



# MAKE DO & MEND

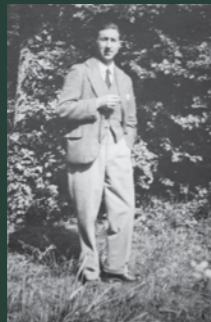
*The wartime hospital drawings of  
master etcher*

**Paul Drury P.R.E (1903-87)**

*fine* Sim *art*

## THE ETCHING REVIVAL PAUL DRURY & GRAHAM SUTHERLAND

Before the war, Paul Drury and his close friend, Graham Sutherland had been leading lights of what has been termed the etching revival. The late 1920s saw “a mania for prints”, with a new wave of young printmakers harking back to a golden age of artist printmaking that incorporated William Bewick, Blake and Samuel Palmer.



Paul Drury

For Paul Drury and his contemporary at Goldsmiths College of Art, Graham Sutherland, it was the discovery of Palmer’s pastoral etchings that excited and inspired them. At the outbreak of war, Sutherland, who had acquired Kenneth Clark as a patron, became an Official War Artist, while Drury, who despite being declared physically unfit for action because of only having one eye, was keen to provide more practical help to the war effort and volunteered at Queen Mary’s Hospital in Roehampton.



Graham Sutherland



Churchill watching air raid trenches being dug in Hyde Park. 1938  
Pen & wash CAT. 02

*“You ought to be magnificent  
in casts of limbs”*

Graham Sutherland to Paul Drury, 1939

## MAKE DO & MEND

*“I am writing at the request of the War Artists Advisory Committee, who have seen some interesting drawings by Mr Paul Drury, who is employed at Queen Mary’s Hospital. The Committee thought highly of Mr Drury’s work. Mr Drury is an artist of very considerable standing. I am certain that such facilities you may be willing to grant will be productive of good work and valuable record”. \**

**T**hey also served who toiled behind the scenes in WWII, treating and mending, with expertise, compassion and endurance, the terrible damage wrought by the second mechanised war of the century.

At Queen Mary’s Hospital in Roehampton, near London - founded in 1915 to cope with the vast influx of amputees in WWI - many thousands of casualties would receive pioneering orthopaedic treatment during WWII and emerge to face the world, reconfigured with state-of-the-art prosthetics, fashioned by a team of highly skilled craftsmen led by pioneering surgeons.

FRONT COVER: Wounded soldier in bed, Oil on canvas CAT. 01

BACK COVER: Jack Wilde teaching a patient to walk, Pen and wash CAT. 03

\*Letter of recommendation to Queen Mary’s Hospital from the War Artists Advisory Committee



Self portrait (by lamplight) CAT. 04



Unrolling dressings CAT. 05

The limbless began arriving in huge numbers soon after the Dunkirk evacuation and one of those waiting to receive them in the 'Plaster Department' of the Artificial Limb Unit was one Paul Drury, a 36 year old artist and teacher, who had himself lost an eye in his youth and was thus deemed unfit for military service.

It was a curiously apt appointment. Paul was the son of Alfred Drury R.A (1856-1944) a famous sculptor, and in addition to his considerable skills as a draughtsman (he was on the Council of Royal Society of Painter Etchers and Engravers and would later rise to be its President) he had also become a practised modeller of plaster casts in his father's workshop. The pair had worked together on Alfred's fine sculpture of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which still stands in the courtyard of the Royal Academy today.

Paul Drury's son, Jolyon, who has written a fascinating account of his father's career, wrote of the appointment: "*Drury's knowledge of anatomy and clay and plaster modelling could be exploited in the specification, manufacture and fitting of artificial limbs*". Drury's friend, Graham Sutherland, who became a noted war artist himself, commented "You ought to be magnificent in casts of limbs".

Work in the Artificial Limb Department was demanding and highly pressurised – and it took its toll on the technicians required to work long hours dealing with a seemingly never-ending conveyor belt of human suffering. Drury, who had been and would continue to be a cheerful and gregarious artist and teacher for the rest of his life, suffered two nervous breakdowns during the course of the war.

Queen Mary's was nonetheless an inspiring and progressive place to be during the war. The motto of George Perkins, the hospital's chief orthopaedic surgeon - who was a veteran himself and who would later write the standard work on Orthopaedic Surgery - was: "*Get them up and limbs exercised as soon as possible*". Drury's plaster workshop



Plaster pylons drying, 1944 CAT. 06



Mr Rapkin, plaster craftsman CAT. 07



Mr Edwards, plaster craftsman CAT. 08



Patient from Diss CAT. 09



Corporal Warren CAT. 10

was the beating heart of this process and the very embodiment of the wartime axiom: ‘Make Do and Mend’.

