

HENRIETTA WARD

A Victorian Artist in Slough

By Michael Day

HENRIETTA WARD
A VICTORIAN ARTIST IN SLOUGH

© Published by S.T.E.A.M.
2006

Every effort has been made to acknowledge sources and obtain clearance for use of copyright material. We apologise for any omissions.

Presented and written by Michael Day, member of S.T.E.A.M.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the following people and organisations without whose help this booklet would not have been possible.

Staff at the Slough Museum

Tony Pilmer at Slough Reference Library

Laura Try, Service Assistant (Enquiries), National Art Library - Word and Image Department, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Kingsway Connections

Emma Gormley, Curatorial Office at the Palace of Westminster

Julia Carver, Assistant Curator of Fine Art, Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives, Bristol.

Simon Lake, Senior Curator of Art, New Walk Museums and Art Gallery Leicester.

Masterfoods Charitable Donations

SOURCES

Mrs E. M. Ward's Reminiscences, 1911.

Mrs E. M. Ward Memories of Ninety Years, 1924.

Maxwell Fraser, History of Slough, 1974.

Judith Hunter, History of Upton Park and Herschel Park, 2003.

Marion Scarr, Typescript on the History of Upton Park.

PREFACE

Michael Day, a long-serving member of STEAM, has researched important Slough connections with the noteworthy Victorian artist, Henrietta Ward, and written up his researches in an interesting and accessible form. The artist painted 'The Young May Queen' in 1853 which has in the background the Red Lion public house in Langley. This intrigued Michael to investigate further. Thus he makes a further contribution to STEAM's studies of Slough's history. Slough is, of course, known as an industrial town and STEAM has produced two studies of Slough manufacturing heritage in 'The Factories that Changed Slough' (2003) and 'Another 22 Organisations that Changed Slough and District' (2005). These were followed in 2006 by a publication on a much less well-known aspect of Slough's history 'Agriculture around Slough and District'. Now Michael demonstrates that Slough has an artistic history with a significant number of works by Henrietta Ward and her husband Edward, painted while they were living in Upton Park in Slough.

Incidentally, his researches have led him to correct previous local historians who have briefly noted Mrs Ward's residence in Slough. Maxwell Fraser in her History of Slough says that the Wards moved from a cottage in Sussex Place to "11 Upton Park" and assumes that this was the eleventh house in West Villas (which runs South to North) despite that fact that in the early 1850s West Villas were not numbered. At that time, however, Victoria Terrace, running West to East was numbered 1 to 12. Michael Day has unearthed a painting of Mrs E.M. Ward in her Studio in Slough that shows a view over what is now Herschel Park with Windsor Castle in the distance. This view is impossible from West Villas. So Michael concludes that the Wards did indeed live in the much larger house, then No. 11, Victoria Terrace, Upton Park.

Congratulations, Michael Day.

Richard Hall

Henrietta Ward was one of the most prominent and successful female artists of the mid-Victorian period, along with other female artists such as: Emily Osborne, Emma Brownlow and Elizabeth Butler. Her subject matter was essentially about home and family in a historical context. With her husband Edward Ward, she moved to Slough in 1852 and stayed for seven years and as a result endowed Slough with an artistic history.

EARLY YEARS IN LONDON

Henrietta Mary Ada Ward was born in 1832 in Newman Street, London. Later, the family moved to Fitzroy Square. She came from a family of artists and was the only surviving child of George Raphael Ward, a painter and engraver and his wife Mary, nee Webb, an artist of miniature painting. Her grandfather was the most famous artist of the Ward family; he was James Ward who was born in 1769 and died in 1859.

James Ward was an animal painter to George III and the Prince of Wales and specialised in painting cattle, and other farm animals as well as famous racehorses

such as 'Adonis', King George's favourite charger. His most popular painting was called, 'Gordale Scar' and is in the Tate gallery. George Morland, 1763 to 1804 was a famous painter of rustic picturesque scenes and was a great uncle. He married James Ward's sister Anne Ward and was James's mentor.

