The background of the entire page is a rich, textured oil painting. It depicts a wooden structure, possibly a barn or shed, with a prominent circular opening or window. The scene is surrounded by dense, vibrant green foliage in the foreground and a bright yellow field in the background. The brushwork is thick and expressive, creating a sense of depth and movement. The color palette is dominated by greens, yellows, and browns, with some darker tones in the shadows.

Peter White *Bardfield Artist*

A POSTHUMOUS EXHIBITION OF THE WORK OF PETER WHITE

CURATED BY SARA HAYES & ANNE WHITE

INTRODUCTION BY ANNE WHITE, PETER'S DAUGHTER

PETER WHITE - BORN 25/03/1929 - DIED 09/08/2016

Peter White was my father. He lectured part time and did his art work at home, so he was a very 'present' father. I remember being in his studio in the cottage in Felsted. There would be lino cut chippings on the floor, the smell of turpentine, a box of stained glass shards in the corner and a home brewed elderberry wine fermenting in the airing cupboard.

I never asked dad why he chose to be an artist - it was just what he was. He certainly wanted to rebel a bit against very conventional upbringing in suburbia. His father was a bank clerk and they lived on the London/Middlesex border in Pinner. His close friend growing up (Roy Ross) also became an artist and this must have played a part in his choice.

His time as an evacuee in the WWII in Devon was a happy time and the landscape was an inspiration to him. As an adult he returned there to see his wartime 'family' and to make sketches for watercolours and oil paintings.

TRAINING

He received a thorough art training attending the Wimbledon School of Art from 1945 to 1951 then for the next three years he studied at the Royal College of Art. The trend in fine art at the time was for the 'kitchen sink' style which Peter found dull with its washed out browns and greys so he switched to the stained glass department. The colours captivated him and the black lead lines used to fuse the glass pieces together were something that influenced his painting which were often semi-abstracts fragmented and defined in a similar way.

He found living in shared lodgings in Notting Hill, with a view overlooking the market, joining to the Humphrey Littleton band at the art school hops and experimenting with Mediterranean cuisine and he was ready for an exotic opportunity, he spotted in the back of a newspaper: 'Art teacher wanted in Montego Bay!'

JAMAICAN TRAVELS

This was in 1956. He loved the banana boat voyage and wasted no time in getting acquainted with Jamaicans and expats on board. Jamaica was a gentler place than it is now and he fell in love with the place and its people. Not so much with the school teaching though; he was more in his element in adult education. To get through that ordeal he would go snorkelling at every opportunity, memorising the fish and coral he saw and putting it all down on paper when he came up for air. He used this work to design beautiful stained glass roundels later in life.



It was during this period he met Marian (Blossom Foster). They met when he would be loaned out by Cornwall College for Boys to teach the girls at Montego Bay High. Peter was proud of his physical fitness, he swam for miles in the sea and cycled round the hilly terrain in the heat. Years later he would boast that his fitness was one of the qualities mum (a PE teacher) noticed and liked about him. She became his Mango Cheeky Bloss. They flouted the convention of the day with this interracial courtship. Other white Englishmen working in banks and the civil service had been barred by their employers from dating the local ladies, but colour prejudice was something Peter had no patience with and he was known in Jamaica for his gentlemanly ways and intense interest in all things Jamaican. He was to revisit the country several times after his return to Britain, even once making the trip on his own, after Blossom's death.



THE BARDFIELD COMMUNITY

Back in the UK, Peter took up a position as Head of Art at Saffron Walden's Friends School, 1958 - 1959, following which he became involved in the creative community of Great Bardfield. He lived there and assisted the print maker Michael Rothenstein.

He then went on to work for artist Edward Bawden, 1961 - 1963 assisting in print making and mural painting. Richard remembers that Edward found Peter to be an excellent printmaker, trained to Michael's exacting standards. He joined Edward at a time when he was working on huge linocuts of Brighton Pier and Liverpool Street station that were so large they had to be printed on the floor by stamping on them. He formed great friendships with Michael and Edward. He also knew the weaver Marianne Straub, artists Bernard Cheese and Sheila Robinson, Walter Hoyle, Stanley Clifford-Smith and Joan Glass.

Friendships with Edward and his son Richard (who became a colleague at Braintree college too) and his family continued long after dad left Bardfield. He also became friends with artists John Aldridge and George Chapman which explains the presence of the Chapman print in dad's collection.

