SYBIL ANDREWS, A NOBLE LIFE
Written by Anthony A. Akelaitis [1]

In addition to being a creative, internationally renowned artist famous for the linocuts she produced from the late 1920's through 1988, Sybil Andrews was a gentle, kind, considerate, loyal, unpretentious yet decisive person. Sybil's excellent character traits were manifested in her relationships with people and in the beautiful art which she created during her lifetime.

Sybil Andrews and her husband, Walter Morgan, resided in Campbell River, B.C., Canada, located on Vancouver Island, beginning in 1947. They would live in their oceanside cottage on Georgia Strait for the remainder of their lives. Before immigrating to Canada in 1947, Sybil and Walter lived in England.

Building in Bury St. Edmunds, England, where Sybil

was born on April 19, 1898.

Sybil Andrews was born in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, England, on April 19, 1898, in an apartment above the hardware store owned by her paternal grandfather, Frederick Charles Andrews, and her father, Charles Andrews. Sybil was the third of five children born to her mother, Beatrice Martha Trigg Andrews.

As a child, Sybil was observant and inquisitive and loved to draw and paint. While attending school in Bury St Edmunds, she became fascinated with the life of St. Edmund who was the patron saint of her hometown. Sybil's interest in St. Edmund would result in her creating an embroidered banner depicting the martyrdom of St. Edmund by the Danes. Sybil began the "Banner of St. Edmund" in England in 1930 and finished it at her seaside Campbell River cottage in 1975. Currently, the banner hangs in St. James Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, England.

Upon completion of her elementary and secondary education, Sybil wanted to attend art school. However, this was not possible as her family lacked the funds to pay the tuition. Instead, Sybil apprenticed as a welder.

While working as a welder in an airplane factory during World War I, Sybil took an art correspondence course. At the end of the war, Sybil returned to Bury St Edmunds where she became employed as an art teacher at Portland House School. This was the beginning of a lifetime career for Sybil as an inspiring and knowledgeable master art tutor.

In 1922, Sybil had acquired the funds to register at Heatherley's School of Fine Art in London. Upon completion of her course of studies, Sybil worked as a secretary at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. Sybil used her earnings to pay the tuition to take courses at the "Grosvenor". It was there that Sybil developed an interest in coloured linocuts. [2] From 1929 to 1938, Sybil created a number of linocuts depicting the agricultural life of Bury St Edmunds and Suffolk, workingmen engaging in hard physical labour and people involved in recreational pursuits.

With the beginning of World War II, Sybil returned to work as a welder for the British Power Company constructing warships. While employed there, she met Walter Morgan and they were married in 1943.

The end of World War II brought a major change in the lives of Sybil and Walter as they decided to leave Britain and immigrate to Canada. Upon their arrival in Canada in 1947, Sybil and Walter chose to settle in Campbell River, B.C., on Vancouver Island. They purchased an oceanfront cottage which they renovated so that Sybil could have an art studio and a place to give art lessons. Sybil would reside at this cottage for the remaining forty-five years of her life.

In November 1967, in response to the question of "why did you and your husband decide to leave England and immigrate to Canada" asked by one of the students in her Tuesday evening art classes, Sybil replied that "she and Walter decided to leave England due to the poor British economy after World War II and the rigid British class system which resulted in her and Walter having little opportunity for a better life there". Sybil then stated that the reason why she and Walter bought their seaside home in Campbell River was because "she found the views from the house and property of the ocean, the Islands of Desolation Sound, and the B.C. coastal mountains majestic and inspiring". [3]

From a young age, Sybil shared her knowledge of drawing and painting as she tutored many students. At her Campbell River cottage, Sybil taught art classes in the afternoons and evenings. In 1985, the Artists Kitchen was published by R.K. Hudson, London. In this book, Sybil compiled her art lessons and outlined her philosophy of art. The Artists Kitchen has since become a valued collector's item.

Before her death in 1992, Sybil donated a large portion of the art that she created in Canada to the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta. A small amount of her Canadian art was given to the Campbell River Museum located in Campbell River, B.C. Most of the art completed by Sybil when she lived in England was bequeathed to the Moyse's Hall Museum in Bury St Edmunds. Recently, these works have been moved to West Stow approximately five miles away.

