

KAREN TAYLOR FINE ART





BRITISH WOMEN ARTISTS 1780–1890

KAREN TAYLOR FINE ART

BRITISH WOMEN ARTISTS 1780–1890
A SELECTION OF WORKS ON PAPER

The drawings are available for viewing by appointment

KAREN TAYLOR FINE ART

+44 (0)20 8743 9207

+44 (0)7881 581275

karen@karentaylorfineart.com

www.karentaylorfineart.com



The work of women artists provides us with an important counterbalance in art history and its gradual emergence into the mainstream is to be celebrated. Often working privately, female artists drew and painted but much of their work has not received the attention bestowed upon their male counterparts. They frequently inhabited the domestic sphere as reflected in the subjects of many of the drawings in this catalogue.

Many of their names are not well known and I hope this small selection of the work of British artists from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may contribute a little to the current reassessment of their work. Women and women artists were an integral part of a period of great historical change and their achievements deserve greater recognition.



1

Lady Diana Beauclerk, née Spencer (1734–1808)

A nymph dancing with satyrs

Watercolour over traces of pencil

30.4 x 27.7 cm; 12 x 10¾ inches

Private collection

Literature: Noël Riley, *The Accomplished Lady – A History of Genteel Pursuits*, 2017, ill. p. 288

The artist was the eldest daughter of Charles Spencer, 2nd Duke of Marlborough. Known as Lady Di, she grew up at Blenheim Palace where she copied the old masters from a young age.

In 1757 she married the 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke but she left her drunken, unfaithful husband, and conducted a secret relationship with her lover Topham Beauclerk (1739–1780), whom she subsequently married two days after her divorce. This relationship fared little better as Beauclerk was a hypochondriac addicted to laudanum.

Horace Walpole, Lord Orford, was a close friend and admirer who built a room at Strawberry Hill, where she was a frequent visitor, to house her work.

Lady Diana was well known for her charming drawings of children, cupids and bacchantes, some of which were engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi and thus widely distributed. She produced designs for Wedgwood wares from wine coolers to marble clocks, painted murals and illustrated books.

Examples of her work can be found at the British Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum and in the Royal Collection.

2

Lady Diana Beauclerk (1734–1808)

The Infant Pan

Signed with initials I.I.: D:B., brown washes on buff paper
31.5 x 21.2 cm; 12½ x 8¼ inches

Private collection

The artist's work was characterised by her effective use of the brush with no pen work, as seen in this drawing.



3

Augusta Innes Withers (British 1792–1877)

A white hen with her chicks

Signed and inscribed on pink ribbon: Mrs Withers
26 Grove Place. Delt., watercolour with gum arabic
on vellum

12 x 23.9 cm; 4¾ x 9⅝ inches

Provenance: Henry Rogers Broughton, 2nd Baron
Fairhaven (1800–1973)

Augusta Innes Withers, the daughter of a Chaplain to the Prince Regent, was born in Cheltenham. She was well known to contemporaries and widely praised for her botanical and bird pictures, characterised by her meticulously detailed and accurate work which is beautifully exemplified in the present drawing.

Withers exhibited widely, at the Royal Academy in London from 1829 to 1846, the Royal Society of British Artists where she showed sixty-eight works between 1832–65 and the New Society of Painters in Water Colours. She was one of the earliest members of the Society of Women Artists where she exhibited forty-three works from 1857–75. Withers was appointed flower painter to Queen Adelaide in 1833, flower and fruit painter to Queen Victoria in 1864 and is listed as a painter to the Horticultural Society.

In 1822 she married Theodore Withers (1782–1869), an accountant from Middlesex. The couple lived mainly in London and had at least two children, Theodore (b. 1823) and Augusta (b. 1825).

Withers contributed to a large number of publications including *The Botanist*, John Lindley's *Pomological Magazine* and Curtis's *Botanical Magazine*. She illustrated Robert Thompson's *The Gardener's Assistant*, 1859 and collaborated with Sarah Drake on James Bateman's *Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala*.

Three of Withers' works are in the Natural History Museum, London, and a large number of her original watercolours are held in the Lindley Library of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Henry Rogers Broughton succeeded his older brother Urban Huttleston Broughton as the 2nd Lord Fairhaven in 1966. He was born in the United States and educated at Harrow, before joining the Royal Horse Guards in 1920. Both brothers were great collectors and Henry put together one of the largest twentieth century collections of paintings, drawings, gouaches and miniatures. He left a large bequest of one hundred and twenty flower paintings, over nine hundred watercolours and drawings and forty-four volumes of drawings by botanical artists such as Redouté and Ehret to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge in the Broughton Bequest.



4

Ann Baring (1758–1804)

***Hilly landscape with cattle watering and rustics
on donkeys***

Signed and dated l.l.: Ann Baring delt 1789, watercolour
over pencil on laid paper watermarked with the
Strasburg Lily

34.8 x 47.9 cm; 13½ x 18¾ inches

Provenance: Private collection, U.K., until 2019

This charming work, previously unknown to scholars, shows Ann Baring's watercolour style as similar to that of her fellow Devonian Francis Towne and she may be presumed to have been one of his pupils. The watercolour shows similarities to Towne's work, especially the trees in shade immediately above the white cow, and the figure and his donkey crossing the bridge and appears to be a composition drawn from elements learned from Towne. The strong shadow cast by the tree trunk in the right, and the fussy foreground plants in the bottom right corner are also characteristic of this kind of Towne. Baring is known to have painted oils as well as watercolours and to have worked in Ireland.

Ann Baring was the daughter of John Baring, (1730–1816) of Mount Radford House, Devon, an English merchant banker and M.P. and the eldest son of Johann Baring (1697–1748), a clothier from Bremen in Germany who had settled in Exeter, where he built up a large business and obtained English citizenship. Her mother was Ann Parker, the daughter of Francis Parker of Blagdon near Paignton in Devon. A Miss Baring commissioned a watercolour from Towne of Lago Maggiore in 1781 (Tate Gallery; Francis Towne online catalogue FT 350).

