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THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE

Works on paper by Rossetti, Burne-Jones and their contemporaries recently donated to Wightwick Manor

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Works on paper by Rossetti, Burne-Jones and their contemporaries recently donated to Wightwick Manor

by PAUL SPENCER-LONGHURST

THE NATIONAL TRUST property Wightwick Manor, near Wolverhampton, has recently received from an anonymous benefactor a generous gift of six important drawings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82). This forms part of a larger donation of thirteen mid-Victorian pictures, including works by Henry Treffry Dunn (1838–99), William Henry Hunt (1790–1864), William Bell Scott (1811–90), and attributed to George Price Boyce (1820–97). The gift is a particularly welcome addition to the collection since in 1975 Wightwick received from the same source a donation of five fine chalk drawings of heads by Rossetti's foremost pupil, Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833–98). All these drawings, apart from one, were made between 1865 and 1875 – a crucial decade in the formation of both artists' careers. They formed part of the collection of Thomas Hester Ayres (Fig. 19) who, on his death on 26th August 1892, left an estate valued at £33,084.¹ These works' relocation and conservation at Wightwick have provided them with a fitting permanent home in a contemporary house begun by Edward Ould in the 'Old English style' for Theodore Mander in 1888. Inspired by the ideas of Ruskin and Morris, Wightwick has belonged to the National Trust since 1937 and contains other major examples of works by Rossetti and Burne-Jones. A catalogue of the principal works follows this introduction.

Relatively little is known of Thomas Ayres. He was a businessman and property-owner and lived in substantial houses at 1 and, later, at 4 Cumberland Gate, Kew Road, Kew² – an area that by the late nineteenth century, although in the county of Surrey, was becoming distinctly suburban. His precise occupation remains a mystery, but he is likely to have been on the fringes of polite society since his brother, William, although clearly a businessman of substance, was evidently something of a high-class pawnbroker and moneylender.³ The widow of Thomas Ayres, Maria (*née* Davies), is said to have come from an Essex family. She died aged eighty at 4 Cumberland Gate on 14th February 1906, and much of her late-husband's collection was put up for sale at Christie's on 23rd April the same year. However, most of the drawings by Burne-Jones, and several of those by Rossetti, failed to sell and were bought in. In February 1907 a valuation was made of the contents of 4 Cumberland Gate by Charles Huggins of 21 King Street, St James's. There



19. Thomas Hester Ayres. *Carte-de-visite* by Dickinson Brothers, 114 New Bond Street, London. Undated. Photograph, 10.2 by 6.2 cm. (National Trust Archive).

followed a house sale on 2nd May 1907, at which the unsold drawings, together with works by Treffry Dunn, Scott, Hunt and Boyce were once more bought in. In June 1913 a Final Settlement was agreed, based on another valuation by Huggins, then at 8 Bury Street, St James's. The paintings and works on

I am much indebted to Stephen Ponder for his Wightwick Picture List (August 1999). I also wish to thank Tania Adams, Anita Bools, Helen Bratt-Wyton, Gemma Chami, Tracy Clements, Alison Fuller, Jeffrey Haworth, Nikita Hooper, Chris Lacey, Alastair Laing, Victoria Skeet and Graham Storey of the National Trust; and Martyn Gregory, Laura MacCulloch, Christopher Newall, Virginia Surtees and Andrew Wyld for their assistance and encouragement in the preparation of this article. The photographs of the drawings were taken by David Houlston.

¹ For this and for verbal, documentary and photographic information on Ayres and his family, I am indebted to the donor of the drawings.

² He moved to no. 4 after 28th July 1881, the date of his will, in which his address is given as 1 Cumberland Gate, Kew, Surrey, and his status as 'gentleman'.

³ William Ayres died 31st May 1904. His will, dated 6th May 1902, gives his address as Clifton House, Mall Road, Hammersmith. It also mentions premises at 73 and 74 Jermyn Street, and 20 Bury Street, St James's, London, SW1; Clackaway House, Les

Hubits, St Martins, Guernsey; Lambourne, Bledlow, Buckinghamshire; two leasehold commercial premises in Hammersmith; and Chawley Manor, West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, plus other commercial properties in London, Middlesex, Surrey, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. More tantalisingly it cites debts owed by the Marquess of Ely and Margaret Emma, Marchioness of Ely, and a life assurance on the Marchioness. It also mentions Ayres's 'three businesses'.

⁴ Perhaps taken from the version then belonging to the Marquess of Lothian and since 1941 in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.

⁵ Others included the following, their provenances taken from V. Surtees: *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82)*, Oxford 1971 (cited hereafter as Surtees), followed by the relevant catalogue numbers: 1. *Study for the vision of the Sanc Grael* (1857; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, no. 2150; Surtees 93G). Acquired from Mrs Thomas Ayres by Sidney Cockerell by 1909, when reproduced as a Christmas card; sold in 1919 to Charles Ricketts; Ricketts and Shannon Bequest,

paper included in these sales are listed individually in the Appendix (see below), and the valuations are lodged with the National Trust Archive. The works now to be found at Wightwick are the subject of this article.

