

Cambridge Festival Symbol
- In the festival at least!



THE Fitzwilliam Museum's exhibition of samplers has not been well publicised as part of the Cambridge Festival, but it should appeal equally to the enthusiast and to the plain ignorant.

Anyone would gasp to see the small Graham Robertson Room transformed into a glorified display of school work — although these examples of schoolgirl handiwork would put an experienced embroiderer to shame, with their bright colours and exquisite stitchery.

Exquisite stitchery

Exhibition of English Samplers, at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Graham Robertson Room, until October 14, reviewed by Marion Leeper.

But this is also a scholarly exhibition, featuring rare examples of "spot" samplers

and whitework samplers. It charts the history of samplers from the earliest ones done by experienced needlewomen as pattern records and kept rolled up in their workboxes, to the Victorian idea of samplers simply as a device for keeping young girls out of mischief.

The exhibition has been meticulously researched

Family portraits

Family Portraits by Ted Coney, at 20 Woollards Lane, Great Shelford, until July 28, 11 am - 4 pm, reviewed by Marion Leeper.

FOR his exhibition of family portraits in aid of the Save the Children Fund, Ted Coney has opened his fascinating Shelford home to the public.

This is appropriate, since his

works are intensely personal and quirky pictures (he is apt to call them "celebrations") of his family and home life. He records christenings, holidays, relations: one painting is a moving memorial to a dead baby.

The exhibition includes preliminary sketches and even a home movie to help explain the allusions, though they make one feel even more of an intruder into the artist's private world.

Glass artistry plays the weighting game

AFTER almost a century, the lost art of making beautiful glass paperweights has been rediscovered. And right in the front of the new craftsmen are the British, who are producing paperweights as good as, and in many cases, better than, the best French glassmakers of the nineteenth century.

The revival is pinpointed in the exhibition at the Cambridge Central Library, third floor, arranged by the Cambridge Paperweight Circle, which finishes today.

The quality of modern glass weights is exemplified by the display of paperweights from Perthshire Paperweights. As a recent "Bygones" programme on television showed, 70 per cent of their products are deliberately smashed because they are flawed.

This quality control means that the surviving paperweights are expensive — £70 is not an unusual price. But there are

some modern ones for £17 or so.

The methods of manufacture have remained the same as a hundred years ago. The exhibition includes many tools used by the glassmakers and illustrates the necessary skills.

Space travel

The most popular paperweights have multi-coloured canes of glass set in a geometrical pattern. Others incorporate animals, birds, insects or flowers. Some of the more expensive have minute silhouettes set within canes.

But for me, the most beautiful selection was based on space travel — tiny stars swirling round a deep blue vortex, delicate moons, suspended in space. Modern makers have gone further than their Victorian predecessors in their search for new ideas.

Dan Jackson