



## Slade School – 1969 to 73 Bro. Carolyn Trant

I went to the Slade straight from school after a brilliant art education under Peggy Angus at NLCS. The first-year intake was 4 young women and 5 young men, and we were given a room of our own under the tutelage (as such) of Patrick George, a nice but not very forthcoming man. There was also a small intake of newcomers who had done a foundation year elsewhere who had to fight for space to work in the corridors or odd corners like everyone else, including the post-grad painting students, and they became the second year; the Slade was tiny back then.

Sculptors, all post-grads I think, worked in the basement; and there was a tantalising door to the world of stage design, not to be crossed by the profane, opposite the entrance hall; and for printmaking, you went back out into the quad, up lots of stairs and into an old physics department – more of this anon. But I was a 'painter' rather than just an artist as I would have preferred, and no cross departmentalising was encouraged.

As I was writing this, I found by chance Patrick George's 2016 obituary I had saved, and it calls him one of the art world's best kept secrets, much admired by Frank Auerbach - 'his admirers appreciate the formal toughness, unusual structures and sensitive colours...' but he eschewed self-promotion, 'a man of considered opinions and a dry sense of humour. I just about caught on to this but there was not much to and fro of discussion and I was very surprised when, at a later exhibition of mine he told me ...' I think this is my feeling about landscape too', and I wished we had both

been able to open up back in 1969. He had been converted to an art career by William Coldstream and was similar Euston Road school dot-to-dotter (hence my surprise at his liking my work – but some of my egg tempera landscapes were made *en plein air* and someone once called me an 'elongated pointilliste' at one point). He in turn had taught Euan Eglow and they became close friends, so I soon began to realise how incestuous the school was – confirmed yet again when I re-read the obituary to find that after two failed marriages he ended up living with another Slade painter who was a postgraduate while I was there; it was all rather cosy, the old garde closing ranks as other newer brooms began to move in.

It was old fashioned by any standards in a charming sort of way – there was an avuncular beadle in maroon uniform – Les I think was his name – on the entrance door, but little other security, and the ladies loo, vaguely reminiscent of the old ones at the RA, had a motherly sit-in lady called Sally who dispensed safety pins and helpful advice and consolation. There were needless to say no female tutors (outside the stage design department) that I can think of except a young Tess Jaray – she seemed very nice but I never had reason to really speak to her much. Ian Tregarthen Jenkins was the school secretary and also kindly and approachable and good at arranging drinks parties that girls particularly were invited to; I don't think many of the blokes would have wanted to go but some of us girls tried to make use of the opportunities as all part of the experience. It still wasn't a great time to be a woman student – the older era of tutors got me into good mixed exhibitions straight away and I remember exhibiting with Claude Rogers, but we were also supposed to look decorative and do the annual strawberry tea, and Coldstream use to mutter about us leaving and having babies in a kindly sort of way – but then he also liked to say that all his students would just become lavatory attendants – so no high-powered ambition encouraged then, we were all just very laid back in retrospect.....

More contemporary tutors included a sporadic visiting tutor in the first year David Troostwyk – I just found his 2009 obituary too and it brought back sudden memories, now expanded by this new information. Students today can instantly look up everything about someone on Wikipedia or on the net generally – back in 1969 tutors turned up with no accompanying biography or background, especially as Patrick George was as taciturn as his guests. David was minimalist in everything – his obituary reports that his answer-phone message was “*Hello. Communicate. Goodbye.*” He presented a project title to be pursued and being a perceptive student, I could see what he was probably wanting – and that it was certainly not a figurative piece of work – so I made a series of white paper cubes with collaged images inset on some of the facets. I enjoyed doing it. (Maybe it related to the secret Book Artist in me that had still not found a way of emerging...) He could see what I normally did in my studio corner and he was pleased I had produced something very different – but he made the comment which still seems strange after all these years -'*who would have thought that you could do something like this...!*'

I think my secret unspoken response was – well of course I can do all sorts of things just as it is your part to enthuse me with why one way is more exciting than another and suggest further

avenues to explore. Should I take his comment as an insult or compliment? Should he also ask me why I was working with pigment and eggs? Was that feeling arrogance on my part or just a craving for further discussions – perhaps Peggy Angus had just spoilt me forever with her enthusiasms and contradictions which spurred endless debate, but above all with the feeling that art was life and FUN – and also about communicating....

