

“To use our talents and improve them”

Women’s careers in the London art world,

1820-1860

Declaration of authorship

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Abstract

This study investigates women's access to work opportunities, and management of their subsequent working careers, in the London art world between 1820 and 1860. As markets became more buoyant, in the 1820s, giving way to a tide of consumerism and mass production from the 1830s onward, the workplace associated with art diversified and grew, yielding new opportunities for training and work in illustration and reproduction, design of commodities, art-teaching and art-historical study to both men and women who, in many cases, also pursued careers as practising artists. Nevertheless, when Emily Mary Osborn's painting 'Nameless and Friendless' was exhibited in 1857, it followed a tradition established in the early 1840s of presenting a demure young woman, clearly vulnerable and insecure in the commercial world, attempting unsuccessfully to earn some much-needed income from her paintings. The narrative of her 'plight' in seeking an income from an inadequate education has persisted to the present day, but it is argued here that this did not literally reflect the experience, either of the painting's female creator, or of other women working in this and associated occupations at the time.

Research into women's working lives in four aspects of the London art business in this period - water-colour painting, wood-engraving, art-teaching and art-writing – provides the opportunity to examine the construction of workplace institutions which stabilised and conferred status on practitioners. The role and impact of bodies which offered occupational status, qualifications and intellectual stimulus are considered through the examination of both cohorts of women and individual case studies. Conclusions are drawn concerning women's exclusion, not from participation, but from the benefits of these bodies, and the continuation of their precarious tenure in the workplace. To Emily Mary Osborn's generation of feminists, existing female professionals presented no acceptable model of career success.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The image below at Figure 1.1 – ‘Nameless and Friendless: the rich man’s wealth is his strong city’ - was painted by a professional female artist, Emily Mary Osborn, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1857, and sold from the exhibition for a respectable sum. It became something of an icon for feminist historians of the late twentieth century, as, indeed, the central figure in the picture and her pictorial predecessors were icons for exhibition-goers during the twenty years 1840 to 1860. Richard Redgrave’s images from the early 1840s, an example of which can be seen at Figure 4.8, of the fading seamstress in her attic or the worn-out teacher in her mourning clothes, together with those of his male imitators and Osborn’s own “pictures of (contemporary) women in pathetic situations”, had, by the late 1850s, established an iconography, in parallel with narratives in the popular literature of the time, of the genteel young woman lacking both resources and opportunity to maintain herself without a male provider.¹



Figure 1.1: Emily Mary Osborn, 'Nameless and Friendless' (1857)

Photo © Tate, reproduced with permission under licence CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported)

¹ Alison Smith, 'Nameless and Friendless...', *Tate Art and Artists* (2015), <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/osborn-nameless-and-friendless-the-rich-mans-wealth-is-his-strong-city-etc-proverbs-x-15-t12936>> [accessed 20 June 2019].

In Osborn's painting, the subjective experience of exclusion from the protection of male relatives, from middle class female sympathy and from commercial recognition, and of thus being vulnerable to the sexual predations of men, is incarnated with all the intensity and literal realism of the pre-Raphaelite style. Osborn's sub-title, "the rich man's wealth is his strong city" suggests an unyielding citadel of male professional life which combines with the young woman's demeanour to give the firm impression to the viewer that this transaction will not have a successful outcome, and that she hardly expects it to. In a foundational work of feminist art history, published in 1987, Susan P. Casteras described this image, and the young woman's situation, as "a telling vignette of the plight she (Osborn) and others faced...the vicissitudes of self-employment... scorn... (and) abuse", transferring the subjectivity of the victim of exclusion depicted in the image to its creator.² Deborah Cherry's subsequent and far more detailed analysis of this "uneasy, unresolved representation" of "the female artist in the guise of the distressed gentlewoman" unequivocally promotes this as a representation of a woman artist, positioning the picture, as she claimed Osborn had done, "in the escalating public debate about women artists".³ "At the outset of her career"; in Cherry's account of the painting's narrative, this young woman is the absolute trope of the genteel young woman, now alone in the world, unprepared with marketable expertise or contacts, the vulnerable object of masculine sexual speculation and female scorn. Cherry tells us that the image became adopted as talismanic by other contemporary feminists in its representation of the "plight" of the woman seeking admission to the commercial world as a whole, rather than simply the female artist.

The status of this image as a literal cry from the heart of the creator has been challenged more recently. Alison Smith, in an article accompanying the image in the collection of the Tate Gallery, compares the image with its creator's actual lived experience more critically. "It would be misleading to equate (the artist's) own career with the predicament of the woman in the picture", she states, according to Osborn her place in the commercial world as a professional artist managing the work she produced, and the narratives it portrayed, for the market she wished to attract.⁴ Contrary to Casteras' view, the experience of the painting's subject did not reflect that of the female artist at the time, but the emotional lure of the image of the

² Susan P. Casteras, *Images of Victorian womanhood in English art* (London: Associated University Presses, 1987), pp.103-105.

³ Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women: Victorian women artists* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 78.

⁴ Smith, 'Nameless' (2015).

delicate victim of fate proved compelling, then and more recently, compared with a more complex and mutable reality. In fact, during the decade when this painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy, over one hundred professional female artists also exhibited, many of whom had established exhibiting careers stretching back to the 1830s and before, and many of whom could have advised the young woman here on the best method of starting out in a career as a painter, if an income was her object.⁵ The literal veracity of the work is undermined, not only by the evidence of its creator's working life, but by that of a numerous population of female artists. In borrowing the powerfully-evocative imagery of the previous fifteen years, initiated by Redgrave, of regretful, ineffectual, but always genteel, seamstresses and governesses or teachers, Osborn gives visual reinforcement to the rhetoric and literature of the day concerning the demeanour and subjectivity of the ideal unmarried woman, and derives marketability for the work. Its authoritative narrative remains instantly recognisable, and empathetic, today, while the implications of contradictory factual evidence are still not widely considered.

A context of change

This study seeks to gain some purchase on the experience of women already at work in the visual arts at the time 'Nameless and Friendless' was exhibited, and to consider the possible reasons for their being invisible, or at least discounted, both by the public and by their younger female contemporaries. In so doing, it investigates the evolution of the workplaces and institutions in which they constructed their careers over the preceding four decades, and their nature of their motives and aspirations.⁶ This study, therefore, positions itself within the history of careers, rather than the history of art, examining the experience of women who earned a living by their own effort at the intersection of gender, social class and geographical location.

The period of this study is approximately the duration of a working life, although the careers considered in the following chapters are those of, broadly speaking, women of two different generations, those born around the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and those born approximately thirty years later. Beginning around 1820, when English cultural and economic life, including Continental travel,

⁵ In this context the term 'professional' indicates that the artist exhibited with the intention of selling their work.

⁶ In this study, the term 'workplace' has been used to refer to the social and economic environment in which men and women pursued their income-earning occupations, rather than being associated with a particular type of work or its physical location.

empire-building and commerce began a new, post-Napoleonic, phase of growth, the study closes in the early 1860s. By this time, the dissatisfaction of educated women with some ambition to exert agency in the cultural and commercial world as they found it, was expressed, in England, by the so-called Langham Place group. In 1858 the founders of the *English Woman's Journal* formed the basis of an unprecedented network of women bound by their interests, activities and politics, rather than by personal friendship and family, both publishing the *EWJ* and planning many other initiatives from their offices there and in association with parallel groups in London and other cities. 'Nameless and Friendless' is one expression of this disparate but mutually-sustaining public female discourse, and its secondary title – 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city' encapsulates a key strand of their narrative of female exclusion from opportunities for reward - financial, social and self-expressive - in the commercial and political worlds.⁷ Initiatives over the preceding decades with the aims of introducing greater stability, opportunity and certainty of reward into commercial enterprise and professional practice, had resulted in increasing formalisation of standards, and hierarchies of personal value, which became entrenched in the second half of the century.

To a very great extent as a result of this new prominence of women's argument with the institutionalisation of gender difference in the commercial world, the period from the mid-1850s onwards has been regarded as pivotal in the history of women's work and careers in Britain. Ellen Jordan, writing in 1999, constructed her argument concerning "middle class" girls and women earning an income from work in the nineteenth century around a central proposition that the workplace accessible to such women in the decades prior to 1850 had a distinctly different character from those which followed the initiatives of "the women's movement" shortly after the middle of the century.⁸ A simplified version of this narrative is that, up to 1850, young middle-class women only worked if driven to it by unanticipated poverty, and then only as dressmakers or governesses. By 1880, however, girls of a similar social class could be found in "previously all-male areas" of the workplace, while the concern, prevalent in 1850, that "leaving home to work for money would destroy their status as ladies and unsex them as women" appeared to have dissipated.⁹ This narrative permeates the twentieth-century historiography of women's careers in

⁷ The Bible, King James Version, Proverbs, x, 15. The verse continues: "the destruction of the poor is their poverty".

⁸ Ellen Jordan, *The women's movement and women's employment in nineteenth-century Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.14-16.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.84.

the nineteenth century, in individual works to a greater or lesser extent, but overall leading to a prevalent assumption that the workplace before 1860 was so suppressive of all female enterprise and career-building that these were eliminated entirely. Moreover, it can be argued that a robustly feminist agenda in this scholarship has emphasized and applauded the successful cumulative challenges to “the rich man’s...strong city” since 1860 to the extent of insufficiently recognising the persistence of its foundations and cornerstones, still encountered in the workplace today.

In recent years, as considered in the review of relevant literature later in this chapter, scholars have queried and revised the narrative summarised above, qualifying the narrative concerning restrictions on women’s work prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, and reducing the exclusive emphasis on gender as a determining factor in women’s working lives. This study extends that scholarship, but also investigates the interactions between women’s engagement in professional work and the formative process of what appeared, by 1860, to be an impregnable “strong city”.

Of all cities in Britain, London was, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, most densely populated with skilled people creating luxury goods, and with people – resident and visiting from elsewhere in Britain, its Empire, Europe and further continents – with money to acquire them and the leisure and occasion to display them. This market generated, over the course of the eighteenth century, not only a network of creative workers, but the industries associated with the supply of materials, the locations where such goods were displayed and sold and different makers’ work and prices compared, where makers encountered each other, and a lively critical press fuelled competition. This was true of the visual arts in the broadest sense, including the adornment of one’s person and one’s residence, as much as for other highly-skilled creative pursuits including music, theatre and literature. In the period between 1800 and 1880, London’s population more than quadrupled, from a million to over four million.¹⁰ However, unlike other British cities which may have also experienced exponential growth, albeit from a smaller base, this was not due largely to industrialisation drawing in new workforces: “few” London trades were “transformed by the factory system until the twentieth century” due to

¹⁰ Caroline Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle: artists and Victorian society* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p.2 discusses this growth in the context of the westward move of the centres of artistic creativity after mid-century, broadly from Fitzrovia to Kensington.

high rents, dense and diverse property ownership and high costs of transportation of the necessary fuel for industry.¹¹ The business of national government, commerce, culture, and international empire and trade, with all the businesses which maintained the lifestyle and ambitions of the population of the city, the country and its overseas dominions, drew new workers into the city and stimulated existing residents to greater productivity and invention. The volume and variety of the market for paintings, centred in the West End of London at this time has been described, elsewhere, but in other branches of the visual arts, also, London was, for this period, at the centre of a rising “tide of consumption” which “reached new heights” in the 1860s and 1870s, and the apogee of “artistic” interior décor in the later part of the century.¹²

The choice of London as the site of this study offers the unique opportunity of reviewing a population of both male and female workers in non-factory trades which, within two or three generations, made the transition from eighteenth-century cultural values, technologies, markets and trade-governing structures (medieval, in the case of the London livery companies) to those which more nearly resemble those of the twentieth century. It was in this hub of culture, commerce and competition that many aspects and practices of the modern workplace – as well as the market in fine art - in Britain were formed.

For the purposes of this study “the art world” has been construed as encompassing a wide range of occupations carried on by people professionally engaged with painting, illustration and decoration, including its production, promotion, and printed reproduction. The decision to site the study among this associated group of occupations was influenced by the occupation of the protagonist of ‘Nameless and Friendless’, and more especially by the interests, and the incomparably wide-ranging personal networks, of the writer Anna Jameson (1794-1860), whose proudly independent spirit of self-sufficiency as a working woman first inspired the research. However, a number of more theoretical and pragmatic reasons also supported this choice. Among the former were the opportunity offered for the study of a diverse range of practitioners, in terms of their social class, their technical abilities, creativity and aspirations concerning financial and other rewards. Equally diverse innovations

¹¹ Sally Alexander, *Women's work in nineteenth-century London: A study of the years 1820-1850* (London: Journeyman, 1983), p.11.

¹² Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich (eds), *The rise of the modern art market in London, 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011). Deborah Cohen, *Household gods: the British and their possessions* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.x and 63-64.

in the workplace present themselves, including changes in technology, in organisation and governance, and in the scale and social diversity of markets. New forms of paid occupation were generated within the art world, as in other occupations based on the training of individual skills and talents. Finally, the art world's crucial cultural role at this time in expressing and reflecting notions of nationalistic and religious probity made its practitioners and exhibitions a focus of the critical press and other social commentators. A dynamic relationship can be perceived between practitioners' career strategies, their personal characteristics, including gender and social class, and the reception and value of their work, infused as these were with wider cultural preoccupations and anxieties. This examination of the interaction between the individual and external social, cultural and economic factors can offer insights into which may reasonably be assumed to be a wider experience for practitioners in unrelated occupations, but who in some key respects – notably their gender and the nature of the market for their work - are in similar circumstances.

The more pragmatic attractions of this field for a study of careers conducted over relatively long periods of time include, firstly, the relative traceability of practitioners who exhibited or were published and, secondly, the relative parity, in terms of education and social class, of practitioners at the outset of their careers. Because professional practice in the art world did not require a university degree, or membership of a professional élite, either for men or for women, it is possible to trace women's careers from similar dates and social points of entry in comparison with those of male counterparts, bearing in mind that no two individuals' careers are ever precisely comparable. Drawing or sketching with colour washes, and sometimes engraving and lithography, were part of many girls' education, across a wide social range of families from tradespeople and artisans upwards. Numerous young women began their working careers at a similar level of technical expertise to boys or young men. Their careers can be traced over a period of time which in some cases spans well over twenty years. Initial researches for the study confirmed that female practitioners' professional identities in the art business are visible to the historian, through exhibition catalogues, particularly, but also through published reviews, exhibiting societies' records, training institutions' records of prize-winners and the business records of the commercial companies who commissioned work.

Shifting values and language

Economic, social, structural and doctrinal change was symbiotically related to linguistic change, presenting challenges to any modern discussion of working careers which spanned this period. Nevertheless, it is essential to apply some consistency of language to a comparative study of the aspirations which drove individuals' careers and the critical and market values which rewarded them. In the context of the art world, consistent terminology must be adopted in order to convey some sense of the individual and relative degrees of social, critical and professional endorsement of the individual and his or her work. Shifting terminology relating to social class, with its connotations of authority and validity in the marketplace, was in this period accompanied by alterations in the connotations of 'professional' and 'amateur' and by increasing reference to ideas of greatness and of genius.

Amanda Vickery, in 1993, published perhaps the most incisive and destabilising critique in all recent scholarship of women's history, both of the narrative of the pivotal position of Langham Place feminism, and, as she presented her argument, of a similarly simplistic narrative of the development of social class structures and their defining characteristics.¹³ In this latter narrative, the social (and political) influence of aristocracy and land-owning gentry, served by artisanal, and labouring classes, gave way, over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, to that of a homogeneous middle class, unified and self-defined by financial, rather than feudal, assets and by a "distinctive (bourgeois) culture" reflecting "moderate, rational and commercial" values and gender ideals which constrained women's agency.¹⁴ Vickery's central contention is that these narratives, unsubstantiated by dispassionately-researched, comparative evidence, have given rise to a language, and widely-accepted assumptions, producing over-simplified historical narratives and lexicons which mitigate against historians' sensitivity to the infinitely various experience and testimonies of the people who lived and worked through historical periods of time.

It has been suggested that the term 'middle class' came into use "in the early years of the nineteenth century" among "men of business" who described themselves

¹³ Amanda Vickery, 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history', *Historical Journal*, 36.2 (1993), pp. 383-414.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.394

thus.¹⁵ More recently, Dror Wahrman has comprehensively traced terminology applied to the social orders comprising the “middle rank” between the labouring poor and the aristocracy in England between the 1790s and the 1840s in English political discourse.¹⁶ He argues convincingly that it was only following the 1832 Reform Bill and its associated public narratives that “the middle class” became an identifiable, coherent social group with political agency, whose essential characteristics of property and franchise were before long reinforced with personal and public virtues, and social attributes linked to income. “The category of ‘middle class’”, he claims, “came to play a central role in organizing and understanding social and political experience”, its characteristics providing “a clear-cut definition...of who belonged to this elusive category and – more importantly – who did not”.¹⁷

Two nineteenth-century texts period have been referenced by many twentieth-century historians of social manners and domestic arrangements in the Victorian period: John Henry Walsh’s *Manual of Domestic Economy*, first published in 1857, which reinforced the association between income, membership of the middle class and what might be termed ‘lifestyle’, and Dudley Baxter’s analysis of *National Income*, first published ten years later, in 1868. Both authors find it necessary to sub-divide the ‘middle class’, based on annual income, in order to further the perception of “an ordered and logical framework” of society, and to make further distinctions between those who formed its solid core, and those who, despite being the majority numerically, did not.¹⁸ By 1857, according to Walsh, two ‘lower’ middle classes comprised those whose income averaged £100 and £250 per annum respectively, while two ‘upper’ middle class incomes averaged £500 and £1,000 per annum. The former would have included shopkeepers, “small businessmen” and supervisors of unskilled workforces, as well as clerks and other “white-collar workers” such as schoolteachers and shop assistants. ‘Artisans’ who worked with their hands but often, after an apprenticeship, pursuing highly-skilled trades, producing items of value and taking on their own workforce of apprentices and journeymen, were classed by Baxter as working class, but formed “an ‘aristocracy of

¹⁵ Donald Read, *The Age of Urban Democracy: England 1868-1914* (rev. edn) (London: Longman, 1994), p.25.

¹⁶ Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the middle class: the political representation of class in Britain, c.1780-1840* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.15.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.18 and pp.332-333.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

labour', especially noticeable in London" due to their independence from masters and craft associations.¹⁹

Read nevertheless notes that people in the second half of the nineteenth-century identified others as members of a comparable, lower or higher social class as themselves on the basis of a complex amalgam of income level, education, manners, modes of speech and dress, and lifestyle, for which income level was frequently a shorthand, but not paramount, indicator.²⁰ Wahrman, also, recognises that, even in the 1830s, when the existence of a definable, cohesive and enfranchised middle class had been rendered, through "protracted discussion...a natural and self-evidently visible part" of the body politic, it did not necessarily correlate with 'objective' social reality to any greater extent than in previous decades.²¹ However, once called into being through repeated rhetoric, and empowered politically, it offered its 'members' an enduring, reassuring and increasingly pervasive model of social formation and political allegiance.

One might infer from this that, from the mid-1820s, the concept of a class within the middle ranks of the populace was defined and given worth (in all senses of the word), becoming reality to a large extent. Although possibly more flexible in lived reality than in rhetoric, its boundaries were first defined and then policed, becoming more tightly-drawn around those who were 'true' members, as compared with those who aspired to membership, over the next fifty years. This approximate chronology represents not only a social and economic context within which the working careers of those considered in this study were conducted, but a significant formative factor in those careers. The values embedded in the public and critical reception of the individual's work, the value (monetary and otherwise) placed upon it, the individual's scope for securing employment, for making useful friends and for the receipt of encouragement and practical support in periods of difficulty, shaped not only overall career outcomes, but individuals' career strategies and aspirations.

Any discussion of women's careers in the period 1820 to 1860 must therefore make use of a terminology for the social class of practitioners, their competitors and their markets, therefore. However, as Wahrman indicates, there is no linguistic framework available which had the same meanings, associations or effect over the

¹⁹ Read, *Urban Democracy* (1994), p.33. Read refers in a chapter on 'Social Life' to both Walsh and Baxter.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.25-27.

²¹ Wahrman, *The middle class* (1995), pp.332-333.

course of the period. In this study an attempt has been made to apply a consistent terminology, which has necessitated the application of terms which were not in use earlier in the century, or had different, less well-defined, associations. The terms used here are based largely on income level, where this is known, but include also an interpretation of the educational, social and domestic lifestyle factors identified by the mid-nineteenth century commentators mentioned above. 'Artisans', and 'lower middle class' are terms used for people – men and women - of a similar income level to that used by Walsh – between £100 and £500 per annum – who pursued skilled occupations for which education (literacy and numeracy), specialist training or experience and industry knowledge were necessary to make a living, together with a degree of self-reliance and business acumen. Despite the weaknesses of this approach, not least its failure to capture the mutability and gradations of the middle class over the period, it serves to capture a sense of relative autonomy, value and influence in people's working relationships. Very generally, the term 'artisan' has been used to describe those who worked at a craft in a studio or workshop and not for a regular wage, while lower middle class describes those who worked from shops or offices. It should be noted that neither workshops nor offices were necessarily located in different premises from their domestic lives. The term 'upper middle class' has been used to describe those who, earning between £500 and £2000 per annum in the period before 1860, lived comfortably from occupations which required a university education, and often also specialist experience, or which required a substantial amount of financial capital. The term 'gentry' has been used occasionally to describe the early nineteenth-century equivalent of the upper-middle class, usually people originating outside London with family connections to wealth generated in provincial economies.

Two further terms which also acquired new social resonance over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century and are fundamentally relevant to a discussion of work and careers are 'professional' and its obverse, 'amateur'. When the Society of Painters in Water-colour (the 'Old' Water-colour Society or OWS) was founded in 1804, with its membership restricted to "professional" painters, the term meant those who earned a significant proportion of their income by producing their own work with the intention of selling it. By 1860, initiatives to stabilise the precarious working environment inherited from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had been pursued in the art business and in others: professional institutions had formed and consolidated their membership criteria and standards of practice and conferred both accreditation and market value on their members. The term 'professional' had

acquired a patina of prestige, authority and high attainment within an occupation. This process was formulated, amplified and ineradicably linked to upper middle class status by the social theorist Max Weber in a seminal work of the 1920s which was republished in English in 1978 and has been much referred to and developed by subsequent sociologists.²² Anne Witz in 1992 applied and extended Weber's analysis of the formation of the professional classes to consider for the first time in comparable terms the formation of women's professions, taking as her initial contention that male power in upper middle class working life was institutionalised by the second half of the nineteenth century in professional cultures and constitutional bodies which were shaped by, and reinforced, economic and patriarchal interests.²³ In a detailed study of the professionalisation – termed “professional projects” by Weber and his successors - of various occupations associated with medicine from the 1870s onwards, she argues that upper middle class women engaged in strategies to professionalise their own occupations, either segregated from, or demarcated within, occupations where patriarchy had taken hold, as means of re-uniting expertise, effectiveness and authority with ideals of upper middle class womanhood. Similar, though less formally-articulated arguments have been used by other feminist historians. Martha Vicinus, in 1985, considered the search for professional status, again in the second half of the nineteenth century, among upper middle class women working in exclusively female environments in religious and lay communities serving the needs of the poor, in nursing and in residential schools and colleges for girls and women.²⁴ Very recently, Zoe Thomas considered women art-workers in the late nineteenth century adopting practices whereby they declared themselves ‘professional’ in imitation of male art studios.²⁵ Across this span of thirty years’ feminist scholarship the narrative of women struggling to achieve the right to apply the term ‘professional’ to themselves in the second half of the nineteenth century has been prevalent. Only recently and very occasionally has it been countered by scholars suggesting that the economic success, social authority and gender exclusiveness of the formal professions such as medicine, surgery, and law, which required university degrees not available to women, may have desensitised scholars to the real sense of, and practice of, their own professionalism by women, and men, in less publicly-prestigious occupations

²² Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (1921-2 and 1978).

²³ Anne Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy* (London: Routledge, 1992). Witz also provides a useful summary of the historiography subsequent to Weber's original publication.

²⁴ Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: work and community for single women, 1850-1920* (London: Virago Press, 1985), pp.228-229.

²⁵ Zoe Thomas, ‘At home with the Women's Guild of Arts: gender and professional identity in London studios, c.1880-1925’, *Women's History Review*, 24.6 (2015), pp.938-964.

throughout the nineteenth century. Referring to Christina de Bellaigue's work on female proprietors and teachers in girls' boarding schools in the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, David Kennerley has proposed that historians should be more "alert to the processes by which certain occupations defined themselves as professional", rather than comparing such practitioners with a more recently-constructed formal model.²⁶ The professionalism of the subjects of his study was more frequently defined in contrast with an amateurism whose defining characteristics were lack of expert training or consistent effort in acquiring the necessary techniques and stage presence to deliver a performance worthy of both the work and the audience's attention.

In this study, the terms 'professional' and 'amateur' have been applied to individual practitioners in Kennerley's sense as evidenced by the 'Old' Water-colour Society's rules of membership, describing one who seeks to earn a significant part of their necessary income from the pursuit of a particular occupation. However, while this may be useful in considering the individual's self-identification, it does not, in the context of a comparative study of careers, satisfactorily deal with the undoubted influence on the course of their working lives of the growing number of 'professional' bodies over the first half of the nineteenth century. Such bodies, including the OWS, as will be seen, attempted to assume many of the characteristics of the 'formal model' for supposedly accredited professionals. Formally constituted bodies are referred to in the chapters which follow as 'professional' in this sense.

The question of training oneself to achieve excellence in a particular occupation is central to both Kennerley's and this study's definition of the 'professional'. The title of this study derives from a reported conversation with the painter Margaret Gillies, a professional painter and teacher of painting to aspiring female artists, towards the end of her long career, in the mid-1880s.²⁷ "Work and the necessity of work", Gillies said, is "the greatest blessing". To paraphrase, work binds us into a community of fellow workers, and enables us "to use our talents and improve them". Gillies, a profoundly-convinced Unitarian, was presumably utilising the word 'talent' in the sense of the Biblical parable, and contemplating the divine injunction to put all one's personal assets and advantages to best use. This Christian duty was, however, for Gillies mingled with a desire to improve not only her painting technique, but the

²⁶ David Kennerley, 'Debating female musical professionalism and artistry in the British press, c.1820-1850', *Historical Journal*, 58.4 (2015), p.990, refers to Christina de Bellaigue, *Educating Women: Schooling and identity in England and France, 1800-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

²⁷ Lady Lindsay, 'Some recollections of Miss Margaret Gillies' in *Temple Bar*, 81 (1887), pp. 265-73.

emotional and spiritual impact of her work upon the viewer. She set standards of excellence and import for her work, as well as employing strategies to improve the income which she needed to contribute to the support of an extended and unconventional household. Charlotte Yeldham in her biography of Gillies, referring back to this statement and to the evidence of Gillies' career, identifies her as a "true professional", despite the fact that the professional society to which she belonged when practising as a mature painter – the 'Old' Water-colour Society – excluded women members from its formal proceedings and from the financial, social and artistic benefits of membership.²⁸ She is an incarnation of the female professionalism addressed in this study, and the nature of both this, and of her ambition, is considered in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Nevertheless, debate had been current in England at least since the mid-eighteenth century as to the nature of that additional quality which was exhibited by a 'great' artist: the highly-skilled technician's genius, or inspiration. In his third 'Discourse', delivered to students of the Royal Academy of Art (RA) in December 1770, Joshua Reynolds, the then President of the RA, sought to describe this "intellectual dignity which ennobles the painter's art, which set the line between him and the mere mechanic", determining that the artist of genius has, through long practice and innate intellectual power in combination, acquired the ability to transform what is before him into a representation of an absolute or universal truth or beauty.²⁹ The feminist art historian Pamela Gerrish Nunn, following the lead of Linda Nochlin's foundational question "Why have there been no great women artists?" described in 1987 the "ebb and flow" of this debate in the nineteenth century, particularly with reference to particular artists, observing in conclusion that to many commentators, including the most influential, womanhood and genius were mutually exclusive qualities.³⁰ This is, of course, an argument in which prejudice plays a greater part than evidence, fought on the most slippery linguistic ground. However, it does appear that Reynolds' assumptions concerning the gender of the painter of genius had, by 1850, when Nunn commences her study, calcified and coalesced with other assertions and arguments concerning the nature of woman in a widely-held belief.

²⁸ Charlotte Yeldham, *Margaret Gillies RWS, Unitarian painter of mind and emotion 1803-1887* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edward Mullen Press, 1997), pp.2-3.

²⁹ Joshua Reynolds, 'Discourse III' (1770), *Authorama classic literature*, <<http://www.authorama.com/seven-discourses-on-art-5.html>> [accessed 9 March 2020].

³⁰ Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *Victorian Women Artists* (London: Women's Press, 1987), pp.16-17. Nunn refers earlier in her Introduction to Linda Nochlin, 'Why have there been no great women artists?', in Hess, Thomas B., and Elizabeth Baker (eds.), *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's liberation, women artists and art history* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1973).

Similar beliefs have been extremely persistent. Challenging Stefan Collini's 2006 publication *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain*, Barbara Caine summarises his characterisation of an intellectual as someone having "expertise, ...channels of communication with particular publics, the expression of views on themes of concern to those publics, and a reputation for having important things to say on these matters of concern" and notes that, given this definition, women have, for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, been disqualified from it by virtue of their exclusion from the educational qualifications, networks and public discourse.³¹ Norma Clarke, dissecting the personal anxieties which informed Thomas Carlyle's lecture and essay 'The Hero as Man of Letters' (delivered May 1840 and subsequently published), observes his self-chastisement for lack of application, dilettantism or lack of purpose in his work and association of these with effeminacy, in glaring contrast with his strictly Calvinist farmer father.³² On this foundation, Clarke suggests, Carlyle constructed the Hero as Man of Letters, redeemed from unmanly idleness by intellectual effort, struggle against circumstances and the hard-won assertion, both of one's own identity and of "matters of concern" to one's audience. The 'great' man, or great artist, was thus a fusion, in varying quantities, of genius, intellectual and hero, at least in print.

Although there was probably, in many cases, a degree of scepticism among the personal acquaintance of the 'great' man, this attribution of the most, or most frequently, applauded (male) practitioners with a mythical, unassailable place in their profession exercised a powerful influence on the moral and financial value of their work in the market. Many English artists had, since the days of Joshua Reynolds, aspired to achieve the accolade of 'genius' by working their way through the hierarchies of art which he identified, from the merely mechanical to the creation of an image conveying universal truth. Because no women were accorded this status, it should not be assumed that the generations of professional female painters before 1850 were content "servilely" to replicate only what was in front of them without thoughtful creative intention.³³

Ambition, or intention to achieve a goal, consistently pursued, is one of the hallmarks of a professional career, as far as this study is concerned. Griselda

³¹ Barbara Caine, 'Stefan Collini, Virginia Woolf, and the question of intellectuals in Britain', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 68.3 (2007), pp.369-373.

³² Norma Clarke, 'Strenuous idleness: Thomas Carlyle and the hero as man of letters', in *Manful assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, ed. by Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991).

³³ Reynolds, Discourse III (1770).

Pollock, publishing, in 2006, a new Introduction to her ground-breaking work *Vision and Difference*, first published in 1988, asks “How did women deal with ambition, rivalry, desire for greatness...” and find a means of self-expression “which the critical discourse of the time simply could not, or would not, register at all?” in the context of female painters (like Emily Mary Osborn) from the Pre-Raphaelites onwards.³⁴ This study argues that, although the immediate predecessors of these female painters did not, decades earlier, argue for equal opportunities with their male counterparts, there is no evidence that they did not have similar ambitions. In addition, echoing David Kennerley’s argument, a more critical examination of the possible range of the goals of ambition, and the realistic nature of its expression may prove rewarding. Even Joshua Reynolds recognised, in the ‘Discourse’ referred to above, that “necessity or failure in the highest attempts” may oblige the painter to adjust his practise to achieve worldly goals by practising in the “lower rank”. Discussing this issue of the nature of success and its relevance to the value of careers as a subject for study, David Vincent referred, in 1993, to the emerging view among social historians that, while publicly-recognised achievement, or economic success, or class advancement, had, until recently, been considered the criteria for a career worth discussing, other types of “subjectively significant (social) mobility” than movement up or down a class structure defined by economic criteria might also be considered.³⁵ Ten years later, in their Editors’ Introduction to a volume of essays considering “the historical origins of the modern career”, Brown, Mitch and van Leeuwen debated this question at greater length, concluding that even “informal” careers conducted largely outside such workplace structures as existed, or careers disturbed by changes of direction or hiatus in the ability to work, have information to impart as to the individual’s perception of themselves, their priorities, their professional environment and their prospects.³⁶ However, they conclude, careers in which the individual sustains “at least a moderate degree of prosperity or respectability” and possibly a degree of renown also, which evidence a degree of individual choice and purpose, despite being resistant to classification and “typology”, can yield more generally-applicable insights into the aspirations and perceptions of influences in their workplace of groups of practitioners. This is clearly of considerable relevance and encouragement to such an approach to the study of

³⁴ Griselda Pollock, *Vision and difference: femininity, feminism and histories of art* (London: Routledge, 1988), p.xxx.

³⁵ David Vincent, 'Mobility, bureaucracy and careers in early twentieth-century Britain', in Andrew Miles and David Vincent (eds), *Building European Society: occupational change and social mobility in Europe, 1840-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p.217, quotes John Goldthorpe, *Social mobility and the class structure in modern Britain* (1987).

³⁶ John Brown, David Mitch and Marco H. D. van Leeuwen (eds), *Origins of the Modern Career* (London: Ashgate, 2004), p.5ff.

women's professional aspirations and changing workplaces. Brown et al define the period a career as encompassing the whole life of an individual, from their first education or training in skills for use in the workplace, to their eventually ceasing work through infirmity or death, and encompassing complex interactions between paid and unpaid work.³⁷ An early version of part of Alison Kay's eventual published work on female entrepreneurs in the period 1800 to 1870 was included in this collection, revealing that, although external factors had a significant influence on her subjects' actual and perceived scope of agency, level of financial reward, and recognition, they nevertheless perceived themselves as women who had purposeful careers, however stunted or constrained they felt themselves to be within the workplace.³⁸ On these grounds, the view has been taken in this study that, firstly, it is legitimate to claim that women had careers in the period before mid-century, and secondly that evidence of training, self-directed strategies for achieving career goals, and remunerative output in their chosen occupation(s) over a period of at least ten years constitute evidence of ambition, however difficult it may be to know with any certainty what their personal ambitions may have been at various stages in their careers, or to reconcile their achievements with contemporary concepts of 'greatness'.

Constraints on women's agency

A multitude of different legal, constitutional and social constraints, combined with historic working practices and prejudices to restrict the opportunity for women to earn an income from their own work. It is difficult to know, as Amanda Vickery asserts, however, at what point in history this has not been true.³⁹ In the 1830s, however, this circumstance was elevated to the level of religious doctrine, and an ideal of womanhood, focused on containment of all her energies within the family and suppression of self-interest, was insistently promoted. This doctrine – that of separate, public and domestic spheres of activity for men and for women, although no longer regarded as the key determinant of the working careers of women in the nineteenth century, remains central to any discussion of them. In 1837 the publication of a translation from the French, adapted to suit English national sensibilities, by Sarah Lewis and entitled *Woman's Mission*, encapsulated the metaphor of woman in her (domestic) "sphere of action", "assigned to her by Providence" like the movements of the planets, and gained powerful currency

³⁷ Ibid., p.3.

³⁸ Alison Kay, 'Small business, self-employment and women's work-life balance in nineteenth-century London', in Brown et al, *Origins of the Modern Career (2004)*, pp.191-206.

³⁹ Vickery, 'Golden age' (1993).

through the middle of the nineteenth century, the phrase continuing in use to the present.⁴⁰ The first publication, in 1987, of Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's seminal work *Family Fortunes* consolidated the account of the nineteenth-century history of professional working women.⁴¹ A massively detailed analysis and comparison of the lives of two families of the "middle classes" based in Norwich and Birmingham respectively in the period up to 1850, Davidoff and Hall's work closes with the assertion that, over this period, all the key organs of society, cultural, academic, professional and religious, came to be organised along gendered lines, excluding women from any publicly visible participation. The exhortations and strictures of Sarah Lewis and her successors in the 1840s concerning the God-ordained nature of women, had coalesced, according to Davidoff and Hall, with other social and economic factors, and been incorporated into society's fabric, until the generation of women who reached adulthood in the 1850s "found a world more rigidly divided into separate spheres for men and women".⁴² In the more structured, hierarchical and exclusively gendered working world which had taken shape, and was consolidating by this point, it was, Davidoff and Hall claimed, not possible any longer for middle class women to reconcile a publicly-visible professional identity, however compliant with public expectations of the subordinate nature and qualified success of their work, with a feminine identity: "women's independent action was denounced as 'unwomanly', 'unsexed' or 'strongminded', epithets designed to undermine core feminine identity".⁴³

While 'separate spheres' has maintained its currency, and usefulness, some assert, as a shorthand term to describe, or explain, women's exclusion from professional activity, scholarly voices have, in the decades since Davidoff and Hall first published, challenged both the degree of acceptance of the doctrine by nineteenth-century women, and its pre-eminence over other factors. In 1988, Linda Kerber acknowledged the usefulness of 'separate spheres' as an explanatory model for women's exclusion from the workplace, compared with the "confusion of anecdote", which, she believed, characterised women's history in the 1960s.⁴⁴ However, although this enabled "narrative and analytical order" to be imposed on the subject,

⁴⁰ Sarah Lewis, *Woman's Mission*, 4th edn (London: John W. Parker, 1839). Chapter IV pp.45-47.

⁴¹ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes*, rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2002). All references here are to this second edition, which differs from the original only in its title (originally *Family Fortunes: Men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850*) and the addition of a new Preface.

⁴² *Ibid.* p.453.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.451

⁴⁴ Linda Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: the rhetoric of women's history', *Journal of American History*, 75.1 (1988), pp.9-39.

she felt that there would come a time when such binary polarities of male and female experience would become less relevant. By 1993, Amanda Vickery challenged 'separate spheres' as a useful model, suggesting that British scholars should follow Kerber's lead and "abandon this foundation".⁴⁵ Basing the discussion of women's experience in this adversarial arena, she argued, tempts the historian to over-state the restrictions against which individual "Victorian heroines" struggled, and to celebrate their ability to "break free of bonds", diminishing awareness of the greater number of equally spirited and capable, but less materially fortunate women. Susie Steinbach, in 2012, reflected even greater detachment from the 'separate spheres' model when she argued two very significant points from the perspective of this study.⁴⁶ Steinbach reminds us that the original *Family Values* posited 'separate spheres', not as a 'régime', but as an ideological frame of reference in the formation and self-definition of the ("comfortable") English middle class – the class which was beginning to describe itself as the upper middle class. Her view is that Davidoff and Hall's work demonstrates that "notions of gender", and of gender difference, were "central to the construction of (this) class". Although the pervasive influence of 'separate spheres' ideology and its accompanying ideals of womanhood should not be underestimated in, for example, the lives and work of women who aspired to 'better themselves' socially, or to attract an income from that middle class, she suggests that the incapacitating effects of the doctrine on women reaching adulthood around 1860 were perhaps not necessarily as widespread numerically, or as absolute as is sometimes assumed, even within the class which supposedly aspired to, or enforced, the ideal. Twenty-first-century scholars who have attempted to analyse their evidence concerning women's working experience without immediate recourse to this 'explanation' of their subjects' behaviour, she felt, had indeed found that evidence of the causal effect of 'separate spheres' ideology is slight.

Davidoff and Hall's Preface to the 2002 edition of their work concurs with the views of historians in the intervening twenty-five-year period that this presented too absolute an interpretation of changes in the workplace, and of women's presence within it, in the period leading up to, and including, the 1850s and 1860s. Nevertheless, despite moderating their view, they maintained that their encapsulation of the term "separate spheres" has provided "a useful and necessary

⁴⁵ Vickery, 'Golden age' (1993).

⁴⁶ Susie Steinbach, 'Can we still use "Separate Spheres"? British history 25 Years after *Family Fortunes*', *History Compass*, 10.11 (2012), pp. 826-37.

trope” for the analysis of women’s history.⁴⁷ Within that trope, they characterise the subsequent gradual erosion of barriers to women’s presence in the ‘public sphere’ (or even, in hitherto exclusively male professional preserves) as due to “nascent feminism”, “built on a sense of grievance” from the 1850s and 1860s onwards.⁴⁸ In other words, professional women were, in Davidoff and Hall’s interpretation of the scholarship since the original publication of their work, obliged to position themselves in opposition to social and institutional structures in the workplace and to adopt an assertive, if not pugilistic, persona in order to overturn the obstacles to a working career.

Davidoff and Hall particularly locate such oppositional initiatives in the creation of all-female environments such as philanthropical institutions, schools and hospitals. The historiography of female professional separatism perhaps begins with Estelle Freedman’s 1979 article arguing, “through historical analysis”, in favour of the modern preservation of a “strong, public female sphere”.⁴⁹ She presents the female institution-building of the nineteenth century, specifically in America from 1870 onwards, as “rooted” in “the ideology of ‘true womanhood’”, forged in preceding decades, but nevertheless generating “the momentum and the networks” which made suffrage campaigns possible, and which “disintegrated” when, in the 1920s, assimilation, rather than separatism in politics and the professions was the preferred strategy, in the “naïve hope of becoming men’s equals”.

The constraints imposed by the doctrine of separate spheres were of relatively limited impact and degree, it seems. We understand them as absolute, to summarise Amanda Vickery, chiefly through the vociferous resistance of a relatively few influential upper middle class women’s voices, first raised in the 1850s and amplified through feminist studies of that generation published in the second half of the nineteenth century. This is not to say that much-vaunted public ideals of womanhood had little influence on professional women’s careers in the nineteenth century, but it is necessary to attempt to discern the accommodations which they consciously made and to recognise the relative importance of other influences.

⁴⁷ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* (2002), p.xviii.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.xvii.

⁴⁹ Estelle Freedman, ‘Separatism as Strategy: female institution building in America, 1870-1930’, *Feminist Studies*, 5.3 (1979), pp.512-529

Professional women at work in the first half of the nineteenth century: a review of literature

Scholarly investigation of women's careers in the nineteenth century is a relatively under-developed field. Between the emergence of the first modern feminist historians' work, in the 1980s, and the turn of the twentieth century, the history of women's work in the period was, firstly, overwhelmingly focused on the second half of the century, as implied earlier, and largely fell into a number of broad genres. Some individual works have informed and influenced this study, as they have other recent historians. One of these genres – the biography or appraisal of the artistic or literary output of a single individual – although recovering a mass of detail invaluable to subsequent scholars can, perhaps merit the art-historian Deborah Cherry's demurrals against "the manufacture of heroines".⁵⁰ An unintended consequence of this approach might be, she felt, that it "tokenised the few against the many", giving the impression that such women were uniquely unrepresentative of their conformist sisters. A number of such works have been referred to as their subjects are discussed in this study, but it has been a concern here to 'normalise' the occupation in which they were engaged as a source of income for female professionals, despite the talents of the latter being more modest, or their work less acclaimed by contemporaries.

A second form of feminist endeavour has been to correct, as far as possible, the tendency of twentieth-century historians to reflect the exclusive preoccupation of nineteenth-century commentators, biographers and historians with the achievements or work of men. Sally Alexander, for instance, with others, in 1979 challenged the prominent and much-respected historian of working-class male labour, Eric Hobsbawm, to re-examine his assumptions concerning the absence of single and married working-class women from the nineteenth-century labour market.⁵¹ Although her published research from this period concerned women working for wages ("working-class women") her focus on London in the period 1820-1850, together with her observations on gender-based segregation of occupations and pay disparities, and her attentive ear for the articulate, determined and self-reliant testimonies of female apprentices and others in organised trades recorded in the 1842 report of the Commission of enquiry into children's employment, have informed this study's appraisal of women's participation in the 'lower' occupations of

⁵⁰ Cherry, *Painting Women* (1993), p.5.

⁵¹ Sally Alexander, Anna Davin and Eve Hostettler, 'Labouring women: a reply to Eric Hobsbawm', *History Workshop Journal*, 8.1 (1979), pp.174-182

the art-world.⁵² In a similar spirit, but with entirely different focus, Julia Swindells presented in 1983 a counterpoint to David Vincent's study of the working-class man's subjectivity.⁵³ Despite the inevitable limitations of her evidence, Swindells provocatively raised a number of propositions which resonate with the concerns of this study. Essentially, she concludes that a working career was fundamentally, and, she implies, invariably, different for a woman in comparison with a man: the rewards of education, training application were negligible, in terms either of approbation or of 'bettering herself' socially. Moreover, "the inescapable experience of that nineteenth-century woman of 'the middling classes' who seeks to define, or is required by circumstance to define and discover, an independent self" through earning her own living was, Swindells maintained, a sense of loss of, or displacement from, a remembered "respectability or gentility".⁵⁴ This, according to Swindells, was the experience of "losing caste", of becoming, as Sarah Lewis put it in *Woman's Mission*, "comet-like, wandering in irregular orbits...terrifying (perhaps to herself, as well as to others) by (her) eccentric movements and doubtful utility".⁵⁵

A third area of interest for this twentieth-century generation of feminist scholars was the rise in women's counter-active responses to perceived exclusion from male professional and political endeavour. Martha Vicinus' work, referred to earlier, is perhaps the most didactic concerning upper middle-class women's motivations and self-assertion. Others investigated the history of women's initiatives in the spheres of university education, social work and, of course, legal rights and suffrage.

From the 1990s onwards, however, historians have increasingly tested the scale and substance of a narrative concerning women, their aspirations, occupations and subjectivities in the second half of the nineteenth century, which was focused on 'separate spheres', exclusion and frustration for the upper middle class and expansion of 'women's work' from a very few potential paid occupations to a few more requiring some education and agency. To a lesser extent, but importantly, there has also been greater probing into the preceding decades, interest in continuities of thought and activity, and closer attention to the presence of women in a variety of occupations not recognised by contemporary commentators driven by

⁵² Sally Alexander, *Women's work* (1983). This was first published in 1976.

⁵³ Julia Swindells, *Victorian Writing and Working women: the other side of silence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985) mirrors David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: a study of 19th-century working class autobiography* (London: Methuen, 1982)

⁵⁴ Swindells, *Working women*, 1985, pp.126-127.

⁵⁵ Lewis, *Woman's Mission* (1839) p.47.

doctrinal preoccupations. Chiefly, those relevant to this study have focused on women in particular paid occupations.

Lynn Alexander's 2003 work on women in the millinery and hand-sewing trades, for example, beginning in the 1830s, compares the reality of the organised and informal workshops identified by the 1842 Commission of enquiry with the pale and solitary seamstress, dreaming of a better world, whether a lost past life or a heavenly world to come, who was immortalised by Richard Redgrave's paintings of the mid-1840s.⁵⁶ In addition to this, and governessing, the other 'ladylike' recourse of middle class woman who needed work, the three areas of teaching, business proprietorship and the creative industries have been the most frequently-investigated, being occupations accessible to nineteenth-century women of the artisan and middle classes, if only because, not being reliant on large workforces congregated in a single location, such occupations were not subject to the gender-exclusive practices associated with mass-production.

Studies of female teachers who worked during the period examined in this study have addressed both governesses in private families and teachers in schools. Kathryn Hughes, in 1992, published the first serious attempt to separate "fictional representations" from the experience of approximately twenty-five thousand women who described themselves as governesses in the Census of 1861.⁵⁷ Christina de Bellaigue's 2007 publication *Educating Women* was the first to focus upon female schoolteachers in the many small private schools for English middle class girls in the period before the activism of the 1860s led to the construction of networks of formal associations, education and training for female teachers in middle class girls' schools and the proliferation of larger schools.⁵⁸ This task presented de Bellaigue with a number of challenges of scholarly context and research problem similar to those addressed in this study. Having determined to scrutinise these neglected subjects, whose existence and professionalism is attested to in diverse writings and memoirs, but hardly at all by the subjects themselves, de Bellaigue developed a list of seventy-four teachers in England born between 1780 and 1850 for whom she had a wide variety of evidence, albeit much of it anecdotal or cursory. Nevertheless, she manages to draw some important general conclusions, in particular challenging the

⁵⁶ Lynn Alexander, *Women, Work and Representation: Needlewomen in Victorian art and literature* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003). p.2 refers in particular to Richard Redgrave, 'The Sempstress' (1846). A contemporary copy of this painting is in the Tate collection but no image is available for authorised reproduction. Images can be seen online, however.

⁵⁷ Kathryn Hughes, *The Victorian Governess* (London: Hambledon, 1992), p.22.

⁵⁸ Bellaigue, *Educating Women* (2007).

contemporary myth of the reluctant teacher, the gentlewoman fallen on hard times. “Many middle class women not only worked, but expected to work” and, although motivated primarily by economic factors, rather than a “sense of vocation” had a professional and business-like approach to their own skills development, the academic quality of the teaching and the commercial viability and reputation of their schools.⁵⁹ Dina Copelman’s earlier study of London’s female teachers in the elementary schools in the period following the national education reforms of 1870 indicates, a developing gulf between those “comfortable working-class and lower middle class families...(who) did not divide the world into male and female spheres,...often prepared daughters for (paid) occupations and did not consider paid work inappropriate for women” and the upper middle class parents’ distaste for participation in institutions catering to the lower middle and artisan classes.⁶⁰

Alison Kay’s study of women entrepreneurs in London in the period 1800 to 1870 is ambitious in its desire to demonstrate the scale of female economic participation in the period investigated by this study and offers valuable insights into the vibrant London economy of the time, and the participation of women “hidden by both the frequent location of their labours in the home and by the vociferous rationalising efforts of traditionalist and vocal contemporaries”.⁶¹ Although the scale and location of her enterprise might be more modest than her commercially-successful male contemporary, Kay maintains, the female business entrepreneur did not become extinct during the first half of the nineteenth century, to be resurrected only by more recent economic and constitutional freedoms.⁶² In taking this view, she adds evidence to Hannah Barker’s assertion, based on the research and recovery of female entrepreneurs in the cities of Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield, of “a continuity of involvement” by women in business throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century which was not eliminated by capitalism, industrialisation and the rise of factory production and which challenges “traditional (historians’) assumptions” concerning the “marginalisation of female workers” and the relegation of “middle class women to their role as consumers”.⁶³ Nicola Phillips reached similar conclusions after researching the impact on women’s participation in business of three supposedly prohibitive, or at least incrementally restrictive,

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 45, 51 and 75 ff.

⁶⁰ Dina M. Copelman, *London’s Women Teachers: Gender, Class and Feminism, 1870-1930* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 8 and 26.

⁶¹ Alison Kay, *The foundations of female entrepreneurship: enterprise, home and household in London, c.1800-1870* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p.133.

⁶² Ibid. p.134.

⁶³ Hannah Barker, *The business of women: female enterprise and urban development in northern England, 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.3.

aspects of civil governance: the law governing women's status, regulation of business practice, and public opinion or social doctrine.⁶⁴ Moreover, she emphasises, as Kay had found, the integration of "the business of life and the business of making a profit" in many women's working lives. The gendered polarities of 'separate spheres', while a factor in a woman's business strategy, in some cases, were not, Phillips maintains, necessarily internalised by the entrepreneurial woman as being prohibitive of her participation in commercial life.

Of all the three professional groups outlined above, the cultural industries, and particularly the literary industry, have attracted greatest research. Barbara Onslow, as recently as the 1990s, found that, contrary to her expectations of finding a body of research into women's participation in writing for the journals which proliferated in the nineteenth century, she was unable to develop her thesis until she had first identified the many women from whom she might make a selection, and the periodicals to which they contributed.⁶⁵ Having researched "several hundred women", however, she was able to identify only about twenty-five who had established themselves as professionals, in that their main source of income was derived from this source, before 1850. This illustrates the inevitable difficulties and uncertainties of establishing the scale of female participation in a single occupation in the first half of the nineteenth century, and of recovering sufficient biographical detail on an adequate sample to draw general or comparative conclusions. Linda H. Peterson, in 2009, instead based her conclusions on a small selection of well-documented female writers, two of whom - Harriet Martineau and Mary Howitt - achieved prominence in this period. In particular, she demonstrates that women adopted strategies of self-promotion, developed their talents and personal circumstances into income-earning work, and cultivated markets within which their particular 'brand' of opinion and writing would be economically successful throughout the nineteenth century. Resourcefulness and ambition were not newly-discovered characteristics of the first avowedly feminist generation in its later decades.⁶⁶

Charlotte Yeldham's work, published in 1984, on female artists and Deborah Rohr's, published in 2001, on musicians' careers of the period 1750 to 1850 perform a similar function to that of Barbara Onslow, in demonstrating that a far more

⁶⁴ Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700-1850* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006)

⁶⁵ Barbara Onslow, *Women of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

⁶⁶ Linda H. Peterson, *Becoming a woman of letters: Myths of authorship, facts of the Victorian market* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

numerous population of women were practising professionally in their field than the few whose works and personal writings have fortuitously survived.⁶⁷ While Yeldham has developed her research into studies of individual female artists, however, including her study of Margaret Gillies, Rohr, the more recently-publishing historian, has undertaken a supplementary study on women musicians' careers and professional networks in the period 1830 to the later 1860s.⁶⁸ In an article based on analysis of the membership and activities of the Royal Society of Female Musicians, formed in 1839 and merged with the all-male Royal Society of Musicians some thirty years later, she observes that, at the merger, the loss of their personal status within their all-female professional body, together with the loss of independence as an institution, was felt keenly by some female professionals.

A consistent feature of the female occupations studied by de Bellaigue, Kay, Phillips, Peterson and Rohr is that, although circumscribed by gendered economic, legal and social conditions, they could be conducted at will, so long as the woman concerned possessed critical 'talents', including ingenuity, determination, suitable skills, contacts and some "property".⁶⁹ All these scholars' analyses make clear that the women concerned adjusted the nature of their work and the level of reward which they sought in order to accommodate perceptions of female capability and propriety among the individuals who purchased their goods or services. However, they do not to the same extent investigate the additional influence of organisations – women's' employers, clients, agents or representative bodies - who were themselves concerned about their corporate identity, profit and prestige. This study extends that discourse, by investigating the relationships between women's motivations, ambitions and priorities and the outcomes which they achieved in terms of remuneration, advancement and professional or social prestige. It is concerned with the subjective effects of success or failure in comparison with women's own expectations and the prowess of their male equivalents.

⁶⁷ Charlotte Yeldham, *Women Artists in Nineteenth-century France and England* (New York and London: Garland, 1984). Deborah Rohr, *The careers of British musicians, 1750-1850: a profession of artisans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.2.

⁶⁸ Deborah Rohr, 'Women and the Music Profession in Victorian England: the Royal Society of Female Musicians, 1839-1866', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 18.4 (2008), pp.307-346.

⁶⁹ Hannah Barker, 'Women, work and the industrial revolution: female involvement in the English printing trades, c. 1700-1840', in *Gender in eighteenth-century England: roles, representations and responsibilities*, ed. by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London: Longman, 1997), pp.81-100, pp.84-85 uses the term "property" to distinguish women in a financial position to pursue some entrepreneurial course of action from those – the "labouring poor" – who lived from one day's pay to the next with no financial security. The term does not imply ownership of land or buildings, nor even, necessarily, any very large sums.

This study aims to reinforce these narratives of female ambition, perseverance and career management in the first half of the nineteenth century in the expectation that this will provide a historical context to modern debates concerning women's subjectivity and their working careers in contemporary English society. Since the late 1990s scholars working in sociology and in business and female employment have been grappling with issues relating to the subjectivity of the modern, or post-feminist, working woman and its role in her realising the professional opportunities available to her. Catherine Hakim's highly contentious series of writings consider the inconsistency between opportunities at work for educated women in Western societies, in an age where legislation provides for equality of opportunity, equality of pay and employee rights, and where women have greater control over their fertility than before contraception became widely accessible.⁷⁰ Some commentators – importantly, not including Hakim – have termed this a post-feminist era, in that the equalities and rights for which feminists campaigned, in Britain, at least, from the 1860s and through the second half of the twentieth century, have been enshrined in statute, the implication being that there is no further requirement for gender-specific equalities provision. Hakim's own conclusions, resulting from a review of research evidence conducted in the mid-1990s, however, was that “the most effective method for subordinating women (in employment terms) is neither exclusion from the workforce nor segregation within it but the ideology of the sexual division of labour in the home and the ideology of sexual differences”.⁷¹ In short, that while these reforms have transformed, over the course of the period since 1860, women's potential and actual entry to virtually all types of workplace, equality of impact and outcome is still governed by binary gender ideals. Hakim's subsequent work has focused on the evidence for, and manifestations of, women's absorption of such ideals in their careers. Maintaining that, in a twenty-first century western workplace characterised by legislative provisions supporting equal opportunity and equal pay, together with women's apparent control of their fertility, career outcomes for women must reflect a greater degree of free choice than in a previous era, such as the nineteenth century, when absolute barriers to participation and career progression were applicable, she summarised the patterns of working women negotiating this workplace as “preference theory”.⁷² In this workplace, she concluded, while a proportion of women are sufficiently dedicated to their work to achieve outcomes on

⁷⁰ Catherine Hakim, *Key Issues in Women's Work: Female Heterogeneity and the Polarisation of Women's Employment* (London: Athlone Press, 1996), *Work-lifestyle choices in the 21st century: Preference theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and 'Lifestyle preferences as determinants of women's differentiated labor market careers', in *Work and Occupations*, 29.4 (2002), pp.428-459.

⁷¹ Hakim, *Key issues* (1996), p.202.

⁷² Hakim, *Work-lifestyle choices* (2000), p.282.

the same terms, and to the same extent, as men, and a similarly-sized proportion prefer dependency upon another income-earner, the majority of women are, unlike the majority of men, “fundamentally divided”, both individually and collectively, “in their preferences and interests” between income-earning activities and unpaid, usually ‘caring’ activities. She coins the phrase “adaptive women” to describe this majority, who choose to juggle changing work and caring priorities over the course of their careers and on a daily basis. Consequently, she concludes, “men collectively gain a huge tactical advantage from women’s diversity (and)...the polarization of women’s central life interests and activities suggests that male dominance will continue to be a feature of modern societies long after the equal opportunities revolution”.

Publishing in 2017 a re-considered version of a paper first delivered in 2013, Business academics Patricia Lewis and Ruth Simpson argue that Hakim’s central assumption concerning modern women’s freedom of choice in managing their career is “a normative ideal” not reflected in reality.⁷³ There are two dangers in this fallacy, they suggest: firstly that women take upon themselves sole responsibility for apparent failures to achieve the success which they are told ambition and dedication will bring, and secondly that policy-makers believe there is no more action necessary to enable equality of outcome, as well as opportunity. Lewis and Simpson advocate further scholarly research to propose practicable actions to rectify “ongoing relations of gender domination”. In more popular literature, which is nevertheless recognised by the academic Catherine Rottenberg, Anne-Marie Slaughter’s article ‘Why women still can’t have it all’ (2012) and Sheryl Sandberg’s *Lean in..* (2013) represent two aspects of a new feminist public debate over “the best way to facilitate women’s ability to balance work and family”.⁷⁴ Essentially, neither Slaughter nor Sandberg counteract Hakim’s assertions, the former maintaining that women, however successful in the public sphere, prioritise home when its wellbeing is threatened, at the expense of their careers, while men do not. Sandberg’s ideal professional woman should apply herself to becoming, as characterised by Rottenberg, ambitious for authority and leadership in her career, intensely individualistic, disavowing “social, cultural and economic forces producing

⁷³ Patricia Lewis and Ruth Simpson, 'Hakim Revisited: Preference theory and postfeminism', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 24.2 (2017), pp.115-133.

⁷⁴ Catherine Rottenberg, 'The rise of neoliberal feminism', *Cultural Studies*, 28.3 (2014), pp. 418-437 refers to Anne-Marie Slaughter, 'Why women still can't have it all', *Atlantic*, 7 (2012) <<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020>> [accessed 21 February 2019] and Sheryl Sandberg and Nell Scovell, *Lean in: Women, work and the will to lead* (Ebury, 2013).

gender inequality” and rigorously disciplined in her subjectivity to eliminate defeatist or fearful habits of mind – until such time as she chooses an alternative course of life. In the early twenty-first century, therefore, there seems to be unanimity that the ideals and expectations of male and female behaviours in the workplace and in the management of their careers continue to have a profound effect on inequality of outcome in woman’s careers, compared with opportunity. While opinions, and evidence, may vary as to the extent of agency and responsibility as between the individual, society and workplace, it seems indisputable that ideologies of gender difference, in subjectivity and in function, at home and in the workplace, which are essentially little changed since *Woman’s Mission* was published in 1838 and shared by the majority of men and women in the modern institutional workplace, continue to curb and dilute female success.

The construction of this study

This study focuses on four working occupations to which both male and female artists turned in their efforts to earn an income, not only the production of original imagery but its preparation for reproduction in the form of wood-engraving, teaching drawing and writing about art. In each of the chapters which follow an aspect of the professional workplace is considered, as it became firmly established in our inherited understanding of the world. The consolidation and developing exclusivity and masculinity of professional bodies, the rise of hierarchical offices and workshops organised for the mass production of goods, the advent of training in technique and method as an alternative to university qualification, and the rise of academic ‘disciplines’ taught in universities to qualify students for high-level entry to the professions, are each discussed as they manifested themselves in the art world. The strategies of a formal professional body to increase the prestige of its art, the social standing of its members and the value of their work are considered in the context of painters in water-colour. Mass production of imagery, and the effects of changes in the organisation of work, and in structures marking expertise and status among workers, which accompanied it, is discussed in the context of the occupation of wood-engraving. An increased emphasis on technical qualification for work and appointment on the basis of demonstrable capability is discussed in the context of teachers of art and drawing skills, while the rise of an academic élite based in universities and other public cultural institutions is considered through an examination of the response of two female writers on art. In each chapter, the history of the particular occupation and the implications of structural, technological

and market change for the practitioners in the field are discussed and a perspective on women's participation provided.

A range of qualitative methods has been used, drawing on institutional and business records to expand our understanding of the numbers of women who might have participated in these occupations, and complementing this approach with individual case studies of female professionals in the field. The recognition by Miles and Vincent that, to "capture a complete and accurate picture" of career development and mobility "we must immerse ourselves in the micro as much as the macro perspective", encourages the view taken here that examining the evolution of the individual woman's professional career in relation to social, economic and structural influences can offer insights applicable on a wider scale.⁷⁵ Such case studies are necessarily selected on grounds of availability of surviving evidence and interpretation of limited, sometimes circumstantial, evidence involves a degree of speculation. The personal histories explored here are treated as unique, rather than representative. However, they firstly are an invaluable method of retrieving and collating a mass of fragmentary evidence of professional careers into a coherent narrative concerning a few women and their industries. Additionally, the careers of women as a group of professional practitioners distinct from their male colleagues is explored in each chapter, discussing the gendering of the value of their work, both in terms of critical and public regard, and in terms of financial reward.

The first research chapter considers women whose primary occupation was painting in water-colour and in whose professional lives their membership of the (Old) Society of Painters in Water-colour played a role. This chapter is particularly concerned with issues of public recognition and professional status, the effects of these on the monetary value of work produced and thus on female practitioners' career decisions and trajectories. In particular, the career of Eliza Sharpe (1796-1874) and turning points in the careers of Margaret Gillies (1803-1887) and Elizabeth Rigby (1809-1893) are studied. Sharpe and Gillies, two painters of differing ability, upbringing and career strategies, each pursued working careers of painting and exhibiting over more than fifty years. During this time their membership of the Old Water-colour Society offered significantly different benefits, Eliza being elected in 1829 and Margaret in 1852. Alongside these two active careers, and by way of comparison, the art training of Elizabeth Rigby is considered and the reasons

⁷⁵ Miles and Vincent, *Building European Society* (1993), p.16.

explored for her conscious decision, in the mid-1830s, not to pursue a professional career in water-colour painting.

This is followed by a chapter on female participants in the trade of wood-engraving, which concerns itself particularly with the effects of commercial mass-production on the viability of women's careers. The experience of three generations of female professional practitioners is considered. Mary Byfield (1795-1871) undertook her first known professional commission circa 1810 and is the only practitioner discussed here who succeeded in deriving a living from the practice, over a long career of more than forty years. Harriet Ludlow Clarke (bap.1816-1866) and Ann(e) Newman Waterhouse (bap.1814-1896) began their careers under the tutelage of William Harvey and John Jackson in the late 1830s, when wood-engraving was promoted to women as a suitable income-earning occupation, but both eventually took alternative career courses. Clarisse Matéaux (c.1834-1911) entered the wood-engraving class offered by the Female School of Design in the late 1840s, and by the early 1850s was the most accomplished wood-engraver of her generation in training at the Department of Science and Art, removing with it to South Kensington in 1856. Her career also took another course, but the final stage of her known professional involvement with the business offers a uniquely female perspective on the trade and its viability as an occupation for a woman.

The next chapter on female teachers of art considers the gradual professionalisation, by means of technical qualification, of the occupation. Taking Mary Harrison (née Rossiter, 1788-1875) and her daughter Maria (c.1820-after 1893), and Elizabeth Terry (née Nasmyth, 1793-1862) as examples of the precarious and marginal occupation of art teaching in the period to approximately 1850, the focus of study moves to the female students of the training class for professional art teachers started by Henry Cole, first at Marlborough House and subsequently at South Kensington, to rectify the nation's dearth of training in drawing skills. One of the first female students here, Eliza Mills (1831-c.1910), strove to turn her professional teaching qualifications to good account in the private sector. Her contemporary, Louisa Gann (1824-1912), is considered over the period when, as Headmistress of the Female School of Art, she sought supporters and funds for a re-launch of that institution when it became one of the many objects of Henry Cole's reforms of public funding. This chapter concludes with an appraisal of the career outcomes of their training, when combined with the factors of social class, financial and other "talents", gender and circumstance, for all of the women

associated with the Department of Science and Art in the 1850s who are discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

The final research chapter considers two female writers on historical (Christian) art who, having had early success in this work, changed the course of their careers after rebuttal from the changing academic world. Very different in their age, social backgrounds, economic status and career histories, the two became friends and, to an extent writing partners, in the 1850s, after which their lives in the art business ceased. Anna Jameson (1794-1860) died with her last work for publication on art unfinished. She had, through most of her adult life, resisted what she saw as the incapacitating effects of public rhetoric concerning women's role in society. In her maturity she turned her attention to training and work in leadership roles for women within exclusively female occupations, while retaining doubts as to the usefulness of such endeavours for the majority of women, or their impact on the lack of social respect for women's achievements in any occupation. Issues of the professional status of women's careers to which the modern terms 'voluntary', 'humanitarian', or 'vocational' be applied, are considered through the case study of the far more intellectually-forceful Louisa Twining (1820-1912) and her self-appointed task, from the 1850s onwards, of humanising the régime of England's workhouses.