After John Baring's father's death in 1748, he inherited the large family cloth business in Exeter. Together with his younger brother Francis, he extended his commercial

interests to London and set up the partnership of John and Francis Baring, of which he was the senior partner. He soon retired from activity in London for Devon and left the running of the London business to Francis, under whose guidance it evolved into Barings Bank. In 1802, Barings and Hope & Co. were called on to facilitate the largest land purchase in history, the Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the area of the USA.

John Baring founded banks in Plymouth and Exeter and was elected Member of Parliament for Exeter in 1776. He was also appointed Sheriff of Devon for 1776. He retired from Parliament in 1802. His daughter Ann had three sisters, Elizabeth, Charlotte and Margaret and two brothers.

The Baring daughters and their cousins were prominent in Exeter society and were known in the circle that included Towne's friends and customers. In 1786 Ann's sister Charlotte married John Short of Bickham, one of Towne's patrons (*ibid*, FT240), and in 1790 Frances, daughter of Charles Baring, married William (*ibid*, FT876), the son of Towne's musician friend William Jackson, whose house, Cowley Place, was very near to Barton Place, home of John Merivale, Towne's major patron. In 1791 Frances's sister Jaquetta married Sir Stafford Northcote of Pynes, another nearby estate where Towne had sketched (*ibid*, FT143). Charles Baring's daughter Lucy was a close friend of Frances, daughter of John Merivale, and after Lucy's death in 1815 Frances married her widower, John Lewis Mallet of the Audit Office.

*I am grateful to Richard Stephens for his comments on
this watercolour.*



5

Attributed to John Boyne (Irish c.1750–1810)

A visit to a white witch

Signed with initials and dated l.r.: J.B. April 7 18.., pen and grey ink and grey wash
16.2 x 21.2 cm.; 6⅜ x 8⅜ inches

This drawing depicts a consultation with a cunning person or white witch. Popular belief in witches remained strong until the twentieth century in many parts of the world. A stock part of eighteenth and nineteenth century country life, these commercial, multifarious magical practitioners provided local communities with a range of services for a small fee, such as un-witching, fortune-telling, and divination. They could gain quite serious reputations and some prospered while their position gave them status in their local communities.

The ‘witch’ seems to have a good-natured face and her bonnet is not peaked while a cat is perched benignly on it. The old woman is seated, a horse skull above her chair and consulting a magical book or grimoire: the ownership of such expensive objects often added to the allure and kudos of cunning-folk. The family are approaching her in a deferential way to ask for her help. The girl looks frightened, is she seeing the real witch, the cause of their maladies? Cunning-folk were often brought in to counter black or harmful magic.

Boyne left Co. Down for London at the age of nine with his father and was apprenticed to the engraver William Byrne. He joined a company of strolling players until 1781 and thereafter established a drawing school.

Boyne’s caricatures, which provide an amusing insight into British contemporary life, can be found in many public collections, including the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.

I am grateful to Dr Andrew Simmons for his comments on this drawing.





6

Miss Selby (fl. mid 19th Century)

Netley Abbey, Hampshire

Pen and brown ink and wash over traces of pencil,
inscribed verso: Miss Selby/Netley Abbey

18.5 x 23.5 cm; 7½ x 9¼ inches

Provenance: Augusta Raymond-Barker, Fairford Park,
Gloucestershire;

By family descent until 2016

This drawing is reminiscent of the work of Heneage Finch (1751–1812), Viscount Guernsey, 4th Earl of Aylesford from 1777, whose lively penwork was his hallmark. The work of his brothers and sisters and his children share this attribute and it may be that Miss Selby knew one of them and was influenced by their style.

The condition of this watercolour is excellent as it comes from a friendship album assembled by Augusta Raymond-Barker of Fairford Park. The majority of the works therein were by local female friends or family members and Miss Selby may be presumed to have lived nearby.

The ruins of this Cistercian Abbey close to Southampton Water in Hampshire are now run by English Heritage and date from the thirteenth century and later.



7

Lady Emily Dundas (British d. 1900)

A black and white dog

Watercolour with touches of bodycolour

6.5 x 8 cm; 2½ x 3⅛ inches

Provenance: Augusta Raymond-Barker, Fairford Park,
Gloucestershire, the artist's step-niece;

By family descent until 2016

Lady Emily Dundas was the sister of Augusta Raymond-Barker's stepmother, Lady Catherine Reynolds-Moreton, who married John Raymond-Barker of Fairford Park in 1841 as his second wife. See no. 8 for further biographical details.

8

Lady Emily Dundas (d. 1900)

The Ladies of Llangollen at Plas Newydd

Watercolour over traces of pencil, inscribed verso:
Llangollen-lan-Llangollen and inscribed on mount: Emily
Dundas, a tiny sketch of a girl's head verso
9.3 x 9.4 cm; 3 5/8 x 3 3/4 inches, in a carved wood frame
Provenance: Augusta Raymond-Barker, Fairford Park,
Gloucestershire, the artist's step-niece;
By family descent until 2016

Both the Ladies of Llangollen came from Ireland and it was here that the two women formed a strong emotional bond and attachment that would endure for the rest of their lives and attract the attention of Regency society.

Eleanor Charlotte Butler (1739–1829) (seated in this drawing and wearing the order of Saint Louis, an order of chivalry founded by the French king) was the youngest daughter of the Earl of Ormonde of Kilkenny Castle. Sarah Ponsonby (1755–1831) lived with relatives, Sir William and Lady Elizabeth Fownes, in Woodstock, County Kilkenny and was a second cousin of Frederick Ponsonby, 3rd Earl of Bessborough, father of Lady Caroline Lamb. Ponsonby attended boarding school at Kilkenny, and it was there, aged 13, that she met Butler, who was 16 years her senior. They became fast friends and corresponded regularly.

Rather than face the possibility of being forced into unwanted marriages, or into a convent in the case of Butler, the pair left County Kilkenny together in April 1778 dressed as men, with a pistol and Sarah's beloved dog Frisk. Their families tracked them down and tried to make them give up their plans. They finally succeeded in fleeing together to Wales and established themselves at a cottage

near Llangollen, which they renamed Plas Newydd, in 1780, which they refurbished in a Gothick style. Windows were gothicised and old stained-glass panels inserted into them. A library was filled with finely bound books and curiosities of all kinds, including a lock of Mary Queen of Scots' hair.

