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Samuel Palmer (see page 78)

OUR 2010 CATALOGUE INCLUDES A DIVERSE GROUP OF works ranging from the fascinating and extremely rare drawings of mid seventeenth century London by the Dutch draughtsman Michel van Overbeek to the small and exquisitely executed painting of a young geisha by Menpes, an Australian, contained in the artist's own version of a seventeenth century Dutch frame.

Sandwiched between these two extremes of date and background, the filling comprises some quintessentially British works which serve to underline the often forgotten internationalism of 'British' art and patronage. Bellucci, born in the Veneto, studied in Dalmatia, and worked in Vienna and Düsseldorf before being tempted to England by the Duke of Chandos. Likewise, Boitard, French born and Parisian trained, settled in London where his fluency in the Rococo idiom as a designer and engraver extended to ceramics and enamels. Artists such as Boitard, in the closely knit artistic community of London, provided the grounding of Gainsborough's early training through which he synthesised French influences and decidedly Dutch East Anglian leanings into a style which he was to make distinctly his own, and what more English an artist can one have than Gainsborough? The 'Conjuror' Reynolds based his high concept of art on Italy whilst the artistic ambitions of the American, Benjamin West, another President of the Royal Academy, were inspired in his native Pennsylvania by a wide range of engravings of the European masters before he settled in London after a short period of study in Italy.

It is a paradox that so many of the finest and most influential British landscape painters of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century derived their inspiration and often their subject matter from Italy, Switzerland and France, as did many of the patrons of the day. Of the artists represented in this catalogue, Cozens, father and son, Towne and later, even Palmer spent extended periods of study in Italy. Turner, Girtin, Cotman and Constable's horizons were expanded by their early close engagement with the works of Canaletto and Alexander and John Robert Cozens.

Painters have always been attracted by the exotic or the unusual and the increased reliability of travel combined by its falling costs encouraged more extreme artistic exploration. David Wilkie, John Frederick Lewis and Thomas Seddon were all attracted in the 1840s and 1850s to the Near East, a region that promised unfamiliar sights as well as Biblical certainties. A moment of uncertainty is marked by the Tenniel drawing underlining Coleridge's reflection 'If men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us!'

One hopes if 'the history of art is the history of revivals' that the history of collecting is similarly mirrored and it is heartening to consider that the richly rewarding byways of seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth century British art are once again gaining greater currency within a broader context and finding a new generation of admirers.

We are greatly indebted to many friends for their help and advice in putting this catalogue together and especial mention must be made of Hugh Belsey, Briony Llewellyn and Richard Stephens who have made particularly significant contributions to the catalogue. We should also like to thank Peter Bower, Judith Bronkhurst, Celina Fox, Colin Harrison, Anne Lyles, David Scrase, Conal Shields, Richard Ormond and Greg Rubinstein for their help and advice at various stages and to Sarah Hobrough and Laurence Allan for their continuing support. It is unlikely that this catalogue would have made it to press without Deborah Greenhalgh's assiduous research and efficient organization.

LOWELL LIBSON

MICHEL VAN OVERBEEK *fl. circa* 1650–80

Four London views drawn circa 1663

A view of Westminster showing Westminster Abbey, Westminster Hall and St Margaret's Church from St James's Park

Pen and ink and sepia wash
4 × 8½ inches · 110 × 215 mm
Inscribed: *St Iaems Park*

St James's Palace from the Park

Pen and ink and sepia wash
4 × 8½ inches · 110 × 215 mm
Inscribed: *St Iaems Park*

A view in Hyde Park

Pen and ink and sepia wash
4 × 8½ inches · 110 × 215 mm
Inscribed: *In Hey Perck*

A view in Hyde Park

Pen and ink and sepia wash
4 × 8½ inches · 110 × 215 mm
Inscribed: *In Hey Perck*

COLLECTIONS
The Rev Dr Henry Wellesley (1794–1866); Private Collection, 2008

Michel van Overbeek *View of Westminster*
Pen and brown ink, with brown wash
8¼ × 13 inches · 207 × 329 mm

This group of four views of London includes not only two views in Hyde Park, but also a view of St James's Palace from the Park and an exceptionally interesting historical record of Westminster showing Westminster Abbey, Westminster Hall and St Margaret's Church as seen from St James's Park. Michel van Overbeek was a Dutch draughtsman with a distinctive style who travelled extensively in France and Italy and made what appears to be a brief stay in England *circa* 1663–66. Both Christopher White and Celina Fox have concluded that he was in London by 1663 as a distant view from Greenwich (Royal collection, Windsor Castle) shows the tower of Old St Paul's covered with scaffolding which was in place from August 1663 until the church was destroyed by fire on 4 September 1666. However in the London view in the collection of the Louvre, the tower is uncovered, which suggests either that the artist was already in London by August 1663 or that he transcribed the details of the tower from another image.

Work from Overbeek's English tour is rare suggesting that his stay was short. It would seem, on the basis of his extant British drawings, that he possibly landed at Dover, probably from France, and worked his way up to London. Amongst the five English views by Overbeek in The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (formerly collection of Sir Bruce Ingram), is a drawing of Dover Castle as well as a view on the Medway. The Fitzwilliam group also contains two views in Hyde Park similar to those in the group under discussion, whilst another is in the collection of the British Library. Other views of London and its environs include a drawing of the Palace of Westminster from the Thames in the British Museum, two views of Westminster (Westminster Public Library), Greenwich (Fitzwilliam Museum), St Albans (British Library) and Copper-mills at Kingston (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven). Two drawings depicting Hyde Park and Lambeth were recorded in the Robiano sale of 1926.

These drawings were owned by the Rev. Dr Henry Wellesley (1794–1866), nephew of the Duke of Wellington, who was a renowned scholar and connoisseur of old master drawings and prints, with a remarkable personal collection. Wellesley was for many years principal of New Inn Hall, Oxford. He was one of the original curators of the University Galleries and played a major role in acquiring by public subscription the Raphael and Michelangelo drawings from the collection of Sir Thomas Lawrence, delivered to Oxford in 1845. His own collection was largely dispersed at sales in London and Paris, both before and after his death.


St Paems Perck.


In Hey Perck.


St Paems Perck.


In Hey Perck.

ANTONIO BELLUCCI 1654–1726

The Ascension of Christ, a modello

Oil on canvas, shaped
19¼ × 12¾ inches · 489 × 324 mm
Painted *circa* 1719

COLLECTIONS

James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos, acquired from the artist;
Lord Chandos, by descent;
Lady Elizabeth Clyde, by descent to 1961;
Clyde sale, Christie's, London 24 November 1961, lot 119;
Paul Ganz, New York;
Professor Julius S. Held, 2002;
and by descent to 2009

LITERATURE

P. Cannon-Brookes, 'A Modello by Antonio Bellucci for Canons', *The Burlington Magazine*, CXVII, 1975;
E. Young, 'Another Sketch by Antonio Bellucci for Canons', *The Burlington Magazine*, CXVII, 1975;
F. Magani, *Antonio Bellucci*, Rimini, 1995, p.180, no.85, reproduced

A sketch for the Ceiling of the Duke of Chandos's Chapel at Canons by Antonio Bellucci

HUGH BELSEY

Adopting a baroque style of painting was out of kilter with the British characteristic of understatement; hyperbole was better suited to the unquestioning beliefs of Catholicism and absolute monarchy and had no place in the rationale of Britain. In these islands Baroque seems always to come with a gilded tongue in a draperied cheek. There was, however, one notable exception, Canons near Edgware, a house which was begun in 1713 to designs by William Talman, who was soon superseded by John James and a little later by James Gibbs who worked on the project between 1715 and 1719. After further disagreements between patron and architect the project was continued by John Price and Edward Shepherd and the house was eventually finished in 1725.

Canons was the built for James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos (1673–1744). His extraordinary wealth, estimated to be £600,000 in 1717, was accumulated through his position of Paymaster of the Forces Abroad during the War of the Spanish Succession. However, his prosperity was short lived and he lost money in the South Sea Bubble and in the York Buildings Company crash so his heir, Henry, the 2nd Duke, heavily in debt, demolished the house in 1747 and sold as much of it as he could.

There are three relicts of this ambitious building scheme: St Lawrence's, the parish church at Little Stanmore, which includes the luxuriant tomb of the 1st Duke and the organ used by Georg Frederic Handel whom the Duke employed between 1717 and 1719; chapel fittings were purchased by John Freeman of Fawley Court, Buckinghamshire to furnish his local parish church of St Mary the Virgin; and, the most telling remnants are in the Chapel at Great Witley in Worcestershire, now the parish church of St Michael and All Angels, where Lord Foley reassembled the ceiling and glass from the chapel. St Lawrence retains its original decorations which, like the chapel in the house nearby, were supplied by a group of émigré artists, Antonio Bellucci, Louis Laguerre and Francesco Sleter.

The Great Witley chapel was described some twenty-five years after it was built by the poet William Shenstone:
The Chapel is so very superb and elegant … it is perfect Luxury; as I truly thought it, last Sunday Se'en-night; his Pew [Lord Foley's] *is a Room with a handsome Fire-place; the Ceiling carved, painted in Compartments, and the Remainder enriched with gilt Stocco Ornaments; the Walls enriched in the same Manner; the best painted Windows I ever saw: the Monument to his Father, Mother, and Brothers, cost, he said,* [£]2000. *The Middle Aisle rendered comfortable by Iron Stoves, in the Shape of Urns; the Organ perfectly neat, and good, in Proportion to its Size.*

The ceiling was, to use a contemporary source, *painted by Senr Bellucha the middle piece representing the Ascension, the two ends being the Nativity and the Christ Crucifyed of the Sides, Ten boys with the Emblems of passions* for a price to Chandos of £490 (Huntington Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 83). In fact eight boys hold symbols of the passion and another four have no such attributes. The glass in the ten windows in the Chapel, painted by Joshua Price between 1719 and 1721, also came from Canons and cost Chandos £500. They show

the life of Christ and Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. The organ came from the same source too. 'Senr Bellucha' is a anglicized scrambling of Antonio Bellucci.

Bellucci was born in Pieve di Soligo and trained in Sibenik, then part of the Venetian republic and now part of Croatia. He moved to Venice at the age of about twenty but his best work was undertaken further afield. In 1692 he was commissioned to paint four altarpieces for the church of Klosterneuburg, a few miles north of Vienna, and then to decorate the Palais Liechtenstein with the *Triumphs of Hercules*. His ability came to the notice of Johann Wilhelm, Elector of the Palatinate and he moved to Düsseldorf. In 1716 when the Elector died, Bellucci travelled to England and was quickly taken up by the Duke of Chandos as the painter not only of his private chapel but also in the house where he contributed the saloon, staircase hall and *six noble room well proportioned … the Cielings painted by Paulucci* – another zenophobic misspelling.

The Chapel at Canons was dedicated on 29 August 1720. Plans for the building by Gibbs exist amongst the Stowe papers in London Metropolitan Archives and the paintings were set in *A Frettwork Ceiling by Mr Burgooty* at a cost of £210. 'Mr Burgooty' was Giovanni Bagutti who, in partnership with Giuseppe Artari, were two of the best *stuccatore* working in England at the time. After the sale, the plaster from Canons was reconstructed in *papier mâché* at Great Witley to frame Bellucci's paintings. To avoid any mishap and to facilitate the reconstruction, the elderly James Gibbs was employed to design the new chapel for Thomas, 2nd Lord Foley. The ceiling includes three large paintings and twelve small roundels just as Shenstone described.

Bellucci's centrepiece is painted on an irregular quattrofoil-shaped canvas and shows Christ in a mandorla of cherubs and

St Michael and All Angels Church, Great Witley, Worcestershire

Antonio Bellucci *The Ascension of Christ*

Interior, St Michael and All Angels Church, Great Witley

angels rising above gesticulating figures of the apostles who are clothed in tones heavier than those worn by the heavenly figures. The heavens and the earth are linked by gesture and a plume of cloud. The composition has been related to three preparatory oil studies, though two of them are now rejected, and now only one is considered autograph, the canvas presently with Lowell Libson Ltd. This study has a mystery and energy that befits the subject. Bellucci has divided the two worlds more distinctly: the triumphant Christ figure bathes the surrounding angels with an ethereal light so brilliant that it bleaches the figures around him which provides a vivid contrast with the terrestrial Apostles below. The Apostles themselves express their amazement with open hands and seek a little of the reflected heavenly glory and there is a dappling across the lower arc of the composition.

This oil sketch is one of very few that represent the most extraordinary flirtation between Baroque art and Britain and it mirrors the aspirations of a particularly unexpected and fruitful union between Italy and Britain.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

E. Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England 1537–1837*, 2 vols, London 1962–1970, II, pp.170–71; J. Simon, *English Baroque Sketches: The Painted Interior in the Age of Thornhill*, exhibition catalogue, May–July 1974, no.72; P. Cannon-Brooks, 'A Modello by Antonio Bellucci for Canons', *Burlington Magazine*, CXVII, April 1975, pp.238–41; E. Young, 'Another Sketch by Antonio Bellucci for Canons', *Burlington Magazine*, CXVII, April 1975, pp.240–42; F. Magani, *Antonio Bellucci*, Rimini 1995, pp.180 (nos. 85–86.4 repr.), 203 (R34 repr.); S. Jenkins, *Portrait of a Patron: the patronage and collecting of James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos*, Ashgate 2009, pp.38–41, 56–72, 190–91.

LOUIS-PHILIPPE BOITARD *fl.* 1733–1767

A wigmaker's shop

Pen and ink and brown and grey wash
8⅞ × 12¼ inches · 225 × 310 mm
Drawn *circa* 1748–9

This fascinating record of an English wigmaker's shop of the mid 18th century appears to have been intended for engraving as part of a series, perhaps as Celina Fox has recently suggested, of the trades relating to London Livery Companies. We have, however, been unable to identify a related print nor a publication for which it may have been intended. The only known related work is another drawing by Boitard of the same size and medium, with a similar ornamental cartouche of *A Tailor's Shop* (collection: H.M. The Queen, Royal Library Windsor, reproduced in A. P. Oppé, *English Drawings, Stuart and Georgian Periods, in the Collection of H.M. The King at Windsor Castle*, 1950, no.71). The drawing of *A Tailor's Shop* was engraved in reverse by George Bickham (published 29 June 1749) and titled *The Merchant Taylors.* It depicts a workshop with tailors sitting crossed-legged by a long window which was added to many attic workshops in London, where a source of natural light was essential. There is an impression of the engraving in the British Museum.

One on the wig boxes stored on the shelves at the back of the workshop is inscribed *Cpt Saunders*. This probably refers to Captain (later Admiral Sir) Charles Saunders, whose Naval exploits in the early 1740s were sufficiently noteworthy to be made use of this way by Boitard in giving verisimilitude to the activities of the work-place being depicted.

Boitard was a Parisian trained engraver, draughtsman and book illustrator who had settled in London by the early 1730s. The son of a designer, Francois Boitard (1667–1719), Louis-Philippe made six engravings after Canaletto for the fan painter Joseph Baudin, which were published in 1736. The following year he designed the frontispiece to *London Merchant* by George Lillo. He briefly returned to France in 1742 and produced a set of prints of birds, animals, hunting scenes and Turkish ambassadors, which were published by the printseller Michel Odieuvre. He married an Englishwoman and settled in England.

In the 1740s Boitard worked as a journey-man in the studio of William Henry Toms, the engraver, and subsequently established himself as a designer of satirical prints, illustrations to books, theatrical portraits and anatomical prints, as well as supplying designs which were used by the Battersea enamel factory, as well as at the Bow and Worcester porcelain works. Boitard's work is characterised by a fascination for detail and a lively line. His surviving drawings and sketches show his observant interest in London life, and produced *The Cries of London, for the year 1766, being a collection of humorous characters in 86 prints, done under the direction of Mr. Boitard* for Robert Sayer.

George Bickham, after Boitard
The Merchant Taylors
Etching and engraving · 9¾ × 13¼ inches · 250 × 335 mm

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH RA 1727–1788

A wooded landscape with a herdsman reclining near a weir

Oil on canvas
30½ × 37 inches · 775 × 940 mm
Painted *circa* 1753

COLLECTIONS
Probably the painting with Panton Betew in 1764;
Gooden and Fox, *circa* 1939;
Arthur Churchman, Baron Woodbridge of Ipswich (1867–1949);
The Hon Mrs Burnett, daughter of the above;
and thence by descent, 2009

LITERATURE
Ellis Waterhouse, *Gainsborough*, 1958, p.108, no.839;
Basil Taylor, *Painting in England 1700–1850*, catalogue of the Collection of Mrs and Mrs Paul Mellon exhibited at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1963, p.52;
John Hayes, *The Landscape Paintings of Thomas Gainsborough*, 1982, Vol.II, p.366;
To be included by Hugh Belsey in any supplement to *The Landscape Paintings of Thomas Gainsborough*

EXHIBITED
Glasgow, Burrell Collection, *In the Public Eye, Great Works of Art from Scotland and the Borders*, December 2000 – February 2001, no.30;
On loan to Gainsborough's House, Sudbury, 2001–2009

ENGRAVED
In reverse by William Austin, and published by John Ryall, 1764, as in the possession of Panton Betew

Naturally drawn to landscape painting, Thomas Gainsborough's work in the early 1750s was undergoing radical change. Earlier the artist had painted small, beautifully-observed landscapes that distilled a series of memories into a crisp composition. They would record burdocks growing on a bank, the effect of sunlight across a track or oaks growing in a water-logged marsh. As his fellow East Anglian, John Constable, observed in perhaps one of the greatest tributes made by one artist to another: 'the landscape of Gainsborough is soothing, tender, and affecting. The stillness of noon, the depths of twilight, and the dews and pearls of the morning, are all to be found in the canvases of this most benevolent and kind-hearted man. On looking at them, we have tears in our eyes, and know not what brings them'.[1]

Landscape must have provided Gainsborough with an opportunity to perfect his craft. There were no opportunities for him to be distracted, the fields and meadows around his native Sudbury needed none of the discussion that a portrait sitter might require — making a landscape painting was a direct and intense relationship with the countryside.

With the demands of family life and the challenge of moving to the larger Suffolk town of Ipswich in 1752, commissions began to grow. Gainsborough painted more portraits and also received commissions for decorative landscapes, no doubt intended for particular architectural settings such as overmantels. Unfortunately there are no paintings which remain in their original settings but the architectural space where Gainsborough's view of *Hadleigh Church* was placed can be identified in library of the Deanery Tower shown in the painting and according to the cash book of John, 4th Duke of Bedford on 15 November 1755 two landscapes cost him £37–13s, included packing cases and the carriage, and were described as, *2 Landchapes to put over Chimneys at Woburn Abbey*.[2] The original setting for one of them has been identified. By their nature these works were larger and a little more composed than his earlier work. Consequently Gainsborough had no choice but to move towards picture-making, balancing forms and directing the eye over the canvas with figures and pools of light and sometimes inserting the odd piece of artifice which made a distinct comment about the changing landscape. The landscape presently with Lowell Libson is one such painting.

On the right is an oak tree, extended beyond natural credibility to frame the composition with twisted trunk and angular branches which echo the rhythms of the landscape beyond. Framing the bottom of the composition is a similar tree trunk that has been felled, the visual purpose amplified by a red cow encouraging the eye to wander to the left. A languid herdsman lounges on the felled trunk his back gently

William Austin (after Thomas Gainsborough)
Landscape with herdsman resting beside a stream
Etching and engraving · 15⅞ × 25¾ inches · 390 × 527 mm
Published by J. Ryall, 1764

reinforcing the line of the upright tree. His pose, famously taken by Gainsborough from paintings by William Hogarth and Francis Hayman, shows him to have been something of a lad, his right hand resting on his thigh in a pose that perhaps indicates the urges of the night before.[3] To the right is a ruined building, the first time such a feature appears in Gainsborough's work though similar ones, clearly church buildings, reappear and show the failing fortunes of this particular community reflected in the lethargy of the peasant. A church tower further along the horizon presents some hope and the cart on the extreme left of the composition demonstrates that the management of the landscape continues. In the centre is a sluice, perhaps a motif the artist took from landscapes by the great seventeenth-century Dutch painter Jacob van Ruisdael who is known to have influenced the young artist.[4] But perhaps the greatest achievement in this landscape is the profile between trees and sky. Contrasting blocks of foliage break the skyline and are extended by brilliant clouds towering over the right side of the composition and contrast with those dark and cowering to the left, emphasising the recessional depth where the tree line breaks to reveal a distant landscape.

Interestingly the landscape was engraved in reverse by William Austin in 1764 for the printseller John Ryall, some ten years after the canvas was painted. At the time, the canvas was owned by Panton Betew, a rich Huguenot silvermith, who lived in Old Compton Street, Covent Garden. He acted as a picture dealer specialising in contemporary landscape painting. But the engraving extends the landscape, adding a few more trees at the horizon and the engraver gives a little more air between the framing tree trunk and the edge of the canvas. These adjustments weaken the composition, dissipating its energy. An accessible engraving encouraged copyists and at least three copies of some age are recorded. The best copy, which John Hayes has attributed to Francis Towne, does not include these adjustments and he must therefore have copied the painting rather than the print.[5]

In that canvas the copyist separates the leaves of the foliage which weakens the strong masses that provides such power in Gainsborough's work. Curiously Gainsborough made a second painting, a replica now in the Yale Center for British Art at New Haven, Connecticut, on a slightly smaller canvas.[6] Given the accessibility of this painting, albeit, surviving in poor condition, it has become the better-known canvas although there are differences, most obviously in the sky. Recent research has revealed the repetition of another early landscape on a reused canvas, indicating that Gainsborough was not averse to duplicating his successes.[7] However, it is unfortunately that, apart from the reference to Betew's ownership, neither the version at Yale nor the one under discussion have an early provenances and so, sadly, neither can be connected to original settings.