Over the course of these four chapters narratives established in the later nineteenth century and thereafter concerning the development of corporate features of the workplace into citadels of male endeavour are questioned. The extent of women's participation is considered over the period of these developments, with a view to establishing the nature of their exclusion (or inclusion). Was women's exclusion from the framework of professional work, by the late 1850s, as absolute as suggested by 'Nameless and Friendless', and if so, what "ingenuity and resourcefulness" were professional women applying to maintain their careers?⁷⁶ Brown et al assert that all careers, whether structured and crowned with renown or riches, or marginal, but satisfying in other respects, such as that pursued by Margaret Gillies, are the outcome of "distinct historical circumstances" and individuals' application of these two qualities. Can we identify the reasons for the careers of these women being discarded from the feminist narrative by Emily Mary Osborn and her feminist circle? Can we detect other subjectivities, distinct from the docile victim of fate or the solitary dreamer mourning a lost paradise of feminine

⁷⁶ Brown et al, *Origins of the Modern Career* (2004), p.36.

fulfilment, in the women who constructed and maintained working careers in the art world in the first half of the nineteenth century? Can we detect from their apparent career strategies and work output indications of the resourcefulness necessary to secure work while occupying a position which was, if not anathema, then at least troubling, to their middle class patrons, employers or colleagues, when viewed through the lens of 'separate spheres' ideology? Lastly, if we compare these historical manifestations of Catherine Hakim's "adaptive women", and the demands of their workplace with those of the present day, can we detect, across two centuries of feminist action, workplace roles and female subjectivity which correspond to our own preoccupations?

Chapter 2 Professional inclusion: women painters in water-colour

Introduction

This chapter investigates the careers of women who pursued the practice of painting in water-colour, in the context of the senior and most prestigious professional body in that business, the Society of Painters in Water-Colour. The first to be founded, in 1804, of several exhibiting societies devoted to water-colour works, The Society of Painters in Water-Colour was hence known ubiquitously as the 'Old' Water-colour Society (and is referred to here as the OWS). The word 'watercolour' is a modern term and the hyphenated form, as in the title of the OWS, has been used throughout this study.¹ Over the period 1820-1860 the OWS evolved in status within the art world, consistently reinforcing water-colour painting as a professional enterprise, in which English artists uniquely excelled. The works of its most successful members commanded investment prices from collectors, comparable with those of Royal Academicians painting in oils. It is argued here that the success of this evolution required a process of masculinisation of both the Society and the art it represented, reflecting a similar process, an accumulation of the attributes of "power", taking place in competitor bodies, such as the Royal Academy, and in other professions.² Female artists were elected members of the OWS from its earliest days, and this study explores the implications for their careers of membership of a professional body, and of its gradual masculinisation, over the period 1820 to 1860.

From the late 1820s publishers interested in the purchase of images were increasingly represented at the OWS' annual exhibition, which was held in late April or early May each year and generally timed to occur two weeks in advance of the Royal Academy's exhibition. The arrival of these new customers fuelled even greater competition among the exhibiting artists as regards price and visibility at the exhibition, as well as increasing the income to the OWS from the exhibition. In 1841 and 1842 a collection, in German, of Woldemar Seyffarth's *Briefe aus London* (Letters from London) was published.³ Based on 'letters' first published in the

¹ Simon Fenwick and Greg Smith, *The Business of Watercolour: A guide to the archives of the Royal Watercolour Society* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), p.2.

² Joseph Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1995) p.19.

³ Woldemar Seyffarth, '28 June 1835', *Briefe aus London*, 2 vols (Altenburg: Pierer, 1841,1842), Vol.I, pp.263-283. 'The Society of Painters in Water-Colour', pp.274-283, in unpublished English translation

quality German art journal, *Das Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* (a daily magazine for the educated classes, published from the early 1800s by Johann Friedrich Cotta), one letter, dated 28 June 1835, provides an account of the OWS exhibition strongly influenced by the perspective of exhibiting members of the Society, presumably his wife Louisa (née Sharpe), and his sister-in-law, Eliza Sharpe. Like other art exhibitions, the OWS held a private view for invited guests on the Saturday before opening to the public, at which, Seyffarth informs his reader, the artists expected to sell more than in the whole of the remainder of the exhibition's term. The importance of gaining a visible space, increasing one's chances of having a 'sold' notice, to encourage, perhaps, further sales, is emphatically made. The OWS was prone to faction and rivalry between Members. By 1857 internal politics there reached a crisis across several fronts and a letter published in the *Art-Journal*, closed by suggesting that it would be fairer to artists if the Hanging Committee were to select one of each member's submitted works to hang in the direct line of view, the remainder to be distributed as fairly as possible to accommodate differences in size, style or colouring and to group genres together to their best advantage.⁴ Seyffarth writes with some feeling about the fact that, although all members, including "lady exhibitors", had passed an initial examination of their mastery of their craft, and were required to send at least one work to the OWS exhibition each year, the Committee of male Members responsible for the exhibition could at their absolute discretion determine whether a work was worth hanging, and if so, where it might be placed. He notes, possibly reflecting some resentment on the part of his "lady exhibitors" at home, that while (male) Associates of the OWS were not required to send works in for exhibition every year, and took no share in the financial gains from the exhibition, they were able, unlike the Lady Members, to "take over Member vacancies arising, although they are, until that point in time, on the same level regarding rights and obligations as the Lady Members". The Associates were therefore assured of future advancement and improved benefits, while the Lady Members remained dependent from year to year on the success of individual works.

Three case studies illustrative of women's careers in this inequitable business are discussed here. Eliza Sharpe and her sister Louisa were elected to the OWS in 1829, and Eliza's painting and exhibiting career spanned the whole of this period of evolution in the OWS. Margaret Gillies was elected to membership of the OWS in

(2018) by Klaus Hartmann and Janet Bentley. Both volumes were reviewed in *The Foreign Quarterly Review, 1827-1846*, 30/59 (1842), 225-26.

⁴ *Art-Journal* (1857), pp.218-19. The title *Art-Journal* has been used throughout, although the periodical's title from 1839 to 1848 was the *Art Union Monthly Journal*.

1852, following a change of artistic career from portrait miniatures to 'subject' painting, which was aligned with the OWS' exhibiting policy. Elizabeth Rigby, who was possibly taught, and was certainly encouraged, by John Sell Cotman (who was himself elected to the OWS in 1825), made attempts to enter the publishing market for water-colour images in the 1830s, but remained a gifted amateur. Seyffarth's comments concerning the unpredictable predilections of Hanging Committees and markets remind one that the history of works exhibited is an unreliable indicator of an artist's overall output and subject matter. Exhibitors who needed an income from their work necessarily tailored it to suit anticipated taste, and perhaps became overly-habituated to that taste over a period of years. Nevertheless, in these three case studies can be discerned women's strategies to augment their professional status and income derived from their work, and the extent to which they were aided in this by membership of a professional body which was nevertheless dependent for its own standing upon public perception and values.

The 'Old' Water-colour Society: cultivating the image of the professional man

Three seminal works inform this study: John Lewis Roget's history of the OWS from its founding in 1804 to the date of publication (1891), based to a large extent on the Society's archives and the personal papers of one of its most diligent Presidents, Joseph John Jenkins, a catalogue of all exhibitors, their works and their sales at the OWS exhibitions published in 1992, and the comprehensive guide to the archives of the Royal Water-colour Society (RWS) published in 1997.⁵ Roget includes a wealth of detail about individual members, but it must be remembered that his purpose was to record for posterity the pre-eminence of the OWS as an institution and that he has exercised some selectivity in his accounts of the members and proceedings of the Society. His biographies of female members are largely derived from Ellen C. Clayton's equally enthusiastic account of historical and contemporary English female artists.⁶ Both are based chiefly upon reminiscence and anecdote. For this study, a view of the perceptions of the OWS on the part of critics and commentators who influenced the market for artists' work has been drawn from three main sources, all commenting on the art exhibitions of the London season: William Thackeray's satirical commentaries, written under his pseudonym of Michael Angelo Titmarsh, published in Fraser's Magazine from 1838 to the mid-1840s, the *Art-*

⁵ John Lewis Roget, *A History of the 'Old Water-Colour' Society* (London: Longman, 1891). *The Royal Watercolour Society, the first fifty years* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1992). Fenwick and Smith, *RWS archives* (1997).

⁶ Ellen C. Clayton, *English Female Artists* (London: Tinsley, 1876).

Journal's reviews from 1839 to 1860, and John Ruskin's series of five pamphlets (often referred to as his *Academy Notes*) published from 1855 to 1859.⁷

The OWS was founded in 1804 by painters in water-colour in reaction to the inadequacy of display of their work at the Royal Academy's Annual Exhibition, and its lacklustre appearance in comparison with nearby oil paintings. Initially the OWS annual exhibition met with success in the form of sales and entrance charges, which funded administration and exhibition costs, and provided some additional income to Council members who served as officers of the Society. However, the first decade was followed by a slump in the market for luxury goods and a brief extension of Society's rules, in the period 1818 to 1820, to permit painters in oils to become Members and to exhibit in order to boost the numbers of potential purchasers attending the annual exhibition. After this rule was rescinded, the OWS exhibited only works in water-colour. This brief relaxation of the OWS membership and exhibition policy caused several practitioners in water-colour in the style of transparent washes and picturesque scenes, to resign due to the strength of their feeling that water-colour should not compete on the same wall with oil.

Between 1820 and 1825, when exclusivity was resumed, a fresh spirit of assertiveness began as to the ability of water-colour to compete for public attention, and collection, with exhibition-worthy oil paintings. Between 1820 and the late 1850s, the Society made valiant attempts to influence the art-buying public in favour of water-colour as a medium equal in artistic terms, in contribution to the British School of painting, in sale value, and in investment value, to oils. A number of initiatives were pursued which, while never amounting to a coherent strategy, and having varying degrees of success, aimed at forging a vigorous (and essentially masculine) identity. An early attempt to dispel the perception of water-colour art as pale-coloured and "feeble" took the form of a "manifesto", which was printed to accompany the exhibition in 1820 urging the merits of water-colour as an art now transformed by new techniques and "chemical discoveries", whose "feeble, tinted drawings" had been "succeeded by pictures not inferior in power to oil paintings, and equal in delicacy of tone, and purity and airiness of tone".⁸ The use of the words "power" and "painting" are significant, implying vigour and colour, compared with "feeble" tinted drawings. The supposedly "new techniques" (which, in fact, had been practised since the Renaissance) involved increasing use of intense colouring

⁷ John Ruskin, *Academy Notes I to V* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1855-59)

⁸ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.I, pp.426-28.

created by “ground dry pigments mixed with a water-soluble binding medium” and generally known as body colour.⁹

At the same time, the OWS took steps to present its exhibition in imitation of the Royal Academy and the various contemporary exhibitions of Old Masters. Although the exhibitions of the early 1820s were of limited scale and financially unsuccessful, the OWS was sufficiently confident of the economy and their potential position in the art market to move their exhibition and administrative base in 1823 to larger premises in Pall Mall East. The 1823 exhibition was a resounding success. Over eleven thousand visitors attended the exhibition that year, and this figure rose over subsequent years.¹⁰ Surplus income was generated from this exhibition for the first time since the earliest years from admission tickets and catalogue sales, and, by 1829, just under £2,300 was generated for exhibiting members from the sale of their paintings in the exhibition.¹¹ The OWS remained at Pall Mall East, which, in Roget’s account, became synonymous with the Society, for over a century, acquiring a lease on the property in 1860. In the context of an application for accommodation in the space coming available at Burlington House, the OWS set forth its offer: in return for recognition in the form of a larger exhibition space, at the anticipated “centre of all Art attraction” which the Royal Academy would engender at Burlington House, the OWS would gladly open its exhibition to all exhibitors in water-colour, without requiring election to Membership and it would offer classes, becoming in effect a Water-Colour Academy.¹² However, the OWS’ application was “foiled” by the claims of other “influential Societies”; it had not succeeded in establishing, for itself, for its membership or for its art, a sufficiently substantial position in the firmament of professional bodies.

An exclusive profession

The *Art-Journal*’s most consistent criticism of the OWS over the years from its first issues, in 1839, to the close of the 1850s, was the exclusivity of the Exhibition to members (of all classes) of the Society, and the exclusivity of membership to professional artists – that is, those working with the express intent of generating financial reward - elected by existing OWS Members.¹³ From the earliest days of

⁹ Fenwick and Smith, *RWS archives* (1997), p.2. Katherine Coombs, *British Water-colours, 1750-1950* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2012), p.17.

¹⁰ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.I, p.434.

¹¹ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.I, p.434.

¹² Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.I, p.100ff..

¹³ Instances include *Art-Journal* (1839), p.72 and (1843), p.135.

the OWS, these restrictions had been central to the Society's campaign for reward to its members, in terms both of public recognition and financial value. Membership had been restricted to a maximum number laid down in its Rules, of thirty Members and twenty Associates. A full complement in both classes had rarely been achieved, possibly because a two-thirds majority of those Members voting on the proposal was necessary in order for applicants to be successful.¹⁴ Although this was not the case in the 1820s, by the 1850s, it had become the rule for new applicants to be appointed as Associates in the first instance, full Members only being elected from among the body of the Associates. The *Art-Journal's* overtly-stated objections to these exclusive regulations were based on the detriment to artistic quality, enabling, as it did, the privileged few artists to crowd the Exhibition with works of less merit than non-Members might achieve, excluding younger water-colour artists of equal merit who, for reasons of prejudice, were not accepted into membership, and obstructing innovation in art.

The benefits to Members of their membership of an exclusive exhibiting society were very considerable. The "mark of exclusivity" was a financially-valuable attribute.¹⁵ At the Royal Academy's exhibition, the work of non-Academicians and even amateurs could be seen, and within this marketplace for works of lesser value, the exclusivity and guarantee of professional distinction offered by the OWS carried weight. Membership of the OWS was not only restricted to artists working professionally in water-colour, but excluded two significant classes of water-colour practitioner: the portrait painters, generally of miniature or small-scale works, and painters of still life. Both were regarded as lesser branches of artistic endeavour compared with landscape and subject painting, which were considered to demand a higher degree of accuracy and technique, as well as greater imagination and artistic purpose in choice of subject, composition and colouring. Portrait miniature paintings had never been admitted to the OWS exhibition, but some Members exhibited subjects from the – living flowers, fruit, insects, birds and animals – which necessarily incorporated still-life objects. In portrait and 'fruit and flowers' subjects many of the practitioners, professional and amateur, were female and continued to exhibit, when their works were accepted, at the Royal Academy.

¹⁴ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, pp.91-93 provides a summary of the Society's Rules applicable in 1855.

¹⁵ Katherine Coombs, *British Watercolours, 1750-1950* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2012), p.33.

There were also benefits of membership of something like a cartel. From 1812 a minimum sale price had been set for a work at the exhibition, which was increased to four guineas in 1825 as confidence grew, and was presumably further increased over the period.¹⁶ Above this base value, exhibitors set their own sale prices, agonising over comparisons with fellow Members and with competing exhibitions, and what their market might be. In 1843 the OWS resisted a request from the Art Union of London for comparative details of prices over previous years on the grounds that this would be injurious to Members' market positions. Profits on the annual exhibition were used to remunerate the officers of the Society (President, Treasurer and Secretary), to pay Members for attending meetings, and to pay a "premium" to Members on a rotating basis, with the aim of encouraging the selected Member to produce an impressive work for the annual exhibition. There was no inclination to widen the membership until, in the 1860s, this seemed the lesser of two evils. A Government Commission sitting in 1863 to enquire into the affairs of the Royal Academy extended its remit to encompass a number of other similar bodies. After providing evidence to the Commission which "declined to give information...which would enable the public to pry into the state of its income", the OWS resisted any suggestion of merger with either the Academy or any other rival organisations.¹⁷ As a nod to changing public opinion, however, the view was taken that the membership should be expanded somewhat, a process which continued for some years, and an additional exhibition was introduced into the Society's annual programme at which the members of other water-colour societies might exhibit.

The OWS did not have an uncontested position in the middle-range market for exhibition paintings. Following shortly upon the Society's' reinvigoration in 1823, the first exhibition of the Society of British Artists took place and the Liverpool Academy began to play a role in the careers of London-based artists of repute.¹⁸ Within a decade, a rival water-colour exhibiting society – the 'New' Society of Painters in Water-Colours (NWS) – held an initial exhibition which was open to all, in 1832.¹⁹ The 'New' Society soon found this open exhibition policy to be unworkable, however, and in 1835 re-structured itself and adopted a 'members-only' exhibition policy. It continued with fluctuating fortunes, and under various names, numbering among its members "many artists of talent and distinction" before joining forces with

¹⁶ Fenwick and Smith, *RWS archives* (1997), p.14. Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.I, p.434.

¹⁷ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, p.113.

¹⁸ *The Royal Society of British Artists, 1824-1893*, ed. by Jane Johnson (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1975). Edward Morris and Emma Roberts, *The Liverpool Academy...1774-1867* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998).

¹⁹ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, p.11ff.

the Dudley Gallery, in the late 1860s. All of these exhibitions, like the Royal Academy, accepted, subject to the decisions of those organising the exhibition, works from professionals and amateurs, in a variety of media and subject matter. The OWS membership and exhibition remained exclusive throughout, however.

From the outset, the OWS accepted proposals of female professional artists as potential members, putting them to the vote as potential 'Lady Members'. Over the period 1820-1860 a steady trickle of successful applications and retirements or deaths resulted in there never being more than six female members of the society, and at some point before 1855 this number had been incorporated into the Society's Rules as a maximum. The successful applicants' status was never the same as that of male artists, who might be elected, at least in the earlier part of the period, either an Associate, or a full Member. A male Associate had the prospect of subsequently becoming a full Member, entitling them to participate in decisions about the officers, membership, organisation and distribution of the surplus income of the OWS, but at no stage was this a prospect for women. Nor did female members have a share in the profits of the Society. Until 1857, when the practice ceased, members, usually about seven, were selected annually in rotation for payment of a premium which, in the 1840s and early 1850s, might be as much as £85.²⁰ It can probably be safely assumed that female artists were also excluded from the lively social life – the suppers and sketching companionship – which participation in the Society offered male Members and Associates. Lady Members had the benefit of the OWS endorsement of them as professionals in their field, and the implicit endorsement of the quality of their work, together with the opportunity to exhibit among practitioners in water-colour, at an event celebrating that medium, rather than including it as a less important relation to the grand subjects in oils. In all likelihood, these benefits alone could enhance sales prices, even for work not exhibited. However, the number of works they could exhibit was, like the male Associates, limited to eight in any one exhibition.

In 1850, in a move which, according to the *Athenaeum*, was "calculated to mislead the public that these are amateurs", the OWS designated female exhibitors in its exhibition catalogue as "Honorary Members".²¹ Immediately a letter was published in *The Art-Journal* from the pseudonymous 'Vigilans', "advocating the cause of the

²⁰ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, pp.97 and 11.

²¹ *Athenaeum*, 11 May 1850.

ladies”.²² By their high-handed action, not sanctioned by the Society’s Rules, the letter states uncompromisingly, the OWS Committee, which was responsible for the organisation of the exhibition, had placed the Lady Members’ public reputation in “great and serious jeopardy...virtually their name has been struck out of the list of members”. It is possible that Samuel Carter-Hall, founding Editor of the *Art-Journal* and author of much of its editorial and journalistic content for more than three decades from 1839, assumed the identity of ‘Vigilans’, “the most regular and outspoken” of various pseudonymous correspondents, for the purpose of variety and piquancy in the magazine.²³ If so, it seems likely that, on some occasions at least, he was prompted by a female artist.²⁴ In a ‘response’ to this letter, Carter-Hall writes “this is not an age when the inferiority of women is to be maintained...it is...wise and just to elevate, rather than to depress, them in places for which they are in all ways eligible”. This demotion of the Lady Members was not remedied by the OWS for some years. The “lady exhibitors” as they were referred to in the Society’s Rules in the 1850s, became Associates, without indication of gender, in the Rules of 1860, and were so designated in catalogues from the exhibition of 1861.²⁵ Based on the tone of this correspondence, it is hard to overstate the importance to the female artist of this one indication of their professional status and the comparability of their works (and their prices) with their male colleagues. The fragility of their position in the OWS, and in the professional world, seems to have increased during this decade when the identity of the Society – ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’, ‘feeble’ or ‘vigorous’ – was in contention.

A more masculine style of water-colour

The OWS, in competition with the Royal Academy for prestige and monetary value, supported its members in painting in a more ‘manly’ style, in subject matter, in intensity of hue, and in scale. Roget styles as “figure men” those who, from 1820 onwards, painted narrative, literary or biblical scenes, focusing on human activity, and who employed body colour to intensify the brilliance of their work, although this group, which became a distinct faction within the Society, included, over the course of the next few decades, some female practitioners.²⁶ Figure 2.1 shows an early

²² *Art-Journal* (1850), p.192.

²³ Debra Mancoff, ‘Samuel Carter Hall: Publisher as Promoter of the High Arts’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 24.1 (1991), pp.11-21.

²⁴ A letter from ‘Vigilans’ in 1840 (p.110), for instance, is incontestably from a woman’s perspective, suggesting that the National Gallery be urged to provide a washroom for lady artists to clean their hands before thrusting them into gloves for their return home from a day’s painting in the Gallery.

²⁵ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, p.106.

²⁶ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.I, p.526.

example from 1825 by Joshua Cristall, who presided over the reinvigoration of the Society and this newly-robust style of water-colour, in the years 1821 to 1831 without, according to Roget, ever himself becoming an adept. Recounting the changes of Presidency of the OWS in the 1850s – “a critical period in the history of our (water-colour) art” – Roget characterises the art of John Frederick Lewis (see Figure 2.2) as the final flowering of the group striving for the vibrancy of colour and degree of detailed verisimilitude advocated by John Ruskin and the pre-Raphaelite painters in oils. Lewis found that he could not physically sustain the labour involved in realising in water-colour the effects which he could achieve in oils, quite apart from the fact that he could, with less labour, achieve twice the value of sales in oil paintings compared with water-colour. Coombs reports Lewis observing to Ruskin that he saw no reason why he should ‘get by water-colour art £500 a year...when I know that as an oil painter I could with less labour get my thousand’.²⁷



Figure 2.1: Joshua Cristall, 'Cottages near Symond's Yat' (1825)

© Bolton Council

Despite Lewis' experience of the labour required to generate an equivalent income, the introduction of a more masculine style of water-colour had some success, over a period of forty years, in establishing the medium as an art to be valued using similar criteria to those applied to the contemporary oils displayed at the Royal Academy. As regards financial value, however, the OWS never quite overcame, firstly the market's distrust of water-colour as a durable medium which would hold its value, or,

²⁷ Coombs, *British Watercolours* (2012), p.36.

secondly, the growing public admiration for sheer size in exhibited works. No water-colour work, even among its peers at an OWS Exhibition, would ever, one imagines, be described, as Wilkie's 'The Preaching of Knox...' (approximately one and a half metres square) was when exhibited in 1832 at the Royal Academy: *The Times* designated it "the *lion* of the gallery".²⁸ Eight years later, in 1840, 'The Banquet Scene in Shakespeare's Macbeth' by Daniel Maclise caused a sensation based partly on its size, at five and a half square metres. Critical acclaim for water-colour nevertheless fuelled a buoyant overall market. In its inaugural year, 1839, the *Art-Journal* published a leading article - 'The Progress of Painting in water colour' - portraying a history of the art from the eighteenth century to the contemporary figure painters and praising the "light, space and vigour" which the latter style imparted, removing "the objection of weakness so long urged against water-colour".²⁹ Fifteen years later, reviewing the OWS Exhibition of 1854, the *Art-Journal* used still the language of masculine strength: such are the improvements made in "substance and brilliancy" compared with traditional water-colour, "that (now) we have all the solidity and power of oil". John Ruskin, in 1843, reinforced this critical support, comparing the traditional and more 'modern' styles of water-colour, and identifying the work of Lewis and Tayler as examples of "power" in the work of contemporary artists, the former for his "brilliant, beautiful and right" effects and the latter for the immense attention and labour in leaving "nothing unfinished or untold".³⁰

It has been said, however, that many remained unconvinced that water-colour could be considered the proper endeavour of the 'modern' male artist.³¹ Towards the close of this period in which the OWS Members and the admirers of their work had done their utmost to establish water-colour art as one in which particularly the British excelled, and which could be respected alongside the British school in oils, over one hundred works were sent to the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855.³² The French critic, Edmond About, was more than sceptical. Quoted verbatim by Roget, he observed that painting in oils and in water-colour were more closely related in England than in France, in colouring, in "vigour" and by the fact that, in England, first-class artists work in water-colour, while the French prefer to leave the medium to convent schoolgirls: the effect of the English efforts could be compared with a pretty girl dressed in the clothes of a musketeer. Why bother, he asked, - a question

²⁸ *The Times*, 8 May 1832.

²⁹ *Art-Journal* (1839), p.145ff.

³⁰ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1843), pp.38-42.

³¹ Coombs, *British Watercolours* (2012), p.36.

³² Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, p.89.

which resonates with the experience of Frederick Lewis and the growing antagonism within the OWS between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ practitioners – to seek grand results (and recognition) by the more difficult means, to enter “par la cheminée quand la porte est ouverte à deux battants”?³³



Figure 2.2: John Frederick Lewis, 'Life in the Harem, Cairo' (1858)

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

A lucrative alternative to sale to collectors offered itself to the figure painters from the 1820s, however, as they claimed a pre-eminent place in providing illustrations for the ‘Gift’ Annuals. These annual literary anthologies accompanied by illustrations included the *Forget me Not*, published in the period 1822-1847 and the *Keepsake*, published in the period 1829-1857. There were many more. Thackeray scorned their portrayals of scenes from popular literature or history: “woe to the painter who falls into the hands of the...Annual-monger (who) emasculates his genius so as to make him fit company for the purchasers of Annuals”.³⁴ Casting the artist as the voyaging hero, Odysseus, he urges him to come “away while it is still time out of the hands of those sickly, heartless, siren Annuals”. Artistic practice and manhood are conflated in contrast to the cloying sentimental conventions entailed in pleasing the public, in working for a publisher’s fee. Three years later, reviewing the Royal Academy exhibition of 1841, *The Times*’ journalist complained more soberly that so

³³ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, p.90, can be translated as “Why come down the chimney when one can use the front door?”

³⁴ William Thackeray (Michael Angelo Titmarsh), 'A Pictorial Rhapsody', *Fraser's Magazine*, XXII (Jul.-Dec. 1840), p.118.

many artists had been seduced by the fees paid by publishers for illustrations that their output of exhibition paintings had been “retrograded”, having acquired a “marvellous resemblance to each other in the mode of execution and design”: none of them were absolutely bad, but few were excellent.³⁵ In its more florid style, the *Illustrated London News* in 1843 makes a similar point: “when will *trade* in Art be less evident and its loftier spirit more developed..?”³⁶ When will art (and artists) “revel in the true freedom of greatness and shine before us?” The artist as genius, as the ‘free’ hero uncompromised by “pecuniary profit” is here taking on an idealised, male form. By the late 1850s, John Ruskin had nothing but scorn for the remaining practitioners of the ‘modern’ style of water-colour at the OWS Exhibition. “Such works,” he wrote in 1859, “appeal to the insensitivities and pretence of the public: insensitivities because no refined eye could bear with the glaring colours...which are the staple of modern water-colour work” and pretence because this work is largely supported by those with pretensions to be artists themselves.³⁷ Water-colour as an art he saw as being “in steady descent”.

The resignation of John Frederick Lewis, who had been briefly President of the OWS, according to Roget, marked the end of the era, at the OWS, of the “figure-men” painting in the “larger style of composition” with dense body-colour.³⁸ The more traditional practitioners assumed greater prominence in the Society’s affairs, and its identity was, until a younger generation of artists had grown in number among the membership, muted in comparison with the exuberant years of the 1830s and 1840s.

Eliza Sharpe: professional “Artist Painter in Water-Colour”

Eliza Sharpe and her sister, Louisa (afterwards Mrs. Woldemar Seyffarth), were both elected to the OWS in 1829, the first female artists to join the ranks of “figure-men”. Eliza’s professional painting career lasted over fifty years, spanning the period described above, during which she remained an exhibitor at this and other venues, last appearing in the OWS catalogue in 1870. A year later, in the Census, having since the first, in 1841, described herself as an Artist, she designated herself “Formerly Artist in Water-Colour”. This suggests that she felt she had retired from a profession, that throughout her working life she regarded herself as primarily an

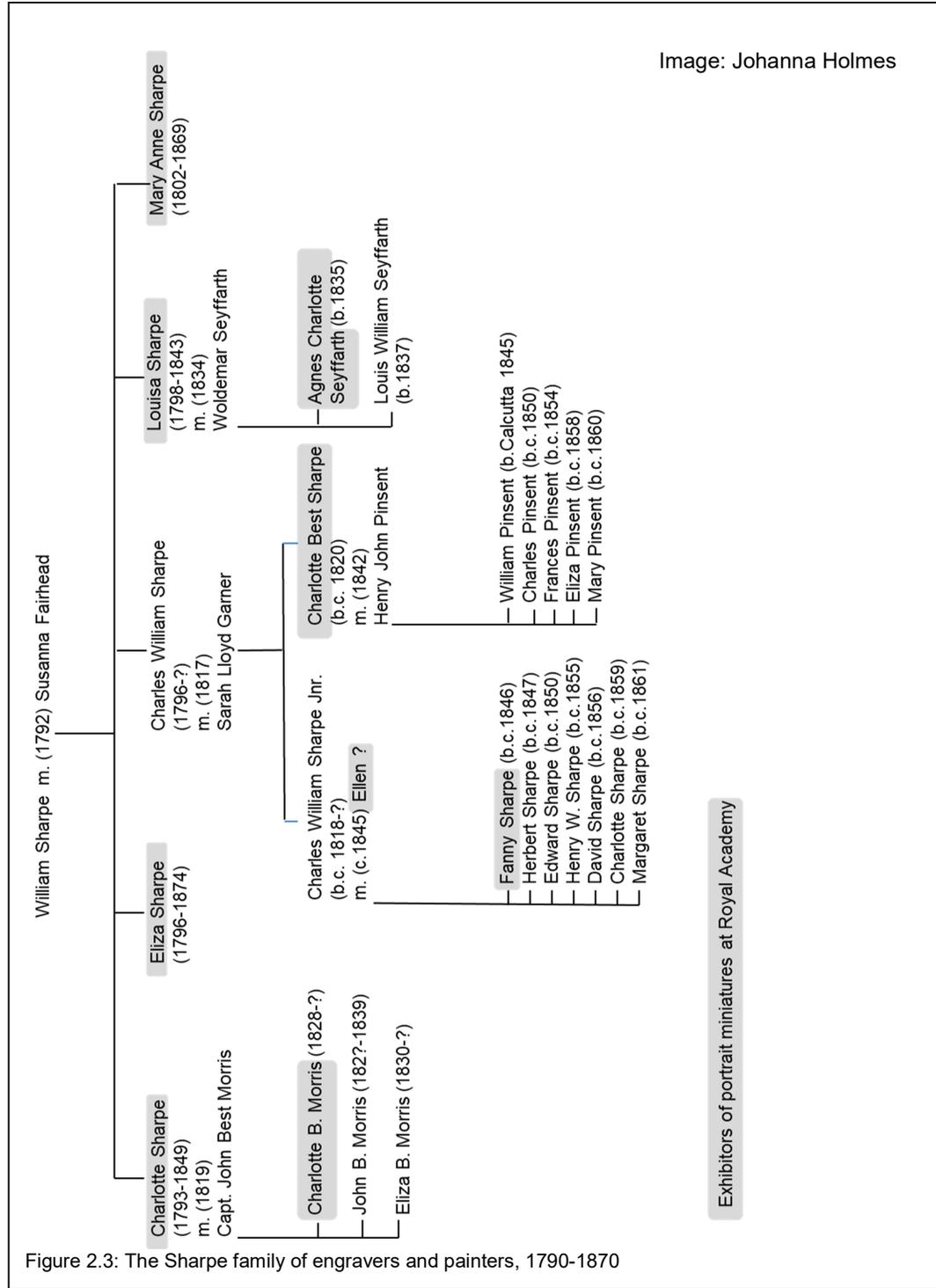
³⁵ *The Times*, 4 May 1841.

³⁶ *Illustrated London News*, 20 May 1843.

³⁷ John Ruskin, *Academy Notes No. V* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1859), pp.44-5.

³⁸ Roget, OWS (1891), Vol.II, p.94.

artist, and that her affiliation to the OWS had been an important feature of her professional identity. This study traces her career, considering the adjustments she made in order to sustain her income and that professional identity, as her profession consolidated its male, heroic ideals of success and value.



The most extensive accounts of the careers of Eliza and her three artist sisters are those by Charlotte Yeldham in her foundational research into English and French nineteenth-century female artists and her more recent article for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB).³⁹ This study extends Yeldham's research into the family and art world context in which Eliza conducted her career, in order to discuss a working life, rather than her success as a recognised painter. Some knowledge of her family is essential to considering Eliza's working career, and the family tree at Figure 2.3 provides a basis for reference.

All four artist sisters were born in the 1790s in Birmingham, children of an engraver and bookseller, William Sharpe (not be confused with the more highly-regarded engraver William Sharp (1749-1824)).⁴⁰ Eliza's brother Charles married in Birmingham in 1817 and at around the same time William Sharpe brought his four daughters to London. All four must have been accomplished artists by this stage, because Charlotte, Eliza and Louisa first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1817, and at least three of them were accepted into the British Institution School in 1818, for which evidence of ability was required.⁴¹ Formed in 1808, by a largely aristocratic board of Directors, the objectives of the British Institution were to foster a classical painting tradition in Britain to rival that of France, in part by enabling students to copy Old Masters on loan from aristocratic collections. Unfortunately, reports to the Directors on the school, the paintings loaned, and the students' names and their progress, become increasingly sketchy and incomplete over the decade to 1825 when they cease altogether.⁴² The students' "season" ran from August to December, at the end of which, from 1819 onwards, an exhibition was held of their "studies", additional to the regular exhibitions of the Institution. The students' work was generally self-directed, a Keeper or his assistant being present to keep order. Initial entry to an individual's first season as a "probationer" was subject to evidence of ability and, from 1824, more stringent requirements were introduced which possibly mitigated in favour of male students, since a certificate was required from a Member of the Royal Academy that the work presented by applicants was their own. A number of the probationers who completed their first season satisfactorily were recommended for admission to the Institution's membership. Many of these new

³⁹ Yeldham, *Women Artists* (1984), Vol I, pp.258-64. Charlotte Yeldham, 'Sharpe (married name Seyffarth), Louisa (bap.1798, d.1843)', *ODNB* (2004), < <https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/25233> > [accessed 31 January 2018].

⁴⁰ Clayton, *English Female Artists* (1876), Vol.I, p.380. London, London Metropolitan Archive (LMA), MS 11936, Sun Fire Insurance Policies.

⁴¹ Thomas Smith, *Recollections of the British Institution...1805-59* (London: Simpkin & Marshal, 1860), p.44.

⁴² London, National Art Library (NAL), MS Minutes of the British Institution, Vols.IV and V.

members returned in subsequent years to “resume their studies”.⁴³ The Keeper’s reports to the Directors indicate daily attendance of between fifty and seventy students in the “season”, necessitating some form of rotation of seats in front of the most popular works for copying.



The student “season” of 1818 was the most numerous ever, and included a number of female artists who had already established exhibiting careers, such as Harriet Gouldsmith (at the time a member of the OWS) and Emma Kendrick (a successful painter of portraits in miniature, and also at that time a member of the OWS), or were members of families including successful male artists, such as Miss Hayter, Miss Drummond and Miss Ross. Simply gaining entry to the 1818 “season” was an important step for the Sharpe sisters in securing a foothold and contacts at the upper end of the art market. At its conclusion, the Keeper reported to the Directors in January 1819 that “during the longest season he remembers,...not only did an universal spirit of harmony and accommodation prevail, but everyone appeared absorbed in zeal towards his particular pursuit”.⁴⁴ It seems that this was a year in which like-minded men and women worked co-operatively, and perhaps formed

⁴³ NAL, British Institution Minutes, Vol.IV, 25 January 1819

⁴⁴ Smith, *British Institution* (1860). p.45.

lasting friendships, or at least business contacts. At the close of the “season”, all three Sharpe sisters were among those selected for special commendation by the Directors and probably kept their copies for future reference and, on occasion, as the basis for an exhibition copy. Mary Anne, particularly, subsequently exhibited paintings ‘after’ the Old Masters during the whole of her career, as did Eliza. Her copy of Rembrandt’s “Christ in the Temple” in the National Gallery (possibly the work now known as ‘The woman taken in adultery’), was exhibited and very positively reviewed in the *Spectator* in 1833.⁴⁵ A purchase made at the first students’ exhibition, held in 1819, of student works from the 1818 “season” is possibly the origin of the assertion, repeated by Clayton and presumably an item of family history, but not confirmed by other contemporary texts, that “the Duke of York was their (the Sharpe sisters’) first patron”.⁴⁶

Eliza’s older sister Charlotte married in 1819, and from then on Eliza, Louisa and Mary Anne formed a unit, living and working together. When, in 1834, Louisa married Woldemar Seyffarth, a German writer and journalist, they did not remove their household entirely to Dresden, but, as Seyffarth’s writings and exhibition catalogues suggest, during the 1830s they spent some time each year in London, dealing with the exhibition and publication of Louisa’s work. Both their children, Agnes and Louis, were born in, and baptised from, the house in Allsop Terrace, near Regent’s Park, occupied by Eliza and Mary Anne. Except for one period of a few years, after Louisa’s death, Eliza and Mary Anne lived and worked together until the latter’s death in 1869. Figure 2.4 shows a caricature, executed by Eliza, probably, in the 1820s, while she, Louisa and Mary Anne lived and worked together. It seems that Eliza portrays herself as asserting her position as senior sister, but possibly also possessing a natural inclination to take charge of the situation. This resonates with Ellen Clayton’s anecdotes, apparently gathered from family memories, of “an unusually original and marked character,...plain-spoken and full of stern contempt for meanness”, while exhibiting “enthusiastic benevolence” on behalf of those she felt neglected or wronged.⁴⁷ In this image, Louisa is presented as ambitious for their art to leave a legacy to “posterity”. Roget judged her the “better painter...her drawing...firmer, her composition more compact” and exhibiting a sense of humour while Eliza dealt “more largely in sentiment”.⁴⁸ Observing the three sisters in Dresden in 1834 (presumably on an extended visit for the occasion of Louisa’s

⁴⁵ Yeldham, *Women Artists* (1984), Vol.I, p.258 and n.29.

⁴⁶ Clayton, *English Female Artists* (1876), Vol.I, p.379.

⁴⁷ Clayton, *English Female Artists* (1876), Vol.I, p.380.

⁴⁸ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, p.548.

marriage), Anna Jameson remarked on their close bonds of artistic partnership, describing them as “so talented and so inseparable...bound together in affectionate communion of hearts and interests...”⁴⁹



Figure 2.5: Eliza Sharpe, 'Self-portrait' (c.1820)

Undated, but, based on her age and clothing, possibly 1817 to mid-1820s).
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

All four sisters began their exhibiting lives as painters of portraits in miniature and throughout their painting careers all except Louisa continued to work and exhibit at the Royal Academy in this genre, which must have yielded sufficient income for it to seem worthwhile to train younger female members of the family in due course (see Figure 2.3). Figure 2.5 shows a self-portrait by Eliza at this period. Louisa, Eliza and Mary Anne all exhibited larger-scale figure paintings in water-colour with body colour from the 1820s onwards, although to different degrees and in different genres. From their first London exhibition, at the Royal Academy in 1817, the Sharpe sisters all styled themselves 'Painter', while other exhibitors of portrait miniatures, such as the Ross sisters and the women of the Drummond family, more generally styled themselves 'Miniature Painter'. This remained true throughout their

⁴⁹ Anna Jameson, *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1835), Vol. I, pp.179-80.

exhibiting careers, and was taken up in turn by their daughters and nieces exhibiting in the same genre. This suggests a conscious strategy, an announcement of intent to make their living in the higher branches of art in addition to portrait miniature work, which was widely regarded in the first half of the nineteenth century as a mundane form of art. Charles Dickens portrayed the occupation as mechanical and unremunerative, the recourse of lady-like but impoverished women, in the character of the good-hearted and resourceful, but poor, Miss La Creevy in *Nicholas Nickleby*. First publishing in parts in 1838-1839, he reinforced a prevalent image of lowly status, despite the fact that some portrait miniaturists were highly-regarded in artistic, and aristocratic, circles.



Figure 2.6: William Boxall, 'Rosina' (1833)
From the *Keepsake* (London: Longman, 1833).
Photo Johanna Holmes, courtesy of the British Library.

Copying from the Old Masters seems to have been a successful strategy on the part of the Sharpe sisters to raise the standing and sale value of their art above miniature portraits. Louisa and Eliza graduated from portraits to the portrayal of actresses in their famous roles, to literary illustration over the course of the 1820s. Eliza Sharpe's first 'figure' painting – 'Miss Paton as Clymante' - was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1824, as was Louisa's 'Miss Stevens as Mrs. Ford'. Both of them exhibited illustrations of

literature in the years to 1829. It seems likely that they regarded the OWS as an opportunity to be exhibited to the art-buying public to greater effect, and a form of accreditation which they could obtain nowhere else. They were quickly alerted to the additional benefits of exposure to the publishers of the Annual gift books, when Charles Heath, the engraver and producer of several of the emerging Annual gift books, bought two of Louisa's paintings - 'Juliet' and 'The Wedding' - at her first OWS exhibition in 1829 for £35 each. From 1830 onwards both sisters' work appeared regularly in the "siren" annual gift books, particularly Charles Heath's

Keepsake, although Louisa was the more frequent contributor. Her 'Juliet' appeared in 1831, and 'The Wedding' in 1832 in the *Keepsake*. Figures 2.6 and 2.7 illustrate the prevailing style of work acquired by Heath and his competitors. Despite Thackeray's scorn, the Annuals contained engravings of works by some illustrious painters, however, and the value of one's name appearing in the same list as theirs must have been significant. Eliza's name, as "Painter" appeared below that of J. W. Turner in the List of Plates in the 1831 edition of the *Keepsake*, and alongside Louisa's and other leading, male, Members of the OWS in that for the 1835 edition.

The combination of this work, continued portraiture, and sale of original works, at exhibition or otherwise, throughout the 1830s, suggest a very reasonable living. Mary Anne had, since 1826, been exhibiting at the Society of British Artists' Suffolk

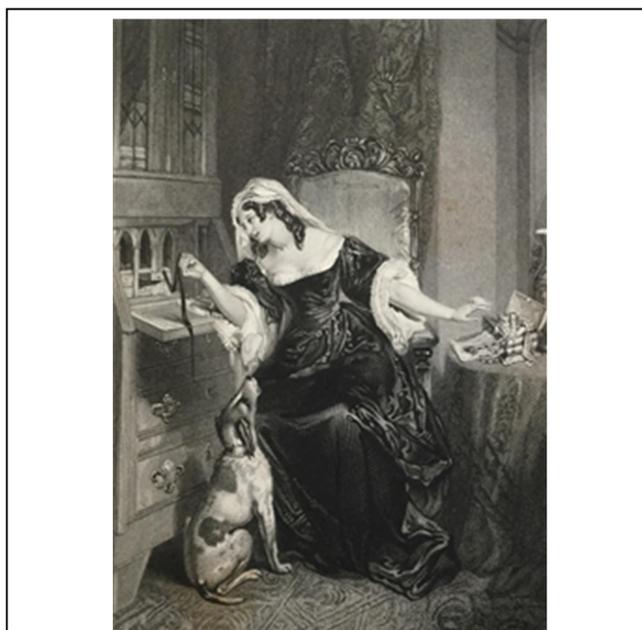


Figure 2.7: Eliza Sharpe, 'The Widowed Bride' (1834)

From the *Keepsake* (London: Longman, 1834), p.284. Photo Johanna Holmes, courtesy of the British Library.

Street Gallery and Louisa from 1832 at the Liverpool Academy. In 1836 all three sisters exhibited at the Liverpool Academy, with which Eliza and Mary Anne continued until 1860. During the height of their commercial success, in the mid-1830s, both Louisa and Eliza's original paintings were sold from the OWS Exhibition for prices far in excess of their portrait miniatures. While the latter might fetch five guineas for a wealthy customer and a number of sittings, their

original figure works sold for thirty-five guineas or thereabouts. Louisa asked for and received one hundred guineas for a picture on three occasions.⁵⁰ These prices compare well with those achieved by male Members, and were paid by male

⁵⁰*RWS: First Fifty Years* (1992). Louisa's paintings recorded as sold for one hundred guineas were 'Brunetta...' (1832), 'I mean to appeal to you...' (1833) and 'An evening in Miss Stewart's apartment...' (1837). She asked this sum on three further occasions in the 1830s, but a sale is not confirmed in the OWS Exhibition sales book. This does not necessarily mean that a sale 'on the side', perhaps for a lesser sum, did not occur!

purchasers, suggesting not only a degree of self-confidence on the part of the professional lady exhibitors, but a market which did not much discriminate between male and female practitioners of similar, literary illustrations.

The financial benefits from sales at the OWS exhibition were short-lived, however. Although Anna Jameson wrote of Eliza and Louisa's art in 1835 as examples of "a power, felt rather than perceived, and kept subordinate to the sentiment of grace (which) should mark the female mind and hand", this same restraint, or timidity, or lack of substance, was pilloried by Thackeray by the end of the decade. Summoning an image of pretty women peeking timorously at the paintings in the OWS exhibition from beneath pretty bonnets, whose judgement on art amounts to very little beyond liking Miss (Eliza) Sharpe's "languishing-eyed charmers whom the world admires so much", Thackeray urges Mrs. (Louisa) Seyffarth to be more ambitious. Referring to Louisa's painting 'Will Honeycomb's Dream', exhibited at the OWS in 1840, he urges her to take note of the "life and authenticity" which a male competitor (John Absolon) at the 'New' Water-colour Society had achieved in a work also based on figures from the eighteenth-century *Spectator's* 'Sir Roger de Coverley'.⁵¹ He clearly considered that Eliza and Louisa had succumbed to the artistic values of the "sickly" Annuals, but in allying them with a female audience of limited judgement he implies that this is both irretrievable and unlamented, unlike male practitioners who may yet save themselves.

Eliza's ventures into more 'serious' subject matter – primarily Biblical scenes – were not successful financially or critically. After 1836, when her first Biblical subject at the OWS, 'Ruth and Naomi', sold for thirty-five guineas, she sold no more Biblical subjects here, and at least one of these works – 'Christ Raising the Widow's Son' – remained unsold, to be exhibited again in 1859 in Liverpool and in 1865 at the Society of Female Artists.⁵² At least one reviewer of the OWS Exhibition took the view that Eliza's use of body colour and gum arabic to heighten the light contrasts produced "an enamel-like brilliancy...only fit for ornamental purposes, and unsuited to such (serious) subjects" as Biblical scenes.⁵³ A few years later, the same critical source dismissed Eliza's work as typically female. Despite positive, even gushing reviews in this and later years of some of Eliza's male colleagues exhibiting in the domestic and literary genres at the OWS, Eliza's depiction of a scene from Dickens

⁵¹ Thackeray (Titmarsh), *Fraser's Magazine* (1840).

⁵² Yeldham, *Women Artists* (1984), Vol. I, p.260.

⁵³ *Spectator* 4 May 1839, p.18.

was evidence that “like most lady painters, (she) is fond of gay colours and pretty faces”.⁵⁴ By the early 1840s, the style and subject matter which had brought Eliza success in the 1830s was, especially when practised by a woman, not only associated with a trivial, merely decorative form of artistic practice, but with superficial or amateur practitioners and a timid, uninformed audience.

Charlotte Yeldham suggests, on the basis of her exhibiting record, that Eliza Sharpe was deterred from classical or biblical subjects after negative critical comments in the 1840s which continued relentlessly throughout the decade. She retreated, Yeldham suggests, into domestic and literary sentimental scenes for which the market declined and her energy grew less in the last decade of her life. Critical reception may well have been one factor in the apparent reduction in the number of original works which Eliza produced, but a number of other factors, including the death of Louisa, whose successes spurred her on, in 1843, and the availability of other, less remunerative but less challenging, work may have played a part.

Such alternative work included teaching, preparing copies for fine engravers, and administrative work for the OWS. One or all three of the sisters tutored other women, both professionals and amateurs, in addition to members of their own family, over the course of their careers, including, Ellen Clayton asserts, Sarah Setchel. More importantly, in its obituary for Eliza, the *Art-Journal* observes that “as a copyist of the works of others she had been generally very successful”, citing a series of copies produced “several years ago for us” of the Vernon and other collections.⁵⁵ Over one hundred and fifty works from the collection of ‘modern’ art accumulated by Robert Vernon (1774-1849) since the 1820s were vested in the Trustees of the National Gallery in 1847. The *Art-Journal* already had a right to reproduce works in the Vernon Gallery in Pall Mall, but, under new proprietorship from 1849, it had more funds at its disposal for illustration of the periodical. As part of a campaign to secure good exhibition space for the collection now in the ownership of the nation, it commenced a series over five years (1850 to 1855 inclusive) of large, steel-engraved reproductions of the works, by the end of which all of them had been engraved. This series was followed by another, of works in the Royal Collection and others, creating “an unsurpassed repository of the popular art

⁵⁴ *Spectator*, 4 May 1844, p.17.

⁵⁵ *Art-Journal* (1874), p.232.

imagery of Victorian England”.⁵⁶ None of the artists whom the Editor, Samuel Carter-Hall, appears to have employed to make copies of works in the collections, which presumably he issued to the engravers of his choice, is credited in the published journal, but if Eliza undertook even a fraction of this work, it would have provided a steady, although unexciting, income, and a source of material for future development for exhibition and sale. Her nephew Charles Sharpe supplied some of the engraved plates. A fourth aspect of Eliza’s career may have taken the form of paid secretarial work for the OWS. It has been suggested that, having become a member of the OWS in 1829 Eliza was “subsequently secretary”.⁵⁷ As a female member, Eliza was ineligible to hold the office of Secretary to the Society, but, as Seyffarth makes clear, there were a number of clerical and secretarial tasks to be undertaken in relation to the exhibition, and perhaps also to the membership and meetings of committees, for which she may have been remunerated.

Through “her own industry and talent” in these various enterprises, Eliza died, aged seventy-eight leaving an estate worth under £2,000: a “modest little fortune” according to Ellen Clayton, but no mean achievement for a woman who had earned her own living for the preceding fifty years.⁵⁸ She retained a robust sense of the monetary value of her work long after art commentators had discounted her in the 1840s. Exhibiting copies of Old Masters at the Society of Female Artists (SFA) exhibitions in the 1860s, Eliza’s paintings were always among the highest-priced of those in a similar genre and medium. In 1861 ‘Christ Raising the widow’s Son’ was priced (for its third outing at the exhibitions discussed here) at £84, placing it by some margin among the five highest-priced in the exhibition, including those in oil. In 1868 a copy of Maclise’s ‘Play Scene in Hamlet’ (possibly a re-working of a copy made in the Vernon Gallery for the *Art-Journal*) was, with one other in the exhibition, priced at over £100. It seems unlikely that she had greater success selling at these prices in the SFA exhibition, where generally lower prices prevailed, than at the more established (and better quality) exhibitions, particularly in London. This may suggest that she felt she could afford to make a statement concerning her professional status without undue financial sacrifice. At all events, Eliza Sharpe seems to have been confident in her own professionalism, and membership of the

⁵⁶ Katherine Haskins, *The Art-Journal and Fine Art Publishing in Victorian England, 1850-1880* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p12. The *Art-Journal* was in financial difficulties in the late 1840s, when publishers George Vertue acquired it in 1849, keeping Samuel Carter-Hall on as editor.

⁵⁷ Yeldham, ‘Sharpe’ (2004).

⁵⁸ Clayton, *English Female Artists* (1876), Vol.I, p.382. Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, p.207.

OWS, despite its reluctance to give full recognition to its female members, played an important part in the formation of her professional identity.

Margaret Gillies: public, but not professional, recognition

Margaret Gillies moved to London from Edinburgh “around 1819” with her sister Mary, to keep house for her widowed father.⁵⁹ Charlotte Yeldham, in her biography and art-historical evaluation of Gillies’ work, suggests that Margaret began to think seriously about a career as an artist when it became apparent that she would not enjoy sharing a household with her father’s second wife, and at this point, in the second half of the 1820s, she became a pupil of Frederick Cruikshank, a portraitist in miniature. Although she seems to have undertaken commissions passed on by Cruikshank, she also turned her family and social connections to good account, finding her own sitters “with ease”.⁶⁰ Over the course of the 1840s and early 1850s, Gillies adopted an increasingly intellectual approach to the practice of portraiture, culminating in a virtually complete change of direction, re-training in oils and working in a different genre altogether. Her election to the OWS in 1852 was part of a career strategy possibly compromised by financial considerations. However, despite the Society’s public demotion of its Lady Members in 1850, Margaret’s work, exposed to the most discerning critics by virtue of its appearance in the OWS exhibition, was more frequently, and more favourably, noticed, and a period of marked improvement in the number of her sales began. This study explores further the extent of the benefits conferred by her membership of the pre-eminent professional body.

Both Roget and Yeldham identify this change in Margaret’s strategy and aspiration as an artist over the course of the 1840s, in which her exhibiting practice at the OWS was to form an important part.⁶¹ Both identify indicators of the intellectual seriousness with which informed this period of change, from Margaret’s acquaintance with William Wordsworth and his family, and the resulting portraits of them (including ‘William Wordsworth’ exhibited at the RA in 1840), and then of others whose minds she admired, or whom she felt were inspirational, particularly women. Such portraits were not produced as the result of commissions from the sitters (although, obviously, their consent and cooperation were necessary) but as ‘tribute’ portraits, some of which became iconic representations of the sitter, intended for a wider intellectual and cultural market, within which the artist gained in

⁵⁹ Yeldham, *Margaret Gillies* (1997), p.7. Margaret and Mary had been unofficially adopted by their Scottish uncle, Adam, Lord Gillies, when their father got into financial difficulties.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁶¹ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, pp.372-377.

status by association. Although Margaret had produced some 'figure' paintings (including 'The Captive Daughter of Zion', exhibited at the RA in 1838, and other Biblical heroines), her stay in Paris with friends in 1851 while training in the studio of Ary Scheffer, was pivotal in the commencement of an exhibiting career at the OWS, beginning in 1852, at which she exhibited exclusively 'figure' works based on personal, literary and Biblical sources. However, while Yeldham's argument is, in essence, that Margaret's art and career should be interpreted in the light of her personal creed, as a committed Unitarian, in social justice and gender equality, Roget's summary of Margaret's artistic output is a telling diminution of both her artistic intentions and her work's intellectual and economic value. "Miss Gillies' art was essentially feminine; dealing almost exclusively with maiden's sentiment and woman's sorrow", he observes, a statement which manages to be both true and to carry a freight of implications of triviality, banality and lack of depth.⁶² On this occasion Roget does not echo Ellen Clayton's words: while feminising Gillies work to an extent with the words "deep poetry and tender sentiment", she attributes to it complementary masculine qualities of "depth and power".⁶³ Roget, the greater authority on art and artists, is here, at the very end of the nineteenth century, following a well-established critical tradition, or habit, analysed later in this chapter, of attributing their exhibited works to "the ladies", before appraising the work entirely in stereotypically "feminine" terms.

When Margaret Gillies joined the OWS in 1852, she was admitted to a small group of female painters in water-colour who had received a degree of professional endorsement of their abilities by virtue of their election to one of the two water-colour societies. At the OWS, Nancy Rayner was the sole woman 'figure painter' who, since her first appearance at the exhibition in 1850, had caused the critics any excitement.⁶⁴ At the NWS, a larger number of women members included prominent exhibitors of 'figure' subjects Fanny Corbaux and Sarah Setchel, and a third practitioner almost unknown today, but briefly noticed by critics at the time, Jane Sophia Egerton. Fanny Corbaux was elected to the NWS in 1839. A woman of considerable intellect she was recognised both as an artist and as a learned authority on Biblical languages and scriptural history. Sarah Setchel had, like the Sharpe sisters, from whom she took some lessons after leaving school, and

⁶² Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, p.375.

⁶³ Clayton, *English Female Artists* (1876), Vol.II, p.92.

⁶⁴ *Athenaeum*, 11 May 1850 "She gives great promise". The *Literary Gazette*, 11 May 1850 "Place aux Dames! This lady is resolutely treading on the heels of Mr. Hunt" and "shows much talent" in all her works in the exhibition.

Margaret Gillies, previously painted portraits in miniature. The remaining female members were Louisa Corboux, who exhibited mainly images of children and pet animals, Mrs. William Duffield (née Mary Ann Rosenberg), Mrs John Dafter (Fanny) Harris (née Rosenberg), Mrs. Mary Harrison (née Rossiter), Mrs. Mary Margetts and Mrs. William Oliver (née Emma Sophia Eburne), all painters of nature and still life, and Fanny Steers, whose landscapes were particularly admired by the critics for the *Athenaeum* and the *Spectator*.

Margaret's career strategy appears to have been profoundly influenced by a deeply-felt (and essentially, Yeldham would have us recognise, Unitarian) desire to put her "talents" to good effect, but also by the fluctuating economic pressures of her domestic arrangements. Since the 1830s Margaret and her older sister, Mary, had been accustomed to making a significant financial contribution to a household of working adults. Mary was Margaret's lifetime companion, a fellow Unitarian, radical and published writer of both stories and articles. From 1841 a settled household had been established, comprising the two women, Thomas Southwood Smith, Margaret's common-law husband, and Southwood Smith's grand-daughter, Gertrude Hill, who he and Margaret adopted, aged two, in 1838, in consequence of her father's financial difficulties. Southwood Smith, a Unitarian minister, physician, and writer on public health and social reform was, by 1840, pursuing his private medical practice while serving as a physician to a number of London hospitals and on the Royal Commission for the Employment of Children, whose revelatory report was published in 1842-1843. Accounts of his life and activity present a man led always by his convictions and zeal for improvements in the health and living conditions of working people, rather than for his own economic or public advancement. Mary's close friend, Richard Horne, lived as part of this household for some of the succeeding twenty years, as did, for shorter periods, an extended family comprising Horne's wife, Southwood Smith's legal wife and daughters, and his grandchildren, Gertrude's sisters. Thomas Southwood Smith was possibly the most consistently able to earn an income, although he provided financial support to the absent members of his family. In 1854, however, his government employment as Commissioner to the Board of Health came to an end and until his death in 1861 the household was to a greater extent financially dependent upon income from Margaret's paintings and Mary's writings.⁶⁵ Margaret's output was, therefore, necessarily influenced to a very considerable degree not only by her own ambition and personal inspirations, but by the sale value of her work.

⁶⁵ Yeldham, *Margaret Gillies* (1994), p.4 and p.63 ff.



Figure 2.8: Sarah Setchel, 'The Momentous Question' (1842)

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

No modern colour image is available of the original work, which can be viewed by appointment at the Victoria and Albert Museum. This photo of a print from a monochrome negative has been retrieved from a museum guardbook.

When Margaret returned from Paris two years prior to this, in time to secure her election to membership of the OWS and to exhibit for the first time there that year, the Society, although acknowledged as the 'senior', the more prestigious, of the two water-colour exhibiting Societies, was generally considered to be rather predictable, caught up, as it was, in internal rivalries between the declining group of "figure-men" and the traditionalists. "All attempt at novelty seems repudiated by the very spirit of the Institution", the critic of *The Times* wrote of the exhibition in 1849 and by 1853 the *Spectator's* critic was bemoaning the OWS' "predominant mediocrity".⁶⁶ The "junior" society, the NWS, operating, since 1835, on the basis of rules very similar to the OWS, is characterised in this period as the enthusiastic young man, compared with the moderate monotony of the late middle-aged. It is rather surprising, perhaps, that an artist of such personal unconventionality and seriousness of mind should choose the OWS, rather than the NWS, but the venerable OWS had

⁶⁶ *The Times*, 1 May 1849. *Spectator*, 30 April 1853.

vacancies for female members, offered greater reflected prestige to the artist and, arguably, the opportunity for greater impact by the new arrival. Possibly, too, better prices were achievable at the “senior” Society. Sarah Setchel’s work, ‘The Momentous Question’ (see Figure 2.8), was hailed in the press as having “extraordinary breadth and force of the effect, which is equal to oil painting”, when exhibited at the NWS in 1842, but was priced at only twenty-five guineas, “a sum greatly below its value”, according to the *Art-Journal* when it was sold to the collector Henry Vaughan.⁶⁷ In the same period Eliza Sharpe was able to sell her genre paintings for forty guineas from the OWS Exhibition.⁶⁸ Sharpe asked ninety to one hundred guineas for her disparaged Biblical scenes, although it seems they returned to her, unsold, from the exhibition.



Figure 2.9: Margaret Gillies, 'Trust' (1860)

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

At both Societies’ exhibitions, the business of sales of exhibited works was noticeably more brisk, and the visitors more actively engaged in discussing the

⁶⁷ *Spectator*, 30 April 1842. *Art Journal*, 1842, pp.102-3.

⁶⁸ *RWS: First Fifty Years* (1992).

relative merits of the artists and their work, than at the Royal Academy. Writing in 1846, the critic for the *Illustrated London News* observed this, attributing the fact to the prices being reasonably affordable, and many of the visitors (especially the women) being themselves practitioners of the art, and even pupils of the exhibitors.⁶⁹ In contrast, the article continues, the 'figure paintings' in oils at the Royal Academy attracted a crowd of over-awed visitors, it was an exhibition at which even the upper middle class visitor was a spectator, the investor and the critic its active participants. The fact that Margaret chose the OWS as the professional exhibiting space for her 'figure' works reveals a combination of business realism and ambition: she needed to sell as well as to impress or inspire, the former becoming increasingly important as her domestic finances came under greater pressure from 1854.

Whether conscious or instinctive, her choice proved positive: although the works exhibited in her first year of membership of the OWs went unremarked by the critics, the *Athenaeum's* critic observing of the NWS that "there is no exhibition room in which female talent and genius figures to such great extent as this", in 1853 the same journal's review of the OWS exhibition hailed Miss Gillies' arrival among the "designers" ('figure' painters) as "not unsuccessful". From that year on, her exhibited works at the OWS were invariably noticed, not in wholly enthusiastic terms, but thoughtfully, and often in several publications - a record which no other woman painter achieved over the period 1840 to 1860.

Roget characterises Margaret's transition to figure, or narrative, painting as a pursuit of a "higher walk of art" than mere portraiture. Her choice of teacher, however, reveals aspirations which Roget does not credit her with. In 1846 the *Art-Journal* published a feature on the work of Ary Scheffer which included, by way of introduction, a translation of writings on his works by French critics.⁷⁰ Scheffer was already well-known to British art connoisseurs and visitors to the Paris exhibitions and ateliers, but engravings and original works were beginning to be seen by the wider British public and, it has been suggested, were particularly appreciated by English women of intellect.⁷¹ Scheffer's purpose in his art was to portray "motives charactered by a simple sublimity...to describe moral incident so vague and undefinable as to seem beyond the compass of art" the *Art-Journal* translates for its

⁶⁹ *Illustrated London News*, 2 May 1846.

⁷⁰ *Art-Journal* (1846), p.126

⁷¹ Edward Morris, 'Ary Scheffer and his English Circle', *Oud Holland Jaargang*, 99.4 (1985), pp.294-323. Charlotte Yeldham, *Margaret Gillies* (1997), p.69.

English readership. Figure 2.9 shows a work exhibited by Margaret in 1860 in which her debt to Scheffer is clear from the calm, unflawed and unmoved expression of the single female figure, particularly when compared with the literary genre water-colour by Sarah Setchel shown at Figure 2.8, and the painting in oil (Figure 2.10) by Scheffer himself. It is presumably no accident that Margaret submitted this work for exhibition at the Royal Academy, rather than at the OWS – a rare example of a thoughtful narrative work in water-colour accepted into the RA exhibition – but it was very nearly the last occasion on which her work was exhibited there.



Figure 2.10: Ary Scheffer, 'Saints Augustine and Monica' (1854)

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Margaret's most inspired works - unkind critics might, and did, suggest all her figure pieces exhibited at the OWS – failed to ignite the same enthusiasm in critical circles that Scheffer's had done, partly, perhaps, because the tastes of fashion and connoisseurship had changed over the decade since his work was first admired in England, but also perhaps because this was not the art expected of a woman. Reviewing her works at the OWS exhibition of 1856, the *Athenaeum's* critic gave (relatively) extended consideration to her work as a whole:

Miss Gillies, who has attained extreme finish, though serious, earnest and thoughtful, is rather heavy, with her (unreal but respectable beings) who are not dramatic or individualised. The

lady tells what she has to say with a deep solemn voice, but she is rather prosy.....all very well, but will not interest in these days.

Such sentiments are repeated by several critics in the mid-1850s who recognised her technique and penetration of emotion, but felt her figures too idealised, too allegorical, too intense, insufficiently 'telling' of an emotional narrative. Even the *Art-Journal's* review of her career in 1861, possibly the most favourable of all reviews during her exhibiting career at the OWS, manages to imply that Gillies' form of art is not much appreciated by either the most discerning critics, nor or those with more plebeian tastes. It states of her work 'Beyond':

it is the most successful essay she has yet produced of that quasi-classic kind of art, in which she seems to stand without a competitor.

Thus, Margaret Gillies' membership of the OWS brought significant opportunity and financial benefits which were nevertheless constrained by the critical and public response to her gender and artistic intentions. Having no constitutional standing within the society, and catalogued, along with the other female members, as "Honorary Member", her position in comparison with the male members was tenuous enough. But, additionally, although the rights to exhibit, and the likelihood of being noticed by critics, offered the benefit of enhanced reputation, and prices, her work was, inevitably, received by critics and public as a woman's work. Ultimately, her identity as a female artist influenced the reputational and economic success of her artistic career to a far greater extent than the accreditation of a professional body could. By largely eschewing the sentimental subjects of popular illustration in her style and intention, her work was even, perhaps, critiqued less favourably for its unwomanly qualities of earnest spirituality, for aspiring beyond established boundaries of gender difference. Despite membership of the OWS, she was unavoidably, first and foremost a member of the company of "paintresses".⁷² This had its effect on values and income. Margaret did not price her work at the top of the range, and although she clearly painted sufficient works to generate an income on which her extended household depended, for a not inconsiderable market, she could never aspire to make her £1,000 a year as John Frederick Lewis

⁷² "Paintress" was a term more in use in the *Athenaeum* than elsewhere. Examples include, in relation to Louisa Seyffarth, 8 May 1841, and Sarah Setchel, 1 May 1852. The *Literary Gazette* favoured "artiste", also in relation to Louisa Seyffarth, 1 May 1841.

wished to do. Possibly this financial imperative, combined with the critical reception of her works in water-colour after the expansion of her range from portraiture to figure painting, contributed to the fact that Margaret never completed the transition from water-colour to oils which she appears to have been considering during her stay in Paris in 1851/52; her career had reached a level of financial viability and some renown which could not be surpassed by a woman in her time and circumstances.

Elizabeth Rigby: the talented amateur

The Sharpe sisters and Margaret Gillies all attempted, and to a degree were successful, in directing their art practice, and their careers, away from the lesser returns of portraiture and into markets which were more rewarding, in terms of financial return, prestige and personal satisfaction. Nevertheless, they failed either to establish a reputation which would add value to their work, or to gain a share in the financial benefits of membership of their professional body, the OWS. In their different ways, all were dependent for their livings on the value of their work in hand, which would cease as soon as they ceased to work long hours to produce it. Few of the opportunities and useful contacts, and none of the financial premiums or salaries, which accrued to their male colleagues in the OWS, enabled them to assume a more leisured, upper middle class lifestyle. Consideration of the case of Elizabeth Rigby, who turned away, over the course of the 1830s, from any thought of a working career in painting, adds a further dimension to the incongruity, for a woman at this time, between a career in painting and upper middle class status.