Henrietta Ward's husband was Edward Mathew Ward, no relation, and he became a well-known painter of historical scenes.

In 1843 due to a mistake by the postman, Edward's letters were left at Henrietta Ward's house, as they had the same surname. He had a studio near Fitzroy Square. The artists soon fell for each other. But since Henrietta's parents disapproved they soon decided on a secret wedding, in 1848 at All Souls Langham Place. She was only 16 years old and Edward was 32. Wilkie Collins, the famous writer of ghost and detective stories, was best man and helped organise the wedding. (Wilkie Collins was one of the first members of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood).

They spent their honeymoon at Iver; afterwards they went to Antwerp and Brussels (she got her inspiration for a future painting called, 'An Antwerp Marketing' from this trip). When they came back to London they lived at Harewood Square. Henrietta's mother never forgave her for this secret marriage and a rift continued for a long time afterwards. Her Godmother, Henrietta Whetherby a wealthy spinster, cut her out of her will for this elopement.

Through the Ward's artistic connections she came to know many literary and artistic figures of the day, including the painters, William Powell Frith and John Everett Millais; Lewis Carroll and Charles Dickens to name a few. Charles Dickens and his wife, invited the Wards to accompany them to Paris in 1854. Wilkie Collins' brother, Charles married Dickens' daughter Kate.

EDWARD MATHEW WARD

Edward Mathew Ward was born in 1816 in Belgravia and so was 17 years older than Henrietta. His father, Charles, who is buried at St Laurence's, Upton, was a manager in Messrs Coutts Banking Company. He also had artistic tendencies. His mother was a Miss Ford, daughter of a Devonshire gentleman.

The family moved to Adelphi Terrace, Strand. They later moved to Russell Place within a stones throw of Henrietta's parents house. After completing an academic education he entered his father's bank, but was not cut out to be a bank clerk. His parents were very understanding and gave him the facility to follow a career in art. He began art training under a Mr Cause (his daughter was a well known actress). When he was 20 years old he received the Silver Palette of the Society of Arts. He painted on commission portraits of actors etc. and created illustrations of Don Quixote.

His parents sent him to study in Italy in 1836, where he painted in Venice and Florence. Then he moved to Rome where he received the Silver Medal for Historical compositions. He moved from Rome to Naples but eventually grew homesick and returned to England in 1839.

E. M. Ward's first picture 'Cimabue and Giotto' hung in the Royal Academy. He was made an Associate member of the R.A. in 1846. He specialised in painting scenes from English and French history and literary subjects and was one of the most popular of Victorian historical painters.

THE WARDS IN SLOUGH

The Wards moved to Slough in 1852 after living in Harewood Square, London to be near Windsor and royalty. They were established artists in Victorian society by now. They lived for six months in a furnished cottage at Sussex Place, then moved to 11 Upton Park. They had three children by now, Alice, Flora and Leslie.

At this time Edward Ward received a commission from the Prince Consort and Council to paint eight historical pictures for the corridor of one of the Houses of Parliament. These included scenes of the Civil War and Glorious Revolution for proposed schemes for the corridors linking the two chambers to Central Lobby.

The Commission sought to focus on and celebrate heroic acts on the part of Royalists and Parliamentarians alike. They included a scene of 'Charles II Assisted in His Escape by Jane Lane', after the Battle of Worcester and 'The Last Sleep of Argyll' a fresco painting finished in 1858. The 9th Earl of Argyll was loyal to the Duke of Monmouth in the failed rebellion against James II and was executed in 1685. Other subjects included, 'The Execution of Montrose' and 'The Arrest of Alice Lisle'; 'General Monk Declaring for a Free Parliament'; 'The Landing of Charles the Second'; 'The Acquittal of the Seven Bishops' and 'Parliament Offering the Crown to William and Mary'.

Originally 'The Last Sleep of Argyll' and 'The Execution of Montrose' were painted in oil, but the light in the corridor of the House of Commons caused glancing on the pictures and made them shine. E.M. Ward decided to paint them again in fresco. The oil paintings are hung at the Royal Art Gallery, Salford while the frescos remain in the corridor. This commission took him several years to complete and encompassed the time the Wards were in Upton.

