

Aria

"THIS IS SAIN FISHERY THAT USED TO BE"

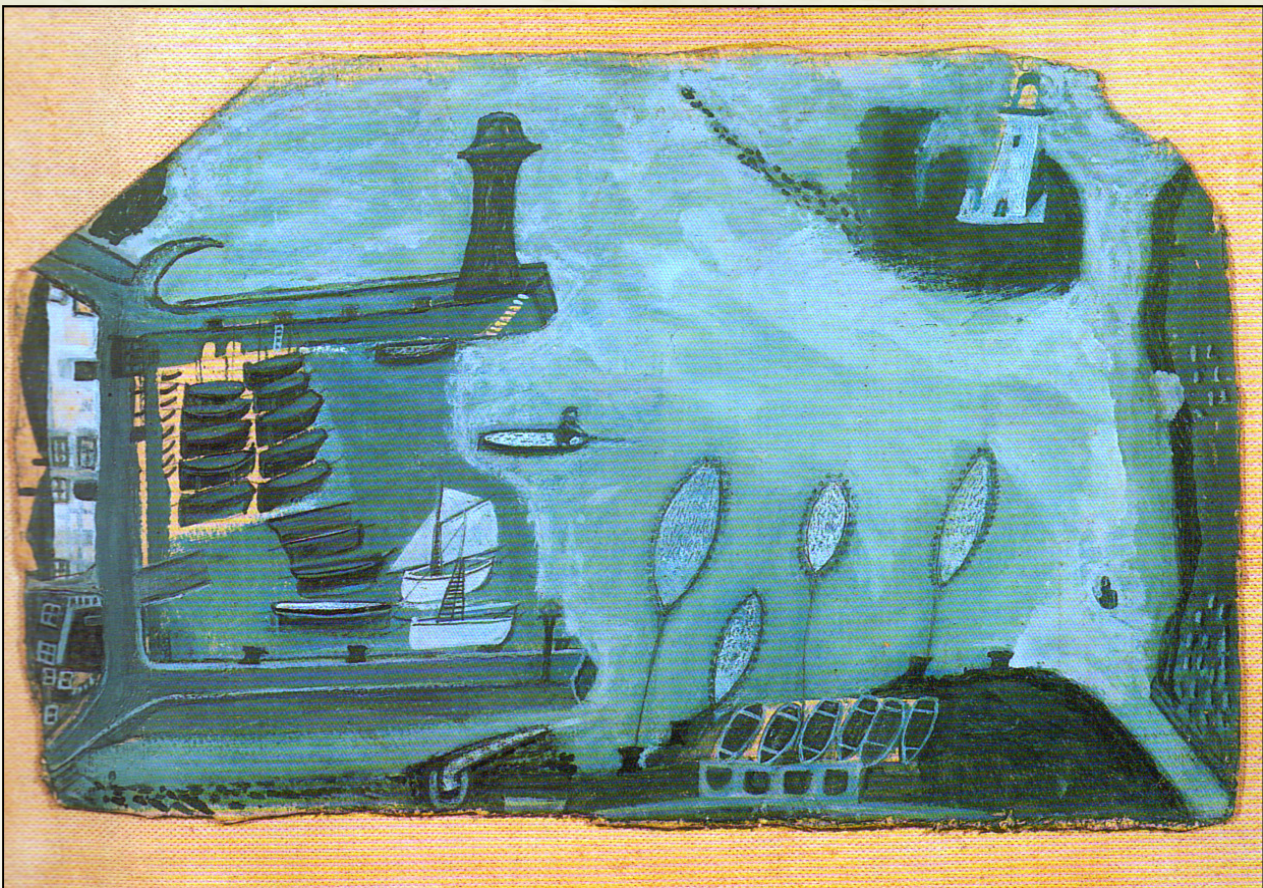
SISTER WENDY ON ALFRED WALLIS

Alfred Wallis was a retired fisherman in his seventies when the artists Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood, out on a trip to St Ives, discovered his paintings on pieces of cardboard cut from boxes. Poor and barely literate, Wallis is

the example *par excellence* of the untaught, primitive painter. He was a man who had rarely seen a painting and yet who instinctively sought to make sense of his world by creating images. He remained primitive - despite the interest taken in

his work by his famous visitors and continued using jagged pieces of card as his canvas, skillfully adjusting his image to the shapes of the surround. This painting is greatly irregular in format, yet the rough edges are entirely appropriate for the sub-

ject: the memory of a sight that Wallis had often seen in his youth, when dangling seine nets were set with weights and floats to catch pilchards.



"This is Sain Fishery that Used to Be", date not known, oil and pencil on card, 41 x 58 cm

Wallis nearly always painted from memory, with a nostalgia for the old times and an eagerness to recall the colors truthfully - he said he had no time

for paintings that were spoiled by putting colors where they do not belong. For all its apparent naivety and spontaneity, this painting is a

deeply considered work. In it, Wallis seeks to express a visual truth, which he does with a grace and earnestness that gives the work an exceptional power.