



Philip Haggren: A Sceptic & A Craftsman





THE FIRST ADVERTISER



# Philip Haggren: A Sceptic & A Craftsman

written & edited by  
Lottie Hoare



Meg Ryan

research

John F Sherman

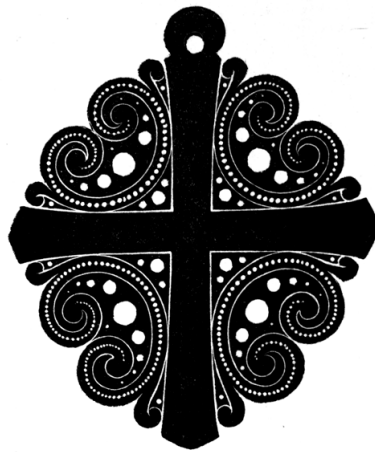
design



*Philip Hageen and his children, Lourdes, circa 1928*

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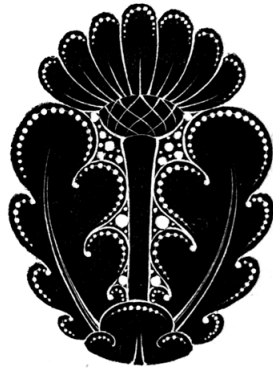
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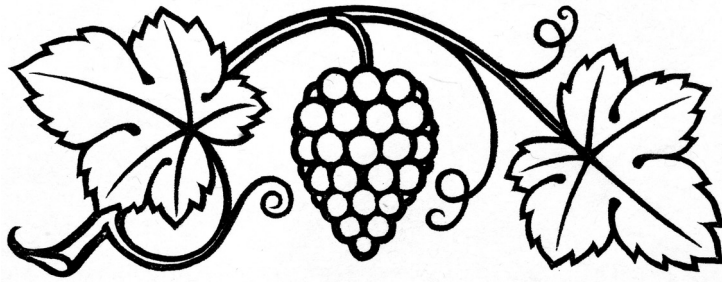
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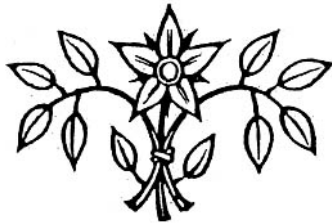
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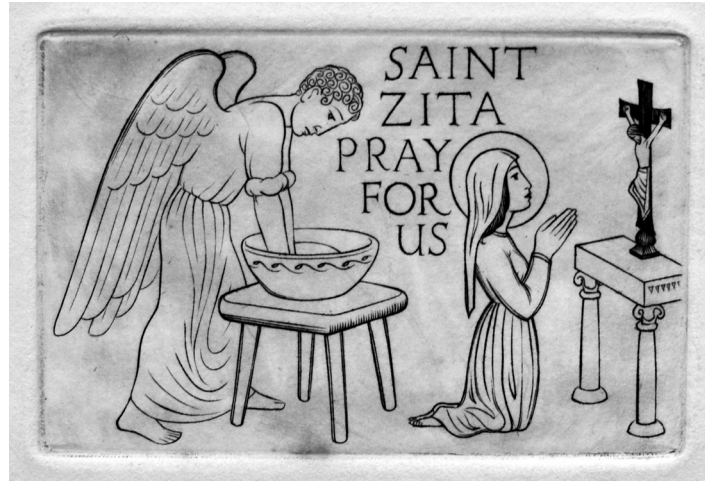


When Adam & Eve were turned out of Paradise, their visible luggage, was nothing but leaves. As they walked, Eve bewailed their poverty & told Adam he was a fool to have owned up and that it was all his fault. She went on to say that anyhow she never wanted to be kept shut up in a garden where you could not do as you liked.

In spite of his grief, Adam almost smiled, for he had smuggled out of Paradise a heavenly treasure - which was a sense of humour. This treasure has continued to be his consolation; but Eve would never share it with him, for she said that it had suffered - as indeed it had - from being hidden under that fig leaf.

*Philip Haqreen. Common Place Book, undated.*





## Foreword

As a child growing up in the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic on Ditchling Common I remember Philip Hageen as a strange and rather remote figure cycling to and from his workshop, seeming even taller than he was on an immensely high bicycle. His retirement in 1959 was quite incomprehensible to my parents who could not envisage how a life without work could be in any way either rewarding or enjoyable, and I think this view was shared by most of the other members of the Guild. Consequently, was then a gap in contact between us and the Hageens for more than 20 years.

Nevertheless, during these years our house was full of his work and a print of “Our Lady of the Rosary” (which appears on page 93) hung above my bed. We also owned a copy of *A Catechism of Christian Doctrine* which was printed by St Dominic’s Press in 1931 and illustrated with Philip’s beautiful woodcuts. This I carried proudly with me to Miss Mattimore’s catechism class, ready to demonstrate its superiority over the little red Burns & Oats catechisms used by the rest of the class. Alas, the rather rigid Miss Mattimore was not the least impressed and insisted that I should use the regular catechism just like everyone else - an early lesson in the difficulty of persuading the rest of the world to share the attitudes of the Guild, something Philip mentions many times in his letters.



It was not until the early 80s that I met Philip again. By that time I had returned to the Guild and, after my father's death in 1982, had taken over the family's silk-weaving and vestment-making workshop. Philip was living in a nursing home not far away and I believe that my first visit was on Christmas Eve 1982. I found to my delight, not the strange and remote figure of my childhood, but a warm, entertaining and enormously wise man. Although bed-ridden at this time, he never complained but lay peacefully with his very elegant long hands stretched on the bedcover, surrounded by books and letters. Over the following four years we had some fascinating conversations. His stories about Eric Gill were wonderfully uninhibited and were a revelation to me, brought up as I had been with a heavily censored version of the 'great man's' views.

He could speak knowledgeably and with humour on any subject from the current state of the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II to his memories of Ditchling, but above all it was Langland's *Piers Plowman* that he really loved to discuss.

It was a delight to be able to bring friends to meet him. Despite his age and health he welcomed them to his small room with exquisite courtesy and proceeded to entertain them with a stream of anecdotes, philosophy and sharp observation.

This wonderful collection of his writing perfectly illustrates how he could combine ascerbic criticism with loving generosity - how else, one wonders, could he have retained his Catholic faith or his friendship with Eric Gill. The letters bring Philip vividly to life, his unmistakable voice coming across strong and clear.

The book is extremely important not only for the new light it sheds on the personalities of those associated with Eric Gill and the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic. It also contributes to the much wider debate surrounding the politics of capitalism and the place of craft workers in the present age. Philip is very clear about the conditions under which human beings must work if they are to be fully free and responsible and to develop their intelligence and skills. In the first decade of the 21st century as we grapple with the intensification of the effects of a 200 year long process of industrialisation, Philip's words, expressed with such vigour and wit, remain remarkably relevant.

Jenny KilBride  
2009

# Dedication

This book is dedicated to Father John Haggren (1919-2003). His patience, foresight and determination to bring his father's ideas to a wider audience brought this book into being. Below is a poem by Philip Haggren reflecting his hopes for his son. It is thought to have been written in 1928, when John Haggren was nine years old.

## To My Son

Little Son, I'd wish for thee  
Thou shouldst like my father be.

Often have I heard it said  
That, of all a man's kindred,  
T'is to grandsire that he shows  
Most resemblance as he grows.  
May it happen so to thee  
And may'st thou mirror him thou ne'er didst see.

Thou resemblest him in feature  
May'st thou have his blessed nature.

For he had a courtesy,  
A Kindness and a chivalry,  
A Sweetness and simplicity  
Alike for those of all degree:  
And his, that gift so rare to see,  
Complete assurance with complete humility.  
May'st thou, like him, have appetite  
To relish all good things aright.



For he enjoyed  
With mind uncloyed  
All beauty and all fun  
And duty done  
Left conscience free  
To gather flower and fruit from every tree.

With fools he wondrous patience had;  
But none at all with what was bad.

His spacious memory  
Was like a granary  
With tested grain well stored.  
There no rat gnawed  
Nor was there any chaff  
But wheat to feed and malt to make man laugh.

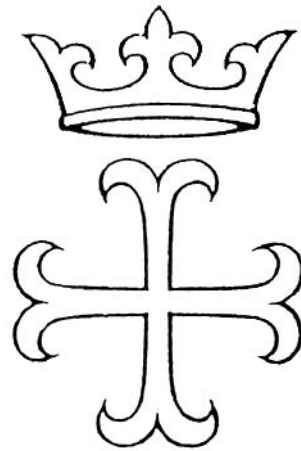
Discretion had he, and could counsel keep:  
No ripple showed the tide within the deep.

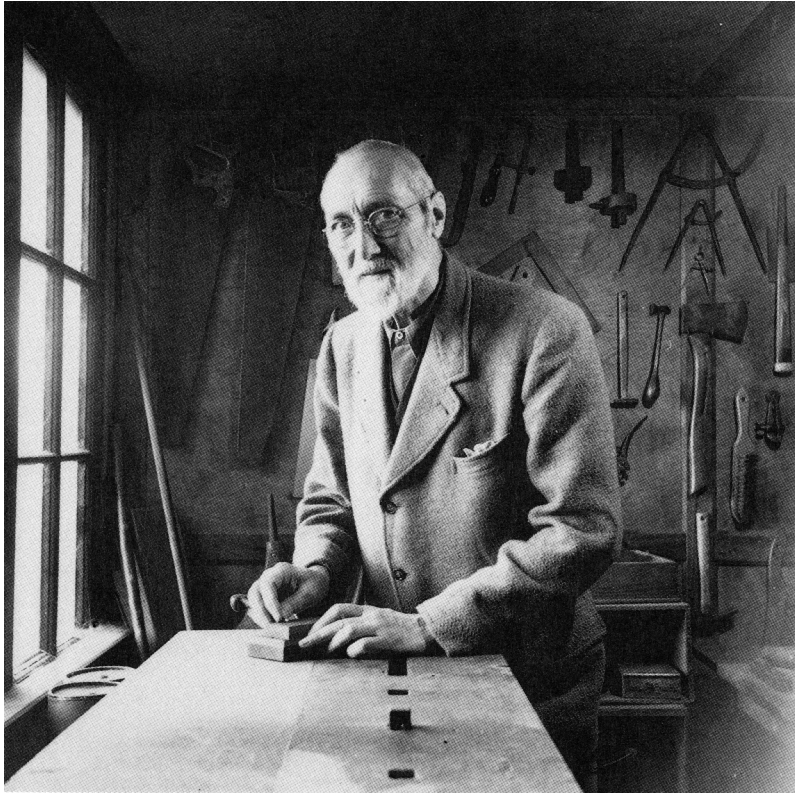
If thou inheritest  
A Character thus blessed  
Then may the sunset rays  
That light my latter days  
Show the same tints as those  
That lit my morning with a gleam of rose

And generations I'll not live to see  
May cherish thankfully thy memory.

Philip Hagreen

*Privately published in 'Twenty Poems,' Lourdes, 1928.*





*Philip Hagreen in his workshop on Ditchling Common, circa 1955*

# Introduction

## *Blade of Words and String of Rhyme*

Parish rooms have a standard, impersonal look – stacked chairs, beige walls, the occasional Health and Safety poster. It was in just such unpromising surroundings that I first read Philip Hagreen's letters, in the parish room of St Andrew's Catholic church in Tenterden. It was April 1993: Philip had died five years earlier at the age of 97, leaving a wealth of correspondence and other material now in the care of his son, Father John Hagreen, who was the parish priest of St Andrew's.

As soon as I began reading these inauspicious surroundings vanished. The letters were compelling. There were so many questions raised, such a cheering rhythm, both to the language used and the handwriting; so much comic reported speech and analogies that made me think about things in a way that seemed startlingly obvious, and yet had never crossed my mind before.

Philip Hagreen is best known as a wood engraver who worked in the shadow of Eric Gill. This book came about through a desire to redress the balance and show Philip Hagreen not only as part of the Catholic craft revival of the early Twentieth Century, but as a thoughtful and outspoken observer who had a memorable talent with words. For those who met Philip, the first thing they want to convey about him when describing him to others was his engaging and provocative story telling and argument. This book aims to bring his ideas to a wider audience.

Philip was modest and particular. He doubted his own skills as a writer. His own miserable experience of formal schooling put him off any study that depended too heavily on the evidence of books. Instead he relied on his own direct and detailed observations of the world to capture in words what he had seen and felt. His writings were occasionally published in specialist Catholic Journals or in other small limited editions – the heading above *'Blade of words and string of rhyme'* is taken from his dedication in an edition of his own poetry from 1928.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, he doubted the power of language to convey experience but at other times he forgot such misgivings. Here he describes creating a wood block for printing:

In some arts, the chief need is a sensual appreciation of the qualities of the materials & the functioning of tools. Thus, in cutting a wood block, the rightness of the work depends on my making the wood & the knife parts of myself. The wood in my left hand moves about on the sandbag as part of me. My consciousness extends beyond my right hand to the very tip of my knife. Wood & steel are co-operating to satisfy my desire, as violin & bow co-operate within the person of the violinist. The process must be as natural as the co-operation of lungs & mouth in speech.<sup>2</sup>

When putting together this book of Philip's writings, I was looking for a title that suited an anthology of writings by someone who loved and yet mistrusted language. It seemed safest to use his own words. He described himself as a 'sceptic & a craftsman.' *'I doubted the orthodox teaching when it did not tally with experience.'*<sup>3</sup> This gave me the title - *Philip Hagreeen: A Sceptic & A Craftsman*.



### *The Vocal Craftsman*

Before explaining more about how this book came into being, I should first explain why so much of Philip Hagreeen's writing survived, without him having been known as a writer.

Philip Hagreeen was born in 1890, the son of an art teacher. An only child, he travelled widely with his parents, hated school and wanted to be an artist. He attended art school before signing up for military training on the day of the outbreak of World War One. He converted to Catholicism in 1915. He did not see active service abroad and was invalided out of the army suffering from stress and exhaustion. He married Aileen Mary Clegg, a cradle Catholic, and after attempts to earn his living as a portrait painter and an involvement in the founding of The Society of Wood Engravers, he met the sculptor and

artist Eric Gill. Philip knew that what he had been taught so far had not brought him a sense of true vocation. In 1923 he moved to Ditchling with his wife and children and worked with Eric Gill. Gill's teaching changed Philip's ideas about craftsmanship and influenced all his later work, first in France, and then with other Catholic craftsmen at Ditchling.

In these years, writing was not a big part of Philip's life. The working life of a craftsman provided opportunities for solitude but also plenty of conversation with a like-minded community. He wrote occasional articles for publication. His correspondence was mainly concerned with work commissions, for instance with the printer Hilary Pepler and later the artist Adé de Béthune.

Long distance friendships in the second half of his life made writing more important to Philip. His friendship with the American lettering expert, Graham Carey, which began in 1939 and was conducted for the next forty-five years mainly through air mail correspondence, inspired Philip to explain, justify and illustrate his arguments about the importance of how objects were made. The two men met several times, in 1956 and in later years, when Graham Carey and his second wife Nancy visited Philip in Burgess Hill. Graham Carey was known for his book *The Elements of Lettering* and was for many years editor of *The Catholic Art Quarterly*.<sup>4</sup> Both men were fascinated by the subject of making, and they exchanged reams of letters on the subject - examining every angle of their disagreements. Despite Philip's claim not to think in words,<sup>5</sup> these exchanges produced Philip's articulate defence of his own viewpoint and show his appreciation of their different approaches:

We do not agree, but we cannot collide because we are not moving on the same plane. You know Latin & Greek & you know about antiquity & mathematics & philosophy. In short you are an intellectual, a citizen of a land where I am a stranger. I was, and still am in my mind, an odd-job craftsman. My job is to appreciate the nature of materials & be sensitive to the right use of them. I am therefore a materialist and a sensualist. When your intellect leads you to put a block of stone on a wooden clere-storey, I scream as though you had dropped it on my toe.<sup>6</sup>

As always, you state your case with perfect clearness. You are probably right that we agree as two people should agree in this 'field full of folk.'<sup>7</sup> If two people agreed exactly, one of them would be redundant - as though a pack of cards had two knaves of diamonds.<sup>8</sup>

The Hagreens and the Careys preserved the 45-year correspondence on both sides of the Atlantic. It came, in time, to form the most extensive exchange of letters in the Philip Haggren archive. It was also during the 1940s that Philip began to correspond with the English Literature Professor, Nevill Coghill, in Oxford and the collector, John Bennett Shaw in Ohio.

Throughout World War Two, and through much of the 1950s, Philip Haggren was still working as a craftsman. He carved small sculptures in wood and ivory; he made woodcuts and engravings – both illustrations and lettering inscriptions. He retired in 1955 and letter writing became a more significant part of his life. From 1973 to 1988 Philip was living in a nursing home and letter writing became an even more important substitute for conversation after 1975 when his wife Aileen died. These were the years when writers such as Tom Dilworth, René Hague and Fiona MacCarthy were working on biographical studies of David Jones and Eric Gill. Philip Haggren was one of the few surviving craftsmen who had worked with both artists. The writers' questions encouraged Philip to put his recollections down on paper. After Philip's death in 1988, his son Father John Haggren gathered together an archive of all his known exchanges and began planning a publication to bring Philip Haggren's writings to light.

### ***A Book Fifteen Years in the Making***

In 1993, Father John Haggren invited interested individuals to discuss the plans for a book on Philip Haggren's writings. The group came together to explore how such a book might evolve: the wood engraver Simon Brett; professor of religious studies, Adrian Cunningham; Rare Book Librarian, David Knott; book plate expert, Brian North Lee; art dealer, Rupert Otten of Wolseley Fine Arts; and retired civil servant Meg Ryan who had a sharp eye for organising and cataloguing the archive of letters. I became involved, having written on Twentieth Century craft and lettering, and having a history student background, which made me unafraid of ring binders full of correspondence!

Over the next decade Father John, Meg Ryan and I pieced together the writings, which we felt ought to feature in *A Sceptic and A Craftsman*. This involved many drafts, hours of corrections, lengthy discussions and numerous pub lunches. In 2000, I contributed a paper entitled *Philip Haggren's Response to Eric Gill As a Catholic Artist* to the conference on *Eric*



*Gill and The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic*, hosted by graphic design professor John Sherman at the University Notre Dame in Indiana. After Father John's death in 2003, we were uncertain how to bring the publication of the book to a conclusion. In 2007, Meg Ryan and I met up with John Sherman, and he took on the design of the book and some adventurous digital font design based on Philip's wooden type lettering. Father John's nephew, Richard Ritchie, also took on the responsibility of guiding the book project through its final stages.

I think both Father John and Philip Hageen would have been intrigued by John Sherman's ability to digitalise and reinterpret Philip's hand-made wooden lettering blocks - blocks devised for letter press printing. I also wish I could hear their views on John Sherman's typeface 'Felicitas' which is inspired by Eric Gill's Perpetua. John Sherman's work demonstrates how Twenty-First century technology can preserve and re-animate the past, making a new tribute to the hand-made objects of the mid Twentieth Century. Here are Philip's words on the need to make or develop rather than simply imitate:

Plainchant did not come of a musician, but of a civilisation. We still have the notes of that, and Benedictines have something of the tradition. It is perhaps the best of human things left in the world today - and yet I wonder whether, if we could hear a ninth century choir, we should find something missing from our rendering of it. I fancy there might be as big a difference as that between the old woodcuts and the new. Perhaps tradition is the wrong word to use of our knowledge of plainchant, for we do not make or develop now, we only use. An artistic tradition should be growth. Experience collects like sap in a tree and then the branches extend. The tree may rot and fall at last, but only to enrich the ground in which the seed is sprouting. So it has happened many times, until this new slavery called "industry" crushed something that had survived all the tyrannies of heathendom, and man would rather buy cheaply than make fittingly. <sup>9</sup>

So, we hope to make this book a tribute to Philip that does not imitate the past but creates a lasting record of his ideas and his craftsmanship within a digital, post-industrial Britain.

In 1993, there had been much debate between those involved with the evolving project, on including the right balance of images and writings. Obviously Philip's wood engravings, wood cuts and carved sculptures were a vital part of his life and work, but they had been featured in some limited edition publications in the 1970s and 1980s whereas his writings had not. Father John's view was firm that words must dominate the eventual publication, as the aim was to introduce his writings to a modern day audience.

As it turns out, Philip's arguments about industrialisation, capitalism and the 'back to the land movement' are more topical in 2009, when the book was made ready for publication, than they were back in 1993. Philip's ideas about work and craftsmanship also make valuable reading at a time when Alain de Botton and Richard Sennett have published writings on these subjects, which largely ignore the spiritual dimension of man's experience of making. However, Richard Sennett does acknowledge the beneficial role of human interaction in the workshop:

We should not give up on the workshop as a social space. Workshops present and past have glued people together through work rituals, whether these be a shared cup of tea of the urban parade; through mentoring, whether the formal surrogate parenting of medieval times or informal advising on the worksite; through face-to-face sharing of information.<sup>10</sup>



### ***Philip's Response to Biographers***

The collector John Bennett Shaw described Philip's correspondence as honest and revealing and felt that his ability to convey experience made it seem as if the two men had met although they never did. Through Philip's letters, he knew his joy and his grief and *the disruption of his and my world: by greed, militarism, rabid nationalism and the eclipse of the moral code by which Philip and I have tried to live our lives.*<sup>11</sup> These same themes made Philip a

valuable resource for Twentieth-Century researchers and biographers. Rather than simply unearthing anecdotes about the past, Philip sought to remember the common ground, shared dismay with modern industrial society and the conflict of ideas that he experienced with close friends.

Controversial figures, such as Eric Gill, inspired different approaches to biography within Philip's lifetime. Philip met and corresponded with the actor and writer Robert Speaight when he was working on a biography of Eric Gill in the early 1960s. At that time Philip knew little about the reality of Eric Gill's private life. Philip's deliberations enter difficult territory when he considers how much or how little we need to know about a man's private life, rather than just his working life, in order to appreciate his art. In 1966, *The Life of Eric Gill* by Robert Speaight, was published - it was a book that hinted that Gill was an unfaithful husband but gave few details. After reading it, Philip reflected on Gill's behaviour:

Much of what had to be told came as a shock to me ... I remonstrated when I thought he was doing harm, but he was beyond the range of any gun.

Lots of men have been very good and very bad, but not at the same time. There must have been some mental kink that allowed Eric to be humbly devout when he was behaving outrageously.<sup>12</sup>

Philip did not like biographies that idolized their subjects. He criticized the author of *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, Donald Attwater, for indulging in 'hagiography' with his book *A Cell of Good Living: the life, works and opinions of Eric Gill* published in 1969. While excessive praise made him uncomfortable, Philip also did not like it when authors set out to seek scandal. He condemned the publication of material involving private disputes between families which he considered likely to upset younger generations: *A hatchet buried by the fathers should not be dug up to wound the children.*<sup>13</sup> He did not like personal remarks to be taken out of context and twisted: he felt betrayed when the bookseller and radio producer, Douglas Cleverdon, circulated a transcript of a tape-recorded conversation between them about life at Ditchling. Philip feared the resulting transcript could result in his off-the-cuff remarks being quoted out of context in others' writings.'

Letters to biographers show Philip trying to build up a picture of an individual while juggling with conflicting impressions. When René Hague was thinking of writing a

whole book about David Jones (as opposed to the edited letters he eventually settled on), Philip wrote commending the idea of fusing together their different views: *I'm sure you could join what I know onto what you know, though it would be like dovetailing diverse kinds of wood.*<sup>14</sup> In another letter to René, Philip elaborated:

It was unwise of Eric to demand instant and complete agreement. That is not the way to learn – and learning is man's job on earth. A second opinion adds a dimension. We are given two eyes so that we may be stereoscopic and see things in the round. You and I will both know David better by putting our ideas together. It is not a matter of compromise but of solidifying.<sup>15</sup>

Philip trusted his instincts when he first met a writer. After Eric Gill's biographer, Fiona MacCarthy, came to see him in the mid-1980s, he wrote to a friend: *A woman is writing a life of Eric. She has been here and hopes to come again. She is not a Catholic. I liked her. She has a right interest in craftsmanship.*<sup>16</sup> Fiona MacCarthy reciprocated: *You have given me so much insight into Gill. No one else could have told me the things which you have done, both in our conversations and the notes you have made for me.*<sup>17</sup> Philip did not live to read her biography, *Eric Gill*, published in 1989.

Philip appreciated biographers who were trying to tell the story of a man and his work, because he saw the two as integrally linked. He often quoted the words Father Patrick Barden had used to sum up the spirit of Ditchling, and applied them universally: *There is not one way of getting your living and another way of saving your soul.*<sup>18</sup>

### ***Going along the Grain***

At the meeting Father John had arranged in 1993, we had some discussion about how to structure the wealth of surviving letters into a coherent framework. Some thought that a selection of Philip's letters should be reproduced in their entirety as primary source material. This would, however, result in certain gems being completely omitted from the publication; so it was decided that we needed to separate out the gems from the humdrum. Father John, Meg and I slowly realised that the essential preoccupations of Philip's correspondence must dictate the shape of the book. Six main themes recurred in Philip's writings: formative early experience, friendship, faith, workmanship, social justice and finally his life long appreciation of art, literature and nature. This eventually split the



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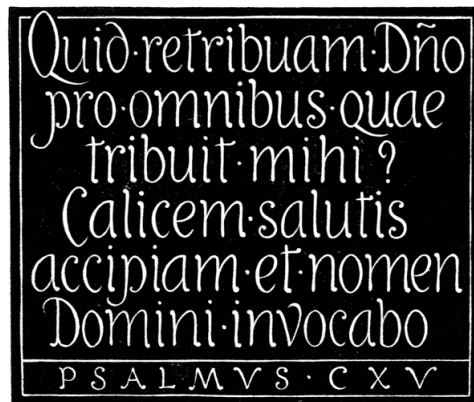
book into six parts. We all agreed that sometimes Philip's letters could stand alone, with occasional introductory comments, but at other times extracts could be juxtaposed to form part of an essay. We strove to give a rounded picture of Philip; just as he tried to help create such a picture of his own friends who were the subject of biographies. We are aware that at times Philip's writings sound obstinate and didactic. At other times he comes across as mellow and unjudgmental. We have tried to include writings that illustrate these contradictory moods.

Knowing that Philip Haggren admired the writer G K Chesterton, and *The Victorian Age in Literature* in particular, it seems fair to suppose that Chesterton's opening to that book could act as a guide on how to present Philip's correspondence:

A section of a long and splendid literature can be most conveniently treated in one of two ways. It can be divided as one cuts a currant cake or a Gruyere cheese, taking the currants (or the holes) as they come. Or it can be divided as one cuts wood - along the grain: if one thinks that there is a grain. But the two are never the same: the names never come in the same order in actual time as they come in any serious study of a spirit or a tendency. The critic who wishes to move onward with the life of an epoch, must be always running backwards and forwards among its mere dates; just as a branch bends back and forth continually; yet the grain in the branch runs true like an unbroken river.<sup>19</sup>

I have tried to go along the grain. That's how the letters seemed comfortable. Throughout all this tentative piecing together of his recorded thoughts, I was conscious of Philip's distaste for gushing praise and his reluctance to have his own work examined in such a way that drew attention to his status as either an artist or a writer. He saw both his work as a craftsman and his observations on life as something that needed no signature. He saw himself as part of an ongoing tradition - *If there is any thought or phrase in my letter that is of the least use to you the fact that you agree with it makes it yours. A bit of truth that happens to have gone through my head is no more mine than wind that has blown through my hair.*<sup>20</sup> His perspective was not simple modesty, but a desire - albeit idealistic - to align himself with a world before the advent of 'celebrity narcissism.' In correspondence with Graham Carey, Philip was wary of too much personal attention:

I would rather that my blocks were thought of as flotsam that has drifted over from England. One of the Christian things about medieval art is the absence of signatures. No one seems to have cared who made a thing or who began it or who finished it or where the ideas came from. When all things were made by art, the artist was known for the ordinary sinner that he is.<sup>21</sup>





So I read and re-read the letters and shuffled material around. I was intrigued to find how Philip could write so widely about all manner of subjects, scrutinize material with such energy and insight and yet never take things to pieces. He was determined to learn from things that were ‘whole’ rather than attempt any deconstruction. He declared his problem with Dominican thinking: *Dominicans say distinguo*. They divide and subdivide when we should see things whole.<sup>22</sup> Slowly, I gained confidence that a book was coming together that could not distort the man - as long as I let Philip speak for himself whenever possible.

Drawing the book together brought inspired moments for all those involved with the project. We hoped that we were making a fitting tribute to Philip. I hope this book tells as much of the story as is possible, with the materials we have, but without trying to explain what is beyond our grasp. Philip liked to leave the inexplicable contained but appreciated:

Chesterton said that in art, as in morals, we draw the line somewhere. Some child explained - “I think a think & then draw a line round my think.” To me, it is a think with a line round it that is a work of art. Man is soul-body & his art is a thought realised.<sup>23</sup>

So we have tried to draw a line around Philip’s thinking. I hope we have done so in such a way that his thoughts are free to jump up off the page and strike the reader anew.

Lottie Hoare  
May 2009







# Part I

## A Selection of Philip's Writings about His Early Years

The surviving correspondence concerning Philip Hagree's childhood and life as a young man was written after Philip was fifty years of age. He looks back at his youth through the filters of his experience as a craftsman. As an adult he worked with intense concentration and long periods of solitude. His memories of childhood focus on people who made objects or absorbed themselves in practical and necessary tasks to earn a living. The reader can sense a gulf between his boyhood fascination with the visible work he observed and made sense of on the coast of Suffolk - amongst fishermen and dock workers - and his uneasy pursuit of an artist's career up to 1923. The uncertainty of the late Edwardian era and the shock of the First World War added to the difficulties he faced when trying to establish his own working life as an artist and craftsman. In contrast, his conversion to Catholicism in 1915 presented no such doubts or moments of indecision.



*Philip Hagreen and his parents, circa 1892*

# Autobiographical Writings 1890-1923

I wanted to co-operate, not to compete. ... My delight was in using any tool, from a scythe to a sail needle.

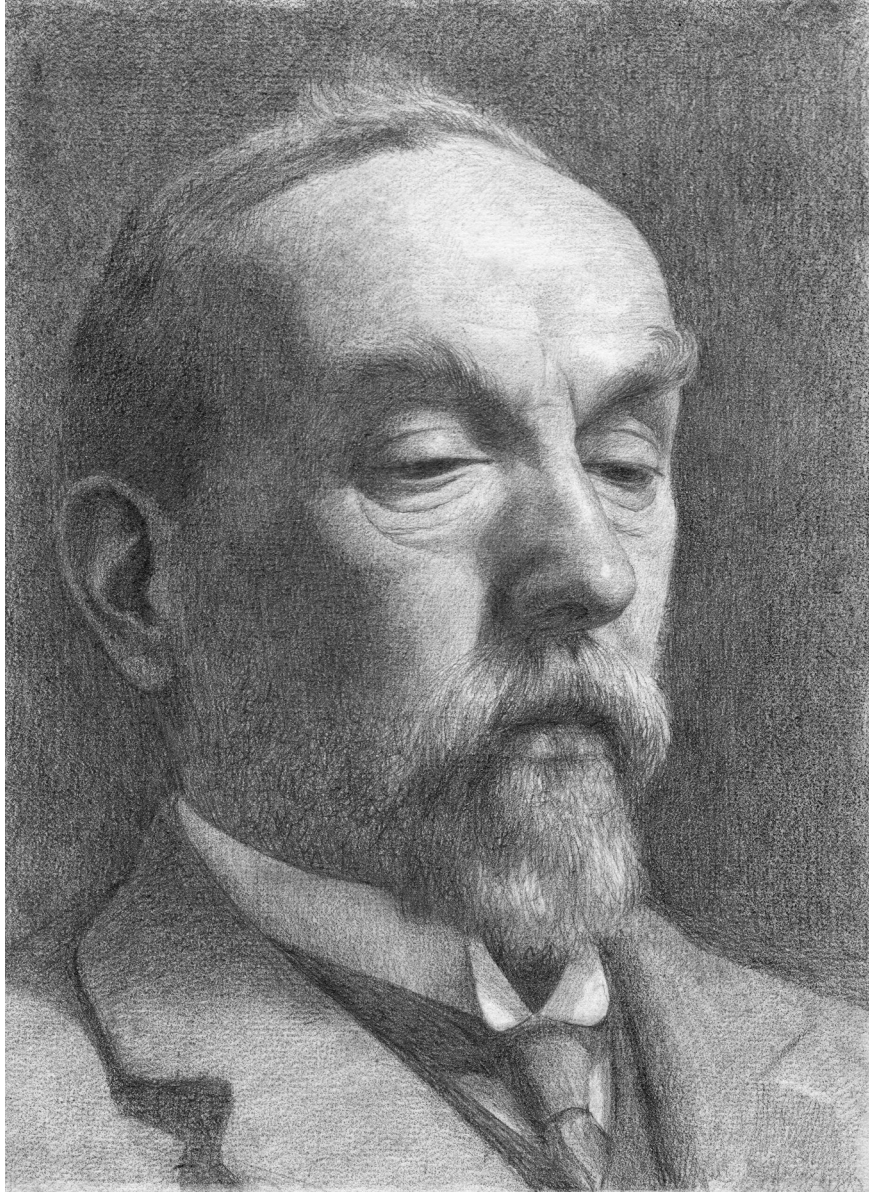
*Letter to Thomas Dilworth 16 November 1985*

Philip was born in Crowthorne, Berkshire, to Emma Susannah and Harry William Owen Hagreen. Philip's father was the drawing master at Wellington College.<sup>1</sup>

Philip never felt nostalgia for Berkshire: *I spent my childhood on the miserable Bagshot sands, where Nature had managed nothing but straggling heather & man had planted millions of character-less pines to make pit props. All was so colourless that it did not show whether the sun was shining.*<sup>2</sup> Suffolk, the land of his paternal ancestors, was for Philip his true home.

Philip identified himself with his Hagreen ancestors whose work was concerned with making. His great grandfather, James Hagreen, had been a hat maker and importer of furs in Bury St Edmunds. Philip's grandfather, Henry Brown Hagreen, was head of the architecture department at The South Kensington School - the informal nineteenth-century name for the Royal College of Art. Henry Brown Hagreen's half-brother, Walter Hagreen, was an etcher and carver who recorded Suffolk's architecture in his detailed paintings. Philip's ambition, even as a young boy, was to become a painter.

An only child, and at times over-protected, Philip still had an uncharacteristically adventurous childhood for a middle-class boy in Edwardian England. His parents were keen travellers and with them he enjoyed visiting Belgium, France, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. His immediate family were not particularly well off, but he was sent away to other family members, both for holidays and in the hope that the country or sea air would benefit his health. Here he took full advantage of his chances to roam the countryside and discover the world first hand. He spent many childhood holidays in and around Southwold, where his paternal grandmother, Emma Angelina, owned a cottage. Philip spent long afternoons watching people work - village potters, fishermen, boat builders. He felt a great affinity with these skilled workers and, in later years, evoked memories of those days when explaining the approach to work shared by craftsmen. He saw tradesmen meeting their customers' needs simply, directly and without paperwork and this remained his vision of how a sound local economy should work.



Most of Philip's recollections of childhood, precise in their detail, were written 60 to 70 years after the events recalled:

*Letter to Adrian Bell 2 May 1970*

I must explain that I am of a Suffolk family. I knew the land much as Constable and Bloomfield recorded it. My happiest memories of childhood are of days spent amongst the fishermen of Southwold. These gentle giants handled the noblest of boats; huge open luggers directly descended from the Viking ships. Inland were the great commons and churches and windmills and corn lands and peace and space.

*Conversation between Philip Hagreen, Richard Ritchie and Tony Kelly, recorded 14 April 1980<sup>3</sup>*

On Southwold beach, underneath the cliffs, all along above the shingle, there was a whole underworld of wooden shacks, boat sheds and net sheds, where fishermen mended their nets, and stored all kinds of things. And then, south from there, just behind the top bank of shingle, was a row of bloater curing huts, all the way down to the ferry over to Walberswick. Oh, for perhaps the best part of a mile along there, every little way there was one of these things. They were all cured with oak logs smouldering. They made a little fire of oak logs, and the herrings were all strung - through their gills and out of their mouths - on long laths which were all put in this shed, all fixed on sockets all the way up. And they shut it all up and they smouldered. The smoke oozed out between the tiles - there were tiled roofs. And the smell was lovely. Oh, it was most appetising - wood smoke and herring mixed. And then, the next day, they'd open up to put fresh logs - put the fire together - and there'd be a few herrings always, that had just broken off. Their gills had fallen down. And those you had merely for the asking- those half done bloaters were very nice. There was a whole trade there of bloater work. Well there's nothing of that sort done nowadays.

*Conversation between Philip Hagreen, Richard Ritchie and Tony Kelly, recorded 14 April 1980*

The man that rowed the ferry, Old Todd, I suppose he got too old to fish, so he just rowed the ferry. It was a peculiar ferry boat, specially built for the purpose with seats all round the back & stern - no thwarts, except one right in the front, where he sat to row. He was a great old character & reputed to be the most weatherwise man in the neighbourhood. Everyone asked Old Todd what the weather was going to be like. But Suffolk folk don't commit themselves more than they need, d'you

see? He told my grandfather one day - "these young ladies they fairly rile me. Why there was a couple of 'em came along yesterday, and they said - 'Mr Todd d'you think it's going to be fine?' And I said - 'Well, it looks as if it might fare to be fine.' 'Mr Todd, d'you think it'll be fine tomorrow?' 'Ah well now I wouldn't go so far as to say it mightn't be a fine day tomorrow.' And she said - 'Mr Todd, d'you think it'll be fine the next day?' Why then Sir, I bust out a-swearing."

Amongst Philip's writings there is an undated story which he gave the title *Crabbed Age and Youth*. Again Suffolk was the setting, where his childhood observations were uninterrupted by school bells or the demands of competitive peers. He remembered himself as a young boy watching and being surprised by animal behaviour.

### *Crabbed Age and Youth*

In the flat land by the Suffolk coast, pastures are separated by dykes. What was dug out was piled up to make a bank. This is about six feet high and has a narrow foot-path along the top. The width of a dyke is slightly more than a man may jump - as I found when I tried. So much for my prologue. Now for my tale.

It was when I was about eleven years old. I lay on the grass watching the creatures that swam or crawled in a dyke. They were all busy about their affairs except a crab who made no move. He was about four inches across. His stillness suggested that he was sleeping after a good meal or enjoying, as I was, the warmth and stillness of a perfect summer day.

As I watched, I saw that a smaller crab of about two inches was approaching. Very cautiously he came up behind the big fellow, moving a few steps and pausing. At last he reached out a claw, gave a tweak to a back leg of the patriarch and scampered away. The big crab jumped round and made a grab but he was not quick enough. The behaviour of the little crab was exactly that of the boy who rings a door-bell and runs away or who throws a snowball at a policeman. Its motive is the fun of rousing quiet people to a state of agitation and the excitement of escaping from wrath. The big crab settled down as before with his hands on his waist-coat, but his tormentor was coming again. He crept on as before, gave that leg a jerk and escaped just in time.

When I saw him coming for a third time I wondered how long the game had been going on before I watched it. But this round was the last. When the crucial

moment came the big crab made such a snatch that he caught the little one and lifted him up. Holding his victim like a parasol he walked to the far side of the dyke, out of the water and up the steep slope of the bank. At four or five feet above the water he sat in the sun. At leisure he took the crab to pieces and ate him.

There was no cloud in the sky, but the brightness had gone out of my day. I had become really fond of that little crab and now I felt sick. It is nearly eighty years since I witnessed this tragedy of Crusty and the Nipper, but I still cannot fit it into the pattern of life. We are told that man has free will and moral law whereas a beast has only instinct. We are told that man and beast share the instincts of self preservation of hunger and sex. None of these instincts led the little crab to pull the leg of the old crab or caused the old crab to resent and punish disrespect for his status. Nipper was young Sam Weller and Crusty was Caiaphas, though both were disguised as decapod crustaceans. Let him who readeth understand. I can't.<sup>4</sup>

*Conversation between Philip Hagreen, Richard Ritchie and Tony Kelly, recorded 24 February 1980*

Later on in my boyhood, I had bad health and had to be by the sea for a while and I was left a lot to lodge with fisher folk down at Mudford in Hampshire, which is 2 miles east of Christchurch, at the mouth of the great harbour there. And those fishermen were still a relic of what had been going on for ages. They fished and they fed themselves mostly on fish. They sent a certain amount up to London - that was the way they got their cash. Not that they needed very much. The simplicity of life for those fishermen - they never had a holiday, or went away. They were always there. And their local needs were always largely met locally. The tailor made complete suits for all the fishermen and they paid him with fish.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 10 July 1980*

When I was young I used to see the village potter. When he had made enough pots he loaded his wagon & toured the countryside. Wherever there were cottages or an inn he would stop. Housewives gathered round to buy what they needed. They replaced breakages & added perhaps a milk jug, a washbowl or a breadcrock. Meeting each customer, the potter learned what shapes were found best. He never had to send a bill or fill up a form. There was no middleman & no advertising. That was economy - not economics.



### *How they unloaded the barge* <sup>5</sup>

*This relates to the sprit sail barges used on the East Coast of Great Britain. When sailing, the sprit supports the huge sail.*

The sprit acted as a crane. A rope, rove through a block at the peak, had on one end a hook to pick up a bale or other unit of cargo. To the other end of this rope were attached four lesser ropes. These were splayed apart by a light spar about eight feet long.

On the quay stood a trestle, eight or ten feet long & about eight feet high. It had three or four rungs. Pulling on the four ropes, four men climbed to the top of the trestle and held the ropes as high up as they could reach. At a signal they all jumped backwards and came to earth squatting on their heels.

This yanked the load out of the hold & sent it swinging ashore. Below the end of the swing stood a turnbril or wagon. As the load reached that point the men let the ropes slip & the load went plop into the cart.

This method required skilled teamwork & was therefore enjoyable by all concerned - including the boy who looked on.



*Philip's Undated Miscellaneous Writings*

It must have been about 1907 when I walked with my father seeing old churches in Gloucestershire. Of special interest was the one at Deerhurst. We walked round it and then borrowed the key to get inside. Seeing what we were about, a tramp who had been sitting on the low wall of the churchyard came up and asked if he might come in with us. My father, who treated every man with equal courtesy, opened the door and bowed him in. My father showed me the curious features in the church while the tramp went round on his own. When we got outside, the tramp asked if my father knew of any purpose or meaning of the stone that projected from high up in the west wall. My father had puzzled over it and could think of no explanation. The tramp said he had seen a similar stone in the Saxon masonry of another church. From the depths of his rags he produced a notebook in which he had drawn and described it. His writing was very neat - and it was shorthand. Expecting the man to beg, my father was ready to give generously. But he did not beg. He went back to his seat on the wall and we left him facing the mystery of that stone.

*Letter to Thomas Dilworth 16 November 1985*

You probably don't realise how ignorant I am ... I was an only child, lonely, but unable to mix with other children because I hated games. I wanted to co-operate, not to compete. Then several illnesses upset my schooling. I still can't spell or do sums or name the parts of speech. Enough of that ... My delight was in using any tool, from a scythe to a sail needle. I could splice ropes & make nets & sail boats.

Philip's schooling was scrappy, being interrupted by illnesses. At the age of 13, he went to Wellington College as a day boy. His father still taught there. It was a Public School with a strong military tradition. Philip was uninspired by his academic education. He remembered hating Latin and team games but his sharp eye and steady hand did bring him success in the school shooting eight. At the age of 17, before leaving school, Philip made his first trip away from home without his parents. He sailed to Norway on the ice ship, *Skandia*, with a Danish skipper, Hans Hay, and a small crew. He later recalled this adventure in letters to Leslie Dow and to his grandson Richard Ritchie. Philip's recollection's of sailing out of a Suffolk harbour reminded him of the landscape paintings of John Constable (1776-1837) who was a native of this part of East Anglia.

*Letter to Leslie Dow 21 January 1967*

I have a specially happy memory of a morning in the spring of 1907, when I sailed out of Ipswich on a three mast top schooner. The Orwell then was just as Constable knew it.

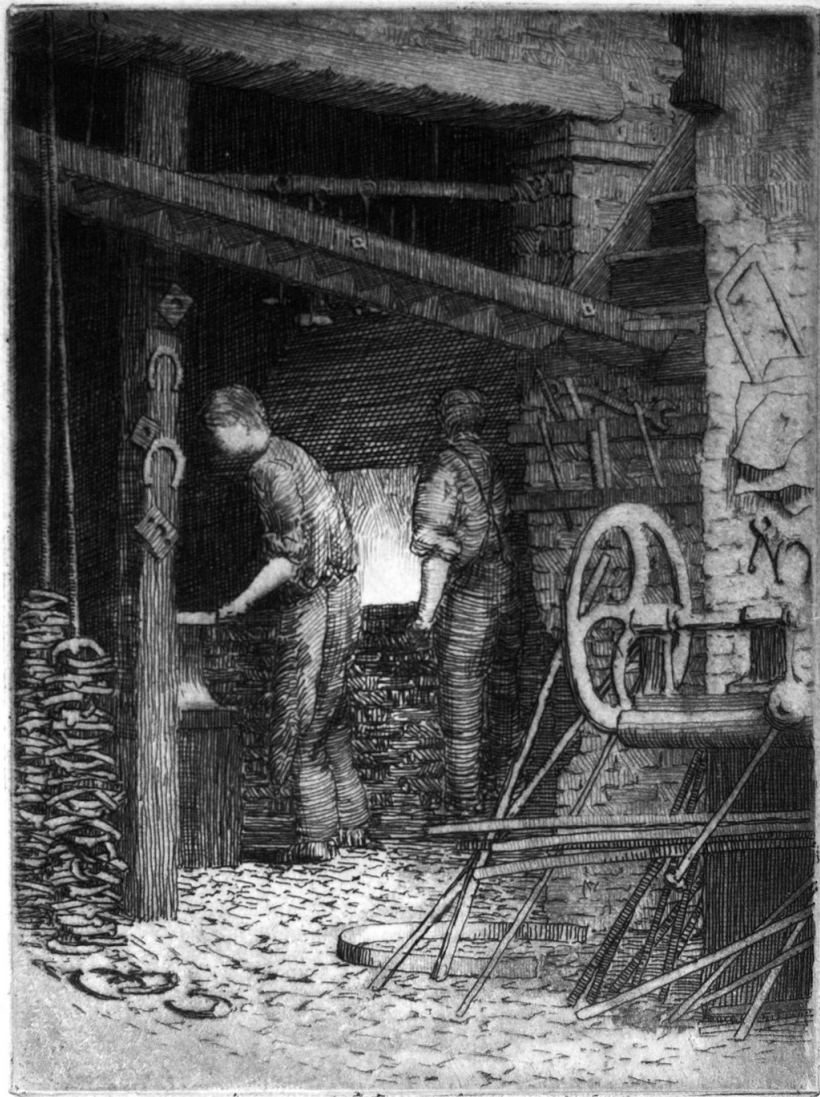
Ninety years later, his grandson, Richard Ritchie, recalled how Philip's stories from this adventure had remained vivid when he retold them in his old age.

*Letter to Father John Hagreen from Richard Ritchie 6 December 1995*

Philip shipped out to the fjords of Norway to pick up ice for the ice houses. It was carved off glaciers, knocked into the fjord & towed to the ships, where it was loaded & taken to England. There was a steam tug to pull the boat in the fjord, but then all sail. He went more than once. The memorable trip was when a huge gale blew up, which blew for three days. At the end of this the Captain still knew where he was - by dropping a lead line & looking at the depth and the sample of the bottom in the tallow on the end; by smelling the air and by his dead reckoning. He told Philip they would see the lighthouse in a certain direction and at a certain time, & there it was.

When the big squall first struck, they had to get all the sails in. All hands were needed aloft, so Philip, as cabin boy, was given the wheel & had sole command of the ship. Bear in mind that with an error, the ship would certainly have capsized with the loss of all of them. He was trusted. It was clearly a major emergency, or they would not have put everyone aloft. Philip describes how he was on the poop with the wheel, the masts with all his friends were high above him, but the deck in front was completely awash, with the bows looking like an island in the distance.

Philip was brought up an Anglican but his mother converted to Roman Catholicism in 1907. His father was a strong influence in his life: his relationship with his mother was more distant - and as a teenager rebellious.<sup>6</sup> Philip himself did not convert to Roman Catholicism until 1915, when he was twenty-five years old. Years later, responding to an outburst from an aunt on the subject of Philip's son John studying for the priesthood, Philip gave his view of his own parents' diverse experiences of faith.



It must seem to you that Father's life was not such as might have been hoped, for one of his character and abilities. It must also seem to you that the main troubles were an unsuitable marriage, an unsatisfactory only child and then a change of religion on the part of wife and child. I think this is quite a reasonable view for you to have formed on what you know, and I think it makes a sad picture.

Now what I know makes a very different thing of it, and the unsatisfactory nature of the child is the only part I think is true.

First as to the marriage. They were indeed a most oddly matched couple & I think their early married life must have been very difficult for both of them. Yet Father remained consistently a devoted lover & gradually won the full devotion of my mother. Wellington College was a very bad setting for both of them & their happiest days as a married couple were certainly after they had moved to Hampstead.

Now about the change of religion. At the time of Mother's conversion I was away from home. I was an irresponsible and thoughtless ass of seventeen and my impressions of that period are not worth much. In retrospect, I should say that Father was probably very much bored by the fuss Mother made about it, but that he felt no antagonism towards the religion itself. Father had a great admiration for Monsignor Benson,<sup>8</sup> who received Mother into the Church. He read his books and encouraged me to read them. Later he got into correspondence with him and I still have a long letter from Mgr Benson that was in Father's pocket when he died.

Father's early reading of Ruskin had set him studying mediaeval art & that led him to respect the religion that produced it. Further, he did not think of the Church only in the past tense, for he read and loved Coventry Patmore and Newman.<sup>9</sup>

Father was never "High Church." He was untouched by Mother's enthusiasm & he made no friends amongst the High Church clergymen that we knew. It was otherwise with the priests. Here he found men of deep learning & wide sympathies, often men with some special knowledge that he delighted to draw out. Amongst these, his closest and longest friendship was with Father Vernon Russell who was organist at Westminster Cathedral. I think this friendship must have begun before Mother was a Catholic & it lasted to the end.

I think that Father's abilities were to a great extent wasted. Wellington College wore him down and never gave him a chance. Only at Kitchener House<sup>10</sup> did he have a job worthy of him. And yet, when I think how he kept his soul intact, how

his anger was always just and never bitter, how unfailing was his generous kindness, I feel very happy about him. He walked where his conscience led him and let no influence turn him aside.

In 1908, Philip left home to study painting in Cornwall under Norman Garstin, whom he was to describe as a civilising influence.<sup>11</sup> He also spent time there with the Newlyn School of painters, and later went to the New Cross Art School and Heatherleys. His teachers tried to instil a respect for Impressionism, but Philip's own development was not enriched by this influence. Years later, after working with Eric Gill who referred to the Impressionists as the 'the last dying flare of the idolaters,'<sup>12</sup> Philip looked back on his own experience of Art School education:

As I was born into a bad social & artistic time, I have observed tradition mostly as the persistence of bad things, or of things that have lost their use & become encumbrances ... All that I learnt and did was tainted by the Impressionist heresy - working from nature - painting what you see and so on.<sup>13</sup>



The Impressionists wanted to record the immediate visual impact on the retina, and offered the viewer surface patterns. The manipulation of tones and textures were ends in themselves. The effect of light on an object was a greater concern than the depiction of form. For Philip colour, tone, light and shade were tools to convey the substance, the underlying reality. When applied to portraits, Philip's approach did not endear him to sitters. He acquired the nickname Truth without Mercy.<sup>14</sup> He grew unhappy with oil as a medium and, in 1914, made his first known attempt at wood engraving with the portrait of Ruben Ranzo.<sup>15</sup>

The outbreak of the First World War, less than a month after his twenty-fourth birthday, brought an abrupt interruption to Philip's work as an artist. He enlisted on 4th August 1914 and was attached to the signal group of the second South-Midland Brigade as a motorcycle despatch rider. That November he became engaged to Aileen Mary Clegg, who had graduated in philosophy from Bedford College London and had embarked on a teaching career. Aileen and Philip were introduced by the Downside monk and teacher, Dom Wulfstan Philipson. Philip's father warmed to her immediately, referring to her with wry affection as Mademoiselle La Fiancée and as My Daughter-in-Love.<sup>16</sup> Philip's mother was less enchanted, perhaps recognising a woman of equal strength; quietly assertive, but less overpowering than herself.

Aileen, a cradle Catholic, inspired Philip to think again about his faith. The circumstances of war also brought a new sense of urgency to spiritual commitment. Philip's letters to Aileen, written while he was away on military training, had much to say about Christian belief and worship. In one letter he described soldiers filling the church on Fakenham Common during an invasion scare, early on Christmas morning in 1914:

We were out just after 5 in the morning. It was pitch dark with a fog as thick as a blanket and everything frozen white. We marched North, having great difficulty with the horses on the frozen roads and halted on a common about four miles from here. We could hear the regiment arriving and by 6.30 we knew that the whole brigade had assembled. As it began to get light, we saw our chaplain and he dismounted at a little church that was nearby. Then those of us that believe got leave of an officer and we followed him. In the little church we found the General and many of our comrades and we filled the church, so many stood in the aisle and in the porch. We all received the Blessed Sacrament and when we had come out there was another celebration and again the church was filled.



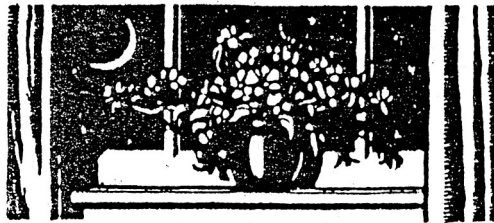
For his birthday some six months later, Aileen gave Philip a book on Joan of Arc. *Jeanne d'Arc* by Louis Maurice Boutet de Monvel.<sup>17</sup> Aileen had chosen the book for its illustrations which dominate each oblong page with careful line drawings, flat colour washes and action-packed scenes, reminiscent of an early comic strip. The text is compressed into one rectangle in the corner of each page. It was definitely a book to woo someone who claimed to think in pictures not words. Philip was moved by her story and came to regard this saint as his patron. The story of the martyrdom of Joan of Arc and the unfavourable role of the bishops in determining her fate gave Philip an unsentimental introduction to Roman Catholicism and matters of personal conscience. In August 1915, after brief instruction, Philip was received into the Catholic church.<sup>18</sup> His father, who always remained an Anglican, wrote to his son to say he was heartily glad that he was settled on the one thing that really mattered.<sup>19</sup>

Philip did not see active service abroad and described his soldiering as 'inglorious.'<sup>20</sup> In March 1916, he was discharged from the army suffering from Neurasthenia - a common diagnosis for soldiers during World War One who were considered by the medical profession to be suffering from anxiety and exhaustion. His father had retired from Wellington College in 1915, and with Susannah had moved to Hampstead where Philip rented a studio. Later in 1916, Philip spent time convalescing at the monastery on Caldey Island, which had itself only recently converted from an Anglican to a Roman Catholic community. Here he first met Laurence Hodson, who became a friend and supporter. Hodson had founded the Essex Press with C R Ashbee, after the death of William Morris, in the hope of keeping alive the traditions of fine printing that Morris had revived.

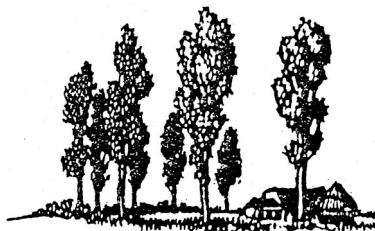
It was on Caldey that Philip also first met the Catholic writer and editor Donald Attwater. 1916 was also the year that Philip produced his first wood engraved bookplate for the bookseller and publisher Elkin Matthews. By September 1917, Philip was working as a Munitions Area Recruiting Officer for E. Sanger Shepherd. Sanger Shepherd was an engineer who had devised a method of making gun sights, known as 'Arking.' He had also been involved with pioneering colour separation processes used in photography. He became a good friend of Philip - 'they both exalted in natural conundrums and creative connections. They also both had a strong sense of mischief.'<sup>21</sup> In June 1918, Philip and Aileen were married at St Dominic's Priory, North West London. They lived at 169 Adelaide Road, near to south of Belsize Park - about a mile to the west of the Dominican community. They had also become Dominican Tertiaries, on the advice of a family friend,



Father John O'Connor. Philip and Aileen's home was also not far from Philip's parents who lived in Hampstead. On 12 May 1919, Philip's father died and two weeks later Philip and Aileen's first son John was born on 24 May.



The end of World War One brought an urgent sense of what might and should be done differently in the Post-War World. In old age Philip looked back at himself in 1919 and described himself as 'worn out and bewildered in a worn out and bewildered country.'<sup>22</sup> The activities with which he was involved in these years tell a different story. It was at this time that Philip first made contact with the artists Robert Gibbings, Noel Rooke and Lucien Pissarro. Early in 1919, Philip contributed wood engravings to a two-volume journal *Change*, published by the Decoy Press for whom Eric Gill had designed the Decoy duck symbol. Philip's woodcuts *Waning Moon*, *Homestead*, *The Bridge*, *The Capstan*, *A Head* and *One of Our Conquerors* were reproduced in these volumes. The editors John Hilton and Joseph Thorp were promoting an anti-industrial message in the text and warning of the dangers of materialism.



The following year, Philip Hagreen suggested the formation of The Society of Wood Engravers to Robert Gibbings. The first meeting of the society was held at Philip's studio on 27 March 1920 under the title The Bewick Club - in honour of the wood engraver Thomas Bewick. However, the name was soon changed to The Society of Wood Engravers. The Society was committed to wood cutting and engraving by the European as opposed to the Japanese method, and they hoped it would encourage plenty of commissions from publishers for book illustration.<sup>23</sup> The founder members were Edward Gordon Craig, Robert Gibbings, Eric Gill, Philip Hagreen, Sydney Lee, John Nash, Lucien Pissarro, Edward O'Rourke Dickey, Gwen Raverat and Noel Rooke. Membership was only available to those who were well-known artists or had exhibited twice before. Between 1920 and 1922, Philip showed fourteen wood engravings at The Society of Wood Engraver's annual exhibitions.<sup>24</sup>

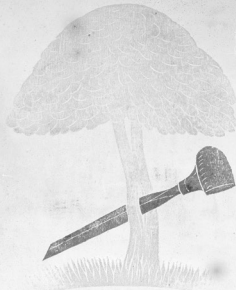
It was also in 1920 that Philip wrote exhibition reviews and other essays for *Blackfriars*, a monthly review edited by English Dominicans and for *Music & Letters* Journal, edited by the musicologist Arthur Henry Fox Strangways. Philip's connection with him came through his father as Fox Strangways had been educated at Wellington College and later returned there to teach until 1910. Excerpts from Philip's writings in these publications appear later in this book in the section on 'The Tradition of Painting.' It is curious to read his writings on art from a time when he was still painting portraits himself and had not yet become vocal about the spiritual element of making art. In these years Philip was concerned with the use of space and the influence of nationality on painting. He also leapt to the defence of artists who made us think about social justice. When one writer in *Blackfriars* dismissed the courtroom illustrations of the French artist J L Forain as 'decadent,' Philip responded: 'his exhibits are satires in which he strips vice of its glamour and exposes legal injustice to the light of reason. His hottest indignation is reserved for the bullying lawyer.'<sup>25</sup>

Later in 1920, Philip, Aileen and John moved to St Dominic's Cottage, Stower Row, Shaftesbury and it was here in Dorset that Joan was born in 1921. In old age Philip remembered the social conventions of his life in this region.

*Conversation between Philip Hagreen, Richard Ritchie and Tony Kelly, recorded 24 February 1980*

We took a little cottage down in Dorset.<sup>26</sup> My wife's people came from Yorkshire.

THE SOCIETY OF



Wood-engravers

Gordon Craig	John Nash
E.M.O'R.Dickey	Margaret Pilkington
Robert Gibbings	Lucien Pissarro
Eric Gill	Gwendolen Raverat
Charles Ginner	Ludovic Rodo
Philip Hagreen	Noel Rooke
Sidney Lee	Ethelbert White

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And you see up there - there was nothing of the tradition of the gentry. It was all mills and the rich people were mill owners. So being down South, she was out pushing the pram, when a man coming home from the hunt, d'you see in his pink, he called out 'good evening' as everybody would. My wife came back furious that a man had been so insolent - that she didn't know who he was and he'd said 'good evening' to her I mean it was an awful impertinence. I couldn't get her to understand.

Young Cecil Rhodes<sup>27</sup> - he and his wife and children were terribly hard up, as we were. And they got the loan of one of the lodges that wasn't wanted, at one of the gates of Wardour Park, which is just in Wiltshire or on the Wiltshire - Dorset border.<sup>28</sup> A terrible place to live in - all damp and all the rest of it. But still it was a roof over their heads. Old Lady Arundell-Wardour was very old and very deaf and she wouldn't allow a motor car to come into the estate - anyone who came must come in their carriage, or walk. But she heard that the Rhodeses were very hard up and she was a good-working Catholic who thought she would give them a cheese.

You see, in those days 'a cheese' was a thing - it wasn't a pound of cheese, or 10lbs of cheese, it was a 'cheese.' And so she brought the cheese in a sack, and she came in her carriage to the lodge. There was about 10 yards to go up to the door of the lodge. She sat in her carriage while the footman got down from the box. He went up to the door and knocked and said that Lady Arundell was there. Then he went back to the carriage and helped the old lady out of the carriage and she carried the sack with the cheese in over her shoulder, like a good hard-working doer of good works, and brought it to the Rhodeses. You see she was game to wash their feet, or anything, as a good work, but she couldn't knock at a door, that was the footman's job. Things like that were very fixed.

If there was a period that Philip's work suggests that he felt 'worn out and bewildered' it was during the two years he spent in Dorset. His work from this time appears more hesitant than his output from 1916-1920. In the years 1921 to 1923, he was commissioned to paint a number of portraits of the Attwater family.<sup>29</sup> He contributed a woodcut of a mother and baby in a thatched shelter, as a frontispiece to a musical score for Dorothy Billingham and Fiona Macleod's *The Hushing Song* in 1921. In 1922, he illustrated *The Best Poems of 1922*, selected by Thomas Moulton with tentative small decorations, including a rather nervous-looking bird as a frontispiece. Also that year he illustrated Lady Strachey's *Nursery Lyrics* with rather awkward images of children at play, though small details such as a toddler boy on a push along horse tugging at a cloth ear are memorable. *The Contemporary Woodcut*, published in 1922, featured older work from Philip Haggren - *The Wind* and *The Tower*. Even his 1923 commission from The Underground Group to produce a London Transport poster for Harewood Downs lacks the enthusiasm and interest in capturing movement that Philip's work had shown a few years earlier.<sup>30</sup> In 1923, Philip was involved with The New Book Work Committee to 'rouse public interest in the woodcut for book decoration.'<sup>31</sup> It was proving difficult to persuade publishers and book buyers that book decoration should be other than photo reproduction.<sup>32</sup> So when Donald Attwater visited Philip in Dorset in 1923, enthused about his visit to Ditchling and The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic, Aileen and Philip were inspired to make their own visit in the autumn of that year. By December 1923, Philip Haggren and his young family had moved to Ditchling so that Philip could learn letter cutting in Eric Gill's workshop.





GUILD OF



ST. JOSEPH &  
ST. DOMINIC

## Part 2

# Remembering Friendships

The Guild of S<sup>t</sup> Joseph & S<sup>t</sup> Dominic was a community of Catholic Craftsmen based on Ditchling Common, Sussex, which was formally organised into a Guild in 1921. In 1906 A J Penty had published *The Restoration of the Gild System* which influenced the formation of The Guild at Ditchling. Penty advocated Christianity as the common faith for Guilds, rather than the unity of a shared belief in socialism, as proposed in the late nineteenth century by William Morris. Penty also proposed small workshops as the basis of production and a return to agrarian society. By 1907 Eric Gill, a founder member of The Guild of S<sup>t</sup> Joseph & S<sup>t</sup> Dominic, was writing in condemnation of the Arts and Crafts movement because it was concerned with producing luxury goods for the upper classes and was divorced from ‘common life’.<sup>1</sup> The Guild at Ditchling hoped to produce goods that met local needs rather than objects that would be treasured for posterity.

Philip Hagreen worked with The Guild of S<sup>t</sup> Joseph & S<sup>t</sup> Dominic from 1923-24 and again from 1932 until 1955. Part 2 of this book examines the ideas and the reality of life in The Guild through Philip’s eyes.





# Philip & The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic 1923-1955

The Group that gathered round Eric Gill on Ditchling Common 60 years ago is now a subject on which students write theses, both here and in America. As I am the sole survivor from that episode, I begin to have curiosity interest. Like the coelacanth, I am a living fossil.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 8 June 1984*

## *Conflicting Thoughts on Work & Faith*

When Philip moved to Ditchling to work with Eric Gill in December 1923 he also joined The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic. This community of Catholic Craftsmen had been in formal existence for little more than two years, but it had been evolving in an unplanned fashion over the previous two decades.

In the early years of the Twentieth Century, the working and social lives of Eric Gill, Hilary Pepler and Edward Johnston became intertwined when they were neighbours in Hammersmith: Pepler had created the Hampshire House workshops, a kind of working men's club where traditional crafts could be learned as trades; and Johnston had formed the Society of Calligraphers. Gill was producing incised lettering inscriptions for commission and making early experiments with sculpture and engraving. Gill moved to Ditchling in 1907, Johnston in 1912 and Pepler in 1915, each continuing to work independently.

During the First World War, the collaboration of these like-minded men began in earnest, when they published their own texts and engravings, printed at Pepler's St Dominic's Press at Ditchling. The Catholic Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic was founded by Eric Gill, Hilary Pepler and Desmond Chute in 1921 on Ditchling Common, Sussex. These three craftsmen were already working with others at printing, furniture-making and letter-cutting in stone. Now, as Guildsmen, they developed existing buildings as a courtyard and built further cottages and workshops. By 1922, there were forty-one Catholics in this community on the Common. A large crucifix, made by Gill, was erected on a nearby hillock, known as the Spoil Bank. A chapel was built and a plaque on an exterior wall bore a quotation from the Vulgate text of Ecclesiasticus, which the Guild members translated literally as *Men rich in virtue, studying beautifulness: living at peace in their houses.*<sup>1</sup>

From its foundation, membership of the Guild was restricted to Catholics. This had not been inevitable. Gill, Pepler and Johnston had different religious backgrounds, but as Pepler recalled, they - *had never discussed faith. It seemed a sufficient bond between us to believe in the Resurrection and the integrity of the craftsman.*<sup>2</sup> Johnston stood for the ideals of craftsmanship over and above any individual's wish to further their career. In the words of their Ditchling contemporary, Philip Mairet: *In a certain purely spiritual sense he already was what they set out to preach and practise.*<sup>3</sup> The pressure to organise this ad hoc working community of friends into an established Catholic guild came from Father Vincent McNabb, the Dominican friar of Hawksyard, whom Gill first met in 1914. Father Vincent believed that *Nothing but a religious order, seeking not wealth but God, will pioneer the movement from town to land.*<sup>4</sup> He saw what was already underway at Ditchling and commended this *primary way of life.*<sup>5</sup> He hoped that under his influence Ditchling would be the first of many self-sufficient Catholic communities in rural England. Johnston was uncomfortable with McNabb's fervent Catholicism and his enthusiasm for directing the formation of the Guild, so he distanced himself from the activities on Ditchling Common and never became a member. Meanwhile, Gill and Pepler, who by 1917 were both converts to Catholicism, *had begun to expect great things of religion.*<sup>6</sup> With the traditional medieval guilds, shared faith had been taken for granted: it was each man's craft that determined the guild to which he belonged. Now, practitioners of different crafts were grouped together because of a shared faith. This brought a new problem of exclusion. It was not just Edward Johnston but, later, other talented craftsmen who were prevented from contributing their skills.

