

Three keywords: **Sanctuary, Reminiscence, Energy.**

Harry Wilson 1902372

(BA Hons) Graphic Design

Research in Practice (ADAD5004)

Word count: 2749

Tutor: Donna Williams

AN UNCERTAIN POINT OF VIEW

By Harry Wilson

Its 23rd March 2020. The UK government have announced a national lockdown, and I don't want to be a Graphic Designer anymore.

I had waited 4 years to go to university, to be greeted by a devastating global pandemic. Going from 100mph to 0 in a blink. Feeling the full force of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as I question my role to my family, to the world, as a student studying to become a graphic designer. With a swift turn of the tables I was back home as if I had never been to University, with my only priority being the safety of my mum. My mum is the life and soul of my family, who suffers with an auto immune disorder, Sjögren's syndrome. She is also a frontline worker for Shared Lives, looking after vulnerable adults in her own home. At this time this individual was still in services, with service users from different houses, and in a maskless, precaution-less world, this was an extremely worrying time as the individual did not respond well to change. I was totally immobilised to the heel of existential crisis, I was ready to write off all my hard work and quit University. University, the gateway to my future, a place of community and hope, with endless possibilities. As the first person in my family to go to university, I had taken it onto myself to break through the norm embedded deeply in my family. Now I'm left standing in my secluded perspective asking myself what the hell am I to provide to a world that's on fire, as an unqualified Graphic Designer? Without any of my creature comforts to ease the relentless exhaustion of not knowing what's coming next, I had to really affiliate myself with the essential 1 hour exercise allocation, if I was going to see out the days to come.

SANCTUARY

protection or a safe place, especially for someone or something being chased or hunted.
(Cambridge Dictionary, 2021) **[1]**

For 1 hour, every day, I would walk the fairways of South Pembrokeshire Golf Club. I have lived adjacent to the club all my life and just as the blanket of green covered an amass of land it also covered my fatigued soul. Like a parallel universe, I was able to walk each hole without being an obstruction to golfers. I was walking on fairways I had never set eyes on from that point of view before, even though I have lived here all my life. This was a complete contrasting harmony with the upside down of the world we had been harshly subjected to.

On one of the routinely visits I decided to sit on an outward looking golf tee, surrounded with solid wooden railway sleepers. Before I had even realised I had sat in the remanence of a thick oily tar (Fig 1).



(Fig 1: Wilson, H. 2020) **[2]**

The Oil Tank Fire, 1940.

On Monday 19 August 1940, three German Junkers 88 bombers flew in over the coast and dropped bombs onto the oil tanks at Pennar (Fig 2). The fire raged for eighteen days, flames spreading from one tank to the next - the largest fire in Britain since the great Fire of London in 1666. (Carradice, P & MacCallum, R. 2009) **[3]**



(Fig 2: Unknown, 1940) **[4]**

It seems that that oily remanence is that of the aftermath of World War Two, seeping up from the ground to greet present day through the medium of a railway sleeper. Eighty years on, I find my place of sanctuary in a place that once was a literal bomb site, a poetic contradiction.

As I walk from green to green, fairway to fairway, why is it that I find solace in the

open land and chaos right at the border. When there is no-one in sight? I see the remanence of oil as a metaphoric key to my thought processes. Seeping up from the unseen underground. Right next to my own roots. My roots as part of one of the oldest families in Pennar. An impressionable connection to the land which is more than matter.

This year I have linked the keyword ‘Sanctuary’ with my visual enquiry project. As highlighted in (Fig. 1), It was at this spot where I found sanctuary, to where I was physically reminded of what and who came before me.



(Fig. 3: Wilson, H. 2021) [5]

This piece that I designed portrays the point of view of the oil I sat in, looking toward where the 18 tanks would have been situated 80 years prior. As the oil seeped through the ground to meet me at present day. I wanted to create a counter piece that would be visible

when exposed to UV lights, heavily inspired by the work at 'Under the Skin'. However, my application of ink would be completely invisible under normal light.



