

[Begin with the work on the white wall immediately inside the entrance to the gallery. Move round the room anticlockwise.]

Eric Ravilious

Downs in Winter, 1935

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Ravilious captures the rolling beauty of the South Downs in a colour palette that emphasises the bleak winter landscape. The abandoned ring roller (a horse-drawn plough) in the foreground draws attention to the empty land behind, its curves and lines working with those of the undulating hills and furrowed fields.

Bought in 1936 by Reeve Fowkes for Towner it became one of the first three Ravilious works to enter public collections.

William Rothenstein, former head of the RCA, acquired 'The Cucumber House' for Tullie House, – these purchases signalled a new level of recognition for Ravilious as a painter.

Towner Collection

[Text panel]

Towner has a long and important connection with

Eric Ravilious (1903–42), dating back to the 1930s.

In 1936, curator Arthur Reeve-Fowkes purchased

two paintings for Towner's permanent collection from

Ravilious' second solo exhibition at Zwemmer Gallery in

London. Downs in Winter and Dolly Engine were two of

several watercolours of the South Downs made on a 1934

painting expedition at Furlongs, the Sussex home of his friend

Peggy Angus.

From the time of this first acquisition, his significance for

Towner and the Collection has been embedded and celebrated

in parallel with the growth of his reputation as a painter, wood

engraver, illustrator and a versatile designer. It continues to be

a priority to develop this collection of works by Ravilious as well as his friends and associates; including Tirzah Garwood, Edward Bawden and Peggy Angus amongst others. Displaying them together here at Towner, close to the locations that inspired many works, lends unique insight into his deep connection with Sussex and the Downs, as well as demonstrating the breadth of his skill and creativity across a range of media.

Ravilious is arguably best known for his distinctive watercolours, many of which are displayed here. He studied at the Royal College of Art from 1922 and was given open access to the nearby Victoria and Albert Museum to view works by earlier generations of English watercolourists.

He was a great admirer of artists whose works he saw there, such as Alfred Rich and Francis Towne, and while rooted in this tradition, Ravilious went on to develop a familiar yet modern style that was unmistakably his own.

[View paintings anticlockwise]

Eric Ravilious

Newt pond, 1932

Watercolour on paper

In 1931, when Edward Bawden and his wife Charlotte moved to Brick House in Great Bardfield, Essex, Ravilious and Tirzah Garwood would stay with them for extended periods. During this time, Ravilious painted the secluded pond at an orchard with a half-hipped barn roof visible over the wall.

Garwood remembered that the artist friends always 'competed with one another' and that 'they always worked very hard and got up very early in the morning' to work on their paintings.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Kirby Hall Fields No.1, c.1935

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Kirby Hall Fields is found in the Essex countryside outside of Great Bardfield and Castle Hedingham, where the artist and his wife, Tirzah lived with Edward and Charlotte Bawden in Brick House from 1932.

Ravilious choose to focus on the metal waterwheel and the dilapidated fence to aid the composition and illustrate human presence without depicting people. In doing so he was following the advice of the artist A.W. Rich who wrote in his manual Watercolour Painting 'If the foreground is entirely void of interest, something must be introduced'.

Acquired with the assistance of the Victoria & Albert Museum
Purchase Grant Fund

Eric Ravilious

Lombardy Poplars, 1935

Watercolour on paper

This painting features Ravilious' characteristic feather like trees, however, the work seems different to his other notable compositions. There is an absence of any man-made structure – a frequent motif he used to draw the eye into the work – instead Ravilious adds depth by blackening the space between the trees. His nod to human intervention is subtle and found in the four cut tree stumps in the foreground.

The bequest of Gwen Ledger

Eric Ravilious

Cuckmere Haven, 1939

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Painted in 1939, Cuckmere Haven is one of Ravilious' most iconic images. His rhythmic lines echo the lines of the downs and valley, capturing the space and atmosphere of the Sussex landscape, where the Cuckmere River meanders before flowing into the English Channel.

As in most of his work, Ravilious suggests human intervention in the surrounding landscape through the inclusion of the fence and road winding around the hill and the horizontal line across the river that marks an artificial bank.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Dungeness Lighthouse, 1938

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Drawn to structures in the landscape, the isolated subject of a lighthouse adds a strong vertical line to the composition amid a wide expansion of land and sea. Ravilious painted lighthouses at Belle Tout, Beachy Head, Newhaven and Rye.

In late 1938 Ravilious visited his friends the Tuely's near Rye.

That evening he wrote to them in a high wind from 'The Bungalow, Dungeness': 'I did enjoy the afternoon and it was nice seeing you again. Thank you for bringing me out here – even if I only explored the place it would be well worth it...

These are the best lighthouses I know'.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Cross the space to the wall on your left.]

Eric Ravilious

Train Going Over a Bridge at Night, 1935

Watercolour and pencil on paper

The deep blue and brown colours in this painting alongside the glowing yellow of the train windows are unusual compared to Ravilious' typically more muted palette, but it captures the excitement and romance of nighttime travel. The train puffs over the bridge crossing the country lane near his home in Castle Hedingham, Essex, from which Ravilious painted the scene, showing the train from the perspective of those on the road.

Ravilious was not a car driver so he frequently travelled by train and they are a recurring motif in his work.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Mackerel Sky, 1938

Watercolour and pencil on paper

A 'mackerel sky' is a term describing rows of clouds that look like the rippling scales of mackerel fish.

This watercolour by Ravilious shows fishing boats beached on shoreline with an anchor on the ground. Ravilious created this work whilst visiting the Essex and Suffolk coastline in 1938.

Originally sold for fifteen guineas to a private collector, it had not been seen publicly for over eighty years and was suspected missing, until several years ago when it was rediscovered and exhibited in Hastings.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Anchor and Boats, 1938

Watercolour on paper

Rye Harbour provided the inspiration for three compositions by Ravilious in August 1938, Room at the William the Conqueror, Rye Harbour and Anchor and Boats.

Ravilious lodged at the William the Conqueror pub for three days while he worked on the paintings. Each one featured the harbour lighthouse in the distance from a different angle. In this work, Ravilious' focus is on the wooden boats grounded on the shore, surrounded by discarded metal objects and part of an anchor. He skilfully uses his dry brush technique to depict the sand and shingle of the beach.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Cross the room diagonally to the beginning of the timeline.

View left to right on the wall, followed by the cabinet directly below, again view left to right.]

[Wall]

[Painting] Phyllis Dodd (1899–1995), Portrait of Eric Ravilious, 1929. Oil on canvas. On loan from a Private Collection

1903 Eric William Ravilious born on 22 July in Acton, London.

1907 The Ravilious family move to Eastbourne.

1914 Attended Eastbourne Boys Municipal Secondary School until 1919.

1919 Studied at Eastbourne School of Art until 1922.

[Cabinet below, left to right]

Eric Ravilious

Top: Drawing of a Blackburn Monoplane from Ravilious' school sketchbook, aged 12, 1915 Reproduction

Original sketchbook held at East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office at The Keep

Top right: Photograph of Ravilious aged 8 or 9, c.1912

Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Right: Mermaid Street, Rye, December 1924,

Pencil on paper. Towner Collection. Acquired 1971

Bottom: Timetable for Eric Ravilious' studies at Eastbourne Art School, 1920

Original held at East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record
Office at The Keep

Above left: Photograph of Eastbourne School of Art (inside the
Technical Institute & Library, Grove Road), c.1904

Above right: Eastbourne Art School Bomb Damage, 1954

The Eastbourne Technical Institute was built on the corner of
Grove and Old Orchard Road in 1904, it housed a library,
museum and art school where Ravilious first studied art and
would later return to teach wood engraving. In a heavy
bombing raid during the Second World War the building
sustained irrevocable damage. Everything that could be
salvaged was moved to a temporary library on the seafront,
the institute was eventually demolished in January 1954.

Eastbourne Heritage Collections

Tirzah Garwood

Top right: Art School, 1927

Wood engraving; ink on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Bottom: Photograph of Eric Ravilious and Oliver Senior at
Birling Gap, (taken whilst teaching at Eastbourne Art School),
c.1926-30. Towner Archive

[Wall]

[Picture] Eric Ravilious, Study of a Sussex Woodland, c.1924.

