

Philip Corbet (1802-1877)
The life and art of a forgotten Regency painter.

Jake Wilkinson
5888689

Art History of the Low Countries RMA
Faculty of the Humanities
Utrecht University

Supervisor: Dr. Victor Schmidt
Second Reader: Prof. Chris Stolwijk
Date: April 17th 2020

Abstract

This thesis examines the life and work of British painter Philip Corbet (1802-1877). Corbet has become largely forgotten since his death and very little literature concerning his life has ever been published.

My primary aim was therefore to assemble the first extensive biography of the painter, whilst undertaking a more in-depth analysis of his work than has yet been attempted. This involved bringing together the small amount written about him, whilst adding to this with information found in my own research in archive centres in Shrewsbury, the town where he spent much of his career. The list of primary sources read includes a number of letters written by the painter himself.

The paper's theoretical approach, its visual analysis, approached his work by creating links between Corbet's paintings and certain seventeenth-century Dutch painters, as well as his British predecessors and contemporaries. The Dutch influence evident in some of his work is rare in this period of his British art, marking him out as a more notable figure than his current reputation would suggest.

The resulting paper is one that surpasses any other piece of writing on the painter in terms of its depths. The biography is more detailed than any other written, but different periods of his life vary in the amount of source material and thus vary in detail. Much of time in Shrewsbury is well covered, for example, whilst his early and later years require further research.

The analysis of his paintings was limited by the limited number of examples of his work available to view, but I have managed to add to this list to the extent that the hallmarks of his style and methods can be detected. The visual analysis will suggest that Corbet's engagement with Dutch painting peaked in the late 1820s, but that his interest in the period was maintained throughout his life.

Contents

3

Timeline

4

Introduction

8

Early Life

14

London

21

Shrewsbury

30

The Netherlands

37

The 1830s and 1840s

48

Later Years

56

Conclusion

59

References and Bibliography

66

Appendix 1

Images

123

Appendix 2

Catalogue

Timeline

<u>Philip Corbet</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Other Events</u>
Born in Ireland.	1802	
	1805	Battle of Trafalgar.
	1815	End of the Napoleonic Wars.
	1820	Coronation of George IV.
Enrols in the Royal Academy.	1821	Death of Napoleon Bonaparte.
First painting exhibited at the Academy.	1823	
	1824	National Gallery is founded.
Settles in Shrewsbury.	1825	Death of Henry Fuseli.
	1827	Birth of William Holman Hunt.
	1828	Death of Francisco Goya.
Leaves Shrewsbury for Holland.	1829	
Visits the Mauristhuis.	1830	Death of Thomas Lawrence.
		Coronation of William IV.
Marries Jane Carline in Shrewsbury.	1832	Birth of Edouard Manet.
Birth of first child, Edith.	1833	
Begins occupation of the Judge's Lodgings in Belmont, Shrewsbury.	1835	Charles Darwin arrives at the Galapagos Islands.
	1837	Coronation of Victoria I.
	1839	Louis Daguerre patents his camera.
		Birth of Paul Cezanne.
	1840	Birth of Claude Monet.
	1841	Death of David Wilkie.
Begins operating a daguerrotype photography studio.	1842	
	1845	Beginning of the Great Famine in Ireland.
	1848	Karl Marx and Frederick Engels publish <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> . Formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.
Death of Thomas Kenyon.	1851	
	1853	Death of J.M.W. Turner.
	1854	Crimean War begins.
Evicted from the Judge's Lodgings.	1855	Birth of Vincent van Gogh.
Exhibits for the final time at the Academy.	1856	National Portrait Gallery opens.
	1859	Darwin publishes <i>On the Origin of the Species</i> .
Living in St. Hellier, Jersey.	1861	American Civil War begins.
	1870	Birth of Vladimir Lenin.
	1876	Alexander Graham Bell makes the first transmission by telephone.
Dies in Bittern, near Southampton.	1877	

Introduction

The nineteenth-century painter Philip Corbet may justifiably be considered Shropshire's most talented painter; he is also an almost entirely anonymous and forgotten figure in the history of British art.

Born in Ireland in 1802, Corbet would leave his home in 1820 to spend three years in London training at the Royal Academy. Following this, he settled in Shrewsbury, then a regionally significant capital, where he enjoyed a successful career as a portraitist, painting many of his adopted county's most significant figures. His work shows a technical ability to rival any of his contemporaries, whilst the consistency in his manner of painting on very small wooden panels is unusual for this period of British art. Although changing fashions and declining health cut his career short in the 1850s, there is some evidence that during his life and in the decades that followed his death he was a respected painter. This is particularly so in Shropshire, where his reputation was still such in the 1950s that an exhibition of his work was held in Shrewsbury. Subsequently however, interest in his life and work has faded and the painter has declined into obscurity.

Why this has happened can probably be explained both by the period in which he worked, as well as his decision to pursue a career away from London. He was active during a period of great transition in British art. When he finished his studies at the Royal Academy in 1823, its president Thomas Lawrence was at the height of his powers as the nation's premier portraitist; by the time he produced his final known painting in the mid-1850s, the Pre-Raphaelites had permanently altered the aesthetic and conceptual direction of the visual arts in Britain. The era inbetween is not one that has captured the minds of scholars and researchers of British art to any great degree, and has subsequently been overlooked.

Countless other early-Victorian painters have suffered similarly over time, many of them of far greater significance than Corbet. His professor and 'mentor' Martin Archer Shee, who painted the portrait of a young Corbet in 1823 (*fig. 1*), serves as an example here. Although not as unknown a figure as Corbet, Shee's 20 year presidency of the R.A. is far less remembered than those of predecessors like Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Lawrence. It is not unusual for Lawrence himself to be described today as 'overlooked'.

Corbet's legacy has been additionally limited by his operating out of Shrewsbury for the majority of his career. Although it was then a comparatively much larger and more important town on a national level than it is today, it was still much smaller than, and situated at some distance from, London, the country's artistic centre. Potential involvement with institutions like the Royal Academy would have been limited for him, whilst the smaller market meant a smaller potential clientele and, thus, a smaller chance of achieving significant fame.

His decision to move to Shrewsbury was not without its merits however. He had befriended a native of the town, Thomas Carline, during his time as a student in London, which would have afforded him immediate networking opportunities, whilst the town itself was large enough for it to be possible for him to earn a living as an exclusively provincial painter. Its small but vibrant artistic community, with people like well-known animal painter Thomas Weaver, the gilder Thomas Donaldson and the Carline family all active in the 1820s, may also have been a draw to him. And yet, although he was successful within this smaller market, such a position of cultural isolation meant that posthumous sustenance of his reputation was always going to be unlikely.

Very few of his paintings found their way into public collections following his death, restricting the public's likelihood of encountering his work further, whilst almost no information on the painter exists in the public domain. There is very little pre-existing literature available on the painter, certainly nothing that might be considered academic.

The majority of sources that comment directly on his work are reviews published during his lifetime in publications like *The Athenaeum*, and within them direct analysis and commentary on his work is invariably brief.

Subsequent writing on him is rare, with only occasional references to his work present in art journals. An article written by John Carline for the *Shropshire Magazine* in the second half of the twentieth-century, and the introduction to the catalogue for the 1958 exhibition written by Richard Carline constitute the only other significant pieces of writing that directly discuss his life and work at any length. Neither of these is more than 500 words in length, and yet their content formed the entirety of Corbet's known biography at the outset of my research. A further issue with these particular sources lies in their reliability, as neither of the texts is referenced or sourced, whilst each of the writers was a descendant of the family into which Corbet married in 1832 and so were prone to natural bias. For what it is worth, their work seems to have been well-researched, with much of its content subsequently substantiated through other, more reliable, sources. Even so they remain brief and, concealed in archives, are unavailable for immediate public consumption.

Such a dearth of writing on the painter is an injustice to his talents, and so it became the primary aim of my research to discover new information about Corbet with the intention of writing, for the first time, an extensive biography of his life. Included within this was a desire to establish a list of his known work, gathering images of his paintings where possible in order to enable an analysis of his style and methods.

Given the limitations in the literature, my method here was to examine as many primary sources as possible and I have read through every document concerning Corbet that I could locate in the holdings of two different archives in Shrewsbury, that of the Shropshire Museum Service, and the county council's own archival research centre on Castle Street in the town centre. Amongst the most useful pieces in the paper archives of Shropshire Museums was a box containing family documents from Corbet's last years. A series of letters and correspondence to the museum from current and previous owners of his paintings present here also proved useful, providing further information and images of paintings that would otherwise have remained unknown.

The primary sources consulted in Shropshire Council's archive facility consisted of over a hundred letters concerning Corbet, many written by the artist himself. They provide a degree of access to his homelife, although Corbet's professional life is hardly touched upon, save for on a few occasions during the letters which chart his demise in Shrewsbury in the mid-1850s. One, quite harrowing, letter from this period is particularly revealing in this regard.¹

A notebook belonging to the writer Samuel Butler was another useful document in these archives. Dating from the late 1890s and containing a collection of short handwritten biographies and notes on various Shropshire artists, it is possible that it was compiled as part of the planning for a publication on the subject.² Butler was

¹ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/60.

² 'Letter from Philip Corbet to the Magistrates with a history of his tenancy'.

² Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

himself a significant cultural figure, his 1872 utopian novel *Erewhon* having been a success upon release, and later be praised by George Orwell.³ He had some experience as an art historian prior to this endeavour into this history of his county's painters too. The three pages concerning Corbet are far from an exhaustive account of his life but do contain content and information not found elsewhere. Butler's father and grandfather were painted by Corbet in 1828, and he himself met the painter, noting his memories of the painter's 'fine-looking' appearance at the end of his account. Such links give the account enough credence to be considered a reliable source.

His efforts to collect correspondence from contemporaries of the artist are a valuable addition to his notes. An original letter from the artist's daughter Edith discussing her father and his work is perhaps the most significant of those, although I have been cautious of any potential bias in its contents for the same reasons mentioned in regard to the essays written later by members of the Carline family.

For periods where reliable documentary evidence is scant, his paintings and their subjects often prove to be the best primary sources available. The intention to assemble a catalogue of his work then has two primary functions, to illuminate his biography whilst also allowing a more comprehensive analysis of his painting career, his style and its development, than any previously attempted.

Sources such as the exhibition catalogue for the 1958 exhibition and Algernon Graves' dictionary of Royal Academy contributions helped significantly with expanding the list of his known works, whilst searches through digitised auction records supplied evidence of others. Very quickly, a lengthy list of artworks was assembled, but more images of his work needed to be found if a substantial analysis of his style was to be possible.

Only ten paintings in public collections in the UK are attributed to him, three of them of the same subject, with four further examples held in Haarlem's Teyler's Museum. Images for these were the only ones readily available at the outset of this project. Further examples were later obtained from online auction records, whilst two photographs contained within the two archival centres in Shrewsbury and contact with various owners of his work allowed access to images of a few more. One unattributed painting has additionally been credited to Corbet, which I will justify in the text.

The first paintings I encountered by Corbet were two from the late 1820s of high status Salopians, the three Burton brothers in one, and John Blakeway and Hugh Owen in the other. The informal manner of the depiction of their subjects seemed to have much in common with certain artists of seventeenth-century Netherlands. Compositionally, they are reminiscent of some of Gerard ter Borch's genre paintings, whilst aspects of their highly finished interiors recall the work of Pieter de Hooch and Gerard Dou. A trip Corbet subsequently made to The Netherlands between 1829 and 1832 suggests he did indeed hold an interest in the country's artistic culture, and, although these two paintings pre-date it, an appreciation of the art of the period was probably responsible for these similarities. Although the four paintings of his in the collection of Haarlem's Teyler's Museum prove that he continued to produce original work during his time in Holland, I believe the trip was primarily motivated by a desire to study the country's art first hand, a suggestion substantiated by his returning to Shrewsbury with copies he made of paintings by Pieter de Hooch, Caspar Netscher, and Rembrandt, amongst others.

³ 'Shropshire artists, professional and amateur', written and compiled by Samuel Butler.

³ George Orwell, 'I belong to the left', pp.172-173, *Collected Works of George Orwell, Vol. 17*, Penguin, 2015.

With this in mind, much of the critical analysis of his work will focus on any effects this interest might have had on his own work, trying to create direct links between Corbet's paintings and specific examples of Dutch paintings. In this, I have attempted to prioritise comparisons with specific paintings that it can established were plausibly accessible to Corbet, particularly during his formative years, although limited access to provenance records means this is not always possible to verify.

Beyond any Dutch influence, Corbet was first and foremost a British painter and his style reflects this too. During his time at the Academy its president was Sir Thomas Lawrence, whilst he was also taught by Sir Martin Archer Shee, one of the nation's most successful society portraitists. Their influence on Corbet is easily detectable in his work. Sir David Wilkie is another notable painter in this regard, particularly in his adoption of aspects of Dutch Golden Age traditions. Indeed, his work of the late 1810s and early 1820s, which Corbet would have seen whilst in London, may have provided some stimulus for the younger painter's own interest in the period. Adopting Dutch traits as overtly as Wilkie did was very rare in British art at this time, and though less obvious in Corbet's work, his embrace of the period marks him out as a member of a very small club of British painters. This fact alone makes him a worthwhile subject.

Indeed, Philip Corbet is a far more interesting painter than his current obscurity would suggest, and it is my hope that this paper may help restore something of the reputation of this once well-respected artist. This is particularly the case for interested parties in his adopted hometown of Shrewsbury, where he was once an important cultural figure but even there is today unknown. Additionally, both private and public owners of his work may benefit from having a more substantial reference for the painter than any that has existed previously. The Teyler's Museum, for example, when contacted in order to request any information they had on the painter, replied that they had none. A greater understanding of the artist can only be beneficial for such collections. I make no claims to be comprehensive in either my biography or catalogue, but what has been collected here is certainly progress, and may act as a reasonable base upon which future research and personal interest in the painter may be built.

One

Early Life in Ireland

Philip Corbet's life between his birth in 1802 and his enrolment in the Royal Academy in 1821 is something of a documentary vacuum. Indeed, even his exact birthplace is itself unknown, although census data confirms the assertion made by various sources that he was born somewhere in Ireland.⁴

The short essays written by John Carline, Samuel Butler and Richard Carline all suggest that the painter descended from 'a branch of the ancient Shropshire Corbets', who had historically held great sway in the county.⁵ Philip was aware of this supposed heritage, and seemed to promote it within his family, Edith later writing that her father considered the county to be 'the home of his forefathers'.⁶

With a direct line to one of Roger de Montgomerie's generals during the Norman conquest of Britain in 1066, known as Corbeau, the Shropshire Corbet's had had a significant and influential presence in the county for centuries. The two sons of Corbeau, Robert and Roger, held thirty-eight Lordships in the county, signifying their immediate influence in Shropshire. The descending generations contain numerous Lords, Barons and countless knights and MPs, and remained in Shrewsbury until Corbet's period there.⁷ Indeed, he would paint the head of the house, Sir Andrew Vincent Corbet, in 1856.

John Carline suggests the Irish branch of the family, from which Philip claims to have been descended, stemmed from an Andrew Corbett, whom he states emigrated to Ireland during the English Civil War.⁸ He does not acknowledge a source for this information, and although he may have been privy to resources beyond my own, my own attempts to establish a concrete link, rooted in evidence, have proved fruitless. Even the extensive family history compiled in the 1910s by Augusta Elizabeth Corbet makes no reference to an Andrew Corbett, let alone one who emigrated to Ireland. She does, however, note that Ireland was somewhere where 'many a Corbet family settled in the troubled days of Cromwell and the following years' and that the nation was a 'fertile field for research' in this regard.⁹

Beyond Philip's own father, evidence of his paternal line is scant, but a family history of his mother's ancestors, the Chadwicks, references the maternal side of Philip's family in intimate detail.¹⁰ John Carline makes big claims made about this line too, writing that Corbet's mother was descended from Sir Andrew Chadwick, a Mayor of London during the Stuart period but once again there is no evidence for this in the family history.¹¹

The Chadwicks of Guelph and Toronto and their cousins, by Edward Marion Chadwick, a Canadian whose research was carried out during the same decade as Augusta Corbet's, shows that the artist's mother, Jane, came from a military family in Tipperary. Her father William, known colloquially within the family as 'Big Billy',

⁴ Census data accessed through the genealogical research site, Ancestry.

⁵ Richard Carline. 'Philip Corbet and the Carlines'. *Catalogue for the Exhibition of the Works of the Corbet and Carline Families, March 8th - April 5th 1958*. (Shrewsbury: Shrewsbury Art Gallery, 1958).

⁶ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

⁷ Bernard Burke. *Burke's genealogical and heraldic history of peerage, baronetage and knightage*. 12th Edition. (London: Burke's Peerage Limited, 1850), p241.

Accessed 27th February: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.d0001238351&view=1up&seq=285>

⁸ John Carline. 'Corbet and the Carlines - Painters, Sculptors and Architects of the Early 19th Century'. *Shropshire Magazine*, (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Magazine) p13.

⁹ Augusta Corbet. *The Family of Corbet: its Life and Times*. (London: The St. Catherine Press, 1914), p366.

¹⁰ Edward Marion Chadwick. *The Chadwicks of Guelph and Toronto and their Cousins*. (Toronto: Davis and Henderson Ltd., 1914), p33.

¹¹ John Carline, p14.

was a commissioned officer in the British army, whilst two of her brothers, Michael and Benjamin, would follow in his footsteps and pursue military careers of their own. The eldest brother Richard, a barrister, would later become leader of the local militia in Shropshire, a link that may have proved significant when Corbet decided to move to the county in the early 1820s.¹² As with their father, the two sisters, Elizabeth and Jane, are both ascribed nicknames, Elizabeth's 'beautiful Betty' and Jane's 'the beautiful' each likely to attest more to family bias than to the genetics of their parents.

Jane's mother, born Mary Lockwood, came from nearby Cashel, and each of her parents, Richard and Elizabeth (née Carden) Lockwood, came from notable local families.¹³ That her marriage to William Chadwick included a settlement of £1,500, a significant sum at the time, suggests too that they had some wealth.¹⁴ William appears to have been a financially responsible man, and when compiling his will in 1799, 45 years later, a £1,000 of this marriage settlement remained to be split between four of his children, Jane being one of these recipients. This would undoubtedly have served as a valuable source of income ahead of her marriage in 1801 to our subject's father, also called Philip.

This was Jane's second marriage, having previously been wed in 1787 to a Henry Adams, a figure about whom I have been able to find very little. The three children they had together, William, Henry and Eliza, are each noted as being 'of Tipperary', suggesting the couple settled there after their marriage rather than Henry's native Cork. None of them were older than 14 years old in 1800, by which time he had passed away. Jane's subsequent marriage to Philip Sr. in 1801 was probably therefore a financial necessity for her given this fact, although she did shortly after give birth to the first of his children, our subject Philip, in 1802. Not much has been discovered about this elder Philip Corbet, beyond the fact that he was based at High Park, in an area in the north of County Tipperary.¹⁵ This is probably where the younger Philip was born, although a precise birthplace isn't definitively noted in any of the sources I have encountered. It is entirely possible that some more exact record of his birth is contained within an archive in Cork or Tipperary.

The town of Tipperary is certainly a valid suggestion for an alternative. There is evidence that elder Philip Corbet would move to the town at some point, as he is noted as 'the late Philip Corbett Esq. of Tipperary' in a document concerning the death of his daughter, Philip's sister, Anna-Maria in 1830.¹⁶ It is impossible to say, however, whether this move from High Park occurred before or after 1802. An interesting additional note here is the qualifying 'Esq.', which suggests he had some status in the area.

We know from Edith that her own father believed himself to be a descendent of the Corbets of Shropshire, with a degree of loyalty to this supposed heritage suggested by the elder Philip's marriage into the Chadwick family, as, if he had any reservations

¹² Chadwick, p34.

The fact that one of the painter's uncles would move to the county at roughly the same time as he would, 1824, is a significant discovery and may alter ideas as to how Corbet was able to move to settle in the area so quickly, although this will be discussed further in the next chapter.

¹³ The writer Turtle Bunbury has carried out some well-referenced research into his family history, including some details on the Lockwood family which is published online and can be accessed here:

http://www.turtlebunbury.com/family/bunburyfamily_lisnavagh/bunburyfamily_lisnavagh_william2.html

¹⁴ Establishing an accurate translation of the value of this money today is difficult, but my attempts have suggested £1500 in 1800 to be worth between £60,000 and £120,000.

¹⁵ Chadwick, p34.

¹⁶ Paschal McDonnell. 'McDonnell's Index of Deaths from 1828 of Cork City, its Liberties and Suburbs.'

Published online and accessed:

http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/genealogy/mcdonnellsindexofbirthsdeathsandmarriages/1828_mcdonnells_deaths.pdf

towards the Anglican British establishment that ran the country, a union with a notable local military family would not have been acceptable to him. This was a divided society, an environment in which ‘Protestants continued to refer to themselves as Englishmen, using ‘Irish’ as synonymous with ‘Catholic’’.¹⁷ The formation of the Orange Order in 1795 and the conflicts of the 1798 Irish Rebellion are testament to the tensions that existed at the time, with the end of the century a period in which ‘religious antagonisms persisted and in some respects grew sharper’ rather than declined.¹⁸ The 7th Dragoon Guards, the regiment of the British army to which William Chadwick and his sons belonged, fought in some of the 1798 conflicts, notably at Rathangan near Wexford.^{19,20} If there was any doubt as to the family’s political and religious views beyond this, the coat of arms of William’s branch of the Chadwick family (*fig. 2*) contains a St. George’s Flag, a clear iconographic statement, whilst two subsequent generations of the head of the family were given the overtly Protestant name William.

Accepting that Philip Corbet the elder was of a similar political bent, this was a union between two families that embraced their British, and subsequently Protestant, identity. Edith’s claim that, as a young man, his father had originally ‘intended him for the Church’ suggests too a father who took these divine matters seriously enough to want his eldest, possibly only, son to dedicate his life to the clergy.²¹ Later work that Corbet undertook in designing stained-glass windows for Shrewsbury’s Anglican St. Mary’s church, as well as the fact that he was married in a Protestant Abbey, suggests he remained loyal to this religious denomination in Shrewsbury. By this time, however, such matters were contending for his attentions with his art and his family.²²

Indeed, it could be argued that Corbet was always more dedicated to his art than his religion, with Edith’s asserting that it was because her father was ‘so passionately fond of painting that he at last induced his parents to allow him to follow the great mists of his heart, and become a painter’.²³ Looking beyond the overly-Romantic rhetoric here, we may want to question what the actual roots of this passionate fondness were.

It is entirely possible that the first paintings he encountered were portraits in his own family’s possession. His parents were not the wealthiest people in County Tipperary, but nor were they the poorest, and would have been able to afford to commission portraits for their walls had they wished to. The same can be said of his maternal ancestors, and it is possible to imagine the painted faces of generations of Chadwicks greeting visitors to the home of his mother’s parents in Tipperary. Corbet may even have encountered portraitists at work in this context, men who would have served as figures of great inspiration to an impressionable young Philip.

There is also the possibility that he encountered private collections in the homes of some of the wealthier acquaintances of his parents or grandparents. The catalogues of exhibitions held by the Cork Society of Art in the 1810s and 20s show that fairly significant private collections did exist in the area at the time, and the idea that Corbet

¹⁷ Stephen Howe. *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p34.

¹⁸ Howe, p36.

¹⁹ Chadwick, p33.

²⁰ Information from the National Army Museum:

Accessed 3rd March 2020: <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/7th-princess-royals-dragoon-guards>

²¹ Edith in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

²² Anonymous. *Salopian Shreds and Patches*. (Shrewsbury: W. & J. Eddowes, 1875). p121

²³ Edith in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

encountered these in situ should not be dismissed.²⁴ As an Officer in the British Army, Corbet's grandfather William Chadwick is someone who would have rubbed shoulders with the local high society, even if he himself was not a firm part of it, and may have provided his grandson with a social link to people who owned work by old masters. James Roche, a banker from Limerick, is an example of one such figure, and although it is unlikely he himself was on good terms with William Chadwick - Roche was a Prominent Catholic who had been imprisoned as a revolutionary in France in the 1790s - his collection shows that paintings by significant old masters existed in Philip's local area at the time.²⁵ Roche was responsible for the loan of fifty-eight paintings shown at the Cork Society of Art's annual exhibition of 1820, with work attributed to the likes of Rembrandt, Aelbert Cuyp and David Teniers amongst them. In previous years, the society had shown pieces from various private collections that included paintings by a number of Spanish, Dutch and Italian masters, Murillo, Canaletto and Veronese constitute a few of these, whilst in 1818, a painting supposedly by Leonardo da Vinci turned up. Of course, many of these attributions are probably spurious, but they do still suggest something of the interests and tastes of local collectors, and in doing so suggest the kind of paintings the young Corbet may have been exposed to.

The young Corbet could have made the 80km trip south to Cork, a not insignificant but perfectly traversable distance in the 1810s, to view these annual exhibitions. With the first of these held in 1815, when Corbet was only 13 or 14 years old, they perhaps do not explain the root of his love for painting, but may well have been an important part of its development. The prevalence of Dutch Golden Age painters is particularly significant in this regard, with the 1818 and 1819 Cork exhibition catalogues including names like Jacob Ruysdael, Nicolaes Berchem and Meindert Hobbema. Encountering such paintings that may have been central to the development of Corbet's own interest in the art of that period.²⁶

Alongside these painters, the Cork society would also display paintings produced by Irish artists, with the presence of work by Martin Archer Shee and James Barry noteworthy for having been painted by artists who had each spent significant periods in London.²⁷ Shee would serve as one of Corbet's tutors at the Royal Academy in London, with Edith commenting on the bond they formed in her letter to Samuel Butler.²⁸ It is entirely possible that the two men had first met in Cork, where Shee may have encouraged the young Corbet to see the merits of the Academy in London.

Another painter whose work was frequently exhibited here was John Corbett, (*fig. 3*) a former student of James Barry who had passed away just a few months prior to the society's first exhibition.²⁹ Although he has slipped away from significance in the intermittent years, he was one of Cork's major portraitists in the first two decades of the nineteenth-century. Born in the city to an engraver father in 1779, he would go on to have a short period of training with James Barry in London, before living and working in his hometown until passing away aged 36 - a premature death perhaps brought on by his being what a 1913 dictionary of Irish artists describes as a

²⁴ Information was accessed through the website for the Crawford Art Gallery, which included an in depth and well-referenced account of the history of art in Cork. This has since been removed from the website.

²⁵ Anonymous Writer. 'James Roche'. *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Accessed 2nd December: <https://dib.cambridge.org/>

²⁶ Crawford Art Gallery.

²⁷ Michael Lenihan. *Hidden Cork: Charmers, Chancers and Cute Hoors*. (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010), p240.

²⁸ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

²⁹ Walter Strickland. *A Dictionary of Irish Artists, Vol. 1 A-K*. (Dublin: Maunsell and Company, 1913), p208.

‘convivial favourite of Cork society’.³⁰ The possibility that he was a relation of Philip is worth considering. The slight difference in the spelling in his surname should not detract from such possibilities, as surnames were far more fluid at this point - Philip himself would later be listed as ‘Corbett’ in the first two R.A. exhibitions at which his work was displayed. He is almost certainly not a brother of the elder Philip Corbet, but may well have been a cousin or second-cousin. If so, might it be suggested that he was a source of early inspiration, or even training, for the young Philip? The self-portrait he painted whilst training with Barry in London presents him as a serious young painter, and, although not as technically proficient as Philip Corbet’s later work, it does bare some similarity in its form and austerity. Such austerity may be surprising in the work of a pupil of the exuberant Barry, but in many ways is characteristic of many of the portraits produced by artists in Cork at this time. The work of Henry Kirckhoffer (1781–1860), although primarily a miniaturist, provides an examples of this.

