



**AMGUEDDFA
CYMRU**

PAINTING
and *Planting*



The Story of Cedric Morris

Cedric Morris illustrations by...

Rianne Rowlands

About this resource

This resource explores a unique Welsh artist and plantsman and how he used his skills to train young artists and help Welsh people during the Depression Era. It can be read individually or as a class and is aimed at Progression Step 3 (8-11) pupils but is suitable for older learners also.

In this resource you will...

- Learn about the life and work of the Welsh artist, Cedric Morris.
- Discover his connections with industrial Wales and how he began painting and planting.
- Find out about his painting techniques and about different types of paint.
- Be introduced to the science of hybrid flowers.

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Mae'r adnodd hwn ar
gael yn Gymraeg.
*This resource is
available in Welsh.*

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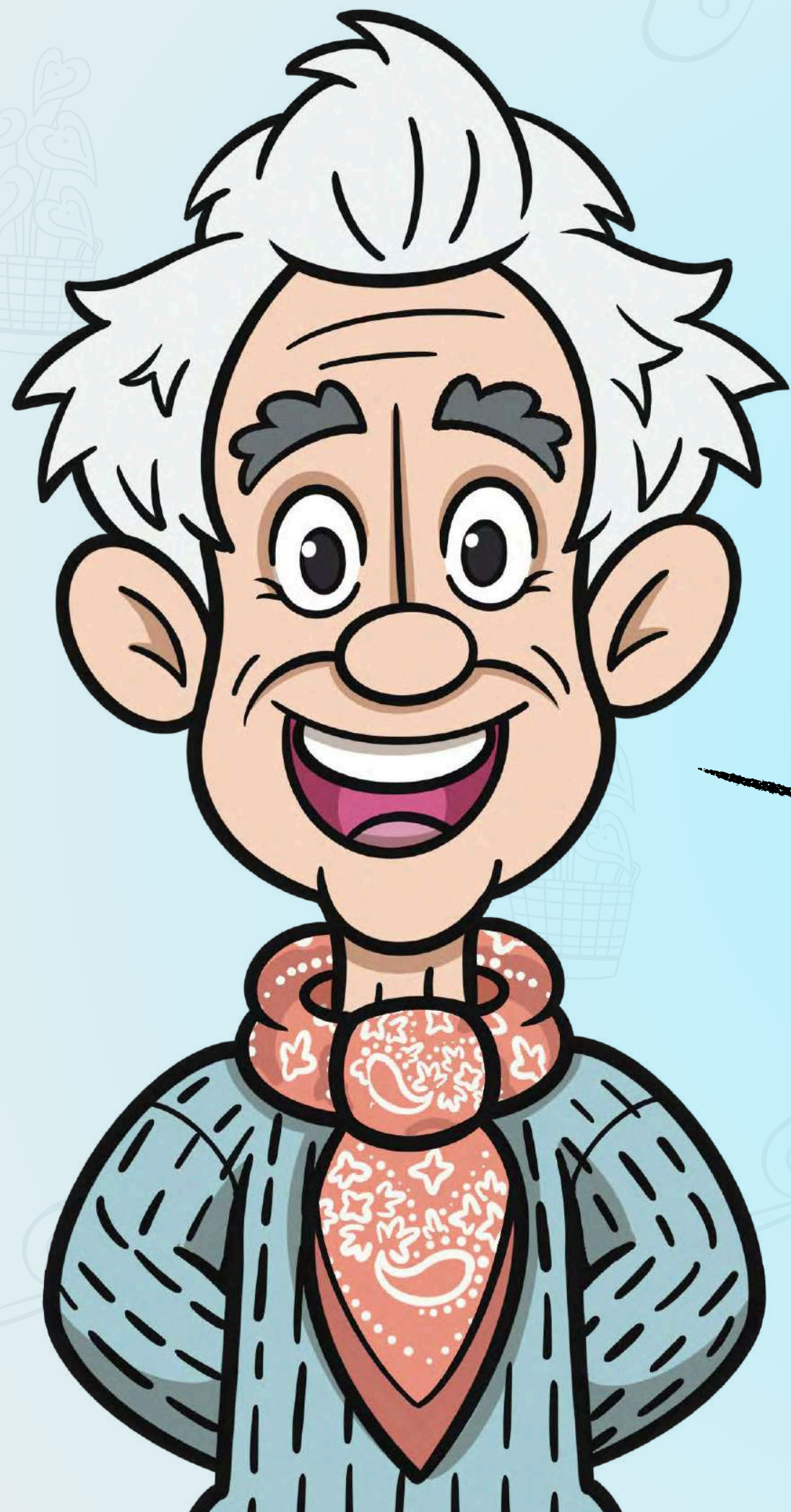


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Mae'r adnodd hwn ar
gael yn Gymraeg.
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My name is Cedric Morris. I was born at Sketty, Swansea, in 1889. Many of my ancestors were English, but I am proudest of my Welsh roots, and I am Welsh. This is the story of how I became known as an Artist and Plantsman.