Pastel on paper. Towner Collection

1922 Won a scholarship and studied for three years at the
Royal College of Art (RCA) London, in the design school.

1924 Passed RCA diploma examination with a Distinction.

Visited Italy on a travelling scholarship.

1925 Exhibited wood engravings at the Redfern Gallery, London. Began teaching at Eastbourne School of Art. Elected to the Society of Wood Engravers; nominated by Paul Nash.

[Painting] Eric Ravilious, Road by a Church, Litlington, Sussex, c.1927. Watercolour and pencil on paper.

Towner Collection. Acquired 2009

[Cabinet below, left to right]

Eric Ravilious

Design and Engraved Plate for the Cover of RCA Students' Magazine Gallimaufry, published by the Royal College of Art, 1925

Far left: Collage; watercolour, ink and pencil on paper

Middle: Engraved steel plate on hard wood block

Left: Magazine; ink on paper

Gallimaufry ('a confused jumble or delightful medley') featured a cover design by Ravilious as well as his wood engraving Sussex Church inside. With contributions from his fellow students Edward Bawden, Enid Marx and Douglas Percy Bliss, who also edited the edition.

Far right: Eric Ravilious

Engraved Wood Block for Sussex Church, 1924

Far left, middle and left: On loan from a Private Collection

Far right: Towner Collection. Jointly acquired by Towner and the Fry Art Gallery, 2025; purchased with support from the Arts Council England/V&A Museum Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, and Eastbourne Arts Circle

[Wall]

1927 Ravilious, Edward Bawden and Douglas Percy Bliss exhibited together at St George's Gallery, London.

1928 Began a mural commission for the refectory at Morley College with Edward Bawden, completed in 1929 and officially opened in 1930.

1930 Married Tirzah Garwood on 5 July at the Scotch Church in Kensington followed by honeymoon in Cornwall. Moved to Hammersmith, overlooking the River Thames.

1932 Moved to Brick House, Great Bardfield, Essex, with Edward Bawden and his wife Charlotte.

[Cabinet below, left to right]

Far left: Eric Ravilious' wood engraving tools, c.1920s

Left, top to bottom: Eric Ravilious

Grass and Flowers Print for 'Desert: a Legend' with hand colouring, 1926

Engraved Wood Block for 'Desert: a Legend', 1926

Engraved Wood Block and Print for May (Grasses) for 'The Twelve Moneths', 1928

Above left to right: Eric Ravilious

Print for Zwemmer Gallery, 1933

Print for the 'The Hansom Cab and the Pigeons', 1935

[Credit Line] Far left; (Left) top; middle; bottom; (Above) left; right: On loan from a Private Collection. Block for May: Towner Collection. Jointly acquired by Towner and the Fry Art Gallery, 2025; purchased with support from the Arts Council

England/V&A Museum Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, and Eastbourne Arts Circle

Zwemmer Gallery catalogue and invitation card for 1933 exhibition

The pencil annotations are by Robert Wellington, manager of the Zwemmer Gallery. From the thirty-eight works listed, nineteen were sold during the exhibition and a selection were kept by the gallery to sell.

On loan from East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office at The Keep, RAV/9/2/3.

[Wall]

1933 First solo exhibition at Zwemmer Gallery, London.

Included 36 watercolours. Painted mural for the Tea Room of the Midland Hotel, Morecambe, with Tirzah.

[Print] Eric Ravilious, Title Page and Headpieces, Kynoch Press Note Book 1933.

Wood engravings; ink on paper.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Next wall]

1934 Made first visit to Furlongs, near Lewes, the house owned by his friend, the artist Peggy Angus. Made a number of watercolour paintings of the Sussex Downs. Moved with Tirzah to Castle Hedingham, Essex.

1935 First son, John born in June. Made a further five visits to Furlongs including a painting trip to Newhaven with Edward Bawden. Produced first designs for Wedgwood.

1936 Second solo exhibition at Zwemmer Gallery, London, includes 35 watercolours and several designs. Produced Wedgwood Coronation design (Edward VIII), and engravings for London Transport Board.

[Print] Eric Ravilious, Ribbon rosette design for Everyman Library, 1935. Wood engraving; ink on paper. On loan from a Private Collection

[Cabinet below, left to right]

Zwemmer Gallery catalogue and invitation card for 1936 exhibition

The pencil notes were likely made by Tirzah, as the buyers are identified by their familiar names.

The location of Coalyard is unknown, there are several Ravilious watercolours that are considered missing.

On loan from East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office at The Keep, RAV/9/2/3.

Towner Art Gallery Minute Book, 1933-1937

Arthur Reeve-Fowkes's 'Curator's Report' from 28 February 1936 details the purchase of Dolly Engine and Downs in Winter. The latter is listed as Winter Landscape, Sussex in the exhibition catalogue.

Towner Archive

[Wall]

1937 Made designs for the British Pavilion at the International Exhibition in Paris.

1938 High Street published by Noel Carrington's, Country Life. Undertook painting expeditions to Aldeburgh in Suffolk, Rye in Sussex and Dungeness in Kent.

[Print] Eric Ravilious, Beautiful Britain Country Life Calendar 1939, 1938.

1939 Member of the selection panel for the Artists International Association exhibition Britain Today. Stayed in Eastbourne; painted Beachy Head and Belle Tout Lighthouse. Solo exhibition at Tooth's Gallery, London. Second son, James born in August. War is declared, volunteered to join Royal Observer Corps. Began chalk figures series visiting Dorset, Sussex, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire.

[Cabinet below, left to right]

Photograph by Norman Parkinson of Eric Ravilious in front of the tennis display for the 1937 Paris exhibition, 1937

Eric Ravilious

Trade card for Dunbar Hay, 1937 Lithograph; ink on card (post wood engraving)

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Above: 'Victory' design for a Curtain or Chintz, undated

Watercolour and ink

Right: Drawing for the catalogue for the British Pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1939

Pencil

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Prints for the British Pavilion catalogue, New York World's Fair, 1939

Wood engraving; ink on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious' family home in Charleston Road, Eastbourne, c.1940 Photograph

Eric Ravilious in uniform with his parents Emma and Frank in their garden, c.1940 Photograph

Towner Archive

[Wall]

1940 Appointed in February as an Official War Artist by the War Artists' Advisory Committee and assigned to the Admiralty. Despatched to Chatham Dockyards then to Sheerness in Kent. Joined crew of HMS Highlander on expedition to Norway and Arctic Circle. Visited Eastbourne and painted Newhaven coastal defences.

1941 Completed Submarine lithographs. Daughter, Anne born in April. Family moved to Ironbridge Farm, Shalford, Essex. Second posting with Royal Navy at Dover and in Scotland.

1942 Postings with Royal Air Force to Yorkshire, Essex and Hertfordshire. Began his third commission as a War Artist,

attached to the Air Ministry. Arrived at RAF Kaldadarnes, Iceland. Joined air-sea rescue mission on 2 September which failed to return. Reported missing presumed dead, aged 39.

[Print] A Young Airman, illustration for '54 Conceits' by Martin Armstrong, 1933. Wood engraving, ink on paper.

On loan from a Private Collection.

[Cabinet below, left to right]

Eric Ravilious

Fragments of unfinished watercolour sketches, undated

Watercolour on paper

Soldiers watching a demonstration, 1939–42

Pencil on tracing paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Flight Lieutenant 'Ginge' Culver's RAF Logbook, 1935–1942

Ravilious accompanied a crew of four on 2 September 1942 to search for a Hudson aircraft reported missing. He had arrived at RAF Kaldadarnes, in Reykjavik the previous afternoon and met Flt Lt Culver, who aged twenty-five was already an experienced pilot. 'Ginge' Culver was in temporary command of half the squadron and about to be promoted to Squadron Leader. He had the authority to invite Ravilious to join the search and rescue mission from which they did not return.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Paintings on next wall; left, top and bottom]

Eric Ravilious

Tents by an Airfield, 1941-42

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Ravilious destroyed many of his uncompleted works but this one remains. It offers an insight into how he created his watercolours showing an uncoloured sketch of a tent and airplanes on the right. The propeller on the plane on the runway gives a sense of its imminent take off. His work had previously been criticized as static and here is a possible attempt by Ravilious to capture a sense of motion.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Road by an Airfield, 1942

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Over six months in 1942, Ravilious worked at seven different RAF stations. Some of these were chosen for their proximity to Shalford in Essex, enabling Ravilious to be closer to home during two periods when Tirzah, who had a mastectomy that February, was first in hospital and then recuperating from operations.