Although only founded in 1815, that Cork had an art society at all makes it significant. The large towns more local to Philip’s childhood home in Tipperary, like Limerick and Clonmel, lacked any counterpart of note. Clonmel was then, admittedly, still a small town of about 10,000, perhaps too small for any kind of organised art society to have been developed.³¹ Limerick however, had, through its port, become quite prosperous as a centre of trade in the 1700s and probably did have some kind of painting or drawing school, although this is not something I have managed to detect. Cork, on the other hand, was not only home to the School of Art, founded in 1818, but at least one other drawing school, with the May 6th 1800 edition of the Cork Advertiser promoting a ‘French, English & Drawing Academy’ run by a Mme. de Lestang.³²

The Cork Society seems to have been serious in its ambitions for their school to become a leading centre of artistic training, and in 1818, the year of the school’s founding, took over a theatre on Patrick Street with, ‘a view to converting it into a ‘saloon of sculpture’.³³ Amongst the 120 or so casts displayed here were full replicas of the Apollo Belvedere, Laocoon and the Venus de Medici, which students had access to in order to aid drawing. Prior to 1818, the annual exhibitions had displayed exclusively local artists, the inclusion of old masters began partly in order for students of the school to better understand form and colouring. By 1820, the exhibition was displaying the work of the students themselves.³⁴ Taking this into account, it would have been the ideal place for Corbet to hone some of what were likely to be juvenile skills before his move to London in 1820. The career trajectory of his best known contemporary Daniel Maclise (1806-1870) (depicted in *figure 4*), followed this exact route; it would not be surprising if further research revealed Corbet’s presence alongside him sometime between 1818 and 1820.³⁵

Where, if at all, Corbet might have trained before this is unknown, but he was unlikely to have been entirely self-taught. An apprenticeship of some kind is likely, perhaps to John Corbett, but more probably to a lesser-known painter from Tipperary

³⁰ Ibid, p209.

³¹ William P. Burke, *History of Clonmel*. (Waterford: N. Harvey & Co, 1907).

³² Crawford Art Gallery.

³³ Crawford Art Gallery.

³⁴ Crawford Art Gallery.

³⁵ The more established Art School in Dublin, founded in 1746, serves as a potential alternative to this, with Walter Strickland’s Dictionary of Irish Artists referring to it having a role in the training of almost every one of its biographies. It only offered drawing classes however, and given its distance from where Corbet grew up, it is unlikely that Corbet did spend much time there.

or Limerick like Peter Kidd, who is noted by Strickland as having taught painting from his house in Limerick in the 1820s.³⁶³⁷ Ultimately, as with almost all aspects of Corbet's early life, suggesting anything more precise than this would be speculative.

The first time his name is encountered in any documentation at all is on the enrolment list of the Royal Academy, in February 1821, when he had already left Ireland to further his career as a painter. In doing so, he was following in the footsteps of many an Irish painter before him, James Barry and John Corbett amongst them. And yet, the academy in Cork and the number of artists working there prove that he could quite easily have forged a career as a painter in Ireland, had it been his will. It might be argued that his perceived heritage played its part in motivating his move to England, but I think it instead attests to his ambition, and suggests an individual determined to receive the highest standard of artistic training possible, regardless of the significant personal and financial costs involved. John Carline has suggested that the finances probably fell on his parents, whom he describes as 'no-longer well off' and who 'must have found it hard to maintain their son at his studies', although I would dispute this.³⁸ They were certainly not as wealthy as their claimed Shropshire fore-bearers, but, as we have seen, Philip's mother received a fairly reasonable marriage allowance and her immediate family were far from poverty-stricken. Philip was 19 at the time of his enrolment, old enough to have spent a few years working in some capacity himself and may have been able to fund many of the costs of tuition and living himself. Either way, the personal sacrifices required of him would surely have played heavier on his mind than those of a financial bent, as leaving his family and home behind for a new country would have been far from easy, logistically and emotionally, at that age, and in that period of history. He may not have realised it at the time, but once he had left Ireland in 1821, he would very rarely, possibly never, return.

³⁶ Strickland, p579.

³⁷ Strickland, p420.

³⁸ John Carline, p14.

Two London

The London Philip Corbet first encountered in 1821 would be broadly unrecognisable from the city we know today. Very few of its now familiar landmarks were yet constructed. The space occupied today by Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery, for example, was still the site of the King's stables and mews (*fig. 5*), whilst the fire that destroyed the original Houses of Parliament would not occur for over a decade. Beyond the great cathedrals of St. Paul's and Westminster, the city skyline would be an alien horizon separating its dirty streets from its smoky industrial sky.

Its size and population were, at the time, unprecedented in human history, with a population consistently and rapidly growing throughout the nineteenth-century from 1 million in 1800 to nearly 4 million in 1881.³⁹

Most of the immigrants that stimulated this growth were members of the labouring classes, left without agricultural work following the rise of machinery and looking to the opportunities afforded by the growing centres of manufacturing in the cities. In London this was 'by far the greatest employer of City labour' in the first half of the nineteenth-century.⁴⁰ Indeed, the air seems to have been so polluted that Thomas de Quincey would write in *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* that the smell of smoke 'could always distinguish a London letter on putting it to the nose'.⁴¹

It would not just have been the smoke that would have appalled a modern visitor, the streets being a stinking mat of the waste of horses and humans alike, with open sewers remaining in the city until the 1850s. That much of this waste ultimately ended up in the Thames was not enough to restrict the populous from turning to the river as their primary water supply. The frequent bouts of cholera experienced by the city's residents are testament to the dangers this posed. Poverty was rife, with the poorest areas heavily populated by these new industrial workers.

Areas like The Old Mint and St. Giles were infamous for their dirtiness and poverty-stricken residents.⁴² The Old Mint was a particularly run down area during Philip Corbet's time in London, with 3,000 families crammed into the 1,000 or so dilapidated homes there. One contemporary account describes how 'the sewage in many places bubbles up through the floors'. These houses often had 'no boarding on the floors' and so their 'inmates slept on the earth'.⁴³

And yet, at the same time this was a city at the centre of the largest empire the world has ever seen, and so whilst much of the population lived in poverty, the factories and ports where many of these people worked were elsewhere in the city creating a world of wealth and luxury. The Colonial expansion of the period brought new means of making money; London became the centre of both global banking and global trade. Lombard Street alone was home to twenty-two private banks, many of them merchant banks funding new ports and transport links in order to maximise the profits of its entrepreneurs.⁴⁴ The Thames, a great highway of merchant vessels, was the focus of much of this development and between 1799 and 1828 four new ports were constructed along its banks to the east of the city. The first of these, the West India Docks on the Isle of Dogs, began construction in 1799 and was large enough to dock 600 ships. In 1805 and 1806, the London docks at Wapping and the East India docks at Blackwell were added to this, whilst the significant development of St.

³⁹ Roy Porter, *London: A Social History*. (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p226.

⁴⁰ Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p16.

⁴¹ White, p18

⁴² Porter, p196

⁴³ David Hughston, writing in 1809 and Watts Philips, writing in 1856, quoted in White, p10

⁴⁴ Porter, p229

Katharine's Docks, orchestrated by Thomas Telford, opened 1828. During this period £5 million, an enormous sum of money at the time, had been invested in these artificial lakes, all, Roy Porter notes, 'from private sources'.⁴⁵ Private enterprise was also responsible for the spate of bridge building in the city at this time, with Vauxhall in 1816, Waterloo in 1817 and Southwark in 1819 all privately funded, the investments repaid through tolls. The opening up of links to the south of the river not only eased the traffic flow across the river, taking pressure off London and Westminster Bridges, whilst also aiding the expansion of industry southward.⁴⁶ Oxford Street and Regent Street were developed into the commercial centre of the city, with a move away from the workshop towards a form of retail outlet far more reminiscent of the modern shop - a revolution in commerce that led to the nearby Strand (*fig. 6*) being described by Benjamin Disraeli as 'the world's first shopping street'.⁴⁷

The earliest address at which I have been able to locate Philip Corbet, in 1822, was here, at the Charing Cross end of the Strand, at number 482. As well as being in London's commercial centre, it was one of the busiest streets in the city, frequently the place of traffic locks and jams.⁴⁸ If he had moved there directly from rural Tipperary, then the difference would have been jaw-dropping for the young painter. The hustle and bustle of traffic outside his house would have been set with a backdrop of the old Palace of Westminster, whilst a River Thames streaming with all kinds of ships and vessels, and the fashionable Covent Garden, were within walking distance. As too, perhaps more importantly to Corbet, was the Royal Academy, at this time housed in nearby Somerset House. That he was able to live in such an area confirms that his family were not struggling financially, as this was a premium location for a young member of the middle class making his way in the city. To Corbet, London was a city of opportunity rather than a last resort for employment that it was to many of its residents.

Indeed, very little of this period's redevelopment would benefit London's poor, predominantly serving the city's middle classes and elites.⁴⁹ In many cases it would be actively detrimental to them: John Nash's Regent Street for example, patronised by, and named after, the new King, was constructed along a route chosen in order to deliberately separate the broadly affluent West End of the city and broadly poor East End, with the house clearing required to construct it resulting in thousands of the already struggling residents being displaced, most to rookeries like St. Giles.⁵⁰ Moreover, the £1,533,000 required for this was funded entirely by their taxes.

George also had a tendency to pump public money into his own estates, developing Buckingham House, then a small mansion, into what we know today as Buckingham Palace. Brighton Pavilion, his extortionately luxurious retreat on the south coast, was another expensive vanity project of his. Estimated to have cost his 'subjects' £700,000 by 1820 (approximately £40,000,000 in purchasing power today), it was described by a contemporary reformist William Cobbett as 'a shocking

⁴⁵ Porter, p230.

⁴⁶ Jerry White notes 90,000 pedestrians crossing London Bridge a day in the early 19th century, p15.

⁴⁷ Porter, p231.

⁴⁸ White, p14.

⁴⁹ Johnstone's London Commercial Guide of 1817 noted on Oxford Street '33 linen drapers, 2 silk and satin dressers and dyers, 10 straw-hat manufactories, 2 drapers and tailors, 6 bonnet warehouses, 1 India-muslin warehouse, 5 lace warehouses, 3 plumassiers, 1 button manufactory, 24 boot and show-makers' (Porter, p242).

⁵⁰ Such displacement was fairly common, with the aforementioned building of St. Katherine's Docks in the mid 1820s making 11,000 people homeless. White, p27.

waste of public money'.⁵¹ Having served for a period of nine years as de facto ruler as 'Prince Regent' before his coronation, he had become used to ruling whilst maintaining a liberal and brazen lifestyle - one that might be considered stereotypical of the high life of elite society often seen to typify the Regency period. Indeed, it has been commented that by the time of his coronation, he was already 'notorious for his wild behaviour and appalling extravagance', described by Venetia Murray as a 'a dedicated hedonist, drunkard and lecher'.⁵² In many ways, he represents how much of the social elite lived their lives, more often gluttonous gambling addicts than the civilised and elegant citizens they purport to be in so many of their portraits.

A master of presenting his subjects as the virtuous and fashionable citizens they purported to be, their go-to man for these was Sir Thomas Lawrence, who seemed to revel in capturing the ostentatiousness of the era. His paintings of George IV perfectly encapsulate the brazen personality of his monarch. George's coronation portrait (*fig. 7*), a variation of a full-length composition Lawrence reproduced frequently in his role as painter-in-ordinary to the King, presents George standing beside his crown in his coronation gown in a manner that screams luxury, but looking beyond the overt display of wealth and power on show, Lawrence seems to me to have captured, in that smug smile, a sense of the extreme vanity and pride of the social elites that made his fortune.⁵³

There is a common perception of this period as being one that is difficult to categorise artistically, it being what former director of the National Gallery Michael Levey has called 'an awkward interim age, supposedly lacking at once in eighteenth-century sense and Victorian sensibility'.⁵⁴ Subsequently, Levey has described Lawrence as an artist who 'fails to fit comfortably into the tradition of English painting'.⁵⁵ And yet, in many ways, he seems almost to have embraced the period's societal shift, his style might be noted as changing to match evolving tastes as the exuberance of the Grand Manner morphed into the austerity of the Victorians. Certainly he made the age his own, and was patronised by the likes of the Duke of Wellington, the actress Sarah Siddons, and repeatedly by the Prince Regent King George IV. In truth the quality of his output is incredibly varied, but at his best Lawrence was able to capture the personality of his sitters with a liveliness and clarity that rivals any of Britain's portraitists from the more celebrated previous generation.

The gaudiness of the King's lifestyle only added to the public demand for political and social reform that had grown throughout these decades. By the end of his reign in 1830, such spending had left him unpopular and 'a reaction against the costliness and ostentation of his metropolitan improvements had already found loud voice'.⁵⁶ This was a period in which the rich got significantly richer, the poor significantly poorer, and whilst poverty in the city was common, it was not restricted to them. Rural agricultural areas suffered as prices fell consistently in the 1810 and 20s, partly as a result of the Napoleonic wars, but also due to political collusion. The average wage of a labourer more than halved during the period.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Venetia Murray, *High Society: A Social History of the Regency Period, 1788-1830*. (London: Penguin Books, 1998), p120.

⁵² *Ibid*, pp2-3.

⁵³ Fourteen unfinished versions were found in his studio upon his death, many to be sent to various Empirical locations around the globe.

⁵⁴ Michael Levey, *Sir Thomas Lawrence*. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1979), p10.

⁵⁵ Levey, p10

⁵⁶ White, p28

⁵⁷ Murray, p86.

The narrative paintings of David Wilkie, perhaps one of Britain's most under-appreciated artists, often captured the difficulties of the poor, presenting a side of society rarely or never explored in painting of the Grand Manner and Regency periods. His 1815 *Distraint for Rent* (fig. 8) is the perfect example of such a painting, depicting a farmer and his family struggling to present their landlord with rent. The family cower in the corner, whilst its head sits with his forehead slumped into his hand as the bailiffs take an inventory. This is a painting with a clear political message, being an 'implied critique of the landlord class', with the fact that this was 'not well received by Wilkie's patrons' suggesting that its message had enough weight to get under the skin of those it was explicitly targeting.⁵⁸

The painting also reflects the clear influence of the Dutch Golden Age prevalent in much of Wilkie's work. There is something of late Rembrandt in the muddiness of its colouring, whilst its dark interior owes much of its composition to the tavern scenes and interiors of Adriaen Brouwer and the Van Ostades. Early seventeenth-century Holland had been the first period of art in which the lives of ordinary people had been presented on anything resembling a mass scale, which may have contributed to Wilkie's 'borrowing' of the style of the Dutch genre tradition when painting his own serious secular works. *The Cottar's Saturday Night* (fig. 9) is distinctly Rembrandtesque in its style, whilst *The Blind Fiddler* (fig. 10) and *The Pedlar* (fig. 11) reflect an interest in the work of Jan Steen and Gerard Dou respectively. The level of influence on *The Pedlar* is such that it could almost be reclassified as 'David Wilkie after Dou'. Wilkie was living in London during Corbet's time there and the two men may have crossed paths. Corbet would certainly have had opportunity to encounter his work, including those listed above, which may have played some role in the development of his own interest in Dutch art.

Between them, Wilkie and Lawrence present the two contrasting demographics of society, the rich splashed out on their country houses as the poor were evicted. The rich built up gambling debts whilst the poor struggled to feed their families. In London, this duality was inescapable; no-one in the city, rich or poor, would have been unable to avoid seeing how the other half lived. In many cases, wealthy new estates bordered some of the poorest areas in the city, with Bloomsbury, where Philip Corbet was living in 1823, serving as an example. Neighbouring St. Pancras was a 'notorious slum' during the 1820s, severely overcrowded by the number of migrants settling in the area.⁵⁹⁶⁰ Everett Street, where the painter lived at number 25, was at the northern end of Russell Square, close to St. Pancras, whilst his most direct route to the Royal Academy would have taken him south past St. Giles.⁶¹ Poverty would have been an unavoidable part of his daily existence. Russell Square was a fairly affluent area, developed in the early nineteenth century, for, according to the Bloomsbury project, 'respectable and reasonably well-off residents': the middle classes.⁶² Sir Thomas Lawrence lived nearby on Russell Square itself. As with his home on the Strand, this shows that he was not living in the slums, suggesting again a reasonable degree of personal or family wealth, although he probably began earning his own

⁵⁸ Murdo MacDonald, *Scottish Art*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), p86.

⁵⁹ Porter, p263.

⁶⁰ Nearby Agar Town was also poverty-stricken, described as 'a disgrace to the metropolis' in 1851 by W.M. Thomas. Thomas also notes 'the frightful amount of crime and misery' there. Porter, p263.

⁶¹ Everett Street no longer exists as an independent street, being part of what is now Marchmont Street. Information taken from University College London's 'Bloomsbury Project', the data for which is collated online and can be accessed at the following link:
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/streets/everett_street.htm

⁶² The Bloomsbury Project.

keep as a painter in his own right around this time, Indeed, in 1823, he exhibited his first painting at the Royal Academy, a portrait of Maria Lacy, an actress and opera singer associated with the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. In the same year he ceased to be a student.⁶³

Although the current whereabouts of this painting is unknown, a couple of prints held in the collection of the British museum give us an indication of how its subject appeared. That I have found no record of any other painting of the subject at all would suggest that one of these may have been made after Corbet's portrait, the full-length portrait even shares, word for word, the title bestowed upon Corbet's work in the R.A. exhibition catalogue, *Miss Lacy of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden* (fig. 12). Frustratingly, only the publisher and engraver are named at the bottom of the print, but if such an association does exist it would be an anomaly in his output, with none of the later portraits of his that I have yet managed to locate depicting their subject full-length. Alternatively, it is entirely possible that a later engraver modified and expanded his original painting, or indeed that Corbet, in his youth, was still experimenting with the forms that best suited his style and work processes. With her début performance in London occurring in October 1822 and with Corbet's painting being exhibited the following summer, we can narrow down the portrait's creation to the winter months of 1822 and 1823.

The opportunity to paint Miss Lacy would have undoubtedly been an exciting one for him, she being one of the new stars of west end theatre. One contemporary report notes that 'the success of this young lady may be considered extraordinary', having been achieved 'without the slightest introduction to, or interest with, the press, or even the support of a dozen friends in the house'.⁶⁴ It is difficult to know with any certainty how Corbet obtained this commission, but it may serve as evidence of his desire to become a society portraitist in the vein of Lawrence and Shee.

The theatre of the era was sometimes a nefarious place, serving as something of a microcosm of wider society. Despite, on the surface being a place of refined culture, it was in reality a haven for debauchery. Audiences were notoriously terrible, their 'unheard-of-coarseness and brutality' commented on by German traveller Prince Puckler in 1827, who also described how 'prostitutes and courtesans paraded in the lobby' and 'dowagers scanned auditorium for potential scandal'.⁶⁵ And yet, this is exactly the kind of place one might expect a young student painter to spend his time in the 1820s, with these venues vital for socialising and networking. Venetia Murray notes how:

*As far as many members of society were concerned, including the intelligensia, the theatre was simply an arena for social life, for flirting, seeing and being seen: the play, whatever it was, and whoever was acting came a poor second.*⁶⁶

It is tempting to imagine Corbet approaching Lacy and offering his services after personally viewing one of her performances.

The commission may alternatively have been obtained through one of his tutors at the Academy, where he had already achieved some success as a student. Indeed, in

⁶³ Royal Academy Archives Reference Number: RAA/KEE/1/1/1/17.

Accessed online at the following link:

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/archive/page-17-c>

⁶⁴ Unknown Writer. 'Biographical Memoir of Miss Maria Lacy'. *La Belle assemblée: or, Bell's court and fashionable magazine*, Vol. 30, January to December 1824. (London: George B. Whittaker, 1824), p230.

⁶⁵ Murray, p220.

⁶⁶ Murray, p220.

terms of opportunities to make social connections, Corbet's enrolment in the Academy came at a near perfect time. Since its formation in 1768, it had cemented itself as the most reputable centre of artistic learning in Britain, and although the so-called golden age of British art premièred by Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough, each founding members - Reynolds being its first President-, had passed, the cast of characters which made up the the Academy's teaching staff when Corbet enrolled in 1821 included some significant figures.

Henri Fuseli was the professor of painting, and although his own work did not seem to make much of an impression on the young painter, Corbet kept two volumes of his lectures on art in his possession until his death, signalling a lasting respect for the lessons of his tutorage.⁶⁷ Its President was the aforementioned Sir Thomas Lawrence, who, vivid with his colouring and an exceptional draughtsman, was as ideal a teacher as Corbet could hope for. He was the finest portraitist of his era, and it is not surprising that of all of Corbet's teachers, it was Lawrence whose style his own work most resembles.

Martin Archer Shee, the man who succeeded Thomas Lawrence as President, and who painted Corbet's portrait in 1823 (*fig. 1*), seems also to have been an influential presence at this time. The two Irishmen seem to have become quite close during Corbet's time there, Edith noting that Shee 'tried to persuade him to remain in London'.⁶⁸ Samuel Butler comments too that Shee painted Corbet's portrait because as a result of his being 'so much pleased with him', describing Corbet here as 'then very good looking - in a somewhat Byronic pose and collar'. A visual comparison between this painting and the well-known portrait of Lord Byron by Thomas Phillips (*fig. 13*) shows that the term 'somewhat' is an understatement, particularly when we consider similarities in the pose and details like the collar.

Might it be suggested through this that Corbet considered himself to be something of a Romantic? Although more dominant as an artistic movement in poetry, many painters have come to be classified as Romantics, including some already noted in this paper like James Barry and Henry Fuseli. John Constable and J.M.W. Turner are perhaps the greatest of them, although each seemed to look at the world through an opposing lens to the other. Constable's rich countryside scenes exalt the rural and the rustic, whereas Turner embraced the new technology and the changing world. He seems particularly to have been fascinated by steam power, and with London's docks becoming increasingly less wooden and more iron Turner would poignantly record this technological shift in his best known work, *The Fighting Temeraire* (*fig. 14*). Here, a small steam-powered tug boat is shown pulling the now defunct, but much larger, wooden warship the Temeraire to be dismantled. The sun sets on the horizon. The later masterpiece, known as *Rain, Steam and Speed* (*fig. 15*), captures a steam train on The Great Western Railway as it rushes towards him, in doing so symbolising the pace with which such advancements were occurring. In the background an aqueduct acknowledges achievements in engineering and architecture pioneered by the likes of Thomas Telford and Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Corbet would have encountered Turner, who was at this time the Academy's Professor of Perspective, although any inspiration he may have taken from him did not, as with Fuseli, translate directly into his paintings. It seems likely that, even at this early point in his fledgling career, Corbet knew his calling to be portraiture, and

⁶⁷ Corbet's own notebook, contained within in the 'Corbet box' in Ludlow Museum Resource Centre, consisting entirely of documents relating to the family's period in Jersey and the South of England.

⁶⁸ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

so neither the expression of Turner's histories and landscapes, nor the fantastical novelty of Fuseli, were of much consequence for the development of his own style.

It would be hard to consider the time he had spent at the Academy anything other than a success, his abilities recognised by various awards he received. The Society's yearly *Transactions* note these as being a the silver Isis medal in 1822, in the 'Copies in Oil' category, for a 'copy in oil of an historical figure', and a large silver medal in 1823 for 'a drawing from a statue'.⁶⁹ A third work, 'a copy in oil from the bust of Homer' is also noted in 1823 amongst a list of artworks also to be included in the annual exhibition 'on account of their merit' and to which 'premiums have been awarded'.⁷⁰ No record of a reward exists for 1824, nor indeed for Corbet's first year as a student at the Academy, 1821, although the name of one young sculptor who *did* in this year is worth singling out, that of Thomas Carline.⁷¹

This is not because of any particularly impressive artistic pedigree, although Carline's award suggests he had some talent - he was awarded a silver Isis medal for an original plaster sculpture 'of a single figure' -, but rather the impact he would go on to have on Corbet's life.⁷² Philip would spend much of the next ten years living and working closely with Thomas and his family in Shrewsbury, eventually marrying his sister Jane Carline in the early 1830s.

They may have met on their very first day at the Academy, their names appearing beside one another on the list of enrollees for March 13th 1821, but given the proximity of their names on this list, it is tempting to entertain the possibility that they knew each other prior to this date.⁷³ Only six artists and architects enrolled in March of 1821, the vast majority (twenty or so) of that year's enrollees appearing instead to have begun on the 31st of October of that year. Taking into consideration the nature of their subsequent relationship, it may be seen as an extraordinary coincidence that they would, between them, form a third of the March enrollees. Family links existed in the Shropshire area for Corbet, and he may well have stayed with his uncle Richard Chadwick at Berwick Hall on his way to London. Shrewsbury served as an ideal intermediate between Holyhead, where his ferry from Ireland would have terminated, and London. He may have spent a few months in the town, where he may have learnt that the son of local architect John Carline, Thomas, was soon to depart for London himself and was introduced to the aspiring sculptor. I have looked for a London address for Thomas Carline, with the hope that one would appear that matched

⁶⁹ Arthur Aikin. 'Premiums Offered In The Session 1822—1823', pp1-41, *Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* 40, (London: Society For The Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, 1823), p37.

Accessed February 21, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/41325963

All volumes of *Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* are collected on Jstor.

Assesible at the following link: <https://www.jstor.org/journal/transoclon>

Arthur Aikin. "Premiums Offered in the Session 1823—1824", pp1-41, *Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* 41, (London: Society For The Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, 1824), p41.

Accessed February 21, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/41325867

⁷⁰ Ibid, p39.

⁷¹ Arthur Aikin. "Premiums Offered in the Session 1824-1825", pp1-48, *Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* 42, (London: Society For The Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, 1825), p44.

Accessed February 21, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/41315551

⁷² Arthur Aikin. "Premiums Offered in the Session 1821-1822", pp1-40, *Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* 39, (London: Society For The Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, 1822), p40.

Accessed February 21, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/41325853

⁷³ Royal Academy Archives Reference Number: RAA/KEE/1/1/1/17.

Corbet's earliest known London address on the Strand, but my search has thus far been fruitless.

Three Shrewsbury

Various sources comment on Philip Corbet as having always planned to live in Shropshire. Edith, for example, would write that her father was ‘bent upon settling down in Shropshire’, it being ‘the home of his forefathers’.⁷⁴ Samuel Butler suggests that this desire existed even before he had arrived in London, and talks of it as a ‘desire to *return* to Shropshire’, despite the fact that no evidence exists that points to him as having been in the county for any noteworthy period before 1825.⁷⁵ Corbet seems to have believed his heritage to have been Salopian, and this may have played a minor role in his decision to move there, but I think it is overplayed in the later sources. Shrewsbury was, after all, a convenient place to settle. His uncle Richard Chadwick lived nearby and may have provided a bed for Corbet during his first forays to the town, whilst the friendship he had developed with native Thomas Carline in London would have provided him with immediate social links to the town’s artistic and cultural community. There is evidence too that he was working from, and possibly living in, the Carline house on Abbey Terrace for his first few years after leaving London.

In the early nineteenth-century, Shrewsbury was one of the thirty largest towns in England, serving as a something of a ‘capital of the thriving region extending from Bangor in the west to Birmingham in the east’.⁷⁶ Being at the centre of such a large agricultural area meant it was a prominent market town, whilst its position on the River Severn aided in the commercial reach of the industrial produce being created in nearby Coalbrookdale. Shropshire had been at the centre of the industrial revolution in the previous century, with some of its key players and their descendants playing a central role in the region’s political and social spheres.

