

maa news

The Newsletter of the Medical Artists' Association of Great Britain • Spring 2012



Obituary

Audrey Besterman, 1920-2011

My mother, Audrey Besterman, who died peacefully aged 90 on July 20th, was a much published and versatile medical artist and scientific illustrator. Her output spanned much of the second half of the twentieth century and her illustrations illuminate the pages of more than a hundred books and journal papers in the fields of medicine, physics, psychology, zoology and bioanthropology.

Long after 'retirement' in the 1990s, Audrey collaborated with Pam Mackinnon on the latter's revision of the mighty, three-volume Oxford Textbook of Functional Anatomy in its latest 2005 edition. Audrey enjoyed her visits to the author's big house in Oxford, where Pam was by that time battling with advanced Parkinson's. Audrey was hugely amused by the ensuing royalties cheque which OUP solemnly insisted on sending her, coming every quarter as it did, for a princely

£1.90, despite my mother's entreaties for them to send it to a medical charity!

Audrey was born on 2 September 1920 at Kimpton, Herts, the third daughter of Edith, a talented amateur violinist, and Charles Brehmer Heald, a consultant rheumatologist. Edith insisted that her own father, Dr Mason, a GP with a reputation for gentleness and exceptionally low birth mortality rates, be responsible for the delivery. The family moved to Hampstead, where they lived next door to the pioneer archaeologist Sir William Flinders Petrie, who was remembered by Audrey for his fearsome temper: he chased a noisy organ-grinder down Cannon Place, and games in the Heald garden had elaborate measures to prevent a ball going over the fence into the garden next door. It was a family joke that two physicians lived in Cannon Place at the time, one named Heald, the other De'Ath. During a family holiday on Exmoor, Audrey was given on her birthday a squeaking hat-box. Inside was a Jack Russell puppy, 'Pip', which became very dear to her: for the rest of her life she had a soft spot for the breed, though she never felt it was kind to keep a dog in her London flat. When we celebrated Audrey's 90th birthday on Exmoor, we found the farm where Pip had been given to her.

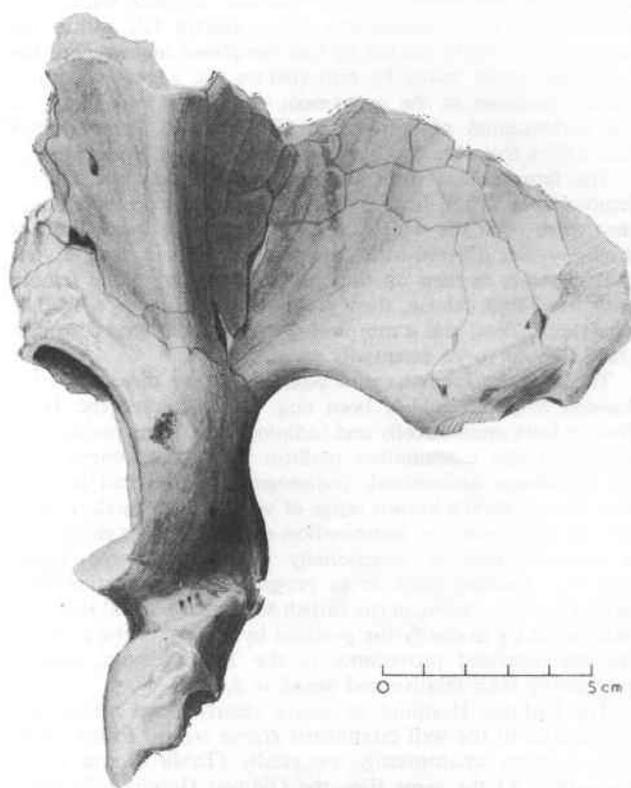
On leaving school in the late 1930s, after the obligatory domestic science course, Audrey attended the Byam Shaw School of Art. Her studies were cut short by the war, when she enlisted as an ambulance driver, based at the Lawn Road station in Hampstead. She describes this period, when she had to deal with some fairly gruesome emergencies during the Blitz, as one in which she really grew up. Ambulance driving appears to have been hazardous in more ways than one: Audrey was awarded two certificates commending her for not causing any accidents!