The atmosphere of the ‘plaster room’, deep in the bowels of the hospital, where uncomfortable and difficult procedures were undertaken at a relentless pace, could easily have been unpleasant and forbidding but this was far from the case, thanks to the personality – and humanising, decorative touches – of the incumbents: Jack Wilde, the Chief Technician – a good natured bulldog of a man - and Drury, who decorated the rooms with his own artistic productions.

In a touching audio account, a teenage schoolgirl from Catford called Molly Linn, who had blast injuries to her legs and spent much of the war at Queen Mary’s, remembers:

*“In the plaster room, everyone was at ease...if two men arrived for arm induction at the same time, the heavenly twins [Wilde and Drury] kept them at ease. The second, plaster room, was cosier – minor jobs done – a little gas fire, a frying pan and two busts: of Marcus Aurelius and Winston Churchill [almost certainly made by Drury himself].”*

Although Drury elected not to apply to become an Official War Artist, Queen Mary’s provided ample material for an artist and the War Artists Advisory Committee (W.A.A.C) was understandably supportive of Drury’s written requests to be allowed to produce a visual record of the work of his department.

The Secretary of the W.A.A.C, Edward O’Rorke Dickey - himself an artist and wood engraver - wrote to the Medical Superintendent of the Hospital:



In the shelter CAT. 11

*"I am writing at the request of the War Artists Advisory Committee, who have seen some interesting drawings by Mr Paul Drury, who is employed at Queen Mary's Hospital. The Committee thought highly of Mr Drury's work. It is perhaps unnecessary for me to add that Mr Drury is an artist of very considerable standing. I am certain that such facilities you may be willing to grant will be productive of good work and valuable record".*



Patients asleep in the shelter CAT. 12



Patient with shrapnel injuries CAT. 13



Captain Grizewood's blood test CAT. 14

On a 'Horley Table', the patient lay with his back flat on the table with legs suspended from slings. That way, wet plaster bandage could be wrapped around a patient's legs without having to turn them over

Horley table CAT. 15



Before the war, Drury had been a leading figure, along with his close friend and fellow Goldsmith's graduate, Graham Sutherland O.M (1903-80) in the etching revival of the late 1920s and 30s, which attempted to reinvigorate the art of engraving, investing it with the pastoral spirit of their hero and muse, Samuel Palmer, whom the pair had enthusiastically revived.



After air raid - a 'deposition' from bombed building CAT. 17

Patient in arm abduction plaster splint CAT. 16



ARP Warden shows how to deal with incendiary bomb CAT. 18

The dangerous, modern world of wartime London could hardly have been further removed from such pastoral idylls, although one insightful reviewer of Drury's early work thought the young artist's best work would be found when confronting real life head on: "his art will find the fullest expression when in direct contact with nature... note the sympathetic reading of personality revealed in the pencil portraits."

Drury had seen what was coming. In 1938, he produced a prescient and touching drawing – from life - of Churchill, whom he and his wife had come across in Hyde Park late one afternoon, privately observing the digging of air defence trenches in Hyde Park.



Jack Wilde teaching a patient to walk CAT. 03



The shortest, fattest soldier in the army CAT. 19

The art produced by Drury during his time at Queen Mary's was as diligent and painstaking as his plaster casting. He filled three sketchbooks with meticulous records of every aspect of hospital life, working them up into what is - in WWII terms - an unparalleled collection of drawings, pastels, watercolours and even the occasional oil painting, in his studio at home in Richmond.



Foot study. Stigmata CAT. 20



Portrait, admin officer CAT. 21



Stretcher case after Dunkirk CAT. 22



Patient with leg injuries, crutches behind CAT. 23

Drury's portraiture, in particular, is outstandingly good, almost Holbeinesque in its intense transcription not only of physical reality but also personality. The far-away look in the eye of the shrapnel head injury victim (see Cat 13); the brave insouciance of the handsome amputee in his wheelchair (see Cat 26); the fatigue and worldweariness of his fellow technicians, all are captured with sensitivity and mastery.

The drawings of figures and groups of figures engaged in various procedures are quite superb: sculptural in their three dimensionality, describing with accuracy every last detail of the plaster room's working reality. Taken together, they are, without doubt, one of the most complete and satisfying set of documentary drawings produced during the Second World War, but they are also far more than mere record.

