LOWELL LIBSON LTD

3 Clifford Street · London W1S 2LF
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7734 8686
Fax: +44 (0)20 7734 9997
Email: pictures@lowell-libson.com
Website: www.lowell-libson.com

The gallery is open by appointment, Monday to Friday.
The entrance is in Old Burlington Street.

In 2011 our exhibition schedule is:

MASTER DRAWINGS NEW YORK
21–29 January

TEFAF MAASTRICHT
17–27 March

LOWELL LIBSON LTD · LONDON
Loan Exhibition of Masterpieces
of English Watercolours and Drawings from
the National Gallery of Scotland
23 June – 14 July

MASTER DRAWINGS LONDON
1–8 July

Cover: a sheet of 18th-century Italian
paste paper (collection: Lowell Libson)
Frontispiece: detail from Fording the River
Thomas Rowlandson (see page 30).

INDEX OF ARTISTS

Jacques-Laurent Agasse 76
Francesco Bartolozzi 56
John Constable 90
John Sell Cotman 54
Alexander Cozens 22
John Robert Cozens 49
George Dawe 88
Edward Dayes 54
Henry Fuseli 86
Thomas Gainsborough 15–29
Thomas Girtin 44
Benjamin Robert Haydon 84
William Henry Hunt 74
Sir Thomas Lawrence 78–81
Samuel Percy 72
William Perter 60–61
William Sheppard 8
Thomas Rowlandson 30, 70, 82
George Romney 68
Thomas Ryder 66
John Raphael Smith 64
Francis Towne 38
William Turner of Oxford 51
Cornelius Varley 48
Francis Wheatley 32
Joseph Wright of Derby 60–67
At the heart of this catalogue is a remarkable group of landscapes centred around five works by Gainsborough which represent the entire span of his career as a pioneering landscape artist of the utmost sensibility. The tradition of Picturesque topography is exemplified in its highest form by our watercolour by Edward Dayes, perhaps his largest and most ambitious exercise in the genre whilst the Romantic period is represented by dramatic landscapes by Cozens, Girtin and the rather remarkable watercolour by Turner of Oxford. An important discovery, here published for the first time, is the beautiful and highly personal painting by Constable of his boyhood home which he specifically executed to be engraved as the frontispiece for his seminal work 'English Landscape Scenery'.

In the area of portraiture, we include the 'swagger' portrait by Sheppard of Thomas Killigrew, a highly unusual seventeenth century portrait with a perfect provenance, as well as a classic and rather elegant Romney portrait and a charming, recently identified, work by the émigré Swiss painter, Agass. Lawrence is represented by the sensitive portrait drawing of his mother and Fuseli by a small head of his friend, the actress Harriot Mellon. The engaging and highly personal portrait by Dawe, executed in St Petersburg in 1808, is testament to the great powers of this somewhat neglected master.

Figure painting is here represented in miniature by the splendid pair of highly-wrought coloured drawings by Bartolozzi, major works by Wheatley and Rowlandson as well as a clutch of rare prints after Wright of Derby. The drawing by Haydon marks an extraordinary moment of artistic synergy in the Romantic movement.

These pictures, I hope, show a representative selection of our stock as well as demonstrating something of our 'house' taste and style. I should particularly like to extend my thanks to the following for their help and advice: Brian Allen, Galina Andreeva, Katherine Ara, Christopher Baker, Hugh Beale, Michael Campbell, Sarah Cove, Robert Dalrymple, Florian Härb, Sarah Hobrough, Alex Kidson, Renée Loche, Anne Lyles, Florian Härb, Jane McAusland, Elizaveta Renne, David Scrase, Richard Stephens, Tim Wilcox and Andrew Wilton. Laurence Allan has, as always, ensured that the pictures are as beautifully presented as possible and Deborah Greenhalgh has, through her assiduous and diligent research as well as her all round efficiency, ensured that this catalogue has actually become a reality.
Thomas Killigrew seated at a table with his dog beside him

Oil on canvas
50 × 40 inches  1270 × 1015 cm
Signed and dated: W Sheppard/1650

collections
By descent in the family of the sitter’s mother to Sir Peter Killigrew, and Sir Frances Enteys, daughter and heiress of the above; John & Mary West, son-in-law and daughter of the above; TheHon Charles Berkeley, son-in-law of the above; Sophia Berkeley, daughter of the above; John Wodehouse, 1st Baron Wodehouse of Kimberley (1714–1834), husband of the above; John Wodehouse, 2nd Earl of Kimberley, by descent to 1947; Margaret, Countess of Kimberley, sale Christie’s 28th February 1947, lot 42 (50 gns); 4th Earl of Kimberley, reacquired at the above sale, and by descent

literature

engraved
J. J. van den Berge, engraved 1650, W. Faithorne, line engraving, published as the frontispiece of Killigrew’s collected Comedies and Tragedies, 1664 and subsequently in Clarendon’s History of the Civil War, 1665 (the text on the open manuscript and the Eikon Basilike are missing).

Thomas Killigrew (1612–1683) was one of the most colourful characters of the seventeenth century: a courtier, libertine, playwright and theatre manager. The Killigrews already had a reputation as notorious supporters of piracy in Cornwall including two of the best-known of Elizabethan pirates, Lady Mary Killigrew and Lady Elizabeth Killigrew. He was the son of Sir Robert Killigrew of Kempton Park, Sunbury and his wife, Mary daughter of Sir Henry Wodehouse (and niece of Sir Francis Bacon). Sir Robert was vice chamberlain to Queen Henrietta-Maria and Ambassador to the States General and his son followed in his footsteps, entering Royal service by July 1632, when he was appointed page of honour to Charles I. In 1636 Killigrew married Cecilia, daughter of Sir John Crofts of Saxham. Contemporary sources state that their relationship was rather tempestuous, although Killigrew does not seem to have ever fully recovered from her early death in 1638. He did remarry, in 1655 to Charlotte, daughter of a wealthy Hague gentleman John de Hesse, Lord of Piershil and Wena, but even so, he requested that on his death, he be buried near his first wife. Killigrew remained loyal to the crown throughout the Civil War. In 1642 he was briefly placed under house arrest, by the Roundheads but was given permission to join the Court in exile in Oxford. Shortly afterwards he left England and joined the exiled court of the Prince of Wales in Paris where his sister, Elizabeth, later Viscountess Shandon was providing more personal support to the exiled Prince; she bore him a daughter in about 1650.

In 1650, Killigrew was appointed Charles II’s playwright in residence in Venice and was also charged with raising funds for the Royal cause and to act as a political agent. However, after only two years, Killigrew was forced to leave Venice, because of public outcry over his appalling behaviour, which was so bad that the Venetian ambassador in Paris was forced to complain to Charles II. Following his expulsion from Venice, Killigrew moved around between the various members of the exiled Royal Family, serving variously the Duke of Gloucester and his aunt, Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia, in The Hague.

During this time however, he appears to have been in Paris and London and on his return to London in 1660 he was appointed playwright in residence. In 1661 he published his Comedies and Tragedies, a collection of his work, which was an instant success. He was soon appointed playwright in residence for the new King, Charles II, and his playwriting career was launched.

In 1664, Killigrew died in London and was buried in St Paul’s Cathedral, next to his first wife. His death was mourned by his friends and contemporaries, who admired his wit and intelligence, and his plays were immediately popular. He was remembered as a man of great talent and a brilliant writer, whose work has been praised for its wit and intelligence, and for its contribution to the development of the English theatre.
have maintained his links with Charles II and to have continued to act on his behalf. He returned to England at the Restoration and was appointed Groom of the Bedchamber to the King and two years later Chamberlain to the Queen.

Killigrew is recorded as having an early fascination with the theatre and during his lifetime he wrote nine plays (seven of which are shown in the present work). His greatest contribution to the British theatre was however, his successful campaign to allow women to appear on stage and the first actresses appeared at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in 1662. His theatrical career, licentious behaviour and was appointed Groom of the Bedchamber to the King and two years later Chamberlain to the Queen.

The portrait present is more than merely a literary portrait however. The attitude of the sitter's ceremony dressed and sporting a black ribbon on his left sleeve suggests that this is perhaps in part at least a mourning portrait. The clues as to who Killigrew is mourning surround the sitter; the portrait of Charles I and the text which lies at the bottom of the pile of volumes, the Eikon Boloniæ: The Paraphrase of His Sacred Majesty in His Last and Juvelines (a controversial pamphlet apparently by Charles I, published shortly after his death proclaiming him a martyr) and uncontrolled, who was only saved from the drawing (Private collection) is almost identical to the completed composition except for the ommission of the portrait of Charles I and the uncertainty and upheaval and furthermore one was prominent as the importance of its iconography: the painting. The sitter's identity was presumable not as important as its iconography: the title of a man of letters in the character of a man of letters (David Pope). The development of the British Literary Portrait up to Samuel Johnson, 1796). The desire to capture the likeness of writers and to depict them engaged in their profession began with the ancient Greeks and continued through the Romans, into the Renaissance in Italy and onwards. This formal portrait painting in England, however, was rare (although by the mid seventeenth century, engraved frontispieces were becoming increasingly popular). The few pure, literary portraits which were commissioned are more of less private in nature and were intended for family use.

Matthew Darly (after Sheppard) Thomas Killigrew - a type to My Boy Kicking - a boy towards (1711-1712) National Portrait Gallery, London, 1711-1712 Published Darly in Holburne 1711 © Trustees of the British Museum (1939,0605.1). He is shown in a conventional pose, but also that by Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher and Dryden (Nell Gwynn made her début here in Dryden’s Indian Queen in 1660). The first actresses appeared at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in 1662. In 1660, Killigrew and Sir William Davenant were granted a patent to found an entertainment and were able to licence all their theatrical holdings to problems and therefore he was eventually forced to hand over to his son in 1677.

His theatrical career, licentious behaviour and was appointed Groom of the Bedchamber to the King and two years later Chamberlain to the Queen. The sitter's identity was presumable not as important as its iconography: the portrait of Charles I and the text which lies at the bottom of the pile of volumes, the Eikon Boloniæ: The Paraphrase of His Sacred Majesty in His Last and Juvelines (a controversial pamphlet apparently by Charles I, published shortly after his death proclaiming him a martyr) and uncontrolled, who was only saved from the drawing (Private collection) is almost identical to the completed composition except for the ommission of the portrait of Charles I and the uncertainty and upheaval and furthermore one was prominent as the importance of its iconography: the painting. The sitter's identity was presumable not as important as its iconography: the title of a man of letters in the character of a man of letters (David Pope). The development of the British Literary Portrait up to Samuel Johnson, 1796). The desire to capture the likeness of writers and to depict them engaged in their profession began with the ancient Greeks and continued through the Romans, into the Renaissance in Italy and onwards. This formal portrait painting in England, however, was rare (although by the mid seventeenth century, engraved frontispieces were becoming increasingly popular). The few pure, literary portraits which were commissioned are more of less private in nature and were intended for family use.


The present portrait appears at first to be a rare example of a portrait of a man of letters in the character of a man of letters (David Pope). The development of the British Literary Portrait up to Samuel Johnson, 1796). The desire to capture the likeness of writers and to depict them engaged in their profession began with the ancient Greeks and continued through the Romans, into the Renaissance in Italy and onwards. This formal portrait painting in England, however, was rare (although by the mid seventeenth century, engraved frontispieces were becoming increasingly popular). The few pure, literary portraits which were commissioned are more of less private in nature and were intended for family use.

Killigrew abandoned some of his former wild existence and became more reflective; he even grew his hair and beard long, a Christian sign of penitence. The present portrait appears at first to be a rare example of a portrait of a man of letters in the character of a man of letters (David Pope). The development of the British Literary Portrait up to Samuel Johnson, 1796). The desire to capture the likeness of writers and to depict them engaged in their profession began with the ancient Greeks and continued through the Romans, into the Renaissance in Italy and onwards. This formal portrait painting in England, however, was rare (although by the mid seventeenth century, engraved frontispieces were becoming increasingly popular). The few pure, literary portraits which were commissioned are more of less private in nature and were intended for family use.

The present portrait appears at first to be a rare example of a portrait of a man of letters in the character of a man of letters (David Pope). The development of the British Literary Portrait up to Samuel Johnson, 1796). The desire to capture the likeness of writers and to depict them engaged in their profession began with the ancient Greeks and continued through the Romans, into the Renaissance in Italy and onwards. This formal portrait painting in England, however, was rare (although by the mid seventeenth century, engraved frontispieces were becoming increasingly popular). The few pure, literary portraits which were commissioned are more of less private in nature and were intended for family use.

The present portrait appears at first to be a rare example of a portrait of a man of letters in the character of a man of letters (David Pope). The development of the British Literary Portrait up to Samuel Johnson, 1796). The desire to capture the likeness of writers and to depict them engaged in their profession began with the ancient Greeks and continued through the Romans, into the Renaissance in Italy and onwards. This formal portrait painting in England, however, was rare (although by the mid seventeenth century, engraved frontispieces were becoming increasingly popular). The few pure, literary portraits which were commissioned are more of less private in nature and were intended for family use.
Perhaps the most influential British landscape painter of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Alexander Cozens forged not only a new visual language at the inception of the Romantic movement, but also through his publications and teaching activities which included his position as Drawing Master at Eton for over twenty years as well as a thriving private practice, he influenced the taste and visual vocabulary of almost two generations of artists, collectors and patrons. Gainsborough, Wright of Derby, Girtin, Turner and Constable, as well as his own son, John Robert, were amongst the landscape painters to be directly influenced by him.

While a product of his era in his fascination in systematizing the universe, Cozens 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 principles 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).

The present exquisitely drawn and carefully finished work belongs to a group of drawings which although conceived within the framework of the picturesque tradition seek to convey a sense of emotional calm and tranquility. The motif of a coastal inlet with repoussoirs of an outcrop of rocks and a becalmed sailing vessel was a favourite device.
Presentation drawing, a term first coined in the 1950s by the Hungarian art historian Johannes Wilde, is used to define highly finished sheets, not preparatory studies for a large fresco or a painting, but drawings drawn for their own sake. Anything created with such confidence would be destined to become objects of admiration collected for their extraordinary virtuosity and their great beauty. As prized objects they are also a greater likelihood that they will survive the accidents of history. As a specialist in the Italian Renaissance Wilde used the phrase to define certain works by Leonardo and Michelangelo, however, 'presentation drawing' has become a term that has been applied to a broader range of graphic work made beyond the confines of Renaissance disegno. Perhaps the most common misappropriation of Wilde’s term is to describe some very finished landscape drawings by Thomas Gainsborough. There are perhaps three different criteria that have been used to define his presentation drawings and they will be examined later in this note. First it is worth considering his draughtsmanship in a more general way.