Another job that Peter had was to help Richard in the 1960s with the design and construction of the mosaic in a swimming pool for photographer John Hedgecoe at Little Dunmow.

TEACHING

From 1961 to 1994, Peter taught art and art history at Braintree College of Further Education, adult education classes at Chelmsford and at Colchester Institute. He became friends with many of his students, and their work features in the Friend's section of this exhibition.



As a teacher of art practice he had high standards and wouldn't let his students off with any corner cutting or fuzzy excuses. He wanted them to do justice to their talents and was keen for them to be based on a good grounding in draughtsmanship and an awareness of what the great artists had achieved before them. The house was groaning with art books. His tastes were broad: the Renaissance, JM Turner, Eduard Manet, Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Georgia O'Keefe, Mark Rothko, Bridget Riley and David Hockney. He could wax lyrical on them all, bringing them to life - a very good quality to have as an art teacher. I remember dad was always collecting colourful bits of fabric, fruit and interesting shaped green bottles for his evening class, still life arrangements for his students to paint.

Dad cared deeply about the suffering of mankind and this is very much reflected in the designs for political posters that I found buried in a plan chest. These reveal a powerful talent for illustrating the horrors of war in the linocut 'poster's' Hiroshima and Refugee Year which I believe he created in the 1970s.

He also marked examination papers for the Cambridge Examination Board and the Associated Exam board from 1980 to 2003, which he enjoyed and was something he could do at home whilst suffering, as he often did with physical ill health and depression.

My mother, his friends, his students and his employers at the colleges and examination boards all insisted that dad should not let his ill health stop him using his artistic talent. He had one man shows at The Halesworth Gallery, The Octopus Gallery (in the Saffron Walden Friends School), Braintree Town Hall and The Quay Theatre, Sudbury. He also participated in mixed shows at the South London Gallery and St Albans (1991) and at the Royal Watercolour Society in 2002.

LATER YEARS

His illness prevented him from exhibiting as often as he had in his early years. Dad's work has been displayed in London at the Royal Academy Summer show in 1948, '53 and '55. He had also shown with the The London Art Group 1950, the New English Art club 1950, the Artists International Institution 1951, St George Gallery 1960 and Zwemmers Gallery 1960.

Dad's love of the greats was a solace to him in times of poor health and struggles with depression. In his beloved cottage near Felsted he made good use of his extensive library

of art books. They were never just coffee table books to him. He spoke of Vincent Van Gogh as if he were an old friend.

He died in Broomfield, Essex, not far from his beloved cottage near Felsted. He loved Essex landscapes and people; he always said Essex people were the salt of the earth. As he got older this sort of benign way of seeing the best in people only increased. Looking at his art books was the pleasure he could still enjoy - that and reminiscing, which he considered to be his main activity!

BRUCE RONALDSON ART TUTOR, ART HISTORIAN & TOUR GUIDE

EX-STUDENT, PAINTING BUDDY & FRIEND

I first met Peter White when he was teaching at Braintree College and I was a student on the Foundation Course. It was probably the best part of my art education.

Art schools were going through the paroxysms and birth pains of conceptual art, which has left many art students and the art scene confused to this day. We are now in the third generation of students that haven't been taught to draw - even teachers themselves struggle to draw.

Peter was taught at Wimbledon, which maintained its technical and craft skills through the crisis; but Peter was of the generation before all this, which as a result of the rise of modernism, found themselves left high and dry by this new tide of ideas.

Even though we lived in the same village of Felsted, Peter and Blossom led a quiet life - over a mile from the centre - and our paths seldom crossed until I returned to live there in the 1980s. It was then that we reacquainted ourselves and formed a firm friendship, which in large part consisted of entertaining each other with meals and long conversations, particularly about art and music, not to mention imbibing freely. A moonlit-walk back to home, avoiding using a car, was a pleasure all of its own. I remember on one such event recalling Peter coming into college with a linocut he had just printed. Twenty years on I was describing the work exactly, and Peter rushed up stairs and found one of the edition and generously gave it to me. It was the purple and orange 'Rockpool' that you will see on the wall in this exhibition.

