy of Art Education (1970), p.350.
[76] Studio, No. 499, October 1934, p.206.

classroom to publicly attended galleries.[77] Gibbs also became an Art Advisor to numerous County Councils, creating art collections for schools and promoted "Pictures for Schools", a scheme pioneered by her friend Nan Youngman, making available a resource of twentieth-century art for school children and their teachers.

Evelyn Gibbs herself was encouraged by a leading educationalist of the day Mary Glasgow and her methods were published on both sides of the Atlantic (published in New York in 1936). Her work played an important role within children's art education of the first half of the twentieth century. Yet her role as an educationalist within the art education movement has failed to receive the appropriate recognition it deserves both because of her relative lack of engagement with the modern art world of the twentieth century and the general neglect that art education itself has suffered. The two names that are remembered and championed as art educationalists during the first half of the twentieth century are Franz Cizek and Marion Richardson. The success and reputations of Cizek and Richardson as pioneering art teachers is in part a consequence of their close connections with the modern movement and with avant-garde modern art. Cizek was on the organizing committee of the 1908 Kunstshau and he taught a course at the progressive Vienna Arts and Crafts School. Marion Richardson attended Roger Fry's second Post-Impressionist exhibition in 1912, when she was still training to teach. Here she discovered a 'correspondence' between Post-Impressionism and her children's art which led to a visionary awakening.[78] Richardson's connection to Fry and the Omega Workshops helped to build and sustain her reputation. It is hoped that this chapter goes some way towards celebrating Gibbs' art education methods and claiming her place amongst the leading art educationalists of her day.

[77] In 1943 Gibbs established the Midland Group of Artists within the Artists International Association.

[78] Malvern, S., 'The Ends of Innocence: modern art and modern children', Art History, Vol.23, no.4, November 2000, pp.626-632 at 629.

Chapter Seven:

The War Art of the Second World War and the woman war artist.

'War painting should be much more than an historic record of scenes and events. It should portray its greatness and its sordidness – the heroism and grim determination of the people, the havoc and upheaval – in short it should also inspire in the present and act as a deterrent to those who in days of peace forget the horrors of war.'[1]

To understand the genesis of the War Artists Advisory Committee and its activities in the Second World War we need to take account of more general developments concerning the place of art and artists in war time. It would not be until the early twentieth century and a war of unprecedented loss of life, World War One, that artists would be recruited to produce a body of work depicting war. For artists who enlisted into the forces at the outbreak of World War One, the Artists' Rifles became a popular option. Originally a Volunteer regiment, its ranks quickly filled with leading artists of the day, including the Nash brothers and C.S.Jagger. Men in the Artists' Rifles and those serving in other regiments at the Front soon began to produce work that started to appear in London exhibitions to much critical acclaim. This led to the call for the appointment of Official War Artists by Sir William Rothenstein, Lady Cunard and Phillip Sassoon. 'The essential purpose was that artists should provide a record of the war; and in some instances, though it was not required or expected, they might create something beyond reportage or official portraits – works of art in their own right.'[2]

In early August 1914 the Cabinet secretly established a propaganda department under the control of C.F.G.Masterman, who with a staff based at Wellington House produced magazines, news-sheets and books for distribution across the world. It soon became apparent however, that

[1] The Studio, Vol. 120, September 1940, p.153.
[2] Stransky, P and Abrahams, W., London's Burning: Life, Death and Art in the Second World War (1994), p.17.

words alone were not adequate, that they needed to be supported by mental images. It appeared that photography would be the ideal medium to aid the propaganda machine, but the cameras of the day proved unsuitable to the nature of trench warfare. The photographic images that returned from France were often poor in quality. The need for paintings became one of pressing urgency. The first war artists of the twentieth century to be appointed were to be explicitly used as propagandists in a bid to present the British war effort in the best light, their essential role being to persuade neutral countries and in particular the United States to join the Allies. The scheme undertaken in World War One produced some of the most moving and memorable pictures of the twentieth century, C.R.W.Nevinson's 'The Harvest of Battle' (1919) and John Nash's 'Over the Top' (1918) are both poignant and haunting reminders of the loss of human life and the devastation of the land on which the battles took place.

Lord Beaverbrook initiated the concept of acquiring paintings and other works of art not only for the immediate needs of propaganda but also for posterity, a permanent record of war. A museum representing war was first suggested in February 1917 by two men acting independently, who both used the traditional means of writing a letter to The Times. Ian Malcolm, the Conservative MP for Croydon and Charles ffoulkes, the Curator of Armour at the Tower of London. Sir Alfred Mond, the First Commissioner of Works, head of the government department which was later to become the Ministry of Works seized on their suggestions. When the Imperial War Museum was founded late in 1917 ffoulkes served on its staff and Malcolm served on its supervising committee, which also included representatives from each of the services and a Women's Work Subcommittee. The duty of the Imperial War Museum was to include the purchase and commissioning of paintings and sculpture. The IWM did its utmost to buy pictures covering every single facet of the war.

The First World War has long been regarded as a frontline war fought in the trenches, a war of slaughter and bravery conducted by men in uniform. However, the movement of men away from their jobs and responsibilities at home and onto the battlefields left a void that was filled by women workers. The position of women in the country was radically altered by the change of circumstances brought about by war. With millions of men in the Forces, and with the huge casualty lists, a shortage of manpower developed. The authorities had no alternative but to call upon the help of women. The establishment of the Women's Land Army (WLA) in February 1917 placed women with occupations that had previously been a male preserve. Work on the land became of huge importance, most critically when the U-Boat campaign was at its most effective and food supplies ran dangerously low. Some of the work was done by women and some by German prisoners of war. Very large numbers of workers in munitions factories were now women. Women also took over the running of their male relatives' businesses; women became window cleaners, chimney sweeps, shopkeepers and bus conductors. During World War One many thousands of firms started to employ female secretaries and typists for the first time. Women were moving out of the private sphere and into the public world, an important change in the accepted roles of women occurred. Yet where are the works of art that depict women's contribution to the war effort? Despite the Imperial War Museum incorporating a Woman's Work Subcommittee, the contribution of women to the Home Front went largely unrecorded. We are left with a lasting and poignant reminder of the horrors of war, a war being fought by men and depicted by male artists. The record of the battle being fought by women, though depicted in part by a small number of artists, the overwhelmingly majority of which were male, is small and dwarfed by the representation of men's wartime efforts. The images of war that were commissioned during the First World War were largely governed by a masculine view-point of war, a masculine world.

In May 1918 the Women's Work Subcommittee appointed the first Official British Woman War Artist, Victoria Monkhouse. Monkhouse undertook a series of sketches of women undertaking traditionally male jobs – bus conductresses, window-cleaners and post-women for example. Clare Atwood and Anna Airy were also among a small number of women employed to make art about the 1914-1918 conflict. Anna Airy (1882 – 1964) attended the Slade at the turn of the twentieth century, producing some of her best work during the war. One of her most successful war pictures executed in 1918 'Shop for Machining 15-inch shells' (fig.7.1) depicts a scene in the works of the Singer Manufacturing Company, Clydebank. The large shells are being made in a workshop entirely staffed by women, under the supervision of a solitary foreman.

The employment of women artists to depict women's war work during the First World War was a bringing together of 'female' subject and 'female' artist which would also occur during the Second World War. The IWM also assigned a number of photographers to record women who had taken on their husband's/father's jobs following conscription, as well as those who had joined the numerous Women's Corps and the Women's Armed Forces. The only woman photographer to be commissioned by the Women's Work Subcommittee of the IWM to record the work of the Women's Services in France and Flanders during WWI was Olive Edis Galsworthy (1876 – 1955).[3] Yet for all the success of pictures like these it is clear that there are exceptions to an otherwise rather limited sphere of operations. As Deepwell has noted in her PhD thesis 'Women in Britain between the Two World Wars 1918-1940' the 'extremely limited participation of women in the war commissions of WWI' are a 'striking case of institutionalised sexism.'[4] In the first major exhibition of war pictures held by the IWM in the winter of 1919-20 women made

[3] Olive Edis Galsworthy's work is featured in Diana Condell and Jean Liddiard's book Working for Victory? Images of women in the First World War, 1914 – 1918 (1987), a photographic record of the various activities that women were doing in a bid to win the war, an important reminder of the often 'invisible' work they were involved in.

[4] Deepwell, C., 'Women Artists in Britain Between the Two World Wars', unpublished PhD Thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1991, p.105.

up only 9 out of 123 artists on show. In fact, not only were women poorly represented at the exhibition, but in terms of the art they produced they operated within a narrower horizon of possibilities. Women artists almost exclusively made images of women at work whereas male artists painted both women and men. Thus, pictures of the Home Front were produced not only by women artists but also by their male colleagues. Stanhope Forbes, for example, painted 'WRNS Ratings Sail Making' (fig.7.2) in 1918 showing a scene on board HMS Essex at Devonport. Other aspects of women's work in wartime were recorded by artists such as A.S.Hartrick and Randolph Schwabe whose war work was largely concerned with aspects of work on the land. Schwabe (1885-1948) produced twenty-one pictures concerned with aspects of work on the land, but only incidentally do some of his pictures record women at work on the land for example 'Voluntary Land Workers in a Flax- field' (fig.7.3).

The 'War to end all Wars' - the First World War - produced a diverse body of pictures that recorded the horrors of trench warfare, depictions that should have acted as deterrents to further bloodshed. Yet only twenty years after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, Europe was once again at war. The Second World War offered artists and their commissioners a yet wider array of subjects to be depicted, the first 'Total' war to involve both soldiers and citizens alike, a war fought on both the Front line and the Home Front.

Shortly before the commencement of the Second World War the Ministry of Information (MoI herewith) was established as a government organ responsible for both publicity and propaganda. In essence, as Foss has noted, it sought 'to provide the unbiased factual information traditionally honoured by the British citizen, rather than the propagandist opinion that passed for truth in less open societies.'[5] The Nazi regime's infringement of human rights was well known,

[5] Foss,B., 'Message and Medium: Government Patronage, National Identity and National Culture in Britain, 1939-45', Oxford Art Journal, 14:2, 1991,p.53.

particularly the lack of freedom surrounding artistic expression which culminated in the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition' of 1937. Artists who failed to gain official approval by the German authorities were curtailed from teaching, exhibiting and selling their work. In stark comparison to the situation in Germany, the MOI sought to project an image of fairness, of democratic intent, promoting the very qualities that made British art both unique and valuable. The separation of politics from war art in Britain was not, however, as clear cut as the government wished the public to believe. The MOI occupied an important place in the Government's propaganda effort, an important instrument in creating a definition of British culture and identity in opposition to Germany's National Socialism. The Government was eager to create a definition of British culture, a symbol of everything that set British society apart from Fascist society, and to this end the MOI proved a useful propaganda machine.[6]

The role of providing a pictorial record of World War Two led to the formation of the War Artists Advisory Committee (referred to as WAAC herewith) established in November 1939 within the MoI and chaired by Kenneth Clark. 'Clark was the ideal choice to head a committee dispensing contracts and purchase funds to artists at a time when the German example of state involvement in the arts made a minefield of such involvement.'[7] The WAAC's secretary E.M.O'Rourke Dickey himself an artist, former professor of Fine Art at Durham University, a Civil Servant and a Board of Education Inspector for Art, played an important role in implementing the WAAC's wishes and dealing tactfully with artists. Male artists were given the job of depicting the destruction associated with enemy action (ruined buildings, shelters) and the work of heavy industry – steel, mining and shipbuilding. Both female and male artists depicted the effects of enemy action (evacuation, food queues, homefront), armaments production, farming

[6] Foss,B., 'Message and Medium: Government Patronage, National Identity and National Culture in Britain, 1939-45', Oxford Art Journal, 14:2, 1991, p. 49-60.
[7] Foss,B., 'Message and Medium: Government Patronage, National Identity and National Culture in Britain, 1939-45', Oxford Art Journal, 14:2, 1991, p.56.

and forestry, hospital work and medicine. The balance of evidence indicates that female artists were considered suitable to depict working women but not to depict men in their more muscular jobs, whilst male artists could of course depict both. As Foss has noted 'Most of the women who had war contracts were assigned to record aspects of "women's work".'[8]

Kenneth Clark wrote in The Other Half of 1977 'I was not so naïve as to suppose that we should secure many masterpieces, or even a record of the war that could not be better achieved by photography. My aim, which of course I did not disclose, was simply to keep artists at work on any pretext, and, as far as possible to prevent them from being killed.'[9] However, there were individuals who voiced concerns over the idea of state interference; these included Graham Bell, George Orwell and C.R.W.Nevinson who referred to Clark as 'Kenneth Napoleon Clark' and contended that 'it would be better to be gassed by the enemy than breathe in a hothouse atmosphere of museum cranks and didactic favouritism.'[10] Indeed, within the WAAC itself there existed a split between those who supported conservative artists and those who supported artists of a more Modernist leaning, although compromise was usually reached. In general, however, the WAAC veered towards the more conservative idiom of established figurative artists. As the Studio commented in 1940 'The official artists were chosen because their technique was considered sound and their names are well known in the field of British art.'[11] In a letter to William Rothenstein of 14th October 1941 Kenneth Clark wrote 'We have cast our net very wide and inevitably caught a few fish which do not suit the cultivated palate, but we have tried very hard to avoid mere picture-making and stuck to sincere records of experience whether

[8] Foss,B., 'British Artists and the Second World War, with particular reference to the War Artists Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Information', PhD thesis, University College London, (1991), p.103.
[9] Clark, K., The Other Half (1977), p. 58.
[10] Foss,B., 'Message and Medium: Government Patronage, National Identity and National Culture in Britain, 1939-45', Oxford Art Journal, 14:2, 1991, p. 58.
[11] The Studio, Vol. 120, September 1940, p.153.

imaginative or fictional.'[12] The official position was less critical. In the WAAC's annual report of 1942 they stated that 'our chief task is to build up for posterity a collection of artistic war records of the highest quality.'[13]

As early as October 1939 Clark defended the policy the WAAC would shortly adopt:

> The first duty of an artist in wartime is the same as his duty in peace: to produce good works of art...As a fireman he will be of very little use to his country, but if he is a good artist he may bring it international renown, and even as a mediocre artist he will help to create that body of images through which a country exists for the rest of the world...[The artists of the First World War] did leave a record of the war which the camera could not have given. There are certain things in life so serious that only a poet can tell the truth about them.[14]

The first WAAC meeting was held on Wednesday 23rd November 1939. During the meeting a list of artists were drawn up 'which should contain the names of all artists likely to be suitable for employment...Care was being taken that none who might reasonably have a claim for consideration were omitted, but this did not, of course, imply that the Committee would not consider recommendations for the employment of artists not on the list.'[15] During the WAAC's second meeting Kenneth Clark 'said that he thought it would be well to bear in mind the distinction between the artist whose work was characterised chiefly by technical efficiency as

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[12] Abrahams, W and Stransky, P., London's Burning: Life, Death and Art in the Second World War (1994), p.29.
[13] Foss,B., 'Message and Medium: Government Patronage, National Identity and National Culture in Britain, 1939-45', Oxford Art Journal, 14:2, 1991, p.55.
[14] Clark, K., 'The Artist in Wartime', The Listener, 26th October 1939, p. 17.
[15] War Artist Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes. 1st Meeting, 23rd November 1939.

compared with the artist whose work was predominantly emotional. Some of those in the second category who had recorded the last war might be reluctant to tackle the present war.'[16]

The WAAC sought to assemble a collection of works that recorded life at the Front and in wartime Britain, the Home Front. Indeed, one important aspect of World War Two was that the Home Front now provided a larger subject area for artists to focus upon than in World War One. 'One effect of the Blitz was to render less meaningful the distinction obvious in the First World War between 'artists at the front' and 'artists at home'.'[17] Painters recording the Home Front, were, according to Ross in Colours of War (1983), 'to do with the war, but not in it.'[18] However, in a very real sense these artists were 'in' this war, the events that they recorded were part of their lives, providing eye witness statements of the Home Front. Artists at home had an important position to fulfil. Kenneth Clark stated that the most important Front was the Home Front, which offered two 'contrasting' subjects to the artist, scenes of destruction and the determination of those at home in the war effort, ordinary people coping with the war.[19]

During the war HMSO published a series of small catalogues entitled War Pictures by British Artists, devoted variously to 'Soliders', 'Production', 'Women' and 'Air Raids' etc. In the Introduction by Stephen Spender to 'Air Raids' (1943) he observes that in World War Two war pictures mean 'pre-eminently paintings of the Blitz. In the last war we would have meant pictures of the Western Front ... The background to this war, corresponding to the Western Front in the last war, is the bombed city; and the artist of this war is the Civilian Defence Artist.'[20] All of the illustrations used in this title are by male artists, for scenes of destruction, the havoc wrought by man, were considered by the WAAC to be suitable for male artists. However, as can be seen by

[16] War Artist Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes. 2nd Meeting, 29th November 1939.
[17] Harries, M and S., The War Artists: British Official War Art of the Twentieth Century (1983), p.192.
[18] Ross, A., Colours of War (1983), p.24.
[19] Ross, A., Colours of War (1983) ,p. 3.
[20] Spender, S., Air Raids (1943), n.p.

the other titles in the War Pictures by British Artists series, the WAAC was interested in commissioning work that sought to depict the whole sphere of activity occurring on the Home Front – the movement of evacuees, the work on the land, the devastation caused by aerial bombardment, the effects of rationing and the production of armaments in the factories to mention just a few of the activities recorded.

The WAAC thus recognised that the line between civilians and the military had become blurred in the fight to defeat fascism. For women who had been constrained from entering public life due to the existing Victorian ideals of separate spheres - the private and the public - war brought women the chance to step outside of the home and lend their hand to the cause. For the first time in the history of any democracy women were conscripted into the army, navy and airforce. The introduction of conscription in 1942 meant that women were unavoidably involved in war work. For thousands of women this meant that their lives were changed out of all recognition. Women came into greater contact with their peers, meeting a wider range of social classes and going to locations all over the country. Women could now mix more widely than ever before, often away from parental control. Women were being liberated from an existence that was bound by the confines of familial commitment, convention and lack of personal funds. The largest number of women, over two hundred thousand of them, joined the Auxiliary Territorial Army. Unlike World War One the women in the ATS, WAAF and nursing and medical branches had equal status with men in the forces, only the WRNS were deprived of an equal footing. Women who joined the National Fire Service, formed in 1941, became full members, doubtless receiving such status as a consequence of war, but which also shows the value of women during wartime. J.B.Priestley in his 1945 British Women Go To War commented that 'No country engaged in this war has mobilised its women for the war effort more thoroughly and efficiently than Britain has and our use of woman power has been one of the unique features of our war

record', a 'unique' feature that deserved to be recorded.[21] Women were no longer just engaged in cooking and office work, women were driving trucks and motor-cycles, packing and re-packing parachutes, raising and lowering barrage balloons, forecasting weather and maintaining gun equipment and rearming combat planes after each raid, a radical departure from the roles of respectability that had governed women's private and public roles during the Victorian era. Indeed, Laura Knight, a contemporary of J.B.Priestley, in War Pictures by British Artists:Women (1943) expresses how the role of women in the Second World War 'helped to popularise a new, active image of femininity' that did not threaten the societal role of men.[22] Women artists now had a familiar subject upon which to focus and to make their own, an opportunity that also held the promise of women's artistic furtherance. However, the commissioning of women artists by the WAAC was to be disappointingly small in comparison to the number of male artists commissioned.

