

## **NORMAN CORNISH AT NINETY.**

**A tough working life, with the risk of gas, stone falls and darkness in a world of coal mines, gasworks, and pit heaps are the life experiences which have produced one of the region's most important artists.**

**Norman Cornish is celebrating his ninetieth year in a major retrospective exhibition with previews in Newcastle and London with a tour to follow.**

**Still living in the family home in Spennymoor, County Durham with his beautiful wife of 63 years, Sarah, Norman Cornish is a triumph of talent over adversity.**

**Although his first drawing prize was earned at the age of four, fate still called him down the pit (dubbed The Butcher's Shop) at the age of fourteen where he worked for 33 years; back breaking work often starting at 2.a.m. Then against all the odds and the constraints of his upbringing, which demanded a steady job and a regular wage, he started to live by his painting. With a wife and family to provide for, at 47 he entered the uncertain world of freelance painter which he had first tasted at age 15 with the sketching club at the Spennymoor Settlement. Its brightly lit exhibitions he then described as "a wonderland." The Spennymoor Settlement was established in the 1930's mainly for the education of local people, and produced such masters of literature as Sid Chaplin.**

**Cornish had his influences, of course, such as Bruegel, Degas, Lautrec and Lowry but he was not an observer of the life he painted but a participant --whose inspiration was a lifetime of historical experience, powerful emotion and deep thinking.**

**Very early, lovely pictures of his wife and family, which speak volumes of that man's priorities, are part of the retrospective. In addition, are the much-loved portrayals of his friends in bars, their dogs, their homes, their kids, and on the old streets, chapels, shops, horses and carts; images of another century from a still living painter..**

**In response to the huge body of work reflecting the lives of himself and the people around him, recognition has come in the form of a Master of Arts Degree at Newcastle University, an MBE, in commissions from business and industry and he is still sought after by many collectors.**

**Tall and handsome in old age, Norman Cornish is a spellbinding talker as the documentary films at the exhibition show ---- and in new television interviews to mark his ninetieth year, which he conducted with great energy and poise, he said, "Destiny has always seemed to look after me from the very beginning. Things have happened that have seemed to make me take the right path."**

### **Exhibition on show:**

**Northumbria University Gallery 30<sup>th</sup> October to 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2009  
King's Place Gallery, London 5<sup>th</sup> March to 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010  
Director, Mara-Helen Wood 01912274424**

**For**

**More details and interviews;  
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**See [www.normancornish.com](http://www.normancornish.com)**