At one dinner, I described my first solo foray into France in the mid-1980s, having always tended to visit Italy for my holidays instead. Peter raved about his French experiences with Blossom and Anne, and soon we had hatched a plan for him and me to go on a trip. Blossom encouraged this, as he had become rather isolated and disappointed in the way art, and his own painting, were going. This is not to say that he was not open to new ideas. He probably delighted more in the avant-garde than I did. We both taught art history as well as painting, but much of my focus was on the Italian Renaissance.

CAMPING TRIPS TO PROVENCE

We both agreed on the greatness of Cezanne (as most artists that I know do), so we resolved to visit Aix-en-Provence. We soon found a very simple campsite here and pitched our tents on 'Placement 19' which looked out directly at Mont Sainte Victoire - from the 'Cezanne end!' - less than 2km away.

Cezanne used to visit Le Tholonet and stay at the Relais, enjoying his favourite dish of duck stewed with olives, le patron assured us. Each day we would walk to the mountain, sketching on the way - usually independently. - then back to the campsite for lunch and snooze in the ferociously hot afternoon heat. We both like to cook and did so as far as a camping stove would allow us. Apart from the occasional visit to art museums etc., this was our daily routine.

It was a great success and we did it for several years, spending less time dallying on our way there and back, and painting for about three weeks. We seemed to be in a rain shadow, and we reckoned that every year we would only have rain once; but when it came, what a storm!

The fruits of our labours were worked up into paintings, which we exhibited back in England. Amongst that disservices of art school before the 1990s, was a failure to explain how the art market worked. As Peter had retired and I had peripatetic work in art and art history, that did not seem to matter too much. However, I think Peter would have liked more recognition; his skills were excellent in painting, printmaking and stained glass. Most of our work from that period was exploring watercolour, because one could continue directly on work started on the campsite.



Later, Peter felt less inclined to travel and felt very weak. I got married late in life, and continued to paint at Le Tholonet, introducing my wife Dorothy to the joys of camping and painting, occasionally visited by Philip Richardson, another painter. We still always booked Placement 19! By the time we stopped, the weather pattern had changed and we experienced thunderstorms most afternoons, and flies infested the campsite. We decided that we had outgrown camping.

It was a great era for sitting in the wild, painting, writing and talking. Often we would not see anyone for hours. Few of the 'off-piste' trails are now accessible, closed due to the threat of forest fire. Best kept as a cherished memory.

PETER WHITE - HISTORY & EXHIBITIONS

Born Pinner, Middlesex March 25th 1929

Studied painting and stained glass at Wimbledon school of art 19-45 to 1951, National Diploma in Design in Painting, 1951.

Studied stained glass at Royal College of Art 1951 - 54, dip. RCA 1954.

Head of Art, Cornwall College, Montego Bay, Jamaica 1956 - 57.

Head of Art at The Friends School, Saffron Waldon, Essex 1958 - 59.

Taught Art and Art History at Braintree College of Further Education 1961 - 1994.

Examiner in 'O' and 'A' Level Art and Art History for the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1980 - 2003.

Assistant Print Making to Michael Rothenstein 1959 - 1961, and print making and mural painting to Edward Bawden, 1961 - 63 and Humphrey Spender in 1962.

EXHIBITIONS IN LONDON

Mixed - Royal Academy Summer Exhibition 1948, 1953 and 1955
The London Art Group 1950, the New English Art Club 1950, the Artists International Institution 1951, St George Gallery 1960, Zwemmers Gallery 1960 and the Royal Watercolour Society 2002.

PROVINCIAL GALLERIES - ONE MAN SHOWS:

Lester Gallery - (Montego Bay, Jamaica) Colchester Institute
Halesworth Gallery, The Octopus Gallery, Saffron Walden, Braintree, Town Hall, Quay Theatre, (Sudbury.)

MIXED EXHIBITIONS

Great Bardfield Group (with Michael Rothenstein) Braintree Town Hall, Lino prints in the South London Gallery permanent collection.



