V. "I believe it is possible that this war really decides" 1941

[f. 48r ctd] Jan 3rd 1941 I believe it is possible that this war really decides whether it is to be man as a predatory animal or man as civilized. It is possible that it is similar to such a conflict as that between Cro-magnon man (homo sapiens) and Neanderthal man, another ape-branch from whom true man is not descended. It is possible that such rivalry[a] in evolution is an aspect of all giant wars, or at any rate that the German racial theories are the inheritance of an early evolutionary warfare. The spread of civilization, even in the earliest times, put an end to differentiation of species.[1] Study of evolution[b] gives a feeling of kinship with animals and even with plants, yes, and even with minerals. On the other hand, when considering these vast, blind and inevitable[c] forces, anything unnatural or civilized, however banal,[d] seems suddenly precious. Even the gathering at the sea-side boarding-house. It is a paradox that the artist, the hot-house flower of civilization, should so often be made to feel dead by the common exoticisms of civilized life, ie middle-class conventions. His sense of omnipotence compels him to bite the hand that feeds.[e] But, of course, his 'life-in-the raw' urge carries him only a minute part of the way back to Nature. He is, though, more aware of his ancestry, the truth within.

a *that such rivalry*: that <an aspect> {such} rivalry

b *evolution*: evolutions<s>

c *and inevitable*: and <[illegible]> inevitable

d *however banal*: <seems> however banal

e *that feeds*: that <feeds> feeds



Figure 48 Paul Tucker, *Interior of a Fisherman's Lodge, St Ives Harbour*. 2011

"On Home Guard night-watches" (1951)

On Home Guard night-watches I would leave my car, the means of agricultural transport, up a steep incline at the back of the cinema[2] where there was a car park used in the later years by the Americans. An adjoining engine that gave power to the cinema would be revolving with the busy, almost joyous reverberations of such apparatus at a fair. Above the hissing pumping and the throb, one heard from inside the pink, luxurious house, an immense voice, a galloping, a shriek of grinding brakes. Smell of this engine was not unpleasant and, by force of long association, seemed scented most strongly with that particular cellulose garnish upon violence that is, or used to be, inseparable from cinemas, a smell not distant from the one of the average hard-centred chocolate and of its nest of fibrous paper in the box. Here stood amid harsh accents and overstrong reverberations the house of day-dreams, offering more freedom, more light, particularly if you had come from the hills in the Land's End country, the probable venue for the Americans' recent 'exercise'. Their military expeditions and our own conduced to an image of St Ives as a nestling outpost upon the wilds; a more ancient, more comfortable, more wooded, but equally western small town in a Western film. And, as with earth-stubbed fingers, muffled, bristling with unwieldy weapons, I dismounted from my car behind the cinema, I could have imagined myself a member, however inefficient, of the Sheriff's posse. The wildness of the coast lay in wait outside. But, since at other times I was tethered to the earth, an element of being abroad invaded the context of those evenings; out of England, beyond enclosure. A quality of agelessness invested the Cornishmen with whom I should pass the night, as if they gathered moors within an ill-lit room. Several had served in ships and these talked of adventure in foreign parts measured against St Ives. I began to know the map of a St Ives day, enlarged by the presence in the Home Guard of so many bakers who used to leave us at four or five o'clock to make the bread.

In the wind and the companion cold of the harbour where we kept watch for many winter months, the parish church, the walled precincts beside the mole looked massive, Norman, a reminder of spaciousness to the guard-room shanty and wastes of sea. Our house, invisible in the distance round two inlets, hung in the trees, miraculously of stone. I would be back soon after seven. As I dropped to sleep there, the noise of the ocean, distant from my bed, would recede further and further like a shark that has been baulked and falls astern. Yet, after these nights, coffee with milk at breakfast was a necessary clothing against an ungovernable cold, to banish the thin spray, the pieces of equipment, the heaviness and bareness of the night and the ill-ventilation. Godrevy Rock with its spent lighthouse[3] had been finally cold and lonely in the dawn, glimpsed at the end of the bay between the trees while I was walking from the gate to the house.

On harbour guard in dark nights I felt the treelessness. Fishermen would come up with torches, up steps on to the tall pier, like passengers obtaining the street from the last underground train. The earth connoted in this darkness the ingrained dirt of crack-skinned fingers or unthawed fingers picking brussel-sprouts and washing gritty leeks with January water. A night wind blew at the deserted cinema corner, making the township very small. We were joined on to the war by tales and hearsay as we searched superciliously for flashes or strange lights, staring for hours into the night face of the sea. There were only the reprehensible black-outs of some houses: no one of us in over four years discovered an object of true suspicion. We had rounds with us on watch and a bigger arsenal at home. Not a shot was fired officially except at the ranges, amid the dunes, in a landscape

whose savagery it would be hard to equal. At notified intervals we were pitched against some of the elements for a short time, disciplined to see well-known roofs at unaccustomed hours of the night. To glance at them unchanged, though watched no longer, on the following day of utter fatigue, brought clearly to mind the brutal endlessness of the ways of wasting time.

In effect, we were in charge of the landscape. We sometimes used the 'lodges' of the fishermen **[figs 48, 54]**,[4] promoted above them as contemplators of the sea domain. Clamped for the night in the upper room of the drill-hall overlooking the narrow ancient street,[5] I felt myself to be a more official observer of the dwindling evening life of the town than were the old women at *their* windows, who were occupying a station perhaps inherited through several hundred years. Of such kind was my astounding promotion from rootlessness in the face of an enemy threat, whereas the others had been observing for generations, at windows, on the wharves, at street corners, staring at, perhaps resenting, the stranger, imitating a defensive watch and a pricking of ears; exaggerating perils and local lore, romancing in tobacco smoke, perhaps talking too much, perhaps getting excited about nothing. Indeed, the very old, retired, fishermen kept it up as we sat of an evening in their sacred 'lodges'. They were unwilling to look down on us or to resent our presence but they naturally tried to forget it. Gradually, very gradually, they would go to bed leaving the rest of the dark hours and the custody of St Ives to us. They had rarely spoken of a time later than thirty years before. It was, of course, absurd that they should surrender observation of the ocean or of the town to me, but I would look to the windows, to the black-out. Indeed, I had more duty to observe any occurrence than had the majority of respected citizens who could have been searching through the years for dereliction or oddity. The place I took, however, was more the one of an old woman at a window who had stared all her life at the house opposite: this was my choice of the privileges at hand. And so, emulating the cats in their possessive tasks, I would relish in the fading light the stone-faced dormer window opposite the drill-hall, searching each piece of flaking stone and mortar, as interweaved as the St Ives generations.

Background V

The present paragraph, probably drafted in its entirety on 3 January 1941,[6] comprises the only text added to *OIL* between that date and 7 December 1942.[7] The reasons for this second hiatus, longer than the first, are here considered with regard only to the first of the two years in question.

1941 saw, not just the intensification of the Blitz, with further, repeated bombing of London and of major seaports and industrial centres throughout Britain, but also the spiralling of the international conflict into dimensions truly warranting the epithet 'giant', already by implication applied to it here by AS.[8] While fighting in North and East Africa continued, the Axis powers' invasion of the Soviet Union in June led to the opening of a new theatre of war in central and eastern Europe, the Baltic states and the Balkans. And by the end of the year, after Japan's attack on the US naval base of Pearl Harbour on Oahu, Hawaii, and its invasion of US- and British-held territories in the region, fighting seemed set to spread across the Pacific, prompting America to enter the war on 8 December.

AS' brief paragraph not only foreshadows the multiplying of fronts and proliferating declarations of war, but also seems to mark a shift in attitude towards the conflict on his part. The inward struggle to maintain equanimity in the face of "the world-picture of destruction, suffering and brutality" which the war endorsed and of the recognition that "Hitler, too, and all the crises are within us",[9] here mutates into a more objective and historical, even epochal form of awareness, in which that struggle is recast as the collective drive to "civilization". This new perspective seems to entail a broader sense of social and cultural, even ethical alliance. Moreover, a letter to ESW written after Easter of that year suggests that AS had the perception that that sense was not personal merely, but widely shared, and that it was not, strictly speaking, political. In commenting on the articles on music that ESW was currently publishing in the *New Statesman*, AS wrote,

> In reading them with great care I have been enormously impressed – almost the only good things in the paper since the war. A great deal of thought that I have been able to take with me into the garden. Any news of the novel? Impossible I suppose at the present time? A great pity as I feel you to be in excellent vein in spite of everything. At any rate you can go on making use of your accumulated <erd> erudition and your long thinking. Why not then write a didactic book? A fine aesthete's book must now be felt at its true value more than <any> {at any} other time. All that nonsense about ivory towers must now have collapsed. At all times one has struggled out of politics to create and contemplate. For the moment no one would dare to deny this.[10]

1941 brought the first war fatality among AS's friends. In December 1940, RB had been commissioned to travel to Meshed in Iran to monitor Russian activity in the region. On 24



Figure 49 Sven Berlin, *Self-Portrait. Ahsburton*. 1941.
Ink and wash on paper

February 1941, before it reached the West African port of Takoradi, his ship was torpedoed by a German U-boat. His death would not officially be announced, in the *Times*, until September.[11]