A number of the drawings Ravilious made during this time feature machinery at rest amid ground operations; subject matter that threatened repetition and which led him to write: 'I feel bored with pictures of planes on the ground and want to go flying'.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Paintings on the right, top then bottom]

Eric Ravilious

View Through Propeller, 1942

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Ravilious had the opportunity to fly for the first time during an extended visit to John and Christine Nash in Scotland, where John, no longer a War Artist, was stationed.

Having had his fill of naval subjects, Ravilious was soon pressing the WAAC to transfer him from the Navy to a Royal Air Force posting.

He found the experience of flying exhilarating, but it presented a new artistic challenge, as he told Helen Binyon, 'air pictures don't have enough horizontals or verticals. They are all clouds and patterned fields and bits and pieces of planes'.

Towner Collection. Acquired in 1998 with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund, National Art Collections Fund and Friends of the Towner.

Eric Ravilious

Bomb Defusing Equipment: (Unfinished), c.1940

Watercolour and pencil on paper

In February 1940, whilst posted to the Royal Naval Barracks at Chatham, Kent, Ravilious went to Whitstable with a naval party to defuse a German magnetic mine.

From this he produced the painting *Dangerous Work at Low Tide* as well as two paintings, including this one, of the bomb-defusing equipment. It has been suggested that this was an idea for a future lithograph for an unspecified and never realised project

Afterwards he wrote to Helen Binyon: 'oh the still life of buoys, anchors, chains and wreckage. I must try to remember what I am here for.'

On loan from a Private Collection

[Text panel]

At the declaration of the Second World War in September 1939, National Gallery director Sir Kenneth Clark set up the War Artists Advisory Committee (WAAC) to be responsible for commissioning the work of Britain's Official War Artists – a position for which Ravilious applied.

Following ten weeks with the Royal Observer Corps at a post near Castle Hedingham, he received his first commission as a War Artist with the Royal Navy in December 1939. In early 1940 this became a full-time salaried position. Appointed an Honorary Royal Marine

Captain, Ravilious began his service at Chatham Dockyards, fulfilling assignments in Gosport, Grimsby and Newhaven, as well as an expedition to Norway documenting naval operations during the campaign against German forces.

Whilst posted to the Royal Naval Air Station in Dundee, Ravilious had requested a trip to Iceland, somewhere he was keen to visit and paint. This was approved by the Air Ministry and he arrived at RAF Kaldadarnes on 1 September 1942.

Early the next morning, Ravilious joined as an observer on a flight with four other men from the base who were sent out on a search and rescue mission for another aircraft. In the increasingly poor weather conditions Ravilious' plane was also lost and he was declared missing, presumed dead.

[Move to the closest room, turn immediately left]

[Text panel]

A young Eric Ravilious moved with his family from West London to Eastbourne in 1907 when his father relocated his antiques business. Living in Eastbourne during the First World War, Ravilious would sketch planes flying over Hampden Park near where the

Royal Flying Corps ran a training school. When attending secondary school, the art master recognised Ravilious' early talent for drawing and, although his mother hoped he might enter a career in the Post Office, he was offered a scholarship in 1919 to study at Eastbourne School of Art.

This was a turning point for Ravilious that shaped his future path. During art school he spent time on painting trips, walking the Downs and the Sussex countryside with his student friends Donald Towner and John Lake.

In 1922 on a second scholarship, Ravilious started at the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London, where the artist Paul

Nash was one of his tutors. After graduating from the RCA three years later, Ravilious returned to Eastbourne where he took up a part-time teaching post at the art school, living once again with his parents. It was while teaching at Eastbourne that Ravilious met and later married one of his students, Eileen 'Tirzah' Garwood (1908–1951), a talented artist who specialised in wood engraving.

Top:

John Gascoigne Lake (1903-1975)

'Pelissier and Mariane' a play by J.C. Squire, 1931

Wood engraving; ink on paper

Ravilious studied at Eastbourne Art School with John Lake and Donald Towner. The three friends enjoyed painting excursions over the South Downs. On these trips, they carried the painting equipment on their bicycles, and Lake recalled how they 'slept on the Downs, in sheds, garages, barns and on haystacks'. All

three went on to study at the Royal College of Art, and Lake later became the Towner Art Gallery's curator (1947-58).

Donald Towner was the great nephew of John Towner; whose bequest of twenty paintings resulted in the founding of the Towner Art Gallery in 1923.

Towner Collection

Bottom:

Oliver Senior (1880-1944) Birling Gap, 1920s

Watercolour and pastel on paper

Eastbourne Art School teacher Oliver Senior taught Eric

Ravilious, John Lake, Donald Towner and later Tirzah

Garwood. Lake recalled that Senior 'mixed his own pastel colours using gum Arabic' and referred to him as 'the finest pastel artist of his day'.

A photograph dated c.1926-30 shows Ravilious and Senior sitting on the beach at Birling Gap, possibly taken during the school trip on which this painting was made.

Towner Collection

Eric Ravilious

Pond at East Dean Farm, c.1927

Watercolour and pencil on paper

This is one of two works of Birling Manor Farm that Ravilious made during a painting trip with his art school students. They were exhibited in 1927 at the St. George's Gallery, London alongside paintings by Edward Bawden and Douglas Percy Bliss.

Here Ravilious' focus is on the heavy shadows cast over the rooftops, land and pond. Comparatively, the other work shows the pond devoid of detail, his attention focused instead on the

swathes of grass in the foreground. Both works build on his understanding of wood engraving to contrast areas of texture and blocks of light and shade.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Hampden Park, c.1928

Watercolour and pencil on paper

In 1909 Ravilious' family rented a semi-detached house near Eastbourne's Hampden Park, and he spent time playing in the fields behind it. Returning to the park in 1928, he painted a figure sitting on a park bench amongst the trees and plants. Whilst not proven, it has been suggested that the figure might be Tirzah Garwood, his student at the Eastbourne School of Art and later his wife. Unusually for Ravilious, who

largely avoided painting detailed figures in his watercolours, he has depicted her facial features and elements of her outfit.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Next blue wall]

Tirzah Garwood

The Relations: The Crocodile; The Wife; The Dog Show; The Cousin; The Grandmother; The Vegetable Garden, 1929.

Wood engraving; ink on paper

Ravilious taught engraving at the art school and found his student, Tirzah Garwood's work to be exceptional.

In 1929 the Curwen Press, looking to promote new artists 'to add zest to our work', asked Garwood to create twelve designs for their calendar. She created The Relations, and The Daughter (later titled The Crocodile). The calendar was never published, but a 1930 article 'The New Wood Cut' recognised

that she had 'humour, originality in choice and treatment of subject, and technical accomplishment' as well as sharing in Ravilious' 'tricksiness'.

On loan from a Private Collection

Tirzah Garwood

Top: High Street Kensington, 1929

Bottom: The Train Journey, 1929

Wood engraving; ink on paper

High Street Kensington was originally titled The Aunt. It shows a younger version of Tirzah visiting London (with a suitcase initialled T.G.) but she is eclipsed by her Aunt in the foreground amongst the crowd. This engraving may indicate Garwood exploring motifs which would become more significant in her later works: mannequins and horses as playthings, and the animation of dolls and models.

Top: Gift in memory of Richard Lowndes. Towner Collection.

Acquired 2025

Bottom: On loan from a Private Collection

[Text panel]

Whilst at the Royal College of Art in the summer term of 1923, Eric Ravilious signed up for classes in the Engraving School. His teacher Sir Frank Short thought he was a 'clever student' who was 'experimenting a good deal'. Paul Nash went on to propose Ravilious as a member of the Society of Wood Engravers which had recently been founded in 1920.