Storm Brewing over Essex Cornfields



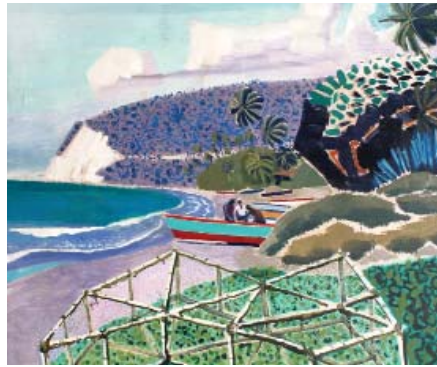
Ramsey Island from Clegyr-Boia 1984



Ash, Ivy and Mustard Field 1993



Hills Above Catadupa 1956



Fish Trap, Black River, Jamaica



South Devon Fields 1975



Untitled



Bluebells in an Essex Garden 1960-1997

Oil Paintings

From the flat blocks of beautiful matte colours in his 1950s painting 'Jamaican Fish Trap Back River' to the dabbling slightly pointillist style of 'Bluebells in an Essex Garden,' Peter used oils with different techniques in various times of his life. There is the impasto style of 'Ash, Ivy and Mustard Fields' where the oil is glossy and built up to form a texture on the canvas so thick that it is almost like a relief painting.

Dad's enjoyment of the bright yellow of the mustard crops can be seen in that piece and in the 'Storm Brewing over Essex Cornfields' painting that we featured on the poster. It also allowed him to use his beloved purple in the sky to contrast with the yellow fields to create drama in his landscapes. This depicts the view from the back of our house. The barn was blown down by the great storm of 1987.

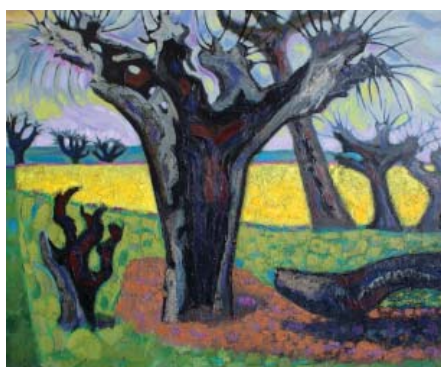
The colours of 'South Devon Fields' (1975) I think shows how fearlessly Peter used colour and it reminds me of the time he painted my bedroom with a neon greeny blue and what with the wall being dissected by the black Tudor beams the effect was so violent that my mother made him repaint it immediately in something a little more calming! The brief life of this wall colour had a lasting effect on me as that green blue is one of my favourite colours to this day.

Purple seems to appear in almost everything he did but I didn't notice to what extent this is true until I read a snippet from an unknown source reviewing the Summer 1958 Great Bardfield Artists Exhibition. The writer gets dad's and Michael's names wrong but this is what he says: 'Also, Peter Whyte, who exhibited in John Rothenstein's house, painted his canvases of Jamaica with an obsession for purple. His style appeared to be an amalgam of Gauguin, Cezanne and the Tachists, which was entertaining'.

Peter was immensely proud and fond of the painting of his dear old dad, created in 1950. It is one of the few works in the show which is not for sale though I am glad to show it here. It demonstrates how dad could also handle oils in a conventional way without the abstractions and stylisations he largely employed.



Detail from Pollarded Ash trees and Mustard Fields 1889



Pollarded Ash trees and Mustard Fields 1889



Montego Bay, Jamaica 1899



Still Life with Green Bottle - 1890



Lynette (lamp) 1962



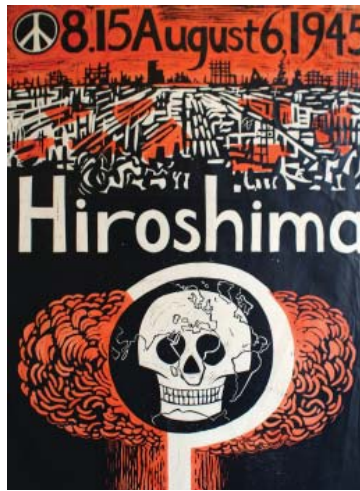
Seagulls on a Cliff 1970



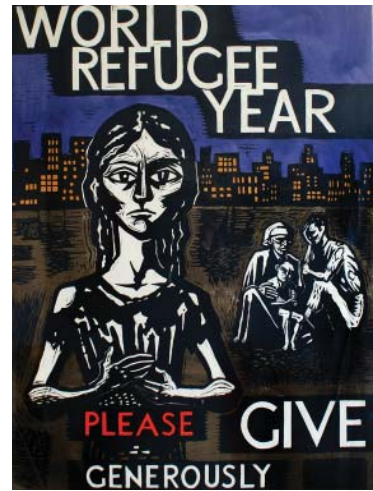
On a Caribbean Shore 1956



Jamaican Fishing Canoes 1956



Hiroshima Tomorrow 1960's



World Refuge Year in Colour 1960's

Prints

Linocuts (with Gesso Relief)

'Lynette' with her lamp with its simple composition and subdued and graphic tonal contrasts was made in Jamaica and is quite different to most of what dad is known for.