This year was a critical one for AS in other ways also. Conscription now caught up with and even overtook his age-group. A few days after he dated the present entry, male subjects born in 1904 and those who had reached the age of twenty between 28 July and 9 November 1940 were obliged to register for military service.[12] On 29 January 1941 the King signed a Proclamation extending the application of the relevant Act of 1939 to six new age-groups: "young men of 18 and 19 years and older men of 37, 38, 39, and 40".[13] It was reported in the *Times* that men would "not be required to register after reaching the age of 41".[14] This, however, would soon prove not to be the case. Already modified in 1940, the National Service Act would again undergo amendment in April and in December 1941. First the possibility of calling men up for service in the civil defence rather than in the armed forces was introduced; then the range of subjects to whom the Act applied was extended from men aged between eighteen and forty inclusive to male and female subjects aged between eighteen and fifty. Thus, on 17 May 1941 AS was one of nearly 300,600 men born in 1902 who were required to register[15] – an event that for his more recently acquired friends solved the "legendary puzzle" of his age.[16]

On 29 September 1939 AS had stated his occupation to be that of "Professional author & painter".[17] Now, in registering at the local offices of the Ministry of Labour, he presumably declared himself a market gardener, so as to be covered by the Schedule of Reserved Occupations. He probably exhibited a certificate to that effect obtained from the Cornwall War Agricultural Executive Committee in Truro.[18] Market garden workers were currently reserved at the age of twenty-one. This would be raised to twenty-five in the revised Schedule issued in December and was due to be increased by one year each month of the following year, possibly up to an absolute limit of thirty, provided a gardener of that age were employed "whole time on food production and, in general, that the area devoted to food production in the garden in which they [were] so employed, [were] not less than three acres".[19]

Evidently, AS had long anticipated the necessity of establishing himself formally as a market gardener and had worked hard to achieve this, taking over, as seen earlier, an additional acre the previous autumn, possibly with a view to meeting the above specification of three acres. To ESW, some time after Easter 1941, he wrote that "[e]ver since the early days of the war, with the help of a boy [WS]" he had worked "some two acres of [his] own land, becoming a real market gardener and providing two evacuated schools and a hotel with vegetables".[20] His life, he recognized, in another letter to ESW, written towards the end of April, was "lucky", if "extremely harassing":

> I have never undertaken anything which made me as nervous and anxious as working land […] This is a large area of intensive cultivation, even for those born to it. I have no spare time, no days off, and go to bed at 9 o'clock. But things are easing up a bit now. What I produce so far satisfies the inspectors, and indeed earns their praise. If I am able ever to do my own work again I shall not resent this experience.[21]

He had earlier written in a similar vein, on two separate occasions, to GB:

> I have had to work even harder this winter than I did last summer. I supply a school up here with all their vegetables and sell to others as well. The seed question is worrying. After breaking oneself clearing up and ploughing up a field, you can't be certain of the seed potatoes. I did get one ton but they were rotten and I sent them back. I was told by everyone I wouldn't get any others, but so far I have managed to get ½ ton good seed. Farming is supposed to be bucolic but I find it a very temperamental occupation.[22]

> I toil away at vegetables and rarely go out of these grounds except for Home Guard, sometimes working through Sundays and into moonlight […][23]

If, after Easter, things in the garden were "easing up a bit", it was probably because around this time he obtained the part-time assistance of a conscientious objector, SB[24] – though this may well have increased the risk of "inspector hauntings".[25]



SB had been born in Sydenham to a paper agent merchant of Swedish and Jewish origin, Karl (Kalle) Gustav Herman Berlin (1885-1972), and his wife Mary Louise Hughes (1882-1955), who, frustrated in her own desire to become a sculptor, encouraged artistic ambition in her son. He had come to Cornwall in 1938, together with his wife Phyllis Groom (1902-1959), known as "Helga", the stage name she had adopted as SB's Adagio dancing partner from 1934 until their marriage in 1937. Forced to leave their first home there, a primitive farmer's cottage facing the North Cliffs, where SB worked in the fields in exchange for a minimal rent, they had moved to Treswithian, near Camborne. Here he had been able to attend evening classes at the Camborne and Redruth School of Art and, in May 1939, had held his first one-man exhibition in the Community Centre.[26]

SB had been obliged to register on 15 June 1940, but had clamed exemption on moral grounds, coming before the South Western Tribunal in Bristol in November. In then asserting the unquestionable authority of his conscience, he had invoked the inability of Socrates and Joan of Arc "to communicate to their judges the validity of their visions" – an argument the regional press were quick to point out had 'boomeranged', in so far as the judge had reminded him that Joan of Arc had nonetheless felt the need to defend her country.[27] His application was however accepted and, though ordered to work on the land, he had somehow found work as a boilerman in a Milk Marketing Board factory. He had lost this job after the boiler had nearly blown up – on the night, as it happened, of the birth of his son Paul – as a result, he would later claim, of sabotage and hostility towards his pacificism. Deprived of his poor relief subsidy from the parish and in

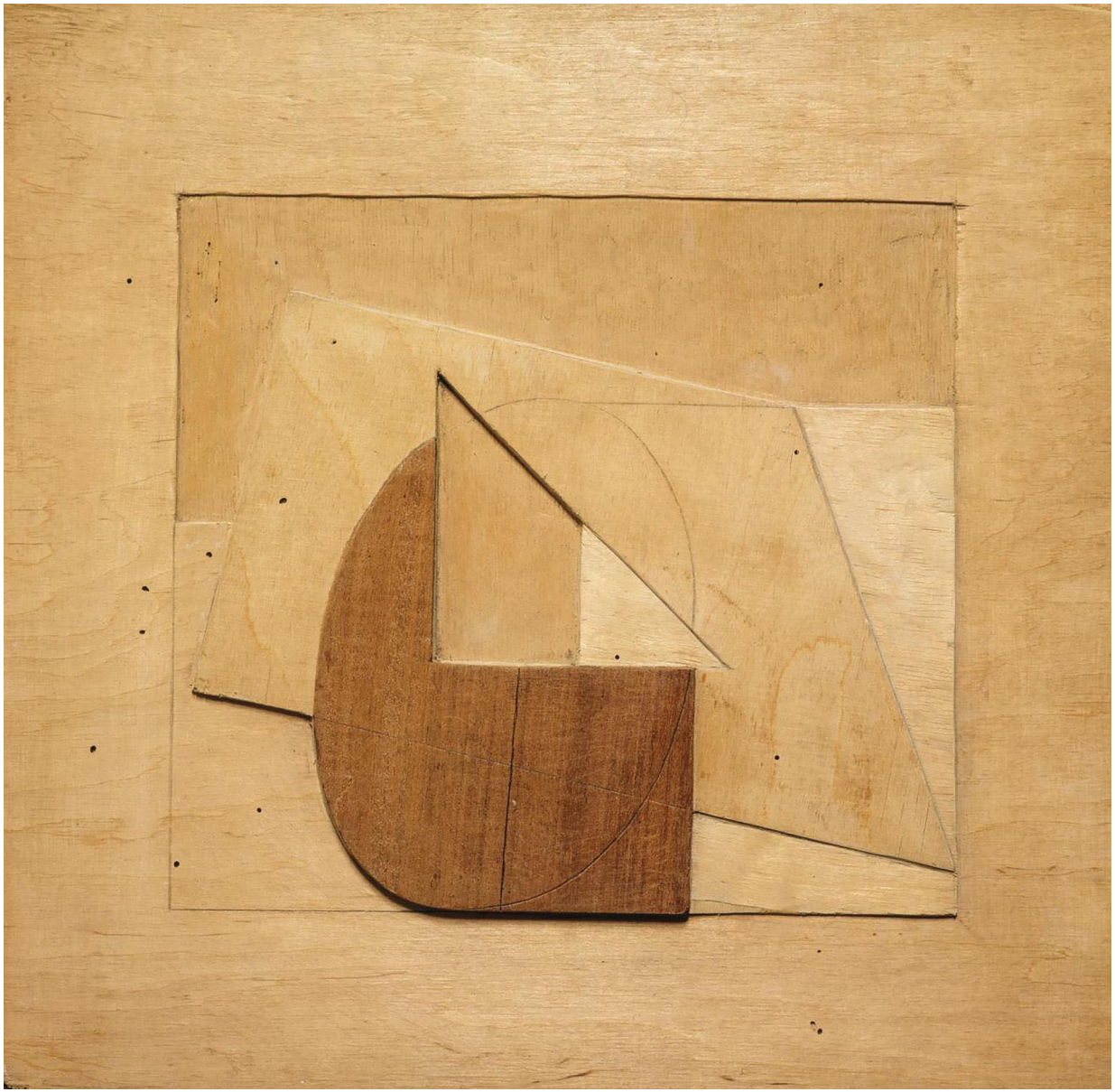


Figure 50 Margaret Mellis, *Relief Construction in Wood*. 1941

order to avoid imprisonment he had joined a pacifist community at Ashburton in Devon **[fig. 49]**, from where he had worked first as a coal-heaver and then as a gardener at a girls' school.[28]

