

**Urban Landscape in the Age of Reform:
Salisbury, Bristol, Brighton, Lambeth,
c.1820–1850**

Two Volumes

Volume 1: Text

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the representation of urban places at a time of dramatic societal change in Britain. Unprecedented urbanisation, the polarising issue of political reform and major infrastructural change, epitomised by the ‘railway mania’ of the 1840s, served to re-map the British landscape. In this context, urban locales and their hinterlands were continuously redefined and endowed with new significances, thus offering new opportunities and challenges to those who took up the task of representing the urban landscape.

Despite the dynamism of urban change, and wide attention on both the ‘Romantic’ period in general and landscape practice during this time, urban landscape imagery remains marginalised in British landscape scholarship to date. Similarly, despite the dominance of reform as a political concern and its impact on the social structure of early nineteenth-century Britain, it has not been used as a lens through which to read landscape images of the period. Intersecting the fields of cultural geography, the regenerating field of topographical studies and reawakening interest in the work of John Constable, this thesis offers a model for reconstituting and critiquing the cultural image of urban places in the period c.1820–50.

To this end, it presents case studies on four distinctive urban locales: the cathedral city of Salisbury; Bristol, a port town; Brighton, a watering place; and Lambeth, on the fringes of the metropolis. Thus, new insights into the production and evolution of civic identity in these locales are produced by viewing a broad spectrum of material (including oil paintings, prints, maps, and topographical literature) through the prism of the reform era. With the exception of Bristol, these places coincide with subjects taken by Constable for three of his major six-foot canvases. Three of these chapters therefore also reinterpret – within the context of urban landscape culture and the reform era – Constable’s urban ‘six-footers’ through close iconographical analysis. They are thus revealed to be highly topical and complex assemblages of references designed to narrate urban transformation in an era of continuous flux.

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Photograph: author

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136. Wenceslaus Hollar, *Palatium Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis propae Londinum vulgo Lambeth House*, 1647, etching, 149 x 290 mm. British Museum, London (1880,1113.5417). Photograph: © The British Museum
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145. J.L., *Lambeth Palace as it appeared in the autumn of 1829*, etching, 1830, 116 x 162 mm, published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Surrey History Centre, Woking (2331/16/PART2/114A). Photograph: author
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153. J.M.W. Turner, *View of London from Greenwich*, 1825, watercolor and ink and traces of graphite, 213 x 280 mm. Metropolitan Museum, New York (59.23.23). Photograph: Metropolitan Museum
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158. William Wallis after Thomas Hosmer Shepherd, *London*, 1827, engraving, 90 x 150 mm (image), in James Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements* (London: 1827). British Library, London (RB.23.b.3439). Photograph: © British Library
159. J. Hinchcliffe after T.H. Shepherd, *The New Shot Mill, near Waterloo Bridge*, 1825, engraving, 101 x 147 mm (image), in James Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements* (London: 1827). British Library, London (RB.23.b.3439). Photograph: author
160. James B. Allen after T.H. Shepherd, *Vauxhall Bridge, from Mill Bank*, 1825, engraving, 100 x 152 mm (image), in James Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements* (London: 1827). British Library, London (RB.23.b.3439). Photograph: author
161. W. Walker after Thomas Allen, *Manufactory for Patent Shot*, 1827, woodcut, 60 x 40 mm, in Thomas Allen, *History and Antiquities of Lambeth*. British Library, London (10353.d.14). Photograph: author
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163. Henry Winkles after William Tombleson, *Lambeth Palace, Surry* [sic] for *Tombleson's Thames*, 1834, steel engraving, 177 x 277 mm (plate). British Library, London (564.f.12). Photograph: © British Library
164. Shury & son after D. McKewen, *Gateway of Lambeth Palace and Lambeth Church, Westminster Bridge in the Distance*, for *Brayley's History of Surrey*, 1840, steel engraving, 120 x 138 mm (image). British Library, London (10350.ee.19). Photograph: © British Library
165. John Constable, *The Opening of Waterloo Bridge ('Whitehall Stairs, June 18th, 1817')*, exh. 1832, oil on canvas, 1308 x 2180 mm. Tate, London (T04904). Photograph: © Tate, 2018
166. John Constable, *Waterloo Bridge from the west*, c.1819, pencil on paper, 305 x 410 mm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (290-1888). Photograph: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London
167. John Constable, *The Opening of Waterloo Bridge seen from Whitehall Stairs, London, 18 June, 1817*, c.1819–20, oil on canvas, 500 x 750 mm. Sold, Sotheby's, 6 December 2017, Old Masters Evening Sale (London), Lot 51. Photograph: © Sotheby's
168. Alexander Nasmyth, *A prospect of London, seen from the Earl of Cassilis's privy garden, with Waterloo bridge beyond*, exh. 1827 (Edinburgh), oil on canvas, 1395 x 2085 mm. Sold, Bonhams, 17 June 2003, 19th Century Paintings Sale (London), Lot 58. Photograph: © Bonhams

169. George Cooke after Ramsey Richard Reinagle, *Opening of Waterloo Bridge on the 18th. of June 1817*, 1822, etching and engraving, 152 x 240 mm. British Museum, London (1880,0911.594). Photograph: © The British Museum
170. M.J. Starling after T. Allom, *The Lion Brewery, Lambeth, for Brayley's History of Surrey*, 1842, steel engraving, 120 x 170 mm (image). British Library, London (1572/279). Photograph: © British Library
171. W. Henshall after C. Marshall, *London*, engraved title page vignette for William Edward Trotter, *Select Illustrated Topography of Thirty Miles round London* (London: 1839), 140 x 120 mm (image, irregular). British Library, London (577.h.15). Photograph: author
172. Thomas Abiel Prior after ?Thomas Allom, *Westminster from Bishop's Walk, Lambeth*, 1846, etching and engraving, 239 x 435 mm. British Museum, London (1880,1113.1305). Photograph: © The British Museum

Introduction

In 2013 John Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* was acquired for the national collection of British art by a partnership of five UK museums (fig.1).¹ This thesis was inspired by a series of discussions held to identify new approaches to this painting and to Constable's work more generally. As an investigation of urban landscape imagery produced in Britain from 1800 to 1850 it offers a new lens through which to view *Salisbury Cathedral*. This counters its habitual reading, exemplified by David Solkin's description of the painting as an archetype of 'rural scenes that played such a central part in the symbolics of national identity'.² Although this statement accurately indexes the ways in which this painting and its artist have been enveloped into national consciousness, this thesis seeks to fulfil Andrew Hemingway's call for scholarship that will

'rupture the carapace of familiarity that encloses the art object, and attempt to recover something of its original novelty and strangeness'.³

The approach taken to *Salisbury Cathedral* therefore questions its classification by Solkin and many others as a 'rural scene'. Such a description not only fails to account for the painting's full range of iconographical components but also ignores the geographical specificity of its setting and the status afforded to it by the most potent of its symbols of national identity—the cathedral at its centre. Regardless of their present-day interpretation, works like Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* engaged with contemporary 'symbolics of national identity' through their representation of distinctly urban components and themes.

¹ Collectively named Aspire, it comprises Tate, Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales, Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service, National Galleries of Scotland; and Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

² David Solkin, *Painting Out of the Ordinary: Modernity and the Art of Everyday Life in Early Nineteenth-century Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 246, 260, n.5.

³ Andrew Hemingway, "Coda: Regarding Art History," in Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape Between Ideology and the Aesthetic: Marxist Essays on British Art and Art Theory, 1750–1850* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 460.

Until the early 1900s, the presence of a cathedral designated a conurbation a city, regardless of the size of its population.⁴ As Raymond Williams has observed, however, cities share a ‘connection of name and in part of function, but nothing like identity’.⁵ This is true of the four places forming the case studies of this thesis: the cathedral city of Salisbury; Bristol, a port town; Brighton, a watering place; and Lambeth, on the fringe of London, Britain’s metropolis. The rapid and unprecedented transformation wrought by urbanisation and industrialisation, which created new landscapes, and new social, economic, political and environmental conditions, manifested itself in distinct ways in each place. A further nuance in this thesis’s approach to the urban landscape is its acceptance that against a context defined by change, the very categories of ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ were subject to slippage. Thus, this thesis does not seek to define ‘urban’ as a binary to ‘rural’ and will encompass, to varying degrees, contemplation of the interrelationship between these zones. Through iconographical and textual analysis of a wide range of visual and literary sources this thesis aims to convey the inherent complexity and liability to mutation of civic identity.

Urban imagery within the field of British landscape

Urban views have been marginal to the study of British landscape imagery despite the weight of attention paid to the genre by scholars across the disciplines of art history, literature and geography in the 1980s and 1990s. This can be ascribed to the role that urban landscape images have been accorded in the canon of British landscape and the prejudices upon which this canon was built.

In their 1980 publication, *Victorian Artists and the City: a collection of essays*, editors Ira Nadel and F.S. Schwarzbach claimed that there existed no tradition of urban subject matter in ‘fine art’, particularly before the Victorian

⁴ John Beckett, *City Status in the British Isles, 1830–2002* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 22.

⁵ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, reprinted from the 1973 original (Nottingham: Spokesman, 2011), 1.

period.⁶ Maxine Berg has suggested that such a position arose through twentieth-century art historians' absorption of late nineteenth-century unease about the urban, thus entrenching the conceptual division of the two spheres as set out by German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936), whereby 'rural' connoted good values (from *gemeinschaft* in German), and 'urban' negative (*gesellschaft*).⁷ As Tim Barringer has recently argued, representations of rural life and landscape became the 'most cherished' of images, creating a canon that appeared to deny the fact of urban and industrial growth.⁸ The phrase 'British landscape' thus attached itself to a body of work dominated by rural representation; the most prominent examples—Thomas Gainsborough's *Mr and Mrs Andrews* (c.1750) and *The Hay Wain* (1821) by John Constable—became emblems of the nation's self-image. Perception of such works as straightforward representations of Britain's past as a green and pleasant land was challenged by scholars such as Ann Bermingham, David Solkin, John Barrell and Stephen Daniels in their demonstration of the artifice of landscape art and its potential use as a tool to serve the social, economic and political ideologies of its maker and consumer alike. The impact of this scholarship was all the greater for its focus on canonical images, yet while it served to invigorate scholarship on British landscape imagery it did not, by and large, extend to the consideration of urban subject matter.

The second reason behind urban landscapes' relative invisibility within the scholarly field owes, most likely, to the bias of the British landscape canon towards painting. Designated as the more cerebral, and important, means of artistic expression, oil paintings thus consumed the focus of much landscape scholarship. This thesis, however, takes its cue from the definition of landscape as 'a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolising

⁶ Ira Bruce Nadel and F.S. Schwarzbach, eds., *Victorian Artists and the City: a collection of essays* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), xiv–xvi.

⁷ Simon Pugh, "Introduction: Stepping out into the open," in *Reading Landscape: country, city, capital*, ed. Simon Pugh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 1; Maxine Berg, "Representations of Early Industrial Towns: Turner and His Contemporaries," in *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750–1880*, eds. Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne, and Scott Wilcox (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 116.

⁸ Tim Barringer, "Pastures Green and Dark Satanic Mills," in *Pastures Green and Dark Satanic Mills: The British Passion for Landscape*, eds. Tim Barringer and Oliver Fairclough (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 2014), 15.

surroundings’ offered by Daniels and Cosgrove, whose work, along with that of other scholars, has liberated the lens of landscape scholarship and allowed it to focus on a whole array of representational means.⁹ It is in this expanded field that the urban gains its visibility and in which works like *Salisbury Cathedral* might be understood in new ways.

This project therefore takes a levelling approach to hierarchy of media, analysing academic oil paintings in tandem with a host of other objects such as prints, maps, touristic souvenirs, as well as topographical literature, reading them in relation to the specific local and national contexts in which they were produced so as to determine the fullest possible impression of the cultural identity of any given place. It aims to take what Andrew Hemingway has described as a ‘totalising and philosophical approach to the understanding of a cultural moment’ and views the indiscriminating consideration of a wide spectrum of imagery and contemporary literature as an essential means to achieve this.¹⁰ This is not to say, however, that the significance of an image’s media, presentation and consumption will be ignored, for these will play an integral role in the assessment of its subject matter and intended significance. Rather, the approach taken in this thesis avoids drawing a correlation between an image’s medium and its validity as an object of interest.

Locating the urban landscape: source material

Much of the source material included within this thesis comes under the classification of topography. In a 1972 book on townscapes, this category was dismissed as a ‘byway of art history’.¹¹ In an 1827 review of a volume of topographical prints after work by leading watercolourist George Fennel Robson, however, topography was cited as being

⁹ See Stephen Daniels and Denis Cosgrove, *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹⁰ Hemingway, “Coda: Regarding Art History,” 462.

¹¹ J.G. Links, *Townscape Painting and Drawing* (Norwich: B.T. Batsford, 1972), 1.

‘one of the most engaging of modern sciences, and peculiar...to this country; for not only do the British artists excel all others in this branch of the art, but the British people excel those of all other nations in their fondness for the same’.¹²

This quotation exemplifies the contemporary understanding of topography as a vital and vibrant artistic category integral to nineteenth-century ideas about and experiences of landscape. Over the past twenty years, scholars have begun to engage with the genre more intensively, recognising it as a category far more complex, varied and ideologically expressive than the pejorative connotations of the label ‘topography’ do fair justice to.

As Felicity Myrone has observed, the subordination of topography was first crystallised in comments made by Henry Fuseli in a Royal Academy lecture entitled ‘Invention’, in which he expressed his observation that all too many landscapes operated merely as the ‘tame delineation of a given spot’, amounting to ‘little more than topography...[a] kind of map-work’.¹³ The impact of Fuseli’s denouncement of topography has lingered on in numerous ways. As Myrone has further demonstrated, its reputation as a straightforwardly representational genre (exemplified by Klingender’s casting of the topographical artist as an ‘explorer’ who ‘makes a visual record of his discoveries’), and thus a lesser intellectual realm, has combined with its physical presentation to render it less visible and accessible.¹⁴ A historical distinction between ‘fine art’ and ‘topography’ has determined the location and presentation of works between the British Museum and the British Library such that ‘art historians have come to revere single sheet items over illustrations in books’. These, Myrone argues, are still approached as ‘evidence’ rather than ‘art’.¹⁵ In much the same way as approaches to oil

¹² “Review of ‘Picturesque views of the English Cities, from Drawings by G.F. Robson’,” *Literary Chronicle*, no. 430 (11 August 1827).

¹³ Henry Fuseli, “Invention” (1810), quoted in Felicity Myrone, “‘The Monarch of the Plain’: Paul Sandby and Topography,” in *Paul Sandby (1731–1809): Picturing Britain*, eds. John Bonehill and Stephen Daniels (London: Royal Academy, 2009), 57.

¹⁴ Francis Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution*, ed. and rev. Arthur Elton (Paladin: London, 1972), 77.

¹⁵ Felicity Myrone, “Putting Topography in its Place,” *Picturing Places*, British Library website, accessed 3 April 2018, <https://www.bl.uk/picturing-places/articles/putting-topography-in-its-place>.

paintings have absorbed a social history critique, scholars today are more inclined to acknowledge the ways in which topographical representations could operate as highly subjective indices of the wider socio-cultural, economic and technological context in which they were created.

John Barrell has recently acknowledged that the genre's very mundanity makes the task more difficult, adding an additional layer through which the image must be read.¹⁶ Informed by Archibald Alison's *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790), Barrell understands 'landscape' as a scene that is unfamiliar, and therefore automatically read through an aesthetic filter. Landscape becomes 'topography' when it is rendered more familiar through a personal sense of place.¹⁷ This thesis is further defined by its attempt to consider the interrelationship between the regional, or the local, and the national, particularly the dynamic between its selected conurbations and the metropolis. It seeks to determine the means of making a place familiar, the iconographical grounds upon which its identity was formed and how these signs might be read from within and from without their location and against modulations in both local and national contexts.

In a review of Barrell's most recent book on the little-known topographical artist Edward Pugh,¹⁸ Peter de Bolla summarises its two key ways of looking that succinctly describe the approach taken towards source material in this thesis. Referencing Michael Baxandall, he notes Barrell's indebtedness to the concept of the 'period eye', one 'essentially attuned to the different ways in which both artists and their audiences were inserted within their time', declaring that 'Barrell's project asks us to learn to look with a 'local eye''.¹⁹ Moreover, as Bolla observes, Barrell

¹⁶ John Barrell, "Landscape and Place," *Picturing Places*, British Library website, accessed 3 April 2018, <https://www.bl.uk/picturing-places/articles/landscape-and-place>.

¹⁷ Barrell, "Landscape and Place."

¹⁸ John Barrell, *Edward Pugh of Ruthin (1763–1813): A Native Artist* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013).

¹⁹ Peter de Bolla, "The Local Eye," *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 38, issue 3 (1 Dec. 2015), 444.

‘does not want us to revalue our canon of great painters and paintings; he wants us to do something much harder and considerably more adventurous: he wants us to learn how to look *in a different manner*’.²⁰

It is the ambition of this thesis that it is able to assess its source material, be it a painting intended for display in the Royal Academy or a wood engraving destined for reproduction in an inexpensive guidebook, in this different manner, with both a ‘period eye’ and a ‘local eye’, so as to be able to bring to bear as full a context as possible in the elucidation of the potential meanings and impact that urban landscape representation could have.

In addition to its adoption of such recent approaches to topography as a highly nuanced area of landscape production, this thesis has also taken advantage of digital tools as a means to locate material of interest. While the digital never suffices as a proxy for the encounter with an original source, the museological impulse of the past decade to create online catalogue records has nevertheless accelerated researchers’ discovery of relevant material and has enabled a time- and resource-restricted project such as this to progress at a rate impossible in the pre-digital age. Digitisation has had a particularly transformative impact on the study of topography. Such material often accounts for a vast proportion of the collection in which it is held; given that display and cataloguing procedures have tended to correspond with traditional art historical object hierarchies, it is the case that topographical material, particularly reproductive prints or work by unknown artists, has been deemed low priority. That many of the photographs in this thesis are its author’s own attests to the paucity of comprehensive digital documentation; this is particularly acute for images within books. The endowment of these objects with an online presence, however basic, is an essential foundation for the unlocking of its potential. To take the British Library’s *Picturing Places* website as an example, which includes papers from a conference entitled

²⁰ Peter de Bolla, “The Local Eye,” 444.

‘Transforming Topography’, this so-called ‘byway’ is finding new ways to infiltrate the mainstream.²¹

Locating the urban landscape: place and time

Given the potential breadth of its topic, this thesis approaches urban landscape representation in Britain through a series of selected case studies. These form its four chapters: Salisbury, Bristol, Brighton and Lambeth. Its chronological framework flexes to take into account key moments in the representation of these places but centres specifically upon the thirty-year period between 1820 and 1850.

The selection of locales was made in response to an initial survey of extant literature. As previously stated, urban landscape representation remains a comparatively marginal aspect of research on British landscape art of the period under review here. As will be discussed in greater depth below, scholars have gravitated towards the study of certain urban centres, or types, namely London, as the metropolis, and regional industrial cities like Manchester and Leeds. This skews our perception of the ‘urban’ towards places where nineteenth-century urbanisation and its associated social change manifested itself most extremely. While these were the types of places that inspired major polemic on the state of urban life from the 1840s onwards, in commentary by Thomas Babington Macaulay, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, this thesis aims to show that older cities, too, were sites of polemic, their identities and representation just as troubled as their newer counterparts.²²

²¹ *Picturing Places*, British Library website, accessed 3 April 2018, <https://www.bl.uk/picturing-places>. Some of the research from Chapter Four of this thesis appears in an essay and filmed conference presentation included on this website (see Amy Concannon, “Lambeth’s Topographical Image,” in *Picturing Places*, <https://www.bl.uk/picturing-places/articles/lambeths-topographical-image>).

²² See, for example: Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, ed. Thomas Pinney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto. With an Introduction and Notes by Gareth Stedman Jones* (London: Penguin, 2004); and Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, ed. and with a foreword by Victor Kiernan (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, 1987).

Another area that has attracted attention is the resort town, yet this has more often than not been studied as a discreet phenomenon and not explicitly related to different types of conurbation other than the metropolis. The geographical situation of marine resorts has accorded them additional interest but again, this is never with a view to scrutinising the representation of the urban landscape *per se*.²³ A common narrative of urban growth runs through extant scholarship on these types of towns. This is the positivistic side to the complex process of transformation by which the older tripartite hierarchy of London, ‘great and good’ towns and small market towns was replaced by a diffuse and increasingly polycentric system.²⁴ Thus far the representation of urban landscapes that were stagnating or shrinking, of which Salisbury is one such example, has rarely been explored.

The case studies in this thesis have therefore been selected with a view to presenting a more nuanced perspective on urbanisation and its visual representation in the nineteenth century. Their selection has been guided by three principles: the contemporary categorisation of urban places; consideration of locales, or perspectives on those locales, hitherto overlooked in scholarship to date; and sites that generated a broad spectrum of representation, from exhibited academic landscape painting to reproductive plates in illustrated guides.

The typology of ‘the great towns of the realm’ was outlined in the 1840 Select Committee report on the Health of Towns thus:

‘1. The Metropolis / 2. Manufacturing Towns / 3. Populous Seaport Towns / 4. Great Watering Places / 5. County and other considerable Inland Towns not being the seats of particular Manufactures’.²⁵

²³ See, for example: John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A social history 1750–1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983), and John Hassan, *The seaside, health and environment in England and Wales since 1800* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

²⁴ Peter Clark, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 2 1540–1840, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 9.

²⁵ “Report from the Select Committee on the Health of Towns; together with the Minutes of Evidence taken before them, and an appendix and index, communicated by the Commons to the Lords, 16 July 1840,” in *The Sessional Papers, printed by order, of the House of Lords, or*

Three of the selected subjects correspond to these categories: Salisbury, a ‘considerable Inland Town’, Bristol, a ‘populous seaport town’, and Brighton, a ‘great watering place’. Lambeth, meanwhile, presented a means by which to address the fluidity of urban landscape in the vicinity of the metropolis, a zone far too nebulous to address in this project which has, in any case, assumed the focus of much research to date. The cathedral city of Salisbury is, as Daniels has pointed out, a prime example of an urban ‘type’ that has received little scholarly attention.²⁶ The image of Bristol, meanwhile, has been analysed predominantly through the prism of its so-called Bristol school of artists, the critique often limited to biographical information and topographical identification. Although the resort town of Brighton is amply represented in scholarly literature, this work mainly centres upon the Georgian period, leaving scope to look beyond 1830. Apart from Bristol, a place with a strong local tradition of oil painting, each chapter additionally correlates with sites chosen by Constable for major six-foot paintings, a criterion which has fostered a cross-examination of a diverse array of media and contexts for consumption. Chorographically, the four chapters map a significant proportion of provincial southern England, an underrepresented geography in urban landscape scholarship.

The chronological framework within which these places are analysed was also determined in response to extant scholarship on urban landscape representation, much of which focuses on two historical phases, the ‘early’ and ‘mid’ nineteenth century that are often, and problematically, interchanged with the monarchical appellations of ‘Georgian’, ‘Regency’ and ‘Victorian’. While Andrew Sanders has pointed out the fact that many of the figures we readily conceive of as Victorian – Lord Melbourne, Sir Robert Peel, Benjamin Disraeli, Macaulay, JS Mill and Darwin – were born during the reign of

presented by Royal command, in the session 1840, vol. 28 (London: Palace of Westminster, 1840), iii.

²⁶ Stephen Daniels, “The Trip to Jerusalem,” in *The Pictorial Turn*, ed. Neal Curtis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 213.

George III, and were thus, like Turner, ‘Georgian’ by birth,²⁷ Lynda Nead’s pioneering study of urban imagery, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven and London, 2000), in fact centres around a period of just fifteen years, 1855–1870, despite its title.²⁸ Thus, aside from any traditional scholarly interpretation of these labels, they reveal a scholarly lacuna in the period between William IV’s brief reign and the first decade of Queen Victoria’s. Beyond monographic accounts of their most eminent practitioners, the 1830s and 1840s are particularly underrepresented in landscape studies, having instead been subsumed in overarching narratives. Rigorous scholarly engagement with these decades is long overdue.

Aiming, therefore, to engage with a broad spectrum of landscape representation from the period c.1820–50, this thesis also proposes reform as a thematic framework within which to do so. Of the events that took place amidst—and indeed because of—the post-1815 tide of urbanisation and industrialisation, the campaign for political reform was simultaneously the most unifying and divisive issue of the thirty-year period examined by this thesis. For some, like the Fourth Duke of Newcastle, whose seat, Nottingham Castle, was left a burnt-out shell by pro-reform rioters, the issue was ‘synonymous with Revolution’;²⁹ in the event, however, the 1832 Representation of the People Act, or, as it came to be known, the Great Reform Act, extended the franchise to a total of only twenty per cent of British men (male householders paying rates over £10).³⁰ Crucially, however, the redistribution of MPs and rationalisation of electoral boroughs ascribed urban areas new political power. Parliamentary representation thus gave a new dimension to the visual representation of urban places, particularly through its

²⁷ Andrew Sanders, *In the Olden Time: Victorians and the British Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 250.

²⁸ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000).

²⁹ Fourth Duke of Newcastle, *An Address to All Classes and Conditions of Englishmen* (1832), quoted in Stephen Daniels, “Reforming Landscape: Turner and Nottingham,” in *Land, Nation and Culture, 1740–1840: Thinking the Republic of Taste*, eds. Peter de Bolla, Nigel Leask and David Simpson (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 22.

³⁰ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 349.

crystallisation of a newly enfranchised middle class, whose cultural, social and economic ambitions had a profound impact on the projection of civic identity. Stephen Daniels's essay on the socially ambitious topographer John Britton and his display map of the new electoral borough of Marylebone has demonstrated both these factors at work, citing reform as 'arguably the central, framing, concept' of the 1830s.³¹ This thesis extends the temporal framework of reform, taking it as the keynote for its governing arc of time. It is understood in multiple senses, beyond politics, and argued as a cultural condition, or an atmosphere, governed by change within which the production of urban landscape imagery accrued new currency.

Thus, while the theme of political reform is prominent in the discussion of Salisbury, a focal point for two major grievances of the reform campaign (so-called 'rotten' boroughs and the perceived corruption of the Anglican Church), in Chapter Two it is explored as both an explicit subject and lingering context for images of Bristol, where idealistic projections of ambitious infrastructural projects by Brunel can be read as acts to reform and rehabilitate the city's identity following depictions of it ablaze in the grip of reform riots. If the fire of reform—which also found physical, symbolic expression in the accidental burning of the Old Houses of Parliament in 1834 two years after the passage of the Reform Act—began in the political sphere, its fumes permeated other aspects of British life, too. The language of reform, for example, coloured expressions of anxiety about Brighton's clientele and desires to see it preserved from 'democratic enjoyment'.³² In the final chapter, Lambeth's proximity to Westminster is a strong theme; political and religious reform is thus an overt backdrop to building campaigns, from the rebuilding of the Archbishop of Canterbury's residence to new churches and, eventually, the Houses of Parliament. The reform of topography itself by practitioners insistent on the democratisation of knowledge and the broad dissemination of their work, a thread running through each of the case studies, is addressed most prominently in this final chapter on Lambeth.

³¹ Stephen Daniels, "Mapping the Metropolis in an Age of Reform: John Britton's London Topography, 1820–1840," *Journal of Historical Geography* 56 (2017), 63.

³² *Morning Chronicle*, 19 September 1828.

Britton was at the vanguard of this initiative. For him, reform provided a climate of opportunity since topography was a discipline attuned to change.³³ As many contemporaries observed, change was the order of the day. Britton himself wrote that

‘[o]ur age has undergone & is undergoing vast transitions. The French Revolution commenced them; steam engines & railways advancing the ‘march of intellect’ with giddy velocity’.³⁴

While reform was the most pivotal socio-political transition, one which, some felt brought Britain perilously close to revolution, it was not the only change by which an old world order was exposed, opened up, or disturbed. We might, therefore, also conceive a number of other key moments as part of the ‘age of reform’: the financial crash of 1825, which checked rampant speculation, strangled the print market and halted urban development; the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, which lifted curbs on civil rights for Catholics; the ‘railway mania’ of the 1840s, which drew conurbations and their hinterlands together and transformed the conceptualisation of speed, time and distance; and the impulse towards the generation, communication and consumption of knowledge that was given legal definition in 1850 by the Public Libraries Act. These events punctuated the period covered here, engineering major shifts in British life, but particularly life within urban places, and are thus, to varying degrees, crucial points of reference in the chapters that follow.

The concept of time plays an important role throughout this thesis, beyond the parameters itemised in its title. Historians have long debated the markers of modern society; the changes mentioned above, from political reform to railways, are widely understood as the markers of modernity in the first half of the nineteenth century. The ways in which art historians have defined

³³ Daniels, “Mapping the Metropolis in an Age of Reform,” 61–82.

³⁴ John Britton to William Beckford, July 1840, quoted in Daniels, “Mapping the Metropolis in an Age of Reform,” 81.

modernity, and analysed its impact upon and presence within urban imagery will be discussed further in the literature review section below. It is hoped, however, that this dissertation will advance a more balanced understanding of nineteenth-century modernity than those analysed therein, as one that was inextricably connected to contemporary notions of antiquity. In many of the sources that form the backbone of this thesis, the past and the present are in constant, and sometimes conflicting, dialogue. In order to appreciate what Williams has termed the ‘structures of feeling’ of a period – its ideological web – modernity and the period’s ideas of the present and its potential future must be read in relation to the way in which the past was discovered, conceptualised and utilised in the period.

Method and Structure

This dissertation’s own analysis of the past is founded upon extensive consultation of primary sources and presented through its four chapters. Following the review of literature, which will establish and critique in more detail the field of research to which this project most closely aligns, Chapter One will focus on the cathedral city of Salisbury. As a major component of antiquarian imagery cathedrals were significant objects of aesthetic interest that, in the period under review here, became highly charged icons of political turmoil. Salisbury was particularly vulnerable to attack from those who saw the clergy and landed gentry as corrupt abusers of power. Inspired by C.R. Leslie’s description of *Salisbury Cathedral* as the ‘compass’ of Constable’s art,³⁵ this chapter will use the painting as a compass by which to explore the creation and re-creation of Salisbury’s visual identity between 1820 and 1850.

In the second chapter the port city of Bristol will come under review. Like Salisbury, this was a city whose importance had been established in the Middle Ages; it, too, had a strong identity within antiquarian culture. Yet this was a place that was also striving to be modern, a struggle that was played out

³⁵ Charles Robert Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, R.A., Composed Chiefly of His Letters*, 2nd edition (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1845), 259.

upon its physical fabric in numerous ways. Centring upon the Reform riots that took place there in 1831 and the period of urban redevelopment – much of it the vision of Isambard Kingdom Brunel – that followed, the interrelationship between conflict and change will be a key theme, as will the assessment of the nuance that a resident body of artists could bring to its urban image.

The waves of development that the coastal resort of Brighton underwent form the subject of Chapter Three. Structured around three key zones, it presents an analysis that expands across a greater range of time, subjects and sources than extant scholarship. Centring upon the representation of key landmarks that were crucial to the conveyance of its ultra-modernity and highly fashionable image, it seeks to pinpoint the factors that brought about changes in its visualisation in the 1830s and 1840s, thus viewing Brighton's rapid transformation and growth (it was at one stage the fastest growing British town in the period) in relation to the social and financial upheaval presented by the financial crash of 1825 and anxieties around political reform.

The final chapter concerns the representation of Lambeth, which experienced the most dramatic, convoluted and polarising change of all the places analysed in this thesis. Fronting the Thames and on the fringe of the metropolis, there was an inherent fluidity about Lambeth's identity: this was, to use a contemporary description, a 'transpontine' zone. Its image was constructed around two aesthetically incompatible icons – the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth Palace and a new cluster of industrial buildings – and therefore presented a new, and unavoidable, set of representational challenges for those tasked with its description. This final chapter concentrates, in particular, on the interaction between text and image and the ways in which the topographical discipline mutated to reflect socio-political change, as much as physical change in the urban landscape.

Locating the urban landscape in art history

As stated above, imagery of urban places has thus far been a marginal concern of British landscape scholarship. While numerous scholarly approaches have contributed to the formulation of this thesis, the discussion that follows comprises a focused assessment of work that has significantly advanced engagement with urban landscape imagery. Expanding on a number of the questions raised earlier in this introduction, it is organised around three distinct phases of scholarship. The first and most substantial part of this review centres upon close analysis of a series of pioneering texts produced in the late 1980s and early 1990s by three art historians, Alex Potts,³⁶ Caroline Arscott³⁷ and Andrew Hemingway.³⁸ The methodologies of these early texts and the issues they raise will be demonstrated as a platform upon which subsequent waves of scholarship have been founded. After touching upon the second phase, which emerged in the late-1990s and was more diffuse in its disciplinary focus, this section will end with a brief summation of a third phase of urban landscape scholarship, that which is presently evolving via new scholarly engagement with the practice of topography.

Urban landscape imagery and Art History in the 1980s

Potts's article, 'Picturing the Modern Metropolis: Images of London in the Nineteenth Century', aimed to address the relationship between topographical imagery of London, literary productions and modernity.³⁹ Published in the social history oriented *History Workshop Journal*, it appeared the same year

³⁶ Alex Potts, "Picturing the Modern Metropolis: Images of London in the Nineteenth Century," *History Workshop Journal* 26 (Autumn 1988), 28–56.

³⁷ Caroline Arscott and Griselda Pollock with Janet Wolff, "The partial view: the visual representation of the early nineteenth-century industrial city," in *The Culture of Capital: art, power and the nineteenth-century middle class*, eds. Janet Wolff and John Seed (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 191–235; Caroline Arscott, "Victorian Development and Images of the Past," in *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, eds. Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 48–66; Caroline Arscott, "'Ramsgate Sands', Modern Life, and the Shoring-Up of Narrative," in *Towards a Modern Art World*, ed. Brian Allen (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 157–68.

³⁸ Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in early nineteenth-century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

³⁹ Potts, "Modern Metropolis."

as the jointly authored essay by Arscott, Griselda Pollock and Janet Wolff, ‘The partial view: the visual representation of the early nineteenth-century industrial city’, which sought to challenge the ‘received wisdom’ that

‘few artists, especially major ones, were attracted to [urban] subjects, or were able to find appropriate means to represent new industrial towns and cities’.⁴⁰

Its assertion of the validity for scholarly engagement with ‘many different forms of cultural production and its varied sites of consumption’⁴¹ was developed in two further essays by Arscott, each of which signposted scholarly routes taken up by the present thesis: ‘Victorian Development and Images of the Past’, which concerned Wakefield, and ‘Ramsgate Sands’, Modern Life, and the Shoring-Up of Narrative’.⁴² In Andrew Hemingway’s *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture* (1992) the ‘urban’ is considered at greater length as both a subject and an arena for consumption during the period c.1805–30. That this remains the only major book-length, thematic study of topographical imagery as a phenomenon in its own right, and that only a small proportion of the subjects he analyses are urban, tells of the continued paucity of literature in this area.

Urban landscape imagery and a social history of art

These texts emerged from a moment of convergence between the distinct but overlapping fields of ‘urban’ and ‘landscape’ studies, and a Marxist approach to history of art. ‘Urban studies’ was crystallised as a field of academic enquiry through work undertaken at the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920s; developed by Henri Lefebvre, Lewis Mumford, Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Sennett, much of this work is overtly Marxist.⁴³

⁴⁰ Arscott *et al.*, “The partial view,” 191.

⁴¹ Arscott *et al.*, “The partial view,” 191.

⁴² Arscott, “Victorian Development,” 48–66; Arscott, ““Ramsgate Sands,”” 157–8.

⁴³ Katrina Gulliver and Heléna Tóth, “Introduction,” in *Cityscapes in History: Creating the Urban Experience*, eds. Katrina Gulliver and Heléna Tóth (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 1, 3.

Although only Arscott and Hemingway explicitly state their inheritance of a Marxist stance, Potts shares their sensitivity to the social politics of urban landscape representation and the multiple interpretations that any one image could inspire for viewers of different class outlooks. In this way, these texts make evident their adoption of the defining approaches of the reinvigoration of British landscape scholarship that took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Marxist philosophies and, in particular, the ‘habitus’ theory of Bourdieu filtered through the work of literary scholar John Barrell, art historians Ann Bermingham, David Solkin and Michael Rosenthal, and geographers Cosgrove and Daniels. Through their efforts, all the richer for their range of disciplinary perspectives, landscape was cast afresh as an ideological tool, inextricably bound to the social, political and commercial interests of its producers and consumers.⁴⁴

The focus of this body of scholarship was rural landscape and it duly placed emphasis on the particular conditions of that socio-economic sphere, centring around the class outlook of the landed gentry and aristocracy, the long eighteenth century and its transformations in agriculture and industry. The texts by Potts, Arscott and Hemingway not only highlighted the interpretive potential of the urban as both subject and context for art in ways that will be discussed in more detail below, but also signified a vital shift in attention towards the production and consumption of landscape culture by the middle class. Indeed, as John Seed and Janet Wolff note in their introduction to *The Culture of Capital: art, power and the nineteenth-century middle class*, the volume in which the essay by Arscott, Pollock and Wolff appeared, by the mid-nineteenth century Britain was a ‘middle class nation’, defined by a

⁴⁴ John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730–1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); David H. Solkin, *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction* (London: Tate Gallery, 1982); Michael Rosenthal, *Constable: The Painter and His Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); Daniels and Cosgrove, *Iconography of Landscape*; Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740–1860* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989).

social stratum whose identity was crystallised in tandem with the process of urbanisation.⁴⁵

Correspondingly, Arscott, Pollock and Wolff emphasise the city as a zone of ‘raging controversy’, focusing on the identity struggle of the middle class within it and its bearing on the picturing of urban places, specifically the industrial cities of Leeds and Manchester.⁴⁶ This theme was developed by Arscott in her case studies on different types of urban places, the Yorkshire market town of Wakefield and Ramsgate on the Kent coast. In the latter, Arscott fuses the analytical approaches to genre and to landscape painting in order to interpret the representation of a largely middle-class, metropolitan crowd in William Powell Frith’s painting, *Ramsgate Sands: ‘Life at the Seaside’* (1854). Reading both crowd and townscape (from fashions on display to street names), she unlocks the contemporary significance of Ramsgate as a destination and subject for painting.⁴⁷

The geography of urban landscape

It was in his seminal book, *The Country and the City* (1973), which explored cultural perception of the two spheres of human settlement, that Raymond Williams acknowledged that there are ‘many kinds’ of city, connected ‘in name and in part of function, but nothing like identity’. The thesis developed in his book, however, effectively determines ‘city’ as London. The only other kind of city he discusses is industrial, yet while Manchester (and Preston, Dickens’s ‘Coketown’), Sheffield and Birmingham are referenced, they serve only as comparisons with London and never as sites of interest in themselves.⁴⁸ Similarly, in Potts’ essay, which focuses exclusively on London, and Hemingway’s book, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture*, there is a degree of nominal interchangeability between ‘urban’ and ‘London’

⁴⁵ John Seed and Janet Wolff, “Introduction,” in *The Culture of Capital: art, power and the nineteenth-century middle class*, eds. Janet Wolff and John Seed (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 2.

⁴⁶ Arscott *et al.*, “The partial view,” 197.

⁴⁷ Arscott, “‘Ramsgate Sands,’” 163–4.

⁴⁸ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, reprinted from the original 1973 edition (Nottingham: Spokesman, 2011), 1, 153, 217, 220.

or ‘metropolitan’. This serves to skew the geography of urban landscape imagery and its reception culture towards the capital only.

Hence, Potts’s use of accounts about London – a place with highly distinctive identity – to determine what constituted the ‘modern city scene’ is echoed in Hemingway’s reliance on London-based periodicals and exhibition spaces in order to construct the ‘urban culture’ referred to in the title of his study. This metropolitan-centric focus is understandable given that the weight and variety of documentation of London’s image and its culture but does, however, implicate the metropolis as archetypically ‘urban’, narrowing down perception of the term, and by extension, suggesting that only images of the metropolis could be considered truly ‘urban’. This artificially restrains our understanding of ‘urban’ in the period and furthermore strains against the philosophical impetus of both these texts towards pluralities of meaning.

Despite this emphasis on London, Hemingway’s book makes various forays into other geographies, which valuably extend the geography of urban landscape imagery and landscape culture. Principle amongst these is the East Anglian textile centre of Norwich, its specific socio-economic context analysed in relation to the prominent cultural activities of its local artists and their patrons, but a large quota of Hemingway’s text also deals with resort towns like Yarmouth and Brighton.⁴⁹ By acknowledging that ‘urban and agricultural scenes’ could have served as focal points for his subject-led analysis of landscape imagery, Hemingway infers a definition of these coastal resorts, and indeed the river imagery he also addresses, as something other than ‘urban’. While categorisation is a necessary means of managing the vast array of material relevant to such as study, the underlying understanding of ‘urban’ here appears again, as in Williams’s book and Potts’s essay, to be somewhat narrow and mutually exclusive from other landscape types.

Hemingway’s focus on resort imagery reflects its status in the 1980s as another nucleus of academic attention in both landscape imagery and urban

⁴⁹ Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 197, 258–9.

studies at large. Distinguished by its popularity and proximity to London, Brighton features heavily in such research, exemplified by social historian John Walton's *The English Seaside Resort: A social history 1750–1914* (1983), and the trans-historical case study on Brighton in sociologist Rob Shield's *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (1991).⁵⁰

Arscott's evident commitment to the exploration of cultural activity beyond London is consistent with the professed ambition of the essay co-authored with Wolff and Pollock, 'Partial View'. Indeed, the essay's focus on Manchester and Leeds was provoked by Ira B. Nadel and Frederic S. Schwarzbach's professed opinion that the capital represented an agglomeration of social conditions in regional cities and their equation of 'metropolitan' with 'leading', and 'provincial' with 'following' in terms of cultural production.⁵¹ Through their assertion of the individual identities of the two leading industrial cities, Arscott, Pollock and Wolff point towards the nineteenth-century ambiguity of the term 'city' given its indiscriminate application to any populous district (in the 1851 census, for instance), even those which might be better described as towns.⁵²

'Partial View' emerged at a moment in which a more rigorous and focused approach to the study of industrial urban landscapes specifically—their iconography and cultural environment—was taking place, exemplified by Stephen Daniels's 1986 article on the Turner watercolour, *Leeds* (Yale Center for British Art).⁵³ Chiming with Arscott *et al.*'s assertion of Manchester's sociocultural specificity, Daniels highlighted Leeds's status as the leading provincial centre for the exhibition and marketing of modern painting in the first part of the nineteenth century. Its close iconographical study of a single urban landscape image, using a wealth of contemporary sources such as George Walker's *The costume of Yorkshire* (1813, 1814) to reconstruct its

⁵⁰ Walton, *English Seaside Resort*; Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: alternative geographies of modernity* (London: Routledge, 1991).

⁵¹ Arscott *et al.*, "The partial view," 193.

⁵² Arscott *et al.*, "The partial view," 230, n.1.

⁵³ Stephen Daniels, "The implications of industry: Turner and Leeds," *Turner Studies* 6 (Summer 1986), 10–18.

layers of significance, offers a methodological parallel with Arscott's case study on Wakefield. While the latter, in its focus on the specific cultural conditions of a small market town (a under-investigated category of urban place), stands in relief against the texts concerned with large industrial cities, it works with them to challenge Nadel and Schwartzbach's suggestion that regional urban zones simply mirrored London in miniature.

Defining urban modernity

In the introduction to *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture*, Hemingway explains that

'[t]he theory of history underlying this inquiry, and the character of the historical phase I am examining, require that *modernity* be the basic criterion with which I operate'.⁵⁴

His reference to Marshall Berman's *All that is Solid melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity* (London, 1983) indexes another common point of reference between his, Arscott and Potts's work. Their work stands as early contributions to what Lynda Nead has since described as the scholarly preoccupation of British art history with 'perceptions and representations of the modern and...the larger, ongoing debate on the meaning of modernity'.⁵⁵ If, at the time of their publication, the lens of modernity within art history was firmly trained on Paris and the late nineteenth century, these texts can be credited with diffusing this focus and advancing interpretations of modernity as expressed in urban landscape culture.

In 'Picturing the Modern Metropolis', Potts questions whether 'the modern city scene really took so long to enter the picture' as prevailing art-historical narratives—which located modernity only in the 'fixed visual stereotypes of later Victorian times'—would have it.⁵⁶ Potts's pioneering close visual analysis

⁵⁴ Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 11.

⁵⁵ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 5–6.

⁵⁶ Potts, "Modern Metropolis," 30, 34.

of topographical works yields the suggestion that images bore their own multiple perspectives on modernity, expressed in accordance with aesthetic conventions, be it through assimilation of modernity in the picturesque or the communication of ‘improving ideology’, thus rendering urban landscape subjects worthy of further exploration.⁵⁷ His eventual conclusion, however, overlooks the significance of his observation and reveals the limitations of his methodology, specifically in his measure of modernity and the pictures in which he seeks to find it. Hence, whilst stating the need to look beyond stereotypes, his own gauge of modernity is somewhat narrow, being based on ‘highly charged literary description’ of the 1820s metropolitan experience (including texts tinged with a ‘definably new, darker...more intense and dramatic rhetoric’).⁵⁸ Searching for a corresponding iconography of the modern city in the paintings of Turner and the topographical print series *Metropolitan Improvements* (1825) and the six volume survey of London (1840s) by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd and Charles Knight respectively, Potts is thus frustrated by landscape imagery’s ‘apparent failure’ to picture the city in ways that were ‘directly evocative’ of its inherent drama.⁵⁹

Similarly, while Hemingway’s assessment of the ‘problem of representing the modern as constituted in the development of the seaside resort’ expands the geography of modernity, it rests on a similar gauge of modernity to that employed by Potts – new elements in the landscape and their representation, and novelty of experience.⁶⁰ Unlike Potts, whose constitution of the ‘modern’ sprang from what could be gleaned in contemporary texts alone, however, Hemingway considers the many forms which modernisation took, for example in social relations or the physical environment.⁶¹

Significantly, Hemingway concludes that only Constable demonstrated the ability to convey the ambiguity surrounding coastal resort modernisation, as replete with both pleasures and pitfalls, a claim Arscott makes for Frith’s

⁵⁷ Potts, “Modern Metropolis,” 34, 42–3.

⁵⁸ Potts, “Modern Metropolis,” 29, 54 n.3.

⁵⁹ Potts, “Modern Metropolis,” 42.

⁶⁰ Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 155.

⁶¹ Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 155.

Ramsgate Sands, too.⁶² Along with Potts's citation of Turner as the chief proponent of modernity on canvas (a concept that would be argued more effusively by Maxine Berg from 1997⁶³), these claims suggest that restrictive representational and media conventions deterred all but those whom we now consider to be the boldest painters from including modern icons on canvas. It thus follows, as explicitly expressed by Hemingway and Potts, that it was in works on paper – the typical domain of topographical imagery – that the iconography of modernity could be more firmly located and in which conventions like Uvedale Price's Picturesque, for example, could be expanded to accommodate industrial or urban grandeur.⁶⁴

On the conceptualisation of modernity as applied to images of urban places, Arscott's works sits in contradistinction to both Hemingway and Potts. Where they exclude consideration of antiquarian culture as an expression of modernity, Arscott embraces it in both of the texts featured here. In 'Victorian Development and Images of the Past' Arscott's chief focus is on the relationship between word and image in two antiquarian studies of Wakefield from 1843 and 1853, akin to the brief analysis of Baines's *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain* (1835) in 'The Partial View'.⁶⁵ Key to her assessment is the notion that all accounts of the present – in this case Wakefield in the mid-nineteenth century – depend on the past, inferring that modernity and the past, and attitudes about modernity expressed via antiquarian study, are inextricably bound, not as a tactic to evade contemporary life but as an expression and commentary on it.⁶⁶ Time was a preoccupation in nineteenth-century Britain – cultural producers were critically aware of the passage of time and the pace of societal change, a phenomenon that could be observed in the creation and transformation of urban places. Antiquarian culture was not, as my study will show, a dialectical

⁶² Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 214–215.

⁶³ Maxine Berg, "Representations of Early Industrial Towns: Turner and his Contemporaries," in *Prospects for the Nation: recent essays in British landscape, 1750–1880*, eds. Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne and Scott Wilcox (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 129.

⁶⁴ Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 21–23. Hemingway devotes a chapter to theoretical approaches to landscape (*Landscape Imagery*, Chapter 5, 62–75).

⁶⁵ Arscott, "Victorian Development," 48–66.

⁶⁶ Potts, "Modern Metropolis," 30; Arscott, "Victorian Development," 48.

entity to modernity but one that was intrinsic to its conceptualisation and physical manifestation, for example via historicising architectural forms.

Expanding the field of enquiry

This early work on urban landscape imagery also highlighted the value of studying material peripheral to the received landscape canon. Arscott, Pollock and Wolff thus asserted the importance of reading across the strata of the media hierarchy, pointing out the danger of losing sight of the material on which ‘high’ art (defined as paintings and engravings made by exhibiting, professional artists) depended (be it book illustration, advertising, theatre bills or illustrated magazines) especially as such art broached new, modern subjects. They propose that

‘[t]he supposed lacuna in images of the city is, therefore, perhaps an art-historical delusion, and a product of a blindness to the necessary historical relations between many different forms of cultural production and its varied sites of consumption’.⁶⁷

One such form of cultural production for urban landscape imagery was topography. Valuable, but necessarily limited, survey studies on topographical artists in regional cities and London by E.D.H. Johnson and William Vaughan respectively, as well as Bernard Adams’ 1983 catalogue of topographical books and plates, provided a foundation for the extensive references to and assertion of the centrality of topographical imagery in the study of urban landscape subjects within the contributions by Potts, Arscott and Hemingway.⁶⁸ Arscott’s statement that ‘[e]ven topographical scenes’ can be shown to inhabit ‘complex ideological space’ implicitly acknowledges the

⁶⁷ Arscott *et al.*, “The partial view,” 193–4.

⁶⁸ E.D.H. Johnson, “Victorian Artists and the Urban Milieu,” in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, vol. 2, eds. H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (London: Routledge, 1973), 449–75; William Vaughan, “London Topographers and Urban Change,” in *Victorian Artists and the City: A Collection of Critical Essays*, eds. Ira Bruce Nadel and F.S. Schwarzbach (New York: Pergamon, 1980), 59–77; Bernard Adams, *London Illustrated, 1604–1851: a survey of topographical books and their plates* (London: Library Association, 1983).

prevailing perception of topography as an indiscriminating and peripheral practice (Klingender's perception that the topographical artist 'makes a visual record of his discoveries' and Links's dismissal of the practice as a 'byway of art history' are worth recalling here).⁶⁹ Hemingway's book is the most useful in this regard, arguing that the contemporary status of the topography – much higher than in subsequent historiographical treatment – makes its concurrent assessment vital to any discussion of landscape painting in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁷⁰

New directions in the 1990s

The texts discussed above provided fertile ground upon which scholarship of urban landscape imagery has flourished. In a reflection of the widening scope of art historical and visual cultural studies more generally, the decade following their publication saw contributions to the study of urban landscape imagery from new and growing aspects of the discipline. Retaining its sociological bent, the impulse behind much of this new work came from architectural and cultural historians focusing on theories of space and the built environment.

Most prominent is the work of Dana Arnold, who has argued for the utility of topographical material as an index of the early nineteenth century's augmented interest in the urban environment - an interest borne of increased domestic tourism and economic growth - but also for the way in which they allow us to infer increasingly marked class differences and social aspirations.⁷¹ Her work, focused largely on architecture and urban planning in Regency London, uses landscape views of the city, as well as maps, legislation, planning documents and written accounts to read its physical

⁶⁹ Arscott *et al.*, "The partial view," 201; Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution*, 77; Links, *Townscape Painting and Drawing*, 1.

⁷⁰ Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 19, 73, 304.

⁷¹ Dana Arnold, *Rural Urbanism: London landscapes in the early nineteenth century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 3.

fabric as an expression of class, gender and national identity.⁷² In *Rural Urbanism* (2005), such sources are used to demonstrate the ambiguity within the built environment of London's West End, which could represent to the public and foreign visitors 'at once notions of national identity and modernity, as well as nostalgia and reminiscence'.⁷³ Although it perpetuates the emphasis on London in the field, Arnold's work revises Potts's preoccupation with a singular modern London as constructed on indices of novelty, change, speed, crowding and working class poverty, suggesting instead that the physical site, or sight, of the metropolitan landscape presented itself as something less clearly defined as archetypically 'urban' or 'modern'. This follows Williams' 1984 essay, 'Between Country and City', which, reflecting on the thesis of his 1973 book *The Country and the City*, played down its apparent dichotomisation of country and city to emphasise a more nuanced conceptualisation of these constructs, their interrelationship and the importance of flux between the two spheres.⁷⁴

The testing of the country-city polarity has gravitated towards study of the suburb. From early contributions such as the chapter by Bermingham in *Landscape and Ideology*, which studied the way in which suburban planners used the picturesque aesthetic to create spaces of 'scenic capital', to the more recent essay by Daniels centring upon John Claudius Loudon's *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* (1838), work on this geographical zone has necessarily enhanced engagement with middle-class values, and cultural preoccupations.⁷⁵ This has been developed in the work of architectural historian Elizabeth McKellar. Her article, 'Peripheral Visions: alternative aspects and rural presences in mid-eighteenth-century London' departed from Arnold's upper class-centric perspective on London in its ascription of

⁷² Dana Arnold, *Re-presenting the Metropolis: Architecture, urban experience and social life in London 1800–1840* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

⁷³ Arnold, *Rural Urbanism*, 1.

⁷⁴ Raymond Williams, "Between Country and City," in *Reading Landscape: country, city, capital*, ed. Simon Pugh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 7–18. This originally appeared in *Second Nature*, eds. Richard Mabey, Susan Clifford and Angela King (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984).

⁷⁵ Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 166–7; Stephen Daniels, "Suburban Prospects," in *Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the Present Day*, eds. Nicholas Alfrey, Stephen Daniels and Martin Postle (London: Tate, 2004), 24. See also Donald J. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

responsibility for the blurring of the boundary between urban and rural to the metropolitan middle classes and the development of the suburb.⁷⁶ McKellar's conceptualisation of the suburb as an edge city, or expopolis, between city and country, a place where 'dwelling, leisure and commerce were intertwined' has since been expanded in a book-length study, *Landscapes of London: the City, the Country and the Suburbs 1660–1840* (2013).⁷⁷ Analysis of suburban imagery from locales other than London remains a relative lacuna, however.

Arnold and McKellar's focus on the social experience of the urban landscape and its image overlaps with research into novel forms of imagery, particularly the panorama. Produced in the mid-1980s, Ralph Hyde's pioneering research into this period craze, conveyed in two exhibitions and related publications, served to highlight the variety and pervasiveness of the panoramic format and its particular application to urban subject matter, aside from its status as an urban commercial attraction.⁷⁸ Arnold's *Re-presenting the Metropolis: Architecture, Urban Experience and Social Life in London 1800–1840* (2000), which posits the panorama as something which extended the viewer's field of vision and re-ordered their sense of power and knowledge, exemplifies the growth of research in this area from the mid-1990s onwards.⁷⁹

The study of urban landscape imagery from an architectural historical perspective has also initiated a growing body of work on another, less-studied,

⁷⁶ Elizabeth McKellar, "Peripheral Visions: alternative aspects and rural presences in mid-eighteenth-century London," in *The Metropolis and Its Image: constructing identities for London, c.1750–1950*, ed. Dana Arnold (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 29–30.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth McKellar, *Landscapes of London: The City, the Country and the Suburbs, 1660–1840* (New Haven: published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2013), xv.

⁷⁸ Ralph Hyde, *Gilded Scenes and Shining Prospects: Panoramic Views of British Towns 1575–1900* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1985); Ralph Hyde and Scott B. Wilcox. *Panoromania!: The Art and Entertainment of the 'all-embracing' View* (London: Trefoil Publications in Association with Barbican Art Gallery, 1988).

⁷⁹ See also Michael Charlesworth, *Landscape and Vision in Nineteenth-century Britain and France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Chapter 3 in Gillian D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760–1860* (New York and Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001); Chapter 2 in Renzo Dubbini, *Geography of the Gaze in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University Press, 2002); Charlotte Klonk, *Science and Perception of Nature: British Landscape Art in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 149–50; Stephan Oettermann, *Das Panorama* (1980; transl. Deborah Schneider as *The Panorama*, 1997); Bernard Comment, *The Panorama*, trans. Anne-Marie Glasheen (London: Reaktion, 1999).

form of novel imagery – the street view, depictions from eye level of street architecture, tracing each building in detail and with very little perspective. The study of these, like that of the suburb, sits within a body of work centring upon the visual and material culture of the urbanised middle class. Thus, Jeffrey Cohen has used them to broaden understanding of consumer culture in the period, 1820–90. These ‘transactional landscapes’, as Cohen calls them, were termed ‘pictorial directories’, functioning as site maps for visitors to instantly gauge the opportunities of any given area, be it for shopping or antiquarian tourism.⁸⁰ Cultural historian Matthew Sangster’s 2017 study of street views, particularly one prominent example, *Tallis’s London Street Views* (1838–40), analyses them alongside major topographical publications like Shepherd’s *Metropolitan Improvements* (a focus of Potts’s essay).⁸¹

The panorama and the street view demanded that their producers capture, translate and convey the physical space of the urban landscape, and its recognisable features, into new spatial realms with their own perspectival laws. By this process of translation and conveyance they relate to the discipline of mapping, which, as another burgeoning form of landscape culture in the early nineteenth century, represents another strand by which to approach urban landscape imagery in Britain. As such, maps feature prominently in the work of the aforementioned scholars Daniels, Arnold and McKellar. It is through the work of Nicholas Alfrey, however, that a more concerted effort to reappraise the map from an art-historical perspective has emerged.⁸² Productively blurring the boundary between ‘fine art’ and map-making, such work has provided a model for cross-comparison of individually distinctive but closely related forms of cultural production.

⁸⁰ Jeffrey A. Cohen, “A streetscape named desire: long views through the emerging bourgeois city,” in *Portraits of the City: Dublin and the Wider World*, eds. Gillian O’Brien and Finola O’Kane (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 27.

⁸¹ Matthew Sangster, “Transformation and Specialization in London and its Topography,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 22, no. 3 (May 2017): 317–328.

⁸² Nicholas Alfrey, “Landscape and the Ordnance Survey, 1795–1820,” in *Mapping the Landscape: essays on art and cartography*, eds. Nicholas Alfrey and Stephen Daniels (Nottingham: University Art Gallery and Castle Museum, 1990), 23–7.

