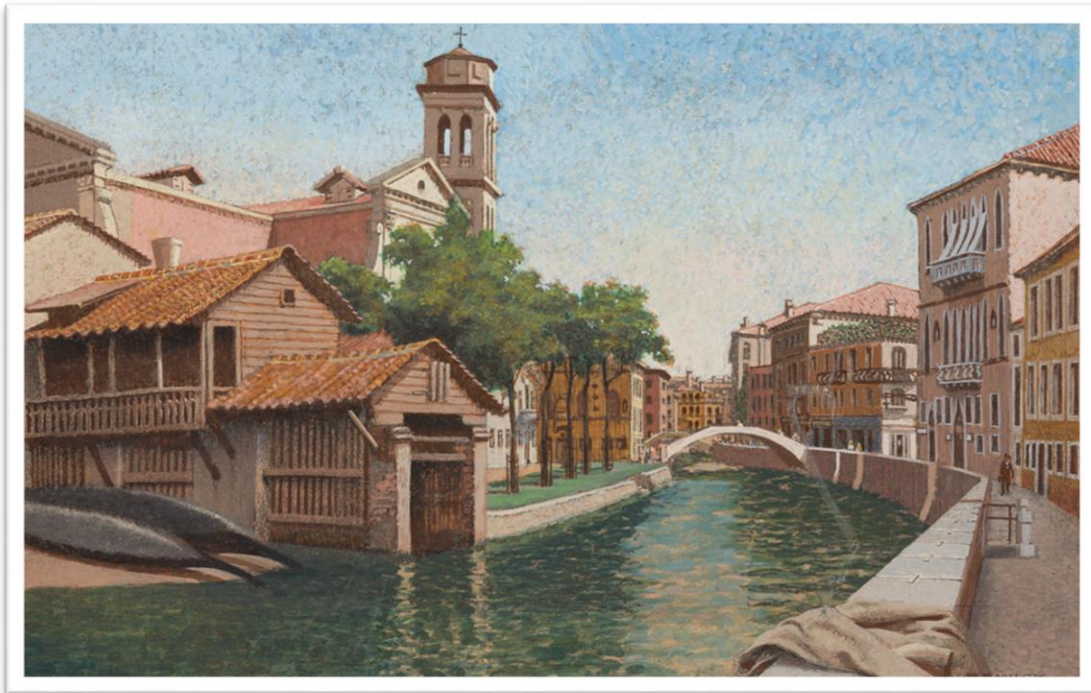


Vivian Bewick

‘A retrospective’



1st November 2021 to June 2022

Open to the public by appointment

Please contact the Administration Office to make an appointment on 020 8504 6668

Supported by EFDC Grant Scheme



www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Bedford House is grateful for the funding received from Epping Forest District Council's Community Grant Aid scheme which has made this exhibition and its digitalisation possible for the benefit of the community.

BHCA Celebrating 75 Years

Bedford House is grateful to Robert Bewick and family for their donation to Bedford House of art works by their uncle, Vivian Bewick. Their donation has created a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Vivian's lifetime work and his dedication to Bedford House and the principles on which Bedford House was created. Bedford House would like to thank Epping Forest District Council for their GrantAid in support of the digitalisation of the above donated artworks in the interest of local history and art history and sharing this electronically with the communities, teaching institutions and museums, locally and beyond.

Vivian Bewick - Vivian wrote in January 1994:

"One of my earliest and most abiding memories is of the large engraving of Raphael's 'Belle Jardinière'. It was one of a medley of pictures, with which my parents had papered the nursery of Tyne House, at Tynemouth, where I was born; in addition to being related to the world's greatest wood-engraver, Thomas Bewick, and spending all my time in drawing, when a blank piece of paper could be found (rarely, in the days of the First World War), it was perhaps inevitable that I became fascinated by the 'magic of line', and have remained primarily a draughtsman ever since. An interest in colour followed later.

Led by line to a short course in graphic illustration at Leyton School of Art, I had the good fortune to secure an apprenticeship in a busy London studio just before my sixteenth birthday. Five years here gave me exceptionally wide experience in almost every kind of illustration and pictorial reproduction. Twice a week, after a hard day's work – started at 8:30am – I went to evening classes in figure-drawing, and, on completion of my indentures, set up on my own in Red Lion Square, immediately opposite Rosetti's old studio, both studios were later destroyed in the Second World War.

This war brought to an end a most thrilling (if somewhat hectic) period of endless variety in free-lance commissions, in which I was always learning; and it was replaced by over five years in the Royal Artillery, which were even more hard-working, though even here I managed to keep one foot in the world of art. An unexpected War Office posting snatched me from basic training at Scarborough, and I found myself at the School of Artillery on Salisbury Plain, one of a bunch of professional artists, architects, and civil engineers, training and being trained as Artillery Surveyors. I became an enthusiastic contributor to the famous wall-newspaper "Swillbin", which carried on a tradition begun in the First World War; I also designed and produced army Christmas cards, illustrated technical manuals, and ran art classes and exhibitions with critiques by James Bateman R.A., whose handkerchief, purple, with white spots, fluttered defiantly from the breast pockets of his Captain's uniform. Latterly, I was in charge of the School of Artillery Drawing Office, until demobilisation.

The five very happy years spent at St. Martin's School of Art and London University, which followed, I was content to regard as a fair exchange for similar length of time given up to the army. The long summer holidays gave me the opportunity for extensive sketching trips abroad, and I took full advantage of the concessions and privileges attached to my ex-serviceman status and life-membership of the National Union of Students. In between holidays, part-time teaching of adults in art clubs, societies, and colleges, became a continual delight. The magic of line still beckons, and I am still at it. Old soldiers never die, and I am sure that this is true to old artists too. We only fade."

Vivian Bewick, January 1994

(Vivian Bewick, Sept 1912 to June 1999)