



M. McMillan Fine Art Ltd.

Walter Williams (1835-1906)

Walter Williams was one of the four sons of George Augustus Williams and was born in 1835, although no birthday is known. On 2nd June 1857, he married Jane Percy, daughter of William Percy, a glass dealer, and they lived in comfort at 8 Lonsdale Terrace, Barnes. His wife also painted and exhibited several landscapes with the Society of British Artists. Walter proceeded to have two children and remarry twice, following his wives' deaths.

From 1902 onwards, Walter declined into utter destitution, moving from Croydon Workhouse to the Richmond Union Workhouse, where he remained until his death at the age of 71. His sister Caroline was still alive although he was recorded to be "without friends or relations". He was buried in a pauper's grave on 19th April 1906.

The poor circumstances of his last years is not, however, reflected in the quality of his work. Haymaking by the River shows his talent for producing excellent light effects, with a pleasing harmony of tone and a good sense of distance. He particularly liked these "cornscapes" which have the warm yellow tones of George Augustus in summer mood.

Many of his canvases have the appearance of having been painted at an earlier period, rather in the style of Edward Williams or the more youthful work of his father and uncles. The trees are very much a Williams convention, but they do have a certain difference in surface treatment. Walter Williams often stippled areas of foliage and foreground with small, even dots of colour, giving an almost pointillistic effect, which is not the same as the careful leaf delineations of H J Boddington or Edward Williams.

In the selection of subjects he was a true member of the family. His work included the Welsh landscape which he painted in a somewhat smoother style than many of his village and woodland scenes. There are canvases, after S R Percy or Arthur Gilbert, with a competence which can make a fair approach to their quality. The Valley of the Mawddach (exhibited with the National Institution when the artist was only 19) showed a landscape, enclosed by mountains, which were described in the Art Journal, 1854 as being "painted with fine feeling, especially in atmospheric effect..."

Walter Williams continued to paint, in the styles described, throughout his career, with sufficient success to prove popular with the public and obtain a steady income as a professional painter - until the decline in his circumstances caused him to lose grip on his talent and way of life. A sad consequence of the death of Walter Williams in poverty is the undoubted fact

that this actually enhances present day values of the paintings of this artist.



Painting Details

ARTIST NAME: WALTER WILLIAMS (1835-1906)

SUBJECT: NEAR REIGATE

OIL ON CANVAS

SIZE 24" X 42" INCHES

SIGNED