Philip's primary interest lay in working with and learning from Eric Gill. Joining a Guild did not hold a particular allure. Yet he came to depend on it as providing an association with people who shared a common outlook on life and work. After joining the Guild in 1923, Philip worked intermittently with it until 1955. He enjoyed the co-operative working life, but mistrusted the rules and regulations by which an official guild tried to bind a working community together. When asked about his membership of the Guild in 1935, he gave this response:

You ask me about this community. Well, I do not think it matters much - as a community. I think it matters enormously that a few Catholic craftsmen are trying to make things the right way. We hold to the definition of Art as the right way of making things. The fact of our being a community is largely due to our having to hold in common some land and workshops that we could not pay for as individuals.



Of course there are advantages of our working together.

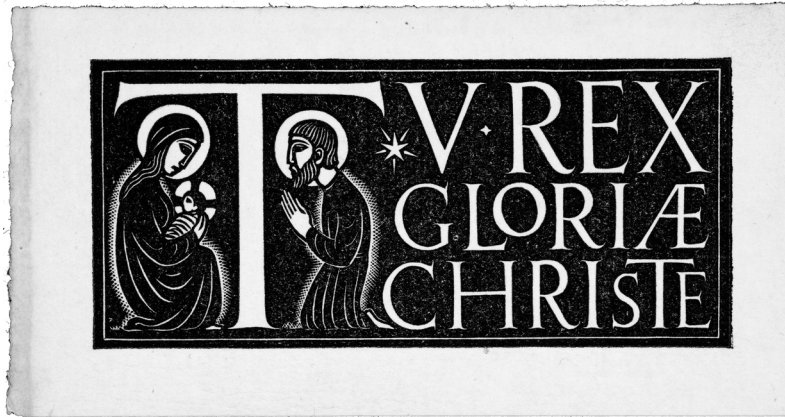
Do not start a community if you can help it. Let individuals work in concert and collaboration. If they are recognisable as a community, they are suspect of the clergy and hated by the bishop.<sup>7</sup>

A considerable amount has been published about the Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic, right up to its demise in 1989, but Philip, like many other commentators, remained guarded.<sup>8</sup> He left colourful accounts of those involved, but on the Guild itself he shared nothing more than a few anecdotes and the occasional enigmatic remark. He hinted at things that those already in the know could interpret, but he left no clear statement, either on paper or cassette, which could cast blame on anyone:

If we were having a confidential chat, I might tell you of the marvellous work of those who founded the Guild & I might also tell you how we, the next generation, are handicapped by the blunders of those founders ... But if I am asked to write something for publication - well you see the difficulty. Leaving out all matter that might seem uncharitable or ungrateful to the founders (or that might lead to a libel action). I find it difficult to focus an image without distortion.<sup>9</sup>

The existence of Catholic craftsmen working together as a community and producing hand-made useful objects does not immediately appear to an outsider to present any threat or conflict to the work of the Catholic clergy. However, the Guild hoped for more promotion and praise from the clergy than they were ever to receive. Inevitably many of the Catholic clergy accepted Twentieth-Century industrial life and were not concerned with the element of prayer that was integral to the Guild's making of objects. Philip's brief writings on the Guild shed light on the contradictory nature of the Guild's relationship with the clergy. How could a Catholic craft guild flourish and expand if the Catholic clergy could neither understand nor represent their work? *We may sometimes have got the clergy to see our arguments, but no power on earth can make them grasp the nature of things.*<sup>10</sup> Even when writing to sympathetic priests, such as Father Kevin Scannell, Philip would emphasise this point:

You must realise that you are one of three, or possibly four, priests who hold our belief that human work should be art, & that it is good. Even such old friends as Fr. Vincent McNabb & Dr. McQuillan do not understand this. They understand



about the land, but not about things. We have scores of priest friends. Some like to come here because they like to see Catholic families growing up, or because they like “Gothic” vestments, or because they like good cooking. They praise work as long as they think it is drudgery, but when they see that we find it delightful & that our besetting sin is doing it on Sundays, they are shocked. They say that man should take a pride in his work - & sign it. That is the antithesis of what we mean. Should one take a pride in one’s prayer & sign it? I suppose that the root trouble is that they are so used to the privation of beauty that they think of it, not as an inevitable attribute of rightly made things, but as a dangerous luxury.<sup>11</sup>

When Philip spent a short time with Gill at Capel-y-ffin, Wales, in the mid 1920s, Gill tried to cajole him into forming part of another guild, but Philip would not hear of it - *At Ditchling we had wasted all the time spent in argument with the clergy.*<sup>12</sup> For Philip, craftsmen needed help in finding markets for their work, not to waste time striving to convince a clergy, who took industrialism for granted, of the importance of making objects by hand.

For Gill and his peers, it was the original medieval craft Guilds which were seen as the model - communities which had produced a simple, unselfconscious workmanship, which predated the Reformation and belonged to the ordinary man in Catholic England. For Philip, the medieval period represented a time when men were self-assured about their individual responsibilities in working life. It was the fourteenth-century writer, William Langland, who shaped much of Philip’s understanding of this period:

Langland tells of Pentecost and of the gifts brought to us by the Holy Spirit, God's messenger. These gifts are the skills by which men do their work. He tells of the skill of the priest, of the lawyer, of the plowman, of the ditcher, the thatcher, the merchant and all the arts by which men rightly earn their living. He includes a sort of soldiering that we should now call police work ... I find it a deal more helpful than the usual list of seven sub-species of grace. It is just the way we have been thinking and working all our lives. From the works of the middle ages we have inferred that they were inspired in this way. Is it not good to find the matter dealt with by a clear-headed poet of the fourteenth century? He was not putting forward a new theory. He was simply expressing the belief of his time.<sup>13</sup>

Philip acknowledged that the Middle Ages were not a time of comfort or security, but throughout his correspondence and his published writings he often referred to the healthy, uncomplicated relationship between medieval men and their work, as his translation of the medieval poem, *Anglia Terra Ferax* bears witness:

Anglia terra ferax	England thou fruitful land
Et fertilia angulus orbis	rich garden by the sea
Anglia plena jocis	Thy folk so full of fun
Gens libera digna vocari	deserve to be called free.
Libera gens	Freedom is theirs whose tongue
Qui libera mens et libera lingua	May tell what mind can see
Sed lingua melior	But a greater good is theirs
Liberiorque manus	Whose hands are free. <sup>14</sup>
<i>Liber Niger domus regis angliae</i>	<i>Translated by Philip Hagreen</i>
<i>Edwardus IV Harleian M S 642</i>	

Philip's involvement with the Guild was of a piece with his respect for medieval workmanship. The Guild's constitution emphasised that work is ordained by God and should be divine worship. Work must be good in itself, good for the workman and good for use. Workmen should own their own tools, their workshop and the product of their work. In an age of uncertainty about the path that industrialisation would take, the Guild stood for self-sufficiency and skilled handwork. In a candle-lit ceremony, the brethren had promised a lifelong adherence to the tenets of the Guild. Father Vincent McNabb had

persuaded them to become Dominican Tertiaries - a lay Order dating from the Middle Ages. In Philip's words - *the Little Office was in my behaviour pattern.*<sup>15</sup> Reciting the Little Office identified the Guild with pre-industrial guildsmen, who shared a common faith and trade, and was a daily renewal of their commitment.

For Philip there were many aspects of Guild life that he could accept wholeheartedly - the Catholic faith, the link in spirit with medieval society, the idea that work was a form of prayer and as such would hold an integral beauty, and the hope that this kind of working life might lead in time to a social revolution. For Philip, as for Johnston, however, one of the significant drawbacks in the early years of the Guild was Father Vincent McNabb. Years later he recalled:

Our ideas were misunderstood, distorted and publicised by Father Vincent McNabb. He never listened, but talked non-stop. He was reputed to be a very holy man. I knew him as a holy terror. Many people thought him our prophet and leader. I suspect that he thought so too.<sup>16</sup>



## *7 Years Away From Ditchling*

Philip spent the years 1925-1932 without any strong link to The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic. After stopping his work with Gill in Capel in May 1925, Philip was in hospital in Abergavenny and then went to convalesce at his mother's home in Ramsgate, Kent. Aileen and the children accompanied him briefly; but as Aileen and Philip's mother,

Susannah, had never got on well the tension must have been unbearable. Philip was later to write of his mother, summing up her intransigence: *We know not of eternity / What hopes she may have nursed: / Of worldly things twas clear to see / She always hoped the worst.*<sup>17</sup>

Aileen was fully supportive of Philip's desire to earn money as a Catholic craftsman; but like many women of her era she had given up her own teaching career to marry and raise a family, so she was not in a position to help bring in an income. There had been some family discussion about the possibility of moving to France. The exchange rate favoured Sterling so the cost of living would be reduced. With no fixed long term plans, Aileen and the children travelled to stay with friends on a farm in the Landes, near Bordeaux, while Philip stayed on with his mother - until Laurence Hodson offered him a chance to continue working at his own projects.

Hodson was a wealthy Wolverhampton brewer and keen supporter of the arts - in particular he sought to publicise the work being done by artists outside the Royal Academy. As co-founder of The Essex Press, with C R Ashbee, Hodson was a keen advocate of the printing and other craft skills that William Morris had revived. Philip first made his acquaintance at the Monastery on Caldey Island in 1917 when he had been discharged from the Army. Hodson was well aware of Philip's physical vulnerability at times of stress, so in 1925, he wrote suggesting that he take up lodgings and the use of a workshop at his home in Derbyshire. The aim was to allow Philip to focus wholly on his art work in a supportive environment. Philip took up the offer, with some hesitation, in August 1925. Hodson saw Gill as a vital player as far as The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic was concerned and later wrote to Philip: *I shall be interested to hear of Pepler's scheme for Ditchling, but I am afraid that Ditchling without Gill is rather like Hamlet without the prince of Denmark.*<sup>18</sup>

Hodson was sometimes clumsy in his defence of an artist's position. In a pamphlet concerning William Morris he wrote of his concern to correct our *wrong impression of Morris as an over-impulsive person lacking in steadiness of purpose.*<sup>19</sup> He was also over keen to direct Philip's steadiness of purpose. He wanted to offer him a last chance of a 'real' artist's career but he did not approve of Philip's concentration on wood carving, during his four-month stay. Hodson saw this as *only one side of art and that a very narrow one. There is no living to be made by that alone.*<sup>20</sup> He suggested that Philip produce paintings for a London show, thinking this a more viable test of his ability to survive economically as an artist.



# FEET & SHOES



For Philip this was a time of reflection and self doubt. He could not go back to painting in the style he had attempted earlier, because the experience of working with Gill had profoundly altered his attitude to the purpose of work, the creation of beauty and the ways in which one praised God through work. Also, after working as a member of a community of craftsmen, it was difficult for him to adjust to working on his own again.

In December 1925, with these problems unresolved, Philip rejoined his family in France and they set up home in Lourdes for the next seven years. Their trip to Lourdes was arranged as a family pilgrimage to pray for Philip's poor health and deteriorating eye sight, but before they left Lourdes railway station they already had an instinctive feeling that this was home. The family lived for a short while at various addresses, the longest stay being in the village of Anclades, before renting a permanent home at the Chalet St Vincent, in the grounds of the Dominican convent on the heights to the north of the Domaine of the

Grotto. Visitors took a delight in the sound of the nuns singing the divine office, as heard from the Hagreens' home.<sup>21</sup>

Bringing up the children in a devout Catholic atmosphere appealed to Aileen. Furthermore, in this traditional agricultural environment, where Catholicism was celebrated so readily, Philip and his family found something of the simple, rural, largely self-sufficient way of life that Gill had tried to create back in England. Laurence Hodson was to describe Philip's working life in Lourdes as having *immense advantages in climate, scenery & a very wonderful religious atmosphere*.<sup>22</sup>

Once the decision had been made to live in Lourdes, the children were sent to Catholic, French-speaking boarding schools in the south west region. Philip took on work for The Catholic Association in Lourdes and also wrote and privately published his poetry, under two titles - *Twenty Poems* and *Twenty Four Poems & Some Foolery*.<sup>23</sup> Aileen thrived in this setting and wrote books on Lourdes and on St Bernadette and contributed articles regularly to *The Sign Magazine*, published in America by the Passionists.<sup>24</sup>

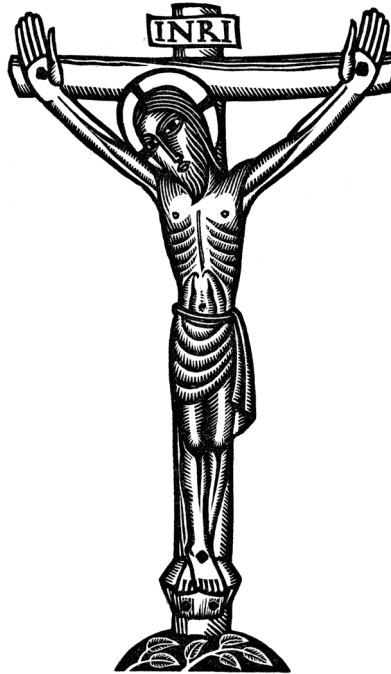
In 1928, when Philip was 39 and Aileen 40, their youngest child Mary Bernadette was born. Philip's rhyme on this new addition to the family gives the lasting impression of a confident, good humoured father:

TO MY YOUNGEST:

Say, in what system are you set,  
My love-provoking Mary?  
Too happy to be human, yet  
Too fat to be a fairy!

After a nomadic existence for the first ten years of his marriage, the seven years in France brought Philip the stability he needed in order to develop his skills in wood-engraving, woodcut and ivory carving. One of his first jobs in France was to illustrate *The Devil on Two Sticks* by Rene Le Sage. The images in this book are very different from Philip's usual work. They appear very flat, almost like characters from a Pollocks Theatre. The illustrations are stylised and not as sensitive or as confident as much of his later work.<sup>25</sup> These were also the years when Philip collaborated on projects with Hilary Pepler at St Dominic's Press and the correspondence planning their work together is presented in detail in 'Hilary Pepler: A Bit of A Showman', later in this book. In contrast with his work on *The Devil on Two Sticks*,

his blocks for St Dominic's Press, which were sketched and cut at Lourdes, show subtle and confident development of Philip's engravings.



### *Philip's Return to The Guild*

In September 1931 Britain came off the Gold Standard and the value of sterling plummeted. A small private income had sustained the Hagreen's living costs in France when the pound was strong compared to the franc but now, Philip and his family now had no option but to leave France. In 1932 they returned to the Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic to live and work in Ditchling once more: *There was another cottage vacant at Ditchling, so we went back to that. Not because I wanted to join up with them particularly, but there was no where else to go to & that was offered. We were really in a fix.*<sup>26</sup>

By the time Philip began his second spell working at The Guild Vincent McNabb's influence had waned. In the 1930s The Guild existed quietly and did not attract much publicity but internal politics were still a problem. On his return from France Philip was

immediately called upon to help Valentine KilBride deal with the legal battles between The Guild and Hilary Pepler. The economic crisis of the early 1930s had presented new legal problems for the Guild as original investors wanted to know whether they could have returned to them funds committed in the early 1920s. Hilary Pepler was complicating matters by having agreed briefly to pay rent on St Dominics Press, which he had operated rent free for most of its existence, and then he changed his mind about paying rent. The Guild also produced a publicity leaflet entitled 'Things' which publicised the work of the Guild but not the work of St Dominic's Press. This resulted in more solicitors letters initiated by Hilary Pepler.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the tensions inherent within a life based around a community of craftsmen, Philip spent the last 23 years of his working life on Ditchling Common. It was here that he produced the introduction and illustrations for Dunstan Pruden's *Silversmithing*.<sup>28</sup> He also met Edward Walters, in Ditchling in 1935, a meeting which resulted in commissions for Philip for *Musicks Duell* and *The Quest of the Sangraal* at Walter's Primrose Hill press.<sup>29</sup> Philip produced his *Cross & The Plough* blocks in these years, discussed in Part 3, and his ivory carvings discussed in Part 4. He also took on some work which conflicted with his principles – he described his designs for Imperial Chemical Industries as: *soap advertisements for one of the wickedest of combines*.<sup>30</sup>

The beginning of World War Two probably bought a new sense of alignment with The Guild for Philip, because he felt such dismay at the problems Britain faced in the 1930s as well as horror at the Nazi regime. He applied to work in propaganda for the British government but was turned down.<sup>31</sup> A month after war was declared he wrote:

The upshot of it all is that we are fighting against an intensely evil thing but to some of us it is hard to see what good thing we are fighting for. We have to hope that when we have freed Germany we may have the vision and strength to free ourselves.<sup>32</sup>

In 1938 Thomas Barry, editor of *The Sower*, a United States quarterly devoted to the interests of the land and crafts, asked Philip for an article about the Guild. Philip laid emphasis on the gulf between principles and practice but also offered a descriptive account of how things worked:

At present the Guild consists of a stone-carver, a wood-worker, two weavers working in partnership, a silversmith, and an engraver. All these are men with families. There are also two apprentices and a young fellow who is becoming a printer and book-binder.<sup>33</sup>

Such are the workers. The work we turn out is the work of these men - working as men. It is not produced by any machines nor by men working as machines. It is the work of genuine, responsible, enthusiastic and fallible human beings.

Most of our work is done to supply the special needs of our customers. We have little stock and no shop, and we very rarely send to exhibitions. Economically, each craftsman is independent of the others. Only the workshops and three cottages are owned by the Guild and rented by the Guildsmen.

As to our principles ... the constitution of the Guild states that The Guild is a society of Catholic craftsmen who wish to make the Catholic Faith the rule not only of their lives but of their workmanship. All else follows from that. For instance "Making the good of the work & the freedom of the workman the test of workshop methods, tools and appliances."<sup>34</sup>

It may easily be imagined that such principles are not easy of application at the present day. They differ so completely from the principles - or lack of principles - of the world in which we have to find our market. Few even of our friends understand what we are trying to do. They ask us to make bad things - woodwork with Gothic arches and such like rubbish - and we are not always in a position to refuse the job. Still we have an increasing number of customers who trust us.

Though each workshop is independent, there are many jobs that involve collaboration. None of us is a specialist. In the six workshops it would be hard to enumerate the crafts that are practised. Our ranges overlap. Most of us for instance, can do inscriptions of one sort or another. This is a great factor in our stability, just as mixed farming may not feel the slump that ruins the single-crop cultivator - there is always something we can be getting on with.<sup>35</sup>

In 1949 Philip was clear about the practical problems which inhibited expansion:

The Guild keeps busy, but it does not grow as it ought. It should by now have begotten similar groups all over the country. Apart from other difficulties, the famine of buildings has all along put the veto on such development.<sup>36</sup>

A decade later we find Philip explaining the problem more fully to Father Tom Phelan, a dedicated friend of the Guild:

It is a great thing that you see the importance of the Guild. I wish you could have known it in its early days and known all that was then hoped for it. These hopes may seem fantastic to future historians, but they were not unreasonable at the time. Apprenticeship should have led to the status of mastership and independence. Other trades could have added to the workshops. Individuals or groups might have moved off to other Counties & established similar Guilds. There were many good Catholics who wanted to join and there were promising lads wanting to be apprenticed. The scheme has remained static for 40 years through the accident of lack of buildings and lodging; the economic situation made the building of houses and workshops prohibitive. Guildsmen with young families could not take in apprentices as well – growing lads who need an awful lot of feeding and clothes-mending and parental care. Such apprentices as could live at home sometimes had to come long distances daily. When the Guild started, after the first world war, folk naturally thought things would soon adjust themselves. But the slump dragged on, year after year, with its shortages and restrictions and high prices, and then the second world war claimed another generation. No one could have foreseen that the Guild would meet with such difficulties – nor would anyone have thought it could survive them.<sup>37</sup>

Hilary Pepler's son, Father Conrad Pepler, corresponded with Philip about the problem of the women's role in Ditchling being overlooked:

'I am glad you made the point about the women of Ditchling. It was rather on Papa's conscience because he told me a few years before his death that one of the chief weaknesses of Ditchling had been that the women weren't brought into it sufficiently and if they had been Ditchling would have survived.'<sup>38</sup>

When reflecting on life in the Guild to Graham Carey, also in 1959, Philip commended their way of working, but acknowledged that the Guild had not brought those involved a secure income. Philip could not have supported his family from his work at the Guild had he not had a small private income from his parents' legacy. Most Guildsmen at times had to accept commissions, even if they felt that the nature of the work, or the organisation that commissioned it, compromised their standards and the principles of the Guild. How far such compromise could be excused by necessity was another potential source of disagreement.

I too believe we have the key to normal making, but has anyone the answer to the question - 'How can one earn a living by normal making?' There are no normal customers with normal needs. A wheelwright used to do normal work in making a wagon for a farmer. Now, the farmer has of necessity to use a mass-produced tractor with standardised spare parts. The situation is much the same for all the arts. The system is wrong, but it has gained complete victory & is daily tightening its control.<sup>39</sup>

Philip found all these descriptions & arguments a distraction from the essential importance of the Guild. It was a 'child of its time' and the circumstances of that time contributed to its demise, but nevertheless it carried a message of timeless significance:

You know that at Ditchling we talked endlessly about work & religion - mostly we heard Eric talk. We were clear about our aims, but we could not make them clear to the clergy. Years after Eric's time, Father Patrick Barden saw the point. He said, "There is not one way of getting your living and another way of saving your soul." I think all we had argued about was really as simple as that.<sup>40</sup>







# Eric Gill: Uncompromising Convert

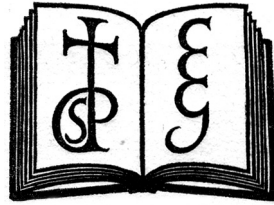
He acted, as we all do, by intuition, appetite, inspiration or temptation. But he talked to convince himself that he acted by reason.

*Letter to Thomas O'Connell 1 July 1979*

Philip and Aileen and their young family moved to Ditchling Common in December 1923 so that Philip could work as a pupil and assistant to Eric Gill. Philip was then thirty-three and Gill forty-one. The two men worked together until May 1925 – less than two years in all. Yet Philip's encounter with Gill was to alter his whole life profoundly. For Gill, the more famous and more prolific of the two, the acquaintance was inevitably of less significance. Perhaps Philip best describes his role for Gill: *He used his friends as whet stones on which to sharpen his ideas.*<sup>1</sup>

In 1923, George Maxwell and David Jones, both to become firm friends of Philip, were already working with the Guild. It was also the year when the first English translation of Jacques Maritain's *Art & Scholasticism* was published by St Dominic's Press. *Art & Scholasticism* presented a coherent account of the scholastic philosophy of art and generated much discussion within the Catholic craft community. Gill's diary lists *reading A & S* at regular evening gatherings with friends – the Hagreens' home was often the venue.<sup>2</sup>

Gill was a patriarchal figure with wide reaching responsibilities both for his own extended family and for his workforce and their families. *Eric Gill ... was one of those people who was so dynamic - he couldn't do anything without involving a lot of people & trying to make them into part of his life. It wasn't aggressive or anything. It was just his nature.*<sup>3</sup> Philip recognised the burdens Gill shouldered, but he also stood up to Gill more than most. He was not Gill's son-in-law – unlike the printer René Hague, and the artist Denis Tegetmeier, both of whom also worked closely with Gill, nor even a prospective son-in-law – the artist and writer David Jones had once been.<sup>4</sup> Philip was married with his own family, and he argued with Gill as a mature man. Whatever faults he perceived, he saw Gill ultimately as a friend and a teacher. He knew nothing of Gill's infidelities, believing that his affairs had pre-dated his conversion. It was not until 1966, prior to the publication of Robert Speaight's biography of Eric Gill, that Speaight told Philip that *things were not quite like that.*<sup>5</sup>



Philip's first work at Ditchling was as Gill's pupil, cutting letters in stone. Letter cutting provided a steady income, so inevitably newcomers were called upon to help out in this workshop. In later years, Philip would tell many stories about his early experience of Ditchling, but he rarely discussed his memories of learning the craft of letter cutting. He left no record of his thoughts on Gill as a teacher of this particular craft except for the telling one that *at that time Gill was the only person who could cut an inscription that showed truth.*<sup>6</sup>

Philip came to Ditchling with a great respect for craftsmanship but no apprenticeship or work experience in any particular craft. Working alongside Gill and other craftsmen made him feel he had *everything to unlearn* - an overwhelming need both to unravel and to forget his traditional art school training.<sup>7</sup> René Hague described Gill's gift at enabling people to forget the very learning that was inhibiting their making: *He had a very great talent for driving out from people's minds whole cartloads of false ideas and prejudices and putting in their place a new set of principles on which they themselves could build.*<sup>8</sup> Philip responded to this gift and respected Gill as a teacher: *As I knew him, Eric's most notable virtue was his generosity. And his patience never failed. He spoke quietly for he had a very small voice. However strong his opinions he stated them without emphasis but with precision.*<sup>9</sup> But Philip criticised Gill's compulsive analysis of making when it became a distraction from practical application: *He should have talked less and only in his workshop and the vulgar tongue. All our talk has been bedevilled by the use of two conflicting vocabularies.*<sup>10</sup> Philip distrusted any attempts to reconcile the practical and the theoretical.

Gill was inspired by the writings of Ananda Coomaraswamy, a pioneer in Indian art history and the cultural confrontation between East and West. It was under his influence that Gill came to believe *an artist is not a special kind of man but every man is a special kind of artist.*<sup>11</sup> For Gill, the artist was the responsible craftsman. The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic needed versatile craftsmen. Between January and April 1924, one of Philip's initial tasks was to help cut away the background of the beer stone of Gill's Stations of the

Cross for St Cuthbert's church, Heaton, Bradford.<sup>12</sup> David Jones helped finish and colour some of the Stations in situ, and Desmond Chute made some of the designs: Station XIV - the Entombment - he based on William Blake's tempera painting *The Procession from Calvary*. The Bradford stations gave Philip his first experience of working as part of a team - collaboratively rather than competitively. He fondly recalled conversations and shared thoughts that took place - in particular, the occasion when Gill paused during cutting and remarked *You know Philip, I think God is probably much better than people think*.<sup>13</sup>

Gill took to the Hagereens straight away, and they became confidants regarding his growing problems with Hilary Pepler and the Guild on matters of finance and responsibility. His diaries show that he visited them immediately after every crisis encounter with Pepler during 1924. Despite Gill's dismissive remarks about Aileen's struggle to combine motherhood and an academic brain, his diaries suggest that at the beginning of their association he had high hopes for his friendship with the couple.<sup>14</sup> For the Hagereens' sixth wedding anniversary in June 1924, Eric Gill inscribed for them a G K Chesterton quotation before breakfast.

1924 proved to be a year of upheaval. Unable to resolve his conflict with Hilary Pepler, Gill decided to leave the Guild. The publicity that had been generated by Dominican priests, in particular Father Vincent McNabb, who promoted Ditchling as, in Gill's words, *a spectacle of Christian family life*, had made it difficult to work without constant interruption.<sup>15</sup> Now he wanted a quieter, more remote location for work and family life. A disused monastery set in the remote landscape of the Black Mountains in Wales would be Gill's new home. The monastery had been built in the late nineteenth century by Father Ignatius,<sup>16</sup> who had tried to revive the Benedictine monastic life within the Church of England, but died in 1908. Since then, the monastery had belonged to the Caldey Island Benedictines.<sup>17</sup> Philip had come to Ditchling to learn from Gill, and he followed him to Capel because he was his pupil and assistant. On August 13, 1924, the Gill and Hagereen families moved to Capel-y-ffin. The families no longer had the privacy of their own homes in this cold, makeshift set up, with its wooden partitions that did not reach the ceiling. The Attwater family joined them there, as did René Hague, future husband of Eric Gill's youngest daughter Joanna, who was later to collaborate in 'Hague & Gill' printing ventures. David Jones also came to Capel and worked there for a time. At Capel, Philip Hagereen did more stone carving and lettering and less wood engraving. He was also busy printing from Eric Gill's blocks which provided illustrations for Gill's sister's poems - Enid Clay *Sonnets and Verses*.<sup>11</sup>



After the move, Philip's name appears rarely in Gill's diaries: the enthusiastic relationship between the Gills and the Hagreens was not sustained once they were all living under one roof. The climate, and a spartan lifestyle that expected the wearing of sandals without socks even in winter, had a bad effect on Philip's health. He was rarely well enough to take part in the long walks and other expeditions that Gill, Hague and others enjoyed. When based in Ditchling, Gill rarely took more than day trips to London, but his Capel years were dotted with extended spells away from home. As Philip did not accompany him, the two men were separated for long periods. Gill was now an illustrator for the non-Catholic Golden Cockerel Press and spent long weekends with Robert Gibbings and his wife at their home in Hertfordshire.<sup>18</sup>

Aileen was also unhappy at Capel. Unknown to Philip, Gill had made advances towards her. Gill was also advocating the idea of a new Guild being formed at Capel: *The Confraternity of the Face of Christ*. Philip spoke out against the idea, and, although plans continued without him, the new Guild was never formed. Philip's experience of Guild life had been rewarding in terms of learning new ways of working and a Catholic approach to art, but he found it otherwise beset by personal squabbles.

Philip's poor health finally forced the decision to leave. He later wrote: *Our time at Capel is a bad dream to remember. ... It seemed that we had been led out to perish in the wilderness. What future was there for our children? And my health was reverting to its war-stricken state.*<sup>20</sup> Having invested everything in working with Gill, Philip had to abandon his work, his home and this way of life and faced a period of great uncertainty and anxiety. Gill accepted the reasons for Philip's move, and they remained on friendly terms. The small community at Capel gave a supper party for the Hagreens on 5 May 1925, the eve of their departure.

Philip thrived on Gill's outspoken fondness for many unpredictable things. When he did not share Gill's enthusiasms, he put them down either to financial constraints or to a new *fad*. Gill certainly cultivated some preposterous fads but, as befits an individual so often cast in the role of mentor or teacher, he also sought new experiences from which he too could learn. He was genuinely fascinated by the outside world, contemporary culture and the whole notion of a changing civilisation. Philip, and many of the other pupils Gill had so inspired, remained anxious about the corrupting influence of industrialism; but as time passed Gill grew less and less concerned about its negative impact on ordinary people's lives. He worked with industry partly for financial gain, but also because the demands made upon



him brought a new adventurous angle to his own experience of working. At times, Gill's writings verged on haughty condescension: *Whether or not Industrialism has "come to stay" is not our affair, but certainly craftsmanship will be always with us like the poor.*<sup>25</sup> Philip was later to write of these remarks: *Gill's besetting sin was self-justification.*<sup>26</sup>

Some work, such as type design with which Gill became seriously involved from the mid 1920s, did not sit comfortably with the principles he had voiced earlier in that decade. Philip acknowledged the need for new typefaces - he found Caslon Italic too light and Old Face too broad for much titling - but he particularly deplored the designing of sans serif. The serif was an aid to legibility, so that to remove it made reading more difficult, thereby impairing, not enhancing, the purpose of type. Philip wrote: *To offer an argument in sans serif is like putting a train on a railway without rails and expecting it to bump along happily on the sleepers.*<sup>27</sup> Philip had learned principles of lettering design from Gill, and he could not reconcile these with Gill's experiments in type design. He was suspicious of Gill's work for Stanley Morrison and Monotype. Maybe Gill also displayed a certain reluctance to explain his own fascination with this work to those who saw the clear contradiction between it and

his earlier uncompromising anti-industrial stance. There are various reports that he made rather cynical remarks to his assistants, suggesting that he was involved with type design solely as a means of gaining additional income, but clearly the challenge of designing type appealed strongly to him.<sup>26</sup>

Philip was seriously troubled by Gill's inconsistencies, but he expressed his concerns with more humour than bitterness:

The 'cell of good living' was a padded cell and the cushions were those who murmured 'Amen' to whatever fad Eric advocated -

It was that all women must be dressed like nuns. It was nudism.

It was the glory of the British Grenadiers. It was pacifism. It was communism.

To be a Designer for Industry was utter degradation until he was honoured to become one.

The Academy was an abomination until he was elected to it.

Was ever a mortal so infirm of purpose?

His principles at any moment were such as justified what he had just done.<sup>28</sup>

Gill had once railed against accepting marks of approval from the Establishment. Then he was awarded the title *Designer for Industry* for designing the sans serif type for the Monotype Corporation. It was not working for industry, but acceptance of the accolade - and for that work in particular - which Philip found so contradictory. To mark the occasion he composed a rhyme:

You can dance and you can sing,  
Your skill at sculpture is astonishing,  
And you can write,  
It seems as though,  
You can do anything except say 'No.'<sup>29</sup>

Philip was strongly influenced by Gill's arguments about right making and work as worship, but he was impatient with what he saw as Gill's 'elastic interpretations' of

Christian imagery. In the correspondence between Gill and Philip for the year 1928, Gill tried out arguments which he later used in the collection of essays *Clothes*, first published in 1931. In one of these, *Clothing Without Cloth*, Gill claims: *There is no escape from the conclusion that skin and hair are themselves garments to be treated well or ill, and that one may be naked and yet not necessarily undressed.*<sup>30</sup> Philip doubted the sincerity of Gill's justification for the nobility of the naked body: other letters written by Gill to Robbert Gibbings show him less inclined to disguise the issue - he describes carving his sculpture *Mankind* as a pleasure parallel to *undressing a pretty girl.*<sup>31</sup>

Gill saw sexual enjoyment as a gift from God and erotic content in art as an expression of sanctity, so he deliberately set out to combine human sensuality with his holy imagery. In this he was inspired by Ananda Coomaraswamy, who started writing at a time when the West was largely ignorant of, and indifferent to, Indian art and culture. The carvings of sexual acts which decorated Indian temples were not considered to be pornographic by those who worshipped there. Gill tried to mimic this unashamedly sensual imagery in an attempt to convey how true faith embraced all aspects of life. The fact that in Catholic artistic tradition depiction of the act of intercourse was avoided presented no barrier to Gill. His wood engraving *Nuptials of God* shows Christ on the cross, locked in an embrace with a haloed bride with long hair, reminiscent of images of Mary Magdalen. For Gill, this bride symbolised the Church.<sup>32</sup> But Philip was not comfortable with the use of graphic sexual images, borrowed out of context from the religious art of a wholly different culture, in defiance of the social conventions of the time. As ever, Philip was concerned with the perceptions of the audience, while Gill was concerned with, as he put it, recording what he saw in his *mind's eye.*<sup>33</sup>

Philip loved much of Gill's work: *There was a hard beauty about it which had rarely been seen since the Middle Ages,*<sup>34</sup> but he preferred his early work - that is, work created in the first two decades of the century. From this period, he loved Gill's ivory madonna, carved in the round, and engravings such as the Hampshire House hog motif - work that showed a compact and ordered composition as well as having a powerful visual impact: *Eric's early engravings stand the test of time. Later things annoyed by their slickness. Skill had deprived him of what he needed - an obstacle to slow down and filter his thought.*<sup>35</sup> Gill's impact on Philip's work will be explored in subsequent chapters. Suffice to say here that under his influence Philip's depiction of people developed an intimacy and tenderness quite absent from his earlier portrait painting.

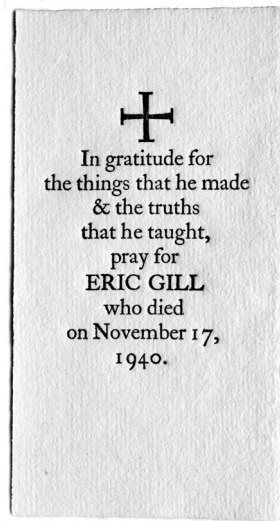


What traits did Eric Gill and Philip Haggren have in common? Apart from similar training, the fact that both men liked a neat and tidy workshop and that both attempted prompt replies to correspondence, it seems that they were poles apart in the criteria they acted on in creating objects. Philip was a stickler for consistency. He rejoiced in the companionship of friends who shared his interpretation of the best way of living and working as a Catholic artist without betraying one's principles. Gill, on the other hand, was forever leaping ahead of his audience: shocking and unsettling the viewer, asking questions, suggesting re-interpretations, and pushing people to see what might be described as a new truth - or alternatively as Gill's own truth.

Philip remembered Gill's reflections on his faith above all else. A decade after their working relationship, when Philip watched Gill carving the figures on the BBC building in Portland Place, London, Gill confided: *To the public this is Prospero & Ariel & to the Directors it is a symbol of themselves sending out their 'culture.'* *But I am able to make a worthwhile job of it because I am also carving God the Father sending forth the Word.*<sup>36</sup> For all their differences, both men saw the experience of making as a form a prayer, a means of praising God, a way of reinforcing their personal commitment to the Roman Catholic faith. Philip had learned from Gill to see making as prayer. The difference between them in their approach to making turned on their different ways of addressing God. Gill's making was a private conversation with God, a means of playing with the limits of his ideas, a form of confession for his tortured conscience. He saw God as his audience. Philip also offered his work to his Maker, but the audience that concerned him also included like-minded believers. For Philip, making was also a way of aligning himself with a Catholic community. He was cheered by the fact that he had Catholic artist friends living in far corners of the earth, all sharing certain ideals. As with his fondness for Chaucer's pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales*, Philip enjoyed the dispute and the approval that comes from being part of a crowd with a common purpose.<sup>37</sup>

Once their working companionship ceased in 1925, Philip and Gill met occasionally in France, in London, and at Piggots in Hertfordshire. They exchanged letters periodically. Philip's respect for what he found innately good in Eric Gill was everlasting, but he never experienced with Gill the close understanding and camaraderie that he felt with Maxwell, Johnston and Jones. When Gill died on 17 November 1940, Philip wrote a letter of condolence to his widow Mary - a calligraphic tribute which Gill would have enjoyed, in bright scarlet ink. Although it was more than fifteen years since Eric Gill had left the

Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, his position as founder was assured. In that letter to Mary, Philip wrote: *Now the Guild are arranging to have Mass said for him in our chapel - his chapel - as soon as possible.*<sup>38</sup> Philip also printed memorial cards to remind folk of their great debt to Eric.<sup>39</sup>



### *Excerpts from Correspondence with and about Eric Gill*

*From Eric Gill 28 November 1923 (letter written before Philip Haggren moved to Ditchling)*

Your letter of the 25th gives satisfaction to all concerned in all respects.<sup>40</sup> We agree with your wife's attitude entirely. Heaven help us from all 'social reform.' Let it be understood that we are not social reformers. The only thing that we are concerned about is responsibility in what we ourselves 'make' (vide p.s.) ...

Come as soon as you like. Hilary, who has the letting of the cottage in his hands, says: You can have the cottage rent free for 3 months (this will give you a chance to sell your present cottage) after that the rent is at rate of £35 per ann.

We look forward to your speedy arrival and I shall hope shortly to be able to start you with some lettercutting.

Yours in St Dominic

Eric Gill t.o.s.d <sup>41</sup>

- PS. This 'ere pen - steel - factory made.  
This 'ere light - oil lamp.  
This 'ere postal service, raliway-train etc.  
This 'ere scribble - no excuse handy.

*Book of Philip – compiled by Graham Carey, during his visit to the Hagreens in 1956; memory of a scene at Ditchling Common circa 1923*<sup>42</sup>

Eric at one end of a long table. Philip Hagreen at the other. Guest making disparaging remarks about Holman Hunt's *Triumph of the Innocents*. Gill to Philip, down the table: 'Philip, how much do you dislike that picture?' Philip: 'But Eric I love that picture!' Gill: 'Glory be to God, Philip, so do I.'

*Recollections recorded in correspondence with Fiona MacCarthy 1986*

My position with Eric was that of an eager, humble and grateful pupil, but I was not a disciple. I admired his work and I agreed with his ideas about making. He talked a great deal. This was never as man to man, it was as a prophet proclaiming the law. I have not read his books as I gather his talk was the drafting of what he would write.

He was intolerant of disagreement so I rarely interrupted his homilies. He would never admit that he had changed his mind, insisting that a second idea was a logical development from the first.

A point of disagreement appeared as soon as we went to Ditchling. He disapproved of a coloured dress my wife wore ... Adornment should be for men only. He saw women's evening dress as abominable paganism. I saw it as a gracious relic of chivalry.

Eric's 'Cell of Good Living'<sup>43</sup> was a kingdom in which his fads were law. Eric was not unique in wishing for such a state, but he was unique in having a wife who would allow it to materialise. Mary might seem a shadowy figure in the background but she was not crushed or submissive. I think she was a strong character dedicated to his support.

Aileen and I had become Dominican Tertiaries before we were married, so the Little Office was in my 'behaviour pattern.' What I could not fall in with was Eric's craze for ritual. He wanted it in all the day's doing and talked of ritual procedure in the bedroom. Beyond being tidy and punctual I dislike formality. I think people should dress as they like, but Eric thought of clothes as vestments dictated by rule

- his rule. Thus he said that all women should be dressed in black and that their skirts should hide their ankles - but they must not wear drawers ...

*To the Careys 25 April 1982*

Seeing how intolerant Eric was of any opposition it was wonderful how happy he was with David Jones. Eric raged against the world of aesthetics, critics & dealers which was David's habitat. Eric wrote "Art Nonsense" insisting that the artist is not a special kind of man. David wrote "Artist & Epoch" showing the artist to be a flying object in the stratosphere.

*To Graham Carey 27 June 1979*

What a marvel he was! He did so many things supremely well. His output was enormous and he only lived to be 58. He finished whatever he began. He answered letters as soon as he received them. Everything was in its place ready for use. Rarely can such a flood of creativity have been directed by such discipline.

Of course he was queer. At times it seemed as though his Catholicism was grafted onto the Hindu stock planted by 'Coomy.'<sup>44</sup> Roots and branches spread wide enough to accommodate his extensive virility.

I think the Dominicans had an unfortunate influence on Eric. Their weapon is logic and Eric swung it about as a battle-axe to defend any irregularity in his behaviour or any daft notion he might think of. He did all his thinking out loud, arguing with anyone - including himself. His wisdom appeared in sparks and flashes.

*To Baron de Vinck 10 November 1971*

Gill became quite mad about sex and I was glad to keep away from him. I know he was a thorough practising Catholic to the end but it seemed to me as though his Christianity was a beautiful pattern printed on a textile already dyed to saturation with Hindu phallic worship.

*To René Hague 10 March 1978*

One day at Capel, Eric asked Dom Theodore Bailey<sup>45</sup> and David and me to meet him after supper. We found him in serious mood with a paper on which he had

drafted the constitution of a new Guild. He explained that this would avoid the mistakes of Ditchling. This time it must be a Church affair. It must have the approval of the Archbishop of Westminster and be under the direction of the local clergy. The first need was prayer, so we should enlist all the holy women we knew as associate members. These were to say a prayer for us daily and pay a yearly subscription - their virtue was to be its own reward. I forget what else he proposed. When he had finished he turned to me as the eldest and asked if I had any comment. I said I would have nothing to do with the thing. At Ditchling we had wasted all the time spent in argument with the clergy. Let us now go to them for the sacraments but ask nothing more from Holy Church. What we now needed was a London agent - some dealer who would show our work and get orders. I did not see how we could live at Capel without some such trade route.

Eric then turned to David who said 'I agree with Philip.'

Eric was furious. He said 'Well, the Guild is founded and Dom Theodore and I are the members.' He walked out without asking Dom Theodore what he thought. We heard no more of the matter.

This was the only time I had a head on collision with Eric. I still think it strange that Eric expected we would agree with him.

*Recollections recorded in correspondence with Fiona MacCarthy 1986*

One day at Capel Aileen and I were celebrating the anniversary of our engagement and Eric set about an inscription for us. It was a passage from Homer - a nuptial blessing - which he wrote in Greek capitals - It was a noble example of his art - and a beautiful example of his kindness. I wish I could show it to you, but it cannot be found.<sup>46</sup>

At Capel-y-ffin, Eric designed an alphabet for notices in Selfridge's shop. He drew the letters on squared paper so that they could be copied easily. To try their legibility he cut out some of the letters with scissors and stuck them on black card.

Thus he made two notices - Men and Women. These he put on either side of the chapel. This was typical of the way he would suddenly have a new fad and expect us to see it as self-evident truth.



*To Thomas O'Connell 1 July 1979*

I will tell you how Eric was led to design type. At Ditchling he worked alongside Hilary Pepler who was printing with Caslon Old Face. Eric liked this and engraved many wood blocks for use with it. In teaching me to cut inscriptions he said we should not think of the Trajan lettering as a norm but think rather of a title-page set in Caslon. Clearly Eric did not think of type as in need of his reforming hand.

You know, of course, that Eric was opinionated & combative. If he seemed quarrelsome it was because he used his friends as whet-stones on which to sharpen his ideas. His friends put up with this, but when he rubbed against an art dealer or an industrialist sparks might fly.

He acted, as we all do, by intuition, appetite, inspiration or temptation. But he talked to convince himself that he acted by reason.

A subject about which he talked much was 'the just price.' He held that anything made by man is a work of art. It was wrong therefore to apply the term only to certain things and to charge more for them. This limited his earnings to so many hours pay as a stone mason. But Father John O'Connor said that people came to Eric not for what any mason could do but for work that only he could do. They were not compelled to come to him so it was just that he should charge whatever they were prepared to pay.

Eric was thinking about this at the time of the move to Wales. When he got there he found that escape from difficulties at Ditchling had made him an exile. He was remote from customers & also from any supply of stone. ... The scene was set for the entry of Stanley Morrison. Eric could do no other than surrender to Industry.

... Some years later I visited Eric at Pigotts & found him drawing a slightly bolder version of Baskerville. He said he saw no need for it but as it was ordered it was an honest way of earning money - & a very easy way.

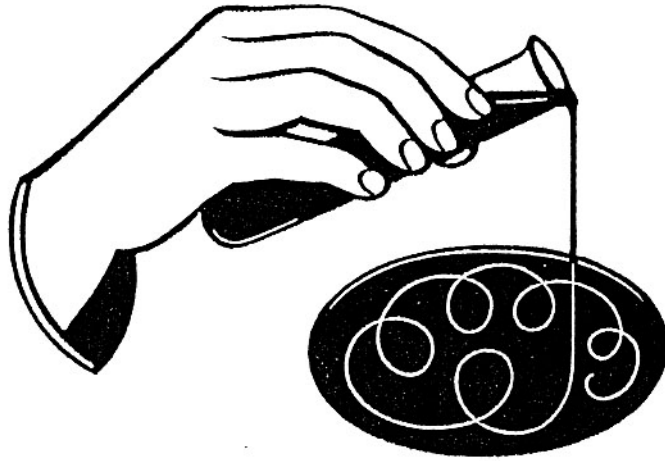
*Recollections recorded in correspondence with Fiona MacCarthy 1986*

... An unfinished carving. It is now known as the Canterbury Deposition.<sup>47</sup> Eric wanted to finish it but said that he must not spend time on anything that was not ordered. He took the thing with him when he moved to Wales. At Capel-y-ffin he found the local stone unsuitable for carving. The cost of carting other stone so far from a railway stopped the trade in grave-stones which had given him steady work ... He had some wood engraving to do but he was getting panicky about money.

Then came a letter from Marchant of the Goupil Gallery.<sup>48</sup> He was planning a mixed show. Could Eric send a small piece of sculpture? I said that here was the opportunity to finish the Deposition. Eric objected that dealers in works of art were rogues and that Marchant would keep a third of the price as commission. I said that Marchant was a good Catholic who jolly well earned his money. Seeing that he had to pay the rent and rates of the gallery whether things were selling or not and the insurance, advertising and so on, the commission was reasonable. Also I said it was better to get two thirds of the price than not to sell.

Eric saw the point and finished the carving. It still needed polishing and time was running out. We sat on either side of it and rubbed with carborundum. All day we rubbed and all the next day but it would not shine. Eric got in a stew because the time had come when the thing ought to be sent off. I told him to give it a coat of French polish and promise to complete the job if it were sold. It was sold, as soon as the show opened, for £90 and Eric received £60.<sup>49</sup>

I urged him to carve more small things because they were sure to sell and it was the work he most enjoyed ...



Now to return to the Deposition, Eric had taught me that our Lord should never be represented with long hair, yet here he had carved our Lord as long-haired and clean-shaven. I thought this unreasonable but I said nothing. However I did object because he had shown our Lord as uncircumcised. He said this was because our Lord is the second Adam & because the statues of the Jain sect of Buddhists were never circumcised. I insisted that he could not ignore a Gospel event which signified obedience to the Law. Very reluctantly, Eric altered the carving.

The following excerpts include a previously unpublished exchange of letters written in 1928. Questions about the appropriate depiction of the body in Catholic Art dominate the correspondence. The letters appear to follow on from a conversation begun, but not finished, at the Hagreens' home in Lourdes on 26 April 1928. Eric, Mary, Gordian Gill, David Jones, and Elizabeth Bill all came to tea with the Hagreens on that afternoon, after a day of looking at churches and sculptures in the locality.<sup>50</sup> The underlying argument in all Philip's letters is that Gill had changed his views between 1923 and 1928. Philip saw Gill as increasingly tolerant of industrialised, capitalist society and less inclined to, as Philip would put it, see things whole. Now it was as if Philip was reassessing Gill's correspondence, looking out for the ways in which Gill had contradicted the guidelines he had once voiced.



*From Eric Gill 6 July 1928*

You would have guessed that I would be horrified by your new work and opinions - text from your letter. No; are you? Why? Your letters of a year or so ago in the matter of *Song of Songs* and such like gave me to suppose that you thought me imprudent - that graphic sexual allusion made you squirm - your letters made me squirm ... but I thought my new work & opinions were free of that particular cause for uneasiness on your part. You leave me guessing. I wish we could have stayed longer *chez vous* and heard your nuns sing.

*To Eric Gill 10 July 1928*

Ever so many thanks for your letter. Evidently mine was inadequate or obscure. I will try to explain. That I should be horrified by your new opinions is surely only human. They are broadly speaking the opinions I held in 1923. Then I learned from you to put first things first; to look to Goodness and Truth and leave Beauty to proceed from them; to see the value of apprenticeship to a craft and the futility of aesthetics as a branch of experimental psychology, and so on.

When you were invited to teach wood carving at S.K.,<sup>51</sup> you refused, for the excellent reason that the place was meant to be a 'Culture Centre,' a hot-house for the production of taste, and not a workshop for the making of things. You raised your eyes to the mountains, as you had urged others to do & now at S.K. you declare that we must move with the times and admit the practice of divorce (as between masonry and sculpture for instance). That we must juggle with aesthetics to amuse the rich and so on. Well is that not horrifying to a stick-in-the-mud like me?

As to your new work - of course looking at photographs is not a bit like seeing the things themselves. Still, as the ivory Madonna strikes me as being superbly good, and I have only seen that photograph of it, I cannot think the photographs entirely to blame. In the case of the big torso the camera must have lied, because I cannot, from the photographs, imagine it as more than 3 feet high.<sup>52</sup> Is it true to say that your work used to be restrained, austere, so that a sensual subject, treated thus reverently, made a noble thing? And is it true that your new work is sensual in treatment even when you are carving a tombstone?

... I'm sure a torso is not a right subject. The 'Middle cut' out of a salmon is most appetising but to which appetite does it appeal? Would the 'Middle cut' be all that you represented in a sculpture entitled 'Salmonkind'?



From Eric Gill 21 July 1928

I was very interested in your letter of course. It's useless I expect and undesirable that we should argue and anyway you are so far away. ... As I do not propose to argue I will content myself with base assertions:

I have not gone back on what I thought and said in 1923-4. I have simply developed the thought and statement. I never said aesthetics were 'futile.' Refusing to join the staff of the Royal College of Art is compatible with accepting an invitation to lecture to the S.K. Museum. (The Museum and the Royal College are independent.) (Neither WR,<sup>53</sup> nor any of his students so far as I know, were at the lecture ...) You should read that lecture as a thing delivered as a kind of insult. Can't you see? I say 'such and such is the state of affairs' - well, god damn and blast you - you fat beneficiaries - we artists know very well we can't be ancient Britons and what not. You have set up a system in which architecture and sculpture are necessarily divorced - so be it. We will rejoice in this at least - that no longer shall we have to do sham gothic to please ecclesiastics or sham classic to please men of business etc - and we can take advantage of our freedom to play experiments on our own, ... and you find it horrifying! You think sculptors ought to be keen to

carve Corinthian capitals on insurance offices or churches - do you? Or do you think your kind of sculpture or mine has a natural affinity with the concrete and iron of the modern architect contractor. Anyway I don't think so. I think that as things are, there's no place for sculpture but the Museum (whether public or private - whether the gallery or the mantle shelf).

As to your 'sensuality' complex ... Gor blime. 'Don't know' is answer to both.<sup>54</sup> I'm sorry I can't enlighten you further. You strike me as a funny old juggins - a trifle annoying as well, but not seriously - annoying as a maiden aunt might be - nothing worse.

Your analogy of the salmon - gor blime again! and so when you see a 'torso' it is nothing to you but a representation of the sexually/physically appetising - is that it? I'm sorry about this - the broken Venuses of the world - not to mention the Apollos - must be very provocative.<sup>55</sup> But I'm taking your words too seriously perhaps? Anyway that particular stone was called 'Mankind' because the Gallery owners thought my title, 'Homo,' too obscure (being Latin) and it was called 'Homo' because it was on its knees, i.e. the heraldically proper attitude of man before God. (Previously I'd intended to call it 'Ecce Virgo, ecce ancilla' - but thought no one would understand - they wouldn't have either ... nor would you I gather.)<sup>56</sup>

*To Eric Gill 29 July 1928*

Loud cheers express inadequately my joy to find that I had misread your lecture at S.K. ... There is a market for craftsmanship apart from competition with factory goods. Romney Green's furniture and Petra's weaving find their billets. I admit that in present abnormal conditions it is difficult for craftsmen to find the market, but I suggest that it is equally difficult for the many customers to find the market. I think it is not so much the smallness of the market as its obscurity of which we should complain. If that difficulty could be lessened, I fancy that many more wood workers and weavers - and a great many more potters - might lead a life far less abnormal than that of 'slaves of commerce,' or than that of the artist standing on his head on the mantelpiece. ... Most artists, I feel sure, would be far more usefully and happily employed weaving table cloths or making tea pots than in trying to express in machine made paint the thrill that they try to feel at the sight of a machine-made teapot on a machine-made tablecloth.

As to your work and what I said about the change in it. It was not really as a maiden aunt that I spoke. Such maiden aunts as I possess would not receive from

the Sanchi Topse<sup>57</sup> the intense and unalloyed delight that I do. The ivory Madonna seemed to me like plain chant & the tombstones like a waltz.

As to the Torso. You say that on his knees is the heraldically proper attitude of man before God. But you used to say that the heraldically proper state of man before God was robed and if robed means anything it surely means the veiling of, precisely, the torso.

*From Eric Gill 8 August 1928*

I was glad to get yours of July 29. ... I am able to reply to the two points in your letter.

Re: my views on an arts and crafts revival: ... I held (since 1909) that the William Morris movement failed for lack of appreciation of the fact that the Industrial era was ushered in by the Reformation with its subsequent insubordination of the man of business - and that a return to religion was the first step. Hence in 1913, the Roman Catholic Church, in 1918 the Guild of S.S. J & D.<sup>58</sup> That Guild was conceived as a return to the religion and religious association by artists. The failure of the Guild was due (apart from Hilario Bottomless Finance)<sup>59</sup> to its becoming involved in social problems and, in my view, precisely that arts and crafts business which is necessarily absurd ...

Re: torsos and robes: Yes, the proper state of man before God is robed - but if 'robed' means anything it means having garments of dignity and adornment. It precisely does not mean 'veiled' and certainly not the veiling of the torso specially. What an idea! (The choice of the word robed is made to indicate that clothes in the ordinary sense of 'things for decency or convenience or comfort' are not meant.) This is an egregious mistake on your part - oh, egregious! I continue to think you a funny old juggins but/and also remain your affectionate brother in S! Dominic.

If Philip replied to this last rather evasive justification for Gill's desire to carve a naked headless woman, then the reply has not survived. Philip's attempts to encourage Gill to ask himself questions about his moral responsibility as a Catholic artist may at times appear pedantic and designed to inhibit Gill's drive to carve his vision in three dimensional form. But it is hard to escape the element of comedy when one remembers that Gill objected to Philip's wife Aileen wearing brightly coloured dresses - *Women should wear black and cover their ankles.*<sup>60</sup>

Gill's political views in the late 1930s brought him into conflict with both his friends and the establishment. His pacifism, and his closeness to the Communist position through his belief in the workers controlling the means of production, for him justified his decision to exhibit with the Artists International exhibition in London. Gertrude Godden, a neighbour of the Hagreens, published a review of the show in *The Catholic Herald*, criticising Gill's decision to exhibit with artists who were anti-God.<sup>61</sup> Gill's published response described the pictures with which his work shared wall space – the subject matter was social justice, police brutality, and starving children. Gill declared himself keen to show that a Catholic can stand up for social justice as well as any Marxist.<sup>62</sup> At this time Gill considered all art propaganda: *What are statues in Cathedrals and eminent politicians in Westminster Abbey if not propaganda for the values and politics upheld by statesmen.*<sup>63</sup> For Philip and Aileen this was not the point. The Communist government had not allowed a Christian life of work and worship to be an option for their people.

*From Aileen Hagreen to Eric Gill 14 September 1936*

I write a formal letter - which I hope will in no way interfere with our personal friendship - to tell you how deeply I deplore your swing 'left.' That the logical consequence of the machine age is communism does not logically result in the consequence that one should back communism, especially as 1) that party is 'all out' to 'destroy' God; & 2) there is at least one other alternative to both communism and fascism which is a healthy one and one completely acceptable to a 'whole hog' Catholic. I know you too well to look for any handful of silver in your offering - and too well for me not to be sure that you have not been blinded by the sand flung by International Societies. Let us by all means go in for a little Bishop-baiting, even overtly, but not in company with the God baiters too.

*From Eric Gill to Aileen Hagreen 15 September 1936*

I was interested to read your letter. Of course it makes no difference to friendship.

You must not talk about my 'swinging left' as though I had just done it. I began as a gauche person and get worse. I was a Fabian at one time and became a Catholic because in my view Fabianism was not left enough. In fact Catholicism is the leftist thing I know and all leftward things share its glory.

You should not take the Communist anti-God business so seriously. Remember, it is true to say that in every way in which God can be denied He is to be denied.<sup>64</sup>



*To René Hague 18 July 1980*

You know that I admired and loved [Eric] and you know that he could not tolerate any dissent from what he was preaching at the moment. When he preached surrender to Hitler I wrote and remonstrated. He replied that I was a dupe of propaganda. I was sad that our friendship should pause on an unresolved discord. But Robert Speaight told me that at the end Eric said he had been wrong about the war.<sup>65</sup>

*To 'May,' undated, circa 1966*<sup>66</sup>

I was interested that you had read the life of E.G.<sup>67</sup> Much of what had to be told came as a shock to me. I saw nothing of Eric in his later years and read none of his books. I remonstrated where I thought he was doing harm, but he was beyond the range of any gun.

Lots of men have been very good and very bad, but not at the same time. There must have been some mental kink that allowed Eric to be humbly devout when he was behaving outrageously. There seemed to be no conflict. ... His friends never doubted his real goodness. He always thought of Heaven as his home and we can only think of him as going where alone he was understood.

*Letter to David Jones*

I doubt that history will record the real greatness of Eric. It has almost forgotten Morris though Morris was far easier to record - simpler and more of a piece from beginning to end. History necessarily looks backwards, so the end hides the beginning. History can hardly see the sincere young Millais behind the popular president at the RA. It cannot see the merry genius of young Gustave Dore behind the theatrical curtain in Bond Street. So with Eric I fear the facile Designer for Industry will hide the uncompromising convert.

Of his writings I know nothing, for I always found them unreadable. His influence must be enormous but I doubt if he will get credit for the best of it. Those of us who were saved from our silliness by his teaching may pass on something or leave a legend of him.

PRO·FOCO  
NON·FORO  
AGRI  
COLENDI



# Father Vincent McNabb: Kill-Joy Paritan

As he stood talking in our workshops, did the custody of the eyes prevent his seeing that we were a guild of craftsmen?

*Recollections recorded in correspondence with Fiona MacCarthy 1986*

The forceful and charismatic friar, Father Vincent McNabb, was famous in Dominican circles as an eccentric preacher. A close friend of Hilaire Belloc, he was also a leading voice of the Distributist Movement, which promoted the redistribution of land to as many families as possible and away from government ownership. He was inspired by Eric Gill and Hilary Pepler's collaboration at Ditchling, and it was he who encouraged them to establish The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic. He hoped that Ditchling would be the first of many successful, self-sufficient Catholic communities throughout rural England.

Through the 1920s and 1930s, Father Vincent made speeches for The Catholic Evidence Guild in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoons. He bemoaned the fact that children now knew about Charlie Chaplin but not St Thomas More; that industrial progress would lead to such ridiculous contraptions as a slot machine to blow your nose for you; and on a more serious note, he described Hitler as a pied piper who had charmed the Germans with his pipe and they would, in time, pay for this in lives.<sup>1</sup> His outspoken adversarial approach brought him a high profile in his lifetime.

Philip knew Father Vincent from his own first spell at Ditchling in 1923, and he soon found his theatrical displays of emotion unattractive and unconvincing. Although Father Vincent professed to love the workshop life, the image of *The Carpenter's Shop* being ever present in his imagination when he visited Ditchling,<sup>2</sup> Philip doubted that he ever observed closely either the individual workmen or the things they made. He seemed to shape his impression of life at Ditchling to suit his arguments, without recognising the real difficulties inherent in this way of life. George Maxwell was always a strong supporter of Father Vincent, and Hilary Pepler's daughters loved him and happily made their first confessions sitting on his knee.<sup>3</sup> David Jones, however, shared Philip's opinion that Father Vincent was *futile and a bore*.<sup>4</sup>

Ditchling played an important part in Father Vincent's spiritual life - *challenging him once again with the teaching and example of his mother.*<sup>5</sup> She had spent her youth in New York until she realised that her faith would suffer if she did not return to a primary way of life in Ireland. In a letter to Hilary Pepler, written some thirty years after the founding of The Guild, Father Vincent analysed his relationship with Ditchling: *Perhaps through my own fault - and assuredly to my own pain - I idealised it. I had never urged it to any path of sacrifice. But when I found it doing, as well as preaching, the things I could only preach to be done, I gave it something of the love I never gave a woman.*<sup>6</sup>

Father Vincent's idealistic investment in Ditchling caused him disappointment. He was upset by Gill's move to Wales in 1924 - a re-location to a remote, rural retreat where McNabb's own influence would be reduced.<sup>7</sup> He had planned an expansion of the Ditchling Community with Hilary Pepler, but setbacks on this front, combined with his limited success as an arbitrator in Gill and Pepler's financial disputes in the later 1920s, put his friendship with both men under strain. Yet in 1930, when Gill was seriously ill, Father Vincent rushed to his bedside twice, to be sure he had made his peace.<sup>8</sup>

Whilst giving credit to Father Vincent's foresight and wisdom, even his supporter Father Brocard Sewell described him as an *unashamed showman* whose stunts jarred on his hearers.<sup>9</sup> Right up until his death in June 1943, Father Vincent placed great emphasis on self denial and suffering. One of his books, *The Craft of Suffering*,<sup>10</sup> includes a description of his childhood trip to see a charwoman's festering cancerous wound, and he refers to *the glorious professionals of pain*. Philip thought him more interested in the suffering at Ditchling than in the art and craft produced there. Whilst recognising that Father Vincent was expressing conventional Christian views on how suffering might be reconciled with the goodness of God, and how Man may find joy and peace when he has learned to accept suffering as part of human life, Philip's instincts drew him to mistrust what he saw as an unhealthy passion for hardship.





*Letter to Father Tom Phelan 27 March 1987*

When I was young, the most highly respected theologian in England was Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., S.T.M.<sup>11</sup> He raged like a blast furnace against the wickedness of seeking a safe period.<sup>12</sup> He said the duty of married people was to create souls for God. To ask whether children could survive was to doubt Providence. What mattered was that they should be baptised.

*Recollections recorded in correspondence with Fiona MacCarthy 1986*

Father Vincent McNabb was a kill-joy puritan, an exhibitionist and a non-stop preacher. While we sat and ate, he stood triumphant over bodily ease. A fixed expression of triumph showed that he was refuting imaginary adversaries.

He advocated a way of life such as he had seen in Ireland where large families in comfortless cabins survived on what they could grow. To encourage us to do likewise he wrote us a slogan in his monkish latin - Pro foco non foro agri colendi.<sup>13</sup>

As he stood talking in our workshops, did the custody of the eyes prevent his seeing that we were a guild of craftsmen?<sup>14</sup> Even had we been farmers his slogan would have been false. The farmer needs the smith, the miller, the tanner, the wheelwright and all the rest - and they all need the priest. Society needs all the trades as a clock needs all its parts to be a going concern.



*Philip Haggren in Conversation with Richard Ritchie and Tony Kelly, recorded 14 April 1980*

*Edited together with recollections about Father Vincent McNabb from correspondence with Fiona MacCarthy 1986*

He thought we were a wonderful show and took us under his wing. He'd come down and talk to us, and if he got people come to him who were down and out and didn't know what to do, he used to say, 'Go down to Ditchling. Go down to those good people down there. They'll find a job for you.' We got all the drunks and - oh! Lord knows what! Eric thought he was a marvellous old saint and mopped it all up. I think Hilary was rather detached.

Father Vincent was at Hawkesyard Priory<sup>15</sup> and got Hilary Pepler and Eric Gill to go up there on a visit and indoctrinated them for all he was worth. He talked and they were mopping it up. Father John O'Connor who was there quietly stepped out of the room - he was bored stiff by all this. There was Father Vincent standing holding forth on 'Holy poverty.' 'Holy poverty' was the key to sanctity and all the rest of it. It was a terrible thing to think of money or the value of anything. And when he was in full spate, in came Father O'Connor who had been up in the attic rootling about and came down all over cobwebs and dust, with a Spode bowl he'd found up in the Attic. Then he walked into the middle of them and said: 'Do you fellows know this bowl is worth £40?'<sup>16</sup> There was no more about 'Holy Poverty.' It was snuffed out.



Father Vincent McNabb was such a nuisance. When the final row came, that Eric couldn't do with Hilary Pepler any longer, Eric suggested that they should meet at the Dominican priory in London, and Father Vincent should hear their case - act as arbitrator. Of course he was the last person for that. Eric had written down on a bit of paper about twenty points where he thought he had been badly done, or was being badly done, by Hilary. Old Father Vincent talked away about holy charity and poverty and all that - hadn't heard a word of it and just talked and talked. And they came away in a worse mess than ever.

When I was going to London, George Maxwell asked me to go to Haverstock Hill and put a question to Father Vincent. When he came into the parlour he was talking and went on talking. He didn't listen to anything. I could not give him my attention because I was trying to keep clear in my mind the question with which George had charged me. I hoped for a pause but that hope faded. Eventually I backed to the door. He followed me along the passage still talking. At the outer door, as I was a Tertiary, I went down on one knee. And, of course, he got down on two knees. I bowed my head and he tried to bow lower than me, because of his humility. He went on all fours, grovelling rump-upmost as he blessed me. He was like that. I mean, he was known - in the street - to say something he thought was rather conceited: 'Oh, Pride, Pride' and went flat down on his face on the pavement. You see he was - you know - a religious maniac.

