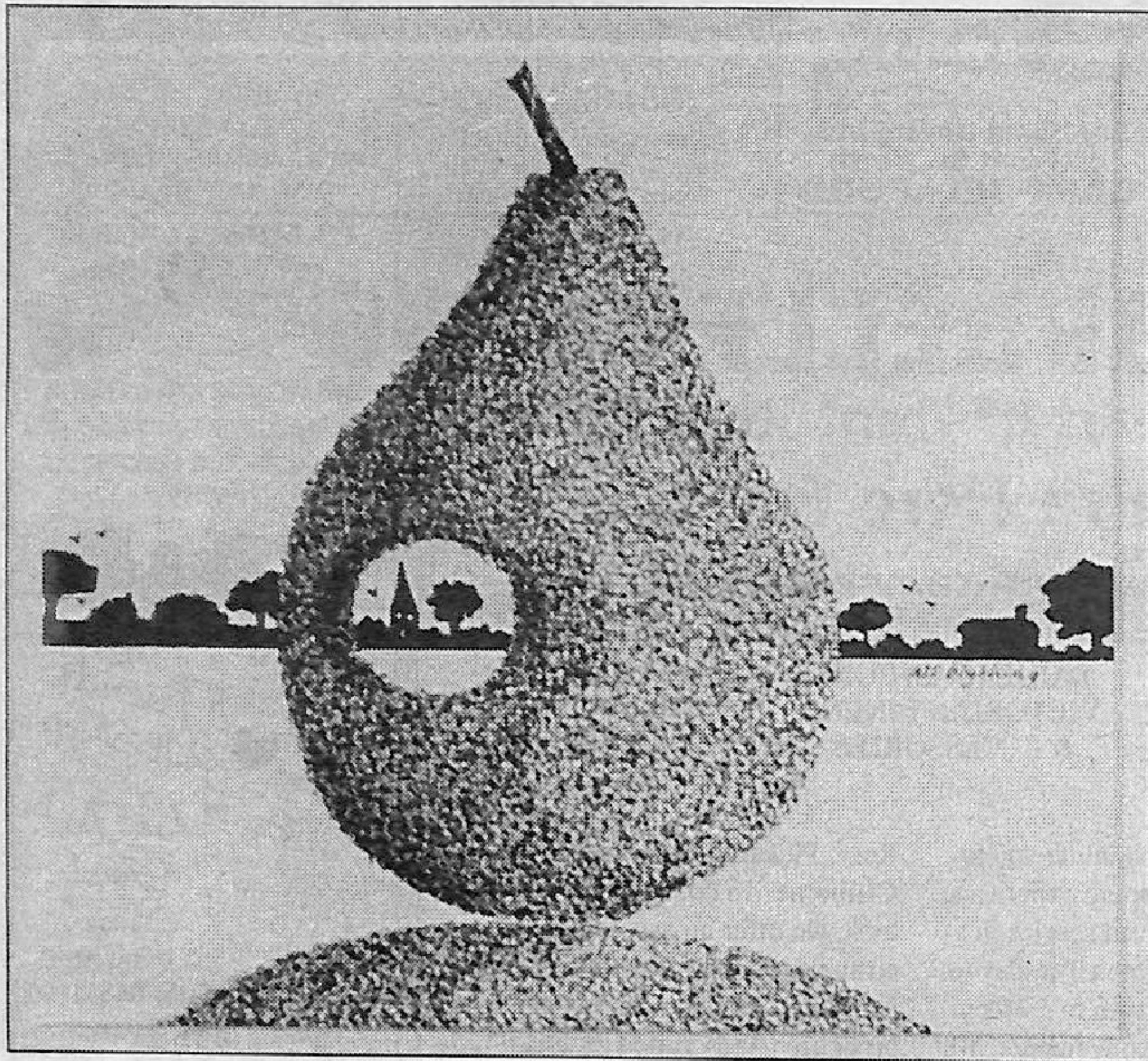


THE ARTS

Colborne Art Gallery member profile: Alf Blything 'Painted impressions of life as I see it'



Alf Blything talks about his life-long interest in drawing, the circumstances that led him to pursue art more seriously, and some of the teachers who helped him learn to express his imagination with pen and brush:

From the early years of four and five until high school graduation at 16 years, I would draw often. There was not any particular subject matter, just whatever took my fancy at that age. People, animals, cartoons, trees were all of interest to the pencil or pen of this budding sketcher.

I got away from drawing for several years, but at the age of 27, I emigrated from England to Canada with my wife Edna, and I returned to drawing and painting sporadically. However, other things became more important during this part of my life, things like my job, buying a house, playing soccer, belonging to service organizations, and generally art took a back seat to all of this.

Then in 1982, fate took a hand in my life when I was slowed down by a fairly major heart attack. During the recovery process, my dear wife Edna thought it would be therapeutic for me to enrol in an art class at Ed Watson's house in Cobourg. This class was an evening class, every two weeks, and the medium was oil. Well, to my surprise I took to the realism in Ed Watson's instruction, and with the help of his great knowledge of oil colours I created a very nice picture. This, my first oil painting, was subsequently framed and sold to an acquaintance.

At the time, I thought I would probably become a second Picasso in a couple of weeks. Well, any artist will tell you it takes a lot of

hard work and self-awareness to be able to express things with a pen or a brush. So I moved on from the realism world, and joined the Cobourg Art Club, who were at that time receiving instruction from Ontario Arts College instructor Jim Pagett.

This was a major advancement for me in the world of art. Privately, in my studio, I would truly experiment with all types of paints, assemblages, trompe l'oeil, and impressionism. It was only when Pagett saw my work and critically acclaimed that which was acceptable, that I got the boost to my confidence that I obviously needed. Pagett was an instructor who took bold chances, and I'm sure it has helped in my development.

Now I paint often in my studio. I'm pleased to say I have a somewhat fertile imagination which, when coupled with a modicum of artistic skill and a keen sense of humour, allows me the pleasure of creating works which are thought-provoking and sometimes humorous. Of course, I do not always know what the end result will be, and often I surprise myself by the finished product. I have been lucky that I have people who like and purchase my work. The future holds many secrets, and I hope to be front and centre giving my painted impressions of life as I see it. It's something I love to do and I hope the public will appreciate it eventually.

Meanwhile, Picasso, you're still on top - but the local competition is heating up.



The Colborne Art Gallery is located in the historic Registry building at 51 King Street East in Colborne. The Gallery's summer hours are: Thursday, Friday and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

COLBORNE CHRONICLES JULY 25/02



MEALTIME FOR 300-PLUS MUTTONS

Eat up everybody! Close to 300 descendants of the first Mutton settlers were on hand at the farm of Lawrence and Beryl Mutton to celebrate the 100th anniversary of their first impromptu picnic. PHOTO BY BOB OWEN