Towards the end of April 1941, Plymouth had suffered a week of intense bombing. From Carbis Bay the conflagration had been visible as (in AS' words) "a pale glow in the night sky as if the moon was rising"[29] and (in Gabo's) "hellish fireworks".[30] In Devon, SB would later recall, the sky was "lit up by flames from the city"; and this vision of the "Dark Angel" of destruction seems to have precipitated his return to Cornwall.[31] He had there been interviewed for a job at Rocklands School by the headmaster, Wyatt Trevelyan Rawson (1894-1980),[32] a prominent member of the New Education Fellowship both before and after the war[33] and later described by SB as "a tall, bony, middle-aged, charming, etiolated man".[34] At LPO, for unknown reasons, he was referred to as "Rawlplug".[35] The post to which SB was now appointed, in preference, he later stated, to Wilhemina Barns-Graham,[36] entailed tending the school's kitchen garden and teaching art, as well, it seems, as dance.[37] And, as he further now learned, he "was to be shared […] as gardener" with AS.[38]

SB had probably started work at LPO, or had at least met AS, by 10 May.[39] Here, in what, just over three years later, after revoking his objection and enlisting, he would refer to as "the passive days" when he would "churn [AS'] garden with the passion of a mad Adam cursed by the hand of God",[40] he was "content to […] take a plant's eye view of passing genius", as neighbours and guests came and went "down the long drive to the house".[41] He would later consider this opportunity a sign that "certain people are contracted by destiny to be at a special time available for help or direction or guidance of some kind",[42] and as "at once a source of revelation". His "physical prowess" had earned him entry to "a closed community, an 'inner circle' […] of advanced artists".[43] His privileged encounter with the abstract art of BN, BH and, especially, Gabo – whom he later singled out as "the real genius in this group and the most inspiring"[44] – significantly affected his own work.[45] It had a similar impact on that of MM, whose collages (such as Relief Construction in Wood **[fig. 50]**) had by now "started to look like constructivist works", interesting Gabo himself,[46] and, before he had joined the RAF in March 1940, on that of Peter Lanyon.[47] Moreover, by giving him access to the homes and collections of AS, BN and BH, coming to work at LPO greatly stimulated SB's interest in the painting of AW[48] – an interest that would quickly become his "private obsession"[49] and lead to his publishing in 1943 an article in *Horizon*, alongside one by BN[50] – the first to be devoted entirely to AW – and, six years later, the first monograph on the painter (for which he would choose for frontispiece AS' *Voyage to Labrador* **[fig. 18]**.[51]

In his own estimate SB "fitted in well". It "did not disturb" AS the balletomane, he later averred,

> to find a young man with a dancer's physique digging in his garden. He was excited that I had met Massine and keenly interested in my long experience as an adagio dancer. When I was digging he used to say, "You look marvellous, Sven, just like Samson when you dig." It became for me a kind of dance.[52]

And yet, whatever truth there might be in these mythographic reminiscences, it would seem that SB's admission to the LPO circle, idealized by him as "this tiny cell of culture and creation Adrian had kept alive during the war",[53] acted to exacerbate tensions already present and help bring about a rupture between AS and BN.[54] Certainly, his book, by reason of its controversial emphasis on AW's poverty and the circumstances in which his life ended, instigated decades of contention, still persisting.[55]

After he had been at LPO a couple of months SB decided to seek AW out at his cottage in St Ives. He would later record how, on mentioning this to AS, he had learned that AW had been admitted to the former workhouse at Madron, near Penzance, now the Public Assistance Institution.[56] This must have been after 20 June.[57] Accounts differ as to how AS and MM had come to know of AW's removal. One would be given much later by MM:

> one day when Adrian Ben and I were going for a walk Ben said oh I went to see Wallis the other day and he said the next time you come I won't be here. And Ben had said oh really and didn't believe it and hadn't done anything and he'd gone again in a fortnight and Wallis wasn't there and all the paintings were there and they were going to burn them and Adrian and I were rather annoyed with Ben for being so for not having thought of something a bit sooner instead of waiting till the last minute like that.[58]

Another account would be given by SB in his monograph on AW:

> Stokes called to see Wallis a week before these inner forces, interacting with the external economic and objective pattern, had clinched and produced this crisis. Wallis had told them that he was too old and too ill to look after himself any more and was going voluntarily into the workhouse – that he would not paint any more. He evidently meant this about painting, because he didn't take any materials with him, though he sent for them later.[59]

SB indeed there further recounted how, following his admission to the infirmary at Madron and after being in bed for about a month,

> Wallis had asked for painting materials. Margaret Mellis, Adrian Stokes and Ben Nicholson succeeded in getting them from the cottage at the considerable cost of carrying away an enormous number of fleas, which were the centre of a ludicrous comedy at Little Park Owles.[60]

CITY MAN WAS IN THICK OF BARCELONA RAIDS

After six months in Spain, during which he was in the thick of the bombing in Barcelona, a Sheffield man, Mr. Peter Freeman, of Clarendon road, Broomhill, has returned home.

"I saw many of the casualties close at hand," Mr. Freeman told the "Daily Independent" last night, "and the mutilations were terrible. Human bodies were cut in half, and arms and legs strewn about the area of the raid."

Mr. Freeman stressed the fact that anti-aircraft guns were virtually useless against the bombers, which flew over Barcelona well out of range.

Mr. Freeman, who is the son of Mr. Arnold Freeman, Warden of the Sheffield Educational Settlement, has been in Spain six months, having undertaken the special work of reconditioning villas at Puigcerda, where there is a refugee colony.



Mr. Peter Freeman

For five weeks before coming home, however, he was in Barcelona, during the time when the air raid terror there was at its peak.

NEW TYPE BOMB

"The casualty figures were very much higher than published in the Government newspapers," Mr. Freeman said. "About 2,600 were killed and a square mile in the centre of the city was devastated.

"In the later raids they dropped a new type of bomb—a concussion bomb—which does not produce much shrapnel or make a deep hole in the ground, but it is a very high explosive type, and when it drops, buildings round about just crumble away."

Mr. Freeman said that sometimes the raids occurred about once in three hours, between three and six aeroplanes being used. They did not seem to aim at any military objective, but their purpose was to demoralise the civil population.

PRECAUTIONS IMPOSSIBLE

Air raid precaution measures were almost impossible. Generally bombs had been dropped before the warning sirens sounded, and eventually the population had to retire to the hills.

Mr. Freeman had one particularly narrow escape when a bomb dropped a block or two away from his house.

Figure 51
Newspaper cutting with article on Peter Freeman. *Sheffield Independent*, 7 April 1938

MM would tell this story many times, focusing especially on the paintings left in the cottage. The most succinct version of her account is the following:

> Ben, Adrian and I went to rescue the paintings. We found them piled up on a long table which stretched the length of the room. We became completely engrossed in turning them over and looking at them. I felt something biting my leg and so the other two said: "Nonsense, you are imagining it." But later when I looked down at my trousers they had changed colour from navy to rust, a swarm of fleas was moving slowly up each leg. When the others got bitten we bundled the paintings into a rug and took them back to the house and put them in the garage. Ben went off and walked into the sea fully dressed, white cap and all. He had no trouble after that, but we had fleas for six months.[61]

As will be seen, however, all MM's versions, and SB's account as well, are problematic.[62]

SB seems not to have worked for AS for more than a few months. He would later link their having to stop working at Rocklands and at LPO with Helga's having once more become pregnant:

> Although the school was one of advanced Free Education based on the writings of A.S. Neill and Rudolf Steiner, devoted to the spirit and mind of the younger generation, there was no place for the yet unborn and we were told to go. Once more we trailed our few belongings out on to the Zennor Moors with horse and cart to a cottage lent to us by Robin Nance […][63]

Their daughter Janet ("Greta") was born on 4 July 1942, so this cannot have been before the autumn of 1941; certainly after 10 August, when AS wrote in a letter to AM that "Bluebeard", apparently his nickname for SB, was still coming to LPO.[64] And this was indeed still a busy time in the market garden. At the start of that month WS had been on holiday, perhaps recovering from an illness,[65] and (rain permitting) there were "a great many things to sow and all the currants to pick as well as potatoes to get up and hedges to clip".[66] Perhaps SB stopped working there at the beginning of September, when AS was able to take five days' "holiday", mainly to help his parents "abandon a flat" in London.[67] There is no further mention of SB in AS' correspondence until February 1942, when he wrote to GB that a new C.O. – "not the one with a beard but a very nice ex-volunteer to Spain whom one could not fail to respect in every way" – had arrived.[68]

✢

PF would later recall having met AS "almost by chance […] in the early summer of 1941".[69] The "almost" is justified by the fact that he was very probably then visiting his grandmother, Edith



Figure 52
Unidentified photographer,
Margaret Mellis with Telfer Stokes at Little Park Owles.
1940-41

