



Sir Peter Blake visits St Peter's Primary School in Budleigh Salterton

OLIVER SANDERS EE190308_OS02_02

County gallery pulls off major coup with knighted pop art icon

BY ROB FLEMMING

A DEVON art gallery has managed to pull off an artistic coup d'art, of which many London galleries would be envious.

Iconic pop artist Sir Peter Blake and Brad Faine, of Coriander Studio, went to the Brook Gallery in Budleigh Salterton yesterday to celebrate the launch of an exhibition of his work entitled *Montage of Generations*, which will be hosted by the gallery until April 19.

But before going to the private viewing last night, Peter and Brad paid a visit to St Peter's Church of England Primary School.

Art co-ordinator, Beverley Cawthera and Angela Yarwood, of Brook, brought the pieces together.

"Normally, children at

five and six years old have to do a self-portrait in watercolours or acrylics," said Beverley.

"I thought that was rather static and two dimensional. Having looked at Sir Peter's work, I thought it was really inspiring.

"He used images, artifacts and other bits that expressed people's character really well and I thought that it would be a good idea for the children to use."

Angela, who has two children at the school, saw the work that they had done and sent a few jpegs to Sir Peter.

"I have wanted to have a display of his work for some time," said Angela. "Sir Peter is absolutely key in British art."

"After seeing the pictures, he agreed to come to the gallery."

Sir Peter did not leave the school empty-handed. The children presented him with a montage based on the great man's interests and life.

Images included a Chiswick bus, a picture of Elvis, Dorothy and the Emerald City from the *Wizard of Oz* and an RAF badge.

After the visit, Beverley said: "It was wonderful. Sir Peter and Brad were so comfortable with the children, asking questions and coming down to their level."

"Sir Peter was really pleased with the big picture and impressed with the fact that they knew that he liked Elvis."

"He showed them his Elvis cufflinks. It was fabulous."

And, indeed, Sir Peter was wearing a set of round cufflinks bearing black

and white photographic portraits of the King.

"It was really good," said Peter, commenting on the children's gift.

"I think they worked from the Stanley Road album. I asked Paul Weller just to make a list of favourite things and he came up with the bus he took to school and his mum and dad."

"It's almost like a self-portrait and children can choose. It's a very good vehicle for children."

Sir Peter Blake is perhaps best known for the paintings that have decorated record sleeves.

The Beatles' Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, The Who's Live at Leeds album and the Ian Drury tribute album *Brand New Boots and Panties* are just a few of the images on display at the Brook Gallery.