

## FOUNDER'S LETTER

2011 marks the 25th year of INSCAPE Fine Art Study Tours. A company, a business, a profession, INSCAPE is, to an astonishing degree, my life; a life which might have been altogether quite unremarkable were it not for those who have urged me on my way, often when only they, not I, seemed to know which that way should be.

My greatest privilege has been to encounter the warmth, strength and mirth of people all over the world, from the cheerful knifegrinder in his tiny stall in Fez to the warm handshake of David, the scarred Irish drunk, in my little corner of London; from a resilient impoverished aristocratic woman holding on to her baronial pile in Scotland to the determination of the newly-widowed INSCAPE member who breaks through her solitude to laugh again with us in Whitehall. Ultimately, I find there is more courage in the INSCAPE members who struggle up the flights of stairs to our rooms in Whitehall than on whole battlefields of history.

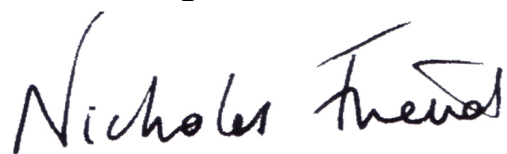
Then there are those I meet through literature, like Shakespeare or Hopkins, or through art, like Rembrandt or Chardin, or through architecture, like Brunelleschi or Hawksmoor, or through music, like Handel or Mahler. Through the privilege of teaching, I feel I have met them all.

For 25 years those I have encountered, in my library and in the world, have sustained me in this curious and important work. This chronicle is dedicated to all of them. It is a dedication to dedication.

I often reflect on how odd it is to have been granted such riches without offering much in return. I cannot play football, or the piano, or the stock market. Of course, I might have been destined for great things, maybe even the directorship of a bank, had not my maths led my father to despair. I can read aloud, and on a good day people are kind enough to laugh with me at the delicious folly of the world. I can remember details of the life of Rembrandt, but I cannot for the life of me remember where I put my house keys.

For most of my life I have simply never had any idea of how I was going to fit in. Now after 25 years, I have found my place; it is with you who have had the patience to read these words.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas French". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.