

Ralph Maynard Smith

1904–1964

Artist and Architect



A Centenary Retrospective Exhibition

Front cover illustration: *Vertical Surfaces on
Beach with Distant Harbour*, 1947. Oil on paper,
7³/₄ x 10¹/₄ ins, Catalogue no. 48

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1904–1964

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A Centenary Retrospective Exhibition

Introductions by John Spurling and Gavin Stamp

The financial support of Shell International Limited and UH Galleries is gratefully acknowledged

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Wolseley Fine Arts and The Ralph Maynard Smith Trust



Ralph Maynard Smith by an unknown photographer, c.1926



The Alberto Vilar Gallery
Prince's Foundation, 19–22 Charlotte Road, London EC2A 3SG
20 October – 10 November 2004



Hull University Art Gallery
Hull HU6 7RX
15 November – 17 December 2004



Eldon Gallery
The University of Surrey, Guildford GU2 5XH
17 January – 9 February 2005



Paisley Museum and Art Gallery
High Street, Paisley, Renfrewshire PA1 2BA
18 February – 13 March 2005



Art and Design Gallery
University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield AL10 9AB
20 April – 20 May 2005



Durham Art Gallery
Aykley Heads, Durham DH1 5TU
11 June – 10 July 2005

Touring venues

A UH Galleries Touring Exhibition in collaboration with
Wolseley Fine Arts and The Ralph Maynard Smith Trust

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Cove of the Spiritual Lighthouse – Figures Hastening Down, 1953. Watercolour with pen & ink, 11 x 15 ins. Catalogue no. 78

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Chronology

1904	Born Rondebosch, Cape Town, South Africa, 27th June, where newly emigrated English parents had set up home, and where his father had started his own architectural practice.	1949-52	Design and build of Hatfield Technical College (now University of Hertfordshire)
1909-19	Schooling in CapeTown and Caterham, England	1951-57	Design and build of the Bank of England Printing Works, Debden, Essex
1920	Last visit to South Africa	1953-63	Design and build of the Shell Centre, London
1920-25	Studying at the Architectural Association, London	1959-60	Further work for The Bank of England on the Returned Notes Building
1923	Spends many weeks crossing Mull and Iona on foot. The starting point of his life as an artist. Starts writing and illustrating <i>The Ravine</i>	1962	Operation for lung cancer
1924-5	Attends evening classes in art at Heatherley's	1964	Dies on Christmas day
1926-9	Development of his Romantic landscape work	1993	Exhibitions at The First Gallery, Southampton and David Holmes Gallery, Peterborough
1927	Elected Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (A.R.I.B.A)	1994	Exhibition at Gallery 47, Bloomsbury, London for curators and critics. British Museum acquires first work.
1928	Joined practice of Elcock & Sutcliffe Marries Geraldine Lyles	1995	Formation of the Ralph Maynard Smith Trust
1930s	Evolution of metaphysical and surrealist imagery	2002	Exhibition at Wolseley Fine Arts, London and publication of catalogue <i>RMS, The Barrier Beyond: Record of a Secret Artist</i>
1938	Becomes a partner in Elcock & Sutcliffe	2002	Acquisition of works by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Museum and Galleries of Wales and the National Library of Wales.
1939-45	Works on hospital, prisoner of war and other essential wartime works, whilst performing duties for both the Civil Defence and Home Guard	2004	Centenary of the birth of RMS, publication of <i>RMS, A Haunted Man</i> by Simon Smith
1940s	Paintings become infused with a darker mood and become more centred	2004/5	Centenary retrospective exhibition <i>RMS: Artist and Architect</i> touring to The Alberto Vilar Gallery, Prince's Foundation; Hull University Art Gallery; Eldon Gallery, University of Surrey; Paisley Museum and Art Gallery; UH Galleries, University of Hertfordshire, and Durham Art Gallery, with accompanying exhibition catalogue.
1945	Joined Stanley Hall, Easton & Robertson's architectural practice		
1946	Becomes partner in Easton, Robertson, Cusdin, Preston & Smith		
1946-49	Paints <i>Free is the Prospect Here</i> in 1946 and three years later starts work on a large illustrated book, using the same title, which charted his mature development.		

Ralph Maynard Smith as Artist

INTRODUCTION

Behind the facade

Ralph Maynard Smith was a highly successful architect whose last and best-known building – in collaboration with Sir Howard Robertson – was the Shell Centre on London's South Bank. Maynard Smith joined Robertson's firm at the end of the Second World War. Earlier Maynard Smith had been a partner with Elcock & Sutcliffe for several years, when Sutcliffe resigned in 1942. Elcock died in 1944 and Maynard Smith dissolved the firm in 1945. Maynard Smith was not called up for active service during the war, but was given 'reserved occupation' status, since Elcock and Sutcliffe specialised in building hospitals. He did, however, join both the ARP and the Home Guard and continued to commute to his office in bomb-blasted London throughout the war. He died suddenly on Christmas Day, 1964, aged 60, soon after the completion of the Shell Centre.

None of this – admirable as it was – would be remembered publicly now, except perhaps by a few architectural historians, if it were not for his other secret life as an artist. He left behind over 1,600 oil paintings, watercolours and drawings, none of which had ever been exhibited and whose existence and quality only began to become apparent nearly 30 years after his death, when his son started to show them. The Ralph Maynard Smith trust was formed in 1995 and this touring exhibition, coinciding with the publication of Simon Smith's biography of his father, celebrates the centenary of the artist's birth in 1904. It is the fulfilment of a hope I expressed ten years ago in the journal *Modern Painters*, when I first saw and was astonished by Maynard Smith's concealed oeuvre, that it 'now needs to be seen in breadth and in depth by as many people as possible'.