Audrey made some lifelong friends in the ambulance service, one of whom was Peg Owen, whom we all adored. Peg was the daughter of the cartoonist, commercial artist and book illustrator, Will Owen, best known for his iconic poster images for Bisto (Peg was the model for the Bisto Kids), Bovril, Lux and Lifebuoy. Peg frequently completed the drawings to meet a publisher's deadline when her father was poorly, a ruse, she proudly related, that went undetected!

Through their respective mothers, both ARP wardens in Hampstead, Audrey and a young medical student, Edwin Besterman (1924-2007, cardiologist) were introduced; marriage ensued in 1944 with the rather grudging approval of her father. This union produced two sons, my brother Harvey, who became a physician and endocrinologist (1946-1997) and me.

After the war, Audrey was accepted as a medical student at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, where she completed her pre-clinical and passed her Second MB in 1946. The arrival of her first son, Harvey, that same year put her medical career on hold.

In 1955, following her divorce from Edwin, Audrey became a single mother with two boys to bring up. Uniting training in medicine and art, she hit on the idea of working as a free-lance medical illustrator, which she could do from home. With friendly guidance from Ruth Bowden, Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Free Hospital, Audrey took up a nine-month apprenticeship with Sylvia Treadgold and Mary Waldron at Guy's Hospital, from whom she acquired the tools of her trade. A striking feature of Audrey's early work is the evidence it provides of the scope of research that came out of the great London teaching hospitals, wherein seethed a crucible of Renaissance inquiry that went far beyond the narrow confines of medicine. That was in the days before performance indicators. An early commission for Audrey was to provide line-drawings to illustrate the patterns made by sand on a vibrating metal plate. The author of Chladni figures: a study in symmetry was Mary D. Waller, Head of Physics at the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women. Where Ernst Chladni had first described the phenomenon in the eighteenth century, using a violin bow drawn across the edge of the plate, Mary developed this work and analysed the underlying forces and symmetries by applying a chip of 'dry ice' (solid carbon dioxide) to the surface of the plate. The property of solid CO₂ imparting a vibration to metal was

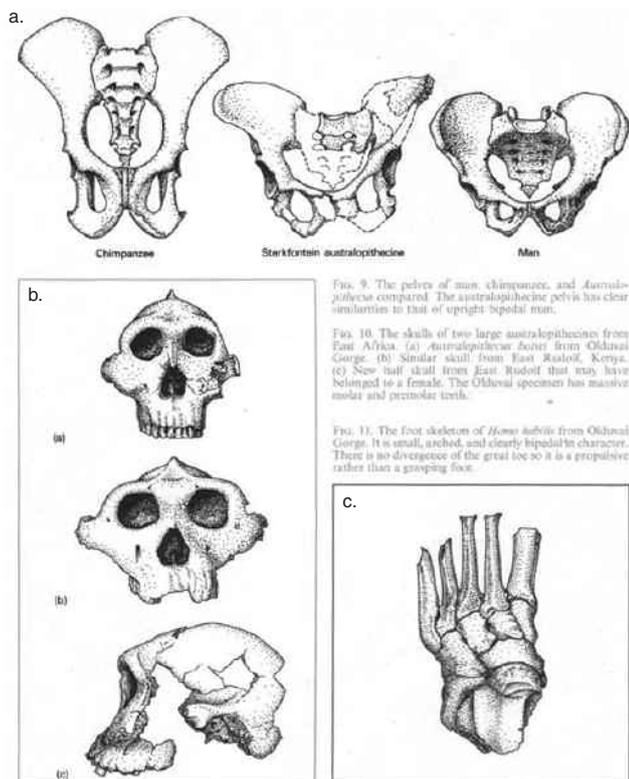


Hip bone of Olduvai Hominid

already known, but Mary relates in her book that the idea of using it for her experiments was prompted by an itinerant ice-cream vendor, who asked her why his bicycle bell rang spontaneously when brought into contact with dry ice!

Another regular visitor to the flat in the 1950s and 60s was John Napier, orthopaedic surgeon and eminent primatologist (Barts, UCH and King's College London), with whom Audrey worked on a number of much cited publications. This led in the 1970s to her work with Michael H. Day of the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, for whom she made exquisite pen wash drawings of early hominin bones from the Olduvai Gorge.

