

# ADAPT OR PERISH

AN ART EXHIBITION FOR  
THE H.G.WELLS FESTIVAL 2009



BY WHITE SHED  
A FOLKESTONE ARTIST GROUP

## Deborah Crofts



The work is inspired by Wells' infamous book 'The Time Machine'. Often drawing on an apprehension of the future, new technology and its side effects on nature, the choice of subject matter placed within Wells' world seems inevitable.

In the book the duality of two opposing worlds caught my imagination. The Time Traveller on arriving in the future is unaware of the hidden dangers in what appears initially like paradise.

The resulting imagery plays with concealed, unseen and mysterious objects, beings and places. It portrays a world where there is more than meets the eye, we have to look more closely to uncover the unknown.

## Nicholette Goff



Because they relate directly to my own concerns, I'm naturally drawn to the passages where Wells makes emotional connections to the landscape. The collage/prints in the exhibition are made using the natural colour and form of pressed white flowers (Wells mentions white flowers above any other colour).

In *The Garden of the Eloi* the background print is taken from an oak tree which I was working on in a SSSI site in East Sussex - an environment that could be considered a curious parallel to the 'perfect' garden inhabited by the Eloi.

*The Garden of the Eloi* (detail)

## John Howard



The Moon has featured in my work for a number of years now, firstly, as a symbol of growth and ultimate wholeness. Secondly as a signifier of the 'lunatic' effect the Moon may have on our internal tides. The human body is made up of up to 60% water and the brain up to 70%, so why should the moon not have a dramatic effect on our bodies?

So making work which related to 'The First Men In the Moon' was an obvious choice for me. There are several authorial departures in Wells' writing which caught my attention. Firstly, and most obviously there is the lunar setting. What also interested me about the book was how unlikeable, acquisitive and self-seeking was Bedford, the main character. Very unusual for a novel's 'hero'. What also appeals are Wells' references to the local area, including Lympne, the Romney Marsh and Elham which set the book in familiar territory prior to the lunar departure.

For me the most memorable visual component of the book was the terrible, frantic and elemental growing of the moon plants at the break of the lunar 'day'. One forgets how early in the genre of science fiction this book is (1901, many years before Triffids, Body-snatchers and Killer Tomatoes entered our cultural psyche!) and was it Wells, perhaps, who was the first to instil in us a fear of alien organic life?

## Sally Higgs



My paintings in this Exhibition at The Grand during the HG Wells Festival were inspired by the science fiction book called 'The Invisible Man' by HG Wells. The layers of paint reflect the experiments of the scientist as he worked obsessively. Once he succeeded in becoming invisible he soon found the reality was not how he expected it to be and he struggled unsuccessfully to reverse the effects. I achieved my aim to produce a painting that the spectator would need look at carefully to find the man who was almost invisible. I then continued on my journey to create visual impressions of this famous story and may have completely lost the subtle figure. However I discovered that instead of wanting to reverse the effect, I found the results of my endeavours more interesting. Although it may not be possible to see him he is indeed still there beneath the surface.

## Helen Mayer



Wells wrote the story, **The Red Room**, in 1894, the year after publication of *The Time Machine*. Unlike the futuristic theme of his first novel, this short story is in a genre still popular at the time – gothic horror. The protagonist, who considers himself modern and rational, spends the night in a supposedly haunted room within an old house, adamant that he will see no ghosts. This is indeed what happens, but the events of the night cause him to experience irrational terror – fear itself. The description of the red room is almost a prophecy of the paintings made some ten years later by De Chirico, with its empty arches, unnerving perspectives, and troubling shadows. However tempting it is to imagine that Wells was familiar with De Chirico's motifs when he wrote the story, the parallels are co-incidental. Unless of course Wells used his time machine ...