There are early stories that Gainsborough used to steal time from his schooling and go into the meadows and woods around his birthplace Sudbury in Suffolk to draw. A self-portrait drawn at least a dozen years after his school days and now in the British Museum (fig.1) shows that he continued to enjoy doing much the same thing later in his career. Escaping the studio for the countryside was described in elegiac terms in a letter, ‘[I] wish very much to take my Viol da Gam[la] and walk off to some sweet Village where I can paint Landskips and enjoy the frag End of Life in quietness & ease’.¹ For Gainsborough the act of drawing was like making music, almost an act of devotion, an extension of seeing and a means of embedding the sights around him into his visual memory, a resource that he could use whenever it was needed.

When Gainsborough was unable to escape his studio in daylight hours, he spent his evenings sitting ‘by his wife … and make sketches of whatever occurred to his fancy, all of which he threw below the table, save such as were more commonly happy, and these were preserved, and either finished as sketches or expanded into paintings’.² Another contemporary source gives further details of his work, the writer and printmaker William Henry Pine remembers sitting ‘by him of an evening … making

---

¹ quoted in Hugh Belsey’s catalogue of Five Landscapes by Thomas Gainsborough
² quoted in Hugh Belsey’s catalogue of Five Landscapes by Thomas Gainsborough
models, or rather thoughts, for landscape scenery, on a little, old-fashioned folding oak table, which stood under his kitchen dresser. The table, held sacred for the purpose, he would order to be brought to the parlour, and thereon compose his designs. He would place cork or coal for his foregrounds, and set up woods of distant brocoli.5 Looking at the drawings he used purple sprouting brocoli rather than the more common calabrese favoured by contemporary gardeners. In other words Gainsborough formed drawings which he described in musical terms, one part of a theme ought to be like the first part of a tune, that you can guess what follows and so I’ve done.4 Presentation drawings, in Gainsborough’s case, were a synthesis of observation and composition made not as a preparation for a landscape painting, but as a balanced finished composition—an end in itself and a joy to behold.

As I mentioned earlier in this note, there are three ways to define presentation drawings in Gainsborough’s work. Some drawings from the 1740s have a monogram stamped in gold leaf in one of the corners which was created with a metal punch, which some drawings were surrounded by a gold-leaf decorative arabesque border which was created with a metal punch, which was used in a very similar way to collector’s marks which had been in vogue since the seventeenth century. The second was adopted later in Gainsborough’s career, in which some drawings were surrounded by a gold leaf decorative arabesque border which usually decorate the spines of leather-bound books. These borders are generally associated with his experimental techniques of offset and resist which were not wholly successful and must have changed appearance in the course of time.5 Some borders include a full signature, stamped with gold leaf like the borders and the v(1) monogram (fig.1).

The third criteria is defined by a throw away (untrue) comment made by Gainsborough that he never sold a drawing and so, by implication, sheets that were in collections by the time of his death must have been presented to the owners. One such sheet, showing a wheelwright’s workshop, is usefully inscribed ‘Presented to John Viscount Tatton by Gainsborough in September 1770’, by Thomas Gainsborough.6 If this watercolour ever had the v(1) monogram, it has been clipped from the edge of the sheet. Edward S. Fulcher, in the second edition of his father’s biography of Gainsborough, recorded fifteen fine drawings, taken in the neighbourhood of Barton Grange, near Taston and, instead of making a portrait of the first owner of the drawings, the collection also included an unframed head in oil, of an intelligent-looking boy, who used to carry Gainsborough’s materials when he went into the country to sketch and, following family tradition, the lad was from a neighbouring village, Pitminster, and so the portrait is always referred to as the Pitminster Boy (private collection), on loan to Gainsborough’s House, Sudbury.7 The drawings, one of which has disappeared since Fulcher first described them and another proved to be by Gainsborough’s contemporary Richard Wilson,8 were sold to the London dealers, Thos Agnew & Son in 1953. They in turn sold the sheets on to Knodder, a firm with whom Gainsborough had a close association. Knodder took the drawings to New York where they were exhibited from 14 to 21 January 1954 and the majority of them was sold to private collectors in the United States. Fifty years later John Hayes traced most of them and discussed their quality and the extraordinary range of style that shows Gainsborough making a varied approach to landscape over a period of forty years.9

The owner of Barton Grange, Goodenough Earle (d.1798), must have been a keen supporter of Gainsborough’s, the nature of their relationship can only be imagined as no letters exist between artist and patron.10 Earle was the same generation as the artist’s father and Gainsborough must have regarded him as something of a mentor. Earle’s will has been traced and after making provision for his own daughter, Sally, he bequeaths his estate ‘to my kinsman Francis Mihner Newtoun Esquire secretary to the Royal Academy’11 whom Gainsborough had described disparagingly as ‘that puppy’ twenty years earlier.12 The romantic notion suggested by Fulcher that Gainsborough had made the drawings in the fields and woods around Barton Grange to give to his friend is subtly countered when one realises that Gainsborough, after he left Bath in 1774, must have seen Earle in London where Earle kept a house. That opens up the possibility that artist and patron first met when Gainsborough was in the capital in the 1740s and perhaps during the following decade Earle bought drawings through the artist’s London agent Patrick Betow.

The earliest drawing in the group, which dates from the late 1740s, shows a group of donkeys resting in a sandy landscape set with scrubby trees (private collection) and from the following decade are three or four drawings, one of which is related to an overmantel which was until recently in the collection Earl Howe.13 In the early 1750s, shortly after Gainsborough had moved to Bath and when he was bustier painting portraits that at any other time in his career, there are at least two drawings in the group that bear the monogram stamp and both are watercolours. One is now in the

---

Fig. 1 | Thomas Gainsborough A wooded landscape with a cart and cottage, circa 1775
5
White chalk, brown and brownish red chalk, 309 x 217 mm
Wallace Art Gallery and Museum, Birkenhead

Fig. 2 | Thomas Gainsborough
Watercolour, 309 x 217 mm
(Figures acknowledgments)
Fig 4 | Thomas Gainsborough
A wooded landscape with heron
Black chalk with watercolour and lead white on prepared
paper · 81/4 x 213/4 inches · 213 x 300 mm
RA

Cleveland Museum of Art, formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd

mid 1780s, does not have the monogram
but it has all the guile of a presentation drawing. It is a sheet in mixed media show-
ing a weary cowherd with three cows posed
between a pool and a distant mountain. It has recently been purchased from Lowell
Libson Ltd by Cleveland Museum of Art, and is recorded within a single sheet of paper,
annotated with the dimensions is amongst
the Pfungst papers in Gainsborough's House,
annotated with the dimensions is amongst
the Earle collection (922, pl.12). Two further drawings remain
unidentified, and they may well be a pair as
their dimensions are similar, and not have the monogram

15. The Will is dated 15 March 1775 and includes
bequests to servants in his London house. The
codicil dated 6 October 1796 includes detailed
bequests to Earl's servants in Somerset.

14. ‘The agill caled a shudke’: Gainsborough's
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,

13. ‘The eighteenth-century attitude to pollarded
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s

12. In contrast, to the right of centre, Gainsborough added a figure
and requests for directions are invested with
such potency in so many of Gainsborough's
and requests for directions are invested with
such potency in so many of Gainsborough's

11. The eighteenth-century attitude to pollarded
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s

10. In the late 1770s, formerly with Leger Galleries,
the artist (fig.4).

9. The eighteenth-century attitude to pollarded
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s

8. It was a particular kind of landscape that
predeceased him.

7. The House of Commons 1715–1754
as a Tory in the parliamentary election in

6. ‘The aged pollard’s shade’: Gainsborough’s
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,

5. Gainsborough’s House, Sudbury

4. ‘The aged pollard’s shade’: Gainsborough’s
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,

3. A Supplement to the Catalogue Raisonné',


1. A letter addressed to his friend William
Jackson dated Bath 3 June 1788 (The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough, ed. John

NOTES
1. A letter addressed to his friend William
Jackson dated Bath 3 June 1788 (The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough, ed. John

2. John Hayes, ‘The Landscapes of Thomas Gainsborough,

3. John Hayes, The Landscapes of Thomas Gainsborough,

4. John Hayes, The Landscapes of Thomas Gainsborough,

5. John Hayes, The Landscapes of Thomas Gainsborough,

6. John Hayes, The Landscapes of Thomas Gainsborough,

7. John Hayes, ‘The Landscapes of Thomas Gainsborough,

8. John Hayes, ‘The Landscapes of Thomas Gainsborough,

9. John Hayes, The Landscapes of Thomas Gainsborough,

10. The eighteenth-century attitude to pollarded
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s

11. The eighteenth-century attitude to pollarded
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s

12. In contrast, to the right of centre, Gainsborough added a figure
and requests for directions are invested with
such potency in so many of Gainsborough's
and requests for directions are invested with
such potency in so many of Gainsborough's

13. ‘The eighteenth-century attitude to pollarded
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s

14. ‘The agill caled a shudke’: Gainsborough's
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,

15. The Will is dated 15 March 1775 and includes
bequests to servants in his London house. The
codicil dated 6 October 1796 includes detailed
bequests to Earl’s servants in Somerset.

16. ‘The agill caled a shudke’: Gainsborough's
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,

17. ‘The eighteenth-century attitude to pollarded
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s

18. ‘The agill caled a shudke’: Gainsborough's
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,

19. ‘The agill caled a shudke’: Gainsborough's
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,

20. The eighteenth-century attitude to pollarded
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s

21. ‘The agill caled a shudke’: Gainsborough's
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,

22. The eighteenth-century attitude to pollarded
trees is examined by Elsie L. Smith, “The
aged pollard’s shade”: Gainsborough’s

23. ‘The agill caled a shudke’: Gainsborough's
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,

24. ‘The agill caled a shudke’: Gainsborough's
Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid,
This charming small painting numbers amongst the earliest of Gainsborough's known works, indeed, it is no.1 in Hayes's catalogue raisonné of the landscape paintings. In spite of its early date, this picture demonstrates a fresh and sensitive handling of paint and is notable for marking the very beginnings of Gainsborough's life-long fascination with extemporising on a few simple bucolic motifs. Gainsborough's obituary recorded that Gainsborough made his first essays in the art by modelling figures of cows, horses, and dogs, in which he attained very great excellence (Morning Chronicle, 8 August 1788). Although Gainsborough's treatment of recession is naïf one senses an inherent sophistication of approach to the handling of both the group of sheep and the clump of trees and shrubs which already indicate the path which his interest in landscape was going to lead him.

The present landscape can be dated by comparison with the well-known painting of the dog Bumper (Private collection) which is signed and dated 1745. John Hayes noted (op. cit.) that this picture 'is identical with Bumper in the fresh, liquid handling of the foliage, the loose touches of yellowish impasto in the foreground, the rather stiff delineation of the tree trunks'. Our landscape can also be compared with the small unfinished Open landscape with a cottage at the edge of a wood (Hove Museum of Art) and the slightly later unfinished Wooded landscape with winding path (Hart Collection). It may also be compared with the slightly later Wooded river landscape with a group of travellers resting near a tower (Speed Museum of Art, Louisville, formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd).

Oil on canvas
9 1/4 x 12 1/4 inches · 235 x 311 mm
Painted circa 1744–45

Collections:
Probably George Forester, Graham, th Lord Kinmark, acquired in 1795;
Mr & Mrs Paul Mellon, acquired in 1961;
Yale Center for British Art, gift of the above, to 1964;
Private collection, 1977;
Private collection, USA, 2010

Literature:
Ellis Waterhouse, Gainsborough, 1946, p.113, no. 883;

Exhibited:
Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Painting in England 1720–1815: The collection of Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon, 1965, no.32
This exquisite watercolour which John Hayes described as being “pitched high in key and full of sunshine” (Hayes, 1966, op. cit.), was executed in the very early 1760s, a period when, as noted by Hugh Belsey in his introduction to this group of drawings (pp. 15–19), Gainsborough was so occupied by portrait commissions that he had little time to paint landscapes in oil. The present work is closely related to two other coloured landscape drawings of the same period: Wooded Landscape with Peasant, Horse and Cart (Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Wooded Landscape with Country Cart and Woodcutter (Private Collection) which are particularly similar in technique and character. Also, in common with the present watercolour, these works are stamped with a gold monogram TG.

This drawing originally formed part of the famous group of fifteen landscape drawings which had been presented by Gainsborough to his friend, Goodenough Earle of Barton Grange, Taunton.

Gainsborough probably met the Somerset squire during his years at Bath and inclusion of five Suffolk period drawings within the collection is presumably an indication that they met soon after Gainsborough’s arrival at Bath. The presence of two London period works further supports the tradition of the continuing friendship and that Gainsborough possibly stayed at Barton Grange during his 1782 tour. Earle’s collection represented, perhaps, the definitive group of drawings charting Gainsborough’s development as a landscape artist formed by a friend and exact contemporary, either by gift or purchase directly from the artist.

After Earle’s death in 1789, the year after Gainsborough’s death, the present watercolour passed to Francis Milner Newton, Earle’s nephew and heir, who inherited Barton Grange. Gainsborough would have also known Francis Newton, who was the first Secretary of the Royal Academy and a member of the Haarlem Committee with which the artist argued irrevocably in 1744. The present work remained with the Newton family until it was sold as part of the larger group of Gainsborough drawings to Agnew’s in 1913 who immediately sold them to Knoedler who included it in their 1914 Exhibition of Drawings by Thomas Gainsborough, the first exhibition devoted to Gainsborough’s landscapes to be held in North America. It then entered the distinguished Stralem Collection.