From the evidence of the two surviving sale catalogues and those parts of his collection remaining in private hands, Ayres's taste was conventional enough, if eclectic and opportunist. The more important paintings, in Christie's first sale, included a copy, then deemed authentic, of Lucas Cranach's *Venus and Cupid with bees*, dated 1537;⁴ three 'Dutch School' portraits; a self-portrait by Henri Fantin-Latour; two subject paintings by Emma Sandys (1843–77), sister of Frederick, and four small landscapes by Alfred Vickers (1786–1869). Among the drawings were seven portraits and an unspecified number of studies of women by Burne-Jones, including the five given to Wightwick, as well as sixteen portraits and studies by Rossetti, including those in the recent donation.⁵ There were also six landscapes by or attributed to Boyce and works by Millais, Frederick Sandys, Simeon Solomon, Francis Cotes, Copley Fielding, Alphonse Legros, Val Prinsep and Ford Madox Brown.⁶ Ayres is also known to have collected coins and miniatures and to have frequented house sales. There is a family tradition that he sometimes acted as an agent for the Duke of Hamilton – at any rate, he was very interested in the Hamilton Palace sales of 1882.⁷ Among the more surprising of the heterogeneous objects in his own collection was a diamond Bible clasp bought from a local nunnery.

The Wightwick drawings attest to Rossetti's and Burne-Jones's devotion to female 'stunners' of a particular kind. For Rossetti, around 1870, the paragon was Jane Morris (1839–1914), who began to sit regularly for him in 1865. However, portraiture as such was not a genre that he favoured, usually preferring to invent literary or imaginative subjects for his images of single figures. As is well known, he returned to oil painting in 1859 with *Bocca baciata* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)⁸ and during the 1860s was much inspired by Venetian art, when the Arthurian and Dantean subjects that had been his preoccupation during the previous decade were supplanted by a series of sensual female images. He also formed new and close friendships with Swinburne, Frederick Sandys and Whistler, sharing with them his admiration for Japanese art, a belief in 'art for art's sake' and a scorn for social convention. In the middle years of the decade he seems to have responded to the influence of these younger figures, especially Sandys, with whom he shared a penchant for large drawings in red chalk. Most of Rossetti's earlier drawings had been in pencil or pen and ink (e.g. Fig. 20), from which he progressed to black chalk, the softer, more nuanced textures of which give his portrait heads of the 1860s an expressive tenderness, embodying the emergent Aesthetic belief



20. *Cavalier abducting a woman*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 1852–53. Pen, ink and sepia, 24.8 by 16.8 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).

in beauty as a goal in itself. From the end of the decade, however, he cultivated coloured chalks which he came to regard as a precious medium, allowing inspiration to proceed directly from the artist's imagination.

*Drawings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti from Thomas Ayres's collection, donated to Wightwick Manor in 2004.*⁹

1. (Fig. 20) *Cavalier abducting a woman*. 1852–53. Pen, ink and sepia on pale blue paper, 24.8 by 16.8 cm. Signed in monogram, perhaps by a later hand, lower right: DGR. Fragmentary

1937. 2. *The skeleton in armour* (c.1857–58; Fitzwilliam Museum, no.1427; Surtees 103). Bought from Mrs Ayres by Cockerell on 2nd August 1905; Charles Fairfax Murray, who sold it to J.R. Holliday, 106 Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham; Holliday Bequest, 1927. 3. *The story of St George and the dragon* (c.1858–60; Fitzwilliam Museum, no.1428; Surtees 148A). Bought from Mrs Ayres by Cockerell, 2nd August 1905; J.R. Holliday Bequest, 1927. 4. *Study for 'Washing hands'* (1865; Fitzwilliam Museum, no.1576; Surtees 179A). Mrs Ayres Sale, Christie's, 23rd April 1906 (part of lot 31), bought by J.R. Holliday, together with a pencil drawing of Mrs Charles Augustus Howell, Holliday Bequest, 1927. 5. *Elizabeth Siddal* (1850–65; Fitzwilliam Museum, no.1575; Surtees 458). Mrs Ayres sale, Christie's, 23rd April 1906, (part of lot 31), bought by J.R. Holliday; Holliday Bequest, 1927. 6. *Mrs Charles Augustus Howell* (1865; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no.E.2916–1927; Surtees 338); Mrs Ayres sale, Christie's, 23rd April 1906 (part of lot 32), bought J.R. Holliday; Holliday Bequest, 1927. 7. *Mrs William Mor-*

ris (1865; Raphael Esmerian; Surtees 366). Bought from Mrs Ayres by Cockerell in 1905; 1957, bought by H.P. Kraus. 8. *Study for the head and shoulders of Dante* (1870; unlocated; Surtees R.I.B, p.45, n.1). Mrs Ayres sale, Christie's, 23rd April 1906 (lot 27); bought by Agnew. 9. Ayres also owned the zinc plate for the etching *The rose garden* (c.1861; Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, no.220'27; Surtees 125). The plate was acquired from Mrs Ayres by Cockerell and given to Virginia Surtees. It is now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

⁶ In 1892, the year of his death, Ayres acquired from Charles Augustus Howell *The Medway seen from Shorn Ridgeway, Kent*, by Ford Madox Brown (1849 and 1873; National Museum Wales, Cardiff, NMW A 363).

⁷ He is not, however, recorded as a buyer at any of the sales.

⁸ Surtees 114.

⁹ The Wightwick inventory numbers of all works discussed are cited with the prefix WIG.D. Dimensions are sight sizes, height before width.



21. *Woman holding necklace and flower*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 1867. Coloured chalks, 58.3 by 35.2 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).