There is one further surprise connected with this particular painting. It is painted on a twill canvas, an experiment that Gainsborough is not known to have repeated. Presumably the additional diagonal thread in the weave was chosen for strength, perhaps Gainsborough was taking extra precautions, alternatively, living in the port of Ipswich, it may have been the only material that was available. More usual at this date is that the canvas has been prepared with a red ground which Gainsborough had first used for the roundel of the Charterhouse which was presented to the Foundling Hospital in May 1748.[8] It provides a warm tonality which makes these early landscapes so distinctive and so different from the work of any other artist working at the time.

HUGH BELSEY

1 From a lecture delivered at the Royal Institution on 16 June 1836 (*John Constable's Discourses* (edited by R. B. Beckett), Suffolk Record Society, Ipswich 1970, p.67).
2 Bedford Estate Archives, Cashbook 19/34/1, f.139. The paintings are included in John Hayes, *The Landscapes of Thomas Gainsborough*, 2 vols, London 1982, II, pp.356–58, 383–86 nos. 28, 50, 51 repr.
3 Perhaps the fullest explanation of this pose is given by Judy Egerton, *The National Gallery: British School*, London 1998 in her discussion of Gainsborough's portrait of John Plamplin (p.88) and by Robin Simon, *The Portrait in Britain and America*, Oxford 1987, pp.68–71).
4 The clearest example is a finished drawing in the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester after a painting by Ruisdael (John Hayes, *The Drawings of Thomas Gainsborough*, 2 vols, London 1970, pp.133–34, no.80, plate 248 and Hayes, *op.cit.*,1982, I, p.45, fig.50 and 51).
5 Hayes, *op.cit.*, 1982, I, p.250–51, repr. fig.288.
6 Hayes, *op.cit.*, 1982, II, pp.365–66, no.34 repr.
7 Details of the discovery were given in a paper at a conference by Rica Jones at the National Gallery in October 2009. The paper will be published in a National Gallery publication in 2010.
8 Hayes, *op.cit.*, 1982, pp.350–52, no.23 repr. The use of red grounds is discussed by Rica Jones in 'Gainsborough's materials and methods: A "remarkable ability to make paint sparkle"', *Apollo*, cxlvi, August 1997, pp.19ff.

Thomas Gainsborough RA
Portrait of John Plampin, circa 1754–5
oil on canvas · 19¾ × 23¾ inches · 502 × 603 mm

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH RA 1727–1788

A portrait of a woman in a white dress in a landscape background

Oil on canvas
30 × 25 inches · 762 × 635 mm
Painted in 1759

COLLECTIONS:
Charles Sedelmeyer, Paris, before 1904;
Lindenhurst Galleries, Philadelphia 1904;
John Wanamaker (1838–1922), Philadelphia, acquired by 1904;
Rodman Wanamaker (1863–1928);
by descent, 2006;
by descent 2009

LITERATURE:
Ellis Waterhouse, 'A Preliminary Check List of Portraits by Thomas Gainsborough', *The Walpole Society*, 1953, vol.XXXIII, a, p.120 (3);
Ellis Waterhouse, *Gainsborough*, 1958, p.100, cat.no.768;
To be included in Hugh Belsey's forthcoming *catalogue raisonné* of Thomas Gainsborough's portraits

EXHIBITED:
Philadelphia, Lindenhurst Galleries, 1904, no.203, repr. pl.145.

This delightful portrait dates from the closing months of Gainsborough's 'Suffolk' period. It was probably painted during the summer of 1759 after the artist returned from his exploratory trip to Bath and just before he sold his property in Ipswich in October 1759 and moved permanently to Bath. There he rapidly established his position as the pre-eminent portrait painter working outside London. Both Sir Ellis Waterhouse and Hugh Belsey, who is currently working on a catalogue raisonné of the artist's portraits, have rightly compared the present work to the famous portrait of Lady Innes (Frick Collection, New York). The portrait may also be compared with that of Mrs Gainsborough (Staatliche Museen, Berlin) and the portrait of Katherine Edgar (Private collection, UK) all of which appear to have been executed about the same time.

Belsey has pointed out that the cool tonality of the portrait, in part created by the greenish shadows, is unusual and may be regarded as something of an experiment. The treatment of the sitter's left hand is similar in technique to that seen in the Berlin and Frick portraits. Pentimenti indicate that the ribbon around the sitter's neck was originally higher but was overpainted and lowered as the painting evolved. There is also a pentiment in the foliage on the left, level with the sitter's eyes. Indeed, the present work is notable for its exceptionally beautiful state of preservation which not only reveals the artist's creative process but also the extreme sophistication of Gainsborough's painting technique by this crucial stage of his career. The delicate 'penciling' or modeling of the features, a hallmark of Gainsborough's mature technique, is seen here to full advantage as a result of the integrity of the undamaged painted surface.

Landscape painting and drawing were the great love of Gainsborough's professional career and the present work is a rare example of this period where he included a significant landscape element. This is also seen in the portraits of Mrs Gainsborough, Lady Innes and Miss Edgar. The inclusion of landscape motifs in these works completed in the final months of his life in Suffolk is perhaps an affectionate leitmotif underlining Gainsborough's consciousness of his impending reliance on an urban life.

Thomas Gainsborough
Sarah, Lady Innes, circa 1757
oil on canvas · 40 × 28⅝ inches · 1016 × 727 mm
© The Frick Collection, New York

Thomas Gainsborough
Miss Katherine Edgar
Oil on canvas · 29 × 24 inches · 736 × 609mm
Private collection, UK

ALEXANDER COZENS *circa* 1717–1786

Goats on the edge of a lake

Pencil, grey and brown wash
6½ × 8¼ inches · 165 × 210 mm
Inscribed *3* in the under-drawing
Drawn in the late 1760s

COLLECTIONS
Private collection, USA, 2009

Alexander Cozens was, perhaps, the most important figure in the development of landscape painting in Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He sought to express emotion through landscape and in so doing, gave a new voice to the early Romantic movement. Through the publication of his treatises on landscape and his activities as a teacher – he was drawing master at Eton for over twenty years and had a thriving private practice – Cozens influenced at least two generations of collectors, patrons and artists. Wright of Derby, Gainsborough, Turner, Girtin, Constable as well as his own son, John Robert were amongst the landscape painters to be directly influenced by Alexander Cozens.

Cozens, although typical of his age in his fascination in systematizing the universe, was a revolutionary in his ideas on the art of landscape. He believed that *composing landscapes by invention, is not the art of imitating individual nature; it is more; it is forming artificial representations of landscape on the general principals of nature, founded in unity of character, which is true simplicity.* This resulted in his creation of a series of systems to assist in the invention of landscape drawings, the most famous being his 'blotting' which he referred to in his *New Method of assisting the Invention in Drawing Original Compositions of Landscape* (1785/6). Cozens explained that a *blot is not a drawing, but an assemblage of accidental shapes, from which a drawing might be made, stating that in nature forms are not distinguished by lines, but by shade and colour* and he attempted to emulate this by developing a style where a drawing was composed of variations in tone rather than line.

Alexander Cozens
Landscape with trees, distant lake and hills
Pencil, watercolour and ink on paper
6¼ × 8 inches · 158 × 199 mm
Purchased as part of the Oppé collection with assistance from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund 1966

Alexander Cozens
Rocks and trees, a coastline beyond
Pencil, watercolour and ink on paper
5¾ × 7 inches · 135 × 177 mm
Purchased as part of the Oppé collection with assistance from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund 1966

JOHN ROBERT COZENS 1752–1797

The approach to Martigny, Rhone Valley, Valais

Watercolour over pencil
19⅜ × 26¾ inches · 493 × 680 mm
Signed on the original mount: *Jn Cozens*

COLLECTION
Sir Frederick Eden;
By descent to Mrs Deverell;
Sir William Eden;
Norman D. Newall, 1979;
Private collection, 1985;
Dorothy Scharf

LITERATURE
C. F. Bell and T. Girtin, 'The Drawings and Sketches of John Robert Cozens', *Walpole Society*, Vol. XXIII, 1935, no.12ii;
C. F. Bell, 'Additions and corrections to the catalogue of sketches and drawings', *Walpole Society*, 1947, p.5;

EXHIBITED
Manchester, Whitworth Art Gallery, *Watercolour Drawings by J. R. Cozens and J. S. Cotman*, 1937, no.86;
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Laing Art Gallery, *Coronation Exhibition*, 1953, no.28

'The artist suspends us above a ledge half way up a steep mountainside (rising up and out of the picture), allowing us to gaze upon a vast, misty valley enlivened by descending shafts of sunlight, subtly rendered. Contemporary Swiss artists, such as Ludwig Aberli, usually place us down in a valley amidst eye-catching activities, with the mountains kept at a safe distance' (Louis Hawes, exhibition review, *Turner Studies*, vol. 8, no.1, 1988, p.49). Here, Hawes neatly encapsulates both the content and the context of Cozens's remarkable composition which in its sense of the infinite mirrors the sentiments expounded by Edmund Burke in his 1757 treatise *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Burke's sentiments such as *I am apt to imagine likewise, that height is less grand than depth; and that we are more struck at looking down from a precipice, than looking up at an object of equal height* when discussing 'Vastness' struck a chord with John Robert Cozens who had imbued his father's teachings on emotion and chance and order in landscape and by applying these emotional reactions to an interpretation of the physical realities of an observed landscape rather than the totally idealized world of his father's drawings.

In spite of his short career, John Robert Cozens developed the theoretical exercises of his father into what Constable, when speaking of his work, characterized as 'poetry'. In his hands, the raw material of topography was transformed into statements of emotional response which transcended view-making through his ability to translate the inherent drama and sublimity of the landscapes with which he was engaging. Although a number of artists had from the 1760s been making topographical views in watercolour, they were, even in the hands of a master such as Sandby, largely works of record: when looking at one of Cozens's works one is always aware of the artist's evocation of a sense of the place rather than the bare bones of the landscape.

During his active career which lasted from the early 1770s to about 1794 when he was debilitated by what appears to be depression, his work was largely known to a group of wealthy connoisseurs and 'Grand Tourists', many of whom had been pupils of his father. It was largely through the activities of Dr Thomas Monro, the physician at Bethlem Hospital who had Cozens under his care, and the dispersal in 1805 of the wonderful series of watercolours which he had made for William Beckford that his influence on the ambitions of the first generation of nineteenth century painters became manifest. Indeed, Monro's students included Turner, Girtin, Constable and Cotman all of whom were indebted to the sublime genius of Cozens: both Turner and Constable, who had declared that Cozens *was the greatest genius that ever touched*

John Robert Cozens *Approach to Martinach Pais de Vallais*
Pencil, squared for copying · 9 × 14¼ inches · 229 × 362 mm. Dated August 30, 1776
By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum

landscape are certainly recorded as having owned works by him.

This impressive view shows the Rhone Valley in the canton of Valais, near Geneva, Switzerland. The watercolour is based on a large squared pencil study, dated 30 August 1776, part of a volume entitled *28 sketches by J. Cozens of Views in Italy* (Sir John Soane's Museum, London). The Soane Museum study is inscribed *Approach to Martinach Pais de Vallais* and dates from Cozens's first journey abroad when he was accompanied by his patron, Richard Payne Knight. A smaller wash drawing derived from this in the Leeds City Art Gallery bears the inscription *Pais de Vallais / near the Lake Geneva*. This information suggests that the scene depicts a southward view of the valley between the east end of the lake and Martigny, where the travellers are likely to have turned up the valley towards the north-east, in the direction of Sion, capital of the canton. An old label formerly attached to the mount read: *The Valley of Sion, Switzerland*, but this is likely to be a misconception as two of Cozens's other versions of the view show the sun centrally placed, high in the sky, consistent with the southerly direction.

On the back of the Soane drawing Cozens made a list of the eight names of patrons who commissioned finished watercolours of this subject. Bell and Girtin suggest the list was compiled over a period of time. The patrons listed are: Sir R. Hoare, Mr Windham, Mr Wigstead, Mr Sunderland, Mr Chalie, Dr Chelsum, Mr Walwin and Sir Frederick Eden

With exception of the watercolour presented here, and the one commissioned by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, none of the others can be traced back to the collectors on Cozens's list. The present work is the largest, and only signed example of the six recorded versions. A label previously attached to the reverse of this watercolour read *Cozens or Payne/Belonged to my Father/ Given me by Mrs Deverell*. A watercolour also in the collection of N. D. Newall (Newall sale, lot 25) was inscribed on a label in the same hand as belonging to Mrs Deverell and signed by William Eden. It was acquired by N. D. Newall at the same time and from the same source as the present watercolour. It seems likely, therefore, that the William Eden was Sir William Eden, 4th Bt (1803–1873) the second son of Sir Frederick Morton Eden, 2nd Bt (1766–1809), and younger brother of Sir Frederick Eden, 3rd Bt (killed in action at the Battle of New Orleans, 1814). Sir Frederick Morton Eden, 2nd Bt, made a journey to Italy in 1790 and, very likely ordered this view from Cozens on his return, the artist adding his name to those who had already acquired versions.

The watercolours are in the following collections:

BELL & GIRTIN CATALOGUE NO.12

I monochrome ink and wash drawing
7⅜ × 10⅝ inches
Collection: Leeds City Art Gallery (Lupton Bequest)

II 19⅜ × 26½ inches
Collection: formerly Norman D. Newall; The present work

III 17¾ × 25 inches
Collection: Sir Richard Colt Hoare; by descent, Stourhead, Wiltshire

IV 16¼ × 25 inches
Collection: City of Birmingham Art Gallery

V 15¼ × 20¾ inches
Collection: Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

VI 16¾ × 24½ inches
Collection: formerly, Victor Rienaecker

VII Squared-up pencil study.
Inscribed: *Approach to Martinach Pais de Vallais.* Dated: August 30, 1776
Collection: Sir John Soane's Museum, London

Another large version (14⅛ × 20½ inches) not listed in Bell and Girtin, was owned by the Littlewood family and subsequently purchased by Paul Mellon, (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Paul Mellon collection).

John Robert Cozens *Pay de Valais*
Watercolour · 15¼ × 20¾ inches · 388 × 527 mm

Le Valais Martigny 1838
Engraving

The Rhone valley above Martigny

GEORGE BARRET RA 1732–1784

Lake Ullswater

Bodycolour on paper laid down on linen
19 × 25½ inches, 482 × 647 mm
Signed and dated *G Barret 22 February 1781*

COLLECTIONS

Private collection, 1986;
Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin, 2009

LITERATURE

Anne Crookshank and Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin, *The Painters of Ireland c.1660–1920*, London, 1978, p.119, pl.24;
P. Butler, *Three Hundred Years of Irish Watercolours and Drawings*, London, 1990, pp.52–55, pl.49;
Anne Crookshank and Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin, *The Watercolours of Ireland: Works on Paper in Pencil, Pastel and Paint c.1600–1914*, London, 1994, pp.52–4, pl.56

George Barret RA
Ullswater, Cumberland, circa 1780
Bodycolour on paper laid down on linen
20 × 26 inches · 510 × 660 mm
© National Gallery of Ireland

When Barret emigrated to England in the early 1760s he specialised in representing wild and mountainous landscapes. Over time his style progressed and his late works in bodycolour became lighter and more vibrant in colour than his earlier work. The present work is a particularly fine example of his later style, which frequently recorded views of the Lake District. In *The Watercolours of Ireland* (*op.cit.*, p.53) Anne Crookshank and Desmond FitzGerald remark: *'Barret's late gouaches, many inspired by the Lake District, are in contrast to his earlier work, lighter and brilliant in colour, and include many peasant figures. The quality of these gouaches is very high; he has an atmospheric sense of distance and of varied light effects. A typical example shows Ullswater* [the present watercolour] *and the surrounding mountains with, in the distance, a party picnicking by a tent.'*

Ullswater is one of the Lake District's most beautiful lakes, surrounded by dramatic mountains and striking countryside; it has inspired many of the great English artists. The poet William Wordsworth, upon seeing the wild daffodils that line the shore of the lake, was inspired to write his most famous poem, *Daffodils*. In Barret's representation of this subject, the mountains which enclose the lake retire gently from its margins. An elegant group of figures can be seen enjoying a picnic on Soulby-Fell, an almost circular hill covered with ferns, to the right of the composition. A ferry transports cattle across the lake to the base of this hill, where the rest of the herd grazes. On the far side of the lake we can see the face of the mountain of Watermillock rising up into the sky.

Barret's works were greatly admired during his lifetime and between 1769 and 1782, thirty-one of his paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy and Barret's influence was considerable, partly due to the popularity of engravings based on his work. A watercolour of a similar scene (National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin) was the source of an engraving by Samuel Middiman for *Select Views in Great Britain* (1784–92). He describes the view of the bold promontory of Hollin Fell, in the centre, taken from Soulby Fell, with *the vast chaos of mountains that guard the Head of the lake* beyond.

For the most part an oil painter, whose romantic landscapes of England and Ireland had a wide appeal, Barret was not prolific in watercolour. Martin Hardie remarks that he *'possessed a fine sense of drawing combined with fluency.'* (*Water-colour Painting in Britain*, vol.II, p.87).

opposite Francis Towne 1739–1816
Detail from *A view near Canon-Teign*
See page 48

A GROUP OF WATERCOLOURS BY FRANCIS TOWNE 1739–1816

The Rose in the Wilderness

Richard Stephens

Six outstanding watercolours by Francis Towne (1739–1816), all recently with Lowell Libson, provide a fresh opportunity to explore the artist's life and work. Spanning his most vital years, the drawings trace the development of Towne's artistic vision and draughtsmanship from the early 1770s to the later 1780s. We can glimpse, through the drawings, how Towne viewed the wider world around him, and where he saw his place within it. Above all the drawings illuminate the culture, morals and politics of Towne's Exeter circle in an age of revolution, war, rapid urbanisation and social change.

Towne spent many years in Exeter and was closely associated with the city. But he had reached his mid to late twenties before moving there, and until that point had lived, trained and worked in London and its environs. Towne was baptised in Isleworth, Middlesex, in 1739, the son of a grain merchant. Aged 13 he began an apprenticeship under Thomas Brookshead (1712–1774), a leading coach painter based in the parish of St Giles-in-the-Fields, the bustling artists' quarter of mid-18th century London. Afterwards, he studied at the St Martin's Lane Academy and under John Shackleton (d.1767), the King's Principal Painter. By 1763 Towne was practising as a 'Landscape and Flower Painter. At Mr Watson's, Coach-painter, Long-acre' and displaying his work at the newly-established exhibitions organised by the Society of Artists of Great Britain (SAGB) and the Free Society of Artists. Not long after, though, Towne moved to Devon, in Joseph Farington's words 'to paint for a Coachmaker in Exeter, and in that City He remained during many years. Finding it more profitable than other practise, He devoted most of his time to give instructions as a Drawing Master, and in the intervals of His time applied to oil painting.'[1] The date of the move is unknown, but it was probably about 1764–5, when he did not exhibit in London; it certainly pre-dated 1767, when he exhibited a View of a mill at Werrington, Devonshire, at the SAGB. Thereafter Towne divided his time between Exeter and the capital, and gradually built up a clientele as a view maker and drawing master to Exeter's urban professionals and the local gentry.

The cost of living was much cheaper in Exeter than in London and, while withdrawing to a distant provincial city advertised Towne's failure to thrive professionally in the highly competitive metropolis, it also offered an escape from the precariousness of the capital's art market. Over forty years Exeter was to make Towne an independently wealthy man, but London repeatedly denied him professional recognition. His friend Richard Cosway (1742–1821) once borrowed from Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* to urge Towne to leave Exeter and re-engage with the London art market, writing: 'The more excellent a man's works are the more they ought to be seen … pray remember this & be no longer like the Rose in the Wilderness – that blooms to fade unseen & wastes its sweetness in the Desart Air.'[2]

No works by Towne from the 1760s are known so, as one of his very earliest surviving drawings, *A View Near Canonteign* dated 26 September 1772, provides a valuable opportunity to assess Towne's work at the first available moment. Towne's Exeter circle was based around his close friend, the bibliophile lawyer and landowner James White (1744–1825), and included the poet and physician Hugh Downman (1740–1809) and the

essayist and musician William Jackson (1730–1803), all three of them schooled in ancient Roman literature at the city's Free Grammar School. The group shared an independent 'Country' world view that questioned London's cultural dominance and the influence of its politics and debt-fuelled consumerism over provincial England. They instead celebrated an alternative value system based on the ancient classical ideal of 'retirement', in which they aimed to shun what they saw as the vanity, greed and duplicity of the modern city, in favour of a more contemplative, straightforward and virtuous mode of living. This fundamental ideological gulf – between London and Exeter – came to define Towne's career and found an echo in his reception by 20th century scholars.