**Thomas Gainsborough RA 1727–1788**

**Wooded landscape with horseman**

Black chalk, watercolour and gouache

9 9/16 x 11 13/16 inches · 241 x 322 mm

Stamped in gold with artist’s monogram TG, lower left

Painted early 1760s

**collections**

Goodenough Earle of Barton Grange, Somerset (d. 1789), a gift from the artist; Francis Milner Newton, Secretary to the Royal Academy, nephew of the above, by descent, 1794; Josephina Sophia Newton, daughter of the above, 1848; Francis Wheate Newton, by descent to 1913; Agnew’s, London, 1913; M. Knodeller & Co., New York, 1914; C. I. Stralem, New York, acquired, 1929; Mr and Mrs Donald S. Stralem, New York, by descent, 1994; Private collection to 2010

**literature**


**exhibited**


**Thomas Gainsborough Woodland Scene with a Peasant, a Horse, and a Cart Watercolour, gouache, grey wash and black chalk 9 9/16 x 11 13/16 inches · 241 x 322 mm Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Mr and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection, Bequest of Isaac D. Fletcher, 1917, accession no. 17.120.235"
Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 4th Bt (1749–1789), the owner of an estate of over 100,000 acres in North Wales and Shropshire, was one of the most celebrated patrons of the arts of his age and known as the ‘Welsh Maecenas’. Williams-Wynn probably acquired the present drawing when he purchased the painting, *Hagar and Ishmael* (now in the National Museum of Wales) at Gainsborough’s posthumous sale in 1792.

On Williams-Wynn’s return from the Grand Tour in 1769, he employed Richard Wilson to paint in North Wales near the family seat at Wynnstay near Ruabon, and took drawing lessons from Paul Sandby with whom he travelled through North Wales in 1771. In 1772, he bought a large town house on St. James’s Square from Lord Bathurst and employed Robert and James Adam to decorate it.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.

Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 4th Bt (1749–1789), the owner of an estate of over 100,000 acres in North Wales and Shropshire, was one of the most celebrated patrons of the arts of his age and known as the ‘Welsh Maecenas’. Williams-Wynn probably acquired the present drawing when he purchased the painting, *Hagar and Ishmael* (now in the National Museum of Wales) at Gainsborough’s posthumous sale in 1792.

On Williams-Wynn’s return from the Grand Tour in 1769, he employed Richard Wilson to paint in North Wales near the family seat at Wynnstay near Ruabon, and took drawing lessons from Paul Sandby with whom he travelled through North Wales in 1771. In 1772, he bought a large town house on St. James’s Square from Lord Bathurst and employed Robert and James Adam to decorate it.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.

Two-wheeled carts with open backs, known in Britain as Scotch carts, were used for transporting many different things but their prime design advantage was that they could tip easily. Compositionally the shafts of the cart were used by Gainsborough to provide dramatic directional diagonals. Unlike the other two drawings, which show the horses unharnessed, in the present drawing a drama is being played out by the horse rather than the cart and the horse is resisting his burden with considerable energy.

The group of man and horse comes from a source that Gainsborough had used before in the great landscape painting *The Harvest Wagon*, exhibited in London in 1767 now in the Barber Institute of Art at Birmingham University. Hugh Belsey has recently pointed out that for both painting and drawing the artist turned to the Quirinale horsemen, classical sculptures of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinale hill in Rome that he must have known from smaller bronze copies and engravings.
than a traditional laid paper. Laid paper had an inbuilt weakened in the varying thickness of the paper shown by the laid lines. Gainsborough was one of the first artists to see the benefit of using an ‘unlined’ paper of this sort. To add detail, he then defined the forms with brief but precise dashes of black chalk. To use just one example, the sky consists of just fifteen parallels lines of chalk, while the figure and cattle are finished with little more than five or six strokes.

This drawing was originally in the collection of the eminent surgeon and anatomist John Hunter (1728–1793) who presumably acquired it from Gainsborough himself. Hunter was the most eminent surgeon of his time and was appointed Surgeon Extraordinary to George III in 1776 and Surgeon General in 1790. In 1764, he bought two acres of land at Earl’s Court and assembled a remarkable collection of dead and live animals, as well as drawings and oil paintings relating to the phenomena of life. He managed to obtain first refusal on all animals which died in the Tower of London menagerie and was constantly adding to his collection. On his death, in accordance with the terms of his will, the collection was offered to the government but Prime Minister Pitt the younger prevaricated. To maintain his family while negotiations continued, his collection of furniture, books, pictures and objects of vertu, including the present drawing, was sold in 1794. Ultimately in 1800 his remaining collection was accepted by the Royal College of Surgeons and in 1819, in conjunction with the College, the Hunterian Society was founded. The drawing was purchased by Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 5th Bt (1772–1840) and remained in the family by descent for more than two hundred years.

The motif of a herdsman and cattle on a winding track is common in Gainsborough’s drawings and this particular composition evidently found favour with both the artist and his friends. A slightly later drawing, formerly in the collection of the Cavendish family at Holker Hall (Private collection, USA, formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd) has the same motif and Thomas Rowlandson chose to produce a soft-ground etching of the composition for his book Masters of Modern Drawings (see Hugh Belsey, A Picture ought to be like a Tune: Gainsborough’s Drawings, essay in Thomas Gainsborough: Themes and Variations. The Art of Landscape, exhibition catalogue, Lowell Libson Ltd, 2003, p. 64, fig. 6). Another closely related version of the present drawing is in the collection of the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester (Hayes, op. cit., no. 637).

The present drawing shows Gainsborough at his most economical stylistically. He started the drawing with a base of stump (black chalk which he then smudged with rolled up cardboard or leather). This provided a similar effect to a grey wash but with more texture and he was able to rub the paper with such vigour as he used a wove paper that was much stronger than a traditional laid paper. Laid paper had an inbuilt weakened in the varying thickness of the paper shown by the laid lines. Gainsborough was one of the first artists to see the benefit of using an ‘unlined’ paper of this sort. To add detail, he then defined the forms with brief but precise dashes of black chalk. To use just one example, the sky consists of just fifteen parallels lines of chalk, while the figure and cattle are finished with little more than five or six strokes.

This drawing was originally in the collection of the eminent surgeon and anatomist John Hunter (1728–1793) who presumably acquired it from Gainsborough himself. Hunter was the most eminent surgeon of his time and was appointed Surgeon Extraordinary to George III in 1776 and Surgeon General in 1790. In 1764, he bought two acres of land at Earl’s Court and assembled a remarkable collection of dead and live animals, as well as drawings and oil paintings relating to the phenomena of life. He managed to obtain first refusal on all animals which died in the Tower of London menagerie and was constantly adding to his collection. On his death, in accordance with the terms of his will, the collection was offered to the government but Prime Minister Pitt the younger prevaricated. To maintain his family while negotiations continued, his collection of furniture, books, pictures and objects of vertu, including the present drawing, was sold in 1794. Ultimately in 1800 his remaining collection was accepted by the Royal College of Surgeons and in 1819, in conjunction with the College, the Hunterian Society was founded. The drawing was purchased by Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 5th Bt (1772–1840) and remained in the family by descent for more than two hundred years.
his imagination and in these works he can be judged as one of the pioneering spirits of the Romantic Movement. The landscape drawings enjoyed a great reputation during the artist's lifetime amongst a sophisticated circle of connoisseurs and artists and their influence on the development of landscape painting in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was considerable.

The present drawing can be directly compared with two of his greatest late drawings: 

Wooded landscape with a cow beside a pool (Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Hayes no.809) which shares the same rapidity of execution and a similar crisp use of washes; and 

Wooded landscape with figures on horseback (Private collection, Hayes no.796) which demonstrates a similar spirit of romanticism. The dancing rhythms in the screen of trees, animated in form and technique, are contrasted with three serene figures standing in the centre of the composition. The composure of the cows drawn in white chalk on the right, one shown face on and the other in profile, show a similar tranquillity and the air is still with cirrus clouds further emphasising the calm of a summer evening.

In the drawings made towards the end of his life, Gainsborough began to experiment with a form of abstraction, which was unmatched in his more public and therefore more conservative oil paintings. John Hayes suggested that his imaginative and technical gifts seemed to have outstripped his attitudes towards the purposes of landscape painting (John Hayes, The landscape paintings of Thomas Gainsborough, 1982, p.175). Certainly, the present highly energised, almost ephemeral, drawing demonstrates the artist's superlative ability to control chalk and wash.

This, the rarest type of Gainsborough drawing, successfully captures the fleeting romantic effects of landscape that he had been seeking to record from his earliest years and its serenity of vision is founded upon early periods of observation from nature. The monumentality of conception and the confidence with which the medium is handled marks the present work as one of Gainsborough's greatest late drawings. As is well known, the landscape compositions of his later years were almost entirely based on his imagination and in those works he can be judged as one of the pioneering spirits of the Romantic Movement. The landscape drawings enjoyed a great reputation during the artist's lifetime amongst a sophisticated circle of connoisseurs and artists and their influence on the development of landscape painting in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was considerable.

The present drawing can be directly compared with two of his greatest late drawings: 

Wooded landscape with a cow beside a pool (Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Hayes no.809) which shares the same rapidity of execution and a similar crisp use of washes; and 

Wooded landscape with figures on horseback (Private collection, Hayes no.796) which demonstrates a similar spirit of romanticism. The dancing rhythms in the screen of trees, animated in form and technique, are contrasted with three serene figures standing in the centre of the composition. The composure of the cows drawn in white chalk on the right, one shown face on and the other in profile, show a similar tranquillity and the air is still with cirrus clouds further emphasising the calm of a summer evening.

Black chalk and grey wash heightened with white
10½ × 15⅜ inches · 267 × 390 mm
Drawn circa 1788

Andrew Wilton and Anne Lyles, The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750–1850, 1993, p.304, reproduced pl.12;
Hugh Belsey, Peter Bower and Lowell Libson, Thomas Gainsborough: Themes and Variations; The art of landscape, 2003, pp.112, 201, 40–47;

New York, M. Knoedler & Co., Drawings by Thomas Gainsborough, 1914, no.1;
London, Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, 1990, no.96;
London, Leger Galleries, British Landscape Painting, 1992, no.8;
London and New York, Lowell Libson Ltd, Thomas Gainsborough: Themes and Variations; The art of landscape, 2003, no.7 (on loan)
This, the largest, most impressive and most beautiful of Rowlandson’s landscape subjects would seem to be a tribute to Gainsborough both in his choice of subject and the extreme rococo treatment of the composition and its component parts as well as to Cuyp and Rubens, both artists he greatly admired. The river has at different times been identified as being either the River Barle or the River Camel, but whatever the inspiration, the present composition would appear to be an idealized landscape. This composition is also known in an unsigned watercolour of similar size which is a later and less fluent repetition of the present work.

The most immediate inspiration from Gainsborough for this composition would seem to be the large landscape of circa 1760, Sunset: Carthorses Drinking at a Stream (Tate Britain) which appears to have been included in Gainsborough family’s sale at Christie’s in 1797. If Rowlandson did have a direct connection with Gainsborough or Gainsborough Dupont, as has been assumed, he may well have known this work.

**Pen and ink and watercolour**
15 7/8 x 20 7/8 inches · 404 x 530 mm
Signed and dated 1795

**collections**
Private collection, 1968;
Leger Galleries
Private collection, acquired from the above, 1969;
And by descent to 2010

**literature**
John Hayes, Rowlandson: Watercolours and Drawings, 1972, p.118, pl.203

**exhibited**
London, Lowell Libson Ltd, Beauty and the Beast: a loan exhibition of Rowlandson’s works from British private collections, 2007, no.37 (on loan)

**Thomas Rowlandson 1756–1827**

**Fording the river**

_Thomas Gainsborough RA_  
_Sunset: Carthorses Drinking at a Stream, circa 1760_  
_Oil on canvas · 56 1/2 x 60 1/2 inches · 1435 x 1537 mm_  
© Tate, London, 2010

_Thomas Gainsborough RA_  
_The Harvest Wagon, 1767_  
_Oil on canvas · 57 x 47 inches · 1448 x 1194 mm_  
© The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham / Bridgeman Art Library
In 1779 Wheatley arrived in Dublin from London, leaving a successful career as a portrait painter, to escape his creditors as well as the irate husband of his mistress (he was later to introduce the latter to Irish society as his wife). He soon established himself as the leading portraitist in Dublin as well as a popular watercolourist, depicting rural life and landscapes. Amongst the major works of this period can be numbered: The Dublin Volunteers meeting at College Green (National Gallery of Ireland); The Irish House of Commons, 1780 (Leeds Museums and Galleries); The Earl of Aldborough reviewing Volunteers at Belvedere House, Co Kildare, 1780, (Rothschild collection, Waddesdon Manor); The Marquess and Marchioness of Antrim driving their phaeton (Private collection) as well as a series of watercolours that James Kelly has characterised as providing ‘one of the most rewarding and appealing vistas on to the daily life of the common people of late eighteenth century Ireland’.

As can be seen in the present work, Wheatley was an accomplished and highly sophisticated watercolourist with a highly individual style characterised by carefully articulated pen and ink outlines combined with delicate washes. Wheatley was a great admirer of Philip Wouwerman and the sophisticated grouping of this composition owes a debt to the Dutch Master.

Wheatley found inspiration in the numerous fairs and gypsy encampments on the outskirts of Dublin and made numerous studies and sketches of the scenes and people, which he would then work up into finished large-scale watercolours. Indeed, the present work, and its related versions, is amongst the most remarkable of late eighteenth century figure watercolours. They proved highly popular and apparently he was able to dispose of them as soon as finished (J. Gandon and T. Mulvany The life of James Gandon, 1846, p. 208). Although he produced a number of watercolours of this subject, there is a spontaneity and candour not seen in his other more romantic rustic works.

These views of Irish fairs have nearly all been identified as either Donnybrook or Palmerston, however, it is impossible to accurately identify them, instead it appears more likely that he combined elements from different places and events to produce a favourable image. Wheatley confined his excursions to the counties of Kildare and Wicklow and therefore they are all based on scenes recorded in the Dublin area.

The present wonderfully preserved watercolour would appear to be the earliest and, possibly the most successful, of the small series that Wheatley produced between 1782 and 1784. The fluency of the penmanship and the existence of numerous pencilled pentimenti suggest that this is the prime version of this important series of watercolours. A simplified repetition of the present composition, also dated 1782, of somewhat cruder quality is in the collection of The Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, and another version dated 1783 is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Other variations of the subject are in the collection of The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino and the City of Birmingham Art Gallery.

Pen and ink and watercolour on laid paper 151/8 x 21 1/4 inches · 384 x 540 mm
Signed and dated 1782
Collections
E. E. Ambatielos, to 1957; Private collection; and by descent

FRANCIS WHEATLEY RA 1747–1801
A fair on the outskirts of Dublin
This splendidly preserved work must rank as, perhaps, the largest and certainly as one of the most sophisticated works of the leading topographer of the latter part of the eighteenth century. The beauty of the lighting effects as well as the refinement and elegance of the figures mark this work, previously unknown to modern scholarship, as one of the masterpieces of Dayes’s career ranking alongside Buckingham House, St James’s Park of 1790 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

Dayes made a number of large landscape watercolours, although none are on the scale of the present work, the most notable of which include Buckingham House 17½ x 20½ inches (Victoria and Albert Museum) and Greenwich Hospital, 1749, 17 x 24 inches (Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester). Dayes also executed a few large subject pictures, the best known of which is the Milton subject The Fall of the Rebel Angels, exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1798 (Tate Britain) on a similarly imposing scale.