They developed a passion for old, carved wood, from medieval churches to fragments of Elizabethan furniture. The staircase hall was lined with it, and a trio of canopies built on to the door and windows. The extraordinary front porch incorporates carvings of the four evangelists, Latin inscriptions, seventeenth century bedposts and lions donated by the Duke of Wellington (visitors learnt that to appear with gifts of carvings ensured a warm welcome). Over the years they added a circular stone dairy and created a garden in the picturesque style. Eleanor kept a diary of their activities.

Living on a modest income they maintained a quiet life, studying literature and languages which they described as their 'system' and improving their estate. They did not actively socialise and were uninterested in fashion, wearing dark riding habits for formal and informal occasions and beaver hats, as seen in Dundas' drawing. Their hair remained cropped in the 'Titus' style, fashionable in the 1790s and they continued to use hair powder, which went out of fashion after the same decade. Many observers commented on their masculine appearance.

Their life began to attract the interest of the outside world and Plas Newydd became a haven for visitors, as they became a celebrated example of 'retirement', leaving



society for a rustic idyll, which delighted writers such as Wordsworth and Sir Walter Scott. They were also admired for their 'Romantic Friendship'. Visitors including Southey, Wordsworth, Shelley, Lord Byron, Lady Caroline Lamb, the Duke of Wellington and Josiah Wedgwood visited. The two formed a literary circle that encompassed Mary Tighe, Ann Talbot, Anna Seward, Hester Thrale (otherwise known as Hester Piozzi, Dr. Johnson's friend, was a neighbour), Henrietta Bowdler, Madame de Genlis and William Wordsworth. Copious correspondence resulted, some of which, for example letters to Anna Seward, have been published (*Collected Letters of Anna Seward*, 1811).

On some days as many as twenty visitors arrived. Their notoriety spread and continental visitors included Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, the German nobleman and landscape designer, who wrote admiringly about them. Queen Charlotte wanted to see their cottage and persuaded George III to grant them a pension.

There was speculation that there was more than romantic friendship between Eleanor and Sarah in their own lifetime. The diaries of Anne Lister (1791–1840), an English landowner from Halifax, West Yorkshire, record a visit to the Ladies of Llangollen in 1822. Her diaries contain accounts of her own lesbian relationships written in code. She was fascinated by the two women and discreetly tried to establish if they were more than just friends, concluding that it seemed unlikely that their friendship was just platonic. Their queer materiality has been explored by Fiona Brideoak in *Desire, Indeterminism and the Legacies of Criticism*, 2017.

Butler and Ponsonby lived together for over fifty years until the end of their lives. Their books and glassware carried

both sets of initials and their letters were jointly signed. Eleanor Butler died in 1829, and Sarah Ponsonby two years later. They are both buried at St Collen's Church in Llangollen.

Plas Newydd is now a museum run by Denbighshire County Council and is open to the public.

Although the Ladies of Llangollen's fame was extraordinary, romantic female friendships were common in eighteenth century Europe. Women often spent a great deal of time in each other's company and developed strong, intense relationships. Female friends frequently wrote to one another using passionate, romantic language that can suggest a sexual relationship to modern readers. Some of the relationships reflected in correspondence were no doubt sexual, others may simply have reflected the conventions of friendship. It is impossible to find conclusive proof whether the relationship between Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby was sexual or not, but there is abundant evidence that it was loving.

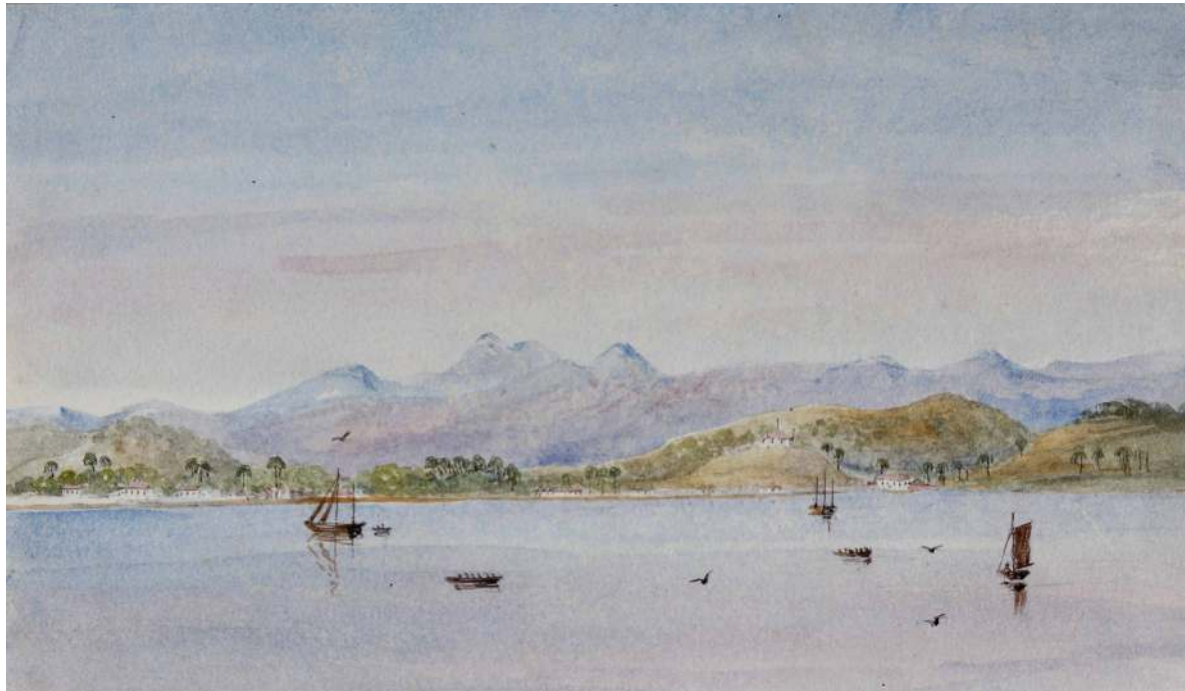
Not that many images of the pair are known as the ladies disliked having their portrait taken. Lady Mary Leighton (née Parker) sketched them individually in pencil and a lithograph was made by Richard James Lane, after Lady Leighton circa 1830–1840s showing them seated at Plas Newydd. A second pirated version was made by James Henry Lynch, printed by Day & Haghe, circa 1833–1845 and shows the pair full-length wearing riding habits and top hats in their garden. Lady Delamere sketched them in old age showing them walking inside Plas Newydd (see E. Mavor, *The Ladies of Llangollen – a study in Romantic Friendship*, 1971, ill. facing frontispiece and facing p. 97).