Audrey's first drawing board was a home-made affair with an ingeniously improvised parallel rule, perched on top of an antique Davenport desk. This and her later, free-standing 'professional' drawing board were part of the family sitting room and my childhood. I grew up with the flayed drawings of Vesalius and Gray's Anatomy on the coffee table, and it was not unusual for my mother to ask me whether I thought she should cover the drawing board with a cloth when non-medical guests were expected. Like a board of censors, we drew the line somewhere between a section through the eye for Richard Gregory (OK) and an erect penis for Derek Llewellyn-Jones (not OK). For my brother, these formative experiences led to a successful career in medicine. For me, the effect was to drive me firmly in the opposite direction. The kitchen was also colonised with the dark arts of illustration: it was home to a shallow, water-filled tray in which her various pens and stencils – all lettering was painstakingly but swiftly stencilled – were left to soak, de-clogging them of Indian ink, alongside shopping lists, chopping boards and saucepans.



a. A comparison of pelvis of man, chimpanzee and *australopithecus*.
 b. Two skulls of australopithecines from East Africa.
 c. The foot skeleton of *homo habilis*.



Audrey hard at work at her drawing board

One of her most productive professional partnerships developed from Macmillan's decision to publish 'Systems of Life', a monthly supplement for the Nursing Times published over a six year period from 1975-80. This used a graphic format of black and white with one second colour, 'ginger biscuit', produced as a colour separation, as with all Audrey's colour work. Once the monthly topic was agreed, production began with Audrey's four-page, rough layout, which then went to Anne Roberts to write the text and thence to Jean Cullinan as series editor. This imaginative reversal of orthodoxy resulted in a 72-part series that contributed to the training of thousands of nurses in the 1970s and '80s.

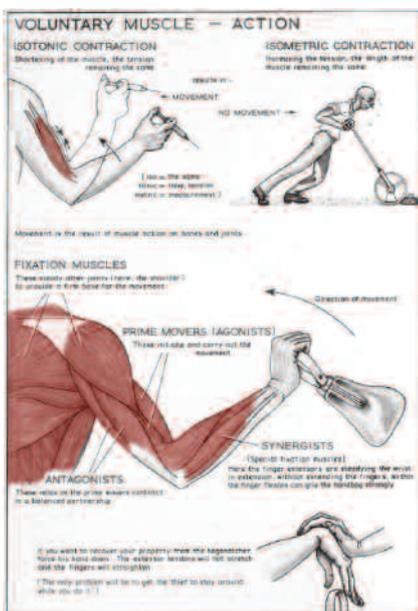
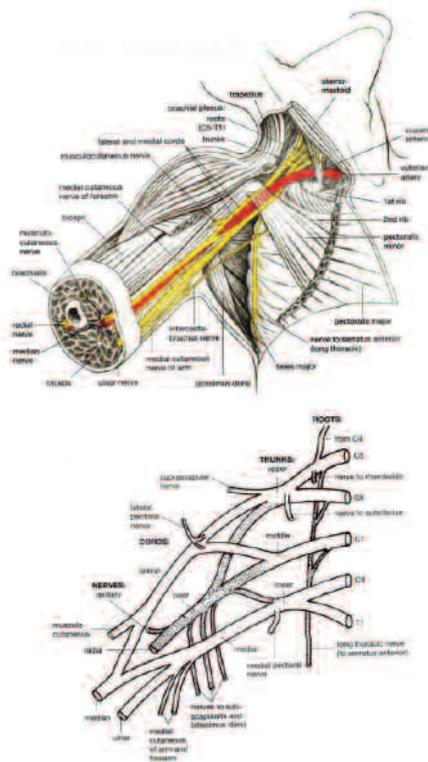
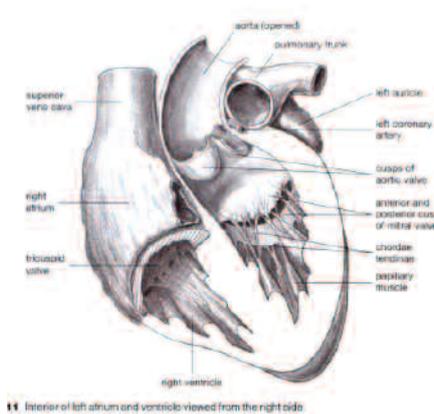


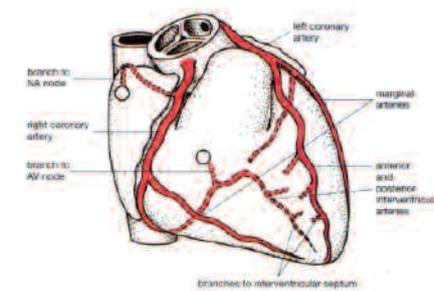
Illustration from the 'Systems of Life' supplement.