Dayes had recorded Lancaster from a similar viewpoint in a small watercolour of 1791 (formerly collection P. K. Nixon). The 1797 engraving, although simplified in the treatment of the foreground details and figures (presumably as they distracted from the purely topographical nature which the engraving was to fulfill), is derived from the present work. There are, however, notable differences in the composition – the animated figure group which dominates the foreground of the watercolour was reduced to a more restrained smaller group, in which two of figures have their backs to the viewer. The charming vignette of the herd of cows by the river’s edge, led by a herdsman and milkmaid were removed entirely from the engraving, creating an altogether more static composition.

Our watercolour shows St Mary’s Church, a former Benedictine priory at the summit of the town above the River Lune. To the left of the church is the small castle surmounted by a square tower known as John à Gaunt’s Chair, with commanding views, notably to the Irish Sea six miles away and the Isle of Man beyond. At the foot of Castle Hill is the imposing ‘Old Bridge’ of late medieval design, described in The Itinerant as adding much to the embellishment as well as to the conveniency of the place. However, with rapidly increasing trade and prosperity, the bridge was replaced by a new larger one built nearby at Skerton and completed in 1788, five years before Dayes’s work. The old bridge was left to gradual deterioration.

The text illustrating the engraving after Dayes in The Itinerant: A Select Collection of Interesting and Picturesque Views in Great Britain and Ireland: engraved from original paintings and drawings, by eminent artists, London, 1799, plate CXXXIX, provides an informative account on Lancaster and its history.
FRANCIS TOWNE 1739–1816
A view taken at Ambleside

Watercolour with pen and brown ink 9¾ x 6½ inches 250 x 165 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 1796

collections
John White, presumably a gift from the artist;
John White Abbott (1754–1857), nephew of the above;
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—son-in-law of the above;
Fanny and Gustavus Douglas, daughter and son-in-law of the above;
The Rev. John White Abbott, son of the above;
John White Abbott (1764–1851), nephew of the artist;
John White, presumably a gift from the artist.

London, Leger Galleries,
Watercolours, 91/4 inches. The drawings in the same proportion but with a page size of 4 x 6 inches. The drawings in the larger book (of which this watercolour is one) were numbered on completion in a sequence up to forty, and most of them can be identified today.

In addition to sketching extensively throughout the area Towne made a thorough sketching campaign in and around Ambleside completing about fifteen large studies of varying sizes on individual sheets of paper as well as in two sketchbooks, the larger approximately 6 x 9 inches, the smaller in the same proportion but with a page size of 4 x 6 inches. The drawings to the largest book (of which this watercolour is one) were numbered on completion in a sequence up to forty, and most of them can be identified today.

Wilcox (op. cit.) has noted in discussion of the present work that ‘of all the scenes in his larger sketchbook, it was this one, the least dramatic, the least obviously located in any specific place, which Towne chose to extract first, finishing it and providing it with a mount before the end of 1786. What distinguished this watercolour from the others is not the scenery at all but the quality of the light. This is expressed not so much in the bright tip of the central mound as in the exquisitely handled golden sky tinged with blue at the extremities. The trees are rendered by firey strokes of brush and pen, handled independently yet coalescing, suggesting a transparency which rarely any of the contemporary effects Towne would have been familiar with to Wilcox. Their Italianate appearance could well have stirred Towne’s interest in the view. He also anticipates the observation of Joseph Budworth who in 1793 noted at Ambleside ‘the tallest pine I have ever seen.’

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, such as Ancient Forum wall, 1780 (British Museum, London) which also featured pine trees beyond a garden wall.

The Ambleside pine trees and characteristic stonework 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, 5 August. 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. 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.

Literature
Richard Stephens, ‘The Rose in the Wilderness’, Lowell Libson Ltd: British paintings, drawings and watercolours, 2006, p.44. To be included in Richard Stephens’s catalogue raisonné of Francis Towne’s works

Towne, in the company of his Exeter neighbours, James White and John Merivale, arrived in Ambleside on 5 August 1786 where they were to be based for their month’s stay in the Lake District. In addition to sketching extensively throughout the area Towne made a thorough sketching campaign in and around Ambleside completing about fifteen large studies of varying sizes on individual sheets of paper as well as in two sketchbooks, the larger approximately 6 x 9 inches, the smaller in the same proportion but with a page size of 4 x 6 inches. The drawings to the larger book (of which this watercolour is one) were numbered on completion in a sequence up to forty, and most of them can be identified today.

Wilcox (op. cit.) has noted in discussion of the present work that ‘of all the scenes in his larger sketchbook, it was this one, the least dramatic, the least obviously located in any specific place, which Towne chose to extract first, finishing it and providing it with a mount before the end of 1786. What distinguished this watercolour from the others is not the scenery at all but the quality of the light. This is expressed not so much in the bright tip of the central mound as in the exquisitely handled golden sky tinged with blue at the extremities. The trees are rendered by firey strokes of brush and pen, handled independently yet coalescing, suggesting a transparency which rarely any of the contemporary effects Towne would have been familiar with to Wilcox. Their Italianate appearance could well have stirred Towne’s interest in the view. He also anticipates the observation of Joseph Budworth who in 1793 noted at Ambleside ‘the tallest pine I have ever seen.’

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, such as Ancient Forum wall, 1780 (British Museum, London) which also featured pine trees beyond a garden wall.

The Ambleside pine trees and characteristic stonework 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, 5 August. 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. 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.
Cozens was the first major landscape painter to work exclusively in watercolour and his poetic landscapes occupy a unique place in the history of both British and European art when considered in connection with the works of his predecessors as well as his very great influence on his successors. Cozens, unlike his contemporaries, perceived the inherent drama in the scenery which he studied and whilst he was content to record, within reason, the topography of his subjects, he was, however, selective in his interpretation and omissions. In the majority of his works (Swiss and Italian subjects) any topographical content became a compositional device rather than the subject of the picture. The exact qualities that make Cozens’s work so poetic are hard to define but perhaps the closest appreciation was made by the art historian A. J. Finberg, their haunting beauty and incomparable power are spiritual, not material.

Cozens was to both anticipate and inspire Turner, Girtin and Constable. Turner and Girtin owed a direct debt to Cozens for they both spent a substantial part of their formative years copying Cozens’s watercolours and many of the interests and compositional devices seen in their most sublime works demonstrate Cozens’s great influence on them. Constable is known to have owned at least one watercolour by Cozens, who he stated was the greatest genius that ever touched landscape.

In May 1782 John Robert Cozens set out for Italy in the entourage of the eccentric millionaire and collector William Beckford who, at the age of nineteen, was making his third visit to the Continent, accompanied also by a tutor, cook, physician and a musician, as well as the usual valets and grooms. Beckford had been a pupil of John Robert’s...
father, Alexander, and as early as 1770 had commissioned some drawings from John Robert.

The most complete record of the tour can be gathered from the seven surviving sketchbooks (Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester) which Cozens used on these travels. The three carriages and outriders passed through Cologne and Augsburg before entering the Tyrol on 4th June when Cozens made the first drawing in his sketchbook. They passed rapidly through Rome and arrived in Naples on 6th July. At this time the party was staying with Sir William Hamilton and his first wife, and there Cozens, the musician Burton and Lady Hamilton fell ill. The subsequent deaths of Burton and especially Lady Hamilton upset Beckford who immediately returned to England, leaving Cozens to convalesce and to continue pursuing his commission for Beckford.

Cozens worked in the area of Naples until December when he revisited Rome before returning to England in September 1789. There is some evidence that Cozens showed his sketchbooks to Beckford at Geneva in November 1783 when the subjects of the finished watercolours might possibly have been chosen. On his return to England he worked on the watercolours which Beckford had commissioned.

This watercolour, which is based on a drawing made on 8th November 1782 (Book IV, no.16), was evidently not made for Beckford and is known in no other version, and it was unknown to Bell and Girtin when they were compiling their catalogue which lists only the sketchbook drawing. It differs slightly from the sketch in omitting a group of trees which frames the right hand side of the composition. The present watercolour depicts the dramatic and rugged nature of the Italian scenery which is further highlighted by the emphasis which Cozens gives to the elemental nature of the subject. In this it may most closely be compared with Scene in the Tyrol, between Brixen and Bolsano, effect of storm and showers (Victoria and Albert Museum).
This monumental watercolour, unrecorded until 1989, must be accounted one of the greatest achievements of Girtin’s short career and is perhaps the most complete statement of his Romantic vision which, at that moment was far in advance of Turner’s. In it Girtin demonstrates all he had learned from his early study of John Robert Cozens’s works whilst synonymising Cozens’s understanding of the sublimity inherent in a landscape with his own sense of the grandeur in what is essentially a calm and pastoral subject.

The power of this composition, which was described by Francis Hantcroft as distinctly solemn and disquieting, is best analysed by Tom Girtin in his discussion of the much faded version in his own collection (now National Galleries of Scotland): The new feeling of anguish was already present on ‘On the Wharfe near Farnley’ [Bacon collection] with its contrast of mood between sky and land, but this drawing seems comparatively placid when set beside the masterpiece of the period the ‘Stepping Stones’ of the Girtin collection; a tour de force of dramatic lighting and composition. Instead of simple diagonals, a whole network of intersecting lines extends across the picture, dividing it into a more or less star-shaped pattern whose sectors are further differentiated by varying degrees of light and shade. As in ‘Jedburgh’ [National Galleries of Scotland], but in more striking and immediate fashion, elements in the ground plane form the lower arm of the crossed lines while the upper area are projected by steep cliff and hill-sides set at varying angles to the picture plane. The network of lines and values consequently impinges as flat pattern as well as drawing the eye into the distance. The straight line dividing light from shade on the river, with its lower terminus setting off the silhouette of the cow, is not only in itself a highly dramatic device; it also complements the similar straight line of the Stepping Stones, the two together enclosing a rectangular wedge of light in sharp opposition to the undulating banks and shadows of the river the cross. In this continuation along the trees beyond the river, the light line leads on to a distant fire at the foot of the mountain.

In order that the scent might yield this striking pattern, Girtin looked down upon it from a height, with the result that the skyline, which was low in the ‘White House’ and higher in ‘Jedburgh’, is now nearly at the top of the picture. No longer is it a flat, gentle skyline disturbed if at all only by the central motive, but a sharp agitated one that in itself constitutes the motive. The bold contours of the hills seems to vibrate in a staccato fashion. The betoken Girtin’s dissatisfaction with the soft undulations of ‘Kirkstall Abbey’ and the ‘Eildon Hills’. Instead of eschewing repoussoir, he conceives the design as a whole series of repoussoirs, with great shoulders of rock re-echoing one another into the distance. Appropriately, the handling is flatter than ever, the whole painting now being built up of those juxtaposed blots of colour that appeared in the sky of ‘On the Wharfe near Farnley’. Yet the total effect is by no means flat, partly as a result of the subtle, atmospheric play of light over the sloping meadowland in the distance, to which attention is directed, characteristically, by the smoke of the fire. And the central mountain mass does not form a backdrop, since the eye is led beyond it by more distant mountains at each side. (T. Girtin and D. Loshak, The Art of Thomas Girtin, 1954, pp.77–78).

This composition derives from a small watercolour study which Girtin made on his tour of the North of England in the spring of 1801. He stayed with Edward Lascelles at Harewood House and he sketched

Thomas Girtin
Stepping Stones on the Wharfe at Bolton Abbey
Watercolour over pencil under-drawing
13⅝ x 20½ inches · 346 x 521 mm
Signed and also inscribed on the original mount:
opposite Bolton Abbey / Yorks
Painted in 1801
Collections
John Allnutt, acquired from the artist; and by family descent, 1989; The Leger Galleries, London; Private collection, Switzerland, acquired from the above; and by descent, 2010
Literature
 Exhibitions
London, Leger Galleries, English Landscape Painting, 1990, no.11

THOMAS GIRTIN 1775–1802
The Stepping Stones on the River Wharfe, above Bolton Abbey, Yorkshire
extensively along the River Wharfe. From these studies Girtin made the watercolour at the Victoria & Albert Museum as well as two finished watercolours, the present work and the autograph repetition in the collection of the National Galleries of Scotland. A comparison of these two finished watercolours reveals the greater spontaneity of the present example’s broad handling and lively execution, which suggests that our picture was executed before the Edinburgh version. Both must have been completed before the artist’s departure for Paris in November 1801.

The importance of this composition is confirmed by a consideration of its subject and topography in relation to the dramatic scenery of this stretch of the River Wharfe. The watercolour of Jedburgh, his R.A. exhibit of 1800 (National Galleries of Scotland), marked a startling departure from the tradition of eighteenth century topography, as exemplified by the view of Lancaster by Dayes in this catalogue (p.34), in that he chose a viewpoint which deliberately excluded the ruined Abbey, the focal point as well as the historic centre of the village, in order to pursue his interests in the more abstract qualities of the landscape. The present composition, on the other hand, is revolutionary in the history of British landscape painting in that the viewpoint from which Girtin made his ‘view’ actually included the picturesque ruins of Bolton Priory and the artist simply decided to exclude them. Girtin could be said to be flouting, if not actually contradicting, all the conventions of landscape painting from the time of Claude onwards, and especially those of the picturesque movement in which he was trained.

John Allnutt, a wealthy wine merchant who lived at Clapham Common, was one of the most active supporters of British artists in the early years of the nineteenth century. He was an important patron of Lawrence and Constable, and although he is not known to have owned any other drawings by Girtin, he collected works by many of the leading British watercolourists of the Romantic period.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT, through visual means, of the time taken up by repeated acts of looking. The appearance of this technique in Varley’s work of 1803 is also important as it seems to anticipate the very distinctive, and more controlled, use of a similar procedure in Cotman’s watercolours a few years later (Timothy Wilcox, ‘Cornelius Varley: The Art of Observation’ essay in Cornelius Varley: The Art of Observation, exhibition catalogue, Lowell Libson Ltd, 2005, p.13).

The Devil’s Bridge has long been a popular site for tourists and artists in search of the picturesque and the sublime. The first bridge to be built over the River Mynach, where it meets the River Rheidol, was constructed in the twelfth century. A later stone bridge was built over the first, and a modern steel bridge now spans both.