Henrietta wrote in her autobiography, 'Memories of Ninety Years', that while Edward was painting 'The Last Sleep of Argyll' she received word that Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort were coming to see the picture,

"One can imagine the state of excitement our household was thrown into by this announcement - we literally hardly knew whether we were standing on our heads or legs. The Queen! Coming to Upton Park and to our house! Incredible! Impossible! Oh dear! How untidy everything suddenly appeared, and how utterly hopeless it seemed to get things straight. We did not merely move from room to room, we flew! Every member of the household, big or little, uniting in a stupendous effort to set the place in order. Long before the time for their arrival I had taken up a position in the nursery, where from one of the windows I could take covert peeps at the road without danger of being seen". Eventually the royal couple arrive and Queen Victoria is more anxious to meet Henrietta than Edward. After a nervous start she soon relaxes in the Queen's company and a happy relationship ensues.

They had many visits from Queen Victoria and Prince Albert during their time at Upton. Henrietta painted several small portraits of her children and Queen Victoria expressed her pleasure at these pictures and gave her various commissions. She went to Windsor to paint the Queen's daughter, Princess Beatrice and son, Prince Leopold and other children. She also taught several of them painting. The royal couple were very fond of the Ward's children and played games with them. The pictures of Victoria's children are at Windsor Castle. Like the Queen, they had a growing family and were of a similar age.

Prince Albert was pleased with Edward's fresco, 'Argyll' and commissioned two more pictures. They were called, 'Napoleon the Third Being Invested With the Order of the Garter' and 'The Visit of Queen Victoria to the Tomb of Napoleon the First'. These were executed at Windsor Castle. Henrietta was working on a picture called, 'The Queen of the May', when one day Queen Victoria upset her props for the picture and she had to start again, but she dared not criticise Victoria for the mischief she had done. Edward painted a picture in 1857 called, 'The South Sea Bubble' which is in the National Gallery in which Henrietta posed for one of the figures. This brought him considerable recognition. At this time he also painted, 'King Charles and Nell Gwyn'.

The Wards experienced a very severe winter while at Upton in 1855. Henrietta says, 'Snow fell incessantly for days, and when cleared from the pavement formed such a high wall that light was obscured. At night thousands of people dressed in all manner of costumes and fancy dress danced by torchlight on the Thames, which the sharp and prolonged frost had converted into a thick sheet of ice. When the snow melted the countryside was flooded and the road from Upton to London was under water'.

During their seven years at Slough they never missed the 4th of June celebrations at Eton College and Ascot Races. They were regular visitors to St Laurence Church, Upton. There was one anecdote she mentions about a ghost that haunted the Churchyard of St Laurence's and terrorised the local inhabitants. It was proved to be a Mrs Coffin who played practical jokes on the locals. She dressed in white and visited the churchyard at dusk, lying in wait for unsuspecting passers by, then suddenly appeared and danced on the tombstones. A local farmer heard of this prankster and decided to lay the ghost to rest. He waited one evening for the 'ghost' to appear and pounced on it and gave it a good beating with a stick. After this the 'ghost' left Upton and Slough for good.

While they were at Slough, Edward was elected a Royal Academician in 1855. They were awakened at 1.30am by his model who came from London with the news. Their third daughter, Beatrice, was born at Slough. Their days at Upton were happy ones, but, because of work demands on Edward and the smallness of their house at Upton, they decided to move back to London in 1859. They lived for the next 18 years at Kent Villa, Kensington.

THE YOUNG MAY QUEEN

Henrietta was only 21 years old when she painted 'The Young May Queen' which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1853. This painting passed through the Richard Green Galleries, London in 1964, but its present whereabouts are unknown. In the

background is clearly the Red Lion public house and further into the background are haystacks on the site of the old Ryvers farm.