Brachial plexus: Schematic diagram of roots, trunks, cords and branches.



11 Interior of left atrium and ventricle viewed from the right side



12 The arterial supply of the heart

Interior of left atrium and ventricle viewed from the right side and the arterial supply of the heart.

However, it is Faber & Faber who feature most frequently in Audrey's bibliography, with books covering a wide range of medical topics and Phyllis Jean Cunningham ('P Jean C') as key figure in the medical editorial team there.

Audrey mitigated the dangers of isolation that can befall the free-lance by playing an active part in professional associations. A handsome certificate and seal attests to Audrey's enrolment as a Founder Associate of the Institute of Medical and Biological Illustration in 1969, she became a member of the Medical Artists Association in 1967 and was elected a Fellow in 1983. She served as Honorary Secretary of the Education Committee from 1980 until 1988, and Correspondence Secretary from 1988 until 1990. Audrey also acted as Honorary Auditor to the Association for a number of years.

In 1961 Audrey married Harold Nottman (1917-2008), with whom she enjoyed a long and happy partnership, acquiring a step-son, Bruce, in the process. To our astonishment, Audrey quickly embraced the arcane rules and protocols of cricket, spending long summer days on the boundary of many a village cricket ground, scoring for the London New Zealand Cricket Club, where Harold was something of a celebrity bowler (he took nine wickets in one match).

Audrey was also a talented wood-carver – a skill that she honed at night school at St Martin's School of Art in the 1950s, with the benign encouragement of a burly Basque refugee from Franco's Spain. All her carvings were made with a particular recipient in mind. 'The Suppliant', for her father, was exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 1958. Greatly to her dismay this was sometimes mistaken for a religious figure: it was in fact a plea against man's capacity for inhumanity.

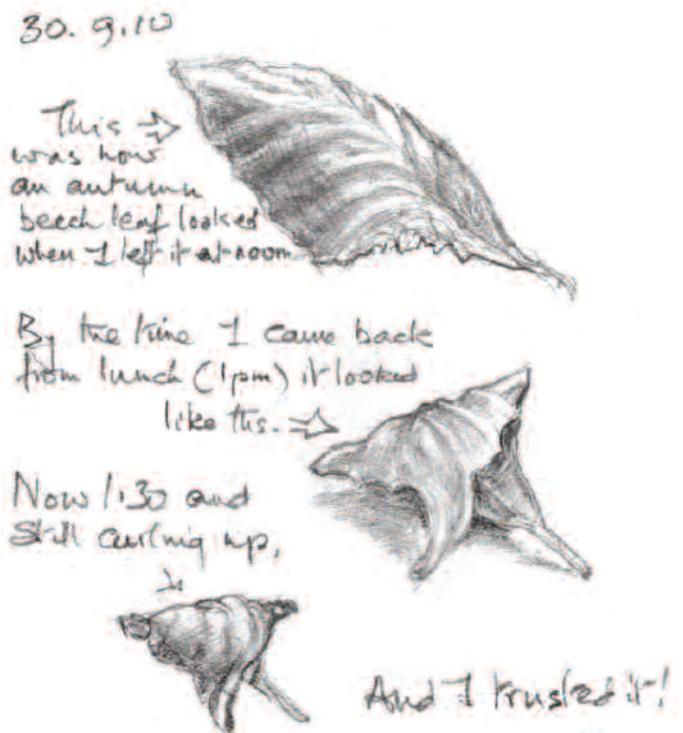
Audrey's creative drive was undimmed by progressive physical incapacity in her last few years. She loved sketching en plain air, making new friends of local people as they passed. A week or so after her 90th birthday last September, she made a



Wood carving of 'The Suppliant' for her father exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1958.

series of drawings of a fallen leaf, noting in her sketch book how it curled up in the an hour or so when her back was turned. Truly, Audrey understood that really to see something, you must draw it.

Audrey had a particular talent for friendship, characterised by her warmth and deep interest in people –particularly the young. Professional relationships often evolved into lifelong friendships, hardly surprising when discussions with the client took place in her flat, with the conversation extending over coffee or lunch. Friendships were often sustained across generations and great distances with the easy flowing care of an inexhaustible blue fountain pen and an elegant, cursive script. For several decades, her flat was a haven for various young peripatetic travellers from around the world, friends of family and friends of friends. They were all made to feel at home and kept in touch, some producing the next generation of travellers who gravitated to Audrey's home. There are many people who remember with affection the warmth and consideration as well as the kindness and wisdom that she imparted to those who sought it.



