



ABOVE: The illustration by Brian Sanders which appeared in *Woman's Mirror* in 1965 showing the 'bubble and streak' technique which was achieved with Liquitex acrylic paints and mediums.

Brian Sanders

Bryn Havord looks at the work of the man whose art captured the look of the '60s, and inspired *Mad Men's* Matthew Weiner to commission the artist to depict those halcyon days for the launch of the show's sixth season.



LEFT: The finished *Mad Men* painting created from a sketch made by Matthew Weiner, and a collection of photographic reference supplied by the programme makers to ensure period accuracy, depicting Don Draper, the show's lead character experiencing a 'doppelgänger' moment on a New York City sidewalk.

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BRIAN SANDERS WAS A JUDOKA at The Budokwai in the west end of London, and I was a judoka at The Judokan in Hammersmith. Fortunately, we never met on a judo mat, but on the carpet in my office at *Woman's Mirror*, when I commissioned him to illustrate a ten-part romantic serial for the magazine. It was in the mid 1960s, and Sanders was part of a new breed of upcoming illustrators, who worked out of a studio at Artist Partners; an agency which was run on the lines of the famous Charles E. Cooper Studios in New York City.

If we'd had a crystal ball, we could have looked forward to the end of 2012. Matthew Weiner, the creator of *Mad Men*, the celebrated television series, set in the art-directed world of 1960s American advertising, decided to market the sixth series in the style of a 1960s ad man,

and remembering the painterly illustrations used on Trans World Airlines flight menus, started a search for an illustrator who could create an image with the same look. He saw the illustration that I had commissioned from Sanders for the first part of the romantic serial which was set in New York City. He also saw a selection of Sanders' work covering nearly four decades of his career that I had produced for Leif Peng's *Today's Inspiration* illustration blog, and decided that Sanders was the man for the job, and asked him to work in his sixties style to create a series of illustrations.

Educated at St Olave's Grammar School, which then stood at the foot of London's Tower Bridge, Sanders spent much of his final year life drawing and painting at the Sir John Cass College of Art, less than a mile away on



ABOVE: The Artist As A Young Man, thinking up ideas for his personal Christmas card. The only piece that he kept from his pre 1960 professional work.
ABOVE RIGHT: Through experience Sanders has learned that some people who might object to being photographed, don't mind being drawn.



the other side of the river. He was offered a place at the Slade School of Art, but because of family circumstances he went to work in an advertising agency.

Sanders represented himself, and he got commissions from *Lilliput* Magazine, which he jokingly asserts he helped to close. Miles Huddleston at Heinemann came to his rescue, giving him numerous book jacket commissions, which helped to keep the wolf from the door. He learned that most of the magazine's artwork was commissioned from two London artists' agents, and he joined one of them as a 'gofer'. It was in 1959 when Artist Partners took him onto their books, and put him on the road to success. They exposed him to sixty world-class artists and photographers and their work, and he says that he owes much to the help that many of them gave him.

His career was interrupted by National Service with the Royal Marines, mostly spent on active service with 45 Commando in areas of North Africa, and the Mediterranean. During his final year he was recruited into the Intelligence Section because of his drawing skills. After National Service he worked with photographer Adrian Flowers, to whom he is very grateful for the assistance he got in helping him to start his career. Sanders spent most evenings after work drawing, and a year later he selected his best twelve pieces for his portfolio, and went freelance. Flowers provided him



with a studio within his own studio in Chelsea, as a quid pro quo for background painting and visualizing.

Heavily influenced by the works of Ben Shahn and David Stone Martin, he found it difficult to advance stylistically away from what they did so brilliantly. Much to Artist Partners' consternation, he collected his samples, destroying all bar the one of him preparing ideas for his first printed Christmas card in 1959. He went drawing in a breaker's yard at the Elephant and Castle in south London, and at Billingsgate Fish Market, which was then between London and Tower Bridges—the stamping ground of his youth.

