

The English Countryside

I feel that she took solace from the countryside, and felt attached to it in a similar way to the nature poet John Clare. Nature does not let you down.

Early on Mary was interested in paintings but I don't think she saw herself as an artist, more of a country person who recorded things. I don't think other people saw her as an artist either, she was not part of the art world and didn't have friends who were. Mary had first trained as a marine biologist at Reading university, before receiving an education certificate in 1944, after which she taught maths, she only started painting after getting married in 1950, when she was 28.

Mary met Godfrey at Walberswick when she was on a field trip with a group of people observing the avocets that had just started breeding on the Suffolk coast, Godfrey's parents had retired there and he was working for the local farmer at Westwood Lodge after returning from Cirencester Agricultural College. After they were married they bought a smallholding at Needham with 100 acres of land, 50 being marsh land along the river Waveney that borders Norfolk and Suffolk. My sister Hannah and I were born along with lots of animals, growing was part of that life which required a lot of work. Mary's interest in the natural world took her on field trips. On one visit to Flatford Mill in Suffolk she met Dr. Ennion who encouraged her to observe and record the natural world. Her recordings became her life's work. They were not straight observations, as she brought herself into her paintings she developed ways of expressing her voice and a poetic understanding of the world around her.

When I stood at the top of that valley looking down at the farm after Mary died, I thought of the way their lifestyle had affected people, of course there are their children, and now great grandchildren, but it's Mary's paintings that are the most important. Out of all that life and industry it is her paintings and vision that have stood the test of time.

