

Limited Edition

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For Sculptors... By Sculptors



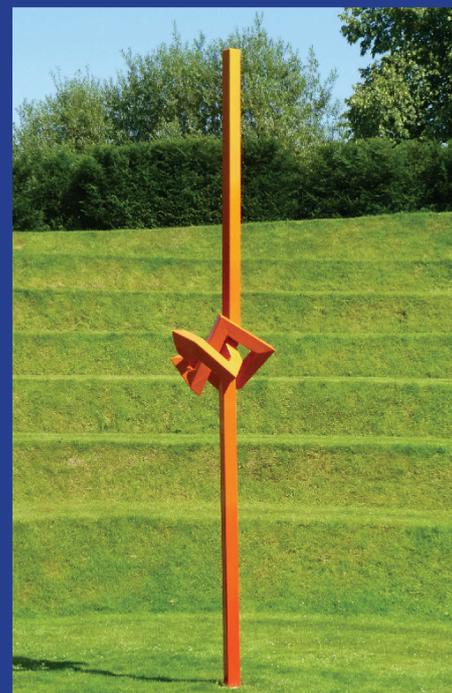
The Magazine Of The



**Surrey
Sculpture
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In this edition

- Moore/rodin Group Visit
- Science And Art
- Studio Visits
- Sculpture? Engineering?
Performance?
- Frozen Sculpture



Free To Members £2.00 Where Sold

The Science & Art Of Domestic Bliss



By Nigel Williams

I make sculpture using mostly re-cycled brass and copper, often incorporating found objects. My current major theme involves the “fantastic embellishment” of antique domestic and industrial artefacts, producing augmented items which are convincing enough (but only if you’re incredibly naïve!) to perhaps have existed in an alternative timeline, maybe if the technology hadn’t been overtaken by something better or cheaper. The results appeal to a wide audience, invoking nostalgia, fantasy, and a sizable dose of humour.

Now how on earth does anyone arrive at making such things? What peculiar combination of experiences and inclinations cause a person to do something which appears so completely peculiar and futile? Well, it’s a complicated life.....

I was born 10 years after the end of the Second World War, so I did not experience the terrible and terrifying situations that the population of this country endured during that time. However, despite having bankrupted itself through 6 years of continuous war expenditure, the country still appeared to have the resources and knowledge to manufacture high-quality goods, and design innovative and exciting products and systems, reaching a peak during the 1960s, when I was growing up.

Quality in particular has been a persistent thread throughout my life: my parents taught me the value of quality goods over cheaper, inferior products which didn’t

last as long and therefore represented a false economy (not to mention not doing the job so well). Nowadays, with the Chinese theft of our designs, and manufacturing them so cheaply (no design cost, using underpaid re-located labour, poor-quality materials and processes, and subsidizing the export cost) that they (along with a number of other global economic and political issues) have all but eliminated our ability to manufacture anything, it has become almost impossible to acquire any new domestic items of quality.

As a child, much of my time was invested in Meccano, and later Lego, creating all sorts of inventive structures and machines, pushing the technology (and my folks’ financial ingenuity!) to its limits. It was clear even at that time (had people been aware of such things in the 1960s) that I was going to be one of those awkward left-brain/right-brain stuck-in-the-middle kind of people, constantly being pulled backwards and forwards between art and science. A life full of conflict followed....!

Another major influence at that time was the Meccano Magazine (found for me on a regular basis by my ever-financially-resourceful mother, second-hand from a neighbour’s child or a slightly-more-well-off cousin), which contained all manner of fascinating articles about machinery, transport, technology, science – and even Meccano itself! My saviour above all else though, was the wonderful Leslie Ashwell-Wood – who produced those marvelous cut-away drawings of technical subjects such as railway engines, submarines and power stations, etc – which I turned to in my regular (second-hand!) copy of the Eagle comic, before I even read the Dan Dare space story on the cover. I learned an immense amount from these illustrations, more than I ever would from any technical description, or even seeing the item itself (which, in the case of a nuclear power-station or a space-ship, was never going to happen anyway); they had a profound effect on my directions and interests throughout my life.

