

# SIR FRANK BRANGWYN

CAPTAIN WINTERBOTTOM  
AND THE BILLIARD ROOM OF  
~ HORTON HOUSE ~

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## ROOM GUIDE

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GALLERY COPY - PLEASE RETURN

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# THE ARTIST AND THE MURALS

Painter, engraver, lithographer, poster illustrator, interior designer; a maker of furniture, carpets, ceramics, stained glass and glassware, Sir Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956) was a 20th century version of a Renaissance artist. Born in Bruges, his parents, who were of Anglo-Welsh extraction, moved the family back to the United Kingdom in 1874. Brangwyn's artistic talent was fostered at home, by his designer father and more finely tuned through working in the workshops and studios of Heygate Mackmurdo and William Morris. He was only 18 years old when he had his first painting accepted for the Royal Academy's summer exhibition.

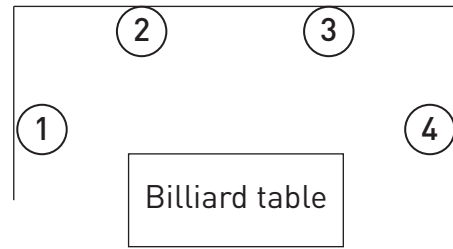
An exceptionally versatile and prodigious artist, it is probably as a mural painter that Brangwyn is most highly regarded and popularly known. He undertook mural commissions for a good number of expositions, private and civic buildings in the UK and America. Along with Diego Rivera and José Maria Sert, he was invited by John D Rockefeller Jnr. to decorate the concourse of the 70 storey high RCA Building [Radio Corporation of

America, now called the 'GE Building'], one of the most famous 1930s skyscrapers in New York. The Swansea Hall in Wales, is home to the artist's British Empire Panels of 1924, painted to commemorate the First World War and designed by the artist as a 'decorative painting representing various Dominions and parts of the British Empire.'

In 1905 Brangwyn was selected as the artist to design the British Rooms at the Venice Biennale. His approach was to fill the British pavilion with friezes, painted in a style, which has been described as "halfway between a kind of historicist baroque and a muscular Art Nouveau". His installation included seating and fittings, which he also designed, creating an aesthetic installation which won a Gold Medal for the best room for the "Sala Inglese". This success led to the artist being invited to paint further works, four panels, for the next Biennale in 1907.

Discussion has arisen among Brangwyn experts about the relationship between the panels from Horton House and some of the 1907 works created for Venice, largely because they depict lively Venetian scenes. Art Historian Dr Libby Horner, has concluded however, that while one Horton House panel – *Quayside Porters* may have been the 1907 Biennale panel, *Venetian Commerce*, this is not definitive, and that the remainder of the panels may have utilised compositional elements of previous sketches but are not the same works.

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*The murals & billiard table:*

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1. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Vineyard Workers Resting** 1916

oil on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Gifted 1951 by the Sargood Trust

2. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Quayside Porters , Venice** or  
**Quayside Porters: Rialto-like bridge in background**

Circa 1907

oil on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Gifted 1951 by the Sargood Trust

3. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Serenaders in a Vineyard**

or **Venetian Serenaders** 1916-1917

oil on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Gifted 1951 by the Sargood Trust

4. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Unloading the Catch** or

**Unloading the catch: Fish porters with baskets of fish**

1916-1917

oil on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Gifted 1951 by the Sargood Trust

ALCOCK & CO. LTD [Late 19th – early 20th Century

New Zealand, Australian, England]

**Billiard table and snooker balls**

mahogany, slate, woollen felt

On loan from Plato Café, Birch Street, Dunedin

# THE ORIGINAL BILLIARD ROOM

The six panels in New Zealand, four in Dunedin and two at Te Papa in Wellington, do not represent the entire Horton House frieze.

The murals were painted in oil on canvas and, when completed, were installed above the Jacobean style panelling. The fishing panel, was apparently the last to be completed and was placed above the entrance on one of the shorter walls. The opposite wall depicted 'men in a tavern, women with washing', representing 'scenes from Venetian life'. One of the long walls showed a canal, porters and Rialto style bridge, the other, men and women drinking and listening to music.

