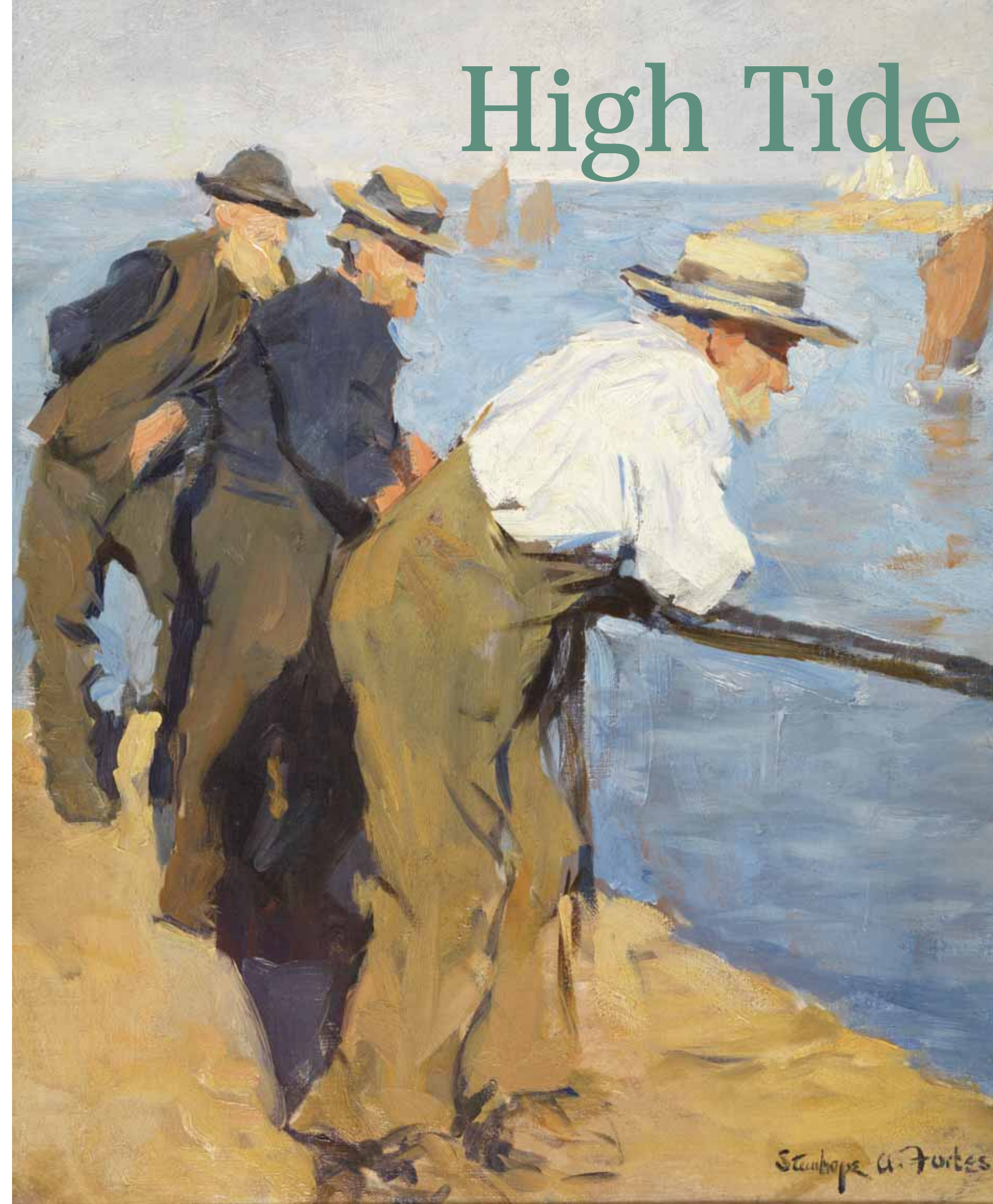


High Tide



Stanhope A. Forbes



Next page:

WALTER LANGLEY

RI RSA RBA RWA 1852-1922

1. THE OLD PILOT

watercolour

81.3 x 72.4 cms 32 x 28½ ins

signed lower right

Provenance:

Private Collection





High Tide

Paintings from Newlyn and St Ives
including an Important Collection of Works
by Julius Olsson 1864-1942

Autumn
2010



MESSUM'S

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JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

2. SUNRISE

oil on canvas
61 x 76.5 cms 24 x 30½ ins
signed lower left

Foreword

Messum's are delighted to present *High Tide*, an exhibition that brings together an impressive number of significant works by Cornish artists produced at the turn of the last century, the vast majority of which have come from private sources.

The Birt collection of marine paintings by Julius Olsson was brought together through the persistence and passion of one man over recent years. Charles Birt was a businessman living in South Wales, whose interest in Julius Olsson was first aroused due to his wife's distant relationship with the artist by marriage. Messum's have been fortunate enough to acquire this unique collection, which includes not only some of Olsson's important exhibited works, but also smaller scale and less formal canvases, looser, oil sketches as well as some rarely seen watercolours. As a collection, it is testament to the captivating power of the sea as inspiration for artist and collector alike.

Olsson was a member of the Royal Academy, a frequent exhibitor at the New English Art Club and an accomplished yachtsman. Of Swedish ancestry, Olsson was memorably described by one interviewer as "a big man with a big heart, who paints big pictures with big brushes in a big studio". He was renowned for his insistence on working outside in the open air in St Ives, capturing fleeting effects of the light and specific atmospheric conditions no matter how inclement the weather. As founder of a popular and successful School of Painting at St Ives in 1895, he was also responsible for a large proportion of the artistic immigration into the town. His students came from all over the world, creating a more bohemian atmosphere and international outlook in St Ives than might perhaps have been attributed to the neighbouring artists' colony at Newlyn.

Olsson's stunning paintings of the sea, capturing her many moods but particularly at his favourite time of day—nightfall—will be accompanied in this show by a selection of paintings by other artists based in St Ives, Newlyn and Falmouth during the same period. While Olsson's eyes were firmly fixed on the elements and the far horizon, many of his compatriots were more fascinated by activities on shore, albeit activities not unrelated to the sea. In Newlyn, where Stanhope Forbes and Thomas Cooper Gotch were perhaps the best-known and most successful of the resident artists, there was no less emphasis on working *en plein air*, but there was also, perhaps, a greater interest in Social Realism as a movement and in the human dramas played out amongst the resident population. The present show features a large group of accomplished watercolours by the Newlyn artist, Walter Langley (1852-1922), who returned frequently to the bittersweet lives of the local fisherfolk, their wives and children, for inspiration. The show will also feature an important work by the Falmouth artist, Charles Napier Hemy (1841-1917)—another painter-yachtsman whose later career was devoted to the drama of the waves.

From its earliest days as a company, Messum's has been renowned for promoting the work of the early Newlyn and St Ives painters and of other great marine painters past and present. *High Tide* demonstrates the quality of the work still available in private hands and the enduring fascination that the sea exerts on artists and collectors alike.

