

TED CONEY'S FAMILY PORTRAITS

This is my sixth season opening our house to the public on Sunday afternoons and although a bit nerve racking at first, once I get started, I enjoy it.

I know visitors aren't sure what to expect, and might even feel a bit apprehensive, so I usually show them my 1931 Morris Minor first, as this is a good icebreaker. I explain that, as the car has been in the family for over forty years and appears in some of the paintings, it is a natural place to begin. Although I had over 2,000 visitors to my recent

exhibition at the Babylon Gallery, it is always more difficult to encourage people to visit the house, especially as I do guided tours, to explain what the paintings are about. Is that a bit intimidating?!

Will he try to sell us something? Well, none of the paintings are for sale, only postcards and tour guides, which are 50p each and I certainly don't push them (they are just on display in the hallway). What if I don't like the paintings? I could hardly expect people to like them all, as they have been produced over forty five years (I show about seven on each tour) and I have gone through many styles over that time. I don't like some of them myself now! I just hope that visitors might be interested in some of the ideas which inspired the work.

As I exhibit in eight rooms and spaces (yes, even the kitchen is drummed into use!) it can be a bit of a strain getting the place tidy enough, every Sunday morning.



Ted Coney's Family Portraits

49 Waterside, Ely, Cambs. CB7 4AU

Open April - December

Sundays (other times by appointment)

Tours at 2pm and 3pm

Groups Welcome Booking Essential

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'Ely's first pop-up gallery'

The experience is similar to the 'tidy up' you do before prospective buyers arrive, when you are selling your house. I once stuffed some plastic packaged bread rolls into the oven, only to forget about them until we became aware of a strange smell when the oven had been switched on, later. So much for the aroma of baking bread, to entice you in!

Why do I do it? Well it's not for the money, as I only charge a modest £3 for an hour long tour and I can only take six visitors at a time. It's more that, as we all experience the highs and lows of life from start to finish, I am interested in showing, through my work, how I have tried to make sense of it all..

*I once stuffed some
plastic packaged bread
rolls into the oven!*

What I do find, as all my paintings are about family life and relationships, is that visitors begin to relate to them, as they have similar stories and experiences to share.

I hope you will make a booking sometime. I can be contacted on Tel. 01353 650038 or through my website: www.tedconeyfamilyportraits.co.uk or tedconey@btinternet.com

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