The artist of this drawing, which lies somewhere between portraiture and caricature, was Lady Emily Dundas, née Reynolds-Moreton, the fourth daughter of Thomas, 1st Earl of Ducie. In 1847 she married Admiral Sir James Whitley Deans Dundas, GCB, (1785–1862) as his second wife. He became the First Naval Lord in the first Russell ministry in July 1847 and they lived at Admiralty House. Thackeray records that during the 1850 season Lady Emily Dundas gave a glittering party.

Lady Emily is recorded as accompanying her husband on many official engagements such as inspecting the fleet in various places from Cork to Malta and as far afield as New Zealand. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean in 1852 and led all naval operations in the Black Sea, including the bombardment of Sevastopol in October 1854 during the Crimean War. She went with him to Turkey and took a house at Therapia.

Lady Emily Dundas had four sisters. Her youngest sister, Lady Catherine Reynolds-Moreton (d. 2 Dec. 1892), married in 1841, John Raymond-Barker, of Fairford Park, Gloucestershire (d. 21 May 1888). He had two daughters by his first wife, Harriet Bosanquet (1798–1830) Augusta (1827–1900) and Leonora. Augusta assembled the friendship album from which this watercolour comes which reveals the women of her family and circle as accomplished watercolourists.





9

Apollonia Griffith (fl. 1830–50)

Malacca

Inscribed verso: Malacca/where dear William died & was buried/Feby. 4th 1845, watercolour over traces of pencil, further inscribed again on original label, signed on the flyleaf of the album from which it comes

13.8 x 23 cm.; 5½ x 9 inches

Apollonia Griffith was a talented print maker and watercolourist. Her father was the London merchant Thomas Griffith of Ham Common, who had four children including her brother William, celebrated for his contribution to Indian botany.

William studied medicine at London University, where his botanical interests developed. In 1832 he joined the East India Company as an assistant surgeon at Madras. After trips to Bhutan and Afghanistan, he took charge of Calcutta Botanic Garden in 1842. Only three years later he was to die at Malacca of hepatitis, leaving behind a widow, young child and three maiden sisters. A cenotaph was erected to commemorate him in the Botanic Garden in Calcutta.

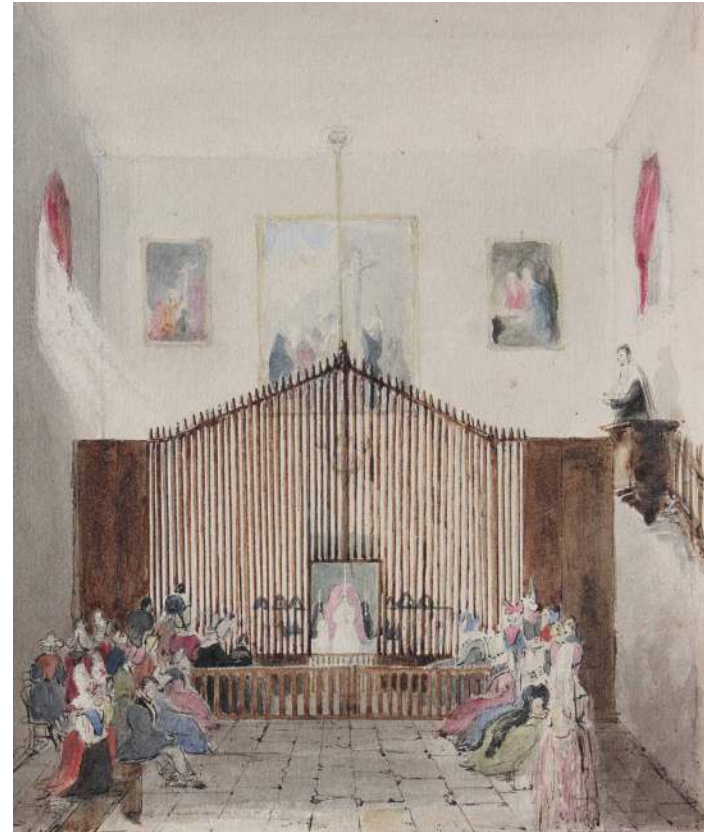
On his deathbed William asked fellow botanist John McClelland to sort through and publish his manuscript papers, and it is through these posthumous memoirs, journals of his travels on the Indian subcontinent published in 1847 with lithographs by Apollonia, that Griffith's work is so widely known and celebrated. Her role is praised in the introduction to the memoirs:

we owe the transfer of the landscapes to stone, which add so much to the appearance of the following volume, to the talent and kindness of his sister.



10
Apollonia Griffith (fl. 1830–50)
Tintern Abbey

Inscribed on mount and dated 1833, watercolour over traces of pencil
 8.3 x 6.3 cm.; 3¼ x 2½ inches



11
Apollonia Griffith (fl. 1830–50)
A young girl taking the veil, Avranches, Brittany

Inscribed on label: A young girl taking the veil./
 Avranches, pen and black ink and watercolour over traces of pencil with scratching out
 18.2 x 15.2 cm; 7¼ x 6 inches

It seems likely that Apollonia visited Avranches to see the botanical gardens which were founded in the grounds of the former Franciscan convent in the late 18th century. The expansion and introduction of exotic species in the 19th century and the location of the gardens overlooking the bay made the gardens an important sight in the town.

