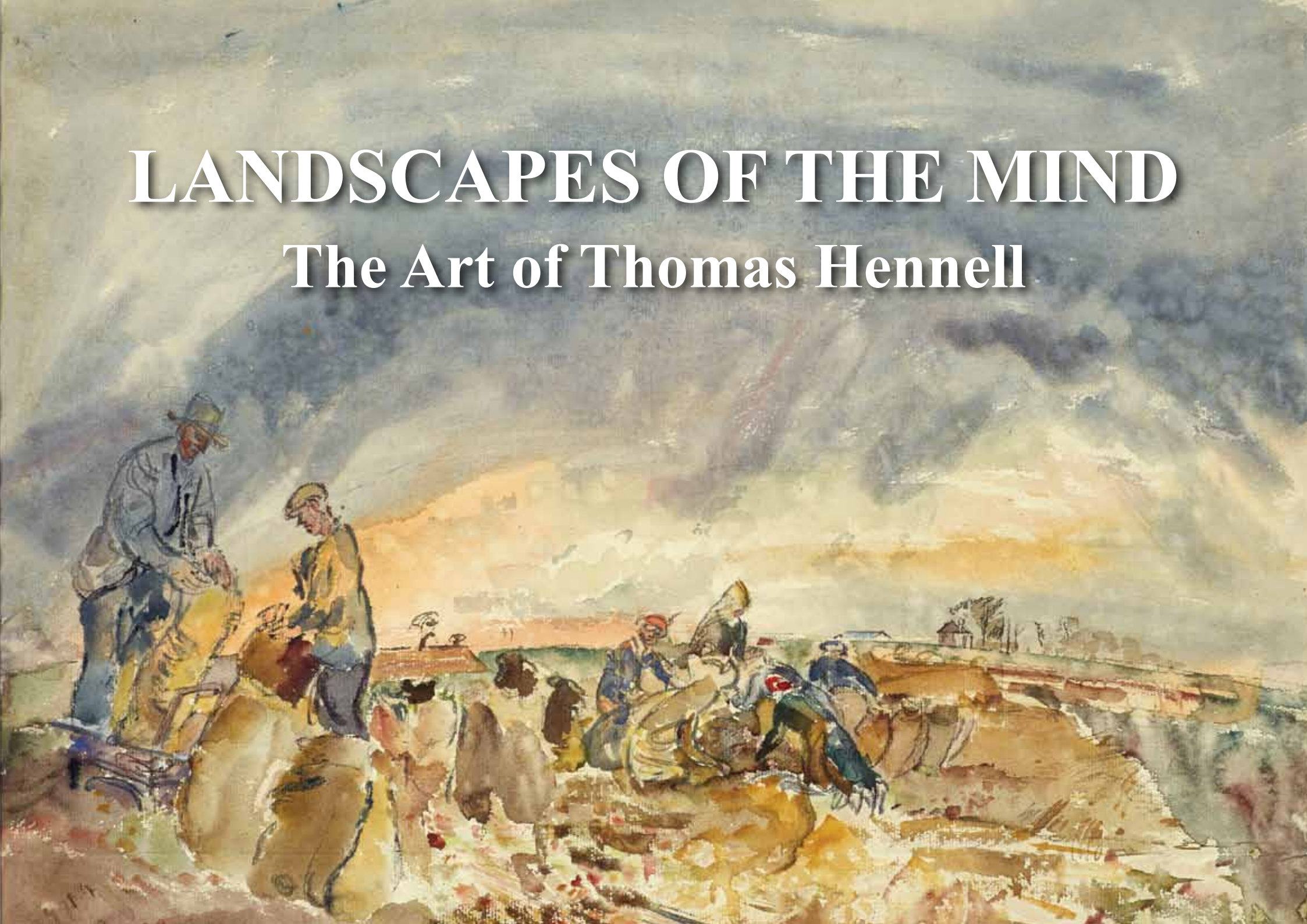


LANDSCAPES OF THE MIND

The Art of Thomas Hennell



Landscapes of the Mind: the Art of Thomas Hennell

is an exhibition presented by

Bethlem Museum of the Mind in partnership with Sim Fine Art.

