

An Artist's View

Durham u3a member John Campbell has recently published a book on the art of dry pencil drawing, featuring many reproductions of his works. A significant section of the book focuses on Durham City and its significance as a World Heritage Site. Here, he explains the background to "An Artist's View".

Why write the book? More important to ask first is "Why draw the pictures contained in the book?"

The simple answer is purely for selfish reasons, a pastime, a means of relaxation, a challenge to test if I had the skill to do it. A drive to record the beauty of a city I loved to visit at all seasons.

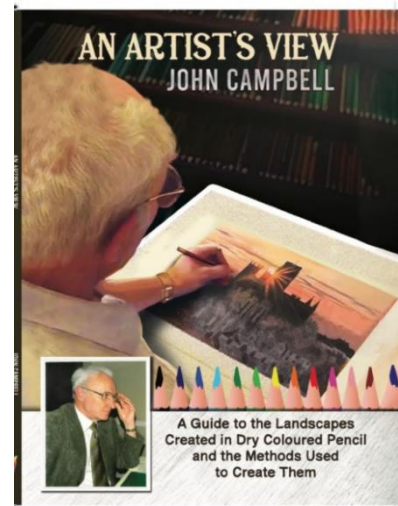
Once seen people were impressed and wanted copies and in some cases the originals. An aware friend then impressed on me that the images should be brought together in a book as a way of keeping the work together.

What has only now become apparent, and something I was completely unaware of at the time, was that the beauty and importance of what I was recording, namely the central spectacle of the 'World Heritage Site', was steadily being hidden away by rebuilding developments. Although it dominates a hilltop, this site is in fact in a hollow formed by the bend of the River Wear.

Even more strange is the fact that only two of the pictures in the book were not reproduced as prints other than as occasional Christmas cards.

I now see on further examination why I felt the emotional need to capture my admiration of this historical site, contained in 'The Vision of Camelot' (*below*) which has its own poem to accompany the image. The scene being imagined by the children is steadily being hidden from view.

The children's fantasy imagination has in fact a historical basis. Thinking beyond the definition of the world heritage site, Durham was the centre of the administration of the palatine, the area under the control of the bishop, an individual trusted by the King to administer and control the defences of the



Northern Borderlands. This gave him huge powers to mint his own money, have his own army, and administer justice.

"An Artist's View" is available in softback and as an ebook. See more at https://youtu.be/Z2_ecyXn47w

John Campbell

A Vision of Camelot



Children clamber before the view
the scene transformed, the way young minds do.
The view which they behold
influenced by sights seen and stories told.
The Citadel, centre of Palatine
rises skywards and seems to shine.
Of knights and battles tales abound
in the true tradition of the table round.
Out to the Cross of Neville ride
the fate of the Scots invaders to decide.
Is that Londonderry there?
or just a memory from the Market Square.
He cannot belong with the ancient knight!
Perhaps it's just a trick of the mist and light!
thrilled and inspired to see this spot
in the mind's eye, A Vision of Camelot.