Topography revived in the 2010s

This holistic approach to physical places and their imagery, in whatever form that might come, has been noted by Denis Cosgrove as a ‘geographical sensibility’ in scholarship.⁸³ The focus on particular products of the urban environment – visual or otherwise – is also characteristic of the recent ‘material turn’ in humanities and social sciences scholarship. Environmental historian Chris Otter defines this as the tracing of a substance, or a ‘physical thing’, through their changing form, mode of circulation, range of distribution and type of political control.⁸⁴ These observations describe the conditions in which a new phase of engagement with urban landscape imagery is taking place.

The work of Katy Layton-Jones typifies this recent resurgence of interest in the visual and material culture of topographical imagery. Emerging from her doctoral research, her book *Beyond the Metropolis: The Changing Image of Urban Britain, 1780–1880* uses a range of sources – including oil paintings, prints, trade cards, ceramics, decorative metal ware and advertisements – to present a survey of the ways in which the provincial urban places were depicted and perceived.⁸⁵ Broad in timeframe and geography, it counterbalances both the attention given in urban studies to the period post-1850 and the weight of scholarship on London. In this, and its emphasis on images of industrial cities, it revisits and develops the territory outlines by Arcsott, Pollock and Wolff in the mid-1980s. Throughout her work, Layton-Jones argues that historiographical perception of the city is skewed by reliance on polarised opinions alone, be they celebratory or despairing of urban life.⁸⁶

⁸³ Denis Cosgrove, “Prologue” in *Envisioning Landscapes, Making Worlds: Geography and the Humanities*, eds. Stephen Daniels, Dydia DeLyser, J. Nicholas Entrikin and Douglas Richardson (Routledge: Oxford and New York, 2011), xxix.

⁸⁴ Chris Otter, “Locating Matter: The place of materiality in urban history,” in *Material Powers: cultural studies, history and the material turn*, eds. Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 38. See also Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: a political history of light and vision in Britain, 1800–1910* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁸⁵ Katy Layton-Jones, *Beyond the Metropolis: The Changing Image of Urban Britain, 1780–1880* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

⁸⁶ Katy Layton-Jones, “The synthesis of town and trade: visualising provincial urban identity, 1800–1858,” *Urban History*, vol. 35, issue 1 (May 2008), 75.

She thus provides a particular challenge to Potts's narrow measure of urban experience, centred upon accounts characterised by 'darker...rhetoric', in her invocation of a wide spectrum of verbal attitudes towards the urban environment.

A marked interest in individuals—which in itself is reflective of a wider academic trend towards biographical study⁸⁷—and networks responsible for the production of topographical material is another feature of recent work. An article on a prominent figure within the present dissertation, John Britton, by Stephen Daniels is most relevant given its framing of Britton's survey of Marylebone, London, within the context of the reform era.⁸⁸ Other investigations into topographical publishing have taken place through the recent doctoral research of James M'Kenzie Hall, comprising case studies on several of the producers referenced in the present thesis, for example Thomas Allom and William Henry Bartlett, and the on-going Nichols Archive project, run through the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester which is compiling a database of the scattered archival legacy left by major antiquarian publisher John Nichols.⁸⁹ This work is complemented by a recent publication by Lucy Peltz, *Facing the text: Extra-illustration, print culture and society in Britain 1769–1840*, which represents the culmination of her research on antiquarian book illustration and offers a valuable appraisal of the social function of extra-illustration, a practice closely aligned with the surge in topographical research and publishing at the end of the eighteenth century.⁹⁰

The awakening of interest in topographical culture has both manifested itself in and been stimulated by a number of recent exhibitions and events. The

⁸⁷ See Barbara Caine, *Biography and History* (London: Macmillan, 2010) and Hans Renders *et al.*, *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁸⁸ Daniels, "Mapping the Metropolis in an Age of Reform," 61–82.

⁸⁹ James M'Kenzie-Hall, "Illustrated Travel: Steel Engravings and their use in early nineteenth-century topographical books, with special reference to Henry Fisher & Co." (PhD diss. Southampton Solent University, 2011); Julian Pooley, "The Nichols Archive Project," Centre for English Local History Research, University of Leicester website, accessed 18 May 2016, <https://le.ac.uk/english-local-history/research>.

⁹⁰ Lucy Peltz, *Facing the text: Extra-illustration, print culture and society in Britain 1769–1840* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, 2017).

most prominent examples of the former have both been hosted by the Royal Academy. In 2012, the exhibition ‘Constable, Gainsborough, Turner’, drawn from the landscape collections of the Academy, prompted its reviewer, John Barrell, to call for better recognition of the contemporary status and impact of topographical projects such as François Vivare’s engravings of the Peak District after Thomas Smith of Derby.⁹¹ This argument echoed that made by Felicity Myrone in the exhibition catalogue accompanying the Royal Academy’s Paul Sandby exhibition three years earlier, that the historical categorisation of works as either ‘landscape’ or ‘topography’ (and, as previously mentioned, corresponding division of collections between the British Museum and the British Library in the 1990s) prevented full recognition of their contemporary interrelation as well as the technical mastery and ideological complexity of much work falling into the latter category.⁹² Under her initiative in her capacity as Lead Curator, Western Prints and Drawings, the microsite ‘Picturing Places’ can now be found on the British Library website. Developed in tandem with a conference held in May 2017 this serves as a valuable platform for the promotion of topography and its study.

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In his essay ‘On History’ (May 1828), Macaulay wrote that ‘[h]istory has its foreground and its background’, and that ‘it is principally in the management of its perspective that one artist differs from another’.⁹³ As a result of a gradual shift in perspective amongst scholars, urban landscape imagery has emerged from a position on the periphery of art-historical landscape studies to one of currency for a range of disciplines seeking to understand urban culture as a whole. The genre has been made increasingly visible and its variety revealed by a shift away from a focus on canonical artists and culturally elite frameworks of production to one that embraces mass-produced imagery and

⁹¹ John Barrell, “The Virtues of Topography,” *London Review of Books*, vol. 35 no. 1 (2013), 17–18.

⁹² Myrone, “‘The Monarch of the Plain’,” 57.

⁹³ Thomas Babington MacCaulay quoted in Andrew Sanders, *In the Olden Time: the Victorians and the British Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 6.

ephemera and, crucially, involves a rigorous searching of the meaning and significance of such imagery for contemporary viewers and consumers. It is within this context that the present thesis has evolved.

Chapter One

The ‘well watered’ city: Salisbury and the place of the Cathedral Church

In 1828, 1829 and 1831 three of Britain’s most prominent landscape artists exhibited views of the cathedral city of Salisbury (figs.1–3). Cathedral imagery had been an established strand of British landscape practice since the 1790s, familiar to all who studied print shop windows and those who frequented metropolitan art exhibitions, particularly watercolour society shows like that which displayed George Fennell Robson’s view of Salisbury in 1828. Fuelled by the cross-currents of antiquarianism, doctrines on the picturesque and the sublime, and, perhaps most potently, the Gothic Revival, the visual culture of the cathedral was not only prevalent but increasingly pertinent: the presentation and significance of medieval architecture, particularly ecclesiastical buildings, became a vehicle for reflection upon the state of the nation. In his appraisal of Salisbury Cathedral’s prominence in this domain, Timothy Wilcox posits that ‘Salisbury, more perhaps than any other building of its type, was transformed from stone to symbol’.⁹⁴ But Salisbury Cathedral was a highly unstable, multifarious and contested symbol whose representation—as the disparate offerings by Fennell Robson, JMW Turner and John Constable show—was liable to mutation. If, in the 1790s, the cathedral stood for British cultural achievement, of glorious and simpler times past, and became a vessel for the patriotism of a nation at war, by the late 1820s the cathedral had accrued potential to signify a troubled present in which the nation was fractured by political warfare that saw the church as both target and weapon. This was therefore a highly charged context in which to create, or re-create, the image of a cathedral city.

Notwithstanding the cathedral’s topographical dominance at Salisbury—indeed, Samuel Pepys observed that it was possible to travel ‘all over

⁹⁴ Timothy Wilcox, *Constable and Salisbury: The Soul of Landscape* (London: Scala, 2011), 13.

[Salisbury] plain by the sight of the steeple'⁹⁵—this was not, as this chapter will show, the only facet in the city's visual identity. The largest, most academically ambitious and, I contend, the most novel of the three images referenced so far, Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (exhibited 1831; fig.1) makes this apparent through its provision of a view onto the city that is at once an overview and a detailed account of its constituent parts. Inspired by Constable biographer C.R. Leslie's designation of this painting as a 'compass' of Constable's art, this chapter will use this painting as a compass with which to explore the creation and re-creation of Salisbury's image from the 1820s to the 1850s. The painting's constituent parts—river, cathedral, city and hinterland—will be taken as directional points to navigate the wide range of spatial and temporal territories mapped out by this and other presentations of Salisbury. Like the lines on a compass rose, however, these constituents will be found to intersect; therefore they are addressed here not in turn and as discreet zones but rather as interrelated components in Salisbury's extensive field of significance.

This chapter will build on recent monographic studies of Constable in Salisbury by Wilcox and of Turner's engagement with the Wiltshire area by Ian Warrell, asking how they and other artists engaged with the city, its iconography and its histories and what new significance was conferred upon them by the turbulent political climate in which they were received.⁹⁶ It expands upon these predominantly monographic works by looking at a wider scope of images and by looking forward to the 1840s. In claiming the city's hinterland as territory with symbolism that was culturally urban, it poses a challenge to the habitual addressing of this landscape as rural. Along similar lines, my contention that *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* is a painting of an urban landscape directly counters David Solkin's description of it as the

⁹⁵ Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, 10 June 1668, quoted in Robert Benson and Henry Hatcher, "Old and New Sarum, or Salisbury," in *The History of Modern Wiltshire*, ed. Sir Richard Colt Hoare, 2nd part (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1843), 467.

⁹⁶ Wilcox, *Constable and Salisbury*; Ian Warrell, *Turner's Wessex: Architecture and Ambition* (London: Scala, 2015).

most famous of ‘rural scenes that played such a central part in the symbolics of national identity’.⁹⁷

The question of national identity will be addressed by looking forward and backward from the point at which Constable’s image emerged, when reform was reaching a climax. Under such a shifting and complicated context, the image of the city was constantly re-appraised, as visual and literary sources displayed, developed and dictated Salisbury’s past and present significance.

In the late 1810s, a period termed by Linda Colley as one of ‘profound but generalised uncertainty’, following over two decades of war and in the grip of economic depression, arguments regarding parliamentary representation and the civil rights of British Catholics and subjects in British colonies gathered pace.⁹⁸ Although a series of bills passed in relatively quick succession (the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act, the 1832 Reform Act and the 1833 abolition of slavery across the British Empire) went some way towards addressing reformers’ demands, the disintegration of social stability and the sting of concessions made, particularly with regard to suffrage and Catholic civil rights, was acutely felt by Constable, who would later write of the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act as a ‘great mischief’ inflicted by the party with whom he had habitually identified, the Tories.⁹⁹ His anguish was amplified by the connection he had to Salisbury, a place for which he had developed a great fondness, that was now, as shall be discussed, embroiled in controversy. A reference in a letter to ‘the Church under a Cloud’¹⁰⁰ from his closest friend and Salisbury resident, the Archdeacon Fisher, is widely acknowledged as a reference to the political turbulence that inspired the artist to place Salisbury at the centre of a six-foot painting destined for public exhibition.

⁹⁷ David Solkin, *Painting Out of the Ordinary: Modernity and the Art of Everyday Life in Early Nineteenth-century Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 246, 260, n.5.

⁹⁸ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 321.

⁹⁹ Letter to George Constable of Arundel (an amateur artist of no relation), 16 Sept. 1836, in *John Constable’s Correspondence, V: Various Friends, with Charles Bone and the Artist’s Children*, ed. R.B. Beckett (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1967), 35.

¹⁰⁰ R.B. Beckett, ed., *John Constable’s Correspondence, VI: The Fishers* (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1968), 250–1.

If the background of aesthetic predisposal to antiquarian subjects and increased socio-political anxiety might be described respectively as long- and short-term contributing factors to *Salisbury Cathedral*'s genesis, an immediate stimulus may have been the exhibition of two Salisbury watercolours by Constable's contemporaries. That by Fennell Robson was shown in 1828 at the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, Pall Mall (fig.3), and was to be engraved for John Britton's *Picturesque Views of the English Cities*. Turner's *Salisbury from Old Sarum Intrenchment* (fig.2), meanwhile, was the first in a sequence of subjects for the ambitious but ultimately curtailed series of engravings, *Picturesque Views in England and Wales* shown in June 1829 in the Egyptian Hall on Piccadilly.¹⁰¹ This exhibition took place in the weeks immediately prior to Constable's departure for Salisbury on 7 July, the visit during which he would make the sketches that most informed his the six-foot canvas he would exhibit two years later. Publicity surrounding Turner's project resurfaced again a year later as the engravings for *Picturesque Views*, which included a view of the Wiltshire antiquarian icon Stonehenge as well as the engraved view of Salisbury from Old Sarum, were exhibited at No. 6 Pall Mall, the gallery space of publishers Moon, Boys and Graves.¹⁰²

Although no documentary evidence exists to confirm Constable's attendance at any of these exhibitions, given the stature of the exhibitors and his own burgeoning interest in publishing ventures (*English Landscape Scenery* was underway by August 1829), Constable would surely have been aware of them. Did reflections on Fennell Robson's work for Britton, with whom Constable was acquainted, and Turner's Salisbury subject, which surfaced just prior to and rose to prominence again during the time of *Salisbury Cathedral*'s genesis, perhaps motivate Constable to express his own vision of this landscape in such a way that would best harness its pictorial power? The

¹⁰¹ Several factors contributed to its lack of success, not least its timing, so soon after the financial crash of December 1825, which was notorious for its adverse effect on publishers. See Eric Shanes, *Turner's Picturesque Views in England and Wales, 1825–1838* (London and Toronto: Book Club Associates, 1979), 10, 12, 14.

¹⁰² Shanes, *Turner's Picturesque Views*, 12–13.

resulting six-foot canvas bespeaks a wish to produce a more academically ambitious, original and definitive statement than his colleagues' depictions on paper of a place that he knew better than any other metropolitan artist.

Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral* as a compass

Constable's composition derives its distinctiveness from a deft manipulation of topography and a dynamic moulding of pictorial space. This is demonstrable by comparison with a contemporary map, which reveals the painting's features – from the church of St Thomas at the far left to the glimpse of Salisbury's surrounding Downs landscape at the far right – as occupying a far more expansive sweep of terrain than appears in the painting (fig.5). This compositional tactic renders the near-square canvas a pseudo-panorama, identifiable as part of what Michael Charlesworth observed as the dominant cultural impulse to 'take in the whole view at once'.¹⁰³

In addition to the compression in width, there is also a compression of depth, enacted by a collapsing of distance between the vantage point and the objects in view. Sketches reveal the Cathedral to be at a greater distance than is seen in Constable's eventual painting (figs.6 and 7). Indeed, other artists tended to employ a distant vantage point so as to convey the scale of the cathedral and the impact of its angular silhouette in relation to the natural undulations of the landscape around it. His translation of the rectangular arrangement seen in the full-size sketch (Guildhall Art Gallery) to a squarer canvas (extended in height by six inches) endows the cathedral with a greater centripetal force: centrally placed in pictorial space, its centrality to the wider landscape is emphasised by the circular path effected by the rainbow, the tree and the river, with its wading horses and cart. A relative evenness of focus and the prominence of figures interacting with the landscape works to enhance our sense of proximity to the features strung across the horizon and thus to engage with the composition's peripheral features—the city and the hinterland—as much as its

¹⁰³ Michael Charlesworth, *Landscape and Vision in Nineteenth-century Britain and France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 27.

central icon. Constable's composition therefore permits an unusually proximate and comprehensive description of Salisbury's three main landscape zones: the walled sacred space of the Cathedral close, the secular space of the adjacent city and the hinterland beyond.¹⁰⁴

Returning to the conceptualisation of the painting as a compass for the exploration of Salisbury, or at least that presented in Constable's configuration of the city, the principal point on that compass is water. The composition is saturated by its presence: an elevated perspective admits a wide expanse of river, the watermeadows are given a sunlit prominence against a dark sky comprised of rain, clouds and the vaporous spectacle of the rainbow. We enter the composition via the water, following the snaking path of the river Nadder, so named, according to a guidebook of 1797, on account of 'its serpentine or winding current'.¹⁰⁵ Its undulating 'line of beauty', of the kind Hogarth identified in 'winding walks, and serpentine rivers', delivers us to the River Avon, which defines the bounds of the cathedral's close, sitting at the heart of the composition.¹⁰⁶ Like a needle on a compass, the cathedral's spire in turn directs our eye upwards to the rainbow, the base of which aligns with the vanishing point of the river and the edge of the watermeadows. The inclusion of water was by 1831 a well established trait of Constable's work, featuring in all of his six-foot paintings and a significant proportion of smaller-format works; his rendering of 'gleaming water in the distance' of *The Vale of Dedham* (National Museums Scotland) was declared 'inimitable' by *The Sun*'s critic in 1828.¹⁰⁷ While its dominant presence in *Salisbury Cathedral* might be contrived as a display of skill in the face of increasing critical hostility, it reflects an acute sensibility towards a landscape that was completely determined and defined by water. The visually catalytic role it

¹⁰⁴ The author's experience attests to this discrepancy, for although development now obscures the view of St Thomas's Church (which may have never been visible to Constable) the cathedral is certainly more distant than Constable's scale would suggest.

¹⁰⁵ *A Description of Stonehenge, Abury, &c. in Wiltshire. with an account of the learning and discipline of the Druids, to which is added, an account of the antiquities on Salisbury Plain* (Salisbury, 1788), 60.

¹⁰⁶ William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 1753, ed. Ronald Paulson (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 34, 51.

¹⁰⁷ *The Sun*, 5 May 1828.

plays in the viewer's navigation of his composition is therefore highly appropriate.

The river landscape

The so-called 'Hampshire' Avon is Salisbury's major waterway.¹⁰⁸ The long-held importance of the Avon to Salisbury's identity is suggested by William Naish's map of 1751, inset with images deemed emblematic of the city landscape: a view of the cathedral and a diagram of the course of the Avon (fig.8). A map accompanying a re-edition of James Easton's guide to the city published the year of Constable's first visit there very clearly delineates Salisbury's position in relation to the complex river system of the Avon valley (fig.9). The lack of contours, parish borders, town plans and other topographic indicators throws into relief the semblance of its watery network to other life-giving arterial structures like the branches of a tree, or nerve endings—visual analogies appropriate for the feature upon which Salisbury's existence, urban plan and prosperity depended. The convergence of lines around Salisbury indicates the water-rich ground that prompted the founding of the city by the clergy in 1220, who harnessed it as an amenity in the city's urban plan by channelling streams to flow through the orderly grid of streets, or 'chequers'. From at least the mid-seventeenth century the agricultural potential of the high water table was harnessed by the construction of the water meadows referred to in the title of Constable's painting, a complex matrix of irrigation and drainage channels that, in their provision of a constant stream of fresh nutrient-rich river water, optimised the productivity of a wide expanse of land.¹⁰⁹

A century later the river brought added economic benefit in the form of tourism to sites dotted along its course that excited picturesque and antiquarian interests. The Reverend Peter Hall, a Salisbury curate, described

¹⁰⁸ The river flows mainly through Wiltshire and derives its county prefix from the point at which it meets the sea at Christchurch, which was formerly within Hampshire.

¹⁰⁹ Hadrian Cook, Michael Cowan and Tim Tatton-Brown, *The Harnham Water Meadows* (Salisbury: Hobnob Press, 2008), 15–16.

in 1834 the way in which ‘[e]very step along the banks of Avon, from Salisbury to Amesbury, teems with antiquarian relics and historical associations’.¹¹⁰ North of Salisbury, the Avon flowed by the ancient hill fort of Old Sarum, a site of particular import to Salisbury’s history and contemporary identity alike, as this chapter will proceed to explain. Further north still, the waters led to Stonehenge, the origins and purpose of which were the source of lively debate in the period under analysis here. The longevity of interest in and celebration of these sites (Samuel Johnson, echoing Sir Christopher Wren, had termed Stonehenge the ‘first essay’ in British architecture and Salisbury its ‘last perfection’)¹¹¹ lent them a pedigree that justified the type of hyperbolic claims typical of local guides that asserted ‘few localities exist which offer greater promise to the English tourist, than the district of which SALISBURY is the capital’.¹¹² Colt Hoare’s organisation of his *Modern Wiltshire* around the county’s rivers, which converged at Salisbury, underlined the importance of rivers in the county’s antiquarian geography and the city’s primacy within this. Salisbury’s situation on the Avon thus connected it to this wider, enigmatic landscape that was subject to both intellectual and political scrutiny in the period discussed here.

‘Well-watered’ and ‘so favourable’: conditions for the city’s growth

Salisbury’s geographical primacy manifested itself in its visual and verbal description. The ‘Course of divers pleasant and profitable Rivers’, which nourished a ‘[c]hain of fruitful Meadows, and rich Pastures’ made this ‘the most pleasant and fertile Country in England’, according to Defoe’s *Tour*.¹¹³ Iterations of similar sentiment reverberate through guidebooks and personal

¹¹⁰ Peter Hall, *Picturesque memorials of Salisbury: a series of original etchings and vignettes, illustrative of the most interesting buildings, and other remains of antiquity, in that city and neighbourhood, to which is prefixed a brief history of Old and New Sarum* (Salisbury: W.B. Brodie and co., 1834), 35.

¹¹¹ Samuel Johnson, *Letters*, quoted in Warrell, *Turner’s Wessex*, 142; James Easton, *The Salisbury Guide, giving an account of the Antiquities of Old Sarum, and the ancient and present state of New Sarum, or Salisbury*, 2nd edition (Salisbury: J. Easton, 1771), 8.

¹¹² John Hearn, *A new Guide to Salisbury and its vicinity, comprising a brief sketch of the history of Old and New Sarum...Remarks on and a description of Stonehenge, etc.* (Salisbury: John Hearn, 1839), 12.

¹¹³ Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro’ the whole Island of Great Britain, divided into Circuits or Journies...[by a Gentleman]* (London: G. Strahan, R. Francklin and S. Chapman, 1724), 34–5.

accounts. Robert Southey noted how ‘delightful’ the ‘little rivers or rivulets...in every direction’ rendered the approach to the city.¹¹⁴ The description of the city as ‘well-watered’ appearing in Britton’s *Beauties* reverberated through numerous other texts.¹¹⁵

Britton’s assessment of the cathedral, as being situated on a site ‘so favourable to the residence of man’ finds visual expression in Fennell Robson’s view for the author’s *Picturesque Antiquities* (figs.3 and 4).¹¹⁶ Telling of the artist’s specialism as a painter of mountain scenery but also of his ability as a master of the picturesque, Salisbury appears here framed and protected by the raised banks in the foreground and the plains, which are much exaggerated in height, in the background. It is a view which, nonetheless, is strongly suggestive of its geographically prime situation; that Robson at least understood the geological structure of this landscape, perhaps informed by his patron, is hinted at by the glimpses of chalk through the thin vegetation on the mound in the right-hand foreground. It pictures Salisbury from the southwest, looking across water meadows being grazed by sheep. According to John Claudius Loudon, sheep grazed there from mid-morning to mid-evening from mid-March onwards, their access and feeding times a strictly controlled so as to maximise the supply of this nutritious, quickly-grown grass.¹¹⁷ The dominance of green in the hand-coloured print held at Salisbury Museum (fig.4) serves to emphasise the lushness of this landscape (and perhaps also recalls the original vivacity of the watercolour’s pigmentation); even without colour, as many would have seen it, both trees and sheep look full-bodied and well-nourished. In the watercolour, the

¹¹⁴ Robert Southey, *Letters from England: by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella. Translated from the Spanish* (London: Longman & Co., 1807), 47–48; T.H., rev., *A Tour through England: described in series of letters, from a young gentleman to his sister; with a new map and several copper plates* (London: William Darton, 1821), 29–30.

¹¹⁵ John Britton, *The Beauties of Wiltshire, Displayed in Statistical, Historical, and Descriptive Sketches: Interspersed with Anecdotes of the Arts*, vol. 1 (London: Vernor & Hood, 1801), 43; T.H., *A Tour through England*, 28.

¹¹⁶ Britton, *Beauties of Wiltshire*, vol. 1, 43.

¹¹⁷ John Claudius Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Agriculture* (1825), quoted in Charles Watkins, “Landscape Management,” in *In Focus: Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows exhibited 1831 by John Constable*, ed. Amy Concannon, Tate Research Publication, 2017, accessed 30 April 2017, <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/salisbury-cathedral-constable/landscape-management>.

suggested fullness of the dark rain cloud contributes to this sense of the ‘well-watered’ city.

Descriptions of the way in which the rivers Wily, Nadder and Avon ‘converge, and, as one river, water this city’, or, indeed of Salisbury as ‘well watered’ analogue the city as a plant, a living organism, thriving from the nourishment of the soil in which its foundations sit.¹¹⁸ As the tallest and most visible iteration of the city, rising from a dense copse of trees, it is possible to project this analogy on to the cathedral in Fennell Robson and Constable’s depictions. Constable had already made a close visual connection between man-made and natural forms in *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop’s Grounds* when he framed the cathedral’s spire with a natural arch of trees (fig.10). Wilcox points towards the potential that this may have been read in relation to the popular understanding of the Gothic as an order of architecture inspired by the natural form of forests in which fan vaulted ceilings were likened to the radiating canopy of a tree’s branches, for example.¹¹⁹ As Britain’s leading example of Gothic architecture and the country’s tallest building (a regular boast in guidebooks was its dominance over St Paul’s Cathedral) this was perhaps the most appropriate building in Britain to construe as a symbol of urban growth. Its pairing with the map of the Avon on Naish’s map of 1751 (fig.7) subtly expresses this sentiment, suggesting the connection between the cathedral, a built expression of wealth, knowledge, spirituality and power, and the bounteous river landscape.

The physical impact of this building on the landscape underlined the concentration of power situated there: at 450 feet high, cutting into the sky ‘like a needle’, as Constable noted, the cathedral’s spire, added in 1320, pinpointed the city’s location from afar.¹²⁰ Salisbury’s cathedral therefore conferred upon the city a vertical primacy and a visual magnetism that equalled its fluvial catchment, a visual pull that reflected the flow of water –

¹¹⁸ T.H., *A Tour through England*, 29–30.

¹¹⁹ As expressed in Chateaubriand’s *Génie du Christianisme* (1802), quoted in Wilcox, *Constable and Salisbury*, 105–6.

¹²⁰ Charles Robert Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, Composed Chiefly of His Letters*, 1845 (London: Phaidon Press, 1951), 146.

and, in time, people and wealth – towards it, fuelling its growth. This was, as Britton termed it, a powerful ‘vortex of...attraction’, which withered its competitors and left the scars of urban struggle on its landscape.¹²¹

In a guide of 1797 it was noted how:

‘[w]here [the Wily, Nadder and Avon] consent to unite, there are (or were) no fewer than three cities and three cathedrals, within a triangle, whose sides are equal, and not more than three miles’.¹²²

The Avon valley is here aggrandised as an uncanny locus of religious power, the site of a triad of ‘cathedral cities’: Wilton, Old Sarum and New Sarum, or Salisbury (fig.11). Although the sides of the superimposed triangle might be equal, the cities positioned at its apexes were not. Their shared basis of power, the potent fertility of the chalk downs, the river system and a geographical position on a major trading route between London and the southwest, could not sustain equilateral growth. The sides of the triangle therefore denote the lines of an inter-urban struggle out of which Salisbury emerged triumphant, as people and prosperity ebbed away from Wilton and Old Sarum and towards Salisbury. The sightline between Wilton and Salisbury is illustrated in an etching by naval writer and amateur artist John Clerk of Eldin (1728–1812) (fig.12). Its vantage point, high ground in Wilton Park, was the site of the eighth-century Benedictine Abbey invoked as Wilton’s ‘cathedral’ in the account of the triad of cathedral cities. While Wilton’s fate as a religious site was ultimately sealed by the granting of the Abbey’s lands to the Earl of Pembroke at the dissolution of the monasteries, its fate as an urban enterprise was sealed much earlier, by the establishment of Salisbury: in 1361 it was reported that the new city began to hold markets without charter ‘to the detriment of Wilton’.¹²³ By the 1800s, despite its dual status as capital of the ancient kingdom of Wessex and county town of Wiltshire (one which it held until 1930), Wilton and its wool trade – now suffering from northern

¹²¹ Britton, *Beauties*, vol. 1, 131–2.

¹²² *A Description of Stonehenge, Abury, &c*, 60.

¹²³ Manuscript quoted in Ralph Bernard Pugh, *The Victoria History of Wiltshire* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1953), 138.

competition – depended on its contiguity to Salisbury for its livelihood.¹²⁴ The view from Wilton Park depicted by Clerk was a ‘vista purposefully opened, to shew the lofty spire and west-front of Salisbury cathedral’ during the landscaping of Wilton Park, an act that cemented Salisbury’s visual dominance over the town it had claimed economic dominance over centuries earlier.¹²⁵ In Clerk’s view, as in Constable’s painting, the eye traces the snaking path of the river Nadder towards the cathedral.

Turner’s *Salisbury from Old Sarum* (fig.2) illustrates the second sightline within the triad, from Old Sarum to Salisbury. Although it was observed in the 1790s guide to Stonehenge that ‘Old and New Sarum are connected by the Avon,’¹²⁶ the hill fort’s distance from the river had sparked the founding of New Sarum in the mid-twelfth century after the trials of transporting water uphill to the fort left the clergy there exposed to exploitation, ‘forced to buy water, at as great a price as would purchase the common drink of the country’.¹²⁷ Petrus Blesensis, archdeacon of London, wrote of the site in 1160 as ‘a place exposed to the wind, barren, dry and solitary’.¹²⁸ Sitting at the confluence of three rivers, New Sarum, by contrast, had ‘rich soil’ that was sure to ‘yield plenty of corn’.¹²⁹ Via the innovative manipulation of natural topography seen in Salisbury’s street plan and the clergy’s redirection of the ‘great western road’ into the new city, Old Sarum’s population was lured into ‘the vortex of [Salisbury’s] attraction’ and its fortunes duly declined.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Henry Hatcher, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of Old and New Sarum, or Salisbury* (Salisbury: Clapperton; and London: Mason, 1834), 85.

¹²⁵ Britton, *Beauties*, vol. 1, 145.

¹²⁶ *Stonehenge, Abury, &c.*, 63.

¹²⁷ Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, *Salisbury: The Houses of the Close* (London: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, 1993), 1.

¹²⁸ Easton, *Salisbury Guide*, 2nd edition, 6.

¹²⁹ Petrus Blesensis, archdeacon of London, writing in 1160, quoted in James Easton, *The Salisbury Guide, giving an account of The Antiquities of Old Sarum and the Ancient and Present state of New Sarum, or Salisbury...*, 25th edition (Salisbury: J. Easton, 1810), 3.

¹³⁰ Britton, *Beauties*, vol. 1, 131–2.

Old and New Sarum

Much more contentious than that with Wilton, the dialogue between Salisbury and its immediate forebear loomed large over the city's identity. The tale of Salisbury was a tale of two cities, one failed and one thriving, of the old and the new. The proximity of the two sites encouraged this dialogue – it was no doubt Constable's intention to stimulate contemplation of the historically tense relationship between the flourishing city and its failed forebear in the drawing he made from Harnham Hill to the south of Salisbury in the summer of 1820 (fig.13). Like *Salisbury Cathedral*, this drawing, too, is sensitive to the city's topography, giving a clear sense of the way in which the cathedral emerges dramatically from a sweep of flat plain cut through by meandering rivers but the drama comes from the formal opposition between the stepped form of the abandoned hill fort and the cathedral's sharp and towering geometry: the city's past and its present in one view. Turner works the old city versus new city dynamic even further in *Salisbury from Old Sarum* (fig.2).

Here, the visual echo of the cathedral and the city nestled around it comes through the upright stature of the shepherd and his flock. He stands tall, as if in defiance of the storm clouds that gather above that force his companions to muster a make-shift, and futile, cloth shelter. Turner had long used pathetic fallacy to reinforce the lesson that nature was mightier than man. In the intervening years between 1795, when he made the sketch that informed *Salisbury from Old Sarum* (Tate, Turner Bequest XXIV 14 b), and the exhibition of the finished watercolour, however, he had explored cities as reflections of status and hubristic ambition, notably in his series concerning Carthage. While he could only ever imagine the ancient city in works like *The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire* (1817), his travels to Italy would reveal to him the ruins of Pompeii, a city obliterated by nature's power, and Rome, where contemporary life was lived out amongst the crumbled relics of its ancient glory days. In 1827, the year before Turner's *Salisbury from Old Sarum* was exhibited, an imagined depiction of the hill fort as it had once been featured on the cover of *The Mirror* (fig.14). The illustration

agglomerated current antiquarian knowledge about the site and the accompanying article contained a quote from Hoare describing the hill fort as a ‘city of high note’, based on its location, between various ancient barrows and near to Stonehenge and Avebury, the two largest Druid temples in England.¹³¹ The atmospheric scheme in Turner’s *Salisbury* thus compounds the dichotomy between the two urban projects. Old Sarum, leaving no trace of the defensive, populous powerhouse projected by the image in *The Mirror*, sits in gloomy shadow, while the triumphant cathedral, emblematic of prosperity and Godliness, is bathed in radiance.

This straightforward reading, of the contrast Turner draws between the failed and the flourishing cities, is destabilised by the image’s atmospheric scheme. Bracketed by storm clouds, the sunlit cathedral may soon be encircled in cloud. This elemental interplay complements the notion of the cathedral as an organic object fuelled by light and water; the presence of the latter is variously apparent in the heavy storm clouds, and glimpses of river made visible by Turner’s scratching out. That these conditions appear to affect only the city and not Old Sarum reinforces their opposing identities as ‘exposed to the wind, barren, dry’ and ‘well-watered’ – the deficient mound versus the fertile plain. The detachment of Old Sarum from the storm in Turner’s composition might, however, be construed as a sign of its protection. Politically, the desolate mound maintained a stranglehold over its younger counterpart in the form of parliamentary representation. As a thriving city, Old Sarum had returned two MPs. That its desolate remains still returned two MPs, for a total of just eleven voters, made it the country’s most notorious rotten borough. Salisbury, meanwhile, depicted in Turner’s watercolour as so expansive as to stretch out beyond the bounds of the image, went completely unrepresented. The storm clouds hanging over the city might then signal recompense for its growth and the political restrictions that its ancient past – so widely celebrated in guidebooks and images – now presented.

¹³¹ Hoare, *Ancient Wiltshire*, quoted in *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, no. 290 (29 Dec. 1829), unpaginated.

After years of turbulence, which included an iteration of the Swing riots that saw the Salisbury foundry responsible for threshing machines attacked by labourers, 1832 saw celebration in the city as Old Sarum was completely disenfranchised and boundaries re-drawn to endow Salisbury with two MPs (as if to cement its drawn-out decline, Wilton had its representation halved from two to one MPs). Despite the insistence by Hatcher and Benson in Hoare's *Modern Wiltshire* that 'a large and respectable portion of the inhabitants were opposed to the change', in the weeks following the passing of the Representation of the People Act – the Great Reform Act – Salisbury held a 'Reform Festival' which visually manifested the city's joy at gaining the franchise.¹³² Local artists like William Grey were reportedly commissioned by residents to paint slogans such as 'Equal Rights', and 'Reform' on transparencies to adorn windows. Those displayed by the proprietor of the King's Head at Fisherton Bridge on the Avon in the centre of the city were singled out for lengthy description by the *Salisbury and South Wiltshire Journal*. One of the inn's transparencies, which was 'very generally admired', featured

'two brothers weeping over a tomb, with this inscription: - "To the Memory of the Borough of Old Sarum, which died June 7 1832, aged 700 years"''.¹³³

Yet while the city celebrated the political demise of its desolate neighbour, and all that that stood for, Old Sarum remained prominent. Its presence was notably augmented in post-1832 guidebooks, the notoriety of the 'rotten borough' perhaps a spur to keep Salisbury relevant – and visited – in the cultural economies of tourism and topographical study. Where once the cathedral and Stonehenge were leading images, as in Britton's *Beauties* (fig.15), Old Sarum now appeared. Indeed Henry Hatcher's account of 1834 contained no illustrations other than a frontispiece of the mound, seemingly so recognisable as to need no titular inscription (fig.16). The site featured on the

¹³² Benson and Hatcher, "Old and New Sarum," 570.

¹³³ "Reform Festival," *Salisbury and South Wiltshire Journal*, 2 July 1832.

title page to Peter Hall's *Picturesque Memorials of Salisbury*, also published in 1834, and dominated the first third of the volume's text. While this emphasis might be entirely apt for a work entitled 'Picturesque Memorials', the lack of focus on the mound's immediate history in Hatcher and Hall's texts seems construed to recover the site – and the city of Salisbury, by association – from the troubled identity that the political context of the 1820s had bestowed upon it. As if to collapse the decades that lay between the 1830s and the 1790s, when Archibald Alison first propounded the theory of association in his *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, a romanticising, philosophical rhetoric prevailed in statements such as Hatcher's, on how Old Sarum

‘prompts the most thoughtless to moralise on the vanity of worldly grandeur, and the fleeting character of human labours, and human institutions’.¹³⁴

Thus the mound's associations were recast firmly in the distant past. Its equation by Hearn in 1839 with Stonehenge, as a site that could ‘call into action [the traveller's] philosophy or his wonder’,¹³⁵ was in keeping with its depiction in the early 1830s by Constable. His portrayal of the mound mirrored its prevailing public identity, and shifted with it as the 1830s progressed. In his first public depiction of Old Sarum, the mezzotint he issued in January 1831 in the second number of *English Landscape Scenery*, the site appears suffocated by thick-set storm clouds (fig.17). The addition of a rainbow – a prismatic bolt of positivity – to the watercolour of the same scene he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1834 (fig.18) suggests, as may be the case with the rainbow in *Salisbury Cathedral*, a later desire to lighten the tone and render its interpretation more ambiguous in a way that was analogous to the efforts of authors to reclaim the site as a place for historical contemplation and, potentially, escape from the turbulence of the present day.

¹³⁴ Hatcher, *Descriptive and Historical Account*, 66.

¹³⁵ Hearn, *A new Guide to Salisbury*, 12.

There is another count on which Constable echoed the sentiments of the Salisbury historians. Notwithstanding his statement that ‘I hate politics & never see a newspaper’, the emphasis placed by Constable on Old Sarum’s past glories in the text accompanying it in *English Landscape Scenery* is seen by Wilcox as a potential sign that Constable wished to justify its augmented political influence.¹³⁶ Constable’s comprehensive account of Old Sarum’s national importance works with the simultaneous undercurrents of pride in the site and regret at its demise that colours comments such as Hall’s, that ‘[Old Sarum] will stand as long as the world endures’.¹³⁷ This is compounded by the *Sonnet on Old Sarum* in the same volume by his fellow clergyman, the Reverend William Lisle Bowles, Canon Residentiary of Salisbury Cathedral (1762–1850) in which the site is deemed ‘city of the sun’, a ‘foresaken, but majestic mound’.¹³⁸ Yet for all the florid description of Old Sarum’s past might and the continued circulation of new theories and knowledge derived from archaeological research there that the cover image in *The Mirror* displayed, no further attempts were made to portray the proximity of Salisbury and its forebear that Constable’s drawing of 1820 (plus a related oil sketch in the Louvre, Inv. 1952-25) and Turner’s *Picturesque Views* composition made so overt. It was perhaps safer, particularly for those working in a network dominated by Tories like Hoare, to present the connection more abstractedly, via verbal means and views of the cathedral in isolation from its landscape. The placing of the sites on different pages therefore served to protect the cathedral from political associations that might damage its celebrated status.

The Cathedral under a cloud

Bowles concludes his poem with the plea that Salisbury Cathedral would not suffer the same fate as Old Sarum: ‘never may her shrines in wreck and silence close!’¹³⁹ Published in 1834, this hopeful prophecy coincided with the

¹³⁶ Wilcox, *Constable and Salisbury*, 170.

¹³⁷ Hall, *Picturesque memorials*, 1.

¹³⁸ Hall, *Picturesque memorials*, 9.

¹³⁹ Hall, *Picturesque memorials*, 9.

dawn of a new age in the church's history during which it underwent intense scrutiny by the Board for Ecclesiastical Reform, established in the wake the Reform Act. Pressure had been steadily building through the 1820s as reformers exposed corruption in the church, equating its nepotism, abuse of property and authority as presenting a presence in British society as equally toxic as Old Sarum.

The visual impact of Salisbury Cathedral's spire upon its immediate locale has already been discussed as a physical manifestation of the productive alignment between natural geography, church and society. At the time of Constable's visits to the city, the Cathedral's influence went far beyond its hinterland in the Avon valley to claim a significant sweep of the Thames valley, too (fig.19). This made it not only one of southern England's largest dioceses but also one of the wealthiest and most politically influential, for the Bishop's jurisdiction extended to Windsor Castle. Thus Salisbury had a royal connection and, via the Thames, a physical and conceptual link to the metropolis. While its placement on the title page for Britton's *Picturesque Views of the Cities of England* (1828) betrayed its author's local sympathies, it also demonstrated the building's national potency, elevating its primacy amongst all cathedral cities (for the volume contained views of cathedral cities only).¹⁴⁰

This was not merely a religious subject, then, but a politically potent landmark of modern Britain that was integral to the historical and visual identity of the wider British urban landscape. It was directly invoked in Parliamentary discussion of reform via a statement made in parliament by anti-Catholic Sir George Henry Rose that 'he beheved [sic] those who saw the spire of Salisbury Cathedral or the cross of St. Paul's in their present places 30 years after the passing of the Bill would have better eyes than he expected them to have'.¹⁴¹ In the year that Constable conceived his painting, it was widely reported that Salisbury's spire could be seen 'to swerve from the

¹⁴⁰ John Britton, ed., *Picturesque Views of the Cities of England with illustrations by G.F. Robson* (London: J. Britton, 1828).

¹⁴¹ *The Morning Post*, 23 March 1832, 1.

perpendicular', a potentially portentous omen for its future.¹⁴² If the potential significance of the storm clouds in Turner's *Salisbury from Old Sarum* can only be speculated upon, those in Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral* are more certain to have their genesis in the crisis facing the church in the 1820s. This was a grave concern to the Tory artist, threatening to his personal ideology but also a threat to the livelihood of his friend. The assurance from Fisher to Constable that he was 'quite sure the 'Church under a cloud' is the best subject you can take'¹⁴³ appears to make plain the symbolic scheme of the painting, thereby rendering it a self-consciously public statement on a highly contentious contemporary matter.

The political dimension was a new chain of association for cathedral imagery, however. By the late 1820s cathedrals had a long visual dynasty. In 1814, Britton, styled 'cathedral fellow' by local antiquarian landowner William Beckford,¹⁴⁴ claimed cathedrals in general as 'universally acknowledged to be the most important and most interesting of our national antiquities'.¹⁴⁵ For Britton this status owed to their fusion of architecture, history and divine purpose, which associated them 'with the sublimity and benignity of the Christian religion, and with the amazing ostentation and terrorism of ancient monarchism'.¹⁴⁶

Although this surely rendered the cathedral a subject of great cerebral potential for inclusion in ambitious historical landscape painting, *Salisbury Cathedral* had no precedent: it was the first oil painting of a cathedral on such a large scale to be exhibited in Britain. Their scarcity on canvas is attributed by Wilcox to the difficulty facing oil painters, working on a larger scale and in a medium not so suited to linear description, of balancing focus on the

¹⁴² Jackson's *Oxford Journal*, 27 June 1829.

¹⁴³ Beckett, ed., *John Constable's Correspondence*, VI, 250–1.

¹⁴⁴ William Beckford writing on 21 Oct. 1817, in *Life at Fonthill, 1807–22, with Interludes in Paris and London from the Correspondence*, transl. and ed. Boyd Alexander (London: R. Hart-Davis, 1957), 228–9.

¹⁴⁵ John Britton, *The History and Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of Salisbury; illustrated with a series of engravings, views, elevations, plans, and details of that edifice etc.* (London: Longman & Co., 1814), vi. Constable sent Britton a presentation copy of *English Landscape Scenery* in 1830 (See R.B. Beckett, ed., *John Constable's Correspondence*, IV: *Patrons, Dealers and Fellow Artists* (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1966), 329–30.

¹⁴⁶ Britton, *Cathedral Church of Salisbury*, vii.

finely detailed masonry with the wider composition.¹⁴⁷ *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds*, was, according to a letter Constable wrote to Fisher, 'the most difficult subject in landscape [he] had ever had upon [his] easil', the cathedral's 'windows, buttresses, &c &c' requiring painstaking attention which, for one critic, sacrificed the Reynoldsian 'breadth of effect' expected of finished oil paintings.¹⁴⁸ Aside from the technical demands on an artist painting a cathedral in oil, the compositional challenge their pointed form presented to exponents of the prevailing taste for classical landscape composition—with its undulating topography and stepped or rounded architectural forms—is gleaned from an unpublished critique of Britton's *History and Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of Salisbury* (1814). Britton's contention that such a vertical protrusion could never 'satisfy the eye of an artist, or be viewed with pleasure by the man of taste' was deemed to be 'in the usual language of painters who find them unmanageable in pictures'.¹⁴⁹ It was, therefore, on a smaller-scale, on the more ephemeral support of paper and through media in which the drawn line was more pronounced – sketches, watercolours and prints – that cathedrals were habitually visualised and collected. Nevertheless, that Salisbury could claim a position of prominence derived from simultaneous celebration and embittered critique of its physical form rendered it perhaps the most loaded of Britain's cathedrals, perhaps after St Paul's, for any artist to commit to canvas, even without the kind of personal attachment Constable's had to it and before the political context impacted its iconography.

The cathedral's diagrammatic presentation in illustrations for antiquarian study encouraged contemplation of the visual data that was productive of its signature Gothic architectural credentials. These depictions of Salisbury presented its cathedral as the ultimate Gothic icon, singular amongst British and Continental cathedrals, said Britton, because its having been executed

¹⁴⁷ Wilcox, *Constable and Salisbury*, 107.

¹⁴⁸ Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence*, VI, 115; *Morning Chronicle*, 12 May 1823, unpaginated.

¹⁴⁹ Edward James Willson, "Critique on Salisbury Cathedral," manuscript bound with Britton, *Cathedral Church of Salisbury*, Yale Center for British Art (Folio A N87 v.1 copy 2), unpaginated. Willson describes himself to be 'a roman Catholic young man of Lincoln'.

largely in one phase lent it an overall ‘consistency and harmony’ of design.¹⁵⁰ Britton was a firm believer that its elegance was further enhanced by its advantageous setting in the landscape, ‘detached from all extraneous and disfiguring objects...thus laid open to the inspection of the spectator’, a characteristic born of controversial means.¹⁵¹ Although the cathedral’s appearance had been far from static in the eighteenth century, changes made between 1789 and 1792 by James Wyatt (1746–1818) at the invitation of Bishop Shute Barrington (1734–1826) sparked such debate amongst the antiquarian community on the principles of restoration in historic buildings and acquired for Wyatt two soubriquets: ‘the Destroyer’ and ‘the Vandal’.¹⁵² The Bishop had already cleared and levelled the graveyard three years before Wyatt went on to dismantle the remaining part of the bell tower and remove two chantry chapels to the east and both the north and south porches. The removal of buildings which obscured views of the cathedral’s main hulk and the drainage and landscaping of the grounds immediately around it correlate directly with the picturesque gaze, one which privileged unadulterated vistas, either naturally occurring or altered in the mind’s eye. Indeed, Shute Barrington was an uncle of picturesque theorist Uvedale Price, whose brother, Richard, like the originator of picturesque taste, William Gilpin, held a prebendary stall at the Cathedral; Gilpin was reportedly consulted by Wyatt on the changes, advising him to reign in some of his proposals for the interior.¹⁵³ Wyatt’s interventions were therefore entirely in keeping with the close community’s culture of landscape appreciation; indeed, the emergence in 1814 of a new edition of the Reverend William Dodsworth’s guide to the Cathedral, fourteen years after the previous edition, promoted the building’s rejuvenated image to the tide of inquisitive tourists.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Britton, *Cathedral Church of Salisbury*, 65.

¹⁵¹ Britton, *Cathedral Church of Salisbury*, 66.

¹⁵² Warrell, *Turner’s Wessex*, 12.

¹⁵³ Charles Watkins and Ben Cowell, *Uvedale Price: Decoding the Picturesque* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), 67.

¹⁵⁴ William Dodsworth, *An Historical Account of the Episcopal See and Cathedral Church of Sarum, or Salisbury, Comprising Biographical Notices of the Bishops* (Salisbury: W. Dodsworth, 1814).

The outpouring of scorn on Wyatt's intervention was in part due to the influence of local gentleman antiquary, Sir Richard Colt Hoare, whose seat of Stourhead lay less than 30 miles away from Salisbury. An enthusiastic, ambitious and moneyed antiquarian, Hoare had amassed a vast library of antiquarian resources and contributed to Wiltshire's topographical bibliography with his own, lavish but ultimately unsuccessful *History of Ancient Wiltshire* and its counterpart, *Modern Wiltshire*; this and other locally-produced texts such as Hall's *Picturesque Memorials* (1834) reiterated scorn at Wyatt's designs well into the 1840s. Hoare was a member of the Society of Antiquaries, whose Director, Richard Gough, had resigned over the election of Wyatt to their number in 1797. The Society's headquarters and site of the Wyatt debate in London was adjacent to the Royal Academy, where, since the 1780s, a steady stream of images depicting antiquarian sites had been exhibited, most commonly views of ruined abbeys or castles that employed Gilpinian picturesque principles and appealed both to their viewer's knowledge and sensitivity to hubris. As Tim Wilcox has observed, however, live, active sites of worship like Salisbury came only gradually into focus, perhaps aided by the aesthetic controversy of Wyatt's modifications and the sudden collapse of Hereford Cathedral's west front in 1786, through the work of Edward Dayes (fig.20), who depicted Salisbury Cathedral as a building nestled within its Close, and younger counterparts like Turner (figs.21–23).¹⁵⁵

It was Turner's work on regional cathedrals, exhibited at the Academy, that likely brought him to the attention of Hoare; by 1795 the young artist was in Salisbury making sketches for a commission of twenty watercolours of Salisbury subjects, half of which were to focus on the Cathedral. Four compositions dealt with each face of the Cathedral but only three were carried forward and completed at full-scale (figs.21–22 illustrate two of these). Turner's watercolours are characterised by the same progressive suggestion of the Cathedral as a living entity, embedded in the landscape and in the social life of the Close, discernable in Dayes's cathedral view. This becomes patent by comparison with the depiction of the east front (fig.23), a perfectly vertical

¹⁵⁵ Wilcox, *Constable and Salisbury*, 20.

elevation that rears up behind two figures below and displays a similar diagrammatic quality to Britton's frontispiece. Its prioritisation of the cathedral's architectural detail was perhaps the very quality that prevented Hoare from commissioning the finished version, for this front had been 'restored' and stripped by Wyatt of its medieval chapels. The absence of a finished version of this drawing expressly manifests the highly personal cathedral that Turner's views for Hoare created: this was the cathedral in its most organic form, unblemished by the interfering hand of the present age.

In the same way that the county's rivers resurface time and again in Hoare's *Modern Wiltshire*, so, too, did activity relating to the Catholic question. Cumulatively, these comments imparted a strong impression of Salisbury's anti-Catholic standpoint.¹⁵⁶ Any irony about this stance, given the original faith of the city's founders, went unregistered: its Cathedral was an Anglican icon and its people were profoundly against concessions to dissenters from the national faith.

This interdependent pre-eminence as an icon of both Anglicanism and Gothic architecture threw the Cathedral into dialogue with yet another outlying site in its hinterland, Fonthill Abbey, the neo-Gothic pile built in successive phases from 1796 for William Beckford to designs by James Wyatt that hybridised British and Portuguese medieval ecclesiastical architecture. Britton's 1823 volume on the building talked of the 'feverish curiosity' it excited, of the way in which in the summer of 1822, there being 'no war nor political contention', journalists descended upon it followed by 'swarms of fashionables', who came after their visits to watering places like Brighton.¹⁵⁷ This unique, audacious building, which claimed an altitudinal position greater than the tip of Salisbury's spire,¹⁵⁸ 'stimulated [the public eye and ear] to excess', according to Britton.¹⁵⁹ Excess was the building's downfall, however. In

¹⁵⁶ Benson and Hatcher, "Old and New Sarum," 565–566.

¹⁵⁷ John Britton, *Graphical and Literary Illustrations of Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire; with Heraldical and Genealogical Notices of the Beckford Family* (London: Printed for the Author, 1823), 1.

¹⁵⁸ *A Description of Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire. Illustrated by Views, drawn and engraved by James Storer* (London, 1812), 21.

¹⁵⁹ Britton, *Fonthill Abbey*, 1.

1825, after several previous collapses, Beckford's pile, now under new ownership, collapsed for a final time and was condemned for demolition. Its extension of Wyatt's influence within Hoare's beloved Wiltshire landscape – and indeed the building's visibility from Stourhead – was no doubt irksome in the wake of the faction sparked by the architect's interventions with the cathedral and its hybridised, false Gothic a blight on the architectural integrity of the county's icons. That Beckford was a Catholic convert likely compounded its unsettling impact. A little over a decade after its collapse, John Bowyer Nicholls revived this notorious building's presence in topographical literature on the grounds that it 'excited an interest which, perhaps no modern building...ever succeeded in attaining'. A review of the work that appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* pointed, with a knowing sarcasm, towards a plate depicting the structure as 'a heap of ruins' that had been 'added by the kindness of Sir R.C. Hoare.'¹⁶⁰

This short-lived feature of the Wiltshire landscape was a troubling presence for the network of topographers convergent on Salisbury that attached yet another chain of association to the cathedral's image. Beckford's Fonthill was now a new ruin of the kind Constable referenced when expressing his distaste at the rise of the neo-Gothic in 1837. 'A new Gothic building', he told his lecture audience at Hampstead, 'is in reality little less absurd than a new ruin'.¹⁶¹ Mimicry of the pointed style was inappropriate for the present day, for it belonged to 'peculiar ages'. By contrast to the insubstantial and false neo-Gothic, the original Gothic of Salisbury Cathedral appears solid and firmly established in the landscape of Constable's six-foot painting, a timeworn monument with catalytic potential to cast the mind back to those 'peculiar ages'.

Within the city lay another building given prominence by both Turner and Constable that had renewed potential significance in the context of inter-

¹⁶⁰ "Review of John Bowyer Nichols, *Historical notices of Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire* (London: John Bowyer Nichols, 1836)," in *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, vol. 6, new series (July 1836), 59.

¹⁶¹ R.B. Beckett, ed., *John Constable's Discourses* (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1970), 70.

religious struggle and threats to the church's authority. The church of St Thomas was the cathedral's most proximate site of worship, lying less than half a mile north of the cathedral. In Turner's composition for *Picturesque Views* it appears as a strikingly dark pillar, its blackened form offset by the radiance of the cathedral; Constable places the church directly to the left of his cathedral, its prominence and proximity to the Cathedral increasing with every successive revision of his composition (fig.24). St Thomas's was founded in 1240 as a chapel-of-ease to the cathedral,¹⁶² presumably to house worshippers during the course of the cathedral's erection between 1220 and 1258; it was thus the original site of collective worship in Salisbury. Its close relationship with the cathedral was reinforced by the perpetuity of the Dean and Chapter's power to appoint a curate.¹⁶³ In his gradual attribution of more space and definition to St Thomas's, Constable was, possibly unwittingly, giving greater prominence to a building whose original namesake, St Thomas of Canterbury (1118–1170), emblematised an episode of church-state discordance not dissimilar to that of the 1820s. Said to have lived for a time at Winterbourne, 5 miles north-east of Salisbury and 3 miles from Old Sarum, the saint famously killed by the King had a strong local relevance which, thanks to the city's historians, was kept alive even after the switch in this church's dedication to the more royal-friendly St Thomas the Apostle at the time of the Reformation.¹⁶⁴ The name of a saint who had railed against erosion of the rights and privileges of the Church would have a renewed resonance in the 1820s, a period of threat to the establishment from political agitators that came in the wake of two decades' worth of Parliamentary bills curbing clerical authority.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Easton, *Salisbury Guide*, 25th edition, 32.

¹⁶³ Easton, *Salisbury Guide*, 25th edition, 32.

¹⁶⁴ Henry Wansey, *A Plan of Old Sarum, with its history and references: also, a Representation of the Castle, and Two Modern Views* (New Sarum [Salisbury]: James Easton, 1819); Tim Tatton-Brown, *The Building of St Thomas's Church, Salisbury*, 7, accessed online 6 February 2014,

<http://www.stthomassalisbury.co.uk/content/pages/documents/1295362661.pdf>.

¹⁶⁵ On the individual laws passed curtailing clerical authority, see John H. Overton, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century (1800–1833)* (London: Longman & Co., 1894), 296, 297, 300, 306, 309, 311.

In 1819 the removal for cleaning of Elizabeth I's coat of arms revealed a medieval mural in St Thomas's that had been covered over in the Reformation (fig.25). A gift to the church from a returned crusader, it depicted the Last Judgement. According to a drawing made by a Miss Wickens engraved for Hoare's *Modern Wiltshire*, at its centre sat Jesus, enthroned upon a rainbow, while at the bottom right processed the damned, headed into a monster's mouth. Amongst them, the text of *Modern Wiltshire* reported, was a figure 'distinguished by a mitre'.¹⁶⁶ This potential omen for the fate of corrupt clergy was whitewashed soon after its discovery, leaving only the drawing and its engraving.¹⁶⁷ Whether or not Turner and Constable knew of this particular episode (it is likely that the latter did), that both artists chose to amplify its presence in their depictions of Salisbury bespeaks knowledge of the potential topicality and national significance of icons beyond Salisbury's cathedral and nearby Old Sarum.

If, in the context of escalating pressure for church reform, it is surprising that Constable's 1825 painting *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds*, a patent celebration of church property and the privileges of bishops, did not draw any more venomous criticism than one single observation of its portrayal 'of that fat rich country ever to be found about the church',¹⁶⁸ it is even more so that *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* failed to draw any remarks on its content when it was first exhibited in 1831. February that year saw the publication of *The Extraordinary Black Book*, a re-issue of a compendium of church abuses begun by journalist John Wade in 1820.¹⁶⁹ The 1831 edition referred to the Fisher family as 'an instance of that monopoly which is the disgrace of the establishment', going on to name Archdeacon Fisher's holding of multiple offices – at Gillingham, Osmington and

¹⁶⁶ Benson and Hatcher, "Old and New Sarum", 589.