The remainder of the room was furnished with four built-in raised oak seats placed between four glazed book-shelves, with a fireplace created from pieces of old carved Italian walnut, carved with Cherub's heads and fruit and flower drops, in heavy relief.

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The furniture in this gallery, which is all from the Gallery's collection, has been chosen to reference the dark wooden Jacobean style panelling of the original billiard room at Horton House and its associated fittings.

[Photographs Courtesy of Fine Art Society,  
London and Dr Libby Horner]



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# FRANK BRANGWYN'S OTHER WORKS

The works of art displayed in this exhibition come from the collection of Mrs Susie Hanan Jones and Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

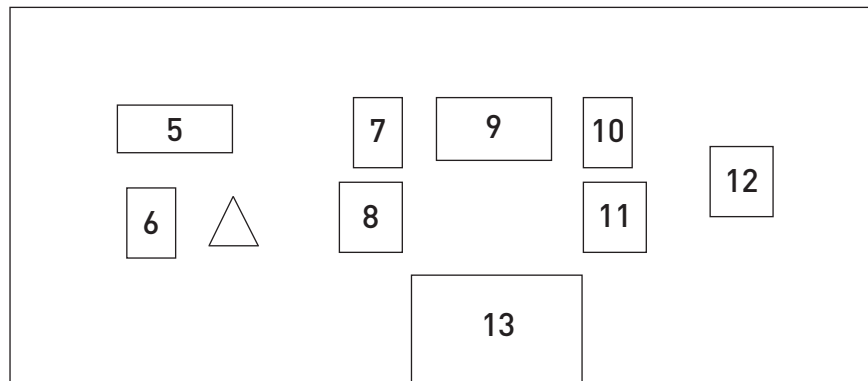
The Gallery owns four works on paper and one other oil painting by the artist. The first Brangwyn acquired for the collection was *The Sawyers* which was bought in 1932 using money bequeathed for acquisitions by a Dunedin accountant Peter Smeaton. The capital sum the Gallery received in 1919 was £10,000 equivalent today to about a million dollars. The interest generated from this capital, enabled the Gallery to buy some its most important pictures, until the bequest was overtaken by inflation in the late 1960s.

The most recent Brangwyn purchased by the Gallery is *Untitled Study of a Head*, a design for a portion of the mosaic decoration of the Apse of St Aodan's church in Leeds, which was bought in 1981.

The selection of works on paper from Mrs Hanan Jones collection, mostly came directly from the artist to her father Mark Hanan, and she inherited them from him. The mounts for some of these pictures, were hand painted by the owner when she was a child, and these and many of the frames, have been retained for this exhibition as a reference to the history of the domestic context and the personal associations they recall.

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*On the right wall leading to the grey gallery:*



5. ALCOCK & CO. LTD [Late 19th – early 20th Century  
New Zealand, Australia, England]

**Score board**

oak?

On loan from the Commerce Club, Bond Street, Dunedin

6. Letter by Frank Brangwyn

7. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Untitled Study of Male Head for portion of mosaic  
decoration of the Apse, St Aodan's Church, Leeds**

pencil on paper

Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 1981  
with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

8. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Man Resting**

lithographic reproduction

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland,  
previously collection of Mark Hanan.

