

M•A•S T E R P I E C E

The Molesey Art Society Newsletter



MARCH 2020

In these unprecedented times, with our much anticipated exhibition cancelled and with no clear idea of when the activities of the Society might get back to normal, it was felt that the membership might be interested in the editorial article that was supposed to appear in the Spring catalogue. This period of 'social-distancing' will be difficult to deal with and finding something positive to do with the time is important. Maybe reading about what some famous artists got up to in our area might motivate you to get out the brushes – 'Keep Calm and Carry On ... Painting and Drawing'.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF GIANTS ...

When the name **Canaletto** (1697–1768) is mentioned, meticulous images of Venice immediately come to mind. However, Giovanni Antonio Canal came to England in 1746 in search of wealthy patrons amongst the English aristocracy and he stayed for almost a decade. He was based in London and there are several well-known paintings of the River Thames in the city but he also painted at least two works featuring the bridge at Walton, one of which is now in the Dulwich Picture Gallery. This is



A View of Walton Bridge painted for the wealthy eccentric Thomas Hollis who appears in the centre of the picture dressed in yellow. The artist also makes an appearance seated slightly to the left with sketch book in hand and he certainly wouldn't recognise the bridge at it is today.

Samuel Scott (1702–1772) was a British landscape painter who specialised in riverside scenes and seascapes. He lived in Twickenham for a number of years and it was during this time that he painted *The Thames at Twickenham* which is now in the collection of the Yale Centre for British Art.



In about 1760 a young German painter by the name of **Johan Zoffany** (1733–1810) arrived in England. His talent was recognised by the actor David Garrick who had by this time taken up residence in Hampton and in 1762 he commissioned the artist to paint four 'conversation' pieces amongst which was *The Shakespeare Temple at Hampton House, with Mr and Mrs David Garrick*. This is now in the collection of Tate Britain. These works established the artist's reputation and he went on to become a notable society painter enjoying royal patronage. He was nominated for membership of the Royal Academy by George III and exhibited there for thirty years.





William Marlow (1740–1813) had been a pupil of Samuel Scott and like him was a noted landscape and marine artist. He was yet another resident of Twickenham, living there from 1788 until his death and the river features in many of his paintings such as *The Thames at Richmond* painted in 1780 and now in the Government Art Collection.

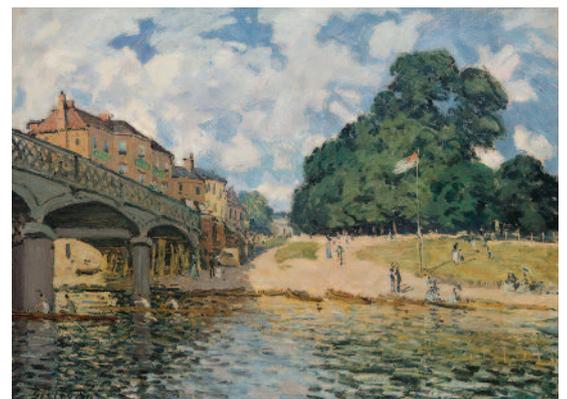
Perhaps the most famous name in British landscape painting is **JMW Turner** (1775–1851) and the Thames was a recurring subject for most of his life and indeed he lived on the banks of the river at Twickenham for several years. Sandycombe Lodge was actually designed by the artist himself and he lived there with his ageing father from 1813 until 1826. The house has now been restored and is open to the public. The first picture shown is *The Thames near Walton Bridges* painted in 1805 and this in the collection of Tate Britain. The river at Richmond was understandably another favourite subject which he painted many times. This watercolour sketch was undoubtedly painted on the spot in about 1819 and was a study for the famous oil painting *England: Richmond Hill, on the Prince Regent's Birthday*, also in the collection of Tate Britain.

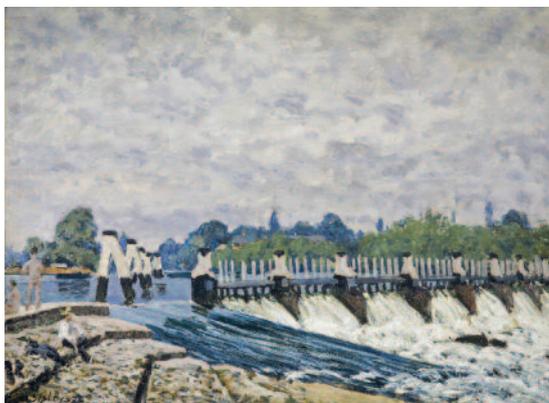


A very similar view is captured in a work by the popular Victorian artist **Myles Birket Foster** (1825–1899), *The Thames from Richmond Hill* painted in 1875 and here shown in an engraving by J Saddler. He is best known as an illustrator and watercolourist specialising in sentimental views of the English countryside. His work was used by Cadbury's to adorn their packaging – an original chocolate box painter!