¹⁶⁷ It was uncovered again in 1876 and has since been restored, although there are unresolved discrepancies between the engraving of 1819 and the restored mural. See "The Doom Painting," St Thomas Salisbury website, accessed 19 Apr. 2017, <http://www.stthomassalisbury.co.uk/documents/history-heritage/9-the-doom-painting-guide/file>.

¹⁶⁸ *The London Magazine*, vol. 7 (June 1823), 703.

¹⁶⁹ *The Black Book; Or, Corruption unmasked! Being an Account of Places, Pensions and Sinecures. To Which Is Added Correct Lists of Both Houses of Parliament; Showing Their Family Connections ... The Whole Forming a Complete Exposition of the Cost, Influence, Patronage, and Corruption of the Borough Governments* (London: John Fairburn, 1820).

Salisbury, places where he had entertained the artist – as a prime exemplar of the clergy’s ‘measureless rapacity’.¹⁷⁰ Constable’s correspondence with Fisher reveals how, already in 1823, pressure for reform was felt most keenly and personally:

I am sorry to see that you are again haunted by that Phantom, “The Church in Danger”.... the Vultures will attack it and everything else... [the state] still stands between you and them.¹⁷¹

Constable’s substituting of ‘you’ for the church and ‘them’ reveals, when mapped on to Salisbury’s urban plan, that the perceived danger lay just beyond the bounds of the Close wall. The Close’s ‘lofty embattled walls’, built for protection with permission from Edward III in 1327 with stones removed from Old Sarum had long reinforced the physical distinction between sacred and secular space, particularly during the conflicts between clergy and city in the 1400s in which the Bishop of Salisbury was targeted owing to his parliamentary role, a potent precursor to the anti-clerical protest of the 1820s.¹⁷² These walls were in ‘great decay’ by the late seventeenth century.¹⁷³ This conflict had the potential, then, to ascribe a new symbolism to these walls, as demarcating the cathedral an island both physically and ideologically disconnected from the society it was meant to serve.

Cathedral and city

Wyatt’s removal of the belfry and chantry chapels had accentuated the cathedral in relation to its setting, so that, according to Britton, it was ‘detached from all extraneous and disfiguring objects’ and ‘thus laid open to

¹⁷⁰ John Wade, *The Extraordinary Black Book: an exposition of the United Church of England and Ireland: civil list and crown revenues* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1831), 25, 512.

¹⁷¹ Constable to Fisher, 21 Feb. 1823 in Beckett, *John Constable’s Correspondence*, VI, 112–113. Beckett notes the relationship between this passage and ‘The Church is in Danger’, a common phrase in rhetoric supporting the church.

¹⁷² John Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1830), 66.

¹⁷³ *Salisbury: The Houses of the Close*, 40.

the inspection of the spectator'.¹⁷⁴ Britton went on to observe a particular quality in Salisbury's close:

Unlike other cathedrals, which are mostly situated in the midst of incongruous buildings, or immured by brick walls, [Salisbury Cathedral] stands so detached from human habitations, that a free view of its regular form and unity of parts is obtained from almost every point'.¹⁷⁵

Even before Wyatt's intervention, Defoe characterised the Close as being so large as to be 'like another city'.¹⁷⁶ Any visual detachment between the city and the cathedral was then, to some extent, conditioned by the characteristics of the space around the cathedral.

The series of watercolours Turner produced for Colt Hoare in the 1790s, which amounted to the most comprehensive survey of the city's principle antiquarian sites produced to that point, epitomises the way in which the two domains were rarely seen within the same frame. Where they do appear in proximity, as in Turner's view of the Close Gate from this set (fig.26), the close's fortified entrances create a distinct threshold that reinforces Defoe's observation of the Close as appearing 'like another city' and evokes the conflicts of previous centuries. Divided into the 'Cathedral' and 'City' sets, Turner's watercolours were geared to gratify Hoare's antiquarian gaze, offering simple elevations of Salisbury's icons that balanced architectural detail with picturesque vignettes of every day life being lived around monuments like Poultry Cross (fig.27). Yet Hoare's eventual placing of Turner's drawings says much about the relative status of the two spaces as artistic subjects: those of the cathedral were destined to be framed and displayed in a dedicated space, made permanently visible, while the city set

¹⁷⁴ Britton, *Cathedral Church of Salisbury*, 66.

¹⁷⁵ John Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales: Or Original Delineations Topographical Historical and Descriptive of Each County*, vol. 15, part 2, *Wiltshire and Warwickshire* (London: J. Harris, 1814), 48–9.

¹⁷⁶ Defoe, *Tour*, 29.

was kept in a portfolio, to be inspected less regularly and available to visitors only by invitation.

Where, in topographical literature, Salisbury is represented by a single image this is always the cathedral. As if to echo the way in which Old Sarum's population and its livelihood were drawn into the vortex of the cathedral's new site, causing it to wither and all but disappear, Salisbury's cathedral operated as a cipher for the wider city, dominating its identity. As has been demonstrated by reference to Stonehenge, Old Sarum and Fonthill, the celebrated form of the cathedral placed it – and, by extension, the city – in various dialogues and contexts that affected its identity in numerous ways. Increasingly, perhaps as a reflection of Britain's augmented confidence and reach as an Empire state, the cathedral's architectural pedigree was placed in an international context. While references to its height in relation to St Peter's Basilica in Rome had been made since at least the 1770s (which was just several feet taller), a print published in 1831 placed an elevation of Salisbury and several other British cathedrals against the Great Pyramid of Egypt (fig.28), and a guide to the city published in 1848 was seemingly the first to deem the cathedral the 'Parthenon of Gothic Architecture'.¹⁷⁷ As seen in Britton's *Picturesque Antiquities*, Salisbury's cathedral was more regularly seen in conjunction with cities other than that in which it was situated.

The discussion of Salisbury's iconography thus far reflects the way in which a few certain elements – the river landscape, the story of Old Sarum, and the architectural particulars of the Cathedral – dominated topographical focus, both visually and verbally. Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral* has proven a useful compass to guide this discussion, its elements working as points to navigate the layers of meaning this landscape acquired to and beyond 1831. The discussion that follows seeks to explore a final point in Constable's index of Salisbury, one that is regularly overlooked in discussions of the painting: the city itself.

¹⁷⁷ J.B., *The Salisbury Guide; or, an Account, Historical and Descriptive, of the Objects of Interest in Salisbury and its Neighbourhood* (Salisbury: W.B. Brodie & Co., 1848), 32.

Like most other artists, Constable had depicted the cathedral in isolation in numerous sketches from visits made in 1811 and 1820. His decision to place the partly-obscured cathedral in his six-foot painting at a relative distance from the viewer and bring the city into closer alignment with the cathedral than was customarily seen runs counter to the tide of both the city and the cathedral's representation across a range of visual and textual formats, from the broadly topographical to the antiquarian and architectural. The sense of connectedness between the cathedral and its surrounding urban and rural environments arises from the pervasiveness of the river through the composition, connecting hinterland and meadow with cathedral, and connecting cathedral with city.

If Constable places the cathedral and city in close alignment horizontally, it is a vertical alignment between the two that comes across in images produced by H.W. Bartlett and H.W. Brooke for Britton's 1830 publication *Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities*, the more comprehensive successor to *Picturesque Views of the English Cities*, in which Fennell Robson's pastoral view of Salisbury had first appeared (figs.29–30).¹⁷⁸ Together, the prints in Britton's volume and Constable's painting project a vision of city life as being visually, spiritually and economically centred upon the cathedral, an icon which Britton himself reflected as calling to mind the 'sublimity [sic] and benignity of the Christian religion'.¹⁷⁹ So while the church was perceived to be 'in Danger' amidst debates about parliamentary reform, the city of Salisbury, founded by the clergy, was pictured as an economically active and peaceful place, a site of domestic comfort and social harmony.

The English Venice

The street-based prints for *Picturesque Antiquities* were the first to feature what Britton describes in his accompanying text as a 'singularity' of Salisbury, the canals that ran through several of its streets. James Easton's 1801 guide to Salisbury directly invoked the benevolence of the church in an

¹⁷⁸ John Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1830).

¹⁷⁹ Britton, *Cathedral Church of Salisbury*, vii.

explanation of their origins, said to be the clergy's innovative and responsive answer to calls by early dwellers of New Sarum for the means to power a corn mill.¹⁸⁰ According to Defoe, these were the 'boast' of Salisbury and, as noted by Southey in his 1807 *Letters from England*, the basis of the city's claim to be 'called the English Venice'.¹⁸¹ This analogy was perpetuated into the mid-1830s by repetition across almost two centuries of guidebooks to the city of the epitaph of Salisbury-born Francis Hyde, who died in the 1500s while in the role of secretary to the British embassy at Venice:

'Born in the English Venice, thou didst die,
Dear friend, in the Italian Salisbury'.¹⁸²

For the Reverend Peter Hall writing in 1834, the appellation for Salisbury of the 'English Venice', was a 'magnificent title'.¹⁸³ No doubt the comparison had originally gained ground through its basis in both the historic reality and the romanticised idea of Venice, promoted by the writings of Shakespeare, Otway and in depictions by Canaletto, as a city of splendour and beauty whose riches owed to its position on the water. By the dawn of the nineteenth century, however, the passing of Venice's status as a 'maiden City, bright and free' was being mourned.¹⁸⁴ Years of successive foreign occupation and severe economic decline meant that the city's splendour was fading fast; it was physically sinking, too, as was noted an article published in the *Forget-Me-Not* of 1827.¹⁸⁵ In light of this, and in the context of the tumult regarding Catholic Emancipation and the fate of the church, the comparison between the cities is particularly compelling. Venice was a Catholic city whose fate was deemed by proponents of the *leggenda nera* to be sealed by the corruption of

¹⁸⁰ James Easton, *The Salisbury Guide, giving an account of the Antiquities of Old Sarum, and the ancient and present state of New Sarum, or Salisbury*...22nd edition (Salisbury: J. Easton, 1801).

¹⁸¹ Defoe, *Tour*, 28; Southey, *Letters from England*, vol. 1, 51–2.

¹⁸² Hall, *Picturesque memorials*, 24. This episode was regularly cited in guidebooks. For another occurrence, see Easton, *Salisbury Guide*, 22nd edition, 20.

¹⁸³ Hall, *Picturesque memorials*, 24.

¹⁸⁴ William Wordsworth, *On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic* (1802, published 1806), in *Collected Poems of William Wordsworth*, with an introduction by Antonia Till (Ware, Herts.: Wordsworth Editions, 1994), 304.

¹⁸⁵ "St Mark's and the Doge's Palace, at Venice," in *Forget-Me-Not* (London: R. Ackermann, 1827), 360–1.

its Catholic leaders. Salisbury was the centre of a Diocese that had emerged from the Reformation as a powerful force within the Church of England, and a city whose anti-Catholic contingent would express its fervour in a demonstration of 1850 (fig.31).

It was not, however, on ideological grounds that some writers found reason to denigrate the terming of Salisbury the ‘English Venice’, but rather on the basis of the cities’ visual and experiential disparity. Thus Southey continued his observations on the ‘English Venice’ by noting that

‘whoever gave it this appellation, either had never seen Venice, or grossly flattered Salisbury. Indeed, ’til the resemblance was invented, these streamlets were rather thought inconvenient than beautiful, and travellers complained that they made the streets not so clean, and not so easy of passage’.¹⁸⁶

Evelyn and Defoe counted amongst such ‘travellers’, the former regretting that if cleaned, the streams had potential to make Salisbury the ‘sweetest town’, and the latter finding the city ‘large and pleasant’, though not ‘the pleasanter for that which they boast so much of; namely, the Water running thro’ the middle of every Street’ which kept ‘the Streets always dirty, full of Wet and Filth, and Weeds, even in the middle of Summer’.¹⁸⁷ In the face of these observations by influential writers, the endurance of the comparison of Salisbury to Venice reads as a means for local authors to defend and bolster the romantic appeal of their city. For his part, Britton gives an effusive and sanitised description of the canals as ‘streams of clean water running rapidly’ that matches the depiction of them in the accompanying prints as both picturesque and highly functional aspects of Salisbury’s streetscape.¹⁸⁸ That he was writing at a time of mounting local concern about the cleanliness of these canals and their maintenance, or lack thereof, casts Britton’s antiquarianism in an actively preservationist light, as perhaps an attempt to

¹⁸⁶ Southey, *Letters from England*, vol. 1, 51–2.

¹⁸⁷ Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. 2, 80, quoted in Benson and Hatcher, “Old and New Sarum,” 467; Defoe, *Tour*, 28.

¹⁸⁸ Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities*, 66.

protect the medieval streetscape and that which he termed a ‘singularity’ of Salisbury.¹⁸⁹ Any such attempts to prevent the erosion of the basis of Salisbury’s claim to be the ‘English Venice’ were, however, futile. The map of 1833 confirms this (fig.5), being inscribed with the proviso that:

‘canals of water run through most of the streets, but within the last few years, many have been covered over; a representation of them is therefore omitted’.¹⁹⁰

Similarly, Hall’s use of the phrase to describe the city in his *Picturesque Memorials* of 1834 is significantly undermined by its accompanying illustrations, which, except for a view of St Thomas’s Church from the Avon (fig.32) are all devoid of water.

Despite the filling in of its canals, Salisbury’s association with the city of Venice, and its visual identification with water persisted and was played out on a national platform when, on 18 December 1852 the *Illustrated London News* ran a full-page report headed ‘The Floods at Salisbury’, giving an account of the impact two months of heavy rainfall had had there and elsewhere in Britain. The report quoted the *Salisbury Journal*’s description of the city as ‘being in the centre of an extensive lake’ and appearing to spectators on the surrounding hills as ‘transformed into a sort of inland Venice’. The engraving accompanying the article made manifest this comparison (fig.33). Panoramic in format and oriented vertically so as to fit on the page, this image, supported by the text, presents the city’s watery transformation as both a visual spectacle and geography lesson in how the features of the landscape that lent it picturesque strength could become its natural weakness, namely its position at the centre of centre of a broad valley plain through which five rivers run. The article focuses on the city’s prime defining assets, all of which, apart from the cathedral, were liquid: water meadows, which had been devastated by floods of previous years; rivers and

¹⁸⁹ Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities*, 66.

¹⁹⁰ *Plan of the City of Salisbury, with the Boundaries of the Borough, as Laid Down by the Reform Act. Surveyed by G.O. Lucas* (Salisbury, 1833).

canals. Even in the floods, however, the cathedral had become sodden and services suspended, since water had ‘oozed up from the pavement’. Comparison of this coverage with that of other cities mentioned by the article is also revealing of Salisbury’s character: Mansfield suffered flooding to its coal mines; the quay, warehouses and paper mills of Newcastle-upon-Tyne were water-logged and goods destroyed, while in Lambeth (at Marsh Gate) a recently-erected arch supporting the South Western Railway line’s extension from Nine Elms to Waterloo required additional support to prevent it sinking into the sodden ground. These were places fast becoming defined economically, socially and visually by modern industry and ambitious new infrastructure projects. Salisbury, on the other hand, was ‘the interesting old city’.¹⁹¹

The reason given by Hall for the exclusion of the canals from the images within *Picturesque Memorials* – that they had been covered over and therefore erased from the streetscape – is inconsistent with his inclusion of other ghosts of the city’s urban scene, from the rotund figure pictured leaning on Poultry Cross, identified in the text as the ‘amiable’ and ‘eccentric’ baker Mr. Sutton, who we are told was recently deceased, to the cathedral’s belfry, which succumbed to Wyatt’s alterations but whose representation here sees it ‘restored’ (fig.34).

The historicising tone of the volume as a whole is set by the first image, a repurposed antique plate showing the city in times past. While the re-use of old plates to present a window on the past was typical, particularly in the reuse of prints after Hollar (a contemporaneous example will be discussed in Chapter Four), in this context it serves to underscore the devaluation of the image of contemporary Salisbury. This is carried through in a reference to Salisbury as a place of ‘departed splendour’. Evidence of that splendour is, for Hall, to be found in flourishes of recognisably gothic design, however fragmentary (fig.35). By comparison to the more ornate specimens of street architecture, the perfunctory, plain form of the Salisbury canals, tainted by

¹⁹¹ *Illustrated London News*, 18 December 1852, 541.

their reputation as a nuisance, would be incongruous to the version of picturesque advanced here.

While the two volumes expand the city's picturesque potential beyond its cathedral, Old Sarum and the mysterious sites of its hinterland like Stonehenge, both convey a picturesque that is almost exclusively gothic, a condition supported by Britton's admission that he 'searched in vain' for suitable subjects in Lichfield and Bath, places in which, their cathedrals aside, traces of the medieval city were subordinate to more modern development.¹⁹² Both authors are united in their preservationist aim. In *Picturesque Antiquities*, Britton called for state sponsorship of artists and writers to undertake a sustained and comprehensive programme of topographical record-making so as to preserve the distinctive antiquities of Britain's cities while it was Hall's hope to

'rescue from oblivion many traces of beauty and curiosity, which the lapse of ages, the fluctuations of taste, and the love of comfort and convenience have already swept away'.¹⁹³

Although they had succumbed to the drive for greater cleanliness and 'comfort' in Salisbury's streets, its canals were neither beautiful nor curious enough to warrant 'rescue' or the kind of restoration awarded to the cathedral belfry. Their point of departure, then, centres upon the underlying purpose of their desire to preserve. If Hall wished to preserve only icons of sufficient 'beauty and curiosity', For Britton, the antiquated aspects of street architecture were

'indications of the vicissitudes and fluctuation of civilised society: they show man in his domestic economy, and in his historical relations'.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities*, vi.

¹⁹³ Hall, *Picturesque memorials*, 34.

¹⁹⁴ Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities*, vii.

Thus, for him, the preservation and recording of antiquities was not merely so that streets may be more beautiful or interesting, rich in aesthetically pleasing portals to the past. Britton's antiquities were made relevant to contemporary life in their fulfilling of a didactic function. Its placing in a national context was instructive, so that it was categorised with, and connected and compared to other medieval cities. Moreover, his insistent emphasis on the city's canals – its 'singularity' – gave the city a distinct identity that was a prime signifier of the city's 'domestic economy' and, by extension, the water-rich topography of the hinterland that lay beyond the bounds of the images themselves (figs.29–30, 36). Other signs of Salisbury's economic life are attentively described in these plates, from the flock of sheep being driven up Castle Street – a sign of the rich arable land about the city and reminder of the wool trade which had so long been the region's mainstay – to the detailed transcription of shop signs that lend the images the air of authenticity topographical publications were so often at pains to draw attention to (and which, in this particular case, was duly praised in *The Gentleman's Magazine*).¹⁹⁵

The attention accorded by Bartlett to multiple signs of the city's working life and to the working people who populate these scenes was unprecedented in public representations of Salisbury to this point. Turner had depicted the working life of the city in his representations for Hoare's personal collection but had opted for its orthodox iconographical profile – in which the city is viewed from afar and dominated by the looming silhouette of its cathedral – to represent Salisbury in *Picturesque Views*. This image has been discussed above in relation to the campaign for parliamentary representation; images such as those in Britton's volume, of densely built-up streets bustling with contemporary life may have also struck a chord in this context by representing the economic domain in prints sure to be consumed by those already enfranchised – those properties and business premises, if not exactly the people – desirous of a share in political authority.

¹⁹⁵ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 99, part 1 (June 1829), 625.

The ‘interesting old city’

Deemed unworthy of Hall’s picturesque, the canals join people as aspects of Salisbury’s streetscape filtered out of his *Memorials*. Published in 1834, two years after the spectacle of unity that was the Reform Festival as reported by the *Salisbury and South Wiltshire Journal*, Hall’s volume conveys not only a much-edited streetscape but a greatly disjointed one: icons worthy of representation are, as they had customarily been in antiquarian texts since the 1770s at least, largely isolated from their context; vignettes offer myopic views that edit out non-picturesque buildings (fig.37) while antique prints present a bygone Salisbury that is completely inaccessible by its consignment to the past. Where there are street scenes, they are largely devoid of life, presenting passive staffage that lend a sense of scale but, by their own lack of engagement in street life, do little to engage the viewer or point to the reality of life lived there. Written by a member of the Salisbury clergy and dedicated to the Dean and Chapter, this is an escapist’s Salisbury, as retrospective and pedantic in its recording of each inanimate sign of its ‘departed splendour’ as it was dismissive of the societal presence in the urban landscape that lay outside the Close walls.

Divergent in their approach to the components of Salisbury’s urban landscape, the two volumes also employ distinct interpretations of the picturesque aesthetic that manifests itself in the formal qualities of their illustrations. The academic integrity of Britton’s illustrations was clearly important – he begins his introduction to *Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities* not with an account of how his subjects were chosen but with an explanation of his understanding of the term ‘picturesque’. Britton was critical of the loose application of the term in topographical literature, and of Gilpin’s term ‘picturesque beauty’, rendered oxymoronic by application of Uvedale Price’s iteration of the picturesque, defined as ‘old’, ‘rough, rugged’ in opposition to beauty’s smooth, undulating elegance.

In Bartlett’s images for Britton the canals become compositional axes that – like the water in Constable’s *Salisbury Cathedral* – draw our eye through the

composition so that we may appreciate the variety of component parts that combine to create the urban picturesque. The images are composed of complex matrixes of staccato, quivering and tapering lines appropriate to the evocation of irregularly-shaped and time-worn buildings; even the relative softness of line achieved through copper engraving enhances the textural description of the ancient streetscape. These qualities are particularly marked in the engraving of High Street, in which the linear canal, bordered by irregular lumps of stone, is mirrored by cart tracks worn into a rough ground strewn with gravel. Possessive of the greatest picturesque potential by Britton's standards, this side of the street is duly highlighted, throwing it into relief against the comparatively regular, more rectilinear forms on the right-hand side, with pavement likely laid down in the wave of urban improvements in the 1770s; a further wave of paving would occur in the years immediately after the publication of this image. While on one level the admittance of environmental imperfections and irregularities in these images works to make a spectacle of dilapidation, and, by extension, of human discomfort, Britton's adherence to picturesque principles admits a more comprehensive topography of the street in which architecture is interesting not so much because of its fine architectural detailing – that which is highlighted in the fragments within Hall's volume – but because of the rich texture of social life and economic activity that it hosts.

By contrast, Hall's volume puts forward a partial, fragmented or historicising view of the streetscape conveyed in delicately delineated and pared-back engravings in which pools of white paper suggest a crisp cleanliness. Through this presentation, Salisbury emerges as a stage set: idealised, yet fragile, glimpsed with a myopia that may suggest fear of the bigger picture. This instability mirrors uncertainty in the face of recent reforms that, when combined with the titular appellation of the fragments as 'memorials' hints at an underlying cynicism or fear here about the survival of the parts of Salisbury – its gothic flourishes and ecclesiastical architecture – that directly reflected the founding of the city by an all-powerful clergy. If, as the wave of reform that occurred in the years immediately preceding this text showed the foundations of Britain's power structure could be shaken and its form

remoulded, could not the march of urbanisation, industrialisation and technological advancement also shake the city's stone foundations and slowly erase traces of its 'glorious' medieval past?

These and other volumes of the 1830s and the early 1840s collectively demonstrate that the urban topography of Salisbury was largely static. Subtle signs of modernity could be found in the replacement of canals with gas lamps and pavements, recommendations of the newly formed Board of Health but large-scale, transformative change of the kind occurring elsewhere eluded the city. Fuelled by the recognition that historically buoyant local trade in wool and cutlery was now, as reported in 1834, unable to compete with the 'superior capital, enterprise and advantages of those [cities] in the North', there was a desire for change.¹⁹⁶ This is seen in an 1840 appeal from a Sam Richardson of Aldershot to resurrect research into making the Avon navigable, and to connect the canalised river to Britain's rapidly expanding rail network. Richardson's aim, to make Salisbury 'a great commercial and important city' came with visions of 'steam-packets lying at the quay, at Salisbury – say, some from Bristol...Hull, or Havre...Liverpool, Glasgow, Lisbon'.¹⁹⁷ As before, the proposal to canalise the Avon came to nothing but, after several aborted initiatives, the city's first railway opened in January 1847 with a branch of the London and South Western Railway connecting Salisbury with Southampton via Bishopstoke (now Eastleigh). Where modern development occurred, however, it was situated outside the chequers of the medieval city plan and thus did little to detract from Salisbury's 'picturesque' appearance.

In 1848 it was hoped that the 'spirit of enterprise' perceived to accompany the railway would 'stimulate the industrial energies of our population, and fully develope [sic] the resources of our city and neighbourhood'.¹⁹⁸ Both Hall's and Britton's publications demonstrate that until such time, there was an economy to be developed from the city's static topography. This economy

¹⁹⁶ Easton, *Salisbury Guide*, 22nd edition, 17; Hatcher, *Old and New Sarum*, 85, 87.

¹⁹⁷ *Salisbury and South Wiltshire Journal*, 24 August 1840.

¹⁹⁸ J.B., *Salisbury Guide*, 79.

was one of recreation and nostalgia, according to Hall, as the antiquary, ‘the man of taste and letters’, might find in his volume an ‘innocent and enlightened source of recreation’ while for those with a personal connection to the landscape its images might ‘realise the scenes of memory and imagination’. That Salisbury’s antiquity could also be monetised is evident in his wish to convert tradesmen into tourists, that they might be inspired by his book to ‘devote a trifle, both of time and money’ to the city.¹⁹⁹ At a more challenging economic juncture, when Salisbury’s long-established trades were faltering and the city was striving to compete with its modernising steam-powered and steam-connected counterparts, Hall’s ‘window dressing’ of the city was more crucial than ever. But while crisp, idealised images and a text that conveys a sense of threat to the city’s picturesque appearance might be outwardly construed to entice visitors, they might also manifest something of their editor’s clerical allegiance and Tory outlook, and something of that desire to use the past as a way to rescue the city from its recent present in the political spotlight.

Britton’s volume, taken with his numerous texts on the area, represents another facet to the economic vitality of topographical study and antiquities in a modern world. His efforts pitched the topography of Wiltshire as a metropolitan concern, drawing Salisbury and its hinterland into a metropolitan economy of taste and knowledge (the construction of a small stone circle in his London garden was a visual manifestation of this quest). Where Hoare’s meetings were accessible by invitation only, Britton’s Wiltshire Topographical Society, inaugurated in 1840, was open to all. Although this openness would be its downfall, provoking friction between local and metropolitan members,²⁰⁰ in theory and in aesthetic, Britton’s presentation of Salisbury in *Picturesque Antiquities* offered a comprehensive insight into new imagery, an everyday topography of Salisbury that was – unlike the franchise so hotly contested there – accessible to all.

¹⁹⁹ Hall, *Picturesque memorials*, 34.

²⁰⁰ Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 66.

That the wider public had come to associate Salisbury with a Britain of times past is evidenced by the *Illustrated London News*'s distinction of it in 1851, amongst a list of industrialising cities, as the 'interesting old city'. This was an identity in which the city and the cathedral close both had a stake, the former's share in Salisbury's visual identity having increased greatly over the 1830s and 40s thanks to the greater variety of images circulated in works like those of Hall and Britton. And yet, as the distant view onto the city in the *Illustrated London News* suggested, it was most identifiable from a distance, as it had been depicted for centuries; that this view had also come to emblemise the national faith is seen in another image from around this time, entitled 'Christianity' (fig.38). In its physical and represented urban landscapes, Salisbury was unable to escape its past. While the implications of this past-present dialogue could be tense – and exploited as such by some, such as Turner – it could also be productive, economically and intellectually. Those who embraced its depiction had to become historians, and those who consumed their works gained conceptual access to wider geographies and time periods beyond those they inhabited – thus the temporally expansive frame of Salisbury's narrative also stretched the creative and mental faculties of those who engaged in its image. Centred upon its cathedral, but using the landscape's vital resource, the river, to connect close, city and hinterland, there was no one image more expansive in size and in intellectual scope than Constable's six-foot oil painting, the first and perhaps the most powerful demonstration of Salisbury's multi-faceted identity.

Chapter Two

‘[A]ntiquities forsooth!...but modernities also’: past and present in the remaking of Bristol

To seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britons, Bristol was a maritime city, a centre for naval prowess and formidable privateering activity.²⁰¹ William Barrett’s *The History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol* (1789), the first comprehensive history of the city, made plain the association between prosperity and the sea-faring tradition of Bristol, ‘Britannia’s second mart and eye’.²⁰² By this time, however, Bristol was struggling to maintain its grip on second place in the face of competition from Liverpool for transatlantic trade. One count on which Bristol could outdo its northern rival, however, was its impressively scenographic landscape setting. ‘Nothing can do it but a Picture’, wrote Alexander Pope, so impressed by the stark contrast of tall ships docked inland:

‘it is so unlike any scene you saw...as far as you can see, hundreds of Ships...the oddest and most surprising sight imaginable. The street is fuller of them, than the Thames from London Bridge to Deptford’.²⁰³

‘As to the seat of the city and its environs’, wrote William Cobbett after his visit in 1830, ‘it surpasses all that I ever saw’. He, too, was impressed by the appearance of the ships, describing the city’s situation thus:

‘A great commercial city in the midst of corn-fields, meadows and woods, and the ships coming into the centre of it, miles from anything

²⁰¹ Jonathan Barry, “Bristol Pride: Civic Identity in Bristol c.1640–1775,” in *The Making of Modern Bristol*, eds. Madge Dresser and Philip Ollerenshaw (Tiverton: Redcliffe Press, 1996), 36.

²⁰² This phrase comes from James Grainger’s georgic poem, *The Sugar Cane*, 1746, quoted in Sue Hardiman, *The 1832 Cholera Epidemic and its Impact on the City of Bristol* (Bristol: Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 2005), 4.

²⁰³ Letter from Alexander Pope to Maria Blount quoted in J.H. Bettey, *Bristol Observed: Visitors’ Impressions of the City from Domesday to The Blitz* (Bristol: Redgate Press, 1986), 68.

like sea, up a narrow river, and passing between two clefts of a rock
probably a hundred feet high'.²⁰⁴

Early depictions celebrate these features, picturing Bristol as a site of dramatic juxtaposition: an inland marina (fig.39). This was just one of Bristol's identities, however. Later, in the Reverend John Evans's 1828 guidebook, the profusion of churches within the city's skyline was, like so many other aspects of Bristol's scenery, celebrated in poetry:

'Urbs antiqua
Dives opum.
Like some renown'd Metropolis
With glittering Spires and Pinnacles adorn'd'.²⁰⁵

Even for a non-conformist preacher like Evans, the city's abundant spires were a source of local pride. Indeed, Jonathan Barry has described how the city's churches were considered to be evocative of the metropolis, and thus suggestive of the city's size and wealth, as well as being landmarks that promoted the city's moral character.²⁰⁶ This was particularly important, perhaps, within the context of growing criticism of the slave trade, from which Bristol derived great wealth.

As the nineteenth century wore on the inherent theatricality in the city's setting and its urban landscape would be exploited: in the hands of artists – many of whom were themselves residents – it would be variously presented as seawards-facing, inland, antiquarian, modern, picturesque, sublime, harmonious and discordant, its intricate matrix of natural and built environments moulded to suit a range of narratives both local and national. This chapter will explore the representation of Bristol's multiplicitous

²⁰⁴ William Cobbet, *Rural Rides*, in Bettey, *Bristol Observed*, 96.

²⁰⁵ Rev. John Evans, *The New Guide, or Picture of Bristol, with the Beauties of Clifton: a descriptive arrangement of excursions in their vicinities: and an appendix on their Geology, Botany, &c. &c.* (Bristol, 1828), title page.

²⁰⁶ Barry, "Bristol Pride," 30.

topography and image in the 1830s. It focuses particularly on the decade up to 1837, a time when, economically, the city's fortunes looked bleak but its visual capital grew. The crux of its investigation lies in the ways in which the city's depiction could, according to purpose, either divulge or conceal the social and economic tensions it played host to. Imagery arising from the Bristol reform riots of October 1831 is central to this discussion. Prominent within Bristol's visual record and its art history, these will be viewed within a wider context of imagery and form a central tenet in the chapter's demonstration of the gulf that opened up at this time between the image and reality of Bristol's urban landscape.

Dressing up: landscape culture and the Bristol scene

William James Müller's painting of 1837, *Bristol from Clifton Wood* (fig.40) serves as a useful introduction to the multiple ways in which Bristol was viewed in the period. Simultaneously, it indexes numerous strains of patronage in the city and means by which image could depart from reality.

The viewpoint gives rise to a dramatic contrast between the foreground, comprising the irregular forms of vegetation rendered in a palette of rich greens, and the mid-ground, wherein lies the city, a mass of jagged, angular buildings in cool tones; beyond, the curvature of hills suggests a city cocooned in countryside. The effect is to highlight Bristol's pleasant situation. A few years earlier, however, *Chilcott's New Guide* had noted, perhaps with some scepticism, how

'[a] fanciful resemblance has been discovered by some between Bristol and Ancient Rome. It is chiefly drawn from this circumstance – that both cities stand on seven hills, and have a muddy rapid river running through them.'²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ John Chilcott, *Chilcott's New Guide to Bristol, Clifton, and the Hotwells*, 2nd edition (Bristol: J. Chilcott, c.1830), 37.

Müller makes feasible the ‘fanciful’ comparison through his suggestion of a hazy atmosphere and blue sky but also via the disappearance of the pastel-tinted landscape into the far distance and the foregrounding of staffage beneath an inwards-arching tree. Müller had by this time seen Rome for himself but the view amalgamates a series of references to painters such as Claude and Gaspard Poussin that held high currency amongst Bristol collectors, filtering them through one hundred years of British landscape painting to this date.²⁰⁸ Another apparent reference, particularly evident in the strong colouring and rendering of trees and earth in the foreground, is to the work of Jacob van Ruisdael and the Northern landscape tradition. As well as touching up the paintings of Constable, whose work also referenced that tradition, Müller is known to have taken commissions for pictures in the style of Dutch old masters, making some for a Mr Heath of Bristol in the style of Ruisdael that sold for five guineas each.²⁰⁹

Given the perceived geographical parallels between Bristol and the landscapes of Rome and the Low Countries, such references were indeed appropriate. Yet Bristol was also compared with other places, too. *Chilcott’s New Guide* noted that the ‘classic traveller will discover in the scenery about St Vincent’s Rocks, no inadequate resemblance, though on a smaller scale, to the celebrated Temple of Greece’,²¹⁰ while another guidebook pointed to the similarity of Bristol’s situation to a town in the Pyrenees,²¹¹ and Clifton, the genteel suburb behind the vantage point of Müller’s picture, was ‘most justly styled the Montpellier of England’, according to another.²¹² While these comparisons were commonplace in guidebooks seeking to glamourise their subject, they serve to multiply the range of costumes the city could wear.

²⁰⁸ Nathanael Neal Solly, *Memoir of the Life of W.J. Müller... With Original Letters and an Account of His Travels and of His Principal Works... Illustrated with Photographs from Paintings and Sketches by the Artist’s Own Hand* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1875), 44.

²⁰⁹ Solly, *W.J. Müller*, 32.

²¹⁰ Chilcott, *New Guide to Bristol*, 2nd edition, 53.

²¹¹ John Chilcott, *Chilcott’s Descriptive History of Bristol, Ancient and Modern ... Third Edition, Improved. With Maps* (Bristol: J. Chilcott, 1840), 1.

²¹² John Morgan, *A Brief Historical Sketch of Bristol, with the New Picture of Clifton, and Strangers’ Guide: Containing Topographical, Antiquarian and Biographical Notices, Together with a Descriptive Account of the Delightful Promenades, Rides and Drives in Clifton and Its Environs, including a Circuit of Fifteen Miles round the City* (Bristol: H. & A. Hill, 1849), title page.

Although the composition of *Bristol from Clifton Wood* may be generic enough to inspire comparison with a range of artistic sources and different localities, Müller pays heed to the specificity of Bristol's urban landscape. Present, then, are the ships moored along the New Cut and the numerous church towers, most prominent being the Cathedral in the centre and the celebrated St Mary Redcliffe – Müller's own Parish church – further in the distance to the right. Also clearly apparent are the conical towers of Bristol's famous glass manufactories, the one at centre possibly that on Limekiln Lane. Defoe had noted 'no less than fifteen glass-houses in Bristol' a century previous, numbering

'more than are in the city of London...sending them fill'd with beer, cyder [sic], and wine to the West Indies, much more than goes from London; also great numbers of bottles, even such as is almost incredible, are now used for sending the waters of St Vincent's Rock away, which are now carry'd, not all over England only, but, we may say, all over the world.'²¹³

This combination of countryside, international shipping, ancient church towers and industry made for a distinctive urban landscape that when orchestrated in views such as this and dressed in an Old Masterly guise suggested a city confident and content in its own identity and optimistic in its prospects.

Defoe, however, almost prophetically cast Bristol's visually arresting setting as a deficiency, writing that 'its situation, and the tenacious folly of its inhabitants...the pretence of freedoms and privileges, that corporation-tyranny' would conspire to prevent 'the flourishing and encrease [sic] of many a good town in England'.²¹⁴ Further scrutiny of written impressions of Bristol reveal distant impressions like Müller's as casting a veil over an urban landscape that both generated and harboured scars of social strife. Trade may

²¹³ Defoe in Bettey, *Bristol Observed*, 62.

²¹⁴ Defoe in Bettey, *Bristol Observed*, 63.

have once been able to overcome the notorious navigational difficulties of its waterways to yield much prosperity but by 1837 even innovations in engineering like the Floating Harbour and Cumberland Basin proved ineffective. Bristol was unique among larger British port cities in the 1800s for being operated, until 1848, by a private company²¹⁵ but it was their failure to upkeep the port and set docking rates that led to a drastic reduction in trade in the face of new competition from Liverpool, as detailed in one guide to the city:

‘Bristol for centuries ranked as the second city in England in respect of riches, trade and population; but the present extent of its foreign commerce will bear no comparison with that of the port of Liverpool’.²¹⁶

While the water may glisten innocuously in Müller’s painting, the 1842 government report on Bristol’s sanitary conditions found sewage ‘thrown into the stagnant waters of the Floating Harbour’, and the River Frome ‘a great open sewer’ that induced sickness in adjoining houses, ‘mostly of the poorer classes, as scarcely any others will live in them’.²¹⁷ This is concurrent with the Rev. John Skinner’s identification of Bristol in 1830 as a ‘vast and dirty city’ and Mary Russell Mitford’s hearing much of ‘its dirt, its dinginess, and its ugliness’ in 1852.²¹⁸ Socially, the city was still found to be a ‘a dark, benighted spot’ by a report on compensation paid to slave owners in September 1833.²¹⁹ The description came two years after riots in the name of reform and in protest against the corruption of the City Corporation wrought devastation on the city’s urban fabric. Pope’s perception that ‘[t]he City of

²¹⁵ David Large, ed., *The Port of Bristol 1848–1884* (Bristol: Record Society, 1984), vii.

²¹⁶ Joseph Mathews, *The Bristol Guide; being a complete ancient and modern history of the city of Bristol of that Opulent Provincial Metropolis, with Its Suburbs Clifton and the Hotwells*, 7th edition (Bristol: J. Mathews, 1828), 196.

²¹⁷ Sir H.T. de la Beche and Dr Lyon Playfair, “Report on the Sanatory [sic] Condition of Bristol,” in *Second Report of the Commissioners for inquiring into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1845), Appendix, part 1, 66.

²¹⁸ Bettey, *Bristol Observed*, 97, 101.

²¹⁹ *The Destructive and Poor Man’s Conservative*, 7 September 1833, in David Large, *Radicalism in Bristol in the Nineteenth Century* (Bristol: Record Society, 1981), 3.

Bristol itself is very unpleasant and no civilised company in it'²²⁰ may be hyperbolic but stands as yet another a useful counterpoint to the image projected by Müller's painting, suggesting the fruitfulness of investigating the evident gap between the projected image and reported perceptions of Bristol.

Collecting: the shaping and proliferation of Bristol's image

Although *Bristol from Clifton Wood* has been demonstrated as referencing national and wider European artistic precedents, it was also rooted in a culture of landscape imagery that flourished in Bristol in the 1820s, the period identified most strongly with the so-called 'Bristol School'. Recalling its origins, the Bristol surgeon and ex-professional engraver Dr John King wrote in 1839 of the 'small society of art-loving friends' that formed around the city's resident Royal Academician Edward Bird (1772–1819) in the early 1800s.²²¹ In the immediate years after his death this society had evolved to encompass professional artists as diverse as Samuel Jackson, Francis Danby, James Johnson and E.V. Ripplingille who together continued the practice of convivial evening sketching meetings and excursions to Bristol's wooded outskirts with amateurs and patrons in tow. Leigh Woods was a particularly favoured destination, described by amateur John Eagles with characteristic effusion as '[t]hose beautiful woods opposite Clifton separated from it by the muddy Avon...dividing...the cares and toils of a busy world from the regions of Elysium'.²²² The spirit of collaboration that had seen Danby, Jackson and Johnson work closely together on an ambitious but ultimately loss-making folio of lithographs of Bristol printed in 1823 (*Three Views Illustrative of the Scenery of Bristol and its Vicinity*)²²³ was later echoed in the collaboration between Müller and Thomas Leeson Scrase Rowbotham (1752–1853) on lithographs of the city during the reform riots. According to Müller's

²²⁰ Letter from Alexander Pope to Maria Blount, quoted in Bettey, *Bristol Observed*, 69.

²²¹ Francis Greenacre, *The Bristol School of Artists: Francis Danby and Painting in Bristol 1810–1840* (Bristol: City Art Gallery, 1973), 10.

²²² John Eagles, *The Sketcher* (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1856), 11.

²²³ These subjects were: Danby, *View from Kingsweston Hill*; Johnson *Redcliffe Church*; and Jackson *St Vincent's Rocks and the Old Hotwell House*. Francis Greenacre, *Francis Danby, 1793–1861* (London: The Tate Gallery and City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, 1988), 157.

biographer, a sketching club involving Müller, William West, Rowbotham, Jackson and Prout re-emerged in 1832–33. This network made much effort to raise the profile of the fine arts in Bristol.

Historiography of the Bristol School naturally prioritises the first-hand account of its activities given by Eagles. His romanticised view of this ‘brethren of the brush’, and of their outings in Leigh Woods somewhat skews the reality of artistic life in Bristol in the 1820s and 1830s, however.²²⁴ In 1835, Danby, having left Bristol, wrote regretfully of his friend and former pupil Samuel Jackson as possessing ‘a genius he has not shown’ on account of his ability to ‘screw down his heart for the getting of halfpence’.²²⁵ Clearly for Danby – who, like so many others, had moved away in search of augmented professional opportunities – making it as an artist in Bristol meant making compromises. Danby may have seen Jackson’s commitment to watercolour (a cheaper and less exalted medium), his return to work as a drawing master following a tour of the West Indies, and his employment to produce topographical landscape watercolours for George Weare Braikenridge – and not the kind of large, imaginary landscapes that Danby built his metropolitan reputation on – as signs of ‘genius’ suppressed. Bristol’s artists, like those in other provincial cities (Norwich being the most pertinent example) were vulnerable to vicissitudes in a myopic local market that favoured familiar landscapes but which was heavily restrained by two factors: the availability of disposable income and the lack of predisposition amongst Bristol’s wealthiest citizens to invest in contemporary art.

Local ‘apathy for elegant and refined pursuits’²²⁶ manifested itself in the low numbers and sales at the Bristol Institution exhibition of 1825 organised by the city’s artists with support from Eagles. A disappointed write-up labelled Bristol the ‘dungeon’ or ‘grave’ of the arts.²²⁷ By 1836 the departure of artists like Johnson and Danby was being lamented in the press, with *Felix Farley’s*

²²⁴ Eagles, *Sketcher*, 129.

²²⁵ Letter from Francis Danby to John Gibbons, 5 December 1835, quoted in Greenacre, *The Bristol School of Artists*, 141.

²²⁶ *Bristol Mercury*, 26 July 1824.

²²⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 28 February 1825.

Bristol Journal suggesting in 1836 that Rippingille would follow ‘unless he be detained by generous commissions’.²²⁸ While this can be read as a ‘puff’ for Rippingille, it reveals the relative dearth of interest in contemporary art in Bristol that continued to be a recurrent and nationally aired complaint into the 1840s, when the postscript to a review of the annual Bristol Academy exhibition of 1846 reprinted in the *Morning Post* read:

‘Let [visitors] compare the amount of their upholster’s [sic] bill with the sums they have appropriated to the purchase of pictures, and perhaps it may strike some of them that a share in the Bristol Art Union is the very least they can do for the encouragement of art in a city where encouragement is very much needed’.²²⁹

This notice came in the wake of the bankruptcy of iron merchant Daniel Wade Acraman, a prominent Bristol School collector and champion of reform. In a letter to fellow iron master and collector John Gibbons Acraman lamented his inability to better support local artists. ‘[N]ow the Iron Trade is become so ruinous to all’, he wrote, ‘I cannot afford to do more; I bought out of the last exhibition a Picture by Johnson and one by Poole’. He diagnosed Bristol’s situation as the cause of its impoverished art scene. By comparison to Birmingham, where much of Acraman’s business was based, Bristol, on the edge of England with no through-routes was ‘neither so rich nor so populous’, and therefore offered ‘little encouragement for Artists’.²³⁰ Indeed, Paul Falconer Poole (1807–79), mentioned above, left his native Bristol for London in 1829. As well as his support of Bristol’s artists, alongside metropolitan ones (the names of Rippingille, Müller and James Johnson appear next to those of Benjamin West and one of the Westall brothers), the catalogue of Acraman’s bankruptcy sale in 1842 reveals a typical preponderance of Old Masters, the craze for which had been fuelled by a surfeit of examples from Continental collections made available after the

²²⁸ *Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal*, 22 July 1836.

²²⁹ *Morning Post*, 19 September 1846.

²³⁰ D.W. Acraman to John Gibbons, 30 January 1830, quoted in Greenacre, *Bristol School*, 29.

Napoleonic Wars.²³¹ Acraman's Old Master collection, which included a Berghem, 'believed to be the finest in the world',²³² was a source of in-kind support for Müller, certainly, who was permitted to make copies early in his career.²³³

Amongst other collectors of art in Bristol were the Bright and Harford families, and banker, slave owner and politician Philip John Miles (1774–1845) whose picture gallery was noted as 'the boast of the West of England'.²³⁴ Like Acraman, Miles sought out Old Master paintings but with a fortune that made him Bristol's first millionaire. Miles purchased works by Titian, Poussin, Rubens and Raphael to adorn the walls of Leigh Court, the mansion he built between 1814 and 1818 on the Abbots Leigh estate just above the shore of the Avon to the west of Bristol.²³⁵ This was adjacent to Leigh Woods, the favoured sketching party location and vantage point for views of Bristol from across the river; that excursions to Miles's collection took place is evidenced by a statement made in 1837 about Pyne, who apparently owed 'much to the early contemplation of Mr. Miles's collection'.²³⁶ The *View of Bristol* by Patrick Nasmyth (1787–1831), with its distinct Ruisdael reference, takes a vantage point just above Leigh Court and may have been painted for Miles (fig.41).²³⁷

An illustrated guide to Miles's collection reveals specific examples that could be easily paraphrased in representations of Bristol's surrounding landscape (fig.42). A pair of upright Poussin landscapes centring on a dramatic cliff find parallels in the numerous depictions of St Vincent's Rocks; a rock-strewn

²³¹ *Literary Gazette: a weekly journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts*, 10 August 1842, 542.

²³² *Literary Gazette*, 10 August 1842, 542.

²³³ Francis Greenacre and Sheena Stoddard, *W.J. Müller 1812–1845* (Bristol: Friends of Bristol Art Gallery for Bristol Museums and Art Gallery, 1991), 50.

²³⁴ John Chilcott, *Chilcott's New Guide to Bristol, Clifton, and the Hotwells*, 10th edition (Bristol: J. Chilcott, 1857), 119.

²³⁵ Kenneth Morgan, "Philip John Miles (1774–1845), banker, slave owner, and politician," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), accessed 25 Aug 2017, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/107409>.

²³⁶ "The Provincial Exhibitions / Birmingham Society of Artists," *Art-Union*, vol. 6 (December 1844), 351.

²³⁷ Nasmyth was commissioned to paint Leigh Woods by John, 2nd Lord Northwick (1770–1859).

forest scene by Rosa provides a precedent for the woods that that clung to the gorge, while Claude and Vernet present model harbour scenes that bear similarities with Müller's *Bristol from Clifton Wood*.²³⁸ In 1833, Miles used compensation he was awarded after the cessation of slavery in British colonies to purchase another seat, Kingsweston, to the north west of Bristol. Like Leigh Court, this was open to visitors by arrangement and upon payment of a fee and set in a celebrated landscape – the view from the park over the mouth of the river Avon was regularly depicted by artists and written into works by Jane Austen and poets Southey and Landor.²³⁹ Miles's only recorded commission for a local artist was to Joseph Horler (1809–1887), a Bath-born artist who is not mentioned in histories of the Bristol school, for views from Kingsweston at the start of the 1830s and into the 1840s (figs.43 and 44).²⁴⁰ He is therefore listed by Greenacre with the Bright and Harford families as being apathetic towards the local art scene.²⁴¹ Yet even without the promise of patronage, his properties were loci of artistic potential, places to study celebrated local landscapes and absorb the painterly language of the Old Masters.

Miles was acquiring Bristol land during a period when topographical study of the city and its surrounds was flourishing. In 1821 he lent his support to the Reverend Samuel Seyers's *Memoirs, Historical and Topographical, of Bristol and its Neighbourhood*, which extended the narrative on from Barrett's first history of Bristol (published 1789) to the mid-eighteenth century. Seyers's work was published by John Mathew Gutch, who, since his arrival in Bristol in 1803 had become proprietor of *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* and an associate of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The book catered to an increasing thirst for knowledge amongst Bristol's business class that was typified and likely fuelled by the activities of bookseller and publisher, William Tyson (1785–1851), author of a local history column in the *Bristol Times and Mirror*. In

²³⁸ John Young, *A Catalogue of the Pictures at Leigh Court, Near Bristol: The Seat of Philip John Miles, Esq. M.* (London: Bulwer and Nicholl, 1822).

²³⁹ It appears in the Jane Austen novels, *Emma* and *Northanger Abbey*, for example.

²⁴⁰ See *Looking towards the Mouth of the Avon*, ?1832, oil on canvas, 333 x 431 mm; and *The Avon looking towards Portishead*, 1840, oil on mahogany panel, 375 x 470 mm, both Bristol Museum and Art Gallery (K485 and K487 respectively).

²⁴¹ Greenacre, *Francis Danby*, 24.

1816 he partnered with the schoolmaster and non-conformist preacher John Evans on a magazine, *The Bristol Memorialist*, which ran for three issues that year and a further one in 1823.²⁴² Although Tyson never realised his ambition to compile a complete history of Bristol, his catalytic role in Bristol's burgeoning culture of topographical research was recognised by London-based topographer John Britton who, upon Tyson's election to the FSA in 1830, described him as 'particularly zealous and diligent in developing the antiquities of his native city'.²⁴³ Gutch's publication of Seyers's history in 1821 boasted illustrations by architect and draughtsman Edward Blore, who had previously worked with Britton on his history of York Cathedral (1819). The list of subscribers, which included Britton, heavily enforces the book's credibility and identifies a widely dispersed network of interest that ranged from the local establishment (MP Henry Bright, the Bristol Corporation and the Bristol Gas Light Company) to high profile figures in the literary matrix such as Hannah More, publisher John Bowyer Nichols and antiquarian Sir Richard Colt Hoare.²⁴⁴ Miles was joined in his purchase of a large paper edition of the work by another local subscriber and plantation owner, George Weare Braikenridge (1775–1856), whose activities as a patron, collector and connoisseur of antiquarian matters made an extraordinary and singular contribution to the contemporary appreciation of Bristol's landscape and our subsequent understanding of it.

Braikenridge and the surveying of Bristol

Whereas Miles used his plantation-based wealth to invest in physical landscapes, Braikenridge spent his creating a vast archive of paper landscapes – including depictions of Miles's seat in a view from Kingsweston hill – credited with making Bristol the wealthiest city in terms of its pre-

²⁴² Irvine Gray, *Antiquaries of Gloucestershire and Bristol* (Bristol: Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 1981), 22, 99.

²⁴³ Gray, *Antiquaries of Gloucestershire and Bristol*, 99.

²⁴⁴ Samuel Seyer, *Memoirs Historical and Topographical of Bristol and Its Neighbourhood, from the Earliest Period down to the Present Time* (Bristol: Norton, 1821), 1–6.

photography visual record.²⁴⁵ Unlike Miles, however, who is said to have died through exhaustion, Braikenridge retired from his business as a merchant in his mid-forties and dedicated the rest of his life to antiquarianism.²⁴⁶ His home in the village of Brislington, to the south east of the city, became a hub for research, artistic patronage and reflection on Bristol's image, present and past. Braikenridge's library, or 'museum', as he termed it, began life as a 'collection of Scraps' gathered through a desire to extra-illustrate his copies of Barrett's *History* and Collinson's *History of Somerset*.²⁴⁷ It would eventually contain some 1500 paintings and drawings and as many guidebooks, items of ephemera, maps, historical documents and manuscripts.²⁴⁸ It was lauded by both local and national antiquarian networks. In 1837, Richard Smith wrote in the *Bristol Mirror* of

'antiquities forsooth! not those only, but modernities also, in fact, and every thing that relates to our city. Time, money, house-room – all have been unsparingly employed in the preservation of that which otherwise would have perished'.²⁴⁹

Braikenridge's receipt of numerous dedications speaks of his enthusiasm for the proliferation of Bristol knowledge in various forms, from Prout's *Picturesque Antiquities of Bristol* to John Britton's *Cathedral Antiquities* and the Reverend James Dallaway's 1834 *Antiquities of Bristow*. In his preface, Dallaway recognised Braikenridge's 'singular perseverance in perpetuating the memories of our native city' and included for his readers an index of Braikenridge's drawings, certifying their centrality to the topographical research of Bristol.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ Samuel Jackson, *View from Kingsweston Hill*, undated, watercolour, dimensions unknown, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery (M5421); Sheena Stoddard, *Bristol before the Camera: The City in 1820–30. Watercolours and drawings from the Braikenridge Collection* (Bristol: Redcliffe Press and Bristol Museums and Art Gallery, 2001), 5.

²⁴⁶ Morgan, "Philip John Miles", unpaginated.

²⁴⁷ Braikenridge's grangerised copy of Barrett is now held in Bristol City Reference Library.

²⁴⁸ Stoddard, *Bristol before the Camera*, 5–9.

²⁴⁹ *Bristol Mirror*, 21 October 1837.

²⁵⁰ James Dallaway, *Antiquities of Bristow in the Middle Centuries; including the topography by William Wyrcestre, and the life of William Canynge* (Bristol: Mirror Office, 1834), iii.

Although at least some of his collection of contemporary Bristol paintings by Danby and other Bristol artists were certainly commissions,²⁵¹ it is these drawings, which record the mutation of Bristol from medieval to modern city, that form the core of Braikenridge's topographical legacy. While the sheer volume of drawings might suggest an indiscriminate desire to acquire, Braikenridge built his collection through a discerning methodology, tailoring his commissions to the specific qualities of the artists he employed. London-born Hugh O'Neill (1784–1824), who worked almost exclusively for Braikenridge during the three years he spent in Bristol, produced 440 drawings of antiquarian subjects, a number reflecting what Braikenridge saw as O'Neill's 'genius', a 'truth and beauty of architectural outline and landscape perspective' that was 'the most faithful...and executed with amazing facility'.²⁵² Other itinerant artists worked on antiquarian subjects, including Irishman Edward Cashin (fl.1822–26), who is only known for his work in the Bristol antiquarian context, and John Chessell Buckler (1793–1894), who went on to achieve great renown for his work as an architect, draughtsman and antiquarian author in his own right.²⁵³ It is thought that Braikenridge's patronage of George Orleans Delamotte (fl.1809–1835), who worked in Bristol for just under a decade, was curtailed upon his discovery of T.L.S. Rowbotham, who, along with Samuel Jackson contributed more general topographical views.²⁵⁴ Largely focusing on the Floating Harbour, its working landscapes, new buildings and views of streets that had been newly paved or lit by gas, the work of these two Bristol-born artists injects a modern dimension to the collection, revealing Braikenridge's embrace of the city's evolution and acquisition of 'modernities' alongside antiquities (figs.45 and 46).

²⁵¹ Eric Adams, *Francis Danby: Varieties of Poetic Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 38.

²⁵² "Obituary—Mr. Hugh O'Neill," *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 136 (Dec. 1824), 566. Braikenridge is identified as the author of this obituary in Stoddard, *Bristol before the Camera*, 108.

²⁵³ See, for example, John Chessell Buckler, *Views of the Cathedral Churches of England and Wales, with descriptions* (London: John Nichols and Son, 1822).

²⁵⁴ "The Braikenridge Collection: then and now / George Orleans Delamotte, Queen Street (later Christmas Steps)," Bristol Museum and Art Gallery website, accessed 18 August 2017, <http://museums.bristol.gov.uk/narratives.php?irn=3245>.

These modern subjects were essential to Braikenridge's intentions to update and expand Barrett's *History* to the present-day. Whether his intention was to publish his knowledge and his drawings or not, the close relationship in his collection between the visual and the verbal aligns with the prevailing methodology of modern antiquarianism as developed by authors like Britton and Brayley. Their work similarly addressed both overarching narratives with frequent diversions into minutiae and copious footnotes to further discuss and evidence their findings. Braikenridge's logbooks for the drawings contain space next to each item for explanatory notes. Fragments of narrative, transcriptions from monuments and diagrams accompany several of the entries but their increasingly sporadic nature suggests that Braikenridge was gathering data at a pace and on a scale that even he found overwhelming, that he was acquiring drawings faster than he could properly catalogue them.²⁵⁵

The layout of Braikenridge's logbook and his concurrent acquisition of literature, ephemera, maps and guidebooks show this to be a project driven by a desire for totality and clarity. The sheer volume of drawings addresses the first, while the layout of the logbook, with space for notes and the prevailing style of the drawings – executed predominantly in thin, flat washes of watercolour with an emphasis on outline – addresses the second. The Bristol they present is heavily idealised, filtered for eyes seeking out the form and function of the urban landscape, not its spirit; lack of variety in atmospheric conditions (the Bristol that Jackson depicted for Braikenridge was mostly bathed in bright sunlight) presents an air of artificiality. *En masse* they work as a survey, endowing their patron with a comprehensive and clearly delineated overview of the city. It is perhaps natural, then, that the four panoramas produced between 1829–30 by Rowbotham for Braikenridge should be described as the 'culmination' to Braikenridge's project (fig.47).²⁵⁶ The precision of line in these drawings, which is particularly effective in its geological description of the limestone gorge, almost certainly derives from use of a camera obscura. At Clifton, Rowbotham is sure to have made use of

²⁵⁵ This is evident in the catalogue he kept for his collection. George Weare Braickenridge, *Catalogue: Bristol Drawings*, vols. 3 and 4, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery (Mb7380–81).