River Trips

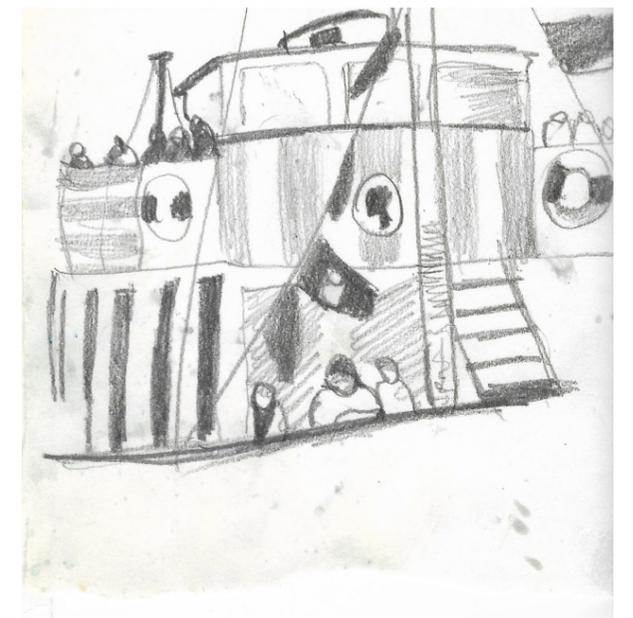
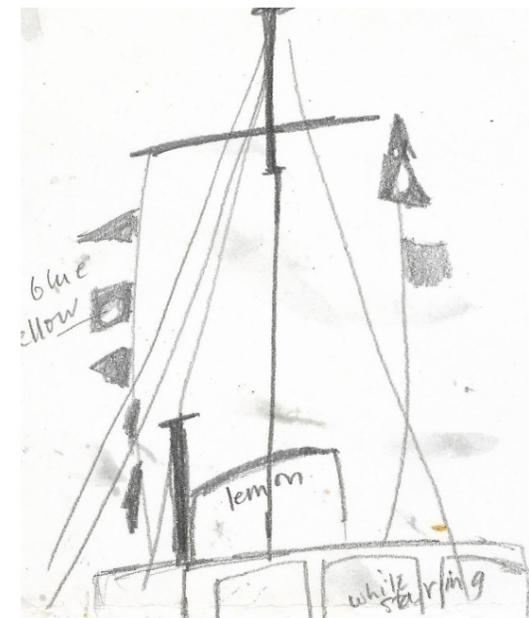
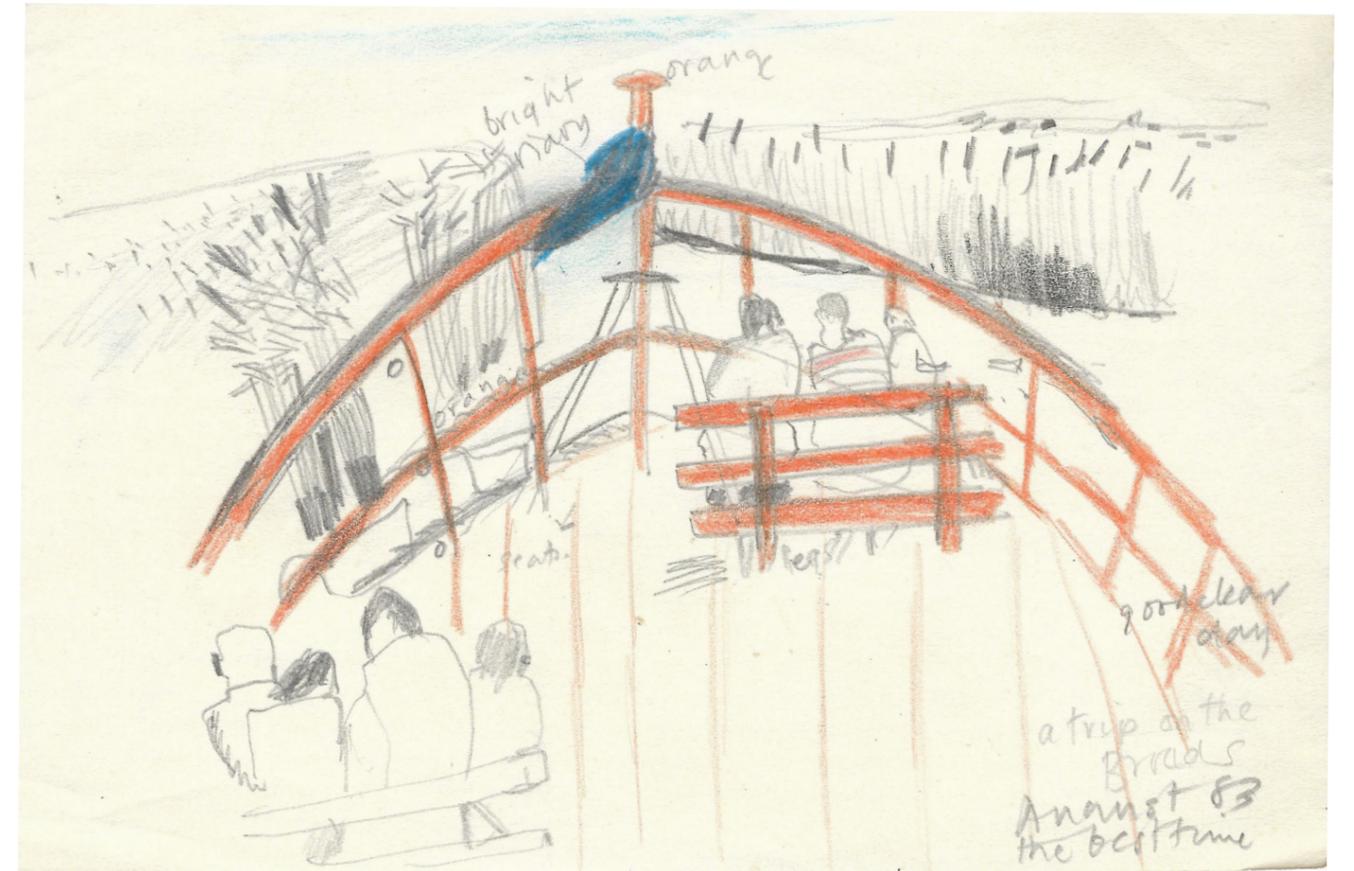
A river is a fine place to sit. The river is going somewhere and you are not. There is very slight activity all the time. There is a sense of travelling - either you can go with it, conjure up the view round the next corner. Look back and recreate its passage in your mind.

Better to be going somewhere all the time - however slowly.

September 28th.



Evening River Trip, 1985, diary entry mentions painting from 87, try and find?



