

THE THOMAS HENNELL COLLECTION



For full details please see the following pages



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.



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 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'.



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.



35 x 49cm

Wartime Fieldworkers Sacking Carrots (with tent), Ridley

Watercolour, signed

CAT. 17

A disparate group of men and women, some elderly, communally sacking carrots for the harvest of 1941, a tent on hand, possibly for foul weather. The portraits of the individuals involved are more detailed than usual, indicating that the people involved were known to Hennell and the sight of them engaged in such work was thus worthy of record.



48 x 63cm

Kentish landscape (possibly Darenth Valley nr Shoreham)

CAT. 18

Watercolour

The landscape around Shoreham in Kent (a few miles from his home in Ridley) was imbued with the spirit of one of Hennell's favourite painters, Samuel Palmer. Hennell and his painting companion, Vincent Lines, are known to have made pilgrimages to specific locations in the area to find a view painted by their hero. The steep-sided Darenth Valley is particularly striking and Hennell seems simply to have succumbed to its picturesqueness in this unusually large and stately work.



38 x 48cm

Farmer with Plough (jagged tree)
Watercolour

CAT. 19

"The blasted tree is lightning's finger post" Thomas Hennell *'Jacob's Dream'*

Although two farmworkers and their horse are ostensibly the subject of this watercolour, it is the jagged tree, rich, loamy soil and the palpable changeability and liveliness of the weather that are more memorable, the figures themselves almost melding into the landscape, an effect that Hennell clearly intended. It is the atmosphere of an afternoon, a moment that he is attempting to distil and capture in a painting.



48 x 58cm

Fieldworkers against a Lourcing Sky
Watercolour

CAT. 20

A mixed group of fieldworkers, including a young girl, possibly engaged in gleaning (the gathering of leftover crops) against a dramatically lourcing sky worthy of Constable. Hennell's friend E.Owen Jennings, noted 'a wonderful blending of line and colour and of sky with landscape' in Hennell's work, which he compared with Constable: "He watched the skies, and like Constable he obtained a unity, an overallness in sky and landscape which is rare in painting".



36 x 46cm

Hedging (Leicestershire Style)

Watercolour

CAT. 21

Hennell's interest in the regionality of rural life is summed up by the inscription on the back of this watercolour of men working in the field - 'Hedging - Leicestershire style'.



32 x 44cm

Ploughman and two Horses
Watercolour

CAT. 22

Exhibited: *'Countryman at Work' Exhibition 1999*

This elegant study of a ploughman and team of horses shows how deftly and sparsely Hennell could create a wonderfully realised picture using just a few calligraphic strokes of a pen and dabs of watercolour.



44 x 58cm

Sheep Dipping
Watercolour

CAT. 23

In the spring of 1940, Hennell travelled to Dorset to record subjects for the Recording Britain project, staying in Thomas Hardy country near Dorchester. He made several watercolours at one Stinsford Farm, belonging to a farmer called Wyndham Hull, recording the shearing and, in this case, dipping of sheep.



32 x 48cm

Field of Wheat on a Breezy Day, Ridley
Watercolour

CAT. 24

The delicately poised beauty of this deceptively simple watercolour of a field of wheat provides ample testimony to Hennell's sensitivity to the weather, which is invariably an important, if not the most important, element in his landscape watercolours. A breeze is getting up, the drama of the sky unfolding and the heads of the wheat begin to sway. A moment captured.



38 x 48cm

Calais Nord - post D-Day, 1944

Watercolour

CAT. 25

Exhibited: Fine Art Society 1984

Hennell's depiction of the 'ruined field of Calais Nord' was made in October 1944, immediately after the capture of the City by the Canadian army. The artist recalled that the desolate scene became 'half identified in my mind with a great, empty ploughed field near my father's house in Kent', adding that it was in this "half nostalgic, half severe mood, that scenes of battle seize one's mind most strongly". Hennell brought his Calais pictures back to England in a Royal Navy motor launch.



42 x 48cm

The Carrot Harvest

CAT. 26

Watercolour, signed, separately initialled & dated '1940'

Exhibited: *Fine Art Society 1984*

The Carrot Harvest dates from the autumn of 1940, when Hennell was engaged in recording Kentish subjects for the Pilgrim Trust's 'Recording Britain' project, with the Battle of Britain raging overhead.



60 x 42cm **Schoolgirl from Ridley** CAT. 27
Watercolour

Exhibited: *Fine Art Society 1984*

Hennell's considerable skills as a conventional portraitist in the difficult medium of watercolour is sometimes underrated, as evidenced by this charming portrait of a young girl, which dates from the late 1930s.