(Fig. 4: Wilson, H. 2021) [6]

As I find solace in 2020, the oil comes to humble me. It reminds me of the terror the landscape before me was once subjected to, and puts my own quarrels in perspective. And for that, I wanted to create this piece in remembrance of the firefighters that lost their lives during the bombing of WW2. Frederick George Davies, 31. Ivor John Kilby, 29. Clifford Mills, 31. Trevor Charles Morgan, 31. John Frederick Thomas, 30. Embedded within (Fig. 3), This is the piece that reveals itself under UV light (Fig.4).

REMINISCENCE

the process or practice of thinking or telling about past experiences (MERRIAM-WEBSTER, 2021) [7]

“to indulge in reminiscence” (MERRIAM-WEBSTER, 2021) [8]. I personally see reminiscence as soul food. A food that over the years I have been addicted too. A food that makes you wish things were different by staying the same. Trying to recall memories to harness the power to stop change.

Its March 26th 2020 and the whole world is anaesthetised with reminiscence. With the lust to go back to their normally led lives, to feel a distant loved one in your arms, to feel untethered and unbound to your own home. After years of fearing change, and finally capitalising on my dreams we are stricken by a global pandemic, and as fast as we're struck, I too am struck by the frenzy that is my old friend reminiscence, and I never want the taste to go. For me, nostalgia is a main undercurrent of Reminiscence. Why do I love the vast vista of the fairways so much?



(Fig.5 *Ned's Bicycle*, 1997) [9]

The Teletubbies (Fig. 5). Just by looking at that image you would think this was an obvious connection, but I haven't watched an episode of Teletubbies for literally decades. Its bizarre because before my finalised 'Sanctuary 2020' piece, I had plans for a more dream-like rendition of the golf course, and with the hindsight of this research it would have been a complete recreation of The Teletubbies set (Fig. 6). The original Idea was actually inspired by the work of an illustrator named Andy Russell. Here we have a piece called hidden harbour (Fig. 7) which triggered my subconscious memory bank in relation to The Teletubbies.