12

Charlotte Bosanquet (1790–1852)***The Drawing Room, Fairford Park, Gloucestershire***

Inscribed on former mount: Fairford/Miss Bosanquet,
watercolour over traces of pencil
19.5 x 30.5 cm; 7¾ x 12½ inches
Provenance: Augusta Raymond-Barker, Fairford Park,
Gloucestershire, the artist's niece;
By family descent until 2016

Charlotte Bosanquet was a highly talented artist of interiors, described by John Cornforth as the best he knew.¹ The recently established fashion for interiors of the residences of royalty and titled families by professional male artists was taken up by female artists and Bosanquet's pictorial mapping of femininity with its focus on the inhabitants and their interior world is second to none.

Her sister Harriet Bosanquet, (1798–1830) married John Raymond-Barker of Fairford Park in 1823. They had two daughters, Augusta (b. 1827) and Leonora, (b. 1829), presumably the two girls in purple dresses recorded in the drawing room of their home.

When their father William Bosanquet, a banker, died in 1840 Charlotte was left unexpectedly impoverished, and moved from house to house staying with members of her extended Huguenot family, building up what amounted to a pictorial diary of her movements, usually depicting the libraries, halls, or drawing rooms of their houses. One of her sketchbooks is entitled *The Bosanqueti – a selection of Several Mansion Houses, Villas, Lodges, Parks, etc., the principal residences of a distinguished Family with descriptive notes* (Ashmolean Museum Oxford, which has a substantial collection of her work and see Cherry, Deborah, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists*, 1993, p. 131).

Fairford Park was built for Andrew Barker in 1661–2 by Valentine Strong (d.1662 and completed by Strong's eldest son Thomas) and the design is known only from Kip's engraved bird's eye view of about 1710. The house was altered circa 1740 and the grounds circa 1750–60 to Rococo taste.²

Soane remodelled the house for John Raymond Barker in 1789–90. His Journal No. 1, in the Sir John Soane's Museum, has an entry for 22 May 1789:

Sanders went to Fairford this Eveng / to take plans of the House / & Offices; retd the 26;

other entries follow and finish with

Received in full April 1791 £227:8:6.

Soane's changes to this room seem to have been restricted to the chimney piece and the cornice, and the bookcases seen framing the composition of this watercolour. (A drawing for the chimneypiece of the drawing room is in the Sir John Soane's Museum).

After use as an American military hospital during the war, the family sold Fairford House in 1945 and the house (not the estate) was eventually bought by Gloucestershire County Council and became the site for Farmor's Comprehensive School. Today it stands in ruins next to the school.

1. John Cornforth, 'Some Early Victorians at home', *Country Life*, December 4, 1975, pp. 1530–1534.

2. D.Verey & A. Brooks, *Gloucestershire 1: the Cotswolds*, 3rd ed., 1999, pp.369–70.



13

Mary Ellen Best (British 1809–1891)

The hat shop

Watercolour over pencil

14.5 x 12.7 cm; 5¾ x 5 inches

Provenance: Paul F. Walter, until 2017

This is an unusual example of a shop interior by Mary Ellen Best, whose remarkable work came to public attention in the 1980s when Sotheby's handled a large group of her drawings and Caroline Davidson published her monograph on the artist. Best's main interest lay in portraying domestic interiors and domestic workers. Born in York she drew the interiors of her own home and after marrying Johann Sarg, a school master, she moved to Darmstadt in Germany and continued to paint. From the summer of 1841 the Sargs lived in Frankfurt, in a house on the Bockenheimer Landstrasse. The birth of Mary Ellen's children greatly reduced her artistic activity.

Examples of Best's work, which she exhibited in her own lifetime in York, London, Liverpool and Leeds can be found in numerous international private collections and York City Art Gallery.

Paul Walter (1825–2017) was the son of Fred and Anna Walter, co-founders of the New Jersey industrial instruments firm Thermo Electric. A respected connoisseur, he supported the Metropolitan and the Museum of Modern Art in New York over many years.



14

Fanny Blake (1804–1879)

A rainbow over Patterdale Churchyard, Cumbria

Signed and dated l.r.: F. Blake 1849, inscribed on original mount in pencil: And on the darkest clouds of woe/he sets his covenanted bow/Patterdale, inscribed on original backboard in ink: Patterdale Churchyard by F. Blake and Blake 3665, watercolour over traces of pencil with scratching out, a Vokins framing stamp on the backboard, a label inscribed Drawing Room attached to the backboard, in its original frame

38.5 x 54 cm; 15½ x 21¼ inches

Provenance: By descent in the Blake family to Major-General Mark Bond, OBE (1922–2017), Moigne Combe, Dorset;

By family descent at Moigne Combe until 2019

Fanny (Frances) Blake was an extremely talented pupil of Peter de Wint and is singled out for special mention in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1851, in a review of an exhibition of the work of amateur watercolorists as an 'accomplished artist, admirable for truth, completeness and delicacy'. Well-travelled, she specialized in topographical views.

This watercolour is a record of the previous church of St Patrick at Patterdale which dated from the fourteenth century and was extensively rebuilt around 1620, known to Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey and Turner. A new church was built at Patterdale by Salvin in the early 1850s after a storm destroyed the building depicted here. The ancient yew tree in this work, thought to have dated back to the Norman Conquest, was destroyed in a storm in 1883.

Reproduced by kind permission of the Wordsworth Trust.



15

Emily Farmer (1826–1905)

Gentle Critics

Signed and dated l.r.: Emily Farmer 1872, watercolour over traces of pencil heightened with bodycolour and gum arabic

50.7 x 36.8 cm; 20 x 14½ inches

Exhibited: Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colour, 1872

Emily Farmer exhibited over one hundred works at the New Society of Painters in Water Colours during her lifetime, achieving good notices from contemporary critics, but her work has fallen from public view, like that of many other women artists.

Emily was the daughter of John Biker Farmer who worked for the East India Company and his wife Frances Ann (née Frost). She was home educated and was taught art by her brother Alexander Farmer, the genre painter.

