

October 26th

**For now we see through a glass, darkly;
but then face to face:**

now I know in part;
but then shall I know even as also I am known. I Corinthians 13:14

A picture to enjoy

The artist William Hogarth (1697-1764), died on **October 26th**.
The verse on his grave stone in Chiswick tells us that he was a painter

Whose pictur'd Morals charm the Mind
And through the Eye correct the Heart.

This is a poetic way of saying that he was a painter who liked to tell a story which points out a moral¹ in his paintings. He looked at the world around him and saw many things that were wrong with it. He saw people cheating, gambling, oppressing the poor or being hypocritical. He put these things into paintings in clever ways to alert people to things that needed to be put right around them. Sometimes he made a *series* of pictures to tell a story with a moral. One of his most famous series of paintings, for instance, tells the story of a weak young man who inherits his father's wealth and gradually wastes it all, ending in misery. This desire of Hogarth's to "correct the Heart" meant he had to paint and draw some very unhappy and immoral scenes. More seriously, he seems not to have realised that however much we point out what is wrong with the world, only the Lord Jesus Christ can change our hearts.

Hogarth also had a sense of humour and the picture on the next page, which he made to illustrate a pamphlet about perspective which a friend of his had written, will certainly make you laugh. The picture is still famous although the pamphlet has been long forgotten. It is called *A Satire on False Perspective* and it is full of deliberate mistakes. How many can you spot?

When an artist draws a picture he is representing solid shapes (things in three dimensions) on a flat piece of paper (two dimensions). He has to do this in such a way that we get the correct idea of their relative height, width, depth, and position. This is the meaning of perspective. In the picture on the next page Hogarth has deliberately got the perspective all wrong.

¹ A "moral" in a story is a warning about something we should not do or an encouragement to do something we ought to do.



Make a list of the artist's "mistakes" and then compare it with the one on the next page.

The man in the foreground's fishing rod's line passes behind that of the man behind him.
 The sign is moored to two buildings, one in front of the other, with beams that show no difference in depth.
 The sign is overlapped by two distant trees.
 The man climbing the hill is lighting his pipe with the candle of the woman leaning out of the upper story window.
 The crow perched on the tree is massive in comparison to it.
 The church appears to front onto the river. Both ends of the church are viewable at the same time.
 The left horizon on the water declines steeply.
 The man in the boat under the bridge fires at the swan on the other side, which is impossible as he is aiming straight at the bridge.
 The right-hand end of the arch above the boat meets the water further from the viewer than does the left-hand end.
 The two-story building, though viewed from below, shows the top of the roof. As does the church tower in the distance.
 The barrel closest to the foreground fisherman reveals both its top and bottom simultaneously.
 The barrel on its is on the step at the front but below it at the back.
 The tiles the foreground fisherman stands on seem to fall away, leaving him standing in the air.
 A tree is growing out of the top of the bridge.
 The planks that form the wall of the building on the right change angle halfway down the wall.
 The line of trees in the distance obscure the sign which is nearby.
 The trees in the line get smaller as they get nearer instead of larger.
 The sheep on the left-hand side increase in size as they get further away instead of decreasing.
 The swan behind the bridge is larger than the men manning the boat.
 The left-most barrel appears to be on lower ground than the other two, when they should be on level ground.
 The bottom swan is only slightly smaller than the cow.
 The man with the pipe is taller than the trees.
 The tops and bottoms of the windows on the second building do not appear parallel.
 The horses and waggon appear to be crossing on the parapet² of the bridge not on the bridge itself.

An experiment with perspective



The ideal toy to use for this experiment is a set of Russian Matryoshka or Babushka dolls. If you do not have a set, don't worry, you can do the experiment with stacks of Lego or other bricks. However, the dolls are usually so well proportioned that the effect is almost eerie!

You will need quite a long space for the experiment so unless you have an exceptionally long hallway at home you will probably have to do the experiment outside on a garden path or similar area. If you have to do the experiment indoors in a smaller space you may have room to get something of the effect by using just two or three dolls, not the whole set.

Stand the largest doll you are using on the ground at one end of your path or hall. Now take the next doll and experiment with placing her in front of the first doll. Move the second doll towards you and away from you along the path or hallway until when you lie down with your head on the ground (closing one eye helps too) the head of the larger doll *just* disappears behind the smaller one. Now repeat the process with the next doll, being sure to keep all three dolls in a completely straight line. Repeat with the next doll until you have used all your dolls or run out of space. If you are using a smaller space and cannot use all the dolls, start with the middle doll.

² The wall along the edge of the bridge that prevents users falling off the sides into the river.

Now move your head very slightly so that you can just see all the dolls at once. They will appear to be the same size!

If you have no Russian dolls, make a set of five little Lego “towers” each one brick taller than the last to do the experiment.

Drawing in perspective³

Over the years artists have developed many different types of aids to help them get the correct perspective. Albrecht Durer (1471-1528) (see 6th April's lesson) spent much time learning about perspective. He travelled to Italy to study the subject. When he returned he wrote a *Painter's Manual* which was subtitled: *A Manual of Measurement of Lines, Areas, and Solids by means of Compass and Ruler*. He describes and illustrates various devices that were used in his day by artists to help them represent perspective accurately. One of these was a square wooden frame. The open space inside the frame was divided up into squares using vertical and horizontal threads, forming a grid of squares. The artist placed the device between him and the scene he wanted to draw. The artist needed to ensure that he looked at the grid from exactly the same position all the time so he used an adjustable wooded post with an eye-hole at the top through which he could look. He placed this in front of himself and positioned it until he could see the subject as he wanted it in the grid. He drew on a piece of paper marked out in squares which exactly corresponded with the grid of squares in his wooden frame. Now he could copy what he saw in each square as he looked through his eye-hole onto a piece of paper in front of him. This was just like the kind of copying using squares that you did in the lessons on 27th May, 3rd June and 7th July. The only difference was that instead of copying from another picture, the artist was copying from “life”.

You can use a window in your home to copy Durer's method of drawing in perspective. The ideal window would be one that looks out onto a street with buildings. Tear off a sheet of cling-film and smooth it onto the window. The cling-film does not have to cover all the window. Use a spirit-based (permanent) marker pen and a ruler to mark a grid on the cling-film that will give you squares with sides about 4cm. I made a grid of about 5x7 squares on my kitchen window. You need to close one eye for this exercise. If you find this difficult you will have to rig yourself up with some sort of eye patch. You also need to draw on the cling film without moving your head so fix up something such as the back of a chair on which you can rest your chin while drawing on the cling film. Now position yourself and draw round the outlines of the buildings, trees, cars etc. with the marker pen. Now you can carefully peel your cling film away from the window and lay it down on a sheet of white paper. If you now draw a similar grid very lightly on another piece of paper you can copy your picture just as you did in the earlier lessons. Rub out the grid lines when you have finished. You can colour and shade your picture, if you wish, referring to what you see through your window.

3 Idea from Edwards, Betty, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (Glasgow, 1979)