Thomas Telford’s road between London and Holyhead, which followed the Roman Watling Street, meant the town was also well-visited by travellers between Ireland and the south of England. Indeed, a local diarist commented in the late eighteenth century that ‘most travellers would make a point to stop to view the beauties of this delightfully situated town’.⁷⁷

The town had a small community of artists, enough to keep Corbet engaged without saturating this market with competition. Perhaps the best known of these was Thomas Weaver, a talented artist who, although occasionally venturing into portraiture, predominantly painted horses and cattle for the landed gentry (*fig. 16*). His reputation was such that he received commissions nationwide, leading to him being subsequently described as the George Stubbs of his generation.⁷⁸ Paintings of human beings seem not to have come as naturally to Weaver, and, although his portrait of pioneering ironmaster William Hazledine (*fig 17*), shows what he was capable of as a portraitist, the vibrancy and expressiveness of this depiction is infrequently matched elsewhere in his output. James Pardon had some presence in the town, painting Darwin’s father in 1825, but this seems to have been irregular.

With no confirmed Shrewsbury address for Corbet in the 1820s, it is hard to be sure exactly when he settled in the town, as it is possible his earliest paintings were

⁷⁴ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

⁷⁵ Samuel Butler in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

⁷⁶ Lawrence Trevelyan Weaver, *Painter of Pedigree: Thomas Weaver of Shrewsbury*, (London, Unicorn, 2017), p17.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p17.

⁷⁸ Robin Blake, author of *George Stubbs and the Wide Creation*, comments in his appraisal of Lawrence Weaver’s book on Thomas Weaver that ‘far from being a sentimental or eccentric sideshow, farm animal portraiture in the early 19th century was part of an economic revolution, and Thomas Weaver was in many ways its George Stubbs’.

made during brief visits there with Thomas Carline. Royal Academy documents show that Corbet ceased to be a student in 1823, although he may well have remained to work in London for a few years before settling in Shropshire. Indeed, the only documented address from this period, noted in Algernon Graves' collection of R.A. exhibitors, has him still living on Everett Street in 1825, although further evidence suggests this may be something of a red herring.⁷⁹

Corbet was admitted in 1825 as a Freemason in the Salopian Lodge, by whom his occupation was recorded as 'Artist' and his residence as 'Shrewsbury'.⁸⁰ His name is again immediately followed in the list by Thomas Carline's, who was also admitted in 1825. Given that Thomas' father John and brothers John and William had been admitted in 1791, 1822 and 1824 respectively, it might be suggested that Thomas would himself have joined the society earlier, but for his absence in London.⁸¹ That he and Philip went on to become members at the same time in 1825 suggests this as the probable year in which they settled in Shrewsbury.

Corbet's paintings also point to this, as, beyond the portrait of Miss Lacy discussed in the previous chapter, almost all of known paintings he produced between 1824 and 1829 are portraits of members of Shrewsbury society. An 1824 submission to the R.A., listed at *The Proposal*, is, alongside Miss Lacy, a second exception, and may serve as the only other known example of a painting produced by Corbet whilst still in London. Even *The Proposal*'s status as a 'London painting' is doubtful, with a comment made by Edith she wrote that 'for the first few years after coming to Shrewsbury, his paintings were chiefly historical' suggesting instead that it too was probably made after he had moved to Shropshire.⁸² Although the exact content of this painting is unknown, the title is one you might expect to be given to a history or narrative painting. Her supplementary comment that these history paintings 'were all sold', is a tantalising one, implying that many more paintings from this period remain in private collections in Shropshire.

One of these was *Dame Quickly's Latin Lesson*, painted and exhibited at the R.A. in 1826.⁸³ Its appearance in the 1958 exhibition of Corbet's work suggest that it was purchased and remained in Shropshire, with almost all of this exhibition's paintings having been donated by local owners.⁸⁴ Depicting a scene from William Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Corbet's painting was described as a 'highly finished picture', and one that 'has advanced his reputation', in an article in the Shrewsbury Chronicle dated 12th May, 1826, which discussed local artists represented by the R.A. that year.⁸⁵

As we will see, this is something of a hallmark of Corbet's style in his portraiture, and it would be interesting to see how this worked for him in the form of a history painting. Given that the fashionable style of the day was fairly expressive, such an approach indicates the presence of influences beyond those painters he had been

⁷⁹ Algernon Graves. *The Royal Academy of the Arts, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904, Vol.2 Carroll to Dyer*. (London: Henry Graves and Co. Ltd., 1905), p163.

⁸⁰ Alexander Graham. *A History of Freemasonry in the Province of Shropshire and of The Salopian Lodge*. (Shrewsbury: Adnitt and Naunton, Booksellers & Publishers, 1892), p223.

⁸¹ Ibid, p220, p222 & p223.

⁸² Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

⁸³ The Blouin Art Sales Index notes a an inscription of '1826' on the rear of the panel.

Accessible at the following link:

<https://www.blouinartsalesindex.com/auctions-Philip-Corbet-Dame-Quickly's-latin-1826?lotId=1068458&artistId=36886>

⁸⁴ The Blouin Art Sales Index also records it being sold through Christies in 1981, and it has thus probably now been moved away from the county.

⁸⁵ Shrewsbury Chronicle article in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

directly exposed to. The influence of certain seventeenth-century Dutch painters is prevalent in many of his portraits from the 1820s and it would be fascinating to see whether this history painting incorporated elements of their style.

Significant in the Shrewsbury Chronicle article is the writer's approach to Corbet as a local painter, and, moreover, one whom he sees as beneficial 'for the reputation of Shrewsbury'.⁸⁶ Within this frame he is compared to Thomas Weaver, high praise that shows that not only was Corbet established in Shrewsbury by May of 1826, but was already well regarded there. Further testament to this is the number of portraits he produced of high ranking members of Shrewsbury society around this time, Edith commenting that after this early spate of history paintings, he 'confined himself exclusively to portraits...and soon had more commissions than he could possibly attend to.'⁸⁷

Probably the earliest of these, painted around 1824 or 1825, were the two portraits he made of Thomas' parents John and Mary Carline. John was a renowned architect in the area, responsible for the construction of a number of significant buildings and bridges in Shrewsbury.⁸⁸ Chief amongst those still standing is the Welsh Bridge, which crosses the northern section of the great meander in the Severn that surrounds the town centre, and still acts as the main crossing into it from the west. He also built nearby Montford Bridge, an important local feature of Thomas Telford's new road, as well as for the redevelopment of St. Alkmunds church and parts of Shrewsbury Abbey.⁸⁹ He occasionally worked too as a sculptor, with the series of lions at the foot of the column at Shirehall a surviving example of his work.⁹⁰ His eldest son John was also an architect, incorporated as a partner in his father's business in 1828.⁹¹ Thomas would follow in his father's footsteps in training as a sculptor. Another son, William, was an ironmonger, and also a member of the local freemason group.

Other early portraits were made for the Kenyons of Pradoc Hall, with Edith commenting that 'among his first portraits was that of the Hon. Thomas Kenyon, whose whole family he painted, and who was as such afterwards a true and fair friend and supporter'.⁹² Although this whereabouts of this portrait of Thomas is unknown (he is depicted in *figure 19* not by Corbet but by Eden Upton Eddis), Edith is correct in stating that he painted the rest of the family. I have found record of six paintings commissioned by the Kenyon family, although, as with that of Thomas Kenyon himself, there may have been more whose whereabouts are now unknown.⁹³ This thirty-year relationship with the family began in the mid 1824, with portraits of two of Thomas' sons, John Robert Kenyon (*fig. 20*) and the younger Thomas Kenyon, painted at age 19 (*fig. 21*). A major in the British army, Thomas is presented standing proudly in his military uniform, gazing over the viewer's left shoulder. The style and quality of painting here is very different to that in the John Carline portrait, and, although the high-finish of each brother's faces reflects the style of Thomas Lawrence, various aspects of the construction of their clothing are reminiscent of some Dutch Golden Age painting. The thick layering up of paint in the gold of the jacket is

⁸⁶ Shrewsbury Chronicle in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

⁸⁷ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

⁸⁸ Shropshire Archives Object Number: 612/52.

'Shrewsbury (Abbey Foregate)'.

⁸⁹ John Carline, 'Corbet and the Carlines - Painters, Sculptors and Architects of the Early 19th Century', pp14-17, *Shropshire Magazine*, (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Magazine), p14.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

⁹³ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

somewhat Rembrandt-esque (*Self-Portrait as Zeuxis Laughing* - fig. 24), as is the efficiency in brushwork shown in the shoulder pads. John Robert's sleeves are similarly built from only a few strokes, the golden stripe becoming something of an abstract splodge of brown-gold when compartmentalised (fig. 22). Such earthy colours themselves may reflect Corbet's interest in Rembrandt, being prevalent in each of the paintings, with even the red of Thomas' jacket subdued and darkened. Paintings like *Balshazzar's Feast* and *Self-Portrait at the Age of 63* (fig. 25) were in London when Corbet was, and exist as possible references for this manner of colouring in Rembrandt's canon.

And yet, Corbet's style is clearly far from an exact reproduction of Rembrandt's, being far less expressive. Even where the paint layers are heavily built, everything is part of a deliberate process, even if the resulting image doesn't appear to have been particularly highly finished. A further example of this is found in the efficient, but careful, spots of white paint that create the points of reflected light, particularly noticeable on Thomas Kenyon's sash badge (fig. 23). Of course, countless examples of painters using this technique exist, and it would be possible to present Corbet as having been inspired by almost anyone through them alone. I would suggest this method as being one he learnt from Martin Archer Shee and Thomas Lawrence whilst studying in the Academy.

Such highlights are frequently used in Lawrence's portraits, that of John Moore (fig. 26) being an example of a similar portrait that makes use of them. As with Lawrence, Corbet's faces are more defined than the rest of his images, with both Lawrence and Corbet focussing on bringing out the personality of their sitters through their faces, with more expressive and experimental painting styles applied to the uniforms.

Shee's military portraits may also offer a good point of comparison here, particularly in terms of their composition and colouring. Shee's picture of Sir Thomas Picton (fig. 27) is a typical example, with similarities in the subjects' poses immediate. The colouring of the facial skin-tones is also comparable, whilst the darkened background of Corbet's paintings, observable in all three of the portraits of his we have examined so far, are similar to those seen elsewhere in Shee's output.

Certainly, there are major differences in the manner in which they are crafted; Lawrence and Shee paint with a greater sense of delicacy and precision, whilst Corbet, beyond the high finish of the faces, seems to have plastered parts of these panels with layers of paint. This is unusual in his known output of the 1820s, with paintings more commonly completed to a higher level of finish.

Corbet's preference for painting on the small scale exemplified in these portraits is almost unique in this era. There were painters who had occasionally worked in this way, Andrew Geddes and David Wilkie being notable examples (figs. 28 and 29), but no artist before him was so consistent in formatting their work in this way. Of his paintings for which dimensions and medium are known, three are on canvas, twenty-three are on panel. The mean size is about 40 x 34 cm, although the majority of these are smaller than this, the average raised by a couple of much larger paintings. That all these larger paintings, as well as the few that he painted on canvas, were all made in the 1820s suggests that they are the result of Corbet's process in working out his preferred methods.

The next commission he had for the Kenyons is an example one of these, a group portrait of some of the younger Kenyon children (fig. 30), painted on canvas and measuring 75x60 cm. It closely resembles the style of paintings of similar subjects by Shee and Lawrence, as does a second group portrait of two children, the brothers

Samuel and William Scoltock (*fig. 31*), probably painted in the same year. Such a similarity in this subject should not be a surprise, as Lawrence was renowned for his ability in capturing the joy and innocence of youth. Indeed, Simon Schama has written that, ‘no-one in his generation captured the romping playfulness of children with as much freedom’ as Lawrence.⁹⁴

It is entirely possible that Corbet was specifically asked to replicate Lawrence’s style in these paintings, and may even have promoted himself as someone able to do so. *Portrait of Charlotte and Charles Ochterlony*, also painted in 1827 suggests further that commissions of children were frequent during this period, but, according to Edith, he began to ‘decline painting’ portraits of children beyond his first few years in Shrewsbury.⁹⁵

The two portraits shown here are quite formulaic, the two heads of the young Samuel Scoltock and Henry Kenyon (the blonde haired child riding the donkey), for instance, bare some clear similarities to one another, both in appearance and in the eerily precise central position they hold in the images. Similarities in the internal dynamic of the subjects also exist, with the youngest child in each engaging with the viewer in a direct manner avoided by each of the other children depicted. This gives the children in question a heightened sense of playfulness, and was something Corbet probably adopted directly from Lawrence paintings like that of Jane Orde and her daughter Anna, or of the two Pattisson boys (*fig. 33*). Shee’s portrait of his son William, painted around 1820, may also be referenced here. (*fig. 32*)

The young Henry Kenyon was painted again by Corbet shortly after this, but would pass away when only 5 years old in January of 1827.⁹⁶ The content of this second portrait is unknown, and is no longer at Pradoc, but it is possible that it was produced posthumously or during the final days of young Henry’s life. A sculpture of Henry made by Thomas Carline (*fig. 34*), probably created alongside Corbet’s work, does remain at Pradoc, and appears to be a posthumous creation. His eyes are shut as if in rest, and, beyond his clasped hands, the boy’s body seems limp. It is evidence of Carline’s abilities as sculptor, being an affective, emotive and mournful piece of work.

In the Kenyons these two young painters also shared a client with Thomas’ father John, who worked on the extension to the drawing room in which the Henry Kenyon sculpture, and five of Corbet’s paintings, are displayed today. It is easy to imagine these men operating a busy and creative series of studios, working in tandem, probably at the Carline’s property at Abbey Foregate. Indeed, there is evidence that Corbet was operating out of the Carline household. A *Salopian Journal* article of 28th February 1827, which discusses an engraving produced by the artist of the Rev. J. Blakeway, notes that copies of the print can be ‘had of Mr. Corbet, at Mr. Carline’s Abbey Terrace’. The suggestion to me is that this where he was spending most of his time, and possibly living, in 1827.⁹⁷ If this is the case, then it is likely that he had

⁹⁴ Simon Schama. *The Face of Britain: The Nation Through its Portraits*. (London: Penguin-Random House, 2015), p329.

⁹⁵ ‘It was in the portraits of children that he was patiently successful; they were lovely. But, after the first few years, he declined painting them, only making some excellent sketches of his own children, which are now in the possession of the family; with the exception of one of myself, as a “Dutch girl going to church”.’

Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

⁹⁶ Graves, p163.

⁹⁷ Anonymous Writer, *Salopian Journal*, no 1726, 28th February 1827. (Shrewsbury: W. & J. Eddowes, 1827), p2. This source also notes the print’s availability from Messrs. Eddowes of Market Square, Shrewsbury, the publisher of the journal. Its price was 0s. 6d.

been living there since his move to Shrewsbury around 1825, and probably remained there until he departed the town for a period in 1829.

The engraving is a variation of a portrait he had painted in 1825, with Rev. Blakeway depicted in this alongside the Rev. Archdeacon Henry Owen (*fig. 35*).⁹⁸ The two men engage in a discussion, perhaps of an academic persuasion. In Shrewsbury society, they would have been known as a duo, as, between them, they were responsible for writing the *History of Shrewsbury*, a successful publication about the town in the early nineteenth-century. A copy of the book sits on the table, its title painted in gold with a delicate and minute touch, whilst the spires of Shrewsbury's churches seen through the window, architectural symbols of the town's history, are each identifiable. Such detailing is evidence of Corbet's technical abilities.

The print of J.B. Blakeway seems to have been produced with owners of its subject's text in mind, with the Salopian Journal article noting that the engravings were 'of a size which may be bound up with the history'.⁹⁹ The production of prints to further the profits from his art may have been inspired by the merchandising methods of William Hogarth and Rembrandt, but such specific targeting of an audience shows a sophisticated degree of commercial nous on Corbet's part. Other surviving prints of his from this period include a drawing made after the Ottley Portrait at Pitchford Hall, a famous painting in Shropshire at the time, and a lithograph of the Ironbridge, displaying again an engagement with local culture and history.¹⁰⁰ Given the short period of time he had actually spent in the county by then, it could be postulated that his primary motivation behind these subject choices was his market.

Alongside the 1827 *Portrait of the Three Burton Brothers* (*fig. 36*), the original portrait from which the Blakeway engraving is derived is one of two surviving group portraits produced by Corbet in the 1820s.¹⁰¹ A third, titled *Archdeacon Butler & Family* when displayed at the R.A. in 1825, and later noted by Samuel Butler as a 'picture in cabinet size' and an 'excellent work' of three figures 'Dr Butler, Mr Butler, and Miss Butler', but this is now lost.¹⁰² If painted in the style of the two known images, then we might expect to find a painting created with a clear engagement with Dutch genre painting. In each we find figures set fairly deep in their environment, far from the picture plane, in a manner reminiscent of Gerard ter Borch interiors. The green curtain that flies above the heads of Blakeway and Owen is a trope from seventeenth-century Dutch interiors, as are the patterned rugs which shroud the tables. The Burton picture in particular is comparative in technique and colouring to a number of Ter Borch's paintings that Corbet would have had access to in the 1820s, with the bold reds of the screen similar to the painting known as *The Singing Lesson* now in Edinburgh; the pyramidal construction of the three men and general composition to *A Woman playing a Theorbo to Two Men* (*fig. 37*), now in the

⁹⁸ Edith included a portrait of Rev. Blakeway in the list of paintings that forms part of her letter to Samuel Butler, but I suspect this refers to this portrait rather than a second individual portrait. The Salopian Journal advert comments that the print was made 'From a Picture by Mr. P. Corbet, painted the year previous to his decease, and the only portrait in existence of him in his later years'. Given that the joint portrait survives today, dated to the correct year, I would suggest that this is the painting she refers to her in her letter.

A copy of the lithograph is held in Shropshire Archives, object number: PR/3/378.

⁹⁹ *Salopian Journal* no 1726, p2.

¹⁰⁰ Shropshire Archives Object Number: PR/3/435 - 'Sir Francis Ottley, Governor of Shrewsbury, Lucy his wife and Richard and Mary their children. From the original in Pitchford Hal, Shrewsbury', c.1825.

¹⁰¹ The three Burton brothers: Robert Burton, Esq., Longnor Hall, Rev. Henry Burton, Vicar of Atcham, and Edward Burton, Esq., of Shrewsbury.

¹⁰² Graves Vol. 1, p163.

Samuel Butler in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

National Gallery, London. It was also compared in one contemporary source, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, to the work of Gerard Dou, the heads in particular noted as being 'worthy' of the Dutch painter in their review of the 1828 R.A. exhibition.¹⁰³ They also show Corbet's abilities in composition, the pyramidal construction of the figures creating a visual relationship between the men that heightens their interaction with one another. The Blakeway and Owen portrait presents these figures in a way that perfectly balances formality and informality. The centre-point of the canvas falls exactly on the line of the gaze between the two men, suggesting conversation.

The paintings are not without their influence in British painting, adopting something of the conversation pieces popularised by Johann Zoffany in the previous century. Compare it, for example, to Zoffany's *Portrait of Mr and Mrs Dalton* (fig. 38), and the similarities speak for themselves. David Wilkie offers a further point of comparison, his painting *Reading the News* (fig. 39) a probable source for Corbet's composition in the Burton picture. Wilkie's *Portrait of Frederick, Duke of York and Albany*, despite not being a group portrait, also bears some similarity in its colouring and atmosphere. Where Corbet departs from Wilkie is in his style, and although they clearly share similar influences, and at times paint with similarly earthy and impastoed brushwork, his work of the 1820s tends to be far more highly-finished than that of his Scottish counterpart.

Indeed, *The Gentleman's Magazine* refers to this in their review of that years R.A. exhibition, noting that the Burton picture 'will bear the strictest and closest examination', describing furnishings that 'could not be more effectively executed'.¹⁰⁴ Each object contained within each of these Corbet portraits is constructed with great care and detail and, in this sense, we might compare his approach to that of Dutch painters like Vermeer, De Hooch and Gabriel Metsu, as well as, again, to Gerard ter Borch. In the patterned rugs covering the tables, Corbet is not only borrowing a trope from interiors produced by these painters and their contemporaries, but applying a precision to them that is directly comparable to some of the greatest painters of the seventeenth century.

This is how Corbet approached the majority of his paintings in the 1820s, with two individual portraits from the period, those of Dr. William Clement (fig. 40) and Francis Darby (fig. 41), reflecting this more highly-finished approach clearly. In each of these, we find another table cloth, and again, the detailing of each interior as a whole is extensive, the reflective highlights on the sculpture and woodwork beyond Francis Darby an example. Such vividness certainly has a kind of Dutch feel to it, but the compositions are distinctly British. The directness of Dr. Clement's pose, for example, is something Corbet may have taken from contemporary portraitist, and assistant of Lawrence, Richard Evans (fig. 42). Similarity in details such as the manner in which both Darby and Evans' subject Samuel Lee keep the page of their books with a single figure are probably not a coincidence. Martin Archer Shee's portrait of writer and sinologist Sir George Thomas Staunton may serve as an additional reference here.

The subjects themselves say a lot about the immediacy with which he became popular as a portraitist in Shrewsbury society. Dr. Clement was a well-respected figure in the town, whilst Francis Darby, the son of pioneering industrialist Abraham Darby, was in charge of much of the ironworks at Coalbrookdale.¹⁰⁵ The Clement

¹⁰³ Anonymous, *Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle, From January to June 1828, Vol. 143*, ed. by Sylvanus Urban. (London: Nichols and Sons, 1828), p622.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p622.

¹⁰⁵ Graham, p223.

portrait may also suggest that Corbet's membership of the Salopian Lodge played a role in him picking up commissions, with the doctor himself admitted to the society in the same year as Corbet.

A second physician, Dr. Thomas Du Gard, was painted at around the same time, although I have been unable to track this painting down. Du Gard had the distinction of being elected mayor of Shrewsbury in 1827, being one of seven past or future mayors of the town Corbet had painted by the end of the decade. The Archdeacon Hugh Owen, and two of the three Burton brothers are amongst these, part also of the preponderance of high-ranking local religious figures painted by Corbet during the 1820s. It may be inferred from this that Corbet was involved with the church, but it is worth noting that these men were wealthy in their own right. The Burtons, for example, had their family seat at Longnor Hall, one of Shropshire's grandest estates, and somewhere Corbet may have travelled to in order to paint them.

Indeed, trips to country estates like this seem to have been commonplace for Philip at this point in his career, Edith commenting that her father 'sometimes went for a week to a fortnight to paint in private houses'. Mr and Mrs John Hill, of the Citadel at Weston-under-Redcastle and the Parkers at Sweeney Hall each commissioned portraits from him, whilst Lord Forrester of Wiley Hall, Mr. Mainwaring of Hardwick Hall and the Eytons of Eyton Hall, all had family members painted by Corbet.¹⁰⁶ They are evidence of the success Corbet had in Shrewsbury in the 1820s, and testament to his popularity as a portraitist amongst the wealthiest residents in the area. Upon making the decision to move there, he surely can't have imagined such success would have come his way so quickly, and yet, this did not stand in the way of his ambitions to continue learning and developing as a painter. Presumably funded by the money made from these commissions, he decided to leave Shrewsbury, along with his friend Thomas Carline, for an extended trip to the Netherlands in 1829.

¹⁰⁶ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

Four

The Netherlands

As with many of the dates in Corbet's life, it is tough to know exactly when Corbet and Thomas Carline arrived in The Netherlands. John and Richard Carline each suggest 1830, with John citing a surviving passport from the trip.¹⁰⁷

Yet, despite this apparent evidence, I do not think this is accurate. He doesn't present any information about this passport beyond a passing mention of its existence, and though I haven't myself seen this document, I wonder whether John Carline did either. Instead, I would argue that they were there in 1829.¹⁰⁸ Neither Corbet nor Carline exhibited at the R.A. that year when both had exhibited in each of the years leading up to the 1829 - Corbet every year between 1823 and 1828, Carline between 1825 and 1828 - would make this sudden mutual absence from the 1829 exhibition strange, if it not for the fact that the two men are known to have themselves been absent around this time.¹⁰⁹ That nothing was shown in 1829 suggests to me that they were already abroad by this point. Similarly, Corbet's return to the R.A. exhibition in 1833 corresponds with his return to England, with there being evidence that they were back in Shrewsbury in early-1832.

My 1829 dating seems to be confirmed by an oil sketch made by Corbet of Ary Johannes Lamme (*fig. 43*), then a young and aspiring painter whose later success as an artist and art dealer would see him appointed the first director of Rotterdam's Boijmans Museum in 1849.¹¹⁰ Although Lamme's initial training was undertaken with his father in his hometown of Dordrecht, he would move to Paris shortly after Corbet's painting of him was made to train in the workshop of his cousin Ary Scheffer.¹¹¹ The RKD profile on him dates this move to Paris to 1829, with his travel passport noted as being issued on June 22nd of that year.¹¹² If this information is accurate, Corbet and Carline wouldn't have been able to meet him unless they were in The Netherlands before this date, and so must have arrived in the summer of 1829 at the latest.

Lamme is presented as the ambitious artist he was in 1829, with brushes and a palette in hand. It is one of the most expressive pieces in Corbet's oeuvre, something particularly noticeable in Lamme's hair, which is beautifully textured with great painterly efficiency, a few swishes of lightened brown forming the messy fringe. Features like his jacket, hands and the palette and brushes he holds are all similarly loosely rendered. The colours are familiar, reminiscent of those seen in the early portrait of John Carline, although, despite the fact that the painting is made from similarly earthy colours and following the format of presenting a single figure before a featureless brown background, there is a lighter feel to things here. Both the pose depicted and the lighting scheme are remarkably different within this format, Lamme's face being lit up in magnificent contrast to the darkness of the rest of the image in a manner only seen in the portrait of the Burton brothers prior to this.

The style of the painting being somewhat unusual for Corbet may be explained if we consider this to be an oil sketch rather than a finished painting, as it appears. Ary

¹⁰⁷ John Carline, 'Corbet and the Carlines - Painters, Sculptors and Architects of the Early 19th Century', pp14-17, Shropshire Magazine, (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Magazine), p15.

¹⁰⁸ They are at least more accurate than Samuel Butler, who mistakenly refers to 1825 as being the year they went to Holland.

¹⁰⁹ Algernon Graves. *The Royal Academy of the Arts, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904, Vol.2 Carroll to Dyer*. (London: Henry Graves and Co. Ltd., 1905), p163.

¹¹⁰ Primarily as a painter, but also as an etcher and lithographer.

¹¹¹ Details on Art Lamme's life taken from his profile on the website of the RKD.

Accessed: <https://rkd.nl/en/explore/artists/record?query=ary+lamme&start=0>

¹¹² Ibid.

Lamme had been tutored in his early life by his father Arnoldus, and it is possible that Corbet visited them in order to receive some training of his own from this master. It seems to me that this trip was first and foremost a study trip for Corbet; an opportunity to absorb the work of Dutch painters to whom he may only have had limited exposure in Britain. By the time he had made his way to Dordrecht, he would have had the chance to encounter paintings by any of the seventeenth-century painters he admired and so it is perhaps no accident that it is possible to detect something of the feel of an Adriaen Brouwer interior in the colouring of the Lamme picture.

Further evidence of it being a study trip lies in the fact that he returned to Shrewsbury with a number of copies of Golden Age paintings in his possession. Notes made shortly after Corbet's death in 1877 show six of these were left by the painter to his daughter Edith. That Corbet retained possession of them until his death suggests he must have valued them greatly, perhaps as souvenirs or, alternatively, as studio aids. Samuel Butler notes them as consisting of 'a De Hooch, a Rembrandt, a Jan Steen, a Gerard Dow and two Ter Borchs'.¹¹³ I have not been able to ascertain the whereabouts of these pictures, but they are almost certainly the source of the five copies that were exhibited in Shrewsbury in the 1958 exhibition. Here they were listed, with some slight titular alterations, as being *A Copy of Van Ostade's Portrait of Paulus Potter*, *Lady in White Satin (after Gerard ter Borch)*, *Dutch Interior (after Gerard Dou)*, *Dutch Interior (after Pieter de Hooch)* and *Presentation of Christ in the Temple (after Rembrandt)*.¹¹⁴

The Rembrandt copy is the only one of these immediately identifiable (fig. 44), and is in the collection of the Mauritshuis. This original was painted by the Dutch master in 1631 and is not typical of Rembrandt's work: the figures are set back in the scene, occupying a fairly small section of the canvas in relation to that bestowed upon their cavernous temple environment. It may have been the magnificence of the lighting effects that drew Corbet to it, whilst it may also signal that he still harboured some ambition of working as a history painter.