She had obvious artistic talent and in her Reminiscences says she could draw and paint before she could read. In 1846, at only 14, she made her debut at the RA with a drawing called, 'Elizabeth Woodville Parting from the Duke of York'. Her first painting exhibited at the RA was in 1850, 'Results of an Antwerp Market'. She had training from her father, George Raphael Ward, and her famous grandfather, James Ward who encouraged her to copy pictures from Punch, and later her husband who influenced her style. She also studied seriously at Henry Sass's school for formal training during the 1850's. The Wards painted in the style popularised by William Powell Frith at that time, using literary subjects.

'The Queen of the May' was a frequent subject in her painting repertoire; Henrietta liked old English customs. When she was young and living in London she used to look out for the postman on 1st May, when he arrived in a new scarlet coat and glossy silk hat. Sweeps used to wash their faces and attire themselves in fantastic costume. 'Jack O the Green' was a man encircled by a box he bore on his shoulders, decorated by green boughs and leaves. Men wearing Pierrots and Harlequins costumes on stilts peeped into her window at Fritzy Square. The "Buy a Broom, Ladies", were a brigade of small children about 8 years old wearing white caps and dress of the Bavarian peasant chanting ditties and May Day dancing.

Henrietta saw similar customs in Langley Village with children bringing home the May. At dawn on May eve children went into the fields and woods and collected branches to be made into garlands called 'May-Bushes' and to be paraded through the village in the company of their May Queen while they sang for money or gifts. The children placed the May Bush on the ground before each house in the village and sang a poem:

A branch of May I have brought you
And at your door we shall stand,
It is but a sprout but it's well spread about
By the works of our Lord's hand.

Fair maids look out of your window so high
To view the May-Bush fair,
It was cut down so late last night
To take the fresh morning air.

The girls in the picture, 'The Young May Queen' most likely came from the Depree Charity School nearby. A local worthy, Charles Thomas Depree (d. 1837) was a pavior from London, that is an up-keeper of pavement stones. He was a churchwarden and trustee at St. Mary's Church, Langley, opposite the school. As an overseer of the poor of the parish he learnt about the lack of schools for the poor. In 1830 he gave money for a school to be built on the north side of the Red Lion public house on church house estate land, site of an old bowling green, and it went with an endowment of £100 which brought in interest of 3% providing income for the running of the school.

By 1847 boys were educated at a bigger school further down St. Mary's Road. The Depree school became the National School for Girls, until the education act of 1870. (The school was demolished in 1966). Therefore, by 1853 only girls studied at the school and were most likely used as models in Henrietta's painting.

AFTER SLOUGH

During her time in Kensington she had several successes. In 1866 she painted 'Palissy the Potter' which was exhibited at the RA and earned her a lot of favourable recognition. The picture has a sense of pathos, typical in Victorian painting. The subject is about a French potter called Palissy who plunged his family into poverty in trying to discover the secret of Majolica in china. The result being that his furnace ceased to work, ruining his china works.

She painted 'Chatterton' in 1873 and her son Wriothesley, who is buried at St Laurence's in the family grave, posed for Chatterton. John Everet Millais came to visit her studio when she was painting Chatterton; and thought it a good idea for the kitten to have a tail and painted it in. The kitten is shown at the door entrance. Henrietta had met Millais when at the Royal Academy; he was 19 years old at the time and was also a friend of E.M. Ward.

Henrietta's other successes included, 'Elizabeth Fry Visiting Newgate 1818', painted in 1876 and 'The Childhood of Joan of Arc', 1867. Many of her works, such as 'Queen Mary Quitting Sterling Castle' were engraved for reproduction. She sold a painting called, 'The Tower, Ay the Tower' in 1864 for the princely sum of 200 guineas. She exhibited extensively at Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester. In 1875 she was proposed for membership of the Royal Academy, but because she was a woman was ineligible.

After living for 18 years in Kensington Edward's health was declining. For this reason they decided to move to Windsor as they had many friends there. Edward Ward was commissioned by the Duke of Albany, (HRH Prince Leopold, son of Victoria and Albert) to design several large pictures for the Windsor Tapestry Works at Old Windsor. These works had been under the patronage of the Duke of Albany since 1856. But, when he died the tapestry works died with him. E.M. Ward did not get better at Windsor and after a long illness died in January 1879.