DM



Julius Olsson in his studio at St Eia, March 1909.
(Photograph: Walter G. Batchelor / Courtesy of
A. Wormleighton, with thanks to David Tovey)



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

3. THE DEEP BLUE SEA

oil on canvas
123 x 166.5 cms 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 65 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection

Exhibited:
Liverpool: Dicksee and co., 1910;
Paris: Societ  des Artistes Franaises as 'Marin Bleu'
(according to old labels on reverse of painting)

JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

Julius Olsson was the son of a Swedish timber merchant and his English wife, and grew up in suburban Surrey. Until the age of 17, he was educated in Sweden and spent many holidays there subsequently.¹ That he had little or no formal training in painting is stated in a number of published sources, yet in addition to becoming an accomplished and much admired painter of seascapes himself, he was also instrumental in the artistic education of whole generations of aspiring painters who enrolled at his School of Painting in St Ives from 1895 onwards. Such was the draw of this establishment for young artists, not only from across the British Isles but from across the world, that it could be said that he was in part responsible for the distinctly bohemian, international flavour of St Ives as an art colony, particularly in comparison with its neighbour across the Cornish peninsular at Newlyn.

Olsson's association with St Ives appears to have begun in 1888, on his marriage to Katherine Mary Butt. It was noted in his obituary that "...physically he was of the Nordic type, blue-eyed and powerful in frame".² This powerful build, in combination with the enormous studios he occupied at different times in various locations in the town, led to Folliott Stokes' memorable comment that Olsson was "...a big man with a big heart, who paints big pictures with big brushes in a big studio".³ The impressive size of Olsson's studio was also mentioned in a magazine article of 1896:

Mr Olsson's studio is as long and as high as many a Methodist Chapel. From ceiling to floor, great fishing smack sails hang across in folds, stained by a thousand winds to the colour of brown velvet. On one side a bowl of water hissed upon a big stove, on the other a deal bench was strewn with tubes of pigment squeezed into decrepit shapes, and bore a china jar from which a score of good square brushes sprouted. On the wall was stretched a length of canvas ploughed and ridged with palette scrapings and behind, against the sail curtains, stood a mirror. Such was the painting room.⁴

Most eloquent of all are perhaps John Douglas's photographs of Olsson in what was originally no. 5 of the Porthmeor Studio complex, an area so large that it was subsequently subdivided into three separate sections.⁵

This larger-than-life character was affectionately portrayed by Folliott Stokes in his article for *The Studio Magazine* as some latter-day Viking, roaming abroad on the briny deep. Olsson was indeed an accomplished yachtsman, who knew "the coast from the Scillies to the Isle of Wight as well as most men know their way to the nearest Railway station".⁶ He had a gig called 'The Mermaid' and a yacht called 'The Siren' for longer voyages and often arranged boat-trips for his students.

It is largely through the accounts of his students, who included Mary McCrossan, the Australian Richard Hayley Lever, and the Canadian Emily Carr, that we get a picture of Olsson's own artistic practices as well as glimpses of his character. This seems to have been marked first and foremost by a formidable work ethic and an absolute belief in the value of studying and recording the effects of nature at first hand in the open air. For female students like Emily Carr the latter posed certain practical difficulties, like the weight of the easel required if one was to stand outside in all weathers. *"On seeing Fearon's (a fellow student's) equipment, Carr exclaimed, 'Gracious! That easel is as heavy as a cannon and that enormous brass-bound paintbox! I can't, I won't lug such heaviness'. Hilda warned, 'J. O. bellows if you cross his will'.*



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

4. BREAKING WAVES UNDER STORMY SKIES

oil on canvas
60 x 75 cms 23½ x 29½ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection

*Unperturbed, the Canadian responded, 'Let him roar!' and proceeded to tie a rock in her paint rag and hang it from her easel."*⁷

The fruits of Olsson's approach won him many plaudits, including the purchase of one of his moonlit landscapes for the nation by the Chantrey Bequest in 1911—*Moonlit Shore*, now in Tate Britain. In 1914 he became an Associate of the Royal Academy, becoming a full Academician in 1920. He won two gold medals at the Paris Salon, served as the President of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters from 1919 and was also twice elected onto the International jury of the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh. He also enjoyed great personal popularity closer to home, being well-established in St Ives' social circles and serving as a Justice of the Peace and Captain of the West Cornwall Golf Club. His talent for making a potent punch in the Swedish manner was also, apparently, legendary.

His popularity within artistic circles was distinctly changeable however, ebbing and flowing like the tides he was so skilled in painting. This was the subject of Sir John Betjeman's poem about the artist:

On a Painting by Julius Olsson, RA.,

*Over what bridge-fours has that luscious sea
Shone sparkling from its frame of bronz'd gold
Since waves of foaming opalescence roll'd
One warm spring morning back in twenty-three,
All through the day, from breakfast-time till tea,
When Julius Olsson, feeling rather cold,
Packed up his easel and, contented, stroll'd
Back to St. Ives, its fisher-folk and quay.*

*Over what bridge-parties, cloche-hat, low-waist,
Has looked that seascape, once so highly prized,
From Lennygon-green walls, until, despised—
"It isn't art. It's only just a knack"—
It fell from grace. Now, in a change of taste,
See Julius Olsson slowly strolling back.*

By the time of Olsson's death in 1942, in Dalkey, Co. Dublin, where he had gone to live with his second wife following the destruction of their London home in the Blitz, this painter, who had done so much to put St Ives on the map internationally, and had encouraged many younger painters to pursue their chosen métier, was described somewhat perversely in his obituary as not being "a painter's painter".⁸ By this time, after the rise of International Modernism, what was probably meant by this was that he was not a great theoretician, or an exponent of one of the 'isms'. This view is also reflected in Betjeman's poem in the phrase 'It isn't art. It's only just a knack', the underlying criticism being that Olsson had developed and become the leading exponent of what was essentially a specialized painting technique that represented very effectively a specific set of lighting conditions and subject matter.

Though Olsson clearly did specialize in terms of his subject matter from a very early stage in his career, such criticism does not take into consideration the broad range he managed to find within the apparently narrow scope offered by 'marine painting', and, moreover, the different ways in which he approached his subjects in terms of paint application throughout a long career. In drawing upon Charles Birt's excellent collection of paintings by this artist, we are



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

5. MOONLIGHT, ST IVES BAY

oil on canvas
127.5 x 175 cms 50¼ x 68¾ ins
signed lower left; various labels on reverse

Provenance:
In the collection of the artist's widow until 1957;
The Birt Collection

Exhibited:
Manchester: Dicksee and co., Autumn Exhibition, 1913

privileged to be able to show that Olsson painted more of Britain's coastline than just the portion between 'the Scillies and the Isle of Wight', as Folliott Stokes would have us believe, and that the range of his technique constituted more than the result of a single 'knack'. We are able to show panels on which the paint is thickly encrusted, canvases that are painted relatively thinly and impressionistically, small panels that were clearly painted entirely *en plein air*, and truly monumental pieces intended for public exhibition both in London and Paris. In addition, we have been able to bring together a small collection of rarely seen watercolours by the artist.

That Olsson was no theoretician in the Modernist sense was probably fair comment, though it was an anachronistic judgment to make on an artist of a prior age and generation. But he was singularly successful in gaining acceptance for the pure seascape at the Royal Academy, through his advocacy of tonalism and *plein-air* observation combined with a hint of romance. In the absence of any formal written reflections about his own practice, we have little beyond the wry observations of journalists, critics and students to indicate what Olsson's art might have been 'about'. The closest we come to a statement from the artist about what painting the sea really meant to him can be found between the lines of his foreword to a book by his student, Borlase Smart:

As a foreword to this volume by Borlase Smart, how am I to express in words my admiration for his temerity in placing before us a treatise on the most difficult and complicated task that ever beset a painter?