Importantly, we can track the painting and its location to Corbet's time in the country, it being included in an illustrated catalogue of the King's Gallery collection produced in 1830.¹¹⁵ Each of the Carlines and Samuel Butler suggest Corbet's copies were made in The Hague, and the existence of this Rembrandt copy would seem to confirm this. Is it much harder to substantiate Butler's claim that the King of the Netherlands 'took great interest in him' and purchased several of his copies, and harder still to confirm Butler's asserted dialogue, with the King supposedly telling Corbet 'I must have that' and 'I must have this' when he went to see him work.¹¹⁶

The 1830 catalogue is an interesting document, not only allowing us to examine an exact set of paintings viewed by Corbet, but also aiding in the determination of the original versions of some of the more ambiguously titled copies. For example, it allows us to suggest that the Gerard Dou copy is more than likely to be the one known now as *The Young Mother* (fig. 45), one of two Dou's in the King's Gallery at this time and the only one that fits the description of an interior.¹¹⁷ As with the Rembrandt, this is a painting where the figures are set back in their environment, suggesting further Corbet's interest in space and image depth that paintings like the Burton

¹¹³ Samuel Butler in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

¹¹⁴ Richard Carline.

¹¹⁵ J. Steengracht van Oostkapelle. *De voornaamste schilderijen van het Koninklijk Kabinet te 's Gravenhage, in omtrek gegraveerd, met derzelver beschrijving, aan Hare Majesteit De Koningin der Nederlanden*. (Den Haag: Ter Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1830), p280.

¹¹⁶ Samuel Butler in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

¹¹⁷ J. Steengracht van Oostkapelle, p56-59.

brothers portrait had established in the 1820s.

The three copies noted as *Lady in White Satin, after Gerard ter Borch* and *Dutch Interior, after Pieter de Hooch* are more elusive, with no paintings in the catalogue offering any plausible candidates. Only one De Hooch painting is in the catalogue, and it is a courtyard scene. None of their Gerard ter Borch paintings feature a lady wearing white satin, whilst I have been unable to find any record of a portrait of Paulus Potter by any member of the Van Ostade family, in any institution. Given that the Mauritshuis does house a portrait of Paulus Potter, but by Bartholomeus van der Helst (fig. 46), we might consider that the issue lies in the later attributions made by Samuel Butler and in the catalogue for the Shrewsbury exhibition catalogue of 1958. Certainly, Corbet would have seen Helst's painting, and would not have missed its clear signature and dating. Moreover, Helst would also have been an artist of great interest to Corbet, being one of the most successful portraitists of seventeenth-century Holland. You would like to hope that the bare minimum of research would have been done on these paintings prior to the 1958 exhibition, and that the authorship of the original painting would have been recognised, but given that no record of any Van Ostade portrait of Potter exists, this doesn't seem to have been the case. A couple of anonymous prints of alternative portraits of Potter are held in the British museum, whilst a copy of a portrait of Potter 'after Ter Borch', dated to 1831, is listed in an auction record from Christies but, again, no record of an original painting of this subject by this painter exists.¹¹⁸ Given that we know Corbet was in The Hague and copied other paintings in the collection, and given that the only painted portrait of Paulus Potter known today is also in The Hague, there is a strong likelihood that it was indeed Helst's portrait that Corbet copied, and that this was later misattributed.

With this in mind, the supposed Gerard ter Borch copy may be the 1665 Caspar Netscher painting known as *Company Making Music* (fig. 47), still in the collection of the Mauritshuis.¹¹⁹ This contains a female figure dressed in a finely painted white satin dress reminiscent of those in his master Ter Borch's own works. Of the copies examined so far, the original painting here has the kind of composition one might have expected Corbet to have been interested in, with three engaged figures contained within a small darkly lit interior. Indeed, it was this kind of painting that inspired elements of the composition of Corbet's earlier group portraits, whilst a later group portrait depicting Corbet alongside his brothers-in-law shows that they continued to be adopted in his work once he had returned to Shrewsbury. The detailing on Netscher's dress is remarkable, and the ability to replicate its minutely painted light and shade is certainly something that would helped Corbet achieve the level of high-finish he endeavoured to apply to much of his work.

It is entirely possible that he made some copies after paintings in collections beyond those in The Hague. We know from the Ary Lamme sketch that Corbet and Carline had already been in Dordrecht, and it is likely that they would have travelled elsewhere in the country too, at least also to Amsterdam, but no evidence exists for this. If we take this into account, narrowing down the ambiguous titles of the Gerard ter Borch and Pieter de Hooch copies to particular originals becomes almost impossible. Ter Borch painted multiple works with ladies wearing white satin, whilst an interior by de Hooch could refer to one of any of dozens of paintings. Even so, the interests suggested by Corbet's other copies can be similarly interpreted here; from Ter Borch, he would have wanted to replicate the detailing in the textures, from De Hooch, the use of light and space.

¹¹⁸ Blouin Art Sales Index notes it being signed and dated to 1831.

¹¹⁹ J. Steengracht van Oostkapelle, p26.

Four portraits by Corbet in the Teylers Museum in Haarlem attest to the fact that he continued to find commissions during his stay. These are amongst his finest paintings, although, ironically, may be considered to show quite a 'British' approach, something that should perhaps not be overly surprising given that his status as a pupil of Lawrence would have been a unique selling point for him when abroad. And yet, although more with subtlety, they also provide visual evidence of Corbet's adoption of a more expressive and Dutch approach, arguably as a result of interactions with the work of painters like Frans Hals.

The two portraits of Hendrik Hentzepeter (*fig. 48*) and his wife (*fig. 49*), both dated to 1830 and probably created as pendants, reflect this Dutch-British duality. Hendrik, depicted deep in thought during his reading, is painted in something of a Lawrencian manner, the style reminiscent of Corbet's earlier portraits of Francis Darby and Dr. Clement. And yet, there are moments where he departs from this. The hair for example, is, as so often in his work, rendered with a wonderfully effective efficiency. The touches of white on the set of keys to create reflections of light in the same manner as in the Netscher painting, whilst the lack of detail and care taken in the left hand may be an act of neglect inspired by similarly apathetic fragments of late Rembrandt paintings.¹²⁰

It is also distinctive in that its sitter seems not to be overtly posing. Other than David Wilkie, very few British portraitists painted subjects with this much candidness, but here Corbet has managed to capture Hendrik in a moment of great contemplation, and when we understand the sitter and his beliefs, the capturing of this sense of reflection and meditation becomes almost profoundly acute. Hentzepeter, 'one of the country's most able ministers', was an early advocate of Adventism, writing extensively on the supposed forthcoming second coming with two pamphlets published in 1830 and 1842 the most significant pieces of literature in his output.¹²¹ Given such philosophical and religious beliefs, and given that he would have been in the midst of producing the first of these pamphlets when painted, the presentation of Hendrik as pensive, perhaps even fearful and mournful, is testament to Corbet's, elsewhere often underutilised, levels of emotional perception.¹²²

The significance of the set of keys on the table lies in the fact that Hentzepeter also worked as a guard and housekeeper for the Royal Museums, apparently living in accommodation with his wife and his elderly mother and her servant in the Mauritshuis' basement. In this role, he would often give tours to visitors, noted by one writer as being effective at communicating in four different languages, and with people from all walks of life. It may have been during one of these that he first encountered Corbet, although it is tempting also to imagine the two men encountering one another as the painter sat in the museum making copies. Hendrik was not from a particularly wealthy family and was not paid a huge wage for his work. What he saw of Corbet's work must therefore have impressed him greatly for him to offer the painter commissions like these. They are, after all, highly-finished portraits, and despite being completed on Corbet's typically small scale, would have been time-consuming for the artist - certainly not the kind of painting one would paint for a newly-made acquaintance at a discount.

¹²⁰ Alternatively, it may also be the result of poorly executed conservation work.

¹²¹ Matilda Erickson Andross. *The Story of the Advent Message*. (Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1926), p31.

¹²² Much of my information on Hendrick came from an article in a Dutch magazine called *Advent*. No author is noted, but it was originally published in 1987.

The portrait of Hendrik's young wife Wendelina Alder-Camp, known as *Portrait of Mrs. H. Hentzepeter*, shows more stylistic experimentation on Corbet's part with a great deal more painterly expression allowed by the sitter's elaborate clothing. Her satin sleeves, which may have been an opportunity to replicate a Ter Borch satin, for example, instead show Corbet painting with a loose expression. In many ways, the satins of the dresses of some of the Kenyon children bare more similarity to those in work by artists like Ter Borch. Here, the brushstrokes are efficient and the whites are muted, appearing far more like a Frans Hals or Rubens sleeve, with Hals referenced further by Corbet in the construction of the bonnet, which, in places, is almost expressionistic in its looseness.

The same can be said of the technique used by Corbet in a third Teyler's museum portrait, also of an unknown domestic female subject (*fig. 50*). Here, all of the sitter's clothing is built from quick, often thick, brushstrokes, with the patterns on her shawl built from little more than a few blobs of pink and an, in places, almost random splatterings of yellow. Her bonnet, as with Wendelina's, borders on impressionistic, the lace patterning created by countless little flicks of white paint. Isolating a section of it highlights the expression of the method, and may perhaps remind us of a Frans Hals ruff or the cuff of one of his sleeves. Given the scale of the work, at 21 x 18 cm it is small even by Corbet's standards, and these sections display an extraordinary level of control and execution.

Beneath the bonnet, a warm and friendly face emerges, engaging directly with the viewer. Her identity is a matter for debate, but, although the picture is signed and dated to 1831, a year after the portraits of Hendrik and his wife were created, it may be part of the same group, possibly showing the servant who lived with the Hentzepeters. Certainly, there is a focus on domestic work in the picture, with the sitter shown sewing, but the same can be said for the picture of Wendelina. The difference between the two sitters is in their approachability; Wendelina looks off in the distance, immune to the stares of viewers, whilst this lady is almost coy in her gaze, presented far less formally. Corbet has, in each portrait, applied a great level of care to their hands, particularly when compared to those in the portrait of Hendrik. Expertly crafted to appear nimble and supple, even on such a small scale and with a broadly expressive style, this detailing focuses the viewer on the sitters' domestic acts. The theme of a female subject engaged in housework is one found frequently in seventeenth-century domestic and genre scenes, with knitting and sewing, and more commonly lace-making, specific themes in a number of paintings. Although clearly portraits - they do not attempt to replicate the candidness of, say, the Pieter de Hooch or Nicholaes Maes interiors shown in *figures 50 and 51* - it is possible that Corbet was drawing upon these genre-painting sources in his presentations of these female subjects. It was not a common motif in British painting, with Joshua Reynolds portrait of *The Ladies Waldegrave* (*fig. 52*) a rare example of its use to signal virtue in an elite British subject.

In many ways, this was a period of replication in Dutch painting, with pictures elsewhere in the Teylers Museum evidence of Corbet's Dutch contemporaries tendency to call back to the seventeenth-century. Indeed, Gerharda Hermina Marius, in the introduction to her 1908 book *Dutch Art of the Nineteenth Century* comments that 'the fact is that many of these painters retained the arrangement of the old masters and copied them so industriously that they ended by making their style their own and

frequently lapsed into contenting themselves with the production of but slightly altered copies'.¹²³

Johannes Jelgerhuis's picture of Delft's new church (*fig. 53*), for example, draws heavily from the work of Pieter Saenredam, whilst the interiors of Lambertus Johannes Hansen (*fig. 54*) and Hubertus van Hove, both of whom have paintings in the collection, show them to essentially be little more than late followers of Pieter de Hooch. Corbet's own engagement with the country's old masters might therefore be said to have produced paintings that not only reflected his own artistic interests, but that were also in keeping with the popular work of contemporaries in Holland at the time. Maintaining something of his British training would have carved deeper a niche for him in this environment, although it is hard to know with any certainty exactly how many private commissions he obtained during his time there. Certainly, he produced more than the paintings discussed so far, with a fourth, and stylistically very different, portrait held by the Teylers. Other works appear in auction records.

This fourth picture shows a young man (*fig. 55*), arms folded, stood in front of two paintings, the bottom of which is a townscape by, or in the style of, Gerrit Berckheyde. The image has a sketchy feel, enhanced by the lightness of the colouring, and seems to have been painted quickly. There are some nice details. The control of light and shade across the image, for example, is, though subtle, well rendered; his use of white highlights in the collar and button are also well executed. The hair, as so often with Corbet, has life and texture. And yet, the departure in style from the Hentzepeter portraits is unsettling, and can only be explained by it being a stylistic experiment, a product of his studies. Indeed, I suspect the subject to be none other than Corbet's companion Thomas Carline, partly because of the sketchy, studious, nature of the painting, and partly because this same gentleman appears to be the subject of one of Corbet's other paintings from this period abroad. This painting, known as *A Man at a Table* (*fig. 56*), is one of those that has turned up in my search through auction records.¹²⁴ It is another small painting, but has a much more basic composition than the other paintings he made in Holland, similar in its simplicity to the John Carline portrait. It is perhaps one of Corbet's weakest portraits - the eyes seem to look in two different directions at once - but is slightly redeemed, once again, by the hair. Its exact purpose is hard to gauge, but it seems unlikely to me, given both its probable sitter and the comparative depth given to other works of this period, to have been a commission, but at the same time doesn't show the experimentation one might expect of a piece produced in study.

It may be related, given similarities in form, to a painting known as *Portrait of an Old Lady* (*fig. 57*).¹²⁵ Each of these adopt similar brown backgrounds, whilst the whites of the man's collar and those of the lady's bonnet are constructed in a similarly painterly manner. Again, this is far from being Corbet's finest portrait, but there is still a certain charm to it. The stern stare contains within it a sense of the sitter's personality, and it is possible that the clear damage to its surface has negated and undermined much of the detail it may previously have had. Aspects of its composition, she poses slightly turned and slightly hunched over, as well as the appearance of the lady closely resemble an unfinished portrait of an elderly lady by Thomas Lawrence (*fig. 58*). Whether Corbet would have had access to this is hard to say, but if we

¹²³ Gerharda Hermina Marius, *Dutch Art of the Nineteenth Century*, translated by Alexander Teixeira De Mattos, (London: Alexander Moring Ltd., 1908).

¹²⁴ Information accessed online at the following link:

<http://www.artnet.com/artists/philip-corbet/een-man-bij-een-tafel-uFMSMzIWVnLTg1aAimsC4A2>

¹²⁵ Information accessed online at the following link:

http://www.askart.com/auction_records/Philip_Corbet/11024018/Philip_Corbet.aspx

consider the similarities between the pictures to be such that he had, it might point to him having visited Lawrence in his studio at some point during his time in London.

Her identity is noted in an old ink inscription on the rear of the panel as 'Grootmoeder Hentzepeter'.¹²⁶ It is thus probable that it shows the elderly mother with whom Hendrik lived in the Mauritshuis' basement, although why her portrait would lack the detail of those painted of her son and his wife is difficult to explain.

Record of only one other painting made during this trip exists, known as *The Connoisseur*, although those noted here are unlikely to have been all that Corbet produced during his time in the country.¹²⁷ He was definitely back in Shrewsbury by May 1832, but if he had arrived in The Netherlands in mid-1829 that would point to a stay of two and a half to three years. His known output is very limited for a such a lengthy stay.

We might wonder where all the others he presumably produced ended up. The lack of original paintings is not overly surprising, as the trip was probably intended for study. If Samuel Butler's account of the King purchasing some of his copies is to be believed, then it is possible some of these remain in the collection of his descendants, or in other private collections in The Netherlands. Corbet may also have reused panels, although this would have negated the long term benefits of the copies, which were more likely to have been sent home (or carried home upon his return trip). Although Edith later inherited a few, it may not have been possible for Corbet to retain all of them and during financial difficulties in the 1850s he may have been forced to sell these kinds of assets in order to offset his debts.¹²⁸ Many may subsequently have become lost in private collections.

Upon returning to Shrewsbury in 1832, however, it is hard to imagine Corbet being in anything less than buoyant mood; he had spent three years studying art abroad with his friend, during which time he had produced some of his finest original work, and apparently been patronised by the Dutch King. Within months of his return, he would be married; within three years, set up in a new home, complete with a studio. Life was shaping up promisingly for the painter. And yet, this was 1832. Francesco Goya and Thomas Lawrence had recently died, whilst Edouard Manet had just been born. Charles Darwin had just landed in South America. Both the world, and within it the art world, were on the verge of great change.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Auctioned by Christie's Amsterdam in April 1994.

<http://www.artnet.com/artists/philip-corbet/the-connoisseur-exi8DkHGuXiz9czmaRIU1w2>

¹²⁸ Information taken from a notebook belonging to Corbet, contained within the collection of Shropshire Museums at the Museum Resource Centre in Ludlow. It has yet to be catalogued, so does not have a reference number.

Five

The 1830s and 1840s.

On the 14th May 1832, Philip Corbet was married to Jane Carline in Shrewsbury Abbey. This is the earliest documented evidence of his being back in the town, and clearly represents a significant moment in Philip's life. This was a commitment of his future, after all, not only to his new wife, but to the town in which he had now chosen to settle. Any hopes of returning to the metropolis of London to build a nationally significant career would have been permanently sacrificed in this moment, although this may have been an afterthought to the notion of being a part of a family group again. He had seemingly not returned to Ireland to see his parents since he had left twelve years earlier, and, after such a long period of parental isolation, it must have been a profoundly joyous moment for the painter to be welcomed into the Carline family, particularly given the role they had already played in his life.

The venue of the wedding suggests that, of all the families he could have married into, even with friendships and professional relations aside, he could have done worse than the Carlines. John Carline himself had previously worked on a restoration of the Abbey, and so would have been acquainted with the ecclesiastical circles that ran it.¹²⁹ Never-the-less, a marriage in what was the town's largest and most important religious venue would have been an opportunity reserved for townsfolk with status and wealth. The fact that it was, and remains, an Anglican venue, adds further evidence to Corbet's Protestant leanings, as does the fact that like his father-in-law, Corbet would go on to do some work for the church in the town around 1840, producing a number of cartoon designs for stained-glass windows for St. Mary's Church.

It is hard to say exactly when Corbet became romantically involved with Jane Carline, but given that the marriage took place so soon after Corbet returned from his travels, it is probable that they had planned to marry at some point before he left. She may have served as an additional benefit to settling in the town during the period in the 1820s when Corbet would have been weighing up his options for the future. She was probably born in 1809 (being listed aged 42 in the 1851 census), and so was 22 or 23 when she was married. Almost immediately they set about building a family, their eldest child, Edith, born on the 1st of February, 1833. Arthur Philip (Bertie), Rowland, Francis Chadwick, Pauline, Fanny, Dora Sophia, Mary, Grace and Cyril would follow across the following decades.

Exactly where they lived is unknown, although the best clue is mentioned in passing by Edith Corbet in her letter to Samuel Butler. Discussing Corbet's later move to the Judge's Lodgings, she notes that her father was 'persuaded to take the home on Belmont, instead of the old Castle', although it is not entirely clear whether the 'old castle' to which she is referring is Corbet's previous residence, or merely an alternative option during his search for somewhere to live in 1835.¹³⁰ It is unfortunate that documents from the period do not reveal more details on this. Algernon Graves' dictionary, for example, lists a new address for Corbet from 1833, but fails to supply the kind of detail he had for the period in which the artist was based in London, noting it merely as 'Shrewsbury'.¹³¹ A short letter, dated to December 22nd 1833, marks Corbet's first appearance in the Shropshire archives, and, given that it concerns his

¹²⁹ John Carline, 'Corbet and the Carlines - Painters, Sculptors and Architects of the Early 19th Century', pp14-17, *Shropshire Magazine*. (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Magazine), p14.

¹³⁰ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

¹³¹ Algernon Graves. *The Royal Academy of the Arts, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904, Vol.2 Carroll to Dyer*. (London: Henry Graves and Co. Ltd., 1905), p163.

home in Shrewsbury, it might have been hoped to offer more in the way of detail, although very little information can be gleaned with any certainty from it beyond its suggestion of financial stability on Corbet's part.¹³² Addressed to a Mr. Haycock, a member of the local council, Corbet complains about the state of the grates on the streets outside his home, offering to pay part of the cost of replacing them himself, even though this would not have been his responsibility.¹³³ If we are to take 'the old castle' as referring to his home at this period, the term does not necessarily provide clarity as to where this was. Certainly, it does not refer to Shrewsbury Castle itself, but rather to a separate house, perhaps a former inn or a property on Castle Hill or Castle Foregate, by some accounts not an entirely reputable area of the town.¹³⁴

Even though I suspect he was not living with the Carlines, it is more likely that he retained the studio space he had used prior to his trip to The Netherlands, which, through the print advert discussed previously, we can assume was at the Carline property on Abbey Foregate.

In any regard the commissions continued as before, with four portraits displayed at the R.A. in 1833 and 1834. A further painting, known as *A Woman with a Still-life*, known through the 1958 exhibition, is dated to 1832. The catalogue notes this painting as showing the influence of Dutch masters, and includes some 'blue pottery', perhaps Delftware, that he had brought back with him from his travels.¹³⁵ Of the portraits, the identities of three subjects are known, being of a Mrs Clement, a John Williams and a Philip Hughes, whilst the fourth is noted only as *A portrait*. 'Mrs. Clement' is probably a relation of the Dr. W.J. Clement painted by Corbet in 1827, probably his mother or a sister given that he did not marry until 1845.¹³⁶ The precise identities of John Williams and Philip Hughes are unknown, although the affixed 'Esq.' suggests their status as people with high social rank. There a wine and spirit merchant active in Shrewsbury in 1830, called Philip Hughes, a likely candidate.¹³⁷ John Williams is one of the most common names along this stretch of the Shropshire-Powys border, a John Williams, for example, was hanged in the county in 1842 for murder, whilst another was a renowned missionary, so it is difficult to establish with any certainty who this subject is. My guess would be that it depicts Sir John Bickerton Williams, a lawyer in the town who served as mayor between 1836 and 1837.

At this point it is worth reiterating that this short list of paintings is unlikely to represent even a small portion of his output during this period of his life and merely reflects what is recorded in the sources. A lack of acknowledgement of this could lead to a misinterpretation of the direction of his work, with the list of known paintings of the 1830s dominated by pictures of members of his new family. This would not have been a financially viable strategy for a jobbing regional painter, and they certainly wouldn't have been his priority. This can be explained as being the case precisely

¹³² Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/27.

¹³³ 'Letter from Philip Corbet to Thomas Kenyon re signing the agreement for tenancy'.

¹³⁴ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/36.

¹³⁵ 'Letter from Philip Corbet to Mr Haycock, complaining about the grates'.

¹³⁶ Paddy Marsh. 'Below the Castle Walls in the Eighteen Forties', pp105-113, *Victorian Shrewsbury: Studies in the History of a County Town*. Edited by Barrie Trinder. (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Libraries, 1984), p108-110.

¹³⁷ Richard Carline. 'Philip Corbet and the Carlines'. *Catalogue for the Exhibition of the Works of the Corbet and Carline Families, March 8th - April 5th 1958*. (Shrewsbury: Shrewsbury Art Gallery, 1958).

¹³⁸ Robert Henry Mair, *Debrett's Illustrated House of Commons and the Judicial Bench 1870*. (London: Dean & Son, 1870), p58.

¹³⁹ Information taken from a list compiled by the 'Shropshire Family History Society', their source being the *Salop Directory*. (Shrewsbury: Tibham & Co., 1828).

Accessed: <http://www.sfhs.org.uk/online-databases/shropshire-inns-1828>

because they are of family members, and so were far more likely to have been kept in the family through the generations. Notes made shortly after Corbet's death in 1877, listing the belongings of his that were to be passed onto his children, note eleven paintings split between two of his daughters, the six aforementioned Dutch copies to Edith, and five additional, although unspecified, pictures to Fanny. These kinds of paintings later served as the most readily available examples of his work when some of his descendants decided to hold the exhibition in 1958. Record of them has thus survived, whilst many others hanging in the country houses of Shropshire have not.

Very occasionally, some of these privately owned portraits find their way through auction houses, such as his portrait of Sir John Hamner (*fig. 59*), which dates from this period and was exhibited at the R.A. in 1835. Hamner was at this point the M.P. for Shrewsbury, but Corbet has avoided the formality one might expect of this kind of subject and instead depicted his reclining in a romantic pose. The panel is now severely damaged, but was once of sufficient quality for one cataloguer of the Hamner estate to comment of Corbet as an artist whom, 'if he had preserved, would have obtained perhaps eminence in his profession'.¹³⁸

Of the seven paintings of family members painted in the 1830s, the two that I have seen suggest they were not produced commercially, with both the portrait of his wife Jane Carline (*fig. 60*), and *The Artist with his Brothers-in-law* (*fig. 61*), appearing to be oil sketches. These may have been painted predominately as stylistic exercises, but with a secondary intention to produce work fit for display in the homes of the respective families. In the black and white reproductions available, many parts of the images seem to be unfinished, but an acute representation of the people themselves is always attained.

Jane is shown in half-length, but Corbet's focus is entirely on her face. Its form may be drawing upon Thomas Lawrence's *Portrait of Princess Lieven* (*fig. 62*), with the two ladies' elongated necks and hair curls almost identical. The major difference is in the interaction between sitter and viewer, and yet, although Jane looks away from, rather than directly at, the viewer, her portrait, clearly made with tenderness - her eyes being a particular delight -, is an engaging one.

In the group portrait (*fig. 61*), Corbet himself is shown on the right, joined by Thomas Carline (left), Richard Carline (above) and Henry Carline, Surgeon in the 6th Dragoon Guards (below). The varying facial expression of each of brothers suggests it may have been something of a character study. A second picture of Richard Carline, who was a solicitor and, subsequently, Mayor of Lincoln, exists, although no visual reproduction of this has been found. Corbet had thus painted, between first moving to Shrewsbury in the early 1820s and 1833, every member of his wife's immediate family, although it might be that these later paintings were part of an effort to further integrate himself with them. Presenting himself alongside his three brothers-in-law, for example, equates himself with them in a manner that implies his intention to present himself as part of the family.

Beyond these portraits of his immediate family are a series of portraits of members of the family of Thomas Donaldson, a gilder and furniture maker whose eldest daughter Mary-Ann married Thomas Carline in 1835. Portraits of each of Mary-Ann's parents were completed by Corbet during this decade, *Mrs Donaldson in a Bonnet, Drawing on her Gloves* in 1833, and *Thomas Donaldson at his Desk* in 1838, whilst portraits of their son Peter Donaldson, 1835, and a fourth, unknown,

¹³⁸ John Hamner, *Notes and papers to serve for a memorial of the parish of Hanmer, in Flintshire*, (London: Nichols & Sons, 1872), p92.

family member were also painted for them.¹³⁹ It may seem tenuous to describe the in-laws of his own in-laws as being in any way akin to family for Corbet, but it is likely that he had a very close relationship with the Donaldsons, not only privately, but professionally too. As a frame maker and gilder, Thomas Donaldson's significance for Corbet is easy to establish, but there is some evidence that the Carlins too occasionally worked with him. Thomas Carline's sculpture of Henry Kenyon, discussed earlier, sits atop of one of Donaldson's ornate marble topped tables, perhaps produced for this purpose, whilst Donaldson's 1811 accounts refer to £50 owed to Carline for 'setting the Mosaic Top of a Mahogany Table'.¹⁴⁰

Trading from Shrewsbury's High Street, his work was clearly well regarded by locals. Beyond Corbet, Thomas Weaver is known to have purchased frames from him, whilst his furniture found its way into many of the area's country houses, notably at nearby Attingham Park.¹⁴¹ Tables made by Donaldson for its redevelopment in the early nineteenth-century, some of which remain in the collection today, prompted great praise from contemporary writer Thomas Howell, who considered his talent such that his 'correct taste in that fine art is too well appreciated to need any eulogium here'.¹⁴² Christopher Rowell, currently Curator of Furniture for the National Trust, has praised him, noting that the two tables designed for the picture gallery in Attingham Park were made 'in the most advanced neoclassical style and are comparable both in design and quality to the best Continental Empire furniture'.¹⁴³ Certainly then, he was a figure with the potential to leave a legacy of international repute, but, like Corbet, he has drifted from the sphere of public interest and become more or less lost to history.