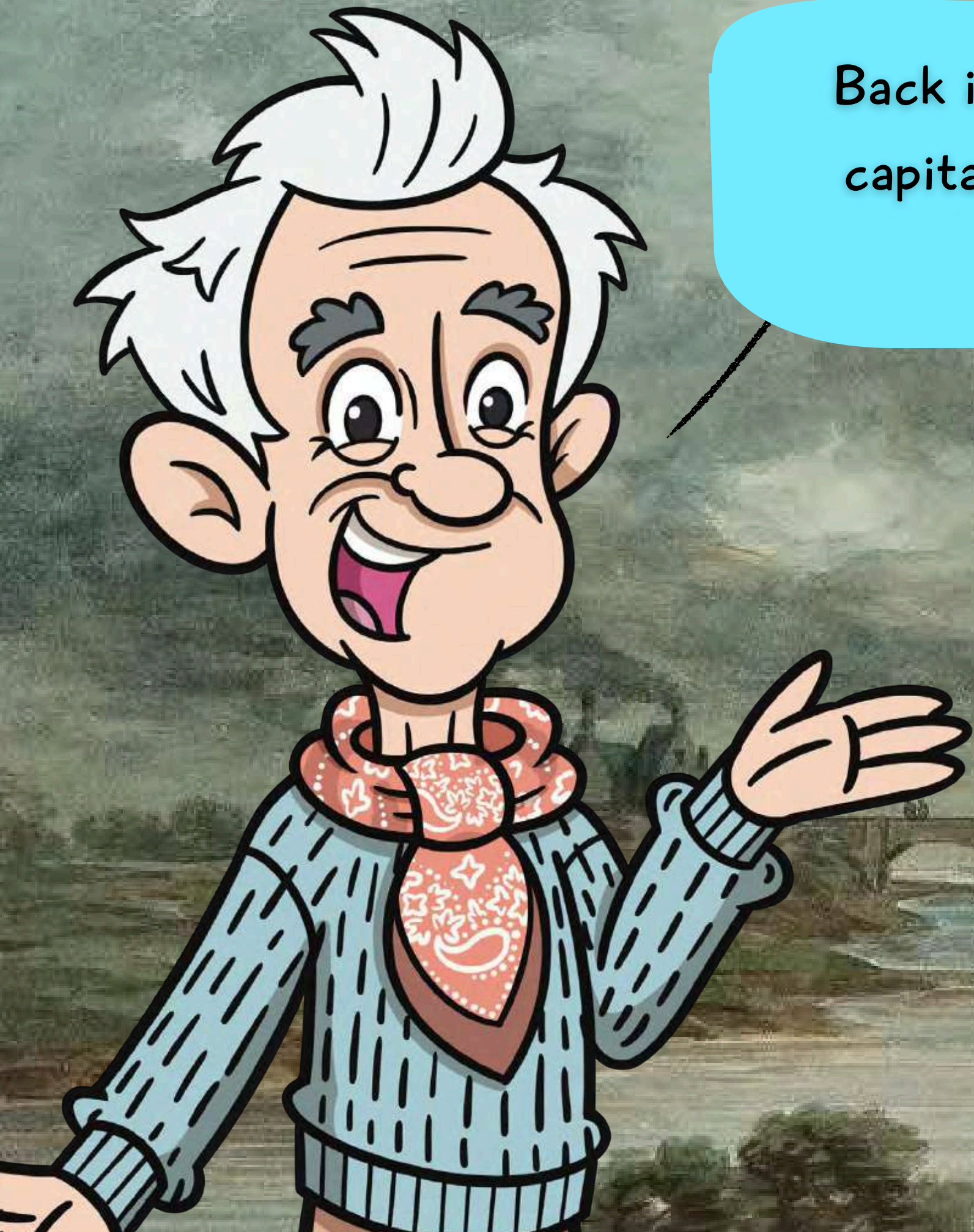
From Swansea to Paris



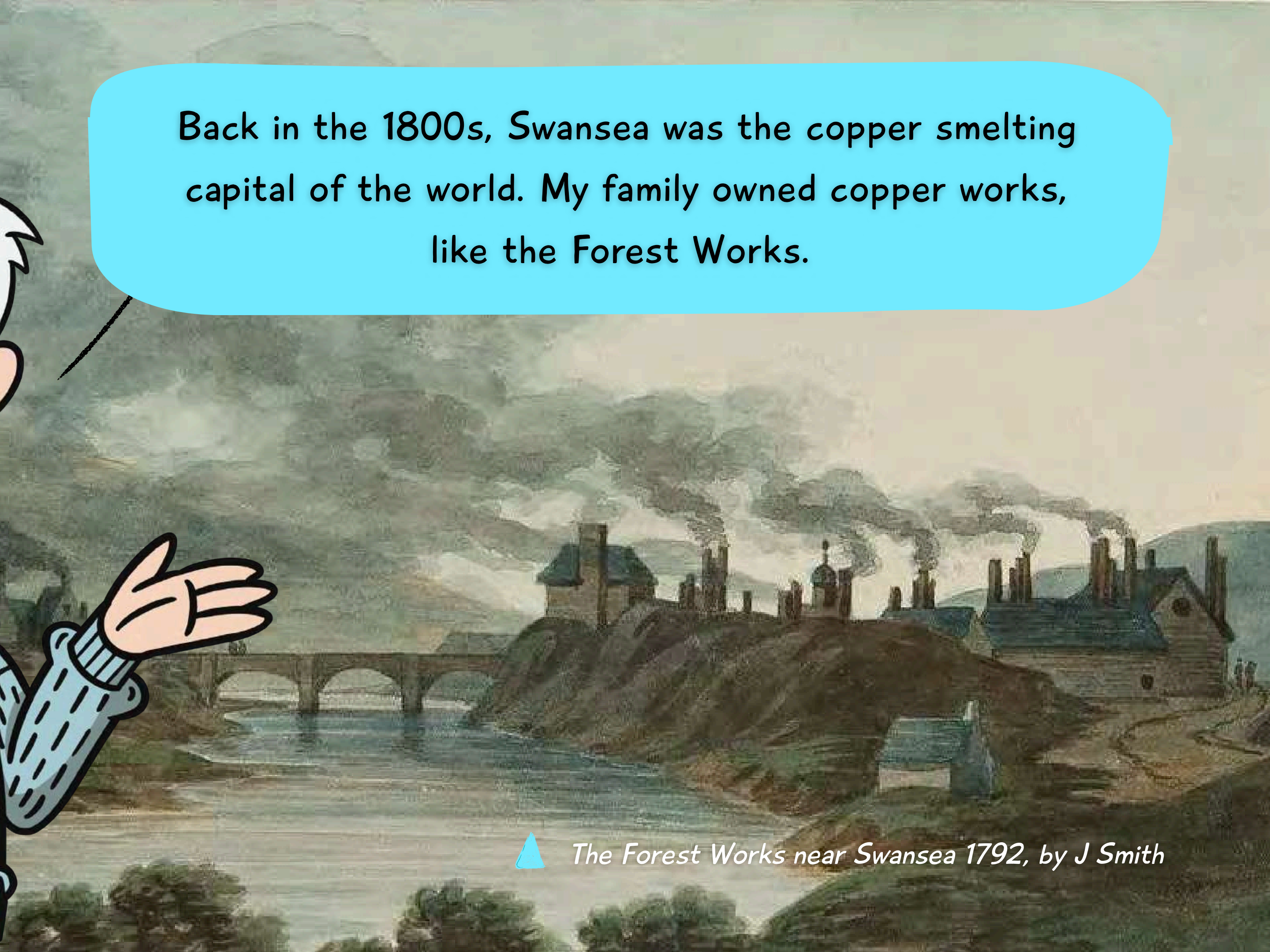
Swansea,
1850s



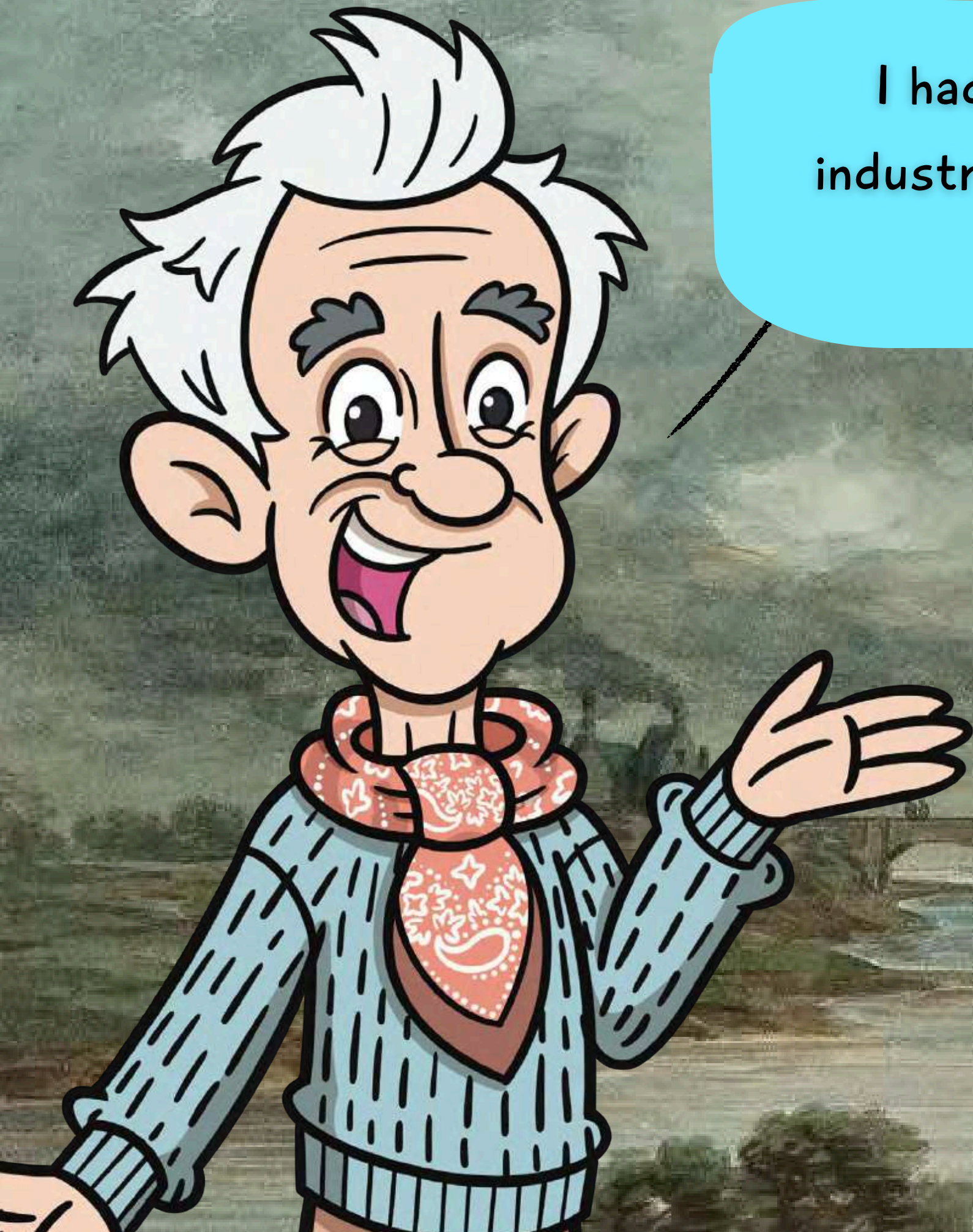
My family had been in Swansea since the 1700s. My father George was a Tinsplate manufacturer and he sold iron. He was the last of my family to make and sell metals in Swansea.



Back in the 1800s, Swansea was the copper smelting capital of the world. My family owned copper works, like the Forest Works.



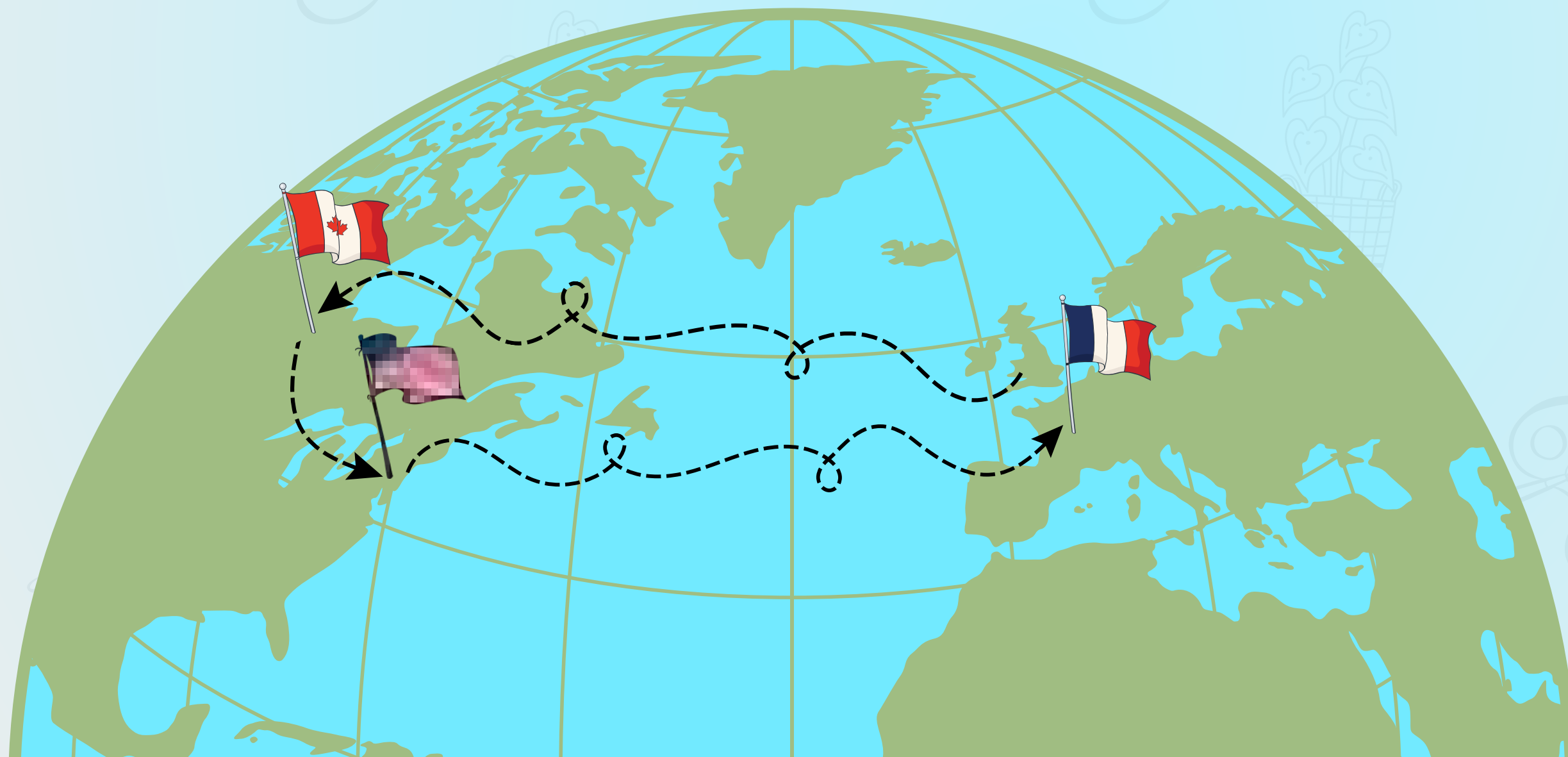
▲ *The Forest Works near Swansea 1792, by J Smith*



I had little interest in following my family into the industrial world. In fact, I had no idea what I wanted to do.

