

A loan and selling exhibition of art in oil, watercolour, etching, wood engraving and ceramics
inspired by a love of the countryside and a rural lifestyle



JOHN LAWRENCE

Born in Hastings in 1933, John Lawrence was educated in Salesian schools, first in Burwash, Sussex then in Cowley, Oxfordshire, before attending Hastings School of Art (1951 - 1953). After National Service in West Africa he applied initially to Goldsmiths and got in but was then advised by a friend that the Central School of Art and Design was a better option for those wishing to go into commercial illustration. After studying there from 1955 to 1957, with a passing interest in journalism at the time, graphic design became his chief goal in life as he loved cartoons and visual story telling in general.

At the CSA one of his teacher/tutors was the neo romantic artist Keith Vaughan, and he also became interested in the work of the latter's peers, John Craxton and John Minton, subsequently researching the Palmer roots of all three and the 1920s pastoral output of Graham Sutherland. Book illustrators and designers of the day, Bawden, Ravilious and Ardizzone also appealed to his taste. Gertrude Hermes, nicknamed *Gert*, introduced him to wood engraving as a technique, and she also provided him with a lead into the world of the private press, a later source of considerable work (Folio etc).

A substantial early commission to illustrate a children's encyclopedia took him in the direction of books for children as a future career. Working initially for Hamish Hamilton from 1967, his big break was joining Julia MacRae Books where he stayed until her retirement in 1990. She introduced him to Walker Books where he produced a long range of picture books over the subsequent years. Another big break was being asked to help to produce an illustrated version of Richard Adams' classic title, *Watership Down*, initially published by Penguin/Kestrel and later Hutchinson's, with a countryside theme paramount.

The second half of his career was primarily dominated by wood engraving as a medium, with regular work provided by the Folio Society through to 2010. Drawing has always underpinned his subsequently engraved designs, with a sense of place, character and period always paramount, and narrative story telling achieved through successive images. For John, the essence of most art is all about movement - a figure about to move is so much more full of life, so fluidity is always present in his work as well as texture to draw the eye in.

He also likes to fit a set of smaller illustrations on to one design block for reproduction, which as well as providing a running aesthetic commentary, also facilitates reproduction both as wall art or subsequently subdivided into individual illustrations. The image alongside this artistic overview, taken from John Clare's *A Shepherd's Calendar*, is a classic example. We have a number of his rural illustrations of country life through the year available for purchase, as well as a selection of other works, including a few for books by Philip Pullman and publicity designs for Cranks wholefood restaurants.



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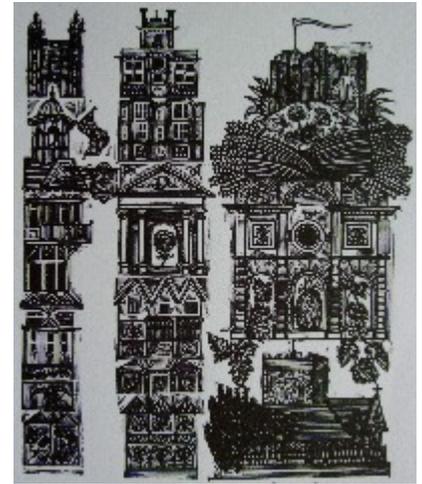
A SELECTION OF SIGNED WOOD ENGRAVED BOOK & OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN LAWRENCE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT THE LONG ROOM GALLERY



A



B



C



D



G



E



F

WOOD ENGRAVINGS TITLES

- A : Cranks - Totnes B : Cranks - Dartford C : Cranks - Guildford
 D : Northern Lights E : The Amber Spyglass F : The Subtle Knife
 G : Birds and Beasts [D, E & F above are illustrations for Pullman books]

Prices and sizes available on application



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FROM A SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR BY JOHN CLARE PRINTED BY THE WHITTINGTON PRESS
AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT THE LONG ROOM GALLERY



APRIL



JULY



MAY



AUGUST



JUNE



SEPTEMBER