Any doubt over where Philip and his young family were living is resolved in November 1835, when, with the help of Corbet's friend Thomas Kenyon, they took up residence in the Judge's Lodgings on Belmont. The name ascribed to this grand townhouse was not merely traditional, and it was still occupied judges visiting the town on magisterial duty. Indeed, the agreement for his occupation, which was signed on November 12th, 1835 and survives in the archives, makes it very clear that this was not an ordinary living situation.

Philip Corbet shall be permitted to occupy the house buildings, offices, gardens and accommodations belonging to the County of Salop, now used as lodgings for his Majesty's Judges in the town of Shrewsbury without payment of any rent.

On top of this, the cost of all damages, repairs and expenses, except for 'papering or painting the insides of the said premises' fell on the council.¹⁴⁴ All taxes too, it notes, were to be 'paid and borne by the said county'.¹⁴⁵ It seems then that Corbet was effectively employed by the county council as a kind of housekeeper, charged with ensuring that the house was in a fit state for the visits of these magisterial guests. Despite the lack of rent and his freedom from the cost of repairs, this was not an

¹³⁹ Richard Carline.

¹⁴⁰ Christopher Rowell, 'Furniture, Carving and Gilding at Attingham Park by Thomas Donaldson of Shrewsbury'. *National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annual 2015*. (London: National Trust in Association with Apollo, 2015), p14.

¹⁴¹ Lawrence Trevelyan Weaver, *Painter of Pedigree: Thomas Weaver of Shrewsbury*, (London: Unicorn, 2017), p101.

¹⁴² Rowell, p14.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/29.

'Agreement for occupancy of the Judges Lodgings'.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

entirely costless arrangement, with the contract going on to detail his financial obligations,

*The said Philip Corbet shall and will well and efficiently find and provide at his own cost at all times which he shall continue to occupy the said premises all furniture, linen, china, glass, and all other articles matters and things needful and proper for the accommodation of his Majesty's Judges and their attendance during their abode in the said premises and to the satisfaction of the Justices of the Peace for the said County.*¹⁴⁶

Given both the size of the house and the expectation that things be 'needful and proper', this was a heavier financial burden than it might be immediately expected. This would have been especially the case at this point, with the house supposedly being 'very much out of repair'.¹⁴⁷

Indeed, Corbet would later write that his 'outlay at commencement, for furniture, plates and linen, was £1,000', a significant sum, although he seems to have embraced the 'guardian' role.¹⁴⁸ Soon after moving in, he encouraged the council to upgrade the house's heating and lighting systems, fronting the initial expense of converting to gas.¹⁴⁹ October 31st letter requesting permission to replace the moth-eaten curtains, whilst noting that other, unspecified, repairs that were already nearing completion.¹⁵⁰ He would also later boast of having been 'told by the judges themselves that [his] plates and furniture were superior,' clearly proud of his work.¹⁵¹

And yet, 'work' is exactly what this was, and in many ways he was as much of an employee of the council as he was a tenant. It was his role to supply and organise servants for the visiting judges, for which he was given a yearly budget of £25. A receipt dated to January 28th 1836 documents Corbet invoicing the council for a fee of £2.1.3., for 'the cleaning of the Judge's Lodgings', unusual given this was supposed to be his home.¹⁵²

The benefit of this unorthodox arrangement was that he was given accommodation, free from rent, in a large, centrally located, townhouse. This meant he had room, not only for his ever-growing family, but for his own studio, with Edith noting that 'one of the upper rooms was converted to a studio', where 'a suitable light was present'.¹⁵³ This would have been hugely beneficial, meaning he could work with freedom and take on students.

Commissions were frequent during this period, with a portrait of a member of the Burton family and a second portrait of Francis Darby notable amongst them for their suggestion of satisfaction on behalf of previous customers.

It seems likely, after all, that Corbet was recommended to Edward Burton (1794-1836), a professor of divinity at Oxford University, by the three cousins whom Corbet had painted in 1827. Three versions of this portrait exist, all of which are held by Burton's former university. Two of them are attributed to Corbet in an 1858 catalogue of the paintings held by the university, one of the three-quarter length

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

¹⁴⁸ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/60.

¹⁴⁹ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/42.

'Letter from Philip Corbet to Thomas Kenyon re outstanding expenses for last Assizes'.

¹⁵⁰ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/27.

¹⁵¹ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/60.

¹⁵² Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/34.

'Receipt for 2 ls 3d received by Philip Corbet from the County Treasurer for decorating'.

¹⁵³ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

portraits shown in *fig. 63* and *64* and the bust portrait, shown in *fig. 65*.¹⁵⁴ This catalogue is not entirely reliable, however, with the measurements and materials recorded for the bust portrait very different to those recorded by the ArtUK project in the last decade, the catalogue noting its size as 91 x 68cm and painted on canvas, whereas the more modern records record it as being 43.2 x 36.8 cm, and painted on panel.¹⁵⁵ I am more inclined to trust the ArtUK database than a 150 year old catalogue, given the recency of the data. Of the two three-quarter length portraits, one was painted on canvas, the other on panel. Given Corbet's known preferred working methods, it is highly likely that the panel version was painted by him, but it is harder to be certain about the canvas version. The data for the three-quarter length painting in the catalogue corresponds with that listed in the modern data for the panel version, and probably refers to it.¹⁵⁶ The canvas version is incredibly similar, but given its medium and the fact that it doesn't appear in the catalogue, is probably a later copy. A mezzotint engraving of the painting (*fig. 66*), created by Henry Cousins in 1837, also exists, perhaps intended to be bound in copies of one of its subject's books.

It is a painting that has much in common with others in Corbet's oeuvre, although its interior is darker. Its subject is sat beside a book, having seemingly been distracted from his work in order to pose for the portrait, reminiscent of the picture of Hendrik Hentzepeter. It is a well-crafted portrait too, with Burton's leading eye, occupying a spot near the horizontal centre of the canvas, penetrating the viewer and drawing them in. The averted gaze of the false eye, initially a distraction, comes to accentuate the centrality of this leading eye once its own gaze is caught, heightening the sense of Burton's own monoscopic visual interaction with the viewer. Wearing his preaching bands, and sat beside what we might presume is a bible, we get, through this psychological encounter, a sense of him of the great theological thinker he must have been considered to be in order to attain his position as Professor of Divinity at Oxford.

My working hypothesis going into the visual analysis of this chapter was that Corbet's trip to Holland was going to have a clear impact on the style of his paintings, but this does not seem to have been the case. Certainly the Burton portraits do not show any clear interaction with the kind of work he is known to have viewed, and copied, during his time in The Netherlands. Nor does Corbet's 1838 portrait of Francis Darby (*fig. 67*), which owes far more to the work of Thomas Lawrence than any other individual painter. The face is very precisely composed, the colouring and details all minutely rendered, whilst other elements model the figure with expression and looseness. The hair is constructed with a flamboyant and wild array of strokes that hint towards a gentle wind blowing in what is, unusually for Corbet, an outdoor setting. Despite its Lawrencian feel, it is painted on Corbet's usual scale, being an incredibly small piece, at 31 x 25.5cm, as well as on panel. In this regard, he retains a certain uniqueness even when his style resembles that of his British predecessors.

Darby was something of an art collector, and was a frequent buyer of Dutch flower paintings. Paintings he once owned by Rachel Ruysch, Jan van Huysum and Jan van Os today form part of the collection at Dudmaston, alongside this portrait of him. He had also purchased two of John Constable's landscapes in 1825, subsequently

¹⁵⁴ Rachael Emily Malleson Poole. *Catalogue of portraits in the possession of the University, Colleges, City and County of Oxford, Vol. III, Portraits in the Colleges and Halls, Part II*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912).

¹⁵⁵ In actual fact it notes it as being 36 x 27 inches but I have converted this to cm for ease of comparison. The other details are taken from the ArtUK database, accessible at the following link: <https://www.artuk.org/discover/artworks/edward-burton-17941836-229059>

¹⁵⁶ The measurements of 17 x 14 inches listed translate to being 43.18 x 35.56, which, when the vagueness of recording measurements to the nearest inch are taken into account, is similar enough to the ArtUk measurements (themselves vague in that they are measured to the nearest cm) of 45 x 37 cm.

building a friendship with the painter. Confiding in Darby, Constable would write of his financial struggles, stating that ‘would rather be a poor here [in England] than a rich man abroad’, before thanking Darby for his ‘highly gratifying’ purchases.¹⁵⁷ Corbet too seems to have developed a friendship with Darby, with a copy of Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Decamerone*, held by the special collections of the University of Sussex, containing an inscription in its inside cover signed, ‘Francis Darby, to his much valued friend Philip Corbet, 1837’.¹⁵⁸ This friendship may have been one of the main reasons Corbet received multiple commissions from Darby, yet, given the kind of paintings we know he purchased, it might also be considered that he was a man with a certain dedication to art and his art collection, which reflects well on Corbet’s own reputation, particularly in the local area.

Looking at the names of some of the other local figures who sat for Corbet, it is clear that he was a sought-after portraitist in Shrewsbury. The number of mayors (eleven) depicted by the painter alone suggests this, although a portrait I suspect to be from the late 1830s may serve as an addition to the list. Currently unattributed, a painting of Joseph Birch, mayor of Shrewsbury in 1848, in the collection of Shropshire Museums (*fig. 68*) shows all the signs of being by Corbet. Painted on a panel measuring 23.6 x 21.6cm, the technique used is similar to the second Francis Darby picture. The burly, serious face of Mr. Birch is crafted with an incredibly high-level of finish, every fold and tonal shift of skin faithfully recorded. His hair, and eyebrows are worthy of Corbet, whilst the application of paint in the necktie is nearly identical to that in the Darby portrait. No-one else in Shrewsbury was able to paint like this at this time, particularly not on this scale. My dating of c.1837 is based, not only on technical similarities to the 1838 Darby painting, but also on the fact that a picture listed as *Mr. Birch* was exhibited at the R.A. in that year by Corbet. This differs to the c.1848 dating currently ascribed, but this is likely to be based on the subject’s period as mayor. Birch, a longstanding member of the town council, would have been acquainted with Corbet for decades prior to this.

In 1840, Corbet was commissioned by Kenyon for two more portraits, depicting his sons William (*fig. 69*) and George (*fig. 70*). Today they hang alongside those painted for the family in the mid 1820s, and, given the time that had passed, are remarkable for their stylistic continuity. The thick strokes used to construct the frogging of William’s coat are immediately noticeable for their similarity to those used in young Thomas’ own military garb and serve as being as close a comparison to the work of Dutch painting as it possible to make in any of Corbet’s work, with Rembrandt-esque expression evident in the looseness of the strokes (*fig. 71*). Indeed, details such as that presented in *figure 72* are almost impressionistic, but taken as a whole come together to form a magnificent interplay of light, shade and reflection. It is a remarkable feat of control given the panel is only 29 x 24.5cm. His uniform is identifiable as that of a Captain in the 2nd Bombay Cavalry, an example of which is held by the National Army Museum. It may be noted that Corbet’s colouring darkens it somewhat, although this may be due to damage to the paint surface, which has also blurred his face and left it appearing as though taken by an out of focus camera. Alternatively, this could be an act of creative licence, with Belinda Day of the

¹⁵⁷ John Lloyd Fraser, *John Constable: The Man and his Mistress*. (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd. 1976. p150-151.

¹⁵⁸ This book is listed as no.235 in a catalogue of the special collection of the University of Sussex., an online version of which is accessible at the following link:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/speccoll/collection_catalogues/travers.html

National Army Museum noting to me that Corbet's uniforms here contain 'a number of inconsistencies'.¹⁵⁹

Talking specifically of Thomas Kenyon's uniform, she noted how 'the shoulder belt plate depicted in this image does not conform exactly to any known shoulder belt plates', suggesting that the person who painted it was 'unlikely to have understood its significance'. She explained to me also that it is odd that it is 'being worn under the waist sash' suggesting that 'this may be a later overpainting'.¹⁶⁰

With this in mind, I return to my statement regarding stylistic continuity. It would be my guess that Corbet himself was responsible for this overpainting, revisiting his earlier portrait and adding to what was perhaps an initially more stylistically reserved representation. This would explain too why the Thomas Kenyon portrait, the 1824 dating of which is more or less indisputable given its subject's age, is incongruous in the artist's early output. Why he might have done this is hard to say, although it may simply have been a case of the portrait becoming damaged in the intervening years and Corbet seizing on the opportunity to 'update' the image. The same may be true of John Robert Kenyon's portrait, as it too bares some similarity to these later portraits, more so the second of them, depicting George Kenyon. This is quite a subdued painting compared to the image of William, with fewer areas that might be interpreted as expressionistic or experimental. George's Navy Uniform (he was a Captain) is actually rather flat, although again, much of this is down to the paint surface being damaged over time. Some nice details do survive here, particularly in the belt and the subject's cuffs and gloves, but, as with all four of the individual Kenyon portraits - as well as most of the paintings he made from 1830 onwards-, the face is painted with a more precise brush than the rest of the image. That his approach to faces is consistently like this throughout his career shows his primary interest to have been the subjects themselves, and in capturing their personality and psyche.

And yet, the continually shifting and changing style elsewhere in the pictures suggests to me that Corbet was still prone to experimentation. Indeed, Edith comments on her father's tendency to sometimes paint purely 'for his own satisfaction and amusement'.¹⁶¹ Referring specifically here to a sketch her father made of Sally Paddock, an elderly inmate of Lord Tankerville's almshouse in Shrewsbury, she notes the image being 'much admired and commented upon' when exhibited at the R.A. in 1840, and that it could 'pass for a Frans Hals, or even a Holbein'.

Despite it being odd that Edith might consider the style of these two great artists to be interchangeable, it is telling that she described her father's work with a comparison to Dutch, or 'Northern', painters at all. With the exception of a few of his paintings, Dutch painting did not have an overwhelming presence in the work Corbet produced following his return from The Netherlands, but Edith's comment suggests he must still had some kind of desire to create work which did, even if this was reserved for paintings he made, to re-quote Edith, 'for his own satisfaction'. At the very least, he may have framed his work, and conversations about his work, in that context, although this ultimately seems to have led to some confusion on his daughter's part.

The eight cartoons he created during this period (six of which are shown in *figs.* 73-78) as designs for the stained-glass windows for St. Mary's Church are, although neglected by Edith, somewhat Dutch in style. Drawn on paper with charcoal, they show Corbet's proficiency as a draughtsman, whilst also prove him to have had a

¹⁵⁹ Personal correspondence with Belinda Day of the National Army Museum.

¹⁶⁰ This opinion was supported by one of her art curator colleagues.

¹⁶¹ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229

grasp of Christian symbolism and iconography one might expect of an artist whose output consisted far more of religious imagery. The form, although dictated somewhat by the dimensions of the stained glass frames for which they were designed, are reminiscent of altarpiece panels, whilst some of their compositions, as well as the style of drawing in the elongated faces and fold ridden draperies, suggest he may have been drawing upon the art of the Northern Renaissance in them. Some of Robert Campin's more sculptural altarpiece wings may provide a reference here (*fig. 79*), whilst Corbet's St. Catherine seems to be something of a composite of traditional images of the subject and the female subject of Jan van Eyck's 1434 *Arnolfini Portrait* (*fig. 80*). To focus on a more specific detail, the feet in the pictures are very similar to those found in sixteenth-century paintings by artists like Maarten van Heemskerck. The opportunity to encounter these kinds of pictures would have been there for Corbet, if not in Holland then in London. A sketchbook from his travels in The Netherlands, displayed in the 1958 exhibition but now lost, may hold the key to further establishing more exact examples of paintings that interested Corbet, but I would suggest these cartoons show his engagement with Dutch painting extended beyond the seventeenth-century to the sixteenth-century. Samuel Butler would later write of the cartoons as being 'perfectly conventional and evidently done without inspiration & interest', but the fact that they remained in his possession until his death, passing them onto Edith, suggests Corbet must have had some affection or use for them.¹⁶²

Two other paintings from this period, known as *A Student* and *A Student Painting*, seem to fall into Edith's alternative category of 'painted for his own satisfaction'. They are enlightening, regardless of the fact that they are missing, in their suggestion that Corbet did indeed take on students. As no specific names can be linked to him in this capacity with any certainty, it is difficult to establish how much impact he personally had on the next generation of Shrewsbury painters. It is unlikely that this was hugely important for him anyhow, and he would probably have seen these students predominately as a source of income to supplement that made from painting portraits. The number of portraits exhibited at the R.A. during this same period suggests that they continued to be numerous. Three were exhibited in 1841, of David Pugh, who lived at Llanerchydol House near Welshpool, Henry de Bruyn, about whom my research has found nothing, and Sir Henry Edwardes, the 9th^h Baronet of the Salopian Edwardes Baronetcy.¹⁶³ The latter most of these paintings was noted by Edith as having been 'much admired at the private view by the Queen and Prince Consort', whilst it also received praise in the Art Union, who wrote of it as a 'portrait of small size...painted with exceeding care, and yet with much freedom', an analysis that might apply to almost all of Corbet's output.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Samuel Butler in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

¹⁶³ Part of this property is, at the time of writing, on sale, with some further information accessible at the following link:

<https://search.savills.com/property-detail/gbwmrstes190024>

It is possible that the portrait of David Pugh may have been made at an earlier date, as Corbet would later write (in Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/60) of his having been visiting Llanerchydol when the availability of the Judge's Lodgings was first made aware to him.

Joseph Foster. *The Peerage, Baronetage, and Knightage of the British Empire*. 2nd Edition. (London: Nichols and Sons, 1881), p203.

¹⁶⁴ From the Art-Union's review of the RA Exhibition, May 15 1841: 'This also is a new name, and one from which we augur much hereafter. The portrait is of a small size, and the subject is not a favourable one; but it is painted with exceeding care, and yet with much freedom'.

Anonymous Author. *The Art Journal, Volume 3*. (London: Virtue and Company, 1841).

The great Victorian painter William Powell Frith praised it as ‘a very beautiful small portrait’ in his autobiography, although the context in which he and Edith broach the work would have been of less joy for Corbet, with the painting being vandalised at the R.A. whilst being exhibited.¹⁶⁵ Frith writes of ‘Corbet of Shrewsbury’ as ‘a well-known, excellent, painter of small, highly-finished portraits’ before touching upon the incident: ‘the eyes in the picture were destroyed by cutting them down to the panel on which the portrait was painted’. Why the painting would be targeted in this manner is difficult to answer. Henry Edwardes was recently deceased, so any attack on it because of him would have been disrespectful to say the least. It not unreasonable to suggest professional jealousy as being responsible, although may simply have been a random attack by an opportunistic vandal. Frith notes ‘born joker’ Charles Landseer’s unique theory as to who perpetrated the crime: ‘the destroyer of the eyes in Corbet’s picture was most likely a schoolmaster in want of pupils!’¹⁶⁶

Edith would later touch upon the event in her letter to Samuel Butler, claiming that it ‘made father a sensation in the artist world.’ She writes of her memories of ‘the consternation when the news came to us’, before recounting the process of its repair,

*Lady Edwardes was much distressed and wished a fresh portrait painted, but exceptionally, the canvas was skillfully drawn together with the point of a needle, by my mother; a piece laid behind, and the eyes repainted.*¹⁶⁷

Although the discrepancy between the painting’s medium in these two accounts is somewhat troubling, it is interesting that Edith notes her mother performing any kind of role in the studio. I would suggest it is far more likely that the picture was painted on panel, as Frith notes, rather than the canvas necessary for Edith’s story to be accurate, but would hesitate to state that Edith is inventing this story. Perhaps instead, she has inadvertently amalgamated a similar memory of her mother into this tale of surgery on Philip’s painting, as it is certainly possible that her mother aided in the preparation of some of the canvasses Corbet occasionally used. Alternatively, it is possible that one of his other canvas paintings was damaged and repaired in a similar manner, but Edith has applied this memory to the more noted, and thus remembered, incident involving the Henry Edwardes portrait. In any case, a second element of doubt as to Edith’s reliability as a source has certainly been introduced here, and should be taken into account in other passages when her correspondence is cited.

A painting in the 1846 exhibition, depicting Samuel Tudor, would also receive some attention, being described in *The Athenaeum* as an ‘unobtrusive portrait...the excellence of which merits a place among the more captivating pieces of this kind in the exhibition’.¹⁶⁸

Although this doesn’t tell us much about the painting itself, that such praise was being bestowed on Corbet during this period of his career does reveal him to have been an artist whose work was known, respected and appreciated by peers and reviewers. It also attests to the quality of his work. He was, of course, still an artist far from national significance, and many similar artists received a similar level of praise, but he can at least be said to have been respected and known beyond the circles in

¹⁶⁵ William Powell Frith. *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1888), p286.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

¹⁶⁸ Anonymous, *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts for the Year 1846*. (London: The Athenaeum, 1846), p572.

which he lived and worked for almost his entire career. Both John Carline and Edith postulate the question as to what his career may have looked like had he remained in the capital, with Carline's outlook more hesitant than Edith's. He notes that 'it was becoming possible for the provincial artist to acquire local patronage and support' and that 'in this Corbet was highly successful', but acknowledges that 'he could never know what he may have missed by the loss of contact with the leading painters of the metropolis'.¹⁶⁹ Edith, predictably, had far more faith in her father's talents, writing that 'if he had lived in London, he would have become famous, and would have undoubtedly have made himself a great name'.¹⁷⁰

Although the limited number of pictures available to view today make any definitive statements difficult, it seems as though Corbet's commercial output became increasingly formulaic in Shrewsbury. Although not wanting to entertain hypothetical levels of success, the biggest difference in this alternative London-based career would probably have been in the type of paintings he produced. He clearly preferred working on a small scale, and this may not have changed, but I can imagine a situation in which London's larger market allowed him to be more experimental with his output, and not quite so heavily reliant on portraits to make a living. Portraiture may still have formed the bulk of his output, but his early history paintings and copies of Dutch genre paintings suggest his interests transcended this. The market in Shrewsbury was obviously smaller, although Corbet was able to make it his own. London's bigger market would have simultaneously meant a greater level of competition in the capital, and any kind of prediction as to his success or failure in this environment is ultimately futile. It would have certainly been a gamble, but given that he would go on to receive praise on a national level, despite his professional regional isolation, suggests he may have had a chance there, although Edith's certainties are naive in their confidence.

Ultimately, what we might consider to have been the safe option of Shrewsbury was not to prove as fruitful as Corbet may have hoped, and by 1846, despite the apparent successes signalled by the praise quoted above, he was struggling financially. During a storm in August of that year, the roof of the Judge's Lodgings became badly damaged, with Corbet writing in a letter to Kenyon of his struggles: 'I am a poor man and cannot afford such losses'.¹⁷¹ He had spent £12 on renovations the previous year, all of which had now been undone, with additional damage done to paintings, carpets and gilding. The house was uninhabitable for three months, with an estimate of the damage caused put at £50, a sum Corbet was unable to afford. It is not clear whether he is referring to paintings already in the house, or to those he held in his studio, which was now 3 to 4 inches deep in water. It is entirely possible that it was damage to his own work and equipment to which he was referring when he said that he 'cannot afford such losses'. A letter from the council to Corbet dated a few weeks later seems to have accompanied £20 of aid, although this was not enough for Corbet, who shortly after gave the six months notice required to resign his tenancy.¹⁷² Thomas Kenyon advised Corbet on 27th August, that this request was to be accepted.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ John Carline, 'Corbet and the Carlines - Painters, Sculptors and Architects of the Early 19th Century', pp14-17, *Shropshire Magazine*, (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Magazine), p17.

¹⁷⁰ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

¹⁷¹ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/44/1.

'Correspondence between Philip Corbet, Thomas Kenyon and John Loxdale with estimate of damage caused to Corbet's property', August 8th 1846.

¹⁷² Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/44/1.

'Letter from The Magistrates of the County of Salop', August 25th 1846.

¹⁷³ Shropshire Archives Object Number:QA/10/5/45 .

Resolution of the Committee to accept Mr Corbet's offer to resign his tenancy', August 27th 1846.

Six

Later Years

Following the correspondence concerning the 1846 storm, Corbet disappears from the archival records for almost a decade. It is perhaps a surprise that, when he resurfaces in 1855, he is still living in the Judge's Lodgings, although almost all of the documentation concerning the next two years of his life is related to this occupation coming to an end. Indeed, the whole affair of his eviction from the Judge's Lodges is charted in great detail, with some of it making for quite harrowing reading as Corbet pleads with the council for leniency over some of his unpaid costs and unfulfilled duties.

The first letters date from mid-July 1855, with a Mr Benson Esq. updating solicitor and council member John Loxdale on a resolution passed by the council to return the house to the council's hands.¹⁷⁴ Corbet, on the 10th, writes to the Magistrates on this, expressing his concern and offering a brief history of his time at the property.¹⁷⁵ It is in this letter that he tells of his having been staying with David Pugh at Llanerchydol Hall in September 1835, when an advertisement for a lodger at the house was brought to his attention by his host. Following up on this, he was taken to the house by his 'late most kind friend' Thomas Kenyon, by whose 'representations' he was 'induced to offer myself as occupant'. Thomas Kenyon had died in 1851, and I would be inclined to suggest that Corbet's difficulties in 1855 were exasperated by no longer having a friend on the council to aid his cause.

Corbet goes on to note the personal expense to him of renovating the house upon his moving in, before reminding the council of the six month's notice they were obliged to be give him.

A letter of August 28th from John Loxdale to Corbet's brother-in-law Richard Carline, who was now acting as his 'legal advisor', states the council's complaints with their tenant. The painter's financial difficulties seem to have been such that he was no longer able to afford to maintain the house to the standards required, with the council citing breach of contract as their reason for eviction. Loxdale also disputes the amount of expense to Corbet in 1835, writing that 'Mr Corbet appears to be under the impression that no internal repairs were done when he entered', and that 'bills and receipts to a considerable amount will show the contrary'. He does, however, offer something of a deal, suggesting that if Corbet forgoes his insistence on seeing out his six months of notice, the council will in turn forgo their insistence of payment from Corbet for the cost to him 'to deliver the house in a condition to the satisfaction of the Justices or their Committee'.¹⁷⁶ If, however Corbet 'claims the full benefit of the agreement, [the council] must of course do the like'.¹⁷⁷

Richard Carline's response to this is to state that if a compensatory fee of £60 is afforded to Corbet, he will leave the property at an earlier date, something that the council 'definitively decline to entertain'.^{178 179}

By the 9th February 1856 proceedings had moved on, with Loxdale writing to Corbet to set the date of eviction to 29th September. We can only presume that Corbet

¹⁷⁴ Shropshire Archives Object Numbers: QA/10/5/59/2 to QA/10/5/59/6.

¹⁷⁵ 'Correspondence between Mr Carlin, John Loxdale, Philip Corbet, Mr Benson and Edward Haycock concerning the case of Mr Corbet and the Judges Lodgings', July 1855.

¹⁷⁶ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/60.

