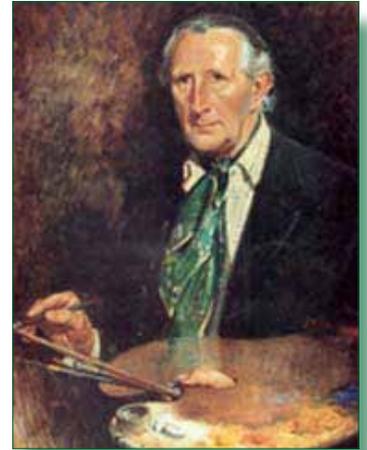


TERENCE CUNEO
(1907–1996)

October's essay deals with Terence Cuneo, who was the nephew of Rinaldo Cuneo, the San Francisco artist that I wrote about in the July 2016 Bulletin. (Terence was also the cousin of Il Cenacolo member Gordon Cuneo, who died in 2010 and who was Il Cenacolo's Man of the Year in 2009). He was famous for his scenes of railways, horses, ceremonies, and military action, as well as being the official artist for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

TERENCE TENISON CUNEO was born in London, the son of Cyrus Cincinato Cuneo and Nell Marion Tenison, artists who met while studying with Whistler in Paris. Cyrus Cuneo's elder brother Rinaldo Cuneo (see July 2016 Bulletin) was also an acclaimed painter in San Francisco, as was his youngest brother Egisto Cuneo (Gordon Cuneo's father). Terence Cuneo studied at Sutton Valence School, Chelsea Polytechnic and the Slade School of Art. His early working life involved working as an illustrator for magazines, books and periodicals.



Cuneo was always searching for new subjects away from the studio. He first made his mark as a racing artist in the 1920s, with his “Pitwork” series depicting Le Mans and other racing circuits. This was the training ground for future subject matter: the excitement of speed, busyness and movement which would come into his later works of equestrian subjects.

In 1936 he started working in oils, while he continued his illustration work. His technique and skill further developed when he became a war artist in World War II—another field for him to conquer. During the War, he was a sapper (a member of the Corps of Royal Engineers, one of the corps of the British Army), where his artistic talents were put to use. He also spent much of his time painting for the War Artists Advisory Committee, providing invaluable illustrations of aircraft factories and wartime events. While working for the Advisory Committee, he served with and became good friends with fellow artist Cyril Parfitt. The many military works and battle scenes that came out of these war experiences could be seen in the various military installations around Britain: especially those of the Royal Artillery and of the Rifle Brigade among others.



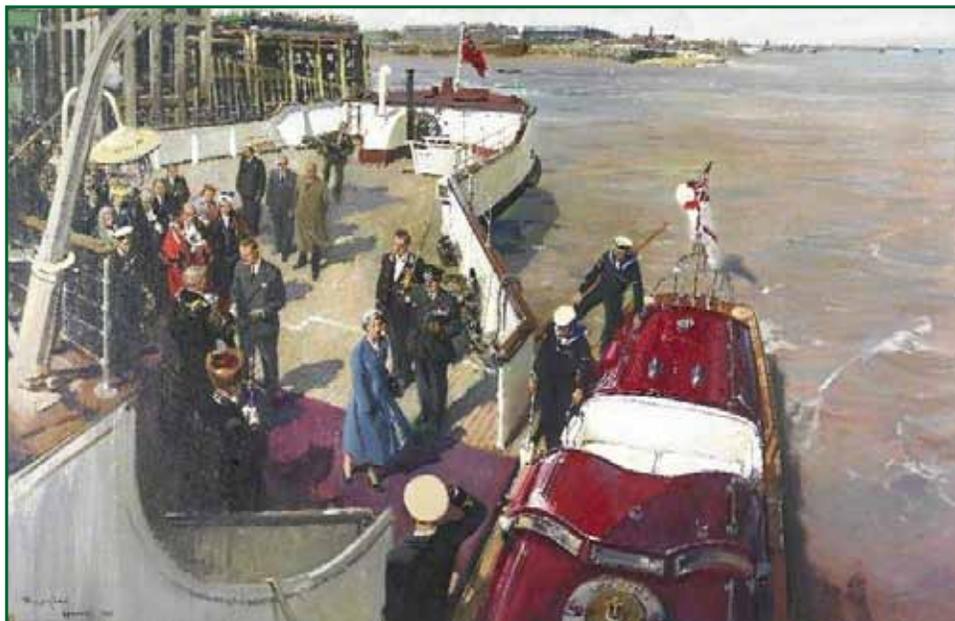
Following the War, Cuneo was commissioned to produce a series of works illustrating railways, bridges and locomotives. He was most famous for his passion for engineering subjects, particularly locomotives and the railway as a whole, not to mention his wide range of specialized military works.



Since 1953, his paintings always included a small mouse, his trademark, which could often be difficult to find, and many people enjoyed searching his paintings to find it. (Similar to Al Hirschfeld's hidden name of his daughter, Nina, in his numerous caricatures, especially those that appeared in *The New York Times*).