The three rockpool linocuts from 1969 were some of the first works I remember Peter making upstairs in his studio. The rockpools with the seaweed shapes looking like Matisse cut-outs are inspired by the happy hours spent meandering along the coasts of Wales and Devon on family holidays. Images from these holidays also appear in 'Seagulls on a Cliff' in which Peter has used the simplicity of the linocut printing technique to pleasing effect. There's that purple again, put in at the top right hand side to compliment the subtle greeny grey colours of the cliffs!

On a Caribbean Shore is a last minute inclusion in this exhibition. It dates back to the same period in the 1950s when dad was living in Jamaica. When I lived there in the early 1990s there were still plenty of men lounging against trees doing nothing much (or 'liming' as it's called over there).

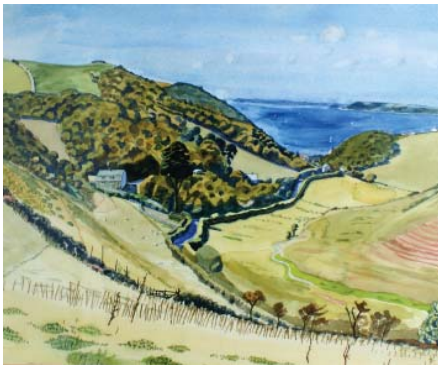


Sea Shore Pool 1969



Rockpool with Sea Anenomes 1969





Valley to the Sea, Hope Cove 1989



Rocky Valley with Gorse 1997



Langley Mill 1997



'Towards the light - In Memory of my dear friend, Roy Ross' 1996



Bluebell Wood (est. 1984)



Montego Bay Sunset 1956

Watercolours

Though he could use watercolours delicately and conventionally as seen in 'Valley to the Sea,' 'Hope Cove,' there was often a rich depth to the colours, as in 'Royal Grammas with Sponges' or 'Montego Bay Sunset.' The faceted shapes he uses in 'Towards the Light' and 'Bluebell Wood' where the different shapes of the various brushes he uses reveals contrasts with the more immediate rendition of 'Montego Bay Sunset' where he allows the watercolour pigment to wash and blend and escape freely. The view was from his first lodgings in Jamaica and years later he would look at this little painting and go rather misty eyed. It was sometimes hard to believe that that experience he had living in Jamaica amounted to less than two years.

I would have liked to have shown some of Dad's Provençal paintings from the trips with Bruce Ronaldson but these have all previously been sold. Maybe the artistic companionship, good food, wine and joy of sunshine that dad shared with painting pal Bruce was captured in the work and made it more saleable, but there were none left in my collection. For more about these painting trips please read Bruce's tribute after the introduction.

Dad was especially happy in Provence, where many of his art heroes had been inspired before him: Cezanne, Van Gogh, Renoir, Monet and Bonnard to name but a few.



Royal Grammas with Sponges 1997



Face



Yellow Flying Fish



Man with Hoe



Reef Fish



Four Eyed Butterfly Fish



Imperial Angelfish



Rock Beauty & Tube Worms



Man with Scythe



Imperial Angelfish

Stained Glass

The majority of the designs were done when Peter was at the Royal College of Art between 1951 to 1954. Not surprisingly, the themes are largely of a religious nature. He would always seek out the local churches and cathedrals whenever we travelled to visit friends or were on holiday, purely for the windows and artefacts inside. The medieval roundels hanging in the window in this gallery were set as exercises, being copies from existing pieces. The more abstract designs on paper, such as the one for a hotel foyer, was also done at the same time as the church windows, reflecting his appreciation of artists such as Paul Klee or Piet Mondrian.

The glorious fish roundels were made later in life, in the 1970s, I remember him assembling them upstairs in his studio. When he showed them to shops and galleries he was asked if he could do cats and dogs instead! This seems unbelievable, as the coral and tropical fish lend themselves perfectly to the medium of stained glass. The dappled sunshine playing on the underwater scenes is rendered perfectly in coloured glass seen through a window. Inspiration for the fish roundels came from his time living in Jamaica in the mid 1950s. He would go snorkelling at every opportunity, memorising the fish and coral he saw and putting it all down on paper when he came up for air.



