

All 32 paintings in this exhibition have one thing in common; that is they have been inspired by the site designated in the Eynsham Neighbourhood plan for the West Oxfordshire Garden Village. Precisely how this land will be developed over the next fifteen years or so is still open to debate, but it is likely to include over 2000 homes, a science park, primary school and a 'park and ride' facility. There are strong arguments for and against the proposal but my purpose has been simply to observe, record and be inspired by the several hundred acres of pasture, hedgerow, copse, wetland and arable that make up the probable garden village site.

The first three paintings (Garden Village 1, two and III) were done in January immediately after the announcement that the project would be given the go-ahead, at a time of frost-hardened ground and air crisp with cold. Saddened by the possibility that age-old hedges and mature trees might not be around for many more years, I added my thoughts and observations with the aim of adding another layer of interpretation to the artwork. As the months passed, with the light, textures and colours constantly shifting, I looked for new ways to represent the seasons' changes. Hawthorn and blackthorn blossomed, fields were ploughed, crops were sown, cow parsley adorned the field margins and trees, some seemingly dead, were restored to life; each required individual attention.

I make no apology for the fact that most of what is on offer portrays fields, wildlife, footpaths, trees and hedges, with the occasional distant view thrown in for good measure for, after all, what else does our notion of 'countryside' evoke?

My simple wish is that when we are no longer around, future generations will be able to see through the tarmac, concrete, glass and brick to a landscape that was once one of natural beauty, birdsong and country smells. Make no mistake; once it's gone, it's gone forever.

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