In the early 1830s Elizabeth Rigby considered turning her capabilities and training in drawing, painting and engraving to her economic benefit. She was an educated stranger to the art trades, a member of the connoisseurial 'gentry' more accustomed to exercising patronage than seeking it. Ineligible for membership of the OWS at the outset of her career by virtue of being an amateur, she nevertheless chose not to pursue alternative means of gaining a 'name' or contacts among publishers, which might have enabled her to become a professional practitioner. A study of her experience in this period provides insights into the gulf to be negotiated by a talented woman between the upper middle class amateur and putting her talents to profitable use. Social class, self-image and motivation are seen playing an important part in Elizabeth's gradual relinquishment of any aspiration to earn an income from painting.

Until Julie Sheldon published her annotated collection of the letters of Elizabeth Rigby, later Lady Eastlake, in 2009, all writing about Elizabeth's life was primarily based upon the so-called *Journals and Correspondence of Lady Eastlake* published by her nephew, Charles Eastlake Smith, in 1895, shortly after her death.⁷³ Using correspondence with family and friends, all of it now lost, together with a journal which Elizabeth kept during her life in Edinburgh between 1842 and 1849, Smith presented the life of a woman who had gained public renown through her marriage, in 1849, to Charles Eastlake. Already a Royal Academician and adviser to Victoria and Albert at the time of their marriage, he was shortly afterwards to become President of the Royal Academy and knighted (in 1850), then Director of the National Gallery (in 1855). Elizabeth herself regarded her marriage as the turning-point from which she gained social and intellectual self-assurance, applied over the succeeding forty years to her own publications, and the promotion of her late husband's theories and work on art and its histories. Although she had, since 1840, provided articles for the *Quarterly Review*, her writing had always previously been anonymous, even though sufficiently lively and opinionated to be recognisable to those who knew her.⁷⁴ Until Sheldon's edition of previously unpublished letters, including a few from the 1830s held in the Dawson Turner Papers at Trinity College Library and at the Norfolk Records Office, the autograph record of Elizabeth's life commenced with her correspondence with John Murray in the context of her writings for the *Quarterly Review*. This study takes as its starting point these early letters, which reflect the first stage of Elizabeth's construction of her career, when she was considering gaining an income from her artistic practice.

Elizabeth's father, Dr. Edward Rigby, was a highly-respected obstetrician, practising in Norwich, a man of science and 'gentleman farmer' at his nearby country property, Framingham Earl.⁷⁵ Her mother came of a long-established Norfolk family, which included several female members contemporary with Elizabeth in the literary and journalistic worlds, including Sarah Austin and Harriet Martineau. In Elizabeth's life up to the period of focus for this study, the most influential among her maternal relations had been her uncle and cousins in Great Yarmouth, Dawson Turner and

⁷³ Sheldon, *Letters* (2009). Charles Eastlake Smith, *The Journals and Correspondence of Lady Eastlake* (London: John Murray, 1895) is an edited selection of Elizabeth's papers with accompanying commentary by her nephew.

⁷⁴ Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon, *Art for the Nation: the Eastlakes and the Victorian art world* (London: National Gallery, 2011), pp.73-74.

⁷⁵ Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation* (2011), p.54.

his family of artistically-talented and industrious ladies.⁷⁶ After her father's death, when Elizabeth was twelve, her immediate family's financial circumstances deteriorated to the extent that the estate became their sole residence.⁷⁷ Even this, however, was insufficient retrenchment, and the property was occasionally let for periods of several months to a year between 1827 and 1842, when it was sold, while Elizabeth's mother and a dwindling number of her adult children lived more cheaply elsewhere. During one such period, while living in Heidelberg, three of Elizabeth's sisters met and married members of the land-owning German gentry of Estonia. She was later to observe to her cousin Hannah Brightwen that they had been "sacrificed to a dream", presumably one of marital happiness for a woman on her husband's estate, which was unrealised by any of the three.⁷⁸ By 1830, Elizabeth, with her mother, Anne, and two remaining sisters, Jane and Matilda, had returned to England without them, Elizabeth's two brothers were pursuing careers elsewhere, and Elizabeth seems to have been resolved upon the pursuit of activities which could generate some income and personal independence. Possibly the financial unsustainability of the family's life at Framingham Earl was not a situation which her – or any one person's – efforts would have resolved. Nevertheless, while not needing an income for the basic necessities of life, or to provide these for dependent relatives, Elizabeth returned to England from Heidelberg in 1830 with an understanding that additional income would enable her to dress, to travel, to study and to socialise as she enjoyed.

Dawson Turner, banker, antiquary art collector and indefatigable generator of scientific and cultural 'projects', many of them intended for publication, was the patron of artists John Crome, one of the founders of the Norwich Society of Artists, and subsequently John Sell Cotman, in collaboration with whom he produced several of his published works.⁷⁹ In 1812 he had persuaded Cotman to move his family to Yarmouth, to be near at hand for employment on Turner's antiquarian projects, and to conduct an intensive programme of teaching and practice in drawing, etching and lithography with Turner's wife and daughters, so that they, too, might better assist him in bringing these projects to publication.⁸⁰ The result, in the period 1812 to 1821, was "his (Cotman's) great series of Norfolk etchings",

⁷⁶ Nigel Goodman, *Dawson Turner: a Norfolk antiquary and his remarkable family* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2007).

⁷⁷ Smith, *Journals* (1895), Vol. I.

⁷⁸ Sheldon, *Letters* (2009), 23 July 1873.

⁷⁹ Derek Clifford and Timothy Clifford, *John Crome* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p.70.

⁸⁰ Dawson Turner, *Catalogue of Engravings, Etchings and Original Drawings collected towards the illustration of the Topography of Norfolk* (London: Privately published, 1841), p.ix.

published in several volumes, of illustrations of Norfolk antiquities, and volumes resulting from three sketching trips, at Dawson Turner's behest, to Normandy in 1817, 1818 and 1820.⁸¹

As a result of his move to Yarmouth in 1812, Cotman inherited Crome's practice, worth about £200 a year in Dawson Turner's estimation, of teaching drawing to schools and families in the surrounding area.⁸² Although the Rigbys lived beyond a comfortable distance from Yarmouth to travel in one day, Cotman seems to have thus inherited the opportunity to teach the Rigby daughters, including Elizabeth, in the period before Dr. Rigby's death in 1821, when money for such luxuries became more limited.⁸³ Julie Sheldon provides a transcription of a later letter from John Sell Cotman to Dawson Turner, dated 30 October 1841, describing a visit to the Rigby family home the previous day, in the company of Madam de Wahl, Elizabeth's older sister, Anne, now divorced and returned to England with her two children. "They were all once my pupils", Cotman says of the Rigby daughters, the tone of the letter suggesting familiarity with the house and all the family from his previous time in Norfolk.⁸⁴



Figure 2.11: John Sell Cotman, 'Great Snoring Church' (c.1815)

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

Cotman became, in part through the agency of Elizabeth, Dawson Turner's daughter, by then Mrs. Francis Palgrave, a full member of the OWS in 1825. In 1834 he moved to London to take up the newly-created post of Professor of Drawing

⁸¹ Roget, *OWS*, Vol.II, pp.501-504.

⁸² Clifford, *John Crome* (1968), p.70.

⁸³ Sheldon, *Letters* (2009), pp.4, 23 with n.27, and p.42 with n.3.

⁸⁴ Sheldon, *Letters* (2009), p. 23.

at Kings College, London, again following Elizabeth Palgrave's agency on his behalf.⁸⁵ His method of teaching, first in Norwich from 1808, and again at Kings College in the 1830s, was largely based on assisting pupils in making copies of his own designs, of which he made hundreds for the purpose, chiefly landscapes and architectural details, illustrating the application of composition, figures, colour and light and shade.⁸⁶ Elizabeth's tuition, therefore, cut short by her father's death while she was still in her early teens, was heavily dependent upon Cotman's own style. Varied in genre and medium as that was, it has variously been described as "mannerist", "sober", "truthful" rather than "idealised", and was at that time definitively in the 'traditionalist', rather than the 'modern' genre of water-colour drawing later practised by members of the OWS.⁸⁷



Figure 2.12: Edward T. Daniell, 'Bure Bridge, Aylsham' (1827)

Etching, after his own watercolour. © Norfolk Museums Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery).

Cotman was not Elizabeth's sole source of artistic guidance in her early years: Edward Daniell, only five years her senior, was an acquaintance in Norwich, where he was a student at the Norwich school in which John Crome taught drawing. Elizabeth was later to recall that Daniell was "interwoven with my earliest attempts at that practice of art which he loved so well...to (him) I owed my first instruction in the processes of etching, and all that I did in drawing was submitted to him".⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Adele Holcomb and M. Y. Ashcroft, *John Sell Cotman in the Cholmeley Archive* (Northallerton: North Yorkshire County Council, 1980, p.8. Andrew W. Moore, *John Sell Cotman, 1782-1842* (Norwich: Norfolk Museums Service, 1982), p.9.

⁸⁶ Moore, *Cotman* (1982), pp.43 and 113.

⁸⁷ Clifford, *John Crome* (1968), p.62. Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.I, pp.504-5,

⁸⁸ Sheldon, *Letters* (2009), p.617.



Figure 2.13: Elizabeth Rigby, 'Bacharach Castle' (1834)

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Figures 2.11 to 2.13 show examples of Cotman's drawing from the period in which he taught the Turner and Rigby daughters, of Daniell's Norfolk scenes from the 1820s, and of Rigby's sketch, taken during one of her visits to the Continent, from 1834. On the evidence of the drawings reproduced here, Elizabeth's work seems to hold its own with that of her tutor, Cotman, and her mentor, Daniell, in artistic matters. An additional indication that her work was

appreciated by a discerning collector can be inferred from the fact that the drawing shown at figure 2.13 is one of sixty of her works in the collection assembled by Paul Oppé, a leading twentieth-century expert on British water-colours.⁸⁹ However, Daniell, virtually her contemporary, pursued a university education and ordination before moving to London as a curate in 1834, from which base he was able to make social and artistic contacts before setting off in 1840 to travel and illustrate his finds in Asia Minor until his death in 1842. In contrast, Elizabeth wrote in 1835 to Dawson Turner indicating that her plans to travel abroad to visit her sisters were entirely dependent upon an unnamed dilatory "escort", without whom she felt unable to "start for Rotterdam".⁹⁰ Elizabeth's strategy to make some sort of independent career in the 1830s, was restricted to her family circle in Britain and the near Continent by social convention, lack of independent funds and, probably, loyalty to her mother.

The first evidence of Elizabeth's intention to earn an income from her art appears in 1830, shortly after her return from Heidelberg, although she may have, concurrently,

⁸⁹ Anne Lyles and Robin Hamlyn, *Watercolours from the Oppé collection* (London: Tate Gallery, 1997). The enthusiasm of this committed collector was first kindled by a work by John Sell Cotman first seen in the sale room at Christies in 1904.

⁹⁰ Sheldon, *Letters* (2009), p.35.

made an initial foray into the literary world.⁹¹ In November of that year, Elizabeth wrote from Framingham Earl to the husband of her Turner cousin, Francis Palgrave. Thanking him for acting as her agent in trying to get a publisher to use some “drawings” which she had produced and on which she had sought the advice of John Sell Cotman, she was not precious about them.⁹² She told Palgrave that her “only object was to dispose of them” and she was not concerned about the form of publication in which they might appear.⁹³ In the event of them being “published in an annual, or any thing of that kind” she would be happy to provide accompanying text to enliven the illustration. There is no discernible record of whether her work was published – there were, as remarked earlier, many “annuals” – but, given the lack of any succeeding correspondence from the same source, it seems unlikely. It is worth noting, though, that she had asked Cotman’s advice on whether the drawings were sufficiently “finished” to be ready for the engraver - the tone of her letter implies that she had discussed the prospect of publication as a serious possibility with both Cotman and Palgrave – and that she asked Palgrave to act as her agent, rather than deal directly with purchasers or publishers herself. This may, of course be a question of convenience, due to her seclusion in the Norfolk countryside and his presence in London, but it is also indicative of a reticence, a deference, which permeates her relationships, as revealed in the correspondence, with Palgrave, Cotman and Dawson Turner through the first part of her career in the 1830s, and arguably with the world beyond them, of economic enterprise.

The second instance of her approach to developing her art as a source of income occurs in correspondence with Edward Daniell, in the winter of 1830-1831.⁹⁴ Having seen a self-portrait, and other works, by Elizabeth, he wrote, in January 1831, suggesting she might exhibit it (although she would perhaps not have been delighted by his suggestion that, if advertised as a ‘Portrait of a Lady by herself’ an additional audience of the curious might be attracted) and commented gallantly on how far her skills had progressed. Daniell’s further comments suggest that Elizabeth was considering how she might develop her range as a portraitist by taking copies of the old masters, by which means she might attain “no second-rate excellence”. While there is no evidence of her actually exhibiting her portraits in a public exhibition, then or at any time in the future, it was these which she seems to

⁹¹ Sheldon, *Letters* (2009) p.5 and n.24 refers to an unverified claim in Smith, *Journals* (1895).

⁹² Francis Palgrave (né Ephraim Cohen, 1788-1861) was married (1823) to Dawson Turner’s daughter Elizabeth.

⁹³ Sheldon, *Letters* (2009) 10 November 1830.

⁹⁴ Smith, *Journals* (1895), Vol I, pp.6-7, 2 January 1831.

have practised most assiduously and consistently, working up series of portraits, of friends and family members, over the course of the 1830s. In 1834, following her return to Norfolk after her stay in London, Elizabeth told her uncle, Dawson Turner, that she was “much employed” on this project, implying that it was a significant commitment, rather than a pastime.⁹⁵ A further series of portraits followed her return from a visit to her married sisters in Estonia, of which, a series of portraits of “Russian nobility”, John Sell Cotman wrote enthusiastically to Dawson Turner in 1841 “They really are exceedingly beautiful and they appear to be her strong points of excellence”.⁹⁶

Although the published work has not been located, Smith suggests that at this point (during 1830) Elizabeth also appears to have completed, and submitted for publication, a translation from the German of a work on art history, which may have been begun while she was still in Heidelberg. Like Dawson Turner, Elizabeth seems not to have been ever without some project. “Her surviving sister” informed Smith many years later that, during this period of the first half of the 1830s, “she (Elizabeth) could not bear to be idle a single day, her energy and ambition worked together”.⁹⁷

When Framingham Earl was again let for two years in the summer of 1832, Elizabeth moved to London and, at the same time as enjoying a more sociable and culturally-stimulating life than rural Norfolk offered, pursued her studies in drawing and painting, literature and music. In a letter to a friend, soon after her arrival in London, she reported “I am leading a life of fascination here and nothing could induce me to withdraw myself from the happy opportunities which surround me.”⁹⁸ Elizabeth commissioned a course of tuition at Henry Sass’s School of Art at the corner of Charlotte (now Bloomsbury) and Streatham Streets. While the mainstay of Sass’s enterprise was the preparation of young men for the entrance examinations of the Royal Academy Schools, he also took on students who were not pursuing this route, including women, although the nature of their tuition is unknown. The choice of Sass’s is intriguing. He was far from being a successful artist in his own right, but had shrewdly identified, in the immediately post-war period prior to 1820, the lack of any coherent courses of study for aspiring young artists. Indeed, Sass was one of the students at the School at the British Institution in the same unprecedentedly

⁹⁵ Ibid. p.8 and Sheldon *Letters* (2009), p.30, 25 November 1834.

⁹⁶ Sheldon *Letters* (2009), p.5.

⁹⁷ Smith, *Journals* (1895), Vol I, p.8.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

popular year as the Sharpe sisters, 1818, where he might have drawn his own conclusions about future demand for tuition. Although Smith states that Elizabeth was “sent” to Sass’s, nothing in the sources suggests that anyone was promoting to her a career in art. Smith offers no substantiation of his statements that Sass “held classes for ladies” at this time, or that Elizabeth “progressed rapidly under his (Sass’s) tuition”. Only one other woman who subsequently made a career in art is known to have commissioned tuition from Sass in the 1830s, Julia Salaman, a portraitist in oils and pastels who subsequently studied with a professional artist also. This suggests that, if Sass taught “classes for ladies” most attendees were amateurs, rather than professionals. If Smith is over-stating the case concerning Sass’s services, Elizabeth may have pursued a course of individual study. Ralph Wornum, for example, later to come to prominence as an authority on art and ornament, took classes on alternate days for three months in 1833, preparatory to an extended tour of the Continent to study paintings.⁹⁹

Elizabeth, even if a member of a “ladies’ class”, would not have had opportunities and benefits comparable with either the regular young male students, or other members of the artistic world. These included, for students, visits to galleries in company with Sass to offer guidance on copying of the Old Masters, and for a wide coterie of (male) students, established artists and others, dinners and *conversazioni*, where contacts were made, opinions sought and professional and social engagements arranged.¹⁰⁰ Apart from her tuition at Sass’s School, Elizabeth’s only other activity to develop a career in art during this time is her copying at the National Gallery, from which no evidence remains. She did not exhibit, even as an Honorary Exhibitor, at the Royal Academy (although it is possible that she submitted works which were not selected), nor her landscapes or interiors at the ‘open’ exhibition of the ‘New’ Water-Colour Society (NWS), which held its second exhibition in the Spring of 1833.¹⁰¹ Unlike Cotman’s much more famous and successful student, from his Kings College years, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Elizabeth did not develop her art beyond drawing tinted with colour.

⁹⁹ London, National Gallery (NG), MS NGA02/1/1, Ralph Wornum’s Journal, 1834-1863. Wornum was appointed to various roles in the 1850s by both Henry Cole, at the Department of Science and Art, and by Charles Eastlake at the National Gallery.

¹⁰⁰ William Powell Frith, *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*, 8th edn (London: Richard Bentley, 1890), p.47. *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, ed. by Edith J. Morley, 3 vols (London: J. M. Dent, 1937), p.426. *Literary Gazette*, 15 February 1823.

¹⁰¹ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol.II, p.11.

In 1833, after her year in London, Elizabeth returned to Norfolk, and, back at Framingham Earl in 1834, engaged herself upon the series of portraits referred to earlier. She may have had some idea of continuing to improve her artistic capabilities, but it is inconceivable that she had any idea of becoming a professional painter of portraits. With her family, she had spent the previous Christmas with the Dawson Turner family at Yarmouth, and it is quite possible that it was during this visit that she and Dawson Turner had first discussed the possibility of her translating, for English publication, Johann Passavant's account of his tour through the English art collections from *Kunstreise durch England und Belgien* (An art study tour through England and Belgium), which had been published in Frankfurt in 1833.¹⁰² At first, Dawson Turner took the lead in negotiations with Passavant. Elizabeth only agreed to undertake the translation once the latter's agreement had been obtained and she had satisfied herself of the project's potential (but by no means guaranteed) commercial and critical success by obtaining a second opinion from her cousin Sarah Austin.¹⁰³ While recognising that her uncle had been "the means of my undertaking" the work, however, she gradually asserted her own critical voice and management of the project.¹⁰⁴ Dawson Turner seems to have had a particular interest in this work as potentially offering scope for him to embellish it with an extended account of the art collections of the great country houses of Norfolk.¹⁰⁵ By October 1835, with the MS nearing readiness for publication, Elizabeth firmly rejected this proposal as being too time-consuming (for her) to visit the collections concerned, and in view of the delay (in publication and, although she did not mention this, in receipt of her payment from the publisher). She was by this stage not prepared, as Cotman had been, to allow her uncle's projects to prevent her from pursuing her own plan. By the time the translation was published, in 1836, Elizabeth had assumed direct contact with the publishers, in which she had previously deferred to Dawson Turner, and become more confident in both writing and in negotiating the publishing world. "The practise (sic.) has been of great service to me," she wrote to her uncle in June 1835, "in writing some other little short pieces which I have been trying my head and hand upon. Should I never see a 6d for it, I would not regret what I have done".¹⁰⁶ It seems safe to say that Elizabeth, by the mid-1830s felt that she had served a sort of apprenticeship in writing and publishing,

¹⁰² Sheldon *Letters* (2009), p.30.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* pp.30-34.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p.35.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p.39.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p.35 (letter to Dawson Turner, 9 June 1835).

and that, when she wrote from then on, it was with a mind to publication. She had embarked on a professional career, but not an artistic one.

Elizabeth's literary endeavours led her, in 1840, to submit to John Murray the MS which would become *Letters from the Shores of the Baltic* and earn her, between the colleagues John Murray and John Lockhart of the *Quarterly Review*, the nickname 'Miss Estonia'.¹⁰⁷ With her letter to Murray, she enclosed illustrations, designed and engraved by her, to illustrate the work.¹⁰⁸ While the MS was enthusiastically received, the illustrations were rejected. "They would not at all have improved these delightful volumes" Lockhart wrote to Murray, having read the first published edition, "pen against pencil £1000 to an orange say I".¹⁰⁹ As far as is known, Rigby's art was never published, or exhibited, in a commercial context. An informal portrait of Elizabeth taken in the 1840s, before her marriage, is shown at Figure 2.14.



Figure 2.14: : (John Richard) Coke Smyth, 'Elizabeth Rigby' (c.1845)

© National Portrait Gallery, London

Julie Sheldon has noted Elizabeth's observation, recorded in Smith's edition of her letters and journals, that "my pen has never been a favourite implement with me; the pencil is the child of my heart" and makes a number of convincing arguments for Elizabeth's pursuit of a literary, rather than an artistic career.¹¹⁰ Sheldon suggests

¹⁰⁷ Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, John Murray Archive (MA), MS 42455, John Lockhart to Murray, 1844-1846, October 1841.

¹⁰⁸ MA, MS 42174, Elizabeth Rigby to John Murray, 31 December 1840.

¹⁰⁹ MA, MS 42453, John Lockhart to Murray, 1840-1841, October 1841.

¹¹⁰ Sheldon, *Letters* (2009), pp.5-6 and n.26. Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation* (2011), p.57ff.

that “Elizabeth recognised that any remuneration for her pencil would be small and that she was more likely to profit from her pen” and adds a number of suggested personal reasons, Elizabeth’s insight on her artistic limitations and on her relative facility in achieving her own standards of excellence in writing, rather than drawing, for example.¹¹¹ However, this is perhaps to attribute to Elizabeth Rigby greater choice and agency than she was permitted, or than she permitted herself. Lack of funds, exclusion from university education, prohibitions on independent travel and lack of a residence in London from which she could extend her social and professional networks precluded the pursuit of a course similar to that of her youthful mentor in art, Edward Daniell, and were significant constraints. She did not pursue similar strategies to those which Margaret Gillies had pursued. Study with a professional artist, exhibition where there were openings, the practice of genres and styles of painting, such as portraiture, in which she excelled, all required sacrifice, not only of time, but of her social identity, family obligations, and personal reputation. Where Gillies was prepared to make these sacrifices, in order to become socially and economically independent, Elizabeth was not. Consciously or otherwise, she calculated, over the course of these few years, that she would lose the security of family connections and loyalty, the prospect of other personal or career opportunities, personal freedom and leisure, by pursuing drawing as a profession. In considering what she might gain, the remuneration was precarious and small in relation to the commitment invested, but in addition, unlike a comparable male artist, there would be no compensatory rewards of prestige and a comfortable income. There was simply no model of success to which Elizabeth, as woman of the propertied ranks, could aspire. When an alternative project presented itself to absorb her intellectual energies, which offered a more discreet alternative, she pursued that, finding in due course that, in her prestigious publisher’s view, her visual illustrations were superfluous, even to her own writing.

“A true professional”

In this study of a professional representative body active throughout the nineteenth century – the ‘Old’ Water-colour Society – a more buoyant economic and cultural market from about 1820 brought constitutional reform and regained confidence of purpose to the Society. A relative flood of new entrants, both men and women, took up training opportunities to use and improve their talents in drawing and painting.

¹¹¹ Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation* (2011), p. 70.

The 'reformed' OWS constitution retained supposedly courteous practices inherited from a previous age towards its Lady Members. In the 1820s and the preceding period of its life, the OWS admitted female practitioners to membership on similar criteria, but different terms, from male artists. The Society's Rules, virtually unchanged for the next forty years, embodied, as regards the Lady Members, that gallantry concerning the 'weaker sex' which ensured that they had no role in the constitutional affairs of the Society, nor share in the profits of its annual Exhibition, to which they were obliged to contribute work. Membership, even on these terms, offered an annual opportunity for one's work to be hung among the best practitioners of one's art, to be reviewed by the national critics, thus developing a 'name', and perhaps to command better prices than in alternative exhibitions, by association with the acknowledged 'masters' of the art. The benefits of membership of the professional body, for women, were restricted to improved opportunities for sale of their work (compared with non-membership).

The OWS governing body strove, and largely succeeded, in establishing its supremacy in water-colour among the London exhibitions, and, to a lesser extent, in rivalling the Royal Academy as a body representing the professional practitioners of a respected form of art. An important element in its self-comparison with the RA was an emphasis on the manliness of the work of its members, and of the Society as a whole. The Society sustained over four decades a strategy to cultivate an image of a masculine, professional occupation pursued by educated, upper middle class men which was discussed by published critical reviews in the language of masculinity, including "force", "power", and precision. In 1850 the society 'demoted' its female members in the catalogues to its exhibitions from "Lady Member" to "Honorary Member", a long-established term in use at the Royal Academy Exhibition denoting amateur status. This suggested to the public not only that the female exhibitors were offered the opportunity only as a courtesy, when in fact their technical expertise had been subject to the same criteria as their male colleagues at their election to the Society, but that they were not professionals. Despite remonstrations in the press, the status of Lady Members, such as it was, was never restored. This decision can be seen as an extension of the strategy of securing masculine qualities and associated prestige to the society's identity, particularly since it occurred at the outset of a decade when the (male) practitioners of the more traditional, less colourful and dynamic style of water-colours were in the ascendant.

Deborah Rohr's analysis, applied to the Royal Society of Musicians (RSM) and its members (although, until 1866, entirely male), adds weight to such an interpretation. Maintaining that "the achievement of professional status required regular affirmation of larger cultural values, ... specifically in relation to gender roles and behaviour", Rohr argues that the RSM was unable fully to achieve "a unified, autonomous profession" because of the association of music with feminine pursuits, the number of (trained and qualified) professional female practitioners and the diffuse occupations and career courses which practitioners of both genders pursued.¹¹² It was, she implies, only once the upper middle class had firmly established the social prestige of formal professional work in the second half of the century, changing the significance of the term 'professional' from its earlier meaning of one who earns their living at a particular occupation, to one who is accredited by a professional body, that "a more confident generation of musicians" emerged. A more recent study focusing on the prestige or otherwise of female musicians (specifically, singers) who practised their art in public as 'professionals' in the previous sense of the term adds a counterpoint to Rohr's argument which resonates with this study. David Kennerley's analysis of reviews of female singers published in the specialist (therefore presumably 'connoisseurial') press in the period 1820 to 1850 found that in this, admittedly narrow, field of public artistic performance, the term 'professional' applied to a female practitioner could denote positive attributes in comparison with the term 'amateur'.¹¹³ The term was being applied, not in the assumed exclusively male context, but in a gender-neutral usage which implies application, in contrast to an amateur, and dedication to training and improving one's abilities, and to serving the purpose of the musical work, rather than displaying one's own personal intent. Kennerley acknowledges, however, that this level of respect for female professionals and appreciation of their performances was nevertheless gendered. Although he presents the fact that only female performers could play female roles as a positive opportunity for female professionalism to a level comparable with male performers, it is only within the bounds of the female character, as perceived by composer, librettist, audience and readers of the specialist musical press, that female professional excellence was permitted.

Similarly, in the art world, although opportunities to make a living as a professional painter in water-colour increased over the period 1820-1860, and female painters participated in this, albeit far less numerously than men, the boundaries of women's

¹¹² Rohr, *Careers* (2001), p.180.

¹¹³ Kennerley, 'Female musical professionalism' (2015).

participation in the business became narrower, more clearly defined, and entrenched in the minds of the buying public. Attitudes which had, no doubt, prevailed since the eighteenth century concerning the 'proper' and 'delicate' subjects and artistic practices for female artists, were promulgated in more insistent tones and prevalent forms of words as the profession grew more competitive and the potential rewards greater. The brief history of the OWS illustrates the greater frequency and range of exhibitions, their growing role as social events, the proliferation of newspapers and reviews, the expansion in audiences and increasing 'celebrity value' of paintings from the 1830s onwards. From 1840, reviews in all the main daily newspapers ran to several column inches, and often, in the periodicals and better London dailies, several issues, with illustrations. Publishing her dissertation in 1987, Pamela Gerrish Nunn identifies, from the mid-1850s, a seemingly impregnable wall of prejudice and assumption among male "commentators" on female painters' art exhibited for sale at exhibitions.¹¹⁴ Taking as her starting point John Ruskin's belittling use of the word "paintress" in a letter to an aspiring female artist (Sophia Sinnet) in 1858, Nunn illustrates the wholesale acceptance, by this date, not only of attitudes towards female artists and their work which are identified below, but of the characterisation of the female painter as an amateur. She quotes the *Spectator* in 1857 alleging that "Rosa Bonheur is the first woman who has taken up art without one vestige of dilettantism": a statement which clearly signals that the professionalism of female artists, even where they earn an income from the occupation, is nevertheless diminished, if not negated entirely, by their gender.¹¹⁵

Ruskin in 1857 was, in 1857, far from the first to use the term "paintress" disparagingly. The *Athenaeum's* review of the OWS exhibition sixteen years earlier applied the term to deliver a final slur on Louisa Seyffarth's "pretty enamelled inanities", in this case her work 'The glove'.¹¹⁶ From the 1830s the boundaries of women's painting practice and artistic potential had been defined and consistently patrolled by "commentators" in the newspapers and journals most influential on the retail and investment markets for art: the *Athenaeum*, the *Art-Journal*, the *Literary Gazette*, the *London Illustrated News*, the *Spectator* and *The Times*. Not infrequently, in critical reviews of the exhibitions of the two water-colour societies works by male artists were discussed in generic order – "designers" or figure

¹¹⁴ Nunn, *Victorian Women Artists* (1987), p.15 ff, surveyed reviews of exhibitions between the mid-1850s and c.1870.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.17.

¹¹⁶ *Athenaeum*, 8 May 1841.

painters, landscape and architectural curiosities followed by flowers and still life – while ‘the ladies’ were discussed as a group. This to an extent reflects the order of the exhibitions’ hang and the fact that works by female artists comprised a minority of those submitted, and tended to be smaller in scale. Larger paintings were hung on the wall, while smaller ones were relegated to “the screens”, or, worse, used as infill in spaces lacking suitable lighting or sightlines.¹¹⁷ Writing in 1856, the *Spectator*’s critic observed that the best work of Fanny Steers, although “to our judgement (she) has been for years past the *facile regina* of the exhibition”, was hung on the screens “at the level of the visitor’s ankles”. To be noticed among the male exhibitors at all, a female artist needed to paint large figure works which attracted the attention of the hanging committee, were placed advantageously and commanded the attention of the reviewers in comparison with adjacent works. Until Margaret Gillies commenced her exhibiting career at the OWS, Louisa Seyffarth and Nancy Rayner, and Sarah Setchel at the NWS, were the only women artists in this period to be noticed, very occasionally, among the male practitioners of figure-painting. In any case, all too often, in the publication, “space (did) not permit” the critic to include more than a few lines at the end of his review concerning the smaller works “on the screens” and (all) those of the “ladies”. In such cases there was almost invariably praise only for the women producing flower, fruit and still life works, chiefly Maria Harrison at the OWS, or Fanny Harris, Mary Harrison and Mary Margetts at the NWS.

The implication of an unbridgeable gulf between between the classes of ‘artist’ and ‘lady artist’ was regularly reinforced by the practice of invariably identifying the female gender of a woman painter. It appears to have been inconceivable that this should be necessary in the case of a male artist. Male practitioners are termed artists, painters or designers, women “this lady” or even, on occasion, “paintress” or “artiste”, suggesting some sort of counterfeit of an artist. The professional, respected practitioner is, through these reviews, gendered male, while the female practitioner is always identified as a woman first and foremost. The gulf was further reinforced by repeated emphasis on a competition between the genders. This was of course an unequal competition; the most admired women painters were only ever presented as rivals to the (nevertheless comparatively numerous) class of undistinguished or inattentive male artists. Lastly, the “paintresses” were presented as a group having identifiable strengths and weaknesses. Women have a particular affinity for flowers and fruit, as subjects, but not dead game, for female subjects, and

¹¹⁷ *Spectator*, 3 May 1856.

for domestic sentiments (love's happinesses and trials, thoughtfulness and prayer, and, particularly, domestic sorrows). If a criticism of a woman's work was to be made, even of a female painter who otherwise achieved praiseworthy work, the weakness was presented as typical of female painters, who generally exhibited certain technical faults. If a work was to be praised, its virtues were presented as somehow exceptional for a woman. Thus, Eliza Sharpe's improbably gay colouring and unvarying prettiness of feature were presented as particularly female fondnesses, while Fanny Corboux, Nancy Rayner and Jane Egerton were all, on occasion, congratulated on avoiding the female weaknesses of timidity or inattention to anatomical detail.¹¹⁸ The faults of male artists' work were criticised, but always as unique to that particular artist or work.

Possibly the most extreme example of amazement that a woman could paint occurred in 1842, when Sarah Setchel's first major work was shown at the NWS. Subsequently entitled 'The Momentous Question', the water-colour depicts an emotionally tense and intimate scene from George Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall* (published 1819). An impression of the composition, if not the colouring, of the original is provided by the photograph reproduced at Figure 2.8. The *Athenaeum* reported that the public were "startled by a display which distances beyond all possible overtaking the male professors of the Jemmy Jessamy school of art, (asking themselves) whether woman is to take possession of the club and the lion's skin, and man meekly to amuse himself with distaff work".¹¹⁹ In a unique rush of accolades the critics vied with each other to praise the work, the *Art-Journal* (published after the bulk of reviews in the daily newspapers had appeared) declaring that "better painting has been rarely seen upon the walls of any gallery of British art".¹²⁰ Reviewers in the daily newspapers opined that "the simplicity of the design...is no less admirable for the; "it has an extraordinary power...rivalling the force of oil painting...almost a water-colour Rembrandt".¹²¹ "Calm and resolute, tender and affectionate" the heroine of the painting is said to be "an Isabella of domestic life" in a "history of self-sacrificing virtue".¹²² However, although Setchel's work was praised, it was compared favourably with that of the less highly-rated male

¹¹⁸ Examples can be found in reviews from the *Spectator* 4 May 1844, the *Athenaeum* 23 April 1842 and 4 May 1850, and the *Art-Journal* (1855), pp.186-8.

¹¹⁹ *Athenaeum*, 23 April 1842. This term was applied deprecatingly to illustration of literary scenes of touching sentiment on at least two occasions in the *Athenaeum's* reviews. Jemmy Jessamy was originally the hero of a sentimental novel by Eliza Haywood, published in 1753. The term came to indicate dandyism, or effeminacy, in a man.

¹²⁰ *Art-Journal* (1842) pp.102-3.

¹²¹ *The Times* 18 April 1842.

¹²² *Art-Journal* (1842) pp.102-3. *Athenaeum* 23 April 1842.

practitioners and only within the boundaries of permitted genres and styles which were least valued.

Pamela Gerrish Nunn locates Ruskin's use of the word "paintress" as emanating from a "newly-invigorated juxtaposition of women and art in the middle of the century", and continues with the observation that "Ruskin's notions" of "great art, ...genius...and technical ability" were "tortuously bound" together but "largely unresolved".¹²³ She acknowledges that the debate had been current for some time before this – at least since Joshua Reynolds' address to the students of the Royal Academy in 1770, in fact – but invests it with a new intensity in the 1850s, bringing the debate to the verge of, but not quite resolving itself into, a conclusion, among "commentators", that "great art" was the exclusive province of male artists.

Female ambition and industry: managing contradiction

Nevertheless, the professional female artists of the 1820s discussed here, initiated careers in the art world in the 1820s and continued with them well beyond the period which Pamela Gerrish Nunn identifies as revealing most anxiety among "commentators" about the professional ambitions of women and hostility to notions of their producing "great art". Although the heat and volume of the debate about female potential in the 1850s, growing in intensity towards the end of the decade, as young women's voices became louder, might imply that female artists prior to mid-century had simply been more submissive, or had lacked ambition, this is clearly not the case, since this study has revealed them strategising in their careers to improve both their talents and their reward. The nature and object of these strategies – their own envisioned potential identity as artists despite the chorus of naysaying "commentators" – can be discerned from their careers despite the paucity of documentary evidence of their intentions.

Eliza Sharpe made a long career of emulating the decade of success, between 1830 and 1840, which her younger sister, Louisa, enjoyed, but was obliged to diversify her activities in order to make a living as tastes changed and her painting practice failed to develop. Just as she and Louisa had raised the status and financial value of their output in the 1820s but producing for exhibition portraits of actresses in character, developing this practice into literary illustration in the 1830s, Eliza attempted, to dissociate herself from the "sickly Annuals" in the second half of the

¹²³ Nunn, *Victorian Women Artists* (1987), p.13 ff.

decade by producing Biblical scenes. It must be assumed that this expansion of her repertoire, at this moment in time, represented an ambition to gain greater financial reward and prestige from works representing more serious, thoughtful subject matter, and to gain for her professional identity an aura of piety and gentility appropriate both to her personal circumstances and to the narrative of the day. Eliza was aged just forty, and as a single woman born into the Georgian artisan class, whose previous subject matter was largely associated with what might be termed light entertainment, it could only be advantageous to be seen to be capable of a more modern seriousness of thought. The tenor of public discourse on the ideal occupations and concerns of the well-bred woman can be inferred from the fact that Sarah Lewis' *Woman's Mission* was published, to great public acclaim, whatever might have been thought of it in private, in the year following the exhibition of Eliza's first Biblical work at the OWS. It can only be a matter of conjecture as to how conscious this 're-branding' strategy was, the extent to which Eliza was motivated by a genuine piety concerning the purpose of her art, and whether she felt herself to be in an increasingly precarious position as a woman who did not conform to emerging narratives of admirable female virtues and proper place. However, in terms of raising her stature as an artist, the strategy failed. The medium in which she had become accustomed to work, her "limited powers" and perhaps a lack of credibility in the light of her career up to this point resulted in "such adverse criticisms...(and) condescending descriptions" that she only spasmodically attempted such subjects over the course of the remainder of her career.¹²⁴

Working persistently, taking every opportunity to exhibit and to earn an income, sharing accommodation and workspace with her sister Mary Anne and other members of her extended family, enabled her to build a financial independence over a forty-year career, but her gender barred her from the financial premiums, sometimes equivalent to an entire year's income for an artisan, which were paid by the OWS to male Members. Although for her, the daughter of an artisan, the advantages of OWS membership included an important mark of her professional and social identity in addition to opportunities to sell her work in a prestigious exhibition, with comparable prices, her income was restricted entirely to making a return on the hours of labour which she devoted to it. This ensured that she remained a respectable artisan rather than a respected, upper middle class professional.

¹²⁴ Yeldham, *Women Artists* (1984), p.259.

In her essay 'Women artists and the politics of feminism', the art historian Deborah Cherry notes Margaret Gillies' declaration to James Henry Leigh Hunt in 1839 that she was embarking upon a programme of portraiture which differed from the opportunities which she had of painting "the nobility of wealth and rank". Gillies' aim was:

to paint what I conceive to be the *true* nobility, that of genius long faithfully and earnestly...labouring to call out what is most beautiful and refined in our nature and to establish this as a guide and standard of human action.¹²⁵

Cherry's objective is to demonstrate the practices of female artists in the second half of the nineteenth century in representing the nobility and genius of other women, but the apogee of Gillies' programme of work was her portrait of William Wordsworth, visiting his home in Cumbria in 1839 and 1840 in order to develop her insight of the man and to work on the portrait. She aimed not only to portray genius, as she understood it, which combined inspiration and industry, but to enact genius in Joshua Reynolds' sense of portraying a universal truth. This same urge is even more strongly evident in her later work, following the example of Ary Scheffer, then establishing her own style. However, although she had training, skill, ambition and artistic vision, she was unable either to transcend the critical boundaries applied to a "lady artist", or to follow John Frederick Lewis' transition to oils and greater profitability in her work. Her work was only moderately appreciated, as being too serious, and her status as an "Honorary Member" of the OWS, although it brought commercial opportunities, did not bring the prestige which a male artist of similar ability might have expected. There is perhaps a philosophical resignation in her comment, later in life, that the great joy of work "is to use our talents and improve them": she did not include reference to the benefits of financial security in old age or of providing financial support to others. A degree of financial independence and her own satisfaction were her (not unappreciated) rewards for a sixth-year career as a professional artist, but not the public prestige accorded to many of her male contemporaries. While she may have successfully communicated her spiritual or philosophical intention to a limited audience of her own circle this was denied her professionally and publicly. Charlotte Yeldham summarises the qualities which made Margaret a "true professional": "she "devoted herself totally to her work", establishing a reputation which enabled her to sell consistently over a long period at moderate prices. However, while it may be true, as Yeldham asserts, that Margaret's "example did much to improve perceptions of women artists and of

¹²⁵ Clarissa Campbell Orr (ed.), *Women in the Victorian art world* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.62.

working women in general”, hers is not an example of success in the world’s terms of “wealth and rank”, but, perhaps, of heroic persistence in her ambitions for her art despite those perceptions.

Elizabeth Rigby’s ambitions were unformed at the period considered in this study, but it seems probable that they were more focused on maintaining a way of life, rather than creating and developing a professional identity. She was, at the outset of her career, of a higher social class and greater financial independence than the Sharpe sisters, while her Anglicanism and family connections placed her, by birth, more at the heart of the educated gentry than Margaret Gillies. Although she made some forays into the business of selling her water-colour work, she lacked the economic imperatives to pursue the arduous process, which Gillies undertook, of becoming a professional lady artist. Her case, and her decision not to pursue a career in art, provides a perspective on the tenacity of Eliza Sharpe’s commitment to her occupation, no doubt driven by economic exigency, and on the unconventional determination of Margaret Gillies to pursue economic and personal independence through her profession. A combination of many factors contributed to her not pursuing a career in art, but in essence, Margaret Gillies’ model of professionalism was not one which Elizabeth seems to have conceived of as a possibility for herself. The financial rewards would not be sufficient to enable a middle class lifestyle to be maintained, nor to outweigh the loss of personal liberty, social activity and family loyalties. Her elder brother pursued a professional career in medicine in London, apparently unconcerned to emulate the gentility of the professional gentleman farmer which his father had been while gaining reputation and standing in his profession, and her sisters were “sacrificed to a dream” of estate-owning minor aristocracy. Elizabeth, even had she been more motivated by financial necessity or intellectual vigour, as Gillies was, would not find in art a model for a career which would offer equivalent social status to that of her brother and sisters.

It is noteworthy that each of these three women artists constructed different strategies, over the course of the 1830s, in a context of increasingly insistent narratives concerning ‘woman’s mission’ and ‘separate spheres’. There is no documentary evidence of their thoughts on this doctrine and its implications for their careers, but the reaction of Elizabeth Rigby’s cousin, Elizabeth Palgrave (née Turner), to *Woman’s Mission* seemingly indicates a seam of counter-cultural resistance among women already established in their careers. Writing to the publisher John Murray III in 1844 to dismiss as “Germanised and Frenchified

sentiment” a manuscript which he had sent for her opinion, which from the context can be surmised to be on the subject of women and the education of their children, she added grimly, “I cannot read such stuff without being very sorry and tempted to be very angry...(but) I could not bear *Woman’s Mission*, which has sold so well, so of course I know my judgement is good for nothing.”¹²⁶ Whatever their private thoughts, however, all of these women made accommodations with a market which was increasingly doctrinaire and repressive on the subject of female professional achievement while strategising to optimise the favourable reception, and financial value of their work. In so doing, they compromised their success as professionals while male peers were ever more successful.

The OWS’ consistent attempts to eliminate associations with the feminine over the period 1820-1860 were mirrored by the marginalisation of female painters in the locations in which they might develop their skills and discuss their work with fellow practitioners in a critical but positive tone. While there were opportunities for women to do this, from 1820 onwards, as the ‘school’ at the British Institution gave way to the National Gallery and the Royal Academy as sources, respectively, of fine examples of painting and of training for painters, they were increasingly exclusively female, of secondary status in the school or studio concerned or located in domestic settings, and study was self-directed. Sharing living and working accommodation with siblings, other family members or close friends not only offered economies of living costs and of studio space when incomes were uncertain and not quite sufficient to live comfortably, but in the case of female artists, might also offer the moral support, technical collaboration and shared vision necessary to persist with their career strategy. Not all such groups were solely of sisters, although this perhaps tended to be the case, and the Sharpe sisters, form one of several examples. Key points of comparison between Margaret Gillies and Elizabeth Rigby are their relative willingness to launch into independent adult lives, however uncertain or unconventional, their commitment to a larger philosophical purpose in their work and, not least, the former’s intellectual companionship with her sister Mary. All in all, however, a constant diet of faint praise and biting sarcasm from “commentators”, combined with a lack of support from their accreditation body can be supposed to have had a suppressant effect on ambition, particularly among solitary practitioners, of whom there are, again, a number of very able examples.

¹²⁶ MA, MS 40902, Letters from Elizabeth Palgrave and Francis Palgrave, 9 October 1844. Elizabeth Palgrave had acted as a ‘reader’ of manuscripts for John Murray II since at least as early as 1825, ‘remunerated’ in the form of books from the Murray press. Her husband, Francis, was published by Murray.

Membership of their professional body - the OWS - did not assist either Eliza Sharpe or Margaret Gillies to the financial means or social prestige to be considered by established society 'upper middle class'. To this extent, it did not confer 'upward social mobility', upon its Lady Members. However, as has been suggested earlier in this study, social class was (and is) not an objective or quantifiable quality, but a mark of acceptance into a group defined by education, income, lifestyle and manners as much determined by subjectivity as by the members of that group. As a member of the artisan class at the outset of her career, it appears that membership of the OWS was important to Eliza throughout her life as a sign of personal, as well as professional accreditation, but, on the evidence of Census records, it was to her family and personal friends that she owed any of the lifestyle attributes, such as the number and type of household servants, of the upper middle class, and possibly this included the comfortable nest-egg which she left at the end of her long life. In contrast, Margaret Gillies, although born into a higher income group than Eliza and well-educated for a woman of her time, had a relatively unstable family background and made lifestyle choices of religious conviction, life-partner and friends, which ensured that she would, like George Eliot, never be accepted into, Anglican, morally-righteous upper middle class circles. Her working for a living was far from being the sole factor in any loss of 'caste' which she might (but probably didn't) expect membership of a professional body to mitigate. Elizabeth Rigby was unwilling to relinquish the attributes of an upper middle class woman in order to commit time and future prospects to an uncertain working life as an artist, which in the event proved a wise decision, if such it was, in terms of her career.

If anything, the external and self-imposed factors inhibiting Elizabeth Rigby's pursuit of an artistic career and constraining the careers of other female painters had become more established by the time 'Nameless and Friendless' was exhibited, in 1857. As seen above, the OWS, together with other professional associations, had become more conservative, and more assertively masculine in its identity. Two decades of disparaging critical appraisal of female painters' works had reinforced the inappropriateness of a woman's addressing similar genres, with a similar degree of seriousness to her male counterparts, and the inevitability of her falling short of recognised excellence in comparison. The following chapter considers women's careers in an occupation considered more appropriate to their lesser capabilities and supposedly 'natural' talent for painstakingly detailed work, that of wood-engraving.

Chapter 3 “An honourable, elegant and lucrative employment”: wood-engraving and commerce

Introduction

Wood engraving (and other forms of reproduction such as etching and lithography) was, like water-colour painting, an occupation in which women participated, both professionally and as amateurs, from the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth. The effects of mechanical production of imagery for mass markets had far-reaching implications for women’s careers in the commercial workplace. The craft of engraving imagery on wood for use in printed material became elevated to an art in the later part of the eighteenth century, and gained respectability among a mass audience through its association with the illustration and decoration, first of specialist books on art, architecture and design, and, later, of good-quality educational, scientific and literary works. From the beginning of the century, female practitioners were active, accepting commissions on their own behalf, as well as working on projects alongside male practitioners, usually members of their extended family. The artistry and minute perfection of the best work, and the fact that it could be undertaken without use of workshop machinery, together with its increasing use with texts of imagination and fiction, were cited as factors which made the work of the wood-engraver particularly suitable, and creatively satisfying, for women. Writing in 1838 in the *Westminster Review*, Henry Cole promoted the ‘art’ as “an honourable, elegant and lucrative employment” for women.¹

From the 1830s onwards the mass market for printed material drove increasing industrialisation of all parts of the printing trade, including the production of illustrations, which moved, as printing firms expanded and consolidated their businesses, to more industrial methods of workshop production and separation of tasks within the process. By the 1850s a close-knit web of business and personal relationships between publishers, printers and wood-engravers included firms which combined all three of these activities, some engraving specialists employing, in exclusively male workshops, numerous trained wood-engravers and apprentices, and large numbers of individual wood-engraving practitioners who sometimes in small groups shared the costs of workrooms, or worked alone in domestic space in their own homes. This was an economically volatile and competitive business,

¹ Henry Cole, 'Article I', *London and Westminster Review*, VII / XXIX (1838), pp.265-280.

which experienced significant seasonal fluctuations in workload, and despite the introduction of more industrialised practices, there was considerable reliance on out-workers, and variations from week to week in pay, even for those in the workshops.

Throughout the period, published articles maintained that wood-engraving could provide independent female professionals with satisfying work and a viable income, encouraging them to pursue it. Classes at the Government School of Design and its successor organisations, sustained for over twenty years from 1843, reinforced this narrative.

This chapter has two opening objectives. Firstly, it assesses the effectiveness of this apparently benign social engineering, whereby women were to be enabled to enter a trade which might yield an independent living. Secondly, it identifies the issues with which women engaged in pursuing their careers beyond initial training and into a commercial, partly-industrialised work infrastructure.

Evidence of women's participation in the wood-engraving business

Rodney Engen's work to identify the individuals and workshops engaged in the wood-engraving industry in the nineteenth century, and to provide such biographical details as he was able to establish, is central to any study of the occupation during the nineteenth century, and provides some evidence of the participation of individual female professionals.² His study has chiefly been among collections of prints, restricting his very considerable Dictionary to those practitioners who signed their work, and the memoirs and biographies of prominent printers and publishers, however. Evidence of the very many practitioners who did not sign their work, or who signed only with the name of the workshop which commissioned them, has so far only come to light through analysis of surviving business records of the larger or more prestigious printing firms and wood-engravers' workshops. Of these, Janet Ing's work on the surviving business records of the Chiswick Press provides invaluable information about both the printshop workplace and individuals, although the Chiswick Press did not utilise the far quicker, steam-powered printing technology.³ More recently, Bethan Stevens' ongoing research in the archive of business papers of the engraving, printing and publishing firm of Dalziel Brothers in

² Rodney Engen *Dictionary of Victorian Wood Engravers* (Cambridge, UK: Chadwyck Healey, 1985).

³ Janet Ing, 'Charles Whittingham the younger and the Chiswick Press, 1852-1859' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1985) and 'A London shop of the 1850s: the Chiswick Press', *The Papers of the Biographical Society of America*, 80 (1986), pp.153-178.

the collection of the British Museum has extended Engen's research there by identifying engravers from the firm's accounts as well as annotated proof copies.⁴ Output from this project, including much of interest on women's participation in work for the firm, continues to be augmented as research proceeds.⁵

As regards the experience of practitioners in general, a significant source for this study has been a selection of the nineteenth-century memoirs of successful printers and engravers, and of reviews of the industry published in the nineteenth century.⁶ Celina Fox's authoritative article from 1980 on the working lives of wood engravers synthesises a wide selection of these, contrasting the image, much promoted in the 1830s and 1840s, of the wood-engraver as a cultivated art-worker in the business of bringing fine art to 'the million' with the reality of a few masters and "an underworld of hacks".⁷ Given her sources, it is perhaps unsurprising that Fox does not include female practitioners in her account, but Stevens' research in the Dalziel archive has confirmed other primary sources in revealing that female professionals were, although few in number in comparison with men, among the wood-engravers individually employed, even by the proprietors of large workshops. Although these primary sources tantalisingly refer generally to unnamed women who are presented to encourage female entrants to the trade, and therefore perhaps likely to over-state their case, there is sufficient corroborative evidence of individual women's work to suggest that, for a few, a working life which included wood-engraving was viable.⁸ The industrialising trade of wood-engraving was not, therefore, entirely impenetrable to female practitioners originating outside the family groupings active from the early decades of the nineteenth century, but attributable evidence of their output is very limited.

⁴ Bethan Stevens, 'Wood Engraving as Ghostwriting: The Dalziel brothers, losing one's name and other hazards of the trade', *Textual Practice*, (2017), <<https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2017.1365756>> [accessed 29 September 2017]. Stevens' monograph on this subject is, in 2019, imminent.

⁵ Bethan Stevens, *Woodpeckings: the Dalziel archive...* (2019), <<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/english/dalziel/>> [accessed 4 July 2019]

⁶ George and Edward Dalziel, *The Brothers Dalziel : a record of fifty years' work, 1840-1890* (London: Methuen, 1901; repr. London: Batsford, 1978). William James Linton, *The Masters of Wood Engraving* (London: B.F. Stevens, 1889). Henry Vizetelly, *Glances back through seventy years: Autobiographical and other reminiscences* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Tubner, 1893).

⁷ Celina Fox, 'Wood Engravers and the City', in Ira Bruce Nadel and F.S. Schwarzbach (eds), *Victorian Artists and the City* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), pp.1-13.

⁸ Cole, *Westminster Review* (1838). Henry Cole (Felix Summerly), *A Handbook for Westminster Abbey* (London, George Bell, 1842). Maria Susan Rye, 'The history of wood engraving', *English Woman's Journal*, 1.3 (1858), pp. 165-177. George Walter Marx, *The art of drawing and engraving on wood* (London: Houlston & Sons, 1881).

An article published in the *Alexandra Magazine* in 1865 provides a final important source of evidence of women's participation and experience in the trade in the later part of the period.⁹ This article is the sole occasion, among the published works considered here, on which the voice of a professional female wood-engraver is heard, and the scope for women's pursuit of a living in the trade dispassionately assessed on the basis of interviews with representatives of the designing, wood-engraving and printing stages of the technical process.

In selecting individual women's careers for study here, investigation has been extended beyond Engen's research, to include women to whom engravings are attributed in a few further publications particularly associated with the promotion of female practitioners, in the decade spanning 1840. To these have been added those women who excelled in the Government School of Design's class in wood-engraving for female students, which ran, through various changes of institutional name and premises, from 1843 to 1859. Appendix A provides names and details of evidence. This list, as can be seen, contains many more names and publications than Engen alone, and it is tempting to think that, if Engen's list is incomplete, so must also be the results of this study of very limited duration and narrow focus. Clearly, investigation could be extended to include other works from a relatively small group of publishers who, over the period, employed female engravers, to attempt the identification of publishers and wood-engravers given as examples or spokespeople in the primary sources, and to gather additional details about those women listed here. However, the list is sufficient, for the present purpose, to make a selection for this study of female wood engravers (those whose names are shown in bold type) about whom evidence over a period can be assembled, and whose careers offer insights from this study's perspective.

Mary Byfield represents a female member of an engraving family active from the late eighteenth century: one of the practitioners established before the advent of mass production. Harriet Ludlow Clarke and Ann Newman Waterhouse provide case studies of women procuring training and entering the business without previous commercial experience or wood-engraving in response to the new opportunities for work in the 1830s. Finally, the experience is considered of some of the women, in particular Clarisse Matéaux, who trained in wood-engraving at the Government

⁹ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving as an employment for women', *Alexandra Magazine* (1865), pp. 246-253 and 304-316.

School of Design (subsequently the Department of Science and Art) in the 1840s and 1850s, before seeking to enter the commercial workplace.

The wood-engraving trade

The preparation of wood-cuts to illustrate and decorate the earliest printed books had developed, especially but not solely, in continental Europe to a high degree of skill and artistry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, by the middle of the eighteenth century this form of reproduction of images had become associated with the cheapest and lowest quality of printed material. In the later eighteenth century, in England, Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) had developed methods of engraving on wood to an unprecedented degree of finesse and beauty, comparable with, or even exceeding, fine engraving on copper, but having the commercial advantage of being capable of integration into a page of print, rather than requiring the insertion, after the text had been printed, of additional pages of images created, by a different process, from engraved metal plates. Wood-cuts were (and are) prepared by ‘cutting’ a block of wood whose grain runs lengthwise, resulting in an easier task for the carver, and potentially a larger area of work, but, potentially, a less delicate image and a risk of the block splitting in the press. Wood-engravings, universal in the Victorian commercial press in England, are prepared by carving into the fine, cross-grain of a wooden block.¹⁰ Blocks were therefore necessarily small – the original dimensions of Figure 3.1, for instance, of which the nineteenth century authority on the subject, William Chatto said that “in the engraving of small cuts of this kind Mr. Thompson has never had an equal; and it is beyond the power of art to effect more than has here been accomplished”, were approximately 65mm x 75mm.¹¹ If larger images were required, several blocks were used. The potential for minute detail and subtlety of shading, and for the blocks to endure multiple impressions was far greater than in the case of woodcuts. Books containing wood-engravings by Bewick and his pupils were collected by those with some wealth and connoisseurial interest, assuming a prestige nearly equal to that of other illustrated volumes in the prosperous library. It has been observed that “Bewick’s success brought respectability to the woodcut as a means of illustration, and thus its universal use throughout the nineteenth century; no longer was it

¹⁰ The terms “woodcut” and “wood-engraving” were used more or less interchangeably, together with the term “cuts” to describe wood-engravings in the nineteenth century and, to a more limited extent, are still today. William James Linton, ‘Of the difference between cutting and engraving’, in *Wood engraving: a manual of instruction* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1884), pp.28-36 provides a degree of clarity.

¹¹ William Andrew Chatto, with John Jackson, *A treatise on wood-engraving, historical and practical* (London: Charles Knight, 1839), pp.632-633.

confined to the cheap broadsheet".¹² The subsequent wider revival of wood-engraving as an art was associated first with the scholarly rediscovery, in the early years of the nineteenth century, of the decorative features of architecture and furnishings, printed materials, costume and other valuable possessions (silver and ceramics, for example). From around 1820 the dissemination of factual knowledge - of history, of the natural world, of cultural, social and scientific phenomena - and of all kinds of creative literature, first among the wealthy and cultured upper middle classes and then more widely, created a general expectation that text would be accompanied by illustrative or explanatory imagery and incidental decoration. Both the printed results, and the practice itself, of wood-engraving became suitable, during the 1820s and 1830s, for a lady's attention.



Figure 3.1: John Thompson, wood-engraver, after Hogarth (1839)

'Copy of one of the plates of Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*'. Reproduced in W. Chatto, *A Treatise on Wood Engraving* (London: Charles Knight, 1839), p.633. Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of the British Library

Throughout the nineteenth century, treatises and articles were published concerning wood-engraving, to differing degrees celebrating the technical and artistic skills of the wood-engraver, promoting the work of specific 'masters' of the art and, advertising it as a lucrative occupation, for women as well as men.¹³ Together they

¹² Bain, Iain, 'Thomas Bewick (1753-1828)', *ODNB* (2005) <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/2334>> [accessed 3 October 2017].

¹³ Volumes reviewed for this study include treatises published between 1816 and 1881 (in chronological order of publication): William Young Ottley, *The Origin and Early History of Engraving*

reflect the changing status of the trade from a curious skill, to a cultural phenomenon, to, as William Linton (1812-1897) claimed, an art form, and record the industrialisation of the process. It has been convincingly argued that the artistic status of wood-engraving as an occupation was enhanced, during the 1830s, by its association with the enterprise of bringing fine art, in affordable reproduction, to the newly-comfortably-off middle classes.¹⁴



Figure 3.2: Mary Ann Williams, wood-engraver, after William Harvey (c.1840)

William Harvey, artist and Mary Ann Williams, engraver, 'Death of Fatimeh El'-Orrah', *The Thousand and One Nights*, trans. by Edward William Lane, 3 vols (London: Charles Knight, 1839-1841), Vol.III, p.725.
Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of the British Library.

This artistic status is fundamental to such treatises, and to their many derivatives in published articles on the subject, throughout the nineteenth century. In Henry Cole's article on the subject in 1838, his exhortation to women to take up the trade conflates the roles of artist and wood-engraver.¹⁵ Writing of Mary Ann Williams as an "artist", he speaks of the envy with which "women of taste" must look upon her "power of producing a scene so beautiful and of exciting in thousands the pleasing

upon copper and in wood (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1816); 'The commercial history of a penny magazine: woodcutting and type founding', *Penny Magazine*, Monthly Supplement II, October 1833 ; Cole, *Westminster Review* (1838); Chatto, *Treatise* (1839); Marx, *Engraving on wood* (1881); Linton, *Manual* (1884).

¹⁴ Fox, 'Wood engravers' (1980).

¹⁵ Cole, *Westminster Review* (1838).

emotions inseparable from it".¹⁶ However, as Fox argues, the commercial success of the enterprise, and the appetite which it engendered for more visual adornment of printed material, was already, through new processes of mass production, undermining and debasing the trade from artistry to mechanical "hack work" in reality.¹⁷

In 1831 Johann David Passavant undertook a tour of England and Belgium, publishing, in Germany in 1833, an account of his travels in which he commented upon the lively trade in London in good-quality illustrated printed material.¹⁸ Taking the view that illustrations from English "wood-cuts...surpass even those of the early sixteenth century", he suggested that this was an art in which the English practitioners excelled in comparison with Continental practitioners.¹⁹ In the highest-quality volumes illustrations were drawn and cut by "the first English artists", but numerous less expensive works were already in print for which, he reported, although the illustrations were drawn by artists, they were engraved on wood by "young people of either sex, who are employed for that purpose".²⁰ It might be inferred, therefore, that he knew of at least one workshop employing young women in the early 1830s, but one should be cautious, about the accuracy or otherwise of Passavant's use of the word "employed", about possible compromises in meaning during translation from the German and about applying the modern connotations of the word. The professional female wood-engravers known to English historians of the period were the female members of London-based families in which this skill had been developed to a high degree of finesse by male pioneers, several of them students of Thomas Bewick, of the previous generation: the Branston family (Robert Branston, 1788-1827), the Byfield family (John Byfield, 1788-1841), the Thompson family (John Thompson, 1785-1856) and the Williams family (Samuel Williams, 1788-1853).²¹

¹⁶ Ibid., p.278.

¹⁷ Fox, 'Wood engravers' (1980)

¹⁸ Johann David Passavant, *Tour of a German Artist in England*, trans. by Elizabeth Rigby (London: Saunders & Otley, 1836; repr. Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1978)

¹⁹ Ibid., p.308.

²⁰ Ibid., p.308.

²¹ Susanna Avery-Quash, 'Branston Family (per c.1800-c.1880)', *ODNB* (2004) <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/64204>> [accessed 3 October 2017], 'Byfield Family (per c.1814-c.1886)', *ODNB* (2004) <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/64208>> [accessed 3 October 2017] and 'Williams Family (per c.1800-c.1875)', *ODNB* (2004) <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/72918>> [accessed 3 October 2017]. Anthony Burton, 'Thompson, John (1785-1866)', *ODNB* (2004) <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/27271>> [accessed 3 October 2017].

Demand for wood-engravers' skills escalated during the 1830s, fuelled to a great extent by the various enterprises of Charles Knight, including his illustrated material for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, of *The Penny Magazine* (1832-1845) and many other respectable and educational works. When, in 1833, Knight published a monthly supplement to *The Penny Magazine* revealing full details of the technology and skills which enabled the production of the journal, he attributed to his use of modern, steam powered presses, together with wood engravings, his ability to produce "ten thousand (copies) a day", reaching "two hundred thousand" consumers per monthly issue of his articles and imagery in this publication alone.²² According to his account, approximately two thirds of his annual budget for content was spent on artwork and engraving, the remaining third on writers of textual content, indicating the importance he attached to the number and quality of images. Knight led the way in developing acceptance of wood-engraving as a respectable form of accompaniment to scientific and serious literature at an affordable (but not 'cheap') price. Due largely to Knight's commercial and technical success in developing the market for printed imagery, by the second half of the 1830s there was a shortage of wood-engravers in London. Not only were the technology and market ready for ever more competitively-priced and mass-produced illustrated material, but a shortage of experienced wood-engravers resulted in an influx of new "hands" among whom artistic capabilities were not required to the same degree as had previously been anticipated.²³

Production of a printed image of the highest quality and artistry required close co-operation and mutual understanding between the draughtsman or designer, who might prepare the image on paper, or directly onto the wood block to be engraved, the engraver, and the printer. The engraver, in theory, had only to follow the designer's lines when removing the surface of the wood to leave the lines in relief to which the ink would later be applied in the printing process. In practice, however, as can be inferred from the examples at Figures 3.1 and 3.2, there were many occasions when the engraver was also a designer, adjusting the scale or aspect of the design, or rendering in lines only, the shades and textures, brilliance, darkness and soft outlines indicated in an original work on paper by painterly colour washes. Lastly, the printer, using a hand press, might adjust and vary the pressure to achieve variations in the blackness of the impression.

²² 'Commercial history', *Penny Magazine* (1833), p.420.

²³ Valerie Gray, *Charles Knight: Educator, Publisher, Writer* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.55 ff.

With the advent of steam-powered presses delivering a huge increase in the speed and number of imprints and the even-ness of pressure, as well as the impossibility of the knowledgeable printer's intervention and adjustment during the printing process, this degree of collaboration became untenable. The economics of a more diverse marketplace for printed, illustrated material further undermined the partnership approach. For all but the most expensive books, the market value of the printed output often did not justify the time and care of collaborative working between the designer and engraver. In 1840 the Dalziel brothers opened a workshop and took on apprentices to be trained in wood-engraving only, a pattern followed by several other successful printing houses, whose principals often included engravers.²⁴ It has been argued that wood engraving not only thus became divorced from 'art', the engravers trained only to follow the drawn lines on the block, a process which Linton classed as entirely "mechanical", but even specialised and mechanised within the process of the block's production.²⁵ Michèle Martin's depiction, largely based on Fox's work, of an oppressive workshop regime in which the artistry of the engravers was stifled and the occupation debased needs some qualification by Engen's references to the Dalziels' requirement that their apprentices also practice drawing (albeit in their own time) and by Stevens' arguments concerning the assertion of their artistic identity by the engravers for Dalziel.²⁶ However, there can be little doubt that the majority of practitioners among the "armies of apprentice assistants" or "woodpeckers" who had been drawn into the trade by 1850, were boys and men undertaking skilled but repetitive work in cramped, ill-lit workshops, the artistic quality of whose output was entirely dependent upon the original designer and the anticipated commercial market for the work in question.²⁷

Both the fastidious upper middle classes and artists seeking reproduction of their painterly vision consigned the medium, when undertaken by these commercial printers, to low status. "Rubbishy woodcuts got up by C. Knight & Co." were "but for the Penny Magazine million" according to John Gibson Lockhart, editor of the elite periodical the *Quarterly Review*, when writing to his proprietor, John Murray III, the

²⁴ Edward and Thomas Dalziel were the chief proprietors of the family firm of wood-engravers, to which were later added printing and publishing activities.

²⁵ Fox, 'Wood engravers' (1980). Linton, *Manual* (1884), p.36.

²⁶ Michèle Martin, 'Nineteenth century wood engravers at work: Mass production of illustrated periodicals (1840-1880)', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 27.1 (2014), pp.132-150. Engen, *Wood Engravers* (1985), p.61. Stevens, 'Wood engraving' (2017).

