

Pop in to Ely

I was involved in the Art Department at the Cambridgeshire High School/Hills Road Sixth Form College for thirty four years before retiring ten years ago.

During my gap year we moved house to Ely and I learnt to use the computer (shamefully I was the only member of staff who needed his work typed by someone else).

I began working again, now part time, and have just notched up fifty years of teaching! I have also been a moderator and examiner for various exam boards, running teachers' courses and doing some consultancy work for the Egyptian government (on art education matters, I hasten to add!)

During all my years of teaching I have also produced my own work, believing that the students shouldn't have all the fun. I painted a picture about family life in 1969 and have been making work about family relationships ever since.

Once we had moved to Ely and the children had left home, I resolved to turn our house (a 300 year old cottage) into a pop-up gallery which opened on Sundays. I don't sell the work so it is more like a museum, but I give guided tours around the house, talking about seven paintings on each visit. The tour always finishes in my studio, so I can show the latest work in progress.

I call my paintings 'family portraits' but they are not portraits in the conventional sense. I tend to use objects and ephemera in a symbolic way to convey their meaning and one of the objects I use is my 1931 Morris Minor. It is possibly the most popular object I display in the exhibition and it appears in a few of the paintings. I used the car for over thirty years to get to work and some of you may remember it. Its most memorable drive recently was down the centre aisle of Ely Cathedral.

Over the past few years it has been a delight for me to welcome former students from Hills Road to the house and I hope that by reading this article some more will be inspired to come. You can even do a Virtual Tour if you live too far away.

All the details can be seen on my website: <http://www.tedconeysfamilyportraits.co.uk>

Ted Coney