After graduating from the RCA, and at home with his parents in Eastbourne, Ravilious would spend hours engraving. Tirzah Garwood, who became an accomplished engraver herself, would also have a profound influence on his craft. Garwood described how he whistled while he worked, and the family canary would 'sit on his head or flutter on his fingers'. Ravilious

was skilled at creating light and vibrancy in his designs, making the cuts and marks that would translate into the effects he wanted on the finished engraving. Like many of his RCA contemporaries, he often incorporated a more modernist sensibility into his commercial print commissions, using traditional techniques but experimenting with image structure and form. Engraving proved to be a good and helpful source of income early in his career.

Eric Ravilious

Woodland Outside Florence, 1925 Wood engraving; ink on paper

Before leaving for Italy on a travel scholarship in early 1925 Ravilious completed his first accomplished block Sussex Church – the design featured in the RCA student magazine Gallimaufry published later in 1925.

Ravilious spent two months in Florence with a group that included Henry Moore and Robert Lyon (also on art scholarships). As evidence of his diligence and to release further funds Ravilious was required to post work to William Rothenstein the RCA principal. He sent this print and two others Road near Florence and San Gimignano.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Manor Garden, 1927

Wood engraving; ink on paper

Ravilious rarely depicts people in his watercolours but they appear more often in his wood engravings; his style in this medium allowing him to illustrate figures through design.

Manor Garden shows tennis players carrying racquets and strolling past a man-made mound. This mound is the grave of

a horse and can still be found, largely unchanged, in Manor Gardens in Old Town, Eastbourne.

Towner Collection. Acquired 1986

Eric Ravilious

Boy Birdnesting, 1927

Wood engraving; ink on paper

Towner Collection. Gift of the Victoria & Albert Museum.

Acquired 1979

Eric Ravilious

Left: Illustrations from the 1929 Almanack, 1928

Left top: Aries (April); Sagittarius (December); Andromeda (July); Serpentarius (November)

Left bottom: Aquarius (February); Virgo (August); Orion (January); Pegasus (September)

Wood engraving; ink on paper

Ravilious was commissioned to create twelve zodiac illustrations for the Lanston Monotype's almanack. He grounded his astrological designs in the Sussex countryside. In his preface, Ravilious wrote about the influence of the zodiac on agricultural seasons 'The deities who became symbolised in the planets were thought to govern the change of the seasons and thus the agricultural labours of each month.' He also changed the symbols of the Goat, Crab, Lion and Scorpion for 'more interesting constellations outside the Belt.'

Towner Collection and on loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Libra (October), Illustration from the 1929 Almanack, 1928.

Wood engraving; ink on paper

Ravilious' design for Libra features a portrait of Tirzah Garwood reading in a chair while Libra's scales sway above her.

Eric Ravilious

Illustrations for 54 Conceits by Martin Armstrong, 1933

Top: An Athlete

Bottom: An Explorer

Wood engraving; ink on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Top: Church Under a Hill. Design used to illustrate The History of the Woodcut by John Nash, 1927

Wood engraving; ink on paper

The church depicted here is the parish church of St Michael the Archangel at Litlington in Sussex. Ravilious made a pencil and wash drawing of the church in preparation for the engraving, carefully constructing the design prior to beginning to engrave the wood block. The work was shown in the eighth exhibition of the Society of Wood Engravers in 1928. Douglas Percy Bliss wrote of the work that it 'shows a direct and uncompromising use of linear systems in affording textures'.

Towner Collection, Acquired 1971

Eric Ravilious

Bottom: Sussex Landscape, 1931

Wood engraving; ink on paper

Whilst many of Ravilious' wood engravings were produced for commissions, he also produced works such as this, for exhibiting purposes. Sussex Landscape was included in the twelfth exhibition of the Society of Wood Engravers in 1931. By

this time, Ravilious had established a strong reputation as an engraver, and an impression was also sent to the Art Institute of Chicago for their annual Exhibition of Lithography and Engraving held in 1931 and 1932. Later, Redfern Publishing Company saw the commercial potential of Ravilious' design, producing a Christmas card with the image in 1933.

Towner Collection. The bequest of Gwen Ledger. Acquired 2017

[Cabinet below prints, view left to right]

Eric Ravilious

Manor Gardens, 1927

Engraved wood block

Jointly acquired by Towner and the Fry Art Gallery, 2025;
purchased with support from the Arts Council England/V&A

Museum Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, and Eastbourne Arts
Circle

Eric Ravilious

Boy Birdnesting, 1927

Engraved wood block

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Dr Faustus Conjuring Mephostophillis: from the Legion Book,
1929

Wood engraving; ink on paper and engraved wood block.

Left: On loan from a Private Collection

Right: Jointly acquired by Towner and the Fry Art Gallery, 2025;
purchased with support from the Arts Council England/ V&A

Museum Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, and Eastbourne Arts Circle.

Eric Ravilious

16 Devices for Everyman's Library, for J.M. Dent & Sons,
1935. Wood Engraving; ink on paper

Towner Collection

Nicholas Nickleby by Charles Dickens Everyman's Library 238.
J.M. Dent & Sons, 1935

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Engraved Wood Blocks for 54 Conceits by Martin Armstrong,
Published by Martin Secker, 1933

Top: An Athlete; Design for A Sun Worshipper, Pg 30

Bottom: An Explorer; Design for A Highwayman, Pg 38

Both on loan from a Private Collection

Engraved Wood Blocks for 54 Conceits by Martin Armstrong,

Published by Martin Secker, 1933

Middle top: A Suicide; Design for A Crew Lost at Sea, Pg 22

Middle bottom: A Chemist; Design for A Coquette, Pg 23

Both jointly acquired by Towner and the Fry Art Gallery, 2025;

purchased with support from the Arts Council England/V&A

Museum Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, and Eastbourne Arts

Circle.

Eric Ravilious

Sussex Landscape, 1931

Engraved wood block

Jointly acquired by Towner and the Fry Art Gallery, 2025;
purchased with support from the Arts Council England/V&A
Museum Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, and Eastbourne Arts
Circle.

[Bookshelves, start with the top shelf, view left to right]

Eric Ravilious - Wood engraving commissions

Consequences; A Complete Story in the Manner of the Old
Parlour Game in Nine Chapters, each by a different author.
Published by The Golden Cockerel Press, London, 1932

On loan from a private collection

English Wits; ed. Leonard Russell Published by Hutchinson,
1940.

On loan from a private collection

The British Pavilion; New York World Fair, 1939

On loan from a private collection

Pavilion of the United Kingdom; Paris, 1937

On loan from a private collection

[2nd Shelf, left to right]

The Twelve Moneths by Nicholas Breton Published by The
Golden Cockerel Press, 1927.

On loan from a private collection

March, pg 6. The Twelve Moneths by Nicholas Breton.

Published by The Golden Cockerel Press, 1927.

On loan from a private collection

The Hansom Cab and the Pigeons by

L.A.G Strong. Published by The Golden Cockerel Press, 1935.

On loan from a private collection

[3rd Shelf, left to right]

June (Gemini); Almanack. Published by Lanston Monotype Corporation, 1929. Towner Collection

Wisden Cricketers Almanack. Published by Whitaker & Sons, London, 1938. On loan from a private collection

A Crew Lost at Sea, Pg 22, and A Coquette, Pg 23. Fifty-Four Conceits by Martin Armstrong. Published by Martin Secker, 1933. Towner Collection, gift of Ashton Rare Books

[Bottom shelf: left to right]

Country Walks by Charles White Published by London
Transport, 1936 On loan from a private collection

The Kitchen Garden in February, pg 37. Country Life
Cookbook by Ambrose Heath. Published by Country Life
limited, 1937. On loan from a private collection

The Time Machine and the Wheels of Chance by H.G. Wells.
Everyman's Library 915. Published by J.M. Dent & Sons, 1935.
On loan from a private collection

[Move to the blue back wall]

[Text panel]

Eric Ravilious made his first visit to Furlongs in February
1934. The flint-faced shepherd's cottage in the Downs near

Firle was rented by his friend, the artist, Peggy Angus. He returned later that summer for six weeks with Tirzah Garwood who remembered Angus being 'very hospitable' as 'streams of friends came to stay at Furlongs, sleeping in tents or on the straw mattresses inside'. Visitors included artists Percy and Lydia Horton, and Charlotte and Edward Bawden. Ravilious and Garwood contemplated a permanent move back to Sussex, but with no immediately available accommodation and Garwood being pregnant they made their home instead at Bank House in Castle Hedingham, Essex. Ravilious continued to spend time at Furlongs having begun an affair with another artist friend of Peggy's, Helen Binyon, herself a frequent visitor to Sussex.

