

Press Release

Date: March 2019

Subject: Christian Spurling (1904 – 1993)

Project Overview: I am writing the biography and catalogue raisonné of Christian Spurling. Christian was the son of Jack Spurling, the celebrated British marine artist. Christian copied several of his father's pictures for clients in the UK and US. The picture appearing in the March 2019 issue of the *Galleries* magazine was commissioned in 1989 and is a copy of Jack's painting entitled *Dreadnought*.

Information Required: Christian's artistic achievements were somewhat overshadowed late in life by controversy surrounding his involvement with the 1934 Loch Ness Monster hoax and documented in a 1994 newspaper article. Other aspects of his life and career need to be researched and documented:

- Christian's mother was Helena Humble (1869 – 1952). Her London stage name was Lena McNaughton. She is mentioned in many newspaper reviews between 1890 and 1910. Her portrait (by H. J. Hudson) was exhibited by the Royal Academy in 1905. Additional information about her would be helpful.
- Christian's father was Jack Spurling (1870 – 1933). Jack's career is already well documented, but I have never seen his portrait or photograph. Has anyone ever seen his image?
- Christian's stepfather was Marmaduke Wetherell (1883 – 1939). Marmaduke led a very interesting life, and was a big influence on the young Christian growing up in Rhodesia. Additional information on Marmaduke would be useful.
- Christian was a POW during WW II, captured during the fall of Singapore in 1942 and forced to work on the Burma railway. Further details are requested for what happened between 1942 and 1946.
- Sometime after the war Mobil Oil Corporation produced prints of at least one Christian Spurling painting. The reason for this needs to be explored: did Mobil Oil own any Jack Spurling paintings? Were any damaged or destroyed in a fire or flood? Did Mobil Oil approach Christian to paint replacements, as a form of atonement?
- At least two paintings were commissioned in 1979 by a collector from Wisconsin, USA. Any details of other paintings sold or gifted in the US would be helpful.
- There was a period, perhaps during the 1960's and 1970's, when Christian's paintings might have been exhibited in a gallery in Chelsea, London. Any details of Christian's paintings sold or gifted in the UK would be helpful.

Contact: If you have any questions, comments or contributions please email sdsmaile@uwclub.net. You can also visit www.christian-spurling.art. Any information would be gratefully received and acknowledged in the appropriate way.

Thank you. Steven Smale