Out of 37 Officially Commissioned War Artists only two women were appointed on a fixed term salaried basis: Evelyn Dunbar and Stella Schmolle.[23] Evelyn Dunbar (under Commission from 1943 – 1944, all work in oil on canvas) was commissioned to paint a total of 17 works depicting agricultural and other women's subjects. The WAAC gave a further nine women short term contracts. All other female war artists were employed to execute a particular work or sold work to the WAAC. The women artists given short term contracts were Rosemary Allen, Dorothy Coke, Ethel Gabain, Evelyn Gibbs, Mary Kessell, Laura Knight, Mona Moore, Elizabeth Polunin and Patricia Preece. Ethel Gabain (work in oil on canvas and lithographic ink) was specially employed for a number of specific works and over a number of years and Evelyn

[21] Priestley, J.B., British Women Go To War (1945) ,p.7.
[22] Knight, L., War Pictures by British Artists: Women (1945),p.44.
[23] Stella Schmolle (1908-1975). Member of Senefelder Club with whom she exhibited at various galleries in England and the US. Sergeant in the Women's Army Corps, depicted women drilling on parade grounds for example. Commissioned to depict scenes in France, during the war, the commission wasn't completed until the end of the war.

Gibbs (work in oil on canvas and pencil and chalk on paper) was specially employed to undertake a few specific works, spasmodically or over a short period. A further seventeen women artists sold work to the WAAC, on an ad hoc basis.

Name of Artist	Type of Commission	Year of Commission
Rosemary Allen	C	1944
Dorothy Coke	C	1940 and 1941
Evelyn Dunbar	B/A	1940 – 1942, 1943- 1944
Ethel Gabain	B	1940, 41', 42', 43', 44', 45'
Evelyn Gibbs	C	1942
Mary Kessell	D	1943
Laura Knight	B	1940, 42', 43', 45
Mona Moore	C	1941
Elizabeth Polunin	C	1941
Patricia Preece	C	1941
Stella Schmolle	A	1942, 43', 44', 45'.

A: Specially employed as an Official War Artists on a salaried/equivalent basis, for successive period and over a number of years.

B: Specially employed for a number of specific works and over a number of years.

C: Specially employed to undertake a few specific works, spasmodically or over a short period.

D: Independent submissions (encouraged by the WAAC). [24]

[24] This table excludes the further seventeen women artists who sold work to the WAAC. The alphabetical code is taken from Foss, B., 'British Artists and the Second World War, with Particular Reference to the War Artists Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Information'. (PhD Thesis University College London, 1991).

It would be interesting to discover whether the pay artists received was reflective of their gender. It is difficult to ascertain whether all artists were being paid roughly the same or that pay differentials occurred owing to the artists' gender and artistic seniority. For example the pay for commissions agreed at the 53rd meeting of the WAAC range from 35 guineas for Evelyn Dunbar's painting of nursing subjects, 25 guineas for Henry Moore's medical aid posts and 15 guineas for Russell Flint's Harvest subjects. Graham Sutherland was paid £325 for six month work on Supply and Home Security subjects and Evelyn Dunbar was paid £325 for six months work on 'women's activities.'[25]

Lady Norman, a Trustee of the Imperial War Museum, served as Chair of the Women's Work Subcommittee from 1918 - 1920 and from the Second World War to the 1960s. A supporter of NUWSS (National Union of Women's Suffragette Societies), she benefited from and was also involved with the equal rights and welfare feminist campaigns of the 1920s.[26] Lady Norman realised the vital importance of recording women's war work early during WWII and wrote to the WAAC's secretary Mr. Dickey on February 3rd 1940:

> The Imperial War Museum (of which I am a Trustee) has once more the duty of recording a War. We have no funds for the purpose of paying artists. But much can be done by introducing artists to subjects and providing facilities for this work, when this work may be done as a labour of love...The calling up of a million women to substitute the work of men, points to the need of appealing to the patriotic sense of women and to the pride they take in their readiness to serve and make sacrifices for this country. A knowledge that their work is being recorded may be an encouragement to them. The Women's Services, at my suggestions, have each appointed a historian to collect records and I am asking that artists within their ranks should draw and paint what they see...I

[25] 97th Meeting of the WAAC held on Wednesday 14th October 1942.
[26] Lady's Who's Who 1938 – 1939 (London, 1939).

realise that the funds at the disposition of the MoI are limited. A grant for a painting by Dame Laura would be of importance. The IWM has reopened and we desire to keep a small selection on view of subjects dealing with the present War and a painting such as I ask for would prove of [illegible...] service. If 400 guineas that she asks for is too much. I could offer her whatever your Committee feels able to spend on the subject.[27]

The reply from the WAAC in response to Lady Norman's detailed suggestions about Laura Knight reads:

> The Committee regrets that they are not able to provide any funds for this purpose, but, if it would be possible for the necessary money to be subscribed independently, they would welcome an arrangement by which Dame Laura would be given opportunity to record the work of women pilots. I am asked to let you know that in the opinion of the Air Ministry, the commissioning of a picture for the National collection of the size and importance contemplated of this particular subject, would hardly be justifiable in view of the greater importance of many other activities of the RAF. This is, not of course, meant to suggest that the work done by women pilots in ferrying aeroplanes is not likely to be a most useful contribution, more particularly since it should have the effect of relieving men pilots for combatant duties. Indeed the woman pilots themselves, would no doubt be the first to give voice to this point of view.[28]

Sir Muirhead Bone had hoped that Lady Norman would approach some women artists, finding the money herself to commission something from them. In World War One Lady Norman had collected many representations of women's war work through commissioning women artists herself but he now seemed to see her role as one of influence rather than of direct patronage.[29] As

[27] Letter to Mr.Dickey from Lady Norman, 03/02/1940. Women Activities WWII. Box 3, 7th May 1940 – 11th May 1940. IWM Second World War Artists Archive. File no: GP/46/22.
[28] Letter to Lady Norman from Mr.Dickey. 08/02/1940 Women Activities WWII. Box 3, 7th May 1940 – 11th May 1940. IWM Second World War Artists Archive. File no: GP/46/22.
[29] Letter to Mr. Dickey from Sir Muirhead Bone at Admiralty House, Portsmouth, 25/01/1940. Women Activities WWII. Box 3, 7th May 1940 – 11th May 1940. IWM Second World War Artists Archive. File no: GP/46/22.

Muirhead Bone wrote to Dickey in January 1940 'You speak in your letter of "Lady Norman's generosity" but of course she has not done anything generous so far as she means us to pay for Dame Laura Knight's picture...(certainly we have no money on this scale and I think in any case the subject does not deserve it)....Whatever Lady Norman does or arranges she would require that such pictures are definitely promised to the IWM for their ultimate home.'[30]

The WAAC did however realise the importance of Lady Norman's suggestions regarding the depiction of women's war work. In February 1940 Mr.Dickey drew up a 'List of War Artists subjects of women's work in war- time arising out of a conversation with Mrs. Benn of the W.V.S.'. The list detailed:

1. Creches for war workers children: mothers coming back to call for the babies in the evening.
2. Women working on allotments neat the Prince Albert Memorial.
3. Citizens Advice Bureau in a derelict house with an overgrown garden, etc: mothers and children in prams at the door, WVS seen through the window.
4. The village police station in a converted barn in Kent.
5. Service of fresh vegetables for mine sweepers. These are organised by women at ports in the north. The men file past and take the vegetables in their arms.[31]

The emphasis in this list on the domestic, the rural and the woman as provider makes an emphatic contrast with Lady Norman's wish to record women's participation in aviation. Plainly, the

[30] Letter to Mr.Dickey from Muirhead Bone, 31/01/1940. Women Activities WWII. Box 3, 7th May 1940 – 11th May 1940. IWM Second World War Artists Archive. File no: GP/46/22.
[31] Imperial War Museum Archives. File Name: Suggestions by Lady Norman. File Number: GP/46/19. 27th January 1940 – 11th June 1942.

traditional role model of the nurturing capacity of women was seen as more appropriate than their capacity to master modern technology. In this connection its is significant that Ethel Gabain's 'Sorting and Flinging Logs' was the only image by a woman artist to be included in the HMSO publication War Pictures by British Artists: Production (1945). Despite the records Gabain had made of factory work, the image chosen to represent women working and the only image by a woman artist was of the Timber Corps.

During the 7th meeting of the WAAC held on 27th March 1940 'The Chairman (Kenneth Clark) said that he thought the Committee would be well to recommend that pictures of women's work should be painted. He asked members to bring with them to the next meeting suggestions for women artists who might be asked to paint subjects of this kind as well as names of men who might be suitable.'[32] Evelyn Dunbar and Dorothy Coke were duly recommended and were to be referred to Lady Reading (Chair of the Women's Voluntary Services WVS) if they agreed to paint pictures of women's activities for a fee of 50 guineas by mutual arrangement.[33] Percy Jowett considered Evelyn Dunbar 'A very fine artist who has done excellent decorations as well as drawings.'[34] Shortly after Dunbar and Coke's recommendation Ethel Gabain was asked to undertake 8 lithographs for a fee of 12 guineas each, 4 of evacuation subjects and four of WVS subjects.[35]

In a letter to Lady Reading from Mr.Dickey, 27th April 1940 he writes: 'I promised to let you know something about the arrangements which we have made for artists to paint subjects which may include women's work since you will no doubt wish to bear them in mind ... it will be

[32] War Artist Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes 7th Meeting, 27th March 1940.
[33] War Artist Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes. 18th Meeting, 10th April 1940.
[34] Letter from Percy Jowett December 20th 1939 in IWM File Number: GP/55/44. File Name: Evelyn Dunbar 1940 – 1949.
[35] War Artist Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes. 18th Meeting, 10th April 1940.

for the three ladies in question to tackle the work of the WVS as such on your advice.'[36] The letter goes on to inform Lady Reading that A.S. Hartrick will include the work of women on the land in some of his work and Francis Dodd, Henry Rushbury and A.R.Thomson will carry out some armament, munitions and textile manufacture subjects. 'Doubtless the part played by women will find a place in some of the subjects to be dealt with by these artists.'[37] The representation of war work undertaken by women appears as a necessary but small part of the war artists' scheme, an addition to the war work of men. Clearly Dickey did not feel that women's war work should be the unique preserve of women artists but his overall reassurances have more than a hint of condescension about them.

When considering the most obvious sign of warfare on the Home Front, the effects of the Luftwaffe's bombing campaign, it is clear that the WAAC felt that only male artists should record it. The WAAC was keen to transport artists to scenes of devastation before the clean up operations commenced in order to depict bombing raids in their full horror, and many of them such as Piper's famous bomb damage drawings and paintings, contain the roaring fires or smouldering embers of recently bombed buildings. The WAAC was especially anxious to record the plight of civilians during the bombing raids. 'Colonies' (as they became known) of people took shelter from the extensive bombing of Britain's cities below ground. Although the government sought to discourage those taking refuge in the Underground, the WAAC was interested in recording these colonies of people. At the end of November 1943 John Piper, under instruction from the WAAC, started on a new body of work, entitled 'the shelter drawings'. Alongside Piper, the Committee also assigned Edward Ardizzone and Felix Topolski to record 'shelterers'. However, the work produced by Henry Moore of civilians during the London blitz captured the true essence of city

[36] Letter to Lady Reading from Mr.Dickey. 27/04/1940 in IWM File Number: GP/55/44. File Name:Evelyn Dunbar 1940 – 1949.
[37] Letter to Lady Reading from Mr.Dickey. 27/04/1940 in IWM File Number: GP/55/44. File Name:Evelyn Dunbar 1940 – 1949.

inhabitants sheltering from the destruction occurring above the surface.[38] Moore's 'shelter drawings' convey the cramped and dark conditions and the sense of 'community' that grew up below the surface, (fig.7.4) Moore's depiction of shelterers fostered his fascination with the figure that was to remain a staple of his life's work. Moore was amongst many war artists whose practice was widened through their war work, a unique experience for a whole generation of painters. Here, however, no women artists were commissioned to record the scene.

Artists on the Home Front were also employed to publicise the second of Clark's 'contrasting subjects' that of Britain's warlike preparations - mining, factories, ship building and the production of armaments, a display of the 'invaluable' civilian war effort. Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland were both assigned to record the work of the 'underground workers', tin and coal miners. Moore had grown up in a mining community his father and brother both working below the surface, another example of the WAAC's effort to align the artist to a subject that held some personal connection. However, Moore's curiosity regarding mining soon waned amongst the dank and confined spaces that he found himself working in. Nevertheless, both Moore and Sutherland's mining works serve as interesting records of mining, a subject that lay largely unrecorded until the WAAC scheme. In Cecil Beaton's introduction to 'Production' (1943) part of the HMSO series of War Pictures by British Artists he writes: 'In this world of molten metals, of glowing furnaces, soot and firework sparks, that only the painter can interpret, Graham Sutherland has reverently seized his opportunity to capture this fleeting phenomenon of sequined brilliance, of mystery of glowing magic...Sutherland has also shown us the strange architecture that the necessity of war has built for us.'[39] It is interesting to note how a photographer of Beaton's renown believes that 'only the painter can interpret' the production of armaments and

[38] Harries, M and S., The War Artists: British Official War Art of the Twentieth Century (1983), p.192.
[39] Beaton, C., War Pictures by British Artists: Production (1945) ,p.6.

not the photographer's camera. Equally, it is noteworthy that no woman was requested to record the world of heavy industry.

Factories continued in their pre-war productive capacity largely due to women entering factories and undertaking jobs that had traditionally been the preserve of men. Meirion and Susie Harries in The War Artists view the recording of factory life as producing some of the 'most compelling images' of the war artists' scheme. Among artists who sought to depict workers in the factories, Mervyn Peake became 'bewitched' by a factory in which glass was blown 'a place of roaring fires and monstrous shadows', his fascination with the factory environment led Peake to produce some of the most successful works of his career.[40] Other more mundane works portraying factories were produced by L.S.Lowry 'Going to work at a Manchester factory' (1943), in which Lowry depicts a Manchester crowd trooping off to work and school, civilians going about their daily business. Vivian Pitchforth's 'Snack time in a factory' (1944) captures the workers daily routine as does Ruskin Spear's 'Scene in an underground train, 1943: Workers returning from the night shift' (1943) depicting exhausted workers returning from the night shift.[41] War pictures of the factories both celebrate the important work that men and women are conducting, their struggle to maintain high productive capacity, whilst also displaying the monotony of the situation, the long hours, and the repetitive routine.

The production of armaments was keenly pursued by the WAAC, and such diverse artists as Charles Ginner, Terence Cuneo, Leslie Cole, Vivian Pitchforth, John Armstrong, John Ensor and Ethel Gabain were assigned to record the production of tanks, shells, bombs and bombers. Gabain's background as a lithographer with her keen sense of detail made her an ideal choice in a subject area of complex detail. In the following chapter one of Gabain's lithographs under

[40] Harries, M and S., The War Artists: British Official War Art of the Twentieth Century (1983), p.198.
[41] Harries, M and S., The War Artists: British Official War Art of the Twentieth Century (1983), p. 168.

discussion is 'Work on a Weir Pump' (fig.8.26) of 1941 which deals with the role of women in the armament factories. Approximately one third of total output in British factories during WWII was made possible by the five and a half million women working in production. A large number of women were employed in the armouries and arsenals and factories dedicated to the production of munitions, which embraced not only shells, weapons, tanks and planes but also tents and boots. Government work meant regular pay and regulated hours; twelve hour shifts were the norm. Huge numbers of women were recruited to make shells and fill them with explosives, and to produce hand grenades and cartridges. The money was reasonable, and in many cases it was considerably more than girls could expect in peacetime. However, there was a degree of envy from those working in the armament factories towards those in the services, who were paid much less but had board and lodging. There were also concerns over women entering places of industry, carrying out the jobs of men who had been called up. The topic gained many inches of newsprint during the war. In the shipyards of England which were working flat out to produce the country's wartime shipping, there was great concern over the entry of women, which during World War One had been felt to hinder rather than help production. Seven hundred women made their way into the yards, where they worked as welders, crane drivers, red-leaders, rivet heaters and catchers. Most though were occupied in an assistant capacity and the majority remained unskilled, thus easily dispensable when war ended and their job was done. This vast expansion in merchant shipbuilding was recorded by Stanley Spencer under commission from the WAAC (fig.7.5). Considering the role that women (albeit a small one) played in continuing shipbuilding on the Clyde I have been unable to find one depiction by Spencer of a woman working in the yards. Spencer's paintings are symbols of men's labour to defeat the enemy, his works are prominent displays of masculine strength.

The mines, factories, ship yards and armament depots all relied on the transport of raw materials and finished goods, a fact the Ministry of War Transport were keen to promote, and

between July 1944 and September 1945 the WAAC employed John Piper as a salaried war transport artist. Piper's work focused on the railways which provided an essential link between the cities and countryside of Britain. Again, this was an area in which women were making an important contribution to the war effort, yet in Piper's images there is no indication that this is so. In fact, the absence of women's contribution to the Home Front in the pictures made of it was noted by the engraver Robert Austin in 1941. In a letter to Dickey at the Ministry of Information dated 11th August 1941 Austin writes: 'I saw the show at the National Gallery and was pleased with it. It is a nicely balanced one and will bring nothing but praise to the selectors of the artists engaged. But it did impress upon me the fact that there can't be a single woman working in any of the service and such valiant people as Waafs, or W.T.S., or WRNS, simply do not exist. Why? Since I am telling you of this omission, I naturally want the credit and the commission to go and rectify this. I maintain I can draw women better than anyone, so will you bring this to the notice of the powers? (Of course I will tell P.Jowett about this). And besides why isn't there an Official War Artist of the Women's Services?'[42] Austin depicted the work of the various Women's Services throughout the war in an interesting and lively manner.