Maynard Smith studied at the Architectural Association in London in the early 1920s and received its diploma at the age of 21. Born and brought up in Cape Town, South Africa, where his father was an

architect, he proved to be a skilled architectural draughtsman, but his only training in fine art was a year of evening classes at Heatherley's. He never seems to have mingled with other artists, though he was certainly aware of and to some extent indebted to the work of many leading British painters of the period, including Paul Nash, Edward Wadsworth, John Tunnard, John Armstrong and Tristram Hillier. His first mentors in art, however, went further back: the letters of Van Gogh and books by Roger Fry, R.H. Wilenski and, above all, John Ruskin. At the age of 19, while he is still a student at the Architectural Association, Maynard Smith took a solitary walking holiday through the Scottish islands of Mull and Iona and carried in his haversack all five volumes of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*.

This tour seems to have been the key to the whole of his subsequent double life as an overt architect and covert artist. It was then that he began to keep a journal, which he called *The Ravine* and whose first volume contained drawings and sketches together with quotations from writers he admired – among them Van Gogh, Blake, Carlyle, Marcus Aurelius and Fiona Macleod (pseudonym of the poet and storyteller William Sharp). In the second volume of *The Ravine*, the texts are all Maynard Smith's own, beginning with the epigram on the title page:

Every man is in a ravine alone.
His solitude and this ravine are his
problem, they are also his sanctuary.

What seems to have happened is that as he walked alone through beautiful and remote places, looking and drawing, reading and meditating, he found that he had embarked on a journey of the mind or soul – he was a religious man, but by no means a conventional Christian – which he felt to be quite separate from his worldly career. It undoubtedly began as a kind of self-education, but as his perspectives shifted to reflect those of a person moving through a landscape, as his architectural draughtsman's skill bent and buckled, flexed and curvetted to cope with the natural world of hills, water and woods – and especially the dynamism of contours, clouds, waves and wind-blown trees – the separation became more intense and ideological. The outward Maynard Smith was a man who imposed humanity's latest urban lifestyle on the earth's surface, but the inward one was a refugee from human society, looking for himself in the natural world and nature in himself.

Van Gogh began in the picture-dealing business, as an employee of the Goupil Gallery, Gauguin was a stockbroker, but once they were gripped by the idea of their art they abandoned their careers. Maynard Smith did not, and that equivocal decision to be both an office-man, commuting daily by



Shepherd Landscape, 1928–46. Oil on canvas, 24 x 36 ins. Catalogue no. 10

train from Tadworth in Surrey to London, and a visionary artist, alone in his studio at home by night and at weekends, cost him dear. He did not meet his wife, Geraldine, until after his 'revelation' on the Scottish islands, and they did not marry until 1928 when he joined Elcock and Sutcliffe. Their only child, Simon, was born a year later and by his account the early years of the marriage and his own childhood were happy and secure. In 1937 they moved into their new house at Tadworth, designed and built by Maynard Smith himself, and did not move again. Maynard Smith did not conceal his artistic work from his wife and child or from close friends and relations, but they surely saw it as a hobby rather than the heart of him – at least until much later, when Simon had grown up and talked about his father's work with him. Were the black depressions Maynard Smith suffered as he got older caused by his attempt to be two incompatible people in one body? Or was he born with a need to isolate his deeper feelings from his social facade, so that at least his art helped to express and justify that isolation? Pride and fear of rejection as an artist, when he obviously relished his increasing acceptance as an architect, may have played some part too. At any rate, he was evidently not, except in company and on the surface, a man at peace with himself.

Nevertheless, having set out on his private journey through the ravine, Maynard Smith was like the pilgrim in Bunyan's poem – 'There's no discouragement / Shall make him once relent' – and his work grew more bold and experimental as it developed. Many paintings of his middle years, such as *Better Be Yourself, Make Your Own Music, Eclipse of the Winged Embryo* and *Circles and Moon* hovered around Surrealism, but in his later years, after about 1950, when he was too busy as an architect to be able to turn sketches into finished paintings, his drawings became truly landscapes of the mind. Yet these notations of anguish and desolation are not in themselves anguishing or desolate, but frequently invigorating and even occasionally, as in *Symbols Gathering on the Shore*, humorous. He never returned to Mull and Iona, but the journey he began there, with the sea always beside him, ended on an imagined shore or the surface of an inhospitable planet, often in wild weather and on a treacherous footing. These very late drawings, some of which look as if they might have begun as doodles on an office pad during a tedious or irritating committee meeting, suggest that, if he had lived longer and had had time to turn them into paintings, he might have become, like his American contemporaries Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, both of whom passed through semi-surrealist phases, an abstract expressionist. Comparing abstract painting to music was one of the critical clichés of the 1960s and 1970s. Long before, in 1938, in *The Ravine*, Maynard Smith wrote of 'organic symbols, which ... can be

used for the free realisation of musical experience ... to float on their appointed paths like the themes in a musical symphony'. Simon Smith tells us in his biography that several paintings were worked to a musical accompaniment and in particular that 'a movement from Schubert's Great C Major Symphony was the driving force behind *Place of Departure*'.

On the other hand, there are at least two late drawings with cryptic titles which are not only figurative but almost literary – in the sense that they clearly tell stories, though the meaning of the stories is not so clear. The title of *An End Far Different From Their Imagining* derives from a poem by Victor Hugo, quoted in *The Ravine* in about 1935:

There was in them the peace of
vanished hopes, the calm, but
sorrowful acceptance of an
end far different from their
dreams.

By degrees the dusk of heaven
Began to darken in them, and
The wide waters and the vast
Gathering twilight closed
Upon them.