My passion for egg tempera painting was for the glory of pure unadulterated colour – you knew what you were getting, unlike oil paint tubes with additives and fillers where pigments were expensive; and also for its non-realistic and almost ethereal layers of possibilities - John Berger was after all currently writing about how oil-painting, much taken up by the Dutch, was developed to depict the gleaming reality of their possessions. I loved the philosophical idea of painting the earth with earth, and the ecological 'organic-ness' of using piles of coloured earths and ochres, and an egg – I eschewed most of the more chemical pigments although also fascinated by their own alchemical possibilities and associations.... I was a natural eco warrior before it was fashionable.

Pushing my memory further I suspect there was a group expedition Troostwyk suggested to another part of London but I can't remember to where, or why I didn't go – perhaps he opened up more then; I can't understand or condone why I didn't go now, but the Slade seemed to paralyse me sometimes. I couldn't engage with these more taciturn tutors who disappeared as silently as they came. I was thrown back to enjoying the company of the more old-fashioned ones who were actually quite happy to talk about anything in a very open and easy way and more likely to understand where I was coming from. How arrogant I was; but I didn't feel so defensive with them and I did feel it important to protect a particular and fragile germ of creativity in me for good or ill – it had survived Peggy's very different practical approach but it needed more time to be explored and grow.

Mostly we just worked on our own projects confined in our first-year room – but one interesting suggestion by Patrick George was that each of our small band should take a life drawing class for the others, based on ideas they were interested in. I can't remember what I suggested but I remember Jonathon Miles trying to make us develop symbols for how the model might be in motion which I found a fascinating idea and enjoyed doing. We were of course all terribly young, 9 of us straight from school and very different backgrounds, taking time to get know each other, and mostly getting on well but also very buttoned up, feeling our way cautiously. I should have stuck out the 4 years and then embraced a postgrad course elsewhere perhaps, but at 18 that seemed a life sentence; maybe I was prescient that within a decade I was going to be seriously ill, marking a watershed in my life, and that I needed to get on with living outside education.

My first personal tutor was John Aldridge – no escaping my Angus/Ravilious background for me: (and later when I moved to Lewes I lodged with Ravilious's son John.) Little direct tuition went on under P George apart from the visiting tutors and small projects, and a tiny bit of life drawing in our first-year studio (where my particular style of life drawing, or lack of one, caused much

consternation – I never had much heart for it). The Slade was home of dot-to-dot drawing and painting under William Coldstream – our benign professor – and Euan Uglow ( less benign), who gave me my sole piece of really practical tuition, and sent me out to Maples nearby to buy a saucepan and then demonstrated sizing a canvas with rabbit-skin glue and how to then prime it for oil painting.

I much preferred egg tempera to oils because I had a passion for medieval painting and all its philosophy, (they seemed to me excitingly on the cusp of a new age just as we were), and the making of a painting with organic materials, buying pure pigments from Cornellisons – then in a wonderful old shop in Long Acre with men in brown coats like grocers, who doled out the colours from little wooden drawers into brown paper envelopes.....small and heavy per ounce for lead and mercury based pigments still then available, real Naples yellow – beautiful - and larger bags for the earth colours that I mostly used – terre vert, yellow ochre and burnt and raw umber, plus a bit of Antwerp Blue.

This caused more consternation; passing tutors sighed and said 'one day I would paint with PROPER paint' - to my great annoyance and I gave as good as I got. To me they seemed trapped in the post-renaissance western oil-painting tradition whereas I had been brought up on Peggy's more global approach. One reason I now like being a member of the AWG is being thought of as a *Maker*. Someone eventually showed me how to make gesso and there was an arcane group of us across the year-groups who went to Mr Lucas's lectures: he was chief restorer at the National Gallery and, these lectures being just after lunch weekly, always totally inebriated and certainly not used to anyone being interested in tempera. But he did take us backstage at the NG where it was totally shocking to see all the great masters stripped down to almost bare canvas – it was the period when all the restorers were chemists.

One of my sons went to the RCA to study painting in the 90's and I was so delighted with the range of disciplines and workshops open to him that I then looked back on my own experience with sadness and regret; what I would have given to be given free range to more techniques and machinery – I had to exploit relationships with male students to inveigle myself into use of the bandsaw in the sculpture department, or worse still ask them to make my complex sculptural wooden frames for me. I liked sculpting my gesso surfaces as part of the picture, experimenting with home-made wax varnishes (nearly setting the etching department on fire on one occasion) and making 3D objects and small installations.