¹⁷⁷ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/22.
December 1st 1855.

¹⁷⁸ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/8.
August 28th 1855.

¹⁷⁹ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/18.

¹⁷⁹ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/22.

refused in turn to ‘entertain’ the council’s deal, although considering the financial cost of fulfilling his contractual obligations means that this was probably misjudged. It suggests a degree of stubbornness on Corbet’s behalf, and perhaps an overestimation of his own favour with the council.¹⁸⁰ Indeed, in writing to Loxdale in August of that year, as eviction approached, Corbet tries, and ultimately fails, to invoke this favour,

*I anxiously hope and trust that they will take into consideration the great number of years during which I have honestly endeavoured to fulfil my duties both towards the county and to the judges and they will therefore not conform too literally to the terms of my original contract.*¹⁸¹

Loxdale actually replies to this to say that he will present this plea for leniency to the committee, a seemingly rare concession on his part, but this was rejected.¹⁸² The letter of September 1st suggests that, in the eyes of the council, the time for such negotiations had passed. Not only do they decline to remit Corbet’s obligations, but that they would take some of his furniture as compensation if the conditions were not met. The County Surveyor hired to ascertain the costs Corbet was obliged to pay in this situation suggested a fee £159, far beyond Corbet’s financial capabilities. The county supplement this with a refusal to deduct a £13 payment Corbet claimed to be owed for previous damages to some of his property.¹⁸³

Without being able to fully evaluate the condition of the house, it is difficult to know exactly how fair the treatment is. A letter from Loxdale to a Miss Anne Pim, who had written to him enquiring about a possible housesteward role at the lodgings, may shed some light on this. Touching upon the difficulties they were having in evicting its occupant, he notes that even once this had been done, ‘considerable repairs will be requisite before anyone can enter inside’.¹⁸⁴ This may be somewhat hyperbolic, but Loxdale is communicating with a third party, and would have had no reason to overstate the extent of the house’s poor condition. Corbet however, seems to refute this, suggesting that he had grounds to take them to court: ‘I have no money to resist their decisions at Law, although I am told it might be done’. In this, he certainly feels as though he has been a victim of an injustice, believing that ‘the Law is not for a poor man without means’. He also questions their response to his refusal to forgo his notice, describing it as a ‘punishment most severe’, noting this is particularly so due to its ‘coming from Gentleman to many of whom I have been to long personally known, having painted their fathers and grandfathers, themselves and brothers, and from whom I have always experienced kindness and hospitality’.¹⁸⁵ This is the first of only two occasions in which Corbet addresses his profession in any of his own correspondence.

His desperation at the situation is evident and he resorts to pleading with the council members in a letter of September 1st, notable for its revelation of the desperation of his state of affairs,

¹⁸⁰ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/24.
February 9th 1856.

¹⁸¹ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/34.
August 20th 1856..

¹⁸² Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/35.

¹⁸³ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/65/1.
September 1st 1856 .

¹⁸⁴ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/21.
November 5th 1855.

¹⁸⁵ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/38.

*For thirty years I have lived in the County and by hand struggling, and Gods helping, I have been enabled to bring up ten children. I shall now be almost beggared by their decision...I appeal once more to the Christian feeling of the magistrates, I beg of them not to ruin me in order to punish me for keeping the house six months against their wishes, but for God's sake, and for my wife and children's sake, to forgive my offence.*¹⁸⁶

Writing that he feels as though he is being punished suggests again that he feels as though he is being unfairly persecuted by the committee, although it may be suggested that the opportunities were there to avoid the council reacting in this manner. Indeed, exactly why Corbet was so reluctant to accept the deal offered to him, which would have averted such devastating consequences, is difficult to establish. His personal relationship with many of the committee members seems to have led to complacency, with his belief that he would be afforded more leniency than he was legally due proving to be somewhat arrogant.

Later in the same letter, Corbet addresses his career as a painter for the second time, noting, in what was a huge revelation when first encountered, that 'my sight will not much longer hold out for my profession'.¹⁸⁷ This seems to have been accurate, as no paintings were made between 1856 and his death in 1877, although this may also have been the result of changing fashions and the rise of photography as a means of recording a portrait. It seems as though Corbet may actually have embraced photography as means of combating this, with a letter of September 30th from one of Philip's sons, Rowland, revealing that the attic space that had served as his studio was being used to store 'photographic apparatus' at the end of his tenancy, and that this would be removed 'when the present disagreeables are over'.¹⁸⁸ A subsequent search of auction records revealed two small daguerrotype portraits (*fig. 81*) produced by 'The Photographic Institution, Salop', a studio run by a 'Philip Corbett in Belmont, Shrewsbury, from 1842'.¹⁸⁹ If this dating is accurate, the painter's adoption of this alternative form of portraiture practice appears to have occurred far earlier than might be expected given that commissions were both common, and well-received when exhibited at the R.A., during this period. Simultaneously operating painting and photography studios would have been a lot of work, but may have initially been a purely financial pursuit. As someone who made his living capturing likenesses, he would be forgiven for fearing what the impact of this technology might come to have on his career, and may have subsequently been trying to stay ahead of the curve. Given that he was poverty-stricken in 1856, we can say with some certainty that it was not a move that bore much financial fruit.

The second half of the 1840s saw the beginning of a period of decline in his production that never recovered. The sample size is small, and for the same reasons as discussed in relation to his output in the 1830s may not fully reflect the variety of his work, but it seems that a decreasing number of paintings were made for the market between 1846 and his apparent retirement in 1856.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/38.

¹⁸⁸ Shropshire Archives Object Number: QA/10/5/59/42.

¹⁸⁹ 'Letter from Philip's son Rowland to John Loxdale' September 30th 1856.

¹⁸⁹ Chris Albury and Nathan Winter, *Photography: The First 150 Years*, (Cirencester: Dominic Winters Auctioneers, 2018), p93.

¹⁹⁰ Most of the pictures here are known from the 1958 exhibition, which were donated by the family. Pictures of his family were more likely to have been inherited through the generations than other works.

Of those that are recorded from this period, over half of them are pictures of his children, and I would be inclined to suggest that Corbet increasingly turned to his photography studio for income, preserving painting as a predominately personal pursuit. That one of his two known still-lives, known as *A Collection of Household Favourites* was made at this time adds some credence to this, as does Edith's comment that these pictures of his children were 'sketches',

*It was in the portraits of children that he was patiently successful; they were lovely. But, after the first few years, he declined painting them, only making some excellent sketches of his own children, which are now in the possession of the family; with the exception of one of myself, as a Dutch girl going to church.*¹⁹¹

Of those that survive, the whereabouts of only this final painting, of a 'Dutch girl going to church', is known (fig. 82). It is unfortunate that the others are lost, as they would supply us with a further glimpse into the work Corbet made when unshackled from market forces.¹⁹² That the picture of Edith itself survives is a blessing in this regard, having been presumably painted for the family rather than for sale.

It is probably the most highly-finished of all of his known paintings, with details like the bookmark and the buttons at the top of her mantle testament to the care and attention Corbet has applied in its creation. And yet, it can still be considered an example of artistic experimentation, although this manifests itself in subject and form rather than style.

Although there is a revealing tenderness to the image, it is not a straightforward portrait of a daughter; Edith's role is more model than sitter. She is depicted in costume, dressed in a mantle, whilst her hair has been styled to maximise the sense of her youth and innocence, painted with a minuteness of touch that incorporates even the slightest reflections of light. A slightly more loosely painted, and somewhat out of scale, hand clutches a book to her chest.

The various titles ascribed to the painting suggest some of the historic interpretations of what this character represents - different sources call it *Going to Chapel*, *Going to School* and *Dutch Girl in a Mantle* - , but I am inclined to trust Edith's own understanding of the image as presenting a 'Dutch girl going to church'. It is revealing that the culture of the country he had visited nearly 20 years prior to painting this picture should play such a role in the identity he has applied to his subject here, suggesting that his interest in the nation and its people was sustained throughout his life. Might he even have based elements of the identity he has created here on memories of people he had personally met during his time there?

In terms of composition and form, it is a very competent painting. One writer in the *Scottish Art Review* of 1946 noted how lines are used to create 'a visual rhythm' in the image, with the verticals of the pigtails and the cloak contrasting with the horizontal 'thrust of the Bible in the hand'.¹⁹³ The presence of the bible is interesting, with books used as props in numerous paintings throughout Corbet's career. Here it is used to imply a studious nature, and thus supplements the presentation of her as youthful.

¹⁹¹ Edith Corbet in Shropshire Archives Object Number: 6001/229.

¹⁹² The sketches from this period are known as *The Artist's Seventh Child*, *Dora*, *The Artist's Children*, presumably a group portrait, *Cyril Playing with a Stick* and, also of Cyril, *The Artist's Youngest Child at Play*.

¹⁹³ Anonymous Author, *The Scottish Art Review, Volumes 1-2*, (Glasgow: Glasgow Art Gallery and Museums Association., 1946), p74.

Examining the style of painting in commissions he obtained during this period is difficult, as there is no visual evidence of any of them. Indeed, there is scant evidence of many existing at all, with only four having been discovered during my research. The 1851 census lists his profession as 'Artist in Portrait Subjects, so if indeed he was becoming more financially reliant on photography as I have speculated, he wasn't admitting it. A *Mrs South* was painted in 1848, but little information can be found on her.

Far less regular during this period were his submissions to the R.A.'s summer exhibitions, with only the painting of Edith displayed between 1847 and 1855. It is somewhat surprising that it was the year in which he was having his difficulties with the council that his name returns to the catalogues, with two of his portraits shown in 1856. The two subjects, *Miss Field of Shrewsbury* and *W. D. Field, Esq., of Ulceby Grange, Lincolnshire*, were, despite the noted geographic variance, probably related to one another. He also obtained the patronage of Sir Andrew Vincent Corbet in 1856, a commission that, as one of the town's wealthiest citizens, shows that Corbet was still known and respected as a painter in Shrewsbury.

Following the three 1856 portraits, no other paintings by Corbet are documented. He would live for another 21 years.

His demise in the 1850s was therefore not only social, in being evicted from the house where he had raised his children and made his life, but professional too. This may partly be explained by the revelation that he was losing his eyesight, but the rapidly evolving art world probably contributed too. The formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848 had a profound and wide-reaching impact at this time, and, though Shrewsbury lagged behind London somewhat, the changing fashions would have undoubtedly soon had a direct impact on Corbet himself. Described by Michael Gaunt as 'the first organised revolt against the Royal Academy', the three primary drivers of the movement, William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, rejected the pretentious and anecdotal nature of the art of mid-nineteenth century Britain. They sought instead to create paintings that, in John Ruskin's words, 'diametrically opposed to the traditional merits and defects of the English school of painting as it has existed for the last half-century', characterised by its 'serious and elevated invention of subject...earnest scrutiny of visible facts, and an earnest endeavour to present veraciously and exactly'.¹⁹⁴¹⁹⁵ Their work is also notable for the brightness of its colouring, itself a reaction to the darkness common to art of the period.

William Holman Hunt's *The Hireling Shepherd* (fig. 83) presents many of these aims clearly. Its colours are extraordinarily vibrant, particularly the greens and reds, whilst the scene as a whole is brightly lit. Also of note is Hunt's highly detailed rendering of what, narratively speaking, might be described as inconsequential scenery; the wheat growing in the next field, and each individual sheep, to name but two examples, are given as much attention as the faces and clothes of the two figures.

Their embrace of realism went beyond this, infiltrating their presentation of subjects as much as it did their style of painting. Millais' *Christ in the House of His Parents* (fig. 84) serves as one notable example, depicting a young Christ and his family in Joseph's carpentry studio. The humble interior presented without any kind of visual sentimentalisation, as though belonging to a poor family. Despite it being a

¹⁹⁴ John Ruskin. 'Reviews of the 1852 Royal Academy Exhibition', pp158-167', *Culture and Society in Britain, 1850-1890*, ed. by J.M. Golby. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p159.

¹⁹⁵ William Michael Rossetti. *The Pre-Raphaelites & their World: A Personal View*. (London: The Folio Society, London, 1995), p34.

masterpiece in its manner of presenting Christian symbolism, the establishment was appalled by this depiction of the holy family as ordinary, *The Times* describing it as ‘merely disgusting’ and ‘revolting’. Indeed, almost all early reviews were critical of them, with an 1851 review referring to the paintings as ‘the crude and grotesque illuminations of Mr Millais and his friends’ before lamenting the Academy’s ‘spirit of toleration and indulgence’ in ‘allowing these extravagances to disgrace their walls for the last three years’.¹⁹⁶¹⁹⁷ Such severe reactions only highlight further to the revolutionary nature of the art. John Ruskin’s public defence of them in the wake of this kind of criticism marks him out as a significant supporter of them, and given that his word was one which held great sway, he was a useful one to have. Attitudes towards them would, as the 1850s progressed, begin to shift, and, subsequently, so did the style and approach of Victorian artists. By the end of the century, Millais would be considered worthy enough to be appointed President of the Academy, although his short reign in 1896 was cut short by his death from throat cancer.

It is hard to know whether Corbet himself tried to adapt his own style, given that there are no visual remnants of his work of the 1850s left, but these changing tastes would have added to the threat that photography already posed to portraitists like him regardless. The desperation of his own situation was compounded further by his failing sight. Ultimately, this artistic revolution may merely have been the final nail in the coffin of his career as a painter, but whatever the true balance of the pressures on him were, his output slowing considerably in the 1850s, seeming to cease completely in 1856.

By 1861 he had left Shrewsbury, census data noting him as a resident of St. Hellier on the island of Jersey, in which he is listed not as a painter but as a ‘Gentleman’ and a ‘Proprietor of Ireland’. By 1871, his occupation was noted as ‘Retired Painter’.

It may initially seem as though moving to Jersey from Shrewsbury was a bizarre next step, although in reality it would have been an easy transition for Corbet and his wife due to the navy career of their sons Cyril and Rowland, who were based on the island.

A box of archival documents relating to this period of the family history is held in the collection of Shropshire Museums, containing within some photograph albums, a scrapbook, a small notebook and a few loose photographs, two of which may show Corbet himself.

The scrapbook and photograph albums each contain photographs of places on Jersey, including churches and castles, whilst also presenting images of various significant locations in Shropshire, like Wenlock Priory, Buildwas Abbey and Moreton Corbet castle. There are also a selection of newspaper cuttings, many of which discuss the exploits of Corbets from beyond their immediate family. The appearance of the Shropshire Corbet family in these suggests a continued conviction that they were related to Philip and his family. The appearance of images of churches and church interiors from all over Britain, including examples from Hereford, Gloucester, Glastonbury and Lincoln, shows his interest in divine matters, particularly in the art and architecture inspired by them, with a selection of photographs of paintings of Madonnas, altarpieces and sculpture included. Most interesting are the

¹⁹⁶ Anonymous critic for *The Times*, ‘Reviews of the 1852 Royal Academy Exhibition’, *Culture and Society in Britain, 1850-1890*, ed. by J.M. Golby. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p158.

¹⁹⁷ Anonymous critic for *The Times*, ‘*The Times* Critic and John Ruskin (1819-1900): Exchange on the Pre-Raphaelites’, pp440-446, *Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), p442.

photographic reproductions of secular prints included, as they give us an idea of Corbet's taste in secular art. It is a curious collection, and although the authorship of many of the source paintings and engravings is illusive, those I have managed to identify are predominately lesser known artists whose artistic styles were similar to that of Corbet himself. The picture of a young girl with a Jan Klaassen doll, known as *Sorrow* (fig. 85), for example, although owing much to Dutch painting, is actually an engraving after a painting by Englishman Thomas Francis Dicksee. Likewise, the exterior scene of three children and an admonishing mother owes much to the Dutch tradition, but is in fact a print after a painting, *The Wolf and the Lamb* by Irishman William Mulready (fig. 86). Rather than a scrapbook of paintings simply admired by Corbet, it seems instead to contain pictures by artists contemporary to Corbet, whom he probably knew, and whose interests resembled his own.

The small notebook, written in a sometimes undecipherable script, reveals the personal belongings Corbet left to his daughters. Inscribed in its inner cover with the artist's monogram, his death is noted as being July 18th, 1877. Its subsequent content is dated to July 23rd, 1877, probably made by the executor of his will. Most of the items noted are everyday household objects, like linen and cutlery, although occasionally his works of art are mentioned. Fanny received five oil paintings, although no further details are supplied. I would guess these to be portraits of the artist's children. She also received a piece of Dutch tapestry, as well as some Dutch clothing, perhaps kept in her father's possession from his visit to the county some forty years prior. Mary, received three of the cartoons he designed for St. Marys, whilst Grace got two more, alongside a piece of 'Flemish glass' and two chalk drawings 'from life' of 'Grandfather Carline and Grandmother Corbet'. These chalk pictures are significant in that they suggest Corbet had some contact with his mother following his departure from Ireland, although exactly when or for how long remains a mystery. Edith, as mentioned earlier, was handed down the six Dutch copies later noted by Samuel Butler as being in the home of her husband, Richard Taylor. She also received 'a still-life', probably that which was shown at the Shrewsbury exhibition of 1958.

The first of the two loose photographs I wish to discuss is (fig. 88) a family portrait showing an elderly couple with five younger women labelled only 'St. Hellier Family'. It seems also to show the artist, probably with his wife and five of his six daughters. Given that one of his daughters, Fanny, had travelled to South America in the early 1870s, and that his three sons were all employed in careers that meant they were at sea, it would make sense that this collection of individuals would be assembled. The lady I suspect to be Jane Carline shows some similarity to the earlier portrait of the artist's wife. Although aged, her hair colour and strong facial features, remain. Corbet himself, probably around 70 years old in the picture, shows his age, although the fact that he still wears the sideburns sported in the portrait of him by Shee (fig. 1) points to something of his youthful character having been retained throughout his life.

A second photograph (fig. 87), shows a family group assembled outside a large white house, and is noted on the back: 'Appears to show Philip Corbet and family'. It is not clear who wrote this, or when, but if we believe it to be accurate, then it seems to suggest that Corbet was living fairly affluently. How he afforded the rent for such a property is baffling considering the manner in which he left Shrewsbury, although it is possible that his sons, Rowland and Cyril, who were each progressing in their careers in the Navy, fronted the bills. It may have been Cyril's death in 1875 that triggered the family's departure from the island, with Corbet spending his final years in

Southampton. Other than his living in South Stoneham, a suburb of this navy city, almost nothing is known about his final few years. He passed away in nearby Bitterne on the 18th July 1877 at the age of 75, survived by his wife and eight of his ten children.

Conclusion

The primary aims of this paper were to establish a substantial biography of the artist Philip Corbet's life, including extended analysis of his paintings and style. With the limited amount of previous literature on the subject, it easily surpasses any prior attempts at this in its length and depth, although it is clear that the research compiled here is far from exhaustive.

Indeed, whole decades of Corbet's life lack many details rooted in documentary evidence, his early and late years being a mystery beyond scant snippets of information. Questions such as where he was born and where he received his earliest tuition, to name but a few, remain unanswered with any particular certainty. Speculation and prediction is required to fill the many gaps in these segments, and, although I have tried to be balanced and conservative when this has been the case, such claims remain open to criticism and debate until evidence can establish the facts.

Sources which commented directly on the artist have proved far more illusive than I had anticipated, although may be accentuated by my being predominately restricted to local research centres and digitised texts and archives. These are limited in their scope and ideally more extensive research would have been carried out in archives in other places where Corbet is known to have spent time. Archives in Ireland, London and Southampton, as well as the RKD in The Hague may all contain further primary sources that could add significant details to his biography. A search of archives in Tipperary, for example, could uncover far more information on his ancestors and early years, perhaps even reveal a confirmed place and exact date of birth.

Even the sources I have consulted are in many ways also deficient. The letters contained within in Shropshire Archives serve as the case of this, with the discussions between Corbet and his councilmen landlords within almost always concerned with his housing. Although this aided somewhat in establishing an accurate account of certain elements of his life in Shrewsbury, his work and career is very rarely mentioned with no comment on his painting made by any of his contemporaries in the town. The exact professional relationship he had with these men, though suggested by his commissions, is unclear without any correspondence addressing it. Samuel Butler's notebook, and, within this, Edith's letter, are two cases where people who knew the artist discuss his work, but are each flawed in their own way. Butler was writing some decades after his death and seems only to have fleetingly known the painter, whilst Edith's account contains inaccuracies and inconsistencies that call into question her reliability. The later writings of John and Richard Carline serve as the best researched pieces of writing on the painter, but written long after his death, suffer from the same lack of available information as I have.

The personal papers of Corbets that have ended up in the collection of Shropshire Museums focus on the period at the end of his life, and useful as they are in establishing more information on a previously entirely unknown period, do not engage directly with the work made during the height of his career beyond reference to a few paintings left to two of his daughters. The 1958 exhibition catalogue suggests that other items belonging to Corbet remain within the families of his descendants, but I have been unable to establish where these are today. A sketchbook, supposedly made during his trip to The Netherlands is amongst them, and would surely serve to add significantly to our understanding of where this visit took him. Currently, he has been located to Dordrecht and The Hague, but it is probable that he also visited other towns and cities whilst there.

The online digitised sources varied in their usefulness, although it tended to be older documents that proved most revelatory. The Royal Academy archives, which recorded details of the awards he received as a student, as well as a London address for the painter during his first few years in the city, serve as a good example of this. The 1830 Mauritshuis catalogue and the R.A. reviews published in *The Athenaeum*, both digitised through archive.org, were additionally of great value. In allowing access to 200 year old documents from home, these digitised sources have offset some of the restrictions imposed upon me, although I have been wary of becoming over-reliant upon them.

Online auction records proved helpful in finding information on paintings otherwise known only by name, providing data which improved the records contained within my catalogue. Very occasionally, they also provided images of paintings. Despite my best efforts, this catalogue, which is included as an appendix to this paper, is unlikely to be anywhere near comprehensive. The majority of the paintings consist of a title and a few rudimentary details, many of which were sourced from Algernon Graves' dictionary of contributors to the exhibitions of the R.A. and Richard Carline's 1958 catalogue. Although I managed to track a handful to the descendants of the Kenyon family at Pradoc, most of these remain unseen.

With my second aim to undertake an analysis of his work, any details on the materials and size of the paintings have been useful, but finding and viewing paintings was important for this to be worthwhile. I have managed to gather twenty-six examples of his work, twice the number of his paintings in public collections. For certain periods, there are enough in order for visual comparison to have value, and it is possible establish the hallmarks of his style. The faces of his sitters, for instance, are always highly-finished regardless of the varying levels of painterly expressions elsewhere in images. It is also clear that his preferred medium was oil on panel. Enough consistencies exist in the pictures I have seen for me to be confident in the attribution to him of the portrait of Joseph Birch, in the collection of Shropshire Museums. For other periods, a fuller understanding of his processes is held back by the limited number of paintings for which images are available. This is particularly true of his later years, with only one example from the final ten years of his career. It would be interesting to see if his paintings from the 1850s showed any sign of Corbet adapting to the changes that were occurring in the art world.

Much of my analysis has looked into links between Corbet's work and that of Dutch painting, but the exact extent of this is inconclusive. In a few paintings such links are clear, but these constitute a smaller number than I had anticipated. It is possible that the first paintings of his work I encountered served as something of a red herring, having been made in the years immediately before his departure from Shrewsbury in 1829 when Corbet's style was at its most 'Dutch'.

The paintings we know vary stylistically, but are often more of an amalgamation of the styles of Dutch and British visual cultures than they are rooted in any either one in particular. The discovery of further examples of his work could alter this perception either way, but I would not be surprised if this is how his style broadly remained during currently lost periods.

There are doubtlessly many examples of his work yet to be found, and any future research undertaken into the painter should begin by gaining access to as many new paintings as possible. Paintings from his early years would probably prove particularly useful in establishing his stylistic roots, whilst the last fifteen years of his career are currently inhabited by only one image. Corbet's entire approach to painting may have altered hugely in these years but remained undetected as a result. The

possibility of holding a small exhibition of his work has been discussed with Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery and, if this were to happen in the future, it might be hoped that the increased awareness this would create locally would aid in the discovery of the whereabouts of other, currently unseen, paintings by him.

More research on his biography is certainly possible, with that obtained in this paper probably only the tip of the iceberg. His early life is currently particularly void of documentation for example, but archival centres in Cork and Tipperary are likely to contain new information that could change this. Obtaining access to more of his personal papers, as well as the sketchbook shown in the 1958 exhibition, would illuminate other periods, whilst greater research into Corbet's sitters and fellow townsfolk could be carried out through consultation of further documents in Shropshire Archives.

Indeed, in its current state, this paper may be considered a base upon which future research can be built rather than a comprehensive study, although this does not mean it lacks value: in bringing together the information that it has, the life and work of this otherwise forgotten painter has been revived to a far greater extent than any other previous piece of writing on the subject.

Bibliography

Ackroyd, Peter. *London: The Biography*. (London: Vintage, 2001).

Ackroyd, Peter. *Turner*. (London: Vintage, 2006).

Aikin, Arthur. "Premiums Offered in the Session 1821-1822", *Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* 39. (London: Society For The Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, 1822), pp. 1-40.

Aikin, Arthur. 'Premiums Offered In The Session 1822—1823', *Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* 40. (London: Society For The Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, 1823), pp. 1-41.

Aikin, Arthur. "Premiums Offered in the Session 1823—1824", pp1-41, *Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* 41. (London: Society For The Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, 1824).

Aikin, Arthur. "Premiums Offered in the Session 1824-1825", pp1-48, *Transactions of the Society, Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce* 42. (London: Society For The Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, 1825).

Albury, Chris & Winter, Nathan. *Photography: The First 150 Years*. (Cirencester: Dominic Winters Auctioneers, 2018).

Andross, Matilda Erickson. *The Story of the Advent Message*. (Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1926).

Anonymous. 'Biographical Memoir of Miss Maria Lacy', *La Belle assemblée: or, Bell's court and fashionable magazine*, Vol. 30, January to December 1824. (London: George B. Whittaker, 1825), pp. 227-230.

Anonymous. *Salopian Shreds and Patches*. (Shrewsbury: W. & J. Eddowes, 1875).

Anonymous. *Salopian Journal*, no 1726, 28th February 1827. (Shrewsbury: W. & J. Eddowes, 1827.)

Anonymous. *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts for the Year 1846*. (London: The Athenaeum, 1846).

Anonymous. *The Scottish Art Review, Volumes 1-2*. (Glasgow: Glasgow Art Gallery and Museums Association, 1946).

Anonymous. *Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle, From January to June 1828, Vol. 143*, ed. by Sylvanus Urban. (London: J.B. Nichols and Son, 1828).

- Anonymous. *The Art Journal, Volume 3*. (London: Virtue and Company, 1841).
- Blake, William. 'London', *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*. (New York, Dover Thrift Editions, 1992), pp. 41-42.
- Burke, Bernard. *Burke's genealogical and heraldic history of peerage, baronetage and knightage*. 12th Edition. (London: Burke's Peerage Limited, 1850).
- Burke, William P. *History of Clonmel*. (Waterford: N. Harvey & Co, 1907).
- Butt, Joyce. 'First Steps in Public Cleanliness: The work of the Shrewsbury Improvements Commission in the 1820s', *Victorian Shrewsbury: Studies in the History of a County Town*, ed. by Barrie Trinder. (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Libraries, 1984), pp. 57-65.
- Butt, Joyce. 'Red Lights in Roushill', *Victorian Shrewsbury: Studies in the History of a County Town*, ed. by Barrie Trinder. (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Libraries, 1984), pp. 66-77.
- Byron, George Gordon. 'Don Juan', *Lord Byron: A Selection of his Finest Poems*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) pp. 124-198.
- Carline, Richard. 'Philip Corbet and the Carlines'. *Catalogue for the Exhibition of the Works of the Corbet and Carline Families, March 8th - April 5th 1958*. (Shrewsbury: Shrewsbury Art Gallery, 1958).
- Carline, John. 'Corbet and the Carlines - Painters, Sculptors and Architects of the Early 19th Century', *Shropshire Magazine*. (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Magazine), pp. 14-17.
- Chadwick, Edward Marion. *The Chadwicks of Guelph and Toronto and their Cousins*. (Toronto: Davis and Henderson Ltd., 1914).
- Constable, John. 'Discourses, 1836', *Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), pp. 129-134.
- Corbet, Augusta. *The Family of Corbet: its Life and Times*. (London: The St. Catherine Press, 1914).
- Foster, Joseph . *The Peerage, Baronetage, and Knightage of the British Empire*. 2nd Edition. (London: Nichols and Sons, 1881).
- Fraser, John Lloyd. *John Constable: The Man and his Mistress*. (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1976).
- Frith, William Powell. *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1888).