For one whose heart draws him to the sea must, in the first place, have an exceptionally retentive memory, and be able to grasp in a few moments the effect of the ever-changing movements of the sea and sky; he must have a delicate and subtle sense of colour, and have the ability to place the main features of his impression of the subject on the canvas with a few strokes of the brush, and, besides this, he must be prepared to face a brave fight with the elements, which will frequently be against him.

...[Smart] has lived and studied for many years on the exposed and rocky coast of Cornwall, where the Atlantic rollers surge in stately procession and he has become imbued with the spirit and power of the sea. He has given us the onward sweep and rebound of the wave from rock and headland, and the more gentle movement of shallow waters over sand and shingle. He has given us many of the thousand forms of moving water; the curves and ripples and eddies, the network of lashed foam; all these only observed for a moment before the effect seized has completely passed away...⁹

Dr Jane Hamilton

Art historian and archivist at Messum's

¹ We are grateful to Jean Cooper and David Tovey for this information.

² *The Times*, 1942.

³ A.G. Folliott Stokes in *The Studio*, 1910, Vol. 48, p. 274-83.

⁴ 'In Painter's Land', *Black and White*, 12 September, 1896, p. 331; cited by D. Tovey, *St Ives: The Artists and the Community: A Social History*, Tewkesbury: Wilson Books, 2009, p. 14.

⁵ John Douglas's photographs of Olsson's studio are published courtesy of Andrew Lanyon by David Tovey, 2009, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

⁶ Folliott Stokes, op. cit., 1910, p. 283.

⁷ Emily Carr, *Growing Pains*, Toronto, 1946; cited by D. Tovey, 2009, op. cit., p. 248.

⁸ Obituary, Julius Olsson, *The Times*, 1942, "It would be fair to describe Olsson as a Romantic naturalist of the old school. He was not 'a painter's painter', but his canvases have earned wide appreciation in the many municipal collections in which they are found".

⁹ Foreword of *The Technique of Seascape Painting*, by Borlase Smart, London: Pitman, 1934.



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

6. CRASHING WAVES, EVENING LIGHT

oil on canvas
51 x 76 cms 20 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 29 $\frac{7}{8}$ ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
The Birt Collection

STANHOPE ALEXANDER FORBES RA NEAC 1857-1947

7. LOAFING (Study for 'The Pierhead')

oil on canvas
61 x 48.3 cms 24 x 19 ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection

Literature:
Laura Wortley, *British Impressionism: A Garden of Bright Images*, Marlow: Studio Publications, 1987, p. 213 (illus.)

Loafing is an excellent example of Forbes' square-brush technique in a work clearly produced at virtuoso speed in the open air. Groups of men 'loafing' at the end of a day's work—leaning against the railings overlooking the sea—were favourite subjects for the painters of Newlyn, especially given the difficulties of persuading the locals to pose under normal circumstances. The present work was used by Forbes as a preparatory study for *The Pierhead*, his Royal Academy exhibit of 1910—the year in which Forbes was himself elected as a Royal Academician.

Within a year of his arrival in the Cornish fishing village of Newlyn, Stanhope Alexander Forbes was attracting the attention of other painters for his dogmatic belief in the necessity of painting in the open air and for the extraordinary quality of his work. As the school acquired a public presence in London exhibitions he came to be regarded as its leader. He protested against being given the title 'Father of the Newlyn School', saying that, "Newlyners are followers of no-one—simply a body of artists who paint in the open air."

Born in Dublin, Forbes' father and uncle both managed railways. His brother followed in the family tradition, eventually managing the London Underground, for which he was knighted. His French mother, Juliette de Guise, was a vital influence upon his career. She was relentlessly ambitious on his behalf and seems to have been the source of his political liberalism and religious skepticism. Forbes was educated at Dulwich College, and trained at Lambeth School of Art before attending the Royal Academy Schools. In 1878 he exhibited his first work at the Royal Academy, a portrait of a family friend. In 1880 Forbes first went to Paris and attended Bonnat's studio, sharing lodgings with his close friend, Arthur Hacker and consorting with another friend, Henry Herbert La Thangue who was studying at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. In the summer of 1881 Forbes and La Thangue

took their first painting trip to Brittany together, laying the groundwork for a *plein-air* painting practice that would be built on in the years to come. The purchase of *A Street in Brittany, 1881* for the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool was taken as confirmation that this, rather than portrait painting, was the true path.

In the Salons of these student years, Forbes took the opportunity to study the work of Jules Bastien-Lepage, the leading *plein air* Naturalist painter who by 1883 had a large international following. It was Bastien-Lepage's belief in the efficacy of devoting oneself to a specific *coin de terre* that Forbes brought to the Cornish village in 1884. There he joined Walter Langley in what he dubbed as "a sort of English Concarneau". *Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach*, which he started shortly after his arrival, was a *succès d'estime* at the Royal Academy in 1885, and it encouraged other artists to investigate the possibility of painting in west Cornwall. Although a founder member of the New English Art Club, Forbes continued to view the Academy as his main exhibiting outlet. He married fellow artist, Elizabeth Armstrong in 1889, the year in which his celebrated *The Health of the Bride* was purchased by Henry Tate. He became an ARA in 1892 and a full RA in 1910. With Elizabeth, he opened a school of painting in 1899.





EDWIN HARRIS 1855-1906

8. SUNDAY BONNET (Girl Wearing a Hat)

oil on panel
20.3 x 15 cms 8 x 5 7/8 ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
Private Collection

Exhibited:
Penzance: Penlee House, 'Brotherhood of the Palette',
June - September 2009

Literature:
Roger Langley, *Edwin Harris: An Introduction to his Life and Art*, Truro: Truran, 2008, p. 31 (illus.)

A friend of Walter Langley from childhood, Edwin Harris studied at Birmingham School of Art from 1869 before completing his training at Verlat's Academy in Antwerp in 1880. There, like many of his generation, he came into contact with the work of Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884) and chose to pursue his style of French rural naturalism, often using a square brush and preferring to work outside in the open air. After brief stays at the Breton villages of Dinan and Pont-Aven, Harris was one of the first artists to join the artists' colony at Newlyn, Cornwall. He made his first visit in 1881 and settled there finally in 1883. He would stay for twelve years. During that time, the Harris home provided a haven and social focus for the community of artists. Stanhope Forbes and Walter Langley were frequent guests. In 1884 his son was born, but this was followed by the loss of his wife in 1887, most probably to cancer.

In 1895 Harris left Newlyn to return to his native Birmingham. There he turned increasingly to portraiture. He was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy, the Royal Society of Birmingham Artists, and was elected a member of the Royal Society of British Artists in 1888. Works by the artist may be found in Penzance Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, and in many private collections.