At school, I was forced to choose between art, woodwork and metalwork – when I actually wanted to do all of them. In the end, I chose woodwork – a decision I do not regret, since I learned a great deal about basic processes, tool usage, safety, etc, all of which have served me well ever since – but it did delay my education in art, and metalworking processes, until much later in life.

Teenage development during the 1970s concentrated around Monty Python’s Flying Circus and rock music, which meant I became fully conversant and totally in tune with the self-deprecating humour, absurdity and challenge-to-formality which became part of the English character at that time. Appreciation for the Goons (helped by the continuing activity of Spike Milligan during the 70s), and a realisation of the existence of Edward Lear, William Heath-Robinson and Rowland Emmet, came a little later.

I’ve always had an ability to visualise and be creative in 3D, and whilst at school, I always wanted to be an architect; but when it came to the crunch – 7 years further education – I just couldn’t face it. That didn’t stop me from sketching all sorts of house plans and fantastic buildings, which was probably leading up to my fascination with computer animation and modeling when it started to take off during the 1980s, proceeding to my study for a Masters Degree in Computer Animation in 1991 (how many people have an M.A. without having a B.A. ...? But that’s another story!)

The usual boy’s interest in cars, trains and planes developed into a following for heritage transport in

general, and later into more complex and sophisticated forays into industrial archaeology, and interests in the machinery, architecture and lifestyles prevalent in the Victorian and Edwardian heydays of industrial development.

A career in computing, including lots of stuff around the edges including automotive design, animation, multimedia, and industrial photography, ultimately lead to a personal backlash against things that were too complicated for the wit of one man to ever comprehend, resulting in a general desire to be involved in simpler, older technologies.

So, the threads are beginning to come together: we have the timing, and cultural events; childhood development; quality; 3D abilities; the art/science conflict; the interest in transport, engineering and manufacturing; the humour; the technical career; the frustrated creativity; the following of Victorian & Edwardian lifestyles – these combinations could have gone in a different direction, but for me they have resulted in possessing the ingredients required to create these unique “developments” of items from a bygone age into artefacts of fantasy that attract people young and old, living in the early part of the 21st Century.

There follows some examples of my work:



Fatal Mistake

This piece comes with a health warning - because if you were contemplating firing this “gun” on all barrels, you might end up making a.... fatal mistake! (follow the added barrels!)

A firing/display stand, and an embellished carrying case, are a crucial part of this piece – the case is custom-moulded and lined with red velvet, significantly adding to the strong irony of the whole piece.

Materials: brass, bronze, copper, steel, marine ply, leather, World War II shell cases

Superhero’s Blowtorch

We’ve all seen the amazing exploits of the superheroes, in the comics and in the movies: rescuing people, fighting evil, saving the planet, etc, etc - but what’s it like for these folks at home? We’ve seen the Batcave and Wayne Manor, but what about the less wealthy superheroes? How do they cope with a leaky radiator or a broken bicycle frame?

Well, this piece offers one answer to some of these little annoyances: it takes a superhero to lift it, but once fired up, it could probably fix all the radiators in the house at once, and mend every broken bike-frame in the entire street all at the same time!

Materials: brass, copper, shell cases, “Monitor” No.26 parafin blowlamp



Flickendorfer’s Celebrated Tea Refinery (Image Opposite)

Do you love tea, but have always hankered after something a little fresher, with just that extra bit of flavour and life? Well, with this very modern device, you can now make your own tea, just (and only) when you need it, using freshly-picked leaves straight from your own plantation!