It was a creatively productive time for Ravilious, encouraged by Binyon and Angus, and the circle of artists at Furlongs. Many of his artworks from this period were brought together for his second solo exhibition at the Zwemmer Gallery in 1936 where

Towner purchased two of his Sussex landscapes.

[Move to the wall covered with Peggy Angus wallpaper]

Eric Ravilious

Dolly Engine, 1934

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Dolly Engine depicts the Asham Cement Works near Lewes and was made while Ravilious was staying with Peggy Angus at Furlongs in 1934. He focuses on the small train used to pull the carts around the tracks of the cement works and has captured its odd character; the small wheels, long chimney, and open-cab design, reminiscent of childhood toys.

The artwork was purchased for the Towner Collection in 1936, during the artist's lifetime, from his solo exhibition at the Zwemmer Gallery, London.

Towner Collection. Acquired 1936

Peggy Angus

Asham Cement Works, 1934

Oil on canvas

Peggy Angus was the daughter of a railway engineer and became fascinated with the cement works at Asham, near Lewes, with its railway tracks curving into the hillside, the engines carrying materials, and the workers engaged in their industrial activities. Angus requested permission to paint at the cement works with Ravilious, which they did on several occasions, resulting in a number of successful paintings for both artists. Ravilious later wrote to Angus encouraging her to keep painting similar subjects, as 'It is I'm sure one of your best works, and such very nice colour'.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Drawing of a Sunflower, c.1932

Pencil on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Furlongs, 1934

Watercolour and pencil on paper

In 1934 the south of England was in a period of severe drought which bleached the downland and prompted Ravilious to reflect that 'the colour [is] so lovely and the design so beautifully obvious' and added, 'I wished I liked the Essex landscape as much as I like Furlongs'.

For several decades this painting hung over one of the mantelpieces in Furlongs sited on top of Angus' hand- printed ochre coloured wallpaper design Corn Stooks.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Shepherd's Cottage (The Lay), 1934

Watercolour and pencil on paper

'The Lay' was the neighbouring cottage to Peggy Angus' house Furlongs and of similar design. It shared the lane in which Ravilious would eventually park the two caravans that he found at the nearby Asham Cement Works.

Tirzah and Eric repurposed the First World War fever wagons (a cart used to confine infectious patients) and temporarily used one as a bedroom and the other as Ravilious' studio.

On loan from a Private Collection

John Piper (1903-1992)

Seaford Head, 1933

Ink, oil and wash with collage on paper

John Piper was another artist to spend time at Furlongs. In 1933 Piper spent days working alongside Peggy Angus near the Seven Sisters and then returning to Furlongs where he used his sketchbook and papers to make his collages. The use of newsprint to depict the chalk cliffs highlights the fragility of the landscape.

He continued to visit Furlongs and stay regularly in Sussex, resulting in a significant body of works of the Downland landscape, the cottages and harbour at Rye, and urban scenes around Brighton.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Floor case facing the Peggy Angus wallpapered wall, begin with the case with the cat in it. View left to right]

Eric Ravilious

Muggery Pope, 1934

Watercolour and pencil on paper

‘Muggery Pope’, or ‘Poke’ as it was humorously referred to by Ravilious and Angus, was an abandoned farmstead, near Furlongs, which Eric and Tirzah briefly considered renovating in 1934. As with many of his works, the unfinished watercolour was torn up by Ravilious, who was dissatisfied with its progress. Peggy Angus retrieved the work, re-mounted the pieces onto backing paper and placed the work on her bedroom wall at Furlongs where it hung for fifty-nine years.

On loan from a Private Collection

Peggy Angus

Cat, pre 1953

Hand-painted ceramic

This ceramic cat used to hang on the wall of Peggy Angus' kitchen at Furlongs above the mantelpiece. Angus also used cats as a motif in some of her hand-printed pattern work. This ceramic cat can be seen in the background of a 1953 photograph by Edwin Smith and in Angus' paintings of her kitchen, hanging next to her wallpaper.

On loan from a Private Collection

Peggy Angus

'Corn Stooks' and 'Twist' hand- printed wallpaper reclaimed from Furlongs, c.1950-70

Lino print; ink on paper

Peggy Angus preferred to hand print her wallpapers herself and was an admirer of the Arts and Crafts movement. As she explained, 'No two prints, even from the same block, are exactly alike. The subtle irregularity in the pressure of the printer's hand can never be matched by the machine.' Her

socialist beliefs caused Garwood's father to describe Angus as 'a Bolshie woman', but her patrons were enamoured with her bespoke commissions and artistic life at Furlongs. Corn Stooks was first designed for Angus' friend, artist and writer Olive Cook.

Towner Collection

[Move to the case opposite, view left to right, top to bottom]

All the wood blocks in this case have been jointly acquired by Towner and the Fry Art Gallery, 2025; purchased with support from the Arts Council England/V&A Museum Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, and Eastbourne Arts Circle

Tirzah Garwood

Drawing and Print for 'Toadstools and Beetle', 1927

Left: Pencil on paper. Right: Ink on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Tirzah Garwood

Drawing and Print for 'A Snail and Bee', 1927

Left: Pencil on paper. Right: Ink on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Tirzah Garwood

Top: A Bee Washing His Back, 1927

Bottom: A Snail and Bee, 1927

Both engraved wood block

Eric Ravilious

'Hermit' Illustration for 'Desert: a Legend' by Martin Armstrong.

Published by Jonathan Cape, London, 1926

Engraved wood block and ink on paper print

Print: Towner Collection.

Top left: Eric Ravilious

Block and Print for Girl with Palms, Illustration for dust-wrapper
for Flower Phantoms by Ronald Fraser, 1926

Left: Engraved wood block. Right: Ink on paper

Right, middle: Eric Ravilious

‘A Watchmaker’ Illustration for 54 Conceits by Martin
Armstrong, 1933. Engraved wood block

Right, bottom: Eric Ravilious

Weekly Intelligence Report featuring Whale and Mermaid;
Britannia; Barrage Balloon; Ship’s Screw, 1942. Engraved
wood block

[Turn left, move to the white wall beyond the wallpaper wall]

Eric Ravilious

Beachy Head (Unfinished), c.1939

Pencil and watercolour on paper

Eric Ravilious wrote that he hoped often to return to Beachy Head to draw. He explained in a letter to the artist Diana Low that, 'It is a good sight in the sun and a considerable variety of scene - an immense bar of light on the sea is splendid and must be done. I began work there on a projecting bit of cliff about four yards square, but flat and comfortable, and looked into the eye of the sun as long as it could be borne'. This unfinished work offers an insight into Ravilious' technique and style of watercolour composition. Areas are filled in one at a time with accompanying notes indicating colour and tone.

Towner Collection. Acquired 1978

Eric Ravilious

Lighthouses at Newhaven, 1935

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Ravilious returned to Newhaven in July 1935 and began working on a dozen watercolours including a view of the West Pier Lighthouse from behind the rail line. It was a week of blue skies and would have been perfect for working outside.

Lighthouses at Newhaven, as with many of Ravilious' watercolours, has a stillness created in part by the precision of every painted element. However, the sweeping railway line seems to suggest movement and leads the eye across the scene.

Towner Collection. Acquired with the assistance of the Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund. Acquired 1969

[Text panel]

Newhaven Harbour was close to Peggy Angus' home Furlongs, and provided Ravilious with a pleasing opportunity to paint ships, boats and marine equipment. During the 1930s, the Sussex port was a site of considerable maritime activity, with lighthouse keepers documenting up to fifty harbour movements per day including the large Channel steamers.