The Women's Land Army helped in the doubling of home production of food from the outbreak of war. Women were enrolling for dairy farming, poultry work, glasshouse cultivation, general farming, or in the newest branch of the WLA - the Timber Corps. The work produced recording agricultural work became amongst the WAAC's greatest successes. A practitioner and recorder of surviving country crafts Thomas Hennell's painting of the record harvest of 1941 generated considerable admiration. James Bateman depicted piggeries and silos and Archibald Hartrick captured land girls cultivating cabbages. When women's war work was depicted by men, however, the connection between the artist and subject often seems to lose its powerful

[42] The Artist as Evacuee: The Royal College of Art in the Lake District 1940 – 1945. Exhibition held at Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Museum, Glasmere, 1st March – 1st September 1987. Notes and Commentary by Robert Woof. Published by The Wordsworth Trust.

association for example in Hartrick's depiction of land girls in which they seem to be lazing under trees. However, in Evelyn Dunbar's official commissioned project to depict the work of Land Girls, a much more positive image is produced. In 'A Land Girl and the Bail Bull' (1945) (fig.8.14), a depiction of dairy farming, the land girl is attempting to catch the bull, she is shown as confident, competent and active in her work. The need and willingness to capture women's war work in a favourable light seems to be lacking in the work produced by men of women's work, they lacked the incentive which marks out the work produced by women.

Some contemporary critics were quick to condemn the WAAC's choice of documenting agricultural work during the war.[43] However, due to the WAAC's commissioning of artists to depict work on the land, the position of women in the country which had been 'radically altered by the force of circumstances during the war' was highlighted.[44] The WAAC were eager to portray the increased participation of women partly due to conscription and also through the prompting of Lady Norman at the Ministry of Information and as a trustee of the Imperial War Museum. Early in December 1939 Lady Norman pushed for the inclusion of works depicting agriculture. 'She believed that such paintings could provide an important comparison with works produced during the Great War.'[45] The work of artists depicting 'work on the land' has come to provide an important and lasting visual reminder of wartime Britain and complements the MoI's publication of Land at War in 1945.

Dunbar's commission to record the Land Army was not exceptional. From the outset of the war the WAAC seems to have considered that women artists were best suited to record women's activities. A good example is provided by the artists chosen to depict the activities of

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[43] Jan Gordon in 'London Commentary' for The Studio, September 1943, p.162, writing about Dunbar's Land Army Paintings comments 'good as they are they are examples of what I mean when I suggest a lack of war-substance'.
[44] Viney. N., Images of Wartime: British Art and Artists of World War One (1991), p.201.
[45] This Land in our Land:Aspects of Agriculture in English Art, Mall Galleries, January 1989.

the Women's Voluntary Services for Civil Defence, considered to be the 'universal aunts of the British war effort'. They provided the personnel to man rest and feeding centres, helped in the re-housing of the homeless, acted as shelter marshals, manned report centres and control rooms and ran the casualty notification bureaux.[46] They were concerned with every aspect of the Government evacuation scheme – billeting, welfare, hostels, mothers' clubs, sick bays, communal feeding centres and nurseries. Dorothy Coke, Ethel Gibbs and Evelyn Dunbar were commissioned to supply pictures of Women's Voluntary Services activities, for as Dickey noted: 'the three ladies who are to do pictures of the war under the WVS auspices....I am sure that the subjects will be well suited to the artists.'[47] Women artists were felt by the WAAC to be 'suitable' to depict women and children; the Committee assumed that women artists would have an empathy with their female subjects because of their gender.

As we have seen Dickey's list of WVS topics included crèches as its first item and Ethel Gabain produced lithographs depicting evacuation operations and crèches organised by the WVS, discussed in the following chapter. Hundreds of day nurseries were set up for children of war workers. As Priestley noted, 'little has been said in public about the work done by the hundreds of women and girls employed in the care of children, although very often that work is responsible, arduous and exacting, and has to be done in remote country districts where there are only very limited opportunities for recreation.'[48] The work of crèches was an important part of the war work carried out by women during World War Two yet it received little contemporary attention and had it not been for the WAAC would have remained neglected. Gabain's crèche pictures are discussed in detail in the following chapter alongside the war work of Evelyn Dunbar and Evelyn Gibbs.

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[46] Priestley, J.B., British Women Go To War (1945), p.45.
[47] Letter from Mr.Dickey to Mrs. Benn at the W.V.S for Civil Defence, 09/05/1940. Women Activities WWII. Box 3, 7th May 1940 – 11th May 1940. IWM Second World War Artists Archive. File no: GP/46/22.
[48] Priestley, J.B., British Women Go To War (1945), p.51.

The WAAC was particularly interested in portraying nursing undertaken by women working in both military and civilian hospitals. In World War Two, the Sisters in Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in the uniform of red and grey travelled the globe, serving in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Nurses were aided by the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) which had been reorganised before the war in order to supplement general medical services. VADs had civilian status and were drawn from the Red Cross and the Order of St John and St Andrews Ambulance Association; they worked on both the Home Front and around the globe. Evelyn Dunbar and Frances Macdonald were both commissioned to compose pictures of nursing subjects. Dunbar's nursing pictures of which her two most successful canvases are 'Standing by on Train 21' (1942) (fig.8.8) and 'St. Thomas's Hospital in Evacuation Quarters' (1942) (fig.8.10) are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The WAAC's commissioning of work by women artists may be explained by a contemporary view of women's art. The Committee seem to have considered women artists capable of depicting women's wartime work but not men's wartime work, whilst male artists were able to depict the war work of men and women alike. The Commissioning process was based upon gender divisions which sought to confine women to the depiction of the 'feminine'. The commissioning process was inherently divisionary, a scaled down model of the art world which had preceded the Second World War and governed by the same laws of sexual discrimination. As a writer in The Studio had declare in 1930: 'With a few fortunate exceptions, feminine painting is apt to be a reflection of the masculine accomplishment.'[49] Art critics of the day tended to regard war artists as an explicitly 'masculine' phenomenon; in an article of 1940 entitled 'The War and The Artist' the editor of the Studio writes: 'The war artist carries a great responsibility. To him, it is given to reveal the spirit of a great period in world history, of the

[49] Studio, Vol.99, No.447, June 1930.

greatness of his fellows, of the magnitude of British endeavour. Let him see to it that he is worthy of his theme' (emphasis added).'[50] For the WAAC too the gendered distinctions working in the art world of the day were still very much in play.

The WAAC may have operated upon lines of sexual discrimination in their appointment of women war artists but they could not afford to ignore the war work of women throughout Britain. The role of women during the Second World War was crucial to Britain's victory and the WAAC realised that their role needed to be depicted. Although no woman artist was employed on a salaried basis until 1943 the employment of a woman artist on a salaried basis was discussed at the WAAC's 45th meeting held on Wednesday 23rd April 1941. 'Sir Muirhead Bone suggested there was a case for the full -time employment of a woman artist, perhaps Dame Laura Knight, to record the work of the women's services. It might be possible for the three women's services to combine to pay the salary of such an artist. It was generally felt that, while the suggestion was a good one as a publicity point, it would be possible to secure a better and more varied collection of pictorial records by commissioning different artists as was the present practice'. Mr.Gleadowe suggested that Dame Laura be kept constantly in mind for women's portraits.[51]

In an article of 1922 entitled 'Can Women Succeed as Artists?' Laura Knight had pointed out that women required equality of opportunity before they could succeed on the same terms as men but twenty years later equality of opportunity was not in evidence.[52] Women artists commissioned during World War Two entered a system which realised that women were an important part of the war machine but the WAAC was slow to offer them commissions. That said, the alignment of female artists with feminine subjects can be viewed as a positive union, bolstering each others' causes, and not as a complete suppression of women's endeavours or a

[50] Studio, Vol.120, July – December 1940.
[51] 45th Meeting of the WAAC held on Wednesday 23rd April 1941.
[52] Studio, May 1922.

deliberate attempt to sideline women's work. Indeed, by aligning female subjects and female artists the WAAC was perhaps furthering the female cause. The contributions that women made to the war effort and moreover, to the female cause is effectively expressed in a passage taken from Laura Knight's War Pictures by British Artists: Women (1945) 'After what she has done in this titanic struggle, will she not guard what she has gained, and to Man's effort add her own? If she can do what she has done in war, what may she not do in peace?'[53] The world was a changed place, new opportunities had arisen, they had been taken, and women were asserting themselves and displaying their abilities, an opportunity that women fought heavily to maintain.

The work of women on the land, within factories and hospitals provided the female war artist with a subject matter to which she was felt to have an affinity, both the female artist and her subject matter had a role to promote, women were casting off the shackles of patriarchal society within the early twentieth century, they were stepping out of the darkness in a bid to assert womankind's position during a period of transition. The female war artists' job lay in projecting a positive image of her own kind. The work she produced had an important job to fulfil, through her work the public would judge the work of women and was of the utmost importance that the public understood women's wartime efforts and the sacrifice which women themselves had made during the war years.

The War Artists' Advisory Scheme resulted in nearly 6,000 works of art, making it possibly the most extensive scheme of patronage for British artists ever to have been organised. Most of the works were eventually distributed to museums, with the Tate and IWM having first pick. The wartime steps taken by the MoI were the first towards government support of the arts,

[53] Knight,L., War Pictures by British Artists: Women (1945), p. 56.

which the Treasury expected to end when the war did.[54] Before 1942 the attendance at art exhibitions was largely restricted to the 'cultured elite', but as the public flocked to the exhibitions of 'New War Pictures' at the National Gallery throughout the war years this 'led to a higher estimation being placed by the public, as well as by those who were most seriously responsive, upon British art not only of the present but of the past.'[55] As Stransky and Abrahams have noted, 'During the First World War the powerful paintings and poetry from the Front were its most prominent artistic achievements. In the Second World War the artists who were at the Front made considerable and memorable contributions. But the Home Front was almost as involved as the fighting fronts, and the artists who worked primarily in England created the greater artistic works.'[56]

The Second World War was a unique period of history that produced artworks with a 'required' representative nature. For the war artist, the war provided a remarkable theme and endless opportunity to promote one's art, if you were commissioned. For many artists according to Kenneth Clark, 'it was a deepening and significant experience, its effects discernible on all their subsequent work, not only on that with a war subject.'[57] Henry Moore expressed how 'Without the war, which directed one's attention to life itself, I think I would have been a far less sensitive and responsible person.'[58] For all war artists the war had an effect upon their lives and work and for some the influence and opportunities that war produced were of longer lasting and greater significance. But for the women perhaps it was a temporary development, Dunbar, Gabain and Gibbs all produced exceptional work during World War Two, yet to assert that their post-war

[54] Abrahams, W and Stransky, P., London's Burning: Life, Death and Art in the Second World War (1994), p.17.
[55] Abrahams, W and Stransky, P., London's Burning: Life, Death and Art in the Second World War (1994), p.29.
[56] Stransky,P and Abrahams, W., London's Burning: Life, Death and Art in the Second World War (1994) ,p. 51.
[57] Ross, A., Colours of War (1983), p.18.
[58] Harries, M and S., The War Artists: British Official War Art of the Twentieth Century (1983), p.156

work was subsequently influenced and enhanced by their wartime experiences would be misleading. Their commissions and submissions to the WAAC did however, provide them with an income, the means to continue their artistic development.

Yet, notwithstanding their post-war development, those who had the most to gain from the war as regards to their work effort and through commissions from the WAAC were British women. The war brought about a change in attitude to women's employment, their employment became a necessity of war and a chance to show their ability was born. Laura Knight, herself a war artist in both world wars, comments in her book entitled War Pictures by British Artists: Women (1945), that pictures of women's activities in wartime 'with many others, will have their place side by side with those of the sailors, soldiers and the airmen, when the artists' record of the war is complete.'[59] According to Knight women's wartime achievements were being placed equally alongside those of their male counterparts, women were fighting for womankind's equality. From Knight's point of view as a successful war artist recognition was also due to women artists' abilities which were being utilised in this struggle for 'equality'. However, the art world continued to marginalise women's work; the struggle for 'equality' would continue. In 1945 the Royal Academy held an exhibition 'National War Pictures', in which out of 151 war artists only 14 were by women. This was a marginal improvement on their presence in the IWM's war pictures exhibition of winter 1919-1920, when 9 women were included in the 123 artists on show. Women artists' marginalised position was not merely a case of exclusion from exhibitions. It is important to remember that lack of official status as a war artist prevented many women artists from working at all. Moreover, although wartime efforts were recorded by both men and women artists, unlike their male counterparts' women artists were excluded from working in

[59] Knight,L.,War Pictures by British Artists: Women (1945), p. 59.

proximity to the front during both wars, and no woman received an Honorary Commission as a war artist with full rank in either conflict.

Given the restrictions with which women war artists worked, tied as they were to particular subjects deemed suitable for their gender, the assessment of their work is fraught with difficulties. To what extent was it possible to make significant works of art about the Home Front, especially when considering the explicit need to produce a picture of Britain's industrial and agricultural vigour that the MoI would be able to approve? And are we able to conclude with Kenneth Clark that this work was a deepening and significant experience? Looked at positively, the war gave women artists the chance to work alongside their male contemporaries on an equal basis, both genders facing the same challenge of making an appropriate response to war-time Britain. Yet, as we have seen, the field of possibilities for male artists was wider, embracing the depiction of heavy industry and the results of aerial bombardment as well as 'Front Line' subjects. The subjects available for women were all legitimate elements in the war effort but they tended to the domestic (nursing and evacuation) and the land (agriculture and forestry). Only in factory work (armaments) and civil defence does the war really make its presence felt. Some women artists were sent abroad during the war but with relativley little success. In August 1944, Stella Schmolle 'wishes to go to Normandy or Italy as the first woman ATS artist. It was agreed that the suggestion should be made that Stella Schmolle be posted to France and whilst there facilities be granted to her to make drawings.'[60] However, at the 169th Meeting of the WAAC the minutes record how Stella Schmolle is returning home after three months in France 'It has proved difficult to get her facilities owing to her sex and her visit has been disappointing through no fault of hers.'[61] Once the war ended however, it was 'thought that the time had now come for women

[60] 162nd Meeting of the WAAC held on Wednesday 16th August 1944.
[61] 169th Meeting of the WAAC held on Wednesday 22nd November 1944.

artists to be sent out to France and Germany to cover various topics out there.'[62] Women artists commissioned to record images abroad after the War included Anna Zinkensen, Laura Knight and Mary Kessell. These women artists were being allowed to engage in the effects of warfare far from the home front and the women they portrayed when they worked at home. Now they were witnessing the horrors of war brought upon other civilian populations. Women had finally been allowed to compete with men for artistic commissions, but their new equality of status was still relatively attenuated.

[62] 185th Meeting of the WAAC held on 20th June 1945.

Chapter Eight:

The War Art of Evelyn Dunbar, Ethel Gabain and Evelyn Gibbs

As we have seen from the previous chapter, women war artists were given commissions primarily to record the work performed by women on the Home Front. In this chapter, therefore, before reviewing the work produced by Dunbar, Gabain and Gibbs during the war, it is necessary to review some of the more salient features of women's contribution to the war effort and the various bodies that administrated it.

Away from the frontlines, women organised themselves to deal with the complete upheaval of normal life. Women's organisations such as the Women's Institute, the Women's Voluntary Service and the Church Guild assumed a new importance and were soon mounting their own special war effort. The Dowager Marchioness of Reading, one of a number of upper class women with the credentials and contacts to organise a range of voluntary initiatives established the Women's Voluntary Services (WVS) in the spring of 1938 on the initiative of the Home Secretary, because there was no women's organisation that was suitable for recruiting women into the Air Raid Precautions (ARP). The Women's Voluntary Service dressed in green uniform the only colour left to them by all the military and nursing services. The list of the activities they carried out included a variety of tasks, ranging from the menial to the complex. The WVS established canteens for the services and the Merchant Navy, mobile canteens for civil defence workers and set up sewing and knitting circles and ran feeding centres. The organisation was organised on a county basis and pulled communities together in times of crisis, their first was to be evacuation. The WVS was instrumental in placing children in new homes, where they would receive the physical and emotional support they required. The WVS were responsible among other things for the Government Knitting Scheme, in which bales of wool were made into vests and coats for children, promoted through the slogan 'Knitting for Britain'. The WVS were also instrumental in fund-raising, providing a transport service, re-uniting families after air-raids and finding the material for black out curtains, to name but a few of their activities. 'Broadly speaking, it saved the day in situations where official channels would have been too slow or

inflexible to cope. Being thoroughly decentralized, it was well equipped to deal quickly with local problems as they arose.'[1]

The WVS was not the only body formed to channel women's help in the war effort. Women of the middle and upper classes saw an opportunity to enlarge their horizons, and by setting up women's organisations found an outlet for their talents and energy. The Women's National Land Service Corps for example, was a mobile organisation of educated women who helped in the recruiting and organising of local women throughout the country.

The newspapers were filled with articles encouraging women to join these organisations and Lord Selbourne made a speech in 1939 declaring that 'Women must take the place of men upon the land, so that the men are spared to fight.'[2] In June 1939 the Women's Land Army (WLA) was re-established (it had originally been formed in February 1917 during World War One) under the direction of the Women Institute's Chair, Lady Denman. The WLA was entirely staffed and run by women. Posters urged women to join the WLA, as women's help was regarded as both urgent and indispensable. By September 1939 when war was declared, around a thousand volunteers could immediately be sent into employment. The re-establishment of the WLA was not greeted with enthusiasm by all. In July 1939 an editorial in The Land Worker the official publication of the National Union of Agricultural Workers grumbled that 'the Hon. Mrs. This, Lady That and the Countess of Something Else are all on the war path again. The Women's Land Army is here, and they have all got their old jobs back - of bossing people, and of seeing that the farmers find a way out of their labour shortage without having to pay better wages.'[3]

[1] Ward, S., War in the Countryside (1988), p. 163.
[2] Ward, S., War in the Countryside (1988), p. 54.
[3] The Land Worker cited in Ward, S., War in the Countryside (1988), p.16.