Towne and his friends were frequent visitors to the secluded waterfalls and woodland of Canonteign, eight miles south west of Exeter, which was then owned by William Helyar (1720–1783) of Somerset; few beauty spots near the city better encapsulated their ideology of retirement and contemplation, a natural space unsullied by man. William Jackson celebrated the site's inspirational qualities:

> *Ah! lead me Genius to the roar*
> *Of falling streams – let me explore*
> *Thro many a Grot thy secret cell*
> *And in thy deep recesses dwell;*
> *For ever from the World retir'd*
> *For ever with thy raptures fir'd!* [3]

Jackson's close friend, the poet John Codrington Bampfylde (1754–1796) who lived about a mile south of Canonteign, also knew the area well. His 1770s verse *On hearing the woods of Canon-Teign in Devon were to be cut down* shows how for the Exeter group the moral condemnation of aristocratic 'city' excess was an intrinsic part of the retirement tradition as they knew it. Bampfylde condemned the commercial exploitation of ancient woodland, 'Where the lone Druid oft was wont to rove / And 'midst the Ivy-mantled Caves retreat,' to pay the gambling debts of Canonteign's owner:

> *… the baser Lord [who]*
> *Barters thy broad brown oaks for filthy gold.*
> *So may no trophy'd honors deck his board*
> *Degenerate, – or well wrought cups unfold*
> *The steed's success, and ill earned joys afford!*[4]

Towne's 1772 view of Canonteign is one of several studies that he made in the vicinity between the early 1770s and the early 1800s. In two such views, Towne makes an explicit reference to the theme of retirement and seclusion by including male figures in contemplative poses. A watercolour of the early 1770s, from the collection of Walter Augustus Brandt (d.1978), includes a large figure in the manner of Salvator Rosa, resting against a rock. An oil painting of about 1780, lot 91 in a Sotheby's sale on 29 November 1978, again features a man in repose, in this instance deep in thought while reading a book. Both of these works appear to have been made on commission, confirming the (presumably local) public's appreciation of Canonteign as a setting for contemplation and retirement.

The importance that Towne attached to *A View near Canonteign* is demonstrated by his use of it as an exemplary work to teach his pupils; an echo of it is even found in a mature work of his protege, the artist and apothecary John White Abbott (1764–1851). A view of Canonteign by an anonymous amateur artist (probably a member of the Merivale family), which is now in the Tate collection, is based on Towne's 1772 study [fig.A]. Towne taught pupils by setting them to copy drawings – his own, in this example, but also after Richard Wilson and Bolognese masters; Towne also led field trips to local beauty spots, such as Canonteign, where pupils sketched directly from nature. Towne's last recorded visit to Canonteign, in 1803, was made in the company of Abbott, who was James White's nephew and heir; Towne's drawing from the visit is at the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford, and Abbott's is at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Abbott was no less devoted to Canon Teign than his mentor. Drawings of the site by Abbott are dated 1800, 1803, 1804, 1805, 1808, 1819 and 1826; in 1809 he offered Fanny Merivale 'if I liked, in the Summer, to accompany him on any of his Sketching Rides to Canon teign.'[5] By the early 1800s, of course, Abbott was an experienced and acclaimed painter and exhibitor in his own right; Towne was less his tutor than a respected elder. So Abbott's large watercolour

FIG.A | Anon *Canonteign*, 1780s–1790s
Pencil, watercolour and pen and ink
8⅛ × 11⅝ inches · 208 × 295 mm
© Tate, London 2009

FIG.B | John White Abbott *Canonteign*, 1800
Pen and brown ink and watercolour
13¼ × 14½ inches · 337 × 367 mm · The Whitworth Art Gallery, The University of Manchester, D.2001.5

opposite Francis Towne 1739–1816
A view near Canon-Teign
See page 48

of Canonteign, dated 14 June 1800 and now at the Whitworth Art Gallery [fig.B], was not drawn under Towne's instruction. Nevertheless, with its obvious debt to Towne's 1772 view, Abbott's watercolour paid homage to his mentor's work.

The Canonteign falls themselves had many admirers but Towne was more attracted to the rocks and woods on the approach to the cascade. On a visit in 1794, the Devon topographer Rev John Swete (1752–1821) described the viewpoint that Towne chose for the 1772 view. His superlative praise for the site's beauty helps to explain the enduring attraction of the view to Towne: *I walk'd towards the Waterfall, in my way to which I past the lower skirts of a common and on a nearer approach following the narrow Path I found myself under the thick covert of some spreading Oaks – which at the same time that they offer'd me a shelter from "Days burning Eye" presented thro the opening beneath their branches a most advantageous view of the noble rock towering most sublimely above the surrounding woods. Possibly there will not be found in Great Britain a nobler object of the kind than the one I had before me – I have seen others more immense; of greater height and bulk! but I never met with a rock so compact, and of so beautiful a form, and taken in all its circumstances, so picturesque and romantic …*[6]

FIG.C | Richard Wilson
Lydford Waterfall, Tavistock, 1771–2
Oil on canvas · 68 × 66 inches · 1727 × 1676 mm
National Museums of Wales

A View near Canonteign depicts a dense and enclosed space, unmediated by framing devices and with only a limited sense of recession; the eye is not led to a horizon but upwards towards the dominating rock. It is a jarring contrast to the generalising Italianate model of landscape typified by the paintings of Claude Lorraine and Gaspar Dughet. Towne was here influenced by a painting of another Devon waterfall that the landscape artist Richard Wilson (1712/13–1782) had only recently painted for William, 2nd Viscount Courtenay (1742–1788) of Powderham Castle, and which is now in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff [fig.C]. Wilson had travelled to Exeter in the summer of 1771 to paint Lydford Waterfalls and Oakhampton Castle for Courtenay. Towne was surely aware of the visit, and must have seen Wilson's commissions at an early stage, for as well as the close connection between Wilson's painting of Lydford and Towne's Canonteign drawing, two views of Oakhampton that Towne made in June 1772, which are now at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the Yale Center for British Art, bear a close resemblance to Wilson's painting of the castle, also now at Birmingham.[7]

Lord Courtenay was the leading figure of east Devon society and was to become Towne's major patron of the 1770s. The immediacy, emotion and local detail of Wilson's two paintings for Courtenay represented a profoundly new departure for the artist, who was much better known as the leading exponent of the Claudian grand manner. David Solkin has described the difficulty of finding 'a satisfactory explanation for so far-reaching a change in Wilson's approach' in the Courtenay paintings, attributing it to the client's own tastes.[8] No doubt this was the case, but the abandonment of the grand manner also represented an intellectual challenge to the Whig establishment that mirrored the oppositional mood of the Exeter gentry, of which Courtenay was the leading member. For in casting off the conventions of Italianate landscape Towne and Wilson were rejecting the idealising visual language of the cosmopolitan elite in favour of Country localism and variety.

Though it articulated a yearning to cast off the concerns of business and politics, the ideal of 'retirement' in the early 1770s was embedded in contemporary political debate. To Country opinion, ancient woodlands like Canon Teign and the Lydford waterfalls evoked an Englishman's hard-fought inherited freedoms and the ancient patterns of a traditional rural society. These were not only culturally opposed to fashionable London living but were, many feared, in immediate jeopardy from the actions of George III's early ministries. During the 1760s and 1770s country freeholders and the provincial middle classes opposed the King over issues of constitutional liberties – notably, for Devonians, the Cider Tax of 1763, Wilkes, and the American colonists. Lord Courtenay led the county's opposition throughout this period: in 1770 the Wilkesite Middlesex Journal placed him approvingly among the 'Mob' of peers critical of the ministry; in the House of Lords he opposed the ministry's belligerence towards America; and he chaired the reformist county association in 1779–80. Wilkes himself had visited Devon in the summer of 1772, whose inhabitants he judged 'very staunch to the cause of liberty.'[9] Canonteign, Lydford, Oakhampton and other sites in the evolving canon of picturesque Devon were symbols of the roots of Country politics.

The 1770s art world also reflected these wider political issues, and Towne's exhibiting career suggests that he was attuned to the pro-Wilkes climate of his adopted city. From its inception, the Royal

opposite Francis Towne 1739–1816
Detail from *A view of the River Dee above Llangollen*
See page 49

Academy (RA) was treated by the Wilkesite press as part of the decadent court machine; SAGB membership, by contrast, 'was a badge of honour signifying support for political freedom against court tyranny.'[10] Having shunned London exhibitions while establishing himself in Exeter in the mid 1760s, Towne returned to the London art market towards the end of the decade. But instead of joining the new RA, he aligned himself ever more closely with the SAGB. Prior to the foundation of the RA Towne had exhibited only twice with the SAGB, in 1762 and 1767. Yet after the foundation, Towne began to show there annually, and he cemented his connection in 1770 by joining the organisation's Fellowship. Rather than exhibiting classical landscapes, Towne built his reputation on exhibiting views of Exeter, well known as a centre of Country opinion and the recent pro-Wilkes 'explosion' among its genteel residents.[11] Among Towne's exhibits was his 1773 painting of the city, now at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, which presents a vision of ancient borough independence guaranteed by a free church.

During the 1770s Towne established friendships among Exeter professionals and a clientele among the Devon gentry aided, undoubtedly, by his closest friend, James White, who was a figure of encouragement and support for artists and writers around Exeter. To the poet and lawyer John Herman Merivale (1779–1844) White was 'the oracle and idol of all who came within his sphere of acquaintanceship and connection.'[12] The portrait artist John Downman (1750–1824) called White 'my excellent friend.' Towne's dramatic gesture of thanks was to bequeath White his entire estate 'as a very small acknowledgement for his generous Friendship & kindness, which he showed me during so many years of my Life.' White also supported the landscape artist John Gendall (1791–1865), who worked in his household as a youth; John White Abbott, of course, was White's nephew. In 1781 Hugh Downman celebrated White's cultural patronage in a sonnet, couched in the language of metropolitan vice and rural virtue, which shows how deeply Country ideology informed the Exeter group's self-image. London, the 'vile capital', is concerned only with profit or 'short-lived fame'; 'insulted taste' retires to Exeter, the virtuous 'distant provinces', where 'unpolluted' judgement lives:

When Luxury hath pass'd it's narrower bounds,
And salutary limits, changed we find
The character, and the collective mind
Of states, while ignorance with vice abounds.
Hence, to the distant provinces, retires
From the vile capital, insulted taste;
There real poetry ne'er lights it's fires,
Or genius fashion-tutor'd runs to waste,
Profit it's only aim, or short-lived fame.
The distant provinces, where nature still
Resides, where virtue for protection flies,
Cherish the muse; the bard there takes his quill,
And writes to judgment's unpolluted eyes;
Amid whose sons, White! she inserts thy name.

The second Towne drawing in the group, *A view of the River Dee above Llangollen* dated 17 July 1777, documents White's supportive relationship with Towne. It was drawn on the tour of North Wales that the two men made together in the summer of 1777; in all probability White was sitting beside Towne above the Dee as he drew this sketch. As Towne's inscription on the drawing indicates, White commissioned an oil version of this view which, judging from Towne's ink and handwriting, was agreed at an early stage and probably on the tour itself. In all likelihood it was White's oil painting that Towne exhibited at the RA in 1779 (no.331, *A view in North Wales, near Llangollen, in Denbighshire*), ending a period of four years during which he had shown nothing in London. Finally, the Dee sketch itself became White's property in 1816, as part of Towne's bequest to his friend.

The 1777 tour took place fairly early in the life of the Welsh tourism phenomenon. To genteel tourists, North Wales came to represent a haven of rural peace, simplicity and continuity amid a rapidly urbanising world. Towne would have known much of the work of artists and writers that was helping to establish Wales as a tourist destination and no doubt these helped determine his decision to invest time there himself. Even though the pictorial tradition was very recent, there is some evidence for its impact on Towne. It made sense for him to account for it in his work, as his Exeter customers would judge his work through the knowledge of North Wales they had gained primarily through these prints and books. Towne continued to gain business from the Welsh sketches for as much as a decade after the tour. Henrietta, Lady Acland (d.1841) ordered four North Wales views, all watercolours dated 1788, including a version of *A view of the River Dee above Llangollen* [fig.D].

Pre-eminent among the artists depicting Wales was the Welshman Richard Wilson, several of whose paintings of North Wales from the 1760s had by the mid 1770s been engraved and were very widely known. Wilson's images had almost single-handedly created the nationwide reputation for beauty of the Vale of Llangollen, and

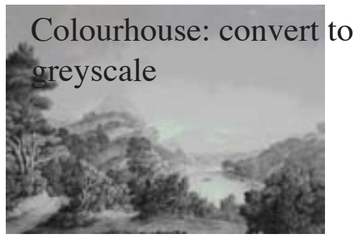

FIG.D | Francis Towne *A View on the Banks of the River Dee above Llangollen*, 1788
Pencil and watercolour · 15¼ × 21¼ inches · 385 × 540mm
Present whereabouts unknown

Francis Towne 1739–1816
A view of the River Dee above Llangollen
See page 49

North Wales's largest landowner Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn (1749–1789), who lived in the area, commissioned views of it from Wilson that were exhibited at the 1771 RA, including one of Dinas Bran, now at Yale, whose composition Towne followed closely in the Dee view here. For the Tory Williams-Wynn, Wilson's images of Llangollen grounded his political opposition to the North ministry within the Country tradition of paternal land stewardship and social harmony, in sharp contrast to the social promiscuity and commerce of the metropolis. Williams-Wynn also undertook a sketching tour with Paul Sandby, who produced *Twelve Views in North Wales*, published in 1775. Six of Sandby's twelve subjects were also drawn by Towne. In three drawings Towne adopted Sandby's viewpoints and compositional arrangement and in *A view of the River Dee above Llangollen* – almost a mirror-image of the equivalent aquatint by Sandby – Towne exploited the same strong lighting effect too [fig.E].

According to his usual practice, Towne organised the drawings from his Welsh tour into a numbered sequence. *A view of the River Dee above Llangollen* is 41 of at least 54 sketches, and among eight studies of the vale of Llangollen. At least four of the eight were drawn on 17 July, which appears to have been Towne's final day of sketching in North Wales; after this he began to make his way slowly back to the West Country, passing through Ludlow on 21 July and Glastonbury Abbey on 30 July. Of the Llangollen views adjacent to *A view of the River Dee above Llangollen* in the sequence, no.40 is at Yale; no.42 is untraced; and no.43 was exhibited at Tate Britain in 1997 (*Francis Towne*, no.9). For Towne, the Vale of Llangollen is a sequence of views that reflect the picturesque tourist's experience of travel. In each view, prominent on the left bank of the river is the road, winding its way into the distance, and linking one drawing to the next. Towne did not seek one archetypal view of the river walk; rather he presented a deliberately subjective account of his path along the Dee, in which nature is not fixed as a timeless statement of pre-ordained values but is immensely various and changing.

Three years after visiting Wales, Towne travelled to Italy. James White wrote to him there in 1781: *I cannot help fancying that your Present Tour is only a Welch Expedition upon a grander Scale, and that your daily & hourly Employments are of the same kind as when we were travelling together.*[13] The period between Wales and Italy had been highly productive for Towne. In 1777 he delivered a large oil painting of Powderham Castle to Lord Courtenay (private collection), who commissioned a further series of watercolour views of the estate; the two that survive are dated 1778 and 1779 (private collections). Courtenay's patronage must have encouraged other Devon landowners to engage Towne in the period before his departure for Rome, such as Sir Robert Palk (1717–1798) of Haldon Hall, Thomas Taylor (1731–1805) of Denbury and George Cary (also 1731–1805) of Torre Abbey. The years to 1780 were profitable, too, and for the first time Towne was able to put aside long-term savings, depositing £350 in the Bank of England in the months before setting out for Italy.

Towne's year in Italy was the centrepiece of his career as a professional artist and among the great experiences of his life. His great series of views of Rome formed the backbone of his huge retrospective exhibition at 20 Lower Brook Street in 1805, with which he brought to a close his life as a professional artist; following Towne's wishes, James White later donated the series to the British Museum after the artist's death. Two of the drawings in the group here resulted from Towne's studies in Rome. The first, *Villa Mellini* dated 20 July 1781, was among the very last sketches he made in the city before returning to England at the start of August, and is one of only two Roman drawings omitted from the British Museum gift (the other is at Leeds City Art Gallery). The second, *A Ruin on the Road going to the Ponte Nomentana,* is a 1786 version, commissioned by an Exeter client,

FIG.E | Paul Sandby *Llangollin in the County of Denbigh, from the Turnpike Road above the River Dee, 1776*
Etching and aquatint · 9½ × 12⅛ inches · 240 × 308 mm
© Trustees of the British Museum

FIG.F | Francis Towne *Arricia, 1781*
Pen and ink and watercolour · 12⅝ × 18½ inches · 320 × 470 mm
Signed, inscribed and dated 11 July 1781
© Trustees of the British Museum

Francis Towne 1739–1816
The gardens of the Villa Mellini
See page 50

of a drawing Towne made on 12 December 1780, not long after arriving in Rome.

Villa Mellini stood on Monte Mario on the northern outskirts of Rome, and its prominent hiltop situation made it a popular site from which to gain a panoramic view of Rome. One such view by John Robert Cozens (1752–1797) is in the British Museum. Although no equivalent by Towne survives, a watercolour by John White Abbott of Rome and St Peters from Monte Mario (Sotheby's, 21 March 2001, lot 170) may well be a copy after Towne. In the drawing here, though, Towne has turned his back to the city and shows instead a section of ascending parkland. Although it forms part of the Roman series, *Villa Mellini* has more in common with Towne's Campagna studies and can be compared with one work in particular: the view of Ariccia, south of Rome, which Towne drew on 11 July and which is probably his most famous Italian work [fig.F]. *Villa Mellini* is drawn on a sheet half the size of *Ariccia* and its composition corresponds closely to the left half of the larger work. Both *Villa Mellini* and *Ariccia* feature a strongly shaded tree which dominates the left foreground; in both a midground Cypress tree draws the eye into the picture and away from the dark foreground; in both, light floods the scene from the left. In *Villa Mellini*, Towne continued to develop the possibilities of the bold composition which he had used so effectively nine days earlier at Ariccia. Perhaps *Villa Mellini* is the surviving half of a much larger sketch, or perhaps Towne wished to adapt the Ariccia composition to an upright format.

Italy was a period of rapid development for Towne and the alteration in his style over the past decade is clear when contrasting *A View near Canonteign* of 1772 with *Villa Mellini*. In the earlier work Towne stands far back from his subject to let in a large, open sky; he is very interested in texture and detail. In 1781 he comes much closer to his subject; the sky is compact and his overwhelming interest is in masses. Towne had learned that bold composition enhanced not so much topographical correctness as emotive force. When he drew *Villa Mellini* Towne was about to start the long journey back to England, through the sublime Alpine landscapes of northern Italy, Switzerland and Savoy; it was in his sketches of these that Towne deployed the lessons of Italy to greatest effect, matching the dramatic subject matter with his powerful new facility and vision.

In contrast to the cultivated parkland of Villa Mellini, the other Roman drawing here shows, in Towne's inscription from the original study of December 1780, an ancient 'Sepulchre by the Road side going from / Rome to Ponta Lamentana' standing in open countryside two miles north of Rome near the Ponte Nomentana [fig.H]. The ruin, known since medieval times as the Sedia del Diavolo, features in several paintings by Richard Wilson, such as one at Tate Britain *circa* 1765–1770. John Robert Cozens, who lodged in the area in the late 1770s, also drew the Sedia del Diavolo, in a watercolour that is very similar to Towne's [fig.G].

Views of ancient Roman ruins such as *A Ruin on the Road to the Ponte Nomentana* were understood by their 18th century audiences as providing a moral commentary on the inevitable decline of the contemporary British empire if – like its ancient predecessor – liberty and civic virtue within the ruling class gave way to greed and faction. In *A Ruin on the Road to the Ponte Nomentana* Towne underlines the contrast between the former splendour of the ancient structure and its present decayed state by introducing a humble shepherd and his flock, who graze around the ruin. The ruin's moral warning about the transience of man's achievements was espcially compelling during the crises of the 1770s and 1780s. Towne's Exeter circle of politically reformist friends and clientele were receptive to this message, and none more so than the city's prosperous non-conformists,

FIG.G | John Robert Cozens
Sepulchral Remains in the Campagna near Rome
Watercolour · 10⅛ × 14⅜ inches · 257 × 367 mm
Whereabouts unknown

FIG.H | Francis Towne
A Sepulchre by the roadside going from Rome to the Ponte Nomentana, 1780
Pen and black ink and watercolour
12⅞ × 14⅞ inches · 327 × 378 mm
Inscribed and dated: F. Towne delt Rome No.20 Dec. 12 1780

opposite Francis Towne 1739–1816
Detail from *A ruin on the road going to Ponte Lamentana in the neighbourhood of Rome*
See page 51

whose strict religious observance and exclusion from public office inclined them to an oppositional moralising outlook towards elite metropolitan society. Towne exploited his time in Italy to make a good income from commissions in the 1780s; based on the fragmentary evidence that survives, between 1782 and 1786 Towne earned at least 90 guineas a year from commissions. Among his larger commissions were two sets of copies of Roman views, ordered by members of two of Exeter's non-conformist merchant families. Although there is some uncertainty, *A Ruin on the Road going to the Ponte Nomentana* was probably one of at least six Roman views ordered by Ann Fortescue (1755–1815), the daughter of the Quaker Thomas Sanders (d.1763) who married John Inglett Fortescue (1758–1840) of Buckland Filleigh in 1784/5. As Ann Sanders, she had studied drawing under Towne and produced a *View of Pynes* after Towne, dated 1778, which is in the Oppe collection at the Tate; her brother, Michael Dicker Sanders, commissioned a view of Walton Bridge from Towne in 1782, and probably also the later oil painting now at the Yale Center for British Art. Towne produced another group of Roman views around the same time for Thomas Snow (1748–1832) of Cleve, near Exeter, who was the friend and neighbour of John Merivale (1752–1821) of Barton Place, both prominent nonconformists.