Cornelius Varley first visited Wales in 1802 and was somewhat unprepared for the scale of the scenery that he encountered: indeed, in 1845 he was to write, ‘There is no portion of landscape that painters are so deficient in as the surface of mountains and rocks; which are caused by the many difficulties that attend an artist while drawing in the open air and in places where many of the requisite concomitants cannot be had’ (C. Varley, A treatise on optical drawing instruments, 1845, p.16). Certainly, on that tour he must have realized that his skills were inadequate to his ambitions to capture the scale and the particular qualities of the geological structures which especially fascinated him. To that end, he returned, more fully prepared, to Wales the following summer in the company of Joshua Cristall and William Havell.

The present watercolour, perhaps his landscape masterpiece, was made during Varley’s second tour of Wales in the summer of 1803 and is closely related to a large study in the British Museum. It was a highly productive trip for the two young artists and as Basil Taylor noted, the mountain landscape drawings they brought back from Wales (above) a wide recognition as works of a very particular penetration and sensitivity. (Basil Taylor, Joshua Cristall 1806–1845, 1979, p.18). Timothy Wilcox, writing in our 2005 catalogue devoted to Varley discussed the results of this tour: ‘Varley’s pencil drawings of 1803 conjure up a vast spatial field with extraordinary clarity. His use of the pencil is now subtly nuanced, both in weight and in the flexibility of outline, ranging from the technically jagged to loose, curly arabesques. As if further to replicate the visual experience, he also creates blur, or slight indistinctness at the boundaries of the field of vision … Apart from his precision in drawing, in 1803 Varley achieved a new purposefulness in his use of colour. This, too, is directed chiefly towards a more accurate representation of the texture of grassy hillocks and rock surfaces. The direct method he used previously is now replaced by a broken, layered effect with smaller touches in one colour applied over a dry layer of a different colour. This might seem almost insignificant in itself, yet it demonstrates once again Varley’s...
The sense of it all, others than their too-obvious vulnerability to the forces acting on them. The scale of Turner’s achievement in the richly suggestive language derived from such an unpromising vocabulary is hardly less than that of Wordsworth, who in Hazlitt’s words, “like Rembrandt, has a faculty of making something out of nothing, that is out of himself, by the medium through which he sees and with which he clothes the barrenest subject” (op. cit. p.33).

Sky was an important element in Turner of Oxford's landscapes and his success at painting it was commented on time and again. For example, in a review of Watercolour Society exhibition of 1808 John Landseer (circa 1763–1852), the father of Sir Edwin Landseer, wrote: by the dint of his superior art he has rolled such clouds over these landscapes and has given to a flat country an equal grandeur with mountain scenery, while they fully account for the striking and natural effects of light and shade which he has intro-

This wild, storm battered landscape is undoubtedly the masterpiece of William Turner of Oxford’s early years and must number amongst the most powerful of British landscapes made in the early years of the nineteenth century. It is no surprise that the first owner of this major Romantic period landscape was also a patron of J.M.W. Turner. Indeed Edward Swinburne, a friend of Walter Fawkes, and his elder brother Sir John Swinburne were amongst the most imaginative of J.M.W. Turner’s patrons.

This monumental work was long known as a view of Otmoor; however, in the 1984 Turner of Oxford exhibition, it was identified as the picture exhibited in 1809 as Scene near Woodstock and is worth quoting from the exhibition catalogue at length:

The view is taken from the side of the Oxford to Banbury road about one mile from Shipton-on-Cherwell, looking towards the North-East. The bridge over the Cherwell at Enslow is just visible on the right, below the steep incline now known as ‘Gibraltar Rock’. Turner’s attention to the detail of the scene extends to the depiction of the stark limey earth visible in the ruts of the main road bearing the rider, beneath the shallow top-soil. With this work, Turner has liberated himself at a single stroke from the topographical tradition. The title is inexplicit as to location, and the eye looks in vain for any landmark which might lend significance to what is so patently an actual view. The wheeling birds, the straining trees and the rider’s flapping cloak all emphasise the force of the wind, which drives the clouds onto a powerful diagonal, countered by that of the churned earth in the foreground. Everything is in a state of flux; the cult of tran-

WILLIAM TURNER OF OXFORD 1789–1862

Scene near Woodstock

Watercolour over pencil heightened with scratching out and gum arabic 22 1/2 x 29 inches · 570 x 735 mm

Original backing inscribed W Turner of Oxford and Mr Swinburne 1809.

collections

Edward Swinburne (1789–1847), acquired in 1809;
Rev E. P. Baker fsa;
Society of Antiquaries, London;
Society of Antiquaries sale, Sotheby’s, 12 November 1970, lot 192, with Michael Bryan, London;
Professor Ian Craft, to 2010

exhibited

London, The Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours, 1809, no.211 (20 gns);
London, Michael Bryan, Thirteenth Exhibitions of English Watercolour Drawings, June 1982, no.11 as Otmoor near Oxford;

literature


[ 30 ]
This bold and spirited drawing depicts the square tower of St Andrew’s Church in the village of Kirby Bedon, a few miles southeast of Norwich on the road to Bramerton, before it was virtually re-built in the 1870s and ‘80s. The tower is shown from the south-west, entirely omitting the main body of the church. Even at this stage in his career, Cotman’s focus was on the importance of design over topographic record.

Our drawing is closely related to Cotman’s watercolour of the subject in the Norwich Castle Museum which includes a figure of a man seated next to the standing child. It is interesting to note that in the watercolour Cotman further refined the details of the architecture, exploiting the inherent qualities of flat planes of colour which enabled him to refine the design of the composition. The watercolour appears to be that exhibited at the Norwich Society in 1810 (no.45) as described by Rajnai (Miklos Rajnai, John Sell Cotman, Early Drawings (1798–1812) in the Norwich Castle Museum, 1979, p.79, 80-84) as ‘… an unprepossessing building is transformed into something highly memorably by its richly romantic setting and sonorous colour. The figure group reappears in one of the 1811 etchings and the stance of the seated man is imitated in of the boys in the foreground of Classical Landscape.’ Another smaller watercolour and possibly slightly earlier treatment of this subject is in the collection of the Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield. Timothy Wilson has noted that the index number on our drawing dates from about 1818. However, in this case he appears to have applied it to an earlier drawing.
FRANCESCO BARTOLOZZI RA 1728–1815

Zephyrus and Flora &
Boreas and Oreithyia
FRANCESCO BARTOLOZZI 1728–1815

Zephyrus and Flora & Boreas and Oreithyia

Coloured chalks, pencil and watercolour
Each, 11⅞ inches · 290 mm diameter
In their original frames

Collections
Jeffrey E. Horvitz, (collection mark not in Laug)

Exhibited
Zephyrus and Flora– Presumably
London, Royal Academy, 1778, no.13 as Zephyrus and Flora, a drawing in crayons

These beautifully executed works depict the exploits of two of the wind gods, Zephyrus and his brother Boreas. In one, Zephyrus, the gentle West Wind, is shown abducting Flora, the goddess of flowers and spring, to whom he gave a garden filled with flowers. The subject of the companion piece, Boreas and Oreithyia is the Rape of Oreithyia which depicts Boreas, the fierce North Wind, carrying off Oreithyia, the daughter of the legendary King of Athens, against her will as his bride. Their union produced two sons, the Boreads, Zetes and Calais and two daughters Chione and Cleopatra.

In the plates 1728–1815 Bartolozzi enjoyed a close personal and professional relationship with Giovanni Battista Cipriani, a fellow foundation member of the Royal Academy with Bartolozzi making over three hundred prints after and in collabora-
tion with Cipriani. The composition of Zephyrus and Flora directly relates to Cipriani’s important oil painting of The Rape of Oreithyia (exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1776, no.6) painted for his patron George Walpole and intended to hang in the saloon of Houghton.

Francesco Bartolozzi was born in Florence and entered the Florentine academy at the age of fifteen, with his lifelong friend Giovanni Battista Cipriani. He moved to Venice in 1748 and established himself as an engraver before moving to Rome where he worked for Piranesi. Bartolozzi was regarded as the best engraver in Italy, and some of his prints of old master drawings were published in London in 1765. Richard Dalton, an art dealer and librarian to George III, met Bartolozzi in Bologna and invited him to London, promising him an annual salary of £300 as well as an appointment as engraver to the king.

Bartolozzi arrived in London in 1774, where he was to remain for the next thirty-five years, lodging at first with his old friend Cipriani. He completed the collection of prints after Guercino’s drawings in George III’s collection as well as engraving a number of paintings that he had drawn in Italy. He exhibited with the Society of Artists from 1756 to 1768, but in the latter year he seceded to the Royal Academy with the rest of the artists who enjoyed Royal patronage. Although engravers were theoretically excluded from membership of the new academy, an exception was made for Bartolozzi. Bartolozzi collaborated with his friend Cipriani on a huge scale, producing some 335 prints in total and helped to establish a vogue for dotted prints or ‘stipples’, which became his characteristic manner. Angelica Kauffmann, Henry Banks and Joshua Reynolds also provided many designs. In 1766 the German ikast Sophie von los Roche visited him at his house in Fulham and recorded: ‘To Fulham and Bartolozzi, the great engraver, whose works I had so often admired ... We came upon the eminent artist with his worthy pupil at his nice house situated in the midst of a large flower garden, busts of his friends in the alley ways, and Apollo on a hill, everywhere with laurel, in front of his window. His rooms are charming and decorated with valuable drawings by Angelika and Cipriani ... Mr. Bartolozzi showed us all the engravings that he had engraved over a period of twenty years: the amount and beauty of the man’s work is astonishing. He plucked me a bouquet from the feet of Apollo in friendly fashion’ (Roche, pp.230–31).

Bartolozzi became increasingly sensitive to criticism, perhaps justified, due to his voluminous output which relied heavily on less talented assistants. In 1801 Bartolozzi and his pupil Gregorio Francisco de Queiróz were invited to Lisbon to reform the royal printing press, but his failing power as well as his reliance on Queiróz, produced disappointing results. He, however, continued to work up to his death, in his workshop in 1815.

John Francis Rigaud (1725–1810)
Agostino Carlini, Francesco Bartolozzi, Giovanni Battista Cipriani, 1777
Oil on canvas · 83 97/8 inches · 2108 x 1257 mm

The Rape of Oreithyia, 1782
Oil on canvas · 49 3/8 inches · 1245 x 1003 mm
Private collection, USA

Bartolozzi (after Cipriani)
The Rape of Oreithyia
Stipple engraving · 12 9/16 inches · 317 x 251 mm

© Trustees of the British Museum
The Gladiator (as this engraving is often called) is of particular importance amongst Joseph Wright of Derby’s works, providing one of his finest early self-portraits and depicting his first great success as an oil painter – his first exhibited painting, chosen for display at the Society of Artists in 1765 (now Private collection).

The image shows a copy of the Borghese Gladiator (the original statue was then in the Villa Borghese, now in the Louvre) being studied by candlelight, whilst the young artist holds up a drawing of the statue for comparison. The sitters are traditionally identified as Joseph Wright himself and Peter Perez Burdett (a fellow draughtsman and Wright’s great friend at this time), together with the more elderly John Wilson. The Borghese Gladiator was particularly admired for its truthful rendering of anatomy and Joseph Wright of Derby chose to display it here from one of its most dramatic aspects. His remarkable use of chiaroscuro heightens the drama of the composition, the statue being seen as a thrusting, diagonal image of great potency against the soft, velvety dark; his eternal energy contrasts with the three men’s quiet study. As much as anything else, this picture is about the power of a great work of art. (Wright of Derby, Tate Gallery, 1990, p.6)

The Borghese Gladiator was one of the most admired works of art of antiquity, and one of the most frequently copied. The bronze cast made for Charles I became one of the most celebrated statues in England and by the mid-eighteenth century when Wright was working, there were numerous copies of different sizes in English collections. He may have studied the copy in the Duke of Richmond’s sculpture gallery at Whitehall which was open to students, but other copies and casts were available. (For a full account of the Gladiator, see Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, Taste and the Antique, 1986, pp.242-4, fig.131).

The Gladiator, along with A Philosopher giving a Lecture on the Orrery and A Philosopher shewing an Experiment on the Air Pump, represents one of the most outstanding displays of chiaroscuro to be found in English art or in mezzotint engraving. It was upon works such as these that Joseph Wright of Derby’s lasting fame was built; indeed, William Pether’s mezzotint engraving of this particular subject is widely considered to be one of the finest achievements of mezzotint engraving on copper to have been produced in England.

This exceptional early proof impression of this magnificent large mezzotint with the upper half of the inscription space still grey and with the early scratched inscription, before the inscription was strengthened and before the entire title space was burnished clean. In this earliest proof state, the mezzotint burr is totally fresh and the soft copper plate shows absolutely no signs of wear and is printed on antique wove paper with margins beyond the platemark on three sides, trimmed just into the base of the blank title space area at the base of the sheet. The sheet is in remarkably intact condition for an early trial proof mezzotint of this era.
This very fine, early, rich black impression, records Wright’s painting A Philosopher by Lamp Light (Derby Museum and Art Gallery) which was exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1769. Wright’s closeness to Pether is underlined by the fact that he stayed with the engraver during the exhibition and the following year Pether, himself, included the mezzotint of the painting at the Society of Artists with the print being published on the final day of the exhibition. Clayton records (op. cit.) that John Milnes (see cat. no. 20) who was forming a collection of prints after Wright’s works paid Pether 15s for an impression. In 1775 Pether published a mezzotint of An Alchymist as a companion to this mezzotint.

The painting listed briefly as The Hermit in Wright’s account book at £100 guineas was unsold at the end of the Society of Artists’ exhibition when he offered it to Catherine the Great, but it remained on his hands and was included in his posthumous sale. The subject, the earliest of Wright’s outdoor candle light subjects, is largely derived from Rosa’s painting of Zenoaetus in meditation (Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen) which he would have known through Rosa’s etching, although the painting was, by then, in an English collection.
of early cataloguers: Frankau relied on Bemrose’s description, never having seen an impression herself. According to Bemrose (p.125) the print was ‘Engraved for Mr. Milnes of Wakefield: who destroyed the plate when twenty impressions had been taken off’. Clayton goes on to observe that the publication line announces merely that this print was published on 30 April 1779, not that it was published by the engraver J. R. Smith – this represents a departure from J. R. Smith’s usual practice and supports Bemrose’s view that The Captive was a private plate. Similarly, its absence from J. R. Smith’s catalogue of his published engravings indicates that he was not the proprietor of the plate. Clayton was unable to locate more than one impression in the first state (Royal Academy, London) and two impressions in the second state worldwide (Derby Art Gallery; and a private collection, (formerly in the collection of the Hon Christopher Lennox-Boyd). This exceptionally rare mezzotint is a ‘Finished proof’ with the scratched inscription. An excellent impression in warm brown-black ink, with totally fresh mezzotint burr, the copper plate showing no sighs of war and it printed on a coarse laid contemporary paper, warm cream in colour with wide margins at the sides, a thread margin at top of sheet and trimmed into engravers’s line at base. A finely preserved example of one of the great rarities of eighteenth-century mezzotint printmaking. No impression is recorded in any major international institution outside England.