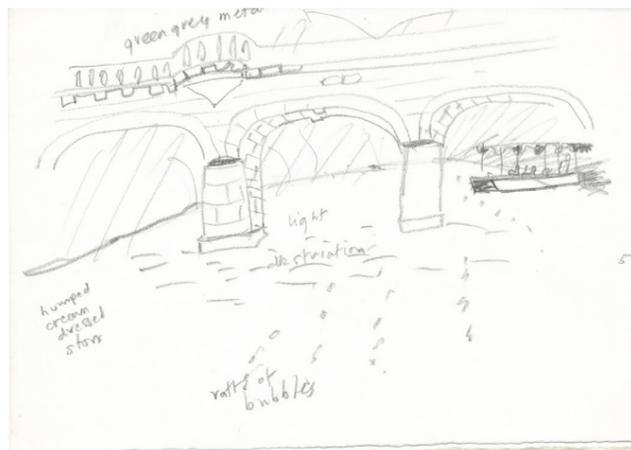
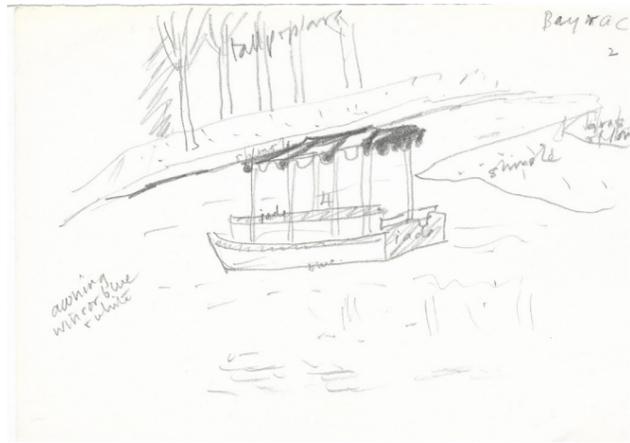
I am going down the river tomorrow



Man Watching Bubbles (title?)

*Saw rafts of bubbles on a swollen river, one day I will try again to paint.
Mountain bubbles carrying views of mountains
bubbles, inside them contain inverted view of the landscape.
Raindrops having on a twig, each contain a perfect view upside down of the immediate small patch of
hedge in front of me, surrounded often by rainbow edges
Rainbows in the sky cannot be effectively shown in paint.*

September 5th



We went late to the river, which was overhung with leafy trees. The sun was setting to the left and very very quickly the remaining light was draining away. Into this graded green gently rowed a boat containing two pink ladies. The rower was in plastic viridian and the boat was cream. Within a few seconds they had glided into the dark brown green shadows.