Farmer's early work was in miniature and she exhibited twice at the Royal Academy in 1847 and 1849 but from 1850 she began to concentrate on genre painting and developed her particular love of painting children. Her most famous work *Deceiving Granny*, 1860, was very popular with the contemporary public and frequently reproduced in different media.

Farmer was elected to the New Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1854, the tenth female member of the Society added to the original membership of fifty-seven artists, the other nine being Fanny and Louisa Corbaux, Jane Egerton, Fanny Harris, Mary Margetts, Emma Oliver, Sarah Setchell and Fanny Steers. She exhibited nearly one hundred works there, including the present watercolour, over the course of her artistic career.

Pamela Nunn observes that although there was not much women's work exhibited at the New Society's exhibitions it was often regarded as the most interesting.¹ Farmer was singled out for special mention by contemporary critics:

...Miss Farmer's pictures, which are, all things considered, the best figure pieces in the collection. They are true in gesture and expression, conscientious in execution and harmonious in colour

Spectator, May 3, 1862, p. 495.

Miss Farmer is the only figure artist (here) whose drawings give any hope or promise...
ibid, April 28, 1866, p. 467.

1. P. Nunn, 'The Mid Victorian women Artists 1850–1879', 1982, PhD thesis
<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1348998/1/438297.pdf>



16

Evelyn De Morgan (1855–1919)

The head of a girl

Pencil

17.8 x 17.7 cm; 7 x 7 inches

Provenance: M.D.E. Clayton-Stamm, by descent until 2018

Evelyn De Morgan, who attended the Slade School of Art, was influenced by George F. Watts and Edward Burne-Jones and by the work of her uncle John Roddam Spencer Stanhope. She often visited Stanhope in Florence, where she developed a love of the work of Botticelli and quattrocento art. She first exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877. In 1887 she married the ceramicist William De Morgan, with whom she often wintered in Florence.

It has been suggested that this delicate drawing may be a preliminary study for a figure in her painting *The Red Cross*, 1916, in the collection of the De Morgan Foundation.

De Morgan's work is held in many national collections including the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, National Trust properties Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton and Knightshayes Court, Devon, the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth, the National Portrait Gallery, London and Southwark Art Collection, London.

Maxwell David Eugene Clayton-Stamm was an authority on the work of William De Morgan (on whom he published extensively), Pre-Raphaelite ceramics and on the Blake-Varley sketchbook of 1819. He was a collector and bibliophile.



17

Alice Mary Chambers (1854/5–after 1930)***Portrait of a woman***

Signed with monogram I.L., red chalk on wove paper

41.8 x 35 cm; 16 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Private collection, U.K., until 2020

Alice Mary Chambers was a talented and well-connected artist associated with Whistler and the Pre-Raphaelites, whose career and family ties have so far been overlooked. A notable figure in the late nineteenth century British art world, Chambers exhibited her work in many major galleries including the Royal Academy, was a close friend of the collector Charles Augustus Howell and gave Dante Gabriel Rossetti's plaster death mask to the National Portrait Gallery.

Chambers was born in Harlow, Essex in 1854 or 1855. Her father Charles Chambers (1817–1874), vicar of St Mary's, Harlow, was a significant figure in the ritualist or Anglo-Catholic movement, her mother Mary Upton (c.1815–1873) the daughter of a Sedbergh cotton merchant. Orphaned by their death within a year of each other in 1873–4 she was able to complete her studies in art. The 1881 census records Chambers as an artist in drawing and painting, living at 17 Red Lion Square in the house which had been previously lived in by William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones and where Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. had their first headquarters.

Chambers was a direct contemporary of Evelyn De Morgan, Kate Bunce and Marianne Stokes and like them, the Pre-Raphaelite influence on her work was profound.

She was a friend of the collector Charles Augustus Howell and through him met other artists such as Whistler (see McClean, *op cit.* p. 77). Howell was Ruskin's secretary from 1865–70, and a close friend of Algernon Swinburne, the Burne-Joneses and Whistler. Howell famously oversaw the exhumation of Lizzie Siddal's coffin to recover Rossetti's manuscript poems in 1869 and was rumoured to have overseen the forgery of various paintings with the help of his lover, the artist Rosa Corder. When the collector Samuel Wreford Paddon sued Howell for fraud, Chambers and Corder provided promissory notes to help settle the claim. On Howell's death in 1890 he named Chambers as an executor and trustee of his will and a guardian of his daughter Rosalind and she made the arrangements for his funeral and the sale of his estate.

Chambers exhibited nine works at the Royal Academy between 1883 and 1893. Her work included such titles as *Cydidippe*, *Psyche*, *A Priestess of Ceres*, *Nancy*, *An Egyptian Fella Woman*, *Relentless Memory* and *During the Prelude*. She exhibited *Daphne* in 1892 at the New Gallery; the catalogue described it as a 'little upright picture of a maiden penetrating with closed eyes through dense laurel thicket' (New Gallery 7). She showed *During the Prelude* and *Home through the wood: Brittany*, at the Autumn 1894 exhibition of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (Royal Society 35, 55). She exhibited work at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, and the Manchester City Art Gallery. She also provided the frontispiece illustration for Mary

Hullah's *The Lion Battalion* (1885), a collection of stories for children.

She specialized in drawings of female figures and mythological and orientalist subjects, and favoured red chalk and her monogram is reminiscent of that of Rossetti. She often used a leafy backdrop, as in the present work (not unlike the famous Morris wallpaper *Willow Boughs*) which can also be seen in her lithograph of the actress of the silent screen Mary Anderson and a similar drawing of a woman with her hair up and with plants in the background which was sold at Christies, London (10 March 1995, lot 134).

Chambers appears to have moved again in London and led quite a peripatetic life spending time in Spain and France and was living in Sussex by 1911. In 1913 she donated Rossetti's plaster death mask to the National Portrait Gallery.

