

James T.A. Osborne R.E.  
(1907-1979)



*James Osborne (Sculpture by Charlotte Osborne).*

Barton Fine Art Limited  
in association with  
World Wildlife Fund (U.K.)  
at  
The Guild Gallery  
192 Ebury Street, London, SW1 W SUP  
01-730 3220  
From 2nd September until  
12th September 1987  
Mondays to Fridays  
10.00am until 5.00pm



*Tiger, tiger (Lino Cut) 877 x 575mm.*

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## **James T.A. Osborne. R.E., A.R.C.A. (1907-1979)**

Born at Ninfield, Sussex, in January 1907, the son of one of the Scottish farmers who migrated to England at the beginning of the century, James Osborne went to school in Hastings, studied sculpture and nearly made that his career. From Hastings he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art in London.

During the third term of his last year, 1930, he was advised to attend the School of Engraving, the chair of which was held by Professor Malcolm Osborne, R.A. although no relative, he too had an early love of sculpture and had also been encouraged away to printmaking.

In that final year at the Royal College he gained the highest accolade of a Rome Scholarship in Engraving. After two years in Rome, where he met Charlotte, who was to become his wife (she also had won a sculpture scholarship to Rome) he returned to take a position in teaching at the Polytechnic School of Art in Regent Street. He was elected an A.R.E., (etchers and engravers) in 1946 and a fellow (R.E.) in 1957.

Although a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy and at the Royal Society Painter-Etchers and Engravers shows, he never had a full one-man exhibition. His work was seen in small numbers at minor provincial exhibitions and some was shown with the Arts Council touring exhibitions in Europe. Some was also exhibited in the U.S.A He was a founder member of the Society of Wildlife Artists.



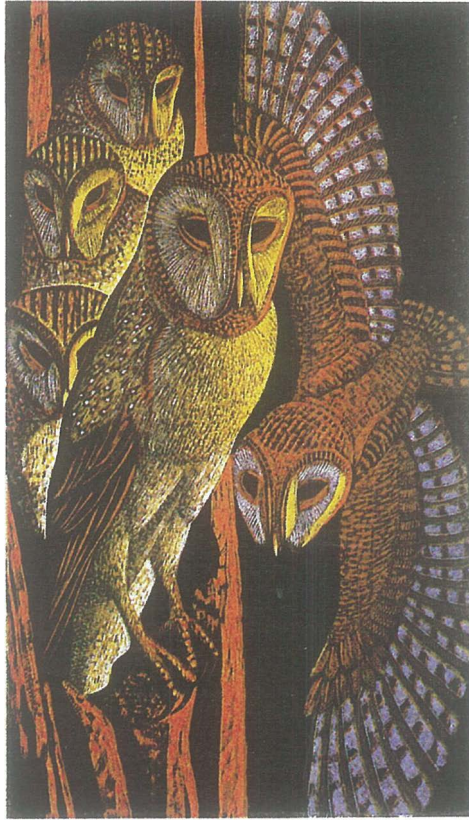
Gay Lilies (Silk Screen Print) 620 x 305mm.

His colour wood engravings, lino cuts and silk screen prints are bold and interpretive, worked on a large scale, high in colour and detail, they illustrate all forms of wildlife, with a special emphasis towards birds, and they contrast sharply with the small, delicate black and white wood engravings that form his earlier work. Oil, watercolour and to some extent pastel also play a part in his work.

His sketches and exploratory compositions he considered only as working drawings. They have seldom been seen, yet they are among his most vital creations.

He constantly experimented with all forms of prints and paper. Each print was different from the next, and although with one exception his editions never exceeded 30 (an extremely small number in printmaking), he printed only as and when required. As a result some editions are only a few in number and in some cases they go down to one or two only.

Immersed in his art and teaching, he made little or no attempt to sell his work or *advance* himself professionally. When approached to sell one of his woodcuts or engravings, he would insist they were not good enough. Consequently, apart from his students, fellow members of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers and friends, his work is not well known, but amongst his peers is thought to be without equal.