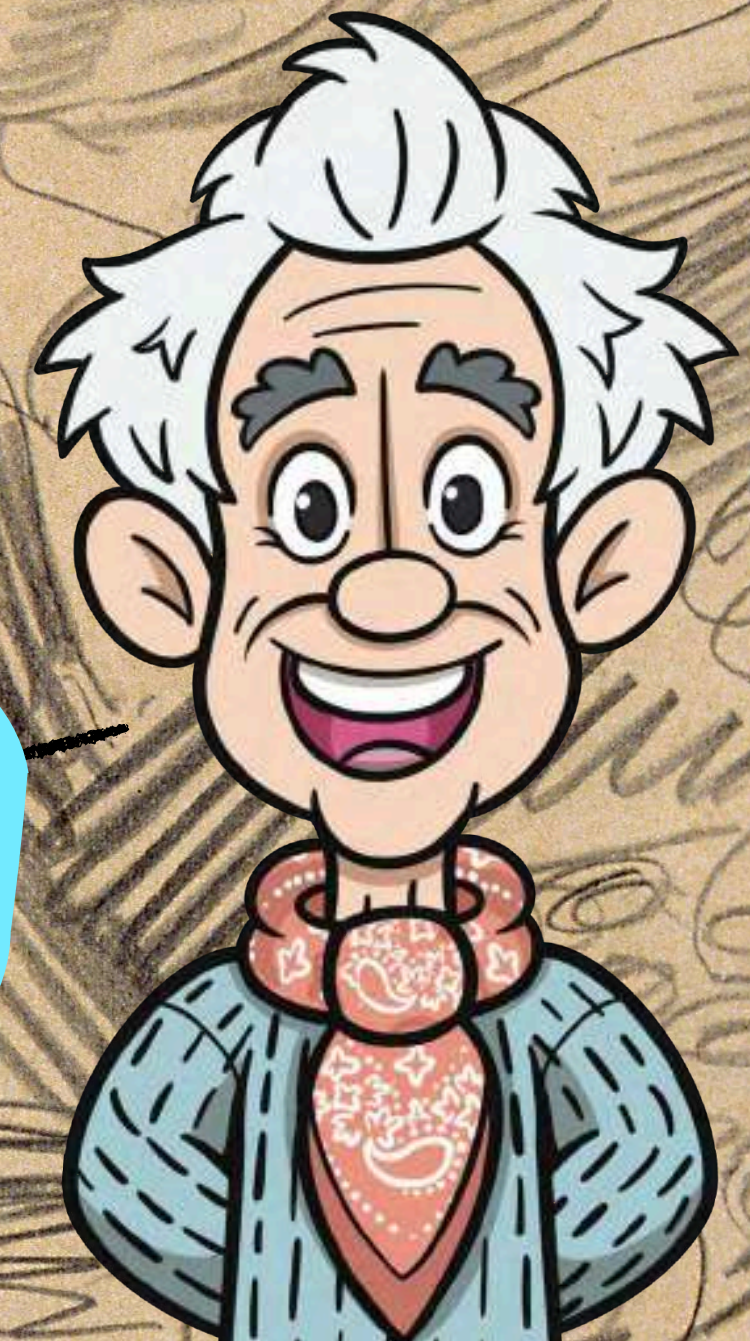
▲ *The Forest Works near Swansea 1792, by J Smith*

I wasn't very good in school. When I left, I had no idea what to do. So, my mother suggested I travel. I went to Canada, New York and ended up in Paris. It was there that I began to study art.



Cafe interior, Paris, by Cedric Morris, 1921

Studying art and sketching the people around Paris was a dream, a dream that finished all too soon. World War One began and I had to go back to Britain to do my bit.





When WWI began in 1914, I enlisted and trained with the Artists Rifles. I failed the medical exam though and did my bit by training the horses used in battle.

*Royal Field Artillery
horses, 1914* ▶



People don't often think of artists fighting during WWI, but many artists joined the Artists Rifles and over 2,000 of them died and 3,000 were wounded. The cap badge created for the regiment featured the Roman god Mars and the goddess Minerva.



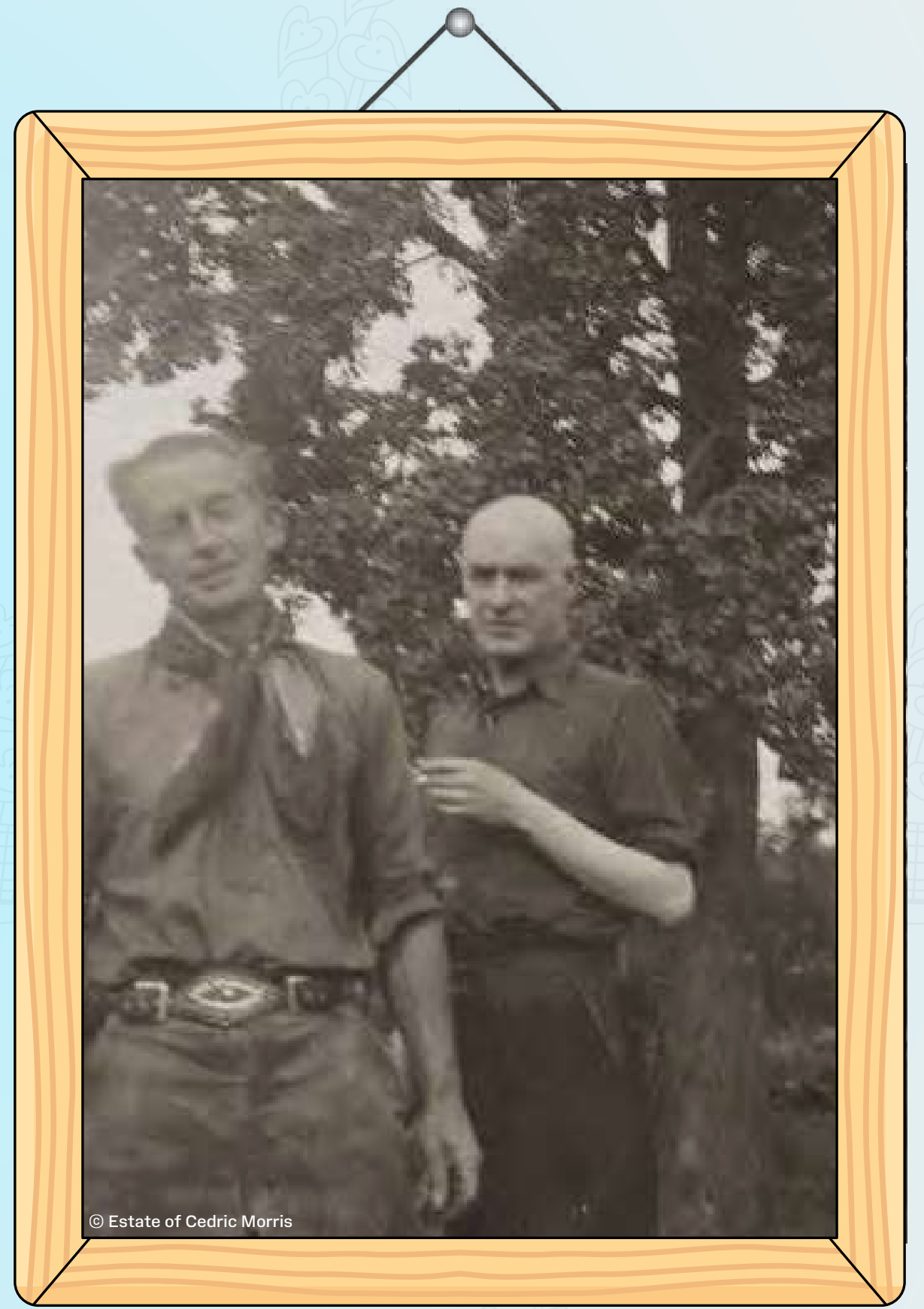
Becoming an Artist

A black and white photograph of a cityscape, likely Cardiff, Wales, featuring a river (the Taff) and a bridge (the Taff Bridge). The image is overlaid with large, white, bold text that reads "Becoming an Artist". The text is centered and has a slight shadow effect. The background shows buildings on the left and a bridge with multiple arches on the right, spanning the river.



At the end of the war,
on Armistice Day, 1918,
I met the person I
would spend the next
60 years of my life
with, Arthur Lett-
Haines, or Lett as
everyone called him.

*Cedric Morris and
Arthur Lett Haines* ▶





Lett was an
artist, and we
travelled to Paris
and across Europe
studying art.