May 7th

Odd Events

What an odd event - I am sure it will never happen again



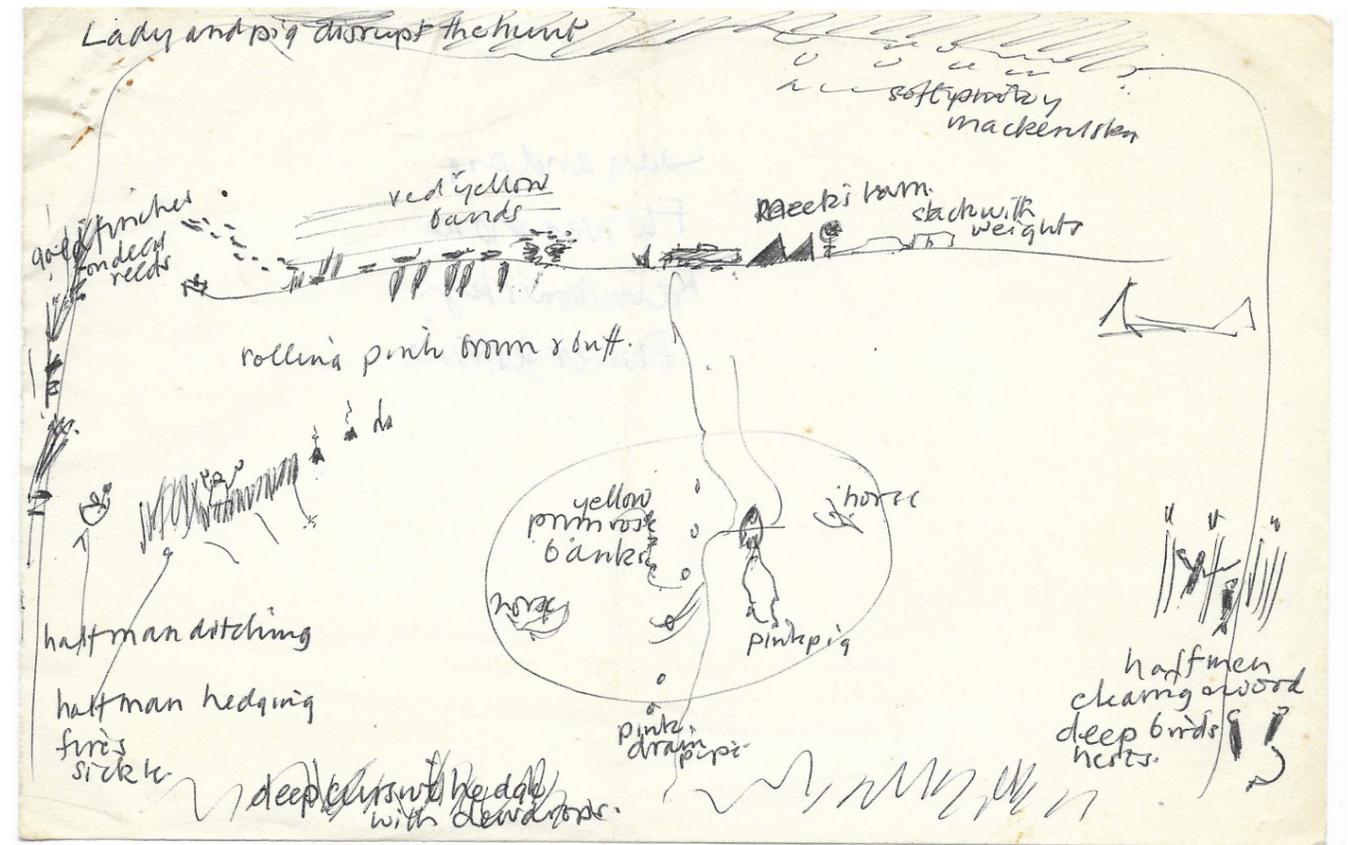
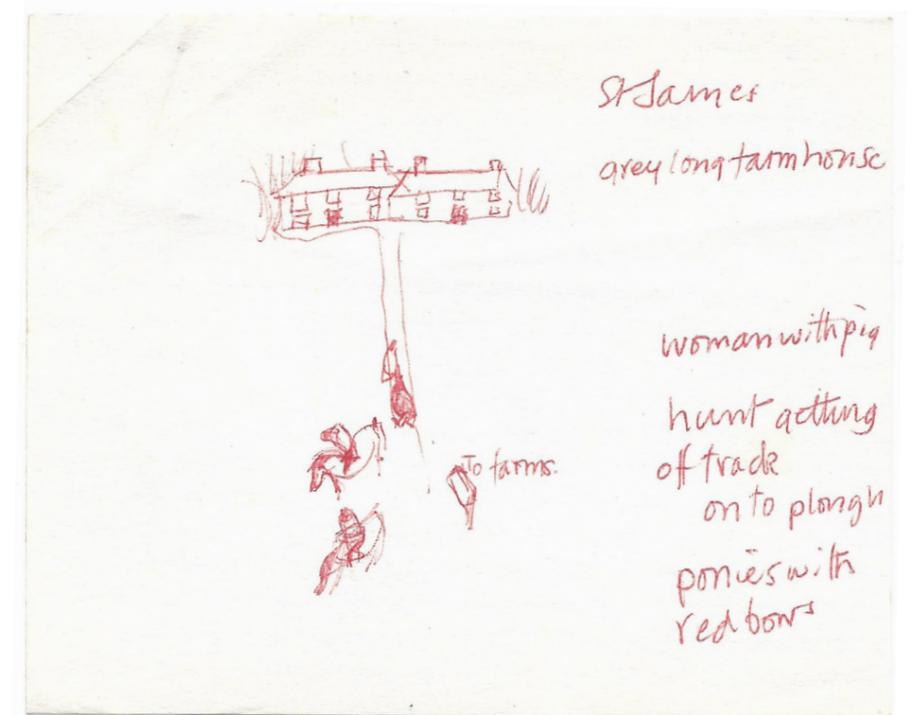
Woman and pig disrupt the hunt.