Study of a fallen beech leaf from Audrey's sketchbook

Audrey read widely – she disliked television – enjoying the latest novel and earmarking for discussion articles in the New Scientist until a few weeks before her death. She loved good conversation and walks in the country; she enjoyed classical music and valued the care and thought that go into a letter; and like Ruskin, she found as much delight in the miracle of a leaf as a mountain. She lived for her family and is survived by a son, four grandchildren and two (shortly to be three) great-grandchildren, and will be greatly missed by the wider family and an even wider circle of friends.

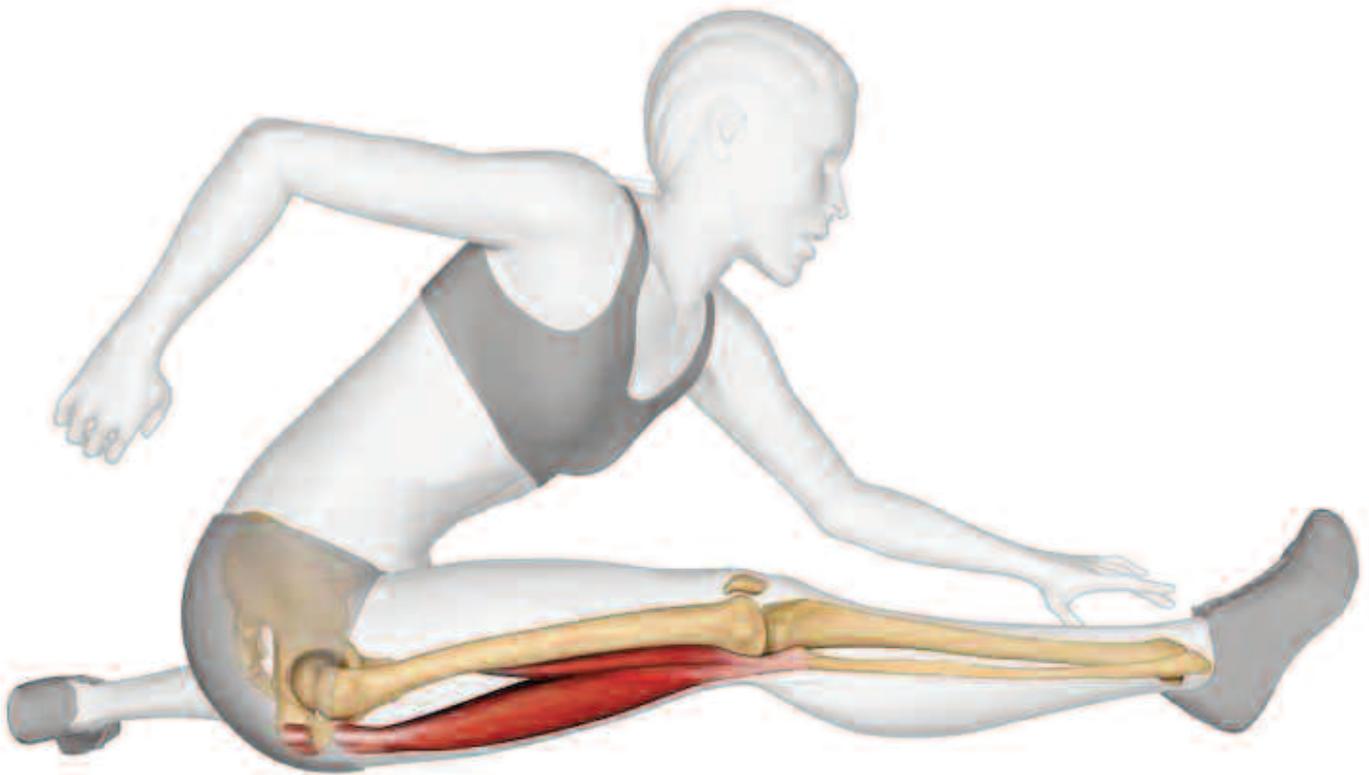
It is entirely in keeping with her life, that Audrey bequeathed her body to science. An appreciative client wrote to Audrey in 1967, "How you managed to produce such magnificent drawings from my sketches I shall never know. They are precisely what I would have wished for in every way. Thank you very much – I think they will 'make' the article for me!" That rather nicely sums up the value of good illustration, which long outlives the artist.

