

# Hiding in Plain Sight



Julian Perry

The Pollard Residency

# Galloper-Sands

Galloper-Sands is the contemporary art gallery for The Alde Valley Spring Festival Ltd. It manages a small land-based international residency programme that embraces the visual arts, traditional crafts, foods and rural writing. This catalogue has been published to coincide with an exhibition of paintings of veteran pollard trees by Julian Perry as part of a Pollard Residency that extended through the spring and summer of 2022.

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# Contents

1. Introduction by Jason Gathorne-Hardy	1
2. Foreword by Julian Perry	3
3. The Grisailles Studies	13
4. The Paintings	25
5. Artist's Biography	47

## Appendices

1] Map of Plomesgate Hundred and the Alde Valley 1737	50
2] Map of White House Farm showing Veteran Pollards 2022	52
3] Pollards in the Landscape : A Background Story	56



# Introduction : Jason Gathorne-Hardy

I first became aware of the ancient oak pollards at White House Farm in Great Glemham as a child. They appeared as eruptions of wood in the sandy farm parkland in the valley bottom, a stone's throw from our family home on top of the hill. They were like earthy citadels and places of adventure. Two in particular stood out. One had a long, low tunnel-like entrance that meandered between bulging folds of stump and root-wood into a broad chimney-like flue of deeply fissured heartwood. Owls and jackdaws made their nests in the hollow limbs above. A dark, dank cavern in the middle felt like a bolthole or hideout - a place where treasure might be hidden. The other tree, a hundred metres or so away [illustrated opposite], is the oldest on the farm. It also has a large chamber within its trunk. As a child, this cavity was only accessible from above – by scrambling up through its open, palm-like cluster of pollarded limbs to find the hole within. This tree did conceal treasure: a stoppered glass bottle containing pre-decimal coins and a handwritten note. It was found by my brother. In carefully opening it, he discovered that it had been placed there in 1947 by our father, aged fourteen.

Looking back, the discovery of the bottle feels profoundly symbolic of just how important these ancient oaks are in our landscape and our histories. Not only do they hold treasure within the folds of their limbs, but the trees themselves stand as messengers from another era : from a time when the land was noisy and replete with biology: with wildflowers, songbirds and more mammals; and more fish and amphibians in the river. Their roots burrow down into soil from the 16<sup>th</sup> century; and beyond that into sharp-edged flints and coarse millstone grit from the last glaciation. Whilst their leaves breathe out oxygen into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, their roots find support and nutrients in layers of earth that span almost all of modern human history.

In welcoming Julian Perry into this landscape and introducing him to the venerable old pollards that live on the farm and in the adjoining Vale of Great Glemham, it has been profoundly moving to see the extent to which he was willing to dive into the subject, in all weathers and through the seasons. The paintings that have arisen from his residency are themselves remarkable: for the care and detail that has gone into them; for the commitment of the artist to be fully present with the trees, frequently sitting with them for hours at a time, on frost-laden mornings in early spring or in the scorching heat of a drought-filled summer; and for the quiet determination to fully realise the truth of these trees. They are survivors from another age, whose presence we should honour and not take for granted. They are gifts from the past - treasures to hold on to with all our might.

Jason Gathorne-Hardy [Curator / Director], White House Farm. September 2022.





# Foreword by Julian Perry

## Painted Pollards

*Pollarding is a form of pruning which involves cutting off the branches and limbs of a tree above the browsing height of livestock or wild animals. The resulting re-growth can then be used as a source of fodder, firewood or timber for construction. The final use of the cropped branches or limbs depends upon the species of tree being pollarded and the time interval in years at which they are cut. Its use was first recorded in Roman times.*



Pieter Bruegel the Elder. *The Gloomy Day*.

© Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

The ancient arboreal practice of 'lopping' or pollarding trees has had a surprisingly consistent and historic fascination for artists. In early Christian imagery, re-growth and regeneration of the lopped trees stands as a symbol for the resurrection. This concept is best expressed in the tradition of depicting Saints and hermits studying beneath pollarded trees. St Jerome can often be found working (translating the bible from Greek to Latin) at a desk, with his attendant lion, beneath a pollarded tree.



The earliest example that I have found is Albrecht Durer's *Saint Jerome by a Pollarded Tree*. This is a drypoint engraving from 1512. Sometimes, the Saint is depicted in a makeshift outdoor study.



Albrecht Durer: *Saint Jerome by a Pollarded Tree*.1512.

© National Gallery, Washington, USA.

Rembrandt contributed to the tradition with his 1648 etching *St Jerome beside a Pollard Willow*: a charmingly implausible St Jerome working at a desk nailed to the tree. Rembrandt no doubt felt that he was working in the ancient tradition. However, one can't help thinking that the real subject of this image is not the Saint, or even the unconvincing lion, rather it is the intensely worked pollard.





Rembrandt van Rijn: *Jerome beside a Pollard Willow*. 1648.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

In Gerit Dow's case, the tree springs from within an ambiguous architectural space, whilst below a suppliant monk gazes up at the highly symbolic new growth above him. All are wonderful examples of Northern artists using the familiar landscape of their homeland to illustrate the biblical story. Stanley Spencer did exactly the same with his hometown of Cookham three hundred years later.

Pollards also feature regularly in non-Christian imagery. In 1565, Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted the *Gloomy Day* (also known as *Early Spring*). It is one of six works depicting times of the year and the seasonal labours associated with each; in this case, the lopping or pruning of a pollard in February or March. Recent cleaning has revealed a somewhat less gloomy and more stormy day.



John Constable: *Water-meadows Near Salisbury*. 1829-30.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

In Suffolk, England, many artists recorded the pollarded trees of the fens and water-meadows. Undoubtedly the most celebrated is John Constable, whose 1829-30 painting *Water-meadows, Near Salisbury* (Victoria & Albert Museum) is one of his most popular works. At the time it was regarded as inconsequential and lacking a proper subject. However, nowadays, we can see clearly that the subject was the peaceful river scene and its attendant pollards. Constable, much like Breugel before, was a passionate recorder of the annual cycle of the agrarian year. His works often recorded the precise tasks of the rural labourers.

Although there are no known images by Constable of trees being lopped, the trees themselves are an important signifier of the complex management of the landscape at this time. One of the most noticeable things about visiting the locations of Constable's paintings (as I often do) is how unkempt the landscape looks, compared to his painted images of two hundred years ago. In Constable's day, labour was cheap and the landscape was worked hard. Even the trees had to earn their keep by being harvested on a regular basis.

It is one of the many remarkable aspects of pollarding that the practice of 'lopping' off the limbs from the main trunk, at between two- and twenty-year intervals, dramatically extends the life of the tree. I was fortunate to recently visit the sight of Constable's painting *Brightwell* and was thrilled to find the same row of pollarded willows looking in very good health (although unlopped) over two hundred years after he painted them.

Of all the artists to create images of pollarded trees, perhaps Van Gogh is the most committed, returning throughout his career to images of lopped trees; even incorporating one as a tiny out-of-scale emblem in a charcoal sketch of a nude and distressed woman *Sorrow*, 1882. In a profound distinction from the Christian tradition, Van Gogh saw the pollard as a universal symbol of suffering rather than redemption: the lopped and distorted trees increasingly standing in as an expression of his own internal distress. The great modernist Piet Mondrian, before he committed to the austerity of 'Neo-plasticism', painted numerous images of pollarded trees, engaging with his native Dutch landscape as Rembrandt and Van Gogh had done before.



The artist at work in his residency studio at White House Farm. Summer, 2022.

Julian Perry. White House Farm, 2022.

## Hiding in Plain Sight

When this exhibition at White House Farm was first discussed I immediately suggested pollards as the project's subject. I knew a bit about the practice of pruning trees at approximately eight feet off the ground, at intervals of between two and twenty years. I also understood enough to know that pollards were out there, even if not always visually obvious or acknowledged. Also, that the chances were that any pollards would be amongst the oldest and the most interesting trees in the local landscape.

Pollards are paradoxical. The more you remove and harvest branches from the trees, the longer they live. The hybrid combination of coppicing (harvesting at ground level) and pollarding (some-times called *copparding*) can grant a tree a near immortality. Epping Forest has thousand-year-old examples that seem in fine health, so it is only conjecture to estimate how long they might live.