²⁵⁶ Stoddard, *Bristol before the Camera*, 112.

his friend William West's Observatory, which opened in 1828 in a building formerly used as a windmill (fig.48).²⁵⁷ West's Observatory typified an era gripped by visual spectacle and capitalised on rising curiosity about the city's topography and its image past and present. His alteration of the tower's function, from a place of work to a place of leisure, went in tandem with the landscaping of Clifton Down and the development of the area as a wealthy suburb and site for excursions; those who could pay the fee were rewarded with the power to survey and scrutinise this landscape like never before.

Common to Rowbotham's panoramas and the drawings in Braikenridge's collection is the relative scarcity of people. Where figures are included, they are peripheral (fig.45), or else picturesque samplers of labour taken not from life but from manuals like William Henry Pyne's *Microcosm* (fig.46). In their relative exclusion of Bristol's people, Braikenridge's collection and Rowbotham's panoramas would appear to be the antithesis of Robert Greethead's panorama of the procession to commemorate the coronation of William IV and Queen Adelaide in September 1831 (fig.49). This social panorama project makes a spectacle of its hierarchy, its citizens processing in order of eminence: its sheriffs lead the mayor, who is followed by Aldermen, representatives of the National Guard and, behind them, the city's clergy. Subsequent sheets are dedicated to the guilds of various professions bearing totems of their trades, including shipbuilders and glass workers. This was a show of what Cobbett termed Bristol's 'private virtue and public spirit united', a well-rehearsed image of stable leadership by families who had, over successive generations, dominated the Corporation.²⁵⁸ Little over a month later, the figures excluded from this and Braikenridge's drawings would make their presence felt over three nights of riots that revealed the gulf between the city's elite and its people and caused a crisis in the city's image.

²⁵⁷ Jennifer Gill, *The Bristol Scene: Views of Bristol by British Artists from the Collection of the City Art Gallery* (Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 1986), 1.

²⁵⁸ Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, in Bettey, *Bristol Observed*, 96.

Social upheaval and urban ruination: The Bristol Riots, October 1831

If in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century Bristol's artists had succeeded in cultivating an image of the city as ancient yet modernising, both industrious and picturesque in which 'private virtue and public spirit united',²⁵⁹ this was to be shattered in the three days of riots that occurred between 29–31 October 1831 in the wake of Parliament's rejection of the first Reform Bill. The riots reshaped Bristol's urban landscape almost overnight as buildings emblematic of power and perceived corruption – Queens Square, the site of the Customs House, the Bishop's Palace, and the city's three prisons – were plundered, burnt and ruined. The extent of the damage (repairs ran to £100,000) and the recording of over 100 fatalities invited notoriety upon Bristol as the site of the worst public unrest seen in Britain since the Gordon Riots of 1780. By the late nineteenth century these riots were already being contextualised within a long history of Bristol mob activity which had seen the 'notorious rabble' of the Kingswood collieries riot over wheat cost in 1708 and 1753, a 'High-Church rabble' protest against the accession of Hanoverian George I in 1714, and the 1793 Bridge Riots, which, in their expression of anger at the collection of toll charges by a corrupt city corporation, paved the way for the discontent that erupted in 1831.²⁶⁰ Yet it was not to Bristol's own history that one contemporary report looked for comparison, but rather to Paris, and the revolution that had taken place there only a year earlier:

'How disparaging a comparison to England is the conduct of the Parisians and the Bristolians? The former, with zeal, with enthusiasm, united firmness, judgement and discretion; the latter go precipitately to work, heedless of nothing but plunder'.²⁶¹

Published in the liberal *Keene's Bath Journal*, this statement resounds with middle class desire that the reform campaign be fought with the same

²⁵⁹ Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, in Bettey, *Bristol Observed*, 96.

²⁶⁰ William Hunt, *Bristol* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887), 200–201.

²⁶¹ Report from *Keene's Bath Journal* reprinted in *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* [Dublin], 4 Nov. 1831.

constructive, cross-class spirit and honour that many believed was key to the success of the July Revolution. To disassociate themselves from ‘mob’ activity was a way for Bath’s middle classes to prove their worthiness of the franchise.²⁶² At a time when so much rested on civic identity, it was also in the interests of Bath’s residents to disassociate themselves from ‘the Bristolians’ so as to advance the spa city’s reputation as a residential location fitted for respectable classes.

On the surface, the representation of the riots by Bristol’s resident artists dramatically subverts the visual identity of the city as an inland maritime utopia: this was no longer the blue-skied and verdant port rendered in the elevating language of the Old Masters or through the pared-back, clarifying lens of topographical drawings for Braikenridge but rather a sublime spectacle, transformed by a nocturnal palette of deep blue, black and brown contrasted with blazing reds and yellows (figs.50–52). Of all the artists who engaged with the event, Müller produced the most sustained and varied response, the riots forming the subject of sketches in pencil and oil as well as watercolours that post-date the event by up to two years. His riot work can be divided into three distinct campaigns, the first and largest of which encompasses sketches made during or in the aftermath.²⁶³ These have regularly been treated as quasi-journalistic, documentary records of a discrete historic event. The analysis that follows will argue that the response of Müller and other Bristol-based artists to the riots was heavily mediated by their prior experience of landscape culture in Bristol and by the demands of patrons. Although the event itself manifested a rupture in socio-political relations, which its depiction crystallised and circulated, the artistic response wove together various strands of local landscape practice, including involvement from patrons with opposing views on reform, and managed to perpetuate key elements of Bristol’s visual identity.

²⁶² R.S. Neale, *Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1972), 42–44.

²⁶³ Greenacre and Stoddard, *W.J. Müller*, 72.

The ‘on-the-spot’ status of Müller’s oil sketches is undermined through the existence of numerous others in the more portable media of pencil and watercolour, as well as by juxtaposition with work by his former master, James Baker Pyne (figs.50 and 51). Müller’s oil sketches are close in size and style to Pyne’s and it is possible the two sketched together, or exchanged sketches. Certainly, the Bristol tradition of sketching *en plein air* in Clifton Wood would have laid a useful groundwork for the gathering of swift impressions, but for all the apparent speed and spontaneity of their brushwork these sketches betray a sensibility to the two apparently oppositional tenets of Bristol landscape practice – the sublime and the topographical. In their colouring and sharp tonal contrasts they echo Danby’s *Sunset at Sea after a Storm* (1824, Bristol Museums and Art Gallery) and *An Enchanted Island* (1824, private collection). This sublime colouring meets a topographer’s need for detail: the sublime spectacle plays out over consistently recognisable landmarks, some of which would be erased in the pyre.

De Loutherbourg’s *Coalbrookdale by Moonlight* (1801), although much earlier, bears relevance as an image which paved the way for the application of the sublime to man-made effects and landscapes with an identifiably topographical basis. The same, slightly elevated perspective on the furnace at Madeley Wood is employed by Pyne and Müller for some of their views of Bristol ablaze and in each the viewer is at a slight distance from the event. But where de Loutherbourg’s angle serves to detach the viewer from any sense of threat while still offering a clear view on the spectacle – an essential component for viewers’ enjoyment of sublime imagery – Pyne and Müller put their viewer in a more ambiguous position relatively close to the action.

Jeremy Caple’s study of the Bristol riots has drawn attention to its spectators’ ambiguity. Although the well-dressed onlookers in Müller’s *The Burning of the New Gaol from near Prince Street* (fig.52) appear to fulfil the traditional function of staffage in topographical images – to simulate a viewer’s experience of the landscape by picturing the ability to ‘inhabit’ it – and are positioned at a remove from the chaos and thus a position of relative safety, testimonies made at the trials of those charged with riot-related offences

suggest that these well-dressed spectators were perhaps more empathetic than disapproving of the rioters' reform cause, a point which complicates the notion advanced by Mark Harrison, for example, that the riots were not an example of cross-class action.²⁶⁴ Samuel Selfe noted that spectators of the storming of the New Gaol offered no resistance to the 150-strong mob, while Bulwer noted that 'so long as the outrages were confined to the public buildings, they approved of them; when private property was attacked this feeling changed'.²⁶⁵ Further describing the people gathered, Bulwer stated that '[t]he city had turned as on the night of an illumination – it was a large crowd'; 'the gentlemen had silk umbrellas over their heads, and the females had silk cloaks and pelisses'.²⁶⁶ These observations suggest that public opinion was not necessarily divergent along class lines in Bristol society, particularly when, as Caple has emphasised, the riots grew out of a combination of frustration at the failure of the reform bid, and a longer-term dissatisfaction with the governing Corporation of Bristol. Müller's sketch clearly delineates the spectator profile described by Selfe and Bulwer.

The emergence of a new, hybridised visual language – the topographical sublime – that these images sustain represents the weaving together of the aesthetic threads of Bristol's art scene. Pyne and Müller may have been making their sketches speculatively at first, but they and others would soon receive commissions to multiply and disseminate their views of the riots and ensuing events. Echoing the means by which French artists Hippolyte Bellangé, Honoré Daumier, and Eugène Lami circulated their depictions of the July Revolution of 1830, numerous lithographs were issued.²⁶⁷ Indeed, Belgian-born printmaker Louis Hague lithographed a watercolour by Müller and Rowbotham, issuing it in Paris as well as London (fig.53). Leading

²⁶⁴ Jeremy Caple, *The Bristol Riots of 1831 and Social Reform in Britain* (New York: The Edward Mellen Press, 1990), 157–159; Mark Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790–1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 142.

²⁶⁵ Evidence of Samuel Selfe and James Bulwer in Caple, *The Bristol Riots*, 157, 158.

²⁶⁶ Evidence of James Bulwer in Caple, *The Bristol Riots*, 158.

²⁶⁷ For lithographs of the July Revolution see, for example, Bichebois after Lami, *29 Juillet 1830. Ambulance des blessés. Cour de Palais Royal*, 1830, lithograph, 194 x 294 mm, British Museum (1886,1012.286) and Hippolyte Bellangé, *Révolution de 1830 (29 juillet) Formation des barricades*, 1830, lithograph, dimensions unknown, Bibliothèque nationale de France (FRBNF41511210).

London lithographer Charles Hullmandel, meanwhile, published plates after Pyne and Jackson, issuing them on a single sheet (fig.54), and local Bristol publishers issued lithographs after works by Müller and Rowbotham (figs.55–57). Müller was commissioned to make further watercolours for the Reverends James Bulwer and Eagles, a staunch Tory, who intended them as illustrations for his scathing account of the riots.²⁶⁸ The liberal William Somerton's account of the riots (which eschewed chronology for the site-by-site approach of the tourist's guidebook) was illustrated by Jackson's widely reproduced view of Bristol ablaze seen from Clifton (top centre, fig.54, and fig.70).²⁶⁹ Thus the work of Bristol's artists was used to advance various perspectives on the riots. To all commissioners of these scenes of politically-engaged crowds, the topographical legibility of the landscape was apparently as important as the drama of the spectacle: the symbolism of the places targeted by rioters transformed Bristol into a cipher for a crisis that was national. This amounted to a message that every city had its prosperous and architecturally splendid quarters and places for crowds to gather and that, as such, every city was at risk.

Bristol's political landscape: Queen Square and Brandon Hill

Queen Square, where the riots originated, and Brandon Hill, where, one year later the eventual passing of the Reform Bill was celebrated, were both established and individually distinctive sites for crowd activity in Bristol. As the commercial and administrative hub of the city, the geometric form of Queen Square, built by the Corporation in the modern neoclassical style, was the most potent iteration of rule in the city and unsurprisingly the area subject to the most sustained and devastating attack. Brandon Hill, on the other hand, was an open space on the then-outskirts of the city that had become associated

²⁶⁸ A set of Müller watercolours is bound within a copy of Rev. John Eagles's account of the riots in a private collection.

²⁶⁹ William Somerton, *A Narrative of the Bristol Riots, on the 29th, 30th, and 31st of October, 1831* (Bristol, 1831).

with radicalism after Henry Hunt spoke there in 1816 and subsequently rarely used for mass gatherings of any kind until 1832.²⁷⁰

When Pope wrote scathingly of Bristol that '[n]othing is fine in it but the Square' he was referencing Queen Square, the city's largest, so large as to be boasted of by Somerton, when lamenting its partial destruction, as one of the 'most spacious squares in Europe'.²⁷¹ The expanse of the square and its former grandeur is conveyed in Müller's and Rowbotham's *Riot in Queen Square* (fig.53). Formerly a marsh, the land upon which Queen Square was built had been claimed and drained at the outset of the 1700s in order to meet the spatial demands of an increasing population, specifically an increasingly wealthy mercantile elite, whose fortunes were built on slavery, shipping and Bristol's various industries. The square was part of a wave of construction over the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in which Bristol extended out beyond its medieval city walls. As part of this process, swathes of low quality cottages for the poor were replaced by fashionable neo-classical townhouses and Corporation offices; keen to exploit this new, modern space, the Corporation adopted it as the main site for civic events, giving it a key role in official public life.²⁷² Although, as Harrison notes, only certain crowds were encouraged to gather there, and managed accordingly – as at the Tories' anti-Catholic demonstration of 1829 when opposing parties were segregated and hustings built – as radical politics gathered pace and were excluded from public buildings, the square was appropriated for their purposes, too.²⁷³ A lithograph after a watercolour by Müller draws attention to the statue of William III which graced the centre of the square (fig.55).²⁷⁴ Having secured Protestantism as the national faith, and passed an Act for Religious Tolerance of non-conformists (of whom there were many in Bristol) and the Bill of Rights for greater constitutional liberty, William III was an appropriate icon

²⁷⁰ Mark Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790–1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 142, 149.

²⁷¹ Letter from Alexander Pope to Maria Blount in Bettey, *Bristol Observed*, 69; Somerton, *A Narrative of the Bristol Riots*, 34.

²⁷² Barry, "Bristol Pride," 30.

²⁷³ Harrison, *Crowds and History*, 85.

²⁷⁴ Steve Poole, "To be a Bristolian: Civic Identity and the Social Order, 1750–1850," in *The Making of Modern Bristol* eds., Madge Dresser and Philip Ollerenshaw (Tiverton: Redcliffe Press, 1996), 87.

for anti-Catholic and pro-reform demonstrations.²⁷⁵ Indeed, one rioter appears to toast the statue in Müller's image.

Unlike the landscape views after Pyne and Jackson in which the urban landscape, be it up-close or at a distance, is the prime focus (fig.54), Rowbotham and Müller uniquely show the riot's peopled epicentre. The most dramatic image, and that which was published by Hague in Paris, depicts the progress of the 3rd Dragoon Guards through the crowd, a violent stage in the riot which left four rioters dead and 86 injured (fig.53). Already reminiscent of the Peterloo Massacre (1819), the suicide of commander Colonel Brereton in 1832 would have added further fuel to the raging controversy over the perceived brutality of their actions. In Rowbotham and Müller's image, the figures (by Müller), both rioters and guards, are set in frieze-like arrangement against the blazing half-ruined Custom House and trees tall enough to number amongst those planted there upon completion of the square's building in around 1710. Fine furniture and iron railings from the homes, businesses and the Customs House lie strewn about the square, demonstrating the shattering of boundaries between public and private, and the overturning of decorum by the chaos of the riot. Somerton described seeing 'here and there high tottering walls, at once objects of curiosity and danger' in the aftermath.²⁷⁶ There is an eerie fascination apparent in the atmospheric sketches Müller made of the square as a 'but a half-standing, half-smoking ruin'.²⁷⁷ The reduction of the square to 'a heap of smoking rubbish' signified the end of Bristol's 'Golden Age' both physically and socially as a site once transformed to boost civic pride was now wrecked in an event which also revealed instabilities in the social foundation of the city. Only in the ephemeral reform meetings and demonstrations that took place there did Queen Square represent modern Bristol; its architectural fabric, redolent of mercantile domination and duly destroyed, did not.

²⁷⁵ Poole, "To be a Bristolian," 87.

²⁷⁶ Somerton, *A Narrative of the Bristol Riots*, 34.

²⁷⁷ Somerton, *A Narrative of the Bristol Riots*, 34; see the pencil drawing, *Riot Damage, Queen Square*, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery (Mb1611/029), for example.

Twelve months later the physical state of the square – half ruined, half standing – could be seen to reflect the limbo of the political climate and was thus a symbolic site for elections to take place, as depicted in the second of Müller and Rowbotham's lithographs, *The First Reform Election in Queen Square* (fig.56). Most prominent in the view, taken from the west side of the square, is the repetitive geometry of houses on the opposite side. Seemingly immaculate and intact, they give no clue as to the previous year's event. Yet as the eye moves through the crowd and its more unruly members in the centre and foreground, the ghosts of the square's other half become apparent: on the right, a solitary column from the Customs House, and in the foreground, either side of a drainage channel, rubble lies scattered. In the general election of December 1832 a Tory and a Whig candidate were returned, the Whig vote having been split between pro-slavery James Baillie, who won the second seat, and abolitionist Edward Protheroe. Celebrating the acquisition of pole position for pro-slavery, anti-reform Tory Richard Vyvyan, *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* believed the setting of the election in the devastated square had aided his victory, the devastated square a symbol of the ills of reformism.²⁷⁸ A display of illuminations was held to mark the election, a celebratory spectacle that was denied to reformers upon the passing of the Reform Act earlier in the year on account of their being 'likely to provoke outrages and disturbance'.²⁷⁹

An ever-present anxiety thus pervaded politically motivated crowd events in the years after 1831. Together with the first two lithographs in the series, *Riot in Queen Square* and *The First Reform Election*, the third, *The Grand Reform Dinner on Brandon Hill* (fig.57) displays Müller and Rowbotham's effectiveness in suggesting movement and noise. It contributes to a lineage of politically-engaged crowd scenes that can be traced from Hogarth's *Four Prints of an Election* (1758; Tate) through to other regional scenes of the reform era, including Turner's *The Northampton Election, 6 December 1830* (Tate; T12321) and Benjamin Robert Haydon's *Meeting of the Birmingham Political Union, Newhall Hill* of c.1832 (Birmingham Museum and Art

²⁷⁸ *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 15 Dec 1832.

²⁷⁹ Caple, *The Bristol Riots*, 128; *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 20 June 1832.

Gallery; 1937P370). The presentation of Bristol's political landscape in the first two scenes accentuates the tension: Queen Square is depicted as an enclosed theatre set, replete with angular geometry and animated by a dense crowd, where violence – or the potential for it – is rife. Enclosed on four sides, Queen Square was a formal manifestation of Bristol's impenetrable, corrupt local government that was – though its devastation – opened up to reveal the city's broken social relations and, subsequently, made an icon of the reform crisis.

Reformers were all too aware of the damaging association between the ruins of Queen Square and their cause but Brandon Hill, open land granted in perpetuity to the people of Bristol in the 1500s, was similarly tainted. 'Mob orator' Henry Hunt had appeared there in 1816, and, after the riots, it was imagined in a poem entitled 'Satan – Reformer' published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, as the vantage point from which the devil admired his work:

Satan stood high upon Brandon Hill,
With his fiery eyeballs glowing;
He bang'd the ground with his swinging tail,
And the Demons came round him, and cried, All hail!
See, see how Reform is going!²⁸⁰

The reformers had been denied access to Durdham Down, probably on account of its proximity to Clifton, where many of the Corporation lived but, as Müller and Rowbotham's print shows, Brandon Hill offered a vantage point over many of the city's most important landmarks and was, moreover, an open space with an expansive, unobstructed view – a setting that formally echoed the principles of the celebration to be held there. This is the only lithograph of the set that makes reference to the wider Bristol landscape, echoing Samuel and Nathaniel Buck's *North West Prospect of the City of Bristol*, circulated in print almost one hundred years previous, in 1734 (fig.58). Here, potentially, the newly laid-out Queen Square is visible beyond

²⁸⁰ "Satan—Reformer," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 31, no. 193 (April 1832), 597.

College Green, sandwiched between the Cathedral and St Mary Redcliffe. But if the Bucks presented Bristol as its authorities might wish it to be seen – as an ancient, prosperous and pleasant city, enveloped by rolling hills and serviced by the Avon – in Müller and Rowbotham’s view, it is not church spires and ships’ masts that pierce the skyline but rather the banners of triumphant reformists. Queen Square is visible here, too, but, like the rest of the city, is now subordinate to the reform celebration. It has been suggested that this image, complete with the drunk, unruly attendees who broke the barricades to join the dinner, deliberately played to Tory fears that reform would usher in mob rule and overturn social structure, prospects equated to the return of the devil.²⁸¹ Eventually, in 1839, the decision was made to gentrify Brandon Hill by the laying out of walks and gardens, an act of reclamation that imposed order and introduced obstacles to deter the assembly of crowds.

It is possible that Eagles, a keen poet, wrote the verse description of Satan in Bristol; he was certainly responsible for letters published in *Blackwood’s* supposedly written from Satan to the Whigs.²⁸² For Eagles, who was born in Bristol and had been curate at St Nicholas’s Church until his move to Devon in 1822, the mob had proven their demonic credentials by their attack on Bishop Grey – who, like Bishop Law of Bath, had voted against reform – and the Bishop’s Palace, perceived symbols of continuing Corporate dominance and opposition to reform. As described previously in relation to Salisbury, the case against the clergy, and specifically the Bishops, whose legislative function rendered them doubly corrupt, had been mounting throughout the 1820s. In February 1831, months before the riots, *The Extraordinary Black Book*, a compendium of church abuses begun by journalist John Wade in 1820, was reissued.²⁸³ If this had fanned the flames of debate, Bristol’s rioters

²⁸¹ Steve Poole, “Picture in Focus: W.J. Müller and T.L.S. Rowbotham: The Grand Reform Dinner on Brandon Hill (lithograph, 1832),” *Regional Historian*, issue 7 (Summer 2001), accessed online 20 August 2017, <http://www2.uwe.ac.uk/faculties/CAHE/Documents/Research/Regional-history/RH7Poole.pdf>.

²⁸² John Eagles, “The Art of Government Made Easy: A Discovery of the Only True Principle, in a Letter from Satan to the Whigs,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 31, no. 193 (April 1832), 665–72.

²⁸³ John Wade, *The Extraordinary Black Book: an exposition of the United Church of England and Ireland: civil list and crown revenues* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1831).

used physical flames to reduce the Bishop's Palace to a 'most ruinous appearance', nothing but 'bare walls and...smoking ruins', its yard 'strewn with broken bottles'.²⁸⁴ Müller affords the viewer the safety of distance in his view of the building ablaze (fig.59), yet this distance also serves to set the pyre in context, revealing its proximity to celebrated features of Bristol's highly renowned portfolio of antiquarian buildings. The cathedral, at the centre, is illuminated as never before, and to its right amongst the spires are St Augustine's (now demolished) and a triangular outline that is possibly the beginnings of St Nicholas's church. The association between Müller and Eagles may account for the inclusion (or movement to a more prominent place) of these particular landmarks: Eagles was baptised in St Augustine's and took up his first curate position at St Nicholas's.

As Caple has asserted, the specificity of reformers' grievances with bishops rendered the city's parish churches relatively safe from attack.²⁸⁵ This would not have diminished the perception of threat to these religious buildings, however, which the smoke-refracted illumination of nearby spires in Müller's image captures. The proximity of the disturbances to another of the city's landmarks, arguably its most recognisable and celebrated antiquarian feature, is seen in another of Müller's oil sketches, *Bristol Riots: The Burning of Toll Houses on Prince Street Bridge with St Mary Redcliffe* (fig.50). Built in the fourteenth century, St Mary Redcliffe functioned in landscape depictions as a beacon of Bristol's centuries-old city status, its wealth and its architectural splendour. Queen Elizabeth's reference to it as 'the fairest, goodliest and most famous Parish church', as well as claims for its stature – once the largest Parish church in Britain and Bristol's tallest building, even once the upper part of its spire was destroyed by lightning in 1446 – were integral to the city's identity as a long-established place of importance.²⁸⁶ The church's interior was adorned with trophies of Bristol's heroes: a whale rib supposedly presented by fifteenth-century explorer Giovanni Caboto (John Cabot) who launched journeys from Bristol, monuments to past mayors and relics of poet Chatterton. Unknowing of the threat to the building that lay only three years

²⁸⁴ *Bristol Mirror*, 5 November 1831.

²⁸⁵ Caple, *The Bristol Riots*, 145–6.

²⁸⁶ Evans, *The New Guide*, 21.

ahead, Evans's *New Guide, or Picture of Bristol* declared in 1828 that

‘when the interesting fabric has mouldered into ruins, even [the monuments to Rowley, Canynge and Chatterton] will be trodden with veneration, as sacred to the recollection of genius’.²⁸⁷

Not only a totem of civic pride, it was also a life source for the parish, being the point of water supply but courted controversy in March 1831 for setting a Parish rate without consultation that was designed to raise money for political ends.²⁸⁸ This was therefore a building with more than just religious associations: being intimately linked with the city's urban development, natural resource infrastructure, its maritime economy, and functioning as an icon for the city's role in the literary life of Britain, this was the topographer's Holy Grail.

St Mary Redcliffe and the antiquarian landscape of the 1830s

In his production of a dedicated volume on St Mary Redcliffe and numerous others that included passages on the church, Britton was heavily responsible for the building's presentation in topographical literature. He would also be responsible for its physical reshaping, too. Chatterton, according to Britton, was to be celebrated for having inscribed the church's name ‘in the annals of poetry and of critical literature’ and thus invited a wider scope of attention upon a building that ‘had long attracted the admiration of the antiquary, and artist, and...every person of taste and science’.²⁸⁹ Chatterton (1752–1770) is highly prominent in Britton's narrative: the history published by the topographer in 1813 contained a life of the poet and was prefaced by ‘Lines on Redcliffe Church, by Thomas Chatterton’ printed in an antiquated typeface that lends an air of authenticity to the poem's medievalising language.

²⁸⁷ Evans, *The New Guide*, 22.

²⁸⁸ *Bristol Mirror*, 5 March 1831.

²⁸⁹ John Britton, *Restoration of the Church of Saint Mary, Redcliffe ... An Appeal by the Vicar, Church-Wardens, and Vestry; with an Abstract of Reports by Messrs. Britton and Hosking, and Engraved Plan and Views of the Church* (Bristol, 1842), v.

Britton was writing on the back of an upsurge in Chatterton's reputation. It had been forty years since his death under a cloud of controversy generated by his dissemination of transcripts and fabricated manuscripts he feigned as works by monk Thomas Rowley (c.1400–70) that had been salvaged by his late father, an amateur antiquarian and writing master at St Mary Redcliffe school, from the church's waste paper pile and mouldering crypt. Chatterton's notoriety grew before his suicide, thought to be accidental, invited shame upon his name. Barrett – with whom the poet had shared the so-called transcripts – had published them as 'manuscripts of Rowley' in what was the first modern historical account of the city, thereby writing them in to the city's story.²⁹⁰ A decade later, Southey, who later remarked 'how worthless a book Barrett's is everybody knows', and his Bristol-based publisher, Joseph Cottle, embarked on a project to repair Chatterton's reputation, producing an anthology that raised funds for his family.²⁹¹ If critics remembered only Chatterton's deception, the emergent circle of Romantic poets – particularly those with strong West Country connections like Southey and Devonian Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) – saw only his talent. In typically sardonic fashion, Coleridge had mused upon the potential of Chatterton to be an omen for his 1795 marriage in St Mary Redcliffe to a woman with whom he was not in love.²⁹² The case of Chatterton embedded yet another instance of discrepancy between image and reality in Bristol.

Southey perceived the establishment's rejection of Chatterton's genius as being aligned to his lowly, 'non-gentleman' status. This stigma of social rank was something that both Southey and Britton had themselves laboured against and their correspondence reveals further common ground in the topographical

²⁹⁰ William Barrett *et. al.*, *The History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol compiled from Original Records and authentic Manuscripts, in public offices or private Hands; illustrated with Copper-Plate Prints* (Bristol: William Pine, 1789), vii.

²⁹¹ Robert Southey to Joseph Cottle, 16 December 1804, in *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey. Part three, 1804–1809*, eds. Carol Bolton and Tim Fulford, Romantic Circles, University of Maryland website, accessed 30 Aug. 2017, http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Three/index.html; Geoffrey Carnall, "Robert Southey, (1774–1843), poet and reviewer," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed 30 Aug. 2017, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26056>.

²⁹² Neil Vickers, "Coleridge's Marriage and Family," in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 73.

study of Bristol. Southey had used *Beauties of England and Wales*, co-authored by Britton with Brayley when writing his *Letters from England* (1807). He referenced ‘Brittons book’ [sic] as a model in an animated letter to Cottle recommending his friend publish an anecdotal history of Bristol, as distinct from dry, fact-reeling accounts, that would focus on changes to the landscape and should contain ‘plenty of prints, views of the city & in the city’.²⁹³ Despite his great interest in the topography of his native city, when responding to Britton’s request for information on St Mary Redcliffe, Southey declared ‘I have only looked at it to admire it, – never as an antiquarian’.²⁹⁴

Britton looked at St Mary Redcliffe as an antiquarian but also as an architect, reflecting and celebrating its history while critiquing its material properties and projecting visions of ways to ‘reveal its true architectural character’.²⁹⁵ One such scheme saw him design a monument to Chatterton (fig.60) that gave physical form to the poet’s association with the church in an architectural register, the neo-Gothic, that was itself a fitting stylistic appropriation of the kind upon which its subject’s fame was founded. Britton’s design for the Chatterton monument may not have been chosen but another and far more ambitious scheme, to realise the spire of St Mary Redcliffe to its full height, was implemented.²⁹⁶ As it stood, St Mary Redcliffe’s spire was truncated at the lower band seen clearly in the image he published in *Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities*, 1836 (fig.61). Britton stated that his projection of its extension countered the suggestion made in 1834 by the locally-born antiquary and gothic specialist, Rev. James Dallaway (1763–1834), that a lantern spire like that seen at Boston, Lincolnshire, complete the

²⁹³ Robert Southey to Joseph Cottle, 16 December 1804, in *Collected Letters. Part three, 1804–1809*, eds. Bolton and Fulford, website, accessed 30 Aug. 2017, http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Three/index.html.

²⁹⁴ Robert Southey to John Britton, 4 November 1810, in *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey. Part four, 1810–1815*, eds. Ian Packer and Lynda Pratt, Romantic Circles, University of Maryland website, accessed 30 Aug. 2017, http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_Four/index.html.

²⁹⁵ John Britton, *The History and Antiquities of the Abbey, and Cathedral Church of Bristol: Illustrated by a Series of Engravings of Views, Elevations, Plans, and Details of That Edifice; with Biographical Anecdotes of Eminent Persons Connected with the Establishment* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1830), 46–47.

²⁹⁶ A design that included a statue of Chatterton by Bristol architect S.C. Fripp was chosen and erected in 1838 (it has since been destroyed).

tower.²⁹⁷ Britton claimed his own suggestion to be ‘in accordance with the original design’ (his lack of reference to a source means this is likely based on his own expertise), admitting an aesthetic ‘preference’ for the appearance of a spire ‘as a distant feature of the city’, a notion perhaps heavily influenced by the impact from afar of that adorning Salisbury Cathedral (a building which had been a consistent focus of Britton’s topographical research).²⁹⁸ Britton claimed St Mary Redcliffe to be as equally eminent as Salisbury, and therefore deserving of work to bring it to its full potential. Work began in 1872 to renovate the church and erect the spire, giving Britton a physical legacy in the antiquarian landscape and celebrated skyline of ‘glittering spires and pinnacles’ that he had done so much to promote.

Britton produced numerous texts dedicated to Bristol. As he stated in his 1829 comparative study of the city with Bath, the latter did ‘not contain much amongst its buildings to attract the attention of the architectural antiquary’.²⁹⁹ Bath was ‘elegant’, dominated by houses built in the last half-century, its economy one of tourism and hospitality, its society transient and ‘devoted to pleasure and amusements’. Bristol, meanwhile, was

‘an active, busy port...its river and docks crowded with trading vessels, its streets narrow, and the houses consisting of all sorts of materials – timber, plaster, brick, stone, &c.’³⁰⁰

Here was a place that Britton could flex his topographical muscles and feed his interest in urban ecosystems, architectural variety and the effects of time on place. Bristol comes across as the more visually stimulating environment in the images, too. Whereas buildings in Bath were presented mainly in front elevation, to the exclusion of the surrounding streetscape, those in Bristol, on

²⁹⁷ Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities* (London: M. A. Nattali, 1836), 77.

²⁹⁸ Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities*, 77.

²⁹⁹ Britton, *Cathedral Church of Bristol*, iv; Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities*, 80.

³⁰⁰ John Britton, *Bath and Bristol, with the Counties of Somerset and Gloucester. Displayed in a Series of Views; including the Modern Improvements, Picturesque Scenery, Antiquities, &c., from original drawings by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd* (London: Jones and Company, 1829), 5, 6.

the whole, are pictured obliquely, offering enhanced visual access to the landscape context around, whether in views that extend wider or deeper in space or through a greater emphasis on detail (as in the view of St Mary Redcliffe in this volume).

Describing the view onto St Mary Redcliffe from a distance, Britton used the metaphor of a woman ‘dressed in light and flowing drapery’ ‘accidentally surrounded, and incommenced by a motley group of the rabble’, a characterisation perhaps not meant to conjure memories of the riots but instead intended to address the church’s immediate neighbours, the factories, warehouses and crowd of ‘colliers, sandmen, sledges, sailors, asses and carts’.³⁰¹ The vision of St Mary Redcliffe’s spire Britton published in *Picturesque Antiquities* is thus a heavily sanitised one: the thick fumes from William Watts’s nearby shot tower and other nearby chimneys and glass furnaces that drifted so close to the spire seen in Bartlett’s prospect of the city from the south-west (fig.62) are here edited out, in synchrony with the idealising and descriptive purpose of the design. Nearly thirty years earlier John Sell Cotman depicted St Mary Redcliffe through the lens of the industrial sublime (fig.63). Utilising a low angle, the height of the church is accentuated and elevated above the trappings of industry that surround it; rather than serving to wholly divorce the antique and the modern – or God and Mammon – Cotman unifies them through a highly gradated scheme of washes laid down with a harmonising breadth of touch. His watercolour manages to illustrate the dynamic combination of architectural antiquities, shipping and heavy industries that hallmarked Bristol’s urban identity while at the same time dramatizing their juxtaposition, an approach that succeeds in presenting a far more tangible sense of the atmosphere that enveloped St Mary Redcliffe.

Cotman, and the Norwich school of artists with which he was associated, appear to have had an important bearing on the direction in which Bristol’s artists, particularly Müller, took its image in the 1830s. The beginning of the

³⁰¹ John Britton, *An Historical and Architectural Essay Relating to Redcliffe Church, Bristol: Illustrated with Plans, Views, and Architectural Details. Including an Account of the Monuments, and Anecdotes of the Eminent Persons Interred within Its Walls. Also, an Essay on the Life and Character of Thomas Chatterton* (London: Longman & Co., 1813), 15.

decade saw the arrival in Bristol of a vast and varied collection of Cotman's work, ranging from watercolours to oil paintings, in the possession of the new curate of St Mary Redcliffe, the Reverend James Bulwer.³⁰² Norwich-born Bulwer had been a pupil of Cotman and, after the riots, awarded Müller a commission to produce a series of images documenting Bristol's antiquarian landscape as impacted by the riots. Whether or not the brief was to complement Bulwer's Cotman portfolio, Müller – no doubt keen to expand his range of artistic references – certainly appears to have been inspired: there is a strong compositional synergy with Cotman's work in *Ruins of the Chapel in the Bishop's Palace* while the group as a whole display the same earthy, muted colouring and use of thick bodycolour with scratching out that defined Cotman's later technique (figs.64–66). Müller's drawings function almost as architectural salvage, emanating a curious melancholy in their combination of contemporary reportage and yearning for the clearer defined societal structure of past times that Gothic architecture – seen here in ruins – had come to represent for some.³⁰³

Bulwer may have also played a role in the development of the major project to depict Bristol's medieval architecture, Prout's *Picturesque Antiquities of Bristol*, which also channelled a Cotmanesque aesthetic. According to Müller's biographer this was a joint conception between the two young artists and it, too, contained a depiction of the Bishop's Palace in ruins (fig.67). Müller may even be the figure sketching, a feature that places the image within a self-referential tradition of specifically antiquarian draughtsmanship, being employed by Cotman as well as Piranesi, French painter 'Robert des Ruines', Hubert Robert and Turner too. While this might aid the viewing of the ruins as a purely aesthetic spectacle, objectified for close study and the practice of sketching, the ability of this image to trigger standard associations of Gothic ruin imagery – of conflicts past, and lessons for the present, of the

³⁰² C.F. Bell, *John Sell Cotman: The Bulwer Collection* (London: Walker's Galleries, 1926), 5.

³⁰³ Marcus Waithe, "Lines, Landscape and Anti-Modernism: Understanding Victorian opposition to the Railways," in *Brunel: In Love with the Impossible*, eds. Andrew Kelly and Melanie Kelly (Bristol: Cultural Development Partnership, 2006), 286.

hubris of human endeavour – is ruptured by the addition of the title that denotes it a modern act of ruination.

This, however, is the only image in which the landscape bears the imprint of modernity. Prout's project, like Britton's design for St Mary Redcliffe, edited out 'the rabble' and was articulated around a series of street views and frontal elevations that advanced the city's antiquarian profile but also, in the context of contemporary threats to the city's historic fabric, recorded and memorialised them. This played to the taste and, arguably, political leanings of the city's antiquarian collectors who, in the context of the city's anxiety-inducing present – characterised by political reform and the end of slavery in British Colonies and signs of economic decline – would value its focus on less troubling 'olden times'. In January 1834, the year Prout's volume was published, the *Bristol Gazette* opined

'[c]an we fully and honestly say that we are proud of her situation in the scale of British cities? Alas! the answer must be negative. As compared with herself at former periods she may not have retrograded but not to advance is to recede, and how fearfully she has been past [sic] by Liverpool and other places'.³⁰⁴

Statistical analysis bears out the sense of decline mooted here: in 1801, Bristol was the fifth most prosperous city; by 1841 it had slipped to sixth place, having been overtaken by Leeds.³⁰⁵ On the surface, Prout's volume presented an aspect of Bristol's identity of which its citizens could have pride, and, as its advertisement suggested, could 'engross' themselves.

Its striking avoidance of the modern was one such way in which the volume offered escapism. Its resurrection of demolished buildings was another, exemplified by *Old House in Baldwyn Street* (fig.68), which, as its inscription denotes, is based on a drawing by Hugh O'Neill in Braikenridge's collection. A similar kind of reverse projection would appear in Britton's *Picturesque*

³⁰⁴ *Bristol Gazette*, 2 January 1834.

³⁰⁵ Harrison, *Crowds and History*, 61.

Antiquities, which contained a woodcut projecting a retrospective view of a historic structure, Temple Gate, removed in 1785 to facilitate the flow of traffic.³⁰⁶ According to Prout's advertisement, 'Artists go where no general observer would think of going' – as well as the past, this included less salubrious areas of the city than those in which its consumers lived. Gathering sketches for the project, Prout and Müller were apparently 'pelted with stones' in 'areas of poverty'; as Bristol's metamorphosis into a modern city took shape, its medieval quarters saw a dramatic fall in the number of affluent residents, who removed themselves to the city's extremes. The retirement to Brislington of Braikenridge, to whom the volume is dedicated, exemplifies this trend. By placing a picturesque filter upon downtrodden areas of the city that its more affluent citizens (those who consumed antiquarian imagery) would not frequent, Prout was offering a potent combination of nostalgia and domestic armchair tourism through streets that, aided by Prout's filling of the picture plane with his subjects to the exclusion of their context, filtered out the harsher social, economic and atmospheric realities of life in Bristol. The cumulative effect is one of fragmentation and distortion.

Prout's credibility as an antiquarian draughtsman was given weight by his place of residence—the advertisement describes him as an 'eminent Professor of Clifton'.³⁰⁷ Few of Bristol's artists lived in the genteel suburb of Clifton: the only others to claim an address here in 1834 were Samuel Jackson, who was by then the city's leading artist, and William West, of the observatory.³⁰⁸ Clifton had developed separately from Bristol as a town in its own right from the end of the eighteenth century during what has been termed the city's 'urban renaissance'.³⁰⁹ Its position on the edge of the city, skirted by downland and the wooded slopes and of the Avon Gorge made it an attractive place for wealthier citizens in search of fresher air and greener spaces to retire to, its development effecting a gradual shift uphill of the locus of wealthy

³⁰⁶ Britton, *Picturesque Antiquities of the English Cities*, 79.

³⁰⁷ *Taunton Courier, and Western Advertiser*, 5 November 1834.

³⁰⁸ *Mathews's Annual Bristol Directory and Commercial List; being an entire classification of professions and trades, with a list of the new Municipal Corporation...for 1834* (Bristol: M. Mathews & Son, 1834), 188.

³⁰⁹ Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, c.1660–1770* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 315.

residential properties. By 1837, when Müller painted his view over the rooftops of Clifton down on to the city, Bristol's urban morphology from a medieval to modern industrial city was complete, as the wealthy moved out of town.³¹⁰ In 1801 Clifton contained a fluctuating 4,457 inhabitants to Bristol's 40,814,³¹¹ its population of 'people of fashion and fortune' supplemented in the summer months by 'a great influx of nobility and gentry' who 'circulate cash, enliven and embellish the town'.³¹²

The distinction between the two urban clusters—one becoming gradually more commercialised, the other strengthening its pull as a social and residential hub for the new middle class and traditional mercantile oligarchy—was, until 1835, manifest in their separate jurisdiction. The manor of Clifton was owned by the most prestigious and wealthy of Bristol's social circles, the Society of Merchant Venturers, until the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act re-established the Bristol Corporation on a more democratic model and brought Clifton within the significant extension to the city's bounds (fig.69). It was still common for guide books, however, to distinguish between the Bristol and Clifton as distinct entities, with 'Clifton' often named in titles as an additional focus of coverage.³¹³ Socially and economically the city and its semi-rural suburb worked symbiotically, however, one the 'urbs antiqua', the centre of business, the other celebrated as a place

'[w]here noble Art and glorious Nature meet...
To form Wealth's most magnificent retreat'.³¹⁴

³¹⁰ Spencer Jordan, Peter Wardley and Matthew Woollard, "Emerging modernity in an urban setting: nineteenth-century Bristol revealed in property surveys," *Urban History*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1999), 200.

³¹¹ John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth Century* (Bristol: W. & F. Morgan, 1887), 10.

³¹² Joseph Mathews, *The Bristol Guide; being a complete ancient and modern history of the city of Bristol of that Opulent Provincial Metropolis, with Its Suburbs Clifton and the Hotwells*, 5th edition (Bristol: J. Mathews, 1819), 208.

³¹³ For example: John Morgan, *A Brief Historical Sketch of Bristol, with the New Picture of Clifton, and Strangers' Guide: Containing Topographical, Antiquarian and Biographical Notices, Together with a Descriptive Account of the Delightful Promenades, Rides and Drives in Clifton and Its Environs, including a Circuit of Fifteen Miles round the City* (Bristol: H. & A. Hill, 1849).

³¹⁴ John Draper, *Somerset, with the Severn Sea: A Poem, with Historical and Miscellaneous Notes* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1867), 8.

It was to Clifton that many middle and upper class residents of the city did indeed ‘retreat’ during the riots. A letter reprinted in the provincial press gave an account of the riots that described ‘the awful red glare of the hemisphere’ and his ‘having some consolation from the safety of our family at Clifton’.³¹⁵ Yet during the riots the ‘safe’ area yielded many volunteers in response to the call for special constables. These men were subsequently celebrated as protectors of the city’s cultural heritage. Clifton resident Eagles writes of ‘Mr Burroughs, of Clifton, and other spirited gentlemen’, saving ‘extremely valuable’ items such as portraits by Van Dyck, Thomas Lawrence and another of George III by Bristol artist Edward Bird.³¹⁶ Madame Tussaud’s waxes, on display in the Assembly Rooms, were also saved from potential destruction by removal, although the house in which she and her family had been staying was torched.³¹⁷ There on business connected with his commission to design the new bridge across the Avon Gorge, Brunel was staying in Clifton the evening the riots broke out; his involvement in the events that October cemented his place amongst the Bristol elite. Having signed up as a special constable with Alderman Hillhouse and Nicholas Roche, a Tory merchant who was on the judging committee for the bridge competition, the aspiring engineer is said to have rescued pictures and a plate from looting at the Customs House and arrested a looter.³¹⁸ His profile was further raised when he came forward with evidence at the London trial of Mayor Pinney, reporting on the behaviour of the crowd attacking the Bishop’s Palace.³¹⁹ Clifton’s political profile was visually expressed during the celebrations of the election of May 1832, when, by comparison to the many areas of Bristol that displayed illuminations, Clifton remained dark, apparently ‘in mourning for Davis’, the Tory candidate, as one resident reported.³²⁰ Similarly, in 1839, a statue was erected there of Sir Charles Wetherall, the city Recorder whose refusal to acknowledge Bristol’s reform campaign in Parliament led to the riots.

³¹⁵ *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Advertiser* [Dublin], 4 November 1831.

³¹⁶ John Eagles, *The Bristol Riots, Their Causes, Progress, and Consequences. By a Citizen [John Eagles]* (Bristol: Gutch & Martin, 1832), 127.

³¹⁷ Somerton, *Narrative of the Bristol Riots*, 32.

³¹⁸ Annabel Gillings, *Brunel* (London: Haus Publishing, 2006), 44.

³¹⁹ Caple, *The Bristol Riots*, 158.

³²⁰ Interview from *Bristol Mirror*, 3 May 1832, in Caple, *The Bristol Riots*, 128.

Published four years after the riots, *Clifton: a Poem* by ‘A Resident Gentleman’, remembered how

‘It seem’d to those from hence who gaz’d
As if a captur’d city blazed’.³²¹

Alongside the activity in Queen Square, it was this distant view of Bristol ablaze, the view of the city’s most elite residents, which was most often reproduced. Perhaps more than any other image of the riots Samuel Jackson’s widely circulated print (fig.70), powerfully conveying the extent of the fire and the ‘awful red glare’, emblematises the jolt to Bristol’s civic image that the riots delivered. It was to Brunel that the city turned for help with its repair.

Clifton, Brunel and the re-configuration of Bristol’s urban landscape

Although not enacted by the violence of political protest, Clifton’s urban landscape had only just, by 1831, rid itself of ruins. Seeking to exploit the marketability of Clifton’s commutable distance from the city and its position of cliff-top surveillance, virtues that served to comfort and empower its residents, the Society of Merchant Venturers embarked on an ambitious building campaign in the 1780s and 90s. The grand terraces, which included the longest crescent in Europe (Royal York Crescent), were left unfinished, however, as the onset of war brought financial pressure and the cessation of Clifton’s development. Protests against the building of houses for the army by the government there, which would be ‘ruinous to the fame of Clifton as a watering-place’, left yet more houses in a desolate state.³²² A newspaper report of October 1805 optimistically opined that ‘we should not be surprised if, in a very few years, the present ruinous piles of unfinished houses were to offer a lucrative speculation to the builder’³²³ while three years later Southey observed of Clifton, ‘once the most beautiful village in England’ that ‘here too, as well as at Bath, is the dismal sight of streets and crescents which have

³²¹ A Resident Gentleman, *Clifton: A Poem* (Bristol: J. Chilcott, 1835), 51–52.

³²² Latimer, *Annals of Bristol*, 10.

³²³ Latimer, *Annals of Bristol*, 10.

never been finished, the most dolorous of all ruins'.³²⁴ The town was still faltering in 1824 when Braikenridge deemed it 'little less than a bankrupt speculation to which much of the peculiar beauty of the place has been unnecessarily sacrificed'.³²⁵

Although politically Clifton may have sided with the view proffered by Eagles in his 1832 account of the riots, that 'Those are their best friends who fear innovation', the physical shape of the landscape and its identity on the national stage would be defined primarily by innovation from 1831, as Clifton achieved a revival of interest propelled by Brunel's suspension bridge.³²⁶ The prospect of a bridge across the Avon Gorge had been raised in the 1750s, when wine merchant William Vick bequeathed £1000 to be invested and, when sufficiently grown, used for the creation of a stone bridge intended to ease congestion on the Bristol Bridge. After years of war and financial instability (including the crash of Bristol's banks in 1825) a competition for designs was finally announced in 1829. Sullied by Thomas Telford's behaviour, who, although commissioned to judge entries refused to select any but his own, a second competition in 1831 named Brunel winner with a design deemed by the *Bristol Mercury* 'admirably adapted to the beautiful scenery of the enchanting spot, to which it is destined to add new charms'.³²⁷ Brunel had employed Clifton resident Jackson,³²⁸ in his capacity as the city's leading topographical draughtsman, to execute drawings of his designs for the competition and likely also the view of the winning design, or, as Brunel referred to it, '[t]he Egyptian thing' (fig.71).³²⁹

The Egyptian aesthetic, expressed through angular, tapered towers topped by sphinxes, popularised by Grand Tourists, had also been the reference in

³²⁴ Southey, *Letters from England*, 1808, in Greenacre and Stoddard, *Bristol Landscape*, 10.

³²⁵ Greenacre and Stoddard, *Bristol Landscape*, 36.

³²⁶ [Eagles], *The Bristol Riots*, 184.

³²⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 21 June 1831.

³²⁸ Jackson's address is listed as 3 Freeland Place, Clifton, and his trade 'drawing', in *Mathews's Annual Bristol Directory and Commercial List; Being an Entire Classification of Professions and Trades, with a List of the New Municipal Corporation ... for 1836*, 38th edition (Bristol: M. Mathews and Son, 1836), 192.

³²⁹ Letter from Brunel to Benjamin Hawes, 27 March 1831, quoted in Colin Maggs, *Isambard Kingdom Brunel: The Life of an Engineering Genius* (Stroud: Amberley Press, 2016), 126.

another feat of engineering, the Chain Pier at Brighton, which opened in 1823. Previous opportunities for Bristolians to observe fantastical Egyptian architecture had come when John Martin toured his *Belshazzar's Feast* there in 1825; there was also a 'fine mummy' on display in the Bristol Institution.³³⁰ The introduction of a feature that would inspire onlookers to connect Bristol with Egyptian civilisation, known for its innovation, power and opulence was likely an attractive concept to ambitious townsmen on the judging committee, an apt antique reference for a project that would render 'the ancient city of Bristol', 'already distinguished among the cities of the empire, yet more renowned'.³³¹

The profusion of references to 'the ancient city of Bristol' in guidebooks and in rhetoric surrounding the modern bridge galvanised local pride and catalysed the dramatic process of urban morphology from medieval to modern city observed for the period to 1837.³³² As expressed in a review by a London critic of Pyne's *Clifton, near Bristol*, shown at the Society of British Artists in 1833, '[t]he scenery of Clifton is well known to the lovers of the picturesque'.³³³ Clifton's picturesque viewing credentials were strengthened by West's aforementioned transformation of its windmill to house a telescope and a camera obscura (fig.48). In *The New Bristol Guide* of 1842 West advertised the range of optical equipment for use 'by day or night' 'for astronomical purposes, and for viewing the extensive and beautiful scenery by which the Observatory is surrounded', as well as the 'magic effect' of the camera obscura. This took in

'[t]he entire of the varied scenery within the range of the summit of the Observatory, including figures, and animals in motion, carriages, the waving of foliage, ships and packets arriving and departing, being brought in succession into the picture with the distinctness and vivid colouring of nature, and affording a high gratification to the observer

³³⁰ Greenacre and Stoddard, *Bristol Landscape*, 48; Mathews, *The Bristol Guide*, 7th edition, 174.

³³¹ Speech of Sir Abraham Elton, Bart., as reported in *Bristol Mercury*, 21 June 1831.

³³² See Jordan, Wardley and Woollard, "Emerging modernity".

³³³ *Morning Post*, 13 April 1833.

from the continued changes and varied effects of light and shade upon the landscape'.³³⁴

In 1837 visitors to the observatory would be able to view the Avon Gorge from a position within the cliff face following West's excavation of Giant's Cave and tunnel construction. West sold his own drawings of the views from his tower to visitors, cementing the recognisability of the view from this position above the city. Clifton's identity as a place of leisurely picturesque gazing would be enhanced by the new prospect onto and from the bridge, and, additionally from 1849, the laying of pathways and planting of trees on Clifton and Durdham Downs, areas used until the 1830s for the grazing of sheep and quarrying.³³⁵

The addition of the bridge, which would become 'the ornament of Bristol and the wonder of the age',³³⁶ implicated the area in a newer, more modern strain of picturesque culture, that of industrial tourism. The fame of other such 'wonders' as Brighton's Chain Pier had rested on the proliferation of souvenir images and Brunel's own image as a celebrated engineer had profited by association with his father's Thames Tunnel, as depicted on prints, medallions, handkerchiefs, and three-dimensional peepshows.³³⁷ In Bristol the appreciation of improvements and industrial additions had been engendered by Braikenridge's topographical campaign, much of it carried out by Jackson, and remarks such as that by the Reverend John Evans, in his *New Guide, or Picture of Bristol*, that the new road between Bath and Clifton afforded a view of 'the new navigation, the two iron bridges and Bathurst and Cumberland

³³⁴ *The New Bristol Guide; Embellished with Lander's ... Electoral and District Map of the City and County of Bristol...Being a Complete Directory and Railway Guide for the City of Bristol, Clifton, and Their Vicinities* (Bristol: Philip & Evans; London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1842), unpaginated.

³³⁵ Jackson's watercolour, *The Avon Gorge from Near Clifton Observatory*, c.1845 (V&A), shows the growth of trees. Francis Greenacre and Sheena Stoddard, *The Bristol Landscape: the Watercolours of Samuel Jackson 1794–1869* (Bristol: City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, 1986), 44.

³³⁶ Speech of Sir Abraham Elton, Bart., as reported in *Bristol Mercury*, 21 June 1831.

³³⁷ Christine MacLeod, "The Nineteenth-Century Engineer as Cultural Hero," in *Brunel: in Love with the Impossible*, eds. Andrew Kelly and Melanie Kelly (Bristol: Bristol Cultural Development Partnership, 2006), 62.

Basins...as will not fail to give additional interest to the ride'.³³⁸ In images that proliferated of the bridge, therefore, its Egyptian styling (which was later downgraded through lack of finance) was of secondary concern to the immediate splendour of its primary structural form, its elegance, and the magnificence of its situation, spanning the 700 foot Avon Gorge. In his speech celebrating Brunel's triumph in the competition, Sir Abraham Elton emphasised the future reality of the seemingly fantastical project by analogy with the Bristol Romantic poets - being 'the realisation of more than the fiction of the imagination', it would surpass even their achievements. Jackson's watercolours of the proposed bridge, often the basis for reproductive prints, circulated the image of the bridge as a fantastical but feasible reality, illustrating its enhancement of the picturesque beauty of Clifton's outlook (figs.72 and 73). Commissioned by the committee under Brunel's direction and exhibited at Bristol's Commercial Rooms, the finished watercolour of c.1831 contains elegantly dressed figures looking on in admiration, and a tree prominently placed so as to partly obscure the bridge, suggestive of the harmony between the man-made wonder and its natural surroundings.

The activity described by West's advertisement for the observatory is evident in Jackson's watercolour, *View on the Avon at Hotwells: The Proposed Suspension Bridge*, of c.1836 (fig.74), an image which goes further in its suggestion of the bridge as engendering a new definition for the Avon as a site where observation of industrious activity enhances the pursuit of touristic pleasure. The focus here is on another area associated with leisure, the Hotwells, described by Gilpin as 'in a great degree picturesque'. Developed as a spa in the late eighteenth century, by the 1830s the popularity of the Hotwells was waning as Clifton physically gained ground with new building projects, and enjoyed the resurgence of publicity surrounding the bridge. Earlier picturesque tourists had been advised by Gilpin to focus on the foreground at Hotwells, 'a very beautiful one', observing its activity as played out against the dramatic backdrop: 'Between these hills stands the pump-

³³⁸ Evans, *The New Guide*, 68.

room, close to the river; and every ship, that sails into Bristol, sails under its windows'.³³⁹ Jackson's watercolour follows suit in its focus on the 'foreground at Hotwells', yet a dual focus is in play through the imposition of Clifton, looming large above with its 'palace-homes of princely merchants'.³⁴⁰ Clifton's process of aggrandisement is in evidence here through the towering form of the Palladian, stuccoed Windsor Terrace and the 'wonder' of the Egyptian bridge. These features dominate the view, endowing Clifton with a powerful visual presence and fuelling its primacy as Bristol's locus of fashion, taste and wealth, a place 'most justly styled the Montpelier of England', according to one guidebook.³⁴¹ Though it was likely commissioned by the bridge committee, this image demonstrates little of the function and utility of the bridge itself (neither passengers nor traffic are visible on its span) revealing it instead as an essential component in Bristol's picturesque armoury, framing the industriousness of day-to-day life of the Avon and the Hotwells and calling attention to the splendour and ambitions of Clifton.

In the 1831 watercolour of Brunel's design for the bridge (fig.71) a sail ship approaches the bridge unaided at that point by the customary rowing boats and horse tugs needed to guide ships into Bristol's harbour, notorious for its shallow approach and lack of space to moor and manoeuvre large ships. The construction of such improvements as at the Hotwells of Cumberland Basin and the Floating Harbour in 1809 put Bristol alongside Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and Newcastle in a category of places where, according to the advertisement for William Westall's *Great Britain Illustrated*, 'the man of business will see with pleasure the numerous new and useful erections which have of late years sprung up'.³⁴² These improvements to Bristol's defining asset were promoted by *The New Guide* of 1828 as to 'render the

³³⁹ William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye, and several parts of South Wales, etc. relative chiefly to picturesque beauty; made in the summer of the year 1770*, 2nd edition (London: R. Blamire, 1789), 143

³⁴⁰ Draper, *Somerset*, 8.