22. *Woman with crossed arms*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 1870. Coloured chalks, 54.1 by 41.1 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).

drawing verso. Kew sale, 1907 (241) as part of a group of drawings in pen, featuring several figures, some in eighteenth-century costume;¹⁰ Surtees 683. WIG.D.288. The subject is likely to have been drawn from, or intended as an illustration to a work of historical literature or the stage, perhaps by an eighteenth-century writer such as Sheridan.¹¹ This work remained in the family after the death of Mrs Ayres. It is datable from stylistic affinities with contemporary drawings by Ford Madox Brown, with whom Rossetti had trained briefly in 1848 and who was greatly interested in Hogarth and his world.¹²

2. (Fig.24) *Alexa Wilding holding an apple*. 1866. Coloured chalks on two horizontally joined sheets of pale blue paper, 60.4 by 42.8 cm. Monogram and date centre right: GDR 1866. Christie's, 23rd April 1906 (26; £8-8-0, bought in); Surtees 530. WIG.D.283. The sitter was the model for some of Rossetti's most famous pictures over a lengthy period, including *Monna Vanna* (1866; Tate Britain), *The bower meadow* (1872; Manchester Art Gallery) and *The blessed damozel* (two versions; c.1871-78, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University;¹³ and c.1875-81, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight). Apart from studies for such major oils, Rossetti

¹⁰ Surtees 674-86.

¹¹ Rossetti illustrated Sheridan's comic opera *The Duenna* of 1775 at this time (Fitzwilliam Museum; Surtees 675). Among nineteenth-century writers, Browning had inspired Rossetti's first watercolour, made over an ink drawing in 1849 with his poem *The Laboratory*, set in the eighteenth century (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery; Surtees 41). A rare worked-up later example of the genre is Rossetti's pen and ink drawing *Doctor Johnson at the Mitre* (1860; Fitzwilliam Museum, no.1425; Surtees 119).

¹² In July and September 1853 Brown wrote three sonnets inspired by a visit to

executed at least seven separate drawings of her between 1866 and 1873.¹⁴ Her present pose seems to reflect that of *Il ramoscello* (Fogg Art Museum),¹⁵ painted the preceding year, and was used again six years later in *The bower meadow*. The prominence of the apple, indicative of Eve the temptress, but also of the prize awarded by Paris to Aphrodite in recognition of superlative female beauty, was adumbrated in *Bocca baciata*, and reflected in *Venus verticordia* (c.1863-68; Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth).¹⁶ In the latter, Wilding's features were substituted for those of the original sitter, a tall, handsome cook noticed by Rossetti in the street. The fruit's proximity to her mouth also prefigures *Proserpine*, on the designs for which Rossetti began working in 1872. Wilding was famously described by Rossetti's studio assistant, Henry Treffry Dunn, as possessing, 'a lovely face, beautifully moulded in every feature, full of quiescent, soft mystical repose that suited some of his [Rossetti's] conceptions admirably, but without any variety of expression. She sat like the Sphinx waiting to be questioned and with always a vague reply in return'.¹⁷ Virginia Surtees has noted that of all Rossetti's models, 'Miss Wilding's features are the most difficult to recognize. The auburn hair falling over a serene brow, the slightly

Hogarth's grave (Princeton University; referred to as a 'Hogarthian sonnet sequence' by F.M. Hueffer: *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of his Life and Work*, London 1896, p.93). Rossetti mentioned them as having 'great excellencies, especially the last' in a letter to Brown dated 23rd September 1853 (O. Doughty and J.R. Wahl, eds.: *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, I, Oxford 1965, p.154, no.124).

¹³ Surtees 171, 229 and 244 respectively.

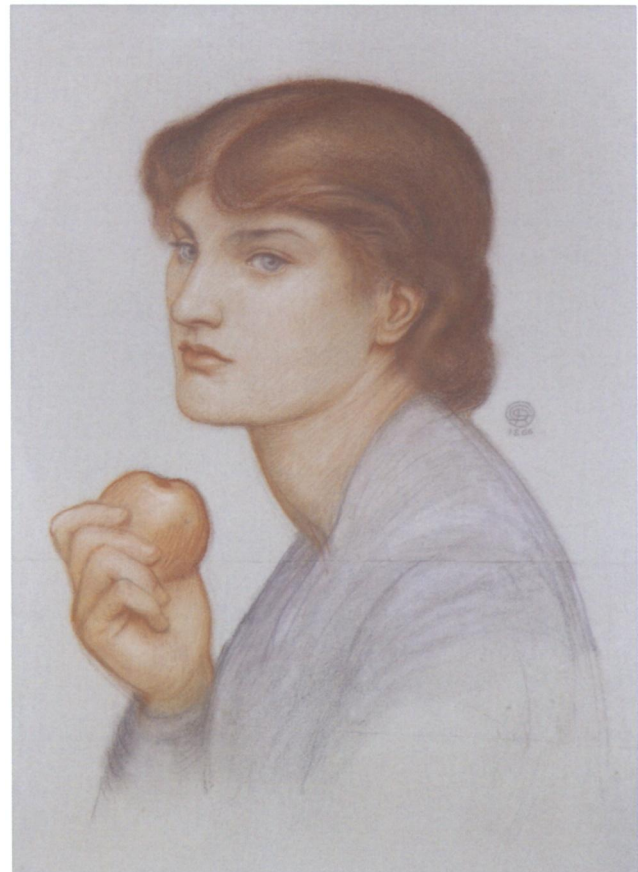
¹⁴ Surtees 530-36.

¹⁵ Surtees 173.

¹⁶ Surtees 181.



23. *Bust of a woman turned to the right*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 1873. Coloured chalks, 50.7 by 37.3 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).