Bethlem's existing collection of Hennell's work will be complemented by watercolours and drawings from all periods of the artist's career, tracing his life through the places he painted and drew, to present the most significant retrospective of Hennell's work this century.

Andrew Sim of Sim Fine Art is the dealer most associated with the revival of interest in Hennell's life and work, and Bethlem Museum of the Mind cares for an internationally renowned collection of archives, art and historic objects, which together offer an unparalleled resource to support the history of mental healthcare and treatment.



The Grounds of Claybury Hospital (c.1934)

Watercolour & ink on paper

Hennell suffered a nervous breakdown in 1932, and spent time at the Maudsley and Claybury Hospitals between 1932-1935. Whilst a patient, Hennell drew his surroundings, as well as his fellow patients.



48 x 32cm

The Orator
Oil on canvas

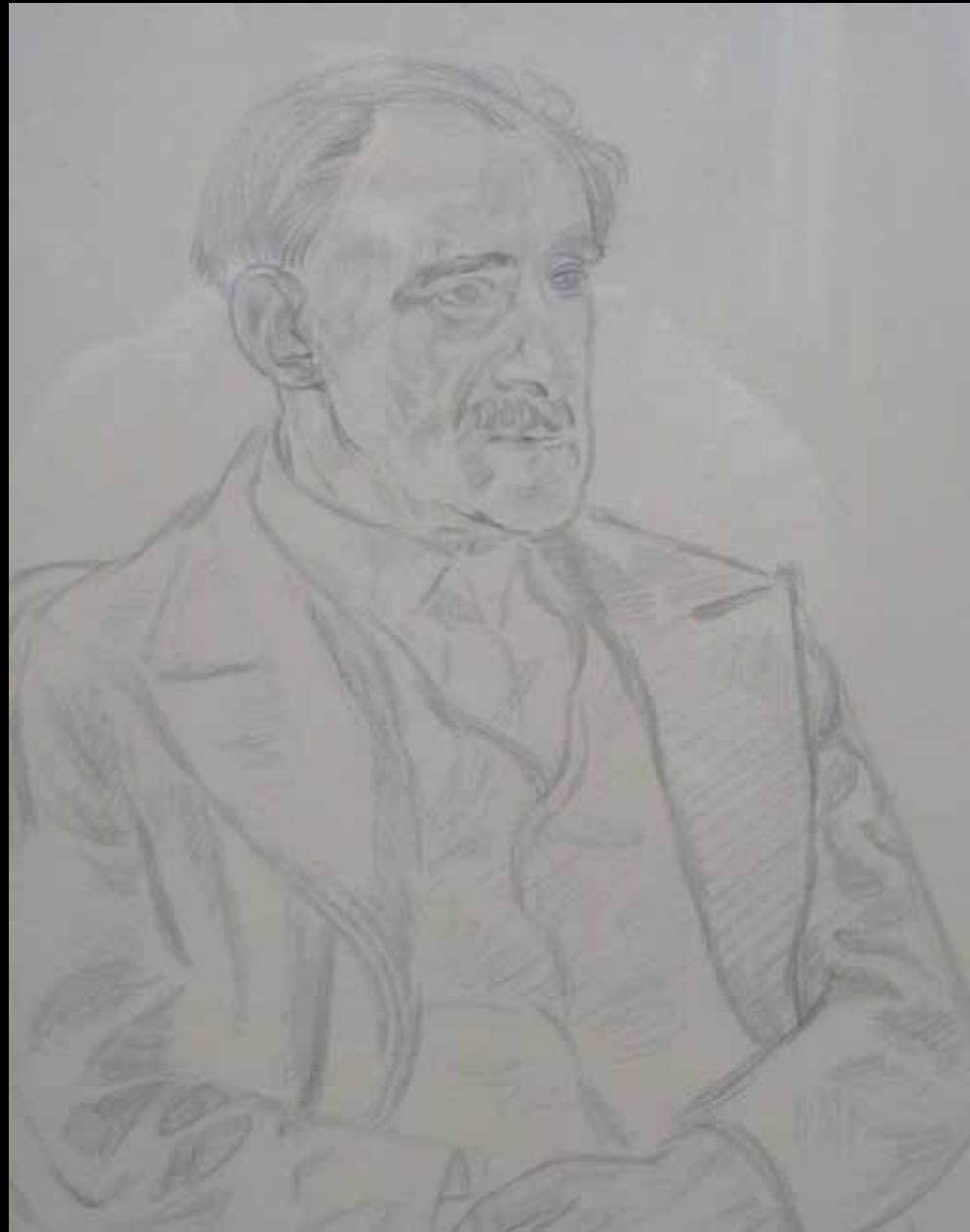
CAT. 5

Literature: Jessica Kilburn, *The Land and the Mind*, publ Pimpernel Press 2021

A study for this work appears on p.232 of *'The Witnesses'* by Thomas Hennell

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

This exceptionally rare oil painting by Hennell of his time at Claybury Mental Hospital, depicts three patients heading out to exercise or, as Hennell bitterly described it, 'to tramp round and round the enclosed court apportioned for recreation'. The man on the left with his mouth open is 'The Orator' who 'stands roaring out a speech, his hoarse cries of one loudness and one note'.



Claybury Patient Study II (c.1935)

Graphite on paper



Claybury Patient Study III (c.1935)
Graphite on paper



Claybury Patient Study IV (c.1935)
Graphite on paper



Claybury Patient Study (c.1935)
Graphite on paper



Diary of Agnes Beaumont - Frontispiece (c.1936)

Watercolour

Series of six pictures, ink on paper

In one image of this series, Hennell shows the hands of Agnes Beaumont, confidante of the 17th century Baptist dissenter John Bunyan, raised heavenwards, not in protest but in entreaty. Her father having barred the door of the family home against her, she was forced to sleep rough.

'I was a little cast down, and grief began to seize upon me, she wrote in her diary. 'Lord, what will become of me...?'



Diary of Agnes Beaumont 2 (c.1936)

Pen



Diary of Agnes Beaumont 3 (c.1936)