²⁷ Engen, *Wood Engravers* (1985), p.vii.

most prestigious publisher of the day, in 1845.²⁸ Dante Gabriel Rossetti had a strained relationship with the Dalziel workshop, stemming from his early dissatisfaction with their treatment, in 1855, of his dreamily-indistinct illustration for 'The Maids of Elfen-Mere'.²⁹ By 1857 he was writing to his friend William Bell Scott with gratitude at having been introduced to the more artistically respectable William James Linton and lamenting the fate in Dalziel's workshop of his illustrations for a volume of Tennyson's poems which had been "hewn to pieces".³⁰

On the other hand, if, by 1850, the establishments of Swain, Dalziel, Whympers and Linton "could be compared to small factories" of illustration, employing perhaps twenty journeymen and as many apprentices, there were at least as many wood-engravers who worked in small groups or alone and in small, scattered premises, sometimes their own home, each engraver working for several clients and accounting for his (or her) own earnings.³¹ Bethan Stevens' research makes clear that even the largest "factories" also drew on this population of outworkers.³² Within fifteen years of there having been a shortage of wood-engravers, the trade was over-endowed with workers of varying degrees of skill, and highly competitive. When, in 1865, the *Alexandra Magazine* published an article concerning the opportunities for employment for women as wood-engravers the pseudonymous author (presumably female, and apparently well-acquainted with the business) took the unprecedented step of interviewing a number of people representative of the perspectives of an established female wood-engraver and three potential clients - publisher, 'master' engraver and artist - who all confirm this picture.³³

Celina Fox notes that Charles Booth, towards the end of the nineteenth century, concluded that there was a considerable pay differential between wood-engravers of whole pictorial images and those paid on piece rates.³⁴ The former might expect to earn £3 to £5 in a week, the latter twenty to thirty shillings. A six-day week was standard in the workshop, but workflow might be variable according to season and

²⁸ MA, MS 42455, Letters from John Lockhart to John Murray, 1844-1845, 12 November 1845.

²⁹ Julian Treuherz, Elizabeth Prettejohn and Edwin Becker, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), notes to Cat. 74 and 75, 'The Maids of Elfen-Mere' (1855).

³⁰ *Autobiographical notes of the life of William Bell Scott*, ed. by William Minto, 2 vols (London: Osgood, McIlvaine, 1892), vol. II, p.38.

³¹ Fox, 'Wood engravers' (1980). Joseph Swain, Josiah and Ebenezer Whympers, and William James Linton established wood-engraving businesses in the 1830s and 1840s.

³² Stevens, 'Wood engraving' (2017), p.17.

³³ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865).

³⁴ Fox, 'Wood engravers' (1980), p. 7 quotes Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London: Macmillan, 2nd ser., 1903), Vol. IV, p. 109. Ing, 'Charles Whittingham' (1985), pp. 99-121 discusses the results of her research into the earnings of compositors, readers and pressmen at the Chiswick Press in the 1850s, which tend to confirm this comparability.

the scale of publishers' commissions. Many printworkers, including wood-engravers, were paid on a piecework basis, rather than an 'establishment' salary, so even those appearing to have some stability of employment in a large workshop would see their weekly pay fluctuate with the demands of the business. Nevertheless, one assumes that during slack periods, preference was given to keeping them employed, and the out-workers felt more keenly reductions in the amount of work. Among the out-working population, similar rates, per inch or per block completed, were applied. The master wood-engraver interviewed for the *Alexandra Magazine* reported that the self-employed engravers to whom he gave regular work and who performed well might earn "about £2 a week during the busy seasons, but these usually occupy only about half the year and during the other half they may have little or nothing to do".³⁵ It seems that the rate of payment for independently-practising wood-engravers increased somewhat, but did not change significantly over the period to 1885, when George Marx claimed to know "several ladies of the present time earning from £3 to £10 per week", presumably on the more artistic, pictorial work identified by Booth.³⁶ Such high rewards (relative to employment in a printer's workshop) were, of course, still dependent on a flow of commissions, good health and a lack of other distractions. It seems unlikely that any male or female sole practitioner could achieve such an income week after week over a period of years. While a male or female wood-engraver in the late 1830s, when Cole wrote his article, might aspire to achieve the levels of remuneration which Ebenezer Landells did, in the 1840s, of "eight to fifteen shillings" for a "small cut", he was exceptional, and for most the work was far from "lucrative" as a means of making an independent living.³⁷

Promoters of women's participation in commercial wood-engraving

Female newcomers to the occupation in the 1830s seem to have found a conducive training, and opportunity to see their work published by Charles Knight, with William Harvey and his one-time student of wood-engraving, John Jackson. Harvey, one of Thomas Bewick's favoured students, had more recently trained as an artist, and by the late 1830s was practising as a designer for engravings, rather than engraving

³⁵ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865), pp. 309-310.

³⁶ Marx, *Engraving on wood* (1881), p.12.

³⁷ Fox, 'Wood engravers' (1980), p. 7. Ebenezer Landells had trained with Bewick and was part of the London-based wood-engraving 'aristocracy' of the 1830s. In 1841 he was a founder-shareholder and organiser of wood-engravings for *Punch* magazine. This was followed by work, in the 1840s, for *the Illustrated London News* and several successful magazines. Amanda-Jane Doran, 'Landells, Ebenezer (1808-1860)', *ODNB* (2004) <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/15971>>, accessed 4 October 2017.

himself. He did not maintain a workshop or take apprentices, but has been said to be “infinitely generous to the aspiring young”.³⁸ The Dalziel brothers, for whom he secured an introduction, in their early years in London, to Charles Knight, remembered him as always generous of his time and help, long after their first success.³⁹ Later seen as having taken “a great interest in the employment of women in his profession”, John Jackson undertook chiefly wood-engraving work, making his “reputation...with extensive work for Charles Knight’s *Penny Magazine*” and subsequently working with Harvey and Knight on an edition of *The Thousand and One Nights*, with designs by Harvey, to which Henry Cole referred in his article for the *Westminster Review*.⁴⁰ Unusually, perhaps because they were all designed by Harvey, the list of illustrations provides the names of the engravers, a number of whom are women (indicated in Appendix A), of whom several were independent of the families of wood-engravers, and one of whom was Henry Cole’s sister-in-law, Charlotte Bond. Jackson was credited, also, with training (at least) two unnamed female wood-engravers who subsequently trained other women.⁴¹

Following the example of the *Thousand and one nights*, a few years later Henry Cole himself published, under his pseudonym of Felix Summerly, two illustrated *Handbooks* to Hampton Court and to Westminster Abbey respectively, in which all the illustrations were engraved by female practitioners, and their names, also, included in the List of Illustrations.⁴² In his preface to the 1842 *Handbook for Westminster Abbey*, Cole reports that, since writing his article in 1838 for the *Westminster Review*, “the lady-professors of this delicate art have increased, at least six-fold”, and makes clear that he has designed the work to include some small (simpler) engravings “as a means of bringing several young engravers to notice”.⁴³ The observation that the women who designed and engraved for these two volumes included “ladies of rank” and Cole’s “female friends and relations” should not be

³⁸ Iain Bain, 'Harvey, William (1796-1866)', *ODNB* (2004) <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/12532>> [accessed 17 October 2017].

³⁹ Ibid. Anthony Burton, 'Dalziel Family (per 1840-1905)', *ODNB* (2004) <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/75984>> [accessed 17 October 2017].

⁴⁰ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865), p. 305. Iain Bain, Jackson, John (1801-1848', *ODNB* (2004) <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/14534>> [accessed 31 January 2019]. *The Thousand and One Nights*, trans. by Edward William Lane, 3 vols (London: Charles Knight, 1839). Lane’s translation, with Harvey’s illustrations, first appeared in weekly parts from 1838.

⁴¹ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865), p.305.

⁴² Henry Cole (Felix Summerly), *A Handbook for the architecture, paintings, tapestries, gardens & grounds of Hampton Court* (London: Cunningham, 1841). Cole (Summerly), *Westminster Abbey* (1842).

⁴³ Cole (Summerly), *Westminster Abbey* (1842), pp.xiii-xiv.

taken to imply that these women were amateurs.⁴⁴ The work of several had been published, one or two very successfully. Cole in these two volumes, was demonstrating that wood-engraving could be, as he had claimed in his article for the *Westminster Review*, a lady-like activity, as could the receipt of remuneration for one's work, even the advertisement of one's name. The model for female participation in the trade which he was advertising, however, was becoming peripheral to the industry.

Henry Cole claimed, in his preface to the 1842 *Handbook for Westminster Abbey*, that the success of his "experiment" had prompted the "Government School of Design to contemplate the formation of a class" for female wood engravers.⁴⁵ "The expediency of employing a person to teach the art of engraving on Wood in the Female School (of Design)" was considered by the Council of the National School of Design on 31 January 1843, and it was first suggested "to apply to Mr. Hervey" (sic.) whether he would "give a limited number of lessons to the Female School (of Design) in the art of drawing on wood".⁴⁶ This might suggest that William Harvey did already have some reputation as an expert sponsor of female wood-engraving. However, time passed, and it was only in July of that year, when some of the female students reminded the Council that such a class was advertised in the prospectus and they particularly wished to be instructed in wood-engraving, that enquiries were renewed, and a teacher appointed whose engravings had previously been published in Henry Cole's volumes promoting female practitioners.⁴⁷ Within weeks, the Council received for consideration a "memorial" signed by ninety-five "professors of the art of Wood Engraving in London" objecting to the teaching of wood-engraving to students at the Female School of Design.⁴⁸ The precise nature of the "injurious results" which the memorialists anticipated is not clear from the *Minutes*, but one might speculate that they (rightly) felt that the class could not offer sufficient training and practice to students (especially compared with the seven year apprenticeship served by boys) to fully qualify them for commissions. An additional dimension,

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Bonython and Anthony Burton *The Great Exhibitor: the life and work of Henry Cole* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2003), p. 82. The "ladies of rank" identified are Lady Callcott (Maria, see Chapter 5) and Lady Palgrave (Elizabeth, see Chapter 2).

⁴⁵ Cole (Summerly), *Westminster Abbey* (1842), pp. xiii-xiv. In this chapter the term 'Government School of Design' has been used for the London-based institution whose governing Council began work, under the Board of Trade, in 1836 and appointed its first masters in 1837. The term 'Female School of Design' has been used to denote the subsidiary of the Government School of Design, established in 1842, also at Somerset House, and reporting to the Council through the overall Director of the Government School of Design.

⁴⁶ *Minutes of the Council of the Government School of Design, 1836-1847*, 3 vols (London: Clowes, 1849), 31 January 1843.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 4 July 1843.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 8 August 1843.

perhaps, was the fact of the gender of students. It has been observed that “men in the relatively highly-paid, skilled trades, especially in the honourable sectors, jealously resisted the entry of women into their trades, and excluded them from trade societies”.⁴⁹ This was certainly Anna Jameson’s interpretation, in 1843, of resistance to the Female School of Design and its activities. “When the idea of a drawing school for women was first mentioned,” she wrote, “it had to encounter such difficulties, sneers, petty objections, jealous interference...(that) one would have thought half London was to be demoralized [i.e. become immoral] because a class of twenty or thirty girls were taught to use a pencil...”.⁵⁰

One might surmise that the leading (male) practitioners of “the art of Wood Engraving” were already in a condition of some anxiety concerning their livelihoods in the rapidly-industrialising trade, since in the winter of 1843-1844 they were renewing their objections on this subject to the Council of the Government School of Design under the name of the “Committee of wood-engravers in London”, whose Secretary was “Thurston Thompson”.⁵¹ The Council persisted with the class, however, taking the disingenuous view that the students were being taught to design for wood-engraving, rather than to engrave. The class in fact studied the techniques of drawing designs onto a block, wood-engraving and printing from engravings, and the copying of ornamentation, not art. The Council had, contrary to its soothing assurances to the wood-engravers of London, established a technical training class.

The Government School of Design, including the Female School of Design and numerous ‘branch’ Schools of Design in the metropolis, in the capital cities of Scotland and Ireland and in the provinces throughout Britain, was reformed from 1852 as a Department of the Board of Trade, under the management of civil servant Henry Cole, who revolutionised the institution over the course of the 1850s.⁵² Cole, who was knighted late in his career, in 1875, had been prominent, both as a civil servant and as a private individual, in the campaign for reform of the National

⁴⁹ Sally Alexander, *Women’s work* (1983), p.22.

⁵⁰ Anna Jameson, ‘Condition of the women and the female children’, *The Athenaeum*, 803 (March 1843), p.259.

⁵¹ *Council Minutes, Govt. School of Design* (1849), 8 February 1844. Burton, ‘Thompson’, *ODNB* (2004) states that Charles Thurston’s father, the prominent wood-engraver, John Thompson “led the wood-engravers of London (with (Henry) Cole’s support) in opposition to the teaching of wood-engraving to women” at the Government School of Design.

⁵² The term “branch” schools was used in the 1840s to describe the local Schools of Design. Later termed Provincial and Metropolitan (i.e. London-based) schools, the term ‘branch’ Schools of Design (or ‘branch’ schools) has nevertheless been used throughout the period covered by this study to describe these subsidiary institutions.

School of Design from the mid-1840s. Initially termed the Department of Practical Art, Cole's rapidly-expanding department was quickly re-named the Department of Science and Art, and this title is used throughout this study, despite later alterations to its name, for the sake of clarity and distinction from its predecessor, the National School of Design. Henry Cole's reforms secured the position of what is referred to here as the 'Central school', based first at Marlborough House and then, from 1856, at South Kensington, as the provider of the most advanced tuition to the most promising students from the 'branch' schools, together with students previously trained elsewhere. From 1853 female students were enrolled as well as male, but classrooms were strictly separated. Occasionally, these women's classes at the Central school were known, confusingly, as the female school. The original Female School of Design was relocated in the winter of 1851-1852 to premises in Gower Street, where it remained until 1860, and re-titled, from 1852, the Female School of Art. It is referred to in this study as the Female School of Art in Gower Street.

Almost immediately upon taking charge of the Department of Science and Art in 1852, Henry Cole transferred the female wood-engraving class from the Female School of Art in Gower Street, together with its more recently-formed class in lithography, to his Central school at Marlborough House, where they would become two of the six "technical classes" there.⁵³ He also appointed John Thompson to be "director of the (wood-engraving) class" while the original teacher continued as "superintendent", reinforcing the technical credentials of the tuition. This class continued until 1859, when it was abandoned due to, among other factors, low numbers of students. Its teacher(s) and its students' careers are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Over the course of the 1850s, Henry Cole's reforms altered the public/private financial base and the terms of employment of all of the component elements in the Department of Science and Art, making both the 'branch' schools and the Female School of Art somewhat more independent managerially, although they were still inspected by the Department of Science and Art Inspectors. Departmental (public) funding for premises and salaries, however, was made more dependent on their providing tuition specified by the Department of Science and Art, not only to their

⁵³ London, National Archives (NA), MS ED 9/3: Minutes of the .. Board of Trade concerning the School of Design, p.147. John C.L. Sparkes, *Schools of Art: their origin, history, work and influence* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1884), p.67, records that other technical classes (for both genders) at the time included "painting on porcelain and decorative art... in woven fabrics and paper-staining, and in metals, furniture, and jewellery".

own students, but to pupils in local elementary schools. Any tuition additional to the South Kensington method and syllabus had to be paid for entirely by students' fees for the class in question. Eventually, from 1860, the Female School of Art, was in the same relationship to the Central school as any other 'branch' School of Design and its relocation to Queen Square in 1861 was, to a large extent, occasioned by its funding being brought into line with them. This reformed institution is referred to in this study as The Female School of Art in Queen Square. In the 1860s Departmental funding of teachers' salaries in the 'branch' schools, including the Female School of Art in Queen Square, became entirely contingent upon the delivery of Departmental objectives and the performance of both teachers and their students in the South Kensington method; not even a basic salary was guaranteed. This had the effect of making schools, which could not, or did not wish to, achieve the targets, even more dependent upon alternative sources of funding. While local industry, and, at a later date, local government, made important contributions the 'branch' schools, they all, and especially the Female School of Art in Queen Square, became even more dependent upon fee-paying students to pay teachers. The effects on the careers of students and teachers of these financial reforms are discussed further in Chapter 4.

After 1860, the Female School of Art, bereft of two of its more reliably fee-generating classes since 1853, re-instated a wood-engraving class in Queen Square. In accordance with the regime described above, the continuity of the class from session to session was dependent on the number of fee-paying students enrolling being sufficient to fund the costs of running the class.⁵⁴ The class continued spasmodically through the 1860s and 1870s, when it seems to have been discontinued altogether, but not before a final attempt was made, around 1865, to "find strength" for its students in the marketplace by uniting as an all-female workshop under the aegis of the Female School of Art.⁵⁵

Despite the faltering viability of the classes for women in wood-engraving, at least three further texts urging women to take up wood-engraving as paid employment followed Cole's article over the next four decades: Maria Rye, for the *English*

⁵⁴ London, Central Saint Martin's (CSM), Reports of the Royal Female School of Art (RFSA), 1863-1906 (incomplete series).

⁵⁵ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865), pp.314-315.

Woman's Journal in 1858, the unidentified 'Asterisk' in the *Alexandra Magazine* in 1865, and George Walter Marx in 1881.⁵⁶

Maria Rye visited the wood-engraving class at the Department of Science and Art, probably prompted by threats of its imminent closure. Bracingly acerbic, she pronounced herself "greatly vexed" at the faint-heartedness with which students abandoned their study when the amount of practice necessary to master the task, and its "tediousness", became evident to them. Like Henry Cole, she claimed that this was a "lucrative" profession in which "no-one possessed of a moderate stock of patience and industry need ever despair of getting plenty of work". Her advice to young women and their parents is to prepare for a working life from a young age, be prepared to train for a long period before being absolutely in need of an income, to build networks of goodwill among commissioning editors and to deliver always the best quality at the time required. One longs to know whether she, or the teachers of the class, could identify any such female models of forethought and single-minded application of effort in reality. In the event, the class was closed in 1859, when the Board of the Department of Science and Art gave "full consideration of the difficulties which have attended the class for teaching wood engraving from its commencement", together with a personal letter from the teacher.⁵⁷

Approximately ten years later, in 1865, the author of an article in the *Alexandra Magazine* reflected on the reasons for the apparent failure of the class for women at the Department of Science and Art. John Sparkes, an official apologist for the Department's remit and activities was later to attribute the demise of this and subsequent attempts to establish technical classes, including wood-engraving, in the Central, and 'branch' Schools of Design to objections from Parliament and local industries concerning, in the former case, subsidy to private enterprise, and in the latter "interference with trade".⁵⁸ Later still, in 1911, the report of the Board of Education, by that stage the governing Department for the Royal College of Art, as the institution at South Kensington had become, made devastating recommendations on the institution as a whole. The Committee's analysis included the statement that "the class in wood-engraving came to an end in 1859 because it

⁵⁶ Rye, 'Wood engraving', *EWJ* (1858), pp.165-177. 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865). Marx, *Engraving on wood* (1881).

⁵⁷ NA, MS ED 28 series: minute books of the Department of Practical Art and its successors, MS ED 28/10, f.61 (1859).

⁵⁸ Sparkes, *Schools of Art* (1884), p.104.

had proved difficult to find work for students who had passed through it".⁵⁹ 'Asterisk', who, it is suggested in this study, had probably been a student of the class, places a different emphasis both on the difficulty of finding work, and on Maria Rye's castigation of the women students for their lack of commitment to the task. In order for a woman not trained through apprenticeship in a workshop or with a master-engraver to get work as a wood-engraver, she asserts, she must have "special ability", contacts who are in a position to offer her work and a lack of other distractions preventing her from providing the work on time. Women who do not possess all three of these "have almost invariably turned to some other pursuit as soon as they left the (Department's) school, finding greater facilities for getting occupation as teachers of drawing or painting than as wood-engravers".⁶⁰ Recognising the deterrent factors of competition, and the privileged position which male practitioners of merely ordinary talent occupy in comparison with women of similar calibre, in that their training within the trade provides them with contacts, as well as the option of working in the mass-production workshops, she proposes a female coalition, organised through the Female School of Art in Queen Square, to build contacts and commercial experience for female practitioners. There is no evidence that this plan ever came to fruition.

Nevertheless, in 1881, George Marx, himself a practising wood-engraver, published a small but comprehensive book of instruction on the method of preparing the design and engraving on wood for commercial printing. He proclaimed in the introductory paragraphs that, as "many of our leading statesmen and philanthropists have advocated and encouraged suitable employments for women", he offered the suggestion that wood-engraving was "one of the branches of art labour in which ladies may engage and practise with every probability of success and fair remuneration." He felt justified in making the last part of this assertion by personal knowledge of "several ladies earning at the present time from £3 to £10 per week".⁶¹ As remarked earlier, this level of remuneration seems unlikely to have been consistently sustainable, while these anonymous "ladies" seem, from other accounts, to have been very few in number.

⁵⁹ *Report of the Departmental Committee on the Royal College of Art* (London: HMSO, 1911), pp.30-31.

⁶⁰ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865), p.313 and p.306.

⁶¹ Marx, *Engraving on wood* (1881), p.12.

Mary Byfield (1795-1871): a cultivator of her connections

The only professional female wood-engraver mentioned by name in George Marx's book, Mary Byfield, pursued an extraordinarily long career as a wood-engraver, from about 1810 to the 1860s. Although atypical, she has been selected for study here because, of all the female wood-engravers belonging to the family groups active in the first half of the nineteenth century, her career and output is particularly well-documented.⁶² Both critically-important business connections, and her attributable output are traceable, as are details of payments made to her which offer a context for other information about the viability of the occupation for the individual practitioner.

Mary and her wood-engraver brothers, John and Ebenezer were born into a family of artisans active in the decorative arts. Their father, James, was a carver and gilder in Soho, London, and it has been suggested that he may have initially taught John to engrave on wood.⁶³ By 1810, John had introduced Mary, as a fellow wood-engraver, to the bibliophile and connoisseur of ancient books, Thomas Frognall Dibdin and together they provided facsimile illustrations to several of Dibdin's early publications on the subject, including his catalogue of the private library of Lord Spencer of Althorp, at that time "one of the most valuable private libraries in the country".⁶⁴ Mary's association with Dibdin continued into the 1840s. His love of archaic printed works combined with Lord Spencer's patronage and the widespread contemporary interest in the recovery and revival of historic design to enable him to bring to fruition a series of publishing projects on historical architecture and ornament spanning more than thirty years. In the late 1820s he found a publishing and printing partnership which could do justice to his vision, and thus Mary, as wood-engraver, was introduced to Charles Whittingham Junr., proprietor of the Chiswick Press.⁶⁵

Whittingham had already set up his printing business independently of his uncle Charles Whittingham Senr. when, in 1828, he was introduced to William Pickering ,

⁶² Ibid., p.12.

⁶³ Avery-Quash, 'Byfield Family', *ODNB* (2004).

⁶⁴ John V. Richardson, Junr., 'Dibdin, Thomas Frognall (1746-1847)', *ODNB* (2015) <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/7588>> [accessed 19 January 2019].

⁶⁵ Judith Butler, 'Ingenious and Worthy Family', *The Private Library*, 3.4 (1980), pp.149-159. All references to 'Charles Whittingham' in this study relate to Charles Junr. unless otherwise stated. The term 'Chiswick Press' has been used to denote his business at all stages of his active life, although the name originated in Charles Senr.'s business, Charles Junr. taking on management in 1839, and adopting the imprint in 1840 after his uncle's death.

a bookseller and publisher of fine editions for connoisseurs, who became a lifelong collaborator and close friend. Whittingham's business, which became the renowned Chiswick Press, kept meticulous records and accounts, many of which are now in the British Library's MS collection and in the collections of the St. Bride Foundation.

Mary's long association with these well-documented and prolific enterprises has resulted in both attributable records of her career over a long period, and her appearance in modern scholarship. Thomas Frognall Dibdin's *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*, published in 1836 (and decorated with wood-engravings by John and Mary Byfield) informed research into the Byfields, taken forward by subsequent wider research into engravers of the first few decades of the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ The career of his publisher, William Pickering, and the ambitions and ultimate failure of his business, offers an illuminating insight into the period of transition from the age of the bibliophile and aristocratic connoisseur to that of the educated upper middle class consumer of aesthetically-pleasing work.⁶⁷ The business of Pickering's printer, collaborator and friend, Charles Whittingham, survived both this transition and Pickering's death in 1854 by means of a thoroughly commercial strategy of diversification of clients and modernisation of printing processes (although he retained the use of manual presses), first recorded in detail in the nineteenth century.⁶⁸ A comprehensive analysis of the later years of Whittingham's business at the Chiswick Press was undertaken in the 1980s, based on the collection at the St. Bride Printing Library, inventories of Whittingham's stock of blocks and designs, and the British Library's collection of the Chiswick Press business records.⁶⁹ Through all these studies, Mary Byfield's name recurs, her work as the wood-engraver of choice for the Chiswick Press essential to the characteristic aesthetic of its output, but no study has focused on her career.

Mary's attributable output of wood-engraved work, dating from about 1811 until her death, in 1871, aged seventy-six, can be summarised in a number of phases. Figure 3.3 shows the earliest of the wood-engravings attributed to her ("by Mary Byfield, aged 17") inspected during the course of this study.⁷⁰ Throughout the 1820s Mary worked with her brother John particularly on Thomas Frognall Dibdin's

⁶⁶ Butler, 'Ingenious and Worthy Family' (1980). Avery-Quash, 'Byfield Family', *ODNB* (2004).

⁶⁷ Geoffrey Keynes, *William Pickering, Publisher: A memoir and checklist of his publications* (London: Galahad Press, 1969).

⁶⁸ Arthur Warren, *The Charles Whittinghams, Printers* (New York: Grolier Club, 1896).

⁶⁹ Ing, 'Charles Whittingham' (1985) and 'A London Shop' (1986).

⁷⁰ Thomas Frognall Dibdin *Typographical Antiquities...4 vols* (London: Miller; John Murray; Longman, 1810-1819), Vol.II: 'Richard Pynson'.

projects, or projects which he seems to have introduced to them.⁷¹ Mary, in particular, remained a favoured engraver of Dibdin's after his most productive and authoritative period of work began, in partnership with Pickering and Whittingham. Both Byfields contributed engravings to the partnership's most prominent publications of the early 1830s which featured facsimile renditions of early woodcuts based on designs by, or attributed to, Hans Holbein.⁷²



Figure 3.3: Mary Byfield, wood-engraver, 'Joan Gorraeus' (1812)

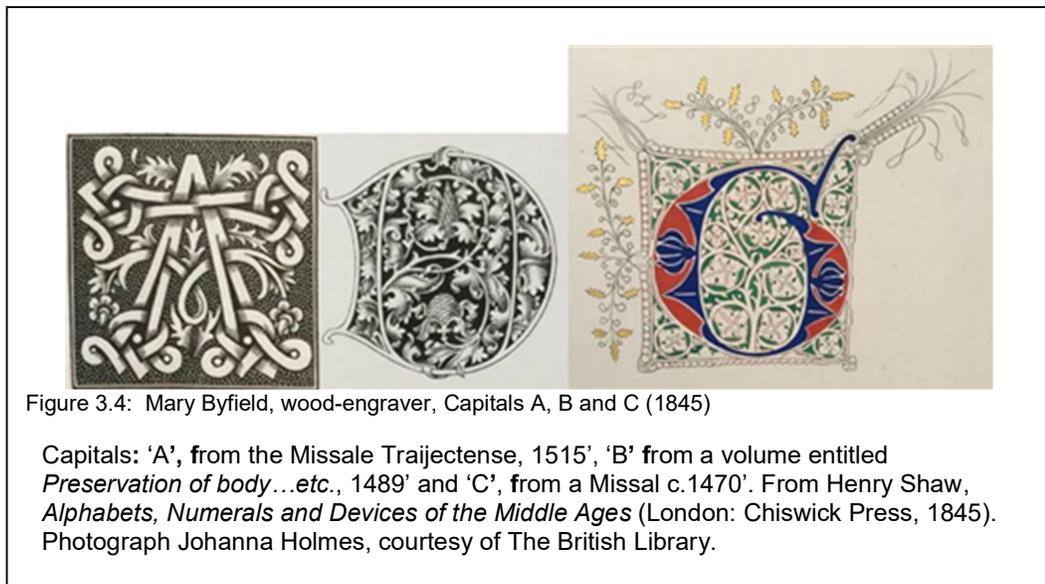
, 'Joan. Gorraeus', Thomas Frognall Dibdin *Typographical Antiquities...*, 4 vols (London: Miller; John Murray; Longman, 1810-1819), Vol.II, (London: W. Bulmer & Co. 1812). Frontispiece to Dibdin's essay on Richard Pynson, between pp.399 and 401. Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

By 1835, Mary was working more or less exclusively on her own account, although continuing to share domestic and workshop premises with her family. Although she worked at Thomas Frognall Dibdin's behest on a number of his projects, her business relationship was increasingly with Charles Whittingham. Although she may have worked for other printers and publishers, in theory, this seems unlikely, given the volume of work she undertook for Whittingham from this stage, throughout the 1840s and into the 1850s. For much of this period she was immersed in the

⁷¹ Judith Butler 'Ingenious and Worthy Family' (1980).

⁷² Hans Holbein, *Icones Veteris Testamenti: illustrations of the Old Testament, engraved on wood* (London: William Pickering, 1830). *The Dance of Death, exhibited in elegant engravings on wood*, ed. by Francis Douce (London: William Pickering, 1833).

recovery, and re-design for future use at the Chiswick Press, of historical styles and emblems. As early as 1830 the Whittingham and Pickering partnership had been commissioned by a second significant retriever of antique styles of the 'middle ages', Henry Shaw, to publish his third book, *Illuminated Ornaments selected from Manuscripts of the Middle Ages*.⁷³ Together they produced, over the period 1833 to 1851, a number of compendia of examples of architecture, ornament, dress and decoration originating in the sixth to the seventeenth centuries. Mary Byfield engraved many of the illustrations for these, taking over from Shaw, who had prepared his own engravings for works published prior to his association with Whittingham. Figure 3.4 shows a selection of her engravings from his later publication on lettering and numerals.⁷⁴



Whittingham also printed, for Pickering, a series of imitative versions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions of the Book of Common Prayer. Again, Mary Byfield prepared many of the wood-engravings, including a fine title page in imitation of that of the version published in 1559. Published in the mid-1840s, these led to the culmination of Pickering's endeavours in re-creating Prayer Books in historical styles: a magnificent treatment, imitating the designs in John Day's edition of 1569, which Whittingham began printing in 1853.⁷⁵ This incorporated two hundred and

⁷³ Ing, 'Charles Whittingham' (1985), p.259. Henry Shaw played a crucial part in researching, authenticating and disseminating to the discriminating public many aspects of Tudor and Elizabethan decoration – in architecture, heraldry, dress and typography to name only four.

⁷⁴ Henry Shaw, *Alphabets, Numerals and Devices of the Middle Ages* (London: Chiswick Press, 1845)

⁷⁵ *Christian Prayers and Meditations in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Greeke, and Latine* (London: John Day, 1569), <<https://lambethpalacelibrary.wordpress.com/2014/03/25/books-and-their-owners-iii-the-prayer-book-of-elizabeth-i/>> [accessed 11 February 2019]. Other historical editions in the series

forty-seven engravings by Mary, for which she was paid, over the course of eighteen months, approximately £174.⁷⁶ The most complex image, used as a frontispiece, is shown at Figure 3.5. Given that Mary was simultaneously working on others of Pickering's ambitiously-connoisseurial works, to be printed by Whittingham, and supporting Whittingham in pursuing more commercial strategies, this period, in the 1840s and early 1850s, was easily her most lucrative.



Figure 3.5: Mary Byfield, wood-engraver, 'Queen Elizabeth' (1853)

From *Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book of 1569* (London: William Pickering, 1853) printed by Charles Whittingham at the Chiswick Press. From an illustration in Arthur Warren, *The Charles Whittinghams, Printers* (New York: Grolier Club, 1896), p.167.

Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

It was clear to Whittingham, from the early 1840s onwards, that the publishing projects of Pickering and the foremost antiquaries, although they established the Chiswick Press' reputation as innovative and first-rate printers, were not profitable:

were the Prayer Books of 1549, 1550, 1552, 1604, 1637 and 1662. Ing, 'Charles Whittingham' (1985), pp.34-35 and 155.

⁷⁶ Ing, 'Charles Whittingham' (1985), pp.155 and 175.

they were expensive to produce, particularly those utilising two, or even five-colour printing, and the market was too small to sustain the work.⁷⁷ Indeed, it has been suggested that the high cost of production of such works as the '*Queen Elizabeth Prayer Book*' contributed to the bankruptcy of William Pickering in 1853.⁷⁸



Figure 3.6: Mary Byfield, wood-engraver, Capitals P, Q and R (c.1850)

Designs by Elizabeth Whittingham.' From an illustration in Arthur Warren, *The Charles Whittinghams, Printers* (New York: Grolier Club, 1896), p.254. Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

From the outset of his business life, Whittingham had ensured that he secured work with publishers other than Pickering, and from the early 1840s was utilising the historically-accurate reproductive designs used in the Prayer Books series, and in Henry Shaw's works, as source material for simplified and reusable designs for page decorations. Alphabets of decorated capitals, head- and tail-pieces, and a range of interchangeable page borders were all engraved by Mary Byfield in the 1840s, and the stock maintained and expanded by her over the ensuing two decades. In 1840 Whittingham had established a position in the publishing world as a specialist printer of quality, but economically viable, editions which larger printing companies would struggle to deliver.⁷⁹ By 1850, he had established a viable, commercially-successful press which, although still using hand-operated presses, utilised his own experience and high standards, his skilled workforce, including Mary Byfield, and his stock of type and designs in historical styles, assembled over fifteen years of work with Pickering and the leading antiquarians of the day.⁸⁰ In 1847 Whittingham had been elected a member of the Society of Arts and he subsequently was appointed one of the adjudicators of work in "paper, stationery, printing and bookbinding" presented at the Great Exhibition in 1851.⁸¹ The Chiswick Press had

⁷⁷ Warren, *Whittinghams* (1896), p.157 ff.

⁷⁸ Bernard Warrington, 'Pickering, William (1796-1894)', *ODNB* (2016), <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/22213>> [accessed 29 January 2019.]

⁷⁹ Warren, *Whittinghams* (1896)p.40-41.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.325

⁸¹ Ing, 'Charles Whittingham' (1985), p.41.

expanded into a discerning popular market with editions which were, to a greater or lesser extent, “allusive” to bygone ages, while maintaining its reputation and capability for highly specialised, facsimile and limited-edition volumes. By this time, Mary was still occupied on the prestigious, but unprofitable, facsimiles of historically-important works, had advanced, with Whittingham, into the use of wood-engraved blocks to achieve attractively-coloured images and, was deeply involved in developing the stock of historically-allusive decorations (see Figure 3.6) which gave the Chiswick Press imprint its character.

However William Pickering’s death in 1854, shortly after his being declared bankrupt, however, marked the end of Whittingham’s more esoteric printing, and with the consolidation of production efficiencies at the Chiswick Press, Mary’s career became more mundane. A stream of alphabets, page decorations and the maintenance of the Chiswick Press’ repertoire of symbols and marks not found in standard typefaces, occupied her time from the mid-1850s to the end of her career. Mary stepped into the role of maintaining the stock, and extending it to an extent, as new commissions required a greater number or different sizes of decoration.

Like other wood-engravers, Mary Byfield was self-employed and charged piecemeal rates. The evidence of her charges is contained only in the records of the Chiswick Press, whose records under the management of Charles Whittingham commence in 1840.⁸² It is possible that even such a comprehensive set of business accounts as has been analysed by Janet Ing contains significant omissions. Mary was perhaps paid by Henry Shaw himself for illustrations to his works which she is known to have undertaken during the years of Shaw, Pickering and Whittingham’s partnership, but for which no payment in the Chiswick Press accounts is recorded by Ing. It is also difficult, although Ing has made a heroic attempt to reconcile payments to the stock of engraved blocks recorded in an inventory of the Chiswick Press stock taken in 1859, to identify the work to which payments relate. However, sufficient detailed information can be gleaned from these sources to make a number of pertinent observations.⁸³

Firstly, Mary did on occasion design and draw onto the blocks herself, before engraving, and accounted for this separately in her invoice as an additional

⁸² Warren, *Whittinghams* (1896), p.152.

⁸³ For the purposes of this study MS records held at the British Library were consulted: London, British Library (BL), AddMS 41919: Chiswick Press Papers Vol. LIII (1852-1860) and BL, AddMS 43977: Chiswick Press Papers Vol. XCIX Accompts of Mary Byfield (1854-1862).

service.⁸⁴ It should not be assumed that her role in the development of Chiswick Press stock of ornaments (or the preceding historical facsimile work) had been purely mechanical. Secondly, Mary was, if not exactly in a retained relationship with the Chiswick Press (although Ing does suggest that some unidentifiable sums might have related to a more general role than engraving at piecework rates), both she and Whittingham seem to have assumed, at least after 1850, in the last phase of her career, that she would undertake a particular type of work when the need arose.⁸⁵ Presumably in recognition of this, she offered him a ten percent discount on most, if not all, of her invoices, indicating that she appreciated the value of the consistent workload.



Figure 3.7: 'Mary Byfield' (c.1850)

Wood engraving from a daguerreotype.
 Photograph © St. Bride Foundation. Reproduced with permission.

It is thus difficult to say with certainty what Mary Byfield's annual or weekly earnings were from the Chiswick Press, but the information which can be gleaned, largely from Janet Ing's work on the books of account between 1840 and 1859, suggests that Mary's regular work on Whittingham's more commercial decorative elements

⁸⁴ BL, AddMS 43977 (31 August 1858).

⁸⁵ Ing, 'Charles Whittingham' (1985), p.125.

earned her approximately twenty shillings a week over the whole year.⁸⁶ This income was greatly supplemented by work on the less commercial, antiquarian works, notably the *'Queen Elizabeth Prayer-Book'*, and, given the rate at which she was paid for this, one might speculate that in the 1840s Mary was earning approximately £60 to £70 in a year. Her practice of giving a discount on her accounts to Whittingham suggests that her relationship with the Chiswick Press had, for her, a financial value even after the more lucrative and creative work yielded to commercial imperatives.

Ladies seeking a “lucrative” occupation

Two women whose careers in wood-engraving began, at least insofar as attributable published work is concerned, with William Harvey, John Jackson and Henry Cole in the late 1830s, and whose subsequent careers can be traced to some extent, are Harriet Ludlow Clarke ((bap. 1816-d.1866) and Annie Waterhouse (bap.1814-1896).

In his autobiography John Ludlow recalled Harriet Ludlow Clarke as “one of the first ladies who took up wood engraving on its revival in this country” and it is certainly the case that she was among the first who “took up” the pursuit, rather than being born into a family of craftsmen, as Mary Byfield and others were.⁸⁷ Baptised Ann Harriet Ludlow Clarke in 1816 at St. Andrew, Holborn, she was the daughter of Edward Clarke, a solicitor in London with a country residence and property in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire.⁸⁸ A number of nineteenth-century sources attest, in passing, to her practising as a wood-engraver over the period 1835 to 1860, but an obituary remains the chief source of published information about her life and is the sole source for an entry, in 1887, in the dictionary of National Biography.⁸⁹ In recent years, this entry has been updated, but no new information of substance added.⁹⁰

John Ludlow (whose surname suggests some connection with Harriet’s family, but who does not mention any close blood kinship) met Harriet through Henry Bellenden

⁸⁶ Ing, 'Charles Whittingham' (1985), pp.261-267. Ing calculates (Table 6, p.109) that pressmen who had completed their apprenticeship and were employed for at least forty-five weeks of the year in the 1850s earned approximately £1.10.0d per week, while apprentices were paid at two thirds the man's rate after serving two years.

⁸⁷ *John Ludlow: The Autobiography of a Christian Socialist*, ed. by A. D. Murray (London: Frank Cass, 1981), p.46.

⁸⁸ Hertfordshire County Archives (HCA), MS DSA4/30/1, Schedule of Tithe Awards, Cheshunt, 1841..

⁸⁹ 'Miss Harriet Clarke', *Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review*, March 1866, pp.436-437.

Lionel Henry Cust, 'Clarke, Harriet Ludlow (d. 1866)', *DNB* (1887), <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/odnb/9780192683120.013.5498>> [accessed 20 September 2017].

⁹⁰ Lois Oliver, 'Clarke, Harriet Ludlow (d.1866)' *ODNB* (2004), <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/5498>> [accessed 3 October 2017]

Ker, his pupil-master at Lincoln's Inn from 1838, and the husband of Harriet's sister, Elizabeth. Ludlow particularly recalled meeting Harriet at Bellenden Ker's "charming country place" in Hertfordshire, where Harriet's father was his landlord and she seems to have been a frequent visitor.⁹¹ The combination of his account and Charles Eastlake's idealised portrait of Harriet and her sister, Elizabeth Bellenden Ker (see Figure 3.8), identifies them as members of the upper middle class. Comparison with Mary Byfield's daguerreotype portrait from the same decade (Figure 3.7) reveals a considerable social difference. Harriet, however, chose first to train as a wood-engraver in the mid- to late 1830s, and later, in the mid-1840s to re-train and practise as a designer of stained glass windows, before, probably, returning to wood-engraving as teacher of the wood-engraving class for women at the Central school of the Department of Science and Art in 1856.



Figure 3.8: Charles Eastlake, 'The sisters' (1844)

Harriet Ludlow Clarke and her sister Mrs. (Henry Bellenden) Ker.
Royal Collection Trust. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019.

⁹¹ Murray (ed.), *John Ludlow* (1981), p.46. HCA, MS DSA4/30/1, Tithe Awards, Cheshunt, 1841.

A fairly robust case can be made for the influence on Harriet's activities and aspirations, at the outset of her career and throughout her life, of Charles Henry Bellenden Ker.⁹² Referred to in this study as Bellenden Ker, he is noted today as a lawyer and reformer of company law but clearly also had pretensions to the artistic taste and high culture associated with the leisured upper classes and aristocracy, as well as an interest in the decorative arts. Bellenden Ker was a sufficiently able wood-engraver to be "a contributor of woodcuts" (sic.) to the 'Penny Magazine' and worked with Charles Knight (the publisher of *The Penny Magazine*) as a committee member of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.⁹³ He had long been an acquaintance, collaborator and patron of Charles Eastlake when he became, with Eastlake, a member of the Council for the Government School of Design when it was established in December 1836, continuing until the Council was relieved of its responsibilities by the Board of Trade in 1851.

Harriet is first recorded as beginning work as a wood-engraver in 1837, coming into contact with William Harvey when undertaking an engraving for *The Penny Magazine*, possibly as a result of Bellenden Ker's introduction.⁹⁴ She cultivated the relationship with Harvey herself from then on, he becoming "her instructor" and she preparing twenty-six engravings of his illustrations for Knight's edition of *The Thousand and One Nights*.⁹⁵ Her work appears also in Henry Cole's two publications featuring wood engravings only by female engravers, for which the designs were drawn by a number of (male) artists. This was clearly not work in which Harvey was involved, so Harriet's name must have been known by this stage to Cole; possibly he 'discovered' her during the course of writing his article for *The London and Westminster Review*. In any case, these seem to reflect a growing confidence in her artistic status, as they are for the first time signed. Harriet's next significant series of attributable engravings were again to Harvey's designs: the illustrations to Anna Jameson's series of articles in the *Penny Magazine* of 'lives' of early Renaissance Italian painters.⁹⁶ Over the years 1843 to 1845 inclusive a series of 47 articles was each illustrated with one, or occasionally two, images, usually a 'portrait' of the artist concerned, based upon a painted or engraved work from the

⁹² W.R. Cornish and David J.A. Cairns, 'Ker, (Charles) Henry Bellenden (c.1785-1871), ODNB, (2006) <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref.odnb/15447>> [accessed 12 February 2019].

⁹³ J.S. Vaizey, 'Ker, Henry Bellenden (1785?-1871), DNB (1892), <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/odnb/9780192683120.013.15447>> [accessed 12 February 2019].

⁹⁴ 'Clarke', *Gentleman's Magazine*, (1866).

⁹⁵ Ibid. *Thousand and One Nights*, trans. Lane (1839)

⁹⁶ Anna Jameson, 'Essays on the lives of remarkable painters', *Penny Magazine*, XII-XIII (1843-1844)

artist's lifetime or shortly thereafter, together with, occasionally, an allusive scene or rendition of a detail from a particularly famous work. In her previous publications, in book form, Anna Jameson had prepared incidental illustrations and engravings herself, but for this series, Charles Knight seems to have placed his own established resources at her disposal. She invited Harvey to meet her to discuss the logistics of the drawing, the engraving and her approval of the proofs on at least one occasion, in 1843, telling him that she was writing at short notice because she had "only just heard of Miss Clarke's intentions to favour me".⁹⁷

It seems, therefore, that Harriet had established some good reputation as an engraver by this stage (as well as commanding Anna Jameson's respect as a result of her social class), and likely that it was in the context of this series of articles and their illustration that Anna Jameson first became one of Harriet's "numerous friends".⁹⁸ Harriet must have impressed upon Anna Jameson that she was busy with other engraving work, because it was only a year afterwards that the latter wrote to John Murray, in the context of planning the illustrations to the work in progress which would become *Sacred and Legendary Art* (in the event, published in 1848 by Longman), asking if he would mind placing some of the wood-engraving work with a woman whom Jameson considered needed the work more than Harriet did: "Miss Clarke, who has always more than enough to do, is very willing" for this work to be transferred to another woman, she wrote to Murray.⁹⁹

Harriet's obituary, obviously written by someone personally well-acquainted with her and keen to record her excellent qualities, claims that, after starting her wood-engraving career, by "indefatigable industry" she was able to realise sufficient money to enable her to "build two model cottages for labourers at Cheshunt".¹⁰⁰ Evidence in the Hertfordshire County archives suggests that Harriet's father, Edward acted for her in the purchase, and that she was, in 1843, considering paying in the region of £300 for land and building works.¹⁰¹ If this or a similar project were realised, this sum suggests that, firstly, Harriet was not dependent on income from

⁹⁷ Judith Johnston, *Anna Jameson: Victorian, feminist, woman of letters* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1997).

⁹⁸ Cust, 'Clarke', *DNB* (1887).

⁹⁹ MA, Acc13236.417, Typescript Transcription of selected John Murray correspondence with Anna Jameson, undated, but probably 1844.

¹⁰⁰ 'Clarke', *Gentleman's Magazine*, (1866), p. 437. One might speculate that the obituary was written by Bellenden Ker, given its prompt, and unusual, placement, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* within weeks of Harriet's death, the fact that she had been absent from her English friends, living with him in Cannes, for the last years of her "chronic malady", and the fact that it ends with a reference to the intention of "her brother in law" to publish some of her notes on works of stained glass.

¹⁰¹ HCA, MS DE/Cr/33, Papers of Crawters of Cheshunt, Estate Agents, Edward Clarke correspondence, 1843-1846.

wood-engraving for living expenses, and secondly, that she had indeed had more than enough work to do of a type which would yield good prices.



Figure 3.9: Harriet Ludlow Clarke, wood-engraver, 'Maroof' (1839)

Designed by William Harvey, 'Maroof showing the Broken Jewel to the King', *The Thousand and One Nights*, trans. by Edward William Lane, 3 vols (London: Charles Knight, 1839), Vol.III, p.689. Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

By the mid-1840s however, much had altered in the trade. As discussed earlier, many more publishers and many more practitioners had entered the business of illustrated printed material; mass production and commerce had contributed to a general reduction in standards to a less intensively-worked, even sketchy style. Even Harriet's work for the "*Penny Magazine* million" shows signs of the diminished workmanship required to meet commercial standards. Figure 3.9 shows an example of Harriet's wood-engraved work from Charles Knight's 1839 edition of the *Thousand and one nights* and Figure 3.10 an example of her work only a few years later, accompanying Anna Jameson's articles for the *Penny Magazine* on the lives of early painters. The former, reveals Harriet's competency as an engraver at the start of her career, in the aspirational style of the 1830s striving to replicate in black and white the variations in light and shade, and intensity of hue which can be achieved in painting. In contrast, the latter shows a much simplified design, based on only a portion of the original fresco and having fewer pretensions to demonstrate the quality of the original work of art.



Figure 3.10: Harriet Ludlow Clarke, wood-engraver, 'The Virgin and attendants' (1843)

Designed by William Harvey after Ghirlandaio, 'The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple' (1486-1490) (detail). From the *Penny Magazine*, 1843, p.364. Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

During 1843 and 1844, Anna Jameson formed the plan to write a significant work on early Christian iconography, which five years later was realised as *Sacred and Legendary Art*.¹⁰² From the early days, she planned a copiously-illustrated work, dropping the names of the illustrator George Scharf and wood-engraver Harriet Ludlow Clarke into correspondence with John Murray, who had agreed, informally, and possibly reluctantly, to be her publisher.¹⁰³ "I have spoken to two friends who would undertake to work for me in the spirit I wish - & to be guided by me (a thing most essential)", she wrote in characteristically uncompromising tone. Jameson envisaged at least one hundred and twenty illustrations, the majority of them wood-engravings, being required for the two-volume work she had in mind at that stage,

¹⁰² Anna Jameson: *Sacred and Legendary Art*, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1848), *Legends of the monastic orders as represented in the fine arts* (London: Longman, 1850), *Legends of the Madonna as represented in the fine arts* (London: Longman, 1852).

¹⁰³ MA, Acc13236.417, Murray and Jameson, 4 June 1844.

for which she would be providing the designs. On at least two occasions Jameson proposed herself paying the engravers on metal and on wood (probably in order to retain the level of control she preferred, and an element of discretion in the medium to be used for each image). It is impossible to decipher exactly how many images she envisaged for her budgets (and, from the extant correspondence, it appears that Murray had the same irritating difficulty) but at £150 or £200 for the first volume only – about sixty illustrations - she seems to have provided for quite generous rates to the engravers, including an element of profit to herself. Charles Whittingham charged William Pickering just over £206 for the drawing and engraving of two hundred and forty-seven illustrations for the '*Queen Elizabeth Prayer Book*', of which, as noted above, Mary Byfield received about approximately eighty-five percent.¹⁰⁴ Murray and Jameson failed to agree terms for the publication and, although Jameson seems to have believed that Murray may have paid Harriet for some engraving work before their discussions concluded there is no evidence that he had.¹⁰⁵ It seems probable that over the period 1843 to 1846 Harriet saw this project slipping away as negotiations continued. At the same time, Charles Knight began to wind down his various publishing enterprises, which had yielded most of Harriet's engraving commissions.¹⁰⁶ She probably recognised that the occupation of wood-engraving offered diminished returns to the practitioner, both creatively and financially, compared with the period in the 1830s when she had entered the trade.

Although it has been asserted that Harriet provided some of the engravings for the eventual publication, by Longman, of *Sacred and Legendary Art*, there are no engravings attributable to her in that work, nor in the two volumes which succeeded it. Lionel Henry Cust, an art historian working at the British Museum when he wrote the entry for Harriet in the Dictionary of National Biography seems to be the originator of this account, possibly having heard it from George Scharf, who was also named by Anna Jameson at one stage in her negotiations with Murray, as a potential illustrator for the work. Cust and Scharf moved in similar circles, the former succeeding Scharf as Director of the National Portrait Gallery in 1895. Those engravings in these volumes which are signed – generally the more complex ones - are attributable, either to the Dalziel workshop, or to Mary Ann Williams, and it seems unlikely that Harriet Ludlow Clarke, to whom the remaining, very basic,

¹⁰⁴ Ing, 'Charles Whittingham' (1985), p. 275

¹⁰⁵ MA, Acc13236.417, Murray and Jameson, 19 April, whether 1845 or 1846 is not clear..

¹⁰⁶ Rosemary Mitchell, 'Knight, Charles (1791-1873)', *ODNB* (2008), <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/15716>> [accessed 4 October 2017].

engravings would have offered little challenge or remuneration, would have been commissioned for these.

Clearly, earning a living was not Harriet's primary concern in her creative design work, and by 1850 she had turned her attention to the design and painting of stained glass, for which she received and executed several commissions, before her declining health prevented further work in this field.¹⁰⁷ She may have returned to wood-engraving in the 1850s, however. In late 1856 a Miss Clark, or Clarke, was appointed at the Central school of the Department of Science and Art in South Kensington to teach the wood-engraving class for young women.¹⁰⁸ This was the class, and teacher, visited by Maria Rye in 1858 in preparation for her article in the *English Woman's Journal* of that year. In June 1859 Miss Clarke tendered her resignation, although her letter has not been retained along with Henry Cole's consequent recommendation to the Council that "in view of the difficulties which have attended the class since its commencement" it should be closed down and Miss Clarke should receive "a session's notice...and payment accordingly".¹⁰⁹ If this teacher is indeed Harriet, this was the last phase of her working career. "She continued to employ herself in various tasteful works of art, in which her natural genius was exercised for her own amusement" until her death in 1866.¹¹⁰

Harriet's predecessor at the Central school, Ann Newman Waterhouse, or Annie as she was known by the time she left South Kensington in 1856, was, like Harriet Ludlow Clarke, an 'incomer' to the occupation of wood-engraving. Her first attributable work appears in Henry Cole's *Handbooks* of 1841 and 1842, along with, in the latter volume a work engraved by her older sister, Mary. Their father worked in the law courts, rising to "Clerk to a Barrister" by 1851. When, in July 1843, Henry Bellenden Ker was asked by his colleagues on the Council of the Government School of Design to renew his efforts to find a teacher for the proposed wood-engraving class in the Female School of Design, it was suggested that he might obtain "the services of Miss (Mary Ann) Williams or any other lady competently skilled in wood engraving".¹¹¹ Possibly Miss Williams preferred to pursue her career as a practitioner, but "Miss Waterhouse" was agreeable to starting work in October that year, giving two lessons for a fee of one guinea each week. During the 1840s

¹⁰⁷ 'Clarke', *Gentleman's Magazine*, (1866), p. 437.

¹⁰⁸ NA, MS ED 28/6, f.78 (1856)

¹⁰⁹ NA, MS ED 28/10, f.61. Regrettably, this MS consists of Henry Cole's reports to the Council but Harriet's original letter is not on the file so her stated reasons for resigning are unknown.

¹¹⁰ 'Clarke', *Gentleman's Magazine*, (1866).

¹¹¹ *Council Minutes, Govt. School of Design* (1849), 4 July 1843.

student demand for the class seems to have been fairly buoyant: Annie Waterhouse secured Council approval for additional equipment to teach colour printing from wood-engravings and successfully negotiated both an increase in her hours and a transfer to salaried status “in the same manner as the other teachers”.¹¹² For two, three-hour, classes a week she was, by the early 1850s, earning a salary of £83 a year.¹¹³ Since this left several days each week in which she could pursue, if she wished, her own wood-engraving practice, it seems an exceptionally generous arrangement.

Henry Cole could not allow such largesse to continue after he took over management in 1852, finding, on investigation, that there were only eight students in the class. Teaching was removed from the Female School of Art in Gower Street to the Central school of the Department of Science and Art, then based at Marlborough House, where he had instituted a number of advanced “Technical” classes. Annie was now required to teach five days a week for three hours each day, for the same salary, plus a three-quarters share of any fees paid by the students of her class, and to be supervised by John Thompson as “director” of the class. He was to be paid £100 per annum “to attend once a week...provided no less than ten students agree to join the course for one year.” Annie was financially compensated, to some extent, the following year, when, on the recommendation of Bellenden Ker (presumably in his capacity as a member of the Council of her previous employer) and Henry Cole, she was appointed, in addition to her teaching role, Matron of the female classes at Marlborough House. From 1853 to her resignation in 1856, she, too, was paid a salary of £100 a year, plus her share of the students’ fees.

Although her terms of employment were more stringent after 1852, Annie benefited in several respects from Cole’s new regime at the Department of Science and Art. She herself was paid far more, and far more reliably, than she could have secured as a practising wood-engraver, and at a rate which conferred upon her a similar status to the other female art teachers in the Department. Her class experienced a period of active support and promotion of students’ achievements, not only from John Thompson, whose reports on the activities of the students in 1853 and 1854 (published the year following) reflect a widening of the students’ artistic training and publishing, but from the scope offered by the new management of the Department

¹¹² Ibid., August 1847 and October 1846.

¹¹³ NA, MS ED 9/3: Minutes, p.147 (Autumn 1852).

for competition, prize-winning and exhibition among the students.¹¹⁴ For a brief period, the female students of the wood-engraving class experienced accolades and praise.

The number of students joining the class increased over this period, Thompson asserting in his report on the class at Marlborough House in 1854 that due to shortage of space, numbers had to be restricted to fifteen.¹¹⁵ When Maria Rye visited South Kensington in 1858, however, she reported that the number was “not many...not more than sixteen in the room”, evidently dismayed to see “how few avail themselves of this opportunity of acquiring so lucrative a profession”.¹¹⁶ “Disgusted at what they are pleased to call the tediousness of the process”, she claims, many students fail to complete the course or become sufficiently proficient, in large part due to the fact that they and their parents want a quick and easy solution to immediate lack of funds, rather than having prepared, as a matter of course during years of relative plenty, to become independent workers.¹¹⁷ It is contended here that neither the Department, nor Maria Rye and her predecessors in exhorting women to train to become wood-engravers, had an understanding of the workplace, nor the perspective of young women who were genuinely anticipating a need for paid employment.

‘Graduates’ of the class in wood-engraving

Little is known about the social origins, motivation or experience in finding work of individual students of the wood-engraving class, either, during the 1840s at the Female School of Design, when, as has been seen, the student’s expectations of the class leading to employment seemed high, or in the period after its removal, in 1852 to the Central school. In this latter period, Rye describes a lack of motivation (and application) among students encountering the tediousness of the task.

Sources include the Minutes of the Council of the Board of the Government School of Design, the exhibition catalogues for national prize-winners’ exhibitions, held in London in the early 1850s, and the Annual Reports of the Department of Science and Art, but these are inevitably limited in detail, and increasingly summary as the 1850s progressed.¹¹⁸ During this decade, the Central school at Marlborough House,

¹¹⁴ *Reports of the Department of Science and Art* (London: HMSO, 1854-1859), 1854, pp. 215-216 and 1855, pp.154-155.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* 1855, p.154.

¹¹⁶ Rye, 'Wood engraving', *EWJ* (1858), p.175.

¹¹⁷ Rye, 'Wood engraving', *EWJ* (1858), pp.175-176.

¹¹⁸ *Council Minutes, Govt. School of Design* (1849). *Catalogues of exhibitions of work of the students of the Government School of Design* (London: HMSO, 1850 and 1851). *Catalogue of the exhibition of*

then at South Kensington, presented itself increasingly as an institution for training teachers of art and design; the technical classes, including wood-engraving, were largely closed or absorbed into the programme for training teachers, the more elementary subsidiary schools in London and the provinces had their own arrangements for rewarding students' excellence, and while national scholarships and medals were continued, national exhibitions ceased.

Two women students of the 1840s are mentioned as evidence of the effectiveness of the wood-engraving class at the Female School of Design in the 1840s in supplying female wood-engravers, trained in design, to the 'profession'. The terms on which they moved into the workplace, and the tone in which their success was reported reveal much about the vision of the Council and the commercial reality encountered by the students. In March 1845 the Director of the Government School of Design reported to the Council that "a pupil...of the name of Davis", taught in the Female School wood-engraving class by Annie Waterhouse, "is now in employment and receiving thirty shillings a week".¹¹⁹ This success presumably encouraged a positive view of the class on the part of the Council, since in July, when both "male and female students assembled together for the award of prizes" the work of the female students was particularly praised as showing "high promise" (although there were, at this stage, no prizes for subjects taught exclusively to girls), that "employment had been offered to female designers" and the Prizes Committee particularly noticed "their very excellent productions in wood engraving by the class of designers for that branch of art."¹²⁰ The following year, prizes were introduced for students of the class at the Female School of Design for "drawing and engraving on wood".¹²¹

Miss (presumably) Davis had not, of course, been offered secure long-term employment, nor a guaranteed level of pay. Even in the exclusively male wood-engraving workshops or the prestige printing firms such as the Chiswick Press, the flow of work was seasonal and paid on piece-rates, and out-workers, as women inevitably were, were even more vulnerable to fluctuations in trade. It is conceivable that she had been offered work with a specialist, non-commercial author or

work of the students of the Department of Practical Art (London: HMSO, 1852). *Catalogues of exhibitions of work of the students of the Department of Science and Art* (London: HMSO, 1853 and 1855). *Reports of the Department of Science and Art* (1854-1859).

¹¹⁹ *Council Minutes, Govt. School of Design* (1849), 4 March 1845.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5 August 1845.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 4 August 1846.

publisher, but if so, the presentation of her success as one to be emulated by other students was something of a mis-representation.

Miss Davis' experience was considerably more positive than that of Miss Waite, two years later, however. Having been awarded first prize (worth two guineas) in the first year of awards for female wood-engravers, Miss Waite was identified by the Director in his report to the Council in April 1847 as having "been taken" by Ebenezer Landells on, essentially, an apprenticeship without payment of premium. She was to work for nothing the first year, to receive six shillings a week the second year, and ten shillings a week the third, "being employed nine hours per diem"¹²². These were understood by the Council to be "liberal terms" for a barely-trained apprentice, and indicative of the length of applied study necessary to command industry-standard rates for skilled wood-engravers. It can hardly have been encouraging for the other students, however. Although one might speculate that Landells, who was much respected as a teacher by his former pupils, including the Dalziel brothers and "some of the most outstanding engravers and illustrators of the next generation", planned to deploy Miss Waite on his new venture into an illustrated magazine for upper middle class women, the *Lady's Newspaper*, nothing more is known of her.¹²³

In addition to their obfuscation about whether art (design) or "mechanical" skill (technique) were being taught to the female students, the Council members appear concerned not to consider too closely questions of the intentions of the students or the nature of the industry.

Clarisse Matéaux (c. 1834-1911) was already a prize-winning student in Annie Waterhouse's class when it was transferred to the Central school of the Department of Science and Art in 1852, and was successful again in 1852 and 1853.¹²⁴ Her work, an example of which is provided at Figure 3.11, was published in 1854 in the catalogue of the Department of Science and Art's collection of exemplars of design which Henry Cole had asked Ralph Wornum to prepare.¹²⁵ By 1854, the students of the class were undertaking 'commissions' from professors in the Department, and

¹²² Ibid., 13 April 1847

¹²³ Doran, 'Landells', *ODNB* (2004).

¹²⁴ *Catalogues of student works exhibited*.

¹²⁵ Ralph Wornum, *Catalogue of Ornamental Casts in the Possession of the Department...the Renaissance Styles* (London: Longman, 1854).

other civil service departments, for illustrations in published works of reference.¹²⁶ “Initiatory practice” in work for external engravers had been undertaken. In all, a total of one hundred and thirty-six ‘subjects’ were engraved by the students, a further thirty-six by Annie Waterhouse, and work commenced on a further series of the Department’s “Greek and Roman bas-relief ornaments”. It must be supposed that the combination of John Thompson’s long experience and innumerable contacts in the commercial trade, with Henry Cole’s concern to utilise the Department’s resources to offset public investment in the Department, had resulted in this unprecedented introduction for the students to the practical trade, which the Female School of Design and Annie Waterhouse alone had been unable to offer. However, “diagrams for Mr. Burchett’s work on geometry” or “of the method of lighting vessels while at sea” were of a different order of creative satisfaction from that promised by the artistry of practitioners such as Mary Ann Williams, from the 1830s and early 1840s.

In 1855 Clarisse was awarded a scholarship, by then transmuted into a salaried studentship of the so-called Training Class for teachers in the Department’s schools, of five shillings per week, which was subsequently increased to ten shillings a week.¹²⁷ She is likely also to have received some payment for the student commissions she undertook, and gained experience through these of the prevailing rates of pay and nature of the wood-engraving trade. She remained enrolled at the Department, pursuing her artistic training, and practising wood-engraving, until 1860, when she was notified that her ‘salary’ would not continue in the new academic year. On writing to protest, she and the other female students whose salaries had been revoked were informed that the Board considered that “having extended already great indulgence to these students who have been very long in taking their certificates” their application should be declined.¹²⁸

By the close of the school year 1862-1863, Clarisse was teaching a class in wood-engraving at the Female School of Art in Queen Square. The headmistress there, Louisa Gann, and Clarisse had previously been fellow-students at the Female School of Design.¹²⁹ She stayed for perhaps two years before pursuing authorship of books for children and, from 1871, being “in effective charge” of editing the newly-founded magazine for children *Little Folks*, which was published, as were most of

¹²⁶ *Report of the Department* (1855).

¹²⁷ NA, MS ED 28/4: Minute books, f.130 (1855) and ED 28/8: Minute books, f.155 (1858).

¹²⁸ NA, MS ED 28/12: Minute books, f.70 (1860).

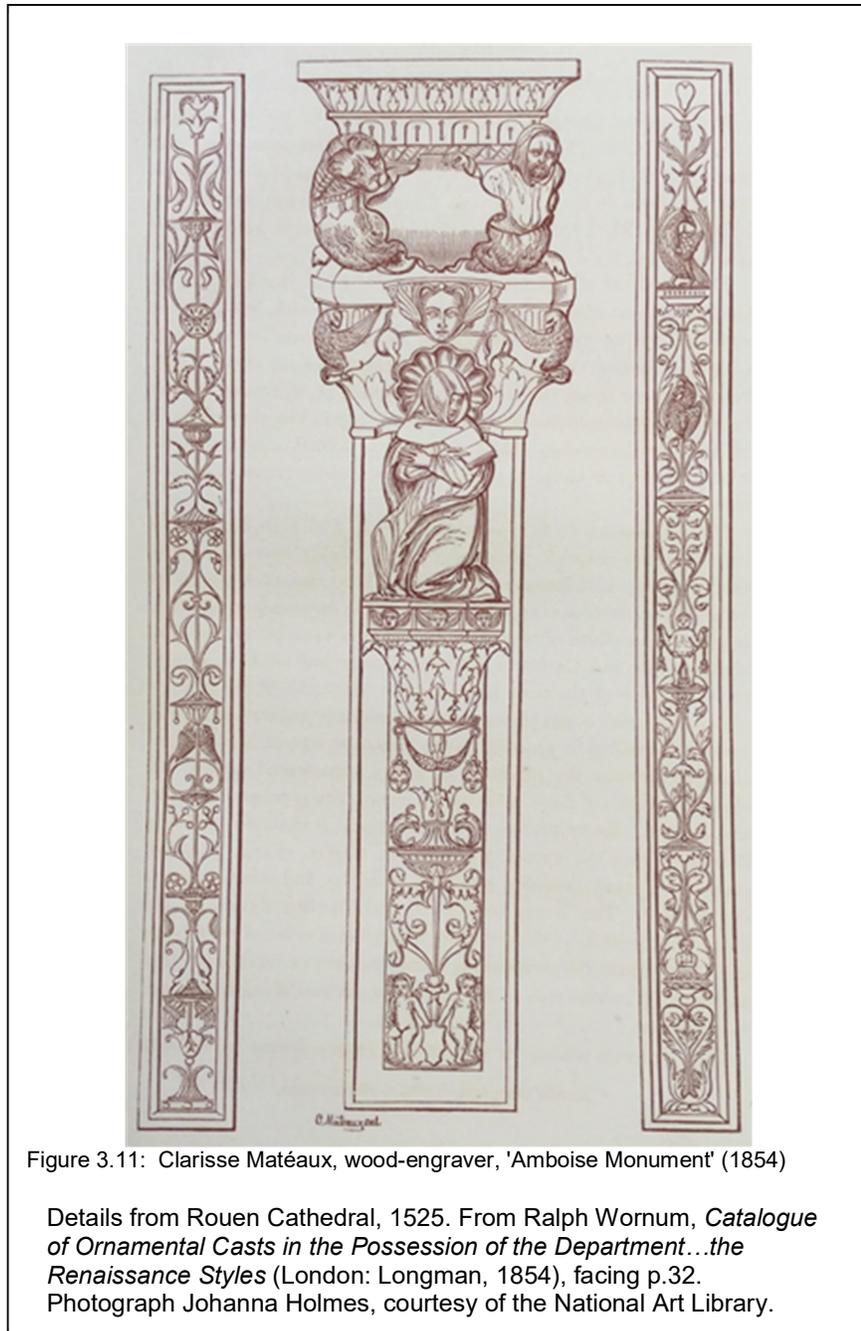
¹²⁹ CSM, RFSA Reports (1863).

her other works, by the firm of Cassell.¹³⁰ She did not, apparently, practise as a wood-engraver after leaving South Kensington and her brief term as a teacher.