24. *Alexa Wilding holding an apple*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 1866. Coloured chalks, 60.4 by 42.8 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).

heavy jaw-line, the lovely face recording a not-too marked intelligence which appear in *Regina Cordium*, *Sibylla Palmifera*, *Venus Verticordia*, are subsequently transformed by the artist into the languid features of the more mature woman which look out of his later canvases'.¹⁸

3. (Fig.21) *Woman holding necklace and flower*. 1867. Coloured chalks on two horizontally joined sheets of paper with pin-holes to upper right and left, 58.3 by 35.2 cm. Monogram and date upper right: GDR 1867. Christie's, 23rd April 1906 (22; £19-19-0, bought in); Surtees 557; WIG.D.282. Label on back of frame: 'D.G. Rossetti 1867 75 gns'. The sitter may be Annie Miller, first discovered by Holman Hunt working as a barmaid in a Chelsea slum and the model for the girl in Hunt's *Awakening conscience* (1854; Tate Britain). She also sat for Rossetti and George Price Boyce, especially after breaking with Hunt in 1860, and posed for Rossetti's *Helen of Troy* (1863; Hamburger Kunsthalle),¹⁹ which this work recalls in a number of details. The same year (1863), however, she married, and by 1867 had given birth to a daughter and a son.²⁰ The pink in her hand is probably intended to allude to this marriage.²¹

¹⁷ H.T. Dunn papers, cited by Surtees, p.200, no.530.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Surtees 163.

²⁰ The composition of *Monna Pomona* (1864; Tate Britain; Surtees 171) is also reminiscent of this drawing; the sitter there, according to G.P. Boyce, was Ada Vernon.

²¹ Cf. the flower's devotional meaning in the near-contemporary *Jane Morris (The blue silk dress)* (Surtees 372).



25. *Alexa Wilding or Lucy Madox Brown*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. 1874. Coloured chalks, 54.1 by 41.1 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).



26. *Head of Maria Zambaco*, by Edward Burne-Jones. 1866–69. Red chalk, diameter 27.5 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).

4. (Fig.22) *Woman with crossed arms*. 1870. Coloured chalks on three horizontally joined sheets of pale grey-green paper, 54.1 by 41.1 cm. Apparently unfinished but signed in monogram and dated upper right: DGR 1870. Christie's, 23rd April 1906 (25; £6-6-0, bought in); Kew sale, 1907 (233); Surtees 561; WIG.D.285. The chignon hairstyle is unusual for Rossetti's models, but the pose seems a development of *Reverie* (1868; private collection) and *Penelope* (1869; private collection).²² Problems of perspective, notably the awkwardness at the left shoulder, imply that the drawing was begun as a study of the model's head and right side and was later extended to the left by the artist, who may then have added some colour on the side of the hand. It may well have been conceived as a study for the head and neck of Alexa Wilding, later to be replaced by Marie Spartali (1844–1927), as the right-hand attendant in *Dante's dream* (1871; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool).²³ She was described in the late 1860s as possessing '... a lofty beauty, gracious and noble; the beauty worshipped in Greece of old, yet with a wistful tenderness of poise, a mystery of shadowed eyes that gave life to what might have been a marble goddess'.²⁴ The sketched-in classical drapery and snake-like bare arms also have much in common with the chalk drawing *Pandora* (1878; Lady Lever Art Gallery), on which Rossetti was perhaps working in 1877.²⁵

²² Surtees 206 and 210 respectively.

²³ Surtees 81.R.1. Cf. G.P. Boyce's watercolour portrait of Alexa Wilding of 1867–68, repr. in C. Newall and J. Egerton: exh. cat. *George Price Boyce*, London (Tate Gallery) 1987–88, no.7.

²⁴ G. Robertson: *Time Was*, London 1931, p.13.

²⁵ Surtees 224.R.1A.

²⁶ Surtees 236.

²⁷ Surtees 350.

²⁸ Surtees 280 and 225 respectively.

5. (Fig.23) *Bust of a woman turned to the right*. 1873. Coloured chalks on pale green paper, 50.7 by 37.3 cm. Signed with monogram and dated upper left: GDR 1873. Christie's, 23rd April 1906 (24; £21, bought in); Kew sale, 1907 (239); Surtees 565. WIG.D.281. The sitter is again Alexa Wilding, although the features also bear a resemblance to Marie Spartali (Mrs William Stillman from April 1872). The drawing certainly conveys both the elegance and the impassiveness that particularly attracted Rossetti to Wilding's features. It seems to be a study for *The Roman widow (Dis manibus)* (1874; Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico),²⁶ but also has compositional links with the red-chalk drawing of *Mrs Murray Marks* (1868; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford),²⁷ and generically with exquisite large coloured chalk drawings such as *Portrait of Rosalind, Countess of Carlisle* (1870; Ashmolean Museum) and *Perlascura* (1871; Ashmolean Museum).²⁸

6. (Fig.25) *Alexa Wilding or Lucy Madox Brown*. 1874. Coloured chalks on faded blue paper, 54.1 by 41.1 cm. Signed in monogram and dated lower left: DGR 21 March 1874. Christie's, 23rd April 1906 (23; £12-12-0, bought in); Kew sale, 1907 (240); Surtees 566. WIG.D.280. The pose of the sitter is very close to that of Alexa Wilding in Rossetti's 1870 chalk study of her head for the left-hand attendant in *Dante's dream* (Fogg Art Museum).²⁹ Rossetti was often at Kelmscott, working on *The Roman widow*³⁰ for F.R. Leyland in March 1874, and 'Alice W.' is stated to have been present for some of the time.³¹ There is a tradition, however, for identifying the sitter as Lucy Madox Brown (1843–94), daughter and pupil of Ford Madox Brown, and a promising watercolourist. The specific date, unusual for Rossetti, and the contemporary brooch and neckline of her dress together offer some support for this identification as she married Rossetti's brother, William Michael, on 31st March 1874. Rossetti is known to have given her another, more finished portrait drawing as a wedding present.³²

Drawings by Edward Burne-Jones from Thomas Ayres's collection, donated to Wightwick Manor in 1975.