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

9. A GENTLE SWELL

oil on canvas
77 x 102 cms 30% x 40% ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection

HAROLD HARVEY 1874-1941

10. OUT TO SEA

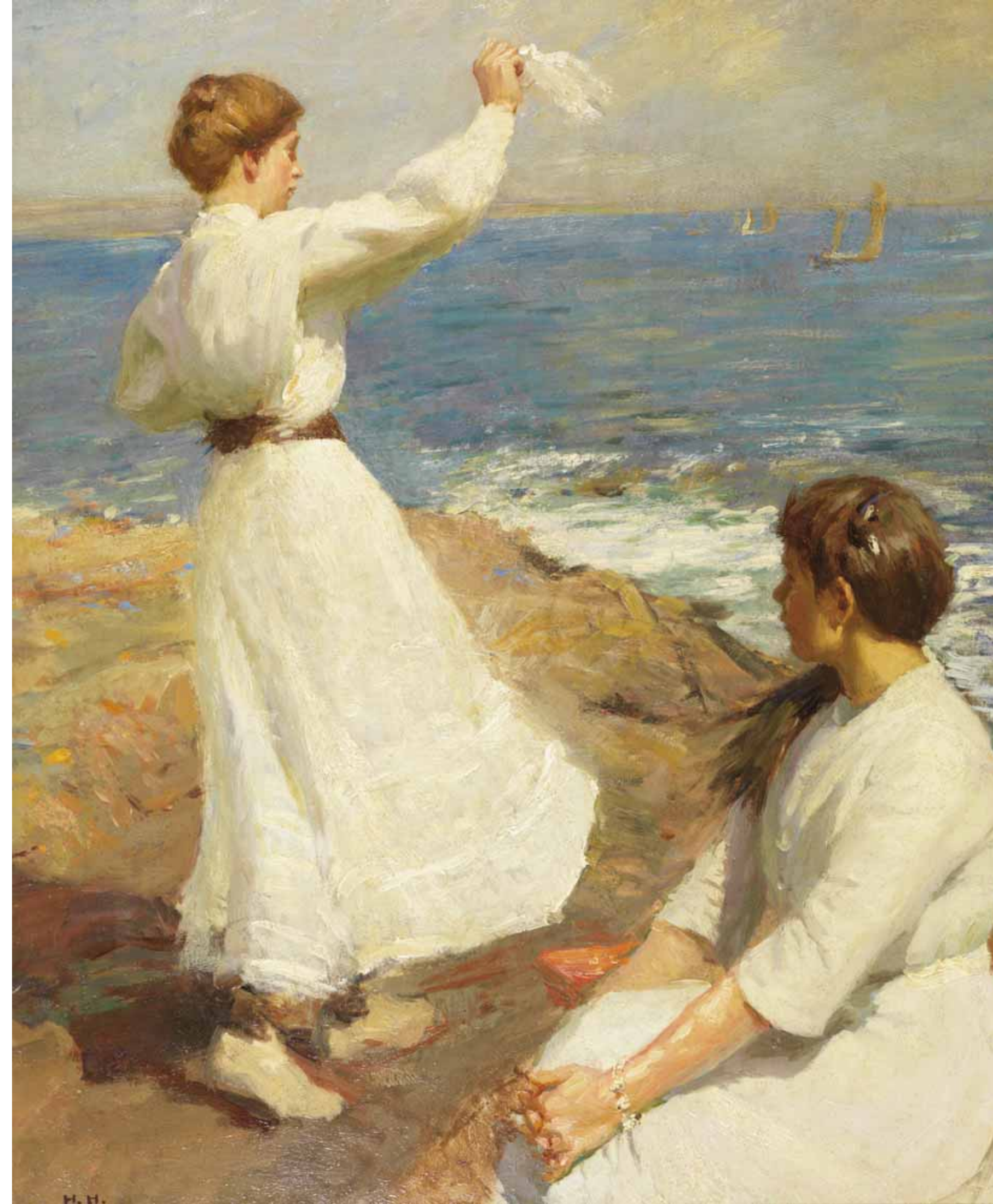
oil on canvas
76.2 x 63.5 cms 30 x 25 ins
signed with initials lower left

Provenance:
Private Collection

From his house at Maen Cottage about Newlyn, Harvey looked down across the bay to St Michael's Mount. But in spite of this stunning view, the sea itself was never a main focal point in Harvey's work. He generally preferred to concentrate on the figures on shore and the stories they told. Harvey moved to this little house on his marriage to a local girl, Gertrude Bodinna, and she frequently features in his work. Gertrude became a good friend of Laura Knight. In this early painting, the figure is reminiscent of the single female figures in white dresses that became so iconic in Monet's work.

Born in Penzance, Harold Harvey was one of the few of the Newlyn School of painters who was actually local to the area. The oldest of a family of eight, his chosen career was frowned upon by his wealthy middle class family, particularly his father, Francis, who was general manager of Carne and Carne's banking co. in Penzance.

Harvey did not seek to raise Cornwall or its people to heroic proportions, as did some of the earlier Newlyn painters, and his numerous paintings form a fascinating record of the changing face of Newlyn in the early twentieth century. He describes the harmony of village life, the unspoilt countryside and its inhabitants from the viewpoint of one who had grown up there and knew it intimately. His personal philosophy was in keeping with the sympathetic social studies of Stanhope Forbes and particularly of Norman Garstin, under whom he initially trained. He went on subsequently to study in Paris in the years 1894-1896 at the Academie Julian as well as the Atelier Colarossi and the Atelier Auguste-Joseph Delecluse. He returned to Newlyn where he began to exhibit with some frequency and recognition, and in 1898 he had his first piece accepted by the Royal Academy.





11.

EDWIN HARRIS 1855-1906

11. THE OLD SALT (Portrait of an Old Man with Beard and Cap)

oil on panel
20.3 x 15.2 cms 8 x 6 ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
Graves Gallery, Birmingham (according to an old label on reverse);
Private Collection

Literature:
Roger Langley, *Edwin Harris: An Introduction to his Life and Art*,
Truro: Truran, 2008, p. 19 (illus.)

JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

12. EVENTIDE

oil on canvas
46 x 61 cms 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 24 ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
The Birt Collection



12.

STANHOPE ALEXANDER FORBES RA NEAC 1857-1947

13. THE SHIP INN, MOUSEHOLE, 1919

oil on canvas
61 x 50.8 cms 24 x 20 ins
signed and dated lower left

Provenance:
Private Collection

It was Forbes' habit, like Monet, to have several canvasses on the go at any given time, each with its own precise timing. At the appointed hour, he would rush off to catch the sun while it was in the right position, moving on to the next equally abruptly when the light changed. The Ship Inn was a subject to which Forbes returned more than once and it was perhaps because of these pre-occupations with the colour values in shade and in the glaring sun that he did so. At a certain point towards the end of the day the sun moved round throwing the street into deep shade, but the distance and the men loafing in the middle-ground into bright sunshine.

Douglas Tregenza describes The Ship Inn in 'Departed Days' (1984) as being the last remaining of the five inns in Mousehole and the grocer from the shop next door, Joe Rowe, was apparently often to be found among this talkative group of fishermen.



WALTER LANGLEY RI RSA RBA RWA 1852-1922

14. KNITTING, 1890

watercolour
66 x 86.4 cms 26 x 34 ins
signed and dated lower right

Provenance:
Sotheby's, 19th May, 1982;
The Fine Art Society, London, May 1983;
Private Collection;
David Messum, c. 1997;
Private Collection

Exhibited:
London: Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours, 1890
Liverpool: Walker Art Gallery, 1890
Newcastle Art Gallery, 1891
Birmingham: Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1891
Penzance Art Museum, 1891
Southport Art Gallery, 1892
Manchester City Art Gallery, 1892
Exeter Museum and Art Gallery and Birmingham Museum
and Art Gallery, *Walter Langley: Scenes of the West Country
by a Birmingham Artist*, 1984, no. 22, (illus.)