By August 1941 19,000 had joined the ranks of the WLA and by August 1943 the number had swelled to 87,000. The WLA developed a connection between women and the land, which allowed women some place within the war effort and allowed the land to serve the country in its fight against fascism. David Matless in Landscape and Englishness comments on this transformation of the land, 'By the end of the second year of the war it was obvious to everyone that the countryside was astir in a big way. Never had the fields looked so well ordered, or the hedges so trim and well cared for... it was as if some vast empty mill had reopened its shuttered doors and was slowly returning to its original business.'[4] The work of the WLA and the replacement of manpower by the machine, the tractor, which helped to make farming less physically demanding and thereby easier for women to undertake, suggested that agricultural work and the land itself had been 'feminised'. The work of the WLA established a connection between the land and women, which was to be made especially visible through literature and art.[5] Many portrayals of land girls marked them out from the rest of the agricultural workforce, including 55,000 regular pre-war female land workers. Vita Sackville-West produced official accounts of the WLA in which she stated that the 'true' land girl, 'like true visitors' went beyond the picturesque appreciation of the countryside: 'in the peculiar metropolitan beauty of Covent Garden, she may once have bought her pound of apples cheap, thinking no more of what had gone to produce them... But she knows now.'[6]

The role of women on the land and therefore their direct contribution to the war effort re-ignited the debate over the social acceptability of women's work that had been sparked in the First World War over women munitions workers. Women were seen to be replacing men within the workforce in a way that compromised their femininity. War brought about the breaking of

[4] Matless, D., Landscape and Englishness (1998), p. 174.
[5] Matless, D., Landscape and Englishness (1998), p. 176.
[6] Sackville-West,V., 'The Women's Land Army' (1944) quoted in Matless, D., Landscape and Englishness (1998), p.176.

social boundaries that had been put in place to keep men and women within their separate spheres, of work and home. Those who were sent to record the work of land girls seem to have been particularly aware of this concern with the 'de-feminisation' of women. As Matless has observed of the photographic records of the WLA, 'Whether seen in posed shots or snapshots the land girl is almost always long-haired and recognizably feminine, and never accompanies male workers, although many of those billeted individually on farms would have worked alongside men.'[7] Sackville-West's accounts promote the ideal of 'fresh-aired beauty', in which 'Bodies are re-shaped by new labour, with the female body moving out of the streamlined office in a reverse Cinderella transformation and harvesting a new glamour.'[8] The agriculturalist A.G. Street recollects his first hand experience of gangs at work in Wiltshire (comment undated): 'Recently, on a drizzly, cold afternoon, I visited several gangs. I saw typists minding the chaff, mannequins on the straw rick, bank clerks on the corn rick, and domestic servants cutting bonds...Of their work the farmers and regular farm workers all spoke highly...I am not suggesting that this scheme or every gang of girls working in it is perfect, but from personal inspection I can definitely say that it works, and also without it the winter threshing in this wet, western country would be considerably more behind schedule than it is.'[9]. The MoI sought to produce a picture of land girls which portrayed their absorption into the countryside. The job they were doing was felt particularly noteworthy to assign a commissioned war artist to highlight their work, Evelyn Dunbar.

Given her existing interest in horticulture, it is noteworthy that Dunbar approached the MoI with a clear prospectus of the kind of work she might do as a war artist. On the 20th

[7] Matless,D., Landscape and Englishness (1998), p.177.
[8] Ibid., p.177.
[9] Ward, S., War in the Countryside (1988), p.40. The 'glamour' with which Sackville-West associates the land girl appears absent from the shots which Cecil Beaton produced under commission, one photograph entitled 'A Land Girl from London who adapts herself to the village mould as though born to it' portrays a girl of 'sturdy trunk, a rooted body, with breeding potential', the girl appears as a threat to 'conventional country womanhood.'

December 1939 Evelyn Dunbar wrote to Mr.Jowett at the Ministry of Information 'I should be glad to know if there was any possibility of work making records say, of women's agricultural or horticultural work, or anything connected with land work, I feel I could do this with very keen understanding. I would be ready to do any other work in which I could use my abilities, though if you did hear of any job connected with the land work or gardening I'd be pleased if you would think of me.'[10] The MoI replied in April 1940 asking Dunbar to 'undertake for the Ministry of Information six pictures of Women's Voluntary Services subjects or the equivalent by mutual arrangement' at the rate of fifty guineas, with travelling expenses and maintenance allowance at the flat rate of £1 per day.[11] The letter also stated that it is 'necessary to submit all your preliminary sketches and studies, as well as finished works for censorship.'[12] Two other women were commissioned by the WAAC in the same period of time. Ethel Gabain who was commissioned to 'undertake 8 lithographs for a fee of 12 guineas each, 4 of evacuation subjects, and 4 of WVS subjects' and Miss Dorothy Coke who was being looked after by the WVS.[13]

Dunbar travelled extensively in England during the war, at first depicting dairy training at Sparsholt Farm Institute, Winchester, Hampshire (later Hampshire College of Agriculture) which had been converted entirely to the training of female recruits for the Land Army. The women were given short but intensive courses in various aspects of farming. Dunbar lived at the Institute with the other staff and took her subjects from the life of the students. In August 1940 Dunbar wrote to Mr.Dickey at the WAAC stressing what she saw as the 'need for a small, but interesting

[10] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence – Evelyn Dunbar, 1940 – 1949. Letter to Mr.Jowelt dated 20th December 1939 from Evelyn Dunbar.
[11] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence – Evelyn Dunbar, 1940 – 1949. Letter to E.Dunbar dated 17th April 1940 from MoI.
[12] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence – Evelyn Dunbar, 1940 – 1949. Letter to E.Dunbar dated 17th April 1940 from MoI.
[13] 18th Meeting of the WAAC held on April 10th 1940.

illustrated hand book for beginners in land work.'[14] (Greenhill, M and Dunbar, E., A Book of Farmcraft (London, 1942) is discussed later and also in Chapter 5). Dunbar seems to have taken a great interest in all that surrounded her whilst at Sparsholt. Her ability to immerse herself in her work had also happened in her execution of the Brockley School Murals a few years earlier, a time in which she led in her own words a 'hermit's' existence. In a letter to Mr.J.C.Darracott, Keeper of the Art Department at the Imperial War Museum, dated April 27th 1971, Mrs Josephine Davis who was working as Assistant Dairy Instructress at the Farm Institute, Sparsholt in the early part of 1940 when Dunbar arrived, recalls Dunbar's time there. 'Miss Dunbar lived at the Institute as a member of staff and painted or drew every aspect of farming life. She seemed to revel in farm machinery and "instructive action" studies'. Mrs Davis even offers an insight into what those who were depicted by Dunbar felt of her work, 'I described her portrayal of people as "Noah Ark" characters – there was an engaging woodeness about their form and construction and yet surprisingly enough the result was fluid and forceful and gave a real sense of those portrayed.'[15] Importantly, Dunbar's depictions of Land Girls did not glamorize the work they carried out. Dunbar's pictures seek to tell a story that Vita Sackville-West described in prose as 'a plodding story, of endurance rather than heroics, and she should be richly honoured for having chosen her vital and exacting role so thoroughly away from the limelight. In this war-drama with its innumerable cast and its gigantic stage, she has seldom had the chance to strut within view of the audience.'[16] Indeed, one instructress at the Hampshire Farm Institute, Sparsholt, complained about the fact that the Land Army posters showed 'a pretty girl nursing a lamb or an equally ravishing blond in a picture- hat, tossing a minute wisp of hay. The reality was very different, and

[14] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence – Evelyn Dunbar, 1940 – 1949. Letter to Mr.Dickey dated August 2nd 1940 from E.Dunbar.
[15] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence – Evelyn Dunbar, 1940 – 1949. Letter to Mr.J.C.Darracott, Keeper of the Art Department, IWM. Dated 27th April 1971 from Mrs.Josephine Davis, Assistant Dairy Instructress at the Farm Institute, Sparsholt ,1940.
[16] Sackville –West, V., The Women's Land Army (1944).

it was only when the girl was sent off to the farm that she realised what farm work was like – the long hours, the monotony, the loneliness, and the incredibly hard work.'[17]

One of the most important jobs that the Women's Land Army undertook was milking, it was both one of the most exacting tasks they performed and one at which the Land Girls excelled. Evelyn Dunbar's depictions of women practising milking, show that even as a female war artist who was typically restricted to women's occupations she made no attempt to hide the roughness of the work, its often monotonous and trying nature. In the milking pictures we see girls in their stiff yellow oilskin aprons, which Dunbar seems to have taken great pleasure in depicting. In Dunbar's 'Women's Land Army Dairy Training' (1940) (fig.8.1) the Land Girls are busy in their respective dairying practices. In the foreground a Land Army girl rolls a churn of milk to the bottom of the picture frame, her forearms crossing over as she does so. And to the left of the figure in the foreground a girl positioned with her back towards us manoeuvres the churns of milk ready to be moved. To the right of the figure in the foreground two women in their stiff oilskin aprons and turbaned head scarves stand at the sink rinsing the buckets and at the far back a girl stacks the cleaned buckets. The picture shows how the Land Army girls are working together in a methodical and efficient way. In 'Milking Practice with Artificial Udders' (1940) (fig.8.2) the composition of the painting owes something of a debt to early Modernist developments in art, with its flattened picture-plane and non-naturalistic treatment of the figures. The wooden floor slats on the left hand side of the picture frame help to concentrate the eye on the Land Girls' work. In their headscarves and WLA uniform they sit on their stools learning how to milk on artificial udders. The girl at the forefront of the picture seems to have mastered the correct technique while the girl at the far end of the picture appears to be struggling. The picture seeks to highlight the difficulties Land Girls experienced and how they were trained to overcome any difficulties. And in 'Girl Milking' (1940) (fig.8.3) Dunbar again displays her modernist

[17] Ward, S., War in the Countryside (1988), p. 41.

credentials, the viewer is placed at the same height as the 'rosy cheeked' land girl who has mastered the milking technique, seated on a low stool in a white overall, the green and brown uniform of the WLA glimpsed underneath. Dunbar's treatment of the cow the angular nature of the hooves and hocks is reminiscent of her treatment of many human subjects. In this small painting (22.5cm x 22.5 cm) Dunbar's exploration of tonality is evident in the many shades of white that make up the composition of the girl's overall and the cow's body.

In 1940 Dunbar also produced 'Putting on Anti-gas Clothing' (fig.8.4). The problem that Dunbar faced when executing this painting was how to make a useful illustration also a work of art. The painting is divided into six boxes, each one depicting the various stages of dressing a Land Army girl in Anti-gas clothing. The division of the canvas as a means of successfully illustrating a sequence of events is also used by Ethel Gabain in 'Stannards Pack for Burn Treatment' (1943) (fig.8.36). Dunbar rotates the figure 360 degrees over the six boxes, to provide the viewer with a thorough illustration of the process involved and the difficulties of putting on the heavy clothing. The painting functions as both an informative manual for the user and as an illustration of the difficulties involved in preparing those on the homefront for possible gas attacks. The painting anticipates two developments in Dunbar's art. The idea of schematic illustration recurs two years later in her illustrations for A Book of Farmcraft (1942). Dunbar also developed the idea of using a grid-like division of the canvas in 'St.Thomas in Evacuation Quarters' (1942) and 'English Calendar' of 1936. The painting was shown in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA in 1941.

In 'A Canning Demonstration' (fig.8.5) also of 1940 the insistent geometry of the hut articulates the space. Dunbar organises all the elements of the painting around the vanishing point above the picture on the far wall of the hut, which is itself slightly off centre. Dunbar's control of space here seems to intend the same use of geometry as is associated with quattrocento painting,

with foreground and middle ground groups arranged parallel to the picture plane. This planar recession allows her to place the demonstrators' heads amongst the heads of their audience to emphasise the communication of their instruction. In the foreground Dunbar places a basket of fruit and various pieces of equipment related to canning on a table. These still-life elements are, perhaps, alternatives to the grid, they are not arranged according to its "logic" so they call attention to themselves as the apparatus for canning. The image serves to record the invaluable work of women within the home and their important contribution to the war effort.

In 1940 Dunbar also produced 'A Knitting Party' (fig.8.6) which highlights the knitting effort that occurred during the war. If 'A Canning Demonstration' of 1940 is all rectilinear, 'A Knitting Party' of 1942 is all about circles and arcs, the circular arrangement of the women knitting, the roundness of the women's hats, the oval mirror above the fireplace and the curved shape of the bay window. At the front of the picture the viewer is confronted with just the shoulders and heads of two women sitting knitting. This not only positions the spectator within the space the women inhabit but also expresses the idea of mental concentration. The importance of the WVS 'Knitting for Britain' scheme is reflected in Dunbar's execution of 'Standing by on Train 21' (fig.8.8) executed in 1942, which depicts nurses knitting whilst they wait to go into bombed cities. 'A Knitting Party' shows how women gathered and worked together within each others' homes during the war. The austerity of war is reflected in the painting's palette which ranges from the varying shades of grey used on the walls and floor to the green of the wool used for the knitting.

Dunbar appears to have spent 1940 interested in not only the agricultural aspect of the war but other occurrences of war. In a letter to Mr.Dickey dated September 12th 1940 Dunbar expresses an interest in the depiction of 'women's activities going on in connection with relief for air raid victims, in which I am helping, and which also provides subjects for drawings and

paintings.'[18] By January 16th 1941 Mr.Dickey informs Dunbar that from the WAAC's original contract of six pictures at fifty guineas they wish to keep: 'A Canning Demonstration'(1940), 'Instruction in Milking'(1940), 'Women's Land Army Dairy Training'(1940), 'A Knitting Party'(1940) and 'Putting on Anti-gas clothing'(1940). In her reply to Mr.Dickey, Evelyn Dunbar writes 'Please express my sincere thanks to the Committee for the wonderful opportunity they gave me; I have found the work tremendously interesting and of great help to me.'[19] Following Dunbar's depiction of the Land Army and her growing interest in agriculture she spent the first half of 1941 illustrating the book she had proposed to Mr. Dickey in August 1940. A Book of Farmcraft was written by a colleague, Michael Greenhill, and was published in May 1941, 'a hand book for beginners in land work.'

The WAAC's warm reception of Dunbar's Land Army painting led to her receiving a letter in August 1941 from Mr.Dickey following a meeting held by the WAAC in which they 'recommended that you be asked to paint some pictures of nursing subjects for a fee of thirty five guineas...It was particularly requested that a hospital train should be included among the subjects that you should deal with. Train No.21 was suggested as particularly interesting'. The WAAC were at this time especially interested in portraying nursing being undertaken by women working in both military and civilian hospitals. Dunbar's reply to Mr. Dickey is full of enthusiasm for the requested depiction of a nursing subject. The WAAC for its part believed that Dunbar was 'usefully employed in painting war subjects and would be prepared to say so, but we would like to have some further information to help us to determine what would be needed in order that you

[18] Imperial War Museum Archives, Personal Correspondence 1940 – 1949 E.Dunbar, letter to Mr.Dickey from E.Dunbar dated 12th September 1940.
[19] Imperial War Museum Archives, Personal Correspondence 1940 – 1949 E.Dunbar, letter to Mr.Dickey from E.Dunbar dated 11th March 1941.

should be able to continue to paint instead of being called up.'[20] The resulting pictures from Dunbar's nursing commission would confirm her war artist status.

In the first completed picture 'Convalescent Nurses Making Camouflage Nets' (1942) (fig.8.7), the pictures hanging behind the nurses indicate that they are possibly working in a home given over to the war effort. The convalescent nurses, the majority of whom are dressed in their 'civvies', stand and kneel whilst making the camouflage netting; one net is placed over a table whilst the other lies on the floor. Actively engaged in their work the women appear unaware of the nurse standing at the door peering in to check on their progress. Dunbar elongates the plane of the picture by placing a large expanse of netting on the floor and then pulling the eye up to the table around which the other nurses work. The viewer is then aware of the observing nurse at the door whose white headpiece is offset by the dark frame which surrounds her. 'Convalescent Nurses Making Camouflage Nets' (1942) was reproduced in War Through Artists Eyes by Eric Newton published in 1945.

The elevated viewer, in 'Standing by on Train 21' (1942) (fig.8.8) (a painting specifically requested by the WAAC, as noted above), looks down on the nurses and orderlies in a hospital train standing by for emergencies. They are making the best use of their time; many of the nurses sit knitting, engaged in the Government Knitting Scheme 'Knitting for Britain'. The eye is drawn down the length of the carriage, with men and women sitting around tables each side of the aisle, to the standing woman at the bottom who appears to be serving tea, possibly a member of the WVS' canteen service. The starched uniforms of the nurses which create stiff angular shapes are echoed by the curtains at the windows in the carriage which appear to be blowing in. The

[20] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence 1940 – 1949 E.Dunbar, letter to Dunbar from Mr.Dickey dated 11th December 1941.

atmosphere appears calm and relaxed in preparation for the work that they will soon be called upon to do.

In 'Hospital Train' (fig.8.9) also of 1942 the viewer's eye is drawn by the passageway and overhead lighting down the long, elongated train carriage, which will transport the injured away from bombed areas. The two nurses to the right hand side of the picture are busy organising the medical supplies. To their left sits the equipment to extinguish any fire and oil lamps in case of a power failure. Past the nurses a man stretches on his tip toes to pull down the beds which line both sides of the carriage. The passageway stretches past the man and into the next carriage beyond.

In October 1942 the WAAC received one further work resulting from this commission which particularly impressed them: Dunbar's large nursing scene, 'St.Thomas's Hospital in Evacuation Quarters' (1942) (fig.8.10). 'It was agreed that your commission of thirty five guineas was a wholly inadequate recompense for the work you have turned in, and a further thirty five guineas was voted to you, making seventy guineas in total.'[21] Mr.Palmer's letter dated 15th October 1942 also brought the offer of a six months commission at a salary of £325, and the request to deal with a variety of women's activities, among them the Land Army, the Services and possibly the Red Cross, to be finalised after a meeting in the near future with Sir Kenneth Clark. Dunbar's status as a salaried official war artist under commission for six months commenced on the 1st January 1943.