Edward Burne-Jones met Rossetti in 1856 when still an undergraduate at Exeter College, Oxford. With his contemporary William Morris, he embarked on his career with the older artist's encouragement, but, by about 1862, Rossetti's influence was on the wane, and by 1870 Burne-Jones himself had become a central figure of the Aesthetic movement. Steeped in the Pre-Raphaelite tradition, however, he was acutely aware of the divergent values of the 'new, select school'³³ and its debts to Venetian and Leonardesque prototypes. Drawing was a central activity for Burne-Jones as an essential discipline throughout his career. He used it both for figure studies and in highly finished compositions, aptly characterised as 'unpainted masterpieces'.³⁴ The five Wightwick drawings reflect the artist's growing interest

²⁹ Surtees 81.R.I.G.

³⁰ Surtees 236.

³¹ Doughty and Wahl, *op. cit.* (note 12), III, Oxford 1967, p.1262, no.1456; p.1263, no.1457; p.1264, no.1458; pp.1266–67, no.1462; and p.1268, no.1464.

³² Surtees 454.

³³ 'The Royal Academy, Second Notice', *Art Journal* 10 (1st July 1871), p.176.

³⁴ Cf. D. Mancoff: 'Unpainted Masterpieces: The Drawings of Edward Burne-Jones', *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 1 (2005), pp.44–55.



27. *Head of Augusta Jones*, by Edward Burne-Jones. Mid- to late 1860s. Red chalk, 32 by 25 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).



28. *Study of a young woman*, by Edward Burne-Jones. Mid-1860s. Red chalk, 52 by 41 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).



29. *Study of Maria Zambaco*, by Edward Burne-Jones. 1866. Red chalk, 48 by 34 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).



30. *Study of a girl in a dress with puffed sleeves*, by Edward Burne-Jones. 1866. Red, black and white chalk, 48 by 34 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).



31. *Fair Rosamund*, by Henry Treffry Dunn. 1869. Watercolour and gouache, 48.6 by 38.5 cm. (National Trust, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton).

in classical art and the Italian Renaissance, an influence especially apparent after his second visit to Italy in 1862. From about 1865 he began to produce large numbers of preliminary studies for pictures – figures, faces, drapery and details, reflecting a determination to improve his draughtsmanship in the light of frequent criticism of his work for ‘bad drawing’.

7. (Fig.28) *Study of a young woman*. Mid-1860s. Red chalk on textured paper, 52 by 41 cm. Signed with initials in heart, lower right: EBJ. Christie’s, 23rd April 1906 (8, as *Head of a Youth [sic]*); £7-7-0, bought in). WIG.D.98. The dress reflects the artist’s interest in decoratively patterned folds of drapery, characteristic of his later work. The model may well be Maria Zambaco (1843–1914; cf. nos.9 and 10 below).

8. (Fig.30) *Study of a girl in a dress with puffed sleeves*. 1866. Red, black and white chalk, 48 by 34 cm. Signed with initials and

dated lower right: EBJ/ 1866. Christie’s, 23rd April 1906 (9; £16-16-0, bought in). WIG.D.49. This drawing is notable for its obvious debt to Renaissance masterpieces such as Palma Vecchio’s *Portrait of a poet* (c.1516; National Gallery, London, from 1860). The girl’s clothing recalls the billowing and bulky fabrics of the poet’s sleeves, and both images use the symbol of the bay leaf, here probably associated with virtue as an evergreen, unchanging in nature.³⁵

9. (Fig.29) *Study of Maria Zambaco*. 1866. Red chalk on textured paper, 48 by 34 cm. Christie’s, 23rd April 1906 (10; £9-9-0, bought in). WIG.D.50. Datable to late 1866 as part of a group of sketches and studies of Maria Zambaco in pencil and red chalk made that year in connection with *Cupid delivering Psyche* (1866–67; London Borough of Hammersmith Libraries, on long-term loan to Leighton House), commissioned by Zambaco’s mother. Chiefly known as Burne-Jones’s muse and lover, Zambaco appears in many of his works, especially of the late 1860s and early 1870s. She was described by him as having ‘a wonderful head, neither profile was quite like the other – and the full face was different again’.³⁶ She was herself also a painter and, more successfully in later life, a sculptor.³⁷ Her father, Dimitrius Cassavetti, was a wealthy cotton merchant, while her mother, Euphrosyne, was a member of the Ionides family, notable for their patronage of the arts. Passionate and unconventional, she was memorably described at the age of seventeen as ‘of great talent and really wonderful beauty [. . .] [but] of that rudeness and indifference that she will not even answer those who speak to her’.³⁸ The following year she married Dimitrius-Alexander Zambaco(s), doctor to the Greek community in Paris, but left him in 1866 and returned to London with her son and daughter. Soon afterwards she was introduced to Burne-Jones by her mother and a tempestuous relationship began, which continued until 1872 when she returned to Paris. An attempt by Burne-Jones to end the affair in January 1869 culminated in her notorious bid to commit suicide by throwing herself into the Regent’s Canal outside Robert Browning’s house. Back in London by the early 1880s, she took up sculpture under the tuition of Alphonse Legros and exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1886 to 1900, especially cast bronze portrait medals. In the 1890s she returned to Paris, where she was on friendly terms with Rodin. Rossetti’s chalk drawing *Portrait of Maria Cassavetti, Mrs Zambaco* (1870) is also at Wightwick.³⁹

10. (Fig.26) *Head of Maria Zambaco*. 1866–69. Red chalk on textured paper, circular mount, 27.5 cm. diameter. Signed with initials within a heart lower centre: EBJ. Christie’s, 23rd April 1906 (11, as ‘*Head of a Girl*’; £14-14-0, bought in). WIG.D.62. Datable as a study for *Hymenaeus* (Delaware Art Museum), painted as a gift to Zambaco’s first cousin Luke Ionides on his

³⁵ E. Korb: ‘Edward Burne-Jones and his Fantasy of the Femme Fatale – Maria Zambaco’, unpublished Ph.D. diss. (University of Birmingham, 2007), p.75.