In one *tour de force* of a drawing in pen and wash, Drury brings an empty store room of artificial body parts to fantastical life in the manner of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* or perhaps even Stanley Spencer's *The Resurrection, Cookham* (see Cat 27). In another pen and ink description of the aftermath of a bombing raid, a victim is shown in the act of being lowered from an upper storey in the manner of a biblical Deposition (see Cat 17). In a rare pastel, a puncture wound in a foot, emphasised in brilliant scarlet, is transformed into a stigmata (see CAT 20).

Drury's wartime hospital drawings are an impressively complete record of the microcosm of his wartime life but they are also imbued with a quality of transcendence; like Barbara Hepworth's much better known post-war drawings commemorating the formation of the National Health Service, they transcend the everyday and capture the operation of something noble and life enhancing.

*Andrew Sim*



Injured patient repairing typewriter  
CAT. 24





Demonstration to medical visitors CAT. 25



Patient waiting in a wheelchair CAT. 26



Splints, casts and plaster beds coming to life CAT. 27



Study for the Stigmata CAT. 28

# TIMELINE

- 1903 Born Oct 14 in Brockley in south east London, the son of **Alfred Drury R.A (1856-1944)** a notable sculptor. He is given the unusual middle name of 'Dalou' to commemorate his father's sculpture master.
- 1913 Father Alfred elected to full membership of the Royal Academy, becoming R.A. Paul loses an eye in an accident.
- 1914-17 Attended Bristol Grammar School as a boarder.
- 1918 Enters Westminster School as a boarder.
- 1921 Enters Goldsmiths School of Art, where he became friends with **Graham Sutherland O.M (1903-80)**, **Milner Gray (1899-1997)**, **Willie Larkins (1900-74)**, **Edward Bouverie Hoyton (1901-88)** and **Alexander Walker (1895-1984)**. They became known as the Class of 21..
- 1924 Discovers the work of **Samuel Palmer R.W.S; Hon R.E (1805-81)**, particularly his pastoral etchings. Drury, **Sutherland Larkins** described as the 'New Pastoralists'. Drury wins the British Institution Scholarship for Etching.
- 1926 Elected an Associate of the R.E – the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers. Drury's and Sutherland's work selected for illustration in 'Fine Prints of the Year for 1926'.
- 1929 Drury's first solo exhibition of etchings, paintings and drawings at the XXI Gallery in London.

- 1930 Paul begins work part-time at Goldsmiths, assisting Stanley Anderson in the etching room. Elected to serve on the council of the R.E.
- 1932 Alfred Drury's bronze statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds erected in the courtyard at Burlington House, the home of the Royal Academy – following many years of invaluable assistance from his son Paul.
- 1934 Officially joins the staff of Goldsmiths.
- 1937 Marries the painter, **Enid Solomon (1910-96)**. Both join the Artists International Association (AIA) independently. The Society formed in 1933 to provide assistance & resettlement for refugees.
- 1938 Paul & Enid join the Red Cross and take first aid training, receiving competence certificates a year later.
- 1939 Paul posted to Queen Mary's Hospital in Roehampton as an assistant in the plaster workshop of the artificial limb unit, where he remained until the end of the war. Obtains permission from the War Artists Advisory Committee (WAAC) to make an artistic record of his work.
- 1940 Hospital receives a direct hit during the Blitz.

- 1941 Exhibits war drawings at the R.A.
- 1942 Suffers a nervous breakdown and goes to stay with relatives before returning to QMH.
- 1944 Alfred Drury dies at the age of 88. Paul suffers a second nervous breakdown through overwork.
- 1945 The War Artists Advisory Committee commissions Paul to record the work at the War Rehabilitation Centre in Slough.
- 1946 Takes over the etching department at Goldsmiths from **Stanley Anderson R.A; R.E (1884-1966)**.
- 1967 Selected as principal of Goldsmiths College of Art. Retires in 1969.
- 1970 Elected President of the RE. Retires 1975.
- 1987 Dies peacefully at the age of 84.

**Paul Drury's work can be found in the following collections:**

- British Museum
- Victoria & Albert Museum
- Royal Academy
- Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Library of Congress
- National Portrait Gallery
- Imperial War Museum
- National Army Museum
- Museum of Fine Art, Boston
- National Gallery of Canada
- British Council Collection.

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**Thanks to Jolyon Drury**

**Bibliography**  
**Jolyon Drury - Revelation to Revolution - the Revival & Evolution of Pastoral Printmaking by Paul Drury & the Goldsmiths School in the 20th Century** Invicta Press 2006

**Contact:**  
Andrew & Diane Sim  
Email: simfineart@btinternet.com  
Phone: 07919 356150

*fine* Sim *art*

