

The Royal Academy of Arts Students' Clubs, 1883–1902

Martin Ferguson Smith



1 Trade card of John Hayman, c1790, showing the house built by John Norton on the south side of Golden Square, Westminster. Wellcome Collection. License attribution: 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

Readers of the report in *The Times* would naturally have assumed that the club was a brand-new one. But it was in fact a revival of an earlier institution with the same name.⁵ The story of the two clubs is worth telling, and it is a story that has not been told before – an omission that is perhaps partly explained by the apparent absence of any minute books or other official records of their establishment and administration.

The earlier Royal Academy Students' Club (RASC) was established in March 1883. It too was intended to bring together past and present students,⁶ and had the blessing of Sir Frederic Leighton and other Royal Academicians. Among the publications that describe its establishment is *The Magazine of Art*:

Rooms, to be open all the week round, have been taken at 17, Golden Square. Here members may meet and dine and read; and here, too, it is proposed to have musical evenings, smoking concerts, and conversaciones. It is also designed to provide the members with colours and brushes and canvases and artistic material generally at prices much lower than the average, and to make the club rooms a kind of depot from which the works of country members may be forwarded to any London exhibition for the mere cost of carriage. The yearly subscription for old students is a guinea, and for younger ones ten shillings and sixpence. There will be no entrance fee until the number of members exceeds 125. The scheme, which has the sanction of the P.R.A.^[7] and the Royal Academicians, seems an excellent one, and is worthy of all encouragement. Application should be made to the Honorary Secretary, Royal Academy Students' Club, Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, W.^[8]

The first Honorary Secretary was Samuel Brooks,⁹ about whom something will be said later. In 1884 he was succeeded by Charles Douglas Richardson.

Golden Square is very close to Denman Street and at least equally well situated for students coming from the Royal Academy on Piccadilly.¹⁰ In *Nicholas Nickleby*, published in 1838–9, Charles Dickens makes it the home of Ralph Nickleby and gives it an unflattering description:

It is one of those squares that have been; a quarter of the town that has gone down in the world, and taken to letting lodgings. Many of its first and second floors are let, furnished, to single gentlemen; and it takes boarders besides. It is a great resort of foreigners.¹¹

In the evening of Saturday, 23 November 1889, the Royal Academy Students' Club held its inaugural meeting in its premises at 10 Denman Street, fractionally north of Piccadilly Circus in London and conveniently close to the Royal Academy of Arts at Burlington House in Piccadilly. *The Times* describes the institution as 'A new club, which has been established for the purpose of facilitating social intercourse between past and present students of the Royal Academy schools', adding, 'It is believed that the institution will meet a want that has been felt for a considerable time past.'¹ The annual subscription for all, whether present or past students, was one guinea.² The 200 members at the start included nearly 50 Royal Academicians and Associates, including Sir John Millais, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, William Quiller Orchardson, Luke Fildes, and Alfred Waterhouse. It was the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Frederic³ Leighton, who, at the inaugural meeting, formally declared the club open. He was its first president, while the posts of honorary treasurer and honorary secretary were occupied by, respectively, Ernest Spence and Robert Scamp Lovell.⁴

Abbreviations

- ARA – Associate of the Royal Academy
- PRA – President of the Royal Academy
- RA – Royal Academy or Academician
- RAA – Royal Academy Archives
- RAM – Royal Academy of Music
- RAS – Royal Academy Schools
- RASC – Royal Academy Students' Club(s)
- RIBA – Royal Institute of British Architects
- YA – *The Year's Art*
- 1883 club – RASC established in 1883
- 1889 club – RASC established in 1889

He goes on to say that many of the boarders are musicians and calls the square a 'region of song and smoke'. He does not mention artists, but Golden Square had been, and was still in his time, favoured by them too. The painter Angelica Kauffman, elected at the age of 27 one of the 36 original members of the Royal Academy in 1769, lived with her father at no. 16 from 1767 to 1781. The next occupant of the house was the painter and playwright Prince Hoare.