*Letter to René Hague 5 March 1978*

Father Vincent seemed to think of himself as patron and protector of the Guild. A comfortless life on the land was his ideal. He saw that Hilary's land was being farmed by his son, David. He saw that Eric kept a pig and George had a goat. He saw that our women folk were over-worked, and he gave it his blessing. I don't remember that Father Vincent ever looked at our work. He came to the workshops to talk. He would not sit down or come near the fire or have a cup of tea. He stood fixed as a lighthouse and cheerless as Mrs. Lot gone saline. His chin threatened like the toe of a hob-nailed boot. He never paused to listen or ask a question. All his talk was about himself. I suppose he had been taught to examine his conscience and had become an addict. Many years later I heard of his remark about hearing nuns' confessions - that it was like being nibbled to death by ducks. That is enough to save his soul.



Please pray for our beloved  
**FATHER VINCENT MCNABB, O.P.**  
July 8th 1868 - June 17th 1943



“ He does not die that can bequeath  
Some influence to the land he knows  
Or dares, persistent, interwreath  
Love permanent with the wild hedge rows.”



“She knows things we mustn’t know”

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# David Jones: Workshop Companion

Our time together at Ditchling, Capel and Lourdes was the only close, workshop companionship I have ever known.

*Letter to David Jones 27 March 1927*

David Jones and Philip first met at Ditchling in 1923. David was the younger by five years, but Philip looked up to him from the start - in part because he had endured full active service during the First World War. During the 1920s, the two men had a close friendship and for certain periods shared a workshop. Philip always considered Jones a great friend: *He was the perfect companion. He had the gift, so notable in Dickens and Mark Twain, of weaving threads of humour through passages of sorrow.*<sup>1</sup>

Of all the artists and craftsmen associated with Ditchling, David Jones is unique in having had both his writings and his artwork extensively analysed by art historians and Literature specialists. International exhibitions of his watercolours, drawings and wood engravings have included two retrospective exhibitions at The Tate Gallery in London.<sup>2</sup> His poetry, published by Faber, is highly regarded in English-speaking countries the world over, and scholars in Britain, Australia and Canada have spent years interpreting his texts.

David left school at the age of 14 and studied at Camberwell and Westminster Art schools with a five year interruption during the First World War when he served as a private in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He was a skilled draughtsman from childhood, but, having no wish to become a commercial artist as his father had been, he was excited by his contact with Eric Gill that began with correspondence and visits to Ditchling in the aftermath of the war. In 1921, after careful deliberation, David converted to Roman Catholicism, and joined the community on Ditchling Common.

Philip's preference for David's work from the period 1923 to 1926 has been widely remarked upon in publications. He liked David's strong, stylised compositions where form dominated rather than detail. He favoured the early religious wood engravings and the heavy black lines of the powerful imagery that David produced for the *Book of Jonah* and *Gulliver's Travels*, about which Philip commented *I've never seen the whole book but the ones I've got proofs of are perfect woodcuts.*<sup>3</sup> Philip was also struck by David's experimental boxwood

carvings that evolved from wood blocks. A cut created in two dimensions for printing would be continued so that the block was cut away to reveal a three-dimensional carving. One such example, *Mater Castissima*, was described by Philip as a *tiny thing of monumental majesty*.<sup>4</sup> In correspondence with René Hague, he found David's carvings important *not only for their own merits but because of the effect they had on his painting & engraving*.<sup>5</sup> He liked the landscapes from this period: pencil, crayon and watercolour works such as *Ditchling Landscape* and *The Garden Path* from 1924; and serene, ordered gouaches showing rich green hillsides such as *Capel Landscape* in 1925. In these works clear outlines contain smooth, expressive texture, but in Jones's later landscapes there is often a sense of nature reeling beyond boundaries.

After spending the early 1920s in Ditchling, David lived at Capel-y-ffin with Philip and they got to know each other even better. David loved the landscape but found the cold atmosphere *deadly*<sup>6</sup> and, like Philip, the harsh regime excessive. In a letter David wrote after he had left Capel, but Philip was still living there, he confides: *I'm grieved to hear that the situation at Capel is not any easier ... if people can't fast and remain charitable and normally polite it seems to me they've got not to go on fasting*.<sup>7</sup>

David was engaged to Eric Gill's daughter, Petra, from 1924 to 1926. It was Philip who made her engagement ring from an old shilling with a verse from the Song of Solomon inscribed around it.<sup>8</sup> Philip observed that it was *so like David* to expect her to pay for it as she was going to wear it.<sup>9</sup> When the engagement was broken off, David wrote to Philip from Caldey Island: *The last month has been one of great nervous tension, as you may guess. Everybody, as far as I know, has acted as they thought best and charity has been preserved. But you can imagine, I expect, the pain and strain and general mental mix of it all - Lord!! However, one deserves it all for one's sins ... and again I ask for your prayers that I may see clearly what to do next*.<sup>10</sup> The following year, David spent six weeks of May and June in Lourdes with Philip, and he confided frankly in his friend. Philip recognised a great strength in David: an ability to fight his anxieties and persist with his work. Others, who had not focused their imagination so precisely on the causes of David's personal suffering, may at times have overlooked this strength.

Despite his despair, David kept working. He found this region of France *awfully panoramic* and difficult to paint, and Philip observed: *The subjects were too big for him. The Welsh Mountains fitted him but the Pyrenees hung loose*.<sup>11</sup> Although for other commentators David's



break up with Petra marked the beginning of an exciting new era in terms of painting, for Philip it signalled a decline.<sup>12</sup>

David's own behaviour, his recoiling from so many of the responsibilities of conventional adult life, often provoked a protective response from close friends. Philip admired David's book *In Parenthesis*,<sup>13</sup> first published in 1937 and considered the volume a *national heirloom*.<sup>14</sup> Based on his experience of the Western Front during the First World War, *In Parenthesis* does not dwell on physical suffering. David's leg wound, the result of a bullet fired at close range, is not mentioned in the text. Philip acknowledged the deep and traumatic effect of the war and respected David's ability to communicate it without parading his personal agony: *In David Jones I can see nothing morbid. The difficulty for most people in understanding his work lies in the wealth of allusion - often allusion to traditions shared by few. In every other sense it is thoroughly Catholic. In In Parenthesis he recites the Sorrowful Mysteries with the Glorious Mysteries always in view.*<sup>15</sup>

Philip did not see David again after 1932, despite the fact that David lived until 1974. They maintained an intermittent correspondence. David became increasingly reclusive and Philip did not often travel. Leading separate lives, their work developed in very different ways.

Philip's reservation about David's later work came partly as a matter of principle - sometimes wood blocks were cut with so fine a tool that the images would barely stand reproduction.<sup>16</sup> Philip also had very definite views on what represented the English tradition, and he was uncomfortable with the Celtic mythology that became increasingly a motivating force for David. He found the detail in David's later imagery erratic, overcrowded and gloomy, and Philip regretted that in David's later prose the narrative

form of *In Parenthesis* was abandoned. Philip described *The Kensington Mass* – as wedding cake and the icing has some plaster of Paris.<sup>17</sup> He did not read *The Anathemata*<sup>18</sup> – *I am told that it is a great meditation on the Mass, but it is so thick with Welsh myths that it is unintelligible to me.*<sup>19</sup>

As with Edward Johnston, humour clearly cemented the friendship between Philip and David – David once wrote to Philip: *it was a pleasure to learn that Turner was working on a long poem half his life called The Fallacies of Hope.*<sup>20</sup> But without the opportunities for shared experience and observation, the common ground between the two was limited. From the time that he joined the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic in 1923, and for the remaining 65 years of his life, Philip's approach to work was to remain remarkably consistent. Eric Gill and David Jones, on the other hand, developed in ways which, to Philip at least, suggested a dramatic departure from the views that the friends once shared. Philip's enthusiasm was for a relationship as it once was, not as it might be. It was those few short years of genuine working companionship that Philip relived in his mind time and again.

*To Tony Stoneburner 12 September 1972*

I ought to have warned you that I am especially unqualified to understand David because of racial contrast. He is from Wales, a land of eloquence, of legend & of fantasy. I am from Suffolk where men are careful of speech and cautious in what they will believe. David loves Malory & Arthurian myths. I detest unnecessary fighting and when Merlin walks in I walk out.

*To Thomas Dilworth 4 November 1985*

You ask what David & I talked about – well anything funny – & that meant almost everything. Of course the graphic arts were our main concern. England was slow to escape from the academic tyranny. Raphael was called the Prince of painters. Art meant the study of him & Rembrandt. I think our best artists were our illustrators. They have not been properly appreciated, except by Van Gogh & Sickert. Impressionism had some influence, but by 1914 we were looking at Jap screens & Byzantine mosaics & Peruvian pots & African carvings & so on.

... David said this was the best time ever for an artist, because of his freedom. He quoted some old book which said that the excellence of the art was in making solid objects appear on a flat surface. He said – “You may no longer do that by painting shadows, but you may smooch the edges with black.”

You may imagine how such ideas were debated. Lethaby wrote - *No art that is only one man deep is worth much.*<sup>21</sup> Without a foundation of tradition, one cannot build firmly. I did not feel it was a good time.

*To Thomas Dilworth 16 November 1985 and 10 April 1986*

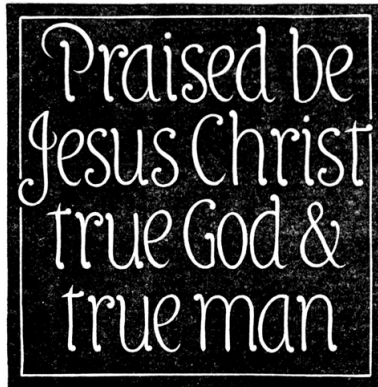
We were strangely different. Perhaps that is what made our contact so interesting ... The difference between David and myself led us to pour out our treasure into one heap. I have been rich ever since.

*To René Hague 20 May 1978*

I did not have to get to know him. There was no shield to be penetrated. Nathaniel must have been like that - seen from afar an Israelite in whom there was no guile.<sup>22</sup>

*To Tom Dilworth 27 September 1985*

The wonderful thing about our friendship was our mutual understanding. We never had to explain. We differed in our likes & dislikes but we never disputed. David loved Latin & plainchant & vestments & things liturgical. I had come into the Church in spite of hating them ... One day he received an invitation to stay with a friend for a fortnight. David said it would be most interesting and he wished he could go. I said 'But why not go?' He said 'He lives in Surrey & I am in Sussex.' Deciding what to pack & packing it & finding out about trains and where to change them - it was impossible. It was clear why he was never made a lance corporal. On Saturday night he said 'Soon we will have to face the question of whether we are going to lapse.' Walking to Mass when wind from Siberia was trying to tear our ears off was like going over the top - & in those days it had to be done fasting. And old Father O'Meara told David off like a Sergeant Major for coming to Mass in dirty shoes. However unpleasant the conditions & however difficult people might be, I never knew David show the least irritation or resentment. His love & understanding & his sense of humour kept him afloat. Whatever he suffered he kept to himself.



To Tony Stoneburner 4 October 1966

If you consider the experiences narrated in *In Parenthesis* and that there is no note of bitterness in the book you will understand why everyone was fond of David.

I want to clear away the idea that he was a 'late bloomer.' He was in blossom when the snow was still on the ground.

I first met David in 1923. He was at that time apprenticed to George Maxwell the carpenter. This absurd experiment soon came to an end. David could never handle a tool as it was meant to be used and the excellent woodworker could make nothing of the tousle-headed untidy young man.

David had already made engravings for the St Dominic's Press. I have one printed in 1922, which is as noble a design as he can ever have made.<sup>23</sup>

In 1924 we shared a workshop, a draughty wooden shed, where David mostly engraved and I worked at various kinds of lettering. We were friends at once, we had so much in common. We were both converts, both war-wrecks, both trying to make a fresh start and escape from all that we had been taught about art. He was my junior by nearly four years,<sup>24</sup> but he was far ahead of as well as above me. We both felt the cold badly and were in unhealthy quarters. I with my wife and children in a cottage, he in a stable. These were badly built when normal materials were not to be had.

As to what we talked about - it would be hard to say what we did not talk about. We loved English writing from Langland & Chaucer onwards - & English painting - especially Blake & Turner. He was fascinated by the eloquence of Belloc and caught from him a feeling of glamour about the Roman Legions. This seemed strange in

so unmilitary a person. We enjoyed the same humour wherever it came from. He loved the Latin Liturgy.

Of David's early work I have some beautiful examples. I prize especially a *Madonna & Child*, carved in boxwood, which he made while we were working together.<sup>25</sup>

To understand David's achievement, one needs to know not only what the war had taken out of his life, but what it had taken out of our country. The siege by submarine had nearly starved us. When the Armistice came, we were short of ships, of food, of fuel, of housing. The sudden ending of munition production threw a great part of the population out of work. The army came home to look for work. We were deep in debt. Wives had to abandon their homes and live with their parents. Children did not know their fathers. To make progress in those days was like walking in deep sand with the wind in one's face - and David made rapid progress.

*To René Hague 22 February 1978*

In my last letter I wrote that David's mattress grew green mildew. Cross out 'green.' I am remembering more exactly how the damp behaved in that stable. Many years later Aileen and I had to live there. The only good thing about it was the glorious Palm Sunday scene that David had painted on the bricks. It uplifted us while it lasted - & it moved Will Rothenstein<sup>26</sup> to tears. I have shown that David was no squarewright, but he surely has a place among the tradesmen that trotted to Canterbury. He was an Imaginator. I wonder whether he ever met that word. It meant a maker of carved or painted images and it fits the David that I knew.

*To Tony Stoneburner 1 September 1969*

In his struggle to escape from the academic he got an obsession I could not share about drawings by children. Something of this has remained in his work. I have before me as I write a drawing (14" x 10") made in 1923. It is of his father's garden, in a dull London suburb and a dull smoky light. It is done with pencil and red and green grease chalk. It is a messy thing, rubbed hard in places with his finger. One can't make out which side of the fence a tree is growing or which side of a tree a path goes. Why do I find the thing fascinating? I have no idea. It hangs next to a fine old Jap print and it holds its own.

*To René Hague 15 March 1978*

I can't claim to have taught David anything. He was learning the right way to engrave while I was trying to rid myself of all that I had learnt wrong. In 1924 I was intent on learning lettering which was new to me.

In discussion I used to disagree with David's extreme admiration for children's drawing and for things that were accidentally wonky. It seemed to me like the decadence of eighteenth century noblemen who had ruins built in their parks ... By the way, I wonder whether some of David's worst lettering was suggested by that on the Bayeux tapestry - where the linen has sagged ...

David was glad to get away from the Art School teaching. So was I, but with a great difference. I wanted to escape from the studio and become naturalised in the workshop. David discarded the academic rules of perspective and light and shade but the studio was his habitat. There, the game is played without goals or boundaries. It is an aesthetic punt about and the pavilion has no clock.

*To Thomas Dilworth 23 November 1985*

David and Eric were like son and father but with no resemblance. David always in a mess and Eric with everything in order, David a virgin and Eric more than married - gazelle & buffalo.

*To René Hague 19 February 1978*

Eric told [David] that his table was the altar on which he offered his work to God. As the priest, he should have nothing on the table but the tools for the job in hand and they should be in regular order. Also he should keep accounts. He should know how many hours he spent on each job and what the materials cost. David did not rebel. He would have obeyed if he could, but his table continued to bear a mound of books, tools, brushes, papers and a paint box with cigarette ends in it. Hilary Pepler too tried to make David more workmanlike. When David had taken a trial proof he was apt to stuff it into a pocket. At some later time he would take it out and consider its qualities, noting how they were enhanced by this crumpling of the paper. Hilary caught him thus chewing the cud and said: "A proof is to let you get on with the block, knowing what needs doing. It is not to be lifted up, carried about or adored."<sup>27</sup>



*To René Hague 10 April 1978*

I have got from home a packet of David's early prints to remind myself of that explosion of creativity. Their speed & assurance was phenomenal, but even more remarkable is their originality. Here is water from a new spring. It is not overflow from the work of Eric or anyone else.

*Letter to Father William Dolan Fletcher 14 September 1975*

I think his blocks are some of his most satisfying things. The limitations of the job were a valuable discipline. Forms had to be defined. The later blocks would hardly stand reproduction. He used too fine a tool for some of the large ones. From a printer's point of view, the best period was that of *Gulliver Travels* and *Pompey the Little*.<sup>28</sup>

*To René Hague 10 July 1979*

Stella Wright<sup>29</sup> ... showed me a little picture that David had made for her. It was a lovely thing of a doe & fawn "among the leaves so green O." They were innocent of ulterior meaning. I don't mind a unicorn dancing with a mock turtle in the land where the bong tree grows, but if he brings me a mystical message I like him no better than a Jehovah's Witness or a vacuum man.

*To René Hague 1 April 1978*

At Ditchling, when David was betrothed, our Joan, who was four years old, had been given a wooden horse on wheels. It was so dear to her that she kept a hand on it throughout supper & would not let go at bedtime. Our stairs were very steep & narrow & we had some difficulty in hoisting her up with Dobbin in her arms. When we got back to our fireside, David said "It's strange how early in life one wants to take what one loves to bed with one." I am sure you will hear David's voice in that.

*To David Jones 27 March 1972*

All is just as I remember it (at Capel-y-ffin). The water in Nant Honddu when we went to fetch the milk.<sup>28</sup> We paused on the bridge to watch the water move to the stones below and wave to the sky above. We wondered how Eric's intense

perception of beauty could be focused on so narrow a field. He would have thought our delay a frivolous waste of time. To us, as to men through all the ages, it was the food of the spirit - The honey to keep us in the dark days.

“O What is life if full of care  
We have no time to stand & stare?”<sup>30</sup>

Our time together at Ditchling, Capel & Lourdes was the only close, workshop companionship I have ever known.

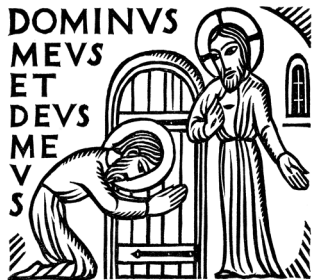
*To Stella Wright 28 January 1978*

Truly David dreaded the discomfort [of painting outdoors], but he heroically endured it at Capel, on Caldey & at Lourdes. We discussed the matter and he said that to design landscape from imagination gave only easy lines and rhythms. He needed to struggle with unwilling material to produce the tensions and stresses that make a live painting. We carried portfolio and easel many miles around Lourdes. Also from Arcachon to Cap Feret where he painted an astonishing sea piece.<sup>31</sup> Here he used the uncanny faculty that he shared with Turner. He painted not from where he stood but from a point about 20 feet up in the air.

*To Tony Stoneburner Summer 1973*

During his time with us (in Lourdes) I had to go to Arcachon for a couple of nights and David came with me. We crossed the harbour and some dunes to see the Atlantic. The great ocean showed its teeth and foamed with fury as it rose for its final assault on Europe. It was the most frightening aspect the sea had ever shown me. David stood up to it as to Goliath. One of his most astonishing water colours is the trophy of that encounter.<sup>32</sup>

David's visit was a wonderful time for me. He was the perfect companion. He had the gift, so notable in Dickens and Mark Twain, of weaving threads of humour through passages of sorrow. There was never anything cynical or irreverent about such humour. It was the spice that purifies and preserves. He could see the absurdity of people he admired and loved. In all things he sought beauty, and he saw it in the most unlikely places.





*To Thomas Dilworth 29 June 1986*

I think the affair with Petra lifted David to the heights and threw him into the abyss. In such a case the shock comes as a wave of misery that may recede but later it returns, not as a wave but as a tide. Then the ache goes on all the time. I think that was David's state when he stayed with us at Lourdes.

*To René Hague 18 July 1980*

About his engagement - For Petra's peace of mind your account of it may stand<sup>33</sup> but truth is he suffered most grievously. During the six weeks at Lourdes he talked with me as perhaps he did with no one else. He had taken the solemn betrothal as a religious vow. A German bullet had gone through his leg but the news that came to him on Caldey went through his heart.<sup>34</sup>

*To René Hague 29 May 1978*

Omission is untruth but charity may snuff out the lamp of Truth. Now I think it best to tell my tale in writing. It may be of no use for your book<sup>35</sup> - though it might be treasure trove to some writer a hundred years hence.

Langland said - 'Let bring a man in a bote amidde a broade water.'<sup>36</sup> David's boat was sailing with a fair wind towards a clear horizon. Then in January 1927, the mast snapped. Thereafter he could only row. He rowed bravely but pulling at the oars he could not see ahead. Denied the vision of hope he could only see what lay behind ... the smouldering ruins of man's history and a litter of broken things.

*Letter to Thomas Dilworth 11 May 1986*

I wished I could talk with David in his later years. He wrote of the artist as having no place in modern society. He wrote of things made for delight as "non-utile" as though they were something new & their makers as mysterious as unidentified flying objects. I think David liked this idea, but really his status as limner & scribe was that of the entertainer. Poets, novelists, actors, musicians & clowns are in this category. They are of great benefit to society, so their works should not be called "non-utile."

*Letter to Maurice Percival 19 April 1975*

When I think of what we have at Lingfield,<sup>37</sup> paintings, engravings, a box-wood carving & *In Parenthesis*, I think David's fame is well deserved. Yet I gather that it is not for such work that he is most admired, but for his later entanglements of myths & symbols. Anyone may say that my failure to appreciate such things shows my low viewpoint, but I am not convinced that what is above me is necessarily better than what I see. A man above me may be among the heavenly bodies - or he may be among the lumber in the attic. In all this I may be showing, as I have said, my weakness, not David's.

When it comes to lettering, I can feel more sure of my judgement. David's inscriptions, polyglot, polychrome, with letters lurching about & laboriously propped up with Chinese white, are really bad. They do not say the words. They are music played out of tune. Michelangelo said that if you roll a statue down stairs, what is left of it is sculpture. I think that bits may be knocked off David's work & there will remain the one & only, the immeasurable David Jones.

# A Bazaar & Fete



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*Catholic Convent & School*  
*Church Street, Uckfield*

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## Wed. July 26th

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STALLS, SIDESHOWS, ENTERTAINMENTS,



TEAS AND ICES



## Admission 6d.

(THE LUCKY NUMBER TEN SHILLINGS)

Printed at St Dominic's Press, Ditchling, Hasocks, Sussex.

# Hilary Pepler: A Bit of a Showman

Hold Hard! ... Our correspondence course in collaboration seems to be breaking down badly. My slow brain goes on considering a rosary book while yours has evolved a whole library.

*Letter to Hilary Pepler, undated, written on reverse of envelope dated 3 February 1927*

For historians of the twentieth-century Private Press movement, St Dominic's Press is regarded as idiosyncratic - charming and casual yet unpretentious. Hilary Pepler had a genuine gift for designing striking illustrated posters and beautifully balanced title pages, but he was never a perfectionist: he would correct errors by hand rather than re-print an edition.

At the outset of the First World War, Pepler had been exempt from military service because of poor vision in one eye, and he had set up the Hampshire House Workshops near his home in Hammersmith. Here, refugees from Belgium who happened to be skilled craftsmen were assisted in reviving their trades. It was this involvement with the crafts that drew his interest to Ditchling. His close friend and Hammersmith neighbour, Edward Johnston, had already moved there and Pepler followed in 1916.

In his first published satire, *Devil's Devices* (1915), Pepler protested that the freedom of the ordinary working man was menaced by industrialism. The book asked: *Who is responsible either for the job or the mess man makes of his life?* Suggested answers included: *the State, the employer, the workman, the consumer, the foreigner, the climate or God.* Pepler's answer was *Man.*<sup>1</sup> Inspired by his first experiences of publishing social satire with a serious message, he opened St Dominic's Press in 1916, in a stable on Ditchling Common, with a Stanhope hand press, a font of Caslon Old Face type and the invaluable assistance of an elderly printer known as Dawes. Everything was done by hand, even the making of the ink. As yet Eric Gill had only cut a dozen or so blocks, but the close collaboration between the two men strengthened Gill's interest in wood engraving as illustration. Some thirty years later when Pepler reminisced about Gill's early engravings, he satirised Gill's first cuts with his typically punchy yet whimsical turn of phrase: *I like to think his first engraving of importance was the Devil, his second the Holy Family, and his third the cardinal's hat.*<sup>2</sup>

Starting St Dominic's Press was for Pepler the culmination of his passionate concern for the crafts and a dedicated interest in the power of the book to reach a new audience and change people's thinking. He supported Distributism and distinguished between two contemporary approaches to reform: *The Fabian proposing to remove all social ills off the map by legislation, and the Christian hoping by precept, example and charity, to give every man his chance to attain and maintain an independence for his well-being.*<sup>3</sup> Susan Falkner, one of Pepler's daughters, remembers her father as someone who was always writing. In every spare moment he had a pen and paper on his knee. As a social worker he had written radical books on juvenile offenders and child welfare. His publications became increasingly critical of what he saw as *the invasion of the home*<sup>4</sup> – the patronising interference of social services in the lives of the poor. For Pepler, all these measures encouraged a dependent society, a gross invasion of individual privacy and an excuse to employ thousands of bureaucrats who did little real good. Pepler's prose was concise yet emotive. In the following passage he summarises his reasons for choosing to go to Ditchling where he could print for the glory of God rather than the profit of mammon:

The three Rs were held up as a new symbol of salvation, the illiterate were regarded as worse than savages, the young were driven out of the healthy fields into hideous school rooms, and fingers which might have become dexterous at the loom, the carpenter's bench, or the anvil were compelled to the fashioning of letter forms and the signs of numerals. They were taught to add up pounds which they would never possess, to value the written story above the spoken word, to exercise their minds in the narrow groove of an alphabet instead of in the open field of reality where to know the shape of a horse and the construction of a plough were matters of life and living related to the seasons, their country and their home.<sup>5</sup>

When Pepler first moved to Ditchling with his wife Clare and three sons, the family were practising Quakers. By 1917, Pepler had adopted the Roman Catholic faith as did his family – a growing family as the war years saw the birth of three daughters. St Dominic's Press publications aimed to spread the word about a self-reliant Catholic way of life. Pepler's editorials for the Press's occasional magazine *The Game*, which appeared between 1916 and 1923, offer theatrical accounts of the beauty of the Sussex landscape and the misfortune of London children who never see cows. There were also 'Welfare Handbooks,' arguing against contraception and state interference in domestic life. In later years, Philip hinted at the self-importance of such publications: *Eric and Hilary kept on publishing their Welfare*



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PUBLIC MEETING

Cdr Herbert Shove D.S.O., R.N.

will speak on

COMMON RIGHTS  
AND  
COMMON DUTIES

At the Meeting House

The Twitten, Ditchling.

TUESDAY JANUARY 31st at 7.30

Printed at St Dominic's Press, Ditchling, Hassocks, Sussex.

*hand books denouncing wickedness like Old Testament prophets. They thrust down to hell all Art Dealers, Bankers, users of custard powder and those who liked a pleasant view from a window.*<sup>6</sup>

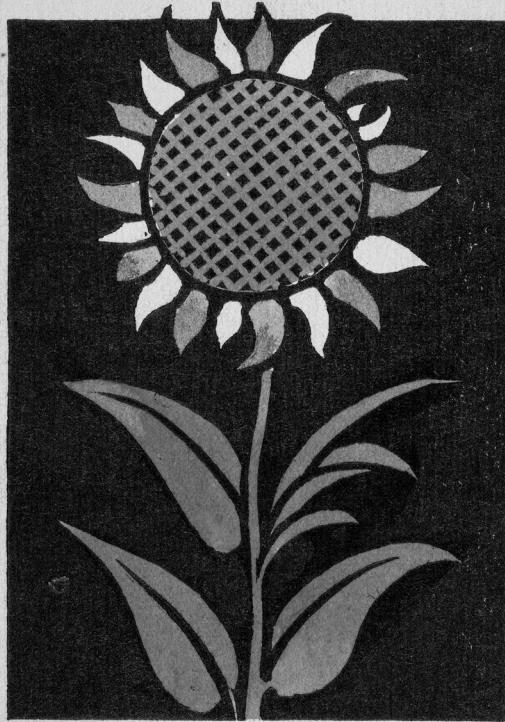
When, in December 1923, Philip began working on Ditchling Common, the workshop that he shared with David Jones was next to St Dominic's Press. Hilary Pepler *would just come in, quote a few lines, and say "Now make a block for that." And he'd go back and print. And David would get hold of a graver and make the most amazing invention without any hesitation.*<sup>7</sup> Publications such as *Libellus Lapidum* evolved in such a way, and Philip considered this book of rhymes *the most amusing thing they ever printed ... a most natural & spontaneous production. The printing began before the writing and engraving were finished and all went with a swing.*<sup>8</sup>

The most successful publications which the Press produced in this first decade caught something of the romantic spirit of the simple life at Ditchling, but steered clear of any direct propaganda. Best sellers – which ran to numerous editions – included *Vegetable Dyes*, by the Ditchling weaving and developer of dyes Ethel Mairet, and *The Mill Book* in which one of Edward Johnston's daughters, Priscilla, wrote about a day at a mill and two of Hilary Pepler's sons, Mark and David, illustrated the tale with woodcuts. Philip's favourite publication from this period was the rhyme sheet *Concerning Dragons*. Pepler's verses concern a child discussing ghosts with its nurse. On seeing the verses, Gill cut four engravings which led to this illustrated publication. Like many of the hand-made objects that Philip favoured, this one has that neat, self-contained quality, in which no excess detail or language clutters our experience of the maker's intention.

Philip remembered Pepler for his wit, which which see-sawed between clever word play and childish jokes about body fluids. When they were working together in 1924, Hilary Pepler showed Philip a proof page of *Libellus Lapidum*. This double-page spread featured two rhymes, one entitled *Arthur J. Penty* and the other *Dean Inge*.<sup>9</sup> Each rhyme was accompanied by a David Jones engraving: Dean Inge was illustrated by an angel embracing a devil. The verse read:

Merely made out of dust  
I judge God to be just  
He would not impinge  
On the place of Dean Inge.

# Vegetable Dyes



Ethel M. Mairet

5/-

Philip queried the rhyme 'Doesn't he call himself Ing?' Whereupon Pepler replied, 'that makes it even better' and immediately added: *This block was for Penty but as we have plenty we gave it to Ing to add to the sting.* On another occasion Pepler saw Philip engraving a brass plaque to go on a presentation. On the spur of the moment he came up with a rhyme about its recipient:

Sir Philip Sassoon  
Never used a spittoon  
He just said 'Ahem'  
and swallowed his phlegm.

Philip arrived at Ditchling at the tail end of Pepler and Gill's collaboration. St Dominic's Press was still producing the publications that both men had devised, but in the background tensions were rife. Pepler held the position of Prefect of the Guild, and issues relating to the whole financing of the building project on Ditchling Common were creating a deep rift. By the autumn of 1924, Gill had left the Guild and his relationship with Pepler was acrimonious: financial and family entanglements had created a dispute which had to be settled by lawyers. Gill and David Jones both became involved in illustrating books for Robert Gibbings, despite Gill's earlier misgivings because the Golden Cockerel was not a Catholic press. This left Pepler without his two best-known engravers. In 1925, Gill's engravings appeared in *The Song of Songs*, and in 1927 David Jones's engravings were published in *The Chester Play of The Deluge*. For Philip, Gibbings was a *clever fellow* but also a *showman and a charlatan*.<sup>10</sup>

Philip kept in touch with Hilary Pepler, and began to contribute blocks to St Dominic's Press in the late 1920s. In the seven years that the Hagreens lived in France, the Peplers made one visit: their daughter Janet was suffering from a tubercular infection in the bone in her leg, and they visited Lourdes in hope of a cure. Otherwise the only means of communication was by letter. For Philip, supporting a Catholic Press was important, but after the inspiring atmosphere of Ditchling where they had worked collaboratively in adjoining workshops, planning a book by post proved difficult and exasperating. As soon as one project was proposed, another, totally different, absorbed Pepler's attention. His swift changes of plan would have been very difficult for any illustrator. No craftsman worthy of the name could produce engravings as quickly as Hilary Pepler could change his mind.

Pepler often used Philip's blocks in St Dominic's Press books without consulting him – for instance in *Meditations on Our Lady* and *Cantica Natalia*.<sup>14</sup> Philip later described the former book as *An unhappy mixture of cuts and engravings*.<sup>15</sup> Philip was irritated by such selections by Pepler, since he believed that *Engravings in a book must be uniform in style. Even in such a miscellany as 'Pert & Impert' the engravings seem to me so miscellaneous as to spoil the book*.<sup>16</sup> When it came to the text of a book for children, the two also differed: Pepler would criticise Philip for producing what he felt was a lecture – *Pi-Jaw*, while Philip was unimpressed with Pepler's past record of *vain repetition*.<sup>17</sup>

However, not all their joint ventures proved unsatisfactory. David Knott notes the St Dominic's Press *Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, produced in 1931, as a work with which Philip was pleased: *the whole concept owed much to Hagreen, and he chose the Goudy Bold for the text*.<sup>18</sup> Also *The Apostles Calendar*, published the following year, suggests in its introduction that Pepler and Philip both believed that illustration showing man as a maker should focus on the portrayal of work, not worry about a realistic impression of the subject. Pepler writes of Philip: *He has not visited Palestine to obtain local colour nor attempted to cut men in wood to look like men made of flesh and blood, but he has consulted several authorities to secure accurate emblems of the work or martyrdom of each apostle*.<sup>19</sup>

Philip moved back to Ditchling in 1932 and then saw that Pepler's interest in the Press was beginning to wane. Philip often criticised Pepler for his changing whims, and in retrospect he thought that St Dominic's Press had become self-conscious without Gill's input. Philip did not pinpoint the nature of Gill's influence but thought he had managed to strike a chord, amuse, entertain and educate and yet still retain a rather innocent conviction. Without him the original aims of the Press had become diluted, and no-one recaptured the raw, urgent innocence of early publications. For Pepler, however, St Dominic's Press had taken on a new direction in the post-Gill era, because his interest had shifted to producing plays, including mimes and puppet shows. In later years, he worked on puppet shows for live BBC television broadcasts and toured the United States with his mime productions. Susan Falkner suggests that her father attempted to regain a medieval simplicity in his work with puppets,<sup>20</sup> just as he had in his activities at Ditchling. Reginald Jebb, who later worked for *G K's Weekly*, traced Pepler's interest in mime to the influence of Gill: *In art in general he favoured what was formal rather than the merely representational. This attitude was one of the many links he had with Eric Gill ... This art-form of gesture and formalised movements appealed to him, I think, because he saw in it the groundwork of all*



WEAVERS

**G**OD loveth sinners,  
Dyers and spinners,  
Weavers even  
May hope for Heaven.  
When naught is left  
Of warp and weft,  
With spindle and loom  
They will meet their Doom;  
The Lamb's white fleece  
Has bought their peace.

*St Dominic's Press, Ditchling, Sussex.*

*Rhyme Sheet No. 13.*

*stagecraft and one of the most fitting means of representing the climaxes of religion and life.*<sup>21</sup>  
For Philip though, Pepler's new work seemed remote – *His interest had gone to theatricals - where my interest does not go at all.*<sup>22</sup>

Amongst Guild members, Pepler was regarded as having betrayed Guild principles. Contrary to the Constitution, and without consultation, he introduced mechanisation to the Press and took on a non-Catholic apprentice. In 1934, Pepler was voted out of the Guild unanimously. He made a big bonfire of St Dominic's Press material on Ditchling Common. As Reeve of the Common,<sup>23</sup> it was his responsibility to ensure that no bonfires were lit there. Philip recalled that before *Pepler could put a match to it there was some hours delay and we all went out and took what we wanted - rolls of vellum, Concerning Dragons, unbound copies of The Turkey and The Turk, and prints by David Jones.*<sup>24</sup>

In 1936, St Dominic's Press closed. Hilary Pepler lived at Ditchling for another fourteen years. In 1951, he died of a heart attack whilst raking mown grass in his own garden. In old age when Philip would freely discuss Gill and David Jones with potential biographers, there were issues about Pepler's disagreements with others in the Guild that he would not discuss. Philip described himself as *shackled and muzzled* out of respect for Pepler's children whom he held in high regard, and in particular Pepler's wife Clare.<sup>25</sup> In Philip's words *A hatchet buried by the fathers should not be dug up to wound the children.*<sup>26</sup> Philip himself had no personal conflict with Pepler and appreciated that he had provided an outlet for his work through St Dominic's Press. However, as the correspondence between them suggests, they did not cultivate debate about ideas or share a sense of humour and delight in anecdote with the ease that Philip could with other friends.

## *Selection of letters between Hilary Pepler and Philip Hagreen*

### *1926 - 1928 – “A correspondence course in collaboration.”*

*From Hilary Pepler Ascension Day 1926*

The strike is o'er and I renew work!<sup>27</sup> However being a holiday of ob.<sup>28</sup> the Church isn't very encouraging in the matter especially on a day which would make even your denationalised tongue water! You know, a happy breeze from the S.W. playing drover to disordered clouds who bowl all over the heavens like calves on a new meadow.

From Hilary Pepler 30 September 1926

I want as soon as possible

1. S† Anastasia ... for my rhyme sheet Weavers ... Size à choix but on the large side ... I am not fertile, the only thing I can think of is a stake with a loom in the background.<sup>29</sup>
2. B.V.M. Crowned<sup>30</sup> and as many other nativities as you can turn out.

I want a good deal of engraving please as the youth I had has gone to prepare for Parkminster<sup>31</sup> and the old firm has gone after the gold of Cockerels, as you know.<sup>32</sup>

To Hilary Pepler 6 October 1926

As to wood engravings - I am making drawings for S† Anastasia and a Madonna & Child, crowned, and I will engrave them as soon as I can.<sup>33</sup> Both will be about the size of my one of Our Lady & Bernadette. I have also made the drawing for a small nativity with a lot of lettering, i.e. 'Quid est homo quod memor es ejus aut filius hominis quoniam visitas eum?'<sup>34</sup>

I enclose proofs of the only two blocks that I have been able to engrave lately.<sup>35</sup> Their *raison d'être* is as follows. Some months ago I had a note from Mrs Sutton ... She suggested that a really good book might be made (especially for children) out of the 'Canticum Trium Puerorum'<sup>36</sup> by giving a whole-page illustration to each of the 20 verses and having the verse on the opposite page. I think it should start with the whole of the third chapter of Daniel in which the song occurs ... I have made sketches for most of the verses and I have made these two experimental cuts.<sup>37</sup>

I am not pleased with them but hope to do better presently. I perceive that the others [blocks] will have to be without the lettering. I love doing it but it takes too long.

I may want to swap with you a few things that do not go at all here (Such as *How to Sing Plain Chant*<sup>38</sup> of which you sent me 6 copies) but I hope to sell most of what I have and so shall be glad to pay for it in blocks.





*From Hilary Pepler 10 October 1926*

Your letter is good reading. I shall try to work a pilgrimage in January! Nous verrons. I am all over the Benedicite Book<sup>39</sup> and I like your blocks, especially the angels BUT BUT BUT I am held up in my mind by the necessity of making books for use rather than for mere love. It is a matter I would like to talk over because it is one of policy. We could make a glorious book - but it would not be used, only looked at and admired and I am against that ...

A holy bishop, not of this diocese, commends the idea of the Christmas Masses so that all might be in one book and one place with the Common,<sup>40</sup> he thinks it would be a popular Christmas present as there are relatively few things a priest wants, & pious females would have something ... to work off their ... useful to buy for him ...<sup>41</sup>

*From Hilary Pepler, undated*

How to sing Plainchant and any other duds (from the selling point of view)

- a) Let me have a list, I will credit you.
- b) Then give them away. I should send gradually to every Dominican house in France, with a catalogue, and ask them to put the enclosed book in their library, or in some other way see that it is not returned!

*From Hilary Pepler 13 November 1926*

We have just made a big bad debt with the milk contract and trade in the Press is nowhere near what it should be at this time of year, and I doubt whether the Cantica Natalia<sup>42</sup> will 'go,' too costly ... We should be suspicious of best sellers and yet it is odd how our judgement tends to shape itself upon the chances of sale! How I wish we could simply work like tram conductors and obtain in return a sufficiency without having to be concerned with aught else.

*From Hilary Pepler 22 November 1926*

Many thanks for the Kegel book plate<sup>43</sup> which is already on its way to Yankeeland. I like it. Clouds are lifting, your prayers must have been working, thank you very much. The milk man paid and we have hopes that he will sell his business to a more stable man. He only owes us £20. But you know it is some indication of the growth of the farm to be owed any money at all.

*From Hilary Pepler 4 December 1926*

I think it will help to keep the balance better if I send you four pounds. You did the crowned Madonna<sup>44</sup> at my request and it is really very satisfactory ... and I shall sell some prints for the frame. But note - if you want to develop the signed print trade you must have a London agent. I am not an art dealer, the Eric experience was an accident - we tried to sell the prints at a few shillings and no one paid any attention to them, then The Wood Engravers' Society and publicity and guineas in place of shillings, but it was not my job tho' I had no reluctance in taking the quids! I think we should probably have kept off the grass ...

The difficulty of making a living is that we must depend on Almighty God!! I mean. (1) It is not any virtue or extravagance on our part that we cannot do things in the BOW<sup>45</sup> manner. (2) The public does not want our goods except on rare occasions when we happen upon a *Concerning Dragons*.<sup>46</sup> If we were of the BOW build we could continue in the Dragon vein until all our daughters were in the Peerage, but God made the Dragon and if he does not show us the lair of another we cannot find it; being, as the world goes, stupid shortsighted creatures I suppose.

This is how it strikes me. I always see my work as something 'God made and Pepler marred.' And I have an idea that this is as it should be - i.e. that we should proceed as discoverer, endeavouring to unveil the truth with careful fingers and a warm heart.

*From Hilary Pepler 16 December 1926*

It is clear at last that the next job must be a small book of devotions for children ... If you could however carry out the silhouette business which Desmond<sup>47</sup> began I think it would be the most economical as well as the most effective (because it saves us from imposing on the public a kind of picture which to them is bizarre and therefore distracting, whereas the silhouette is accepted) ...

A yarn: a smart female of 21 opposite a rough working man in a railway car. Smart F. very conscious of her knees and a certain insubordination about the undergarments - they would don't you know. Anyway there was a lot of nervous pulling down, straightening, fidgeting - at length she catches the eye of W.M. who in a bland and fatherly manner says "Don't you worry about me, my dear, my hobby's beer."

*To Hilary Pepler 25 January 1927*

Child's devotions. ... Prospect of selling the book - It does not sound hopeful, but naturally I think you underestimate the attractiveness and suitability of my blocks. Anyway I propose to engrave the whole set. When you see all the sixteen you may feel more hopeful and realise what a delightful little book they would make.

P. S. I am influenced by the following considerations. I hold that it is reasonable to regard this business of wood engraving in either of two ways:

A. Getting the most out of wood and gravers in depicting the subject. As example - D.J.'s rosary engravings.

B. Treating it as the job of making tools for impressing designs on paper. As example - E.G.'s engravings of the stations<sup>48</sup>

And I hold that they have the following advantages and disadvantages:

A. May produce a block of similar weight to type but it is of a different kind.

B. May give too big blacks and whites but the thing is of the same nature as type.

A. Gives great richness and a third dimension.

B. Is on good terms with the press and the ink and the paper.

This last advantage is the one that inclines me to B. for St Dominic's Press. If you compare the examples I have mentioned you will see that, in the first, only those

blocks that were lucky enough to get the right amount of ink are clear enough to be either decorative or intelligible. In the case of the stations, however, every print tells the story and the worst print has 80% of the beauty of the best print ...

*From Hilary Pepler 28 January 1927*<sup>49</sup>

My dear Philip, Great Scott - pill - bags - sweepstakes and motor lorries in other words hx:!!\*II!!()i!ii which, in the language of Holy Writ, Selah seelo, may be interpreted YORE ANOTHER - altho in the Earliest Elohistic M.S. the vowel sound is indicated by a HYPHEN or HOOK. So when I was talking about Chute's silhouettes I meant the little devils of which I enclose a copy (See 'Good Friday')<sup>50</sup> and yet on consideration I admit that it would not be possible to do this size in that manner so I beg your PARDON.

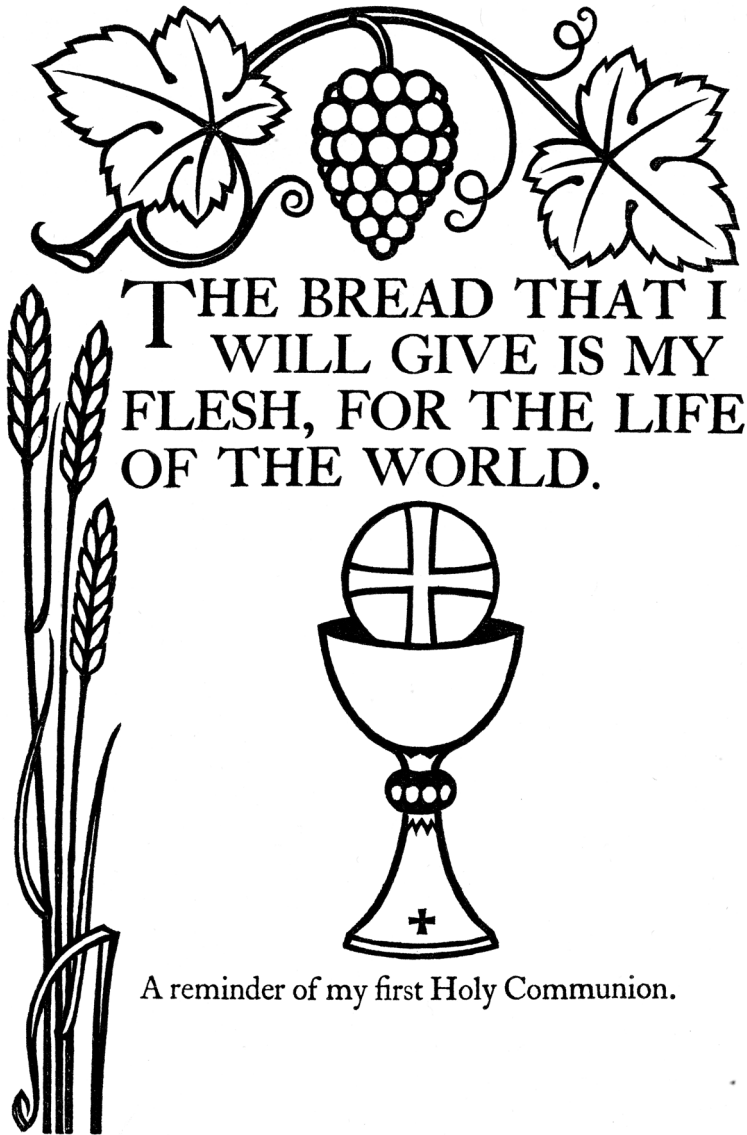
*To Hilary Pepler, undated, written on reverse of envelope dated 3 February 1927*

Hold Hard! ... I must give all my time to some pen drawings wanted in a hurry by a publisher to illustrate a book. They will be paid for in cash prompt so must be done as soon as poss ...<sup>51</sup>

Our correspondence course in collaboration seems to be breaking down badly. My slow brain goes on considering a rosary book while yours has evolved a whole library of books that have no form in my imagination.

Cannot deal with these now. But of Rosary book have come to conclusion that it is no use publishing your words with my engravings. Your words are catalogue titles that would do if the pictures were large rich and adventuresome. My engravings are simplified emblems to decorate a book. Put the two together and you have a decorated menu but no dinner.

Further - now that you send a reasonable proof, it is clear that my engravings will not go with such big type. They go rightly with that used in the D.J. Rosary book.<sup>52</sup> As for other books - I am sure it is unwise to use same blocks in two. You have twice the printing to sell the same number - no one will buy two books with the same engravings.



*From Hilary Pepler 22 February 1927*

The Kid's Mass Book - Rosary. I am proceeding with "mine" leaving blank pages where your blocks would have been so that the child can make it's own pictures or stick others in.<sup>53</sup> My mind is too full of Maritain and the life of S<sup>t</sup> Dominic (for I prepare a "play" about him,<sup>54</sup>) and ways and means to think in tune with your pictures. I am however certain that the words must be few and the manner and matter objective as I said. Let the child get to know as much about Our Lord as possible - then things will happen in good time. I am not interested in the 'why' but the 'is.'

*From Hilary Pepler 28 February 1927*

I am up a tree - i.e. heading off on a job, so that prayer books remain in the galley, but, assuming your judgment to be right (that your blocks should go w. Gt Primer and the Gospel narrative<sup>55</sup>) will you consider a child's Life of our Lord rather than a Rosary book? I want to put out a Children's Library, all same size page and similar binding - but the books need not be all for the 7 yr old. I feel that I have a Rosary Book which did not catch on (size and binding against it)<sup>56</sup> and hence am shy of another - whereas a Life of Our Lord (taking S<sup>t</sup> Luke and extracts much as I gave you in outline for the Mass book ) is another affair. Peace due to George.<sup>56</sup> I have not seen Eric. I don't imagine there will be much entente, but he formally withdrew all claims and I responded with a ditto, hence a cessation of hostile acts ... I imagine we do not want more. I am 'fed' with Art & Love<sup>58</sup> and he with the Hilarian antics. I suppose we both would have had an appeal to justice and seen one (or both!) confounded - but I fancy Charity is a safer and kindlier judge. God save us all. I wish I had thought of your plan and disregarded lawyers in the first instance.<sup>59</sup>

*From Hilary Pepler 28 January 1928*

I did not pull off the sale of your 1926 Christmas card.<sup>60</sup> ... You are too remote for the kind of trade in block cutting which is of the hand to mouth variety. People are usually in such a confounded hurry. It is different if a far seeing person considers what he will have on the market next Christmas. I should be such but you know me, so it is useless to pretend! ...

Now then: have you any ideas for a Christmas book which you would prepare and supply me ready for the press by July? I am not pressing you - but it might

be a profitable job to have for spare time. Mairet<sup>61</sup> has opened a shop in Percy St (Tottenham Court Road - odd how our friends land up in places which were once several leagues beyond the pale, it must be the Tubes) and has a poster show in Feb. at which I hope to rope in a few orders for book plates, but otherwise I see nothing that is likely to come your way via me. If you have any spare figures, especially if they are of the order which is NOT Gillish, and have no market - send along.

***Philip looks back at his involvement with Hilary Pepler & St Dominic's Press***

*To John Bennet Shaw 25 February 1948*

About the St Dominic's Press - I am not surprised at the result or lack of result when you enquired of Hilary Pepler. He had lost all interest in the job before he closed down the Press & made a great bonfire of the remnants. It is a queer story, for I think his early printing was the best stuff of its period & that there has been nothing as good since.

*To John Bennet Shaw 3 March 1948*

My own opinion of the St Dominic's Press is that it turned out gloriously lively work to begin with and that most of its work was very good as long as it was influenced by Eric Gill and had his engravings and those of Desmond Chute and David Jones - That is to say up to 1924. After that time the work was uneven in quality and some of it I think was pretty bad. Amongst the things that I am sending are some very early specimens - even things printed before the Press had a name. I have sent a copy of the 4th edition of *Vegetable Dyes* which you may think too tattered to be worth anything.<sup>62</sup> It is the proof copy corrected by Mrs Mairet, so it may interest a collector. The block on the cover was a bit of end grain pearwood that happened to be the right size. Hilary Pepler drew the flower and I engraved it in a hurry while the printers waited for it. Hilary Pepler said it was the Kermes plant.<sup>63</sup> A thing much to be regretted is that the Press never had a binder as part of the team. Books were either issued in paper covers and so died from exposure, or else they were sent to commercial binders who sometimes bound them very badly. The truth about the Press is not as simple as I have suggested above, because Eric's influence was not a matter of direct help or advice. All the same, I think it true to say that after he left, the integrity of the work could no longer be relied on. It became self-conscious.



*To John Bennet Shaw 7 September 1949*

Perhaps you knew that some of the best things the St Dominic's Press ever produced were posters. It was in the nature of such things that they perished although they were printed on hand-made paper. Some were printed from type alone & some had big wood-cuts. The paper varied from about 36" x 24" down to about 24" x 13."

I don't know whether anyone made a collection of these things. I doubt it. I am sending over to you a lot that is perhaps the only bunch of them that survived. There are about 20 different posters & some duplicates. The best one has a magnificent wood-cut by Eric Gill 16" x 14".<sup>64</sup>

*To Baron Jose de Vinck 2 March 1972*

I have only a vague memory of the Meditations on Our Lady.<sup>65</sup> I know I disliked it & was sorry my name was attached to it. The blocks were unrelated & the book was made to sell. Pepler did not have to pay either Thomas à Kempis or me.



*Tape recording of Philip Hagreen in conversation with Douglas Cleverdon 1982*

Of course Pepler's whole show was such a muddle, and a lot of Eric's blocks got terribly damaged because they were just chucked down on the floor and it was a brick floor, just laid down on Sussex clay, so that it was all damp and that's why so many of the blocks have got cracks showing the joins have come undone because they were on a wet floor for months or years.

He was a bit of a showman was Hilary and amongst other things he was Reeve of the Common which meant that he had to be responsible for things - arranging for the cattle to be pastured on the common ... And they had a meeting once a year of all the local farmers to arrange about things. For this purpose he had a most wonderful old coat with a great sort of skirt to it. It had a bit of a waist. A long coat - I think it was bottle green. It was a very glorious eighteenth century get up.

*To John Bennet Shaw 14 October 1951*

Our local news since I last wrote is the death of Hilary Pepler on September 20th ... His funeral showed how live is the tradition of this place. The Guild chapel was his mortuary and there the Requiem was sung by his son, Fr. Conrad O.P. and two other Dominicans. The woodworkers worked all day and all night, literally, to make a fine coffin. The weavers lined it - and so on. All was done by friends. After the Requiem they walked to Ditchling churchyard, two miles away, pushing a wheeled bier. I suppose Hilary will be remembered mainly for his printing - a thing he seemed to have forgotten completely.



To the true of heart  
a light is risen up in  
darkness: Alleluia.

# Edward Johnston: A Dynamo of Thought

*There must have been a dynamo of thought behind those sunken eyes and that bony hand.*

*Philip's review of Edward Johnston  
(Priscilla Johnston, Faber, 1959) published in Good Work, Christmas 1959*

Long before the two men met, Philip Haggren was first aware of the work of Edward Johnston through his book - *Writing and Illuminating and Lettering*. This invaluable guide had been first published in 1906. Philip's father owned a fourth edition of the book and had shared his own interest in handwriting with his son. Sydney Cockerell, a museum director and lettering enthusiast of the period, once described Johnston's manual as *The best handbook ever written on any subject*.<sup>1</sup>

The calligrapher and type designer, Edward Johnston, was born in Uruguay in 1872. His parents, both of Scottish descent, came from families who had emigrated to run cattle ranches. Johnston's father became an agnostic after reading *The Origin of the Species* and was perceived as the Black Sheep of the family. Johnston moved to England as a child but never went to school. With his siblings, he was educated at home and grew to love literature, physics, and carpentry; he had a tool room with a lathe while in his teens. In his early twenties, he studied medicine at Edinburgh University. Poor health and the threat of tuberculosis cut short this ambition, so instead he spent a year studying the shapes of early pen lettering at The British Museum's manuscript collection in London. This led to a post at the The Central School of Art from 1899 -1912, where he taught formal penmanship and lettering.

Johnston's first pupils at The Central School included the eighteen-year-old Eric Gill, Cobden Sanderson and Hilda Walker - daughter of Emery Walker. Noel Rooke, another early pupil, recalled his first impression of Johnston:

When at last he came into the room, one was intrigued by an apparent impassivity which was clearly superficial - mixed with a physical slowness which might be inertia or lassitude. The first impression was immediately corrected by the

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz.  
e

courtesy of his first words which, even for those days when the standard was so much higher, could be described as dazzling. Such princely courtesy could only be the result of unusually active thought and perception, of active effort to 'do as you would be done by;' and by clear thinking.<sup>2</sup>

Johnston wore a brown tweed jacket for his classes, with roomy pockets that appeared to contain every implement that he might need for teaching - including scissors, a magnifying glass and slabs of ivory. Noel Rooke also remembered the jacket years later serving as a garden jacket at Ditchling. By then the pockets contained various screw-drivers for adjusting the water clock on the Johnston's hen house.<sup>3</sup>

After their first contact at the lettering classes, Johnston and Gill became lifelong friends. Johnston also had close ties with the Peplers - all three families lived in Hammersmith in the first decade of the century, and they all moved to Ditchling between 1907 and 1916. Johnston's wife Greta suffered from tuberculosis and this was a prime reason for their move to Sussex. According to Philip Mairet, it was not so much the place as Edward

Johnston's character that led his friends to quit urban life and follow him to Ditchling:

I would say that the unanimity which had inspired them to migrate to Ditchling had had its origin in - more than anything else - the example of Edward Johnston ... In a certain purely spiritual sense he already was what they set out to preach and practise.<sup>4</sup>

Philip echoed Mairé's sentiments when he described Johnston as *The Grandfather of the Guild*:

I used to feel that Edward Johnston was an unconscious Catholic because of his way of thinking. He used to say that every thing was three things & that you could not know what a thing was unless you knew the three things that it was. To see him pick up some ordinary thing and talk of it on three planes and bring the trinity into a unity was an experience that humiliated and exalted.<sup>5</sup>

Johnston's character, his passion for calligraphy and *his unswerving insistence on the truth that made his teaching so much alive*<sup>6</sup> - all these factors had a significant impact on the formation of the Guild of craftsmen at Ditchling. Yet Johnston always remained on the fringes of the Guild. Despite Johnston's involvement in early St Dominic's Press publications, he resigned from work on its occasional magazine, *The Game*, because by 1918 he felt he could no longer reconcile his own beliefs with an increasingly Catholic agenda. For Edward Johnston and his wife Greta, religious faith was a strong bond in their marriage. She had been brought up a Presbyterian and conversion to Catholicism was not a path she was prepared to follow. She worried when Johnston spent many late nights discussing religion with Gill and Pepler, although she was to joke that Johnston could not take the step of converting to Catholicism because he would never be able to get up early enough for Mass. Philip later remarked that as a man outside the Church, Johnston reminded him of Chesterton's lines: *Bad men who had no right to their right reason / Good men who had good reason to be wrong.*<sup>7</sup>

It is important to emphasize that throughout this entire period, from 1890 to 1932, Philip never met Edward Johnston. Even during the first year that Philip spent at Ditchling from 1923-1924, he did not so much as glimpse him. Religion and the location of their workshops kept them on different paths. Edward Johnston was never a Catholic and therefore not part of The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic. Philip was working on Ditchling Common as part of the Guild. Johnston was working in his own workshop within his

home, Cleves, in Ditchling village. Johnston was a distant figure who Philip had admired through reading his writings. Of course Philip had heard Gill's admiration of Johnston. However, Philip's own meeting did not come until a supper party at Cleves in 1932.

When Philip was invited to dinner at the Johnston's in 1932, he had only recently returned to Ditchling after a seven year absence in Lourdes. He had been reluctant to return to Ditchling in 1932, but it was the only place he found that a cottage was offered. He had enjoyed working on book illustration commissions in the intensely Catholic atmosphere of Lourdes. In France, Philip had been settled in an environment where work as prayer had been acknowledged but putting the intention of the craftsman into words had not been on the agenda. Meeting Edward Johnston was to change Philip's perspective and I believe inspired Philip Hagreen to focus on putting the intention of the craftsman in to words.

Philip knew Edward Johnston for the last 15 years of Johnston's life. Philip was 42 when they met and Johnston was 60 and coming to the end of his working life in as much as he was ceasing to take on regular Calligraphic commissions by the early 1930s. The two men had much in common: a love of medieval manuscripts, a shared love of the absurd and of playing with language and the origins of word meanings. They both had an intense interest in science, similar struggles with their own physical health, a preference for working slowly, alone, developing their own work and mastery of the tools they were using. Both men were uncompromising when it came to their suspicions about Industrialism - in Johnston's words "Industry does not appear to be based on good principles or be aimed at good purpose."<sup>8</sup> For both men their faith was also central to their lives. Edward Johnston apparently said 'If I were wrecked on a raft, in the middle of the Atlantic, I would still praise God.'<sup>9</sup> Philip experienced that same conviction. Not actually in the middle of the Atlantic - but throughout the crises of ordinary life. After the strong but at times uncomfortable influence of Gill on Philip's working life, in the decade before he met Johnston, Philip had at last found someone who shared crucial ideals but also listened and had a deference for tools and the mysterious experience of making. Eric Gill had a rather manic need to control workmanship. Philip's words best sum this up:

"Gill held his pen in a strong grip. Johnston held his so lightly that you could have taken it away from him without his noticing"<sup>10</sup>

"Eric Gill taught me to cut the alphabet in stone and Johnston showed me all the ways of writing it. I would ask him questions and he would talk into the small



hours. One night he wrote me an alphabet in his Winchester script and flourished my initials. That page is one of my treasures.”<sup>11</sup>

It was also in 1932 that Edward Johnston became President of The Arts & Crafts Exhibition society and it was this new role that enabled Philip to become something of a guinea pig in Johnston’s projects. Philip himself was never a member of the Arts & Crafts exhibition society. He only ever belonged to Catholic groups. But Johnston’s mission during his presidency of the society – to encourage craftsmen to put their intentions into words – was to have far more impact on Philip and his writing than it did on the society and its exhibitions.

Edward Johnston had been very reluctant to take on this role of President of The Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society. Noel Rooke had persuaded him because he thought Johnston might enable the organisation to get back in tune with the inspiration of its founders – as Walter Crane had summed up their purpose on 1893 – to show that the root and basis of all Art lies in the handicrafts.<sup>12</sup> Johnston’s wife Greta described Edward Johnston’s view on accepting the presidency – “Cincinnatus cannot have left his plough with more reluctance.”<sup>13</sup> Comparing Johnston to a Roman who did not want to leave farming in order to be a dictator in the city seems particularly appropriate. Not that Johnston was actually farming – but his need to be alone with his work down in Ditchling, rather than arbitrating between the contrary views of craftsmen in London, was well conveyed by Greta.

Johnston was always a teacher and therefore he was interested in expanding the viewer’s appreciation of objects and tools. Johnston had a particular interest in the early 1930s in how exhibition labels might help the viewer to engage with the object that he was looking at. Philip on the other hand was never a teacher. Although Philip was never a teacher of any craft – he did not have apprentices or pupils working with him – but in old age he came to see himself perhaps as a teacher of those who had not lived through that time he had. A teacher of biographers and writers for whom he could try to convey not only anecdotes but descriptions of what it felt like to make things.

Johnston’s believed that sharing the craftsman’s description of his process, with the viewer, could in a sense reanimate an exhibition. He pointed out that exhibitions lacked the experience of touch and therefore “An exhibition is, in fact, apt to be a kind of lying in state – of Talent at rest: the action must be imagined.”<sup>14</sup> Johnston also considered “There is something necessarily artificial about a formal exhibition.”<sup>15</sup> These ideas were recorded in





his June 1933 speech to the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society. The paper was read at the AGM of The Arts & Crafts Exhibition society, which was held at The Art Workers Guild, 6 Queen Square, London. Philip was not present at this speech and he never participated in the society's exhibitions but he was a collaborator in the preparation of this paper. The paper proposed that labelling was a key part of sharing the craftsman's experience with the public. The craftsman should put his intentions onto a label. Johnston declared:

"We are, in fact, all potential poets - most of us in rather a small way, but still appreciators of beauty and Makers of word arrangements by which we exchange ideas"<sup>16</sup>

At end of Johnston's paper he suggests that in addition to informative labels - tools and broadsheets with essays should form part of exhibition. He envisages an engraving tool in position, as though in the act of cutting a line, in a piece of boxwood. To Johnston this was partly a continuation of the teaching tradition he had come across at The Central School thirty years earlier where tools relating to particular crafts would be lent to schools as exhibits to further an understanding of the process. To Philip it was enlightening to find his own private interest in making tools to fit a particular job, presented as objects to help the audience see what they were looking at. Philip's role in providing observations for Johnston gave Philip a new confidence about talking and writing about making. Philip disliked what

he saw as self-indulgent introspection. But the sense of being given permission by Johnston to discuss what was important to share with the viewer – this liberated Philip Hagreen and, I would argue, led subsequently to Hagreen’s detailed correspondence with Graham Carey on man as a maker.

Philip once gave Johnston a silver crucifix. When Johnston was admitted to hospital in old age, the crucifix and his wife’s wedding ring were removed from his pocket by hospital staff. When he returned home he had these precious belongings pinned into his pocket so they *should not get away from him again*.<sup>17</sup> Philip also introduced Johnston to G K Chesterton’s writings. Johnston read *The Innocence of Father Brown* nineteen times and a copy was buried with him. He died on 26 November 1944 at Ditchling. When Johnston’s daughter Priscilla wrote a highly acclaimed biography of her father, published by Faber & Faber in 1959, Philip wrote to Graham Carey offering to review the book.

*Letter to the Careys 11 July 1959*

There is a new book that I might review if you would like me to try. It is the life of Edward Johnston by his daughter Priscilla. Aileen & I are reading this, in a borrowed copy, &, as far as we have got, we both think it a marvellous job of biography. My qualification for reviewing it is that I knew E.J. intimately & that I knew, or at least met, most of the other characters in the book. Perhaps you would rather review it yourself or get some calligrapher to do it.

Philip’s review of *Edward Johnston* was published in *Good Work* in 1959. Here is an extract:

If one knew only of his influence and saw an example of his pen work one might say: - What energy! What a dynamic personality! Yet he was not a fire or a whirlwind but ‘a still, small voice.’<sup>18</sup>

There must have been a dynamo of thought behind those sunken eyes and that bony hand. For the rest, like Brer Rabbit, he was a monstrous weak man. His head was little more than a skull and his body was represented by clothes that seemed to hang on a rake ...

Johnston was set on his course by Lethaby who convinced him that Art, with a big A, was absurd and that it was useful work for daily bread that mattered. Johnston held to that and taught it all his life, but he never succeeded in putting it into practice.<sup>19</sup>

Always there was work awaiting his pen. Patrons begged him to get on with it - to do it how he liked & at his own price. There can be nothing he so enjoyed as writing. Yet in each job he saw problems that must be solved before he could begin. Only when he had the whole work clear in his mind could he make the first stroke, before that stage was reached he was commonly tired out and turned to any other occupation for relaxation.

