



# The Tree of Life

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**T**HOSE of us who are fortunate enough to live in close proximity to trees whether in wooded areas or in city parks are undoubtedly aware of the health giving properties emanating from these wonderfully, majestic, mysterious forms of nature.

As a painter I've spent many hours simply being close to, absorbing and reflecting, by means of drawing, until such times that the 'spirit' of the tree connects with something within oneself. Some people are more susceptible and immediately sensitive to that special relationship. Others, however, find it takes time before a state of quietude descends and that special oneness with nature becomes a reality.

The 20th century English painter Graham Sutherland is a prime example of one who recognised this hidden, mysterious world. His highly charged emotional

paintings of tree forms bear witness to his exceptional ability to reveal that anonymous presence within nature. Keeper of the Tate Gallery's Modern Collection, Ronald Alley, in his introduction to a Sutherland exhibition, wrote the following:

"These unpredictable moments of illumination, when some natural form seems to take on a kind of presence, a life, a personality (and which have been compared with the Wordsworthian moments of vision) are at the heart of much of his work".

This hasty sketch in charcoal and chalk of an old beech tree refers to a specific tree on the banks of the Fleet River in the Galloway Hills of S.W. Scotland where we have enjoyed many holidays in the Spring and Autumn months. The ancient trees in that region speak to the souls of those who care to listen. □