

PROJECT LYDOS BY LOUISE COURTNELL

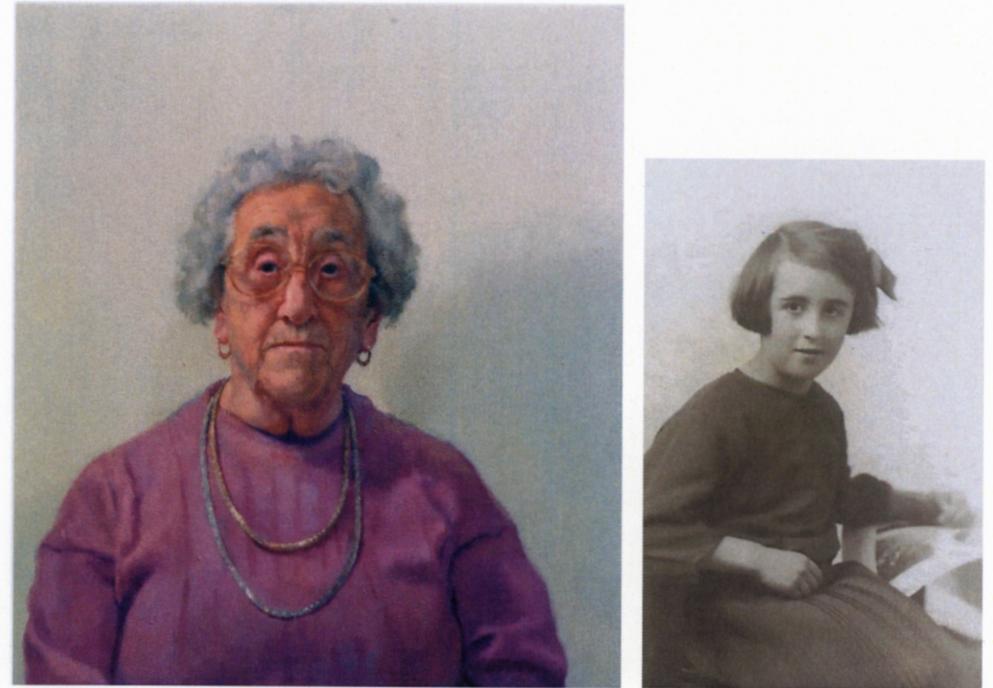
50 PORTRAITS

Thank you to all the sitters, to the villagers who have supported and helped to finance the project, to John Cork for filming the exhibition and making a DVD, to Aury and Nahem Shoa for their continuing encouragement, to Annie Hill Smith, to Robert for giving me knowledge on the end of my brush, and finally to my family, friends and my partner Richard for their love and support.

Courtneil intends to make a book based on the project in the future.
It is hoped the exhibition will tour to other venues throughout Cornwall and the UK.

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Phyllis Cooper (née Chapell)
Born 1917

2003

FEB 7th - MAR 15th 2015
Hannahs at Seale-Hayne, Newton Abbot
OPEN DAILY 10am - 5pm

PROJECT LYDOS

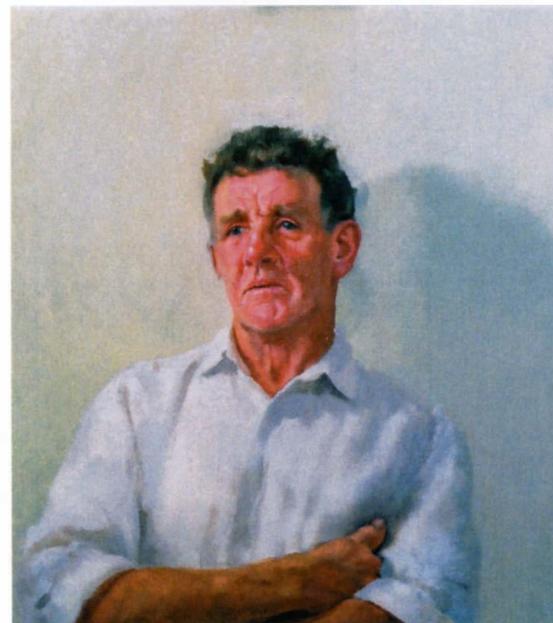
Louise Courtnell was born in Plymouth and is a full-time painter, living and working on the Rame Peninsula, south-east Cornwall. In 2003, she began Project Lydos, a series of 50 oil paintings of two generations born in the twin Cornish fishing villages of Kingsand and Cawsand, between 1910 and 1944. She wanted to make a visual record of her local community. An important part of the project was to include a childhood photograph, a brief personal history and memories of village life spanning half a century.

The paintings were done solely from life and required an average of sixteen hours of sittings. Some were painted in Courtnell's studio and the remainder in the residents' own homes. Teamwork and commitment is needed to paint a good portrait and she is indebted to the generosity and patience of the sitters, who were all first-time models! During the sessions, she recognized a common thread - that they all had a strong sense of identity and pride in their Cornish heritage and were pleased to be part of a project which promoted and celebrated their villages.

The paintings are not sentimental or flattering. Courtnell is aiming to capture a certain 'nakedness' in the faces of the sitters; she is more interested in the faces unmasked, rather than hidden behind a smile. She hopes to reveal something of the sitters' personality and life. Careful attention is paid to the subtlety of colour, tone and quality of the paint. She is the impartial observer, always respecting the 'event' which is the model.