No. 17, which was half of a large house built in 1775 for the surgeon John Norton, inventor of the antiscorbutic Maredant's Drops, and taken over in 1788 by his professional assistant and successor, John Hayman, was divided into two houses (nos 17 and 18) in 1812. Hayman's trade-card shows what the building looked like before its division (Pl 1). No. 17 was the east part, on the left in the image. The building was the central one on the south side of the square, not, as strangely shown in the otherwise useful *Survey of London* account of Golden Square reproduced by British History Online, on the north side.¹² Fittingly for the future premises of the 1883 club, no. 17 was home to a variety of artists in the 60 years or so before its arrival. The watercolour painter George Fennell Robson lived there for several years until his death on 8 September 1833. From 1829 he worked with Robert Hills, a prolific painter, mainly of watercolours, and Hills died there on 14 May 1844. The artist John Peel, who was also an art dealer but achieved most fame as a liner and restorer of pictures and as a frame-maker, was an occupant of no. 17 from 1832 until his death in 1858, and of no. 18 as well from 1844. No. 17 was the home of the artist Johann Jakob Wolfensberger in 1841¹³ and the London address of the artist Carl Haag in 1855. The art dealer Henry Charles Ferdinand Artaria moved to 17 Golden Square from St James's Street in 1843. He lived there until his death in 1850. He committed suicide, but had the consideration to perform the act in a workroom at 33 George Street, Hanover Square, rather than at home. The 1851 census shows the watercolourist and lithographer Joseph Nash (1809–78) and his mid-teenage son of the same name, at no. 17. Joseph Nash Jr was to follow his father in painting watercolours.

Between 1859 and 1864 mother and daughter Maria and Catherine Rowland ran a girls' school at no. 17, but the 1861 census shows nine other residents, including a carver and gilder, a bookbinder, and an 'artist in colours'. The carver and gilder is William Turner, who was in partnership with James Partington until their picture-restoration business ended in bankruptcy in 1864. The artist, aged 20, is Henry Haig, possibly a grandfather or other forebear of the Henry Haig who lived 1930–2007 and is best known for his stained-glass work.

The 1881 census, taken two years before the arrival of the RASC, shows that no. 17 was being run as a lodging-house with a manager, his wife, and their baby son. Two of the lodgers, both Italian males, are described as sculptors. One, Giovanni, was already at no. 17 in the 1871 census. His family name is absent in the 1881 census and illegible in the 1871 one. The name of the other Italian is illegible. The third lodger, Reeves Lovell, was also there in 1871, and in the 1875 Electoral Register he is shown as occupying three unfurnished rooms on the third floor. He was a bachelor, who is described in census returns as a publisher of books, and had been involved in residential property investments.¹⁴ No evidence has been found that he ever had an investment interest in no. 17, but he was to continue to live there until at least 1891 and very likely until his death in the summer of 1898. What his residency shows is that the club did not have the use of the whole house. Far from it, in fact, because he was by no means the only other occupant. The Post Office directories for 1885, the Rate Book for 1884, and Electoral Registers for

1883–5 show nine other names, including George Brook Jr, a woollen manufacturer – nothing to do with the art world, but an interesting man in that he, like his father, was not only a prosperous Huddersfield mill-owner, but also a militant radical. He had an office at no. 17 from no later than 1882 until at least 1889. Another who had offices there was Joseph Stuart, a member of the Consultative Council of the National Fair-Trade League. One of those named in the Electoral Register for 1885 is Louis Thompson Rowe (1855–1927), a Bridgwater grocer's son, a highly cultured man, who became a notable collector of antiquarian books and music. His music collection is preserved as the Rowe Music Library at King's College, Cambridge.

No. 17 Golden Square was demolished in 1902, but not before briefly being the home of a son of a recently-deceased Royal Academician, for the 1901 census shows the head of the household to be George Leslie Calderon (1868–1915), living with his wife, Katharine. He was the fifth son of the painter Philip Hermogenes Calderon and had qualified as a barrister, but was on his way to distinction as an expert in Russian and Slavonic literature and as a dramatist – careers cut short by his death at Gallipoli.

It is not known how many rooms the 1883 club had at its disposal. The 1889 club during its time in Denman Street had just two.¹⁵ The wider range of services offered by the earlier club suggests that its premises may have been somewhat more spacious, but, with the house being used by so many people for residence and business, it seems unlikely that it occupied more than three rooms.

