

GALLOPER-SANDS

CHRISTMAS EXHIBITION



Standing Avocet, 2023. H400mm W300mm.

BECKY MUNTING

The Wildfowl, Waterbird & Wetland Residency

GS

GALLOPER-SANDS

Fine Art & Artisan Crafts

www.gallopersands.co.uk

INTRODUCTION : *The Wildfowl, Waterbird & Wetland Residency*

This new residency collaboration with Becky Munting builds upon a previous project with the artist at White House Farm called *The Rebirding Residency*. This ran for three years and recorded birdlife on the farm as we introduced a range of habitats, all of which were intended to support increased populations of wild birds in the farmed landscape.



Above : Saul Hunt Tree Surgery – creating woodland glades for song birds at White House Farm in February 2020.

Interventions included : the creation of woodland clearings and wildflower-rich pastures; hedgerow restoration; the preservation of deadwood habitats in the form of standing and fallen trees; the installation of nest boxes in woodland areas and in the farmyards; the creation of grassland margins and fallow areas on arable land; leaving old barns open for swallows; and the creation of wetland scrapes and lakes in the floodplain of the Upper Alde Valley.

I have used a Set of Sustainability Criteria for all management activities at White House over the past 17 years. One of these requires continuous onsite ecological enrichment of the farmed landscape. The film producer and presenter Bruce Parry used a word for this process in the title of one of his films : ‘*Tawai*’. The word is borrowed from the Penan tribe in Sarawak and there is a very moving moment in the film when a Penan guide takes Parry into the jungle and explains what ‘*tawai*’ means. It describes the forest when it is full : replete with biology and on song - truly alive and flourishing.



Above : Charlie and Jack Steed – creating wildflower enriched farm parkland at White House Farm in Spring 2020.

I found this profoundly inspiring. It led to a vision or dream for White House Farm : to manage the land in such a way that the farm becomes ‘*tawai*’ - as full as possible with biology, whilst still functioning as a family home and a working farm; as well as a vibrant home for the visual arts, heritage crafts and rural writing. The landscape interventions linked to the original *Rebirding Residency* have brought many positive changes.

We now have flocks of goldfinches and swallows at the farm. Skylarks have returned and we have a full complement of owls. Green and Greater Spotted Woodpeckers are both common and we also have resident raptors, including sparrow hawks, kestrels and buzzards. The farmyards, woods and hedgerows have also become home to a wonderful variety of songbirds. The fallow arable land supports the flocks of goldfinches and this year the barns were busy with over twenty swallows. The soundscape of the farm has become richer and it does feel like this small patch of land in the Upper Alde Valley is becoming a bit more *tawai*.

The eastern edge of the farm lies in the floodplain of the River Alde. The meandering, slow-flowing river is the farm's boundary. Here, we have created a series of wetland scrapes and lakes in the floodplain in the hope of achieving two things. One aim has been to mitigate the contrasting risks of seasonal flooding in wet weather and falling water levels in the river and underground during droughts due to abstraction at Benhall Pumping Station. The other is to create new habitats for wildfowl and waterbirds. This has worked in small ways : kingfishers already resident in the Upper Alde Valley now feed in the lakes; and we have visits from herons, common sandpipers, snipe and the occasional egret.



Above : David Rose creating wetland scrapes and new water retaining habitats in the floodplain of the River Alde.

With these initial phases of rebirding the farmed landscape at home now completed, it felt both natural and important to look beyond the edges of White House Farm to much broader horizons. The patches of wetland habitat that we have created in the Upper Alde Valley are tiny compared to areas that lie downstream as the Alde is at first joined by the Fromus and the Ore, and then flows over the weir at Snape to become part of the broad estuary that runs past Aldeburgh and Orford to join the sea at Shingle Street.