Tristram Besterman
18 July 2011

Medical Artists' Association of Great Britain 63rd Annual Conference

13th and 14th April 2012

*The MacRae Gallery, Hunterian Museum, Royal College of Surgeons of England,
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PE*



The programme this year includes some fascinating papers on:

- ***The Heart of Leonardo: context and analysis*** • ***Victorian Monsters*** •
- ***The Art of Age Progression*** • ***It all started with the Brain*** •
- ***Sculptures of Anatomy of Oceania*** •
- ***A History of Anatomical Illustration*** • ***Sports Therapy Massage and Rehabilitation*** •

We're also celebrating this Olympic year with a visit to the Qvist Gallery to view the Anatomy of the Athlete exhibition.

Full conference ticket 13/14 April (including Annual Dinner) £190

Day ticket 13th April £90 Day ticket 14th April £30

Accommodation 13th April at Nuffield College Single ensuite £70 Double ensuite £90 Twin ensuite £90

Further details please contact: Philip Wilson - Conference Chairman
Tel: 01566 781000 or Email: pwilson@medart.co.uk

The Dr Patricia Archer Medal

I am pleased to announce that the first recipient of the Dr Patricia Archer Medal will be chosen at our forthcoming 63rd Annual Conference at the RCS on the 13-14th April 2012.

In her Will, Pat kindly bequeathed a gift of money to the value of £6000 to be used to provide a medal, in her name, as a prize to recognise the best example medical artwork or 3D piece produced by a member each year for as long as the gift lasts.

Throughout her career she championed the cause to maintain the highest possible professional standards in medical art and instilled this culture to students under her tutelage and members of staff alike.

Maintaining an appreciation of these aims will be a fitting legacy.

As the Association now tends to hold its 2-day conference every other year, and it is only then practical to organise an exhibition of members' work, Council has decided to award the Medal biannually.

The Medal, prepared by medallists Thomas Fattorini Ltd, will be presented to the recipient at the Annual Dinner who will also receive a half scale replica, as a lapel badge, which can be worn at future conferences or meetings.

Philip Wilson - Chairman

Entry requirements:

- Work must have been completed within the last five years and supplied as a digital copy of the original artwork.
- Either flat mounted or window mounted on white A3 mount board.
- 3D work is welcome, and will be displayed on plinths 1m x 40cm x 40cm.
- An Identification label template will be emailed to the membership nearer the time, and should be completed and attached to the mount board in the bottom right corner (or on plinth surface for 3D art work).

The exhibition is open to all members of the Association irrespective of whether attending the conference or not. Those who will be attending are asked to bring their piece with them and will be responsible for its collection at the end of the conference.

All other members are asked to forward their submission to **Emily Evans by post, to Penn Street Studio, 23-28 Penn Street, London, N1 5DL** and must include the relevant postage/stamps, for the material to be returned.

All enquires regarding the conference exhibition to emilyannevans@googlemail.com





ANN HOLDEN *dissected* and Archie

Who are you?

Ann Holden (aka Mrs Allan Dinwoodie).

What's your background?

Went to university, qualified in veterinary medicine and worked full-time as a small animal vet for the next 20 years. For 11 of those years I owned and ran my own practice on the Wirral, until 2000, when I decided a change of direction would be a good thing. Since then I have worked as a locum vet in the UK, and a volunteer vet in India, a care support worker and, more recently, a medical writer. I still do some freelance medical writing work for the company I was employed by in Knutsford. Meanwhile, I became more involved with art and trying to improve my skills. It was a great thrill to be accepted on the MAET course, and thus 'have permission' to draw in detail (after years of being told to 'loosen up') and spend time with those fascinating specimens in the Wellcome museum.

Where are you based?

On the Wirral, close enough Chester and Liverpool when necessary, far enough away to forget we're near two cities.

What's your art background?

None really (apart from drawing horses

as an alternative to owning one when I was a teenager), until about 10 years ago when I started to attend some watercolour classes locally. Until then I had spent more time on calligraphy.

Where did you study?

Newnham College, Cambridge.

What's your speciality?

Animals (no surprises there!) but I also enjoy painting buildings.

What's your favourite artwork to date?