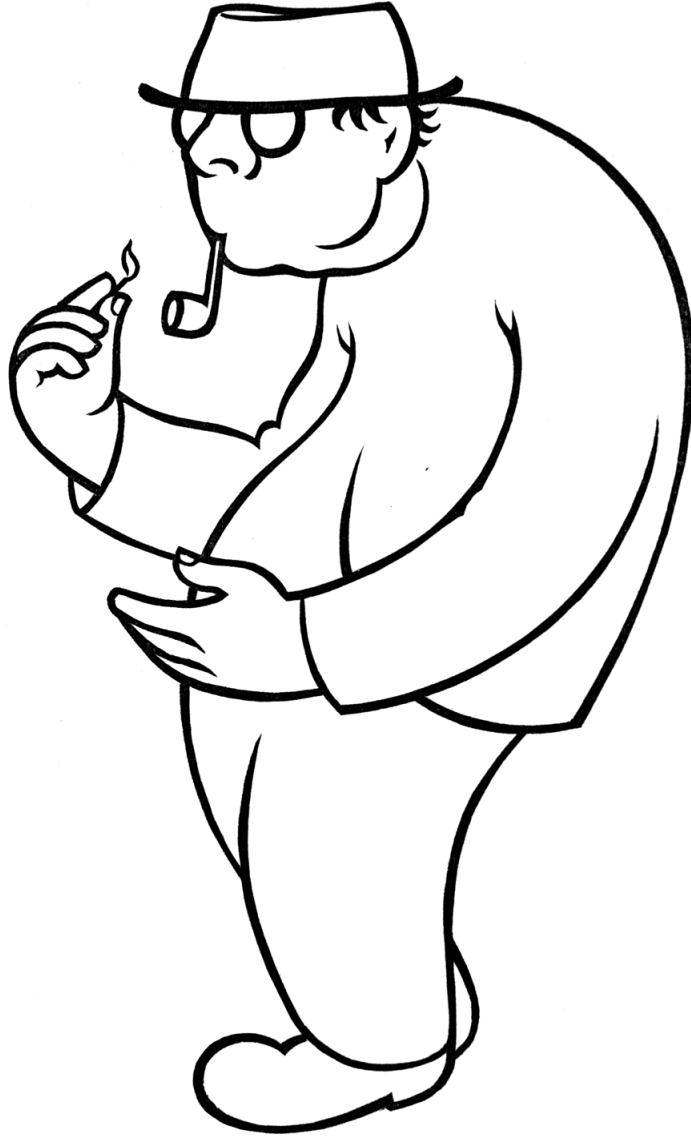
It is said that if a cat can get his head through a hole the rest can follow. If Johnston could make the first stroke the work would go with a swing to a triumphant full stop. It went through like the playing of a sonata. But that first stroke might hang fire for days or for years. He died leaving a dusty pile of requests for his work unanswered - even unopened. He was a devoted husband and father. His family needed his earnings. His mind was immensely active and he lived an austere life. Yet the vellum remained blank while he mended some household gadget that could have been replaced for a few pence.

The facts of his life might suggest a selfish and indolent man who shirked his duty, but no one who met him thought that. The most diverse people got the impression that there was something holy about him. Of some craft that was dead, folk would say 'It needs a saint like Edward Johnston to revive it.' If any other name had been used they would have said 'some man of genius.' Johnston was a man of genius, but his friends thought first of his sanctity, and they thought of his raising of formal writing from the dead as a miracle. To them he was the patron saint of calligraphy - like Melchisedech an unaccountable but authentic priest of the Most High God.<sup>20</sup>

To say that he was sincere does not suggest anything unusual because, thank God, sincerity, like carbon, is a plentiful element. But carbon in pure crystal form is a rarity. His sincerity was of that diamond hardness, transparency and beauty.

Perhaps his uniqueness was due less to the subtlety of his intellect than to the simplicity of his soul. He could read a good story over and over again. He and small children understood each other.

This tired and hesitant man was tolerant of almost any fault in lettering except docility or slackness. Every letter must be free and on its toes. He held his pen lightly and moved it gently and it made strokes like the sword play of an athlete.



# George Maxwell: Best Exponent of the Guild Idea

He was a wel good wrighte - a carpenter.

*Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales: Prologue – The Reeve.  
Quoted by Philip in a letter to the Careys, 7 May 1975.*

For Philip, George Maxwell was *the best exponent of the Guild idea*.<sup>1</sup> He was a superb and experienced craftsman, having worked as a coach builder in Birmingham before joining the Guild in 1922. His faith was strong and yet he was devoid of any ostentatious piety. Perhaps Philip also admired Maxwell because he had found his craft early in life and persevered at it. The friendship between Philip and Maxwell was clearly strengthened by a shared sense of humour. Philip quoted Maxwell speaking in the pub after a Sunday sermon - *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net which enclosed a vast multitude of fishes. There were sharks and slippery eels - and quite a lot of cod*.<sup>2</sup>

Maxwell was a cradle Catholic. He was well versed in the history of Christian thought and an avid reader of books on religion and philosophy. He was also involved in the Catholic Social Guild and Catholic Evidence Guild<sup>3</sup> before his arrival at Ditchling, and in later years he wrote regularly for the Journal of the Catholic Land Movement *The Cross and The Plough*. It was disillusionment with the world at large, and a desire for the companionship of men and their families with shared beliefs, that inspired him to move to the Ditchling community.

When Philip Hagreen first came to work in Ditchling in 1923, Maxwell had already established himself as a member of The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic. However, during Philip's first year at Ditchling he was slightly distanced from Maxwell because of the growing dispute between Gill and Pepler. Philip became Gill's confidant and Maxwell Pepler's. There were also tensions because as Maxwell divulged in his correspondence to Father Vincent McNabb he was sorry that Ditchling attracted so many converts, such as Philip, rather than cradle Catholics.<sup>2</sup> Maxwell never moved away from Ditchling. Although he and Philip were separated for several years - when Philip moved to Capel-y-ffin and France - the two men were re-united in the 1930s, and then worked together in The Guild for twenty four years.

## · GEORGE · MAXWELL ·

Despite their differences of opinion (according to Maxwell, Father Vincent McNabb was *a source of absolute wisdom*,<sup>4</sup> while Philip found him unnecessarily theatrical and a *kill-joy puritan*<sup>5</sup>) Philip did not subject Maxwell to the kind of criticism that he bestowed on his other working companions. Perhaps this was because Maxwell never really came under scrutiny in any biography or monograph; consequently no biographer called upon Philip to discuss him. He could reflect on Maxwell in old age and enjoy his memories; but even if he had been interrogated about his friend no amount of questioning could have undone his deep admiration. Robert Speaight draws a parallel between the two men *Maxwell and Hagreen were both married and seemed to take for granted many of those things which for others were a matter of endless discussion*.<sup>6</sup>

Philip's contemporaries were a little more guarded in their response to Maxwell. Donald Attwater recalls his being *sometimes inclined to lay down the law* when it came to philosophical matters.<sup>7</sup> Susan Falkner's childhood recollection is of a man who was *a great one for St Thomas while his wife was praying that heaven might produce shoes for her children*.<sup>8</sup> Others who knew him were keen to emphasize how hard he worked, although in his profession and circumstances he could not ensure a steady income. Eric Gill approved of Mrs. Maxwell, as she was without *intellectual high browism*<sup>9</sup> and he also depicted the two Maxwell daughters in a wood engraving, *Teresa & Winifred*, in 1924. Like Philip, Maxwell was never a disciple of Gill. In Maxwell's case he had been involved with radical Catholic movements all his life and he could see Gill's limitations as well as his strengths. Maxwell was also a shrewd observer of the role of the craftsman in modern society, forecasting in 1935 that the future would bring a situation where: *Possibly a few favoured craftsmen will be kept as pets, for the financiers of mass production do not buy mass-produced goods*.<sup>6</sup>

*Excerpt from Philip Hagreen's unpublished Obituary of George Maxwell sent to The Catholic Times, 1957.*<sup>10</sup>

A great number and variety of people visited his workshop and home ... Like any other good missionary he had learnt the language of his hearers and could think and express himself in their idiom. With a gardener he called a spade a spade; with a priest he called it the efficient cause.

The thing he had to tell was the purpose of work: that it was ordained by God for the good of the worker, for his development and perfection. In this dark age of industrialism few men have work fit for free, responsible and rational beings. George Maxwell had struggled out of industrial employment and become a whole man ... wholeness was a word he often used and he might have said that it was by work that he kept body and soul together.

*A tale of George Maxwell, carpenter (Philip Hagreen's notes, undated)*

In our workshops on Ditchling Common we were visited by many priests. They were pleased to find us saying the Little Office together but they deplored our ideas about work. They said we should use modern methods which would free us from the drudgery that kept us earthbound.

The silversmith was heating a job on his forge, working the bellows with his foot. A priest said 'He ought to have an electric blower to do that.' 'Yes' said George 'it would leave his foot free for higher things.'<sup>11</sup>

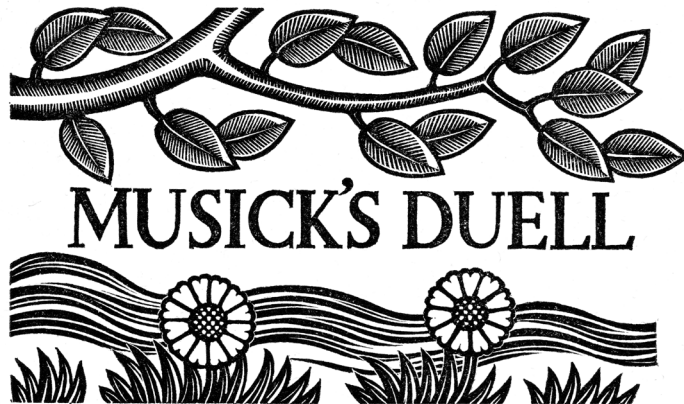
*Wisdom of George Maxwell (Philip Hagreen's notes, undated)*

There lived near our workshops a widow who enjoyed herself and annoyed her neighbours by begging for various charities that she thought deserving. George used to do odd jobs of carpentry for her, so she counted him as fair game. I was in his shop one day when I saw her coming. I went into the inner office to be out of sight, but George welcomed her and gave her ten shillings.

I remarked afterwards on the difference in our behaviour. He said 'Why not - bless her dear old heart - it will go on her bill.'<sup>12</sup>

*Story recalled by Philip Hagreen's son, Father John Hagreen*

Relaxing after lunch one day, George picked up a women's magazine which had



been passed on to his wife. He came upon an advertisement which so depressed him he brought it to the workshops to show Philip. It was for a novel garment: an inflatable bra. When they had commiserated George turned to go, but stopped short of the door and brightened. 'At least' he said 'now we know why babies get wind!'

*The 'ignorant bishop' (Philip Hagreen's notes, undated)*

Hearing that a church of very modern design was being built, I asked George how that could happen in Southwark diocese. He said 'The architect pulled a fast one on the bishop.'

The bishop had said the design must be traditional. The architect said that we have no tradition. Did the bishop mean that it should be in the manner of some past period? If so an archaeologist was needed rather than an architect. The bewildered bishop said 'O, do it your own way.'

I said 'Wasn't the architect right?'

George said 'Yes Philip, but that's not the way to talk to an ignorant man.'

*Conversation between Philip Hagreen, Richard Ritchie and Tony Kelly recorded 14 April, 1980  
(describing illicit liquor production)*

George Maxwell was the wisest of them all: - a quiet, wise man. The others had all kind of tricks for hiding their stills. Now George had a shed with scrap iron and



odd bits that might come in useful for all kinds of jobs. And there, for anybody to see were the guts out of an old geyser that had gone phut - that he'd swapped over, making alterations in a building. And of course sometimes that wasn't there - it was the worm of George's still. And, when he wasn't using it, it was there on the scrap. 'Oh that's only an old geyser.' It was far the safest thing to do.

But they made some very good gin. Because, if you make gin, it doesn't have to mature. Other things - it isn't safe to drink for a good while, but with gin you distil it three times and only put the junipers in at the last. You use a urinometer to check the strength. Well, they couldn't get the juniper berries, so they went to the chemist for essence of juniper, which you could buy, you see. And the chemist would hand over a little bottle and say 'Yes, the dose is 3 drops on a lump of sugar.' Then one day - there was talk about this gin - there was some good stuff going - the chemist said "You know it used to puzzle me - all you people had got bladder trouble - that you all came for urinometers and essence of juniper." He said "I couldn't think why there was an epidemic of something of that sort.!"

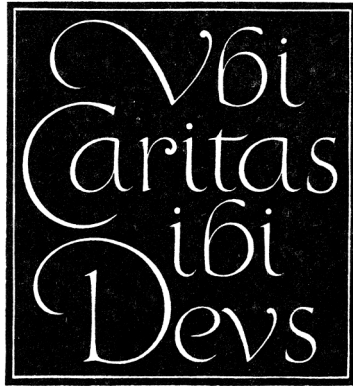
*Letter from Philip Hagreen to the Careys 8 March 1957*

Now comes the news that George Maxwell has died. He had been ill for some weeks after a bad influenza. He returned to work a few days ago, feeling very weak but with no suggestion of danger. Early this morning his heart gave out - before a priest could reach him - but no one worries about George's soul.





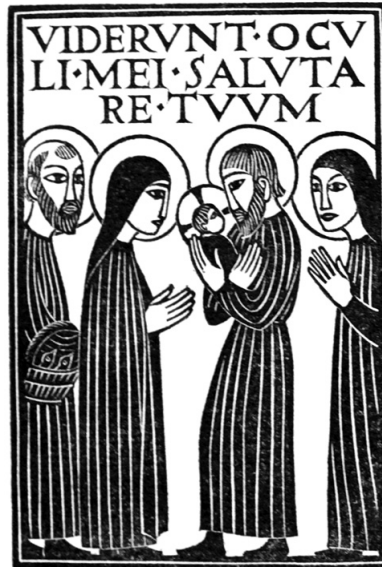
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## Part 3 A Critical Faith

Philip's writings do not often sound angry but his outspoken and heartfelt frustration is most apparent when he is corresponding on the subject of the Catholic Church and The Papacy. Philip did not shy away from admitting that his writings on these subjects could seem bitter: 'If bitterness is not sometimes appropriate why are there all those hop-fields in Kent? Even Gin is insipid without a bit of lemon peel. To put it another way - sweet music on muted strings is alright at bed time, but to wake men up & set them marching one needs a bugle and the tap of a drum. I scored that overture with percussion.'<sup>1</sup>

It was rare that he had a particular grievance with an individual Catholic minister and he respected the hard work of parish priests. His exasperation was focused on the Catholic Church as an institution and he felt that Pope John Paul II was unhelpful when it came to seeking an international unity for The Catholic Church. The decision-making processes and the bureaucracy involved with running Catholicism - as a church which crossed cultures and continents - conflicted with his own experience of faith which was personal, local immediate and uncomplicated.



# The Outspoken Convert

I think doubt is one of the safest paths towards truth.

*Letter to Rosemary Simmons 19 December 1970*

Some of Philip Haggren's most eloquent and passionately direct writing is concerned with the Roman Catholic faith. A convert to Catholicism at the age of twenty five, he came from a Church of England background. His father remained an Anglican all his life: his mother converted to Roman Catholicism in 1907. Philip's conversion in 1915 also came a year after his engagement to Aileen Mary Clegg, who was herself a cradle Catholic. Philip's father wrote to congratulate his son on his conversion - *being settled on the one thing that really matters*.<sup>1</sup>

Philip was an unorthodox Catholic. He had come into the Church in wartime, without a great deal of instruction. He still retained his love of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and the "Authorised Version".<sup>2</sup> He was not at home with what he saw as the Irish and Latin aspects of the Roman Catholic faith and he was sorry that England had lost touch with the values and culture of pre-Reformation English Catholicism.

He was not however prone to any blind nostalgia for a "Lost Church." Langland's *Piers Plowman* was one of his all time favourite works and he learned from it much about the corruption of the Church in the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Philip came to identify himself with Langland's tradition of anti-clericalism. He too took a critical stance against luxury, self-importance and waste in the Catholic Church - in order to defend the faith he held so dear and never as a path to disillusionment. He imagined that all believers wanted to communicate with God directly and without distraction. He was therefore bemused and exasperated by the tendency of many to practise harsh complaint rather than prayer.

When a donkey wants to pray  
We know it can only bray:  
But is it not a wicked shame  
That Christian men should do the same? <sup>4</sup>

It was precisely because his love of the Church was so great that he reacted so strongly against its shortcomings. Observing the conduct of the Catholic Church throughout his adult life, he was profoundly disappointed. His faith, however, remained rock solid. The corruption of a man-made Church could not dent his belief in God, the Four Gospels and his certainty that the Roman Catholic Church was the true descendant of the early Christian Church. He drew an analogy between the Catholic Church & the lavishly decorated *Book of Kells*.<sup>5</sup> To Philip this book appeared *perverse & decadent*, but the calligraphy and ornamentation took their place as ephemera; the important thing about the book was the text of the Four Gospels. Similarly the Catholic Church viewed from the outside appeared as *a pile of superstitions, ... ritual, officialdom*, but these were minor distractions from true Catholic faith.<sup>6</sup>

While he was vocal in his criticism, Philip delighted in signs of positive change. In the early 1950s he had been particularly critical of the Catholic Church in England: *The clergy claim monopoly of thought about religion, but they do not think?*<sup>7</sup> so he welcomed the changes brought about by Vatican II, including the alterations to the Mass which enabled the congregation to take part in a simpler but more intelligent form of worship. The Mass spoken in one's native language, rather than Latin, enabled the worshipper to think about and reflect more on the words that were spoken. Philip was sorry that Vatican II was not implemented consistently as he wished to see the Gospel brought to the people in a manner that did not depend on showmanship. He also objected to invasive rules about Catholic's private lives. He had great respect for Dr Franz Konig, the Cardinal and Primate of Austria, who sent the encyclical forbidding birth control (*Humanae Vitae*)<sup>8</sup> *back to the pope and told him what he could do with it, no doubt in diplomatic Latin*.<sup>9</sup> He also disapproved of the Church squandering money on Churchmen's expensive tastes when it could be financing schemes to help people in difficulty all over the world. Furthermore, he was disappointed, during the 1980s, that Pope John Paul II was so vehemently opposed to the liberation theology being preached and practised by Catholic priests in South America. But his concerns were balanced by his respect for *the dedicated parish priests who managed to keep burning while Rome fiddles*.<sup>10</sup> He was also greatly cheered by the growth of ecumenism.

Philip felt driven to speak out against the Catholic Church given that: *so very few of the faithful protest. Much moral cowardice is called loyalty*.<sup>11</sup> Philip had admired his protestant father. *He walked where conscience led him and let no influence turn him aside*<sup>12</sup> and he followed this approach himself as a practising Catholic.



### *Conversion and the Nature of Faith*

*Letter to Herman B Vorhees on his reception into the Church, 19 October 1951*

I am still feeling scared at the narrow escape I had from unbelief, although that was when I was 25. The sudden & unexpected recognition of the facts. The Church had always been a familiar object in my landscape, & on the whole an ugly object. I saw that the Church was mainly composed of bad Catholics, with a fair proportion of obvious rogues & fools. This being so I was naturally puzzled & annoyed that Catholics should always be so pleased about being Catholics.

After 36 years in the Church, I ought to be able to say something useful to a new convert - but I have made no "progress" & I have no pious thoughts. My experience is that Catholics in the lump look just as ugly now as ever they did, & that faith in the Church as a divine institution is just as clear as ever it was. The two things go together. A body of good people led & organised by good & wise rulers, might have lasted a fair while, but with such people & such clergy & such popes as we have had, it could not have endured & grown unless it were what it claims to be. Any human explanation is just unbelievable. The man who says that priests made the Church might just as well point to an oak tree & say: "A gang of carpenters made that."

*Letter to Brian North Lee 10 April 1985*

You rightly mention I am R.C. because that affects all one does. It used to be written - "A bigotted R.C." Now it is "A devout R.C." This is meant more kindly but it touches my conscience and I wince.

*Letter to the Careys 13 November 1963*

We are supposed to have religious freedom in England, but one is not free to be an English Catholic. Such odd ones as myself find themselves crushed in the Latin-Irish pincers.

*Some Thoughts of a Convert, 1983*

In these 68 years, I have had no moment of doubt about the Faith, but I have not found myself at home. I am English, insular, provincial, as is the Church of England. This is not a matter of Faith but of culture. The Faith is yeast that may work in many kinds of dough & make them all into wholesome bread.

The Irish came with the Faith in their bones & with a great zeal for chastity. But they taught & practised “speaking charitably”, which is what our ancestors called the sin of “favel”.<sup>13</sup> The missionaries came ready to convert us by reason. But the English distrust logic. Like the Jews they are moved rather by poetry & parables. We are expected to join in public devotions that make us blush.

The Latins, the Irish & the English are one in Faith but of three cultures. The English are loth to lift their mind above this earth so their story ends “and they lived happily ever after.” The Latins seek to edify us so their story ends with a holy death - perhaps a martyrdom. The soft speech of the Irish rises in triumph as their story ends - “& he destroyed him utterly.”

In this kettle of fish I sadly missed an ideal that was taken for granted in the Church of England. In the middle ages it was called ‘leute’ and it meant the simplicity that could not think a lie. It was personified as Piers Plowman.

So firm was this tradition that when England spoke through her novels the popular heroes were not men of might or cunning, but men like Nathaniel in whom there was no guile - Uncle Toby, Mr Pickwick, Colonel Newcombe and the White Knight. This ideal of simple truth I miss among Catholics; having for so long been maligned and persecuted they are habitually on guard. When the Church is criticised they rush to her defence without considering whether the criticism is justified. The simple man would only defend Truth - that means defending God. It was to Saint Truth that Langland made his long pilgrimage.<sup>14</sup>



*Letter to the Careys 6 June 1963*

Temples and rituals do not denote religion. They may show nothing but fear of devils. Fear of devils is not an aspect of Religion: it is denial of faith in a good God.

*From an undated letter to Julian Smith*

I think of Saints in this way - There are electric heaters in which a coil of wire glows while it heats & there are others that give black heat. You enjoy the warmth from these without noticing where it comes from. I had a friend whom I account as a black heat saint. The light of his heroism may have been known only to me, so natural was his behaviour.

The glowing saints who get canonised were often a dreadful nuisance. They did not fit into family or society & their fads have been imitated more than their virtues.

*Letter to Julian Smith 11 June 1983*

Canonisation is like the birthday honour list. It ought not to be taken seriously. Often it depends on who has the relics & whether he has money or influence. Every monarchy claims to have a saint even if he is as flimsy as Edward the Confessor.

Some Saints have done great harm. In our own time there was St Pius X. He stopped all biblical scholarship by saying that the vulgate must be accepted as the word of God. He stopped all creative Church music by saying that Gregorian Chant must be the norm & that the only instrument must be the organ. He bewitched several sacks full of little crucifixes so that whenever one was kissed it gave a plenary indulgence<sup>15</sup> to the kisser or to the dead, & this might be done any number of times. If he believed such rot he was a mut. If he did not he was a humbug. Where does sanity lie?

*Letter to Baron Jose de Vinck, Epiphany 1980, on the subject of his book<sup>16</sup>*

That you say nothing about the real difficulty of faith may mean that no one can think of anything to say. Hell is not in your index. You quote, as many do, Dame Julian's saying that all things shall be well, but she says "when the damned shall be forgotten without end."<sup>17</sup> Nobody quotes that. In modern books hell may be mentioned in a foot-note. In all four Gospels it is in the headlines.

You do tackle the problem of original sin & you find, as I do, that what you have been taught is unacceptable.

I imagine that if we could talk we should find many points of agreement. I believe with all my might, but I don't swallow without chewing. I never swallowed indulgences or Sacred Heart revelations or imaginings about the way of the cross. Nor are popes all-wise. I think this one has done vast harm in South America & now he throws 'Humanae Vitae' as a spanner in the works.<sup>18</sup>

A root trouble is that popes want their encyclicals to be treated as gospel. Each pope quotes the words of his predecessors & carries on their teaching. All our glorious buildings, from wayside shrines to cathedrals were paid for as insurance against purgatory. Credulity has worn thin, so there is no longer a market for forty years and forty quarantines.<sup>19</sup> But Holy Church does not tell us that the whole thing was wrong.

## *Popes*

*Letter to Father Tom Phelan 27 March 1979*

*(When Pope John Paul II was one year into his 32-year incumbency)*

You ask me what I think about the present pope. We may take it for granted that he is a very good & brave man, with great abilities & assurance. But I am not happy about him as pope.

He has taken the names of his three predecessors & declared his intent to uphold their teaching. What they taught we only know from their encyclicals.

For many generations each pope has quoted from the one before. Thus have grave distortions been extended. An example is the importance given to encyclicals. They are said to be nearly infallible, because the pope is using his "magisterium." But, if a statement is not infallible, it is fallible & no encyclical is infallible.

Recent encyclicals have defined the rights of man & said these have always been his rights & that the Church has always upheld them. The last galley-slaves were those of the pope & the last choir-boys to be castrated were those of the Sistine choir.

*Letter to Father Tom Phelan 7 May 1981*

I wish popes were less pontifical. Long ago Belloc wrote a poem about a traveller in the wilds. It contains the memorable lines -



The Learner

“Whatever happens, we have got  
The maxim gun & they have not”.<sup>20</sup>

Popes talk about dialogue, but all their utterances are monologue.

“Whatever happens, I have got  
The Holy Ghost & they have not.”

“Said Louis, Roi, ‘L’Etat c’est moi’  
Said Pope J.P., ‘The Church, that’s me.’ ”

*Indulgences (Undated Note)*

I believe that our heavenly Father can be infinitely indulgent to his children. I believe that Our Lord by his sacrifice earned infinite credit. The Church says we must believe that at some unspecified date God handed the cheque-book of this account to the papacy.

Luther was one of millions who thought it a bit thick that cheques should be used to pay for military aid against the Emperor or for glamour buildings in Rome.

## *On Human Life*

In 1968 Pope Paul VI published the Encyclical “*Humanae Vitae*” on the subject of birth control. In the Second Vatican Council, during the early 1960s, this subject had been reserved by the pope for his personal decision. Against the advice of many experts, theologians and married Catholics, the Encyclical forbade all positive forms of birth control. There was much protest and shock within the Catholic community that the pope had acted unilaterally and disregarded his advisors. In his own correspondence, Philip observed how, throughout history, the Catholic Church’s views on both celibacy and sexual relationships within marriage, provoked difficulties in private and public lives.

*Letter to Julian Smith, undated*

It would have been better if St Paul had had a good tough wife to oversee his letters ... Of course the Church has been, & still is, horribly wrong about women & about marriage. Celibacy has warped the clerical mind.



*Letter to Julian Smith, undated*

A [Parish Priest] usually leads a wretchedly lonely life. He cannot have a real friendship with any member of his flock. He has to be friendly but detached with all of them. Often his worst worry is his housekeeper. Her position is a very difficult one.

*Letter to Noel Anthony Scawen Lytton 29 October 1983*

Our Parish & seminary systems evolved in a stable society that has passed away. Some drastic fresh thinking is needed. I don't think celibacy should be linked with priesthood but, as you say, we can't pay a family wage.

*Missions (Undated)*

In some parts of the world, celibacy could not be understood, for it is only by marriage that a man reaches the status of a responsible adult. Among these people there is a ready acceptance of the Gospel, so that missionaries cannot cope with the numbers of converts. In some cases the language of a tribe may be quite different from that of a neighbouring tribe, so that a preacher who is eloquent in one area is dumb in another.

Among the converts are many eager & intelligent men who have trained & become catechists. These preach to their people, organise meetings for prayer & instruction. They baptise & conduct marriages & funerals. But their parishes have so spread that parts of them can rarely or never be visited by a priest. Thus many Catholics cannot receive absolution or Holy Communion. Yet priesthood may not be given to the catechists, because, unlike the pope, they have received the sacrament of matrimony.

That all believers should “eat the flesh of the Son of Man” is God’s wish, but this is made of none effect by Rome’s tradition.

*Letter to John Bennett Shaw 2 November 1984*

I am sure you remember what Mr Dooley<sup>21</sup> said about Holmes - “You must know that he has a friend named Watson & Watson knows nothing at all & everything that he knows is wrong.” Might that be said of the pope? He knows many languages but not the language of married love. Legislation on marriage ought not to be only by celibates.

*Letter to Father Edward M Catich 9 July 1972*

There are many things about which the Church laws should be changed or abolished. We need fewer of them. Marriage is a case in point. Clergy should give us the sacrament, but not follow us into the bedroom. Love & nature should be trusted.

*Thoughts about the daisy, undated*

Like the daisy, man is rooted in the soil; & like the daisy, he can look God in the face. Like the daisy, man must live in the earth as well as above it ... Soul & body are not a partnership or mixture. They form a compound. Man is always going wrong & moralists are always trying to set him right. They say he should not give way to his lower nature: that his soul should control the body as a rider controls his mount. This is misleading, because it implies that the body is apt to err & that the soul knows better. But the vast majority of sins, & all the worst ones, are sins of the soul.

Hunger, weariness & desire are natural & call for satisfaction. Only when our right instincts are misused do we sin by gluttony, sloth & un-chastity.

Sins of the soul are pride, malice, injustice, avarice, envy, revenge, resisting truth or hiding it, or hiding from it, hypocrisy and all manner of deceit - & so on.

The moralist who has a “down” on the body should be reminded that the devil has no body & that God has one - born of the Virgin Mary.

*Letter to Baron Jose de Vinck 10 November 1971*

... When Vatican II tried to discuss contraception we realised that the Church had no valid reason for forbidding it. Realising how we had been robbed of peace and happiness throughout our active years we have regained the companionship of our early days. I can write -

You prelates who are celibate  
Are surely somewhat out of date  
In telling us the married state  
Need only be a tête à tête.

but I have to keep silent because our son is a priest. He has to work on a marriage advisory council and prepare couples for marriage. I do not ask him what he teaches.

*Letter to Thomas Ferrier Burns, 1968* <sup>22</sup>

*(A request that Philip's name should not appear on a letter addressed to The Tablet)*

I have had to lie low since my son entered a seminary twenty odd years ago. Multitudes of Catholics must be silenced by some such considerations. If they could speak, some of our Ghostly Fathers would be holding their hats on.

## ***Communities & Introspection***

*Letter to Father Kevin Scannell 6 Sept 1942*

The 13th century Cistercians were the Adam & Eve of Industrialism. It was they who turned the art of building back towards the architect-cum-slave business. It was they who began landlordism in its modern sense. It was they who first mortgaged crops & wool-clips years ahead to get building loans from the Jews of York - & so on. Catholics like to blame the Reformation for such evils, but Henry VIII & the rest only put into lay hands the chains which monks had devised.

*Letter to Father William Dolan Fletcher 27 December 1974. Philip produced a series of broadsheets to publicise and protest against the excesses of the new Prinknash Abbey.*

I could see that Prinknash Abbey, amongst others, was a parasitical growth in the body of the Church. The monks kept appealing for more and more money to make their Abbey & its furnishings more and more grandiose.

It might be said that this was no business of mine, but as no one else seemed to see the scandal. I thought I ought to say something. I printed No 1 & sent a copy to each of the monks. Of course there was a row. They wrote telling me that no layman ought ever to criticise the Clergy, they begged me to keep quiet and so on. My answer was No 2. There were more protests so they got No 3.<sup>23</sup> They held a chapter meeting at which it was decided to pray for me. The Abbot had a breakdown & went off on an expensive luxury cruise. The Second World War began before more could be done.

*Letter to Father Kevin Scannell 7 May 1940*

The family must be supported by ill means if not by good. But a Monastery is not a family in that sense. Also, a family asks for as little as it can manage with and would not think of begging for luxuries. A Community of monks could live far cheaper than a family because almost all the members could do a bit of the work required for self-support. Actually, a monk costs as much as many families because he will only live under Gothic arches & all that ...

... I should say that Monasticism in England is in a hopeless state & that if there are to be Communities of Contemplatives, a new Order is needed. When an oak is rotten to the roots, the only hope of future timber lies in acorns.

Some Communities are exclusive social cliques like Pall Mall Clubs. Some are ostentatious & self-conscious. Some live in a glamour of sugary devotions. Some are refined & artistic & limitless in their extravagance. All have two things in common. They all lead austere lives, seeking to know God, & they all live expensively on the proceeds, direct or indirect, of slavery, knavery & usury.

There has grown up dangerous superstition that Religious Orders are ordained by God & that the Rule of an Order is Holy Writ. God only ordained the Priesthood. Rules are men's devices to help some men to be good. They are only means to that end. Religious are apt to be loyal to the ideas of their Order & that is not always the same thing as being directly loyal to Our Lord & to the poor whom he left as his representatives.



*Letter to the Careys 17 June 1966*

Just as I deny the claim of the intellectuals to the primacy in art, so I deny the claim of the spirituals that contemplation is above action. Contemplation without action may lead to introspection disguised as self-examination. The Good Samaritan was not a priest but a business man or at least he meant business.

*Letter to the Careys 9 July 1963*

Introspection is the very devil. It makes people such dreadful bores. Look at the whole of western iconography and you wont find a saint or sage with his eyes shut. They lift up their eyes to the hills, to the heavens, to the harvest fields. If Homer was blind it was not because he kept his eyes shut.

*Letter to the Careys 27 July 1961*

As to the sense of the sacred, the numinous & so on - that is not a thing you can cater for because it is a personal fancy & persons differ completely as to what provokes it. By you it is felt on mountain tops. Many of the Greeks felt like that so they sought the supernatural up there and St Paul had to deal with "the spirit of wickedness in the high places."<sup>24</sup> In some lands people were more excited among trees & missionaries busied themselves chopping down sacred groves. Some people sought the deepest caves, as at Altamira. Huysmans saw mountains as scenery for comic opera & longed for the flat horizons of his home. Kipling's ex-soldier returned to the velt *Where there's neither a road nor a tree / But only my Maker an' me.*<sup>25</sup> Some people feel nearest to God when they are marching in an army & some when they are in solitude. There is no universal feeling about these things. The better a Church pleases some people, the more it will offend others. But the Church is universal & her Truth above feeling.

*Hope*

Philip tried to help those who were finding difficulty in accepting the Church's teaching, particularly in the aftermath of Vatican II. The Second Vatican Council, between 1962 and 1965, set out to make decisions which renewed the Church and helped it to meet the needs of the modern world. The Church as an institution of human beings on earth was seen as a body which needed continual reformation. Philip supported this ideal; if change could

stem corruption and dishonesty within the Church then it must be viewed with cautious optimism. Philip tried to reassure fellow Catholics that Vatican II could bring people closer to a true experience of faith.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 2 February 1980*

I am sorry you are disturbed about the state of the Church. Of course it is rotten, but has it not always been so? The Church has one disease after another. It is never healthy, yet it is never in danger of death ... Langland, himself a minor cleric, attacked the clergy of his day & fixed them in the pillory of his verse. There they stand exposed, like the gamekeeper's hawks & stoats. But Langland saw things on more than one plane & he did not confuse them. Holy Church appeared to him as a *Lady lovely of lere*,<sup>26</sup> whom he would serve loyally to his life's end.

*Letter to Maurice Percival 27 February 1981*

... I want you to be as happy as I am about the reforms of Vatican II. When I became a Catholic in 1915 I did so because I believed the truth & the sacraments were the treasure hidden in that field. But I detested Latin & chant & ritual with all its paraphernalia & upholstery.

Consider what I put up with. The Epistle & Gospel were for the instruction of the people, so in England they were read in English. Why then were they also read in Latin? Was God not supposed to know English? And anyhow did God need to be instructed in works that the Holy Ghost had edited?

The maniple was a handkerchief. When did a priest last blow his nose on it? And so on, mumpsimus after mumpsimus.<sup>27</sup> I think of the woman who ended her confession "And I've been disobedient." The priest asked - "To whom have you been disobedient?" She said "O, I don't know. Its what I have always said."

Our Lord said "Do this in memory of me." So it behoves us to think what he did at that first Mass. Did he put on fancy dress & speak a dead language? Did he turn his back to the apostles or whisper? Did he say "kneel down & put out your tongues?" No. He spoke in the vulgar tongue of Galilee & he said "Take & eat".

Why the superstition about Latin? Our Lord did not speak it. His words were recorded in Greek. The Uniate Churches each used its own language. I have heard Mass in Syro-Chaldean.<sup>28</sup>

... What has been cleared away from the Mass was what had stuck to it. For some people all the trimmings came to have glamour. But glamour is a dangerous drug, akin to Lotus.

I could write more on this subject but you will think I am preaching. Of course I am not fit to do that. I simply want to lift a worry from your mind & replace it by the joy I feel now that we hear, each in the tongue wherein we were born, the wonderful works of God.

*Letter to his daughter Joan, undated, in the wake of Vatican II*

I will try to tell why I am happy about recent changes.<sup>29</sup> I was never happy about exposition.<sup>30</sup> Our Lord said "Take & eat." He did not say "Look at the loaf in the baker's shop window."

Likewise he did not say "hold a table napkin under your chin & put out your tongue." Think what custom had made of the Heavenly Banquet when it was often only the priest who ate & drank. The faithful looked on while he did so & washed up & locked the rest of the food in a strong box.

It is the duty of a shepherd to see that all the sheep are fed. The food is there in abundance, for God keeps the grass growing all the time. What should we think of a shepherd who cared more about the pasture than about the sheep? If he made rules & conditions for access to the pasture we might remonstrate with him. Yet throughout centuries the clergy had made laws about fasting & about when, where & in what clothes Mass might be said. Of course there must be order & ritual so that priest & people act together but the purpose should be the feeding of sheep & not just the worship of grass.

When an old picture gets to the National Gallery they must set about cleaning it. They remove dirty varnish. They may find layer upon layer of re-painting & attempted improvement. They try to remove all this & show us what the painter intended.

Even so is the Church clearing away some of the things that hide the meaning of Maundy Thursday. The tabernacle & the monstrance only date from the Renaissance. Before that the pyx was kept in a wall cupboard as it may be today. The monstrance has not gone yet, but I hope it may.

*Letter to the Careys 27 March 1981*

Since Vatican II, Catholics & Anglicans and others' have dared to meet. They have found that they are all Christians & that they can pray & work together. We now share Churches. Our bishops preach in each other's Cathedrals. We have joint parish meetings for study & discussion. We are locating & examining our points of difference.

*Letter to Father Tom Phelan 20 July 1982*

The pope's visit<sup>29</sup> seems to have been a success even beyond the hopes of those who organised it. I feared he would say queer things, as he has done elsewhere, by treating contraception as a form of abortion - wherein I am sure he is wrong.

However, he did not mention the subject.

I think what was done at Canterbury<sup>32</sup> was of immense importance. The situation was without precedent & I think Cantuar (that is the Archbishop's title) did a wonderful job. He gave the pope a whole hearted welcome, without compromising his claim to be the rightful successor of St Augustine. Both leaders declared their wish for reunion. What can be the next step if any? Cantuar may have a great part of his Church behind him, but has the pope any backing in Rome? Popes may come & popes may go, but the Curia<sup>33</sup> sits tight forever.

*From a letter to Julian Smith, undated*

I pray for the union of all Christians, but I see as you do that Church of England includes benevolent agnosticism that cannot be called Christian. Happily the parsons I hear every day on the radio talk sound doctrine & I think they do it more convincingly than the Catholics.

*Letter to the Careys 3 April 1980*

The first words I heard this morning were from a smiling nurse who wished me a happy Easter. She is a Buddhist. Then I turned on the radio and heard a superb Easter sermon by a Baptist. England is in the hell and all of a mess but the grace of God is manifest. When I was young, the people of this country were in classes and sects, species and sub species, insulated from each other by custom and prejudice. Society was like a cluster of grapes with each grape in its waterproof skin. Now the grapes have burst and I think wine is fermenting.



### *Perfect Ending: Perfect Beginning* <sup>34</sup>

These were Philip's own words spoken on his death bed and chosen for the inscription on his grave stone. For all his criticism of the Catholic Church, he was throughout his life at peace with his faith.

*Letter to Noel Anthony Scawen Lytton 8 July 1982*

Now as to how my faith has fared since 1915 I think its roots have gone deeper and it has shed a lot of foliage. God has revealed all we need to know for our salvation and has left areas that we must accept as mysteries. Theologians fill these areas with guesswork and it gets accepted as doctrine.

*Letter to Father Edward M Catich Christmas 1970*

As for the problem of Hell, I dare not think about it, as I cannot reconcile it with God's mercy - nor with His justice. Attempts to explain it away, or mitigate its horror, are useless when the teaching is so emphatic in all four Gospels. I used to be terrified on my own account when I was young, but Langland came to be my favourite poet, & he says *Ever is thy soul safe but if thyself will.*<sup>35</sup>

*Letter to Maurice Percival 11 May 1981*

Only in old age did I see the obvious - that one should speak to God as one should speak to anyone, saying only what one means. I remembered that nearly everything

I wanted to say was in the Anglican book of Common Prayer - written down in the golden age of our language. There is a litany of about eight pages which suits me.<sup>36</sup> I say it every morning adding or modifying a bit here and there. Then I leave things to God. I don't keep nagging at him. For such as you & me I think prayer should be neither a stimulant nor an opiate but rather a tranquiliser. It should make us clear headed but calm. Having cast our care upon the Lord we should trust him & give our minds to any work or fun that is to hand. Perhaps you know the medieval rhyme:

Serve God truly  
And the world busily  
Eat thy meat merrily  
And ever live in rest  
Thank God highly  
Tho he visit thee poorly  
He may amend it lengthily  
When him liketh best.<sup>37</sup>

*Letter to Julian Smith 15 November 1987*

I am of the earth, earthy. I don't think I am altogether wrong. God made man out of earth and gave him the earth as his habitat, his realm & his responsibility. God saw that it was good. I agree with him.

## *Signals*

Philip's semi-autobiographical story is set in the year of his own conversion and published in *Blackfriars* magazine in 1929. The story describes an encounter while Philip was serving in the Signals Corps during First World War.

Of the hero of this story I know little. It must have been some time in 1915 that I first met him, at a dismal depot in the Midlands. I was sharing a leaky tent with a fellow Second Lieutenant known to his friends as 'Jimbo.' As we were endeavouring, by means of a Primus stove, to dry some clothes faster than the leakage of the tent wetted them, we were nowise pleased to hear that a newcomer was allotted to our tent, and to have to make room for the baggage that his batman dropped squelching in the entrance. Its owner soon followed muttering frightful things about the Kaiser.

He would have been tall if he had not stooped. He had thick black eyebrows that almost met, and that gave him a scowling expression belied by the genial smile of his thick lips. We learned that he was our senior as an officer, and that he was some kind of engineer by profession. He was by no means unsociable, and he dropped into his place in that tent as though he had known us for years. The labels on the newcomer's luggage showed an indistinguishable surname preceded by the abbreviation 'Wm.' The next morning I was awakened by the voice of Jimbo shouting: 'Guglielmo !' Guglielmo he remained for a while, but our increasing respect for him led us to anglicise it as 'Guggly' before many days had passed.

I soon found he was a Catholic. As I had been a Catholic for two months, and had hardly spoken to a fellow Catholic since my reception, I suggested an immediate visit to the Mess to celebrate this happy meeting. On the way there he told me he had been 'received', with hardly any instruction, less than a fortnight ago, and while we drank what claimed to be old ale, he showed his respect for my seniority by asking me theological conundrums to which I could give him no answer whatever.

Guggly was at that depôt for about 3 weeks and was then sent to join a division doing its final training on Salisbury Plain. He was by nature a silent man, and we had little conversation. I have said that he stooped. It was not a stoop of weakness but rather of pensiveness, and it was emphasised by his habit of keeping his right hand in his jacket pocket. The pocket contained two things dear to him. One was his pipe, along with tobacco-pouch and matches, the other was a small slide rule. This was usually in his grasp, and showed why he entered so little into conversation. He would appear to be listening to what others said, and then, instead of joining in, he would produce the slide-rule and verify the calculation that he had been making in his head. He must have had a very well controlled brain, for he compelled it to learn whatever was needed. The Quartermaster lived in fear of his knowledge of 'expendable stores.'

Of his conversion I know nothing, except that he had previously been an agnostic, with a tendency to pantheism. Faith came to him when he was hourly awaiting orders for the front. He found a priest, explained the situation, and begged that he might be received at once. The priest must have seen the reality of his faith behind his ignorance of detail, for he received him after a rapid canter through the Penny Catechism, and trusted him to fill the gaps in his knowledge at the earliest opportunity. To this end Guggly brought away 'one of each' of the C.T.S.<sup>38</sup> pamphlets that he found in the church. These were just the ones that droop and get dusty - lives of foundresses and missionaries, and exposures of various heresies of which Guggly had not previously heard. No matter what the subject, the writer spoke for

the Church - he stood upon the rock, and it was this feeling of standing, with all the others, on the rock, that was Guggly's most thrilling experience at this time. After his journey over the shifting sands of agnosticism, deluded by the mirages of scientific speculation, he felt the rock to be a thing almost unbelievably good. He would advance wild theories in order to provoke me, as a senior Catholic, to contradict them - he was stamping on the rock to enjoy the new sensation of its resistance.

His knowledge of things Catholic was restricted. Of a Catholic's intellectual heritage he knew nothing. He knew nothing of the liturgy, and he had heard no plain chant recognisable as such. What he had seized upon - or what had seized on him - was the essential dogma of the Divinity of Christ, with its corollaries - His Omnipotence and His Accessibility. An accident, if one may call anything such, led him to concentrate his attention on this last fact, and that is the whole point of this story.

Guggly's job in the army was Signals. Signals meant every means of communication, from wireless to despatch-riders. A Signal Officer had to know all about telephones, heliographs, signalling lamps, semaphore, and all the organisation involved. It was a very difficult job and it entailed an appalling amount of responsibility. It is little wonder that, as the time approached when messages would become literally matters of life and death, a Signal Officer became saturated with 'Signals' and thought of everything in terms of communications.

Our days were mostly spent in an imaginary campaign in which we had to establish communication between imaginary units and imaginary headquarters that were always being moved about. To this game, the officers in command would add realistic touches by cutting our telephone-wires, taking our despatch riders prisoners, announcing that transmitting stations were destroyed, and so on. When all seemed to be going like clockwork, an operator would shout that he was 'Dis,' which meant that he was disconnected. Then would be the rush to find the break in the line, and meanwhile to get messages through by some other means.

All this was exacting work for all concerned, and towards evening the signal 'C.I.' was anxiously awaited. This stood for 'Come in,' and how willingly we obeyed! What a rolling up of flags and reeling up of cable. How we scuttled back to camp! Soon we might eat and sleep, but first we must stand around the Commanding Officer and hear his criticism. Questions had to be answered. Why was the helio not used at such a moment? Why was some unit 'dis' at another? Why did such and such messages take so long on the way?



We seemed to eat and drink signals. Technical slang became part of our language and technical metaphors our most natural means of expression.

Although I was quite as ignorant as he, Guggly continued to ask me questions on the strength of my seniority as a Catholic. Thus - 'if a convert under instruction gets the "C.I." before he is baptised, can he have Catholic burial?'

'To get the "C.I."' What metaphor could be more exact for Death? It is the cessation of the day's work - the moment after which no mistakes can be put right. It is the return to Headquarters. Those who have signalled from afar will now speak face to face. It is the call to refreshment and rest, but first it is the call to Judgement.

These things affected our speech, but they affected Guggly's outlook, and ultimately his conduct. I have said that he realised vividly the accessibility of Our Lord by means of prayer. He seemed to take it for granted that all Catholics prayed as he did, and I gathered that his method was to pray vigorously when he was vigorous and wearily when he was weary. When he was merry he prayed merrily, and when he was sad he prayed dolefully. In sober mood he prayed soberly, but if he were drunk he prayed drunkenly. From the first his moods did not stop his prayers, but before long, I fancy his prayers stopped, or greatly modified, his moods.

It must have been about four months after Guggly's departure that I met him again. I, too, had been sent to Salisbury Plain: and learning that his Division was still in the neighbourhood, I borrowed a motor bicycle, and spent a free Sunday evening in trying to find him. When I did it was supper time so he led me off at once to his Mess. During the meal conversation was genial, but I noticed a change in Guggly. His health had evidently suffered badly from overwork, he looked a good deal older, and he was slower of speech. Between courses his right hand was in his jacket pocket as of old and yet his slide rule was not there, for that was sticking out of his breast pocket. After supper, when I offered him tobacco, I found he no longer smoked. I realised then that the only thing in that right pocket was his rosary, and that when he was not telling the beads he was clutching the crucifix.

As of old he asked me questions on faith and morals. Since our last meeting he had had little time for reading and yet I felt he understood so much more than I did. His questions were all expressed in the metaphor of our occupation:

'It is a first principle, isn't it? that each unit is responsible for keeping in communication with Headquarters. It must not expect Headquarters to establish a line and ring up.



A CATECHISM  
OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE  
CHAPTER I: FAITH.

1. Who made you? ☞ God made me.
2. Why did God make you? ☞ God made me to know Him, love Him and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him for ever in the next.
3. To whose image and likeness did God make you? ☞ God made me to His own image and likeness.
4. Is this likeness to God in your body, or in your soul? ☞ This likeness to God is chiefly in my soul.
5. How is your soul like to God? ☞ My soul is like to God because it is a spirit, and is immortal.
6. What do you mean when you say that your soul is immortal? ☞ When I say my soul is immortal, I mean that



‘The only way to be sure you are in touch is to keep sending messages.’

‘Every unit needs its line to Headquarters to ask for supplies, reinforcements, etc., but the primary object of the line is not the sending of these messages, but the receiving of orders from Headquarters. The importance of never being “dis” for a moment is due to this. A unit is useless unless it is listening all the time for orders.

‘Intercommunication between units - “lateral” communication - is useful; but it is very liable to be cut or tapped by the enemy. Also it is not necessary if all units are through to headquarters. It is far more important to secure the line to Headquarters, and trust them to plug you through to other units, than to give much attention to lateral lines.

‘When messages are not acknowledged, it does not always mean that they have not been read at Headquarters. If you get no acknowledgment you overhaul your gear, test the alignment of your helio, and then send each message twice over and very carefully. I take it that this is the commonest conditions of our communication with Heaven.’

Only once after that did I see Guggly again, and that was three days before he was killed. I had been moved to a camp near Aldershot, and about a month after the meeting on Salisbury Plain, I came upon a motor lorry that had stopped in order that its high load of baggage might be securely roped on. As I passed the number on it caught my eye, and it was the number of Guggly’s Division.

Enquiry proved that they were off to France, that the Division was then entraining, and that only one more lorry was to come. This was in charge of an officer - it might be Guggly. I turned down a side road and soon saw in a field a lorry receiving the last of its load. On the top of the huge pile stood Guggly, shouting instructions in a tired but terrific voice to the men who were adjusting the ropes. The engine started, the men clambered up; and, as I reached the gate, the lorry swung out into the road, and Guggly caught sight of me waving my hat. He shouted: ‘Hold the line to G.H.Q. for me; I’m afraid I’m “dis.”

‘You can’t be “dis,” man.’ I shouted back.

‘I’m still signalling,’ he yelled, as the lorry gathered speed, and he waved to me with his left hand, for his right hand was in his jacket pocket.

*Letter to Father William Dolan Fletcher 5 January 1975*

As to the 'holy pictures', I wonder how they appear to you. As I look at them, I remember how hard I tried to make them rightly & I see how little I succeeded. The holy fire was stamped out by the Renaissance. We cannot revive it. All we can do is to try to strike a fresh spark & hope it may kindle a new tradition. Even if all my 'holy pictures' are failures, I do not regret having attempted what was too high for me. "O, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"<sup>39</sup>

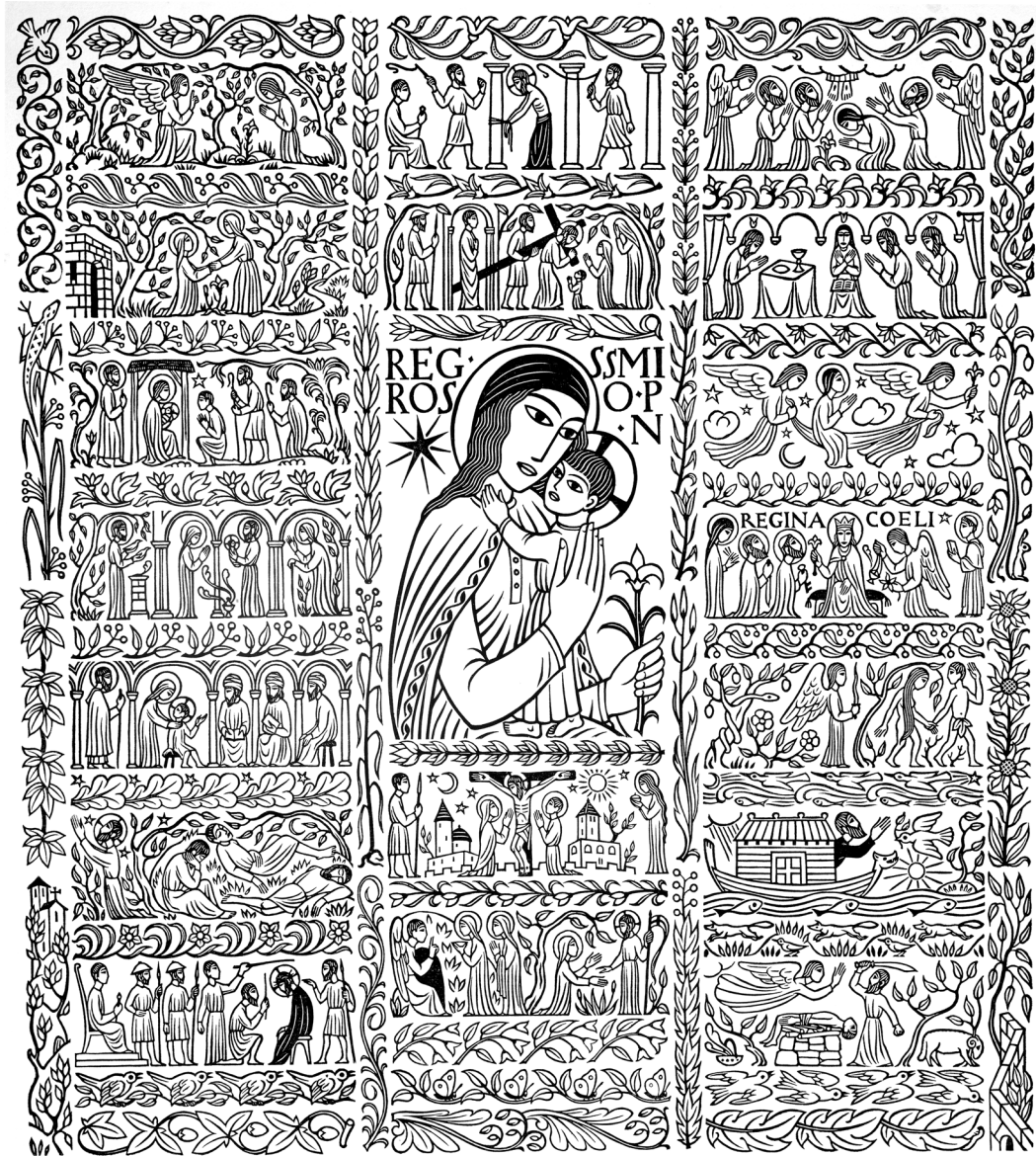
When it comes to lettering the case is different. I came into a live tradition & a literate public. ... Especially there was one of the words - "Ubi Caritas ibi Deus".<sup>40</sup>

*Letter to Maurice Finnan 9 December 1953*

Why on earth don't Catholics concern themselves to state the truth in an acceptable way? "Testimonia tua credibilia facta sunt nimis." Why make them incredible by startling them in jargon? Our Lady would be an attraction if she were given a chance but she is used as a red rag to wave in front of the Protestant bull. The Church Militant ought not to be Church Quarrelsome. Our Catholic papers show the Catholic as a nasty little boy shouting: "I'm the king of the castle. Get down you dirty rascal".

Father Faber on sentiment does not impress me any more than Henry VIII would on marriage.





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Philip Hagreen

Our Lady of The Rosary. Wood-cuts by Philip Hagreen. Printed at St Dominic's Press, Ditching, Sussex.





## Part 4

# Approach to Making

Philip Hagreen made objects without self-conscious deliberation about how to justify and explain the process of how these objects came into being. However, he lived and worked at a time where particularly in Catholic circles there was an intense debate about the French philosopher Jacques Maritain's book, *Art & Scholasticism*. Through friends, correspondents and involvement with Catholic art journals, Philip was inevitably drawn into some dialogue about making. Everytime he ventured into such discussions he found himself grounded by a sense that working with his hands gave him a perspective unattainable from philosophy.





# Discovery and Influence

## *Introduction*

The beauty that is man's proper concern is the beauty of what man can make - the beauty of his words, his movements, of the form that he gives to clay or to stone, to wood or to metal. And the condition of all this beauty is appropriateness.

A right aim and right methods in the making of things are as necessary to true civilisation and culture as are right principles of justice and of duty.

*Philip Haggren, excerpt from the introduction of  
SILVERSMITHING: It's Principles and Practice in Small Workshops,  
by Dunstan Pruden, St Dominic's Press, 1933*

Philip wrote some beautifully satisfying accounts of a craftsman's approach to his work. Some of his writings on this subject were published, but the more colourful and memorable passages often appeared in his private correspondence, for he was keen that his friends should gain some perspective on craft through the eyes of a maker.

Philip's writings were inspired by a number of sources. As a young man he read the works of W R Lethaby, the architect and teacher. Philip enjoyed Lethaby's precise summing up of the best approach to making - remarks such as *Beauty is the substance of things done, as faith is the substance of things hoped for*.<sup>1</sup> From 1923 to 1925 Philip worked with Eric Gill, who was his first practical teacher of craft. The views Eric Gill held at that time had a strong and lasting effect on the way Philip worked and the way he thought about work.

Philip loved working, but he was not possessive about the status of a craftsman and in this respect he distanced himself from Eric Gill - *Eric used to be contemptuous of the amateur, the man with a weekend hobby; but I always felt that hobbies were escapism in a really good sense. They showed & fostered the desire to make things as one thinks best*.<sup>2</sup> After working with Gill, Philip continued to make objects in a workshop for over thirty years: he carved small sculptures in wood & ivory; he made wood cuts and engravings - both illustrations and lettering inscriptions. Throughout his working life his making reflected the life and outlook of a Catholic craftsman.

When Philip writes about craft, his central argument is heartfelt: practical experience is man's best teacher. Having discovered this for himself, Philip wanted to share it with others, and he did so with vivid accounts of how knowledge gained through practical work outwitted theory on all counts. His grandfather and father had ensured that Philip was well informed about the theoretical discipline of art and craft practice, but it was not until Philip learnt the skills of a craftsman for himself that he was ready to analyse theoretical ideas about making. He always felt that making was primarily to be enjoyed: *Man ought to sing as well as talk, to dance as well as walk, work ought to be fun.*<sup>3</sup>

### ***'On Devient Forgeron a Force de Forger'***

Philip quoted this old French proverb about a blacksmith learning his trade from the forceful nature of his work as the *first headline in my philosophy*.<sup>4</sup>

What makes a smith? Strokes of a hammer. The strokes that shape the iron, shape the man. Every blow adds to his experience & skill. There is no other way of becoming a smith.

This principle is true in all the arts. They may be taught by example, but they can only be learnt by practice. By practice a learner may do what some master has done, but that will not make him an artist. He only becomes an artist when he makes things as no one else has, or ever will, make them. Is a learner then to seek novelty? Heaven forbid! All sincere work is original, for its origin is the individual workman.

To a learner I would say: 'experiment boldly & thoughtfully. Do not be bound by any supposed rules or laws of art. Let your discipline be loving obedience to your medium. Do not strain your medium. The best way to use it is the most obvious - though what is obvious to you may be startling to someone else. Avoid complexity. Chastity is nobler than adornment. Modesty is nobler than showing off.' The qualities of a good artist are the qualities of a good man, for they are one & the same person. He should be venturesome but not irresponsible, humble but not servile, persistent but not obstinate.

A teacher should always be learning. He must learn the needs of each pupil &, from every mistake of a pupil, he may learn something about the medium. Teaching is a dangerous trade. The teacher may become a pedant & the pupil may be crippled by



rules & inhibitions. Academic art is art that has been over-taught. The only escape from that is by rebellion.

The teaching of art is apt to do more harm than good. The teacher cannot see the beauty to which the pupil is groping. The pupil may only know that he is being drawn towards a beauty that is out of sight. The teacher can see the faults in the pupil's work & tell him to correct them, but can the teacher say for certain what is a fault? What looks like a fault may be the growing-point of the potential flower branch.

It may be objected that the teacher should recognise the growing-point & not mistake it for a canker. The difficulty is that there is no norm or standard to apply as a test. What matters in the work of an artist is a character peculiar to himself. Only when it has been developed can it be recognised. It must never be recognised by the artist, or he will become a self-imitator & fade away as a recurring decimal. The beauty the artist is striving for is not in his work. It is beyond his reach. His work can only point to it.

Academic art is art from which teaching has removed the faults. It is as insipid as distilled water. To be appetising & digestible, our food must have more elements than the cook can account for. We need a regular admixture of catalysts & roughage to satisfy our complex nature. But there are works of art in which faults would be hard to find & which satisfy us. Such perfection is not reached by eliminating faults, but by filling the work so full of living virtue that there is no room for faults.



## *Tools & Carving*

*Philip Hagreeen, Catholic Art, The Cross & The Plough, Lady Day, 1941*

In this matter of tools, it is worth noting that in good periods nothing was so perfectly finished as the craftsman's tools. He lavished his art on them like pouring his wine for his best friend.

Philip here implies that the need for well-designed and well-made tools had been overlooked in an industrialised age. In his circle of Catholic craftsman Philip was well known for the way in which he *lavished his art*<sup>5</sup> on his tools. As a young boy he had been fascinated both by tools and the various methods adopted by workmen to achieve their aims. As an adult, and a largely self-taught craftsman, he often found standard tools inappropriate, and devised ones to suit him better. The materials he chose to work with taught him how the tools needed to be formed.

When Philip first embarked on ivory carving in the mid 1920s, he did not know where to find information on accepted ivory carving equipment, so he improvised. Finding



wood engraving and wood carving tools unfit for the task, he begged dentists' worn out instruments so that he might experiment. Once he had discovered their possibilities and limitations, he softened, forged and ground them to his purpose; and then tempered and sharpened them again. Years later he met an ivory carver who had been taught the orthodox method, and who introduced Philip to the usual tools. Soon, however, this carver had given up his tools and adopted Philip's.<sup>6</sup>

Philip occasionally made a tool from a broken umbrella spoke, but his favoured material was an old file: the steel had the right properties. He invented curved scrapers for smoothing flat surfaces. His large hands, with unusual articulation, made handling small implements difficult, so he made tools that suited him better. For woodcuts he developed two different types of knife to replace the conventional one. Both had the blade at right angles to the handle. In the first, the blade faced back along the haft which he grasped in his fingers - thumb purchased on the side of the block - and drew towards him. In the second, the blade faced forward, had a graver's handle and was pushed like one. For fine work, the latter were very light and had a swan neck. Sharp tools require less effort and allow more control. After honing them on the finest stone, he would finish off with a jeweller's stick and a strop. A metal graver he would lubricate by wiping its keel on a paraffin pad every time he took it up.

When Philip retired he distributed most of his tools among friends. Some were copied, but several of the more original ones cannot be traced.<sup>7</sup>

*Letter to the Careys 1 July 1955*

If you get over here, I think tools will be one of the subjects we shall talk about most. We agree so profoundly about their place in life. It would be no use writing about them - they need to be demonstrated & handled. I am only a man of things - not ideas. It is only ideas that can go into letters.

*Letter to the Careys 2 May 1962*

You know how tools interest me in all their aspects and varieties from the cobbler's awl to the shipwright's adze. They take man's thought through his hands to his achievement. Man is not complete without them.

*Letter to the Careys 29 November 1975*

It makes me very happy to think of you as shaping ivory with tools that I contrived. I hope you will enjoy the job as much as I did. I seem to remember that ivory clogged my files, but I remember using a rasp. The easiest way is the best way. A moralist may say that is laziness & an aesthete may call it economy of means. If an artist thinks about it at all, he calls it common sense. I think the old phrase “kynde witt” is better. It is the wisdom that is in the nature of man.

In the few carvings that I made, I crammed the tusk or tooth so tight full of the subject, that there was not much to scrape away.

*Essay on Philip Hagreen by Graham Carey from Philip Hagreen: The Artist and his Work, Father William Dolan Fletcher, At the Sign of the Arrow, May 1975*

Philip maintains that every true artifact is made for some purpose and that it is therefore to be regarded as a tool for the achieving of that purpose. Its mere existence is not, as is sometimes claimed, and cannot be, its purpose. On the other hand a useful artifact is a thing in itself, an object of a certain kind, something that is as well as does. But whether it can be looked at functionally or formally, the thing is worthy of all the perfection that its maker can lavish upon it. In the case of a wood block, the work must not only be a technical means to a beautiful proof, but a beautiful object in itself. Japanese furniture, for example, is as carefully and lovingly finished on the back, where no one ever sees, as on the front. Fred Partridge, an English craftsman, once said “If you want to judge a piece of work, look first at the back. That will display to you the maker’s devotion to his work or his lack of it.” The tool is an end as well as a means to an end.

*Letter to the Careys 10 January 1976*

I take no end of trouble to clarify the obvious. You cross the ocean & crawl back through the centuries to hide your meaning in a code that no expert could crack. But all you mean is ‘Dear Nancy.’

I am very glad to see how my tools are leading you on to do more ivory carving ... I hope your next ivory will be sculpture. That is always convex. Don’t let those round tools tempt you to scoop cavities.

You once gave me a chip of mastodon of which I made a small crucifix for casting in metal. I have also carved mammoth & walrus & hippo & rhino-snout & a whale

tooth, which was the hardest material of all. ... look at the ivory until you see a thing in it. Develop it like a chick in an egg, until it can live without the shell. Don't grieve it by myths or metacubes. Just let it be its simple self.

Philip's wish for a carving to *be its simple self* is clearly seen in the way he collaborates with his material: preserving, as far as he can, its original shape and nature. The Madonna and Child, carved by Philip in the late 1920s and known as *Our Lady of Africa*,<sup>8</sup> retains the form of an African elephant's ivory tusk; and all such carvings suggest that he enjoyed this close relationship between the subject and its material. He also saw ivory as a fitting material for carving statues of Mary because one of the names under which she is invoked is *Tower of Ivory*.<sup>9</sup>

Philip produced some of his most captivating and evocative work in ivory. These carvings have a subtlety and tenderness about them, which finds an echo in his copper engravings, but is perhaps not so successfully caught in his wood carvings and wood engravings. When Philip began ivory carving, it was a new territory for him and he had to explore techniques for himself. This self teaching is significant, because he was so often conscious of his need to 'unlearn' - to try to forget his art school training. Philip liked order and principle and consistency, so he found it difficult to disregard his past education, however much he longed to. He loved Ogden Nash's rhymes because of the amount of un-learning they demanded - as Philip put it - *you need to forget literacy to rhyme 'garnished' with 'astarnished'*.<sup>10</sup>

Another striking aspect common to Philip's carvings, both in wood and ivory, is the attention he pays to hands. In his carvings of the Madonna and Child, it is as though the hands, and indeed the very experience of holding the child, interest him more than any other aspect of the carving. It is largely through the way in which he shows Mary holding Jesus that Philip conveys her love for her child. Again, the hands on his wood carving of Christ crucified are clearly the hands of a carpenter, hands once capable of using tools skilfully. In his painted wood carving of Joseph and the boy Jesus, made in the late 1920s in Lourdes, we again see the hands protecting the young child, but not shielding him totally from the outside world. This carving has a colourful simplicity that reflects something of church decor in southern France.