Pigs frighten.

They often have left covered with mud, high up and appear as if they are wearing long socks.

This combined with the fact that they are poised high on their hoofs, gives them a ludicrous appearance as if wearing shoes with high heels.

June 6th

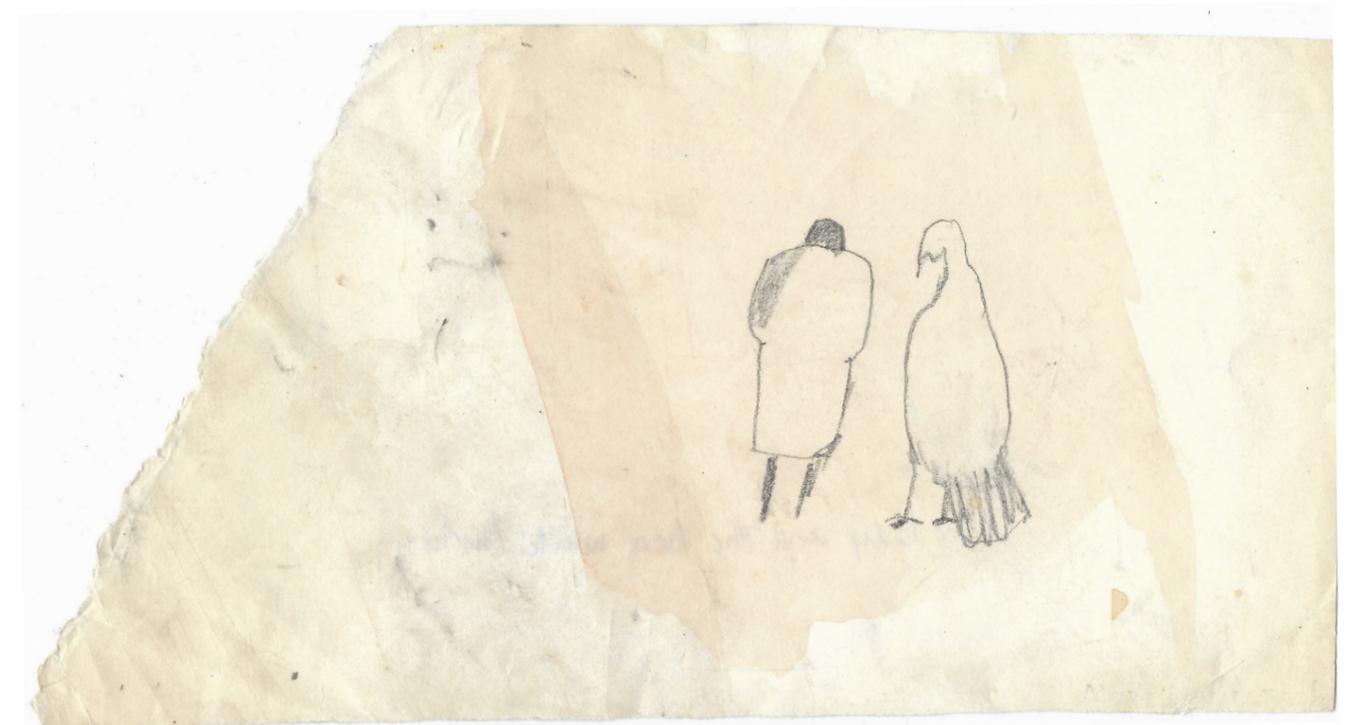
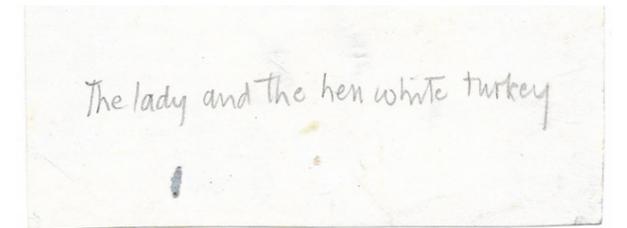
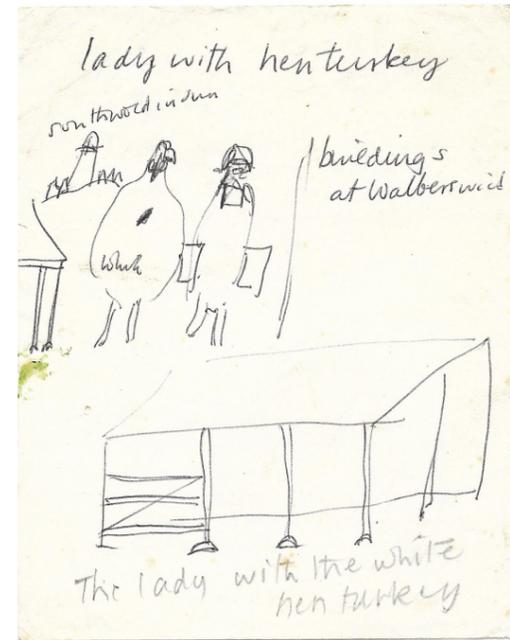