³⁴¹ John Morgan, *A Brief Historical Sketch of Clifton and Strangers' Guide to That Fashionable Place of Public Resort, for its general salubrity most justly styled the Montpelier of England...* (Bristol: H. & A. Hill, 1850), title page.

³⁴² *The Examiner*, 23 January 1831.

harbour of Bristol as secure, commodious, and convenient, as any in Europe',³⁴³ yet the reality—lack of water circulation and regular silting up, combined with hefty docking taxes—brought about a loss of trade to Liverpool. This was noted by another guide published the same year. Acknowledging the passing of the city's reputation as 'Britannia's second mart and eye', it detailed how

'Bristol for centuries ranked as the second city in England in respect of riches, trade and population; but the present extent of its foreign commerce will bear no comparison with that of the port of Liverpool'.³⁴⁴

Jackson's c.1836 watercolour and the oil from a similar vantage point (figs.74 and 75) contain numerous signs that would have appealed to the city's progressive elite, keen to take social or economic advantage of innovations in transport. In the watercolour a large sail ship is towed by a steam tug, the sight of which inspired controversy on the Avon. The first steam vessel to sail there, the *Charlotte*, did so in June 1813 yet, owing to resistance amongst the Common Council to the replacing of horses and men with steam, it was not until 1836 that a regular steam tug service, provided by a single vessel, *The Fury*, was put in place.³⁴⁵ The tug in the c.1836 watercolour may indeed be *The Fury*. Bearing a possible date of c.1840, four years on from that of the watercolour, the oil painting, one of Jackson's few, more significantly suggests the regularity of steam ships on the Avon. In use for passenger traffic in Bristol since 1824, steam packets like that seen from above in the watercolour of c.1831 as well as in this image were an increasingly common sight, particularly after the establishment in 1837 of the Bristol Steamer Navigation Company. Their suitability for inclusion in images was endorsed by the Reverend Eagles's imaginative description of a steamer's passage down the gorge 'something very grand', as

³⁴³ Evans, *The New Guide*, 68.

³⁴⁴ Mathews, *The Bristol Guide*, 7th edition, 196.

³⁴⁵ Latimer, *Annals of Bristol*, 75–77.

‘if some terrific monster dragon, vomiting forth fire and volumes of deadly suffocating smoke, were...on his annual progress of terror and cruelty’.³⁴⁶

With its white funnel glistening as if newly cleaned and luxuriously tasseled awning, the steam packet dominating the mid-ground of the oil painting is laden with passengers bound for a tour of the Wye, the original destination for seekers of Gilpin’s picturesque, suggesting an association between innovation and leisure attractive to the middle-class consumer. This, and the cargo of turtles in the rowing boat before it, to which our attention is playfully called by the outwards looking figure balancing one on his head, point towards the presence of Barton’s Gloucester House and Steam Packet Hotel, the advertisement for which announces it as a supplier of turtles, the basis of the highly fashionable turtle soup.³⁴⁷ The city’s predilection for this dish was referred to in Byron’s satirical poem *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* when he wrote that ‘[t]oo much in turtle Bristol’s sons delight’.³⁴⁸ Turtles came from Bristol’s main Atlantic trade partner, the West Indies, their presence here a reminder of Bristol’s long-established connection with the distant reaches of the Empire. Hotwells and, by its prominence and proximity, Clifton, were thus projected as places deriving much of their wealth and fashionable status from their embracing of modernity and connectedness with overseas trade.

Clifton from the Overfall Dam

Around 1837 Pyne began work on a large canvas, *Clifton from the Overfall Dam* (fig.76). Taken from a viewpoint on the south bank of the New Cut at Bedminster, it looks directly onto the island now known as Spike Island. By comparison to the natural topography of the undulating downs either side of the mouth of the Avon Gorge, the topography of Pyne’s foreground was man-

³⁴⁶ Eagles, *The Sketcher*, 149–150.

³⁴⁷ Bristol Museum and Art Gallery trade card collection (reference: HC1379).

³⁴⁸ George Gordon, Lord Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers. A Satire*, 3rd edition (London: Benbow, 1821), 28.

made, only decades old and already, by 1837, a thing of the past. The New Cut and the Overfall Dam were parts of William Jessop's 1809 Floating Harbour, a 3.2 km-wide channel containing two large lock-controlled docking basins created by isolating a section of the natural river Avon. Jessop's failure to account for silt and sewage deposits from the river Frome and from ships emptying their bilges manifested itself in the build-up of mud and stench, making the harbour a major hazard for public health and safe navigation and requiring maintenance that further inflated Bristol's harbour fees above those of its rivals. In August 1832 Brunel suggested remedying the accumulation of silt and sewage by replacing the Overfall Dam with a series of sluices. The implementation of Brunel's plan occurred in 1834 (having been delayed by lingering works to repair riot damage), his sluices coming to be known as the Underfall Dam.

Pyne's composition also includes other sites of engineering import. Like the Floating Harbour, two of the most prominent terraces in Pyne's picture were notoriously ill-considered projects. Windsor Terrace, in the left mid-ground (just below the western downs) ruined its financier, the plumber William Watts, whose fortune derived from his discovery of the technique required to manufacture perfectly spherical shots (and whose shot tower, in Lambeth, would appear in images such as Constable's *Waterloo Bridge*, to be discussed in Chapter Four). Costs for Windsor Terrace spiralled when a giant wall to bolster its foundations was required. 'Watt's Folly', as the wall became known, can be seen clearly beneath the terrace in Pyne's painting. The most imposing sweep of houses, Royal York Crescent, was begun in 1791 but completed only in 1820, stalling on account of the outbreak of war and loss of finances. It leads to a wooded mound on the right-hand side, which represent the grounds of a house belonging to the descendants of Thomas Goldney (1696–1768), who, in the 1730s, had operated as the Bristol agent for the Coalbrookdale Iron Company.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁹ Kenneth Morgan, "Thomas Goldney (1696–1768), ironmaster," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), accessed 19 Aug. 2018, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-56846>.

By 1837 Pyne was living and regularly exhibiting in London. In 1833 he exhibited a painting entitled *Clifton, near Bristol* (Merchants' Hall, society of Merchant Venturers) at the Society of British Artists and what was perceived in a review to be the watercolour sketch for it at the New Water-Colour Society's exhibition.³⁵⁰ Further Bristol canvases followed—proof, perhaps, that Bristol's hybridised landscape was attractive to patrons—but none so large as *Clifton from the Overfall Dam*. This large canvas could have been conceived before the works commenced to convert the dam into sluices, perhaps as a commission. In everything but size it appears to pair with his 1836 *Clifton from Ashton Meadows* (fig.77), a view taken from another Bedminster viewpoint, this time further over to the west, looking directly onto the Avon Gorge and Clifton. The pictures are both connected to and distinguished from one another by their atmospheric scheme: they share the same weather conditions and, set side-by-side, the trail of thick black smoke in *Clifton from the Overfall Dam* appears to be carried over in the thick, grey cloud of *Clifton from Ashton Meadows*. If the former celebrates the advent of steam by placing it centre stage, which few artists had yet dared to do, the latter shies away from it altogether, featuring only vessels with sails that work with the sheltering coves to project a quasi-Dutch scene of calm and plenty, perhaps contrived to appeal to collectors of Old Masters like nearby Leigh Court resident Miles.

Clifton from the Overfall Dam is consistent with Pyne's increasing interest in technological interventions in the landscape. Yet his daring focus on Bristol's modern face—the steam ship, its floating harbour and the dazzling rows of newly-built uniform terraces—in the *Overfall Dam* drew criticism upon its exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1837. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* declared it 'a mean subject' with 'poor objects occupying the greater space'. The same critic mused upon Pyne's technique, believing it to be 'without character, very poor and thin; with no colour, disagreeably white' while the *Bristol Mercury*, responding to its showing in Pyne's native city in

³⁵⁰ *Evening Mail*, 22 May 1833.

1838, proclaimed that '[i]t is Pyne's', possessing 'all his peculiar, and yet beautiful, touches'.³⁵¹ As Ruskin would later point out, Pyne was looking to Turner. An advertisement for a megilp that came with his recommendation³⁵² vouches for his adoption of the elder painter's methods. Indeed, *Clifton from the Overfall Dam* is an essay in Turnerian technique, combining a thickly laid sky with a landscape developed through thin layers and feathery touches that fail to conceal graphite under-drawing. This lack of finish is most obvious in the foreground, particularly in the mass of brown strokes to the right, which may suggest boat building or the assembly of materials to replace the dam. In any case, this lack of resolution seems apt for a painting of a ghost feature, and is effective in blurring the boundary between land and water, an interrelationship that so much defined Bristol's economy and its image.

The painting's sketch-like aesthetic recalls the apparent spontaneity of the many small-scale studies Pyne and his former pupil Müller produced in their co-ordinated response to the riots at the outset of the decade. Their practice aligned again in 1837, for this year also saw the production of Müller's *Bristol from Clifton Downs*, discussed at the very outset of this chapter (fig.40). Where they had once been united in their recording and circulation of a disastrous moment for Bristol's identity and landscape, they were now making parallel contributions to its rehabilitation. Considered as pendants, these large, celebratory paintings emblematised Bristol's duality as both an ancient maritime Elysium, and an innovative, modernising port. Technically, too, the canvases embody these themes, for in distinction to Pyne's bold composition and progressive handling of paint, Müller's canvas is an exercise in the traditional picturesque prospect, rendered with the same fine finish and treatment of nature as could be found in Dutch Old Master landscapes, that long-favoured idiom of Bristol collectors. Crucially, Clifton—the city's most aspirational and rapidly developing residential zone—occupies a privileged position in both.

³⁵¹ Francis Greenacre, "James Baker Pyne (1800–1870)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), accessed 17 Aug. 2017, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22931>; *Bristol Mercury*, 7 July 1838.

³⁵² Appendix, "Winsor and Newton's List of Materials for Oil Painting," in *The Art of Landscape Painting in Oil Colours*, 3rd edition (London: Winsor and Newton, 1850), 13.

The success of these paintings as favourable representations of a modernising and economically buoyant city is attested to by their provenance. The first owner of Müller's *Bristol from Clifton Wood*, George Jones, was part of the original proposing committee for a railway connection for Bristol in 1832.³⁵³ Pyne's *Clifton from the Overfall Dam*, meanwhile, came to be owned by Francis Tagart JP (1818–1911). In 1899 Tagart was listed as Director of Surrey Commercial Docks, London's largest harbour complex. He may have purchased Pyne's painting to hang in his Bristol home, Old Sneed Place, to the city's north, valuing its memorial to a short-lived feature of a landscape he had known in childhood.³⁵⁴

The 'Great Western' city

The steam packet in *Clifton from the Overfall Dam* is docked along an east-west axis, the latitude that defined Bristol's three major civic improvement projects: the floating harbour, the Suspension Bridge, and the Great Western Railway. Each of these sought to improve Bristol's connections with its hinterland and beyond. These projects were also united by their pattern of development and subsequent historiography: each was locally-conceived, born of commercial stagnation and mercantile ambition, before being developed, wholly or in-part, by Brunel. It was the latter, the Great Western Railway, into which Brunel channelled his greatest ambitions, hoping to transform Bristol into Britain's prime 'Western Gateway' by which passengers and cargo would change between the railway and the steam ship, SS Great Western, from one Brunel design to another, between London and New York. Although Bristol's part in this new and thoroughly modern journey was short-lived (for in the 1840s Plymouth became the principle trans-Atlantic hub), the volume of Bristol imagery produced between the point of its conception in 1833 and its completion accounts for some renewal of pride in the city, amongst the commercial classes and investors, at least.

³⁵³ Greenacre and Stoddard, *Müller*, 100; Gillings, *Brunel*, 52.

³⁵⁴ Anthony Beeson, *North Bristol: Sea Mills, Stoke Bishop, Sneyd Park & Henleaze through time* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2014), unpaginated; *Railway Times*, vol. 76 (1899), 663.

Coinciding with the launch of the SS Great Western in 1837, Müller and Pyne's ambitious canvases thus capitalised on a moment of celebration.

The first part of Brunel's master plan, the Great Western Railway, commenced building in 1835 and opened in stages until the completion in June 1841 of the Box Tunnel, carrying the line between Bath and Chippenham in Wiltshire, meant that trains could run from Paddington Station to Bristol uninterrupted. An extension from Bristol to the Somerset market town of Bridgwater had already opened, meaning the city now had improved connections with its rural hinterland, its neighbouring city, Bath, and the metropolis. The railway's journey to completion embodies symptoms of the complex amalgam of anxiety and ambition that attached itself to Bristol in the post-1832 context. This mix manifested itself foremost in the project's name – its committee having purposely avoided inclusion of 'Bristol' for fear of alienating investors aware of the city's decline in trade rankings.³⁵⁵ Fears as to the impact of these new connections were regularly voiced: in 1833 the *Bristol Gazette*, ever sensitive to the local economy, claimed the railway would dilute the city's centrality to its hinterland, and 'destroy all that remains of wholesale trade, by rendering Bristol a mere suburb of London' while the 1846 diatribe *Railway Eccentrics: Inconsistencies of Men of Genius exemplified in the practice and precept of Isambard Kingdom Brunel* condemned as false the promise the engineer had made to the Directors of the Great Western that the west of England would not be a 'Country of Railways'.³⁵⁶ Its author pointed to the new railway maps for proof that the region had become just that.

The transformation wrought by the snaking black line of the Great Western is evident in Wyld's 1839 map (fig.78). The strong black line of the railway possesses a heavy magnetism and dominance that is hard to escape. Its linear dynamism moves the eye at a rate consistent with the greater speed of travel that the line represented. The line presented here represented a new outlook

³⁵⁵ Colin Maggs, *A History of the Great Western Railway* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2013), 5.

³⁵⁶ Vigil, *Railway Eccentrics: Inconsistencies of Men of Genius exemplified in the practice and precept of Isambard Kingdom Brunel* (London: J. Olliver, 1846), 6.

for Bristol: opened before the Floating Harbour had reached full operational potential, and before the Suspension Bridge was complete; the city's road network had already been deemed circuitous enough to warrant publisher Landers to produce his map to assist potential voters in proving their distance from the Council House. Shortcutting all road connections the dynamic force of the linear route on the map appears to fulfill its champions' hope that the line would 'make Bristol almost a suburb of London'. Celebrating the bigger picture of the steam link with America, it was also envisaged that the Great Western Railway would make the city a hub for 'the great *entrepot* of goods shipped from the capital to Ireland, America and the West Indies'.³⁵⁷ Yet neither Wyld's nor Mogg's map (fig.80), produced in 1839 and 1841 respectively, picture Bristol in this maritime context, instead cropping the survey to articulate only the city's new, inwards-facing potential.

Although we are encouraged to envisage the speed of the connection, we are encouraged to travel through the map slowly. Its large size facilitates the study of its detail, and inset maps that give an understanding of the line's contours – and Brunel's navigation of the challenges they posed – as well as its partner branch lines in the southwest and the national railway web. These maps made the line and its topography ripe for middle class study; the statements made by their proprietors that Brunel had either drawn the line himself or superintended production gave a measure of authenticity equivalent to the claims of topographical publishers that illustrations were drawn from the motif by the best draughtsmen.³⁵⁸ George Alfred Jermyn's map was particularly lavish, measuring over seven by two feet, it was marketed as a collectors' object, and presented in a tooled leather slipcase (fig.79) or 'varnished, stretched and framed in Maple and Rose-wood'.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ As reprinted in the *Birmingham Journal* from the *Bristol Gazette*, 9 February 1833; *Stamford Mercury*, 12 August 1836.

³⁵⁸ Brunel drew a line on an Ordnance Survey map 'for the purpose of this work' according to Edward Mogg in *Mogg's Great Western Railway, and Windsor, Bath, & Bristol Guide* (London: Edward Mogg, 1841), preface, unpaginated. For an advertisement claiming that the basis of Jermyn's map of the Great Western Railway's was a line drawn 'under the direction' of Brunel, see Appendix, "Works recently published by John Weale," in Samuel Clegg, *Architecture of Machinery: An Essay on Propriety of Form and Proportion* (London: Architecture Library, 1842), 22.

³⁵⁹ Appendix, "Works," in Clegg, *Architecture of Machinery*, 22.

These maps possess a typographical grandeur that is both appropriate to the momentousness of the occasion they mark, but which also, in the case of the calligraphic flourishes in the engraved title on Mogg's map, for example, lends them a distinctly antiquarian feel (fig.80). This demonstrates a graphic continuity with the luxury graphic publications of the past but also chimes with the outwards physical presentation of the railway at Bristol (fig.81). Brunel designed the façade for Temple Meads in a hybrid of neo-Norman and neo-Tudor styles, a style which suited a city of such antiquarian stature and which—along with the dozens of other stations built in similar historicising manner—clothed the gateway to a new age in the comfortingly familiar garb of the past. Crossing the threshold into the domain of the Great Western Railway was a literal step forward in time, too, for, until 1852, the city still kept Bristol Time, a full six minutes behind Greenwich Mean Time.³⁶⁰

There is a startling absence of the railway from images generated in Bristol: as Jackson and Pyne's works make clear, steam ships were assimilated in watercolours as well as oils as signs that the city was well-connected and modernizing. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the sole image in the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery collection depicting the Great Western Railway in action is a view of an engine passing over the Normanesque bridge at Brislington (fig.82). It is possible that the drawing, made by William Arnee Frank, was a speculative endeavour or a commission produced with the village's resident antiquarian, Braikenridge, in mind. It is known that Braikenridge intended to bring his *History of Bristol* up to date with Brunel's initiatives; Hawkins's depiction of Temple Meads was in his collection. Like Bristol's façade for the station, the railway here displays a union between advanced engineering and antiquating architecture designed to mimic Britain's historic fabric, presents it as an unobtrusive feature, as timeless a part of the landscape as the barge that sails towards it.

³⁶⁰ Nigel Thrift, "The Making of a Capitalist Time Consciousness," in *The Sociology of Time*, ed. John Hassard (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), 127.

Caught between time and place

Frank's depiction of the Great Western Railway is in striking contrast to that J.M.W. Turner painted just four years later (fig.83). The defining image of the railway age, this picture encapsulates the bittersweet wake of innovation, focusing on the bridge at Maidenhead, close to Sonning Cutting, the site of a fatal derailment in 1841 that initiated the drawing up of legislation for railway safety. The train that approaches us may have come from Bristol, a city whose image had suffered the same kind of dissection as Turner has the tracks perform upon the picture plane. The advent of modernity had polarised the city and its image, breaking it into parts: if the ruination of the reform riots had encouraged a retreat into the visual culture of antiquarianism, it was also catalytic in the proliferation of images that projected the city's rebirth and fitness, through steam transport and engineering projects, for a new age. Geographically the city was being rearticulated along this division: the antiquarian landscape was that of the old centre while the city's modernities were on its peripheries, at Clifton and at Temple Meads. Collectors of images that eschewed the modern age, ironically, lived in modern houses in the city's new suburbs.

Rain, Steam, and Speed presents the landscape as an evolving, dynamic object, shaped by nature and man, the very processes from which Bristol's scenographic quality derived. Its founding bounty, the Avon Gorge, formed over millions of years and rendered a palimpsest for cycles of societal imprint that might leave their mark or, in the case of Queen's Square and the Overfall Dam, be erased just moments – in the longer sense of time – after their erection. Appropriate for a landscape seen in flux, Turner's (and Pyne's) brushwork, in parts, defies immediate resolution. Bristol's image was replete with features that that were, in reality, unresolved, having no physical counterpart. Many of the buildings pored over by antiquarians had been demolished, or were, like Britton's St Mary Redcliffe, projections of ideal form. Similarly, images of the Clifton Suspension Bridge that were so widely circulated pictured an ambitious, ideal design that would not materialise. Brunel's Great Western Gateway was also a grand design: the SS Great

Western's first voyage in 1838 was marred by the breakout of a fire on board and, following the Company's bankruptcy and a spell as a troop ship for the Crimean War Bristol's transatlantic dynamo was broken up at Castle's Yard, Millbank, in 1856, sealing the fate of its maritime identity. Turner gives painterly form to the inland magnetism of the line between Bristol and the metropolis on the railway map, a line which stood for the way in which the city was caught between time – be it the medieval, the modern, Greenwich Mean Time or Bristol time – and its own sense of place in the world.

Chapter Three

‘Piccadilly by the Seaside’: expanding Regency Brighton

In September 1824, William Hazlitt embarked on a tour of the Continent. In his account of his travels, he offered a brief but highly discerning summation of the natural, architectural and social character of Brighton, the port of departure for his cross-channel journey. Viewed from the deck of the steamer, the town stood

‘facing the sea, on the bare cliffs, with glazed windows to reflect the glaring sun, and black pitchy bricks shining like the scales of fishes... Every thing here appears in motion—coming or going. People at a watering-place may be compared to the flies of a summer... The only idea you gain is, of finery and motion’.³⁶¹

This passage neatly encapsulates the essence of Britain’s foremost modern resort town: a place designed to glitter, be it in sunlight or through its architecture and its social scene. Brighton was a place of motion, of comings and goings, a place predicated on flux and journey making. For centuries fishermen had launched out from and returned to its shore, continuing to do so as the beach acquired new vessels: bathing machines full of convalescing Londoners who travelled to Brighton in the wake of Lewes physician Richard Russell’s *A Dissertation Concerning the Use of Sea Water in the Diseases of the Glands* (first edition in Latin 1750; English transl., 1752); and steam packets such as that upon which Hazlitt travelled.

Hazlitt’s departure from Brighton on a steamer was made possible by a new construction, the wrought iron Chain Pier, which circumvented the problem of the town’s shallow bay and enabled bigger ships to dock. Celebrated as a spectacle of modern engineering, the pier fast became Brighton’s prime attraction. Amongst the flurry of publications timed to coincide with the

³⁶¹ William Hazlitt, *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy* (London: Hunt and Clarke, 1826), 4.

launch of the cross-channel steamer was a new guide to Brighton by topographer Edward Wedlake Brayley (1773–1854) featuring views by topographical draughtsman and printmaker Robert Havell Junior (1793–1878) (fig.84).³⁶² The dramatised perspectival view of the Chain Pier which adorned its paper boards visualises Hazlitt’s description: the cuboid geometry of the new terraces strung along the chalky white cliffs provide the backdrop to the town’s new hub for ‘coming or going’, the place in which finely dressed people could come to see and be seen.

True to Hazlitt’s observation, swarms of people descended on Brighton during the season, from August to January, doubling its population. Even without these fluctuations, Brighton’s rapid growth was, and remains, its headline phenomenon of the period from c.1820–50. Brighton’s growth outstripped in its rapidity that of the new industrial centres in the midlands and the north: from 7339 in 1801, Brighton’s resident population rose to 24,429 in 1821; by 1841 it had reached 46,000.³⁶³ Such statistics were quoted in contemporary guidebooks like Brayley’s to bolster the reverberant narrative of the town’s rapid transformation from an ‘insignificant dirty little Fishing Town’ to ‘the most fashionable resort in the kingdom’.³⁶⁴

When writing his account of Brighton in 1824, however, local publisher Richard Sickelmore felt compelled to focus on the ‘exuberance of the present day’ over and above the narrative of Brighton’s accelerated metamorphosis. This, Sickelmore felt, had already so ‘often been a subject of strenuous enquiry’.³⁶⁵ The story of Brighton’s rapid change and the glitter of its Georgian period has continued to exert a magnetic force on those writing accounts of the town. Considering the historiography of Brighton in the preface to his 1975 study, Edmund Gilbert drew attention to the wealth of

³⁶² Edward Wedlake Brayley, *Topographical Sketches of Brighthelmston and its Neighbourhood* (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1825).

³⁶³ Peter Clark, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 2, 1540–1840 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 64.

³⁶⁴ *The British Roadster, or Stage Coach Companion*, No.32. *Being a map and description of the road from London to Paris, by Brighton and Dieppe* (London, 1834), unpaginated.

³⁶⁵ Richard Sickelmore, *Sickelmore’s Descriptive Views of Brighton* (Brighton: R. Sickelmore Jun., 1824), ii, iv.

literature centring on the period 1783 to 1830.³⁶⁶ These were the years of the town's association with the pleasure-seeking royal whose progress through the titles of Prince of Wales, Prince Regent and King George IV mirrored the ascendancy of the place in which he sought respite from royal responsibilities. His effect upon Brighton's landscape would extend far beyond the exotic Royal Pavilion, with minarets and onion domes that sharply contrasted the classicising geometry and regular proportions of the town's terraces. The fashionable society that swarmed in King George's wake would contract Brightelmston's name to 'Brighton' and expand the town's physical bounds, initiating a wave of infrastructural development designed to maintain the momentum. A strong culture of local history in Brighton has contributed to the continued dominance of this period within the town's cultural identity, as exemplified by the activities, publication output, and online presence of the Regency Society, a group founded in 1945 to protect the town's regency architecture.³⁶⁷

The measure of the town's celebrity in the 1820s is attested to by its being taken as the subject of numerous works by Turner and Constable. While analysis of their work has been plentiful and has been interpreted in ways that highlight nuances of contemporary opinion about Brighton's rapid growth and popularity, extant studies predominantly reinforce the worthiness of the 1820s for art-historical attention. Pioneering accounts of Brighton's image over a longer timeframe have proved a vital foundation for this chapter, particularly given the abundance of images aimed at tourists in the period, but analysis of individual images within them is often scant and focused chiefly on topographical identification.³⁶⁸ This chapter will envelope the work of Turner and Constable within a longer timeframe, analysing their engagement with Brighton in tandem with a more varied array of visual material than other studies have thus far taken into account. It will propose a new perspective on

³⁶⁶ Edmund W. Gilbert, *Brighton: Old Ocean's Bauble* (Hassocks: Flare Books, 1975), vii.

³⁶⁷ See, for example, publications by founder Anthony Dale and former vice chair Sue Berry referenced in the bibliography of this thesis and the Regency Society website, <https://regencysociety.org>.

³⁶⁸ For example, John and Jill Ford, *Images of Brighton* (Richmond-upon-Thames: St Helena Press, 1981) and David Beevers, ed., *Brighton Revealed: Through Artists' Eyes, c.1760–1960* (Brighton: The Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery & Museums, 1995).

Constable's six-foot painting of Brighton, *Chain Pier, Brighton*, viewing it not as an anomalous subject to be set apart from his wider *oeuvre* but as an integral part of the artist's sophisticated campaign to use oil painting as a means by which to demonstrate topographical knowledge and narratives of place, similar to the way in which *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* was demonstrated to operate in Chapter One. The visual and verbal commentary on Brighton that Constable circulated in his print portfolio, *English Landscape Scenery*, will be invoked as grounds upon which to challenge the dominant scholarly position that the town held little interest for the artist. Consistent with previous chapters, my focus is not on the mechanics of how such artists depicted Brighton, but rather how the characteristics of its identity, as a place of change and flux, were manifested in the images they created.

If, as John Walton has observed, Brighton was 'morally neutral ground'—a place which could be exploited for a range of purposes, be it health, dissipation, idleness or improvement—it was certainly not pictorially neutral ground. This chapter will demonstrate the ways in which its image was subject to modifications that allowed it to be presented in different ways, according to different sets of picture-making conventions.³⁶⁹ Nor was its identity as stable as its image often sought to convey. Through the scrutiny of a broader timeframe and by relating Brighton's rapid change to the wider context of socio-political turbulence seen during the period c.1820–50, this chapter interweaves a counter-narrative of anxiety at the social implications of the town's phenomenal development and the onslaught of modernity as well as propelling the narrative of Brighton's mutating urban landscape into the 1840s, beyond the period of Brighton's 'exuberance', that which is most prevalent in extant historiography.

This temporal progression will run in parallel with a progression through a series of three key spaces in Brighton's urban landscape: the Chain Pier; the new, sea-facing housing developments at Kemp Town and Brunswick Square;

³⁶⁹ John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History 1750–1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983), 20.

and, to conclude, the upper reaches of the town lying inland, encompassing its railway and the down land it traversed. In his 1825 account of Brighton, Brayley described Brighton's urban geography as an 'isosceles triangle'.³⁷⁰ Informed by the surrounding natural topography, the triangle's baseline was the straight stretch of coast; the bulk of urban development was weighted towards the coast and narrowed to a point inland between two rising slopes of the South Downs. This shape also serves as an analogy for the direction of my discussion. Starting with the Chain Pier close to the centre of the seafront, the triangle's baseline, the chapter will begin with an exploration of the catalytic role this architectural intervention played in the spatial and social reconfiguration of Brighton's image, away from the picturesque and towards the modern. The discussion will then move outwards to the corners of this base, tracing the shape of Brighton's seafront development to assess the contribution that new residential developments made to the image of the town. This section will push the narrative beyond 1830 and discover a more troubled and nuanced image of the town in the wake of the 1825 financial crisis. The reform crisis—and the sharpening of class consciousness it precipitated—will also be presented as a context in which to view images of Brighton and its society in this section and that which proceeds it, centring on Brighton's urbanised interior. The discussion will then consider how this inland space came to be an increasingly well-imaged domain. It will show, too, how Brighton's hinterland was transformed by the construction of the railway from a site perceived to possess little visual merit to a spectacular asset of the resort's landscape.

I. Chain Pier

Situated in the middle of the baseline of Brayley's topographical triangle, the Chain Pier's centrality within Brighton's developed shoreline is reflected by the centrality it quickly assumed within the town's visual representation. Brayley's guide, which featured the pier on its original paper boards, was just one of a host of new artistic and publishing ventures designed to capitalise on

³⁷⁰ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 14.

the excitement around it (fig.84). Upon its opening in November, 1823, the Chain Pier was said to be the ‘most importantly conspicuous’ of the changes to Brighton’s urban environment precipitated by its dramatic rise in popularity and subsequent influx of investment.³⁷¹ Extending 345m out from the shore, the cast- and wrought-iron pier, designed by Captain Samuel Brown (1776–1852) was a thoroughly modern structure that placed Brighton firmly within the cult of metropolitan improvement by industrial design. It was an agent of speed, contracting the journey time between London and Paris to 33 hours; when John Sell Cotman made the crossing in 1817 the marine leg of the journey alone took him 42 hours.³⁷² The rhetoric of the pier’s description—celebrated variously as a ‘curious specimen of modern ingenuity, and scientific art’ and ‘the finest specimen of architecture, of the kind, in the world’—and the circulation in guidebooks of its statistics similar to the terms used to describe other structures like Clifton’s Suspension Bridge (constructed between 1831–64), which was discussed in Chapter Two, and London’s Waterloo Bridge (opened in 1819), which features in Chapter Four.³⁷³ Like the bridge at Clifton, the Chain Pier was lauded as an example of ingenuity and man’s triumph over nature, the depth of its foundations and penetration of its supports into the chalky cliff recounted as proof of its ability to defy natural forces.³⁷⁴ Prefiguring the Clifton Suspension Bridge at Bristol, it signalled a similar array of outwardly modern references, from its neo-Egyptian design through to its use of iron supports, which, having been cast in the town’s Regency Foundry, manifested the presence in Brighton of industrial-age technologies. Primarily, however, the Chain Pier was celebrated as a novel social space in which to admire the company and landscape of Brighton as never before.

³⁷¹ Sickelmore, *Descriptive Views*, 35.

³⁷² *Morning Post*, 23 May 1827; *The Dieppe Connection: The Town and its Artists from Turner to Braque*, exh.cat., Brighton Museum and Art Gallery (Brighton: The Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery & Museums, 1992), 84.

³⁷³ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 23; Richard Sickelmore, *History of Brighton and its Environs, from the earliest period to the present time*, 5th edition (Brighton: R. Sickelmore 1827), 97.

³⁷⁴ Sickelmore, *History of Brighton*, 97.

Cooke's *Southern Coast*: time-travelling between the picturesque and the modern

Viewers of bound copies of William Bernard Cooke's *Picturesque Views of the Southern Coast of England* were afforded the opportunity to see for themselves the pier's transformative impact upon Brighton's landscape and its image. Turning from Henry Edridge's depiction of Brighton to that by Turner from twelve years later produces a highly exaggerated sense of time-travel that drastically communicates the perceived shift in Brighton's identity, from 'fishing village' to 'fashionable resort' (figs.85 and 86). While viewpoint plays a part in this contrast – Edridge takes up a westward-facing position on the beach, Turner a seaborne inland-facing view – the pairing's polarity is illustrative of the strain that the Chain Pier placed upon conventional modes of coastal depiction and the shift towards acceptance of the modern that occurred within topographical imagery in the 1820s.

When Edridge's image was issued in 1814, Britain was at war. The focus of topographical publications like *Southern Coast*, which was intended as the first instalment of a comprehensive coastal topography, and William Daniell's *A Voyage around Great Britain*, paralleled national security initiatives motivated by the threat of French invasion. Edridge's *Beach at Brighton* emerged a year after the publication of the first Ordnance Survey map to cover Brighton, which, with its shallow bay, was less of a defensive priority than places like Dover, seen in *Southern Coast* with its Martello tower and off-shore naval frigates.³⁷⁵ War infringed little on Brighton. It maintained its grip on pleasure-seeking tourists; indeed, the presence there of two large barracks for the Prince's Light Dragoons, noted in *Southern Coast*, became an attraction for tourists like Lydia Bennet of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), who envisaged 'the streets of that gay bathing place covered with officers'.³⁷⁶ While Edridge's focus on shipping can be construed as offering a comforting illustration of Britain's ability to provide for itself during a

³⁷⁵ James Elliot, *The City in Maps: urban mapping to 1900* (London: British Library, 1987), 73.

³⁷⁶ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 258.

blockade, it amounts to a privileging of continuity over change, offering as little to indicate the war-time context as it does Brighton's touristic evolution.

Presenting the essential elements of workaday south coast life—fishermen, boats, prosaic clapboard buildings and a rough, tumbledown chalky coast—Edridge's image is conversant in the generic language of the coastal picturesque. Even by comparison to a print from seventeen years earlier after Philip James de Loutherbourg (fig.87), which operates within the same conventional framework, Edridge's image appears deliberately retrospective in its denial of Brighton's prominence as a watering place. De Loutherbourg appears to depict the veteran 'dipper' Martha Gunn, a star of popular prints who was in charge of manoeuvring ladies' bathing machines into the sea.³⁷⁷ As Andrew Hemingway has observed, Edridge's evasion of Brighton's touristic side was consistent with mythologising notions of the British coast as a place untouched by change, immune to modernity.³⁷⁸ This reading is only undone if one reads the collier—identifiable as such by comparison to similar vessels in later sketches by Constable—as an overt sign of Brighton's large, growing population that required ever-greater quantities of vital imports.

The dominance that the Chain Pier exerted over Brighton's seafront and its catalytic impact on tourism challenged the applicability of a mythologising coastal picturesque at Brighton. This can be seen by contrasting depictions of the fish market, an activity resort tourists were encouraged to engage in.³⁷⁹ Hastings, Brighton's Sussex neighbour, had been rendered the archetypical coastal picturesque subject by Joshua Cristall and other watercolourists in his wake in the early 1800s.³⁸⁰ The persistence across time of its identity as such is seen in a vignette from *Southern Coast* of 1816 and a watercolour by

³⁷⁷ The identification of Martha Gunn is noted in its online catalogue record: "Fisherman Returning to Brighton; 1797. After Philip James de Loutherbourg," Collection Search, Brighton Museums, accessed 9 September 2018, https://brightonmuseums.org.uk/discover/collections/collection-search/?cblid=BTNRP_H1927_96_2.

³⁷⁸ Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 190–6.

³⁷⁹ Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 172.

³⁸⁰ "Catalogue entry: Joshua Cristall, Beach Scene, Hastings," Art & Artists, Tate, accessed 14 November 2015, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/cristall-beach-scene-hastings-t01851>.

Turner of 1824 (figs.88 and 89). In both, the fish market is set against Hastings' natural landscape, its vertiginous cliffs. By contrast, the backdrop to Brighton's fish market, as pictured by Havell Jr. for Brayley's *Topographical Sketches*, is dominated by modern development, led by the Chain Pier (fig.90). Any sense of balance between modernity and tradition is undermined by Brayley's text, which described the fish market as a 'mock auction' staged partly for tourists, and noted how, because fish were 'by no means plentiful at Brighton', supplies were imported from London.³⁸¹ This casts an artificial spin on traces of tradition in the modernising resort: despite appearances, Brighton was outgrowing the capability of its natural resources and traditional industries.

Brighton's modernity was similarly amplified by comparison with its cross-Channel counterpart, Dieppe. Foodstuffs (mainly fruit and dairy) were imported from here, too, while images by Cotman and Richard Parkes Bonington presented it as a place of antiquarian and picturesque merit.³⁸² Counter-posing its charms with those of Brighton, Hazlitt deigned to prefer its 'huge mis-shapen but venerable-looking Gothic Church' over the 'new-fangled erections, Egyptian, Greek or Coptic' to be seen in the modernising urban landscapes of Britain.³⁸³ By the end of the 1820s, however, Dieppe began to emulate its British counterpart.³⁸⁴ Nonetheless, travelling from one to the other was still a dichotomous experience, as told by Auguste Louis Charles de La Garde, who

'gazed with delight at this long curtain of palaces...elegant in architecture, that I am told to be Brighton'.³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ John Bruce, *The History of Brighton, with the Latest Improvements, to 1833* (Brighton: J. Bruce, 1833), 103; Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 50.

³⁸² Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 60; for British artists' depictions of Dieppe, see *The Dieppe Connection*, cited above, and David Blayney Brown, *et al.*, *Coasting: Turner and Bonington on the Shores of the Channel* (Nottingham: Nottingham City Council Museums and Galleries, 2008).

³⁸³ Hazlitt, *Notes*, 5.

³⁸⁴ *The Dieppe Connection*, 9.

³⁸⁵ Auguste Louis Charles de La Garde, *Brighton, scènes détachées d'un voyage en Angleterre* (Paris: J.-P. Aillaud, 1834), 11.

Staging modern Brighton

Turner's view for *Southern Coast* captures the sensation of arrival at Brighton (fig.86). By comparison to Edridge's scene, it demonstrates transformation of Brighton into a heady nexus of tourism, investment and urban development during the economic and social liberation of the post-war years. Turner's is a highly complex, restless image in which elements vie in cacophonous competition for the viewer's attention: sunshine fights storm clouds, buildings jostle for room in the densely-packed urban sprawl, while the sea, folds in on itself in a swaggering display of technical showmanship.³⁸⁶ Like Hazlitt's appraisal of Brighton, which was not without its barb, Turner's image confronts the strains that developments like the Chain Pier imprinted upon Brighton and its identity, making a spectacle out of tension.

In the foreground a lugger lists as if about to collide with the Chain Pier. Clashes had indeed occurred between Brighton's resident working community and land owners seeking to develop ground for use by tourists, as had occurred at the Steine. This triangular patch of ground lying between the Palace, the Chain Pier and the seafront Albion Hotel was, as Brayley tells us,

'formerly an irregular piece of common land...used by the inhabitants for various purposes indiscriminately; as boat-building, the making and drying fishing nets [sic],* the stowage of coals, wains, carts, timber vehicles, &c'.

'*The Fishermen considered it as their *privilege*, to spread and dry their nets here, long after the resort of the Prince of Wales to Brighton; and it was not without much difficulty that they could be induced to relinquish their claims'.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ Hazlitt, *Notes*, 4.

³⁸⁷ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 27.

This area was enclosed and converted into lawns for promenading in the 1790s. Even before the acceleration of Brighton's development in the early 1820s, its traditional industries like fishing had already lost physical space to modernisation; relegated to just one of many foci in Turner's image, they also stood to lose their occupancy of pictorial space.

The opening of the Chain Pier was closely preceded by the completion of the Royal Pavilion after seven years of remodelling. Built to designs by John Nash purportedly based upon William Daniell's *Oriental Scenery*, it added another layer of novelty to Brighton's urban fabric.³⁸⁸ Together with the Chain Pier the Pavilion positioned Brighton as a competitor to London in its architectural synthesis of global references drawn from the spreading tendrils of Britain's empire. The exotic was further represented by the premises of the Indian entrepreneur Sake Deen Mahomed, who in 1787 introduced the 'healthful art' of shampooing to Britain via his Brighton treatment rooms.³⁸⁹ These references brought spectacle and novelty, but also stature, for if London was becoming a world city, the cosmopolitan features of Brighton's landscape signalled its ambition to be the world's watering place.

The Pavilion was not universally admired, however. Daniell, perhaps in an attempt to protect the integrity of his *Oriental Scenery*, reportedly Nash's source of inspiration, described the Pavilion as a lamentable product of 'unrestrained permission'.³⁹⁰ Motivated to celebrate local sights, locally-produced guidebooks tended, on the whole, to venerate the building, with Sickelmore terming it 'truly astonishing', displaying 'utmost refinement of taste'.³⁹¹ Further disdain upon the royal complex had already been prompted by architect William Porden's apparent privileging of flamboyance over functionality in his design for the stables. According to Brayley, they

³⁸⁸ Clifford Musgrave, *Life in Brighton, from the earliest times to the present* (London: Faber, 1970), 158.

³⁸⁹ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 48.

³⁹⁰ William Daniell, *A Voyage round Great Britain, undertaken in the summer of the year 1813, and commencing from the Land's End, Cornwall, with a Series of Views, illustrative of the character and prominent features of the coast*, vol. 7 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1824), 50.

³⁹¹ Sickelmore quoted in Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 32.

purported to be ‘Moorish or Hindoo’ but displayed ‘an incongruous mixture of different styles’ and were rendered useless for stabling by the dangerous build-up of heat and lack of ventilation beneath the large glazed dome roof.³⁹² Much like the debate surrounding alterations to Salisbury Cathedral discussed in Chapter One, polarised attitudes to the Pavilion and its fanciful architecture would persist; indeed, in 1834, its buildings were ‘ridiculed as a gilded puppet show’.³⁹³

The façade of the Royal Pavilion, was, as other images show, largely invisible from the Chain Pier (figs.91–93). The overt modernity of Turner’s Brighton is therefore contingent on topographical manipulation that comprised its veracity. He has widened the aperture between the entrance to the Chain Pier and the Albion Hotel and rotated the palace along its north-south axis so that it instead runs east-west, parallel to the seafront, revealing its full façade. The Pavilion is thus incorporated into Turner’s fantastical, exaggerated presentation of Brighton as a spectacular urban landscape. The same desire for topographical comprehensiveness is also seen in Turner’s exaggeration of the slopes flanking the town, which allowed him to indicate numerous other landmarks of Brighton’s touristic itinerary: St Nicholas’s Church above the town, the rotunda of the new Lamprell’s Baths on the left-hand seafront, the celebrated Albion Hotel, and the imposing block of new, neoclassical terraces along Marine Parade, which each added further dimensions to Brighton’s architectural panoply. Turner’s desire to outshine his competitors and produce the defining image of modern Brighton was likely also motivated by his position as a stakeholder in *Southern Coast*. By 1827 the production had yielded its investors ‘a constant dividend of profit’ and would, Cooke supposed, do so ‘for some time to come’.³⁹⁴

Yet the extent to which Turner’s re-working of the landscape was his own innovation can be questioned when the image is juxtaposed with prints published before and shortly after the supposed time of Turner’s visit to

³⁹² Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 44–45.

³⁹³ *The British Roadster*, unpaginated.

³⁹⁴ See letter from W.B. Cooke to Turner, 1 Jan. 1827, as reprinted in Appendix A, Eric Shanes, *Turner’s Rivers, Harbours and Coasts* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1981), 153.

sketch the Chain Pier.³⁹⁵ These are *A Coasting View of Brighton*, published in London on 1 April 1824 by Robert Havell & Son, and a view after the same draughtsman, Havell Jr., that was issued in September 1824 and appears in Brayley's *Topographical Sketches* (figs.92–93). Havell's images similarly exercise topographical manipulation to juxtapose Brighton's leading architectural features, the Chain Pier and Pavilion.

While acknowledging that Havell's panorama may have informed Turner's pairing of the Chain Pier and Pavilion, Ian Warrell perceives no link between Turner's watercolour and the illustrations for Brayley's *Topographical Sketches*.³⁹⁶ Published in September 1824, ahead of the volume itself, it is not inconceivable, however, that Turner looked to Havell's suite of images when composing the dense, topographically comprehensive background of his watercolour for *Southern Coast*. The success of Havell & Son's enterprise in the field of topographical illustration is well acknowledged, yet the extent to which their projects may have shaped the approaches taken by academic landscape artists is less so.³⁹⁷ Ten years earlier, Havell had contributed a drawing of Turner's house, Sandycombe Lodge, for Cooke's *Thames Scenery*; he was also on Cooke's roster of contributing artists for *Southern Coast*. Given their acquaintance, shared professional network and the publication of Havell's prints during the period Turner was developing his own view of Brighton, the possibility should not be discounted.

³⁹⁵ Ian Warrell has considered two dates for Turner's visit to Brighton in 1824. The first possibility is that he arrived before 10 August 1824, when he began his tour of the rivers Meuse and Mosel (possibly, were the artist uncharacteristically desirous of an upmarket hotel, being the 'Mr Turner' reported as an arrival at the New Steine Hotel in the *Brighton Gazette* for 3 June). Alternatively, he may have visited upon his return from the Continent between the beginning of September and November. See Ian Warrell, "J.M.W. Turner in Brighton," in *Brighton Revealed*, 33.

³⁹⁶ Ian Warrell, "In Pursuit of Originality in Brighton," in *Constable and Brighton: 'something out of nothing'*, ed. Shân Lancaster (London: Scala, 2017), 47.

³⁹⁷ Ralph Hyde, *Gilded Scenes and Shining Prospects: Panoramic Views of British Towns 1575–1900* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1985), 136; Lucy Peltz, "Havell family (per. c. 1775–1934), artists and publishers," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), accessed 30 June 2018, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-65039>.

Consuming the Chain Pier

The Chain Pier replaced the Steine as high society's favoured promenade, its industrial functionality providing a sharp contrast to the former's picturesque, verdant walks.³⁹⁸ Turner's depiction of the pier teeming with life is consistent with statistical reports of sales of 2d. single-entrance tickets: on the last Sunday of July in 1825, 4300 tickets to enter the pier were sold, while even on a rainy August day in 1824, there were 1500 visitors.³⁹⁹ The *Morning Chronicle*'s 'Mirror of Fashion' column regularly reported notable 'promenaders' on the Pier – Lord and Lady Aberdeen, Lord and Lady George Seymour, for example – amongst 'all the fashion of the place'.⁴⁰⁰ Numerous shops, including a print shop, were situated at the base of its arches, enabling visitors to purchase a vast array of Tunbridge-ware souvenirs bearing the pier's image that reveal the myopic focus: the Chain Pier became the defining feature of Brighton images, making an already-marketable subject into an essential component (fig.94). So much did tourism dominate Brighton that in 1833 Bruce claimed the production of 'fancy articles', meaning Tunbridge-ware souvenirs or shell work, to be its main economy, employing one third of the resident working population for most of the year.⁴⁰¹ At the shore end of the pier was Tuppens' Library, while at the other was a camera obscura which, alongside telescopes, meant that the pier ushered in not only a new mode of transport—the steamer it was built to receive—by which Brighton could be accessed, but also a new vantage points and mechanisms by which to experience, visualise and consume Brighton's urban landscape (the library and telescopes can be seen in fig.91).

The Chain Pier's swift ascendancy to the defining icon of Brighton's urban landscape as well as the quantity and social composition of Brighton's crowds justified the production of luxury souvenirs. Turner's work occupied positions at the top end of the market: Turner's print ranged in price from 12s. 6d. to

³⁹⁸ Sickelmore, *History of Brighton*, 35.

³⁹⁹ John George Bishop, *The Brighton Chain Pier: in memoriam. Its history from 1823 to 1896* (Brighton, 1897), 20, 24.

⁴⁰⁰ *Morning Chronicle*, 5 November 1823.

⁴⁰¹ Wood from forests around Tunbridge Wells, Kent, gave the product its name. Bruce, *History of Brighton*, 4.

£1 10s., depending on the size and quality of paper,⁴⁰² while Havell's panorama cost £1 11s. 6d., one shilling more than his panoramas of London and the coastal journey to Calais.⁴⁰³ Published five months after the opening of the Chain Pier, *A Coasting View of Brighton* gives physical embodiment to Hazlitt's determination of Brighton as a place of 'finery and motion' (figs. 92 and 95). Ranging over six conjoined sheets measuring 15cm in height and over 3m in width, the image is revealed by being unwound from a boxwood drum adorned with a crown, the associational cachet of which was no doubt appreciated by its purchasers attracted to Brighton on account of its royal patronage.

Like his portable river panoramas, Havell's Brighton panorama might be taken aboard a boat and rolled out in synchrony with the vessel's progress.⁴⁰⁴ Indeed, the seaborne vantage point replicates the experience of sailing along Brighton's seafront. A further novelty lies in the panorama's ascription of agency to its operator, who, as its captain, animates the landscape and sets it in motion, controlling the speed at which the paper coast is consumed. As well as being an object of 'finery and motion', Havell's panorama was intrinsically theatrical. As a luxury object, it would appeal as a talking point, something to share with and be admired by others, which could become a performance in itself. More specifically, its unfurling motion was an adaptation of the stage set design and delivered in miniature, and in private, a sense of the spectacle that drew crowds to the ever-popular large-scale panoramic experiences.

Inscribed identifications of the seafront's features render Havell's panorama a didactic tool for understanding Brighton's rapidly developing urban landscape. Brayley's *Topographical Sketches* included a key to these; a translation of both into French was available for visitors from across the

⁴⁰² Walter Thornbury, *The Life of J.M.W. Turner, R.A.: founded on letters and papers furnished by his friends and fellow academicians* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), appendix, 356.

⁴⁰³ *Quarterly Review*, vol. 30, March 1825, unpaginated.

⁴⁰⁴ Hyde, *Gilded Scenes*, 33.

Channel.⁴⁰⁵ The several layers of Brighton's growth to this point are present in Havell's panorama: there are fishing boats; bathing machines for the health tourists, rows of multi-storey terraces to house new residents and seasonal tourists and, adjacent to Brighton's most fashionable address, Marine Parade, the onion-domed Royal Pavilion and neo-Egyptian Chain Pier. The order in which these icons are revealed, as the landscape unfurls from right to left, visualises Brighton's urban chronology. We thus sail backwards through layers of time: from the Chain Pier and the Pavilion, architecturally flamboyant symbols of the town's modernity and new fashionable appeal, to the bathing huts used by convalescents, and on to the huts, vessels and drying sails of the resident fishing community.

Constable, Brighton and the 'secret hand' of change

Motivated by his wife's need for convalescence, Constable and his family arrived for their first stay in Brighton on 13 May 1824, just days before the launch of the steamship *Rapid* from the Chain Pier, an event that epitomised the modernisation of the resort.⁴⁰⁶ If Turner and Havell outwardly courted excitement around this process, Constable's *Chain Pier, Brighton* has been construed as a begrudging concession to the imprint of modernity upon the coast and a calculated pitch to promising markets (fig.96). In the section that follows I will argue that it is possible to reconceptualise Constable's painted Brighton as a more positivistic reflection on modernity than it is generally believed to be, seeing it as part of a longer engagement with the resort and in relation to statements about the town he would attach to later projects.

Constable certainly seized his time in Brighton as a professional opportunity. *Chain Pier, Brighton* was, as his friend Fisher assured him, 'a useful change of subject' that would demonstrate to critics and peers his versatility and worthiness for full RA status.⁴⁰⁷ Constable may have hoped that his rendering

⁴⁰⁵ Hyde, *Gilded Scenes*, 33.

⁴⁰⁶ *Sussex Advertiser*, 17 May 1824, 3.

⁴⁰⁷ *John Constable's Correspondence, IV: Patrons, Dealers and Fellow Artists*, ed. R.B. Beckett (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1966), 155.

of this modern subject in a cool tonality evocative of Dutch Old Master seascapes would excite the interest of prominent patron and president of the British Institution, the 3rd Earl of Egremont, who had invested in the Chain Pier and paid a visit to the artist's painting room in the town in the summer of 1824.⁴⁰⁸ Egremont saw commissions from Paris on Constable's easel during his visit.⁴⁰⁹ In August that same year, Constable's *Hay Wain* received a gold medal at the Paris Salon – as the point of reception for French tourists, the Chain Pier may have suggested itself as being of topical interest for the French market. In the event, no buyer was found for a subject rendered in a particularly restless iteration of Constable's increasingly raw handling of paint, and, despite his innovative blend of artistic conventions, Egremont commissioned Turner to paint the Chain Pier.

The marketability of Constable's composition was, nonetheless, certified when it became the first engraving to be issued after one of Constable's six footers (fig.97). Changes between the painting and the engraving reveal the former's comparatively diminished acknowledgement of Brighton's modernity: effects of chiaroscuro amplify the presence of the Chain Pier in the engraving and a cloud of smoke rises from a canon to signal the steam packet on the distant horizon, an element not seen in the painting. Jointly orchestrated by London art dealer Dominic Colnaghi (1790–1789) and Brighton print seller Samuel Shepherd Folker, the engraving was a more calculatedly commercial endeavour that played to consumers' expectations of Brighton's printed image.⁴¹⁰

The Chain Pier's understated presence in Constable's painting has been seized upon as an expression of disdain for the structure he termed the 'dandy jetty',

⁴⁰⁸ *John Constable's Correspondence, VI: The Fishers*, ed. R.B. Beckett (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1968), 171; Andrew Loukes, *Constable at Petworth*, exh. pamphlet (Swindon: National Trust, 2014), 14. Loukes quotes a letter from Maria noting the presence of Lord Egremont in Brighton in 1824, in *John Constable's Correspondence, II: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell*, ed. R.B. Beckett (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1964), 370.

⁴⁰⁹ Anne Lyles, "Arrival in Brighton and Setting up a Painting Room," in *Constable and Brighton*, 32.

⁴¹⁰ Samuel Shepherd Folker published a portrait print of Lord Egremont by W. Ward ARA after I. Maquieir in July 1825. His trade is invariably listed as 'carver and gilder'. He occupied 143, Royal Colonnade, North Street, Brighton until late in 1831, when he moved to London. *Brighton Gazette*, 28 July 1825; 15 October 1829; 31 July 1831.

a remark made in the context of a letter to Fisher.⁴¹¹ Referencing Brighton as ‘the receptacle of the fashion and off-scouring of London’, Constable continued:

‘the beach is only Piccadilly by the seaside. Ladies dressed and *undressed* - gentlemen in morning gowns...about *knee deep* in the breakers - footmen - children - nursery maids, dogs, boys, fishermen...rotten fish and those hideous amphibious animals the old bathing women... are all mixed up together in endless and indecent confusion...there is nothing here for a painter but the breakers – & sky.’⁴¹²

Described as ‘hostile’ and ‘ill-humoured’, this private passage has dominated perception of Constable’s engagement with Brighton.⁴¹³ The dominance of natural elements and the trappings of maritime culture in the foreground of *Chain Pier* have therefore been seen as the artist’s recourse to the iconographical elements and formulae with which he was most comfortable—nature, the working landscape and the picturesque.

Ann Bermingham, however, has criticised the tendency to unquestioningly apply Constable’s private correspondence as an explanation of his artistic project, and to do so without reference to the wider attitudinal context in which they were received.⁴¹⁴ The passage above should be seen as typical of the jocular comments Constable and Fisher exchanged on the mores of society. Indeed, Fisher saw it worthy of sending ‘to John Bull’, the satirical master. Furthermore, his remark that ‘[Brighton] is an odious place...I only guess. I never saw it’ suggests an elitist predisposition to dislike a place of fashion that may have been informed by Gilpin, who had held a prebendary stall at Salisbury, and who had found Brighton ‘disagreeable’, with ‘scarce an

⁴¹¹ *John Constable’s Correspondence*, VI, 171.

⁴¹² *John Constable’s Correspondence*, VI, 171.

⁴¹³ Anne Lyles, ed., *Constable: The Great Landscapes* (London: Tate, 2006), 168; Warrell, “In Pursuit of Originality,” 45.

⁴¹⁴ Ann Bermingham, “Reading Constable,” in *Reading Landscape: country – city – capital*, ed. Simon Pugh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 97.

object either in it, or near it, of nature or of art'.⁴¹⁵ Added to this are Mary Shelley's observation of 'perfection in the ugliness of Brighton' and German prince Ludwig Heinrich Hermann von Pückler-Muskou's statement that 'fashion [had] deserted Bath and fled with a sort of feverish rage to the unmeaning, treeless and detestably prosaic Brighton'.⁴¹⁶ By the mid-1820s it had clearly become *de rigueur* for the cultural elite to express distaste for Brighton's social melange and the picturesque deficiencies of its natural landscape.

For Hemingway, the nadir of Constable's innovation in *Chain Pier, Brighton* is his combination in oil on canvas of a picturesque foreground and a background denoting modernity.⁴¹⁷ It is possible to go further and see Constable's depiction of a rapidly modernising landscape as a manifestation of his campaign to demonstrate complex and detailed topographical narratives of place of the kind he would also develop in his six-foot paintings of Salisbury and London, discussed in Chapters One and Four respectively. Key to this is Constable's compositional strategy. This may be equated with that of Havell and Turner, whose images invite particular meditations on Brighton's landscape as a product of transition and host to a series of striking, and often tense, juxtapositions.

Like his contemporaries, Constable modified topography to suit his aims. Perhaps inspired by Gilpin, for whom the sea was 'a grand object' but Brighton's coast a displeasing 'straight line', Constable has exerted a picturesque transformation of the plumb-straight bay into a sweeping crescent.⁴¹⁸ The receding diagonal of the shoreline and its convergence with the pier works with the *repoussoir* of the large sail and the white canopies of the bathing machines on the left to emphasise this directional pull down

⁴¹⁵ Fisher to Constable, 8 September 1824, in *John Constable's Correspondence*, VI, 174; William Gilpin, *Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex, and Kent Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (1804), quoted in Beevers, ed., *Brighton Revealed*, 12.

⁴¹⁶ Ludwig Heinrich Hermann von Pückler-Muskou, *Tour in England, Ireland and France, in the years 1826, 1827, 1828 & 1829* (Zurich: Massie Publishing, 1940), 346; Mary Shelley, "A Visit to Brighton," in *London Magazine* 16 (1826), 464.

⁴¹⁷ Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 184, 186–187.

⁴¹⁸ Gilpin in Beevers, ed., *Brighton Revealed*, 12.