In the drawing there are people visible in the mouth of a cave or tunnel on the right, while a dark cloaked figure moves – or more exactly flits – along the other side of a wall at centre left. Below, there is a broad, curving bay with a succession of small figures in canoes floating out over the lapping tide towards a distant horizon. Rupert Otten, one of the organisers of this exhibition, is surely right in suggesting that it is a vision of the dead leaving the earth. But what of *On So Slender a Thread Hangs All My Joy*? A dense crowd of heavily cloaked figures leans towards a horizon rimmed with ragged black foliage and, in a dark sky, a great vortex of light from which beams spring like a sheaf of rockets and stream away out of the top of the drawing. The words accompanying it in *The Ravine* are Maynard Smith's own:

Few perhaps have dwelt within an overshadowed and blackened environment for so long and survived, that I feel impelled towards the expression of its dark interior, its depth of solemn movement. To escape the nervous tension, release the gathering immense force, confirm the fanatical belief in liberation through revolt, and give free flight to its tangent inspiration.



An End Far Different from Their Imagining, 1955. Pen & ink, 4½ X 7⅙ ins. Catalogue no. 80

But the words date from the late 1940s, whereas the drawing was done in 1958. Whatever the meaning of these drawings, they demonstrate how Maynard Smith's journey was more circular – or perhaps spiral – than chronological and how he ranged about, pricked on by both hope and despair. With no dealer or public to please, no trends to follow, no artist-friends to applaud or critics to carp, he was free to go in any direction his mood – or his hand – chose.

All one can say is that after the sunlit early landscapes – sturdily constructed from long curves, airy and optimistic – and the gracefully monumental, surrealist paintings of 1947–50, he eventually entered a more disturbed and disturbing place, more sea and sky than land, more memory than observation, more internal than external. The same development can be traced through his writings in *The Ravine* and later notebook/journals. In the 1930s he wrote:

It is the pulsation, the throb of the
Earth round which I fly like a moth
Enamoured of the light.

And in 1949, in the book called *Free is the Prospect Here*, which is also the title of a particularly stormy landscape of 1946, where the earth seems to writhe and heave like the sea – or like El Greco's Toledo – and the only two vertical forms are Van Gogh-ish cypresses, he wrote:

On the grey sand beside the shallow stream
Under your old wind-beaten tower
You walk in the moon.
And although you have passed the best of life,
Still trace
Enthralled by the unconquerable delusion
Magical shapes.

The English are perhaps better at producing eccentric individualists than 'great' artists or at least those that can be filed under a 'movement' or tradition; so much so that one could almost trace a tradition of eccentrics from Blake and Palmer to Stanley Spencer and Alfred Wallis, none of whom have much in common with each other except that they passionately created and partly inhabited worlds of their own. The affable, if reticent, architect Ralph Maynard Smith, unmasked at last by his son as a lifelong visionary artist, belongs to that almost traditional non-tradition.

Paintings and Drawings

- 1 **Prelude to Storm 1925 ***
Watercolour, 6½ x 9¾ ins
Signed lower right, inscribed lower left
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K125
(illustrated)
- 2 **Wall over the Hills 1926**
Oil on Board, 15 x 21¼ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K139.02
Lent from a private collection through Wolseley Fine Arts
- 3 **Andante 1927**
Charcoal and carbon pencil, 7¾ x 11 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K147
- 4 **Hand in Hand with the Musician 1927 ***
Watercolour, 9¾ x 13½ ins
Signed lower right and titled lower left
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K148
(illustrated)
- 5 **Meeting of Walls 1927**
Lino-cut, 6 x 8 ins
Signed and numbered 5 from the edition of 20
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K153.02
- 6 **Landscape with Hills and Clouds 1927**
Watercolour, 7 x 9 ins
Studio stamp lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K160
- 7 **Self Portrait in the Hills 1927 ***
Oil on canvas, 16 x 22¾ ins
Initialed on the reverse of the canvas
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K164
- 8 **Andante 1928**
Oil on canvas board, 9¾ x 11¾ ins
Signed lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K166
- 9 **Evening Movement 1928**
Gouache, 5 x 7½ ins
Signed lower right and inscribed lower left
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K168
- 10 **Shepherd Landscape 1928–46**
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K170
(illustrated on page 11)
- 11 **Walls 1928 ***
Oil on canvas, 17 X 21 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K172
(illustrated)
- 12 **The Road to Woldingham 1929**
Oil on paper, 9 x 12¾ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K180
(illustrated)
Lent by John Starling
- 13 **Wood Study 1929**
Watercolour heightened with white, 8½ x 10½ ins
Signed lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K181

- 14 **Landscape with Road and Storm Clouds, Woldingham 1931**
Oil on paper, 9½ x 11¼ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K237
Lent from a private collection through Wolseley Fine Arts
- 15 **Landscape with Bridge and Figures 1932/3**
Oil on paper, 9¾ x 11⅞ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K253
- 16 **Mountain landscape 1933**
Oil on canvas, 13 x 15¾ ins
Signed lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K286
(*illustrated*)
Lent from a private Irish collection
- 17 **Entrance to the Wood, Fittleworth 1935**
Watercolour over pencil, 9½ x 11½ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K395.02
- 18 **Cornish Cove 1934/6**
Watercolour, body colour, pen & ink, 10 x 14 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K414
- 19 **Composition, June 1936**
Watercolour, 9 x 12¾ in
Signed lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K415.02
- 20 **Woodland Paths 1936**
Carbon pencil on paper, 5¼ x 7¼ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K434
Lent from a private collection through Wolseley Fine Arts
- 21 **Somerset Landscape 1937**
Watercolour, body colour and charcoal, 11¾ x 20¾ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K453
Lent from a private collection through Wolseley Fine Arts
- 22 **Figure in the Hills 1938**
Oil on paper, 5 x 4¾ ins
Inscribed with colour notes
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K464
- 23 **Cloudy Landscape with Light Beyond 1939**
Watercolour, 7 x 10 ins
Signed lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K501
- 24 **Walton Landscape 1940**
Oil on paper, 6¼ x 8¾ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K532
Lent from a private collection through Wolseley Fine Art
- 25 **June Greens, Gopns 1941**
Oil on paper, 7½ x 5⅞ ins
Signed lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K542
- 26 **Devon Cove 1941**
Oil on paper mounted on board, 9½ x 11½ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K560
(*illustrated*)
- 27 **The Edge of the Wood, Winter 1942**
Oil on paper, 5⅞ x 7½ ins
Signed lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K614
- 28 **Dusk in My Garden 1943**
Oil on paper, 5¼ x 7½ ins
Signed lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K667
- 29 **Forms Outward Bound 1943**
Charcoal, pen & red ink, 7⅝ x 11⅞ ins
Signed and dated lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K670
(*illustrated*)