Towne finished *A Ruin on the Road going to the Ponte Nomentano* in 1786, the year of his August tour of the Lake District. The last two drawings in the group here come from this short tour, which Towne made with his old friends James White and John Merivale. By 1786 the region was fairly well established as a centre of tourism. William Gilpin's *Observations relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* was recently published and Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes* was in its third edition; Towne owned copies of both. In *A View taken at Ambleside* Towne's memories of Italy are paramount. With its tall pine trees, warm evening glow and Gaspar Dughet-like mountain backdrop, Towne created a graceful Italianate scene that encapsulated West's idea that Ambleside's scenery was 'pleasing' and 'delicate', in contrast to the 'stupendous romantic' landscapes around Keswick, to the north. Towne surely had in mind one of his early Roman studies, which also featured pine trees beyond a garden wall [fig.1]. The Ambleside pine trees and characteristic stone walls also appear in a study, now at the Victorian and Albert Museum, which Towne drew at 8 o'clock in the morning on his first day of sketching in the Lakes, 7 August [fig.J]. As his inscription indicates, *A View taken at Ambleside* was mounted in 1786, in the Leicester Square apartment Towne shared with John Downman. The decision to remove this sheet from the sketchbook so soon after drawing it – more often than not Towne left his sketches unmounted for some years – suggests that he had some special assignment in mind for it. Perhaps it was a gift to James White, as the drawing was owned by his descendants until 1946.

At any rate, the special treatment given to *A View taken at Ambleside* is unsurprising, for it is one of the most effective and successful works that Towne made on the tour.

The final drawing, *The Cascade in The Groves at Ambleside*, now in a private collection (see page 46), has a more tangible link with Italy for, as Towne noted on the bank of its mount 'N.B. the paper this is drawn on I brought myself from Rome.' The note, which appears on several views of and near the waterfall, indicates how Towne's study tour to Italy continued to inform his thinking and working practices; how, by advertising his direct experience of Italy, Towne aimed to raise the status of his drawings. Like the early mounting of *A View taken at Ambleside*, the use of precious Roman paper to make a drawing is a sign of its eminence. *The Cascade in The Groves at*

FIG.1 | Francis Towne
Entrance to the Villa Ludovisi, 1780
Pen, ink and watercolour · 18¼ × 12⅝ inches · 464 × 320mm
Signed, inscribed and dated Dec 9, 1780
© Trustees of the British Museum

FIG.J | Francis Towne *Ambleside*, 1786
Pen, ink and watercolour · 6¼ × 9⅜ inches · 159 × 230mm
Signed and dated *F. Towne delt 1786, No. 11*
© V&A Images, Victoria and Albert Museum

opposite Francis Towne 1739–1816
A view taken at Ambleside
See page 52

Ambleside is one of four views that Towne made in early August of Stock Ghyll Force, a waterfall behind the Salutation Inn on the eastern edge of Ambleside. [fig.K]. The waterfall's fame began in 1775 when the poet William Mason named it as one of three 'magnificent cascades' that Thomas Gray had missed seeing by not staying the night at Ambleside – this one *not above half a mile behind the inn* which Gray had rejected as being 'dark and damp as a cellar.'[14] It was Thomas West, however, who gave the cascade the name by which it became widely known – and which Towne used – by refering to its location in 'the groves.' West considered it 'the most curious you will see in the course of the tour … The parts of this cataract are noble. The deep dark hue of the rocks in the gloomy bosom of a narrow glen, just visible by day, and the foaming water tinged with a hue of green caught from the trees and shrubs that wave over the fall, render this scene highly awful and picturesque.'[15]

Towne made repeated visits to the falls in the early days of his stay in Ambleside. The three other studies of Stock Ghyll Force concentrate on the upper part of the right-hand stream only; one is untraced, the other two are at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and Tate Britain. A drawing made on the approach to the waterfall is at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and another, lot 115 at a Sotheby's sale on 19 November 1981, showed 'A View at Ambleside coming from the Cascade in the Groves.' Two further

opposite Francis Towne 1739–1816
The cascade in the groves at Ambleside

Watercolour and pen and ink
14¾ × 10½ inches · 375 × 267 mm
Signed and dated 1786
Inscribed on the artist's mount, verso: *The Cascade in the Groves at Ambleside the Head of Lake Windermere, drawn on the spot, August 1786 by Francis Towne N.B. The paper this is drawn on I brought myself from Rome*
Private collection USA, formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd

FIG.K | Anonymous photographer
Stock Ghyll Force, circa 1895
Barrow Library, Cumbria

drawings, at Ulster Museum and in a private collection, may show Stock Ghyll, the fast-moving stream into which the waterfall flowed.

In *The Cascade in The Groves at Ambleside* the group of six Towne drawings has come full circle; for here again is an intimate study of rocks, trees and water; a scene of retreat and contemplation hidden *in the gloomy bosom of a narrow glen* of the kind that Towne had made fourteen years before at Canon Teign. Towne's approach to the subject in 1786 retained little of the reserve of 1772 but it is clear that the theme of retirement continued to inspire.

NOTES & REFERENCES

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2 Richard Cosway to Francis Towne, 15 March 1779, transcript, Paul Oppé MS, private collection.
3 *Invocation by Mr Jackson*, in MS Osborn d.237, Beinecke Library, Yale.
4 ed Roger Lonsdale, *The Poems of John Bampfylde*, Oxford 1988, p.69. The sonnet is known from two Devonian commonplace books, belonging to John Phillipps (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng misc e.241) and John Herman Merivale (Beinecke Library, Yale, MS Osborn d.237).
5 Fanny Merivale to Louisa Heath Merivale, 24 January 1809, transcript, Paul Oppé MS, private collection.
6 eds Todd Gray and Margery Rowe, *Travels in Georgian Devon: The Illustrated Journals of the Reverend John Swete*, 3 vols, Devon Books in association with Halgrove, Tiverton, 1997–2001, vol 2, p.54.
7 All three Oakhampton works are illustrated in Timothy Wilcox, Francis Towne, London 1997, pp.35–6
8 David Solkin, *Richard Wilson The Landscape of Reaction*, London 1982, p.240
9 John Wilkes ed John Almon, *The Correspondence of the late John Wilkes*, London 1805, vol 4, p.112–3.
10 Matthew Hargraves, *Candidates for Fame*, Yale 2006, p.101.
11 E.C. Clark, *The Association – British Extraparliamentary Political Organisation 1769–1793*, Harvard 1963, p.28
12 Merivale's diary entry for 1 July 1825, quoted in Anna Merivale, *Family Memorials*, Exeter 1884, p.260.
13 Transcript of letter dated 4 May 1781, Paul Oppé MS, private collection.
14 Thomas Gray, *The Poems of Mr. Gray. To which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings by W. Mason, M.A*, York, 1775, pp.365, 366
15 Thomas West, *Guide to the Lakes*, London, 1784, 3rd edition, p.77

FRANCIS TOWNE 1739–1816

A view near Canon-Teign

Pen and ink, grey and light brown wash
12⅛ × 9⅞ inches · 307 × 252 mm
Signed on the mount, dated 1773, and inscribed, and inscribed again on the reverse in the artist's hand *A View near Canon: teign in the County of Devon drawn on the spot September 26th 1772 by Francis Towne No. 2*

COLLECTIONS

Bequeathed by the artist to James White (1744–1825) of Exeter, in 1816;
on White's death in 1825, it reverted to Towne's residuary legatee, John Herman Merivale (1779–1844) and his descendants;
by descent to his granddaughters, Maria Sophia Merivale (1853–1928) and Judith Ann Merivale (1860–1945), Oxford, in May 1915;
Barbara Edith Urmsom (b.1886), Oxford, by April 1924;
Bertram Nowell Williams (b.1909), Boydell, 1962, sold by him, Christie's, 6 November 1973, lot 210 (1800 gns Wadsworth);
Christie's, 21 November 1978, lot 24 (£1500);
Private collection to 2009

EXHIBITED

London, Henry Tresham's gallery, 20 Lower Brook Street, *A series of The most pictureque scenes in the neighbourhood of Rome, Naples and other parts of Italy, Switzerland, etc., together witha select number of views of the Lakes in Cumberland, West Moreland and North Wales. The whole drawn on the spot by Francis Towne, Landscape painter*, February 1805, two drawings of this subject were in this exhibition as nos. 1 and 2, 'Canonteign, Devonshire'

LITERATURE

Timothy Wilcox, *Francis Towne*, exhibition catalogue, 1997, p.36;
To be included in Richard Stephens's *catalogue raisonné* of Francis Towne's works

FRANCIS TOWNE 1739–1816

A view of the River Dee above Llangollen

Pen and ink and grey wash
11½ × 18⅝ inches · 292 × 473 mm
Signed, dated and inscribed: *Painted this subject for James White Esq of Exeter in the county of Devon. No 41. July 17th 1777, A view of the River Dee above Llangollen, Drawn on the spot by Francis Towne*

COLLECTIONS

Bequeathed by the artist to James White (1744–1825) of Exeter, in 1816; on White's death in 1825, it reverted to Towne's residuary legatee, John Herman Merivale (1779–1844), Barton Place Exeter;
Maria Sophia Merivale (1853–1928) and Judith Ann Merivale (1860–1945), Oxford, by decent inherited in 1915;
Miss Emily Norrie, Pequot Avenue, New London, Connecticut acquired from Judith Merivale, August 1933 for £8;
Norrie sale, Parke Bernet, New York, April 21 1971, lot 183 (a pair with a *View in Cumberland*) for $200 to Agnew;
Private collection, 1973;
Private collection, 1977;
Private collection

LITERATURE

To be included in Richard Stephens's *catalogue raisonné* of Francis Towne's works

FRANCIS TOWNE 1739–1816

The gardens of the Villa Mellini

Pen and ink and grey wash
12⅝ × 9³⁄₁₆ inches · 320 × 234 mm
Signed, inscribed and dated verso: *No. 50 Rome Villa Malini July 20th 1781 drawn on the spot by Francis Towne evening sun from the left hand*

COLLECTIONS

Bequeathed by the artist to James White (1744–1825) of Exeter, in 1816; on White's death in 1825, it reverted to Towne's residuary legatee, John Herman Merivale (1779–1844), Barton Place Exeter;
Maria Sophia Merivale (1853–1928) and Judith Ann Merivale (1860–1945), inherited in 1915;
Sold by the above 1 March 1935 to Agnew (£8);
Margaret Pilkington (1891–1974), acquired from the above, 1 March 1935 for £1;
and by descent to 1985;
Private collection;
And by descent

EXHIBITED

London, Leger Galleries, *English Watercolours and Drawings*, 1986, no.5

LITERATURE

Timothy Wilcox, *Francis Towne*, exhibition catalogue, 1997, p.78;
To be included in Richard Stephens's *catalogue raisonné* of Francis Towne's works

FRANCIS TOWNE 1739–1816

A ruin on the road going to Ponte Lamentana in the neighbourhood of Rome

Watercolour
12⅝ × 18½ inches · 320 × 470 mm
Signed and dated 1786, also inscribed verso on the original mount: *No 6/ Rome/ A view of a Sepulchre/on the left hand side of the road/ going out at the port of Pia to/ Ponte Lamentani/ drawn on the spot/ by/ Francis Towne/ 1786*

COLLECTIONS

Private collection, UK, to 1972;
Dr J. G. Goldyne, 1996;
Private collection

EXHIBITED

London, Henry Tresham's gallery, 20 Lower Brook Street, *A series of The most pictureque scenes in the neighbourhood of Rome, Naples and other parts of Italy, Switzerland, etc., together witha select number of views of the Lakes in Cumberland, West Moreland and North Wales. The whole drawn on the spot by Francis Towne, Landscape painter*, February 1805, no.139

LITERATURE

Adrian Bury, *Francis Towne: Lone Star of Watercolour painting*, 1962, p.121;
To be included in Richard Stephens's *catalogue raisonné* of Francis Towne's works

FRANCIS TOWNE 1739–1816

A view taken at Ambleside

Watercolour with pen and brown ink
9¼ × 6⅛ inches · 235 × 156 mm
Signed and dated *F. Towne, delt.*, 1786 and inscribed *No. 9* also inscribed by the artist on verso of the original backing sheet:
No. 9 A View taken at Ambleside at the Head of the Lake Windermere in Westmoreland by Francis Towne 1786 London Leicester Square 1786

COLLECTIONS

John White Abbott (1764–1851), presumably a gift from the artist;
The Rev. John White Abbott, son of the above;
Fanny and Gustavus Douglas, daughter and son-in-law of the above;
Francis Alexander Gustavus Skardon-Douglas, son of the above;
Thos Agnew & Sons, acquired from the above, 3 September 1946;
Joseph Hawksley Elliott (d.1978), acquired January 1947;
Dr Marc Fitch, acquired in 1978 from the Leger Galleries;
Private collection, 1988–2009

EXHIBITED

London, Henry Tresham's gallery, 20 Lower Brook Street, *A series of The most pictureque scenes in the neighbourhood of Rome, Naples and other parts of Italy, Switzerland, etc., together witha select number of views of the Lakes in Cumberland, West Moreland and North Wales. The whole drawn on the spot by Francis Towne, Landscape painter*, February 1805, no.60;
London, Leger Galleries, 1978, no.7;
London, Leger Galleries, *English Watercolours and Drawings*, 1987, no.1;
London, Leger Galleries, *The Fitch Collection*, 1988, no.2;
London, Tate Gallery & Leeds, City Art Gallery, *Francis Towne*, 1997–98, no.48

LITERATURE

Timothy Wilcox, *Francis Towne*, exhibition catalogue, 1997, pp.113–4, cat no.48, repr. in colour p.113;
To be included in Richard Stephens's *catalogue raisonné* of Francis Towne's works

MICHAEL ANGELO ROOKER ARA 1746–1801

Neath Abbey, Glamorganshire

Pen and ink and watercolour
Image: 10 × 14 inches · 255 × 355 mm
Mount: 013 × 17 inches · 330 × 431 mm
Each signed also inscribed on the original backing sheet: *Neath Abbey, Glamorganshire*

EXHIBITED
London, Royal Academy, 1797, no.721 (*Two views of Neath Abbey, Glamorganshire*)

Rooker initially trained under his father, who was both an architectural engraver and pantomime actor, before serving as assistant to Paul Sandby during the 1760s. He was amongst the first intake of students at the Royal Academy in 1769, however, it is not certain how long he remained a student. He was elected ARA, the following year, the first year that honour was instigated. His relationship with Sandby continued and in the 1770s, he engraved a series of Sandby's country-house views, for *The Copper-Plate Magazine*, taking over from his father, who had previously engraved much of Sandby's work. From the end of the 1770s, Rooker largely abandoned engraving, concentrating instead on furthering his career as a watercolourist and also as a scene painter, an occupation to which he was introduced by his father's connections

From the late 1780s, Rooker undertook annual sketching trips through England and Wales. At this time he also abandoned his earlier style of working in pen and ink and wash and began to work almost entirely in watercolour. The present work is unusual in that, not only is some of his pencil underdrawing still visible, but the artist has employed it to help emphasise the texture and shape of the stone.

Rooker was particularly adept at capturing the myriad textural varieties found in architecture. Furthermore, the artist's enjoyment of the interplay of light and shade created by the trees and the ensuing patterns that were projected onto the building is clearly evident by the artist's handing of the subject in these watercolours.

Like so many of his watercolours, Rooker has peopled this work with vignettes of ordinary figures; labourers going about their daily work, oblivious to the monumentality of the ruins behind them. Although to the modern eye, the contrasts this creates can be interpreted as being a social comment, this would have been unlikely to have been Rooker's intention. Rather he felt them to be an interesting and integral part of the scene; he might have intended them as a comment on a rapidly changing and disappearing rural existence. He almost certainly included them out of a desire to capture a subject as it really was, and unlike some of his contemporaries, did not want to clean up the view to make it more appealing to picturesque notions of architectural subjects.

The very reason for the founding of the Abbey on its site, good running water, led to the establishment in 1792 in the vicinity of the Abbey of an iron-works which by the 1820 consisted of two blast-furnaces and a foundry employing about four hundred workmen. A copper works was situated to the south of the Abbey. Indeed the encroachment of 'progress' on the Abbey has continued unabated to the present day and the still impressive ruins are now surrounded by modern industrial buildings and a major road.

FRANCIS WHEATLEY RA 1747–1801

Glendalough, Co. Wicklow

Pencil, pen and grey ink and watercolour
8¾ × 12⅞ inches · 222 × 327 mm
Signed with initials and dated FW /*1779*

COLLECTIONS
Private collection, 1994;
Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin, 2009

LITERATURE
William Laffan, *Painting Ireland: Topographical Views from Glin Castle*, Tralee, 2006, pp.236–8, pl.167

Glendalough, meaning 'Glen of Two Lakes', is a glacial valley in Co. Wicklow, renowned for its important early medieval monastic settlement, which was founded in the 6th Century by St. Kevin (*c.*498–618), a hermit priest. Despite being almost completely destroyed in 1398 by English troops, Glendalough has remained a place of pilgrimage. In 1825 Sir Walter Scott whilst on a visit to Glendalough, described the view as *the inestimably singular scene of Irish antiquity* (Laffan, *op.cit.*, p.236). Laffan describes this watercolour as *… one of the most delightful watercolours in the whole collection, the raking rays of a summer evening's sun create subtle shades of grey and blue which permeate the scene, casting light and shade on a series of buildings framed by a low triangle, diminishing with distance towards the right in a composition that allows for most of the picture to be filled by a great expanse of luminous sky, punctuated by puffy clouds.* (*op.cit*, p.236)

In contrast to others artists who were inspired to depict this landscape, Wheatley chose to illustrate the view down the valley, rather than up, with the sun breaking through the clouds casting shadows on the various ruins below. The light draws the eye over the ivy-strewn chapel on the left of the sheet, over the figures in the centre as they meander through the ruins and across the valley past St. Kevin's church to the right of the sheet.

The watercolour is dated 1779, which was a year of significant artistic activity in Glendalough, encouraged by Colonel William Burton (1733–1796) who had founded the Hibernian Antiquarian Society to promote the country's rich heritage. In 1779, having just been elected to the prestigious Royal Academy of Arts in London, Wheatley fled to Dublin with another man's wife with whom he lived for several years, whilst travelling the country and sketching out-of-doors. His work of this period ranges from rural scenes such as the present work, to more formal and stately subjects such as *The Irish House of Commons*, painted in 1780, and now in the collection of the Leeds Museums and Galleries.

There is another watercolour of Glendalough by Wheatley, probably executed during the same visit as the present watercolour, in the National Library of Ireland in Dublin.

Francis Wheatley RA
Gateway at Glendalough, co. Wicklow, circa 1779
Watercolour; 6½ × 9 inches, 164 × 228 mm
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

ROBERT HEALY 1743–1771

Miss Cunningham holding her King Charles spaniel

Black and white chalk heightened with bodycolour
23 × 16¾ inches · 584 × 425 mm
Signed and dated *R: Healy. 1770*
In a print frame originally supplied to the Vanneck family at Heveningham Hall, Yorkshire

COLLECTIONS

Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 August, 1961, lot 17 (presumably purchased Appleby Bros);
Appleby Bros, London;
Christie's, London, 25 May 1971, lot 17 (bt Colnaghi);
Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin, 2009

EXHIBITED

London, P. & D. Colnaghi, *Exhibition of English Drawings and Watercolours*, 1972, no.95, pl.XXXV

LITERATURE

Anne Crookshank and Desmond FitzGerald, *The Painters of Ireland c.1660–1920*, 1978, pp.73 & 76, pl.61;
Ellis Waterhouse, *The Dictionary of British 18th Century Painters*, 1981, illus. p.368, described incorrectly as by William Thompson;
Desmond Guinness, 'Robert Healy: An eighteenth-century Irish sporting artist', *Apollo*, February 1982, p.84;
Anne Crookshank and Desmond FitzGerald, *The Watercolours of Ireland: Works on Paper in Pencil, Pastel and Paint* c.1600–1914, 1994, pp.62–3

Healy's work is rare and much sought-after as his promising career was cut short by his untimely death at the age of twenty-eight. This pastel is one of his most accomplished and enchanting. In *The Painters of Ireland*, Crookshank and FitzGerald write: *He has left some of the most original works created in Ireland in the eighteenth century. He is best known for the superb series of studies of the Conollys and friends at Casteltown, hunting, skating, walking and shooting done in February 1768 …* – most notably *Tom Connolly and the Castletown Hunt* (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven); but equally skilled are his small full-length works *en grisaille*, usually of women, such as the present portrait: *Miss Cunnigham holding her King Charles spaniel*.

Robert Healy was educated at the Dublin Society Drawing Schools under Robert West. This establishment excelled in teaching the art of pastel and many artists who worked in the medium left the Drawing School with exceptional skills. He is perhaps best known for his bust portraits, examples of which hang in the National Gallery of Ireland. Healy was perhaps one of the most original of these artists because of his decision to work entirely *en grisaille*. His drawings were described by Anthony Pasquin (1761–1818) as *proverbial for their exquisite softness; they look like fine proof prints of the most capital mezzotinto engraving* (A. Pasquin, *Memoirs of the Royal Academies*, London, 1794, p.18). The delicate style of this drawing with its varying depths of chalk colouring is an apt justification of this description.