*Cedric Morris and
Arthur Lett Haines*



© Estate of Cedric Morris

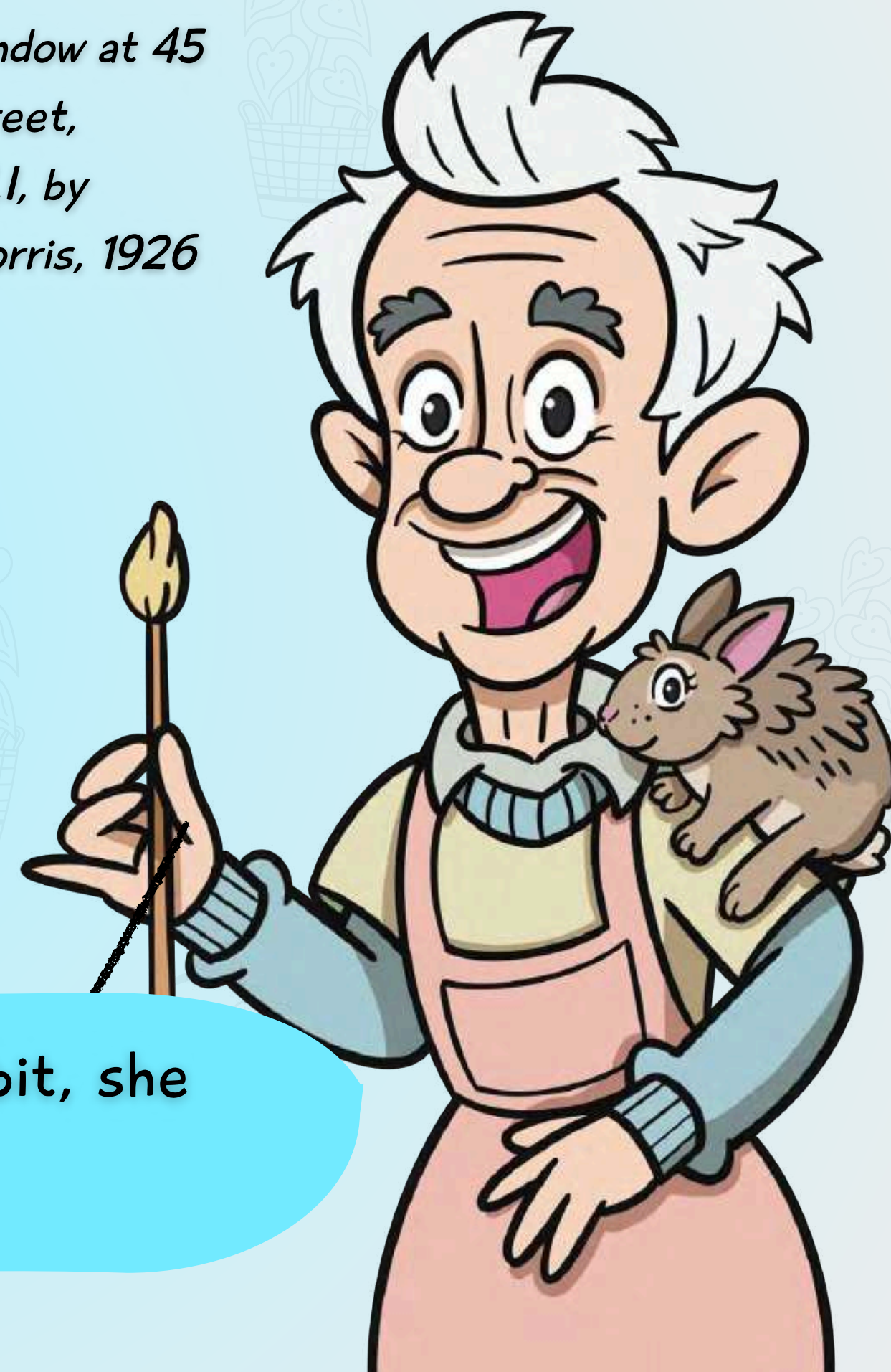
▼ *From a window at 45 Brook Street, London W.1, by Cedric Morris, 1926*

By 1925, Lett and I had a studio in London. The studio soon filled up with our art and as I loved animals, birds and plants, I filled the studio with those too!





◀ *From a window at 45
Brook Street,
London W.1, by
Cedric Morris, 1926*



You might have noticed Maria Marten, my Irish rabbit, she would sit on my shoulder as I painted.



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◀ *Crickhowell, by
Cedric Morris, 1933*



The first paintings I created were landscapes, like this one I painted of Crickhowell. I paint in a very different way to other artists.



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I never drew with a pencil on a canvas first like many artists do. I simply start to paint from the top left corner.

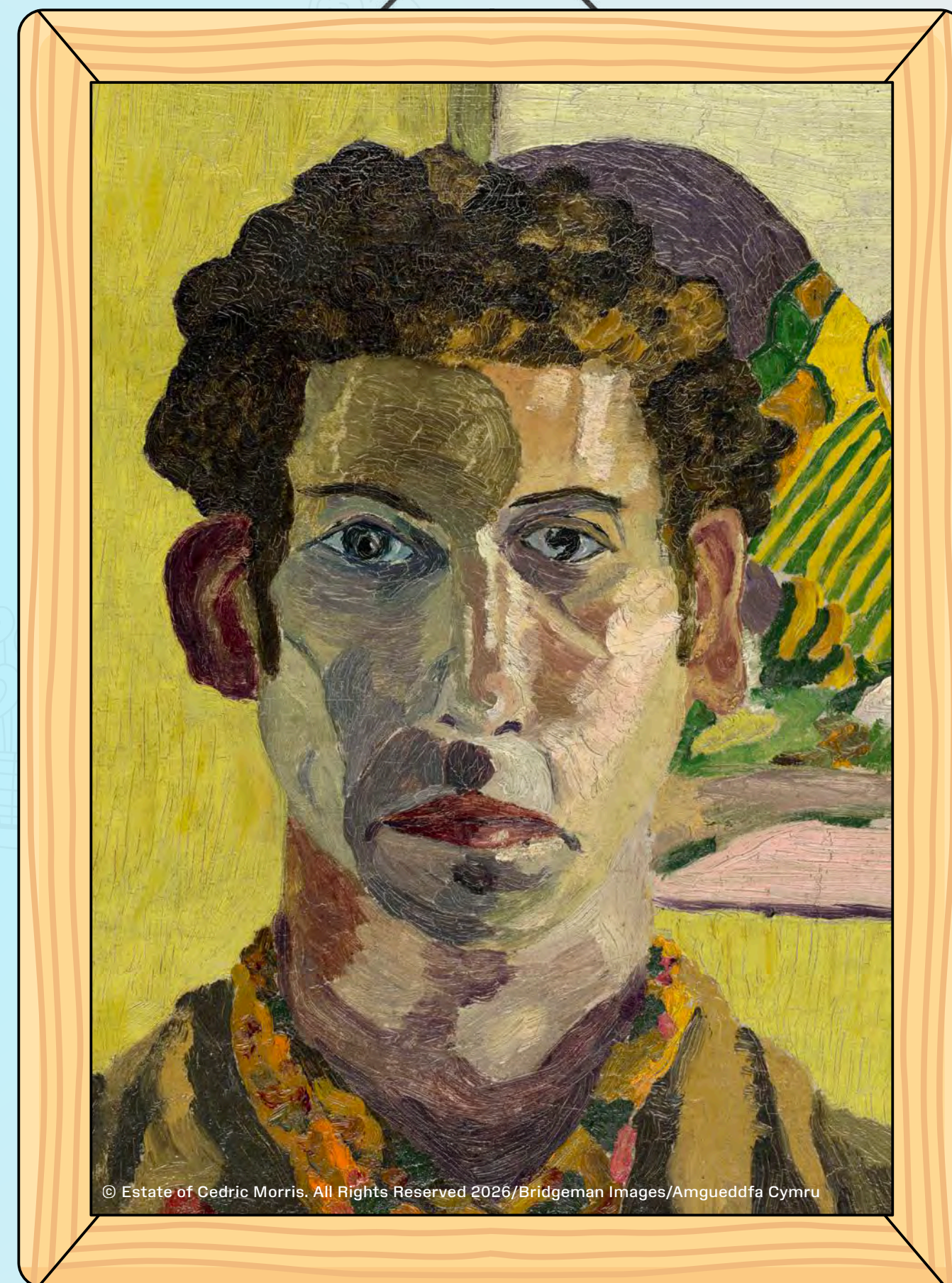


I paint horizontally down across the canvas until I get to the bottom right corner. There are many ways to paint, and this way works for me.



*Self-portrait, by
Cedric Morris, 1919*

I also painted portraits, like this one. For many people my most famous paintings were not of landscapes or people, they were of flowers.





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This type of painting is often called a still life painting. But I wasn't painting still life, I was painting a portrait.

▶ *Helen's pot, by Cedric Morris, 1936*





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For me flowers
are as full of
emotions,
character and life
as people are, so
I painted flower
portraits, not still
life.

▶ *Helen's pot, by
Cedric Morris, 1936*



MONDAY. THE DAILY EXPRESS. DECEMBER 10, 1928.

The
TALK of LONDON
By THE DRAGOMAN

BOOM IN MODERN ART

Several other young artists are now meeting with gratifying success.

Mr. Cedric Morris, for instance, sold every picture shown at his last exhibition, and Mr. Paul Nash sold thirty works at the Leicester Galleries some weeks ago.

Important commissions, too are falling to the lot of the younger men, such as Mr.

I sold many paintings while I lived in London. Winston Churchill even bought a painting from me.

But by 1929, I grew tired of city life. Lett and I moved to Suffolk and lived in a house called The Pound. It was there that I could not only create flower paintings but create flowers themselves.





KNOW YOUR PAINT!

We artists use the word medium when we talk about the paints we use and what we paint on. I use oil paints and paint on to a canvas, so my medium is oil on canvas.





KNOW YOUR PAINT!

Oil paints mix well with each other. I like to thicken the oil paint to get lovely thick brush strokes on a canvas. They take a while to dry mind! There are lots of different mediums.