Hiding in plain sight, pollarded trees discreetly pepper the East Suffolk landscape. When you get your eye in you can see ancient pollards throughout the Alde Valley. Many are what are called *lapsed*. This refers to a halt in the once regular lopping (often many decades ago). These are perhaps the most common pollards in the Alde Valley region. They are not hard to spot. The key indication is the absence of a principal 'spear' trunk. Instead, there are multiple trunks that all originate from a point about ten feet up from the ground. Whilst aesthetically appealing, this unnatural re-structuring eventually can be disastrous for the tree, as the enlarged multiple trunks crack, admit disease and fall.



Julian Perry: *Lapsed Pollard*. 2003.

© Collection of the Artist.

Epping Forest is 80 miles to the South of the Alde Valley and is perhaps the greatest preserve of pollarded trees in the country. William Morris observed that, when he was a child growing up on the edge of the Forest in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, every tree in the forest was pollarded. Even allowing for a little exaggeration, this is a staggering thought and



conjugates an image of how intensely trees were managed in the past. The evidence of this is still visible, and when you get to know what to look for it is not so hard to believe Morris.

In 2003 I was fortunate to be commissioned to paint an exhibition about Epping Forest for the London Guildhall Art Gallery. I would have struggled with this project had it not been for the extraordinary Pollards and Coppards\*. These distorted and 'immortal' trees provided infinite subjects.



Julian Perry: *Two Pollards*, 2003.  
(Private Collection.)

For me a pollarded tree is emblematic of survival or even triumph in the face of adversity. There is a vitality to the rapid re-growth of the lopped trees that defies what violence has been done. Understanding this, the historic association with the resurrection of Christ makes perfect sense. Seeing this regenerative 'blooming' first inspired my pollard paintings.

The pollarding of the Alde Valley trees, or at least finding the evidence of past lopping, has a profundity. It is a visible testament to past labour and practice by numerous generations long gone. In our time trees are often simply tolerated by farmers with little actual purpose. Pollarding, however, represents a time of much deeper and wider

synchronicity between the people and the landscape they worked. Distorted trees bear silent witness to a past age when trees provided vital animal feed, fencing and building materials.



*Three Pollards, 2004.*

© Collection of the Artist.

As trees age their value to biodiversity increases. When limbs mature and die unique microhabitats develop. Rotten cavities and ancient fissured bark provide a context for numerous symbiotic relationships, both visible and invisible. After sitting painting in front of such ancient trees for many hours at a time, their contribution to local wildlife slowly reveals itself. Painting one ancient pollard I was thrilled to see it hosting Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers (UK Red list), Treecreepers, Song Thrushes and Little Owls - and they were just the birds that I spotted, often high in the ancient canopy.

After twenty years (appropriately a good interval between lopping) I am delighted to return to painting pollarded trees. For me the trees response to severe pruning is both a symbol of trauma and rebirth. It has been a privilege to spend time engaging with these very special trees, whilst making my own modest contribution to the long history of painting pollards.

Julian Perry. August, 2022.

## Notes

\*A *Coppard* is a coppiced tree that has at some remote time stopped being lopped at ground level and allowed to grow. Eventually the lapsed *coppice* has matured enough to be *pollarded*. This combination of both types of lopping produces extraordinary sculptural growths that seem more like multiple close trees rather than a single original organism.

## Image credits

Detail of Pieter Bruegel the elder *The Gloomy Day Early Spring*. 1565.  
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. [www.khm.at/en](http://www.khm.at/en).

John Constable: *Water-meadows near Salisbury*. 1820 or 1829.  
Collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk).

Rembrandt Van Rijn: *St Jerome beside a Pollard Willow*. 1648.  
Collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk).

Albrecht Durer: *Saint Jerome by the Pollard Willow*. Drypoint, 1512.  
National Gallery Washington, USA. [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov).

## Photographs

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# The Grisailles Studies

For this project I have continued my ongoing studies into traditional painting techniques. In this case it has been the use of a variant on the *grisaille* technique of using an extremely limited colour range\*. This approach emphasises the tonal modelling of the subject and enables a more evocative form of drawing.

Traditionally grisaille paintings were modelled in greys and often used to imitate stone. However, I have used very warm browns and blues to evoke the complex organic shapes of pollarded trees.

*\* Grisaille is a form of painting in oils in which a limited range of pigments, typically in the grey spectrum (but sometimes brown or earth colours), are thickly applied and sculpted on board or panel. The pigments are usually thinly dispersed in the oil medium, giving the work a translucent quality. The resulting images may serve as studies for larger paintings, or may be treated as paintings in their own right.*

Left : the artist painting a grisaille study of *Early Spring Pollard* at White House Farm.  
Photograph taken by Sally Taylor.

*Hedge Pollard (Grisaille), 2022.*

Oil on panel. H210mm W180mm.

Located just over a mile West of White House Farm, this ancient pollard hides its lopped past behind a screen of leaves.

Unpruned for several decades, it is a testament to a productive, if forgotten, past.

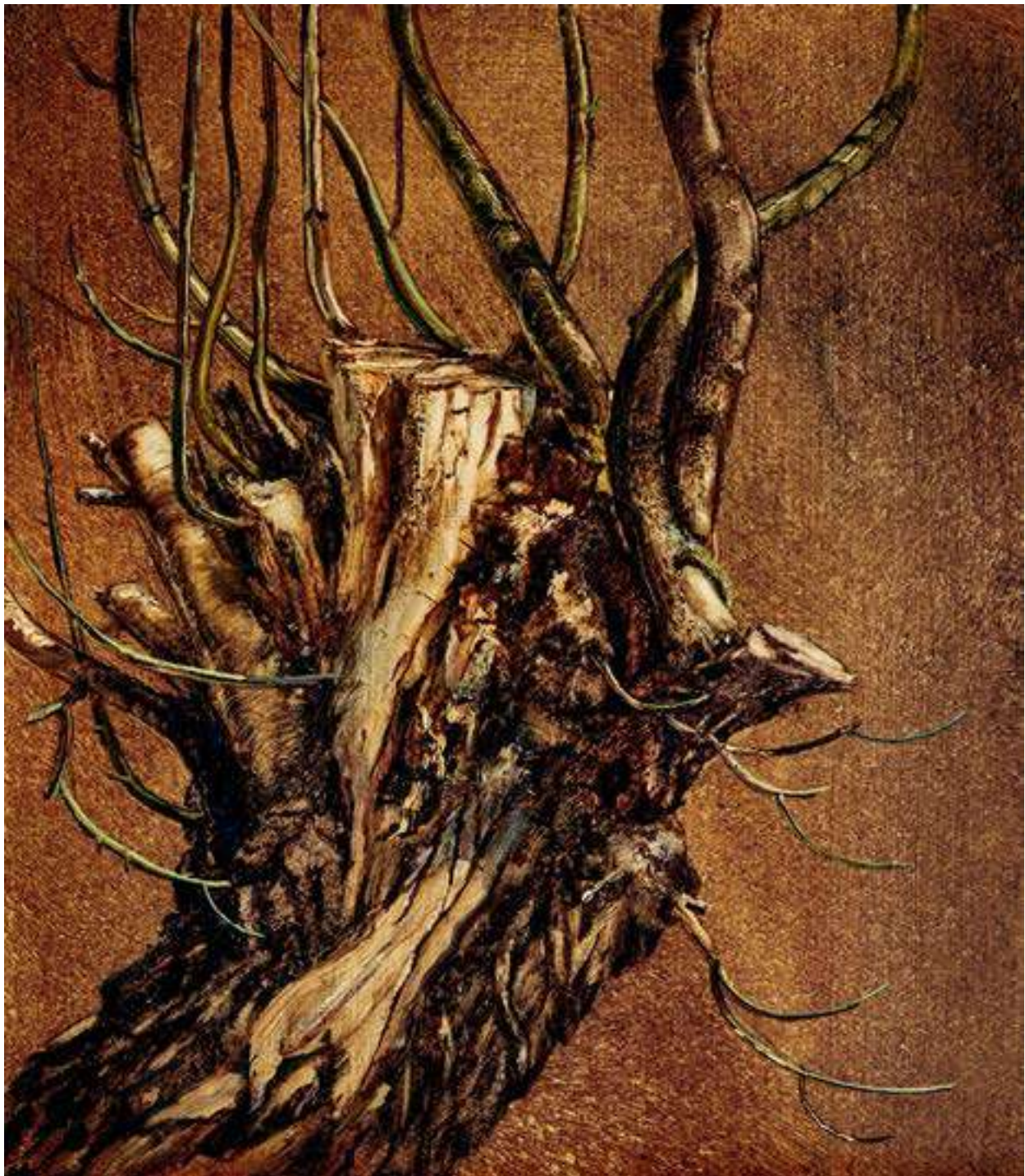


*Pollard Study II (Grisaille), 2022.*

Oil on panel. H310mm W270mm.