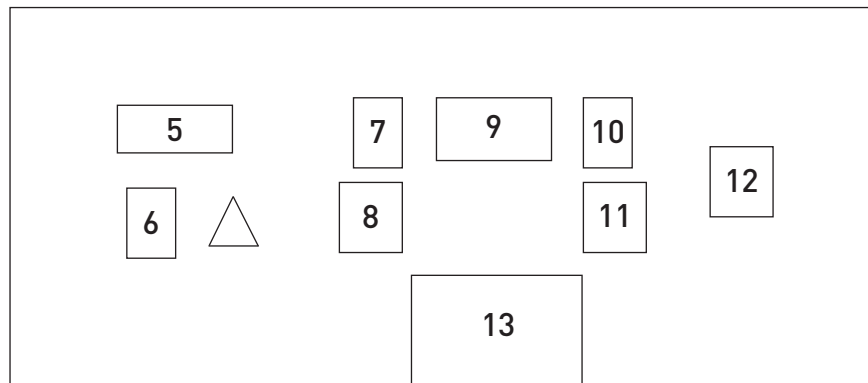
9. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**The Feast of Lazarus**

etching

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland,  
previously collection of Mark Hanan.

*On the right wall leading to the grey gallery:*



10. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Sketch for Selfridges Dome**

chalk drawing

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland,  
previously collection of Mark Hanan.

11. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Death of St Aidan**

lithographic reproduction

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland,  
previously collection of Mark Hanan.

12. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Old Woman, Bruges**

etching

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.  
Gifted 1939 by Mr H Madeno.

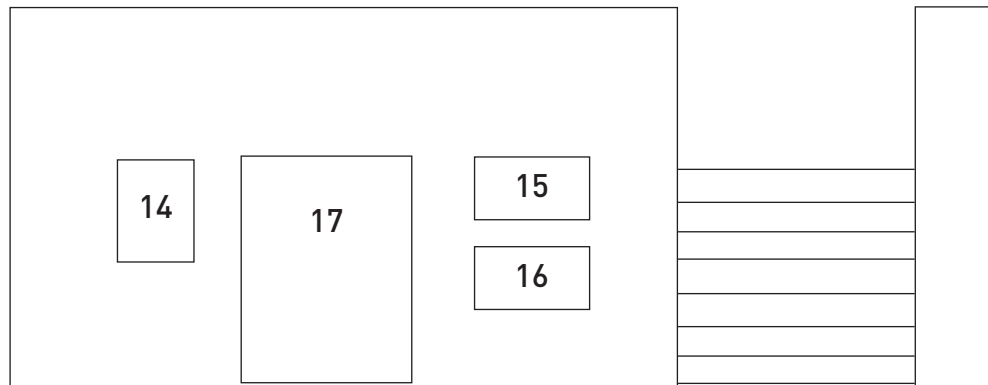
13. MAKER UNKNOWN [17th Century British]

**Settle**

oak

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery

*On the left wall beside the stairs:*



14. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Figure with Adze**

drawing on paper

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland,  
previously collection of Mark Hanan.

15. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Lead Worker**

lithographic reproduction

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland,  
previously collection of Mark Hanan.

16. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Men Dancing**

lithographic reproduction

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland,  
previously collection of Mark Hanan.

*see next page for item number 17*



17. MAKER UNKNOWN [17th Century British]

**Large cupboard (Enclosed cupboard or press) c 1625**

Oak with wooden inlay

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Gifted 1955 by Miss Eleanor Joachim.

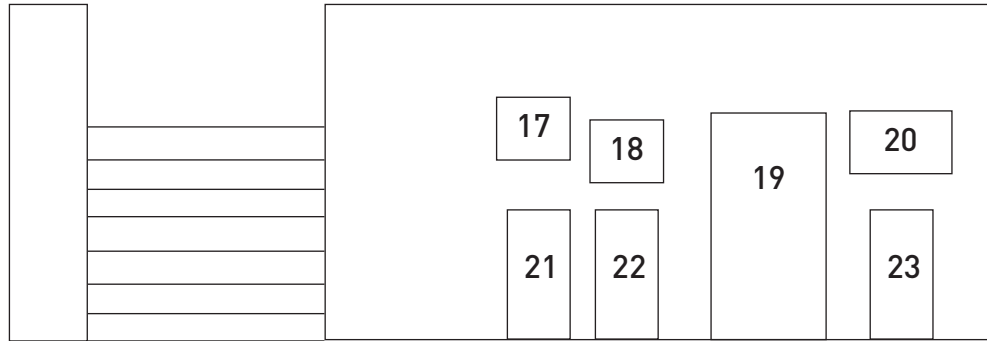
The intense decoration and dark-stained oak of this hand-crafted cupboard would have complemented the Arts & Crafts aesthetic of the billiard room.