Pen

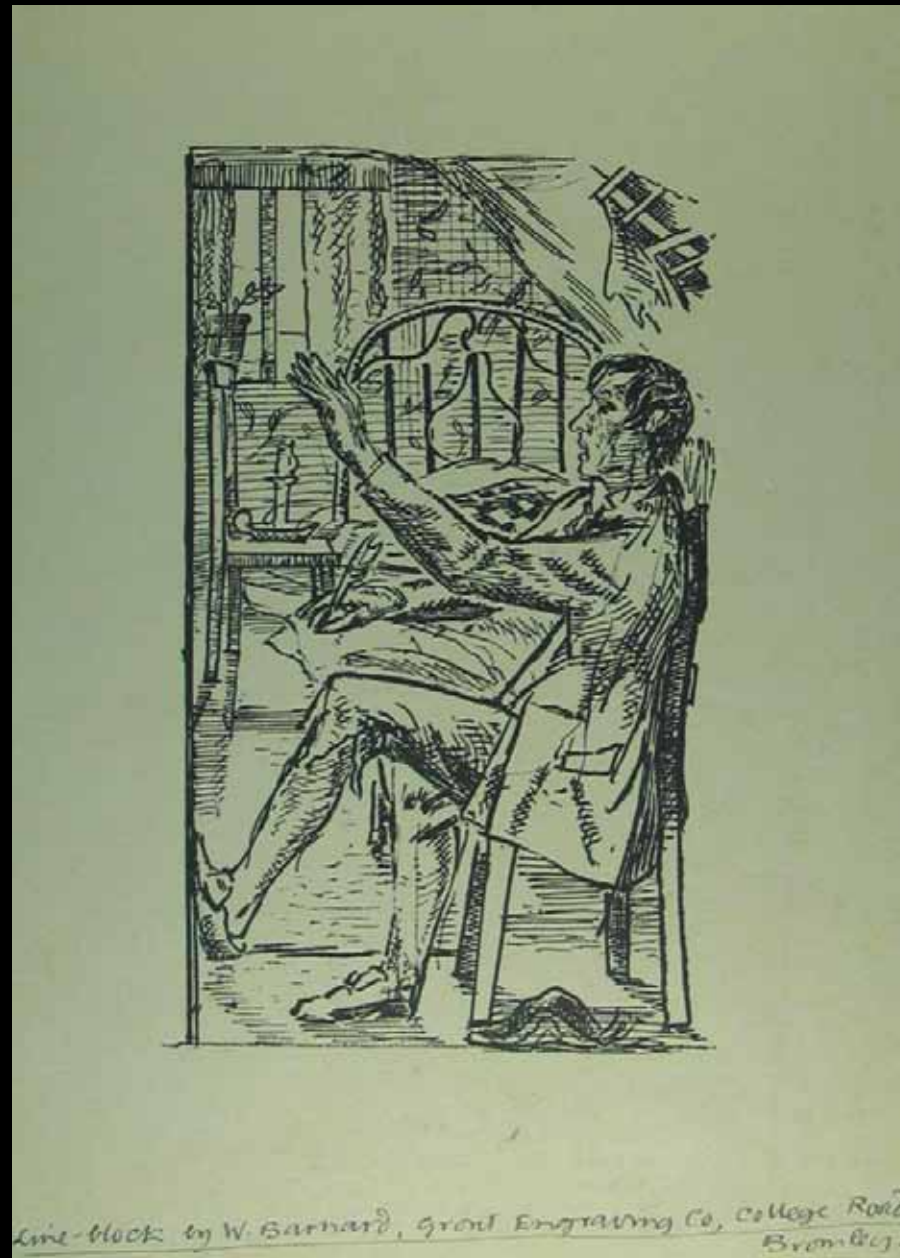


Diary of Agnes Beaumont 4 (c.1936)
Watercolour



Diary of Agnes Beaumont 5 (c.1936)

Pen



Diary of Agnes Beaumont 6 - John Bunyan in Prison (c.1936)