³⁶ Letter from E. Burne-Jones to Helen Gaskell, January 1893, cited by P. Fitzgerald: *Edward Burne-Jones: A Biography*, London 1975, p.114.

³⁷ For further details of her life and artistic career, see Korb, *op. cit.* (note 35).

³⁸ D. du Maurier, ed.: *The Young George du Maurier: A Selection of his Letters 1860–1867*, London 1951, p.20.

³⁹ Surtees 543; WIG.D.64.

⁴⁰ Korb, *op. cit.* (note 35), p.85.

⁴¹ For further details of the three Jones sisters, Emma, Augusta and Millie, see B. Elzea: *Frederick Sandys 1829–1904: A Catalogue Raisonné*, Woodbridge 2001, p.182, no.2.A.76, and pp.333–34, Appendix 17.

⁴² Two contemporary red-chalk head studies in Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (1904P54 and 1904P202) show her in right and left profile respectively,

marriage to Elfrida Bird in August 1869. Although Zambaco's attempted suicide took place before the painting was finished, Burne-Jones remained involved with her. His initials placed within a heart, clearly indicate the continuing sincerity of his feelings for her.⁴⁰

11. (Fig.27) *Head of Augusta Jones*. Mid- to late 1860s. Red chalk on textured paper, 32 by 25 cm. Signed with initials lower right: EBJ. Christie's, 23rd April 1906 (12, as 'Head of a Lady'; £13-13-0, bought in). WIG.D.51. The sitter has been identified by Betty Elzea as Anne-Marie or Augusta Jones (b.1843), the sister of Mary Emma Jones, who lived with the artist Frederick Sandys as his common-law wife.⁴¹ An actress and favourite model of Burne-Jones in the mid-1860s, she was the sitter for Princess Sabra in *The princess in the garden* (1866; Musée d'Orsay, Paris), the first oil painting of his *St George* series, and also posed for several other leading artists, including Rossetti, Simeon Solomon and Whistler. She married Frederick Vincent Hart, a designer and architect.⁴² Burne-Jones frequently used the technique of soft chalk on fairly heavy paper, which gives a rich, grainy texture to shadows and background in his work of the 1860s – both for figure studies for paintings, such as *Green summer* (c.1864; Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery), and in highly finished signed drawings such as this.⁴³

Other nineteenth-century works on paper from Thomas Ayres's collection, donated to Wightwick Manor in 2004.

12. (Fig.31) *Fair Rosamund*, by Henry Treffry Dunn. 1869. Watercolour and gouache, 48.6 by 38.5 cm. Signed in monogram and dated lower right: HTD 1869 Kew sale, 1907 (222). Label on reverse of frame: 'Fair Rosamund, H. Treffry Dunn, Manor House, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea'. WIG.D.295. Dunn was employed by Rossetti as a studio and household assistant from May 1867. The sitter seems to be Frances Catherine Howell.⁴⁴ In 1867 she married her cousin, the egregious Charles Augustus Howell, who was responsible for introducing the penniless

Dunn to Rossetti. Thomas Ayres also possessed a pencil portrait of her by Rossetti.⁴⁵ Ruskin's secretary and the *de facto* agent for Rossetti and Swinburne, Howell instigated and aided the recovery of Rossetti's buried manuscript of poems from Lizzie Siddal's coffin on 5th October 1869. In a letter to Howell of 16th August that year, Rossetti offered to paint a portrait of Howell's wife if the book of poems was recovered.⁴⁶ No such oil was begun but a related chalk drawing exists⁴⁷ and the present work may be connected with this project. Rossetti had treated the subject of *Fair Rosamund* (1860; National Museum, Wales)⁴⁸ and, despite major compositional differences between the two works, his influence here is also evident in the passion flowers in the background, which refer to *The blue bower* (1865; Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham).⁴⁹ There are further resonances from *Medea* (1867; Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery) by Frederick Sandys, another resident of Tudor House at the time – most obviously, the headdress.⁵⁰

13. *Northern shore: seascape*, by William Henry Hunt. Watercolour, 10.4 by 19.3 cm. Kew sale, 1907 (233B). WIG.D.293.

14. *Mediterranean park*, by William Henry Hunt. Watercolour, 11 by 18.9 cm. Kew sale, 1907 (233B). WIG.D.294.

15. *Sky above roofs*, by William Bell Scott. 1863. Watercolour, 12.3 by 26.1 cm. Initialed on centre house and dated 19.12.63 lower right. Kew sale, 1907 (225). WIG.D.292.

16. *Sky above woods*, by William Bell Scott. 1863. Watercolour, 11.4 by 26.7 cm. Initialed lower left: WBS. Dated lower right: 12 December 63. Kew sale, 1907 (226). WIG.D.290.

17. *Italian landscape*, attributed to George Price Boyce. Watercolour, 7.4 by 19.8 cm. Kew sale, 1907 (232). WIG.D.289.

18. *Italian landscape*, attributed to George Price Boyce. Watercolour, 6 by 18.9 cm. Kew sale, 1907 (232). WIG.D.291

Appendix

Ayres sale catalogues

Relevant sections from the sale catalogues of Thomas Ayres's estate after the death of his widow, Maria, are given below and include works not donated to Wightwick, the better to illustrate his taste and collecting activities. Dated 23rd April 1906 and 2nd May 1907, the sales were followed by valuations respectively in February 1907 and April 1913, leading to the June 1913 Final Settlement with his daughter, Marie. Works from the Wightwick donation are marked with an asterisk, and their catalogue numbers in the text above are noted in parentheses. The style and descriptions of the original entries have been preserved wherever possible. A number of the works are still in the possession of Thomas Ayres's descendants.

