



'The Last of the Snow'. Oil on Linen. 1220 x 760mm. 2023. Private Collection, Asia.

A long overdue report on life and work in Cambrian Valley. I see the last Newsletter from us was Spring 2021 – the time is sliding by too quickly!

Fi and I are not long home from several weeks away in Paris, Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Bruges – a 75th birthday treat for me to see the wonderful Vermeer exhibition at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Having cunningly joined as 'Friends of the Museum' we had easy and free access to the 10-room, 28 work show, which was solidly booked out and had 650,000 attend. Vermeer has been a life-long hero for me, so being able to study so many of his beautiful works at close quarters was a privilege. His "Woman Holding a Balance" 1664 and "Woman in Blue Reading a Letter" 1662-64 are my favourites, but several others come close.

We also spent a couple of days in Vermeer's hometown Delft. Art tourism and commercialisation is astonishing now: you can hardly turn a corner in Delft without being confronted by "The Girl With a Pearl Earring" in one crass form or another...Vermeer would be cringing with embarrassment.

I loved seeing the paintings of Christen Kobke and Willem Hammershoi in Denmark: the State Gallery (SMK) in Copenhagen and Ordrupgaard, just on the outskirts of the city, are marvellous. And discovering the Groeninge Museum in Bruges, was another extraordinary surprise.

We also visited MONA (Museum of Old and New Art) in Hobart late last year: what a project that is! A memorable example of what a private enthusiast with funds and a dream can gift to a community. Tasmania has benefitted enormously from MONA's magnetic attraction.

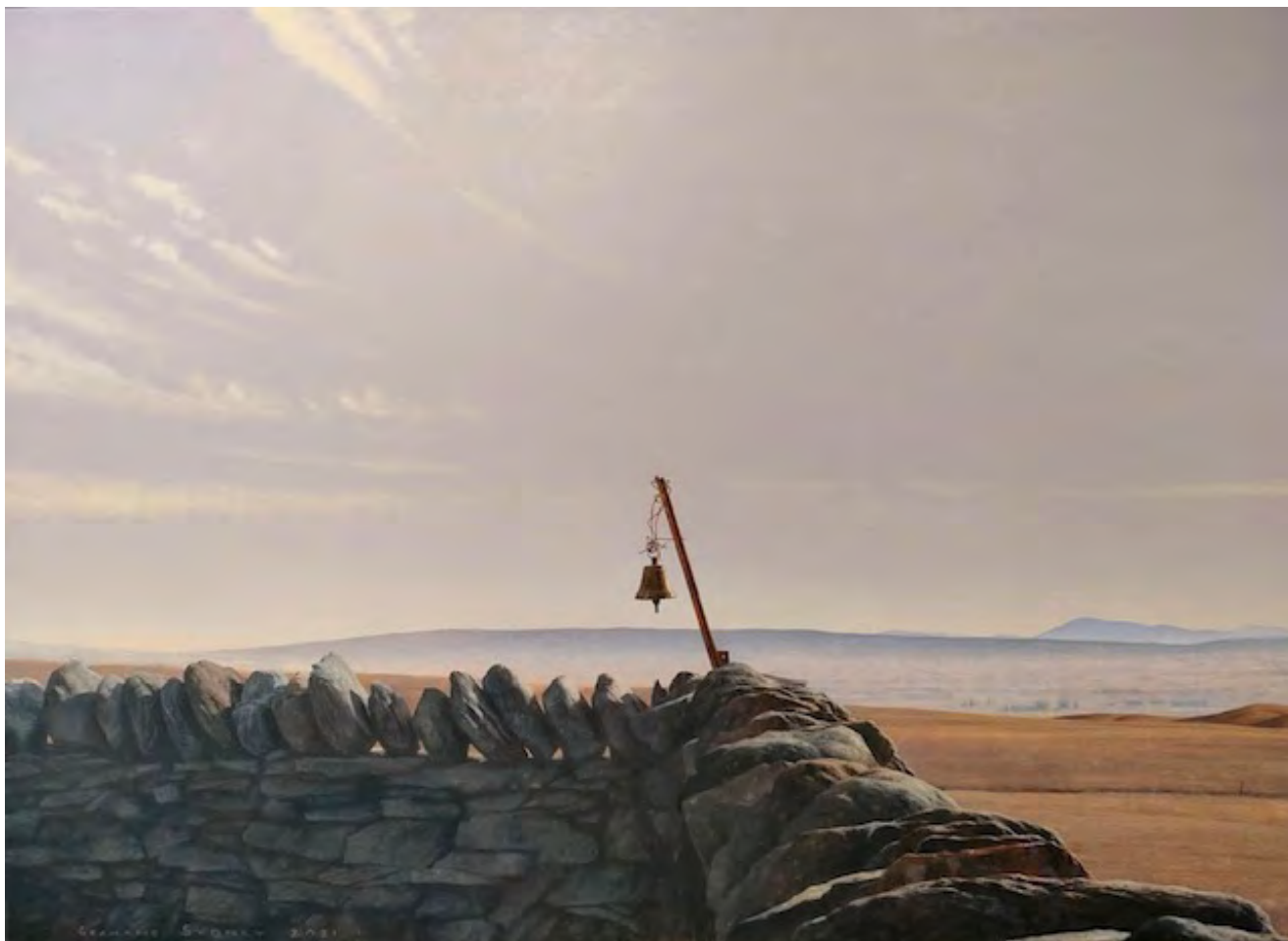
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INTERNATIONAL ART TOUR 2024

Speaking of galleries in Europe, David Smith of Travel Managers has proposed that I host a 3-week tour diving into some of the world's greatest art collections in Madrid, Paris and Amsterdam 17 May - 08 June 2024. All I have

to do is share what I know and love about the great paintings, what I think makes them so fascinating and important... which is what I really enjoy doing. It's a small group limited to 16, with a varied itinerary including

options such as markets, biking and hammam baths. If you are interested contact David for a copy of the schedule: david.smith@travelmanagers.co.nz or 021 940 026.