In the early 1960s, the American illustrator Bernie Fuchs was rapidly becoming the man to watch and emulate. In particular, the British art directors and illustrators were fascinated with what they called the “bubble and streak” style; but we had no idea how the Americans achieved it. Sanders used soap mixed with gouache in an attempt to get the paint to bubble, but to no effect. However, he achieved some success drawing in pencil or charcoal on canvas paper, scumbled with coloured inks mixed with soap, and worked over in gouache. There was then a *eureka* moment when we discovered Liquitex acrylic paints and mediums, which were manufactured in America. However, they weren't on sale in the United Kingdom, but it wasn't long before parcels of the paint and mediums were winging their



ABOVE: A portrait of Sanders' eldest son Mark, showing a keen interest in a worm. Always interested in science and biology and now in his early 50s, he works in the radiology department of a New Zealand hospital. Sanders early paintings emphasise texture and negative space, rather than attention to photographic detail.



way over the Atlantic, sent by friends and relatives.

I always admired Joy Hannington's work as the art editor of *Homes and Gardens* magazine; in particular the way she encouraged illustrators, giving them considerable freedom to work in the way which most suited them. She encouraged Sanders to develop his "bubble and streak" style, and he is grateful for the confidence she showed in him, and for the opportunities that followed. *Reader's Digest* also began to give him work, and he formed a working friendship with its art director Ken Ellis, which lasted until Ellis' death forty-five years later.

During the 1960s, Sanders' work was being used in all of the newspaper colour supplements, including the *Telegraph Magazine*, the *Observer Colour Supplement*, and *The Sunday Times Magazine*. The supplements gave illustrators excellent shop windows for their work. *The Sunday Times Magazine* art director was the brilliant and trail-blazing Michael Rand, who commissioned Sanders to illustrate the best shots made by ten great tennis players. He also asked Michael Leonard to paint several personalities, including Brigitte Bardot, which subsequently proved to be remarkably prescient, showing



what they might look like in later life. He then asked Sanders to produce a series of paintings illustrating what personalities looked like when they were young, and what they did for a living. They featured Eugene McCarthy, Ho Chi Minh, Kwame Nkrumah, Len Deighton, and Dame Edith Evans.

Sanders had made a series of experimental collages that helped persuade Stanley Kubrick to offer him the opportunity of recording the making of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. He drew on the set for two days each week, working on larger paintings in his studio. Although he worked on the project for more than a year, he only has a record of twenty-four of his works. He thinks that there may be more in the Kubrick Archive. Only two of these drawings were published before Kubrick's death, and then not until 2001.

It was an exciting time, and many of the illustrators started to develop their highly individual styles, which reflected the fashions, music and arts at the time. However, in common with the illustrators working in the USA, the 1970s proved to be a challenging decade for every illustrator working in Britain, trying to

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FACING PAGE: Homes and Garden's art editor, Joy Hannington had been expecting a horizontal half page but didn't complain when Sanders delivered this vertical illustration. **ABOVE LEFT:** His agent, Artist Partners, wanted an illustration which would appeal to the advertising industry. Sanders says, "MadMen? We lived the London equivalent, as Artist Partners' offices were in Mayfair, the centre of the advertising industry". **ABOVE:** 'The Red Geraniums'. The first illustration Joy Hannington of *Homes and Gardens* commissioned from Sanders, was a stark 'kitchen sink' story about two old people. This was the second.



ABOVE: One of Sanders' concept paintings for '2001 A Space Odyssey'. The original was four feet square.
 ABOVE RIGHT: This was painted for the American market. The artist thinks it was for art director Bill Cadge at Redbook.
 RIGHT: One of the only two pieces of Sanders' '2001' concept art published before the film was released.
 CENTRE RIGHT: An early experiment in "split screen" illustration.
 FAR RIGHT: Illustration for Sweden's *Damernas World*.