I felt trapped between doing life drawing with Uglow, one eye closed and looking at the model through a hand-held screen with string squares and making little crosses on my piece of paper, or watching Stuart Brisley being sick off scaffolding in the infamous 'black room'; performance art was all the rage, but painting in egg tempera was considered just too weird...

And there seemed no middle ground.

Where did I belong? Fortunately my second tutor was my saviour. At the end of 1970 most of the

really old guard of tutors left *en masse*, due to age rather than ideology I think – a shame as they had all been so sympathetic, Morris Feild – who had been Patrick George's art master at school, Sam Carter... and dear Lynton Lamb who was delighted to find I wanted to learn woodcutting and engraving and had been waiting for years for someone like me but was tragically now losing his sight. He gave me his large leather wood engraving cushion which I still treasure, and also the nicest letter I have ever received after my final year show. He was friend of the great Jan Tischold and we discussed lettering. He also got me a job teaching at Heatherley's private art school, then still in Pimlico, while still a student – a useful source of extra revenue; mostly wood engraving, to cover for Zelma Blakely who was always away boating at Pin Mill and filling in teaching debby girls drawing and painting.

John Aldridge also retired at the end of my first year and my new tutor was Jeffrey Camp and we got on fine; his paintings were never straightforward rectangular shapes either. These were the days where you could spend a whole day with a tutor and we just used to wander around London looking at exhibitions whilst he pointed things out – just like his illustrated books *Draw* and *Paint* – and then go back to his house in Clapham and feed his pet toad and talk to his partner Letitia (Yhap) (still a very good friend).

He showed me UCL's hidden museums – the Egyptian Petrie collection, and Oriental Ceramics in Gordon Square... I had already discovered the Courtauld collection in its original building. This was my favourite way of learning, begun when I used my free school train pass (those were the days) and skived off lessons at NLCS to visit commercial galleries in Cork Street and talk to the dealers and see extraordinary works and enjoy their expertise. Jeffrey was perfectly sympathetic to tempera or whatever worked for me and his interests also ranged, like Peggy's, widely over centuries and continents; he had a gentle laconic way of speaking but a sharp eye for detail.

Philip Sutton was never my tutor but had a good chat-up line – 'you look like one of my drawings, come and model for me in Streatham' which I survived unscathed – he was always full of fun and energy, like his work which seemed to approximate to a 'middle ground.' Strangely I ended up teaching his Uncle ? Sydney/Stanley? Years later when doing a summer job teaching art to adults in London – I was asked if I minded having a 90 year old in my class... he too was amazing and full of energy and fun and I enjoyed driving home afterwards and our conversations about the old London rag trade he had worked in most of his life.

Through Peggy I got to know Adrian Heath and his really nice wife Cleo – they lived in wonderful Charlotte Street with lots of Victor Pasmore paintings on the walls, as well as Adrian's, so that was all part of my education too at their supper parties; they also lent me their house on Barra when Peggy's was full of her grandchildren or other friends. I would spend months on Barra in the summer holidays making drawings which eventually became part of my first solo exhibition. At the Slade they were considered too 'Cecil B De Mille' : I used to think ...'please just go north and see what the sunsets are like dropping into the Atlantic' – and I should have said 'haven't you heard

and seen the work of one of my heroes Edvard Munch?' (woodcutter extraordinary) – but the Slade seemed to want to knock all the wildness out of me, I obviously exhibited the wrong sort of wildness, and they nearly succeeded. It took me years to really get back to working from my imagination again. I seemed to spend most of my time being extremely defensive which wasn't a good way to learn, but then nobody seemed to want to teach me much either...

We were supposed to attend a 3 hour lecture once a week with Courtauld students (6-9pm – ghastly) with German professors and all based on the classics and seeming very remote from how I (and probably many practising artists) thought about art, especially when brought up as I had been by Peggy's revolutionary approach and curriculum. These lectures were all names and dates and attributions, and there was a shocking occasion when Kenneth Clarke came to give us a slide show in some huge lecture hall at UCL and put slides of twentieth century painters in upside down and said 'it didn't matter as they were 'modern art' – I remember how we Slade-y's all bayed and howled at him....