In offering membership to former as well as present students the 1883 club anticipated the later one. It anticipated it too in the sort of functions it hosted. Smoking concerts, popular in the last decades of the 19th century, featured in the programmes of both clubs. In fact, the 1889 club's inaugural meeting took this form, the musical performers including the Welsh tenor Hirwin Jones, the pianist and composer Sigismond Lehmeyer, and EF Clarke, brother of the composer and conductor Hamilton Clarke.¹⁶

Press reports of the foundation and activities of the clubs make no mention of women members, and it can be taken as certain that there were none. One telling indication that membership was confined to men is that smoking concerts were always all-male gatherings. Similarly, when in 1889 the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) established a club, 'the object of which shall be the maintenance of a friendly intercourse among Past students of the Royal Academy of Music',¹⁷ only men were eligible for membership, a restriction which, after the inaugural dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on 27 July 1889,¹⁸ provoked an impassioned and persuasive protest from a female past student of the RAM and present teacher of music. Signing herself 'Lady Professor', she asks:

Pray do we not also stand in need of sympathy and help, and fresh sources of information, just as much as our male brothers in art? Do not we ladies have to teach, to play and sing in public for a living in just the same way as you do? Of course we do, and so we ought to have just as much consideration extended to us. I call it a shame we should be so ignored. We don't want to attend grand banquets, such as the one the gentlemen went to at the Holborn Restaurant last week; we should be satisfied with tea, but certainly we ought not to be shut out from the benefits of meeting, of co-operation and mutual assistance.¹⁹

One suspects that not a few female students and former students of the RAS will have felt similarly aggrieved about their exclusion. The first female student, (Anne) Laura Herford (1831–70), had been admitted in 1860. The previous year, after Lord Lyndhurst had lauded the advantages of the RA Schools to 'all her Majesty's subjects', she had written to him to point out that half of her Majesty's subjects, namely all

those of her Majesty's sex, were excluded. She then organised a petition for the admission of women, and this was sent to all members of the RA. In response, Sir Charles Eastlake PRA informed her that there was actually nothing in the rules to prohibit the admission of women, whereupon, with the support of Thomas Heatherley, one of her teachers, she submitted an application with a drawing signed 'L. Herford'. The letter of acceptance was addressed to 'L. Herford, Esq.'. ²⁰ It seems to be a common belief that Herford's application took the RAS by surprise, and clearly the writer of the letter of acceptance was under the misapprehension that she was male, but, given that the PRA himself had implicitly given her the green light, the RAS could hardly complain that she had ambushed them.

Herford was followed by 12 more women in 1861–3 before, on 14 December 1863, the RA Council 'resolved unanimously that no more female students are to be admitted to the Academy at present'. ²¹ However, the breach in the dam created by Herford could not be repaired, and significant numbers of women were admitted in the following decades. According to a lively illustrated article in *The Graphic* in 1889, successful female candidates for admission 'usually outnumber the men by three or four to one'. ²² If this information were correct (and since the writer is generally well informed, one's first inclination was to suppose that it was), the RA student clubs, in refusing to admit women, would have been excluding a very large number of potential members. But the archival records in the RA Library tell a quite different story.

Those records are the register of *Probationers 1825–1905*, ²³ in which entrants are listed by year, and the separate register of students admitted following probation, ²⁴ in which (less conveniently from the point of view of counting) the listing is alphabetical. My count of the probationers and students from December 1880 to July 1890 is as follows:

PROBATIONERS		
Total	Males	Females
698	536	162
STUDENTS ADMITTED AFTER PROBATION		
Total	Males	Females
685	525	160

And so the true position was exactly the opposite of that stated in *The Graphic* article: men (77%) outnumbered women (23%) by more than three to one. Moreover, there was no significant change in the proportion of men to women in the late 1880s, when the article was written. On every occasion in the period investigated more men than women were admitted as probationers and as students. The number of probationers admitted was least uneven on 31 December 1887, when 13 were male and 10 female. The largest single intake of female probationers was on 30 December 1882, when there were sixteen, but the intake of male probationers on that occasion was more than twice that figure, at thirty-seven.

The figures for probationers admitted in the same period (December 1880 to July 1890) *for painting* are:

Total	Males	Females
347	196	151

And so, although men (56%) still outnumbered women (44%) by a significant margin, the scene here was less male-dominated and there were some entries in which there were more women than men. One such entry was in December 1882 when the total of 24 probationers in painting comprised nine men and 15 women.

As well as women students being in a minority at the times when the two student clubs were established, they were not treated equally with respect to the study and practice of art. Until the end of 1883 the Life School, for the study of drawing from the nude, was for male students only. On 4 December

1883, sixty-four female students signed a petition to the President and Council of the Academy:

We the undersigned students of the Royal Academy do hereby respectfully and earnestly petition that in re-arranging the schools of this Institution you will reconsider the question of granting us a Life-class for the study of the partially-draped figure.