Conclusions

The activity of wood-engraving briefly enjoyed status as a manifestation of artistic work, but quickly was overtaken by technological change, becoming largely mechanical. At the outset of this research it was anticipated that the effects of industrial production in the printing trade aimed at mass markets would be found to have been exclusive of women workers by virtue of the growth of workshop production, bringing traditionally hierarchical apprenticeship-based qualification and access to work opportunities to a previously family-based workplace. However, it has been found that the occupation of wood-engraving, possibly because, unlike printing itself, it involved no heavy machinery, remained, in London, at least, virtually unregulated and unstructured throughout the nineteenth century, despite the large number of practitioners. Although mass production did, to an extent, give rise to dedicated wood-engraving workshops where only boys and men worked as apprentices and journeymen, this study has found that such workshops, even in London, the centre of the printing and publishing trade for quality books and periodicals of the time, were neither monolithic in scale nor particularly structured in terms of terms of pay and occupational status. Many more 'workshops' were informal affairs where two or three practitioners gathered, to share company, trade news and expenses while performing a taxing and repetitive task. The occupation was not exclusive of female practitioners, therefore, to the same extent as those industrialised occupations where gender-determined factory-based work was becoming entrenched. Nevertheless, rates of pay for piecework in an uncertain and seasonal market placed this occupation firmly in the realm of those which might be pursued by sons and daughters of the lower middle class. Although the returns on individual pieces of work were consistently presented as lucrative by upper middle class advocates of the work for women, the annual income generated would have to be supplemented by additional income from other sources in order to sustain a reasonably comfortable lower middle class lifestyle. The occupation was not a means to financial independence.

¹³⁰ Simon Nowell-Smith, *The house of Cassell, 1848-1958* (London: Cassell, 1958), p.129.



Henry Cole and Maria Rye both summoned idealised and unrealistic images of womanhood to recruit young women to the occupation of wood-engraving: the first an artistic sensibility pleased and satisfied with the creation of something beautiful for its own sake and incidentally capable of earning her some financial reward, and the second a female warrior who will overcome difficulties if only she will apply herself fully to the task. Neither of them recognised the commercial realities of the industry as playing any part in the feasibility of women's participation. Most

critically, the Government School of Design, in instituting and maintaining its wood-engraving class for women, lacked determination to provide a sufficiently challenging and intensive training to place the young women on an equivalent level of speed and competence with male apprentices.¹³¹ When, in the early 1850s, John Thompson made efforts to use his expertise and contacts to provide the students with experience of working for printers and publishers the work lacked creative challenge and reinforced the sequestered, uncommercial nature of the women's training. There was at the heart of the initiative an expectation of amateurism on the part of women, which was reflected and reinforced by the attitudes which drew Maria Rye's exasperation. This well-intentioned provision was not only ineffective in facilitating employment for women, but it validated a view in the workplace, among employers and students that it was the nature of women that they "only devote themselves partially to the work".¹³²

Throughout the nineteenth century, despite the assurances of commentary in the 1830s that this was work ideally suited to supposedly feminine delicacy of hand and sensibility, female women's participation in professional wood-engraving was marginal. Largely trained by fathers and brothers, women in the first three or four decades of the century pursued the occupation professionally only in family groups led by their menfolk. Mary Byfield, the only practising female wood-engraver in this period for whom there is substantial evidence over a long career in the trade, cultivated her unique relationship with a 'niche' printer using hand-presses for limited print-runs and maintained a relatively secure place in his workforce, although diminishing in value as the 1840s gave way to the 1850s. This strategy sheltered her position from the competition of the generation of wood-engravers trained to cater to the demands of the mass-produced printed material, and although she trained her nieces in the craft, and they seem to have practised commercially, at least for a time, her younger male relatives did not pursue the same occupation as Mary's wood-engraver brothers had. There is a pattern of men leaving the trade when potentially more lucrative or satisfying pursuits were available, illustrated most prominently by the career of Thurston Thompson, wood-engraver son of the leader of the objectors to women's training in the occupation at the Female School of Design in the early 1840s, who subsequently took up employment with Henry Cole as photographer in the Department of Science and Art. Twenty years after this class was initiated, the widowed female practitioner interviewed by 'Asterisk' for her

¹³¹ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865), pp.312-313.

¹³² Ibid. p.312.

article in the *Alexandra* in 1865 stated that she had not sufficient confidence in the occupation yielding a comfortable living to train her daughters, her sons or the occasional young women who had approached her as potential pupils. Believing that “there were already quite enough (practitioners) in (the trade) and knowing how discouraging it is to go about seeking work and finding none” she felt that her career, initiated through her wood-engraver husband’s training her, was a unique combination of financial necessity and helpful contacts in the printing industry: “to learn on the mere chance of getting employment from strangers would be a waste of time”.¹³³

Miss Davis and Miss Waite made some sort of transition from training to employment within the industry, and it cannot definitively be said that no others did so in the twenty years between 1845 and 1865 during which trained women were emerging from the wood-engraving classes. The majority of students felt the work was tedious and unrewarding and, while potentially a source of “extra pocket-money”, not to be pursued as “regular employment”.¹³⁴ “Such playing at work”, ‘Asterisk’ continues, “is much to be deprecated” as it creates an impression in “the market” of women workers as half-hearted and half-competent, where the “needier sisters” might otherwise earn their living.

The other women considered here all found routes away from the practice of wood-engraving as commerce and competition overwhelmed the industry. Harriet Ludlow Clarke, the only member of the upper middle class identified by this study, engaged in the occupation for its artistic satisfaction as much as for money, but her career in this occupation faded with her chief clients’ retirement from their trades of publisher and artist. She re-trained as a stained-glass designer. Annie Waterhouse, trained at a similar period to Harriet, but of a lower social class, made all she could of the opportunity to teach, rather than practise wood-engraving, gradually securing her employment in the government’s service, negotiating increases in pay and enhancing the training she offered over fifteen years, until her marriage in 1856. Her students in the 1840s and early 1850s were largely drawn from the lower-middle and artisan classes – young women who were brought up expecting to work, and who might be expected to apply themselves to work of reasonable remuneration, but it appears that few pursued the occupation. Clarisse Matéaux, the only one of Annie’s students who seems to have excelled in, and enjoyed, the occupation, made

¹³³ Ibid. pp.310-311.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p.313.

an attempt to revive a wood-engraving class for young women, which she taught, in the 1860s, but could not make it pay, and made her own path into writing and editing for a publisher. It is tempting to believe that during this transition she was the author, 'Asterisk', of the article in the *Alexandra* magazine, who concluded that "the solitary worker is at a disadvantage now", a situation which could only be rectified by women building their own network of publisher, printer, wood-engravers and market, with the Female School of Art in Queen Square at its centre.¹³⁵

The multitude of male wood-engravers in London, while they worked in a precarious and solitary trade, which was largely unconsolidated into workshops or businesses of any scale which might offer them security, nevertheless were trained and practised within a close-knit network which facilitated the formation of business relationships and mutual confidence between publisher, printer and image production. Women, by virtue of their separate, and inadequate, training, found these business networks impenetrable. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that the class at the Female School of Design and in the early years of the Department of Science and Art (the decade 1843-1853, approximately) gave lower middle class girls and women an experience of attendance at an institution outside the home, work in a group of peers unconnected with family and recognition of success, in the form of scholarships and prizes, giving endorsement to a desire to produce good work. As will be seen in the following chapter, promotion at work and sales into commercial production were the additional rewards of female students in other, more design-focused classes. The status of the wood-engraving class as a "technical" class was reinforced when Henry Cole removed it to the Central school, where it became something of an anomaly, far less prestigious or productive of 'success stories' than the design and art-teaching classes. However, in the preceding decade, some spirit of common effort to acquire new skills and perform them excellently inspired Clarisse Matéaux in her later attempts, in the 1860s, to reignite that spirit as a teacher at the Female School of Art in Queen Square. It is unsurprising that many of those women who trained in wood-engraving turned to other occupations in which the ratio of reward to effort was higher and the income more reliable. The following chapter considers an occupation in which many artists,

¹³⁵ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865), p.313. The only output from this partnership identified in the course of this research is *The Bath Tatting Book* (London: Emily Faithfull, 1865) with wood engraved illustrations of the tatting patterns designed and engraved by students of the Female School of Art in Gower Street, presumably under the tuition of Clarisse Matéaux (c.f. CSM, RFSA Reports (1863 and 1864). The Report for 1865 is missing from the series.

as well as some of the wood-engravers considered here, sought to stabilise their income, that of teaching their art or craft.

Chapter 4 “Doubt of a lady’s ability to teach”: women teachers of art

Introduction

In 1857 Henry Cole, Superintendent of the Department of Science and Art, was experiencing resistance to his recommendations of female candidates to teach girls’ and women’s classes in the ‘branch’ schools associated with the institution in South Kensington. He reported to the Board that, despite female students’ excellent results, both in his new qualification course for teachers of art and generally, there remained difficulties in placing such teachers in salaried positions, due, in his view, to “some public apathy in engaging their services, arising from the doubt of a lady’s ability to teach Drawing rigidly and precisely”.¹ This chapter examines the impact of this “public” lack of confidence in “a lady’s ability”, despite her qualifications.

Henry Cole’s programme of wholesale change, from 1852 onwards, in the Department of the Science and Art and the many schools of design connected with it, included immediately opening the “salaried training class” for Masters, and then Mistresses. His aim was to provide a pool of students who had been trained to an advanced standard, and examined in the methods and principles of art and design which he was introducing nationally and who would, he planned, fill teaching vacancies in the Department’s ‘branch’ schools across Britain as rapid reform and expansion created them. In part as a result of Cole’s decision, in 1854, that this class, and its associated “salary”, should replace scholarships held by existing advanced students, the first female students were admitted to the class in that year. Not only did Cole for the first time “professionalise” the occupation of drawing master, but for a period in the 1850s the possibility existed of women becoming professionally-accredited drawing mistresses.

This chapter considers the careers of female teachers of art in the period 1820 to 1860, a period characterised, in general education, by a transition from private provision and lack of consistency of educational quality to state intervention in both provision and (to some extent) the scope and quality of teaching. In the earlier part of the period the practice of teaching art, or drawing, was precarious and dependent

¹ NA, MS 28/6, f.105 (1857).

upon private students, or on schools in which drawing was considered an attractive addition to the prospectus. Largely undertaken as a sideline by struggling artists or as the recourse of failed ones, the prevalence and conditions of this occupation are evidenced only occasionally and generally dismissively in primary sources. The three female teachers considered here – Mary Harrison and her daughter Maria, and Elizabeth Terry – are exceptions to this, in that their teaching is referred to favourably, if briefly, by contemporaries, and further investigation reveals remarkable women, although obscure and ephemeral teaching careers. In contrast, Government intervention in the education of the less well-off, both in Britain and in its colonies, began to offer scope for qualification, regular pay and predictable employment, attracting young men and women to teaching as a profession. The female students of the salaried training class at the Department of Science and Art in the 1850s, their origins and ambitions, and the outcomes from their training as art-teachers, are considered. The careers of two of the female students who attracted Cole's attention and who pursued relatively traceable careers are discussed in greater detail: Eliza Mills, whose career took her back to the precarious private sector, and Louisa Gann, from 1858 Headmistress of the Female School of Art, a post in the state-subsidised sector which she held for approximately fifty years.

The historiography of this subject is not extensive. No robust study of artists' teaching practice in this period has been undertaken. Modern histories of the Government Schools of Design, and of the Department of Science and Art and its 'branch' schools have been largely based upon the schools' published reports and minutes, and on papers published in connexion with the many commissions of enquiry into their management and effectiveness in the education of workers in design-led occupations.² The focus of these studies has been upon the organisation and its teachings (and the shortcomings of both) and the achievements of key individuals, notably Henry Cole and the charismatic Headmistress of the Female School of Design from 1842, and its successor, the Female School of Art in Gower Street to 1857, Fanny McIan. The identity and achievements of individual students and teachers is, for obvious reasons, difficult to trace in this primary published material, and particularly so in the case of women, who formed a very small minority. However investigation of two additional manuscript sources - Henry

² Quentin Bell, *The Schools of Design* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963). Edward Bird, 'The development of art and design education in the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Loughborough University, 1992). F. Graeme Chalmers, *Women in the nineteenth-century art world: schools of art and design for women in London and Philadelphia* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1998). Stuart MacDonald, *The history and philosophy of art education*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2004).

Cole's notes of matters to bring before the Board of the Department of Science and Art, and his diaries – adds considerably to the individual histories of the female students considered.³

The “obscure individual”

In her comprehensive study of British water-colour artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Katherine Coombs remarks that not even the most successful of (male) water-colour artists in the first half of the nineteenth century, whose work benefited from the exclusive selling exhibitions of the professional societies and was

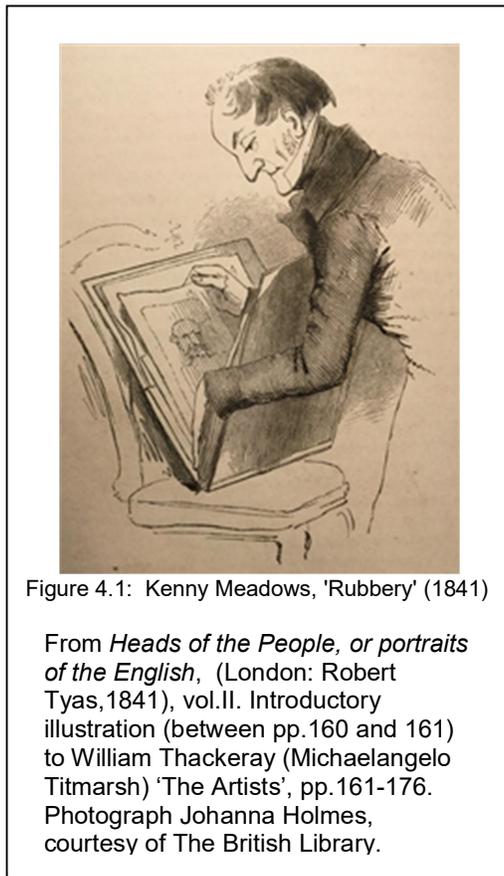


Figure 4.1: Kenny Meadows, 'Rubbery' (1841)

From *Heads of the People, or portraits of the English*, (London: Robert Tyas, 1841), vol.II. Introductory illustration (between pp.160 and 161) to William Thackeray (Michaelangelo Titmarsh) 'The Artists', pp.161-176. Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

collected at the time (and is still today), were able to support themselves entirely from sales of pictures. As she notes, Peter de Wint, “one of the foremost (artists) of his generation, supplemented his income as a drawing master”.⁴ John Sell Cotman, as has been seen, taught in his own academy, both in private homes and in his own premises, and ultimately, from January 1834, as Professor of Drawing at King's College in London.⁵ While the most celebrated artists took pupils who were, or aspired to be, professional artists, all who taught also applied their efforts to amateurs of varying degrees of ability and interest in art, in family homes, in their own premises, and in schools managed by other proprietors. A number (probably

many) also pursued other activities for which an artist was deemed to be required, such as tinting engravings or preparing illustrations for the publisher's engraver, undertook a variety of domestic design, personal companionship or visual recording commissions for wealthy patrons, or pursued other, parallel, careers.

³ NA, MS ED 9/3: Minutes. NA, MS ED 28: Minute books. NAL, Henry Cole: Diaries: typed transcripts, 45.C.

⁴ Coombs, *British Watercolours* (2012), p.34.

⁵ Moore, *Cotman* (1982), p.113.

Although some artist-teachers occupied positions of considerable status, including royal appointments, the majority appear not only to have regarded teaching as a necessary, secondary and often tiresome occupation in comparison with their own artistic activities, but were painfully aware of the low status accorded to “the Drawing Master” by their employers and their colleagues in the art world. A correspondent, himself a Drawing Master in a public grammar school, having studied in the Royal Academy Schools, writing to the Editor of the *Art Journal* in 1858 described his position to be still, due to lack of status and lack of a secure salary, “as it has always been,...the obscure individual, the forgotten one...his boots..cracked, his coat and hat...seedy”.⁶ From this anonymous writer’s perspective, little had changed since, in 1841, William Thackeray’s satirical piece ‘The Artists’ was published. There, the

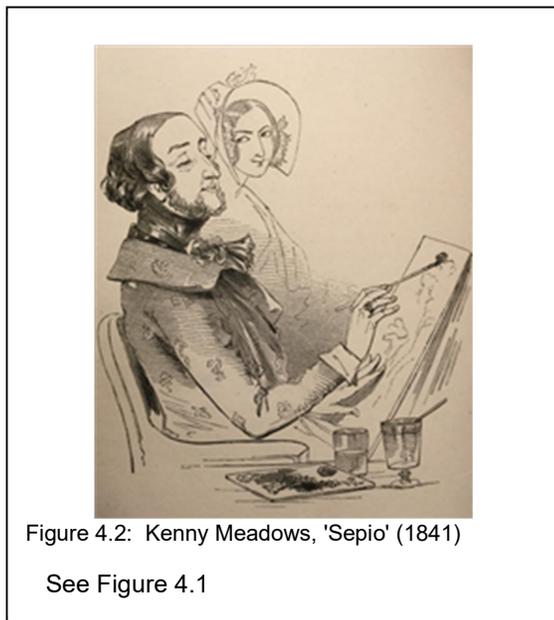


Figure 4.2: Kenny Meadows, 'Sepio' (1841)

See Figure 4.1

artist-teacher in schools, “poor Rubbery” (see Figure 4.1) is depicted as a down-at heel, but affectionately dutiful, husband and father, trudging up to twenty miles each day from one school for young ladies to the next to earn “a sufficient number of half-crowns” to meet his modest household expenses, where his work is appropriated by the students as their own and he is treated with disdain.⁷ In contrast (see Figure 4.2), “Sepio of the Water Colour Society, paints before eight pupils daily” in “houses where...he has a faint hope that he is received as an equal”. He

keeps his own paintings to sell and has investments: “the city ladies die to have lessons of him”, but he is nevertheless portrayed by Thackeray as a shallow, heartless man, whose mother and sisters are “washerwomen, it is said, in Pimlico”.

Some indication of the prevalence of the artist-teacher occupation can be gleaned from data in Christina de Bellaigue’s study of the experience of schoolmistresses and students in private girls’ schools in the period 1800 to 1867.⁸ Here she

⁶ *Art-Journal* (1858), p.307.

⁷ William Thackeray (Michael Angelo Titmarsh), ‘The Artists’, in *Heads of the People, or portraits of the English*, illustrated by Kenny Meadows (London: Robert Tyas, 1841), Vol. II, pp.161-176.

⁸ Bellaigue, *Educating Women* (2007), Table 6.1.

suggests that over seventy per cent of English private schools for girls offered Drawing lessons and that this subject was among the ten most frequently-offered, approximately on a par with Grammar, Geography and History. Given that the twenty-nine schools for which she has identified records represent a small minority of the likely total of short- and long-lived establishments over the period 1820-1860, and that, even so, the majority of girls were educated at home, the prevalence of 'opportunity' to teach this core element of a young lady's education must have been considerable. A numerous body of male and female artist-teachers can therefore be assumed, although, like 'Rubbery', in poorly-paid, insecure and unsatisfying situations. Perhaps because art did not form part of the more academic 'curriculum' for boys, male teachers of art predominate in both evidenced and anecdotal accounts of upper middle class girls' schooling. Whether at school or at home, throughout the period it seems to have been entirely accepted, even expected, that a Drawing Master who was a practising professional (however impecunious) artist would teach both girls and, in decreasing numbers, boys. Cotman, for instance, was finding, in the 1820s in Norwich, a considerable falling-off of numbers of male and female students of the social class to which he was accustomed. Sydney Kitson, a mid-twentieth-century biographer of Cotman, observes that "drawing...had ceased to be the universally fashionable pursuit among amateurs that it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century".⁹ The inference is that the teaching of drawing to youthful, fee-paying amateurs became, from this time, particularly associated with the socially-aspirational accomplishments of young women. Although Cotman himself pursued his career, from 1834, as Professor of Drawing at King's College, London, where he taught "in the region of fifty" students in a class, the young men, of whom there were increasing numbers each year due to Cotman's popularity, pursued their practice in preparation for their professional lives – the Rossetti brothers were among his students there - and not as an essential male amateur accomplishment.¹⁰ Indeed, when the Editor of the *Art-Journal*, Samuel Carter-Hall, responded to the anonymous drawing-master correspondent cited above, in 1858, he acknowledged that "this branch of knowledge has been neglected among the youth of the middle class" and suggested, possibly wilfully, that upper middle class families would pay for tuition in art for their sons only to ensure sufficient knowledge to enable them to become discerning investors in paintings.¹¹ In contrast, he

⁹ Sydney D. Kitson, *The Life of John Sell Cotman* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p.250.

¹⁰ Moore, *Cotman* (1982), p.113.

¹¹ *Art-Journal* (1858), p.367.

observed that drawing was taught “in schools of design to scholars of the trade-class”.

The method of teaching drawing seems to have been similar for both genders. Students learned chiefly from copying. Worked, and often finished, examples may have been provided from the teacher’s own work, images and exercises were taken from one of the many books of instruction, engraved and coloured illustrations in books at home offered examples for the wealthier students, and the more expert visited galleries to copy from the displays. Numerous books purporting to teach Drawing, especially in water-colour and especially to young ladies were published during the period. At least seventeen “manuals” of drawing and painting published before 1840, are listed in F. Graeme Chalmers’ study of schools of art for women in the mid-nineteenth century, which he suggests “may have been most used by women”, and there were other such books.¹² The benefits of practical example and assistance from an accomplished practitioner, including technique, composition and perspective, which would facilitate the student’s completion of their own designs, was available only to the wealthiest or to advanced students considering art as a profession. The majority of artistic work produced by amateurs, increasingly characterised as female and not of the upper middle class, was widely disparaged as mechanical and without merit.

When Henry Cole took over the management and reform of the Government Schools of Design, in 1852, therefore, and began to establish a profession of art teaching, a number of negative social distinctions were already associated with the institution, its students, and the teachers who qualified within its regime, and the method of precise copying as a means of learning which they practised.

Female artists and teaching

Given the lowly status of the occupation of art-teaching, it is unsurprising that evidence of both male and female artist-teachers, is incomplete. Their names do not appear in school prospectuses or annual reports. Among those artists whose biographies or memoirs survive (where men predominate), teaching is mentioned, if at all, as the least of their achievements or interests. If male teachers of art and drawing felt themselves “obscure” and “forgotten”, female teachers are even more difficult to identify, and harder still to trace a career longitudinally. Nevertheless, it is

¹² Chalmers, *Women in... Schools of Art and Design* (1998), pp.42-43.

clear from the infrequent references to a female artist-teacher, that women pursued this occupation in a similar way, and for similar reasons, as their male counterparts, albeit to a far lesser extent. For such information as exists the modern scholar is almost entirely dependent upon Eliza Clayton, the source of virtually all the biographical information relating to female artists and their working lives incorporated into dictionaries of artists and personal memoirs published in the later nineteenth century, or upon incidental references in the letters and earlier nineteenth-century biographies of fathers, brothers or husbands.¹³

Instances of the former case are Mary Harrison and her daughter Maria Harrison. Both were painters in water-colour, taking their subjects from the natural world. Mary was an early member, from 1831, of the 'New' Water-colour Society, and Maria was elected a Lady member of the 'Old' Water-colour Society in 1847. From what little we know of her, Mary was clearly a resourceful woman. At first pursuing water-colour painting as a serious amateur in the second decade of the nineteenth century, she turned her skill to commercial account, teaching art in Liverpool, Chester and "the country around" throughout the 1820s, where she became "a favourite teacher" while bearing and bringing up a family of, in total, twelve children, of whom four became exhibiting painters.¹⁴ One might compare her business with that of John Sell Cotman in Norfolk at the same period, travelling to family houses and teaching local students from her own home. It is not clear what brought her to London in 1829, but presumably a combination of the same factors that brought Cotman: a perceptible decline in the provincial market for tuition of the type they offered, and more lively markets in London for private tuition, as well as for collectable small paintings among comfortably-off exhibition-goers. As Sir Walter Scott observed in the case of the Terrys, "London, or its vicinity (was) the best place for a limited income" to provide comforts, opportunities and contacts.¹⁵ Mary Harrison was possibly also considering the future careers of her children: the whole family moved with her and while her husband's business investment had failed in 1820, there seems to have been a certain amount of wealth to keep and educate the children, enable him not to work at a lower middle class trade, and to live relatively comfortably with her earnings from painting and perhaps some teaching, although this is not mentioned in her son's entry for her in the Dictionary of National

¹³ Clayton, *English Female Artists* (1876).

¹⁴ Robert Harrison, 'Harrison, Mary (1788-1875)', *ODNB* (Archive edn), <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/odnb/9780192683120.013.12440>> [accessed 3 May 2019].

¹⁵ *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by H.J.C. Grierson, 12 vols, (London: Constable, 1932-37), Vol. xi, pp. 20-23.

Biography. While Cotman, however, was assisted into a teaching post at Kings College, London, this was not an opportunity for which Mary Harrison would be considered. She pursued a painting career in the London exhibitions of some forty-five years, for which she received critical acclaim and some income, first exhibiting at the newly-formed and, at that stage, non-exclusive, 'New' Water-colour Society in 1831, and the Royal Academy in 1833.

It seems that for two or three years in the early 1840s the family, including Maria and her brothers Robert and George "went to reside" in Paris, a city in which, according to Ellen Clayton, in 1814 her mother Mary had been "the first English lady who had ever painted (copies)" in the Louvre galleries.¹⁶ In Paris Maria is reputed to have taken some lessons from "M. Millais",¹⁷ while George, who had taken some instruction from John Constable while in London, led groups "on what is believed to have been the first attempt to lead amateurs to sketch landscape in out-of-door classes".¹⁸ Robert was introduced, while there, to cosmopolitan and aristocratic society and thence made his way with his new acquaintances to Berlin and then to Russia, but Maria returned to London with the remainder of her family.¹⁹ Back in London, in 1843, George Harrison continued his sketching class, advertising in the *Art-Journal*. He died in 1846, however, and Maria was admitted to membership of the 'Old' Water-colour Society "in her brother's place".²⁰ Ellen Clayton states that in this same period Maria "utilized her studies chiefly by giving lessons in schools" and Roget repeats this, although both recognise the artistic abilities of Maria and her sister Harriet, and the market for their work.²¹

By 1851 Mary and William Harrison, now in their early sixties, had moved to Kentish Town, where four sisters, Maria, Harriet, Frances and Emily (in order of age from twenty-nine down to nineteen) and their eldest brother William shared the house with them. William was already long-embarked upon his career in the Bank of England, while Robert was still, with his growing family, in Russia, working as tutor in an aristocratic family. Over the ensuing forty years the sisters lived mutually-supportive but independent lives, clearly supporting themselves from a combination of painting and teaching and sharing accommodation for long periods. While Maria

¹⁶ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol. II, p. 298. Clayton, *English Female Artists* (1876), vol. I, p.412.

¹⁷ Clayton, *English Female Artists* (1876), vol. II, p. 280, may intend Jean-François Millet, rather than John Everett Millais.

¹⁸ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol. II, p.298.

¹⁹ Robert Harrison, *Notes of a nine-years' residence in Russia, from 1844 to 1853* (London: T. Cautley Newby, 1855).

²⁰ Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol. II, p.299.

²¹ Clayton, *English Female Artists* (1876), Vol. II, p. 280. Roget, *OWS* (1891), Vol. II, p.300.

never described herself as anything but an artist in the Census (where it has been possible to trace her), her sisters gave their occupations as artist, or teacher, or both. There is no unequivocal evidence that they taught exclusively art, but the consistency of their self-descriptions as artists, and the independent mobility of their lives, suggests that they were not tied to their own school or to elementary school-teaching. From what little one can glean from the historical record, all four sisters occupied the fluid and uncertain working world in which both painting and art-teaching were opportunistic, and in which the first of these commanded distinctly greater social cachet.

In the same year – 1829 – that Mary Harrison moved to London to reinvigorate her career, Elizabeth Terry's husband, Daniel, died. Elizabeth had married Terry in 1815, at the outset of his successful career as an actor on the Edinburgh and London stage and had since had three children. Born in Edinburgh to painter and art-teacher Alexander Nasmyth, one of a talented family of eleven children, including five painter daughters, Elizabeth had assisted her father in his school of art as a girl. The eldest sister, Jane, managed her father's school, conducted in his studio on the top floor of his Edinburgh home, until his death in 1840. During her fourteen-year marriage to Daniel Terry, Elizabeth continued painting and exhibiting her work, and worked as designer on part of the project he undertook for Sir Walter Scott, creating the medieval revivalist interiors at Scott's home at Abbotsford.²² Although this work was largely carried out before 1820, Daniel Terry remained in constant touch with Scott, whose correspondence from the 1820s is the source of much of the information, such as it is, concerning the failure of Daniel's theatrical business ventures, his unrealistic plans to retire to Scotland to be a literary man, the failure of his health in 1828 and, ultimately, Elizabeth's circumstances in the late 1820s.²³ By November 1828, after the final stage of Terry's decline had begun, Scott received shocking reports of how emaciated and incapacitated Terry had become and that "Mrs. Terry's strength is being worn out".²⁴ "But Mrs. Terry is so good an improver of limited finances", he replied, "that I hope they will be able to get on".²⁵ Scott was already not only godfather, but sponsor of school fees and adviser to Elizabeth and Daniel's son Walter. Scott's final act as benefactor to Elizabeth Terry was, as he

²² Clive Wainwright, *The Romantic Interior: the British collector at home, 1750-1850* (London and New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre, 1989), pp.154 ff.

²³ Grierson, *Scott Letters, Vols x-xi*.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. xi, p.141n.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. xi, p.37.

suggested in a letter to John Gibson Lockhart in April 1829, to “get up” a volume about the decorations (“the trumpery”) at Abbotsford, for her benefit.²⁶

Within a few months of becoming a widow, however, Elizabeth had set up her own school of painting for upper middle class young ladies at her home in Devonshire Street. Scott wrote to another correspondent in December 1830 that she had been “very successful in obtaining scholars”. Her younger sister, Anne, and possibly a second sister, Charlotte, lived with her or nearby for periods, helping with the school, for the next five years. In the 1890s Louisa Twining recalled the “indescribable pleasure” of joining, with two of her siblings, in the mid-1830s, the art classes run from her home by Elizabeth Terry and her sisters, and later at the Nasmyth apartment on the corner of Mortimer and Regent Streets.²⁷ These classes, Twining asserts, were “afterwards carried on for many years with great success”.²⁸ However, Elizabeth re-married in 1835, a comfortably-off professional man, moving to his home area of Norwood with her daughter. She seems never to have returned to art tuition as a means of generating an income. Anne married in 1838, moving to Lancashire, where other members of the family were engaged, as was her husband, in engineering. Alexander Nasmyth died in 1840, after which the “apartment at 326 Regent Street” which Jane, Anne and Charlotte had occupied from time to time during his lifetime, was given up. It seems probable that the life of the sisters’ school of art lasted no longer than 1840.²⁹

It appears that, for both male and female artist-teachers, teaching was an occupation to be pursued through economic necessity, to be abandoned whenever circumstances made this possible. Women, particularly, were passing on skills which they had first acquired from painter parents, while men were perhaps more likely to have received formal art training themselves. However diligent and assiduous with guidance they may have been, in contrast with those who relied on mechanical copying, their methods were those they had experienced, and the art they taught was usually that which they themselves practised. There was no consistency, nor commitment to the student’s purpose in becoming economically active. These were the class of teachers appointed as masters (and one mistress,

²⁶ Ibid., Vol. xi, p.164.

²⁷ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of Life and Work* (London: E. Arnold, 1893), p.17.

²⁸ Twining’s recollection, nearly sixty years after the event, may have been a little faulty, as she claims that the Twinings became students at Mrs. Terry’s in 1836, by which time Elizabeth Terry had become Elizabeth Richardson.

²⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, biographical information is extracted from the several articles in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography relating to Nasmyth family members.

Fanny Mclan at the Female School of Design) in the Government Schools of Design during the 1840s, and in contrast with whom Henry Cole was to shape his model of the professional teacher of drawing.

Government involvement and new opportunities

Tuition in Drawing was extended to the sons and daughters of the lower middle classes with the founding, in 1837, of the Government School of Design, and, in 1842, of its subsidiary, the Female School of Design. The financing of this, and of the successor schools, and Henry Cole's application of financial leverage to secure reform, uniformity of tuition, and consistent status among the 'branch' schools had a profound effect on the careers of the art-teachers employed and trained there. Some introductory detail is necessary to understand his purpose, governed by a Utilitarian outlook, and impact. The earliest government grants for the general elementary education of working people had been made in 1833, but in 1839 a reformed scheme of public grant aid, governed by the newly-established Select Committee of the Privy Council on Education (generally referred to in contemporary documents as 'the Committee of Council'), was put in place. While the Government School of Design was a very different institution from these publicly-funded general schools, it received Board of Trade funding within the same regulatory regime and political culture, and was therefore subject to political and popular scrutiny as to whether value for money was obtained. The specific purpose of fitting students for work as designers in the external and internal decoration of buildings or the manufacture of decorated goods and materials, ensured that guardians of the public purse (appointed or otherwise) assessed the success and value for money of the schools in terms of the employability of students after completion of their studies, within the industries to which they had supposedly been trained. The conflict between this criterion, the lack of real understanding and respect between the patrician top management of the schools and proprietors of industry, and the social aspirations and creative inclinations of the students, generated many a commission of enquiry, public criticism and 'reform' over the next seventy years. From its inception in 1836, the Council of the Government School of Design and its successors acted as a conduit and controller of public funds to the 'branch' schools. Local Councils of Management were expected, as were the governing bodies of general Elementary and Normal (teacher-training) schools, from 1839, to secure additional funds from non-government sources to ensure their viability. While, in the case of general education, such funds were overwhelmingly raised and distributed

to schools by charitable and religious organisations, in the case of the schools of design, it was expected that a combination of the government grant with contributions from local interests – businesses and trade organisations and individuals – and fees for tuition among scholars who could afford them, would enable premises to be acquired and maintained, and teachers' salaries paid. The schools of design were thus, from the very first, financially dependent upon three differing interest groups: government, in the form of the Committee of Council, with its wider educational and national trade objectives, local manufacturing industries who needed design which was affordable and appealing to their market, and students and their families who paid fees for tuition and whose career or artistic aspirations were frequently out of alignment with the schools' objectives and teaching resources.

With Henry Cole's appointment, in early 1852, by the Committee of Council as the "Superintendent...entrusted with the general management of the business", rigorous guardianship of the public funding of the schools of design commenced.³⁰ The artist Richard Redgrave was, by the same Minute, appointed Superintendent jointly with Cole, to "supervise instruction at the Head, Female and Branch schools". Cole energetically sought economies for the public purse within the schools of design and compliance with the Committee of Council's objectives across the whole spectrum of education. His changes created both opportunities and efficiencies which his students negotiated and which shaped their careers as teachers of art.

The 'reform' of the Female School of Design

Throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s Cole ruthlessly exploited the leverage offered by the grant or withdrawal of public funding to secure consistency of teaching content, method and performance throughout the schools of design. However, there was a threshold of materiality of such funds below which the branch schools' local management began to assert their independence from his control. A number of 'branch' schools, having developed locally-appropriate courses and business relationships, became increasingly independent in the wake of his successive campaigns, during the 1860s, to provide funding only for the delivery of his (the 'South Kensington') method of tuition in art and design and to pay on results. The ultimate outcome from this process, alongside other incremental

³⁰ NA, MS ED 9/3: Minutes (February 1852).

changes to the overall institution, was that the last commission of enquiry, in 1911, found the Central school, by then the Royal College of Art, to be redundant.³¹

The Government School of Design and the Female School of Design shared premises at Somerset House from their founding until 1848, although in gender-segregated classes. Both offered a rigorously restricted 'curriculum' which abhorred, particularly in the case of the girls, study which would "approximate high art, or lead the students to it".³² The Female School of Design, having made the transition to Gower Street and been re-named the Female School of Art, remained closely linked with the Central school until 1860 in terms of its governance (unlike 'branch' Schools of Design, it had no separate Council or Board) and its finances. As Cole implemented his programme of reform in the 1850s, 'branch' schools' public funding was reduced to contributions to approved capital costs such as the provision or extension of buildings, and a centrally-calculated proportion of salary for the teachers appointed on the Central school's individual recommendation. All other costs, including rent and maintenance on buildings, and additional salaries or occasional payments to teachers, were to be incurred at local discretion and funded locally, from fees to students, funding from industry, or other sources. By 1858 Cole could report that "the *District School for Female Students* at Gower Street...has been made a branch...during the year".³³ He was referring to the fact that, having secured the retirement of the Headmistress at the Female School of Art, Fanny Mclan, and separated the financial accounts of the school in Gower Street from those of the Central school at South Kensington, he was in a position to enforce the same public funding constraints on the Female School of Art as on the other 'branch' schools.

Transferring to the 'branch' school principles of public funding would, Cole agreed with Fanny Mclan, precipitate a funding crisis for the Female School of Art in Gower Street, which had not previously been obliged to raise money to pay rent on its premises, nor other costs including salaries not funded from fees paid by students. Like the Central school, the Female School of Art, being located in central London, did not have a local market for its students in the form of a few, readily-identifiable producers of decorative goods on a large scale, and moreover, its students were

³¹ *Report on the RCA* (1911).

³² F. Graeme Chalmers, 'Fanny Mclan and London's Female School of Design 1842-1857', *Woman's Art Journal*, 16.2 (1995-6), pp.3-9 quotes the *Report from the Select Committee on the School of Design* (1849).

³³ *Report of the Department* (1858), pp.52-53.

less widely-marketable, due to their gender. The effect of this crisis on the careers of the female teachers at Gower Street is discussed in detail in this chapter. The Female School of Art survived as a 'branch' school, continuing to be eligible for the (increasingly limited) public funding available to all such institutions after its relocation to Queen Square in 1860. Like its peers, its students were examined by the Central school, and were eligible to submit work for medals and to enrol for advanced classes and apply to be admitted to the teacher training classes. However, the 'reform' engineered by Cole in the interests of uniformity in his plan, had lasting, and unique, effects upon the character of the institution.

Teaching 'drawing' to the children of working people

Between 1852 and the end of 1854, Cole engineered a position of supremacy for the schools of design in teaching drawing to children who would in future work at the heart of manufacturing production, or in any field where the ability was required to record accurately a three-dimensional object or scene on a two-dimensional material. In 1852, influenced by Cole, the Committee of Council required all children in the elementary schools which it supported to be taught "drawing, concurrently with writing". In the autumn of 1853 Cole consulted with the masters in the schools of design on the methods to be used in elementary schools, and "the extent to which you consider drawing can be taught to a child in forty hours per annum".³⁴ He was concerned to clarify that "the Department views (the teaching of drawing to "the great body of the community") much less as related to fine art of for the encouragement of artists, decorative or otherwise, than as promoting accurate observation by the eye and a rapid deftness of explanation" of visually-perceived information.³⁵ Following this, the Committee of Council introduced provisions for elementary school teachers to become qualified to teach children drawing using the method established by Cole, and to be paid an additional sum in salary each year from the Department if they obtained a certificate after tuition and examination in the schools of design and subsequently trained pupils who passed inspections and examinations.³⁶ These arrangements applied, with minor variations, both to existing elementary school teachers and to students in teacher training colleges supported by the Department. By 1854, there were several of these in London, including the Anglican Whitelands College (founded in 1841 in Chelsea and training only young women), the Methodist Westminster College (opened in 1852 and in these early

³⁴ NA, MS ED 28/1, Minute books f.311 (1853).

³⁵ NA, MS ED 28/1: Minute books, f.311 (1853)

³⁶ NA, MS ED 28/2, Minute books, f.38 (1854).

days catering for both genders on the same site in Westminster) and the British and Foreign Schools Society's non-denominational college at Borough Road (the earliest of all, and training both genders, as it had done since the beginning of the century). In December 1854 the *Art-Journal* carried an advertisement for the first examinations for "Schoolmasters and Schoolmistresses" wishing to enter the examinations for the Department's certificates to put forward their names.³⁷ The financial incentives in prospect for those who were successful were made clear, but also it was announced that in future years the Committee of Council's examinations for all general teachers' certificates of merit would contain a drawing component. Sarah Smetham, a teacher in the elementary schools attached to Westminster training college, was, by her husband's account, among this first group of "about forty" candidates to apply to become qualified under Cole's system to teach drawing to children, preparatory to their entering the teacher training college and more advanced tuition. Of seven who were successful, she was the only woman.³⁸

In 1856 Cole determined that the system of prizes for the pupils of such teachers (though not the system of Departmental funding to their schools) should be extended to all schools, "whether private or free, whether in connexion with the Department or not".³⁹ As the drawing-master correspondent with the *Art-Journal* mentioned earlier noted in 1858, the ability to draw had, by then, become so fundamentally a part of the general expectations of young men that, in his experience of public grammar school pupils, they needed "to draw, with respectable accuracy" in order to pass "several examinations required for public service".⁴⁰

By these incremental methods, Cole therefore established, over a period of a few years, a system of financial and career incentives for his own art masters and mistresses, and for the teachers employed by government-funded schools and colleges, whether qualified or in training, to teach drawing using methods and examples which would enable their pupils and students to pass examinations set by his Department. Two of the fundamental features whereby art-teaching might be designated a profession in its own right – entry closed to all but the qualified, and central standardisation, and inspection, of method and quality – had been established. It has been suggested that the number of art-teachers employed in

³⁷ *Art-Journal* (1854) p.i.

³⁸ Oxford, Centre for Methodism and Church History (CMCH), MS James Smetham Letters and Reminiscences, 1855.

³⁹ NA, MS ED 28/5: Minute books, f.202 (1856)

⁴⁰ *Art-Journal* (1858), p.307.

schools who were qualified only by virtue of their being trained as artists began to decline in this period, compared with teachers holding certificates from the Department. Nevertheless, the former retained a social cachet as educated people tutoring the educated classes.⁴¹ A secondary status attached to the teachers of art to working people who were trained and qualified under Cole's regime, and even within his own schools of design, all of which were to a large extent financially dependent upon fees paid by private students, there was a tendency to appoint artists as specialist professors of classes for which fee income was necessary.



Figure 4.3: James Smetham, 'Richard Burchett' (1853)

Sketch from MS James Smetham Letters and Reminiscences compiled by Sarah Smetham. From the collections of the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK. Photograph Johanna Holmes, used with permission.

Structured advanced training of art teachers

Anticipating the escalation in the teaching resources required in the schools of design, Cole opened, in 1852, a "class for Drawing Masters" at the Central school, then still based at Somerset House, "under Richard Burchett, the Headmaster".⁴² Burchett, shown and described lecturing in a sketch by James Smetham in 1853 (see Figure 4.3), had been a student and master in the school in the 1840s, under the previous regime, and this possibly accounts for a lack of sympathy between

⁴¹ MacDonald, *Art education* (2004), p.144.

⁴² Bird, 'Art and design education' (1992), p.303 ff.

Cole and himself, which made itself clear in their clashes over the conduct of the training class over the succeeding decade. The first intake of students - young men who were all existing students of the schools of design - started training in October 1852.⁴³ The following year the class, now accommodated at Marlborough House, enrolled a further forty-one students, again all male, which was the highest intake in any year for which John Sparkes, in 1884, provided statistics to a commission of enquiry.⁴⁴

In early 1854 Cole confirmed with his Board at the Department his proposals to “organise an advanced class of teachers whose sole time shall be devoted to acquiring knowledge and practising teaching” at the Central School.⁴⁵ Possibly based on experience so far, he stated that it was “absolutely necessary” that they be remunerated “sufficient for them to stay in the school while in training”, and recommended £1.10s per week, plus a fee of £5 from any elementary school or Metropolitan or Provincial school, in which they practised teaching before qualifying. While not an adequate income for a person maintaining their own household in 1854, this was considerably more valuable than a scholarship. In August 1855 Cole reported to the Board that, because the Lords of the Treasury felt that there was insufficient public confidence in the advanced tuition in design being offered by the schools to scholarship students, they should be re-designated as trainee teachers of design, and “all scholarships (should) cease forthwith”.⁴⁶ The difference in value between a scholarship held by an individual student and the full salary in the training class was to be phased in over months or years so that no unmerited increases in reward should occur. Talented but impecunious advanced students, were thenceforth obliged, if they required an income while pursuing their studies, to fulfil the requirements of the prospective art-teachers, teaching in elementary schools and taking certificates in the teaching of drawing, in return for their ‘salary’.

On the basis of this, the Headmaster of the Central School, Richard Burchett could report in his retrospective of the academic year 1855-1856 that “from the commencement of the winter session of 1855/6, the school (had become) only a Normal Training School”, i.e. a training college for teachers of art.⁴⁷ This was somewhat misleading, as the school needed income from fee-paying students to

⁴³ NA, MS ED 28/1: Minute books, f. 100 (1852)

⁴⁴ Sparkes, *Schools of Art* (1884), pp.139-147 .

⁴⁵ NA, MS ED 28/2: Minute books, f.7 (1854).

⁴⁶ NA, MS ED 28/4, Minute books, f.83 (1855).

⁴⁷ *Report of the Department* (1857)

meet the costs of the advanced and technical classes which it offered. It has been estimated that throughout Cole's period of office in the Department of Science and Art (1852-1873), ninety percent of the student population throughout the Central and 'branch' schools of design "fell into the category of general fee paying students".⁴⁸ The proportion of self-funding students, who were free to follow any course of study for which they could pay, was somewhat lower in the Central school, but still constituted sixty to seventy percent of students there. Burchett reported the following year that just under a third of students (seventy-one out of two hundred and forty-three) were "receiving allowances" as masters and mistresses in training.⁴⁹

The course of study offered to the masters and mistresses in training was intended to ensure that the students were familiar with, and able to teach, the full range of drawing and design classes offered in the 'branch' schools. The Central school also offered advanced classes and lectures in which its students could develop their skills and knowledge of 'the higher reaches of art' and of technical processes.⁵⁰ Six 'advanced' courses of instruction were offered, each leading to a certificate, which included painting and modelling the human figure, with anatomical studies, in a variety of media, including oils, and advanced architectural and mechanical drawing. The classes and lectures were not only populated by Cole's prospective drawing masters and mistresses, but by young people (18 years was the minimum age for entry) with a wide variety of economic means and intentions concerning their future careers. It seems probable that a number of the students "receiving allowances" also had ambitions to become practitioners, rather than teachers. The profession of art-teaching as Cole had constructed it, compared with practising as an artist, became closely associated with the less well-off, lower middle class students who attended the general advanced and technical classes alongside the more liberally-endowed.

The prospects for these students "receiving allowances" in the 1850s, however, were not unattractive: the certificates awarded to them placed them in a preferential position for teaching jobs in certain situations, and, if they were employed in the schools of design, of fixed government salaries in relation to the certificates held. In the event, these prospects of security proved illusory, as by 1863 Cole had made all salaries in the 'branch' schools contingent upon the performance of the teachers

⁴⁸ Bird, 'Art and design education' (1992), p.307.

⁴⁹ *Report of the Department* (1858).

⁵⁰ MacDonald, *Art education* (2004), p.163.

and of their students.⁵¹ The final stage of this process of “payment by results” caused uproar among the masters who had been awarded teachers’ certificates by the Central school and had taken up posts in good faith, and led to the founding of the Association of Art Masters. The inference, from this title, that there were, by the mid-1860s, no certificated art mistresses employed in the schools of design is very nearly, but not entirely, correct.

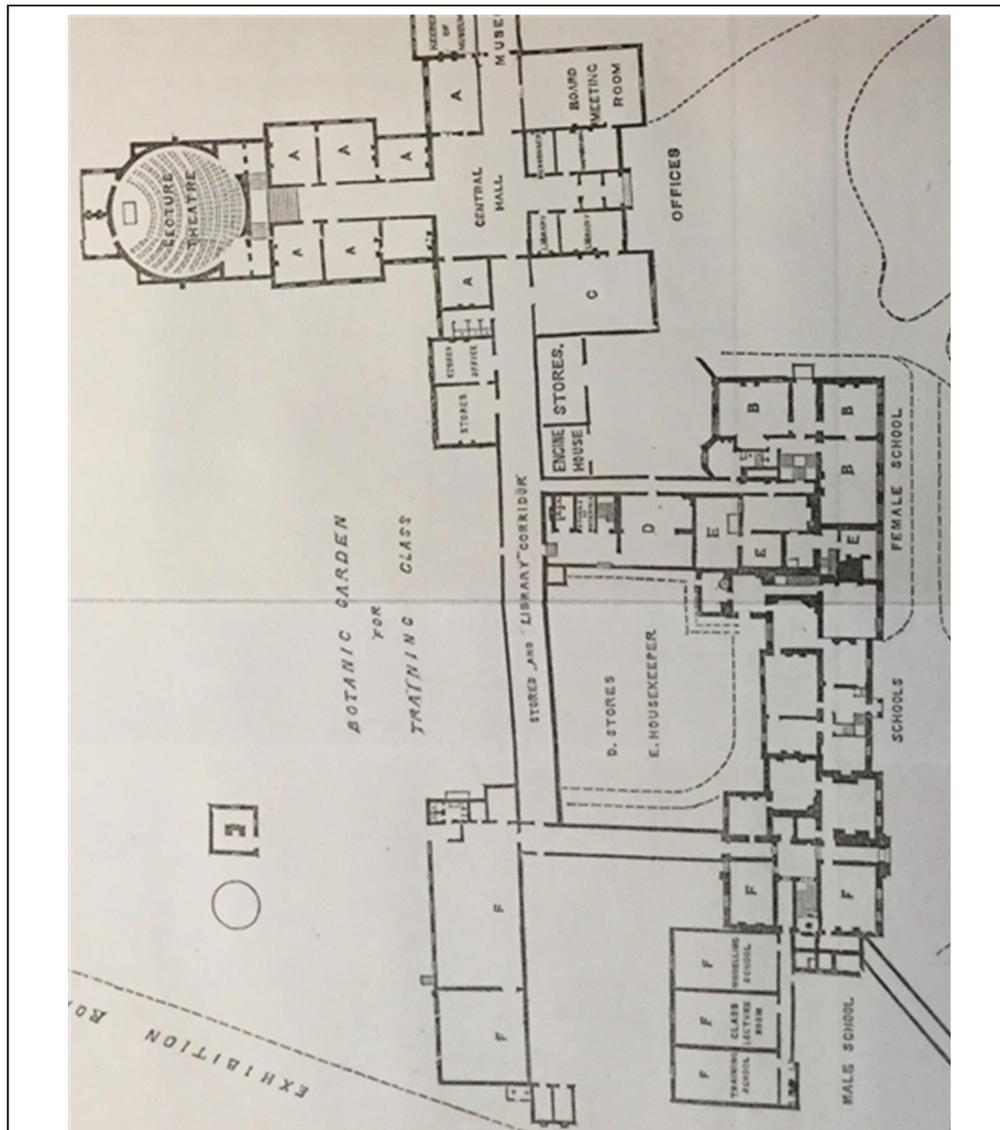


Figure 4.4: 'Plan of the Museums and Schools at South Kensington' (1858)

From *Report of the Department of Science and Art* (London: HMSO, 1858).
Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

⁵¹ Bird, 'Art and design education' (1992) pp.331-339. John Sparkes inaugurated the Association of Art Masters in response to this final blow to the reliable element of salaries (which was not replicated in the system applicable to general teachers).

Art mistresses in training

Cole did his utmost to achieve complete gender segregation at the Central School, both at Marlborough House and at South Kensington. Within six months of taking office, in July 1852, he was proposing to the Board that it “can hardly be questioned” that “Female Students should enjoy the benefits of any instruction given in the Department”.⁵² “If it is decided that they are to be admitted, then it becomes necessary to consider what proper arrangements can be made so as to protect them from the inconveniences which might arise if they studied in common with the male students”. As a result, elaborate arrangements were proposed at Marlborough House to ensure that the female students not only had their own classrooms, but their own (entirely supervised) access to them from the street at the beginning and end of classes, and a female “Matron” supervising their behaviour within the precincts of the Female Department of the Central School. From then on, confusingly, the teaching space allocated to female students at Marlborough House, and afterwards at South Kensington, was frequently titled the “female school”. When moving to South Kensington similar, but more spacious, arrangements were made (see Figure 4.4) and the Warden’s duties passed from the retiring teacher of wood-engraving (Annie Waterhouse) to a newly-appointed Matron.⁵³ New Rules for the Training Class for Female Teachers were printed in March 1857.⁵⁴ These required that the students “be neatly and quietly dressed”, preserve silence during the hours of study and communicate only with the Matron and Teachers.

The first two women to enrol in the salaried training class which Henry Cole proposed to the Board in 1854, with the approval of the Superintendent of Instruction, Richard Redgrave and student careers replete with prizes and scholarships, were Florence Collins and Eliza Mills.⁵⁵ They were followed, later that year, by a further three senior female students from Gower Street, and in the first half of 1855, by two more talented women, Mary Channon and Charlotte Gibbs. Others followed (Appendix B provides summary details of the careers of students who entered the class for Mistresses in Training between 1854 and the end of 1857), but by 1856 it was becoming clear that the female students were remaining in the training class for longer than their male peers before being recommended, or accepted, for teaching positions in the schools of design. Cole had anticipated,

⁵² NA, MS ED 9/3 (July, 1852)

⁵³ *Report of the Department* (1857). NA, MS ED 28/6: Minute books, f.67 (1856).

⁵⁴ NA, MS ED 28/7: Minute books, f.41 (1857).

⁵⁵ NA, MS ED 28/2: Minute books, f.63 (1854).

when specifying the course in 1854, that two years would be the period necessary for a student “to be proficient in teaching across the whole range of the Department’s course” in a school of design.⁵⁶ However, of the six young women accepted into the class in 1854, only two – Florence Collins and Catherine Wilson – had been appointed to teaching jobs by Christmas 1856, and both to jobs within Cole’s direct line of control, at the Central school and at the Female School of Art in Gower Street, respectively. Following on from these first six, a further ten had enrolled by the end of 1856, and three more, including Catherine Wilson’s sister, Helena, were preparing to do so in 1857. It can be seen from Appendix B that their family circumstances were such that the expectation of earning their livings had long been a fact. In order to achieve this, their families had already financed their daughters’ studies in the Female School of Art in Gower Street and its predecessor. Since 1850, money prizes and, latterly, scholarships had been available, which several of the young women had been successful in obtaining, but these, like the ‘salary’ in the Training Class, were not sufficient as an independent income. They were already in their twenties, and needed to move on with their careers. Unlike their male counterparts, many of whom originated in the provincial ‘branch’ schools of design, all the young women and their families were based in London. Relocation to a school of design in a provincial city would be a more complicated matter than for a young man, even if there were an available position and an amenable local headmaster.

In January 1857 Henry Cole and Richard Redgrave conferred on the subject of “the Class for Female Teachers recognised by the Department”.⁵⁷ It must have been clear to them that they would, within a very short time, fill all the available jobs as teachers of classes within the schools of design in London which generated fees from female students (and thus paid that proportion of the teacher’s salary which Cole considered appropriate). Their strategy from then on consisted of three elements: to exert themselves to place female students within the ‘branch’ schools, to fill those posts which came available within the Central school and the Female School at Gower Street with students from the female Training Class, and to put in place “special arrangements” intended to assist the unplaced majority into paying employment as teachers of art in the world beyond their publicly-subsidised realm.

⁵⁶ NA, MS ED 28/2: Minute books, f.7 (1854).

⁵⁷ NAL, Henry Cole: Diaries: typed transcripts, 45.C.118 (1857).

In his report to the Board that month, Cole attributed the failure so far to secure appointments for female teachers in the 'branch' schools to "public apathy" and "doubt of a lady's ability to teach", but this was merely a gesture in the direction of the problem.⁵⁸ There was insufficient income to be gained from female students in the great majority of these schools for the masters to have any interest in sharing the revenue of the school with a woman teacher who would be able to teach only female classes when they could teach both genders and all areas of the Department's course. In the event, only two women who joined the Training class in the later 1850s secured employment in 'branch' schools. Susan Ashworth joined the class in 1858, already a successful student within the Central school, who had completed all the Certificates offered there, and was swiftly placed at the Edinburgh School of Art. Her mother, had separated from her clerical husband and had moved the family – Susan and four younger brothers – from Lancashire to London around 1840. By 1851, she appears to have been receiving family funds, while Susan was studying at the Central school her brothers were already bringing their earnings from respectable jobs into the household. Susan was already nearly thirty when she moved north, and remained in Edinburgh, teaching at the school of design and exhibiting her own paintings, for about twenty years, until she, too, received some financial independence. Mary Julyan also joined the class in 1858, but it was not until 1863 that Cole forced the Dublin School of Design to employ only Certificated teachers of the South Kensington method, requiring the school, as a condition of continued receipt of government subsidy, to employ a new Headmaster, Assistant Master and Lady Instructor.⁵⁹ The daughter of a carpenter and builder, whose mother was also in business, Mary had two older siblings: a brother who joined their father in business and a sister who trained as a certificated schoolteacher in the elementary schools. Aged twenty-six in 1861, Mary described herself in the Census as a Teacher of Drawing, suggesting that perhaps she did some work at the Central school after completing her training there. She moved to Dublin in 1863, and remained there, still working as "Art Mistress" in 1901 after a forty year career of teaching in the Dublin School of Design and exhibiting her own paintings. It is probably no accident that both Ashworth and Julyan worked in schools of design with long-established histories in capital cities of Scotland and Ireland respectively. Here there were markets of young women for their tuition, and artistic societies within which they could develop and exhibit their own work for sale.

⁵⁸ NA, MS ED 28/6, Minute books f.105 (January, 1857)

⁵⁹ John Turpin, 'The Dublin School of Art 1847-1877', *Dublin Historical Record*, 36.1 (1982), pp.2-20.

By the end of 1857 teaching jobs at the Female School of Art in Gower Street and at the Central school, shortly to move to South Kensington, had been filled. Laura de la Belinaye joined Catherine Wilson at the former and Mary Channon continued to teach the female lithography class as she had done since 1853, but now with her teaching Certificate.

In early 1857, Cole prepared proposed alternative “arrangements” for the female students of the Training class to get teaching jobs. He presented these to a meeting of the female students March 1857, which must have been attended by many on the schedule at Appendix B.⁶⁰ This was not a gathering of inexperienced girls, but of mature young women, several of whom had already been teaching for some years, as “pupil teachers”, as “scholars” and as Mistresses in their own right. Many had, as Cole indicated in his report to the Board, attained “great excellence and high class certificates”.⁶¹ They had won national prizes offered by the Department and seen their work included in its exhibitions, including, in the case of Eliza Mills, the Fine Arts and Manufactures Class in the Great Exhibition of 1851, and seen their designs sold into industrial production.⁶² Eliza Mills, as the most senior of the group, seems to have been placed in some sort of representative role: in April, following the meeting, he met her to arrange the “beginning of (the) system for recommendation of Female Teachers”.⁶³

The “new arrangements” which Henry Cole put in place to improve the outlook for the female ‘graduates’ of his Training Class seem to have comprised, at this stage, two initiatives to broaden the range of institutions to which they might be recommended, beyond the reluctant ‘branch’ schools of design. An informal Association for Promoting the Employment of Ladies as Teachers of Fine Art was assembled.⁶⁴ Its six founding members were The Countess Granville, Lady Stanley of Alderley, the Countess Airlie, the Hon. Mrs. W. Cowper, Mrs. Henley and Mrs. Caldwell. Two of them - Lady Stanley of Alderley and her daughter Blanche Ogilvy - were already active in promoting the reform of girls’ and women’s education in England, and were to become more so over the course of the 1860s. Eliza Caldwell was a pioneer of education and work opportunities for girls in textile production in South India on behalf of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge

⁶⁰ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.118 (1857).

⁶¹ NA, MS ED 28/6, Minute books, f.105 (1857).

⁶² Belinda Morse, *A woman of design, a man of passion: the pioneering Mclans* (Lewes: The Book Guild, 2001), p.205.

⁶³ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.118 (1857).

⁶⁴ NA, MS ED 28/8, Minute books, f.161 (1858).

(SPCK). It was presumably anticipated that these and the other ladies would extend and use their contacts to recommend qualified female teachers of art and design in schools and colleges for girls and young women. At the same time, Cole and Burchett put arrangements in place with the leading teacher training colleges in London to promote the employment of the qualified female teachers of drawing, on preferential terms of payment by the colleges to the Department of Science and Art.⁶⁵ Only Eliza Mills is known to have benefited from the first of these 'arrangements', however: her subsequent career is discussed later in this chapter. As regards the second, by March 1858 Burchett was reporting to Cole that "the arrangements are now in operation with the Training School at Whitelands" (College).⁶⁶ Catherine Baines was appointed at both Whitelands and Westminster teacher training colleges, with a total of nine hours' work a week, for which she would be paid £45 a year. While this was regular work, however, the pay was meagre in comparison with the income women teachers could expect to earn in a school of design. In 1858 Catherine Wilson earned £117 at the Female School in Gower Street, and Laura de la Belinaye £90, while Florence Collins, at the Central school earned just under £130.⁶⁷ Although such incomes were increasingly dependent upon a share of student fees for their classes, rather than guaranteed salaries, Catherine had no such prospect of improving her income, since the colleges where she worked were charitably-funded institutions for poor students. The work secured under these "arrangements" was ephemeral: the teaching of "practical geometry and perspective" to prospective (female) teachers of elementary schoolchildren was, in the opinion of the Principal at Whitelands, a waste of both teaching and examination time in a crowded timetable.⁶⁸ It seems to have been with some relief that, when Cole withdrew the special deal in 1863, the college reverted to its previous practice of employing a drawing master for two hours a week, and Catherine's successor, Mary Rees, lost her job as assistant.⁶⁹ The arrangements with the Methodist-run Westminster College, which provided training for both genders, were entirely different in approach, but equally insubstantial. The College had, since opening in 1852, employed an artist-teacher Drawing Master, James Smetham, to teach in the training college, his wife, Sarah, had qualified with the Department of Science and Art as a teacher of drawing to elementary

⁶⁵ Ibid. Richard Burchett, Headmaster of the Central School, reported to Henry Cole in March 1858 that "the arrangements proposed are now in operation with the Training School at Whitelands (College)".

⁶⁶ NA, MS ED 28/8, Minute books, f.161 (1858).

⁶⁷ NA, MS ED 28/10: Minute books, f.80 (1859)

⁶⁸ London, University of Roehampton, Whitelands College Archive, MS Minute Books....1847-1880 (December, 1857).

⁶⁹ Whitelands Minute Books (April 1863) .

schoolchildren, and a number of pupil teachers were in the process of qualifying.⁷⁰ An additional teacher recommended by the Department was an unnecessary additional expense, except insofar as Smetham was incapacitated by mental ill-health in 1857-1858 and on occasion thereafter.⁷¹ Catherine Baines appears in none of the annual reports or staff photographs of this college which had a positive approach to Drawing as part of its curriculum, any more than she does at the very much more resistant Whitelands. Henry Cole's arrangements with such institutions were transitory, and the positions insufficiently substantial to generate a useful income, or a recognised place within the institution.

Over the period to 1860, the female students who had entered the Training Class in the years 1854-1857 dispersed. A number of the women pursued careers, where these can be traced, which combined teaching in schools and in private families with sales of their artistic work at exhibitions. This represented a return to precisely the precarious condition of the artist-teacher, although they had received an education in drawing, and associated techniques, history, botany and geometry not available to their predecessors (certainly not those of the lower social classes) and gained experience and qualifications which gave them a standing in seeking teaching work. At least two turned their art education to good account, though never becoming teachers. Clarisse Matéaux has been discussed in Chapter 3. Charlotte Gibbs was successful, in the mid 1860s, following her marriage to an artist, Philip Newman, in securing work with the fine jewellery-makers Brogden, for whom she drew many successful designs. From these few years onwards, however, none of the students gained positions of the kind for which their training had originally been intended to fit them.

The Training Class for Mistresses of Drawing continued to accept new entrants, although at a reduced rate: the number of new entrants over the course of the 1860s, and then the 1870s, was approximately two thirds of the number entering the class in the 1850s.⁷² The decline in male entry was more marked, however. Although men continued to outnumber women by factors of between three and four to one, the numbers of male students reduced to between a quarter and a third of the numbers rushing through the salaried Training Class in the 1850s, some of them taking up positions after only a year in the class, and without all their Certificates.⁷³

⁷⁰ CMCH, Wesleyan Education Reports (1854-1859).

⁷¹ CMCH, MS Smetham Reminiscences, 1857 onwards.

⁷² Sparkes, *Schools of Art* (1884), Appendix F.

⁷³ Bird, 'Art and design education' (1992), p.305.

Both male and female 'graduates' of the class suffered, in the 1860s, a lack of opportunity in the schools of design for two primary reasons: previous appointees remained in their positions for long periods, and Departmental financial constraints of the 1860s reducing the growth of schools and the remuneration of both students and teachers. When employment prospects improved, in the 1870s, the proportion of male students 'graduating' into jobs in the schools of design recovered its previous level (about one third), but the proportion of women doing so remained negligible. Although women were employed in the 'branch' schools, their routes to those positions were not through the Central School and its Training Classes for Masters and Mistresses.

The overall number of female students in the advanced classes at South Kensington, including the Training Class, however, increased five-fold, from forty-six, when the site was first occupied in 1857, to two hundred and fourteen in 1861. It seems probable that a different class and character of student prevailed as fee income was more eagerly sought by the school's managers, and as prospects of teaching jobs reduced to virtually none. Conditions in the South Kensington 'Female school' were overcrowded and Burchett requested more assistance to maintain order and ensure that the rules on behaviour, which remained stringent, although not particularly observed, were adhered to.⁷⁴ Eventually, in March 1864, a Lady Superintendent, Miss Trulock, began work and some additional space was provided.⁷⁵ Within a few weeks, however, there was open rebellion among the students against her enforcement of the Rules on behaviour and assertion of her authority. Some of the young women were suspended for unacceptable behaviour. Events were reported both in the newspapers and in the *English Woman's Journal*, which presented the students as "well-bred middle class maidens" whose "harmless customs" of chatting as they sketched together in the grounds at South Kensington were being curtailed as if they were children.⁷⁶ Student resentment of Miss Trulock's efforts to regulate behaviour seem to have begun on the day of her arrival, and may have included resentment at her level of remuneration, her personal relationship to Henry Cole and his circle (her employment was recommended by William Thackeray's widow), her interference with the 'laissez-faire' ways which Burchett had allowed to develop (including the receipt of sealed letters by the students at the school), and the fact that she was not a Certificated teacher,

⁷⁴ NA, MS ED 28/14, Minute books f.122 (1862)

⁷⁵ NA, MS ED 28/18, Minute books, f.16 (1864).