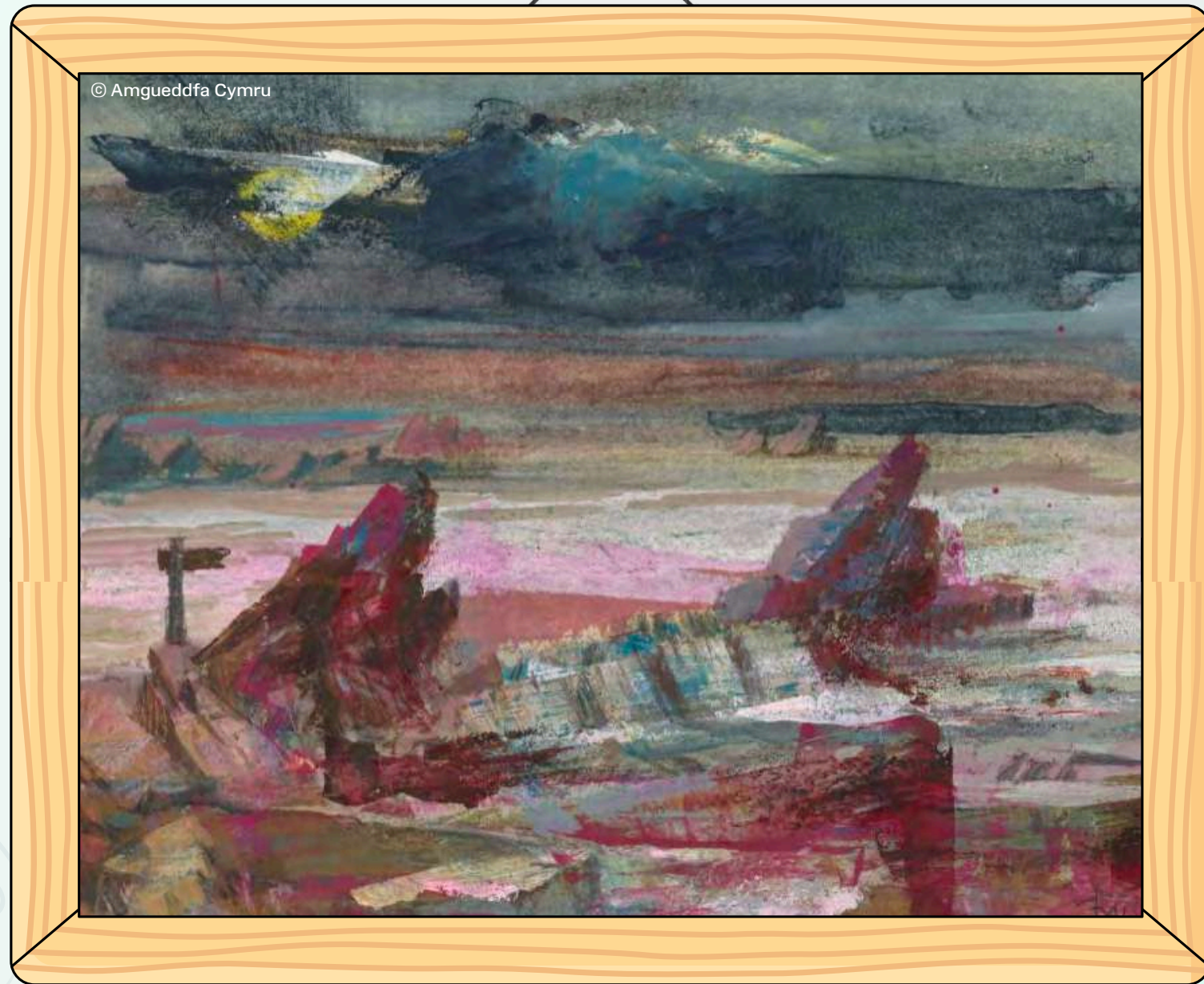




Two women seated in church, Gwen John, 1920s (Watercolour)



Watercolours are coloured pigments mixed with water. When the water dries the coloured pigments are fixed to the paper. Watercolour paints are transparent so often you can see the paper underneath.



▶ *Albion Bay, Ray Howard-Jones, 1958 (Gouache)*



Gouache (pronounced "gwash") is very similar to watercolour paint, but instead of being transparent it is opaque, which means you can't see through it.



© Amgueddfa Cymru

▶ *The morning after the storm, JMW Turner, 1840 (Oil)*



Artists use paints in different ways. I use oil paints thickly, but here an artist is using the same paints to get a very different style. Spotting the medium used by artists can be hard but there is always something that gives it away.

A detailed painting of a bouquet of flowers in a basket. The bouquet is filled with various types of flowers, including white and pink peonies, purple and yellow irises, and a large yellow flower in the foreground. The background is a soft, muted green. The text "Becoming a Plantsman" is overlaid in a large, bold, black font with a white outline.

Becoming a Plantsman



*Stoke-by-Nayland
Church, by Cedric
Morris, 1940*



I have always been fascinated with flowers and nature. When Lett and I arrived at the Pound, we turned it into a little paradise, filled with plants and animals.



*Stoke-by-Nayland
Church, by Cedric
Morris, 1940*



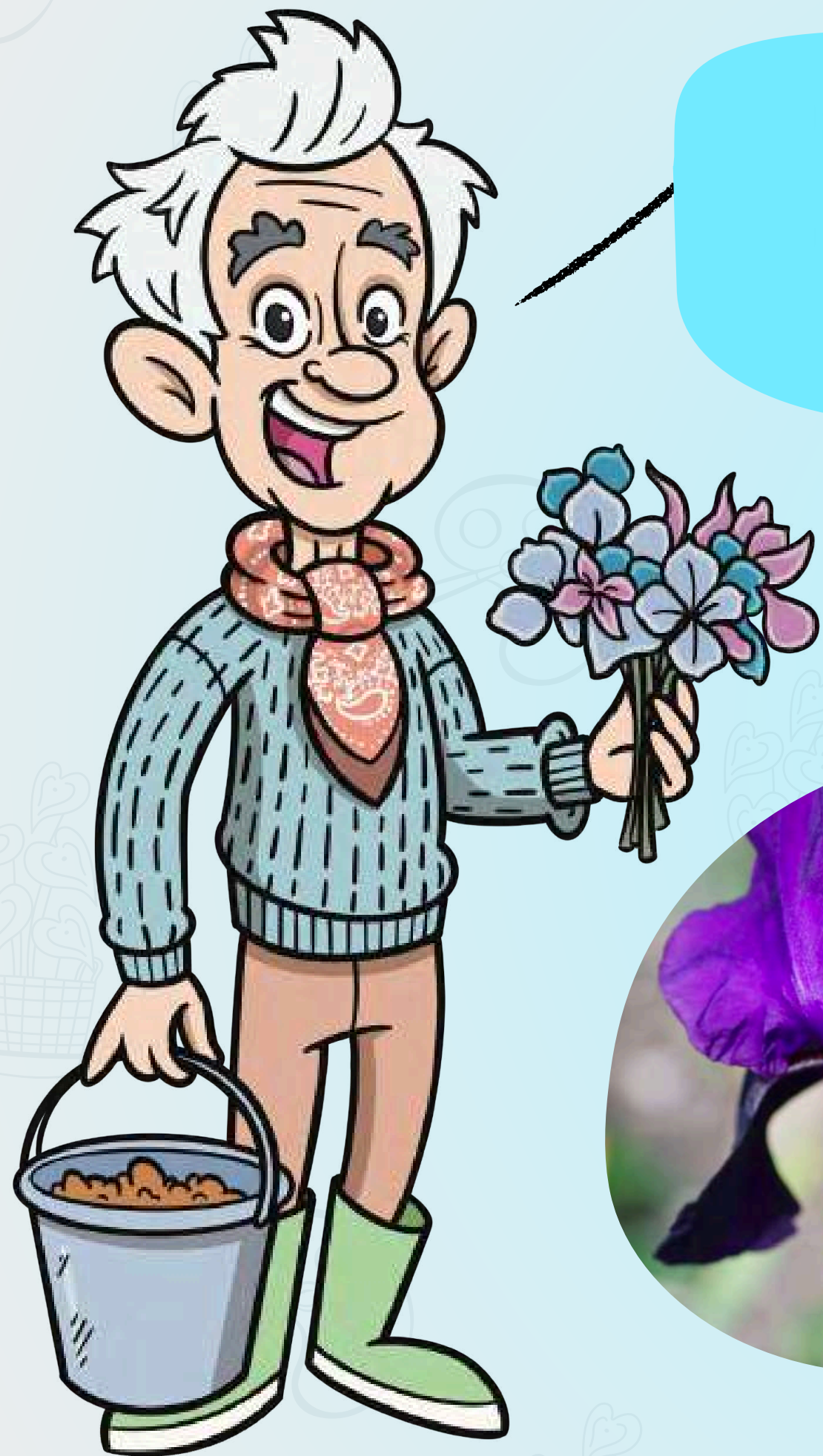
We were so inspired with what we had created we wanted others to enjoy it and get inspired. Nearby we opened a school of art and invited students back to the Pound.



The idea was to have a school where students could work together with experienced artists to produce paintings.

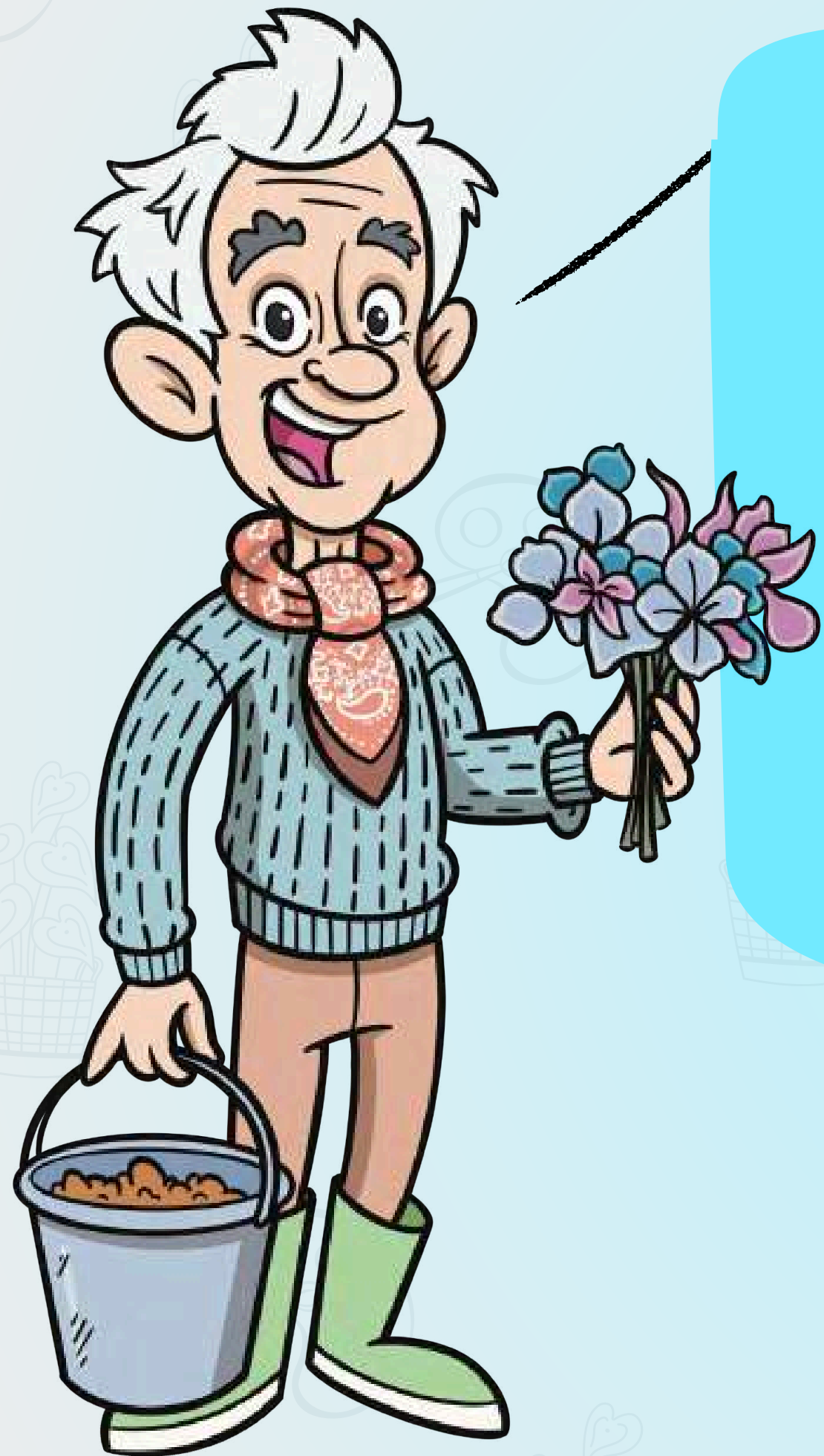
A student of mine described visiting the Pound like this....

