THE ART OF

JOHN CHARLES DOLLMAN

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ABSTRACT

This research argues the relevance of John Charles Dollman Jnr (1851 – 1934) to late Victorian and early 20th-century British art. Dollman was a Royal Academy trained artist who painted for fifty years, primarily from his large home in London but also from a country studio in rural Sussex. Little has been written on Dollman in the context of his art, time or place. This is despite the popularity of a number of his significant paintings that remain on permanent display throughout the Anglo-world. A high level objective of this thesis is to remedy this paucity of knowledge surrounding Dollman, and so provide the "primary context" to any appreciation of his works.

Studying Dollman reveals a number of aspects to his art that make him special. His abundant output and his equal competence in both oils and water colours are two. But it is his brilliance as an *animalier* that makes him distinctive. It is a contention of this thesis that Dollman was the natural late 19th–century successor to Edwin Landseer. Dollman was also competent in all the traditional genres. He could paint history, dramatic narrative, war, social realism, *animalia*, mythology, allegory, *genre*, neoclassicism, sport, portrait, still life and landscape. Apart from this versatility, what made him singular was how he applied his skills as a painter of animals across all these styles. It is also argued that this versatility is the very reason that he has been largely forgotten.

Dollman was financially secure and personal interests informed much of his work. He was sensitive to social issues and their consequences, and passionate about natural history, entomology, anthropology and sport. His scientific and objective studies were widely published. Dollman continued painting in the traditional genres, especially the classical revival style, well after the golden period of Victorian painting. He was amongst the remaining few traditional artists to resist the inroads of modernism, his paintings being regularly selected for exhibition by the Royal Academy up until his death in 1934.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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* * *

ABBREVIATIONS

B	Royal Society of Artists, Birmingham
FIN	Fine Art Society
FLS	Fellow of the Linnaean Society
FRES	Fellow Royal Entomological Society
FRIBA	Fellow Royal Institute of British Architects
LEI	Leicester Gallery
RBC	Royal British Colonial Society of Artists
ROI	Royal Institute of Oil Painters
RI	Royal Institute for Painters in Water Colour
RWS	Royal Society for Painters in Water Colour
RA	Royal Academy
WC	Water Colour

References to paintings exhibited are in the form:

Institution, Catalogue Number, Year.

Eg., RA 172 1909

Where there is an ambiguity with the title, it is also included.



Chapter I
A PLACE IN ART HISTORY

Introduction

Paintings that bear the signature *J. C. Dollman* or the initials *J C D* can be found in the collections of many major galleries, museums and institutions globally, especially in the Anglo-sphere of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and South Africa. Individually, many of these paintings remain familiar today and continue to be regarded, both technically and in subject, as significant and important works. The better known remain on permanent display, although some now languish in the reserve vaults of these institutions. Others are held in private collections. *Les Misérables*, first exhibited at the British Royal Academy of Arts' summer exhibition in 1888 and currently held by the Museum of London, is an example of Dollman's earlier work. It has been critically admired for well over a century and is well travelled, most recently to exhibitions in Japan.[1] "*A very gallant gentleman"*, depicts the selfless heroism of Captain Lawrence ("Titus") Oates on the ill-fated Scott expedition to the South Pole in 1912. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1914 and has since enjoyed pride of place at the exclusive Cavalry and Guards Club in St James, London, for which it was originally commissioned.[2] Another, *The ride of the Valkyries*, travels globally to Wagnerian festivals from its adoptive home, the Art Gallery of Western Australia.[3] In the recent art market, a painting by Dollman entitled *The stymie,* nominally of a golf scene but also containing a political subtext, was sold at auction in 2008 for a hammer price of over

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1 RA 630 1888.

2 RA 530 1914.

3 RA 888 1908.
The alternative spelling of Valkyrs is often used for this painting. British historian Hélène Guerber used Valkyrs throughout her text of *Myths of the Norsemen: From the Eddas and Sagas,* published that year and illustrated by Dollman. The more conventional spelling will be used in discussion.

200,000 pounds.[4] All of these paintings were extensively reproduced, initially as etchings and later as stand-alone prints, and have featured in many illustrated magazines and books. They, and many similar paintings by Dollman, were highly acclaimed when first exhibited and a significant number were voted as the Royal Academy "picture of the year". Yet for all the continued visibility of his paintings, we know very little about Dollman and his work. This thesis aims to explain and correct that neglect.

The Artist and His Art

In general, critical appreciation of these works has included very little, if any**,** reference to their creator, John Charles Dollman Jnr, other than by name or signature.[5] Rather, they have been, and continue to be, viewed in isolation from their maker and from each other as fine examples of late Victorian British painting, spanning the broadest spectrum of traditional and formal art categories including narrative, social realism, history painting, *genre*, war painting, sports, classical revival, animals and landscape. Today, any exhibition catalogue reference to Dollman is usually a paraphrase of the single paragraph descriptions contained in the *Dictionary of British Art* or *Who's Who in Art*, with little supplementary contextual or comparative curatorial information.[6] Apart from obituaries and a short, illustrated art-social article in the *Windsor Magazine* of 1906, followed by similar light contributions in *Pearson's Magazine* in 1908 and the German *Der Aar* in 1912, very little biographical or critical information concerning John Charles Dollman has been produced.[7]

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4 Sotheby's Catalogue, *Scottish and Sporting Pictures,* Auction, London, 26 August 2008. Sale price 205,250 British pounds.

5 For examples see: Secord, W., *Dog Painting 1840 – 1940 A Social history of the Dog in Art,* (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1992; Mitchell, S., *The Dictionary of British Equestrian Artists 1880 – 1940,* (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1985; Trumble, A., *Love & Death, Art in the Age of Queen Victoria,* (AGSA, Adelaide), 2002.

6 Wood, C., (ed.), *Dictionary of British Art*, Vol. IV, (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1995. Dolman, B. (ed.), *Who's Who in Art*, (Art Trade Press, London), 1934.

7 *The Times*, 12 December 1934; *The Sphere*, 29 December 1934; Bensusan, S. L., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman, A.R.W.S.", in *Windsor Magazine*, April 1906, pp. 579 - 594; "The Art of the Age", in *Pearson's Magazine*, Vol. XIX, 1908, pp. 570 - 580; Sdjorn, H. T., "John Charles Dollman", in *Der Aar*, 1912, int. 3, pp. 825 - 835.

A threshold question arises as to why a significant number of his individual works should have retained such popular appeal over time while Dollman himself has been largely forgotten and neglected by art historians and curators. In part, this question can be answered by pointing to the general devaluation of interest in 19th–century art generally, following the First World War. Of course there are notable exceptions to this neglect that include the works of Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775 – 1851), John Constable (1776 – 1837) and the Pre-Raphaelite painters, whose art, style and personal histories are maintained and kept alive by retrospective exhibitions and on-going scholarship.[8] A number of Dollman's individual works have also resisted the general abandonment of traditional art and have retained a lasting popularity, but without the benefit of an accompanying history or appreciation of the artist. The on-going survival of these works in the public realm suggests that we must seek a further reason for ignorance of Dollman the artist, even more so than for his peers.

It is one contention of this research that it is the broad span of Dollman's artistic engagement that is largely responsible for his current neglect. Most of Dollman's 19th–century British visual-art contemporaries were and remain closely identifiable, and readily associated with, a specific genre, movement, style or school of art. For example, Walter Langley (1852 – 1922) is primarily identified with social realism, Edmund Blair Leighton (1852 – 1922) with neo classicism, William Turner with romantic landscape while John William Waterhouse (1849 – 1917) has strong links with the pre-Raphaelite movement. Today, these artists are generally considered, reviewed, tested and compared within the art scholarship framework and norms of their relative schools, and within some temporal context. Some migrated from one genre to another over time during their artistic careers, such as social realist, Frank Holl, and the pre-Raphaelite painter, John Everett Millais, both of whom moved to more profitable portraiture. Others made occasional excursions, such as Turner with his flirtation with *genre* in *A Country Blacksmith*, but few if any operated simultaneously and consistently across such a broad spectrum of styles as

[8] Paxton, J., *The Victorians, Britain Through the Paintings of the Age*, (Random House, London), 2009, pp. 6 - 12.

did Dollman.[9] In contrast with his 19th–century peers, Dollman did not wish to be constrained by or contained within any particular school and freely travelled between the established genres. He was a history painter, an *animalier*, a landscape and *genre* painter, an oil and water colourist, a graphic artist, and much more. Throughout his exceptionally long creative career, and while working across most of the various accepted schools, he seems to have had little regard for changing art fashion. He effortlessly transported his interests and talents between these various genres, successfully importing his skills as an *animalier* into his landscapes, *genre*, history and his later aesthetic painting, in both oil and water colour. Yet it is this lateral versatility that makes it difficult to fit Dollman neatly in to any particular art school or historic model. This has led much of his work being considered in isolation, rather than in the context of a style or the work of others. To further confuse Dollman's position within British art, in attempts to characterise him he has been labelled variously as a "black and white artist who turned to colour" an "historical painter", a "painter of *genre* and animals", the creator of "problem pictures", a "subject painter", the "chief ornament of … the anecdotal school", a "water colour painter", a "specialist painting in animals", a "*peintre de scènes de chasse"* (hunting scenes) and a "*peintre à la gouac"* (body colour).[10] Recent references have focused

[9] Treuherz, J., *Victorian Painting*, (Thames & Hudson, London), 1993, p. 184.Turner's painting, *Country Blacksmith Disputing upon the Price of Iron, and the Price Charged to the Butcher for Shoeing his Poney* was exhibited in 1807 and inspired by the public attention received by David Wilkie's *genre* studies. See Butlin, M., and Joll, E., *The Paintings of J. M. W. Turner*, revised ed., (New Haven, London), 1984, pp. 52 – 53.

[10] Mallalieu, H. L., *Dictionary of British Watercolour Artists to 1920*, (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1976; *The Dictionary of British Equestrian Artists 1880 – 1940,* (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1985, p. 150; Lewis, F., (ed.), *Dictionary of Historical Painters*, (Lewis, Leighton on Sea), 1979; Secord, W., *Dog Painting 1840 – 1940 — A Social History of the Dog in Art, (*Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1992, p.155; *New York Times*, 13 December 1994; *The Times*, 12 December 1934; *Daily Telegraph*, 12 December 1934; *The Daily Mirror*, 12 December 1934; Natural History Museum on J. C. Dollman at http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/art-nature-imaging/collections/art themes/caught,_in_oils/more/tigers_more_info.htm. Last accessed 14 October 2013; Bénézit, E., *Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dissinateures et craveurs*, Tome 4, (Gründ, Paris), 1999.

on Dollman as a painter of "ambitious" mythological pictures.[11]

Ironically, it is his strength of versatility that has exacerbated his neglect.

Context and Form

An underlying assumption of this thesis is that a good appreciation of Dollman's biography, education, training, beliefs and values, interests, patronage and motivation, considered against the social, moral and political inflections of his time, is essential to derive full meaning and intent from his art.

An academic basis and framework for this supposition is provided by Robert Belton who identifies *context* as one of the three prime "elements of art" – the other two being *form* and *content*. Within *context,* Belton differentiates between that which pertains to the artist, which he calls the *primary* context, that which relates to the milieu in which the work was produced, the *secondary* context, and that which relates to the field of the work's reception and interpretation, the *tertiary* context.[12]

Norman Bryson expands on this contextual framework by positing a set of semiotic tools to enhance any analysis.[13] The application of signs and symbols are often unique to an artist and their decoding and analysis adds further intended meaning to the contextual layers. At the same time, Bryson attacks the contra *perception* theory which relies heavily on representation. It, he argues, is limited to "fundamental human facilities exercised by a work of art."[14] This notion of *perceptualism* involves the "uncritical reception of realism as optical (i.e., perceptual) truth, instead of as a meaning-bearing construction which is therefore subject to the inflections of social values."[15] Some of Bryson's critics, while not rejecting the

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[11] "John Charles Dollman", *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Charles_Dollman.* Last accessed 13 October 2013.

[12] Belton, R. J., "The Elements of Art", in *Art History, A Preliminary Handbook,* 2012, reproduced in *http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/fccs/about/links/resources/arthistory/elements.html,* Last accessed 5 November 2013.

[13] Bryson, N., and Bal, M., "Semiotics and Art History", in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 73, no. 2, June 1991, pp. 174 - 298.

[14] Bryson, N., Holly, M.A., and Moxey, "Introduction to Visual Theory" in Morra, J., and Smith, M., *Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, (Routledge, New York), 2006, p. 192.

[15] An explanation of perceptualism in Belton, R. J., "The Elements of Art."

essentiality of a contextual contribution, maintain that the perceptual complements the contextual, and the former should not be fully discounted. They argue that "while the contextual contribution to seeing is socially constructed, such seeing remains in need of a sensory foundation".[16] An accommodation of the two positions is best found in the earlier writings of John Ruskin who concerned himself with both the importance of "the artist's emotion and imagination" perceived within "social, economic and political contexts", and "the effects of art upon the audience" as complementary rather than competing elements to understanding.[17]

Bryson's concept of *recognition* further builds on the contextual approach by acknowledging the challenges that it presents.[18] Bryson argues that "confrontation between work and spectator necessitates an act of interpretation" and a recognition "of the historical gulf separating the horizon of work from that of the spectator [and] an acknowledgement of social difference."[19] Bryson's *recognition* is an act of historic interpretation which is concerned with both Belton's notion of *secondary* and *tertiary* contextual analysis.

Linda Nochlin argues an additional consideration. Any "interpretation" must also "recognise" that the "artist's perception is… conditioned by the physical properties of paint and linseed oil… in conveying three dimensional space and form onto a two dimensional picture plane."[20]

An accommodation of the intrinsic (biographical and psychological) and extrinsic (social and cultural) *primary* contextual factors is currently missing from the descriptions and interpretations of Dollman's various and many works. To enable this perspective is an important objective of this study.

The contrary view, which holds that interpretation should be contained to the "optical truth", is especially inadequate in any analysis of Dollman's art as much of it was inspired by and reflected contemporary events. This was particularly true of the

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[16] Van Eck, C., and Winters, E., (eds), *Dealing with the Visual Art History, Aesthetics and Visual Culture*, (Ashgate, Aldershot), 2005, p. 7.

[17] Landow, G. P., *Ruskin*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford), 1985, p. 7.

[18] Bryson, N., Holly, M. A., Moxey, K., (eds), *Visual Theory*, (Polity, Oxford), 1991, p. 1.

[19] Ibid, p. 66.

[20] Nochlin, L., *Realism*, (Penguin Harmondsworth), 1971, p. 15.

work he created for magazine and illustrated newspaper markets.[21] Other of his works contained strong narratives which drew on ethical, political or social issues of the time. His private interests in natural history, entomology, photography and sport also fed and influenced his art which can only be fully understood within context. The formative influences of his formal training and associations also moulded and set his artistic perspectives, and informed his subject choices and technique. While there may be some styles in art that can be viewed and understood intrinsically, Dollman's work can not be seriously understood outside of these layered contexts.

This study also recognises the importance of *form* and *content*, but with less contention than *context*. *Form* and *content* are not likely to be ignored in any contemporary analysis or curatorial criticism of Dollman's individual works. *Form* relates to constituent elements of work "independent of their meaning."[22] Belton argues that, at a primary level, features relating to *form* are without semantic significance. But at a secondary level, relationships between primary features are relevant. These include "balance, composition, contrast, dominance, harmony, movement, proportion, proximity, rhythm, similarity, unity, and variety." These secondary considerations are important to any analysis of Dollman. He applied aspects of *form* differently across the many genres he worked. In his history paintings, colours were chosen to match the circumstance, emphasising the optimism or pessimism resident in the narrative. He reserved his richest palette for landscape work, which was a celebration of the English countryside. In other genre, such as his later studies of animal beauty, the background detail was kept minimal to emphasise the brush-work precision applied to the subjects. Regarding *content*, in a broad sense, this can relate simply to an inventory of what is seen as a literal image. At a finer level, figurative meaning and significance may be constructed through allegory, attributes, traditional signs, metaphors, irony and parody. These meanings are particularly relevant in understanding his visual narratives.

Dollman's work is analysed against these "elements of art" in subsequent

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[21] The counter or "perceptualist" view holds "that artistic process can be described exclusively in terms of cognition, perception, and optical truth." see Bryson, N., Holly, M. A., and Moxey, K., (eds), *Visual Theory*, (Polity, Oxford), 1991.

[22] Belton, R., "The Elements of Art", *passim.*

chapters. This is done in terms of both the genre in which he worked and themes apparent in his art.

Themes in this Research

Dollman's paintings, taken individually, can be assigned nominally to one of the acknowledged genre silos associated with 19th–century British art. Within the framework of each, none of his work would have been considered overly eccentric or radical for their day. However, they possess a style and approach that was independent and different from others, and his works remain collectively identifiable as his and distinguishable from his peers.

A systematic analysis of Dollman and his work also reveals a number of strong themes that are central to his art and support the contention that he was both special and different. These essential themes traverse all the many styles in which he painted. They are introduced here as characteristics of Dollman and his work, within the framework of *form, content* and *context,* for consideration and qualification in the succeeding chapters, each of which is built around a specific genre or style.

The first and most outstanding characteristic was his exceptional ability as an *animalier*. In his time, it was averred that Dollman stood together with Briton Rivière as "Landseer's successor". It will be argued that Dollman is more deserving of this distinction.[23] He incorporated animals as subjects, objects and background to the majority of his subject paintings, as well as producing fine studies without narrative and with little or no background in the painting. Many were reproduced in journals and collective publications by the Natural History Museum while his entomological work was also published in a number of scientific volumes. The infusion of fine animal studies into most of his narrative paintings is a major hallmark of his work.

Beside his brilliance as an *animalier,* it will be shown that the extent of his *oeuvre* was remarkable in the scope of the styles in which he painted. He exhibited many hundreds of large and small oils and water colours at an extraordinary output that was sustained for most of his working life.

Complementing his breadth of style was his versatility in being able to work

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[23] Wood, C., *Victorian Paintings in Oils and Watercolours*, (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1996, p. 93.

simultaneously in both oil and water colour. He was equally at ease in both media as were some earlier Victorian artists, such as Turner and Constable, and concurrently a member of both the Royal Institute for Painters in Oils (ROI) and the Royal Watercolour Society (RWS), each institution being dedicated exclusively to one medium.

The fourth key characteristic of Dollman that becomes very evident in any review of his work was his compelling need to tell a story. He engaged dramatic and bold narratives in his history, social realist, war painting and *genre* works. He drew heavily on the popular literature of Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, Daniel Defoe and William Shakespeare, the poems of Henry Longfellow as well as biblical events and Teutonic myths. Dollman exploited the full spectrum of what Richard Altick argues constitutes a "literary picture", spanning from "at one end… the painting that transfers a scene in a poem, play, or novel… to canvas [to] the other… the painting that is merely embellished with a poetic quotation meant to set or intensify the tone of the picture."[24] However, his most dramatic paintings were often the product of his own experience, observation and creative interpretation.

An interest in social realism is an unexpected aspect of Dollman that was revealed early in his career. Dollman was from a middle class background that was markedly different from other notable artists who embraced the sub-genre. Earlier social realist artists included Sir Samuel Luke Fildes (1843 – 1927), who found inspiration from his chartist grandmother, a survivor of the Peterloo Massacre, Sir Hubert von Herkomer (1849 – 1914), a young man with radical opinions, and Frank Holl (1845 – 1888), whose family were active socialists.[25] They were all influenced by the English social realist painter and illustrator, Frederick Walker (1840 – 1875) and employed by *The Graphic* illustrated newspaper from the early 1870s for the strong social realist content in their work. In marked contrast with them, Dollman came to *The Graphic* a few years later directly from the Royal Academy Schools with a conservative middle class and mercantile background. However, the philosophy, cultural experiences and the commissions offered him through his association with

[24] Altick, R. D., *Paintings from Books,* (Ohio University Press, Columbus), 1985, p. 2.

[25] The Peterloo Massacre occurred on 16 August 1819 when cavalry charged a crowd of up to eighty thousand in Manchester who had gathered in the cause of parliamentary reform.

The Graphic profoundly influenced his social sensitivities, later reflected in many of his larger exhibited works.

His other personal interests also contribute to the *primary context,* as well as informing the *content* and *form* of his art. His comfortable financial position permitted some self-indulgence and enabled him the perspectives of the new Victorian class of enthusiastic self-sufficient and enlightened amateur, engaging in broad interests that ranged over entomology, natural history, photography, anthropology, literature, sport and politics. Dollman's many and diverse preoccupations can be linked in to his art at various levels, including choice of subject, narrative and style.

Lastly, it is contended that his contribution to late Victorian art was a consolidation and refinement of the then existing styles, which reinforced the established genres rather than worked at the edge of any new artistic movement; he was a 'refiner' and a 'finisher' rather than a 'leader' while retaining his own special style.

These will be shown to be the principal characteristics of Dollman, and properties that traverse all his art. Additional aspects which help define Dollman and his work are also considered in detail in subsequent chapters. The most significant of these was his motivation. At one level, he was a populist painter who responded to the extrinsic art market and popular public preferences: at another he indulged his own intrinsic interests, passions and skills, and a desire for a strong and creative sense of narrative in his work. Complementing these interests was the influence of his various family members, with all four children being accomplished and exhibiting artists in their own right, and a younger brother who was also a popular illustrator and painter. His daughter Ruth had a passion for landscape painting and daughter Mary for painting natural studies and still life. The preoccupations of his two sons, Hereward Chune and (John) Guy Dollman, with entomology and natural history, were also clearly aligned to his own interests and influenced much of his *animalia* work. A concern for things social and political also led him to incorporate subtexts in many of his narrative paintings although some are difficult now to decipher through the mist of time. These he complemented with his own language in symbols, especially in his problem pictures and social realist, history and war paintings. It was this social interest, developed through his association with *The Graphic*, that led him later to

engage in a very different approach from the official war or home-front artists in his history and war paintings. There, as will be shown, he often focused on negative outcomes and consequences rather than on the front-line, but still retaining a strong sense of personal courage and recognition. Another defining influence was Dollman's love for the country-side, particularly for the chalk hills of Sussex. The South Downs provided joint inspiration for his (and Ruth's) extensive water colour studies *en plein air,* and the development of his own style in landscape paintings.

Thesis Structure

Rather than approaching Dollman's life and paintings in a structure that is based on these themes or is chronological, works associated with each of the traditional genre he engaged will be examined in sequence by chapter. It is recognised that some unavoidable overlap will occur between these studies. The various themes that have been introduced here, and that collectively establish Dollman and his work as special among late 19th and early 20th–century British artists, will be explored and tested within these chapters. Chapters II and III set the framework of the primary, secondary and tertiary contexts, as outlined by Benton. They underpin this study and consider Dollman's formative years, the subsequent influences which shaped his interests, the style and the narratives he employed, the changing environment in which he lived and worked, as well as his originality, creativity and versatility.

Throughout the text, the term genre is used in the context of the various art movements while *genre* (italicised) is applied to the style which deals with paintings of everyday life. The titles of paintings have been capitalised except for those exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibitions. These follow the original form of the exhibition listing.

Resources

There is a scarcity of primary documentation relating to Dollman in the form of personal letters or diaries to better inform this research. However, there is a significant body of diverse material concerning his life, circumstances, and interests which is used in conjunction to construct a personal biographical portrait of Dollman

and establish the important place he deserves amongst late Victorian British artists. A number of recently uncovered early creative attempts and sketches help us to better appreciate some of his seminal experiences. Also, a rich private photographic record, paintings located in public and private collections, images of missing paintings contained within Royal Academy and other publications, as well as periodicals, public records and the commentaries of contemporary critics on specific works, are used to validate John Charles Dollman's essential relevance to any consideration of late Victorian British art.

* * *

Chapter II
J. C. DOLLMAN IN CONTEXT

Introduction

An obituary of John Charles Dollman Jnr describes him as an English painter who etched and worked extensively in oil and watercolour, "exhibiting at the Royal Academy almost continuously for 60 years", remaining "busy at his easel to within days of his death" in late 1934.[1] Dollman's exceptionally long career as a productive artist spanned a period of profound social change in England. It included the mid 19th–century of Charles Dickens and the social dislocation of the industrial revolution, the reigns of Victoria and Edward VII, the Great War followed by the Great Depression, and up to the eve of the Second World War. Both tastes and practice in visual art experienced a similarly profound evolution throughout that period. The realism and naturalism of Samuel Prout (1783 – 1852), Constable and Turner gave early ground to the pre-Raphaelites and aesthetes, and then to the impressionists and post impressionists. Later, the traditional styles were all but displaced by abstraction and post-modernism, including cubism, futurism, dada and surrealism. This transition was fed largely by the mass popularisation of visual art made possible through the advent of 19th–century colour printing, copper and steel etching replacing wood-block engraving, and the rapid growth in art journals and magazines. A further influence was the increasing popularity of large public exhibitions. These were underpinned by the aspirations and the display of the rapidly growing middle and mercantile classes in England and elsewhere.[2]

Early Days

Dollman was born on the 6th of May 1851 at Hove (adjacent Brighton) in Sussex on the south coast of England. He was the eldest son of John Charles Dollman (1822 – 1890) and Mary Plowman (1824 – 1885) and one of ten children, a

1 *The Sphere*, 29 December 1934.

2 Treuherz, J., *Victorian Painting,* (Thames & Hudson, London), 1993, pp. 33 - 35.

number of whom died in infancy. His father ran a mercantile business in Hove that involved, amongst other enterprises, book publishing and selling, insurance, stationery and operating a lending library and reading rooms.[3] The family home at that time was a four-storey Georgian style terrace house strategically located at 7 Western Road. There, commercial business was conducted on the ground floor. The censuses of 1861 and 1871 indicate that, apart from family members, there was also a live-in house servant, and that John Charles Dollman Snr employed an "apprentice" and an "assistant".[4] Earlier, Dollman Snr had lived in St James, London where his father and grandfather had conducted a hatter's business by royal warrant. That shop was on the ground floor of a substantial four-storey terrace at number 8 St James Street in close sight of St James' Palace. It was large enough to accommodate servants and, famously, Lord Byron as an upper floor tenant from October 1811.[5] Dollman Snr's brothers, Charles John Dollman (1816 – 1860), a university trained chemist, and Alexander Plenius Dollman (1814 – 1871) were also engaged in trade and entrepreneurial activities which at times took them to far parts of the globe.[6] Another brother, Francis Thomas Dollman RIBA (1812 – 1899), was an architect closely associated with Augustus Pugin (1812 – 1852), and who regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy.[7] Letters between the siblings indicate a tight family while their activities demonstrate a strong common mercantile,

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3 *Folthorp's Court Guide and General Directory for Brighton, Hove and Cliftonville*, (Spottiswoode, London), 1864, pp. 220, 281, 420 & 443.

4 1871 Census Returns of England & Wales, Sussex, Hove near Brighton, John Charles Dollman household; digital images, Ancestory.com; citing Class: *RG 10*; Piece: *1092*; Folio: *136*; Pages: *48 & 49*; GSU roll: *827504,*

5 Byron's letters contain numerous references to this being his address. See Cochran, P., *Byron and Hobby-O: Lord Byron's Relationship with John Cam Hobhouse,* (Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle), 2010, passim. Hobson's diary of Wed 29th July 1812 cites Dollman's involvement in the proposed elopement of Byron with Lady Caroline Lamb in disguise from the house. The site is now occupied by Byron House.

6 Letters from Charles John Dollman to Alexander Plenius Dollman, George Town: various 1841, Adelaide: 1853, in private collection, Adelaide. Charles John Dollman finally settled in Adelaide, South Australia, in 1852.

7 Francis Thomas Dollman was an apprentice to Pugin and later published many books on Victorian architecture, especially associated with the gothic revival style. See his definitive work: *An Analysis of Ancient Domestic Architecture in Great Britain,* (Jobbins, London), 1861.

entrepreneurial, and professional background together with financial independence.[8] This close familial environment suggests that John Charles Dollman Jnr was exposed to middle class social and mercantile values from an early age. The family was well educated and secure, and these formative influences were to set the conservative character of Dollman in the years ahead. In later chapters, Dollman's scientifically progressive, inquiring mind and interests, as well as a developed sensitivity to the plight of the poorer classes, are examined against this early conservative family and social milieu.

Some evidence of Dollman's early artistic talent can be found in *The Guardian* newspaper, published in Brighton in 1867. A full printed column was devoted to a detailed critique of a landscape painting he produced at the age of eighteen for a local Brighton landowner. It was considered by the writer to be of such quality that "many artists of older years and larger experience might feel pleased to append their names to."[9] A further example of a young and developing artistic talent is apparent in an 1868 booklet, published by his father, on the *Legend of Devil's Dyke.* It consisted of 38 rhyming verses, illustrated by a series of vignettes which were declared "composed and illustrated by J. C. Dollman Jnr."[10] On its final page are two wood-block engraved drawings of the Devil's Dyke (Plate 1) which reflect another early attempt at landscape. All of the drawings are signed with a monogram, suggesting that he was beginning to consider his self worth as an artist. In the same year Dollman illustrated

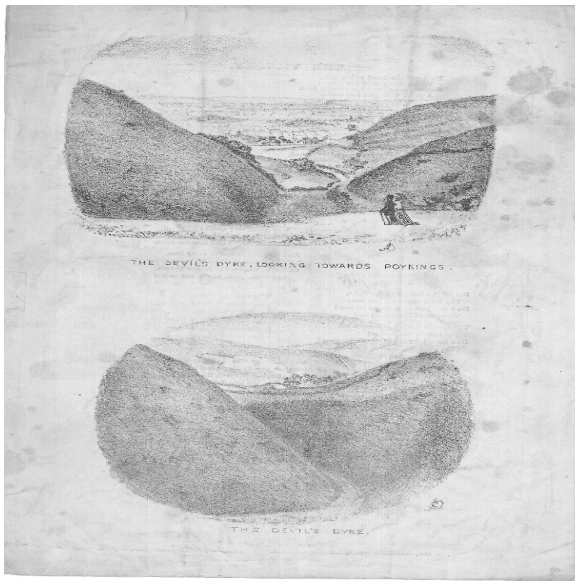


Plate 1 The Devil's Dyke

8 Letter from Charles John Dollman to Thomas Francis Dollman, 1853, State Library of South Australia, D 7168(L).

9 *The Guardian,* Brighton, 11 December 1867.

10 The legend has it that the Devil proposed to flood the country by digging a dyke to the sea but was tricked by St Cuthman with the help of the local abbess and nuns to leave with his work only half done. See Cobham Brewer E., *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,* (Philadelphia, Henry Altemus), 1898, p. 335.

the front page of the Brighton satirical magazine, *Jack O' Lantern* (Plate 2), which bore the intriguing motto "Lux E Pessimis Moribus".[11] In it, the double centre page displayed his cartoon drawing of *The False Start*, nominally set on the Brighton race track on race day, but also containing local satire and subtext.[12] Other evidence of a young artistic creativity can be found in a series of three sketches of the Rifle Volunteer movement which bear the inscription 'J. C. Dollman Junior of Hove.' These three sketches of 'territorials' (Plate 3) must have been made at the age of eighteen or earlier and demonstrate a good working understanding of the military, as well as a strong sense of humour and an ability to caricature. Dollman was later to become himself a 'territorial', in the Artists' Rifles.[13]



Plate 2 ***Jack O' Lantern***

A number of 20th–century sources suggest that Dollman first began his formal art studies at Shoreham, a seaside town a few miles to the west of Hove.[14] Contemporary civil directories do not record a significant art institution in Shoreham so any tuition there was likely to have been of a private nature.[15] In his later years, a

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11 *Jack O' Lantern*, (Beal, Brighton), 24 October 1868. A copy is retained in the Brighton and Hove Museum archives. The motto is taken from the Latin, meaning: "Light from the Evil Ways".

12 A dog with a recognizable human face being chased by a policeman, an apple cart nearby overturned and portly, bearded and elderly jockeys altercating with the marshal suggest a strong level of local characterisations in the scene.

13 These sketches belong to a private collection to which the Liverpool Scottish Museum has access.

14 For example, Dolman, B., (ed.), *Who's Who in Art*, (London, Art Trade Press), 3rd ed., 1934, p.121, and "Obituary John Dollman", *The New York Times*, 13 December 1934.

15 See *Kelly's Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Middlesex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, 1867,* (Kelly, London), 1867.



Plate 3 ***March Past After the Review***

magazine article compiled around an interview with Dollman purports that he "received his first training at the Brighton School of Art".[16] This account is repeated in several of his English obituaries, and neatly fits both in time and with Dollman's circumstances.[17] The art school at Brighton was established in 1859 and was housed initially in a wing of the Brighton Royal Pavilion near the kitchens. It later moved to a purpose built Regency style building on the Grand Parade. The school's sole art master was John White. He had been appointed to the position in Brighton from a similar post at the Leeds School of Practical Art following training at the South Kensington Schools.[18]

Dollman later relocated to London and, like his master White, enrolled at the South Kensington Schools (known as the Royal College of Art from 1879), located

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16 "Painters of Today – Dollman", *The Daily Mirror*, 17 April 1934.

17 "Mr J. C. Dollman", *The Daily Telegraph,* 12 December 1934. The Dollman house was a short 15 minute walk to the Royal Pavilion.

18 Woodham, J., "Brighton School of Art – the Victorian age to the 20th century", published by the University of Brighton at http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/faculty-of-arts-brighton/alumni-and-associates/the-history-of-arts-education-in-brighton/brighton-school-of-art---the-victorian-age-to-the-twentieth-century. Last accessed 21 May 2015.

close to the Victoria and Albert Museum.[19] "At Kensington everybody is in grim earnest," wrote its first historian Frank Percival Brown, "for the primary objective is to turn out masters and mistresses [while] the vast majority of the students intend that art shall be the business rather than the solace of their lives".[20] The school's archival material is limited and no record of Dollman's experiences there, nor of how long he was enrolled, is available.

However, a signed and dated painting made at this time by Dollman was



Plate 4 ***The Dandy***

recently released to the market by auction from a private trust in the United States.[21] It is worked in oils and portrays a caricature of a Regency period gentleman considering his self-worth in front of a mirror. The painting labelled (by the

[19] The South Kensington Schools' title had officially been changed to National Art Training School in 1864 but the original name persisted. It had a strong connection to the South Kensington Museum which was later renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum.

[20] Brown, F. P., *South Kensington and its Arts Training,* (Longmans, London), 1912, p. 18.

[21] *The Dandy,* dated 1870, from the Emile H. Mathis II Trust, Racine, USA, now in private collection, Adelaide.

auctioneer) *The Dandy*, (Plate 4) indicates a level of sophistication remarkable for his youth and early stage of training and development. As an historical *genre* painting, it nominally would be best considered against others in Chapter VIII but is introduced here to provide some indication of the level of development he achieved in his late teens at Kensington. According to Brown, "as many as twenty-two [students] were admitted [to the Kensington Schools] in the year 1869", and while the Kensington Schools were the national training school for art teachers, "students were also … prepared for admittance to the Royal Academy Schools."[22]

Royal Academy Schools

On 22 June 1870, Dollman was proposed for admission to the Royal Academy Schools for painting by academician and history painter, Alfred Elmore RA (1815 – 1881).[23] He had just turned nineteen years. The hand entry in the Royal Academy register, one of only four new entries for that year, either by accident or design, incorrectly carries his age as twenty years.[24] By early 1871 he was recorded as a lodger at 26 University Street, St Pancras, within walking distance of the Royal Academy Schools at Burlington House, Piccadilly. The census of that year listed his occupation as "artist in painting".[25] The Royal Academy was then, as now, the pre-eminent place to study art in England. For Dollman, securing a place in the painting school meant a studentship entitlement of up to ten years' tuition commencing with classes in 'perspective', the 'elements of drawing', and the Preliminary Painting School. In 1874 Dollman won prizes at the Academy schools for 'Drawing from Life'.[26] This award was available to male students only, as The Upper Painting School or 'Life School' separated the sexes with female students permitted only to

[22] Brown, F. P., *South Kensington and its Arts Training*, p. 18.

[23] *Royal Academy Schools Student Register*, Royal Academy Archives, Burlington House, London. Alfred Elmore was a Victorian history and *genre* painter elected as a full member to the Academy in 1857.

[24] The aged of nineteen was unusually young to be accepted into the Royal Academy Schools, although not without precedent.

[25] 1871 Census Returns of England & Wales, Surrey, Kew, Searle household; digital images, Ancestory.com; citing Class: *RG 10*; Piece: *211*; Folio: *98*; Page: *113*; GSU roll: *824596.*

[26] *Annual Report from the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the year 1874*, (London, Cloweg & Sons), 1877, p. 11.

paint the "costumed model".[27] In 1875 Dollman was awarded a gold medal from the Academy School for his historical painting *Ahab and Jezebel confronted by Elijah in the Garden of Naboth*.[28] He also received a scholarship in the form of a 25 pounds per year 'reward' for two years, as well as a presentation of a series of books. These traditionally included bound sets of published lectures given at the Royal Academy by Joshua Reynolds, Henry Fuseli and others.[29]

There are no records of his school attendance or details of termination. However, it is clear from the prize lists that he continued there from 1871 until at least 1875, and most likely through 1877 to near the end of his nominal scholarship period. In 1872, his second year as a student, he had two paintings accepted into the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition: *What are the wild waves saying?*, a title inspired by a contemporary song based on a Dickensian character*,* and *Caught napping*.[30] In the same year he exhibited *The Invaders,* reportedly a "capitally painted work… deserving special notice", together with four other animal studies at the Royal Society of British Artists' Winter Exhibition.[31] Also exhibited was *A Disputed Point* at the picture galleries of the Crystal Palace.[32] While the monetary considerations received for his larger Royal Academy exhibited paintings are not

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[27] It was considered that "since only an insignificant proportion of the female students become professional artists, it [was] unnecessary and undesirable that in the Ladies' Life School there should be any study of the undraped model". See Clarke, M., "Translating Nudus: Modernity and the British Academy's New Clothes", in Adlam, C., and Simpson, J., (eds), *Critical Exchange: Art Criticism of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries in Russia and Western Europe,* (Lang, Bern), 2009, p. 182.

[28] *Annual Report from the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the year 1874*, (London, Cloweg and Sons), 1877, Appendix 3, "Premium List".
The subject for the Historical painting was set by the schools in advance and was the same for all students ensuring a fair competition. Both Dollman and Frank Dicksee were awarded a gold medal which was unusual as only one gold medal was normally issued. No reason is given in the minutes for the dual event.

[29] Ibid, p. 29.

[30] RA 23 1872: *What are the wild waves saying*. This title is taken from a popular contemporary song composed by Stephen Glover (1813 – 1870) about the deathbed scene of little Paul and his haunted memories of the sea. See Dickens, C. *Dombey and Son,* (New York, Modern Library), 2003.
RA 1070 1872: *Caught napping.*

[31] "The Society of British Artists", in *The Era,* 8 December 1872, p. 8.

[32] "The Picture Galleries of the Crystal Palace", in *The Morning Post*, 22 April 1872, p. 3.

readily available, those for some of the smaller studies, mainly dogs, are. Records indicate that he generally received payments in the order of twenty to fifty pounds per canvas. He exhibited sixteen at the Royal Society of British Artists alone during his early student days from 1872 to 1875.[33] These prices compare favourably with those achieved by contemporary artists exhibiting at the Society. To put the commercial value of these works into some present day perspective, the purchasing value of a pound sterling in 1872 was crudely one hundred times that of today.[34]

In his third year as a student, the selection committee of the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition accepted *Just saved,* and another with title borrowed from William Shakespeare's Macbeth, *If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly*.[35] In 1875 he exhibited *His only friend* (Plate 5) and *Those that ask shan't have and those that don't ask don't want*, an expression borrowed from a



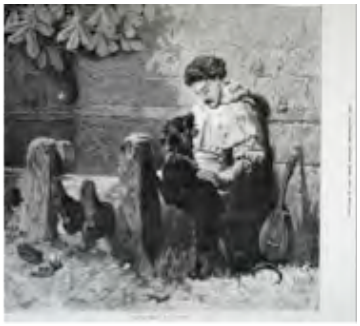


Plate 5 ***His only friend***

[33] Johnson, J., (ed.), *Works Exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists 1824 – 1893,* (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1982, p. 136.

[34] See *safaira.com* for historic British pound inflation and price conversion. Last accessed 22 May 2015.

[35] RA 61 1873: *Just saved*
RA 989 1873: *If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly*.
Shakespeare, W., *Macbeth*, Act 1, scene 7.

contemporary schoolboy saying that was associated with greed.[36] Of these, *His only friend* has been located in the collection of the Bankfield Museum in Halifax, England. In 1875, this painting of a downcast minstrel in stocks receiving some sympathy from a dog was deemed worthy of publication as a high quality wood-block engraving on a full centre page of the *Illustrated London News*.[37]



Plate 6 J. C. Dollman c. 1875

At this time, Dollman is also recorded as being the subject, himself, of a sculpture exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer exhibition of 1875 by William John Seward Webber in.[38] While neither the sculpture or an image of it has been found, a photograph then taken of Dollman (Plate 6) has survived.

Images of the various paintings remain elusive. Annual photographic recording of paintings in the *Royal Academy Illustrated* did not begin until 1888. Commentaries on them are also hard to find. They were made while Dollman was still a student yet capable of meeting the high standards of acceptance to the Academy's Summer Exhibition. Their titles all suggest they each contain strong narratives, with some being associated with history, Shakespeare or Dickens. There is no early evidence of any interest in new art fashions or movements. His subject matter and style remained very consistent

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[36] RA 65 1875: *His only friend*; RA 377 1875: *Those that ask shan't have and those that don't ask don't want*. The expression used for the second title was used in early 19th–century publications in the context of the school yard. For examples see newspapers: *The Spectator*, 10 September 1859 and *The Lion*, 31 July 1829.

[37] *Illustrated London News,* 18 September 1875.

[38] RA 1404 1875. Webber was a sculptor who exhibited at the Royal Academy 14 times between 1870 and 1891. He also sculptured a marble bust of J. C. Dollman Esq., presumably Dollman's father [RA 1441 1878], and his architect uncle T. F. Dollman Esq. [RA 1579 1879]. See "William John Seward Webber" in *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851 – 1951*, University of Glasgow History of Art and HATII, online database 2011.http://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/person.php?id=msib4_1256301512. Last accessed 13 July 2015.

with the Academy School's teachings, which were then delivered in rotation by academician 'visitors', often older members, who perpetuated the general conservatism of the Royal Academy and the legacy of Joshua Reynolds.[39]

One further early and otherwise un-recorded Dollman oil painting, signed and dated 1874, was recently released from a private collection in Scotland for auction in New York. This painting demonstrates a style remarkably similar to that of Edwin Henry Landseer RA (1802 – 1873), a connection which will be explored in some detail later.[40]

A contemporary observation by an art critic of the *Morning Post* during Dollman's later student period also points to his early versatility across various styles and his ability as a painter of animals, two special characteristics of his art which later become prominent and set him apart from his peers:

> Mr J. C. Dollman, one of the most promising of our young painters, has surprising vigour and versatility of imagination. He has proved with equal distinctness his skills in various provinces of art, figure subjects, landscapes and animals being to all appearances equally easy of delineation to him. In his treatment of dogs he is particularly effective, his canine "sitters" invariably acquiring under his pencil a drollery of look and action and a quizzicality of character which bespeak in the artist a true vein of Aesopian humour.[41]

Primrose Hill Studios and Bedford Park

By 1879 Dollman had moved from boarding lodgings to Primrose Hill Studios, a short distance north from Regent's Park.[42] This artist studio complex consisted of twelve Queen Anne style cottages grouped around a rectangular courtyard, each containing a residence and a large studio lit by a south-facing sky-light. A larger and

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[39] It was against this legacy that "The Clique" (St John's Wood Group) and later the pre-Raphaelites had rebelled.

[40] This painting has been given the title *Pointers at Rest* by the auctioneers, Bonhams of New York, auctioned 12 February 2014 and now in a private collection in Adelaide.

[41] "Mr A. Tooth's Gallery", in *The Morning Post*, 9 November 1877, p. 3.

[42] Graves, A., (ed.), The *Royal Academy of Arts, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904,* (Graves and Bell, London), 1906, Vol. 2, p. 350.

separate two-storey lodge housed the servants of this artists' commune. Dollman occupied number five while his life-long friend, John William Waterhouse, lived and worked initially in number three. On the 9th of August 1880 Dollman is recorded as having married Mary Jane Fletcher (1853 – 1929) from Bury St Edmunds at nearby St Mark's Anglican Church, Regent's Park. These two events suggest that Dollman had concluded his studies and was fully supporting himself financially through painting sales and art work for a number of illustrated magazines including the *Illustrated London News*, the *Sphere, The Graphic* and the American *Harper's Bazaar*.[43]



Plate 7 Dollman in his studio

In 1883 Dollman moved again, this time to the new London garden suburb of Bedford Park. He had purchased land there in December 1880, shortly after his marriage to Mary, and had two adjoining houses (Plate 8) constructed at 12 and 14 Woodstock Road. They were designed by prominent London architect Maurice B. Adams FRIBA (1849 – 1933) and were named Hove House after Dollman's place of birth.[44] Both houses had ornate porches and plaster gables with number 14 also incorporating "a large first floor studio [designed] to overlook the orchard trees."[45]

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[43] A contemporary article recorded Dollman had been a student at the Royal Academy for seven years (from 1870) while often attending evening classes due to work during the day. See "The Art of the Age – the Work of J. C. Dollman", in *Pearson's Magazine*, Vol. XIX, No. 114, 1905.

[44] The question arises as to how Dollman paid for the two properties. No mortgage was taken out and in 1888 Dollman purchased additional land from adjoining 16 Newton Grove. Dollman's mother and father lived until 1885 and 1890 and there is no obvious family estate from which he would have benefited. There were also a large number of siblings who would have considerably diluted any potential inheritance. As Dollman built the properties after his marriage it is possible that some of the funds came from his wife or her family.

[45] Greeves, T. A., "The Making of a Community", in *Country Life*, 14 Dec. 1967, p. 1600.

By this time, it was the mark of a successful artist to have a house reflecting conspicuous smart middle class values which served as both a studio and home. Julie Cordell argues that the Victorian "artist's studio or studio home was a nexus in which their respectability infused the studio as a site of both production and consumption, animated spaces filled with aesthetic and moral qualities of artists and of their art".[46] This was all in turn enabled by the vast new middle class art market.[47] Both of Dollman's houses were progressive in design for 1880 and contained "hot and cold water, inside toilets connected to sewers, and ground floor kitchens rather than the usual basement kitchen."[48] The house featured in London's *The Building News* magazine in 1880.[49]



Plate 8 Nos 12 and 14 Newton Grove, Bedford Park, London.

The studio incorporated an external rear staircase, common in the design of artist studios at the time, to enable the artist's models access and egress without entering the sanctity of the house.

[46] Codell, J.F., The Victorian Artist, Artists' Life Writings in Britain, ca. 1870 – 1910, (University Press, Cambridge), 2003, p. 45.

[47] Paxman, L., *The Victorians: Britain Through the Age of Painting,* (Random House, London), 2009, p. 12.

[48] Lofthouse, P., "The Development of English Semi-detached Dwellings During the Nineteenth Century". in *Papers from the Institute of Archeology,* Vol. 22, 2012, p. 95.

[49] *The Building News,* 13 August 1880; *The Building News,* 14 October 1881.