By the second year I was living a couple of blocks behind the Slade which was really useful for all the extra lectures and events on offer (nothing much was ever compulsory). I particularly remember an amazing but baffling series of aesthetics lectures by Richard Wollheim, and a series of student organised discussion groups with RD Laing – then very provocative and invited by some radical UCL student group. The great thing about being part of UCL was that there were loads of things there on offer if you poked about a bit...

I had at first been living in a large house in Holloway, behind the prison and conveniently near to Peggy in Camden Studios– where I spent a lot of time printing wallpapers all night to earn enough to pay my rent. For various reasons I didn't get a proper maintenance grant as I had left home the minute I took my A levels - so I also relied on Peggy's mushroom omelettes and Cypriot sherry from Plender Street, Welsh rarebit from the UCL canteen for lunch (10 pence – old money) and sweepings of vegetables from Berwick Street market for supper.

John Aldridge used to arrange amazing parties for his tutees, hiring a coach (I am tempted to say charabanc) and bussing us all to Great Bardfield and his amazing garden where huge amounts exotic food was on trestle tables - to keep us safely out in the garden I suppose (much alcohol was also consumed and the house was exquisite) but that was soon over; the end of an era – his parties had been paradise, especially for the hungry.

In a flurry of 'in loco parentis' Coldstream disapproved of my flat when he found out all the other lodgers were men and by the end of my first year found me a tiny room in the infamous 'Slade Hostel', which was in the last two terrace houses at the Kings Cross end of Cartwright Gardens, with home to misfits of all types – supposedly 9 men on one side and 9 women on the other and a sculpture tutor nominally keeping an eye on us in the basement. During my time we knocked the whole wall down between the houses on the ground floor by the phone to save going out and round.

I was probably much safer with all my protective men in Holloway, but despite having a new room the size of a broom cupboard the hostel great fun, and only £2 a month. I used to try and grow herbs in a window box, and the double gas ring came with resident Slade Hostel mice who patrolled the gas pipes all night, noisily. When I left in 1973, having graduated to a bigger better room upstairs, it was finally abandoned by UCL as a den of iniquity and is now a Hotel like all the rest of the curve of the Crescent I think or been gobbled up as part of a proper hall of residence.

There were very good lectures on twentieth century art – and cubism particularly I remember – in the Bartlett School of Architecture next door to the Slade where Reyner Banham ruled and also gave talks, and there was another wonderful young radical lecturer whose name escapes me sadly... and of course we had free access to the films put on 3 times a week by the Film School – long successions of Italian films, French, Russian – I remember seeing the 7-8 hour new Russian *War and Peace* (Bondarchuk 1967) before even the English sur-titles were added and a Russian interpreter standing and talking us through it over 3 separate sessions - and the amazing films of Paradjanov *Colour of Pomegranates*, and *Shades of Our Forgotten Ancestors*. I could also spend all evening painting in my 'studio' space – aka corridor - until late and thrown out by the janitors, and not have far to go 'home' via the delightful Woburn Walk.

The other tutor I adopted whose ideas ranged extensively globally and temporally was Keith Critchlow, a regular visiting lecturer from the Architectural Association, and the architect of the Regents Park mosque, a mine of esoteric knowledge – sacred geometry, archaeology, early ecological information and how to make a geodesic dome in the middle of the quad *a la* Buckminster Fuller. He attracted a small coterie of the more hippily inclined of us, who meditated in a special designated college room ... I think some of my friends from that time are still in saffron robes and my artist son in Hackney learns Tai Chi from one of them quite co-incidentally. We were entranced by Keith's amazing superfast slide shows with his accompanying rapid delivery stream of extraordinary facts and cross connections were so inspiring and encouraging. I stayed in touch with him for years, our paths sometimes crossing at artistic or esoteric events. Sadly both Jeffrey and Keith died this Spring (2020) - Jeffrey well into his nineties.

At a different end of the spectrum but entirely complementary was John Berger, whose work I admired immensely – but his coterie seemed totally made up of very intense and tortured looking young men and it all looked rather pretentious, so I steered clear. I liked his art/political views and interpretation of medieval art which chimed with my own natural instincts – I had spent all my history A level special paper defending the medieval aesthetic and refusing to embrace the Renaissance as being necessarily a great thing in the way I was supposed to.