The depiction of hands in Philip's carvings gives a powerful visual and tactile confirmation of his own descriptions of making - remarks such as *I do not think in words or in abstractions. My mind is only the exchange between my eyes & my hands*.<sup>11</sup>



The metaphor of the violin and the bow, guided by a skilled individual, recurs quite often in Philip's writings. In a letter to Lord Lytton the image crops up in a more barbed attack on mechanisation:

Lethaby said that arts may be killed. They do not die naturally. Here is an epitaph for one of them:

Sliced Ham

The shop assistant winds the handle much  
As he is wound in the employer's clutch:

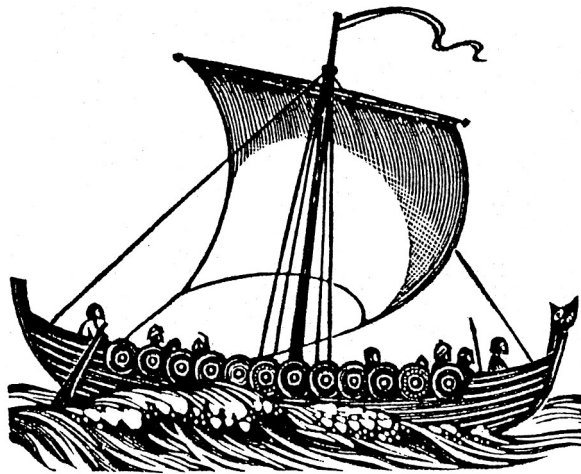
The automatic scales assess the ham,  
The shop assistant doesn't care a damn

But I have seen a shopman work as though  
His ham a violin, his knife a bow.<sup>12</sup>

## *Cuts and Engravings*

*Letter to the Careys 7 February 1952*

I have such a hunger for strong, smooth, purposeful lines - lines in normal health - that I take an awful lot of trouble trying to get them.



Philip's writings about wood cuts and engravings provide a commentary on his own learning. He catalogues his breakthroughs, and describes how working something out for yourself allows you to see other craftsmen's work through new eyes.

*Letter to Baron Jose de Vinck 20 January 1972*

A block is a tool for the use of a printer, usually to be used with type. A good block is one which gives the printer no trouble. One can best learn to make good blocks by printing them.

Blocks are made either by cutting them with a knife, or by engraving them. Cutting is usually done on pear wood, which has a fine even grain, but is not too hard for the knife. It is not liable to warp or split. Wood engravings are made on the end grain of box-wood. This is very hard & fine & gives a surface like marble.

Each method has its merits. For fine detail only engraving is suitable. For bolder work, cutting has the advantage of needing less pressure for printing, as there is some slight sponginess in the wood. However, it will not stand as many prints as the harder box-wood. Any man with a carpenter's bench can plane pear wood to type height<sup>13</sup> & square it to lock up with type.<sup>14</sup> Box-wood has to be prepared by a specialist & is an expensive material. The knife cut thus has an economy of means which makes it what the mathematicians call the more elegant solution.

In each method immense skill was developed. We see it in such cuts as were made from the drawings by Durer & Holbein & from the great Japanese masters. In engravings, we see it in those made from the work of such men as Charles Keene & John Tenniel. In all these, the designer & block maker were two men. In Japan they understood one another, but in the West they were at cross purposes. The one exception was Thomas Bewick. He realised how wood engraving could be used in books & he made it his language.<sup>15</sup>

From William Morris onward there have been artists who have made cuts & engravings, but perhaps these methods may be considered obsolete. They are too slow to pay a wage, now that it costs so much to live.

*Letter to Adé de Bethune 23 December 1935*

I am disappointed that you do not make your blocks for three reasons. Firstly, you are missing such a lot of fun. Secondly, by cutting or engraving you could get better results. Thirdly the photographic zinc block & all that belongs with it is part of the industrial slave system. It was not invented to make better blocks, but only

to make more profits by substituting mechanical tricks for skilled craftsmanship. This applies to all machinery. If you have machinery you must have capitalism or communism. You cannot have freedom unless you return to the use of tools & the skill, responsibility & joy that belongs to them.

*Letter to Father William Dolan Fletcher 5 November 1974*

I hope my blocks may not give you undue trouble. They were made in a primitive way & amid great discomfort. I managed to save a big log of pear wood that would have been burnt. I sawed slices off this when needed & planed them as well as I could to type height. I thought of knives that would serve me. These I forged, tempered & ground. It meant a lot of work, but I can feel that I made those blocks. No one else is responsible for their faults.

*Letter to the Careys 16 January 1945*

I have made a few more experiments on copper. I am interested in what you say about the curvilinear tendency of engraving. I had rather welcomed it as giving my work a bit of rhythm. I think the soft weakness of my attempts is partly due to another cause - the inadequacy of my drawings. My hands are so clumsy that my pencil drawings are disgraceful, smudgy things. All I can trace onto the plate is a crude design of blunt & blundering lines. If I could get a decent drawing onto the plate, I should only have to tighten it up as I engraved. As things are, I push the graver timidly along, wondering which side of the road I should be on & hoping lines will meet where they ought. If I can get more sureness & confidence, I do not think I shall have to avoid flowing lines short of lapsing into waltz-time.

*Letter to the Careys 7 February 1952*

I am glad that you can see dexterity in my engraving. I am getting more control than I used to have & I have contrived some unorthodox tools that suit me, but my work is still very slow & laboured. I have such a hunger for strong, smooth, purposeful lines - lines in normal health - that I take an awful lot of trouble trying to get them.

ABCDEFGHI  
JKLMNOPRS  
TVW, A.abc

### *Pens & Type*

*Philip's own comments recorded freehand in his copy of Benson & Carey's  
The Elements of Lettering (1940)*

Writing with the pen should suit its purpose. For documents & chronicles it should march to the tap of a drum. In letters, which are conversation, it should run. In light or lyric mood it should dance. In a title or a colophon it may swirl about & skate.

For Philip, pens and type were tools in just the same way as gouges and gravers. Without good lettering the reader could not get pleasure from the content of a text. In his 'Commonplace Book,' Philip wrote Lethaby's words in his own hand: *We might reform the world if we began with our own handwriting, but we certainly shall not unless we begin somewhere.*<sup>16</sup>

Philip's father, HWO Hagreen, had encouraged his son to see handwriting as significant and recommended Edward Johnston's influential writing on the subject as a guide.<sup>17</sup> In a letter to a friend HWO Hagreen had spelt out his thoughts on how certain principles should be considered from the outset:

## The Pen

In all ages, the wings of birds have been a delight & an inspiration to artists, whether in Persia or Peru, & when we pick up a moulted feather we marvel at its beauty & handle it with reverence.

This stump of a quill, cut & used & cut again, still has the sure curve that was the theme of all the structure & harmonies of the wing. The beauty of a perfect tool is shown as we handle it. It is pleasant to the touch; round for comfort, yet not too round for control. It does not roll off the table. It is light yet strong & with exactly the right springiness. It splits naturally & cuts to a clean edge. Every size of quill that we can want is at our service. That of the goose gives the normal pen for letter-writing. The crow quill is traditional for very fine work.

Our museums show nothing more precious than the products of this simple tool. If we will but handle it lightly & rightly it can still be for us the key to a world of beauty.

There is no reason why a child's first attempts at lettering should not aim at real style and beauty – speed and other utilitarian merits following later ... the absolutely natural product of a broad nibbed pen used quite freely as a Drawing-tool, with the body held straight and square, and the penholder sloping well out towards the right. Any child can soon get the knack of such forms, and can learn from them the meaning and history of ordinary print. They should be able to develop and design from them a hand fluent, legible and full of character, without the meaningless mechanical drudgery of copying the lifelessly perfect 'copperplate' that has been engraved but never written.<sup>18</sup>

Philip's own hand writing was often admired by his correspondents. He practised what his father preached. His concern for legibility and presentation in lettering was shown in his own clear script and in his descriptions of how different typefaces affected the reader *Perpetua ... is like wire netting and does not hold the focus. The white of the paper dazzles it away.*<sup>19</sup> Philip also designed and made movable wooden type of a size suitable for use in posters. Some of these hand-made letters are now in Ditchling Museum.<sup>20</sup>

*Letter to the Careys 1 March 1962*

Writing is a very personal affair – not so much because of personality, which is commonly over-stressed, but because people's hands differ so greatly in their proportions, potentialities and aptitudes. There is a very wide range of scripts that are legible and beautiful. I don't think any of them should be copied but all might be considered as possible starting points for experiment. One might get hints from cursive scripts, even if they are not in our alphabet. There was lovely Greek stuff, written with a blunt reed, and there is the Japanese phonetic, which can be delicious. Have you ever studied the inscriptions that dance down the backgrounds of Utamaro's prints?

*Philip's Miscellaneous Undated Writings*

Principles of Writing: The purpose of writing is to record & communicate words. Its essential quality therefore is legibility. Robert Bridges defined this as *certainty of deciphering*.<sup>21</sup> Each letter must show its own character without ambiguity. Though each letter has its own personality, all the members of an alphabet must show a family likeness. They must take hands in harmony & walk in step.

To form words, letters must group themselves in close formation. They must not

struggle apart or jostle one another. As letters should follow each other in words so words should follow each other in lines. The interval between them should be sufficient to be obvious & there should be a wider gap after a full stop.

*Letter to Maurice Percival 14 January 1973*

About Roman lettering - I agree it has survived the most atrocious ill usage ... but I do not think it a good alphabet. Caps do not pack well. For instance LA or TT or TV make the word look as though it had lost a front tooth. Then J & U have never integrated with the older letters. In cursive, the common form of r is apt to be too like v & the dotting of i & j & the crossing of t & x stop the run of the pen. It seems strange that, after all the contortions & changes it has gone through, the alphabet should have kept such faults. It may be one of the many cases where man has become a slave to his own invention.

*Letter to Baron Jose de Vinck 20 January 1972*

The most difficult job I ever did was to make some movable wooden type, cut with a knife ... by a vast amount of work I achieved my aim. A great difficulty is that ‘f’ has to be supplemented by coupled letters for “ff”, “fi”, “ffi”, and so on. I made an “f” that packed in any combination. Of this alphabet I have only one proof. I have now had photographs made of it, actual size, and I send you prints.<sup>22</sup>

*Letter to Herbert Simon 15 March 1971*

When I printed, it was with Caslon old face 14pt. I think that more legible than any of Eric’s types. The only type I made was a unique curiosity. I wanted to print some small, narrow, posters with a line of heavy stuff, to shout a few words. Caslon titling was too wide & not strong enough, so I made an alphabet of movable wooden type which I cut with a knife.<sup>23</sup> I managed compression without distortion, & the result was a success.

Like you, I dislike sans serif, except in such large caps as Johnston designed for the Tube. Serifs are needed to suggest enclosed spaces within & between letters. One reads by the counters, not by the contours. Without serifs, the attention escapes into the void.

Of course, I dislike all fashions. Beginning a book near the foot of page one, & pushing illustrations off the paper, are sub-human acts. Yet how little sound, unselfconscious, work gets past a publisher now? They demand stunts.

*Letter to Thomas Barry 22 July 1938*

To offer an argument in sans serif is like putting a train on a railway without rails and expecting it to bump along happily on the sleepers. All types are more or less bad now that they are not made by punch cutters. God does not bless mere design.

Caslon Old Face seems to me to be still the best type available. Of course it has horrible faults especially in its italics, but they are faults of ignorance and of its period - and therefore more easily forgiven than the faults of wilful pride plus machinery.

You ask me my ideas about relation of illustrations to page and so on - but what is there to say? If paper, type, blocks and printing are the work of humble craftsmen all will be well. Taste, academic knowledge of periods and theories of proportion applied to machine-slave products are only face paint on a whore.

### ***The Beauty of Ordinary Things***

‘The Beauty of Ordinary Things’ is the title of a series of wood cuts that Philip made for *Catholic Art Quarterly* between 1948 and 1952. In a broader sense the term exemplifies Philip’s sincere admiration for simple, useful things.

In 1950 Philip discussed the series with the Careys: *These wood engravings have been made from things that were lying around. It will be noticed that they are almost devoid of decoration. Museums tend to accumulate the most richly decorated things. These are not always the best & they are certainly not the ones from which we can learn most.* Graham Carey made further suggestions to Philip of things which he might engrave for the series. Philip replied: *Your suggestions about beautiful ordinary things are excellent & attractive. Like those I have already engraved they are mostly survivals from better days & may soon be lost. The anvil, for instance, evolved for the horseshoe & now the farrier’s is a rare & dying trade. Those who will learn to shave with a real razor are becoming fewer - & so on.*<sup>24</sup> Philip liked to think that his engravings would become a lasting record; a means of celebrating a time when unselfconscious good design mattered.





**THE QUILL:** In all ages, the wings of birds have been a delight & an inspiration to artists, whether in Persia or Peru, & when we pick up a moulted feather we marvel at its beauty & handle it with reverence.

This stump of a quill, cut & used & cut again, still has the sure curve that was the theme of all the structure & harmonies of the wing. The beauty of a perfect tool is shown as we handle it. It is pleasant to the touch; round for comfort, yet not too round for control. It does not roll off the table. It is light yet strong & with exactly the right springiness. It splits naturally & cuts to a clean edge. Every size of quill that we can want is at our service. That of the goose gives the normal pen for letter writing. The crow quill is traditional for very fine work.

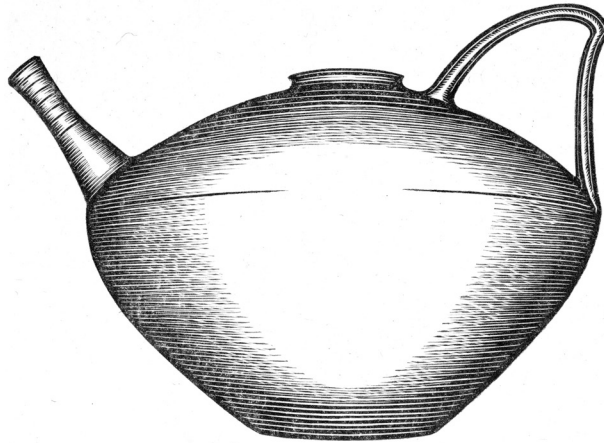
Our museums show nothing more precious than the products of this simple tool. If we will but handle it lightly and rightly it can still be for us the key to a world of beauty.<sup>25</sup>

Here is a **HOOK** such as you may see wherever things are lifted by rope. The rope may be tied to each thing, but that takes time and wears out the rope-end. Long ago the smith perfected this gadget. The metal eye gives the rope room to turn and it also takes the rub. The whole thing is so natural and inevitable that we may fail to notice its beauty. The rhythm of the rope-strands is enriched in the plaiting of the splice. The hook invites the work that it performs so well. No decoration could improve it. Let us thank God and his servant the smith.<sup>26</sup>

**WATER POT** of unglazed earthenware. Diameter 14 inches. Basses Pyrenees. France.

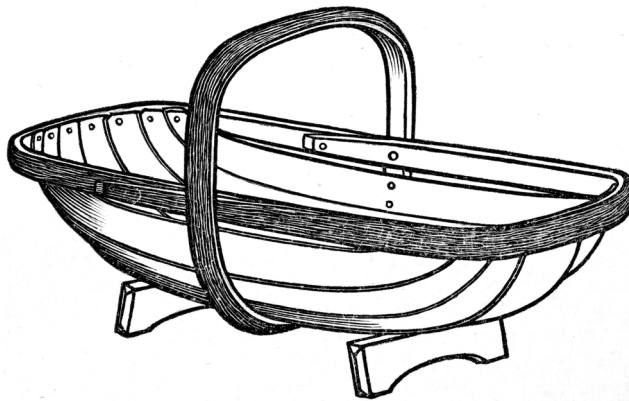
This is used for carrying water and as a reservoir from which it may be poured. These two needs are perfectly met. The narrow base allows the pot to be tilted without effort. It also enables it to be balanced on the head. The spout acts as a



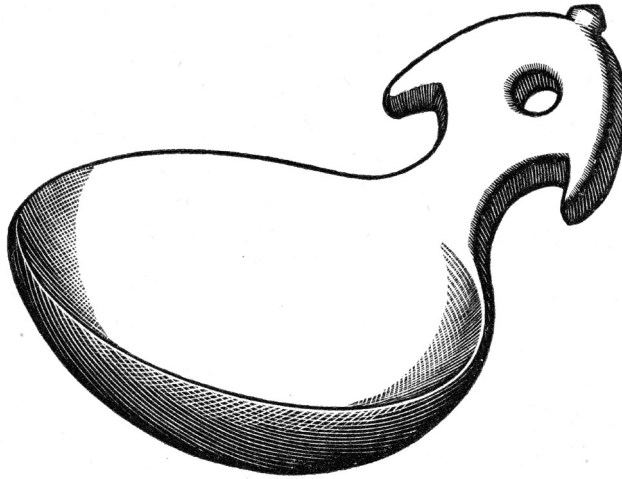


second handle for lifting the full pot. When carried on the head, the upright part of the handle can be fingered to assure vertical poise ...

Consider the majestic bearing of women accustomed to walking with this as though it were a head ornament. Compare it with the pigeon-walk of the modern collapsible type that considers it a hardship not to have hot water from a chromium-plate tap.



**TRUG.** Modern, Sussex, England. This serves as a gardening basket, but its construction is rather that of a clinker-built boat. It is made of birchwood, split, bent and nailed before it has time to dry. The handle and rim are split saplings with the bark left on. These trugs are made in sizes ranging downwards from about 25 inches long. Differences between sizes are enough to allow several to be carried or stored one inside another. They are light, strong and durable.



**MEAL-SCOOP** of alder wood, 7 in. long, from a water-mill in the Hautes Pyrenees, France.

This was for dipping down into the bin to examine samples. The first and second fingers curl under the lop ears and the thumb closes on the hole by which the scoop hung on the nail. To pick it up is like a friendly handshake.

Alder is ideal for such things as it is light and tough and never splits. It is hard to saw and impossible to cleave, but yields freely to the gouge.<sup>27</sup>

*Letter to the Careys 12 January 1950*

We both of us see & handle & love - that is, we really use - normal implements & vessels, with a normal appreciation of them. A reverent sensuality seems to me normal for a man - a soul-body. I hope to do more engravings of common things & also more decorations. The snag about the common things is that they are almost extinct. When a decent thing wears out, or gets broken, it is replaced by a vile mass-produced abortion that is a usurper, an interloper, an intruder into one's home. This can never become one of the household gods. It remains an enemy alien & a corrupting influence.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 31 December 1976*

I have not worked yew, nor did I ever have a lathe, but I have experience of a variety of woods & have found some special merit in most of them. Perhaps you

know that what were called box-wood rulers & protractors were really elder. Box is far too brittle. Hornbeam splits as it dries, so that you cannot have large pieces, but small pieces are precious for their great hardness. It was used for the cogs of wooden wheels in mills.

A precious wood that is often wasted is alder. It is the perfect wood for carving - statues, picture frames etc. It is the only wood for sabots, because it is so light & tough. It never warps or cracks. It is the easiest wood to shape with a gouge. If waxed & polished, it looks like pear-wood. Its charcoal was considered the best for making gunpowder.

You may know that oaks used to be felled when the sap was rising, because then the bark could be most easily stripped off for the tanner. Carving was done while the wood was green. It would harden then without rupturing itself.

Elm bowls were turned green. They hardened out of shape, but they did not leak. I could go on about the special value of ivy, dogwood, willow, acacia & the service tree, but it only shows how old I am. Who cares now that a flail will only stand the beating if it is of crab-apple?



## *Tradition*

*Letter to the Careys 7 June 1956*

Folk speak of following tradition, which is absurd. Tradition is behind us & we are always going on into unmapped country. The arts, so far, only amount to clearings here & there in unlimited forest. It is no use trying to foresee the result of our work.

Philip saw himself as part of an ongoing tradition and was interested in the ways in which history had both helped and hindered expressive craftsmanship. He knew that his role was difficult and misunderstood - but not impossible. In his 'Commonplace Book' - (a notebook into which he recorded sayings and quotes) he again recorded the words of Lethaby - *No art that is only one man deep is worth much; it should be a thousand men deep.*<sup>28</sup>

Philip gave much thought to the ways in which good craft practice might be inspired in an industrial world. He insisted that the responsibility lay with the maker rather than the world at large. Cobbett had written in *Rural Rides*:

Some people, under this state of things, consoled themselves by saying that 'things will come about;' they had come about before, and would come about again. They deceived themselves. Things did not come about; the seasons came about, it was true; but something must be done to bring things about. Instead of the neuter verb - to speak as a grammarian - they should use the active; they should not say 'things will come about,' but 'things must be put about.'<sup>29</sup>

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 2 February 1980*

I hope you may succeed in getting some youngsters to make things - & so make themselves. The most sure title to ownership is our right to what we ourselves have made. We seek the perfection of what we are making & we value the tools of our craft as parts of our being. Those who have this sense of ownership will respect the property of others. They can never be vandals.

*Enclosure in letter to the Careys 9 July 1967*

We often hear it said that a man has mastered his medium, that he shows his mastery & so on. The expression is apt if it means the man has come through his apprenticeship & has the skill of his trade. But it can be misleading & may show a misunderstanding of art. What really happens is that the artist is attracted to a craft & makes friends with it. He makes friends with the job, with the materials &

with the tools. He looks to them for guidance & they tell him what is needed. Art is a matter of love & understanding. A work of art is the child of a happy marriage.

*Letter to Nevill Coghill 18 August 1949*

Forest trees only grow to their full height if they form a forest. If man is set in solitude or in a bad tradition, he needs abnormal strength & vision & confidence to produce normal work. It took all the genius of Blake & Morris to lift them out of the swamp.<sup>30</sup>

*Letter to Father Kevin Scannell 3 March 1937*

A job of craftsmanship needs more than one maker. The experiments necessary to find the right use of a material can only be worked out by generations of master-to-apprentice tradition. In most crafts, this tradition has been lost. We have to begin again. In some ways, we have not even the advantage of a clear plot to build on. All the ground is cumbered with tangled wreckage - centuries of vanity preceded the greed of industrialism, so it is not merely a matter of doing without machinery.

We craftsmen have got to learn - as quickly as we can. It is not only tricks of technique that must be rediscovered: it is humility, obedience, perseverance & economy that are our need - also courage & confidence.

You are probably right that you are puzzled by arts because you have not practised them. I can only appreciate in a very limited way the arts that I do not practise. For instance - within the last few weeks I have tackled & mastered the job of engraving on copper. Now, copper engravings have become totally different to me. I can enjoy them & criticise them as never before - though I had been looking at them all my life.

*Letter to an unknown recipient about his Christmas card Virgo Virginum quomodo fiet istud.*<sup>31</sup>

How very kind of you to send me a note about that Christmas card of mine. I agree that the method is interesting and the result a failure, and I agree that modern woodcuts lack something that was in the old ones. As you ask how this is, I make a suggestion. When there was neither slavery nor machinery, everything was so decently made that to make it beautiful was as easy as making a fire in a forest. To create beauty in present surroundings is like making a fire in the sea. It is a self-conscious process. I cannot decorate that initial O as well as the least 12th century

scribes, but it is less from lack of skill than from lack of tradition. Skill can be attained in a few years, but the experience of many generations is necessary for the best that man can make.

Plain chant did not come of a musician, but of a civilisation. We still have the notes of that, and Benedictines have something of the tradition. It is perhaps the best of human things left in the world today - and yet I wonder whether, if we could hear a ninth century choir, we should find something missing from our rendering of it. I fancy there might be as big a difference as that between the old wood cuts and the new. Perhaps tradition is the wrong word to use of our knowledge of plain chant, for we do not make or develop now, we only use. An artistic tradition should be growth. Experience collects like sap in a tree and then the branches extend. The tree may rot and fall at last, but only to enrich the ground in which the seed is sprouting. So it has happened many times, until this new slavery called "industry" crushed something that had survived all the tyrannies of heathendom, and man would rather buy cheaply than make fittingly. There remain certain scattered and battered individuals who try to make things decently - with a dim hope that their great-grandchildren may make them beautifully.

*Letter to Father Tom Phelan 14 January 1960*

I am exactly as puzzled as you are as to how anyone, in these days, can begin to apply the principles of human work in which we both of us profoundly believe.

In the days of Ruskin & Morris, some traditions were still alive & circumstances were not compelling. By the end of the First World War, the situation was almost desperate. By the end of the Second, Industrialism & Art had torn Man in half.

There was a time when a farmer had the choice of using tractors or horses. Now the roads are too smooth for a horse to pull on. You can't get stabling or oats at a road-house. The smithy has become a garage or Ye Olde Forge Tea Shoppe, & the saddler's widow sells dog-collars & plastic hand-bags from Japan.

Other stories have the same plot. My job of engraving cannot be done on stainless steel or chromium plating, which have replaced silver. Wood-blocks & hand printing were only worth using on hand-made paper. That has gone because of typewriters - & anyhow there is no linen rag to make it from.

Of course you know all this as well as I do. What I set out to say was that though I see no hopeful sign - yet I hope. Perhaps a new approach to the subject is needed &

you younger folk in a younger country may make it. I cannot think in terms other than those of the old methods.

## ***The Wisdom of Solomon***

*Holy Bible (Authorised Version) Chapter 13, verses 11 to 17*

Philip loved this Old Testament text where the idols of the gentiles are attributed to the experiments of a carpenter. He enjoyed both the recognition of a craftsman's obsessive joy in making and the sounds of the words.

Now a carpenter that felleth timber, after he  
hath sawn down a tree meet for the purpose,  
and taken off all the bark skilfully round about,  
and hath wrought it handsomely, and made  
a vessel thereof fit for the service of man's life;

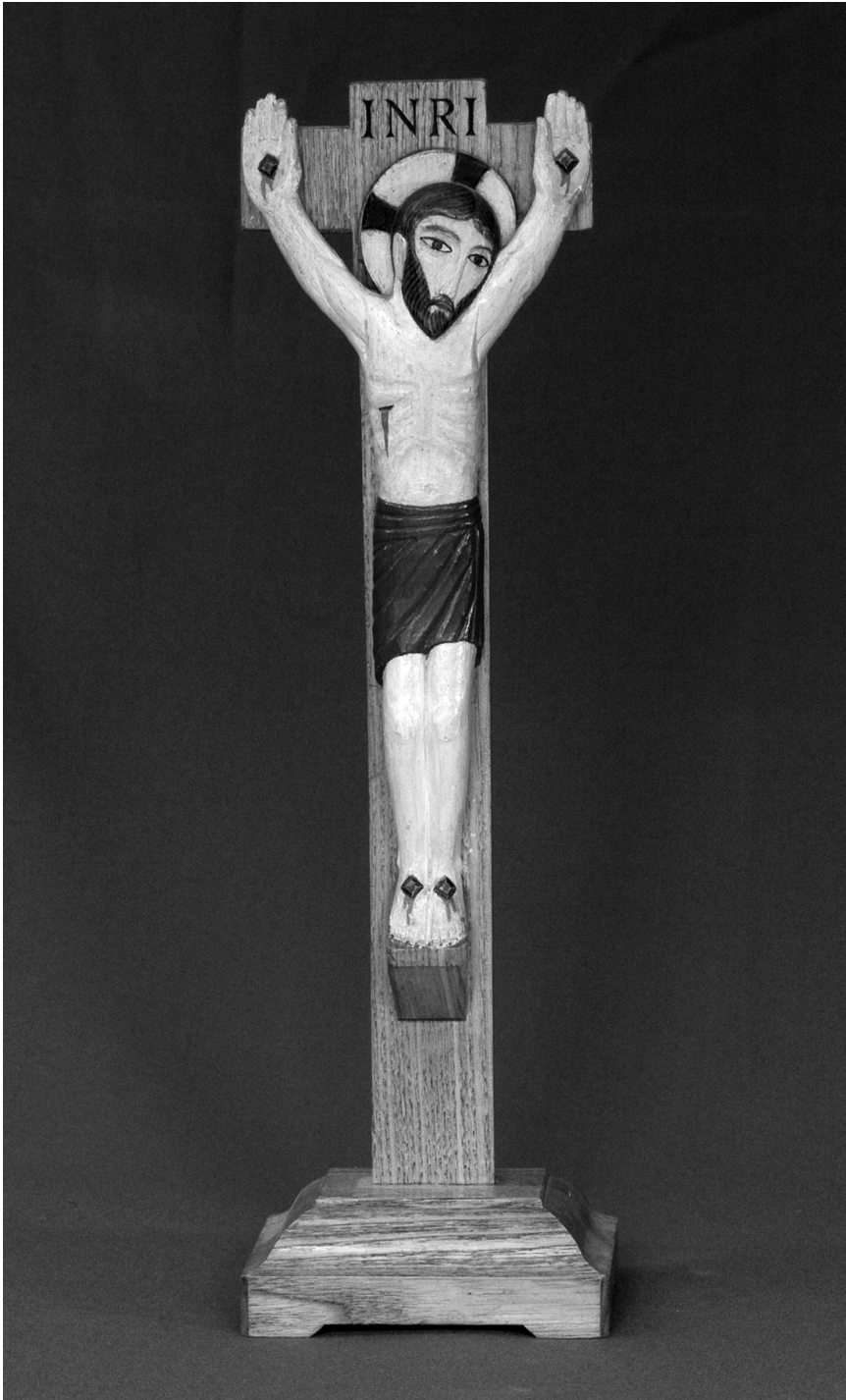
And after spending the refuse of his work  
to dress his meat, hath filled himself;

And taking the very refuse among those which  
served to no use, being a crooked piece of wood,  
and full of knots, hath carved it diligently,  
when he had nothing else to do,  
and formed it by the skill of his understanding,  
and fashioned it to the image of a man;

Or made it like some vile beast, laying it over  
with vermilion, and with paint colouring it red,  
and covering every spot therein;

And when he had made a convenient room for it,  
set it in a wall, and made it fast with iron ...





## ***The Four Causes***

Graham Carey, 'What is Catholic Art?' in *Christian Social Art Quarterly* Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1937.

Art is the imposition of an original FORM upon a MATERIAL by the use of certain MEANS to achieve a given END.

The statement above was used by Graham Carey to define 'The Four Causes' in 1937. The subject of 'The Four Causes' was to preoccupy many of the Catholic art publications with which Carey was involved in subsequent decades and was used as a test to define 'Good Work'.

Aristotle proposed that any natural change could be described according to four basic causes: 'The Four Causes' of all creation. For any natural change there are four explanations: to do with the form (Formal), the components or Material, the tools or means of its making (Efficient) and to what end; what is it destined for (Final).

Philip agreed with Carey about the framework of 'The Four Causes':

The questions about any work of art are - What is it for? What is it made of? What tools & thoughts were used in the making? In other words, are the four causes all satisfactory? If they are it is good art whether it pleases us or not. The appetite is a dangerous guide, as you suggest.<sup>32</sup>

The causes need not be seen as distinct. If the designer and maker are the same person: the tools are an extension of his eyes, his limbs, his fingers. Through them his will embodies the idea he has in his mind. He can visualise each stage, each stroke, knowing how far he dare push his own skill, what can be done with these tools, what are the potentials of this particular piece of material. So the material cause, the efficient cause and the formal cause are unified. When it comes to the final cause; however well the maker may understand the needs of the user, he will most perfectly know his own. That may be more important than the quality of the material or the way it is treated. The exercise of all his faculties in a creative way develops the maker.<sup>33</sup>

'The Four Causes' provided a strong justification for hand-crafted objects to be designed and made by the same individual. If the designer of an object did not make it himself, then the mind behind the work would not be the mind of the maker, and the formal cause would not be his. Philip and Graham Carey also agreed that *the formal cause is the fourth card that*

*cannot rightly be played until the other three are on the table.*<sup>34</sup>

In preparation for Edward Johnston's 1933 paper, presented at The Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society in that year, Johnston discussed with Philip Haggren (as well as with Ethel Mairet, Frank Partridge and Joseph Cribb) how their intentions as makers could be expressed in words. Philip chose to talk not about wood engraving but about his experiments with ivory carving. Both Philip and Edward Johnston were very interested in how the maker's own hands, tools and the natural materials with which they worked all interacted. Philip's own words - quoted by Johnston in this 1933 paper - show how his work exemplified 'The Four Causes:'<sup>35</sup>

### ***Final***

"Portraits of Our Lady are consciously and unconsciously made by all artists - in carving, painting, or writing - and to me this ideal image suggests the best use of a piece of Ivory."

### ***Material***

"This carving exists because that rhinoceros horn existed. I should prefer always to start with a piece of ivory, already beautiful in itself, and hope to preserve its special quality. The tip is solid ivory & permits considerable relief in the heads & arms of the figures. The lower part is hollow, necessitating a much lower relief in the skirt of the robe. The hem of the robe forms a horizontal line round the horn, and below this line a short length of the horn is left untouched, save for a slight polishing, and makes a perfect base."

### ***Efficient***

"The proper care of tools, which includes the improving & even making of them, as an extension of your fingers, is the main thing. It is the positive aspect that matters: mistakes are not to be worried over - they are pushed out by the merits."

### ***Formal***

"A small piece of tusk suggests a form which could suitably stand on the mantelpiece - that place variously described as the 'Shrine' or 'Centre' or 'Museum'



of the home. In a time-serving age, the clock naturally occupies the centre, but time should wait upon eternity.

Philip also referred to adding harmonies to the ivory when carving. These connections between making things and making music crop up quite often in Philip's later writing. His first recorded attempt to make links between music and art came when writing about British Painting in *Music & Letters* Journal in 1920. Johnston himself also spoke of harmony as something that needed to be at the root of formal penmanship: *The idea of heaven and earth is there, harmony and contrast.*<sup>36</sup> While the relationship between music and art intrigued Philip, Philip remained deeply distrustful of films:

*Letter to Father Burke 29 October 1947*

Some months ago I spoke to you about the cinema. It seemed to me a pity that you had become a victim of that drug and were becoming an unpaid advertiser for it. Those who are addicted to a drug either try to conceal the fact or they evolve arguments to justify the habit. The latter is the more dangerous line because it affects public opinion and encourages others to form the habit without the restraint of shame. Having read what you say to Catholic Youth, I have written down my comment for you. There is much that I might say on other aspects of the subject and I should like to write of the positive possibilities - of the glorious and wholesome alternatives to sitting in the dark and wondering whether the film producer is showing originality. But this must suffice for now.

... We can consider the final cause of films. That is the acquisition of money - an eminently Catholic cause. Then we can consider the material cause. This is complicated, because many materials are involved and most of them are not raw materials. First, a large quantity of darkness is required - thousands of cubic feet of it. This has to be artificially produced because God made sun, moon and stars and said: - Let there be light; - and saw that it was good. Within the artificial darkness an artificial light has to be produced. This involves electric current, wires & gadgets and all the business of dynamos, grids & what-not. Then there is the film itself. The production of this and its sensitising involve industrial activity from the equator to the arctic.

Now every stage of every process in all this requires that machines shall be tended by their slaves. Not one of these slaves can have the normal opportunity to develop his character & abilities.

*Letter to the Careys 16 December 1961*

I came upon a quotation recently that pleased me. It says what I believe & have tried to say;

RULE OF CONDUCT:

- 1) Necessity for a rule.
- 2) Morals consist in establishing a hierarchy among things & in using the lesser to obtain the greater. This is an ideal strategy.
- 3) Never lose sight of the end. Never prefer the means
- 4) Regard oneself as a means; thus never prefer oneself to the chosen end, to the work ...

You probably agree with it and with me. And it is just what we can't get others to see ... The clergy won't have it because they have got it fixed in their heads that art is a matter of taste. It is of no use to speak to them of obedience to the job, because they do not believe there is a right way of making things. They advocate obedience, but can only think of it as obedience to an ecclesiastic of some sort. How nice it would be if one could use that quotation as coming from some saint or theologian! But it is from "The Journals of André Gide, 1890." I gather that he was a bad lot & that his works are on the Index. <sup>24</sup> Heaven help us - & reward Gide for seeing that bit of truth!

## ***Symbolism***

*Letter to Graham Carey 9 November 1957*

If you ever find yourself thinking of Our Lord as a proposition in solid geometry, don't tell anyone - unless it is a psychiatrist.

Philip was adamant that discussion of symbolism was a distraction from any constructive debate about useful objects. His protests are usually comic and when he confronts Graham Carey with his disagreements over matters of symbolism the sub-text of all his arguments resonate with a mixture of amusement and indignation. Philip was provoked into discussion about symbolism by various articles which appeared in magazines edited

by Carey during the 1950s and 1960s, such as *Good Work*. Unlike ‘The Four Causes,’ symbolism was a subject on which the two men could not agree.

*Letter to the Careys 1 January 1953*

I can take no interest in symbols. I think a chalice has got a whole-time job to be a chalice, without being a gallery of allegorical diagrams.

*Letter to the Careys 13 June 1953*

About cubes and centrality - to carry the idea through, the priest ought to stand on the centre of the altar and hold the chalice above his head with his four hands. The absurdity of this reminds us that God in his making shows no interest in cubes or centrality. He makes a man to work one way round. His nose and toes point one way and he is blind behind.

*Letter to the Careys 21 July 1953*

Of course symbolism of a sort is God’s own language. We can’t criticise the Holy Spirit for appearing as a dove or as tongues of flame. But such symbolism is to make things easier for us - like the idea of God as our Father or of Our Lord as the Good Shepherd. Such ideas are of a different kind from the unnecessary linking together of different things to their mutual disadvantage. A sword may happen to resemble a cross, but to connect them is to lessen the significance of both.

*Letter to the Careys 31 January 1957*

I also agree that the truth about art is knowable and tellable. Incidentally, I think you have told it more clearly than anyone I know. When I disagree with you it is not about art: it is about things which have nothing whatever to do with art, but which are apt to get into the rational-milk-without-guile and turn it sour. What I have in mind is such nonexistent and irrelevant notions as cubes etc and the diagrammatic confusion that you call symbolism ... I shall go on trying to cure you of symbolism and I expect you to want to cure me of my scepticism about philosophers. I know that theory is alright - in theory. But I know that it can be disastrous if it gets in the workshop. Romney Green<sup>37</sup> did superb woodwork. Then in wartime he taught mathematics. Returning to his workshop, he got applying his



mathematics. He got thinking through his adjustable set-square instead of through his spoke-shave. His furniture became solid geometry and it was deadly.

... You may wonder why I write so much about what must seem to be my prejudices. I suppose it is because I am like you and with you in wanting as many people as possible to make things as beautifully as possible. To that end, I am anxious that nothing should complicate the problems of making, Also I want people to meet as few don'ts as possible. People sometimes reach beauty by the most unlikely roads. What looks like a digression sometimes proves to be a short cut.

*Letter to the Careys 8 March 1957*

Apart from its origins - symbolism is a cumbersome nuisance to those who can read. Its justification was illiteracy. Pubs had names that could be shown in pictures so long as there were folk who could not read. The "Elephant & Castle" & the "Who'd a thought it" are equally identifiable today.

You may wonder why I should not let pass your symbolism as a hobby that I don't happen to share. It is because it distorts & colours what you write about the making of things. I think that what you can tell about art is so valuable that it is a disaster when it is thus adulterated ... My reaction to your symbolism is perhaps



a rush to the defence of things. I want each thing to have its proper nature. The needs of the job should inform the making. A house should be a house. The building will be queered if the house is to be a diagram of the cosmos.

*Letter to The Catholic Art Quarterly, Volume XVI, no 2.*

Distortion is what the artist is constantly accused of – or admired for – and if he is any good he is innocent of distorting anything. The assumption in the public mind is that the sculptor sees a human head and then, instead of making a stone head the same shape, he distorts the vision. It is assumed that the sculptor had an idea like a plaster cast from the life and then altered that idea.

The use of the word “distortion” admits that there was some such plaster cast idea to distort and this is the error that we particularly want to dispel. The sculpture starts with a lump of stone and he fashions it into a stone head without having had any head other than that stone head in his mind at any stage of the work. Thus there was no image to distort and if the sculptor has rightly appreciated his material he has not distorted the stone.

Though the stone head has not been copied or distorted from a human head, it may have become a most lively and expressive head. Yet it may conform only to the simplest heraldic specification of a head: “In chief two eyes” and so on. If Picasso put “two eyes in chief sinister” he is simply wrong.

*Letter to the Careys 9 July 1959*

Graham’s article has of course, good thinking & good illustrations. I am only sorry that the word “distortion” should be accepted & used at all. It means something unnatural & undesirable, & the philistines rightly use it with that meaning. But if one pours water from a cylindrical vessel into a conical one the water is not distorted. It takes a new & appropriate shape, as the ivory carver’s thought takes appropriate shape in the tusk. Distortion twists things out of shape. Art, if it twists things, twists them into shape. Representations are things translated - thoughts imaged - imaginings embodied - above all, things transfigured.

*Letter to the Careys 11 July 1961*

I have disagreed with the things you have published about church building. The achievement of sacred space seems to me nonsense ... I know there are people who

feel holy if the light is bad or if there is a smell of incense or dry rot or floor polish. They feel scientific in a smell of disinfectant and vigorous on a noisy motor-bicycle. But such things are foolishness.

*Letter to the Careys 27 July 1961*

As to the sense of the sacred, the numinous and so on, that is not a thing you can cater for because it is a personal fancy & persons differ completely as to what provokes it ... There is no universal feeling about these things. The better a church pleases some people, the more it will offend others. But the Church is universal & her Truth above feeling. The job of the builder is to provide a suitable area of floor for a given number to kneel or sit and perform the functions for which they gather. There must be accessibility & passage-way. All this must be protected from the weather, lit & ventilated. The builder will find quite enough problems of construction without having his mind confused by cubes & glamour. He has got to consider keeping warmth in or keeping heat out ... Words and music should be clearly heard and noises from the street & planes should be muffled. There should be no waste of space or materials. The height of some French Cathedrals is as silly as the tower of Babel or a top-hat, but their fashion is still followed.

*'Concerning a Doorway.' Enclosed with a letter 3 March 1968 to the Careys.*

There were some folk somewhere who thought of the earth as an island in an endless ocean. Others thought of it as a lump held up by Atlas or by an elephant standing on a tortoise. But most people did not bother about fantasies. They got on with such useful work as building doorways.

A doorway is not a solid set in a fluid. It is a way through a wall - an upright oblong hole. The uprights had to carry weight and to show that they would carry it. Those who built them thought with the minds of caryatids. In England they developed 'long and short' work which was perfect for square corners. Then they took to columns for the supports. The masons enjoyed the power of the arch above. To show this they chiselled a big spike on each voussoir. This made the chevron zig-zag which gave the arch a bite like a shark. As doorways grew and were recessed through thick walls, supports were often ranks of round and square columns with capitals. Each bore its rib of arch with any decoration that the mason thought of. The chevron was pushed to the outside because it was only effective on a large scale. Engineering and fashion went on changing but one never bumped one's nose against a solid in a fluid. The specification remained - In a wall stony a void proper.

The doorway shown in the Summer Good Work has its stones de-naturalised. They have been given a 'perm.' The posts have one function, the lintel another. Your waggle denies this. It crawls up or down and pretends to have an impossible mitre joint. You think of seas with vertical horizons. Do the turns at shin level indicate an up-side-down sea and should we wade through it or hop?

Our thoughts here are not compatible. Yours of a bubble that blew away ages ago. Mine rejoice in the gift of gravity that keeps us on a spinning globe and keeps stones in place if we handle them aright. Do not look at a thermometer to learn the time nor search Ezekiel for a telephone number.

### *Philosophers Go Ballooning*

*Letter to the Careys 27 June 1960*

Beware of Words!

Both as a working craftsman and as an observer of other people's art, Philip found philosophy unhelpful. One of his most memorable accounts of how philosophy did not aid his experience of the visual comes in his description of visiting the William Blake Bicentenary exhibitions in London. Philip again used his own comic imagery to underline the diverging paths of philosophers and artists.

*Letter to the Careys 13 August 1957*

My special objective was the bi-centenary exhibition of Blake at the British Museum & the V&A. It is the biggest show of his work ever and it is as wonderful as I had hoped. ... I ought to be able to write something about these visits: the impossibility of doing so shows me how art is in practice outside philosophy. Philosophy would show, for instance, that a Blake painting is utterly bad, yet our eyes tell us that it is enormously good. The subject may be meaningless to us. It may be catalogued as "Unidentified subject, perhaps allegorical." There are figures compounded from bad engravings after Michelangelo. These are contorted into impossible poses & distorted into impossible proportions. There are wings like grave-stones, there is drapery like water-weed: herbage on the ground looks as though it had been boiled. All that philosophy can see is that the work is bad, without even the merit of humility, for Blake said it was the best for centuries. By

all reason these pictures should be “horror comics.” Yet they are heavenly things, whose uplifting power is irresistible.

In the British Museum, it happened that I & another man were looking at a picture & he was so thrilled that he had to exclaim about it, even to a stranger. We got talking & it was clear that the joyous virtue of Blake was equally manifest to both of us. Yet I was a tired old Englishman & he was a vigorous man of not more than 30 & he was a black African.

Of course, a philosopher might be told that Blake was a great artist. In that case, he would study Blake’s writings & find that he was a Manichee,<sup>38</sup> that he thought Newton a devil because he was interested in natural phenomena - & so on. Not by words can one learn about painting & not by any means can one learn to paint like Blake.

*Letter to the Careys 8 November 1957*

About our philosophers & art - they have no workshop experience. Some of them would avoid such experience, lest it should sully the ethereal purity of their philosophising. Each of them tunes his “aesthetic” to what he has been told is the keynote - the Parthenon or Raphael or Cezanne or Le Corbusier.

I want every help for art, but I don’t see philosophy as a possible ally. Art is concerned with things that exist. Philosophy is concerned with abstractions that cannot exist. You say yourself that doing & being are separable in thought if not in reality. I say that if they are not separable in reality, then thought about them separately is false thought.

*Letter to the Careys 27 June 1960*

Blessed be Jowett who has shown you the danger of thinking in words! He shook Belloc in a similar way. In this case, I hope he has told you what I have been trying to say these many years. Philosophers go ballooning and mistake clouds for mountains. Their balloons are words that have got detached from things. Beware of words. Trust in them leads to thinking separately of ideas which cannot be separated in fact - & associating things which are not related in fact.

Jacques Maritain’s *Art & Scholasticism* was first published in English in 1923. Philip studied the ideas put forward in this book and discussed them, first with Eric Gill and later with

other craftsmen working at Ditchling. Over time he began to see a parallel between his artistic development and his understanding of Maritain's theory: by his own account it took him twenty years to become an engraver and twenty years to realise Maritain's mistake - The distinction between making & doing, between art & prudence, was the root error.<sup>39</sup> Eric Gill had endorsed Maritain's theory in *Art Nonsense & Other Essays*, in which he wrote: *Here we must remember that a work of art is a thing - it is a thing made - it is not a deed done. A work of art is not an act of prudence. Prudence ... is not concerned with things but with deeds.*<sup>40</sup>

*Letter to Dear Brother 5 December 1982*

Eric ... sought authority, but sought it in the wrong place. Maritain & Father Vincent followed St Thomas who followed Aristotle. They said that doing is ruled by Prudence; that making is ruled by Art & that Art is not a moral virtue.

Langland knew better. He knew that arts are gifts of the Holy Ghost.

*Letter from Dr John McQuillan 1 September 1948*

The distinction between making & doing in the matter of prudence is sheer nonsense, or even worse ... Prudence is the first of the four Cardinal Virtues, and is meant to control the whole of our lives.

*Letter to Dr McQuillan 12 September 1948*

I am most grateful & comforted by what you say of Prudence & Making & Doing. It is what Eric wished. But the theme of Maritain's book was otherwise. Maritain said he was stating the teaching of the Ancients & the Schoolmen. Eric went through & through that book with learned men expounding it - Fr. Vincent McNabb - Fr. John O'Connor - Fr. Austin Barker & others. Eric obediently accepted their assurance that Maritain was right. Looking back over those years of discussion; it seems to me that Eric was thinking about Art, while Maritain & Co. were thinking about the works of famous men. Maritain & Co. quite rightly found these works difficult to justify as products of Prudence. But they did not think of rejecting them as bad art. They tried to rate them according to their popularity amongst the highbrows & so they devised an intellectual virtue of Art that was not a moral virtue. "The wind has blown them all away."<sup>41</sup>

Philip set out his refutation in an essay entitled *Things & Their Making* which was published in *The Cross & the Plough* and also in *The Catholic Art Quarterly* in the United States. Although the essay was first published in 1948, the argument it contains was probably formed at least a decade earlier. Philip stood by *Things & Their Making* and regarded it as his testament. In 1978 he wrote *How do I dare to contradict the great philosophers? Because however well they knew their business, they did not know my business. Also we can see they were wrong about slavery, so why should we think they were right about art? Thirty years ago I wrote down what I still think is the truth of the matter.*<sup>42</sup>

### ***Things & Their Making***

St Augustine spoke of beauty as *splendor ordinis*<sup>43</sup> which is perhaps as near to a definition as we can have. St Thomas spoke of beauty as *id quom visum placet*, and this is commonly quoted as St Thomas's definition of it. Actually, it is a statement of how beauty is enjoyed - not by being used or consumed or possessed, but simply by being perceived.

The simple truth about beauty is that it is an attribute of God. It is a sign of God's handiwork. Beauty cannot come from anywhere but God. God has seen that his creation is very good, and we can see that it is very beautiful. Wherever God's purpose is fulfilled beauty is shown, whether we can see it or not. God's creatures, sustained by his will and obedient to his laws, act on one another. The wind sets waves in rhythm and the waves churn pebbles to roundness and spread sand to smoothness. All is changing continually, but the change is from beauty to beauty. The spider's web and the bird's nest cannot fail in beauty, for these creatures make according to God's will.

Man is created with ability to make, with the instincts of a maker and with the need and duty of spending most of his life in the making. It may be doubted whether any human activity is without an element of making. A cow eats, but a man orders his eating so that he makes a meal. A beast may travel, but a man may so order his travelling that he makes a journey. We naturally use the word when we think of man's higher acts. The word poet means maker, and we think of poetry as a product of man's higher faculties. Above all, man makes his prayer. He makes his acts of faith, etc., as he makes his Confession and makes his Communion. But man has free will and is apt to sin. If he makes according to God's will, what he makes has beauty; it takes its place in God's universe.



This is the simple truth about art, for art is the right way of making such things as it is right to make. When man makes rightly, he is acting as God's agent and the thing made shows by its beauty that God willed it. To be rightly made, a thing must be appropriate to its purpose; it must be made of suitable material, and the material must be fashioned in ways suitable to its nature. Suitable tools and processes must be used, and all must be done in manner suitable to the maker. This last rightness means that the work involved must be appropriate work for a man - a creature fallen and redeemed, a sinner but a candidate for eternal union with God. It also means that it must be appropriate to the particular man, whether he be a genius or a dullard. No two works of art are exactly similar, for no two human beings are alike and none of them is quite as he was yesterday. The perfection of each work of art is peculiar to itself. This is true of God's art, for every one of his blades of grass is specially fitted for its function.

To put this simple truth in another way: Man must make. It is his duty to God and to his neighbour that he should make rightly. Right making is God's work done by man, so it has something of God's beauty. Creative work is intended to develop the maker. It exercises his will and his judgment, it refines his senses, and it gives full play and discipline to his imagination. The maker is concerned to perfect the thing he is making, and the most important effect of that is to perfect the maker. At the present time this simple truth is generally denied, or its application is despaired of. Making is everywhere displaced by mechanical production, and what is called art is governed by aesthetics - that is, by pleasure-seeking. Men are almost all employed in sub-human work. Their creative faculties are undeveloped and their senses and imaginations undisciplined through lack of right use.

That sins of greed and injustice should gradually have produced this system and smirched the whole world with its ugliness is not to be wondered at. What is surprising is that such hideous violation of the rights of God and man should have been achieved without resistance, or even protest, from churchmen. This failure has, no doubt, many reasons and many excuses. I am going to suggest one reason which may have hampered churchmen in the past and which makes them helpless in the face of industrialism today.

Learned men are constantly reminding us of our debt to ancient Greece. Undoubtedly we have received a great deal from that source. What we owe for it depends on its worth. Now, however great the philosophy and the art of Greece, they are vitiated by slavery. This philosophy and this art have percolated through Christian philosophy and Christian art, and after two thousand years of that cleansing they still bring with them the poison of slavery. Even those who see slavery as an evil that should be abolished think that there are liberal arts and servile arts, or fine arts and mere crafts. Along with this false distinction we have inherited another which is even more harmful. This is a wrong idea of the distinction between doing and making. We are told that doing is governed by prudence, and that making is governed by art. We know that Prudence is the Queen of the moral virtues; but a list of the moral virtues does not include art. No one suggests that the artist is at anytime outside the realm of Prudence, but there is a strong suggestion that his art is.

Now this is absurd. Art - right making - is the making of what God wants us to make in the way he wishes us to make it. If it were not this it would be sin. Patience, fortitude, modesty, obedience, etc. - these are the rules of art as they are of conduct. Impatience, slackness, self-assertion, disobedience, etc. - these are the faults of art as they are of manners.

Making is God's province now, as it was in the beginning and as it was in Nazareth. This province has been invaded and God's rule usurped. If we can do little in the way of rebellion, at least we need not acquiesce. We can still pray for God's kingdom to come and not that the enemy's rule may be blessed.

*Letter to the Careys 10 October 1948*

I have just finished this book label for Hilda. I have not kept as close to classical forms as I did for Hodgie Shaw, because I wanted to make the most of the carved lines & also to fill the space as evenly as possible. I hope you, & Hilda, will not mind this rather 17th century touch.



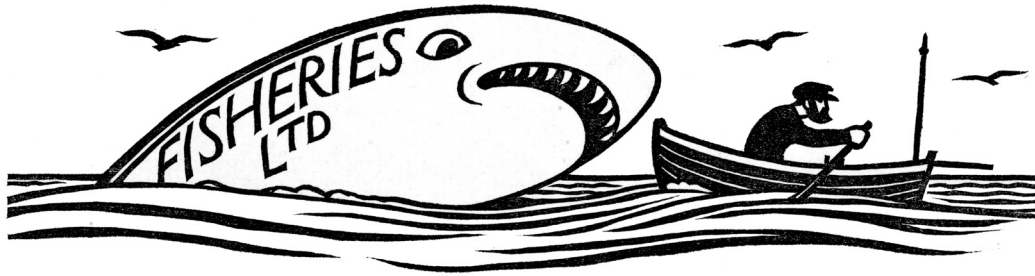


In the case of the block for Christopher, if I fill the two lines with caps, the ‘Carey’ will have to be in letters more than twice as high as the ‘Christopher.’ Do you think it would be better to put the ‘Christopher’ in upper & lower? I enclose sketches of both arrangements. Another way would be to keep to one size of letter & so get an even texture, & fill up the spaces with ornament. I enclose a sketch of this too ... Every little block I make has problems peculiar to itself & they take a deal of thinking out.

*Writing about a bookplate for the daughter of Nevill Coghill in 1943.*

I puzzled much over this block as it was difficult to get an even texture with all the round letters coming in one half of the thing. The words naturally filled the space without calling for anything fanciful in the way of flourishes. I have therefore tried to mitigate the austerity by putting some jam on the border.





THE SHARK

## Part 5 The Common Good

The 1930s and 1940s brought ‘intense debate on the nature and limits of The Common Good’.<sup>1</sup> The Catholic philosopher Jaques Maritain, whose book *Art an Scholasticism* had strongly influenced The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic during the 1920s, lectured and published on the subject of the Common Good between 1939 and 1946.

In many ways Philip lived a very local life: he travelled very little and focussed on the precise demands of a current commission, spending long hours in his workshop. His concern for ‘The Common Good’ of mankind was shaped by a recognition that few people in modern industrial society had the freedom to shape their working lives the way he had done. He believed that ‘The Common Good’ of the working population had been compromised by an industrialised society. This society inhibited and undermined the individual - making demands on the workforce that limited their time with their families and their communities and robbed them of a sense of using the skills to develop satisfaction and confidence through work. The articles that he wrote on the problems of working in an industrial society argue that modern industrial working life is essentially unchristian. The woodcuts that Philip produced have a more immediate impact; they show how the workers have lost their strength and their voices, while their labours have benefited a greedy, wealthy minority.

# THE SUN OF JUSTICE

An essay on the social teaching  
of the Catholic Church by

**HAROLD ROBBINS**



**HEATH CRANTON LIMITED**  
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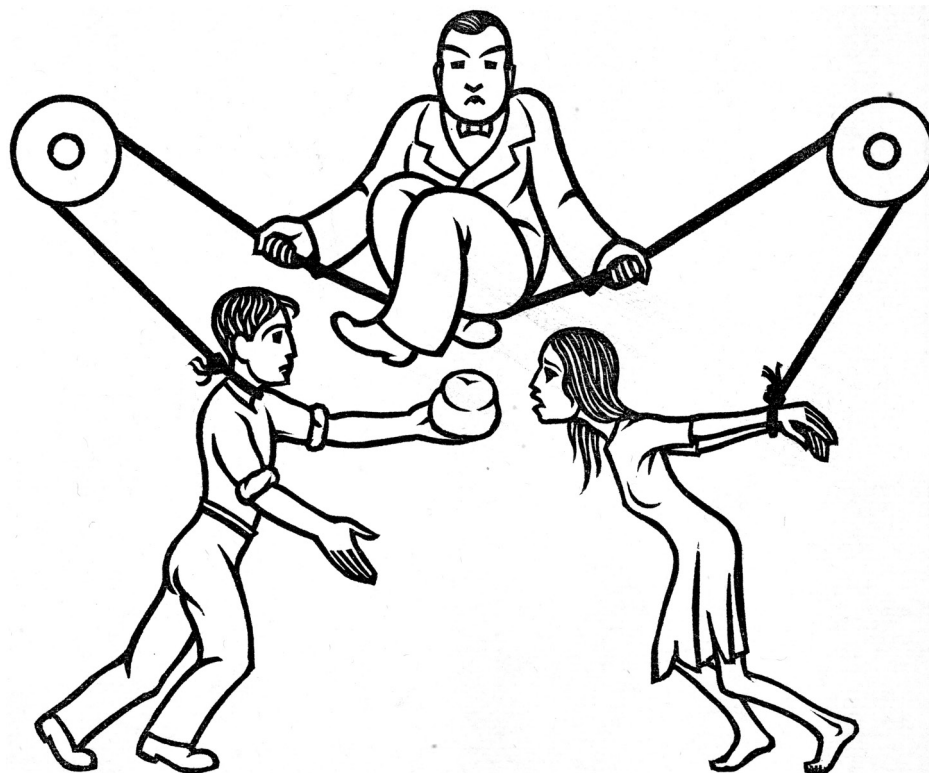
# Industrialism - The Fight Against Goliath

Philip's contribution to the anti-industrial protest movement in the 1930s and 1940s came in the form of published articles and wood cuts. He did not participate in social gatherings with Distributists. He did not work on the land himself. He was a commentator on the fringes of Catholic land movement but he was dedicated and sincere when it came to communicating his observations on what had gone wrong with society.

Philip came to very clear and firm conclusions about the conditions under which human beings must work if they are to be fully free and responsible, and develop their intelligence and skills. He was acutely aware of the damage done by industrialism to the individual, the family, and wider society. As a Catholic he deplored his Church's failure to recognise the real problems caused by industrialism. He endorsed Catholic teaching about the nature of man and human acts; but, for him, the tragedy was that those who taught moral theology could not see what their teaching meant when applied to the worker and the economy. Throughout his life he faced the fundamental gulf between recognition of problems brought about by industrialism; and the general feeling that industrialism was a force which could not be banished from the modern world. Professor Nevill Coghill wrote to Philip in 1946 *What disturbs me is that I admit every word you say, and yet do not know what can or should be done about mass production.*<sup>1</sup>

Industrialism had created new social problems but some Catholics played down Philip's urgent concern for social justice on the grounds that Christ did not tackle social problems, nor tell his disciples to do so. Philip had no truck with that view point and believed that everyone needed to face the possibility of dramatic social change rather than avoid the issue:

I would comment that conversion & salvation involve a drastic reform of the individual. Man is a social being & Catholic influence should lead to a drastic reform of society. The leaven should work in the dough. ... Social systems based on Catholic principles might have very various forms of government, but none of these systems would resemble any that exist in the world today.<sup>2</sup>



TRYING TO MAKE ENDS MEET

Philip's writings on the 'Common Good' are direct, confrontational and brimming with metaphors to show how corrupt society has become, and yet he would be the first to admit he did not have all the answers.

This new slavery spreading from what had been Christian Europe has destroyed the arts of all the world. So complete has been this destruction and so long has the slavery lasted, that most men do not know that they are slaves. They have lost all knowledge of their true nature, images of their creator, whose work should be artistry and whose artistry should be worship and joy and a means of salvation.<sup>3</sup>

### *Historical Perspective*

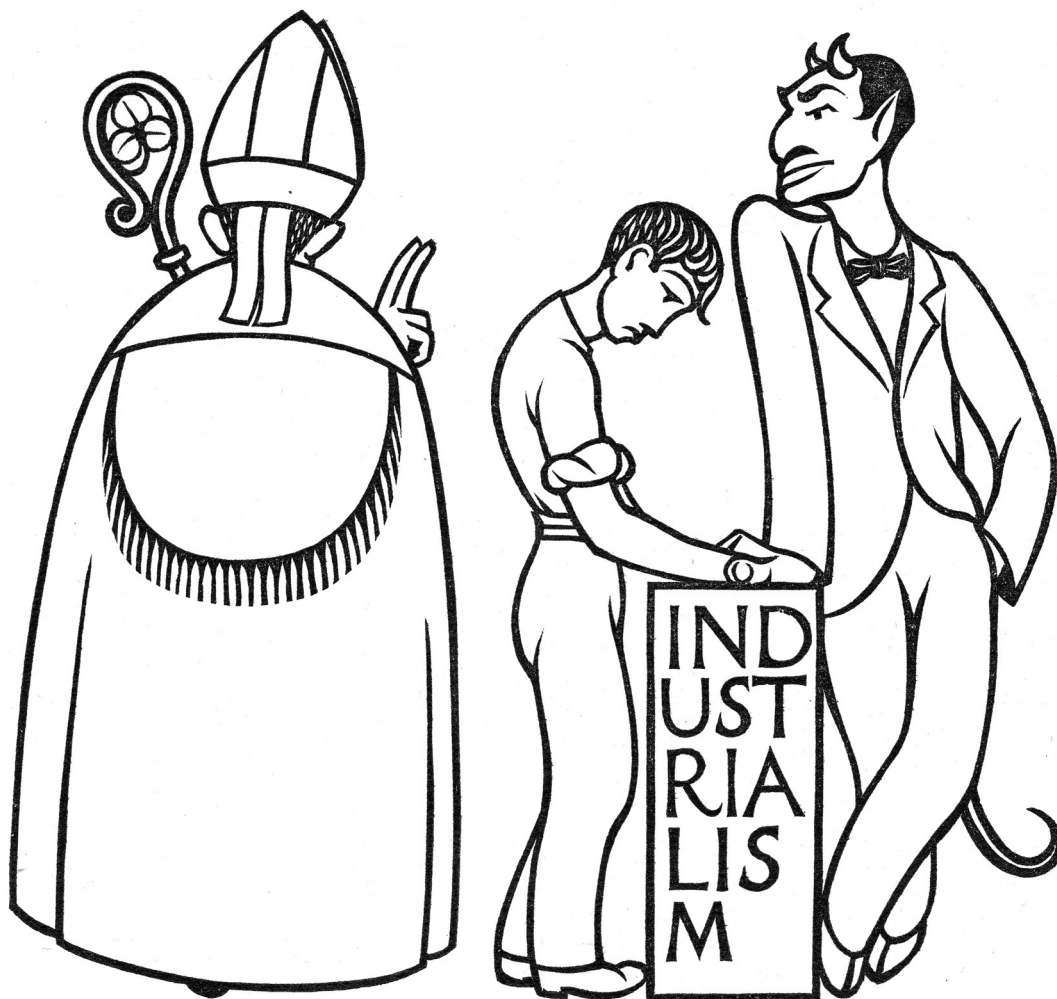
The struggle to accommodate the 'Common Good' in a changing society had been attempted since the birth of civilisation. In the Ancient World, Plato, Aristotle and Cicero had

all turned their attention to man's individual rights and his collective responsibilities. In Christian times, 'The Common Good' became a fundamental concept of the Roman Catholic Church's social teaching. The term was introduced by St Augustine in the fourth century, and taken up by St Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth, to underscore the view that man is essentially a social being, who should be concerned with the welfare of his fellow men as well as with his own relationship with God. From Philip's favourite book, Langland's *Piers Plowman*, Philip gained an understanding of the medieval concept of the 'Common Good': as Grace, Christ's messenger, gave different gifts to each person but called on all to love one another as brothers:

And crouneth Conscience kyng, and maketh Craft youre stiward  
And after Crafts conseil clotheth yow and fede.<sup>4</sup>

In the late eighteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution was well underway in England, a revival of interest in the 'Common Good' began in political circles. The French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence provoked an outpouring of political and Utopian literature, questioning what man really required of society. How could freedom of thought and speech be encouraged, but so contained as to avoid a descent into war and chaos? How could the gulf between rich and poor be addressed to bring about a fairer society? How could people ensure that social reality, rather than political theories, were the first priority of those in power?

Philip was also influenced by writers who held that, between the Reformation and the onset of Industrialism, the welfare of mankind had been sacrificed on the altar of financial gain for a minority. William Cobbett, writing in the early nineteenth century, saw that the Reformation had 'enfeebled and impoverished the nation, how it has corrupted and debased the people, and how it has brought barracks, taxing-houses, poor-houses, mad-houses and gaols, to supply the place of convents, hospitals, guilds and almshouses'.<sup>5</sup> The historian, R H Tawney, writing in the 1930s, saw a unity in the values of early Christendom which had become fragmented in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: *The ground which is vacated by the Christian moralist is quickly occupied by theorists of another order. The future for the next two hundred years is not with the attempt to re-affirm, with due allowance for altered circumstances, the conception that a moral law is binding on Christians in their economic transactions, but with the new science of political Arithmetic, which asserts, at first with hesitation and then with confidence, that no moral law beyond the letter of the law exists.*<sup>6</sup>



“ It doesn’t much matter what his work is.”

“ Thank you.”

### *The Catholic Response*

In 1891 the Catholic Church published Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which aimed to ‘Save poor workers from the cruelty of greedy speculators, who use human beings as mere instruments for moneymaking.’ The encyclical assumed that industrialism was here to stay, but aimed to mitigate its impact; arguing that, as the workers create the wealth of a nation, justice demands that they receive an adequate share. Twenty four

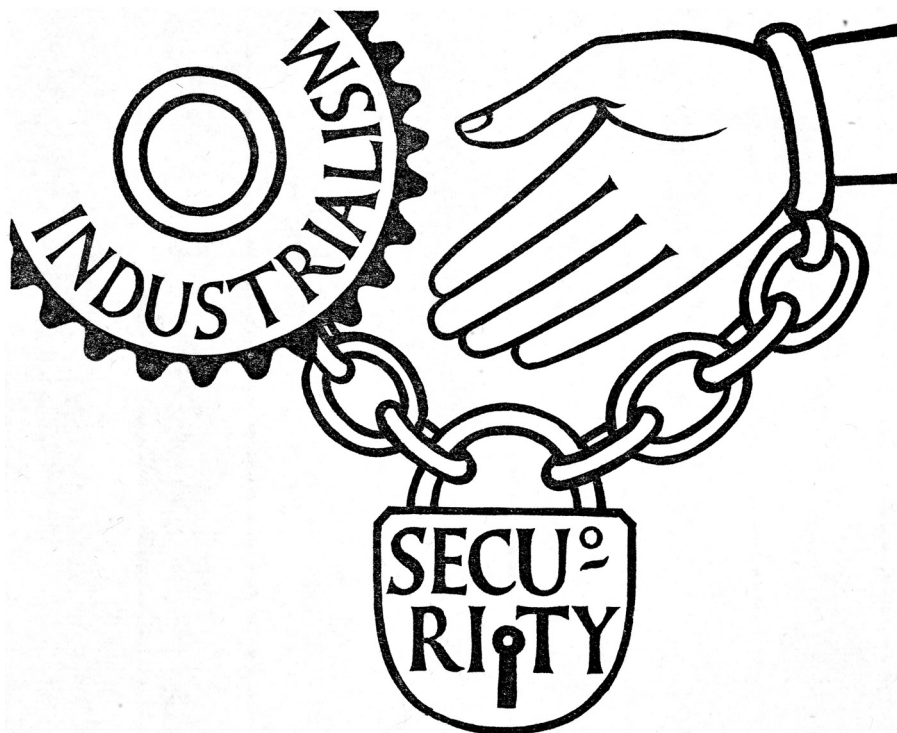


years later, Philip, as a young Catholic convert, observed that industrialism was still undermining family life. *Rerum Novarum* might have denounced the ‘survival of the fittest’ and the exploitation of the workforce, but who was listening? What was the Church doing in practice to protect people from an industrial society which controlled their lives.