The following year a supplementary feature detailed some of the bespoke furniture and architectural fittings of no. 14 (Plate 9).

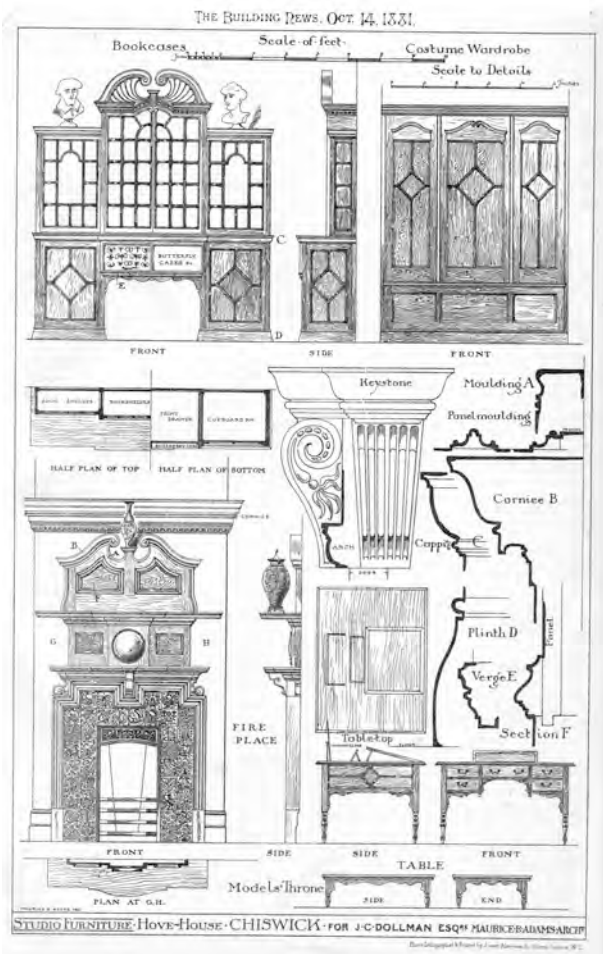


Plate 9 Some bespoke fittings at no. 14.

According to Tom Greeves, Bedford Park, "the world's first garden suburb", was developed from 1875 by Jonathan Carr (1845 – 1915) "for the middle classes with aesthetic tastes."[50] Pamella Lofthouse explains that while the new suburb was notable for its revolutionary open, park-like design and its Queen Ann revival architecture, it was soon equally known for its eclectic mix of "artistic and bohemian" inhabitants who comprised painters and architects, lawyers, poets, novelists, playwrights, musicians, clergy, Oxford dons and those who were "something in the city."[51] Neighbours included artists J. W. Forster, J. B. Yeats and his son Jack Yeats, Lucien Pissaro, son of Camille Pissaro (who painted six paintings of Bedford Park while staying there in 1897) and T. M. Rooke, the pre-Raphaelite pupil of Burne Jones and associate of John Ruskin. Margaret Bolsterli stresses Bedford Park was not a dormitory suburb. Many worked there during the day in the various arts. To illustrate this she cites a letter from York Powell, resident, law lecturer and Regius Professor of History at Oxford:

[50] Greeves, T. A., "London's First Garden Suburb – 100 Years of Bedford Park", in *Country Life*, 27 November 1975, pp. 7 - 9.

[51] Glazebrook, M., "Some Artists of Bedford Park", in *Country Life*, June 1967, p. 42.

> We are all jolly here together. Yeats is well. Orpen has his Irish book done. Paget pegging away at theatre 'blocks' for *Graphic*, Todhunter pegging away at fitting Schiller's *Mary Stuart* for the modern stage by unmelodramming it and poetizing it.[52]

The aesthetics of Bedford Park clearly appealed to the broader Dollman family. In 1891 his younger brother and artist Herbert Pervis Dollman (1856 – 1892) and six of his siblings were recorded as living in a substantial terrace house at nearby 32 Woodstock Road.[53] Dollman's sister Selina Mary (1849 – 1933), a "Professor of Music and Languages" and head mistress of the local dame school, later occupied the adjacent 34 Woodstock Road which, in 1911, she shared with brother James (1854 – 1931) and sister Kate (1847 – 1942), a "portrait artist", together with domestic help.[54] John Charles lived and worked at Hove House on Newton Grove for the next four decades until the death of his wife Mary in 1929, soon after moving the short distance to join his siblings in Woodstock Road, occupying a terrace at no. 25.

The Graphic and Middle Years

From the mid 1870s Dollman produced material for several illustrated newspaper and magazine publications. This led him to the position of Chief Draftsman of *The Graphic,* a weekly illustrated newspaper, from 1880 to 1888. The experiences he gained there shaped his subject interests in the years ahead. They particularly informed his social awareness and under-pinned an interest in painting

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[52] John Butler Yeats was a painter, G. H. Orpen a Celtic scholar and lawyer, H. M. Paget a set designer and black and white draftsman, and Dr John Todhunter a playwright and poet. Bolsterli, M. J., *The Early Community at Bedford Park*, (Routledge & Kegan, London), 1977, p. 71.

[53] 1891 Census of Returns for England and Wales, Middlesex, Chiswick, Thomas Francis Dollman household; digital images, Ancestory.com; citing Class: *RG 12*; Piece: *1034*; Folio: *89*; Pages: *43*; GSU roll: *6096144.*

[54] 1871 Census of Returns for England and Wales, Sussex, Hove near Brighton, John Charles Dollman household; digital images, Ancestory.com; citing Class: *RG 10*; Piece: *1092*; Folio: *136*; Pages: *48 & 49*; GSU roll: *827504.*
1911 Census of Returns for England and Wales, Middlesex, Chiswick, Selena Dollman household: digital images, Ancestory.com; citing Class: *RG 14*; Piece: *6949*; Schedule Number: 422.

social realism, which otherwise would have been unusual for an artist of his middle class background and traditional education.[55] While still quite young, he travelled to North America in association with *The Graphic*. He also travelled on the continent through Antwerp and the Low Countries and "as a young man did a great deal of sketching in Holland and North Wales."[56] Evidence for his having visited the Low Countries can be found in the Provinciaal Overijssels Museum, Melkmarkt, Zwolle, to the north of Amsterdam. In its collection is a portrait of *Bars van der Veen* (Plate 10), manager of the nearby Gentlemen's Club Societeit 'de Harmonie' at Grote Markt, Zwolle. It is signed by Dollman and dated 1877.



Plate 10 Bars van der Veen

Most of Dollman's large oils and dramatic water colours were worked on at his home and studio in Bedford Park. He also purchased a property at the outskirts of a village on the South Downs in East Sussex that he used as a country studio and an escape from London in summer. Ditchling is still recognised today as something of an artist enclave with historic connections to the *Arts and Craft*s movement.[57] Here, under the shadow of the Ditchling Beacon, Dollman painted many of his rural landscapes, mainly in water colours, travelling to and from Bedford Park by steam train and dog cart. His youngest daughter Ruth (1890 – 1967) also painted *en plein air* with water colours from this country studio, a number of which were exhibited at the Royal Academy

[55] This theme is explored in Chapters III and IV.

[56] "Subject Pictures: Obituary Mr J. C. Dollman", *The Times*, 12 December 1934.

[57] The village of Ditchling is particularly renowned for an artist community founded by Eric Gill during the early 20th century known as The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic which was inspired by the medieval guilds and the earlier Arts and Crafts Movement. The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic survived until 1989.

and elsewhere. Many were also used to illustrate literary works.[58] Dollman was always surrounded by his family (Plate 11) of gifted scientists and artists. His eldest son, and Curator of Mammals at the British Natural History Museum, Captain (John) Guy Dollman BA FLS (1886 – 1942), followed his father's interest in studying and painting animals while later painting coastal landscapes in something of an impressionist style.[59] Younger son Hereward (1888 – 1919) was an entomologist who specialised in scientific paintings of insects and moths.[60] He was also a skilled artist, winning a number of early awards including the John Watson prize for proficiency in drawing and painting.[61]



Plate 11 Dollman and immediate family.

***Back Row*:**
Ruth, Hereward, Guy & Mary (daughter)

***Seated*:**
John Charles & Mary (wife)

[58] Publications include: Jefferies, R., *The Open Air,* (Chatto and Windus, London), 1908, and Jefferies, R., *Nature Near London,* (Lippioncott, Philadelphia), 1908.

[59] Many of his technical paintings with text were published jointly together with the mildly eccentric Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild. Guy also painted and exhibited impressionist seascapes. FLS: Fellow of the Linnean Society of London. FLS is the world's premier society for the study and dissemination of taxonomy and natural history, co-located with the Royal Academy of Arts at Burlington House.

[60] Hereward Chune Dollman died relatively young having contracted sleeping sickness while working with the British South Africa Company researching the tsetse fly (*Glossina morsitans*). Hereward is recorded as having produced 157 water colour illustrations considered "extremely vivid and incredibly accurate" of caterpillars while in Africa. See *Lindfield Life,* July 2014, Issue no. 64.

[61] Pethers, H., "Hereward Chune Dollman", in *Natural History Museum – Evolve*, No. 18, Winter 2014, pp. 58 - 59.

Both his uncle, Francis Thomas Dollman RIBA (1812 – 1899), regarded by some as second only to Augustus Charles Pugin (1812 – 1852) as a Gothic revival architect, and brother Herbert Pervis Dollman, a painter of *genre*, exhibited at the Royal Academy and published.[62] His sister Kate, and both daughters Mary (1883 – 1971) and Ruth, also exhibited.[63] Within this close family, complementary and overlapping interests, experiences and artistic passions influenced each of its members and are important to any understanding of Dollman's inspiration and motivation. These influences are explored in subsequent chapters.

From his early days at the Royal Academy Schools, Dollman regularly exhibited at the Academy's summer exhibitions, continuing the habit until the end of his life. There, he was awarded the Royal Academy 'picture of the year' by popular vote several of times.[64] He was elected to the Royal Institute for Painters in Watercolours (RI) in 1886, the Royal Institute of Oil Painters (ROI) in 1887 and the Royal Society for Painters in Water Colours (RWS) in 1913. A number of citations also indicate that he was at some stage elected member of the Royal British Colonial Society of Artists (RBC).[65] He had 67 major paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy over a period of 62 years while the Royal Society for Painters in Water Colours exhibited 193 of his works. Many more were accepted by the Fine Art Society, the Royal Society of Artists, the Salon in Paris and elsewhere. Apart from periodically achieving 'picture of the year' he received numerous awards including a medal at the 1900 Paris Exposition.[66] He also received other awards from around

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62 Francis Thomas Dollman was articled to Augustus Charles Pugin from 1827 to 1832. He published significantly and is particularly remembered for his commission by Prince Albert in the late 1850s to embellish Edinburgh Castle with a gothic redesign.

63 *Dictionary of British Artists*, *1880 – 1940*, (Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge), 1976, p. 150.

64 The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition picture of the year was selected by public vote and acclaim. The selection was not always consistent with the critics' choice.

65 The Society was granted royal charter in 1910 and included colonial exhibitors, particularly Australian.

66 In 1900, Dollman had two paintings accepted by the The Exposition Universelle. EU 68: *Saint Antoine* and EU 69: *Hanks Dinna Pike Out Hawk's Eem*, see: Crespon-Halotier, B. and Meslay, O., *Les peintres britanniques dans les salons parisiens des origines à 1939 : répertoire,* (Paul Melon, Dijon), 2000, p. 167.

the British Empire, including a First Order of Merit at the Adelaide Jubilee Exhibition in 1887 for his *Grandmama's Elopement*.[67]

Dollman's broader interests also found connection in his art. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society (FRES) in 1903, three years before his son Hereward at the very young age of eighteen received similar distinction.[68] From his interests in ornithology and lepidoptera, Dollman produced a number of water colour study collections for the British Museum (now the Natural History Museum), as well as studies of larger animals, and contributed to a number of natural science book publications. He also had a passion for photography. He was elected an honorary member of the Royal Photographic Society where he presented his sometimes controversial views on the nature of perspective in the composition of both photographic and painted images.[69]

Dollman was also fond of several sporting activities and used sports' settings for several of his narrative paintings. He was a keen golfer and angler, enjoyed reading Dickens, playing chess and "having a good smoke". His politics were conservative and he was an enthusiastic Imperialist, arguing that the colonies should have a full and direct representation at Westminster. [70]

Thoughts on Art

Dollman's perspectives on specific aspects of art and other matters, gleaned from interviews and from recorded third-party observation, are explored in later chapters. However, it is appropriate at this early point to consider some of the general views he expounded on British art at the Society of Arts in a long presentation given at the height of his career in 1906. His topic for presentation nominally dealt with the future roles of both painting and photography in British society, but he used the opportunity to explore a number of themes in the visual arts.

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67 *South Australian Register*, 31 October 1887.

68 *The Transactions of the Entomological Society of London,* (Longmans, London), 1917, p. XV.

69 Address to the Royal Photographic Society: "Eyes and Camera in Relation to Perspective", reproduced in *The Camera: The Photographical Journal of America*, September 1923, Vol. 27, No. 9, pp. 476 – 493.

70 A visiting Australian cousin made observations on these interests in 1915 that are further discussed in Chapter IX.

With respect to painting, he believed that traditional "pictorial art was in a somewhat eruptive condition". On the various schools of pictorial art he observed:

> Periodically, for all time, the art of painting has been subject to the vigorous action taken by groups of strong men who have felt called upon to assert their independent views, and to act in concert in supporting them. [They] have always been so vital in their work, and have so tenaciously adhered to their aims, that in course of time they attain the dignity of being entitled "schools".[71]

However, he qualified this observation by declaring himself independent of these processes, arguing that "those of us who aspire to know art… must put ourselves outside the influences of these factions, as sole teachers, and turn to the truly great achievements of the past". He further observed that the particular character of any school is always defined by an "emphatic insistence upon one or other of the canons of art at the expense of the remainder". This was a product of unduly and "forcibly dwelling upon the quality of detail alone, or tone, colour, light and shade, or general effect." In the case of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood "the passion was excessive detail".[72]

While Dollman clearly did not subscribe to any of the various movements, he proffered a view they may be part of an evolutionary process and geared to improve the art of the period, contending that "these movements are generally well timed and indeed may be considered to be the natural outcome of the age, the calling to some weak point in the art of the period". He also acknowledged that potential positives could flow from the work of special individuals inspired by a movement as "if, in the enthusiasm of the quest, its votaries outstrip the bounds of moderation, the gain to the common cause is great." Here he might have had George Mason, Frederick Walker or John Millais in mind, artists that he admired for introducing the "glorious heritage of colour" to what he considered to be "modern" English painting.[73]

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[71] Dollman, J. C., "Art in Painting and Photography", in *Society of Arts Journal*, No. 54, 1906, p. 468.
[72] Ibid, p. 469.
[73] Ibid, p. 470.

Dollman was less charitable with the *Impressionists*. This movement flourished from 1874 through the 1880s, establishing a legacy that endured beyond the turn of the century to become what is considered by some to be the first of the modern movements.[74] While its primary focus was in Paris, its influence had extended into London by the late 1880s with an exhibition by the London Impressionists led by Walter Sickert (1860 – 1942). He in turn was a student of James Whistler (1834 – 1903) who had been earlier influenced by the Parisian avant-guard. Dollman's colourful but blunt criticism of impressionism is best presented *ad pedem litterae*:

> Impressionism differs from the schools that have preceded it in the fact that it makes no effort in the direction of adding to the existing practice of painting. On the contrary, it subtracts a good deal from it. It contents itself with a memorandum of the effect, and avoids the risk of contending with other qualities. The principal notes are struck and left, without any graduation or attempt at delicacy or detail, the resulting effort, regarded as a picture, stops short just where difficulty begins — that of showing knowledge and management in the more subtle passages of the painter's art. The canvasses are really beginnings of pictures, left in the state which has been known from all time among painters as the 'laying in' stage.[75]

He went on further:

> the faculty of execution which this class of work offers the painter is necessarily effective, decoratively; and a certain number of imitators, captivated by its facility and novelty, are following the lead given, as other men have followed other leads — mistaking a part for the whole, and they will have the misfortune of leaving no art legacy behind them.[76]

While Dollman implies that these art movements were generally a distraction from the natural evolution of art, in the following chapters it will be shown that, to

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[74] Murray, P., (ed.), *Dictionary of Art and Artists,* (Penguin, Aylesbury), 1974, pp. 229 - 230.
[75] Ibid, p. 469.
[76] Ibid, p. 471.

some degree, his art was influenced by them. For example, although from the 1890s many of his oils continued to exhibit strong narrative elements, he was also producing works clearly inspired by the classical revival movement, drawing something from the later aesthetic style of Frederic Leighton, William Waterhouse and others.[77] Possibly in an unconscious recognition of their influence on him, he observed that while "the sobering influence of time in all these cases *is* the healer, and though, in the course of nature, the dying out of the school of the day makes room for that of the next, the good which is found in them is gathered by and incorporated into [what] we know as art."[78]

Dollman also stressed the importance of a good art education, as "a man's cultured taste is not born with him". Any gift for art that a person is born with "is pointless unless it is educated and developed". As well as mastering the executive functions of creating art, the artist must "learn to compare and mature his judgement to be able to select, for selection is the great principle of art."[79]

Made at the height of his career, his 1906 presentation demonstrates his conservative approach to style and art movements, and his belief in traditional training. It also indicates a mind alert to opportunities and a desire to be creative and interesting in subject selection.

Later Years

Despite the loss of his second son Hereward to sleeping sickness in 1919, and his wife Mary in 1929, Dollman's output did not significantly diminish until a few years before his death in December 1934 at the age of 83. During that year the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition included his oil study of a pride of lions in the wild entitled *Disturbed*.[80] The same year he exhibited seven water colour paintings at the Royal Watercolour Society's Summer and Winter exhibitions. In 1935 another five water colours were exhibited posthumously, one of which was his dramatic diploma

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[77] This movement should not be confused with the austere neo-classicism of the early 19th–century. Examples from Dollman include RA 1913 71: *The mischief god*; RA 403 1922: *The enchantress*; RA 311 1926: *Circe*; RA 139 1930: *Enchantment.*

[78] Ibid, p. 469.

[79] Ibid, p. 471.

[80] RA 319 1934.

work for the Royal Watercolour Society, known today as *The Vikings* or *The Ravagers*.

Dollman was buried at Walstead in the rolling hills and countryside of his beloved South Downs, where he now shares a large family memorial site with his wife and four children. Following his father's death, his elder son Guy distributed some of the large paintings still in family possession to various galleries in Britain and the Commonwealth. These were eagerly accepted despite Guy observing that general interest in larger history paintings was by then diminished. The Art Gallery of South Australia received "*And some fell by the wayside*" to complement its existing holdings of *The Immigrants* and "*Worse things happen at sea*."[81] The Art Gallery of New South Wales received *Saint Antony*.

Biographical Summary

This profile of John Charles Dollman Jnr together with his later perspectives on art enable an appreciation of the mind at work before the easel, and provide the contextual basis for now moving to a detailed examination, within a framework of genre and style, of his many and varied works.

A distilled summary of Dollman's history shows that he had a full, traditional and conservative art training in which he excelled. His social background was mercantile middle class and he was financially comfortable, which enabled him to indulge his many interests from natural history and sport to photography — which in turn were to significantly influence his work. While his background and traditional education conditioned him to a conservative approach in art, later experiences, particularly those associated with *The Graphic*, were to stimulate broader interests which included social realism. Although he acknowledged the various art movements of his time, he remained generally ambivalent about them while still part of the traditional art framework, while showing an unwillingness to cross the line into the *avant-garde* and the modern. His abilities in animal subjects were recognised early, as was his versatility in working across the range of all of the established genre which were central to the tenants and teachings of Royal Academy as inherited from Joshua

[81] *The Daily Sketch*, 8 January 1936.

Reynolds. Finally, his longevity in exhibiting, the number of paintings exhibited and the broad extent of his *oeuvre*, taken together, were unique.

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Chapter III
"BLACK AND WHITE"
*THE GRAPHIC'*S DRAFTSMAN, 1875 – 1990

Introduction

Some short biographies of John Charles Dollman refer to him as a painter in oil and water colours who worked "formerly in black and white".[1] This reference relates to his days as a young graphic artist for a number of periodical publications in England and North America, and occasionally in France.

From 1875, while still a student at the Royal Academy Schools, Dollman increasingly undertook commissioned work, illustrating for a number of London-based weekly magazines. These publications included *The Sphere, The Illustrated London News* and *The Graphic* as well as *Harper's Weekly* in North America.[2] He had already achieved professional success in having paintings accepted for the Royal Academy summer exhibitions and elsewhere. Some of these were subsequently featured in these magazines as wood-block engravings made by various engravers, often inscribed 'after J. C. Dollman'. His initially casual association with mass circulation publications introduced Dollman to the public market for drawing and painting, and the contemporary appetite for visual art. Yet, it was the broad exposure he later gained from the position of Principal Draftsman to *The Graphic* from 1880 to 1888 that substantially influenced his style and steered his interests. This was especially the case in relation to social realism and narrative painting.[3] For over a decade, Dollman steadily produced large numbers of paintings and drawings, and sketched interpretations of social and political events for *The*

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1 Dolman, B., (ed.), *Who's Who in Art*, 3rd ed., (Art Trade Press, London), 1934, p. 121, Mitchell, S., *The Dictionary of British Equestrian Artists*, (Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge), 1985, p. 196; and "Obituary, Mr J. C. Dollman", *The Times*, 12 December 1934.

2 Bensusan, S. L., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman, A.R.W.S.", *The Windsor Magazine*, April 1906, p. 579.

3 Saur, K. G., *Allgemeines Künstler – Lexikon,* (Verloy GMBH & Co., München), 2001, p. 346.

Graphic. These were, in turn, reworked by the team of engravers for weekly publication. The images ranged broadly in subject, size and content, and included detailed visual interpretations of dramatic happenings both in England and abroad, coverage of social occasions and sporting events, as well as humorous and *genre* works.

The Graphic

To grasp the importance of *The Graphic* in shaping Dollman's work, it is necessary to consider the guiding philosophy of the publication, and to understand that it stood somewhat apart from mainstream journals and illustrated newspapers of its time. It was particularly characterised by an underlying reformist agenda, and its embrace of the new sub-genre of social realism in both graphic art and literature from the middle to the late 19th–century.

During Queen Victoria's reign, there was a proliferation of illustrated mass circulation news magazines which included the *Illustrated London News*, the *Pictorial Times,* the *Penny Illustrated Paper* and others. For the first time, they enabled a broad middle class readership interested in popular literature and pictorial reporting. By the middle of the 19th–century a number of their literary writers were actively engaged in drawing attention to social issues such as poverty and homelessness. Popular writers exploring social themes included Elizabeth Gaskell (1810 – 1865), Charles Dickens (1812 –1870), Anthony Trollope (1815 – 1882), George Eliot (1819 – 1880), Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) and H. Rider Haggard (1856 – 1925). They often serialised their novels in the weekly periodicals prior to their release in book form. The relatively self-contained periodical divisions and chapters of many of these stories tailored specifically for weekly release still reflected the compartmentalised structure of their earlier serialisations when later produced in book form. However, usually missing from the books when later published were the numerous dedicated illustrations that almost always complemented the story in the original journal publication.[4]

[4] An example is the 77 original magazine illustrations missing from 15 stories by Thomas Hardy later published as the *New Wessex Edition of the Collected Stories of Thomas Hardy,* (Macmillan, New York), 1988.

Some of the newer magazines, such as *Punch,* had a bias towards humour, while others, like *Good Words,* entertained with illustrated poetry.[5] To deliver the broad pictorial component increasingly expected by the readership of mainstream magazines, a selection of images was produced by an in-house illustrator. The artist drew from a broad spectrum of social material that included fashion, royal events, public occasions, sports and musical performances. As Treuherz observes, they were all aimed at "wherever a crowd of great people and respectable people can be got together, but never, if possible any exhibition of vulgar poverty".[6] Other than by style, it is often difficult to attribute many of these earlier images to either an individual artist or an associated wood engraver, as they generally remained anonymous in publication. Later on, either one or both might sign or simply initial the more significant of the published works, and if both signed they did so in the opposite lower corners of the image.

The Graphic was founded in December 1869. It was a time of rapid growth in popular magazine culture. Its owner and inspiration was William Luson Thomas, a close friend of Charles Dickens. Thomas had begun his career as a reporter. He was also a wood engraver and liberal reformer who believed that illustrations had the power to influence public opinion on social evils and the darker side of Victorian London, especially in relation to matters of crime and the plight of the poor. *The Graphic* quickly established itself as a successful competitor to the *Illustrated London News* which had been founded earlier in 1842. A number of other rivals, such as the *Illustrated Times* and the *Pictorial Times*, failed to hold on to their readership. The more successful *Illustrated London News* purported to represent all aspects of life as did its companion mainstream publications, but it carefully "avoided all matter which might offend."[7] However *The Graphic* did not feel similarly constrained. Its readership was drawn from the same middle class demographic as the others, but as its name suggests, it gave a special emphasis to the use of vivid imagery in conveying or supplementing its written information. To enable this, Thomas gathered

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5 Treuherz, J., *Hard Times, Social Realism in Victorian Art*, (Lund Humphries, London), 1987, p. 53.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

together a team of gifted artists, some of whom were young graduates from the Royal Academy Schools. They drew images on wooden blocks which were then worked by engravers, cutting the material away between the line strokes to provide the relief that could be inset beside the inked type and reproduced. He paid well for good work. Amongst the earlier artists he employed were John Everett Millais (1829 – 1896), Luke Fildes (1843 – 1927), Frank Holl (1845 – 1888) and Hubert von Herkomer (1849 – 1914), all of whom became noted for their important contribution to the genre of social realism. Fildes' dramatic *Houseless and Hungry* (1869) depicting a cluster of the cold and shivering poor seeking shelter in a London workhouse, was used to launch the paper and set its future social tenor.[8] Thomas' artists were permitted a wide level of freedom in the selection of subjects and he encouraged them to explore different perspectives, with "Fildes and Holl… wandering around the East End of London in search of material."[9] Herkomer believed that this licence to determine subjects as he thought fit "was the making of [him] as an artist."[10] His first engraving was significant in that it was in marked departure from the Victorian stereotype of gypsies as rouges and scoundrels. In this image he depicted their plight (Plate 12) in a way that that was clearly designed to elicit empathy from the middle class readership.[11] In the following years many similar studies were made by these artists dealing with social hardship, poverty and distress.



Plate 12 ***A Gypsy Encampment on Putney Commons***

Peter Keating argues that these black and white artists were different. In his essay "Words and pictures: Changing images of the poor in Victorian Britain", he observed that *The Graphic*'s artists and engravers "broke decisively with the immediate past… [and] unlike their predecessors… were extremely successful in

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8 *The Graphic*, 12 April 1869.

9 Treuherz, J., *Hard Times*, *Social Realism in Victorian Art,* p. 55.

10 Von Herkomer, H., *The Herkomers,* Vol. 1, (Macmillan, London) 1910, p. 82.

11 *The Graphic*, 18 June 1870.

translating their engravings in to full scale paintings".[12] Fildes' etching *Houseless and Hungry* was the basis for his oil painting *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* (1874) in which he recycled a number of his engraved figure studies. Herkomer's *Sunday at Chelsea Hospital* (1871) was reworked into his large painting *The Last Muster* (1875). It showed a group of old army veterans attending a church service, one of whom had died, unnoticed by others.

The late 1870s also marked an important turning point for both graphic draftsmen and engravers. The invention of the photo-technical transfer process, or *photogravure,* heralded the beginning of the end of the draftsman's dependence on the Guild of Engravers. Until then the quality of the final image for printing was very much dependent on the varied skills of the wood engraver, or *xylographer*. The new techniques produced a printed image that was highly representative of the original, and there was no longer the inevitable loss in interpretation through the medium of wood. Alexander Roob argues that the consequence of this was that artists "developed a self awareness that increasingly stressed authorship and aimed at developing an identifiable style".[13]

On the death of Thomas, one of his illustrators Hubert von Herkomer wrote of the important role *The Graphic* played in the development of social realism in visual art and the lessons its artists received "at the hands of Mr W. L. Thomas". He further suggested there "was a visible change in the selection of subjects by painters in England after the advent of *The Graphic*":

> Mr Thomas opened [*The Graphic*'s] pages to every phase of the story of our life; he led the rising artist into drawing subjects that might never have otherwise arrested his attention; he only asked that they should be subjects of universal interest and of artistic value. Whether it was to do a two-penny lodging-house for women in St. Giles', a scene in Petticoat Lane, Sunday morning, the flogging of a criminal in Newgate Prison, an entertainment given to Italian organ grinders, it mattered little. It

[12] Keating, P., "Words and pictures: Changing images of the poor in Victorian Britain", in Treuherz, J., *Hard Times*, *Social Realism in Victorian Art*, p. 126 - 130.

[13] Roob, A., "Xylographism Unbound - The Influence of Illustrated Journal Graphics on the Art of Vincent van Gogh", at Melton Prior Institute for Reportage Drawing, http://www.meltonpriorinstitut.org. Last accessed 13 July 2015.

was a lesson in life, and a lesson in art.[14]

Depiction of the poor and the hapless in art was, of course, not new. The underclasses had always been acknowledged in paintings, not as subjects, but as incidental and anonymous figures designed to add background, character and charm to the focal image. As Treuherz observed, "peasants, cottages, beggars and field workers" increasingly formed an important component of the landscape "with the emergence of genre painting and the idea of the picturesque."[15] However, by the mid 19th–century there had begun a small but expanding movement which sought to portray, in both literature and visual art, the growing social and political disruptions caused by the industrial revolution and the movement towards democratic institutions. For the first time "poor people were taken as subject matter for a new kind of art, in which social conscience was combined with documentary interest in accurate recording."[16] Realism had sought "not just to represent things naturalistically, but to depict the lowly and the commonplace, correcting the historical bias in art towards the grand and spectacular." Social realism took this notion and applied it to contemporary social issues.[17] According to Richard Muther, this marked departure from the then "ascendant view" on Victorian art as "an art based on luxury, optimism and aristocracy… ." That view, he added, was "that a picture ought in the first place to be an attractive article of furniture for the sitting room… (and) everything must be kept within the bounds of what is charming, temperate and prosperous, without in any degree suggesting the struggle for existence."[18] "The prevailing attitude", Muther goes on, "was that these social subjects were ugly and inherently inartistic." By the late 1870's, the critics had become more generous in their acceptance and individual paintings were more likely to be deemed "within the acceptance of good taste".[19]

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[14] Von Herkomer, H., "On death of William Thomas", 1900, in Spartacus Educational, http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Jgraphic.htm. Last accessed 2 May 2014.
[15] Treuherz, J., *Hard Times, Social Realism in Victorian Art*, p. 9.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid, p. 9.
[19] Ibid, pp. 9 - 10.

Dollman and *The Graphic*

Dollman was not a foundation artist of *The Graphic* but formally joined within ten years of its first publication, and in the period of its rapidly expanding readership. At a time that other publications were failing, *The Graphic* had grown from 1869, and modest beginnings in a rented house with a small team of artists and engravers, to a point by 1882 when it employed over one thousand people in three London buildings and ran twenty printing machines.[20] (Plate 13)



Plate 13 Etchers at work in *The Graphic*'s studios in 1880

From the mid 1870s, Dollman was regularly producing drawings and art work for *The Graphic*. His work explicitly depicted political, military and social events, often emphasising their dramatic nature and incorporating a strong underlying story. These representations included the coverage of British overseas military adventures, such as the Zulu Wars in South Africa, the wars in Afghanistan, Egypt and the Sudan, and elsewhere in the Empire.

The practice of *The Graphic* was to have a war correspondent artist at the front line. Most notable of these was Charles Edwin Fripp (1854 – 1906), who made



Plate 14 *The Relief of Ekowe*

[20] That year the colour printed Christmas edition sold over half a million copies at one shilling. In1889, a *Daily Graphic* was launched which further expanded its public reach.

many sketches on the spot. These Dollman later worked up in some detail at the studio. Some would be in the form of a fold-out print, often up to a metre in width. The published image was usually signed *J. C. D*.[21] One example of many is *The Relief of Ekowe* (Plate 14), published in colour tint as a *Graphic Supplement* 'fold-out' in 1879.[22] Dollman produced many similar pictures reporting on the story of the Zulu Wars (Plates 15 & 16).



Plates 15 & 16 Siege of Morosi's mountain: a colonial soldier at the last major incident of the Zulu war 1879.

In another work illustrating the war in Egypt and the Sudan, Dollman's large fold-out image (34 cm. x 100 cm.) depicted the *Defeat of Baker Pasha's Force at Teb in its attempt to relieve Tokar*, *February 4* (1884) (Plate 17). It was an explicit description dealing with the annihilation by Mahdists of the motley British led relief effort made up of three thousand Turkish cavalry, Egyptian gendarmerie, and assorted black African troops.

[21] Miller, D., *The Victorian Watercolours and Drawings: in the Collection of her Majesty the Queen*, (Philip Wilson, London), 1995.

[22] Supplement to *The Graphic,* 17 May 1879.



Plate 17 ***Defeat of Baker Pasha's Force at Teb in its attempt to relieve Tokar, February 4.***

Dollman also produced series of collaged images in temporal sequence to enhace a visual narrative to these sorts of events. An example of this is his *Afghan War – A Raid on a Cave Village* (1879), which was given publication prominence in a double centre page.[23] In this sequence of seven drawings, Dollman created a dramatic visual narrative beginning with readying in the early morning dark as they *Buckle on the Sam Browne*, followed by a scene of *The Spies* huddled around a camp fire for *The Last Warm Before They Set Out*. Then came *The Night March*, and troops crawling forward behind the crest of a ridge, and the battle. In the last large image of the *Victorious Return to Camp*, British troops in pith helmets are shown marching in loose order along a valley with rising smoke in the background. In the foreground a group of less disciplined locals marshal the captured sheep, cattle and mules that were spoils of the encounter — and so concluding the story. He produced many of these narrative series, which were not solely confined to dramatic and bloody events but were also used for reporting subjects of general interest. These topics included *Indian Contingent in Malta* with its emphasis on difference in colonial custom and behaviour, and *Life in Manitoba, British North America* which was concerned with the lives and adventures of native people.[24]

[23] *The Graphic*, 22 March 1879.
[24] *The Graphic*, 20 July 1878, *Indian Contingent in Malta.*

This idea of portraying dramatic situations underpinned with strong narrative clearly had taken root in Dollman, and was also to imbue much of his later work on canvas. Building on the intense experience with *The Graphic,* Dollman was later inspired to produce many large works in oil, and on occasion in water colour, emphasizing a dramatic theme or event. These included his "*Worse things happen at sea"*, a depiction of a misadventure on the highway, the chivalrous and tragic "*A very gallant gentleman"* portraying the last moments of Captain Lawrence "Titus" Oates and, in water colour, the fearsome portrayal of marauding Vikings, *The Raiders*.[25] As mentioned earlier, a number of these were voted "painting of the year".



Plate 18 ***The Canadian Governor General***

Dollman's less dramatic depictions in the publications included news from the colonies, royal occasions and light-hearted social and sporting events. Each weekly edition would invariably contain a selection of his work. Some of it was executed in fine detail. Other material was produced in haste to meet the short publication cycle and the demands on engraving staff. The 1878 engraved image of the newly appointed Governor General to Canada (Plate 18), travelling en-route to his appointment, is an example of his less dramatic but more hurried reporting work.

The Graphic, 31 August 1878, *Life in Manitoba.* Like the majority of the pictures in *The Graphic*, this series was not signed. However, its publication coincided with Dollman's work related trip to North America.

[25] RA 1118 1889: "*Worse things happen at sea"*.
RA 530 1914: "*A very gallant gentleman".*
RWS 119 1907: *The Raiders.*
Dollman generally used larger paintings and oils to depict his more narrative works and reserved water colours for landscape or smaller copies. *The Raiders* is an exception.



Plate 19 ***Opium Den at the East End***

At a domestic level, and in keeping with the social and political direction of the magazine's principal, Dollman also engaged with the social issues of the time, as did Herkomer, Millais, Holl and Fildes before him. Like them, Dollman showed he was very capable at producing images with strong social commentary. An example of this sort of work is his *Opium Den at the East End* (Plate 19). It depicts opium users lying on bunks and rags in a crowded and smoky room managed by an Oriental figure seen dispensing to a new arrival. While some opium dens in 19th–century London might have been quite opulent, this is not one of them.[26] A sensitivity to social issues was not obvious in Dollman's art prior to his formal engagement with *The Graphic*. Regardless of whether this interest was learnt or simply lying latent to this point, in later years it was again manifest in a number of his large paintings concerned with social issues.



Plate 20 ***Christmas Day at the Seamen's Hospital***

It was the public enthusiasm for many of the engraved and etched images published first in *The Graphic* that led them later to be worked up with considerably more effort and finesse into large oil paintings. Herkomer and Fildes often made these popular *Graphic* images into paintings for exhibition. The opposite also occurred when successful exhibition paintings on a theme that fitted the social or political bent of *The Graphic* were subsequently engraved and later etched for wide publication. In 1879, an engraved image drawn by Dollman, with

[26] *The Graphic,* 23 October 1880.

added colour tint, formed the centrepiece to *The Graphic* Christmas Edition. Entitled *Christmas Day At The Seamen's Hospital Greenwich – Coming Down To Dinner* (Plate 20), it proved to be very popular.[27] The following year Dollman exhibited at the Royal Academy a refined and relatively large (254 cm. x 149 cm.) oil representation of the same subject, which had a catalogued title *Friends in adversity* (Plate 21).[28] It would otherwise be difficult to determine whether the wood engraved image dated 1879 was worked from the undated oil painting which was exhibited in the summer exhibition in 1880, or *vice versa*.[29] A *British Medical Journal* article in December 1879 resolves the puzzle. It fully described the engraved illustration and noted that Dollman was then "painting a large picture on the subject for the next Royal Academy [exhibition]."[30]

The writer of the journal article had good understanding of the context for this work. "In the foreground", it describes, "a native of Cashmere is leading an aged pensioner; and behind them is a naval reserve man… who has under his charge a *Warspite* boy, suffering from ophthalmia". The article also stated that Dollman took the faces from both sketches and photography, indicating that his interest in photography was established quite early. The article went on to describe the various nationalities of the "natives", observing that at no other place than the Dreadnought Hospital "can the lover of anthropology more readily



Plate 21 sectional detail:
Friends in adversity

[27] *The Graphic*, The Christmas Number, 1879.

[28] RA 471 1880. The full Royal Academy recorded title of the painting is: *Friends in adversity: Christmas Day at the Dreadnought Hospital, Greenwich. Frequently between thirty and forty different nationalities, patients at the hospital, sit down to dinner at Christmas.* The painting is in the collection of Nottingham City Museums and Galleries.

[29] As the Royal Academy summer exhibitions were an annual event, the oil painting could have been completed any time after mid 1879.

[30] "The Dreadnought Hospital", in *The British Medical Journal*, 27 December 1879, p.1032.

study the distinctions of race."[31]

The content of this engraving was typical of the lighter social conversations to be had in *The Graphic*, but still concerned with social issues and the less fortunate in society. Dollman applied some licence in modifying aspects of the finer oil version. These are described later in Chapter VIII in the context of *genre*. The two visual representations of the same content offered here, the wood-block image and a section of the oil painting, of the same event (Plates 20 & 21), provide a good demonstration of the constraints and limitations to the art of reproducing the artist's image. Against the realism of the larger oil, the detail and perspectives in the engraving are highly compromised and the characters appear two-dimensional and more cartoon like. Yet these engraved or etched and often colour tinted images were prized and considered quite fine enough for framing and mounting on walls in many modest homes.[32]

Again exploiting themes of diversity and sailor welfare, Dollman's *Waiting to see the Doctor* (Plate 22), one in a series of *London Sketches,* was published in *The Graphic* in 1881.[33] It was wood engraved by Horace Harral (1844 – 1891) after a drawing by Dollman depicting fifteen sailors with various ailments awaiting medical attention in the dispensary, also at the Seamen's Hospital on London Docks.[34] Harral was a principal and accomplished engraver for *The Graphic* at that time. The image, set in the doctor's ante-room, depicts a group of seated patients who collectively represent the highly diverse ethnic and national origins of those drafted into mercantile service across Queen Victoria's Empire. A fixed, burly and uniformed attendant oversees them. Like *Friends in adversity*, this work emphasised the assortments of culture and nationality of the sailors curiously assembled through their common condition. Similar themes, providing opportunity to depict social divergence and national types, were often worked by *The Graphic'*s early artists.

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[31] Ibid.

[32] The engraved published prints were often produced on pages without ink type on the reverse for this purpose.

[33] Unlike *Friends in adversity*, it seems that the etched drawing did not inspire a larger painting.

[34] Horrace Harral etched in wood for many artists associated with *The Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News*. He was active from 1844 to 1891 and his work was exhibited at the Royal Academy.



Plate 22 ***Waiting to See the Doctor***

There is nothing romantic about this setting but it is clearly designed to engage the observer. Many human emotions are captured in this image, ranging between misery, boredom, indifference and patience.

The depictions of the opium den and hapless seamen in the hospital were only two of the many works Dollman produced for *The Graphic* in the late 1870s and into the 1880s dealing with the trials of the working classes. They also mark the beginnings of his broader interest in social narrative and its inclusion in his major works. In 1884 he painted *The Immigrants' Ship* with its overt references to social stratification and dislocation. Later, Dollman produced his confronting "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" on a large canvas, and then an even larger "*And some fell by the wayside",* a painting that invites sympathetic comparison with Hubert von Herkomer's "*Hard Times*" (1885).[35] The social narratives within these three significant works are deserving of closer analysis, which is provided in the next chapter.

While Dollman's work in black and white was influenced by William Thomas, his inspiration for narrative in general and social narrative in particular must also owe

[35] RA 738 1909: "*Am I my brother's keeper?*"
RA 224 1910: "*And some fell by the wayside*".

something to the strong literary culture that existed within *The Graphic* at that time. As Principal Draftsman, Dollman, together with his fellow artists, illustrated the socially reflective prose of *The Graphic*'s great literary contributors. Through the inevitable intimate working association with these writers, he was exposed to, and influenced by, their notions of social injustice and their concerns for the plight of the lower classes.

For a decade, Dollman was immersed in an unusual art and literary culture, rich in both narrative and aspects of *social realism,* that surrounded *The Graphic* and Thomas. While never abandoning his many other interests, Dollman's work in later years reflected on this formative influence and the compelling need to tell a story of misfortune.

As a growing sense of social narrative underpinned much of his new work during this period, other influences from this association were also becoming apparent. The work he produced for *The Graphic* and other journals shows that he had also developed a strong interest in depicting with realism the plight of animals. His wood-block engraving *Chains and Slavery in Antwerp,* showing working dogs connected in harness and the photo-etched *The Best of Friends Must Part, An Incident on a Homeward Bound South African Liner,* both contain a strong story line and are clearly designed to elicit a sentimental response.[36] Similar constructions relating to animals can be found in many of his later better known paintings. These are discussed in detail in later chapters.

The Graphic was a convenient vehicle for Dollman to exploit his strong interest in painting animals generally, and he incorporated them as the central subjects to many of his images. *Before the Magistrate Unfit for Work* (Plate 23), produced in his overlapping later student, early *Graphic* days, had a theme of the working horse that had become redundant. He reused this



Plate 23 ***Before the Magistrate – Unfit for work***

[36] *The Graphic,* 24 March 1871, and *The Graphic,* 21 January 1893.

sentimental subject of distressed horses a number of times in later years, the most notable paintings being his *Top of the hill* and *Les* Misérables.[37]

Dollman's *Table d'hôte at a dogs' home* was also designed to appeal to those observers sensitive to the welfare of animals, but this time it was incorporated with a dash of humour. Here Dollman emphasised the characters of these dispossessed and assorted animals, and has to a degree personalised them. This image of assembled unfortunates overseen by their keeper, with its emphasis on diversity, might be compared to that of the Dollman's doctor's waiting room. The centre page wood-block engraving of the 'high table' was based on a very popular painting Dollman produced and reproduced in both oil and water colour a number of times; known versions are in the collections at the Walker Gallery, Liverpool and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.[38]

A further developing interest of Dollman, cultivated in part through his long association with *The Graphic,* was painting sport. From 1879 he illustrated rowing and horse racing and other events such as boxing and fox hunting. Even here he sought to reinforce the picture with some underlying dramatic narrative, such as the tension felt just before the starter's gun in *Are You Ready?* (Plate 24) Like his military



Plate 24 ***Are You Ready?***

[37] RA 40 1900: *Top of the hill.*
RA 630 1888: *Les Miserable.*

[38] RA 459 1879. An oil version of *Table d'hôte at a dogs' home*, purchased 1880, is in the collection of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. The water colour version, first exhibited at the Sydney International Exhibition (1879 – 1880), was purchased in 1879.

subjects, some of these larger topics were also worked up in a more intricate, detailed manner to occupy the centre pages of the publication, sometimes as a four page fold-out extending up to a metre in breadth. A number of these were also enhanced by colour tint. One sport for which Dollman demonstrated a particular passion was golf. He applied the subject many times in publication, using his knowledge of the sport not just to create a pleasant image but also to build some political or social narrative. Later examples of this on canvas are his *The stymie* and *During the time of the Sermonses*.[39]



Plate 25 ***Vol. i, ii, & iii***

Dollman was also very capable of producing lighter narratives in work that was more aligned to *genre*. Some were published in *The Graphic* but often, with more intricate detailing, in the more mainstream *Illustrated London News*. Again these images were frequently displayed in the centre pages, without back print and

[39] RA 230 1899: *The stymie.*
RA 526 1896: *During the time of the Sermonses*.

designed to be easily separated from the magazine for framing. An example typical of this finer sort of work was his clever *Vols i, ii, and iii* (Plate 25), possibly depicting the same woman three times in different dress, mood and composure on the same seaside bench, absorbed in the three stages of her novel.[40] Another possibility is that they are three women who all share a Victorian 'three volume novel'. The art writer in the *Illustrated London News* fancies that this is the case and they are reading *The Emptied Heart* by Amelia Mudge, and the book has been borrowed for a nominal three days, constraining the reading time and necessitating simultaneous use of its three volumes by the three women.[41]

Dollman also produced a large number of *bandes dessinées* narratives. These depicted a sequence of events in a generally light-hearted or humorous manner, though sometimes with a more serious tone and possibly imbued with some moral or truth. They were a refinement of his earlier serial style of reporting military



Plate 26 ***Fox on One Tree Hill***

and other events. This type of presentation was made popular from the 1830s by the Swiss author, painter, and caricaturist, Rodolphe Töpffer.[42] *Punch* later introduced

[40] *Illustrated London News,* 12 January 1889. The three figures represent the three levels of engagement with the novel. The first represents an introduction, marked with optimism, the second with absorption and the last with reflection and sadness. The dress and demeanour of the three figures is designed to reinforce these states ranging from light to more colourful to sombre.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Grove, L., *Text / Image Mosaics in French Culture: Emblems and Comic Strips,* (Ashgate, Aldershot), 2005, p. 43.

the term 'cartoon' for humorous caricatures.[43] These visual narrative sequences were produced very rapidly for weekly publication, sometimes with added colour tint, and were a departure from the more serious and exacting studies of public and social events. An example of this type of work was Dollman's *Fox On One Tree Hill* (Plate 26) that ran over three pages.[44] Dollman produced it in 1890, near the end of his formal association with *The Graphic.*

His interest in depicting humorous contemporary events was not limited to publications. An entertaining anecdote was central to a number of his original and imaginative oil paintings, including *The Village Artist* (1899) and *The Borrowed Plume* (undated).