Literature:
Roger Langley, *Walter Langley: Pioneer of the Newlyn Art
Colony*, Bristol: Sansom and co., 1997, p. 148 (illus.), p. 162

According to one anonymous letter to the *Magazine of Art* in 1898, "...it was Birmingham that first discovered Newlyn".¹ This statement was made in reference to Walter Langley and Edwin Harris, both former students of the Birmingham School of Art who worked in Newlyn in the early days of the 'Newlyn School'. Who actually first 'discovered' Newlyn, as an attractive subject and possible location for an artists' colony to rival those on the Breton coast, is still a matter of some contention. The arrival of the railway in Penzance in the 1850s enabled unprecedented access to the Cornish coast directly from the capital, and artists had certainly visited Newlyn with more frequency since that time. But the statement can certainly be justified in that it was Walter Langley who was the first artist to take up permanent residence in the town, in 1882, and this signaled the birth of the Newlyn School as an entity.

His motives for doing so are a matter of some conjecture, but are assumed to have been chiefly economic. Unlike the majority of his fellow artists in what would become the Newlyn School, Langley had been brought up in poverty and by 1880 he had a wife and growing family of his own to support. The fruits of his earlier visits to Cornwall in 1880 and 1881 had resulted in commissions for more of the same from a Birmingham dealer, who offered him £500 for a year's work.

Langley was also unique in the colony in choosing to specialize in the medium of watercolour—a medium treated with little short of disdain by the Royal Academy, the zenith of most other artists' ambitions. This choice may also have been economic—he had a ready market for his watercolours, and, moreover, his mastery of the medium put him in a unique position in that market. A reviewer of his one-man show at the Fine Art Society in 1893 concluded, "As a

master of the actual technique of water colours, he has few living rivals. The quality of some of his work is matchless—so simple, direct and serene."²

Langley's technical skill was nonetheless matched by a genuine feeling for his chosen subjects. Rather than focusing on the hardships faced by Newlyn's fishing fleet as they fought with the elements, or even on the drama of the elements themselves, Walter Langley cast a sympathetic eye on the quieter domestic troubles of the sweethearts, wives and children left behind while their men-folk went to sea. As Alice Meynell put it in her foreword to the catalogue of Langley's one-man show at the Fine Art Society, Newlyn dwellers were "as still a people as any to be found, with no distinction save that which is common to all coast-dwellers—the habit and aspect of looking at horizons, pupils contracted by sun and sea-wind, and grey eyes full of daylight".³

The present collection of works by Langley demonstrates not only his undoubted skill in a notoriously difficult medium, representing a cross-section of young and old, male and female sitters—subjects who usually appear more than once in his oeuvre. They also reflect Langley's genuine empathy with the populace of Newlyn and convey something of the bittersweet nature of lives lived under difficult conditions at the turn of the last century.

1 Anon., *The Magazine of Art*, 1898

2 *The Magazine of Art*, Review of Langley's one-man show at the Fine Art Society, 1893

3 Alice Meynell, Foreword, *Water Colour Drawings Illustrating Fisher Life*, London: Fine Art Society, 1893





WALTER LANGLEY RI RSA RBA RWA 1852-1922

15. THE OLD SALT

watercolour
17.8 x 12.7 cms 7 x 5 ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection

JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

16. MOONLIT SEA

oil on canvas
36 x 46 cms 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection

JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

17. SILVER SURF

oil on board
34.5 x 44 cms 13 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection



16.



17.

STANHOPE ALEXANDER FORBES RA NEAC 1857-1947

18. THE SKIPPER'S YARN

oil on canvas
75 x 95.5 cms 29½ x 37¾ ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection

The early years of the 1900s saw Forbes choosing to concentrate in his paintings on smaller groups of figures seen from a closer range. This caused him some difficulties initially as he discovered to his annoyance that “one of the drawbacks to this place [Newlyn] is the girls will not pose.”¹ The strong Methodist ethos of the local inhabitants meant that all such activities were seen as expressions of laziness and vanity. The choice of such humble subject matter also offended the tastes of many critics back in London, but Forbes defended himself trenchantly, saying “that which may seem awkward and rough, suited as it is to the conditions of its life, and in harmony with its surroundings may be beautiful.”²

¹ Letter from Forbes, 10th December 1884; cited by C. Fox and F. Greenacre, *Artists of the Newlyn School 1880-1900*, Newlyn Orion Galleries, 1979, p. 64

² Stanhope Forbes, *The Treatment of Modern Life in Art*, c. 1891-2; *ibid.*, p. 66





19.

EDWIN HARRIS 1855-1906

19. YOUNG WOMAN IN A BONNET

oil on panel
20.3 x 15.2 cms 8 x 6 ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection

Literature:
Roger Langley, *Edwin Harris: An Introduction to his Life and Art*,
Truro: Truran, 2008, p. 40 (illus.)

JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

20. GULLS AT LOW WATER, CARBIS BAY, CORNWALL

oil on canvas
61 x 76.5 cms 24 x 30½ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection



20.

THOMAS COOPER GOTCH RBA RI RP NEAC 1854-19312

21. SHARING FISH (sometimes known as SHARING THE CATCH—NEWLYN HARBOUR)

oil on canvas
122 x 160 cms 48 x 63 ins
signed upper right

Provenance:
Bought directly from the artist's daughter in Newlyn

Exhibited:
London: Royal Academy, 1891, no. 746
Nottingham Castle: *Special Exhibition of Cornish Painters*, 1894, no. 206
Kettering: *T. C. Gotch Memorial Exhibition*, 1932, no. 42
Newlyn and Bristol: *Artists of the Newlyn School*, 1880-1900, 1958
Beaconsfield: David Messum Fine Paintings, *A Breath of Fresh Air*, 1974, no. 41
Newlyn, Plymouth and Bristol: *Artists of the Newlyn School, 1880-1900*, 1979, no. 61
Penzance: Penlee House Museum and Art Gallery: *A Village in Focus: Newlyn*, 2009

Literature:
Royal Academy Pictures, 1891, illus. p. 88
Pall Mall Gazette Extra, 'The Pictures of 1891', illus. p. 39
Caroline Fox, *Stanhope Forbes and the Newlyn School*, Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1993, p. 61
Tom Cross, *The Shining Sands: Artists in Newlyn and St. Ives, 1880-1930*, West Country Books, The Lutterworth Press, 1994, p. 66
Patrick Hepburn, *Thomas Cooper Gotch: The Making of an Artist*, Kettering: Alfred East Art Gallery, 1994, p. 18
Lewis Hind, 'T. C. Gotch and his pictures', *The Windsor Magazine*, 1896, pp. 273, 277.
Pamela Lomax, *The Golden Dream, A Biography of Thomas Cooper Gotch*, Bristol: Sansom and Co., 2004, pp. 14, 20 (illus.), 98, 111, 158
Frank Ruhrmund, 'Evocative focus on pity and pain' in *The Cornishman*, January 29th 2009, p. 24 (illus.)