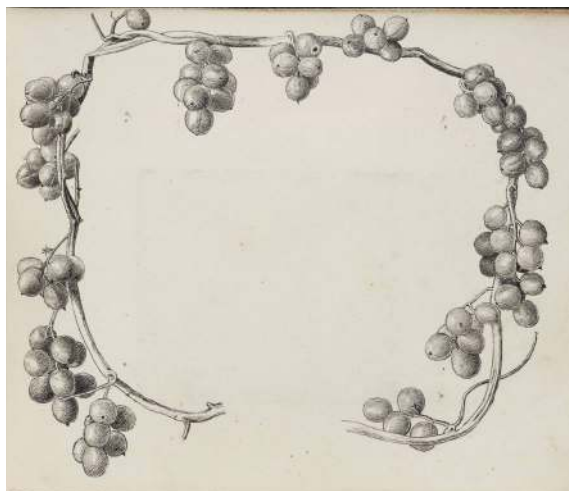
I am most grateful to Thomas McLean for his helpful comments on this drawing; see 'Family Portraits: The Life and Art of Alice Mary Chambers', Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature, Number 133, Summer 2018, pp. 69–83 <https://doi.org/10.1353/vct.2018.0006>.



18

Margaret Lillas 'Maggie' Sumner (1859–1919)

A sketchbook of pencil drawings of the Lake District



Including a group of views of and from Kelbarrow and the surrounding area of Grasmere, the church, Grasmere, *where I fish*, the view from the front of the house where *we have all our meals in the summer in the shade of tall rhododendrons*, also including the front quad of Oriel College, Oxford with Merton tower, Magdalen tower, Oxford, boathouses on the Isis, a lion of Trafalgar Square, interior of York Minster and others

Twenty-seven, pencil, all laid into the sketchbook and most with drawings of plants in pen and black ink decorating the surrounding page, a photograph and a couple of slips of paper with annotations inserted, inscribed on the flyleaf: E.S./from/M.L.S./Xmas.1875 (E.S. is presumably Elizabeth Lily Sumner (1855–1930), her oldest sister)

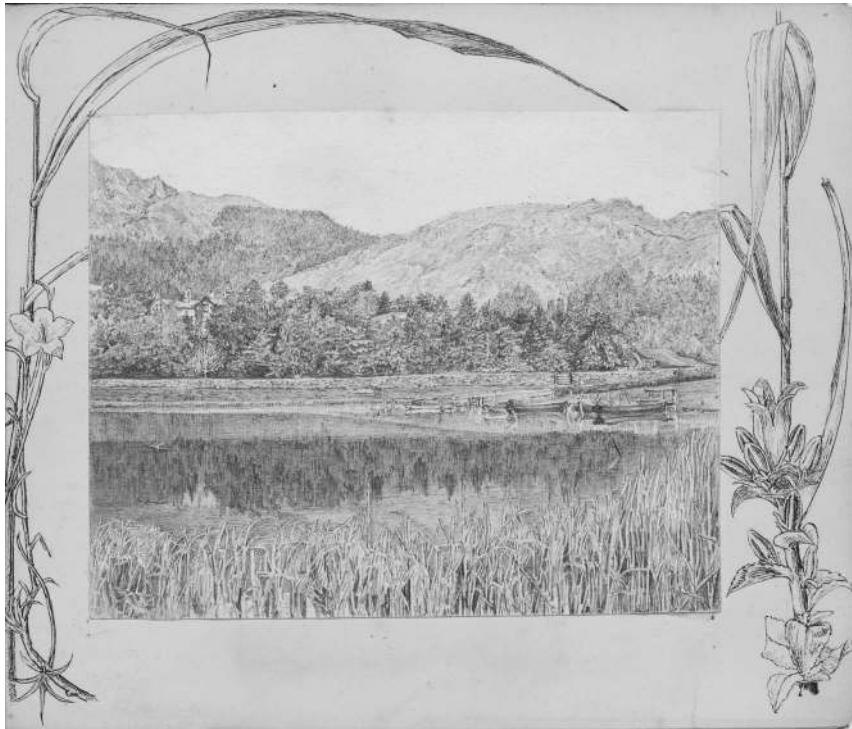
The drawings 10.8 x 13.8 cm and smaller, the sketchbook 13.5 x 16.8 cm, bound in green boards with a leather spine
Provenance: The family of the artist, by descent until 2019

This sketchbook includes a group of very fine drawings of Kelbarrow and the surrounding area of Grasmere in the Lake District and was presumably a Christmas present from the artist to her sister Elizabeth in 1875. The detailed pencil landscapes are surrounded by pen and ink drawings of plants drawn directly onto the pages of the book. The plants include ivy, lily of the valley *Convallaria majalis*, dog rose *Rosa canina*, snowberry *Symphoricarpus albus*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, rush, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, grasses, apple blossom *Malus domestica*, Ginkgo *biloba*, blackberry *Rubus fruticosus*, snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*, foliage of an umbellifer, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, english bluebell and others.

Maggie Sumner was the only female artist to contribute to the first five issues of *The Yellow Book*, the fashionable magazine edited by Aubrey Beardsley which ran from 1894–97, taking its name from the notorious covering into which controversial French novels were placed at the time. Her pen and ink landscape sketch *Plein Air* appeared in number four, the last of the volumes issued under Beardsley's editorship. Her career after this is as yet unrecorded.

A collection of papers relating to the Sumner family in the possession of the Cumbria Archive Centre includes a series of eleven (unpublished) autograph letters by John Ruskin to his promising pupil, Maggie Sumner, dating from 1881–1886, which suggests that they may have met both in Oxford and at Brantwood. Towards the end of his life Ruskin had a number of correspondence pupils. His first comment in June 1881 was that her drawings were excellent with scarcely any fault. He gave her constructive criticism as in this letter of 5 July 1881 with detailed commentary on a drawing of a photograph of Rouen:

I must not keep your drawings longer, though they still puzzle me, and not a little. With most students, the tendency to lose breadth in defining parts is a mere weakness: - in you, it is a kind of strength; the intensity with which you fasten on complex forms and colours having something in it like old German involved Gothic. Still, I must check the exaggerated - power, I will call it, rather than fault - and ask you to tell me if on seeing your copy of the Rouen Photo again with a fresh eye, it does not appear to you patchy, chippy - gritty, - hatchy, - botchy - (I don't mean all these things - but something which they all partly describe) - as compared with the original? - Try a little bit again and



see if you cannot get it softer and more like shade, where shade is, and more [broad] in light where light is. And - in trees, do a single branch instead of a whole tree. And do it perfectly or as perfectly as you can - keeping the shades mysterious.