Henrietta was urged by Dean Stanley, her husband's friend, to arrange for him to be buried at St Paul's Cathedral, but E. M. Ward's wish was to be buried by his father's grave at St Laurence's Upton, Slough.

Sir Frederick Leighton, Wilkie Collins, William Powel Frith and many others attended his funeral on a cold January day at the small church at Upton. Henrietta lost her father later that year. She was now a widow and in her forties with eight children to support, Alice, Leslie, Eva, Flora, Wroithesley, Beatrice, Enid and Stanhope. She was left her husband's entire estate which came to under £3,000.

Soon after she received a letter from Lord Beaconsfield, Benjamin Disraeli, which included a Civil List Pension of £100 a year in recognition of her late husband's contribution to the arts.

AFTER E. M. WARD

After the death of her husband and father she decided to run a studio at William Street, Windsor for girls only. It was the only one of its kind. Her pupils were of an august kind, such as the Duchess of Connaught, and Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll and Edinburgh. After three years in Windsor she moved back to London in Gerald Road where she continued running her studio. Her pupils there included the Duchess of Albany and Lady Randolph Churchill who happened to bring her young son, Winston, wearing knickerbockers, along one day. She had visits from Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema and Sir Luke Fildes.

All her sons predeceased her. Wriothesley was killed in a train accident in America, Stanhope, the youngest son, died of enteric fever, after a distinguished career in the army and Leslie died in 1922 of illness. Leslie Ward was recruited by the editor of Vanity Fair under the pseudonym 'Spy', replacing Carlo Pellegrini, 'Ape'. He produced caricatures of the celebrities and politicians of the day. Her daughters Eva and Flora became artists and exhibited at the RA.

SLOUGH REVISITED

Henrietta came to visit Slough after 60 years in 1918 and stayed with her friends the Bentleys at The Mere. The Bentleys came to Slough in 1860 when George Bentley, father of Richard Bentley, lived at East Villas until 1887 before moving to the 'Mere', Upton. Richard dissolved the publishing firm in 1895 and sold everything to Macmillan and Co. It was this Richard Bentley's grandfather, also Richard, who employed Charles Dickens as his editor for 'Bentley's Miscellany' in 1837. Dickens was offered £40 a month for editing it and began the first installment of Oliver Twist in monthly installments. Dickens also included Nicholas Nickleby in the Miscellany. There was an acrimonious relationship between Bentley and Dickens over fees and copyright which eventually resulted in Dickens leaving and buying out the rights to Oliver Twist at a cost of £2,250, a fortune for those days. Dickens was due to include the first installments of Barnaby Rudge but it never materialised with Bentley.

In retirement Richard Bentley wrote local history books such as, 'Some Stray Notes Upon Slough and Upton'. Henrietta read this and mentions it in her 'Memories of Ninety Years'. He died in 1936 and his widow continued there until 1961. Afterwards the house passed to The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and, much altered, is there to this day.

Henrietta liked ghost stories. She mentioned about the 'ghost' of St Laurence Churchyard and her friendship with Wilkie Collins, who wrote ghost stories. She devoted most of one chapter in her Reminiscences to a story of 'The Mystery of Love Hill House', near Langley Park, Iver. This story was told to her by a local vicar, Sir Frederick Ouseley, a well known composer of church music, who lived at Love Hill House. It was about a mysterious little old man in a long yellow gown with a brutal expression on his face who had the habit of appearing and disappearing around the

place. A visiting doctor reported groaning sounds and a woman screaming. The vicar's curate, a Mr Fife, witnessed books falling off a shelf and some even flying through the air. Henrietta made enquiries about this story and it transpired that a long time ago a gentleman farmer lived at Love Hill House and always wore a yellow coat. He was living with a foreign woman at the time and this created a scandal. When Sir Frederick had the house repaired, under the floorboards, were found skeletons of a woman and infant apparently murdered by the mysterious man in a yellow coat. The vicar swore an oath that his ghost story was true.