Prison and cave scenes, because of the single source of natural light casting brightness into a darkened space, provided perfect settings for Joseph Wright of Derby’s natural genius with chiaroscuro. He had produced a small prison scene as an oil painting in 1773 and followed this with an oil of The Captive in 1775 (Vancouver Art Gallery), which was engraved seven years later than this mezzotint, in stipples (see p.66). Wright’s final and most elaborate oil version of this subject was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1778 as ‘Sterne’s Captive’ (Derby Museum and Art Gallery); where it was bought by John Milnes, for whom this mezzotint was engraved. In May 1778, after Milnes had purchased the painting of this subject at the Royal Academy show, Joseph Wright of Derby supplied him with a near complete collection of the earlier mezzotints after his works. It would have been characteristic of Milnes to have taken this new enthusiasm for Wright’s works to the extreme of commissioning a private plate for himself. This is therefore the rarest of all of the large mezzotints after the work of Joseph Wright of Derby as only 20 impressions of this mezzotint were printed prior to the destruction of the plate.

This particular subject depicts a scene conjured up in the mind’s eye of a character from Sterne’s A Sentimental Journey, in which a solitary captive, lost in despair, is described sitting on his cell. In Wright’s picture the prisoner is seen holding the stick upon which he carves a notch to record each day of his confinement. There is a melancholy and desolate mood to this depiction of infinite solitude.

Clayton (op. cit.) records Smith’s fine mezzotint was the first engraving of the subject. It is apparently rare and except the notice of JOHN RAPHAEL SMITH 1752–1812 AFTER JOSEPH WRIGHT OF DERBY 1734–1797

The Captive 1779

Mezzotint
Sight: 17¾ x 25¼ inches · 455 x 640 mm
Plate: 17¼ x 22 inches · 434 x 556 mm
Image: 171/8 x 217/8 inches · 434 x 556 mm

With the artist’s name in the plate

LITERATURE

Joseph Wright of Derby
The Captive, 1775–7
Oil on canvas · 40 x 50 inches · 1016 x 1270 mm
Derby Museum and Art Gallery

| 64 |
The oil on which this stipple engraving was based was completed in Rome in 1774 (Vancouver Art Gallery). It changed hands in 1780 and was in the collection of Edward Pickering by 1790. This particular version of the subject differs considerably from Wright’s later treatment of the subject (Private collection). In particular, the captive himself is noticeably frail and gaunt when compared with his counterpart in the final painted version. The calendar of small sticks rests upon the bed and various other minor details display a more literal interpretation of Sterne’s writing than does Joseph Wright’s final romanticized version.

An extremely rare brilliant early proof impression, in Clayton’s second state, prior to the engraved title and inscription, with the artists’ names and publication line in scratched letters only. Printed in black ink with particularly strong contrast. On antique laid paper with margins. Clayton lists only three impressions in this state, of which this is one.
Morshead was reputed to be one of the largest landowners in the west of England. In 1809, however, he lost his fortune, allegedly through gambling in London, and was obliged to sell much of his estate in Blisland, near Bodmin. He died on the Isle of Man in 1813. Morshead’s descendants remained in Blisland, and the family coat of arms can be seen in the window of the south transept of the parish church which had been converted into a private chapel by Sir John in 1791.

This extremely elegant example of Romney’s portraiture serves to underline why he was so successful in what might have seemed an overcrowded profession in the London of the 1770s and 1780s. Romney’s great technical ability as a draughtsman and in his ability to handle paint was combined in his best works with what can only be described as an elegant sense of taste and a refined sensibility to colour which marked his works throughout his career and especially after his return from Rome in the mid-1770s when his handling of the medium took on a new breadth and confidence.

Romney’s sitters books record that Sir John sat for his portrait during May and June 1786 and was charged 20 guineas. Romney also painted a pendant of Elizabeth Morshead, (Private collection) which was begun in 1787 and completed in 1791 for which 25 guineas was paid.

Sir John Morshead (1747–1813) lived at Trenant Park, near Liskeard, Cornwall, and was MP for Bodmin, 1784–1802. He was created a Baronet in 1784 and in 1796 was appointed Surveyor General to the Prince of Wales. In April 1798, the Prince of Wales appointed him Lord Warden of the Stannaries, and Chief Steward of the Duchy of Cornwall. As Lord Warden of the Stannaries from 1798–1800, Morshead was involved in overseeing all aspects of the tin industry from mining, refining and assay offices in the region. The principal role of a stannary town was the collection of tin coinage, the proceeds of which were passed to the Duchy of Cornwall. The authority of the Lord Warden enabled him to exercise judicial and military functions in Cornwall, and he was entitled to call a Stannary Parliament of tinners.
This wonderful drawing demonstrates Rowlandson’s prowess as a draughtsman at the highest level. Rowlandson’s fluent and incisive pen-work and his ability to depict character combined with his gentle humour makes him one of the most appealing of artists; his best works take one back effortlessly into late Georgian England while amusing one with their timeless observational, but non-condemnatory, humour.

The present drawing is a perfect example of Rowlandson’s art at the point where his powers are at their greatest. Racing subjects were a favourite theme throughout Rowlandson’s career as he was an enthusiastic gambler, a devoted delineator of animals with ‘attitude’ and a great observer of low-life types – the racecourse provided all he needed.
Roscoe (op. cit.) has pointed out that Samuel Percy’s wax portraits differed from those of his predecessors’ inasmuch that they not only tend to be in much higher relief but because they are cast in naturalistically coloured, or ‘stained’ liquid wax. Percy took his new manner of working in wax to its fullest extent in the remarkable series of tableaux which ‘framed in recessed cases, they combine multiple fully rounded statues in coloured wax, often with the addition of real lace, hair and other ornaments, to give the figures a doll-like verisimilitude. His subjects were often rustic genre scenes, for instance ‘Gypsy Encampment’, in which nine figures, including a screaming infant, gesture furiously, creating a bustling composition of theatrical unrest’ (Roscoe, op. cit. p.971).

The remarkable tableau of A race of chimney-sweeps on donkeys is possibly the largest and most ambitious of Percy’s waxes to survive. It originally formed part of the remarkable collection of over a hundred of Percy’s works which the 15th Earl of Shrewsbury formed, presumably by direct purchase or commission for the artist himself.
his career as a clerk and then became a pupil of John Ruskin at the Working Men’s College. Ruskin formed an extremely high opinion of his pupil’s abilities, using him as a substitute drawing master. When Ruskin considered that Ward needed more training he paid for Ward to have lessons with Hunt. Ward assisted Ruskin in organizing the watercolours and drawings which Turner left to the nation as well as making copies of Turner’s watercolours at Ruskin’s behest. Ward’s copies were of extremely fine quality and have subsequently often been confused for the master’s work. When Ward set up as a dealer, Ruskin used Ward as a channel for the disposal of much of his own work.

Ruskin greatly admired Hunt’s work and had an extensive collection, mostly of finely wrought still-life watercolours. This large and spirited study numbers amongst the finest of Hunt’s studies of single figures and demonstrates his great virtuosity as a draughtsman. Hunt exhibited five watercolours of gamekeepers between 1824 and 1828 whilst a slightly later work dated 1825 is in the collection of the Yale Center for British Art. In the mid 1820s Hunt was working for the Earl of Essex at Cassiobury Park in Hertfordshire and it is likely that some of these studies were made during his time at the Earl’s estate. The present drawing may be a candidate for Hunt’s exhibit at the Old Watercolour Society in 1824. There is an undated, more fully worked-up, watercolour of a gamekeeper which was formerly in the collection of Harry Quilter (reproduced, Harry Quilter, Preferences in art, life and literature, 1894, opposite p.180) which may possibly be a candidate for Hunt’s 1826 exhibit. In 1828 Hunt also exhibited a slightly smaller A Game-keeper from Nature (last recorded, Private collection, Oxfordshire). Another smaller watercolour of the same subject is in the Fry collection.

WILLIAM HENRY HUNT 1790–1864

The gamekeeper

Pen and ink, pencil and watercolour
17 7/8 x 12 inches · 450 x 300 mm
Signed and dated 1826
Inscribed by the artist on the backing board:
Drawn from Nature by Wm Hunt, 6 March 1826
St. Russell Square
Also inscribed in another hand:
Watercolour drawing / The ‘Gamekeeper’ by William Hunt of the Old Watercolour Society / London / Price Fifty guineas – purchased from William Ward of Richmond, Surrey / A Church Terrace / by The Hon. George Duncan on October 3rd 1892. – The British Museum desired to have this picture but G. D. had first choice – Mr. W. Ward was Mr Ruskin’s assistant at the National Gallery when arranging the Turner –

COLLECTIONS
William Ward of Richmond; The Hon. George Duncan, acquired from the above, 3rd October 1892 for 50 gns.; Private collection, 1910

EXHIBITED

Shown at:
William Ward (1829–1908), who in later life described himself as ‘for 30 years Assistant to Professor Ruskin’ had started his career as a clerk and then became a pupil of John Ruskin at the Working Men’s College. Ruskin formed an extremely high opinion of his pupil’s abilities, using him as a substitute drawing master. When Ruskin considered that Ward needed more training he paid for Ward to have lessons with Hunt. Ward assisted Ruskin in organizing the watercolours and drawings which Turner left to the nation as well as making copies of Turner’s watercolours at Ruskin’s behest. Ward’s copies were of extremely fine quality and have subsequently often been confused for the master’s work. When Ward set up as a dealer, Ruskin used Ward as a channel for the disposal of much of his own work.

Ruskin greatly admired Hunt’s work and had an extensive collection, mostly of finely wrought still-life watercolours.
earlier portraits and of the dress seen in this portrait we suggest that an earlier date can be ascribed to this work. Agasse, himself listed ‘P of a lady wole [sic] length. Small size’ in the autograph record of his works (op. cit.) which Mme Loche has pointed out tends to be imprecise as to the exact details of individual pictures.

Marianne Langham (1772–1809) was the second daughter of Sir James Langham 7th Bt, of Cottesbrooke, and Juliana, sister and sole heiress of Thomas Musgrave, of Old Cleeve, Somerset.

This particularly charming example of Agasse’s work as a portrait painter was painted at a period in his career when he was especially engaged as a painter of animals – on occasion on an heroic scale – and it was only later in his life that he increasingly turned to portraiture as a support to his waning income. This finely drawn work demonstrates Agasse’s preference for a slightly oblique off-centre treatment of his sitters who are often seen seated in sparsely treated surroundings which are often scumbled-in. One of the earliest examples of this is the drawing of circa 1800 of his sister, Louise-Etiennette Agasse (Cabinet des Dessins, Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, Geneva, Acc. no.1968–41) which demonstrated a pose that he was going to repeat throughout his career. Agasse was to employ a similar device in his double portrait of the Booth children, The Important Secret, (known in two versions) of 1823 and the 1838 portrait of Mrs Cross (Zoological Society of London). The painting of 1820, The Hard Word (private collection) and the related drawing (Cabinet des Dessins, Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, Geneva, Acc. no.1921–1) again shows Agasse’s predilection for the format seen in this portrait of Marianne Langham which is also of a similar size.

Perhaps the best-known example of this format is the small full-length portrait of Edward Scheener (private collection) executed in 1823. In this larger portrait many of the compositional elements found in the present work are repeated and is similar to that seen here. Mme Renée Loche confirms the attribution of the present work to Agasse but has suggested that this portrait may date from the period 1820–30 as the majority of his portraits date from that period. However, on the basis of Agasse’s earlier portraits and of the dress seen in this portrait we suggest that an earlier date can be ascribed to this work. Agasse, himself listed ‘P of a lady wole [sic] length. Small size’ in the autograph record of his works (op. cit.) which Mme Loche has pointed out tends to be imprecise as to the exact details of individual pictures.

Marianne Langham (1772–1809) was the second daughter of Sir James Langham 7th Bt, of Cottesbrooke, and Juliana, sister and sole heiress of Thomas Musgrave, of Old Cleeve, Somerset.
happy union of two antipathetic personalities, the flamboyant, somewhat vulgar, erratic and extravagant father and the genteel, prudent and watchful mother’ who might easily have found a place in a novel by Jane Austen as the capable and modest wife of a clergyman of limited means.’ (Kenneth Garlick, Sir Thomas Lawrence: A complete catalogue of the oil paintings, 1989, p.11). This drawing remained in the family of Lawrence’s sister, Anne, who married the Revd Richard Rosse Blosom, a master at Rugby School, in 1790; and it stayed in the family by descent until 1952. The oil sketch of Lawrence’s mother was also owned by Anne Bloxam and remained in the family when the Bloxams moved to New Zealand, and was on loan to the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongerawa, from 1981–2002 (with French & Co, New York).

