

# COUNTRY LIFE

EVERY WEEK

AUGUST 6, 2025

## Georgian glory

The revival of a lost vision



Sit! Stay! Office etiquette for dogs  
Smoke signals: the best barbecue ever  
No-fun fungi: Britain's deadliest mushrooms



Ford and Charlie Minter. Theirs is a hybrid operation, in that they put on selling exhibitions in rented premises—in this case No 8, Duke Street, St James's, SW1, across the road from Christie's—but give them the full presentational treatment of a major evening auction. There is even a handsome, well-researched catalogue. From that, we learn that *The Yellow Boy* has travelled still further and more exotically than his blue rival. From the sitter's family, marquesses of Hertford, the portrait was sold to King Carol of Romania, who left it to his mistress, who sold it to 'a lady resident in Mexico City', from whom it went to a lady in Portugal before it returned to London in 1981.

The 36 paintings on show are predominantly British, French or Irish and there is a strong contingent of British Impressionists. There is a particularly striking Laura Knight (1877–1970), the 38½in by 54½in *Lamorna Cove* (Fig 2) of about 1919 and a wonderful example of Dublin-born William Leech (1881–1968) at his best, the 44in by 34in *The Secret Garden* (Fig 1)—another echo of Hodgson Burnett—from which the scent of lilies is almost intoxicating.

Earlier in the year, the summer week of dealers' exhibitions under the banner Classic Art London, which I previewed here on June 4, seems to have had a most satisfactory first outing. Visitors, including museums, were plentiful, talks (including the COUNTRY LIFE one on dealers' favourite objects) and tours popular,



Fig 4 above left: *Tent Lodge, Coniston Water* by J. M. W. Turner. £95,000. Fig 5 above right: *View from Old Sarum* by Eric Brown. Sold by Darnley Fine Art. Fig 6 left: Constance Gordon-Cumming's *Chandivelli Batticaloa*. Sold by Karen Taylor

and, most importantly, sales healthy. English-watercolour dealer Guy Peppiatt, of Mason's Yard, SW1, reported that he had never sold as many items during a summer show, 30 out of 75, including one of four Turners, the 19½in by 25½in *Tent Lodge, Coniston Water* (Arts & antiques, July 16) his top ticket at £95,000 (Fig 4). He also attracted a number of new buyers. New buyers made an even greater mark at Darnley Fine Art (now in the throes of moving two doors along Cecil Court, WC2) taking all of a group of landscapes priced from £3,000–£8,000 by the Wiltshire artist Eric Brown (1894–1955) (Fig 5). Some were local

admirers, but others included overseas visitors wanting souvenirs of visits to Salisbury.

As well as the group by Thomas Jones that I picked out in my preview, Karen Taylor offered a recently discovered collection by a talented, but long-forgotten watercolourist, writer and intrepid traveller, Constance Frederica Gordon-Cumming (1837–1924) (Fig 6). More than half of 93, priced between £250 and £8,500, were sold to institutions and collectors from three continents and her work is now to be seen from Scotland to New Zealand. 🐉

**Next week** Paints to live and die by

## Pick of the week

Once again, the recently established drawings dealer Alexander Clayton-Payne takes my pick of the week, thanks to an exhibit that I should have bought, but alas, did not. It was one of two drawings he sold by George Richmond (1809–96), the friend of Blake and Palmer who became perhaps the best of all Victorian portraitists. The first was a forcefully sketched 8½in by 7in ink-and-wash study of the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (right)—described by the historian Lord Blake as 'the most formidable intellectual figure that the Conservative party has ever produced'. The other was a 7¼in by 4¼in brown ink self-portrait head (far right) that would have fitted well in my small collection of portraits and self-portraits of English School watercolour painters. Oddly, both had lost their attributions when bought by Mr Clayton-Payne, although the Salisbury had been fully catalogued at Sotheby's in 2006 and the self-portrait at Agnews in 1976.



## Pick of the week

Once again, the recently established drawings dealer Alexander Clayton-Payne takes my pick of the week, thanks to an exhibit that I should have bought, but alas, did not. It was one of two drawings he sold by George Richmond (1809–96), the friend of Blake and Palmer who became perhaps the best of all Victorian portraitists. The first was a forcefully sketched 8¾in by 7in ink-and-wash study of the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (*right*)—described by the historian Lord Blake as ‘the most formidable intellectual figure that the Conservative party has ever produced’. The other was a 7¼in by 4¼in brown ink self-portrait head (*far right*) that would have fitted well in my small collection of portraits and self-portraits of English School watercolour painters. Oddly, both had lost their attributions when bought by Mr Clayton-Payne, although the Salisbury had been fully catalogued at Sotheby’s in 2006 and the self-portrait at Agnews in 1976.