In reviewing the various influences *The Graphic* had on its artists and Dollman in particular, what the artists themselves contributed to what might be characterised as '*The Graphic* school of graphic art', and how they were influenced by each other, there remains an open question in relation to Dollman concerning *The Graphic* and Vincent van Gogh (1853 – 1890). It has been advanced by art historian Bob Speel with little qualification that Dollman's art had an influence on van Gogh.[45] The claim has been reiterated in a number of publications as well as by institutions such as the Natural History Museum (London), at exhibitions relating to Van Gogh, and more recently in the popular encyclopaedia, Wikipedia, and its many derivatives.[46] While on first flush such an assertion might be considered dubious and the perpetuation of some fanciful early mistake or false assumption, a review of the claim may indicate a level of substance. It has been established for some time through Van Gogh's letters and other sources that, beginning with his two years (1873 – 1875) in London as an apprentice to the art trade, he had a fascination with graphic art of a number of the larger journals. In particular, these included the *Illustrated London News* and *The Graphic*. With the benefit of support payments from his brother Theo, Van Gogh

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[43] Harvey, R. C., "Comedy at the Juncture of Word and Image", in Varnum, R. and Gibbons, C., *The Language of Comics: Word and Image,* (University Press of Mississippi, Jackson), 2001, p. 77.

[44] *The Graphic,* The Christmas Number, 1890.

[45] http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/speel/paint/dollman.htm. Last accessed 17 May 2014.

[46] http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/art-nature-imaging/collections/art-themes/caught_in_oils/more/tigers_more_info.htm. Last accessed 17 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Charles_Dollman. Last accessed 17 May 2014.

amassed a significant collection of wood engravings and social reportage from the 1880s and catalogued and analysed the stylistic features of the often un-named artists.[47] Alexander Roob argues Van Gogh's early attempts at graphic art drew heavily on the style of the "'*Graphic*'s social realists as far as the use of hatching and outline drawings was concerned." In contrast, the "late Van Gogh, with his dynamic, often vortex-like bundling of lines, then more and more approached a view one can describe as a wild, unleashed xylographism."[48] In his letters to his brother Theo, Van Gogh was clearly impressed and influenced by the foundation *Graphic* draftsmen, particularly Hubert von Herkomer and Luke Fildes.[49] He also refers to Dollman's work in letters to his brother and to his artist friend, Anthon van Rappard, to whom he sent at least two attributable works, one being Dollman's study of the opium den in East London.[50]

Dollman was a substantial contributor to *The Graphic* from the mid 1870s and its principal draftsman in the 1880s. As Van Gogh is said to have been profoundly influenced and inspired by its publication at that period, it is reasonable to argue that Dollman may well have had an influence on his art.[51] Roob also argues that "it was above all the contemplation of the 'Graphic' social reportages that encouraged Van Gogh to cast aside the academic corset of his student years and seek his motifs on the streets and in deprived neighbourhoods".[52] He goes on to assert that for a number of years Van Gogh painted under the inspiration he found in these graphic illustrators that he so expressly admired, producing his poignant lithographic studies

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47 Melton Prior Institute for Reportage Drawing,
Roob, A., "Xylographism Unbound – The Influence of Illustrated Journal Graphics on the Art of Vincent van Gogh".

48 Ibid.

49 Letter, Vincent van Gogh to Theo van Gogh, The Hague, 3 June 1882. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam Br. 1990: 235 | CL: 205.

50 Ibid*,* and Letter, Vincent van Gogh to Anthon van Rappard, The Hague, between 24 and 27 October 1882, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam Br. 1990: 275 | CL: R28. The other study was: *The distress in Ireland – The Duke of Edinburgh and the officers of the relief squadron visiting the sick off the West Coast,* in *The Graphic*, 15 May 1880.

51 *New York Times*, 1 May 1988, "Art; the plight of Have Nots in Victorian Britain in Exhibition at Yale by Vivien Raynor".

52 Roob, A., "Xylographism Unbound - The Influence of Illustrated Journal Graphics on the Art of Vincent van Gogh".

of *Orphan Man Drinking Coffee* (1882), *Sorrow* (1882), *At Eternities Gate* (1882), *The Public Soup Kitchen* (1883), *The Orphan Man* (1882) *The Weaver* (1885) and his touching study of a peasant household, *The Potato Eaters* (1885). By 1886 Van Gogh was experimenting in more symbolic representations of the hardiness and social nobility of work in his still life study of *A Pair of Boots* (1886).[53] Van Gogh wrote of *The Graphic* in October 1882, the time when Dollman was its principal draftsman: "there is something virile in it – something rugged which attracts me strongly … in all these fellows I see an energy, a determination and a free, healthy, cheerful spirit that animate me. And in their work there is something lofty and dignified – even when they draw a dunghill".[54]

The Graphic's Influence on Dollman

It is clear that his experiences with *The Graphic* profoundly influenced Dollman and all his work. A desire to produce rich narrative in art and the discovery of social realism remain the two major influences on him from that time. Dollman had a busy association with *The Graphic* and other periodical newspapers which began in the middle of his art studies and continued without break until the late 1880s. Despite this he still managed to produce significant numbers of paintings in oils and water colours, with two or three major works and several minor works made ready for exhibitions and the general market each year. Dollman's strength of narrative was also influenced through association with notable serial writers and their literature, and his close involvement in the visual reportage of significant current events. His *Knights of the Road* (highwaymen) series of paintings in the 1880s is an example of his increasing use of literature for inspiration. The depiction of everyday scenes around London such as its market places, working horses in stress and events at the zoo for the various journals also taught him the softer narrative of *genre* work. Early examples of *genre* paintings he exhibited that would have been inspired by this association include "*Should old acquaintance be forgot"* and "*Warranted quiet to ride or drive"*, and the water coloured*, Pro Bono Publico* (undated).[55]

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[53] *A Pair of Boots*, Vincent van Gogh collection, Rijksmuseum.

[54] Letter, Vincent van Gogh to Anthon van Rappard, The Hague, c. 29 October 1882. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam Br. 1990: 278 | CL: R16.

[55] RA 703 1885: "*Should old acquaintance be forgot*".

Dollman's exposure to the social issues addressed by *The Graphic* also had a profound effect on his later work in social realism. Mark Bills, the biographer of Thomas, argues that *The Graphic'*s "images of poverty made it a catalyst for the development of social realism in British art."[56] According to Bills, at a time when novelists were losing interest in the poor, *The Graphic*'s artists' work "temporarily took over from fiction its hitherto predominant role as the nation's artistic conscience on such matters… throughout the 1870s and beyond." Peter Keating makes the further observation that "what [*The Graphic*] captured was not simply the surface reality, but a formative mood of the late Victorian age, and therefore of 20th–century Britain itself."[57] These influences stayed with Dollman throughout his working life and permeated a number of his later works. Within the genre of social realism, the most notable was "*Am I my brother's keeper?*"

The Royal Academy Schools had tutored Dollman well in the history painting class at the Life School. He received awards from both — but it was his period and experiences with *The Graphic* which significantly expanded his perspectives. At that time he demonstrated he could work with equal competence in *genre*, dramatic incident, realism with strong narrative, social realism, sport, animal studies, military, humour, and subjects from contemporary literature. These developed interests and skills formed the basis of his work over the next forty years. Unlike the narrowing experience of his peers who worked in social realism for a while before migrating to more profitable portraiture painting, Dollman was to later expand his already broad repertoire to include landscape, problem paintings, classical revival works, mythology and war paintings. The spread of his work was remarkable as was the way he integrated the various elements of the different genre, particularly in relation to his clever importation of animal subjects.

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RA 12 1886: "*Warranted quiet to ride or drive*".

[56] Bills, M., 'Thomas, William Luson (1830–1900)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, September 2013 at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27248. Last accessed 29 October 2015.

[57] Keating, P., "Words and pictures: Changing images of the poor in Victorian Britain", p. 130.

Chapter IV
SOCIAL REALISM
REPRESENTING THE DISPOSSESSED

Realism

Realism, as an art movement, became established within Britain from the mid 19th–century. Its exponents rejected earlier traditions in art, as embodied in Joshua Reynolds, of embellished idealism, romanticism and subjectivism in favour of depicting nature or contemporary life with accuracy, sincerity and truth through close observation.[1] Realism was a component of a number of earlier artistic streams. It is evident in the works of Jan Van Eyck (c. 1390 – 1441) and other early Dutch *genre* artists, and later in 17th–century painters such as Caravaggio (1571 – 1610). It was not consciously formalised into a style, however, until the middle of the 19th–century in France.[2] In Victorian Britain, realism in art also developed in reaction to a society under stress from rapid industrialisation, and to the conventions of the Royal Academy. At that time, other progressive factors that influenced its acceptance and growth included the development of sociology and positivist philosophy, the growth in professional journalism, and the advent of photography.

Social Realism

A sub-genre exists within realism which has since been referred to as *social realism* or *socio realism*.[3] It, in turn, developed in response to increased social awareness and acceptance of public responsibility for the consequences of the

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1 As with the term *genre*, there is some ambiguity in the term realism. In realism the emphasis is not on realistic depiction but rather the choice and the treatment of subject. This is also what in part differentiates it from naturalism.

2 The term was coined in France to describe the work of Gustave Courbet (1819 – 1877) and others who rejected idealism to focus on everyday life.

3 Social realism should not be confused with the *socialist realism* of the 20th–century. Although related in that it notionally dealt with perceptions of struggle and working-class aspirations, socialist realism was a publicly sponsored or State art form designed principally for propaganda purposes by Marxist inspired regimes from the early 20th–century.

industrial revolution. It was identified with a strong and unapologetic narrative that strove to highlight the social distress and hardships experienced by the poor in Victorian Britain. Treuherz further qualifies social realism as "a sub-stream of paintings not just depicting the poor, but depicting them in the light of social problems".[4] The ingredients of social realism were poverty, social class, work, stress, and deprivation, with their consequences. Simply depicting pathos or distress alone was not enough. In England, the roots of social realism can be loosely traced to William Hogarth (1697 – 1764) and his critical observations on drunkenness and extravagance. Later, in France Honoré Daumier (1808 – 1879) addressed similar social issues through satirical lithographs, but by the late 19th–century interest there had waned. In contrast, social realism, while never achieving an unqualified acceptance from either art critics or public in Britain, established itself there as a small but important part of art from the mid 19th–century until the First World War.[5] Between the two World Wars, principal support for the art movement moved across the Atlantic to the United States and to a number of significant artists, including Ben Shahn (1898 – 1969) who depicted the human suffering of the Great Depression, and Ivan Albright (1897 – 1983) and Edward Hopper (1882 – 1967) who focused on social alienation.

In the second half of the 19th–century, the ugly realities of the poor and the struggles of the working classes were observed and portrayed by a small number of loosely associated British artists, committed to the style. At first, the art public had difficulty in accepting what it perceived to be confronting and uncomfortable descriptions of social distress. George Shi states that initially "the public was outraged by Social Realism … because they didn't know how to look at it or what to

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4 Treuherz, J., (ed.), *Hard Times – Social realism in Victorian Art,* (Lund Humphries, London), 1987, p. 9.

5 It has been argued by Watson that the term "Social Realist" is misapplied to much of 19th–century British art and to Holl, Fildes and Herkomer in particular, as they "never worked together as a movement with an ideology or manifesto". See Watson, P., *The Social-realist Phase in the Painting of Luke Fildes, Hubert Herkomer and Frank Holl*; *The Making and Unmaking of a Sub-genre,* MA Thesis, University of Chester, 2007.

do with it."[6] Writing of Fildes *Applicants for admission to a Casual War,* the *Saturday Review* remarked of social realism as an art form, "it has always been held that in written description a place may be found for horrors which become intolerable when brought into pictorial form boldly before the eye." The *Art Journal* questioned "the subject's fitness for art at all" and the journal *Academy* reflected "a man may preach ever so eloquently and usefully, and yet his sermon may be a thing out of place."[7]

Suzie Hodge and Miquette Roberts argue that some fellow artists were also critical — ugly depictions of modern life being undeserving of the effort and embellishment of serious art. They cite Dante Gabriel Rossetti's reaction to a painting by his friend Ford Madox Brown entitled *Work* (1852 – 1865) as an example:

> I am beginning to doubt more and more, I confess, whether that excess elaboration is rightly bestowed on the materials of a modern subject – things so familiar to the eye that they can really be rendered thoroughly I fancy, with much less labour; and things moreover which are often far from beautiful in themselves.[8]

Neither was this type of work popular amongst traditional wealthy patrons. They would have been quite disinclined to have depictions of distress and poverty mounted on the walls in their important homes. However, the rise of new public galleries across Britain and some rich collections in the mid 19th–century underpinned a limited market for this new style.[9]

In the 1850s, British artist George Frederic Watts (1817 – 1904) first produced a small number of paintings now considered as belonging to social realism. They included a female suicide, a sempstress, a beggar and a scene of family eviction set during the Irish potato famine. As Treuherz remarks, "the form they took was unlike *genre* painting [in that] they were larger in scale, broader in treatment and eliminated

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6 Shi, G., University of Fine Arts, Valencia, quoted in "Social Realism", *United States Academic Decathlon Curriculum 2011 – 2012, Pre-Season Study Guide,* (Pediapress), p. 294.

7 Cited in Korda, A., *Printing and Painting the News in Victorian London, The Graphic and Social realism,* (Ashgate, Farnham) 2015, p.117.

8 Hodge, S., and Roberts, M., *The Victorians,* (The Tate, London), 2000, p. 11.

9 Treuherz, J., *Victorian Painting*, (Thames and Hudson, New York), 1993, p. 39.

the use of costume and setting as narrative devices."[10] These works were not exhibited at the time "presumably because [Watts] thought that the public, accustomed to *genre* and anecdote, would not understand them."[11]

Following Watts, *The Graphic* became the principal catalyst for the growing public acceptance of drawings and etchings of social realism during the second half of Queen Victoria's reign. Treuherz's observation that *The Graphic'*s artists "were extremely successful in translating their engravings into full scale paintings" was considered in the previous chapter.[12] However, the same public reception was not always afforded these works when they were transferred on to canvas.

Three early and notable artists at *The Graphic,* Luke Fildes, Hubert von Herkomer and Frank Holl, all attempted to later work up a number of their black and white drawings, first published in *The Graphic* and elsewhere, into oil paintings for exhibition and sale. For them, "the streets of London were foul places of stench and disease, which they… explored at first hand."[13] These "real portraits of genuine distress" were submitted to the Royal Academy selectors, where they were more inclined to be accepted for exhibition than at the Salon.[14] Fildes' etched illustration, *Houseless and Hungry,* which was used to launch the first edition of *The Graphic* in 1869 and later reworked into a physically large (135 cm. x 250 cm.) oil on canvas, was exhibited in 1874 with the title *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward*. The picture generated some dismay within the conservative viewing halls of Burlington House and fired a debate on the appropriateness of this style to fine art generally, "there [being] little in a theme of such grovelling misery to recommend it to a painter whose purpose is beauty."[15] The *Art Journal,* in a cross allusion to what it perceived as similar unsavoury social depictions in literature, lamented that a "picture cannot

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[10] Ibid, p. 184.
[11] Ibid, p. 40.
[12] Casteras, S., " 'The gulf of destitution on whose brink they hang': images of life on the streets of Victorian Art", in Treuherz, J., (ed.), *Hard Times – Social realism in Victorian Art* (Lund Humphries, London), 1987, p. 130.
[13] Ibid, p.134.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Treuherz, J., *Hard Times – Social Realism in Victorian Art*, p. 183.

be shut up and put away like a book".[16] On Fildes' *The Widower*, *The Times* regretted the "great pity that painters do not bear in mind the fact that their pictures are meant to adorn English living rooms".[17] Other artists received similar unflattering critiques. On Henry Wyndham Phillips' (1820 – 1868) *The Modern Hagar*, the *Art Journal* observed that it was "a most sad and painful picture and one that few would covert as a possession to be looked upon often".[18] Not all critics were as averse with one writing "not a few of us will see the miseries of their fellow beings for the first time in these personalities".[19] From the mid 1870s, Holl began a series of social paintings that were preoccupied with melancholy. His most notable was *Newgate: Committed for Trial* (1878), depicting on canvas a familial visit to dingy prison cells that was based on an earlier wood-block illustration from *The Graphic*. Herkomer also drew on a published illustration from 1871 as a basis for his *The Last Muster, Sunday at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea* (1875) while finding later inspiration for his *Hard Times* (1885) in Charles Dickens' novel of the same name, published in 1854.

While these three significant artists formed the vanguard of a new movement in painting social realism in Victorian Britain, the style only managed to achieve a small number of overall acceptances amongst the broad selections exhibited at the Royal Academy and elsewhere. As there was a limited market for this type of painting, which in the main came from the newer art galleries and institutions, these three artists found the need to move outside the style of social realism, producing conventional landscapes and working in other more traditional styles. All finally migrated in later years to more lucrative portraiture painting.[20] Paintings of social realism ultimately formed a very minor part of their total output, with Holl limiting

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[16] *Art Journal*, 1874 on Field's *Applicants for Admission to a Casual ward,* cited in Treuherz, J., *Hard Times – Social Realism in Victorian Art,* p. 11.

[17] *The Times*, 28 April 1876, on Luke Fildes' *The Widower*.

[18] *Art Journal,* 1855, on Henry Phillips and his *The Modern Hagar*, cited in Treuherz, J., *Hard Times – Social realism in Victorian Art*, p. 11.

[19] Treuherz, J., *Hard Times – Social Realism in Victorian Art,* p. 13.

[20] Watson wonders if Fildes, Herkomer and Holl were ever truly committed to *social realism* and whether they should be "condemned as apostates" for seeking more rewarding commissions – see Watson, P., *The social-realist phase in the painting of Luke Fildes, Hubert Herkomer and Frank Holl*, p. 65.

himself to only painting portraits by 1879, then producing twenty or so of these a year until his death in 1888.[21]

Images of social realism were not the sort of display to be hung in important homes to prick the conscience, nor would they have sat comfortably beside family portraits, or studies of *The Hunt*, or the family hounds. These paintings were intended to be confronting. They all embodied strong and explicit social content and were designed to elicit compassion and sympathy for the plight of those socially less fortunate, rather than their condemnation. Their appeal, therefore, was likely to be more public than private, and come from those with reformist and liberal perspectives. Many of these works were ultimately acquired by public art galleries and institutions, particularly those in London and the towns amongst the 'satanic mills' to the industrial north, rather than being taken up by individuals. Fildes' *The Widower* was acquired by the Walker Gallery, Liverpool, on its completion in 1904. His *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* was purchased on his death by Mrs Edwin Tate, and is now at the Tate in London. Herkomer's *Hard Times* was purchased by the Manchester City Gallery in 1885 and his *Last Muster* is at the National Museums, Liverpool. Holl's *Newgate: Committed for Trial* is at Touchstones Gallery in Rochdale, Lancashire.

Dollman and Social Realism

As described earlier, Dollman began his association with *The Graphic* in the mid 1870s following in the footsteps of Fildes, Holl and Herkomer. He was subject to the same conditioning experiences under the direction of social reformer William Thomas and, like the earlier three black and white artists, was producing a significant number of paintings for the Royal Academy and other exhibitions by the 1880s. Also like Fildes, Holl and Herkomer, he demonstrated capability in more than one genre, although he did not ultimately abandon social realism, nor follow them into the more profitable market of portraiture. Where he also differed significantly from them and others was in the breadth of the *oeuvre* he maintained at any time, and the ease with which he moved back and forth between recognised genres.

[21] Treuherz, J., *Victorian Painting*, p. 184.

Peter Watson is reluctant to acknowledge social realism as an art movement, rather than it being simply a "sub-stream of social concern". He also has difficulty with how inclusive the movement was in Victorian England. To establish whether Dollman's work in the genre truly qualifies as social realism, and if it does, the extent of its contribution, three of his principal works are tested over the following pages against similar works by contemporary artists who have been acknowledged by Watson and others as belonging to social realism.[22]

Any comprehensive analysis of these works would have some consideration of *form* involving technical features of the painting, including background and colour as well as balance, harmony and contrast. While these are all important elements, it is the *content* which determines a painting as belonging to social realism and what differentiates it particularly from being simply realism or *genre*.[23] Devices and symbols which describe the social condition and sense of distress — with or without hope — were therefore essential components to any construction of social realism. Operating within the broad framework of social distress and poverty, social realist artists depicted the working poor, stress and poverty from commonplace and sentimental, as in Kennington's *A Pinch of Poverty* (1891), to ugly and disturbing, as in Watts' *Found Dead* (c. 1850) and *The Irish Famine* (c. 1850).[24]

The Immigrants' Ship and "*And some fell by the wayside*" are both studies of the less fortunate who Dollman depicts with a sense of compassion, and presents in a way that would not have compromised the sensitivities of any Royal Academy viewer. He was also capable of more disturbing work in the manner of Fildes and Holl, of which his "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" is the foremost example.[25] These three paintings that typify Dollman's work in social realism have been selected for the purpose of more detailed and comparative analysis.

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[22] Watson, P., *The social-realist phase in the painting of Luke Fildes, Hubert Herkomer and Frank Holl*, passim.

[23] Belton, R. J., "The Elements of Art".

[24] *A Pinch of Poverty* is of a wistful flower girl and her family in poverty. It is painted in somber colours to reflect their situation. The yellow flowers symbolise some hope. *Found Dead* depicts the death of a woman most likely by suicide. *The Irish Famine* shows a group of people in absolute distress with no hope.

[25] RA 738 1909.

The Immigrants' Ship

The Immigrants' Ship was painted during 1884 at Dollman's new studio in Bedford Park. Earlier, in the late 1870s, Dollman had visited North America on an assignment for *The Graphic*. The advent of steam to supplement wind and sail had shortened the transit time significantly, but the voyage of several weeks provided a good opportunity for him to experience life at sea and observe the social milieu on board. His direct observations formed the basis for a number of *genre* studies which were later published as black and white pictures, sometimes with added colour tint, in *The Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News*. Typical of this lighter type of *genre* work was his *The Ship's Belle,* set on an upper deck, which showed an attractive woman surrounded by attentive and competing male passengers.[26]

It was the experience of this trans-Atlantic voyage which also equipped Dollman to paint his more serious *The Immigrants' Ship* (Plate 27).[27] This painting is



Plate 27 *The Immigrants' Ship*

[26] Published in both *The Graphic,* 27 January 1877 and *Harpers Bazaar,* 3 March 1877.

[27] *The Immigrants' Ship* was part of Dollman's collection until his death in 1934, after which it was gifted to the South Australian Agent General in London by Captain Guy Dollman. In 1979 it was transferred to the Art Gallery of South Australia.

worked in oils on canvas (163 cm. x 111 cm.), and depicts an on-board scene that incorporates a number of layered narratives. The general view is set around passengers on deck of a composite steam and sail vessel at some moment during an outbound transit from England, c. 1880. The vessel is upright and stable, no white water can be seen between the railings, and loose sails are draped over the aft deck-house. The funnel and the smoke's direction suggest the perspective is from the rear of the vessel.[28] Although the painting was named *The Immigrants' Ship*, this human cargo represents a broader social mix than the title only might suggest.[29]

The main narrative is set on the aft waist deck where the focal subject is the bearded figure of an immigrant labourer wearing the leggings and boots of an agricultural worker. Like many from the English working classes at this time in history, he has chosen emigration as a way out of the general social distress. He stares ahead with a vacant glaze of resignation, and there is a sense of numbness and capitulation. Providing for his family is onerous, a responsibility emphasised by the infant baby that he is cradling.[30] Around them are random possessions which likely constitute their entire worldly possessions — including a working dog.[31] At the labourer's feet is a discarded and crumpled newspaper, suggesting that he is literate and therefore capable above the level of basic labour. It also symbolises the irrelevance, now, of events left behind. The immigrant's wife, under a large shawl that may be cloaking a pregnancy, clings to her husband with eyes closed and in acceptance of their condition. A partly peeled and temporarily discarded orange on the deck indicates that she is either too physically or mentally drained to have an interest in completing the task. However, the situation of this family is not dire. The children appear well fed and clothed, and they have with them toys and books, suggesting some normality in their lives. The children also symbolise life, hope and a future.

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[28] Trumble, A., *Love and Death – Art in the Age of Queen Victoria,* (Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide), 2007, pp. 154 – 155.

[29] Dollman's immigrant family were almost certainly travelling on an assisted passage possibly under a Bounty System, although this time in history is well after the Wakefield colonisation experiments.

[30] This was a device often used in social realism, and was applied in Herkomer's *Hard Times* and Kennington's *A Pinch of Poverty*.

[31] The dog is a border collie, traditionally used in Scotland, England, and Wales for herding sheep.

Having described the central figure and his family, Dollman then builds a number of sub-narratives to provide contrast. To this end he painted various *genre* vignettes into the picture. On the side deck or 'breezeway' are two elderly men seated and looking seaward, one with legs outstretched and hands deep in pockets, the other resting on a walking stick in studied contemplation. A top hat suggests a class above the labourer and his family, and age would preclude both from being assisted or 'bounty' immigrants.[32] Behind them two young women, framed by an open umbrella, have engaged the attention of a sailor. Their smiling flirtations are overseen from the upper deck by a smartly dressed group of white shoed travellers engaged in more serious social intercourse. Further back in the shadows there appears to be a man in a bowler hat.

It is tempting to compare this painting with Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England* (1855) (plate 28). His image has two principal figures, based on Brown and his wife, Emma. They stare seaward, stony-faced, with their backs symbolically to England and the white cliffs of Dover. One of their children is behind, and the small hand of another is seen under her cloak. Some of the figures further back seem less savoury, and contrast with this gentle family. The depictions in the two paintings are similar; Dollman's and Brown's immigrant families are at sea having left their homes, and both men are brooding. The bonds of family are obvious. But Brown's voyagers are well dressed. She has a leather glove and a scarf and he is wearing an impressive coat and hat. They are clearly not of the poorer classes represented by Dollman's family. This is confirmed by Brown, who wrote of the painting he had "singled out a couple from the middle classes, high



Plate 28 *Last of England* F. M. Brown

[32] The generally accepted upper age limit for bounty immigrants was thirty years.

enough in education and refinement to appreciate all they are now giving up."[33] Because of this, Brown's image theoretically does not qualify as social realism. However, both paintings share a complementary story designed to evoke similar sympathetic emotions from the viewer. They are families forced by desperate personal circumstances to emigrate from England.

Another interesting comparison is Herkomer's *Hard Times* (Plate 29), a painting that unquestionably belongs to social realism. Both Dollman and Herkomer images involve a working family necessarily on the move to find work in a new place. The difference here is their mode of transport and the distance contemplated. In *The Immigrants' Ship* and *Hard Times* there is the distress of having to move for work, but in both there are also clear suggestions of hope. In *Hard Times*, the worker looks up and toward the bend in the road, anticipating the transport which will hopefully deliver them to better things.



Plate 29 ***Hard Times*** **L. Fildes**

Dollman's choice of title is also important to his story. While *The Immigrants' Ship* might nominally describe the type of vessel, it says little about its human cargo. Moran suggests that term immigration in the late 19th–century was closely associated with the notion of "shovelling out the poor" from rural areas and slums to the colonies and elsewhere as a remedy to economic and social hardships in Britain.[34] Therefore, to the Sunday afternoon public in the exhibition halls of Burlington House, the term is likely to have had the similar negative connotations as *Hard Times*.

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[33] Ford Madox Brown, cited in Wood, C., *The Pre-Raphaelites*, (Crescent, New York), 1981, p. 48. At the time Brown himself had considering emigrating.

[34] Moran, G., "Shovelling out the poor", in Duffy, P., and Moran, G., (eds), *To and From Ireland: Planned Migration Schemes c. 1600 – 2000,* (Geography Publications, Dublin), 2004, pp. 137 – 154.

"*And some fell by the wayside*"

In 1910 Dollman submitted "*And some fell by the wayside*" (Plate 30) to the selection committee of the Royal Academy's summer exhibition.[35] The title of this work derives from the *Parable of the Sower* and alludes to those who are unable to participate in God's promise.[36] In the context of Dollman's painting, these are the socially dispossessed and those excluded from society's promise.

While the British movement in social realism is generally considered coterminous with the Victoria age, Rees argues that, from a social perspective, "the first 14 years of the 20th–century can be regarded as an extension of the 19th–century [up to] the Great European War."[37] The events of 1914 brought with them great changes that extended to all aspects of life including art, resulting ultimately in social realism and other traditional styles being finally and effectively subjugated to modernism.[38] The date of this painting is 1910. It therefore still falls within, but close to the end of the period considered by Watson as spanning the "making and unmaking [of] the sub-genre" of social realism in Britain.[39]

Rees argues that, by then, social attitudes towards the poor had improved considerably from those held in the mid 19th–century. "In 1834 able-bodied pauperism seemed largely a matter of individual fault", and relief was restricted so "that it [was] only… given in the extreme instance". In contrast, by 1909 Beatrice Webb, a Fabian socialist and co-author of *Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws*, was arguing the increasingly held view that "poverty [was] a social disease rather than a demonstration of original sin."[40] By 1910, spectators at the Royal Academy had become more understanding of the causes of poverty and quite accustomed to visual images of hardship.

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35 RA 224 1918.

36 "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it." Matthew 13:3 – 7.

37 Rees, J., *Social & Industrial History of England, 1815 – 1918,* (Methuen, London), 1920, p. 163.

38 While there was significantly less interest in painting social realism by the early 20th century mainly due to competition from more financially rewarding work, paintings were still made in the genre, with Luke Fildes producing his *The Widower* in 1904.

39 Watson, P., *The social-realist phase in the painting of Luke Fildes, Hubert Herkomer and Frank Holl*, passim.

40 Rees, J., *Social & Industrial History of England, 1815 – 1918*, p. 163.



Plate 30 "*And some fell by the wayside*"

Dollman's "*And some fell by the wayside*" is a relatively large oil painting on canvas, measuring 120 cm. x 180 cm.[41] The scene is set in the fading light of early evening. The focal point is some members of a family seated on the verge of a dirt road, their faces lit by the orange glow of an open fire. Like his earlier *The Immigrants' Ship*, Fildes' *Hard Times* and works like Kennington's *The Pinch of Poverty*, the study is of a family group, rather than an individual, that has fallen on hardship. The central figure is a woman who balances a baby on her lap while keeping busy peeling turnips for an open pot and the evening meal of root vegetables. The light recedes away from the fire, but the silhouette of a man can be seen lying against sloping ground beside his wagon and horse. He gazes upwards in contemplation of their stark situation and uncertain future. Some of the fading light is reflected in linear puddles of water lying along the wheel ruts of the muddy road, included to emphasise exposure. The woman is concentrating on her task and has her back to the observer, so it is difficult to discern her mood. That of her three older children, however, is clearly visible and illuminated by the fire. They all share the

[41] Held in private collection, Adelaide, South Australia.

same vacant and distant look of sad resignation seen earlier in the families of *The Immigrants' Ship*, *Hard Times*, and *The Pinch of Poverty*. Again, a cradled baby forms a symbol of vulnerability while other children serve to emphasise notions of dependence and responsibility. The spot beside the road is where this unfortunate family is destined to spend the night without proper shelter.

The children are not portrayed as thin and their clothes, while modest, are not rags. Rather it is the image of a working-class family that has recently fallen on misfortune, as the painting's title suggests.[42] Dollman's purpose in this painting is to elicit sympathy for this family generally, and the man leaning in the shadows upon whose shoulders responsibility lies.

Dollman may have unconsciously constructed this family to mirror his own, with the four children being of similar age span to his own, and the eldest being a girl. The big difference between his and this fallen family is that this painting was made at the peak of his career, recognition and success.[43]

In these similar descriptions of social dislocation by Dollman and others, the situation is portrayed as distressful, but it is not dire, and the artists have included signs of hope. For example, while these images share the device of incorporating a cradled baby to emphasise susceptibility and responsibility, in the contexts of these works, it may equally be interpreted as a symbol of renewal and optimism. Dollman also has his immigrant staring forward into space, contemplating the past, the present and an uncertain future – which might deliver better things. In "*And some fell by the wayside*", the woman is driven by the immediate needs of her family as the man stares skyward trying to make some sense of what is, and what is to come — tomorrow might offer relief and opportunity. In all of these works, the young can symbolise the future and the emphasis on the familial bond denotes an underlying strength.

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[42] These are not gypsies. The children have blonde hair, and the title of the painting suggests otherwise.

[43] About this time, a number of illustrated magazine essays, glowing in praise of Dollman, were published including those in *Pearson's Magazine* (1905), *The Windsor Magazine* (1906) and the German *Der Aar* (1912).

"*Am I my brother's keeper?*"

"*And some who fell by the wayside*" and *The Immigrants' Ship* are both thought provoking images dealing with working-class families experiencing stress. Although down on their luck and their future uncertain, there remains hope. In contrast, Dollman's painting "*Am I my brother's keeper*?" offers no hope, and these sad souls are Victorian society's truly outcast and forgotten.

It is a large painting measuring 210 cm. x 120 cm. As a recent copy of the original is not available, the monochrome image (Plate 31) shown is from *Royal Academy Pictures*.[44] An original smaller pencil and watercolour painting (Plate 32) by Dollman is also shown; it lacks the refinement of the larger painting, but gives some indication of the colour and tones used.[45] A preparatory black and white wash study of the embankment (Plate 33) which includes the lamp post and bench, but without its human load, is in the reserve collection of the South African National Galley, Cape Town.



Plate 31 "*Am I my brother's keeper?*"

[44] *Royal Academy Pictures 1909,* (Cassell, London), 1909, p. 123.

[45] *British & Continental Watercolours & Prints*, Exh. Cat., Christie's London Auction, February 1995. Dimensions: 35 cm. x 60 cm.



Plate 32 "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" (water colour)

The painting describes a cold and wet night in 1909, set on the River Thames embankment, London. It is early winter as there are still a few fallen leaves from the London plane trees on the ground. One or two others stubbornly cling to overhanging branches. The scene is shrouded in an icy blue hue and the ground is damp from a recent rain or drizzle. Blue reflections on the wet stone pavement add to the sense of cold and exposure. White electric lights from the Savoy Hotel behind pierce the dark.[46] An excessively large, ornate and regal Victorian lamp post, and the elaborate bench which they occupy, represent the stature of Empire, formality and establishment — contrasting with the informality of this sad and miserable company.

The bench is supporting five men and one woman, three on either side of a central partition. They had either been unsuccessful or simply not applied for night refuge in one of the "deterrent" workhouses reserved for "incorrigibles such as drunkards, idlers and tramps".[47] The provision of casual wards in workhouses had been formalised with the 1834 New Poor Law and the practice of providing night accommodation continued well into the 20th–century. These were harsh places and



Plate 33 Study for "*Am I my brother's keeper?*"

[46] *American Art News*, 1 April 1916.

[47] Crowther, M., *The Workhouse System 1834 – 1929: The History of an English Social Institution,* (Batsford Academic and Educational, London), 1981, p. 54.

casuals were treated differently from others in the system to discourage vagrancy.

While it is difficult to discern their ages, none looks particularly old and all are attempting to sleep, some with the benefit of shared body warmth. Alcohol does not seem to have played a part in their sad predicament, as there are no discarded bottles or similar evidence lying nearby. The woman rests her covered head on the shoulder of a man and cradles her baby; they appear to be immigrants from the country. The central figure is a discharged soldier still wearing a war medal on his chest.[48] The other three are unskilled workers without money or employment. In the earlier paintings, the inclusion of a baby might be considered a symbol for a future and optimism, but in this miserable scene its presence only serves to emphasise their despair.

This painting attracted early interest, particularly in its adoptive United States. As reported in the *New York Times*, it was purchased and dispatched by the chairman of the British Educational Commission, "Alfred Mosely of London, as an expression of gratitude to the Board [of Education of New York] for its cooperation with his education work." In a covering letter to the gift, Mosely expressed a wish that:

> the picture [would] emphasize to the people of this country the need of vocational training, so that the sad conditions, the preponderance brought about by un-skilled labour in England and the European cities, might never be repeated in this country.[49]

The painting was formally received on the 12th of May, 1913 by Colonel Theodore Roosevelt (later President of the United States from 1901 to 1909) on behalf of the City of New York. Roosevelt endorsed the theme of the social importance of education, wishing not to see "a diminution in cultural work, but a great expansion in vocational, technical, and industrial [arguing] it must be extensive and intensive – no smattering… ."[50] The donor and the receiver both spoke of individual education as the solution to poverty and social distress, and implied the fate of the poor souls on the park bench was attributable to their lack of it.

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[48] *The Shawnee News,* 25 June 1911.
[49] *New York Times*, 13 May 1911.
[50] Ibid.

Following presentation, "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" spent its early years displayed in the auditorium of the Washington Irving High School, but was later ordered to be removed to the basement by the school's Principal Zabriskie as he considered the painting was of "a degenerate character" and "too morbid" for schoolgirls to look upon.[51] In 1916 the *New York Times* reported that the secretary of the Board of Education had directed that the painting be returned to the New York Board of Education Building located on Park Avenue. It also stated Carl Beck, Director of the Labor Forum (of New York), had petitioned the Board for the painting to remain on public display at the school. Beck argued:

> More than two thirds of the Washington Irving school girls must earn their living after graduating; their mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters are wage earners, and only a block away from their 'joyous atmosphere' some of their brothers and sisters sit on the benches of Union Square, a commonplace reality for which the painting 'Am I My Brother's Keeper' compels sympathetic attention".[52]

A few days later a further intervention was made, this time in the form of a public letter containing the header address of The White House and signed Margaret Woodrow Wilson. The President's daughter stressed the importance of having a "sense of the realities around us and to prepare us to grapple with the problems which these realities present." It was her opinion that "the picture is too beautifully conceived and executed for its appeal to be morbid or unhealthy." She denied that "ignorance of life is a good preparation for life, or indifference to misery a good preparation for service."[53] The Catholic Church also weighed in against the Principal, led by Reverend John Ryan, President of the Catholic University of America and foremost Catholic authority on education.

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[51] *American Art News*, 1 April 1916.
There is an irony here. The school was named after Washington Irving whose most famous story, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,* first published in 1820, concerned a headless horseman.

[52] *New York Times,* 3 March 1916.

[53] *New York Times*, 25 March 1916. A number of attempts have been made to discover the current whereabouts of this painting through the Office of Mayor, New York. To date no acknowledgement or response has been received.

This very immediate debate on what was and was not appropriate to depict, the role of the artist in the creative sense (i.e., to produce beauty, not ugliness, or to depict social realities), and what was considered confronting and ugly, reflected the earlier broad discourse on social realism that had occurred in Britain in the preceding half century. All the representations to preserve the picture at the school proved to be in vain. In 1920, "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" was recorded as being placed with the Board of Education Building in New York.[54]

Dollman's *"Am I my brother's keeper?*" and his "*And some fell by the wayside*" were exhibited in successive years of 1909 and 1910 at the Royal Academy. Most other artists had lost interest in the movement or vacated it for more lucrative portraiture well before this time. Yet Dollman still had some concern for poverty and social distress. The problems had not gone away and the social conditions that had spawned the movement of social realism persisted. At that time there was a public perception by some that conditions had actually worsened. *The Times* declared in 1909 the "the golden age [was] behind" and "no generation ever had to deal with evils so great and perplexing as those of the present day".[55] As Reid points out, a wave of unprecedented industrial strikes and unrest beginning in 1910 was coupled with widespread "poverty, deprivation, unemployment and underemployment", falling real wages and a "new dearness."[56]



Plate 34 ***Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward,* L. Fildes**

Fildes' *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* (Plate 34) is often cited as the embodiment of British social realism. Dollman's "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" has much in common with this

[54] *Catalogue Of The Works Of Art Belonging To The City Of New York*, Vol. II, (The Art Commission of the City Of New York, New York), 1920, p. 37.

[55] *The Times*, 19 January 1909.

[56] Reid, D., (ed.), *Edwardian England*, (Croom Helm, London), 1982, p. 17.

painting. A group of homeless and disparate souls have been thrown together — in Dollman's painting for the shared warmth and a temporary place for the night on a shared public bench — in Fildes' painting to seek refuge in the casual ward of a workhouse from a bitter night. Both depict society's rejected, forlorn and forgotten, and describe the collateral effects of social change and displacement brought about by the industrialisation of Britain. These are society's most marginalised and while Fildes' painting offers some possibility of temporary intervention or help, Dollman's image is one of total abandonment. These descriptions are disturbing and confronting and contain no softening or sentimental elements. Although one was painted early on and the other near the end of the movement, the narratives are complementary and designed to jar and provoke the observer – and to stimulate feelings of sympathy and guilt. The difference here is that Dollman's painting offers no suggestion of hope.

Related Works

In considering Dollman's interest in exploring suffering in the broadest sense, another facet presents itself. Dollman, from his earliest works with *The Graphic*, showed a special interest in animals and a strong concern for their suffering. He often placed them in human-like situations and similarly exposed them to work, hardship and pain. A number of these works might be taken as metaphors for human suffering with examples of *The top of the hill,* where a plough horse has collapsed while in harness from a life of overwork, *Les Misérables,* depicting cab work horses on a cold and forbidding night in London, and his *Before the Magistrate,* where an aged working horse is examined to determine its fate.[57] These paintings clearly fall within any definition of realism and portray hardship, suffering and exploitation usually associated with work. They are designed to generate discomfort and pity and share a lot with Dollman's constructions of human distress. The narratives within some of these paintings which detail working animal distress are explored later.

[57] RA 630 1888.

Dollman's Legacy to Social Realism

This comparative analysis of three paintings by Dollman demonstrates that they possess the essential ingredients necessary to meet Watson's demanding definition of social realism. Further, the history of each indicates that they were accepted in their time as important works on social matters.

Although attitudes towards social realism as a sub-genre fluctuated, over time there was a steadily growing critical acceptance. In her essay, "Images of Life on the Streets in Victorian Art", Susan Casteras also argues "while images of the urban poor remained a constant feature of Victorian art, perceptions of the 'Great Unwashed' shifted in the art of the 1870s and 1880s." While mid Victorian images could be moving, most Royal Academy pictures had "avoided disturbing subjects, sanitised their characters, and projected the poor as suffering but surviving." By the end of the period "the urban homeless" were being portrayed without any sentiment "as people with dirty clothes [and] wretched types who stirred reactions of shock as much as pity."[58] Dollman's "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" fits this later characterisation.

Dollman was not at the vanguard of the movement in social realism in Britain; that distinction belongs to Watts, Fildes, Holl and Herkomer. But Dollman must be acknowledged as an important contributor, especially during the later period of the movement when most of its earlier proponents had either died or turned their brushes to more lucrative work.

Dollman's "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" remains one of the last profound and significant paintings of the British movement in social realism. It represents a logical end to the process of evolution within social realism described by Susan Casteras.

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[58] Casteras, S., " 'The gulf of destitution on whose brink they hang': images of life on the streets of Victorian Art", p. 134.

Chapter V
ANIMALIA
"LANDSEER'S SUCCESSOR"

Introduction

J. C. Dollman worked across the range of genres, but his depictions of animals especially distinguishes his art. Animals could be his primary subjects and accompanied with a strong underlying narrative, or supporting actors, or the bearers of symbolic or allegorical meaning. They could be stock animals as staffage to a landscape, sentimental accompaniments to *genre* scenes, or meticulously rendered examples of physical beauty and the majesty of nature. These various applications by Dollman will form the prime categories for consideration in this chapter.

Dollman's engagement with natural history can also be considered in terms of the 'animals admired', 'animals observed', 'animals beloved', and 'animals destroyed', classifications that Kenneth Clark applied in his analysis of animal paintings.[1] Clark's categories all work for Dollman and will also be referred to in discussion.[2]

The art historian Christopher Wood has characterised the Victorian period as something of "a golden age for sporting and animal painting".[3] The foundations of this golden period, Ron Radford suggests, were laid in the late 17th-century by Francis Barlow (c. 1648 – 1704). Radford argued Barlow can be "considered the first English animal and bird painter" or *animalier.*[4] In the following century painters such as George Stubbs (1724 – 1806) "raised animal painting to great art with his

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1 Clark, K., *Animals and Men*, (Thames & Hudson, London), 1977, *passim*.

2 Diana Donald provides a simpler framework built around tension between "admiration, sympathy and compassion on the one hand, and exploitation, cruelty and domination on the other", and the "strangely divided consciousness of human beings in their attitude to animals". See Donald, D., *Picturing Animals in Britain 1750 – 1850*, (Yale University Press, New Haven) 2007, p.273 and p.305.

3 Wood, C., *Dictionary of Victorian Art*, *Vol. IV*, *Victorian Painting*, *2*, *Historic Survey and Plates*, (Art Collectors' Club, Woodbridge), 1995, p. 90.

4 Radford, R., *Island to Empire*, *300 years of British Art*, *1550 – 1850*, (AGSA, Adelaide), 2005, p. 20. Radford mistakenly gives Francis Barlow the first name of Thomas.

magnificent and sensitive portraits particularly of horses and dogs." Stubbs benefited from his anatomical and scientific studies and understanding.[5] He was kept particularly busy by his principal patron, George IV, with eighteen of his commissions surviving into the current royal collection.[6] Stubbs was active at a time when English taste in art increasingly reflected the gentry's obsession with horses, prized farm animals, sport and pets, with the fashion lead being set by the aristocracy. By the early 19th–century John Ferneley (1782 – 1860) had established himself as a successful hunting, racing and equestrian painter and made a substantial living from many, mainly private, commissions.[7]



Plate 35 ***Monarch of the Glen*** **E. Landseer**

Members of the royal family continued to be particularly keen sponsors of sporting and animal painters. Queen Victoria's favourite was Edwin Landseer (1802 – 1873) whose pictures, according to Treuherz, "contain a mixture of cruelty and sentimentality that is typically Victorian".[8] His heroic and epic *The Monarch of the Glen* (1851) (Plate 35) and *The Stag at Bay* (1846), with their evocation of wild strength and beauty in nature, enjoyed strong popular contemporary appeal. Landseer also had a talent for incorporating finely worked animal studies into compositions which, in



Plate 36 ***The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner*** **E. Landseer**

5 Ibid.
6 Lloyd, C., *The Queen's Pictures*, (National Gallery, London), 1991, p. 182.
7 Ibid.
8 Treuherz, J., *Victorian Painting*, (Thames & Hudson, London), 1993, p. 28.

Lloyd's phrase, "buttressed the narrative... with a moralising or allegorical" message.[9] Yet, unlike Stubbs, he was equally capable at exploiting popular tastes by depicting the special bonds between Man and animal in sentimental paintings such as his *The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner* (1837) (Plate 36), now hanging in the Victoria and Albert Museum. At times he went further, engaging in anthropomorphic representations of animals as in *Trial by Jury* (1840), now more popularly known as *Laying Down the Law*, where his dog subjects take on something of legal personalities.