Downstream of Snape, the landscape shifts from quiet inland river valleys full of pastures, ditches and aldercarr to vast areas of mudflats, salt marshes and shingle that define the coastal landscape of East Suffolk and the Suffolk River Valleys. These rivers are part of a larger delta that extends southwards to include the Colne, Blackwater, Thames and Medway; and northwards to enfold the Blyth and Waveney. Combined, they are a globally important environment for wildfowl and waterbirds. It is the birdlife in this landscape that the new *Wildfowl, Waterbird & Wetland Residency* explores and celebrates, capturing birdlife on the Stour, Orwell, Deben, Alde & Ore, Blyth and Waveney through Becky Munting's truly beautiful paintings. This is our second catalogue. It presents new paintings of birds from the Alde and Ore estuary and a selection of woodland species as a tribute to the first *Rebirding Residency*. I look forward to this new collaboration growing over the coming seasons and years.

Jason Gathorne-Hardy. White House Farm, Great Glemham, Suffolk. August / November 2023.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT : *Autumn 2023*



Left : Canada and Greylag Geese feeding at Orford near the Alde and Ore Estuary.

It has been impossible to fail to notice the terrifying impact of climate change following the recent storms. Homes and businesses have been destroyed. Properties which previously have been unaffected by tidal surges and rainwater runoff from fields have been decimated by flood water.

The rising water levels have destroyed many wildlife habitats, but thankfully the storms came after ground nesting birds had fledged, and many migrant birds had left on their epic voyages to winter grounds. A slight silver lining is that some birds may have benefited from the flooded fields. Huge numbers of wildfowl have been feeding and resting on the water-filled fields, safe from predators. It's little comfort for those who have lost so much.

Fields along the river Ore and Deben have been flooded and are too water logged to enable heavy agricultural machinery to operate. It's lovely to watch the geese feeding on the fields undisturbed. Numbers of wildfowl seem to be encouragingly high so far. The change in attitude with many landowners moving away from organised shoots, and allowing rewilding of land much seems to be having a beneficial impact on bird life. Pheasants, no longer threatened by guns and which eat anything they can fit in their beaks, will be increasing in numbers too but hopefully a naturally balance will be reached.

Becky Munting. November 2023.