You approached down a tunnel of trees to come out into the sunlight. There was a small greenhouse by the wall where Cedric grew cacti and geraniums. The parrots flew about the garden, hung in trees and stumped in and out of the house. Cedric's studio was beside the house in the garden. To go in there quietly when Cedric was painting the favourite of all his flowers, irises, was a revelation...



Irises were my favourite flower, and I would create my own. All the ones you see here are creations of mine. Creating hybrid flowers takes a lot of time and patience.

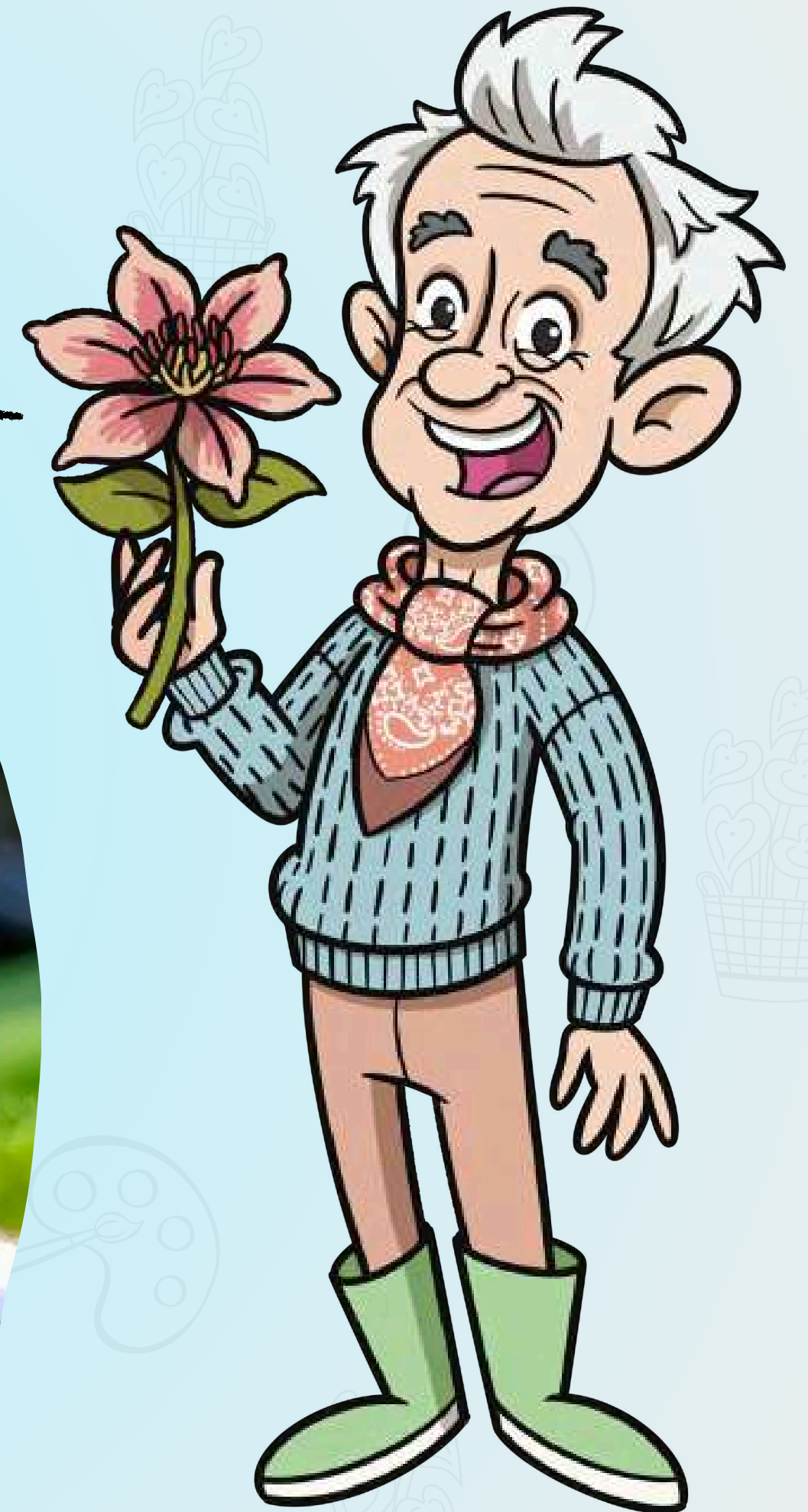




First, I would find flowers with strong stems, unique colours and much more. Then, I would hand pollinate the flowers to create stronger plants or new colours.

Creating new colours was such fun! It's like painting with nature, mixing one colour with another to make a new flower. There are many ways of creating hybrid flowers. Let me show you one way.

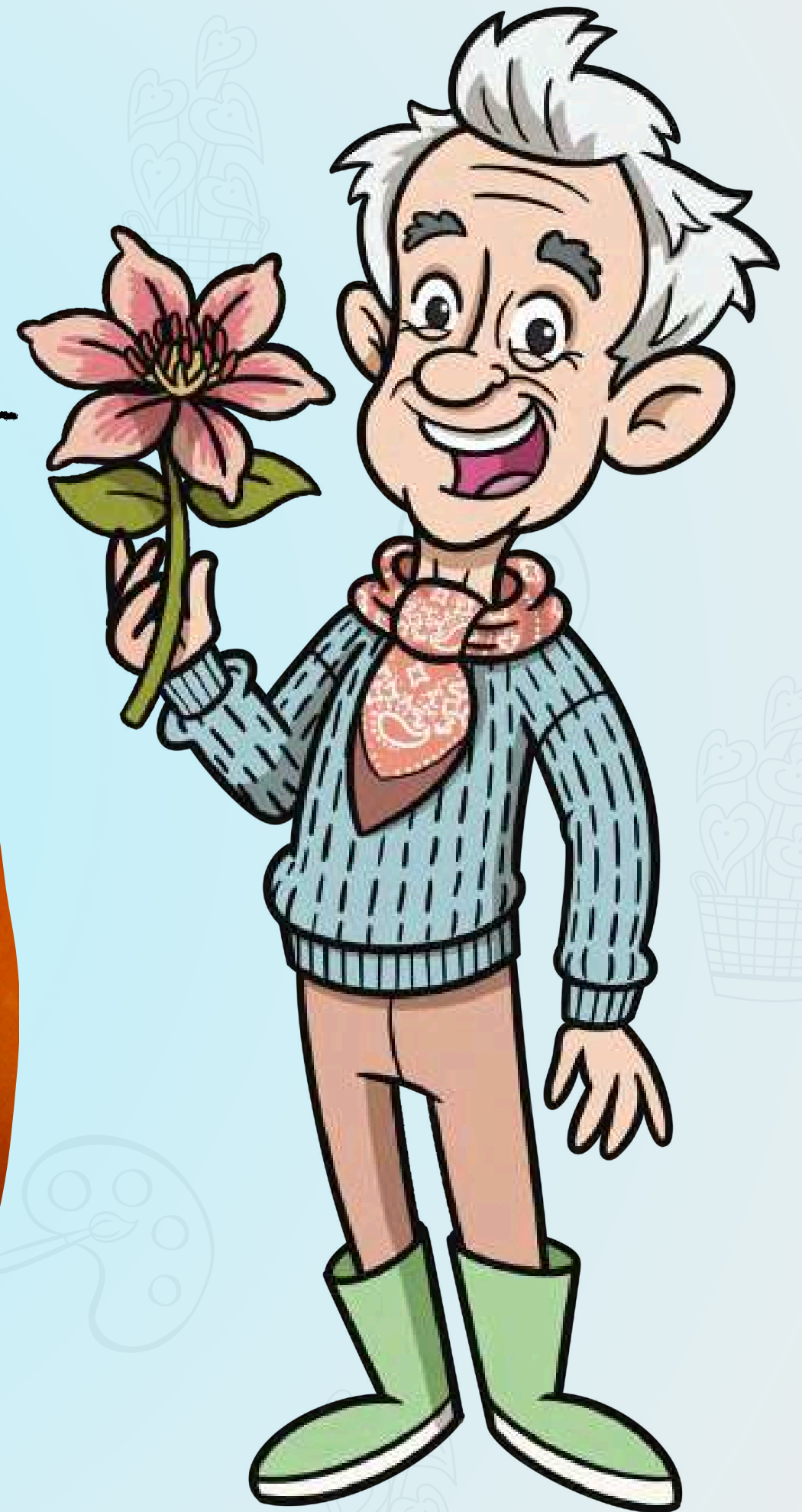
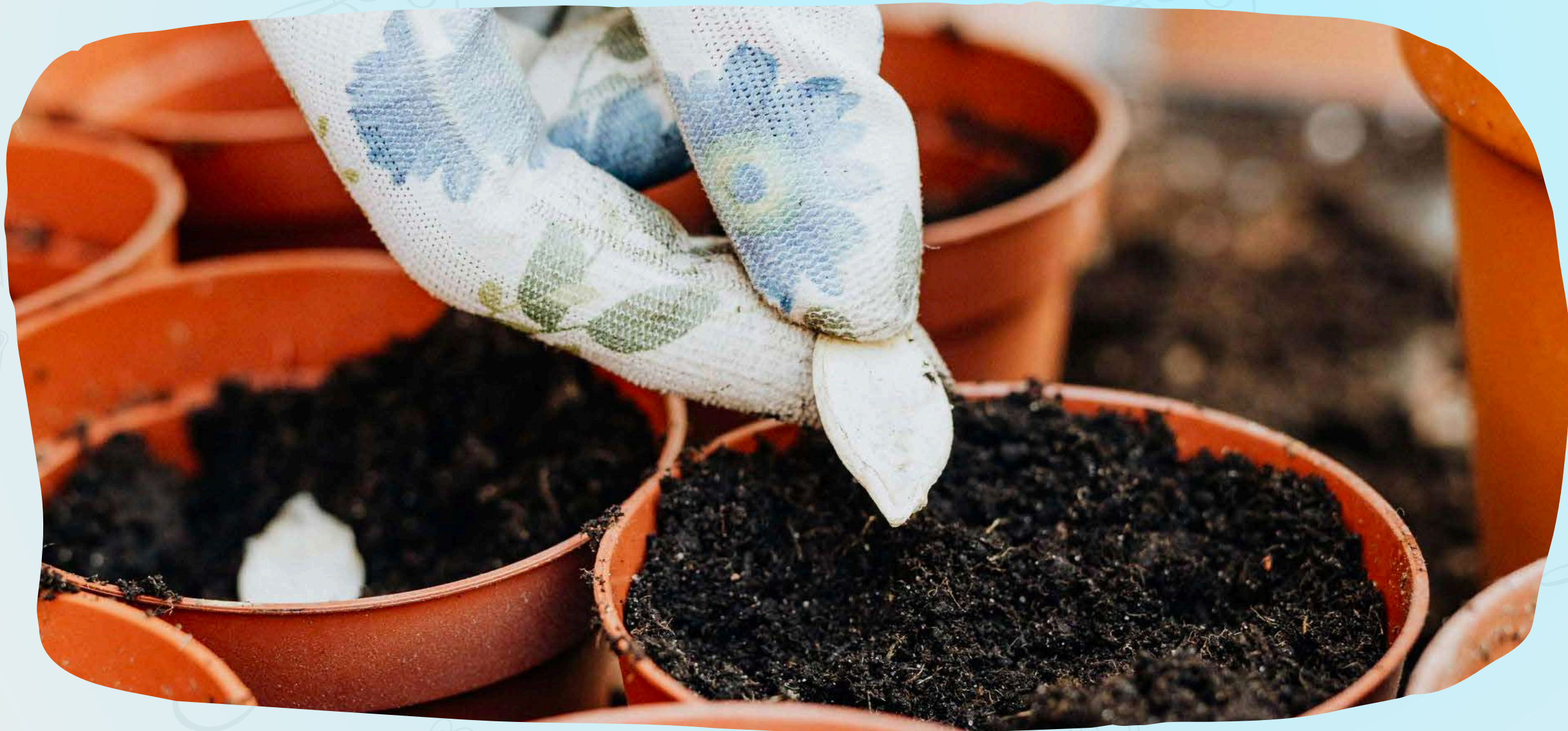
Take the pollen from one flower using a brush.
Brush that pollen on to a different flower. Both
must be the same species though!