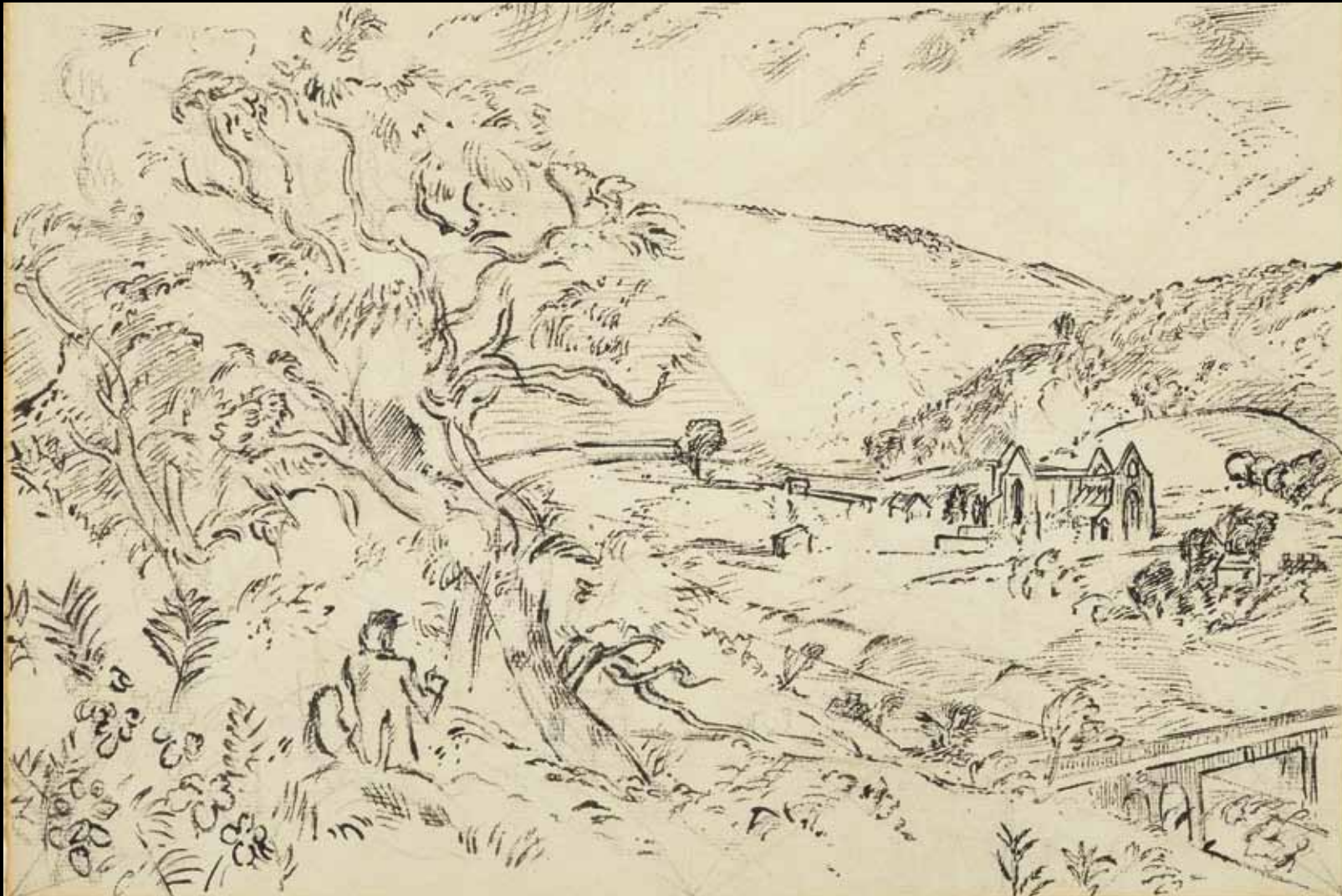
Pen



Cart outside Ash Church

Watercolour, signed & dated 1938

Loaned to the exhibition with the kind permission of Stuart & Vicky Hennell



22 x 31cm

Study of Tintern Abbey, Vincent lines sketching
Reed pen

CAT. 1

Literature: H.J. Massingham. 'A Countryman's Journal' P.15

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

'Tintern Abbey' provided one of the chapters in H.J. Massingham's 'A Countryman's Journal', which Hennell illustrated in 1939.

The place had particular resonance for Hennell as his father had been rector there from 1892 to 1900.

NB: This work is the original sketch for the illustration used in Massingham's book



28 x 38cm

Landscape Study with Tramp
Watercolour

CAT. 2

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

'Gentlemen of the road' were a feature of the rural landscape in Hennell's time and here, a tramp with his meagre possessions in a makeshift knapsack adds a note of realism to an otherwise idyllic pastoral scene.



24 x 32cm

Ruins in Normandy, 1944

CAT. 3

Pen and wash, signed & dated '1944'

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

Hennell arrived in Normandy just behind the D-Day invasion, a time lag he regretted, but he soon made up for lost time. This was one of the busiest and most fruitful periods of his war artist's career, as he sketched his way from the beachhead to the ruined towns and villages of northern France.



51 x 31cm

Wattle & Daub Barn

CAT. 4

Reed pen

Literature: Frontispiece for C. Henry Warren *'Miles from Anywhere'*

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021