But here again admitting I had good A levels wasn't a particularly wise idea – I had been given a lot of stick about them at my interview for the Slade by both Patrick George and Bernard Cohen; it was a strange time and being 'stupid like a painter' was fashionable. But Bernard Cohen was always very supportive of my work once I was 'in' and once sent me off to show some of it to Angela Flowers, saying I must 'jump into a taxi'... I remember rather prosaically suggesting 'couldn't I just

go by bus' – normally I just walked to Oxford Street, or indeed anywhere, and my pictures were small; she did buy one and saved some others for a *Small is Beautiful* exhibition she was arranging I think but I can't remember whether it ever happened. (I still remember vividly the bright yellow duvet cover on the bed in the back of the gallery.) Looking back I am amazed Bernard liked my work – he was painting white dots onto white canvases at the time but I have met him again since at Artists Book Fairs and he has always been really nice.

I suppose that like all women I have always had a sort of imposter syndrome. I used to exhibit regularly at the Royal Academy shows and in their *Gallery Upstairs* and I remember that at one year's Summer Exhibition, where I always sold all my work, they rang me to say that all three pieces had been sold to the same man and did I mind; puzzled, I asked why I should mind and they hummed and ha-ed a bit and said – well he collects Outsider Art (I think it was Victor Musgrave but I am bad at names)... I said no I was delighted, why should I mind? Probably the wrong answer again.

We never had to do *any* written work to graduate, despite Coldstream being in the throes of writing his infamous report which ended up with everyone getting art degrees and so then having to do a certain amount of 'academic' input and needing, ironically, A levels to get into art college. I was in the intake that still only got a Slade Diploma but proud to say I never went to university or got a degree.

Some of Berger's coterie got thrown out - I think eventually for writing too much and not painting enough – quite a novel thought now when art students seem to be encouraged to do quite the opposite. I think John had mellowed a lot over the years when I met him again much later and was he was always interesting. Then I saw the fairly recent film about him and being interviewed with Tilda Swinton who was making a show of peeling interminable apples and an indescribable emotion flooded back and I remembered why I hadn't tried to get more involved with him at college.

Visiting tutors ranged from regular to occasional; there would be a list put up of who was around and when and you just had to sign up and say where you were working and you got a slot with them, anyone from Hockney to Auerbach, and they would come and look at your work with you. From year two I was working in a corridor where there was a wide bit for 3 of us to have tables, up on the top floor leading to the printmaking rooms, the old physics department. We were on constant display but enjoyed watching the traffic from silkscreen room – silkscreen becoming all the rage – to the more traditional litho and etching up our end of the corridor. Silkscreen smelled horrible and didn't look at all organic, and it was also very flat; as was a litho print but lithography was taught by the wonderful master printmaker Stanley Jones. Peter Schlesinger sashayed up and down frequently in his pale pink suit, over from California for a student year and one of the reasons David Hockney was a frequent visiting tutor.

The printmakers were terribly cosmopolitan and much more interesting than the painters down in

the 3 main studios where everyone was fighting for a space. The Slade was totally open for anyone to walk into in those days and (often foreign) degree students from UCL used to come in to see what we were all doing. Rumour had it that Barto – Bartholomeu Dos Santos – master etcher, and Portuguese, used to encourage them to stay on for a further art diploma, especially if he found that they would otherwise have to return to the country they came from and sometimes not very nice regimes. So there were interesting political and philosophical discussions often going on – just what I had hoped for from an art degree. (Barto also went round the bins rescuing abandoned work and had an amazing collection he bequeathed to the college when he retired! He offered to swap work with me when I left – a wonderful opportunity for me to get a lovely print- so maybe he collected work that way too... he put on a big exhibition of it all before he died many years later).

In the first year such lively discussions had been thin on the ground downstairs, despite it being only just after *les evenements* of 1968 at Hornsea Art School just up the road, *most* disappointing. I remember marching the streets shouting 'Margaret Thatcher milk snatcher' at one point, and the promising looking evening meetings with R D Laing over in the UCL buildings I attended, but mostly it was all rather tame. I think Joseph Beuys was probably actually giving his talks somewhere in London around this time but I never found them or anyone who had been to them.

One *disadvantage* of my nomadic existence was that I lost a lot of work which I was storing in a plan chest in the print room – including a lot of my old school work I had saved to continue working from – there being no room in my broom cupboard and I had well and truly left home. I think people would take a punt on stealing student work hoping we would become famous and that it would be worth something one day. There was also a strange posh young woman going around wanting to buy up complete editions from printmaking students, including me, for some undisclosed 'client'. Stanley Jones said we may as well go for it – the money was extremely handy! I wonder what happened to the sold work too. I really miss not being to re-see my school self-portrait drawing with real hair attached and earrings in the ears – but maybe it is better in retrospect, but you never work the same way again after art school and it would be fun to see what I had done in my adolescence.

