JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

The Wake of the Tug

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WILLIAM AYERST INGRAM RBA, RI, ROI1855-1913English School “The Wake of the Tug” Oil on canvas, signed 38.2 x 76cms15 x 30 inchesOverall framed dimensions Exhibited Royal Academy 1888 no. 1108

It was not until recently that, following the unearthing of the birth certificate, it was confirmed that William Ayerst Ingram was born in Twickenham on 27th April 1855, the son of the Rev G. S. Ingram and brother of R.S.Ingram. Until then, it had been assumed that he was born in Glasgow but the confusion may have arisen because his father, who was the vicar in Twickenham, was originally from the Scottish city.

Apparently he travelled to Australia when still a boy and this must have instilled a wanderlust which was evident throughout his life and he returned to Australia in the 1880s and 90s to paint and exhibit. He moved to central London to undertake his artistic training under the instruction of the landscape and coastal scene painter John Steeple and the landscape watercolourist Augustus Walford Weedon and began his career predominantly as a landscape painter. His first studio was close to that of the sculptor, portraitist and history painter George Percy Jacomb-Hood and they became good friends.

Ingram used both oils and watercolours in his work and Martin Hardie, in his three volume opus "Watercolour Painting in Britain" writes of him: "Much of his work was in oil, but his watercolour drawings of subjects found on the coast and the open sea have a quiet accomplishment…" The lure of depicting water and its shifting movement and light is exemplified by his hiring a sailing boat with a full crew in 1884 to journey from the Needles to Falmouth so as to sketch as they went.

He travelled extensively in search of subject matter for his paintings and the majority depict coastal and river estuary scenes as well as landscapes. He exhibited from 1880 onwards at the Royal Academy (44 paintings), 143 times at the Royal Society of British Artists, 51 at the New Watercolour Society, 53 at the Royal Institute, 23 at the Liverpool art Gallery, at the Fine Art Society in 1888 and 1902 and the Dowdeswell Gallery in 1911 and 1914 as well as several other venues including a well-received exhibition in Paris in 1886 entitled "Two Years Afloat".

In 1883, he was elected a full member of the Royal Society of British Artists. In 1907 he became a full member of the Royal Institute and in 1906 of the Royal Institute of Painters in Oil-Colours. He was a founder member of the Royal British Colonial Society of Artists and became its President in 1888.

Ingram lived in several addresses in London including Chelsea, Maida Vale as well as Surbiton, but apart from his European trips, much of his time was spent painting in the West Country, particularly around Brixham, St Ives and Falmouth.and he moved down there permanently in 1882. He opened the Falmouth Art Gallery in 1894 with the renowned Newlyn School painter Henry Scott Tuke. The founding of this gallery combined with the close association both artists had with the Newlyn School, enabled them to attract significant painters to exhibit there. These included Thomas Cooper Gotch, John Singer ...

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