Materials: Premier Systems electric copper kettle (serial number 9657), brass, copper, shell cases, grease guns, spirit burner, cooker parts

Munitio Sanduskia

A "botanical form from spent armaments" work - this time utilising 20mm cannon-shell cases and approximately 90ft (27m) of recycled copper pipe. The fake botanical-style name is partially derived from the name of a city in Ohio, USA that has an amusement park with the largest number of roller-coasters in the world - Sandusky.

Materials: copper, brass, aluminium alloy, shell cases

The Massive Moth Immobiliser

Are your nights made miserable by a massive amount of moths in your home? Or are you troubled by a particularly massive moth? Or perhaps you just fancy a "massive moth" of your own....

The "Massive Moth Immobiliser" will become an asset to your home in all of these cases!

Materials: Abol Syringe No. 9 rose sprayer, brass, copper, grease gun



Vimworthy's Patented Swarm Eliminator

Are you having trouble with swarms (wasps, mosquitos, elephants....)?? If so, let Vimworthy's Patented Swarm Eliminator come to the rescue - with its fearsome array of omni-directional high-powered spray nozzles, assisted by a pre-heating boiler and super-heater coil, you can head straight into the centre of the swarm, confident in the knowledge that you can take out the whole swarm with one squirt!

Materials: brass, copper, shell cases, "Dron-Wal 5/P" compressed-air sprayer, Tecalemit "Cycle Gun" grease gun

The "Arachno-copta" Improved Bed Warmer

(See Front Cover For Photo)

I found this prototype for an improved design copper bed-warmer (incorporating its own self-heating boiler and extensive warming network to reach all corners of the bed) in appalling condition at the back of the old JCB factory in Birmingham, and lovingly restored it to the condition you see here.

You could believe that, or you could believe that I've just finished making it, with thoughts of encroaching autumn & winter, and climbing into a cold empty bed at night... either way, I'd be happy!

Materials: JCB copper bed warmer, brass, copper, grease gun



For the future - well, I have plenty more ideas for "fantastic embellishment", hopefully with much finer and more detailed embellishment - could keep me going for a very long time to come! Currently under construction is a device for making fortified tea: it's called the "Pot-of-Tea'n Still" - those of you with knowledge of illicit Irish whisky will hopefully get the joke!

I also have plans for some of the other themes I follow, including:

- introducing water to some of my botanical forms - I get constant requests for this, and I am fortunate to possess some of the computer software & hardware-interfacing skills to allow me to create programmable water systems, which could be quite intriguing. However, I need some funding to approach this - the cost of electrically-operated valves and associated hardware soon mounts up! If anybody has any ideas for financial resources or backing, do let me know!
- the creation of automata & working machines - I have wanted to engage in this type of work for nearly 30 years, and the ideas keep coming. Rowland Emett, Paul Spooner, Tim Hunkin, and Keith Newstead are all heroes of mine, and I would love to have the opportunity to create work that moves!



Monitor Medusa

This is the one for the lazy decorator: if you can't be bothered to move your blowlamp back & forth across the wall when you're stripping paint, just light up this one, and it'll strip the whole wall at once...!!

Materials: brass, copper, shell cases, "Buflam" parafin blowlamp, Enots "Auroram" grease gun

Recent And Upcoming Exhibitions Include:

- "Sylvansmiths" with Ed Elliott, in Oxford
- Asylum V Steampunk Festival, Lincoln
- Rowland Emett Society Convention in Leeds
- National Trust Mottisfont Abbey, Hampshire
- Royal Landscape Savill Garden, Windsor Great Park
- Whittard of Chelsea, Covent Garden
- Sculpture Ardington, Wantage (May 2014)
- Oxford Artweeks, Summertown (May 2014)
- Rowland Emett Exhibition, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (May-Sep 2014)

One thing I would like to develop is unusual exhibition opportunities for my "fantastic embellishment" pieces - I believe they would fit very well in Heritage Museums, for instance - so if anybody has any ideas, contacts, or experience with that - do get in touch!

For more information on my sculpture, photography and books, please have a look at my website

www.orlogikbooks.com

Or contact me by email at:

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