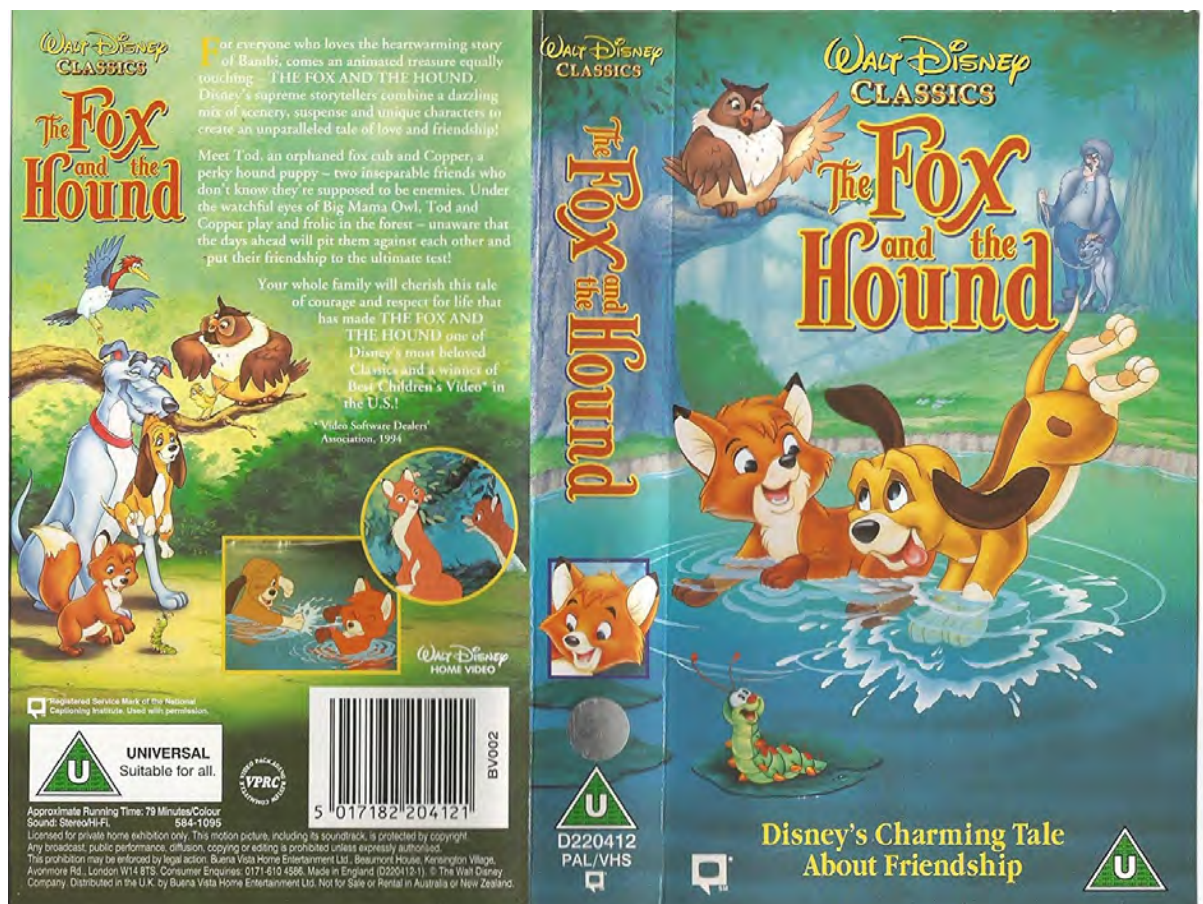


(Fig. 6: Wilson, H. 2021) [10]



(Fig 7: Russell, A. 2013) [11]

Its like I have stumbled across a subliminal memory bank that my subconscious has been puppeteering this entire time. Nostalgia to me is the possession of physical artefacts that evoke an experience or time before. I am completely sentimental in my possessions. I still have all my old VHS tapes I watched growing up as I loved Disney. Drawing the characters growing up, to having a dedicated Instagram page for all my Disney prints. The VHS tapes, included *The Lion King*, *The Jungle Book*, *The Fox and The Hound* etc. To this day I love the sleeves, theres something so endearing within hand drawn 2D animation and their hand illustrated sleeves to boot. Just how I've recognised the significance of the Teletubbies in my subconscious, perhaps there's something to the relentless hours sat, immersed into the realm of Disney.



(Fig. 8: *The Fox and the Hound*, 1981) [12]

One major graphic design element that has stuck with me all my life is that of the security hologram situated on both sleeve and VHS tape. I cannot quantify the hours spent watching the ‘adverts’ before the ‘feature film’ growing up, but anti-piracy was a common element across the board. From an early age I have been told that a hologram symbolises quality and high standards within this anti-piracy campaign. Whether I have been brainwashed into being a pure, fear mongered consumer all these years or to conform to a certain set of rules, I really think the standard in which I conduct myself has been ingrained in me at an early age, which, along with many other variables has made me who I am today.



(Fig: 9: *The Tigger Movie*, 2000) [13]

“This idealized emotional state is framed within a past era, and the yearning for the idealized emotional state manifests as an attempt to recreate that past era by reproducing activities performed then and by using symbolic representations of the past.” (Hirsch, 1992) [14]

As Hirsch highlights in his paper, it would seem I am right in that bracket. My bedroom right now at 25 years old is surrounded in Star Wars memorabilia, even my blinds. It has been a personal promise to myself that I shall never conform to becoming an adult and wear these comforts on my sleeve for the world to see. I'm trying to recreate the past that was never actually the past.



(Fig. 10: Wilson, H. 2021) [15]

ENERGY

a fundamental entity of nature that is transferred between parts of a system in the production of physical change within the system. (MERRIAM-WEBSTER, 2021) **[16]**

“Its energy surrounds us, binds us. Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter.” (Star Wars, 1980). **[17]** I believe that the consciousness is an energy field. An energy field that exists on a separate plane to the physical world we live in. Though we do not have the technological prowess to measure it, doesn't mean its not there. A quote my mum has told me growing up, “Man isn't meant to know everything”. From her years of observing the destruction of man on the planet, resonates a modesty that has always lived through me. I am not lesser or better than anyone. As we cannot assume any aspect of another persons life.