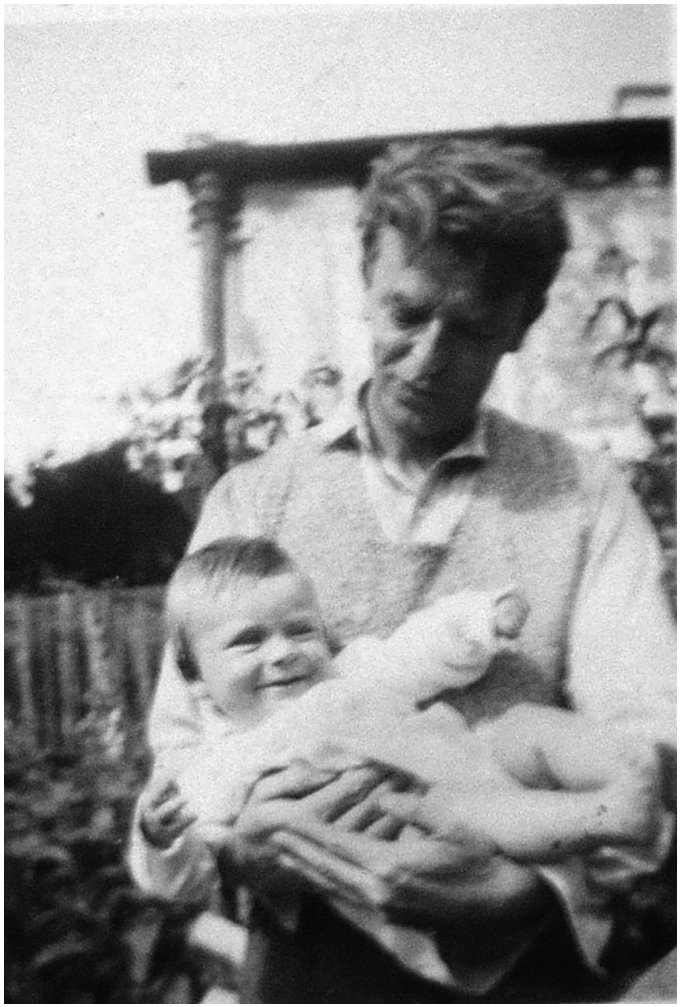


Figure 53
Unidentified photographer,
Adrian Stokes with Telfer Stokes at Little Park Owles.
1940-41

Marion Freeman (1853-1953) and aunt Ellen Dorothy ("Dolly") (1894-1986), possibly evacuated from London and now living in a house called Carn Dhu on the main St Ives-Lelant road, very close to the field which AS had taken over in the autumn of 1940.[70] They had perhaps already been joined by PF's mother, Edith Nora White (1882-1975), who was certainly in St Ives by February of the following year.[71] Learning that PF was "working on the land",[72] AS had suggested he join him in his "commercial enterprise". Doubtful, however, of his own, let alone an artist's ability "to run an enterprise of that sort", PF had let the matter drop.[73] By the late autumn, when SB had left and it would have been clear that WS must soon be called up (he had registered on 6 September), AS was faced with the prospect of managing the market garden on his own. So on 29 November he sent PF "a reply paid telegram […] repeating his original proposal".[74] PF would recollect having been "so taken aback" by the "business-like acumen" shown in this use of a reply paid telegram, that he "immediately wired [his] acceptance" of AS' offer.[75]

AS' assertion to GB that PF was a conscientious objector who commanded total respect seems to have been intended contrastively, though it is not clear whether the contrast intended was between PF and his immediate predecessor, SB (whom GB would have met when visiting LPO in the summer of 1941),[76] and their respective reasons for conscientious objection, or between the respect PF commanded and the disrespect widely enjoyed by objectors. A month or so after the start of the war GB had written to AS, "I feel one should really be a conscientious objector but I am so <determined> certain that Hitler is a bad thing that I feel I <[illegible]> may not refuse to join people who aren't so certain, in trying to put him down".[77] Might he have become less convinced that conscientious objection was morally the right choice? In any case, AS' repeated commendation to him of PF's political stance[78] shows the wish to signal his own approval. PF's subsequent assessment of AS' political orientation at this time was that he was "liberal, progressive, perhaps even anarchist":

> And I was also very far to the left, I'd been out in Spain, and this naturally interested Adrian and I used to spend a long time trying to analyse the situation as I had seen it in Spain, with regard to anarchism […] his ideas of anarchism were again that of an artist, mine were the ideas […] more of a professional, as I had seen anarchism being practised in Catalonia. I don't think he'd ever thought it out in a real political sense. He'd thought it out as everybody […] being or having ultimate responsibility for his actions[. He] didn't wish for any central direction, any governmental direction. He thought this was the ultimate ideal […] in a rather vague way[.][79]

PF was born in Sheffield, the eldest child of the socialist and anthroposophical educator and writer Arnold James Freeman (1886-1972) (AJF), described in 1940 by the Irish playwright and socialist George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) – one of his role models – as an "exceptional character" who had "spent his life in an attempt to achieve the spiritual regeneration and



Figure 54 Paul Tucker, *The Fishermen's Lodges on the Harbour Front, St Ives*. 2011



Figure 55 Unidentified photographer, *Graham Bell, Anne Olivier Popham and William Coldstream*. July 1941

aesthetic cultivation of the inhabitants [of Sheffield], mostly at his own expense".[80] PF's mother, Edith Nora, had graduated in the Art, Theory and History of Teaching from Bedford College, London, in 1904. Subsequently, she had taught at the North London Collegiate School.[81] Both originally from East London, the couple had married in 1914 and had moved to Sheffield, where AJF had been teaching for the Workers' Educational Association and had been offered work with the University Extension Movement.[82] In WWI he was granted exemption from military service on the condition he continue to lecture at, and undertake other work for the University.[83] In 1918 AJF founded and became the first Warden of the Sheffield Education Settlement.[84]

PF had graduated at Sheffield with a 1st Class Hons BEng in Electrical Engineering in 1937. For six months between 1937 and 1938 he had been in Spain, undertaking "the special work of reconditioning villas" in the refugee colony at Puigcerdà, Catalonia; and he had been in Barcelona during the bombing of the city **[fig. 51]**.[85] On returning to England in 1938 he had become a member of the Sheffield Coordinating Committee for Refugees, working with Czech, Spanish and Sudeten German exiles and also helping to set up camps for Spanish refugees in France.[86]

Like other men of twenty-four PF would have registered on 9 March 1940; and he appeared before the Yorkshire Tribunal for conscientious objectors at Leeds the following 3 May. "'If a wish to improve the social system is political, then I am afraid my conscientious objection is political,'" he told the Tribunal. His application was supported by AJF, who "said his son took a degree with very high technical honours, and out of hundreds of candidates he got a very good job at the B.B.C., which he gave up to do refugee work for a bare maintenance".[87] AJF endorsed this statement by pressing his own beliefs and actions: "He [AJF] had given his whole life to the service of humanity. Four Jewish children were maintained in witness's home, and his wife had rescued 40 children from Germany". In conclusion, PF was registered as a conscientious objector on the condition he carry out forestry work.[88] On 21 May 1941 (around the time he first met AS) he joined the Farm Training Scheme at Laurels Farm, Holton cum Beckering, in Lincolnshire.[89] He remained there until 18 August, when he left to work with the Wiltshire War Agricultural Committee.[90]

✢

In the first part of 1941, and no doubt throughout the year, AS' Home Guard duties involved night-watches at the harbour in St Ives: "We have to pass the boats by signal into the harbour and fire at them if they don't signal", he told GB in January.[91] Conditions in the guard room, on occasion one of the fishermen's "lodges" (shelters and meeting places) on the harbour front, of which three still survive **[fig. 54]**, often prevented constructive use of the time between watches; and in a later letter to GB AS bemoaned "the weekly night of boredom on the pier".[92] Yet an extended passage in *S&R* is evocative of inner oscillation between a sense of "rootlessness" and of honorary 'guardianship' of the landscape – by virtue of his agriculturally developed "strong tie with the Cornish soil"[93] – which belies the "brutal" lesson in "wasting time" thus imposed.[94]

Meantime, the household at LPO had once more augmented, not just from the arrival of AM and the birth of TrS **[figs 52-53]**, but from the appointment of a cook, a Mrs Horn (*alias* "the hornet"), who lived in the house with her evacuee daughter, Helena.[95]

As MM had promised her parents, a piano had been acquired for AM and had been placed in the granite passage.[96] Yet "there was nobody to teach" her and this course of study seemed unpromising. AS had then suggested she might learn to dance and had consulted Phyllis Bedells, whom he knew, and it was arranged that AM should attend her morning classes at the Palais de Danse, along with Mrs Horn's daughter (who would embarrass her by addressing her as "Miss Ann"). Every morning, before leaving for St Ives, she would take AS and MM morning tea, prepare TrS's bottles and see to his nappies. After the three-hour lesson she walked back to LPO and, before she could have her lunch, would have to get TrS to sleep. She was also expected to plan meals with or for the cook, which she would later remember had made her anxious. Towards July she took and (split tights notwithstanding) passed the first Royal Academy of Dance examination, in Exeter, after which she went back to Scotland for a month.[97]

On 10 August AS wrote her a letter full of news (and incidentally showing that they were now keeping bees and that the conscription of women was underway):