Marine Parade, drawing attention to the seemingly infinite sweep of fashionable new houses. Moving from the picturesque detritus of the long-established fishing industry in the foreground, through to the fashionable homes of its newest and seasonal residents behind, this spatial progression mirrors the chronological transition of Brighton from fishing village to fashionable destination and imbues the painting with the town's topographical narrative.

This narrative can be advanced by continuing beyond the houses, to the deepest realm of the pictorial space, close to the centre point of the landscape, where it is possible to discern a small 'X' (it appears more clearly in the print, fig.97). This denotes the sails of a windmill, possibly that situated beyond Marine Parade, or else much further away at Rottingdean, to the east of Brighton's developed extremity. Present in depictions by Havell, Daniell and Turner discussed above, windmills feature throughout representations of Brighton. Like deliveries of coal from colliers, the number of windmills bore direct correlation to the growth in Brighton's population; this can be read in their position, too, for they were moved, demolished, or their parts recycled in the face of creeping urbanisation.⁴¹⁹ Just as Constable's regular inclusion of gravel being extracted from pits on Hampstead Heath tells of London's expanding urban landscape, his numerous sketches of fishing tackle, fishing vessels, colliers, gleaners and windmills at Brighton present the means of using the natural world to fuel its urban growth (fig.98).

In preparation for a lecture he gave in 1836, Constable professed his belief that the act of landscape painting could function as 'experiments' in 'Natural Philosophy'.⁴²⁰ Read as a narrative on the evolution of Brighton's landscape, predicated upon man's ability to harness—and to tame—nature, *Chain Pier, Brighton* might therefore be said to express a 'Natural Philosophy' of Brighton's evolution. Although not available to viewers at the time of *Chain*

⁴¹⁹ Sue Berry, "Walking with Constable," in *Constable and Brighton*, 111.

⁴²⁰ Leslie Parris, Conal Shields, and Ian Fleming-Williams, eds., *John Constable, Further Documents and Correspondence with a Tribute to R.B. Beckett by Norman Scarfe* (Suffolk: Suffolk Records Society; London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1975), 20.

Pier's initial exhibition, the way in which he chose to represent Brighton in *English Landscape Scenery* (1830) supports this reading (fig.99). Change is its central theme, be it 'the continual change and ever-varying aspect' of the sea's surface, or the transformation of the town from 'a fishing village of so little importance' to 'one of the largest, most splendid, and gayest places in the kingdom; the resort of multitudes of every class of society'.⁴²¹ In stark contrast to the private comments Constable made to Fisher, the text for *English Landscape Scenery* is also effusive in its commendation of Brighton: 'there is perhaps no spot in Europe where so many circumstances conducive to health and enjoyment are to be found combined'.⁴²²

If such a comment was included as a sop to the market, it is nonetheless substantiated by a reasoning no other guide to Brighton at that time was propounding, that 'natural local causes ... have secretly wrought this change'. These causes were the town's nearby rivers, the hills that shelter it from winds, and the even temperature that sea breezes were supposed to induce. The account concludes:

'[t]hus it will be seen that in this happily situated spot the Climate, the In-land Country and the Coast are equally propitious'.⁴²³

This text adds weight to the interpretation of *Chain Pier, Brighton* as a positivistic reflection on the town's identity, as a place founded upon a harmonious synergy between man and nature.⁴²⁴ Its associated image, too, supports this interpretation—*A Sea-Beach, Brighton* presents not the open, untamed expanse of sea seen in other of Constable's sketches but instead homes in on one of Brighton's groynes, built to fend the coast from erosion and thus protect its urban development. The Chain Pier might then be read within Constable's painting not as an icon of modernity begrudgingly

⁴²¹ Letterpress for 'A Sea-Beach – Brighton', *English Landscape Scenery*, in Andrew Wilton, *Constable's 'English Landscape Scenery'* (London: British Museum, 1979), 42.

⁴²² Letterpress for 'A Sea-Beach – Brighton', in Wilton, *'English Landscape Scenery'*, 42.

⁴²³ Letterpress for 'A Sea-Beach – Brighton', in Wilton, *'English Landscape Scenery'*, 42.

⁴²⁴ Warrell, "Taking on the Chain Pier—and Turner," in *Constable and Brighton*, 68.

included but as a conduit to further man's enjoyment and optimisation of the natural world.

A delicate balance

There were many subscribers to the opposing sentiment. Despite its concurrence with *English Landscape Scenery's* proclamation on nature's gifts, topographer Thomas Walker Horsfield concluded his 1835 account of Brighton with a less promising outlook on man's impact on the landscape:

‘history takes up the pen and transmits to posterity, not the physical changes, which beneficent nature is incessantly carrying on for the happiness of all her creatures, but the records of the ravages committed by human folly and ambition’.⁴²⁵

Turner's visualisation of Brighton as a teetering jumble of insubstantial forms beneath a storm-ridden sky may hint at the hubris behind Brighton's development. Its accompanying text in *Southern Coast* had, after all, reported ‘fears for the [Chain Pier's] stability’.⁴²⁶ Such concerns were countered by effusive reports of its survival, unscathed, after the ‘tempest’ late in 1824; the repeated iteration of statistics like the depth of its foundations also served to assuage Brighton's visitors of its infallibility.⁴²⁷ The pier was not immune to ridicule, however: in a verse lampooning promenaders' determination to traverse it in all weather, it was claimed that the pier, like its high tolls, would come crashing down in high wind.⁴²⁸

The insinuation that the Chain Pier was a commercial folly, vulnerable to collapse, chimed with long-standing anxieties about Brighton's geographical

⁴²⁵ Thomas Walker Horsfield, *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex*, (Lewes: Sussex Press and London: Nichols and Son, 1835), 24.

⁴²⁶ *Picturesque Views on the Southern Coast of England, from drawings made principally by J.M.W. Turner, R.A. and engraved by W.B. Cooke and George Cooke...*, vol. 1 (London: W.B. Cooke, 1826), unpaginated.

⁴²⁷ Sickelmore, *Descriptive Views*, 39; James Wallis, *Brighton as it is, 1840. Wallis's Royal Edition* (Brighton: James Wallis, 1840), 4–6.

⁴²⁸ *Brighton!! a comic sketch* (London: William Kidd, 1830), 9.

situation and the town's ability to defend itself from the natural processes of erosion, weathering and coastal storms. Instances of success on this front were habitually woven into triumphant narratives of the town's transformation: groynes were posited as the original means of ingenious defence against the power of the sea. The construction of the sea wall, which can be seen at the foot of the pier in Havell's, Turner's and Constable's images was another. The smoothness of the latter lent a visual and structural rigidity to a shoreline that was, in its natural state, a cascade of chalky earth (fig.100). The cliffs' instability was underlined by the geological research of Gideon Mantell (1790–1852), who, in search of respectability and with financial encouragement from the Earl of Egremont, moved to Brighton from nearby Lewes in 1833.⁴²⁹ His publications on Sussex's geological past made much of Brighton's susceptibility to erosion, chiming with Horsfield's lyrical, but ultimately pessimistic outlook for the town, that the 'ocean is silently, but incessantly, carrying on the work of destruction'.⁴³⁰ Geologically, Brighton was then thought to be a landscape formed by 'catastrophe'; it remained an unstable topography.⁴³¹

II. Kemp Town

Despite it being the most commercially viable subject Constable had thus far exhibited, *Chain Pier* failed to find a buyer. Timing may have been a factor in this. By 1827, the unbridled excitement and capital investment that had led to Brighton's rapid post-Waterloo development had given way to a new financial and social context in which the physical, social and economic instability of Brighton came under threat. This context was defined, in the short term, by the financial crash of 1825, and, in the longer term, by widened access to the franchise, and to travel and leisure in general, the ascent of new monarchs

⁴²⁹ Dennis R. Dean, "Mantell, Gideon Algernon (1790–1852), surgeon and geologist," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 7 Jul. 2018. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18004>.

⁴³⁰ Gideon Mantell, *The Wonders of Geology, Or, A Familiar exposition of Geological Phenomena by G. M...from Notes Taken by G. F. Richardson* (London, 1838); Horsfield, *County of Sussex*, 12.

⁴³¹ This concept was propounded by French paleontologist, Georges Cuvier. Horsfield, *County of Sussex*, 11.

(William IV in 1831 and Victoria six years later), and competition from other resorts. Against this new context, Brighton's landscape and image were subject to new contortions that exerted new and greater pressures upon its identity and threatened to expose its modernisation as a project of hubris and folly.

In his 1825 guide, Brayley described the town as having been 'so much extended in every possible direction'.⁴³² Sickelmore's map shows it is barely contained within the border and indeed subsequent maps would recourse to a much smaller scale to accommodate its expansion and even then the town would outstrip its border (fig.101). Expansion challenged the Chain Pier's dominance within Brighton's image as plates began to circulate that foregrounded newer features of its urban landscape: the seafront residential developments of Kemp Town and Brunswick Town, located on the cliffs to the east and west of Brighton respectively (figs.102 and 103). Mapping this shift on to Brayley's isosceles triangle, these images pulled visual attention across the length of its baseline and away from the central nexus of Chain Pier, Pavilion and the Steine. One of the most widely-circulated maps confirmed the ascendancy of these new residential developments by selecting them as inset vignettes (figs.104 and 105). The challenge these new developments posed to the pictorial supremacy of the Chain Pier was not only registered in visual culture—Kemp Town and its ilk severely tested the sustainability of the post-Waterloo property boom and became a focus for criticism and concern about Brighton's urban environment.

The bird's-eye perspective of the prospectus images works in multiple ways to promote the schemes' Elysian ambition to the '[f]amilies of rank, splendour and fashion' it was anticipated would inhabit them.⁴³³ By 'looking forward in time as well as space', these images embody Denis Cosgrove's explanation of the prospect view and serve to address the tastes of a clientele conditioned to

⁴³² Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 11.

⁴³³ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 11.

appreciate a ‘sense of theatre and backdrop’.⁴³⁴ What Gilpin termed the ‘unfortunate straightness’ of Brighton’s coast is made a virtue, turning the developments into perfectly manicured stage sets within which the beholder could play out their ambition; the backdrop of the South Downs is pleasantly undulating and, dotted with windmills, configured as a landscape of service to the new town. The images’ inaccessible viewpoint endows the viewer with power and works against the commonplace depiction of Brighton from the beach or a boat to immediately convey the impressiveness and benefits of a cliff-top residence: elevated above and distanced from the workaday, touristic central beachfront it was, vitally, accessible by ‘good carriage roads’.⁴³⁵ Kemp and Brunswick Towns were thus marketed as places of great potential in which one could ‘unite a town and country life’, as Constable wrote of Hampstead.⁴³⁶

This idealised vision would be thrown in to a problematic dialogue with the difficult reality of the years 1825–28, however, when the bubble of speculative investment burst and tainted perception of the resort, as had occurred at Bristol. Satirical poetry pitched Kemp Town as the epitome of hubristic ambition. One such verse, disseminated in the London press, questioned the provision of gas to houses which ‘yet few tenants hold’, asking, ‘[d]id Babel e’er rise faster?’:

‘See, in its front, you lamps of glass—
Strange that the town should waste its gas
To illuminate lath and plaster’.⁴³⁷

As a hallmark of modernity, the arrival of gas was, like the cast iron Chain Pier, a transformational novelty. The haste to usher in this new technology, even after the crash of 1825 had left Kemp Town in limbo thus prompted

⁴³⁴ Denis Cosgrove, “Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, new series, vol. 10, No. 1 (1985), 55; Neil Bingham, *C.A. Busby: the Regency Architect of Brighton & Hove* (London: RIBA, 1991), 65.

⁴³⁵ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 19.

⁴³⁶ Constable to Fisher, 29 November 1826, in *John Constable’s Correspondence*, VI, 228.

⁴³⁷ *New Monthly Magazine*, February 1829; *Morning Post*, 2 February 1829.

satirical comparison with Babel, or the ancient city of Babylon. This was newly topical in the wake of the publication of British military Captain, Robert Mignan's account of his work there, which referenced the Old Testament prophesy that the vast, and powerful city would eventually become 'heaps, a dwelling place for dragons...without an inhabitant'.⁴³⁸ Ahead of the financial crash, Brayley had anticipated that '[w]hen the whole of the Town is illuminated by this brilliant light the effect from the sea will be particularly striking'.⁴³⁹ By the late 1820s it was now being viewed along with Kemp Town as a beacon of Brighton's vanity and the hubris of its rapid growth and modernisation.

Of the 250 houses proposed by Kemp, only 105 were eventually built; by the end of 1828, ninety of these remained as shells.⁴⁴⁰ Archival records reveal the personal devastation this project wreaked. Kemp Town builder George Strafford filed for bankruptcy in 1828; poverty drove Kemp Town painter, Isaac Reed, to petty crime; while the bankruptcy of Peter Smyth Sampson, 'bookseller and dealer in fancy articles' at the Chain Pier's Royal Saloon attests to the struggles of tourist-oriented businesses.⁴⁴¹ There is a downturn in extant imagery of the town for the years immediately after 1825, reflecting its memory amongst publishers as a 'lost year'.⁴⁴²

Fears that the crash was depreciating Brighton's exuberance were compounded by changes in the town's relationship with the monarchy. King George IV would make his last visit to Brighton in March 1827. Six months later, the *Morning Chronicle*'s 'Mirror of Fashion' column—regularly written from Brighton—remarked blithely upon his absence as a minor impediment to the town's revival after 'the panic':

⁴³⁸ Jeremiah 51:37, quoted in Robert Mignan, *Travels in Chaldaea: Including a Journey from Bussorah to Bagdad, Hillah* (London, 1827), 168.

⁴³⁹ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 18.

⁴⁴⁰ Sue Berry, *Georgian Brighton* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2005), 41.

⁴⁴¹ B 3/4738, 17 May 1828; RQ 28, 6 April 1832; B 3/4782, 6 March 1830, National Archives Kew.

⁴⁴² J. Alexander Dick, "On the Financial Crisis, 1825–26," in *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, ed. Dino Franco Felluga. Extension of *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*. Website, accessed 12 November 2015, http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=alexander-j-dick-on-the-financial-crisis-1825-26.

‘Although we have lost all hopes of seeing the King again, we are by no means dull here, for the town was scarcely ever so full ... The demand for first rate houses has infused new life into the builders; and Kemp Town, which was, during the panic, given up as a bad speculation, is likely to be finished, and to find inhabitants. The hotels are nearly all full, and the drives...are covered during the fine weather with company. Our fashionables here complain sometimes of intruders, to whom they are obliged to give the ‘cut direct’; but from the perfection of democratic enjoyment they are preserved by the obstacles which are opposed to indiscriminate immigration, in the way of expences [sic] of conveyance and living at Brighton.’⁴⁴³

Published in a Tory-run newspaper at a time when the threat of political reform was looming large, Brighton emerges here as analogous to the political establishment: an entity accessible only to a class of people who were unwilling to share their privilege. Brighton society defended itself through acts of snobbery—to give someone the ‘cut direct’ was to ignore them or sever social ties—and would, the article posited, be saved by the cost of living from what Tories viewed paradoxically as the ‘perfection of democratic enjoyment’.⁴⁴⁴ Indeed, Prince von Puckler-Muskau observed its season as being for those who ‘have no country-house or who find London too expensive’, but that ‘nothing can be done here without money or time’.⁴⁴⁵

Typified by the print of Brunswick Town after William Bartlett and Wild’s panorama, the staffage within images of Brighton’s new cliff top developments promoted these new streets as spaces designed specifically for the enjoyment of the town’s wealthiest visitors, reinforcing its social

⁴⁴³ *Morning Chronicle*, 19 September 1828. This echoes Brighton as a reference point for American emigrants who were reported in the *Morning Chronicle* (15 April 1830) as writing home about houses in Zainsville and Cincinnati being ‘as dear as in Brighton’.

⁴⁴⁴ “cuttee, n.,” OED Online (Oxford: Oxford University Press), accessed 11 July 2018, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/46400?rskey=kWTwqs&result=2>. The OED cites Pierce Egan’s use of the phrase in *Life in London* (1821).

⁴⁴⁵ Letters dated 8 February 1827 and 23 January 1828 in von Pückler-Muskou, *Tour in England*, 119, 220.

exclusivity and therefore its appeal to those with money to sustain its eminence (figs.106 and 107). Disassociated from their inscribed titles, these prints might be mistaken for neoclassical developments of equivalent prestige—a boulevard in Paris, perhaps, or London’s Regent’s Park. Key to this is the exclusion of the sea and the absence of indicators of maritime culture, an extreme manifestation of a trend that will be discussed at greater length in the last section of this chapter. By turning attention away from the shore, the ‘indecent confusion’ that was the intermingling of all social classes and the textural variety of yesteryear’s picturesque—with its weather-beaten boats and burlesque characters like bathing matron Martha Gunn—has been entirely displaced by the fashionable crowd upon whom Brighton’s reputation now depended.

This promotion of Brighton as a socially homogenous zone corresponds to the variety of ways in which images increasingly emphasised the resort’s clientele in the late 1820s. Nathaniel Whittock’s *Chain Pier* is a sophisticated example, combining a broad range of topographically specific features, from Brighton’s windmills in the background to its seafront hotels, with a detailed presentation of the Chain Pier’s social scene (fig.91). Accessible by ticket only, this was an explicitly élite zone and is depicted by Whittock accordingly, peopled by genteel visitors engaging in the accordingly genteel leisure activity of studying their surroundings from this unique, modern vantage point. Arranged in a frieze, Whittock’s figures are presented as being equally worthy of attention as the landscape that they inhabit in accordance with fashion plates set in Brighton, which positioned it alongside the metropolitan centres as a place on the vanguard of trends (fig.108). This was compounded by the account of Brighton given by Frenchman Auguste Louis Charles de La Garde (1783–?1853). Illustrated by Brunswick Town, it posited that Brighton ‘is to London what Versailles is to Paris’, an ‘elegant microcosm of the big city’ that was not only a royal residence but a ‘place entirely dedicated to fashion’.⁴⁴⁶ The foregrounding of Brighton’s fashionable clientele is most emphatically expressed in the series *Beauties of Brighton*, which used the

⁴⁴⁶ de La Garde, *Brighton*, 10, 44.

resort's urban landmarks as backdrops for sentimental genre portraits of young ladies (fig.109). The popularity of this series is attested to by its publication in London, Brighton and Paris, and perhaps inspired Cruikshank's satirical conceptualisation of Brighton as a landscape in which the fashionable crowd obscured its famous scenes, consuming greater attention than the landscape itself (fig.110).

Set against the gathering momentum of the movement for political reform in which the pattern of population growth was key to the distribution of political power, such images not only advanced a particular social profile of Brighton but also served to confirm oft-quoted growth statistics and promote the resort as a populous place. The only visual iteration of political reform itself at Brighton, however, came through map publishing. Edward Wallis's *Brighton and its Environs* was accompanied by a map, entitled 'A New Plan of Brighton and Kemp-Town Divided into wards pursuant to the Reform Bill' and showed the town apportioned into coloured zones—an entirely new way of reading Brighton's landscape that had no relevance to its leisure pursuits, only to its population distribution (fig.104).

William IV had defended the enfranchisement of Brighton, countering the possible objection that it was, like the spa town of Cheltenham, a place of 'luxury and dissipation' with his opinion that 'there is a resident population in each quite sufficient to establish a claim to be represented'.⁴⁴⁷ Reform agitator William Cobbett, however, conceived of Brighton as a populous place of dissipation. While Brighton could compare in size to Bristol, Norwich, and Portsmouth, it was ultimately 'a place of no trade; of no commerce at all', 'a pure creation of the taxing and funding system'.⁴⁴⁸

Cobbett's remark that Brighton was 'very pretty to behold', a staple of positivistic historical accounts of Regency Brighton, is often quoted out of

⁴⁴⁷ Letter written on behalf of King William IV (?) by Sir Henry Taylor to Charles, Earl Grey from Brighton, 2 December 1831 in *The Reform Act, 1832. The Correspondence of the Late Earl Grey with His Majesty King William IV. and with Sir H. Taylor from Nov. 1830 to June 1832*, vol. 1, ed. Henry, Earl Grey (London: John Murray, 1867), 6.

⁴⁴⁸ William Cobbett, *Cobbett's Weekly Register*, 4 August 1832, vol. 77, no. 5, 258.

context. His full statement portrays the town as a visible exponent of societal inequality. In relation to industrial towns, Brighton was

‘dismal to think of, when one reflects that [its luxuries] proceed from the unrequited toil of those who create all the valuable things in the country, and who are despised as something beneath the care of those who make the laws’.⁴⁴⁹

Brighton became a well-known Tory seat, with the *Brighton Herald* reporting London’s surprise that the town contained any radicals at all, let alone a reformers’ Political Union.⁴⁵⁰ Language evocative of the reform movement, as seen in the defence of Brighton issued in the *Morning Chronicle*, continued to paint Brighton in a derogatory light, however. Humour masks anxiety about the change of monarch in remarks such as that by Joseph Jekyll about William IV, that he invited ‘such mobs to dinner at Brighton that I really read the arrivals at Margate t’other day by mistake for the list of guests’.⁴⁵¹ Once a common equation, back in the 1700s when the south coast’s resorts hosted a more heterogeneous clientele than did Bath, this was a stinging remark for a town that had aspired to evoke more auspicious comparison.⁴⁵² In a guide to spa locations published in 1841, Brunswick Terrace was deemed to be one amongst several areas in Brighton that were ‘now the subject of a scramble between the patrician and the plebeian’, suggesting that any attempts of Brighton’s regular visitors to protect its exclusivity had been in vain.⁴⁵³ Thus, by the 1840s, it would appear that the derision seen in the private writings of Gilpin, Constable, and Shelley had taken hold in tourist literature, too.

⁴⁴⁹ William Cobbett, *Cobbett’s Weekly Register*, 4 August 1832, vol. 77, no. 5, 258.

⁴⁵⁰ Philip Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work: Local Politics and National Parties, 1832–1841* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 83; Nancy D. LoPatin, *Political Unions, Popular Politics and the Great Reform Act of 1832* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), 82–3.

⁴⁵¹ Quoted in Edmund W. Gilbert, *Brighton: Old Ocean’s Bauble* (Hassocks: Flare Books, 1975), 106.

⁴⁵² Unidentified source from 1795 quoted in Walton, *The English Seaside Resort*, 11.

⁴⁵³ Augustus Bozzi Granville, *The Spas of England and Principle Sea-Bathing Places* (London: Henry Colburn, 1841), 560.

Ruin, emulation and recovery

The financial ruin induced by Kemp Town was followed by the calamitous physical ruin of another production by its architect, Amon Henry Wilds. The Anthaeum tropical gardens were the vision of Henry Phillips, a botanist who had designed the planting schemes of newly landscaped areas like the Level and who, owing to his association with Constable, has been proposed as the author of the Brighton text in *English Landscape Scenery*.⁴⁵⁴ Intended to be the largest domed structure in the world and boasted as being 8,000 cubic feet larger than St Peter's Basilica, Rome, it was celebrated by those who saw it before completion for the 'boldness of mind that had projected it, and the marvellous skill with which it had been reared'.⁴⁵⁵ The magnificent appearance of this structure was anticipated in a panorama drawn by the Anthaeum's architect, Amon Henry Wilds (fig.111). Wilds' designs for the building were adhered to, but for one vital component: a central supporting pillar. Days before its official opening in August 1833 the structure collapsed. Its ruin was not cleared for twenty years and attracted tourists until well in to the 1850s.⁴⁵⁶

This was not the only instance of discord between the projected glamour and splendour of Brighton's urban landscape and its physical reality. Although Queen Victoria had made efforts to become as fond of Brighton as tradition expected, her dislike of the Pavilion's exoticism and the resort's 'indiscreet', 'troublesome' people led her to characterise Brighton 'quite a prison' and gravitate, instead, towards Ramsgate.⁴⁵⁷ Her preference for the Kent town apparently encouraged its inhabitants to 'confidently anticipate that Ramsgate will in a few years have its Pavilion as well as Brighton'.⁴⁵⁸ The departure of

⁴⁵⁴ Warrell, "Taking on the Chain Pier—and Turner," 68.

⁴⁵⁵ John George Bishop, *'A Peep into the Past': Brighton in the Olden Times, with Glances at the Present* (Brighton: J.G. Bishop, 1895), 386.

⁴⁵⁶ Musgrave, *Life in Brighton*, 187.

⁴⁵⁷ Clifford Musgrave, *The Royal Pavilion* (Brighton: County Borough Publications, 1954), 17.

⁴⁵⁸ *The Tourist's Guide to the Principal Ports and Watering Places of Great Britain* (London: Joseph Rickerby, 1846), 48.

royalty from Brighton saw the Pavilion decline into ruin, its rooms having been dismantled and become derelict by 1850.⁴⁵⁹

As Brighton's architectural icons deteriorated over the 1830s and 40s, other towns seeking to usurp its eminence began to emulate its urban landscape. In 1835, it was reported that Hastings was planning a new square 'nearly one hundred feet wider than Sussex Square, Kemp Town'; the text for *Southern Coast* had already publicised Dover's desire to build a Chain Pier.⁴⁶⁰ Two new towns sought to channel Brighton's success by nominal association in the 1830s: the American commuter town of New Brighton, advertised as being twenty minutes by steamer from New York, and a resort town of the same name on Britain's Wirral coast.⁴⁶¹

The latter was developed by Liverpool merchant James Atherton and was deemed by William Beattie in his text for the project begun by Edward and William Finden, *The Ports, Harbours, Watering-Places, and Coast Scenery of Great Britain*, as a place which 'in several respects bids fair to eclipse even the attractions of its celebrated god-mother in Sussex'.⁴⁶² The plate representing Brighton in Finden's *Ports*, after Thomas Creswick (1811–1869), reinforces the town's longevity as the 'god-mother' of resorts by reversion to the iconographical pillars upon which the town's visual identity rested in the 1820s (fig. 112). It is as if Creswick had held a mirror to Constable's *Chain Pier*: the viewpoint inverts his forebear's perspective, looking down the bay from a position on the new sea wall in front of the now-completed Kemp Town, to which Constable had alluded in the distance of his painting. Creswick's inclusion of sailors (two of whom look out to sea) and fishing paraphernalia alongside finely-dressed characters repeats the formula seen in Constable's *Chain Pier*, re-dressing the social mix to be seen in Brighton as a picturesque virtue.

⁴⁵⁹ Musgrave, *Royal Pavilion*, 17.

⁴⁶⁰ *Morning Chronicle*, 13 February 1835; *Southern Coast*, unpaginated.

⁴⁶¹ *Description of New Brighton on Staten Island opposite the City of New York* (New York, 1836).

⁴⁶² William Beattie, *The Ports, Harbours, Watering-Places and Picturesque Scenery of Great Britain*, vol. 1 (London: George Virtue, 1842), 123.

That Brighton was now represented foremost by the fashionable enclave of Kemp Town in a compendium like Finden's *Ports* is further evidence of the way in which the town's residential wings displaced the Chain Pier as the prime landscape subject. It also demonstrates Kemp Town's eventual lead over Brunswick Town as the most fashionable location, a place in possession of 'a dignity...not equalled by any other part of Brighton'.⁴⁶³ The revival of Kemp Town had been sustained by frequent updates in the press of its aristocratic residents' movements. Prominent amongst these was the sixth Duke of Devonshire. An early purchaser of a Kemp Town house, he had, in 1828, purchased the shell of an adjoining property, referring to it as his 'nutshell'.⁴⁶⁴ Paintings by John Wilson Carmichael (1799–1868), amongst them *Kemp Town, Brighton, East Sussex, from the Sea*, attest to and promote Kemp Town's resuscitated reputation (fig.113).⁴⁶⁵ His canvases project Kemp Town as a veritable playground for bathing, excursions on the water and fishing for pleasure and the sea is recapitulated as a vantage point on Brighton, a perspective that had been overtaken by focused views of architectural adornments in reproductive prints which, like Creswick's, invited dual contemplation of Brighton's social profile. By contrast, distance largely precludes identification of many of Carmichael's figures, thus avoiding any potential tarnish to the 'dignity' of Kemp Town in the eyes of his prospective patrons.

Creswick's image was the only one within Finden's *Ports* to utilise the portrait format. Judging by references within the text to MPs selected at the July 1837 elections, the volume was published later in 1837. It is possible, then, that Creswick may have been inspired by the upright composition and dramatic receding perspective of Turner's *The Grand Canal ('Scene – A Street in Venice')*, which had been exhibited at the Royal Academy in May 1837 (fig.114). This formal similarity echoes the comparable complexities surrounding the two watery urban landscapes' identity in the late 1830s, when

⁴⁶³ Charles Knight *et al.*, *The Land We Live In: a pictorial, historical, and literary sketch-book of the British Islands*, vol. 2, part 14 (London: William S. Orr & Co., 1854–56), 326.

⁴⁶⁴ These were 14 Chichester Crescent and 1 Lewes Square. See Beevers, ed., *Brighton Revealed*, 105.

⁴⁶⁵ Another was likely commissioned by the Duke: *The Seafront at Brighton*, 1847, oil on canvas, 737 x 1093 mm, The Duke of Devonshire and Chatsworth House Trust.

both remained attractive to tourists despite persistent observations of decline from a glittering past. The increased circulation of knowledge about the instability of the foundations upon which each place was built extends this parallel. If the Italian city was sinking, Kemp Town was vulnerable to erosion.

The development's proximity to unstable ground was highlighted in reports such as that from 1843 which detailed how

‘several hundred tons of earth and chalk slipped in to the sea, near Kemp Town, Brighton, and...carried with it two men and a boy, one of whom was killed on the spot’.⁴⁶⁶

As has been intimated, the recounting of historic landslides was common in guidebooks as a way to celebrate the ingenuity and efficacy of Brighton's groynes. That ‘the site of the ancient town of Brighton has been entirely swept away’ was reiterated in Mantell's 1840 publication, *The Wonders of Geology, Or, A Familiar exposition of Geological Phenomena*, in which he also described the way in which the rock beneath Kemp Town could be ‘crumbled between the fingers’.⁴⁶⁷

If Creswick and Carmichael's images of a completed and populated Kemp Town advanced the notion that Brighton had staved off financial and social degradation, they would also suggest its continued prowess in engineering defences against natural forces. Centrally placed in their compositions is the literal foundation of Kemp Town's grandeur and functionality, the vast stretch of sea wall beneath it. Constructed to protect the cliff face from erosion, this also served to redirect sewage away from bathing areas and provided Kemp Town residents with exclusive tunnel access to the shore.⁴⁶⁸ Celebrated as another means by which man had overcome nature by way of engineering prowess, this ‘Great Wall’ was said to ‘impress the stranger with its extent

⁴⁶⁶ *Caledonian Mercury*, 27 Nov 1843.

⁴⁶⁷ Gideon Mantell, *The Wonders of Geology, Or, A Familiar exposition of Geological Phenomena* by G. M...from Notes Taken by G. F. Richardson (London, 1838), 68, 80.

⁴⁶⁸ Bruce, *History of Brighton*, 47.

and beauty'; even Italian physician Augustus Bozzi Granville, a detractor of Brighton, acknowledged it should be considered a 'Roman work'.⁴⁶⁹ In *Kemp Town from the Sea* the development stands triumphant, and defiant. Gleaming in bright sunlight, Carmichael's Kemp Town, and, by extension, Brighton, is decidedly not a place in decline. The multi-storied, stuccoed terrace of Kemp Town appears to mimic the white block of the cliffs further down the coast in the painting, blurring the boundary between the notoriously unstable cliffs and the urban development that had, after a tortuous start, now cemented its place as a beacon of Brighton's fashionable image.

III. The Interior

This chapter has thus far followed the approach to Brighton's urban geography taken in most contemporary guidebooks. Brayley's *Topographical Sketches*, written at the time when the seafront was the loci of the most novel urban developments, duly discussed this zone first.⁴⁷⁰ This was not the subject of the first image in his book, however, which viewed Brighton from an inland position on Rose Hill, to the northwest of the town (fig.115). As the view that greeted visitors arriving by road its placement opposite the title page thus provided a proxy for the traveller's first encounter with Brighton but also served to summarise the extent of its developed nucleus. Returning to Brayley's analogy of the urban space at Brighton as an 'isosceles triangle', the view from Rose Hill overlooked the town's northern apex.⁴⁷¹ This triangular shape also works as an analogy for the distribution of artistic attention at Brighton: during the 1820s Brighton's 'interior' landscape received proportionately less attention than the shoreline. From the late 1830s, however, there was a perceptible drift of attention inland and a splintering in the town's image in which the dominance of the Pavilion, the Chain Pier and Kemp Town, as singular emblems of Brighton's urban landscape, began to fade. These subjects were now more often pictured within a wider urban

⁴⁶⁹ Charles Knight *et al.*, *The Land We Live In*, 326; Augustus Bozzi Granville, *The Spas of England and Principle Sea-Bathing Places* (London: Henry Colburn, 1841), 568.

⁴⁷⁰ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 18.

⁴⁷¹ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 14.

context, if at all. This section will explore the significance of this trend, discussing it in relation to changes in the print market, the make-up of Brighton's visitors and the growing impact of the resort's relationship with the metropolis.

Luxury and labour

Like the seafront, the scene below Rose Hill was an urbanising landscape acquiring signifiers of Brighton's ascendancy as a resort and, accordingly, its rapid population growth. Brayley's text informs us that the view overlooked the newly enclosed and landscaped Royal Brighton Pleasure Grounds and an area known as the Level, which was 'a receptacle for rubbish' until it was commandeered for George IV's coronation celebrations and 'improved' by 'handsome Lawns...shrubs, and enclosed with dwarf walls and iron palisades'.⁴⁷² Brayley's endorsement of the enclosure and landscaping of ground for the benefit of respectable visitors is matched by his enthusiasm for new residential developments, their carefully laid-out, uniform 'modern buildings...far superior to the old ones'.⁴⁷³ The view from Rose Hill takes in the pristine frontage of one such project, Hanover Crescent, built between 1822 and 1823 by soon-to-be Kemp Town architects Wilds and Busby.⁴⁷⁴ The most notable feature of the outlook from Rose Hill was St Peter's Church, seen at centre right in Havell's image. Brayley notes that construction began in 1824; Havell's inaccurate projection of its spire suggests he did not see the completed church when producing his image for Brayley.⁴⁷⁵ Sights like this new, neo-gothic church signified to viewers not only the full variety of Brighton's architectural reference points—the neo-gothic joining the hybridising eastern architecture of the Palace and the neoclassical pattern of its residential terraces—but that town's provision of stylish settings for everyday life extended beyond its seafront.

⁴⁷² Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 13.

⁴⁷³ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 15.

⁴⁷⁴ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 15.

⁴⁷⁵ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 15; Ford, *Images of Brighton*, 21.

Five years later, however, topographer Thomas Allen described this zone as containing the least desirable of Brighton's houses: ranked highest were those facing the sea, followed by those with a view of the sea, and, last, those 'in the interior'.⁴⁷⁶ As the circulated image of Brighton diversified to include views from its flanking downs, it is possible to map this hierarchy and corresponding social stratification by observation of the figures seen in each location. Apart from a top-hatted Pavilion gardener, the only figure identifiable as a labourer in the 1840s series *Views of Brighton* is seen in the view of Rose Hill, confirming the interior's identity as a hybrid urban-agricultural landscape, rather than one of luxury, and hence, less desirable (figs.116 and 117). A lithograph after Brighton-born artist Richard Henry Nibbs (1816–1893) further confirms the stratification of Brighton's spaces along class lines (fig.118). Those at the very bottom of Brighton's social tier—inmates of Brighton's workhouse—are seen in the foreground, this image being their only known depiction.⁴⁷⁷ The houses in the left-hand foreground, meanwhile, heralded the eventual covering over of this hill with modest terraces built for tradespeople.⁴⁷⁸ It is perhaps significant that Nibbs's image of Brighton as an operational social machine, in which a fuller range of societal operators and their spaces were depicted, was not a commercial success.⁴⁷⁹ Although, as Constable's letterpress for *A Sea-Beach* stated, Brighton was 'the resort of multitudes of every class of society', it was still the case that those who detracted from the resort's luxurious image were not necessarily welcome in its depiction.⁴⁸⁰

As well as confirming the social profile of the town's different zones, Taylor's *Views of Brighton* typified the trend towards the issue of multiple views. The juxtaposition of prints on one sheet, presumably for the purposes of portfolio storage, exaggerates the sense of a dispersed focal point in images

⁴⁷⁶ Thomas Allen, *History of the counties of Surrey and Sussex. Illustrated by a series of views, engraved on steel from original drawings by Nathaniel Whittock*, vol. 2 (London: I.T. Hinton and Holdworth & Hall, 1829), 586.

⁴⁷⁷ Steve Myall, *The Victorian Development of the Clifton, Montpelier and Powis Estates of Brighton* (Lewes, Pomegranate Press, 2008), 41.

⁴⁷⁸ Myall, *Victorian Development*, 41.

⁴⁷⁹ Myall, *Victorian Development*, 39–40.

⁴⁸⁰ Letterpress for 'A Sea-Beach – Brighton', in Wilton, 'English Landscape Scenery', 42.

of Brighton in the 1840s induced by Brighton's inland development. Additionally, the use of stock prints—seen in Taylor's appropriation of Nathaniel Whittock's 1829 view of the Chain Pier which originally appeared in Thomas Allen's *Surrey and Sussex* (figs.91 and 116)—and the widespread use of lithography suggests the economy of later depictions of Brighton. As industrialised processes in paper production and reproductive technologies made prints increasingly cheaper to collect, it was no longer necessary for artists to aspire to the single-image comprehensiveness that Havell and Turner had achieved through topographical manipulation twenty years earlier. Multiple issues of Brighton views attest to the rise in the late 1830s of collectible print series such the *Album de Brighton*, a set aimed at the continued influx of French tourists (fig.119). The scenes floating in blank space on the *Album* sheet encourage free movement through the landscape in a sequence not restricted by spatial geography nor anchored by topographical description beyond short titles. The format of these scenes, in vignettes of multiple sizes, played to a new variation of grangerisation in which collectors would cut and paste images into scrapbooks, with or without text.⁴⁸¹ It had thus become possible to create a personal topography of one's own with juxtapositions as idiosyncratic as the architectural and social contrasts upon which Brighton's urban landscape was built.

The dozens of oil sketches made by Constable during his summers in Brighton also amount to a personalised topography, one that privileged its peripheries. His sketches of windmills, taken from positions higher up Brighton's western slope than that in the images discussed above, obscure the town's unique landmarks in favour of its universal, centuries-old agricultural infrastructure (figs.120 and 121). Though it has been said that these sketches prove Constable's dislike of Brighton's urban fabric, windmills were, like collier ships, accessories to urban growth. The frequency of their depiction, be it in seventeenth-century Holland or early nineteenth-century Britain, correlated with rapid increases in population, while their placement in the

⁴⁸¹ Lucy Peltz, *Facing the text: extra-illustration, print culture, and society in Britain, 1769–1840* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, 2017), 222.

landscape plotted the course of urban sprawl; as previously stated, at Brighton they were either moved further outwards from the centre or demolished as the town expanded.⁴⁸² Through the motion of their sails working in conjunction with the weather to enact processes of transformation—of corn into flour and of a ‘dirty little fishing village’ into a ‘fashionable’ resort—they were the very embodiment of mutability.

In the years coinciding with Constable’s production of his *plein air* windmill sketches, the iconography of the windmill was ascribed a renewed artistic and political currency. 1822 and 1825 saw the publication of mezzotints after Rembrandt’s renowned composition, *The Mill*, which Constable had copied in watercolour upon its exhibition at the British Institution in 1806.⁴⁸³ Constable emulated the visual pairing between church and the windmill commonly seen in the Dutch landscape tradition in an image he contributed to illustrate ‘The Social Day’, a poem by Peter Coxe, brother of William, Archdeacon of Salisbury. The verse upheld windmills as beacons of social cohesion, indiscriminately providing all with sustenance:

‘But when we know its powers dispens [sic]
The bounteous gifts of Providence
That the same mill the flour will spread
To give the rich and poor their bread’.⁴⁸⁴

Since the inception of the Corn Laws, part of the controversial 1815 Importation Act established to protect mill owners from being undercut by foreign imports, the status of the windmill as a symbol of God’s bounty and social harmony was heavily undermined. Under these laws, the mill was an instrument of social schism, its sails and artificially inflated grain prices generating wealth for owners but pecuniary pressure on the labouring class. Since his father had owned a windmill, Constable’s family numbered amongst

⁴⁸² Timothy Wilcox, ed., *The Romantic Windmill: the windmill in British art from Gainsborough to David Cox, 1750–1850* (Hove: Hove Museum and Art Gallery, 1993), 35; Sue Berry, “Walking with Constable,” 111.

⁴⁸³ Wilcox, ed., *The Romantic Windmill*, 9, 62; Mark Evans, ed., *John Constable: the Making of a Master* (London: V&A Publishing, 2014), 87.

⁴⁸⁴ Wilcox, ed., *Romantic Windmill*, 62.

those whose interests were best served by the Corn Laws. In 1829 Constable had Lucas engrave an image of a Brighton windmill for *English Landscape Scenery*.⁴⁸⁵ At a time of mounting pressure for repeal of the Corn Laws, this image not only had potential to express Constable's belief in the mill's spiritual connotations (as a conduit between earth and sky, and man and God), but also his Tory values, in which the windmill, like the church, was a worthy perpetuator of the social order. It was ultimately excluded from Constable's publication. In 1846 Lucas posthumously published another of Constable's windmill sketches, coinciding with the momentous repeal of the Corn Laws that year.⁴⁸⁶

An inscription Constable made on the reverse of one windmill sketch (fig.120), that 'the neighbourhood of Brighton—consists of London cow fields—and Hideous masses of unfledged earth called the country' reveals the commonly held prejudice about Brighton's surrounding landscape.⁴⁸⁷ Prized only for the quality of the mutton that grazed on the herbaceous layer of vegetation covering the chalk hills, this landscape had long been denigrated or else completely overlooked. In *Southern Coast*, this landscape's 'want of wood' was 'considered...a defect in the environs of Brighton'.⁴⁸⁸ Brayley found 'very little scenery of picturesque description' there, while Prince von Pückler-Muskou's description of the Sussex Downs as 'unmeaning, treeless', echoed his complaints of Salisbury's chalky plains.⁴⁸⁹ These comments reveal the aesthetic prejudice of a generation accustomed to viewing landscape through the prism of the Gilpinian picturesque, in which trees were necessary framing devices that gave a picture its structure and legibility. We might therefore see Constable's sketches of windmills, like *Chain Pier, Brighton* as rising to the challenge of elevating derided or overlooked subjects but also as a means of drawing the Downs into the image of Brighton as an appealing

⁴⁸⁵ David Lucas after John Constable, *A Mill near Brighton*, engraved 1829–30, published 1855, mezzotint on paper, 146 x 115 mm (image), Tate (T04074).

⁴⁸⁶ David Lucas after John Constable, *Cornfields near Brighton*, engraved 1844, published 1846 as part of 'New Series of Engravings, illustrative of English Landscape', mezzotint on paper, 184 x 253 mm (paper), British Museum (1878,0112.231).

⁴⁸⁷ Evans, ed., *Constable: the Making of a Master*, 74.

⁴⁸⁸ *Southern Coast*, unpaginated.

⁴⁸⁹ Brayley, *Topographical Sketches*, 13; von Pückler-Muskou, *Tour in England*, 118, 346, 338.

asset for this class of society: not only did its fashionable streets and modern infrastructure serve their interests, but so too did its hinterland. In the late 1830s and 1840s this fringe zone would play an increasingly prominent part in the projection of Brighton's modernity.

Looking North: new perspectives

Brighton Looking North unites in one sweeping view many of the sights pictured in the popular lithographed vignettes and prints taken from the higher ground on western reaches of the town (fig.122). Its bird's-eye vantage point presents a new perspective on the town, literally and figuratively—for the view northwest from a position just above the shore was novel. While it may recall the projected visions of Kemp and Brunswick Towns that lingered on in the vignettes inset within maps, *Brighton Looking North* dispenses with the sea altogether and celebrates central Brighton as a fully-operational agglomeration of urban infrastructural developments. In this it can be compared to maps of Brighton that, by highlighting the town's 'Improvements', aligned the resort with a progressive metropolitan topographical culture that celebrated municipal buildings, transportation and industry as totems of civic progress and as sites worthy of visual interest. Comparison with Jobbins' map of 1843 affirms the growth of modern infrastructure in the intervening years (fig.123). The town's gasworks, situated close to Kemp Town, which had been a source of its derision during the economic crash, was by now joined by a waterworks, a county hospital, a street network comprising houses aimed at a greater variety of residents, and a cemetery so full as to have been extended beyond the ancient walls of St Nicholas's churchyard.

By plotting out new features and re-contextualising familiar landmarks, *Brighton Looking North* functions almost like a map and yet the visual hierarchy created by its elevated and receding perspective encourages a progression through Brighton's urban landscape that narrates the town's evolution in a way similar to Constable's *Chain Pier*. Rather than the fishing

industry, *Brighton Looking North* foregrounds the first part of the town to witness notable, leisure-focused urban development. Thus, the lawns and walkways of the Steine, formerly treated as common ground and used by fishermen to dry nets, are triangulated by the Pavilion, the Albion Hotel and, at bottom right, the entrance to the Chain Pier. These are all urban features that, despite being established little over twenty years before, now numbered amongst Brighton's oldest. Dissected and encircled by transport arteries, peopled with wagons, carriages, tourists and street hawkers, this touristic hub is depicted as the central organ within the wider body of the town. Windmills indicate the bounties of its hinterland, providing sustenance for a population whose means of flow into the town is visualised in the form of the railway viaduct on the horizon, complete with steam train in motion. The railway would take Brighton imagery far beyond the tip of the town's topographic isosceles triangle, integrating the Downs into the visual communication of its modernity.

The opening of the railway connection with London in September 1841 infused a renewed sense of excitement about Brighton as a destination synonymous with technological progress and experiential novelty. By contrast to the celebrated Chain Pier, groynes and sea wall, however, the railway re-focused attention inland, adding further weight to the burgeoning visual identity of the town's interior as a highly functional and highly developed urban organism. Brighton appears as such in a woodcut depicting the view from the railway terminus that was published in the Brighton edition of the *Railway Travelling Charts*, a series of companion guides to railway journeys (fig.124). Situated close to the London Road, the prospect that greeted alighting rail passengers was from an angle similar to that which had greeted travellers by road in 1824, as seen in Havell's view from Rose Hill. In the 1840s woodcut, the lack of tonal emphasis ascribed to the town below the station exaggerates the sense of distance and, in turn, the expansiveness of land now engulfed by swathes of new urban and industrial development.

This modern landscape was presented as the climactic sight of the journey from the capital to the resort in the Brighton edition of the *Railway Travelling*

Charts (fig.125). Its format echoed, but outstripped in its information and its visual content, earlier pocket-sized stagecoach route guides like *The British Roadster* (fig.126). Both road and rail guides offer a duality of means by which travellers could ‘read’ the landscape of their route. In the *Roadster*, sections of a skeletal map laid out across its pages traced the road along which the coach would travel, with some contouring and place names marked. Concise written summaries of the destination and major places along the way were offered. The Brighton edition of the *Railway Travelling Charts* epitomises the renewed emphasis on the experience of journeying to Brighton that the railway invoked. The journey gave rise to new observational and educational possibilities, since, as the text stated, ‘[r]ailroads, by passing through country generally some distance from the old coach roads, reveal objects of interest which have hitherto escaped much notice’.⁴⁹⁰

New technologies in print and paper production enabled the larger format of the *Railway Travelling Charts*: akin to Havell’s rolling panorama, its fold-out design encouraged more concerted, and potentially communal study of its contents. A diagram of the railway’s course operates as the central spine around which the surrounding objects of interest are illustrated and explained. This informational *mis-en-scene*, in which antiquarian sites and modern railway infrastructure are juxtaposed, functions as an analogy for the contraction of travel time afforded by the railway’s speed, although this was, ironically, the very quality that prevented prolonged in-carriage engagement with ‘objects of interest’.

A further novelty lay in the *Railway Travelling Charts*’s presentation of new knowledge, for example about the down land north of Brighton, which qualified as one such object that had ‘hitherto escaped notice’. Readers were encouraged to observe the ‘geological features of the Brighton Railway’ and the differences in scenery these produced, from London clay’s meadows to the ‘grassy Chalk Downs’.⁴⁹¹ Running counter to the downs’ earlier portrayal

⁴⁹⁰ *Railway Travelling Charts, or, Iron Road Books, for perusal on the journey, London to Brighton* (London: J. Holmes, 1846), unpaginated.

⁴⁹¹ *Railway Travelling Charts*, unpaginated.

as either an inadequacy of the Brighton experience or else not part of it at all, the railway help to re-cast this landscape as a site that was both visually and scientifically interesting. During the course of the railway's construction, Mantell had published *The Wonders of Geology, Or, A Familiar exposition of Geological Phenomena*, based on a series of lectures delivered at Brighton, in which he posited geological knowledge as the 'means of civilisation' that informed and was informed by '[e]very artificial excavation' necessary for modern urban projects like the railway.⁴⁹² Remarking on the strangeness that 'hundreds of intelligent persons from the metropolis' did not understand the landscape that they 'traversed daily', he presented a section on the geological features of chalk downs traversed by the railway, which were 'formed by the elevated masses of ancient cretaceous deposits', including 'elephants and other large mammals'.⁴⁹³ The integration of this knowledge in topographical guides to the railway further advanced the sensation of time-travel that new technology afforded, illuminating the dual identity of the Downs as a landscape that was simultaneously ancient and modern.

The leading icon of the advent of modernity upon the downs was John Rastrick's London Road viaduct, a curving 27-arch brick structure built between 1845 and 1846 to convey the railway between Brighton and Lewes (fig.127). Its depiction in a painting by Carmichael, exhibited at the 1848 Royal Academy, calls attention to the numerous tensions—artistic, social and economic—that this era-defining technology gave rise to both at Brighton and beyond.

In the intervening years since his 1840 portrayal of Kemp Town's monumental sea wall, Carmichael had capitalised on the 'railway mania' of the 1840s in depictions of the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway expressed in the same visual idiom of high colouring and clarity of form seen in his *London Road Viaduct*. This aesthetic related his work more to that of William James Müller, Clarkson Stanfield and William Mulready, than it did to Turner, whose trailblazing *Rain, Steam, and Speed – the Great Western*

⁴⁹² Mantell, *Wonders*, 4, 5.

⁴⁹³ Mantell, *Wonders*, 5.

Railway had set the precedent for the railway as a valid subject within the academic arena of the Royal Academy in 1844. Yet whereas Turner's evocative and atmospheric depiction of the modern phenomenon had been met with admiration, tempered only by his by-now regular detractors, the *Art Journal* noted Carmichael's contribution to the 1848 Royal Academy exhibition was 'as agreeably painted as the material will admit' but 'rather more an engineering water colour subject, than suitable for an oil picture'.⁴⁹⁴ Echoing the 1837 criticism of Pyne's *Bristol from the Overfall Dam* as a 'mean subject' these comments serve to further highlight the daring of Constable's inclusion of the Chain Pier in his speculative portrayal of Brighton in 1827, underlining that his reasons for subduing its presence reflected more than any prejudice towards it that he expressed in private. Still, in 1848, the application of oil, a traditionally exalted medium, to modern subject matter remained contentious.

As much as the harmonious mood of Carmichael's painting appears to celebrate both steam and sail as dynamic elements that worked together to power Brighton's development, the advent of steam power was poised to erase the windmill, an icon that had been integral to its visual and economic identity, from the town's landscape. Like those elsewhere, Brighton's windmills faced obsolescence from the transition to steam-powered milling, notwithstanding the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846.⁴⁹⁵ Carmichael may therefore have been playing on the political currency and increasing nostalgia potential of the windmill in his juxtaposition of these technologies. This reading can also be applied to the layering of new over old transportation in the centre of the composition. Through its location and name, the London Road viaduct drew attention to the transport revolutions that had widened access to Brighton and aided its growth but, as had been the case with improvements to Brighton's road links in the early 1800s, anxieties resurfaced with the advent of the railway. It has been suggested that the cost of rail fares, at 14s 6d and 9s 6d for first and second class respectively, were set

⁴⁹⁴ Quoted in Diana Villar, *John Wilson Carmichael 1799–1868* (Carmichael and Sweet, Portsmouth, 1995), 67.

⁴⁹⁵ Wilcox, ed., *Romantic Windmill*, 38.

deliberately high as a result of pressure from Brighton's elite who wished to protect its exclusivity.⁴⁹⁶ Granville, however, who had superciliously described Brunswick Town as an area suffering from the 'struggle between the plebeian and the patrician', surmised that the narrowed journey time would force Brighton to adopt a more competitive economy that would further enhance its accessibility to less respectable resort tourists from London.⁴⁹⁷

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Before the railway was even begun, it was predicted in 1830 that London and Brighton would become as it were part of each other'; 'what importance this would be to the Metropolis!'⁴⁹⁸ As has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, Brighton's urban environment was intimately linked with that of London, through its visitors, its emulation of metropolitan architecture and, with the coming of the railway, its increased accessibility. The railway determined Brighton's identity as 'London maritimised'.⁴⁹⁹ By the mid-1850s, it was declared that

[w]e might, indeed, almost class Brighton as a suburb of the metropolis...Or we might fancifully liken it to some bright and beautiful ornament attached to the girdle of the metropolis, by the shining rails, as by burnished chains'.⁵⁰⁰

If the windmill had begun a process of urbanisation of the rural down land surrounding Brighton, the cutting through and bridging of this landscape by the railway advanced this to extremes. By drawing attention inland, the railway cast the downs anew: no longer a barrier and a background to the

⁴⁹⁶ John Howard Turner, *The London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, vol.1: origin and formations* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1977), 128, 163–164.

⁴⁹⁷ In 1819, Mrs Fitzherbert, famed for her illicit relationship with the Prince Regent, lamented the high frequency and low fare – six shillings – of coaches from London to Brighton. See Ian Warrell, "In Pursuit of Originality in Brighton", 45; Granville, *Spas of England*, 579.

⁴⁹⁸ *Morning Chronicle*, 26 April 1830; the article was repeated in the *Observer*.

⁴⁹⁹ Granville, *Spas of England*, 565.

⁵⁰⁰ Charles Knight *et al.*, *The Land We Live In*, 324.

urban landscape but rather its foreground, frontier, and host to the modern-age infrastructure that tethered the resort in servitude to the most extreme iteration of urban landscape, the metropolis.

Chapter Four

‘Between refined society and the toiling multitude’: Lambeth and Thameside London

In the introduction to his 1828 *An Original Picture of London*, John Britton wrote that

‘[a] *Picture of London*, however faithful and interesting for a time, cannot remain so for long; for this metropolis like the seasons of the English climate, seems doomed to perpetual change, to constant fluctuation, to endless vicissitudes’.⁵⁰¹

This phrase could just as well apply to many of Britain’s towns and cities in the grip of rapid urbanisation in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of the case studies forming this thesis, it is the parish of Lambeth that most befits this description. Morphing from a conglomeration of villages into a densely populated hive of industry and modern technology, early nineteenth-century Lambeth was an unstable entity, subject to perpetual change. This instability was underscored by its ambiguous status in relation to the metropolis. Geographically proximal, Lambeth was also distanced from the capital, physically, by the Thames, and nominally – this was the ‘Surrey shore’, and, as it came to be known in time, ‘transpontine London’ (a term that stemmed from the concentration there of alternative, bawdy theatres but which had especial relevance to its marshy riverbanks by parity with the ‘pontine’ marshland south of Rome).⁵⁰² These appellations signify the tense duality in Lambeth’s position as both external and yet belonging to the metropolis. Lambeth’s ambiguity is reflected in Britton’s *Picture of London*, too, for despite little mention in the text, Lambeth is visually incorporated within the

⁵⁰¹ John Britton, ed., *The Original Picture of London*, 26th edition (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, 1828), v.

⁵⁰² “transpontine, adj.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), accessed 19 May 2015, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205015?redirectedFrom=transpontine&>. The OED cites its first documented use as being in 1844 to describe the bawdy style of Lambeth’s theatres, evolving to mean across or over a bridge, specifically on the other side of the bridges in London, i.e. south of the Thames.

volume's map and its principle features, Lambeth Palace (home to the Archbishop of Canterbury) and Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, are delineated. The map's title, however, makes reference only to the cities of London, Westminster, and the Borough of Southwark; Lambeth, under the jurisdiction of Surrey, is not labelled. This chapter will demonstrate the numerous ways in which Lambeth's image was similarly manipulated to serve multiple purposes. Despite Lambeth's proximity and the degree to which its growth was symbiotic with that of the capital, the relationship between these distinct urban zones was fraught with contention and complications that rendered Lambeth simultaneously vital and peripheral to the metropolis's image.

This chapter is dominated by the geography of the river Thames, taking as its focus the stretch of river between two bridges built towards the beginning of the period under review here: Vauxhall Bridge, the original iron version of which was constructed in 1816, and Waterloo Bridge, which opened to great fanfare a year later and, although not initially conceived as a monument, drew Lambeth into the commemorative remodelling of London after the Napoleonic wars. The ensuing discussion will focus on three sites that lay along the stretch of river bracketed by Vauxhall and Waterloo bridges – Lambeth Palace, Lambeth Marsh and, as new icons of an industrialised shoreline, a pair of manufacturing shot towers that stood either side of the southern approach of Waterloo Bridge. Culturally, the Thames was understood as an embodiment of Britain's economic and scenic capital and duly celebrated as its prime aesthetic asset. Analysis of the contribution each of these sites made to the Thames's image and the ways in which their depiction in images and texts shaped and re-shaped Lambeth's visual identity will be the driving aim of the chapter.

Just as the chapter on Bristol focused on the activities of a locally-rooted network of artists in the presentation of that landscape and its urban developments over time, the analysis of Lambeth's topographical profile will feature individuals who had connections to the locale. Whereas at Bristol, however, the focus was upon a relatively tightly defined period of time, that in which the activities of its resident artists were relatively coherent, the

temporal lens at Lambeth will be wider, spanning the arc of time punctuated by three texts produced by authors with Lambeth roots, Edward Wedlake Brayley and Thomas Allen. Brayley's *Lambeth Palace*, produced as a collaboration with actor-turned-antiquarian William Herbert, who was also Lambeth-based, was his first major topographical publication; his *Topographical History of Surrey* (1841–48), was amongst his last and most ambitious works. Along with Allen's *History and Antiquities of the Parish of Lambeth* (1827), and William Edward Trotter's *Select Illustrated Topography of Thirty Miles Round London* (1839), these are taken as key works in the construction of Lambeth's image. This will provide the opportunity for analysis of the way in which Lambeth, a landscape of rapid and disorienting change, was framed by different writers at different points working within a discipline that was itself evolving.