Philip saw the Catholic clergy as unfaithful to the Church’s own teaching on the Common Good. They failed to see that the very basis of industrialism was irreconcilable with the teaching of their Church about the nature of man, his intelligence and free will. Philip drew a parallel between the view of Catholic philosophers, such as Maritain, that ‘art’ was not subject to the virtue of ‘prudence’, and the clergy’s idea of an ‘economic law’ not subject to ‘justice.’ Philip saw both arguments as flawed, because no aspect of life could be divorced from the natural law, whether that law was regarded as God-given, or as an expression of fundamental human rights.

Hilaire Belloc, the Catholic historian and Liberal MP, also influenced Philip’s thinking on the ‘Common Good.’ Both *Rerum Novarum* and Liberal reformers in Britain, in the early years of the century, tried to accommodate Industrialism. This in Belloc’s view was a mistake. In 1912 he published *The Servile State*, and coined the term ‘Distributism’ to describe the re-distribution of productive property within a ‘Back to the Land’ society. In the Distributist ideal society ownership of land and property would be as widely distributed as possible, to individuals or cooperatives, and would not be in the hands of governments and corporations. He held that the State’s interference in the relationship between worker and employer simply polarised the two. Men were offered the minimum of security in exchange for servitude, but the nature of the work expected of them and their subordination to their employers were intolerable constraints. Their individual opportunities were severely limited as they played out the role of pawns in an economic game. Philip agreed with this analysis but was wary of Belloc as a historian. This was partly because Belloc’s view of European Catholic history centred on the French experience, whereas Philip found a greater relevance in English medieval Catholicism. More significantly, Philip did not see how a practical solution for the ‘Common Good’ of working man could evolve from Belloc’s writings.

G K Chesterton also supported the redistribution of property. His journal *G K’s Weekly* became the voice of Distributism in the 1920s and he founded The Distributist League in 1926. Chesterton’s name became closely associated with theoretical revolution. The abrupt,



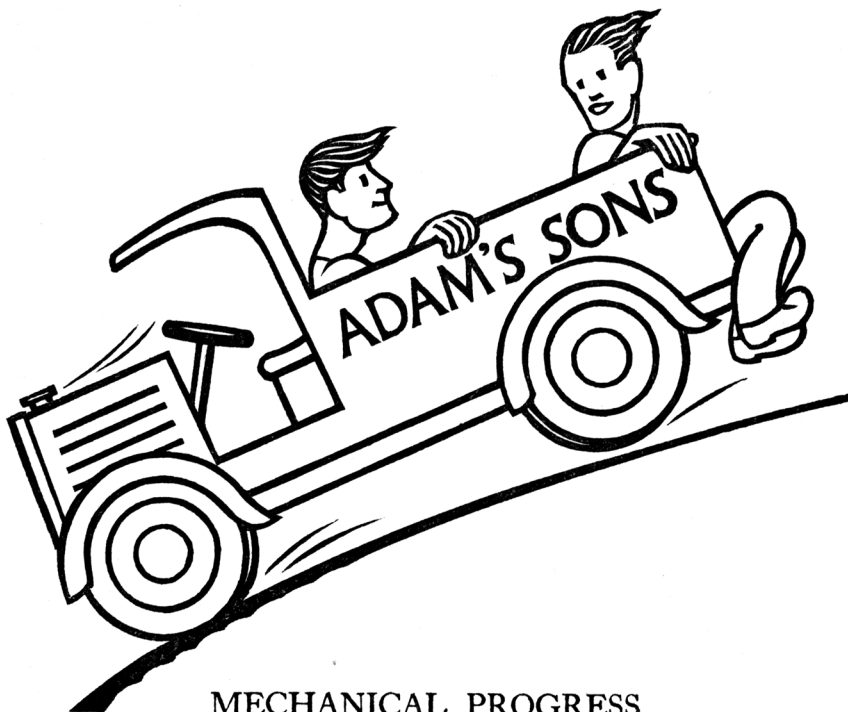
whimsical style of his arguments is heartening, but does not inspire a rallying of the masses. As with Gill and Pepler's Welfare Handbooks from St. Dominic's Press, there is a hint of gentility in Chesterton's delivery that makes it hard to believe that going back to the land would actually involve him ever getting soil in his fingernails: His argument that:

Because a girl should have long hair, she should have clean hair; because she should have clean hair she should not have an unclean home; because she should not have an unclean home she should have a free and leisured mother; because she should have a free and leisured mother, she should not have a usurious landlord; because there should not be a usurious landlord, there should be a redistribution of property; because there should be a redistribution of property there shall be a revolution.<sup>7</sup>

This quote is a prime example of Chesterton's interest in word play taking precedence over any practical strategy to implement Distributism. The style of writing in Philip's correspondence also echoes Chesterton with its punchy narrative and short sentences,

unwavering opinions and consistent recourse to understated humour - the kind of jokes that are delivered as if they do not expect a laugh, but always get one. Philip regarded Chesterton as one of the greatest writers of his generation - quite apart from applauding his views on the 'Common Good.' When Chesterton was writing about England's heritage in *The Victorian Age in Literature* for instance, Philip cherished the results, but he deplored Chesterton's anti-semitism and distaste for the East - *it's strange that so great & so kind a man as GK should have had such indefensible prejudices.*<sup>8</sup>

Philip was above all a man of principle, but how was he to put his principles into practice when it came to the 'Common Good'? As far as was possible in the confines of Twentieth Century industrial society, Philip tried to live by the same principles which had determined the medieval attitude to work. In his own case, as a craftsman, this was feasible, but he realised that most workers could not keep industrialism at such a distance. He felt thwarted but he was a realist. He recognised the perceptive judgements of G K Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, but although their works on social justice might be published and



discussed, what practical good could Distributists achieve when their proposals had negligible impact, both on mainstream politics and the religious establishment. There was no organised national strategy to implement the Back-to-the-Land way of life for those who might choose it. The Distributist training farms which did exist were in their very nature local projects with a local focus. In a letter to Professor Nevill Coghill, Philip conveyed his frustration: he knew how a craftsman could live and work by methods that promoted the 'Common Good' of his fellow men, but what could he suggest for others, whose working lives were so very different?

You rightly ask what can or should be done? I know what I can or should do. Were I not sure of that I should not have dared to write as I have done. But it is one thing to see one's own path and quite another to state the principles by which anyone else might find theirs. My difficulty is that I do not think in words or abstractions. My mind is only the exchange between my eyes and my hands.<sup>9</sup>

The industrial bus on which we are travelling has broken down. The clutch slips, the brakes do not work, the battery is nearly dead & the tyres flat. Our politics are mainly concerned with who is to sit in the driver's seat. But does that much matter? There are some who think the only way forward is to get out & walk.<sup>10</sup>

Philip's correspondence and essays include no mention of Jacques Maritain's writings on *The Common Good* and while he would have been aware of them we have no evidence to suggest he read them first hand. Maritain argued that Communism, Capitalism and Totalitarianism all failed to provide an environment where Common Good of mankind is catered for because all placed materialism above man's need for God. Maritain argued that our priorities must change:

'It has to do with arriving at a vital primacy of quality over quantity, of labour over money, of the human over technical, of wisdom over science, of common service to human persons over individual greed for infinite wealth or Stalinist greed for unlimited power.'<sup>11</sup>

Philip did not dismiss all repetitive work as drudgery. He was frustrated that the Clergy and others who commended modernisation could not see the difference between the tedium of repetitive work in a factory, where man had no influence and was developing no skills, and the repetition that is necessary for a craftsman in order for him to excel at

making beautiful objects. Later in the chapter this problem is tackled in Philip's essay *The Clergy & the Carpenter* but first we see it elaborated in a summary of a discussion between Philip and his son Father John Hagreen.



### *The Treadmill*

*A summary of a discussion between Philip Hagreen and Father John Hagreen*

The treadmill is punishment, but treading a lathe or potter's wheel is part of a satisfying job.<sup>12</sup>

At the lathe or the potter's wheel the foot, precisely controlling the speed, is as much part of the action as the hand. Touch, eye and judgement all harmonise, and the finished article is graced with humanity. Even if it is one of a set, each is individual, a "work of human hands".

Industrialism predated the advent of steam. It arose from the corruption of the medieval guilds - the master craftsmen restricting access to their ranks. The aim of industrialism is profit - by maximising output and minimising costs. This is achieved by fragmenting the work, each part requiring less skill than the whole - many of the elements being totally unskilled and reaping only a pittance. The quality of the work is only of relevance to the market value of the product: the good of the workman is totally ignored.

So in the Potteries ranks of men threw bowls or other shapes as fast as they could,

on wheels turned by a belt through the floor, beneath which ranks of girls treadled - slowly, fast, or furiously - at a signal from the man above each. No one would willingly throw pots in that way, let alone provide the power. But there were always others more desperate for a job, so it was “take it or starve.” Striking was useless as only skilled hands would be difficult to replace. (People who are engaged in a satisfying occupation are reluctant to lay down their tools.) When mechanical power became available the girls were simply discarded.

Any organisation of the proletariat was violently resisted by the owners supported by the State. Once the closed shop was achieved through external factors, wages soared - not out of greed or revenge, but because if men couldn't be forced to do the job they had to be bribed.

Servile Work is, by definition, the work of slaves - what people will only do if driven. The Liberal arts are, again by definition, the choice of free souls.

# The CROSS and the PLOUGH

## *The Cross & The Plough*

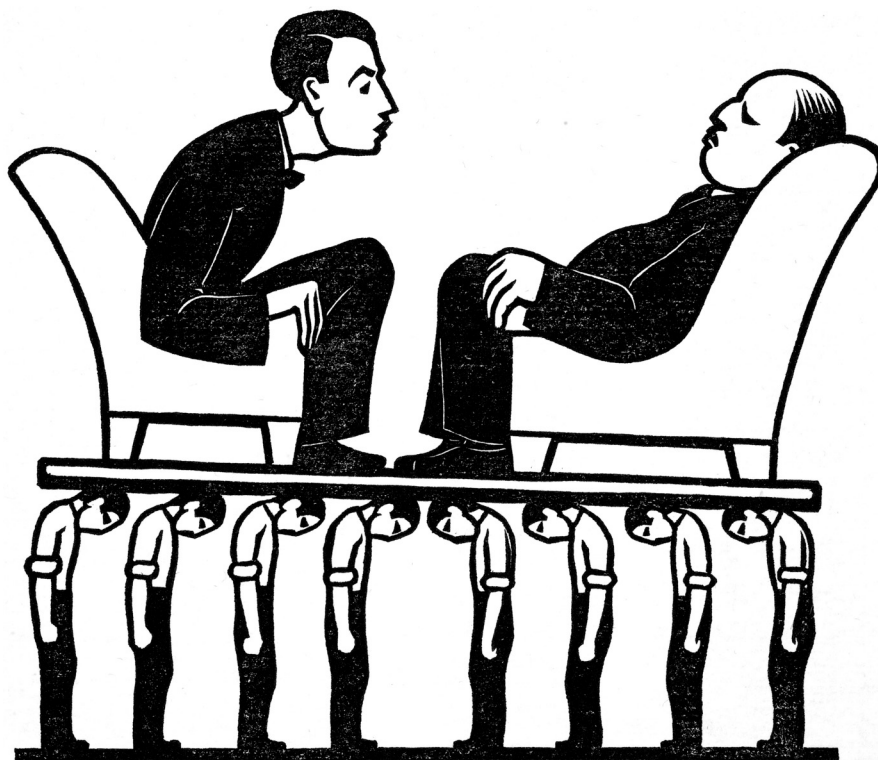
For Philip working with his hands was his best means of protest. His writings and cartoons concerning social justice appeared from 1936 to 1947 in *The Cross & The Plough*. This quarterly magazine, published from 1934 to 1949, encouraged people to put Distributism into practice. It described itself as ‘The Organ of the Catholic Land Movement of England and Wales’, a movement had begun in Scotland under Father John McQuillan in 1929, in response to unemployment and urban decay. It aimed to provide training, so that unemployed men and their families could become smallholders in Catholic colonies.

As well as giving practical advice on how to live self-sufficiently on the land and reporting on the work of training farms such as Priors Wood, the magazine offered regular commentary on The Times editorials and sought to point out the short sighted environmental vision of the British Establishment. *The Cross & The Plough* was concerned with the neglect and wasteful use of British farmland and the gulf in understanding between urban and rural communities: large farms produced smaller yields per acre and should be broken up; monotonous factory work led to neurotic disorder; tests showed that bleached flour made dogs go mad; inoculations were enfeebling herds, vaccines were passing into the soil which was itself becoming eroded and depleted by artificial fertilisers and poison sprays. Articles from *The British Medical Journal*, *The Economist* and *The Times* were all discussed and the editorial drew attention to any signs of dissent and dissatisfaction with society as recorded in these mainstream publications: *The Economist is always frank. It is a pity that, on the whole, it is read only by those who approve thoroughly of its principles. Otherwise the social revolution would be even more imminent than it is.*<sup>13</sup>

Although Philip rarely met the editor of *The Cross & The Plough*, Harold Robbins, who lived in Sutton Coldfield, he counted him as a friend and ally. Robbins was adamantly opposed to any form of mechanisation in agriculture. Machines were simply the devices of capitalists who wished to make more money easily at the expense of rural families, thereby making them more dependent on the system. In 1938 Harold Robbins wrote *The Sun of Justice*, arguing the case for the Land Movement based on Papal Encyclicals. Philip contributed the cover illustration, shown at the start of this chapter. Philip was a supporter of Robbins in many ways but he was sceptical about the dependence on encyclicals:

Amongst my fellow believers I was, and am, a minority of one in rejecting utterly their belief in the infallibility of Encyclicals. The trouble all came from Father Vincent McNabb. He insisted on their infallibility because of one passage in *Rerum Novarum*. Harold Robbins thought he was using indestructible material in building his book *The Sun of Justice* of extracts from *Papal Utterances*. I maintained that our adversaries could quote far more than we could.<sup>14</sup>

But in the field of illustration, Philip was sure of his ability to present social injustice in a graphic medium. As virtually the sole illustrator for *The Cross & The Plough* for over fifteen years, Philip produced some of his most original and confident work. The arrangement of characters within a given cartoon is brought together with all the simplicity of a beautiful



**PLANNING FOR PEACE**

“ We must instil into the masses a sense of their responsibility.”

title page. Be it an assault on the oppression of the workers on the factory production line or an image conveying the ordinary man crushed by the weight of business and bureaucracy, the designs are rhythmical and almost serene. Philip's people become pawns in his own game - every last limb, or curve of the neck shaped to fit his plan. This operates as a powerful and poignant metaphor for humans no longer able to run their own lives.

Joanna Selbourne described these prints as 'wittily satirical anti-capitalist commentaries - a rare use for the medium at this period'.<sup>15</sup> Not only was it a rare use for the medium in the 1930s, the images were also produced with no concessions to Capitalism. Philip made the blocks for all these prints by hand, using pear wood and cutting them himself. He sent all these blocks to Harold Robbins for him to use as he saw fit in *The Cross & The Plough*



and like all contributors received no payment whatsoever. Harold Robbins printed an explanation and acknowledgement of Philip's 'propaganda for its issues'.<sup>16</sup>

Philip loved Chesterton's cartoons - *GK seemed able to visualise and depict as fast as he could think*.<sup>17</sup> Chesterton's power to project a message may have partly inspired Philip's cartoons for *The Cross & The Plough*. Philip's work was quite different - overtly political and using more stylised images than Chesterton's sketchy illustrations. But the anti-industrial content of Philip's work was in a sense a homage to Chesterton's prophecies.

*Letter to Father William Dolan Fletcher 23 October 1974 about The Cross & The Plough*

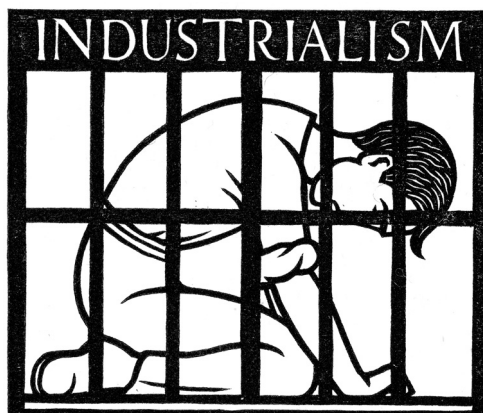
It was a fight between David with only a pea-shooter & Goliath in a tank. But I believe the cause was, & is, a right one - & I am glad that in my small way I was able to take part. I wish we could talk, for I write with great difficulty. Lying in bed, with hospital routine & nothing for reference, presents obstacles & distractions. It seems a very long time since I made my wood-cuts ... The thoughts that I tried to tell were common to a number of men scattered about England. I think of Chesterton, Heseltine, Massingham, Kenrick, Robbins, Maxwell, Rochford & Went<sup>18</sup> We had no common dogma, or even slogan, but we all saw the same sight. We saw a system robbing men of their freedom, responsibility & dignity.

*Letter to Baron Jose de Vinck 2 March 1972*

I am sorry you think the cuts with a social message unsuitable. I think they were my most successful blocks & I care about that message enormously. They are not political in the ordinary sense. They are my small contribution to the resistance movement against industrialism.

### ***Philippics in defence of the Common Good***<sup>19</sup>

For the most part, Philip's published essays are serious in their arguments and examples. His correspondence offers word play and surprise but his published essays explain problems with careful attention to detail. He was determined to reveal what he saw as the evasive approach of the Clergy, when they were faced with social problems.



“Within the framework of the existing system.”

In these next extracts from an essay published in *The Cross & The Plough* in 1943, Philip shows how The Reformation and growth of Capitalism worked against social justice:

### *Of Justice*

As commercialism grew, the opportunities and temptations of avarice increased. Clergy & laity alike grabbed what they could & the clergy grabbed the most. Clerics held sinecures. Monasteries added field to field and barn to barn. When the storm of heresy struck the ship of Peter in the sixteenth century, all hands were called to pump out the errors. The ship was saved with the sacraments intact, but justice had gone by the board.

The loss of this essential part of the moral code is hidden from us by a thing called honesty. We live in, and by, injustice and we pride ourselves that our dealings are honest. The most flagrant injustices may be regular and above board. A business may be unjust in its very nature: it may depend on the helplessness of its employees, on the ignorance or vices of its customers, on manipulation of markets & prices & the ruin of competition. But its contracts are fulfilled, its dividends are paid, its accounts audited and its balance sheets published. All concerned are honoured for their honesty & thanked for their charity if they give from their thieving.

In business affairs, Catholics - clerical & lay - are indistinguishable from unbelievers ... Justice is not practised: it is not known. The idea of justice has been absent from our minds for four hundred years. Methods that were counted as sins

crying to heaven for vengeance are now not thought to be matter for confession.

To show ourselves how justice has been abandoned & forgotten, let us imagine the state of things ... if, instead of the graver matter of Justice, Chastity had been jettisoned. The parallel to our business methods would be unrestrained promiscuity. If that were practised by all ... the very names of the sins against chastity would be forgotten, or remembered only as archaisms. The mention in the confessional of adultery, fornication or contraception would send the priest to a book of reference. He would wonder what medieval superstition had aroused scruples in the penitent. This is exactly what has happened to the sins against justice - FORESTALLING, REGRATING & USURY.



In *The Problem of Judas*, another essay in *The Cross & The Plough* in 1946, Philip shows how the economic law of modern society would commend Judas' greed.

### ***The Problem of Judas***

Problems of psychology are popular & any mystery about a person's character or motives arouses interest. Thus people find Judas the most interesting of the Apostles, as they find Hamlet the most interesting of Shakespeare's heroes. Why did earlier ages not perceive the problem?

Let us try to see Judas as they did. They knew that his greed for money led him to embezzlement of apostolic funds & then to betrayal of his Master. Instead of repenting, he despaired & committed suicide. Our simple forefathers thought that Judas got what he deserved.

Now, if we transpose the story into the industrial era, & retell it in our own language, we see at once the problem which has fascinated so many modern writers. ... First, Judas' desire for money. The old word for that was "coveitise", which meant breaking the tenth commandment. Avarice, holding too tightly to our possessions, was considered a sin, but "coveitise", the desire to add to our wealth by absorbing that of our neighbour, was considered worse. So completely have we changed all this, that the very word "coveitise" has gone from our dictionaries. "Cupiditas" is still found in the Latin, but the English for it is now the profit motive, business enterprise, commercial expansion, capturing markets, salesmanship, or some such expression.

Judas was the steward of the apostolic group & he helped himself from the funds. Now the recognised practice is that the 'buyer' gets a commission or 'rake off' on each deal, but he commonly takes this from the seller - an expression of gratitude on the part of the favoured contractor, very often paid in kind. ... This system suits the buyer's employers, because they need not pay a big salary. It suits the sellers, because they know where they are with the buyer, there is a pleasant tone about their dealings & it costs them nothing - the commission being allowed for in the estimates. It suits the buyer, because this gain does not appear in his tax return.

We read in St John's Gospel how the precious ointment was poured out & how Judas grumbled because, had it been sold & the money given to the poor, he would have got his 'rake off.' Judas was reproved & St Mark tells us how he then went straight off to the Chief Priests & fixed up with them. In modern terms, Judas' behaviour seems very natural. Imagine the buyer who finds a transaction has passed

over his head & is only snubbed when he remonstrates. The obvious thing is to 'cash out' & offer his special knowledge to the rival firm.

Thus far, the behaviour of Judas is in conformity with modern business practice. It is in accordance with the law. Not perhaps with the natural law, that forbids injustice. Nor with the revealed law, which forbids 'coveitise.' But in accordance with the economic law, which has superseded these. ... We are taught that economic law 'compels' this or that line of action. If it is objected that the economic law had not been discovered in the first century, we can only say that Judas was a man in advance of his time. He acted in a way that we should say was prudent, & the use of that word shows how we have developed. Prudence used to mean the choice of virtuous actions. Now it means safety first & an eye to the main chance. It used to be considered prudent to lend to the needy. Now it is prudent to lend only where the security is good.

In the eyes of our ancestors, it was to Judas' discredit that his traffic involved a selling into bondage. ... This is foreign to our thinking, for all 'progress' for the last century has involved reduction to slave status.

The yeoman, the fishermen, the craftsmen and small traders are gone and their descendants are part of the machinery - or part of the scrap heap. These proletarians no longer have the status of men as their forefathers understood it. They are manpower available for industry. The Son of Man has been delivered onto the hands of sinners. They have bound him and lead him away captive. We have accepted this system. We invest in it and we buy its products, so we do not blame Judas on this score.

The story of Judas shows that he had something besides business capacity. There was a risk that the affair might not go through as the Chief Priests planned. The Master might escape, or the populace might rise & rescue him - he might become King of the Jews after all. Well, the kiss secured Judas in either event. It was the sign of identification that he had promised &, if the plot failed, it was proof of his loyalty. ... He had boldly shown himself to be a loving disciple even in the face of the enemy. Is there a modern word for this type of ability? Yes, it is diplomacy.

Judas had carried out his contract faithfully & received his payment. He had shown that combination of commercial & diplomatic talent which raises men to Cabinet rank & makes our statesmen what they are. Then, suddenly, he lost his nerve. He had what we call a breakdown, with depression & suicidal tendency. The Evangelists are unsympathetic; but, for us, the tragedy lies in the absence of an

understanding psychiatrist in whom Judas could have confided. ...

The problem of Judas is a perplexing one & invites the speculation of psychologists & moralists. His recorded acts are the every day affairs in which we find no matter for confession. ... Was there some form of pride, some wilful blindness, some deep spiritual smugness of which we know nothing?

*The Problem of Judas* challenges the reader. Philip's account convinces; and yet we are left feeling uncomfortable: how did this change in perspective come about such that a callous capitalist vision is viewed as the norm. Philip's next essay, *The Clergy & The Carpenter*, was first published in full in *The Cross & The Plough*, Michaelmas 1945, but when it was reprinted in the United States periodical *The Catholic Art Quarterly*, in the first edition for 1950, Adé Bethune, a good friend of Philip, pruned the text:

*Letter to the Careys 16 June 1959*

One thing I would like to stipulate - that if 'The Clergy & the Carpenter' is reprinted, it should be as I wrote it & not as Adé edited it. Adé left out the sub-title "not walking hand in hand", because she disliked Lewis Carroll & she charitably took all the sting out of my writing, so as not to offend the clergy. She thought there was bitterness - but that was what I intended as one of the ingredients. If bitterness is not sometimes appropriate, why are there all those hop-fields in Kent? Even gin is insipid without a bit of lemon peel.

Philip did not want to draw attention away from the clergy as culprits. He blamed them for a lack of constructive leadership in the face of industrial change. Surely the clergy would have taken a different view of industrial capitalism if it had altered their working lives in the same way as it had affected other workers - *Priests do not realise that their unique privilege is the right of all men and is denied to all men but themselves.*<sup>20</sup>



“IT’S ALL RIGHT, HE CAN SAVE HIS SOUL.”

*The Clergy and The Carpenter: Not Walking Hand in Hand* <sup>21</sup>

**It is the nature and duty of man to work.** Of this essential activity the clergy say little. Perhaps this is as well, for when, about once a year, they preach on the hidden life of our Lord and speak of his work as a carpenter, what they usually say is bosh. This excuse may be made for the clergy: that their work as priests has not changed since the time of our Lord. Their raw material, the human soul, remains the same. Their tools are still the liturgy, the sacraments and teaching. The clergy do not realise their unique immunity from the disaster that has crippled the lives of other men. To follow the example of our Lord as priest is still possible. To follow the example of our Lord as carpenter is forbidden.



The higher it's raised, the tighter the chain.

We are told from the pulpit that by working as a carpenter our Lord set us an example of humility and patience: that he chose a laborious trade and endured its drudgery. We hear of a menial occupation in a provincial village and the tedium of knocking in nails. That he who made the oak tree by his word should therefrom have made a table by the labour of his hands was indeed an example of humility and patience. We would also suggest that it was an example of how tables should be made.

**Let us think for ourselves what manner of work may have been done in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth.** Firstly the things made were for reasonable and good purposes. They supplied the normal needs of the neighbourhood. St Joseph dealt directly with his customers, who could discuss their requirements with him. If he were asked to make a bad thing he could refuse. In other words, the final cause of each thing was good and was clearly known to its maker.



Secondly, the raw material, the wood, was local. Trees were felled by St Joseph or under his supervision. The saw was mainly used across the grain, where it cuts sweetly. Along the grain, the tree was opened with wedges. This is a delightful process, leaving the full strength of the wood and revealing its full beauty. Such wood will not warp and for many purposes it may be used at once and allowed to season at its leisure. St Joseph was free to choose the most suitable wood for each part of a job. Thus the material cause of the work was good.

Thirdly, St Joseph's bench and tools were his own. He was free to replace them or alter and adapt them to his needs. The efficient cause of the work was good. Fourthly, there remains the formal cause, the practical intelligence of the carpenter. The carpenter makes a table, but the carpenter is prone to evil. He may work carelessly through sloth. He may work too hastily through avarice. He may be too meticulous through pride of craftsmanship and through being wrongly ashamed of his human limitations. He may try to give his work a perfection that only belongs to things made directly by God. A cruder kind of pride may lead him to make the table, not the best way, but in a way that will show his skill or his originality. By virtue of art, these temptations are avoided.

**When a Jesuit tells us that our lord chose the dull work of a common carpenter,** rather than the more interesting work of a cabinet maker, the poor man is talking through his biretta. It is hard nowadays to make anyone understand what was meant by craftsmanship, because so few have ever seen any. A learned priest tells us that the curse of Adam seems to have worked itself out, since machinery has removed the drudgery from work. We wonder how the clergy would like it if their work were mechanised, modernised, rationalised. Perhaps some of them would only jib at the long hours. If a carpenter does bad work, the clergy think it no libel to say that he is a bad carpenter. Yet if we speak of a bad priest they think we are accusing him of unchastity, for it does not occur to them that a bad priest might be one who does a priest's work badly.

The words used about making are worthy of meditation. For instance, we admit the merit of a thing that is hand-made. But the hand is used in mechanised production. The hand is all that is used. We therefore call such production manufacture and speak of the employees as hands. The merit of the hand-made thing is that it is made by man. The craftsman uses his memories of tradition and of experience. He uses his understanding to apply these to the job in hand, and he uses his will to do the job as well as he can in the best way he can think of. Thus his hand is directed by the three powers of his soul and the thing is made by the whole man. So

naturally do we think of the hand as the executive of the soul that we speak of acts of the Divine Will as the work of God's hand.

The carpenter may make a table to the best of his ability. It will be a perfect table: not perfect in the sense in which a daisy is perfect, but perfect in its suitability, its appropriateness. Compared with a daisy, the best table is a clumsy botch, for human skill is infinitely below that of its Creator. Yet the table is good through the good will of its maker, through the right use of his faculties. It takes its place without disharmony in God's world, & because it is a product of man's free will, the table is more pleasing to God than all the daisies that ever bloomed.

**We have no fear of misrepresenting the views of the clergy on work.** We have discussed the matter with so many priests in the course of so many years that we know their teaching by heart. Further, we have read many Pastoral Letters. In particular, we remember a joint pastoral of our hierarchy on the social question. Therein our bishops talked of the dignity of man. This dignity, they said, demands that he should have security of employment, a family wage, a bathroom & suitable sanitation. They say: "As Christians we ought not to tolerate any attack, direct or indirect, on the dignity of man, or on the sanctity of family life." Very well then. We say that the dignity of man is attacked, nay outraged, when he is compelled to spend his whole working life in sub-human acts. The sanctity of family life is violated when the husband is kept from home, virtually in prison, all his working days; when he cannot own either his means of livelihood or his home. Of these things our spiritual leaders say not one word.

Apart from the very few priests who see that the industrial system is evil in its origins & in its effects, & that no adjustment of it can make it compatible with Catholicism, the clergy are of two types.

The majority shirk the problem. They say that it is a matter of economics. That it would be too costly to make things by hand nowadays. That we are not going to write with quill pens, when we can have typewriters; & that, anyhow, the church has never condemned slavery. The other, less common, type admits the evil of industrialism, but advocates surrender to it - for the glory of God & the salvation of souls. This group includes men of learning & renown, whose reputation, as well as the speciousness of their arguments, gives them great influence. It was bad when the Scribes & the Pharisees were hypocrites. It is a deal worse when they are sincere.

Though these clergy admit that there are many evils connected with industrialism, they defend machinery. At any mention of the evils of mechanisation, they interrupt with: "But you cannot say that machinery is evil in itself." Why are they thus roused? If a man is drowning, do they shout: "But you cannot say that water is evil in itself", or do they try to save him? These clergy say that our idea of work is a false one. They tell us that our Lord did not come to earth to enjoy making good woodwork, but to suffer and to teach us to suffer. They say that our Lord showed us something infinitely higher than craftsmanship when his hands no longer held chisel and mallet but were nailed to the cross. Truly, every man has his cross - but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed.

These clergy say that if the work is mechanical, so much the better as it leaves the mind free for higher things. Mechanical work permits no use of the intellect or the will, for the actions are dictated and timed by the machine. But neither does it permit freedom of the mind. It exacts continuous attention. The punishment for a moment's inattention, hesitation or delay may be the loss of a finger or an eye or a smash-up of machinery and an accusation of sabotage. It is only because they can give this attention that human beings are used. Whatever can be done automatically is done by machines. In their effort to belittle the evils of industrialism, the clergy remind us that man is soul and body and that it is the soul that matters. They speak of the soul as the rider of an unruly horse and they seem to think that if the horse is lamed it will be better for the rider. But man is not two-things, like rider and horse: he is soul-body: a centaur. If we consider the duties of man on earth and his state in eternity, we must think of him as a compound - just as we must think of water as a compound when we are studying hydraulics.

**We are told that it is not economical to make things by hand.** Well, let us consider the economy of such a workshop as St Joseph's. Nothing of the material was wasted. The crooked and knotty parts of a tree were as valuable for some purposes as the straight grained parts were for others. The bark was used by the tanner. Then it was litter and then manure. Twigs and any rotten wood were used as fuel along with all the chips and shavings. The ash was used for washing and for the garden. No time or energy was wasted. On a frosty morning the carpenter might swing axe or adze or cleave a log with beetle and wedge. On a sultry afternoon he might sit to use the draw-knife or sharpen a saw. He could think out his problems when his mind was alert, and when it was dull he could go on with jobs that are done largely by habit. Further no ability was wasted. There

was no limit to the development of the carpenter's powers. A wooden spoon made by a man of genius surpasses ordinary spoons as a Stradivarius surpasses ordinary violins.

And what of the customer? He got what he wanted and paid only for what he got. The things were made to fill his needs and also to suit his means. A piece of furniture might be the cheapest that would function or it might be a highly-wrought heirloom - a joy for centuries. Most hand-made things may be repaired by their maker. They may come back to him again and again as wear or accident make it necessary. Thus he learns their weak places and devises improvements. An important point in the economy of such neighbourly dealings is that payment may often be made in kind.

**How does this compare with the industrial methods that we are told are economical?** The tree grows in some far country, perhaps on the other side of the world. Only what can be sawn into straight planks is shipped. Curved pieces would take up too much room. Instead of being seasoned & cloven, the wood is cut regardless of anything but the number of cubic feet that can be sold. Such wood is unfit for any decent work. The grain has not been followed & it will warp indefinitely. The carpenter receives it with all its best qualities destroyed. It may be full of sap, or it may be artificially seasoned - processed - so that it is as weak & characterless as cardboard. Thus the material is wasted & there is all the waste of transport by sea & land. When the wretched wood reaches the workshop or factory, the carpenter may not use his wits to make the best of it. He must work to tracings made in architects' offices. Fads & fancies, or travesties of antique manners, are expressed in such terms of solid geometry as can be drawn with T-square, etc.

Thus is the man wasted. A man is said to be employed in the saw-mill, in the transport trade, in the design office or in the factory. Yet nowhere is the man employed. What is employed is the economic pressure that forces the man to perform sub-human work. Now that finance reaps interest not only from factory production but from every kind of trade and traffic, the worker has acquired a certain value as a consumer. He has purchasing power. His wages can be sucked in again by the creators of credit. He is encouraged to raise his standard of living, which means his expenditure on rent and luxuries. It is made almost impossible for him to bring up a family or acquire a permanent property. By every means he is induced to waste his wages on perishable goods, on mechanical amusement and on pre-fabricated emotion.



**Why is such a system said to be economical?** Because it pays dividends to investment, because it pays interest to credit. It is essential to mechanised industrialism that as few as possible should be employed and that their tasks should be, as far as possible, fool-proof. It is said that the workers should be contented - which means that they should be submissive. A business is considered economical if it makes profits. Its object and its test is the prosperity of parasites. If this is economy - to hell with it ! No craftsman to-day has the fullness of control and freedom of method that existed in St Joseph's shop. The carpenter who starts with squared wood and machine-made nails has been robbed of three-quarters of his craft. No one to-day knows the joy of joining wood that he has shaped from the tree with nails that he has forged. To drive and clinch those nails gave a satisfaction we cannot experience. The memory of it remains in our language, for the rhetorician still hits the nail on the head and clinches an argument.

Wood has been ousted by materials that can be shaped entirely by machinery. Metals and plastics can be stamped and moulded without human skill. The many parts of an elaborate thing can each be mass-produced and they can be assembled by a row of slaves, each of whom repeats mechanically an allotted action. Behind him, or her, hover the "motion study expert" and the "industrial psychologist" to check any movement that is not the shortest. Industrial employment is not work, but

privation. It is the crucifixion of man's nature as maker. Those who betray him to it show their love for him in the kiss of Judas. Seeing Christ in our neighbour we see him unjustly condemned. Like Pilate, we seek to release him. Most of the clergy - also like Pilate - wash their hands of the business. But the chief priests persuade the people and they cry out: "Let him be crucified!"



*Letter from Father Austin Barker OP to Harold Robbins 16 September 1945*

"The Clergy & the Carpenter" needed to be written - & the only pity is, it is not likely to be reprinted in the Catholic Times, the Catholic Herald, the Universe etc.: that is the measure of their futility & waste of time & paper.

*Letter from Nevill Coghill 28 March 1946*

Your article: "The Clergy & the Carpenter" is sound good sense and sound Christianity too - "a poet, a musician, a painter, an architect; the man who is not one of these", said Blake, "is not a Christian." And I see very clearly from your paper how industrialism, more than Darwin and the Higher Critics, has taken away Christianity from the world. My father was a carver and a painter - not perhaps very good, but as good as he knew how, and that's what matters - and I can still see the joy on his face when he had fitted his own wooden nails into his own carving, and the anxious joy of his brush strokes. William Morris has an article proclaiming truths similar, or at least congruent with those in yours. No doubt you know it.

What disturbs me is that I admit every word you say, and yet do not know what can or should be done about mass production. I cannot but think we won the war by it; and cannot but think it was right to have fought. My only notion is one you would, I think, repudiate; nor have I much confidence in stating it; it is that every man should have more leisure (if it is true as is often said that we can make the machines do some of his 'work'), and use that leisure in making things for use and pleasure.



## THE CLOISTER & THE HEARTH

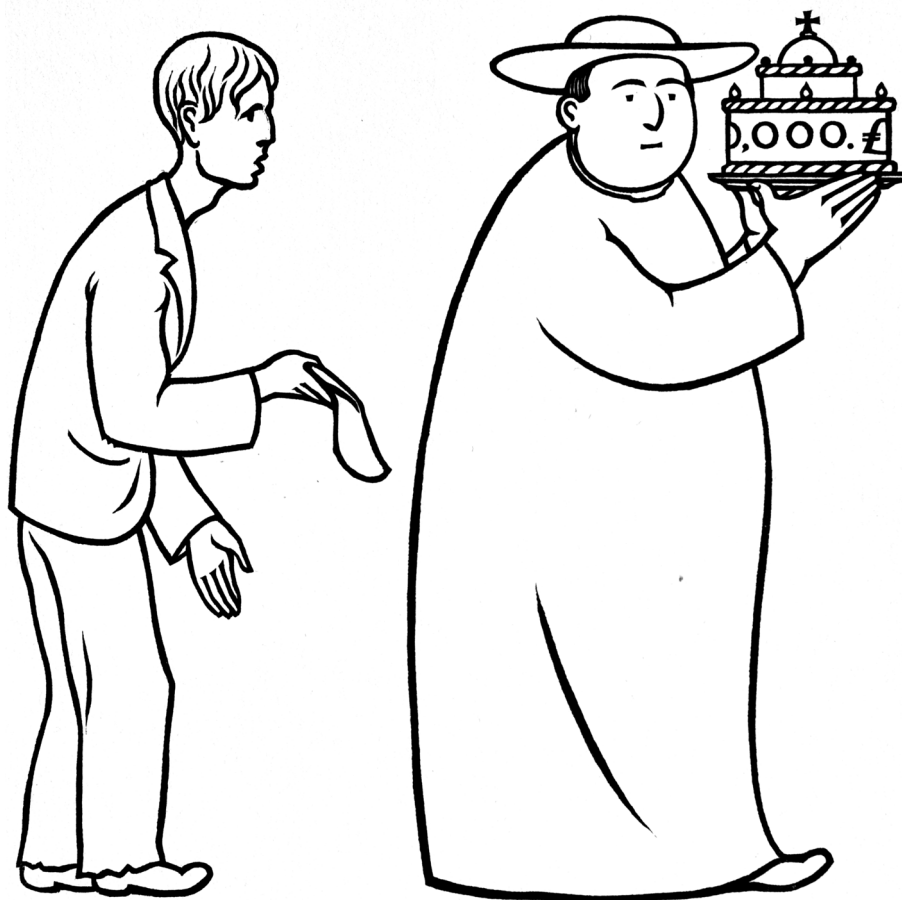
### *The Prinknash Broadsheets*

Philip's Prinknash Broadsheets consisted of a small edition of three separate broadsheets which were circulated amongst Philip's friends and sent directly to the Abbot of Prinknash, and each member of the community in the late 1930s. The Benedictine monastery, situated in Cranham, Gloucestershire, planned to construct extravagant new buildings in a time of widespread social deprivation. Philip objected to monastic fundraising to finance the grandiose lifestyle of contemplatives. His own correspondence and the text on the broadsheets best tell the story while the images provide - what Father Austen Barker called a *perfect illustration of the right subordination of matter to form*.<sup>22</sup>

Letter to Father Austin Barker OP 4 March 1940

The 3 broadsheets were done for Prinknash in response to their appeal for £100,000. ... The war saved them from a fourth ... I wish one could do something more effective on behalf of the oppressed than these squibs. Of course Prinknash is only a slight symptom of the great disease. How does it look to you? To me it seems a vast scandal that the clergy are everywhere in alliance with industrialism. They do not question the justice of proletarianism. They busy themselves with liturgical fads, while the souls they should be converting & tending are driven to Bolshevism or despair. Heaven forbid that I should be anti-clerical - but I do wish that our shepherds & teachers would open their eyes & their hearts & then their mouths.

## TAKING THE CAKE



“No, it’s for God.”



*Letter to Father Austin Barker OP 27 March 1940*

I am no end grateful to you for writing so generously about my broadsheets. Yours is the first encouragement I have received from our Order. Fr. John Baptist Reeves attacked No. 3 on Old Testament grounds, but I am a Christian, not a Jew, so that did not worry me. Fr. Martindale was horrified by the whole idea - which is satisfactory because Jesuits, however good, are always wrong.

Fr. Vincent McNabb was as Hamlet-like as ever - "All which, Sir, though I most powerfully & potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down": I disagree with him in this as in other matters. Remember I am writing only for myself. George Maxwell would probably defend anything Fr. Vincent said. For myself, I cannot forget that Fr. Vincent wrote against my beloved Chaucer. He damned Chaucer for what Chaucer never wrote, without having read what Chaucer did write - a piece of puritan fanaticism worthy of Oliver Cromwell. But to return to this business of Social Justice. I think Fr. Vincent is wrong & morbid. He writes about his humility, his obedience etc. instead of losing himself in the job as a good craftsman would do.

Beating one's breast may be all right for a Carthusian, but we are Dominicans. Fr. Vincent was sent forth with a flaming torch in his mouth<sup>23</sup> & he sits chewing the stump of it. It was meant to give light, to warm the hearts of the faithful & to burn the backsides of the enemy. The wolves are eating the sheep. You are a Hound of the Lord & a Barker. For God's sake bark!

I need to work very hard to earn a living for my family. I cannot afford to cut & print cartoons & I am only an amateur at the job. I do it because no one else will, but the protest ought not to come from so vile a Catholic as I am. The teaching of the clergy ought to have made such things unnecessary. Priests say "but one must avoid giving scandal", by which they seem to mean that one must not risk offending rich parishioners or getting into trouble with the Bishop.

Millions are in slavery, deprived of property, of privacy, of almost all human rights; compelled to labour mechanically, often in conditions of speed, noise, stink & vibration in which it would be illegal to keep a pig. And not one priest in prison for libel or sedition. It scares me. ... What an outburst! Your trust in my motives has turned on the tap. I thank you beyond words for your confidence & beg a continuance of your prayers. ... Of course show this letter to Fr. Vincent, or anyone else, if you feel inclined.

*Letter to the Careys 19 July 1959*

... three broadsheets that I sent to all the monks of Prinknash Abbey in response to their appeal for money. The third was entitled 'Taking the Cake.' It was meant to hit the Archbishop of Liverpool as well as the Abbot of Prinknash. That set of prints involved me, as you may imagine, in some pretty hot correspondence and I had a separate file with it all together. As it was not about art but about the enormously expensive way of living which contemplatives claim as their due I have not bothered you with it. The only person who knows the whole story from both sides is Peter Anson, so I gave him the dossier. He thinks I should not have attacked but only ridiculed. He agrees heartily that the monkery is a stinking scandal but thinks it futile to attack a force so strongly entrenched. I admit my attack was futile in this sense - that the Abbot in the 20 years since then has gone on getting and wasting more and more money. Some hundreds of thousands of pounds must have been spent on fads, hobbies and follies. I don't think the size of Goliath is a reason for not slinging a stone at him.

## *Optimism*

Philip's work for *The Cross & The Plough* might well have developed differently but for the national rallying necessitated by World War Two. Writing a month after the outbreak of war, Philip described how difficult an anti-industrial crusade was in war time:

*Letter to Graham Carey 3 October 1939*

When we are in the thick of it, Heaven may give us such spirit as Poland has shown. Meanwhile, it is difficult to foresee things - & difficult not to foresee things. There can be no peace until Nazism is broken, but what is to succeed it? There seems to be no alternative but Communism & that would be worse. One can only hope that some new movement may arise in all countries, but there is no sign of it at present. Industrialism is the real enemy, here & everywhere, & all countries seem to worship it. War conditions have already vastly lessened the liberty of the individual family. What was left of natural farming and the crafts is being wiped away.

All this is gloomy - indeed the outlook is dark but there are good things to note. Folk are compelled to rely more on their vegetable gardens and less on transport. Above all, folk here are showing an undamaged humour. The Nazi leaders are popular comic characters & treated as detachedly as Punch & Judy.



It's not you I'm fighting for.

During the war Philip was disappointed that Catholic publications were not seeing the light:

*Fragment from draft letter to The Tablet 2 January 1943*

No one criticises the capitalist era for failing to produce wealth. No era has been more immensely, and indeed recklessly, fecund. So writes the Editor of *The Tablet*, but he is wrong. We criticise the industrial era for failing to produce wealth. It is an era of impoverishment.

Wealth is such property as is of benefit to its owner. A white elephant may be property, but it not wealth. All industrial products partake of the character of white elephants. They are possessions that are a charge on the owner. They also deprive him of independence.

Let us compare a few typical pre-industrial possessions with their industrial successors: the horses on a farm gave power, traction and locomotion. They also gave manure. They were fed by the land which they cultivated and manured. They

reproduced their kind so that they replaced themselves, or their number could be increased. They were therefore a possession in perpetuity. With the land, the carts, the ploughs etc. they gave independence.

For power, traction and locomotion, industrialism sells three separate machines. These produce no manure & must be fed with oil, petrol, tyres & spare parts, all of which must be bought from industrialism. Here is a constant charge on the owner and inescapable dependence. The machines do not breed.

Look around your home and consider what things will have to be replaced by your children. Every product of industrialism will have to be. In most homes there are a few things that may be used for centuries to come:- they are things that were made centuries ago. Perhaps there is an oak table or chest, a brass candlestick or a copper saucepan. Perhaps there is a book 400 years old. It may be little the worse in another 400 years, when no page remains of any other book on the shelves. Does any musician complain because his fiddle has been played on for 200 years? How long do you expect your wireless set to last and what does it cost you a year while it is deteriorating?

By the time Britain was restructuring after the war, Harold Robbins was seriously ill. Publication of *The Cross & The Plough* was suspended in 1949, never to be resumed. Philip bemoaned the absence of a collective understanding of his beliefs about work; but, his outlook being essentially optimistic, he welcomed any signs of a significant change of attitude in society.

*Letter to the Careys 14 July 1963*

In my lifetime there have been developments & applications of old customs & Christian thought that have been beyond all expectation. I was born in a time of social strata & religious frontiers. Poverty was terrible & treated as a natural phenomenon. Heroic people were trying to improve things but there was little they could do. Throughout my life the class distinctions have been melting away. The sense of responsibility of all men for the government & the responsibility of the government for all men has transformed England. The happy, healthy children that one sees everywhere are evidence of a profound change. Seed sown long ago has germinated. These changes have not been imposed. They have grown & are growing. There is much that is evil. We have some very bad newspaper owners & our prisons are crowded, but these evils are matters of public concern. We have freedoms & privacies that may be abused but they are most precious.

*The Cross & The Plough* had featured articles on pollution, vaccinations, the social stresses of capitalist working life and the need to convert to organic farming - all of which are now widely recognised as the subject matter of mainstream news and politics. Distributists were aware of the dangers inherent in taking away individual freedom and responsibility and deplored the misuse of people and material resources. In the 21st century there is a more broadly based awareness that despite material benefits, considerable harm has been caused by industrialism; and, what is more, that through industrialism, much of the self-sufficiency and resourceful approach of earlier generations has been lost.



**THE OFFICIAL ATTITUDE**

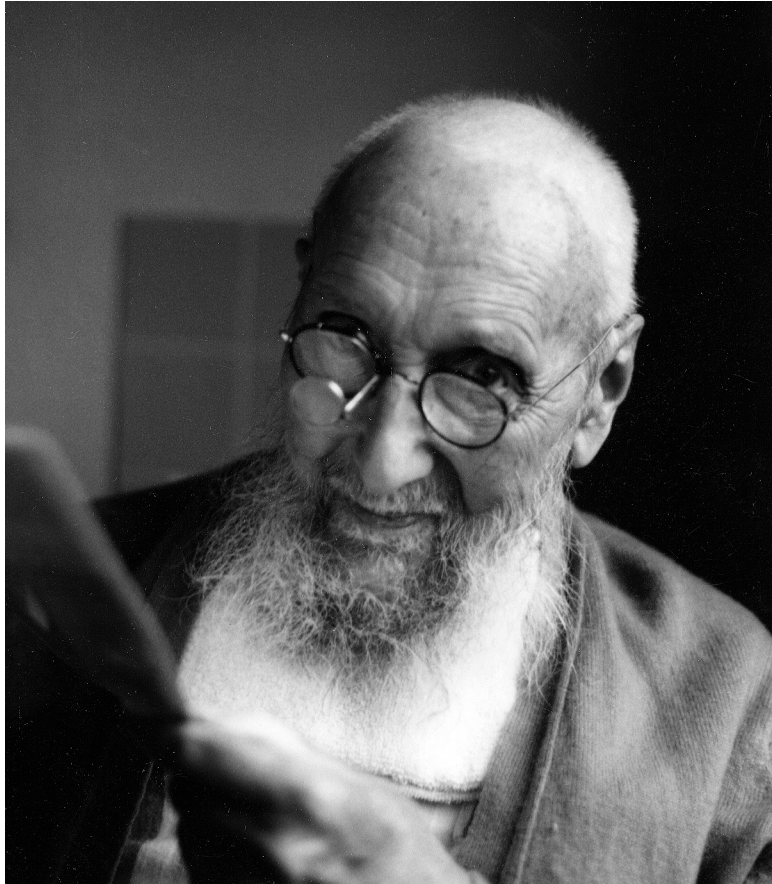




## Part 6

# The World of Remembered Beauty

In 1951 Philip and Aileen Hagreen's youngest daughter Mary died of polio. She was twentyone years old. It was a shock that he was never to write about in any detail but the grief Philip and Aileen experienced probably influenced the decisions taken over the next few decades. Four years later Philip gave up tenancy of his workshop and gave up making wood blocks. By the end of the 1950s Philip and Aileen were living with their elder daughter Joan and her family, waiting for their own bungalow to be built nearby. A life of retirement close to their grandchildren kept them in touch with the joy, enthusiasm and energy of young people. Retirement was also a time when Philip began to write letters ever more regularly. Even after he moved to a nursing home in the early 1970s Philip read widely and shared his appreciation of art, craft, literature and nature with everyone keen to converse in person or on paper. There is no trace of bitterness or regret in his writings on these subjects; only a genuine respect and recognition for the beauty and mystery of what both man and God had created.





## Old Age 1959 - 1988

Old age ... suits me very well, but the way it came was tactless. Physical infirmity stopped work when my mind was going at full gallop.

Congestion of thought made me very restless. Now at last I am becoming lazy. This may be a temptation from hell, but I hope it is a tranquilliser from heaven.

*Letter to the Careys 18 March 1979*

There is a certain irony in the story of a man, with little regard for the contemplative life, forced by his physical state to abandon his practical work and turn to contemplation. Inspired by Eric Gill, Philip had come to see work as prayer and he could no longer pray appropriately: *I used to be able to concentrate all day on a few inches of material but now I have no material at all and I am a materialist.*<sup>1</sup> Despite this he reassured himself: *Work goes on in my mind.*<sup>2</sup> His reflections centred on the fabric of the real world rather than abstractions.

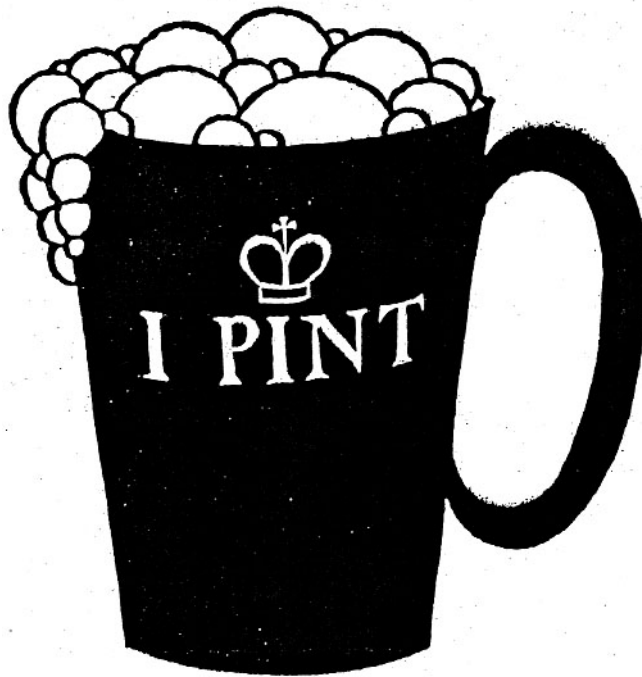
*A Visit to Philip Haggren, Brian North Lee, The Bookplate Journal Vol 3, No 2, September 1985.*

When my friend Anne Stevens, suggested that I join her on a visit to see Philip Haggren I was very pleased but apprehensive: happy to have a chance to meet a fine bookplate maker who is surely the last of his generation, yet unsure about the delicacy of visiting a ninety-five year old, almost bedridden, in a nursing home just outside Crawley in Sussex. Prints of his bookplates are elusive, as sixteen years of collecting had made clear, but I had been fortunate enough to obtain a copy of *The Bookplates of Philip Haggren*, published by The Private Press of the Indiana Kid in 1982 in an edition of about sixty-five copies. This book, as well as illustrating about 120 of his ex-libris, had as frontispiece a photograph c. 1939, in which he seemed already an elderly man. How, one wondered, should we find him in health and memory forty-six years later?

The answer is that, amazingly, he seemed apparently no older, his mind as alert as the best sort of twenty year old, his memory superb, and with skill as a raconteur to equal it. Although a little deaf there was a happy sparkle in his eye, he was totally approachable and welcoming, and only the character of his gentle courtesy and finesse marked him out as a man of his generation. He is over six feet tall. He has a

fine and expressive face, blue eyes, and large but assuredly artistic hands. Over all one noted the sort of serenity about him which only those at peace with the world know; and the tenor of his conversation indicated that he is a firm Catholic - to which the nearby crucifix and bottle of Lourdes water were added testimony.

... Curiously, Philip Haggren seemed little concerned at his lack of public recognition; though perhaps it isn't really curious at all, for he has a genuine if misguided modesty about his work. He chatted about it happily for an hour and a half, and the only time he became really excited was when he was showing us alphabets written out for him by Eric Gill and Edward Johnston. He also had some sheets of newspaper of the 1930s, evidently folded to provide some book covers, beautifully lettered with initials. As he explained, he used to lend books to Johnston, who would thus cover them; but then they all looked the same, and so he would letter them with the initials of the title. Seeing these newspaper covers, faithfully kept after almost half a century, added point to his comment that, "the best things I ever saw in workmanship were to watch Eric Gill carving on stone and Edward Johnston writing with a bamboo pen."



Philip Haggren, from a talk given by David Knott to the Imprint Society of Reading,

*Reading University Library, Wednesday, 13 February 1991.*

I can document the origin of my interest in Philip Haggren with the catalogue of Sothebys' sale of 9 November 1981, from which I acquired lot 215 - a collection of Christmas cards. One of the items in the lot was a Christmas card, 1 Pint, wood-engraving by Philip Haggren, printed and published by the Ditchling Press. I was quite taken with 1 pint. For a start it was a professional production, whereas many of the other pieces in the collection were the work of amateurs. More than that, it was clearly not in the bosky tradition of English wood-engraving in which rural scenes and natural history subjects pre-dominate, and which is often distinguished by a remarkable ability to render details, textures and tonal values. This was more of a punch in the eye.

Haggren was a convert to Rome, and much of his work is religious in content, often overtly Catholic. His beliefs, life and work are impossible to separate, but he and I were not co-religionists. Almost the first thing he said to me when I met him at Ifield Green was "Are you a Catholic?" I said "No." He said "Are you anything?" I said "No" again. He then said something like "You should be", but left it at that. In his letters he occasionally referred to the fact that we did not share a common outlook, but only obliquely, and sometimes in a jokey way. I was reminded that an atheist was a man without invisible means of support.

I accept that some may feel an explanation is called for. When the work borders on the religious I admit it is not to my taste, but at other times it can be impressive and affecting. To this must be added my admiration for many of the more secular pieces and for the integrity with which he approached all his work. For his part, I think he regarded me as another, unlooked for, and inexplicable burden to be borne, in a life which had had its fair share of burdens. He liked to say that I was only the second person to have thought his prints collectable. This was not really so, but it sounded good when he went on to say that the first was a mortician from Oklahoma. I believe it was a moot point for him whether the mortician from Oklahoma, who was a Roman Catholic, was to be preferred or not to the unbelieving librarian from Reading.

*To Noel Anthony Scawen Lytton 24 August 1981*

Dear Anthony,

I have no immediate reason for writing but I want to keep in touch. In my solitude I sadly lack the rubbing against other minds which shapes ideas and cracks fallacies. By the way of testing a thought, I recently wrote to the Tablet. I said that Vatican finances being in the red and a great part of humanity being hungry, the pope ought not to spend millions on glory jaunts, nor ought he to let countries in for the enormous expense and upset of receiving him. I gave special reasons why it was unfitting that he should come here. The editor agreed with me. He dared not publish my letter. I do not blame him. He has to please his subscribers.

All my life it has worried me that Catholics defend any wrong rather than face facts. I think this is a self-defeating policy - I wonder what you think but I am not demanding an answer.

... But pray for me. I hope that all goes smoothly and merrily in your world.

Philip<sup>3</sup>

Some people don't like to change their opinions in old age. They will justify their outlook with ferocious determination and refuse to consider another point of view. Philip, on the other hand, responded to circumstances. He was always outspoken, this never faded, but he was also receptive to new ideas and revised his previously held opinions when events persuaded him to do so. The above letter was addressed to Lord Lytton ahead of the pope's visit to Britain. Lytton did not agree with Philip's sentiments, the papal visit took place, and Philip himself came to see it as an important step towards ecumenical understanding. In July of 1982 he replied to Lytton on this subject:

You were right about the pope's visit. I think what was achieved at Canterbury was very important ... things should be kept moving ... but what backing has the pope? Can he drive his pope-mobile through his circumlocution office?

Good had come of an event Philip had initially seen as an extravagance, but when changing his views he reminds us that important matters must not be brushed under the carpet: the paraphernalia and bureaucracy of the church so often work against faith.

By 1957 Philip's poor health prevented him from carrying on with his engraving. His printing presses were sold and his blocks were taken to the United States by Graham Carey. Most of them were later loaned to Father William Fletcher for his book - *Philip Hagreen: the Artist and his Work* - and never returned. Two years later Philip and Aileen bought a bungalow in Lingfield, Surrey, to be near their daughter Joan. Here they also enjoyed the company of their four grandchildren. Philip and Aileen now had more time together to discuss and observe the world around them and having bought an Austin 30 in 1957, they began excursions in this their first car. By 1973 Philip and Aileen became too frail for Joan to help them live independently any longer, so the couple moved to the Gables Nursing Home in Ifield Green, near Crawley, Sussex. Aileen died there two years later but Philip lived at the home for almost sixteen years. On his wife's death, Philip remarked of their relationship: *We started together and we finished together*,<sup>4</sup> alluding to a remark of Sir Thomas Beecham to his orchestra about a piece of modern music. In subsequent letters Philip described the frustrations of a life without like-minded companionship and his delight in occasional rewarding discussion:

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 10 December 1976*

As I lie alone in my quiet cell, Heaven gives me the opportunity to become a contemplative. But I fail to take the first step in that direction. My mind is full & overflowing with the work I wanted to do. My mind fails to give meaning to abstract words. I wonder what is meant by spirituality. I rejoice in the vast store of memories I have accumulated of beauty of all sorts and of good friends.

*Letter to Graham Carey 16 January 1977*

I was slow in beginning this letter & I am slow in getting on with it. You can't think what the obstacles are. I keep trying different ways of holding my pen, but it only makes a shaky line. When I think of the right word, I don't know how to spell it & have to think of another. I wish I could outgrow the disgrace of my childhood in not being literate. I ought to be proud enough, or humble enough, to write as I speak. Yet the worst difficulty is the congestion of my thoughts. I have had a blank wall to look at for over three years. When I have a visit, I talk too much, but an hour of conversation does not sort out a week of thought. It is like trying to get pills out of a bottle. They won't pour out one at a time. Always two or three jam together in the neck.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 11 April 1977*

As to wisdom - I have been greatly blessed in having had some very wise friends. I learned from them but, however much I admired them, I was not anyone's disciple. There was always some point of disagreement. Defining that point was a valuable result of the friendship. Flint & steel produce no spark until they collide.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 12 April 1979*

Like you I am blessed in my family. They really are too generous in visiting me. There is rarely a week when I do not see one or other of them. Most often it is Father John. His energy and ability astonish me.

Friends and family kept Philip animated, hopeful and involved those last sixteen years of his life. He enjoyed keeping in touch with ideas and opinions across the generations. His grandson Richard Ritchie bought a friend who was researching old people's memories for a possible broadcast, and they recorded Philip's conversation in 1984. This is the only surviving recording of Philip's voice.

Philip corresponded regularly - always questioning views on social justice, religion, making things - all subjects that had absorbed him throughout his life. Many writers working on subjects related to Ditchling also visited him in these years and he loved to re-live the past in their company.

Visitors were struck by Philip's vigour and imagination in an environment that was so physically limiting - He was hoisted into an arm chair for three hours a day but otherwise he spent his time in bed in a room with no view. Tom Dilworth, who was researching David Jones wrote to Philip in those years: *I will remember ... to pray for you today, that you have the patience you need to live on your back in that room, and to do and be what you are meant to.*<sup>5</sup> Philip described his own situation: *I am the only useless member of the family. I ought to be fasting in sackcloth & ashes, but I loll among pillows, fed & watered like a battery hen in its nest box.*<sup>6</sup>

Conversation, correspondence, reading and listening to the radio filled Philip's hours in old age and perhaps words took on an importance, or at least were savoured, in a different way than during his time as a working craftsman. Television did not provide a fresh stimulus - Philip disliked the way the cameras zoomed in and out on a subject, or the way



in which a face or other image was cropped so that it could not be appreciated in its full form. He enjoyed watercolour painting, however. He could still use a watercolour brush, referring to it as: *a key to a home for my mind*.<sup>7</sup> As travel and the first hand experience of nature became increasingly uncomfortable and difficult he took comfort from the chance to paint the countryside he would like to find himself in – *They are imaginary landscapes in fine, still weather ... I hide them in a portfolio as aids to betterment. When I get one out in the privacy of my room it criticises itself so severely that I need no second opinion*.<sup>8</sup> He also worked at imaginary portraits: *I set about exploring in imagination and colour with the paint-box my father used nearly a century before. I ended up by making portraits of imaginary people and these were probably the best creative work I ever did*.<sup>9</sup> Aileen had encouraged his preoccupation with idyllic, pastoral scenes. When he once made a portrait of a damned soul she found the tormented expression so unpleasant that she tore up the picture.

In the last ten years of Philip's life his memory remained undimmed and his correspondence touched on the powerlessness of old age with his usual levity and generous spirit.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 7 April 1978*

Be encouraged by my experience. I came here moribund four and a half years ago and have got steadily better. I can't walk and I can only read with difficulty and a strong glass, but still I can enjoy life. I can remember so much beauty. The great thing is to surrender to circumstances and the care of nurses.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 10 July 1980*

Since I began this letter I have had my 90th birthday - astonishing in that all the nurses kissed me - & so did matron. Perhaps very old men are accounted harmless, like extinct volcanoes. Whatever the reason, I am very glad I am not being nursed by nuns. One of the nurses is a beautiful Mohammedan from Persia. What would they say at home?

*Letter to the Careys 27 March 1981*

Old age has not given me detachment from earthly things & I don't intend that it should. So long as I am on this earth, I hope to enjoy the wonder of it ... I go on learning - I am one of those old men whom Chaucer likens to medlars - "for they be not ripe till they be rotten." I am also like the one he likens to a leek - "that hath an hoare head & a greene tail".

*Letter to the Careys 25 April 1982*

I am ever so sorry to hear about the broken ribs ... There is an advantage in being bedridden - 'He that is down need fear no fall'

*Letter to David Knott 19 June 1982*

We must realise that we are at cross purposes. You want to catalogue the works of Philip Haggren. I was concerned with making blocks as well as I could. I never cared a hoot about 'the art of Philip Haggren.' If you ask about my career, I can only say it has been an inglorious obstacle race.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 17 December 1982*

I enter my tenth year in this limbo. But I don't find life dull. My memories give me endless matter for thought & wonderment ... I care as much as ever for the beauties of wild life, though all I see of it is when my daughter brings me wild flowers.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 21 August 1983*

I need no vow of stability to keep me in this cell - as its essential furniture is bed and commode. I call it my bed-shitter.



*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 19 June 1984*

I can sympathise as I was also invaded by colonoscope. Could that be called introspection? By the way, the colon was known to our ancestors as bum-gut. A colon might be a matter of punctuation, but there is no ambiguity about the bum-gut ! I was cleaned by being fed only through a vein for about a week. Then I was disembowelled, a plumbing defect was rectified and I was cobbled up again and sent here dying of dropsy. That was eleven years ago ... what philosophers would call the material cause - or should I say the efficient cause - of my welfare, is bran at breakfast.

*Letter to Thomas Dilworth 29 June 1986*

I am in a cosy hermitage, but am not spiritual. I contemplate all the beauty I have seen & heard in my 96 years. It is all made by God or inspired by him. Detachment from earthy things is not for me. I hug them with joy.

*Letter to Julian Smith 15 November 1987*

We are alike in our sense of frustration. I was a slow worker, but could concentrate on the making of a thing; and such making was prayer. Without such a point of focus, my thoughts fly off like thistledown and leave me restless. ... I don't get used to my state, though it must be nearly thirty years since I could do worthwhile work. ... My very good Parish Priest brings me Holy Communion almost every week. It is strange that though one in the faith he and I seem to have nothing else in common. He is altogether Charismatic and I am of the earth, earthy.