Ravilious made his first painting trip to Newhaven in 1934 and returned for two weeks in summer 1935 with Edward Bawden, staying at the Hope Inn which overlooked the harbour and Ouse estuary. By this time Ravilious saw watercolour painting as central to his future as an artist and had built a considerable body of work. The aim of this extended Newhaven trip was to create at least a dozen more paintings to secure his next solo exhibition at the Zwemmer Gallery.

It was such a successful trip that he and Bawden returned in September of 1935. This time, severe storms and driving rain

prevented outdoor work, and the two friends did not get on as well, resulting in an early return to London for Ravilious.

Newhaven had, however, provided a wealth of successful images that inspired him and fed into his wood engravings and developing interest in lithography. His Newhaven Harbour lithograph was made in 1937 for the Contemporary Lithographs series.

[Paintings, top to bottom, move left to right]

Eric Ravilious

Channel Steamer Leaving Harbour, 1935

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Ravilious often took several weeks or even months to finish a watercolour. However, this one of the steamer SS Rouen captured as it left Newhaven for Dieppe, was completed at the Hope Inn within a day of the initial sketch.

Later in 1940, as an Official War Artist, he returned to Newhaven to paint the coastal defences under very different circumstances. The resulting works, many of which are in the collection of the Imperial War Museum, show how the coastline was fortified against the imminent threat of invasion by sea.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

James and The Foremost Prince, 1934

Watercolour and pencil on paper

The Sussex downland provided Ravilious with his most direct form of inspiration; however he was also attracted to scenes in which shapes and structures provided strong element of design; harbours and quaysides were therefore natural subjects for him to paint. Ravilious was perhaps further attracted to the scene because John Nash and Edward

Wadsworth, artists and contemporaries highly admired by Ravilious, also found in harbours a fertile ground for paintings.

On loan from a Private Collection

Edward Bawden

September 8.30pm (Newhaven), 1935

Watercolour and pencil on paper

During Bawden and Ravilious' second Newhaven trip in September 1935, there were storms and bad weather, in contrast to the glorious sunshine of their July visit. Ravilious left Newhaven early following a disagreement with his friend, but Bawden stayed on and produced a series of watercolours of the area.

This work was created from the vantage point of Fort Hill looking down at the channel steamers below with their bright lights reflected in the water.

Towner Collection. Acquired 2008, with assistance from The Art Fund, The Heritage Lottery Fund and Friends of the Towner

Edward Bawden

Newhaven Harbour, 1936

Watercolour and pencil on paper

Through working alongside each other on their Newhaven Harbour scenes, Bawden and Ravilious developed their styles more distinctly from each other. The architectural writer J M. Richards, husband of Peggy Angus, noted how Bawden was developing his 'spatial sense' opposed to Ravilious' 'concentration on pattern'.

On loan from a Private Collection

John Piper (1903-1992)

Newhaven, the Castle, 1936

Ink, oil and wash with collage on paper

John Piper visited Newhaven and took with him his portfolio of paper scraps, ink, scissors and glue. Many of Piper's south coast collages drew on accurate details but he would also assemble objects to give an approximate sense of the place—the Castle may have been the Hope Inn where Ravilious stayed. The newspaper pages used on the cliffs of this and other works from the series are from *The New Statesman* and *Nation*, December 1933; the articles referring to the political turmoil in Europe at the time.

Towner Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund; a V&A Purchase Grant Fund; Eastbourne Arts Circle; The Spencer Wills Trust; a donation in memory of Helen R Hallier; and additional public donations as part of the John Piper Appeal, September 2011.

[Next wall]

Eric Ravilious

Newhaven Harbour, 1937

Lithograph; ink on paper

In 1936 Ravilious was invited to create a poster-sized lithograph for a new company called Contemporary Lithographs established by artist John Piper and Robert Wellington from Zwemmer Gallery. It was the first lithograph Ravilious made using a previous Newhaven painting as a template. Piper described it as a 'summery kind of picture' while Ravilious ironically declared it an 'Homage to Seurat'.

On loan from a Private Collection

Barnett Freedman (1901-1958)

Chromoworks, 1940

Lithograph; ink on paper

Barnett Freedman, another Royal College of Art graduate and close friend of Ravilious, had become well known for commercial illustration and lithography. Freedman described his love for lithography with its 'immense range and strength of tonality that can be obtained, the clarity and precision of delicate and fine work and the delightful ease of manipulation by the artist'.

Like Ravilious, Freedman served as an Official War Artist. After the war he led the Lyon's tea shop lithographs scheme to revitalise their cafes as well as the homes of post war Britain by offering affordable art to the masses.

Gift of Professor Ian Rogerson. Acquired 2013

[Move to the final room, begin with the painting next to the text panel opposite]

Eric Ravilious

Kettle, Teapot, Breadboard, Matches, also known as Design for embroidery for Dunbar Hay, 1939 Watercolour and pencil on paper

The London-based design shop Dunbar Hay was founded in 1935 by Cecilia Dunbar-Kilburn and Athole Hay, to showcase modern English design. Cecilia recalled 'Edward Bawden and Barnett Freedman were well established. Eric Ravilious was not so well known, but he could design anything and was immensely interested in Dunbar Hay and our ideals'. This work combines the aesthetic of his Wedgwood designs with his observation of domestic objects. It was Ravilious' intention to 'try his hand at textile designing after the war' Cecilia wrote in 1972.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Text panel]

Having tea with Josiah Wedgwood in the Euston Hotel during 1936, Eric Ravilious came away delighted, having secured a commission to work for six weeks a year on Wedgwood ceramic designs. Ravilious believed that 'old Josiah's own patterns are the most perfect pottery designs I've seen', however, he later lamented that 'the family think my beautiful designs above the heads of their public ... to begin with something should be done which is safer and more understandable'. They eventually settled on a design to celebrate Edward VIII's coronation and fifty mugs were produced. Upon King Edward's abdication at the end of 1936, Wedgwood quickly changed 'ER' to 'GR' for the 1937 coronation of George VI.

The first batch, rendered redundant, were sent at Ravilious' request to his friends as Christmas gifts.

Ravilious developed his relationship with Wedgwood

and went on to design several dinner services including Persephone (1936) and Garden (1939). He also designed Travel in 1938, however this only went into production in 1952 after Ravilious' death. The nursery-ware series Alphabet (1937) features many motifs found in his other design and illustration work, whilst Boat Race Day (1938) was inspired by Ravilious and Garwood's time living by the River Thames in Hammersmith and the celebrations that followed the annual boat race.

[Designs on paper, view left to right, top to bottom]

Eric Ravilious

Above: Proposed design for Wedgwood Leaves and Greenhouse, 1936

Pencil and applied paper cut-outs of wood engravings on paper

Towner Collection. Acquired in 1998 with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund, National Art Collections Fund, MGC/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and Friends of the Towner.

Eric Ravilious

Top: Design for Wedgwood 'Afternoon Tea', 1937

Pencil and watercolour on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Bottom: Design for Wedgwood nurseryware 'Alphabet' mug, 1937

Pencil and watercolour on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious and Tirzah Garwood

Top: Six Cups, Proposed design for Wedgwood, 1937

Pencil and applied paper cut-outs of wood engravings on paper

The patterned paper used to create the surface for each cup is the work of Tirzah Garwood, originally designed as end papers (to line the inside of hardback book covers). They are successful as flat designs on paper, however, cannot be produced as the sides of the cup taper and the pattern distorts.

Towner Collection. Acquired in 1998 with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund, National Art Collections Fund, MGC/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and Friends of the Towner.

Eric Ravilious

Bottom: Proposed design for Wedgwood cup and saucer, 1941

Pencil and watercolour on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Designs for Wedgwood 'Garden' series, 1937

Pencil and applied paper cut-outs on paper

Left & bottom right: On loan from a Private Collection Top right:

Towner Collection. Acquired 2009

Eric Ravilious

Designs for Wedgwood 'Boat Race Day', 1937

Left: Pencil on paper

Middle: Ink on paper

Right: Transfer print on paper

Wedgwood employed the eighteenth- century method of transfer printing to produce ceramics decorated with Ravilious' contemporary designs. Skilled operatives in the factory would engrave his original designs onto copper; the resulting images printed on tissue paper would be fixed to pottery but burnt away in firing, leaving outlines ready to receive colour prior to re-firing. The workers who applied the colour were guided by watercolour versions submitted by Ravilious.

