Yanbu Al Bahr & Covers

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Charmian Bourne

Yanbu Al Bahr & Covers

This short presentation stems from our years living in Yanbu-Al-Sinaiyah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, between 1979 and 2002. My husband, John Bourne, originally worked for Saudi Arabian Parsons, managing a Graphics and Photographic Studio, responsible for cataloging the construction and development of Yanbu-Al-Sinaiyah (*Yanbu Industrial City*) which was situated 30 minutes' drive south of the old town of Yanbu-Al-Bahr, the closest Hajj port to the city of Medina. The Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu was founded under King Fahd to construct twin cities at either ends of the crude oil and liquid gas pipelines crossing the entire country, to enable oil and their derivative products to be exported through the Red Sea, avoiding the narrow and contentious Straits of Hormuz.

Yanbu-Al-Bahr consisted of two parts, an old town next to the port, mainly consisting of large merchants' houses constructed from large blocks of coral stone cut from the reef and decorated with ornately and intricately carved, wooden mashrabia windows and doors. These impressive buildings were in decline and already mostly abandoned during the early 1980s with the residents preferring to move to the newer part of town offering better facilities and air-conditioning.

For the newly arrived expat community, these old buildings were a great source of interest, both historically and culturally. We spent many fascinating hours walking around this area, noting its sad decline over the years we lived in Yanbu. John took many photographs and produced water-colour paintings of the most decorative of these merchants' houses, some of which are shown here.

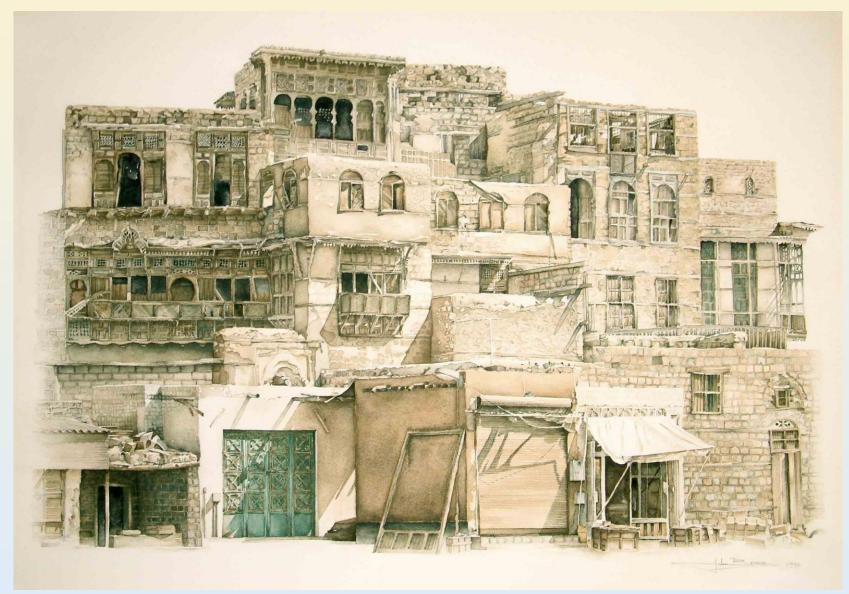
The first watercolour painting shows a general view of the architecture facing the sea, already sadly in decline, but clearly showing the coral stone from which they are built. The next two images are watercolours of the back and front of The Babatin family home and storage warehouse, probably the largest and impressive of the various merchants' houses. In the painting looking up at the house, it is easy to imagine and see the bright colours, red, blue and sepia that originally adorned this building. The next watercolour illustrates The Atik Stores, one of several open fronted shops trading in the area of the old souk up until the late 1990s. Of special interest, are the small pivoting fish, detailed in the next photograph, seen in the intricate woodwork surrounding the upstairs living accommodation, alluding to the fishing heritage of Yanbu-Al-Bahr.

The next two images show elevations of the Bin Jabr family house, originally painted green as evidenced by the second photo taken on a dull day. It was on one of these Friday afternoon excursions, picking our way through the rubble surrounding these houses that we found in the side annex of the Bin Jabr house, an old, worm-eaten, mahogany wooden dowry chest. As a very new collector of Saudi stamps, I was very excited to find inside many old envelopes and letters, mainly dating from the time of the Second World War. It is some of these that are included here and the reader of this article probably has a greater understanding of their Philatelic interest than I do!