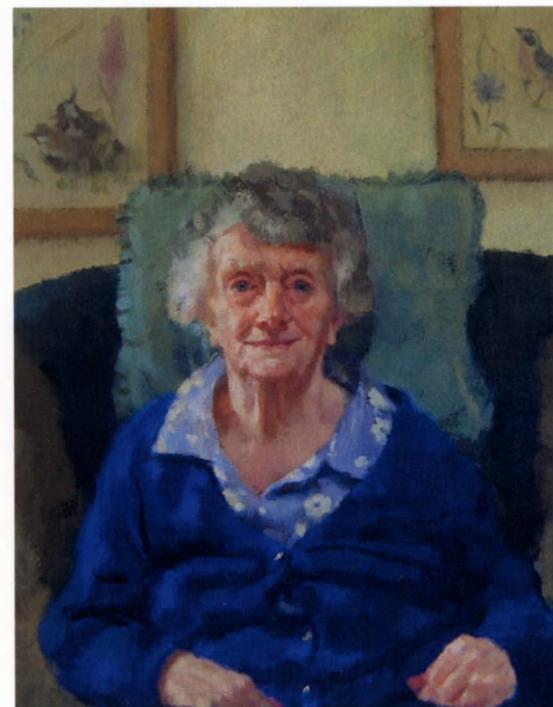
Courtnell feels privileged to have met all of the sitters, many of whom have since become friends. Sadly fourteen of them have died since the project began.

The name LYDOS derives from the name of a boat belonging to one of the sitters and is an acronym for Lower Your Drawers Or Swim!!!



Malcolm Baker
Born 1944

2003



Edna Hoblyn (née Jago)
Born 1910 - Died 2008

2005



HISTORY OF KINGSAND & CAWSAND

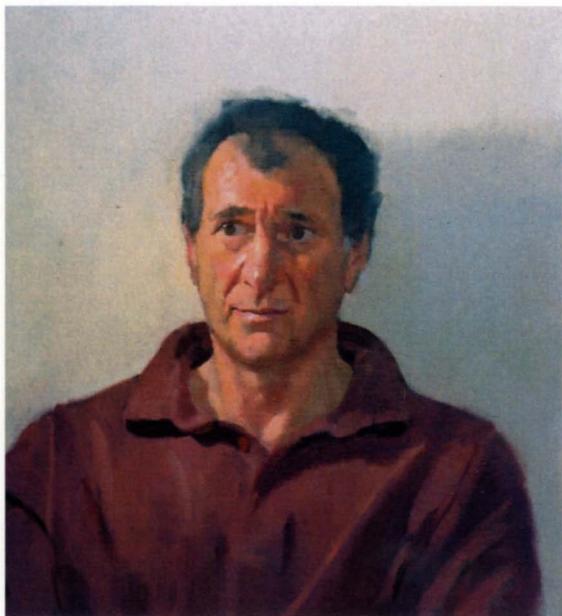
The villages lie on the south coast of Cornwall, ten miles from Plymouth. They were originally in separate counties divided by a stream - Kingsand was in Devon and Cawsand in Cornwall - , but were amalgamated after the Second World War. Fierce rivalry existed between the two villages, especially amongst the fishermen. Life always revolved around the sea, though today only one fisherman remains, (see image of Malcolm Baker). Smuggling was rife until 1870's when, if caught, one would face either deportation to Australia or New Zealand, or having to join the Royal Navy for five years with no pay!

Lilian Cannan (left), remembered seeing wounded soldiers returning from the First World War and recalled the traditional mark of respect of laying straw outside the homes of the dying, in order to muffle the sounds of the passing horses and carts.

In 1910, when the oldest sitter, Edna Hoblyn, was born, there were four hundred local families living in the villages. Only twenty-four remain; two-thirds of the original houses are now holiday homes.



Punch and Judy show in the meadow, Cawsand 1912.



Tony Carne
Born 1939

2003



Lilian Cannan (née Singleton)
Born 1912 - Died 2005

2004



THE ARTIST

Louise Courtnell met Robert Lenkiewicz in 1987. He became her mentor and teacher and there followed an intensive two year 'apprenticeship' in painting, which concentrated on the understanding of tone.

Her work includes landscape and still-life, however she has always had a passion for portraiture. She has been a regular exhibitor at the National Portrait Gallery, (BP Portrait Award) from 1991 to 2001 and was commended for two self portraits. Commissions have included Dr. Rowan Williams, (2002) and Robert, Earl of Edgcumbe, (2008).

She reveres the work of Rembrandt and Van Dyck. In her opinion, the greatest and most moving paintings ever made were Rembrandt's late self-portraits, which remind us of our own mortality and humanity. She also feels strongly that there is a place for the observational painter in a world of the instant, digital image.

Courtnell has run a painting class in Kingsand for 17 years and gives private tuition, following Robert's approach to painting.

She is delighted to have the opportunity of showing her project at Seale Hayne and is dedicating the exhibition to Robert.

"Life is a tragedy. That's why we have the Arts - to make it more bearable." - R.O.Lenkiewicz.



The artist with 'Self Portrait - Losing Robert' 2002



Cawsand Infants School

1925