When I was young, George Stubbs made an impression, with his equine work (he still does, for his anatomical knowledge). Last year I saw an exhibition of Christian Købke's work (he's known as the 'Danish master of light') and was fascinated by the quality of light in his landscapes and his intimate portraits of ordinary people.

Where do you find your inspiration?

Usually when I'm doing anything other than art. Seeing work that really impresses me can be counterproductive because it makes me realise how limited I am!



Technical illustration – a drawing in coloured pencil used as background work for the final illustration

Do you prefer traditional or computer generated art?

Traditional (but computer generated has its place and I find its challenges interesting).

Are you Mac or PC?

PC

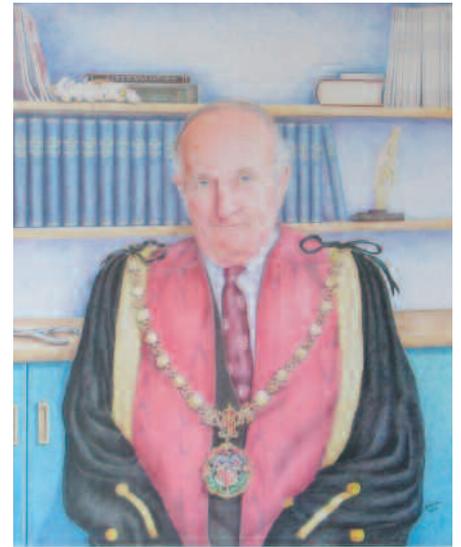
Have you ever exhibited your work?

National Exhibition of Wildlife Art (NEWA)

several years and in 2009 at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (in the UK Coloured Pencil Society exhibition)

Do you have a claim to fame?

I was introduced to the Duchess of Cornwall when she opened the new wing of the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital at the Royal Veterinary College in 2008. On the same day the portrait I'd been commissioned to paint was unveiled. It was of Emeritus Professor Leslie Vaughan, a much loved and respected veterinary surgeon who had worked at the RVC most of his life. Sadly, Professor Vaughan died a few days before the occasion but fortunately not before he had seen (and approved!) his portrait.



Professor Vaughan portrait (in coloured pencil)

If you could invite five people to a dinner party who would they be? (Mythical, dead or alive)

David Attenborough (swoon), my maternal grandmother (who died many years ago), my father-in-law (who died before I first met my husband), Jane Austen (how would she seem, in this post-feminist age?) and Eeyore (we have so much in common!).

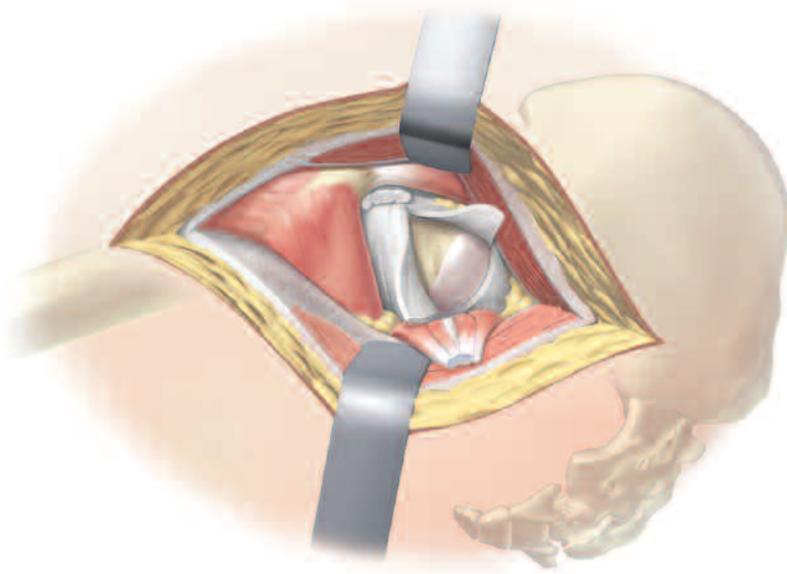
What's your favourite food?

All food is favourite! Really fresh homemade bread and butter is hard to beat.

What's your favourite drink?

Wine (a good Chablis, or Rioja)

Gallery - Mandy Miller MMAA, RMIP



Posterior Approach to the Hip
Lightwave, Amapi and Photoshop



Hip Implant
Lightwave, Amapi, Poser and Photoshop

MAA News

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