In May 1883 he wrote:

I liked your drawings much more than I told you... Work at anything you can do without too much trouble while you're here - mossy rock if possible, and send it me.

On 6 Jun 1883 Ruskin instructed Sumner what to draw:

In the first place - attend to sky. - drawing all interesting cloud forms you can seize - and noting effects of morning and [evening]. In the second place, draw tree branches and foliage masses for light and shade only and anatomy of branch - letting colour alone. In the third place - draw any birds you can see - any here and paint any that are going to be cooked. Fish also, if to be had. I don't think there's any chance of your getting a scold from me, unless you stop working.

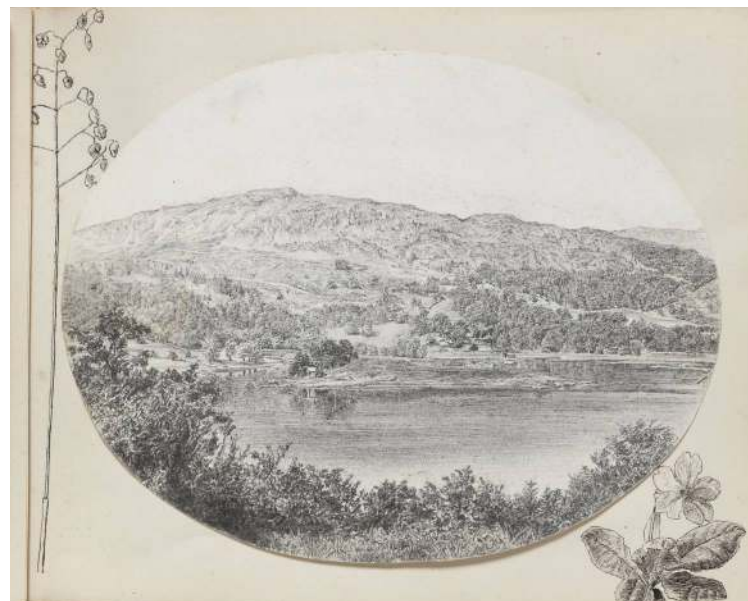
And on 15 July 1888:

Sketch the clouds in pencil - add from memory all you can, in colour the day after, if possible...The birds I meant were geese - ducks - cocks and hens... try to draw a Hen's wing! or a duck's breast! - I am so glad you are happier in your work - Be sure you will be more & more so. -and more useful than in any other way.

The last letter dating from 24 September 1886 praises the development in Sumner's work:

your becoming fastidious in choice is the best possible sign. - But try to see how by a little change in place or introduction of minor object, even the imperfect subject may be made effective. I hope to be well enough to give you a scolding at Brantwood next time you are near me.





19

John Butler Yeats (Irish 1839–1922)

Etta Paget knitting

Inscribed in brown ink l.r.: Mrs Paget, pencil on laid paper, recto, with a portrait of a gentleman verso

18 x 12.7 cm; 7 x 5 inches

Provenance: By descent in the artist's family until 2017

Henrietta (Etta) Paget, née Farr, was a painter and the daughter of statistician, William Farr. The Pagets, a family of artists and illustrators, were neighbours of the Yeats family in Bedford Park in west London in the 1890s. J. B. Yeats habitually sketched visitors to his house in informal poses like the one in this drawing.

Etta studied at the Heatherley School of Fine Art where she met Henry Marriott Paget, RBA, (1857–1936). They married in 1879 and were leading members of the Bedford Park circle of writers and artists. The house in The Orchard had a north facing studio which Etta and Henry both used before their children were born. Bedford Park was known for its free thinkers and 'New Women' who participated in discussions ranging from politics to art and literature with men on an equal basis. The couple had four children over eleven years, one of whom, Dorothy, became an actress. Etta's artistic practice dwindled in the face of family life. Etta, Henry and her sister Florence, the actress, were members of the Golden Dawn, a group involved with spiritualism and the occult. W. B. Yeats was also a member and Florence was said to have had an affair with him and George Bernard Shaw.

Henry Paget was a painter of historical subjects and portraits and his portrait of W. B. Yeats is in the Ulster Museum. His paintings, especially his historical scenes, were illustrative rather than inspiring and he also painted mythological subjects. Paget worked as an illustrator for the *Sphere* in Constantinople during the Balkan War of 1912–13 and exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1879–94.



KAREN TAYLOR

Karen Taylor has been working with paintings and drawings for over thirty years. She works as a fine art adviser, agent and dealer, offering independent, impartial advice to collectors and museums all over the world on buying, selling and all areas of collection management.

After graduating from Brasenose College, Oxford, where she read history, she joined Sotheby's British Paintings department and spent nearly ten years there. She ran the British drawings and watercolours auctions and also specialized in topographical and travel picture sales, where she built up the Greek and Turkish areas.

In 1993 she joined Spink's picture department. Here she expanded her interest in Oriental, Indian and Far Eastern art and organised exhibitions of Orientalist pictures and twentieth century British paintings and contemporary artists. She also represented Spink at international art fairs in Basel, Maastricht, New York, Hong Kong and Singapore, amongst other places, and served on the prestigious Grosvenor House Art & Antiques Fair picture vetting committee.

Based in Sydney for several years, where she renewed her interest in Australian art, Karen headed up Spink Australia before returning to London. Since 2001 she has been running her fine art consultancy, handling British paintings and drawings of all periods, typically placing pieces privately and working with many of the world's major museums.

She can provide valuations for all purposes and advice on insurance, framing, conservation, lighting and display, storage and logistics.

She works by appointment in West London.

KAREN TAYLOR FINE ART

Agent and dealer in British art





KAREN TAYLOR FINE ART

+44 (0)20 8743 9207

+44 (0)7881 581275

karen@karentaylorfineart.com

www.karentaylorfineart.com