



# A Gallery Tribute to Walter J. Arnell

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Thursday, April 9, 2015 The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

Tucson, Arizona

Although Walter Arnell wasn't a miniature artisan himself, he encouraged his wife, Pat's interest and always supported her in her hobby. As Pat's collection grew he helped design appropriate lighting for viewing the pieces in their home. Walter was very involved with the building of the museum and documented it's progress as well as miniatures in the collection on film. Pat's enthusiasm for miniatures even rubbed off on him. This is a guide to several miniatures in our collection that have special relevance to this great man.

## **Mary McGrath's miniatures and Walter's *Pepper's Ghost Roombox* (Brooke Tucker, ca. 1990s)**

Pat and Walter joined the National Association of Miniature Enthusiasts (NAME) in 1980. Walter was an active member of NAME and served on the Board of Trustees as Board member, Secretary, Second Vice President, Chairman of the Long Range Committee and as Media Chairman. Walter embraced the idea of building a public museum and worked tirelessly with Pat to make The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures a reality. A roombox created by Brooke Tucker for Walter was gifted to the museum by Walter and now serves as a teaching tool in the Museum's A Little Magic Theater explaining important



One of Mary McGrath's extraordinary sculptures, located in our A Little Magic Theater. Photograph by Emily Wolverton.



Museum Founders, Walter and Patricia Arnell. Walter Arnell passed away on April 1, 2015. Photograph by Amy Haskell.

points about the art of miniatures to museum guests. Walter was particularly fond of Mary McGrath's tiny sculptures of birds and other forest creatures in their natural settings. In the A Little Magic Theater you can see his collection of these exquisite miniatures.

## ***Yellow Rose of Texas* (Brooke Tucker, 1985)**

Walter and Pat purchased several roomboxes by miniaturist Brooke Tucker and developed a lasting friendship with her. *Yellow Rose of Texas* is the only complete miniature dollhouse Brooke Tucker ever created. It was commissioned by a woman in Texas who cancelled after the bedrooms had been completed. The Arnells were happy to pick up the commission which Brooke then personalized with details that reflect the Arnell family members' lives. To indicate Walter Arnell's English heritage, Brooke incorporated three paintings of the English countryside. One of these paintings is in the living room under the bar and it even includes an image of

Windsor Castle. The other two paintings can be found on the left side of the house in Father's Retreat. These paintings are in the study, one over the fireplace facing you and the other across from Walter's desk visible to you as a reflection in the mirror behind his desk. On the second floor of Father's Retreat, there is a painting of an airplane— a copy of a work of art that hung in Walter's real-life study. Walter was an apprentice at the Royal Aircraft Establishment during WWII. He frequently flew as a technician testing the then-new automatic pilot and fly-by wire systems, which prompted a life-long interest in aviation. Throughout Father's Retreat you will notice pictures of hot air balloons, another of Walter's interests.

### **Man's Library (George Wisler, acq. 1989)**



The movie clapper and camera in *Man's Library*.  
Photograph by Emily Wolverton.

This library by George Wisler was furnished by Pat Arnell who decided to decorate it as though it were Walter's room because her husband kept an extensive library in their home. If you look around the miniature room, you will notice there are three paintings

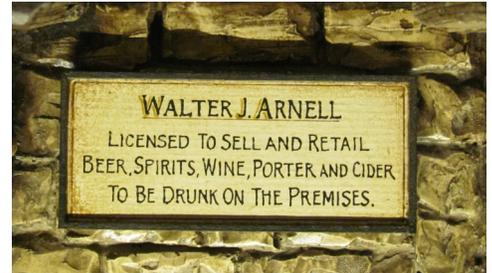
and two sculptures of airplanes. Aeronautics was a passion of Walter's. Based on his experience of working on planes during WWII, Walter was inspired to pursue a career in engineering. He earned a PhD in Engineering Psychology from University College London which led to an appointment as Professor of Engineering at the University of Southern California. Later, when Cal State Long Beach started, Walter was invited to join the Engineering faculty and was appointed its Dean. He served with distinction and a building he was instrumental in creating was named after him. As he always recalled with a chuckle, it's the aeronautical wind tunnel.

Walter was a man of many interests, and once he was interested in something he pursued it with zest. The library also contains a movie camera and movie clapper board, because film making was a serious avocation Walter took up in the 1970s. While living in Hawaii the Arnell's beach-front home caught the attention of the Hawaii Five-O television producers, and a number of episodes were filmed there. Walter became fascinated with filmmaking and took up the hobby. His first film was a result of a tour of East Africa and he went on to make and sell films commercially on a variety of topics. The making of films led to many adventures from the Arctic to

the Antarctic. He even went ballooning in various locations around the world. Pat recalls some of these ballooning adventures. She remembers floating past Walter in her own balloon while shouting out to him to stay inside his basket as he leaned over the edge with his camera to get just the right shot!

### **Load of Mischief Pub (Pam Throop, 1987-88)**

Pat Arnell purchased *Alderley Manor*, an English Tudor House by miniature artisan Pam Throop in the late 1980s.



The sign featured above the entrance to *Load of Mischief Pub*. Photograph by Emily Wolverton.

When the artist and her daughter delivered the house, Walter, possibly feeling nostalgic for his homeland of England, inquired if Pam made pubs, too. Cleverly, Walter put a copy of *The English Pub* by M. Jackson on the side table in the guest room for encouragement. Delighted by Walter's enthusiasm, Pam agreed to build him a miniature pub.

As it turned out, Walter had a pretty good idea of what he was looking for. His father had been a "licensed victualler" who ran a small country pub outside of London. If Walter J. Arnell was to be the victualler of this miniature pub it had to have "real good food" and be a "free" house which pumped its own ales. Walter insisted that the ales must be pumped by hand through a beer engine in the bar from barrels in the cellar. The barrels would be delivered through an exterior trap door down a ramp to the cellar because Walter vividly remembers helping out with this as a child. Walter also wanted living quarters in the pub because the best pubs were those where the publican lived and entertained. Walter assigned Pat and Pam the job of finding a building that would be a suitable model for his pub. With the thought that it would pair with *Alderley Manor* the ladies went on a miniature tour of the Cotswold region west of London in pursuit of finding the right building. Walter assured the ladies "you will know it when you see it." They found a match in the Sign of the Angel Inn and Pam set to working creating Walter J. Arnell's *Load of Mischief Pub*.

### **Cheshire Regency (George & Sally Hoffman, 1981)**

In the 1980s Pat commissioned George and Sally Hoffman to build a miniature that resembled a house the Arnells lived in during the 1960s when Walter was pursuing a degree in Engineering Psychology from University College

London. At the time, Pat and Walter had small children and they moved into a large house on Regent Street. Pat furnished the miniature tribute with items and dolls that resembled the young family including miniature family photographs and even a portrait doll of Walter, which stands behind the desk in the study.

Walter spent a lot of time in the study and would stay up late working on his dissertation. While working he would hear the front door open and close, so he would go down to the door and check the locks. Each time they would be secure. Before the Arnells moved into the house, they had lunch with the people who had been renting it and were told the house was haunted. Be that as it may (or may not), they had many happy memories of the home and their time on Regent Street.

Lisa Hastreiter-Lamb  
Associate Director & Director of Education

*Special thanks to Russ Ferrell and Eve Throop for providing biographical information.*



The miniature version of Walter Arnell in his miniaturized study located within *Cheshire Regency*. Note the tiny photograph of the man himself, hanging on the wall. Photograph by Michael Muscarello.