

# BORN ON THE WIND

## MEMOIRS OF AN ARTIST

Mary Fairburn

*Borne on the Wind* is the compelling autobiography of English artist Mary Fairburn. Mary has led an extraordinary life: from camping with lions in the Serengeti to volunteering at Mother Teresa's 'Home for the destitute and dying' in Kolkata, which she relates in a humorous, thoughtful and engaging way.

Although marked by the disruptions of war, Mary Fairburn's early life was a magical time, immersed in art, friendships and the landscape of southern England. She was inspired creatively and spiritually by myth and story, particularly by the English fantasy tradition of C.S Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, which eventually led her to illustrate *The Lord of the Rings*.

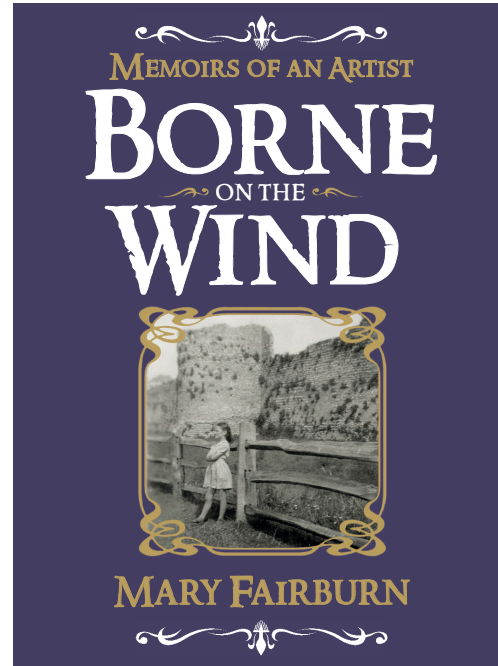
Tolkien himself was very impressed by Mary's work: 'I think the samples you sent me are splendid. They are better pictures in themselves and also show far more attention to the text than any that have yet been submitted to me.' (Letter from J.R.R. Tolkien to Mary Fairburn, 24th May, 1968.) An exchange of letters ensued (between Mary Fairburn and J.R.R. Tolkien) but unfortunately – due to a series of misadventures – they were not published until 2014, in *Tolkien: The Official Calendar 2015* by Harper Collins.

*Borne on the Wind* features descriptions of Mary's many and varied occupations, which serve as an historical snapshot from the perspective of an independent, creative woman. These include: teaching at the Forest Gate Franciscan Friary in East London and at the school at MiLS (Masjid-i-Suleiman) in Iran; painting egg tempera frescoes for a wealthy Baron in Italy; and volunteering at one of the infamous Sister Gemma's hostels for London's down-and-outs.

*Be prepared for a wild and entertaining ride!*



**Mary Fairburn** was born in London in 1933. She studied fine art and education at the Winchester School of Art and the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. Mary travelled extensively throughout Europe, Asia and Africa, always with her sketchbook in hand, creating art along the way. Her artwork is passionate and evocative, often delving into the mystical realm. Mary Fairburn's artwork has been exhibited in Winchester, Amantea (Italy), Melbourne and Castlemaine. She now lives in Castlemaine, Australia.



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“*Mary's life story is a lived lesson in art, literature, history, geography and spirituality, brought to life for the reader by her strong feelings about everything, and astonishing retention of detail.*”

Paul Tankard, 2020

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