'Cemetery Bell'. Oil on Linen. 665 x 910mm. 2021. Private Collection.

PODCAST AND MEDIA

Graeme Douglas is doing a series of long-form interviews with NZ Painters for his "The Good Oil" podcast. His talk with me can be heard on Series 1 Episodes 2 and 3:

On the subject of interviews and articles, Ed Hanfling of *Art New Zealand* did a substantial piece on my work in their April 2022 issue and Kurt Bayer wrote a double page spread on me and mine for *NZ Herald* on

4 March 2023. Sharon Stephenson interviewed me for the *NZ Listener* (11 Feb 2023) and she also wrote an excellent story on our friend and patron Adam Ballin (08 July 2023) who is slowly assembling the best collection of post-WW2 New Zealand paintings, with a view to eventually housing them in a dedicated public gallery. If you can't access these articles, email us at: grahame@grahamesydney.com and we'll send you a PDF.

Finally on publications, Patrick Shepherd's book on Artists in Antarctica is due out soon. My two trips down to the ice had a big impact on my work, and this release will cover that influence.



Click here to listen to **The Good Oil** podcast

<https://nzpod.co.nz/podcast/the-good-oil-1>



'Untitled'. Oil on Linen. 710 x 910mm. 2023. Personal Collection.

PREMIUM REPRODUCTIONS

We have a new selection of some recent works printed on heavy 250gsm satin artboard which are remarkably accurate and

pleasing. After all this time, it's still amazing what interest there is and we are constantly sending prints through-out New Zealand

and to all four corners of the globe. The new prints can be found on my website under 'Large Premium Prints'.

FRIENDS

Although Fi and I are increasingly grateful to be living so far removed from the turbulence and frustrations of an often absurd, unbalanced world (perhaps it's just me getting old...) and we often dream of Building a Wall around our property (thank you, the Donald!) we take great pleasure in visits from friends.

We've enjoyed time with so many cherished mates — like Robin White and Mike Fudakowski (we hope you've all seen Robin's terrific retrospective exhibition "Something is Happening Here"), Greg O'Brien (whose magnificent tome on Don Binney is due out

any day now), Roger and Di Hall, Owen Marshall and Jackie, Brian Turner and Jillian Sullivan...these friendships stretch out over so many decades. Frightening!

I spent a memorable day in the Coromandel with Michael Smither and Gian last November. Michael has been an inspirational presence in my life since I first met him in 1969 and has painted some of the most memorable images in our collective culture. Now in his mid-80s he's still painting (as we all hope to!).

During the summer it was a delight to have the outstanding

painter Linden Frederick and his wife Heather close to us for a fortnight. They live and work in Maine, USA, and Linden shows with a notable gallery in New York. Not only a fine painter, he is also a skilled luthier, and has made over 40 fiddles: lindenfrederick.com

We've been thrilled and relieved to watch that bit-part jobbing actor Sam Neill triumph over his hard health challenges, and to welcome his memoir "Did I Ever Tell You This" — much like the man himself: generous, amusing, full of stories. A remarkable life, and a highly enjoyable read.



'For the Forgotten'. Oil on Linen. 660 x 1010. 2022. Personal Collection.



'Say Not Goodnight'. Oil on Linen. 660 x 1010. 2022. Private Collection, Asia.

MORE BOOKS

Beyond home, family and work, books continue to provide one of my greatest pleasures, and keep me poor. I've been immersed in biographies of Bonnard, Modigliani, Magritte, Sargent, Gustave Caillebotte, Camille Pissarro, Kathe Kollwitz, Arthur Streeton (Art Gallery NSW) and Caravaggio amongst others.

One notable read has been "Seurat and the Making of La Grande Jatte" by Robert L Herbert. Like Modigliani and Gericault, Georges Seurat died in his early 30s...unbelievable to me. Peter FitzSimon's "The Opera House" the story of Sydney's — and Australia's — emblematic gem is a compelling read. If only

New Zealand had something so bold and beautiful. And if you can stand any more of the sickening subject, Maggie Haberman's "The Confidence Man" will tell you all you need to know about Trump.



'Site Office'. Oil on Linen. 710 x 1220mm. 2023. Private Collection, Asia.

Finally – FAMILY

Fi and I have two little black curly dependents now, Labradoodle Teddy (nearly 4) and Labraspoodle Tinks (almost 1) who keep us amused and busy every day (and night ... we had to buy a bigger bed!). We are a happy, fortunate household behind the fictitious Wall.

The three grand daughters in Frankston, near Melbourne,

proceed apace in achievements and skills — musical, artistic, sporting — and we are so proud of the impressive young ladies they are steadily becoming. Daughter Melissa's days are crammed with music teaching duties, Dale carries on with the noble task of teaching special needs students, and son Nick is in Auckland working in the world of branding and on-line promotion.

All of us are close to flying up to Port Douglas, north Queensland, to memorialise my 75th birthday by lying lazily around a resort pool for a warm week. Sounds good to me!

Best wishes to you all,
GCS

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