The present drawing, a portrait of Miss Cunningham, one of the daughters of the Surgeon-General Alexander Cunningham, is a fine example of Healy's work. A gentle and sentimental atmosphere is created through the elegance of the figure and the fashionably rustic background. Alexander Cunningham, a Dublin surgeon, held the post of Surgeon-General to the Army in Ireland until 1779. He subsequently worked at the charitable Meath Hospital in Dublin. Cunningham was the subject of a drawing by Charles Forrest (fl.1765–80), a contemporary of Robert Healy. They were both educated at the Dublin Society Drawing Schools and their work is similar in style.

Robert Healy *Tom Connolly of Castletown hunting with this friends, 1769*
Pastel, chalks and gouache on two sheets of joined paper · 20¼ × 53½ inches · 514 × 1359 mm
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B2000I.2.880

Charles Forrest *fl.*1765–80
Portrait of Surgeon-General Alexander Cunningham
pastel, pen or fine brush and ink heightened with white · 23½ × 17½ inches · 596 × 444 mm
Ex collection: Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin © Christie's Images Limited [2009]

BENJAMIN WEST PRA 1738–1820

The woman clothed with the sun fleeth from the persecution of the dragon

Oil with pen and ink on canvas
15½ × 11¼ inches · 395 × 286 mm
Painted *circa* 1798

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet … And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon … and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness … And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

The Bible, *The Book of Revelation*, XII

This previously unrecorded mixed-media study on canvas is closely related to one of Benjamin West's most important commissions, *The Woman clothed with the sun fleeth from the persecution of the dragon*, one of four pictures commissioned in 1797 by William Beckford for a planned but never-realized 'Revelation Chamber' at Fonthill Abbey. The chamber was intended, according to James Wyatt, the architect of Fonthill, *to have walls 5 feet thick in which there are to be recesses to admit coffins. Beckford's coffin is to be placed opposite the door. The room is not to be entered by strangers, to be viewed through wire gratings. The floor is to be of jasper … West is to paint all the pictures for this room, and is now limited to £1,000 a year while He is proceeding with the pictures* (Joseph Farington, *Diary*, 8th December 1798).

West worked on the four subjects: 'St John Called to Write the Revelation', 'A Mighty Angel Standeth upon the Land and upon the Sea', 'The Woman clothed with the sun fleeth from the persecution of the dragon' and 'The Beast Riseth Out of the Sea' and the commission was well-enough advanced for West to exhibit large studies or *modellos* for all four at the Royal Academy in 1798.

Beckford, ever capricious, soon changed his mind, and in September 1799 Farington noted *West not to paint the pictures for the Revelation Chamber, only to finish what he has begun* (*op.cit.* 15 September 1799). Beckford originally agreed to pay West £3,000 for the four pictures and made an advance of £1,000. It appears that at this time West agreed with Beckford's agent, Nicholas Williams, to complete work on the large studies at the rate of 300 guineas for two and 400 guineas for the other two. Although West maintained to Farington in January 1800 that the commission was still in progress there is no further mention of the pictures for the Revelation Chamber, even from the ever inquisitive Farington and the entire concept for this room appears to have been abandoned. Beckford took possession of the four large studies and they remained at Fonthill until its contents were dispersed in 1822 and 1823.

Benjamin West
The Woman Clothed with the Sun Fleeth from the Persecution of the Dragon
Oil on paper laid on panel
58¹¹⁄₁₆ × 27⅜ inches · 1490 × 690 mm

Albrecht Dürer *The woman of the Apocalypse and the seven headed dragon*
Woodcut, 1497–98 · 15⅜ × 10⅞ inches · 390 × 278 mm
British Museum 1895.0122.568
© Trustees of the British Museum

William Blake *The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed wit the Sun, circa* 1805
Pen and ink with watercolour over pencil
16⅛ × 13¼ inches · 408 × 337mm · Rosenwald Collection 1943.3.8999
National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

Benjamin West
Studies for the Windows of Fonthill Abbey
Pencil · 9⅛ × 7⅛ inches · 233 × 185mm
Morgan Library 1970.11.127

The present study is a particularly beautiful example of one of West's more fully realized studies and displays the artist's characteristically fluid pen-work combined with a careful handling of paint. It is unusual in being executed directly onto a lightly primed canvas rather than West's usual method of initially working on paper which would then be faced onto a canvas support. There are a number of related workings and studies pertaining to this particular image. A sheet of black chalk drawings in the Morgan Library (1970.11.127) contains five small studies of a winged woman holding a child (Ruth S Kraemer, *Drawings by Benjamin West and his son Raphael Lamar West*, 1975, pp.37–38, no.60, the recto of the sheet is reproduced as pl.39). The treatment of the winged figure in the modello shown at the Royal Academy was substantially different to that seen here and shows the woman at the point where *her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne*. The treatment of the figure shown in our picture is similar to that found in West's treatment of 'A Mighty Angel Standeth upon the Land and upon the Sea' and is especially close to a highly finished drawing for that composition in the collection of the Toledo Museum of Art.

The Book of Revelation has always exercised a strong grip on the imagination of artists from the age of Durer onwards and of West's contemporaries; William Blake was especially inspired by this particular subject.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS PRA 1723–1792

Augustus, 1st Viscount Keppel · a study for the portrait in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

Oil on book board
8¼ × 7⅛ inches · 210 × 182 mm
Painted *circa* 1779

In late 1778 a long running feud with his fellow officer, Admiral Palliser, over the causes for the defeat of the British in a naval engagement with the French, developed into a bitter political debate culminating in Keppel standing Court Martial accused under various Articles of War, two of which carried automatic death sentences if found guilty. Following his acquittal in February 1779 Keppel commissioned Reynolds to paint a half-length portrait for presentation to his supporters. The idea for this appears to have originated with John Lee, Keppel's defence lawyer, who advocated Dance as a suitable painter, however, Reynolds was an old friend of Keppel who had first sat to him in 1749. Reynolds appears to have been commissioned by Keppel to make four versions of this portrait for which he was paid £400 for 'four half lengths' (Reynolds's ledger). The portrait presented to Lee, which appears to be the 'prime' version is now in the National Maritime Museum (Mannings no.1042); the version presented to Edmund Burke is in a British private collection (Mannings no.1043); the portrait presented to John Dunning is in the National Portrait Gallery (Mannings no.1044) and presumably that in the Albemarle collection (Mannings no.1045) in the 1880s also descended from the sitter. Other versions of varying quality are known, however, what is evident was that Keppel who paid £100 for each of the portraits believed that, at Reynolds's full price, his 'presentation' portraits were autograph rather than studio repetitions. Reynolds's pocket book records numerous appointments with Keppel between May 1779 and July 1780 but some of these are evidently purely social occasions.

The acquittal also gave rise to another portrait of Keppel by Reynolds (Tate Gallery, Mannings no.1048): this time commissioned by Thomas, later Lord Erskine who had acted as Keppel's advocate at the Court Martial.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, PRA
Augustus, 1st Viscount Keppel (1725–1786),
circa 1781–83 · a study for the 'Acquittal' portrait in the Tate Gallery
Oil on panel · 8⁹⁄₁₆ × 5⅞ inches · 205 × 150 mm
Private collection, USA, formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd

Sir Joshua Reynolds, PRA
Augustus, 1st Viscount Keppel (1725–1786), *circa* 1779
Oil on canvas 50 × 40 inches · 1270 × 1060 mm

JOHN SELL COTMAN 1782–1842

St Peter Mancroft, Norwich

Pencil and watercolour on laid paper
13 × 17½ inches · 330 × 445 mm
Painted in 1801

COLLECTIONS

James N. Sherrington, by 1904;
Mrs Caleb Rose (d.1907), widow of the above;
Professor Sir Charles Sherrington, by descent;
and by descent, 2009

LITERATURE

Miklos Rajnai (et al), *John Sell Cotman 1782–1842*, 1982, no.6, p.41, repr. p.42

EXHIBITED

London, Tate, *Cotman Exhibition*, 1922, no.218;
Oxford, Oxford Art Society, *Forty-third Annual Exhibition of Pictures in the Department of Fine Art*, Ashmolean Museum, 1933, 'A selection of water colour drawings by John Sell Cotman', no.10;
London, Victoria and Albert Museum; Manchester, Whitworth Art Gallery; Bristol, Museum and Art Gallery, *John Sell Cotman 1782–1842*, 1982–3, no.6

John Sell Cotman
The Market Place, Norwich, taken from Mr Cooper's
Pencil and watercolour · 14½ × 21 inches · 368 × 534 mm
Signed and dated 1807
Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal (The Morse Gift)

This major early work by Cotman was described by Rajnai (*op.cit.*) as 'the most impressive among Cotman's first renderings of sites that were familiar to him since his infancy.' Cotman's artistic career had started in 1798, after he had moved to London from his native Norwich, colouring prints for the publisher Rudolph Ackermann. Like his close contemporaries, Turner, Girtin and Constable, Cotman had studied at Dr Thomas Monro's informal 'Academy' where he would have been made familiar with the works of Alexander and John Robert Cozens and drawings by Canaletto. In 1800 he first exhibited at the Royal Academy, showing a group of watercolours of views of Surrey, originating from a trip to Dr Monro's country house at Fetcham and of Wales, inspired by a sketching trip made in the summer of that year. Even in his earliest works Cotman demonstrated an instinctive grasp of monumentality and the inherent drama to be found in landscape as well as man's works. In this he was surely inspired by the sublime works of John Robert Cozens as well as the later works of Girtin which he would certainly have seen at the Royal Academy and probably also within the narrow circles of artistic London.

St Peter Mancroft is the largest of Norwich's churches and dates from the fifteenth century. It stands on sloping ground to the south of the provision market and a substantial brook ran behind the present buildings on the east side of the market giving access to water for the market. The buildings congregating closely around the church in the present picture were demolished in the mid-nineteenth century.

JOHN CONSTABLE RA 1776–1837

A stand of elm trees

Pencil on laid paper
19½ × 17½ inches · 495 × 444 mm
Verso: *A study of East Bergholt with the Church*
Drawn *circa* 1802

COLLECTIONS
Private collection;
William Bevan, 1999;
Private Collection, USA, 2009

LITERATURE
Charles Leggatt, *Constable, a Master Draughtsman*, London, 1994, p.178, fig.84, reproduced;
Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings of John Constable*, 1996, no.98.8, repr. pl. 82, (verso, *op.cit.*, no.99.9, repr. pl.84)

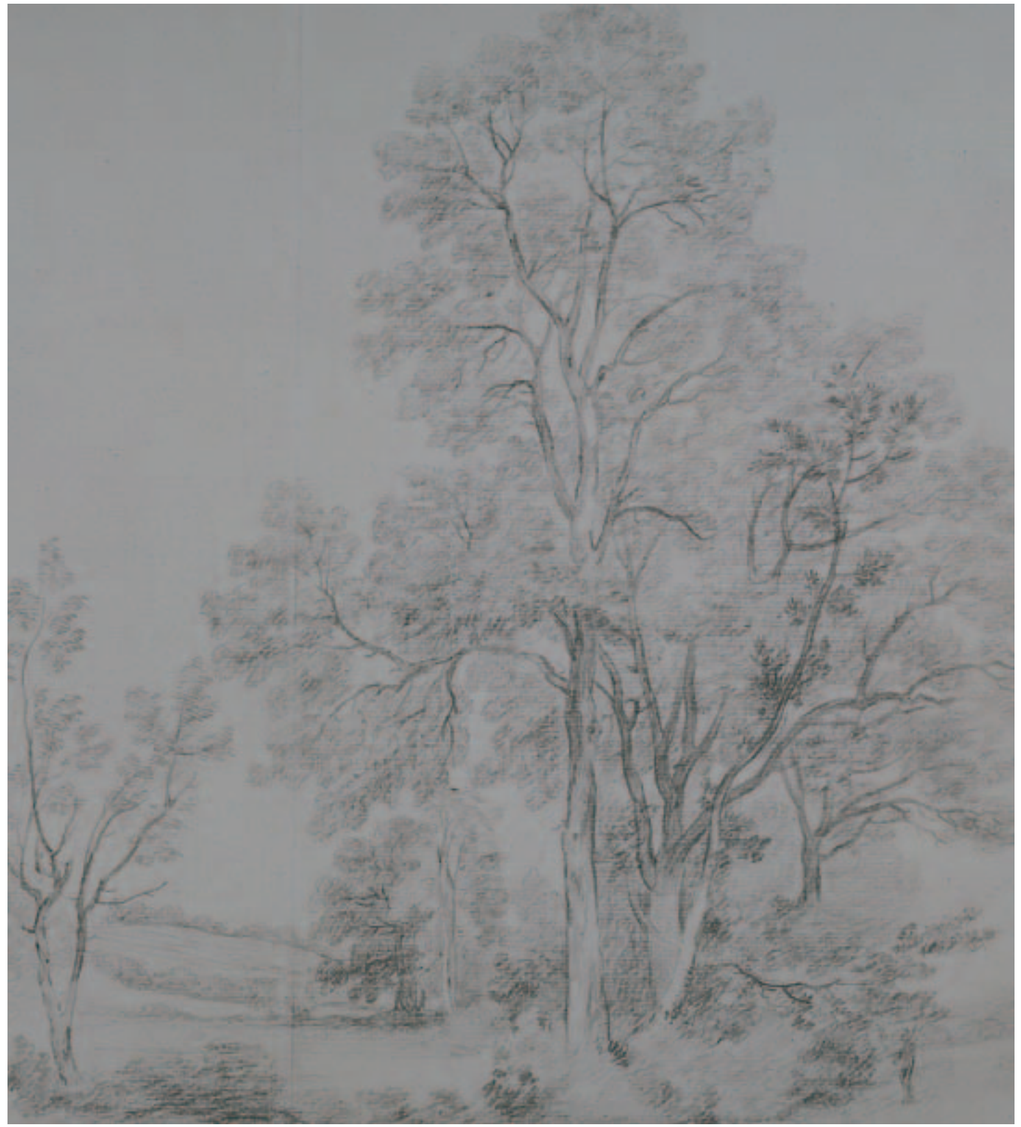
EXHIBITED
London, Spink-Leger, *Feeling through the Eye, The 'New' Landscape In Britain 1800–1830*, 2000, cat no.3

The present drawing is a splendid and important early example of the rare large-scale drawings of trees, which Constable executed throughout his career. William Blake on seeing one of Constable's drawings of trees is recorded to have exclaimed *Why this is not a drawing but inspiration* upon which Constable is said to have replied, *I never knew it before; I meant it for drawing* (C.R. Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, 1951, p.280). Indeed, it is the very objectivity of observation, especially at this period, a turning point in his career, that makes this drawing such a compelling statement. This drawing also demonstrates the debt the young artist owed to Gainsborough, whom he much admired. Early in his career, Constable produced a number of works, clearly influenced by Gainsborough and the treatment of the foliage and the zigzag use of line seen in this drawing are indications of the strong influence of the earlier artist.

In 1802 Constable had been offered the post as drawing master at the Military College at Great Marlow, but declined it on the advice of Joseph Farington and Benjamin West who advised him that it would interfere with his developing career as a painter. The acceptance, for the first time after earlier attempts, of one of his pictures at the Royal Academy possibly encouraged him in this decision. Moreover, in May 1802 Constable had a moment of revelation regarding his struggles with his art which he described thus:
For these few weeks past I believe I have thought more seriously on my profession than at any other time of my life – that is, which is the shurest way to real excellence. And this morning I am the more inclined to mention the subject having just returned from a visit to Sir G[eorge] *Beaumont's pictures. – I am returned with a deep conviction of the truth of Sir Joshua Reynolds's observation that "there is no* easy *way of becoming a good painter." It can only be obtained by long contemplation and incessant labour in the executive part … For these two years past I have been running after pictures and seeking the truth at second hand … I am come to a determination to make no idle visits this summer or to give up my time to common place people. I shall shortly return to Bergholt where I shall make some laborious studies from nature – and I shall endeavour to get a pure and unaffected representation of the scenes that may employ me with respect to colour particularly and anything else – drawing I am pretty well master of. There is little or nothing in the exhibition worth looking up to – there is room enough for a natural painture'* (John Constable to John Dunthorne, 29 May 1802).

The present drawing, painted 'from nature' belongs to a very small group of carefully observed works of 1802, the best known of which are a series of small paintings executed *en plein air* which are notable for the intelligence of observation and execution including the painting of *Willy Lott's House* (with Lowell Libson Ltd).

John Constable *Willy Lott's House*
Oil on canvas · 13¼ × 16¼ inches · 337 × 426 mm
Painted in the summer of 1802
Lowell Libson Ltd



John Constable
Elm trees at Old Hall Park, East Bergholt
Pencil with slight grey and white washes
23¼ × 19½ inches · 592 × 494 mm
Signed, inscribed and dated Octr. 22nd 1817
Victoria & Albert Museum (320–1891)
(V&A images, Victoria and Albert Museum)

Detail illustrated opposite at actual size

Unlike many of his contemporaries, who were essentially urban creatures, and therefore tended to view the countryside as a means of escape from urban reality, Constable was a countryman and as such had a different outlook on the depiction of nature. It is possible to see in his works an understanding of landscape as a place where people lived and worked not merely as a vehicle to express Romantic and Picturesque notions. He adopted a practical manner of dealing with nature, which enabled him to represent the structure of the natural phenomena without idealisation as can be seen in this drawing of trees, which are fully anantomised, their weight and growth carefully observed and noted.

Although Graham Reynolds (*op.cit.*) dated the present work to *circa* 1799, it appears to correspond, stylistically to a slightly later period, *circa* 1802. There is another early tree study, where the artist has attempted to convey sunlight filtering through the leaves, in the University of Michigan Art Museum. There are two large drawings in the V&A's collection: *Elm Trees in Old Hall Park, East Bergholt* and *Trees at East Bergholt*, both of which were executed somewhat later in his career, 1817.

JOHN CONSTABLE RA 1776–1837

Studies of a peacock

Pencil with pen and sepia ink
6½ × 7½ inches · 160 × 190 mm
Drawn in the 1820s

COLLECTIONS

Isabel Constable, the artist's daughter;
Alfred Tidey, a gift from the above;
J. Maas & Co., 1962;
Private collection

John Constable RA *Malvern Hall*, 1821
Oil on canvas · 21 9/16 × 30 7/16 inches · 542 × 782 mm
Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA, 1955.638
© Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA

Graham Reynolds suggests that this drawing was probably connected with one of Constable's commissions to paint country houses. Considered to be birds of protection, peacocks were frequently kept in the grounds of country houses at this period. Peacocks appear on the lawn of a painting of 1821 painted for Magdalene, Countess of Dysart, of the *Entrance Front of Malvern Hall, Warwickshire* in the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts (Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, 1984, no.21.82, pl.285).

Reynolds also refers to a sketch of a peacock on a mound drawn on the same sheet as rough sketch of foliage (*op.cit.* no.35.19.p.50, pl.1028) from a sketchbook used in 1835 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 316–1888). The sketches were made at Fittleworth in Sussex in July 1835. He also suggests that our study of peacocks can be compared with Constable's pen and ink study of *The butter burr in flower* (*op.cit.* no.26.7, pl.615) drawn in 1826 (Courtauld Institute Galleries, Witt Collection, London).

Charles Rhyne also notes the similarity between this drawing and a pen and ink sketch of a brace of pheasants drawn by Constable in 1834 (*op.cit.*, no.34.74, pl.981).

The present drawing was in the possession of the artist's daughter Isabel. She gave it to Alfred Tidey (1808–1892) a portrait and miniature painter, who was a friend of Constable and his family. Isabel gave him other works by her father including a small oil sketch *Fire in London*, seen from Hampstead (Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven).

WILLIAM TURNER DE LOND *fl. circa* 1820–*circa* 1837

A view from Bank Place, Limerick

Pencil and bodycolour on paper, water-marked Strasburg lily, laid down on linen
17⅛ × 22¼ inches · 436 × 566 mm
Painted in 1821

COLLECTIONS

1st Viscount Guillamore, presumably acquired from the artist;
and by descent;
Anonymous sale, Christie's London, 9 July 1985, lot 113;
Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin, 2009

LITERATURE

Anne Crookshank and Desmond FitzGerald, *The Painters of Ireland c.1660–1920*, London, 1978, p.198, pl.189 (as attributed to Samuel Frederick Brocas);
Anne Crookshank and Desmond FitzGerald, *The Watercolours of Ireland: Works on Paper in Pencil, Pastel and Paint c.1600–1914*, London, 1994, pp.146–147, pl.189;
William Laffan, *Painting Ireland: Topographical Views from Glin Castle*, Tralee, 2006, p.68, pl.37.

During his two year visit to Ireland in the early 1820s William Turner de Lond executed two views of Limerick, one from the North Strand (Limerick Museum) and the present watercolour, which complement his small surviving body of work. At one time attributed to Samuel Frederick Brocas, who was painting in Limerick at much the same time, Turner de Lond's style is less dry than Brocas, and he handles the technique of bodycolour with greater skill and confidence. Described by Laffan (*op. cit.*, p.190) as *… one of the most interesting of all the topographical artists to have worked in Ireland* Turner, an itinerant English artist, spent two years in Ireland from 1820 and in addition to depicting urban panoramas and local events at Limerick and Ennis, he most notably recorded the visit of King George IV to Dublin in 1821.