- 30 **Edge of the Wood, June 1943**
Oil on paper, 3³/₄ x 7¹/₂ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K683
Lent by Mr & Mrs Martin Sheppard
- 31 **Moon Rising above Trees 1943**
Pastel, 5¹/₂ x 8 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K718
Lent by Dilys Banham
- 32 **Abode of Shadows 1944**
Charcoal, pen & ink, 8⁷/₂ x 12¹/₄ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K725
Lent by Derek Banham
- 33 **Sun Rising beside Grove 1945**
Pastel, 6 x 8 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K817
- 34 **Welsh Coast 1945**
Watercolour, 7³/₄ x 12³/₄ ins
Inscribed with colour notes
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K819
(*illustrated*)
- 35 **Free is the Prospect Here 1946**
Watercolour and pastel, 8³/₄ x 12³/₈ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K834
Lent by the National Museum and Galleries of Wales
- 36 **Indented Sky 1946**
Charcoal on paper, 7 x 8⁷/₈ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K836
- 37 **Memories 1946**
Sepia watercolour on paper, 14³/₄ x 20⁷/₈ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K839
- 38 **Place of Departure 1946**
Pastel and charcoal on paper, 10⁵/₈ x 12¹/₄ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K845
Lent by the National Museum and Galleries of Wales
- 39 **Surrey Woodland 1946**
Watercolour on paper, 4⁷/₈ x 7⁵/₈ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K848
Lent by Simon Smith
- 40 **Burial Ground 1946**
Carbon pencil on paper, 8 x 12¹/₄ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K850.02
Lent from a private collection through Wolseley Fine Arts
- 41 **Autumn Chipstead Valley 1946**
Pastel on paper, 10⁵/₈ x 14 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K859
Lent from a private collection through Wolseley Fine Arts
- 42 **Starry Sky Above Trees (Landscape by Starlight) 1946**
Watercolour and body colour, 8⁷/₈ x 12⁵/₈ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K877
- 43 **Snowfield, Tadworth 1946**
Watercolour with charcoal, 13³/₄ x 21 ins
Studio stamp lower left
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K897
- 44 **Interior with Bat 1947 ***
Watercolour with charcoal, 14 x 21¹/₄ ins
Studio stamp lower left
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K933
(*illustrated*)
- 45 **Ranmore 1947**
Watercolour and chalk, 5³/₄ x 13¹/₂ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K935
Lent by Sally Maynard-Smith
- 46 **Five Obsessions 1947**
Charcoal and white chalk on grey paper, 10 x 13¹/₂ ins
Signed lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K942
Lent by Simon Smith

- 47 **Sympathy of Land, Sea and Sky 1947**
Oil on paper, 9¼ x 13 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K962
(illustrated)
Lent by John Starling
- 48 **Vertical Surfaces on Beach with Distant Harbour 1947**
Oil on paper, 7¾ x 10¼ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K963
Lent by Richard Williams
(illustrated on front cover)
- 49 **Rock on the Shore 1947**
Watercolour on gesso ground, 13¾ x 21¼ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1000
Lent by Mr and Mrs Peter Sellwood
- 50 **Dangerous Currents 1948**
Watercolour, pen and brown ink, 4¾ x 6¼ ins
Signed with initials and dated lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1012
- 51 **Southern Cape 1948**
Pen & ink wash, 3½ x 5¾ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1014
- 52 **Memories Coast 1948**
Watercolour on gesso ground, 7¾ x 12¼
Studio stamp lower left
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1021
- 53 **Study for 'These are for Remembrance' 1948**
Watercolour, pen & ink, 4¾ x 6¾ ins
Signed with initials and dated lower left. Verso quotations from Ruskin.
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1036
- 54 **Lava Pillars 1949**
Watercolour, 5⅞ x 8⅞ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1048.02
Lent from a private collection through Wolseley Fine Arts
- 55 **Composition (Dark Planes and Sea) 1949**
Watercolour with pen and ink, 3½ x 5⅞ ins
Signed with initials lower left
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1049
- 56 **Declining Years 1949**
Watercolour, pen & ink, 4¾ x 5¾ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1052.02
- 57 **Eclipse of the Winged Embryo 1949 ***
Oil on panel, 13 x 20½ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1054
(illustrated)
- 58 **Jacta est alea (The Die is Cast) 1949**
Watercolour with pen & ink, 6⅞ x 10¼ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1065
- 59 **The Barrier Beyond 1949**
Watercolour, pen & brown ink, 5 x 8½ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1110
- 60 **S139 The Incommunicable 1949**
Pen & ink, watercolour and pastel, 7 X 11 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1113.01
- 61 **Yesterday's Memorial 1949**
Watercolour, pen & ink, 14¾ x 22 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1123
Lent by Richard Williams
- 62 **Six Small Landscapes – pages from a sketchbook 1949**
Pen & ink, wash, watercolour, pencil, 6⅞ X 8⅞ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1159