Looking at 'St Thomas's Hospital in Evacuation Quarters' (1942) it's easy to see what impressed the WAAC. Dunbar has divided the canvas into a series of smaller pictures each of

[21] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence 1940 – 1949 E.Dunbar, letter to Dunbar from Mr.Palmer (Mr.Dickey's successor) dated 15th October 1942.

which depicts a task being carried out by the nurses - sterilising equipment, preparing beds for patients, working at the operation table, changing patients' dressings, reporting to matron, measuring out doses of medicine and organising stock rooms. Dunbar writes: 'The whole is a scene of everyday hospital tasks, a flat chequered background with its wreath of crisply white aproned figures moving deftly and swiftly over it. Browns, greens, blue, scarlet and white with a few sharp blacks and spottings of delicate pink so it seemed to me... Wish I could do it again – I'd do something a lot better.'[22] Each picture forms part of the larger story; Dunbar's work informs the viewer of the many tasks that the nurse carries out on a day to day basis. The striking use of the colours of the British flag - white, red and blue - is also crucial to the success of the painting; the use of red at certain points in the picture helps to draw the eye inwards, highlighting the activities present in each scene. The painting 'arose from the vivid impressions I received on first going in to and going about in a big hospital. My original idea, before I went there, was to do a record of the different nurses in their various uniforms, but the activity transmitted this till it became the nursing composition which you finally had from me.'[23]

During Dunbar's time as an officially commissioned war artist (1943-1944) The Evening Standard (6th September 1943) carried an article entitled 'She Paints the Land Army' in which Dunbar's war work is investigated. At the time the article appeared Dunbar was at work upon another series of pictures of the Women's Land Army. The author highlights Dunbar's 'preference' for the country recalling her 'English Calendar' (1936), 'a sort of chessboard in the squares of which little figures of gardeners and girls symbolised the months' (fig.5.9).[24] This technique was also used in another of Dunbar's war paintings, 'Putting on Anti-gas clothing'

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[22] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence 1940 – 1949 E.Dunbar, letter from Dunbar to Mr.Gregory dated 4th January 1944

[23] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence 1940 – 1949 E.Dunbar, letter from Dunbar to Mr.Gregory dated 4th January 1944.

[24] Ministry of Information, Reference Section, Press Cuttings Bureau, The Evening Standard 6th September 1943.

(1940), discussed above, in which the canvas is broken down into a series of six smaller pictures: read left to right each picture shows the individual steps of putting the clothing on. The way Dunbar maximises the use of the canvas to tell the story is a method of painting that she employed in both her war pictures and in her non- war work. In September 1943 the Ministry decided to give Dunbar a further commission for six months; they especially 'liked your idea of WAAF' painting. But no WAAF paintings were produced and Dunbar produced further Land Army paintings in their place.

On 1st March 1944 Dunbar received another six month commission painting women's subjects, depicting the activities of the Women's Voluntary Services. Dunbar's pictures convey people's everyday lives during wartime. 'The Queue at the Fish Shop' (fig.8.11) of 1944 records the war food shortages that the civilian population experienced. Fresh fish was always in short supply but because it was perishable it was never rationed and therefore fish queues were always long. The size of the canvas helps to emphasise the length of the queue. The detailed figures huddled along the shop fronts are framed between two horizontals, giving them a frieze-like organisation. Part of the queue that has formed outside the fishmongers 'M.Hill and Son' are positioned behind a large panel of red wall, the same colour as the door pillars of the shop, which adds to the unity of this part of the painting. In the foreground of the painting Dunbar places three figures in motion, in contrast to the static nature of the queue. In the lower right hand corner of the painting a woman hurries across the road to join the queue. In the bottom left hand corner of the foreground an RAF man cycles past the queue on his bicycle, to the right of the bicycle a service woman's head appears staring out at the viewer from the bottom of the picture, contrasting their urgent business with the daily realities facing the civilian population.[25]

[25] 'The Queue at the Fish Shop' was one of a few pictures by commissioned war artists that the Imperial War Museum included in their major exhibition 'Women and War' held 15th October 2003 – 18th April 2004.

In the autumn of 1944 Dunbar returned to again her depictions of the Land Army and executed possibly her best work as an Officially Commissioned Woman War Artist entitled 'A 1944 Pastoral: Land Girls Pruning at East Malling' (fig.8.12), subsequently given as gift by the WAAC to Manchester City Art Galleries. The Land Girls are depicted pruning fruit trees, standing on ladders set against a grey autumnal sky with the wind blowing through the trees, preparing for the onset of winter and the coming of spring in the New Year. The painting is part of the European tradition of painting the round of the seasons, the production of food and the necessity of a good harvest. The main picture is framed by a black border which contrasts with the inner picture. The border depicts gloved hands, pruning shears and saws. The girls' tools and hands evoke the Renaissance tradition of showing the Instruments of the Passion presented around the image of the crucifixion. The picture is dominated by the geometrical positioning of the two ladders and the girls in their headscarves have a monumental quality that also brings Renaissance exemplars to mind. In 1944 Dunbar also produced 'Sprout Picking, Monmouthshire' (fig.8.13) which is now at the Manchester City Art Galleries. The picture depicts one of the many tasks that Land Girl gangs did during the harvesting months. Peggy Reed from Bromley in Kent recalls the hard and often back-breaking work that she was involved in as a Land Girl. 'In summer we went haymaking, stacking up the hay stooks throughout the fields in long golden lines ... Threshing was hot, hard, dirty work – our eyes were sore and noses streamed from the husks of corn ... On cold frosty mornings we picked sprouts and we froze. But lunchtime in the barn with our sandwiches and flasks and chatter and gossip was a pleasure. We did hedging and ditching, and the farmer would burn debris on a huge bonfire and I can still smell the woodsmoke now. A waft of woodsmoke brings back the nostalgia for a time when I was young and carefree and happy.'[26] The picture in no way glamorises the physically demanding task the girls are involved in, it portrays the scene in a factual manner.

[26] Adie, K., Corsets to Camouflage: Women and War (2003), p.189- 190.

Dunbar's paintings of the Women's Land Army are faithful to the reality that many women faced; her works represent an important part of women's war effort, their work on the land. Her ability to dignify the labour of the Land Girls can be contrasted with he contemporary thoughts of Vita Sackville-West regarding the work of Land Girls 'Not for the Land Army are the community existence, the parades, the marchings-past, the smart drill, the eyes-right, the salutes - or very seldom. For the most part its members work isolated and in a mouse-like obscurity. Their very uniform seems to suggest a bashful camouflage of green-and-fawn to be lost against the grass or the stubble.'[27] Dunbar's paintings it may be argued, monumentalised the war effort of thousands of women and redeemed them from the obscurity Sackville-West describes.

The quality of work that Dunbar produced encouraged the WAAC to continue renewing her contract; it appears however, that Dunbar's lack of time keeping was proving troublesome to the WAAC. In a letter to Mr.S.E.Trenaman at the Ministry of Information's finance division, Mr.Gregory describes Dunbar 'as a very slow worker and has to make a great many sketches on the spot before she can complete her work' he goes on to say that 'I shall certainly bear in mind your suggestion that in the future it would be better to purchase pictures rather than employ her on a commission basis'. The Ministry's concern with Dunbar's slowness in producing commissioned pictures is aired in a letter from Mr.Gregory to Dunbar 'It would help therefore, if you could speed up the work in some way, although I do not want to exert too much pressure and spoil the results.'[28] Dunbar's reply to Gregory is defensive about the time restrictions that he highlighted, 'I'm sure they would rather have a few good things than many poor ones, wouldn't they?'[29] Dunbar's later war work would be worth the wait, producing her most finely observed and executed work under commission from the WAAC. As Dunbar wrote to Mr.Gregory in

[27] Sackville – West, V., The Women's Land Army (1944), p. 1
[28] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence 1940 – 1949 E.Dunbar, letter from Mr.Gregory to Evelyn Dunbar dated 27th November 1944.
[29] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence 1940 – 1949 E.Dunbar, letter from Dunbar to Mr.Gregory dated 11th December 1944.

September 1945, 'The title of the picture is 'A Land Girl and Bail Bull' (fig.8.14). It seems to me rather old-fashioned (for want of a better word) but there it is.'[30] This was one of the last war pictures that Dunbar executed as an official artist. Dunbar stated that it was 'painted at Strood towards the end of the war about 1944 – 45. It is an imaginative painting of a Land Girl's work with an outdoor dairy herd on the Hampshire Downs. The bail is the moveable shed where the milking is done.'[31] The picture was painted in just four months, 'All the observation had to be done before 5 am and once we did an all night journey of about 100 miles to the farm where the idea came into being, arriving at 4'o clock in the morning, and came back the next day!'[32]

The work is impressive for more than its painterly qualities and vivid depiction of the girl tethering the bull, tempting him with a bucket of fodder. Dunbar's painting depicts the gender reversal of the agricultural labourer, the Land Girl is no longer relegated to the quasi-decorative status of shepherdess or milkmaid, her task is a real one as she confronts the bull, an encounter in which she is clearly dominant. The picture encapsulates the work of women within the war, not only within the countryside but within the country as a whole, challenging previous gender ideals, breaking down barriers. It is instructive to compare this picture with what it confronts, the easy assumptions about women's capabilities that were so widely believed before the WLA set to work. A contemporary account of women working the land, written just before war was declared, seeks to divide different tasks into those suitable for men and those suitable for women. 'Women can look after chickens, but they cannot ditch. They can feed pigs, but they cannot look after boar. They can milk the cows, and, if they have enough experience, which is not very often, they can attend to the calving, but they cannot look after the bull. They can drive a reaper and binder, but they cannot drive a big track-laying tractor. They cannot lay drains, they cannot cart or spread

[30] IWM Archives, Personal Correspondence 1940 – 1949 E.Dunbar, letter from Dunbar to Mr.Gregory dated 26th September 1945.
[31] Foster, A., Tate Women Artists (2003), p.57.
[32] IWM Archives, letter of 1945 regarding 'A Land Girl and the Bail Bull' from Evelyn Dunbar.

chalk, or spread dung or load it. They cannot pull swedes or mangolds or load them. In fact, they cannot do any heavy work on the farm, and there is not a great deal of light work; the idea of substituting women for men on the farm is absurd.'[33] (Emphasis added). Many women working on farms across the land relished the challenges they faced, as Vita Sackville-West was determined to emphasise: 'The speciality of the agricultural worker, and consequently of his handmaid the Land Girl, is what happens on the farm owing to the unreasonable behaviour of their dumb beast friends... The bull is a creature of incalculable impulses, apt to turn even against those who have brought him up from the bucket ... One girl, who had been dragged round the farmyard, and twice thrown to the ground under the bull's feet, but who held on all the same, remarked afterwards that she liked this life, it was so much more interesting than office work. She looked quite puzzled when somebody said there was no accounting for taste.'[34]

Dunbar's 'Land Girl and Bail Bull' received a warm reception from the WAAC. In a letter dated 1st October 1945 Mr Gregory wrote 'my Committee were simply delighted with your new picture and they thought it had been very finely seen and well conceived. In fact, the whole composition of the picture and its rather poetical mood made them enthusiastic and several members declared it was the best work they had ever seen of yours.'[35] This impressive example of Dunbar's work was bought by the Tate Gallery. It is probable that the work was shown at the Royal Academy exhibition of war paintings held on October 13th 1945. In September 1945 Dunbar submitted commissioned works: 'Women's Land Army', 'Milking Time', a few drawings

[33] Ward, S., War in the Countryside (1988) ,p. 17, opinion voiced by W.R.Nicholson in July 1939 edition of The Land Worker.
[34] Sackville-West, V., The Women's Land Army (1944), p. 84.
[35] IWM Archives, letter regarding the delivery of 'A Land Girl and the Bail Bull', from Mr.Gregory dated 1st October 1945.

of Tent Making and three sketches of airmen, reviewed at the WAAC's 191st Meeting on 26th September 1945.[36]

The WAAC's support and nourishment of Evelyn Dunbar's artistic talent through their employment of her as a salaried war artist resulted in a remarkable record of women at the home front. Today Dunbar is considered one of the success stories of the WAAC's legacy and there has been talk for a number of years of a solo show at the Imperial War Museum. However, contemporary accounts were not all so complimentary of Dunbar's work. Jan Gordon in the Studio edition for September 1943 in a regular editorial entitled 'London Commentary' offers the following criticism on Dunbar's set of four Land Army paintings:

> good as they are they are examples of what I mean when I suggest a lack of war-substance. The retort might be that an artist who had got the war under his skin would have selected aspects of his subject that did contain such suggestions. One cannot pretend that in actuality these Land Girls are working under normal conditions and the job of the war artist is to get something expressed that the camera cannot do.[37]

Dunbar's paintings produced in 1943 as a salaried war artist include 'Women's Land Army Hostel' and 'Land Army Going to Bed' (fig.8.15), pictures which arose from Dunbar's stay near Coldstream, Berwickshire in May 1943. In 'Land Army Going to bed' of 1943 the viewer is positioned looking down on the scene below from the top of a bunk bed, whose foot is shown at the bottom right of the painting. Immediately in front of the viewer Dunbar has painted a striking composition of a land girl taking off her jumper, her arms wrapped around her head to form a circular frame. The painting is a fascinating interpretation of the Land Girls' everyday life based upon observation but handled in a style that seems to owe something to Stanley Spencer's

[36] Early in 1945, at the WAAC's 172nd meeting held on January 3rd 1945, Evelyn Dunbar was recorded as 'now working on a picture of women making tents'.
[37] The Studio, September 1943, p.162.

example. Both these pictures capture the boarding school atmosphere of the life of Land Army gangs, when Land Girls were formed into mobile units for seasonal work. Jan Gordon is right to state that Dunbar's pictures of Land Girls don't portray the hardships of war that those at the Front Line experienced, but they do tell us a great deal about women displaced from their homes and families, who helped to fight the war from the fields of England, and this 'spirit' is what the WAAC wanted to get across in commissioning such works. '"They fight in the fields", and sometimes they have had to fight in very truth. Not only against weeds and weather, frost and flood; but against fire and angry animals.'[38] The viewer was expected to understand that their war effort was as relevant as their fellow comrades-in-arms fighting in the air, land or sea. Many of the girls in the Land Army had never left home before, had never been away from cities like Manchester, Birmingham or Leeds; indeed, one third of all land girls came from London or large industrial cities. The girls often grew homesick away from their parents and although a few left to return home the overwhelming majority worked hard to make their time well spent. Dunbar's success in depicting Land Girls lies in her reluctance to 'beautify' her subjects; she resists the temptation of much WLA propaganda to portray the Land Girl as a blonde haired pretty young girl. Dunbar's war work portrays a far grittier, harder working reality.

Whilst Gordon attacks Dunbar's lack of rapport with her Land Army subjects, Ernest Blaikley the then Keeper of Art at the Imperial War Museum (an internal commentator rather than an external critic like Jan Gordon) praises Dunbar's 'The Queue at the Fish Shop' (1944) (fig 8.11). In an article for the 1948 February edition of the Studio entitled 'The Lighter Shade of War Art' Blaikley considers Dunbar's fish queue as 'another well – observed study of everyday life with its patient row of housewives waiting outside an empty shop bearing the optimistic notice about large supplies. Fatigue, boredom and expectancy are all registered in the different attitudes of the waiting crowd and one can almost see the patient women shifting from one tired

[38] Sackville-West, V., The Women's Land Army (1944), p. 80.

foot to the other.'[39] Whilst Gordon criticises Dunbar's lack of affinity with her subject, Blaikley praises her skill at depicting the emotional and physical strains of wartime upheaval upon Britain's people.

The resilience of people at the home front would be tested on an unprecedented scale with the threat of bombing raids on Britain's cities. To minimise the loss of civilian lives the government began the evacuation from the city to the country on 1st September 1939. Over the next three days one and a quarter million people were evacuated. The city moved to the countryside on a scale and in a way unprecedented in modern British history. The Women's Voluntary Services were largely responsible for dealing with the evacuation. Evacuation brought about the meetings of 'two Englands', 'one often deemed more English than the other, and anger, sympathy, kindness, rejection, abuse or friendship followed.'[40] Matless in Landscape and Englishness describes evacuation as 'a window through which town life was seen'. There arose a debate over those who viewed the rural middle class as 'selfish' and those who saw the urban working class as 'sinful'.[41] Miss G. Mackay Brown was the organiser for Bedfordshire's 34 rural parishes and found accommodation for evacuated children. Here she describes the problems encountered by those who let evacuees into their homes. 'Many had never sat at a table for a meal – food had been thrust into their hands or they had been given a few pence to go out and spend it on what they liked. One small boy would only eat dry bread for the first few days and many had never tasted jam.'[42] There are many stories that portray evacuation as a trying time for both city dwellers and those in the country who took them in, there are also many stories that recall fond memories of the countryside and the love and affection that many children received.

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[39] Studio, February 1948, p.134.
[40] Matless, D., Landscape and Englishness (1998), p.179.
[41] Matless,D., Landscape and Englishness (1998), p.180.
[42] Adie, K., Corsets to Camouflage: Women and War (2003), p. 172 cited from IWM Documents: The Papers of Miss.G. Mackay Brown.

In 1940 Ethel Gabain (fig.8.16) was offered a short-term commission to produce eight lithographs by the WAAC, one of which included 'The Evacuation of Children from Southend, Sunday 2nd June, 1940' (fig.8.17). Here Gabain describes her observation of evacuation, 'I got down in time to see the children gathering at 6.30 and stayed until 9 – a really wonderful sight – everything went without a hitch apparently and so quietly and good-temperedly. It was really moving – What a pity you cannot get someone more worthy than me to do it a Brueguel or a Goya – however, shall do my best.'[43] The eye is drawn to the taller, older girl who stands facing the viewer, looking back away from the waiting train, willing us the viewer to board the train. To the girl's right stand two children of decreasing height, the child at the forefront of the image is looking out to the viewer, but signalling with their thumb towards the train. Along the platform other children stand waiting to board the train. As the viewer's gaze wanders into the depth of the platform the facial characteristics of the children become less defined, almost shadow-like. Gabain's use of dark and light is particularly evident in this image where the children are placed against the black background of the train carriages. Gabain's print serves as an important piece of government propaganda, reinforcing the need of parents to get their children out into the country and away from the aerial bombardment of the cities.

Gabain's interest in evacuated children and her skilled portrayal of them led to the offer of a commission on the 27th August 1940 from the Ministry of Information for an evacuation series. A series of five lithographs were published by H.M. Stationers Office in 1941 under the title 'Children in Wartime': 'Boys from South-East London Gathering Sticks in Cookham Wood', 'Girls from a London School at Finnemore Wood Camp', 'Evacuees in a Cottage at Cookham', 'Bombed Out Bermondsey' and 'Nursery School, Watlington Park'.

[43] Imperial War Museum Archives. File Name: Ethel Gabain 1940 - 1950. File Number: GP/55/46. Letter from Ethel Gabain to Mr.Dickey dated 2nd June 1940.