Another important English *animalier* of the early Victorian period was Richard Ansdell (1815 – 1885) who painted *genre* and heroic military scenes as well as animals. He also collaborated in detailing animals into the paintings of various renowned landscape artists such as Thomas Creswick (1811 – 1869). Ansdell's subject matter and style were similar to those of Landseer but lacking some of his emotion. Despite enjoying wealthy patronage, Ansdell received no further royal commissions after refusing to paint the Queen's dogs other than in his studio. This seems to have compromised his public standing and prejudiced any claim he might have had against Landseer as the most outstanding *animalier* of the early 19th–century.[10]

Edwin Landseer's Successor

Christopher Wood contends that the succession from Landseer in the late Victorian period passed to two younger artists, Briton Rivière and John Charles Dollman.[11] Rivière (1840 – 1920) was some eleven years older than Dollman. He painted a number of large history and classical paintings depicting animals. But it was the sentimental treatment to Victorian tastes of animal loyalty he applied in his *Sympathy* (1878) (Plate



Plate 37 *Sympathy*
B. Rivière

[9] Lloyd, C., *The Queen's Pictures*, p. 190.
[10] Barringer, T., Cowling, M., and MacLeod, D. S., *Paintings from the Reign of Victoria: The Royal Holloway Collection*, (Frances Lincoln, London), 2008, p. 195.
[11] Wood, C., *Dictionary of Victorian Art*, *Vol. IV*, p. 93.

37) that first made him famous. Landseer clearly was the inspiration for much of Rivière's work. For example, the subjects of animal bonding, loyalty and the setting of his *The Long Sleep* (1868) invite comparison with a similar narrative of strong pathos in Landseer's *The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner.* From 1863, Rivière became a regular contributor to the Royal Academy summer exhibitions**.**

Rivière is now principally remembered for his later sentimental works. In 1891 his biographer, Walter Armstrong, described his ability to depict emotion without over anthropomorphising:

> Rivière's strong points are his sympathy with animals, his pleasant sense of colour, his directness of conception, and his fine vein of poetry. The first of these saves him from that besetting sin of the English animalier, the dressing up in human sentiments....[12]

In 1905, *Pearson's Magazine* published an article that offered a very similar perspective on Dollman to that earlier on Rivière. It described the younger Dollman as a fine *animalier* and "a true follower of Landseer." His view was accompanied by the qualification that "whatever else he may have learned from the great animal painter, certain it is that he absorbed none of the fondness [of Landseer] for making animals appear ridiculous or absurd...."[13] He went on:

> Dollman frankly owns a great dislike for that sort of thing, and although his interest in all animals, dogs and horses in particular, has led him to study most carefully their traits and peculiarities, he has far too much respect and sympathy for them to paint them other than as they are.[14]

While parallels and similarities are obvious between Dollman and Rivière as artists, and as *animaliers* in particular, there are important differences. Dollman's work evolved significantly during his lifetime from sentimental and popular depictions

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[12] Armstrong, W., "Briton Rivière, Royal Academician, His Life and Work", in the Special Edition of *The Art Annual*, 1891, p. 24.

[13] "The art of the Age – the Work of J. C. Dollman", in *Pearson's Magazine*, June 1905, No. 114, Vol. XIX, No. 37, p. 571.

[14] Ibid*,* p. 572.

of animals to generally more dramatic studies with animals as the key actors — while Rivière generally did not. This evolution from the sentimental to the dramatic is considered later in more detail.

Dollman's Interest in *Animalia*

The genesis of Dollman's special interest in animals and their inclusion in his art deserves some consideration. There are few clues in his family background. Dollman spent his young and school days in the town of Hove on the Sussex coast, the son of a book publisher and seller, and stationer.[15] His uncle, Thomas Francis Dollman (1812 -1899), had exhibited at the Royal Academy but he was an architectural draftsman with no recorded interest in natural subjects. However, the towns of Hove and Brighton are close to the rural South Downs, an area of countryside for which Dollman later demonstrated a great affection through his landscape paintings and where he established a country studio in the artist enclave of Ditchling.[16] At the age of sixteen, while still living at Hove but before moving to London to enrol in the Kensington and Royal Academy Schools, he had already demonstrated a talent in painting rural animal subjects. Good evidence of this is found in the *Brighton Guardian*. In 1867, a lengthy article in the newspaper reviewed "a large painting in oil" entitled *Twelve O'Clock* by the young Dollman. The scene he depicted was taken from a local farm:

> The foreground represents a half ploughed field, whilst in the distance may be seen the rising downs. To the left is a small copse and to the right is a small stunted hedge. A team of three horses attached to a plough forms the chief subject of the painting. The scene is taken at noon; the animals have been stopped for a time in their labours and are intent on the contents of their nosebag, while the men are resting under the hedge enjoying their midday meal. A peasant girl is approaching bearing the essential accompaniment of the

[15] *Census England and Wales*, *1861*, at http://www.ukcensusonline.com/census/1861.php. Last accessed 18 June 2014.

[16] *Hove Cottage*, formally called *Beanacre*, on Underhill Lane, Ditchling, in Sussex.

repast... good English beer.[17]

What particularly impressed the writer in this "striking and impressive... very courageous [and] credible" *genre* / landscape painting was Dollman's depiction of animals, "not an easy branch of art". "Mr Dollman's *forte* seems to be for animal drawing", wrote his critic. **"**The strong looking limbs, the well rounded forms, the symmetry of the horses... are brought out with great fidelity and naturalness".[18]

Another influence may have come about through an accident of geography. In the late 1870s and at the conclusion of his studies at the Royal Academy, Dollman took up the rented studio with attached lodgings at Primrose Hill, a short walking distance to the London Zoo in Regent's Park. This move marked the beginning of many visits to study the zoo's animals, a number of such occasions being recorded in text and engraved images on the pages of *The Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News*.

A third strong and enduring influence throughout his mature life was a consequence of the interests he shared in many aspects of natural history with his two sons, Hereward and Guy. Hereward Chune Dollman was an entomologist with fine scientific drawing skills who researched in Africa and elsewhere. His father shared his passion for entomology. For this, there is clear evidence in the 441 finely executed colour plates based on his water colour entomological studies, later published in the two volume set, *The Caterpillars of British Moths*, and 68 colour plates in a companion two volumes, *The Caterpillars of the British Butterflies.*[19] Both father and son were also active Fellows of the Royal Entomological Society. While this interest might not appear particularly relevant to the matter of his larger animal studies, it demonstrates an absolute commitment to accuracy, fine detail and integrity in portraying the natural world.

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[17] "A Rural Sketch", *Brighton Guardian*, 11 December 1867.

[18] In 1886, the Royal Academy selected two of Dollman's paintings for inclusion in its annual exhibition, one of which was entitled *Twelve o'clock*. This painting is of a very similar theme, depicting a farmer by his plough in the turned field, stopped for a 'ploughman's lunch'.

[19] Stokoe, W. J., *The Caterpillars of British Moths,* Vols. 1 and 2, (Frederick Warne & Co, London), 1948; and Stokoe, W. J., *The Caterpillars of the British Butterflies,* Vols. 1 and 2 (Fredrick Warne & Co, London), 1944.

Possibly even more important was Dollman's collaboration with his eldest son (John) Guy Dollman, who was for many years curator of mammals at the London Museum (Natural History), now the Natural History Museum, Kensington. In association with the Museum, John Charles Dollman produced a large number of water colour studies of animals ranging to primates, wild cats, horses, large African mammals as well as many bird species. The originals are still held in that institution and have been published a number of times since in open card series and in book form.[20] The closeness of his immediate family and these strong and overlapping interests served to reinforce Dollman's special and enduring interest in natural history.

Complementing the various influences that excited his interest in animal subjects was an ability to paint fine detail from recall. *Pearson's Magazine* observed that "most of Dollman's latter day studies of animals [were] done from his accumulated knowledge rather than from sketches made direct from nature. He [had] a wonderful memory for animals, and could draw almost any animal he has studied." Further, these "impressions got years before when studying different animals at the zoo" informed his subsequent work throughout the years. [21]

Dollman's Early Animal Portraits and Sentimental Studies

As observed before, many 19th–century British *animaliers* were financially enticed into painting sentimental depictions of animals for broad art market publication and consumption. They also took on the more lucrative private commissions, creating gratifying studies of pets and animals for the gentry. A number of surviving early works indicate that Dollman, while still a



Plate 38 ***Two Pointers***

[20] Publications include *Primates* Series 1 and 2, *Horses and their Allies*, Series 1 and 2, *Carnivora* Series 1 and 2, all published for the Trustees of the Natural History Museum by Waterlow & Sons, London, 1930 – 1931.

[21] *Pearson's Magazine*, p. 571.

student at the Royal Academy Schools, actively catered to the tastes of both these markets. One unnamed study of hounds beside dead prey set against a mountainous backdrop, signed and dated 1873, was recently auctioned.[22] Another good example of this sort of work done in oil on canvas has the title *Two Pointers* (1874) (Plate 38).[23] In 1877, George Brewis Esq. of Chesterfield Park commissioned Dollman to paint a *Portrait of Dash II*, *Field Trial Champion* (Plate 39), a study of an English setter flushing grouse on moorland with sportsmen in the background.[24]



Plate 39 ***Dash II, Field Trial Champion***

These three dog portraits, as well as a similar study made by Dollman in 1882 of two spaniels in a highland setting, are reminiscent of Landseer's work. Landseer had applied this style, one which Clark calls studies of 'beloved animals', to works commissioned by the 19th–century wealthy.[25] Dollman, like Landseer, constructed his animal subjects with precise detail while the background is often lightly or crudely represented. Also like Landseer, Dollman sets his animals in the centre of the frame and they are standing, seated or lying as though posing for the artist's composition.

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[22] Auctioned by Alderfel Auctioneers, USA, June 2013 as *Hunting Dogs*, (75 cm. x 50 cm.) painting in oil on canvas, signed and dated "J C Dollman 1873".

[23] *Two Pointers* by J. C. Dollman, Sotheby's Auction London, 22 March 1989, currently in private collection in Adelaide.

[24] The show dog depicted in the oil painting "Dash II" was sold in 1878 for the then remarkable figure of one thousand two hundred pounds. Dollman's painting of Dash has since featured in many dog subject books beginning with the illustrated front-piece to Walsh, J. H., *The Dogs of the British Isles*, (Field, London), 1878. The painting (90 cm. x 125 cm.) recently sold at auction by Cheffins Auctineers, Cambridge for 13,000 pounds. *Dash II* is not to be confused with the favourite dog of Queen Victoria, "Dash", painted by Landseer.

[25] Untitled painting by J. C. Dollman, Cato Crane Auctioneers, Liverpool, auctioned on 17 February 2011.

An early and popular example of Dollman's more sentimental treatment of animals, exploiting a growing Victorian appetite for this type of work, is his *Table d'hôte at a dogs' home* (Plate 40).[26] This oil painting is set in a courtyard at the Battersea Dogs Home for lost animals and depicts a wide assortment in dogs of various breed, size and shape at meal time. They make amusing dinner companions, the elements of humour being emphasised by the painting's title.



Plate 40 ***Table d'hôte at a dogs' home***

Purchased by the Walker Art Gallery in 1879 where it remains on permanent display, this medium sized (75 cm. x 129 cm.) painting remains popular today. Both the title and the subject invite a comparison with human situations in which a diverse social group might come together for a meal. But it is not an anthropomorphic depiction of the type produced by Landseer and others. The painting was well received. To capitalise on its popularity, Dollman produced a number of versions, one of which is a smaller (29.5 cm. x 51.6 cm.) undated water colour purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales.[27] Its popularity at the time is further demonstrated by the inclusion of an etched version into a double centre page feature in *The Graphic* that

[26] RA 455 1879.

[27] Acc. Num. 4604, Art Gallery of NSW. The painting was first exhibited in (and probably purchased at) the Sydney International Exhibition (1879 – 1880) at The Garden Palace, the Domain, Sydney.

year, and its subsequent reproduction in books and in large print format.[28]

Some years before Dollman had painted another sentimental study of dogs at the Battlesea Dogs Home entitled *The Dogs' Refuge* (1871) (Plate 41), now in the reserve collection of the Brighton Art Gallery, Sussex.[29] The subject matter here does not share the light humour of *Table d'hôte* — but it retains a strong sentimental theme in common with much of 19th–century animal art.[30] Bendiner argues that this "sentimentality that runs through so much of Victorian painting… had a religious



Plate 41 ***The Dogs' Refuge***

[28] *The Graphic*, 22 September 1879. This work has been reproduced many times since in colour form as for example in *The Nation's Pictures,* (Cassell, London), 1902.

[29] This painting is in a current poor condition and requiring of significant restoration work.

[30] Phillip Howell uses both dog-home studies to illustrate the growing public interest and concern for strays in the 19th-century. He argues that the Victorian's "'invented' the modern dog" and that Dickens was an important contributor in the development of sentimental middle-class attitudes to domesticated animals. Howell also suggests that the analogous use of the term "Homes" to describe a refuge for both starving dogs and fallen women by Victorians is deliberate and revealing. See Howell, P., *At Home and Astray, the Domestic Dog in Victorian Britain*, (University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville), 2015, pp., 73 – 101

function [and] the surrender to pathetic emotions" was "a Christian act." He cites John Ruskin who had re marked that Landseer's *The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner* is exemplary of this.[31] *The Dogs' Refuge* was a very early work by Dollman, completed when he was only nineteen and in his entry year of study at the Royal Academy Schools. It was also deemed worthy of publication.[32] Dollman's *Pointers at Rest* (1874) is a study of prized domestic animals indoors also made while still a student. A comparison of these two paintings suggests the later treatment of the hounds is noticeably more studied, natural and refined than the painting of three years earlier, indicating the positive influence of his tuition and training at the Royal Academy.

Samuel Levy Bensusan's review, "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman A.R.W.S.", in 1905 considered *Table d'hôte* and these other early works to be "skilful within... limited boundaries" but not "seriously representative of the life work of a man who has given us 'Les Misérables...' "(Plate 42**).** Where other *animaliers* appeared locked



Plate 42 *Les Misérables*

[31] Bendiner, K., *An Introduction to Victorian Painting*, (Yale, New Haven), 1985, p. 22, citing John Ruskin on *The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner* in *Modern Painters,* 1851.

[32] The inscription on the reverse indicates it was painted in February 1871. The etched representation *after* Dollman appeared in *The Pictorial World,* 27 February 1875.

into the sentimental Victorian market and very willing to take good commissions from wealthy owners of animals, Dollman steadily evolved towards both more challenging and more studied works, increasingly incorporating a strong underlying narrative into his painting. While Rivière continued to focus on the demands of the popular market, Dollman moved in this new direction. As Bensusan further observed, Dollman's "earliest fancies in which domestic animals played so large a part had been engraved and sold far and wide. Only an artist with a serious purpose could have broken away from the class of picture that was sure to sell and easy to paint." In his view this departure "might well have been fatal, for while the artist was content to paint what fine-art dealers could sell, the material side of his future stood secured."[33]

Animal Subject Narrative Paintings

Over succeeding years, particularly following his departure from *The Graphic* and in the period leading up to the First World War, Dollman progressively refocussed energies away from sentimental works to large animal subject canvasses that embodied strong underlying narratives and literary content. His notable animal only subject paintings include his *Les Misérables*, *The top of the hill*, *Trespassers* and *Pro Bono Publico*.[34]

The first of these, *Les Misérables,* is normally on permanent display at the London Museum when it is not travelling to exhibitions. In the 1905 article in *Pearson's Magazine*, Dollman confided to its author that in this work he was inspired to capture the suffering of cab-horses "as he had seen them, day after day, in passing the old cab rank... in Sloane Street**.**"

> [He] had often thought of the picture, but it came home to him more forcefully than before on walking by late one evening at the beginning of winter's thaw, when the streets were ankle deep in dirty, melting snow and ice. There they stood, "Les

[33] Bensusan, S. L., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman, A.R.W.S.", in *The Windsor Magazine*, April 1906, p. 581.

[34] RA 630 1888: *Les Misérables*; RA 40 1900: *The top of the hill*. *Trespassers* does not appear to have been publically exhibited. A good black and white reproduction is contained in Bensusan, S., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman", p. 581. *Pro Bono Publico* is an undated water colour in private collection which does not appear to have been publicly exhibited.

> Misérables", lined up in patient resignation, every line of their bodies showing the most utter weariness, while inside the brightly lighted cabmen's shelter their masters sat half dozing by the fire. The next morning he hurriedly sketched from memory the picture, just as it had been shown to him the night before.[35]

This painting is currently exhibited as *A London Cab Stand* at the museum, a new title which unfortunately diminishes the subject and meaning intended, and which was better suggested by the more emotive title chosen by its artist. Dollman's central narrative in this painting is the miserable plight of London work horses, particularly during the bleakness of winter. In February 1888 the weather was severe and there were heavy storms across most of southern England.[36] The icy conditions are obvious from the slush and snow, and the reflective roadway. There are seven Hansom cabs and 'Growlers' at rest in front of the cab shelter in the middle of the road. Inside, the drivers enjoy a warm refuge while waiting for a fare.[37] Some of the horses are wearing small blankets and others have feed bags — except the horse to the left whose bag has fallen to the ground, and to which the observer's eye is first drawn. Dollman applied a limited palette to emphasise the bleakness of the scene, blurring the distant buildings into a cold haze, supplemented by smoke from the shelter chimney. All three windows of the building show a warm light**,** emphasising by contrast the bleakness outside. The individual studies of the horses are finely depicted; all the animals have been given differential treatment, and each assigned a different stance. Taken together they demonstrate Dollman's fine ability as a painter of horses. Apart from the gallery visitor, this sad scene is witnessed only by a duty policeman standing in the right middle distance.[38]

Horses are also the central subject in Dollman's *The top of the hill.* Like his *Les*

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[35] *Pearson's Magazine*, p. 576.

[36] Galinou, M., and Hayes, J., *London in Paint*, (Museum of London, London), 1996, catalogue item 101.

[37] In 1888, London was serviced by about 1500 cabs. The Hansom cab had two wheels and a high driver's seat behind while the Growler had four wheels and was capable of carrying a greater load.

[38] The actual location of the shelter depicted is near the corner of Sloane and Pont Streets, London. Originally there were sixty of these green coloured shelters. This is one of the thirteen surviving today.

Misérables, it also contains a dramatic story of animal suffering. One of two yoked and harnessed horses has fallen dead in the furrows at the top of the rise.[39] The other stands beside it, patient and listless as it waits for some instruction. The ploughman strides along the turned earth into the distance, seeking help. There is little else in the scene to distract from the pitiful subject. The background is kept simple with clear sky made contiguous to the gentle rise in the hill behind. The only other object within the frame is the inanimate plough, still attached and behind. In the left foreground is a small cluster of flowers as if in quiet tribute to the dead beast. The anatomy of both horses is finely depicted and designed to show their age and years of hard labour. The standing horse has a sunken belly and protruding hips similar to its fallen companion; the large veins on its underbelly emphasise its age and stress. These horses have clearly been exploited beyond reasonable age. Victorian sensibilities to animal cruelty were strong and this painting was designed to trigger those emotions.[40]



Plate 43 ***Pro Bono Publico***

In 1887, *The Spectator* reported this "silent, every-day tragedy of animal life" as "dramatic and interesting", adding "the horses are well drawn, the landscape well suggested, and the story of the composition told emphatically and clearly."[41] It also suggested that many artists were incapable of expressing this type of sentiment.

In contrast to these two animal subject paintings with their strong descriptions of exploitation and suffering of working animals, Dollman's *Pro Bono Publico* (Plate

[39] Dollman painted a number of still life studies of animals, mainly birds, that fit Kenneth Clark's category of 'animals dead'. This painting possibly also fits the classification.

[40] To highlight English sensitivities in relation to animals, Jeremy Maas cites the thousands of British prisoners that were pardoned in 1887 to honour of the Queen's Jubilee. Excluded were those accused of cruelty to animals, something deemed by her Majesty to be "one of the worst traits in human nature". see Maas, J., *Victorian Painters*, (Barrie & Rockliff, London), 1969, p. 78.

[41] *The Spectator*, 25 June 1887.

43) is designed to acknowledge their services to mankind, and their more humane and proper consideration.[42] This water colour painting depicts a line of working cab horses enjoying a cool draft from one of the many public water troughs placed throughout London as the result of public subscription. Attached to each is an inscribed brass plaque from which the title of the picture is borrowed. In *Pro Bono Publico* Dollman acknowledges the public appreciation and concern for work horses by the citizens of London. He designed the lightness of colour and animation to create a positive sentiment — in marked contrast to the still gloom of *Les Misérables*.

Allegory, Symbolism and 'Problem' Pictures

In the decade Dollman was formally engaged by *The Graphic,* much of his work, including that associated with animals, was strongly influenced by its proprietor, William Thomas. In relation to animals, that meant producing *genre* studies, light sentimental and popular works, and later more serious studies involving animal distress such as *Before the Magistrate*. However, by the early 1990s Dollman was again his own man and no longer geared to any external agenda. At this point he seems to have fully abandoned the sentimental in favour of dramatic narratives incorporating animal studies, and extended their scope to incorporate more allegory and symbolism with animals as subjects and supporting actors. Edward Morris argues that, in moving to a heightened realism, Dollman had again emulated Landseer.[43] This realism was also becoming more apparent in the other genre he painted, particularly social realism.

Famine, Peter Ogilvie argues, is a painting which still manages today to generate "acclaim and unease in equal measures".[44] Here Dollman created a grim image of Death in the form of a cloaked, tall and sinister shape advancing across a ravaged land, supported by legions of gaunt wolves with wild eyes, and an advance

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[42] RA 40 1900.

[43] Morris, E., *Public Art Collections in North West England – A History and Guide*, (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool), 2001, p.166.

[44] Ogilvie, P., *Uncovering the Nation's Art Collection*, BBC, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/galleries/collections/salford-museum-art-gallery-2155/foreword. Last accessed 21 June 2014.

guard of low flying black ravens.[45] Dollman had painted the wolves from earlier images and his memory of visits to the London Zoo.[46] Later he confessed that the studies were somewhat difficult to make as "the wolves in Regent's Park [zoo] are all [too] well fed".[47] While the figure of Death is central to this painting, the animals chosen and the way they are portrayed are symbols critical to the impact of the picture and the overall strength of narrative. In Northern Europe, the wolf of Norse legend represents victory on the battlefield and had long been a symbol of chaos, destruction and death in both Teutonic mythology and Biblical traditions. In old English and Norse the word for raven was often used as a kenning (compressed metaphor) for bloodshed and battle.[48]

About 1900, Dollman also began producing problem pictures in which animals were again central to his symbolism. Problem pictures were a popular sub-genre during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods**,** employing a deliberately ambiguous narrative to stimulate speculation on their meaning and interpretation. They fell out of favour in the 20th–century as public art moved away from the traditional styles generally, in favour of modernism.

Dollman's painting, *The unknown* (Plate 44), is an example*.* With its cluster or 'troop' of twelve chimpanzees around what appears to be a sorceress as its key actors, the work challenges the viewer to determine its underlying meaning.[49] The chimps have each been assigned a different pose and show varying levels of interest in a woman in front of a conjured fire who is providing them with direction. One of the twelve, however, appears to be walking away with its back turned — a possible

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45 RA 847 1904.

46 *Pearson's Magazine*, p. 572.

47 Bensusan, S. L., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman", p. 594.

48 Ravens symbolise many things across different cultures. In the Celtic tradition they mean evil, death and destruction. In the Germanic tradition they forebode bad events and collected the dead from the battlefield. See: Carstens, R., "Following Raven" in *Southwest Art,* 2012, Vol. 41, Issue 10, p. 94. At about this time Dollman also produced a number of paintings based on Viking and Norse legend as well as contributing illustrations to several books on the subject.

49 RA 326 1912.



Plate 44 ***The unknown***

allusion to the twelve apostles of Christ, one of whom also turned away.[50] *The unknown* provoked a lot of interest "and so much speculation" at the Royal Academy summer exhibition in 1912, and again when it was published in the *New York Times* Pictorial Supplement, that Dollman "at last consented to give an explanation of the subject".[51] He wrote:

> The object of my picture, 'The Unknown' is to present an illustration of the progress attained in evolution – in the person of the most beautiful of created beings, the woman beautiful, and its nearest completely known connection, the chimpanzee – and to intimate how imperfect is our knowledge of the lost intermediate stage of development.

This evolutionary theme is not a surprise, and is consistent with Dollman's strong connections with natural history and his association with the Natural History

[50] The early draft for this painting, which is held at the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, interestingly has only nine chimps. Dollman may have increased the number to deliberately create a Biblical analogy.

[51] *New York Times*, 15 September 1912.

Museum. The chimps, as well as representing a close evolutionary connection to mankind, also symbolise curiosity and early intelligence. Fire is a sign for many things including energy, religion, alchemy and magic. In these contexts the ability to make fire is also a sign of human evolution.

The theme also demonstrates that, while a conservative in many ways (see Chapter II), Dollman was scientifically progressive. Whether his explanation offered should be believed is moot. In truly revealing the answer to the problem, he would have devalued any ongoing speculation or interest in the painting. Despite Dollman proffering a solution, the meaning in the painting has continued to be actively debated ever since. One popular interpretation of its message is that the painting depicts "how monkeys and women, equally childlike in their ignorant astonishment, tried to cope with the concept of fire in the primeval world".[52] This view is challenged by others.[53]

Another problem picture by Dollman first exhibited in 1902 was *Kismet* (Plate 45).[54] Set in a desert, a committee of Vultures, as the harbingers of death, eye a hapless victim. The title of this painting denotes 'fate', and this image provides little optimism for a satisfactory outcome.[55] Observers are intentionally left to determine their own underlying narrative. *The unknown* suggested questions regarding Darwinism and evolution — Kismet raises questions of destiny and inevitability.

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[52] See Dijkstra, B., *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siecle Culture,* (Oxford University Press, Oxford), 1987, p. 290. *Note*: This observation incorrectly identifies the chimpanzees as monkeys.

[53] A public retort posted by T. Polyphilus to *Live Journal,* 15 November 2009, observes "details of the painting contradict this explanation. The sophisticated textiles worn by the woman disprove the notion that the setting is "primeval," and her imperious gesture makes it clear that, rather than being astonished by the fire, she is using her knowledge of it to dominate the monkeys. The lack of visible fuel for the fire even makes it seem as though she has just conjured it into existence." See "Book Review: Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siecle Culture", at *http://paradoxosalpha.livejournal.com/114337.html.* Last accessed 19 October 2015.

[54] RA 412 1902.

[55] Kismet: from the Turkish or Urdu word meaning destiny.



Plate 45 ***Kismet***

Animals from Literature and History

Dollman depicted another species taken from the order of primates, monkeys, as his subjects in *Mowgli made leader of the Bandar-Log* (Plate 46).[56] He added a sub-text to this title borrowed from Rudyard Kipling: “This time, they said, they were really going to have a leader, and become the wisest people in the jungle — so wise that every one else would notice and envy them”.[57] Monkeys are social creatures but are also associated with mischief and mayhem and therefore appropriate to a narrative of jungle politics. While Dollman generally chose his animal related themes from his own experiences, he selected this subject from the literature of his contemporary, Rudyard Kipling (1865 – 1936). Whether or not Dollman was closely connected to Kipling is unclear. Kipling lived much of his life in Burwash, Sussex**,** several kilometres to the east of Dollman’s Ditchling, so they may well have been acquainted. A tantalising clue to a connection is by way of his artist daughter, Ruth, who in 1910 painted a fine and detailed portrait stated by the London fine art

[56] RA 773 1903.

[57] Kipling, R., *The Jungle Book*, (McMillan, London), 1894, p. 54.

auctioneers, Bonhams, to be that of Kipling.[58] If this is correct, it is particularly interesting in relation to Ruth as there is no record of her painting other than landscapes, so the portrait appears to have been both an unusual and a special commission, and suggests some familiarity with the sitter.[59]

In relation to painting the monkeys in *Mowgli*, Dollman tells an amusing



Plate 46 ***Mowgli made Leader of the Bandar-Log***

[58] See http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/13609/lot/250B/. Last accessed 7 September 2015.

[59] The painting was sold by auctioneers Bonhams, London in 2006 as a portrait of Rudyard Kipling. A number of publications on Kipling have also highlighted this image, as does the Kipling Society. It is increasingly the belief of the author that the painting is rather of John Charles Dollman Jnr, the artist's father. Unfortunately Bonham's can no longer find its justification which "unequivocally" determined the portrait to be of Kipling.

anecdote. He had some difficulty initially finding an example of a *langur* or *rhesus* monkey for his studies but finally found one, the property of a young organ grinder. Word spread and Newton Grove, Bedford Park, was soon inundated with "fresh organ-grinders and picturesque Italian beggar boys with their monkeys to perform before the gate." They were still there when the painting was finally taken out from the studio for the Royal Academy summer exhibition at Burlington House, at which time "one of these little creatures was sitting on top of the gate post."[60]

Dollman's study describes a very large number of monkeys who share a focus on the feral boy, in a similar manner as the chimps attend their sorceress in his *The unknown*.[61] While on first consideration this painting might seem to be a simple translation of Kipling's narrative from text to canvas, it also considers the hierarchical relationship between primate and man. Social evolution is not the core message of this painting, but it is strongly suggested in this construction.

Another narrative painting taken from literature is Dollman's *Crusoe*, now in the National Gallery of Victoria.[62] The animal depicted in this study, the castaway's companion spaniel, is presented in a supporting role to the main actor and sits quietly beside its resigned master, whose eyes as well as hopes are fixed towards the distant horizon. It and other versions of Crusoe by Dollman are discussed in the following chapter in terms of narrative painting.

Dollman's history painting, *"For he believed in his God" – Dan. vi.* (Plate 47), relating the biblical story of Daniel in the lions' den, provides an opportunity for a direct comparison with Briton Rivière and his treatment of the same subject.[63]

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[60] *Pearson Magazine*, p. 574, see also Bensusan, S. L., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman. A.R.W.S.", p. 594.

[61] While this painting contains some anthropomorphism, it is a direct representation from literature in which animals demonstrate human-like behaviours, and therefore not open to the earlier criticisms.

[62] RA 693 1899.

[63] RA 313 1919.



Plate 47 ***"For he believed in his God" – Dan. vi.,***

Rivière produced two versions of Daniel, the first being *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (1872) now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, and the later *Daniel's Answer to the King* (1890)**,** currently held in the Manchester Art Gallery. Dollman's oil painting is currently in the collection of the Durban Art Gallery in South Africa. A smaller water colour version exists that is very similar in construction to the oil, except for additional lions in the right foreground. It was probably an earlier study for the larger oil version.

In Rivière's 1872 painting, Daniel is seen passively confronting the animals which appear entranced (Plate 48). In the second work, Daniel's focus and attention is elsewhere (Plate 49). These individual animal studies are both varied and detailed but lack the realism of Dollman. Dollman's working of Daniel, with his robed figure kneeling in studied contemplation, is also more sophisticated in construction than those of Rivière. Unlike Ruben's version done in his Flemish baroque style (c. 1614 – 1616), the most famous interpretation of the Daniel story, and unlike Rivière's two works where his lions are animated, Dollman's lions are lying or standing as if indifferent to the presence of Daniel. The difference for Dollman is in his timing of the



Plate 48 ***Daniel in the Lion's Den***
B. Rivière



Plate 49 ***Daniel's answer to the King***
B. Rivière

captured moment, it being after God's intervention through His angel.[64] Dollman also treats his animals with the same detail and care that he affords Daniel**,** and in doing so again successfully weds the genres, this time history and animal painting, to create an harmonious and convincing image. History painting was once established at the top of the traditional hierarchy and *animalia* on a lower rung; now by melding history and animals, Dollman again challenges that order.

This integration of genres was to continually mark his work. The conjunction of history and animal painting is also obvious in both Dollman's representations of the temptation of Saint Antony, painted some 28 years apart. The later of these is shown at Plate 50.[65] Here the animals have more symbolic than literary value with the wolf, in biblical terms, symbolising the devil, and the chimps inquisitiveness.[66] These two paintings of St Antony by Dollman, together with Leo Tolstoy's concern



Plate 50 1925 version of ***St Antony***

[64] Daniel, 6–21.

[65] RA 445 1897: *Saint Antony*. "The demons changed themselves into the shapes of beasts and creeping things… But when the enemy saw himself too weak for Antony's determination, then he attacked him with the temptation which he is wont to use" (full title). RA 527 1925: *St Antony*.

[66] Several Biblical references associate wolves and the Devil. See for example, Jeremiah 5:6 and Ezekiel 22:27.

that Dollman's work was seriously compromised by consideration of aesthetics over narrative, will be discussed further in Chapter VI.

Animals in the Background

Dollman frequently used animals as support and background actors to many of his *genre*, dramatic narrative and sporting paintings. The horses leading the coach in front of *The White Swan,* standing by the overturned coach in "*Worse things happen at sea*", beside the highwayman in "*Not worth the powder or shot*", and being ridden in the fox hunt in his two-painting sequence entitled *The Chase* and *The Refuge*, are all similarly afforded exacting brush-work.[67] His *Orpheus, Enchantment* and *The enchantress*, *The spell*, *Circe* and other of his later works in the classical revival style also engage wild animals as key supporting actors.[68] So do a number of his sporting pictures, such as *Polo* featuring eight figures on horseback at the gallop during a chukka.[69] It is this broad and clever incorporation of *animalia* into all the narrative genres that marks Dollman as different from most his contemporaries.
On occasion, the portrayal of animals in other situations without any human presence also appealed to Dollman. These paintings include his *'Don't care' was hanged* which depicts a crow that has been killed and strung-up as a deterrent to other crows, its title taken from a line in a nursery rhyme.[70] He also made occasional attempts at light humour using animals, such as in his clever *The Borrowed Plume* (Plate 51), which is probably the only painting in which he came close to committing the sin of anthropomorphism.[71]

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[67] RA 1889 1118: "*Worse things happen at sea*"; RA 1884 671: "*Not worth the powder or shot*".

[68] RWS 146 Winter 1911: *Orpheus*; RA 391 1930: *Enchantment*; RA 403 1922: *The enchantress*; RA 576 1923: The spell; RA 311 1926: *Circe*.

[69] RA 69 1890

[70] RWS 112 Summer 1929: *" 'Don't care' was made to care, 'don't care' was hanged".*

[71] *The Borrowed Plume* is painted in water colour (25.4 cm. x 38.1 cm.) and has been widely published in large print format and marketed as *The Imposter*. This painting dealt with pretence beyond one's station and may have had some political connotation in its day.



Plate 51 ***The Borrowed Plume***

Natural History

Landseer became famous for his *Monarch of the Glen*, a study of animal majesty and beauty that falls neatly into Clark's determination of 'animals admired'. There is background but it is lightly worked in detail and is generic in style. Dollman was similarly capable of meticulous and subtle studies of animals to a level of almost photographic detail. Many of these 'animals admired' images were produced for the sole purpose of demonstrating the animal's natural physical beauty. These paintings were equally light in any incidental narrative. Being more aligned to natural history or scientific works, they were generally set against a simple and non distracting background. Dollman produced many of these generic animal portraits at various times during his career, some of which would have been used to inform studies within his larger narrative works.

Many of his other animal portraits were large and major works in their own right, typically depicting wild tigers (Plate 52), leopards or lions at rest. Several of these are still reproduced en-mass today for the large colour print market. These are finely executed works and are often used as reference images. Dollman also produced a large number of studies of birds, the various horse species, lower order primates and



Plate 52 ***Tigers***

other wild mammals, often in water colour, many of which are now in public galleries as well as in natural history collections.

Animalia **Summary**

Dollman's contribution as an *animalier* was exceptional. Unlike the work of his contemporaries, Dollman's animal studies evolved from the sentimental legacy of Edwin Henry Landseer to rich descriptive paintings. He applied finely worked animals across a number of the traditional art classifications, including history, *genre,* landscape, sporting painting and even still life. In doing so he often drew on inspiration from literature or from his own observations, and extensively deployed his animals across key or supporting roles, or as background. A large number of his animal depictions were central to some dramatic incident, several were more ornamental as in his neo-classical studies, while in others he employed animals as key actors, as in his problem pictures and his more allegorical works. All these benefited from his fine detail and perspectives which demanded of him accuracy, precision and integrity.

Dollman's importance as an *animalier* derives not simply from the brilliance of his objective studies, but also from the masterly infusion of animals into the stories of the majority of his paintings, which fell across most of the then accepted styles. This differentiates Dollman from his peers, and is the hallmark of his mature painting. He clearly belongs to any list of important British *animaliers* and is deserving of the title 'Landseer's successor'.

Dollman's consuming interest in animals was exemplified by his final painting *Disturbed,* a study, with no visible human content, of a lion family in an African bush setting, alert to some impending danger.[72]

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[72] RA 319 1934. This painting was completed shortly before he fell ill prior to his death in late 1934 and was his last painting to have been exhibited at the Royal Academy.

Chapter VI
HISTORY AND NARRATIVE
"PAINTING IN THE GRAND MANNER"

British History and Narrative Painting Overview

In the late 18th-century Joshua Reynolds (1723 – 1792) used his position as President of the Royal Academy to promote the superior virtues of history painting over all other genres.[1] Reynolds reasoned:

> Invention in painting does not imply the invention of the subject; for that is commonly supplied by the Poet or Historian. With respect to the choice, no subject can be proper that is not generally interesting. It ought to be either some eminent instance of heroick action or heroick suffering. There must be something either in the action, or in the object, in which men are universally concerned, and which powerfully strikes upon the publick sympathy.[2]

The term history painting taken literally can therefore be misleading. The genre is not simply constrained to subjects "taken from the past, but [is rather concerned with] stories of an ennobling character from literature, myth or history expressed in an artistic language."[3] The result is also often referred to as 'high art' or the 'grand style'. The root of the term originates from the Italian *istoria* and Latin *história*, meaning narrative or story that usually involves actors in some physical or emotional engagement.

In Western art history, painting was initially concerned with religious narratives, mythology or literature, often dealing, as Reynolds suggests, with some heroic deed or act of suffering. But by the 18th century secular subjects had become increasingly

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1 Wark, R., (ed.), *Sir J. Reynolds, The Discourses 1769 – 90*, (Yale, New Haven), 1975. Lectures presented at the annual prize-giving ceremony of the Royal Academy Schools.

2 Ibid, p. 117.

3 Treuherz, J., *Victorian Painting*, (Thames & Hudson, London), 1993, p. 11.

common.

These later works continued to subscribe to the grand style in their descriptions; yet they often engaged in a liberal interpretation of historic facts and the 'realism' they portrayed was often highly subjective.[4] Svetlana Alpers, in her discourse on narrative versus descriptive art, highlights the realism of early Dutch paintings as having a significant influence on the development of Northern history painting generally. She reasons from an iconographic perspective that their realism was often only an apparent or *schijnrealisme*. "Far from depicting the 'real' world... such pictures are realised abstractions that teach moral lessons by hiding them beneath delightful surfaces."[5] This proposition is endorsed by Raymond Lister, who argues that narrative paintings are concerned with "a story, idea or anecdote... [which] usually... had a moral import [and was] painted with a degree of representational realism."[6]

Two English history painters of note in the early 19th–century were Benjamin Haydon (1786 – 1846) and David Scott (1806 – 1849). Both executed physically large works spanning a range of heroic subjects from Philoctetes and Orestes to Napoleon and Wellington. In the late 18th and early 19th–centuries these works were typically quite large, though their grand dimensions limited the number of potential patrons and the scope of the buying market. On the continent the Catholic Church had always been a good sponsor of large history paintings, but British artists received little similar benefit from religious patronage. As well the challenge of the limited British market for this type of work, a critical "modernist" perspective was developing during the 19th–century. According to Paul Barlow, this approach argued history painting was "defined by the 'literary' or the 'illustrative' and that these characteristics are alien to art [being] an intrusion from another medium, a corruption or violation… by the body of writing."[7] Others mocked the pretentiousness of these grand works as "pieces of canvas from twelve to thirty feet long, representing for the

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5 Alpers, S., *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, (University of Chicago, London), 1984, p. XXIV.

6 Lister, R., *Victorian Narrative Paintings*, (Potter, New York), 1966, p. 9.

7 Barlow, P., "Introduction, The Death of History Painting in Nineteenth Century Art", in *Visual Culture in Britain,* Vol. 6, No. 1, Summer 2005, p. 1.

most part personages who never existed… performing actions that never occurred, and dressed in costumes they never could have worn."[8]

Despite a growing reaction against the traditional form from the mid to late 19th–century, some large history paintings were still being promoted and sponsored by public institutions in Britain. Several examples are to be found spanning the famous Westminster Mural competition of 1843 to the completion of *Manchester Murals* by Ford Madox Brown some fifty years on — but overall, these were relatively few in number.[9] Barlow maintains that "for sheer quantity and variety at least, the Victorian period was the great age of history painting", while noting that its "radical metamorphosis [was] an inescapable fact."[10]

By the second half of the 19th–century, at the time Dollman was receiving formative training at Kensington and the Royal Academy Schools, exponents of history painting had, for practical purposes, come to a closer accommodation with the buying market and contemporary tastes. They moved to smaller sized works and began depicting their subjects and heroic actors in a more intimate and a less pompous manner. A growing public interest in *genre* with its weaker narrative also took some interest away from history painting, and added a new layer of competition to the British art marketplace.

"By the end of the century" according to Roy Strong, "the tide had ebbed, and activity was confined to an ever–shrinking group of Academy painters".[11]

Dollman and History / Narrative Painting

Consideration of Dollman's cultivated history style suggests a neat fit with the mid 19th–century re-alignment of British narrative and history painting. His interest in, and enthusiasm for, history painting was evident early. As still a student, he had won the biannual Royal Academy prize for the genre with his *Ahab and Jezebel*

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8 "William Makepeace Thackeray", *The Times* (London), 5 April 1838.

9 Brown had entered the Westminster competition in 1844; he was unsuccessful.

10 Barlow, P., "Introduction, The Death of History Paining in Nineteenth Century Art", p. 4. As well as acknowledging the great murals and narrative works that were exhibited, Barlow also recognises the rapidly growing middle class appetite for engraved copies, published individually or through illustrated newspapers and magazines.

11 Strong, R., *And when did you last see your father? The Victorian Painter and British History*, (Thames and Hudson, London), 1977, p. 42.

confronted by Elijah in the Garden of Naboth.[12]

Dollman clearly loved telling a story, and he went on to paint a great number of history / narrative paintings throughout his working career. Samuel Bensusan, in his complimentary article published in 1906 on J. C. Dollman, recounted Dollman's contention that a picture should be dramatic and have a strong narrative.[13] He asserted "mere executive ability… to be no more than a part of an artist's equipment." Dollman held that "first and foremost [was his] desire to present a dramatic incident, one as novel as possible". He added, "having found it, I express myself, naturally enough to the best of my ability. My drawing, composition, and colour are the best I have to offer."[14] His style involved both a strong storyline and realism, and continued to be highly popular with gallery audiences and art critics alike, despite the general decline of interest in narrative. It was the strength of these paintings that generated the greatest public recognition of his work during his lifetime, and for which he is now principally remembered. On his death in 1934, the *Daily Telegraph* paid tribute to Dollman who, it wrote, was "… vividly remembered by all who have not forgotten the anecdotal school of painting, of which he was its chief ornament."[15]

In what follows, Dollman's history and narrative paintings are reviewed under six logical groupings or sub-genres. The first includes works on a biblical theme, then 'dramatic incident', those with some political or social subtext, those drawn from non-biblical literature, allegorical works and finally mythological narrative paintings. This order does not reflect any hierarchy. There is often overlap between these sub-categories in both subject matter and treatment, just as we have come to expect in Dollman's work. Dollman's later neo-classical works pose a problem. In contrast with the strong storylines contained in *The hunter*, *The field of honour* and similar

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[12] *Annual Report from the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the year 1874*, (Cloweg & Sons, London), 1877, Appendix 3, "The Premium List." Unfortunately, an image of this composition has yet to be found.

[13] Samuel Levy Bensusan**, (**1872 – 1958) was a prolific writer who published books on many subjects including art with notable publications on Rubens, Reynolds, Rossetti and Holbein.

[14] Bensusan, S., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman, A.R.W.S." in *Windsor Magazine,* April 1906, pp. 579 – 594.

[15] *Daily Telegraph*, 12 December 1834.

paintings, these contain only token narratives, the paintings being principally ornamental and more alike the later aesthetic works of John William Godward (1861 – 1922).[16] They are therefore best addressed in their own chapter.

An inclusive review of Dollman's history and narrative paintings also permits further validation of the various traits that inform his work and traverse his art generally. Included amongst these are the strong focus on *animalia* in all the genres that he practised (explored in the previous chapter), his resistance to the pressures from changing art fashions and new art movements, and his consistency in subject matter, style and treatment in over half a century of active painting. Importantly, in studying these paintings, a further theme in relation to content and his more dramatic subject matter is apparent. Dollman's history paintings are not, in the most part, celebrations. Rather, he chooses to depict, to varying degrees, desperation, despair, resignation, failure and a sense of the victim, which is more inclined towards Reynolds' notion of "heroick suffering" than "heroick action". These paintings do not in general display joyous occasions or good outcomes.[17] Other examples of his work, which were characterised earlier as social realism, and include "*And some fell by the wayside*" and "*Am I my brothers keeper?*", also demonstrate this theme, as do *Les Misérables* and the more allegorical *Famine*.[18] Importantly, in many of these paintings, the despair is not absolute as Dollman often provides some hint of restitution or optimism, either in the visual narrative or in the title chosen for the painting.

Biblical Paintings

Dollman drew on both the Old and New Testaments as well as other theological writings for a number of religious and allegorical themes in his history painting. Biblical subject paintings included *Gold* (Matt. 19:23, Luke 18:25)*, Thirty Pieces of*

[16] RA 757 1911: *The hunter*; RA 429 1895: *The field of honour*.

[17] Exceptions to this are some works drawn directly from literature.

[18] History painting is normally considered to be at the opposite end of the narrative spectrum to social realism. Andrea Korda, in *Printing and painting the news in Victorian London: The Graphic and social realism,* (Ashgate, Farnham), 2015, contends, however, that social realism developed after its initial introduction at the Royal Academy to function "in the manner of history painting, though updated to serve the specific needs of late Victorian patrons and viewers."

Silver (Matt. 26:15) and his Daniel in the Lions' Den*, "For He Believed in his God*" – Dan. VI. (Dan. 6:23).[19] Other theologically inspired paintings include his *Conversion of St Hubert* which was based on Hubertus, Bishop of Liège (c. 656 – 727 A.D.) and his two workings of temptations of *St Antony*, taken from the writings of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (c. 295 – 373 A.D.).[20]

The first of these, *Gold* (Plate 53) stands out amongst this group.[21] This is an allegorical painting which engages the biblical parable of a wealthy man proceeding to the gates of heaven. It was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1893 and published in the *Royal Academy Pictures* of the following year. The subject is the figure of a wealthy miser who is carrying a large coffer of gold to his tomb. A jostling



Plate 53 ***Gold***

[19] RA 293 1894: *Gold*; RA, 48 1892: *Thirty Pieces of Silver* or *Judas*; RA 313 1919: *"For He Believed in his God" – Dan.vi.*

[20] RWS 108 Summer 1918: *The Conversion of St Hubert*; RA 445 1897: *Saint Antony, The demons changed themselves into the shapes of beasts and creeping things…But when the enemy saw himself too weak for Antony's determination, then he attacked him with the temptation he is wont to use"*; RA 527 1925: *St Antony.*

[21] *Royal Academy Pictures, 1984*, (Cassell, London), 1894, p. 49. The *memento mori* theme of a miser and impending death had been explored by many artists over time including the notable *Death and the Miser* by Hieronymus Bosch (1450 – 1516) and the same title by Frans Francken (1581 – 1642). More contemporary with Dollman, George Frederic Watts (1817 – 1904) produced his allegoric "magnum opus", *The Court of Death.*

crowd of his life creditors follows for whom he shows no recognition or acknowledgement.