⁷⁶ *English Woman's Journal*, 13.77 (1864), p.360. .

commanding respect on these grounds. The “insubordinate” behaviour of the young women questioned by the Board included insolence and disruptiveness. Henry Cole observed, in his closing remarks to his minutes of the Board’s discussion, that the students interviewed were “other persons than Teachers in Training”, implying that they were upper middle class fee-paying students, who had been admitted to “all the privileges” of the “National Art Training School” and should be “prepared to conform themselves to the discipline and rules which my Lords think fit to establish”.⁷⁷ It seems probable that social class distinctions played a significant part in fuelling the upper middle class students’ unwillingness to be governed by a woman obliged to work for her living, or to observe rules intended for the governance of students of a lower social class. Such attitudes were presumably not dissimilar to those encountered by the ‘graduates’ of the class for Teachers in Training. In the event, the two students who had offended apologised and were re-instated. Jane Trulock remained at the school for a further thirty years. On the basis of her salary, she and her unmarried younger sister kept house in Kensington, near the Central school, taking in as lodgers young female art students coming to London to study from the ‘branch’ schools in the provinces.

Promoting the Employment of Ladies as Teachers of Fine Art: Eliza Mills

Eliza Mills had been admitted to the Training Class in February 1854, with Florence Collins the first women to be admitted to the class.⁷⁸ Born in 1831, the daughter of George Mills, a carver and gilder living just south of the Thames in Waterloo, and his wife, Caroline, Eliza had enrolled at the Female School of Design at some point in her early teens, winning her first prizes (worth three guineas in total) in 1847, for her copies in oils and drawing the figure in the round. She continued to win prizes after Cole introduced his first national competitive regime in 1852, in all the areas of design considered appropriate for female students, particularly designs for fabrics and carpets, as well as drawing. Her “fresco painting” had been selected for exhibition by the Department and displayed in the Fine Art court of the Great Exhibition.⁷⁹ Eliza had done reasonably well, financially, since Cole had taken over, winning approximately £23 in money prizes in the national competitions of 1853, which, together with the Scholarship to which he appointed her in 1852, which was effectively a teaching assistant position, in which her “whole time and services

⁷⁷ NA, MS ED 28/18: Minute books, f.76 (1864).

⁷⁸ NA, MS ED 28/2, f.63 (February, 1854).

⁷⁹ Morse, *The Mclans* (2001), p.205.

(were) to be at the disposal of Mrs. Mclan, for the benefit of the School”, brought her income in that year to over £50.⁸⁰ Seven further Scholars had since been appointed in the Female School of Art in Gower Street to share the teaching load, and the value of her Scholarship had increased, in the school year 1853-4, to £30, before Eliza was admitted to the Training Class, probably at a salary of £1 per week, in February 1854.⁸¹ For a young single woman living with her parents, albeit with three younger sisters, this was a reasonable income, but without a teaching post, she had no share of the fee income from students, and no regular income in prospect in relation to her Training Class Certificates.

Following the introduction by Henry Cole in 1857 of the new “arrangements” for recommending qualified female teachers of drawing to jobs beyond the schools of design, Eliza Mills was “recommended” to teach the “South Kensington system” of drawing to the daughters of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. She began work at Buckingham Palace in 1857 or 1858.⁸² Princesses Helena and Louise were aged 11 and 9 respectively in 1857; and Princess Beatrice was born in April that year. Drawing had been introduced into Louise’s school timetable in 1854, when she was six. It is not clear how Eliza’s introduction to the Palace was made. The most likely scenario seems to be that Henry Cole mentioned the ‘problem’ of placing the female students to Prince Albert during one of their many discussions of the progress and future activities at the South Kensington site, but it is possible also that the Countess Granville, whose husband, the Earl Granville, was a trusted adviser to both Victoria and Albert, made the introduction in furtherance of the aims of the Association for Promoting the Employment of Ladies as Teachers of Fine Art.⁸³ There is copious evidence of Prince Albert’s interest in the scope and method of his children’s education, and some evidence that he was interested in introducing the most advanced contemporary methods.⁸⁴ It has been suggested that the arduous plan of education for the royal children devised by Albert under the guidance of Baron Stockmar in the early 1840s, became more flexible during the 1850s as it was applied to the younger children.⁸⁵ With the appointment of Lady Caroline Barrington in the early 1850s to take charge of the care and education of the younger girls, their

⁸⁰ NA, MS ED 9/3, Minutes (March 1852).

⁸¹ NA, MS ED 9/3, Minutes (May 1852). NA, MS ED 28/1, Minute books, f.324 (1853). It is not clear for how many weeks of the year the “allowance” of £1 per week was payable.

⁸² NA, MS HO 45/7392: Royal patronage and use of the title Royal: Female School of Art (January, 1860).

⁸³ Jehanne Wake, *Princess Louise: Queen Victoria's unconventional daughter* (London: Collins 1988), p. 104ff.

⁸⁴ Wake, *Princess Louise* (1988), p.29.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

educational routine was reorganised, with “three governesses...under the meticulous instruction of Prince Albert”.⁸⁶ He seems to have introduced, or instructed Lady Barrington to do so, during this period, a number of female teachers who were trained, as Eliza was, in a method of teaching, rather than relying entirely on social status.⁸⁷ Almost by definition, these were young women who had been educated in the expectation of working for their living, whose social origins were lower than those customary for the education of young ladies of the aristocracy. At Whitelands College, in 1855, the Principal reported with satisfaction to his Committee that, the Buckingham Palace schoolroom having been “reorganised...under the charge of a schoolmistress”, a past student of College, “Miss Burr”, who had in the interim been teaching at “Mr. Gurney’s School at Marylebone”, had been appointed.

Probably neither Eliza Mills nor Miss Burr occupied a significant position in the Palace schoolroom hierarchy, nor one offering many fee-earning hours, given the plethora of subjects accommodated within the timetable. Neither of them is mentioned by the sources consulted, or seem to be recorded elsewhere. However, the status this appointment conferred resonated through Eliza’s subsequent career.

The duration of Eliza’s appointment at the Palace is unknown, but it may be speculated that it was relatively short-lived. Princess Louise, the most artistically-talented of the three younger princesses, was taught painting also by at least two of the male artists employed in various capacities by the Queen: William Leighton Leitch and Edward Henry Corbould.⁸⁸ By 1864, Louise was also studying modelling and was developing her artistic skills far beyond Eliza’s qualification to teach. Reports of Eliza’s other teaching work in the period between 1857 and 1868, when she began work at Cheltenham Ladies’ College, are difficult to verify. It is entirely possible that, as suggested by John Sparkes’ record of the Central school and its students, she combined a few hours per week at Whitelands College and Spitalfields school of design with a few further hours at Buckingham Palace.⁸⁹ This would, at least have provided her with a viable income. However, as in the case of Catherine Baines’ employments at Whitelands and Westminster colleges, no corroborating evidence has so far come to light.

⁸⁶ John van de Kiste, *Queen Victoria's Children*, rev. edn (Stroud: Sutton, 2009), pp.23-24.

⁸⁷ Whitelands, Minute Books (November, 1855).

⁸⁸ Wake, *Princess Louise* (1988), pp.50 and 56.

⁸⁹ Sparkes, *Schools of Art* (1884), p.144.

In 1868 a leading member of the Council of management at Cheltenham Ladies' College reported to his colleagues that he had "made an arrangement with Miss Mills, Drawing Mistress to the Royal Family, to be appointed Teacher" for an initial period of one term "as an experiment".⁹⁰ John Houghton Brancker was accustomed to take executive action on the school's behalf, and to manage its finances, despite there being a Lady Principal, Dorothea Beale, appointed ten years previously. It was not until 1875 that a constitutional change was engineered which placed management more firmly in her hands and brought more like-minded people into the governance of the business. Eliza remained in Cheltenham, teaching drawing and water-colour painting at the Ladies' College, until 1882. When she arrived, a drawing master was already in post, Mr. S. Bradshaw, the school's finances were uncertain, and drawing was offered as a subject included in the fees. As the school became more successful in attracting students, Dorothea Beale became more confident in her methods and in the school's future. In the early 1870s, the school moved into new buildings, which included "accommodation ample" for two hundred and twenty pupils to be taught and included rooms dedicated to calisthenics, painting and drawing, natural science and practical chemistry.⁹¹ At the same time, a new drawing master was engaged on the basis of Dorothea Beale's recommendation to the Council, Mr. Bonomi Warren, at a salary of £150 per annum for eight hours teaching per week.⁹² Eliza Mills remained as one of the teachers of classes in drawing, water-colour and, towards the end of her time at the school, oil painting. Her credentials as "late teacher of the Royal Princesses" continued to be advertised in the school prospectus and the fees payable for her classes were in some years comparable with those for the male teachers.

Art tuition at the school went from strength to strength. Having been included in the students' fees in 1868, when Eliza started to work there, the school next began, in 1869, to offer tuition, for a fee, to "occasional students", but by 1880 was charging an additional fee to regular, as well as occasional, students for a range of classes in drawing, water-colour and oils. By 1881 there were four art teachers and two hundred pupils for their classes, necessitating additional studio space.⁹³ In 1882 a new, dedicated art studio was completed (see Figure 4.5), which Dorothea Beale suggested, in her report for the school year ending 1884, had contributed to "the

⁹⁰ Cheltenham, Cheltenham Ladies' College Archive (CLC), Council minutes, 1855-1871 (March 1868).

⁹¹ CLC, Prospectus and Annual Reports, 1857-1885 (1873)

⁹² CLC, Council minutes (November 1872)

⁹³ CLC, Council minutes (June 1881)

numbers entered for ...drawing (having) largely increased". However, Eliza Mills was no longer a teacher at the school to enjoy the new facilities. She seems to have left the school's employment at some point during the school year starting in 1881. There is no indication in the College archives as to exactly when or for what reason Eliza left, and it is possible that these were entirely personal. It seems a very great coincidence, however, that the art teacher who was not an exhibiting artist, whose social origins, art education and teaching qualifications were of and for the artisan and lower middle classes, and whose chief claim to impress the school's fee-paying parents was that she was the "late teacher at South Kensington and of the Royal Princesses" nearly twenty years previously, should leave at the point when art tuition at the College was about to take on all the appearance of an art school.⁹⁴ In her report on the year 1872, Dorothea Beale announced the recent arrival of several new staff members: "several ladies who have passed University examinations and proved their efficiency as teachers...also Mr. Bonomi Warren, for Water Colors, and Miss Scates, who has taken the highest prizes of the Royal Academy of Music".⁹⁵ She was clearly signalling to parents her school's policy of recruiting teaching staff in all subjects who had the highest qualifications available, and who had proved their teaching ability. Although Warren was not a Royal Academician, his qualifications of gender, social class and artistic practice may have been perceived as superior to those of Miss Mills. If so, this suggests that, in the upper middle class fee-paying sector, confidence in the South Kensington Drawing Mistress qualification was undermined, not only by "doubt of a lady's ability to teach Drawing rigidly and precisely" but also by distaste for the method itself, and its lower middle class practitioners.

In the late 1870s, Eliza Mills seems to have made efforts to establish parity with Warren, by teaching oils at Cheltenham, by exhibiting at the Royal Academy in 1875, and by ensuring that the fees charged for her classes were equivalent with those for the male teachers. No record has been found of her either teaching or exhibiting after leaving Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1882, and although she described herself, in the 1901 Census, living in lodgings in Cheltenham, as a "retired Teacher of Painting" there is no evidence to suggest that she accumulated anything approaching the financially-comfortable status at the end of her life as Mary Julyan in Dublin, or Susan Ashworth. It may be significant that Eliza was, by ten years, an earlier generation of student at the Government School of Design and then at the

⁹⁴ CLC, Prospectus (1875)

⁹⁵ CLC, Prospectus (1873)

Department of Science and Art. Even Henry Cole, when it came to making appointments of Drawing Mistresses in the 'branch' schools of design, selected the practising artist, rather than the product of an education in which the "higher reaches of art" were intentionally excluded.



Figure 4.5: 'The art studio at Cheltenham Ladies' College' (1882)

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“Ruling well and wisely”⁹⁶: Louisa Gann’s school of art

Louisa Gann was never a student in the Training Class for Mistresses of Drawing. The daughter of an auctioneer and merchant, she had been a prize-winning student at the Female School of Design, along with Eliza Mills, since 1847.⁹⁷ When Henry Cole took over management of the schools of design in 1852, and made appointments to the Central school and the Female School of Art in Gower Street, which were under his direct control, Louisa was appointed Assistant Teacher to Fanny Mclan at the latter, at a salary of £30 a year and a share of the fee income from the classes she taught.⁹⁸ During the course of the decade she became Deputy Headmistress, and it seemed at first unnecessary, then, with Fanny Mclan’s departure in 1857, infeasible due to pressure of work, to take teaching certificates at the Central school.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ *English Woman’s Journal*, 13.77 (1864), p.360

⁹⁷ *Council Minutes, Govt. School of Design* (1849), August 1847.

⁹⁸ NA, MS ED 9/3: Minutes (March 1852)

⁹⁹ NA, MS ED 28/8: Minutes (January 1858).

In 1857, Henry Cole called at the Female School of Art in Gower Street to discuss with Fanny Mclan and Louisa Gann the implications of the former's imminent retirement.¹⁰⁰ Cole's management since 1852 had brought benefits. However, by the mid-1850s, his reforms of the whole structure and ethos of the schools of design had gathered pace, including the gradual elimination of terms of employment, and methods of art teaching, dating from before his tenure. As part of a programme of securing value for money from the management of the 'branch' schools, he was gradually requiring greater compliance, and offering less secure financial reward, to the headmasters (and in this case, the headmistress) of the 'branch' schools. Fanny Mclan had been on a comfortable, guaranteed annual income of over £300 since 1852, although Cole had, in the year previous to her retirement, determined that "the system of payment should be somewhat dependent upon Mrs. Mclan's exertions without any guarantee".¹⁰¹ When she retired in May 1857, Fanny Mclan was not replaced: not only was her guaranteed salary, now reduced to £200 per annum, a very considerable saving to the Department's budget, but her departure released her share (a further £100 per annum in 1856) of the fee income from the school's pupils, to be redistributed among the remaining teachers, increasing the proportion of their income which was dependent upon their own "exertions" in recruiting paying pupils.¹⁰² Mclan's departure also brought the scheme of tuition into line with Cole's precepts for the course of tuition offered at a "District School": students were taught only to a specified level, were examined on standard examples and principles and were taught by teachers who were themselves products of the system of training laid down by himself and Redgrave. As has been seen, Catherine Wilson had already joined Louisa Gann, and Laura de la Belinaye's appointment followed in 1857.

These changes were not sufficient to achieve complete conformity with the other 'branch' schools, however. The Department remained liable for the rent on the Female School of Art premises in Gower Street, and for the greater part of Louisa Gann's salary as Deputy Headmistress of the school. Two options were discussed when the three met in February 1857: closure of the Female School of Art in Gower

¹⁰⁰ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.118 (1857).

¹⁰¹ NA, MS ED 28/5: Minute books, f.165 (1856).

¹⁰² NA, MS ED 28/5, f.165 (March, 1856) Mclan's fixed remuneration at the time of her retirement was itself the result of a previous reduction in her salary guarantee by the Department, which had been £310 per annum in 1853.

Street altogether, or a “change of management”. Cole recorded in his diary that they “decided for Closing”.¹⁰³

No action was taken, however, possibly because Cole had embarked upon a period of frantic activity to open the Central school, and then the Museum, at South Kensington and to put in train the redevelopment of the larger site on which they stood.¹⁰⁴ To recuperate, he took extended leave of absence in Italy from September 1858 to February 1859, but returned to his plans for greater “efficiency” in the schools of design in 1859. In August of that year, he proposed to the Board that the finances of the Central School and the Female School of Art in Gower Street should henceforth be separated “in order that the Teachers at Gower Street might receive payment from the fees of that school”.¹⁰⁵ In fact, the new analysis, as prepared for the Board, revealed that the Female School of Art in Gower Street was still, by Cole’s definition, inefficient: students’ fees did not generate sufficient income to pay the proportion of teachers’ remuneration which Cole thought appropriate, and the Department was still subsidising the school, unlike any other nationally, by paying the rent on its premises and by paying the major part of Louisa’s income as Deputy Head Mistress. Following the Board meeting Cole made a note to write to Miss Gann “to inform her of the arrangements proposed” and to ask her to come to see him.¹⁰⁶

When she attended, on 5 November Louisa Gann possibly already had proposals in mind for the reversal of the decision “for Closing” the Female School of Art.¹⁰⁷ Cole informed her of the view he had put to the Board, that, rather than continue to subsidise it, the Department “wished to abolish Gower Street School”, but she seems to have demurred.¹⁰⁸ His view was that, since girls and young women could now get advanced tuition at the “efficient” Central School, and the standard tuition of the Department at other ‘branch’ schools in London, in segregated classes at Finsbury, Hampstead and Spitalfields, or in the general (mixed-gender) classes at five further schools, the Gower Street school was obsolete. Over the next few months a mutual accommodation was reached which ultimately provided Cole with the efficiencies he required but cast both Louisa and the Female School in Gower

¹⁰³ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.118 (1857)

¹⁰⁴ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.117 (1856) and 45.C.118 (1857). The Museum was formally opened, with the Queen and Prince Consort, and members of the Court present, on the evening of 20 June 1857.

¹⁰⁵ NA, MS ED 28/10 f.80 (August, 1859).

¹⁰⁶ NA, MS ED 28/10: Minute books, f.78 (1859)

¹⁰⁷ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.120 (1859).

¹⁰⁸ NA, MS ED 28/10, f.117 (December, 1859) and NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.120 (1859).

Street in a tightly-restricted role. They met again, in December, before the next Board meeting, however, and when he reported his proposals to the Board before Christmas he held out the possibility of a “voluntary agency” coming forward to take over the management in future. In any case, “the rent and local expenses of the School (would) not be paid after Midsummer Day (1860) and...if no voluntary agency should come forward, the School (would) be closed”.¹⁰⁹ Louisa had negotiated an opportunity to bring a new agency into being which would perpetuate the school and the jobs of its female staff.

Over the succeeding months a committee was assembled and a company formed which would be the vehicle for the raising of loans and receipt of subscriptions and donations, enabling new premises to be acquired when the rent on Gower Street ceased to be paid. The membership of this Committee was necessarily entirely male. In the early 1860s several of the top echelon of the Department of Science and Art, including Richard Redgrave and Henry Alexander Bowler, Director of art instruction and Inspector of the schools of design respectively, were members as were luminaries of the art and design establishments, Sir Charles Eastlake, President of the Royal Academy and Director of the National Gallery, Professor Thomas Leverton Donaldson, founder of the Institute of British Architects and first professor of architecture at University College, London and William Hookham Carpenter, the keeper of prints at the British Museum. Louisa’s father, Amos Gann was also a member of the Committee, until his death in 1867.

At the same time, a fundraising campaign was launched and, to enhance the apparent social cachet, substance and prospects of the “agency”, a network of “Lady Visitors” was ‘recruited’. They were a widely disparate group, socially and politically, bringing together the aristocratic wives of senior politicians associated with the Privy Council and the Board of Trade, and the wives of men influential in the world of mass culture, including Harriet Chambers (wife of William Chambers, publisher), Marian Cole (wife of Henry Cole), Mrs. Thomas Longman (of the publishing dynasty), Anna Maria Hall (wife of Samuel Carter-Hall, editor of the *Art-Journal* and in her own right a writer and promoter of work opportunities for women) and Therese Rosalie Uzielli (widow of Matthew Uzielli, railway magnate and owner, until the sale at his death in 1860, of a considerable collection of decorative art especially of the Italian Renaissance). Three doyennes of the fine art world with closer connections to the Female school were possibly more active: Mary

¹⁰⁹ NA, MS ED 28/10, f.117 (December, 1859).

Carpenter, successful society portraitist and wife of William Hookham Carpenter (keeper of prints at the British Museum), Elizabeth Eastlake, wife of Charles Eastlake (director of the National Gallery and President of the Royal Academy) and Fanny Unwin, previously Mclan and Louisa Gann's predecessor at Gower Street. Most strikingly involved in all the subsequent fund-raising initiatives of the 1860s however, was Lady (Henrietta Maria) Stanley of Alderley, friend of F.D. Maurice, member of the Association for Promoting the Employment of Ladies as Teachers of Fine Art and one of the lady visitors at Queens College in Harley Street.

Whether the Committee members regularly attended formal meetings, or the ladies actively promoted the Female School of Art, was secondary, at this stage, to the fact that their names, individually and collectively, were reassuring to potential donors. Louisa also wrote, in January 1860, to Sir C.B. Phipps, private secretary to Prince Albert, requesting permission to name Queen Victoria as patroness of the school, receiving the response that this might be reconsidered when there was more "evidence of the reasonable certainty that this school will be permanent".¹¹⁰ In June 1860 a 'conversazione' was organised in aid of the Female School of Art, held at the Museum at South Kensington, at which the Koh-i-noor diamond was exhibited.¹¹¹ Just under £235 was raised from this event alone, about one fifth of the total of about £1,200 raised in 1860 from this, together with a programme of approaches to City livery companies, the luxury goods shops in New and Old Bond Street and individuals, which yielded one hundred and sixty donations.¹¹² An event at which invited guests and the public were invited to see exceptional people and objects and to purchase affordable items, was demonstrated to yield a better return on the organisational effort invested than direct, individual approaches.

At the beginning of October 1860 the Female School of Art, with the help of a bank loan, was able to move for the new school year into the property in Queen Square which it was to occupy for the next fifty years.¹¹³ Later that month, Henry Cole went "with Marian to the Female School of Art Committee", possibly to discuss plans for mutually satisfactory working in the future.¹¹⁴ The following year, two events were organised. The first of these, an educational public exhibition of water-colour paintings lent by established artists and collectors, including the Museum at South

¹¹⁰ NA, MS HO 45/7392: Royal patronage: FSA (January, 1860). The Female School of Art eventually acquired the title 'Royal' in 1885-6.

¹¹¹ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.121 (1860).

¹¹² NAL, Catalogue of a collection of water-colour painting...in aid of the Female School of Art (1861)

¹¹³ Morse, *the Mclans* (2001), p.256

¹¹⁴ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.121 (1860).

Kensington, for the catalogue of which Richard Redgrave wrote an essay, may have raised some money in entrance fees and purchase of catalogues. The second, a few days later, was a bazaar held in the newly-built art teaching rooms at the Central School, which Cole estimated raised £1,200.¹¹⁵ The Chairman's Introduction to the catalogue for the first of these events outlined the Committee's business strategy: to eliminate debt on the purchase of the property through fundraising, and to extend it to provide good teaching space for more (paying) students with the help of a grant from the Department of Science and Art.¹¹⁶

In the Spring of 1864 Louisa sent proposals for another Bazaar to Henry Cole, who recorded in his diary that he spent much of a day "revising" her programme, before meeting Louisa with one of the lady visitors at the Female School of Art, his wife, Marian, to settle the details. By the end of May, he had "arranged with Charles (possibly Eastlake) that everything in the Bazaar was to be under my (Cole's) Management".¹¹⁷ With a combination of showmanship, enthusiastic attention to detail and concern that any event held on the site of the newly-erected "gorgeous courts" at South Kensington should be attended and appreciated by the highest in the land and by the largest possible number of the paying public, the event he orchestrated was later described by *The Times* as "one of the most brilliant fêtes that have been held for many years".¹¹⁸

As Bird relates in detail, Cole was at this stage facing a number of criticisms and resentments from the Masters of 'branch' schools concerning the grandeur of the new buildings on the South Kensington site, and the fact that no expense seemed to be spared for his museum, while he continued to drive down the Department's contributions to their salaries and their schools' running costs. A Parliamentary Select Committee was enquiring into the operation and impact of the Department as a whole. The "bazaar" or "fête" in aid of the Female School of Art was an act of bravado and celebration of the realisation of his mission.¹¹⁹

The 1864 Bazaar in aid of the Female School of Art in Queen Square ran for three days 23 to 25 June and featured professional and amateur entertainments, all separately ticketed, and 'stalls' organised by "ladies of distinction", at which "none of

¹¹⁵ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.122 (1861).

¹¹⁶ NAL, Catalogue: Female School of Art exhibition (1861).

¹¹⁷ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.125 (1864).

¹¹⁸ Bird, 'Art and design education' (1992), p.326, quotes the *Art-Journal* (1864).

¹¹⁹ At least three national newspapers reported this event in detail. Those of 24 June 1864 in *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* are referred to here.

the worthless gew-gaws...so common at fancy fairs" were to be found.¹²⁰ Aristocratic stallholders mentioned by name in the press reports included the Countess of Tankerville, Countess Harley Teleki, Viscountess Stratford de Redcliffe, the Baroness Marochetti, Lady Stanley of Alderley, Lady Louisa Moncrieffe, Lady Hawarden, Lady Combermere, Lady Rich and Lady Trevelyan. Marian Cole also took a stall. Several stallholders exhibited and sold items from their own collections of art or luxury goods of European manufacture. On the first day the event was opened in a ceremony attended by their Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales and involved the presentation of Louisa Gann and a hundred students of the Female School of Art in Queen Square, clad in white, presenting the purses containing the donations they had collected. The second day was attended by the Princesses Helena and Louise for pleasure. Aged eighteen and sixteen respectively, they were "much taken", as were the national newspapers, with the Dog Show, which featured no live animals but rather objects, presumably borrowed from the Museum, and some witty plays on words such as "ye medieval fire-dogs".¹²¹ The first page of the programme is reproduced in Figure 4.6, offering a sense of the exuberant spirit of the event. The report in *The Times* of the first day likened the scene in the gardens "to the days of the International Exhibition of 1862", of which Cole had been a driving force, estimating that at one point in the day between five and six thousand people were present. Tickets for some events were one guinea each, and the royal party set an example by purchasing at the 'stalls', so the takings for three days must have been very considerable, compared with the collections in the students' purses, which, according to *The Times*, totalled approximately £500.

It is difficult, and probably incorrect, given the influence of individual women among the Female School of Art's committee of Lady Visitors, to attribute its resurrection entirely to Louisa Gann. Nevertheless, her original resistance, in 1859, to Henry Cole's assumption that the Female School of Art in Gower Street would close when he withdrew his Department's exceptional financial support, and enterprise in enlisting the help of the 'great and good' of her business, proved fundamental to the school's continued existence. Henry Cole's intervention in, or perhaps overhaul of, the scale, benefactors and public for the Bazaar in 1864, injected the glamour of wealth, royalty, aristocratic connoisseurship and the "higher reaches" of artistic quality into the school's perceived identity, however. Even the rude humour of his particular invention, the dramatic performance entitled 'Mumbo-Jumbo' was, despite

¹²⁰ *The Times*, 24 June 1864.

¹²¹ NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.125 (1864).

“remonstrances” on the part of Lady Eastlake and Professor Donaldson, interpreted as the “Rabelaical spirit” of the literary canon, rather than a display of lack of breeding.¹²²

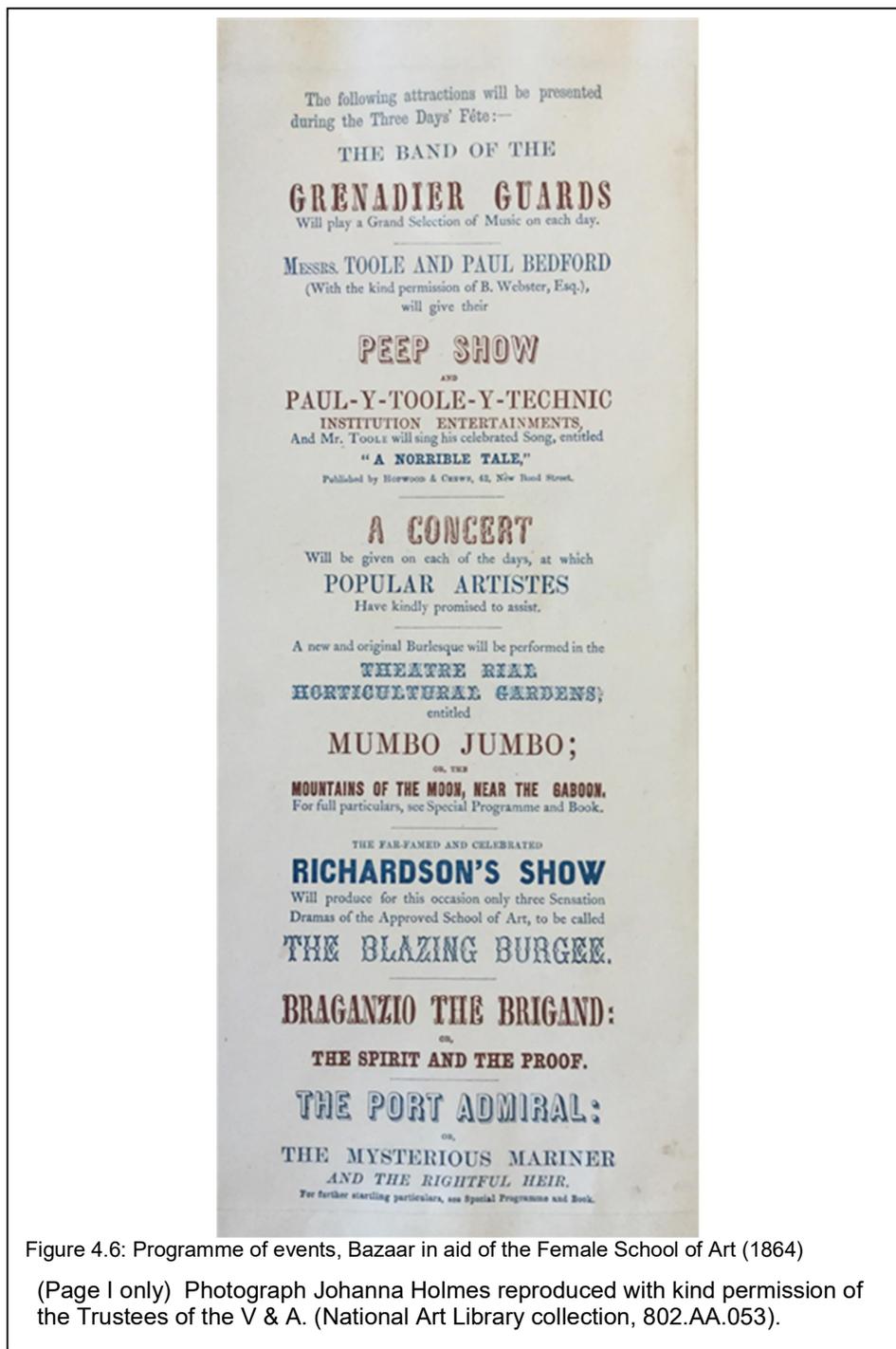


Figure 4.6: Programme of events, Bazaar in aid of the Female School of Art (1864)

(Page I only) Photograph Johanna Holmes reproduced with kind permission of the Trustees of the V & A. (National Art Library collection, 802.AA.053).

The Bazaar of 1864, and the aristocratic women who publicly adopted the school by participating, made an enormous contribution to the school's subsequent life which,

¹²² NAL, Cole Diaries, 45.C.125 (1864). *The Times*, 24 June 1864.

in the immediate aftermath of the Bazaar and up to about 1880, has been described as a fashionable “finishing school” or “seminary” where young women from the monied classes were “refined” through art”.¹²³ This description is no doubt accurate to the extent that the school consistently presented itself as the only art school in London exclusive to young ladies, and that, in the perennial search for fee-paying students, the school was probably more dependent upon the wealthy parents of young women who had no expectation of earning a living than were ‘branch’ schools of design in London or the provincial cities. The illustration, taken from the *London Illustrated News*, of the life class held at the Female School of Art in Queen Square in 1868 (Figure 4.7) seems to support this view. However, a description in the *Art-Journal* of 1866 of the evening class “for the study of the draped living model” started there in that year by E.T. Parris, or a description, in 1870, of a visit to the Female School in Queen Square, suggest considerably greater numbers of students, variety of concurrent activities in the new studio and studious application on the part of the students to their practise than is suggested by this illustration.¹²⁴ The school’s annual reports suggest that the school maintained some focus on equipping young women to earn their own livings as teachers of art, and to progress to the Central school for advanced training which would, it was hoped, better assist them in this. Here, a continuing commitment is revealed, to providing scholarships to poorer students, independently of the Department of Science and Art schemes, and of students being successful in the latter’s examinations, winning medals in competition with other ‘branch’ schools of design.

The rewards of study in terms of teaching jobs, however, were far from plentiful. In 1876, the Committee of the Female School of Art “again urge(d) upon the students” at annual prize-giving “to press forward for higher honours”, and the pursuit, through study at the Central school, of “a standing” which will give them “preference...not only as private teachers, but when vacancies occur in the many Art Schools of the kingdom”.¹²⁵ Although the Female School in Queen Square offered scholarships for students who did move on to advanced study, over and above the scholarships offered by the Central school itself, the Committee noted with regret that, in this and other years, many students discontinued their studies after obtaining the most elementary of the Department’s Teachers’ Certificates, without proceeding to the

¹²³ Chalmers, *Women in...Schools of Art and Design* (1998), p.60ff. Bird, 'Art and design education' (1992), p.307.

¹²⁴ *Art-Journal* (1866), p.94. J. Cordy Jeaffreson, 'Female Artists and Art-Schools of England', *Art Pictorial and Industrial*, 1.2-4 (1870-71), p.50 ff.

¹²⁵ CSM, RFSA Reports (1873 and 1876)

Central school to practise the “higher” forms of painting. It became ever more apparent, as the Committee noted in 1884, that, while the higher-qualified students were being successful in obtaining positions in “the High Schools” and in “several private schools”, and Louisa Gann was being successful in recommending others as teachers in private families, “the Science and Art Department...made..few appointments (of women) in the 164 Schools of Art in the Kingdom”.¹²⁶

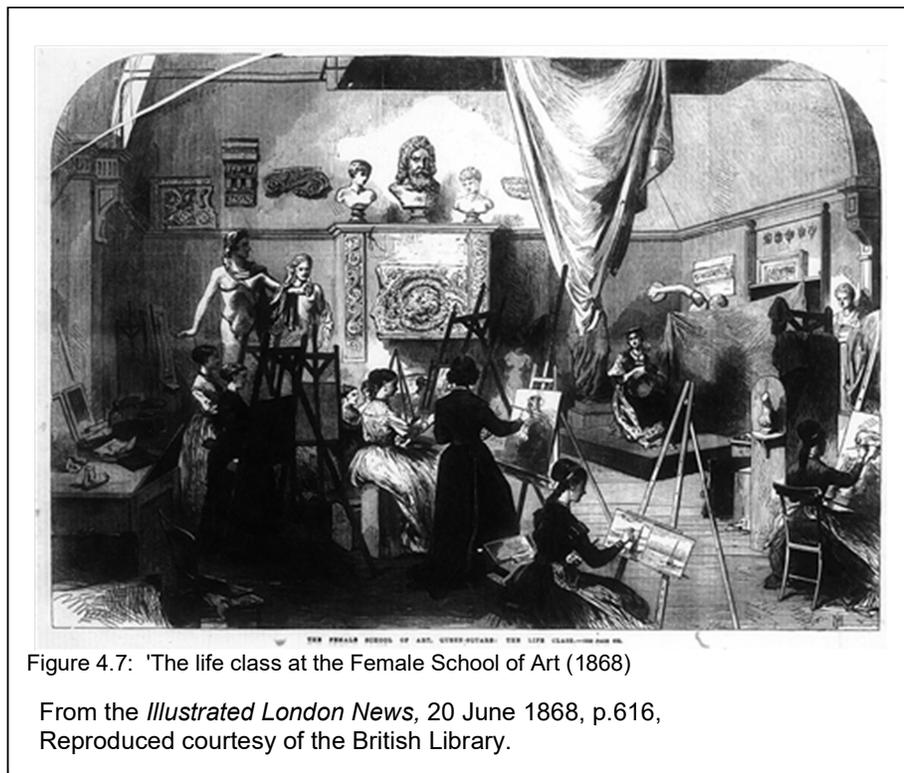


Figure 4.7: 'The life class at the Female School of Art (1868)

From the *Illustrated London News*, 20 June 1868, p.616,
Reproduced courtesy of the British Library.

The apparent success of the Bazaar and other fund-raising efforts, masked the fundamental problems for the financial viability of the Female School of Art noted by Henry Cole in the late 1850s. Charitable funds and subscriptions met the costs of the initial purchase and development of the Queen Square premises in the early 1860s, and Louisa Gann and her Committee were immensely successful in obtaining funding for scholarships and prizes, but the Female School of Art ran on a hand-to-mouth basis of fee income and tuition costs for forty-five years of its life in Queen Square. Chalmers, and his successor in scholarship, Morse, have noted that, by the 1890s, the school was in decline and its finances were in “disarray” by the time it closed. While other ‘branch’ schools had achieved a reasonable financial position due to the advent of local authority funding for “technical instruction”, creative links with local industry, diversification and a student body (of young men)

¹²⁶ Ibid. (1884).

with realistically-achievable employment prospects, the Female school had become an isolated anomaly.¹²⁷

Louisa and her senior staff, Laura de la Belinaye and Helena Wilson, remained in post for more than forty years. Laura retired in 1894, possibly because the school could no longer afford her services, while she was comfortably-off until her death in 1908. Louisa and Helena stayed on until the much-depleted and obsolete school closed in 1907.¹²⁸ Louisa died after 1911, leaving no known estate of value. Their careers had been fixed in place at the Female School in Queen Square in 1860, possibly by ties of personal loyalty and determination, but also by the fact that there were no alternative positions in the schools of design, in the private girls' education market or within the professional representative body, the Association of Art Masters, which would have offered any of them a comparable degree of professional self-determination or financial reward. They made the most they could of the opportunity which presented itself in 1860, their own careers inextricably linked to a business whose financing demanded a public narrative concerning exclusively female, decorous conventionality, rather than artistic ambition and excellence.

Conclusions

The occupation of art-teaching was, in the first half of the nineteenth century, regarded by both employers and practitioners as an occupation of the second rank compared with the creation of original artistic work. Although not actually beneath respect, it was to be pursued only from financial necessity. To the extent that teaching was associated with falling short in his career as an original artist, and that, increasingly, private pupils were female, and amateur, the art-master was, certainly as presented by Thackeray, an emasculated or foppish figure. The women who pursued teaching were of similar backgrounds to their male competitors, in that they were primarily painters, often from painting families, and did so for similar reasons. Women's careers in art-teaching, however, remained subsidiary to other occupations and were more spasmodic or opportunistic than those of their male peers. In a market which valued recognised academic art training and the demonstrable expertise of the professional exhibitor, male artists constituted the upper middle class parent's stereotype of an art-teacher. In the universities and

¹²⁷ Bird, 'Art and design education' (1992), p.430ff.

¹²⁸ Chalmers, 'Fanny Mclan' (1995), p.50. Morse, *the Mclans* (2001), pp.257, 260 and 264. CSM, RFSA Reports.

academies of art which developed their position from the 1830s to the 1850s, there were few female classes, and the male 'professor' was perceived as a greater authority than the teacher in all circumstances, including female classes. By the early 1850s, for example, Francis Cary had been appointed professor of art at the Ladies' College in Bedford Square, and all the professors at Henry Cole's reformed Department of Science and Art were male.¹²⁹ When he transferred 'technical' classes in wood-engraving and lithography to the Central school from the Female School of Art, male 'professors' were employed, although the female teachers of the classes remained in post and the students remained exclusively female.

In general education, the introduction of state subsidy in the late 1830s to elementary schooling and, by extension, to Normal schools which trained teachers for the elementary schools, led to standardisation of knowledge on the part of both teachers and pupils, but also to disciplines of study and of the acquisition of knowledge to a given level in all subjects taught. Many Normal schools trained students in methods of imparting knowledge effectively. At the Methodist Westminster College, for example, which opened in 1851, students were required to deliver, as part of their learning, sample lessons to children, peers and observing teachers.¹³⁰ The Annual Report for the College for the following year observes the benefit which students have gained from their lessons in Drawing, which enabled them to illustrate their lessons on the blackboard "gaining, by that means, the cheerful and expectant attention of the galleries, as well as in giving more speedy and intelligible lessons".¹³¹ Some women participated in this training on a fee-paying basis, indicating a more widespread interest among teachers in offering educationally-useful lessons. When the London Association of Schoolmistresses, which was largely composed of teachers of this latter social class, rather than elementary schoolteachers, established itself in the mid-1860s an important part of its early programme of activity was a series of lectures (to be given by authoritative male professors) on the best methods of teaching "Arithmetic, English, Latin and Political Economy" to girls in fee-paying schools.¹³² For upper middle class parents at this date who preferred to educate their daughters within the home, the choice of a suitable governess was pungently set out by Elizabeth Sewell in her publication *Principles of Education* in 1865. Quoted in the *Quarterly Review*, her observation

¹²⁹ Cherry, *Painting Women* (1993), p.59.

¹³⁰ CMCH, Wesleyan Education Reports, 1852, p.33.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.31-32.

¹³² Cambridge, Girton College Archive (GCA), MS GCPP Davies 9/1/1, Minutes and Members present of the London Association of Schoolmistresses, 21 February 1868.

that “the choice lies in great measure between well-born and well-bred ladies, driven by circumstances to a profession for which they are imperfectly qualified, and underbred, but clever, women who really know what they profess to teach” was summarised by the reviewer as a choice, for protective upper middle class parents, between “superficial (or) vulgar”.¹³³



Figure 4.8: Richard Redgrave, 'The governess' (1843)

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Richard Redgrave's images of the “imperfectly qualified” and reluctant schoolteacher, governess and seamstress first popular in the 1840s (see Figure 4.8) had become by the mid-1860s, through repetition and enforcement in literature and imagery, an embodiment of the first. The *Quarterly Review's* author implies that this was the more desirable, the safer, style of educator for the parent who wished their daughters to develop into ideal upper middle class young women. By implication, it would be preferable for their daughters to be like her – inept but lady-like – than to expose them to the “vulgar” attentions of trained teachers who could provide an academic education. The photograph at Figure 4.9, taken in 1858 at Westminster College, illustrates the disparity which Elizabeth Sewell summarised between the trained teachers of the lower classes, confidently gazing at the viewer, and the ideal teacher of the conservative upper middle class. These represented the extreme boundaries of the territory which Henry Cole's female students would need to negotiate in terms of personal credibility, social identity and market attitudes if they were to make their living as teachers of art.

¹³³ 'Article VII', *Quarterly Review*, 119 (1866), pp.499-515.



Figure 4.9: 'Women students of Westminster (teacher training) College' (1858)

© The Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University.

The case studies of Eliza Mills and Louisa Gann both offer an insight into the management of social identity necessary to market one's services as a professional female art-teacher in the schools of the day. The characteristics valued by Henry Cole in the prospective art-teachers in the schools of design - "rigidity", "precision", "discipline" and "accuracy" – were those associated with the "ill-bred" governess: they were not lady-like attributes. The majority of his female students therefore faced some difficulty: they were not ladies by birth and they were not educated to be upper middle class 'ladies'. They were in a problematic position, if hoping for appointments within the schools of design as these became ever more dependent upon fee-paying students. While Cole attributed the schools' reluctance to appoint them to "doubt of a lady's ability to teach...rigidly and precisely", possibly the 'branch' schools' anxiety was that the successful London-based young women would not suit the expectations of fee-paying students, that the young women were not lady-like enough. If so, and it must only have been a secondary consideration, given the other circumstances mitigating against the employment of female teachers in the 'branch' schools, this was a difficulty far more prominent in the private schools for girls, where alternative employment might be found, but where male artist-teachers still predominated. There is no record of the Association for Promoting the Employment of Ladies as Teachers of Fine Art having any success beyond the possibility that it played some part in Eliza Mills' appointment at the Palace. By

repeatedly emphasising this aspect of Eliza's teaching career, in the Prospectuses for Cheltenham Ladies' College in the 1860s and 1870s, Eliza (and Dorothea Beale, the headmistress) were signalling, not Eliza's artistic and pedagogical abilities, but her credentials as a well-bred teacher. Her qualifications from the Central school are not referred to at all in prospectuses for parents, while the university and college qualifications of newly-recruited female teachers were presented as indicative of the quality of the school's educational offering, and a male artist required no formal qualifications to command respect. Eliza left the school's employment just as the art-teaching there moved into a purpose-built studio suggesting a high calibre of tuition and artistic aspiration among students.

Louisa Gann and her two female colleagues at the Female School in Queen Square arguably represent proof of the potential to teach, to commit to a shared business endeavour and to promote the talents of younger women which existed within the salaried Training Class for Mistresses in Drawing in the 1850s. However, for twenty years following the School's 're-launch' in 1860, they carefully cultivated its identity as a unique, exclusively-female environment suitable for the sheltered daughters of fee-paying upper middle class parents, differentiating it from the Central school and the other London 'branch' schools of design. Within the walls of the school, discipline, industry and concentration on classes was expected from the majority of students; this was no refuge for dilettantism. At annual prize-givings, the students were urged to apply themselves to studies at the Central school, to gain better qualifications and to take up scholarships. The lack of work opportunity as teachers within the schools of design was lamented. However, the need to retain credibility with titled and upper middle class donors and parents prevailed in shaping the public narrative, and the School's place in art history.

By the close of the period considered in this study, therefore, associations had been established between correctness or depth of knowledge and vulgarity, between teaching and failure as a practitioner, and between learning the mechanical techniques of one's occupation and being "under-bred" or of a lower social class. The experience of Jane Trulock in the Central school in 1864 illustrates the low regard in which fee-paying female art students might hold a woman who needed to work for her living. This is the context in which Henry Cole's initiatives at the Department of Science and Art created a profession of art-teaching to which young women had access. Comparable with the Normal schools in terms of the overall régime of certificates gained by examination, prizes and the social class of most of

the 'salaried' students, the Central school produced teachers for the schools of design who would be subject to similar controls of inspection and 'payment by results'. Art-teaching within this regime possessed some of the attributes of a professional occupation, including qualifications in a particular approach, restricted access to jobs and exacting standards of performance on the part of practitioners. These new 'professionals', however, not only lacked the status associated with a university degree, but were trained to teach primarily the mechanical and technical skills of drawing and design. Both they and many of their prospective students were "ill-bred". Male graduates of the Central school's training class were offered opportunities to work in a setting – the schools of design - where they might accrue status and authority from their (relatively) secure positions of employment within the standards of the accreditation framework which Cole had built. The few women students who were placed in the first wave of female appointments within the schools of design derived similar benefits, although to a lesser extent, since they received lower salaries and were not ever promoted to higher positions, even at the Female School of Art in Gower Street, then in Queen Square. Indeed, there was no opportunity for advancement or change of employment for them and, without the individual creative and exhibiting elements of the careers which Susan Ashworth and Mary Julyan were able to pursue in Edinburgh and Dublin respectively, the careers of the teachers at the Female School of Art in Queen Square, Helena Collins and Laura de la Belinaye, slowly atrophied over the course of forty years. The remaining qualified female Mistresses of Drawing, untethered from the schools of design, dispersed into that uncertain and precarious territory of combining in a working life financial security, social recognition and personal satisfaction, probably all to a lesser extent than they would have liked to follow their prize-winning student lives.

The careers of all those women identified in this study as connected with the Department of Science and Art in the 1850s, are summarised in Appendix B, Part 1.¹³⁴ Looking first at their expectations and aspirations in the first ten to fifteen years of their lives, it is clear that the majority of them were brought up in families where independent agency and commercial enterprise, among female members as well as male, was a necessity. Assignment of the terminology of social class prevalent in the second half of the nineteenth century to these households of the 1820s and 1830s is extremely problematic. The lack of Census information providing combined

¹³⁴ Part 1 of this Appendix excludes the students of the Training Class in the period 1854-1857 for whom no Census records have been retrievable in order to construct basic biographical details.

details of family members' occupations, the address, size and tenure of their home and the descriptions of any servants living there, and the potential for wide discrepancies between modern assumptions about the social status of occupations, the wealth they generated and the background and education of their practitioners, make meaningful attributions of social class, with its implications for wealth and education, unsafe.¹³⁵ However, it is clear that none of these young women were born into families of the labouring class, or those who worked for others for wages. There is also evidence of enterprise among mothers as well as fathers: the mothers of Susan Ashworth, Annie Carey, Mary Channon, Sarah Doidge and Sarah Goble were all left head of their families of several young children in the 1830s and 1840s. Three of them, like Mary Harrison, discussed in Chapter 2, brought their children to London, presumably in order to improve their opportunities for education and work, Mrs. Doidge and Mrs. Goble setting up in business as lodging-house keepers. The mothers of Mary Julyan and Mary Ann Freed conducted businesses in their own right. While their individual circumstances (and relative financial security) were different, all these families produced a generation of girls and boys who expected to work, and aspired to 'better themselves', while at the same time choosing an income-earning occupation which suited their individual abilities, as far as possible, rather than join their parents in a shared endeavour.

Secondly, during the course of their careers, relatively few (four out of a total of twenty) of the women in this group included marriage in their careers, and all after they had worked for some years previously. Two of them (Charlotte Gibbs and Sarah Goble) continued working after marriage and while having children. All who married chose husbands who worked in a similar field to their own occupation, suggesting an overlap of social and professional networks. There is also scattered evidence of the single professional women making use of the professional networks and friendships which they formed during their years of formal training: Annie Carey and Clarisse Matéaux published in similar genres and periodicals in the 1860s and 1870s, ultimately working for the same publisher. Clarisse's attempts to reinvigorate female networks of artwork designers, wood-engravers and printers, based upon the Female School of Art in Queen Square in the 1860s, have been discussed in Chapter 3 (pages 133-140).

¹³⁵ For instance, the father of Annie Waterhouse's future husband, James Frazer Redgrave, for instance, is described in the latter's baptismal record as a "wire-worker". Far from being a humble labourer, however, William Redgrave was a prosperous owner of a factory in Pimlico producing wire fencing, and also, by his first wife, father of Samuel and Richard Redgrave.



Figure 4.10: 'The Philological School' (1857)

Wood-engraving by W. T. Green after [C. A. H.].
Wellcome Collection. Reproduced under licence CC BY

Lastly, turning to outcomes from their careers, at first it appears, from their accumulated wealth over a lifetime's work, that a number of these women were able to 'better themselves' through their professional efforts. The sums appearing in Wills and Probate records, however, are a conflation of wealth from a number of sources, including inheritance, earnings from regular employment, from sales of high-value objects and from investments, and the fruits of economies in living costs over a long period, through sharing living costs in conventional (extended) family groups or in partnership with friends, for example. Even the limited amount of research into individual careers undertaken for this part of the study reveals wide disparities between individuals' sources of wealth at death. Susan Ashworth, Annie Waterhouse and, probably, Laura de la Belinaye, for example, benefited from family wealth, inherited in the first case and acquired through marriage in the second. Both Susan and Annie gave up regular teaching employment when it thus became financially viable to do so, suggesting that their work as teachers of art was not so rewarding, in any sense, as to take priority over other work / life options. Others benefited from sale of their paintings through exhibitions. Mary Julyan seems to have pursued this strategy, in combination with establishing a life in Dublin, where the costs of living well were less than London. Sarah Doidge likewise removed herself to Wales. In both cases, one might surmise that the social and professional benefits of distancing oneself from London and family, and of lively local artistic

networks and markets, played a part in their choice. Others, such as Annie Carey, Charlotte Gibbs and Clarisse Matéaux, pursued entirely different occupations to generate varying degrees of wealth. For those whose only significant source of income was their regular teaching, and who remained in and near London, the need for strategies to enable single women to live self-reliant, relatively comfortable lives, while earning substantially less from regular employments than was considered appropriate recompense for their male equivalents is a dominant theme. This group would include the Wilson sisters, who established, over the second half of the nineteenth century, an extended family household, centred on the earning power of Catherine's husband, George Moore, a schoolmaster who held a degree from London University. Catherine, Helena and their third sister, Amelia, together with two daughters, formed a single household in which the women were variously teachers, governesses and art students, while George progressed to become Headmaster of the fee-paying Philological School (see Figure 4.10) in Marylebone, a school for boys founded in 1782 and predecessor of the now-defunct St. Marylebone Grammar School.¹³⁶ The household migrated from St. Pancras to Hampstead and eventually to Great Missenden in Buckinghamshire. Of those who remained single and seem to have relied principally on an income from art-teaching Louisa Gann is the most obvious example of the vicissitudes of inadequate pay: living frugally and sharing living expenses with friends or colleagues enabled her to maintain her home, but not to retire until closure of the Female School of Art made this inevitable.

The majority of the female students of the advanced classes of the Department of Science and Art did not achieve the career outcomes as professional art-teachers which were the objective of their training. Nor is there any consistent evidence that qualifications and accreditation, together with long working lives in their profession as art-teachers, resulted in any improvement in their social standing. Family wealth and educational status, combined with, in varying degrees, creative talent, fortunate marriage choices, childlessness and judicious economies of lifestyle played a larger part in the undoubted improvement in material comfort which they achieved over the course of their careers. Their unprecedented formal education, training and experience of both paid work and personal success may have contributed indirectly to greater economic security and personal satisfaction. Neither a contemporary observer, nor a twentieth-century social historian, would recognise that the single,

¹³⁶ Based on Census data. Westminster City Council holds a comprehensive archive of the school's records.

childless but comfortably-off women in this sample had, through their professional efforts secured a position in the upper middle class of the second half of the nineteenth century. However, neither can one recognise the loss of “caste” associated with working for a living which Julia Swindells locates in the testimonies of her subjects.¹³⁷ It might be argued that Swindells’ subjects were somewhat younger than those discussed here, and considered themselves higher up the social scale at the beginning of their careers, while we have no personal testimony from the women considered in this study. The comparison does, however, illustrate the potential for variety in the extent to which, over the course of their careers, women absorbed and complied with strictures intended to support, protect and valorise the ideals of *Woman’s Mission*.

¹³⁷ Swindells, *Working women*, 1985, p.2.

Chapter 5 “More than ‘colleges’ can do”: art-writing and the working-day world

Introduction

In January 1857 Anna Jameson wrote to her friends Elisabeth Jesser Reid and Mary Sturch, Elisabeth’s sister, observing in passing that she was glad to hear that they were “at work again...but the settlement of the woman’s question involves more than ‘Colleges’ can do, excellent tho’ they be”.¹ Jesser Reid had opened the Ladies’ College in Bedford Square in 1849 and Jameson had briefly served as a founding member of the General Committee.² Whether from lack of conviction as to its objectives, or because she travelled abroad unpredictably and for relatively long periods, Jameson’s formal involvement with Bedford College, as it came to be known, ended after a few months, but her friendship with Mrs. Reid and Miss Sturch endured, apparently undiminished, until her death in 1860.

The foundation of the University of London in 1836, incorporating University College (founded 1826) and King’s College (founded 1829), was symptomatic of the consolidation of male higher education and the academy across Europe, not only in universities, but in hospitals, museums and other state institutions of expertise. Bedford College, associated with University College, London, was intended “to widen women’s culture” and to provide an alternative to Queen’s College in Harley Street, which was associated with the avowedly Anglican King’s College, London.³ Both women’s colleges, although having a different emphasis in their purpose (Queen’s had been founded in 1848 with the intention of accommodating and educating governesses, and continued to provide education for younger girls expecting to work as governesses or teachers), offered courses of lectures to fee-paying female students from the upper middle class, and Bedford College was, at this stage, dependent upon this income for its continued existence.⁴ The lecturers at both colleges were (male) professors from the London University colleges and the

¹ Egham, Bedford College Archive (BCA), MS RF103/7: Letters from Anna Brownell Jameson, 103/7/11 (27 January 1857).

² BCA, MS BC/4/1/1/1: Minute Book of the General Committee, 1849-1881.

³ Sybil Oldfield, revised by M.C. Curthoys, 'Reid (née Sturch), Elisabeth Jesser (1789-1866)', *ODNB* (2011), <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref.odnb/37888>> [accessed 4 August 2019].

⁴ Pam Hirsch, *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, 1827-1891: Feminist, artist and rebel* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1998), p.39 and note refers to Margaret Tuke’s history of Bedford College published in 1939.

academy beyond who provided unprecedented intellectual and creative stimulus to the upper middle class attendees of their lectures. For some, even many, of these, the opportunity to forge and develop personal networks was foundational to their campaigns, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, for women's equal opportunities in social, educational and professional opportunities. Frances Mary Buss, first headteacher, from 1850, of the pioneering North London Collegiate School, attended "evening lectures" at Queen's in the late 1840s, where she met Dorothea Beale, later Principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College and employer of Eliza Mills. In a later letter to Beale, she described Queen's as opening "a new life...intellectually".⁵ At Bedford College, Anna Jameson's friend and fellow Committee member, Julia Smith, herself enrolled on the courses of lectures and tuition, as did her niece Barbara Leigh Smith and her friends who would subsequently form the basis of the circle of feminists known as the Langham Place group, publishers, from 1858, of the *English Woman's Journal*.

Since her first publication, in 1832, on the qualities of women, Jameson had been concerned with the "working-day world" and fitting the lower middle class daughters of "attorneys and apothecaries, tradesmen and shopkeepers, bankers' clerks, &c." for satisfying careers in it.⁶ In her first lecture, in 1855, she returned to this phrase: "this place which we occupy on earth", she maintained, is best defined as "this working-day world...a place in which labour of one kind or another is at once the condition of existence and condition of happiness...The only question is, what shall we do?"⁷ Although one could speculate from her use of inverted commas, in her letter to her friends, around the word 'Colleges' that she had some sense of neither Queen's or Bedford Colleges being quite comparable with a (male) university college, Jameson respected the efforts and aspirations of Jesser Reid's Bedford Square initiative. Her reservations seem to indicate a sense of the insufficiency of both the quality and the accessibility of women's education, but also a fear that, even if this were rectified, education would not bring access to the career opportunities which women needed to maintain themselves in the "working-day world". It has been suggested in the preceding chapters that there was a profound disassociation of upper middle class ideals of womanhood from the display of hard-

⁵ Elizabeth Coumts, 'Frances Mary Buss (1827-1894)', *ODNB* (2006), <<https://doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/37249>> [accessed 4 August 2019] quotes a letter from January 1889 in the North London Collegiate School archive.

⁶ Anna Jameson, *Characteristics of Women, Moral, poetical and historical* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1832), p.184. Jameson, 'Condition of women...' (1843), p.258.

⁷ Anna Jameson, *Sisters of Charity and The Communion of Labour* (London: Longman, 1859), p.12. For the sake of clarity, all references to the lectures delivered in 1855 and 1856 are from the 1859 combined edition, in which they appear substantially unrevised.

won technical skills or knowledge, particularly if these were applied to income-earning activity. This chapter investigates the possible reasons for Anna Jameson's apparent scepticism concerning these 'colleges' for upper middle class female intellectual stimulus, through an analysis of her friendship and philosophical partnership with Louisa Twining in the 1850s, and the career outcomes of the latter.

Anna Jameson, it is argued, aspired to, and was encouraged to, contribute to an intellectual discourse concerning early and later medieval European Christian iconography. Louisa Twining first attempted to follow Jameson into this debate, but subsequently discovered a locus in which concepts of social justice fuelled her intellectual and organisational energies. Jameson, denied her art-writing objective due to both circumstantial and more widely-applicable factors, then also attempted the role of the intellectual, addressing, in conceptual, rather than anecdotal, terms issues of work for women which had been her concern throughout her career. In the early years of this period both women published works which were the fruit of dedicated research and a desire to make an innovative and unique contribution to the scholarship of the time, as well as to inform a wider audience. They became better-acquainted during this period, but their friendship deepened into a practical and intellectual collaboration from the time of Jameson's first lecture on women's work and social institutions, in 1855.⁸ This study considers this friendship and collaboration for the first time in modern scholarship, reflecting upon the expressions of "ambition... desire for greatness" and influential self-expression which "the discourse of the time could not register".⁹

The history of art takes academic substance

As Hilary Fraser has observed, "the modern academic discipline of art history originated" in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ As private collections of fine art became more widely-accessible to the public and state-sponsored galleries assembled collections, an international network of collection Keepers, gallery directors and cultured travellers developed an approach to art-writing which was more concerned with historical accuracy, and with documentary and technical evidence, than the anecdotes and partialities associated with aristocratic taste which had gone before. As well as, in Hilary Fraser's words, meeting "a demand for

⁸ Anna Jameson, *Sisters of Charity, Catholic and Protestant, Abroad and at Home* (first published London: Longman, 1855).

⁹ Pollock, *Vision and difference* (1988), p.xxx.

¹⁰ Hilary Fraser, 'Women and the ends of art history: Vision and corporeality in nineteenth-century critical discourse', *Victorian Studies*, 42.1 (1998), pp.77-100.

popular critical guidance”, published works on historical art, in this study termed ‘art-writing’, also began to contribute to a critical dialogue between an internationally-competitive élite of academically-authoritative voices, at first led by the German-speaking Europeans.¹¹ Karl Friedrich Rumohr, with the equally academic Gustav Waagen, had taken leading roles in the formation of the Berlin gallery of ‘old master’ paintings, the Berliner Gemäldegalerie, which opened in 1830. In a revolutionary approach for the time, the display of the collection was designed on chronological and art-historical principles. Rumohr’s three volumes recounting his researches in Italy, which contributed to the gallery’s hang, were published over the period 1827-1831.¹² Both he and Waagen advocated academic scepticism concerning the output of, and attributions to, masters of the later Italian Renaissance and their successors, and an academic method of close attention to the art object itself, together with historical evidence of the artists’ lives, audience and purpose.

This spirit of academic enquiry combined, in differing permutations across Europe, with emerging ideals of nationhood and of the spiritual vigour of early Christianity in driving a wider interest in, and appreciation of, art produced before the sixteenth century. Adele Ernstrom suggests that in Britain, in the early years of the nineteenth century, artistic works of this age were valued chiefly on grounds of their age and rarity; they were regarded as curiosities and suited to study by antiquarians.¹³ However, the rise of nationalism and Romanticism in the disparate German states, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, prompted the study there of works produced in Germany’s Gothic past, and of artists’ travels and relationship with the artistic culture south of the Alps. Referring to Friedrich Schlegel’s call to German art “connoisseurs” to retrieve and co-locate “all the now-existing and widely scattered compositions of the old German Schools (of art)”, Ernstrom suggests that the collection opened to the public by the Boisserée brothers in Heidelberg in 1810 was an expression of these concerns, as much as an antiquarian impulse.¹⁴ This collection, subsequently acquired for Ludwig I of Bavaria in 1827, housed in Munich and much-visited by cultured international travellers, galvanised the academic study of the so-called ‘primitive’ or “preclassical” art made from the “earliest Christian paintings in the Greek manner” to the late Italian Renaissance.¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Karl Friedrich Rumohr, *Italienische Forschungen*, 3 vols (Berlin and Stettin: 1827-1831).

¹³ Adele M. Ernstrom, “Why should we be always looking back?” “Christian Art” in nineteenth-century historiography in Britain’, *Art History*, 22.3 (1999), pp.421-435.

¹⁴ Ibid. p.424.

¹⁵ Ernst Hans Gombrich, ‘The values of the Byzantine tradition: a documentary history of Goethe’s response to the Boisserée collection’ in Weisberg and Dixon, *The Documented Image: Visions in art*

In Britain, Ernstrom argues, “the very name of Christian art was almost unknown” to the general audience in Britain until the mid-1830s, when A.W.N. Pugin first published his treatise on Gothic architecture.¹⁶ Virtually concurrently, three foundational works were published which resonated in more esoteric and academic circles: Maria Callcott’s *Description of the Chapel of the Annunziata dell’Arena* in 1835, Alexis-François Rio’s, *De la poésie Chrétienne....Peinture*, in Paris in 1836 and Franz Kugler’s *Handbuche der Geschichte der Malerie von Constantin dem Grossen bis auf die neuere Zeit* in Berlin in 1837.¹⁷ All focused more rigorously on factual description and the evaluation of historical evidence, rather than the author’s emotional response to the subject, design or condition of the work discussed, and set a standard, in their various ways, for the future discussion of early Christian art in academic and culturally-informed circles. A new field opened, of academic debate which also contributed to cultural, social and national identity. The academic and the intellectual were to this extent mutually reinforcing.

Two inter-connected audiences for art-writing can be discerned from this very brief summary of its development in England in this period: an esoteric, academic one, largely employed in universities and cultural institutions, and a far more numerous group who combined, in different degrees, interests in the history of Christian faith and public governance, in the dissemination of Christian principles among the less well-educated, in cultural tourism and in their own creative work as designers and painters. From the perspective of this study, two English authorities became prominent, almost representative, among the two audiences over the period 1840 to 1860: Charles Eastlake and John Ruskin. The first might be said to have embodied academic values, the second to have positioned himself as an intellectual – a man of influential opinions - as discussed by Barbara Caine and considered earlier in this study.¹⁸

It has been suggested that Charles Eastlake’s “connoisseurship in early Italian art” was fuelled by discussion with Maria Callcott, whom he first met (as Maria Graham)

history (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), pp. 291-309. Gombrich uses the term “preclassical” thus (p.292).

¹⁶ Ernstrom, 'Christian Art' (1999), p.422 refers to A.W.N. Pugin, *Contrasts: or a parallel between the noble edifices of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and similar building of the present day*.

¹⁷ Approximate translations are, from the French *Christian Poetry in Painting* and, from the German, *History of Art from Constantine the Great to the present*. The Chapel of the Annunziata dell’Arena, in Padua, contained one of Giotto’s great fresco cycles.

¹⁸ Caine, 'Intellectuals in Britain' (2007), p.370.

in 1817 in Italy, but encountered more frequently in London in the 1830s.¹⁹ It is thought that, over this later period, discussions between Charles Eastlake and Maria Callcott amounted to a degree of collaboration on her *Essays towards the history of painting* (1836 and 1838) and his *Materials for a history of oil painting* (1847).²⁰ Characterised as a “conventional...scholarly... undemonstrative” man, Eastlake gradually ceased painting as a source of income in favour of administrative and advisory positions, including, from 1843, that of Keeper of the collection at the National Gallery, where he was to become Director in 1855, and academic publishing.²¹ Nevertheless, he was a “passionate” advocate of the modern, disciplined, approach to art history emanating from continental Europe.²² From 1840, he produced a series of “true works of scholarship” on art “based on a mixture of fresh observations in front of works of art themselves and an in-depth reading of archival and other reliable sources, both old and contemporary”.²³ These, all published by the house of John Murray, included translations of foundational German-language works of art history and Eastlake’s own academic treatises, on the basis of which he established himself as leading scholarly authority, although perhaps not much read by the general public.²⁴

It has been observed that “Ruskin was able to begin and sustain a career as a writer without any of the economic considerations that normally circumscribe literary life”.²⁵ From this freedom, as well as his undoubted originality of thought and observant artist’s eye, his hugely influential published works, unrestricted as to opinion, subject or length emerged over the period from 1843, when the first edition of the first volume of *Modern Painters...* was published, to the late 1880s. From a body of work on art, architecture, their makers, societal value and aesthetics which is too vast to be summarised, as well as through his practical teaching and work initiatives, he established a reputation and a position as arbiter of an artistic aesthetic which valued spiritual faith, honesty of representation and purpose, and beauty of appearance among the highest qualities of art. While not himself academically knowledgeable in the way of Charles Eastlake and his Continental counterparts,

¹⁹ Caroline Palmer, 'Women writers on art and perceptions of the female connoisseur, 1780-1860' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford Brookes University, 2009), p.140, refers to Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art* (1976).