Herons

Oil on board
H400mm W300mm

£525



Golden Sun – Heron Study

Egg tempera on board
H180mm W255mm

£325



Little Egret Study

Oil and gold leaf on board
H130mm W180mm

£225



Heron Study

Oil on board
H130mm W180mm

£195



Redshank

Oil and gold leaf on board

H180mm W255mm

£345



Sanderling

Oil and gold leaf on board
H180mm W130mm

£225



Avocet Study I

Oil and gold leaf on board
H180mm W255mm

£225



Avocet Study III

Oil and gold leaf on board
H180mm W255mm

£395



Snipe

Oil and gold leaf on board

H180mm W255mm

£345



Kingfisher

Oil on board

H120mm W120mm

£185



Oystercatchers

Oil and gold leaf on board
H355mm W520mm

£855



Standing Avocet

Oil and gold leaf on board
H400mm W300mm

£595



Osprey Study

Oil and gold leaf on board

H120mm W120mm

£195



Plover Chick Study

Oil and gold leaf on board
H120mm W120mm

£195



Stonechat

Oil and gold leaf on board

H180mm W130mm

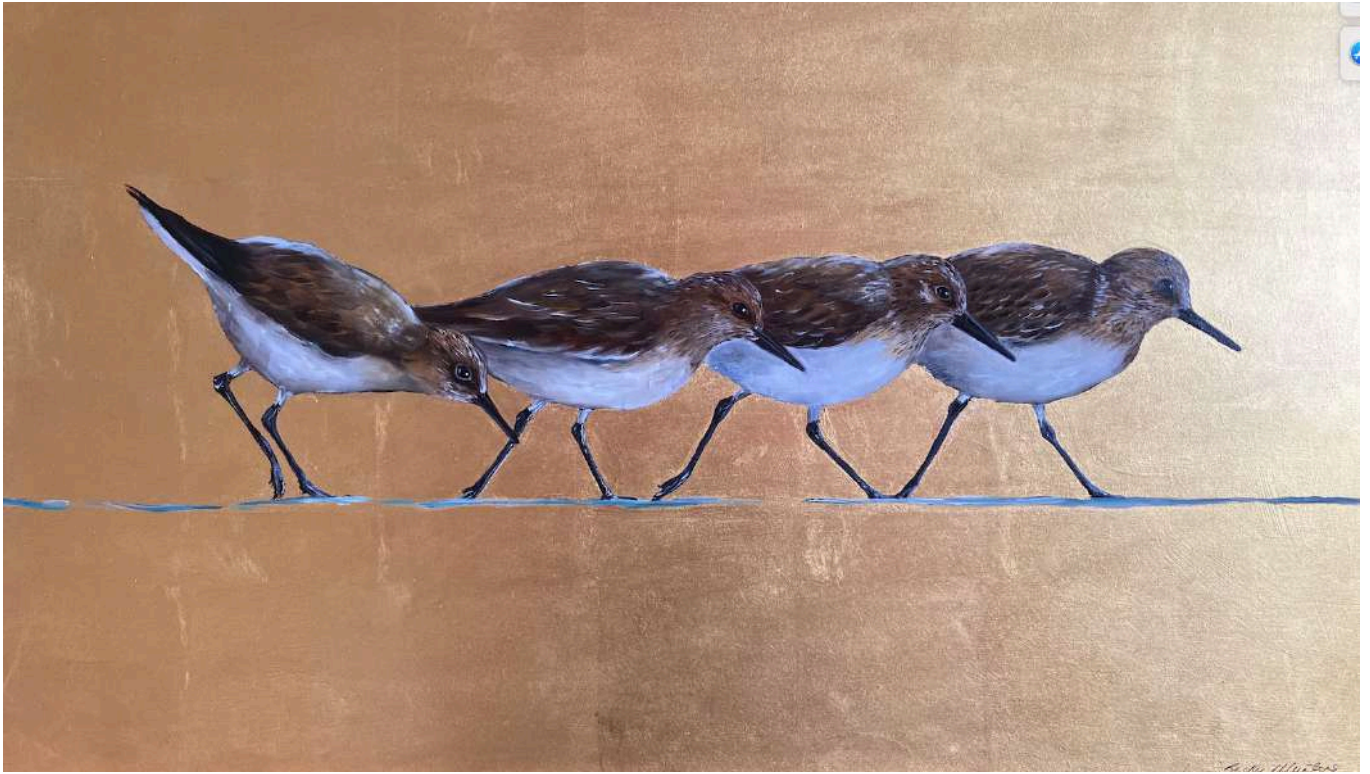
£225



Mute Swan Study

Oil and gold leaf on board
H120mm W120mm

£185



Tide Running - Sanderlings

Oil and gold leaf on board
H315mm W500mm

£845



Sygnnet Study

Oil and gold leaf on board
H120mm W120mm

£195



Avocet Chick Study

Oil and gold leaf on board
H120mm W120mm

£195



Kingfishers

Oil and gold leaf on board
H410mm W780mm

£725

WOODLAND BIRDS : *The Rebirding Residency*

These paintings are presented as part of the Christmas Exhibitions 2023 to mark the changes in the landscape at White House Farm that have helped to increase the populations of wild birds in the fields, hedgerows and woodland that surround the farmyard galleries.