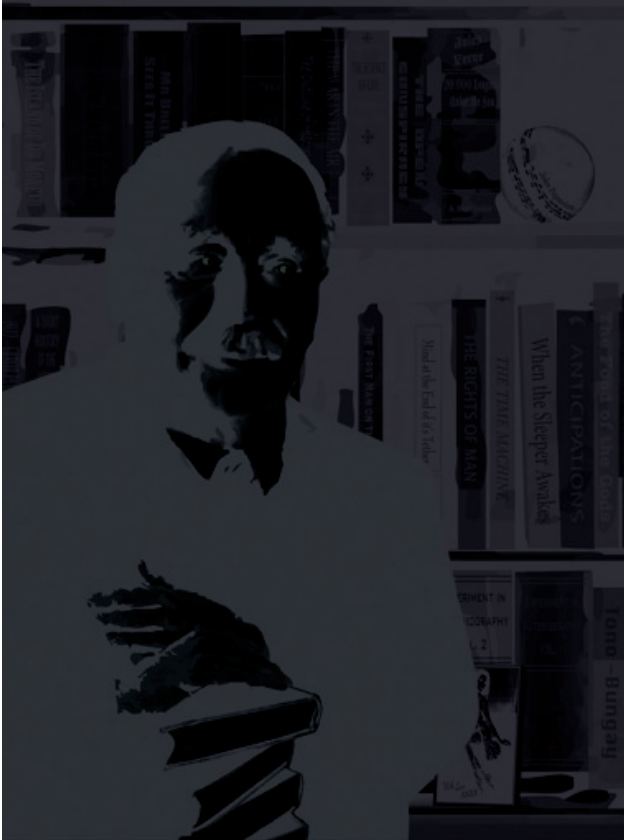
## Cheryl Papasian



The **Door in The Wall** is often considered one of HG Wells best short stories. Behind a green door in a London street lies a beautiful enchanted garden with exotic plants and animals. Life is simple and happy in the garden and it is tempting to stay within the walls and leave the stresses of modern life behind.

Does the garden represent a perfect life of personal or artistic fulfillment with its incumbent risk of failure and poverty? Is it better to ignore the door and live a safer but unfulfilled life? But like Wallace in the story, ignoring your inner desires can lead to unfortunate results.

## John Papasian



For my entry in the H.G. Wells Exhibit, I thought it was appropriate to submit a work of portraiture.

I have always admired the immediacy and brilliance of the 17th century Dutch school and in particular the spontaneity of Frans Hals. His confident stroke and baroque designs have always remained modern and entertaining.

With this picture, I hope to present an homage to the mighty spirit of Hals, and in the process, try to bring a bit of H.G. Wells back to life.

## Gillian White



“The resurrection of the frozen air, the stirring and quickening of the soil, and then this silent uprising of vegetation, this unearthly ascent of fleshiness and spikes.”  
The First Men in the Moon

In the First Men in the Moon, H.G. Wells describes a strange, exotic and extreme world where plants grow from seed to maturity before one’s eyes. The land of the Eloi in **The Time Machine** is more recognisable to us as a cultivated garden without pests or disease but is a vision of a dying world.

Human beings have landed on the moon, have produced genetically modified plants and are in the process of reversing the effects of global warming. Arthur C Clarke wrote that Wells “scientific romances were not youthful aberrations or escapist fantasies, but works of art with unique relevance for our times.”

## Anne Wimsett



Anne Wimsett has painted a series of paintings of Folkestone in the days when HG Wells was writing stories in the town. Inspired by the H.G. Wells book, *The Time Machine*, they represent Folkestone in the past and present.

## Candida Wright




HG Wells found inspiration in the local landscape for his stories of journeys through portals into other realms of existence.

Tales locally set include 'Mr Skelmersdale in Fairyland', 'First Men in the Moon' and 'The Sea Lady', with other locations used for 'The Door in the Wall' and 'The Time Machine'.

My mixed media pieces have been informed by the stories, the landscapes that inspired Wells and my own exploration of them.

My journeys have taken me through portals to the downland, undercliff, springs and streams of the many hidden worlds to be found in Folkestone's environs.



Adapt  
or Perish,  
now as ever,  
is Nature's  
inexorable  
imperative.

H.G. Wells



## **Participating Artists**

Deborah Crofts  
Nichollette Goff  
Sally Higgs  
John Howard  
Helen Mayer  
Cheryl Papasian  
John Papasian  
Gillian White  
Anne Wimsett  
Candida Wright

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