FINAL YEARS

Henrietta continued to live and work at Chelsea until her death in 1924. She turned to landscapes and painted St Lukes Church, Chelsea where Dickens had married Kate Hogarth in 1836. She complained about the slum children being a disgrace to civilisation, calling them, 'a colony of potential Bolsheviks that has already been founded'. They tormented her when she was out painting one day: a few shabby boys advanced in a gang and threw a large parcel of dust wrapped in brown paper that smothered her painting. If she appeared to have little sympathy for poor children she certainly hated all forms of cruelty to animals and was against any form of hunting, shooting and trapping. Henrietta wrote, 'the dreadful spectacle of a number of grown-up people torturing a beautiful fox by chasing it to its death! Or if it happens to escape only to be torn to pieces by hounds'.

She died in 1924 at the age of 92 at her home, 59 Sydney Street, Chelsea. This extract from the Slough paper reads, 'The funeral of the veteran artist, Henrietta Ward who died at the age of 92 took place on Wednesday morning at Upton Church where she was laid to rest with her husband. The service was held at Chelsea and the coffin conveyed to Slough in a motor hearse. The committal prayers were said by the Rev. JA Harrison. It would be an overstatement to call Mrs Ward a great artist, yet her industry and application caused her to reach a commendable efficiency'. She was laid to rest with her father in law, husband and son.

She had lived to a great age but many things had moved on by 1924. Even by 1880's her art was considered old fashioned. Her work decreased, but she spent more energy on her school. Her last showing at the RA was in 1921 at the age of 89.

She was basically a Victorian artist who once lived and worked in Slough.

HISTORY OF S.T.E.A.M.

In 1992, when many people found themselves unemployed, the then Industrial Chaplain, Bob Nind, invited anyone who was interested to attend a meeting. This was to find out what help was needed and what people could offer. From that meeting a group of unemployed people decided that they would call themselves S.T.E.A.M. (Slough Town Employment Action Movement) and meet each week for mutual support as unemployment can be isolating. They would cook and share their own self-financing lunch on Mondays.

STEAM members would gather and share information on jobs, courses and benefits. They would go off to seminars and meetings to which they would otherwise never get to. The group, by its very nature, is constantly changing. Some find jobs, either short-term, or long-term. People go away on courses, but usually they keep in touch and find great support in having somewhere to come back to. STEAM'S first contribution to the local community was to organise the first 'One World Festival' in Slough.

In October 1997, STEAM published its own booklet on the experiences of unemployed people in 'Boom Town Slough'. When the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) was introduced some members appeared on Channel 4, Carlton Television and Radio Berkshire.

Late in the summer of 1998, STEAM members completed a video called, 'STEAM at Work'.

In 2001, STEAM launched its sequel booklet on the experiences of local unemployed people, in their own words. The booklet includes an update on the job market by our chairman. He also participated in a debate with a local missionary, entitled, 'Enough Good Work for All'. The booklet also features the work that went into the making of our 'STEAM at Work' video.

In May 2003, STEAM staged their successful exhibition entitled, 'The Factories That Changed Slough', at the Slough Museum, about the rapid growth of Slough Trading Estate and employment during the inter-war years. The exhibition featured photographs of people working on the estate between 1920 and 1940, (plus some of the 1950's), the products they made and the working conditions in which they made them. The group published a booklet based on the exhibition, but with additional information, in the autumn of 2003.

STEAM published a sequel book in the autumn of 2004, entitled 'Another 22 Organisations That Changed Slough and District, and staged a second exhibition, based on the book, at the Slough Museum, in February 2005. For this work STEAM became winners of The Slough Mayor's Arts Project of the Year Award 2005.

In June 2006, the group launched its 3rd Industrial Heritage booklet entitled 'Agriculture Around Slough and District, featuring the evolution of farm equipment, peoples' reminiscences of farming life and brief histories of no less than 115 farms. Our third exhibition, based on the booklet, was staged at the Slough Museum, in July and August 2006.

Tel: 01753 475100