A classic Newlyn composition, *Sharing Fish* is possibly Thomas Gotch's most impressive naturalistic canvas still in private hands. However, its unenthusiastic reception at the 1891 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, where it was 'skied', marked an important turning point in his career. Following a similar experience the previous year with his exhibit, *'Twixt Life and Death*, (location unknown), it was Gotch's disappointment at the public reaction to these works which prompted his retreat from naturalism. He left Cornwall that summer for an extended visit to Italy, where he made a study of the Renaissance masters, and for the next decade thereafter adopted a much more 'aesthetic' approach. The picture's reception is the more surprising in retrospect because it incorporates many features which had already popularised works by Gotch's Newlyn contemporaries—particularly Frank Bramley and Stanhope Forbes—painters who aspired to present the harsh reality of fisherfolk life as objectively and authentically as possible.

Sharing Fish records a custom among the Newlyn fishwives. They divided the catch among themselves but ensured fair shares by asking a passerby to choose the fish for each family. Like many other Newlyn paintings, it illustrates the intergenerational

dependence in the village with children, mothers, grandmothers and possibly great-grandmothers all included. The younger woman in the foreground was Mary Rowe, a model much favoured by the Newlyn artists. She also appears as the bride in Stanhope Forbes' *The Health of the Bride* (RA 1889; Tate Britain). In subject and composition *Sharing Fish* relates quite closely to Forbes' better known painting, *A Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach* (RA 1885; City Museum and Art Gallery, Plymouth), the canvas responsible for putting Newlyn on the artistic map. Indeed, the arrangement of the fish in the foreground and the semicircular grouping of the fishwives seems consciously to echo the structure of Forbes' work, the seated women on the right of both paintings being balanced against standing figures in the centre and to the left. Forbes had recorded his figures within an extensive panorama of the beach and sea from which the whole community derived its living, and luminous, opalescent reflections across the wet sand increased the feeling of recession. In contrast, Gotch's view with the backdrop of The Cliff emphasizes the enclosed character of the fishing village and the scale of these small transactions.

Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, Gotch trained at Heatherley's and the Slade School of Fine Art, before joining the *atelier* of Jean-Paul Laurens, in 1880. Summers were spent in Cornwall with his friends from the Slade, Henry Scott Tuke and Caroline Yates. Gotch and Caroline were married in Newlyn in August 1881. One of Gotch's earliest Newlyn pictures, *Mental Arithmetic*, 1883 (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne), was, like *Sharing Fish*, set beneath The Cliff. However as the colony expanded the cosmopolitan Gotches always remained slightly detached, spending long periods away. Although Lewis Hind, writing of T.C. Gotch's work in 1896, described 1891 as Gotch's "disconsolate year", he nevertheless brought important outside influences to the school, encouraging the development of a Symbolist strand of Newlyn naturalism. *Sharing Fish* is today one of the few important Newlyn School paintings remaining in private hands.





JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

22. THE TWILIGHT MOON

oil on canvas
61 x 76 cms 24 x 29 7/8 ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
The Birt Collection



WALTER LANGLEY RI RSA RBA RWA 1852-1922

23. THE BRETON FISHERMAN

watercolour
43.2 x 27.9 cms 17 x 11 ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection

HENRY HERBERT LA THANGUE RA NEAC 1859-1929

24. THE SAWING HORSE

oil on canvas
114.3 x 88.3 cms 45 x 34¾ ins
signed and inscribed on old label on reverse

Provenance:
Sir H.H. Haroldsworth, Bt.,
Charles R. Galloway, Esq., Knutsford, Cheshire, his sale, Christie's, 24th
June, 1905;
Private Collection

Exhibited:
London: The Royal Academy, *Summer Exhibition*, 1896, no. 89 as "In a
Cottage Garden";
Manchester, 1896;
Copenhagen, 1897, as "In a Cottage Garden";
St Louis, Royal Commission, *St Louis Exhibition*, 1904 no. 174

Executed with La Thangue's distinctive sweeping brushstrokes applied rhythmically to echo the vigorous movements of his subjects, *The Sawing Horse* is one of a series of pictures recording the life of the local Sussex farmworkers near his home in Bosham, where he settled in 1891. The present work was exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1896 where another of his paintings, *Man with a Scythe*, was bought for the nation through the Chantrey Bequest.

Though not a member of the Newlyn School, La Thangue was a contemporary and great friend of Stanhope Forbes, studying in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts while Forbes was studying there under Bonnat. Like many of their generation, the two artists were profoundly influenced by the leading rural naturalist painter, Jules Bastien-Lepage and particularly by his twin dogmas concerning the efficacy of painting *en plein-air* and in devoting oneself to a particular locality. In 1881 La Thangue and Forbes made their first trip to the Breton coastline together, putting these theories into practice in the various artists' colonies there and thus laying the groundwork for a successful plein-air practice and engagement with Social Realism that would be built on by both men in the years to come.



WALTER LANGLEY

RI RSA RBA RWA 1852-1922

25. MENDING THE QUILT, 1884

watercolour
43.2 x 20.3 cms 17 x 8 ins
signed and dated lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection



25.

HAROLD HARVEY 1874-1941

26. THE OLD HARBOUR AT DUSK, NEWLYN, 1911

oil on canvas
41 x 45 cms 16 x 18 ins
signed and dated lower right

Literature:
Kenneth McConkey, Peter Risdon and Pauline Sheppard, *Harold Harvey: Painter of Cornwall*, Bristol: Sansom and co., 2001, no. 145, p. 141

The present painting encompasses the view across the old harbour at Newlyn at dusk, just as the sun is fading and the lights at the harbour mouth have been lit. And we are not the only viewer of the scene. To the left, Harvey has captured two men 'loafing', as it was commonly known. At the end of a hard day of fishing, they are leaning on the railing at the edge of the cliff and looking out to sea.



26.



HAROLD HARVEY 1874-1941

27. THE BATHERS, 1913

oil on canvas
48 x 54 cms 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins
signed and dated lower left

Provenance:
Private Collection

Exhibited:
London: Whitford and Hughes, Autumn Exhibition
1986, *Silver Bells and Cockle Shells*, cat. no. 13

As the only member of the Newlyn School who was actually a native of Cornwall, Harvey did not so much produce paintings that were social documents, in the manner of Stanhope Forbes for example, but rather illustrated activities that had always been part of his way of life.

The present work is an unusual subject for Harvey and it may have been inspired by the paintings of boys bathing by Henry Scott Tuke, working in nearby Falmouth. While Tuke's paintings are to some extent pre-occupied with correctly representing male physiognomy in the open air, however, this atmospheric piece by Harvey is more concerned with light and simple *joie de vivre*, somewhat in the vein of Laura Knight's early Newlyn beach scenes.

In its depiction of the simple pleasures of boyhood, the painting was almost certainly inspired by Harvey's own childhood experiences and amply reflects his commitment to the Cornish lifestyle of the day.



FRED HALL NEAC 1860-1948

28. I KNOW AN OLD WIFE

c. 1888

oil on canvas
78 x 91 cms 30¼ x 35½ ins

Exhibitions:
New English Art Club, 1888, no. 67

Literature:
Alice Meynell: 'Newlyn', in *The Art-Journal*, 1889, pp. 97-102, illus. p. 102.