1. Collection of Pictures and Drawings, The property of a Lady deceased [. . .] also [. . .] The Following are sold by Order of the executors of A LADY, deceased [. . .] Christies, 23 April 1906.

DRAWINGS

1. G.P. BOYCE: THE MILL 9 in. by 13 in.
2. G.P. BOYCE: THE CURFEW TOWER, WINDSOR 10 in. by 7 in.
3. G.P. BOYCE: THE RIALTO, VENICE 7½ in. by 10½ in.

and were probably made in preparation for *Astrologia*, a gouache of 1865 (private collection).

⁴³ S. Wildman et al.: exh. cat. *Visions of Life and Love: Pre-Raphaelite Art from the Birmingham Collection, England*, Seattle (Art Museum) 1995, p.244, no.79.

⁴⁴ Cf. Rossetti's contemporary chalk drawing of Mrs Howell (sale, Sotheby's, London, 21st June 1988, lot 43); Surtees 339.

⁴⁵ Part of lot 32 in the sale of 23rd April 1906; see Appendix and note 55 below.

⁴⁶ Doughty and Wahl, *op. cit.* (note 12), II, Oxford 1965, p.712, no.851.

⁴⁷ Sale, Sotheby's, London, 21st June 1988, lot 43, repr. in colour.

⁴⁸ Burne-Jones also treated the subject more than once in the early 1860s, most notably in a watercolour of 1863 (private collection).

⁴⁹ Surtees 178.

⁵⁰ In 1873–74 Sandys depicted Mrs Howell in a large chalk portrait (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, no.97'25).

4. G.P. BOYCE: SAN GIORGIO, VENICE: Moonlight 7½ in. by 10½ in.
 5. G.P. BOYCE, 1864: NIGHT SKETCH OF OLD BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE 7½ in. by 9¼ in.
 6. G.P. BOYCE, 1867: BRIDEWELL, LONDON, 3¾ in. by 5½ in.
 7. SIR E. BURNE JONES, 1867: LUCRETIA, 54 in. by 27 in.
 "And when a wolfe findeth a lamb alone,
 To whom shall she complain or make moan".
 *8. SIR E. BURNE JONES: HEAD OF A YOUTH [*sic*] – red chalk 21 in. by 16¼ in. [no.7]
 *9. SIR E. BURNE-JONES, 1866: HEAD OF A GIRL – red chalk 19 in. by 13½ in. [no.8]
 *10. SIR E. BURNE-JONES: HEAD OF A GIRL – red chalk, 19 in. by 13½ in. [no.9]
 *11. SIR E. BURNE-JONES: HEAD OF A GIRL – red chalk Circle – 11 in. [no.10]
 *12. SIR E. BURNE-JONES: HEAD OF A LADY – red chalk, 12½ in. by 10 in. [no.11]
 13. SIR E. BURNE-JONES: FEMALE STUDIES; and HEAD OF DANTE, red chalk
 14. F. COTES, R.A.: PORTRAIT OF MADAME LA DUCHESSE DE GRAMMONT, in grey dress trimmed with gold Pastel 24 in. by 17½ in.
 15. FIELDING: ON THE THAMES NEAR MORTLAKE, 9 in. by 13½ in.
 16. A. LEGROS, 1864: THE CATHEDRAL DOOR, 12½ in. by 11 in.
 17. SIR J.E. MILLAIS, P.R.A., 1850: THE TOWN CRIER, 11¼ in. by 16 in.
 18. SIR J.E. MILLAIS, P.R.A.: HEAD OF A LADY; and STUDY OF A MAN'S HEAD – pencil
 19. SIR J.E. MILLAIS, P.R.A.: AN OLD WOMAN – pencil 13½ in. by 10 in.
 20. VAL PRINSEP, R.A.: A LAKE SCENE, with boat: Evening, 8½ in. by 12 in.
 21. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1850–65: HEAD OF A GIRL, with green dress – on gold ground, 13 in. by 9½ in.⁵¹
 *22. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1867: A LADY, with flowing hair, holding a flower – black and red chalk, 23 in. by 18 in. [no.3]
 *23. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1874: HEAD OF A LADY – black and red chalk, 23 in. by 18 in. [no.6]
 *24. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1873: HEAD OF A LADY – chalk, 20 ½ in. by 15 in. [no.5]
 *25. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1870: PORTRAIT OF A LADY – black and red chalk, 35 in. by 25 in. [no.4]
 *26. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1866: A GIRL, holding an apple – black and red chalk, 24½ in. by 17½ in. [no.2]
 27. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1870: STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF 'DANTE' IN THE PICTURE OF 'DANTE'S DREAM' – chalk 18½ in. by 15 in.⁵²
 28. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1861: IN THE STUDIO – pencil – 12 in. by 10½ in.
 29. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1865: HEADS OF LADIES – a pair – pencil, 16 in. by 13½ in.
 30. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1865: HEADS OF LADIES – pencil
 31. D.G. ROSSETTI, 1865: A LADY, washing her hands;⁵³ and PORTRAIT OF A LADY – pencil⁵⁴
 32. D.G. ROSSETTI: HEAD OF A LADY, 1865;⁵⁵ and A FEMALE STUDY, 1875 – pencil
 33. F. SANDYS: HEAD OF A LADY Pastel – 15 in. by 11 in.
 34. SIMEON SOLOMON, 1867: THE FAVOURITE Pastel – 14 in. by 11 in.