- 63 **The Cone** 1949
Watercolour, 6 X 7¼ ins
Signed with initials and titled lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1167
- 64 **Sympathy of Land and Storm** 1950
Charcoal and watercolour, 7¾ x 12¾ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1109.02
- 65 **Circles and Moon** 1950
Oil on panel, 12¾ x 17¼ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1178
Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum
- 66 **Districts of my Kingdom No. 1** 1950 *
Oil on panel, 8½ x 14½ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1183
- 67 **Landscape Pierced With Cones(B)** 1950
Pen, brown & blue ink, 3½ x 5⅞ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1192
(illustrated)
- 68 **Walled Enclosures** 1950
Watercolour, pen & brown ink, 5¼ x 7 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1217
Lent from a private UK collection
- 69 **Impact of the Predestined – Natural Topography** 1950
Watercolour with pen & ink, 6¾ x 10⅞ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1267
- 70 **Storm Receding** 1950
Pen & brown ink wash, 5⅝ x 7¾ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1270
Lent by John Spurling
- 71 **Wordless Urges** 1951
Oil on panel, 16¾ x 26 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1113.02
(illustrated)
- 72 **Vertical Surfaces on a Beach** 1951
Watercolour, 15 x 22 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1296
(illustrated)
Lent by the Easton family
- 73 **Outward Bound (Cone)** 1951
Pen & ink wash, 4½ x 7 ins
Studio stamp lower left
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1297
- 74 **Flight Over the Horizon with Floating Surfaces over the Sea** 1951
Watercolour 6¾ X 8½ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1305
(illustrated)
- 75 **Touchflower of the Unseen** 1952
Pen & ink, 4⅞ x 7⅞ ins
Studio stamp lower right
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1331
(illustrated)
- 76 **Narrow Lagoon** 1952
Watercolour with pen & ink, 7 x 6¼ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1338
Lent by Margery Clarke
- 77 **Memories Field Encircled by Hills** 1953
Ink wash and watercolour, 6⅞ x 9 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1357
- 78 **Cove of the Spiritual Lighthouse – Figures Hastening Down** 1953
Watercolour with pen & ink, 11 x 15 ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1363
(illustrated on page 4)
- 79 **Coming in with the Tide** 1955
Watercolour and pen & ink, 4¾ X 7⅝ ins
Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1413

- 80 An End Far Different from Their Imagining 1955**
 Pen & ink, 4½ X 7⅞ ins
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1419
(illustrated)
- 81 Memories Field 1956**
 Ink wash, 7 x 8⅞ ins
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1436
 Lent by Alexandra Walker
- 82 Construction by the Sea Pierced by Hollows 1957**
 Pen & ink, 4⅞ X 7 ins
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1486
- 83 On So Slender a Thread Hangs My Joy 1958**
 Pen & ink, 5 x 7½ ins
 Studio stamp lower right
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1518
(illustrated)
- 84 Path Intimate Obstructed 1958**
 Watercolour, 4¾ x 7 ins
 Studio stamp lower left
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1520
(illustrated)
- 85 Surfaces Floating Over Beach 1958**
 Pen & ink, 7 x 9 ins
 Studio stamp lower left
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1522
- 86 Surfaces Standing On and Floating Over Beach with Distant Mountains 1958**
 Watercolour and pen & ink wash, 4½ x 7 in
 Studio stamp lower left
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1523
- 87 Rock with Vista 1958**
 Ink wash, 7 x 10 ins
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1558
- 88 Perpetual Motion of Spirals 1959**
 Pen & ink, 5⅞ x 8 ins
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1587
- 89 Symbols Gathering on the Shore 1960/61**
 Ink wash, 6½ x 8 ins
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1595
 Lent by Sally Maynard-Smith
- 90 Many Centred Storm 1960**
 Pen & ink, 6¾ x 8¾ ins
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1626
- 91 Circling Sky, Tide Coming In 1961**
 Ink wash, 15¾ x 19¾ ins
 Studio stamp lower right
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1650
- 92 Circling Storm with Seed Forms 1961**
 Pen & ink, 7 x 9 ins
 Studio stamp lower right
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1651
- 93 Great Storm Over the Sea 1961**
 Pen & ink, 7 x 9 ins
 Studio stamp lower right
 Recorded in the RMS archives under reference K1656
(illustrated)

NOTE: Works marked with an asterisk are only for sale to public museums and galleries or other charitable organisations.