THE SINGING RAIN

BY HONORIA TIRBUTT

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN SANDERS

FOR the lonely ones in cities winter is a strange and desolate time. Among the tall buildings and the many-eyed blocks of flats the dusk slips blue and shadowy. Lights bloom sudden and mysterious, exotic golden blossoms suspended in the sky, rain blows light and chill along the pavements. Men and women move quickly now, blurred into dream faces in the early twilight.

Francesca paused in front of a lighted store. Her own image looked back at her, vague and wavering, the face a misty blur, the long fair hair twisted up in a knot. It was past closing time; the streets were almost deserted. Scraps of paper whipped along the gutters; buses ground past full of home-going faces. Somewhere over the high buildings a clock struck the hour. She tucked the violin case securely under her arm and moved away again; the skirts of her tweed coat blew against her, a shadowy, indeterminate figure in the pale evening, another student going home.

In the side streets the houses, tall and dim, retained an air of past grandeur, still with their pillars and porticoes. Francesca's fingers were cold as she took the key from her pocket. She had left her gloves somewhere again—she scattered a little trail of belongings as she moved daily between her lodgings and the college, a library

FRANCESCA WAS YOUNG AND IN LOVE BUT SHE DREAMT OF MUSIC AND ROME

45

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ABOVE TOP: 'The Singing Rain'. The final illustration was produced using ink and gouache.

ABOVE: An early acrylic double spread for *Woman* magazine. Sanders tried whenever possible to make the locations in the compositions as important as the figures.

FACING PAGE: Another job for *Homes and Gardens*. It was always Sanders aim to avoid the "clinch cliché".

pursue careers in magazine illustration. Television stole away advertising revenue and page counts went down. There was a decline in the interest in fiction in women's magazines, and for some reason art directors and art editors started asking the illustrators to produce more highly finished work. They also increasingly turned to photography in place of illustration. However, the market for paperback book cover illustration remained buoyant, although more and more photographic cover illustrations were being used.

It was also a time of personal change for Sanders. He felt that the scumbled acrylic (bubble and streak) style of illustration had run its course, and that the work of many illustrators was taking on a similar look. Knowing that figurative illustration was his forte, he began working with traditional methods, beginning with watercolour, as taught to him by his earliest mentor, J. C. Middleton, who had been art master at the school he had attended as a boy.

At the beginning of the 1970s, there was still a common belief in the graphics industry that watercolour was "wishy-washy" and did not reproduce well. His response was "You just need to charge your brush with more colour and allow for the fact that it dries a couple of tones paler than it looks when wet." There followed a series of magazine illustrations and paperback book covers, fully showing his mastery of the technique. However, he still



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Robert McGinnis - "Warrior Queen" Book Cover, Berkley Pub, 1979 Art © Robert McGinnis

Graphic

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ABOVE: Double page spread for *Woman's Own*
FACING PAGE: Illustration for *Woman's Realm* circa 1970. Sanders got out his watercolours and embarked on further change. His agent said: "watercolour is too weak for reproduction." Ha!

did some illustrations using acrylics, including paintings of Cleopatra and Ophelia, which were commissioned as *Shakespeare for Schools* posters, published by *The Sunday Times*. In the early seventies, David Larkin, then art editor of Pan Books, asked Sanders if he would like to re-jacket their series of Steinbeck books. They both agreed that the medium of watercolour was too "English" for the subject matter, so it was agreed that he would work in acrylic using more solid colour. He thought that there were only six books, but was pleased to learn that there were in fact twenty-six.

At the end of the seventies, Sanders started producing artwork to be reproduced as postage stamps. The first Royal Mail set *Police* was begun in 1978 and published in 1979. The Royal Mail's commissioning art director Stuart Rose had seen Sanders' watercolour work in several magazines, and asked to see his portfolio. At the first meeting Sanders was surprised to learn that he was expected to work only four times larger than a printed stamp. Most of his work was large in scale, made to



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reduce to page or double page spread magazine format. However, he took up the challenge, soon learning that good composition works at any size, but inevitably, at that small size, the artwork becomes tighter.