PICTURES

35. DUTCH SCHOOL: PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN, in black dress and white collar 20 in. by 17 in.
 36. DUTCH SCHOOL: PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN, in breastplate and leather tunic. On panel – 20 in. by 13 in.
 37. DUTCH SCHOOL: A CHILD, in green dress, holding some flowers. On panel, oval 15½ in. by 13½ in.
 38. H. FANTIN LATOUR: PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST, in dark dress 23½ in. by 19½ in.
 39. MISS E. SANDYS, 1870: POT-POURRI, 18½ in. by 13½ in.
 40. MISS E. SANDYS: BELINDA, 14 in. by 10 in.
 41. A. VICKERS: SANDOWN BAY, ISLE OF WIGHT 9½ in. by 14½ in.
 42. A. VICKERS: THE THAMES NEAR CLEWER 9½ in. by 14½ in.

⁵¹ Fitzwilliam Museum, no.1575; Surtees 458, as an unfinished early likeness of Elizabeth Siddal. In the provenance, but not in the accompanying footnote, the lot number is wrongly cited as 31.

⁵² *Study for the head and shoulders of Dante*, bought by Agnew, now unlocated; Surtees under R.I.B., p.45, note 1.

⁵³ *Study for 'Washing hands'*. 1865. Fitzwilliam Museum, no.1576; Surtees 179A. The head is taken from Ellen Smith.

43. A. VICKERS: HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE 10 in. by 13½ in.
 44. A. VICKERS: A ROAD THROUGH A WOOD IN TAFF VALE, 9½ in. by 14½ in.
 [Total Sold: £1,000.16.od.]

2. 4, Cumberland Gate, No.270, Kew Road, Kew. Catalogue of Rare Antique and other Furniture [. . .] Valuable Oil Paintings & Watercolours [. . .] For Sale by Auction on Thursday, May 2nd [1907] Messrs Breadmore and Webb, Auctioneers, 64, Sheen Road, Richmond, and Railway Station, Kew Gardens.

PICTURES – OILS

204. 'A quiet state of things' by Jas Cole, gilt frame.
 205. An old 'Interior of Cathedral with figures', gilt frame
 206. Oval portrait of a child, Dutch school, gilt frame
 207. Small painting on panel, 'Still Life', gilt frame
 208. 'Sandown Bay, Isle of Wight', by A. Vickers, gilt frame, glazed
 209. 'Portrait of a lady', by Hayter, about 50 in. by 40 in., in massive carved gilt frame
 210. 'A road through a wood in Taff Vale, S. Wales', by A. Vickers, gilt frame, glazed
 211. 'Portrait of a girl with bowl of roses', gilt frame, glazed
 212. 'Horses and dog in a landscape', carved gilt frame
 213. 'The Signal', by Jas. Cole, gilt frame
 214. 'View near Wimbledon', by C.D. Brockman, gilt frame
 215. 'Chrystabel', by E. Havell
 216. 'The Little Mamma', by Jas. Cole, gilt frame, glazed
 217. Sketch of a girl with pitcher, ebonized and gilt frame
 218. Lady holding a hand of playing cards, gilt frame
 219. Portrait of a gentleman in black dress and white collar, 17th Century, Dutch School, gilt frame
 220. A nude study, gilt frame

WATER COLOURS

221. A clever work, classical figures in oak frame, glazed
 *222. Portrait of a lady, in gilt frame, glazed [no.12]
 223. A river scene and tree study by Val Prinsep, R.A., gilt frame
 224. Park scene with buildings, signed W., gilt frame
 *225. Study of a cloudy sunset, by W.B. Scott, gilt frame [no.15]
 *226. A ditto, similar subject, the companion picture [no.16]
 227. A sepia study [these words deleted in ink], 'Head of a girl', by E. Burne-Jones, A.R.A., [name deleted and 'D.G. Rossetti' substituted], oak and gilt frame
 228. Cottage interior with figures by F. Goodall, R.A., gilt frame
 229. 'The Thames between Blackfriars and Waterloo Bridges', gilt frame
 230. A lake and mountain scene, by Val Prinsep, R.A.
 231. A rocky coast scene, gilt frame [these words deleted and the following substituted in two different hands] Oil painting 'Scene on the Medway' Madox Brown⁵⁶
 *232. A small pair of sketches, by G.P. Boyce, gilt frames [nos.17 and 18]
 *233. Portrait of a lady, by D.G. Rossetti, 1870 [no.4]
 [Two additions in ink:]
 233A. Lady in a garden
 *233B. A small pair of watercolours by W. Hunt [nos.13 and 14]

PENCIL DRAWINGS, &c

234. 'Lanercost', by Samuel Prout, oak frame
 235. 'St Nicholas', Prague, gilt frame
 236. A portrait, by J.E. Millais, R.A., gilt frame
 237. An etching, 'The Tempest', Act I., Scene II., by J.E. Millais, R.A., oak and gilt frame
 238. 'A Tree Study', by Runworth, in oak frame
 *239. Portrait of a lady, by D.G. Rossetti, oak frame [no.5?]
 *240. Study of a girl, by D.G. Rossetti, gilt frame [no.6?]
 *241. A 3 [deleted and '2' substituted in ink]-figure sketch, [the following words deleted] by D.G. Rossetti [no.1].

⁵⁴ *Elizabeth Siddall*. Fitzwilliam Museum, no.1575; Surtees 458.

⁵⁵ *Mrs Charles Augustus Howell*. Dated 31st July 1865. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no.E.2915–1927; Surtees 338. Kate Howell was single at the time this drawing was made, but later she married her eponymous cousin, Charles, in September 1867.

⁵⁶ *The Medway seen from Shorn Ridgeway*, by Ford Madox Brown. (National Museum Wales, Cardiff, NMW A 363).