48 x 38cm

CAT. 28

Wymondham North Mill, Norfolk

Reed pen

Exhibited: *Fine Art Society 1984*

Hennell was a close friend of windmill expert and conservationist, Rex Wailes and had been planning to illustrate Wailes's definitive account of their history and design, until the war intervened. A cache of Hennell's extant drawings and watercolours was discovered posthumously and published in a book, written by Alan Stoyel, called '*The Windmills of Thomas Hennell*'. This is Wymondham Mill, an octagonal stock mill and the tallest in Norfolk. Remarkably, it had been dismantled from another location (Dilham) and relocated via the Great Eastern Railway in 1858. It was still in use when it was burnt down in 1950, a fire which started in the engine room.



32 x 48cm

Pre-war Rural Scene with Horse and Tractor

Watercolour

CAT. 29

A classic Ridley watercolour from the spring of 1938 shows new and old methods of ploughing, the horse and a small tractor, still co-existing in the pre-war world.



38 x 46cm

Gypsy Encampment

Reed pen

CAT. 30

Provenance: Rothenstein Estate

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

Hennell's sensitive and endearing depiction of a gypsy encampment in Herefordshire dates from his time working for the *Recording Britain* project in 1940. Hennell and his sketching companion, Vincent Lines, clearly won the trust of their subjects, judging by how relaxed they seem. The smiling boy in the hat (bottom right) was later drawn sleeping on the ground. Lines later recalled: 'It was a grand subject and what children. It seemed to me they spoke unconscious poetry'.



24 x 32cm

Gypsy boy asleep
Reed pen

CAT. 31

The boy in this picture can also be seen (bottom right) in Gypsy Encampment.



32 x 38cm

Return of the Herd, Crendon

CAT. 32

Watercolour, inscribed 'at Crendon' & initialled 'T.H'

Exhibited: 'Thomas Hennell, Countryman & War Artist' Sept 1990'

This watercolour finds Hennell in an unfamiliar part of the country - Buckinghamshire - a journey almost certainly prompted by the fact that his friend and collaborator, Henry (H.J) Massingham, lived at Long Crendon. Hennell stayed with Massingham in 1944 and this watercolour possibly dates from that time.



48 x 58cm

Goldbeating Workshop (George M. Whiley Ltd in Whitfield St, W1)

Watercolour

CAT. 33

A study for this work is illustrated in Jessica Kilburn's new biography (p.253). Hennell was commissioned by goldsmith, Cecil Whiley, to draw the craftsmen in his workshop. Kilburn writes: "the men hammered gold into thin leaves for gilding, using methods which had not changed since the days of the ancient Egyptians. 'They were grand fellows' recounted Hennell, but after a day in their company, I felt as though they had all been punching my head with solid, though well-padded, fists'.

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



42 x 52cm

Reedcutters at Salhouse, Norfolk Broads
Watercolour

CAT. 34

"drawing reed of wheat for thatching trade" Thomas Hennell, 'Barn-work'. Poems, publ Oxford University Press

The material used for thatching roofs in Britain varies according to geography. Water or Norfolk reed was traditionally gathered from the Norfolk broads by reedcutters, as in this lovely watercolour, which is not dated but is likely to have been produced between 1941 and '43 when Hennell worked on a series of articles for 'The Architectural Review', which were published posthumously as *'The Countryman at Work'*.



38 x 48cm

Winter Dawn, Ridley

CAT. 35

Watercolour, dated '1943' verso

Hennell returned from Iceland in November 1943 and this atmospheric wintry scene was probably completed the following month before he embarked on a journey to Grimsby and Hull to make watercolours of the fishing fleet.



34 x 41cm

Packaging Spring Cabbage, Wartime
Oil on canvas

CAT. 36

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

Provenance: *Ohly Family, William Ohly, Berkeley Galleries*

This oil painting, which must be considered one of Hennell's most accomplished works in that medium, was made in 1942, possibly to order, for a show at the Berkeley Galleries in London, one of the only art galleries to stay open throughout the war. It was run by William Ohly, who Hennell described as "a most sympathetic & approachable man".



30 x 38cm

Lady with Chauffeur
Graphite

CAT. 37

This early exercise in constructing and executing a group of figures is an extremely rare survival from Hennell's time at the Regent Street Polytechnic in the 1920s.



?? x ??cm

CAT. 38

Portrait of Julianna Smyth

Graphite, inscribed 'Julianna, 28 Dec 1937 Rathcoursey

Julianna Smyth was the unmarried sister of Captain John de Herez Smyth, the owner of Rathcoursey House in County Cork, where Hennell spent many happy holidays.



Exhibition

Bethlem Museum of the Mind & Sim Fine Art

present

Landscapes of the Mind - Bethlem Museum of the Mind. March 4 to May 31

Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Rd, Beckenham BR3 3BX

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