Prelude to Storm, 1925. Catalogue no. 1



Hand in Hand with the Musician, 1927. Catalogue no. 4



Walls, 1928. Oil on canvas, 17 X 21 ins. Catalogue no. 11



The Road to Woldingham, 1929. Catalogue no. 12



Mountain landscape, 1933. Catalogue no. 16



Devon Cove ,1941. Catalogue no. 26



Forms Outward Bound, 1943. Catalogue no. 29



Welsh Coast, 1945. Catalogue no. 34



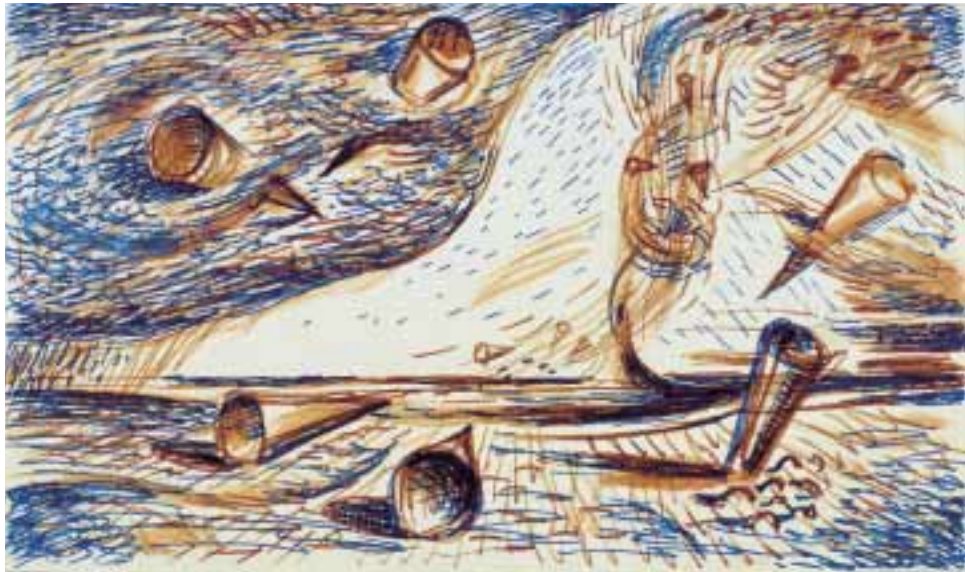
Interior with Bat, 1947. Catalogue no. 44



Sympathy of Land, Sea and Sky, 1947. Catalogue no. 47



Eclipse of the Winged Embryo, 1949. Catalogue no. 57



Landscape Pierced With Cones (B), 1950. Catalogue no. 67



Wordless Urges, 1951. Catalogue no. 71



Vertical Surfaces on a Beach, 1951, Catalogue no. 72



Flight Over the Horizon with Floating Surfaces over the Sea, 1951. Catalogue no. 74



Touchflower of the Unseen, 1952. Catalogue no. 75



On So Slender a Thread Hangs My Joy, 1958. Catalogue no. 83



Great Storm Over the Sea, 1961. Catalogue no. 93

Ralph Maynard Smith as Architect

INTRODUCTION

Architectural Commentary

Elcock & Sutcliffe

Elcock & Sutcliffe was a productive and respected firm of architects that flourished between the two world wars. The founder was Charles Ernest Elcock (1878–1944), who entered into partnership in 1923 with his former pupil, Frederick Sutcliffe (1891–1958). Maynard Smith joined the firm in 1928 and became a partner ten years later. Elcock was “of Quaker stock” and had begun his architectural career in Belfast; later, after the turn of the century, he was senior assistant to the great John James Burnet of Glasgow. He then worked with several architects, including Matear & Simon of Liverpool, before setting up on his own after the Great War, first in York and then, in 1923, in London. According to Sutcliffe, Elcock was “a witty conversationalist, and his Irish wit and humour made him excellent company at any social gathering.”

The most prominent building by Elcock & Sutcliffe is the former home of the *Daily Telegraph* in Fleet Street. A massive, dominating pile in a Graeco-Egyptian manner with Art Deco overtones, this was designed in collaboration with Thomas S. Tait (whom Elcock had met in Burnet’s office) and it was a model for the ‘Megalopolitan Building’, the home of the *Daily Beast* in Evelyn Waugh’s novel *Scoop* with its “Byzantine vestibule and Sassanian lounge.” The firm was also responsible for the Grand Stand at Epsom racecourse while Sutcliffe designed a number of banks, but Elcock & Sutcliffe’s real speciality was hospitals. In 1924 the firm won two competitions for new hospitals – at Davyhulme near Manchester and at Harrogate – and more followed: at Oldham, Grantham, Cardiff, Wolverhampton and at Hertford, where the “verandah ward” was first introduced. Elcock became an expert on hospital design, visiting the United States and Europe as a member of the International Hospital Association.

Sutcliffe later recalled that "such was his keenness to modernise and improve both hospital construction and equipment and his thorough knowledge of the subject that, alas, he was apt to be too dogmatic and somewhat intolerant towards the views and opinions of others."

Davyhulme Hospital, completed in 1929, was the largest built since the war. The buildings were mostly two-storied with flat roofs, built of brick and reinforced concrete in a simplified Classical manner but given a landmark clock tower; one contemporary critic considered that "the entire scheme preaches the therapeutic gospel of light and air." Similarly sensible buildings characterised the extensive Hospital for Mental and Nervous Diseases at Runwell, near Southend, on which Maynard Smith worked and which was completed in 1937. Interest was given by the dramatic chimney of the boiler house placed on axis and by the barrel-vaulted non-denominational chapel. Howard Robertson wrote how the architect of such an institution "assumes the mantle of a physician" and how "the gloom and depression inevitably connected with a visit to a mental hospital are lost in admiration for what has been achieved." Another, analogous commission was that for the new buildings for the Bethlem Royal Hospital at Monks Orchard, Beckenham.

During his time with Elcock & Sutcliffe, Maynard Smith produced many perspective drawings illustrating the firm's projects, both executed and unexecuted. Several were essays in the streamlined, modernistic manner fashionable in the 1930s and Sutcliffe noted how Elcock's "optimism was unbounded, and only equalled by his brilliancy as a planner, which combination made him susceptible to the whims of promoters of really 'speculative' schemes, some of which showed real genius." These included projects for a department store, a cinema, film studios and for a new Thames bridge combined with offices and shops. Some of these commercial schemes were in fact executed, such as the shop at 15-154 Oxford Street of 1931.

The firm of Elcock & Sutcliffe did not survive the Second World War. In 1942, Sutcliffe transferred to the Ministry of Works to design emergency hospitals for the United States military; Elcock died in 1944, leaving Maynard Smith as the only active partner. The following year he decided not to continue the practice but to join another established firm.