My first conscious encounter with ‘energy’ was that in relation to the Preseli Hills. I had been given a brief by my lecturers to design a corporate identity for a countryside cafe. As per with every brief I was given I wanted to ensure it was on a completely new topic. Even though I can see the hills from my bedroom window, 26.7 miles away. I too, like most people, only knew of their vague connection to Stonehenge. Due to the mayhem of starting 4 modules at one time, I didn't actually make it up to the hills until about 2 months into the project. At this point, all identity of the cafe had been designed and I really wanted to gain more sufficient primary research to strengthen my project. After passing many sites I just wasn't drawn to, and through perseverance and questionable way-finding, I came across one of the two sites, of which the Stonehenge bluestones originated. Carn Goedog. I was utterly blown away. (Fig 11). It is simply a carbon copy of my cafe logo (Fig 12), which I had created 2 months prior. Ever since then, the encounter began to grow in my consciousness as aspects of the brief were being met with powers far greater than coincidence. Every separate requirement for this brief was met by the research I uncovered within the book, ‘*Real Preseli*’ (Osmond, J 2019) **[18]**. The only aspect that didn't draw exact inspiration from the hills was my logo. But not one month after my deadline, the documentary ‘*Stonehenge: The Lost Circle Revealed*’ aired on BBC Two, where a team of archaeologists shed light on the long lost 400 year gap in our understanding of the origin of the Stonehenge bluestones and their transportation over 180miles of rough terrain. To where the exact, lost outer ring of Stonehenge, originated in its exact state right here in Pembrokeshire (*Stonehenge: The Lost Circle Revealed*. 2021) **[19]**.

(Fig 11: Wilson, H. 2020) **[20]**



(Fig 12: Wilson, H. 2020) **[21]**



The thought of an astral connection and ancestral feeling with the hills through research of the Celts that lived here before me, was again underpinned by the work of Grayham Hancock. A British writer, who is unfairly referred to as a pseudoscientist, gets his name by talking about past ancient civilisations and questions the history books and man, about perhaps there being things we've missed that could expand our knowledge. As I quoted my mum earlier, "Man wasn't meant to know everything". This is true because we can never know everything, we only have the perception of knowledge without sight of completion. With that in mind, we must be humbled as a species and allow room to build on what we know, and reform the foundations if they're wrong, leaving our hard work and ego's behind. This has led me to question whether past civilisations had access or knowledge of the non physical realm I call consciousness. There are 70 ton granite beams that are situated above the tombs at the Giza Pyramid complex in Egypt (Hancock, G. 2019) **[22]**. Without any single mathematical explanation to this, who are we to compare our own progress as a

civilisation with those who constructed something so mathematically and astrologically precise given the 'known' tools they had to hand at the time, we simply can't compare. Therefore, we cannot assume the technological prowess of those who came before us.

My Interpretation of the caution to presume the abilities of those before us has been underpinned with a recent video lecture with guest speaker Naomi Games, the daughter of Abram Games. An official war artist who was commissioned with 100 or so posters. As the oil humbled me, so did the work of Games. As I'm sat here in the comfort of my own home doing a degree, I haven't the fraction of skill or talent Games possessed. Never have I, or will I ever compare myself to any one of his magnitude, it just evokes the question of have we really improved as a discipline when games was doing things back then without the crutch of technology. Has technology made us complacent and over confident in our abilities as designers? What I've learned from the talk and this semester, that I need to be more hands on in order to learn as much as I can about Graphic Design. Being shackled to my laptop for the last 8 months has left its mark and with the end of this chapter a new one begins, and it starts outside.

I started the pandemic as a Graphic Design student. But, not even in my third year, do I honestly now classify myself as a Graphic Designer. I let my family, lecturers and most importantly, myself down when I considered doubting the journey I have taken. But, through the ashes something else emerged. Grit. Something that isn't just acquired, it is made. During my second year of University it has been my number one priority to prove myself to my family, my lecturers, but most importantly to myself. I have never worked so hard at something in my life. Working tirelessly every day until my endurance has been built to a point where it is now a part of me, a part of who I am. So my proposal might be this, what lies beneath the title of a Graphic Designer, in regard to upbringing, experiences and interests. A metaphorical interpretation of this proposal is underpinned by an enduring quote told to me by my GCSE and A-level Photography and Art teacher, "Rockstar's don't go to music school, they go to art school" (Griffiths, J. 2014).