I don't think anyone I was at the Slade with made it big time that I can think of – maybe Gary Wragg, Paul Martin, John Stezaker... And Chris leBrun, who became head of the RA, and Daphne Todd fronts up the Portrait Society I think... but nothing on YBA scale. Ana Maria Pacheco came as a postgrad just as I left – how I wish we had overlapped as she and her work are so wonderful and much underrated and I have really enjoyed meeting her since.

Apart from painting I started printmaking as no-one upstairs seemed to mind and I discovered Stanley Jones was the most wonderful teacher – it wasn't that I was particularly attracted to lithography at first but I just really wanted to work with *him*. I was really already a woodcutter - but no-one was particularly interested in teaching me after Lynton left and Jeffrey just told me to go to the V&A and look at their admittedly excellent display about Japanese woodcuts – with prints

and blocks and tools, and I just had to work it out for myself. There was some useful teak lying about to work, bits of cut up old physics lab desks for a start... and plenty of old seasoned wood in skips in those days. I already had a useful relationship with infamous TN Lawrence in Bleeding Heart yard for tools and Japanese paper since being editor of my school magazine which was good as he wouldn't let people set foot in his shop without a good pedigree... he was very grumpy with anyone he considered time-wasters and wouldn't let them in - you had to wait on the top step in the Dickensian yard and recite your credentials.

Stanley was brilliant at working with absolutely anyone and showing them how to do what they wanted to do – a real enabler, and I learnt so much from him that I could then translate into other printing techniques and work generally - good disciplines of organisation, careful looking, comparing, colour matching – he was the person I have stayed closest to; I ended up working with him briefly at the old Curwen Studios making lithographic prints of my tempera paintings for *Royal Academy Graphics*, which was set up by Stephen Reiss, who also showed my paintings in his *Upstairs Gallery* at the RA (before he went on to run the Aldburgh festival I think....)

At weekends I spent a lot of time back down at Furlongs with Peggy Angus where there was often something lively going on, (including Tim Hunkin in an asbestos suit sitting on top of the midsummer bonfire I remember) and it was good to get out of London and my broom cupboard and into the countryside. I was theoretically painting landscapes after all, and had won a David Murray landscape scholarship one summer, entered by the Slade, which gave me some welcome cash and the gift of some tutorial sessions with Olwyn Bowey from the RA – she came down to see me in Lewes and we have stayed friends ever since – she and Carel Weight bought one of my paintings. The only woman tutor since school in my career!

So it was a strange mixture of all being rather cosy but chaotic; there was no attempt to put up a professional looking degree show as students have done for the last 2-3 decades, back then nobody seemed to care or else made a point of deliberately disagreeing with the whole concept. I must have rubbed shoulders with an amazing collection of tutors without ever fully appreciating it at the time, they were never off-putting or put on any side. But it was also vaguely underwhelming and disappointing, and I certainly didn't feel I fitted in very well... but probably only the few who ended up continuing teaching dot-to-dot life painting there after graduation did.

After I left I was given a solo show for the following year by David Wolfers at the New Grafton Gallery and exhibited with him for several years afterwards but again never felt that such shows were really what my work was about – he would whisk it away and insist on professional frames! - in the same way that I was horrified to find myself exhibiting at the Royal Academy but I wasn't sure what to do to escape the net of supposed success. Being in London was wonderful but I soon retreated to the countryside, (and had babies!) whilst still painting daily until I became extremely physically ill in my twenties for some years, before re-emerging again to make what I had always

said I had wanted to do since a small child and was now called *Artists Books* – it's a bit like being ill, once what you are suffering from/way of working has a title everyone takes more notice and it is all more legitimate.

I often wonder whether it would have been better if I had not gone straight from school – but looking at my cross section of Slade friends I don't think it would have made any difference. It was just a strange in-between period for everyone and the Slade hadn't really sorted out its own new identity and just muddled along. I don't think I would have been particularly happy anywhere else, although I might have learnt more. But being laid back and just observing life in central London was a unique opportunity before life started to get more serious as the 70's moved on.