The narrative is full and Dollman has incorporated much symbolism into this painting for us to interpret. The miser's eyes are fixed towards the tomb and away from his past associations as he ascends the steps to the crypt, while jealously guarding the treasure that he intends should accompany him. A woman to his right in simple, long white drapes, suggesting innocence, is reaching forward for some acknowledgement, but is ignored. She represents a wife and by association, family, or possibly a mistress. Immediately behind and ascending the steps is his knight who is freely offering his sword and, symbolically, his life. He also represents all those who have protected him and made past sacrifices. The knight's prominent position in the crowd stresses the importance of might and loyalty to the miser achieving and maintaining his position in life. A priest also looks for acknowledgement and leans forward to pick up two discarded coins. In the background a hand is holding a crown, symbolising the debt owed his sovereign. However the wealthy miser's dog by his side baulks before the entrance to the tomb fearful of advancing any further, accentuating the greed that drives its master. The painting is animated and the motion of the jostling crowd follows the miser forward to the entrance of the tomb. The dress of the medieval knight and the classical robes of his wife, mistress or daughter form part of the eclectic mix of dress and setting which suggests that the theme is universal and timeless.[22] It is about selfishness and betrayal without any notion of redemption and its lofty moral message would have been at home with the 19th–century conservative traditions in the Royal Academy.

Bensusan acknowledged *Gold* as a powerful and well elaborated picture. However, he was mildly critical of the strength of narrative in the painting, suggesting that it was "belonging more to literature than art." He also believed it was overshadowed by his immediate previous work which portrayed the tragic Judas in *Thirty Pieces of Silver* (Plate 51), "regarded by many as Mr Dollman's

[22] Ibid, Notes, p. iv, the anonymous writer — possibly M. H. Spielmann, then President of the Royal Academy of Arts -— had a somewhat different interpretation of the scene suggesting that "his heedless train (was) only too willing to follow."

masterpiece."[23]

In 1892, Dollman's painting of *Judas* was exhibited at the Royal Academy and "attracted much attention."[24] Unlike *Gold*, it is not an animated image. It is centred on the solitary figure crouched in remorse in a sombre desert setting, his face hidden in shame with the bag and thirty coins loose by his side. Bensusan was impressed with the subtlety of Dollman's composition and inferred emotions, arguing:

> Few pictures of modern times strike a deeper note of suffering and remorse, and the intensity of the emotions is the greater because they are suggested rather than expressed. The face of the Betrayer is hidden by his hair – "there are some emotions that we may not ask to see" said the painter, referring to the picture in a recent conversation.

He was clearly enthusiastic about this work adding "sad and sombre it may be, but of its power and the devotion that must have been demanded for an accomplishment at once so dramatic and so restrained there can be little question."[25] The public reaction was equally effusive. The *New York Times*, impressed with the realism, the strong symbolism and the emotion captured in Dollman's *Judas* wrote "J C. Dollman has a fine figure of Judas, the very incarnation of despair. The drooping figure, with misery in every line... It is all very forcible and yet well within the bounds of possibility".[26]

Dollman's two interpretations of the St Antony story have been described earlier with respect to his skills as an *animalier.* The tale of St Antony in the desert includes both seductive visions and the torment of assailing demons. Dollman chose to paint St Antony's seduction, as did Paul Cézanne c. 1878, and Lovis Corinth in 1897 and 1908.

Although the term "heroic" does not best describe these paintings, there is the sense of personal strength, perseverance, hardship and the overcoming of the temptations thrown his way. The way Dollman executed the earlier of these two

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[23] Bensusan, S. L.*, "*The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman, A.R.W.S.*",* p. 594.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.
Thirty Pieces of Silver also known as *Judas* is in the collection of the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, Sussex, England.

[26] *The New York Times*, 5 August 1894.

paintings caused the great Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy some concern. Tolstoy who, like John Ruskin, was hostile toward any notion of “art for art’s sake” and argued here that “J. C. Dolman” [sic] had neglected the painting of the figure of St Antony in favour of the beauty of the naked woman (Plate 54).

> It is apparent that the naked woman pleased the artist very much, but that Anthony [sic] did not concern him at all; and that, so far from the temptation being terrible to him [the artist] it is highly agreeable. And therefore if there be any art in this picture, it is very nasty and false.[27]



Plate 54 J. C. Dollman confronting St Antony’s temptation

Tolstoy’s interpretation is flawed as the beauty of the woman is surely meant to equate directly with the strength of St Antony’s temptation. She is not beauty to be appreciated for art or beauty’s sake in isolation from the narrative — her beauty is central to temptation and the story. What Tolstoy might have imagined as a ‘disagreeable’ seductive temptation is unclear. He possibly had in mind depictions of the ‘torments’ and not the ‘temptations’ of St Antony.[28] Tolstoy did not live to see Dollman’s second painting of St Antony in which the temptation is arguably more beautiful and alluring — and therefore stronger.

Dramatic Incident

The second distinctive sub-category, dramatic incident, is most representative of the style of all the paintings produced by Dollman, not only in the sense of the

[27] Tolstoy, L., *What is Art,* (Walter Scott, London), 1896, p. 130.
[28] Many earlier artists, including Michelangelo, had painted the ‘torment’ of St Antony.

number of large canvasses, but also for their consistency of form, his personal interests in over six decades at the easel, and in public recognition and appreciation. The subjects of these works varied greatly and their treatment was invariably creative. Recognising their central importance to any understanding of Dollman's art, a representative number of these dramatic works is considered in temporal order over the following pages.

In 1877, still quite early in his career and just out of the Royal Academy Schools, Dollman exhibited *The burial of the Indian chief* (Plate 55) at the Royal Academy's summer exhibition.[29] Appended to the title provided for the catalogue by Dollman was an extract from the poem *The Burial of the Minnisink*, written in 1839 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807 – 1882).

They sang, that by his native bowers
He stood, in the last moon of flowers,
And thirty snows had not yet shed
Their glory on the warrior's head;
But, as the summer fruit decays,
So died he in those naked days.

They buried the dark chief; they freed
Beside the grave his battle steed;
And swift an arrow cleaved its way
To his stern heart! One piercing neigh
Arose, and, on the dead man's plain,
The rider grasps his steed again.

As a young man Dollman travelled to North America and lived for some time on the Tuscarora Reservation near the town of Buffalo and adjacent the Canadian and United States border.[30] The Tuscarora were the sixth nation of the Iroquois Federation. They had been forcibly relocated to the reservation from their traditional lands closer to Washington and New York. The featured publication in *The Graphic* of his *The Ship's Belle*, a study of upper deck life on a trans-Atlantic steamer, together with other graphic images published in 1877 from what was clearly first hand observation, indicate that his visit to North America was in 1876.[31]

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[29] RA 1360 1877.

[30] Obituary to J. C. Dollman in *The Times*, 12 December 1934.

[31] This study is of a young woman on board being the centre of attention for a number of competing men. The title is clever as the ship's bell was the way of marking the passing of time on board, highlighting not only her beauty but that she was also a distraction to the tedium of the voyage. In 1878 several etchings of detailed Dollman drawings dealing with the voyage and reception of the new Governor General to Canada were also published indicating that it was possible he made a second voyage. Dollman's *The Immigrants' Ship*, painted in 1884, was almost certainly inspired by this voyages.

Good evidence exists of the young Dollman's anthropological interest in American aboriginal culture. Fifteen significant artefacts that he collected while there are now in the collections of the British Museum, London.[32] This interest introduces Dollman as a late Victorian-age enthusiastic amateur with eclectic interests significantly broader than simply his passion for painting, a perspective that is reinforced throughout his life.

In Longfellow's lifetime the Indian Wars, made worse by imported European diseases, had decimated much of the indigenous populations of North America. At



Plate 55 ***The burial of the Indian chief***

the time of Dollman's visit to the Tuscarora, the Great Sioux Wars of 1876 and 1877 were being waged to the South West. In *The burial of the Indian chief,* Dollman portrays wailing Indian women preceding a sad and formal burial procession. To the right, the dead chief's horse is led to the warrior's grave where, according to the second verse of Longfellow's poem, it will be dispatched by an arrow to reunite with

[32] The Dollman collection of American Indian artefacts at the British Museum includes bangles, pouches, smoking pipes, bows and arrows, baskets and ceremonial dress.

and to serve its master in the next life.

The painting follows on the style of George Catlin (1796 –1872), who was the first to depict the customs of the plains Indians on their own territory.[33] Dollman had also witnessed their distress at first hand. By naming the painting after the "Indian chief" instead of the more specific "Minnisink", Dollman universalised the meaning of his painting; it spoke to the tragedy afflicting all native Americans. It was also an expression of both resignation and sadness, themes he repeated often in later works, particularly in his wartime paintings where he focused on negative outcomes including sacrifice, sorrow and futility. This sombre work has been restored in recent years to its original and lighter palette that is typical of his earlier paintings.[34]

Dollman further engaged native American Indian themes in at least two other significant narrative paintings, which, although painted many years apart, would also have been informed by his time and experience on the reservation. The first of these, *Up a tree* (Plate 56), was once part of a collection of fourteen of Dollman's paintings held in the Art Galleries of Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria.[35] Tragically, this painting was a victim of a de-accession strategy by the South African National Gallery in 1947.[36] The Gallery disposed of 129 of its paintings to a Mr Aubry Crookes (with some irony to be found in his name) who subsequently on-sold them at auction for considerable profit. *Up a tree* is a novel and clever study that describes the shadow image of a hapless native on the snow. The Indian up the tree is beyond sight, and both he and, symbolically, his image on the ground are encircled by a large pack of wolves. The metaphor of "being up a tree", common in North American English, is applied to difficult situations where there is no escape, and well describes

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[33] Eisler, B., *The Red Man's Bones: George Catlin, Artist and Showman,* (W. W. Norton & Company, New York), 2013, passim.

[34] *The burial of the Indian chief* is in the collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

[35] RA 265 1921. Dollman had also made an earlier water colour version: RWS 29 2016 (Summer)

[36] *The Cape Argus,* 6 May 1947, p. 1, reported that the South African Supreme Court unsuccessfully attempted to stop the sale and that the J. C. Dollman painting of *Up a tree* which had initially cost the trustees five hundred pounds was sold by Crookes at auction for seventy guineas. However, a letter in the possession of the South African National Gallery: Capt. Guy Dollman to Mr te Winter, 20 January 1936, seems to contradict this and indicates that this painting was initially a gift to the gallery.

this circumstance. What inspired him to create this subject in 1921 is not obvious. As with a number of his other dramatic studies, the scene offers little optimism and one can only guess a bad outcome. In creating this dramatic narrative, Dollman has again drawn on his fine skills as an *animalier*. Although the whereabouts of the original painting and the identity of the 1947 purchaser at auction remain unknown, a good black and white image can be found in the *Royal Academy Illustrated* of 1921.[37]



Plate 56 ***Up a tree***

The third painting with a strong native Indian theme, *The hunter* (Plate 57), was completed in 1911 and exhibited that year at the Royal Academy. It was also very popular. [38] The painting depicts an ironic reversal of position where the prey is the stalker. An animal study again forms a central feature of the painting. The other actor is an indigenous North American precariously negotiating a precipice in a desperate bid for escape. At the time of the exhibition an amusing parody was published in *Punch* magazine entitled a *Satisfactory Solution (thanks to a friendly ventilator cord) of Mr Dollman's Picture in Room XI at the Royal Academy* (Plate 58).[39]

[37] *Royal Academy Illustrated 1921*, (Walter Judd, London), 1921, p. 105.
[38] RA 757 1911.
[39] *Punch,* 20 May 1911.

There are no obvious clues as to why Dollman chose a native Indian or a North American theme to explore this idea of role reversal some thirty years after his stay on the Indian reservation. Although many of Dollman's dramatic pictures offer



Plate 57 ***The hunter***

quite negative prospects, on this occasion, though dire, the outcome is not conclusive.

This painting was further parodied in popular publications with appropriate acknowledgements in 1914 and again in 1915, which indicates that by then the painting had become widely known.[40] In both these, a Russian bear is shown as the stalker and the hunted is Germany represented by the Kaiser. Parodies are necessarily derivative and are usually applied to well known original works. The high profile publication of these parodies is therefore indicative of public familiarity with *The hunter.* Dollman made the 1911 painting in oils but with on-going public interest in the work and its continued reproduction in parody, he later

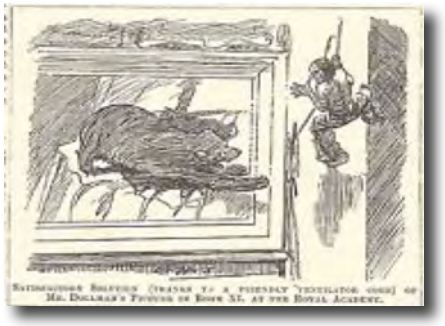


Plate 58 ***Satisfactory Solution…***

[40] *The Argus* (Melbourne), 1 September 1915 and *Punch,* 16 September 1914.

produced a water colour version that was smaller but very accurate to the original.[41] This was not an unusual practice for Dollman.[42]

In 1909, Dollman used water colours to paint other warriors, depicting a fearsome Norse raiding party moving across a very different landscape. His dramatic paintings intended for public exhibition were usually executed in oil on canvas. However, he often made earlier drafts in water colour, or produced later secondary water colour copies in response to market demand. *The Ravager* (Plate 59) was unusual in that Dollman painted it only in water colour. This is because it was the diploma piece which established his full membership of the Royal Watercolour



Plate 59 ***The Ravager***

Society in that year. It is an important work because it demonstrates, in the creation of a dramatic scene, Dollman was equally capable of applying oils and water colours.

The Vikings, bearing shields with swords raised, are severe and threatening. The forbidding nature of the scene is reinforced by the icy snow and low flying

[41] This version is in a private collection in Adelaide. It is inscribed by Dollman on the reverse: "*The Hunter* 1917, Water colour replica of the painting in oil exhibited by the Royal Academy in 1911. J. C. Dollman R. W. S."

[42] There are also multiple known versions of *Table d' hôte e at a dogs home* and *Les Misérables.*

ravens symbolising death that flank the warriors. They is a device that appealed to Dollman which he also applied in *Famine*. The harsh image foretells awful events. This painting has remained popular and still is exhibited periodically by the Royal Watercolour Society at its Bankside Gallery on the Thames embankment, London.



Plate 60 Hereward Dollman

For a number of years, Dollman also explored a highwayman theme and notions of gentlemanly honour, producing both serious and sometimes amusing works. For these he employed his second son Hereward as an occasional model (Plate 60).[43]

One of this series painted in a serious vein was his *The field of honour* (Plate 61) depicting the tense prelude to a duel by pistol.[44] It is clearly cold and the nearest adversary has dropped his cloak to the ground. He stands writing a last note. The aides nearby prepare the pistols with shot and powder as a seconder relieves the farther dueller of his cloak. Top hats and clothing worn put the date between the late 18th century and 1845, the year that the last duel between Englishmen was fought, a time that well predates Dollman.[45]

This was period a period in history that clearly appealed to him. An undated oil of a highwayman holding up a coach in the snow is an example of another dramatic image set in the early 19th–century (Plate 62).[46] As well as making clever characterisations of the unlucky travellers, this was another opportunity for Dollman to indulge in further animal studies.

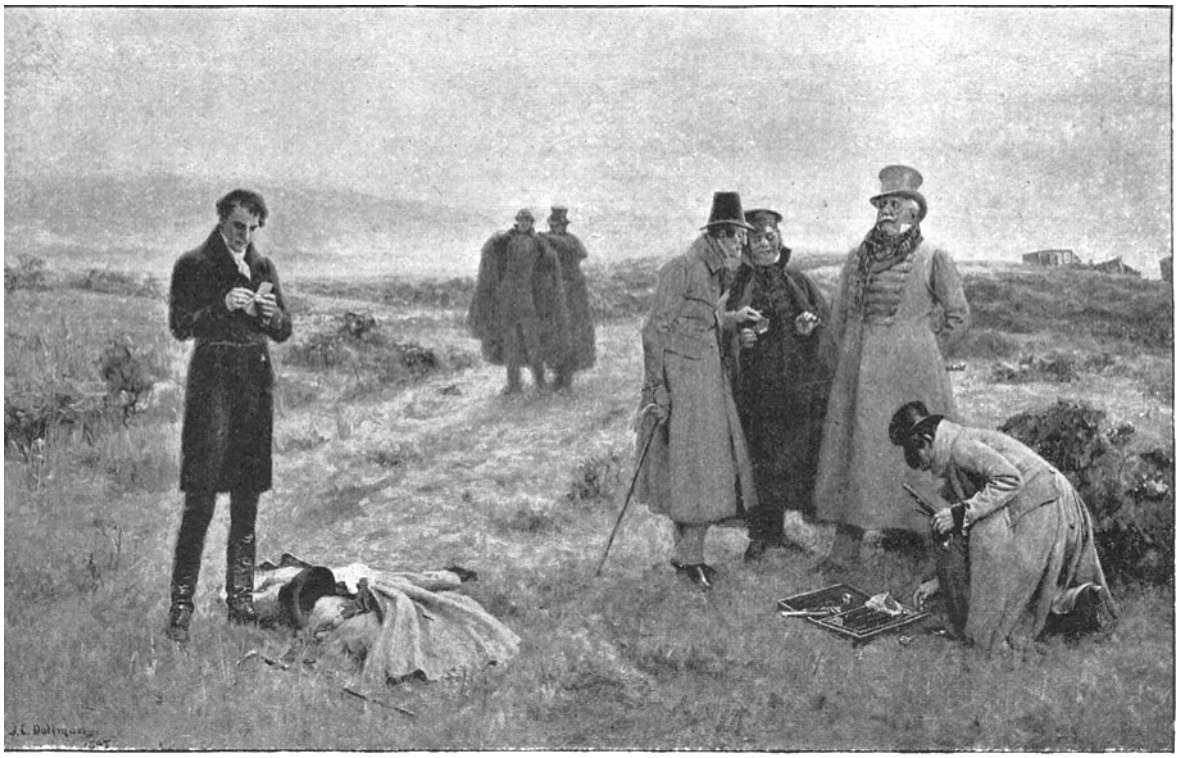
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[43] Hereward Chune Dollman, photographed in the Bedford Park studio in 1907. In private collection Adelaide.

[44] RA 429 1895.

[45] The last English duel occurred on 20 May 1845 between James Seton and Henry Hawkey at Southsea following an altercation over the latter's wife. The duel was fatal.

[46] Held in private collection, Adelaide.



30 × 50

THE FIELD OF HONOUR.

J. C. Dollman, R.I.

Plate 61 ***The field of honour***



Plate 62 ***The Highwayman***

One of his lighter narratives involving highwaymen include *Hawks Dinna Pyke Out Hawks' E'en* which depicts two knights of the road at a turnpike, each having mistaken the other as a potential victim.[47] Another, *Not worth powder and shot*, is also meant to be amusing.[48] A mounted armed and masked highwayman has sighted a potential victim and has galloped up to him. Instead of a wealthy traveller he is, in the words of contemporary art writer Henry Blackburn, a "starveling, old, itinerant musician — one whose poverty is such that… he does not even take the trouble to turn upon his heel to see who his pursuer may be, but trudges along, supremely independent in that he has nothing to lose." He adds that "the subject is no caricature, no exaggeration of very unlikely possibilities, but the incident is a simple transcript of what might very well take place, while it is, of course, a humorous phase of human nature."[49] A further entertaining highwayman study is his *Your Humble Servant*.[50] Dollman recounts that he had an idea to paint a country signpost at a crossroads in the middle of a wide and open landscape.[51] The idea gestated for some time until he "suddenly" thought to make his highwayman part of the image, whom he then painted with head bowed in deference before the sign to which was appended a notice of a reward for his capture, "alive or dead."

Dollman brought the adventures of his highwayman to an end in 1892 when the image of his impending capture in *Dead or Alive* was exhibited at the Institute of Painters in Oils. The drawn-out struggle with authority had come to its conclusion, the highwayman's horse lay dead on the road and his pursuers on horseback had begun dividing so as to encircle him. The moment in the painting is dramatic and it is up to the gallery viewer to speculate on the outcome. As with several of his paintings, Dollman deliberately left the end of this story ambiguous.

The notion of highwaymen as gentleman heroes had been romanticised well by the late 19th–century. Across the various arts, Captain Macheath in the satirical 18th century English ballad opera *The Beggar's Opera*, Dick Turpin in the novel

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[47] An engraved image of this painting "after J C Dollman" appeared in *The Graphic*, 6 June 1891. The title is taken from the Scots proverb: "Hawks do not poke out Hawks' eyes"

[48] RA 671 1884.

[49] Blackburn, H., (ed.), *English Art in 1884*, (Appleton, New York), 1895, p. 48.

[50] RA 984 1887.

[51] Bensusan, S., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman, A.R.W.S.", p. 588.

Rookwood (1834) by William Ainsworth (1805 – 1882), and the narrative poem *The Highwayman* by Alfred Noyes (1880 – 1958) all served to reinforce this image. Stories of gallant highwaymen were popularly serialised in books and the penny-dreadfuls for boys. Highwaymen were also the subjects of painting by a number of Dollman's contemporaries, including William Powell Frith with his portrayal of the infamous *Claude du Vall* (1860), a charming gentleman thief and ladies' man. Over a decade Dollman produced a number of works which tapped into this romantic, popular and very marketable theme. That the last recorded robbery by a highwayman in England occurred in 1831, twenty years before Dollman was born, attests to the enduring appeal of the subject.[52]

The most dramatic and, according to *The New York Times*, best known of Dollman's narrative paintings was his memorial to Captain Lawrence 'Titus' Oates, "*A very gallant gentleman*" (Plate 63).[53] The painting has since been widely reproduced in large colour print, books, and in many other publications. It was commissioned by the Cavalry and Guards Club at St James, London and hangs



Plate 63 "*A very gallant gentleman"*

[52] Mc Lynn, F., *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England,* (New York, Routledge), 1989, p. 81.

[53] *The New York Times*, 13 December 1934. RA 530 1914.

there today above the formal staircase.

Dollman painted the image Oates as lone and courageous figure bracing against a freezing Antarctic wind. He is set against a stark and simple background, which serves to emphasise the frozen emptiness and remoteness of this hostile and bleak place. The theme is of heroic and noble sacrifice. In the background the small orange glow from a lamp within the snow shrouded tent symbolises life and still the faint hope of survival, and that Oates 'heroick suffering' might not be in vain.

With limited resources left to the expedition, Captain Oates sacrificed his life so that his comrades might live. His act has been since represented many times as the ultimate deed of selflessness and gallantry. The natural appeal to the Cavalry and Guards of this chivalric act is not surprising. A search party later erected a cross in the snow above the general area where Oates' body lay. On it famously was inscribed:

> Hereabouts died a very gallant gentleman, Captain L. E. G. Oates of the Inniskilling Dragoons. In March 1912, returning from the Pole, he walked willingly to his death in a blizzard to try to save his comrades, beset by hardship.[54]

"*A very gallant gentleman*" was painted in the period immediately prior to the First World War. Its statement of unselfish sacrifice rang with a strong message of patriotism at a time of seriously escalating military instability coupled with expanding imperial ambitions across Europe. The painting was received well by the Academy public and critics, and was awarded first place in a public and press plebiscite.[55] It was also acclaimed as 'painting of the year' in 1914.[56]

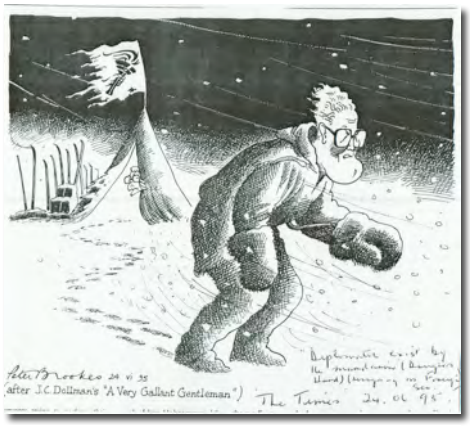


Plate 64 ***The Times 1995***

Of all of Dollman's paintings that remain in public consiousness, this is probably the most

[54] Huxley, E., *Scott of the Antarctic,* (Atheneum, New York), 1978, p. 258.
[55] *The Advertiser,* 6 December 1916.
[56] *Pictures of 1914*, (Pall Mall Gazette, Holborn), 1914, p. 57.

popular. As recently as 1995 it was being used in parody, again indicating the image continues in public consciousness.[57] Peter Brookes, political cartoonist for *The Times*, used that occasion to mark the *Diplomatic exit by the mandarin* (Plate 64), Douglas Hurd who had resigned as British Foreign Secretary for the good of Prime Minister John Major's government.

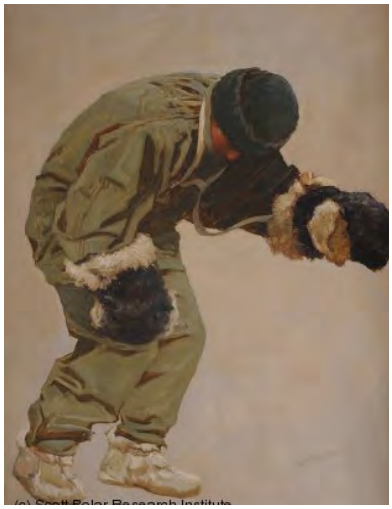


Plate 65 Study for "*A very gallant gentleman*"

In preparing for the painting, Dollman engaged Edward McKenzie, a survivor of Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition of 1910 – 13, as the model for the study of the Oates' portrait (Plate 65).[58] Beginning with *The Boy's Own Paper* in 1914, "*A very gallant gentleman*" has featured since in many publications, on dust jackets and as the front plate of academic books on the Antarctic, contributing to the perpetual interest in this painting. [59]

Social and Political Paintings

Two of Dollman's important works depict men playing golf. Their sporting theme masks a serious political purpose, and they thus belong among his narrative paintings. His *The Stymie: A foursome at North Berwick in the forties* (Plate 66) is set on the first green of the club at North Berwick, a small town on the Firth of Forth about forty kilometres to the west of Edinburgh.[60] It depicts the political figures of Lord Rosebery, Admiral Fleming, the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Charles Hope with

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[57] *The Times*, 24 June 1995.

[58] Edward A. McKenzie (1888 – 1973) was one of the last survivors of Scott's Terra Nova expedition. He joined the Royal Navy when he was only fifteen and travelled widely on many ships before applying to go with Scott, where he joined *Terra Nova* as Leading Stoker, RN. He spent most of the expedition with the ship, although he took what opportunities were offered to make short trips ashore. *Polar Record*, Vol. 16, No. 105, 1973, p. 873 – 87.

[59] *The Boy's Own Paper*, Vol. 36, No.11, September 1914. Example of dust jacket and plates: Mountevans, E. E., *South with Scott*, (Collins, London), 1957.

[60] RA 230 1899.

their respective caddies in a tense moment contemplating the impasse of a stymie.[61] The event is set some sixty years before Dollman created the painting, so it would be unlikely that he had selected his actors, the timing or the situation simply to demonstrate his passion for the game of golf.



Plate 66 ***The Stymie: A foursome at North Berwick in the forties***

In 1840 there had been a political impasse in relation to the appointment of Admiral Fleming to the position of Governor of the Greenwich Hospital. He had been nominated to replace Sir Thomas Hardy.[62] This led to his censure in Parliament where his lack of any war experience was felt to disqualify him from appointment.[63]

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[61] Archibald John Primrose, 4th Earl of Rosebery (1783 – 1868), Walter Francis Montagu Douglas Scott, 5th Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Charles Hope and Admiral Charles Elphinstone Fleming (1799 – 1840) were all British politicians. At the time of the incident in the 1840s a *stymie* had occurred when one ball impeded a more distant ball from a direct line to the hole. Today the ball lying closer to the hole would be 'marked' and removed so as to not block access.

[62] Sir Thomas Hardy was of Battle of Trafalgar fame and recipient of Nelson's famous invitation: "kiss me Hardy."

[63] Lord Melbourne to the Duke of Wellington "Debates and Procedings in Parliament" in *The Spectator,* No. 606, Vol. 13, 8 February 1840, p. 124.

The political opposition by some members in both the Commons and the Lords is the likely subtext of the painting.[64] The landscape setting was not fanciful but was true to reality as a comparison with the setting of the first green at the West Links today reveals. In many ways this painting is similar in treatment, including the use of a lighter palette, to that Dollman applied to some of his earlier paintings. It does not exhibit all the three-dimensional realism of other of his contemporary or later works. Notwithstanding, it was likely the aesthetic appeal of the golfing theme in this painting instead of any historic political commentary that secured a hammer price at auction price of 205,250 pounds in 2008.[65]



Plate 67 ***During the time of the Sermonses***

The other significant painting exploiting a golfing theme was exhibited four years before but was set considerably earlier in history. In the catalogue of the Royal Academy summer exhibition, it was given the title *During the time of the Sermonses* (Plate 67) and unusually long subtitle of *In 1592 and 1593 the Town Council of*

[64] Barlow, J. H., (ed.), *The Mirror of Parliament*, Vol. 1, (Longman, London), 1840, debate in the House of Commons pp. 400 – 417, House of Lords pp. 786 - 787.

[65] The painting was bequeathed to Glenbervie Golf Club in 1957 and subsequently sold in 2008 at Sotheby's auction, Gleneagles. The sale achieved much publicity.

Edinburgh contributed to the pious gloom of their country by forbidding this harmless and healthy amusement on Sundays. John Henrie and Pat Rogie, early martyrs of the club, were prosecuted for the playing of the gowff on the links every Sabbath the time of the Sermonses.[66] On this occasion, Dollman felt there was a need to overtly establish the historic context of the painting in its title, rather than simply leave it to the observer to determine. Dollman had an open passion for the sport of 'gowff'. At the time he made this painting, some three hundred years after the recorded event, there still would have been a strong social expectation of general attendance at church on a Sunday morning instead of indulging in sport on the fairway and green. Dollman is protesting that things had changed little and that this expectation still persisted in 1886. The characterisations of the golfers are studied, with the player fixed and determined not to be distracted by the surly Presbyterian minister or his accompanying clerk who seems to be carrying some legal instrument. The second golfer is directing some appropriate comment to the two unwelcome spectators while showing no sign of submission. In the left distant background can be seen the outline of the city of Edinburgh.

Literature

In the fourth sub-category, sources from literature, and returning to a theme of despair, is Dollman's study of Robinson Crusoe, the castaway from Daniel Defoe's novel. Defoe published his very popular children's work in 1719. The book was illustrated with wood engraved images of the ship-wrecked mariner wearing home-sewn skins. Engravers such as George Cruikshank adorned Defoe's books with many illustrations, but the subject of Crusoe was not taken up seriously by



Plate 68 ***Crusoe***

[66] RA 526 1896. Purchased in 1897 by the Harris Museum and Art Gallery (Preston).

artists until the 19th–century.[67] Richard Altick argues that this was due to "the low repute Defoe's narrative had as a work of literature [as] no book so irremediably identified with the reading fare of the humble was entitled to the dignity of easel art."[68] However, from 1832 onwards, 24 paintings of this unfortunate mariner are recorded as having been exhibited at the Royal Academy, with half of them in the short period of 1835 to 1863.[69]

In 1999, a painting by Dollman called *Robinson Crusoe and his Man Friday* (Plate 68) was placed into the art market by its New Zealand owner for auction at Sotheby's, New York.[70] On the frame were written lines of verse taken from the



Plate 69 *Crusoe* 1899

[67] Probably the first was Thomas Stothard's *Robinson Crusoe's Long Boat,* exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1808. See Bray, A., *Life of Thomas Stothard, R. A., with Personal Reminiscences,* (Murray, London), 1851.

[68] Altick, R. D., *Paintings from Books,* (Ohio State University Press, Columbus), 1985, p. 380.

[69] See: Graves, A., (ed.),*The Royal Academy of Arts; a complete dictionary of contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904,* (Franklin, New York), 1906.

[70] Christie's London catalogue, 6 June 1997, signed 'J. C. Dollman' (lower left) and signed and inscribed 'Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday, J. C. Dollman' (on an old label on thereverse), oil on canvas (102.9 cm. x 127 cm.).

nature poet, William Cowper (1731 – 1800): “When I think of my own native land, in a moment I seem to be there; But alas! recollection at hand soon hurries me back to despair.”[71] This painting was initially incorrectly thought to be that which Dollman exhibited as *Crusoe* (Plate 69) at the summer exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1899.[72] The former painting is full of sunlight and colour but again has the more two-dimensional aspect associated with his early paintings, dating the work as most likely before 1880. Dollman’s later rendering of *Crusoe* employed a similar composition of the shipwrecked castaway on a sand dune by the sea, accompanied by his spaniel. In both paintings Dollman’s Crusoe holds a fixed and wistful gaze on the horizon with some forlorn hope of rescue. Also in both, Dollman, the *animalier* uses the opportunity to express the bond between man and dog. The subject and disposition of the paintings are very similar, but the outcome is markedly different. Unlike the earlier work, Dollman uses a much more sombre palette in the 1899 painting and there is a more convincing realism. A very small oil study by Dollman, measuring 25 cm. by 30 cm., dated 1897, signed simply “J C D” and appropriately named *Far Away* was recently discovered and shipped for auction in London.[73] Its composition is more closely aligned to the painting which he exhibited in 1899. The subject, however, has the colour palette of the earlier picture. Being signed only with initials suggests that it may have been a preparatory study for his 1899 painting or possibly a smaller and less disciplined work intended for some book or magazine publication. These three paintings, all with the same *content*, demonstrate how Dollman’s *form* had changed and matured over twenty years.[74]

Victorian artists responded to many themes in literature and the works of William Shakespeare continued to remain an important inspiration for history painters. Altick argues that Shakespeare accounted for about twenty per cent, or about 2,300 of all literary paintings recorded from 1760 to 1900.[75]

A Midsummer Night’s Dream and *Henry IV* provided two of the more popular

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[71] William Cowpers’s poem "The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk", supposedly written by Alexander Selkirk during his solitary abode in the Island of Juan Fernandez.

[72] RA 693 1899.

[73] Gorrenges Antiques, *Antique and Fine Art Catalogue*, Sale 23 October 2007, Lot 1991.

[74] See Chapter I, Belton on *context, content* and *form*.

[75] Altick, R, D., *Painting from Books*, p. 255.

Shakespearean subjects for 19th–century artists and they also appealed to Dollman. His "*Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown*" (Plate 70), depicting the guilt ridden,



Plate 70 "*Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown*"

despairing and insomniac King Henry IV in the Palace of Westminster, was painted quite early in his career and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1877.[76]

The painting received public acclaim that year when it was printed from a wood-block as full centre page image with no back print in *The Graphic*. No other image of the work has yet been uncovered but the fine etching gives a good sense of the composition by Dollman.[77] His motivation for this painting can only be conjecture. It

[76] RA 1877 1375,
Shakespeare, W., *Henry IV, Part 2*, Act 3, Scene 1, 26 – 31.
Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude,
And in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a king? Then happy low, lie down!.
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

[77] *The Graphic*, 11 August 1877, p. 133.

may have been connected with the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India under the instigation of the Tory and imperialist Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. Victoria had been in extended morning following her loss of Albert. She emerged reluctantly from private seclusion in 1876, the first time since Albert's death in 1861, to open Parliament to address the bill defining her new Imperial status. There would have been considerable public focus on the politics of the monarchy at that time. More likely this painting was simply made by Dollman to meet public tastes and the market, or was inspired his by own interest in the bard.



Plate 71 "*If it were done….*"

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene VII provided Dollman with another subject possibility in a dramatic setting. The image of the painting offered here (plate 71) was published in 1916. The black and white photograph provided presents a finer appreciation of the original quality of Dollman's work than would be obtained from a wood-block engraved copy.[78] It is tempting to believe that this image to one of his earliest works exhibited first in 1873 and taken from Macbeth's soliloquy, titled "*If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly*." Yet the signature is more consistent with that applied to his later work.[79] This could therefore be a copy or a reworking of the original.[80]

Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* was the inspiration for Dollman's *Mowgli made leader of the Bandar-log* (Plate 44).[81]

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[78] Courtney, W. L., *A tribute to the genius of William Shakespeare*, (Macmillan, London), 1916.

[79] RA 989 1873.

[80] Dollman often made later copies of his paintings. This work was signed with full signature rather than "JCD" indicating that it was probably not intended for publication only.

[81] Kipling, R., *The Jungle Book,* (McMillan, London), 1895.

Painted in 1903, this painting depicts the boy, Mowgli, in conversation with his captors in the ruined city Cold Lairs, deep in Indian jungle. He had been made prisoner of the Monkey People of Bandar-log who had captured him for the purpose of making him their leader. He was subsequently rescued by the giant python Kaa who wreaked a terrible revenge on the Bandar-log. This painting, which was also acclaimed Royal Academy picture of the year, provided an exceptional opportunity for Dollman to exploit further his animal theme. As touched on in the previous chapter, Dollman's daughter Ruth may have painted Kipling and some personal connection with the author may have helped to inspire this picture. Regardless of any association, Dollman was leveraging off the remarkable public popularity enjoyed by Kipling's stories at this time.

Dollman painted a number of other significant paintings inspired from literature. They include his richly coloured *The awakening of Titania* (Plate 72), with its sub-title "*Methought I was enamoured of an ass…*", taken from Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[82] This 1898 painting of the queen of the



Plate 72 ***The awakening of Titania***

[82] RA 313 1898: A study for *Titania* has been located in the Witt Library, London and the original is now in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, where it remains on permanent display.

fairies is a marked departure from the dramatic and often sombre themes Dollman chose from Shakespeare, Kipling and elsewhere in literature, which again serves to demonstrate his versatility. Titania was popular with 19th–century artists; the genre of fairy painting had exponents from Edwin Landseer to John Everett Millais and other members associated with the pre-Raphaelite movement.

Dollman's paintings of Robinson Crusoe, Titania and Mowgli were made within a few years of each other, but the construction of each was very different. They also represent the broadest application of literature in art.

Allegory

The allegorical work *Gold* has already been considered in the context of Dollman's biblically inspired paintings. Other significant allegorical paintings were *Famine* (Plate 73), dated 1904, and his later *Up a tree.*[83]



Plate 73 *Famine*

In 1906 Dollman wrote to B. H. Mullen, Curator of Salford Art Gallery, about *Famine,* confiding that he and most of his professional friends believed it to be his

[83] *Famine* is in the Salford Art Gallery and Museum and was purchased in 1906. It missed being purchased for the nation under the terms of the Chantrey Bequest by one vote.

"most serious effort in art."[84] He explained that, for a while, he had worked on the idea of the "wolf at the door" as a subject picture, which eventually grew into this painting. In the letter, he pointed out that the painting was not about the "perishing of humanity" from lack of food but was "rather to be taken as an allegory for the inevitable obliteration, consignment upon neglect, in the more serious directions than life itself." Despite this explanation, the meaning of the painting remains obscure, which was probably his intention. He also acknowledged that the subtlety of its message "will not reach many!" The Salford gallery took his version of the allegorical message and today has an interpretation in its explanatory notes: "this painting illustrates the idea of the destruction of the human soul or spirit, not the human body, by neglecting life itself", adding later that Dollman "intended it to portray a famine of human spirit, or death of the soul after its neglect."[85] One doubts if this allegorical meaning might have been distilled from the painting, or wonders what other interpretations might have been put upon it, without the benefit of the original letter to Mullen. Dollman liked creating problem pictures which were deliberately ambiguous, and here he has provided just enough contextual information to ensure ongoing intrigue.

Letters from the gallery at the time also indicate that the painting was insured for 500 British pounds. In terms of crude 'commodity' value, this is the equivalent to about 50,000 British pounds today.[86] *Famine* is now reported as the most popular painting in the art gallery and is given pride of place.[87] This popularity persists without the



Plate 74 *The Leprechaun* 1907

[84] Letter: John Charles Dollman Jnr to B. H. Mullen, Esq., M. A., 14 December 1906, original at Salford Art Gallery and Museum, England.

[85] *Famine*, Greater Manchester Museums group at http://www.gmmg.org.uk/our-connected-history/item/famine/. Last accessed 1 August 2015.

[86] Officer, L. H., and Williamson, S. H., "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present", in *Measuring Worth*, 2015, at: www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/. Last accessed 1 August 2015.

[87] "The Immaculate Introspection: Art to feed the soul, via Audience Perception" at https://okathleen.files.wordpress.com/2008/10/the-immaculate-introspection.pdf. Last accessed 1 August 2015.

benefit of any public knowledge of the artist except for the suggestion of its underlying meaning provided in Dollman's casual letter of 1906 — without which any sense of it might have forever remained hidden.

The painting has been parodied a number of times since, including a pastiche dealing with the subject of consumption (tuberculosis) in Ireland by Thomas Fitzpatrick, published in *The Leprechaun* in 1907 (Plate 74).[88] Again, this is an indicator that Dollman's work was publically well known and topical. The *animalia* aspects of the painting were considered earlier as well as the constructional relationship with two other allegorical paintings, *Anno Domini 1917* and *The Reckoning*.

Mythology

Within the last sub-category considered, mythological paintings, Dollman's best known and recognisable work is his *Ride of the Valkyries* (Plate 75). The property of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, it spends time away from its home



Plate 75 ***The ride of the Valkyries***

[88] Reproduced in IRA History at http://irahistory.com/post/110998432504/this-rather-eerie-cartoon-published-in-the. Last accessed 1 August 2015.

attending Wagnerian festivals.[89] This painting has its links to literature through 13th and 14th century Germanic poems as does William Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. In Old Norse, the female *Valkyrja* are the 'chooser of the slain' who determine who will die in battle, selecting half for Odin's Valhalla and the other half for the goddess Freyja and an afterlife in Fólkvangr.[90] Dollman's strong depiction of the chaotic sky and the powerful steeds with lights shining in their eyes, and on which the female warriors ride brandishing their weapons, is forceful and amongst the most dramatic of all his works. The painting invites a comparison with an 1890 painting sharing the same title by William T Maud (Plate 76).[91] Maud's neo-classical interpretation is strong and more romantic than that of Dollman but it fails to demonstrate the same sense of energy and drama that the later painting evokes.



Plate 76 *Ride of the Valkyries*
W.T. Maud

Bellona is a similarly dramatic mythical painting. It was finished a year before *Ride of the Valkyries* and is an heroic depiction of the Roman goddess of War leading her legions into battle.[92] In its composition, Dollman again capitalises on his skills as an *animalier*. Just as he uses the steeds in *Valkyries* to denote strength and invoke fear, here he uses enormous hounds of war. Somewhat disturbing, one hound to the immediate right of the mounted Bellona has caught sight of, and is staring down, the gallery viewer. This is a device that Dollman used a number of times to draw the observer into the painting.[93]

Around the time of making of these two paintings, Dollman produced a large number of mythical works, many of which were published. Some were of more subdued subjects from Teutonic myths, such as *Frigga Spinning the Clouds* while

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89 RA 888 1908.

90 Ellis-Davidson, H. R., *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe,* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth), 1990, passim.

91 William T. Maud (1865 – 1903) was a British painter who also reported for *The Graphic* during the second Boer War. He died in Aden in 1903 from injuries following the Battle of Ladysmith.

92 RA 883 1907. Bellona is derived from the Latin, *bellum,* meaning war.

93 Another example of this is in Dollman's 1913 painting, *The mischief god*.

others were more animated such as *Werewolves*.[94] A number of Dollman's paintings based on Norse mythology were used to decorate two substantial books on the subject. The first was *Myths of the Norsemen: From the Eddas and Sagas* first published in 1908.[95] The second was *Told by the Northmen: Stories from the Eddas and Sagas*, printed a year later, and at the time he was painting his *Valkyries*.[96] Eight black and white images by Dollman were incorporated in the first publication and nine in the second.

Dollman's History and Narrative Painting — A Summary

Dollman's output of history and narrative paintings over his working lifetime was remarkable. The small but representative sample reviewed here is an indication of his diversity within the genre. They also show his creativity. To his mind, the two important steps in producing a work of substance were, firstly, to find a dramatic subject from life or literature worthy of interpreting on to a canvas, and then to determine the most innovative, creative and novel way to communicate the story. The palette he applied changed over the years as he moved away from brighter colours in an attempt to reinforce the seriousness of his more sombre later subjects. Paintings like *The ride of the Valkyries* were exceptions, where strong colour was needed to engender vitality.

Any comprehensive analysis of Dollman's work, spanning the period from the early 1880s to the 1930s, seems to contradict Bensusan's gratuitous but sympathetic observation in 1906: "What a long way we find ourselves from the earlier work, painted at a time when the skill of the hand had yet to be reinforced by the observation and sympathy of a matured and serious intelligence!"[97] It is argued here that the reverse is rather the case, and that Dollman's composition and skills in realism grew and matured to complement his early well developed and intelligent perspectives. Within the genre of late Victorian history and narrative painting,

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[94] Friga was the wife of Odin.

[95] Guerber, H. A., *Myths of the Norsemen: From the Eddas and Sagas,* (Harrap and Co., London), 1908.

[96] Wilmot-Buxton, E. M., *Told by the Northmen, Stories from the Eddas and Sagas,* (Harrap and Co., London), 1909.

[97] Bensusan, S. L., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman, A.R.W.S.", p. 594.

Dollman demonstrated his superior skills as an *animalier*, an extraordinary breadth of subject interest, and inventiveness and flexibility in both style and narrative, all of which were informed by his socially and politically acute mind. His broad perceptions and application enabled him to better accommodate the changing market for visual art. They also ensured his continued popularity at a time toward the end of the century when interest in the genre of history painting was waning. What particularly differentiated him from contemporaries was a disposition, in his grander works, to focus more on negative or unfortunate outcomes, rather than on their heroic potential. In doing this, his paintings were often sombre, reflective, and sometimes desperate, but often included a subtle suggestion of faint optimism or possible redemption. His privileged, middle class upbringing and his enthusiastic, if not amateur, interests in natural history, sport, politics and socio-political matters provided him with broad and different perspectives to many of his peers and the artists of *The Graphic* whom he had left behind. Strong underlying narratives presented with imagination, often accompanied by secondary narratives of social interest, mark Dollman's contribution to "the anecdotal school of painting, of which he was its chief ornament."[98]

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[98] *Daily Telegraph*, 12 December 1834.

Chapter VII

DOLLMAN AND THE ART OF WAR

"FOR KING AND COUNTRY"

Introduction

The advent of World War in 1914 offered a new opportunity for Dollman narrative. The subject of war in art was not altogether novel to Dollman as thirty years earlier he had drafted many illustrations relating to conflicts in Afghanistan and South Africa for engraving into *The Graphic*. These illustrations invariably dealt with some dramatic incident, confrontation or heroic deed, or on occasion described a triumphant return. Importantly, Dollman was not physically on any of the battlefields that he painted. Rather he relied on descriptions and sketches of events from *The Graphic*'s front line reporters. These he interpreted into a visual war narrative for the magazine's weekly pages. Typically, the subjects and stories of this visual reporting were of both engagement and bravery. They also embodied strong tones of Empire — sentiments which British official war artists were asked again to depict some thirty years later. Dollman did, however, have some first hand knowledge of things military. At the time he drew these images for *The Graphic* he was serving with the 20th Middlesex (Artists') Rifle Volunteer Corps with its headquarters at Burlington House of the Royal Academy.[1] Beside him under pith helmet and in light grey uniform were John Everett Millais, Frederic Leighton (Lieutenant Colonel), John William Waterhouse, Ford Madox Brown, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris together with many other names very familiar to the Royal Academy.[2]

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1 Dollman served in A Company from 1880 to 1889. There were four Companies, two consisting of artists and two of architects. The Corps was raised in 1859 by Lord Peel on fears of invasion by Napoleon III. See Gregory, B., *A History of The Artists' Rifles 1859 – 1947,* (Pen & Sword, Barnsley), 2006, passim.

