

GLOBAL MURAL CONFERENCE TASMANIA 2008

from **Sylvia Burgess**

Baron Sergeand @ The Barons Courts in Prestonpans Scotland

INTRODUCTION

The Prestoungrange Arts Festival contingent of Andrew Laurie, Chef at the Prestoungrange Gothenburg in Prestonpans, Scotland [there to defend his Willie Park Golf Title], his wife Audrey and Sylvia Burgess, Baron Sergeand (an adopted Scot) arrived on **Friday 21st March** after visiting Singapore and Cairns. Tom Ewing and his partner Jan had made their own arrangements since Tom was competing in The International Murals Fest, so we met up with them in Sheffield.



On the **Saturday 22nd March** we visited Hobart down in the South of Tasmania [pictured above], as it had been strongly recommended by the Baron and Lady of Prestoungrange as wonderful place to go and the Saratoga Market was a must. They were right. A very picturesque harbour with fresh fish restaurants including the Mures, an ancient Scottish baronial family.

Sunday 23rd March started with a leisurely breakfast then we explored Sheffield with its backdrop of Mt Roland, and kept a regular check on the progress of the 9 muralists paying particular attention to our Tom Ewing whom we found in his kangaroo skin hat having been severely burnt the day before painting in the Murals' Park. We networked with others who had arrived a few days early for the Conference and Mural Fest. We also found the Scottish Scone Shoppe which for the next 9 days was frequented on a very regular basis. Its walls were adorned with tartan including a knitted tartan long cardigan/coat.



Our first impression of Sheffield was the community's warmth.

Monday 24th March was a quiet day, making sure we checked on the progress of the murals and repairing a puncture on the hire car; and again visiting the Scottish Scone Shoppe for refreshments, and John's Slaters Store.











On **Tuesday 25th March** the Global Conference commenced with Registration. Unfortunately the Golf Tournament had to be postponed due to a bereavement in the town and although it was hoped to rearrange later in the week it had to be abandoned. So Andrew keeps his title until challenged by Colquitt in October 2010.

We then set off in a minibus to tour nearby Railton, the town of Topiary, which is a part of the Kentish Municipality, Tasmania's "Outdoor Art Gallery". Topiary sculptures ranged from an elephant [got myself snapped with Cim McDonald, Murals Curator from Chemainus] to trains and from service men and women to farmers ploughing.









From Railton our minibus took us to Deloraine where we visited the Great Western Tiers Visitor Centre and enjoyed the 15 minute audiovisual presentation telling the

story of the Yarns Artwork in Silk. Yarns Artwork in Silk depicts the landscape and four seasons of northern Tasmania's Great Western Tiers. The large-scale work had been created in four panels each measuring 3 ½ x 4 metres. The work, crafted by more than 300 local artists, took 10,000 hours and 200 metres of hand-dyed silk to complete. The artists have employed a number of techniques including embroidery, cross stitch, weaving, patchwork and quilting to create Yarns. It tells the story of the local area – exploring its history, landscape and culture. Every year Deloraine hosts the Tasmanian Craft Fair which attracts 200 local and interstate exhibitors and 30,000 visitors.

From Deloraine we went to a Raspberry Farm for lunch and sampled home grown and cooked produce from raspberry sausages to rich chocolate covered raspberries. We came away with a jam sample too! On the way back we called into a Cheese Farm and there standing outside was a relation of our own life Prestoungrange cows – unpainted!

On return the Global Mural Arts & Cultural Tourism Association biennial General Meeting took place and its Minutes are available at:
<http://www.prestoungrange.org/global/html/news/minutes/documents/GlobalMuralminutes-SylviaUK.doc>

In the evening we were entertained with folk music and a sausage sizzle BBQ. As darkness fell the Fire & Light Parade started with animals made from wooden frames and covered in greaseproof paper and glue. The figures were carried across the park by children and adults one being the huge globe with the Global Mural Arts & Cultural Association logo on it. It was of great delight for Karl Schutz, Founding President of the Global Association, since he had never seen the logo like this and he knew it definitely had the fabled “wow” factor. The evening finished with a fantastic firework display attended by many of the local community.



Wednesday 26th March – Arts “Striving for Excellence”

This was the first formal day of the Conference and Darren Cunningham was Master of Ceremony. The Conference was official opened by Dr Karl Schutz and John

Dyer. Unfortunately the Mayor was not able to attend but his representative Andrew Kenny, who is also Chairman of the Conference Committee, did the honours.