One of the leading figures in the French Impressionist movement was **Alfred Sisley** (1839–1899) who was actually born of English parents. Although he spent most of his time in France he did make several visits to England and in 1874 he stayed at the Castle Hotel adjacent to the old bridge across the Thames at Hampton Court. From here he walked the banks of the river and set up his easel to paint at least a dozen canvases which are recognised as important works in the development of Impressionism and many are to be found in major collections around the world. The first painting shown is *Bridge at Hampton Court*



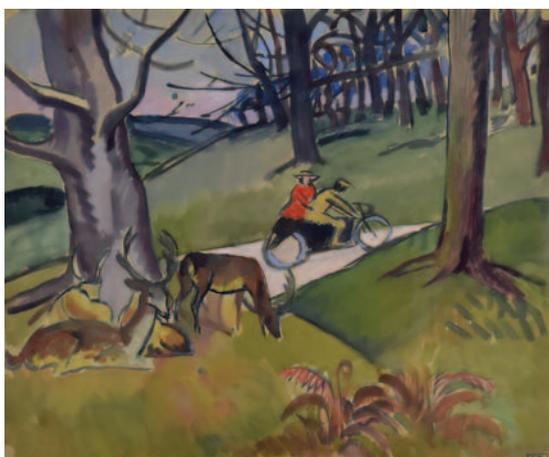


(Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne). Although there have been some changes to the area since his time including a new bridge across the river, there are still many survivals from times past and in some cases there are very few difference between what Sisley saw and what can be seen today. The second painting shown is *Molesey Wier* (Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh).

Camille Pissarro (1830–1903) was a fellow French Impressionist painter and he first visited England in 1870, escaping the horrors of the Franco-Prussian War at home. He made a return visit twenty years later with his son Lucien who eventually settled in England. It was at that time that he spent some time in the area and captured a summer's day in *Cricket on Hampton Court Green*



(National Gallery of Art, Washington).



Lucien Pissarro (1863–1944) may not be as well-known as his father but his paintings are now recognised as important works and he was often to be found at his easel on the banks of the Thames at Richmond. Another member of this highly talented family was **Ludovic-Rodo Pissarro** (1878–1952) and the picture shown is *Motorcycle Ride in Richmond Park* painted in 1919 and now in a private collection.

Another Frenchman drawn to the area was **Ferdinand Gueldry** (1858–1945) but his main reason for being here was to officiate and participate in rowing regattas. However he was also a talented artist who exhibited regularly at the Paris Salon and his principal subjects were boating scenes on the rivers Seine and Marne. In 1896 he painted *Ecluse de Molesey* (Molesey Lock) now in the Musée Nogent-sur-Marne.



Henri le Sidanier (1862–1939) is an important figure in the post-impressionist movement and in 1908 he made a visit to the area, staying in Hampton Wick and painting several views of Hampton Court Palace. The images have a somewhat melancholy feel – people rarely feature and “*he considered the silent harmony of things was enough to evoke the presence of those who live among them*”. The image shown is *Le Palais, Matin d'Été* (Hampton Court).

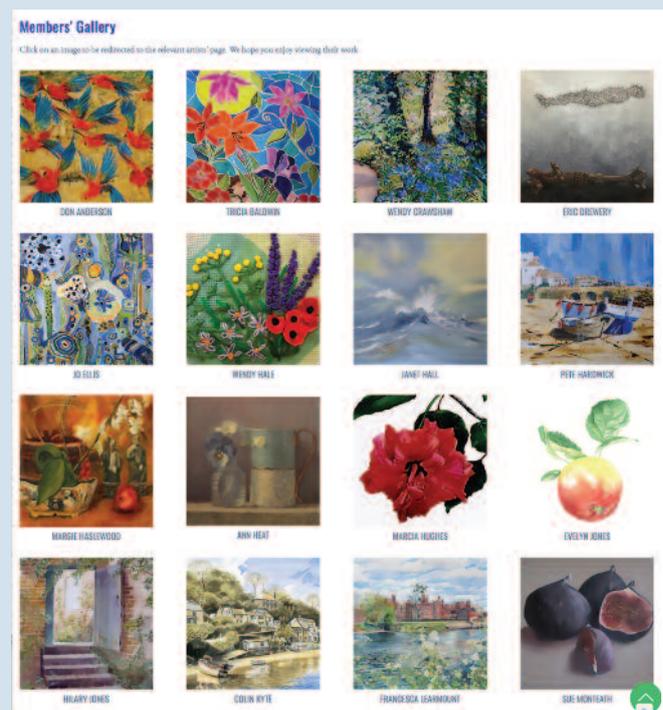


Spencer Frederick Gore (1878–1914) is recognised as one of the leading figures in British art at the turn of the twentieth century and was the first president of the influential Camden Town Group. He was born in Epsom and after education at Harrow he attended the Slade School of Fine Art. His untimely death from pneumonia at the age of 36 was probably brought on after painting outdoors in Richmond Park in cold, wet weather. He lived in Richmond and the park provided him with the subject for at least 32 paintings in the last months of his life. The first image shown is *Cambrian Road, Richmond* now in the collection of the Yale Center for British Art and the second is *Richmond Park* painted in 1914 and now in the Tate Gallery collection. His son **Frederick Gore** (1913–2009) became an influential figure in British art and lived in Richmond for much of his life and made many paintings of the local area. His work is often featured in exhibitions at the Richmond Hill Gallery.



NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Many of you already have a presence in the Members' Gallery on the Society website (www.moleseyartsociety.co.uk) where selected paintings are displayed together with a brief pen portrait. During this period when it is difficult to share your efforts with others and interact with like-minded individuals, why not refresh the images on your page in the gallery. Perhaps submit those pieces that you were intending to show at the Spring Exhibition. This is no substitute but at least there is the opportunity for your work to be seen by a wider audience. If you don't have anything in the gallery, why not take this opportunity to submit some image files and get yourself noticed.



If you would like to send new files or get any advice on how to submit image files then please contact Eric Drewery by email on eric.drewery@virgin.net.