²⁰ Avery-Quash and Sheldon, *Art for the Nation* (2011), pp.23-27.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Susanna Avery-Quash, with assistance from Elspeth Hector, 'The Eastlake Library: Origins, history and importance', *Studi di Memofonte*, 10 (2013), p.9.

²⁴ Clara Thomas, *Love and Work Enough: The life of Anna Jameson* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p.181.

²⁵ Robert Hewison, 'Ruskin, John (1819-1900)', *ODNB* (2016), <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/24291>> [accessed 9 April 2019].

Ruskin's passionate espousal of medieval art and architecture, and their social context, added energy and popular significance to the more academic principles of aesthetics and their place in society. Two manifestations of this were, of course, Ruskin's promotion of the so-called pre-Raphaelite artists, from 1848, and the development of the Arts and Crafts movement in design and architecture. His teaching, intertwining narratives of the influence of artistic endeavour in promoting the maker's respect for the integrity of material, purpose and decoration in the made object, and his or her respect for God's creation in copying or representing it decoratively, readily associated itself with the 'colleges' for working men and women which came into being in the late 1840s and 1850s. These two men presented models within the art world, of so-called greatness, to anyone aspiring to philosophical influence. Both men's writings encouraged and inspired thoughtful people, such as Anna Jameson and Louisa Twining, to join a discourse of cultural importance.



Figure 5.1: Chromolithograph, 'Angels in Adoration' (c.1885)
 After Benozzo Gozzoli, detail from the Medici Riccardi Chapel. Chromolithographic print made for the Arundel Society.
 © Museums Sheffield. Collection of the Guild of St George.

It was inevitable that, as accuracy of observation and critical attention to the historical intention of visual images gained importance, so did accuracy of illustration as a means of communicating academic argument and conveying factual evidence. In his Postscript to Maria Callcott's *Description* of the Giotto frescos at Padua her husband, painter and, apparently, designer of the illustrations, Augustus Wall Callcott, apologises to the "rigid Critics in Art (who) will, no doubt, object to ... the absence of those peculiarities and even defects belonging to the age in which the works were executed".²⁶ He did not attempt to copy these "defects" or stylistic conventions of another age, but maintained that he was capturing the "beauty" of the work by omitting features arising out of accidents of the time in which the original artist lived". He reflected the contemporary, connoisseurial, view that the 'correction' of 'mistakes' and the damage to the original work of use and time was necessary in order to convey beauty to eyes accustomed to the strictures on form and perspective of classical art. Simplified and softened monochrome line drawings of details of Giotto's polychrome and more austere work accompanied Maria Callcott's measured descriptions and Biblical references at the outset of what might be termed art-historical publishing.

In 1848, at a meeting in the home of Charles Eastlake, the Arundel Society was founded, to undertake the work of copying early Christian art particularly from the Italian schools, in order "to preserve the record and diffuse a knowledge of the most important remains of painting and sculpture, to furnish valuable contributions towards the illustration of the history of Art".²⁷ On the first Council were men, including John Ruskin but excluding Eastlake, with financial resources and with coinciding, but differing, interests, including Henry Bellenden Ker and Lord Lindsay, whose names appear elsewhere in this study. The Society initially produced monochrome representations of medieval Italian artworks based on existing images, using first lithography and then, more successfully, Dalziel's wood-engravers.²⁸ By the mid-1850s, it was clear that the use of existing copies merely perpetuated nineteenth-century inaccuracies and the intrusion of Victorian sentiment or even 'corrections', while linear monochrome was inadequate to reproduce the tints or texture (including disrepair) of the originals. The "rigid Critics" to whom Augustus

²⁶ Maria Callcott, *Description of the Chapel of the Annunziata dell'Arena, or Giotto's Chapel, in Padua* (London: Charles Dolman, 1835).

²⁷ Button, Victoria, 'The Arundel Society: techniques in the art of copying', *Conservation Journal*, 23 (1997), <<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/conservation-journal/issue-23/the-arundel-society-techniques-in-the-art-of-copying>> [accessed 9 April 2019]. Button quotes the *Art-Journal*, 1869, p.26.

²⁸ Tanya Ledger, 'A study of the Arundel Society, 1848-1897' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1978), p.34 ff and p.46 ff.

Wall Callcott had referred were still dissatisfied. From this time, copies made *in situ*, specifically for the Society's purposes, by trained and dedicated artists, replaced the practice, wherever possible, of copying from existing copies. At the same time, the Society pioneered the use of chromolithography, disseminating to subscribers its first colour prints in the early 1860s.²⁹ This process was considerably more costly, involving the use of more than twenty stones and the highest lithographic skill, with the twin results of restricting the number of colour images which could be made available each year, and also of restricting the market to a relatively wealthy élite. Figure 5.1 shows an Arundel Society chromolithograph from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, which can be contrasted with wood-engravings illustrating the works of Anna Jameson and Louisa Twining at Figures 5.3 and 5.6 respectively. Similar in style to the illustrations published by the Callcotts in 1835, these demonstrate the limitations of cost-effective technology, in the period up to 1860, in providing evidence to support published academic art-historical argument.

The boundaries of female attainment: Anna Jameson experiences a setback

When art-writer Anna Jameson's negotiations with her prospective publisher for her 'magnum opus' - the prospective *Sacred and Legendary Art* - ground to a halt in 1846, it was the "style and choice of illustrations" which were the decisive stumbling-block.³⁰ These negotiations had begun in 1844, but tensions between Jameson and the publishing house of Murray had arisen previously, during the process of agreeing the scope and terms of her two previous major works of art-writing: visitors' guides to the paintings displayed in the public and private galleries of art in and around London, which were completed in 1842.³¹ One source of disagreement with the elder John Murray (second in the line of that name who succeeded each other as head of the publishing house) was Anna's need to earn an income from her work. She was a daughter of an artisan, married, but leading a life independently of her husband, and supporting ageing parents (her ailing father died in 1841) and impecunious sisters.³² Although she knew that John Murray's terms were generally

²⁹ Ibid. pp.76-78.

³⁰ Gerardine Macpherson, *Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson* (London: Longman, 1878), p.226, recalled that her aunt, Anna Jameson, "always looked upon (it) as *the* work of her life, the one by which she desired chiefly to be remembered". MA, Acc13236.417, Murray and Jameson, 19 April (year unidentified in original, but probably 1846).

³¹ Anna Jameson, *A Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and near London* (London: John Murray, 1842). Anna Jameson, *Companion to the most celebrated private galleries of art in London* (London: John Murray, 1842).

³² Anna Jameson was the daughter of a painter, generally of miniature copies in enamel, Denis Murphy. Two biographies provide further details of her life and an appraisal of her contributions to

to buy manuscripts once they were completed and ready for the printer, she attempted to negotiate on the basis of a partially-completed manuscript of one guide only, in order to gain some financial assurances before proceeding with detailed research.³³ In the event, and over a period of two years, the research was undertaken without advance payment, but the material proved far more voluminous and time-consuming to put in order than Jameson had at first thought, largely due to the confused hang and limited catalogue information among the private aristocratic collections, compared with the National Gallery. The work was separated into two volumes, remunerated separately, thus enabling payment to be made in two stages, but the impression is that neither party was wholly satisfied with the contractual arrangements. The second, and related, source of tension between them was that, although Anna Jameson had considerable standing as an author in several different genres in a popular market, derived from increasingly well-received output over the preceding fifteen years, “the advantages of Mrs. Jameson’s name” did not convince John Murray Senior of her saleability as an authority on art to the educated middle and upper classes.³⁴ He rather favoured an alternative proposal, he told her in July 1840, from Thomas Phillips, RA, and Dawson Turner, with whom she might wish to collaborate. Anna’s explosive reply is indicative of her fierce self-reliance and uncompromising nature, and of her confidence in her own abilities as an art-writer. “I do not like any amalgamation or partnership”, she replied, “I will do my work alone and I will be responsible for its accuracy”.³⁵ This emphasis on accuracy, together with Jameson’s rejection of Dawson Turner’s old-school “antiquarian’s eye” and Phillips’ tendency to sweeping generalisation (“charming”, he had written to Dawson Turner of the Giotto frescos at Padua in 1825), seem to indicate an affiliation on her part to the more modern, and rigorous, approach to art history espoused by Charles Eastlake.³⁶ Indeed, she scathingly remarked of her most eminent predecessor as author of a guide to the National Gallery’s collection, William Hazlitt, “as to fact and detail he (Hazlitt) is inconceivably inaccurate... he says himself he ‘never took a note on the spot’”.³⁷ David Octavius Hill’s portrait of Anna Jameson (see Figure

nineteenth-century culture: Clara Thomas, *Anna Jameson* (1978) and Judith Johnston, *Anna Jameson: Victorian, feminist, woman of letters* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1997).

³³ The correspondence relating to the two-year wrangle between Jameson and Murray over the terms and payment for these volumes is contained in MA, MS 41911, Letter book of the publisher John Murray containing copies of outgoing letters (1839-1846), John Murray to Anna Jameson, 14 July 1840 to 12 August 1841 inclusive and MA, MS 40609, Letters from Anna Jameson to John Murray, (date unknown) June 1840 to 2 June 1842 inclusive.

³⁴ MA, MS 41911, Murray outgoing letters, 31 July 1840.

³⁵ MA, MS 40609, Jameson to Murray, 22 July 1840

³⁶ Donata Levi, 'Carlo Lasinio: curator, collector and dealer', *Burlington Magazine*, 1079 (1993), p.133.

³⁷ Jameson, *Public Galleries* (1842), pp.56-57. This appears in connexion with Jameson’s notes on Ludovico Carracci’s ‘Susannah and the Elders’. Susanna Avery-Quash, 'William Hazlitt's account of Mr. Angerstein's collection of pictures', *Tate Papers* 24 (2015),

5.2) shows her as a woman of learning and observational powers, holding her spectacles and leaning forward with sober concentration.



Figure 5.2: Hill and Adamson, 'Anna Jameson' (c.1845)

© National Portrait Gallery, London.

When Anna opened negotiations with the third John Murray on the prospective *Sacred and Legendary Art*, in 1844, he was not only newly head of the firm, and presumably still adhering to his father's business practices, but struggling to generate sufficient funds to "buy the business back" from his mother, to whom the terms of his father's will had bequeathed it, while paying interest on its value in the meantime.³⁸ When Anna wrote on a subject which they had clearly already discussed, asking him to make her an offer for the manuscript in preparation, but characteristically proposing her own suggestions, there were probably commercial reasons for his lack of interest in her proposals, which favoured her personal flow of income, together with a profit-sharing arrangement after publication.³⁹ He was obdurate on the subject of payments in advance for either her work or that of artists and engravers to produce, under her direction, at least sixty illustrations, although

<<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/24/william-hazlitts-account-of-mr-angersteins-collection-of-pictures> [accessed 28 March 2019] , also notes this comment of Jameson's.

³⁸ William Zachs, with Peter Isaac, Angus Fraser and William Lister, 'Murray Family (per 1768-1967)', *ODNB* (2016), <<https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/64907>> [accessed 29 March 2019]

³⁹ MA, Acc13236.417, Murray and Jameson, 4 June 1844.

not unwilling to share any profits if the work were successful.⁴⁰ Her proposals for these illustrations are interesting on several counts. She clearly had in mind a hierarchy of subject matter, in which groups of the most sacred Christian characters, and works by acknowledged artistic masters deserved whole page engravings on metal, while ‘lesser’ subjects would be represented on a smaller, simpler scale and engraved on wood. She had already discussed undertaking the engraving work with like-minded acquaintances whom she knew would be responsive to her academic standards: respectively George Scharf, already making a name for himself as illustrator of middle-eastern antiquities for the British Museum and respected publications, and Harriet Ludlow Clarke, who had been introduced to Jameson as wood-engraver of the illustrations to her series of articles for the Penny Magazine in 1843-1844.⁴¹ Both Scharf and Clarke had impeccable connections in the upper middle class art world which would reflect upon Jameson herself and upon her proposed work. Subtly, she was presenting herself to Murray as a member of the social and cultural class who formed the majority of his authors and audience, despite her more plebeian background, audience and reputation.

Over the two years which followed, Anna persistently cajoled, argued and negotiated with John Murray Junior with regard to an ever-changing number of illustrations. When Murray queried the requirement for such an “embarras de richesses”, she maintained that the illustrations would render the work more “interesting and piquant” to the reader, and would, she might have added, have emulated and surpassed in scale and ambition Maria Callcott’s description of the Giotto frescos.⁴² Murray remained unconvinced, however, politely resisting all attempts on Anna’s part to draw any financial agreement in writing from him, while Anna pressed on with her researches, collecting ever more visual imagery to illustrate her compendious commentaries on the attributes of sacred personages and spiritual leaders depicted in early Christian art.

In the meantime, Murray had been approached, in March 1845, by Lord Alexander Lindsay about the possibility of his publishing “a work of some extent entitled ‘Sketches of the History of Christian Art.’⁴³ By February of the following year, Lindsay sent the completed manuscript to Murray, asking him to purchase the work

⁴⁰ MA, MS 41911, Murray outgoing letters, 15 June 1844.

⁴¹ Jameson, 'Lives of Painters' (1843-1844).

⁴² MA, Acc13236.417, Murray and Jameson, 19 June 1844.

⁴³ Alexander Lindsay, *Sketches of the history of Christian art*, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1847).

outright “for such definite sum as he might be prepared to give for it”.⁴⁴ Although the work exhibited extensive knowledge of the Continental scholarship relating to early art and the historical relationship between the different ‘schools’, Lindsay applied a personal and “oppressive” theory of the “character and artistical attainment of different races of men” to all his otherwise respectful critiques of the works and their creators.⁴⁵ Murray attempted to persuade him that the length of the introductory article setting out these theories, entitled ‘Progression by antagonism’ should be separately published, but as John Ruskin noted in his review in the *Quarterly Review*, after publication in 1847, Lindsay’s moral theory so permeated the work, “in all its pseudo-organisation” that it militated against evidence-based historical or aesthetic honesty ineradicably throughout. Nevertheless, despite this, and the fact that Lindsay seems to have had no interest in illustrating his work, as a “learned historian of art” he was invited by the founders to join the first Council of the Arundel Society, which produced its first Prospectus in 1849.⁴⁶

At last recognising that John Murray would not reach a satisfactory agreement with her, and possibly, at this stage, anxious that Murray would not wish to publish a work which might compete with Lindsay’s in a limited market, Anna Jameson agreed terms with Longman in mid-1846. This entailed a loss on at least two counts. Firstly she lost any prospect of controlling the quality of imagery which might reinforce her critique of artists or their works. Longman would commission all new wood-engravings from Dalziel, based on designs which Anna would produce, and all thought of metal plate engraving, so much better at revealing tint and texture, albeit in monochrome, would be abandoned. A competent amateur artist – Jameson herself - would be matched with jobbing wood-engravers commissioned by the printer, representing a significant diminution in accuracy and quality compared to her original plans. Secondly, Longman astutely required the manuscript and imagery to be produced within a fixed deadline; it was time for Anna to organise the mass of material, research and anecdote which she had accumulated over recent years, and to close down further researches for the time being. Travelling to Italy, with her niece Gerardine to assist with the “formidable task” of sketching *in situ* and producing designs for the wood-engravers, Anna wrote to her friend Robert Noel from Paris in September 1846, “I am sold into a double captivity”.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ MA, MS 04700, Letters from Alexander Lindsay to John Murray, 1845-1858, 19 February 1846.

⁴⁵ John Ruskin, ‘Article I: Progression by antagonism’, *Quarterly Review*, 81 (1847), pp.1-57.

⁴⁶ Ledger, ‘Arundel Society’ (1978), p.13, notes also that Lindsay resigned from the Council as soon as it appeared that he would be expected to play an active part in its business.

⁴⁷ Macpherson, *Anna Jameson* (1878), pp.228-229.



Figure 5.3: Anna Jameson, designer, 'St.Cecilia' (1848)

Engraved Dalziel. From *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848), Vol.II, p.209.

Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

The original work can be seen in the collection of the Uffizi in Florence
 (<http://catalogo.uffizi.it/it/viewer/#/main/viewer?idMetadato=1185218&type=iccd>).

Comparison of the Dalziel wood-engraved image at Figure 5.3 with the original illustrates the academic limitations which Anna Jameson placed upon her work by her commitment to copious illustration, compounded by the economic circumstances in which the work came to fruition. Possibly the translation of the original image, which Jameson described as a “grand matronly figure” of St. Cecilia, “quite unlike our conventional ideas of the youthful and beautiful patroness of music” into a Victorian ideal of youthful womanhood owes as much to the limitations of Jameson’s sketch taken in Italy as to the artistic conventions perpetuated by the Dalziel wood-engraver in London.⁴⁸ However, the fact remains that these illustrations add nothing to the course of art-historical discourse and everything to the “piquancy” of the work to the Victorian cultural tourist.

⁴⁸ Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848), vol. II, p.208.

It is difficult to know exactly the form which Anna Jameson's ambitions as an art-writer took at the outset of the 1840s.⁴⁹ In modern times, academic recognition has declined from her initial rediscovery as "the first professional English art historian" through various degrees of scepticism, based upon her flowing, conversational written style, the multitude of genres in which she published, her susceptibility to lapse into anecdote and digression and her studied (and, on occasion, obviously disingenuous) self-deprecation.⁵⁰ One of the more recent appraisals of her art-historical writing persuasively makes a comparison between Jameson and Virginia Woolf's "middle-brow" journalist: "the woman of middlebred intelligence who ambles and saunters now on this side of the hedge, now on that, in pursuit of...art...life...money, fame, power or prestige".⁵¹ The verdict of her contemporary, the intellectual Harriet Martineau, anticipated Laurie Kane Lew's argument: although Jameson's view of paintings, in her youth, "was intensely subjective", Martineau wrote, she "studied long and familiarised herself with so extensive a range of Art" that her "metaphysical tendencies were to a considerable extent corrected".⁵² It is Martineau's view that although Anna Jameson, "from first to last" did not over-estimate her abilities, "never mistook her function" nor "supposed that she had written immortal works", but was ambitious for recognition, never hiding "her lustre under a bushel". It seems probable that such a woman, if given encouragement at a time when her studies had begun in earnest, during the research and writing for the *Handbooks* to the galleries of art, might harbour ambitions to recognised "by the highest authorities" as an art-writer in the modern academic style.

There is evidence to suppose that Charles Eastlake provided that encouragement, and was possibly an activating force in Anna Jameson's proposals to Murray for *Sacred and Legendary Art* in 1844. She had read Alexis-François Rio's *De la poésie Chrétienne* in the late 1830s, and in 1841 wrote from Paris to her sister Charlotte that "the great event of my life here has been meeting M. Rio", with whom she reported having spent time studying in the Louvre and having "profited accordingly".⁵³ A second letter refers to her only extravagance in Paris being the

⁴⁹ Harriet Martineau, *Biographical Sketches* (London: Macmillan, 1869), pp.429-436.

⁵⁰ Adele Holcomb, 'Anna Jameson, the first professional English art historian', *Art History*, 6.2 (1983), pp. 171-187.

⁵¹ Laurie Kane Lew, 'Cultural anxiety in Anna Jameson's art criticism', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 36.4 (1996), pp.829-856.

⁵² Martineau, *Biographical Sketches* (1869), pp.429-436.

⁵³ Macpherson, *Anna Jameson* (1878), p.176.

purchase of “old books about the saints and the Fine Arts”.⁵⁴ She was clearly contemplating a contribution to the literature at this early stage, even before the *Handbooks* were published. When Charles Eastlake’s translation from the German of the first part of Franz Kugler’s *Hanbuche*, dealing with the Italian Schools, was published by John Murray in 1842, he observed that “some acquaintance with the legends and superstitions of the middle ages is as necessary to the intelligence of many Italian and German works of art as the knowledge of the heathen mythology is to explain the Greek vases and marbles”.⁵⁵ Four decades later, when Elizabeth Eastlake wrote for the Encyclopaedia Britannica an entry on Anna Jameson, she claimed that her husband had been the first to recognise that there was a project to be undertaken to cross reference these “legends and superstitions” as recorded in early printed works, notably the *Golden Legend*, with the visual imagery now subject to increasingly academic scrutiny. Originally, she stated, Eastlake had intended to undertake this work himself, but “eventually made over to Mrs. Jameson the materials and references he had collected”.⁵⁶

After the project had taken shape in Jameson’s mind, and negotiations opened with Murray, a letter from Eastlake to Anna Jameson, dated June 1844, advises her that she may consult the works in his library at Fitzroy Square “whenever you like”.⁵⁷ He referred specifically to his collection of catalogues of the collections in the Continental galleries, but the catalogue of the Eastlake Library produced by the National Gallery in London reveals that he possessed, probably already at this date, most of the previous scholarship on the subject published in French, German and Italian, in all of which languages Jameson was competent, if not fluent.⁵⁸ His collection included engravings of works in the Boisserée collection, Johanna Schopenhauer on van Eyck (1822), Giuseppe Cadorin on Titian (1833), Alexis-François Rio on Christian art over the centuries (1836) and two German works on the attributes of the saints: Joseph-Maria von Radowitz’ *Ikographie von Heiligen* (1834) and Albrecht Friedrich von Münchhausen’s *Die Attribute der Heiligen* (1843). Probably thinking to encourage Jameson in her task, Eastlake added that the last volume was “eagerly sought for” in England among those who read German, “and such an English book would be very successful – the additions you can make & the

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.178.

⁵⁵ Franz Kugler, *A Handbook of the History of Painting....Part I, The Italian Schools...*, trans. by Margaret Hutton, ed. by Charles Eastlake (London: John Murray, 1842), p.xviii.

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Eastlake, 'Jameson, Anna (1794-1860)', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 13 (Edinburgh: 1889), p.562.

⁵⁷ MA, Acc13236.417, Murray and Jameson, 10 June 1844.

⁵⁸ London, National Gallery (NG), Catalogue of the Eastlake Library

improvements in arrangement & illustration will be doubly sure of public favour”.⁵⁹ Read with hindsight, this could be a specification for the work which Jameson published four years later: wider in scope than von Münchhausen, more detailed in description of the artworks themselves, with notes on their whereabouts, arranged by name of the subject, rather than the attribute, copiously illustrated, rather than entirely textual, and an essential addition, in Elizabeth Eastlake’s words, “to the traveller’s library”.⁶⁰ It is tempting to think that Eastlake thus helped Jameson to organise the scope and layout of her work. Elizabeth Eastlake paid a further tribute to Anna Jameson’s fulfilment of her task in 1874, when publishing the third revised edition of Charles Eastlake’s *Kugler*. The earlier editions of Eastlake’s Editor’s Preface, she says, refer to old works on the iconography and legends of the saints, but “all such works may now be considered superseded by Mrs. Jameson’s ‘Poetry of Sacred and Legendary Art’”.⁶¹ First Charles Eastlake, then both he and his wife, evinced a slightly proprietary, and not disparaging attitude towards Jameson and her work.

Writing in the 1990s of the breakdown in Anna’s agreement with Murray in 1846, Judith Johnston presents their negotiations as a contractual agreement which Murray terminated, having a preference for Lord Lindsay’s proposal. Anna Jameson was “sacrificed on a power axis that is constituted by both gender and the class system”, she concludes.⁶² However, it does not appear from the correspondence in the Murray archive that any sum of money was ever offered by Murray for Anna’s work. From 1844 onwards, when he proposed a profit-sharing arrangement with no payment for the manuscript, Jameson alternately asked him to name terms which offered her a money payment and threatened to go to another publisher, despite “having several reasons why I should prefer you as my publisher on this occasion”.⁶³ It may be more accurate to say that he was never prepared to be drawn into any financial commitment to the work of the woman whom Harriet Martineau described as the “restless, expatiating, fervent, unreasoning, generous, accomplished Mrs. Jameson”.⁶⁴ Her persistence, her inability to finance the preparation of the manuscript and imagery, the unfinished (and unseen by him) nature of her work, the illustrations which were reminiscent of a picture-book for the lower middle classes

⁵⁹ MA, Acc13236.417, Murray and Jameson, 10 June 1844.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Eastlake, ‘Jameson’, *Enc. Brit.* (1889), p.562.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Eastlake, *Handbook of Painting. The Italian Schools. Based on the Handbook of Kugler*, New ed., (London: John Murray, 1874), p.xi.

⁶² Johnston, *Anna Jameson* (1997), p.182.

⁶³ MA, Acc13236.417, Murray and Jameson, 30 March 1846.

⁶⁴ Martineau, *Biographical Sketches* (1869).

(the *Penny Magazine*), as well as her gender and social class, combined to form a disinclination to involve his firm in the enterprise.

Jameson's finances were always precarious.⁶⁵ While she could – and did – secure income from elsewhere to meet her own costs while researching and writing *Sacred and Legendary Art* (including publication in the *Athenaeum* of a series of selected articles under that overall title), the cash payments necessary to artists and engravers to prepare the blocks and plates for the printers were prohibitive for Jameson to proceed without a secure prospect of publication. Yet she persisted in her plan for copious illustration, sacrificing a possible deal with the most prestigious publisher, the Eastlakes' publisher, for this vision of her work. If she had academic art-historical ambitions, she may have been seeking to emulate, or improve upon the work from 1835 of Charles Eastlake's other female working partner, Maria Callcott, or she may have been pursuing a parallel course to Eastlake's own thoughts which led to the founding of the Arundel Society. She may have felt that her text would not be a sufficient contribution to the contemporary scholarship without the addition of illustrations, or that she needed to set it clearly apart from the entirely unillustrated and cerebral work by Lindsay. Alternatively, she may always have had in mind an audience of the uninitiated, to whom visual recognition would be an important part of their enjoyment of the work.

Judith Johnston is, of course, correct in identifying gender and the class system as significant factors in the failure of Anna Jameson's negotiations with John Murray, but her own ambitions also played a determining part. Whatever these ambitions may have been, her experience with John Murray revealed to her that knowledge of her subject and commitment to accuracy were insufficient to counteract her "captivity" within the bounds of gender, social class, personal qualities and financial substance.

Louisa Twining finds a purpose for her talents

Nearly thirty years younger than Anna Jameson, Louisa Twining's forays into art-writing were influenced both by Jameson and by the work of the Arundel Society. She was born into a cultured upper middle class family of sufficient wealth for her to be unfettered by the need to generate her own income or to marry to secure her financial future. Nevertheless, both she and her older sister by fifteen years,

⁶⁵ Thomas, *Anna Jameson* (1978), p.103.

Elizabeth, combined lives of material comfort and culture with active promotion of initiatives to relieve the hardships of the poor, from the mid-1840s engaging with networks of other men and women of similar class and background, including, among the older generation, close friends of Anna Jameson: Mary Sturch and her sister Elisabeth Jesser Reid, Lady Byron, Sarah Austin and Bryan and Anne Procter.

Louisa's two volumes of *Recollections*, both published after 1880, and a third memoir, *Workhouses and pauperism*, have been the chief source of information about her life, and her sense of her own achievements, for modern scholars, who have largely adopted Louisa's own hierarchy of the importance of her achievements over a long working career, focusing on her public campaigns and concerted action from the mid-1850s onwards, to alleviate the conditions in workhouses.⁶⁶ The earliest of these volumes, specifically concerned with her working career as a campaigner for, then manager of, various forms of accommodation for women offering alternatives to residence in the London workhouses, opens hesitantly, informing the reader that Twining entertained "misgivings and doubts" as to whether it was "egotistical" to publish her account of her professional life, although she overcame these in the interests of "history and fact" concerning not only her own work, but that of other female colleagues "now ignored" by younger workers in "the cause".⁶⁷ She subsequently achieved some of the appointments for which she campaigned, together with recognition for her encyclopaedic knowledge of workhouse provision and the history of its reform between 1840 and 1900, and wrote prolifically and authoritatively on the subject up to her ninetieth year. However, this ingrained habit of self-deprecation, her severely serious demeanour (see Figure 5.4), her lack of interest in entertaining her audience, and the unpalatability to modern scholars of, firstly, her views on social distinctions and, secondly, of the conjunction between her professional practice and that of the Christian church may have led to a lack of curiosity among historians of nineteenth-century social reform, and lack of attention to any personal ambitions indicated first by her ventures in art-writing.

A single, authoritative but unpublished, study of Twining's contribution to the professionalisation of philanthropy as an occupation for women has been produced

⁶⁶ Louisa Twining: *Recollections of workhouse visiting and management during twenty-five years* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1880); *Recollections of life* (1893); *Workhouses and pauperism and women's work in the administration of the Poor Law* (London: Methuen, 1898).

⁶⁷ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of workhouse visiting* (1880), pp.vii-viii.

in the last fifty years.⁶⁸ Announcing itself to be “foremost a work of recovery”, Theresa Deane’s study offers a detailed chronological record and critique of Twining’s work from the 1850s to the end of her life against twentieth-century definitions of the critical features of a “profession”.⁶⁹ With this focus, it is perhaps unsurprising that Twining’s art-writing is mentioned as satisfying to her, and successful in its way, but essentially a “leisure activity” for which there was no time once Louisa’s philanthropic work became a serious, professional commitment, in the mid-1850s.⁷⁰ The only sustained attention given to Louisa Twining’s art writing also appears in an unpublished thesis: Caroline Palmer’s study of women art-writers of the first half of the nineteenth century.⁷¹ Palmer’s brief study recognises, to a greater extent than Deane, Twining’s vision of herself as a “serious-minded art-writer”, and the continued importance of visual imagery in Twining’s work to humanise workhouse environments and to encourage their occupants.



Figure 5.4: 'Louisa Twining' (date unknown)

Detail of photographic portrait in middle life. From the frontispiece to Twining, *Recollections of life* (1893). Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

⁶⁸ Theresa Deane, 'The professionalisation of philanthropy: the case of Louisa Twining (1820-1912)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2005).

⁶⁹ Deane, 'Louisa Twining' (2005), p. 10. Deane uses definitions of a “profession” developed in Anne Witz, *Professions and patriarchy* (1992) and Harold Perkin, *The rise of professional society: England since 1880* (1990).

⁷⁰ Deane, 'Louisa Twining' (2005), p.27.

⁷¹ Palmer, 'Women writers' (2009).

Ultimately, however, she suggests that, Twining sacrificed her study of art to pursue her Christian duty to “integrate (and, by implication, subordinate) private interests into the needs of the wider community”.⁷²

In her *Recollections of life*... Twining represents her foray into art-writing as the “delightful” occupation of an amateur, but this somewhat belies, as Palmer notes, the seriousness of her endeavour.⁷³ Perhaps understandably, given that, by 1893, developments in the discipline of art history had far surpassed works considered of the highest scholarship in the first half of the century, and colour reproduction of fine art works, sometimes utilising photography, had become a familiar technology, Twining deprecated the innovative significance of her art-writing, maintaining that she began her first work on the typology of Christian imagery, inspired by the thought of taking Anna Jameson’s *Sacred and Legendary Art* a little further, and “with no thought of publication”. However, she already had a sound academic grounding in the history of early Italian art, and had made a serious attempt at pioneering the illustration of her work from original water-colours.

Louisa’s family had travelled in Germany, visiting the Boisserée collection in 1839, and were acquainted with both Gustav Waagen and the German historian Friedrich Ludwig von Raumer, both of whom had visited their London home in the 1840s.⁷⁴ In the middle of that decade, Louisa had undertaken a translation from the German of two volumes of an art-historical work, which in 1847 she offered to John Murray for publication.⁷⁵ She wrote to him, deprecatingly, of “two small volumes...referred to as an authority in Kugler’s ‘Handbook of German Art’” and praised by “Mrs. (Sarah) Austin in her ‘Fragments from German Writers’”. “The present interest in everything connected with the history of early Art might probably render an English translation of this little work an acceptable addition to those already written on the subject”. It may be deduced from references to Kugler and to Sarah Austin that this is a translation of two volumes of Karl Friedrich Rumohr’s *Italienisches Forschungen* (Studies in Italian Art). Unfortunately there is no corroboration of this attribution in the Murray correspondence, nor of John Murray’s regretful rejection in reply, which may, in part, have related to the fact that Rumohr’s work had been superseded during the intervening twenty years since publication. It may be inferring too much to suggest that Twining’s omission of this from her *Recollections* indicates an

⁷² Ibid., p. 120.

⁷³ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of life* (1893), p.106. Palmer, ‘Women writers’ (2009), p.116.

⁷⁴ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of life* (1893), p.154.

⁷⁵ MS, MS 41212, Letters from Louisa Twining to John Murray, 10 March 1847.

experience she would prefer not to recall, or to make public, but she was not deterred in her undertakings, in that she commenced, in 1849 “an attempt to trace...the History of the Art of Painting from the earliest dawn of Italian art and the catacombs”.⁷⁶ Inspired by the work of the Arundel Society, of which Twining was “one of the first subscribers”, the proposed design of this work was to provide a brief life of the “master” on the *verso* leaf, facing illustrations in colour, taken from her original watercolours, of his work on the right.⁷⁷ To put this ambition in context, the first publication for subscribers to the Arundel Society, in 1849, was a new translation of Vasari’s life of Fra Angelico, accompanied by extensive notes on the whereabouts of the latter’s work, and twenty monochrome lithograph plates of examples. Louisa’s sister, Elizabeth was at the same time at work on the first volume of her *Natural Order of Plants* which was published in 1849 and follows a similar plan to that summarised by Louisa for her first illustrated work.⁷⁸ Elizabeth’s beautiful illustrations, an example of which is shown at Figure 5.5, were published in full colour, using a combination of (chromo-)lithography and hand-tinting, but as far as Louisa’s proposal was concerned “it proved impossible to reproduce” in the form in which she had conceived it.⁷⁹ This must have been a disappointment, as Palmer notes, although, less self-deprecatingly, Louisa observes that “nothing of a similar kind had then been brought out”. Not only were the technological resources lacking to carry through Louisa’s plan, but she may have felt that the personal dedication to, and financial investment in, the research for such a scheme was “impossible”. Moreover, it must have been clear to Louisa that the cost of reproduction would have rendered unfeasible the dissemination of the imagery beyond a wealthy élite, while her intention, influenced by her studies with Frederick Denison Maurice and by Christian Socialism generally, was to disseminate an understanding of the images more widely.

Louisa’s intentions and definition of success in publishing her next work are far from clear. Although she later claimed that when she began she had no intention of publishing, as has been seen, she had already seen two ambitious works of art writing and illustration, intended for publication, fail to come to fruition. The work she commenced around 1850, intended “to pursue the subject further” which Anna Jameson’s *Sacred and Legendary Art* had opened to her, may have begun as a less

⁷⁶ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of life* (1893), p.106.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.98 and 106.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Twining, *Illustrations of the Natural Order of Plants, Vol. I* (London: Joseph Cundall, 1849).

⁷⁹ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of life* (1893), pp.106-107.

ambitious project undertaken for her own interest and occupation.⁸⁰ However, at some point in the very early 1850s, she was “advised” to seek a publisher, “as at that time nothing of a similar kind had then been brought out”.⁸¹



Figure 5.5: Elizabeth Twining, 'The clove-pink tribe' (1849)

Day & Son, lithographers. From *Natural Order of Plants* (London: Joseph Cundall, 1849), Vol.I, facing p.69.
Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of the RHS Lindley Library.

Focusing on the use of symbols “to express the invisible objects of...belief by visible signs”, Louisa’s first published work, *Symbols and Emblems* (1852) follows a similar pattern to her earlier plan, of plates showing examples on which the accompanying text on the facing page provides a commentary.⁸² The illustrations are monochrome wood-engravings of the utmost simplicity, although not beneath any comparison with her predecessors in illustrated art-writing, Maria Callcott and Anna Jameson. Avoiding paintings, and thus later periods of medieval Christian art “already noticed by others” (including, as Palmer notes, Anna Jameson), the examples are taken from the earliest Christian art from the catacombs and subsequently, as applied to bas-reliefs, stained glass, early manuscripts and medals, all of which were conveniently-represented, in terms of Louisa’s travel, in the library and collections of

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Louisa Twining, *Symbols and emblems of early and Medieval Christian Art* (London: Longman, 1852), p.vi.

the British Museum and the Louvre. As Louisa later observed, her research – “delightful mornings (at the British Museum)...searching through all the works I could find” in the library, the print room and the manuscript room – would not have been possible if she had been obliged to travel too far from home.⁸³ Louisa seems to have also used her new contacts, including the “kind assistance” from the officials at the British Museum, to gain permits to pursue her researches for her second published work in the Louvre when an opportunity arose.⁸⁴

The details of Louisa’s personal introduction to Anna Jameson, at some time between 1849 and 1852, or of the extent to which they discussed their art writing, are tantalisingly absent from either Louisa’s published recollections or unpublished material. Given the similarities of both their art-writing and their philanthropic interests, the possibilities are numerous. At the outset of their friendship, Anna may have regarded Louisa as something of a protégée. When, in 1852, Jameson published *Legends of the Madonna*, she included in her Introduction a reference to Louisa’s recent publication in a note, in a similar way to the Eastlakes’ references to her own works. Drawing attention to “a very curious and startling example of the theological character of the Virgin (Mary) in the thirteenth century” which had appeared in Louisa’s *Symbols and Emblems*, Jameson complimented it as being “certainly the most complete and useful book of its kind which I know of”.⁸⁵ If this scrap of evidence can be interpreted as Jameson having some sort of interest in Louisa’s work, it seems likely that they were at least on terms which would allow discussion of accessible collections, objects and their interpretation.

Louisa’s choice of publisher, Thomas Longman of Longman, Green, Brown and Longman, was perhaps also influenced by Anna Jameson, who may have reinforced Louisa’s earlier experience of rejection by Murray and told her of her contrasting “kindly intercourse” with Longman.⁸⁶ Louisa was to find a similarly friendly and helpful relationship. She recalls that, over the course, in 1852-1855, of bringing to fruition her two published works on art, *Symbols and emblems* (1852), and *Types and figures of the Bible* (1855), “many a walk did I take to Paternoster Row to consult with Mr. Thomas Longman, who gave me all the help and advice I

⁸³ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of life* (1893), p.107.

⁸⁴ London School of Economics, Women's History Archive (WHA), MS 7LOT, Papers of Louisa Twining, Musées Impériaux to Louisa Twining, March 1854.

⁸⁵ Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna* (1852), p.xxviii.

⁸⁶ Macpherson, *Anna Jameson* (1878), p.206.

needed”.⁸⁷ The tone of Longman’s surviving business letters to Louisa is similarly collaborative. In a letter to Louisa dated 12 April 1853, he wrote of putting his books in order at home, so that he may find the ones he had offered to lend her for her researches, and suggested that she should call there to pick them up.⁸⁸ There is no remaining evidence of the terms on which Longman published, and it is probable that, unlike Anna Jameson, Louisa was not motivated by the need for an income. Longman remained her publisher throughout the 1850s, and there is evidence of her personally financing the publication of at least one of her social campaigning pamphlets. Thomas Longman wrote, in 1855, to thank her for a cheque to the value of more than fifty pounds for her “little pamphlet”.⁸⁹

In July 1852, Twining sent a copy of the newly-published *Symbols and Emblems* to G.F. Waagen, apparently asking him for advice as to how to promote her work in German art historical circles, particularly with the scholars whose work she admired. Thanking her for the “beautiful present”, Waagen promised to do what he could himself to make the work known and advised Louisa to contact, of the two scholars whose names she suggested, Professor Piper, Director of the Christian Museum of the University of Berlin, and author of *Mythologie und Symbolik der Christlichen Kunst* (*Mythology and symbolism in Christian Art*, published in 1847-51).⁹⁰ As a teaching professor, Piper would be able to recommend her book to his students. True to his word, Waagen did place a review of the book in the *Deutsches Kunstblatt* (*German Art Journal*). Piper’s observations, in January 1853, on the volume which Louisa sent to him were perhaps less influenced by family friendship than Waagen’s.⁹¹ He had recommended the work to his students, but he suggested that Louisa should prepare and publish a supplement with full details of the location, materials and manufacture of the objects which she had drawn for her illustrations. Her work had not quite met his standards as a scholarly work of reference. Although reviews in the *Athenaeum*, the *Ecclesiastic* and the *Spectator* were soberly appreciative of the “painstaking research” and “authority” of the book, it must have been clear to Louisa that, if she aspired to a recognised place in the academic

⁸⁷ Louisa Twining *Recollections of life*, pp.107-108. Louisa Twining, *Types and figures of the Bible illustrated by the art of the Middle Ages* (London: Longman, 1855)

⁸⁸ London, London School of Economics, Women’s History Archive (WHA), MS 7LOT, Papers of Louisa Twining, 12 April 1853.

⁸⁹ WHA, MS 7LOT, Thomas Longman to Louisa Twining, 5 July 1855.

⁹⁰ WHA, MS 7LOT, Gustav Waagen to Louisa Twining, 14 August 1852, trans. by Johanna Holmes.

⁹¹ WHA, MS 7LOT, Karl Piper to Louisa Twining, 29 January 1853, trans. by Johanna Holmes.

world, she would need to adopt a more scholarly, and time-consuming, approach, and to create a more comprehensively-referenced and densely textual work.⁹²

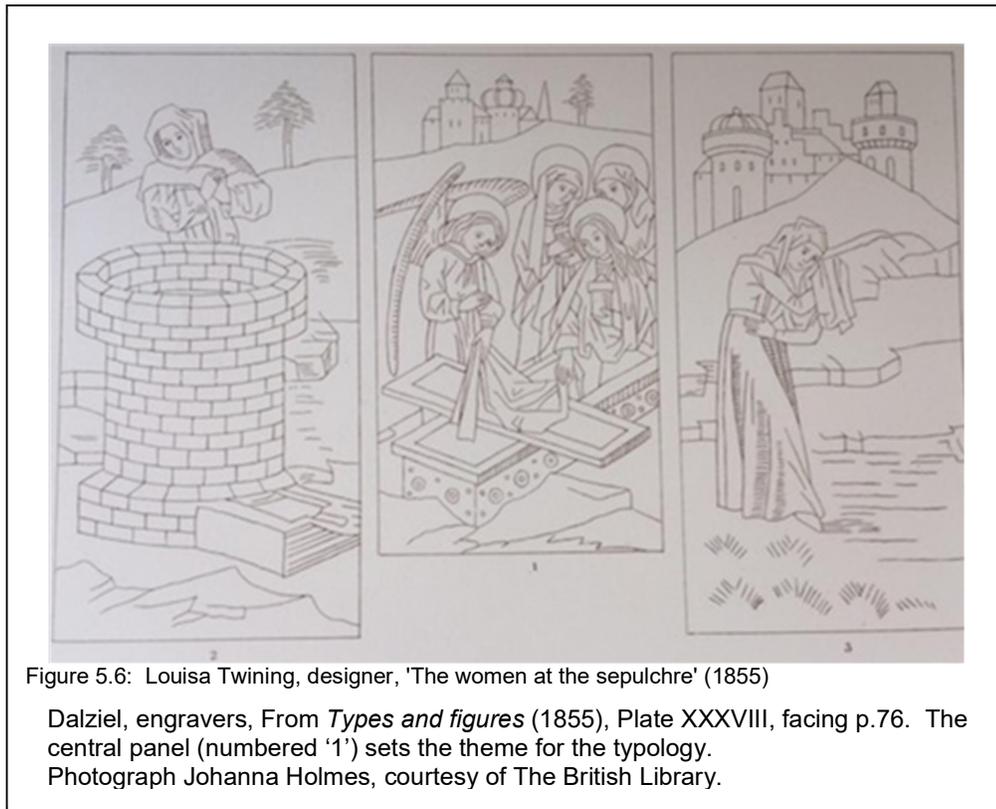


Figure 5.6: Louisa Twining, designer, 'The women at the sepulchre' (1855)

Dalziel, engravers, From *Types and figures* (1855), Plate XXXVIII, facing p.76. The central panel (numbered '1') sets the theme for the typology. Photograph Johanna Holmes, courtesy of The British Library.

Louisa followed Piper's advice to a certain extent in relation to her second volume, *Types and figures of the Bible* (1855). More abstruse and more overtly theological than *Symbols and Emblems*, this work proposes an argument concerning the typology of Biblical iconography, rather than extending the catalogue of imagery, already assembled by Jameson, Lindsay and her own previous work.⁹³ The illustrations, although somewhat more sophisticated than the earlier volume, remain guilelessly simple. Figure 5.6 illustrates the form of illustration in this work, a result which was disappointing in comparison that to which Louisa had aspired in her first, uncompleted study of Christian art. Although Caroline Palmer makes the case that Twining's religious faith, combined with the appropriateness of this as a subject for a female art-writer, were the basis for her claim to stature as an art-writer, Twining, in her introduction seems less confident of this. Echoing Anna Jameson's question "Why must we be always looking back?"⁹⁴ she acknowledges that "to revive the

⁹² Louisa Twining, *Types and figures* (1855) endpapers.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.ix.

⁹⁴ Ernstrom, 'Christian Art' (1999) quotes Anna Jameson, 'The House of Titian', in *Memoirs and Essays illustrative of art, literature and social morals* (London: R. Bentley, 1846). In this essay,

outward form, from which the living idea is parted or forgotten, may seem to be useless...but...our interest need not be affected, if we look upon them simply as belonging to the Past".⁹⁵ Having made so many compromises in the attempt, first to be published, and second to be acknowledged by academic authorities, one wonders whether Louisa herself felt that there was insufficient satisfaction in the pursuit of academic goals. After the publication of her second volume of art historical writing, she turned both her energy and her intellect to an entirely different area of work.

Theresa Deane has demonstrated the extent to which, from the mid-1840s, Louisa's daily life was occupied with widely differing, but intensely-felt, activities, to which her Christian faith was central. Several members of her close family died, having been nursed in the family home, which she still occupied, including two talented older brothers, in 1847. She had become involved in visiting a group of twenty to forty of the poorest households in the central London parish of St. Clement Danes to bring both material and spiritual comfort – what Deane terms “district visiting”.⁹⁶ She attended lectures at Queen's College, London, founded in 1848 by Frederick Denison Maurice, and a Bible class led by him at his home. From the mid-1850s she taught working-class women at the Working Men's College which he founded in 1854. It was probably here that she heard John Ruskin lecture, listening with “rapt and delighted interest”, gaining from these, and from his early books, particularly *The Stones of Venice* (first published 1851-1853), “an education of the mind and heart” on “all the objects of nature and of art”.⁹⁷ Over the course of the ten years from 1845 to 1855 a serious, energetic young woman educated herself with considerable intellectual application in art, in theology, in the lives of the poor and in the pains of human suffering and loss.

In 1853, Louisa fulfilled a promise made to Mrs. Stapleton, one of the people she had come to know through district visiting, that she would visit the elderly woman if she was obliged to move into the Strand Union workhouse in Cleveland Street when she was unable any longer to earn enough to maintain an independent life.⁹⁸ Over the course of regular visits, Louisa, who had no previous experience of the life within these closed, under-supervised and under-resourced facilities, developed a

Jameson muses on the relative of the relics of the past, and their study, compared with the innovations of the present.

⁹⁵ Louisa Twining, *Types and figures* (1855), p.viii.

⁹⁶ Deane, 'Louisa Twining' (2005), p.23.

⁹⁷ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of life* (1893), p.290.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.111.

penetrating critique of the regimented, and sometimes maliciously unkind, management regime. She saw that, under-resourced as they were, large workhouses – the Strand Union, by no means the largest in national terms, accommodated approximately five hundred people at this time - offered no respect, care, privacy or even physical safety, to individual residents who, particularly in the case of orphans and old people, were unprotected and lacked any sort of social contact with people from the world beyond the workhouse. Even where managers were generally benign, there was no time or money for them, or for the workhouse chaplain, to involve themselves with individuals' needs. Health, order and cleanliness depended upon rigidly- and minutely-observed regulations and upon the efforts of untrained, and often unsuitable, residents. Where managers did not have residents' interests at heart, and where visiting by outsiders was obstructed or prevented, abusive practices became entrenched, against which residents had no recourse. Having experienced, over the course of the next two years, obstruction to her visiting residents at Cleveland Street on a regular basis, and even greater resistance to her organising a group of her female friends to do likewise, and having visited one or two other workhouses, Louisa felt she should enter the public debate on workhouse management and visiting which had begun to spark in England. She brought to her first published writings – three letters to the *Guardian* published in 1855 and subsequently published by Longman as a single pamphlet (probably the one for which she had paid him £50 to see published) – all the intellectual rigour and articulate well-organised argument which had earned her a favourable review from the *Spectator* of her art-writing: “This is a carefully –compiled work”, the reviewer wrote, “done *con amore* but with sound sense as well, which dispenses with raptures and sentimentalities, and sets to in a practical efficient spirit...to explain the substance”.⁹⁹ From these first published writings on the need for reform of workhouse management, her crisp tone, unequivocal words and confident analysis of her subject carried an authority which experience, rather than received doctrine or reading had taught her.

Louisa and Anna Jameson were certainly on terms of personal acquaintanceship by this date (1855). Louisa had “prepared a pamphlet” when she “saw Mrs. Jameson one day and asked her about” publication.¹⁰⁰ “Strike while the iron is hot”, Jameson

⁹⁹ Louisa Twining, *A few words about the inmates of our Union workhouses* (London: Longman, 1855). The review of Twining's *Symbols and emblems* (1852), is reproduced from the *Spectator* in the endpapers to Louisa Twining, *Types and figures* (1855).

¹⁰⁰ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of workhouse visiting* (1880), Appendix: extracts from my diary, Autumn 1855. Louisa is clear that this conversation took place in a face-to-face encounter, which must

advised, meaning, one suspects, not only that this was the moment in public discourse when Twining's analysis would have greatest impact, but while Louisa herself was fully intellectually-engaged with her subject.¹⁰¹ In the pamphlet, Twining outlines an innocuous-sounding plan for female volunteers to assist workhouse chaplains by visiting long-term residents of the workhouses (chiefly older people unable to earn a living due to physical or mental frailty) on a regular basis to provide some individual social contact, thus helping to keep up morale, and to remind residents of Christian comfort as an antidote to exposure to "evil ways". "It is not intended now to suggest any different plans of management" which would result in increased costs, Twining says reassuringly, but by the end of her pamphlet she is reminding readers of Anna Jameson's recent lecture, calling "public attention" to "the need for introducing a new influence into our workhouses, such as would be exercised by well-educated women". The reader is left feeling that this is not the last they will hear of Louisa Twining's suggestions.¹⁰²

The relationship between Louisa's intellectual and emotional engagement with her new purpose and her Christian faith is a vexed one. She herself does not suggest that she was 'called' by God, nor that she was making a sacrifice of self to a discipline of hard work and service in His name. Rather, the motivation which overwhelmingly conveys itself to the reader in these early campaigning leaflets is a humanitarian, or humanistic, anger on behalf of individuals who have been deprived of individuality and agency, leaving them vulnerable to neglect and exploitation, fortuitously united with a plan which is realistically deliverable by the writer and others like her, and a formidable forensic intelligence as to the systems, attitudes and financial constraints to be overcome and those which can be made to serve her purpose.

Earlier that year, on 14 February 1855, Anna Jameson had delivered her first lecture on the employment of women at the house which her friends Elisabeth Jesser Reid and her older sister Mary Sturch shared at 21 York Terrace, near Regents Park, in London. Anna's lecture does not present a particularly cogent or forceful argument, drawing heavily upon her enthusiasm for her source material: the recently published work by Mary Stanley on Protestant sisterhoods and the example of the nursing

have taken place between February and June 1855, given Anna Jameson's subsequent travel to Europe.

¹⁰¹ Louisa Twining *Recollections of workhouse visiting*, p.95.

¹⁰² Louisa Twining, *A few words* (1855), pp.5 and 14.

sisterhood and community at Kaiserswerth.¹⁰³ For the first time in her career, however, Jameson was arguing for “the occasion for woman to do well her appointed and permitted work”, rather than criticising the lack of opportunity for, and lack of social acceptance of, women’s professional work in a workplace shared with male counterparts.¹⁰⁴ Anna gave her support to these models of all-female occupation as an opportunity for women to be enabled to organise themselves, to receive recognised training, to work alongside men, albeit in different (usually subordinate) roles and to be respected for their contribution to the objectives of the enterprise in which they worked, but she conceives of such opportunities only in the terms of her source documents, suggesting that the companies of Christian sisters who had devoted themselves to the care of the sick, the destitute and the imprisoned, in institutions abroad offered a model which could, without offending defenders of English Protestantism, be replicated in this country. She gives us a reasonable facsimile of the intellectual striving to analyse material and influence their audience, possibly in an effort to gain in a different forum the public stature which she had not achieved in the art world. However, the work lacks Twining’s analytical power or authenticity of personal engagement and experience, and her use of the word ‘permitted’ seems to indicate a rather weary capitulation to forces mitigating against women’s opportunities to work in the same occupation and on the same terms as men..

Nevertheless, Jameson’s lecture had considerable impact. Her vision of a female workforce which made a respected, professional contribution to endeavours to which men were also committed made an impression, even upon those not so convinced that only religious self-sacrifice could motivate women to undertake distasteful tasks among the sick, the insane and the criminal. Both F.D. Maurice and the Rev. J.S. Brewer referred, in their lectures “to ladies” which to an extent launched their plans to start a Female College, to Anna’s throwing down some sort of challenge to men to make the opportunities – for training and for purposeful, remunerated work – available to women.¹⁰⁵ Within a week or so of first publication of her lecture, Jameson had received “several” letters suggesting that workhouses, as well as hospitals, might be institutions in which suitably trained women might

¹⁰³ Mary Stanley, *Hospitals and sisterhoods* (London: John Murray, 1854).

¹⁰⁴ Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859), p.15.

¹⁰⁵ *Lectures to Ladies on Practical Subjects*, ed. by Rev. J. S. Brewer (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1855), pp.15-16, p.21 (F.D. Maurice ‘Introductory Lecture: Plan of a Female College...’ and pp.287-8 (Rev. J.S. Brewer, ‘Workhouse visiting’).

pursue useful and satisfying careers.¹⁰⁶ It seems likely that Louisa Twining and some of her acquaintance in the nascent movement for the reform of workhouse management were the authors of these letters, and that they contributed to Jameson's decision to exchange her planned extended visit to Rome for a tour of European cities during the summer and autumn of 1855 to research organised work by women's sisterhoods in a variety of settings, including prisons and refuges for the poor as well as infirmaries. Starting in Paris in June, by September she was in Vienna, from where she wrote to Elisabeth Jesser Reid and Mary Sturch in London to relate her progress and plans, her good health and the tireless exertions of the sisterhoods in alleviating the effects of an epidemic of cholera.¹⁰⁷ She expressed concern that, unless (English) Protestants could find a mechanism for enabling women to deliver caring services to the sick and the poor, Roman Catholic countries would be able to claim superiority on humanitarian grounds. She had been particularly impressed with women's ability to manage a female prison without recourse to the violence and handcuffs utilised by male officials. She seems newly-fired with personal interest in her subject.

Jameson and Twining: a working partnership

In March 1856 Louisa Twining "took Mrs. Jameson" to see the Strand Union Workhouse in Cleveland Street, "as she (Jameson) was preparing her second lecture...and workhouses were especially to be brought forward."¹⁰⁸ Anna had just returned from her extended trip to the Continent. This was followed by two visits to institutions with which Louisa was less familiar: the refuge for old and sick poor women run by the Roman Catholic Little Sisters of the Poor at Hammersmith (London) on 17 March and the St. Pancras Union workhouse on 26 June, two days before Anna delivered her second lecture.¹⁰⁹ As Theresa Deane records it, both women were struck by the "spirit of 'love'" which reigned in the former, a phenomenon which Jameson referred to at length in her subsequent lecture, contrasting the care and personal attention to the dying provided in the institutions run by Roman Catholic sisterhoods on the Continent, with the grudging, cost-conscious provision in workhouses under the governance of an Anglican parish. Although Twining later recalled that she "found it difficult to come to terms" with the fact that the Sisters were saving their co-religionists from workhouse conditions while Anglicans were "not doing the same for the British poor", it is clear from Anna

¹⁰⁶ Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859), p.6.

¹⁰⁷ BCA, MS RF 103/7/7 (17 September 1855).

¹⁰⁸ Louisa Twining *Recollections of workhouse visiting* (1880), p.96.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Jameson's letter of the previous year to Mrs. Reid and Miss Sturch that she had already formed this view in relation to a range of institutional provision.¹¹⁰ This seems to indicate that there was already an exchange of opinion between Jameson and Twining, each absorbing the information and analysis of the other, although attribution to the originator is difficult to establish.

Over the course of 1856 and 1857 Louisa Twining established a network of contacts among women engaged in similar work, some of them implementing the scheme she had outlined, and organised women of her acquaintance to undertake visiting in workhouses as she had outlined in *A few words...* in 1855. Surviving letters from Anna Jameson to Mrs. Reid and Miss Sturch provide evidence of the latter, with Anna's occasional company, visiting workhouse residents, at this time, taking with them small necessities such as spectacles or warm woollen fabric, as well as Christian comfort.¹¹¹ The workhouse in question was quite possibly the St. Pancras Union, which accommodated between fifteen hundred and two thousand residents in 1857, and was previously "conspicuous for the most disgraceful mismanagement and held up to public indignation". In 1856 a ladies' visiting committee had been established, similar to those suggested by Twining.¹¹²

At the beginning of 1857 Louisa was prompted by a correspondence in the *Guardian* to write three further letters to the newspaper, all of which were published, and later that year collated into a single separate pamphlet.¹¹³ This was followed by a research trip to Paris, possibly armed with introductions from Anna's previous tour, a petition in June 1857 to Parliament in support of Lord Raynham's motion (not carried) calling for an enquiry into the management of metropolitan workhouses, an article in the Church of England Monthly Review, also published as a pamphlet, and a paper for the first meeting, in September 1857, of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (NAPSS).¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Deane, 'Louisa Twining' (2005), p. 31 refers to Louisa Twining, *Workhouses and Pauperism* (1898).

¹¹¹ BCA, MS RF 103/7/7 (17 September 1855)

¹¹² Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859), p.123. Peter Higginbottom, 'St. Pancras, Middlesex, London', *The workhouse* (2019), <<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/StPancras/>> [accessed 26 April 2019].

¹¹³ Louisa Twining, *Metropolitan workhouses and their inmates* (London: Longman, 1857).

¹¹⁴ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of workhouse visiting* (1880), pp.100-103. Louisa Twining, 'Workhouses and women's work', *Church of England Monthly Review* (1857) subsequently reproduced in Louisa Twining, *Recollections of workhouse visiting* (1880), Appendix IV.

Work, training and professional purpose for women

Louisa's article 'Workhouses and Women's Work', published in 1857, is the result of an invitation to address their Committee, received from the ladies' visiting group at the St. Pancras workhouse, some of whom she had met when she visited with Anna Jameson the previous year.¹¹⁵ It is, in many respects, a tribute to Jameson and to the thoughts set out in her lectures, and is perhaps the fruit of their discussions, following that visit and the preparation of Jameson's lecture. Not only are Jameson's lectures named as sources, but Louisa quotes statistics and examples used by Jameson, and admires the principle of a "communion of labour". She refers to Kaiserswerth, as Jameson and others, including Florence Nightingale, had done to demonstrate that women are entirely capable, with training and organisation, of effective action and leadership roles.¹¹⁶

Twining has distinctly greater intent than Jameson, however, and puts forward practical proposals. She is unsentimental about the nature of woman: in her experience both men and women who are given too much unsupervised licence are equally capable of abusing their positions. The unaccountable system, the treatment of residents as an undifferentiated mass of potential "rule-breakers" and the public feeling that the poor deserve to suffer for their poverty are her targets. She promotes the idea of educated female visitors for a number of reasons here and in her other writings of this period. Their education (and by inference, their social class) will enable them to negotiate on a more equal footing for entry to the institution and, hopefully, for humanitarian improvements for the residents, with "Boards of Guardians (who) certainly never contemplated nor desired the help of women in their ungracious task".¹¹⁷ By inference, and by Louisa's own example, they might also have access to support from elsewhere, including more powerful allies. While she is scathing about the normal education of English young ladies fitting them for anything like this work, Twining promotes the idea that it is precisely these young women who, with training, maturity and experience, are most needed to exercise authority, imagination and diplomacy. The fact that Twining's proposed visitors are apparently innocuous women who are not engaged in earning a living will facilitate residents' speaking to them of the personal hardships which could be ameliorated and to which their visitors have time to pay attention. She is derisive of

¹¹⁵ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of workhouse visiting* (1880), p.99.

¹¹⁶ Nightingale, Florence, *The Institution of Kaiserswerth on the Rhine...* (London: 1851)

¹¹⁷ Louisa Twining, 'Workhouses and women's work', *Church of England Monthly Review* (1857), reproduced in Louisa Twining, *Recollections of workhouse visiting* (1880), p.172.

male assumptions that “they (women) would be too tender-hearted, too sympathising, or too meddling and interfering with that which belonged to men only”. The Workhouse Visiting Society, inaugurated in 1858 with Twining as Honorary Secretary, was originally envisaged as a network of informal women’s groups which would bring about improvements in the lives of residents through action for change in the Poor Law regime locally, and nationally, as well as by bringing spiritual and material comfort to individuals.

Anna Jameson had been abroad for much of 1857 and 1858 and returned to England late in 1858 to find Louisa a determined and active campaigner with her own organisation and reputation within the NAPSS and its influential contacts in political circles. Writing to congratulate Louisa on a letter to the *Times* Jameson commented “you strike and strike again and so aptly...hit the nail on the head”. She invited Louisa to visit her in Brighton and asked, firstly, for “your help and advice” regarding the combined edition of the *Sisters of Charity* and *Communion of Labour* lectures to be published in 1859, and secondly if she might “make use of your letter” in that new edition.¹¹⁸

A logical response to a “cruel inconsistency”

The exact degree of collaboration between Louisa and Anna during 1859 cannot be established, but they were clearly in touch. As seen earlier, Anna Jameson was not a woman who entered into collaborations lightly. Her invitation to Louisa, and request for help, are indicative, not only of Anna’s weakened health, and possibly awareness of her failing faculties, but of her confidence in, and admiration for, the younger woman’s abilities.

Anna’s preface, addressed to Lord John Russell, President of the NAPSS, in the combined 1859 edition of her two lectures, has a force and directness absent from her previous work, in which it is tempting to see Louisa’s influence.¹¹⁹ Towards the end of Jameson’s lecture in 1856 she had imagined critics of her views asking the question “What is your plan?” Her rhetorical response then is characteristic of Anna Jameson. Penetrating and highly articulate in her identification of the difficulties facing women who needed to work, she was unable to formulate a proposed

¹¹⁸ WHA, MS 7LOT, Anna Jameson to Louisa Twining, 29 November 1858. Louisa’s letter to *The Times*, ‘On the subject of workhouse nurses’, appeared on 25 November 1858 (p.5).

¹¹⁹ Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859). This ‘Letter’, which forms a lengthy preface to the lectures as originally composed, does not appear in later editions of the work, and is perhaps for this reason not widely discussed in recent scholarship.

strategy which would not offend her readers. She found herself obliged to admit that “I have no plan ready prepared, and so exquisitely contrived to avoid offence”.¹²⁰ It had been a few months after delivering this lecture that Anna wrote to Elisabeth Jesser Read and Mary Sturch again, somewhat despairingly, that “the settlement of the woman’s question involves more than ‘Colleges’ can do” but with the hope that if “all the good and hopeful” pursued their various courses “something will be done”.¹²¹

By 1859, however, Jameson’s views, as expressed in her new introductory essay, were trenchant on the subject of women taking the initiative to secure meaningful work for themselves. “With a sort of cruel inconsistency”, she wrote, men resist women’s entry to increasingly stratified and professionalised occupations, and threaten antagonism and a withdrawal of their traditional protectiveness towards ‘the weaker sex’ if women were to gain entry. However, these men who talk of their protection of the weaker sex may extend it towards their wife, daughter or sister, but not to another woman. “It is not, therefore, in right of her womanhood, but as a part of the property of a man...that a woman is protected. I do not see that we have much reason to regard this threat of losing the man’s protection”. “We are reproached”, on the one hand, with seeking to do men’s work, and on the other for separating our work from theirs. Men, she continued, seem to have lived happily until now with the fact that every circle of men from which women are excluded must create “a certain number of women separated from men”. It is a regrettable circumstance, but it is not the result of women’s actions or wishes.

“What Englishwomen require,” she continued, is an accepted objective “that in all public institutions, charitable, educational, sanitary, in which numbers of women and children are congregated, and have to be managed and otherwise cared for, some part of the government should be in the hands of able and intelligent women”.¹²² She advocated that girls’ education and training should include practical health and household management, which would fit them to take on these “social duties”.¹²³ Thirdly, she proposed that there should be female inspectors of girls’ educational establishments from the industrial schools for the poor up to “the larger and higher colleges for girls which we find extended by the Universities”, in order to oversee such education and training.¹²⁴ Female trainee teachers, she observed, became

¹²⁰ Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859), p.147.

¹²¹ BCA, MS RF 103/7/11 (27 January [1857])

¹²² Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859), p.xxx.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.xl.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.xli.

“excellent teachers of grammar, geography and history” and astonish the (male, academically-inclined) “lawyers and collegians”, but they should be examined by people, including women, with regard to the “practical (subjects’) requirements” of their future occupation in teaching girls. These proposals, logical and focused on the need to prepare a cohort of educated, upper middle class women to take on responsibility and influence in institutions accommodating women and children, creating a profession of “social duties”, are the core elements of Louisa Twining’s subsequent writings on this subject, and there is thus reason to suppose that discussions with Louisa helped formulate such clear and practical proposals.

Jameson’s last two proposals, however, pertain to the mixed-gender, rather than the separatist, workplace and to the male-dominated sphere of political and intellectual influence. Women should have freer access to “higher kinds of industrial, professional (including medical) and artistic training”, she asserts, reverting to arguments from much earlier in her career concerning male resistance to the entry of women to artisan occupations. However, as if in recognition that qualifications will not result in equal opportunities or equal recognition, she adds that the education of boys in the exclusively male environments in which they are taught to disparage women and acquire the habit of “jocosity” at women’s expense should change.¹²⁵ “Young men grow up...in total ignorance of the true condition of woman...with...an inclination to misunderstand and despise the motives which actuate us”, she wrote, uttering an uncharacteristically despairing and angry cry that, without recognition and respect from men, ‘colleges’ will never be enough.¹²⁶ It is a bleak message: a woman who honestly endeavours to use and improve her talents “to raise her position in life” finds “the wit and talent she admires” in male role models “turned against her”. And, Jameson suggests, the greater the woman’s effort, the more prominent the women make themselves, the more they are “traded and ridiculed”.

Anna Jameson regarded the ‘Letter to Lord John Russell’ as the culmination of her thinking on women and work: Bessie Rayner Parkes, writing in 1866, recalled Anna’s conclusion, once it had been published, that “Now I have said all I can say upon these subjects”.¹²⁷ Her unexpected death in 1860 ensured that this was indeed the case. It has been suggested that twentieth-century feminist scholars, led

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.xxi.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.xxiii-xxiv.

¹²⁷ Bessie Rayner Belloc (née Parkes), *Vignettes: Twelve biographical sketches* (London and New York: Alexander Strahan, 1866), p.447.

to focus on Jameson's writings as an inspiration for the Langham Place feminists, then disappointed to find her saying that she does not wish to take up arms for the "rights and wrongs of women", secured her neglect as an important nineteenth century "public moralist".¹²⁸ Jameson's integrity in "asserting the moral and social function of culture", and the role of "great artists and writers" to "work out the intellectual and spiritual good and promote the progress of the whole human race" enabled her, Benjamin Dabby argues, to establish her both own voice and the authority of female observation, in the decades before 1850.¹²⁹ While his argument is convincing, it is argued here that Jameson's ambition took her a step further. Not content to establish herself over this period as one among many commentators, both female and male, in "Britain's literary democracy", she wished to make a unique and personal contribution to academic and intellectually-rigorous discourse.¹³⁰ Here she failed, for a number of reasons including, but not restricted to, her gender, but her experience led her to fear for future generations of ambitious women.