Elizabeth Walsh, Artistic Director

Ten Days on the Island.

Elizabeth considered that public art can create controversy and discussion and create integration of a community. It also engages with artist and environment. It was debated as to whether a mural should be left to fade or replaced with a new one.

“What is the value of the mural?” when it fades and how long it lives?

An example was given of how a new piece of art can be fated from the start when a monument of history was moved and replaced with a new sculpture. Everyone hated it because a piece of history had been moved.

John Dyer, Andrew Keddie, Teresa Bentley

The Sheffield Story

In Sheffield in the 1970s 15 businesses closed. After 10-12 years a Retailers Association approached the Council to do something. A Committee was formed and became aware of the Chemainus story. This Committee is the Sheffield Mural & Rural Tourism Association (SMARTA).

It was reported that the Sheffield Mural Book had been their most successful way of raising funds.

An example was given of a butcher who was against the mural programme because it didn't affect him directly, but when there was an airline strike there was a drop in tourists visiting Tasmania. He then realised that his suppliers had dropped their orders for his meat. He was then one of the first to put up his hands and give financial support to the arts and tourism programme.

Sheffield now has 55 historical murals and the Mural Fest enables murals to change every year.

It was reported that in 1995 there was very little relationship with Kentish Council and it took 2 years to build that relationship. But the future is in danger if Kentish Council take over from the volunteers. It is felt that the Murals programme will lose the valued energies of the community and the passion from the volunteers and community in general.

In 1985 the first mural was painted in Sheffield by John Londas. To raise money to pay the artist they sold each sq. ft of the mural for \$10. With regard to copyright – Sheffield buy copyright from artists at \$500.

On the subject of maintenance of a mural – not all agree that an artist should be asked back and paid a fee. If some artists are unable to return to maintain their mural then others are asked to do it. It was then questioned as to whether the newly maintained mural was that of the original artist or the new artist?

In Sheffield it was reported that there are murals on the walls which are outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. Also if a building is sold with a mural on it, agreed by the previous owner, then the new owner has the right to paint over it.

Karl expressed the importance of being specific with an artist that the Committee purchase the rendering, mural and copyright and never to share profits with an artist. The Committee must own the copyright.

David Sheffield, Artist in Residence, The MAC, (The Marley Accommodation Centres) Nebo, Queensland

Earning a living as a Mural Artist

Earns a living as a muralist and says the art of survival is commitment. This session was open for ideas on all aspects of painting murals. It was noted that garbage bins had been painted in Chemainus.

Cim MacDonald felt it was important to:

- let people put strokes on the artist's mural as they chat and to involve them and have photos taken with them with the artist.
- ensure the surroundings of the mural are kept as nicely as the mural itself.
- take photographs as the murals age and document the cracks, peeling and evidence of moss appearing.

Mural Tour

There was then a break in the sessions where we went on a mural tour of half of the murals – split into two groups.

Tom Ewing, Prestoungrange Arts Festival, Prestonpans, Scotland

Tom gave a very good presentation telling our own Prestoungrange Arts Festival story very well.

Mark De Cracker

Mural Mania, 50 miles of murals along the Erie Canal USA

Another very interesting presentation and to see so many more styles of murals.

Wayne Edwards led the Open Forum 1 – Mural Art is not Art –or is it ?

- Art is what makes life worth living
- Art for communication
- Art for beauty
- Art is something that moves you emotionally both good or bad
- Art is an expression shared or not shared with others
- Art as a form or currency
- Art as a form of therapy
- Murals are another form of storytelling
- Murals must not be in isolation but are part of their surroundings. Must complement surroundings or would look out of place.

The subject of photography was discussed and whether that was art or not? It was viewed by some as a starting point for beginners and then to develop one's own style from there. Some viewed photography as being controversial and not art in itself.

It was also discussed the difference in an artist being asked to paint a mural according to a client's brief or painting for own pleasure. In this case the artist is thought to be "a tool for someone else". They are being asked to create what someone else cannot do themselves.

Evening Entertainment – Music Hall & Dinner Sheffield Town Hall

This was an excellent show based on the show "Pricilla". The professionalism of the cast was outstanding. It was hilarious and the meal was excellent too.

As we were at the show we could not attend the Fireside Chat with Cim McDonald.