The cupboard is carved with many emblems, such as the crown and thistle, symbolic of King James, the son of Mary Queen of Scots and the arrogant but dashing Lord Darnley (Henry Stuart.) James who was King James VI of Scotland, became King James I of England, the first king of both countries. The carved crown over the thistle signifies this accession. 'Jacobean' is the name given to this style and period of furniture.

Other designs, such as the acorn leaves allude to the oak from which the cupboard is made, but also make a connection to the ancient and earthly 'Green Man', a male fertility figure from Mediaeval times, whose image is also carved into this chest.

Easily recognisable by his grotesque face with foliage sprouting from his mouth, nose, eyes or ears, he was often carved into stone or wood and appeared in stained glass and illuminated manuscripts. Use of his image was revived in the 17th century and in the 19th century he was often incorporated into Victorian church buildings and revivalist furniture, such as cupboards similar to this early 17th century type.

*On the right wall beside the stairs:*



17. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Venetian Boatmen**

lithographic reproduction

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland,  
previously collection of Mark Hanan.

18. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**St Osyth on the Colne, loading sprats**

watercolour

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland,  
previously collection of Mark Hanan.

19. MAKER UNKNOWN [17th Century British]

**Oak hanging cupboard** c 1680? oak

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.  
Bequeathed 1970 by Miss Agnes Mary Mill of Wanaka.

20. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Old Kew Bridge** Etching

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.  
Gifted 1941 by Mrs May Gertrude Moore of Christchurch.

21&22. JOHN SHAW [d.1936 New Zealand]

**Jacobean Style Armchair** c 1900 oak

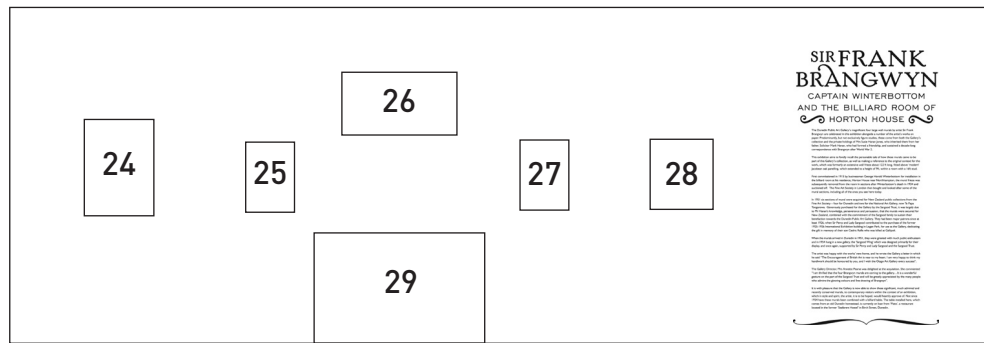
Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.  
Gifted 1954 by Ethel and Winifred Johnstone.

23. JOHN SHAW [d.1936 New Zealand]

**Jacobean Style Armchair** c 1900 oak

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.  
Bequeathed 1984 by Ethel Johnstone.

*On the left wall leading to the blue gallery:*



24. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Chioggia** 1934

oil on board

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 1935 from a special fund in memory of the late G M Thomson.

25. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**American Boatmen**

lithographic reproduction

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland, previously collection of Mark Hanan.

26. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**The Sawyers**

ink, wash and charcoal

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 1932 with funds from the Peter Smeaton bequest.

27. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Blacksmiths**

lithographic reproduction

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland, previously collection of Mark Hanan.

28. FRANK BRANGWYN [1867-1956 English]

**Portrait of Frank Brangwyn**

etching

Collection of Susie Hanan-Jones, Auckland, previously collection of Mark Hanan.