Easton & Robertson

Easton & Robertson was a highly respected and progressive firm of architects both before and after the Second World War; Maynard Smith joined the practice in 1945 and became a partner the following

year. Remarkably, each of the two principal partners was separately awarded the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture by the Royal Institute of British Architects: Sir Howard Robertson in 1949, Murray Easton six years later in 1955. John Murray Easton (1889–1975) was a Scot, born in Aberdeen, who worked as an architect both in London and in France before joining Robertson in 1919. He was later described as “a connoisseur of good food and wine, a chef of varying degrees of excellence on occasion, a stimulating and witty conversationalist, an admirable host, a genial guest.” Howard Morley Robertson (1888–1963) was a writer and teacher as well as an architect and a very influential, cosmopolitan figure in British architecture between the world wars. Half-American, he had been born in Salt Lake City and received his architectural education both in London and at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In collaboration with the photographer F.R. Yerbury, secretary of the Architectural Association, Robertson, through his many articles, did more than anyone to introduce an insular and conservative profession to the exciting and unsettling architectural developments in Continental Europe in the 1920s.

Easton & Robertson came to prominence by winning the competition for the Royal Horticultural Hall with a design inspired by the congress hall at the 1923 Gothenburg Exhibition. Soon after, the firm was amalgamated with that of Stanley Hall, who died in 1940. In 1955, Hope Bagenal described how their buildings “come out of an office where younger men and older men work together carrying on that great tradition of friendliness of that good man Stanley Hall. That office is also a school of building research and a school of aesthetics.” In their modernisation of the Savoy Hotel, Easton & Robertson produced a spectacular essay in Art Deco but more typical were more sober buildings like the Metropolitan Water Board Laboratories in Finsbury and St Michael’s Court for Caius College in Cambridge in which the horizontality and austerity of modernism was fused with and civilised by the discipline of Classicism. Easton, thought Bagenal, “is a mind emancipated both from the tyranny of the old and from the tyranny of the new and everything is submitted really to a rigorous experimental criticism.”

After the Second World War, Easton & Robertson was no longer so avant-garde but the firm continued to produce imaginative and well-detailed buildings in more straitened economic circumstances. Although the firm designed a number of ship interiors for the New Zealand Shipping Co., most of the commissions were educational and included a number of science buildings for the University of Cambridge. Amongst the projects with which Maynard Smith was involved was the new Printing Works for the Bank of England at Debden, Essex. Built in 1953–56, this was the firm’s most

impressive post-war design, in which the 125 feet wide main production hall was spanned by pre-cast and pre-stressed concrete ribs of a remarkable asymmetrical profile which support tiers of north-light shell windows; the engineers were Ove Arup & Partners. Another was Hatfield Technical College, completed in 1954, in which a pre-cast reinforced concrete frame designed by Felix J. Samuely was humanised with simple brickwork and gently pitched roofs – never doctrinaire, Easton was particularly concerned with sound detailing and with fundamentals, "and the first fundamental is the climate of these islands." For the enlargement of Alleyne's Grammar School at Stevenage a similar manner was adopted, although here the new brick buildings had to be in sympathy with the existing. Completed in 1959, this was a job largely handled by Maynard Smith and one which his family and partners wanted him to submit for election as a Fellow of the R.I.B.A.

When presented with the Royal Gold Medal in 1955, Murray Easton thanked his partners, without whom "I would have fallen by the wayside long ago. For 36 years Howard Robertson has been a kind and fertile critic; for 29 years Leslie Preston has held my hand and later Teddy Cusdin has supplied, so far as is possible, my many deficiencies, and Maynard Smith has set a great example of efficiency." Maynard Smith's discreet role was often to convert Robertson's tentative concepts into precise and buildable projects. In 1959 the practice was renamed Easton, Robertson, Cusdin, Preston & Smith, and Robertson together with Maynard Smith were acknowledged as the partners in charge for the firm's largest project: the Shell Centre on the South Bank in London. The final scheme was prepared in 1956 for a complex of offices for 5,000 employees which culminates in a broad, 26-storey, 351-foot-high tower clad in Portland stone. Unfortunately, the design was bitterly attacked in the press for being old-fashioned compared with contemporary American tall buildings with glass curtain-walls. Although Robertson ably defended the design in terms of efficiency, weathering and appropriateness, the criticism hurt and soured his final years. The Shell Centre opened in 1962; the following year Sir Howard Robertson died and both Murray Easton and Maynard Smith retired.

*Gavin Stamp
for the Ralph Maynard Smith Trust*

March 2004

Catalogue of Architectural Panels

Ralph Maynard Smith made significant contributions to each of the following major architectural projects:

A1 Bethlem Royal Hospital
Elcock & Sutcliffe, completed 1930

A2/A3 Runwell Mental Hospital
Elcock & Sutcliffe, completed 1937
A mental hospital with 1,000 beds on a 500-acre site, self sufficient with its own farm, nurses' home and senior staff houses as well as wards, power station and chapel.
(illustrated)

A4 Cardiff Royal Infirmary
Elcock & Sutcliffe 1940/41

A5/A6 Hatfield Technical College and Secondary Technical School (now University of Hertfordshire)
Easton & Robertson, 1954
(illustrated)

A7/A8 Bank of England, Printing Works at Debden
Easton & Robertson, 1957
(illustrated)

A9 Alleyne's Grammar School, Stevenage
Easton, Robertson, Cusdin, Preston & Smith, 1959

A10/A11 The Shell Centre, London
Easton, Robertson, Cusdin, Preston & Smith, 1963
The complex consists of a tower block and an adjoining lower office block and a separate downstream building.
(illustrated)



Runwell Mental Hospital, Chapel
Exterior, 1937. Catalogue no. A2/A3
Photo: Derek Banham