Thursday 27th March

Rev the Engine – Waltzing Matilda, led by Cindy Dyer

This session was led by Cindy Dyer accompanied by her daughter, sister, nieces and a young man. They were a very talented group and brought a tear to many an eye as they beautifully sang Waltzing Matilda and We are Australia. It certainly did "rev the engine" and got the day off to a grand uplifting start.

Dan Fellows, Images of Tasmania. Through the eyes of a local; take a pictorial look at the beautiful images of Tasmania

Dan Fellows is a local tourism photographer and toured Australia for 7 years. He has been in Tasmania for 17 years. He showed us some wonderful pictures of Tasmania in all its glory and we purchased a CD to remind us of his professional photography.

Dr John Ewington,

Sustainable Rural Communities: The Sheffield Experience

Dr John Ewington is an educator who has worked in all sectors of education. He is also a social researcher and mathematician and a man with “vision”.

He drew attention to the wonderful building we were in, Sheffield School, which was a good example of how schools buildings and community works together. The school cost \$2m of which the community raised \$750,000. The school is known as the “Social Capital” of Sheffield – the school is the community and the community is the school. It is also unique in its adaptability to suit all occasions e.g. gymnasium and halls for the school and a shared stage which can be accessed from two separate rooms.

There are 4 murals on the School outside wall which included discussions with the children to depict their school from their own perspective. The main elements being:

- mischief
- humour
- school playground

Dr John Ewington then went on to cover the academic side of his research concerning Building Social Capital through Community Partnerships and quoted from *Putman, 2000*.

His model showed the circular interaction between Initialisation, Development of Strategic Plans, Maintenance and Institutionalised Sustainability. An example of the community and the school working together is that the School is used for Adult Learning. The children see parents in education too. The parents are able to see how the school deals with situations within the classroom.

Peter Martin, Hon. Secretary: Redwater Creek Steam & Heritage Society
Tourism and Trains

This was another interesting presentation which included how the Sheffield station and platform were moved and how they placed a “golden spike” into the new track.

Working Art Space Presentation held at the Working Art Space building.

In this building there was an array of different types of art : paintings, knitting, postcards, textures, sculptures and many more. Here we were treated to home made refreshments – an art in itself.

Kavita Payall-Phelan, Committee Member and Economic Development Manager from Cessnock City Council – Kurri Kurri

The success of murals in the town of Cessnock, NSW

Kavita has been with the Council for 5 years . She explained that there are 2 levels of budgets. One of which is discretionary and reviewed monthly, the other annually. She highlighted not to sacrifice independence to a Council but to align with Council officers. A tip was to give a free mural guide to anyone who spent \$10.

Karen Whitaker-Taylor, Arts Officer, Baw Baw Shire Council and Ingrid Thomas, President of Women’s Compass Network.

Community Contribution through the Arts

They highlighted the connection with the Community and the arts always comes through in all discussions. It created pride and ownership. “Art is a glue between young and old”. They were heavily involved in art to improve health and well-being especially for women.

Healthy mind = healthy body. Art = Healthy mind. It is a way of encouraging people to “do things”. Anti-graffiti was funded by Department of Justice for “street art” projects. They teamed up with an artist and youngsters of 15/16 years of age.

It used to be that their Council was only interested in Rates/Roads/Rubbish but now new Councillors have changed that. They are getting involved in paths and gardens and Karen emphasised keeping them on side and not having a “them and us” situation. They are valuable for the maintenance and installation of murals. On funding she said it was important to be flexible with vision to get funding.

Some of the projects they had done were in mosaics on bollards. They tried to encourage schools to work on a path through a park but it didn't happen so the WCN did it themselves and worked with community groups to put bollards in the park then people walked on the paths to see the bollards. The funding ran out so Gibstone Womens' Network took over. Bollards are low cost and mosaics last for a long time.

Mural tour Part 2

This took place after a splendid lunch and viewed the remaining murals in Sheffield. Again split into two groups. John Dyer showed us how the "flying fox" worked in Slater's Store and we saw a model of his grandmother 90 years of age collecting the money and sending the change back down to the counter – fascinating. We were accompanied by three Mt Roland River Carers who are undertaking a project to protect the river and the environment.

Julian Bale

Mural Maintenance

The leading question was "Restoration of other people's murals – How much would be left of the original after restoration?". Is it the same work?

Q. Why maintain them?

- A.
- Because people love them
 - No funds to replace them
 - Expect more paint life from a mural to the paint life on a house without a mural.
 - In retrospect – if got rid of it then would regret it later
 - Suggestion to have a mural museum but could a large enough area be found?

