

# ALDE VALLEY SPRING FESTIVAL EXHIBITION 2020

## *On a Turning Wing : A Celebration of Birds, Flight & Migration*

ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE : TESSA NEWCOMB

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It has been a great pleasure to be able to welcome Tessa Newcomb back to White House Farm for the 2020 Spring Festival. The Festival itself grew out of *The Easter Retreat Exhibition*, which started in 2003 in a small end of terrace cottage next to All Saints Church in Great Glemham village. Tessa was commissioned to paint murals of the village street and surrounding countryside as a small tribute to village life. The Easter Retreat Exhibitions were merged with *The Alde Valley Food Adventures* in 2009 to create *The Alde Valley Spring Festival* : a month long celebration of food, farming, landscape and the arts.

In the 1940s, White House Farm also hosted some of the early planning meetings for the Aldeburgh Music Festival. It has more recently been involved in the creation of the The Alde Valley Spring Festival's sister project *Pesta Nukenen* – a community-owned food and cultural festival that takes place each July in the beautiful Kelabit Highlands of Sarawak, East Malaysia. The farm has proved to be a fertile place for festivals.

In an essay in the book *A Painters' Place* published by Abbott Hall Gallery, Jake Nicholson (son of Ben and Winifred Nicholson) described the importance of livestock and farming in our lives and our heritage. The book is richly illustrated with works by both of the Nicholsons and also many of their contemporaries, all of whom stayed as guests at their farmhouse Banks Head : Christopher Wood, Ivon Hitchens, Paul and John Nash amongst many others.

It is a joy to see a very familiar place through the eyes and impressions of another. Tessa's work has remained at the heart of the Spring Festival Exhibitions over the intervening years since the first small show at Church Cottages in Great Glemham in 2003. It is endlessly fascinating to see how she perceives the world. Her paintings are teeming with narratives, some hidden and others obvious; but all of which emerge from close observation and her own deeply original perception of what's going on – be it people, farm animals or wildlife.

This collection of new paintings has grown out of a *Horsebox Residency* at White House Farm in early 2020. The horsebox itself has some provenance, having featured in the book *One Man and a Mule* by Hugh Thomson. It now resides at the farm and is used seasonally as a painting studio. For spring 2020 we parked it beside a restored hedge and offered it to Tessa as a studio from which to paint songbirds, farmyard fowl and wild birds from the Alde Valley and Suffolk Coast. A wonderful collection of new works has appeared. Some, such as *Exotic* and *A Hedge in Winter*, catch scenes from the farmland that surrounds the Horsebox Studio. Others, including *Wind, 6pm, Dusk* and *In the Absence of Cars* provide glimpses of daily routines in the lives of songbirds and other wild birds. The wonderful painting *Living in Harmony* is visually striking. It is a captivating portrayal of life at an osier bed at the farm which doubles up as home for seven Maran cockerels and numerous Muscovy ducks. *Two Females, Spring is in the Air* and *Pussy Willow* catch other small moments in the lives of the many ducks now living at the farm. Other larger works such as *Minsmere* and *Drying their Wings* provide images of birds in the broader setting of the Suffolk's coastal landscape. Although only a few miles from the farm as the crow flies, the wide open skies and huge expanses of marsh and mudflats along the coast feel a world away from the Upper Alde Valley – and home to very different birdlife.

For all sales, larger images and more details : [enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk)

The dimensions given are for the paintings; all prices include frames (not measured).



1. *Bird Friendly*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H135mm W155mm £400



2. *Wind*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H135mm W180mm £375



3. *6pm*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H165mm W140mm £400



4. *Stab*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H100mm W170mm £400



5. *She Made Him a Ground Feeder*, 2020.  
Oil on board.  
H130mm W140mm £300



6. *Dusk*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H140mm W180mm £400



7. *Moorhen*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H205mm W150mm £600



8. *Two Females*. Oil on board.  
H310mm W380mm £750



9. *Look before you Eat*, 2020.  
Oil on board.  
H135mm W100mm £375



10. *Living in Harmony*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H480mm W380mm £1,250



11. *Houses*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H255mm W180mm £480



12. *Birdfeeder*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H185mm W130mm £400



13. *Let there be Birds*, 2020. Oil on canvas.  
H500mm W500mm £900



14. *Exotic*, 2020. Oil on card.  
H210mm W335mm £600



15. *On a Floating Thing*, 2020.  
Oil on board.  
H295mm W155mm  
£600



16. *Ipswich*, 2020. Oil on board.  
H215mm W460mm  
£800



17. *Spring is in the Air*, 2020.  
Oil on board.  
H140mm W235mm  
£450



18. *A Hedge in Winter, 2020.*  
Oil on board.  
H710mm  
W410mm  
£1,200



19. *Low Sun, 2020*  
Oil on board.  
H200mm W200mm  
£450



20. *Pussy Willow, 2020*  
Oil on board.  
H200mm W200mm  
£500



21. *Minsmere, 2020.*  
Oil on board.  
H450mm W610mm  
£1,550



22. *Under a Cloud, 2020.*  
Oil on board.  
H100mm W175mm  
£300



23. *In the Absence of Cars, 2020.*  
Oil on board.  
H140mm W230mm  
£400



24. *Drying their Wings, 2019.*  
Oil on board.  
H450mm W560mm  
£1,800

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT



*A Hedge in Winter, 2020. Oil on board. H710mm W410mm. (Cat No 18.)*

I hung my first bird feeders outside the horsebox one January afternoon.  
My fear was that I would not see any birds.  
A little later the hedge started popping with little birds.  
I was delighted and have continued to be so.  
Now from home I can visualise the birds having a field day.  
My mother (the painter Mary Newcomb) first came to Minsmere when the avocets arrived.  
She met my father who was working on the land at Walberswick.  
They settled here.  
It has taken me years to become a 'bird watcher'.  
Thank you Jason for suggesting it.

Tessa Newcomb. 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020. Wenhaston.

## End of Catalogue

**For all sales or for more information about any works**

**Please contact :** [enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk)

**Website :** [www.aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk](http://www.aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk) **Instagram :** [@aldevalleyfestival](https://www.instagram.com/aldevalleyfestival)