Having spent several weeks researching with the police on streets, motorways and river patrols, so he could produce a series of working drawings, he nearly lost the commission at the presentation stage by declining the Metropolitan Police's request to replace the mounted policewoman with a man. His small show of feminist solidarity might well have altered his career prospects, for in those days there was always a three-way competition for each set of British stamps. However, the art director's assistant, Barry Robinson, smoothed ruffled feathers; steered the work through the large stamp selection committee, and the set was chosen. Their working friendship lasted over the years until Robinson retired.

For his second set featuring *The Fishing Industry* in 1981, he toured the coast of Britain where he discovered

an industry in decline, but met many entertaining characters, particularly in the north west of Scotland.

His third set illustrating *Youth Movements*, made in 1982, was the first time he designed four stamps that worked well as a set. His fourth set for the British Council which he produced in 1984, was designed by the Newell and Sorrel Design Group, with him executing the final artwork.

In 1985, he went from the miniature, to making a watercolour of HM Queen's presentation of new standards to the Royal Tank Regiment then stationed in West Germany, which measured six by four feet. In the same year he prepared in small scale *The Royal Air Force* stamps, which were published in 1986.

1987 saw the publication of a set for Guernsey Post Office featuring Guernsey born Sir Edmund Andros, who later became Governor of Virginia, Boston, and New Amsterdam—before it was renamed New York.

Having made first day cover cachets to all of his Royal Mail stamps for Uncover in the USA, the corporation



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FACING PAGE: The cover art to 'Of Mice and Men', one of twenty six acrylic artworks that Sanders created for Pan Books series of John Steinbeck books. Art directed by David Larkin.

ABOVE: Woman's Own. Peter Lawrence was a very trusting young art editor who let Sanders go straight to finished artwork. Sanders thought he had pushed his luck by drawing back views of the girls, but it got it past the editor.



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ABOVE TOP: Opening spread for a *Woman's Own* serial.
ABOVE: 'Taxis of the Marne'. General Gallieni requisitioned the Renault taxis of Paris to take troops to the front in 1914. From 'Man and the Automobile' published in France as *L'Homme et L'Automobile*.

went on to commission him in 1988, to work on a fifty-year anniversary project *The History of World War 2 in Postage Stamps*, which was a massive undertaking, spread over five years, and which involved eight other artists. Of the one hundred issues, Sanders executed thirty-nine sets, which finally totaled eighty-two stamps. Each artwork was designed to include not only the stamp format, but the square shape of a 1st day cover cachet for each stamp. This complicated the design, as some stamps were printed in pairs or fours. Later the artwork was exhibited at The Imperial War Museum Cambridge.

During 1997 and 1998 he designed a further twenty-six stamps, and thirty-two coins for the Marshall Islands commissioned by Unicom on the subject of legendary fighting ships. Eight coins were minted as a separate set entitled *Legendary Fighting Ships of the US Navy*.

In 2000, he designed seven stamps and first day covers which honoured Sir Winston Churchill, and in 2004, a further eight stamps; a book of stamps, and a 1st day cover commemorating the end of World War 2 for the Isle of Man Post Office. In 2005, The Marshall Islands also re-issued *Historic Fighting Ships*, and two sets from the *The History of World War 2 in Postage Stamps* series.

Sanders has exhibited widely in mixed exhibitions, and



has had one man shows at The Imperial War Museum, York Castle Museum, The Association of Illustrators' Gallery, National Trust Gallery at Trelissic in Cornwall, and The Sir Rowland Hill Museum.

He has now been a professional artist for five decades, during which time he has worked in every area of the illustrative arts, ranging through book publishing, magazines, advertising, government agencies, film, television, and art education. He is one of the founders of the British Association of Illustrators.

In partnership with his wife, the illustrator Lizzie Sanders, who is also a paper engineer, he has produced many 3D paper works including *An Edwardian Doll's House*, and an accurately detailed paper model of Stonehenge, the prehistoric monument located in Wiltshire. He also executed the artwork for a large-scale pop-up model, and other illustrations of the ship, for a recent book about the Titanic.