Gaunt, William. *Concise History of English Painting*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973).

Gautier, Theophile. 'Art in 1848', *Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), pp. 315-320.

Graham, Alexander. *A History of Freemasonry in the Province of Shropshire and of The Salopian Lodge*. (Shrewsbury: Adnitt and Naunton, Booksellers & Publishers, 1892).

Graves, Algernon. *The Royal Academy of the Arts, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904, Vol.1 Abbayne to Carrington*. (London: Henry Graves and Co. Ltd., 1905).

Graves, Algernon. *The Royal Academy of the Arts, A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904, Vol.2 Carroll to Dyer*. (London: Henry Graves and Co. Ltd., 1905).

Hamner, John. *Notes and papers to serve for a memorial of the parish of Hanmer, in Flintshire*. (London: Nichols & Sons, 1872).

Howe, Stephen. *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Lenihen, Michael. *Hidden Cork: Charmers, Chancers and Cute Hoors*. (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010).

Levey, Michael. *Sir Thomas Lawrence*. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1979).

MacDonald, Murdo. *Scottish Art*. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000).

Mair, Robert Henry. *Debrett's Illustrated House of Commons and the Judicial Bench 1870*. (London: Dean & Son, 1870).

Marius, Gerharda Hermina. *Dutch Art of the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Alexander Teixeira De Mattos. (London: Alexander Moring Ltd., 1908).

Marsh, Paddy. 'Below the Castle Walls in the Eighteen Forties', *Victorian Shrewsbury: Studies in the History of a County Town*, ed. by Barrie Trinder. (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Libraries, 1984), pp. 105-113.

McDonnell, Paschal. 'McDonnell's Index of Deaths from 1828 of Cork City, its Liberties and Suburbs.'

Published online and accessible here:

http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/genealogy/mcdonnellsindexofbirthsdeathsandmarriages/1828_mcdonnells_deaths.pdf

Murray, Venetia. *High Society: A Social History of the Regency Period, 1788-1830*. (London: Penguin Books, 1998).

Steengracht van Oostkapelle, J. *De voornaamste schilderijen van het Koninklijk Kabinet te 's Gravenhage, in omtrek gegraveerd, met derzelver beschrijving, aan Hare Majesteit De Koningin der Nederlanden*. (Den Haag: Ter Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1830).

Orwell, George , 'I Belong to the Left', *Collected Works of George Orwell, Vol. 17*. (London: Penguin, 2015), pp. 172–173.

Palmer, Samuel. 'Letter to John Linnell, 1828', *Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), pp. 125-126.

Porter, Roy. *London: A Social History*. (London: Penguin Books, 2000).

Rossetti, William Michael. *The Pre-Raphaelites & their World: A Personal View*. (London: The Folio Society, 1995).

Rowell, Christopher. 'Furniture, Carving and Gilding at Attingham Park by Thomas Donaldson of Shrewsbury'. *National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annual 2015*. (London: National Trust in Association with Apollo, 2015), pp.12-20.

Ruskin, John. 'Letters from John Ruskin to The Times', *Culture and Society in Britain, 1850-1890*, ed. by J.M. Golby. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986), pp. 151-158.

Poole, Rachael Emily Malleson. *Catalogue of portraits in the possession of the University, Colleges, City and County of Oxford, Vol. III, Portraits in the Colleges and Halls, Part II*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912).

Ruskin, John. 'Reviews of the 1852 Royal Academy Exhibition', *Culture and Society in Britain, 1850-1890*, ed. by J.M. Golby. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 158-167.

Ruskin, John. 'From the Preface to the Second Edition of Modern Painters 1844', *Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), pp. 204-210.

Ruskin, John. 'From Modern Painters Volume 1 1843', *Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), pp. 199-204.

Schama, Simon. *The Face of Britain: The Nation Through its Portraits*. (London: Penguin-Random House, 2015).

Strickland, Walter. *A Dictionary of Irish Artists*. (Dublin: Maunsel and Company, Dublin, 1913).

Turner, J.M.W. 'Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) on Colour', *Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998) pp. 107-114.

Weaver, Lawrence Trevelyan, *Painter of Pedigree: Thomas Weaver of Shrewsbury*. (London: Unicorn, 2017).

Wendorf, Richard. *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Painter in Society*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

White, Jerry. *London in the Nineteenth Century*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007).

Wood, Christopher. *William Powell Frith: A Painter and his World*. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 2006).

Wood, Christopher. *The Dictionary of Victorian Artists*. (Woodbridge: Barron Publishing, 1978).

Wordsworth, William. 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802', *The Collected Poems of William Wordsworth*. (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2006), p320.

List of Documents From Shropshire Archives:

Object Number: QA/10/5/27

Letter from Philip Corbet to Thomas Kenyon re signing the agreement for tenancy
October 31st 1835

Object Number: QA/10/5/28

Inventory of furniture and china at the Judges Lodgings and list of articles belonging to Philip Corbet

Object Number: QA/10/5/29

Agreement for occupancy of the Judges Lodgings

Object Number: QA/10/5/34

Receipt for 2 ls 3d received by Philip Corbet from the County Treasurer for decorating

Object Number: QA/10/5/36

Letter from Philip Corbet to Mr Haycock, complaining about the grates

Object Number: QA/10/5/37

Letter from Mr Loxdale, concerning Philip Corbet acting as Deputy Recorder
October 12th 1839

Object Number: QA/10/5/42

Letter from Philip Corbet to Thomas Kenyon re outstanding expenses for last Assizes

Object Number: QA/10/5/44

Correspondence between Philip Corbet, Thomas Kenyon and John Loxdale with estimate of damage caused to Corbet's property

Object Number: QA/10/5/45

Resolution of the Committee to accept Mr Corbett's offer to resign his tenancy
August 27th 1846

Object Number: QA/10/5/58

Philip Corbet re valuation of articles which he purchased for the Judges Lodgings and vacation of the house over Midsummer

Object Number: QA/10/5/59

Correspondence between Mr Cailin, John Loxdale, Philip Corbet, Mr Benson and Edward Haycock concerning the case of Mr Corbet and the Judges Lodgings
July 1855

Object Number: QA/10/5/60

Letter from Philip Corbet to the Magistrates with a history of his tenancy
July 10th 1855

Object Number: QA/10/5/65

Committee Minutes for the attention of Philip Corbet

Object Number: 6000/6099

Papers relating to the affairs of Thomas Carline (in bankruptcy etc.)

/Object Number: 6001/229

Shropshire artists, professional and amateur.

Object Number: 612/52

Shrewsbury (Abbey Foregate)

Object Number: PR/3/435

Sir Francis Ottley, Governor of Shrewsbury, Lucy his wife and Richard and Mary their children. From the original in Pitchford Hal, Shrewsbury.
c.1825

Document from the Royal Academy Archives:

Object Number: RAA/KEE/1/1/1/17

Royal Academy Enrollment List.

Document from the National Archives:

Object Number: PROB 11/2143/327

Will of The Honorable Thomas Kenyon of Pradoc , Shropshire

Appendix 1
Images

Introduction



Fig. 1
Portrait of Philip Corbet,
Sir Martin Archer Shee,
1823,
Oil on canvas,
77 x 63.5 cm,
Private Collection.

Image Source:
Bonhams Auctioneers.

Chapter One

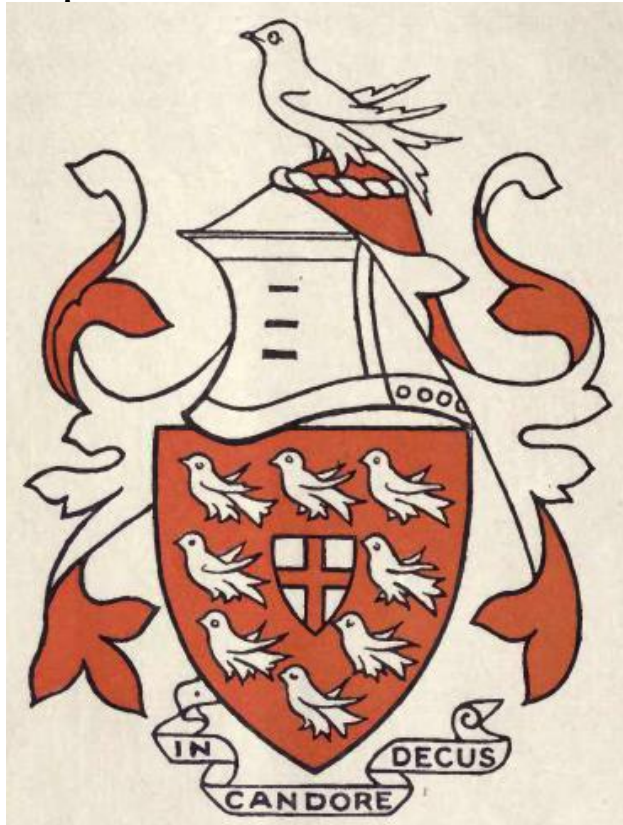


Fig. 2.
***Coat of Arm of the Chadwick
Family of Tipperary.***

Image Source:
***The Chadwicks of Guelph and Toronto
and their Cousins*** by Edward Marion
Chadwick.



Fig. 3
Self-Portrait at age 19,
John Corbett,
Unknown Location.

Image Source: *Dictionary of Irish Artists* by
Walter Strickland.

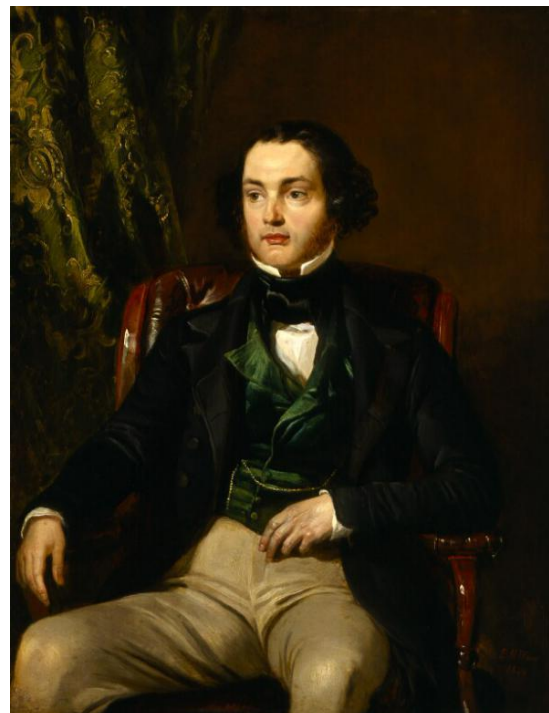


Fig. 4
Portrait of Daniel MacLise,
Edward Matthew Ward,
1846,
Oil on panel, 45.7 x 35.2 cm,
National Portrait Gallery, London.

Image Source: National Portrait Gallery.

Chapter Two



Fig. 5 (above)
A Perspective View of the Royal Stables at Charing Cross,
1793,
John Maurer,
Engraving,
Published by R. Sayer: Golden
Buck, Fleet Street.
British Museum.

Image Source: British Museum.



Fig. 6
The Strand, Looking Eastwards from Exeter Exchange,
Caleb Robert Stanley,
c1824,
Oil on canvas, 75 x 67.8 cm,
Museum of London.

Image Source: Art UK.



Fig. 7
Portrait of George IV,
Sir Thomas Lawrence,
1821,
Oil on canvas,
295.4 x 205.4 cm,
Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace.

Image Source: Royal Collection Trust.



Fig. 8 (above).
Distraint for Rent,
Sir David Wilkie,
1815,
Oil on panel, 81.3 x 123 cm,
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.
Image Source: National Galleries of Scotland.



Fig. 9 (below).
The Cottar's Saturday Night,
Sir David Wilkie,
1837,
Oil on panel, 83.8 x 108 cm,
Kelvingrove Museum & Art Gallery, Glasgow.
Image Source: Glasgow Museums.



Fig. 10 (above)
***The Blind Fiddler*,**
Sir David Wilkie,
1806,
Oil on panel,
57.8 x 79.4 cm,
Tate Britain.

Image Source: Tate.



Fig. 11 (left)
***The Pedlar*,**
Sir David Wilkie,
1814,
Oil on panel,
59.7 x 49.5 cm,
Yale Centre for British
Art.

Image Source: Yale Centre for
British Art.

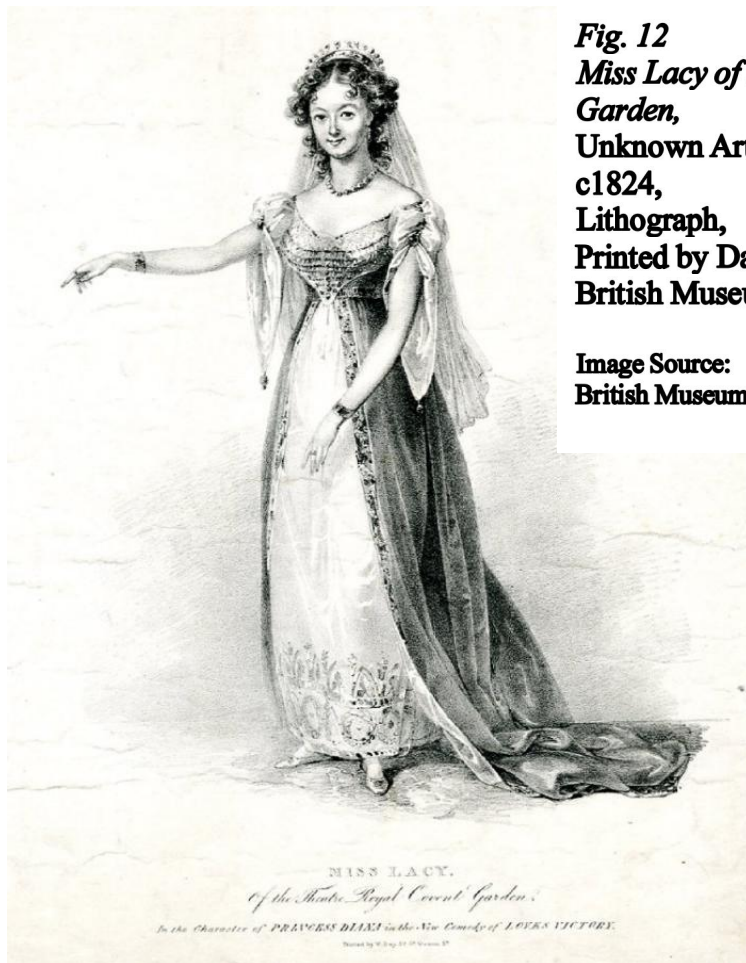


Fig. 12
Miss Lacy of the Theatre Royal Covent
Garden,
Unknown Artist,
c1824,
Lithograph,
Printed by Day & Co, London.
British Museum.

Image Source:
British Museum.



Fig. 13
Portrait of Lord Byron,
Thomas Philips,
1813,
Oil on canvas,
91 x 71 cm,
Newstead Abbey.

Image Source: National Trust.



Fig. 14 (above)
The Fighting Temeraire,
J.M.W. Turner,
1838,
Oil on canvas, 90.7 x 121.6 cm,
National Gallery, London.

Image Source: National Gallery.



Fig. 15 (below)
Rain, Steam and Speed: The Great Western Railway.
J.M.W. Turner,
1839,
Oil on canvas, 91 x 121.8 cm,
National Gallery, London.

Image Source: National Gallery.

Chapter Three



Fig. 16
Mr Stanier and Herdsman with Hereford Heifer,
Thomas Weaver,
c.1820,
Oil on canvas,
69.5 x 90.3 cm,
The Royal Agricultural University Collection, Cirencester.

Image Source: Art UK.



Fig. 17
Portrait of William Hazledine,
Thomas Weaver,
c.1835,
Oil on canvas,
122 x 101 cm,
Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery.

Image Source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 18
Portrait of John Carline,
Philip Corbet,
c.1825,
Oil on panel,
21.5 x 17.7 cm,
Private Collection.

Image Source: The owner of the painter.



Fig. 19
Portrait of Thomas Kenyon,
Eden Upton Eddis,
1850,
Oil on canvas,
125 x 100 cm,
Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

Image Source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 20
Portrait of John Robert Kenyon,
Philip Corbet,
c. 1824,
Oil on panel,
29 x 24.5 cm,
Private Collection.

Image Source: Author's own picture.



Fig. 21
Portrait of Thomas Kenyon,
Philip Corbet,
c.1824,
Oil on panel,
30 x 24 cm,
Private Collection.

Image Source: Author's own picture.



Fig. 22
Portrait of John Robert Kenyon (detail)
Philip Corbet



Fig. 23
Portrait Thomas Kenyon (detail)
Philip Corbet



Fig. 24
Self-Portrait as Zeuxis Laughing
 Rembrandt,
 1662,
 Oil on canvas,
 82.5 x 65 cm
 Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne.

Image Source:
 Wallraf-Richartz-Museum.

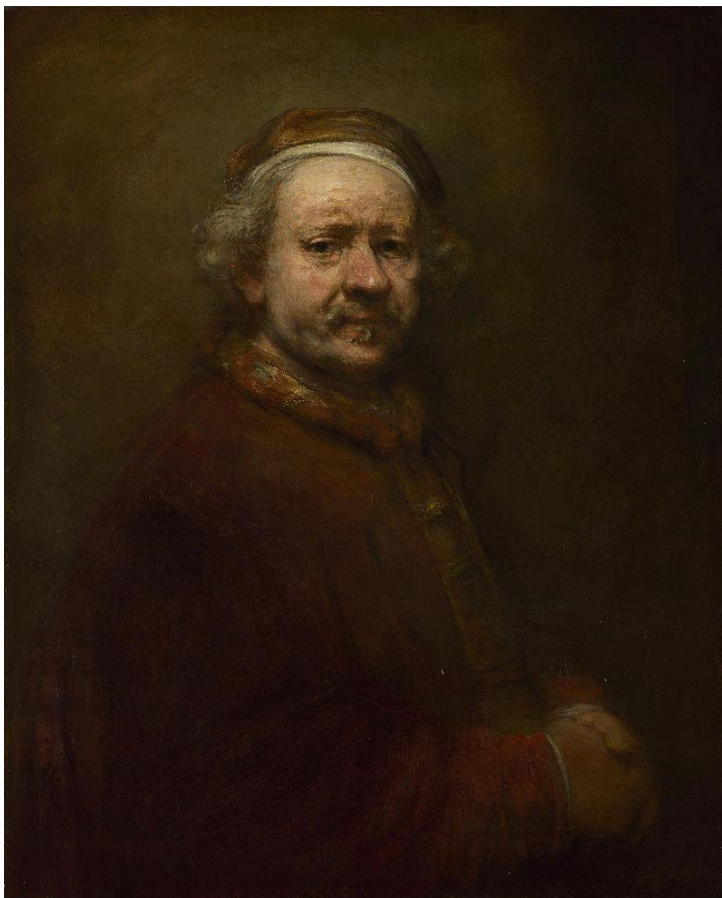


Fig. 25
Self-Portrait at Age 63,
 Rembrandt,
 1669,
 Oil on canvas,
 86 x 70.5 cm
 National Gallery, London.

Image Source: National Gallery.



Fig. 26
Portrait of Sir John Moore,
Sir Thomas Lawrence,
c1800,
Oil on canvas,
74.9 x 62.2 cm,
National Portrait Gallery, London.

Image Source: National Portrait Gallery.



Fig. 27
Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Picton,
Sir Martin Archer Shee,
c1815,
Oil on canvas,
245 x 150cm,
Carmarthen Guildhall.

Image Source: Art UK.



Fig. 28
Portrait of Robert Liston,
Sir David Wilkie,
1811,
Oil on panel,
30.5 x 25.4cm,
National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.

Image Source:
National Galleries of Scotland.



Fig. 29
Self-Portrait,
Andrew Geddes,
c1815,
Oil on canvas,
76.2 x 62.9 cm,
National Portrait Gallery,
Edinburgh.

Image Source:
National Galleries of Scotland.



Fig. 30.
Portrait of the Children of Thomas Kenyon,
Philip Corbet,
1827,
Oil on canvas,
75 x 60 cm,
Private Collection.

Image Source: Author's own image.



Fig. 31 (left)
Portrait of Samuel and William Scoltock,
Philip Corbet,
c1827,
Oil on panel,
46 x 35 cm,
Private Collection.

Image Source: Photograph in Shrewsbury Museum Archives.



Fig. 32 (above)
Portrait of the Artist's Son,
Martin Archer Shee,
c1820,
Oil on canvas,
76.2 x 63.5cm,
Royal Academy of Arts.

Image Source: Royal Academy of Arts.



Fig. 33
Portrait of William Henry Ebenezer Pattison and Jacob Howell Pattison,
Sir Thomas Lawrence,
1811,
Oil on canvas,
127 x 101.6cm,
Polesden Lacey, Surrey.

Image Source: National Trust.



Fig. 34
Henry Kenyon,
Thomas Carline,
1827,
Marble.
Private Collection.

Image Source: Acquaintance of author.



Fig. 35
Rev. Archdeacon Owen and Rev. Blakeway
Philip Corbet,
1825,
Oil on canvas,
92 x 86.5 cm,
Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.

Image Source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 36
Portrait of the Three Burton Brothers,
Philip Corbet,
1827,
Oil on panel,
74.5 x 61.5 cm,
Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.

Image Source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 37
A Woman Playing a Lute to Two Men,
Gerard ter Borch,
c1667,
Oil on canvas,
67.6 x 57.8cm,
National Gallery, London.

Image Source: National Gallery.



Fig. 38
Portrait of Mr and Mrs Dalton with
their Neice Mary de Heulle,
Johann Zoffany,
c1765-68,
Oil on canvas,
90.8 x 71.1cm,
Tate Britain.

Image Source: Tate.



Fig. 39
Reading the News,
Sir David Wilkie,
c1820,
Oil on panel,
40.6 x 33cm,
Laing Art Gallery.

Image Source: Laing Art Gallery.

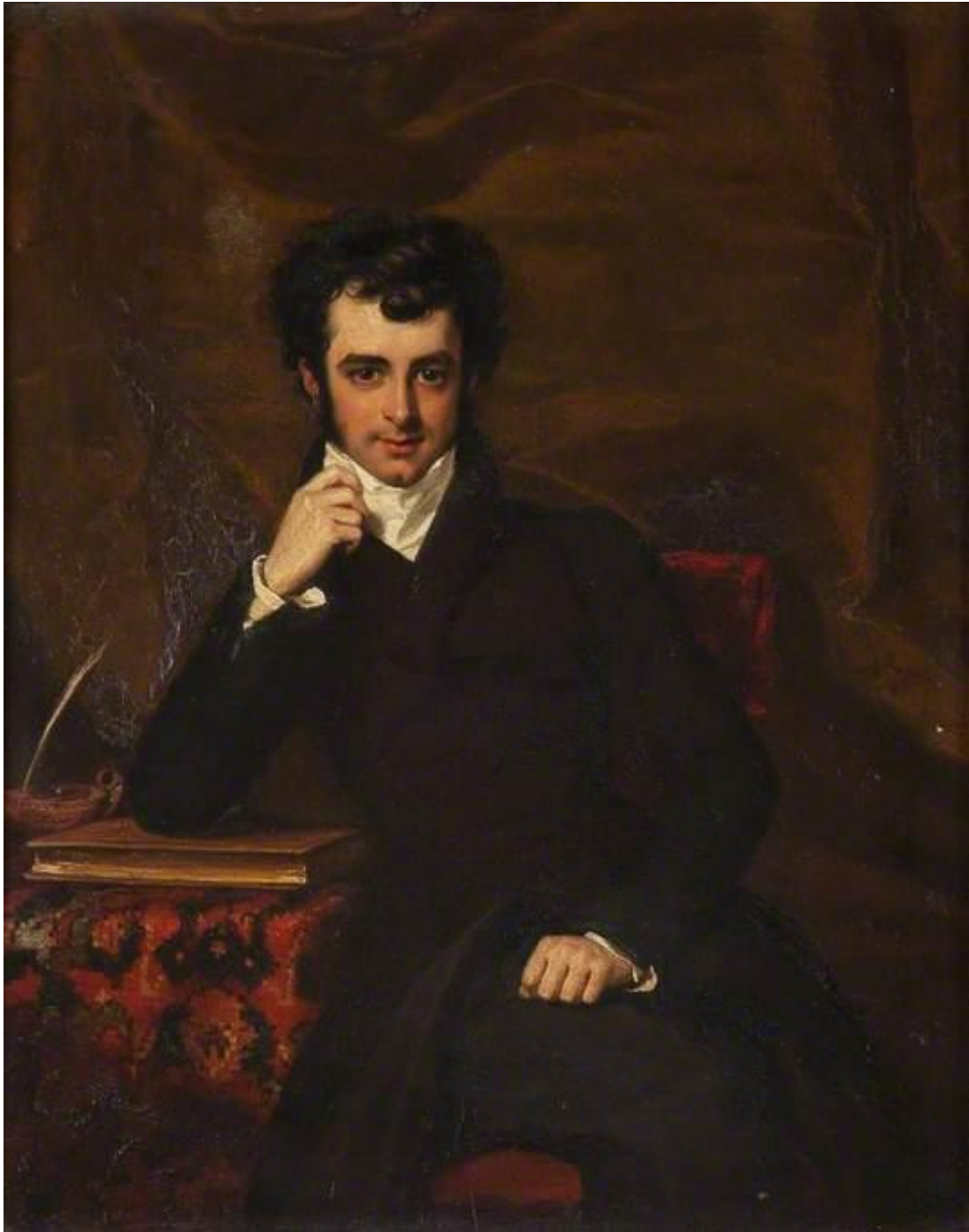


Fig. 40
Portrait of Dr William James Clement,
Philip Corbet,
c.1825,
Oil on canvas,
37.7 x 30 cm,
Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.

Image Source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 41
Portrait of Francis Darby,
Philip Corbet,
c.1825,
Oil on panel,
49.5 x 39 cm,
Ironbridge Gorge Trust.

Image Source: Ironbridge Gorge Trust.