Momentarily a squared ginger and white horse stood awkwardly under a crab apple tree.

The shadows were mauve. The vision was my own.

May 7th



Distant Spires

Tivetshall long mile - all grasses flowing in a pink

It seems country people visit each other on bicycles still and take with pride a bunch of flowers, that they have grown, to their friends. Often in the country garden a row of flowers is grown for cutting e.g. sweet williams, gladioli, chrisantherum, sweet pea (in abundance), a sea of bloom

What better than a bunch of flowers. Your friend will love them and will give you some in return. I wonder what they will be.

July 5th



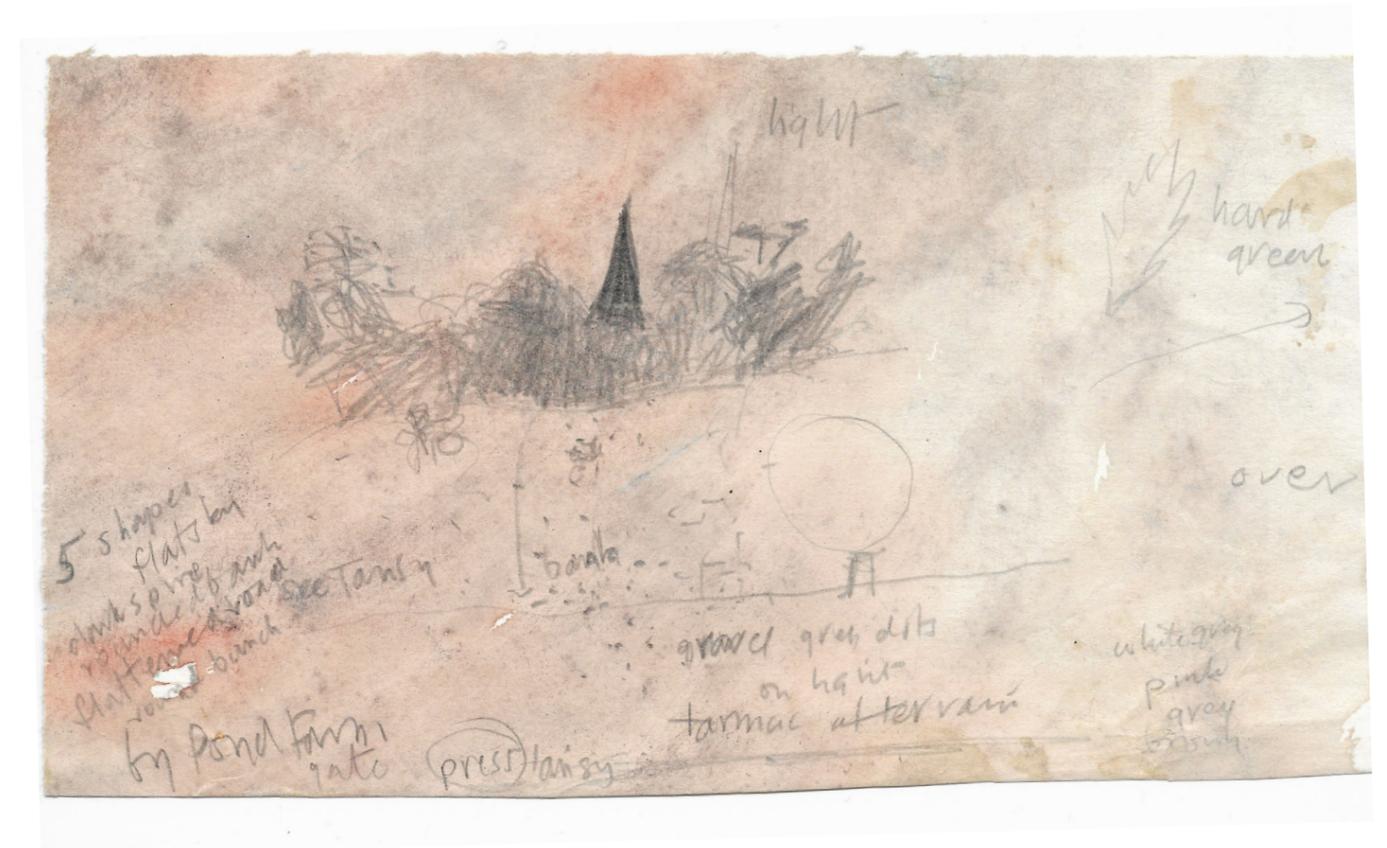
Lady with sweet williams, date?