Hall first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1887 and it was in that year that he began painting Social Realist and anecdotal scenes of Newlyn interiors. They met with a fair degree of commercial success. In 1888, Stanhope Forbes wrote in a letter to his mother, "Fred Hall is back, his purse full of money. He has been very fortunate lately."¹ The comment is thought to refer to the swift sale of a pair of paintings Hall exhibited at the Royal Academy that year. Conceived as pendants, the paintings illustrated Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem 'The Goose', and represent two episodes from the story recounted therein: 'The Goose that laid the Golden Egg.'² The present painting was exhibited in the following year at the New English Art Club. 1889 was the last NEAC exhibition in which the Newlyn painters had a substantial presence, since in that year it was taken over by Walter Sickert and other Whistlerite refugees from the Society of British Artists.

Hall exhibited the painting under the title, 'I know an old wife lean and poor; her rags scarce held together'. These are the first two lines of Tennyson's 'The Goose', so it seems that he felt there was further inspiration to be drawn from the tale. In this painting the 'old wife' seems to be surveying the wreckage caused by the departure of the goose and the stranger. We seem to be at the point in the poem at which "The glass blew in, the fire blew out, / The blast was hard and harder. / Her cap blew off, her gown blew up, / And a whirlwind clear'd the larder;"

In her article on the Newlyn School of 1889, in which the

present painting is illustrated, Alice Meynell said,

In Mr. Hall's 'I know an old wife' will be recognised the interior in which he painted also his two brilliant pictures, 'The Goose' in the 1888 Royal Academy. Here, too, he has looked on the cottage floor from rather an unusual height, so that the horizon is far up on his canvas. The old cottager who was so harassed by her goose is here quiescent, watching the incidents of a tolerably untidy kitchen, one of which is a glossy mouse at its foraging.³

The glossy mouse in question is unfortunately no longer a part of the composition, the canvas having been cut down at some point in its history by perhaps as much as a third. In reducing the canvas size the overtly narrative aspect of the composition was, perhaps in accordance with contemporary taste, removed. The central focus of the painting thus becomes the plight of the rural poor. Though Hall's painting would retain its taste for anecdote, as well as for caricature, social realism was becoming a greater concern for the artist at this date. Following his stay in Porlock, near Minehead on the Somerset coast, he exhibited *Adversity* at the Royal Academy in 1889—a snow scene depicting an evicted family coming down a road towards the viewer.

¹ Cited by Fox and Greenacre, *Painting in Newlyn, 1880-1930*, 1985, p. 72

² See the lithograph illustrations included in *Royal Academy Notes*, 1888, p. 80

³ Alice Meynell, 'Newlyn', *The Art-Journal*, 1889, p. 102



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

29. WINTER GALE ON THE CORNISH COAST

oil on canvas
127 x 180 cms 50 x 70 7/8 ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection

Literature:
Studio Magazine, January 1910, Vol. XLIII, no. 202, p. 277 (illus.)

DAME LAURA KNIGHT RA RWS 1877-1970

30. THE ROCK POOL

oil on canvas
35 x 41 cms 13¾ x 16½ ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection

The arrival of Harold and Laura Knight in Newlyn late in 1907 is often considered a major staging post in the history of the colony. They had long considered a move south from the artists' colony in Staithes and finally succumbed, attracted by tales of the vitality of the artistic community and the thought of a more temperate climate with longer daylight hours. The heyday of the first generation of Newlyn artists was largely over, though the Forbes, Walter Langley, Norman Garstin and Thomas Cooper Gotch still worked on the peninsular, and the paintings produced by the younger generation of artists were distinctly lighter both in style and in content. Rather than a Cornwall of beleaguered fishermen, of "grey fog and legend", as Garstin put it, the Knights on their advent "plunged into a riot of brilliant sunshine, of opulent colour, and of sensuous gaiety".¹

Not only did Laura throw herself into the social life of the colony, causing some degree of comment among the artists as well as the locals, she also hired some female models from London to pose nude on the rocks and hillsides near the local beaches. Her ambitions to study the nude figure under the effects of natural sunlight had hitherto been thwarted by the unwillingness of the local girls to co-operate.

The present painting is likely to represent one of these London models basking in the sunshine of Lamorna Cove.

¹ Norman Garstin, 'The Art of Harold and Laura Knight' in *The Studio*, LVII, 1912, p. 195





JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

31. THE CALM SEA

oil on canvas
61 x 76.2 cms 24 x 30 ins
signed lower right

CHARLES NAPIER HEMY RA RWS 1841-1917

32. FALMOUTH, 1890

oil on canvas
50.8 x 76.2 cms 20 x 30 ins
signed with initials and dated lower left; label inscribed on reverse: "Painted in 1891 (sic) by C. Napier Hemy, for the *Ophir* and formed part of the decoration of the lounge when the vessel was employed as a royal yacht to take King Edward, then Prince of Wales, to the East."

Provenance:
The Mayor's Office, The Mansion House, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

The commission referred to on the back of the present painting came in about 1888 from John James Stevenson, the designer of the interior woodwork of the *Ophir*—an Australian liner. Stevenson had North-Eastern connections; his family owned the Jarrow chemical works, and this may go some way towards explaining the later provenance of the painting.

The vessel represented in the present work is the old warship, HMS Ganges, a training vessel moored up off Mylor. Pendennis Castle is visible in the distance.



32.

CHARLES NAPIER HEMY RA RWS 1841-1917

33. HOME MOORINGS, 1894-5

oil on canvas
91.4 x 137.2 cms 36 x 54 ins
signed and dated lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection

Exhibited:
Probably London: Royal Academy, 1894, no. 427, as 'Home Moorings'
Penzance: Penlee House, *Charles Napier Hemy: Master of the Sea*, 2006-7, as 'The First Pot of the Day'

Literature:
Probably *Royal Academy Illustrated*, 1894, p. 23 (illus.)

Home Moorings demonstrates Charles Napier Hemy's considerable talent for producing dynamic compositions that capture perfectly the movement of the sea. It was produced during the 1890s, when the artist was at the height of his powers. In 1897, he would have his Royal Academy exhibit *Pilchards* acquired for the nation through the Chantrey Bequest for the considerable sum of £1,200.

The present work is considered to be that exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1894 and illustrated in the relevant volume of the *Royal Academy Illustrated*. Though it will be noted that the dimensions are identical to those listed, a number of small adjustments have clearly also been made—the rudder and the jacket worn by the man on the left differ in colour from the early illustration and the position of the boat on the distant horizon has also been altered. The present work has also been signed in full and dated 1895 at the lower right.

The most likely explanation seems to be that Hemy himself reworked the painting after its showing at the Royal Academy and this would not be without precedent in his oeuvre. A painting called *Wreckage* that was exhibited at the Royal Academy of 1898, now in the collection of the Bradford Art Galleries and Museums, was repainted in 1901, Hemy considering that the figures had originally been too large.¹

It is possible that it was at the time of the repainting, in 1895, that the painting came to be known by its alternative name, 'The First Pot of the Day'.

Widely viewed as the most accomplished marine artist of his generation, Charles Napier Hemy first came to public attention with the Pre-Raphaelite work *Among the Shingle at Clovelly* in 1864. He was still painting with vigour and exhibiting widely until his death in 1917.