A Springtime study of a pollard based on the trees at Stratford St Andrew on the river Alde. One of many works endeavouring to visit the world of Durer and Altdorfer within the visual complexity of an ancient pollard.



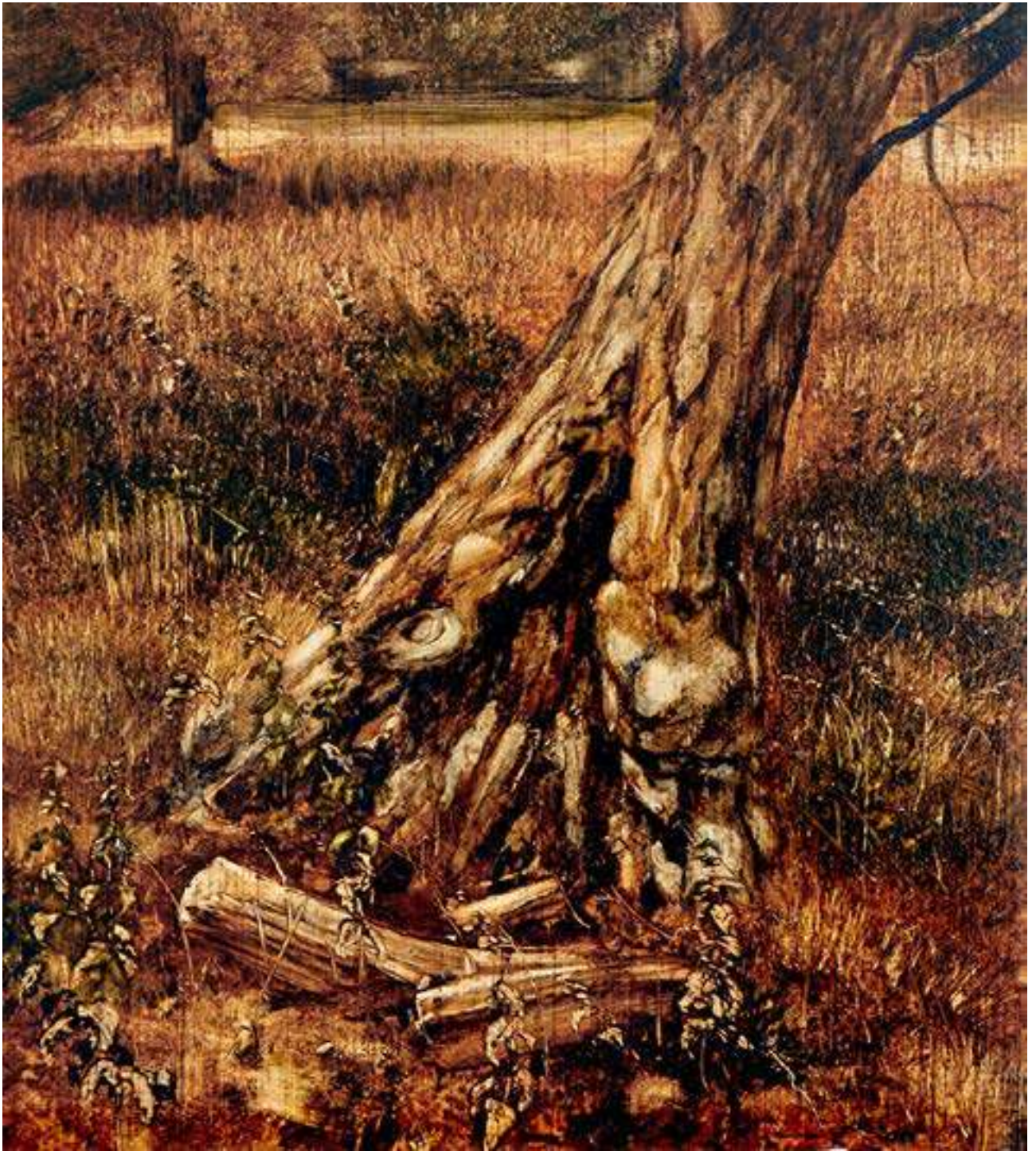


***Ancient Ash (Grisaille), 2022.***

Oil on panel. H205mm W183mm.

An ancient and somewhat strange ash tree found in the park at White House Farm resisting the imminent arrival of Ash Dieback (visible in local trees). Ash trees do not make good pollards but in this case it seems to bear witness to historic mutilation that implies previous coppicing and lopping.





***Ancient Pollard in Leaf (Grisaille), 2022.***

Oil on panel. H180mm W210mm.

A Summer study of one of the grandest of all the pollards in the park at White House Farm. Despite its past pruning and storm damage, the tree is a survivor and a magnificent specimen.





***Hornbeam Pollard (Grisaille), 2019***

Oil on panel 18 x 18cm

An Epping Forest pollard that reflects the vitality of regrowth after lopping. Hornbeams are excellent pollards but uncommon in Suffolk.











# The Paintings

Shaped by man, nature and considerable amounts of time, the ancient trees at White House Farm represent a living testament to intransience and survival. Depicting them made a refreshing contrast with my work of the last ten years, painting the flux and loss of eroding cliffs and the pernicious implications of rising sea levels.

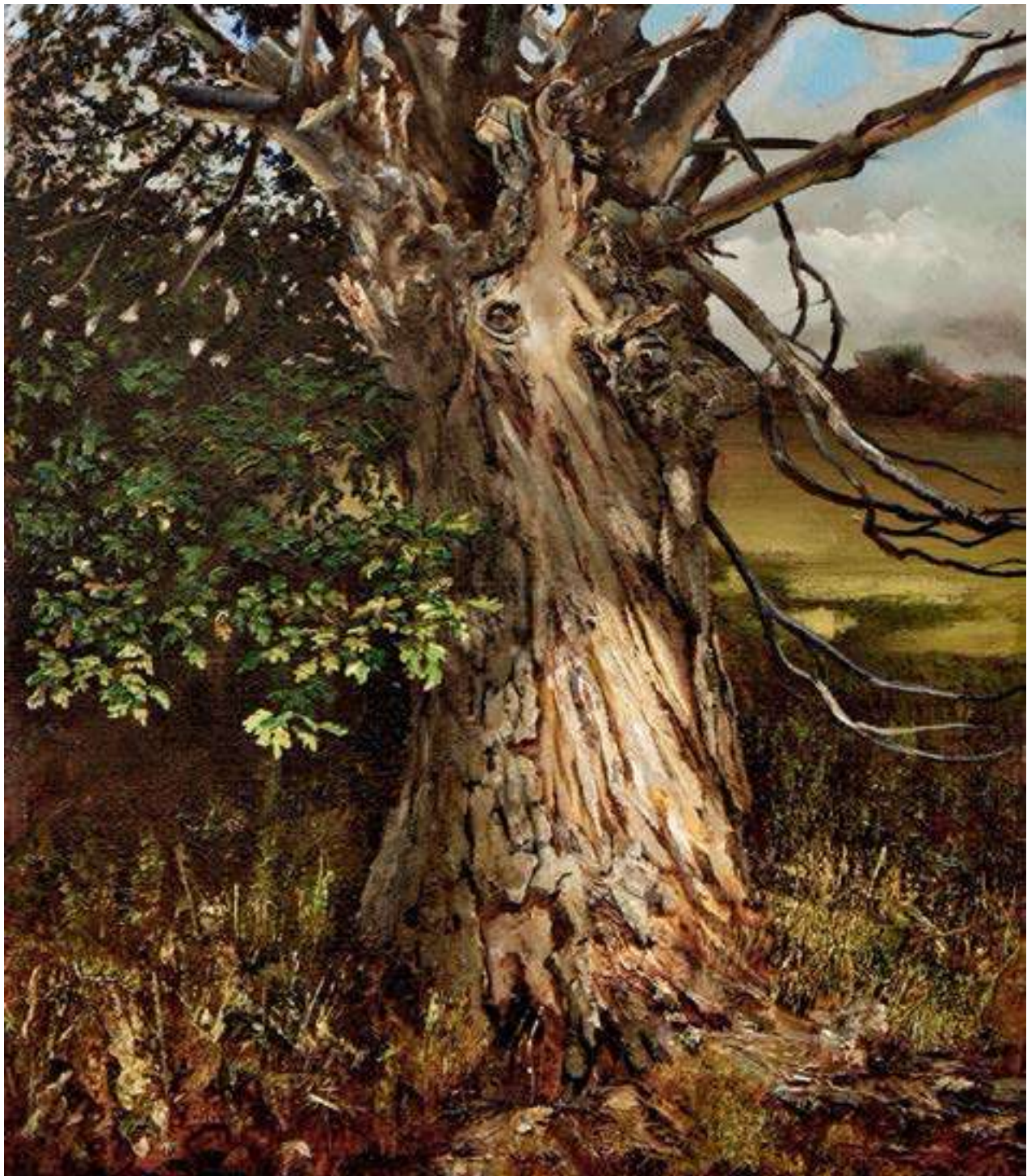
*The Pollard Residency* at White House Farm offered a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a return to landscape painting at its most straightforward. The images in the show are all based on studies or developed works, made in the fields around the farm. I have enjoyed the utter simplicity of choosing a tree, sitting down and painting it. The reality was of course rather more difficult than that sounds. Studios are ordered places designed to facilitate creativity; fields are not.