Lawrence’s only known portrait of his father is a chalk drawing (Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, Stanford, California) made towards the end of his father’s life, portraying him as a full-figure of a man, confident and at ease with himself. In comparing it to the oil sketch of Lawrence’s mother, Michael Levey commented that the portrait of Mrs Lawrence is ‘far removed in mood from the jaunty assurance of her husband. It is a haunting image, in which the haggard features are still handsome, and the likeness to her youngest child is strong.’ (Michael Levey, Thomas Lawrence, 2005, p.34). This particularly fine and sensitive drawing of Thomas Lawrence’s mother, Lucy Lawrence, relates to an oil sketch painted when she was already ill towards the end of her life as May 1797. They are Lawrence’s only known portraits of his mother. Lawrence was close to his mother and a letter he wrote to a Miss Lee on the actual day of his mother’s death suggests he had been present. Just months later, Lawrence’s father died. It is unsurprising that the sitter’s clandestine marriage to the insolvent and unemployed, Thomas Lawrence (senior) in 1753 was met with disapproval by her family. Lucy was the younger daughter of the Rev. William Read (1694–1754), Vicar of Tenbury, Worcestershire, and Rector of Rockford, Herefordshire, and his wife Sara Hill, who was descended from well-established Welsh and Shropshire gentry: her great-uncles were Sir Littleton Powys, Chief Justice of North Wales, and Sir Thomas Powys who had been Solicitor-General. Lucy’s father banished her from the family home and her uncle removed her from his will. There was, however, a reconciliation with her family, though not with her father who died in 1754. Lucy and Thomas Lawrence had sixteen children, of which the artist was the fourteenth, but youngest surviving child. He was born in Bristol on 13 April 1769. Mrs Lawrence was described as a woman of ‘taste and ability, amiable, and well looking both as to figure and face’ by Mrs Papendiek, Assistant Keeper of the Wardrobe to Queen Charlotte who got to know Sir Thomas Lawrence when he painted the Queen in 1789. In his catalogue of Lawrence’s work Kenneth Garlick commented that the clue to the artist’s character lay with the ill-assorted but apparently

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE PRA 1769–1830

Portrait of the Artist’s Mother, Mrs Lucy Lawrence

Pen and coloured chalks
9⅝ × 7½ inches · 243 × 190 mm

Drawn circa 1796

Collections
Anne Bloxam, sister of the artist; Lucy Brookbank Bird, daughter of the above; May Grundy, daughter of the above; Lucy Bird, sister of the above, acquired in 1912; Mrs N. Pickering, Hawkhurst, by descent, 1941; Private collection, 2010

Literature


This particularly fine and sensitive drawing of Thomas Lawrence’s mother, Lucy Lawrence, relates to an oil sketch painted when she was already ill towards the end of her life as May 1797. They are Lawrence’s only known portraits of his mother. Lawrence was close to his mother and a letter he wrote to a Miss Lee on the actual day of his mother’s death suggests he had been present. Just months later, Lawrence’s father died. It is unsurprising that the sitter’s clandestine marriage to the insolvent and unemployed, Thomas Lawrence (senior) in 1753 was met with disapproval by her family. Lucy was the younger daughter of the Rev. William Read (1694–1754), Vicar of Tenbury, Worcestershire, and Rector of Rockford, Herefordshire, and his wife Sara Hill, who was descended from well-established Welsh and Shropshire gentry: her great-uncles were Sir Littleton Powys, Chief Justice of North Wales, and Sir Thomas Powys who had been Solicitor-General. Lucy’s father banished her from the family home and her uncle removed her from his will. There was, however, a reconciliation with her family, though not with her father who died in 1754. Lucy and Thomas Lawrence had sixteen children, of which the artist was the fourteenth, but youngest surviving child. He was born in Bristol on 13 April 1769. Mrs Lawrence was described as a woman of ‘taste and ability, amiable, and well looking both as to figure and face’ by Mrs Papendiek, Assistant Keeper of the Wardrobe to Queen Charlotte who got to know Sir Thomas Lawrence when he painted the Queen in 1789. In his catalogue of Lawrence’s work Kenneth Garlick commented that the clue to the artist’s character lay with the ill-assorted but apparently
Michael Levey recently pointed out that Lawrence was a draughtsman of instinctive, masterly ability, drawing with a facility far beyond anything that Reynolds could attempt, and with a precision of outline alien to Gainsborough. At the basis of his paintings always lay drawing – quite literally (Michael, Levey, Sir Thomas Lawrence, 2005, p.2).

Unlike the portrait drawings which are the best-known aspects of his practice as a draughtsman and which were intended for a public audience, however limited and personal, the lesser-known studies such as the present three examples demonstrate his abiding love of and fascination with the actual art and process of portrait painting and underline the extreme degree of skill and professionalism that he brought to his paintings which superficially appear to owe more to Lawrence’s painterly qualities than to his skill as an anatomical draughtsman.

In his early years in London Lawrence spent much time studying antique sculpture in order to understand the human form, before being allowed to move onto the live model. However, as Lawrence had already been practicing as a portrait painter in Bath, prior to his entry to the Royal Academy Schools, he was in many ways advanced of his fellow students as Henry Howard RA remarked his [early] proficiency in drawing … was such as to leave all his competition in the antique school far behind him (D. E. Williams, Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence, vol.I, London, 1831, p.99).

These three drawings demonstrate Lawrence’s interest in the mechanics of his art and his devotion to drawing, not only as a skill but as a form of study vital to a practicing artist. To that end Lawrence not only made drawings such as these for his own elucidation but obsessively collected the drawings and studies of past masters to further his understanding. There are two sheets of studies of limbs in the Victoria and Albert Museum, executed in black chalk on brown paper as well as several sheets of studies of limbs in the British Museum. These like our drawing were executed in black and red chalks as is a further sheet of studies of a woman’s hands in the Fitzwilliam Museum.

Michael Levey recently pointed out that Lawrence was a draughtsman of instinctive, masterly ability, drawing with a facility far beyond anything that Reynolds could attempt, and with a precision of outline alien to Gainsborough. At the basis of his paintings always lay drawing – quite literally (Michael, Levey, Sir Thomas Lawrence, 2005, p.2).
Rowlandson was fascinated by the resemblance between human, animal and bird faces, as can be seen in the numerous visual puns that occur throughout his work. The present drawing is notable for the variety of human expressions that Rowlandson managed to invest in his thirteen fish depicted in this drawing. Rowlandson emphasized his interest in the pun in his pseudo-scientific inscription: Cucullus being the scientific name for the Common Cuckoo (Cuculus canorus) which is further punned with cocu de mer.

Rowlandson’s interest in ‘character’ studies ran in parallel with the growing enthusiasm towards the end of the eighteenth century in the pseudo-science of the study of physiognomy and it would have been unlikely that an artist who was so touched by humour would not have found this subject a fertile field for cultivation. Rowlandson appears to have had more than just a passing interest in this ‘science’. Following on from Pythagoras and other writers including Giovanni della Porta, author of De Humana Physiognomia (1586), and Johann Lavater who were interested in this phenomenon, Rowlandson made a number of careful observations in the early 1820s which were not only intended to be humorous but appear to be serious forays into the subject. Rowlandson noted on the title page of one of his albums as well as on a single sheet, now in the Courtauld Institute, amongst the numerous mythological religions in the world, there is one which teaches us the souls of human beings pass into the bodies of the animals — Pythagorean.

There is an album of sketches by Rowlandson entitled Comparative Anatomy; Resemblances Between the Countenances of Men and Beasts in the British Museum (1885,1212.182–244), which contains sheets depicting, ‘Four fishes and four fish-like human profiles’ and ‘Gurnet and John Dory, paralleled by an old lady and a college don’. The Houghton Library, Harvard, also holds a substantial group of drawings exploring the subject (watermark 1821), whilst the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, holds another group of drawings entitled Comparative Anatomy and Jug Designs (59.55.1086) depicting the head of the Duke of Wellington opposite a miser and a rat. This motif also appears in one of the leaves of an album from Denston Hall, Newmarket, which was on the art market in 1989. That album included a page with a drawing of the head of a fish next to the profile of a man with a piscatorial gaping mouth above another drawing of a long-beaked bird and a man with a prominent proboscis. Although the present sheet depicts fish rather than comparative human resemblances, it reflects Rowlandson’s interest in ichthyology taken to the level of caricature.
This sonnet was one of three dedicated by Wordsworth to Haydon. It was originally written on December 23rd, 1815, and Haydon later wrote in his autobiography: ‘Now, readers! was not this glorious!’ During this period, he was also the recipient of four poems by Keats and one by Elizabeth Wordsworth, as Haydon drew it on other occasions, or more likely his own: it certainly symbolises the hand of ‘Creative Art’. The hand represented below may be Wordsworth’s, as Haydon drew it on other occasions, or more likely his own: it certainly symbolises the hand of ‘Creative Art’. It is likely that Haydon first met Wordsworth in May 1812 at the Mayfair home of Sir George Beaumont, Haydon’s patron, on one of the poet’s visits to London although the first reference to the poet in Haydon’s diary appears in 1815. Fourteen years older than Haydon, Wordsworth, who had recently published The Excursion, may have been a feature attraction at the Academy. Wordsworth’s sonnet dedicated to Haydon: ‘Great is the glory, for the strife is hard! Bear no continuance of weak-mindedness — And in the soul admit of no decay, Still to be strenuous for the bright reward, Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress, And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may, While the whole world seems adverse to desert. Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse, Heroically fashioned — to infuse Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part, Demands the service of a mind and heart, Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,’ Whether the instrument of words she use, High is our calling, Friend! — Creative Art Wordsworth’s sonnet dedicated to Haydon: ‘Great is the glory, for the strife is hard! Bear no continuance of weak-mindedness — And in the soul admit of no decay, Still to be strenuous for the bright reward, Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress, And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may, While the whole world seems adverse to desert. Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse, Heroically fashioned — to infuse Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part, Demands the service of a mind and heart, Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,’ Whether the instrument of words she use, High is our calling, Friend! — Creative Art

A manuscript transcript in Haydon’s hand of Wordsworth’s sonnet dedicated to Haydon: ‘Great is the glory, for the strife is hard! Bear no continuance of weak-mindedness — And in the soul admit of no decay, Still to be strenuous for the bright reward, Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress, And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may, While the whole world seems adverse to desert. Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse, Heroically fashioned — to infuse Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part, Demands the service of a mind and heart, Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,’ Whether the instrument of words she use, High is our calling, Friend! — Creative Art

Williams Wordsworth 1842, (both National Portrait Gallery, and even included Wordsworth’s Head in his major composition Christ’s Entry in Jerusalem, painted between 1814 and 1816 (Mount St Mary’s Seminary, Cincinnati). Elizabeth Dufourne, who first owned this drawing, was a neighbour of the David Wilkie in Rultford Place, London, and modelled as the mother in Wilkie’s The Blind Fiddler. Their circle of mainly Scottish friends also included Benjamin Haydon and the French émigré artist Dufourne, whose marriage to Elizabeth was short-lived, ending with her departure to France. Haydon wrote affectionately of her and this period of their association in his autobiography, where he even refers to them reading Shakespeare together. He wrote: ‘Liz was as interesting a girl as you would wish to see and very likely to make a strong impression on any one who knew her; however, I kept clear, and she ultimately married the Frenchman. Scott’s Champion on 4th February 1816, and in Leigh Hunt’s Examinet, 31 March 1816. In return Haydon produced portraits of Wordsworth in chalk (1815) and oil. William Wordsworth on Helldan, 1842 (both National Portrait Gallery), and even included Wordsworth’s Head in his major composition Christ’s Entry in Jerusalem, painted between 1814 and 1816 (Mount St Mary’s Seminary, Cincinnati).
Pencil 7 x 4½ inches · 178 x 113 mm Inscribed by the artist in pen and brown ink, upper margin: "opus haud parvum... in y' lato. Magiae. dixi apud Antoniou philov. 16 γυναίκα χρή / 86 / 84. Juvenalis 39[2] [Epitapheus, Hippolytus, 11, 620–49]: ‘But a clever woman – that I loathe! May there never be in my house a woman with more intelligence than befits a woman!’”, inscribed and dated, lower margin, 4½ inches · 115 mm: "Su(lice) / 4½ inches · 178 x 113 mm. The daughter of... the RA 1741–1825 [71x65] [86] [71x486] H E N R Y  F U S E L I Portrait of Harriot Mellon, famous for her beauty, made her debut in London at the Drury Lane Theatre as Lydia Langrish in Sheridan’s Rivals in 1795. A fellow actress described her as a ‘young, glowing beauty, endued with great natural powers of mind, talents and vivacity, but... an insuperable rusticity of air and manners.’ The month after her marriage she left her appearance on stage, as Audrey in As You Like It. Their happy marriage lasted until 1792, when Coutts died, making her the richest widow in the country. Possessed of his sole heir including a share in his banking operation. Her second marriage, in 1810, to William Aubrey de Vere Brackelth, 7th Duke of... "It is my turn next.” Later in his career, “at the table of Mr. Coutts the banker, where Fuseli sat as a drawing of a courtier, identical in style, medium and size, in the Knebworth House, Hamburg, which bears a similar two-line Greek inscription, this time quoted from Homer’s Iliad. The inscription on the versos indicates that Coutts had invited Fuseli and other friends to his box at the Covent Garden theatre. Presumably it was there that Fuseli made this portrait, which shows Mellon, her niece. Sir Thomas Lawrence was among the artist’s greatest supporters and patrons. Fuseli had been introduced to the banker shortly after his arrival in London in 1754, aged twenty-three. Later, Coutts helped finance the artist’s trip to Italy in 1770, which proved to be crucial to his artistic development and when Fuseli returned to London eight years later, in 1778, Mrs. Coutts, dressed like Morgiana, came to the box, deeply absorbed in what appears to be a reading. Presumably it was there that Fuseli, surrounded by the adoring members of the Coutts family and other friends, such as Thomas Lawrence, and his sitters. One of the young women Fuseli frequently portrayed at the time was Lavinia de Irujo, daughter of a Spanish diplomat, then living in Chelsea. She, like one of Coutts’s grand-daughters, Lady Georgina North, had received drawings lessons from the artist. Two portraits of Lavinia, made in 1834 and 1835, respectively, are particularly close in style and type to our sheet. The earlier one shows Lavinia with an almost identical coiffure, her name inscribed in Greek letters. Fuseli often inscribed his drawings in Greek; a characteristic sheet comparable to ours is a drawing of a courtier, identical in style, medium, and size, in the Knebworth House, Hamburg, which bears a similar two-line Greek inscription, this time quoted from Homer’s Iliad. The inscription on the versos indicates that Coutts had invited Fuseli and other friends to his box at the Covent Garden theatre. Presumably it was there that Fuseli made this portrait, which shows Mellon, her left arm seemingly resting on the ledge of the box, deeply absorbed in what appears before her.
Loss of Patroclus, Rejecting the Consolation of Thetis (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington), which was regarded by contemporaries as ‘the best ever offered to the Academy on a similar occasion’. He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1804 and the rise of this talented painter through the hierarchy was rapid, being elected an Associate in 1809 and an Academician in 1814. Dawe continued to exhibit portraits but mostly subject pictures up until his elevation at the Academy and thereafter showed only portraits having secured his reputation as a painter.