'Boys from South-East London Gathering Sticks in Cookham Wood' (fig.8.18) and 'Girls from a London School at Finnemore Wood Camp' (fig.8.19) are both careful studies of children at play, topics that allow Gabain to use her skills as a lithographer to best effect. The circle of boys gathering sticks portray evacuated children in their new country surroundings and display Gabain's feeling for strong composition. They are seen exploring the woods, immersed in nature. Gabain's studies of women in domestic settings prior to the war are usually stripped of detailed surroundings, yet this lithograph displays Gabain's skill at depicting detail. The irises in the foreground and the trees in the background are as detailed as the boys in the picture. In the middle of the forefront of 'Girls from a London School at Finnemore Wood Camp' a girl in a uniform shift dress waits to catch a ball tossed in the air. Around her other girls in the same uniform are throwing and catching balls, the balls appear suspended in the air, the girls' activity is frozen in time. On the ground the girls' shadows dance on the floor. The movement of the playing girls is mirrored by their shadows which provide a pattern of contrasting black and white. In 'Nursery School, Watlington Park' (fig.8.20) Gabain perfectly translates into an image the words of Mr. Burke at the Ministry of Home Security, 'Granted ample space and skilled supervision, there is no better way of caring for little children whose mothers cannot leave the evacuation areas with them.'[44] In the foreground of the lithograph a group of small children, three seated and four standing, in their 'uniform' of checked dresses and Mary-Jane shoes gather. Two of the children are holding posies of flowers. The standing children are looking down on the seated children possibly playing some kind of game, but shielded from the viewer's eyes by the child sitting with its back to the viewer. Beyond the group of children some nurses seated on the ground play with a child and just in view to the picture's left a child is walking towards the nurses, a long shadow cast in front of her. At the back of the picture the two scenes are framed by groups of trees which lie to the left and right but which have a large gap in between. The gap

[44] Imperial War Museum Archives. File Name: Ethel Gabain 1940 - 1950. File Number: GP/55/46. Letter from Mr.Burke at the Ministry of Home Security to Mr.Dickey, undated.

between the groups of trees, the distance between the two groups of children and the children and the trees deepen the depth of the painting, making the space seem larger, a contrast between the open countryside and the crowded city. These three images serve to show the benefits the country brings to children. The WAAC was eager to portray evacuation in a positive and encouraging way. Nevertheless, H.M.Stationers Office reported to the WAAC that Ethel Gabain's published lithographic series of evacuation subjects were selling very slowly. And at the WAAC's 73rd Meeting held on 18th February 1942 it was agreed that in view of the strong propaganda value of the subjects the majority of the pamphlets should be distributed free to suitable organisations, in order to stimulate the sales of further sets.[45]

In 'Evacuees in a Cottage at Cookham' (fig.8.21) Gabain shows at first hand evacuees brought out of the city and placed into homes in rural locations away from the bombing of the cities. The print is described in the HMSO booklet War Picture by British Artists: Women (1945): 'Mrs. Norris of Cookham – five of her war family of 7 children are from London. Mrs. Norris is the ideal foster-parent, and there are very many other households like her. Given Mrs. Norris' friendliness and care, town children readily adapt themselves to their new surroundings.'[46] In the middle of the picture a small girl sits on the lap of a bespectacled lady, Mrs. Norris, who is serving some form of cake or pudding to three boys who surround her. The girl whose eyes stare upwards looks worried in her new surroundings, whilst the older boys possibly her brothers are intent on eating. To the far left of the picture sits a woman in profile, possibly the mother of the children, who is not eating anything. Rather uncomfortably Gabain places the 'party' at the corner of the table rather than around it, the corner of the table mirroring the corner of the room behind

[45] In September 1942 the idea of a pamphlet illustrated by Evelyn Dunbar was discussed by H.M.Stationery Office, 'An ideal way of using her gardening and farmcraft knowledge, illustrations for a possible "Dig for Victory" booklet, selling in the usual way. If a project of this sort is ever possible I will pleased to bear her in mind. Correspondence between E.J.Hambleton at MoI and Mr.Fennemore at the Central Institute of Art and Desing, National Gallery, 29th September 1942.
[46] Knight, L., War Pictures by British Artists: Women (1945), p. 46.

them. The beamed ceiling and the pictures hung closely together on the walls give the impression of a cosy country cottage, a world away from the bombings of the cities.

In only one of this series of five lithographs 'Bombed Out Bermondsey' (fig.8.22) does Gabain deal with the negative effects of war upon children. Possibly this example was to be used as a way of encouraging people to evacuate their children away from the danger of bombed cities. A group of four women with haggard faces stand in a circle before a row of tenement houses which have been destroyed by a bomb. In the near foreground two schoolboys stand, one is talking, the other facing away from the viewer, with his hands deep in his trouser pockets. The haunted figure of a woman stares at the bombed houses to her left whilst the child cradled in her arms stares out at the viewer. Opposite the mother and child a group of children stand in the rubble worried by the chaos and confusion that surrounds them.

A recent commentator has suggested that Gabain's commission to depict scenes of evacuation allowed her 'to use the philosophy and the outlook of the earlier Romantics fully to confront the aesthetic and moral issues' of her day.[47] War artists who used Romanticism to depict the sufferings of humanity in war time were few in number and often left uncelebrated. They sought to depict fragments of peoples lives allowing the viewer to share the subjects experiences and in so doing empathise with them.[48] Sillars in British Romantic Art and the Second World War(1991) highlights the Romantic stance that Gabain adopted in her lithograph entitled 'Bombed Out, Bermondsey', the composition of the figures leads Sillars to comment that the 'rhythmic quality to the balance of the group of figures, a kind of stunned, static dance, that recalls the abstract qualities - we see in many of the finest Romantic paintings'. Gabain's lithograph conveys the experience of the moment, she deals directly with the rawness of people's

[47] Sillars, S., British Romantic Art and the Second World War (1991), p.50.
[48] Sillars, S., British Romantic Art and the Second World War (1991), p. 56.

emotions when faced with such devastating destruction and their ability to continue their daily lives. This lithograph sees Gabain expressing the devastation that war brings to ordinary citizens. From her depictions of their stunned faces she allows the viewer to enter their fragmented world, she gives us an insight into their psychological reaction.

In 1940 Gabain was also commissioned to depict the work of the WVS Organisation for the Civil Defence Services. Gabain's 'ARP Workers in a City Canteen run by WVS' (1940) (fig.8.23) is discussed in a letter from Mr.Burke at the Ministry of Home Security to Mr.Dickey at the WAAC, in which the important work of the WVS is stressed:

> The organisation of the WVS has done particularly valuable work for the Civil Defence Services. Canteens for Fire Fighting Services, for debris and demolition workers, for wardens and staff which man and control report centres day and night, have been set up all over the country. The present study shows a scene at a canteen in the centre of the City of London. Hot meals and drinks are provided day and night by voluntary workers, many of whom do night shifts in addition to their day's work. The canteen is used by wardens, the staff of the nearest Report Centre and members of the ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service) and other Civil Defence Services. The area in which this canteen stands has been the subject of particularly heavy bombing.[49]

Gabain places the ARP Workers in the foreground of the lithograph, drinking their tea and water and one smoking a pipe. The WVS volunteer in her uniform is placed behind the men she is serving food to. Her presence in the picture frame is not as detailed as the men in the foreground, perhaps echoing the unsung nature of the work WVS volunteers were doing in order to win the

[49] Imperial War Museum Archives. File Name: Ethel Gabain 1940 - 1950. File Number: GP/55/46. Letter from Mr.Burke at the Ministry of Home Security to Mr.Dickey, undated.

war. A homely touch is added by the addition of the vase of flowers towards the back of the table: the WVS sought to obtain a sense of normality in the chaos and upheaval of war.

It seems logical to include here Gabain's 'Hospital Supply Depot' (1940) (fig.8.24). This lithograph depicts WVS workers working in groups at sewing machines – either mending or making items. The work has a quasi-photographic quality to it, in its detailed portrayal of the WVS women sewing in groups around tables. The picture is focused on the table in the foreground around which three women are working. The viewer sees the back of the woman to the left of the picture; her white headscarf helps to push the focus of attention onto the two other women at the table. The picture has a strong sense of dark and light, the women's white outfits are contrasted to the black of the sewing machines on which they work. The indoor surroundings of the group of women at work on the making of uniforms are contrasted with the outdoor surroundings. Pictured through the panes of glass which take up half the wall space, is a wooded area.

Gabain's ability to convey feelings that lay beyond the immediate scene, the ability to immerse herself completely within the subject under consideration; to reach beyond what the eye sees, must have impressed the WAAC. In June 1941 she received a further commission to carry out four lithographs of women doing men's work for a fee of 12 guineas for each design, under the same conditions as before. Gabain accepted the commission of four lithographs of four women workers: lumber-jacks, shipyard workers and ferry pilots, keeping the fourth in reserve - possibly ATS girls working the anti-aircraft predictors unless the subject had already been covered by Captain Anthony Gross who 'at the present moment is engaged on a series of ATS drawings.'[50] Under this commission Gabain produced 'Sorting and Flinging logs' (fig.8.25) a composition of three women carrying out the physically demanding task of moving lumber. In the

[50] IWM Archives, Letter dated 31st July 1941 from Mr.Dickey.

foreground three muscular women of the Timber Corps are dealing with felled timber, the figures are quite androgynous, the headscarves are the only indication of their gender. Their determination is shown in their faces as they carry out an occupation previously associated with male workers. The Women's Timber Corps was one of the most important branches of the Land Girl's work. 'They felled, lopped, sawed and shaved. They measured for pit props and army telegraph poles. They split wood for fencing which was made for rolling out in front of tanks on beach landings so they wouldn't sink into the sand.'[51] The fine detail of the lithograph is testimony to Gabain's acute eye, from the depiction of endless piles of logs to the way the women have tied their hair in scarves. Gabain positions the girls at the front of the picture, two are framed by the angle of the logs they are moving and the third girl stands to the right holding a log which completes the frame device being used to place attention on the two girls to the left of the picture. The horizon lies half way down the image, the clear sky above helping to highlight the features of the girls who are thus dominating the lower half of the lithograph filled with the felled timber. In 1941 the WAAC also purchased from Gabain 'Loading logs on a tractor at a Banffshire Lumber Camp' (fig.8.26), which must have been executed at the same time as 'Sorting and Flinging Logs'.

When looking back at Gabain's work produced between the wars there is little indication that she had a relish for detail. Her prints relied on strong tonal contrasts and there is little evidence of any preoccupation with the incidental clutter of the rooms she depicted. Yet the very finesse of her technique as an engraver which allowed her to make every detail tell, of those few details that were included, was obviously capable of expansion to the new circumstances of the WAAC commissions. Gabain's ability to portray detailed machinery accurately is particularly noteworthy in 'Work on a Weir Pump' (1941) (fig.8.27) in which a woman is seen operating this piece of equipment, one of the multitudes of women workers in engineering industries. As

[51] Adie, K., Corsets to Camouflage (2004), p.89.

described by Laura Knight in 1945 'Her particular task is to make an important component of the Weir Pump, a piece of machinery with which all the sailors will be familiar, for they depend upon this apparatus to keep the ship clear of bilge water.'[52] Gabain's clever use of light and dark in this lithograph highlights the work being undertaken. The girl working on the weir pump looks androgynous, only the use of the headscarf identifies the person as a woman. Gabain carefully arranges the composition: the woman's head is highlighted by the framing device Gabain uses, playing on the positioning of the archways and pieces of equipment. Gabain's own love of the lithographic press must help to explain her fascination and careful depiction of the machinery that surrounds this industrial worker. Gabain's ability to convey light and shade are put to remarkable effect in this lithograph in which women are working under artificial light.

'Building a Beaufort Fighter' (fig.8.28) of 1941 depicts three sets of stepladders placed in front of the aircraft, focusing the viewer's attention on to the three parts of the aircraft upon which women engineers are working. The aircraft is a hive of activity, with twelve women working on its construction in groups of two or three or on their own. Working just inside an aircraft hangar the aircraft and the women workers are bathed in sunlight and set in contrast to the darkness of the back of the hangar. As with 'Work on a Weir Pump' Gabain's ability to depict machinery and the construction of buildings is demonstrated in this lithograph. Gabain's lithographs of women working in production provided her with the opportunity to demonstrate women's skill and aptitude in handling machinery in harmony with her own skilful use of the lithographic process and the lithographic press.

The final lithograph of this series is the 'ideal' portrayal of women's war work that the WAAC was striving to achieve through their commissions. 'Salvage Workers' (1941) (fig.8.29) depicts a group of six women salvaging anything of use following a bombing raid in what appears

[52] Knight, L., War Pictures by British Artists: Women (1945), n.p.

to be a residential area. The scene of destruction, however, is absent from the picture itself, and the women are seen emptying sacks of salvaged material into the back of a lorry. Gabain portrays them as happy in their work, smiling as they work together. The women are working in a chain, taking their turn to empty their bags into the lorry. Gabain's use of light and shade in this lithograph is very effective. The paleness of the outside of the lorry contrasts with the dark open void inside it. The picture is a display of the importance that women held in the war effort and the sense of unity, of pulling together in a bid to win the war that was vital to boosting morale among those on the home front. The turbaned women are placed in a pyramidal alignment, up to the women nearer the apex of the group. The lithograph 'Demolition. Brick sorting and chipping' (fig.8.30) was purchased by the WAAC in 1941, which makes it likely that it was executed at the same time as 'Salvage Workers'. Women of the WVS in overalls and some in turbaned headscarves, are salvaging any bricks worth re-using on a bomb site in London, portraying the British resolve to carry on even in adverse circumstances. The woman in the foreground signalling to another helper with her large gloves is the central figure around whom other women, less defined in detail, work. Three women to her right, silhouetted against the whiteness of the brick wall behind them, stand sorting the bricks as does a stooped figure of a woman to the left of the central figure with a shovel in her hand. Further to the back of the image three women are seen collecting bricks that are reusable. The figure closest to the foreground carries a pile of bricks whilst the two women to her left in shadow stand collecting bricks, framed by the clear sky behind them and the chaotic detail of the bricks under their feet.

It seems possible that 'The Fire Drill' (fig.8.31) although documented as being commissioned in 1940, belongs to the group of lithographs discussed above that sought to depict women in men's jobs. In 1939 the police and fire services initiated auxiliary branches for women, which saw them manning switchboards and doing administrative tasks. However, as incendiaries rained down women in the Auxiliary Fire Service graduated to pump crews. When the National

Fire Service was formed in 1941, women became full members wearing a navy uniform with tapered trousers which fitted neatly into their rubber boots. 'Almost every citizen now takes his share in firefighting and such scenes as this come close to the personal experience of all dwellers in large towns and cities.'[53] The lithograph depicts women who have joined the National Fire Service. The central image of the picture displays a woman descending a high wall. A man at the top of the picture frame is controlling her descent. The wooden wall, the brick wall in front of which an audience watch and the low brick wall to the right of the picture act as a separation device, between the exercise being carried out and the houses in the background, the places in which fire drills will be carried out. The scene is staged with the positioning of the three water buckets in the foreground and the hose placed in one. And the audience watching to the left behind a rope, possibly new recruits.

In the 1930s women of wealth had often taken to the skies, a pursuit whose heroines included Amy Johnson, the first woman to fly solo to Australia. In September 1939 the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) was formed to release RAF pilots for combat duty. Women with thousands of hours of flying time were at first disregarded but growing pressure forced the government to take action. The first group of women were allowed to fly Tiger Moths in January 1940. At first, the government did not allow women to fly operational aircraft, but soon with planes piling up outside the factories the government lifted their ban on women ferrying operational planes. By the end of the war in 1945 over a hundred women pilots, a small band of flight engineers, as part of the thousand odd pilots of the Air Transport Auxiliary, had between them made over three thousand deliveries.[54] The lithographs that Gabain produced of these women pay testament to their vital war work.

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[53] Imperial War Museum Archives. File Name: Ethel Gabain 1940 - 1950. File Number: GP/55/46. Letter from Mr.Burke at the Ministry of Home Security to Mr.Dickey, undated.
[54] Adie, K., Corsets to Camouflage: Women and War (2002), p.142.

In 1941 Gabain was commissioned to produce a lithograph entitled 'Capt. Pauline Gower of the Women's Air Transport Auxiliary' (fig.8.32), which as the Studio commented, 'reveals, thank goodness, the hand of a designing woman.'[55] Depicted in a 'staged' scene, in her aeroplane, framed by the wings supports Capt. Pauline Gower appears an androgynous figure. With her raised knee and uniform of flying hat and tie Pauline Gower takes on an almost masculine presence. It seems likely that Gabain produced another lithograph entitled 'Ferry Pilots' (fig.8.33) at this time which was not part of the original commission but subsequently purchased by the WAAC in 1941. Gabain frames the two pilots handling the aircraft by the wing supports above their heads. The lithograph highlights the important job women were doing delivering aircraft, with men away fighting. The two women's heads are placed against a clear background, which helps to highlight their feminine features. The pilot's 'smallness' in relation to the size of the aircraft is further highlighted by Gabain's partial depiction of the wings' vast expanse of black above the pilots' heads.

In 1941 His Majesty's Stationery Office produced: 'Women's Work in the War (other than the services) Six Lithographs published by the Ministry of Information'. The lithographs used were Gabain's 'Sorting and Flinging Logs', 'Captain Pauline Gower of the Women's Transport Auxiliary', 'Salvage Workers', 'Work on a Weir Pump', 'Building a Beaufort Fighter' and 'Salvage Workers'. The production of this pamphlet illustrated with work by Ethel Gabain followed on from that produced also in 1941 entitled 'Children in Wartime' (discussed above) and illustrated with Gabain's work. The Ministry of Information's regard for the work of Gabain, her sensitive and realistic depictions of wartime Britain in the lithographic medium, made her art an ideal choice for promoting the Government's wartime policies.

[55] Studio, February 1942, p.22.

In 1942 the WAAC purchased one of Gabain's lithographs entitled 'Women at work on an erected tank' (fig.8.34); it depicts women in the ATS at work in REME (Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers) workshops. The tank which takes up a large portion of the picture space and the five women that are working on top of it are dark and set in relief by the white space which surrounds them. The details of the building in which the tank is situated are faded as are the two figures which stand to the left of the tank in the foreground. The brightness of the sun which streams through the roof lights bleaches the surrounding area which serves as a background to the tank.

The range of subjects tackled by Gabain can be summarised as comprising images concerned with women's productive labour (forestry, salvage and manufacturing) and also with the more nurturing aspect of women's role in society (the evacuation series, civil defence and hospitals). As the mother of two children, one imagines that Gabain invested these latter subjects with a particular response. The WAAC, with its strategy of matching artists to subjects, doubtless felt that Gabain's skill in charging interiors with an emotional tone, seen in her pre-war lithographs, would readily translate into the more 'dramatic' scenes of the Home Front. Following Gabain's commission to portray women in men's jobs the WAAC wrote to Gabain asking for a painting of a subject connected with crèches for working women's children, at the fee of twenty five guineas. The increase in fees awarded to Gabain reflects not only a change of medium but also the confidence that the WAAC invested in her work.