Placing Lambeth

Lambeth was consistently referred to in this period as being on the 'Surrey' shore of the River Thames. Its close identification with its county geography distinguished it from neighbouring locales. Millbank was not regularly referred to as belonging to the county of Middlesex, nor was Westminster. Adjacent Southwark, while also a part of Surrey, had enjoyed the distinction of borough status since the 1300s, a status Lambeth would not be granted until the closing decade of the nineteenth century. Even after the Reform Act of 1832, which awarded Lambeth two Members of Parliament in recognition of its immense growth in population, Lambeth remained, until 1889 (when it was incorporated into the newly-created County of London), under the jurisdiction of the county of Surrey. In the period under review here, Lambeth was a rapidly urbanising entity whose identity and location made it difficult to place. Greenwood's 1829 Map of Surrey visualises Lambeth's incorporation within its county geography and within the pink-shaded ancient hundred of Brixton, another jurisdictional category (figs.128 and 129). And yet the pattern of urban development, heavily weighted towards the upper right-hand part – in which urbanisation has conjoined Lambeth and Southwark – distinguishes

Lambeth from the rest of the county to paint a picture of the Brixton hundred as a polarised geography, spanning land that was predominantly rural or semi-rural except for its northern-most extremity.

Thus the general descriptions of Surrey as a topography of ‘gentle hill and dale’ could not account for the urbanised, flat exception at its northern extremity.⁵⁰³ Similarly, Brighton-based geologist Gideon Mantell, who collaborated with Brayley on his *History of Surrey*, made no mention of Lambeth in his geological account of Surrey. This rapidly urbanising area is excluded in an otherwise detailed description of Surrey scenery, which describes more suburban areas like Clapham, Norwood and Dulwich; nor is it labelled on the geological map.⁵⁰⁴ This exclusion metaphorically expresses the temporal dimension of the Lambeth-Surrey polarity – geology is a mode dealing in slow, deep time but Lambeth, the most rapidly urbanising and industrialising area, was morphing at a speed far beyond the geologist’s measure.

A further geographical context, that of the parish, placed Lambeth in a narrower territorial division with a morphology that reflected more acutely the scale and impact of changes taking place. In March 1825 the parish of St Mary, Lambeth’s oldest church, was divided into five ecclesiastical districts following the receipt of £64,000 from the Commission for the Building of New Churches, which recognised the need for new places of worship in areas that had seen a rapid influx of people; four new churches were eventually built.⁵⁰⁵ A plan was made to indicate the redrawing of these boundaries (fig.130). Formerly covering the entire extent of land indicated, that ranged from the Thames in the north southeast to Norwood across the eastern half of

⁵⁰³ Thomas Allen, *History of the counties of Surrey and Sussex. Illustrated by a series of views, engraved on steel from original drawings by Nathaniel Whittock* (London: Isaac Taylor Hinton, 1829), 3.

⁵⁰⁴ Gideon Algonon Mantell, *A Sketch of the Geology of Surrey* (Dorking: Robert Best Ede, 1840), 3.

⁵⁰⁵ The sums apportioned in the Act (A public Act for building and promoting the building of additional churches in populous parishes, 58 Geo. III, cap. 45) were reported in *The British Magazine and Monthly Register of religious and ecclesiastical information, parochial history, and documents respecting the state of the poor, progress of education &c.*, vol. 1 (London: John Thurrill, 1832), 509.

the hundred of Brixton, the parish of St Mary, or ‘Lambeth Church District’ as it is labelled on the plan, was now a much reduced and broadly triangular patch of land bordered by Westminster Bridge Road to the north, St George’s Fields to the east, Kennington Lane to the south and the Thames to the west. The appellation of the smaller adjacent district indicates the way in which the area’s character was changing. This was the site of Lambeth Marsh, a previously extensive area of open, boggy land infiltrated by minor tributaries of the Thames. As the marshland disappeared beneath a grid of streets and new buildings, this zone now took its name from Waterloo Bridge, the structure responsible for catalysing its development. The structure of this chapter broadly corresponds to the chronological sequence of Lambeth’s urbanisation. It will begin with a focus on Lambeth Church District, in which Lambeth Palace and Vauxhall Gardens were situated, before moving down the shoreline to analyse the new topography of the Waterloo Bridge District, particularly its industrial structures.

According to Thomas Allen, ‘[n]o portion of the parish of Lambeth deserves or claims the attention of the antiquary or topographer so much as [Lambeth Church] District; it is filled with curious objects’.⁵⁰⁶ Lambeth’s historical record was strong, the area a rich palimpsest of associations. Thus Allen notes how Westminster Bridge, erected in 1750, was the site of a Roman river crossing at Stangate while St Mary’s church stood as the only remnant of the Saxon and medieval settlements. As the place where King Harthacnut died in 1042, where his successor King Harold performed an immediate self-coronation, and the location for one of King Henry VIII’s palaces, it had been a place of royal import.⁵⁰⁷ In the cultural life of the nation it was distinguished as the home and final resting place of the Dutch botanical collecting family Tradescant, who opened England’s first museum there in the seventeenth century; their elaborate tomb at St Mary’s church was a standard point of note in topographical texts. By far the most dominant strand of the area’s antiquarian record, however, was its role in the ecclesiastical life of Britain. St

⁵⁰⁶ Thomas Allen, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Lambeth, and the Archbishopal Palace, in the County of Surrey* (London: J. Allen, 1826), 322.

⁵⁰⁷ Rudolph Ackermann *et al.*, *Microcosm of London* (London: R. Ackermann, 1808), 163.

Mary's was thus drawn into this by its physical and operational relationship with the area's main antiquarian focal point, Lambeth Palace. Occupied by the Archbishop of Canterbury since the thirteenth century, this stood as the last physical manifestation of the area's long association with institutional power.

Lambeth Palace: an iconographical anchor

Consistently prominent across a range of representational forms, Lambeth Palace was the most visible of the area's 'curious objects'. John Noorthouck described it in 1772 as the area's 'only building of consideration' in an area 'chiefly inhabited by glass blowers, potters, fishermen and watermen'.⁵⁰⁸ Indeed, with an imposing castellated five-story gatehouse (named Morton's Tower after archbishop John Morton (c.1420–1500)) the Palace exerted a physical dominance correlative to its status as Lambeth's prime antiquarian focal point. While the detail of its location is lost to the scale of Greenwood's map, it is presented as Surrey's prime pictorial motif through the map's inset vignette (fig.131). In the map of parish boundaries, however, it is thrown into relief as a building occupying a large and irregular space amidst a dense linear matrix of newly-built streets. As this chapter will demonstrate, Lambeth Palace was an anchor point in a topography defined by change. Comparison of maps from a broader span of time further illuminates this. In the map accompanying Noorthouck's *History of London*, the blacked out footprint of Lambeth Palace, the 'only building of consideration', stands in stark contrast to the white space of interlocking gardens around it (fig.132).⁵⁰⁹ These spaces describe an open landscape with gardens cultivated for foodstuffs or, in the famous case of Vauxhall or Cuper's Gardens, turned over to pleasure and escapism from the metropolis's more straitened behavioural codes. By 1841, however, when the first volume of Brayley's *History of Surrey* was published, the landscape of his childhood and the situation of Lambeth Palace was much changed. Laurie's Map of London from 1841 (fig.133) shows that it is now

⁵⁰⁸ John Noorthouck, *A New History of London, including Westminster and Southwark. To which is added, a general survey of the whole; describing the public buildings, late improvements, &c. Illustrated with copper-plates* (London: R. Baldwin, 1773), 691, 692.

⁵⁰⁹ Noorthouck, *New History of London*, 691.

the enclosed white space of the Palace's walled garden that marks it out in a patchwork of new urban development that shows the vestiges of Lambeth's identity as a parish replete with the benefits of its position on London's rural fringe – open space and gardens utilised for both produce and pleasure – as being replaced by a new steam-powered infrastructure of industry and transport, and a raft of public institutions and housing to serve a swelling population.

As well as revealing the changes that took place, these cartographic representations indicate the complex socioeconomic ecology in which Lambeth Palace was situated, going further than images could in revealing the Palace as something of an anachronism in an area centred upon economies of industrial production and pleasure. They also points toward the area's constant, immutable feature – the Thames.

Lambeth's geography is defined by the river's serpentine path. The river is both a border and a threshold, containing the area's spatial reach but also offering its residents access – via the water, and its bridges – to a broad spectrum of economic opportunities that were either based on the river itself or in territories accessible by its traversal or navigation. The river was the frontier from which the earliest iterations of Lambeth's urban life radiated out: the area's earliest settlers resided close to the river in two villages originally founded on low-lying islands formed by the course of the Neckinger, a Thames tributary, and the marsh land lying in the crook of the Thames and whose names, Water Lambeth and Lambeth Marsh, reflect this geography.

Lambeth Palace was very rarely depicted in isolation from the river, a precedent set in some of its earliest representations by Wenceslaus Hollar, whose work established the core suite of angles from which artists would depict Lambeth. In *The Prospect of London and Westminster taken from Lambeth*, c.1647, Hollar exploits the compositional potential of Lambeth's position in the crook of the Thames's path to visualise the Palace as part of a triad, with Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral, that reverberated

ecclesiastical power and national spiritual guidance (fig.134). Yet this was a troubled time for the church and state, and particularly so for Lambeth Palace: the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud was executed for treason by Charles I in 1645, the regent suffering the same fate four years later; from 1648 the Palace was occupied by the army, its chapel turned into a entertaining hall. Lambeth Palace is thus configured here as part of a stage set for national drama; the bird's eye prospect view is of an uncertain outlook for Britain. This perspective had a strong visual legacy, being taken up by Canaletto and resurfacing again in the 1790s in a print after Joseph Farington for Josiah Boydell's *History of the River Thames* (fig.135).⁵¹⁰ As the threat of French invasion via the south coast and revolutionary insurrection from within loomed large, this was another decade of heightened political uncertainty in which images that promoted a peaceful and powerful vision of Britain took on a heightened patriotic value.

As Andrew Hemingway has observed, rivers were a major theme in the boom in British landscape imagery of the early nineteenth century, their depiction serving to embellish and particularise the ideology of Britain's rivers conveyed in eighteenth-century poetry – that they were powerful symbols of national power, wealth and political health.⁵¹¹ The Thames had been celebrated by poets since Denham in the seventeenth century but it was James Thomson (1700–1748), who was most influential upon artists; Turner's views from Richmond Hill are amongst the most direct tributes to Thomson (who had lived and was buried in Richmond) and his lyrical, idealised vision of the 'majestic' Thames.⁵¹² Other voices echoed these ideas. In 1810 Thomas Love Peacock's *The Genius of the Thames* followed Thomson in exalting the Thames in relation to celebrated rivers within and beyond Britain. By comparison to the Wye, for example, the original picturesque tour destination whose 'fair banks' were merely 'all lovely smile', the Thames was the 'monarch-stream of Albion's isle' where 'Imperial commerce holds her

⁵¹⁰ William Combe, *History of the River Thames* (London: J. Boydell, 1796).

⁵¹¹ Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 216–7.

⁵¹² James Thomson, *Autumn*, in *James Thomson: The Seasons*, ed. J. Sambrook (Oxford: Oxford University Press / Oxford Scholarly Editions Online, 2014), accessed 8 February 2018, doi:10.1093/acrade/9780198127130.book.1.

court'.⁵¹³ This profile had been ascribed to the river at Lambeth by Hollar in his print of Lambeth Palace taken from a position on the opposite bank (fig.136). Hollar's print portrays the river as the essential economic prop for the area, not only for communities such as the aforementioned 'glass blowers, potters, fishermen, and watermen', but also the clergy, too – since at least 1513 a significant strand of the Archbishop of Canterbury's income came from the lease of the horse ferry that plied between Lambeth Palace and the Millbank shore. Along with the watermen, the Archbishop was compensated when Westminster Bridge opened in 1750.⁵¹⁴ Again, Hollar's print promotes an appreciation of Lambeth Palace as a locus of power, prosperity and peaceful status quo and it was this perspective, one in which the daily life of the river economy was given greater prominence, that would reverberate most strongly in the period that saw what Bernard Adams calls a Thames 'river cult', which devoured tours, histories and views of the capital's river.⁵¹⁵

Images of the Lambeth shoreline proliferated under the umbrella genre of Thames views. These set Lambeth into a multi-county context of changing scenery, identifying it as a place worthy of picturesque representation and travel. While these images invariably emphasise the river's worth as an economic asset, brief comparison of three such views produced over a period of ten years indicates the way in which the river could be used to convey multiple, and unique, facets of Lambeth's identity. *Lambeth Palace from the Steps of the Penitentiary*, engraved by William Bernard Cooke after George Barrett and published as part of Cooke's *The Thames* in 1822, endows this stretch of river with a grave identity that was new to the period (fig.137). Millbank Penitentiary, built on marshland formerly occupied by a mill in the possession of Westminster Abbey, began receiving prisoners in 1816. Famed for its panopticon geometry, it was the largest prison in Britain and a gloomy presence on the Thames. Barrett's composition places the new and the ancient architectures of incarceration in dialogue here, drawing out Lambeth Palace's

⁵¹³ Thomas Love Peacock, *The Genius of the Thames: a Lyrical Poem, in two parts* (London, 1810), 18, 31.

⁵¹⁴ Peter Matthews, *London's Bridges* (Oxford: Shire, 2008), 90.

⁵¹⁵ Bernard Adams, *London Illustrated: 1604–1851. A Survey and Index of Topographical Books and Their Plates* (Phoenix, Arizona: Onyx Press, 1983), xix.

past as a site where the Anglican forerunners, the Lollards, were imprisoned. An atmosphere of dread is suggested by the dramatic, dark sky, lightened only by the fall of sunlight on the Palace – a possible inference of the eventual justice served upon the Lollards by the Reformation. If Barrett keys in to the sublime, De Wint, working for Charles Heath's *Views In and About London* projects Lambeth Palace as a noble site of picturesque grace (fig.138). Like Barrett it confers a sense the Palace's historic grandeur and its permanence within an ever-changing scene of river traffic. Three years later, in 1828, Edward William Cooke began publishing his series *Fifty Plates of Shipping and Craft*; Lambeth's only representation in the group was within a view entitled *Hay Boats* (fig.139). While clearly Cooke's emphasis was on the variety of vessels to be seen on Britain's waters, the setting signals a key shift in the depiction of Lambeth's shoreline. In the towers built for shot manufactory, which will be discussed in the final part of this chapter, Lambeth had now acquired new topographical identifiers, and, significantly, ones that replaced Lambeth Palace's place in the dialogue with the towers of Westminster Abbey.

Thus the river was the driver of Lambeth's mutating identity and the vehicle for its portrayal. Together, these images, along with those that came before them, present the features of Lambeth's shoreline that will form the chief iconographical nodes of my analysis: Lambeth Palace, a constant, although not static, presence there since the medieval period, evocative of power and grandeur, and the towers that represented the agglomeration of industrialised production, the scale and forms of which were new to the period under review. They demonstrate how, by modifying the viewpoint or the buildings depicted, an artist might reveal one or several aspects of any given location's web of associations, from its historical past and continuing religious importance – in Lambeth Palace – to its role in the industrial evolution of the British economy.

Lambeth Palace revealed

Despite its dominance in textual, visual and cartographic descriptions of Lambeth, the sights that lay behind Lambeth Palace's perimeter walls remained relatively mysterious until the early 1800s, its interior known only to those who had been inside, or who had gained access to the exhaustive description by Lambeth Palace Librarian, Andrew Coltee Ducarel (1713–1785), published in 1785.⁵¹⁶ The *Concise Account of Lambeth Palace* (1806) produced as a joint venture by Brayley and William Herbert thus filled a void in Lambeth's bibliography for a more accessible, up-to-date text that can be read as an example of the drive to unpeel the layers of mystique around the Anglican Church and its riches, be they antiquarian or monetary, that reached its most politically-motivated expression in texts such as John Wade's *Little Black Book* – which exposed the Fishers of Salisbury Cathedral – as reform campaigning emboldened in the 1820s.⁵¹⁷ Its timing was opportune, too. In the 1790s the Thames 'river cult' had been fuelled by the intensification of focus on the British landscape and its antiquities, as opposed to those in Europe, during the war with France. Brayley and Herbert's dedicated focus on the history and appearance of a building which stood as a bastion of long-established Anglican power (at a time of intense and deep mistrust of Catholicism) was not only a novel contribution to antiquarian literature but ideologically astute.

Brayley's text brought an increased ambition – and greater comprehension – to what Herbert, an actor turned antiquarian author, had originally conceived as a portfolio of images without text. Thus, they stress the role that 'actual and repeated inspection' played in the building's description and in the making of the volume's images. Every drawing was 'made under the direction of W. Herbert, and by him in company with the artist compared on the spot, and the

⁵¹⁶ Andrew Coltee Ducarel, *The History and Antiquities of the Archiepiscopal Palace of Lambeth, from its Foundation to the Present Time*, issued as part of *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, vol. 2, no. 27 (London: J. Nichols, 1785).

⁵¹⁷ Edward Wedlake Brayley, *A Concise Account of Lambeth Palace* (London: E.W. Brayley and W. Herbert, 1806).

engravings...watched with similar attention'.⁵¹⁸ While this was a regular strategy in persuading consumers of the integrity and reliability of topographical publications, there is a striking level of observational detail within the main text of *Lambeth Palace* that is commensurate with its chief aim to address the 'little that is known as to its internal structure and decoration'.⁵¹⁹ To date, the work of Hollar, Canaletto and Farington had established a strong visual identity in views of Lambeth Palace's exterior in conjunction with the river; another, but less common, precedent was for views of the Palace from the Archbishop's garden, the most recent example before the emergence of *Lambeth Palace* was by J. Grieg after Whichillo [also known as Whichelo] in 1804 (Lambeth Palace Library, PYT002.0071). By commissioning views of the building's interior, Brayley and Herbert were breaking new ground. So while not wholly original in its text, as its preface deferentially notes (it draws particularly heavily on the work of Lambeth Palace Librarian, Ducarel), *Lambeth Palace* presented an entirely novel array of illustrations to the market. Its focus on the interior of the building, rather than any external aspect, may have inspired Rudolph Ackermann's choice of an interior view of Lambeth Palace in his 1809 *Microcosm*.⁵²⁰

If the inaccessibility of the elevated viewpoint adopted by Hollar, Canaletto and Farington furthered interest in the Palace and promoted it as a vantage point rather than as a site of inherent topographical interest, it also reflected the fact that, while the mission of its resident, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was public, the Palace was a private space. Through the text of Brayley's *Lambeth Palace* and, uniquely, images that closely described the design, function and contents of its rooms, the interior of this enigmatic and historically significant building could now be envisaged. Its title page vignette of the palace from the opposite shore therefore functions as a dual experiential threshold (fig.140). As the pages were turned and the book's contents discovered, so, too, were those of the Palace rendered visible and accessible (figs.141 and 142). Brayley's account of the interior begins with the one room

⁵¹⁸ Brayley, *Lambeth Palace*, iii–iv.

⁵¹⁹ Brayley, *Lambeth Palace*, ii.

⁵²⁰ A copy of this image in the British Museum (reference number: 1948,0315.1.67).

to which laypersons were admitted by appointment, the quadrangular Library. This housed the country's most extensive collection of ecclesiastical manuscripts and included, amongst its 25,000 volumes, what Brayley called an 'extensive' and 'highly valuable' collection of 'English...topography', a resource which magnified this historic site as a locus for antiquarian attention. Its prime position in Brayley's account reinforces the volume's appeal at a time of great thirst for knowledge. One symptom of this zeal of learning was the phenomenon of extra-illustration, or 'grangerisation' – as Lucy Peltz has highlighted, the volume's advertisement explicitly stated its service to this market, 'to illustrate Pennant, Lysons, Ducarel, &c' and in the high social currency of extra-illustrated volumes, as objects intended to be displayed and discussed, would have compelled collectors to seek out such new images as those offered by Brayley and Herbert.⁵²¹ Details of stained glass windows and architectural segments as well as diagrammatic portrayals of inscriptions serve this market, and the general antiquarian taste for enigmatic fragment and detail to be decoded (figs.143 and 144).

Brayley engaged in a way no previous author had with the immediate landscape around the Palace itself, exemplifying the antiquarian appetite for both the micro and macro perspective on place and demonstrating his awareness of current concerns within landscape culture. Praising the 'beauty of the extensive grounds', a sensibility to Gilpinian picturesque is revealed in his description of how:

'[a]n opening has...been made towards the river by cutting down ... trees, which admits a most beautiful view of the water, part of [Westminster] bridge, of the venerable abbey, and of the cathedral of St Paul'.⁵²²

The creation of this view, framed by trees, was part of a redesign of the grounds that took place between 1783 and 1784 which had seen open lawns

⁵²¹ Brayley, *Lambeth Palace*, advertisement, unpaginated; Lucy Peltz, *Facing the text: Extra-illustration, print culture and society in Britain 1769–1840* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 1, 252.

⁵²² Brayley, *Lambeth Palace*, 19.

punctuated with winding paths replace the formal enclosed gardens and bowling green.⁵²³ The ‘picture’ this design created hints at a dual desire on the part of the former Archbishop of Canterbury, John Moore, who oversaw the changes – on the one hand, these changes emphasised the Palace’s proximal position in relation to the city’s major icons of religious and political power, while on the other, they revealed his sensibility to contemporary approaches to landscape.

Lambeth Palace restored

Brayley and Herbert’s *Lambeth Palace* was published one year in to Charles Manners-Sutton’s term as Archbishop of Canterbury. Twenty-one years later, a year before Manners-Sutton’s death, Allen reported details of new plans for improvement works in the vicinity of Lambeth Palace, namely the building of a private road from Stangate across the gardens of Lambeth Palace, presumably to ease the Archbishop’s journey from Westminster.⁵²⁴ He reported a rumour circulating in relation to these works, that ‘[i]t is said [Lollards’] tower is to come down’, which would have surely alarmed the antiquarian community – the five-storey tower was an imposing front the Palace complex and, named after its most famous incumbents, was rich in associations.⁵²⁵

When Archbishop William Howley succeeded Manners-Sutton, the fabric of Lambeth Palace came under even greater scrutiny. Within his first year of office Howley employed a young antiquarian draughtsman turned architect, Edward Blore (1787–1879), to begin major renovations to the complex. Blore’s survey found the Palace to be in a ‘deplorable...state of neglect’; even serviceable rooms like the Great Hall, with its celebrated vaulted ceiling, were squandered and required repurposing to fit the building for purpose as the accommodation and state rooms of a newly-incumbent nineteenth-century Archbishop. An Act of Parliament was required in order to release the

⁵²³ For plans see items TD217–8 in Lambeth Palace Library.

⁵²⁴ Allen, *Lambeth*, 324.

⁵²⁵ Allen, *Lambeth*, 325.

£60,000 necessary to fulfil Blore's vision; with a further £27,000 of Howley's personal funds, work to demolish, re-build and re-organise the Archbishop of Canterbury's London seat began in August 1829.⁵²⁶

In May, 1830, after well over half of the medieval and Tudor parts of the building had been demolished, an article about the works ran in the *Gentleman's Magazine* reassuring its 'antiquarian readers' that 'objects of deep antiquarian interest' would not be altered:

'throughout the extensive reparations of this ancient structure (comprehending some of the most venerable architectural remains connected with our church history) there has been a...studious care on the part of the Archbishop of Canterbury to preserve all the leading marks by which the eye of the biographer, the historian and the philosopher, have recognised it from age to age'.⁵²⁷

The accompanying illustration of the Palace, taken from the garden, revealed a drastic change (fig.145). This was an entirely new view of buildings whose form, particularly when seen in reverse from the riverside, would have been familiar. The ghost of an apex on the Lollards' tower on the right signals that the removal of an entire wing has taken place. Only the smaller accretions remain to be demolished while the 'most venerable architectural remains' of the dining hall, the chapel and the wing that held the vestry and Post Room are reassuringly bolstered by scaffolding props.

Given the on-going debate concerning the propriety of Wyatt's treatment of Salisbury Cathedral discussed in Chapter One, this assurance of sympathy for the Palace's celebrated historic features was particularly salient. Blore had himself objected to alterations of gothic buildings, such as at Winchester Cathedral,⁵²⁸ and was praised in the article as 'one of our ablest restorers of

⁵²⁶ James Garrard, *Archbishop Howley, 1828–1848* (London: Ashgate, 2015), 38.

⁵²⁷ J.L., "Lambeth Palace," in *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 100 (May 1830), 393.

⁵²⁸ Edward Blore, *A Report addressed to the Dean of Winchester, on the proposed Removal of the Organ from the Side to the Centre of the Cathedral* (London, 1823).

Gothic art’.⁵²⁹ His claim to this reputation was founded mainly on work he had carried out for Howley at Westminster Abbey. Recommending him to Howley in 1826, Lady Lavinia Spencer described Blore as

‘a Man of deep learning, & of accurate information, as an Antiquarian, on all subjects related to Gothick Architecture, & joins to these essential & rare qualifications the most exquisite taste, & the most correct adherence to his estimates’.⁵³⁰

Blore was indeed steeped in antiquarian knowledge. His father, an antiquarian and topographer, had encouraged his early development as an antiquarian draughtsman. Blore provided illustrations for James Hall’s *Essay on the Origin, History, and Principles, of Gothic Architecture* (1813) before supplying drawings for a range of other publications, including Samuel Seyers’s history of Bristol, discussed in Chapter Two, and projects by Britton. It was Sir Walter Scott, who, by recommending his talents as an architect and restorer, launched Blore’s transition into architectural design. The redesign of Lambeth Palace was by far the largest project he had undertaken.⁵³¹ His position at the crux of overlapping, but ultimately distinct, fields of interest – antiquarianism, picturesque landscape culture and contemporary architecture – is evident in his designs. Whilst they balance the need to preserve and rationalise, they also convey a desire to impress.

Blore’s sympathies for antiquarian research are perhaps revealed in his treatment of Juxton’s Hall. This ‘noble room...applied to no useful purpose’, was repurposed as a library, housing stacks of fine volumes, and was, as its positive appraisal in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* pointed out, fitted out with under-floor pipe heating.⁵³² Nearby, the Vestry Hall, opposite St Mary’s,

⁵²⁹ J.L., “Lambeth Palace,” 394.

⁵³⁰ M.H. Port, “Edward Blore (1787–1879), antiquarian artist and architect,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed 5 Dec. 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2679>.

⁵³¹ Port, “Edward Blore”.

⁵³² Blore’s 1828 report on Lambeth Palace (MS housed at Lambeth Palace Library), quoted in Tim Tatton-Brown, *Lambeth Palace: A History of the Archbishops of Canterbury and Their Houses* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2000), 87.

contained a display of maps dating largely to the 1770s, depicting estates owned by the Parish.⁵³³ Combined, these rooms may be conceived as spaces for the convergence of the geographical knowledge contained within the parish as well as reflection on the land and depictions of that land in the See of Canterbury's possession. The conversion of the Great Hall into a library addressed the exalted status of the Palace as a site for antiquarian learning that Brayley had highlighted in his 1806 account.

Readers of the *Gentleman's Magazine* were further assured that the main aspect view of the Palace from the river would

‘be preserved entire...From no point will a view of the ancient parts of the Palace be intercepted by the new; and it appears to have been the object to leave untouched as a sacred relic of history every well-known feature of this remarkable edifice’.⁵³⁴

There would be change, then, but none that would impinge upon the majority view of the Palace as depicted by artists and enjoyed by tourists of Thames scenery: the established view remained protected. The avenue of mature trees in the Archbishop's garden that overhung Lambeth Walk would help shield the changes from view but while the famed form of the complex's largest buildings (the Lollards' Tower, Juxton's Hall, the Post Room, chapel and vestry) would not alter, they were to be joined by a vast new neo-Gothic wing, three storeys high and fronted by a grand entrance and a large courtyard. Recalling Blore's background as an architectural draughtsman, a series of tightly drawn watercolours he made records the building's metamorphosis and reveals the scale of the change (figs.146–147). From these viewpoints inside the Archbishop's garden, the Palace is entirely transformed; its original parts are now cocooned by the majestic neo-Gothic extension and distinguishable only by their red brick. In a sequence of images depicting the north elevation, Blore narrates the progress of monumental change by recording the buildings as they stood, in the process of demolition, and upon completion (figs.146–

⁵³³ Allen, *Lambeth*, 341.

⁵³⁴ J.L., “Lambeth Palace,” 395.

147). Most striking is the view of the demolition in progress (fig. 148), an act of ruination made picturesque: builders and their workhorses are clustered in repose, or else standing on exposed interior floors, drawing attention to the newly-revealed skeleton of the condemned wing. Blocks of stone, bearing traces of Gothic detailing, are amassed under a framing tree on the left-hand side.

Writing in the mid twentieth century, medieval art historian Charles Reginald Dodwell criticised Blore's approach as one that misunderstood the now-demolished buildings' historic importance, seeking only to replace the 'picturesque' with the 'impressive'.⁵³⁵ This assessment neglects to account for the modulations in the cultural application of the term 'picturesque' into the nineteenth century. Blore's brand of picturesque was not the theoretical aesthetic based around principles of roughness, variety and composition but rather an architectural interpretation that emerged from Gilpin's predilection for the Gothic, which had filtered through more recent appraisals of this idiom by Pugin and others.⁵³⁶ Presenting an unobstructed view of the Palace, framed by the natural landscape around it in ways that suggested its longevity, Blore's watercolours index his extensive exposure to and engagement in the picturesque presentation of buildings old and new, ruined and intact.

For Blore, the rationalisation of Lambeth Palace's architectural scheme to more heavily emphasise and reflect the building's gothic origins was the prime objective. In recommending Blore to Howley, Lady Spencer had advised that the architect would not make 'a sad mess of blunders in design, adaptation and chronology'.⁵³⁷ If topographers refrained from terming the Lambeth Palace's buildings a 'sad mess of blunders', the point was always made that this was a 'motley' collection of buildings.⁵³⁸ In Cooke's *Thames* it was said to display 'a very irregular appearance', its additions over the centuries designed for comfort over 'uniformity', but nevertheless productive

⁵³⁵ C.R. Dodwell, *Lambeth Palace* (London: Country Life, 1958), 40, 41.

⁵³⁶ See, for example, Augustus Pugin, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture* (London: M. Nattali, 1821).

⁵³⁷ Garrard, *Archbishop Howley*, 37.

⁵³⁸ Brayley, *Lambeth Palace*, 20.

of ‘a grand effect...when viewed from Westminster [B]ridge, the opposite banks of the river, or from the river itself, gives a venerable dignity to the scene’.⁵³⁹ This assemblage was rarely in itself described as picturesque. Blore conceived this ‘heterogeneous assemblage of buildings of various ages’ as being erected ‘without the slightest regard...to the character of the building as an ancient Archiepiscopal Palace’.⁵⁴⁰ Hence his adoption of the neo-gothic idiom served a higher purpose than aesthetics. The 1813 essay by Hall on gothic architecture, for which Blore had provided illustrations, recommended the Gothic style for churches and public buildings on account of its being ‘lively, picturesque and sublime’.⁵⁴¹ Blore was thus making a building that reflected the gravitas and longevity of its occupant’s high status in British public life.

Hall also believed gothic architecture to be particularly apposite for ecclesiastical buildings because, as Gilpin had asserted, it looked equally good as a ruin, resplendent in ‘solemn grandeur’.⁵⁴² The Lambeth Palace renovation and rebuilding project was taking place at a moment when the Church’s powers were perceived to be eroding – the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act and the Great Reform Act in 1829 and 1832 respectively were taken by some as omens that the established Church would be in ruins before long. In this context, Allen’s report in 1827 that ‘[Lollards’] tower is to come down’ or his reviewer in the *Literary Gazette*’s surmising in 1829 that ‘we should not be surprised if this ancient structure, hallowed as it is...were, ere long, advertised “to be let on building leases”’ may have acquired an additional charge.⁵⁴³ In antiquarian culture, its imposing form and images of its mean interior, as provided in Brayley and Herbert’s *Lambeth Palace*,

⁵³⁹ William Bernard and George Cooke, *Descriptions to the Plates of Thames Scenery. Engraved by W.B. Cooke & G. Cooke, from Original Drawings by Eminent Artists* (London: John Murray; W.B. Cooke, 1818), 28.

⁵⁴⁰ Blore’s 1828 report on Lambeth Palace, quoted in Tatton-Brown, *Lambeth Palace*, 87.

⁵⁴¹ James Hall, *Essay on the Origin, History, and Principles, of Gothic Architecture* (London: John Murray, 1813), 134.

⁵⁴² Hall, *Essay*, 134. Hall was revisiting ideas expounded by John Carter (1748–1817), originator of *The Builder’s Magazine*. See Georg Adolf Germann, *Gothic Revival in Europe and Britain: Sources, Influences and Ideas*, transl. Gerald Onn (London: Lund Humphries for the Architectural Association, 1972), 55–57.

⁵⁴³ Allen, *Lambeth*, 216; review of Allen, *Lambeth*, in *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c. for the year 1829* (London, 1829), 582.

powerfully evoked the sorry fate of its most famous incumbents, late fourteenth-century dissenters from the Catholic faith – ‘the poor persecuted Lollards’, as Allen termed them.⁵⁴⁴ In Anglican Britain, the Lollards’ Tower stood as a symbol of the oppression that Protestants had once faced in Catholic Britain. Allen’s *History* was published in 1827, two years before the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act. In the years of intense debate and factionalism over the issue of societal freedom for Catholics, the potential for the removal of Lollards’ Tower from Lambeth Palace would surely resonate more widely than amongst those keen to preserve antiquarian icons alone.

Lambeth’s creative community

A major facet of Lambeth’s economic and cultural profile was the presence there of a large community of creative residents – artists, writers, engravers, publishers, map-makers and theatre professionals. Between the period bracketed by Brayley and Herbert’s *Lambeth Palace* and the restoration and rebuilding of the ecclesiastical complex itself, the area witnessed an influx of young landscape-based practitioners, embellishing the area’s long tradition of such residents. Their profiles and activities will be analysed below as contributions to the formation and transformation of Lambeth’s image and identity.

As the son of Kennington-based engraver J. Allen, Thomas Allen was born into Lambeth’s artisanal community. It was perhaps only natural that as aspiring topographical writers he and fellow Lambeth native Brayley should gravitate towards description of a place that held personal as well as public significance for their first major forays into this field. Both their texts were rooted in the vicinity of the locale they describe: Allen’s volume was published by his father, whose print market connections would surely ease sales. At the time of producing *Lambeth Palace*, Brayley’s collaborator Herbert was a resident at Globe Place, Westminster Bridge Road.

⁵⁴⁴ Allen, *Lambeth*, 216.

Brayley and Herbert's careers articulate the degree of occupational fluidity within Lambeth's creative community. Brayley had been born in Lambeth but moved to Islington as an apprentice to enameller Henry Bone; Herbert, meanwhile, moved to Lambeth in order to work at the Royal Coburg Theatre. In a reflection of Brayley's first authorial partnership with Britton on a satirical song, Brayley and Herbert initially collaborated on a volume of poetry before producing *Lambeth Palace*.⁵⁴⁵ The latter determined the direction their careers would take – both would find employment as librarians and gain eminence in the antiquarian field.

The long history of resident printmakers in Lambeth was emphasised by Allen, himself the son of a Lambeth engraver, in his *History*. He mentions Simon François Ravenet (1721–44) and Benjamin Thomas Pouncy (d.1799), the pupil and brother-in-law of premier British engraver William Woollett, who was famed for engraving Richard Wilson's work and lived for the last twenty years of his life at Pratt Street (now Pratt Row).⁵⁴⁶ Allen also notes Pouncy's work as clerk and deputy librarian to Ducarel at Lambeth Palace library; this had seen him produce architectural and archaeological illustrations of numerous Lambeth subjects for John Nichols's *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica* (1782–8).⁵⁴⁷ It is possible that Herbert had been inspired to transition into antiquarian publishing by Pouncy's activities in this area – Herbert and Pouncy lived close by one another, and may have both frequented the Mitre Inn, which was, before its demolition sometime in the 1820s, known as a hub for Lambeth's artistic community.⁵⁴⁸ Brayley also deems the presence of artists in the parish worthy of record, focusing upon St

⁵⁴⁵ Cooper Thompson, rev. Elizabeth Bagnent, "Edward Wedlake Brayley (1773–1854), topographer and archaeologist," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed 4 Nov. 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/3302>; Bernard Nurse, "Herbert, William [formerly William Herbert Wilderspin] (1772–1851), antiquary and librarian," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed 8 Dec. 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13064>.

⁵⁴⁶ Timothy Clayton, "William Woollett (1735–1785), printmaker," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed 5 Mar. 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/29956>.

⁵⁴⁷ Allen, *Lambeth*, 303, 339. An engraving by F. Cary (fl.1782) after Pouncy, *View of Lambeth Church from the Thames at High Water*, 1784, was collected by John Charles Crowle and included in his 14-volume extra-illustrated copy of Thomas Pennant's *History of London*, which he bequeathed to the British Museum in 1811 (registration number: G.1.183).

⁵⁴⁸ Martin Hardie, *Watercolour Painting in Britain*, vol. 3 (London: B.T. Batsford, 1966), 87.

Mary's churchyard as the resting ground of other of the area's noted cultural figures, including William Minton, an engraver, and Robert Barker, inventor of the panorama.⁵⁴⁹

Barker had lived at 14 West Square, St George's Fields, in neighbouring Southwark. Here he had erected a large building for the painting of the panoramas that would appear in his famous Leicester Square rotunda; the first complete 360-degree experience took the roof of Albion Mills in Lambeth as its vantage point.⁵⁵⁰ Barker died in 1806 but his panorama studio, continuing under his son Henry Aston Barker, would find a pool of skilled labour on its doorstep in the many scene painters who worked for Lambeth's pleasure gardens and theatres. One of the most prominent employers was the equestrian performer and Philip Astley (1742–1814), who, in the 1770s, forged a new facet of Lambeth's entertainment culture in the form of Britain's first circus.⁵⁵¹ Situated just off the approach to Westminster Bridge Road, his Amphitheatre pioneered the illegitimate performance of patented material, modifying productions for trick-riders on horse-back and interspersing acts with comedic interludes – this kind of low-brow theatre, one which pushed the boundaries of theatrical genre as well as the law, became the hallmark of Surrey shore entertainments.⁵⁵² Brayley's upbringing in Lambeth may have ignited the enduring interest in the theatre evident in his *Historical and Descriptive Accounts of the Theatres of London* (1826), which illustrated Astley's Amphitheatre.

In 1832 a biography of Southwark-born Thomas Girtin was published that emphasised Lambeth's centrality to his artistic development. According to its

⁵⁴⁹ Edward Wedlake Brayley, *A Topographical History of Surrey: By E. W. Brayley...Assisted by John Britton...and E. W. Brayley, Jun...The Geological Section by Gideon Mantell. (The Illustrative Department under the Superintendence of Thomas Allom)*, vol. 5 (Dorking: R.B. Ede; London: Tilt & Bogue, 1848), 332.

⁵⁵⁰ Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1978), 138.

⁵⁵¹ Marius Kwint, "Philip Astley (1742–1814), equestrian performer and circus proprietor," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed 8 Dec. 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/821>.

⁵⁵² For a recent exploration of this, see Frederick Burwick, *Playing to the Crowd: London Popular Theatre, 1780–1830* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

author it was Girtin's exposure to the 'truly picturesque shore of Lambeth', where

'among the old houses occupied by the families of fishermen, and other buildings rich in the material sought by the topographic painter, he found enough to delight his fancy, and engage his art. Few spots indeed could have better supplied these objects, which in the pursuit of local colour an artist seeks, than the rudely built dilapidated, overhanging dwelling houses, potteries, whiting-mills, and other examples of the main features of the pictorial of topography, than this part of Lambeth'.⁵⁵³

Girtin's legacy is evident in the approach taken to Lambeth by David Cox, who arrived there in 1804 via a promise of scene painting work at Astley's Amphitheatre. Cox had been when working as a scene painter at the Theatre Royal in Birmingham and, although Astley's promise failed to materialise, he remained in Lambeth, working instead for the Surrey theatres and lodging at 16 Westminster Bridge Road, a house six doors down from art dealer Thomas Palser (c.1776–1843), one of several print and map publishers in Lambeth and a lynch pin of the area's artistic community.⁵⁵⁴ By 1815 Palser was established enough to describe his premises as a 'Print Warehouse'.⁵⁵⁵ Prints after numerous contemporary artists with local links could be found there: from Lambeth-based caricaturist William Heath to landscape artists Samuel Prout, (who lived at Brixton from 1811 and produced hundreds of drawings for Palser) and Girtin, whose influence Cox came under, perhaps through the tutorship of John Varley.⁵⁵⁶ Palser's purchase of drawings of local subjects

⁵⁵³ "Recollections of the Life of the late T. Girtin," in *Library of the Fine Arts; or, Repertory of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture and Engraving*, vol. 3 (London: M. Arnold, 1832), 307.

⁵⁵⁴ Stephen Wildman "David Cox (1783–1859), landscape painter," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), accessed 11 Dec. 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6520>.

⁵⁵⁵ As described on Thomas Palser's trade card, held in the British Museum (registration number: Banks,17.76).

⁵⁵⁶ Heath lived at 5, Stangate (off Westminster Bridge road); Prout's account book for 1811–16 (North Devon Athenaeum, Barnstaple) lists more than 1330 watercolours and sepia wash drawings bought for a total of £800 by Thomas Palser (his first important client after John Britton) and Rudolph Ackermann. See Reynolds, *English Watercolours*, 80; Varley had

from Cox, including views of Battersea fields and Old Bonner Hall, may have impressed upon the aspiring landscape artist the commerciality of the views to be made in the immediate vicinity of his lodgings.⁵⁵⁷ The Thames recurs in Cox's work over the four decades he lived in and around Lambeth and although it was to the more humdrum scenes of the working river at Battersea and Gravesend that he would most often return, he was clearly aware of the pictorial currency of the Thames at Lambeth.⁵⁵⁸

At 27.3 x 68.3 cm, *A View of Westminster bridge, looking towards Lambeth Palace and Westminster Abbey* (fig.149) is a large, ambitious panoramic watercolour that celebrates Westminster Bridge as a conduit between two worlds within London – Westminster, where the public life of the nation was centred, and Lambeth, which was home to a public figure, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as the site where, in the theatres and tea gardens, the private lives of London's pleasure seekers played out. In subject, technique and format it exhibits a range of references to a matrix of artists whose work celebrated Lambeth's topography. The technique and panoramic format of Cox's watercolour may have been inspired by Peter de Wint's elongated view of Westminster exhibited in 1808 at the Associated Artists in Watercolour (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum⁵⁵⁹); both Cox and de Wint were students of Varley, whose own work shows a debt to Girtin.⁵⁶⁰

Cox's *Westminster from Lambeth* celebrates Lambeth as a vantage point rather than as a subject, giving visual expression to a later description by one-time Lambeth resident William Etty of the view across to the gothic pile of

studied Girtin's watercolours under Dr Thomas Monro. See Greg Smith, *Thomas Girtin: The Art of Watercolour* (London: Tate, 2002), 237.

⁵⁵⁷ Manuscript account of the life of David Cox by William Hall in Scott Wilcox, ed., *David Cox: Sun, Wind, and Rain: the Art of David Cox* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 241. Cox also appears to have sold drawings for prints to other publishers. See, for example, *London from Brixton*, 1813, hand-coloured aquatint, 215 x 338 mm, British Museum (1880,1113.5554), published by Hassell & Co.

⁵⁵⁸ Greg Smith, "Humble Origins and Heroic Struggles: the young landscape watercolourist as a moral example," in Wilcox, ed., *David Cox*, 89.

⁵⁵⁹ Peter de Wint, *Westminster Palace, Hall and Abbey*, date unknown, 334 x 803 mm, Victoria and Albert Museum (accession number: 61-1921).

⁵⁶⁰ C. M. Kauffmann, "John Varley (1778–1842), watercolour painter and art teacher," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), accessed 11 Dec. 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28115>.

Westminster Abbey as being ‘not unlike Venice’ (fig.150).⁵⁶¹ Etty was an associate of Clarkson Stanfield (1793–1857) and David Roberts (1796–1864), who, like Cox, initially arrived in Lambeth as scene painters. More so than Cox, however, Stanfield and Roberts’s reputations in landscape were, like that of Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg before them, more closely aligned with their ingenuity in this domain. They remained in Lambeth only for as long as the work was there: Stanfield was employed at different times by Astley’s and the Royal Coburg Theatre, and Roberts at the latter, but both moved from the area in 1827 and 1829, respectively, as their metropolitan careers took off. Their trajectory from the world of the Surrey shore’s theatres to the more exalted (but not necessarily less commercial) realm of the Royal Academy, where they both gained membership, mirrors that of Brayley and his collaborator on *Lambeth Palace*, William Herbert.

Newcastle-born Stanfield and Scotsman Roberts, who were friends before their arrival in London, evidently found kinship in Lambeth with others from regional backgrounds like Etty and Cox and used this as a platform for professional development in the sphere of fine art. Along with fellow Stangate Street residents John ‘Jock’ Wilson, who had been trained by Alexander Nasmyth, and Nasmyth’s son, Patrick, Stanfield and Roberts were founder members of the Society of British Artists; with Cox, Prout and Thomas Shotter Boys they took part in the Artists’ *Conversazione* between 1828 and 1833.

Mapping the residencies of these artists in tandem with analysis of their biographies reinforces how tightly woven this network of Lambeth-based artists was (fig.151). This reveals the zone triangulated by the end of Westminster Bridge, Astley’s Hercules Hall and Lambeth Palace to be a hub for regionally-born aspiring landscape artists seeking metropolitan success in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.⁵⁶² If not all of this

⁵⁶¹ Leonard Robinson, *William Etty: The Life and Art* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2007), 117. Etty lived on Stangate Walk before moving across the river, as Stanfield had done, to 13 Buckingham Street, between the Strand and the Thames.

⁵⁶² Other artists with dual artistic and theatrical links were Thomas Barker the panoramist, J. M. Wright, Joseph William Allen and Charles Tomkins. See Pieter van der Merwe, *The*

community have left evidence that their surroundings in Lambeth inspired their practice, their trajectories are inextricably bound to a place that offered prospects both picturesque and profitable.

Urbanisation was a major factor in the arrival of this generation of artists to Lambeth. They came to work in its spectacular entertainment venues, which multiplied as the road network grew, and lived in its new houses – in plentiful supply, lodgings in Lambeth had the added benefit of being cheaper than those across the river.⁵⁶³ William Blake spent the 1790s living in a newly-built house in Lambeth, 13 Hercules Buildings, and was witness to a period of rapid change there. Situated just 600 metres away from Lambeth Palace, Blake's address acquired its name from its leaseholder, Astley, who used proceeds from his Amphitheatre, to acquire a triangular plot upon which he built himself a home that was flanked by a terrace of houses on one side and a tavern on the other. All were named Hercules, in reference to his strong man act of 'the twelve trials of Hercules'.⁵⁶⁴

Along with Astley's empire, other facets of Blake's immediate surroundings – Albion Mills, which had been burnt out in protest, Bethlem Hospital and the Royal Asylum for Female Orphans – came to stand for the evils of a broken, morally bankrupt, capitalist-run industrial society. According to David Erdman, Blake's time in Lambeth

'seemed, according to reminiscent passages in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, elaborately symbolic of the shattered state of the world's hopes'.⁵⁶⁵

As much as Lambeth's artisanal community may have been a stimulus to his own creativity, the area acutely revealed social injustices born of an

Spectacular Career of Clarkson Stanfield, 1793–1867: Seaman, Scene-Painter, Royal Academician (Newcastle: Tyne and Wear County Council Museums, 1979), 15.

⁵⁶³ Chris Miele, "From Aristocratic Ideal to Middle-Class Idyll: 1690–1840," in *London Suburbs* ed. Julian Honer (London: Merrell Holberton in association with English Heritage, 1999), 41.

⁵⁶⁴ Graham Gibberd, *On Lambeth Marsh: the South Bank and Waterloo* (Jane Gibberd: London, 1992), 107–108.

⁵⁶⁵ David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire* (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 288.

industrialising capitalist economy, its urban landscape skewing his vision of ‘lovely Lambeth’ as a new, but ultimately doomed Jerusalem. If, in Hollar’s time, Lambeth had been primarily a rural retreat for London’s elite, Blake’s Lambeth presented an altogether different scene.

At Hercules Road, Blake was sandwiched between paragons of debauchery and distress. Occupying three sides of the junction to the north end of the street were the Temple of Flora, the Flora Tea Gardens, and the Apollo Gardens, places that in Hollar’s day had been the resort of the fashionable. By the mid-1790s, these had fallen into ruin and ill repute while the remaining quarter of the junction, formerly the site of the Hercules Tavern, was now occupied by a workhouse, the Royal Asylum for Female Orphans.⁵⁶⁶ Hence in *Milton, a Poem in Two Books* (1804–10), Lambeth is ‘ruin’d and given to the detestable Gods of Priam, to Apollo, and at the Asylum given to Hercules, who labour in Tirzah’s Looms for bread’.⁵⁶⁷ Allen’s *History* acknowledged this downturn in Lambeth’s garden culture, comparing the ‘honest fashion’ in which Apollo Gardens and the Temple of Flora had been established versus their lowly reputations and ultimate closure after being ‘converted into a receptacle for loose and dissolute characters’.⁵⁶⁸

Vauxhall Gardens and the ‘rage for building’

Since its inception in 1660, Vauxhall Gardens had managed to maintain a reputation as a place where the respectable visitor could find respite from the toils, pressures and propriety of everyday life. Once there, the visitor could veer towards pleasure that was either innocent or illicit in nature. The gardens’ size and the ambition of its spectacular entertainments made it pre-eminent within Lambeth’s pleasure garden culture and it outlasted all other such venues in the area. Although its heyday as the gem of London society’s scene passed with the death of its original proprietor Jonathan Tyers in 1796, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century it attracted bigger crowds than

⁵⁶⁶ For a map of Blake’s Lambeth, see Fig. 14 in Erdman, *Blake*, 289.

⁵⁶⁷ *Milton*, plate 25, lines 48–50, quoted in Erdman, *Blake*, 288.

⁵⁶⁸ Allen, *Lambeth*, 319.

ever – the tally of 133,279 visitors for 1823 was amongst the highest it achieved.⁵⁶⁹

Its survival was down to an evolution in its offer, which came to incorporate more elements of the bawdy, ‘transpontine’ theatre culture of neighbouring venues like Astley’s, giving it ‘more in common with the circus and music hall than the notion of rural idyll’.⁵⁷⁰ A corresponding shift in its demographic occurred, too, with visits from the middle and working classes increasing in proportion as the decades wore on.⁵⁷¹ All the while, however, it remained, fundamentally, a novel environment experienced through walking.⁵⁷² Themed walks, such as the Chinese Walk, encouraged the viewer to imagine themselves transported to other worlds and were dotted with an array of cosmoramas – in 1822–24 these included evocations of Lake Lucerne, Paris, moonlit Rotterdam and Fingal’s Cave.⁵⁷³ In Brayley’s account of Vauxhall Gardens, published in 1850, when the attraction was nearing the close of its operations, he notes the change in character of its entertainments, observing the replacement of ‘a curious piece of machinery, representing a landscape, with a miller’s house, a water-mill, cascade, and moving figures’ with ‘ballets, rope-dancing, short dramatic pieces, juggling, hydraulic experiments’; ‘the cosmorama and perspective views’, were evidently still in demand, being ‘frequently changed in accordance with the subject which most engages the attention of the public’.⁵⁷⁴

Walking ascribed the visitor agency in controlling the pace of their visit – not an insignificant attribute at a time when the advent of the railways brought an increasing awareness of speed. The journey to Vauxhall had traditionally been an important part of the experience, too. In its heyday, most visitors arrived there by water, the passage across the Thames – most likely in darkness – to a

⁵⁶⁹ David Coke and Alan Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens: a history* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 249.

⁵⁷⁰ Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens*, 250.

⁵⁷¹ Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens*, 250.

⁵⁷² See Anna Novakov, *Imagined Utopias in the Built Environment: From London’s Vauxhall Garden to the Black Rock Desert* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017).

⁵⁷³ Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens*, 297.

⁵⁷⁴ Brayley, *Surrey*, vol. 5, 353–54.

destination on the periphery of the city a journey that heightened the sense of escape, if also carrying with it the frisson of danger.⁵⁷⁵ The erection of bridge crossings to Lambeth (Westminster Bridge in 1750, Vauxhall Bridge in 1816 and Waterloo Bridge in 1817) helped to effect a shift away from river travel such that by 1829 an anonymous writer bemoaned that '[a]ll we have left of this aquatic rage is a solitary boat now and then skimming and scraping to Vauxhall Gardens'.⁵⁷⁶

As noted, the bridges catalysed Lambeth's urbanisation, spawning networks of roads lined with buildings and new houses of the kind that its young artists lodged in. An advertisement appeared in 1841 for land in the vicinity of Vauxhall as being 'Invaluable for Building'. An elaborate report in *Punch*, discounting the rumours, evoked at once the fragility of the gardens' ephemeral structures and their possible memorialisation in street names:

'In spite of the rumours that Vauxhall Gardens are going to be built upon; that a crescent is to take the place of the orchestra; that a line of street to be called Supper-Box Buildings is to run along one side; while Rotunda Row is to occupy the other, on the ground where the Rotunda now rears its proud *papier mâché* chandelier; that the lamps are to be submitted to the hammer...Vauxhall is open, and *Punch* has paid a visit to the royal property.'⁵⁷⁷

While some of these reports may have been placed by the proprietors to incentivise visitors, as residential developments encroached ever nearer Vauxhall Gardens fearful reports circulated that Vauxhall would be lost to the 'demands of the builders', that its 'shady walks [would fall] prey to the rage for building gothic villas overlooking the mud-banks of the Thames'.

⁵⁷⁵ Peter Borsay, "Pleasure gardens and Urban Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century," in *The Pleasure Garden, from Vauxhall to Coney Island*, ed. Jonathan Conlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 60.

⁵⁷⁶ *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, no. 392, 3 Oct. 1829 (London: J. Limbird), 210.

⁵⁷⁷ From a selection of press cuttings in *Historical Collections relative to Spring Garden at Charing Cross, closed by Cromwell in 1654; and to Spring Garden, Lambeth, 1661, since called Vauxhall Gardens*, compiled by Jacob Henry Burn (1793–1869), British Library (Cup.401.k.7.), 469.

It was, ironically, the development of the railway – first used to boost crowds at Vauxhall – that was to bring about the gardens’ demise. On 11 July 1848 the extension of the London and South West Railway from Nine Elms to Waterloo saw the opening of a station at Vauxhall specifically located to facilitate access to the gardens, depositing passengers at a platform situated just opposite the entrance. This expanded the geographical reach of Vauxhall Gardens, such that suburban visitors could enjoy it ‘to the same extent as if resident in the Metropolis’, as a railway poster for the railway boasted in 1851.⁵⁷⁸ As Coke and Borg point out, that the same visitors could now board trains in the opposite direction to access the real countryside limited the appeal of the simulated and enclosed rural idyll over which rows of terraced housing and the tall, noisy, filthy railway now cast long shadows.⁵⁷⁹

A landscape of loss: Lambeth Marsh

The rumours of Vauxhall’s closure exploited the very real sense of apprehension that Lambeth, as Blake had forecast – and indeed London as a whole – was becoming lost to the ill effects of urbanisation. Cruikshank captured this in his 1829 satire *London going out of Town, or, The March of Bricks & Mortar* (fig.152). Visualising what had been described in 1823 as the ‘rage for building’, in which ‘bricks, mortar, rubbish and eternal scaffold poles...seem to be running after you’, *London going out of Town* presents an amalgamated topography of the city, encompassing St Paul’s Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and Hampstead Heath.⁵⁸⁰ Lambeth’s own urbanising geography is drawn into this apocalyptic vision via the sign at the centre of

⁵⁷⁸ Poster reproduced in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens*, 360.

⁵⁷⁹ Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens*, 343.

⁵⁸⁰ Leigh Hunt, ed., *The Literary Pocket-Book; Or, Companion for the Lover of Nature and Art* (London: C. & J. Ollier, 1823), quoted under the entry for ‘Park’ in James Elmes, *A General and Bibliographical Dictionary of the Fine Arts* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1826). The same quote appears in Charles Molloy Westmacott, *The English Spy*, vol. 2 (London: Thomas Davison, 1826), 71, which was illustrated by Cruikshank’s brother, Robert, and was likely familiar to Cruikshank. On the possibility that this quote served as an inspiration for the etching, see Michael Rawson, “The March of Bricks and Mortar”, *Environmental History*, vol. 17, issue 4 (Oct. 2012), 844–851.

the image that reads: ‘Mr. Goth, Brickmaker, Bricklayers Arms, Brick Lane, Brixton’.

As previous chapters have demonstrated, commentary upon change was a foundational tenet of topographical culture. The phenomena of change were particularly marked at Brighton, as it was at Lambeth, yet whereas the financial crash of 1825 had largely burst the coastal resort’s bubble, there was sufficient momentum in Lambeth after this date to foster a multiplication and intensification of expressions of alarm that the last vestiges of greenery really would give way to the march of bricks and mortar. Lambeth Marsh, the nub of boggy but green open land framed by the u-shaped bend of the Thames, became a focus for these fearful observations.

A conspicuous reference to Lambeth Marsh appears in Turner’s 1825 watercolour *View of London from Greenwich*, an image which takes as its central theme the contrast of old and new London and the accumulating panoply of schemes for its continued development (figs.153 and 154).⁵⁸¹ Mounted upon the easel in the left-hand foreground are two maps that have been identified by Daniels and Bonehill as the 1825 map of London produced by George Jones and a historic map, possibly the so-called Agas map of 1563 or one of several modern reproductions ‘designed to show the beauty and prosperity of London in the reign of Elizabeth I’.⁵⁸² Through his prominent indication of Lambeth Marsh on the historic map, denoted by large lettering, Turner was drawing attention to its disappearance; if, in the sixteenth century this extensive nub of green, open space would have been a distinctive feature of the prospect from Greenwich, in 1825, it was almost futile to even approximate its location through the dense agglomeration of masts, towers and buildings.