After his coronation in July 1821, George IV spent the following year working on improving his popularity across his new kingdom with visits firstly to Ireland in late 1821, and then Scotland in 1822. He painted at least four known works of the King's visit to Ireland and the largest of the works (National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin) was painted in oil and depicts the King's formal entry into Dublin in an open carriage outside the Rotunda Hospital. For Turner de Lond *… the royal visit clearly afforded him the opportunity to match his particular expertise in the genre of bustling street scenes with a public occasion that would attract ready patronage.* (Laffan, *op.cit.* p.190). A watercolour of *George IV at College Green, Dublin*, was also in the collection of the Knight of Glin.

As the first monarch to visit Ireland since the reign of King Richard II (1367–1400), George IV gained brief popularity on this visit, but this was spoiled by rumours that he had in fact travelled to Ireland to visit his mistress Elizabeth, Lady Conyngham (1769–1861) at Slane Castle, Co. Meath.

By 1822 Turner de Lond was in Edinburgh where he recorded George IV's two week visit. On 23 August, the King reviewed 3,000 volunteer cavalrymen and honoured the Clans on Portobello Sands. In his painting George IV appears on horseback in front of his entourage, wearing a Field Marshal's uniform, before cheering crowds (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh).

In considering this scene of Limerick, Turner de Lond's attention to detail, both

William Turner de Lond
Limerick from across the Shannon, 1821
Bodycolour · 16¾ × 22¼ inches · 426 × 563 mm
Limerick City Museum

William Turner de Lond
George IV, King of England, entering Dublin, 1821
67¼ × 110 inches · 1710 × 2790 mm
Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland
Photo © National Gallery of Ireland

generally and topographically, is remarkable. William Laffan (*op.cit*. p.68) describes George's Quay: *'By the 1820s this had become one of the poorer areas of Limerick, and Turner de Lond shows women washing clothes in the river at the foot of steps, and sheets hung along the quay walls to dry. There is also an open timber structure which may have been a temporary structure, or semi-permanent, market stall. Bank Place is less crowded. Women walk under parasols on the flagged pavement, while a smart carriage emblazoned with a coat of arms enters the city on a cobbled road past a water seller with barrels on a horse-drawn, solid block-wheel cart. A stage coach crosses the bridge form the old town, and the masts of the ships anchored in the port are just visible above the parapet of the bridge, for it is low tide.'*

The elegant horse-drawn landau in the centre of the watercolour is almost certainly that of Standish O'Grady, 1st Viscount Guillamore (1766–1840), who served as Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland for a number of years. This watercolour was originally part of the O'Grady collection and the ladies in the carriage are presumably members of the family.

The topography of the view has also been painstakingly recorded providing an accurate depiction of the townscape of Limerick in the 1820s. The neo-classical building in the centre of the watercolour is the County Courthouse, built in 1809 with a portico added in 1814. Until 1760 a medieval wall ran alongside the river but was replaced by George's Quay, visible in the watercolour on the far side of the river, along which stood various shops and dwellings, a number of which were refaced with red-brick facades, one with a Dutch-style gable. To the right can be seen the tower of St. Mary's Cathedral, the oldest building in Limerick, founded in 1168 and built on the site of a palace that was donated to the people of the city by Donal Mor O'Brien, King of Munster.

In 1821 an exhibition was held in Limerick which included over sixty works, of which twenty-five were by Turner de Lond, ten of these were Irish subjects, including several views of the River Shannon at Killaloe and Bunratty, as well as a view of the Market Place and Courthouse at Ennis.

As to Turner de Lond's later career, Laffan writes: *'It seems certain that de Lond returned to Ireland some sixteen years later to paint a further view of College Green* [which]*depicts a scene of devastation quite at odds with the pageantry of George's visit. It shows the aftermath of the fire of 25 April 1837 which destroyed the Royal Arcade linking Suffolk Street with College Green.'* What is particularly interesting is that while he was in Edinburgh, he made *'something of a specialty of painting views of the effects of the great fire of 1824, and the comparison with one such picture seems conclusive evidence for an attribution of the Ruins of the Royal Arcade to Turner de Lond. This extends by almost a decade our knowledge of his working dates and suggests an ongoing relationship between the artist and Ireland.'* (*op.cit*., pp.196–7)

SAMUEL PALMER 1805–1881

The Gleaning Field

Oil and tempera with pencil under-drawing on canvas
16½ × 20½ inches · 420 × 520 mm
Painted *circa* 1832–3

COLLECTIONS

John Giles, a cousin of the artist, 1811–1880;
Giles sale, Christie's, 2 February 1881, lot 620 (135 gns to the Fine Art Society);
Possibly, William Fothergill Robinson QC;
Possibly, Rev. William Fothergill Robinson, Woodspeen, Newbury, d. 1929;
Herbert A Edwards, Newbury, 1888–1978; and by descent, 2005;
Private collection, UK, 2009

EXHIBITED

Probably, London, Royal Academy, 1833, no.48 (*The Gleaning Field*);
London, Fine Art Society, *A Collection of Drawings, Paintings and Etchings by the Late Samuel Palmer*, 1881, no.2

LITERATURE

Raymond Lister, *Catalogue raisonné of the works of Samuel Palmer*, 1988, no.167 (as untraced since 1881)

In the early 1830s Samuel Palmer was developing the artistic 'voice' that had taken shape at Shoreham in Kent from the mid 1820s amongst 'The Ancients' as Palmer and his circle which included Edward Calvert, George Richmond, Francis Oliver Finch, Frederick Tatham, Henry Walter, John Giles and Welby Sherman called themselves. Palmer's father, a lay Baptist preacher had retired to Shoreham, no doubt attracted by its reputation as a centre of non-conformism and there Palmer pursued his vision of a rustic idyll rendered in deliberately archaic forms and based on a potent mix of biblical and classical imagery. The works of the early Shoreham period gently developed to a point where they display a slightly more conventional framework for Palmer's vision. By the early 1830s rural discontent and political unrest were encroaching not only the unchanging rhythms of Kentish life but making a direct impact on the direction of Palmer's art. His art at this period was also directly informed by his strong political convictions, as has been recently underlined by David Bindman (David Bindman, 'The Politics of Vision: Palmer's *Address to the Electors of West Kent*, 1832', in *Samuel Palmer 1805–1881, Vision and Landscape*, exhibition catalogue, 2005, pp.28–32). This recently rediscovered picture, which has emerged after over a century of obscurity, marks a particularly important period in the development of Palmer's vision as well as recording a moment of crisis in the political, economic and social life of late Georgian England: the arrival of the modern age.

With the end in 1815 of the long-running war with France, peace brought considerable economic and social distress with the discharging of large numbers who had been serving in the army and navy and the decline in manufacturing industries deprived of lucrative wartime orders. The boom years of the Napoleonic wars, when labour had been in short supply and corn prices had been high ended with the coming of peace which brought with it plummeting grain prices and an over-supply of labour. This combined with the continuing enclosure of common grazing land, the importation of cheap labour and the associated draconian Poor Laws, the imposition of the Church Tithe, as well as

Samuel Palmer *The Gleaning Field*, *circa* 1833
Tempera on mahogany panel · 17¼ × 23¼ inches · 439 × 592 mm
© Tate, London 2009
Bequeathed by Mrs Louisa Mary Garrett 1936, no.4842

Samuel Palmer *Pastoral Scene*
Oil on panel · 11¼ × 15¾ · 300 × 400 mm
Painted in the early 1830s
© 2005 University of Oxford – Ashmolean Museum

Samuel Palmer *The White Cloud*
Oil on canvas · 8¾ × 10¾ inches · 223 × 274 mm
Painted *circa* 1833–34
© 2005 University of Oxford – Ashmolean Museum

rapid improvements in the mechanisation of agrarian life, especially with the introduction of the horse-powered threshing machines which could do the work of many men, culminated in widespread unrest, most notably marked by the 'Swing' riots of 1830–1. The widespread outbreak of arson, machine breaking and wage rioting by agricultural labourers started in Kent and spread across the whole of southern and eastern England. The disturbances began with acts of arson in north-west Kent in June and July 1830 and by late October many areas of Kent had suffered arson attacks and rioters in the Sittingbourne district smashed machines in daylight. Agrarian unrest continued in 1831 with further arson, machine breaking and wage riots, indeed, Shoreham's landowners did not escape the spate of rick burning. In Kent there were 141 instances of arson, 81 of machine breaking, and 60 riots. The military was deployed throughout the County to support local forces of law and order although detection rates were low. No one died as a result of the unrest but repression was harsh; four men were executed for arson, 48 imprisoned and 52 transported for machine breaking, directly affecting over one-third of all Kent parishes. This movement paralleled its urban-industrial counterpart, the Luddite disturbances. The first threshing machine was destroyed on Saturday night, August 28th, 1830. By the third week of October, over one hundred threshing machines had been destroyed in East Kent. The riots spread rapidly through the southern counties of Surrey, Sussex, Middlesex and Hampshire, before spreading north into the Home Counties, the Midlands and East Anglia, moving on as far as Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. The Swing Riots soon became the largest popular rural uprising since the Peasants Revolt of the fourteenth century.

The present painting is a hugely significant work not only in Palmer's *oeuvre* but in British art of the period. In it Palmer subverted what in other hands might be a charming bucolic subject into a political commentary laden with imagery which would have been easily read by an audience of the 1830s. This imagery was carefully considered and worked upon by Palmer as evidenced by numerous pentimenti which reveal the nuances of the artist's thoughts as he completed this important statement of both his artistic prowess and social sympathies for exhibition at the Royal Academy. The very act of gleaning: the gathering of the discarded leavings of the harvest underlines the plight of the agrarian poor whilst the sickle seen in the foreground underlines the traditional implement of harvest. The standing figure of the young woman follows a traditional depiction of Ceres the Roman goddess of growing plants (particularly cereals) and a cypher for abundance. Pentimenti reveal that this figure originally was intended to follow a pose from antiquity with one raised arm, however Palmer adapted the figure to show her with two outstretched arms, a pose more often intended as emblematic of Justice.

Palmer's time at Shoreham can be divided in to two periods; the first dating from 1825 to about 1830 saw him developing his earlier 'Visionary' ideals inspired by his intense religious leanings and his admiration for Blake within a more carefully understood pastoral framework. In this he was further inspired and supported by the like-minded companions of these years the 'Ancients'. By the early 1830s these companions had largely dispersed to pursue their careers in London and Palmer, himself, had to address both his artistic development and the development of his career in the light of his straightened resources. Changing conditions forced Palmer to develop the fruits of the youthful idyll of his first five years at Shoreham and put them to practical use. It appears likely that at this period he was spending some time in London, perhaps giving drawing lessons. He certainly attempted to address the wider world by submitting work to the Royal Academy in 1830 and 1831 which although rejected is indicative of his striving for a wider recognition beyond his immediate circle. The economics of life played a part – Palmer claimed at one stage to have reduced his weekly expenditure to 5s 2d (26 pence) and looking forward to the future he was thinking ahead to marriage and by 1832 had set his sights on John Linnell's daughter, Hannah. Certainly the first few years of the decade saw Palmer involving himself in a campaign of creating small cabinet or easel pictures and this was the only period of his career when he was to focus so closely in presenting his work in this medium to the public.

1832 was to be a momentous year for Palmer. Concerned by the shifting hierarchy of agrarian life highlighted by the developing unrest, he distributed an ill considered *Address to the Electors of West Kent* which at the time was characterized as 'The ravings of this maniac'. His professional standing seemed to improve that year when the Royal Academy accepted seven works which had been sent in from his recently acquired house in Marylebone. By this stage the religious subjects of earlier years had been replaced by landscapes, often small and

experimental in technique. Amongst the works he exhibited in 1832 were 'Pastoral' scenes and 'A harvest scene'.

In 1833 Palmer exhibited five works, amongst them 'The gleaning field' (here identified as the present work) and a 'Kentish scene' which may, given the ongoing unrest and the particularity of the title, have had a particular political or social undertones. The following year Palmer exhibited six pictures at the RA including 'The harvest field'.

The present work, unseen since it was last exhibited in 1881 is the most likely candidate for Palmer's Royal Academy exhibit no.48 of 1833 'The gleaning field'. The small group of oil paintings of the early 1830s now known to us are difficult to tie down as to specific title or their earliest exhibition history as we have very few indications as to how Palmer's quirky stylistic techniques were developing and the titles of his exhibited pictures were rather generic. However, in the case of this picture it is easier to be specific as this appears to be the only painting by Palmer depicting gleaners on a large scale as the sole identifiable subject of the composition. The small oil in the collection of Tate Britain (C04842) traditionally identified as 'The Gleaning Field', could also be easily identified as 'The Harvest Field' or one of his specific titles such as 'Landscape- twilight'. On the basis that the Tate's picture remained with A.H. Palmer until 1909 one can safely assume that the picture acquired by the Fine Art Society from Giles's estate at Christie's bore the title that both the artist, who was still alive, and Giles, his closest friend, knew it by. As Pamela Sharpe has recently pointed out ("The female labour market in English agriculture during the Industrial Revolution: expansion or contraction?' *The Agricultural History Review*, 1999, vol.47, pt.2). Gleaning was being increasingly regulated by the late eighteenth century as farmers resisted trespassing on private property, but the common right was sustained and was importance to the budget of the rural poor. Gleaning started in a field as soon as the harvesters had carted the grain out of it and moved on to another one. Indeed it is fascinating that virtually all Palmer's major works made for a public audience in the period 1830 to 1835 directly focus on agrarian activity and were made at a period of rural unrest and at a time when he increasingly realized that his conservative leanings towards the *status quo* in the countryside were futile and that he was to have to increasingly focus his professional activities in London.

Samuel Palmer *View of Lee, North Devon*
Oil on canvas · 10½ × 15 inches · 267 × 381 mm
Painted *circa* 1834–35
© The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK

Samuel Palmer *The Bright Cloud*
Oil on canvas · 9¼ × 12⅝ inches · 233 × 320 mm
Painted *circa* 1833–34
© Manchester City Galleries

George Richmond RA
Portrait of John Giles (1810–1880)
Oil on canvas · 14 × 12 inches · 356 × 305 mm
University of Michigan Art Museum

John Giles (1810–80), the first owner of this picture, was Palmer's cousin and a near contemporary. Giles, one of the 'Ancients', albeit not an artist, was a stockbroker by profession and helped look after Palmer's often precarious financial affairs, managing, on occasion, to act as a buffer between Palmer and his father-in-law, John Linnell. Giles was also very close to George Richmond and his family and remained a lifelong friend with both Palmer and Richmond. Alfred Herbert Palmer recalled his father's close relationship with Giles and the way in which he assembled his select collection of Palmer's works:

For more than half a century, my father and his first cousin Mr Giles had spent Christmas together. It is difficult to imagine two natures more completely congenial; and their minds, from their youth up, seemed instinctively to follow the same channels. Permanently impressed by my father's influence early in life, his cousin during his visits to Shoreham as one of the 'Ancients,' acquired an admiration for the same kind of art, and literature, and music, and for the rich scenery, which he learned to invest with the same associations. Even many years spent in the prosaic atmosphere of the Stock Exchange failed to vitiate these early tastes, which indeed intensified with time; and what my father himself had long admitted to be immoderate or eccentric in the art and the opinions of the Shoreham period pleased the other all the more. A relic of a strict, bluff, old school, Mr Giles carried with his comely stature a sentiment of warm-hearted geniality appropriate to Christmas. From the time of his arrival he retreated to the study, where secure from all interruptions, the pair conversed of the old days, deploring modern innovations, and extolling antiquity. The plethoric 'Shoreham Portfolio' was invariably in requisition, full of the works of the Shoreham period by my father and one or two members of the clique. There was hardly one of these works that was without its story, or that failed to call up a host of associations which, even at second hand, had a charm of their own. To hear those two old men talking together over that portfolio, was to live the seven years of secluded happiness over again, to abandon oneself to the same enthusiasms, to see the same 'visions,' and to creep with awe or shake with laughter at the stories and adventures. The portfolio being ended, a little dusty colony of Shoreham pictures were reached down from the highest shelf, and put one by one upon the easel for discussion. Year after year Mr Giles's admiration for these pictures seemed to increase, and by degrees, he possessed himself of some of the best. (A. H. Palmer, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Palmer, painter and etcher*, 1892, pp.147–148).

Giles died in 1880 and his collection, comprising some 635 lots of which 185 were paintings, was sold by Christie's in 1881. The present work was purchased by the Fine Art Society for the considerable sum of 135 gns in advance of the exhibition they were to devote to the works of Palmer later that year. The picture appears to have been acquired at that time by either George Richmond or his son-in-law, William Fothergill Robinson. Richmond had presented his daughter Julia and Robinson with Palmer's *The White Cloud* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) as an anniversary present and Robinson had also been a purchaser at the Giles sale acquiring 'The Bright Cloud' (Manchester Art Gallery).

JOHN MARTIN 1789–1854

The Destroying Angel

Pen and ink with sepia wash
3½ × 5½ inches · 88 × 140 mm
Signed with initials and dated 1833

COLLECTIONS

Samuel Leigh Sotheby, d.1861;
Samuel Leigh Sotheby sale, Sotheby's,
6 February 1862, lot 131;
Private collection, UK, 1997;
Private collection, USA, 2009

EXHIBITED

Dublin, Royal Dublin Society, Exhibition of Fine Arts, 1861

ENGRAVED

By W.H. Powis, for R.Westall and J. Martin, *Illustrations of the Bible*, published by Edward Churton, 1835, no.33.

W. H. Powis (after John Martin)
The Destroying Angel
Wood engraving, 1835
by courtesy of Michael J. Campbell

Martin executed forty-eight drawings for illustrations of the Bible, all of which were based on Old Testament subjects. The drawings were engraved and published in 1835 by Edward Churton in *Illustrations of the Bible*, which received considerable acclaim and was greatly admired by fellow artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Best known as painter of religious subjects and the sublime, John Martin was described by the writer and politician Bulwer-Lytton as *the greatest, the most lofty, the most permanent, the most original genius of his age*.

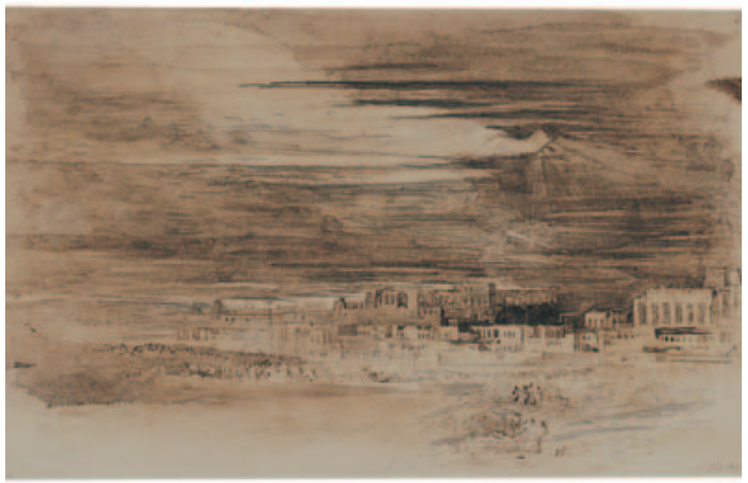
He began exhibiting at the Royal Academy in 1811, and at the British Institution, where he won premiums in 1817 for *Joshua*, and in 1821 for his *Belshazzar's Feast*, which received both adverse and favourable reviews. Among his principal large-scale compositions are *The Last Judgement*, *The Plains of Heaven* and *The Great Day of his Wrath* (all in the Tate Gallery). In addition to painting, Martin was an accomplished engraver of mezzotints and for significant periods of his life he earned more from his engravings than his paintings.

In 1823 Martin was commissioned by an American publisher, Samuel Prowett, to illustrate Milton's *Paradise Lost*, for which he was paid £2,000; and before the first twenty-four engravings were completed he was paid a further £1,500 for a second set of engravings on smaller plates. Prowett produced four separate editions of the engravings in monthly instalments, the first appearing on 20 March 1825 and the last in 1827. In 1835 *Illustrations of the Bible* by Martin and Richard Westall was published with ninety-six engravings, of which forty-eight were after drawings by Martin. This drawing of *The Destroying Angel* is one of the original illustrations for the publication and depicts the first Passover, as described in Exodus 12: 21–28.

The drawing was previously owned by Samuel Leigh Sotheby (1805–1861), who worked with his father, Samuel Sotheby, in the family firm of auctioneers in Wellington Street, Strand. 'Samuel Leigh was also something of a collector. In 1859 he staged an exhibition on the firm's premises of his 'cabinet pictures'. They were mostly the work of a wide range of English artists, including Richard Parkes Bonington, George Cattermole, William Collins, John Sell Cotman, John Constable (*A View of Windsor Castle*), Richard Dadd, William Etty, and A. V. Copley Fielding, many of them given by relatives of the artists. On other occasions he bought them at auction, 'paying more than others'. He also took a great interest in the management of the Crystal Palace, which had been re-erected near his home, Woodlands, in Norwood.

On Sotheby's death, his library and other items, including this drawing of *The Destroying Angel*, and five other of Martin's original illustrations for the Bible were sold at Wellington Street in February 1862.

Illustrated opposite at actual size



SIR EDWIN LANDSEER RA 1802–1873

Blackcock

Ink wash heightened with blue and red chalks on laid paper
9 × 11 inches · 228 × 280 mm
Signed in monogram lower right and inscribed: *Como, 17"Oct /1848*

COLLECTIONS
Private collection, Scotland, 2008

Quite apart from Landseer's continuing reputation as a painter of animals and sporting subjects, his extraordinary skill as a draughtsman both in oil as well as with the pen has become increasingly celebrated. His drawings were eagerly sough-after – usually as gifts – by his contemporaries and he can now be seen to be one of the most skilful and inspired of draughtsmen of the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The intuitive facility, inventiveness as well as the emotional qualities of the best of his drawings ranks Landseer alongside Delacroix and Hugo.