Up in the Branches III

Oil and gold leaf on board

H410mm W780mm

£1,550



Bullfinches

Oil and gold leaf on board
H255mm W180mm

£455



Little Robin

Oil and gold leaf on board

H120mm W120mm

£195



Goldfinch

Oil on board

H120mm W120mm

£185



Coal Tit Icon

Oil and gold leaf on board

H120mm W120mm

£195



Kestrel

Oil and gold leaf on board
H120mm W120mm

£195



Great Tit

Oil on board

H120mm W120mm

£185



Golden Sun – Little House Sparrow

Oil and gold leaf on board
H120mm W120mm

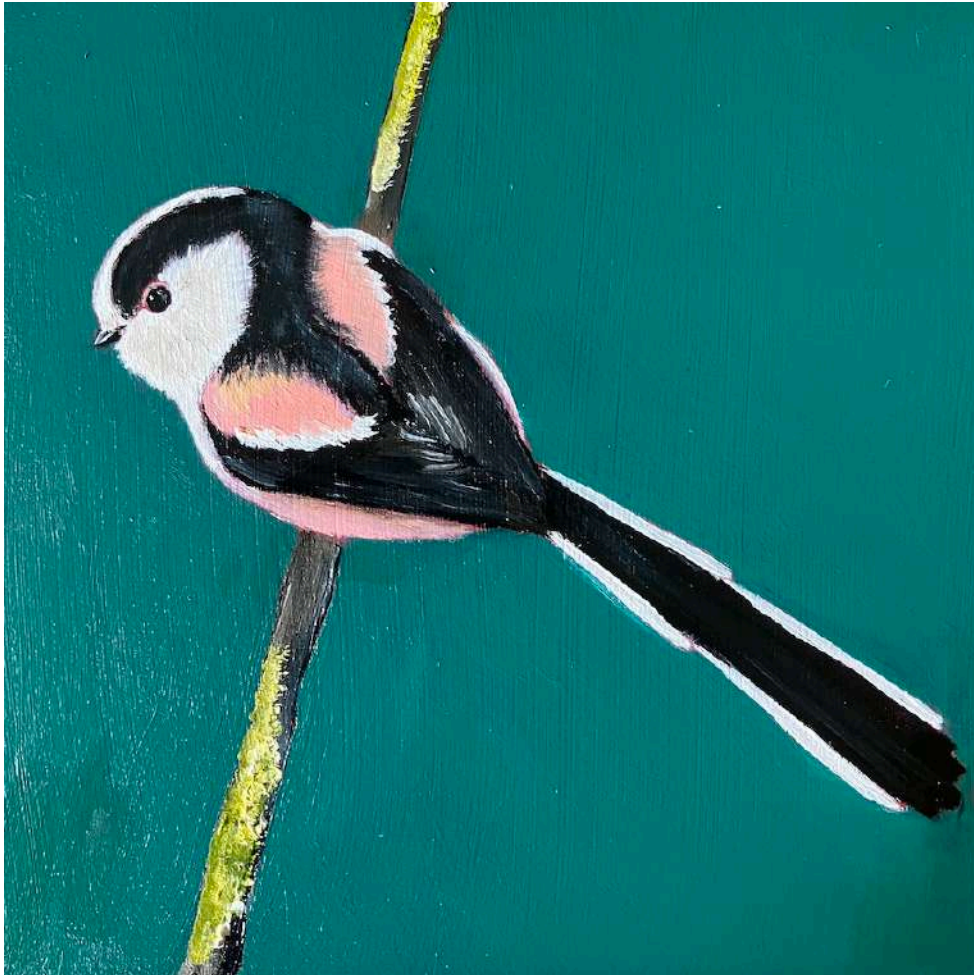
£195



Blue Tit

Oil on board
H120mm W120mm

£185



Long Tailed Tit II

Oil on board
H120mm W120mm

£185