Q. Who is responsible for the maintenance?

How often expect to maintain it?

Would anyone remember the artist plus contact numbers?

How would one get the original paint and colour?

Is it any longer the artist's work?

Has permission been given by the artist?

If maintenance not done by the artist it may not be as good as the original and the artist may object.

- A. Cim McDonald, who is a Curator and has repainted 7 murals, has always had the permission of the artist and has learnt how to paint in the different styles of artists.

Advised:

1. That artists should keep a record of what materials/colours were used and good photograph records. Then let the owner of the mural have the record
2. Coatings are important to protect it, but if vandalised badly it is hard to get back to the paint of the original mural through the coating.
3. Keep boards away from the walls as damp and residues can seep through from the walls to the boards.
4. Coatings suggested were Wattle poly u 400, anti-graffiti clear and Armour A&B but it must be put on thinly. Also Diamond Glaze is used in Chemainus

Joy Jinks & Kacee Holt – Colquitt, Georgia 2010 Presentation

As Colquitt are hosting the 2010 Global Mural Conference a session was slotted into the Programme. They explained about the local dish called “Swamp Gravy” which is the juices from fried fish, water, onions and peppers. For recipe go:

http://www.inmamaskitchen.com/RECIPES/RECIPES/VEGII/swamp_gravy-one.html

Murals are about story telling but it was advised to be careful of telling stories which may bring back memories which had been laid to rest several years earlier.

Open Forum 2 led by Dr Karl Schutz

Why Murals?

From experience in Chemainus and as has been proved around the world, murals draw people into town. The Dinner Theatre gets a % of income from the new hotel.

Chemainus are trying to get topiary started but not started yet.

Friday 28th March

Rev the Engine – led by Cindy Dyer

We started the day with another excellent performance by Elise and Caitlin who sang two songs “Someone’s watching over me” and “Dreams”. Beautifully sung from the heart.

Ian Braid, OAM Minister & Mayor of Principality and Alan Dyer

Sheffield Yarns

A very amusing double act with story telling of Sheffield over the years. One tale told by Alan Dyer (John Dyer’s dad) was when John was in Scotland in 2006 and was looking for some accommodation. He was told by one hotelier that they didn’t have any rooms so John asked “If I was George Bush would you have a room?” The hotelier said “Yes”. John’s reply was “George Bush isn’t coming so I’ll have his room”. This story was a taste of the humorous stories they told.

Lesley Jackes , South West Women’s Mural Project

“South West Women: Celebrating Similarity and Difference”

They have a mural of 90 panels. Through each panel is a flowing river which symbolises women and each river connects to the next panel. It took 280 participants to complete.

Similar to Karen Whitaker-Taylor of Baw Baw Shire Council, this mural is to enhance women's wellbeing and health and to match women's journey of life. It is felt that art is a healing process.

It is agreed that the mural will never be broken up or sold nor hung. It must stand on its own two feet. This gives it flexibility in galleries. It is a "mobile mural".

The colours represent stages in life going from blue, green, yellow, gold to red and white being the purity of love. It has a spiritual representation.

Chris Griffin, Group Manager Destination Marketing, Tourism Tasmania
Leveraging Tourism Marketing

Chris explained about leveraging tourism marketing and he is involved in getting partnerships with local industry/government and future partnership campaigns. He tries to get tourists to understand the depth of the area and going below the advertising surface. Also how to get that message across and how to translate the benefits. What makes a place unique.

Sally Schnackenburg, author of **The Wiendorfer Story**

This session was held at Cradle Mountain National Park where we had a BBQ lunch served by the Mt Roland River Carers. Sally Schnackenburg told us the story of Kate Weindorfer and her husband Gustav Weindorfer as we sat round the camp fire.

For the story go:

http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/education/education_resource/national_parks/background_notes/3d.html





After the story telling we walked along to a very long mural which told the story of Cradle Mountain.







Saturday 29th March

The day was free to go on the Wilmot & Cradle Mountain Tour or to attend the Community Sausage Sizzle and steam train ride provided by Redwater Creek Steam & Heritage Society or to watch the muralists conclude their art in the Mural Fest competition.

Gala Dinner & Announcements of Mural Fest winners

Master of Ceremonies was Peter Gee

The Conference concluded with a splendid Gala Dinner and announcement of the winners of the Mural Fest Competition. Everyone also sang Happy Birthday for Panner and Continuing Golf Champion Andrew Laurie!

The Finished Murals were outstanding and delighted us all