*Family of Bam Owls (Wood Engraving) 520 x 300mm.*

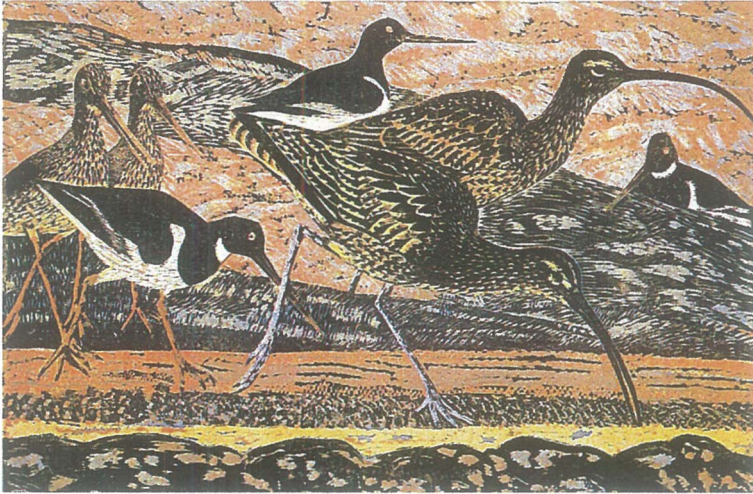
Charlotte Osborne gave up any idea of her own career as a sculptress to become a teacher and help her husband. There is no doubt that she could have become well known and successful in her own right had she chosen to do so.

It was only as a result of Charlotte Osborne's visits to the Barton Gallery early in 1986 that it became known that she had preserved most of her husband's prints and engravings. They number over 500, comprising 60 different works in colour (a total of 300) and 53 individual works in black and white wood engravings (a total of 220). In addition the wood engraving blocks preserved total 50 and there are numerous drawings and studies of wildlife.

As a result the first major exhibition of Osborne's work was held in July 1986. It comprised 100 individual exhibits. The World Wildlife Fund (U.K.) gave support to the event in their 25th year, and described his work as unique.

A truly remarkable collection and almost a lifetime's output by an artist of rare quality, who as a young shy and sensitive boy (a characteristic which was to remain with him throughout his life) used to escape from his parents' farm at Ninfield to wander alone over the fields. He came to observe and interpret animals and birds, with whom he seemed to have an affinity, and over endless isolated hours gained a unique knowledge of wildlife which he applied to his art during his mature years.

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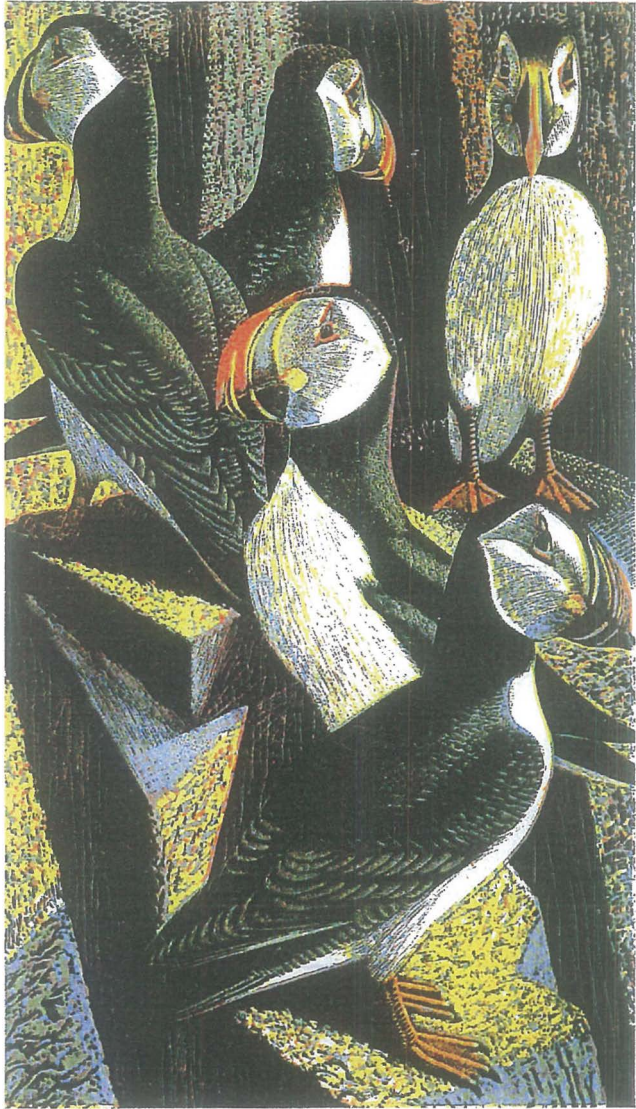