Louisa Twining's realisation of her ambitions

Following the NAPSS conference in Bradford in October 1859, at which Louisa Twining delivered a paper and Anna Jameson spoke, Louisa prepared and published an article which offers a résumé of the concerns which the two women shared.¹³¹ Receiving a copy shortly before her death, Jameson, who had by now become a member of the Committee of Twining's fledgling national network, the Workhouse Visiting Society, wrote to her "Many, many thanks for the good (your essay) is sure to effect. It is, besides, very well written and logically (sic.) arranged as to material and reasoning. I am quite delighted with it altogether."¹³² The article set out Louisa's and Anna's shared vision for the involvement and training of women to manage workhouses, to support the women and children who lived there, and to influence the regime of life there for them.¹³³ "Do not despair about your own particular wish", Jameson wrote, recognising that Twining's more immediate concerns were to publish the paper she had delivered at the NAPSS Conference the

¹²⁸ Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859), p.15.

¹²⁹ Benjamin Dabby, *Women as public moralists in Britain: from the Bluestockings to Virginia Woolf* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 2017). p.125.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹³¹ Accounts of Anna Jameson's participation at this conference and her reception can be found in B R Belloc, *Vignettes* (1866) and (Jameson's own account) in *The Letters of Anna Jameson to Ottilie von Goethe*, ed. by G.S. Needler (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 31 October 1859.

¹³² WHA, MS 7LOT, Anna Jameson to Louisa Twining, 7 January 1860. Louisa Twining wrote *in memoriam* on the envelope containing this letter "Mrs. Jameson's last letter to me before her death".

¹³³ Louisa Twining, 'Deaconesses for the Church of England', *Church of England Monthly Review*, January (1860).

previous October. Here, with characteristically incisive and dispassionate analysis she made proposals for the establishment of schemes which would train and give practical support to young girls leaving the workhouse schools to enter employment – and residence outside its walls - for the first time.¹³⁴ These two papers incorporate the twin strands of Louisa Twining's career for the succeeding forty years: a concern that men of the upper middle class and local connections but no experience or aptitude for the task were appointed to manage and inspect institutions while women could both help them to operate a more humane regime or take over management, and a parallel concern that the institutions and their services should be structurally-reformed nationally. To the end of her life she paid tribute to Anna Jameson's "numerous letters of encouragement and advice", but her humanitarian passion, her drive, her clinical analysis and precise, realistic proposals for change, were all her own.¹³⁵

Twining, long-retired from managerial work, reviewed in several of her publications, the changes in her field of interest, and of women's participation in it, since the beginning of her career. Her observations, combined with Deane's conclusions, throw a light on a number of aspects and consequences of her early ambitions and determination discussed here. Firstly, although fired by conviction and possessing a degree of confidence stemming from her family's social standing, her intelligence and ability to communicate, and favourable reviews of her published writing, Louisa was at first cautious about joining the debate on provision for the destitute in the first half of the 1850s. She needed the encouragement of Anna Jameson and to associate her proposals with as many as possible of the attributes of male commentators, intellectuals, and clerics engaged in the debate. Her goal gained substance by its emphasis on the irreproachable values, training in domestic management and supposed attributes of personal sensitivity to emotion and care of upper middle class women, and by the gathering of a network of like-minded women of similar social status and interests to herself. In order to take the platform at the first meeting of the NAPSS in 1857, she first needed a constituency.¹³⁶ Secondly, and linked to social status, was the fact that Twining's proposals could only be funded through voluntary effort. Only upper middle class women already financially provided-for, and having a home of their own, could be available to undertake the

¹³⁴ Louisa Twining, *Recollections of workhouse visiting* (1880).

¹³⁵ Louisa Twining, *Workhouses and Pauperism* (1898), p.47.

¹³⁶ Louisa Twining, 'On the condition of workhouses', *Philanthropist*, January and February (1858) was first delivered at the NAPSS conference in Birmingham in 1857. In the event, Louisa Twining was unable to be present for family reasons, and her paper was read to the meeting.

work Louisa envisaged. Lastly, if a scheme was to gain the support of politicians and other influential men, including churchmen, it should complement, rather than compete with, existing services. From her early campaigning leaflets, it appears that these strategies were conscious on Louisa's part – indeed, she was able to present them as virtues in her proposals – but practising the art of the possible by these means laid the foundations for the shortfalls in realising her ambitions which she noted forty years later. Theresa Deane argues convincingly that, by imitating some of the practices of professional bodies which added social prestige, potential remuneration and a degree of social mobility to male careers, Twining established a female professional body in the form of the Workhouse Visiting Society. If so, however, this was a profession which lacked both substance as a participant in national governance and debate, and the usual rewards for its members' careers. By the 1890s, as Louisa observed, the original female pioneers and founders were forgotten, or viewed as idiosyncratic, and few women had put themselves forward for appointment as inspectors or for election as guardians under the Poor Laws, which they were now entitled to do, provided they met the property-owning criteria for elected public office.¹³⁷ In the public realm, “instead of interest and intelligent enquiry, we find apathy and ignorance prevailing in all classes” towards the care of the mentally-ill, physically frail or destitute whose lives were governed by the Poor Law. Consequences included national failure to provide consistent standards of care or provisions for the training of staff and other public servants.¹³⁸ Both of these had been fundamental to Twining's original proposals, but neither she, nor her organisation, had gained sufficient substance and influence to make an impact on public distaste for the subject over the course of nearly forty years.

Louisa Twining was not the only woman working in her field. A number, to whom she refers (although not by name) in this article were active, but, from her account, can be characterised as falling into two groups: those, like herself, who were financially independent, and those who were dependent upon pay. Essentially, it was to the former that Twining addressed her article, and whom she exhorted to join the ranks of guardians and inspectors of Poor Law institutions. In her mind, as Theresa Deane concludes, there was no likelihood of the latter progressing to such positions through experience, training and supervision: they were not expected to be susceptible to, or driven by, the same humanitarian impulse which had first inspired her, nor were they expected to perceive and then implement the

¹³⁷ Louisa Twining, 'Women as Public Servants', *Nineteenth Century*, 28 (1890), pp. 950-958

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.950.

improvements in services and institutions for which she had long campaigned.¹³⁹ While Deane suggests that this lack of opportunity for practitioners to progress detracts from the status of “philanthropy” as a profession in the normally-accepted sense, the obverse is also true, that it marks out “philanthropy” as the preserve of the educated upper middle class, and, moreover, those who did not seek remuneration. Ironically, while male professional bodies were, amongst other objectives, predicated upon establishing and increasing the financial value of their members’ work, this female philanthropic association was intent on detaching itself from the term ‘professional’ in the sense of financial reward as an indicator of value, excellence or public recognition. Through her early strategies and subsequent consolidation of these, Twining embodied, promoted, and reinforced associations of philanthropy, lack of personal material reward, and personal inspiration, mission or vocation.

Conclusions

Both Anna Jameson and Louisa Twining had ambitions to make a unique, or at least personally-distinctive, contribution to a prestigious public discourse. Both, for different reasons, and with different degrees of career impact and personal disappointment, were denied access to the art-historical discourse in its emerging academic form. Anna Jameson instead colonised a space she had already prepared with her guides to the galleries of art in the early 1840s, for an audience which she characterised, in an article published in 1849, as “the uninitiated”.¹⁴⁰ Hilary Fraser, writing in 1998, took the view, that female art-writers, including Jameson, “in search of intellectual legitimation” as authorities on their subject, promoted the ideological association of their gender with “sensibility and piety”, thus establishing a sub-genre of art-writing, or scholarship of a lower order, defined by their womanhood, rather than their academic contribution.¹⁴¹ Anna Jameson’s gender may have liberated her, in Hilary Fraser’s sense, from traditional styles of art-connoisseurship, but it is argued here that she was attempting, in *Sacred and Legendary Art*, to join the ranks of the initiated. Hers was not an intellectually brilliant mind, as the young John Ruskin, meeting her in Venice in 1845, accurately and unkindly noted. “She is candid and industrious” but “absolutely without knowledge or instinct of painting (and had no sharpness of insight even for anything else)”, he recorded from his notes in his published, autobiographical *Praeterita* in

¹³⁹ Deane, 'Louisa Twining' (2005), pp.257-258.

¹⁴⁰ Anna Jameson, 'Some thoughts on art, addressed to the uninitiated', *Art-Journal* (1849), pp. 69-71 and 103-105.

¹⁴¹ Fraser, 'Women and art history' (1998), pp.81-84.

1886-1887.¹⁴² It is probable that, even had she been uniquely brilliant, her need for immediate financial return, and her dependence upon the feminine identity established with her public, would have proved insuperable. However, even ambitions to become a middle-ranking member of the academic élite of her day, to be a hero in Carlyle's sense of the word, in which industry in the face of adversity is more highly-prized than Ruskin's "instinct", were thwarted. Jameson, particularly once her friendship with Louisa Twining had contributed to a personal, rather than a theoretical, engagement with philanthropic activity, in the 1850s added her voice to those who promoted a peculiarly feminine heroism in 'sisterhoods' assisting the poor and sick. While enthusiastically embracing the opportunities for training, leadership and control of their own affairs which 'sisterhoods' might offer, however, she did not forget that women of other talents, like herself, needed opportunities to be successful in the mixed-gender workplace.

Louisa Twining found, in her campaigns for reform of workhouse management in the 1850s, an outlet for her intellectual and emotional energies, a political and social objective on which her contribution might have an impact, a network of both women and men of the upper middle class who valued and respected her views and a literal and metaphorical platform at the NAPSS. Nevertheless, in order to legitimise and actuate her vision, she was obliged to occupy a space in the public sphere which interested neither the medical or other established professions, nor the public. In so doing, she mobilised an idealised stereotype of upper middle class womanhood, who was trained in the management of a large household, but devout and empathetic. While she herself gained the prominence and public positions which she advocated for other women, however, she had modelled a form of female prestige which was reliant upon a woman's philanthropic commitment (and family support for this), social class and independent financial means to be accessible to others. By the end of the nineteenth century, very few women found this model one which was feasible or desirable.

Anna Jameson bleakly foresaw, in her final essay on women's opportunities to make a contribution in the "working-day world", that, if that contribution were ever to be recognised by society as of equal value, in terms of financial and other reward, with that of men, the tone and dominance of male commentary would have to change.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Thomas, *Anna Jameson* (1978), p.214, quotes E.T. Cook and John Wedderburn (eds), *The complete works of John Ruskin*, Vol.XXXV, pp.373-374.

¹⁴³ Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859)

It is not enough, Jameson was concluding, to raise the woman's aspirations, knowledge and abilities, in 'Colleges' or elsewhere, if her aspirations are quashed and her achievements are judged or ridiculed with the "flippant tone, the slighting allusion" which undermine both her professional prestige and her confidence.¹⁴⁴ Jameson viewed with regret the female "antagonism" engendered "when a laugh rings out in the reading room of a fashionable club", but apparently regarded it as an inevitable form of "industrial competition" in the professional workplace.¹⁴⁵ While she denied addressing the "rights and wrongs of women", possibly, as Benjamin Dabby suggests, to the detriment of her posthumous feminist credentials, she was contemplating a gendered mutual antagonism which has proved far more enduring, and restricting of female careers, than the doctrine of 'separate spheres'.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.xxv.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.xxvii.

¹⁴⁶ Dabby, *Women as public moralists* (2017), p.125.

Chapter 6 “Every wise woman buildeth her house”: Conclusions

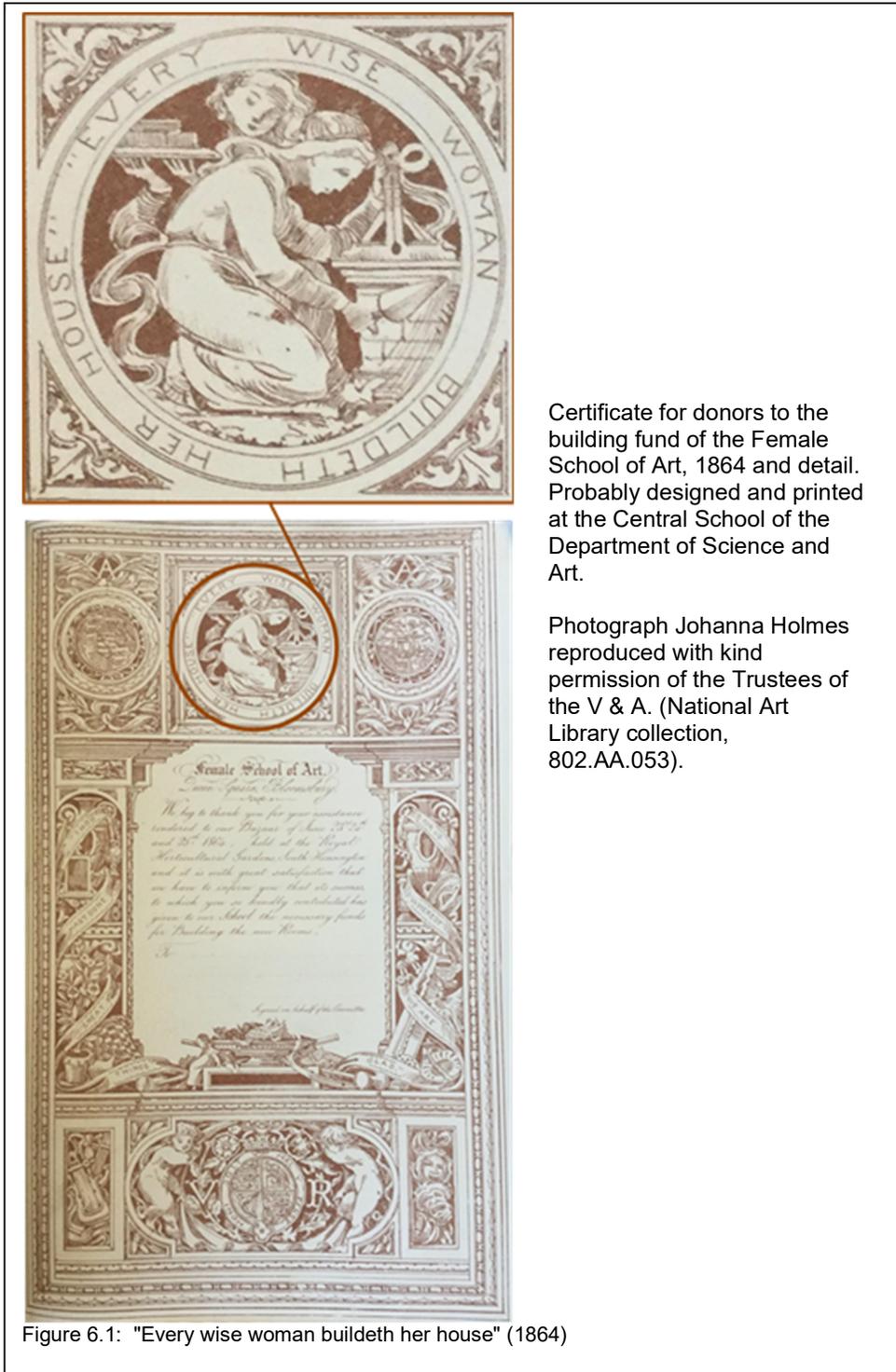
A modern online search for this Biblical verse from the Old Testament Book of Proverbs yields metaphorical interpretations which are consistent with the doctrines promulgated by Sarah Lewis in *Woman’s Mission* in 1839. Whether by bearing and bringing up children, keeping the home as a haven (literally and metaphorically) for the family, or by exercising patience and self-restraint in the interests of family harmony, the “wise woman” focuses on her immediate family, rather than “tearing down” the edifice through self-indulgence or anger.¹ While this is no doubt an interpretation also current at the time, the image from the early 1860s shown in Figure 6.1 adds a significantly different dimension through its literal interpretation. Produced in 1864 as a central detail of the certificate of appreciation for donors to the Female School of Art building fund and issued in connexion with the Grand Bazaar of that year, the image shows a young woman wearing a flowing robe, and possibly an apron, trowel in hand, putting the final touches to a chimney, or perhaps a pillar, of a (presumably domestic) building, assisted by a young female hod-carrier. Not only are the women (however unsuitably-dressed) undertaking manual work, but image and caption resonate to put forward the proposition that a wise woman cultivates her independence and resilience through work. This may be undertaken in the interests of home and family, or in the interests of a new building for a school of art, as in this case, but she is an active and resourceful participant, rather than a modest, or even submissive, nurturer and recipient of charity or protection. Although the Female School of Art has been termed “an alternative to finishing school abroad” due to its high proportion of (and dependence upon) upper middle class fee-paying “accomplishment students”, this does not seem to have been, on this evidence, its sole intent in the first decade of its life in Queen Square.²

While the Female School of Art remained concerned throughout the third quarter of the nineteenth century, to ‘keep up appearances’ suitable to its unique attraction to upper middle class parents and their daughters as an exclusively female art school, there is also ample evidence in its annual reports of concern to enable poorer

¹ Proverbs 14.1 in the King James Version of the Bible reads “Every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. “

² Chalmers, *Women in...Schools of Art and Design* (1998), pp.38-39.

students to take up scholarships and to pursue studies and practice which would further their working careers.



Both contemporary and subsequent commentators have chosen to emphasize the former aspect of its identity, favouring an upper middle class narrative and ideals of womanhood and underpinning the modern interpretations of the text. In the

nineteenth century, the genteel aspect of the Female School of Art's identity, suppressing advertisement of its achievements in enabling its students to move on to paid work and independence, was both necessary for the school's remaining in business, and the only model of female endeavour through which journalists and commentators could express praise for the institution. In the twentieth century, this characteristic, praiseworthy at the time, has been accepted as the essential nature of the school and deployed in the cause of emphasising the frustrations of would-be female artists at the inadequacy of the Female School of Art's tuition. In the process, the narrative of the women brought up, and trained in the institution, to pursue paid occupations, has been submerged and the nineteenth-century devaluation of their, and the school's, professionalism has been perpetuated.

The changing nature of the workplace

This study has examined a number of specialist occupations within the art world of the first half of the nineteenth century, and considered the presence and experience of women working professionally in those occupations, illuminating a number of additional factors which have exacerbated their lack of recognition.

The 'Old' Water-colour Society, discussed in Chapter 2, reflected a new spirit of commercial buoyancy and confidence from 1820 onwards, and the experience of its members reflected wider economic and social trends as consumerism and large-scale production of visual imagery, accompanied by corresponding developments in technology, offered new opportunities and increased competition among practitioners. In this more economically - and critically - challenging environment, the OWS cultivated the masculine rhetoric and attributes of other professional institutions in the art world, such as the Royal Academy, which would add prestige, and an aura of substance and immutability to the work of its members. The term 'professional' assumed connotations of accreditation and value, while the term 'amateur' conversely took on associations of ineptitude and diletantism.

In the publishing industry, for which many water-colour artists, including those discussed in Chapter 2, provided, in the 1820s and 1830s, illustrations to be engraved on metal plates, printed and distributed for leisured readers, mass-production from the mid-1830s onwards led to the adoption of a more durable, less labour-intensive form of reproduction of illustration: the wood-engraving. As seen in Chapter 3, a craft which had been struggling to achieve, although monochrome, the

standards of detail, and representation of variations in texture and light, which were achievable on metal plates, by dint of close collaboration between artist, engraver and printer, became subject to the forces of mass production. Restricted production times, a less discriminating consumer and the profitability of the printing trade in relatively ephemeral printed works led to the occupation of wood-engraving becoming a highly-skilled, occasionally creative, but largely mechanical and repetitive one, in which specialist workshops trained apprentices, although they did not accommodate the majority of workers on their premises, and assumed a dominant position as employers of a large number of workers on piece-work rates. By the 1860s, competition for work meant that trade contacts, the ability to produce a reliable level of quality appropriate to the market for whom the final published work was intended, and speed of production, together with their health and commitment to long working days, were at least as important for the individual wood-engraver as their artistic engagement with the subject of the image or with the originating artwork.

Public concerns about the shortfalls in skills of the children of the lower middle and better-off working classes, together with the view that they should be productively occupied, led to a degree of state intervention and finance for education from the late 1830s onwards. The resulting increasing in financially-viable elementary schools led to an emerging infrastructure of schooling for the lower classes, including consistent, structured training of teachers. Chapter 4 demonstrates the methods adopted by Henry Cole to exploit the opportunities offered by this framework of qualification and funding when, acting for the Board of Trade, he took over management of the schools of design in 1851-1852 and instigated a rigorous national programme of training in all the skills of transforming visual ideas onto paper, which was necessary in many industries and the armed services, as well as in art and design. Qualifications, or 'certificates' in these skills had become, by the mid-1850s, a requirement for certain government jobs, and for elementary-school teachers. By the 1860s, however, both the acquisition of such skills and the teaching of them, were ineradicably associated with a lower middle class form of learning, inappropriate for advancement to the occupations pursued and positions held by the university-educated professional upper middle class.

As higher academic establishments – chiefly universities, but including also national museums and other institutions - proliferated, the business of academic research and publication of new findings in a range of disciplines, including art history,

became more disciplined, and more abstruse. Association with such an institution, if not a professorial or directorial appointment within one, became an important element in establishing the personal credibility in one's field necessary to further a reputation and career.

Professional women's presence and status

This study has established that women were participants in all the occupations associated with these changing and consolidating structures. In some fields, such as wood-engraving and art-teaching, their presence has been revealed more extensively than was previously known, while in painting and art-writing, although their names are individually recognised in the canon, new light has been shed on their broader experience as aspiring professionals. Their history, however, has been overshadowed by twentieth-century histories of stabilising workplaces, material success, personal impact in the public sphere and social mobility. As the example of modern evaluation of the effectiveness of the Female School of Art indicates, nineteenth-century hierarchies of value, powerfully imposed at the time, continue to infuse modern appraisals. Initiatives to counteract the precariousness of work in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, to stabilise financial reward and to gain social status for individuals and their occupations, in the shape of professional bodies and associations, businesses, educational establishments, and trade representative bodies, all acted to marginalise the "solitary worker", both male but, particularly, female.³

It has been argued that within each occupation studied, the female practitioners, always a minority compared with men, experienced a cumulative process of marginalisation and diminution of status, compared with male counterparts within their profession, rather than absolute exclusion. Within the professional body of the 'Old' Water-colour society, for example, female members were excluded from the profit-sharing arrangements from the exhibition, and from positions of remuneration and authority, ensuring that they were unable to accumulate financial or reputational capital from their membership. Both they, and the female wood-engravers, were excluded from the informal networks of mutual support and business contacts which their male counterparts derived from the organisations in which they had trained, or where they worked. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, in the schools of design, male and female students of all ages were strictly segregated, and a fundamental

³ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865), p.313.

resistance to boys being taught by female teachers ensured that female art teachers taught only girls. Positions for female teachers arose only in cities where a plentiful supply of fee-paying female students ensured that a female teacher would not be putting at risk the fragile budgets of the male teaching staff. The female art-teachers who proved surplus to requirements among the national schools of design, dispersed into spasmodic and uncertain employment in which family contacts and serendipity played a more significant role in career success than their professional qualifications. Those who secured positions within the schools of design, within a very brief period of opportunity, remained in those positions for several decades, lacking opportunity for progression, confined to positions in which it was considered both cost-effective and necessary to employ a woman. Not only did this restrict opportunities for other trained women art-teachers, but, at the Female School of Art, at least, several generations of their female students who needed to work pursued more accessible and reliable alternative occupations, rather than continue to advanced art training leading to careers as art-teachers.

In the solitary occupations of painting, wood-engraving and art-writing, remuneration for each piece of work produced did not differ significantly between male and female practitioners of similar abilities. More significant factors in their higher overall levels of income, and thus their ability to acquire the attributes of a higher social class, were men's greater opportunities to supplement their income, by teaching in prestigious institutions, for example, capitalising on the credentials of their original training institution, or to develop their career into more lucrative and secure employments which were open to men but not women, such as arts administration. Male freedom to travel and socialise, and to devote their entire time, if they chose, to their occupation, put them at a great advantage in having a variety of opportunity. The female practitioners were, to different degrees according to personal circumstance and preference, trapped by the need to earn their living in perpetuity from their daily work output and by domestic or family obligations which restricted social contact, freedom to travel or re-locate and time available. In the more secure employment enjoyed by female art-teachers in the schools of design, women were generally remunerated at approximately two-thirds of the hourly rate of their male counterparts, and this seems to have been the case in the elementary schools also financed in part by the Board of Trade.

As both contributors to, and beneficiaries of, economic and professional consolidation, female practitioners were manoeuvred into a marginal, precarious

and obscure role. Few were, or could afford to be, sufficiently committed to their occupation to achieve, despite the poor rewards in terms of income and professional recognition, a reputation in their market which could be turned to good account. As the cases of Margaret Gillies and Anna Jameson indicate, in Chapters 2 and 5 respectively, the apparent success of even such “true professionals” was the result of compromising their artistic or scholarly aspirations in order to occupy the space which their market considered appropriate to a woman.⁴ Many more of the women studied in detail here, or glimpsed on the periphery of this study, combined disparate activities, earning where they could, making use of their acquired skills in commercial life where this was worthwhile financially, sharing living expenses with friends and family, and undertaking domestic or voluntary work.

Female practitioners of all these occupations, as this study has recovered more detail of their lives and careers, have been found, despite their individual talents, ambitions, and individual professional successes, to have remained insubstantial in terms of wealth, contemporary recognition and impact or authority in their profession, as well as the historical canon. Possibly, while the creator of ‘Nameless and Friendless’, Emily Mary Osborn, intended to portray a young woman “at the outset of her career” disabled by her lack of professional training and of commercial experience, from conducting a successful sale of her pictures, she was portraying a larger, more troubling and more persistent truth – that the effectiveness or impact of the professional woman is defined by her gender and will, for many decades to come, be less than that of her male counterpart.

Public perception of the female professional

In 1861, James Smetham, Professor of Drawing at the Westminster (teacher training) College, wrote in his diary “I felt a stupendous rage last night”.⁵ His wife Sarah, the head teacher of the Methodists’ Infant School at Hackney Road, had returned home tired out from her day at work. “The very things which raise my gratitude and admiration and would be appreciated by all good and thoughtful people,” Smetham wrote, “would form a reason to the mass of genteel society why they should not think her as good as themselves”. Methodist-trained Sarah had taught in the demonstration school attached to Westminster College and been the first female teacher to qualify at the Central School of Science and Art to teach drawing to elementary students. After marriage and children, she had returned to

⁴ Yeldham, *Margaret Gillies* (1997), pp.2-3.

⁵ CMCH, MS Smetham Reminiscences, 1861.

work a few years previously, to keep the family when James had been unable to work due to mental ill-health. To do her job, as she recorded in explanation of her retiring from it when pregnant with her third child later that year, necessitated leaving home in Stoke Newington at eight each morning to walk to Dalston and take an omnibus. She stayed after school hours to instruct pupil teachers, returning home “after six, generally very tired (and) frequently to much fresh and exhausting calls on energy”.⁶ Yet, a woman’s social status was “allowed” to her by “genteel society”, in James’ view, only if she were able “to do nothing and have everything”. The women studied here were, from Smetham’s perspective, which took in both upper and lower middle classes, not able to cross the threshold to upper middle class respect while they tired themselves out working for a living. Indeed, as has been seen in Chapter 4, there was something “ill-bred” about a woman who “really (knew)” what she “professed to teach”, about having to study or practise to acquire knowledge or skill which did not flow entirely from natural aptitude, and something dangerous to upper middle class girls about being expected to undertake intensive study.⁷ In the terms of this doctrine, a woman’s physical and mental frailty, together with her unsuitability for work, was a mark of gentility.

While women sought recognition of their skills and expertise within their own professional worlds of fellow-workers and knowledgeable purchasers, they also desired “legitimation” as expert professionals from a wider, less-informed upper middle class public who were either their customers or the customers of their employers and professional institutions.⁸ Hilary Fraser and others have identified the more or less conscious emphasis of their femininity by female art-writers as a means of asserting their particular, ‘natural’ qualification to critique historical Christian art and thus their status as authorities. She suggests, however, that this may have been a counter-productive strategy, necessitating supposedly feminine disclaimers and sentiment while inviting a comparison with more formally-qualified and academically-educated male authors in which, in the public mind, women were inevitably the less prestigious. It has been seen in this study that such unfavourable comparisons were, in the case of painters, crafted and annually reinforced by critics and commentators, who always identified an artist as female if this was the case, and implied always that, if her work excelled, it bore no comparison with the most acclaimed male painters, being simply better than the second or third ranks of male

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ ‘Article VII’, *Quarterly Review*, 119 (1866), pp.499-515.

⁸ Fraser, ‘Women and art history’ (1998), p.84.

practitioners. Female work was invested by critics and commentators with female sentiment, faults were typically female, and good work atypical of female artistic enterprise. It is clear from Anna Jameson's trenchant remarks in her 'Letter to Lord John Russell', published in 1859, that such unrelenting reinforcement of women's professional inferiority applied to their initiatives in other fields of work, including the voluntary. If a woman pursues "any path which is not one which obsolete custom has prescribed to her", Jameson asserts, she runs the risk of being praised, if she is successful, in an "insolently complimentary" style, or condemned, in the case of fault or failure, to providing yet more evidence of typically female incapability.⁹

In occupations where artistic 'sensibility' was not required, such as wood-engraving, there were fears among male practitioners in the early 1840s, that female practitioners would dilute the market for their work, and devalue its worth, either by working for a lower rate, or simply by associating the occupation with limited female capabilities. By the 1850s, the occupation having become more mechanical, less intimately associated with artistic knowledge and practice – a devaluation for which commerce, rather than womankind, was responsible – different forms of resistance to engaging female practitioners pervaded the printing world. Despite the fact that each of the men whose advice was sought by 'Asterisk' for the *Alexandra Magazine* article on female prospects in the wood-engraving trade said that they knew of one female practitioner, at least, who produced work of the quality needed in the time required, the majority of women who thought themselves wood-engravers, in their view, lacked sufficient training and practice, attention to detail and commitment to working in their industry. "Ladies only devote themselves partially to the work, then fancy themselves more competent than they really are" says one of these interviewees, who, the article implies, is one of the Dalziel brothers (who nevertheless identifies several women whom he employs and who perform satisfactorily).¹⁰ The generality of women, it is implied, are considered amateurs, too easily distracted to dedicate themselves as men do, to a job of work.

Anna Jameson and Louisa Twining, both through their collaborative efforts and independently, sought to initiate and define female professions in which women could show themselves capable, dedicated to a corporate objective, and effective in the public sphere. They claimed legitimacy for these professions by virtue of their difference from the courses of training and employment open to young middle-class

⁹ Jameson, 'Letter to Lord Russell' in Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859), p.xxv

¹⁰ 'Asterisk', 'Wood engraving' (1865), p.312.

men and by their enhancement of attributes supposedly 'natural' to women. In addition, Louisa Twining emphasised and idealised the acquired skills of the upper middle class female role of overseer of the health and home of the family and wider household or community. Both were essentially conservative in seeking respect and recognition for a female place in the public sphere which would be contended for neither by men, nor by the lower middle class women for whom income, the support of dependents or social advancement might be motivating factors.

The woman to whom these were motivating factors, whatever her occupation and whatever her level of income, bore indelible marks of exclusion from the class in which the ideal woman should, in James Smetham's jaundiced words "do nothing (worthwhile) and have everything". At the same time, an aura of imminent failure surrounded her. By virtue of her gender, she was exceptional if she performed well and at any moment she might revert to typically-female incompetence. In another of Anna Jameson's "cruel inconsistencies", a woman was, in the popular narratives of the employing classes, both ideally-suited to minutely detailed, delicate work, and liable to inattention to the highest standards of precision and timeliness.

'Nameless and Friendless': Opportunity, ambition and outcome

It may be surmised that many did not feel that these were entirely satisfactory or inevitable outcomes from their personal work / life choices. Despite embracing Louisa Twining's proposals for the training and qualification of middle-class girls in the management of exclusively female, 'social' professions, Anna Jameson remained concerned, up to and including her last pronouncement on the subject, that women should be at least given the opportunity to participate in the male professions without public derision.¹¹ That same year, in 1859, forty-nine women prominent in the art world, including, of the women discussed in this study, the painters Eliza Sharpe, her sister Mary Anne, and Margaret Gillies, the art-teacher Louisa Gann and the art-writer Anna Jameson, signed a letter to the Members of the Royal Academy requesting that women be offered the same opportunity as men of being "admitted to the privileges of the Schools".¹² Despite the personal successes and, to an extent, recognition, which they had achieved in their own fields over the preceding forty years, they felt that opportunity for equal entry to the most prestigious form of art training would enhance women's career prospects in

¹¹ Jameson, 'Letter to Lord Russell' in Jameson, *Sisters and Communion of Labour* (1859), p.xliii.

¹² *English Woman's Journal*, Vol.3 (1859), p.287.

comparison with men, and if they reflected upon their own careers in comparison, they presumably felt that they had lacked a potential opportunity.¹³ The ultimate goal, however, and one which indicates the disappointed ambitions of the previous generation, was to secure for the next generation of women the “privileges” to their longer-term careers in painting associated with, firstly, the accreditation of having studied at the Royal Academy at all, and, secondly election as Academicians with the right to exhibit at the annual exhibition. While the younger generation were successful more or less immediately in gaining entry, over the course of the 1860s, to the Royal Academy Schools, however, the “privileges” associated with this training were very much longer in coming. It was not until 1936 that a woman, Dame Laura Knight, was elected by Royal Academicians to join their number, and no woman has yet been elected President, although women have, since 2010, taken on the role of Keeper. Eileen Cooper RA served from then until 2017, when she was succeeded by Rebecca Salter RA. The OWS, by then the Royal Watercolour Society, amended its Rules to permit female Associates to make the transition to full Membership as men had always done, and the first, Helen Allingham, was elected to full Membership in 1889. The first female President of the Society, Jill Leman, was elected in 2017.

Considering Emily Mary Osborn’s talismanic image of this generation of female artists in the late 1850s and early 1860s, ‘Nameless and Friendless’, one might deduce a rejection of all of the strategies and compromises which the previous generation or two of professional women in the art world had utilised in order to realise, as far as they could, their ambitions and requirements. The reasons for this rejection are understandable: professional work for a woman without a successful, upper middle class husband or father was, on the evidence discussed here, incompatible with either retaining or gaining a privileged place in the social hierarchy, or with financing the comfortable lifestyle experienced in their youth. Nevertheless, the upper middle class feminists, among whom Osborn counted herself, were a minority among the female population available for, and wanting to, work. Their narrative, by virtue of their own organisation, resources and social status, has become widely accepted, however.

¹³ The first woman to enter the RA Schools, albeit by concealing her gender at application, was Laura Herford, in 1860. She was followed by a number of students who received their early training from Louisa Gann and her colleagues at the Female School of Art in Queen Square.

Potential further recoveries

More extensive recoveries of female careers conducted 'under the radar' of contemporary and modern narratives of women's professional work in the nineteenth century remain to be made. Over the course of research for this study, many intriguing pathways and avenues have been passed by with only a few initial steps taken in some cases to explore further. Largely, these have been associated with individual women who, in terms of interest to a researcher and to a reader might equally have been selected for study, but whose histories are peripheral or superfluous to the particular line of enquiry pursued in this here. Occasionally, small cohorts have been identified, where investigation of their common experience or endeavour might throw light upon the professional and personal networks of women whose "informal" careers were not pursued in isolation from each other. Of the latter, two might be singled out as directly relevant to the debate in this study, both pertaining to the period after 1860 and potentially offering additional perspectives on established narratives of women's participation in the public sphere. The Female School of Art's role in promoting women's careers in art and design, and in art-teaching has already been discussed as a counterpoint to its more familiar image of genteel ineffectiveness. Further investigation of the students and their subsequent careers might throw light both on its real impact and on the operation of contemporary values in creating the female image and behaviours of cultivated dilettantism which resonates with Sheryl Sandberg's trenchant views.¹⁴ A second project based on research into the members of the Associations of Schoolmistresses formed in the mid-1860s in Brighton, Bristol, Leeds, London, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle might yield interesting insights into the permeability or otherwise of social class distinctions, of female social mobility and its facilitating and inhibiting factors, over the course of their teaching careers. The inaugural meeting of the London Association, formed initially to counteract the professional isolation of teachers who had "scarcely so much as a speaking acquaintance with any professional associate", was attended by a number of women from the lower middle class whose teaching careers had begun some time before 1860, including Helena Wilson of the Female School of Art, whose career is briefly considered in Chapter 4.¹⁵

¹⁴ Sandberg and Scovell, *Lean in* (2013).

¹⁵ GCA, MS GCPP Davies 9/2, Annual Reports of the London Association of Schoolmistresses, May 1869.

Resilience and adaptability: treacherous virtues

Given the extreme limitations, outlined above, of financial reward, security of income, status or recognition within their occupations and affirmation of their professional careers from contemporary public opinion, the independence, determination and persistence of the women studied here are remarkable. The adaptability which they demonstrated, and the dispersed, informal and precarious careers which they pursued, had a significant disadvantage in rendering them insignificant in terms of public recognition. They did not conform to a model of womanhood with which society concerned itself, nor wished to respect.

Each of the women considered here made her own accommodation with cultural and social influences, with her own financial and family circumstances and her personal “talents”, the assets of education, contacts, health and family support, in order to derive personal reward and to achieve the best use of her resources for self-defined priorities. Margaret Gillies’ reflection, which provides the title of this study, that the rewards of work, in addition to the companionship of fellow-workers, are “to use our talents and improve them” is intensely individualistic and independent of judgement or valuation in the public sphere. “Every wise woman buildeth her (own) house” makes a useful maxim for the women considered in this study, reflecting a key unifying attribute of the female careers in the London art world in this period.

The statement by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall in 1987, that by the 1860s the “world (was) more rigidly divided into separate spheres for men and women” than it had been in the earlier nineteenth century, is qualified by the results of this study in several respects.¹⁶ Women who were trained and educated (to however limited an extent) in the expectation of working for a living or for their family’s welfare – those of the lower middle or “comfortable working” classes, as Dina Copelman terms them - found that, unlike their male social equals, opportunities were becoming closed to them.¹⁷ The occupation of wood-engraving, by 1860, had lost the pretensions to artistry cultivated before 1840 and was predominantly pursued by boys and men of the lower middle and working classes, without scope for personal advancement. Economic competition, out-working practices and the required speed

¹⁶ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* (2002), p.453.

¹⁷ Copelman, *Teachers* (1996), p.xiv.

of production ensured that women from outside the trade were unlikely to gain entry to work at all, even if they were willing and able. The art-teachers trained in the 1850s at the Central school of the Department of Science and Art struggled to find work which made use of their artistic talents or specialised training. If they were successful in gaining such work, it offered no scope, unlike the prospects of their male contemporaries, for advancement in their career and social mobility due to the operation of upper middle class doctrines and ideals of femininity and masculinity. Young women of the upper middle class were constrained by lack of education, training and the social mores of their class from entering these workplaces, while the professions and professional representative bodies which their brothers moved into after a university education had indeed become more rigidly exclusive. Even those women who did so, like Louisa Twining, worked for little pay, in fields which were unattractive to ambitious male contemporaries, and were not integrated into statutory or professional structures in which less experienced men gained positions in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Over the course of the 1840s and 1850s, and as the “tide of consumption” (i.e. consumerism) reached new heights in the 1860s, women from both these groups pursued careers based on adaptability, determination and resilience.¹⁸ These careers epitomised what John Brown et al, in their Introduction to their compilation of studies of historical careers, have termed “informal” careers.¹⁹ This study records the progressive separation, over the period 1820 to 1860, of the models of career, and rewards, or career outcomes, available to male and female professionals. Both were equally precarious, at the outset of this period, although the female practitioners were always subsidiary, in numbers and in perceived capability, both artistically and in the management of business. While male careers profited from burgeoning markets for visual imagery, however, in terms of remuneration, prestige and mutual assistance to greater success, female careers were conducted at the fringes of, or independently from, these processes of consolidation. The women considered in this study each adapted their working practice and aspirations to accommodate, not only their own personal circumstances, but the perceptions of the market for their work, and the perceptions of their clients, publishers, critics, employers and even representative bodies regarding their femininity. Whatever their skills, qualifications and intellectual attainments, being female essentially defined their careers.

¹⁸ Cohen, *Household gods* (2006), p.x.

¹⁹ Brown et al, *Origins of the Modern Career* (2004), p.8.

Career objectives and the “adaptive woman”

The introductory chapter to this study traced the historiography of an increasingly hyperbolic lexicon associated with male professional achievement. The words ‘great’, ‘genius’, ‘intellectual’ or ‘hero’ were used, over the course of the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth, to signal the appropriateness of public acclamation for a man’s successful endeavour. While some scholars have suggested that the words became devalued through too-frequent use, there can be no question that professional careers which were rewarded by renown or wealth were, in popular iconography, achieved through the dedication of mental energy, courage and talents of men. Professional success, measured by these characteristics, became a male preserve. Throughout this study the narrative of women’s lack of the necessary qualities to succeed in these terms – mental capacity, application, single-mindedness, technical ability – is evident as a constant accompaniment to the efforts and strategies of women to develop their careers in order to achieve their own goals. Each applied her own terms for success, which included an income, as in the cases of Anna Jameson or Mary Harrison, but also financial security, as in the cases of the teachers at the Female School of Art, making a perceptible contribution in the world, as in the cases of Louisa Gann, Louisa Twining or Margaret Gillies, or exercising and improving the skills she had acquired, as in the cases of Eliza Sharpe, Mary Byfield or Sarah Smetham and other trained schoolteachers. Each woman’s career was the result of ambition combined with attachment to family dependents and tempered by factors which she could not change, such as innate aptitude, social origins, gender and workplace features. To this extent women’s careers were similar to all careers, male and female, in the art world and in other occupations. However, while the majority of women studied here improved their material lives, and those of their families, as a result of the use and improvement of their talents, they did not gain the conventional benefits of social mobility. Measured with reference to recognition by members of a higher echelon, such as employer, connoisseur or patron, or through increasing income level and domestic expenditure, Brown et al identified in 2004 the shortcomings of twentieth-century assessments of (male) social mobility when applied to the nineteenth century when considering the progression of, and outcomes from, male and female careers of the time. By identifying such restricted criteria for ‘success’, because identifiable and quantifiable over relatively large populations, the historical literatures of the twentieth century gave “limited consideration to the institutional structures, conditions in the labour market, or role of individual investments in education or training” or

individuals' idiosyncratic qualities.²⁰ The term 'bettering themselves' has been used in Chapter 4 to recognise the improvements in household lifestyles to which female careers contributed, but should not be read as social mobility in either its twentieth-century construction, nor in the sense of recognition by, or entry to, the upper middle class. In the majority of cases studied here, if a woman remained unmarried, even in relative financial comfort or enjoying some professional respect, her social circle, from what little one can see at this distance, was at the fringes of the urban upper middle class.

All the women studied here were accustomed from childhood to a culture of independent agency or thought. This can be seen particularly from the discussion, at the conclusion of Chapter 4, of the women associated with the Department of Science and Art in the 1850s, whose roots were in an entrepreneurial or dissenting lower middle or artisan class, but is true also of most other women discussed here. Even among the more educated and wealthy families of Margaret Gillies, Susan Ashworth or Louisa Twining, traditions of religious radicalism and business enterprise can be observed. London, as indicated at the beginning of this study, had a far higher population of such people in the first half of the nineteenth century than other English cities. It seems probable that a correspondingly higher incidence of female careers of the type identified here occurred, at the earlier stages of this period, in this London-based population rather than other large cities based on industrial manufacture. One might speculate that this was particularly the case as a growing differential between the cost of a comfortable life in the capital and elsewhere necessitated a higher household income, or greater economy of life, in order to reside in the capital. This study has found some suggestive evidence to support a view that women who began their careers in London found that a profitable career as a single woman was more sustainable elsewhere, provided she could find reasonably-remunerated work. The mutual affirmation in the pursuit of a career strategy which derived from meeting fellow female practitioners at galleries, training colleges and other institutions in a capital city should not be underestimated in considering how widespread geographically was the phenomenon of professional careers for women in the first half of the nineteenth century. It seems probable that the spread and consolidation of elementary education and of the 'branch' schools of the Department of Science and Art, through the 1840s and into the 1850s offered an introduction to viable, if not lucrative, careers for women of a similar background and talents in manufacturing towns elsewhere. There is evidence of this effect for a few

²⁰ Brown et al, *Origins of the Modern Career* (2004), p.4.

lower middle class young women, still requiring further research, who came to London, having trained initially in the 'branch' schools of design, to take up scholarships to pursue their studies in art and design in the second half of the nineteenth century, lodging with women of a previous generation in their careers, including Jane Trulock. From this it might be surmised that, as urban populations supported an entrepreneurial artisan and lower middle class, young women, few in number and enormously outnumbered by young men, pursued careers in the art world described in this study throughout the middle years of the nineteenth century.

The case of Emily Frances Strong, arriving in London in 1858 to pursue her studies in art and painting, offers a vibrant contrast with these lower middle class young women, all of them at the outset of their careers in the art world. Emily was, as described in an essay of 2014, "typical of England's provincial gentry".²¹ John Ruskin had suggested she might take some classes at South Kensington, which she did, combining it with some study of the figure in the studio of one of the most successful painters of his day, William Mulready. Not only was she, Elizabeth Mansfield maintains, contrary to the image portrayed by 'Nameless and Friendless', "a typical middle class Victorian woman" in having considerable "personal liberty" to live with a friend, to adopt "colourful, unconventional dress" and to move unaccompanied about the city", but she is also emblematic of the female students described a few years later by Henry Cole in the wake of the 'rebellion' against Jane Trulock, described in Chapter 4. Cole insisted that these "other persons than Teachers in Training" (that is, those not receiving the Department of Science and Art's 'salary' but instead paying fees for the tuition they chose to pursue, should "conform themselves to (his School's) discipline and rules". Twenty-five years later, the widowed Emily, now styling herself 'Emilia', married "a friend from her time in South Kensington", Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, under whose name she published, as an acknowledged expert, the bulk of her writings on French art. In the context of this brief history, both Henry Cole's "discipline and rules" and Emily Mary Osborn's 'Nameless and Friendless' appear anachronistic embodiments of the doctrine of 'separate spheres'. The modern response to evidence of "personal liberty" and contravention of established class values among young upper middle class women has thrown into eclipse, as their own disparagement of Jane Trulock did, the careers of lower middle class women who, for whatever reason, did not enjoy a similar

²¹ Elizabeth C. Mansfield, 'Women, art history and the public sphere: Emilia Dilke's eighteenth century', in Temma Balducci and Heather Belnap (eds), *Women, femininity and public space in European Visual Culture, 1789-1914* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp.189-203.

liberty. Emilia Dilke commented in 1886 that she had, in constructing her career as an art-writer, sought to “make a position” and “command respect” by making herself “*the* authority”, eschewing more immediately-lucrative endeavours in order to build a unique professional identity.²² In so doing she was laying claim to a model of professional success which her male peers had been consolidating for over half a century, and which continues to exercise a dominant position in the workplace and in social policy.

Catherine Hakim’s analysis of the modern gendered workplace reflects a “working-day world”, in western societies, at least, in which this model of success at work, consolidated in the nineteenth century, has resulted in the majority of male professionals pursuing careers with undivided motivation and energies, “individually and collectively”, thus securing “a huge tactical advantage”, compared with their female counterparts, in terms of personal professional outcomes and of collective political and economic “dominance”.²³ Comparably-qualified women are, she maintains divided in their personal objectives, and disparate in their professional priorities, due in large part to the persistence of the model of the female career strategy described above: a constant negotiation between ambition, family obligations and workplace conditions. She implies that the current reconfiguring and destabilising effects of new technologies, internationalism, social attitudes and emerging economies, on a supposedly ‘solid’ employment infrastructure will not have a material effect on the “dominance” which men achieve by virtue of their being, for the foreseeable future, a four-fifths majority of those working in competitive and influential professional environments who choose to dedicate the greater part of their lives, energies and talents to their working careers. While the majority of women – “adaptive” women - exercise “work-lifestyle” choices which involve domestic and caring responsibilities, or pleasures, their careers will, until “long after the equal opportunities revolution” be diverse, governed by a larger number of variable factors than the careers of their male peers, and thus less successful in terms of personal career outcomes, and less impactful as regards collective influence in the workplace. The careers discussed in this study are those of similarly “adaptive” women, who aimed to “use their talents and improve them” in order to gain an income, acknowledgement, purpose, while also supporting their families and friends. This examination of their careers in a period in which, it is

²² Mansfield, 'Emilia Dilke' (2014), pp.191-192, quotes unpublished correspondence between Dilke and a friend, commenting that Dilke’s chosen specialism was, at the time, a relatively under-explored and under-valued area.

²³ Hakim, *Work-lifestyle choices* (2000), p.282.

assumed by Hakim and more generally, women had little “choice”, since none of the characteristics of the so-called post-feminist age applied, resonates with current these debates on two counts. Firstly, the nature of “choice” has been the subject of many subsequent challenges to Hakim’s conclusions, as have the extent and characteristics of the female working population to whom they apply. This study suggests that women who worked professionally in the first half of the nineteenth century exercised similar personal agency to their modern counterparts, but the constraints upon their actions in comparison with their ambitions were, of course, greater in number and more keenly felt, given the lack of any state-funded support in the case of unemployment or infirmity. A related question, which has been a more constant preoccupation in undertaking this research, and which has also been addressed by modern feminists, is whether Hakim has discounted too many subjective and cultural constraints in positing a female position of professional “choice” and lifestyle “preference”. If this study has succeeded in convincingly representing the operation of cultural ideals of masculinity and femininity, associated with social class, upon the professional subjectivities of women who needed both to earn a living and to realise their ambitions, and if the concerns and experiences of the women studied here, have resonated with those of their modern counterparts, it becomes important to recognise today the persistent operation of legacies of nineteenth-century gender ideals, and their role in constructing personal and social models of success. Until these are recognised and challenged by culturally-influential men and women, every wise woman must continue to build her own house as best she can.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Female wood-engravers active between 1820 and 1860

Surname, other names	Primary sources	Biographical notes
Bond, Charlotte	1001 Nights (1839); Hampton Ct(1841) Westminster(1842) ^{1 2 3}	Sister of Marian, Henry Cole's wife. From 1857 wife of Charles Thurston Thompson.
Bond, Laura	Westminster(1842)	Sister of Marian, Henry Cole's wife.
Bourne, Miss	Govt. School of Design ⁴	Prizewinner in Female School of Art wood-engraving class 1846
Bourne, Miss E.	Govt. School of Design	Prizewinner in Female School of Art wood-engraving class 1847 (possibly identical with Miss Bourne above)
Bradley, Miss C.G.E.	Dept. Science & Art	Prizewinner in Dept. annual exhibition, 1853
Branston, Elizabeth	Engen; ODNB ^{5 6}	Female relative (daughter?) of (Allen) Robert Branston (1778-1827). (Sister?) of his son Robert Edward Branston (bap.1803-1877). Robert Branston Snr. trained John and Charles Thompson and also his nephew, George Wilmot Bonner (1796-1836), Henry Vizetelly's first master.
Busk, Ellen	Westminster (1842)	
Byfield, Mary (Snr.) (1795-1871)	Chatto (1839) Butler ^{7 8}	Sister to Ebenezer and John Byfield. Aunt to Ann, Mary (Junr.) and Edward, and to Elizabeth Clint. Described her occupation as "Engraver on wood" in 1851 Census.
Byfield, Ann (1830-?)	Butler; Stevens ⁹	Niece of Mary (Snr.). Described her occupation as "Engraver on Wood" in 1851 Census.
Byfield, Mary (Junr.) (1840-?)	Butler; Engen	Niece of Mary (Snr.) Described her occupation as "Artist Engraver on wood" in 1861 Census ("Scholar" aged 11 years in 1851)
Clarke, Miss A.	Engen	Possibly related to, or identical with, (Ann) Harriet Ludlow Clarke.
Clarke, Fanny (Frances) (bap.1812-1852)	Hampton Ct (1841) Westminster(1842) Lives of Painters (1845 in book form) ¹⁰	Sister to Harriet Ludlow Clarke
Clarke, Harriet Ludlow (bap.1816-1866)	1001 Nights (1839) Hampton Ct (1841) Westminster(1842) Lives of Painters (1843-44 in The Penny Magazine; 1845 in book form) Engen; ODNB ^{11 12}	Through her sister, Elizabeth Ann (m.1823, d.after 1872) sister-in-law of Henry Bellenden Ker (c.1785-1871), from 1836-1848 a member of the Council of the Government School of Design. Described her occupation as "Artist" in 1851 Census. Teacher of wood engraving at National School of Design 1856-1859.

¹ *Thousand and One Nights*, trans. Lane (1839)

² Summerly, *Hampton Court* (1841)

³ Summerly, *Westminster Abbey* (1842)

⁴ *Council Minutes, Govt. School of Design* (1849)

⁵ Engen, *Wood Engravers* (1985).

⁶ Avery-Quash, 'Branston Family', *ODNB* (2004).

⁷ Chatto, *Treatise* (1839)

⁸ Butler, 'Ingenious and Worthy Family' (1980)

⁹ Stevens, 'Wood engraving' (2017)

¹⁰ Anna Jameson *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters* London 1845

¹¹ Jameson, 'Lives of Painters' (1843-1844)

Surname, other names	Primary sources	Biographical notes
Clint, Elizabeth (1815-?)	Cole in <i>Westminster Review</i> (1838) 1001 Nights (1839) Chatto (1839) Hampton Ct (1841) Butler; Engen ¹³	Niece to Mary Byfield (Snr.) Described her occupation as "Engraver on wood" in 1851 Census.
Clint, Mary	Cole in <i>Westminster Review</i> (1838) 1001 Nights (1839) Chatto (1839) Hampton Ct (1841)	
Clisby, Miss S.	Govt. School of Design	Prizewinner in Female School of Art wood-engraving class 1847
Compton, Martha	Westminster(1842)	
Cook, Mary Ann (? – 1843)	1001 Nights (1839) Engen	
Cowper, Annie	Hampton Ct (1841) Westminster(1842)	
Cross, Elizabeth A.	Dept. Science & Art	Prizewinner in Dept. annual exhibition, 1852 Identified contributor to Dept. Catalogue of casts, (1854)
Dalziel, Margaret (1819-1854)	Engen	Sister to four male proprietors of the firm of Dalziel; aunt to several more.
Davis, Miss / Mrs.	Govt. School of Design	A pupil of the Female School of Art's wood-engraving class who, in 1845, had "secured employment" worth 30 shillings per week.
Dixon, Annie	Engen	
Dudley, Juliet	1001 Nights (1839) Hampton Ct (1841) Westminster(1842)	
Fairey, Harriet	Dept. Science & Art	Prizewinner in Dept. annual exhibition, 1852
Filmore, Miss	Govt. School of Design	Prizewinner in Female School of Art wood-engraving class 1846
Green, Jane	Westminster(1842)	
Kelly, Lucinda	Engen	
Matéaux, Clarisse (Clara)	Dept. Science & Art	Prizewinner in Dept. annual exhibition, 1850 (Govt. School of Design), 1852, 1853. Identified contributor to Dept. Catalogue of casts, (1854)
Muddle, Eliza	Westminster(1842)	
Percival, Mary	Westminster(1842)	
Peters, Mrs. J.	Engen	
Sparling, Miss H.M.	Dept. Science & Art	Identified contributor to Dept. Catalogue of casts, (1854)
Sane, Miss	Govt. School of Design	Prizewinner in Female School of Art wood-engraving class, 1847
Stanley, Miss A	Govt. School of Design	Prizewinner in Female School of Art wood-engraving class 1847
Swallow, Miss M.	Dept. Science & Art	Identified contributor to Dept. Catalogue of casts, (1854)
Thompson, Augusta	Hampton Ct (1841) Westminster(1842) ODNB ¹⁴	Daughter of John Thompson (1785-1866). Sister of Charles Thurston Thompson (1816-1868) (and through him sister-in-law of Henry Cole) and to Richard Anthony Thompson (1819-

¹² Oliver, 'Clarke', *ODNB* (2004)

¹³ Cole, *Westminster Review* (1838)

¹⁴ Burton, 'Thompson', *ODNB* (2004)

Surname, other names	Primary sources	Biographical notes
		1908). Niece of Charles Thompson (1791-1843) and of Eliza Thompson.
Thompson, Eliza	Cole in Westminster Review (1838) 1001 Nights (1839) Hampton Ct (1841) Westminster(1842) Engen ODNB ¹⁵	Sister of John Thompson (1785-1866)
Thompson, Isabel A.	Hampton Ct (1841) Westminster(1842) Engen ODNB ¹⁶	Daughter of John Thompson (1785-1866). Sister of Charles Thurston Thompson (1816-1868) (and through him sister-in-law of Henry Cole) and of Richard Anthony Thompson (1819-1908).
Turk, Eliza		
Waite, Miss	Govt. School of Design	Prizewinner in Female School of Art wood-engraving class 1846. Secured job from 1847 in engraving workshop of Ebenezer Landells (1808-1860), wood-engraver and proprietor of several illustrated magazines.
Waterhouse, Ann Newman (Annie) (c.1816-?)	Hampton Ct (1841) Westminster(1842) Govt. School of Design Dept. Science & Art Engen	Sister of Mary Theresa. Taught wood-engraving at Govt. School of Design, then at Dept. Science & Art, 1843-1856 (resigned at time of marriage)
Waterhouse, Mary Theresa (1817-1873?)	Westminster (1842)	Sister of Ann
Whittingham, Charlotte (1829-1903)	ODNB ¹⁷	Daughter of Charles Whittingham, printer. Trained by Mary Byfield in engraving, but primarily a designer.
Whittingham, Elizabeth (c.1830-1867)	ODNB ¹⁸	Daughter of Charles Whittingham, printer. Trained by Mary Byfield in engraving, but primarily a designer.
Williams, Miss Emma (bap.1832-?)	ODNB ¹⁹	Daughter of Samuel Williams (1788-1853). Sister of Lionel Joseph, John Manning, Alfred Mayhew and Frederick George (all bap.1832). Niece of Mary Ann Williams.
Williams, Mary Ann (c.1788-?)	Cole in Westminster Review (1838) 1001 Nights (1839) Chatto (1839) Hampton Ct (1841) Westminster(1842) Sacred & Legendary Art (1848-57) ODNB ^{20 21}	Sister of Samuel (1788-1853) and Thomas (1798-?) Williams, wood-engravers. Aunt of Emma Williams.

Note: Those named in bold type are discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁵ Burton, 'Thompson', *ODNB* (2004)

¹⁶ Burton, 'Thompson', *ODNB* (2004)

¹⁷ Avery-Quash, 'Byfield Family', *ODNB* (2004)

¹⁸ Avery-Quash, 'Byfield Family', *ODNB* (2004)

¹⁹ Avery-Quash, 'Williams Family', *ODNB* (2004).

²⁰ Anna Jameson *Sacred and Legendary Art* London 1848 (First Series, 2 volumes), 1850 (Second Series: *Legends of the Monastic Orders*), and 1857 (Third Series: *Legends of the Madonna*, (2nd edition)).

²¹ Avery-Quash, 'Williams Family', *ODNB* (2004).

APPENDIX B, Part 1: Women employed in various capacities around mid-century by the Department of Science and Art, in alphabetical order by surname									
Name in March 1858	Born/bap.	Death	Father's occupation	Association with Department of Science & Art	Age in 1857	Other known teaching appointments	Non-teaching career	Exhibition record (see list of abbreviations)	Wealth at death
Ashworth, Susan Ann (Annie)	1829	1894	Clerk (in Holy Orders) Incumbent (Manchester)	Student, Female School of Art (1850-1853). Trainee Drawing Mistress, (1858). Teacher Edinburgh School of Art (1858-c.1870). //	28		Living in London on own means from c.1871	Studies from nature, landscape. RGIFA, 1866-1870; RSA, 1864-1873; SFA, 1872-1879; SBA, Various.	£5,032
Belinaye, Laura de la	1827	1908	Surgeon	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1854-1857). Teacher Female School of Art (1857-1894). //	30				£3,360
Carey, Annie	c.1824 (arrived Liverpool from New York 1825)	Unknown (possibly returned to USA)	Dissenting Minister (India, USA, England)	Student Female School of Art before and including 1852 (prizewinner).	33		Authoress (Matéaux circle), 1870-1880		Unknown
Channon, Mary Elizabeth	1825	1900	Cabinet-maker	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1855-1857). Teacher Lithography at Central school (1853-after 1891). //	32			Studies from nature, figure. SFA, 1857; SBA, 1858-1863; RA, 1865.	£5,900
Clarke, Harriet Ludlow	1816	1866	Solicitor	Teacher Wood-engraving at Central school (1856-1859). //	41		Wood-engraver, Stained glass designer		<£2,000
Collins, Florence	1833	1915	Wine merchant	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1854-1856). Teacher at Central school. //	24		Married (1862 Emile Casabianca.	SFA 1857	Unknown /negligible
Doidge, Sarah	1829	1911	Comb-maker (deceased). Mother a lodging-house keeper.	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1854-before 1859). // Teacher at Female School of Art (part-time 1854). #	28	Canonbury *	Artist painter (from before 1881).	Studies from nature, landscape. RA 1859 -1874; SFA. 1857-1901; SBA, 1870-1885.	£4,400

APPENDIX B, Part 1: Women employed in various capacities around mid-century by the Department of Science and Art, in alphabetical order by surname									
Name in March 1858	Born/bap.	Death	Father's occupation	Association with Department of Science & Art	Age in 1857	Other known teaching appointments	Non-teaching career	Exhibition record (see list of abbreviations)	Wealth at death
Freed, Mary Ann	1831	1916	Unknown	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1855-1861).	26	Teacher of Drawing before and after 1891. //			£840
Gann, Louisa	1824	1912	Auctioneer / merchant	Teacher at Female School of Art (1853-1909)	33				£117
Gibbs, Charlotte Isabella	1836	1920	Schoolmaster	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1855-1861).	21		Jewellery designer and goldsmith (known by married name Newman from 1861).		£15,800
Goble, Sarah	1828	1912	leather-cutter	Attended Richard Burchett's lectures (1853). Student for Teacher's Certificate (1854).	29	Teacher at Westminster College training School (Elementary) (1850-1856). Hackney Road Infants School (1858-1861). Taught students at home (1879-1887)	Married (1854) James Smetham, artist and Drawing Master at Westminster College.		£4,300
Harden, Maria	1830	1892	Clerk to a colonial broker	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1855-1860).	27	Governess (before 1861-after 1871). //			£103
Hipwood, Sarah	1823	Untraced	Parents untraced	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1854-1858). //	34	Teacher of Drawing and Painting (before 1861-after 1881)	Artist, oil and water-colour (before and after 1861)	Studies from nature. SBA, 1868-1869	
Julyan, Mary	1835	1913	Carpenter and builder	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress. Teacher at Dublin School of Art (1863-after 1901).	22		Associate, Royal Cambrian Academy	Studies from nature, figure. RA, 1863-1864; RHA, 1874-1911; SBA, 1866, 1881; WCSI, 1912.	£6,400

APPENDIX B, Part 1: Women employed in various capacities around mid-century by the Department of Science and Art, in alphabetical order by surname									
Name in March 1858	Born/bap.	Death	Father's occupation	Association with Department of Science & Art	Age in 1857	Other known teaching appointments	Non-teaching career	Exhibition record (see list of abbreviations)	Wealth at death
Matéaux, Clarisse (Clara)	1834	1911	Parents untraced	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1855-1860). Teacher of Wood-engraving at Female School of Art (1862-1869). //	23	Teacher at Central school *	Editor of magazine (1871-75). Author (1871-1890s)		£400
Mills, Eliza	1831	Uncertain. After 1901	Carver and gilder	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1854-1857). Teacher at Spitalfields School of Design. # Teacher at South Kensington. //	26	Whitelands College. # Teacher at Buckingham Palace (1858-?). // Teacher of Art Cheltenham Ladies College (1868-c.1881). //	Member, Society of Female Artists	Studies from nature, landscape. RA 1875; SFA, 1857-1859	Unknown /negligible
Trulock, Jane	1817	1902	Corn Dealer	Matron at Central school.(1861-after 1891)	40		Took in art student boarders		Unknown /negligible
Waterhouse, Annie	1814	1896	Clerk to barrister	Teacher of Wood-engraving, Central school (1852-1856).	43	Teacher of Wood-engraving at Female School of Design (1843-1852)	Married (1856) James Fraser Redgrave, civil servant.		£7,400
Wilson, Catherine	1835	After 1901	Law stationer	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1854-1855). Teacher at Female School of Art (1856-1861). //	22		Married (1861) William Moore, schoolmaster .		Unknown
Wilson, Helena	1837	Uncertain. After 1911.	Law stationer	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1857-1861). Teacher at Female School of Art (1861-1907). //	20			Studies from nature. SBA, 1858-1861; SFA, 1857.	Unknown

APPENDIX B, Part 2: Female students of the Training Class in the period 1854-1857 for whom insufficient biographical details have been retrieved for analysis					
Name in March 1858	Born/bap.	Death	Association with Department of Science & Art	Other known teaching appointments	Exhibition record (see list of abbreviations)
Baines, Catherine	Untraced	Untraced	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1855-1859)	Whitelands College (1858-?). // Westminster College (1858-?). //	
Edgley, Sarah Jane	Untraced	Untraced	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1855-1860). Teacher at Metropolitan (branch) School of Design (?-?). *		
Elliott, Rebecca	Untraced	Untraced	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1857-1862)		Studies from nature. SBA, 1878
Hunt, Jane	Untraced	Untraced	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1855-1858)		
Rees, Mary	Untraced	Untraced	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1857-1865)	Whitelands College (?-1863). //	Studies from nature. SBA, 1865, 1872
Swallow, Jane F.	Untraced	Untraced	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1858-1861)		Studies from nature. RA, 1864; SBA, 1864-1869
Wheeler, Sarah Ann	Untraced	Untraced	Student / trainee Drawing Mistress (1856-1861)		Studies from nature. RA, 1863; SBA, 1864-1879; SFA, 1878-1880

Notes:

// Sundry sources including: NA, MS ED 28 series: Minute books, Census, FSA Annual Reports

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* Morse, *the McLans* (2001), p.264 summarises selected achievements of women who studied under Fanny McIan at the FSA at Gower Street. Unfortunately, Morse provides no references to her primary sources for the information, which is so far unverified.

List of abbreviations of exhibiting institutions	
RA	Royal Academy, London
RGIFA	Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts
RHA	Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin
RSA	Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh
SBA	Society of British Artists (a.k.a. Suffolk Street Gallery)
SFA	Society of Female Artists. London
WCSI	Water Colour Society of Ireland

Abbreviations: Archival resources

BCA	Bedford College Archive, Royal Holloway University of London
BL	The British Library
CLC	Cheltenham Ladies' College Archive
CMCH	Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University
CSM	Central Saint Martin's, University of the Arts
GCA	Girton College Archives
HCA	Hertfordshire County Archives
LMA	London Metropolitan Archive
MA	Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland
NA	National Archives
NAL	National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum
NG	The National Gallery, London
WCA	Whitelands College Archive, University of Roehampton
WHA	Women's History Archive, London School of Economics

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