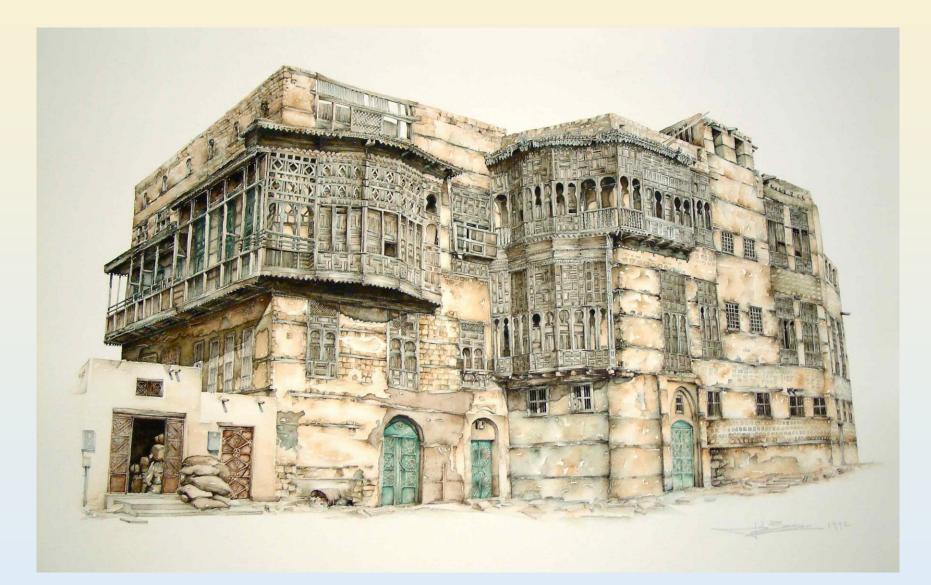
I still have the old dowry chest and although my own collection has expanded considerably from those early days, these covers have pride of place in my Saudi albums, particularly the ones bearing the Mohamed Jabr & Son name with 'Yambo' and 'Yanbo' hand stamps plus various censor markings, as a souvenir of our happy years living on the Red Sea coast.