An exhibition of Cuneo's work soon after the war demonstrated his inquisitive eye. One challenge that he gave himself was painting delicate detail. This can be seen in his pictures *The Visit to Lloyd's of Queen Elizabeth II with the Duke of Edinburgh to lay the Foundation Stone of Lloyd's New Building* (1952), *The Queen's Coronation Luncheon, Guildhall* (1953), and many other scenes that he painted from Westminster to Buckingham Palace. He painted a number of pictures of Queen Elizabeth II.



The Departure of HM Queen Elizabeth II and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh from the Corporation Pier, Kingston upon Hull, for the State Visit to Denmark



A significant point in his career was his appointment as the official artist for the coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which brought his name before the public worldwide. Because of this notoriety, he received more commissions from industry, which included depicting manufacturing, mineral extraction, and road building.

Cuneo's portraits on the grand scale show him at his best. His fine equestrian portrait *HM the Queen as Colonel-in-Chief, Grenadier Guards* (1963) again shows Cuneo the observer, its simplicity of shape and line in contrast to the busy details of earlier paintings. He also painted official portraits of Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, Edward Heath, and Col H. Jones VC.

Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery (1887–1976), 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, GCB, DSO



He traveled extensively to countries in Europe, to Africa, to Asia, and to the US; wherever he went, he painted scenes that interested him and challenged his artistic abilities, from big game animals in Africa to landscapes in Europe. Whatever he painted on these trips, his little mouse would always be in the painting. Once on a visit to the US, he rode the range and painted a stampede. When he painted the Bedouin, the desert scenes showed his flair for painting direct from life, his color capturing the harshness of the desert life.

When he was elected to the Society of Equestrian Artists as its first president, Cuneo gave his complete support, always showing his latest works, whether of his travels or the first viewing of an important commission he had received. When he would choose selections for open exhibitions, he would be critical but constructive to young artists, finding the good points and quick to praise. He loved storytelling, which often shows in his work. His early experience as an illustrator came to the



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fore in his work as a painter. The paintings would be considered in stages—first the shapes and the subject matter, then the detail and the real point of interest. He usually made numerous preparatory studies and was forever correcting. When he finally achieved the painting as he wanted it, it would be highly finished.

His work has been used in a variety of ways, from book jackets and model railway catalogues to posters and jigsaws and even Royal Mail postage stamps (his paintings have appeared on both Great Britain and Isle of Man stamps). His work can be found in many museums and galleries, including Guildhall Art Gallery, Lloyd's of London, and the Royal Institution.

Terence Cuneo married Catherine Monro in 1934. They had two daughters, Linda and Carole (whose portraits he painted as young women) and three grandchildren, Andrew, Melanie and Cindy. He was awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire), the CVO (Royal Victorian Order), and the Freedom of the City of London. He was also RGI and FGRA. He died on January 3, 1996 in London.

A 1½ times life size bronze memorial statue of him, by Philip Jackson, stood in the main concourse at Waterloo Station in London since 2004, when it was unveiled by Princess Anne. It was commissioned by the Terence Cuneo Memorial Trust (established in March, 2002) to create a permanent memorial to the artist, together with an annual prize at the Slade School of Art, given by the Trust. In tribute to Cuneo's trademark, the statue includes a hidden mouse peering from under a book near the artist's feet, and another carved into the statue's plinth near the ground. Three years later the artist's 100th birthday was celebrated with balloons and birthday cake for Waterloo passengers.

In 2014, with work underway to bring some of Waterloo's disused Eurostar platforms into use for commuter trains, and very likely further development in the next few years to cope with the continued growth of the station—heading for 100 million passengers a year—the Trust decided that rather than keep moving the statue, it would be better to find a permanent place for it. It was moved from Waterloo to a new home at Brompton Barracks, Chatham in Kent. Since Cuneo had served as a sapper in World War II, the Trust decided that the statue should form the centerpiece of a new quadrangle at Brompton Barracks, which is the home of the Corps of Royal Engineers. It now has a prominent place at the Barracks.

As Tom Coates stated in his obituary published in *The Independent*: “There is always a place for an artist who observes, records and illustrates. The camera can lie, so can an artist to himself, but never to his public. Terence Cuneo was a public man; it shows in his work, the time he gave to many committees and in his universal friendship.”



Note the tribute to Cuneo's signature mouse at the foot of this statue by Philip Jackson.



Adapted by James J. Boitano, PhD from: Doris Maslach, A Life History with Doris Maslach, an oral history conducted in 2004 by Nadine Wilmot, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2007, (http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/roho/ucb/text/maslach_doris.pdf), [Doris Cuneo Maslach was the cousin of Terence Cuneo and the sister of Gordon Cuneo]; Art UK ("<http://artuk.org/discover/artists/cuneo-terence-tenison-19071996>"; Cuneo Society Website (<http://www.cuneosociety.org/terence.html>); Terence Cuneo Website (<http://terencecuneo.co.uk/>); Tom Coates “Obituary of Terence Tenison Cuneo,” website of The Independent, January 7, 1996; London SE1 Community website, July 25, 2014 (<http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/775>); and Wikipedia.