48 x 58cm

Digging Carrots

Watercolour 1941

CAT. 6

Exhibit: *Guillaume Gallozzi, New York as 'Digging Carrots - Land Army' Fine Art Society Dec 1988*

Landscapes of the Mind, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

Literature: *Jessica Kilburn, The Land & the Mind, publ Pimpernel Press 2021*

In this magnificent and apparently timeless autumnal scene of workers gathering in the harvest, the contemporary reality of 1941 intrudes with the inclusion of Land Girls in their standard-issue brown coats helping out as part of the concerted war effort to gather in the nation's food.



41 x 52cm

Orchard Cottage (Hennell's home from 1935 onwards)

CAT. 7

Watercolour

Literature: Jessica Kilburn, *The Land & the Mind*, Publ Pimpernel Press 2021

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

"I bend my narrow hope A frugal means to make" Thomas Hennell *'Hercules Seghers'*

Orchard Cottage, a small Victorian cottage in a two-acre plot a mile or so from Hennell's childhood home, had been bequeathed to Hennell's clergyman father by one of his parishioners. It provided a spartan but suitably bucolic base for Hennell on his discharge from Claybury Mental Hospital in 1935. He tended the garden and orchard avidly, as well as keeping bees.



48 x 58cm

Large Group Sacking potatoes - wartime fieldwork
Watercolour

CAT. 8

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021
Hennell's nickname as a student was 'Turner' and in this splendidly wet and wild depiction of fieldworkers set against an ominously looming sky, the spirit of the master is successfully invoked.