Charmian Bourne

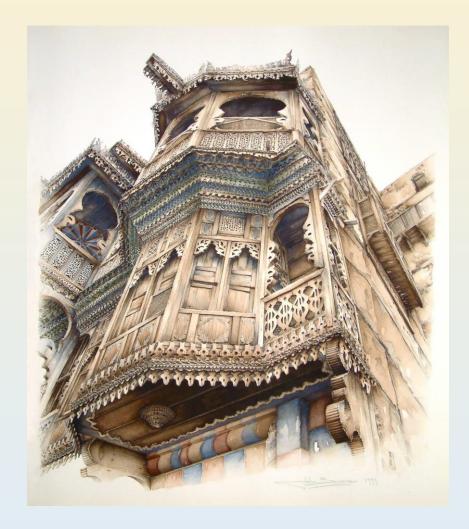
Merchants' Houses



Babatin House Back



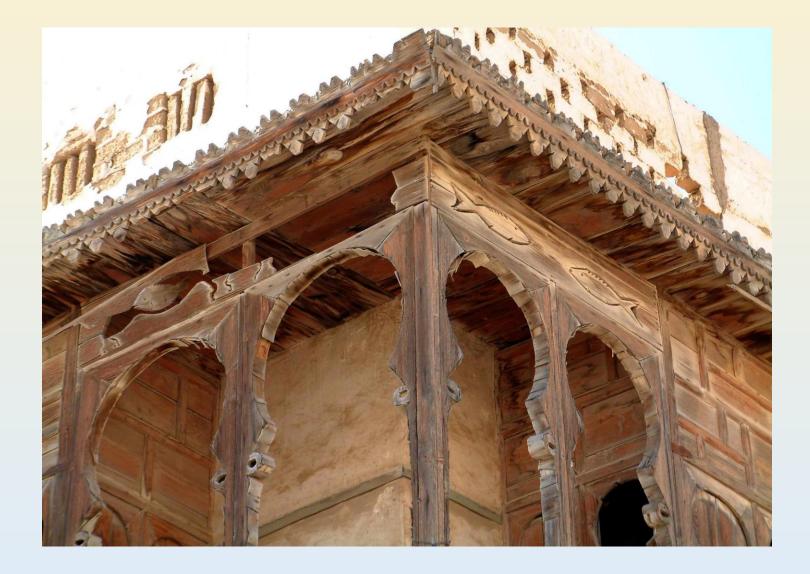
Babatin House Mashrabia



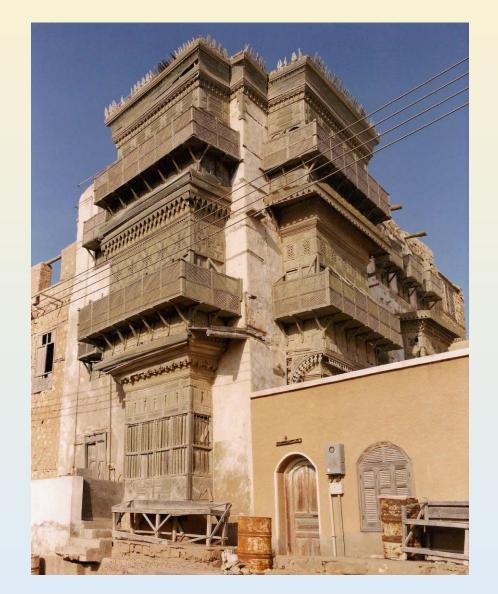
Atik Store



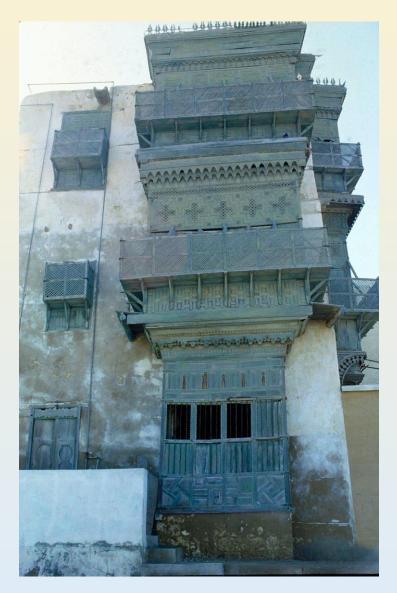
Swivelling Wooden Fish



Bin Jabr Front Elevation



Bin Jabr Front Elevation



Dowry Chest, 1990





Yanbu Cover 1 Letter

مراند نزر برسع ده (من الى مناب مف الفر المتالج الزرعيد موليد م السم رو معربات (مراستونا في متابع ما ماد ب یاغ الد غالالور ما دود الذي عنا نفر نفرانه دي غمياده رتبى كام فن زندا الات ما الخد تنا در معم مادلم وندور مم الواب فحد عظم ولوس/ تلون ذيل عام م مردت مان بالور : المغور مشام من إل م تفول الما 2 قرر منا با م فر مع تقود الم بانغ قدره جامع . دمرا با تعاد رقب مع رف أ الم م وما : شم لذي -من مؤر عليم كتابة واعظم على ماند - الم على ماند بقيم/ الفائم عالما محسا في قامه الرمال _ رجعنا الم اللهاك التي لدما لتقسر لعند الجمل وقد لاعفا عدم الحول ع الذين العلوم فن زنا حر الت - كال من عود الجب قر-متدونة الدافق الفانف وروخ عبر انم فقت الم وقد مانوس ليصف دوم الإ ات المسترا مرافعي تنارم برل في ال الل كذب كالمغل فيم ، رال جامت ودم عن لي مح ول نت زن لورش و برمان وروان عن زند-وا مشر ماعد من من من موني أروار و الدر وم و لنع ما الرور الزمارة وكور الى طر معتد من من اَحْظَ- اللَّهِ 2 (عَنْ الْمَارَ الْمَاكَ رَبِّ فَن لَكُمْ رَالَمَ عَالَمُونُ الْمُ وقفاد العد العد مار وفا مراد ف فتروغ مذیع برما بم منا حدافی مرافع ارتر اسبو عن من را ليتح أراك والحي ---







Yanbu Postcard



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