Left & Middle: On loan from a Private Collection

Right: Towner Collection. Acquired 2020

[Ceramics cabinet in the middle of the room, begin at the closest end, middle shelf with the large bowl]

Eric Ravilious

Wedgwood 'Boat Race Day' Bowl, issue 1938, reissue 1975

Queen's Ware with underglaze and onglaze decoration

Ravilious submitted four designs to Josiah Wedgwood in May 1937, who in reply shared his nephew Tom Wedgwood's suggestion that 'it would be more amusing if an additional one were put inside' and that Boat Race - Night 'would be a suitable finish to the race'. In response Ravilious provided a night scene set in Piccadilly Circus before the bowl went into production.

The bequest of Gwen Ledger. Towner Collection. Acquired 2017

[Bottom of ceramics cabinet, underneath the bowl]

Wedgwood 'Piccadilly Circus on Boat Race Night' Design, design and issue 1937-38

Queen's Ware with underglaze and overglaze decoration

Towner Collection. Acquired 2023

[Move round cabinet clockwise to view grey plates]

Wedgwood 'Travel' Design, design 1938, issue 1952

'Winsor' grey earthenware with underglaze and onglaze decoration

Towner Collection. Acquired 2009

[Top, middle and bottom shelves. View the yellow plates]

Wedgwood 'Garden' Design, design 1938, issue 1939

Queen's Ware with underglaze and onglaze decoration

Towner Collection

[Top shelf. View the yellow and blue, cup and saucer]

Wedgwood 'Afternoon Tea' Design, design 1937, issue 1938

'Leigh' bone china, printed black with enamelled common yellow and emerald green

Towner Collection

[Middle and bottom shelves, ceramics in blue and green]

Wedgwood 'Persephone' or 'Harvest Festival' Design, design and issue 1936

Queen's Ware with underglaze and overglaze decoration.

Towner Collection

[End of cabinet, top shelf. View the blue mug then the pink mug]

Wedgwood King Edward VIII Coronation Mug, design and issue 1936.

Queen's Ware with underglaze and overglaze decoration.

Towner Collection. Acquired 1992 & 2017

Wedgwood Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Mug, design 1936,
issue 1952

Queen's Ware with underglaze and overglaze decoration.

Towner Collection

[Shelf below]

Wedgwood 'Alphabet Nurseryware' Design, design and issue
1938 Queen's Ware with underglaze decoration

Towner Collection

[Back wall with monitor. View left to right]

Edward Bawden (1903-1989)

The Boy, Eric Ravilious in his Studio at Redcliffe Road, 1929

Watercolour, pen and ink on paper

While studying at the Royal College of Art, Ravilious, Bawden
and Bliss came up with nicknames for each other and

Ravilious became known as 'The Boy'. In 1928 when he began work on the Morley mural commission Ravilious moved from Eastbourne back to London, taking rooms at 52 Redcliffe Road with Bawden, who was living on the ground floor. This watercolour depicts Ravilious at work on a Morley mural cartoon. Bawden wrote to Bliss: 'The Boy has sent me his Morley College decorations. They are amazing!'

Towner Collection. Acquired 1978

[Text panel]

In November 1927, William Rothenstein, principal of the Royal College of Art, attended the unveiling of Rex Whistler's murals in the Tate Gallery's restaurant. They had been funded by Sir Joseph Duveen and it was rumoured that the wealthy art dealer might be willing to support further public art projects. Upon learning that Morley Working Men and Women's College in North Lambeth was a potential site for new murals,

Rothenstein campaigned for his former RCA students to be considered for the commissions. In June 1928 Ravilious and Bawden were selected to decorate the refreshment room at Morley College, and another of their contemporaries, Charles Mahoney, was chosen to decorate the college concert hall. They began work on their murals that September, earning £1 for each day spent on-site over an 18-month period.

In February 1930 Stanley Baldwin, then leader of the Conservative Party, officiated at the formal unveiling of the redecorated refreshment room showcasing the new murals. This event was the first time Ravilious and Garwood's parents met, ahead of the couple's wedding in July of that year. In October 1940, the college was bombed. Of the almost two-hundred people who had been sheltering in the building at the time, fifty-seven of them died. The mural was completely destroyed.

Eric Ravilious

Morley Mural design, 1928-1930

Watercolour, pencil, pen and ink on paper

This is a design by Ravilious for the murals he painted with Edward Bawden in the refreshment room of Morley College. The college had originally been based at The Old Vic theatre which led to the designs being themed around fantasy and incorporating many Elizabethan plays. The chalk pit and figures in the background of this scene include The Long Man of Wilmington and can be found as earlier motifs in Ravilious designs from 1929 for an almanack. Their replication shows Ravilious bringing touches of Sussex to his various commission.

Towner Collection. Accepted under the Cultural Gifts Scheme by HM Government and allocated to the Towner Eastbourne, 2024

Eric Ravilious

From the 1929 Almanack 'Pisces' March, 1928 (top) and
'Taurus' May, 1928 (bottom)

Wood engraving; ink on paper

Ravilious offered a unique perspective on the zodiac for the 1929 Almanack and merged classical imagery with scenes from the Sussex countryside; here Pisces is represented as a fish with wings flying over a chalk pit. In the illustration for May, a feminised Long Man of Wilmington appears with the bull of Taurus. Ravilious questioned whether the chalk figure of the Long Man was inspired by the male sun god Baldur, suggesting instead that it may have been based on the female goddess for Virgo.

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

Palm Tree, c.1928

Pencil on paper

The placement of this palm tree can be seen in the mural design on the roof of the open stage structure above the Long Man of Wilmington.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Monitor]

The Morley Murals

This film tells the story of the Morley Murals from creation to destruction. Featuring the voice of Anna Maxwell Martin.

Duration 12 minutes

Produced 2017 for Ravilious & Co.

[Paintings to the right of the bench]

Eric Ravilious

Hawser (Rope), 1933

Watercolour and ink on paper

On loan from a Private Collection

Eric Ravilious

'The Stork' at Hammersmith, 1933

Watercolour and pencil on paper

'The Stork' at Hammersmith is likely to have been painted from a view at Linden House on the River Thames— now the headquarters of the London Corinthian Sailing Club and the Sons of the Thames Rowing Club, a short walk from where the Tirzah and Ravilious had taken rooms in Weltje Road.

Ravilious finished this watercolour five days before his solo exhibition opened at Zwemmer's and shortly after his father-in-

law, Colonel Garwood, recorded in his diary: 'I purchased a picture of the Stork for 12 guineas to keep it in the family. It was one of the best'.

Towner Collection. Acquired in 1979 with the assistance of the Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund.

[Text panel]

Eric Ravilious and Tirzah Garwood moved to lodgings at 8 Weltje Road in Hammersmith at the beginning of the 1930s. Overlooking the River Thames, it provided inspiration for a number of his watercolours at this time.

During this period the two enjoyed parties and gatherings with fellow Royal College of Art graduates. The couple joined the celebrations on the day of the Boat Race: the rowing competition between Oxford and Cambridge universities. In late 1937, Ravilious drew on his memories of this annual event

for the 'Boat Race Day' Wedgwood designs, including four images for the outside of the large bowl, as well as the night-time scene of buses and people celebrating at Piccadilly circus which decorates the inside of the bowl; this was suggested by Tom Wedgwood as an addition.

[Move to the library area, begin with the drawings to the left of the wooden panel]

Eric Ravilious

Drawings for Highstreet: Bakers & Confectioners; Hooper & Co Coach Builders; Pharmaceutical Chemist; J. Lamb – Chairs; Bakers & Confectioners; Taylor & Gentleman's Clothing; Toy & Costume Shop; Bicycle Shop; The Brighton, 1936-38

Pencil on paper

John Piper described Ravilious' shop fronts as 'records of a passing beauty' and 'full of present-day

experience'. They present a history of independent shopkeepers at a period when there was renewed interest in Victoriana and a nostalgia for theatrical ornamentation. Many of these shop fronts were based in London. The Brighton was a pub in Camden Town.

