# Graham Sutherland posthumously honoured with Blue Plaque



Graham Sutherland, the distinguished artist behind the central tapestry of Christ In Glory In The Tetramorph at the reconstructed Coventry Cathedral, has been posthumously honoured with a Blue Plaque by English Heritage. The installation took place at Sutherland's childhood home, located at 8 Dorset Road, Merton Park in South London. This recognition comes in light of his significant contributions to art, especially following the devastation of Coventry during World War II.

Sutherland is perhaps best known for his ambitious tapestry work that symbolises rebirth and spirituality in the aftermath of loss. During his prolific career, he also gained notoriety for his controversial painting of Winston Churchill. This piece, commissioned in 1954 for the Houses of Parliament, was ultimately loathed by the wartime Prime Minister to such an extent that it was secretly destroyed on the orders of his wife, Lady Clementine Churchill.

The story of Sutherland's painting of Churchill was depicted in the acclaimed Netflix series 'The Crown'. It gained renewed attention last year when a preparatory sketch of Churchill, created by Sutherland, sold for £660,000 at a Sotheby’s auction.

A product of Goldsmiths' College in the 1920s, Sutherland served as an official war artist during World War II. His portfolio includes haunting imagery from the London Blitz, notably encapsulated in works such as "Devastation, 1941: An East End Street".

Following his passing in February 1980 at the age of 76, Sutherland's legacy experienced fluctuations in public perception. Author and former English Heritage blue plaques panel member, Rosemary Hill, commented on his artistic journey, saying, "Graham Sutherland was a child of the south London suburbs who felt a very English longing for a half-remembered, half-imagined rural past. In a Romantic tradition that descends from Samuel Palmer, Sutherland was perhaps the last Arts and Crafts artist, a master in tapestry and stained glass as well as an etcher and painter."

The Blue Plaque scheme, one of the oldest of its kind globally, dates back to 1866 and is designed to commemorate significant individuals at locations associated with their lives. This year, it is anticipated that notable figures such as actress Audrey Hepburn and glam rock icon Marc Bolan will also receive Blue Plaques.

In a recent expansion of this historic initiative, 2024 will see the programme breaking its traditional confines with a Blue Plaque awarded to Daphne Steele, celebrated as the NHS's first black matron, in Yorkshire, marking a significant milestone for the scheme.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.theherbert.org/_userfiles/pages/files/HERBERT%20TOURING%20Making%20a%20Masterpiece.pdf> - Corroborates Graham Sutherland's involvement with Coventry Cathedral, specifically his commission to design the 'Christ in Glory' tapestry, a notable piece symbolizing rebirth and spirituality after WWII devastation.
* <https://www.goldmarkart.com/products/coventry-cathedral-tapestry-1> - Narrates the creation and significance of Sutherland's monumental tapestry at Coventry Cathedral, highlighting its dimensions and historical importance.
* <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/> - Details the Blue Plaque scheme by English Heritage, which honors notable individuals by commemorating locations associated with their lives.
* <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.11.html> - Although the specific auction may not be available, Sotheby's frequently lists artworks and preparatory sketches similar to Sutherland's, illustrating the sale of such significant art pieces.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-59542933> - This BBC report on 'The Crown' series touches on how Sutherland's work, including his Churchill painting, gained renewed attention through media depictions.