2 In an historical article about the Artists' Rifles in *The Telegraph* on 27 April 2014, the "Artists" were remembered as an interesting party of fighting men: "Dante Gabriel Rossetti was cashiered for showing too much attitude, William Morris marched with two left feet and Ford Madox Brown accidentally shot his dog on an exercise."

One example from many of Dollman's interpretative images of military conflict is *Isandula: the Dash with the Colours* (Plate 77) in *The Graphic* in 1879. It is taken from a wood-block etching depicting "Lieuts Melville and Coghill cutting their way through the Zulu army with the colours of the 24th regiment".[3] Like much of Dollman's early work on Imperial subjects, it is dramatic and highly animated.

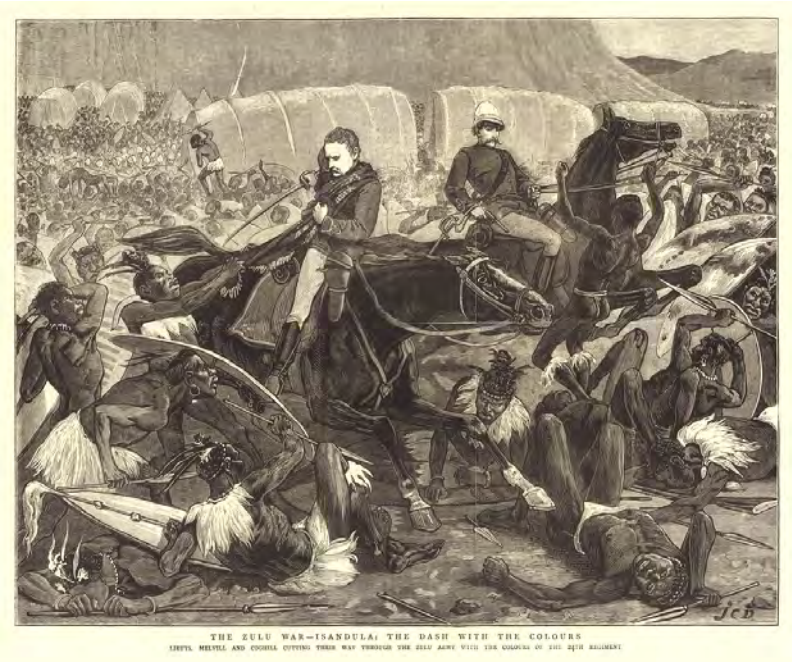


Plate 77 The Zulu War – Isandula

Although informed by detailed observations and sketches of the war front by John Nash, this interpretation of events within the London studio belongs to Dollman. It is offered to readers of *The Graphic* as a true representation of the events — yet this image, together with many others he made on similar themes, was based on his distant and second hand understanding of happenings.[4] There is no evidence to suggest that Dollman's interpretations were anything but honest although they may have been influenced by editorial direction and expectations of the reading circulation for highly dramatic and heroic depiction. Later Dollman avoided portraying intimate battle scenes and was rather concerned with the social consequences of conflict and war. These early depictions, therefore, were more representative of his abilities in visual journalism and efforts towards subjective accuracy, than of his artistic creativity.

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3 *The Graphic,* 15 March 1879.

4 Realism in this sense is an attempt to truthfully describe what might have happened. In Dollman's case it is an indirect realism constructed on the knowledge and information available from a distance The image is unembellished and consistent with actuality although not necessary an accurate representation.

Boer War Painting

Following employment with *The Graphic* but well prior to the Great War, Dollman produced a large oil painting (122 cm. x 214 cm.) entitled *Harvest* (Plate 78) that was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1905.[5] The subject of this painting is the battle wounded, some walking beside, others on commandeered agricultural wagons, moving in column. Their uniforms are khaki and four soldiers can be seen wearing felt hats with a circular rim and one, an officer, with a turned brim — rather than pith helmets.[6] The use of the slouch hat had become widespread amongst British Empire forces during the latter part of the second South African or "Boer" war, partly due to a



Plate 78 ***Harvest***

shortage of cork helmets. Unlike the continuing practice of former colonies, it was abandoned by English troops in 1905.[7] Australian and Canadian contingents had entered the second Boer war dressed in khaki, but it was only later in the conflict that the British abandoned the easy targets of red uniforms in favour of similar dress. The uniforms therefore are consistent with those of English soldiers during the third or the

5 RA 236 1905.

6 Khaki is the Indian Urdu word for 'dust'.

7 Dennis, P., Grey, G., *et al*., (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, 2nd ed., (Oxford University Press, Melbourne), 2008, p. 497.

"guerrilla" phase of the second Anglo-Boer War (1900 – 1902) and the painting depicts the bad outcome of some engagement with the Boer enemy.

The image is one of defeat and retreat. Two wounded officers walk slowly beside a large, heavy hay wagon carrying a dozen or so injured. An elderly man, probably a farmer, leads his two work-horses along the rutted road. Another wounded soldier finds some support from the rear of the wagon, and further behind can be seen similar cargo. The vision disappears beyond the hill to the site where the tragic event occurred. The sky is ominous and long water reflections in the wheel furrows emphasise cold and drudgery.[8] The implied meaning of the title, *Harvest*, is clear. On the adjacent hill are the neatly stacked sheaths which have been displaced from the wagons by the human harvest, or the harvest of war.

Dollman likely commenced this reflective painting in 1904 for the Royal Academy's summer exhibition of 1905. It was therefore conceived following the war and British victory over the Boers, but rather than celebrate any post-war joy, reflective glory or gallantry, as might have been expected, this image considers the harsh human costs and the suffering that was inflicted. The style that Dollman applied in *Harvest* remained true to the mid Victorian realism that he had employed since first exhibiting at the Royal Academy in 1872. *Harvest* is an important painting for Dollman in that it established a theme of personal and social suffering from war, and a narrative style that he subsequently used in a number of his paintings.

The Great War

In August 1914 Britain went to war with Germany. That year Dollman exhibited his "*A very gallant gentleman*" at the Royal Academy.[9] This painting contained a strong narrative built around the selfless heroism of Captain Lawrence Oates, a member of Scott's fatal British Antarctic exhibition in 1912. Oates was a cavalry officer of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons and nominee for a Victoria Cross in the Boer War.[10] The painting

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8 Dollman often used the technique of painting water underfoot with reflection to emphasise a negative state – see "*And some fell by the wayside*" and "*Am I my brother's keeper?*"

9 RA 530 1914.

10 This painting has been reproduced many times as a model of selfless courage. For example, see Mountevans, E. E., *South With Scott*, (Collins, London), 1957. The painting is owned by the Cavalry and Guards Club, St James, London.

does not deal directly with war itself. It rather represents the strong imperial sentiments in the lead up to the First World War.[11] Strong British pre-war nationalism was reflected in theatre and penny novels, and in newspapers which led with editorials of nationalist rhetoric and imperial 'sabre-rattling'. Dollman's painting was commissioned by the active military officer class of the Cavalry and Guards Club, London. Its message was unambiguously of selfless sacrifice and courage to the benefit of others. It was very much in sympathy with public pre-war sentiments and was highly acclaimed. Like the earlier *Harvest*, this work is built on a notion of sacrifice. *Harvest* suggests the futility and waste of conflict. "*A very gallant gentleman"* rather contained both chivalric and patriotic messages that were consistent with the preparations for war. As Allen Frantzen argues, in the prelude to the great conflict, notions of Victorian masculinity, chivalric conduct and duty were popular and used to justify and legitimise considerations of war.[12] These allusions to chivalric sacrifice were applied publicly at many levels throughout the war: from *The Boy's Own*, the scout movement and in schooling, to recruitment and propaganda posters, magazines and newspapers.

The notions of personal suffering, imperial strength and will, and most of all, sacrifice, were manifest in Dollman's war related paintings, produced over the seven years following outbreak in 1914. Dollman made seven significant war related paintings during this period, all except one being exhibited at the Royal Academy. These included: *The Reckoning* in 1914, *"Tipperary"* in 1915, *The creditors* in 1916, "*Fraternité*" and *Anno Domini 1917* in that year, *The altar* in 1918 and *The silence* in 1920.[13]

The earliest of these, *The Reckoning* (Plate 79), carries a clear and unmistakable message. It presents a panorama of the massed allied armies, united and marching to confront the (perceived) belligerence of Germany and Austria-Hungary**.** At the head of the columns rides an ethereal female figure, draped in white and carrying scales in one hand symbolising justice, and in the other and held aloft, an ancient sword symbolising

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[11] The British Government's War Propaganda Bureau was formally established at Wellington House after the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914.

[12] Frantzen, A., *Bloody Good – Chivalry, Sacrifice and the Great War,* (University of Chicago Press, London), 2004, passim.

[13] RA 552 1915: *"Tipperary"*; RA 789 1916: *The creditors*; RA 445 1917: "*Fraternité*"; RA 691 1917: *Anno Domini 1917*; RA 544 1918: *The altar*; RA 206 1920: *The silence.*



Plate 79 ***The Reckoning***

retribution. The flowing dress from this apparition is from an earlier classical time and there is a sense that it is leading a crusade for good or an holy alliance. To the left are the commanders of the British Empire under the Union Jack with a well moustached staff officer at the centre flanked by Australian slouch hats and Indian turbans. The British armies are all in khaki emphasising their modern approach to war. In the centre is “gallant little Belgium”, a smaller column of battle wounded beneath a tattered black, yellow and red tricolour. To the right under the French and Russian tricolours are horseman in more traditional and brightly coloured 19th–century military uniforms which include silver helmets and Cossack hats. Behind can be seen the colours of the Japanese and Dutch followed by endless columns folding over the rolling hills to the horizon. It is a clear day with visibility unlimited and their fixed stare ahead is a sign of their determination and optimism. The message is clear; that of unity between nations in a crusade against Germanic aggression, and that righteousness and justice is guiding and endorsing them in their cause. Dollman’s 1914 painting seeks to legitimise Britain’s commitment to the war and can also be interpreted as a call to arms. Being the early days of conflict, it cannot yet reflect on the horrors and agonies to come.

The rolling hills bear a strong resemblance to the South Downs of England, painted by Dollman many times from his country retreat beneath Ditchling Beacon. The construction of the scene also bears a striking similarity to his *Famine*.[14] A ghost like figure with up-stretched arms is central to both — in the former leading the brigades of the Good and in the latter columns of wolves with an advanced guard of black ravens representing evil and symbolising Death. In both the procession is from right background to left foreground over rolling hills which are symbolically denuded of vegetation. However *The Reckoning,* as its title suggests, is focused in optimism and redemption. *Famine* offers little hope.

The Reckoning was a symbolist painting that deals with the collective actions of nations and notions of righteousness. In marked contrast, his next painting *"Tipperary"* (Plate 80) was concerned with lower and more intimate themes. Exhibited in the very early days of the war, *"Tipperary"* depicts a congenial group of soldiers walking, ahead of heavily laden supply wagons towards the front. There are no wounded and they are singing with heads high, and all are in fine spirits. One is using his hat as a wind shield to light the cigarette of his comrade. An officer at the head is smoking a pipe. The road is wet and muddy and a soldier to the rear is assisting a wheel from a rut, suggesting that this current task and indeed what lies ahead may not necessarily be easy — but the sun is breaking through and there is a clear optimism and confidence in their faces, swagger and song. The title of the painting and their marching song is from the music hall "Its a long, long way to Tipperary", written in 1912.[15] "*Tipperary*" reprsents the positive mood and optimism of England, seemingly shared by Dollman, during the first year of the war that it would be a short and brief encounter and something of an adventure from which "they would be home by Christmas".

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[14] RA 847 1904.

[15] Tipperary was a British music hall and marching song written by Jack Judge and Harry Williams for a bet on the 30 January 1912. Early in the war the Irish Connaught Rangers sang this song as they marched through Boulogne on 13 August 1914 which was subsequently reported in the *Daily Mail*. The song was then adopted widely by the British Army. See Gibbons, V., *Jack Judge: The Tipperary Man*, (Sandwell Community Library Service, West Midlands), 1998, passim.



Plate 80 "*Tipperary*"

From the time Dollman painted "*Tipperary*" up until about 1916, all representations of the War in art were unofficial. Art depicting the unfolding events had been made until then by fighting soldiers at the front and non-combatants, who observed first hand the events and effects of war.[16] However, that year the secret War Propaganda Bureau recruited, with appropriate military rank, its first official war artist, 2nd Lieutenant Muirhead Bone (1876 – 1953). Bone was immediately dispatched for a tour of the front in a chauffeur driven car.[17] He was a Scot and a graphic artist who produced approximately 150 drawings at the front in a short period of time. He composed his war drawings in a traditional style which was highly regarded and widely published, although criticised by some as being a "deadpan realism".[18]

Those artists who followed included some already serving as soldiers, such as Paul Nash (1889 – 1946), Stanley Spencer (1891 – 1959), and Christopher R. W. Nevinson (1889 – 1946) — and others who were too old for active duty. The scheme was initially established for propaganda purposes but was broadened in 1918 under the British War Memorial Committee by Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Information. It

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[16] Apart from two official photographers who both held commissions, the taking of pictures on the Western Front was absolutely forbidden and accompanied a technical penalty of death by firing squad.

[17] Chilvers, I., "Official War Art" in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford), 2003.

[18] Gough. P., "Why Paint war? British and Belgium Artists in World War One" – British Library article reproduced at http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/why-paint-war-british-and-belgian-artists. Last accessed 11 December 2014.

ultimately evolved to become an official visual war record that is now central to historic interpretations of national conflict museums and state memorials. In total, some ninety artists produced official images of the war for the British Government.[19] It is important to understand the purpose and style of this official art in considering the role of the home artists, and their depiction of events and effects of the war.



Plate 81 ***Howitzer Firing*** **P. Nash, Imperial War Museum**



Plate 82 ***Travoys Arriving with Wounded at Dressing Station at Smol,*** **1919, S. Spencer**

In contrast to Bone and his conservative, authentic style, those selected after him were generally considered to be *avant-garde* and overwhelmingly modernist.[20] Of these, Nash, a progressive and a still relatively young artist in his twenties, was a strong proponent of the European styles of abstraction and surrealism, and attuned to rapidly evolving contemporary tastes in art which had accelerated in Britain from the turn of the century (Plate 81). Stanley Spencer (later knighted) was another young English artist who saw the earlier days of the war from the medical corps (Plate 82). Notable portrait artists, William Orpen (knighted 1918) and John Singer Sargent, demonstrated that they were also capable of capturing the more grisly aspects of war, especially in its later years. Orpen's *Zonnebeke* (Plate 83), with its image of absolute devastation of the Flanders' town of the same name, clearly

[19] Simkin, J., "War Propaganda Bureau", at http://spartacus-educational.com/FWWwpb.htm. Last accessed 11 December 2014.

[20] Bone said that he painted "war as it is". Further, he was not constrained by the direction and restrictions that the second wave of official war artists were given. See article by Gough, P., "Why Paint war? British and Belgium Artists in World War One".



Plate 83 *Zonnebeke*, 1918, W. Orpen

indicates that any earlier romance associated with the notion of war was completely gone by 1918.

The agony of war is also felt in Sargent's late war classical frieze painting *Gassed* that depicts a line of blinded young men in agony feeling their way forward on a battlefield between the dead, literally as the blind leading the blind.[21] This painting retained more of a naturalistic style and is one example of an artist who did not need to resort to modernism to capture the new brutal style of warfare on the front.

Younger artists like Christopher Nevinson were drawn to war "partly because Futurism had tended to glorify the gun, armoured car and battleship, and violence in general."[22] Sue Malvern in her comprehensive analysis of modern art in the First World War observed "the veracity of the younger artists vindicated pre-war avant-gardism by its fitness to represent the almost unknowable and unprecedented experience of the Great War."[23]

Unlike these official war artists, Dollman had no direct experience of the front but, like most British citizens, he had knowledge by association. His son, Captain (John) Guy Dollman, was a bomb demolition expert who had been wounded, and an extended visit by his Colonel cousin from the front in France provided him insights above the level of war propaganda. Like other citizens, his knowledge was also informed by official photographs from the front published in newspapers and illustrated magazines.

Nevertheless, Dollman had no interest in depicting troops advancing with bayonets fixed across no-man's land to take enemy trenches, horses straining to drag artillery through the mud, monstrous cannons pulverising an enemy, explicit bravery or

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[21] John Singer Sargent painted *Gassed* in 1918 – 1919. It is currently in the collection of the Imperial War Museum, London.

[22] Ferguson, J., *The Arts in Britain In Word War 1*, (Stainer & Bell, London), 1980, p. 26.

[23] Malvern, S., *Modern Art, Britain and the Great War*, (Yale, New Haven), 2004, p. 93.

heroism, or the bodies of the defeated in the mud trenches or in bomb craters. Rather, his response to this war in the works he produced can be seen at two levels. On the first, and unlike much of the work done by the official artists, he humanised and personalised the actors in his *"Fraternité", The Creditors* and *"Tipperary"* with strong depictions of the human spirit, comradeship and selflessness in the context of war. In these paintings, people are subjects and are treated individually rather than as members of a collective or used as staffage to a battle landscape. At the second, he employs symbolism to provide a strong moral narrative in *"Anno Domini 1917"* described earlier, and *The Altar*. *"The Reckoning"* (good confronting evil) is the one painting that does not fit neatly this characterisation. It contains symbolism but is rather concerned with the morality of nations than the effect of modern war on individuals. Painted in the summer of 1914, those effects were yet to be experienced.

Geometric modernism might have been the appropriate way to boldly capture the mechanically driven military horrors of the front, but it lacked the subtlety of traditional styles necessary to achieve what Dollman intended.[24]

In 1916 Dollman first displayed his *The creditors* (Plate 84) at the Royal Academy summer exhibition.[25] This painting had little in common with the work of yet to be appointed official war artists. It is painted in a naturalistic, realistic manner, its subjects are distinctively individual and the scene is set in central London, well from the front line. On a park bench, a cast iron frame type that is still commonly found in London Parks, seated are four servicemen in uniform**.** All display some type of injury and are accompanied by a uniformed nurse. The view is looking east along Rotten Row with buildings and spires above the tree line towards the City.[26] It is sunny but their heavy clothes, the leafy trees and the year beside the artist's signature indicate it is cool day in the summer of 1916. The two soldiers on the left of the seat, one a kilted Scot with a head wound, and the second a bandaged foot**,** are lost in quiet

[24] For an analysis of the relationship between modernism and the war machine see essay: Hopson, C., "Responding to War, British Artists in WW1" at Academia@edu. Last accessed 8 January 2015.

[25] RA 789 1916. (dated 1915 – 1916)

[26] Letter: Colonel Walter Dollman to wife Rose, 20 May 1916. On visiting J. C. Dollman in London he wrote "First of all we went through Hyde Park and saw Rotten Row, the Albert Hall, saw the Serpentine, and to the spot Charlie used as a setting and background for his latest picture, The Creditors."

contemplation. The former is balancing pen and writing paper on his knee, the other looking blankly ahead. The Scot is showing a medal ribbon which must be either the 1914 Star (Battle of Mons) or the 1915/16 Star.[27] The two other soldiers are engaging the young nurse**,** also in uniform. It may be intended that the four soldiers represent England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the sacrifice of each, but the insignias of other than the Scot are not discernible. One of these four also has no bandages or obvious wounds but holds a walking stick, suggesting that not all wounds are physical. The presence of the young nurse in military uniform symbolises the active



Plate 84 ***The creditors***

contribution of women to the war effort. Walking forward in middle distance is a soldier with an arm in sling, accompanied by a well dressed woman. The inclusion of this fifth soldier is an over-paint of the original image which is now in the collection of the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. Mass produced prints by London fine engraver and print maker, Frost and Reed Pty. Ltd.**,** of the original painting in 1916 indicate that under the study of this soldier is the image of a well dressed woman. The added soldier

[27] Joslin, E., Litherland, A., and Simpkin, B., (eds), *British Battles and Medals,* (Spink, London), 1988, p. 236.

appears to be an officer in putties, carrying a swagger stick in his good hand. Why Dollman chose to later introduce an injured officer to the scene is interesting. His inclusion suggests that the officer class was also exposed to injury, about which Dollman had first-hand knowledge through the gassing by chlorine of his cousin in Flanders, and explosion injuries suffered by his army Captain son, the bomb specialist. A perambulator and a young boy in sailors' dress with a scooter also share the path, symbols of both renewal and optimism as well as what the sacrifice is all for.

Dollman's overarching message in this work is clear. The four soldiers represent heroism and selflessness by British servicemen, and the nurse the contribution by womanhood. The injured demeanour of the servicemen also indicates the human suffering and casualty of war. They had no say in the political formation of the conflict nor would they directly benefit from the industry of war or any imperial profits, yet they were made to take the brunt of the pain and suffering. The given title, *The creditors* emphasises where the debt lies — and what is owed as a consequence of political and diplomatic failures.

In the following year, Dollman exhibited his "*Fraternité"* (Plate 85) in which he again portrayed casualties of war. This time the scene is closer to the front and depicts the evacuation of the lightly wounded on foot. Unlike the sense of human waste created in *Harvest* ten years earlier, also depicting a withdrawal from the front, this painting carries a positive meaning of camaraderie and ties which transcend nations and cultures. Dollman again remains true to his traditional style of descriptive realism. In the distance and across the shell ravaged landscape, smoke is seen rising from a town, probably the location of the battle, and a single tree trunk is all that stands between. Along a muddy road leading away from the front a French medic in military grey is providing balance to an injured countryman. Also supporting the injured Frenchman is a British soldier in khaki who in turn has both arm and head injuries. Immediately to the right a British soldier is carrying a rifle and looks towards the injured Frenchman with some concern. Just clear of the road a soldier is pausing to light a cigarette**;** he carries a German picklehaube helmet as a trophy, symbolising some success in battle. Further French and British troops follow in the direction of a road sign pointing to safety. The road is wet, but the sun is shining on this damaged collection of men. The narrative is of human bonding at both an individual and national level, and



Plate 85 "*Fraternité*"

the French spelling of the painting's title emphasises the connection across cultures. This 1917 realistic representation of the ravaged landscape is in marked contrast with the style of the modernist painted images of the western front which were later made and released.[28]

His painting *Anno Domini 1917* (Plate 86) takes a very different perspective from his earlier war inspired works centred on human notions of retribution, camaraderie, indebtedness and fraternity. By 1917 the conflict in France had been reduced to muddy trench warfare, and fields blasted and potholed by endless bombardment. Any romantic notions of war were well past and the horrific losses and suffering on both sides had become very apparent. Official war artists were now representing the more

[28] All non-official photography had been banned at the front and in early 1917 the official war artists were yet to do their work leaving only newspaper descriptions and censored official images to inform his construction.

gruesome aspects of war in their work including the dead of both sides. The futility of it all had become obvious.[29]

Anno Domini 1917 is a symbolist painting which decries the conflict with its increasing sense of pointlessness and waste. It is also draws on a religious theme. War paintings imbued with spiritual sentiment and the notions of resurrection and immortality were not uncommon during the war with images such as *The Great Sacrifice* (1914) by James Clark (1858 – 1943) depicting the Christ figure on a cross beside a dead soldier, or his *The Great Reward* (1917) showing a soldier being elevated from the battlefield by an angel.[30] Spiritual paintings were not restricted to the



Plate 86 ***Anno Domini 1917***

[29] See William Orpen's 1918 *Zonnebeke,* earlier.

[30] Many of these works were published in *The Graphic*. *The Great Sacrifice* was published as a special souvenir photogravure with the Christmas 1914 Edition and proved so popular that the newspaper commissioned its sequel, *The Great Reward*.

dead and a number were painted with visions of Christ or Mary visiting wounded on the battlefield — as by George Hillyard Swinstead (1860 – 1926) in *The White Comrade* (1915), and in *The Messenger* (1916) by William Yates Titcomb (1858 – 1930). Reports during the early years of the war of battlefield visions underpinned the popularity of these works. Other artists like George Clausen (1852 – 1944) employed a simple field cross motif in spiritual studies rather than make intricate studies of Christ or Mary.[31] This group of artists inclined toward spiritual themes were contemporaries of Dollman, if not just a little younger, and all employed a traditional style. In contrast there is little evidence of spiritualism in the war paintings of the younger modernists.

Like Clausen, Dollman avoided popular compositions around visions. In *Anno Domini 1917*, he depicts a panorama of small crude white crosses haphazardly stretching across the snow-covered wasteland to the horizon. They throw long shadows forward towards the figure of Christ, robed in purple, wearing a crown of thorns, and looking across the wasted plane.[32] The crosses are in clusters as if in loose military formation, and all are facing towards the figure. The scene is observed from behind so His expression and hands are obscured. His head is silhouetted by a halo and is lowered slightly as if in sadness.

The symbolism of Dollman's *Anno Domini 1917* has been interpreted in a number of ways. Palmer-Fernandez in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and War* contends that Dollman's painting symbolises "harvesting the souls" by the saviour, a theme attempted also by others to create "a profound expression of grief" although with the "crosses [set] in realistic settings".[33] This interpretation is supported by Peter Harrington in is article "Religious and Spiritual Themes in British Academic Art during the Great War".[34] There is still further symbolism to be extracted here. The motif of Christ juxtaposed into the fields of Flanders symbolises His personal sacrifice for all

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[31] George Clausen's 1916 painting, *Youth Morning,* has its focus in a cluster of about 50 small crosses set on a grassy landscape.

[32] *The Holy Bible*: The crown of thorns and the purple robe are attributed to Christ in the New Testament. See Mark 15:17 and John 19:2.

[33] Palmer-Fernandez, G., (ed.), The Encyclopedia of Religion and War, (New York, Routledge), 2003, p. 23, Note: Palmer-Fernandez incorrectly attributes the painting to James Dollman.

[34] Harrington, P., "Religious and Spiritual Themes in British Academic Art during the Great War", *First World War Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, October 2011, p. 156.

mankind. The individual crosses represent sacrifice for country. Richenda Roberts supports this contention of dual sacrifice arguing that the purple robe and the crown of thorns relate to Christ's torment, crucifixion and sacrifice on the cross.[35] Roberts also suggests a relationship between Dollman's figure and the Christ of William Holden Hunt (1827 – 1910) in his painting *The Light of the World*. Composed over the years 1851 to 1853, Hunt's image is of an entreating Christ in purple robe and with crown of thorns but facing the beholder. Roberts suggests that by presenting the view of Christ with his back to the observer, Dollman symbolised that through engaging in the bloody and dehumanising conflict of this war, "society had rejected the redeeming implications of Christ's sacrifice espoused in biblical texts such as Revelation (3:20) and Hunt's painting."[36]

Besides any symbolism of harvesting or sacrifice of souls, there remains an additional layer of meaning. Unlike the visionary paintings associated with spiritual visitations on the battlefield which incorporated a sense of martyrdom and elevation with rewards into the next life, this is a very desolate scene. There are no mourners. The British government had decided not to repatriate bodies and here it is only Christ that has not forsaken them. The endless crosses on a barren, snow covered landscape and the lack of any sense of purpose, achievement or optimism, point to the futility and waste of it all. What differentiates Dollman's work is that it highlights the unmitigated sense of despair from the great losses by 1917 and the growing social sense of pointlessness. The Christ figure is not gesturing but simply standing, head slightly lowered, surveying the waste across a bleak environment accentuated by the cold and snow. If Dollman had been seeking to show respect, gratitude or hope in this work he might have set the crosses in fields of flowers and colour, as did official war artist George Butler (1872 – 1936) and others.[37] In a commemorative exhibition catalogue of 1925 Dollman's painting was listed with the different title, *Service*, accompanied with the following description:

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[35] Roberts, R.A., *"Art of a Second Order", The First World War from the British Home Front Perspective*, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012, p. 150.

[36] Ibid, p. 154.

[37] George Edmund Butler was an official war artist of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

> Christ gazing at the resting place of those who gave their lives in service during the Great War. Apart from the subject matter this picture gives excellent opportunity for the study of composition. The central figure is of course the most important, but the shadows on the ground from the figure as well as those of the crosses send the spectator's attention in the direction of Christ's thoughts.[38]

The current whereabouts of the painting is not known. It was initially acquired by the Mrs Ida Tatham for the Tatham Gallery in Natal, South Africa.[39] A public subscription from those local South African families affected by the war had helped raise the purchase price. In 1961, with Victorian and Edwardian paintings out of favour, it and over one hundred other paintings were de-accessioned and in 1963 sold at auction with no record of the purchasers now being available.[40] A maquette of Dollman's painting, however, has survived and is in excellent condition. The colours in the draft are un-faded and probably better represent the original colour purple of the robe, than does the light affected image from the surviving early print shown above.[41]

In mid 1918 Dollman exhibited his major work for that year at the Academy's Summer Exhibition. Entitled *The altar* (Plate 87) it is a study of grief and mourning. It was at the time when the war had reached its final desperate stages with enormous losses being incurred on both sides. Throughout the war, British society dealt with death very differently from the earlier Victorian years. Christine Brouchier argues that instead of a period of prolonged public mourning, "the death of a soldier was

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[38] Text provided by Brendan Bell, current Director of Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg South Africa, Letter: January 2015.

[39] Mrs Ida Tatham founded the Tatham Art Gallery in 1903. A handwritten postscript to a report written by Mrs Tatham to the Pietermaritzburg City Council (13 August 1949) provided by Mr Bell provides some history: "May I add a reference to another picture that deserves notice. In 1917 J. C. Dollman's painting "A.D. 1917" was shown in several galleries in England. It gave a message from Flanders to the bereaved in the war of 1914 – 1918. I brought back photographs of it, and it's message was so appealing, I had no difficulty in collecting [pounds] 250 to purchase it and it now hangs in our Gallery — at last in a place where it may be seen and give its message, and I am grateful."

[40] "Tempest in the Tatham" in *The Witness*, 14 April 2010,

[41] The artist study for the painting was given to Colonel W. Dollman in April 1917 and is now in the private collection of his grandson, Chris Colyer in Adelaide. The final work closely resembles the draft sketch.



Plate 87 ***The Altar***

something that many people believed could not be mourned, as dying for 'the cause' according to the propaganda of the war was something to be celebrated rather than lamented."[42] Also, the decision not to repatriate home the dead meant that there was no formal end to mourning by way of funeral or other social norms. To further accentuate matters, there was often no grave to be found on foreign soil at which relatives and family could focus their grief. Rather the later entombment by government of an 'unknown soldier' from some battlefield of the conflict was meant to symbolise the collective national sorrow for all those that had been killed and to be a mark of mourning for all war dead.

Dollman was keen to show that, while public mourning and sorrow might be discouraged as unhelpful to the war effort, private mourning continued to be very real. This painting describes the personal and silent grief of one woman for her lost husband. The widow, wearing a black mourning robe draped to the ground and black scarf, stands transfixed before a large stone altar memorial raised on a plinth. Her face is largely obscured and she holds a wreath in her shadow. The altar is partly covered by a flag with flowers on top and to the side, left by earlier visitors. She is a solitary figure standing still in quiet reflection before placing her own tribute to her husband, interred in some ground far away, possibly unmarked. The branches overhanging the secluded and quiet memorial corner of this place are showing early flowers of spring, suggesting renewal, and the sun is shining, giving some sense of peace.

When *The altar* was first published in 1918 as a feature image in the *Illustrated London News,* it carried the sub-text 'A Study of Mourning Widowhood'.[43] The painting

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[42] Brouchier, C. "Rituals of Mourning: Bereavement, Grief and Mourning in the First World War" in *Gateway*, Issue 4, Summer 2001. Found at: grad.usask.ca. Last accessed 5 January 2015.

[43] *Illustrated London News,* 11 May 1918.

received prominent public attention following the Academy's summer exhibition. This was probably because it was so different from all the other images of remembrance associated with public memorials painted at the end of and after the war, including Dollman's own *The silence* (see below). It asserted the need to reconcile with individual grief, if only in private. The woman in black is symbolic of the sorrow of all women who had suffered loss in the war. Yet, Dollman still complied with the contemporary notion that both private and individual mourning in war was primarily the preserve of women.[44]

The current whereabouts of this painting is also unknown and reproductions are only monochromatic. However, it is not difficult to imagine that Dollman would have applied a sombre palette of drab sandstone for the masonry wall and altar, a shade approaching black for the widow contrasted with small elements of strong colour in the floral tributes.

Dollman's final wartime inspired work *The silence* (Plate 87) was exhibited at the Royal Academy in the summer of 1920.[45] Again, the present location of the painting is not known and the monochrome image below is taken from *Royal Academy Illustrated* of that year. [46]

The Silence is a post war study of the first memorial service at the Cenotaph, London.[47] It portrays a large and inclusive solemn occasion with wreaths, honour guards and a sea of people all focussed on the imposing *art deco* structure. In reality, the Cenotaph sits in the middle of the main road at Whitehall closely surrounded by overshadowing buildings but Dollman has painted it as though it is the only structure set in an endless human landscape which is paying silent tribute, in the words inscribed and borrowed from Rudyard Kipling, "to our glorious dead". Dollman has painted the monument standing alone to represent it as a universal memorial which does not belong to any place.

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[44] Roberts, R. A., "*Art of a Second Order"*, p. 230. Other painters who painted solitary women mourning those who were lost include George Clausen with his *Youth Mourning* (1916) and Evelyn De Morgan with *The Mourners* (undated) and *Ignoto* (undated),

[45] RA 206 1920.

[46] *Royal Academy Illustrated 1920,* (Walter Judd, London), 1920, p. 123.

[47] Cenotaph is from the Greek κενοτάφιον meaning an "empty tomb".

The exhibition of the painting at the Royal Academy in the summer of 1920 establishes the date of the scene as the 11 November 1919 and the laying of a wreath at the monument by the King, George V.[48] As only black and white reproductions of this painting can now be found some additional appreciation is from a unexpected source. A letter from St James Court dated very early in 1922 from Princess Marie Louise, grand daughter of Queen Victoria, thanks Dollman for providing the "very beautiful" miniature painting entitled *Silence* (RL 26949) (Plate 88) to the Queens Dolls House.[49] As an image of the miniature could not initially be made available, a description provided by the curator of the Royal Collection gave an indication of the



Plate 88 ***The Silence***

[48] This first Cenotaph, built only a few weeks before, was made from wood and plaster and only intended to be a temporary structure. It was so popular that it was decided to replace it with an exact replica made from Portland stone and was unveiled the following year as the national memorial.

[49] Letter: Princess Marie Louise to J. C. Dollman, 25 January 1922, (original in private collection in Adelaide).

colours, it being described as “an impressionistic view of the cenotaph with a golden light behind and a sea of heads around the monument in blues and purples.”[50] An image of the miniature has now been made available from the Royal Collection for the purpose of this study (Plate 89). It is as described by the curator and permits some sense of how the colours in the prime painting may have presented. There are no other obvious examples of Dollman painting in a neo-impressionist style either before or after, although he had experimented with colour in his landscapes.



Plate 89 *Silence*, The Queens Doll House

Only months earlier Dollman’s youngest son, Hereward, had died of sleeping sickness — ironically after he had discovered the parasite in the tsetse fly which is the cause of the disease.[51] Dollman would have been in mourning for Hereward at the time he painted this work.[52] It was an unusual time to experiment in an impressionist style. This was the last of Dollman’s war related paintings and he returned to his more traditional and realist style in the summer of 1921.

Dollman’s War Paintings in Context

A chronological consideration of the subject and treatment in Dollman’s principal seven war inspired paintings shows that they are temporally consistent with the changes in national emotion and mood throughout that period. At the beginning of the conflict, Mosse argues, men flocked to recruitment offices driven by “patriotism, the

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[50] Letter: The Royal Collection Picture Library, St James's Palace to W. J. Dollman, 25 September 2007.

[51] Obituary, Hereward Chune Dollman, *The Entomologist’s Monthly Magazine*, June 1919, p. 139.

[52] Shortly after Hereward’s death, Dollman broke his line of war related paintings to paint *“for he believed in his God” Dan.vi.* This painting of Daniel putting himself before the lions with his faith was possibly an analogy to his son who believed in Science and went to Africa, symbolically and literally into “the lions den”.

search for a purpose in life, love of adventure, and ideals of masculinity".[53] They were a generation which no longer knew the reality of war. The invasion of neutral Belgium made for a sense of injustice that required a remedy, and peer pressure and the support of women also played an important role. After the horrors of the Somme and two years of trench warfare, the introduction of conscription and the publication of endless lists of war dead, the taste for war turned bitter with the marked change in social attitude being reflected in the poetry of Wilfred Owen, *Anthem for Dammed Youth,* and Siegfried Sassoon, *Suicide in the Trenches*.[54] The importance of allies was then very apparent as was the arrival of the United States into fray in mid 1917. The government propaganda machine had by then been put into full effort. These later years were full of despair for many, until finally wars end and the opportunity to grieve and put up monuments to the dead.

In alignment with changing public and national perceptions, in 1914 Dollman's subject was retribution, in 1915 camaraderie and optimism, in the middle war years fraternity between allies and indebtedness to those who made sacrifice, by 1918 despair and sorrow and, finally, silent and solemn reflection. Dollman had no interest in the mechanics and physical detail of conflict but rather was concerned with the consequences of war, and relationships between men rather than between man and war. The market for graphic images of actual conflict was strong, and was underpinned and sponsored by the official war art scheme, magazine and journals, and war reporting. Yet reviews of exhibitions at the Royal Academy and elsewhere indicate that there was also an interest in the more sensitive and human interpretations of a conflict that had emotionally touched everyone. In publications like *The Great War*, the selected "notable pictures" from the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1917 included combat pictures by J. Prinsep Beadle, *Battle of the Somme: Attack of the Ulster Division, 1 July 1916*, and W. B. Wollen, *The London Territorials at Pozieres, 23 July 1916*. Included also were more intimate studies incorporating old school realism and collected under the title page, "Glimpses of the Pity of War". Here were included

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[53] Mosse, G.L., *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford), 1991, p. 54.

[54] Both Owen and Sassoon were English officers and poets. Owen was initially with the Artists' rifles.

paintings such as Dollman's "*Fraternité",* and Gemmell Hutchinson's *A Stray Shot* which depicted a wounded and dying nun lying clasping a crucifix in some dimly lit and damaged ancient building.[55]

The strong public appeal of Dollman's realist and descriptive works at the time was demonstrated by the mass production as large colour prints, and wide distribution of his *The creditors, "Fraternité"* and *"Tipperary"* by publishers Frost and Reed. The *creditors* also received wide publication in English language periodicals, newspapers and magazines such as the *New York Herald Tribune* and *The Graphic*.

Although the realism of the older and more traditional artists enjoyed popularity in the broader press, it was the work of the modernists, particularly through the official war art programme, that populated the collections and walls of war memorials and museums, most notably the Imperial War Museum, and which were to become the ready reference for war art and war history in the following decades.

However, immediately following cessation of conflict and while many art critics were waxing positive on the new art, the public perception of the modernist paintings in public national gallery collections was much more critical and less accepting. In December 1919, The Royal Academy hosted an exhibition of war art in support of a proposal for the establishment of a separate art memorial. Some 925 pictures and sculptures were displayed of which the great majority represented official war art from the Ministry of Information.[56] The popular press was far from complementary, being particularly scathing of the work of the "moderns". "Extremism in art was readily equated with subversion" and some of the boldest criticism argued that the paintings were unworthy of the fighting men.[57] *The Morning Post* declared "the fine men who fought in the great war are represented, either wilfully or through ineptitude as clockwork manikins (sic)", the *Manchester Evening News* carried the headline "Heroes made to Look Like Clowns", and the art critic of the *Daily Mirror* lamented "when I got into the next gallery I knew what they meant by the horrors of war — it's the pictures".[58] In Parliament, questions were asked of the government about the "freak pictures"

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[55] Wilson, H. W., and Hammerton, J. A., (eds), "Notable pictures from the RA Summer Exhibition 1917", in *The Great War,* Vol. IX, (Amalgamated, London), 1918, p. 147.

[56] Harries, M. and S., *The War Artists,* (Michael Joseph, London), 1983, p. 150.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Newspaper reports reproduced in Ibid.

which received a sympathetic response from the Minister of his "astonishment that most of the art critics consider them very fine works of art". [59]

This perception is now reversed. Today it is principally the work of those modernists and their interpretation of conflict, the brutal war machines and landscape, and the slaughter through their new geometric forms, rather than the finer, prescriptive art of older Victorian realists, more concerned with humanity with their social and intimate responses to the Great War, that prevails. Over time, both the remoteness of events and a desire to view war art as a primary source of war history rather than a source of human association, has given further ground to the moderns. War museums have become the principal repository of war art and the Imperial War Museum in particular has almost exclusively promoted the artwork of male combatants at the front. There is a further possible reason for the diminished interest in the traditional style of painting war. Works which reveal emotions, and sentiments of sorrow, personal loss and indebtedness, personalise the events which, despite the distance of time may still evoke discomfort. Richenda Roberts offers a fourth reason. On the "home front", women together with injured servicemen had displaced men in employment and as a result "feminine authority and masculine weakness" had temporarily upset pre-war values. The reintegration of men into post war society resulted in the re-establishment of masculine authority and recognition of their wartime ordeal. As a result "much art engaging with the home front has been deemed antithetical to established canonical values and written-out of history".[60] An example of the persistent thinking which still tries to exclude perspectives of other than male soldiers in the front line in favour of modernism from the canon of war art can be found in Jonathan Black's 2003 thesis *Neither Beasts, Nor Gods, But Men.* In it he dismisses Dollman's *The creditors* as nothing more than "Victorian *genre*".[61]

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[59] Question tabled by Sir Clement Kinlock-Cooke on 23 February 1920 cited in Ibid.

[60] Roberts, R. A., *"Art of a Second Order"*, p. 16.

[61] Jonathan Black, *'Neither Beasts, Nor Gods, But Men:' Constructions of Masculinity and The Image of The Ordinary British Solider or 'Tommy' in The First World War, Art of C. R. W. Nevinson (1889 – 1946); Eric Henri Kennington (1888 – 1960) and Charles Sargeant Jagger (1885 – 1934),* unpublished PhD thesis, University College, London, January 2003, p. 126, cited in Roberts, R. A., Ibid, p. 129.

Dollman's Contribution to War Art

Dollman's important contribution to war art, alongside that of other prescriptive artists who had grown out of the realist schools of the previous century, was his commentary on the social impact of war, the relationships between soldiers and with family, and the public perceptions which changed significantly over time. The broader sociological considerations and conversations on the impact of war have a valid place alongside any understanding of fighting in the trenches. These interpretative paintings received strong acclaim and were widely published during and immediately after the period of the Great War. They have since been devalued to a "second order" in the general canon of war art and have lost much of their public recognition in favour of official war paintings, the history of war events, and modernism.

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Chapter VIII
GENRE
PICTURES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Background to *Genre*

As the expression *history painting* has come, with time, to embrace a meaning broader than these two words alone might suggest, similarly the art category *genre* painting also requires some decoding to understand its full meaning, context, scope and position in British Victorian art. The descriptive term *genre* derives from the French collective noun for people: *les gens.* When added to 'pictures' as in the phrase 'tableaux des genres' it literally means 'pictures of people'.

The term was originally used in a derogatory sense for art works that did not subscribe to the ideal or the 'grand manner', a prejudice reinforced by Joshua Reynolds who had preached that "art had to be elevated and generalised and not deal with the everyday".[1] By the mid 18th century the term *genre* was being used less pejoratively and was also being applied in its more narrow and current sense of everyday and ordinary scenes, presented in an apparently realistic rather than an idealised way.

Genre painting had its roots in Dutch and Flemish art; amongst its 16th century painters probably the most recognisable today is Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525 – 1569) who depicted peasants in domestic and rural village settings. They were followed in the 17th century by other northern artists such as Isaac van Ostade (1621 – 1649), Aelbert Cuyp (1620 – 1691), Johannes Vermeer (1632 – 1675) and Pieter De Hooch (1629 – 1684), who, as well as capturing rural life, also contemplated middle class domesticity. The relatively smaller scale of these paintings made them attractive for purchase and display in middle class houses of the time.

An interest in paintings depicting scenes of humble and domestic rural and town life also developed in England from the period of William Hogarth (1697 – 1764). The popularity of these works grew to challenge the primacy of history painting in both

[1] Treuherz, J., *Victorian Painting*, (Thames & Hudson, London), 1993, p. 108.

English taste and consumption by the middle of the 19th–century.[2] They differed from landscapes which did not include significant figurative elements although the boundary between *genre* and landscape is often blurred. The physical size of Victorian *genre* paintings crudely corresponded to their position of importance on the ladder of genre hierarchy. English *genre* paintings were typically smaller than history paintings, and bigger than landscape or still life. However, within the category of *genre,* William Powell Firth (1819 – 1909) and his emulator, George Elgar Hicks (1824 – 1914) chose to paint crowd scenes on larger canvasses.[3] What marked all of these works, Julia Thomas argues, was they were "emphatically English" and the "embodiment of a [new] national school of art".[4]

William Frith, a personal favourite of Queen Victoria was perhaps the most notable Victorian *genre* painter. Frith was renowned for his social panoramas which included *Life at the Seaside* and *The Derby Day.*[5] George Hicks was also an influential English *genre* artist, as were William Holman Hunt (1827 – 1910) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882). Scotland had earlier produced David Allan (1744 – 1796) and Sir David Wilkie (1785 – 1841).

Genre, in capturing ordinary life and events on canvas, is often built on a simple, sometimes anecdotal, narrative which highlights the Victorian class divides. It may include any of the social emotions from love to despair, depict old age, portray the toil of labour or simply show general social interactions. *Genre* paintings purport to represent real situations even though the scene might be a construct of the artist that draws on various real experiences or observations.

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2 Altick, R. D., *Painting from Books, Art and Literature in Britain*, *1760 – 1900*, (Ohio University Press, Columbus), 1985, pp. 63 – 65.

3 Examples of the larger works of William Powell Frith include:
The Derby Day, 1856 – 1858, 101.6 cm. x 223.5 cm., Tate Gallery, London, and *Life at the Seaside*, 1851 – 1854, 75.6 cm. x 154 cm., Royal Collection, London.
Examples of the work of George Elgar Hicks: *The General Post Office: One Minute to Six,* 1860, 108 cm. x 153.7 cm., Museum of London, and *Dividend Day at the Bank of England,* 1859, 90 cm. x 135 cm., Bank of England Museum, London.

4 Thomas, J., *Victorian Narrative Painting*, (Tate, Millbank), 2000, p. 36.

5 William Powell Frith was also known for his satirical *A Private View at the Royal Academy, 1881,* in which he, being a strong traditionalist, satirised the influence of Oscar Wilde and the aesthetic movement in English art.

Dollman and *Genre*

The growing public interest in *genre* in the 19th–century was facilitated, in part, by the rapid growth of illustrated magazines and newspapers. They offered engraved wood-block representations of popular paintings to mass readerships, initially produced in black and white, and later sometimes with colour tint. The most important engraved and etched works were awarded the double centre pages in the publications of the day without any typed print on the reverse. A significant component of Dollman's work was aligned to this market. Although he continued to produce *genre* work throughout his career, he was more inclined towards it during his earlier years.