> Telfer is more lively than ever, correcting the news with his social cough demanding attention. The Spenders were [illegible] tomorrow for a time and the piano is still here. Bill Coldstream came for some nights and is coming again. He is absolutely wretched and lonely in Hackney […] You are missing a lot of fruit here. The mushroom bed is beginning, the potato digging has long been finished and the ground planted out. While the onions look as if they might eat one instead of the other way round. What lovely honey (and milk) you must have been having. We hope to raise some honey, perhaps today […] Milk has been plentiful because Peggy [MM] now drinks very little […] Molly has just gone and Seraphina still screams a lot. Ben [BN] and Barbara [BH] are still Ben and Barbara. Olive goes for her medical tomorrow. The weather has been like last summer since the day before you went, until it rained a bit this week. Gabo is now very haughty with the news, and leaves as soon as the Russian part is finished. The gramophone gets played very little […] I am about to have a row with Rawlplug about buying lettuces elsewhere when I have 300 going to seed. We have tens of thousands of early carrots. In early potatoes we lifted close on two tons. This is pretty good as farmers sometimes reckon 2 tons to the acre. The exemption inspector also came on his account when William [WS] was ill, said they were the best potatoes he had seen this year […] The hornet is knuckling under a bit. She took Telfer yesterday to a race meeting or gymkhana or something organized by Miss Passy.[98]

"The Spenders" were Stephen – who, after being evacuated with *Horizon* to Devon and teaching for a term at Blundell's School in Tiverton, had returned to London and had joined the National Fire Service[99] – and his second wife, the pianist Natasha Litvin (1919-2010). They had married on 9 April and had come to LPO the next day for their honeymoon, obliging AM to sleep in the granite passage and to cede the piano to Natasha.[100] SB would later recall having seen and heard Spender's "beautiful Russian mistress […] who used to play Chopin on the piano in the lower room of the house, the music moving to me across the lawns".[101] He would have been referring, though, to the couple's second visit to LPO, anticipated in the letter to AM just quoted and also in the following, from AS to JM:

> Stephen Spender is here again and has been questioning me about Drinan. He says he admired the poems in New Writing very much. Now that he is married again and going to live somewhere, he wants to collect all the books he admires, and would I ask Drinan to send him a copy of his last book. He thinks one was sent originally, but he has lost it. So, if Drinan cares, he can send Spender a copy c/o Horizon. His only criticism of Drinan is that he is inclined at times to be turgid. Obviously his admiration is great […] I should not be surprised if Stephen were spying for Fabers. He was seeing Eliot at Faber last week. I think he is convinced that I am Drinan.[102]

WC **[fig. 55]**, on the other hand, was now posted to Horfield Barracks, Bristol, as Camouflaging Officer for a large area in the West Midlands and south-west England. He was "wretched" no doubt on account of ongoing divorce proceedings and his unsatisfactory relationship with Sonia Brownell.[103]

There were other visitors too, owing not least to the fact, as stated by AS in a further and apparently unsuccessful invitation to ESW, "that this and other places near, [had] to assume the role of Palermo and the south of France for those who [had] less interest in Cornwall" (less interest than ESW himself, one infers). The early summer brought MG (who lent AS Arthur Koestler's recently published *Darkness at Noon*) perhaps with Desmond Bernal.[104] It also brought the Surrealist painter Julian Trevelyan (1910-1988), who came to Cornwall "periodically to inspect the camouflage of pill-boxes"[105] and who, as AM would remember, "slept on the floor" on bedding, afterwards "rolled up", and wore "wine-coloured pyjamas".[106]

Yet the most eagerly anticipated and certainly, for AS, the most memorable and intimately gratifying visit was the first made to LPO by GB and AOP **[fig. 55]**.[107] AS evidently felt close affinity with GB, manifesting keen, even urgent affection for him; and GB in return prized his friendship.[108] As seen earlier, a visit had first been solicited well before the war had begun.[109] And in later confessing to GB his growing irritation with "the Mandarins", BN and BH,[110] AS had pointedly deplored *his* inaccessibility and incommunicativeness: "As usual I don't know where to write to you".[111]

Between August and September 1940, "overjoyed" to receive a letter from GB but regretting their decision to go to Wales[112] rather than come to Cornwall (thus foregoing "the choice of studios lapped by the sea"), AS had again tried to persuade GB and AOP to visit LPO:

> At the moment we cannot put up two people for much more than a week. But that's still perfectly easy. Wouldn't the Admiralty pay your fare back if you had to go? Even so, I know it is far too short unless you are going to stay on in St Ives. You have no idea how beautiful it is – and stimulating. I think nobody has failed to find it so. But I expect it is too late. Maybe you will be sent to Plymouth and will then be able {to make} it here at intervals.[113]

And that autumn, after the birth of TrS, AS had suggested that if AM should at any time decide to return to Scotland, he might let GB know "in case Olivia [AOP] might be free, and might desire to take her place. We can think of no one we would prefer to have. It is worrying", he added, "she should still be in London".[114]

A little later, "an exciting, inspiriting letter" from GB had briefly revived in AS "the old feeling of looking forwards to the post".[115] The letter opening with these words elicited an intense response from GB, now in the RAF and stationed at Bodorgan, on the Isle of Anglesey:

> You cant imagine what sensations your letter roused in me – all the feelings of love and admiration I have for you fill me. Imagine the dreary scene – a school dormitory but not inhabited by fresh young people but dull complacent ones, raining and cold. I have a cold myself. Your letter so alive with intelligence and imagination calling to mind the days when we were philosophers trying to understand what was going on within and without. What horrible lives these people lead who are unmoved by poetry or indeed by anything which does not appear to affect their {physical} comfort. They are ordinary people with ordinary virtues, but why they live I cant imagine. When I read your letter I think of your limestone, and the ecstatic feelings I had when finding myself in the South of France, I first felt in sympathy with you. Things like wine and olives, the symbols of a frugal creative life. It is a month now since I shed a tear <[illegible]> in honour of a hero. Of course I don't think you love Cézanne personally the way I do. Still you must see what a train of images and feelings your letter roused in my sleeping intelligence.

And GB closed with the tantalizing news that he might be transferred to Torquay, in Devon, adding cautiously "but it isn't worth guessing or wishing".[116]

The transfer failed to materialize, however, because on 12 January 1941 GB broke a leg while playing football and was taken to Carnavon and Anglesey Infirmary in Bangor.[117] Later that month AS and MM were "truly moved to read so gradually (as in an E M Forster novel)" of GB's "most painful accident", but equally excited to hear he might spend his sick leave at LPO.[118] News of a maltreated toe was succeeded by two months' silence, leaving AS "entirely worried" and, retracting his earlier warning of the "small strain on the domestic arrangements" which the temporary accommodation of two might entail, emphasized that, if GB *were* to come, he would not "be wanted to do anything" and "could easily stay in bed all the time".[119]

A final solicitation – now in reality the merest hint of a hope – closed a letter of encouragement which must have been written towards the end of April or early May, so after the removal, on 18 April,[120] of GB's plaster:

> I have a vivid picture of you in a white room watching a hedge on your left, at right angles to you, coming into leaf. I feel I am doing the same. The mind beneath is rich but there is little on top. There is no leaf for us this year. It is in the past, and about the future we cannot dare to hope. I too feel I shall produce much better leaf if circumstance should ever allow. But don't be incredulous about your recumbent hedge. If not dead, we shall arise […] Hoping, as always, to see you some time. Do you realize that except for our wedding party and one <night> evening last May, we have not seen each {other} <since the end of 1937 or beginning of 1938 when you went to France> {for two years}?[121]

GB and AOP at last came to Carbis Bay that summer, staying at LPO from 28 July to 2 August. In letters written later in the year AS would hark back to the "one day" he had been able to spend "entirely" with them as "an anchor in [his] mind" and as the "one nice day of the war", on which he depended "more and more". "It would be perfect", he ventured, if GB "were sent to one of the aerodromes" nearby. "I still cling to that idea", he insisted, adding, "You have made me feel that nearly all those I have seen in the last two years are not my friends". And perhaps part of this feeling had been GB's capacity, on which AS remarked, to stimulate him to think about painting, his own included, and to look forward to the time he might once more be able to paint. He felt his "meagre skill" might perhaps have improved as a result of an earlier experience of teaching at a local school, as yet unidentified but possibly Rocklands, where both MM and AM seem to have taken classes the following year.[122] And GB and AS had no doubt also discussed the Euston Road Group exhibition that had opened in May at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.[123] Alarmed by GB's "talk of a possible life without painting", AS had retorted that, if conditions in Britain were reduced even "half way" to those of Poland, AOP and he "had better join" them at LPO, and they would all "just hold life together". "But if things are at all possible", he went on, "you must return to the centre of things or come and paint down here, which is of course what I would prefer".[124]

Notes

1 AS unwittingly falls prey here to something of the same atavic prejudice as he imputes to the Nazis, in categorically opposing Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons and casting the former in the role of the brutish opposite of "anything unnatural or civilized" and "true man". Prejudice of the kind would not begin to be dispelled for several more decades, when it would be shown that, though diverging hundreds of thousands of years ago from a common ancestor, modern humans and Neanderthals not only co-existed after the arrival of the former from Africa, but also interbred (it is now thought around 50,000 years ago), leaving the genomes of all present-day non-Africans with a small percentage of Neanderthal DNA. Moreover, there is currently mounting, though still controversial evidence of Neanderthal behavioural and cognitive complexity, manifest in purportedly intentional forms of "graphic symbolism" long pre-dating the arrival of modern humans and transmitted over time, thus disruptive of those assumptions of linear progression previously constraining interpretation of the Neanderthals' place in the evolutionary scheme (see e.g. Garcia-Diez 2022; Romagnoli, Rivals, Benazzi 2022; Sümer et al 2024; Iasi 2024).