*Curlew, Oyster Catcher, Redshank (Wood Engraving and Lino Cut) 725 x 480mm.*

What sets Osborne's work apart is the variation from print to print and the large scale of wood engraving blocks he worked on. Each can be considered as individual and original work.

Harry Eccleston President of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers said of the 1986 exhibition: "Although I have known and admired individual pieces of work for the past 40 years, seeing it all gathered together is a revelation. You are suddenly aware of how much he is following in the great tradition of those British artists who have found their inspiration in animals and birds which surround them: Stubbs, Bewick and more recently Tunnicliffe".

***A substantial donation from the proceeds of work sold is to be made to the World Wildlife Fund (U.K.) and the National Art-Collections Fund.***



Puffins (Wood Engraving) 520 x 300mm.

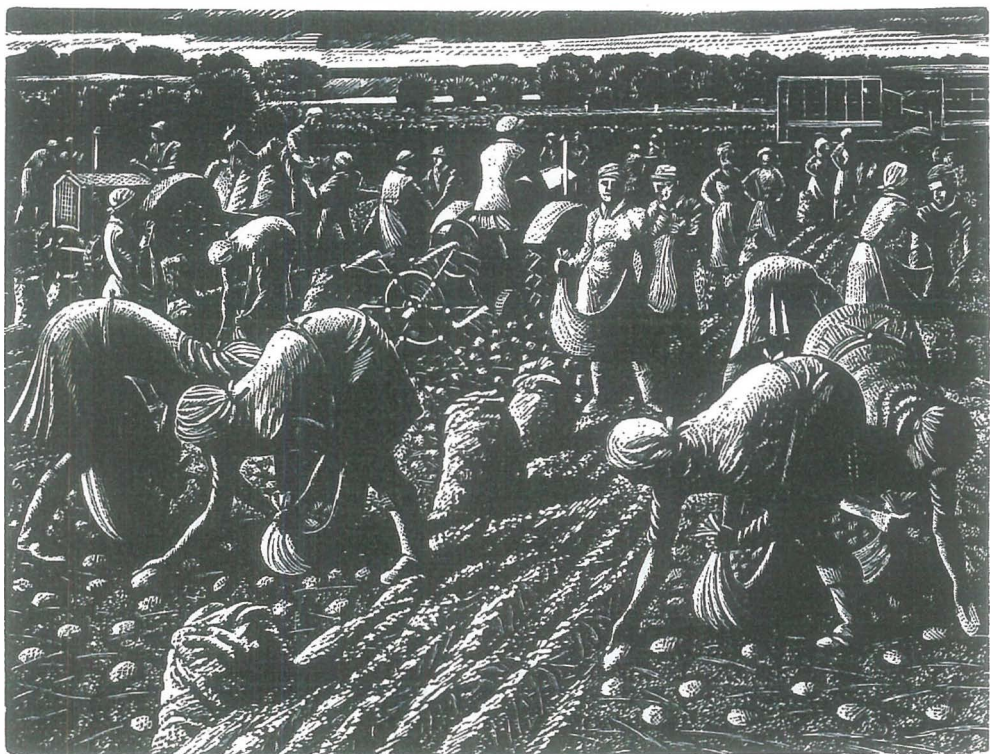


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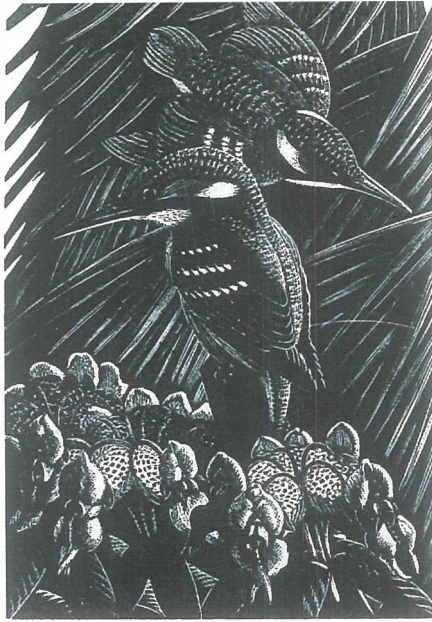




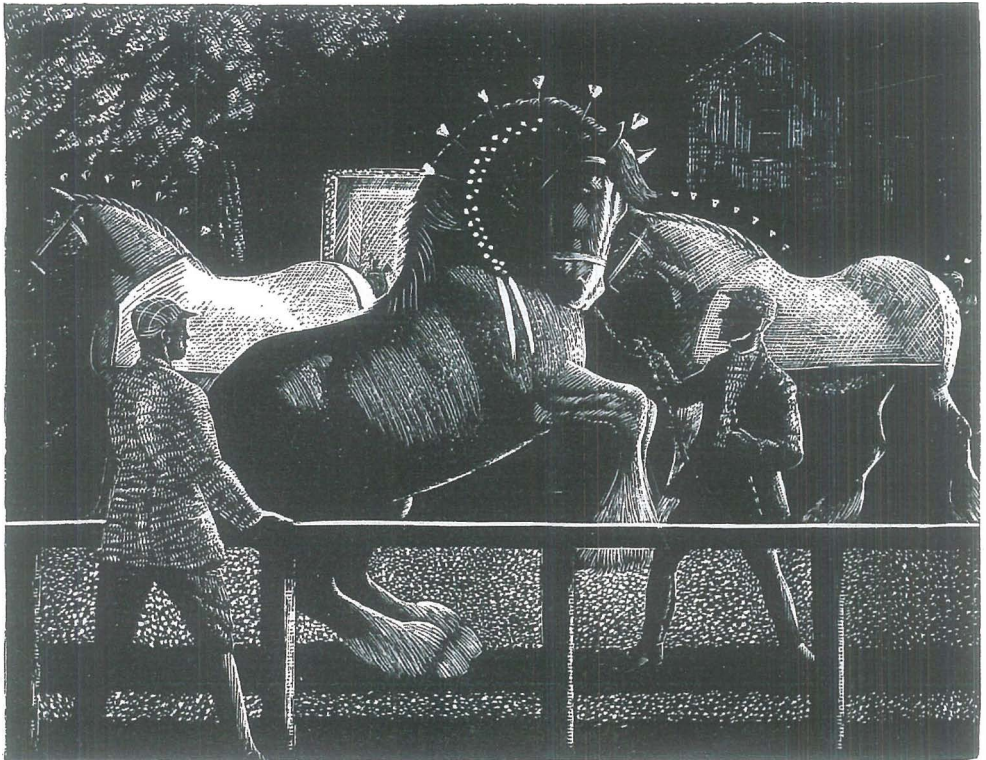
*Herstmonceux Castle 1930 (Plate Engraving).*



*Potato Pickers (Wood Engraving).*



*Kingfishers (Wood Engraving).*



*Rearing Horse (Wood Engraving).*