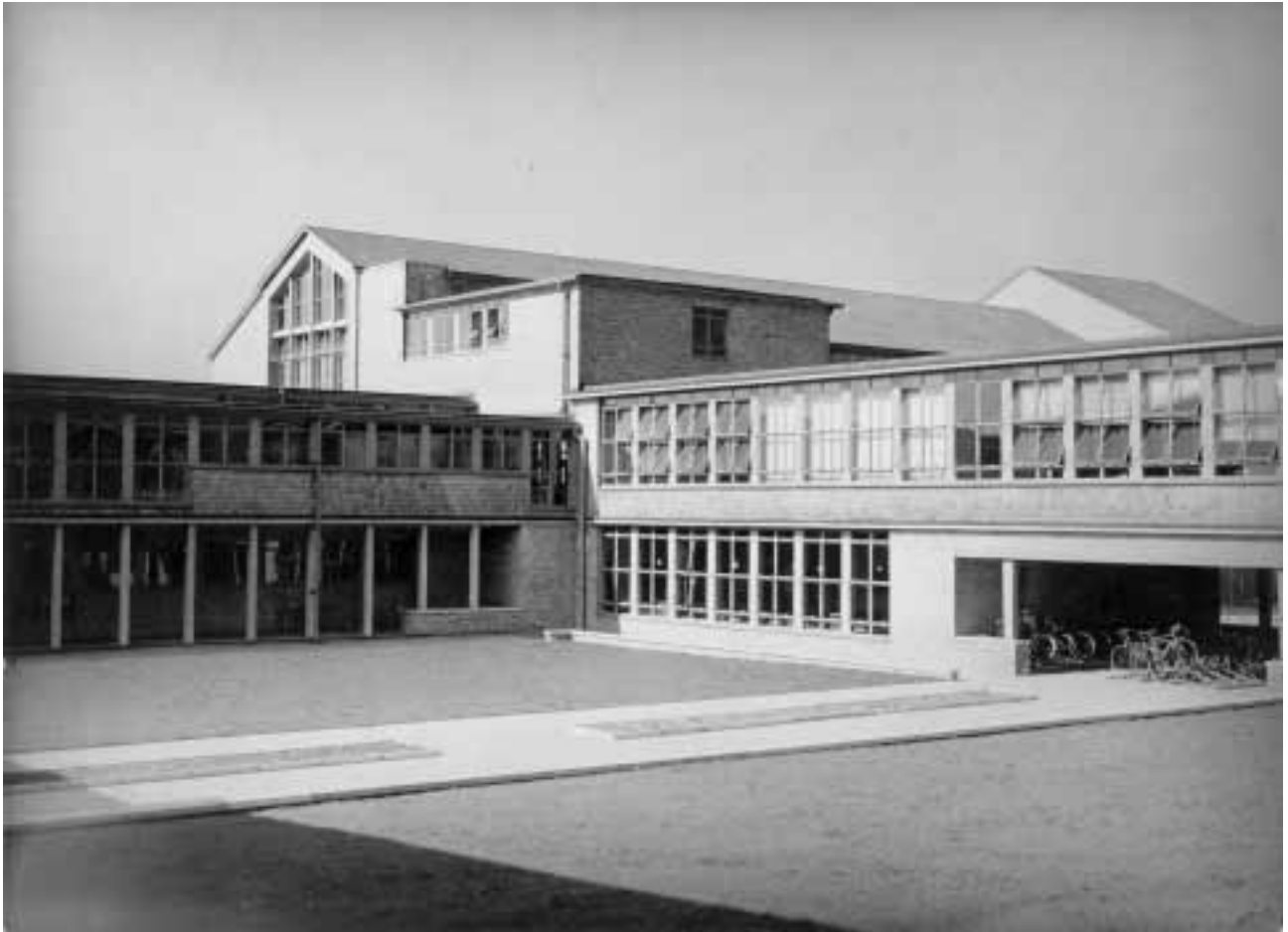
Ralph Maynard Smith made many drawings for proposed projects. The RMS Trust archive contains photographs and originals of a large number from which the following selection is reproduced:

- B1 **Early sketches and drawings for domestic architecture, 1929–1938**
- B2 **Unknown project, possibly for Tottenham Court Road
and
Sheffield Ice Rink**
Both Elcock & Sutcliffe, 1931
(illustrated)
- B3 **Project for the Adelphi site and Corinthian Club, London**
Elcock & Sutcliffe, c. 1931
- B4 **A bridge across the Thames**
Elcock & Sutcliffe, early 1930s
and
New factories
Charles E. Elcock & Maynard Smith, c. 1944
- B5 **Oxford Street Store (Modernist proposal)**
Elcock & Sutcliffe, 1931
(illustrated)

- B6 **Oxford Street Store (DH Evans)**
Elcock & Sutcliffe, 1931/2
- B7 **The Splendide, Elcock & Sutcliffe, 1935
and
The Arcadium, Elcock & Sutcliffe, 1935/6**
- B8 **Flats, Elcock & Sutcliffe, 1931–37**
- B9 **Grantham Hospital (planning from 1939–43)**
Charles E. Elcock & Maynard Smith
- B10 **The Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital, Hayling Island**
Elcock & Sutcliffe, 1939
and
London Chest Hospital
Easton & Robertson, 1946
(illustrated on page 7)
- B11 **Some later architectural sketches, 1953–60**
Easton, Robertson, Cusdin, Preston & Smith

Sheffield Ice Rink. 1931.
Catalogue no. B2





University of Hertfordshire, Quadrangle, 1954. Catalogue no. A5/A6
Photo: University of Hertfordshire Archive



Bank of England, Exterior of Printing Works at Debden, 1957. Catalogue no. A7/A8
Photo: Bank of England Archive



Shell Centre, c. 1963. Catalogue no. A10/A11
Photo: Shell Archive



Shell Today
Photo: Ashley Peters, 2002



Oxford Street Store, 1932. Catalogue no. B5

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Rupert Otten

August 2004

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