In 1840, having achieved great professional and social success, Landseer began to suffer from the depression and instability that was to shadow him for the rest of his life. However, in these years his annual visit to the Scottish Highlands where Landseer, a renowned wit and raconteur as well as keen shot and fisherman, was welcomed both by the artist and by his aristocratic hosts. Landseer always kept a sketchbook on him and he was an inveterate draughtsman making studies from life of elements that might have a later use in his paintings as well as for the amusement of his companions for whom he made many humorous studies, sketching whilst out in the field, and even sometimes at the dinner table. Here he has magnificently improvised with ink handled with a brush to create a rapid and atmospheric work, which maintains the spontaneity of a sketch but has the successful finish of a painting. The monochromatic palette and muted composition deliver a beautiful rendering of the dead bird. In writing of Landseer's paintings of dead game birds, Richard Ormond notes that they are *intensely physical and charged with emotion* (Richard Ormond, *The Monarch of the Glen: Landseer in the Highlands*, 2005, p.56).

Looking at this wonderful depiction of a dead blackcock, one is instantly reminded of Landseer's *Grouse* (Private Collection, UK) and *Ptarmigan* (Philadelphia Museum of Art), both of 1833. In those complex images, Landseer contrasts a shot bird with a living mate, thus sentimentalising and humanising their fate. He wants one to imagine the bird's experience. However, in the current drawing Landseer draws the viewer into the perspective of the sportsman. The stark use of wash brilliantly conjures a cold snowy mountain, and the restrained patches of coloured heightening add the drama: a subtle addition of blue chalk in the feathers breathes life into the bird, and the spots of bright red not only identify the markings of this prized gamebird, but also highlight its fate.

Amongst the earliest of Landseer's renditions of blackgame is in his *Scene in the Highlands* (Private Collection on loan to The National Galleries of Scotland) of 1825–28. This large and formal group portrait of the Duke of Gordon with his sister, The Duchess of Bedford, and his nephew, Lord Alexander Russell, is adorned with dead game in the foreground; amongst the trophies of the hunt is a brace of dead blackcock. However, a poignant and relevant comparison should be drawn *A Random Shot* (Bury Art Gallery and Museum). Whilst this large picture is painted in oils, and its subject is a shot deer, the stark white setting of a cold snowy hilltop is instantly reminiscent, as are the small but glaring touches of red blood; and importantly, it was painted in 1848. Ormond argues that this mountaintop setting references a sacrificial altar, as well as raising the subject to universal significance. It may well be that this composition was derived from his spontaneous sketch of the blackcock.

Landseer, who became famous for his paintings of horses, dogs and Highland Scenes, was born in London, the son of John Landseer ARA. He first exhibited works at the Royal Academy in 1815 at the precocious age of thirteen. After being elected an ARA at the age of twenty-four he became RA in 1831. Further honours followed. A great favourite of Queen Victoria, he was knighted in 1850, received a gold medal at the Paris Exhibition of 1855 and in 1866 was elected President of the RA, a position that he declined. At his death, the nation mourned, and he was undoubtedly the most famous and popular painter of his day. His depictions of animals carry on in the sporting tradition established and dominated by George Stubbs. Yet Landseer's prowess at describing fur and feather, and his ability to breathe life into his subjects, has left him unsurpassed in the realm of animal painting.

The enigmatic inscription 'Como' has so far eluded explanation. The drawing was obviously made in Scotland where Landseer is recorded as being in October 1848 and Richard Ormond has suggested that 'Como' may refer to a hunting lodge or estate known familiarly by that name.

SIR DAVID WILKIE RA 1785–1841

A study of arabs at an encampment near Jericho

Pen and ink and ink wash
16⅜ × 12⅝ inches · 415 × 320 mm
Signed, inscribed and dated: *Encampment near Jericho 5 March 1841*

COLLECTIONS

Probably, Wilkie sale, Christie's, 29 April, 1842, lot 571;
Private collection, 1982;
Private collection, UK, 1998;
Private collection, New York, 2009

EXHIBITED

London, Spink-Leger Pictures, *Master Drawings 17th to 20th Century*, 1998, cat. no.29

Sir David Wilkie
Pilgrims to Mecca and Jerusalem
Pen and ink and ink wash · 8¼ × 6½ inches · 208 × 164 mm
The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

In August 1840, Sir David Wilkie set off on an eight month tour of the Holy Land. His friend David Roberts had recently returned from a lengthy visit to the area and Wilkie would have seen Roberts's work. Wilkie believed that he would find inspiration for religious subjects, as well as *fresh proof of the correctness of the sacred narrators* (A. Cunningham, *The Life of Sir David Wilkie*, Vol. III, 1843, p.426) and in 1839, he wrote to his patron Sir Willoughby Gordon saying, *The Researchers of travellers must assist greatly in the representation of Scripture subjects.*

Inspired by the Holy Land, Wilkie produced a large number of drawings, such as the drawing, *Pilgrims to Mecca and Jerusalem* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). which he intended to use as the basis for later paintings. Unlike his contemporaries, who visited the Middle East, Wilkie had little interest in the topography of the region. The influence of the Old Masters was still uppermost in his mind and his aim seemed to be to produce paintings in this vein. The British Consul in Jerusalem, W. T. Young wrote, *A new world in his vocation seemed to be opened before him and he would exclaim 'Ah if the Italian Masters had but visited Palestine, what treasures of scene and attitude and costume might not have been added by them to the noble legacies they have left us in drawing and colour'. (A Selection of the best pictures of the late Sir David Wilkie, R.A., including his Spanish and Oriental Sketches with notices biographical and critical,* 1848).

The present drawing can be pinpointed within his journey with the aid of his journal. On 5 March he recorded: … *From the Dead Sea came to Jordan-rapid, deep and muddy. Proceeded on for several hours to the once far-famed Jericho, now but a village and by the depredations of Ibrahim Pacha, and his army on their retreat, a heap of ruins – a part of it yet smoking with fire. Here we found no refuge, but by the advise of the Sheiks proceeded towards the mountains on the way to the Holy City, to a river of the purest water. In this beautiful sequestered spot, we with our Arab escort pitched out tents for the night. A fire was lighted, refreshment cooked, and as night came on the strange appearance of our companions and newness of the situation, gave completely the air and impression of romance* (Cunningham, *op.cit*, p.403).

Wilkie's style has developed in this work, working swiftly to capture a moment in time. He is interested in recording details of expression, posture, costume and light, rather than in working out technical detail. This is a result of a need to portray new and unfamiliar people, effects and scenes, which inspired the artist to adopt a more lively, spontaneous manner. The boldness and vigour of design present in this work is characteristic of Wilkie's instinctive response to the Holy Land. Wilkie left Jerusalem for home in April and died of a sudden illness on the voyage. Wilkie's burial at sea was memorialised at the Royal Academy in the following year by *The Funeral of Sir David Wilkie* (private collection) by his friend George Jones, and *Peace: Burial at Sea* (Tate Britain) by his old sparring partner J. M. W. Turner. Wilkie died before working on any of his Middle Eastern drawings and paintings and it is impossible to gauge how his art might have developed as a result of his last tour.

JOHN FREDERICK LEWIS RA 1804–1876

A veiled Egyptian girl, Cairo

Watercolour and bodycolour
15½ × 11¼ inches; 396 × 285 mm
Drawn in the 1840s

COLLECTIONS
Private collection, 1969;
Private collection, 2009

The Woman in Blue: John Frederick Lewis's Cairo figure studies

BRIONY LLEWELLYN

When John Frederick Lewis was elected a Royal Academician in March 1865, the proprietors of the *Illustrated London News*, published an article devoted to the latest recipient of the honour.[1] By then he was already known as the 'eminent Oriental Painter', famed for the meticulously observed and exquisitely rendered scenes of Eastern life with which he had been astonishing his public for the last fifteen years. His remarkable watercolours had been exhibited to great acclaim at the Society of Painters in Water Colours and he had become its President in 1855. The following year, John Ruskin, the fiery and influential Victorian art critic had extolled his *A Frank Encampment in the Desert of Mt. Sinai* as *among the most wonderful pictures in the world*, recommending his readers to examine the painting scientifically, with a magnifying glass, particularly the 'eyes of the camels' where they would find *as much painting beneath their drooping fringes as would, with most painters, be thought enough for a whole head … Yet marvellous as this quantity of detail is, the quantity is not the chief wonder, but the breadth*.[2] At the same time, Ruskin had reminded Lewis of the fragility of the watercolour medium, and had urged him to paint in oils. Two years later, citing financial exigencies, Lewis had resigned both Presidency and membership of the 'Old' Water-Colour Society, to the consternation of his fellows, in order to become eligible for the Royal Academy.[3]

Accompanying the *ILN*'s article was a portrait of the artist, engraved from a recently taken *carte-de-visite* photograph by John Watkins portraying Lewis as the respectable Victorian gentleman he had become, and betraying no hint of the *strange and adventurous* life, *were he himself to provide the data* that he had led.[4] Even then, it seems, an air of mystery shrouded the details of his existence, just as it does now: he left no journals and few letters and the lack of a contemporary biography that so many artists of his stature were accorded has meant that his personality remains elusive. Despite his position as a member of the artistic establishment, he chose to distance himself from the hub of activity in London, preferring the suburban seclusion of Walton-on-Thames. By exhibiting regularly at the Royal Academy, however, he ensured that his art remained in the public eye, enjoying both critical acclaim and commercial success. This contrast between the solid respectability of his English existence and the apparent rakish eccentricity of his life abroad, perfectly encapsulates the opposing tensions that run through Lewis's life.[5] The informal sketch that Francis Grant made of Lewis in his early sixties [fig.4] is a telling image, giving an insight into the less official side of his English persona. He is attending a Royal Academy function, but with slightly dishevelled beard and hair, spectacles on the end of his nose, and hat rammed onto his head, he has been caught in an unguarded moment; a grandee, but more relaxed than the stiff pose presented by the Watkins photograph.[6]

As well as the technical virtuosity and minute attention to detail that Ruskin had admired, Lewis was feted for the perceived realism that characterised his subjects. Other artists who depicted Eastern subjects

had visited the region for a period of weeks, or even months, but Lewis had lived there for over a decade, in 1840–51, residing for nine years in Cairo in an old Ottoman-period house. His apparently 'exotic' way of life had been highlighted by the brilliant essayist and novelist, William Makepeace Thackeray, with his usual verve and wit, in a colourful, tongue-in-cheek account of his visit to the artist in 1844.[7] Describing a luxurious Eastern lifestyle, complete with traditional Ottoman costume, pipes, servants and an animal menagerie, he had invested his friend's existence with an Arabian Nights-style glamour. The reality, though hard to determine with any precision, was undoubtedly more complex. Comments from other western visitors are tantalizingly sparse but, while confirming his wearing of Oriental garb, they also indicate that he retained many European habits and that he associated with the Western community in Cairo: he was described by one of them as *an excellent fellow liked by everyone*.[8] The most prominent member of this group was Edward William Lane, author of the popular and authoritative compendium of Egyptian social life, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, published in 1836. Lane also adopted Eastern dress and a hybrid lifestyle that placed him, like Lewis, on the overlapping borders of the cultural divide between East and West. At the same time Lane was conscious that these distinctions were themselves shifting, that the Egyptian traditions that he recorded were not immutable, and were beginning to give way to the modernising reforms introduced by the Ottoman Sultan in Constantinople and his Viceroy Muhammad Ali in Egypt.[9]

Few of Lewis's contemporaries in England are likely to have been aware of these nuances of his existence in Egypt: in their eyes he had, as the *ILN* expressed it, become *in knowledge of the Orientals quite one of themselves*. His familiarity with the people and place of the East was established by the *portfolios of sketches and studies which have hardly been approached in variety of subject, in value as accurate records, or in artistic excellence*. During the time that he had been in Egypt he had sent no works back for exhibition, until, in 1850, his large watercolour, *The Hhareem*, caused a sensation in the London art world.[10] Its success is likely to have been one of the factors that prompted his return to England the following year, and in order to show that he had not been unproductive during those nine years, Lewis lost no time in displaying his oriental sketches and studies.[11] For him their purpose was not just to provide source material for his famed portrayals of Eastern life, but, by demonstrating that his own experience was firmly grounded in reality, they also underlined their validity, 'rendered valuable', as the *Art Journal* stated, 'by their strict authenticity'.[12]

More than 250 Turkish and Egyptian subjects, comprising on the spot sketches as well as later studies, were included in the sale held in 1877 after Lewis's death.[13] Of these, only a handful depicted women in Egypt, probably a reflection of the difficulties all western artists encountered when attempting to portray Muslim women. The problem was articulated by William Holman Hunt in letters written home from Cairo in 1854 when he was working on *an illustration of modern Egyptian life*, a painting of a young Egyptian couple in the street. This was eventually exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1861 as *A Street Scene in Cairo: the Lantern Maker's Courtship.*[14] Hunt described his frustration at the unsuccessful efforts he had made to find suitable female sitters and may have been referring to Lewis's greater familiarity with Egyptian society when he wrote:

I believe one might be more successful in obtaining a perfect knowledge of the language and the inhabitants by a year or two's residence but without a sacrifice of time sufficient I do not see that it would be possible to paint any thing of importance requiring female figures.[15]

FIG.1 | John Frederick Lewis RA
Blue Robed Fellah Woman
Watercolour and chalk
15¼ × 9½ inches · 362 × 241 mm
Ford collection (image: *Walker's Quarterly*, 1929, no.28)

FIG.2 | John Frederick Lewis RA
Blue Robed Fellah Woman
Watercolour, bodycolour and black chalk
14½ × 8¼ inches · 370 × 215 mm
Private collection (image: Sotheby's, London)

FIG.3 | John Frederick Lewis RA
A Cairo Bazaar; the Dellál
Signed and dated *J.F. Lewis* RA / *1875* (lower centre)
Pencil, watercolour, bodycolour and gum arabic on paper
26½ × 20 inches · 675 × 510 mm · Private collection
(Image: Peter Nahum at the Leicester Galleries)

FIG.4 | Sir Francis Grant PRA (1803-1878)
Portrait sketch of John Frederick Lewis RA 1865–68
Pen and ink wash on a sheet of Royal Academy stationery of the 1860s · 7 × 4⁵⁄₁₆ inches · 176 × 110 mm (sheet size)
Inscribed on the backing sheet: *J.F.Lewis R.A.*
Private collection

Hunt himself, by his own admission, had *only twenty words of Arabic, and a great deal of impatience*.[16]

How then should we view the present work, Lewis's attractive study of a young woman wearing Egyptian dress, with no date, inscription or explanation from the artist to indicate her identity? [17] Her garments seem to match the detailed description given by Lane in his chapter on the 'Personal characteristics and dress of the Muslim Egyptians' of the costume of the lower but not the poorest class of women: a blue, white and red outer 'cloak' or *milaya*, a blue *tarha* covering her head, a black *burqa'* or face-veil and red morocco shoes.[18] This type of costume was also described by another European visitor to Cairo in the 1840s, Lucinda Darby Griffith:

The middle class of females, great numbers of whom are always to be seen thronging the streets of Cairo, wear, instead of the hhab'-arah of black silk [worn by upper-class women], *one of cotton plaid, chequered blue and white, with a mixture of red at the border … Their boor'cko' or face-veil is composed of a coarse black crape, fastened at the top by a chain of brass or silver tassels, or a string of coins or beads. Their shoes are generally of red morocco, turned up at the toes.*[19]

While he was in Egypt, Lewis acquired several items of costume that he later used as props in his paintings, one of which was described in the 1877 sale as *A blue check dress of Fellah woman; and a black veil* (lot 499).

Also in the sale were two sketches entitled: *A Fellah Woman, Egypt* and *A Fellah Woman: Cairo* (lots 102 and 202). Since the term 'fellah' is probably being used here in its more general sense of 'Egyptian' rather than in its correct meaning as 'from the country', these sketches may relate to the woman in the watercolour under discussion, whose clothing is that of an urban and not a rural woman. As a European man, Lewis would have been prohibited from gaining access to a respectable woman of this class from outside his own social orbit, but his long acquaintance with Egyptian society, seems to have put him in a slightly better position than other Western artists to find female sitters: not only were female servants part of his own household but he was also said to have had *peculiar advantages, inasmuch as the slaves of the seraglio were sent expressly to dress a model as a study*.[20] In addition, from 1847 when he married Marian Harper, an English governess, he could use his own wife to pose for studies in the Egyptian clothing that he had been able to acquire.

If, by suggesting that this study represents either one of the Lewises' female servants or, perhaps, a combination of this and Marian herself modelling clothing that Lewis had obtained, we resolve the question of identity that it poses, its purpose is complicated by the existence of at least two other sketches of a woman wearing the same costume, one, almost identical, also in profile, the other seen from the front [figs 1 and 2].[21] Several of Lewis's Eastern sketches are known in duplicate versions, the second probably intended for a lithographer. Lewis had already produced two successful volumes of lithographs as a result of his travels in Spain in the previous decade, and it seems that he was thinking of compiling another series illustrating the *manners and customs of the modern Egyptians*, a visual equivalent to Lane's popular text, which might record, or indeed 'fix', for posterity Egyptian traditions before they vanished. For this series he sought practical advice from David Roberts, whose own sketches deriving from his tour of Egypt and Palestine in 1838–39 were rapidly being turned into the most successful lithographic production of the decade.[22] It is possible that the work under discussion with its more extensive application of white bodycolour represents the slightly more worked up version for the lithographer, based on the original sketch, represented by fig.1. In order to settle on the most effective composition, Lewis would have drawn his

subject from different angles (fig.2). For reasons unknown, but probably commercially driven, the projected volume of lithographs never materialised.

Another unrealised project is suggested by a compositional study that shows the woman as posed in fig.2 walking along a Cairo street, followed by a female companion.[23] It is not clear where the narrative would have led, and perhaps it was abandoned because it seemed to lack the internal dynamics evinced by Lewis's successful creations, but its interest lies in its unusual focus on women rather than men as the central figures in the composition. Towards the end of his life, Lewis produced a cluster of anecdotal paintings which highlighted a specific event taking place within the narrow streets of the Khan el-Khalili. In most of these, men predominate or at least appear to have gained the upper hand over the women portrayed, but in one, *A Cairo Bazaar; the dellál,* a scene revolving around a commercial transaction, the women are neither subservient nor incidental, but equal partners, bartering with the men [fig.3].[24] Though now clothed in the brightly coloured silks worn by the richer classes, these women, whose features resemble those of the figures in the earlier 'costume' studies, may be derived from them.

This scene of Cairo street life in which women play a prominent role is a watercolour, not exhibited and possibly sold directly to the collector, Robert Arnold Cosier. The oil version, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1875, is very similar, but has a significant alteration: the foreground women on the left have been pushed further back into the picture by a male figure, a seated Arab youth, probably the women's servant, who, holding their purse, regards the bargaining between his employers and the *dallál* with amusement.[25] It is possible that by depicting a mercantile transaction in Cairo, in a painting intended for the London art market, Lewis may have been equating the male-dominated commercial life of the two cities, different superficially, but similar in essentials.[26] When the painting was exhibited, it was accompanied by an extract from Lane's manual of Egyptian life, explaining how this brokering of merchandise operated. As conscious of the great oriental scholar's example as he had been in Cairo thirty years before, Lewis was perhaps demonstrating that he was his equal as an authority on Eastern life, using paint in the place of words to establish his pre-eminence in his own field.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 *The Illustrated London News*, Supplement, 25 March 1865, p.285.

2 John Ruskin, *Academy Notes*, 1856, in E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, ed., *The Works of John Ruskin*, London, 1903–12, vol.xiv, pp.73–74. *A Frank Encampment in the Desert of Mt. Sinai*, 1842, watercolour and bodycolour, 64.8 × 134.3 cm, signed and dated 1856, Yale Center for British Art (B1977.14.143)

3 In the 1850s the Royal Academy's rules precluded membership of another exhibiting society. The contentious circumstances of Lewis's resignation from the SPWC are detailed in Simon Fenwick, *The Enchanted River: Two Hundred Years of the Royal Watercolour Society*, Sansom and RWS, Bristol, 2004.

4 Copies of the photograph are in the Royal Academy, London and the Rob Dickins Collection, Watts Gallery, Compton. Letters in the latter collection and in the National Portrait Gallery Archive suggest that the photograph was taken in 1864.

5 These apparent dichotomies are discussed in Briony Llewellyn, 'Solitary Eagle? The public and private personas of John Frederick Lewis', paper read at the symposium *Ottoman Istanbul and British Orientalism*, Pera Museum, Istanbul, 27–28 November 2008, publication forthcoming. Also in Emily M. Weeks, 'The "Reality" Effect: The Orientalist Paintings of John Frederick Lewis (1805–1876)', PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2004. I am grateful to Dr Weeks for generously allowing me to see the draft chapters of her forthcoming publication *Cultures Crossed: John Frederick Lewis (1804–1876) and the Art of Orientalist Painting*, Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

6 Since the sketch is on paper headed 'Royal Academy of Arts, / Trafalgar Square W. C. / London ____ 186_' and is inscribed 'JF. Lewis R.A.' it can be dated between 1865 when Lewis was elected RA and 1867/68 when the RA left the east wing of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square for new premises in Burlington House, Piccadilly. It may post-date Sir Francis Grant's knighthood and election as President of the RA in 1866.