Then wait for seeds. Normally, it would be a few months before a seed pod would grow. The seeds are all inside the seed pods.

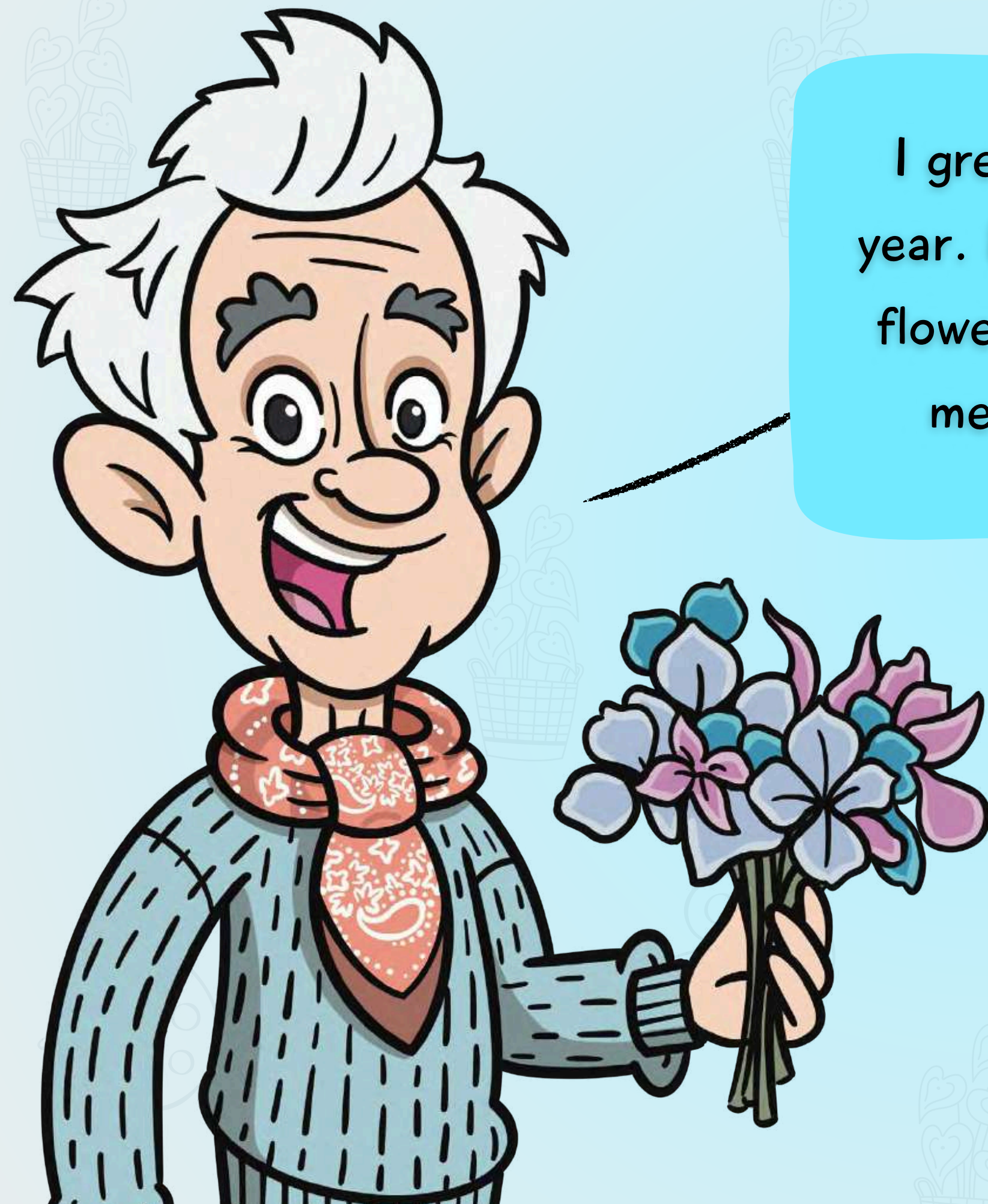


Plant the seeds in pots indoors. Given the right care they will then grow into seedlings.



Take the seedlings outside to plant. Some plants grow quick and some take a long time. Irises can take up to two years to grow.





I grew over a thousand iris seedlings every year. I won medals across the country for the flowers I created. In fact, many people knew me more as a Plantsman than an Artist.



KNOW YOUR PLANTS!

All of these are plants I created. Can you identify them?



KNOW YOUR PLANTS!

All of these are plants I created. Can you identify them?



Iris



Geranium



Poppy



Back to Wales and Benton End

*Dowlais
steelworks,
1930s*



Teaching, painting and planting kept me busy, but I made sure to still visit Wales. In the 1930s I held art workshops for unemployed workers in Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil.

In 1935, I was proud to work with other artists across Wales and create the largest exhibition of Welsh contemporary art ever held at that time. It was held at the National Library of Wales and the National Museum Cardiff.

MONDAY, JULY 15, 1935.

Travelling Exhibition of Welsh Contemporary Art

To be Inaugurated at National Library To-morrow

The first Travelling Exhibition of Welsh Contemporary Art will be inaugurated to-morrow at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Invitations have been sent out for the private view in the names of Lord Davies (the president) and the Council and Court of Governors of the National Library of Wales.

The promoters are Mr. Augustus John, Mrs. Byng-Stamper, Mr. Cedric Morris, Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis, Mr. Isaac Williams (National Museum of Wales), Mr. Brynmor Anthony (Registrar, University of Wales), Mr. Herbert Vaughan (National Library of Wales), and Mr. Richard Hughes.

As previously announced in these columns, during September the collection will be exhibited at the Deffett Francis Gallery, Swansea, and finally it will come to the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, during October.

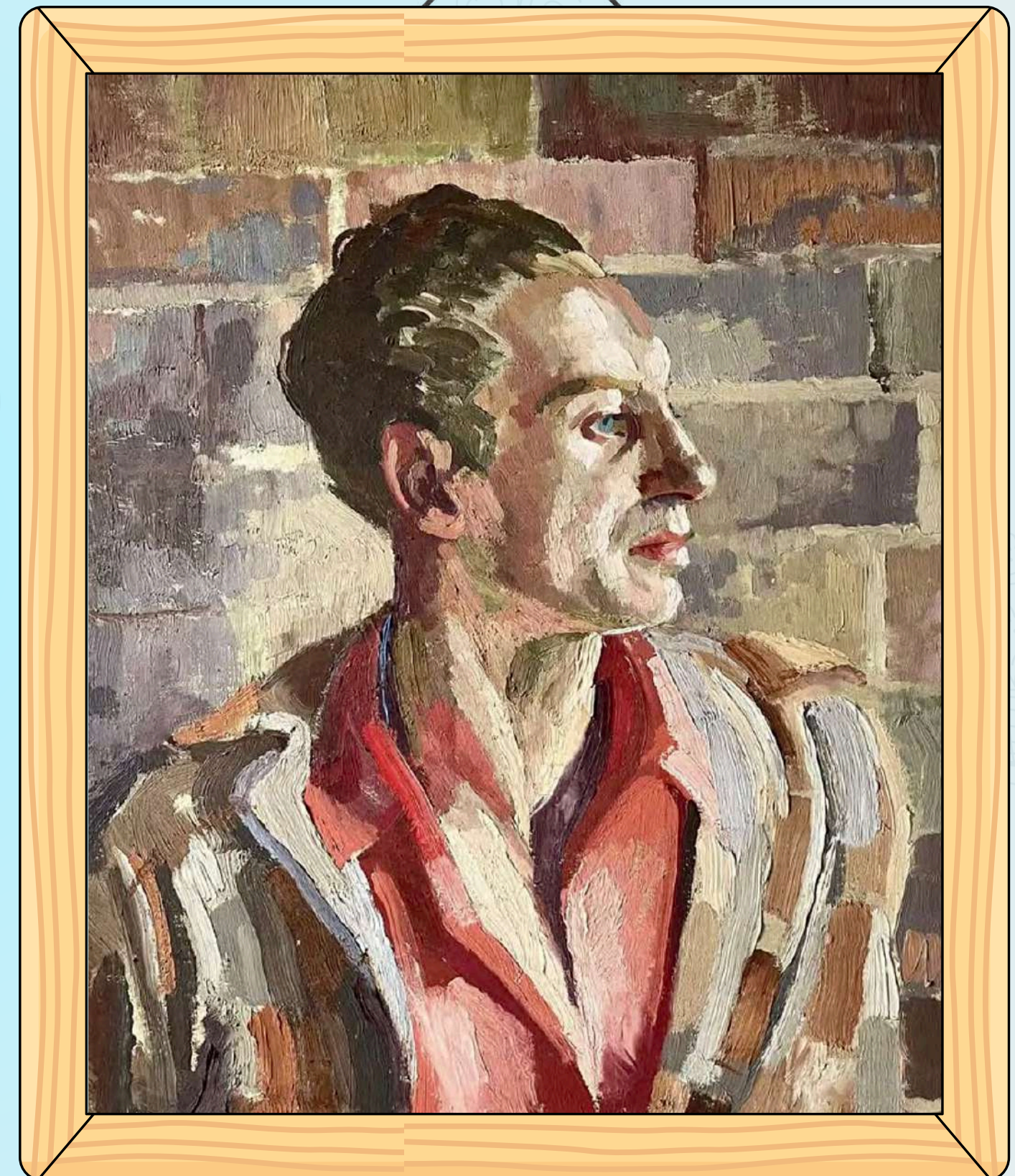
More than 150 pictures have been secured, together with a few examples of sculpture and architectural drawings, the work of a score or so of Welsh artists.