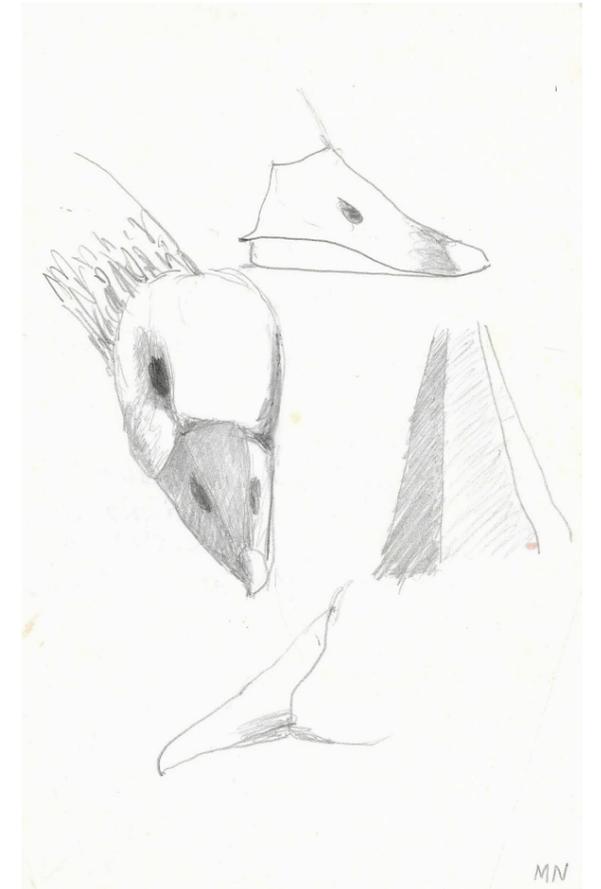
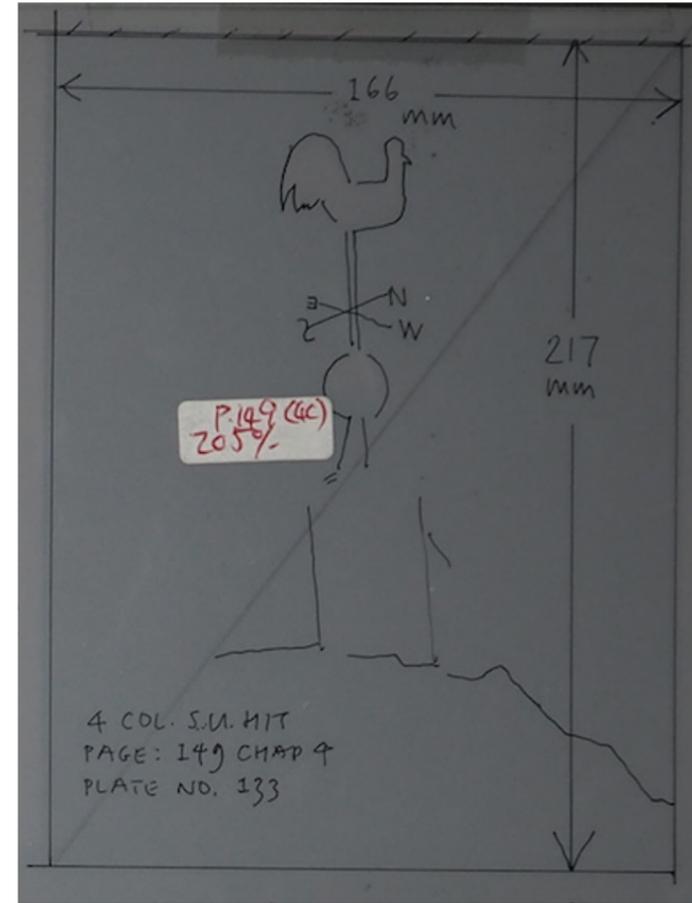
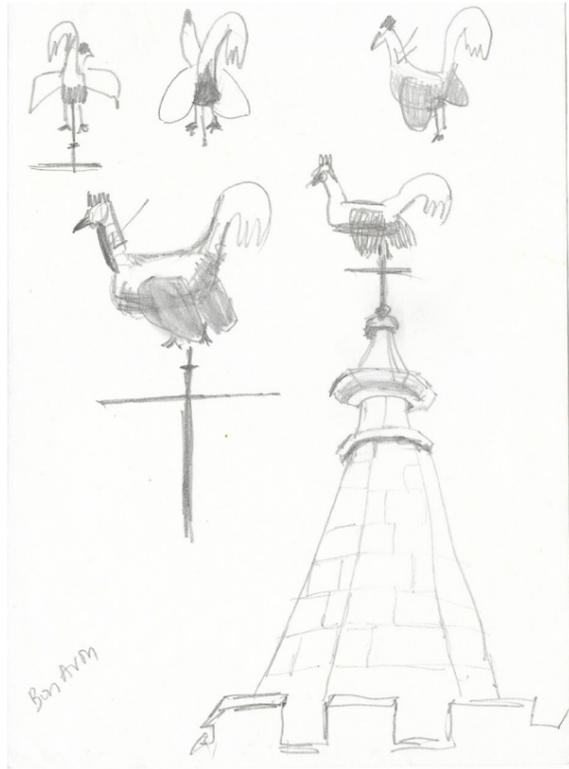
Distant spires - tall black steeples
sequence: seeing something you expect to happen

- behind flower banks
- suddenly seen on turning a corner
- behind people on sky line
- set in hollow in a landscape
- contrast to church if average church
- church towers



Fen Church





I wish the geese would go away. They press so close with button eyes. Their beaks are faceted - angular as a church steeple in Lincolnshire.

You thought they were white but look again. They are eating the roses and their feathers glow pink.

September 15th

The Companionable Countryside

if I ever assembled a book it would be in
appreciation of the English countryside

The country is companionable. Towns are not.

August 28th



*I am listening now for the sound of the triple roll.
All fields become striped from rolling and subtle patterns are
appearing as the tractors harrow the newly planted fields.
Birds have a shadow across the ground and cloud patterns
flock the earth.*

April 11th

*Don't worry, the shells will all wash back into the sea.
The dandelion will push up through the asphalt.
The man will whistle and none will hear him.
The grass will push through the paving stones and cover us all.*

August 28th



Wood Farm, Linstead Magna, Suffolk



*I should like to have been a stone mason and
kept racing pigeons at the bottom of the garden
in black and white striped huts.
Learning both skills diligently amongst rows of
well grown vegetables.*

*I can make bread and the hens will lay eggs.
What more could you want?*

Also a bell ringer at night.

June 23rd