48 x 58cm

Building an Airfield, Pegu, Burma

Watercolour, signed & dated 1945

CAT. 9

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

This large, impressive watercolour displays the newfound confidence with large groups of figures that characterised Hennell's war pictures from the far east. A disparate group of workers, all deftly and individually captured rather than generalised, proceed with the task of extending an airfield to accommodate more and larger aircraft. The smooth ultra-modernity of a Douglas Skytrain paratrooper transport plane provides a note of culture clash with the almost medieval un-mechanised labour.



70 x 58cm

Yarmouth Sands. from Memory (includes self portrait)

Watercolour

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind, Bethlem Royal Hospital
Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021*

Fine Art Society Exhibition, 1986

In this highly unusual and self-revelatory work, Hennell includes a self-portrait, for the only time in his mature career: a depiction of himself seated, sketching at the seaside. Except that this is clearly not a realistic picture of Yarmouth Sands but, as Hennell's title suggests, a dreamlike depiction of Hennell's memory of the scene.

Freud would have a field day interpreting potential meanings: light blazes from a gaudily painted tearoom with 'Just as Mother Makes it' written on its fascia, outside which a pavement artist sits, accompanied by the words 'All My Own Work' written, perhaps in sand, in front of him. Other elements include an outsized carnival head, a railway that leads nowhere and a dramatically unreal sky akin to the Northern Light.

CAT. 10



24 x 60cm

Spreading manure
Watercolour (double-sided)

CAT. 11

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

Literature: Jessica Kilburn, *The Land & the Mind*, Publ Pimpernel Press 2021

One of the striking things about Hennell's paintings of the countryside in the 1930s and 40s is how highly populated they are, as in this elongated watercolour of muck spreading: at least a dozen men and a horse and cart are engaged in a process that would today involve no more than one man and a machine.



38 x 48cm

View from Orchard Cottage
Watercolour

CAT. 12

"of hungry days and darksome penury" Thomas Hennell *'Hercules Seghers'*

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

A molecatcher can be glimpsed passing the front gate of Orchard Cottage, an appropriately rural note for a place where Hennell lived from 1936 onwards.



42 x 48cm

Gully Bridge, Kinsale (pre-war Irish scene)
Watercolour

CAT. 13

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

Picturesque coastal scenes are extremely rare in Hennell's oeuvre but this pretty depiction of a horse-drawn cart crossing the River Bandon finds the artist in holiday mood as he would have been staying in County Cork with his good friends, the Smyths, whose house - Rathcoursey - features in some of the artist's happiest works. The Smyths habitually drove around in a horse-drawn cart.



36 x 48cm

The Big Field at Ridley - Seed Sowing after Rain
Watercolour

CAT. 14

Exhibit: *Landscapes of the Mind*, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

A seed sower is dwarfed by the familiar field in front of his father's rectory and a dramatic evening sky in this evocative and quintessentially Hennellian weather-scape.



58 x 70cm

Rathcoursey House from Mad Dog Wood
Watercolour

CAT. 15

Hennell adored Rathcoursey House in Cork, the home of his friends, the Smyth family (and the artist's frequent holiday home) describing it as an 'Arcadian landscape' and 'paradise in every way'. The house overlooked the sea, both of which are subtly depicted in this large and beautiful watercolour that Hennell's friend, Vincent Lines, described as having a 'visionary quality', which he said remained in the memory almost as a dream, so evocative was it "of the spirit of place".



38 x 48cm

Gaggle of Women, Old Men and Children Helping Out on the Land

CAT. 16

Pen, wash & watercolour, dated 5 Dec 1940

Exhibit: Landscapes of the Mind, Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind Exhibition 2021

Huddled together against the cold of a bleak December day in 1940, a mixed group of men, women and children, including one in a pushchair, take a break from working in the fields as part of a concerted national effort to help out on the land.