During World War Two, together with thousands of other children living in London, who were evacuated to the countryside to protect them from Hitler's bombing campaign, he was sent to Saffron Walden, a charming market town in north Essex, where he and Lizzie now



ABOVE TOP: 'Rolls Royce Silver Ghost'. Sanders's work on this commission involved a considerable amount of research which certainly shows in these examples.
ABOVE: 'The Auburn'.
 All of the illustrations for 'Man and the Automobile' were painted in acrylics.

Text continues on page 63

RIGHT: Sanders re-jacketed several C. S. Forester books for David Larkin at Pan. This was for 'Hornblower in the West Indies'.

FACING PAGE TOP: Article on duelling for *Men Only*. Sanders visited London's Hampstead Heath at dawn for the scene described by the author. As the mist cleared he saw a hawk stoop and take a pigeon.

BELOW: Packaging for Coty Products. 12 different packs were created from this artwork.

BELOW RIGHT: 'The Luck of Ginger Coffey'. Cover for a Brian Moore novel, published by Paladin.

BELOW FACING PAGE: One of more than thirty illustrations he made for James Herriot stories for various clients.

BELOW FACING PAGE RIGHT: 'The Emperor of Ice Cream', another of Sanders' book jackets for Paladin's Brian Moore novels.





A selection of Brian Sanders' stamps and coins for the 'Legendary Fighting Ships' series. First issued 1998 by the Marshall Islands and re-issued 2005 for the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. 35 full colour works were designed for use as stamps, first day covers and coins.

RIGHT: From the top: Bonhomme Richard. Brass coin. Ming Treasure Ship. Silver coin. USS Missouri. Silver coin.

FAR RIGHT: Clockwise: Trireme Romano. A highly maneuverable warship, with up to three banks of oars and a heavy bronze ram at the prow. Viking Longship. The first shield shows the cap badge of Sanders' old school St Olave's, named for King Olaf Haraldson of Norway who destroyed the Roman London Bridge by tying his ships to its supports and rowing downstream. USS Olympia, the Flagship of Admiral Dewey who in 1898 engaged and destroyed the Spanish Fleet off Manila Bay. USS Louisville final artwork. In 1991 the Louisville made the first ever submerged cruise missile strike in operation Desert Storm.







ABOVE: The sinking of the Bismark, art for one of two stamp pairs from 'The History of World War 2 in Postage Stamps.

RIGHT: More artwork from the World War 2 series of stamps which was commissioned in 1988 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the war.

CLOCKWISE: 'The Fall of Singapore'. Artwork for stamp and 1st day cover 'First Combat of the Flying Tigers'.

'The Raid on St Nazaire U-Boat Pens'. HMS Cambletown rammed the lock gates with 3 tons of explosives in her prow, which exploded the following day disabling the harbour for the rest of the war.

Battle of El Alamein. Artwork for stamp and 1st day cover featuring General Montgomery 8th Army, and Field Marshal Rommel Afrika Corps.

FACING PAGE: The cover of the first of a biographical graphic trilogy covering the first twenty years of Sanders' life.



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EVACUEE

A WARTIME CHILDHOOD



BRIAN SANDERS

Text continued from page 57

live in a village close by.

His most recently published book, *Evacuee: A Wartime Childhood*, the first in a biographical trilogy, which quotes him as saying; "I always wanted to be an artist and I'm still trying". It is a brilliantly written and illustrated book, evoking the atmosphere of wartime Britain. I was also a child at the time, but living in a different part of Essex, and his book brought back so many memories of a strange and threatening time, but also a time of joy and fascination. The adult view at the time was that the American GIs were "Overpaid, over-sexed and over here", and indeed many of them were a source of interest to many of the young British females at the time. They were definitely of interest to many of us young boys with their stories of life in America, and in the US forces; their chewing gum and chocolate were pretty good as well!

Sanders is now half way through producing the second part of the trilogy, and at seventy-five years-of-age he still works as hard as ever. ●

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