Foyer of hotel, abstract 1953



Detail from Crucifixion & Resurrection



Blossom White, artist's wife by LE Anderson (Andy) 1974 - Oil - NFS



Portrait of the Artist by Anderson (Andy) 1974 - Oil - NFS



Untitled - Ray Humpries - Linoprint



13 Queen Street, Anne White - Watercolour - NFS



Country Coalyard by Bruce Ronaldson, 1988 - Linoprint



Offcut - Michael Rothenstein (Print bin)

Friends & Influences

PORTRAITS OF PETER AND BLOSSOM WHITE - LE ANDERSON

A student at dad's evening class at Chelmsford College, Andy, as she was known to her friends, has captured an excellent likeness in both pieces.

BIRDS AND BRANCHES II, SCREEN PRINT - MICHAEL ROTHENSTEIN

This print transported Peter taking him back to the happy years he spent as printmaking assistant for Michael in Bardfield.

THE TORCH, ACRYLIC - BY PETER JOWETT

My father was intrigued by how his friend created such beauty from this subject; a pile of clothes hanging over a chair with a torch resting on them.

BEELEIGH WEIR NEAR MALDON, ACRYLIC - VAL BONNET

'Sis' was a student in one of dad's adult education classes. 'Bro's' influence can certainly be seen here and worked in both directions.

THE THREE GRACES, WATERCOLOUR - BRUCE RONALDSON

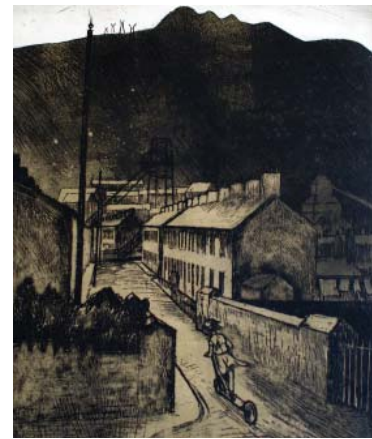
Painted in Provence, on one of several painting trips Bruce and dad made together. Bruce describes these trips vividly in the opening pages of this catalogue.

13 QUEEN STREET, WATERCOLOUR - ANNE WHITE, DAUGHTER OF PETER WHITE

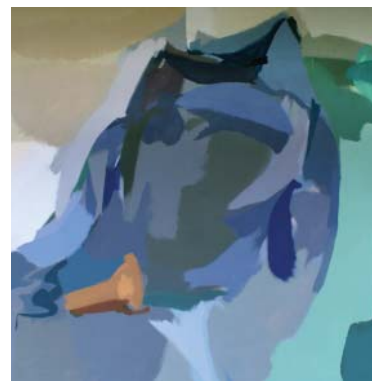
Dad was unusually lenient in his appraisal of this. Possible he just liked this because he loved its subject - the front of the house where he courted my mother in Jamaica.

TITLE UNKNOWN, LINOCUT - RAY HUMPHRIES

Ray was a student of dad's at Braintree College and became a friend of the family. This linocut is complex and with its faceted pattern, it's hard to say who influenced who here.



South Wales street scene with child riding a scooter - George Chapman - Etching



The Torch, Acrylic by Peter Jowett - NFS



Birds and Branches II by Michael Rothenstein - Screenprint



John Clark, Sculpture - NFS



The Three Graces, Bruce Ronaldson - Watercolour - NFS



Detail from Birds and Branches II by Michael Rothenstein - Screenprint



Detail from Beeleigh Weir near Maldon, by Val Bonnet - Acrylic



PETER WHITE BARDFIELD ARTIST

Private View May 31st at 6.00pm

Exhibitions runs May 31st - June 22nd 2019

The Minories Galleries, 74 High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1UE

An exhibition of Peter's work in oil, watercolour, linocut and stained glass, from student days to the present. Inspired by his days working as a printing assistant to the artists of Great Bardfield, Michael Rothenstein and Edward Bawden. Included are pieces by artists of Bardfield, including friends and family. We aim to bring them together in this collection and celebration of Peters life and work.

Sara & Anne