At the start of the project, it was bitterly cold and frosty; and by the end it was one of the hottest summers on record. Flies, sheep and nettles all tried to put me off, adding to the challenges of painting *en plein air*. However, I think the numerous trials give the works a vitality and commitment that a studio-made work might lack. If you are deeply uncomfortable whilst you work, you tend to try and make it worth it.

*Hedge Pollard II, 2022.*

Oil on panel. H310mm W270mm.

A larger and developed version of the grisaille study of the same name. It would be fascinating to know the age of this veteran tree. The scars of repeated lopping imply that it has looked over the fields to Great Glemham for many centuries.



***Ancient Lopping, 2022.***

Oil on panel. H270mm W310mm.

Inspired by the hedge pollards of Great Glemham, this work is my homage to the Gothic tradition in Northern landscape painting. Perhaps best represented by Matthias Grunewald, Northern artists of the Renaissance imbued their subjects with a distressed vitality, often via extraordinarily detailed images.

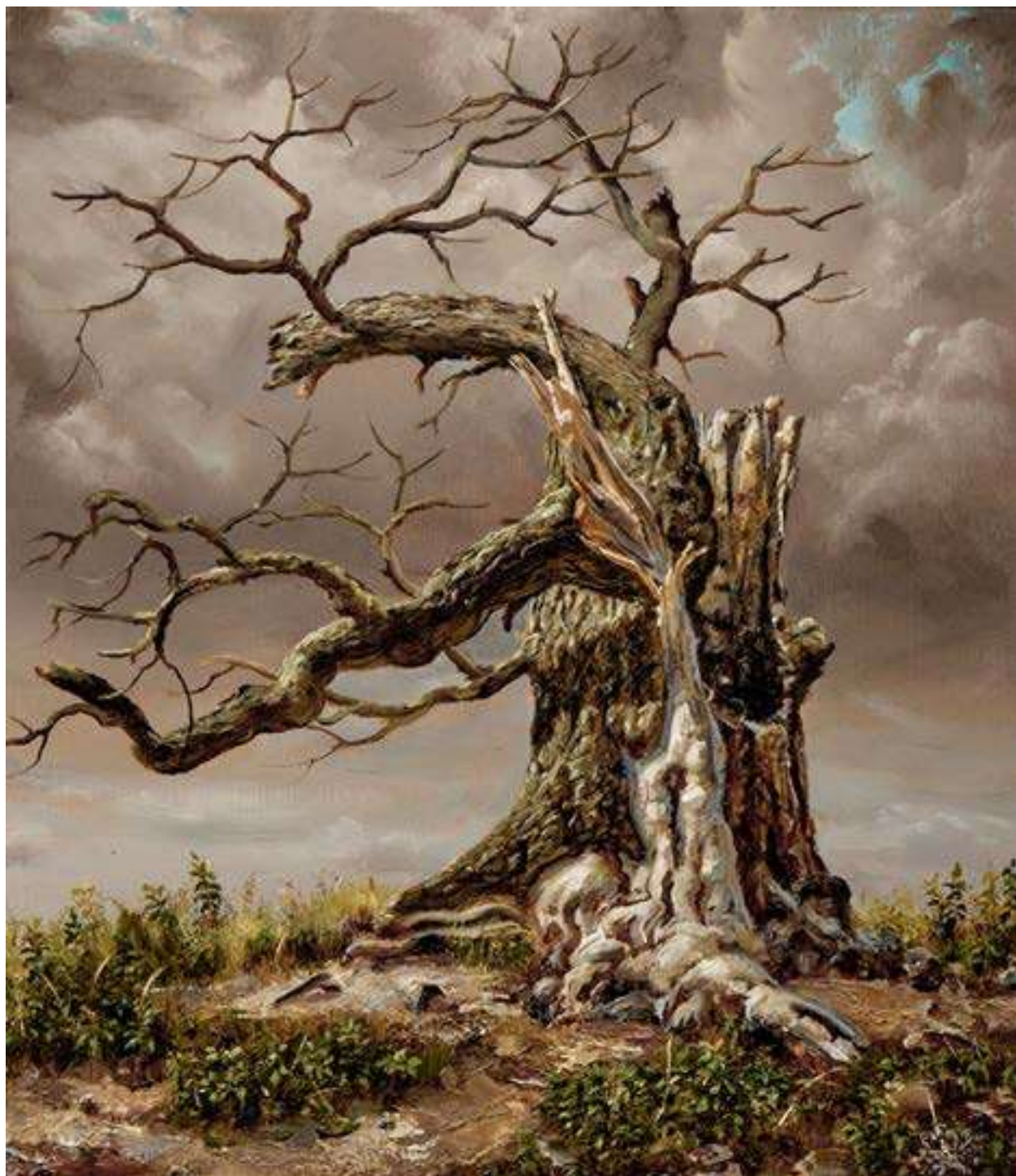




***Dark Sky Pollard I, 2022.***

Oil on panel. H310mm W270mm.

Painted from life at White House Farm in the Early Spring, this work is a 'portrait' of one of the most dramatic trees on the farm. Despite a hollow centre and numerous lost limbs to historic pollarding or storm damage the tree seems to be thriving. The tree is the embodiment of regeneration that is the paradox of pollarding.



*Early Spring Pollard, 2022.*

Oil on panel. H310mm W270mm.

An ancient pollard at White House Farm in early Spring. I think of this painting as a contemporary echo of Pre-Raphaelite landscape painting. When not constructing pseudo medieval scenes, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) and their followers painted some of the most vivid images of the British Landscape.





***White House Farm Pollard, 2022.***

Oil on panel. H310mm W270mm.

A huge and undoubtedly ancient oak pollard. Home to a family of Little Owls. A vivid example of how, as trees age, their contribution to biodiversity increases.