Dawe established a respectable practise as a portrait painter from about 1806 and in 1809 exhibited his full-length portrait of Mrs White, one of the most remarkable portraits of the period. By 1811 was receiving the patronage of the banker, Thomas Hope, one of the principal connoisseurs and arbiters of taste of the day and Dawe’s success was assured. In the summer of 1815 Dawe briefly employed John Constable, with whom he had been acquainted since 1806, to paint in the background for the full-length portrait of the actress Eliza O’Neill as Juliet: this theatrical scene, full of romantic atmosphere achieved by the effect of glittering lamplight, stirred public opinion when exhibited both in London at the Royal Academy in 1816 and later in St Petersburg in 1827.

Dawe seems to have established himself in the unofficial rôle of a Court Painter with commissions of portraits of Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg Saalfeld, later king of the Belgians, who married in 1816 and the Duke and Duchess of Kent. Under the patronage of the Duke of Kent, Dawe travelled to St Petersburg where he was to fulfil a commission from Alexander I, Emperor of Russia, to paint the heroes of the 1812 campaign. This commission was to occupy Dawe for the rest of his career and resulted in a gallery of over three hundred portraits for the Military Gallery of the Winter Palace (Ermitage Museum, St Petersburg). This, as yet, unidentified portrait, appears to have returned home with Dawe at the end of his time in Russia and may well be a record of an early friendship made in St Petersburg’s artistic or literary circles.

Dawe is now the least celebrated of the major late Georgian portrait painters in spite of being compared in his lifetime with both Thomas Lawrence and Jacques-Louis David. Undoubtedly, his removal from London at a vital period of his career left the field entirely clear for Lawrence, whose only clear rival he was. Dawe certainly made a rapid impression in Russia with Pushkin dedicating the following verse to him:

Why does your wondrous pencil strive
My Moorish profile to elicit?
Your art will help it to survive,
But Mephistopheles will hiss it.

Draw Miss Olenin’s face. To serve
His blazing inspiration’s duty,
The genius should spend his verve
On homage but to youth and beauty.

George Dawe was the son of Philip Dawe a well-known engraver, and named after his godfather, the painter, George Morland. His younger siblings, Henry, James and Mary all followed artistic careers. George trained as an engraver and in 1794 entered the Royal Academy Schools and in 1803 received the gold medal for Achilles, Franta; for the Oil on canvas, outlined 26 × 22½ inches · 660 x 571 mm
Signed, inscribed and dated, lower right: Geo Dawe RA St Petersburgh 1819, also signed and inscribed verso: Geo Dawe RA Pinxit 1819 St Petersburgh. Also inscribed on the stretcher by Cornelius Varley with varnishing instructions.

This remarkably vivacious portrait was executed very soon after Dawe’s arrival in St Petersburg where he was to fulfil a commission from Alexander I, Emperor of Russia, to paint the heroes of the 1812 campaign. This commission was to occupy Dawe for the rest of his career and resulted in a gallery of over three hundred portraits for the Military Gallery of the Winter Palace (Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg). This, as yet, unidentified portrait, appears to have returned home with Dawe at the end of his time in Russia and may well be a record of an early friendship made in St Petersburg’s artistic or literary circles.

Dawe is now the least celebrated of the major late Georgian portrait painters in spite of being compared in his lifetime with both Thomas Lawrence and Jacques-Louis David. Undoubtedly, his removal from London at a vital period of his career left the field entirely clear for Lawrence, whose only clear rival he was. Dawe certainly made a rapid impression in Russia with Pushkin dedicating the following verse to him:

Why does your wondrous pencil strive
My Moorish profile to elicit?
Your art will help it to survive,
But Mephistopheles will hiss it.

Draw Miss Olenin’s face. To serve
His blazing inspiration’s duty,
The genius should spend his verve
On homage but to youth and beauty.

George Dawe was the son of Philip Dawe a well-known engraver, and named after his godfather, the painter, George Morland. His younger siblings, Henry, James and Mary all followed artistic careers. George trained as an engraver and in 1794 entered the Royal Academy Schools and in 1803 received the gold medal for Achilles, Franta; for the

Private collection, UK, 2010

Literature
To be included in Dr Galina Andreeva’s forthcoming catalogue raisonné of the works of George Dawe.
As part of his return, visiting Paris, Cambrai, Brussels, and Aix-la-Chapelle for the Congress between Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia. In the autumn of 1818 while working at Aix on a portrait of Prince Volkonsky, Dawe was noticed by Emperor Alexander I and invited to go to St Petersburg to paint, on very profitable terms, more than three hundred portraits of Russian commanders who had distinguished themselves in the campaign against Napoleon.

Dawe travelled to the Russian capital via Germany, where in Weimar he met and painted Goethe (Goethe Museum, Weimar) and discussed with him his essay on the theory of colour then in preparation. Dawe arrived in St Petersburg in the spring of 1819 and established his studio there for ten years until May 1828, although he briefly returned in the spring of 1829. For five years, until the Military Gallery opened in the Winter Palace in December 1821, Dawe’s studio, included his brother Henry and brother-in-law Thomas Wright (who married Mary Margaret Dawe in St Petersburg in 1819). Dr Galina Andreeva numbers about four hundred military and not less than a hundred society portraits by Dawe whilst he was working in Russia. Among the best portraits painted by Dawe in Russia are those of Barclay de Tolly and Admiral Shishkov (both in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg); the young Countess Tingganow (Alupka Palace, Alupka, Crimea); and the Mezhakov family (Vologda Art Gallery, Vologda).

In spite of his prodigious output, Dawe was also known for his diverse interests, finding time to study anatomy, the theory of colour, psychology, and languages including Russian which he attempted to use on his extensive travels in Russia. He also built up a fine collection of old masters many of which were sold after his death in London.

Dawe enjoyed an unparalleled success in Russia: in 1820 Dawe was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg, where in 1827 he was allowed to exhibit 150 portraits. In the winter of 1826 he held a solo exhibition in Moscow and on the death of Dawe’s patron, the new Emperor, Nicholas I, chose him as Court Painter for the coronation ceremony. The following year he was appointed the First Portrait Painter at court and in 1829 accompanied Grand Duke Constantine to Warsaw.

On his first return to England, Dawe brought with him several Russian portraits and in November 1828 he showed them to King William IV at Windsor Castle, before departing again for Russia. During his return journey which took from November 1828 to February 1829, Dawe visited the courts of Germany and France where he was enthusiastically received. Dawe’s stay in St Petersburg was, however, short-lived as he had been suffering from ill health for some time and in August 1829 he returned permanently to London. Dawe died a few months later and 27 October he was buried with honours in St Paul’s Cathedral. We are extremely grateful to Dr Galina Andreeva and Dr Elizaveta Renne for their helpful comments regarding this work.

Mary Margaret Dawe in St Petersburg in 1825. Dr Galina Andreeva numbers about four hundred military and not less than a hundred society portraits by Dawe whilst he was working in Russia. Among the best portraits painted by Dawe in Russia are those of Barclay de Tolly and Admiral Shishkov (both in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg); the young Countess Tingganow (Alupka Palace, Alupka, Crimea); and the Mezhakov family (Vologda Art Gallery, Vologda). In spite of his prodigious output, Dawe was also known for his diverse interests, finding time to study anatomy, the theory of colour, psychology, and languages including Russian which he attempted to use on his extensive travels in Russia. He also built up a fine collection of old masters many of which were sold after his death in London. Dawe enjoyed an unparalleled success in Russia: in 1820 Dawe was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg, where in 1827 he was allowed to exhibit 150 portraits. In the winter of 1826 he held a solo exhibition in Moscow and on the death of Dawe’s patron, the new Emperor, Nicholas I, chose him as Court Painter for the coronation ceremony. The following year he was appointed the First Portrait Painter at court and in 1829 accompanied Grand Duke Constantine to Warsaw.

On his first return to England, Dawe brought with him several Russian portraits and in November 1828 he showed them to King William IV at Windsor Castle, before departing again for Russia. During his return journey which took from November 1828 to February 1829, Dawe visited the courts of Germany and France where he was enthusiastically received. Dawe’s stay in St Petersburg was, however, short-lived as he had been suffering from ill health for some time and in August 1829 he returned permanently to London. Dawe died a few months later and 27 October he was buried with honours in St Paul’s Cathedral. We are extremely grateful to Dr Galina Andreeva and Dr Elizaveta Renne for their helpful comments regarding this work.

Mary Margaret Dawe in St Petersburg in 1825. Dr Galina Andreeva numbers about four hundred military and not less than a hundred society portraits by Dawe whilst he was working in Russia. Among the best portraits painted by Dawe in Russia are those of Barclay de Tolly and Admiral Shishkov (both in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg); the young Countess Tingganow (Alupka Palace, Alupka, Crimea); and the Mezhakov family (Vologda Art Gallery, Vologda). In spite of his prodigious output, Dawe was also known for his diverse interests, finding time to study anatomy, the theory of colour, psychology, and languages including Russian which he attempted to use on his extensive travels in Russia. He also built up a fine collection of old masters many of which were sold after his death in London. Dawe enjoyed an unparalleled success in Russia: in 1820 Dawe was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg, where in 1827 he was allowed to exhibit 150 portraits. In the winter of 1826 he held a solo exhibition in Moscow and on the death of Dawe’s patron, the new Emperor, Nicholas I, chose him as Court Painter for the coronation ceremony. The following year he was appointed the First Portrait Painter at court and in 1829 accompanied Grand Duke Constantine to Warsaw.

On his first return to England, Dawe brought with him several Russian portraits and in November 1828 he showed them to King William IV at Windsor Castle, before departing again for Russia. During his return journey which took from November 1828 to February 1829, Dawe visited the courts of Germany and France where he was enthusiastically received. Dawe’s stay in St Petersburg was, however, short-lived as he had been suffering from ill health for some time and in August 1829 he returned permanently to London. Dawe died a few months later and 27 October he was buried with honours in St Paul’s Cathedral. We are extremely grateful to Dr Galina Andreeva and Dr Elizaveta Renne for their helpful comments regarding this work.
This extremely important recent rediscovery returns to the painter’s oeuvre one of his most personal statements, for the house which forms the subject of this picture was Constable’s birthplace and he chose this image to lie the frontpiece of what may be considered to be his most important ‘manifesto’ of his art. The rediscovery of this painting brings to light a fine example of Constable’s virtuoso powers as a painter in oil, and an unusually moving memento of his affection for his home and family. 

The present picture can be dated to 1830 on stylistic grounds and appears to have been made specifically with the ‘English Landscape Scenery’ project in mind. Andrew Wilson, writing recently of the present painting notes that: Constable himself described the subject as ‘a spot’ that might ‘to others’ be ‘void of interest or any associations’, but as he explained in the note that accompanies the plate in his publication, to him personally ‘it is fraught with every endearing recollection.’ He says that ‘the endeavour has been to give, by richness of Light and Shadow, an interest to a subject otherwise by no means attractive’. He seems to have had in mind the special power of the mezzotint medium to impart a resonant tonal drama to his view; or as he put it in the Introduction to the series, ‘to arrest the more abrupt and transient appearances of the CHAOSQUO IN NATURE’. This was, in fact, a good example of a subject specifically designed to exist in mezzotint form, and it is therefore perhaps less than surprising that the preparatory study for it has been forgotten (Private communication with Lowell Libson).

Indeed, it is notable that no other drawing or study by Constable relating to this seminal image for the frontispiece is known. The importance of this canvas, quite apart from the pregnancy of the subject, is that...
it provides essential evidence of the fertile creative process that Constable and Lucas were engaged in during the complex process of making the English Landscape Scenery mezzotints. Recent conservation has revealed a number of stages of addition, deletion and change which took place over a relatively short period, which are reflected in the various proof stages of Lucas’s print. It is therefore clear that as the creation of the plate progressed, Constable would alter this painting and show it to Lucas who would then effect the appropriate changes to the plate. Sarah Cove was able to identify evidence, during conservation, of the ‘archaeology’ of the various stages of the development of the image towards that seen in the final published print. During this development Constable was making major compositional changes in oil on the canvas as well as making minor alterations, as usual, on ‘touched’ proof impressions of the mezzotint. The present work presumably left the Constable family, as part of a lot of mixed unidentified sketches, towards the end of the nineteenth century. It was then worked up by an unknown hand into a ‘finished’ picture, presumably, to render it a more attractive a commercial proposition in an age which valued the highly finished over the more spontaneous works we now prize so highly.

Our painting demonstrates a much lighter and more spontaneous handling of the paint than is usually found in Constable’s important finished statements of this period. Indeed, the delicacy of Constable’s technique and the sureness of his drawing in paint with the brush demonstrates the confidence with which he could work when he was not under pressure to produce the sort of high finish that was expected of paintings to be exhibited in public. As a consequence one sees, in this picture, Constable working on a highly personal statement, without the constraints that he usually felt placed on him by the demands of a public that was often unsympathetic or who lacked an understanding of the aims of his art. However, it is important to view this as a complete painting rather than a working study – in all respects it functions as a finished statement, but one which was made to be translated into another medium.

It is interesting to note that Constable reused an earlier canvas and child, typical of the studies for religious paintings and copies after Italian Masters that Constable was making in the period circa 1806–12. Sarah Cove’s recent technical examination of this work confirms that Constable employed an unusual and rather typical pink priming over his earlier painting which he proceeded to work on before it had properly dried. The pigments employed in the picture as well as the handling of the various elements of the media are typical of, and in some instances unique to Constable’s work of the early 1830s.

We are very grateful to Sarah Cove, Ricca Jones, Anne Lyles, Mary Anne Stevens and Andrew Wilton for their various thoughts and comments on this work and the development of the image from canvas to mezzotint. We are grateful to the owner of this picture for allowing it to be published for the first time in this catalogue.
Lowell Libson Limited specialises in British paintings, watercolours and drawings of the seventeenth to late twentieth centuries as well as European and North American drawings. We offer a carefully selected stock within a wide price range. We are always seeking to acquire interesting and important British paintings, drawings and watercolours by outright purchase or for sale on the owner’s behalf on a commission basis.

We are able to advise on all aspects relating to the collecting of pictures; from the purchase and sale of works of art, to conservation, restoration, framing, lighting and hanging. We also offer a complete curatorial service for large and small collections.

Although based in central London, we offer an international service. We travel extensively in North America and Europe and count many of the leading museums and collectors of these continents amongst our clients.

Our gallery is located on the second floor of an attractive, red brick building dating from the 1880s situated between New Bond Street and Savile Row. We strongly believe that the process of acquiring a work of art should be an enjoyable and stimulating experience and as such we offer our clients the opportunity to discuss and view pictures in discreet and comfortable surroundings.