7 William Makepeace Thackeray [Michael Angelo Titmarsh, pseud.], *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, London, 1846; reprint, Cockbird Press, Heathfield, 1991, pp.142–146.

8 Ms letter. Dr Henry Abbott, physician and collector, to Joseph Bonomi, Cairo, 28 June 1850 (Bonomi papers in collection of Yvonne Neville-Rolfe). See Briony Llewellyn, 'A "Masquerade" Unmasked: An Aspect of John Frederick Lewis's Encounter with Egypt' in Jason Thompson, ed., *Egyptian Encounters*, vol.23, no.3 of *Cairo Papers in Social Science*, Fall 2000, pp.133–151.

9 I am indebted to Dr Jason Thompson for his comments on the complex issues of the modernising reforms in Egypt at this time and for allowing me to see chapters of his forthcoming biography of Lane, *Edward William Lane 1801–1876 The Life of the Pioneering Egyptologist and Orientalist*, The American University in Cairo Press.

10 *The Hhareem*, watercolour, 88.6 × 133 cm, Corporate Collection, Japan; illustrated in Nicholas Tromans, ed, *The Lure of the East British Orientalist Painting*, Tate, London, 2008, fig.137.

11 According to the *Art Journal*, 175 works were displayed, 'opened to private view', on 19 June 1851: see issues for July 1851, p.202 and August 1851, pp.221–222. They were on show for at least a month, being seen by John Brett and his sister, Rosa, on 17 July, as recorded in their separate diaries. The venue is not clear but may have been Wass's Gallery in Bond Street. I am grateful to Charles Brett for alerting me to these references in the Brett diaries and for assisting me with my researches on Charles Wentworth Wass. On 16 March 1854, fifty of Lewis's oriental sketches were displayed at the Hampstead Conversazione meeting of the Graphic Society: see letter from J. F. Lewis to C. Atkinson, 6 March 1854, Royal Academy Archive GS/5/4 and a note in the *Art Journal*, April 1854, p.123.

12 *Art Journal*, August 1851, p.222.

13 Christie's, Manson & Woods, London, *Catalogue of the remaining works of that distinguished artist, John F. Lewis,* RA. *, deceased,* 4, 5, 7 May 1877.

14 Oil on canvas, 54.6 × 34.9 cm., 1854–57, 1860–61; Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. See Judith Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt A Catalogue Raisonné*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2006, vol. I, *Paintings*, pp.168–70.

15 Hunt to Thomas Combe, 23 March 1854, MS, Bodleian Library, MS Eng lett c296. I am indebted to Dr Judith Bronkhurst for supplying me with extracts from Hunt's letters to Combe and for pointing this out to me.

16 Hunt to John Everett Millais, Cairo, 16 March 1854, cited in William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, London, 1905, vol. I, pp.380–382.

17 Provenance and references: possibly H. L. Micholls, his sale Christie's 4 February 1905 (59), bt Blaiberg (15s), and therefore Michael Lewis, *John Frederick Lewis R. A. 1805–1876*, F. Lewis Publishers Ltd, Leigh-on-Sea 1978, no.470, 'An Egyptian Lady, Cairo', 15 × 10¼ in; 38 × 26 cm.; or R. A. Walker Esq.; Sotheby's 20 February 1946 (126), bt Colaman (£15), and therefore Lewis, *op.cit*, no.473, 'An Eastern Woman', 15 × 13 in; 38.1 × 33 cm.; Private Collection 1969 and 2009.

18 E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 1895 edition, reprinted by East-West Publications, The Hague and London, 1981, pp.55–57.

19 Lucinda Darby Griffith, *A journey across the desert, from Ceylon to Marseilles …* , London, 1845, pp.185–187. Mrs Griffith was accompanying her husband, Major George Darby Griffith home to England via the newly opened 'Overland Route'.

20 *Art Journal*, August 1851, p.222. Whose 'seraglio' is not made clear, but this presumably refers to the household of one of the Egyptian élite with whom Lewis seems to have been acquainted, although no other evidence exists.

21 Fig.2: Lewis, *op.cit.*, no.477; *The Walpole Society*, vol.LX, 1998, 'The Ford Collection', no.RBF296, as *A Turkish Girl in a Yashmak*. Fig.3: Lewis, *op.cit.*, no.476; Sotheby's 14 April 1994 (502). A further version of the profile study is at the Yale Center for British Art (B1977.14.6217), Lewis, *op. cit.*, no.360, but recent close examination of this suggests that it is a later, possibly non-autograph, copy.

22 There are several references to this proposed series of lithographs, notably in letters from W. Black to D. Roberts, 17 May 1846, from D. Roberts to his daughter Christine, 4 June 1846 (both in a private collection) and from J. F. Lewis to D. Roberts, 13 July 1851 (Department of Rare Books and Archives, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven): see Llewellyn, 2000, *op.cit.* and Weeks, 2004, *op.cit.* David Roberts's *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt & Nubia*, was published by F. G. Moon, London, 1842–49.

23 The study is 16.5 × 11.5 cm; Lewis, 1978, cat. no.478; sold Sotheby's, London, 19 November 1970, lot 155; current location unknown.

24 For provenance and references see Christie's 25 November 2009 (14).

25 Curiously, Cosier owned both the watercolour and the oil: they were in the sale held after his death, Christie's, London, 4 and 5 March 1887, lots 75 and 179 respectively. The oil is currently in a private collection, sold Sotheby's, 12 June 2003, lot 29 and see Lewis *op.cit.*, no.618.

26 An interesting discussion of Lewis's attitude to the art market is in Emily M. Weeks, ' "For Love or for Money" Collecting the Orientalist Pictures of John Frederick Lewis', *Fine Art Connoisseur*, vol.4, no.1, January/February 2007, pp.40–47.

THOMAS SEDDON 1821–1856

An Arab Shaykh

Oil on canvas
18¼ × 14¼ inches · 464 × 362 mm
Signed (initials in monogram), inscribed and dated: *Egypt 1854*

COLLECTIONS

Joseph Arden, acquired directly from the artist;
Arden sale, Christie's, 26 April 1879, lot 40, *'An Arab Shekh; Beschara, Mount Sinai'*;
John Pollard Seddon, the artist's brother, acquired at the Arden sale;
Private collection, Egypt, *circa* 1950;
Acquired by the Fine Art Society, London, 1979;
Coral Petroleum, Houston, Texas, 1985;
Private collection, New York, until 2009

LITERATURE

John Pollard Seddon, *Memoir and Letters of the Late Thomas Seddon, Artist, By His Brother*, London, 1858, pp.131–132 & 141;
The Spectator, 14 April 1855, p.392 (review of Seddon's private exhibition);
The Connoisseur, July 1980, 204, no.821, repr. on the cover;
Coral Petroleum, *A Near Eastern Adventure*, n.d., repr. cover;
Mary Anne Stevens ed., *The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse, European Painters in North Africa and the Near East*, Royal Academy, p.228, cat. no.117, repr in monochrome and in colour p.86

EXHIBITED

London, the artist's room, 14 Berners Street, 1855, (as *Arab Shaykh*);
London, Royal Academy, Summer Exhibition, 1856, no.9 as *An Arab shaykh and tents in the Egyptian desert Painted on the spot*;
London, Society of Arts, 1857;
London, The Fine Art Society, *Travellers Beyond the Grand Tour*, 1980, no.90;
Washington DC, The National Gallery of Art & London, Royal Academy, *The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse, European Painters in North Africa and the Near East*, 1984, no.117 as *'Arab Shaykh (probably Richard Burton)'*

By July 1853 Thomas Seddon, newly launched into his career as a painter, had planned a painting trip to the East to be made in the company of William Holman Hunt. Seddon's ship landed at Cairo on 6 December 1853 and within six days of his arrival had met *a Mr Burton, who knowing the Arabic language thoroughly, has taken to the dress* (Seddon 1858, pp.31–32). Richard Burton (1821–90), soldier, diplomat, poet, linguist, translator, anthropologist, explorer and student of Islam, was a key figure in European-Near Eastern relations in the nineteenth century. When Seddon met him he had just undertaken the boldest of the many adventures for which he became famous. Earlier in the year he had managed to pass himself off as a Muslim and enter the sacred city of Mecca. Burton commissioned Seddon to make a watercolour sketch of him to be used as an illustration in his description of his experiences, *The Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah* (1855–6).

Writing home on the 30 December, Seddon recorded that he was being advised on subject matter for his paintings by Edward Lear who had also just arrived in the city. By this time he had also completed his famous watercolour portrait of Burton *An Arab Shakyh in his Travelling Dress*,

Hunt arrived in January 1854; although reliant on Seddon's gifts as a linguist, he took exception to his adoption of Arab costume and propensity for practical jokes. In the following month the artists encamped close to the pyramids. Their first sight of Jerusalem, on 3 June 1854, was, for both artists, a deeply moving religious experience: Seddon camped at Aceldama and for five months worked on *Jerusalem and the Valley of Jehoshaphat from the Hill of Evil Counsel* (1854–5; Tate collection).On 19 October 1854 Seddon left Syria for home, stopping at Dinan and Paris on the way.

There has been some confusion, or perhaps over optimism, in the past in identifying the subject of the present work as being Richard Burton, however Seddon makes clear in his letters (quoted in John Pollard Seddon, *Memoir and Letters of the Late Thomas Seddon, Artist, By His Brother*, London, 1858, pp.131–32) that this work was largely executed in Egypt and whilst passing through Paris on his way back to England he found *an Arab, from whom I have been painting; and I hope to finish from him my Shekh*. Seddon went on to record that his model, Besharah, had 'fought for twelve years with Abd el-Kader, three years with another chief, and lastly with Bow Maza, was taken prisoner, and was released by Louis Napoleon a year or two ago. He has received thirteen wounds, from which he is only now recovering. He is a very handsome and fine fellow.' By a curious twist of fate Besharah, from the Beni Said tribe from the Sinai, had accompanied David Roberts from Egypt to Mount Sinai and Aqaba. Roberts also painted him in 1839, and is the principal figure in the lithograph, *Arabs of the Tribe of the Benisaid* (*Holy Land*, Vol. III, pl.89).

We are very grateful to Briony Llewellyn and Judith Bronkhurst for their help with this note.

GEORGE SIDNEY SHEPHERD 1784–1862

Drawing Room Day, Regent Street, London 1851

A view of Regent Street, looking north, showing a procession of soldiers on horseback and horse-drawn carriages with Rudolph Ackermann's 'Eclipse Sporting Gallery' at 191 Regent Street, on the left and Hanover Chapel beyond.

Watercolour heightened with white
8¼ × 12 inches · 211 × 304 mm
Signed and dated 1851

ENGRAVED
Thomas Picken and published by Rudolph Ackermann, 1851, in Ackermann's Series, no.10

Thomas Picken (after G. S. Shepherd)
View of Regent Street, Drawing Room Day
Lithograph, pub. Rudolph Ackermann, 1851
Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

George Sidney Shepherd exercised what was almost a monopoly during the first half of the nineteenth century in supplying publishers with accurate and atmospheric architectural views for engraving. These highly skilled and often complex perspectives were, in the early part of his career, executed in pen and monochromatic washes, however, later in his career, in the 1830s and '40s, he extended his palette and executed more painterly and colourful watercolours, of which the present work is an exemplary example. He travelled widely in England but was best known for his London views.

Shepherd worked several times for the publishing magnate Rudolph Ackermann Senior and it was under his auspices that he first collaborated with Thomas Picken in 1813, preparing a series of street scenes for Ackermann's publication *The Repository of the Arts*. In 1825 Rudolph Ackermann Jnr set up a similar business to that of his father's, but concentrating on publishing sporting and military prints, at 191 Regent Street. Known as the *Eclipse Sporting Gallery*, Shepherd has included it on the left-hand side of this watercolour.

During Queen Victoria's reign the Court Drawing Room days were held four times a year, two before Easter and two after. Such was their popularity that when the date of these occasions was announced, the Lord Chamberlain's office was inundated with letters suggesting names of ladies for presentation. Those who had kissed the Queen's hand were entitled to nominate another lady for presentation. The lists were carefully scrutinised by the Lord Chamberlain and the Queen, who only received those who were of the highest moral and social character. Summonses were dispatched three weeks before the events to allow the ingénues time to perfect their court curtsies and organise the Court dress required for these occasions.

In his *Saunterings in and about London* (1853) Max Schlesinger described London on Drawing Room Day:
We go down St. James' Street, and reach the point where it joins Pall Mall; there we stand, in front of St. James' Palace, an old black and rambling building, with no interest, except what it derives from the past; and even in the past, it was considered as a mere appendage to Whitehall; and only after Whitehall was burned down, did St. James' Palace become the real seat of royalty; and it continued to be so until George IV took up his residence at Buckingham Palace. At the present day, the old palace is used for court ceremonies only; the Queen holds her levees and drawing-rooms in it. In the three large saloons there are, on such – occasions, crowds of people who have the entrée, *in full dress, and great splendour, thronging round the throne, which is ornamented with a canopy of red velvet, and a gold star and crown. The walls are decorated with pictures of the battles of Waterloo and Vittoria; in the back-ground are the Queen's apartments, where she receives her ministers. The anti-chambers are filled with yeomen of the guard, and court officials of every description. In the court-yard are the state-carriages of – the nobility; and the streets around the park are thronged with crowds of anxious spectators.*

The ceremonies later moved to the more spacious rooms of Buckingham Palace.

SIR JOHN TENNIEL 1820 – 1914

Afghanistan – Where are we now?

Pencil
7⅛ × 9 inches · 182 × 227 mm
Signed with monogram, dated 1878, and inscribed *Afghanistan*, also inscribed under mount: *Where are we?*

COLLECTIONS
Gift of the artist to Arthur à Beckett, 1 March 1888;
Mrs Evans, by descent to her daughter Mrs J. Hollingsworth, Fitzhall, Iping, near Midhurst, given to
P. R. Boyle, December 1954;
Private collection, 1987;
Private collection

EXHIBITED
Manchester, Royal Jubilee Exhibition, 1887

ENGRAVED
for *Punch*, vol. 75, 23 November 1878, p.235, with the caption: *'Where are we now?' Driver Dizzy. 'Come along; it's all right. We're only in search of a "Scientific Frontier" ! ! !*

This masterly pencil drawing for *Punch*, topical then, as it is today, depicting the Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (Dizzy) resolutely leading a bull, a personification of 'John Bull', symbolic of Britain, with the face of Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who opposed the involvement in Afghanistan and resigned over this issue.

In the full text in *Punch*, Disraeli, the Drover, attempts to placate the bull saying 'You surely don't suppose *I'd* lead you wrong?' The bull retorts '… this is not at all the sort of way in which you swore to lead me. 'Twas to be a path of peace, and jocund jollity; a happy pasture steeped in holy calm …' The Drover reveals 'These fields are pleasant, but not well protected, their boundaries require to be corrected, somewhat enlarged, perhaps, just here and there. Rectification – … A Scientific Frontier's what we seek.' Rather mystified the bull asks 'What's that?' The final lines sum up Disraeli's position in opposition to such scepticism:

DROVER [aside]
Plague take the brute! What shall I say?
He did no use to question me this way.
[aloud] *A scientific frontier is, – a border*
Imperial not empirical! In order
That blessing to secure I'm striving ever
With all devices that are darkly clever,
I look to you to back me up, of course,
With all your resolution and resource.

BULL *All vastly fine! but I am very weary,*
All the look-out is neither clear nor cheery.
Fatigued and fogged, I mean to make a stand,
And the true end of all this toil demand.
You *know where you are going, I suppose,*
But I tramp blindly on, led by the nose!

In the 19th century Afghanistan was a vital chess piece in what was known as the 'Great Game' – the rivalry for control of territory between the British Empire and the Tsarist Russian Empire in Central Asia. Britain's first intervention in Afghanistan in 1838, the First Anglo-Afghan War, was provoked by the ruling emir deciding to receive a Russian envoy. Regarded as a threat to bordering British India by viceroy, Lord Auckland, he launched an invasion which deposed the emir. However, in 1842 the troops were forced to retreat from Kabul and were massacred by the Ghilzai tribe in the Khyber Pass. Only a small number survived from over 4,000 soldiers and 12,000 camp followers. This devastating loss was the most serious defeat suffered by British imperial troops during the Victorian era. However, the Indian army restored imperial status by returning to Kabul and obtaining the release of British prisoners before withdrawing.

After this defeat British policy was to stay clear of Afghanistan and to retain influence over the emir by paying him a subsidy; and it was not until 1878 that earlier events seemed to repeat themselves. When the Russians sent an uninvited diplomatic envoy to Kabul, Britain reacted by sending a mission to the Emir which was stopped at the border, sparking the Second Anglo-Afghan War. A force of 40,000 men was sent across the border at three locations on 21 November 1878 – Tenniel's cartoon appeared in *Punch* just two days later. The Russians did not come to the aid of Afghanistan, and with British forces occupying much of the country; the Treaty of Gandamak was signed in May 1879 to prevent a British invasion of the rest of Afghanistan. The Afghans subsequently launched an uprising which the British thwarted and re-occupied Kabul. However, it was clear to the British that defeating the Afghan tribes was not the same as controlling them and ultimately 2,500 British and colonials were killed as well as over 1,500 Afghans.

Illustrator, political cartoonist and water-colourist, Tenniel was both artist and astute observer. His life covered not only the long reign of Queen Victoria, which he chronicled faithfully in his weekly cartoons, but also part of the preceding Georgian and later Edwardian eras. His work at *Punch* brought him in contact with the social and political life and times of his day, and made him one of the most influential commentators of the era; although he is now perhaps best known for his illustrations to Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books. Tenniel presented this drawing to his friend Arthur à Beckett, editor of *Punch* between 1874 and 1902.

MORTIMER MENPES 1855–1938

A geisha carrying a parasol

Oil on panel
4¼ × 3¹⁄₁₆ inches · 109 × 78 mm
Signed
In the original frame designed by the artist

In his paintings of life in Japan, Menpes absorbed the intricacies of Japanese art, emulating the harmony which he described in his notes accompanying his illustrations to *Japan, a Record in Colour* (1901). This is a particularly enchanting and intimate depiction of a young geisha holding her parasol, dressed in her long kimono, carefully walking down a flight of steps, with a group of inquisitive children looking down.

Menpes describes the role of the geisha: *The* raison-d'être *of the geisha is to be decorative. She delights in her own delightsomeness; she wants frankly to be as charming as nature and art will allow; she wants to be beautiful. She wants to please you, and she openly sets about pleasing, taking you into her confidence (so to speak) as to her methods. She does it with the simple joy and sincerity of a child dressing up … Nothing can be too brilliant for the geisha; she is the life and soul of Japan, the merry sparkling side of Japanese life; she must be always gay; always laughing and always young, even to the end of her life.* (*op.cit.*, pp.125, 127)

Original frame designed by the artist

Born and educated in Adelaide, South Australia, Menpes moved to London in 1875, at the age of twenty. He studied at the South Kensington School of Art where Edward Poynter was a fellow pupil. In 1880 he met James McNeill Whistler and left art school to study informally under him, working together with Walter Sickert as Whistler's studio assistants and learning about composition and the technique of etching. The same year Menpes exhibited two drypoints at the Royal Academy where, over the next twenty years, he exhibited over thirty-five etchings and paintings. He was greatly influenced by Whistler, not only learning the technique of etching, but also sharing his fascination with Japanese design.

In 1887 Menpes visited Japan with the intention of studying at first-hand their art, life and culture. When he returned, his Japanese pictures formed the first of many successful one-man exhibitions. His enthusiasm for all things Japanese led him to design and oversee the making of elaborately carved friezes, ceiling panels, doors, windows and furniture which were shipped to London and took two years to incorporate into his house at 25 Cadogan Gardens, Chelsea.

In 1900 Menpes worked as a war-time artist in South Africa for *Black and White*. He published *War Impressions* in 1901, the first of a series of books illustrated in colour from his sketches, with, in most cases, a text transcribed by Dorothy Menpes, his daughter. The series included *Japan, a Record in Colour* (1888 & 1901), *France*, *Spain* and *Morocco* (1893), *World's Children* (1903), *The Durbar* (1903), *Venice* (1904), *India* (1905), *The Thames* (1906), *Paris* (1907), *China* (Blake, 1909), *The People of India* (1910), *Lord Kitchener* (1915), and *Lord Roberts* (1915). He founded the Menpes Press together with his daughter, for the reproduction of Old Masters by a method he devised himself.

Despite Whistler's vitriolic tongue towards Menpes and his refusal to grant him membership to the *International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers*, formed in 1898, and of which Whistler was president, Menpes always remained loyal and after Whistler's death published a memorial to their friendship *Whistler as I Knew Him* (1904) as well as a series of etched portraits of the 'stinging butterfly'. The Leicester Galleries also gave an exhibition, by way of a memorial, of Menpes's personal collection of Whistler drypoints.

Menpes was equally skilled in watercolour and oil, and had considerable success as a portrait painter of some of the well-known figures of the era. For the last thirty years of his life he lived in Pangbourne, on the Thames, in Berkshire, where he managed 'Menpes Fruit Farms'. Menpes died in April 1938; the obituary in *The Times* refers to Menpes as a *painter, etcher, raconteur and rifle shot*. He described himself in his earlier life as 'the typical 'rolling stone', travelling all over the world, *in record time, being unsurpassed even by Jules Verne*. He is described as making *a much greater impression as a personality than as an artist, being alert, resourceful, and opportunist – never at a loss for a retort in argument*.

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