29. JOHN SHAW [d.1936 New Zealand]

**Jacobean Style Settee** c 1900

oak

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Gifted 1954 by Ethel and Winifred Johnstone.

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# THE PEOPLE

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It was through the agency and efforts of Solicitor Mark Hanan LLB that Dunedin was offered the Brangwyn murals. Hanan and Brangwyn developed a friendship through their interest in art. The correspondence between them began in 1947 following an introduction from Proctor Dawbarn, the Managing Director of The Fine Art Society, London. The relationship developed and continued until Brangwyn died in 1956.

Born in Invercargill in 1907, Hanan studied law at the University of Otago and initially practiced as part of Ramsey, Barrowclough and Haggitt. From 1931-1953 he practiced on his own account, then from 1953-1958 as Hanan Bell & Co followed by Hanan Bell and de Courcy, which he formed in 1958.

Active and able in his field, he lectured in Tort at the University and became the President of the Law Society. He also served as a member of the Otago Art Society from 1946 and was elected as the President for one year in 1950. Although not an artist himself, he had a passion for collecting and art contributed significantly to his enjoyment of life. He once wrote ... "Pictures have formed my escape from the daily round of worries and concerns over the last years and all of this I owe to Sir Frank, who with the kindness of his heart has treated me almost like a son." (Letter Mark Hanan to Mrs Peacock [Brangwyn's housekeeper], 2 November 1951)

The letters and the exchanges of friendship between Brangwyn and Hanan took place during the stressful period, following on from the aftermath of World War 2. Peoples' lives were disrupted and displaced; food was rationed in the UK well into the 1950s and New Zealand played a key role in producing and supplying food at this time. Hanan sent regular parcels of meat, rice, cheese, chocolate, tea and even woollen underwear to Brangwyn, who in return, and more often than not, as an expression of gratitude, sent him parcels of pictures, mostly works on paper. In one of his letters Brangwyn commented that his meals mostly consisted of '...potatoes with a little of your cheese, grated and a bit of rice pudding with apples. This is my everyday meal and I thank God from my heart that I have it to enjoy it.' (Letter Frank Brangwyn to Mark Hanan, 19 January 1953)

Hanan expressed an interest in Brangwyn as a muralist in 1946 when he thought such a work, would be a fitting tribute for the 1948 centenary celebrations of the Otago Province. It was then that he contacted the Fine Art Society about the artist and although at that time they owned the Horton House panels, having bought them in 1936 from the Winterbottom sale, the funds couldn't be raised to acquire the panels at that time. It was not until 1951 that the murals became available to New Zealand. Robert Elliott, a Melbourne newspaper magnate, intended have them for a Gallery he was planning at Mildura, but when he died unexpectedly before his plans could be realised and the panels were again on the market. They were offered to Hanan for £3000.

In April of 1951 Hanan wrote to Brangwyn... "You will be interested to know that last week the Sargood Trust authorised me to complete the purchase of the Winterbottom panels from Mr Dawbarn... In one of your letters you generously commented that you hope Mr Dawbarn would recompense me for all my trouble, by sending me a water-colour as a gift; but Sir Frank I have never asked nor do I want to receive anything from him. The only thing I do feel about it at all is that Mr Dawbarn is a business man first and last, and that he perhaps fails to realise just what is involved in endeavouring to persuade people, particularly in a small country like this, to provide the money required for the purchase of works of Art.

We are but a young country still near to the wages of the struggle for existence without any of the unlimited wealth of many families in England, so the organising of the raising of funds for such a purchase is by no means an easy or every-day matter." (Letter Mark Hanan to Frank Brangwyn, 20 April 1951)

In 1951 the Sargood Trust purchased the six panels. Four of these were presented to the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, namely: *Venetian Serenaders*, *Quayside Porters*, *Unloading the Catch* and *Vineyard Workers Resting*. The two other panels *Mediterranean Market* and *Card Players* were purchased for £400 by the National Art Gallery, Wellington (now The Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa), through its Picture Purchase Reserve Account.

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