I don't think I am altogether wrong. God made man out of earth and gave him the earth as his habitat, his realm and his responsibility. God saw that it was good. I agree with him.

Let us rejoice in love, in beauty and in laughter, for there is fun in the nature of things.

*Letter to Nancy Carey 31 December 1987*

Very dear Nancy - Your news is splendid. To find one's proper work & to be able to do it is not common in this unnatural age. Carlyle wrote of it as the greatest of earthly blessings.

... I have just had a visit from Richard with his wife and their son Benjamin. He is a lovely baby and the three of them are aglow with joy - almost incandescent.

... I am blear-eyed and feeble. What does not fail is my love of friends & my gratitude to them. May you be blessed in all ways !

This was Philip's last known letter. He died five weeks later, in February 1988. This letter to Philip's son John, from Father Conrad Pepler, son of Hilary Pepler, perhaps best captures both the simplicity and the exuberance of Philip's company.

11 February 1988

My dear John,

I read in *The Times* yesterday that your father had gone to the Lord. I offered Mass for him today and write to you - but not condolences rather perhaps congratulations. He was such a great and holy person. We met again by correspondence two or three years back. I ought to have kept that up and gone to see him. But it was not to be. I suppose it was my neglect. Those letters were so much alive though he was a prisoner to his bed but at that age there can be no wonder. I realised he was old, but not as old as that. He seemed full of wit and joy. He will cheer the heavenly communities.

Much love,

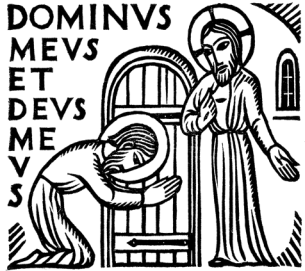
Conrad







REGINA-AP-  
STOLORVM-  
O-P-N



# The Tradition of Painting

Though Leonardo did his best to flatter and please her  
It wasn't more than half a smile he got from Mona Lisa.  
But Hogarth said some simple things to a shrimp girl that he met -  
We don't know what it was he said - but she's not done laughing yet.

*Undated rhyme by Philip Hagreen*

Philip wrote many letters debating the nature of art as a form of Christian work. Little space was given over to his own aesthetic appreciation of painters past or present. In old age Philip wrote *I care about a vast lot of things - but not drama or opera or ballet.*<sup>1</sup> Painting, however, mattered to him all his life.

In 1920 Philip wrote about art for both *Blackfriars* and *Music & Letters* journals.<sup>2</sup> Three years before he chose to move to Ditchling and work with Eric Gill his writing already reflected his strong views on the factors that corrupt artist's lives. He was suspicious of The Royal Academy *as a dumping ground for mediocrity* and concerned that Catholics should not shut their eyes to the paintings in London's National Gallery simply because it was non-Catholics who selected them.<sup>3</sup> He was also frustrated that art was not widely seen as something that Britain should be proud of in the period immediately after World War One: *When so much is said about patriotism we should remember we are an artistic nation not just a military one.*<sup>4</sup>

When writing for *Music & Letters* Philip was particularly concerned about Nationality believing it to be *The first thing that strikes us about almost every work of art.*<sup>4</sup> He divides Britain into two classes *The Squirarchy* who had been the only people able to finance and influence the arts throughout history, and *The People* who observe painting in public places but have no influence over its production.<sup>5</sup>

*Excerpt from Music & Letters, 1920, page 272*

All Van Dyck's work is tinged with insincerity; he was painstaking without being thorough, and mannered for the sake of manner. He gave the Squirarchy exactly what they wanted. He flattered his sitters giving each of them that look of conscious superiority that showed their breeding. He gave them all the same



helpless hands with tapering fingers, not because he admired such, but because his sitters did. Van Dyck never presumed to paint an intimate portrait; he kept a respectful distance and was as discreet as any flunkey.

Such a man could not fail to be a huge success both socially and financially, but his effect on painting was disastrous. He left the Squirarchy even more self-satisfied than he found them and made it harder than ever for an honest painter to get a living.

*Excerpt from 'The Royal Academy', Blackfriars Magazine, Vol 1, No 3, June 1920*

In past years it could be safely predicted of the works of Academicians that one would be duller, that another would be more facile, that a third would be greener, a fourth browner. Of Mr Clausen<sup>6</sup> alone could one prophesy that his work would be better. I know not how many years it is since he took the dangerous bait of Academic honours; but he has never disappointed us. To strength of realism he has added strength of design. In recent years he has become a great colourist. He continues to show himself each year more mature in judgement, more scholarly in technique, and withal more inspired as a poet.

The influence of nineteenth-century Catholic historians, and subsequently the ideas of Eric Gill and other anti-industrialists in the first half of the twentieth century, all shaped Philip's feeling for a lost Christian artistic tradition - destroyed by the Reformation and the demands of Renaissance culture. His preference was for artists with a noble vision that

rose above their immediate cultural environment. Neither the tradition of realism nor the impressionists appealed – he commented on the *smug, stuffy vulgarity* of Renoir.<sup>7</sup> Such work did not move him. He could find in it no spiritual dimension.

Philip was slightly suspicious of the decadence of painting: its link with fashion, and its attempt to record trivial aspects of a society preoccupied with wealth and status. And, although sincere and unselfconscious art might be admirable, unless artists had a craftsman's understanding of tools and materials the resulting work would not satisfy all the viewer's senses.

Philip particularly liked the story of Ku-Kai-Chic which reminded him how some sense of mystery was always withheld from the viewer:

Ku-kai-chic was painter to the Great Chan in the second century AD. A painting by him in the BM shows that he deserved the job. Being ordered to decorate a wall in the palace he allowed no one into that room while he worked there. After several months it was finished and the Emperor came to see it. The picture was of a walled garden full of beautiful trees, flowers, fruits & birds. The Emperor was delighted but wished that the door in the garden were open so that he could see what was beyond. The painter said “That door leads only to my own country.” He walked through it and was never seen again.<sup>8</sup>

*Undated notes by Philip*

The story of European painting might have been happier if Leonardo had been faithful to Art, but he committed adultery with Science. All the academic pedants who have taught light & shade & peep-show illusion can trace their ancestry back to that unblessed union.

The language of colour in which the Middle Ages had praised God was considered childish. Painting had grown up & become self-conscious. All things had to be clothed with shadows. Painters worshipped Chiaroscuro in sackcloth & soot.

*Romance – an undated manuscript by Philip*

In a London slum, Turner was born a painter and he was never anything else. He had the example of J R Cozens and the companionship of Tom Girtin, but he was of no school and no one can be of the school of Turner.

John Crome told his son - "If it is only a pig-sty you are painting, dignify it." Whatever Turner painted he transfigured. This did not come of falsifying or of adding glamour; it came of a noble vision. It was as though he saw with the eyes of his Guardian Angel. Beauty poured into his mind faster than he could fix it. He worked at high speed day and night, without rest and without repetition. In all his work, Turner sang of beauty. His song was that of the three young men - "All ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord."<sup>8</sup> It was the song of St Francis - "We praise thee O Lord for brother Sun".

Up and down Europe he went, gathering material. Back in London, he unpacked his sketch-books and spread his memories on paper and canvas. Into the stagnant murk he brought the blaze of southern sunshine, the crystal air of the Alps and the heave and swing of the ocean. He always worked alone and spent his last years in hiding under an assumed name. He moved towards the light until some of his late work seems incandescent. At the end he had his head lifted so that he might watch the dawn, and he died as the rising sun shone in his eyes.

Turner's slightest sketch was a lyric and each is an eager seizing of some glint of beauty. Of those which he left to the nation, Ruskin catalogued some seventeen thousand. Little is known of the man, except that he was mean about money and that he never talked about painting. In such faultless devotion to his only love, the nation may have seen romance when they buried him with Nelson in St Paul's.

*Undated Manuscript ('Thoughts about a hazel bush')*

In English landscape painting, the abundance of green would be soporific if it were not arrested by a spot of red. A patch or blur of red would not do. It must be a sharp dot. So in the middle distance a woman wears a red shawl. My grandfather habitually put a red tulip, even where no tulip could grow.

*Undated Notes*

Why do I find the paintings of Constable unsatisfactory? I love his subject matter. I admire his observation, his sincerity &, above all, his courage. It was his courage & readiness to attack that enabled him to seize the gleam as it moved, the gust as it blew & the horse as it leaped. Why then am I not satisfied? It is because my view of the subject is obscured by paint. A painter must love, or perhaps hate, his subject, but he must love his paint. Now consider a picture by Hogarth. We may look through it & see pleasant or unpleasant people. Or we may look, not through





the picture, but at it. If we examine the paint, we find nothing but delight - the craftsman's delight in the best possible use of his material. The pigment is mixed to the right creaminess & laid on the canvas with the most suitable brush. If it is said that Constable's direct attack on his subject did not allow such refinements - then I point to Hogarth's *Shrimp Girl*. That appears to have been painted all in a flash. Yet a woman who had seen it told me it made her want to kiss the paint. An artist should be a craftsman as well as a visionary. If he loves his medium, it will carry out his wishes & give him freedom. Constable was on better terms with his pencil, so perhaps his drawings are his best work.

*Excerpt from Music & Letters, 1920, page 276-277*

Reynolds was a snob and a tyrant, but he had real artistic ability and a great capacity for hard work. Of the merits of his painting it is now impossible to form any just estimate, for the technical methods by which he obtained a resemblance to the old Roman masters caused his pictures to fade and crack, even during his own life time. He was utterly ignorant and inappreciative of painting as a craft, and fumbled over problems to which any sign-painter could have shown him the solution.

*Letter to the Careys 23 October 1961*

I recently came upon a remark by Degas that you might use as a text. Unfortunately, it was not quoted in French, but the idea is clear enough. - "Drawing is not what you see, but what others must be made to see." Don't you think that is rather a good way of placing drawing as a language? It goes with his constant denunciation of those who painted direct from nature. I may have quoted to you before his reply when asked whether one should not draw from a model. - "Yes, provided the model is on the ground floor & your easel is upstairs".

*Excerpt from 'The Diploma Gallery', Blackfriars Magazine, Vol 1, No 5, August 1920*

Do not hurry up the stairs; take them gently, pausing to examine the drawings that hang there. You may see why Blake admired Flaxman, and why Sandby set a whole generation experimenting in water-colour ...<sup>9</sup> To me the greatest treasures of the collection are the small Constable sketches. They used to hang at the head of the stairs. I strained my neck in my efforts to get a proper view of them and leant over the banisters in peril of a horrible death in the abyss below. Now they are placed at intervals around the gallery, very near the floor. Is it the intention of the authorities that they shall be seen kneeling or not at all? I know not; but it is edifying to see an earnest student apparently 'making the stations'.<sup>10</sup>

*Letter to Noel Anthony Scawen Lytton 25 September 1983*

I remember a day when I had some hours in Paris between trains. I wanted to see two things in the Louvre and they were far apart in that monstrous department store. To get from one to the other I had to go through the great picture gallery. I had spent the night in a crowded train and I was carrying a heavy rucksack so when I found a seat I sat and loosed my load. An American couple were doing the Louvre. The man leant wearily on a stick and looked at the floor while his wife read from a guide book. Of some picture behind my back she read "This picture which is known as 'La Belle Jardiniere' is considered by many to be the most beautiful of all Raphael's Madonnas" & so on. As I hoisted on my rucksack I happened to look round. The picture was not by Raphael, it was not a Madonna. 'La Belle Jardiniere' was in another room. I went on my way refreshed because it is pleasing when people become caricatures of themselves.

*Letter to Father Tom Phelan 15 March 1963*

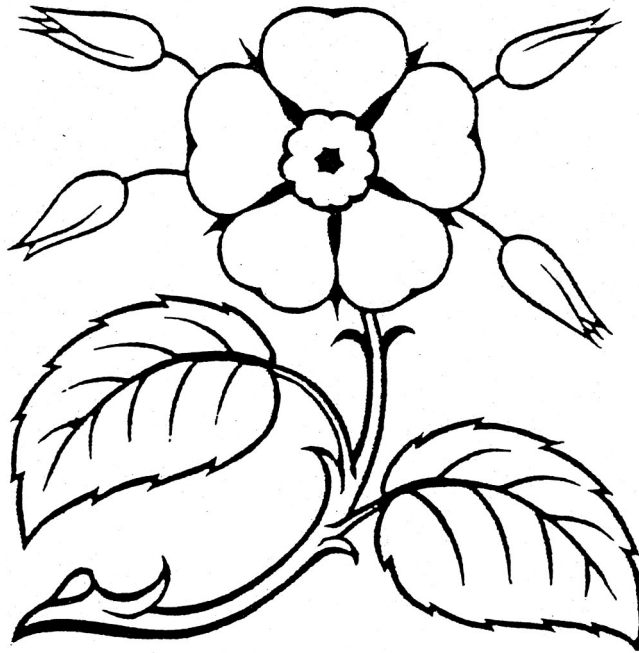
With what are called Artists now, I have no common language and no common base to measure from. The fact that they speak of “Fine Arts” shows they have no wholeness of thought. ‘Taste’, ‘aesthetics’, ‘self-expression’ & so on can mean nothing but pleasure seeking & self-indulgence. Enjoyment of the work & of the result are necessary guides to right making, as pleasure in eating is necessary for right appetite & digestion. Of course much good art is for pleasure. It is for our delight and refreshment. In that case, we must be sure that it is healthy pleasure. Music may set our minds dancing & lift us out of the mud; but crooning may induce self-pity, which no man ought to allow himself for a moment. A Turner water-colour may let us breathe clean mountain air; but a Picasso is as brutal as a bull-fight. It may give some people a morbid excitement, though I only find it repulsive.

*Excerpt from Music & Letters, 1920, page 277*

The quality which distinguishes the English painters and in which they excel all others is in their sense of space.

If you hang an English picture on the wall of a room you have enlarged the room by the amount of space represented; but if you hang up an Italian painting you have crowded the room by the introduction of so many more people or things. This is partly due to the difference in climate. In an Italian house there is space in plenty, and the pictures are required to fill the blank spaces and people the emptiness. In an English house there is no space to spare and light is precious, for both have been limited for the sake of warmth. One tendency of its pictures, therefore, must be to ease the crowdedness. They must give a feeling of greater space, and the people and things in them must live in the bigger world beyond the frames.





AMERICAN TEA  
& GARDEN PARTY AT  
HORSTED PLACE  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 23<sup>rd</sup>  
FROM 3. P.M.

IN PLACE OF THE USUAL CONVENT BAZAAR

# Legacy of Literature

It is a treat to read a modern poem that is shapely & has the courtesy to be lucid. I once said something of that sort to a poetess and she appeared to be pained by my old-fashioned ignorance. She said 'But one must be obscure.'

*Letter to the Careys 23 October 1961*

In every aspect of life Philip mistrusted abstraction. Consequently he did not appreciate language as a substitute for real things, but he revelled in it as a guide for making connections in the world around us. He did not like authors who used complicated words - the kind that people could not fathom without having received a particular type of education. Just as he welcomed the use of English in the Mass, because it meant that the congregation could be united by a shared understanding of the Word, so he expected literature to communicate a powerful message to a broad audience. He found fault with writers such as Ezra Pound: *When Pound put in a bit of Basque & a Chinese ideogram I thought it the ill manners of a spoilt child. I don't think Pound, or any one else, has thoughts too big to go into the words of Bacon, Keats, Dickens & Huxley!*<sup>1</sup>

Philip liked literature that reflected conversation. He liked dialogue and debate on different views of the truth. He believed that the King James version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer *were fixed in print when our Language was at its best. However our speech changed, these works did not become obsolete. Rather they were the warp on which the great tapestry of our literature was woven.*<sup>2</sup> Philip did not want strands of multiple interpretation to be brought into the picture. He preferred to be guided by an author's moral strength, rather than be forced to confront reflections on the darker sides of human nature. If a story told of a genuine search for the truth - beset by inevitable human error, but not destroyed by it - then he felt the trust between writer and reader would be maintained.

For Philip, certain writers were anchored in the here and now by their awareness of the constancy of nature. Browning brought *a miracle of sharp focus* when he described the chaffinch singing on the orchard bough *His creations are three-dimensional sculpture rather than painting.*<sup>3</sup> Robert Bridges' bird chorus in *A Testament of Beauty* was second only to the one in *Piers the Plowman.*<sup>4</sup> Whereas T S Eliot was *a good fellow but rooted in literature, not in the soil, He is a fungus growing on a tree,*<sup>5</sup> and James Joyce was *gibberish.*<sup>6</sup> Nor did Philip

favour what he perceived as the hysterical quality of Gerard Manley Hopkins' writing, which he found random: *Hopkins shook his head like a dice box and recorded what was thrown out.*<sup>7</sup> But he was delighted by play with language that he thought everyone could enjoy. He loved Lewis Carroll's *Through The Looking Glass* and the idea of Turgenev in conversation with Jowett, describing a Russian sect as *shlim-shlam & vish-vash - vot you call Broadchurch.*<sup>8</sup> He loved the absurdity of simple misunderstanding. He was amused by the tale of an eleven year old who, when told to write about the harm to fish caused by oil spills, wrote: *Last night my mum opened a sardine tin. It was full of oil and the sardines were all dead.*<sup>9</sup>

In his later years Philip read little that was new. He liked to *go through a few old books slowly and repeatedly.*<sup>10</sup> His copy of Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* was given to him by a Quaker spinster when he was eighteen years old; it was falling to pieces by the time he was ninety five. The book he turned to most often, after the Bible, was Langland's *Piers the Plowman* which first appeared in 1362.<sup>11</sup> It was widely read in its time as an allegory of life, and Philip saw the parallels between Langland's criticism of medieval society and his own misgivings about the industrialised age in which he lived. The allegorical characters, including *the lady lovely of lere, Mede the maid, Favel and Coveitise,*<sup>12</sup> all play their part in a sequence of visions designed to lead the central character - *Will* - on a journey to confront *Truth*. The book promotes two principles fundamental to Philip: the equality of man before God and the dignity of honest labour.

Langland attacked the corruption within the English Catholic Church of his own era. *Soul* criticises *Friars* for spending money on building, and tells *Will* where *Charity* is to be found: in *Piers the Plowman* himself, in royal robes or rags, but not in monasteries, nor anywhere else where money is sought. In Philip's attack on the *gothic monstrosities*<sup>13</sup> of Prinknash Abbey and his suspicion of the contemplative life in the twentieth century, we hear the echo of Langland's words. Philip also liked contemporary literature that had grown out of Langland's tradition: for example David Jones' *In Parenthesis* - *that book shows the direct influence of Piers.*<sup>14</sup>

Although Philip saw *Piers the Plowman* as a book aimed at the general reader, he also engaged in correspondence on the subject with the Oxford Professor, Nevill Coghill, an authority on both Langland and Chaucer.<sup>15</sup> Coghill's replies brought a fresh stimulus to Philip - he met few people who shared his love of literature.

We do not know when Philip first read the works of the novelist and essayist, G K

Chesterton, but he came to regard him as one of the great writers of his era and was strongly influenced by him. Philip's letters suggest that he did not think of Chesterton so much as a campaigner for social justice, but more as a wise observer of occasions when people were engrossed in their own delusions. Perhaps Philip's own written style owes something to Chesterton's punchy narrative with its short sentences, unwavering opinions and consistent recourse to understated humour. It is also significant, given Philip's regular defence of the whole man, that Chesterton himself championed *wholeness* – *he had no trace of T S Eliot's 'disassociated sensibility.'* *He consciously resisted the splitting apart of reason and emotion, mind and body, spirit and matter, which so many of his contemporaries were drawn to.*<sup>16</sup>

Letters to Lord Lytton, written when Philip was in his nineties, emphasise the importance of literature as a link between nations and generations: *Don't undervalue reading for pleasure. Seeing the world with the eyes of Chaucer and Dickens may be the most valuable part of our education. It is our literature that links together the English-speaking peoples.*<sup>17</sup> Philip spoke highly of G K Chesterton's *The Victorian Age in Literature*, and enjoyed the way in which the author drew out similarities and contrasts in the writing styles of his near contemporaries.<sup>18</sup> He favoured writers who made the reader look again at their own era, remembering the values that must be upheld for the benefit of future generations. Of Langland and Chaucer Philip wrote – *through their work we may see the Christian world in which they played their parts. They inherited the experience of the Christian centuries and they can pass on something of that tradition to us ... in Melibeus there is one golden sentence 'For right as the body of a man may not liven without the soule, namore may it live withouten temporal goodes.'* *Surely that is the gist of Rerum Novarum – man's need for, & therefore his right to, ownership.*<sup>19</sup>





## Words

To Thomas Dilworth 29 June 1986

You really must introduce your students to Cobbett, he says: *Grammar, perfectly understood, enables us not only to express our meaning fully & clearly, but so to express it as to enable us to defy the ingenuity of man to give our words any other meaning than that which we ourselves intend them to express.*<sup>20</sup>

To Tony Stoneburner 30 January 1978

In general, I agree that all words have a right use somewhere. One need not keep to the dictionary. One may enlist barbarians from the wilderness - including what Brer Tarapin said when he got to the bottom of the pond <sup>21</sup> ... My reservation about admitting all words, is because interdenominationalisation is more than I can accept, even in a journal of high repute. I want to throw it to the Germans, who thrive on such stuff. But among good words, I am sure you enjoy the bastard ones that come often from the illiterate. I heard a gardener praise a tree as being a very specimental one. And then there was an Irish maid, who explained that some device worked by suckage & blowtion. No talk about pneumatic action would be as clear. As to tautology - of course, I love the biblical thoroughness of washed with water, burnt with fire & so on. A passage that David & I enjoyed is in Wisdom. It tells how a man carved a wooden idol. Then he covered it with vermilion & painted it red.<sup>22</sup> I like the bit that says of the people before the flood that all the thoughts of their hearts & all the imaginations of their minds were always evil continually.<sup>23</sup> ...

I realise that a preacher must load his words. He must strike chords & strike them heavily. Carlyle was great at that. He did not say that a thing was a botch. He said it was - a shambling, squint-cornered, amorphous botch.<sup>24</sup>



## *William Langland's Piers the Plowman*

*Romance - a manuscript by Philip, written circa 1977.*

As I see it, the mainspring of life is romance, and the evidence of romance is fidelity. Some people mistake glamour for romance. But glamour is an illusion. It is to romance what superstition is to religion.

Man is in the image of God, and human romance is in the image of the divine romance. Love is creative. The love within the Holy Trinity leads to the creation of all things. Love desires love in return, so man was given a free soul. Man may misuse his freedom, but God is faithful. Therein lies the romance.

The word romance is most commonly used of the love of man and woman. This may be as happy as *The Owl & the Pussycat*, or as sad as *The Dong with the Luminous Nose*. Fidelity is the blood in its veins. Any man's life may be a romance, though it may be known only to himself. His aim may be the finding of some truth. It may be the learning of some skill, or the achievement of some public good, or the creation of some beauty.

Among the romances of the 14th century must surely be reckoned the life of William Langland. It is only from his one book that we know that he lived. He is unknown to history, as the star of Bethlehem is unknown to astronomy. The star and *The Vision concerning Piers the Plowman* had the same purpose - to lead wise men to the truth.

From the little he tells us about himself, we gather that Langland came from the Malvern Hills, that he wandered and wondered, that he became a clerk in minor orders; and that he settled in London, living with his wife and daughter in a hovel on Cornhill.

It was probably about 1350 that Langland conceived his poem. It was to tell the adventures of a man on his pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Truth. The convention of a series of dreams enabled him to tackle problems one at a time. His native dialect gave him a rich vocabulary of short words with which to pack his lines with meaning - lines that beat like waves foaming and sparkling with alliteration. He could make sweet music when he remembered running water, or the song of birds; but his is essentially a poetry of thought. He exemplifies the advice given by the Duchess to Alice - Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves.<sup>25</sup> He had a tale to tell and he thought no labour too great to tell it clearly. He began by considering the many ways in which men have to work to live and how, in all of them, men may do God's will.

But Langland was hard to please and he began the poem again from the start. He amended, amplified and enriched it and carried the pilgrimage a stage further. Then, a third time he re-wrote the whole work and carried it on to completion. This extended version reaches its climax in a showing of the Passion, the triumph over death, the breaking of the doors of hell and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A thread running through the whole poem is *kynde witte*. This is the instinctive wisdom that God has put in our nature and which really has the last word in all our judgements. It is typical of Langland's *kynde witte* that his gifts of Pentecost are not the seven listed by the theologians, but the skills or graces of the trades ... By grace men perfect their work, and so perfect themselves.

*Piers the Plowman* is packed tight with the thought and devotion of the Middle Ages. And it comes to us with the freshness of spring growth.

The life-work of the obscure clerk on Cornhill is surely a romance.

*To the Careys 25 May 1975*

I will try to write something about Langland by way of introduction, for he has been my companion for half my lifetime. Of course his dialect is an obstacle to begin with. He & Chaucer were both writing in London at the same time, but Langland was from the West Country. His speech had not the French ingredient, but it had an enormous vocabulary of short words. He has a dozen words for man and they are each of one syllable. His verse is simple and regular; a line of four beats divided by a point, as in plain-chant. I think we get his meaning best if we read slowly in half-lines. To begin thus:

In a somer seson / Whan soft was the sonne

I shope me in shroudes / as I a shepe were

- by the time you come to -

And as I lay & lened / and loked on the wateres

I slombred in a slepyng / it sweyued so merye <sup>26</sup>

- you will have felt the movement of the verse with the bunches of alliteration sparkling on the waves. Once afloat, you are carried like Huck Finn down the great river to freedom & safety.

*To René Hague 4 October 1978*

Of course I want to hear your friend read Langland. He may show that my guess-work has been all wrong. I have thought of him as going with a rather slow, steady tread and a rather gruff accent. I think the caesura was always marked. He was a psalm-singer by trade. Have you tried chanting him?

*To the Careys 24 April 1975*

Langland tells of Pentecost & of the gifts brought to us by the Holy Spirit, God's messenger. These gifts are the skills by which men do their work. He tells of the skill of the priest, of the lawyer, of the plowman, of the ditcher, the thatcher, the merchant & all the arts by which men rightly earn their living. He includes a sort of soldiering that we should now call police work. I do hope you may be able to read the whole passage. I find it a deal more helpful than the usual list of seven sub-species of grace. It is just the way we have been thinking & working most of our lives. From the works of the Middle Ages, we have inferred that they were inspired in this way. Is it not good to find the matter dealt with by a clear-headed poet of the 14th century? He was not putting forward a new theory. He was simply expressing the belief of his time.

*To Nevill Coghill 5 April 1946*

As to Piers, I agree that any paraphrase is a dim reflection of the original. So much depends on the texture. To re-write him is like making a copy of an oak table in pine.

*To Nevill Coghill 20 October 1953*

About our mutual friend, Will Langland - having read carefully the A, B and C texts, and re-read a good deal of them, I naturally want to thank you for the great help you gave me by your various writings on Piers Plowman. Also, I want to try to put into words, and submit to you, a thought on the subject. ... Piers Plowman is one of those vast compositions in which the theme is nowhere stated starkly. However complex the variations, one is confident that this is not a conglomeration. It is an organism. It has the unity of a growth from a single cell. But what is that cell? The poise of a statue may delight us, because all is related to the bend of the spine, yet the sculptor may not have shown us the spine. The unity of Piers Plowman is a unity of purpose, not merely a unity of atmosphere. Long Will takes us for a tour round Christendom and it might be said that he brings us back to where we started. But that tour is

more than an experience, it is a progress. Something very important is achieved by it.

We set out to find where DoWell dwelleth. We might have expected to find that the house of DoWell was a religious house, but we never find the house at all and we never get a glimpse of DoWell - nor of DoBet - nor DoBest. As you have shown, these are personified in Piers. DoWell was an abstraction, like Clergy, Conscience, kynde witte & the rest; but Piers is a person.

We set out with Langland in search of DoWell & followed him in all weathers until he seemed to have reached safety. But the illusion of safety is itself a danger & Conscience sets out on a fresh quest. This time it is no abstraction that he seeks, but Piers the Plowman.

Is this the change from the quest of goodness itself to the quest for Goodness Himself - the chord that resolves the discords and brings us into a major key? Might not the whole book be a meditation on the question in the Gospel:- How can we know the way? and the answer:- I am the Way.<sup>27</sup> ... Altogether it seems to me that Langland is right in the middle of Holy Church. He stands with both feet on the rock. He looks on tempests & is never shaken.<sup>28</sup> He is a giant, but there is nothing disproportionate about him - and what good company he is!

*From Nevill Coghill 22 October 1953*

Thank you for a most illuminating letter about Long Will. Every point you have made speaks with the authority of someone who really knows and loves the poem. You first say it is not a conglomeration but an organism; and whoever does not comprehend that can never get anything from it, except a phrase or two which is dubbed 'historically interesting', as if Langland wrote to give useful quotations for Whig historians. Your image of the statue and the spine is very well found. The unity of Piers Plowman seems to me the unity of a pilgrimage, which starts with a whole world - *a thousand of men tho thrungen togyderes*<sup>29</sup> - and ends with one man and his conscience still on the way. But, as you so well point out, the way has become The Way. Your expression - the quest of goodness itself to the quest for Goodness Himself seems to me one of those final and simple sayings which are so hard to come by, but which sum a great thought. I had not thought it myself and I rejoice to be able to think it now, thanks to you; and, as you say, it takes my own thought a step further into words. For I now see that the illustration at the end of my modern version (Christ crucified adored by Albion) is a pictorial presentation of the same search that you have phrased so finely.



## *From George Herbert to Ogden Nash*

*To Julian Smith - undated*

I think George Herbert supreme as a religious poet. In my own time, I see Kipling and Hardy as standing high above all others, just as Browning and Tennyson did in their generation. Kipling and Hardy had an advantage in that they were masters of narrative prose. Their verse grew naturally from that and had no glamour of poetic diction.

*Some Thoughts of a Convert - 1983*

Uncle Toby's nephew (Tristram Shandy) detested what he knew of the Romish Church. While we regret that his knowledge was so incomplete let us admit that what he knew was really detestable. We feel that we could teach him, but maybe he could teach us something - as when he says -

*For my own part, I never wonder at anything - and so often has my judgement deceived me in my life, that I always suspect it, right or wrong - at least I am seldom hot upon cold subjects. For all this, I reverence truth as much as anybody; and when it has slipped us, if a man will but take me by the hand, and go quietly, and search for it, as for a thing we have both lost, & can neither of us do well without - I will go to the world's end with him - But I hate disputes.<sup>30</sup>*

*To William Baldwin Fletcher 13 October 1980*

The Acts of the Apostles will go on to the end of time & it is in that story that we are acting. But as well as being a rational creature, man is a laughing animal. As such, his habitat is The Ingoldsby Legends.<sup>31</sup> Comfort yourselves with this thought, because what looks like a horrid scandal in Acts, may be a damn good joke in Ingoldsby.

*To Julian Smith 27 September 1982*

I am with you in finding help in memories of poetry as well as of nature. Happily, much English poetry is about nature. I think the first part of Browning's *De Gustibus* is one of the most beautiful of English landscapes. But Keats' letters from Devon are as lovely.<sup>32</sup> As to memories of nature, I imagine that you think often of the flowers you used to paint. My joy is in foreground detail, rather than wide landscape - just as I am happier in a small parish church, than in a cathedral.

*To René Hague 28 September 1978*

I have been out of reach of books, or any sure news of books. I see the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Tablet*, but I am distrustful of reviews. I have read again such old books as I had - *Tristram Shandy*, *Huckleberry Finn*, half a dozen Dickens, some Macaulay, some Carlyle. All stood the test of my slow reading, with Dickens standing high above them all. This does not mean that I live in the past, but simply that old books were all I had.

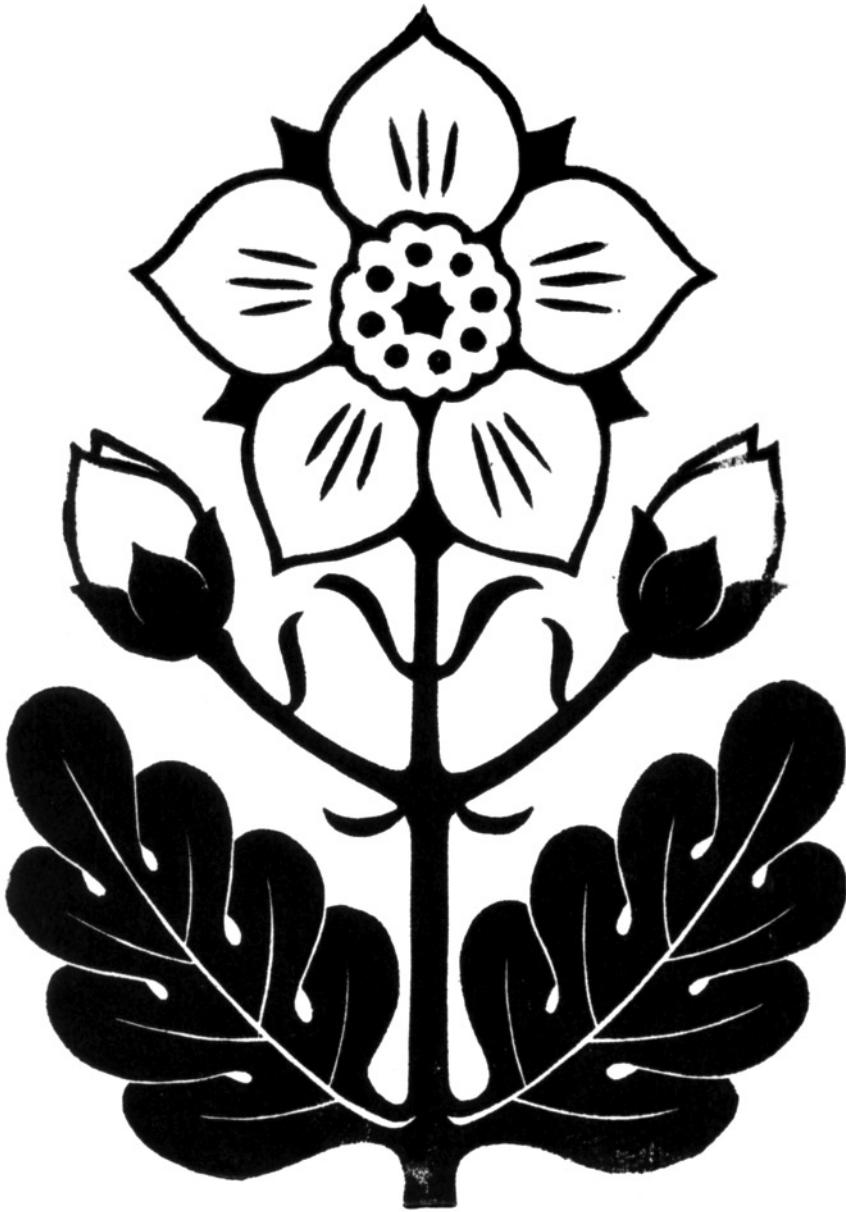
The poets I see praised most often are Hopkins, Yeats, Eliot and Hardy. What I have read of Hopkins and Yeats, I heartily detest. Eliot could be funny about a cat, but when serious, I find him as empty as a blown egg.

I think Hardy is rightly admired. He stands like Stonehenge. The poor Juggins grumbled that God had not redeemed the world. He saw the cross, but could not see the Figure on it. ...What a master he was! His poems are like the crystals in a snow flake; each is symmetrical, but no two are the same shape. Someone said that Crabbe was Pope in worsted stockings.<sup>33</sup> Was Hardy Browning in hob-nailed boots?

*To Thomas Dilworth 4 November 1985*

[Desmond Chute] was a friend of Yeats & Pound ... He dismissed Dickens as having no style. Thank God Dickens allowed no style to come between us and Mrs Micawber and Mr Snagsby and Mrs Wilfer and the young man of the name of Guppy and Mr F's aunt and Durdles and Ruth Pinch - they go to the horizon and any one of them might have made an author famous. Desmond seemed to think of England as outside civilization - Protestant and barbaric.

Newman said - Whatever happens now, English literature will always have been Protestant. But he did not belittle that literature. The bigotry in *Tristram Shandy* and *Lavengro* does not lessen our enjoyment of them. They are really great stuff.



*To William Baldwin Fletcher 25 July 1984*

I can't understand the craze for G M Hopkins. I detest his gasping, hiccuping, diction - though of course I feel sorry for him.

*Book of Philip ~ compiled by Graham Carey, during his visit to the Hagreens in 1956*

Philip argued once with a Hopkins enthusiast [Dom Wulstan Phillipson]. He said - you can't use words like 'Whifflewaffle.' The admirer took him seriously & said - 'it is not fair to quote words out of context.' So Philip wrote a poem & sent it to the admirer, saying - here is the context & I cannot make any more sense out of it than out of the bits. The poem was accepted as genuine ... & Philip never dared to confess the fraud. He told me: It is quite easy, you write some stuff in Hopkins metre, put in a few hiccups, & then take out every word that seems to mean something & put in one that doesn't.<sup>34</sup> Here it is:

Star Fare

Dove-dawn dims to harvest, hast'ning, face-fettered, annealed.  
Up then, ascend! Thrones to throng, thunderous, thousand-ranked:  
Alone each, parchment-perfected, soul-sealed, self-sealed.  
And O! The increase! The fortune! God be thanked!

Have at it then! Under & over wavering, never return!  
How then? Flukes falling, far feathered to topmost bough?  
Tell us it! Broken - O bent, rent, tethered to burn,  
Astream, flood-seethed, in gold-fire mesh - Never allow.

Now to be wakened! Din deafened, dead-wit interrupted,  
Interspaced, time-tongued, listening, lagged in surfeit of sun.  
There too, thrown in thought-thong, ebulous, light-corrupted.  
No-thing, un-thing, fending in fascets adjacent, the guerdon won!

*Undated Manuscript*

W B Yeats was a lily that festered. Some men stroke a cat to please the cat. Some do it to please themselves. Yeats pleased himself. He preferred glamour to reality, because it entailed no responsibility.



*Letter to George Heseltine 29 September 1971*

Stranger to me than GK's horror of the East, was his infatuation with everything Irish. Atheism, glamour and decadence did not dull his superlatives. Looking to the West, he saw green and gold... This made him befriend Shaw, an atheist and a communist, a vegetarian and a teetotaller.

GK's relative treatment of Yeats, Hardy and Kipling was fantastic. He said that Yeats was the greatest poet of his time and he denounced the other two. Of course they both wrote some unworthy stuff, but it is not by his worst that a man should be judged. Shaw put God out of his mind to make room for Shaw. Hardy was a humble man and a reluctant atheist. As for brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot - he gave us the most gentle and sympathetic picture of that character in William Leaf in *Under the Greenwood Tree*.<sup>35</sup> Kipling knew a lot about the Empire, and GK may have counted this against him. But Kipling was no atheist and he championed monogamy, fidelity to promises and loyal perseverance. Altogether, he and GK had so much in common that it seems sad their mutual friend, Baring<sup>36</sup>, did not manage to get them together. At least they should have met at the tomb on which Kipling had inscribed Gehazi.<sup>37</sup>

*To René Hague 4 October 1978*

I agree with you that the way poetry is read on the radio is abominable. The reader lowers the pitch of his voice to a hollow growl. Then he dramatises the poem without regard to the line endings. Towards the end he pulls out the sob stop. The penultimate line is faint and husky and the last line does not reach me at all. The organ blower has gone to sleep before the Amen.

*To Tony Stoneburner 12 September 1972*

About *The Waste Land*, it shows moods of an intellectual in a feverish state of mental health. The poems are like those impressionist paintings that do not depict objects so much as record how light was reflected by the objects. I suspect that the great popularity of *The Waste Land* has been due to the fashion for wonky mental health. Young people who are normal take drugs to get the wonky feeling. Reading Eliot gives them a cosy feeling of being among the high-ups.

If one thinks of the close woven narrative of *The Ingoldsby Legends*, *The Ancient Mariner*, Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy*, or the mature philosophising of *Bridges' Testament of Beauty* - do T S Eliot and Ezra Pound and Co. still stand? Do

they hold the mirror up to nature, or only see themselves? I think introspection is the very devil, even when pious people call it self-examination. A mill should grind grist, not grind its own teeth. That only produces noise.

*To the Cantons 9 July 1951*

I reported our conversation about the low interests of our eminent novelists, and Aileen remarked that France shows the same phenomenon. Mauriac is the Catholic best-seller, specialising in the vilest aspects of the vilest people.<sup>38</sup> My favourite reading is *Piers Plowman* and *The Canterbury Tales*. These have been Catholic literature for five and a half centuries, so I can't be considered eccentric in my taste. Chaucer takes one out to meet his friends and acquaintances in the April sunshine. Langland, on a May morning, invites us to climb Pisgah with him and look towards the Promised Land. Now we are invited to go on all fours and look under the bed. Gloom and stuffiness are considered to be profound and sunshine is decried as superficial.

I doubt whether this fashion could have got itself accepted while Belloc and Chesterton were writing. They uplifted - whether they helped us up, or cheered us up or blew us up - we were the higher for it.

*To René Hague 2 June 1980*

I am glad you enjoy some of Belloc's simple things. It was queer that David<sup>39</sup> loved the bare beauty of - When Jesus Christ was four years old and dressed his own thoughts in fancy costumes.

Belloc was a master of words - and he knew it ... You may not have heard him on hunting - in the manner of Mrs Markham:

And when they kill the fox, that is the kill.  
'That is very simple Mama'.  
Yes, my child. You will notice that gentlemen  
always use simple words.

Thus a common man may speak of the circumference of a field, but a gentleman will say "the all-round it - I mean the outside of it - you know what I mean, what!"<sup>40</sup>

*To the Careys 23 July 1956*

Ogden Nash is interesting. I like knock-about rhymes, but at first I was too much repelled by the subject-matter to appreciate the fun. However, I came upon an opinion with which I happened to agree and then I marvelled that he should think of following 'garnished' with 'astarnished.' One has to forget so much to do that - to forget literacy in fact. Such an escape from his schooling may have been as difficult as our escape from foreshortening and chiaroscuro. I will go on reading him and may find his best things have a place among the minor classics.





# Reflections on Beauty

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,” — that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

*John Keats: Ode on a Grecian Urn*

Philip echoes Keats’ famous lines in his own writings on beauty, believing that many of the rules man has devised across the centuries create an unnecessary distance between man and God - *the filters of our teachers keep out too much. They keep out beauty.*<sup>1</sup> The following passage is taken from one of Philip’s unpublished essays.

Beauty is one of the languages in which God speaks to us. In his kindness he has made the perception of beauty intensely pleasurable. I thank God for this. But the moralists don’t seem to think it a good idea. They think pleasure is a bait with a hook on it. A woman made friends with a robin by feeding it. She put crumbs outside her open door. Then she put them just inside. Then nearer to where she used to sit. The robin ceased to fear a trap and after some months it took crumbs from her hand. Even so, let us realise that beauty is not a trap, but a gift that God wants us to accept from his hand.

God speaks to us through the beauty of everything he has made. But man may err or be perverse. His work may lack beauty or it may be unusual. Then it may be hailed as a perfume or condemned as a stink. Judgement in such matters may be left to art critics and aesthetes. I speak only of such beauty as is plainly recognisable by man. A tree spreads out its leaves to receive the light of the sun. So we should spread our attention to catch the beauty of the world. The more we enjoy beauty, the more we find to enjoy. What is obviously beautiful may be the appetizer that prepares us to enjoy less obvious - but equally beautiful - things. Some of our fellow creatures get our affection at first sight - the bumble bee, the Jenny Wren, the dormouse and, for me, the nightjar.

God made nature to support us. It does this by feeding our bodies with its substance and our minds with its beauty. To get nourishment from nature man must do a great deal of work and he must use food with reasonable restraint. To feed our minds with beauty man has only to enjoy it. No amount of it will give him surfeit. Life is a hard struggle if we are to keep chaste and sober and out of debt and in charity with our neighbours. Let us fill our minds with beauty - fill them to saturation.



Those who warn us against sensual enjoyment assume that enjoyment of food will lead us to *pate de foie gras*. They think that delight in touch must lead to its highest use in sex. But a man may learn to enjoy the simplest things. He may come to find oatmeal so delicious that he eats it in silence. I am not a pleasure seeker. I have no need to seek pleasure: it comes to me. As the psalm says, 'Thou spreadest a table in my sight.'<sup>1</sup> Man's senses take in beauty faster than he can digest it – as a cow takes in grass. The cow at leisure chews the cud. Thanks to the gift of memory, man can ponder all the beauty he has ever been shown.

We are told to detach our minds from earthly things and think of heaven. But I advise the opposite. We know nothing whatever about heaven and it is impossible to think about nothing. To think about what holy people have imagined about heaven is a waste of time. God has chosen to make us material beings and to set us to work in a material world. Let us keep our thoughts on doing our work with the means God has given us.







# The Natural World

The only theory I find credible is that God said 'Let there be bats.'

*Letter to the Careys 19 April 1976*

Philip's imagination created landscapes. When he pictured the natural world in his head he combined his theoretical knowledge of science with his practical knowledge of craftsmanship; his precise visual memory for horticulture and species of animals then brought the whole imagined landscape into precise focus. Perhaps this is why the later work of David Jones did not appeal to Philip: because Jones's visual imagination moved beyond an appreciation of shared familiar landscapes and into a realm of fantasy. Philip enjoyed his intense recollections of what was real and he enjoyed the arguments about the mysterious evolution of what we understand to be 'The Natural World.'

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 7 Dec 1977*

The elm puzzles me. Why has it not learnt to send down roots to anchor it in the winds of our climate? Was it introduced from a land where the soil was shallow, or where there were no gales? If so, where is that land? Also why has an elm leaf spinal curvature? Does that give any benefit, or is it an inherited malformation?

I am very glad you are planting trees. We need millions of them, singly & in groups & in woods. In the middle ages some forests must have been dense and carefully pruned. I have examined 15th century cloven oak plants that were dead straight and up to 9 ft. long. The tree must have been about 2 ft. in diameter. Nothing like that is grown now.

I think oak should be the main planting, but there should also be sweet chestnut & ash & walnut. We ought to plant as well the beautiful things that used to grow in hedges, such as crab apple, wild guelder rose & spindlewood. And then I think of the service tree & the buckthorn and so on.

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 8 June 1980*

I have been reading what scientists say about evolution & I find it incredible. Things have certainly evolved, but not by accident. By accident things break down. That things die & disintegrate is natural: that they grow & multiply is supernatural ... Our scientists expect us to believe that, by a series of accidents, a walking stick became an umbrella.

*Undated manuscript - The Problem of Evolution*

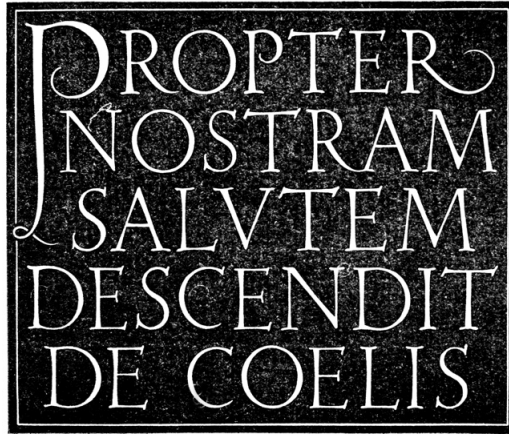
There are two ways of making a dog run. One is to tie a tin can to its tail. The other is to give it a hare to chase. The root problem of evolution is whether progress is a flight from danger behind, or a rush towards an objective ... Changes are not all due to learning from the past, but may tend towards future advantage. Sometimes the advance is by a leap, a structural change or new invention.

Unbelievers still try to make out that progress is by pushing from the past. If it is pulling into the future, then some power must be pulling - that power must already exist in the future. Other names for the tin can theory are devil-take-the-hindmost & natural selection. The theory that nature shows purpose, that the dog is chasing a hare, may be called supernatural selection, or the work of God. Neither theory covers all the facts.

*Letter to 'The Tablet' 29 November 1989*<sup>1</sup>

We have all met people who thought that in long ages nothing might by chance become something. That in further ages something might by chance become some things, that these might by chance become reproductive and that this process might by chance produce beings who believe in the power of chance to make form from the formless. But these people do not realise what authority they have behind them - no less than that of the high priest. For we read of Aaron in Exodus 32:24 : "So I asked them, which of you has any gold? And they brought what they had and gave it to me: I cast it into the fire and there came out this calf".

Well, Moses did not believe that tale. No more do I.



*Letter to the Careys 15 March 1976*

I admire [Darwin] immensely. He would be famous if he had written only on earth-worms or on coral islands, but his real importance is that his mind was on everything at once. Ecology was his realm. By his example, he taught of physical things what Chesterton taught of spiritual when he ended a poem: “There is one thing is needful: everything. The rest is vanity of vanities.”

Darwin was the most acute & patient of observers, ingenious in experiment & cautious in formulating theories. One must marvel at the brain that could contain & organise all that knowledge & the character that kept them working - & he an invalid. Above all this he knew where the frontier of science lay. He said his work threw no light on the origin of matter or the origin of life. His followers rushed in where Darwin feared to tread. Hence the explosion that has left the area radioactive to this day.

As to the claim that Chance & Time could make anything - random tapping on a typewriter producing Shakespeare’s sonnets - I never found that error attributed to Darwin. Tapping will produce nonsense to eternity. Those who say that chance could produce a living & breeding creature are claiming that tapping could produce not only a sonnet, but a poet.



**BENEDICITE OMNES  
VOLUCRES COELI  
DOMINO**

Philip's fascination with the natural world was appreciated and shared by a particular group of friends - among them the Careys, Lord Lytton and Philip's grandson Richard Ritchie. When Richard covered Darwin and the creation theory at University he found his grandfather keen to discuss the subject.<sup>2</sup>

Grandfather always wanted to tease - especially on the Darwin/creation argument which I touched on in my first year Natural Science course. He delighted in examples of organisms which could not have arisen in stages. The most obvious example being the bird. "What use is half a wing to a bird - it would have been gobbled up immediately. How could that have 'evolved'?"

... We used to have long discussions. I always had an open mind, but fed in information from my scientific training & he fed in anecdotes & information from his life's experience, friends & contacts, & incredible memory.

Philip delighted in friends who shared his enthusiasm for close scrutiny and detailed knowledge of plants and animals. Many of his friends and acquaintances over the years had not had this passion. Nor did Philip meet Catholic clergy with a keen interest in nature: *They are urban in background and gregarious in training. I have never met one who saw God's work in nature. A bumble-bee is a messenger from Heaven to show me how God cares.*<sup>3</sup> The correspondents with whom Philip could discuss the natural world engaged his mind during the long years in a nursing home where he did not even have a view of a garden through his bedroom window.

*Letter to the Carey 13 August 1978*

The spider on your window is thought provoking. Whether it is writing or decorating or merely excreting, it seems to have method & enjoyment. Among all the wonders of nature, I find spiders & bats especially fascinating. There is so much in their behaviour that we cannot account for.

*Letter to the Careys 19 April 1976*

When we lived in France we had warm summer evenings. We should have opened windows wide but for the insects. Enough of these came in through a few inches of opening. Happily this allowed bats to come in as well. Often one would fly in,

do a romp of aerobatics round the room, catch all the insects & fly out again, all in a few seconds. ... The behaviour of our bats showed that they sensed the shape of our room & of everything in it. They knew the position & movement of any insect in the air & the way out by the partly opened window. Turning off the electric light made no difference. The mechanism for this echo-sounding is immensely complicated. It includes a high-frequency switch that prevents the bat from hearing the note it emits & lets it hear the echo.

How can I see this business as a development. It is clearly an invention. So is the sting of the bee & the battery of photo-electric cells in the Apollo butterfly & the radio of the fox moth. The only theory I find credible is that God said "Let there be bats!".

*Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 12 April 1979*

Now about your bees - You probably know the old belief that when there is some notable event in your family or in the world you must go & tell the bees. I forget what will happen if you don't. I dislike superstitions in general but I think there is some right feeling behind that one. Bees will always be a mystery to man. A swarm is not just a crowd. We may exploit the bees but they are not our slaves. A hive is a sovereign state & diplomatic conventions must be observed ...

Consider the adder's fangs. They are not teeth. They are hinged, & shut like clasp-knives into the roof of the adder's mouth. They are needle-sharp, but tubular. Behind them is an outfit that concocts a deadly poison & a pump to squirt it down the fangs at the instant of their puncture. So that the fangs may unfold & be free to strike, the lower jaw dislocates itself & hangs down out of the way. An adder only strikes when it is caught & cannot escape. It is very timid & quick to get out of sight, so most adders probably go through life without using their deterrent. Yet the apparatus is passed on - along with the knowledge of how & when to use it.

And, after all, what is gained by the venom? In the same habitat & with the same diet, the harmless grass snakes are better off. They grow bigger & are far more numerous. In cases like this, the Darwinians look silly & the theologians look silly & I feel an utter fool. And yet, in all my bewilderment, I believe with Einstein that "God does not play with dice".



*Letter to the Careys Christmas 1982*

Darwin saw that slight differences among rock pigeons enabled man to breed from it the fantail, the pouter & so on. No such game could be played with wood pigeons, because they are all exactly alike. Darwin reasoned that natural selection could only work where individuals differed. Exact uniformity would account for the fixed state of the cockroach, the horseshoe crab, the shark etc. But variety is the key to progress. BUT - the coelacanths know nothing of this. No two of them are alike & some are not symmetrical, yet they have looked on while the world changed. It is clear that what this creature lacked was not opportunity, but ambition. That being so, is it to be blamed for not having traded with the talents entrusted to it, or praised for being humbly content in its lowly station?

In Victorian England, the ruling spirit was utilitarianism. The Romantics were popular, but they had no effect on the cast-iron cruelty of economics. Darwin was romantic, but he took it for granted that Nature was utilitarian. But Nature is God's handiwork, & God's ways are not man's ways. Everywhere we see prodigality, complexity & variety, where man would seek economy, simplicity & uniformity.

*Letter to the Careys 23 March 1983*

I have been reading about termites. They seem to differ from other insects as Einstein differs from Newton. It is a truism that in a committee six wise men may add up to make one fool. But a multitude of these primitive blind creatures add up to a genius for organising, building & catering.

They are so sophisticated that they can eat no natural food. They can take only a liquid which they produce in underground fungus farms. For these, they bring up water from a great depth. They adjust ventilation to keep temperature & humidity constant. They never sleep. They seem to have no means of communication, yet they rush to repel an invader or to repair damage.

Seeing how instinct enables some creatures to co-operate & live in orderly communities, it is strange that men cannot do it. The civilisations that have lasted long enough to leave great monuments have all been slave states. Your founding fathers proclaimed liberty - but only for white men.

In his letters to Graham & Nancy Carey there was, as always, a spirit of debate. Ideas and examples tumbled together in evocative, argumentative writing. Philip's correspondence with Lord Lytton produced more descriptive writing with strong imagery. They had been introduced by Dom. Wulstan Phillipson, a monk from Downside. In a letter to Julian Smithy Philip referred to him as *a splendid Catholic & a patriot - soldier, traveller & farmer. I get the most interesting letters from him about the blunders of the Foreign Office and the birds that are nesting in his garden.*<sup>4</sup>

*Letter to Noel Anthony Scawen Lytton 14 October 1982*

Natural selection seems to have played only a small part in evolution. Many things have developed handicaps. The stag's antlers waste its energy & hamper it in the forest country that is its habitat. They are only for swank. When they fall off the beast can't defend itself or its family.

Nature is dreadfully wasteful. Only a very large forest can grow as fast as a herd of elephants can knock it down. Goats can destroy a forest by eating the bark of the young trees & rabbits will prevent any trees getting started.

*Letter to Noel Anthony Scawen Lytton 17 January 1983*

About the goldcrest - it is more generally distributed than you think. Nurses have seen it here. We had them around Ditchling Common, far from any wood or conifers. In a hard winter I found one frozen. Cold is their chief enemy. Like Jenny Wrens they crowd together in a hole for warmth. I have heard of a house-martin's nest packed full of goldcrests. The firecrest is very rare. One was seen for certain



by a neighbour of ours near Ditchling Common. It entered his house by an upstairs window and explored the stairs at leisure before going out the door.

When we first knew the Common, plovers, snipe & redshanks were nesting there, as well as quantities of larks & meadow pippits. But then came motor cars. On any fine day they parked like a train all along the road-side. In each was someone asleep or reading a newspaper while the dear doggie had a good run. The area seethed with racing & barking animals. That finished the ground-nesting birds. Swans nested on an island in the pond but savages came on motorbicycles & shot at the sitting bird with air guns until she deserted.

*Letter to Noel Anthony Scawen Lytton 11 March 1983*

I imagine your snowdrops & lent lilies. My daughter brings me blooms from her bit of woodland but they need to be seen as they grow.

Wild geese being the metaphor for what we cannot catch, you are rarely favoured when they come to be your guests. They are noble creatures, at home on land, water or in the air. They have played their part in our civilization. From the dark ages until my time it was the goose quill that was mightier than the sword. It was the plectrum in the harpsichord and it feathered the arrows of the long bows. It was everyone's tooth-pick. I hope yr geese may mow yr lawn. They bite closer than sheep.

In Philip's undated manuscripts on the subject of nature - written perhaps with publication in mind or maybe simply for his own interest - he does not open dialogue in the same way as he does in his regular correspondence. His challenge appears to be whether he can persuade the reader to follow his thinking step-by-step.

*Undated manuscript - A Note about Bird Song*

Ornithologists tell us that birds sing to claim territory. Anthropologists are more understanding - they do not tell us that Menuhin strigulates to keep other fiddlers out of a concert hall. Nor do they tell us that a man who sings in a cold bath is defending his privacy.

Some birds call to keep contact, as a pair of bullfinches, or a gaggle of geese. A flock of starlings gossip & giggle before they settle down for the night. But these

sounds are conversation rather than song. Men sing for good reasons; for love, thankfulness, companionship, or, like the lark, from heavenly blessedness. Only under direct orders from Satan did men sing the hymn of hate. Birds seem to sing for much the same reasons as men. Most men have a national anthem & most birds have a signature tune.

Among birds, as among men, there are brilliant performers with no originality. Thus the jay, who has only a harsh scream of warning, has the whole range of bird-song at his disposal. And his powers go beyond that. A great aunt of mine had a jay, who used to embarrass her because whenever it heard the door open, it would use her voice to call: "Frank, wipe your boots!"

And I knew a jay, who lived in a back yard in Penzance. In that seclusion it heard few sounds, but it echoed these perfectly. They were the cry of the gulls overhead, the fighting of cats in an adjoining timber-yard & the flushing of the W. C.

*Undated manuscript - Thoughts about a Hazel Bush*

Man is a child of God, made in his father's image. We can recognise man's likeness to God in his free will, in his knowledge of right & wrong & in his capacity for love.

In so far as man resembles God, God resembles man. The astronomer may see that God is the infinite mathematician. The statesman may see God as the infinite ruler. The lover may see that the redemption of man is God's passionate romance. The artist can see in all created things the evidence of God's artistry.

Sometimes we see God & man using the same technical tricks. In English landscape painting, the abundance of green would be soporific if it were not arrested by a spot of red. A patch or blur of red would not do. It must be a sharp dot. So in the middle distance a woman wears a red shawl. My grandfather habitually put a red tulip, even where no tulip could grow.

Turner sent to the Academy a sea-piece of muted greens & gold & ivory. It was hung next to Constable's picture of the opening of Waterloo bridge, in which the reds shouted like trumpets. When Turner saw this, he put a dot of red in the waves of his sea-piece. Constable was told - "Turner has been in & he's fired a gun." On varnishing day, Turner made that dot into a buoy, swaying & tugging at its chain.

Now consider the hazel bush. Long before the wedding, we see the catkins ripening. Below them the female flowers are also getting ready. These are minute &

would not be noticed if they were not flaming red.

Scientists tell us that the coloured petals of flowers evolved to show the insects where to find their ration of honey. Thus the hive bee is led to the white clover & the bumble bee to the red.

But the hazel employs no insect. From its catkins it pours a rain of pollen so abundant that every female flower is sure to get some. All she needs to catch a grain is stickiness on the stigma. Clearly the crimson flower has no functional purpose. It is the adornment of the bride. The colour harmony of the hazel is transformed by the staccato note from another key, as a pancake is translated by the squeeze of lemon.

Throughout nature we see marriage celebrated with merriment & jollification. Insects may dance, birds may sing & display their wedding plumage & hares may do the daftest things.

All this is in line with what we are told in the Gospels. The beginning of miracles was to glorify a wedding. God's favour was revealed in the peace, joy & harmony for which the vine was made.

And it is to a wedding feast that we are all invited at the end of time.





# Notes

## *Introduction*

- 1 NEW -
- 2 Letter to Maurice Percival 14 January 1973
- 3 Letter to Graham Carey 12 January 1957
- 4 Letter to the Careys, 6 April 1966
- 5 Letter to Graham Carey 6 October 1974
- 6 Letter to Neville Coghill 5 April 1946
- 7 NEW -
- 8 Letter to Graham Carey 25 August 1977
- 9 Letter to Graham Carey 11 September 1977
- 10 NEW -
- 11 *The Bookplates of Philip Hagreen* introduction by John Bennett Shaw Nappanee The Private Press of the Indiana Kid 1982, Page 7-8
- 12 Letter to the Careys 10 January 1976
- 13 Letter to an unknown recipient about “Virgo Virginium quo modo fiet istud.”
- 14 A Grammar of the English Language, William Cobbett, Thomas Dolby, London, 1818, p.14 quoted by Philip in a letter to Tom Dilworth 29 June 1986
- 15 Letter to the Careys 8 March 1957
- 16 (Hatchet)
- 17 Letter to Rene Hague 15 February 1978
- 18 Letter to Amend as in e mail
- 19 (right interest)
- 20 Letter from Fiona MacCarthy 3 February 1987

- 21 Letter to May undated circa 1966
- 22 Letter to Tony Stoneburner 12 September 1972
- 23 Introduction to *The Victorian Age in Literature*, G.K. Chesterton, Henry Holt and Company, London, 1913
- 24 Letter to Neville Coghill 23 October 1953
- 25 Letter to Graham Carey, 22 April 1946
- 22 (Dominicans distinguo)
- 23 Letter to the Careys 17 June 1966



### *Autobiographical Writings 1890-1923*

- 1 Philip's mother was born Susannah Eardley in 1858. She married Harry William Owen Hagreen in 1889. HWO Hagreen was born in 1857 and died in 1919. Susannah died in 1933.
- 2 Letter to William Baldwin Fletcher 21 August 1983
- 3 This conversation between Philip Hagreen, his grandson Richard Ritchie and a BBC Technician, Tony Kelly, who was interested in collecting the memories of the elderly and British folklore, was recorded with Philip Hagreen's consent in April 1980.
- 4 Sam Weller is a fictional character, the valet to Samuel Pickwick, in Charles Dickens' first novel *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (Chapman & Hall, 1837) Caiaphas was a Jewish high priest involved with the trial of Jesus.
- 5 Philip Hagreen undated writings
- 6 Letter to 'Aunt Flo' June 1946
- 7 Florence Hagreen, sister of Harry William Owen Hagreen and aunt of Philip Hagreen.

- 8 Monseigneur Robert Hugh Benson (1871-1914) became a Roman Catholic priest and author of novels and Catholic apologetics. He was the son of the Archbishop of Canterbury - Edward White Benson (1829 - 1896).
- 9 Coventry Patmore (1823-1896) was an English poet who converted to Roman Catholicism in 1862 after the death of his wife. John Henry Newman (1801-1890) was a Roman Catholic priest and Cardinal who converted to Roman Catholicism from Anglicanism in October 1845. He was involved with the Oxford Movement which aimed to bring the Church of England back to its Catholic roots.
- 10 Kitchener House was a rehabilitation centre for wounded soldiers situated in Hampstead at the end of World War One. Both Philip's parents and at one time he himself worked here. Soldiers bore HWO Hagreen to his grave when he died in 1919.
- 11 Norman Garstin (1847-1926) was an Irish painter and art teacher who worked in Newlyn and Penzance, Cornwall.
- 12 Eric Gill, *Art-Nonsense and other Essays* (Cassel & Company, 1929), Check page number?
- 13 Letter to Father William Dolan Fletcher 28 November 1974
- 14 Conversation with Father John Hagreen, dates?
- 15 Letter to David Knott 19 June 1982
- 16 Letter from HWO Hagreen 17 December 1914, addressed to "My very dear Daughter in Love Aileen"  
Letter from HWO Hagreen to Mrs Brockenbury 2 March 1915 original in Tate archives concerning William Orpen. Sort out this footnote once I have been back to Tate Archives. I am not sure what comes from where?
- 17 This book was first published in Paris by Plon Nourrit & Cie, 1896.
- 18 Cross ref. Signals when know this book's final page numbers.
- 19 Letter from H W O Hagreen 4 August 1915
- 20 Letter to René Hague 15 February 1978
- 21 Email from Richard Ritchie to Lottie Hoare 17 April 2009
- 22 Letter to Father William Dolan Fletcher 28 November 1974
- 23 Joanna Selbourne, *British Wood-Engraved Book Illustration 1904-1940: A Break With Tradition* (Clarendon Press, 1998) Page 110.
- 24 Clarify which information attributed to Selbourne and which attributed to Margaret Pilkington lecture

and Studio magazine. Check these details.

- 25 BlackFriars, Volume 1, No 4, July 1920, page 219.
- 26 Their address was St Dominics Cottage, Stower Row, Dorset.
- 27 Cecil Rhodes was an artist of Philip's acquaintance and a friend of the Gill family in the early 1920s.
- 28 The Wardour Estate, situated North East of Shaftesbury and close to the A30 has been held by the Arundell family since 1547. Its buildings include a ruined castle dating from the fourteenth century, An 'indifferent seventeenth century' house, another stately home - the largest Georgian mansion in Wiltshire, 2 summer houses and a lodge with thick round pillars. (Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England : Wiltshire* (Penguin, 1963))
- 29 Known sitters included Catherine Dorothy Attwater, née Bickle [Donald's wife] undated; Jabez (Jebus) Bickle [Catherine's father] 1918; and Sanchia Attwater [Donald & Catherine's daughter] 1918.
- 30 *Hushing Song* was published by Down & Liddard. *The Best Poems of 1922* was published by Jonathan Cape. *Nursery Lyrics* was published by Chatto & Windus. *The Contemporary Woodcut* was printed by the Baynard Press in an edition of 550 copies. The Woodcuts were selected by Mr Campbell Dodgson who wrote in the introduction "Mr Haggren and Mr Dickey are among the engravers who rely very much upon the effective use of white lines and spaces." The 'Harewood Downs' poster was also printed at Baynard Press and published by Underground Electric Railways Ltd in 1923.
- 31 This is again explained by Selborne on page 112. Check which version of her book before typing in details.