2 The Royal Cinema (see "Background I", 68 and fn. 135; "Background II", 110).

3 See "Background I", 63; *OIL* IV, f. 47*r*, 153 and Figure 37.

4 See "Background V", 197.

5 Originally the Teetotal Methodist Chapel, on the corner of Chapel Street, now (2025) a shopping centre.

6 See *OIL* V, f. 48*r*, 179.

7 See *OIL* VI, f. 48*r*, 209, and "Background VI", 215.

8 *OIL* V, f. 48*r*, 179.

9 *OIL* II, ff. 21*r*-22*r*, 88.

10 AS to ESW n.d. [after Easter (13 April) 1941], photocopy in SIA.

11 Knox 2003, 432, 435-6.

12 *Times*, 17 January 1941; Slack 1942, Appendix I, 318.

13 *Times*, 30 January 1941.

14 The article continues, "The first of the new age classes to register will be the youths of 19, and the last will probably be the eighteens […] In explanation of the new Proclamation the Ministry of Labour and National Service says:– '[…] Registration of further age classes will be accompanied by an amendment of the existing Schedule of Reserved Occupations. These amendments, besides raising the existing age of reservation in a number of cases, will make reservation depend to an increasing extent upon the actual work being done by the man for whom reservation is sought and not simply upon his age and occupation […] The 1922 class (18-year-olds) will probably be left until the last, and may not be required to register for some months".

15 Slack 1942, Appendix I, 318; *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, June 1941, 115.

16 GB to AOP n.d. [postmarked 20 May 1941], TGA 200214.

17 England & Wales 1939, ref. RG101/6705H/002/2.

18 A requirement specified in *Schedule* 1941, issued in December.

19 The Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour (Mr Tomlinson) in reply to Sir P. Hannon during a debate on Military Service (gardeners) in the House of Commons on 22 July 1941 (Hansard online: `https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1941-07-22/debates/53d37053-033b-40a4-8e93-1a898f3a1451/MilitaryService(Gardeners)`). Cf. "Background IV", 171-2, and "Background VI", 243, fn. 54.

20 AS to ESW n.d. [after 13 April 1941], photocopy in SIA. In *S&R* (Stokes 1978, II, 218), AS would write, "During six years, except for Home Guard, for the sale of vegetables, for market garden purchases, I rarely went outside the two and a half acres" (not from reclusiveness or misanthropy, as presumed in Wilkinson 2017 [27]).

21 AS to ESW n.d. [after Easter, 13 April 1941], photocopy in SIA.

22 AS to GB n.d. [postmarked 11 January 1941], TGA 200214.

23 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 7 April 1941], TGA 200214.

24 See "Background I", 71, fn. 153.

25 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 29 January 1942, but probably dating from early December 1941], TGA 200214. The allusion was almost certainly to "that awful agricultural inspector, Mr Rowe", probably A.E. Rowe, District or Distributing Officer of the Cornwall War Agricultural Executive Committee (see *Western Morning News*, 15 January and 30 November 1943), who, AS had warned SB, was apt to be "looking over the hedge" at inopportune moments (Berlin 1945-87, 24; cf. 1994, 107).

26 Aarons 2016, 1-25.

27 *Morning News*, 13 November 1940. SB had told the Tribunal, "I do not intend to allow the State or any individual to interfere with the course of my progress while I am still in possession of the power of self government and the faculty of contemplation". Cf. Berlin 1994, 91 ("But the papers in Cornwall took it up and reported it in full as 'Pacifist faces Boomerang Argument'. I was derogated and the good will my show had built up was gone in a day. Public opinion turned against me, especially as I was living on the Parish. The board of Guardians complained and threatened again to expel me from Cornwall as D.H. Lawrence had been expelled in the first war. The Cornish are spy-mad in war time and trust nobody but themselves. I was arrested but not charged for drawing in the street and in a churchyard which was also HQ of the Local Defence and for 'signalling to a German submarine from the North Cliffs'").

28 Berlin 1994, 92-8; Aarons 2016, 28-9.

29 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 9 May 1941], TGA 200214.

30 Diary entry for 21 April 1941, quoted in Bird 2008 (57).

31 Berlin 1994, 98; Aarons 2016, 30-1.

32 Son of the engineer, spiritual healer and footballer, Frederick Lawrence Rawson (1859-1923) and Evelyn Trevelyan Cazalet (b. 1866).

33 Rawson later completed the history of the Fellowship begun by W. Boyd (Boyd, Rawson 1965). He was one of the chief organizers of the British Commonwealth Conference, held in London in 1931 (*St Andrews Citizen*, 6 February 1932). Rocklands School was wound up in 1944 (*London Gazette*, 2 January 1945) and Rawson went on to teach at Bryanston and Cranborne Chase. He was Chairman of the North Dorset

Liberal Association after the war and Liberal candidate for Dorset South in 1950.

34 Berlin 1994, 100. In a private memoir, the decorative artist George Oakes (1927-2017), who attended Rocklands in 1940-41 together with his sister Judith (b. 1930), would describe Rawson as "an irascible man who taught us French and maths" (Oakes 2005-10). In Wilkinson 2017 (14-5), Liza Spitzova from Lelant, who modelled for BH, is said to have worked at Rocklands at this time and to have referred to its headmaster as "'Ratty Rawson'".

35 "Rawlplug" was a contemporary brand of wall plug. In AS' and MM's correspondence "Rawlplug" is often cited in tandem with someone nicknamed "the wild goose", apparently a female and possibly Rawson's German wife, Hilde Neuffer (1897-1980), the daughter of the actor and director Dagobert Neuffer (1851-1939), of Hungarian Jewish origin. Formerly married to the violinist Max Strub (1900-1966), Hilde Rawson was herself a musician: when registered in 1939, at Rocklands School, Hastings, together with her son Harald Strub (1923-1988), later a cellist, her occupation was stated to be "Unpaid domestic duties & violin teacher" (England and Wales 1939, ref. RG101/2493L/022/33). She is perhaps to be identified with the "Hildegarde" who visits the author-narrator in the first chapter of SB's autobiographical *I am Lazarus*, and who is there said to have come into his and his wife's lives "like a sudden wind, almost a gale at times, driving everything before her": "She plotted, she counter-plotted, she altered all one's relationships with friends and with enemies. Behind this there was a burning hatred for Nazism which, when her political plans went wrong, she directed on the society around her. She wanted to change the world, to reshuffle all life's furniture. It was the force of her people turned on its head" (Berlin 1961, 3). On being informed by AS in December 1944 that a "letter from the wild goose" had "recently been wafted" to LPO, "headed with a note by Rawlplug himself", SB would reply, "How strange that the call of the wild goose should come again on the wind in the west – had it the note of migration? Is it possible that she may fold her huge wings in <her> your garden before long? As the war matures I feel the difficulties between herself & Rawlplug must have deepened considerably, & I wonder on whom she takes her revenge, & over whom he pours his milk of human kindness. <A complex [illegible] relationship.>" (AS to SB n.d. [after 26 December 1944]; SB to AS 30 December 1944, Anthony D. Green Collection (AGC).

36 Berlin 1945-87; 1994, 100. For Barns-Graham see "Background III", 139.

37 In a TS entitled "SB in Cornwall 1934-1953" and signed and dated in October 1964 (AGC), SB would write, "I worked as Gardener and taught children painting. My wife taught dancing". In Berlin 1994 (100), he wrote of the interview, "And Helga could teach dancing, although I was never forgiven for including her in her absence, in a joint commitment that included work she hated". Cf. Oakes 2005-10, which records that SB "had come to the school to teach art from being a dancer, sort of Latin American, he taught the girls a sort of modern ballet" (confirmed by Judith Oakes Wehrwein, who writes in a personal communication, 2025, "I have a strong memory of Sven Berlin. At the time, I understood him to be a former dancer. He attempted to teach us girls the rudiments of ballet"). Oakes 2005-10 further states, of one of the teachers at Rocklands, that she had come from a school previously attended by Oakes, Ocklye House, a Montessori school at Crowborough in East Sussex, and, startlingly, that she "became the mistress of Sven Berlin".

38 Berlin 1994, 100; cf. Berlin 1945-87, 34, where Rawson is reported to have told SB, "I want you to work part of the time at Adrian Stokes['] market garden. It will more properly meet your condition of exemption from military service. Working only at the school wont be enough and I dont want to upset the authorities". Cf. also Mellis 1981, 46-7 ("And Adrian went to see the headmaster and the headmaster said he had got a couple there and […] he could lend the man out and the man was Sven Berlin and he did the stoking for the school. The schoolmaster had found Sven and Helga, who was just about to have a child, absolutely starving somewhere so he took them in and I don't know what Helga probably did"); and Mellis 1993, tape 4131A ("there was a school which had been evacuated from London and they hired out somebody they had found and we had to pay them. Well the person they found was Sven Berlin because this school master had found Sven and Helga in absolute poverty and they sort of got them to the school and Helga was did a job there with the sort of matron and Sven did the sort of odd jobs and things").