Charles was the eldest of three artistic brothers and his parents, with roots on Tyneside, took him to Australia in his youth. He loved

the long sea voyage and on returning to England, around 1855, signed on for service aboard a merchant brig. But Hemy was a deeply spiritual man and a devout Catholic, and so he gave up this life at sea in favour of spending three years living as a Dominican monk in Lyon and Carpentras, France (c. 1860-62). At the end of this period he left the monastic life, deciding instead to paint for a living.

His early training with John Bell Scott, a friend of Rossetti, led to a spell working for William Morris's stained glass workshop, through which he met Burne-Jones who became a life-long friend. In 1867 Hemy went to train at the Antwerp Academy, probably driven by the religious and academic subjects then popular in the city. Though he later abandoned such subjects in favour of his first and last love, shipping and the sea, the experience instilled in him a dedication to close and careful observation that he never abandoned. In Antwerp the importance of drawing was also emphasised and Hemy drew and sketched incessantly throughout his career.

It was not until he reached the age of 56 that Hemy appreciated that marine painting was his forte and true calling. From 1881 Hemy lived in Falmouth where, in a boat fitted out as a studio, he followed the fishing boats and coastal craft, making sketches as he sailed. In a letter of 1881 to the painter, Luke Fildes he wrote:

"I have made up my mind to give up all costume and semi-religious subjects, interiors, gardens, landscapes etc., and devote myself to telling my story of the sea from my point of view. I have built my house here (Falmouth) so as to paint nothing but sea and ships and do them always from nature. It is sad not to be in London, but Falmouth is better than Venice."

¹ See Andrew Greg, *Charles Napier Hemy RA, 1841-1917*, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne and at the City Art Gallery, Plymouth in 1984, cat. no. 44, p. 49.



CHARLES NAPIER HEMY RA RWS 1841-1917

34. STUDY OF A SAIL

watercolour
45.7 x 33 cms 18 x 13 ins



34.

35. STUDIES OF TRAWLER'S NET, 1902

watercolour
43.2 x 55.9 cms 17 x 22 ins
signed with initials and dated lower left; inscribed lower right

35.



36.





WALTER LANGLEY RI RSA RBA RWA 1852-1922

37. CONTEMPLATION, 1888

watercolour
33 x 54.6 cms 13 x 21½ ins
signed and dated lower left

The present watercolour is related to a more ambitious watercolour by the artist called *Village Idyll—After the buoyant happy days of youth comes the calm eventide of age*, 1888.¹ The central figure in both works is the seated figure of an elderly woman, engrossed in recollections of former times. The smaller scale watercolour in the present selection called *Waiting for the Boats* (no. 41) perhaps represents the same model in what is certainly a very similar pose.

According to Roger Langley, *Contemplation* is an example of many watercolours sold by Langley without titles directly to dealers. Langley's sales records contain an entry for 22nd March 1888 which states "Drawing 33 x 56. Old woman and two children sold to Franks, a Birmingham dealer, for £40".

¹ See Roger Langley, *Walter Langley, Pioneer of the Newlyn Art Colony*, Bristol, 1997, p. 84 and 161



WALTER LANGLEY RI RSA RBA RWA 1852-1922

38. LOST IN THOUGHT, c. 1902

watercolour
35.6 x 20.3 cms 14 x 8 ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection

The motif of a young girl at work mending patchwork quilts was one that Langley returned to on a number of occasions, not only to great decorative effect but also as a means of introducing pathos to his work. The activity illustrated the hardship of the lives of the womenfolk left behind as their loved ones fished these perilous seas.

Lost in Thought is almost certainly related to Langley's Royal Academy exhibit of 1902 now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool—an oil painting called *A Cornish Idyll*. A number of other watercolour studies for that important painting are known. ¹

¹ See Roger Langley, *Walter Langley, Pioneer of the Newlyn Art Colony*, Sansom and co., 1997, p. 114 (illus.)



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

39. SUMMER NIGHT, ST IVES BAY

oil on canvas
61 x 76 cms 24 x 29 $\frac{1}{8}$ ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
Private collection, Sweden

STANHOPE ALEXANDER FORBES RA NEAC 1857-1947

40. THE PICTURE BOOK, 1924

oil on canvas

46 x 41 cms 18 x 16½ ins

signed and indistinctly dated lower left; old label on reverse reads, "Edward John Charles Nightingale, Christmas 1938, from Grandma, The Picture Book, Stanhope A. Forbes"

Provenance:

The Nightingale Family

The fall of light on the sitter's faces—either mother and son or brother and sister—and on the page of the picture book in the present painting suggests that they have gathered together around the only oil lamp in a humble cottage interior. The boy's round-necked jersey and woollen hat imply that he was the son of one of the numerous local fishermen while the coloured illustrations of the book proclaim it as an expensive publication for the period. Maybe Forbes had lent it to the perhaps illiterate pair to help them while away the time as he painted them. Living in relative ease in the midst of a humble fishing community Forbes felt that "the many signs which tell of the hardships of poverty ... should be faithfully recorded; for without them the story is half told and its value lost."¹

¹ Stanhope Forbes, *The Treatment of Modern Life in Art*, c. 1891-2, cited by C. Fox and F. Greenacre, *Artists of the Newlyn School 1880-1900*, Newlyn Orion Galleries, 1979, p. 66





JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

41. MOONLIGHT ACROSS THE BAY, 1897

oil on canvas
45.7 x 61 cms 18 x 24 ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
Private Collection

This unusual painting by Olsson is thought to be related to his Royal Academy exhibit for 1897, a painting called Nightfall; an uncharacteristically poetic work representing two girls by the sea gathering flowers from a hedgerow in the gentle half-light of dusk. The present work may be a plein-air study of the floral undergrowth that dominates much of the Academy exhibit.



WALTER LANGLEY RI RSA RBA RWA 1852-1922

42. WAITING FOR THE BOATS, 1888

watercolour
25.4 x 17.8 cms 10 x 7 ins
signed lower right



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

43. THE FAR HORIZON

watercolour
33.5 x 44 cms 13¼ x 17½ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

44. THE WHITBY LIGHTS

oil on canvas
76.2 x 101.6 cms 30 x 40 ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection

Literature:
A. G. Folliott Stokes, 'Julius Olsson: Painter of Seascapes' in *The Studio Magazine*, January 1910, Vol. 48, no. 202, p. 277 (illus.)



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

45. SUNSET, WEST OF IRELAND

oil on canvas
44 x 59 cms 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

46. SUMMER MORNING, CO. DOWN, 1932

oil on canvas

61.5 x 76 cms 24¼ x 29¾ ins

signed lower left; inscribed with title on old label on reverse

Provenance:

The Birt Collection



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

47. MOONLIT SEA

oil on canvas
45 x 60 cms 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

48. INCOMING TIDE

oil on canvas
45.5 x 70 cms 17 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection



JULIUS OLSSON RA NEAC PROI RBA RWA 1864-1942

49. HAYLE ESTUARY

oil on board
24 x 34 cms 9½ x 13¾ ins
signed lower right

Provenance:
The Birt Collection

**50. HEADLAND: CALM SEA
AND YACHT**

oil on board
28.5 x 36.5 cms 11¼ x 14¾ ins
signed lower left

Provenance:
The Birt Collection



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Julius Olsson in the back section of the original Studio No. 5, Porthmeor Studios, St Ives.
(Photograph: John Douglas / Courtesy of the Olsson family archive and with thanks to David Tovey)