On loan from a Private Collection

[Text panel]

High Street began in 1935 as a shared idea of Eric Ravilious and the artist Helen Binyon called an 'Alphabet of Shops'.

Ravilious originally intended that his contribution would be in the form of wood engravings, but after working with the printer Curwen Press he became interested in lithography and decided to make a series of lithographs drawn onto zinc plates. Each picture was printed in four colours using a separate plate for each. In March 1937, Ravilious published three of his

lithographs through the graphic arts magazine *Signature* with a review of their proofs by John Piper.

The architectural writer J. M. Richards (husband of Peggy Angus) wrote engaging texts to accompany Ravilious' images, and it was published in autumn 1938 by Noel Carrington (the brother of Dora Carrington) at Country Life Books, priced at seven shillings and sixpence. Whilst Ravilious was disappointed by some of the resulting images, *High Street* immediately achieved classic status. The lithographic plates for the publication were destroyed when the book's printer Curwen Press was bombed during the Blitz, meaning a lithographic re-print would never be possible, enhancing its rare status.

Eric Ravilious

The Butcher's Shop, c.1937

Watercolour and pencil on paper

The Butcher's Shop was one of the first shops included as front matter for High Street. It was located at Sible Hedingham close to Castle Hedingham in Essex, where Ravilious moved in 1934. Sketching in his local butcher's shop in 1935, Ravilious described how 'the meat and rabbits and pigeons are very nice to draw'. This watercolour and pencil artwork shows the interior, whereas the lithograph at the beginning of High Street shows the front of the shop.

Towner Collection. Acquired in 1998 with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund, National Art Collections Fund, MGC/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and Friends of the Towner

Eric Ravilious

Letter Maker, 1936-37

Lithograph; ink on paper

Letter Maker was one of the works that appeared in the 1937 Signature magazine. This version with deep red colouring was

an early design. It was later printed using darker colours in the publication *High Street*. On 8th November 1936, Ravilious wrote in a letter that he had been drawing an illuminated signs shop in the East End. He wrote that it was 'looking very well and I was glad to have got that for the book. It is a kind of large firework by night, all glowing and sparkling with reflectors like buttons.'

Eric Ravilious

Top: Restaurant and Grill Room, 1937-38

Below: Letter Maker, 1936-37. Preparatory drawing and prints.

Ravilious illustrates the formed letters, arrows and lights in the window. The text by J. M. Richards describes how letter makers replaced the 'old-fashioned sign-writer' and illuminated signs for shops were increasingly popular. The final version of the Grill Room is richly decorated with moulded plaster and patterned tiles. The chef on the left grills, while the chef on the right keeps the meat warmed on a hot-plate and raises up the dish-covers using pulleys.

Eric Ravilious

Naturalist, Furrier, Plumassier, 1938. Lithograph; ink on paper

An early version of this shop front was also included in the 1937 Signature article. In the accompanying text for High Street, Richards describes how 'when a favourite dog dies, the owners sometimes want to have him stuffed, or his skin made into a rug. They go to a naturalist like Mr. Pollard to have this done'. A Plumassier would treat and dye large feathers for hats and fans.

Eric Ravilious

Left: Pharmaceutical Chemist, 1938. Right: Fire Engineer, 1938.

Lithograph; ink on paper

Old-fashioned chemist shops kept 'glass jars full of coloured liquid' in the windows to show what kind of shop it was, and Richards remarked that it was 'appropriate that this drawing should have been made at night' because chemists stayed open late in case people needed medicine. This fire engineer's shop

was found in London. Ravilious depicts the various implements on display: the portable fire-pump; the reels on the shelves for winding hoses; and the red triangular fire extinguishers, which people kept in their houses. The white figure at the back is a complete asbestos suit. On loan from a Private Collection

Tirzah Garwood

Right: Town, 1948. Left: Country, 1948. Oil on canvas

Garwood began to make portraits of local village houses just before she re-married in 1946. The family moved from the countryside in Essex to a cottage in London, but two years later in 1948 she had a recurrence of cancer. With her diagnosis she entered a period of creative fruition and painted oil on canvases such as these Town and Country scenes which she later turned into three- dimensional models. These scenes align to the theatricality of Ravilious' High Street series.

[Move to the back pink wall] [Text panel]

The early 1940s brought tragedy and challenge to Tirzah Garwood when Ravilious lost his life in a plane crash in September 1942 whilst serving in Iceland as an Official War Artist. Breast cancer caused repeated periods of illness and she eventually underwent a mastectomy, all while caring for three young children on her own. In 1944 she moved with the children from the almost uninhabitable Ironbridge Farm to a smaller house in Wethersfield, where she began making captivating relief models of Essex houses in the surrounding villages. Garwood had a brief respite of happiness in 1946 when she married Henry Swanzy, a BBC radio producer and former lodger of Peggy Angus. Together they moved to London, surrounded by friends. In 1948, however, her cancer returned and she became increasingly bedridden. Despite her illness this was an artistically productive period during which she completed a number of enthralling oil paintings. As her condition declined, she moved to a nursing home where she died on 27 March 1951. In 1949 Garwood had

gifted two Ravilious prints to Towner. Alongside the gallery's earlier purchase of his watercolours, her gift paved the way for Towner's ongoing relationship with the Ravilious/Garwood family and helped to shape this important Collection.

Tirzah Garwood

Top: Hornet with Wild Roses, 1950

Bottom: Orchid Hunters in Brazil, 1950. Oil on canvas

These two works were acquired for the Towner Collection in 1951. The following year Garwood's memorial exhibition was held at the Towner. Hornet with Wild Roses holds an ominous atmosphere—its view of a post-war garden shows verdant greenery, honeysuckle and roses visited by insects; the oversized hornet flies defiantly up into a blue sky. Both works demonstrate Garwood's wit and sense of humour and illustrate her curiosity and love of nature. Both Towner Collection. Acquired 1952

Tirzah Garwood

Weewak's Kitten, 1950. Oil on canvas

A folly of children's building blocks arranged by Garwood's daughter Anne sits in a forest of plants and flowers. They are visited by delicate butterflies and behind the building sits a black kitten. In 1951, a critic at the BBC described how Garwood's pictures 'evoke a sense of security and comfort' but added that 'the sinister head of a kitten - larger, horribly larger than the house' reveals 'the deceptiveness - and so the fascination - of Tirzah Garwood'.

Tirzah Garwood

Prehistoric Encounter, 1950. Oil on canvas

In the summer of 1950, Garwood moved to a nursing home in Essex as she needed full-time care. Her second husband Henry Swanzey described in his diary in June: 'There was an orange-yellow frog she wanted to draw, and she and Anne [her daughter] spent half an hour rounding it up in a box hedge. Her eyes had the

intense and concentrated expression I have seen sometimes when she is painting, an absorption I have seen in no other human creature.' Swanzy had also bought her a tortoise in Colchester and Garwood depicted them meeting under the moon in between prehistoric mare's tail plants.

[Turn to the blue wall beside the library shelves]

Tirzah Garwood

Vegetable Garden, c.1933. Needlework wool embroidery

Despite favourable reviews of her wood engravings, Garwood created them in the shadow of Ravilious during the 1930s and was enlisted to contribute to Ravilious's work, including working on murals at Midland Hotel, Morecambe in 1933. At home she carried out needlework and embroidery and became an accomplished seamstress. This is one of only two surviving pieces of embroidery that Garwood produced. In this vegetable garden scene she shows off her prowess for depicting figures in movement and draws on

pastoral domestic themes that would resurge in her later oil paintings.

[Inside the plinth as you leave the library]

Tirzah Garwood (featuring Eric Ravilious)

Scrapbook, c.1947-49. Featuring; collage; drawing; painting

Garwood's scrapbook has her own marbled papers stuck into it pasted over with firework illustrations. It is filled with Valentine's cards, and pictures of butterflies as well as artworks by artist friends including Edward Bawden, Helen Binyon and her husband Ravilious. She loved 'the charming distortions of perspective and proportion' in collage work. Her son John was born in mid-1935 and she wrote to Diana Low in 1936, 'I always regret that I stopped working because it is difficult with a house to think about'. Making the scrapbook was her creative outlet during a period of domesticity and being a mother.

On loan from a Private Collection