

PATRICK WAS BORN IN HALIFAX (the one in Yorkshire) in 1940, just in time for the Second World War to really get going, and spent his young life moving between places as diverse as Ashby De La Zouche, Plymouth, Castle Bromwich, and Coalbrookdale. Showing no aptitude for the family trade in running power stations, he developed a love of the natural world, and the skills with which to depict it – not as it appears, but as he imagined it. He qualified and worked as a teacher of French and German, married in 1964, went on honeymoon to Cornwall and never came back. His early work was heavily influenced by surrealism, Dali, and Heironymous Bosch, something which would not entirely vanish in the following decades.

Feeling increasingly trapped in his job, he turned professional in 1972 and started picking up commissions for the book covers and record sleeves for which he is perhaps best known, but with which he was probably least satisfied. Nonetheless, they attracted the attention of Roger Dean and his publisher, leading to further commissions (paperbacks for Michael Moorcock, Poul Anderson et al, and album covers for Budgie, Greenslade, and Judas Priest). It was probably through these that he came to be lumped in with many of the other “fantasy” artists of his generation, for better or worse; some of them “new age” (which he hated), some of them “sword and sorcery” (which he found hilarious, and called the “brass bra” school of painting). The work from this time, and some of that produced while a teacher, is rounded up in *Mythopoeikon* (1977), a sort of “end of part one” collection. Two children’s books *Micky’s New Home*, and *Tinker, The Hole-Eating Duck*, followed soon after.

It’s sometimes said that everyone has a novel, a play, a symphony, or even a double gatefold concept album in them, and Patrick’s double gatefold concept album was *The Pentateuch Of the Cosmogony* (1979). A lavishly illustrated and biblical tale of an alien civilisation fleeing its dying world, and gaining redemption through facing the error of its ways. It contained a double gatefold concept album of music by Dave Greenslade. The timing – it was released as a *rock album* for Christmas 1979 – was unfortunately in the same few weeks as *The Wall*, *London Calling*, and *Metal Box*.



It was five years until a follow up appeared. *Hallelujah Anyway* (1984) was as much a volume of poetry as a book of paintings, with a deceptively pastoral theme. Though the original idea had been to include another LP of music, this time there was just the book, and no music. Nostalgists often forget what grim times the early 80s were, and it was against this backdrop of recession and nuclear proliferation (as well as the fate of *The Pentateuch*) that this work – a dark stroll around the Helford River – was set. The sun still rises; rejoice, even though you suffer.

More books and commissions followed. *The Dorbott Of Vacuo* (1987 – a third children’s book), *A Closer Look* (1986), *The Second Earth* (1988 – another shot at *The Pentateuch*) and *Pastures in The Sky* (another collection). In 1989 he spent three months in Munich working on the film *Never-Ending Story II*. During the 1990s there were exhibitions in France and the

beginning of a long relationship with Gruyere Castle, where there is a permanent collection of his work. Patrick always adored the Alps, and rarely missed the opportunity to walk up one.

The final decade of his work is perhaps his most difficult to assess, as it was produced against a tide of deepening dementia. This is evident in his last book “*Benign Icons*”, and the postings on his website, though conversely, it seemed a time when, perhaps freed from the ability to carry the sundry weights of the world, he was never happier. Hallelujah..... anyway.

And now we are left with the work, sprawling across a lifetime. It’s interesting to see where he fits into both the grand and humble schemes of things. He was a

contemporary of John Lennon, Bruce Lee, Cliff Richard, and Raquel Welch. He began writing *The Pentateuch* during the long hot summer of 1976, while Concorde started to boom in the sky above his attic studio.

Artists don’t just exist in some lofty parallel world where only art happens. I can remember him standing by the dodgems in 1970, smoking his pipe while Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep blared through the sparking, crackling mesh in the ceiling, and the siren skirled.

He liked digestive biscuits. He was bitten by a dog. He rode a bike. He painted some pictures. Here they are.

Daniel James Woodroffe 2019