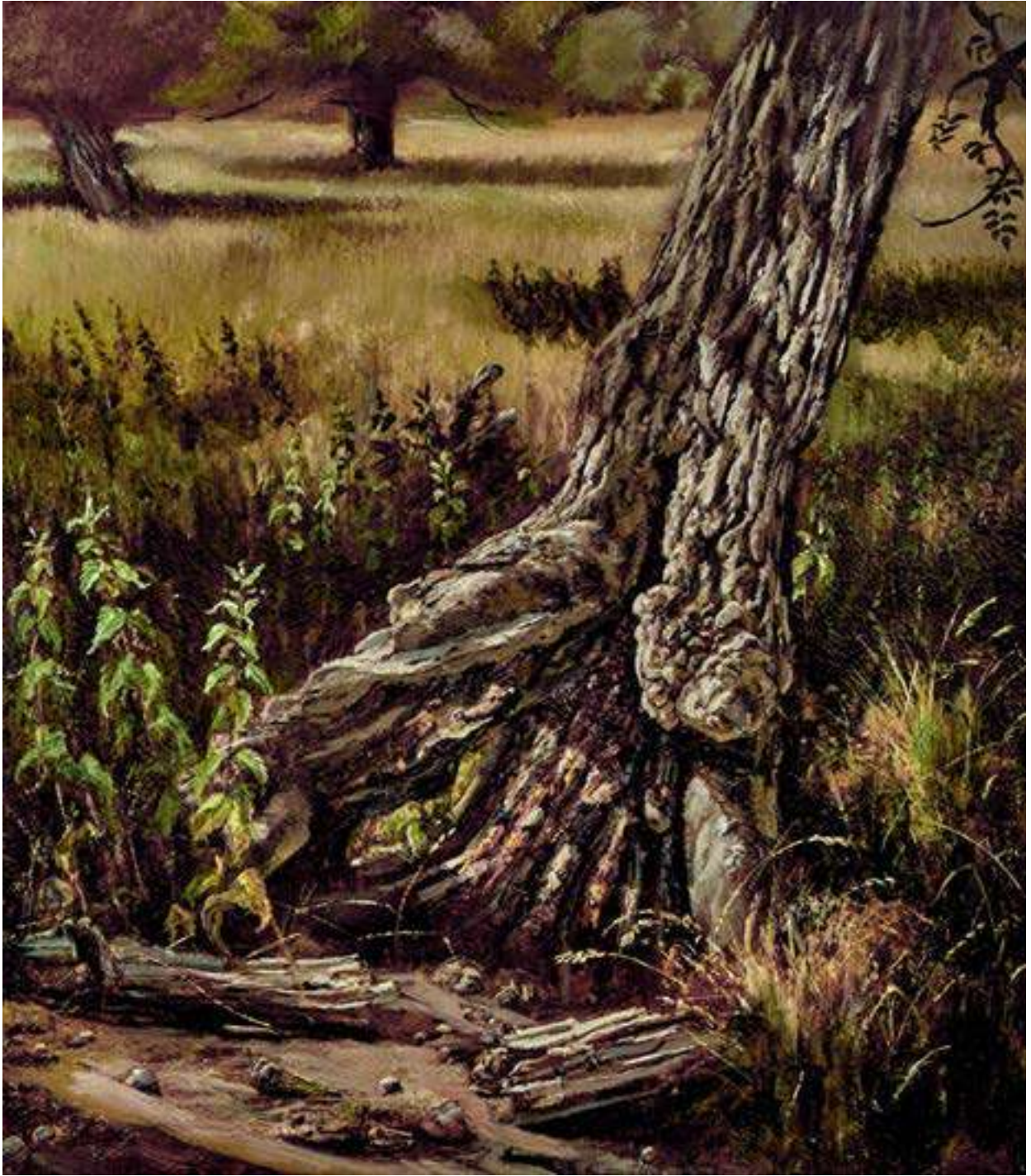
***Ancient Ash, 2022.***

Oil on panel. H310mm H270mm.

The developed painting from the grisaille of the same name.

The nettles surrounding this distorted tree are indicators of past human disturbance.





***Lopped Tree and Sunset, 2022.***

Oil on panel. H270mm W310mm.

Based on the pollards further down the Alde Valley from White House Farm at Farnham, this is my affectionate nod to the Romantic or 'Italianate' Dutch landscapes of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.





***Green Shoots, 2022.***

Oil on panel. H230mm W300mm.

A work devoted to the re-growth after lopping that is the reward for all the effort of heavy pruning. This vibrant new growth inspired early Christians to adopt the pollard as a symbol of the resurrection and life after death. Whilst not a Christian myself, I can see the value in any positive symbol.

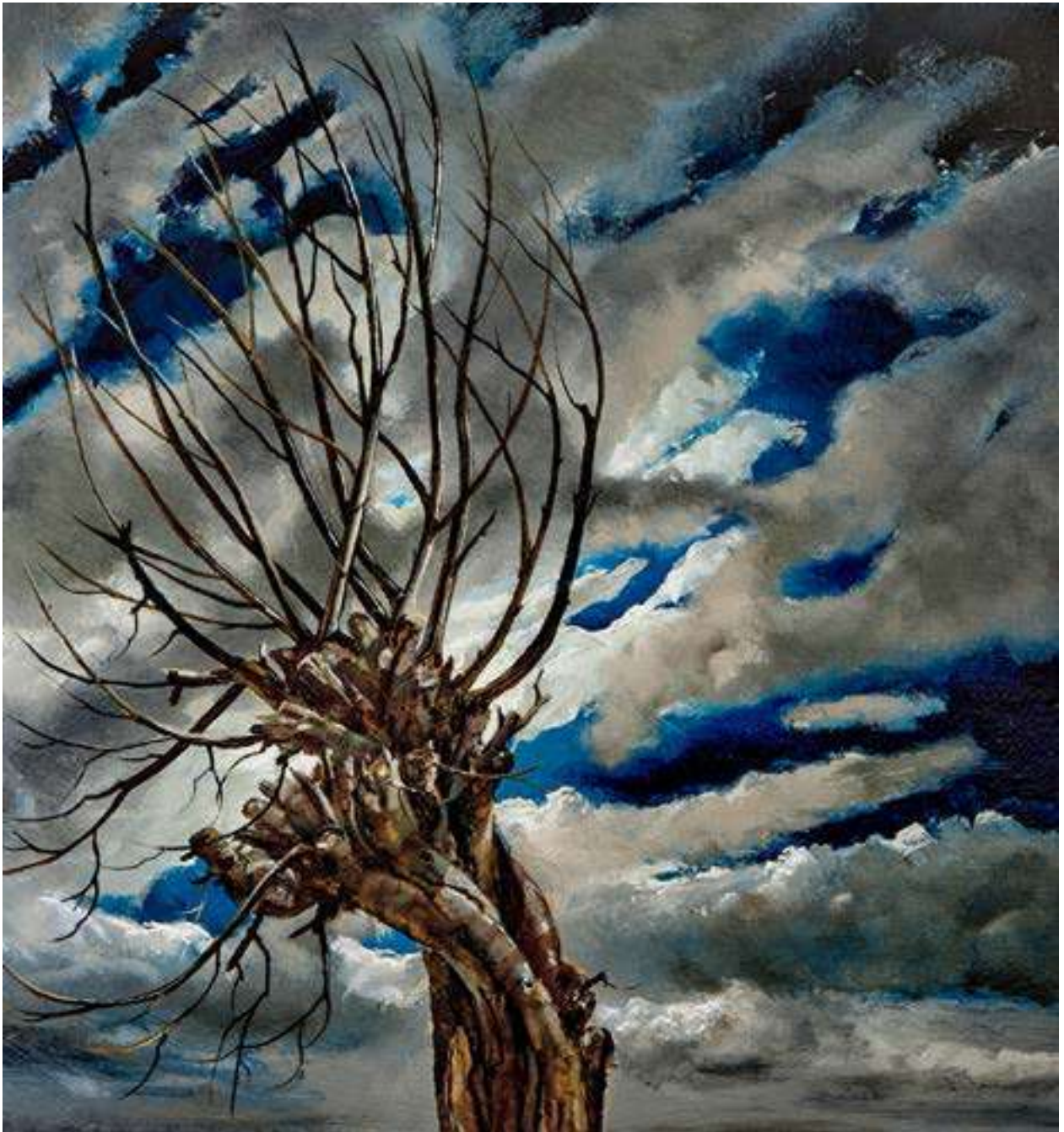


***Moonlit Pollard, 2022.***

Oil on panel. H300mm W275mm.