Some surprise has been expressed that there should be so many Welsh artists making their mark in contemporary art. But surprise may be expressed that successful contemporary artists well known in South Wales should not find a place in what is a remarkably interesting and instructive



In 1940, Lett and I moved to a new house called Benton End. We continued the school of art from there and had students like Vivien Gribble, who painted this portrait of me.

Sir Cedric Morris outside Pound Farm, Higham, Suffolk by Vivien Gribble, 1930



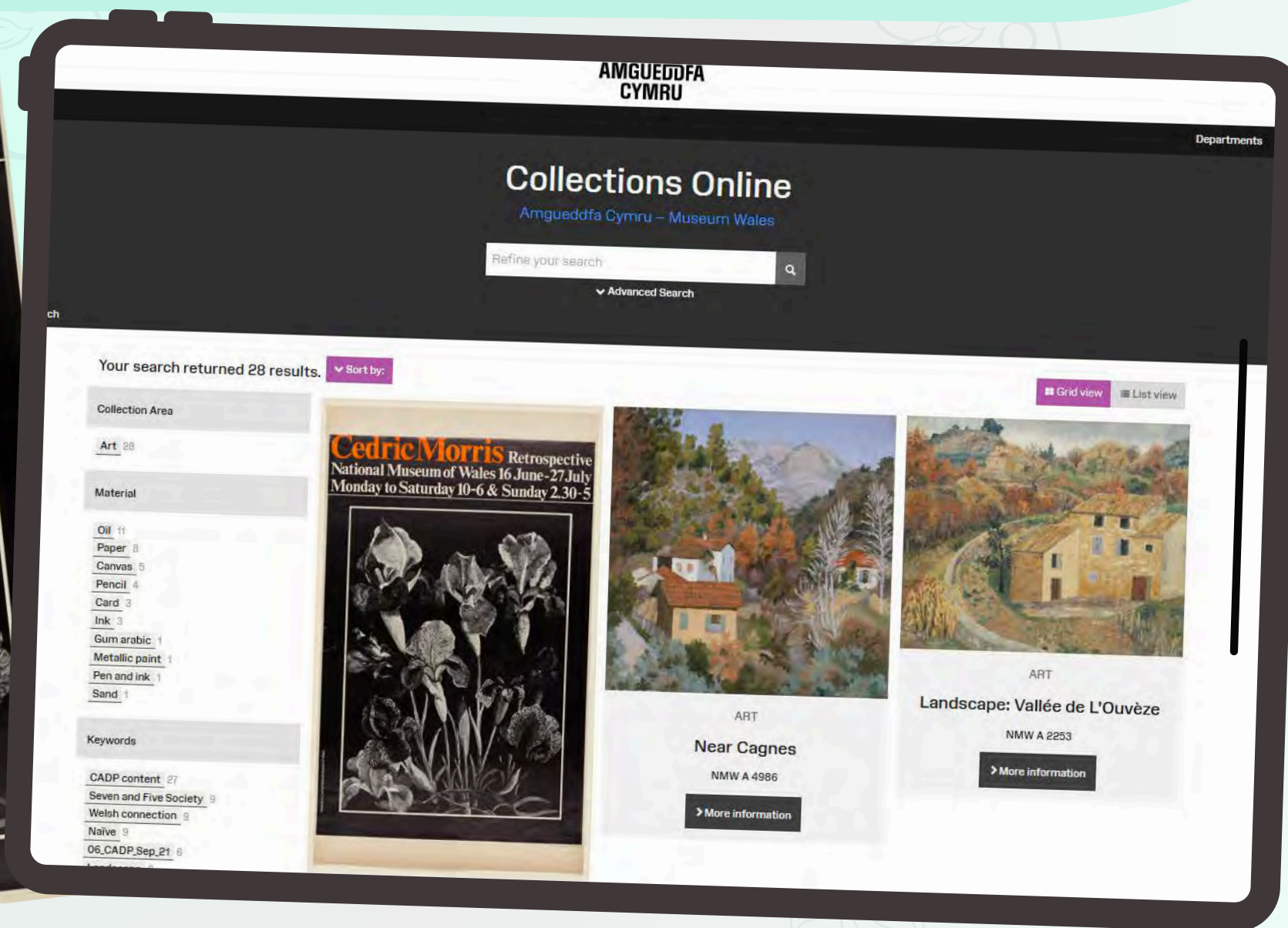


After World War Two life continued for me and Lett in much the same way. We lived at Benton End for over 40 years teaching, and of course I was planting and painting the whole time.



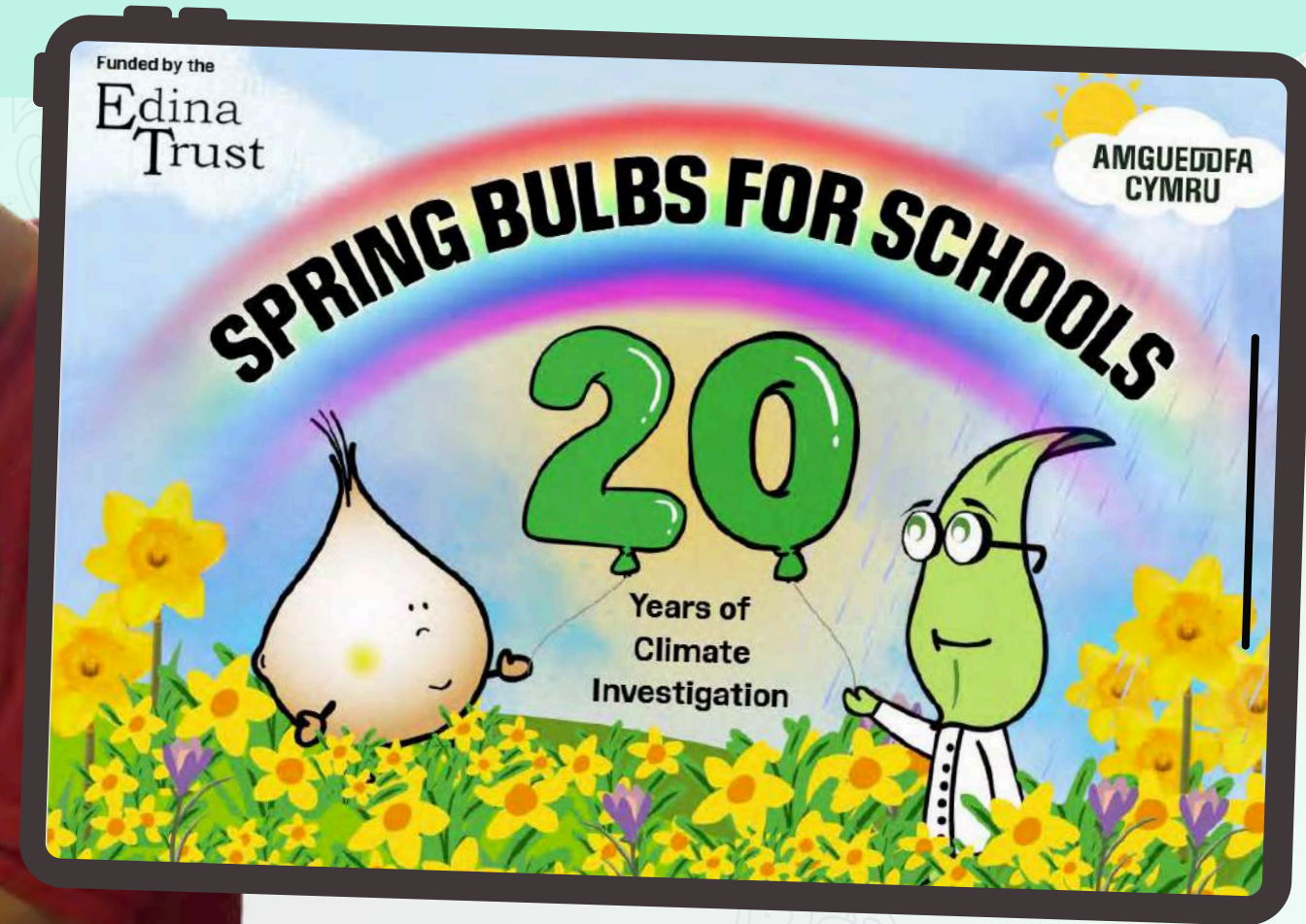


You can explore more of my artwork at the Amgueddfa Cymru website. Select the tablet below and discover paintings and sketches from my life as an artist.





If you or your school are interested in planting and becoming a climate scientist, then you can explore our Spring Bulbs for Schools project. Select the tablet below and explore what has been done so far, planting activities and how to take part in this planting experiment.





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In person workshops
about history, art, nature
and the climate are
available across
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more.