39 This was the day Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess (1894-1987) was arrested in Glasgow after making a solo flight there with the intention of holding peace talks with the Duke of Hamilton. SB would later recall how AS had come "hurrying towards [him] with the news that Rudolph Hess had dropped into Scotland in a parachute and his cleaning lady, who had told him before it was announced, declared that 'Hess carried a typewriter, Mr Stokes, my 'ansome, that typed out terrible diseases'" (Berlin 1994, 107). However, in Berlin 1945-87, this episode is said to have been recounted to SB by AS when painting his portrait in 1945 (see "Background VIII", 302 and Figure 75).

40 SB to AS 29 September 1944, AGC.

41 Berlin 1994, 106-7; Berlin 1945-87, 24. Cf. Mellis 1993, tape 4131A: "So he [SB] came to work and then Ben [BN] and Barbara [BH] used to come over quite a lot so we introduced him to them and I used to bring tea out at 4 o'clock everyday and everybody came and ate it on that balcony and Sven rather enjoyed tea actually he was the kind of person that didn't really like working very hard so Adrian had to keep him going all the time and he always stayed and had tea much longer as long as he possibly could".

42 Berlin 1996, 157.

43 Berlin 1994, 100-1.

44 Berlin 1994, 101. The passage continues, "I called him the Asian Bowman after a drawing by Pisanello. To go for a walk with Gabo was like passing through the invisible frames of existence when every tree, every flower, every stone and star was transformed into a beautiful construction".

45 Evidence of the impact on SB of Gabo's work in particular at this time is offered by the memoir of George Oakes, in whose view SB "really thought of himself as an artist, very bohemian, he was a good draughtsman, drew landscape rather in the fashion of Van Gogh, I remember I thought this very clever and envied his ability. He also made up small three dimensional abstracts painted on sheets of glass.

He became associated with the then St Ives school. Although I cannot remember exactly I'm sure he must have introduced us to the wider art world, the post Impressionists and people like Ben Nicolson and Barbara Hepworth" (Oakes 2005-10; for BH's presence at the school see fn. 43). Aarons 2016 (15) instances a "raffish pencil self-portrait dated 12 October 1941" and featuring "a small 'construction' in the corner" as an example of SB's experimentation in this period with abstraction and constructivism, inspired and encouraged by Naum Gabo". An apparently similar drawing, dated 1942, was put up for sale by Dreweatts, Newbury on 11 July 2024 (lot 65).

46 Mellis 1993, tape F4130B. The following spring, BN would choose two of MM's collages to show, alongside work by himself, BH, Peter Lanyon, John Wells (1907-200) and Gabo, in the exhibition *New Movements* 1942 (Mellis 1977; Stephens 2008, 60).

47 In the summer of 1939, disoriented after his return to Cornwall from London, where, at AS' suggestion, he had studied for two months at the Euston Road School, Lanyon took lessons from BN, again at AS' suggestion, producing works such as *Box Construction No. 1*, 1939-40 (Pier Gallery, Stromness) and *White Track*, 1939-40 (Tate St Ives) (Garlake 1998, 15-7; Checkland 2000, 186).

48 He later recalled seeing his first AW in the "morning", "Quiet" or "Waiting Room" at Rocklands just before his interview with the headmaster (Berlin 1945-87, 34; 1949, 105; [1949, 1992] 2000, 88; 1994, 100). According to one account of this episode (1994, 100), it was SB's co-interviewee, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham (see "Background III", 139), who identified the artist for him. According to another (1945-87, 34-5), it was Rawson (perhaps its owner) who told him "about Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood discovering Wallis painting in his cottage in 1928" and explained that BN and BH "lived only a few door{s} down the road from the school" and that they "had a great collection of Wallis' work and would not be difficult to meet". According to this same account, indeed, SB did immediately meet BH, at lunch that day in the school's dining-hall, where he found her sitting next to Rawson's "German wife", and was invited by her to go and view their collection. To judge from SB's description of the painting (1994, 100: "It was of a ship coming into harbour, but the sea, the houses and the harbour itself were turning round it like a wheel of which the ship was the axis. It was a new experience and I realised that this is how it must feel to be in a ship at the wheel steering it into harbour. It was painted in low tones of brown and green and white"), it must have been similar in composition, though not in colour, to *St Ives Harbour* (1932-1933), which the previous year BN had presented to the Museum of Modern Art, New York (`https://www.moma.org/collection/works/38737?artist_id=6229&page=1&sov_referrer=artist`).

49 SB to AS 18 March 1943, AGC. In Berlin 1941-42 AW himself (along with AS) figures in a list of persons SB intended to interview, showing that he had begun his researches well before the painter's death on 29 August 1942.

50 Berlin 1943; Nicholson 1943.

51 Berlin 1949; [1949, 1992] 2000. See "Background I", 67 and Figure 18 and "Background VI", 230, fn. 91.

52 Berlin 1994, 101; cf. Berlin 1945-87, 34.

53 Berlin 1994, 106.

54 See "Background VII", 284, and "Background VIII", 305-8. Webb (2025, 438) even claims, it is not clear how justifiably, that tension between AS and BN over AW – specifically, resentment on BN's part at AS' befriending of AW – predated BN's removal to Dunluce and even motivated AS' offer to pay its rent.

55 As is repeatedly stressed in Webb 2025.

56 Berlin 1949, 105. Apparently inconsistent with this account is a letter from AS to BN written after the publication of Berlin 1949: "I made a point of showing them [his framed paintings by AW] to everyone while at the same time, illogically, owing to a scruple about his being your protégé so far as he was anyone's, I never visited him or saw him after 1939 when you were in St Ives, until I went with you to Madron. I saw him no more than 3 or 4 times in all. § It is very unfortunate that we didn't know of his illness, of his incapacity and of the workhouse threat and what it meant to him" (AS to BN 8 March 1949, TGA 8717.1.2.4562 [Janet Sayers' transcription]). Webb 2025 (493) implies that AS was being dishonest here. However, that he avoided seeing AW after the beginning of the war for the reason stated is in part at least confirmed in Mellis 1981 (41): "Well, when we first went down there we sort of looked after him only he was Ben's property so to speak so after Ben came we didn't go to see him quite so much because Ben went to see him then"). Also, AS may have meant it was unfortunate they had not known of his illness, etc. prior to the situation's becoming critical in the summer of 1941.

57 Webb 2025, 461.

58 Mellis 1993, tape F4230A; cf. Nicholson 1943 (53): "One day, on knocking at his door, I could get no answer and discovered from a neighbour that he had been ill and had been taken to Madron Institute".

59 Berlin 1949, 105; [1949, 1992] 2000, 88.

60 Berlin 1949, 111.

61 Lambirth 2010, 43, quoted from an interview with the author.

62 See "Background VI", 237-8.

63 Berlin 1994, 102; cf. 1992, 16. Robert ("Robin") Nance (1907-1990) was a Cornish cabinet maker, then serving in the army. Rocklands does not appear to have been a Steiner school in any formal sense, i.e. specifically a Waldorf school, as might be inferred from Aarons 2016 (30) and Wilkinson 2017 (12). Interestingly, though, Hilde Neuffer's parents were friends of Steiner's, who was godfather to her brother Harald (d. 1917) (Steiner [1925] 1977, 221; Seig 2014, 106).

64 AS to AM n.d. [10 August 1941] TGA 202412.

65 AS to AM n.d. [10 August 1941] TGA 202412.

66 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 3 September 1941], TGA 200214.

67 He also "spent ½ hour with Victor [VP] and ¼ hour at the National Gallery", where he encountered KC, who wanted to show him "Graham's" new pictures. To AS' shock, this turned out to be a reference, not to GB, but to Graham Sutherland (1903-1980), whose work AS found "[m]ore or less meaningless" (AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 29 January 1942, but probably dating from early December 1941]). In writing to ESW two years later about his essay on Sutherland for the Penguin Modern Painters series (1943), AS would express a more

favourable, though still highly qualified assessment of the painter, as the epitome of a certain "type of romanticism", possessing "a great deal more purely visual worth than was to be expected"; and he would tell how he had met Sutherland "for a few moments" in Cornwall (where between June and December 1942 the artist made sketches of miners and the underground workings of Grevor tin mine, Pendeen, near St Just, for the War Artists Advisory Committee [Tate [1995] 1996, 101]); and how he had "liked him very much" (AS to ESW n.d. [1943], photocopy in SIA).

68 AS to GB n.d. [end of February 1942], TGA 200214. AS had previously informed GB, "William [WS] has to go in the New Year and I have a C.O coming to work. How shall we drill in 2 tons of early potatoes and sow the carrots and onions. He is a very nice chap called Peter Freeman who organized refugee camps in Spain and is, I believe, exempted on political [illegible] grounds. But I have seen him for only a few hours" (AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 29 January 1942, but probably dating from early December 1941]). PF was not, as stated in Lambirth 2010 (34), an evacuee.

69 Freeman 1973.

70 See "Background IV", 171-2. On 29 September 1939 PF's grandmother and aunt were registered at 1, Barnoon Terrace in St Ives. By 21 February 1941 a "Mrs Freeman" was living at Carn Dhu (she advertised for a garden seat in the *St Ives Times*, giving that address). In the interview cited in fn. 119 (177), Arthur Rogers remembered a Mrs Freeman, associated by him with PF, as living at Carn Dhu.