A romantic image of an ancient Alde Valley Pollard,  
steadfast under the fast-moving clouds and inevitable  
changes to the surrounding landscape unseen below.



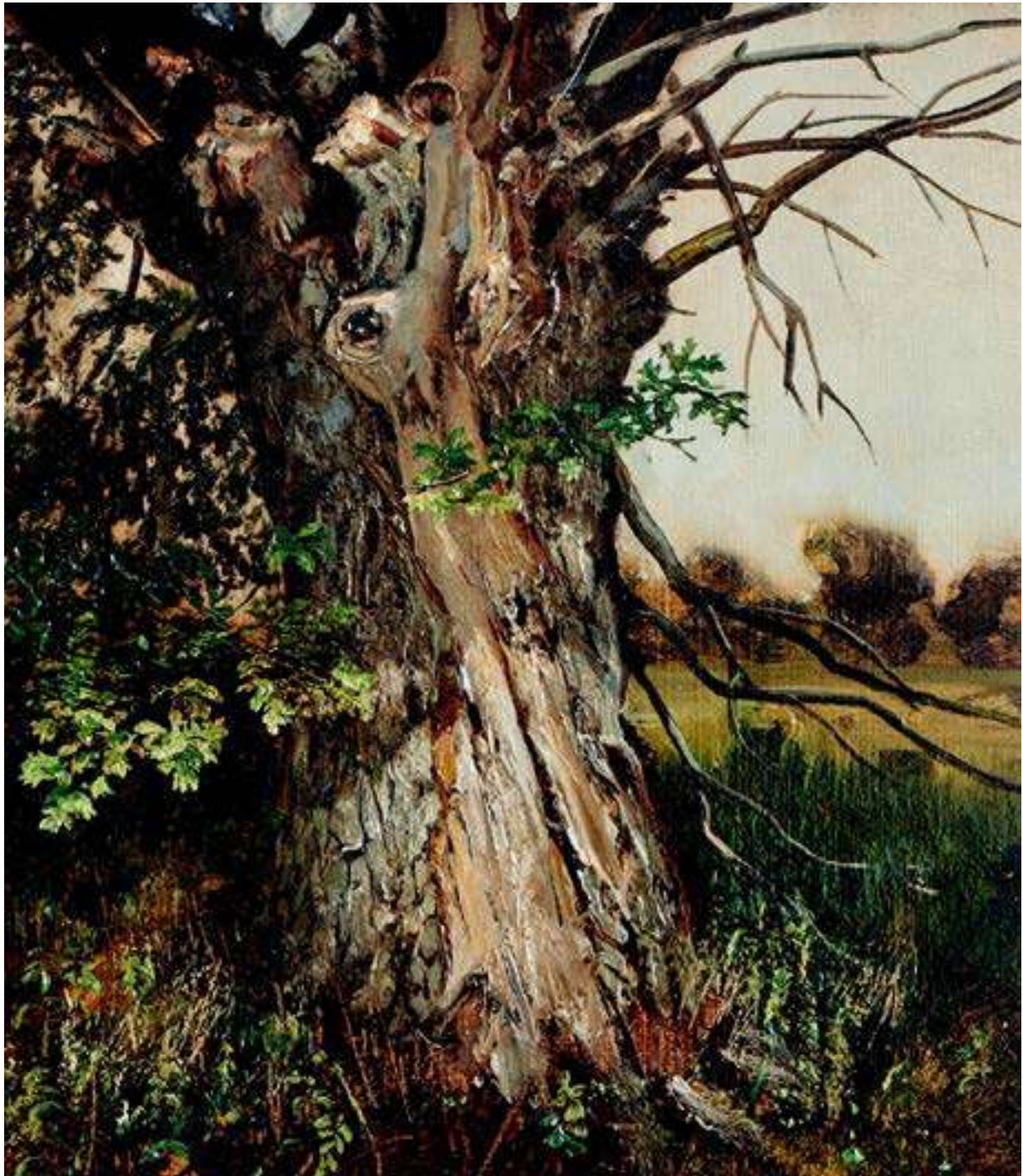


*Hedge Pollard, 2022.*

Oil on panel. H210mm W180mm.

A small version of the other works of that name. All these works celebrate this ancient tree whose long history is unknown but hinted at by its complex post-logging scars and unnatural form.









# Artist's Biography

## Julian Perry : Born 1960

After studying in Maidenhead and Bristol Julian Perry has lived and worked in East London for more than thirty years. Over this period, he has been committed to using landscape painting as a vehicle for exploring the good and the bad in humanity's complex and often dysfunctional relationship to the landscape.

Brownfield sites, nature reserves, caravan parks and allotment sheds have all been subjects for shows. Recent works have looked at the crisis in British forests due to disease and Climate Change.

Perry enjoys an international reputation. His works are held in numerous public and private collections in the UK and abroad, including the personal collection of King Charles III. Perry has won major British Council and Arts Council England awards and has a varied ongoing exhibition program.

In 2015 his work on coastal erosion impacting Britain's east coast featured in the Venice Biennale. More recently, in the spring and summer of 2022 Southampton City Art Gallery hosted a major solo exhibition of Perry's work in *There Rolls the Deep – The Rising Sea Level Paintings*. Other works by Perry also featured prominently in *Earth : Digging Deep in British Art 1781-2022* at the Royal West of England Academy in Summer 2022.



# Appendices

- 1] Map of Plomesgate Hundred and the Alde Valley 1737
- 2] Map of White House Farm and The Vale of Great Glemham 2022
- 3] Pollards in the Landscape : A Background Story for the Exhibition



## 1] Map of Plomesgate Hundred and the Alde Valley 1737

Plomesgate Hundred is the old medieval jurisdictional territory for the Alde Valley area of East Suffolk. It was centred on the coastal port town of Aldeburgh. The Moot Hall, now directly overlooking the shingle shoreline of the North Sea, was once in the middle of the town. It remains the historic home and meeting place of the town council – continuing the original function of a moot hall.

Willow pollards, both lapsed and recently trimmed, can be found along the ditchlines, hedgerows and dykes on low-lying flood meadows along the meandering route of the Alde and its tributaries : the River Fromus, the Upper Alde and the River Ore.

Larger pollarded oak trees can also be seen further inland in the hedgerows, lanes and field boundaries of the Alde Valley, both on low lying land and also on the heavy clay 'uplands'. Veteran pollarded oaks can also be found in clusters in East Suffolk, typically around medieval farmsteads and in farm parkland or parkland. There are some magnificent examples along lanes running through Benhall and between Framlingham and Dennington, as well as the extraordinary oaks at Staverton Thicks near Butley.







## 2] Map of White House Farm and The Vale of Great Glemham

White House Farm is situated in the Upper Alde Valley in the parish of Great Glemham, tucked between the villages of Stratford St Andrew and Sweffling. Upstream, the River Alde flows through Rendham and Bruisyard, which lie at the northern edge of Plomesgate Hundred. Beyond these settlements, the river tapers out into streams and seasonal ditches. It rises from clay-capped uplands between the villages of Badingham, Brundish and Dennington: true highland villages in the context of Suffolk's modest heights.

The low-lying sandy pastures at White House Farm are arranged around a long field called The Straits. This has a causeway running down its middle, which coincides with a public footpath that connects the farm via a footbridge to Benhall Low Street on the other side of the Alde. The Straits is home to a cluster of magnificent veteran oak pollards and the remains of several lapsed willow pollards. These are marked in red on the Pollard Residency Map opposite, which is also presented on the two following pages.