An important part of war work undertaken by women on the home front was the care of children particularly the under fives, a fact which continues to receive little public notice even today. Hundreds of day nurseries were set up for children of women war workers. Much of the work done in these nurseries was rightly considered at the time as essential war work, a fact the WAAC were obviously keen to see depicted through the medium of a picture. The resultant

picture was entitled 'A Creche' (1942) (fig.8.35), the first commissioned war picture that Gabain executed in oil. The painting is a sensitive study of children being cared for in a bright and happy environment, the composition itself centres on the bathing of a child whilst other children are fed and play with their toys.

Gabain's work as a war artist was interrupted by a short break owing to her continued ill health. She was the oldest of the commissioned women war artists working for the WAAC and turned sixty in 1942. She suffered from arthritis and had lost a kidney some years before. Gabain's work for the WAAC is remarkable for the many obstacles that she overcame whilst producing her pictures. In a letter from John Copley to Rudolph Schwabe, a friend of Gabain's, Copley wrote concerning the illness of Ethel and how we 'live from hour to hour' hoping for her recovery.[56] Following her break in war work she returned fresh to the challenge of recording the home front in early 1944. In November 1943 Gabain had received a letter from the Finance Division of the MoI commissioning her to make a painting of 'Stannards Pack for burns treatment' at the fee of 25 guineas. Gabain's commission afforded her flying facilities so that she could record the use of the Stannard Pack by air crews. The finished picture 'A Bunyan-Stannard First-Aid Envelope for Protection Against Infection in Burns, as issued to the R.A.F.' (1944) (fig.8.36) takes on a format adopted by Dunbar, the breaking down of the picture into a number of squares which each contain a scene, the squares making up the larger picture which tells a story. Gabain also produced at this time another medical scene in oils entitled 'A Bunyan-Stannard Irrigation Envelope for the Treatment of Burns being applied by Sister Roberts in Middlesex Hospital'(1944) which appears to have been purchased from Gabain by the WAAC.

The WAAC must have been impressed with Gabain's handling of a medical subject and her adoption of oil paint, for in May 1944 they commissioned her to paint a portrait of Dr. Alexander

[56] IWM Archives, Letter from John Copley to Rudolph Schwabe dated 8th February 1943.

Fleming (fig.8.37), the fee was based upon the scale of the picture, 50 guineas for a head and 75 guineas for a three quarter length portrait. In a letter to Mr.Gregory of the WAAC Gabain explains here how the composition developed:

> Both Professor Fleming and I thought that the best way to do it would be of him working at Penicillin in his laboratory. He has a very fine head and all the surrounding phials etc would be lovely to paint. It had such a romantic genesis; he had left cultures of various microbes, by the window to germinate – when he came back he found them all dead, killed by some unknown spore which had flown in at the window and the spore proved to be Penicillin! With the romance of the true scientist he wants to be painted the actual glass plate containing this original spore with all its destruction around it and it is a lovely thing in itself ...It seems a thing so worthy to record in all the destruction of war that I hope the Committee may feel so too. I should love to do it. Professor Fleming suggests that its application should be shown either in its clinical use in Hospital, or in showing the people by whom it is produced commercially. Both he said would be interesting to do but of course it is Professor Fleming himself who is the heart of the matter.[57]

The picture is an accomplished and highly detailed painting which portrays Fleming in his laboratory with a Petra dish of penicillin which he had discovered some time earlier, a testimony to the skills of Gabain and to the WAAC for aligning her with a subject conjunctive with her own method of painting, highly detailed and with a keen sense of colour.

Clearly Gabain was inspired by this commission to suggest its development into further work. In a letter to Mr.Gregory, she suggests that a work should be commissioned which portrays the clinical use of Penicillin. The WAAC's belief in Gabain's work led in July 1944 to the commission of a penicillin subject of a recently bomb-injured child being treated. The picture was to be entitled 'Child being treated with Penicillin for bomb injuries' (1944) (fig.8.38) and was

[57]Imperial War Museum Archives. File Name: Ethel Gabain 1940 - 1950. File Number: GP/55/46. Letter from Ethel Gabain to Mr.Gregory, dated 8th May 1944.

assigned the now regular fee of 25 guineas. The child stares out from the picture, lying in traction in her hospital bed. The child's upper body is framed by the bed sheets, the tube from the drip behind her and the traction device. The other half of the picture concentrates on her legs which have been damaged and the uncomfortable looking device which is helping to repair them. The brightness of the light flooding through the window catches the girl's pillow and highlights her golden hair; the child is portrayed as angelic, possibly because of the suffering she has endured. The picture is another display of Gabain's keen eye for composition and colour. The interesting aspect of this picture is its true 'subject'. It appears that the girl was not a casualty of bomb damage but that her injuries had been brought about by being run over by a bus.[58] The true story of her injuries was concealed or overlooked to fit in with what the WAAC wanted Gabain to portray. 'Child being treated with Penicillin for bomb injuries' was the last picture that Gabain was commissioned to do during wartime.

In October 1944 Mr.Gregory felt that an increase in Gabain's fees were due: 'I do not think the fees paid to Mrs Copley (nee Gabain) are very high considering the work she has done. There was a great deal of detail in it and she carried it out most excellently to the complete satisfaction of the Committee. Indeed, her pictures are two of the best we have ever had...The pictures (Fleming and bomb child victim) are felt to be of great value to the nation as records and she showed great pluck and determination in carrying them out.'[59]

Gabain produced a few further oil paintings during the war, one of which was entitled a 'Portrait of a Girl Bus Conductor' (1941) (fig.8.39). The WAAC would have been keen for the girl bus conductor to be portrayed as it was felt that in no other sphere did women replace men

[58] This twist in the picture's history only came to light at the end of 2002 when the girl who appears in the picture went along to the IWM and told Mike Moody of the Art Department about the picture's background.
[59] Imperial War Museum Archives. File Name: Ethel Gabain 1940 - 1950. File Number: GP/55/46. Letter from Mr. Gregory to Mr.Trenaman at the Finance Division, dated 30th October 1944.

with greater success than as bus conductors. 'In no sphere have women taken the place of men in wartime with greater success than that of bus conductors. The job is no light one and calls for good humour and good judgement, as well as strength to stand up to the physical strain. The subject of this portrait is working on a London bus.'[60] Another oil painting was 'Sandbag Filling, Islington Borough Council' (1941) (fig.8.40) which portrays two women in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) filling sandbags. The idea for this work came from Gabain. In a letter to Mr.Dickey, Gabain writes 'It is very fine material such lovely people – the "Fort-lady" (they are all "ladies" not women) of a sand gang, the Mother of 13 – the grandmother of 9 and one of her daughters in the gang. She the mother wears dungarees and clogs and on top of it all a wreath of gay artifical flowers around her cap and this is the sort of [illeg.] that goes through these people – they are doing really fine work, the Borough Enquirer at Islington told me they actually fill more sandbags than the men. I think they are worthy of being recorded. Do you think the Ministry would consider lithographs?'[61] The woman to the right has the noted garland of flowers in her hair, with her hat pushed to the back of her head. For those who joined the ATS, and following conscription in 1942 two hundred thousand women did, there was however a gap between the glamour and responsibility offered in the official advertisements and the reality on the ground. It is likely that the study for this oil painting came from the lithograph that Gabain executed entitled 'Sandbag workers' (1941) (fig.8.41).

Ethel Gabain was called upon again at the end of the war to depict distinguished women. On 19th December 1945 Gabain received a letter from W.M.Dodd of the Finance Division asking her to undertake two further lithographs at the fee of ten guineas. The resultant lithographs of 'Miss Caroline Haslett, C.B.E, Director of the Women's Electrical Association' and 'Miss Barbara Ward, Assistant Editor of "The Economist"' (fig.8.42) are portraits whose style reflects the work

[60] Knight, L., War Pictures by British Artists: Women, p. 61.
[61] Imperial War Museum Archives. File Name: Ethel Gabain 1940 - 1950. File Number: GP/55/46. Letter from Ethel Gabain to Mr.Dickey, possibly 1941(?).

that Gabain had been executing in oils. These later war lithographs have a freedom and looseness to them that contrasts with the highly detailed and tightly composed lithographs that Gabain was producing in her earlier war lithographs. Gabain contributed to the vital recording of women's work in World War II in a way that brings to life the atmosphere in which women were contributing to the war effort. And as Gabain promoted women's work her own work was undergoing transformations pushed through by the work she was commissioned to undertake. The war seems to have acted as a catalyst to the development of her work. Certainly, compared to the lithographs she had produced before World War Two, her war work is marked by a greater precision of detail, a readiness to employ multi-figured compositions and a more readable emotional tone to the narrative. The mysterious and enigmatic quality of her work of the 1920s and 1930s had largely disappeared.

The pioneering work that Evelyn Gibbs was undertaking in education and her own education at the RCA and Rome School of Art marked her out as an ideal candidate for the WAAC's scheme, but unlike Evelyn Dunbar and Ethel Gabain whose involvement as commissioned women war artists spanned almost the whole of the war, Gibbs' contribution started later and was less extensive.

In 1939 Evelyn Gibbs was teaching at Goldsmith's College, London. The College was evacuated to Nottingham for the duration of war, Gibbs would not return to live in London for 21 years. During this period Gibbs was an active member of the Artists International Association (elected to its membership in 1937). Many artists of Evelyn Gibbs generation joined the AIA, she was led by 'her concern at the upsurge of Fascism in Europe in the 1930's' (Gibbs had witnessed the Fascist dictator, Mussolini's rise to power at first-hand during her stay at the British School in

Rome, Italy, 1929-1931).[62] The AIA founded in 1933 by Clifford Rowe was 'unique in the history of the artistic and cultural life of Britain...its primary aim was to organise visual artists - painters, sculptors and designers...enable them to express their commitment to social responsibility in art and to support radical, political ideas directly in terms of their practice as artists.[63] The AIA's primary concern lay in providing a place for art in an ever changing society, attracting an audience and showing this audience how artists work functioned in society. At the height of its success the Association could boast over one thousand members, it 'embraced some of the most prominent artists in Britain drawn from the whole breadth of the professional spectrum', including Augustus John and Stanley Spencer.[64] Indeed, Paul Nash a 'prominent' member of the Association commented how its work was 'a highly practical tactic to bring contemporary art before the mass public.'[65]

As early as 1938 the Association was keen to form regional AIA subgroups. The outbreak of war in 1939 'broke the knot of the London artists' community which isolated many of the AIA members away from the capital, leading to a call for the establishment of regional subgroups. The primary function of the regional subgroups was to bring contemporary work to the regions. In 1942, Gibbs founded the Midland Group (originally the Midland Regional Designer's Group) based in Nottingham. Gibbs became the group's first Honorary Secretary and for seventeen years was the driving force behind its success. From very early on Gibbs arranged lectures and talks by artists such as Victor Pasmore, John Minton, Patrick Heron, Terry Frost, the potters, Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, the art critics Herbert Read, James Laver and Eric Newton. The Midland's Group first exhibition in 1942 was held in a large furniture store in the middle of Nottingham and was visited by sixteen thousand people in the first three weeks, the turnout

[62] Lucas, P., Evelyn Gibbs: Artist and Traveller (2002), p.57.
[63] Morris, L and Radford, M., The Story of the AIA: Artists International Association 1933-1935 (1983), p.6.
[64] Radford,M.,Art for a Purpose: The Artists International Association, 1933-1953 (1987), p.7.
[65] Ibid, p.186.

reflects the public's interest in art during a time of upheaval, and the exhibition possibly functioned as an escape from everyday life in war struck Britain. In the early summer of 1943 the Midland Group was accepted as an affiliated member of AIA.

Evelyn Gibbs was the driving force behind the Midland Group and one of many women who were active members of the Association. Women participated at all levels and formed around forty per cent of its membership and were frequently represented to the same extent on its committees. Evelyn Dunbar and Ethel Gabain both exhibited with the AIA, but they did not play an active role in the Association. The small amount of work which Gibbs produced for the War Artists Advisory Committee in comparison to Dunbar and Gabain could have been in part due to both her teaching responsibilities and her work promoting the Midland Group. It also seems possible that her position within the AIA hampered her chances of receiving a better commission than that of producing a few specific works. Indeed, Robert Radford comments in Art for a Purpose: The Artists International Association, 1933 – 1953 (1987) that the 'average' AIA member was not the ideal candidate for the job citing the member's left-wing views as in possible conflict with that of the service chiefs.

However, on 11th September 1943 Mr. Gregory wrote to Gibbs requesting to purchase three of her submitted pictures depicting women at the Raleigh works in Nottingham for the fee of 30 guineas, a bid by the WAAC to back the government's campaign 'Women of Britain: Come Into The Factories'. These three pictures of women working in the Raleigh works entitled, 'Women at Raleigh Works' (fig.8.43), 'Eliza and Diash: Women at hand press. Raleigh works' and 'Women at Raleigh Works' (this picture is identical to the first in title and subject except for some additional light highlighting) executed in chalk and ink, were similar in style to work Gibbs was producing prior to the war. 'Two Women Resting' executed in 1930 in ink and pencil has the same looseness of style that was to dominate Gibbs' war work. The purchase of the Raleigh

pictures marks the commencement of Gibbs' commission by the WAAC on short term contracts, to record the Blood Transfusion Unit, the manufacture of armaments and the work of the WVS.

In 1942 Gibbs painted an oil depicting the work of the WVS canteens, 'Canteen Counter' (fig.8.44). The work owes a slight allegiance to some of the artists associated with the Euston Road School, using an approach that adopted a modified Modernist vocabulary to record the contemporary world. With its 'social realist' observation of the everyday, Gibbs' of 1942 is a good example of this sort of work. Although painted during the war, it was not commissioned by the WAAC and was most probably an independent submission before Gibbs was specially employed by the WAAC to undertake a few specific works. To the far right hand side of the canvas a girl, with the same oval face and feline eyes reminiscent of the faces present in Gibbs earlier prints, for example, 'The Expulsion' of 1929, stands. The girl wears an apron and is most probably a member of the WVS, serving in one of the many canteens established to serve civil and military personnel. She is lifting the large glass lid off a cake stand in which a number of cakes sit. On the table are two other cake stands, both empty and a vase of long stemmed yellowy/orange chrysanthemums whose colour matches the cakes on the stand. Gibbs' use of a circular shape is repeated along the foreground from the top of the vase, the circular tiers of the cake stand, the lidded cake stand and the shape of the top of the girl's apron. The application of the oil in small strokes gives the painting a heavily textured effect which is complemented by Gibbs' clever deployment of shadow and light through her effective colour palette, from warm whites to deepest black.

In September 1943, following the WAAC's previous purchase, Gibbs received a letter from S.E.Treneman at the Finance Division asking her to undertake for the WAAC three drawings on blood transfusion for the fee of 30 guineas. Gibbs produced five drawings in total depicting blood transfusion, three of which the IWM kept and two which were gifted to the IWM

upon Gibbs' death in 1991. The works held by the IWM are entitled 'Blood Transfusion: Filtering Serum' charcoal, wash on paper, 'Blood Transfusion: Filtering Plasma' ink, charcoal and wash on paper, 'Blood Transfusion: Pouring Citrate Solution into Blood Bottles' charcoal and pencil on paper, 'Blood Transfusion: Pouring Citrate Solution into Blood Bottles' charcoal wash on paper and 'Blood Transfusion: Pouring Citrate Solution into Blood Bottles' charcoal and ink on paper (fig.8.45). These works would have served to remind people of the importance of blood donation in times of heavy numbers of casualties on active service and in casualties from aerial attack. Gibbs's attention to detail and careful use of highlighting allows the onlooker to gain a sense of the important work these women are doing. In these drawings Gibbs' technique is more obviously intrusive than we might expect. The concentration on figures, seen in Dunbar and Gabain's work, gives way here to an emphasis on the equipment itself. And while the procedures in preparing blood supplies are described in these pictures, the detail with which the apparatus is depicted is placed in dialogue with the much more loosely handled context of its physical location and its human operatives. From a didactic point of view, these drawings lack the complete clarity of vision we find in Dunbar and Gabain's images. The stylisation of figures, for example, is notable. Looking closely at 'Blood Transfusion: Pouring Citrate Solution into bottles' we find that the most prominent figure to the left of centre is portrayed with Gibbs' highly stylised oval face and feline eyes, whilst the figure to the far right is lightly sketched, appearing very shadowlike.

Gibbs' successful completion of this commission depicting the processes of blood transfusion was followed by a painting that was to test her artistic limits. On 18th September 1943 Gibbs received another commission from the WAAC for a picture of the WVS Clothing Exchange depot for the fee of 25 guineas. The Women's Voluntary Service provided an array of services from running canteens at stations, to fire-watching, to ambulance driving. They also obtained clothes from clothes wholesalers for people who were bombed, distributing them

throughout the country. Clothing depots provided a much needed way for people to clothe themselves during the hardships of war, and made an interesting subject for portrayal. The IWM archives holds a preliminary pencil sketch of Gibbs' picture, which is similar to the pencil and wash pictures she produced for the blood transfusion series, and provides a glimpse into her abilities at composition. The finished oil painting however, lacks the confidence of working in that medium which Evelyn Dunbar's war paintings exuded. Like Gabain's commission to work in oils the previous year, Gibbs was requested to move away from the medium in which she had been trained. The WAAC's motives here are not clear but it is possible that oil painting was seen as capable of producing a more impressive record than drawing or print-making could achieve. In the foreground to Gibbs' 'WVS Clothing Exchange Depot' (fig.8.46) a mother places a boot on her child's foot, illustrative of the important work clothing exchanges did in providing clothing for those affected by the devastation caused by aerial bombardment. The technique Gibbs use of piling up the figures vertically, is quite baroque, especially when compared to Dunbar's adoption of linear structures. Gibbs uses the mother and child as the focal point of the picture, behind them the counter on which the child sits rises up away from them to the very top of the picture plane. Along the course of the counter other women and children stand trying to obtain clothing. Gibbs uses the linking of hands between the mothers and children to produce a rhythmic line through the image, creating a scene of unity. The mothers and children are linked together, but to the right hand side of the painting, a lone figure stands isolated from the picture's activity looking on at the scene in front of her. Gibbs only depicts fives of the faces in detail the rest are generalised, a technique also used by Gabain in her etching of 1940 'Evacuation from Southend' (fig.8.17). Gabain and Gibbs both faced the same problem, how to paint a crowd. Both overcame the problem by dealing with civilians as a mass, by depicting the collective effort of the group rather than the work of one or two selected subjects. The WVS Clothing Exchange painting is a triumph in expressing the chaos and need of mothers to clothe their children. It also serves as a vital illustration of the work that the WVS were doing in the face of chronic shortages and strict

rationing. 'The W.V.S Clothing Exchange Depot' was to be the last picture that Gibbs executed for the WAAC. She did however, return to depicting the war in Nottingham where she had been evacuated with Goldsmith's College of Art, particularly the factories in which women worked.