## ***Part 2: Remembering Friendships***

1 new

### ***Philip & The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic 1923-1955***

- 1 Sirac XLIV:6 Lottie to explain this further
- 2 Letter to Ade Bethune 23 December 1935
- 3 Letter to Thomas Barry 25 January 1938
- 4 Letter to the Careys 24 February 1962
- 5 Letter to Father Kevin Scannell 5 September 1942





- 6 Philip Letter 'At Ditchling we had wasted all the time spent in arguments with the clergy..?'
- 7 Reference book ? 'had never discussed faith. It seemed a sufficient bond..' Lottie to find but Meg can you check that 'Aylesford Review' you have on Pepler?
- 8 Philip Mairet autobiographical papers... Lottie to check page numbers. Amended 23 Sept - Page 124
- 9 new
- 10 Reference book? Father Vincent writings... 'Nothing but a religious order..' Lottie to find.
- 10 Reference book? Father Vincent 'Primary Way of Life..' Lottie to find.
- 11 Reference book? 'expect great things of religion.' Lottie to find.
- 12 Letter to the Careys 24 April 1975
- 13 Lottie to explain history of 'Anglia Terra Ferax'
- 14 Letter to Rene Hague 27 February 1978
- 15 Letter to Father William Dolan Fletcher 23 October 1974
- 16 The 'young fellow' referred to here was Father John Hagreen.
- 17 new
- 18 Article on The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic by Philip Hagreen published in The Sower: A quarterly devoted to the interests of land and crafts, Summer 1938, No.2. Page 64-66

- 19 Meg I am confused about these two letters supposedly a decade apart?
- 20 Meg I am confused about these two letters supposedly a decade apart? Tom Phelan?
- 21 Letter to the Careys - Meg checking which one?
- 22 Philip Letter "There is not one way of getting your living.."?
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### *Eric Gill: Uncompromising Convert*

- 1 Letter to Thomas O'Connell 1 July 1979
- 2 Gill's Diary on microfilm in Tate Gallery Archive - Lottie to give further details
- 3 Philip Letter Eric Gill '...was one of those people who was so dynamic...'?
- 4 David Jones had been engaged to Eric Gill's daughter Petra from 1924-1927.
- 5 Philip's recollections (notes on paper) recorded for Fiona MacCarthy in 1986
- 6 Letter to Graham Carey 23 October 1961
- 7 Letter to Brian North Lee 10 April 1985
- 8 Rene Hague - reference book? - 'whole cart loads of false ideas...' (On Gill) Dai Great Coat? No, does not seem to be in Dai Great Coat - checked that. Look elsewhere.
- 9 Letter to Fiona MacCarthy 1986
- 10 Letter to Graham Carey 23 October 1961
- 11 Eric Gill reference book - 'an artist is not a special kind of man but every man is a special kind of artist' Lottie to find.
- 12 new
- 13 Letter to Fiona MacCarthy 1986 and Philip's undated notes on Speight's life of Gill

- 14 Gill's Diary on microfilm in Tate Gallery Archive - Lottie to give more details
- 15 Gill's words 'a spectacle of Christian family life' - lottie to find source.
- 16 Lottie to explain who Father Ignatius is
- 17 Lottie to explain about Peter Anson and Caldey.
- 18 Gill's Diary on microfilm in Tate Gallery Archive - Lottie to give more details.
- 19 Edgar Holloway conversation with Lottie Hoare (check dates? 1990s?)
- 20 Letter to René Hague 15 March 1978
- 21 Undated writings, Philip Hagreen's note books.
- 22 Letter from Laurence Hodson 25 January 1926
- 23 Lottie to find Hodson's publication on William Morris
- 24 Laurence Hodson's letters where he states that wood carving could not earn Philip a living ?
- 25 Gill 'craftsmanship will always be with us like the poor' Lottie to find in Gill's writings.
- 26 Philip letter - 'Gill's besetting sin was self justification'?
- 27 Letter to Thomas Barry 22 July 1938
- 28 Letter to Graham Carey 25 May 1976
- 29 Philip's own writings 'You can do anything except say 'No' ?
- 30 Clothing Without Cloth: An Essay on the Nude, Eric Gill, Golden Cockerell Press, 1931, page 3.
- 31 Lottie to find letter to Robert Gibbings in publication where he describes carving Mankind as parallel pleasure to undressing a pretty girl.
- 32 Lottie to establish where Gill talks of bride symbolising church.
- 33 Gill's writings - 'mind's eye' - Lottie to find.
- 34 Letter to the Careys 13 October 1959
- 35 Letter to David Jones December 1940
- 36 Lottie to establish where Gill wrote this about Prosperp & Ariel
- 35 new



- 38 Meg I am confused about this calligraphic letter to Mary Gill by Philip Hagreen. I think it is held in the Willam Andrews Clark Memorial Library and I saw it when in Los Angeles years ago but does any copy exist in the Philip Archive that you recall?
- 39 What about these printed memorial cards - do we have copies of those? Will they be illustrated in the book.
- 40 i.e. to The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic.
- 41 Member of the Third Order of St Dominic.
- 42 This is an unpublished account by Graham Carey. Cross refer to the footnote which first explains the nature of Carey's notes/conversation.
- 43 Gill sums up his way of life as a 'cell of good living ... reintegrating bed and board, the small farm and the workshop, the home and the school, earth and heaven.' Autobiography, Jonathan Cape, 1940, p.299. Donald Attwater borrowed the phrase 'cell of good living' for the title of his own book on Gill.
- 44 Ananda Coomaraswamy. Lottie to explain who he is.
- 45 Dom Theodore Bailey was a Benedictine monk, artist and authority on philosophical matters, resident at Capel in the 1920s.
- 46 5 November 1924 - the only anniversary of their engagement that Philip and Aileen would have spent at Capel.
- 47 This sculpture began as a female nude with her right arm raised. Gill then altered the subject to that of the Dead Christ. and removed the raised arm. The piece now belongs to King's School, Canterbury.
- 48 new
- 49 Deposition (Black Marble) was first exhibited at the Goupil Gallery, London from November - December 1924. According to Eric Gill: The Sculpture, Judith Collins, Herbert Press, 1998, The



carving was priced at £70. The discrepancy in price may be a case of Philip misremembering or the price being incorrectly recorded at the time of sale.

- 50 Gill's Diary on microfilm in Tate Gallery Archive - Lottie to give further details
- 51 South Kensington, referring to The Royal College of Art on Kensington Gore. The Victoria & Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, was also then known by the same term having started life as the museum collection for the benefit of art students.
- 52 Mankind, Hoptonwood stone, 95"(H)x24"(W)x18"(D). First exhibited as the major sculpture at Gill's solo show at the Goupil Gallery, March 1928. Bought by the sculptor Eric Kennington for £800. The discussion between Gill and Hagreen as to what is appropriate in the depiction of mankind and animal kind would perhaps have amused the council of Whipsade Zoo a decade later, when in 1938 Kennington offered the sculpture to them. They refused on the grounds that it did not show a naked animal. Mankind was then offered to the Tate gallery, London and is still held in their collection.
- 53 William Rothenstein, Principal of the Royal College of Art from 1920 until his death in 1945. He was considered to have established the reputation of the RCA. He was particularly keen to promote mural painting and other forms of public art within the college.
- 54 i.e. both the questions in Philip's previous letter, regarding sensuality and tomb stone carving.
- 55 Eric Gill would not miss a chance to hint at bisexual desire in any one with whom he was conversing or corresponding.
- 56 Lottie to credit Martin Andrews on Robert Gibbing here.
- 57 A domed building housing relics in the ancient Buddhist city of Sanchi (India). Few of its external carvings are erotic in content as this was a monastic settlement but Philip may have been thinking of the Yaksis or tree sprite which forms a bracket on the building. This fertility goddess was illustrated in an article by Ananda Coomaraswamy in Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol 80, No. 6. Date ?
- 58 The Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic - which was not officially formed until 1921.

- 59 A caustic manipulation of the name of his one-time friend Hilary Pepler with whom he had had disagreements over money and a reference to the shady financial dealings of another notorious contemporary whose actual name was Horatio Bottomley (died 1933). Both Gill and Pepler were financially involved with land and buildings which were the property of The Guild.
- 60 Philip Letter 'Women should wear black and cover their ankles' ?
- 61 In 1934 Philip had written to Gill challenging his decision to exhibit in the 'Artists International' show of that year, alongside Henry Moore. Philip insisted that the organisation was anti-God and that the perceived support of high profile artists was being used for publicity purposes. Aileen objected to what she saw as Gill's continued support for the Communist cause. According to Philip certain communists even propounded the view that stone and wood were counter-revolutionary materials. For a detailed account of Catholic misgivings about the International Societies see Gertrude Godden, *The Communist Attack on Great Britain: International Communists at Work*, London, Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd.
- 62 Lottie to settle on what to include for this footnote
- 63 Lottie to settle on what to include for this footnote
- 64 Eric is mis-applying the mystical tradition which emphasises the unknowability of God.
- 65 Eric Gill had adopted a pacifist attitude at the beginning of World War Two and many of his apprentices from the late 1930s became conscientious objectors. Eric Gill died in 1940 so he never learnt the full story of Nazi atrocities.
- 66 Full name of correspondent 'May' unknown.
- 67 The initials here stand for Robert Speaight's *Life of Eric Gill*, published 1966.

### ***Father Vincent McNabb: Kill Joy Puritan***

- 1 E.A. Siderman *A Saint in Hyde Park* Geoffrey Bles, 1950, gives details of McNabb's speeches.
- 2 Fiona MacCarthy *op.cit.*, p.142
- 3 *A Ditchling Childhood*, Susan Falkner, Icen Publications, 1994, p 14
- 4 Letter to Rene Hague 5 March 1978
- 5 *Father Vincent McNabb O.P.* Ferdinand Valentine, O.P. Burns & Oates, 1955 p.7 + p.146
- 6 McNabb's letter is reproduced in Hilary Pepler's article *Handwork or Landwork in Blackfriars*, August 1943

- 7 Fiona MacCarthy, *op.cit.*, p.171
- 8 *ibid.*, p. 238
- 9 Brocard Sewell *The Aylesford Review* p.4-11 Three Essays Father Vincent McNabb, VOL.1. Paupers' Press
- 10 *The Craft of Suffering: Verbatim Notes of Instructions on Suffering given by Father Vincent during retreats at the Cenacle convents, Hampstead and Grayshott, 1929-1935.* Introduction xi, Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1936.
- 11
- 12
- 13 Translation from Latin: 'For the hearth not the market should fields be tilled.'
- 14 new
- 15 The Spode family home which they left to the Dominicans; it then became a Dominican priory.
- 16 A Spode chamber pot. Hence the rhyme by Hilary Pepler in *Libellus Lapidum* (St Dominic's Press, 1924) A SPODE 'I abode in a place where they showed / a commode made by spode, / China lace, / I'm blowed, what a place !' Philip also told a story of Miss Spode, who did good works in the parish, trying to make peace between an irish couple. Her intervention was met with the retort 'Ah ye may ride in yer fine carriage, but thank the Lord I haven't got my name on every piss pot in the country !' (Sound Recording of Philip Hagreen 14 April 1980 Side B)





## *David Jones: Workshop Companion*

- 1 Undated letter to Tony Stoneburner (reply to his letter of 19 June 1973)
- 2 David Jones' exhibitions at the Tate Gallery, London, 17 December 1954 – 30 January 1955 and 21 July to 6 September 1981.
- 3 Philip Haggren on David Jones 'I have never seen the whole book but the ones I've got proofs of are perfect woodcuts' (Gulliver's Travels) ?
- 4 Philip describes Mater Castissima as 'a tiny thing of monumental majesty' ?
- 5 Philip found David's carvings 'important not only for their own merits but because of the effect they had on his painting and engraving.'
- 6 Letter from David Jones to Philip Haggren Second Sunday in Lent 1927
- 7 Letter from David Jones to Philip Haggren 26 March 1925
- 8 Letter to Tom Dilworth 23 November 1985
- 9 Letter to Tom Dilworth 23 November 1985
- 10 Letter from David Jones to Philip Haggren Second Sunday in Lent 1927
- 11 Letter to Rene Hague 1 April 1978
- 12 'Haggren considers Jones's work between 1923-6 'a phenomenal outpouring of happy creation' terminated by the shock of 1927, but it was, in fact, nothing to what Jones achieved immediately afterwards between 1927 and 1932' David Jones: The Maker Unmade, Jonathan Miles and Derek Shiel, Seren, 2003, pages 152-153.
- 13 First published by Faber in 1937
- 14 Letter to Rene Hague 1 April 1978
- 15 Letter to Dom Wulston from Philip 12 May 1939
- 16 Letter to Father William Dolan Fletcher 14 September 1985
- 17 *ibid.*, The Kensington Mass, A short unfinished poem concerned with the Mass which was the last poem David Jones was working on before his death in 1974.
- 18 The Anathemata, a long historical poem concerning the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Mass, first published Faber, 1952 and considered by W H Auden to be "probably the finest long poem written in English this century."

# THINGS

- 19 Letter to the Careys 18 March 1979
- 20 Letter from David Jones to Philip Hagreen 12 December 1940
- 21 new
- 22 Gospel of John 1:47
- 23 It is not clear from the letter which of David Jones engravings Philip is referring to. In 1922 David Jones had first come to Ditchling and his work had only recently been influenced by Eric Gill.
- 24 A miscalculation. Philip was five years his senior being born 12 July 1890 whereas Jones was born 1 November 1895.
- 25 Mater Castissima, painted boxwood carving on a base, 1921-1924, 70mm wide - 107mm high, inscription on reverse: 'O Virgo Virginum Quo Mode Fiet istud Quia Nec Primam Similem Visa Es Ned Habere Se Quentem Filiae Jerusalem Quid Mea Admira Mini Divinum Est Mysterium Hoc Quod Cernitis.'
- 26 new
- 27 From 1563 Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, no XXVIII
- 28 new
- 29 Stella Wright was a niece of David Jones.
- 30 In his book *In Parenthesis* David Jones refers to the water in the trenches gurgling like the water of Honddu. In a letter to Tom Dilworth (10 April 1986) Philip notes that David Jones first heard the gurgle of Honddu about nine years after World War One and subsequently used this later experience to help recreate the atmosphere of the trenches.
- 31 A line from the Poem *Time to Stop and Stare* by William Henry Davies (1871 - 1940)
- 32 See footnote 30 below.
- 33 It is not clear from the context which of David Jones' paintings Philip is referring to. David Jones painted numerous sea scapes in the period immediately following his trip to Arcachon. Most of these

watercolours show a calm sea and Philip is clearly referring to an image of a rough and intimidating sea. Many of the sea paintings from the subsequent years also clearly depict views from the British coast line. David Jones did paint a dramatic sea scape in oil in 1931 'Rough Sea' (illustrated in *The Paintings of David Jones*, Nicolette Gray, John Taylor/Lund Humphries, 1989) but Philip refers here to 'One of his most astonishing water colours.' In *David Jones: The Maker Unmade* David Jones' Jonathan Miles and Derek Shiel, Seren, 2003, Jones's trip to Arcachon and the fact 'he painted the bay' are referred to on p.112 but there is no accompanying illustration.

- 34 Rene Hague in *Dai Great-Coat* writing on the subject of the broken engagement: 'I have always been inclined to minimize the distress caused ...' p.42. Hague argues that David accepted that his vocation as an artist would make marriage impossible. Philip's compassion for the young man is understandable. Philip knew David best when his sense of loss was most intense. Hague knew him in later years when his life was filled with different people and preoccupations.
- 35 David Jones received the letter from Petra calling off the engagement when he was staying on Caldey Island, Pembrokeshire.
- 36 Philip's correspondence with Rene Hague was specifically to assist Hague in his plans to write on David Jones and in the editing of David Jones letters for *Dai Great-Coat: A self-portrait of David Jones in his letters*, Faber, 1980
- 37 *Piers Plowman*, William Langland, B text, passus VIII, line 30.
- 38 Philip Hagreen lived with his wife Aileen in Lingfield, Surrey, from 1957 to 1973, either in their own Bungalow or with their daughter Joan Ritchie. In November 1973 they moved into a nursing home 'The Gables, at Ifield Green, following serious operations.

### ***Hilary Pepler: A Bit of a Showman***

- 1 *The Devil's Devices or Control Versus Service*, H D C Pepler and Eric Gill, Hampshire House Workshops, 1915, p.118-119
- 2 A letter from Sussex by H D C Pepler about his friend Eric Gill, Cherryburn Press and The Society of Typographic Arts, Chicago, 1950, unnumbered pages.
- 3 Essay by Hilary Pepler in *The Register*, Volume 2, No.3, 1949, p.78
- 4 *Justice and the Child*, Douglas Pepler, Constable & Company, 1915 p.21-23 & p.149
- 5 *The Hand Press*, H D C Pepler, Society of Typographic Arts of Chicago, 1934.
- 6 Letter to Rene Hague 27 February 1978

- 7 Philip letter 'would just come in, quote a few lines, and say 'Now make a block for that...?'
- 8 Philip letter 'the most amusing thing they ever printed... a most natural and spontaneous production.' ?
- 9 new
- 10 Tape recorded interview with Philip Haggren and Richard Ritchie, 14 April 1980, Side A
- 11 Letter from Lawrence Hodson to Philip Haggren 3 February 1926
- 12 The Catholic Association organised annual pilgrimages to Lourdes from British Diocese.
- 13 London, 1927, privately printed for Navarre Society Ltd.
- 14 For instance, Philip's blocks were used without his prior knowledge for Meditations On Our Lady, St Dominic's Press, 1929
- 15 Letter from Philip to Stanley Scott 31 July 1957 in the collection of David Knott.
- 16 Letter to Hilary Pepler, 7 February 1927. 'Pert and Impert' refers to Pertinent and Impertinent St Dominic's Press, 1926
- 17 Letters from Hilary Pepler 22 January 1927 and to him 25 January 1927
- 18 On the Catechism of Christian Doctrine 'the whole concept owed much to Haggren and he chose the Goudy Bold for the text.' Where is this quoted from?
- 19 Pepler writes of Philip 'He had not visited Palestine to obtain local colour..' Lottie to establish where this is from?
- 20 A Ditchling Childhood 1916-1936 p.63
- 21 Reginald Jebb in The Aylesford Review, Spring 1965, p24
- 22 Philip letter 'His interest had gone to theatricals - where my interest does not go at all?'
- 23 An ancient office which involved collecting rent from farmers with grazing rights on the common and paying a 'looker'(shepherd) to keep the land and the cattle in good order.
- 24 Conversation between Douglas Cleverden and Philip Haggren, 1982, at the Gables Nursing Home, Crawley, Sussex.
- 25 Clare Pepler had attended Croydon High School for Girls and studied painting in Paris at 17 before going to Herkomer's School of Art in Bushey, Hertfordshire. The two quotations within this sentence are taken from a letter to Mary Ellen Evans 2 March 1983.



- 26 Letter to Father Tom Phelan 19 September 1978
- 27 The strike referred to is The General Strike. It ran from 3 to 12 May 1926.
- 28 A holy day of obligation - a week day when Catholics are required to go to Mass and abstain from 'servile' work.
- 29 2.4.1. Weavers Broad Sheet No.7, with a rhyme by Hilary Pepler, 11 3/4 x 5 3/4 inches, St Dominic's Press, 1928 - Lottie to amend when we are sure how we are referring to illustrations in this book.
- 30 i.e. Blessed Virgin Mary 2.1.66 (Regina Coeli) - Lottie to amend when we are sure how we are referring to illustrations in this book.
- 31 A Carthusian monastery, West Sussex, England
- 32 Another reference to The Golden Cockerel Press.
- 33 Lottie to cross reference where either these drawing or the prints appear in the book when we know final page numbers.
- 34 2.1.67 Psalm 8, verse 4 'What is man, that though art mindful of him ? And the son of man, that thou visitest him ?' - Lottie to amend when we are sure how we are referring to illustrations in this book.
- 35 1.4.7 & 1.4.8 - Lottie to amend when we are sure how we are referring to illustrations in this book.
- 36 'The Song of the Three Children' occurs in the third chapter of Daniel, in the Apocrypha. This project of Philips came to nothing but in 1932 he made quite different engravings for The Song of the Three Children, a book of poems by Daniel Sargent, 5 x 7 1/2 inches, published by St Dominic's Press (3.5.13)
- 37 The pencil sketches have survived. - Lottie to amend when we are sure how we are referring to illustrations in this book.
- 38 How to Sing Plain Chant Father James Harrison O.P. 6 1/2 x 4 inches, edition of 450 copies, not illustrated except for a Gill device, St Dominic's Press, 1920

- 39 The Song of the Three Children referred to in Philip's letter 6 October.
- 40 The Common of the Mass i.e .the invariant texts.
- 41 The words contained in [] are crossed out in the original text and the final words of the sentence are then added in their place.
- 42 Cantica Natalia, twenty Carols with plainchant notation and woodengravings by Desmond Chute, Philip Hagreen and David Jones. 13 3/4 x 20 1/4, edition of 95 copies, (The largest book S<sup>t</sup> Dominic's Press ever printed) 1926
- 43 3.2.95 - Lottie to amend when we are sure how we are referring to illustrations in this book.
- 44 i.e. 2.1. 66 Regina Coeli - Lottie to amend when we are sure how we are referring to illustrations in this book.
- 45 Burns, Oates and Washbourne, publishers of Roman Catholic literature.
- 46 Concerning Dragons was a children's poem illustrated by Eric Gill which was printed and published by S<sup>t</sup> Dominics Press in 1921 and sold numerous editions.
- 47 In early editions of The Game Desmond Chute produced small silhouette illustrations for use as tail pieces to break up the text: images of the hound of S<sup>t</sup> Dominic, S<sup>t</sup> Peter's cock etc. Chute was producing engravings at Ditchling between 1918 and 1921.
- 48 Eric Gill's stations of the cross engravings were first printed in The Way of the Cross 6 3/4 -4 1/2 inches, S<sup>t</sup> Dominic's Press, 1917
- 49 This letter from Hilary Pepler is written in purple, blue, red, green, orange and black ink with yellow underlining. It is a response to a letter from Philip in which he must have voiced his opinions on silhouettes. No known copy of Philip's letter survives.
- 50 Lottie to try and establish what 'See Good Friday' refers to.
- 51 3.5.6 A Devil on Two Sticks, Alain René Le Sage, Navarre Society, 1927 - Lottie to amend when we are sure how we are referring to illustrations in this book.
- 52 A Child's Rosary Book wood-engravings by David Jones, 5 1/4 x 8 inches, S<sup>t</sup> Dominic's Press 1924, bound in dark grey paper covers.
- 53 This book was eventually published as A Simple Rosary Book, large type for small children, with a single illustration, a Dominican Friar by David Jones dating from 1923-4, S<sup>t</sup>. Dominic's Press, 1927. It was bound in black with Silver titles.
- 54 S<sup>t</sup> Dominic: Scenes from the Life of the Saint in the form of a play , H.D.C.Pepler, S<sup>t</sup> Dominic's Press,

- 1929 (illustrated using work by Jones and Chute from earlier years)
- 55 new
- 56 A Child's Rosary Book *ibid.*,
- 57 George Maxwell helped arbitrate and resolve the Gill / Pepler conflict with an out of court settlement. Lottie to establish source?
- 58 Douglas Cleverdon, a book seller and small publisher arranged for Eric's essay Art & Love to be published at the Golden Cockerel Press, 1928. The essay drew an analogy between the Christian and pagan treatments of love, and the subject matter, as well as the involvement of a rival press, galled Pepler. The publication included 6 copper plate engravings by Eric Gill.
- 59 The details of Philip's plan are not known but it seems characteristic that he would have suggested a privately agreed compromise between the two men rather than a public wrangling in court.
- 60 Probably 2.1.67 - Lottie to amend when we are sure how we are referring to illustrations in this book.
- 61 Philip Mairet (1886 - 1975) was a craftsman, writer and journalist. He was married to the weaver Ethel Mairet (1872-1852). In 1928 Philip Mairet opened The New Handworkers' Gallery on the first floor at 14 Percy Street showing a permanent exhibition by individual craftsmen including Phyllis Barron, Michael Cardew, Bernard Leach, Romney Green and Ethel Mairet. In 1930 the gallery moved to 6 Fitzroy Square but closed the following year.
- 62 The fourth edition of *A Book on Vegetable Dyes*, 1924, features Philip's cover illustration but not the earlier editions nor the subsequent reprints.
- 63 The Kermes Oak (*Quercus Coccifera*) was a small evergreen species of oak on which the Kermes insect (*Coccus illicis*) lived. The dried bodies of this insect were once thought to be berries. They provided a red dye stuff which had largely fallen out of use by the late nineteenth century because of the availability of tinned cochineal. Kermes is a more permanent dye than cochineal.
- 64 These posters are now in the collection of the Hesburgh Library at The University of Notre Dame, Indiana.



- 65 Meditations on Our Lady, Thomas à Kempis, wood engravings by Philip Hagreeen, St. Dominic's Press, 1929

### *Edward Johnston: A Dynamo of Thought*

- 1 Edward Johnston, Priscilla Johnston, Faber, 1959, page 149
- 2 Lottie to find this Noel Rooke quote 'When at last he came into the room..'
- 3 Edward Johnston, Priscilla Johnston, Faber, 1959, page 99
- 4 Autobiographical and Other Papers by Philip Mairet, edited by C.H.Sisson, Carcanet, Manchester, 1981, page 124
- 5 Scholastic philosophy distinguishes four such "Things": the final, the material, the efficient and the formal causes. For Johnston, the material cause and the efficient cause were one. Include cross reference to Approach to Making chapter.
- 6 Philip letter 'his unswerving insistence on the truth ...' ?
- 7 Lottie to find this Chesterton quote 'Bad men who had no right to their reason.,' Amendment Meg on 16 Sept said she thought she could find this.
- 8 NEW - Conversation between Lottie Hoare and Joan Ritchie, eldest daughter of Philip Hagreeen.
- 9 NEW - Meg - is this in Cleverdon transcript or Richard tape? 'There was another cottage vacant at Ditchling..'
- 10 NEW - Philip letter '...gentle steady glow ...' ?
- 11 NEW - Philip letter '...utmost contempt for the politics of a man who could not tie a clove hitch..'? ?
- 12 NEW - Four Papers read by members of the Arts & Crafts exhibition society. Longmans. Green & Co. Ltd. London. 1935, page 8
- 13 NEW - Philip letter '...Gill held his pen in a strong grip. Johnston held his so lightly..'? ?
- 14 NEW - Philip letter '... Edward Johnston had been commissioned to inscribe..'? ?
- 15 NEW - Philip letter '...Eric Gill taught me to cut the alphabet in stone and Johnston showed me all his ways of writing it..'? ?
- 16 NEW - Meg do we know where this alphabet now is? Was it sold by Rupert or is it in Notre Dame?
- 17 NEW - Edward Johnston, A Tribute by Sydney Cockerell, Privately printed at the Maidstone School of



Art and Craft, 1947, page 6

- 18 NEW - Philip letter ‘..Johnston was explaining his belief that in the best work..’?
- 17 Philip letter ‘..they should not get away from him again..’?
- 18 Lottie to explain ‘a small, still voice’
- 19 Edward Johnston, Priscilla Johnston, Faber, 1959, page 302. Johnston never bothered much about money, A small private income and occasional help from his uncle had made it possible to live. All his life he had almost given work away and claimed no copyright in ideas and discoveries.
- 20 Lottie to explain ‘Melchisedesch’

### ***George Maxwell: Best Exponent of the Guild Idea***

- 1 Letter from Philip Hagreen to Father Fletcher, 6 January 1976.
- 2 As recalled by Father John Hagreen in conversation with Lottie Hoare.
- 3 The Catholic Social Guild was an organisation which studied the implications for industrial societies of the teachings of the Church. The Catholic Evidence Guild was a missionary organisation which became active in England in 1918. It employed lay preachers to relieve overworked priests.
- 4 Letter from Eric Gill to Father Austin Barker OP, 2 August 1924, quoted in Robert Speaight A Life of Eric Gill, Methuen, 1966 p.148-9
- 5 Philip Letter ‘Kill Joy Puritain’ where does Philip refer to Father Vincent in this way?
- 6 A Life of Eric Gill, p.135
- 7 Donald Attwater A Cell of Good Living, Geoffrey Chapman, p.69
- 8 Susan Falkner A Ditchling Childhood , Icen, 1994, p.23-4
- 9 Eric Gill letter to Desmond Chute, 18 February 1922, Gleeson, quoted in Eric Gill, Fiona MacCarthy, Faber & Faber, 1989, p.151
- 10 ‘..but they did not print anything about George’ - note by Philip Hagreen at the top of this manuscript. This account was written in 1957 after Maxwell’s death.
- 11 A similar remark appeared in Nisi Dominus, St Dominic’s Press,1919 in a rhyme called Birmingham Factory attributed to Hilary Pepler. ‘Hark, how the voice of Freedom calls/ To Gramaphones and Music Halls/ The “hands” are free, the master sings/ The “hands: are free, for higher things/ Provided that they

be not late/Next morning at the factory gate.’ Most writings in these booklets are based on stories or incidents reported by others, and as Maxwell originated from Birmingham his conversation may well have provided the inspiration for this rhyme. Although George Maxwell did not move to Ditchling until 1922 he had contact with the community some years earlier.

- 12 This widow was the Mrs Crawford referred to in the Hilary Pepler section of this book. Mrs Virginia Crawford was well known as a result of the Crawford Divorce scandal in 1885-6 which had left the politician Sir Charles W, Dilke’s career in ruins.

### ***Part 3: A Critical Faith***

- 1 Letter to the Careys 16 June 1959

### ***The Outspoken Convert***

- 1 Letter from H W O Haggren 4 August 1915
- 2 new
- 3 new
- 4 Rhyme by Philip Haggren in *The Cross & The Plough*, Lady Day 1939, page 4
- 5 The Book of Kells is an illuminated manuscript of the Four Gospels with Latin text and famously ornate and complex illustrations. It was produced by monks, circa 800 AD at the Monastery of Kells, County Meath, Ireland.
- 6 Letter to Tony Stoneburner 6 August 1975
- 7 Letter to the Careys 29 January 1952
- 8 The Encyclical letter in which Pope Paul VI restated the Church’s condemnation of contraception. Dr Franz Koenig (1905-2004) had visited Philip and the workshops at Ditchling during the 1950s. Koenig was one of the signatories to The Maria Trost Declaration in 1968 which suggested that birth control was a matter for the sincerely informed conscience.
- 9 Letter to Julian Smith 11 June 1983
- 10 Letter to the Careys 3 December 1967
- 11 Philip letter ‘So very few of the faithful protest. Much moral cowardice is called loyalty.’ ? I need to find this when I visit archive which is now in Winchester.

- 12 Letter to Aunt Flo June 1946
- 13 Used by Langland to personify cunning or duplicity. cf phrase “To curry favel.”
- 14 William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, B text, Passus V, line 59
- 15 A plenary indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment due to sins which have already been forgiven. Philip is here hinting at the abuse of indulgences which was highlighted by protestants at the time of the Reformation.
- 16 Jose de Vinck published predominantly historical and discursive texts about the Catholic Faith at his Allelulia Press (USA). We think the book Philip refers to above is Jose de Vinck, *The Yes Book: An Answer to Life* (co-published with the Franciscan Herald Press, 1972)
- 17 Julian of Norwich (1342-1416), *Revelations of Divine Love* (Edited by Grace Warrack, Methuen & Co Ltd, 1901), Chapter 32, page 66. The wording here is ‘all these shall be condemned to hell without end.’
- 18 Philip refers to *Humanae Vitae* as ‘a spanner in the works’ because to forbid contraception when some Catholic countries are already struggling with problems of poverty and overcrowding was a contentious issue.
- 19 An obsolete method of computing the value of Indulgences.
- 20 Hilaire Belloc, *The Modern Traveller* (Edward Arnold, 1898), page 41
- 21 Mr Dooley was a fictional character devised by Finley Peter Dunne (1867-1936). Mr Dooley wrote in colloquial Irish and passed comment on the world from an Irish pub in Chicago. The sketches which had appeared in newspapers across America were published in *Mr Dooley in Peace and War* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1898)
- 22 Tom Burns was editor of the *Tablet* from 1967 - 1982.
- 23 When we know for sure where in the book these illustrations will appear Lottie can give page numbers. Need explanations on the protests too.
- 24 Epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians, vi, 12
- 25 From the poem “Chant Pagan” by Rudyard Kipling published in *The Five Nations* (Methuen & Co, 1903). The velt that Philip refers to is usually spelt veldt or veld and is the term for a wide open space in South Africa.
- 26 William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, B text, Passus I, line 3. In Middle English the word ‘lere’ referred to the cheek or the face and complexion.
- 27 A prayer following Holy Communion begins “Quod ore sumpsimus.” An account of a medieval visitation



tells of a monk, who, when his pronunciation was corrected retorted “I have always said ‘mumpsimus’ and I shall go on saying ‘mumpsimus.’” A version of this incident was told in 1517 by Richard Pace, later Dean of St Pauls Cathedral. The word ‘mumpsimus’ has come to be applied to people who refuse to change their ways even if what they are doing is nonsense.

28 new

29 The changes resulting from Vatican II

30 The exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in a ‘monstrance’ [an open or transparent vessel], for public veneration by the faithful.

31 The first ever Papal visit to England took place in May 1982

32 On 29 May 1982, the Pope & the Archbishop of Canterbury (Robert Runcie) prayed together in Canterbury Cathedral.

33 The Curia is the Papal Civil Service.

34 Lottie to explain about Perfect Ending Perfect Beginning from notes provided by Meg.

35 William Langland, Piers Plowman, B text, Passus VIII, line 49

36 Philip refers to The Litany in the 1662 revision of The Book of Common Prayer. The point he is making is that this Anglican Prayer book has kept the same text for hundreds of years but only in old age did he rediscover this Anglican text, having worshipped in Catholic Churches with Catholic Prayer books for almost all his adult life.

37 Add footnote about ‘serve god truly’ source/author - I am completely stumped on who wrote this and

have looked everywhere I can think of. Try Index middle English Verse. Try Lydgates minor poems. Try Bibliography William Sherman's Used Books. Try Julia Boffet & ASG Edwards Index middle eng verse. Start there.

- 38 The Catholic Truth Society is a publisher and charity founded by Cardinal Herbert Vaughan in 1868 with the purpose of distributing cheap, accessible pamphlets to deepen people's understanding of the Catholic Faith.
- 39 Lines 97-98 from the poem 'Andrea del Sarto', Robert Browning, first published in Men and Women (Chapman & Hall, 1855)
- 40 Ubi Caritas ibi Deus - translates as 'Where there is charity, there is God.' When layout is finalised give cross reference/page numbers to where this appears in the book.

### *Discovery and Influence*

- 1 Lottie to establish where Lethaby wrote this this quote about faith
- 2 "Eric used to be contemptuous..." letter from Philip ?
- 3 "Man ought to be able to sing as well as dance..." letter from Philip ?
- 4 "We do not agree but cannot collide..." letter from Philip ?
- 5 "...as tho a pack of cards had two knaves..." letter from Philip ?
- 6 "First headliner in my philosophy..." letter from Philip ?
- 7 Source of carver giving up tools and adopting Philips?
- 8 Do we know the whereabouts of any of his tools so that we can tell the reader what we do know?
- 9 This carving is now in a Private Collection.
- 10 One of the invocations of Mary in the Litany of Loreto.
- 11 To the Careys 23 July 1956
- 12 To Neville Coghill 5 April 1946
- 13 To the Careys 12 January 1957
- 14 Source of sliced ham poem ?
- 15 Lottie to explain about type height.

- 16 Lottie to also explain about type here.
- 17 Lottie to trace source of this Lethaby quote
- 18 Do we know of this recommendation directly from an HWO letter to Philip or from Philip's recollections in a letter to another or on a cassette?
- 19 HWO letter?
- 20 "Perpetua ... is like wire netting?" letter from Philip ?
- 21 Lottie to explain about Robert Bridges and this quote
- 22 Lottie to check with John Sherman that the movable wooden type is now held in the Notre Dame archive.
- 23 Lottie to check with John Sherman that versions of the posters referred to in this letter to Herbert Simon are now held in the Notre Dame archive.
- 24 Which issue is this text and wood cut in ? (Quill)
- 25 Which issue is this text and wood cut in ? (Hook)
- 26 Which issue is this text and wood cut in ? (Meal Scoop)
- 27 Lottie to establish where Lethaby wrote this quote about art and depth
- 28 new
- 29 Lottie to translate *Virgo Virginum quomodo fiet istud*
- 30 Source of Four Causes quote?
- 31 "The exercise of all his faculties in a creative way develops the maker" letter from Philip?
- 32 "The formal cause is the fourth card..." letter from Philip?
- 33 Lottie to find further details on this interview between Johnston and Philip 1935
- 34 A follower of Mani (third century AD) who taught that everything sprang from two chief principles, light & darkness, or good & evil.
- 35 Letter to Rene Hague 20th March 1978
- 36 Lottie to explain Gill's comments on Maritain and give page numbers
- 37 Lottie to explain source of "The wind has blown them all away."

- 38 “How to I dare to contradict the great philosophers...” letter from Philip?  
 39 Lottie to translate “splendor ordinis”

### ***Part 5: The Common Good***

- 1 Michael A. Smith *Human Dignity and The Common Good in the Aristotelean Thomistic Tradition* (The Edwin Mellon Press, 1995), check page number.

### ***Industrialism - The Fight Against Goliath***

- 1 Letter from Nevill Coghill 28th March 1946  
 2 Letter to Sister Dorothy Mary 26 February 1946  
 3 ‘Catholic Art’, *The Cross & The Plough*, Lady Day 1941  
 4 William Langland, *Vision of Piers Plowman*, Passus XIX 251-252. Edited by Walter W Skeat, (London, 1869). Modern English translation: ‘And Crown Conscience King, and make Craft your steward. And with Crafts advice clothe and feed yourself.’  
 5 William Cobbett, *A History of The Protestant Reformation In England and Ireland* (Charles Clement, London, 1824), Letter XV, page 448.  
 6 R H Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (John Murray, 1926), page 10.  
 7 G.K. Chesterton, *What is Wrong With The World* (Cassell & Company, 1910), page 283.  
 8 Letter to George Heseltine (reply to a letter of 4 June 1971)  
 9 Letter to Nevill Coghill 5 April 1946  
 10 Unpublished, undated writings by Philip Hagreen  
 11 Lottie to find correct source of this Maritain quote in translation.  
 12 Unpublished, undated writings by Philip Hagreen and John Hagreen.  
 13 ‘The Two Standards’ in *The Cross & The Plough*, Michaelmas 1939, Page 3 (No author is given so presumably the editor Harold Robbins contributed this text)  
 14 Letter to George Heseltine (reply to a letter of 4 June 1971)  
 15 Joanna Selborne, *British Wood-Engraved Book Illustration 1904-1940: A Break with Tradition* (Oxford

University Press, 1998) Page 251

- 16 Harrold Robbins in *The Cross & The Plough*, Lady Day 1939, Page 3.
- 17 Letter to George Heseltine 30 May 1971
- 18 The individuals Philip lists were all linked to the Distributist movement: The writers G K Chesterton and George Coulehan Heseltine; the carpenter George Maxwell (add cross references to page numbers and list of correspondents for the above three individuals when book page numbering finalised); the writer H J Massingham who was concerned with the disappearance of the cultural traditions of the rural world; the journalist and Birmingham Distributist, K L Kenrick; the Catholic Land Movement activist and editor of *The Cross & The Plough*, Harold Robbins; *The Distributist* and author of *The Drink Problem*, Captain H.S.D Went,
- 19 A 'Philippic' is a bitter verbal attack or denunciation.
- 20 Letter to Fr. Kevin Scannell 7 February 1943
- 21 The title here echoes 'The Walrus & The Carpenter Walking Hand in Hand' from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (1872). The point Philip is trying to make is that while a walrus and a carpenter managed to communicate in a nonsense poem, in real life the Clergy do not respect the crafts. There is also the reminder here that both Jesus and Joseph pursued the craft of carpentry.
- 22 Letter to Philip Hagreeen from Father Austin Barker 29 March 1940
- 23 The emblem of the Dominicans is a hound running, carrying a flaming torch in its mouth.

# Philip Hagreeen

## *Old Age 1959 - 1988*

- 1 Philip letter 'I used to be able to concentrate all day..?'
- 2 Philip letter 'Work goes on in my mind..?'
- 3 Lottie to explain the historical setting of this letter



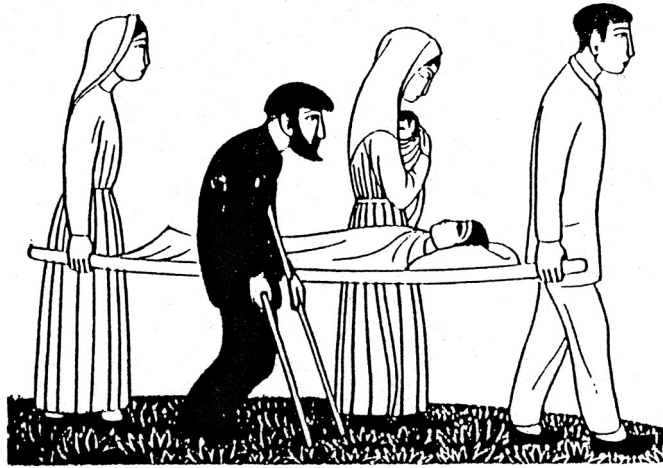
- 4 Recalled by Father John Hagreen in notes on the subject of his father.
- 5 Letter from Tom Dilworth 15 July 1986
- 6 Philip letter 'I am the only useless member of the family..'? ?
- 7 Letter to the Careys 12 April 1962
- 8 Letter to the Careys 2 May 1962
- 9 Philip letter I set about exploring in my imagination ... paint box my father used nearly a century ...? ?

### *The Tradition of Painting*

- 1 Philip letter "I care about a vast lot of things - but not drama or opera or ballet" ?
- 2 Philip's articles on galleries and artists appear in Blackfriars Vol 1 Nos 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9. Lottie to give further publication details
- 3 George Clausen (1852-1944) A Founder member of the New English Art Club. Professor of Painting at the RA schools 1904-6. Elected RA 1908.
- 4 Letter to René Hague 27 March 1978
- 5 Excerpt from 'At the Leicester Galleries', Blackfriars Magazine Vol 1, No 3, June 1920. Philip Connard (1876-1958) painter and illustrator for the Bodley Head was a member of the New English Art Club and refused to acknowledge modernist developments.
- 6 Source of Philip letter on Ku-kai-chic and lottie to give historical details
- 7 See Chapter 'Things & Their Making' for further discussion on working as an artist.
- 8 Daniel III in the Apocrypha, See also section Hilary Pepler, footnumber to be confirmed
- 9 Lottie to give details on Flaxman and Sandby's dates and nature of their work.
- 10 Following the Devotion of The Way of the Cross. Lottie to explain further.

### *Legacy of Literature*

- 1 Philip letter 'When Pound put in a bit of Basque ...Huxley' ?
- 2 Letter to Tom Dilworth 30 May 1986



3 Letter to Tom Dilworth 10 April 1986

4 Letter to Tom Dilworth 16 November 1985

5 *ibid.*,

6 Letter to Tom Dilworth 26 January 1986

7 Meg - did you find it again - as you said you found it and lost it - (Hopkins and Dice Box quote)

8 Letter to Tom Dilworth 16 November 1985

9 Letter to Rene Hague 5 March 1978

10 Letter to the Careys 8 May 1951

11 It first appeared as a poem of about eighteen hundred lines, but was subsequently revised and extended to some fifteen thousand lines.

12 Representing Holy Church, bribery, flattery and covetousness respectively. 'The lovely lady of Iere' is the published name - Philip has juggled with the word order.

13 Philip letter "gothic monstrosities?"

14 Philip letter '...direct influence of Piers?'

15 Lottie to give brief details on Nevill Coghill

- 16 Lottie to check which book on Chesterton she quoted here?
- 17 Philip to Lord Lytton 20 September 1983
- 18 Letter to The Careys 21 February 1960. This book was first published in 1913.
- 19 Letter to the Careys 8 May 1951 followed by Letter to the Careys 25 May 1975 from ‘... in Melibeus’ onwards.
- 20 *A Grammar of The English Language*, William Cobbett, Thomas Dolby, London, 1819, page 14 (Letter II)
- 21 Brer Tarapin ‘went to the bottom kerblinkerty blonk’ in one of the stories from Uncle Remus: his songs and sayings, The Folklore of the Old Plantation, Joel Chandler Harris, first published 1881.
- 22 Wisdom XIII:14 (Philip was quoting from memory)
- 23 Genesis VI:5 (Philip was quoting from memory)
- 24 Thomas Carlyle, Lottie to find source
- 25 Footnote needed attributing this quote to Alice in Wonderland
- 26 *Piers Plowman*, William Langland, B text, Prologue, lines 1-2 and 9-10
- 27 John XIV: 5&6
- 28 Shakespeare, Sonnet CXVI
- 29 *Piers Plowman*, William Langland, B Text, Passus V, line 517
- 30 *Tristram Shandy* Chapter XLIII Lottie to give further publication details
- 31 Lottie to give details of Ingoldsby Legends
- 32 See Letters of John Keats, Robert Gittings, Oxford University Press, 1970
- 33 Lottie to find source of this worsted stocking quote.
- 34 Rene Hague once did a false ‘David Jones’ in the same manner. Source?
- 35 Thomas Hardy, first published by Tinsley Bros, London, 1876
- 36 Maurice Baring (1874-1945) poet and novelist and friend of Belloc, Chesterton and Kipling.
- 37 In 1915, Kipling wrote a poem called “Gehazi”, which was a fierce attack on Sir Rufus Isaacs & his brother, Godfrey, at the time of “The Marconi Scandal.” The Chesterton brothers had also attacked the Isaacs over the same affair. Gehazi obtained the gifts his master, Elisha, had declined for curing Naaman’s

leprosy - and was himself struck with the disease (2 Kings V:20-27) There was no “tomb” involved, but Philip may have meant to imply the burial of a reputation.

- 38 Francois Mauriac (1885-1970) was a left wing, Roman Catholic novelist preoccupied by the ‘ugly realities of modern life’ and the battle between good and evil in human nature. Winner of Nobel Prize for literature 1952.
- 39 David Jones
- 40 Mrs Markham’s New History of England, Hilaire Belloc, Cayme Press, London, 1926, p. 93 A spoof on the original mid-nineteenth century Mrs Markham’s children’s histories by Mrs Elizabeth Penrose [1780-1837], a Linconshire vicar’s wife. Each of her chapters is followed by a humourous discussion between a mother and her children on pertinent historical questions.

### *Reflections on Beauty*

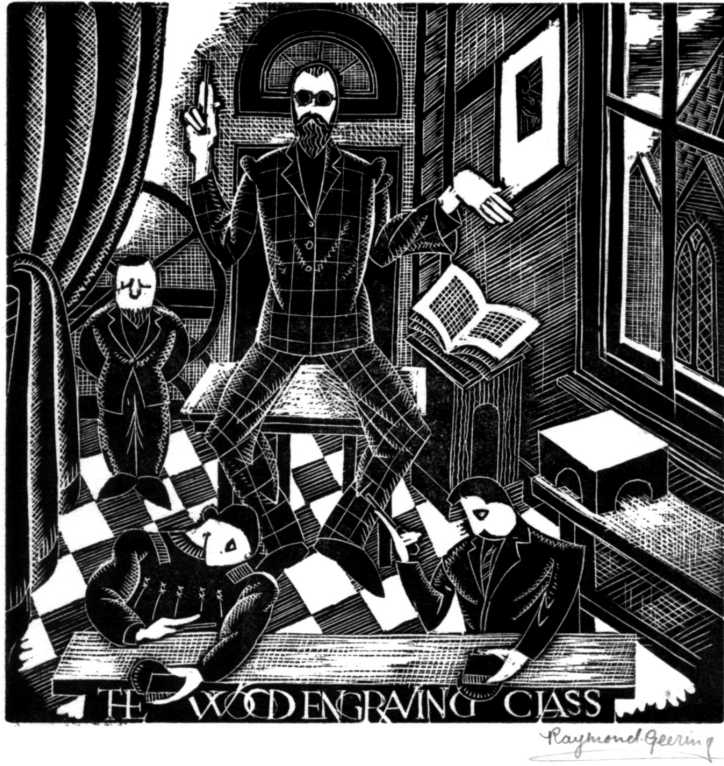
1 new

### *The Natural World*

- 1 Lottie to explain historical context of this letter to The Tablet
- 2 Fill in from email Richard Ritchie’s exact degree \*\*
- 3 Philip letter “They are urban in background and gregarious in training..”
- 4 Letter to Julian Smith 11 June 1983

1st EPISTLE OF St JOHN, IV, 9.  
By this hath the charity of  
God appeared towards us,  
because God hath sent his  
only begotten Son into the  
world, that we may live by  
him. Alleluia.





*Philip Hagreen teaching at The Brighton College of Art by Raymond Geering*

# List of Correspondants

*The dates given below, concerning Philip Hagreen's correspondence with different individuals, are based on the surviving correspondence which we know to be in existence.*

Father Austin Barker, OP ( ); a Dominican at Hawksyard Priory, and a friend of Eric Gill. Philip corresponded with him in 1940 and 1945.

Thomas Barry ( ); ..... Philip corresponded with him between 1938 and 1948 on the subjects of *The Cross & The Plough* and the use of type.

Adrian Bell (1901-1980); a farmer and writer who was interested in The Back to the Land Movement. Philip had a short correspondence with Adrian Bell concerning Bell's autobiographical book *My Own Master*, 1961.

Adé de Béthune (1914-2002); an artist involved with The Catholic Worker Movement. Her wood cuts appeared in various publications including *Easy Essays: Observations on religion and modern society*, Peter Maurin, Sheed & Ward, London, 1938. She organized commissions for Philip's artwork within the USA. Philip corresponded with her between 1932 and 1955.

Father Burke ( ); Priest and cinema enthusiast in the Southwark diocese. Philip corresponded with him in 1947 on the 'evils of cinema.'

Thomas Ferrier Burns (Tom Burns) (1906-1995); publisher and editor. Tom Burns was director of the *Tablet Publishing Company* from 1935 to 1985 and Editor of *The Tablet* from 1967 to 1982. Philip corresponded with him in 1988 regarding a Society of Wood Engravers exhibition.

Trevor and Elizabeth Canton (*The Cantons*) ( ); Elizabeth Canton (née Smith) met Philip and Aileen Hagreen when she worked as a land girl in Burgess Hill. When she later married she received an ex-libris by Philip as a wedding present.

Arthur Graham Carey ( ); Philip Hagreen corresponded regularly with Graham Carey from 1939 to 1987. Hilary Pepler first put them in touch. Graham Carey and John Howard Benson wrote *The Elements of Lettering*, Merrymount Press, Newport, 1940. Graham Carey contributed to journals throughout his life on the subject of art from a Roman Catholic perspective. In the last few months of his life Eric Gill had planned to emigrate to the United States of America to live with Graham Carey and his family and start a community, but Gill died in 1940.

Betty Carey; first wife of Graham Carey. She died in the early 1950s.

Nancy Carey; second wife of Graham Carey. Nancy and Graham Carey married in 1956. They visited Philip and Aileen Hagreen in Burgess Hill, Sussex, during Easter 1956.

Father Edward M. Catic (1906-1979); calligrapher, priest, authority on the Roman alphabet and author of various publications including *Eric Gill: His social and artistic roots*, Iowa City, Praire Press, 1964. Philip corresponded with him between 1966 and 1973.

Nevill Coghill (1899-1980); Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford University from 1957 to 1966. He commissioned a Philip Hagreen bookplate for his daughter and other items for Exeter College, Oxford, and then continued his correspondence with Philip from 1943 to 1957, mainly on the subject of *Piers Plowman*.

Thomas Dilworth ( ); Professor of English Literature at the University of Windsor, Canada. Author of *Reading David Jones*, University of Wales Press, 2008. Philip corresponded with him between 1985 and 1986 on the subject of David Jones.

Leslie Dow ( ); .....

Maurice Finnan ( ); Father John Hagreen introduced Maurice Finnan to Philip Hagreen when John and Maurice were both studying for the priesthood. Maurice Finnan left the priesthood and subsequently married. Philip corresponded with him between 1952 and 1972.

William Baldwin Fletcher ( ); ..... who commissioned Philip Hagreen to illustrate work for ICI. Philip Hagreen corresponded with him between 1977 and 1985.

Father William Dolan Fletcher ( ); priest, art historian and author of *Philip Hagreen: the artist and his work, Sign of the Arrow*, New Haven, 1975. Philip Hagreen corresponded with him between 1974 and 1979.

Eric Gill (1882-1940); artist and sculptor. Philip worked with Gill in the early 1920s. They subsequently corresponded between 1928 and 1936.

René Hague (1905-1981); printer and writer who married Eric Gill's youngest daughter, Joan Gill, and founded and ran the Piggotts Press from 1930 to 1956. Philip corresponded with Rene Hague from 1978 to 1980 on the subject of Hague's planned publications on David Jones. René Hague was the editor of *Dai Great Coat: A Self portrait of David Jones through his letters*, Faber & Faber, 1980.

George Coulehan Heseltine (1895 - ); author of *The Change: Essays on the Land*, Sheed & Ward, 1927. Philip corresponded with George Heseltine in 1971 on the subject of G K Chesterton.

David Jones (1895-1974); artist and poet, with whom Philip worked during the 1920s. Although they corresponded between 1938 and 1940 they did not meet again after the early 1930s.

David Knott ( ); Visiting Research fellow at Reading University. Retired from Reading University Library Rare Books in 2002.



Brian North Lee (1936-2007); historian of bookplates and author of *The Ex-Libris of Philip Hagreen*, The Bookplate Society and Forlaget Exlibristen, 1987. Philip corresponded with Brian North Lee between 1985 and 1987.

Noel Anthony Scawen Lytton, 4th Earl of Lytton (1900-1985); military officer and writer who Philip corresponded with him between 1982 and 1984. Dom Wulstan Phillipson had put Philip Hagreen and Lord Lytton in contact.

Hilary Pepler (1878-1951); printer and writer; Philip first met Hilary Pepler in 1923 in Ditchling. They corresponded in the late 1920s when Philip was contributing illustrations to St Dominics Press while he was based in Lourdes, France.

Maurice Percival ( ); art teacher at Downside and involved with stage productions. Later taught at Eton and Harrow. He was also a friend of David Jones. Philip corresponded with him between 1972 and 1981.

Father Tom Phelan ( ); Priest and one time editor of *The Catholic Art Quarterly*. Philip corresponded with him between 1959-1987.

Dom Wulfstan Phillipson ( ); Benedictine monk at Downside Abbey with an interest in the theatre. One of the Founding Fathers of Worth Priory. Philip corresponded with him between 1939 and 1941 on the subjects of Gerald Manley Hopkins and Saint Benedict.

Dr John McQuillan ( ) was involved with The Catholic Land Movement and was a contributor to the publication and symposium *Flee to the Fields*, Heath Cranton, Ltd, 1934. Philip corresponded with him in 1948 on the subjects of Jacques Maritain and Aquinas. There is a puppet of Dr John McQuillan, made for Hilary Pepler's puppet shows, which is held in the collection of Ditchling Museum, Sussex

Joan Ritchie (1921-1999) was the eldest daughter of Philip and Aileen Hagreen and the mother of Richard Ritchie.

Father Kevin Scannell ( ) was a Cistercian monk who left his order and became a parish priest. Philip corresponded with him between 1940 and 1944 on the subjects of his *Prinknash Broadsheets* and monasticism.

Herbert Simon ( ) printer who worked for the Kynoch and the Curwen Press and wrote *Songs and Words: A History of the Curwen Press*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1973. Philip corresponded with him between 1970 and 1971 on the subject of the Curwen Press.

John Bennett Shaw (1913-1994); best known as a collector of items relating to Sherlock Holmes but he also collected the work of Eric Gill. In 1948 Philip Hagreen designed a bookplate for Shaw's personal Gill collection. The Eric Gill collection was aquired by Notre Dame University in 1965. John Bennet Shaw had graduated from Notre Dame in 1937. Philip corresponded with him between 1947 and 1987.

Julian Smith ( ) had been taught by Aileen Hagreen when she was teaching in the years before her marriage to Philip Hagreen. He was baptized as a Catholic in 1940 and Philip and Aileen Hagreen were witnesses. Philip corresponded with him between 1980 and 1987.

Tony Stoneburner ( ); poet and clergyman. Philip corresponded with him between 1966 and 1978 on the subjects of David Jones and Ditchling.

Baron Jose De Vinck ( ); author and publisher; Philip illustrated The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom: Its Origin and Evolution, Casimir Kucharek,

Alleluia Press, Allendale, New Jersey. Philip corresponded with Jose De Vinck between 1971 and 1980.

Herman B. Vorhees ( ); .....





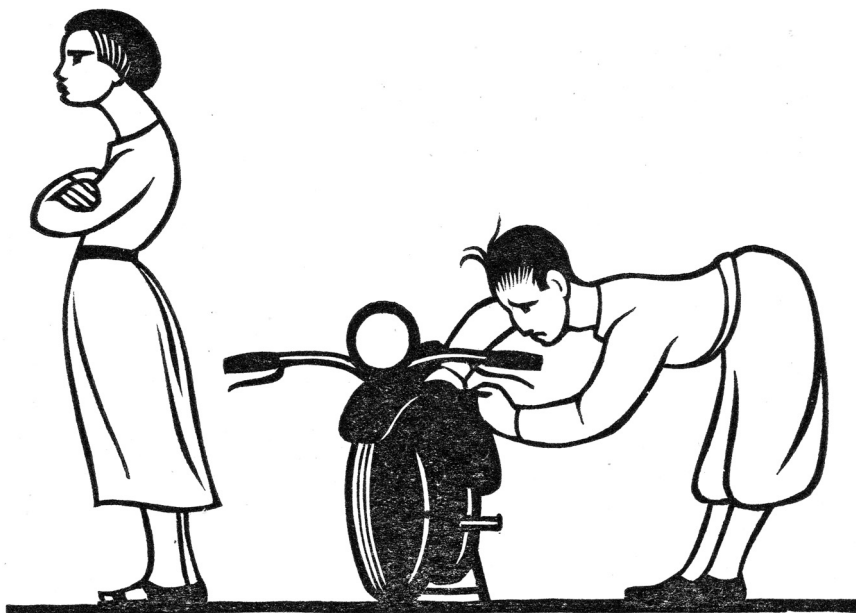
REGINA CAELI



**M**ARY, the babe thy body hath wrought,  
Is the Way of God the Magi sought,  
Is the Light of God the Shepherds saw,  
Is the Word of God Who is the Law.  
Mary's babe, so tender weak and small,  
Is the Love of God Who saveth all.

*St Dominic's Press, Ditchling, Sussex.*

*Rhyme Sheet No. 14.*



# THE BREAKDOWN

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iv		Philip Hagreen and his children, Lourdes, circa 1928 - <i>RR scan</i>
v	4.2.6	Brooch - <i>RR scan</i>
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 20 A.003.004 The Wind - *ND scan*  
 23 "I must have learned to use a hammer at this forge." Alford Morgan taught Philip to make an etching. Philip was about 15 (1905-06) when he made this.  
 25 A.033.022 The Winding Road - *need scan*  
 27 A.001.001 Seafarer - Ruben Ranzo - *need scan*  
 29 A.002.022 The Waning Moon - *need scan*  
 29 A.002.024 The Homestead - *need scan*  
 31 F-016 Society of Wood Engravers - *ND scan*  
 32 A.003.008 St Dominic's Cottage - *RR scan*  
 33 Paschal Lamb - *RR scan*

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- 36 D.007.020 Where We Are - *RR scan*  
 39 B.001.013 Madonna & Child, Facing Left, Child Grasping Hair - *need scan*  
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- 84 B.001.022 Madonna & Child, Tu ad ... - *need scan*  
 87 D.001.004 Veni Domine ... - *ND scan*  
 90 D.001.003 Praised be Jesus Christ - *RR*  
 95 B.005.017 Our Lady of the Rosary (*reduced*) - *ND scan*  
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- 98 F003.019 Bazaar & Fete Poster (*reduced*) - *ND scan*  
 101 Distributist League Poster (*reduced*) - *ND scan*  
 103 *Vegitable Dyes* Book Cover  
 106 Weavers, Rhyme Sheet No. 13 (*reduced*) - *ND scan*  
 109 Nativity - *ND scan*  
 113 A Reminder of my First Communion - *ND scan*  
 116 Natus Est - *ND scan*  
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 123 B.004.025 St Thomas Aquinas - *need scan*  
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- 128 F001.004 George Maxwell - *RR*  
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 132 E.006.002 Musick's Deuell - *ND scan*  
 133 C.001.027 The Cross & the Plough - *ND scan*

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135    D.001.005        Ubi Caritas ibi Deus - *ND scan*

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143    ???                The Learner - *RR scan*  
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160                    Hagreen block - *Ditchling photo from Penney Pepler*  
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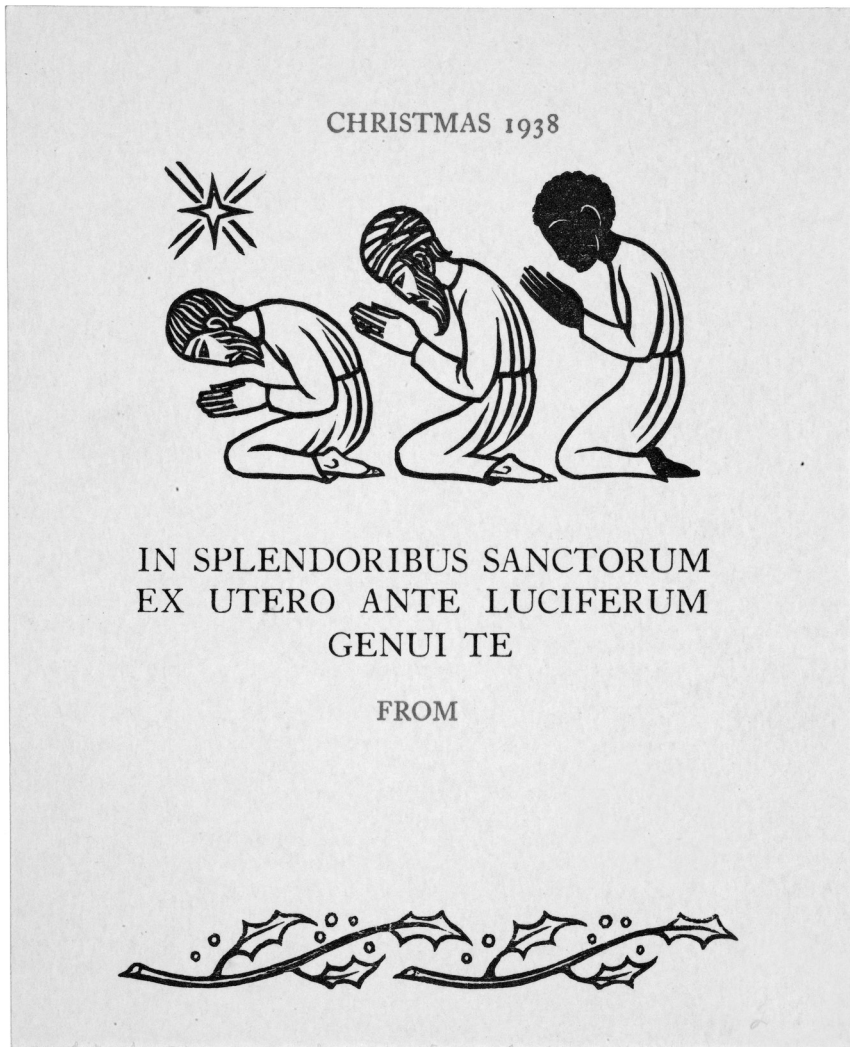
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- 210 C.001.030 Trying to Make ends Meet - *ND scan*
- 212 C.003.002 It Doesn't Much Matter What His Work is - *RR scan*
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- 215 C.001.035 Mechanical Progress Adam's Sons - *Ditchling scan*
- 217 C.001.031 Equal Opportunity for All - *ND scan*
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- 230 C.001.015 Planning for Peace - *ND scan*
- 222 C.001.026 Within the Framework ... Industrialism - *ND scan*
- 223 C.001.022 Centrifugal Force - *ND scan*
- 227 C.001.018 It's all Right he can Save his Soul - *RR scan*
- 228 C.001.016 The Standard of Living - *ND scan*
- 233 C.001.025 Freedom from Want - *ND scan*
- 234 D.001.014 God Hath Visited His People - *RR scan*
- 235 C.001.039 No. 2 Cloister & the Hearth - *RR scan*
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- 301    A.003.011      Terra Deserta - *need scan*
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- 305    D.002.022      Shirley Dovey - *need scan*
- 306    D.007.014      Good Lettering: English Stone - *need scan*
- 308    B.001.052      Yule Log - *need scan*
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- 313    A.002.001      The Profiteer - *need scan*
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- 324    D.005.006      Philip Hagreen - *need scan*
- 326    2.9.7              Brandcardiers & Sick at Lourdes - *need scan*
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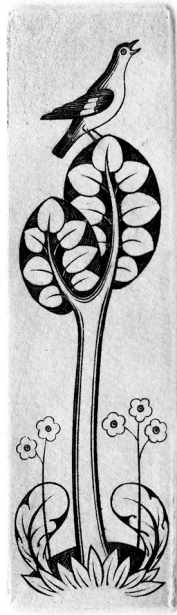
**& NOTE THE DATE !**

**Wed. July 4**

**ANNUAL CONVENT BAZAAR &  
GARDEN PARTY AT**

**HORSTED  
PLACE**

**FROM THREE  
P.M.**



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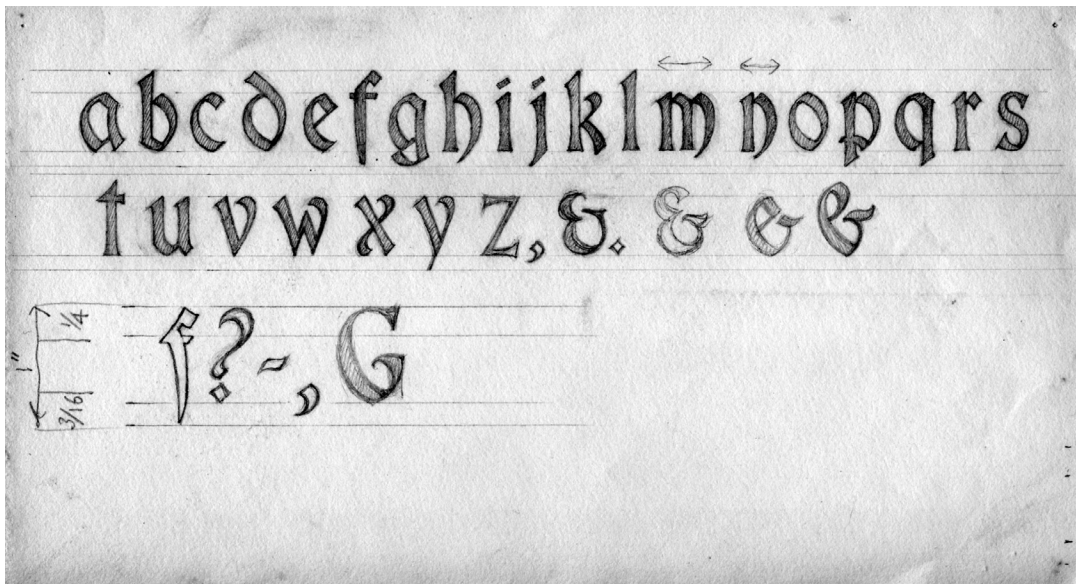
*This trowel  
was used by  
the Mayor  
of Brighton,  
Alderman  
S. Davey, J.P.,  
in laying the  
Foundation Stone  
of the new  
School Buildings  
on the 19<sup>th</sup> day  
of April,  
1951.*



*This was for a small poster –  
I don't think it worth printing.  
It had colours added.*

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