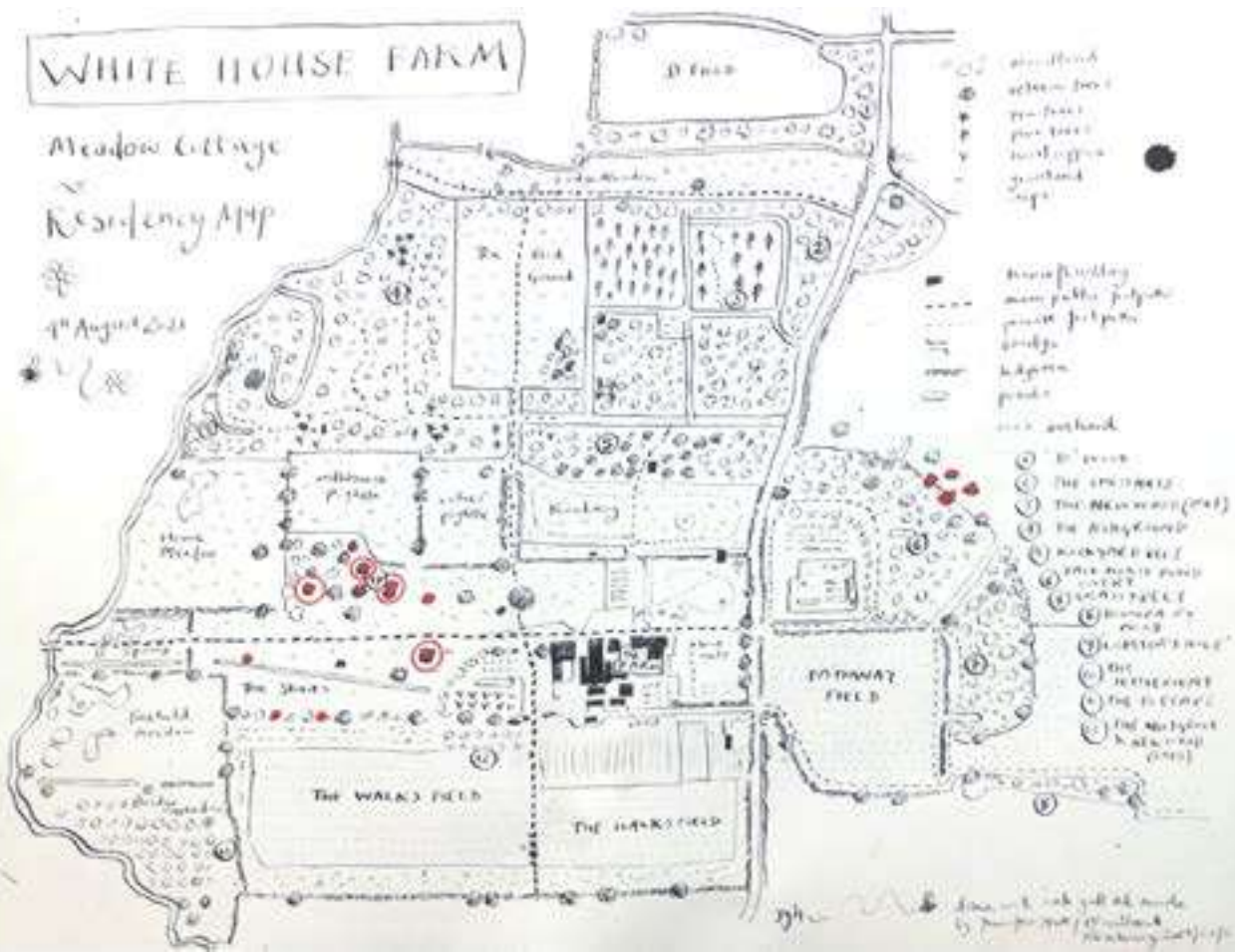
The pattern of clustered oak pollards is repeated on high ground to the west of the farmhouse, on land that borders the parkland of Great Glemham House. Both groups of veteran pollards hint at an older medieval landscape. Indeed, in his book *The History of the English Countryside*, Oliver Rackham refers briefly to The Straits as an example of post medieval farm parkland.

The Pollard Residency and Julian Perry's paintings of these magnificent trees, in the form of his grisailles studies and his profoundly moving finished portraits, draw attention to the presence of ancient pollards in the landscape. As he notes in his Foreword, they often stand unnoticed, hidden in plain sight. One aspiration for the Pollard Residency, the residency exhibition and this catalogue is that all three help raise awareness of veteran trees in our landscapes – and the importance of pollarding as a management tool to help preserve them for future generations.