71 See "Background VI", 222, 226.

72 A probable reference to the training undertaken at Holton cum Beckering (see below).

73 Freeman 1973.

74 The telegram would subsequently be incorporated into Figure 77.

75 Freeman 1973.

76 See below. SB's depiction of AS in his autobiographical writings is almost invariably, perhaps a little ingratiatingly, flattering. A different note, hard to decipher, seems to emerge in a letter to his wife Helga written towards the end of the war: "I've been laying here thinking of earlier days in the war: days at Rocklands when Paul was <a> quite a <q> tiny fellow & I was a respectable schoolmaster. Rawson playing Brassbound on the lawn. Adrian turning up to an end of term garden party in a <lime> <lily> {lime} green suit, very nervous, smiling out of the side of his face, saying 'Really, Sven, how terrifying. I dont know any of these people!' Only there because he sold vegetables to the school. Contemptuous really. Laughing to himself. What ridiculous levels this war has reduced us to – our hopes and ideals – even our most ordinary requests from life seem out of proportion <[illegible]> as time goes on. That was a world of strange people" (SB to Helga Berlin 17-18 December 1944, AGC). The reference to "Brassbound" is to an outdoor performance of the play *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* by George Bernard Shaw (in which Judith Oakes Wehrwein took part, personal communication, 2025).

77 GB to AS n.d. [after 9 October 1939], ASP, TGA 8816.230.

78 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 29 January 1942]; n.d. [end of February 1942], TGA 200214.

79 Freeman 1973.

80 Gibson 2023, 15, 17, 63.

81 Gibson 2023, 153.

82 Gibson 2023, 154.

83 *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 7 September 1916; cf. Gibson 2023, 20, 157.

84 His brother Ralph (1880-1950) was a civil engineer who helped design the Sydney Harbour Bridge (opened in 1932). Of their siblings, Frank (1890-1955) was also a bridge designer, whereas Peter (1888-1953) was Labour MP for Brecon and Radnorshire (1929-31) and for Newport (1945-56).

85 See also *South Yorkshire Times*, 24 February 1939. According to Sheffield University Records and Archive, PF was an Instructor under the Spanish Republican Government's Ministry of Education from 1937 to 1939. According to his daughter Pam (personal communication, 2025), during the Civil Wat PF helped orphaned children.

86 *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 14 February 1939, 7 March 1939, 2 June 1939, 19 June 1939. PF had also acted the part of Titus in his father's play *St Paul*, whose British premiere was given at the Little Theatre, Sheffield – "the heart of the Settlement's activities" – in June (*Shefield Independent*, 11 June 1938; Gibson 2023, 185).

87 *Sheffield Independent* (11 June 1938) also reported that PF had "relinquished a B.B.C. appointment to engage in relief work in Spain on behalf of the International Voluntary Service for Peace".

88 *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 3 May 1940; cf. Makin 2022, 35 ("Mercantile marine, forestry, land work").

89 The farm had been purchased that spring by the Community Land Training Association via the Peace Pledge Union and a public appeal for funds in *Peace News* (Makin 2022, 8-10). A prominent member of the Union was John Middleton Murry (1889-1957) (who had written a Preface to *TA*).

90 Makin 2022, 35. PF's training at Holton covered "Draining. Muck spreading. Milking – hand & machine. Ploughing. Market garden. Hand distributing artificals [*sic* = fertilizers]. Horse harrowing. Beet singling. Hoeing. Binding. Mowing grass. Silage. Hay etc. Fertilizer distributing [with] horses". For PF's work at LPO with AS and later career, see "Background VI", 217-21.

91 AS to GB n.d. [postmarked 11 January 1941], TGA 200214.

92 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 9 May 1941], TGA 200214.

93 *S&R* (Stokes 1978, II, 223). PF would later say of him, "I felt he was natural to Cornwall […] he really had […] an attraction to the soil" (Freeman 1973).

94 See "On Home-Guard night-watches", 182.

95 AS to ESW [after 13 April 1941], photocopy in SIA.

96 See "Background I", 68, and "Background IV", 167. The piano seems to have been hired (see the letter from AS to AM quoted immediately below) and was delivered by the Penzance removal firm of R.P. Andrewartha (later Riviera Furniture Removals, Ltd), giving rise to AM's nickname at LPO, "Andrew".

97 AS to AM n.d. [10 August 1941] TGA 202412 (Janet Sayers' transcription); AM, interviews with Janet Sayers, 1998, 2006; Stokes

Angus 2003, tapes F12925, F13549; AM, interview with Paul Tucker, 2011.

98 AS to AM n.d. [10 August 1941] TGA 202412 (Janet Sayers' transcription). "Molly" was possibly the nurse who helped deliver TrS (see AM to MM n.d. [autumn 1953?], EMM). "Seraphina" was Nina Serafina Gabo, born 28 July 1941. For Olive Buttree see "Background II", 101, 110. Miss Passy was the headmistress of another evacuated school, the Brush End. The Horse Show and Gymkhana was held on 9 August (*Cornishman*, 14 August 1941).

99 Cf. AOP to GB 27 February [1941], where it was reported that Spender was reserved as editor of *Horizon* and was to teach at The Downs, Malvern, where WHA had taught before going to America.

100 MM Diary 1941 (EMM); MM 1977 (TGA 7817.6); AM, interview with Janet Sayers, 2007.

101 Berlin 1945-87; cf. Berlin 1994, 107.

102 AS to JM n.d. [after 10 August 1941], JMP, NLS, Acc.10509/5 (cf. Fountain 2010, 300, 315). That spring three poems from the sequence later titled *The Men of the Rocks* had appeared in *Folios of New Writing* 3, 64-7. On JM's pseudonym see "Background III", 139. "Eliot" is the poet and Director of Faber and Faber T.S. Eliot (see 79, fn. 33).

103 Laughton 2004, 77-80.

104 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in letters from GB to AOP postmarked 7 April and 9 May 1941], TGA 200214. For Bernal see "Background III", 139, and *OIL* VI, f. 49*r*, 205.

105 AS to GB n.d. [early May 1941], TGA 200214.

106 AM, interview with Janet Sayers, 2006.

107 For their second visit see "Background VI", 228-9.

108 GB to AOP n.d. [postmarked 27 May 1941], TGA 200214. GB told AOP that the poet Robert Waller (1913-2005) was going on a cycling tour and hoped to call on AS. "I hope they will both enjoy it", he commented. "Though both poets they are very far apart and Adrian is as devout in his paganism as Robert is in his Christianity. Those two and Tommy [the painter Thomas Carr (1909-1999)] are really my favourite friends. Theyre more generous than Bill [WC] can bring himself to be. Its funny to think of Robert's serious Christianity confronted with the old Galleazzo, Gattamelata, Malatesta, Sforza Stokes".

109 See "Background I", 71.

110 See "Background II", 104.

111 AS to GB, n.d. [postmarked 9 October 1939] TGA 200214.

112 GB had been in south Wales earlier in the summer for the Recording Britain scheme.

113 AS to GB n.d. [after 15 August, before 30 September 1940], TGA 200214.

114 AS to GB n.d. [after 28 October 1940; enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 7 November 1940], TGA 200214.

115 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 7 November 1940], TGA 200214.

116 GB to AS n.d. [GB to AS [between December 1940 and January 1941], ASP, TGA 8816.230.

117 GB to AOP n.d. [postmarked 14 January 1941], TGA 200214.

118 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 3 February 1941], TGA 200214.

119 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 7 April 1941], TGA 200214.

120 GB to KC n.d. [3 May 1941], TGA 8812.1.3.203.

121 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in a letter from GB to AOP postmarked 9 May 1941], TGA 200214.

122 See fn. 80 (243). Possibly, however, the school in question was one for girls (see below in this note); though according to Oakes 2005-10 Rocklands was then attended by only a few boys. During his visit AS had told GB in confidence of his disappointment at the response of WC and VP when they had been shown certain "olive pictures" he had painted in Italy, probably in 1938 (see "Background I", 61, and "Background III", 139, and Figures 31 and 33). In now excusing this as the attitude of "excellent artists" to the work of a "wayward pupil", he instanced his own resentment when, two months after teaching them, he had had to choose "the best of the girls' pictures for a school exhibition" (perhaps the festival organized in July 1941 by the Association of Schools Evacuated to Cornwall, for which see "Background IV", 171), and had found that these were by the pupil "to whom [he] could teach very little" (AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in letters from GB to AOP postmarked 3 September 1941], TGA 200214. The former episode seems related to an experience recounted by the painter Lawrence Gowing (1918-1991) in Rhode 1973a. Gowing, who had himself studied at the Euston Road school, confessed to not having known what to say when, shown paintings – to his eye "disconcertingly amateurish, strangely unemphatic[,] almost fortuitously smeared" – which AS had brought back with him from Italy (presumably in 1938, but Rhode's confusing presentation of Gowing's testimony makes it unclear whether the pictures in question might not rather have been those painted in 1937 at Sanary [see "Background I", 61]).

123 Reviewed (nominally) by Sonia Brownell in May issue of *Horizon*.

124 AS to GB n.d. [enclosed in letters from GB to AOP postmarked 3 September 1941 and 29 Jan 1942], TGA 200214.