Gibbs' employment throughout the war by Goldsmiths must have played a large part in her lack of concern over selling executed pictures or gaining a commission from the WAAC. Both Dunbar and Gabain on the other hand, were eager to obtain a commission from the WAAC, in part for financial gain. Dunbar offered herself to the WAAC's scheme in the belief that she could be of use to them, in essence her proposal was offered out of economic necessity; the need for employment also appears as the driving force behind Gabain's constant offering of her skills to the WAAC.

This chapter proposes that all three artists, for all their professional activity before 1939 were significant contributors to the WAAC scheme, perhaps the only time in the twentieth-century when male and female artists enjoyed something close to parity in terms of patronage and recognition. Yet, in texts dealing with the war art of the Second World War women war artists receive fleeting mention, while in-depth discussions of war art produced by men dominates the record. Michael Foot in Art and War: Twentieth Century warfare as depicted by war artists (1991), Meirion and Susan Harries in The War Artists: British Official War Art of the Twentieth Century (1983) and Alan Ross in Colours of War (1983) deal almost exclusively with male war artists. In all ten chapters of Ross' book each chapter deals with male artists' representation of the war, even Chapter Seven which deals with the Home Front looks exclusively at the work of three male artists: Keith Vaughan, Will Scott and Rodrigo Moynihan. This thesis goes some way towards resituating the contribution of women artists to the WAAC scheme.

Conclusion

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that we can find ways of accommodating historically, within the art practice of the first half of the twentieth century, those who made a living through art, who reached high standards of technical proficiency and yet did not champion the radical. While it would be easy to simply regard Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar as essentially timid, conservative and/or academic artists content to secure a reputation in fields untroubled by the key developments in twentieth-century art, this is too sweeping. Looked at attentively, each of them made valuable contributions – to lithography, art education and mural painting. Art historical discourse has traditionally been orientated to easel painting and sculpture and has found it less rewarding to deal with these categories of art practice. As a result none of these categories are usually considered to be historically or critically significant and the achievement of artists associated with them is negated. These three women are artists whose professional success has been retrospectively taken away from them by an over-restrictive model of art history.

It is time for art history to explore the lives of those who trod the less fashionable path, those who made a living through their art by embracing the traditional rather than championing the radical. This thesis has presented the work of three English artists whose careers and achievements were known and well respected during their lifetimes, but who were ignored in standard historical accounts of British art until very recently. Artistic ability and professional success for these three artists has not secured them the critical significance needed to claim their place among the art world of the first half of the twentieth century. But what the careers of these three artists do demonstrate is that access to good art schools and commitment to their studies opened up the possibility of working professionally. All three artists were concerned with the everyday business of making art rather than embracing the exceptional (avant-garde) business of trying to change art.

By exploring their careers and assessing their practice in the light of its immediate context, this dissertation proposes that Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar for all their individuality as artists, can be viewed as case-studies of women working in the British art world in the first half of the twentieth century. In doing so, it aims to contribute to recent academic art history, which has

been moving beyond the canonical list - not just focusing on artists associated with Vorticism, Unit One, 7 and 5 and Circle. In The Modernity of English Art (1997) David Peters Corbett addresses the need to look beyond the radical and assess the practice of artists working within the academic tradition and acceptable to the Royal Academy. Peters Corbett's partial recovery of those artists outside of the avant-garde pays attention to the whole fabric of artistic culture rather than just the more assertive parts that have dominated our view of twentieth-century art practice.

In order to contribute to a more detailed picture of the British art world within the first decades of the twentieth century, this thesis provides a long overdue appraisal of the work of Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar. Its documentary approach presents one way of dealing with artists outside of the avant-garde whose artistic ability, professional success and critical significance deserves to be highlighted. Work of this calibre deserves its proper recognition and by bringing it into historical focus we gain a greater understanding of the early twentieth-century British art work and diversity of artists working within it. Moreover, by placing their individual work within the relevant contexts of arts training and career opportunities we gain insights into the structure of the professional arena in which so many artists of the time made their living. The thesis has also drawn attention to the fact that although the opportunities for women were not necessarily as generous as they were for male artists, the situation for women was not inescapably bleak, that it was possible to sustain a worthwhile career as a woman artist.[1]

The thesis has been informed by the growing body of work that has sought to articulate an approach to women's art practice that recognises its problematic position, both with respect to the difficulties faced by women artists and with respect to the subsequent critical estimation of their work. While acknowledging that all three artists treated here have been affected by these cultural and discursive tendencies, the thesis concludes that their career trajectories tend to

[1] We should remember, however, that after their marriage in 1945 Dunbar was supported financially by her husband and the need to make her art financially rewarding does not appear to have been a pressing concern. Gabain and Gibbs both successfully used their art training as a means of making a living, even during the collapse of the market after 1929. It is noteworthy that Gibbs embraced an increasing move towards abstraction later in her life, possible due to a marriage that freed her from the need to make a living through her art.

complicate any reading that would seek to explain their achievement in exclusively gendered terms. Given what was arguably a limited range of opportunities, all three women worked successfully within that range of possibilities. The quality of their image-making ensured that all of them received early recognition, although Gabain was fortunate not to have faced in the 1910s and 1920s the economic circumstances that stalled the development of Dunbar and Gibbs' careers in the 1930s.

Gabain's accomplished work as a lithographer and her important work promoting lithography within the Senefelder Club gives an important model of a woman artist who trained at the Slade and in Paris and who had a commercially and artistically successful career as a printmaker. Gibbs' work as an art educationalist has also been recuperated and can now be viewed alongside her fellow leading art educationalists. By exploring the educational work in which she was involved, this thesis gives a much overdue account of a woman who at the age of twenty-nine produced an influential and frequently reprinted pedagogical text. The importance of Gibbs' book as a teaching tool is discussed and evaluated, demonstrating how she made an important contribution to the new teaching methods which sort to liberate the creative imagination of children. Dunbar's contribution to the mural movement before and after the War, although a relatively small part of her oeuvre, is significant and an examination of her mural work adds to the growing understanding and appreciation of this still somewhat neglected field and the artists working in it.

It is the argument of this thesis that all three artists acquired a professional proficiency of a standard suitable to recommend their abilities to the War Artists Advisory Committee. In Gabain's case her reputation had grown from the 1910s; Dunbar and Gibbs had less time to establish themselves (and Gibbs, in particular, had had to adopt a new career in the wake of the crash in the print market). As participants in the recording of the Home Front, all three artists offer valuable insights into the different relationships artists had with the WAAC, ranging from receiving a commission and continuous employment to the occasional production of only a limited number of commissioned works. All of them responded effectively to these new

circumstances and in the case of Dunbar and Gabain particularly, produced bodies of work that should be much better known than they are.

At the very beginning of the research conducted for this thesis Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar came to the fore of the group of women war artists. The decision to work on these three individuals was made in respect to both the quality of their war work and the extent of the archival resources on them. The methodological assumption of this thesis is that in a context of relative neglect it is simply more important sometimes to assemble factual data when a war artist's career is being reconstructed, to allow an assessment of its historical significance and to provide the basis for its evaluation as part of the British art scene, especially in the 1930s and 1940s. Using such an approach, the work and careers of other women war artists could be recovered relatively successfully to develop further our understanding of the contribution women made to the WAAC's activities.

If as art historians we are to produce an accurate portrayal of the art world of the early twentieth century we must be willing to assess individual artists that remain neglected and place them within the context of the period. It is possible that all three of the artists studied here might have developed a more vanguard style, but given the art market of the time their conservative styles were prudent strategies financially. Methodologically, however, the question raised by this thesis is not whether or not Gabain, Gibbs and Dunbar could (or should) have worked in less 'conservative' idioms. If we are to make sense of the British art world of the time, to take stock of it as more than a parade of avant-garde groupings, we should not ignore artists like these. Knowledge of their training, their professional circumstances and their contributions over such a wide field of endeavours, all help provide further insights into a rich and complex historical period.

Appendix One
Chronologies of Ethel Gabain, Evelyn Gibbs and Evelyn Dunbar

Ethel GABAIN, R.B.A., R.O.I., V.P. S.W.A (1883 – 1950)

1883	-Born in Le Havre of mixed French and Scottish descent.
1897	- Attended boarding school in England.
1902	- Studied at the Slade,
1903	- Travelled to Paris to study at Collin's Studio in Paris.
1904 – 1906	- Studied at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, made her first lithograph.
1906	- Studied lithography at the Chelsea Polythechnic.
1908	- Founder member alongside John Copley of the Senefelder Club, set up 'with the aim of reviving interest in lithography as an artistic medium'. Returned to Paris, lived in the rue Boissonade in the 14th arrondissement.
1911	- Travelled to Paris and then onto Italy and Switzerland.
1913	- Married John Copley, fellow artist.
1920	- First joint exhibition with Copley at the Albert Roullier Art Galleries, Chicago. Commissioned by London Underground Railways to produce a poster.
1925	- Moved to Italy with her family.
1927	- First appearance at Royal Academy with an oil painting entitled 'Zinnais', the fore-runner of many flower studies. Began to acquire a reputation for her oils.
1930s	- Lectured on art history at schools with scripts supplied by husband in order to boost family funds.
1932	- Became member of Royal Society of British Artists.

1933 - Won de Laszlo silver medal with a portrait of Flora Robson as Lady Audley purchased by Manchester City Art Gallery and elected to the membership of the Royal Institute of Painters in Oils.

1934-1939 - Elected Vice-President of the Society of Women Artists.

1935 - Elected to the Royal Institute of Oil Painters.

1940 - Appointed an official war artist.

1950 -Died on 30th January 1950.

Exhibited at Goupil, Redfern and Chenil Galleries, with Colnaghi, Royal Society of Artists, Walker in Liverpool, memorial exhibition at the RBA in 1950 and was Vice President of the Society of Women Artists.

Imperial War Museum, Manchester City Art Gallery, Hove Museum and Art Gallery, Walker Gallery, Liverpool, Sadler's Wells and the National Portrait Gallery hold her work.

Evelyn GIBBS, A.R.E., A.R.C.A. (Lond.) (1905-1991)

3rd May 1905 - Born in Liverpool. Educated at Queen Mary's High School, Liverpool.

1922 - 1926 - Attended Liverpool Art School.

1926 – 1929 - Studied at the Royal College of Art under Professor Malcolm Osborne.

1929 - Won Rome Scholarship in Engraving and elected Associate Member of the Royal Society of Painters and Etchers.

1929 – 1931 - Attended the British School in Rome.

1929 - 1939 - Exhibited at XXI Gallery, NEAC, RA and Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers.

1931 - 1934 - Teaching by pioneering methods in two London schools for handicapped children. Work won approval from Mary Glasgow, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools.

1934 - Wrote influential book on children's art education The Teaching of Art in Schools: An Illustrated Description of Children's Imaginative Painting and its effect on craft.

1934 – 1946 - Lecturer in art at Goldsmith's College, University of London.
- Regular lecturing on 'Child Art' mainly to educational bodies.
- Began painting based on trips abroad.

1937 - Elected a member of AIA and WIAC.

1938 - On list of artists in AIA's project 'Portraits for Spain'.

1939 - Moved to Nottingham with Goldsmith's College, following the declaration of war.

1942 - Exhibited at WIAC.

1943 - Founded 'Midland Group', and acted as the group's driving force for the next 17 years. The prime function of the group was to bring important contemporary art to the region.

1942 – 1945 - Took part in all AIA members exhibitions from Nottingham.

1943 - Undertook War Artists Advisory Committee commission and produced 5 works held in the Imperial War Museum.

1945 - Married Hugh Willatt, local solicitor and keen supporter of the arts, Secretary General of the Arts Council.

1946 – 1949 - visiting lecturer at Goldsmith's.

1954 – 1960 -Undertook regular working trips to France, Spain, Corsica, Italy and Greece.

1951 – 1965 - Exhibited at RA.

1960 - Moved to London.

1963 - Published edition of prints with Alecto Ltd., London.

1969 - Bought farmhouse Gozo, Malta.

1973 - Elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers.

1985 - Became member of Royal Engravers.

1991 - Died in London.

Showed at RA, NEAC, XXI Gallery (1930 and 1931), Zwemner Gallery; London (1954 and 1957), Leicester Galleries; London (1960), Midland Group Gallery; Nottingham (1962 and 1965), Forum Gallery; Bristol (1964), Ivan Spence Gallery; Ibiza (1967), Drian Galleries; London (1970), Nottingham University Art Gallery (1970), Solo Exhibition - Drian Gallerires; London, 10-27 October 1972, Posthumous exhibition at Morley Gallery in 1994.

Work held by Arts Council, Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, V & A, Ministry of Works, Contemporary Arts Society, British Museum Prints Room and WAAC at IWM, Leicestershire County Collection, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County Collection, RA - John Stott Bequest, Nottingham University- Glenn Stott Bequest and private collections.

Evelyn Mary DUNBAR, N.E.A.C., A.R.C.A (Lond.) (1906 – 1960)

18th December 1906 - Born in Rochester, Kent.

1925 – 1927 - Studied at Rochester School of Art.

1927 – 1929 - Studied at the Chelsea College of Art.

1929 – 1933 - Awarded a Kent county scholarship to attend the RCA.

1931 - Won the Augustus Spencer Prize.

1933 - 1936 - Commissioned to paint murals at Hilly Fields School, Brockley, Kent.

1936 - Illustrated her first book The Scots Weekend.

1937 - Illustrated Gardeners Choice with Mahoney.

1938 - Commissioned by 'Country Life' to produce 'A Gardener's Diary'.

1939 -Commissioned by the WAAC, sent to Sparsholt Agricultural College.

April 1940 -Appointed an Official War Artist.

1940 -Illustrated A Book of Farmcraft and Married Dr.Roger Folly, an agricultural economist, who at the time was a Flying Officer in the RAF. After the war he returned to an academic post at Wye College, University of London.

1945 - 1948 - Became a member of NEAC.

1950 - Visiting lecturer at Ruskin College of Art, Oxford.

1952 - Moved to Kent, settling at Hinxhill, near Ashford.

1953 - Illustrated A Farm Dictionary and held a solo show at Wye College.

1958 – 1960 - Commissioned to paint a pair of murals at the Bletchley Training College,

12th May 1960 - Died prematurely near Ashford, Kent.

Rarely exhibited her work, but did show with NEAC and Goupil Gallery, London. Imperial War Museum, Tate Gallery and Manchester City Art Gallery hold her work.

Appendix Two:
Complete list of Evelyn Gibbs' exhibitions, 1931-1988.

1930 Exhibition of Rome Scholars at British School in Rome.

1931 Exhibition at XXI Gallery, London.

1938 Contributes to A.I.A. project "Portraits for Spain".
Exhibits in "Etchings and Drawings by Liverpool Artists" at Sandon Studios, Bluecoat Chambers, Liverpool.

1939 Exhibits at A.I.A. exhibition "Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy and Cultural Development" at Whitechapel Art Gallery.

1943 Exhibits at A.I.A. Exhibition "For Liberty" at John Lewis, London.
First official meeting of Nottingham Regional Designer's Group, Gibbs elected Honorary Secretary.
Exhibits at Nottingham's A.I.A. Group's first show "Art For All".

1944 Exhibits at the second "Art For All" exhibition in Nottingham.

1946 Exhibits at Leicester Galleries, London in "Works by some Contemporary British Artists".

1947 Solo show held at the Midland Regional Design Group.

1949 Exhibits in "Pictures for Schools" exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery, London.

1951 Solo show at MRDG, over thirty works shown. First exhibits at the Royal Academy.

1953 Included in "Famous British Women Artists" at Nottingham Castle, toured to Sheffield, and in A.I.A's "Life in Industry".
Exhibited in "Artists of Fame and Promise" at the Leicester Galleries 1953, '54, '55, '56 and '58.

1954 "Evelyn Gibbs, Drawings of France and Corsica" at Zwemmer Gallery, London.

1955 Included in Zwemmer's "Young Midland Artists".

1957 Joint exhibition with Sylvia Melland at Zwemmers.
Joint exhibition with Marion Adnams at Midland Group.

1961 Exhibition of "Recent Drawings" at the Leicester Galleries.

1962 Exhibition at Midland Group Gallery: Sixty-eight drawings and paintings.

1963 Exhibition at Ivan Spence Gallery, Ibiza.

1964 Exhibition at Forum Gallery, Bristol. Embarks on a major series for Alecto Prints.

1965 Exhibition of "Recent Etchings and Drawings at the Midland Group.

1970 Exhibition of "Drawings, Paintings and Etchings" at the Drian Galleries.

Exhibition at Nottingham University Gallery.

1972 Exhibition of "Drawings and Etchings" at the Drian Galleries.

1974 Exhibition at Gallery 359, Nottingham.

1976 Commissioned by Curwen Press to make series of lithographs.

1977 Exhibition of Lithographs at Curwen Gallery.
Exhibition of "Drawings, Etchings & Lithographs" at the Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta, Malta.
"Drawings and Etchings" at the New Art Centre, London.

1981 Group exhibition "Six Hammersmith Artists" at the Riverside Studios, London.

1984 Included in "Artists under the Flag (War Artists)" at Gillian Jason Gallery, London.
Contributes to "The Garden of Flora" at Nottingham Castle Museum.

1988 "Evelyn Gibbs' Early Etchings (1927-1930)" shown by Garton and Co.

1991 Fine Art Society, London, drawings and etchings from 1920s and 1930s.

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The following abbreviations have been used:

DCA	Dora Cohen Archive, Oxford Brookes University
GUA	Glasgow University Archive
IWMAA	Imperial War Museum Art Archive
IWML	Imperial War Museum Library
TGA	Tate Gallery Archive
TGL	Tate Gallery Library
UWA	University of Wales Aberystwyth Archive

GUA	Ethel Copley fl. 1914-1923 Archive
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