# WHITE HOUSE FARM

Meadow Cottage  
Residency Map

4th August 2021

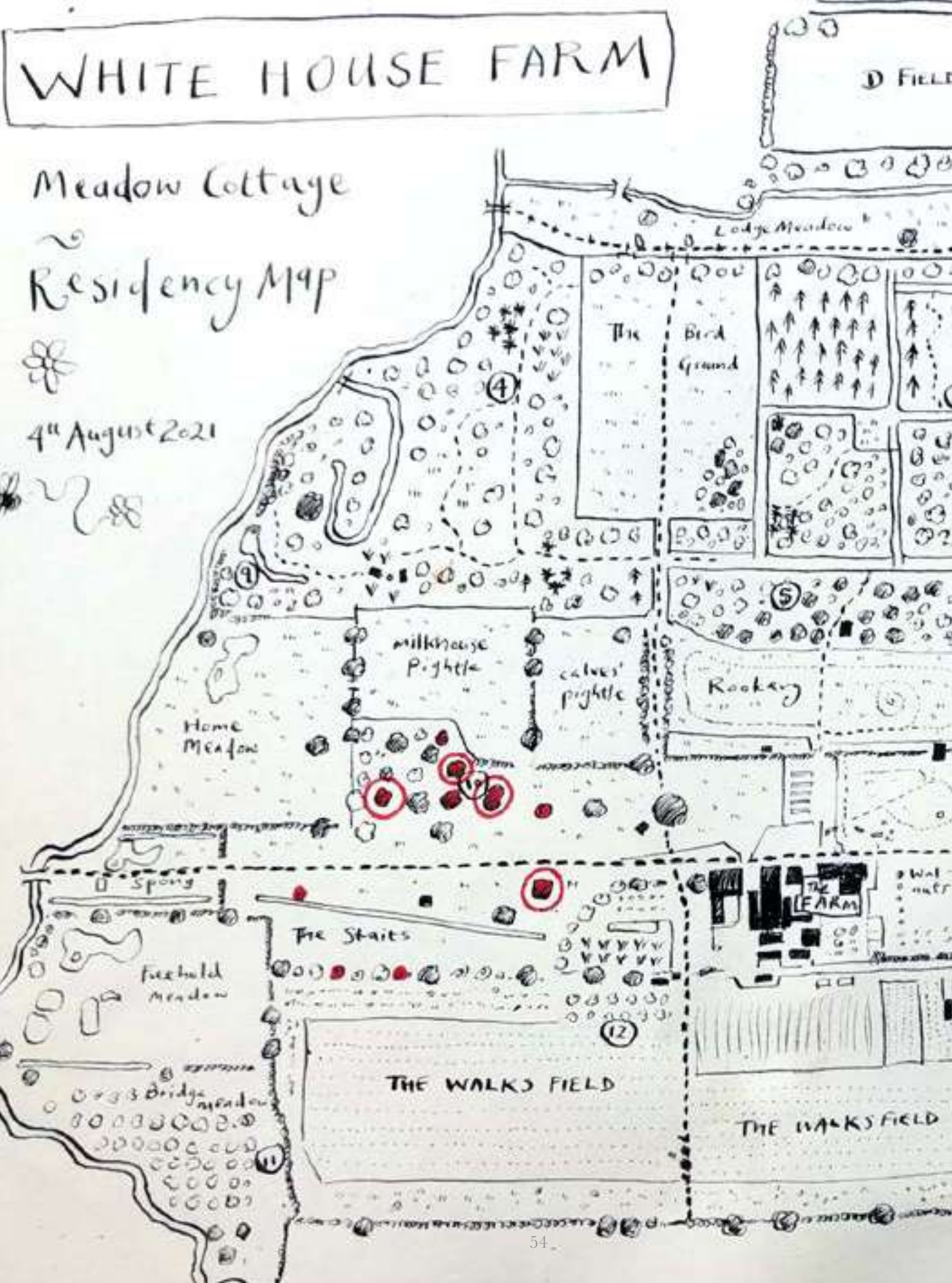




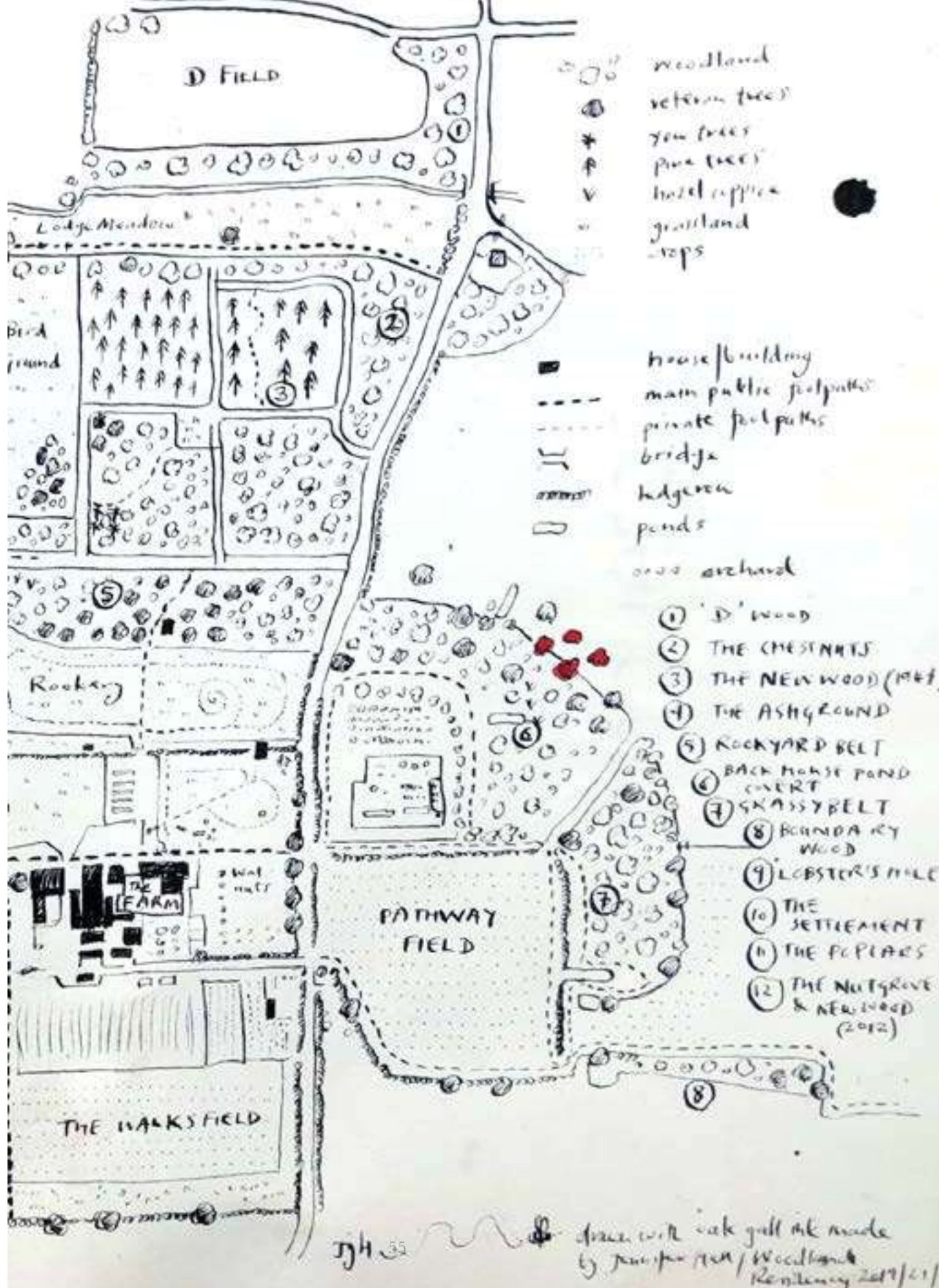
# WHITE HOUSE FARM

Meadow Cottage  
Residency Map

4<sup>th</sup> August 2021







### 3] Pollards in the Landscape : A Background Story



Left : a tapestry of the oldest pollard at White House Farm in the 1970s, showing the author aged 10 with a family pet, Poppy. Right : the same tree as it appeared in 2014 after losing two thirds of its crown in heavy rain – in an etching by Sarah Pirkis. This was one of 10 etchings made for a residency collaboration called *Crabbe's Oaks*.

In 1954 Norman Adlard & Company of Ipswich published the first edition of *The Suffolk Dialect of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* by A O D Claxton. It proved to be a popular book and by 1968 the publisher had moved on to the third edition. My late grandfather Jock Gathorne-Hardy [The 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Cranbrook] contributed a short foreword to the 1968 edition, which ended with the following sentence:

*"Linguistics, like forestry, make one want a double life span but nevertheless I am glad to have seen Mr Claxton's book in one lifetime."*

Looking out over the fields and pastures at White House Farm, where I am now fortunate to live, I find myself feeling the same about the beautiful pollarded oak trees and other wildlife at the farm. The length of the trees' lifetimes does make one want to live longer – or to at least stand in wonder amidst them and imagine the long reach of their lifespans.





Left : if left untended, veteran pollards are at risk of their losing their crowns as upper branches collapse under their own weight, pulling the tree apart. Right : Julian Perry's *grisaille* study of the same beautiful veteran pollard.

It also induces a desire to care for the trees. In nearby woodland, a grove of veteran sweet chestnuts is raising a younger generation of seedlings. But, more dramatically, some of the oldest chestnuts are regenerating naturally from new side shoots around their stumps. If they have enough light – which means deliberately felling or thinning the much faster-growing, self-sown sycamore trees that spring up around them – these ancient and venerable sweet chestnut trees do seem able to continue their lives indefinitely into the future. They do this by retreating groundwards when they can no longer sustain upward and outward growth from their aged canopies; and then slowly push out new stems from the base of their twisted trunks.

Veteran oak trees can mimic this cyclical retreat and re-growth by going stag-headed. In this process, the trees allow their crowns to die back. They then concentrate their growth around a smaller core of branches, leaving the older exposed limbs to lose their bark and rot back to antler-like heartwood. But very few trees seem to have the genetics to do this. Perhaps one in a hundred ? The remainder tend to slowly die back across their whole canopy, until finally giving up – or succumbing to disease.



Left : acorns gathered from the old pollarded oaks at White House Farm in the autumn of 2020 and used to create a tree nursery. Right : the planting team – Leo Wood, Dylan O'Reilly and Will Boswell. Over 2,200 acorns and sweet chestnuts were planted.

As Julian notes in his foreword, pollarding has largely disappeared from the land; and yet it is precisely this practice that ensures the survival of many oak trees into their second or third life-spans. If those of us who are fortunate to live with such precious trees on our land, it seems imperative to explore ways of rekindling this practice if we are to help ensure the continued survival of existing veteran trees – and also to create new generations of ancient trees. At the farm we are consulting with local experts, including Gary Battell and Nathan Hunt. We are also embarking on a programme of gathering acorns from the old pollards to create a future forest of oaks and sweet chestnuts.

The autumn of 2020 proved to be a mast year for oaks at the farm. They dropped thousands of acorns on to the ground beneath them. 2022 is proving to be another bumper year, despite - or perhaps because of - the long summer drought. We are gathering fallen nuts again and, to mark Julian Perry's Pollard Residency Exhibition, we hope to be able to offer to every visitor a pocketful of acorns to take home and plant. They will all be collected from the oaks that Julian has painted, so that the trees may continue to grow in many new places around the UK. The Pollard Residency has been a deeply enriching and timely collaboration – and inspiring, too. I hope it spurs the active revival of veteran pollards not just at the farm and in the beautiful Alde Valley of East Suffolk, but all around the country.

Opposite : one of the hazards of painting *en plein air* – unrequested help from livestock. [Photograph by Julian Perry.] Overleaf : hope for the future – an acorn on the oldest pollard at the farm. [Photograph by Jason Gathorne-Hardy – alongside others above.]









# Gallopers-Sands Residencies

Gallopers-Sands is the contemporary art gallery for The Alde Valley Spring Festival.  
This limited edition catalogue has been published to coincide with an  
exhibition of paintings of veteran pollard trees by Julian Perry  
as part of a residency that extended through  
the Spring and Summer of 2022.

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