Proposed question for Independent Project, ‘What lies beneath the title of a Graphic Designer, in regard to upbringing, experiences and interests’.

Proposed Practice based project, A visual communication of what makes every Graphic Designer different, when we all share the same title.

Bibliography

McIntosh, C. 2021. 'Sanctuary', *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sanctuary> (Accessed: 19 April 2021). [1]

Wilson, H. 2020. *Hole 16*. [Digital image] South Pembrokeshire Golf Club. [2]

Carradice, P & MacCallum, R. (2009) *Pembroke Dock Through Time*, 1st edn. Amberly Publishing Plc. [3]

Photographer unknown. (1940) *Title unknown*. Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/nazi-bombs-cause-oil-slick-6455201> (Accessed: 19 April 2021). [4]

Wilson, H. 2021. *Sanctuary 2020*. [Digital illustration] Pennar, Pembroke Dock. [5]

Wilson, H. 2021. *Sanctuary 1940*. [Digital illustration] Pennar, Pembroke Dock. [6]

Merriam-Webster. 2021. 'Reminiscence', *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. Springfield, Massachusetts. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reminiscence> (Accessed: 19 April 2021). [7]

Merriam-Webster. 2021. 'Reminisce', *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. Springfield, Massachusetts. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reminisce> (Accessed: 19 April 2021). [8]

'Ned's Bicycle' (1997) *Teletubbies*, Series 1, Episode 1, BBC Two, 31 March 1997. [9]

Wilson, H. 2021. *Flowers*. [Digital illustration] Pennar, Pembroke Dock. [10]

Russell, A. (2013) *Hidden Harbour* [Matisse Acrylic Paint on canvas]. Available at: <https://>

andyrussell.com/hidden-harbor.html (Accessed: 19 April 2021). **[11]**

The Fox and the Hound (1981) Directed by Ted Berman, Richard Rich, Art Stevens. [VHS]. United States: Walt Disney Productions. **[12]**

The Tigger Movie (2000) Directed by Jun Falkenstein [VHS]. United States: Walt Disney Television Animation. **[13]**

Hirsch, Alan R. (1992). “Nostalgia: a Neuropsychiatric Understanding” Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation, LTD. Chicago, IL. **[14]**

Wilson, H. 2021. *Bedroom*. [Digital image] Pennar, Pembroke Dock. **[15]**

Merriam-Webster. 2021. ‘Energy’, *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. Springfield, Massachusetts. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/energy> (Accessed: 19 April 2021). **[16]**

Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back (1980) Directed by Irvin Kershner [DVD]. United States: 20th Century Fox. **[17]**

Osmond, J. (2019) *Real Preseli*, 1st edn. Poetry Wales Press Ltd, Nolton Street, Bridgend, Wales. **[18]**

‘Stonehenge: The Lost Circle Revealed’ (2021) *Stonehenge: The Lost Circle Revealed*. BBC 2. 12 Feb 2021. **[19]**

Wilson, H. 2020. *Carn Goedog*. [Digital image] Carn Goedog, Preseli Hills. **[20]**

Wilson, H. 2020. *Sticks & Stones* [Digital logo] Swansea College of Art, Wales. **[21]**

JRE Clips. (2019) *Graham Hancock’s Theory about Ancient Civilizations* [Online video] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=191PshRLtos> (Accessed: 19 April 2021). **[22]**

Online journals

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sjogrens-syndrome/>

<https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/wales/entries/93d34396-e453-3630-a373-3cb69d8d8e7a>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-33985679>

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/devastating-inferno-lasting-more-18-9887859>

<https://undertheskin.co.uk>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/agoraphobia/overview/>

<https://www.fatherly.com/health-science/when-do-memories-start-what-do-kids-remember/>

<https://www.elitedaily.com/life/science-behind-nostalgia-love-much/673184>

<https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/7326>