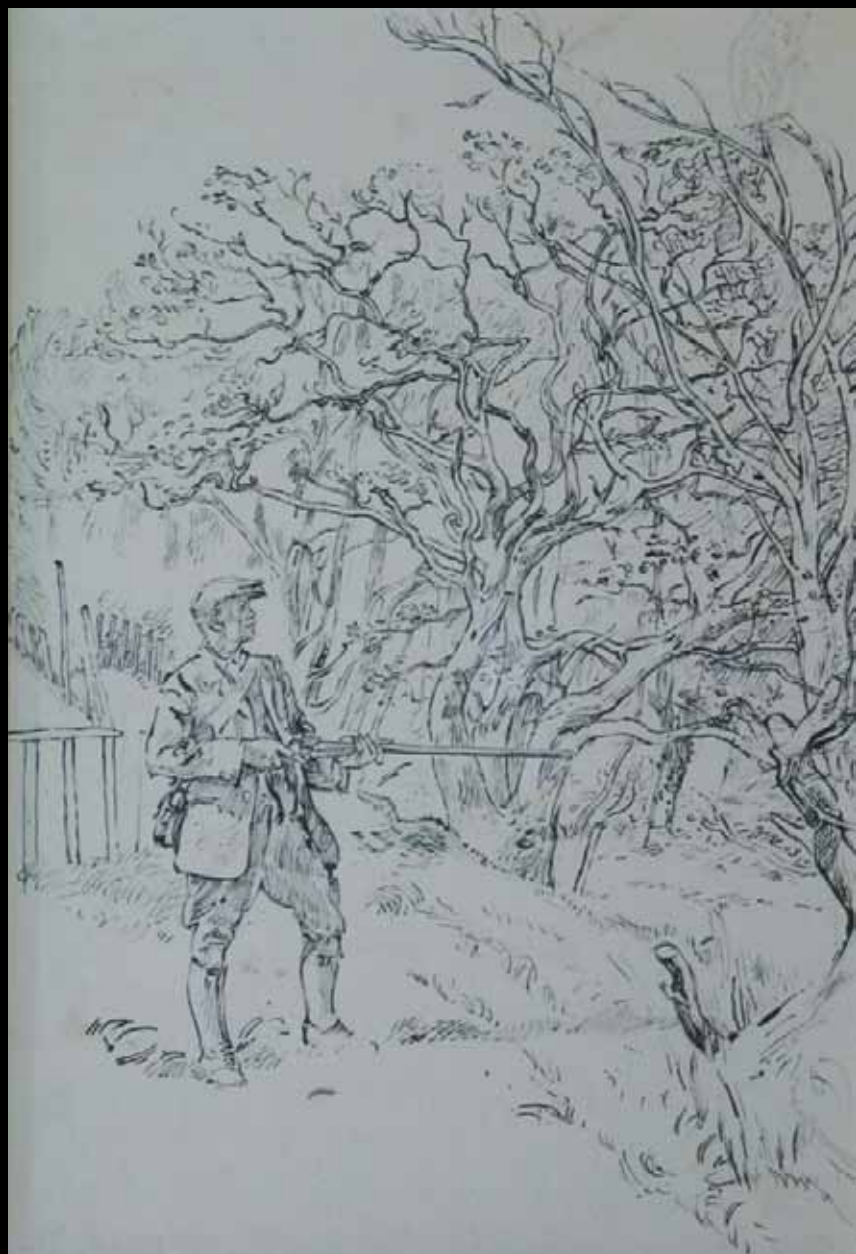
Building a Small Timber Craft, Grimsby 1944
Graphite & watercolour on paper



Magpie Bottom, Shoreham

Graphite & watercolour on paper, undated

Shoreham is west of the village of Ridley, where Hennell's father was parish rector, and where the artist grew up.



Pigeon Shooting (c.1943)

Ink on paper



Great Bardfield Church, Essex (c. 1943)

Ink on paper

Hennell was friends with fellow artists and members of the Bardfield Group, including Edward Bawden, Eric Ravilious and Tirzah Garwood. Edward Bawden encouraged Hennell to write of his experiences of mental ill health, which resulted in Hennell's book *The Witnesses*.



The Potato Clamp, 1943
Graphite & watercolour on paper



Loading a Cart

Graphite & watercolour on paper, undated

Growing up in a rural community, Hennell was familiar with agriculture, which later became a central theme of his artwork and the illustration commissions he received. Hennell's skill and knowledge recommended him to the Pilgrim Trust and Ministry of Information, and he painted rural wartime scenes for project Recording Britain in 1940. Hennell also began work for the War Artists' Advisory Committee (WAAC), and gained a full time position in 1943.



Petty France, Gloucestershire (1932)
Watercolour on paper

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