Dollman experimented with a broad spectrum of *genre* subjects. He often highlighted class difference, sometimes with little emotional or sentimental content. At other times he depicted sadness, misfortune and occasionally humour in his characterisations. His compositions included groups of actors engaged in some collective interaction as well as solitary studies.



Plate 90 ***La Malade Imaginaire***

A significant number of Dollman's paintings can be classified as *genre*. Consideration here will be limited to a small but representative group of these various works, chosen to illustrate his versatility as well as his creativity in engaging with everyday subjects.

Beginning with a lighter work, a *genre* painting he first exhibited in 1893 and which was subsequently widely published was his *La Malade Imaginaire* (Plate 90). Dollman's *La Malade* depicts a number of gentlemen and a dog clustered around a well-presented woman in a bath chair at the sea front. They are competing for her attention and she is playing on their affections, as the title suggests, by feigning some illness. As is generally the case, Dollman cannot resist the temptation to import some animal study into the picture, in this case a large dog, which is equally attentive and captivated by the woman as are her other admirers. From their dress it is summer, the colours used are bright and the sun is out, and the mood is light and positive. This painting was subsequently engraved by Paul Hermann Naumann (1851 – 1897) to fit the centre pages of the *Illustrated London News.*[6] The idea for the painting was not new — Dollman had worked the theme of men overly doting on an attractive woman successfully fifteen years earlier in his published wood-block image of *The Ship's Belle* (Plate 91).[7]



Plate 91 ***The Ship's Belle***

Dollman's "*Worse things happen at sea*" (Plate 92), voted picture of the year by public plebiscite at the Royal Academy in 1889, is built around the more serious theme of a highway accident, although it is not without a touch of humour.[8] It was catalogued in *Academy Notes* as "a coach upset on a country road; the passengers in various attitudes of anxiety, helplessness or alarm".[9] The following year this oil painting on canvas was listed as item 61 in an Exhibition of British Art at the

6 *Illustrated London News*, 2 September 1893.
7 *The Graphic*,1878.
8 RA 1118 1889.
9 Blackburn, H., (ed.), *Academy Notes*, (Chatto and Windus, London), 1889.

Exhibition Building on North Terrace, Adelaide, with a list price of 250 pounds.[10]

The painting depicts an unfortunate incident on the road. In constructing this image Dollman departed from a normally serious demeanour to indulge in some



Plate 92 "*Worse things happen at sea*"

amusement in this characterisation of this unhappy ensemble of travellers. This is well described in a contemporary commentary on the work published in the Adelaide newspaper, *The Advertiser*.[11]

> Pictures painted around an incident receive most notice from people who drop into the gallery… and none seem more favoured than J. C. Dollman's "Worse Things Happen at Sea." It is an old-fashioned story and is humorously told. The time is early Victorian, and the types are delineated with a brush that evidently delighted in the serio-comic. George Cruickshank might have suggested it, and Tony Weller might have "sat" for the

[10] *Exhibition of British Art by the Royal Anglo-Australian Society of Artists, Exhibition Building, Adelaide*, (Edgerton and Moore, Melbourne), 1890, p. 21.
To translate this figure to some present value is difficult. By applying historical U.K. inflation data from 'Consumer Price Inflation Since 1750', *Economic Trends* no. 604, pp. 39 - 46, this price equates to about 24,000 British pounds in 2014. *Worse things happen at sea* was subsequently acquired by the Art Gallery of South Australia.

[11] *The Advertiser,* Adelaide, 14 March 1906.

old red-cheeked coachman, who is mopping his brow beside the broken-down mail coach.[12] We at once perceive that the dapper little creature in the skirted coat on the left is a Frenchman, and it is as easy to detect pessimism in the face of the cadaverous individual with the Wellington nose on the right of the coach. The young ladies in coalscuttle hats and the old party with the little boys are equally self-revealing, even when their faces are turned from us. It is an awkward catastrophe, and the driver is seeking to soothe the irate feelings of his passengers with the consoling reflection that "worse things happen at sea." One feels at once that the artist was a born raconteur. Moreover, he relishes the story as he tells it. Many a chuckle must have escaped him as he filled in those humorous touches.

Another large and finely detailed work is Dollman's *London to York Coach outside the Black Swan Inn* (Plate 93). It also has an underlying theme of coaching. It was painted in 1906, the bicentenary of the first coach service from London to York and back, a journey that took four days each way.[13] A Black Swan Inn still exists in the city of York today and is of Jacobean style architecture. However, the Black Swan which then served as a major coaching inn, also a medieval building, was on nearby Coney Street. Its façade was changed in 1790 to a Georgian style. It is therefore tempting to consider that Dollman's image is set in Coney Street. However, a silk 'Steven-graph' weaving (Plate 94) which was exhibited in 1879 at the York Exhibition suggests this is not the case. It indicates the coach actually ran between two Black Swan inns, one in York and the other at Holborn, London, and suggests the image of the inn façade is of that in London.[14] Some further evidence for this is in the width of the road depicted in front of the inn. It is more consistent with the Holborn than the York address.

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[12] George Cruikshank (1792 – 1878) was a British caricaturist and illustrator who was likened as a contemporary of Hogarth in his lifetime. Tony Weller was a character from Charles Dickens' first novel *The Pickwick Papers* where he was depicted as a loquacious coachman.

[13] "Historic Pubs and Inns of York", at http://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/YK/cms/pdf/12-media-culture-Historic%20Inns%20and%20Pubs%20of%20York%202013.pdf. Last accessed 19 October 2015.

[14] Named after Thomas Steven, a Coventry weaver, who adopted local weaving machines to make colourful pictures often used as bookmarks.



Plate 93 ***London to York Coach outside the Black Swan Inn***

A problem with this painting is that Dollman appended the date 1706 to the title, which represents the date of the inaugural service.[15] However the costumes are clearly not those of early 1700s, being more suggestive of a later period and likely to be early to mid Victorian. The image is therefore more consistent with the first centenary of the inaugural journey, rather than the second.

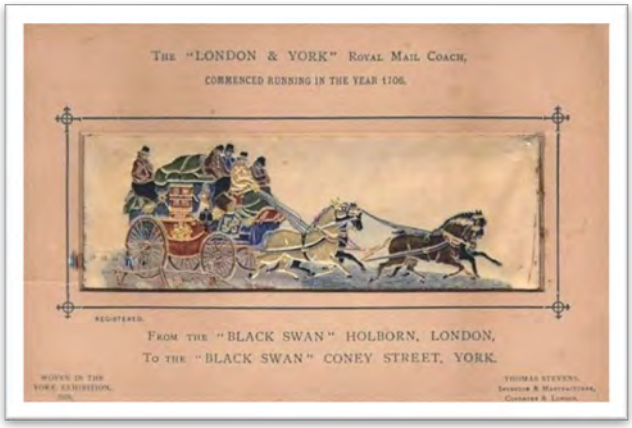


Plate 94 ***London to York*** **'Stephen-graph'**

In this painting, Dollman offers a detailed study of each actor whose status is made obvious by both dress and activity within the painting. As in the larger *genre* paintings of Frith and Hicks, Dollman, to a lesser scale, has created a number of social vignettes in this painting. None of these dominate but rather sit within and

[15] The first coach left on 12 April 1706 at 5.00 a.m.

complement both the overall visual image and the coaching narrative. These individual studies are worked to a high level of detail.

The setting is pre-departure and the coachman in a red coat and cradling a whip in the foreground is in conversation with a dismounted rider accompanied by a dog at his side. Cheaper class passengers climb onto the top of the coach to join the luggage and a glimpse of a premium passenger can be seen through the uncovered window. The London *Black Swan,* with its Jacobean leadlight glass, forms the backdrop. Two young coach hands attend the team, one steadying them as the other adjusts the straps. A young woman brings them water. The hand of a maid can be seen above the horses passing some departing item, possibly bread, to the passenger in left driving seat. The sun is out and the shadows are short, the road is dry and the temperature is warm as indicated by the shirt sleeves of the horse handler and the water maid – the perfect weather for coaching – all suggesting a good prognosis for the journey ahead. The figures are all well composed and proportional, and the study of the horses and the dog give further evidence of both Dollman's ability and passion for painting animals. Unlike "*Worse things happen at sea*", there is no immediate sense of excitement or emotional stress, or even attempts at caricature, this being offered as a not uncommon event. In both these coaching paintings Dollman employs earthy tones and red, with small complementary additions of blue and green, which is consistent with his later palette.

These two coaching studies tell us a lot about Dollman. Firstly, his keen eye for observation and recreating detail is obvious with one of the studies involving a normal and the other an abnormal but not uncommon situation. In both he has captured all the essential elements that one might associate with coaching. Of the physical aspects, the horse and animal studies within the frames are fine and convincing and the technical aspects and all the subtleties of vehicle architecture and harnessing appear present. Other inanimate objects like baggage and game are appropriate, proportional and well constructed. The social narratives are built around dress, task and class difference and include interactions that are credible as well as incorporating various emotions where warranted. Both paintings display a convincing sense of realism.

Dollman clearly enjoyed coaching as well as portraying other horse drawn

vehicles as subjects. In addition to these two *genre* studies he painted coaches into his sporting pictures of *The Hunt* and *The Refuge* which dealt with fox hunting, in his dramatic portrayal of a 'knight of the road' in *The Highwayman,* and in paintings of London work horses, as in his *Les Misérables*. Coaching was a popular *genre* subject with painters in the 18th century and well into the 19th–century. Probably the most famous coaching painter was James Pollard (1792 – 1867) and one from many examples of his work is *Coaching Incident – Royal Mail Coach Interrupting a Fox Chase,* which describes a similar but less dramatic event to that of Dollman's *The Hunt*. A contemporary, William Joseph Shayer (1787 – 1879), also created a number of similar works and in 1878 painted his *Coach and Four Outside An Inn.* They were followed by Samuel Henry Alken (1810 – 1894) who also chose the York Coach on the open road in winter as a subject in his *The Royal Mail Coach, York to London.*[16] Dollman's coaching paintings represent the end of this golden period of coaching, the road vehicles being steadily displaced by rail coaches after 1847. Dollman's paintings were also made at a time when most other artists had left the subject. They benefited from the greater sense of detail, realism and narrative that is particularly associated with the later Victorian period and which is not apparent to the same degree in earlier similar works by artists such as Pollard and Alken.

A number of Dollman's *genre* paintings were also designed to elicit some sympathy from the observer. Sentiments of disappointment and rejection are clearly evident in Dollman's *No Sale* (Plate 95), dated 1885. The treatment of this work is very different from his busy coaching studies. A farmer is heading home with head slightly bowed in deep thought and with hands firmly in his pockets, signifying resignation. His dog is leading but does not seem particularly animated and mimics the posture of its master. The day is miserable, misty and wet and the background is lost in the mist, ingredients in the painting designed to add to the sense of gloom.[17]

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[16] James Pollard exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy from 1821 to 1839 and specialised in couching and horse studies. See Selway, N. C., *James Pollard: 1792 – 1867, Painter of the age of Coaching*, (F. Lewis, Leigh on Sea), 1965. Samuel Henry Alken began a career as a miniaturist but changed to sporting and coaching figures.

[17] In 1856 John Ruskin coined the term "pathetic fallacy" to describe the device in literature where behavior of inanimate objects, for example the weather, is made to reflect human emotions. For Ruskin it had negative connotations as it was, in his view, being untruthful.



Plate 95 *No Sale*

The drabness of the day is further emphasized by Dollman's application of a limited colour palette using browns and earthy tones. The theme of a person in deep contemplation was often used by other *genre* painters. Examples include *The Sonnet* (1839) by William Mulready and George Hicks' *Companion to Manhood* (1863) from his triptych *Woman's Mission*. Other *genre* painters exploited the related theme of receiving bad news by letter. In *No Sale* Dollman has made a simple and commonplace event interesting by building an empathy with the farmer and his quiet disappointment.

Dollman's *Before the Magistrate — Unfit for Work* (Plate 96) is a further example of a *genre* painting clearly designed to draw pity from the viewer. Unlike *No Sale*, the sentimental concern here is for the working animal rather than the man. An image of the original work is not available, but a large etched reproduction included in *The Graphic* allows some appreciation of this painting.[18] In the 19th–century many horses were mistreated. A system of spot checks was introduced in London where injured horses and drivers were inspected by magistrates. The painting describes this inspection process with a focus on the central activity — an official making a physical assessment of the animal's health. The formality of the process is emphasised by the recording officer at a desk and the policeman at the door. The

[18] *The Graphic*, 16 November 1878.

horse's handler, made obvious by his working smock and whip, nervously awaits the decision, and the magistrate in the trappings of a gentleman which include top hat and cane, oversees the scene. In this painting, as in Dollman's other *genre* studies, the dress of all the actors clearly indicates the social hierarchy. In particular, their



Plate 96 ***Before the Magistrate – Unfit for Work***

figurative headwear which ranges between the high "topper" of the gentleman magistrate, the bowler hat of the inspecting officer, the peaked cap of the recording clerk, the policeman's helmet and the flat working hat of the handler, leave no doubt as to the social pecking order.[19]

This painting demonstrates many of the central ingredients that constitute *genre* painting, including a contemporary day-to-day life narrative and an interpretation of social class. It is also designed to generate compassion for the fate

[19] The Bowler hat was popular with the working class during the Victorian period. In the 20th century it came to be more associated with the middling classes and businessmen associated with finance and the 'City'. Dollman often used the top hat as a symbol of class in his paintings. Ironically, Dollman's grandfather, hatter Thomas Francis Dollman held the patent from 1812 for the folding top hat — see *Patents for Inventions, Abridgements of Specifications,* (Patent Office, London), 1874, p.36.

of the animal, just as Dollman had intended in *Les Misérables* and *The top of the hill*.

Dollman employs a very different theme in his *genre* painting, *Friends in adversity: Christmas Day at the Dreadnought Hospital, Greenwich (Coming down to dinner)* (Plate 97), introduced in chapter III. This long title was given to a study of a deck of sailors from diverse nationalities who are united here, not by choice but by infirmity, to share Christmas fare a long way from their native homes.

The *Dreadnought* was originally one of three hospital ships moored in the



Plate 97 ***Friends in Adversity: Christmas Day at the Dreadnought Hospital, Greenwich (Coming down to dinner)***

River Thames off Greenwich. It was eventually abandoned and broken up in 1872 after the last of its patients had been transferred to the new on-shore Dreadnought Hospital nearby. The newer land hospital is the setting for this painting.

In this study Dollman portrayed seamen of all nations — young and old, black and white, and shades in between. The focus of the viewer and the artist's light is upon the middle eastern man wearing a Turkic Qaraqul (hat) and gold cummerbund assisting a bearded and possibly blind sailor down the stairs. Dollman has paid particular attention to the garb of his actors and the folds in the 'harem pants' are particularly well described.

This disparate group of sailors has come together under a banner which proclaims 'After so many ship wrecks we find a port!' In a century of war between European nations including their colonies, this painting is a metaphor for the bonds that Dollman felt pervaded between all seamen, despite national difference, race or religious creed. A young boy following in the precession with a fiddle is also holding mistletoe, a symbol of love between people. As discussed earlier in the context of *The Graphic*, this painting was made in 1880 and at that time Dollman was working closely with a number of weekly publications. The image is in neat accord with a mission of *The Graphic*'s artists, set by William Thomas, for depicting *genre* from the observations of everyday happenings around the streets of London. The painting is in the collection of the Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery.

Dollman was very capable of injecting humour into his *genre* paintings. In England, William Hogarth in the previous century had become an inspiration for social lampooning, and George Cruikshank was well practised in the 19th–century art of satire. Both engaged in social criticism and the mocking of political figures through their construction of humorous and entertaining anecdotes. The growing readership of magazines and newspapers had also introduced a broader public to graphic humour which spanned from light-hearted fun to biting satire. Recognising this market, Dollman produce a number of amusing works in his earlier years. These works were neither brash nor confronting but were often witty and entertaining. Unlike the satirists who used humour to achieve political ends, Dollman applied his only for amusement's sake, and was more inclined to use realism as his medium to

express social concerns on canvas.[20]

An example of his humour is his all-animal study *The Borrowed Plume,* described earlier in the context of *animalia*. A later *genre* painting with a humorous narrative is his *The Village Artist* (Plate 98), painted in oil in 1899.[21] This is the study of a young boy who has occasion to be caught, chalk in hand, applying cartoon graffiti on to a garden gate.[22] The subject of this unauthorised portrait is betrayed by the walking stick, top hat and a protruding nose to be the caricature of the elderly gentleman who has made an untimely arrival into the picture. He is clearly ungrateful



Plate 98 ***The Village Artist***

[20] See Chapter IV, Social Realism.

[21] Painted 1899, oil on canvas, 60.9 cm. x 50.7 cm. Currently held by the Laing Art Gallery Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, England [TWCMS : C10605]

[22] The boy depicted has a close likeness to photographic images of Dollman's own son when young, (John) Guy Dollman.

of the young artist's efforts and creative talent, and has duly arrested him by the ear. The inspiration for this painting might possibly have come from one of Dollman's own early artistic adventures. If a deeper interpretation is felt necessary, it might be that the painting is a metaphor for the non-recognition of young and upcoming new artists by the old guard, although this is unlikely as Dollman himself was more wedded to the traditional than the *avant-garde*. It is more probable that Dollman was simply indulging in a bit of fun inspired by some casual event or observation. Pictures of boyish mischief were generally popular in the 19th–century and many were published in *The Graphic* and elsewhere but it was not common to see light contemporary humour presented in oils on a large canvas like this.

Dollman also painted a number of sport related works that would have been considered *genre* in their time. Sporting paintings are now generally acknowledged as a classification in their own right, but in Victorian England most would have been considered as *animal paintings* – and as such have been introduced and considered in the earlier chapter dealing with *animalia*. This put their status as lower on the scale of traditional genre hierarchy. However, they contain a number of characteristics which still invite comparison with *genre*. For example, they normally portray contemporary day-to-day scenes and often depict class distinction. They may show a large number of horsemen, and the riders and accompanying people are often identifiable within some social context. An example of this is George Stubb's *The Grosvenor Hunt* (1762) which has Lord Grosvenor placed as the central figure of the composition.[23] These paintings could induce some emotion, but the narrative of the hunt is generally not sentimental for the rider, horse nor the unfortunate prey. Rather it is more concerned with the thrill and excitement of the ride and the relationship with the landscape more so than the kill of the fox or stag – and works on the theme of the hunt are generally painted as a celebration of the open air.[24]

Besides making a number of animated hunting paintings which might now be considered within the scope of sporting paintings, Dollman also made a number of sporting related images which should still be considered in the context of *genre*. One

[23] Owned by trustees of the Grosvenor Estate headed by the Duke of Westminster.
[24] Clark, K., *Animals and Men,* (Thames & Hudson, London), 1977, pp. 212 - 213.

of these was his *The rising generation* (Plate 99*).*[25] He first made this painting as a watercolour in 1890 and exhibited it at the Royal Academy a year later. The painting was subsequently purchased by the Corporation of Southport in the rural northwest of England.[26] *The Graphic's* black and white centre-spread etching of the painting appeared in March 1892 and its subsequent popularity resulted in colour reproductions in a number of large folio art and other publications over the following years.[27]

This contemporary and sentimental work portrays two men, one being of considerable girth and in bright hunting attire suggestive of the role of squire,



Plate 99 ***The rising generation***

inspecting future pack candidates for the hunt under the care of an affectionate boy keeper. One pup is peering out into the fields in anticipation of future adventures as its mother leans against the master's knee — all making for a very domestic picture.

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[25] RA 1067 1891.

[26] Purchased in 1894 by the Atkinson Art Gallery, Merseyside, England.

[27] One of a number colour of publications which reproduced *The rising generation* was *The Nation's Pictures – A Selection From the Finest Modern Paintings in the Public Picture Galleries of Great Britain,* (Cassell, London), c.1894, p.25.



Plate 100 Untitled print

Dollman's studies for this painting have survived and are currently held in the vaults of the South African National Gallery in Cape Town.

A very close likeness of the portly squire also appears in an untitled Dollman hunting related *genre* painting (Plate 100). It is concerned with a terse conversation between the gentleman of the hunt and an intermediary, possibly the landowner, on behalf of a local labourer who has had his birds and his basket of potatoes upset by the passage of the chase. In this painting the subject is not the sport of the hunt, *per se,* but rather the consequences of some misadventure that it brought about, and how social classes interact.



Plate 101 *Old Gentleman at his Desk*

Dollman also produced a number of *genre* paintings that were intimate domestic studies, often in an indoor setting and set around a desk in a study, or in a library. His

younger brother Herbert Pervis Dollman specialised in this type of painting, and exhibited and published a number including the popular *Asking Papa* and *A Codicil.*[28] An example of similar work produced by John Charles Dollman is a small watercolour measuring 19 cm. x 26 cm. belonging to the Royal Collection in St James Palace and labelled by the Trust, *Old Gentleman at his Desk* (Plate 101). It was painted near the time of his younger brother's death, and its provenance into the collection is through the Duke and Duchess of York in 1893.[29]

Summary

These selected examples represent a cross-section of Dollman's work in *genre.* They highlight his versatility, as well as the breadth of subjects he addressed. In most of these paintings, an underlying story is constructed, designed to secure some type of emotional response from the observer – be it humour, sympathy or compassion for man or for beast, a sense of humanity or a feeling of injustice. Dollman's *genre* paintings do not attempt the same depth of narrative as his more dramatic works, but they were very popular during his early lifetime and were well supported by the selectors and viewers at the Royal Academy, as well as the broader public through general publication. *Genre* painting in the 19th–century was not simply reserved for lesser artists or those solely driven by the market. Many Victorian painters who are now highly admired included *genre* works to varying degrees within their *oeuvre*. These artists include William Holman Hunt, Sir John Everett Millais and Sir David Wilkie. Even Turner could, on occasion, turn his head to *genre* as he did in *A Country Blacksmith Disputing upon the Price of Iron, and the Price Charged to the Butcher for Shoeing his Poney*.[30] On the other side of the English Channel, important artists of the Impressionist School were also engaged in

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[28] RA 661 1892: *Asking papa*; RA 999 1891: *A Codicil.*

[29] Miller, D., *The Victorian Watercolours and Drawings: in the collection of her Majesty, the Queen*, Vol. 1, (Philip Wilson, London), 1995, p. 277. The black and white image has been provided by the Royal Collection Trust (All Rights Reserved).

[30] Turner's painting was something of a personal challenge to Wilkie's popularity in *genre*. He organised for it be hung competitively beside Wilkie's *The Blind Fiddler* at the Royal Academy in 1806.

genre studies. A very recognisable example today is Pierre Auguste Renoir's *Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1881).

Although Dollman will be remembered primarily for his history and dramatic narrative works, his 19th–century *genre* paintings were well accepted in their time. They met the new demands of the growing middle class for contemporary depictions of their own lives and their domestic experiences. *Genre* formed an important part of Dollman's *oeuvre,* and further establishes his capacity to operate freely between the various styles. He demonstrated versatility in his *genre* works, and often took a different perspective, particularly in the application of animals as supporting actors in his many visual conversations about every-day life.

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Chapter IX
LANDSCAPE PAINTING
EN PLEIN AIR ON THE SOUTH DOWNS

Introduction

In the preceding chapters it has been established that, in his time, Dollman was renowned at the Royal Academy and elsewhere for his large oil and water colour paintings. They traversed the broadest spectrum of subject matter from *genre*, dramatic incident, studies in social realism, history (drawn from both literature and classics), animals, war, scientific studies and even still-life. Yet another less recognised facet to his art was his proficiency in landscape painting which became more manifest during his later years. Being physically smaller studies and more commercially affordable than his larger oil pieces, most of these works have survived in smaller private collections although a significant number reside in the British Museum, Natural History Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Queen's collections and British regional art galleries. Others are held in galleries throughout the Commonwealth. These include the Art Gallery of South Australia, Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery in Launceston, Tasmania, the South African National Gallery, and the *Te Pataka Matapuna* Museum in Auckland, New Zealand, amongst others. Dollman often exhibited his water colours, many of which were landscapes, in dedicated single artist exhibitions with accompanying published catalogues, as well as in a cluster amongst others in larger exhibitions. For example his solo exhibition *Animal and Pastoral Subjects* held at the Fine Art Society in 1906, included a selection of 45 paintings.[1] In 1886 Dollman was elected a member of the Royal

[1] Catalogue: *John Charles Dollman — Animal and Pastoral Subjects*, (Fine Art Society, London), January, 1906. The Fine Art Society had its rooms at 148 New Bond Street, London. The society's director Marcus Bourne Huish (1844 – 1921), a writer and art dealer, was the subject of a portrait painting by Dollman exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1904 (RA 139). The society's entrance fee was a fairly expensive five shillings but free to purchasers.

Institute for Painters in Water Colours (RI).[2] Later he was elected first an associate and then as a full member of the Royal Society for Painters in Water Colour (RWS) where his work was exhibited regularly from 1906 until after his death in 1935.[3] During this period an extraordinary 176 paintings were accepted by the Royal Society alone, a large proportion of which were landscape studies.[4]

Dollman and Ditchling

Dollman's interest in landscape was wedded to his love of countryside and, in particular, the South Downs of Sussex. A large majority of his landscape water colours are rural studies, although there are a few interesting and notable exceptions, such as his summer study of the River Thames and the 18th century stone bridge arching the river at Richmond (Plate 102). He also painted some larger landscapes in oils but these were also the exception.[5]

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[2] The Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours began in 1807 as the new Society for Painters in Water Colours. In 1885 it established its galleries in Piccadilly opposite the Royal Academy's Burlington House, and was granted the prefix 'Royal' by Queen Victoria.

[3] The society, like the Royal Institute, was initially established from discontent at the perceived preference for oil painting over water colours at the Royal Academy. The society has experienced a number name changes:
Society of Painters in Water Colours 1805 – 1812;
Society of Painters in Oil and Water Colours 1812 – 1820;
Society of Painters in Water Colours 1820 – 1881;
Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours 1881 – 1988. and
Royal Water Colour Society 1988 – current.
Information provided by letter from the Secretary, Royal Water Colour Society, Bankside Gallery, London 2003.

[4] Johnson, J., & Greutzner, A., (eds), *Dictionary of British Artists 1880 – 1940,* (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1976, p.150. See Appendix X for Dollman exhibits at the Royal Water Colour Society. Mallalieu, H. L., (ed.), *Dictionary of British Water Colour Artists Up To 1920 – Vol. 1, The Text,* (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1986, comments that Dollman "dropped" the Royal Institute for the Royal Society having only exhibited nineteen works at the former.

[5] Dollman's *Ditchling Beacon* (1921) is a larger oil of the winter countryside without human or animal figures. It is in the collection of the Lewes Town Council, Sussex, and displayed in the Town Hall.

Some evidence of Dollman's strong affection for the Downs can be found in contemporary letters written and photographs taken by his cousin. One such letter of May 20th 1916 records the writer, a Lieutenant Colonel with the Australian Infantry Force, boarding the carriages of a train in London southbound for Hassocks and the nearby village of Ditchling, not far from the Channel coast. Walter Dollman Jnr was on brief war leave just prior to the full horrors of the Somme. His 27th Battalion had arrived in France by way of Egypt in March that year, following disengagement with the Turkish army at Gallipoli. That day he was in khaki, wearing a slouch hat and



Plate 102 ***Richmond Bridge***

fully looking the commanding officer with his tightly clipped moustache, and armed with a camera and a description with which to identify his cousin on disembarking.[6] The Colonel was a keen writer and photographer and his several and detailed letters home of this visit provide a window into his artist cousin's persona generally.[7] They

[6] These two Dollmans were first cousins once removed. Walter's grandfather, Charles John Dollman (1816 – 1860) was an Adelaide chemist whose younger brother John Charles Dollman (1822 – 1890) was the father of the artist John Charles Dollman Jnr — suggesting little family imagination or adventure in the choice of personal names.

[7] Letters: Colonel Walter Dollman to wife Rose, 1915 – 1916, unpublished, held in private collection, Adelaide.

also point to the importance to him of his country retreat near Ditchling which was a base for his *plein air* art and where a secondary studio enabled him to refine much of his landscape work. [8] One of a number of photographs taken is of the two cousins (Plate 103).

The Colonel's first letter tells that Dollman had purchased the property adjacent the Ditchling Beacon in Underhill Lane about 1900 as a "summer house" and renamed it from *Beanacre* to *Hove Cottage* in recognition of the artist's childhood at Hove, not far away on the Sussex coast.[9] In comparison to his imposing London home, earlier named *Hove House,* it might have been considered a cottage, it was then and remains a substantial property. The letter described:

> The house was originally two dwellings, it is two storied and has about three acres of land bounded by flowering hedges. There is a big lawn and around it is a perfect profusion of flowers and over the rest of the land is a carpet of wildflowers.[10]

Kelley's *Sussex Directories* associate John Charles Dollman with *Hove Cottage* from 1907 to 1922, which loosely correlates with his most prolific period of landscape painting.



Plate 103 John Charles Dollman and Col. Walter Dollman

At the time of the Colonel's visit, the artist's daughters Ruth and Mary were also visiting the cottage. Sons Hereward was in Rhodesia and Guy was at the time a Captain in the army, was engaged in "instructional work". Dollman's interest in natural history clearly connected him with his two sons, but it was landscape that connected him to his younger daughter

[8] *en plein air* (French): landscapes painted out of doors to catch the quality of open air. See Murray, P. and L., (eds), *A Dictionary of Art and Artists*, 4th ed., (Penguin, Aylesbury), 1976, p. 351.

[9] Letter: Walter Dollman Jnr to Rose (wife), London, 19 May 1916.

[10] Ibid.

Ruth, already an accomplished and established artist. The cottage contained a well lit studio which Dollman had added soon after purchase. It was from here that he and Ruth shared, recorded and indulged their love of the southern countryside through their many water colour studies made along the line of chalk hills he had known since his childhood. A large number of Ruth's paintings of Sussex were published in colour plate and contained in works such as Richard Jeffries' *The Open Air* (1908) and *Nature Near London* (1908) with twelve plates in each, as well as publications like The Studio's *Sketching Grounds.*[11] From 1905 to 1928 she is recorded as having exhibited on eleven occasions at the Royal Academy as well as on numerous occasions at the Fine Art Society, the Royal Institute for Painters in Water Colours and the Royal Water Colour Society amongst others. [12] Ruth also held single artist exhibitions at venues such as the Leicester Galleries (sixty paintings) and the Fine Art Society (twenty one paintings) in London.[13]

The Colonel clearly enjoyed his stay, taking long walks with Dollman into his landscape while discussing "pictures", though he quickly realised that he should "give politics a wide birth" as he discerned his cousin to be "a Tory of the hottest kind". He "was not a teetotaller" and in the evenings entertainment included "some gramophone, whisky and cigars". He also determined his host to be "the most interesting companion, 65 years old but could easily beat [the Colonel] at walking, active as a kitten, an incessant smoker, and him full of keenest humour". He had a "delightful appreciation of lights and shadows and the possibilities of picture ... He likes a joke and is a devotee of Charles Dickens and Kipling."

Of the many water colour landscape paintings Dollman made from *Hove Cottage*, almost all are rural studies of the country along the South Downs of Sussex, though some studies contain village scenes and beach sand dunes. Before

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[11] Jefferies, R., *Nature Near London,* (Lippincott, Philadelphia), 1908;
Jefferies, R., *The Open Air,* (Chatton & Windus, London), 1908;
Holme, C., (ed.), *Sketching Grounds,* (The Studio, London), 1909.

[12] Ruth Dollman Exhibitions, 1905 – 1928, B2, FIN 69, LEI 112, RA 11, RI 14, RWS 6, see Johnson, J., and Greutzner, A., (eds), *Dictionary of British artists 1880 – 1940* (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1976, p. 150.

[13] *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Water Colour Drawings of The Sussex Downs by Ruth Dollman,* (Leicester Galleries, London), 1909.
On and Under a Sussex Down, Catalogue, (Fine Art Society, London), 1905.

critically examining a selection of these landscape paintings in some detail, it is first useful to establish the position of landscape art within the context of late 19th–century English painting.

English Landscape Painting

Historically, as a genre, landscape had not enjoyed a high status amongst the various schools of painting. In 1667, André Félibien (1619 – 1695), French historiographer to Louis XIV and theoretician, had determined the hierarchy of painting genres which was to endure and be later formalised by many of the academies in Europe. In his schema, history painting was deemed to be the *grande genre*.[14] Then, in descending order, consideration was given to portraits, *genre*, landscape, animal painting and then residing at the lowest order was still life. This hierarchy or "rank" was reiterated and endorsed in terms of English art by Joshua Reynolds (1723 – 1792) in his *Discourses* of the 1770s and 80s, in which he similarly promoted history as at the zenith and still life the base of all visual art endeavour.[15] Underlying this order was the notion that paintings which reflect an intellectual understanding of the essence of the world in an idealistic way represented the higher forms of art, while naturalism and realistic paintings, which simply replicated what was, were of a lower order.

While painters dedicated to the more lowly genres of portraiture, animal painting and landscape could seemingly make a good private living, it was only the history painter who enjoyed high public stature. This "tradition of history painting based on historical and literary subject matter and the idealised human figure" occupying the highest rank in figurative art was facilitated well into the 19th–century.[16] Kay Dian Kriz argues the Napoleonic war years and "a strong and

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[14] Minor, V. H., *Baroque & Rococo: Art & Culture,* (Abrams, New York), 1999, pp. 209 – 210.

[15] "A Discourse – Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy on the Distribution of the Prizes, December 14, 1770, by the President", Discourse XII in Johnson, E. G., (ed.), *Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses,* (McClurg & Coy, Chicago), 1891, p. 305. Interestingly, Reynolds own painting of portraits "in the grand manner" transcended his own genre boundaries.

[16] Kriz, K. D., *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter: Genius as Alibi in the Early Nineteenth Century,* (Yale University Press, New Haven), 1997, p. 11.

persistent demand for a form of native painting that inscribed English character" precipitated the rise in prominence of landscape painting in Britain early in the 19th–century.[17] At this time public tastes were increasingly moving away from romanticism to realism in the form of *genre* and landscape. It was also this period that saw Constable, Turner, and Bonington, artists who primarily painted in landscape, receive public recognition as outstanding painters of the first half of the 19th–century. Notwithstanding the elevation in status accorded these three great artists and some other practitioners of landscape, there remained an ongoing resistance throughout the 19th–century to an elevation in status of landscape.[18]

In his *Dark Side of the Landscape*, John Barrell supports Kriz' contentions and similarly argues the critical ingredient of the increased appeal of landscape was its tailoring to English tastes and English consciousness.

> The unmistakable Englishness of the figures and the discreet hints of actuality provided by tattered clothes, heavy boots and agricultural implements, which distinguish the paintings of this tradition... from the Italianate tradition [which was] elaborately Arcadian...[19]

Kenneth Clark, in his *Landscape into Art,* observed that in half a century, the perception of the importance of landscape in England had moved from that of Gainsborough, who had believed "that no landscape was worth painting outside Italy", to that of Constable who proclaimed that his art could be found under every hedge.[20] Clark also argues that John Ruskin's prediction that by the 19th–century landscape would "become the dominant art, and create a new aesthetic of its own" was fulfilled.[21]

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[17] Ibid, p. 58.

[18] Herrmann, L., *Nineteenth Century British Painting*, (Giles de la Mare, London), 2000, p. 92.

[19] Barrell, J., *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The rural poor in English painting 1730 - 1840* , (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge), 1980, p. 9.

[20] Clark, K., *Landscape into Art*, (Murray, London), 1976, p. 147.

[21] Ibid, p. 229, citing Ruskin, J., essay, "Of the Novelty of Landscape" in *Modern Painters,* Vol. III.

Dollman's Sussex 'ideal'

In the 19th–century, English landscapes sought to proclaim an English ideal of countryside. The realism they portray generally avoided the harsh and cruel reality of the Victorian countryside and Dollman's interpretations (and those of his daughter) of the South Downs are consistent with this convention. His workers quietly labour, the animals are healthy and content, and the sky is generally peaceful. In most of his landscapes, there are both human and animal forms, but, unlike *genre*, they are not dominant to a point where they diminish the rural essence. Nevertheless, Dollman's highly developed skills as an *animalier* enabled him to convincingly include their forms, usually at a point of middle distance, to complement the scene. Unlike some landscape artists who at times imported the *animalier* expertise of other artists into their work, as did William Turner with George Stubbs, Dollman was fully self-



Plate 104 ***Shepherd on the South Downs***

sufficient.[22] Another almost signature element to many of Dollman's landscapes of the Downs is an orientation of his study so as to capture Ditchling Beacon, the high point of the line of chalk hills, usually shown to the south and in the middle or far distance. Within these themes there was still scope for both considerable variation and enterprise.

A good example of his landscape work capturing all of these elements is his *Shepherd on the South Downs* (Plate 104) painted c. 1900. The relaxed observing shepherd in rustic but tidy dress, seated and cradling his walking stick in the summer



Plate 105 ***Sussex 1906***

sun with his lazy companion dog beside, cuts an ideal English image. It is summer despite the apparent heavy clothing of the worker as the shadows are short and the sun is now shining on the North side of the Downs. The animals are represented variously and realistically, and the eye is drawn to follow the line of sheep from the

[22] "In a water colour by Turner, contained in the Wallace Collection, entitled *Grouse Shooting with Portrait of the Artist*, the dogs are by Stubbs, and their treatment is quite in keeping with Turner's technique", "Painters of the Royal Academy", 1768 – 1868 by Sparrow, W. S., in Holme, C, (ed.), *The Royal Academy from Reynolds to Millais,* (The Studio, London), 1907, p. xiv.

leaders toward the rise in the middle distance, and then to the rolling chalk hills of the Downs. The human and animal figures are quite prominent in this painting, as were those of Constable in his earlier works, and the composition contains all the ingredients as well as the balance of English landscape. [23]

His later *Sussex 1906* (Plate 105), in the collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia, contains a more diminutive figure. He stands casually with stick and is tending a white cow herd grazing in the middle left distance, partly concealed by the tall flowering grasses. The wildflowers of spring line the grass track which leads the eye again toward the rolling Downs in the distant background. The clouds occupy over half of the study and are finely depicted. The foreground is bathed in sunlight and there is good contrast between the middle green of the grass and the floral colours together with the white of the thistles. The bluish rolling hills in the distance under the forming clouds provide perspective and accentuate the openness and



Plate 106 ***Below Ditchling Beacon, South Downs***

[23] In Constable's earlier works, such as *Flatford Mill* (1816) and *Boat Building Near Flatford Mill* (1815), the figures were prominent while in later paintings they are diminished in size and number.

clarity of the vernal day. Again, this aesthetically pleasing landscape portrays the English ideal.

The complementary nature of both British *genre* and landscape painting in the 19th–century is apparent in many of Dollman's studies. The following are two examples of *genre* studies embedded within Dollman landscapes. The first entitled *Below Ditchling Beacon, South Downs* and undated (Plates 106 and 107) is of a man mounted on a horse but seated across the saddle, and in light conversation with a shepherd who is casually leaning on his crook.[24] The second entitled *Afternoon from*



Plate 107 *Genre* detail within *Below Ditchling Beacon, South Downs*

Fulking Down, *Sussex,* undated (Plates 108 and 109) includes a *genre* study of hay making and carting with the Beacon in the background.[25]

In both of these paintings the overall landscape predominates over the smaller *genre* study. However, in some of Dollman's works, like the *Shepherd on the South Down* described above, a more prominent presence of the *genre* component within the scene makes for a more borderline determination between the categories of *genre* and landscape.

[24] *Below Ditchling Beacon, South Downs* in the collection of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Australia.

[25] *Afternoon from Fulking Down*, *Sussex* in the collection of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Australia.



Plate 108 ***Afternoon from Fulking Down*, *Sussex***



Plate 109 ***Genre* detail in *Afternoon from Fulking Down, Sussex***

A 1909 survey of a number of eminent contemporary artists who painted the South Downs in water colours by writer and the Director of the Fine Art Society, Marcus B Huish, suggests inclusion of detailed and subtle *genre* studies into the

landscape was unusual by the early 20th–century.[26] According to Huish, ruins were t hen also "fortunately out of fashion." The concern of these artists, he goes on, was to capture the natural beauty of the landscape of the Downs, "their sweetness of contour, their varied colourings, the greys lying in their hollows, and their loveliness at all hours of the day, notably at sundown". These artists sometimes included distant domestic animals or occasionally a lone figure as incidental to the scene. Dollman's landscapes, in contrast, demonstrate much greater enthusiasm for creating a scene within a scene. Huish's general survey of the landscapes made by these relevant artists did not recognise the inclusion of any *genre* studies, apart from one image containing this sort of work that he chose to highlight in discussion. It was entitled *Courthouse Farm*, painted by a "young artist (who had) deservedly attracted attention" and which contained an inset study of a hay wagon, horses and working driver in very much the Dollman manner. It had been painted by Dollman's daughter, Ruth.[27]

Dollman's *The Hunt* is a landscape painting with a decidedly English character. Unlike many sport genre paintings of fox hunting which typically have red jacketed and mounted riders at the gallop, led by a frenzied pack of hounds and foremost an unlucky fox, as subjects — as in Dollman's own twin large oil paintings, *The Hunt* and *The Refuge* — this painting is primarily a study of the summer landscape with Ditchling Beacon in the right background. The horses and hounds are not animated and appear almost incidental to the scene. They do, however provide some perspective to the surroundings, as well as offering contrast to the natural colours of the open countryside.

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[26] Huish, M. B., "Sussex", in Holme, C., (ed.), *Sketching Grounds*, (The Studio, London), 1909, pp. 7 - 20. Included in the survey were Albert Goodwin, RWS (1845 – 1932) who was influenced by Turner, Sutton Palmer (1854 – 1933), who also painted continental streetscapes and architecture in a style similar to that earlier of Samuel Prout, and Wallace Rimington, RBA (1854 –1918).

[27] Ibid, p. 20.

These landscapes generally show a sky of wispy white clouds, set against a light blue that extends to the horizon. Dollman's study, *The Cloud* (Plate 110), held in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, is very different. Interest here is immediately raised upwards to a developing cumulonimbus formation beyond the hill line, signifying a distant storm. This work emphasizes the 'circumstance' component of landscape, one of the three high level categories of landscape codified by Alexander Cozens (1717 – 1786) over a century earlier.[28] The clouds above the hill are still bathed in afternoon sunlight, and so are still well off, making for no immediate threat, and the sheep continue peacefully about their feed.



Plate 110 ***The Cloud***

[28] Alexander Cozens codified landscape into three components: Composition, Objects and Circumstances. Within these categories were sixteen, fourteen and twenty seven types respectively. 'Circumstances' included seasons, clouds, mist, storm, the setting sun, etc. He also suggested the emotions evoked by each category / type to the viewer. See: Cassidy, B., "Alexander Cozens and the patronage of the Grant family: with a recipe for varnish and a treatise on landscape", in *British Art Journal,* Vol. 12, number 3, 2011, pp. 32 - 41.

Dollman has created a more passive sky in his undated *Whitcomb Farm* (not shown). This painting also depicts barns and haystacks with sheep, a herder at the stile, and a sentry dog in the foreground.[29] The slope of the Downs in the distant centre indicates the view is to the west and the sunlight on the side of full haystacks and the dry grass indicates it is early morning on a late summer's day. The picture is one of warmth and mellowness and offers a contrast to another by Dollman in the possession of the Victoria and Albert Museum, set in the early morning. Though



Plate 111 Dew

Dollman's undated *Dew* (Plate 111) is unusual in that it has no human or animal content, the distant building — probably his *Hove Cottage* — is framed in the gap between the hedgerow and provides some perspective. It is cool and early, and the orientation is towards the east with the Beacon to the distant right. It is clearly a moment of transition with the lower ground still bathed in dew as the higher grasses and plants enjoy the first sun. Here again Dollman has composed a work that conforms to Cozens' notion of 'circumstance'.

[29] Held in private collection, Adelaide.

These examples represent only a very small selection of Dollman's many landscape paintings, yet they demonstrate clearly the strong affinity he held for the ideal of rural life and natural surrounds. They also show versatility, particularly in relation to his incorporation of *genre* images. His depictions are gentle as he strives to recreate the essence of his southern England, portraying nature as rich and in full bloom, generally under a summer sun. The animals remain quiet and content, and their overseers unhurried. The realities of Victorian labour are avoided. The serenity in these studies is in marked contrast to pitiful winter scenes of Victorian London depicted in his dramatic oils*, Les* Misérables and "*Am I my Brother's Keeper?*"

Any conversation regarding Dollman's landscape paintings must also consider their technical aspects or *form* which include colour, balance, harmony and perspective. Dollman's palette is generally bright and he often employed purples, bright greens and earth colours, sometimes using a similar technique to the impressionists in the choice of complementary colours for contrast – for example, the red jackets of the huntsmen, the purple of flowers or yellow straw colours against a rolling sea of light green grass. He used shadow, figures and colour in support of perspective, and exploited the light of various times of day in the southern English summer. The size of these paintings reflects open air work and the need for portability, as he (and Ruth) would have physically carried the easel, paper and paint from the cottage, often several miles along the winding paths and up the inclines, to the selected view.

Though Dollman's interest in landscape became more apparent in his later life, it was also present at a young age, demonstrated early by his *Twelve o'clock* (described in Chapter II). This interest remained latent for many years to find expression again in his fifties and sixties. While it was possible that earlier commercial and family imperatives might have denied him this indulgence until then, two other factors may have precipitated a renewed interest. His close working association with his daughter Ruth, who was now a mature artist in her own right, exhibiting and publishing her water colours of the South Downs, was clearly an influence. Also the purchase of the summer house in the clement and brighter south of England and establishment there of a country studio gave him access to inspiration and subject matter. This was coupled with the increasing popularity from

the late 19th–century for landscape painting *en plein air* rather than in a studio. Painting *en plein air* had been enabled through the introduction of paints in tubes and the invention of the box easel. In England, new enthusiasm for the painting style was also following the lead of French impressionists and artists in the Low Countries. These timings were complemented with Dollman's ongoing love of the Downs and countryside established from his youth, together with his special skills as both a fine *animalier* and figure painter.

Today, landscapes in general still do not enjoy the status of the higher genres, but remain a very significant component of British Victorian and Edwardian visual art. Dollman will always be remembered for his larger oils with their strong conversations, and for depicting history or dramatic incidents and events, but his landscapes should be acknowledged as fine examples of the English 'ideal' style in landscape which came to maturity in the late 19th–century. His colour and light, and subject selection are notable. But it is his inclusion of cleverly crafted *genre* vignettes into his landscapes that makes Dollman singularly different from his fellow late Victorian artists – to which end he again drew on his brilliance as an *animalier*. What is also more generally remarkable is his high level of demonstrated competency in landscape alongside the many other genre in which he painted.

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Chapter X
AESTHETICS & NEO CLASSICISM
THE NEW 'HIGH ART'

In his time, John Charles Dollman was recognised well for painting strong narrative and animal subject works.[1] Early in his career he also produced many *genre* studies through association with *The Graphic* and other illustrated periodicals, which were driven by the growing public taste for this type of art. As with landscape painting, another facet to his work which was not particularly apparent until his more mature years was an interest in classicism. Several of his paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy and elsewhere after 1890 show the clear influence of the aesthetic or classic revival style that grew out of the later Victorian period. This is not to suggest that this later activity was at the expense of his narrative efforts in other genres, but was rather parallel and complementary to his other interests. An examination of these works, which are not large in number, reveals something of a fusion of his earlier styles, which gave rise to a classical approach that was distinctly his.