At Sybil's request, when she passed away on December 21, 1992, her memorial service was held "at Hudson's Farm in North Campbell River beneath the many four hundred year old Douglas Fir trees and beautiful ancient maples, an area she and her Thursday art groups spent many hours sitting, sketching and painting. It was a peaceful ceremony read by Lorne Ritchie, one of her special art members, during a little downpour of rain". [4]

Sybil Andrews was a wonderful person and a creative and pioneering artist who became world

renowned. Her strength of character enabled Sybil to deal with the hardships of two world wars, the deprivations caused by the Great Depression of the 1930's, the lack of opportunity in Great Britain after World War II, and adjustment to a new life in Canada. The Sybil Andrews Heritage Society created this website to share Sybil's life and art with you.

Footnotes

1. Anthony A. Akelaitis, a student of Sybil's and a member of the Sybil Andrews Heritage Society.
2. Linocut: an art form using linoleum to create a block relief print that was taught to the students at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London, England, commencing in the 1920's
3. Akelaitis, Anthony, Personal Journal – "Conversations with Sybil", November 28, 1967.
4. Kretz, Diana, Letter to A. Akelaitis, August 26, 2010

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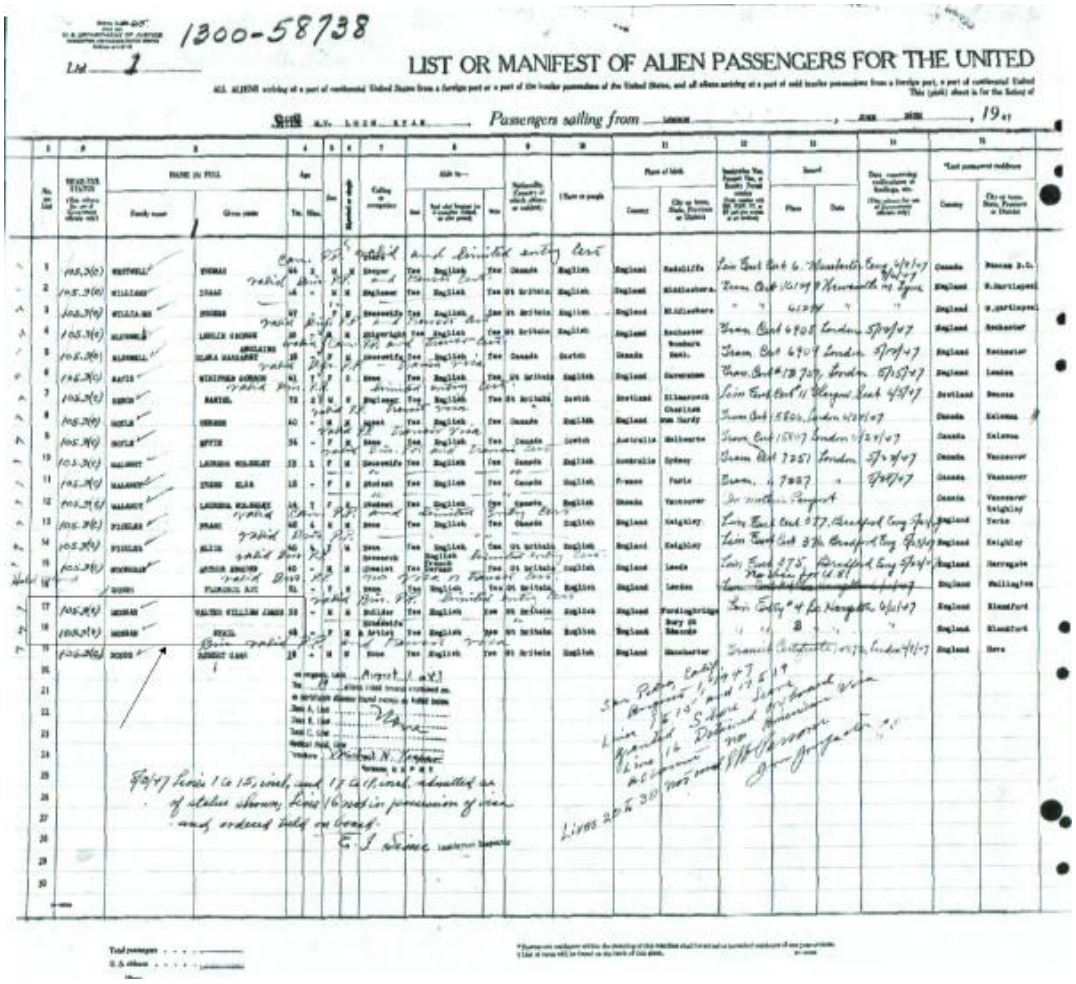
Sybil Andrews File at the Campbell River Museum and Archives, 470 Island Hwy, Campbell River, B.C., Canada.



Manifest of the ship Sybil and her husband were on. They are passengers 17 and 18

Detail of the manifest