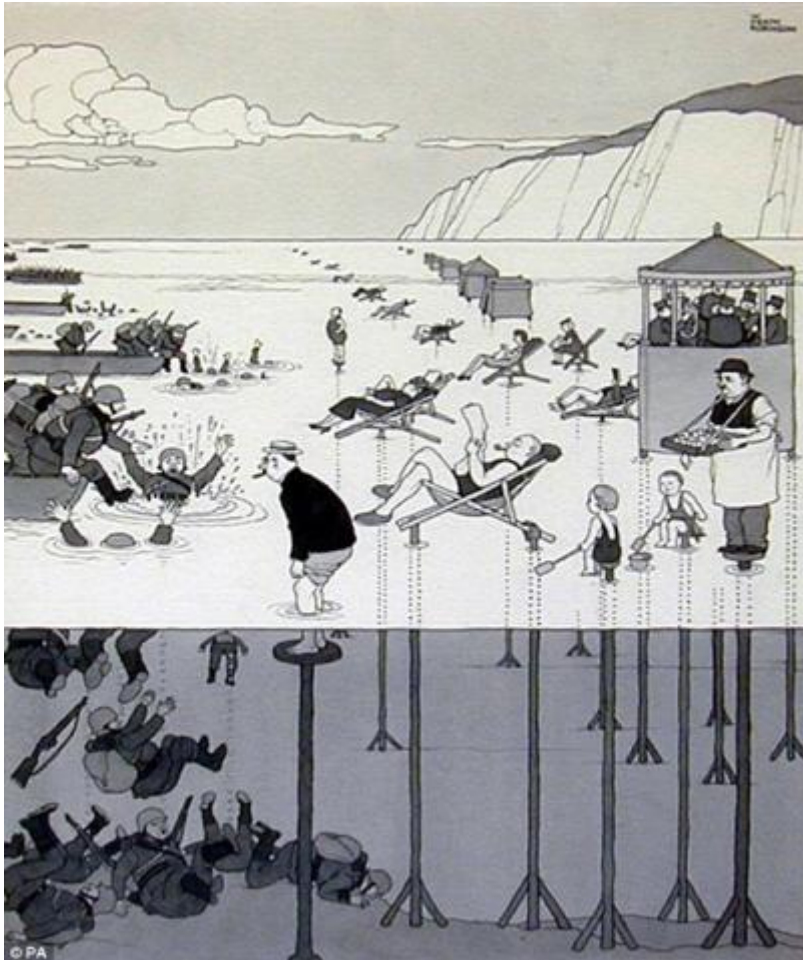


Heath Robinson cartoons saved for the nation

23 March 2015

Saved - work of early 20th century illustrator whose elaborate contraptions were the inspiration for Wallace and Gromit.

Image



William Heath Robinson's Deceiving the invader as to the state of the tide

A large collection of works by the much-loved cartoonist and illustrator William Heath Robinson have been saved for the nation thanks to grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and the Art Fund.

The William Heath Robinson Trust (WHRT) has been awarded £250,000 by NHMF and £50,000 by the Art Fund to acquire 410 drawings and paintings that span the full range of the artist's work. With a heavy emphasis on his humorous works, the collection includes many of his most well-known First and Second World War cartoons.

The collection was put up for sale following the death of its previous owner Simon Heneage in 2011 and without these grants, it was at risk of being offered more widely and potentially broken up.

William Heath Robinson (1872-1944) was one of the leading illustrators of his day. Well-known for his drawings of complicated contraptions, the term 'Heath Robinson' first entered the language in 1912 as a synonym for 'absurdly ingenious devices'. During both the World Wars, his ironic and bizarre depictions of both sides in the conflicts and gentle satire of public figures proved extremely popular.

Numerous artists ranging from Wallace and Gromit creator Nick Park to Olympic Cauldron designer Thomas Heatherwick have cited Robinson as an influence on their own work.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of NHMF, said: "These fantastically wry cartoons represent British humor at its best. With the new museum opening in 2016 and the country marking the centenary of the First World War, there's a renewed interest in Heath Robinson's work and we felt that it was important to keep this collection together for the nation to rediscover and enjoy."

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund, said: "We're immensely pleased to have helped with the acquisition of this important group of works, a perfect complement to the trust's developing collection. We all look forward to the opening of the museum with pleasurable anticipation. It's hard to imagine England culture itself without William Heath Robinson."

The pieces being acquired were originally part of Heath Robinson's own collection. They include:

- Examples from his series *The Saintly Hun* which subverted the usual depiction of the German character during the First World War
- *Deceiving the invader as to the state of the tide*, part of a series looking at possible ways to resist a German invasion
- An almost complete set of drawings made for *How to build a new World*, a book published in 1941 which reflected the hopes and aspirations of Britain in the second year of the war
- Rare early rough sketches, providing an insight into the illustrator's way of working and generating ideas
- Some advertising commissions, a major source of income after the First World War

Geoffrey Beare, of the William Heath Robinson Trust, said: "These works provide a perfect complement to the trust's existing collection, which is particularly strong in illustration. It will permit us to mount a broader range of exhibitions in our new museum and to maintain our programme of touring exhibitions. We are proud to become custodians of such an exciting collection of works by one of Britain's best loved artists."

Following Heath Robinson's death, his collection was split in two and this larger part was stored in the National Magazine Company warehouse until the 1970s before being bought by family friend Simon Heneage, publisher and founder of the Cartoon Museum. Although many pieces were sold or donated by Heneage over the years, he retained the best and most interesting examples for display in his private gallery.

Culture Minister, Ed Vaizey, said: "His brilliant drawings of absurd contraptions made William Heath Robinson one of the finest illustrators of his time and his influence can still be seen today in much loved creations such as Wallace and Gromit. The grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund to acquire over four hundred of his drawings and paintings will make sure the legacy of this talented cartoonist lives on and his work can be enjoyed by art enthusiasts for many years to come."

This was the only significant Heath Robinson collection remaining in private hands and, this acquisition means it will now be available for the public to view for the first time. The works are being reunited with the WHRT's existing collection (the other part of the artist's own collection) and displayed at the new Heath Robinson Museum at West House, Pinner when it opens in April 2016. For more details of the William Heath Robinson Trust and the new museum please visit the [William Heath Robinson Trust website](#).

Notes to editors

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art, helping museums to buy and show great art for everyone. Over the past five years they have given over £26m to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections and placed hundreds of gifts and bequests, from ancient sculpture and treasure hoards to Old Master paintings and contemporary commissions, with 25% of grants going towards works by living artists. They also help museums share their collections with wider audiences through supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including the national tour of the Artist Rooms collection and the

2014 tour of Jeremy Deller's English Magic, the British Council commission for the 2013 Venice Biennale. Support for museums extends to the Art Guide app – the comprehensive guide to seeing art across the UK, promoting a network of nearly 700 museums and galleries throughout the country, and the £100,000 Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year – an annual celebration of the best of UK museums, won in 2014 by Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield. Independently funded, the majority of our income coming from over 117,000 members who, through the National Art Pass, enjoy free entry to over 230 museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions. Find out more about the Art Fund and the National Art Pass at the [Art Fund website](#).

Further information

For further press information and images, please contact:

NHMF press office: Natasha Ley or Tom Williams on 020 7591 6143 / 6056 or out of hours 07973 613 820, email: tom.williams@hlf.org.uk / natashaL@hlf.org.uk.

The Art Fund: Madeline Adeane, Press Relations Manager on 020 7225 4804, email: madeane@artfund.org.

William Heath Robinson Trust: Peter Higginson, Chairman on 07941 290 174.