Dollman's strong early preoccupation with narrative in his history paintings, and to a lesser degree *genre,* caused him to be a 'late starter' in classicism. Having commenced, he then included classical themes in a number of his major paintings made for exhibition, persevering well after the interest in the genre had begun to wane by the beginning of the 20th–century in favour of the new modern and contemporary styles. His contractual departure in the early 1890s from *The Graphic,* with its preoccupation with dramatic narrative, social realism and *genre,* might have been the release necessary for Dollman to explore broader interests. These included both landscape painting (described in Chapter IX) and the style of classical revival.

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[1] Contemporary recognition of Dollman was published in articles which included Bensusan, S. L., "The Art of Mr J. C. Dollman, A.R.W.S.", in *Windsor Magazine*, April 1906, pp. 579 – 594, *Pearson's Magazine*, Vol. XIX 1908, pp. 570 – 580, and "John Charles Dollman" in *Der Aar,* 1912 / 13, pp. 824 - 833, etc.

Dollman, Waterhouse and others

Dollman's developed interest in classicism is likely to have been influenced by fellow artists and friends, particularly John William Waterhouse (1849 – 1917). Waterhouse lived and worked at 3 Primrose Hill Studios, London, from *1878 to 1886, and then in 6 until 1900. Dollman occupied adjacent number 5 from 1879 to 1884, from where growing success enabled the move to his new, purpose built, stately home and studio at Bedford Park. He remained there until a few years before his death in 1935.* At Primrose Hill, Dollman and Waterhouse already were well acquainted, having both entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1870.[2]

Primrose Hill Studios are a cluster of close, speculatively built and rented two-storey cottage studios near Regent's Park that share a central courtyard, and are still only accessible from a narrow lane. It was an intimate environment where "Waterhouse's studio was a never failing place of meeting". George Armour, a fellow artist and member of the commune, recalled "dear old quiet Waterhouse [who] took his part in all the nonsense we amused ourselves with at Primrose Hill." He added:

> A few outside friends were admitted to these entertainments, among them a son of Charles Dickens, but there were also many purely studio evenings which, though hardly worth record, were amusing to those who took part. Boxing gloves and foils were requisitioned at times, and though none of us was even reasonably proficient with either, our very ineptitude was a delight to the onlookers.[3]

The friendship between Dollman and Waterhouse that began as young members of this close artistic community fresh from the Royal Academy Schools, continued until the death of Waterhouse early in 1917. While little record of Waterhouse's personal life has survived, letters written by Waterhouse to Dollman

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[2] Waterhouse initially enrolled in the Royal Academy Schools in sculpture before moving to painting.

[3] Armour, G. D., *Bridle and Brush: Reminiscences of an Artist Sportsman,* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London), 1937, pp. 135 - 139.

attest to a close and enduring connection between the two, both socially and professionally, over many years. Two letters are addressed from 10 Hall Road, St John's Wood, North London, to where Waterhouse and his wife had relocated from Primrose Hill in 1900. The new address helps to tentatively date the letters to post 1900.[4] One of these demonstrates the mutual interest in each other's work:

> 10 Hall Road N.W.
> March 17
> Dear Dollman,
>
> I had been hoping to come over to you and see your work, but a picture I am doing has given me so much trouble that if it is to go to the R.A. I must work very hard at it and give it every chance. Therefore it is difficult to get away just now. I am sorry to hear that you have been laid up with a cold but hope you are all right now, and that the picture is finished. I wish you all luck with it, and hope to see it in a good place at the Academy. With kind regards to Mrs Dollman and Miss Dollman,
>
> Believe me
> Yrs very sincerely
> J. W. Waterhouse

Waterhouse was described in one obituary as "an eclectic" and a "devout believer in 'art for art's sake' " who was influenced by the classicism of the elder Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836 – 1912) and Frederic Leighton (1830 – 1896).[5] The Royal Academy recently labelled him "the modern pre-Raphaelite" in its subtitle to its 2009 exhibition on J. W. Waterhouse.[6] Another probable aesthetic influence on Dollman was Edmund Blair Leighton (1852 – 1922), a romantic historical painter who

[4] Letters: Waterhouse to Dollman, private collection, reproduced at *johnwilliamwaterhouse.com*, last accessed 14 March 2015.

[5] "John William Waterhouse", obituary in *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 1917.

[6] "J. W. Waterhouse, the modern Pre-Raphaelite", exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, 27 June to 13 September, 2009, Burlington House, London.

was part of Dollman's Bedford Park circle of artistic friends.[7]

Dollman's first painting with clear characteristics of classicism was *Gold*, first exhibited in 1894.[8] This painting contained a strong scripturally based narrative which somewhat overshadowed the painting's aesthetic dimensions. By 1898, his depiction of *The Awakening of Titania* included some of the rich palette and the use of complementary colours that had marked the pre-Raphaelite movement. Some years later he exhibited *Orpheus and his Lute* and *The Mischief God* at the Academy*,* two works which moved closer in alignment to the classical aesthetic style.[9] After recovering from the distractions of the First World War and in defiance of the public shift of interest away from the traditional schools in favour of modernism in art, he persisted in a distinctly Dollman aesthetic neo-classical approach with his *The enchantress*, *The spell* (a reworked oil version of his pre-war Orpheus), *Circe, The eldest god* and *Enchantment*.[10] As always, Dollman continued to be active and productive in all the other genre that had marked his life's work and interests as he explored this new style.

Other paintings by Dollman which were likely to have been influenced by the work of his friend Waterhouse and the classical movement generally include his two workings of *St Antony,* both engaging nude temptations, the first of which had been strongly denounced by Leo Tolstoy as "art for art's sake".[11]

The Classical Revival Movement

Dollman's explorations in classicism reflected the classical revival in late Victorian aesthetics. The movement in England began under the influence principally of Frederic Leighton in the 1860s, and lasted until the First World War. Christopher

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7 Edmund Blair Leighton was not related to Frederic Lord Leighton. Dollman and he were close neighbours at Bedford Park and Dollman is recorded as attending Blair Leighton's funeral in 1922.

8 RA 293 1894.

9 RWS 146 1911 (Winter): *Orpheus*; RA 71 1913: *The mischief god.*

10 RA 403 1922: *The enchantress*; RA 576 1923: *The Spell*; RA 311 1926: *Circe,* RA 424 1927: *The eldest god*; RA 391 1930: *Enchantment.*

11 RA 4451 897: *Saint Antony, The Demons changed themselves…* ; RA 527 1925: *St Antony*. See the earlier discussion of Tolstoy's observations on Dollman's *St Antony* in Chapters V and VI.

Wood contends that its aim was "to escape the moral strait-jacket of Ruskin, and the 'John Bullish' insularity of the pre-Raphaelites, and renew contact with the great traditions of European art."[12] Nevertheless, Wood continues, both *Pre Raphaelite* and *Classical Revivalist* schools should be considered as representations of the same fundamental *Aesthetic* School and, as they occupied overlapping temporal and physical space, "inevitably these two movements [are] at times difficult to dis-entangle."[13] Artists such as Albert Joseph Moore (1841 – 1893) and Waterhouse managed to keep a foot in both camps, with the latter artist's style being described as an "individual fusion of the classicism of (Frederic) Leighton and the aesthetic pre-Raphaelitism of Burne Jones."[14]

Treuherz argues that the art of the new classical revival was not the "austere neo-classicism of the early 19th–century with its tense linearity". Rather, "it was based on a new interpretation of Greek art as the expression of a harmonious, luxurious ideal of beauty in repose".[15] It also sought innovative ways to present classical scenes in an interpretive way to contemporary Victorian audiences. This aim at times presented a challenge, a difficulty that had been foreshadowed earlier by the German philosopher, Georg Hegel.[16] According to Elizabeth Prettejohn, Leighton met this challenge early on with "utter critical failure" when his *The Triumph of Music* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1856.[17] Instead of his Orpheus strumming a classical lyre, he was intentionally furnished with a modern violin, an attribution that Leighton justified in a letter to his father as follows:

> About fiddles, I know that the ancients had none; it is an anachronism which I commit with my eyes open, because I believe that the picture will go home to the spectator

[12] Wood, C., *Victorian Painting In Oils and Watercolours,* (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1996, p. 48. Wood also contended that classical revival was more a renaissance of the renaissance than a return to prime classical studies.

[13] Wood, C., *Victorian Painting In Oils and Watercolours*, p. 48.

[14] Ibid, p. 45.

[15] Treuherz, J., *Victorian Painting,* (Thames & Hudson), 1993, p. 136.

[16] Hegel considered the difficulty in accommodating "anachronism" in art, see Hegel, G. W. F., *Aesthetics, Lectures on Fine Art*, tr. Knox, T. M., Vol. 1, (Caledonian Press, Oxford), p. 278.

[17] Brandlhuber M. Th., and Buhrs M., (eds), *Frederic Lord Leighton, Painter and Sculptor of the Victorian Age*, (Prestel, Munich), 2009, p. 39.

much more forcibly in that shape.[18]

Leighton, and those who followed him, later evaded issues of historical inaccuracy by avoiding any discrete location or historical time, and by applying a loose fusion of settings and dress to their subjects. As argued by Elizabeth Prettejohn, the scene portrayed was softened to "a palace of no date – it may be Roman in the luxurious days – it may be Pompeian – it may be Egyptian of Cleopatra's age – it may even be Palladian of the best time of the Renaissance".[19] Dollman later drew upon this license for vagueness. Prettejohn further argues, however, that ultimately these were "precisely the problems that led, in the 20th–century, to the widespread demotion of 19th–century classicism in art historical status". [20]

Despite early reversals, Leighton, who had trained on the continent and settled finally in London in 1859, in 1868 was elected a member of the Royal Academy and became president from 1878. Under his extraordinarily long leadership of 18 years, the Royal Academy experienced a golden age and the classical revival movement thrived with its subjects becoming the vogue.[21] Leighton was supported by other 'Olympian' followers who included Moore and Alma-Tadema, George Frederic Watts (1817 – 1904), Edward John Poynter (1836 – 1913) and John William Godward (1861 – 1922), all of whom provided varied interpretations of the classical ideal from the late Victorian perspective.

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[18] Barrington, R., *The Life, Letters and Work of Frederic Leighton*, Vol. 1, (George Allen, London), 1906, p. 245.

[19] Stephens, F. G., critic, on Leighton's *Leider ohne Worte,* (Songs without words), 1861 in "Royal Academy", *Athenaeum,* No. 1749, 4 May 1861, pp. 600 - 601.

[20] Prettejohn, E., "The Classicism of Frederic Leighton", in Brandlhuber, M. Th., and Buhrs M., (eds), *Frederic Lord Leighton, Painter and Sculptor of the Victorian Age*, (Prestel, Munich), 2009, p. 41.

[21] The Royal Academy initially showed little interest in the aesthetics of the pre-Raphaelite movement in favour of paintings with stronger narrative. However, under the presidency of Frederic Lord Leighton, the Academy fully embraced the asceticism of the closely related, if not derivative, classical revival movement.

Dollman's Neo-classical Paintings

Of those several paintings by Dollman which reflect the aesthetic style of the pre-Raphaelite and classical revival artists, *Gold* was the first, being completed when the classical revival movement was at its peak. This painting, described earlier in some detail, contains a mix of mediaeval and classical figures joined by clever narrative that can be compared to pre-Raphaelite works such as *Rienzi Vowing to Obtain Justice for the Death of his Younger Brother, Slain in a skirmish between the Colonna and Orsini Factions* painted in 1848 by William Holman Hunt (1827 – 1910) and *Isabella* in 1849 by John Everett Millais (1829 – 1896). As with these two early pre-Raphaelite paintings taken from literature, *Gold* is particularly concerned with costuming. Its allegorical narrative is drawn from the New Testament.[22] Dollman's *Titania,* also described previously, was completed a few years later in 1898, and was similarly inspired by literature, this time Shakespeare. *Titania* was designed to be a visually pleasing work to which Dollman applied a rich palette, particularly in the complementary shades of green. Its colour harmony is reminiscent of the pre-Raphaelites.[23]

These paintings contain elements which suggest Dollman was consciously adopting a more aesthetic approach. But it is his *Orpheus* and *The Mischief God,* painted a decade later, which unambiguously belong to the late classical revival style. Orpheus had been a popular subject in all the art schools through the centuries, with artists spanning from Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568 – 1625) to Frederic Leighton, including Dollman's good friend, John William Waterhouse.[24] Orpheus was a legendary poet and musician in ancient Greek mythology who is said to have been able to charm all living and inanimate things with his music. Most artists, like Waterhouse, used the death of Orpheus and the Underworld as topics for their painting. Others focused on his music and its charm over animals. This mystical association between Orpheus and animals was an opportunity too good not to be

[22] Matt. 19:23; Luke 18:25.

[23] It has been suggested that the Titania story is an inversion of the Circe tale. Where Circe used sorcery to turn her lovers into animals, Titania must love a donkey after Bottom was transformed.

[24] John William Waterhouse: *Nymphs Finding the Head of Orpheus,* 1905.

exploited by the *animalier* in Dollman. unsurprisingly, he chose a pride of lions as his subjects for enchantment. Dollman's depiction of the legendary Greek poet has Orpheus wearing a long white toga and a floral head wreath, seated on a large rock, strumming music from his ancient lyre or *phorminx*. As he plays he rests against a lion, and three lionesses and another lion are in repose at his feet, spellbound by the music. The wreath indicates 'Greekness' and it also represents a crown, symbolising Orpheus' powers over all animals. He is wearing a toga rather than a tunic, more reminiscent of ancient Rome than Greece – yet remaining well within the licence of the classical revival school for anachronism, which permitted a liberal mixing of classical time and place. Unlike other late Victorian artists who might have purposely chosen to paint Orpheus playing a violin, Dollman chose an historically correct musical instrument.



Plate 112 *Orpheus*

Orpheus (Plate 112) was first exhibited in water colour at the Royal Water Colour Society in 1911. It was well received and an etched colour version was widely published. In 1923, a more sophisticated and larger oil reworking of this painting entitled *The spell* (Plate 112) was exhibited by Dollman at the Royal Academy summer exhibition. The overall formula of this painting was little changed from the 1911 work, though more attention was paid to the posture of the central figure, in general detail and in the alignment of the instrument. In effect Dollman had used his earlier watercolour as a preliminary for this much larger and later oil.



Plate 113 ***The spell***

This painting was also received well and subsequently featured in the 1923 edition of the *The Royal Academy Illustrated*.[25] A review of other paintings exhibited at the Academy in the summer of 1923 reveals an overwhelming preponderance of portraits and landscape paintings with very little reference to classical subjects. Dollman and Charles Ricketts (1866 – 1931) were the exception; between them, they had four works accepted for exhibition on ancient themes.

Dollman's 1913 painting, *The mischief god* (Plate 114), also incorporated much of the essence of the classical revival style. It was again an excuse for Dollman to paint his lions. On this occasion he depicted them in harness drawing a regal platform with a chair supporting the divinity. A large formal urn on a pedestal, the classical musical instruments, the tunics worn by the men and the barefooted girls casting flowers collectively establish that this Maenadic celebration is drawn from antiquity. The God of Mischief has had several incarnations in ancient history.

[25] *The Royal Academy Illustrated,* (Walter Judd, London), 1923, p. 89.

Homer's Iliad introduces Atë, Greek goddess and daughter of Zeus as an invocation of mischief and folly. Within the Norse and Roman pantheons there also existed a portfolio for mischief but most references in post classical literature seem to be confined to the Greek tradition.[26]

Dollman's Atë is not looking ahead to where the procession is leading but directly at the observer, at whom she is smiling wryly. On her lap is a winged Eros who is represented as a plump child armed with a bow and arrow, a construct of Eros probably more appropriate to a later period in history.[27] Like Frederick Leighton

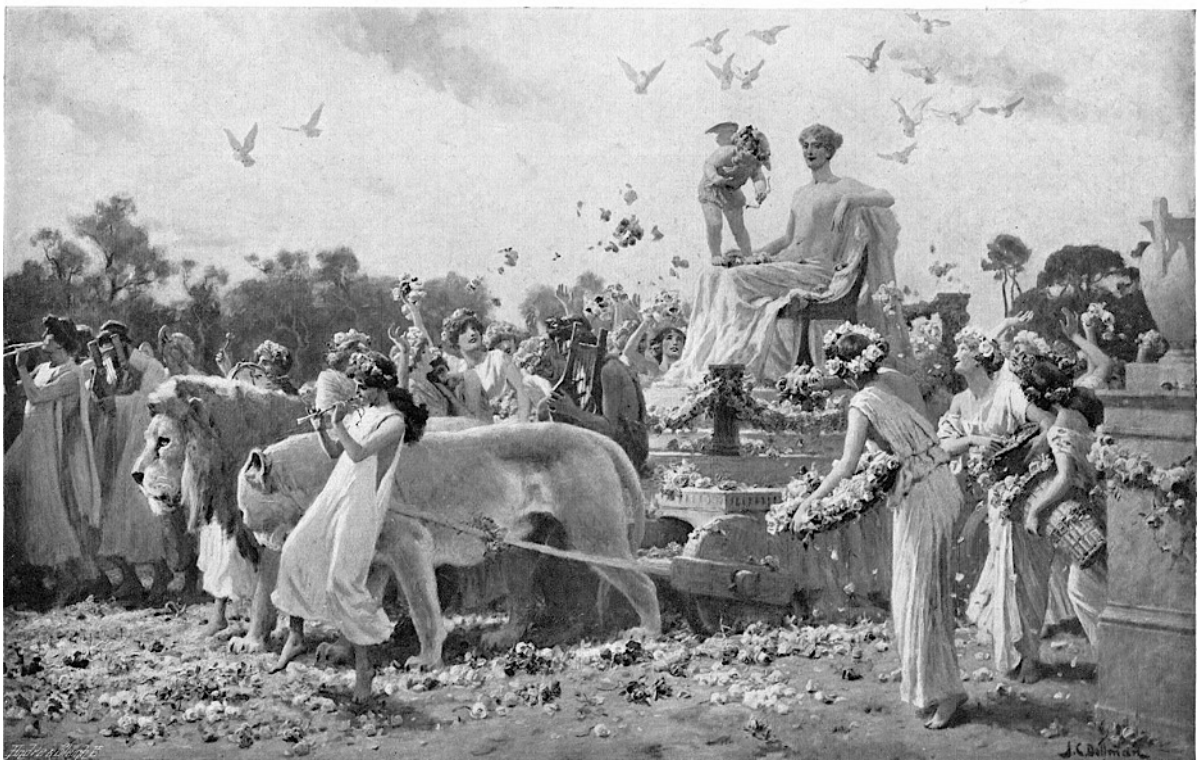


Plate 114 ***The mischief god***

and Waterhouse and the better known exponents of aesthetic classicism, Dollman has drawn on classical literature and possibly sculpture as well as the many interpretations of Atë made by earlier artists.

As the classical revival school was not too concerned with accuracy and the levels of historic integrity varied, one might imagine all paintings in the style sitting somewhere along a continuum of discourse, with historic narrative placed at one end

[26] William Shakespeare invokes Atë as the goddess of menace in his plays *Julius Caesar* and *Much Ado About Nothing.*

[27] In classical Greek art Eros is normally portrayed as a slender winged youth.

and aesthetics at the other. Dollman's painting has similar interpretive and stylistic dimensions to Lawrence Alma-Tadema's *Bacchus* (1889) and *Bacchanals* (1912). In it he has re-created an episode from classical history but also strived to produce an aesthetic painting. This tension between history and aesthetics in *The mischief god* might, in this case, be represented as a position somewhere near the middle of the history – aesthetics dichotomy.

Art historian George Landow discerns two distinct categories in Victorian classical revival works. In both, he argues the classic revivalists were attempting to present "Victorian ideas and ideals in Roman dress". The first category was based on an historic event or significant occurrence in literature. The second did not have that strong connection with literature and was rather the study of everyday life or "archaeological *genre*".[28] *Gold* and *The mischief god*, are early examples of Dollman's classical revival work that fall into Landow's first category. His later work in the genre, however, did not neatly fit the second category, as will be explored further. It was this that distinguished Dollman.

After the distractions to visual art caused by the Great War had passed, Dollman returned to make new paintings in the aesthetic, classical style. In these images, he departed from his previous use of strong underlying narratives which would have otherwise competed with their aesthetic appeal. In the following years, Dollman exhibited four paintings in this style at the Royal Academy in fairly quick succession. They were *The enchantress* (1922), *The spell* (1923), *Circe* (1926) and *Enchantment* (1930), each constructed to a recipe of a dominant and solitary figure who possessed powers of enchantment over animals, set in some classical context. Little underlying story is obvious in these works, except for the central notion of powers of enchantment and some allusion to classical history in the title. The objects of the paintings are always large species predatory animals, usually leopards, again indulging Dollman's untiring passion for painting *animalia*.

The first painting in which he applied this formula was his earlier pre-war painting of *Orpheus* with his legendary powers of charm over all animals. It was a formula that he clearly liked which he continued to exploit.

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[28] Landow, G. P., "An Annual of Victorian Literary and Cultural History", in Peterson, W. S., (ed.), *Browning Institute Studies,* (Ams Press, New York), 1984, pp. 35 - 36.



Plate 115 ***The enchantress***

In the first of the new paintings *The enchantress* (Plate 115), Dollman depicted the form of a composed and beautiful woman wearing a golden tunic from some undefined classical period. She has spellbound a lepe of leopards in a setting of an ancient stone staircase by the sea.[29] His later *Enchantment* (Plate 116) shares a similar setting of a stone stairway and backdrop to the sea though the number of leopards has been culled from eight to six. Italian Cypress pines in the middle distance reinforce the notion that this is a Mediterranean, and by association, classical scene.

The enchantress within *Enchantment* has discarded her period tunic but the marble steps and an ancient lyre instrument still provide this picture with a classical sense. Music is the basis of the charm. Her naked beauty would certainly have had Leo Tolstoy again railing against Dollman for once more painting beauty for beauty's

[29] *The Enchantress* was part of the Chrysler Foundation collection but was sold in 1989 with the other paintings in liquidation of the estate of Walter P. Chrysler Jr. Its current whereabouts is unknown.

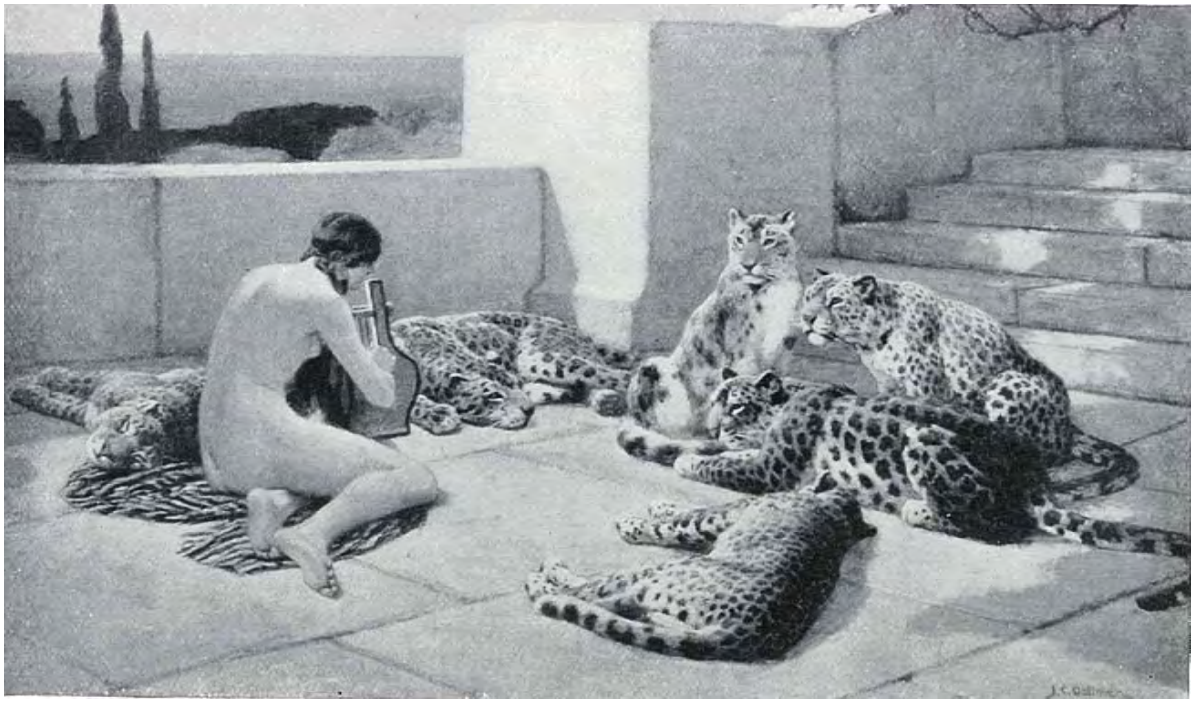


Plate 116 ***Enchantment***

sake, had he lived long enough to see it.[30] But, as Wood points out, the late classical movement had "succeeded in bringing back the nude to Victorian art after its banishment in the mid-Victorian moral ice age".[31] Alison Smith agrees, arguing this had been promoted by artists such as Frederic Leighton and Edward Poynter, both of whom occupied positions of significant authority and influence over practice and taste, Leighton as President at the Royal Academy and Poynter, Director of the South Kensington Schools.[32]

Dollman's *Circe* (Plate 117), which was exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 1926, and painted in oils to his preferred canvas size of 50 x 30 inches (127 cm. x 36 cm.), follows the formula but with the number of animals further consolidated now to seven and the coastal setting replaced with the entrance to a cave. The unrobed Circe holding a flower captures the gaze of the enchanted animals and she appears to be in some conversation with them. The lack of garb or

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[30] See earlier discussion in relation to Leo Tolstoy and his criticisms of Dollman's first naked study, his temptress of *Saint Antony*, in Chapter V. Tolstoy died in 1910.

[31] Wood, C., *Victorian Painting In Oils and Watercolours,* (Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge), 1996, p. 49.

[32] Smith, A., *The Victorian Nude, Sexuality, morality and art*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester) 1996, p.165.

any architectural features leave the observer to rely on the name of the painting alone to establish her classical credentials. As with *Enchantment,* the naked beauty is seen from behind but the hair and features suggest that Dollman had employed the same model for both paintings and possibly also for the 1925 rework of his temptation of *St Antony*.[33]

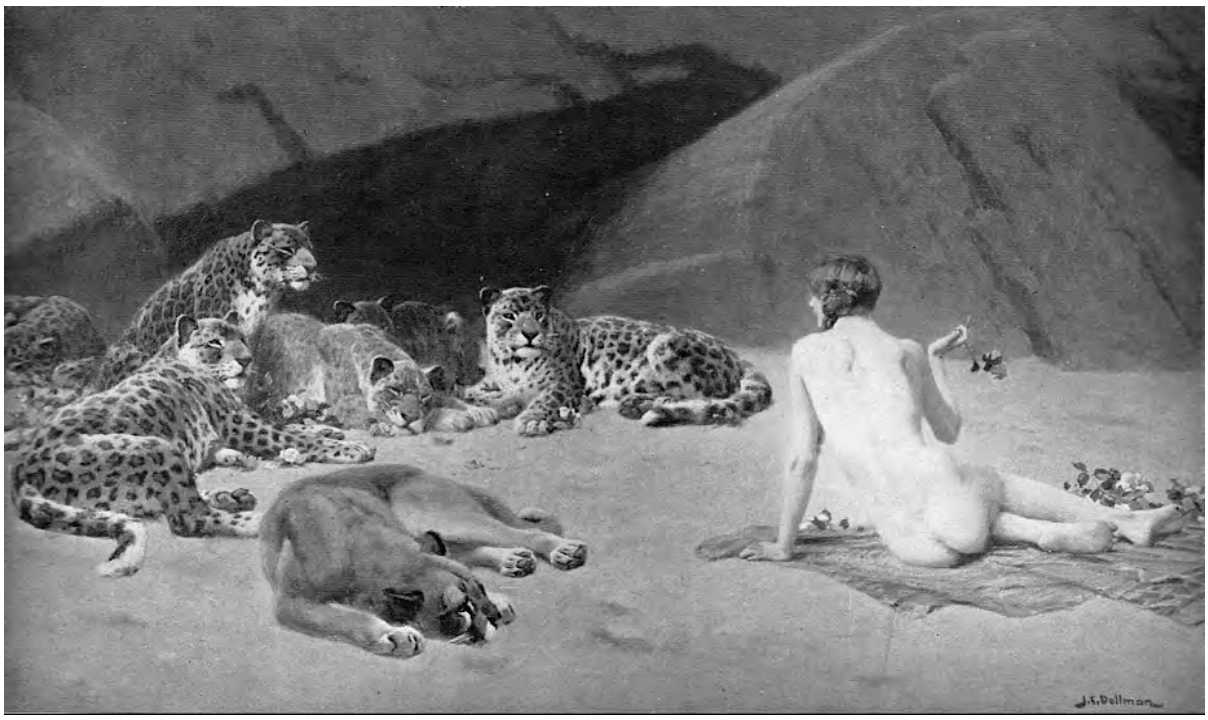


Plate 117 *Circe*

Circe, in Greek mythology, was a goddess of magic, a sorcerer and enchantress, and a popular subject for pre-Raphaelite painters. Dollman's friend, Waterhouse, had a fixation with Circe and made three depictions which were more concerned with her sorcery.[34] However, the approach of these two artists was very different. Dollman's Circe is passive and languid when compared to those painted by Waterhouse in the early 1890s.

Waterhouse depicted her as malevolent, in one painting disposing of a rival by

[33] The current owners of Hove House advised the author anecdotally that Dollman's wife, Mary, insisted on the construction of a new external set of stairs to the second floor studio so that the models would not pass through the house.

[34] Waterhouse's three Circe works were: *Circe Invidiosa* (1892), *Circe Offering the Cup to Ulysses* (1891), and *The Sorceress* (1911).

poison and in another entrapping Ulysses and his crew with sorcery.[35] However Waterhouse's last painting of Circe some twenty years later, *The Sorceress,* has more in common with Dollman's interpretation. While not naked, she is more passive and appears in contemplation, engaged in some sort of communication with the wild animals which in this painting, as in Dollman's, are leopards. The inclusion of the loom as well as the beasts identify the woman in the painting as Homer's Circe, and unlike Dollman's painting, there is no need for a decoding title.

These four of Dollman's classically inspired post war paintings form a style that is uniquely his. They don't fit Landow's first classification which relies on a strong visual narrative, nor do they align neatly to his classification of passive 'archaeological *genre*.'[36] Unlike earlier paintings in the genre, they contain little classical staffage, being stripped of palaces, urns and pillars, and even period dress. This seems to be deliberate. The First World War had all but destroyed any remnant of historical romance and the ennobling myths that had persisted from the previous century. Dollman's response to this was to consciously minimise the historic and classical aspects of the style in favour of ascetics. These paintings were intended to be viewed as works of beauty, not only for the female, but also for the animal forms.

Probably the late classical revival artist of closest comparison to Dollman, in both the time that he painted and in style, was John William Godward. Like Dollman, he also made single subject paintings such as *Mischief* (1905) and *By the Blue Ionian Sea* (1916). However, Godward's women are more concerned with domestic matters than any sorcery or enchantment, and neatly fit with Landow's generalisation of classical *genre*. A further characteristic that clearly defines Dollman's later classical paintings as distinct from those of others was his inclusion of animals in a

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[35] Angus Trumble counts Watehouse's *Circe Invidiosa* "as one of the most remarkable images of the *femme fatale* in Victorian Art." See Trumble, A,, (ed.), *Love and Death – Art in the Age of Queen Victoria,* (AGSA, Adelaide), p. 102.

[36] Landow describes a late "fashion for paintings of an attractive young woman seated or lying on a high backed marble bench or one placed against a marble wall or a parapet over which the viewer catches sight of ocean… and an intense blue sky". See Landow, G. P., "An Annual of Victorian Literary and Cultural History", in Peterson, W. S., (ed.), *Browning Institute Studies,* (Ams Pr Inc., New York), 1984, p. 37. While Dollman's paintings superficially seem to fit this description and he has obviously drawn on this Alma-Tadema inspired "sub-genre", his are clearly not *genre* paintings.

way that was unique. All of these paintings contain significant, balanced and highly refined animal studies – that again speak of Dollman's brilliance as an *anamalier*.

Dollman had finally compromised his earlier insistence that a painting's real purpose can only be about its underlying meaning and telling a story.[37] In his last years he acknowledged, through his work, that there was also a place for beauty in painting.

This group of four paintings, and possibly one unlocated other, post-date almost all of the artists of the classical revival movement, which had come to a fairly abrupt end with the outbreak of war in 1914.[38] Frederick Leighton had died in 1896, Alma-Tadema in 1912, and his old friend Waterhouse in 1917. The only notable member of the school to survive the war period and continue to work productively was John William Godward, who died in 1922. With his focus on Godward, Vern Swanson in *J. W. Godward: the Eclipse of Classicism* describes the demise of classical painting as a genre, comparing it to the reaction against history painting a century earlier. He argued "that Classicism has become to the Edwardians what history painting had been to the Second Empire, a little too 'high' of an art," noting "modernism and post modernism serve as today's Official Art…"[39] Swanson also placed Dollman in the "Late Classical Milieu" as something of a fifth columnist against modernism.

Yet, it was not just the passing of the classical revival painters and the Great War which saw the end of the genre. According to Roger Jenkyns, the demise of the classical revival movement was assisted by important contemporary art critics such as Roger Fry (1886 – 1934) who launched "a frank attempt to dethrone Greek art

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[37] See Chapter II.

[38] In 1927, Dollman exhibited *The Eldest God* at the Royal Academy (RA 424 1927). Although the location of the painting is unknown and no image of that painting is currently available, the title strongly suggests that this also was a study in the classical style, possibly similar in presentation to *The Mischief God*.

[39] Swanson, V. G., *J. W. Godward: the Eclipse of Classicism,* (Antique Collectors, Woodbridge), 1997, Part 4 section 28, reproduced as an on-line book at https://www.artrenewal.org/articles/On-Line_Books/Godward/godward1.php, Last accessed 14 May 2015.

altogether."[40] Jenkyns also observed that not only classical painting was displaced by modernism with sculpture, classical literature and poetry also "becoming distinctly unpopular".[41]

The Royal Academy continued periodically to accept and exhibit Dollman's classical revival works together with a handful from other aging artists up until 1930, keeping the style technically alive well into the modern era. Dollman's motivations for continuing to paint and those of the Royal Academy for continuing to exhibit the style are likely to be several. The Victorian history, narrative and *genre* paintings that he had created forty years earlier detailing stage coaches, highwaymen and workhorses were now truly relegated to the past. Of all the Victorian styles, classical revival was the one to persist the longest, resisting the inroads of modernism into the 20th–century. It therefore enabled Dollman to continue painting in his traditional ways well into the 1920s. Though a relatively late convert to classical revival, his association with Waterhouse would have made him very familiar with the style. The Academy also persisted with classical revival from a sense of nostalgia. It was reinforced by two later presidencies, those of Sir Edward Poynter from 1896 to 1918 and Sir Frank Dicksee from 1924 to 1928. Dicksee had enrolled at the Royal Academy Schools the same year as Dollman. Both presidents had employed a strong aesthetic style during their working lives. There is a further and self evident factor that influenced Dollman towards classical revival. The style served as a vehicle for him to continue his realistic paintings of *animalia*, his true and undying passion. This was not possible within the modern styles. It also enabled him to paint nude subjects, something that was not encouraged during Victoria's reign.

In recent decades, and after many years of neglect, the classical revival style has been rediscovered. Works by Waterhouse, Leighton and others have been retrieved from the reserve collections of many galleries to be formed into major public exhibitions. Dollman's output of classical aesthetic works is modest when compared with that of the greatest names of the movement — but his contribution

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[40] Jenkyns, R., *The Victorians and Ancient Greece,* (Harvard, Cambridge), 1980, pp. 344 - 345.

[41] Jenkyns records the influential 20th Century art critic, Kenneth Clark as retrospectively endorsing the "iconoclasm" of Fry as a "real relief" and a "liberation from an unconscious insincerity"; see Ibid.

was unique, and in the end he stood as a lone rear-guard figure from the 19th–century against the tide of modernism.

* * *

Chapter XI
CONCLUSION

Objectives

This research had two principal aims: to rediscover the artwork of John Charles Dollman Jnr, and to establish its relevance to late Victorian and early 20th–century British painting.

Locating his pictures has been challenging. Dollman's many paintings are well dispersed, located globally in galleries, institutions and private collections. A number of his larger pieces are on permanent display. More have been found stored in the reserve vaults of galleries and other institutions. Where it has not been possible to find original paintings, published images and art criticisms have been used to ensure completeness in analysis and discussion.

The relevance of Dollman's art has been established in the preceding chapters through critical analysis, and comparative examination of his work against that of British art and the artists of his time. This analysis demonstrates that Dollman differed from his art peers in several ways. The two most remarkable differences were his versatility in successfully applying his skills across all the recognised traditional genre, and his extraordinary talents as an *animalier.* Both become very apparent in a review of his principal works.

The Problem with Dollman

Dollman lived a long life and painted extensively throughout a period of history marked by rapid social change and disruption, brought about primarily by the industrialisation of Britain. Throughout these years he produced work across all the traditional styles. While he remained committed to realism, his interests moved with the times, his own personal situation and the market for art. During his life he was well recognised; his work received high recognition which included medals and, on several occasions, the public judgment of painting of the year at the Royal Academy. Today, however, he is little known.

At the outset of this thesis it was argued that the artistic meaning and language of any work can be only truly discerned against what Robert Belton characterised as its primary context. This requires a comprehensive understanding of the artist.[1] It is an important outcome of this research to have enabled the delineation of a primary context so as best to inform any future consideration of Dollman's paintings.

Dollman's Relevance

It was contended early in this study that Dollman should be recognised as special in any consideration of late 19th–century British art. In support of this notion, a number of propositions were made. They have now been validated through examination of Dollman's personal history, the position he occupied within the *milieu* of British fine art, his style and his *oeuvre* from six decades at the easel.

The first of these is that a number of Dollman's significant paintings have defied modernism to remain popular to the present day. Beginning early last century, a general movement away from the old schools had begun which gained momentum through the First World War. There are notable exceptions to the general rejection of traditional paintings and their artists. But these are limited to a small number of popularised Victorian painters such as Turner, Leighton and Waterhouse. They, and some of the pre-Raphaelites, are now regularly marketed in 'block-buster' exhibitions by galleries throughout the Anglo world. In these the focus is principally on the artist, and a cross section of their work is used to support the curator's characterisation. Apart from these few notables, many traditional painters, together with their art, have been largely forgotten and simply written out of art history. For Dollman this is only partly the case. While little knowledge or analysis of Dollman has been published since his death, a significant number of his paintings do remain prominent in permanent exhibitions of art galleries and other institutions around the world. These include his *Famine, Les Misérables*, "*A very gallant gentleman*", *During the time of the Sermonses*, *Mowgli, The Immigrants' Ship*, *The ride of the Valkyries* and others. Today, all of these continue to be reproduced as supporting subject images for

[1] Belton identifies *context* as one of the three "elements of art". Within context, he considers three sub elements, *primary, secondary* and *tertiary*. See Chapter I.

various publications. Some also have travelled internationally to theme exhibitions or, as in the case of the *Valkyries,* to Wagnerian events. Though these and others of Dollman's paintings continue to attract public interest, knowledge of the artist behind them has been forgotten, lost, or is at best superficial and often incorrect. The main reason for this neglect is that his divers interests in art have made him hard to label, classify, manage, and market from a curatorial point of view, particularly in the very themed retrospective exhibitions so popular today.

The preceding chapters explore this difficulty in pinning Dollman down to any category. Was he a painter of animals, *genre*, biblical history, social realism, war, characterised humour, popular literature, landscape, still life, mythology, allegory, problem pictures, or neo-classical works? As has been shown, the answer is he was all of these. Dollman had two great strengths. Firstly, he could move his skills effortlessly between all these styles. The second was his outstanding skills as an *animalier* which benefited all his painting. Other key characteristics also marked his work. His early training at the Academy's Life School equipped him for his fine characterisations in narrative and classical revival works. He included detailed incidental *genre* studies in his landscapes and history painting. His social sensitivities learnt in the sub-genre of *social realism* later became manifest in his war paintings. Dollman, it could be argued, belonged to all schools. But, as made clear in his public speculations on art generally, he would have preferred to be considered as belonging to none. In this he was not alone, with Rupert Bunny claiming "his greatest complement has come from a critic who said he belonged to no school".[2] Of all the possibilities available to Victorian artists, Dollman was least represented in the discipline of portrait painting. While on occasion he demonstrated that he was very capable of portraiture, he did choose not follow his fellow graphic artists from social realism into this relatively more lucrative pursuit. This is because Dollman was driven by two primal needs — the first to tell a story, and the second to satisfy his gift as a fine *animalier* — and portraiture offered him neither of these.

It is this diversity of interest and difficulty in characterising Dollman as belonging to any particular school of art that has acted against his memory. Also,

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[2] *Table Talk*, 9 February 1933, cited in Edwards, D., *Rupert Bunny, Artist in Paris*, (AGNSW, Sydney), 2009, p. 24.

Dollman's relatively inconspicuous domestic profile, when compared to Turner, Rossetti or Leighton, did not attract the sort of public fascination that they enjoyed then, and do still. As a result, despite the continuing public appreciation of Dollman's individual works, knowledge of their creator has largely slipped from memory.

It has also been established that Dollman worked with equal ease in oils and water colours. He was not unique in this, although others who did usually had a bias, or migrated from one to the other during their working life. The preceding chapters demonstrate how Dollman operated in both media simultaneously, with ease and with equal competency, continuously throughout his working life.

His most significant attribute, his ability as an *animalier*, was very evident in the greater part of his work. In his own time, this established Dollman in competition with Briton Rivière for the accolade of the late Victorian 'successor to Landseer'. Animals pervade most of his work as studies in their own right, or as important subjects, or supporting actors to a prime or underlying narrative. He imbued a realism into all his animal studies which was unrivalled in his time, employing a precision in his narrative and aesthetic animal painting that was also in demand for scientific (natural history) works. As with Rivière, some of his earlier animal subject paintings might have appeared sentimental, but his mature work on animals demonstrated remarkable sophistication. As an *animalier* alone, he stands above his late Victorian peers.

Another key and defining characteristic that made him special was the boldness of his narratives. He constructed layered descriptions in his history painting, social realism, war painting and *genre* works. The events depicted could relate to a dramatic incident, a reflective event or humour, or anywhere in between. At times there was an implicit political or social subtext, as in *The Stymie* and *The Sabbath Breakers.* On other occasions, the subject was simply inspired by some accidental observation that met with his own sensibilities, as with *Les Misérables.* Popular or classical literature also inspired his paintings, such as *Crusoe*, *The ride of the Valkyries* and *Heavy is the crown*. Sometimes the moment he chose to paint was deliberately inconclusive and it is up to the observer to ponder the outcome. Examples are the *Field of honour*, *The hunter, Up a tree* and "*A very gallant gentleman*". Other paintings describe an outcome which is, more often than not,

unfortunate, and the observer is left to ponder what events preceded it. Examples are his *Kismet, The altar* and *The creditors*.

From the point of wealth, family and association, Dollman lived a comfortable life. He was middle class and had a good education, and seemed to want for little. His position enabled him also to indulge his many interests including sport, walking the South Downs, photography, natural history, anthropology, entomology and family. These interests, in turn, all informed his art.

His history reveals that his early engagement in subjects involving social realism was not a product of early intimate personal experiences. It was rather learnt by association with *The Graphic* over the decade following on from his schooling at the Royal Academy. In this, he was different from most of his peers in the sub-genre who had a first-hand and formative knowledge of the harder side of life. But while they generally abandoned social realism in later years, Dollman continued to draw on this early conditioning in works such as his acclaimed and controversial "*Am I my brother's keeper*?"

From the review of his various works considered by chapter under the various genre headings, and with consideration of the dates on which these paintings were first exhibited, it is clear that Dollman was not a leader in the styles. Rather, in borrowing from the *lingua franca* of modern business management, he was a 'refiner' of the existing traditional styles. He was also a 'finisher' who, having outlived most of his peers, helped to prolong the life of traditional styles well into the 20th–century — and against the inroads of the modernism.

Dollman's landscape paintings, many of which were made in the period from about 1905 to after the end of the First World War, were mainly concerned with the rural South Downs of England, and are an important body of work in their own right. They cleverly exploit light, colour, the seasons and animal studies in a way that is distinctive. While he would have disliked any comparison of his work with that of Impressionists, his style was not dissimilar in its application of complementary colours and exploitation of light. What distinguished Dollman's work from the landscapes of others of his time was that he often incorporated one or more creative *genre* studies into his pictures. As these paintings were typically smaller, they often found their way into private collections rather than to galleries or institutions. His

landscapes, numbering into the hundreds, when supplemented with those of his daughter Ruth, who shared a very similar style, constitute an important rural history of Sussex and the South Downs of England.

Dollman's paintings on war-related subjects belong mainly to what Richenda Roberts characterises as military "art of a second order" – the vision of the First War from a "home front perspective".[3] Roberts argues that both an ongoing public fascination with war history and the war museums have kept alive the strong interest in dramatic paintings of conflict set on the battlefield. She adds that those works which relate to the social and "feminine" side of war have been effectively removed from the canon of war art.[4] Another consideration influencing this bias was that the paintings of conflict were made mainly by young official war artists experimenting in the new modern style. Those who painted the social implications of war generally painted in a realist and traditional manner, a style which already in their time, was losing public interest. Regardless, Dollman's *The creditors, Fraternité, Anno Domini 1917* and *The altar* are all profound, creative and very different treatments of the social outcomes of war. When considering this group, the one painting that is out of style is *The silence*. Dollman had earlier repudiated the Impressionists. But in this painting he has borrowed from the movement which he so disliked as being incapable of producing art "beyond the laying-in stage".[5] Here he departed from his normal scripture of realism, employing symbolic colours including purple, and dissipated the background so that the vision is only of the monument and those that were attending its purpose.[6]

In Dollman's later life, painting strong narrative, history and *genre* had fallen well from favour. With the steady demise of the traditional styles, Dollman chose to focus his energies on classical revival, landscape and animal paintings – areas which still had some currency with the art public. He helped perpetuate these styles,

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3 Roberts, R. A., *Art of a Second Order*, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012, *passim*.

4 Ibid, p. 13.

5 For Dollman's views on Impressionism, see Ch. II.

6 Mark 15:16, Jesus was clothed in purple by Roman soldiers before being beaten and crucified.

still producing fine creative works that were well accepted by galleries and public up until his death in 1934.

In his time, the high regard for Dollman's work was demonstrated by its broad acceptance at the Royal Academy, wide publication and public interest — and since by galleries which continue to exhibit his significant subject paintings. He was important to late Victorian art in a number of ways, the most outstanding of which was his brilliance as an *animalier*. While a full appreciation and interpretation of Dollman's paintings has suffered from a loss of contemporary knowledge of the artist — the primary context to all these works — this thesis remedies that and provides a new understanding of Dollman to inform any future analysis of his art.

* * *



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