Long Tailed Tit I

Oil on board
H120mm W120mm

£185



Coal Tit

Oil on board

H120mm W120mm

£185



Chaffinch on Hawthorn

Oil on board
H180mm W130mm

£225



Coal Tits

Oil on board
H255mm W180mm

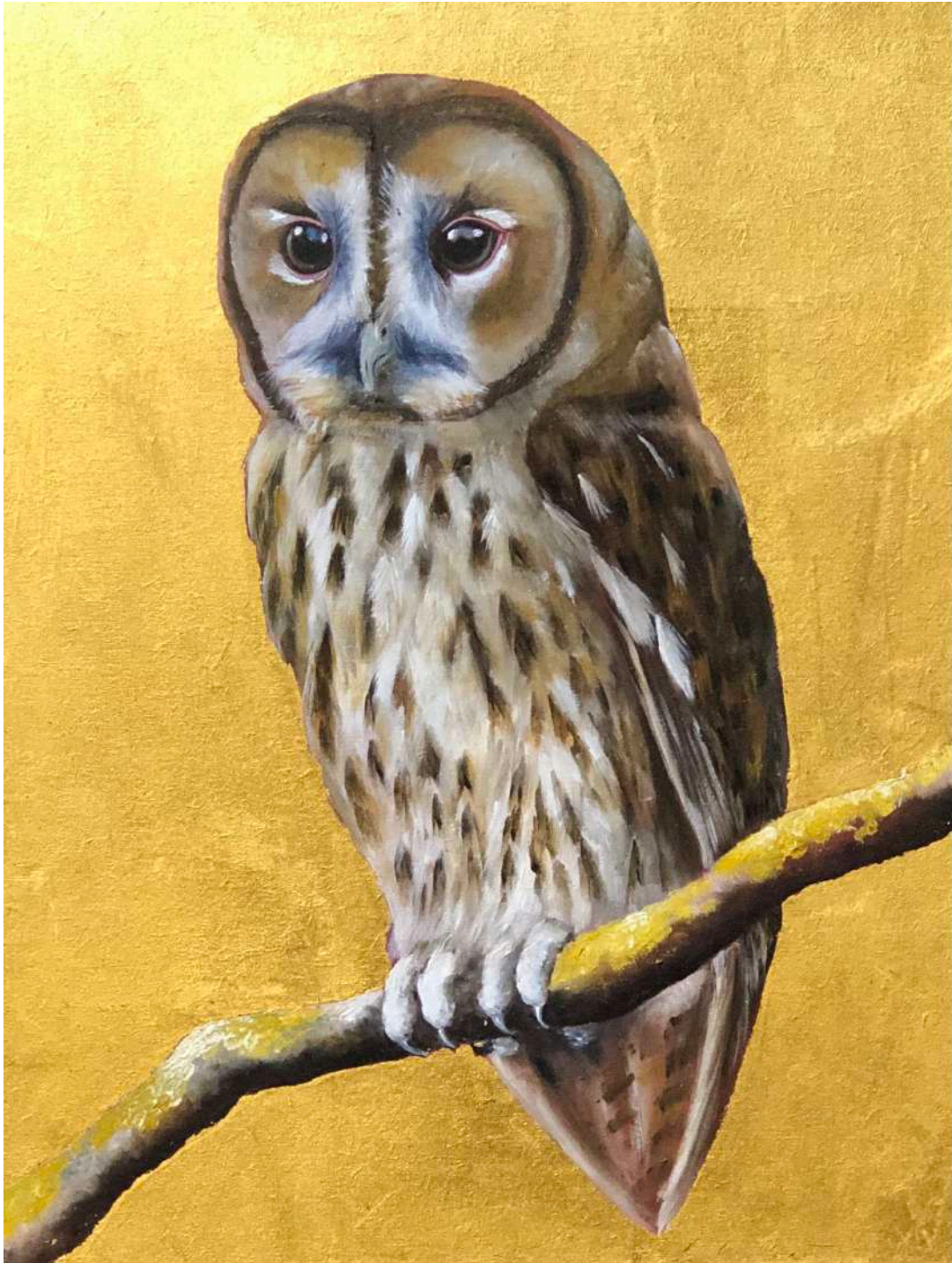
£395



Long Tailed Tits in Hawthorn

Oil and gold leaf on board
H410mm W780mm

£785



Tawny Owl I

Oil and gold leaf on board
H305mm W230mm

£425



Tawny Owl II

Oil and gold leaf on board
H300mm W260mm

£525

Gallopers-Sands is the online gallery for The Alde Valley Spring Festival Ltd

Company No 7592977 www.aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk

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