⁵⁸¹ John Bonehill and Stephen Daniels, “Projecting London: Turner and Greenwich,” in *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 35, no. 2 (2012), 175–6.

⁵⁸² Bonehill and Daniels, “Projecting London,” 181.

That the old map overlays the new is both an index of the trend for looking back in time but also the topographer's methods, the juxtaposition recalling that seen in historical atlases.⁵⁸³ As John Britton wrote,

‘the progress of such a city [as London]...its features and peculiarities, at different and remote periods...can only be done by the faithful topographer, with Maps, Plans, and Prints’.

Prevalent amongst the range of such materials depicting Lambeth produced during the time bracketed by Brayley and Herbert's 1806 account of Lambeth Palace and Allen's *Lambeth* of 1827 are those which – like the map in Turner's watercolour – presented its appearance in former times. These were available in Lambeth itself, through print dealer Palser, at Westminster Bridge Road, and Brayley's collaborator Herbert, of Marsh Gate.⁵⁸⁴ Palser published restrikes of earlier plates. These were not only a cheaper alternative to the commissioning of new images, but also capitalised on the trend for grangerisation of topographical works epitomised by John Charles Crowle's treatment of Thomas Pennant's *History of London*.⁵⁸⁵ It was, however, an initiative for reworked editions of old prints by Herbert that drove a new wave of collecting in this area. From 1808, he began publishing images under the title ‘Scarce Topographical Prints’ that from 1819 assumed the collective serial title *Londina Illustrata. Graphic and Historic Memorials of Monasteries, Churches, Chapel...In the Cities and Suburbs of London & Westminster*. Herbert undertook a concurrent project, *London before the Great Fire*, with Boydell, which replicated portions of Wenceslaus Hollar's *Prospect of London and Westminster taken from Lambeth*. These projects resurrected lost landscapes, making them visible to a generation who had never experienced their physical manifestations but would memorialise them

⁵⁸³ Bonehill and Daniels, “Projecting London,” 181.

⁵⁸⁴ Thomas Palser's trade card is in the British Museum (registration number: Banks,17.76); Herbert's address is inscribed on the print, *The Palace of Whitehall, as it appeared about the Reign of James the second*, from the series *Londina Illustrata*, a copy of which is also in the British Museum (registration number: 1880,0911.1276).

⁵⁸⁵ For grangerisation, see Peltz, *Facing the text*.

in grangerised volumes and reinstate their presence in the contemporary city through study and discussion.⁵⁸⁶

Herbert and Boydell's *London before the Great Fire* included *Lambeth Marsh as it appeared in 1670* (fig.155). The rate of its loss to urban development made it a particular focus in this culture of remembrance. That the marsh had always been a precarious site is signalled in its street names, with Narrow Wall and Broad Wall street names that persisted in the nineteenth century, denoting the presence of flood barriers. The encroachment of industry and urban development of the 1800s was a man-made threat, sparking a wave of nostalgia for the rural area it had once been. In 1805 Samuel Ireland had bemoaned how:

‘The scenery of the Thames, on the Lambeth side, receives no additional beauty from the miserable range of buildings erected along its banks, along what was, and still is in parts, called the Lambeth Marsh’.⁵⁸⁷

Ironically, the retention of the name ‘Lambeth Marsh’ had occurred through its being given to the road that dissected the Marsh from east to west which was, by 1800, joined by another, the New Cut, to make what Brayley called Lambeth’s ‘great line of thoroughfare’.⁵⁸⁸

The spread of gravel, tarmac and brick over Lambeth Marsh enacted a particularly fervent nostalgia and mourning for what many still remembered it to have been. Writing of these changes, a Lambeth Marsh resident reported in 1812 a wooden building, the place of ‘rural retreat’ for a then-renowned comedian, Mr. Palmer, that was now ‘gone to decay’, the water opposite ‘nearly choked up’ but which could be seen ‘in its former state’ in a ‘neat

⁵⁸⁶ Another example is a drawing by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd, *A prospect of the Thames from Lambeth with Westminster Abbey in the centre ground and the Strand and City of London to the right*, c.1820, British Museum (registration number: 1880,1113.1175). This was later published as an aquatint.

⁵⁸⁷ Samuel Ireland, *Picturesque Views on the River Thames*, vol. 2 (London: C. Clarke, 1802), 162.

⁵⁸⁸ Brayley, *Surrey*, vol. 5, 387.

small engraving'. The author pinpointed a location close by as the 'last remains of undisturbed verdure in the neighbourhood'.⁵⁸⁹ This forlorn description corresponds with other reports of changes caused by the new roads. The New Cut blocked natural drainage channels to the Thames and thus polluted the soil, but was also seized by landlords as a chance to increase rent; these factors contributed to the exodus of horticulturalists, the most notable of which being William Curtis, who closed his renowned botanical garden behind Broadwall in 1789.⁵⁹⁰

As well as presenting an unusual perspective on a London landmark, Nasmyth's watercolour of St Paul's Cathedral over the green expanse of Lambeth Marsh was perhaps calculated to appeal to this wave of nostalgia and regret at the fate of Lambeth Marsh (fig.156). Taken from a low viewpoint, it not only obscures the landscape of timber yards, glass factories and foundries that were beginning to accumulate on the riverfront but also projects an image of the marsh as an untamed wilderness that seems fanciful in the light of the area's rapid urbanisation; even Noorthouck's map of thirty years before delineates this area as a network of buildings, yards and enclosed gardens (fig.132).

Still, Nasmyth was presenting what was widely regarded as Lambeth's most picturesque scene. Writing in 1827, Allen reflected that

'[t]wenty years ago Lambeth Marsh was considered a rural retreat; leading from it, were numberless pretty walks with pollard willows on each side...a windmill or two made up the rustic scene, in many places worthy the pencil of some of the best Dutch masters'.⁵⁹¹

Two decades later, Brayley's *History of Surrey* made mention of the same pollard willows. 'Everything is changed', he wrote, the 'swampy marsh...rural spots...small tea-gardens', had become '[c]rowded streets,

⁵⁸⁹ John Morris Flindall, letter to the editor ['On remarkable objects in Lambeth'], *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*, vol. 34 (1 Aug. 1812), 3.

⁵⁹⁰ Gibberd, *Lambeth Marsh*, 103.

⁵⁹¹ Allen, *Lambeth*, 296.

wharfs, manufactories' such that 'scarcely any part of the metropolis is fraught with a more abundant population'.⁵⁹² His capitulation of the loss of Lambeth Marsh as a loss for society recalls Blake's forecast as well as prefiguring later Victorian pessimism about the inner city. In the 1870s images of Lambeth Marsh would serve to illustrate the detrimental impact to society of intense urbanisation and industrialisation.

Lambeth's shoreline: a landscape of gain?

That images of Lambeth Marsh as it had been in previous centuries were more common than its contemporary representation is not only indicative of the retrospective turn in topographical culture but also of the fact, stated in the section above dealing with Lambeth Palace, that one of the principle contexts in which Lambeth was represented was in works dedicated to Thames scenery. Although the newly urbanised inner part of Lambeth Marsh was not a regular subject for imagery, commentary upon the losses and changes there provides an important context for the more numerous images of its shoreline. The augmentation in number and scale of industrial premises were too conspicuous and too alien to ignore, encroaching upon and, as will be seen, creating new standard viewpoints for Thames scenery.

London's south bank was one of the most rapidly industrialising areas in Britain. By 1820 there were between 300 and 400 masters in 'various branches of machinery' living in Southwark and Lambeth; the river, according to Britton, was 'lined with manufactures and warehouses...such as iron-founders, dyers, soap and oil-makers, glass-makers, shot-makers, boat-builders'.⁵⁹³ Amongst these and the numerous timber yards, major works included that of John Rennie, engineer of Vauxhall, Waterloo and Blackfriars Bridges; Maudsley, Son and Field, who built and successfully launched in 1832 the first Thames-built steam ship, the Lord William Bentinck (named after a prominent Whig), from their works by Waterloo Bridge; Mrs Coade's

⁵⁹² Brayley, *Surrey*, vol. 5, 387.

⁵⁹³ Britton, ed., *Original Picture of London*, 388.

Artificial Stone manufactory, and Doulton's pottery, which was set back from the river in Lambeth High Street.⁵⁹⁴

The changes to the character of the riverside at Lambeth initiated a crisis of description and divergent attitudes to its aesthetic. The discussion that follows closely analyses the means by which artists and writers dealt with such change on the Thames shoreline, a focus dictated by the weight of imagery taking in Lambeth's riverside only. A pattern is detectable through the evidence analysed below, from the 1790s to the 1840s, which may be cursorily summarised as revealing a gradual shift towards an acceptance of industrial motifs within Lambeth's image. This attitudinal shift was by no means linear, however – the view taken by Ireland in his *Picturesque Views on the River Thames* (first published 1797) that 'no additional beauty [came] from the miserable range of buildings erected along [Lambeth's] banks' was rehearsed well into the 1830s, even as other publications had begun to admit these buildings into their views.

Ireland's volume promoted the Thames as a paragon of classical elegance and peaceful, picturesque prosperity – a desirable message for a nation at war. His view of St Paul's Cathedral, taken from the Lambeth shore excluded any such 'miserable' identifiers of Lambeth's increasingly industrialised character from the frame (fig.157). A quarter of a century on, however, this classicising mode was adapted to encompass the principle icons of Lambeth's evolving waterfront. Thomas Hosmer Shepherd's *London* takes a similar viewpoint to that in Ireland's volume (fig.158). Looking across the Thames to St Paul's from the Lambeth shore, Shepherd's composition denotes that the spectacle of the urban landscape could perform its own version of the Claudean picturesque, a tower and jumble of bargeboards standing in for a framing tree and vegetation. Its widened frame allows for the inclusion of a feature Ireland had denounced as one which could not 'be considered as an object ornamental to the river Thames': Watt's Patent Shot Manufactory.⁵⁹⁵ Standing

⁵⁹⁴ Jon Newman, *Local History: Views from North Lambeth* (London: Museum of Garden History, 2006), 14.

⁵⁹⁵ Ireland, *Picturesque Views*, vol. 2, 194.

prominently in the right-hand foreground of Shepherd's view, and absent from that in Ireland's volume, this tower represented an expansion of the lead empire built by the Bristol-based plumber William Watts, who had discovered that pouring molten lead from a height into a pool of water created perfectly spherical shots. Erected in 1789, it was one of the most conspicuous and early signs of this new age of industry at Lambeth, and was well placed to contribute to the Revolutionary and Napoleonic war effort. This was the first illustration to James Eames's text for *Metropolitan Improvements*, a pro-capitalist, patriotic text that promoted a bombastic vision of the post-Napoleonic wave of building as indicative of the 'Age of Augustan England', one in which exemplars of industry like Watts's shot tower were to be celebrated as symbolic of Britain's industrial ingenuity, and its economic and military might. The repeated form of the tower – be it a church spire or chimney – in Shepherd's *London* signals a city that was both pious and prosperous.

Further into *Metropolitan Improvements* appears the first image to be widely circulated depicting the second of Lambeth's shot towers (fig.159). This was erected for Thomas Maltby in 1826 further down shore, to the other side of Waterloo Bridge, thereby embellishing the site's triumphant military associations. Accordingly, the view down the bridge from the Thames's north shore accentuates the rhythm of its neoclassical columnar structure. Bathed in sunlight, it lends the new tower a monumental, triumphal air concordant with the accompanying text's emphasis and celebration of such new urban landscapes' contribution to the 'Augustan Age of England'. Indeed, in criticising the government's failure to reward the adjacent bridge's owners for changing its name (and thereby endowing it with monumental status at no cost to the state) the suggestion was raised that the owner of this, 'one of the most striking and handsome objects in London', might wish to broker a deal and have it renamed 'Trafalgar Column', years before the idea to build Nelson's column.⁵⁹⁶ The bridge and tower provide a neoclassical orderliness and

⁵⁹⁶ *The Globe and Traveller*, 9 December 1826.

grandeur to a riverscape otherwise populated by an assortment of low-lying warehouse buildings and ephemeral rivercraft.

This image of Maltby's shot tower for *Metropolitan Improvements* was revelatory, presenting to its consumers a new Thames landmark in a composition that bore little relation to any previous views of the river. By comparison to the image of Vauxhall it was paired with on the page (fig.160), it conveys the multiplicity of landscape types that Lambeth's shoreline presented but also compounds the evocation of the classical landscape – if Vauxhall was a leafy Claudian pastoral, populated by traditional boat builders, the shot tower's resemblance to a lighthouse evoked the port, standing for the nation's productivity and ability to defend itself.

Yet despite the towers' symbolic potential and their prominence in Shepherd's plates for *Metropolitan Improvements*, Elmes's text makes no mention of them, instead focusing upon structures that served more overtly communal and civic functions such as new streets, theatres and public buildings. Shot towers seemed, therefore, to lay outwith Elmes's category of the kinds of 'adornment of cities' through which 'nations are established'.⁵⁹⁷

Allen's *Lambeth*, meanwhile, is more progressive, being attentive to both the form and function of these new sights, singling each tower out for illustration in a way that corresponded to the standard *mis-en-page* of more decidedly antiquarian texts like Herbert and Brayley's *Lambeth Palace*, a point of reference in his volume (figs.161 and 162).⁵⁹⁸ The inland perspective on Maltby's works has a diagrammatic quality that complements the didactic nature of his text but by stripping the towers of their wider, elevating Thames-side context, Allen reveals them to be mundane specimens. This aesthetic is compounded by the choice and handling of their media, the woodcut being

⁵⁹⁷ James Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements: or London in the Nineteenth century: displayed in a series of engravings of the new buildings, improvements and by the most eminent artists / from original drawings taken from the objects themselves expressly for this work by Mr Thos. H. Shepherd* (London: Jones & Co., 1827), 3.

⁵⁹⁸ Like Brayley, Allen was Lambeth-born, his father having been a printer of maps. Allen's *Lambeth* was published in Kennington. He acknowledges the 'interesting and well-digested account compiled by Messrs. Brayley and Herbert' in *Lambeth*, 80.

particularly rudimentary, although this choice of media was likely linked to the volume's relatively low cost.⁵⁹⁹

Allen's approach to Lambeth's industrial scenery inspired a lengthy diatribe in the *Gentlemen's Magazine*. To Allen, Maltby's tower was 'a great ornament to the river' that 'does infinite credit to the architect'; to his reviewer, it was the most 'horrifying object to the picturesque' amongst 'various nuisances to the eye which annoy us in the entrance of cities'.⁶⁰⁰ The review continued:

'these wretched concerns of manufactories are among the greatest... what with their sheds and barns... and yards full of puddles and mud, and lumber and litter; they form the most complete specimen of the anti-picturesque... a profusion of gawky chimnies [sic], and clouds of annoying smoke, fætid smells, and stunning or creaking noises. That these are very vile things, every Gilpinian will readily admit'.⁶⁰¹

This echoes Ireland's denouncement of the shot towers, written in the 1790s, the decade most saturated by Gilpin's influence, that Watts' shot tower could not 'be considered as an object ornamental to the river Thames'.⁶⁰²

Ireland's words reverberated again, a few years later, in the pan-European publication, Tombleson's *Thames* (1834). It declared that

'[t]he miserable and unpicturesque appearance which the Surry [sic] shore presents is fully compensated by the prospect ... more in advance, comprising the venerable form of Lambeth Palace on the right, with the grey and weather-beaten tower of the church.'⁶⁰³

⁵⁹⁹ Allen's *Lambeth* cost £1 15 shillings in octavo and £3 3 shillings in quarto. *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 101, part 1 (Feb. 1831), 13.

⁶⁰⁰ Allen, *Lambeth*, 443; *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 97, part 1 (Mar. 1827), 528–9.

⁶⁰¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 97, part 1 (Mar. 1827), 528. The reviewer makes the suggestion that a row of Lombardy poplars and fir would conceal the works.

⁶⁰² Ireland, *Picturesque Views*, vol. 2, 194.

⁶⁰³ William Gray Fearnside, ed., *Tombleson's Thames* (London: W. Tombleson, 1834), 72.

That action was still, in the 1830s, being taken to obscure the ‘miserable’ Surrey shore’s industrial structures is demonstrable by comparison between the volume’s depiction of Lambeth Palace and that which features in volume three of Brayley’s *History of Surrey* (figs.163 and 164). Both offer a close and detailed view of the palace’s architecture and its situation, as if viewed from a pleasure craft on a tour of the Thames, a viewpoint which accentuates the grandeur of the Palace. In McKewen’s image for Brayley’s *Surrey*, the vertical rhythm of landing posts, flag poles and trees leads the eye to the shot towers, a new feature in the Palace’s topographical dialogue. This, by comparison, is revealed to be missing – obscured by trees in Winkles’s view for Tombleson’s *Thames*.

Constable’s *Opening of Waterloo Bridge* and Lambeth’s ‘anti-picturesque’ shot towers

Reaching its conclusion, the review of Allen’s *Lambeth* melodramatically opined that

‘the sorrows of the picturesque are...never pitied...the environs of towns and cities might...sing “Nobody’s coming to rescue us, / Oh! dear what will be made of us”’.⁶⁰⁴

It is significant that Constable, a painter whose reputation has traditionally rested upon his depictions of rural places (as noted above in relation to his work at Salisbury and Brighton) should choose to make something of this ‘anti-picturesque’ icon in a major six-foot painting. Notwithstanding Rosenthal’s suggestion that the shot tower reinforces the painting’s celebration of Britain’s military prowess, its inclusion has thus far eluded most commentators, particularly given its anachronistic status within a work purporting to be rooted in a single moment from 1818 – Maltby’s tower was

⁶⁰⁴ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. 97, part 1 (Mar. 1827), 529.

erected nine years after the opening of the bridge (fig.65).⁶⁰⁵ My contention here is that the opening of the bridge and the tower function in a similar way to Turner's Elizabethan map in the watercolour of Greenwich, operating as temporal signposts of this location's evolution over time. The painting can thus be read, like *Salisbury* and *Brighton*, as part of Constable's drive to project topographical knowledge-driven histories of place within the arena of academic landscape painting.

The painting was conceived as a means for Constable to diversify his repertoire and capitalise on the attention and approbation awarded to him after the exhibition of *The White Horse* in 1819. To paint a contemporary cityscape of monumental import, one that played to the patriotism sweeping Britain in the years since Wellington's victory and recalled illustrious Old Master precedents like Claude's embarkation scenes and the more recent Thames scenes of Canaletto, was, in principle, a sound strategy for a painter of hitherto rural scenes. This was one of the most celebrated Thames prospects. In his *History of the River Thames* (1795), which helped establish the canon of Thames views, William Combe lauds this stretch of river as a 'splendid picture':

a scene even of superior magnificence [to that which takes in Westminster Abbey]. The Thames here takes a bold sweep toward the east, and displays its greatest breadth of water. From hence the eye naturally ranges on the embankment of Whitehall, and resting, for a moment, on the refreshing foliage of those trees that shade Lord Fife's beautiful terrace...the Adelphi...Somerset House...Saint Paul's, which...with the surrounding spires, finish this splendid picture'.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁵ Michael Rosenthal, "Turner fires a Gun," in D.H. Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line. The Royal Academy Exhibition at Somerset House* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 152.

⁶⁰⁶ Combe, *River Thames*, 159.

Waterloo Bridge, praised by Canova (1757–1822) as ‘the finest bridge in all Europe’,⁶⁰⁷ and Britton as ‘one of the noblest structures of its kind in the world’,⁶⁰⁸ was universally lauded as an enhancement to this ‘picture of extraordinary interest’.⁶⁰⁹ Despite his evident intent to reveal it on several occasions, it would take Constable thirteen years to finish and exhibit his picture.⁶¹⁰ By 1832, its subject’s glimmer had faded somewhat: not only was the bridge a commercial failure – high tolls (halfpenny for pedestrians, more for vehicles) intended to permit only the most respectable of traffic simply drove users to nearby toll-free Blackfriars and Westminster bridges – but it was no longer the newest crossing in London.⁶¹¹ In August 1831, London Bridge had been opened by William IV – perhaps a factor in Constable’s decision to commit to exhibiting his Thames subject, this more recent event was mistaken as the subject of *Waterloo Bridge* upon its exhibition in 1832.⁶¹²

The intervening years also saw another take on this view. Alexander Nasmyth’s *A prospect of London, seen from the Earl of Cassilis’s privy garden, with Waterloo bridge beyond* (1826) (fig.168) draws on the precedent of Dutch Italianate landscape painting, most likely filtered through works like Turner’s *Dort or Dordrecht: The Dort packet-boat from Rotterdam becalmed* (1818; Yale Center for British Art), to saturate this stretch of Thames in warm sunlight. This atmospheric scheme lends itself to Nasmyth’s handling of the subject – tightly delineated, it treads within the bounds of topographical representation to privilege legibility of the scene. Thus, architectural features such as Lambeth’s new landmarks, St John’s Church and Maltby’s shot tower, are clearly identifiable. While this painting predates the printed depictions of

⁶⁰⁷ “Memoir of Antonio Canova,” in *The New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register*, vol. 13 (Jan. 1820), 70.

⁶⁰⁸ Britton, *Original Picture of London*, 24th edition, 199.

⁶⁰⁹ Samuel Owen, *A Picturesque Tour of the River Thames from Oxford to its Mouth. Illustrated by Twenty-Four Highly Finished and Coloured Views, a Map and Vignettes from Original Drawings made on the spot by William Westall, A.R.A. and Samuel Owen* (London R. Ackermann, 1828), 149.

⁶¹⁰ *The Monthly Magazine*, vol. 52 (1 April 1821), 276; *The Gazette of Fashion*, 30 March 1822, 149. Judy Crosby Ivy suggests these reports may be assumptions on the part of visitors to his studio, who had seen the painting on the easel. See Judy Crosby Ivy, *Constable and the Critics* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell in association with Suffolk Records Society, 1991), 87, 93.

⁶¹¹ Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), 22.

⁶¹² *The Observer*, 6 May 1832; *The Times*, 8 May 1832.

the shot towers there is no evidence that this work was ever displayed in London.⁶¹³ Earlier versions of his own painting, those without the ceremonial flotilla, possess a similarly tight handling of paint, but Constable had criticised the way in which the most prominent form of topographical landscape painting, the panorama, was executed ‘minutely and cunningly, but with no greatness or breadth’.⁶¹⁴ His complaint that their makers ‘only look to the surface and not to the mind’ was aimed at his former friend, Richard Ramsey Reinagle, whose income largely came from more popular forms of landscape imagery – in 1818 he produced a view of the opening of Waterloo Bridge for Cooke’s *Views on the Thames* (1822) taken from the corner of Cecil Street, where he and Constable had once lodged together (fig.169).⁶¹⁵ Four years before, Reinagle had been selected over Constable for the status of Associate Academician; in 1819, the year Constable is thought to have begun his *Waterloo Bridge* project in earnest, the two men dined next to one another at the Royal Academy’s dinner celebrating the birthday of the King.⁶¹⁶ It is entirely possible that the occasion prompted Constable to revisit his drawings of Waterloo Bridge and develop them into a record of its opening that was much grander and both technically and academically ambitious than the comparatively pedestrian spectator’s view his former friend had produced.

In Reinagle’s view of the bridge’s opening, the presence of Watts’s shot tower is softened by its being seen against a swathe of grey cloud that is not obviously intended to be smoke, and its partial occlusion behind the white smoke of the canon fired at the ceremony. Nasmyth had a keen interest in engineering but even so, the view of the south bank’s modern industrial landscape in his sunlit vista is partially obscured by the sails of the traditional wherries in the foreground. The Thames’s new, and less picturesque features, are thus subtly assimilated in ways that do not compromise topographical

⁶¹³ Jonathan Clarkson, *Constable* (London: Phaidon, 2010), 175.

⁶¹⁴ C.R. Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, 1845, edited by J. Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1951), 17.

⁶¹⁵ George Cooke after Reinagle, *Opening of Waterloo Bridge on the 18th of June 1817*, 1818, etching and engraving, 142 x 224 mm, British Museum (registration number: 1880,1113.1405).

⁶¹⁶ R.B. Beckett, ed., *John Constable’s Correspondence, IV: Patrons, Dealers and Fellow Artists* (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1966), 218.

accuracy rather than being entirely screened from view, as in the image for *Tombleson's Thames*. That publication's reaction to industry's encroachment on Lambeth Palace finds a parallel in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* criticism of Allen's *Lambeth*, which found the proximity of the bridge and the new shot manufactory disturbing, 'swindling the eye into a belief' that the crossing was built as a convenient route to Lambeth's industrial premises. In their diminishing of the visual and environmental impact of the shot towers upon their surrounds, however, via the presentation of them as clean and calm complexes, the images for *Metropolitan Improvements* and Allen's *Lambeth* performed their own 'swindling of the eye'. In these prints the shot towers appear as mere structural interventions in the landscape, isolated from the context of the rapidly industrialising landscape around them and thus disassociated from the environmental impact of the phenomena of industry they are invoked to represent. The 'strange emptiness' of Thomas Shotter Boys's *Westminster from Waterloo Bridge* (1842), as Alex Potts has observed it, demonstrates the endurance of this idealised vision.⁶¹⁷

Constable's representation of these shot towers amplified as the painting evolved. It is clear from an early sketch that he intended to use the towers of Lukin's iron foundry and Watt's shot mill as framing devices on the right-hand side and in all painted versions prior to that he exhibited, the area is represented by single towers silhouetted against the sky. They emit only thin, wispy trails of smoke, or else none at all (figs.166 and 167). In the final *Waterloo Bridge*, the towers and their fumes have multiplied in volume (fig.165). The anachronistic inclusion of Maltby's shot tower, which first appears in a sketch from c.1829 (Yale Center for British Art), operates like a beacon, drawing attention to the Lambeth shoreline by way of the contrast between the whiteness of the tower and the thick black column of smoke pouring from Lukin's iron foundry close by (a representation consistent with that seen in Girtin's *Eidometropolis*). Constable's eventual representation of the south bank as a frontier for a Lambeth that had become an agglomeration of such towers set beneath a thick cloud of smoke, was, therefore, a major

⁶¹⁷ Alex Potts, "Picturing the Modern Metropolis: Images of London in the Nineteenth Century," *History Workshop Journal*, 26 (Autumn 1988), 32.

departure from the way in which this landscape was commonly seen. It embraced the juxtaposition of forms – the monumental with the industrial, the neoclassical with the unavoidably modern – that proved so troublesome in print culture within what was held to be the more cerebral realm of academic landscape painting in oil on canvas.

Evocative of John Evelyn's characterisation of London from two centuries previous as a 'Hellish and dismall Cloud of SEA-COALE', Constable's representation of Lambeth's industry may have reminded its viewers of mounting concerns about the environmental impact of smoke.⁶¹⁸ While this was a city-wide issue, it appears to have been felt particularly acutely in Lambeth. When reflecting on his removal from the area following the construction of the New Cut, the botanist William Curtis recalled how

‘I had long observed with regret that I had an enemy to contend with in Lambeth Marsh, which neither time, nor ingenuity, nor industry could vanquish; and that was the smoke of London which, except when the wind blew from the South, constantly enveloped my plants’.⁶¹⁹

Henry Doulton, inheritor of his father's eponymous pottery, recalled Lambeth in the 1830s as 'a perfect congeries of evil odours' presenting 'a richer and more varied nosegay of stinks than any other part of the metropolis' thanks to the open drains and industries for processing bone and manure.⁶²⁰ Potteries were, however, amongst the worst pollutants: a by-product of Doulton's glazing process was chlorine, which the Archbishop of Canterbury reported to be suffocating his garden.⁶²¹ In 1864 it was reported that the stonework of Blore's remodelling of Lambeth Palace was 'already in a far advanced and

⁶¹⁸ John Evelyn, *Fumifugium: Or, The Inconvenience of the Aer and Smoake of London Dissipated* (1661, new edn 1772) in Mark Jenner, "The Politics of London Air John Evelyn's *Fumifugium* and the Restoration," *The Historical Journal*, 38, no. 3 (1995), 535–51.

⁶¹⁹ William Curtis quoted in "Of Botany, and the Brompton Botanic Garden," *The Monthly Magazine: Or, British Register*, vol. 19 (1 June 1805), 454.

⁶²⁰ Newman, *Local History*, 13.

⁶²¹ Newman, *Local History*, 17.

most lamentable state of decay’ owing to the fumes from neighbouring potteries.⁶²²

Set slightly back from the other Whitehall Yard houses that Constable represents in the left-hand foreground of *Waterloo Bridge* was the home of the Tory-turned-Whig MP Michael Angelo Taylor (1757–1834). Taylor was the principle advocate of the 1821 Steam Engines and Furnaces Act, which aimed (but ultimately failed) to reduce industrial smoke pollution by forcing manufactures to fit ‘smoke consuming’ machines.⁶²³ Constable’s powerful evocation of the unpleasant sight and smell of industrial smoke visualises what may have been Taylor’s personal motivation. But that cloud represented much more than a local and environmental grievance – it might also represent the political encroachment of the middle classes, whose enterprises gained them wealth and standing, and posed a threat to the ‘old money’ of the occupants of Whitehall Yard. Conversely, the smoke cloud was likely an attractive prospect to the eyes of Birmingham-based coalmine owner and ironmaster Charles Birch (fl.1825–1870), who, by 1839, had come to own Constable’s *Waterloo Bridge*.⁶²⁴ For a man whose fortune rested on the means of producing that very smoke cloud, its juxtaposition with Waterloo Bridge, built using a loan from governmental coal tax revenue, and the royal pageantry of its opening rendered an auspicious showcase of the central role of industry in not only the economic and political life of Britain, but its capital’s landscape, too.

Constable’s motives for calling attention to Lambeth’s industry through the inclusion of the anachronistic shot tower and the density of smoke looming behind it are unknowable. Yet amid mounting concerns about the adverse impact of industrialisation and urbanisation, it may have been a way to transform what was, by 1832, an untimely depiction of an event that had

⁶²² Architect Ewan Christian quoted in Dodwell, *Lambeth Palace*, 54.

⁶²³ Roland Thorne, “Michael Angelo Taylor (bap. 1757–1834), politician,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), accessed 4 Aug. 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27067>; Lee Jackson, *Dirty Old London: The Victorian Fight against Filth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 221, 224.

⁶²⁴ Robinson, *William Etty*, 393.

occurred seventeen years previously, into a contemporary historic landscape painting. Read this way, the work becomes a meditation on the relationship between time – present, past and future – and place.

Lambeth and the ‘public task’ of topography

Constable’s depiction of Lambeth in *Waterloo Bridge* may also relate to the particular currency it had in the year he exhibited it. In February 1832 the cholera epidemic hit London. Polluted and unsanitary, Lambeth suffered greatly – half of all the capital’s cholera cases occurred in the low-lying urbanising marshlands of Lambeth, Southwark and Bermondsey.⁶²⁵ Although he had moved away from Lambeth, the epidemic would claim Allen as one of its victims in July 1833.

Constable’s painting thus encapsulates ambiguous status that this facet of Lambeth occupied – as a cause for both celebration and concern. The tension between Lambeth’s gains and losses plays out across topographical literature, too. In Allen’s *Lambeth* there is a disconnect between his passive commendation of change, such as his report that Lambeth’s industrial buildings were ‘much admired for their solidarity, plan, and architecture’, and his expressions of alarm, elsewhere in his text, at the pace of change.⁶²⁶ Brayley wrote of Lambeth Marsh that ‘scarcely any part of the metropolis is fraught with a more abundant population’, but he could also appreciate the view that coalmine owner Birch might have had, that its industrialised shoreline impressed ‘the philosophic observer with a deep sense of mercantile activity and metropolitan affluence’ without conveying any awareness of the correlation between the simultaneous boom in manufacturing and population.⁶²⁷

The admittance of industrial landscapes into mainstream topographical imagery and the ambiguous and at times contradictory dialogues surrounding

⁶²⁵ Jackson, *Dirty Old London*, 59.

⁶²⁶ Allen, *Lambeth*, 307.

⁶²⁷ Brayley, *Surrey*, vol. 5, 387, 393.

them and their impact is perhaps a reflection of the changing context in which topography was conducted and consumed. Since the discipline's early days it had been recognised as a virtuous and patriotic concern; Allen was aligning himself with tradition when proclaiming his efforts as a 'public task'.⁶²⁸ If political conflict found an outlet in the discipline at times, as evidenced by the way in which criticism of Wyatt's treatment of Salisbury Cathedral acquired a political anti-Catholic dimension, on the whole topographical accounts served a readership that was united through their belonging to the same class, or their aspirations for gentlemanly status. In the latter, Allen and Brayley were united, both using authorship as a means to elevate themselves beyond their artisanal roots – their residential transition from Lambeth to Islington (and, in Brayley's case, out to the increasingly desirable Surrey suburbs) reflects their success in this regard. There was, however, an important distinction between the contexts in which their books were published, even though just thirteen years separated them.

Allen's *Lambeth* was published in 1827. At the time he was writing, agitation for political reform was reaching fever pitch. Arguably, his personal connection to Lambeth, an area that was already suffering overcrowding, rampant capitalist-driven development and becoming changed beyond recognition, tempered his approach. This is detectable in his particular concern for the disappearance of green space. As he observed it, the 'tumbling up of tumble down houses' was occurring so rapidly that 'there will scarcely be a green spot for the resort of the inhabitants' – the removal of space for 'walking in the fresh air' would, he noted, have 'evil consequences to health'.⁶²⁹ His hope 'that the legislature will turn an eye to the subject' explicitly articulates urbanisation's negative impacts as a political issue to be addressed.⁶³⁰ This appears to be a rare example of a topographical author using his voice as a means to draw attention to issues affecting those who had

⁶²⁸ Allen, *Lambeth*, vi. This notion was first promoted by Richard Gough's *British Topography* (1780) and John Britton, amongst others. See Stephen Daniels, "Transforming Topography," British Library website, accessed 21 August 2018, <https://www.bl.uk/picturing-places/articles/transforming-topography>.

⁶²⁹ *Morning Post*, 9 September 1833; Allen, *Lambeth*, 296.

⁶³⁰ Allen, *Lambeth*, 296.

none: the many working-class inhabitants of Lambeth who were largely absent from topographical texts, images and the realm of their consumption.

The first volume of Brayley's *Surrey* was published in 1841, nine years after the passing of the Representation of the People Act. Class had become a critical issue: agitation for reform was on the rise again, manifesting widespread discontent at the scope of the so-called 'Great Reform Act'. Brayley's description of his *History of Surrey* as being addressed to 'all', 'however exalted by birth or fortune, or of whatever rank, or station', chimes with the language of this reform-centric era. Efforts to broaden the reach of topography had long been commended.⁶³¹ Although it failed to find merit in Allen's attentiveness to the shot towers, the *Gentlemen's Magazine* critique of Allen's *Lambeth* appreciated the societal importance of the volume's relative affordability:

'Science is under great obligations to all those who can render Topography cheap, and yet not spoil it; for, where it is locked up in very expensive works, it can never become a science of general reading, and thus loses much encouragement'.⁶³²

Despite his evangelical ambition, Brayley's approach could not be described as topography for 'all'; his approach to the industrialised shore at Lambeth demonstrates the way in which such volumes served, ultimately, to reinforce the class values that Britain's most powerful and affluent citizens lived by.

Amongst the benefits of 'topographical researches' as perceived by Brayley was the discipline's ability to extend 'knowledge of the various seats of trade and industry, and thus facilitating the progress of manufacturers, and the spread of commerce', a comment that positioned his work within the longer continuum of the genre's curiosity about such sites, aligning himself with Pennant and his ilk.⁶³³ This outlook tallies with the volume's illustrations, as

⁶³¹ Brayley, *Surrey*, vol. 1, ii.

⁶³² *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 97, part 1 (Mar. 1827), 529.

⁶³³ Brayley, *Surrey*, vol. 1, i.

in that of Lambeth Palace, which is seen in relation to the shot towers further down shore, and in the depiction of Goding's Lion Brewery, which opened in 1837 and was situated adjacent to Maltby's shot tower (fig.170). In this image, the historic Thames and the contemporary Thames harmoniously coexist and complement one another.

Goding's Lion Brewery, owned by brothers James and Charles Goding, opened in 1837, continuing the tradition for the production of alcohol at Lambeth that had once been exemplified by Beaufoy's wine and vinegar works, a business forced to vacate Lambeth Marsh to make way for the construction of Waterloo Bridge. To Thomas Pennant, writing in the 1770s and quoted in Allen's 1827 text, Beaufoy's epitomised 'magnificence of business'.⁶³⁴ This description matches equally well the illustration of the Lion Brewery, sponsored by James Goding, in Brayley's text. Echoing the frontage of nearby Somerset House, the brewery possessed a classicising grandeur, its imposing form and embodiment of Lambeth industry strengthened by its adorning lion, manufactured at the nearby Coade manufactory. This 'handsome' building was celebrated as unmatched by other such factories in the metropolis.⁶³⁵ Much like the way in which *London, for Metropolitan Improvements* (fig.158), displayed Watt's shot tower against St Paul's, the domed cathedral appears on the horizon behind the brewery, drawing it into the celebrated London landscape and acting as a reminder that Britain's prosperity was rooted in its moral and spiritual foundation. The brewery's columns lend their grandeur to the nearby shot towers and chimneys, its overall form imposing a formalised geometry upon a plot formerly occupied by a jumble of timber wharves while a packed steamer chugs its way past an array of slower, traditional vessels, both commercial and ceremonial.

Brayley's text praised middle-class manufactures, who, '[p]laced...between the toiling multitude and the refined society of a great nation', he believed were distinguished by their responsible and innovative efforts to reduce

⁶³⁴ Allen, *Lambeth*, 310.

⁶³⁵ Pierce Egan, *Pilgrims of the Thames, in search of the National!* (London: W. Strange, 1838), 143.

smoke emissions. While several high profile cases of errant manufactures from the 1830s and 40s show that this was not unilaterally the case,⁶³⁶ it demonstrates the text to be complicit, with its images, in the projection of an idealised modern world that reinforced the acceptability of the status quo – manufactures, who, by and large, now had the franchise were thus conveyed as responsible, moral citizens, worthy of their elevated place in the patriarchy.⁶³⁷

The image of Goding's Lion Brewery by Allom, the topographical draughtsman and architect (who was, like Brayley, Lambeth-born), provides what is likely to be an unwitting visual expression for Brayley's spatial analogy of class. Dressed in white, the passengers of the ceremonial barge may well be clergy and are perhaps being conveyed between St Paul's, in the background, and Westminster Abbey or Lambeth Palace, just up river; with the well-dressed passengers of the steamer, they represent 'refined society'. Behind them is the domain of the manufacturer, the brewery. What we do not see, however, is the 'toiling multitude', at work behind the walls of the brewery or living in their 'tumbledown' homes on Lambeth Marsh.

Brayley's text and this type of image rearticulated Lambeth as a centre of power: its industrial shoreline, adorned by the new brewery, was the mercantile equivalent of Lambeth Palace. This is underscored in the image set into the title page of William Edward Trotter's 1839 *Select Illustrated Topography of Thirty Miles Round London* (fig.171). This perspective ascribes to the shot tower the value of the prospect, just as Hollar, Canaletto and Farington had used the height of the Archbishop of Canterbury's seat and the bend in the Thames to construe a visual relationship between Lambeth Palace and other seats of power within London. Unlike Horner's crow's nest atop St Paul's, which was occupied by the artist only, who shared the view via his *Panorama*, the shot tower was accessible to visitors. In 1842, Cooke's *Handbook for Richmond and Twickenham...* talked of the shot tower as a 'handsome structure of white brick...from the top of which a magnificent

⁶³⁶ Lee Jackson, *Dirty Old London*, 223.

⁶³⁷ Brayley, *Surrey*, vol. 5, appendix, 48.

panorama of London presents itself to the view'.⁶³⁸ This not only confirms the acceptability of the shot tower as an adornment to the Thames, a concept unthinkable to the critic of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, but that it could blur the lines between Lambeth's identities, joining the likes of Vauxhall – the site of balloon launches and panoramas – as a venue for spectacular visual entertainment in itself.

Reform and re-positioning Lambeth: the centre of a 'magic circle' or the transpontine fringe?

In the introduction to Trotter's *Selected Illustrated Topography*, in which the author stated his ambition to 'follow in the footsteps of such leaders as Lysons and Brayley', the image depicting Maltby's shot tower was explained thus:

'[t]he preceding vignette may be taken as somewhat allegorical of our task. It displays a view of London from a gallery near the summit of the shot-manufactory in Belvidere-road, which tower, with a little poetic licence, may be deemed the centre around which we draw our magic circle'.⁶³⁹

While this may seem to determine Lambeth as the fulcrum of the capital city, placing it within the metropolis, the 'magic circle' of sights to appreciate no doubt corresponded with the vista seen in the title page vignette (fig.171) and thus described a fan-like shape that excluded much of Lambeth – the slum housing built on the river's mud flats, the less spectacular sites of industry, for example. Just as the majority of Lambeth was therefore still excluded from the frame, conceptually and administratively, too, the area and its people remained on the margins. Its vulnerability in this way was reinforced by the growing use of the term 'transpontine' to describe it. When Brayley

⁶³⁸ W.B. Cooke, *A Hand-book for Richmond & Twickenham with Hints to Visitors and an excursion by water from London to Twickenham* (London: W.B. Cooke, 1842), ii.

⁶³⁹ William Edward Trotter, *Select Illustrated Topography of Thirty Miles Round London* (London, 1839), iv–v.

celebrated this view of ‘mercantile activity and metropolitan affluence’,⁶⁴⁰ it is safe to assume that he was not enveloping Lambeth into the scope of ‘metropolitan affluence’ but rather celebrating Lambeth’s fuelling of this via its ‘mercantile activity’.

So while bridges, buildings and governance – such as Lambeth’s inclusion in the Metropolitan Police ward from 1829 – might narrow the physical and conceptual distance between it and the metropolis, this gap was prone to expansion through long-held prejudice and its economic distinction as a landscape in service to the metropolis, be that through gardens, theatres, or factories. In a response to the closure of the unstable Westminster Bridge in 1846, *Punch* magazine referenced Lambeth’s ‘transpontine people’ as ‘aliens in geography’, teetering on the verge of un-metropolitan backwardness:

‘already [Lambeth] is a week behind us in the polite arts’, it reported, ‘and every day that [the bridge remains closed] will send them backward four-and-twenty hours towards the barbarism...it has taken centuries to get out of’.⁶⁴¹

The veil of humour here was thin: rapid urbanisation and industrialisation in Lambeth had delivered there a population whose place, and rights, in society were, in the 1840s, still very much the subject of polarizing debate. Even after the passing of the 1832 reform act, which apportioned Lambeth two M.P.s in the re-drawing of electoral boundaries, access to the electoral system and abuse of privilege by the intimately linked church and state remained under fire. It was in Lambeth, at Kennington Common, that the Chartists would meet in 1848, with intent to march on Parliament; home to ‘some of the loudest complainers’ was how one nineteenth-century commentator described the area.⁶⁴²

⁶⁴⁰ Brayley, *Surrey*, vol. 5, 393.

⁶⁴¹ *Punch*, reprinted in *Bell’s Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 6 September 1846.

⁶⁴² George Hill, *The Electoral History of the Borough of Lambeth* (London: Stanford & Co., 1879), 43.

Through both its proximity, and the values of its inhabitants, then, Lambeth was closely implicated in the emergence of, quite literally, a new political landscape. Just two years after the passing of the Great Reform Act, the old parliamentary complex was gutted by fire; many, including Turner, witnessed this portentous spectacle from the Lambeth shore. Its replacement, the ultimate exercise in the neo-gothic, once again invigorated Lambeth's image, re-drawing attention to its most ancient topographical icon, Lambeth Palace through images like Thomas Abel Prior's print, possibly after a drawing by Thomas Allom (fig.172).⁶⁴³ Likely to have been aimed at consumers keen for projections of the new parliament, this print was widely disseminated as a headpiece of the Stationer's Almanack: intended to be wall-mounted, this image had more potential than any topographical volume to achieve the broadened reach which Brayley hoped for his work.⁶⁴⁴ In line with both Allom and Prior's renown (Prior was one of Turner's few trusted engravers) this is an ambitious image that is not only compositionally and tonally complex but which encapsulates so much about the way in which Lambeth's image was formed and re-formed over time.

The primary effect of its perspective is an occlusion of the flat expanse of river and an exaggeration of the physical proximity of Lambeth Palace and the Palace of Westminster. This functions as an analogy for the ideal relationship between church and state upheld by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, William Howley. After having been a consistent and vocal opponent of Catholic emancipation, the Reform Bill and having voted against the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Howley had only reluctantly, and in response to immense pressure, ushered in measures to reform the Church of England. The popular image of Howley – a relic of ancient privilege, out of touch with his times – was fuelled by knowledge of his habitual and extravagant Dining in State at Lambeth Palace.⁶⁴⁵ This architectural juxtaposition invites comparison between symbols of a modernising Britain – the new (but pseudo

⁶⁴³ Ralph Hyde, *London Displayed: Headpieces from the Stationers' Almanacks* (London: London Topographical Society, 2010), 50.

⁶⁴⁴ Hyde, *London Displayed*, 1.

⁶⁴⁵ J.R. Garrard, "William Howley (1766–1848), archbishop of Canterbury," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed 5 Mar. 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14005>.

Gothic) architecture at Westminster, the steamer at the pier – and the church, with its antiquated leader and ancient architecture. The tension between the two may also be hinted at through the detail of the boy tugging a stubborn donkey in the foreground, a seemingly innocuous but potentially loaded inclusion.

This is compounded by the depiction of the immediate surrounds of Lambeth Palace as a site caught between modernisation and tradition. The grounds outside the Palace are pictured here as a rationalised, orderly space ideal for promenading, a place from which to appreciate the contrast of old and new gothic on either side of the Thames. The area is thus far impervious to the major wave of transformation then affecting riverside landscapes, the building of bridges. As detailed in relation to Vauxhall Gardens, the advent of bridges over the Thames took traffic away from the river. Their construction was vocally opposed by the river's watermen; in time, however, watermen evolved to become proprietors of steam packets, modifying access to stairs, such as those at the Adelphi, to dock these new vessels.⁶⁴⁶ Against this backdrop, the title Constable gave to his painting of the opening of Waterloo Bridge, *Whitehall Stairs*, signals another count on which his work was dedicated to memory and loss in the landscape. When Westminster Bridge was constructed, the Archbishop of Canterbury was compensated for losses to the revenue he could accrue from the crossing points in the Bishopric's ownership. In its focus on the stairs, the foreground of Prior's print offers an increasingly novel perspective on the river, one that was lost to the elevated experience of conveyance in steamers and across bridges but one which also details an ancient remnant of the Bishop's power as a landowner.

By comparison to the first part of this chapter, which dealt with the iconography of Lambeth Palace and its impact on wider Lambeth's image, the latter sections, concerned with Lambeth Marsh and the shot towers, feature comparatively little discussion of clerical authority. This is not to say, however, that the Bishop played no part in the shaping of Lambeth's new

⁶⁴⁶ David Starkey *et al.*, *Royal River: Power, Pageantry and the Thames* (London: Scala Books with the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 2012), 170.

landscape. The Bishopric owned much of Lambeth Marsh, selling it off in sections. Howley had dictated that the railway linking Vauxhall to Waterloo be directed around his grounds, forcing it to cut through the village of Water Lambeth, which was obliterated entirely when the Thames Embankment was built in the 1860s.⁶⁴⁷ If the convergence of the Chartists there presented Lambeth as a place of political division, the morphology of its urban landscape resulted in a Lambeth that was physically divided, too, and shaped by clerical as much as commercial interests. Behind the river frontage lay squalid living and working conditions that later Victorian writers would expose but this was a divide that the eventual celebration of Lambeth's industrial shoreline simply masked, making change palatable to those who were largely unaffected by anything other than its aesthetic impact.

*

At the outset of this chapter, three sites were identified as focal points for the visualisation of Lambeth's landscape in the period c.1790–1850: Lambeth Palace, Lambeth Marsh and, as emblems of a growing industrial economy, the towers for manufacturing lead shot. Each of these focal points grew out of or mutated in line with the demands of a modernising society. That their changing identities were intimately interlinked is perhaps most powerfully summarised by the consumption of the second focal point, Lambeth Marsh, and by the rampant development of industry and attendant urbanisation emblematised by the third. This was, at least in part, set in train by the incumbent of the first focal point, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the gradual relinquishing of pockets of land in the Bishopric's ownership. Its new buildings – palaces for religion, commerce (and, looking across to Westminster, politics) – drew on the architectural languages of Europe's past, the gothic and the classical, to manufacture an appropriately hybridised identity that worked to assert this built environment's centrality to British public life and the 'Augustan Age of England'. As much as Lambeth was becoming a 'new' urban landscape, however, the work of artists and

⁶⁴⁷ Gibberd, *Lambeth Marsh*, 51.

topographical writers registered and circulated the old Lambeth, particularly the Marsh, keeping alive its image and reconstructing it in a process that idealised the memory of a landscape that was becoming, to some, the very vision of the ‘anti-picturesque’. Through a process of gradual, but ideologically divisive, means, Lambeth’s new features – its shot towers and industrial complexes – were eventually embraced as part of a new, modern picturesque that served the interests of a booming capitalist society with growing global horizons. Close analysis of selected texts by Allen and Brayley, in tandem with a wider array of others, has illuminated not only Lambeth’s evolving landscape identity but also its role in the evolution of the discipline and consumption of topography itself, its appeal, like the franchise, widening to include the middle class.

If, in *Lambeth Palace*, Brayley and Herbert wrested the ancient topographical motif from the more exhaustive narrative contexts in which it was customarily seen to that point, such as the ambitious three-volume *History of Surrey* by William Bray and Owen Manning that had appeared in 1805, the county that Brayley surveyed for his own *History of Surrey*, published almost forty years later, was much changed. Many places had been transformed into sites with urban characteristics that required more narrative consideration than they once had: that Brayley’s *History* expanded to five volumes is no doubt, in part, a reflection of the fact that by the 1840s Lambeth had become too unwieldy and outgrown its county context. Shortly after Brayley’s text was published, formal recognition that Lambeth now had more in common with its urban neighbours than its rural Surrey counterparts came when the Lambeth Metropolitan County District was formed on 10 March 1847. This chapter’s focus on the riverfront is reflective of the way in which Lambeth’s image centred so much upon its shoreline. If, before the advent of bridges, the river had served to entrench the divide between Lambeth and London, encouraging its ‘transpontine’ cultural economy, it was also the means by which Lambeth could edge closer, conceptually, to the metropolis: the building of bridges catalysed its urbanisation, drawing it ever nearer to the metropolis’s ‘magic circle’.

Conclusion

The central aim of this thesis has been to generate a new perspective on British landscape culture through the investigation of two interconnected parameters, urban landscape imagery and the reform era, c.1820–50, an age in which industrialisation, urbanisation and the redistribution of suffrage in 1832 progressively concentrated economic and political power upon urban sites. Within this context, urban landscape imagery, in multiple formats, was a significant aspect of landscape culture, despite its marginalisation in the historiography of landscape in this period.

Building on studies of urban landscape imagery made by Hemingway, Arscott, Potts and others in the 1980s, this thesis has presented an expanded geography of urban landscape, looking beyond metropolitan London and the industrial north to consider four distinct urban types in southern England. By interweaving iconographical and textual analysis with consideration of the social significance and pervasiveness of topography as a practice, its four chapters have created a distinct thematic prism for re-viewing canonical work by John Constable, and demonstrated the riches of topography—in its widest application, encompassing image, text, and maps—as an outlet for ideological expression in this period of major flux.

Guided by three principles—the definition of urban types ascribed in the 1840 report of the Select Committee for the Health of Towns, places under-represented in extant landscape scholarship, and sites chosen by Constable for major six-foot paintings—its selected case studies fostered a cross-examination of a diverse array of media and contexts for consumption. Chapter One used the iconographical elements of Constable’s *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* as a compass with which to navigate a landscape replete with features whose significance gained new potency in the age of reform. As a place so prominent in the socio-political life of Britain past and present, the cathedral city’s contemporary image was found to be inextricably bound to that of the barren site of its forebear, Old Sarum, the infamous rotten borough and thus structured around binary concepts – the old

and new, failed or thriving. This flex across temporal associations was also a feature of Bristol's identity, as a place containing 'antiquities forsooth, but modernities also', which was explored in Chapter Two. Highlighting the way in which Bristol's visual identity was shaped from within by the activities of local collectors like Braikenridge and artists such as Muller, Jackson and Pyne, it alighted on the disjunction between images of the city as a maritime Elysium and those which presented the troubled events of the reform riots, a disjunction that was perpetuated even outside of the context of reform via the protracted genesis of Brunel's interventions in its landscape.

The evolution of the picturesque as an aesthetic category which could encompass the urban and the modern was a particularly prominent thread in Chapters Three, on Brighton, and Four, on Lambeth. The former chapter viewed Brighton's image in an expanded spatial and conceptual framework, looking at spaces lying at the developed extremes of its seafront, and behind it, also looking beyond the Georgian period to highlight the challenges levelled at the resort's buoyancy by the financial crash of 1825 (and its lingering effects), waning royal presence, the reform question and attendant class anxieties, and the inherent instability of its geological foundations. In the final chapter, Lambeth's geographical prominence as a site on the banks of the Thames and its long association with ruling authority was identified as a foundation for repeated engagement with its image that, over time, amounted to an iconographical reassessment in which its multiplying industrial structures could be celebrated as 'metropolitan improvements', rendered part of a new, urban picturesque and even become sites of spectacle.

Pointing towards the symbiotic relationship between urbanisation, social upheaval, and the growth and evolution of topography, these chapters have demonstrated that the production and consumption of urban landscape imagery was an activity through which social identities, particularly of the urbanised middle class, were forged. Thus, the visual culture of urban landscape – and the iconography of antiquarian and modern features – acquired new capital as a means for both producers and collectors to profit financially, advance and display social status, or stake out ideological ground.

The readiness of Bristol's artists to convey their home city in a range of guises, the renown that commissioning and collecting bestowed on retired merchant Braikenridge, the volume of commercial Brighton imagery and the sponsorship of an image in Edward Wedlake Brayley's *History of Surrey* by the owner of its subject (doubly serving to promote his business and cultivate the impression of erudition by association with a scholarly project) all exemplify this.

Amongst the most prominent topographers to be discussed within this thesis, Brayley, like his friend, John Britton, accrued social capital through their publishing efforts, many of them urban in focus. Although it has analysed a small portion of their work, this thesis has revealed a correlation between their respective birthplaces and the geographies that became their intellectual focus. Thus, Britton was attentive to Salisbury, in his home-county of Wiltshire, and Bristol, its southwest neighbour, and Brayley to places more immediately proximal to London: his native Lambeth, its encompassing county of Surrey, and Brighton. Capitalising on non-metropolitan familial urban geographies enabled Britton and Brayley to claim intellectual authority and carve out professional identities within the competitive melee of the capital.

In their hands, topography itself was reformed and made fit for modern Britain. Britton's 1812 riposte to detractors like Fuseli—who had complained of landscape views that appeared to be 'little more than topography', which was amongst the 'last branch of uninteresting subjects'—chimed with the defining concerns of the age of reform. Topographical images spoke

'a language to be understood by all persons of every nation and every situation in life'.⁶⁴⁸

If the admittance into the frame of a wider variety of urban subjects helped to widen out topography's applicability and relevance to a modernising society, the emphasis its producers placed on intellectual and observational integrity,

⁶⁴⁸ John Britton, *Fine Arts of the English School* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1812), 66.

and clarity of communication lent an air of transparency that was found lacking in the nation's governing institutions. The production and acquisition of knowledge about places, their past and their present, was thus made a 'public task' and the practice opened up via cheaper productions and the many new municipal libraries and learning institutions. Britton and Brayley number just two figures amongst the recurrent set of practitioners discussed within this thesis upon whom very little secondary literature exists; their network of artists, writers, publishers and the socio-economics of their exchanges is thus ripe for further study.

This thesis has sought to position Constable, an artist often treated in isolation from his contemporaries, in relation to this network of topographers and their work. Furthermore, it has re-evaluated three large exhibition canvases as narratives of urban transformation—as statements upon the identity, past and present, of each of his subjects—and it has argued for the centrality of topographical culture in his ambition to elevate both landscape painting and his reputation. By understanding place as an assemblage of social characteristics as much as physical ones, it is possible to read Constable's urban landscape paintings as complementary, rather than anathema, to his depictions of his native landscape. Thus, the artist's urban landscape paintings have been interpreted as highly researched syntheses of both place-based knowledge, expressions of personal social identity and potential statements on the volatility of the times through which he lived. In common with his Stour scenes, water functions as the compositional and narrative architecture around which complex chains of association, both public and private, are structured. Hence, it is in his embracing of the technically challenging, socially divisive and aesthetically progressive urban subject matter that Hemingway's claim that the artist was 'at his very best when he deals with the urban' can be applied.⁶⁴⁹

This thesis has also cast Constable as a painter of modernity, an attribute typically accorded to Turner alone in British landscape of the period.

⁶⁴⁹ Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery*, 191.

Modernity—and indeed the concept of time in general—has been consistently identified as a current pulsing through the production, consumption and content of urban landscape imagery. If in art history the legacy of Baudelaire has limited the application of the term ‘modernity’ to certain locales and time periods, this project has exercised a loosened application, for example by exploring an expanded geography of modernity, beyond the metropolis. To varying extents, the chapters have discussed substantiations of modernity in the built environment, notably the Clifton Suspension Bridge, the Chain Pier at Brighton, and Lambeth’s shot manufactories, but in each of these cases the seemingly binary concept of antiquity is highly relevant, too, via the echoes of ancient architectural idioms – Egyptian or Greco-Roman – in their design. Thus the very fabric of the modern world was inextricably bound to the past. Modernity’s impact can also be read in the range of new media and formats used to represent urban landscapes, from lithography and mass-produced souvenir objects to railway guides.

During an era characterised by flux, and a distinct and pervasive awareness of the phenomena of change, the representation of urban places multiplied and diversified to account for, and provide a commentary upon, the multiple layers of significance that the physically mutating and socially vital urban landscape could withhold. The juxtaposition of the case studies in this thesis, which have been shown to be individually fertile testing grounds for the recovery of such significances, is both novel and, as this conclusion emphasises, immensely fruitful, giving rise to new insights and directions in which to take the study of urban landscape further. This thesis has thus asserted the vitality and variety of urban landscape imagery, its multiple functions and its audiences and revealed the rich potential of its model to further discern the cultural expressions, experience of, and attitudes to modernity and urban life in visual culture in the age of reform.

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