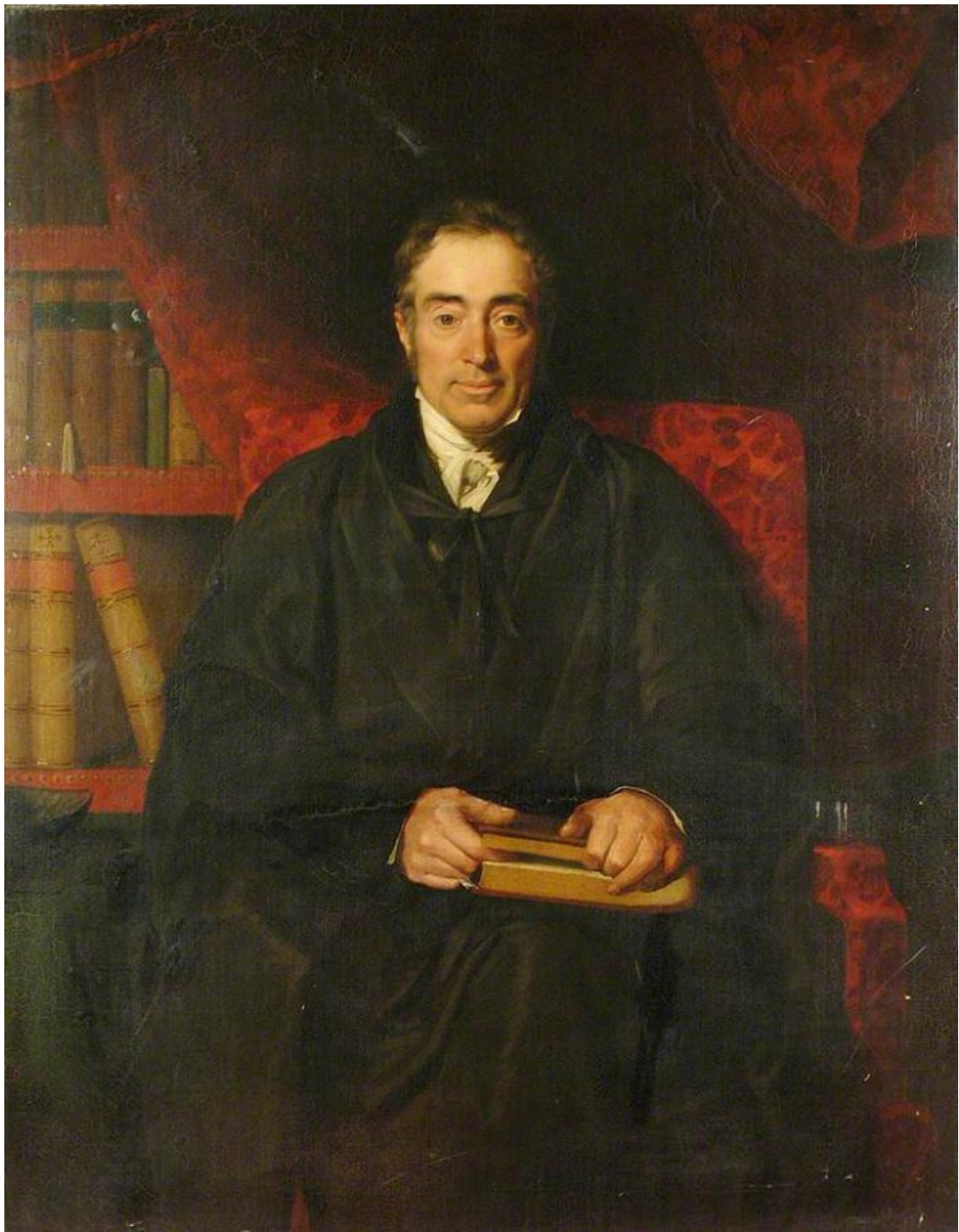


Fig. 42
Reverend Samuel Lee,
Richard Evans,
c1825-35,
Oil on canvas,
140 x 110 cm,
Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.

Image Source: Shropshire Museums.

Chapter Four



Fig. 43
Portrait of Ary Johannes Lamme,
Philip Corbet,
c1829,
Oil on panel, 24 x 18 cm,
Private Collection.

Image Source: RKD.



Fig. 44
Simeon's Song of Praise,
Rembrandt,
1631,
Oil on panel,
60.9 x 47.9cm,
Mauritshuis.

Image Source: Mauritshuis.



Fig. 45
The Young Mother,
Gerard Dou,
1658,
Oil on panel,
73.7 x 55.5cm,
Mauritshuis.

Image Source: Mauristhuis.



Fig. 46
Portrait of Paulus Potter,
Batholomeus van der Helst,
1654,
Oil on canvas,
99 x 80cm,
Mauritshuis.

Image Source: Mauritshuis.

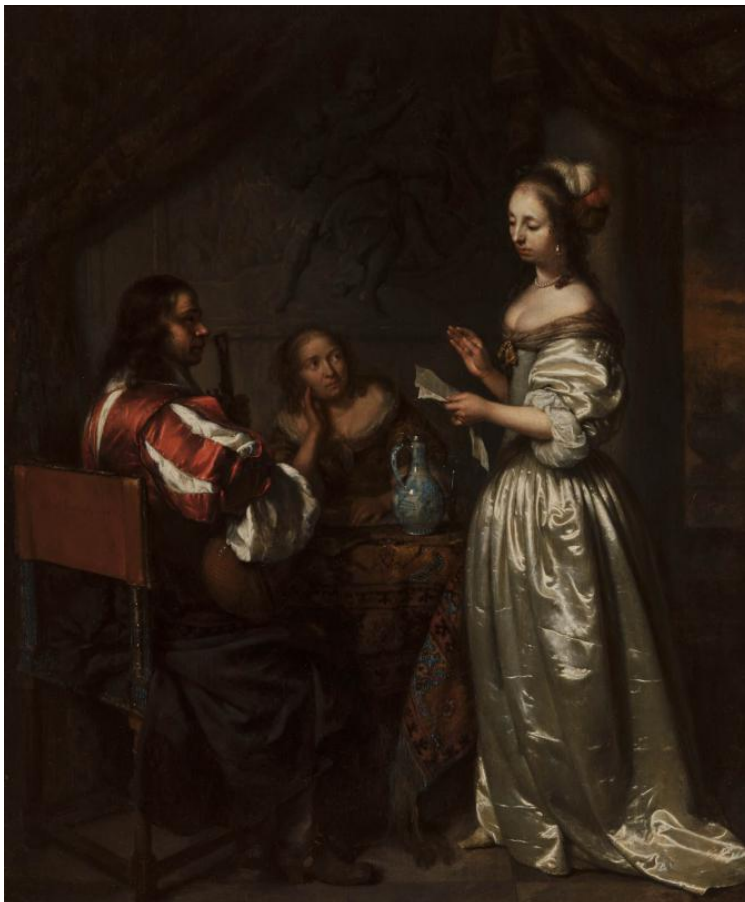


Fig. 47
Company Making Music,
Caspar Netscher,
1665,
Oil on panel,
44 x 35.7cm,
Mauritshuis.

Image Source: Mauritshuis.

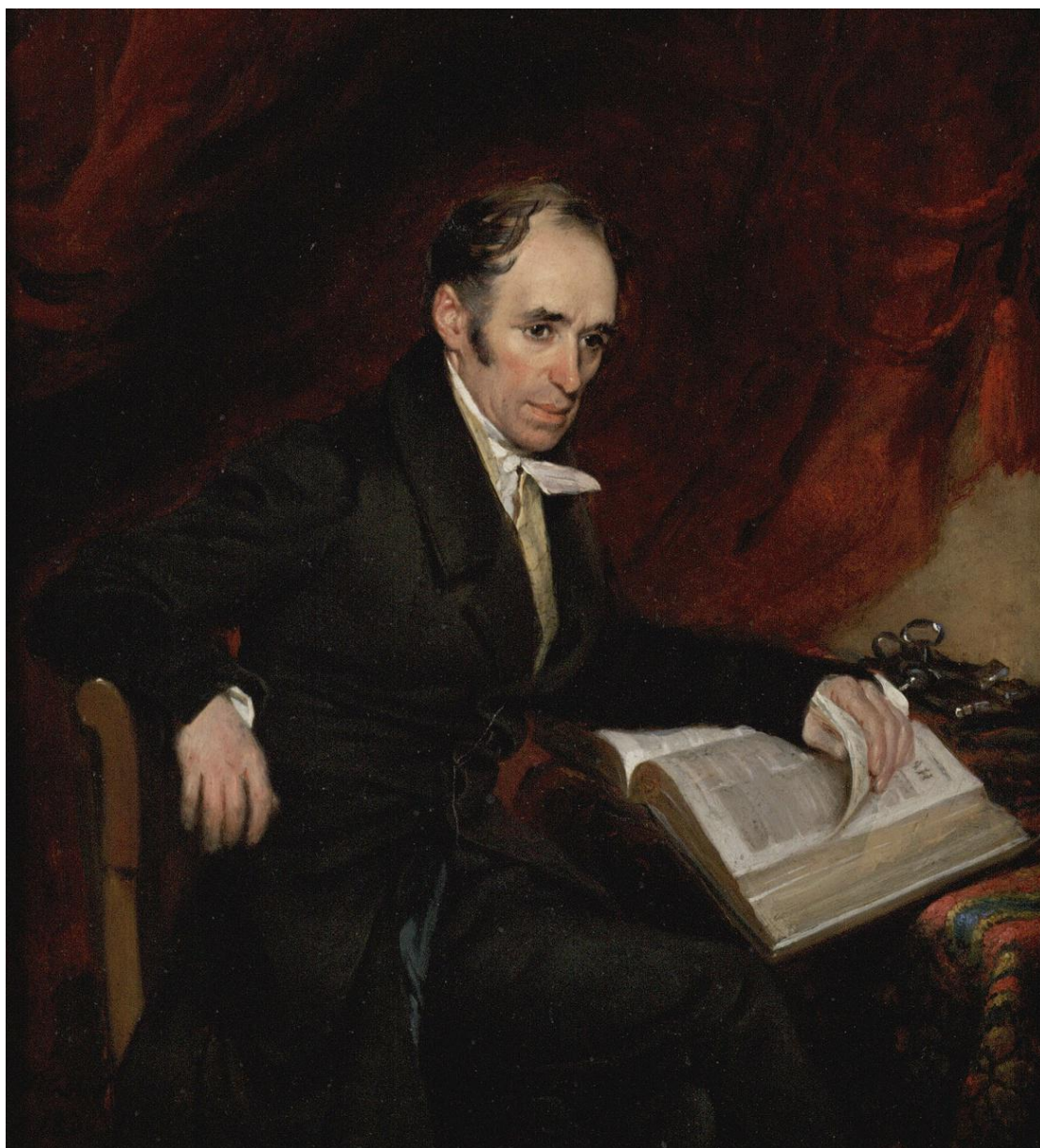


Fig. 48
Portrait of Hendrik Hentzepeter (Portret van Hendrik Hentzepeter),
Philip Corbet,
1830,
Oil on panel,
26.2 x 23.7 cm,
Teylers Museum.

Image Source: Teylers Museum.



Fig. 49
Portrait of Mrs. Hentzepeter (Portret van Mevrouw H. Hentzepeter),
Philip Corbet,
1830,
Oil on panel,
26.3 x 23.4 cm,
Teylers Museum.

Image Source: Teylers Museum.



Fig. 50
Portrait of an Unknown Lady (Portret van een onbekende vrouw),
Philip Corbet,
1831,
Oil on panel,
20.7 x 17.8 cm,
Teylers Museum.

Image Source: Teylers Museum.



Fig. 50
Interior with a Woman sewing and a Child,
Pieter de Hooch,
c1662 - 1668,
Oil on canvas,
54.6 x 45.1cm,
Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

Image Source: Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza.



Fig. 51
A Young Woman Sewing,
Nicolaes Maes,
1655,
Oil on panel,
56 x 46 cm,
Guildhall Art Gallery.

Image Source: City of London Corporation.



Fig. 52
The Ladies Waldegrave,
Joshua Reynolds,
1780,
Oil on canvas,
143 x 168.3 cm,
National Gallery of
Scotland, Edinburgh.

Image Source: National
Galleries of Scotland.



Fig. 53
Interieur van de Nieuwe Kerk te Delft,
Johannes Jelgerhuis,
1825,
Oil on canvas,
51.2 x 41.4cm,
Teylers Museum.

Image Source: Teylers Museum.



Fig. 54
Voornaam Binnenhuis Met Vrouw En Kind Bij Een Trap,
Lambertus Johannes Hansen,
c1835,
Oil on canvas,
70 x 80 cm,
Teylers Museum.

Image Source: Teylers Museum.



Fig. 55
Portrait of an Unknown Man
(Portret van een onbekende man),
Philip Corbet,
1830,
Oil on panel,
20.6 x 16.4 cm,
Teylers Museum.

Image Source: Teylers Museum.



Fig. 56
A Man at a Table,
Philip Corbet,
1830,
Oil on panel,
19.5 x 16 cm,
Private Collection.

Image Source: ArtNet.



Fig. 57
Portrait of a Lady (Grootmoeder
Hentzepeter),
Philip Corbet,
c.1830,
Oil on panel,
Private Collection.

Image Source: Mellors & Kirk
Auctioneers.



Fig. 58
Head of an Old Lady,
Thomas Lawrence,
Late 18th century,
Oil on canvas,
Victoria and Albert, London.

Image Source: V&A.

Chapter Five



Fig. 59
Sir John Hanmer, Bart., M.P.,
Philip Corbet,
1835,
Oil on panel,
45.5 x 37 cm,
Private Collection.

Image Source: Halls Auctioneers.



Fig. 60
Portrait of Jane Carline,
Philip Corbet,
c.1835,
Oil on panel,
Private Collection.

Image Source:
Shropshire Archives.



Fig. 61
The Artist with his Brothers-in-law,
Philip Corbet,
1832,
Oil on canvas,
Private Collection.

Image Source:
Shropshire Archives.



Fig. 62
Head of Princess Lieven,
Thomas Lawrence,
c1812–20,
Oil on canvas,
46 × 38.4 cm,
Tate Britain.

Image Source: Tate.



Fig. 63
Portrait of Edward Burton,
Philip Corbet,
c.1835,
Oil on panel,
45 x 37cm,
Bodleian Libraries, University
of Oxford.

Image source: Art UK.



Fig. 64
Portrait of Edward Burton,
After Philip Corbet
Oil on canvas,
48.4 x 39cm,
Christ Church, University of Oxford.

Image source: Art UK.



Fig. 65
Portrait of Edward Burton,
Philip Corbet,
c.1835,
Oil on panel, 43.2 x 36.8cm,
Christ Church, University of Oxford.

Image source: Art UK.



Fig. 66
Portrait of Edward Burton,
Henry Cousins (after Philip Corbet),
1837,
Mezzotint on paper,
46 x 34.6cm,
National Portrait Gallery, London.

Image source: National Portrait Gallery.



Fig. 67
Portrait of Francis Darby, Esq.,
Philip Corbet,
1838,
Oil on Panel,
31 x 25.5 cm,
National Trust, Dudmaston.

Image source: National Trust.

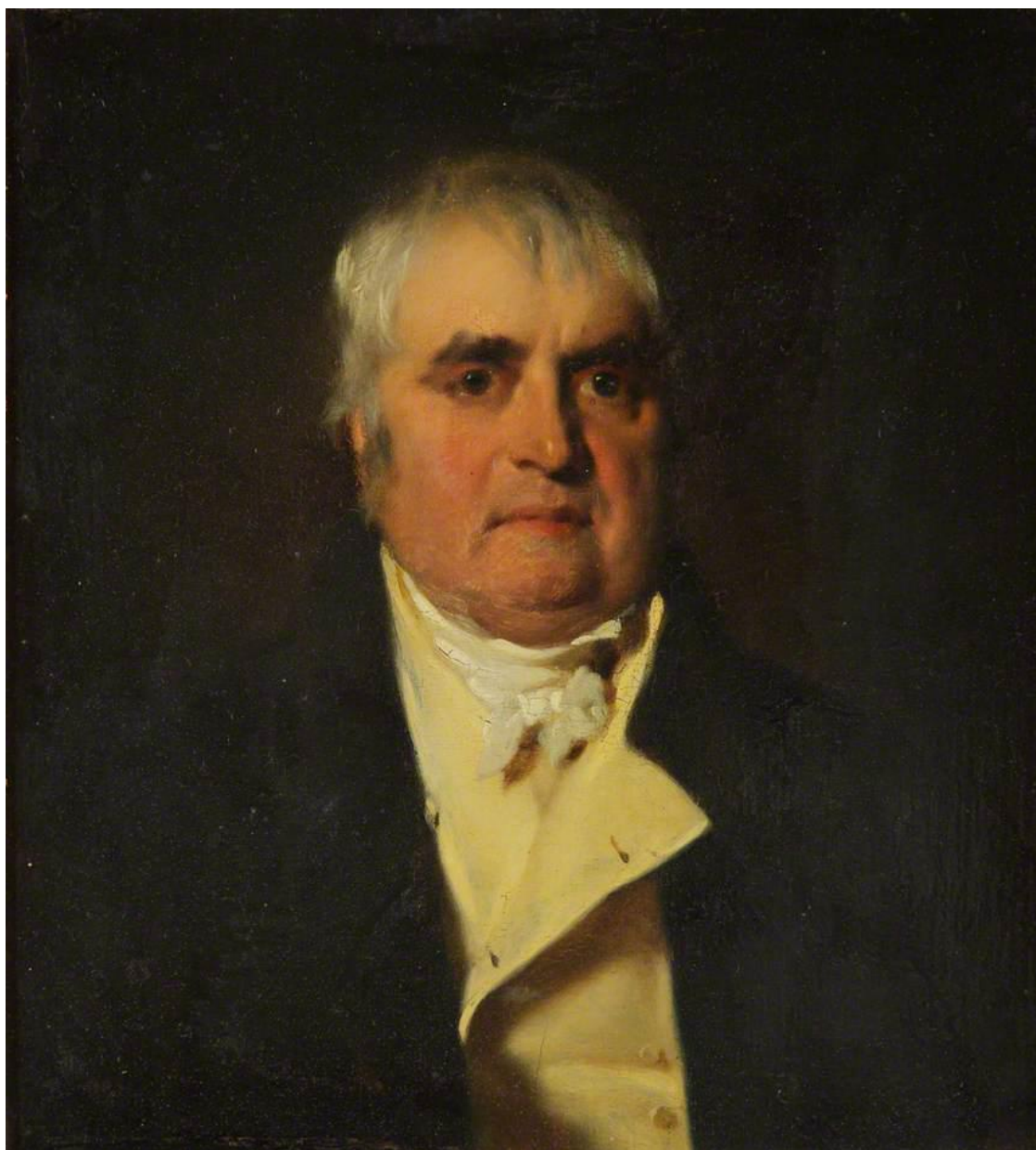


Fig. 68
Mr. Birch,
Philip Corbet ,
1837,
Oil on panel,
23.6 x 21.6 cm,
Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 69
Portrait of William Kenyon,
Philip Corbet,
c1840,
Oil on panel,
29 x 24.5 cm,
Private Collection.

Image source: Author's own image.



Fig. 70
Portrait of George Kenyon,
Philip Corbet,
1841,
Oil on panel,
29 x 24.5cm,
Private Collection.

Image source: Author's own image.



Fig. 71
Detail of *Portrait of William Kenyon*.



Fig. 72
Detail of *Portrait of William Kenyon*.



Fig. 73
St. Catherine.
Philip Corbet,
c1840
Charcoal on Paper,
Shropshire Museums.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 74
John the Baptist.
Philip Corbet,
c1840
Charcoal on Paper,
Shropshire Museums.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 75
Christ with Three Children.
Philip Corbet,
c1840
Charcoal on Paper,
Shropshire Museums.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 76
Christ in Heaven
Philip Corbet,
c1840
Charcoal on Paper,
Shropshire Museums.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 77
Christ with a Lamb,
Philip Corbet,
c1840
Charcoal on Paper,
Shropshire Museums.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 78
Melchizedek,
Philip Corbet,
c1840
Charcoal on Paper,
Shropshire Museums.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 79.
The Nuptials of the Virgin - St. James the Great and St. Clare,
Robert Campin,
1420,
Oil on panel,
88 x 77 cm,
Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Image Source: Museo del Prado.



Fig. 80
The Arnolfini Portrait,
Jan van Eyck,
1434,
Oil on panel,
82 x 59.5cm,
National Gallery, London.

Image Source: National Gallery.

Chapter Six



Fig. 81
Two Daguerrotype Portraits,
The Photographic Institution, Salop,
1840s.
Private Collection.

Image source: Dominic Winters Auctioneers.



Fig. 82
A Girl in a Dutch mantle (Portrait of Edith Corbet),
Philip Corbet,
1848,
Oil on panel,
43.2 x 34.9 cm,
Glasgow Museum Services.

Image source: Glasgow Museums.



Fig. 83
The Hireling Shepherd,
William Holman Hunt,
1851,
Oil on Canvas,
76.4 x 109.5cm,
Manchester Art Gallery.

Image source: Manchester Art Gallery.



Fig. 84
Christ in the House of His Parents,
John Everett Millais,
1849–50,
Oil on canvas,
86.4 x 139.7cm,
Tate Britain.

Image source: Tate.



Fig. 85
Photographic reproduction of:
***Sorrow*,**
George J. Zobel (after Thomas
Francis Dicksee),
1861,
Engraving, published by J. Brooker,
42 x 35cm,
Location of original is unknown.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 86
Photographic reproduction of:
***The Wolf and the Lamb*,**
Unknown engraver (after William
Mulready),
Engraving,
Original painting in the Royal
Collection.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 87
Philip Corbet and his Family
Outside their House in Jersey,
Unknown photographer,
c1870,
Museum & Resource Centre,
Ludlow.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.



Fig. 88
Philip Corbet and his Family,
Unknown photographer,
c1870,
Museum & Resource Centre,
Ludlow.

Image source: Shropshire Museums.

Catalogue of Known Paintings

Miss Lacy of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden,
1822 or 1823.
(435 R.A)

Portrait of John Carline,
c.1825,
Oil on panel,
21.5 x 17.7cm.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 8)

Portrait of Thomas Kenyon,
c.1824,
Oil on panel,
30 x 24 cm,
(Private Collection)
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 13)

Portrait of John Robert Kenyon,
c.1824,
Oil on panel,
29 x 24.5 cm.
Private Collection (Pradoe)

Rev. Archdeacon Owen and Rev. Blakeway,
1825,
Oil on canvas,
92 x 86.5 cm,
Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.
(163 R.A) (FA.00771)

Archdeacon Butler & Family,
c.1825 .
(187 R.A)

Portrait of Francis Darby,
c.1825,
Oil on panel,
49.5 x 39 cm,
Ironbridge Gorge Trust.

Dr William James Clement (1802–1870),
c.1825,
Oil on canvas,
37.7 x 30 cm,
Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.

Mrs. Carline
1825
(311 RA)

Dr. Du Gard
1826
(RA 142)

Mrs John Lloyd and Child,
1826.
(RA 143)

Dame Quickly's Latin Lesson,
1826,
Oil on panel,
71.2 x 62.3 cm.

Portrait of Samuel and William Scoltock,
c. 1827,
Oil on panel,
46 x 35 cm,
Private Collection.

Group of the Children of Hon. Thomas Kenyon
1827
Oil on canvas
75 x 60 cm
Private Collection.
(RA 169) (Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 11)

Henry Kenyon at Pradoc,
1827,
Oil on panel.

Portrait in a Florentine Dress
1827
(RA 240)

Portrait of the Three Burton brothers: Robert, Henry and Edward Burton,
1827,
Oil on panel,
74.5 x 61.5 cm,
Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.
(SHYMS: FA/1990/45) (R.A. 1827 - 281) (Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 15).

A Portrait of Charlotte and Charles Ochterlony
1827,
Oil on panel,
38 x 30.5cm.

Portrait of Dr. Butler, Mr Butler and Miss Butler,
c.1828.

Self-Portrait, Wearing a Hat,
c.1829,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 16).

Portrait of Ary Johannes Lamme,
c.1829,
Oil on panel,
24 x 18 cm,
Private Collection.

A Man at a Table,
1830,
Oil on panel,
19.5 x 16 cm.

Portrait of a Lady (Grootmoeder Hentzepeter),
Philip Corbet,
c.1830,
Oil on panel,
Private Collection.

Portrait of Hendrik Hentzepeter (Portret van Hendrik Hentzepeter),
1830,
Oil on panel,
26.2 x 23.7 cm,
Teylers Museum, Haarlem.

Portrait of Mrs. Hentzepeter (Portret van Mevrouw H. Hentzepeter),
1830,
Oil on panel,
26.3 x 23.4 cm,
Teylers Museum, Haarlem.

Portrait of an Unknown Man (Portret van een onbekende man),
1830,
Oil on panel,
20.6 x 16.4 cm,
Teylers Museum, Haarlem.

Portrait of an Unknown Lady (Portret van een onbekende vrouw),
1831,
Oil on panel,
20.7 x 17.8 cm,
Teylers Museum, Haarlem.

The Connoisseur,
1931,
Oil on panel,
23 x 20 cm.

Copy of Van Ostade's Portrait of Paulus Potter,
1830-31,
Oil on panel.

Lady in White Satin, after Gerard ter Borch,
1830-31,
Oil on panel,
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 18).

Presentation of Christ in the Temple, after Rembrandt,
1830-31,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 19).

Dutch Interior, after Gerard Dou,
1830-31,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 20).

Dutch Interior, after Pieter de Hooch,
1830-31,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 21)

A Woman with a Still-life,
1832,
Oil on panel,
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 22).

The Artist with his Brothers-in-law,
1832,
Oil on canvas.

Mrs Donaldson in a Bonnet, Drawing on her Gloves,
c.1833,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 26).

John Williams, Esq.,.
1833.
(RA 307).

Mrs. Clement,
1833.
(RA 428).

Philip Hughes, Esq.,
1834.
(RA 102)

A portrait,
1834.
(RA 113)

S. Pritchard, Esq., E.L.C.S.,
1834.
(RA 294)

Edward Burton,
c.1835,
Oil on panel,
45 x 37 cm,
Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.
(RA 1838 - 95)

Edward Burton,
c.1835,
Oil on panel,
43.2 x 36.8 cm,
Christ Church, University of Oxford.

Sir John Hanmer, Bart., M.P.,
1835,
oil on panel,
45.5 x 37 cm.
(RA 9).

The Artist's Wife,
c.1835,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 24).

Portrait of Peter Donaldson,
c.1835,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 27).

Portrait of Richard Carline,
c.1835,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 25).

A Member of the Donaldson Family,
c.1836.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 28).

Portrait of a Lady,
1837.
(RA 63)

do.
1837
(RA 373)

Mr. Birch,
1837.
(RA 222)

The late Rev. Royer Clayton, Vicar of Dawley, Shropshire,
1838.
(RA 123)

Portrait of Francis Darby, Esq.,
1838,
Oil on panel,
31 x 25.5 cm,
National Trust, Dudmaston.
(RA 419)

Thomas Donaldson at his Desk,
c.1838,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 36)

Portrait of William Kenyon,,
c.1840,
Oil on panel,
29 x 24.5 cm,
Private Collection.

A Student,
c.1840,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 29)

Sally Paddock; a sketch at Lord Tankerville's alms- houses, Shrewsbury,
1840.
(RA 336)

Sir Henry Edwardes, Bart,
1841.
(RA 323)

Henry de Bruyn, Esq.,
1841.

(RA 364)

David Pugh, Esq., of Llanerchydol, late M.P. for Montgomeryshire,
1841.

(RA 573)

Portrait of George Kenyon,
1841,
Oil on panel,
29 x 24.5cm,
Private Collection.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 14)

A Student Painting,
c.1845,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 30)

One of the Artist's Daughters,
c.1845,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 31)

Samuel Tudor, Esq., aged 83 years,
1846.
(RA 372)

The Artist's Seventh Child, Dora,
c.1848,
Oil on canvas.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 33)

Mrs South,
1848,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 39)

A Girl in a Dutch mantle,
1848,
Oil on panel,
43.2 x 34.9 cm,
Glasgow Museums.
(RA 59) (Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 34)

The Artist's Children,
c.1850,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 34)

A Collection of Household Favourites,
c.1850,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 35)

The Artist's Youngest Child at Play,
c.1851,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 37)

Cyril Playing with a Stick,
c.1852,
Oil on panel.
(Shrewsbury Exhibition 1958 – 38)

Miss Field of Shrewsbury,
1856.
(RA 422)

W. D. Field, Esq., Ulceby Grange, Lincolnshire,
1856.
(RA 464)

Portrait of Sir Andrew Vincent Corbet,
1856.