We beg to lay it before your notice, that almost all of us rely on the profession we have chosen as our future means of livelihood, and that therefore, a class which is considered so essential to the training and success of male students, must be equally so to us. We venture to hope that the separation of male and female students in the upper schools of the academy, may have removed an important objection against the granting of our request. ²⁵

There follows a list of 26 persons, all female, from whom 'letters of support and sympathy were received'. The Council of the Academy considered and approved the petition at its meeting on 11 December 1883:

After considerable discussion it was Resolved by 8 votes to 2: 'That a Life class for the study of the partially draped figure is established for the Female students.' ²⁶

This was very modest progress – very modest in two senses! Women continued to be barred from studying and drawing the nude; moreover, the relevant Council minute, unlike the petition and the resolution, makes clear that only study of the partially draped female body was to be permitted. Another 10 years were to pass before women were permitted to draw the partially clothed male body, and even then the models were so bizarrely covered up as to reveal no hint whatsoever of the most obvious distinguishing features of the male anatomy. ²⁷ In *The Graphic's* portrayal of the ladies' class in the Upper Painting School (Pl 2) the female model is as fully dressed as the students.

With men and women often studying in different classes and the women being denied 'the full monty' in painting, drawing, and modelling from life, female students were accustomed to being treated as a different species. Moreover, there was little opportunity for interaction between male and female students within the walls of the Schools out of class. A drawing in *The Graphic* captioned 'The Men's "Long Rest" – in the Corridor' indicates that men and women took their breaks between classes in separate spaces (Pl 3). ²⁸

In view of the discriminatory way women were treated in the RAS, it is hardly surprising that they were excluded from the student clubs. Moreover, clubs in late Victorian London were usually for men only. There were a few for women only, including the Somerville Club (1878), the University Club for Ladies (1887), the Pioneer (1892), and the Writers' Club (1892). But few admitted women as well as men, a notable exception being the Albemarle Club (1874), notorious for being the club at which the Marquess of Queensbury left a calling card for Oscar Wilde, calling him a 'Somdomite' (*sic*). We have already seen that it did not occur to the founders of the Royal Academy of Music Club to admit women, and the same is true of those who drew up the rules of the Royal Societies Club founded in 1894, for the only mention of them is in Rule XXX: '... members may introduce Ladies to view the Clubhouse between Ten o'clock a.m. and noon, and upon occasions of any special club or public function.' Presumably the escorted ladies could partake of tea or coffee, but they had to be off the premises by lunchtime.

An example of a female RAS student in the 1880s who is likely to have very strongly resented the uneven treatment of women in training and their exclusion from the student clubs is Mary ('Marie') Jane Naylor, daughter of a London clothier. She was born in 1856 and entered from St John's Wood Art Schools as a probationer in December 1882 and left in 1885. ²⁹ She was one of those who signed the life-class petition. A tal-

ented artist, specialising in figurative subjects and portraits, she had 12 paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1886 and 1904. She exhibited in Paris as well as in London, notably when the Galerie Dosbourg (also known as Galerie Le Parc de Boutteville) put on a solo exhibition of about 40 of her paintings in May–June 1898.³⁰ But so strongly did she feel about the continuing and growing campaign for women's rights that after 1904 her artistic career took second place to her work as a leading suffragette.

The 1883 RASC ceased to exist sometime in 1886. It is mentioned in the 1884, 1885, and 1886 issues of *The Year's Art*, but not in the 1887 one. It is not clear why it was so short-lived. One likely problem was that, while it is reported to have been sanctioned by the president of the Academy and his colleagues, it may not have benefited from their wholehearted involvement and commitment. According to one newspaper report,³¹ Sir Frederic Leighton was its president, but this is not confirmed by any other source, and one would expect the information, if correct, to have been included in the details of the club in *YA*. (Strictly speaking, Leighton was ineligible for membership of either RASC, since he had never studied in the RAS.) The report of the 1883 club's establishment in *The Magazine of Art*, quoted above, implies that in April 1883 there were fewer than 125 members. Only when that number was exceeded would an entrance fee be required. It looks as though that figure was achieved later that year, because *YA* 1884³² shows an entrance fee of one guinea as well as an annual subscription of the same amount. The half-price annual subscription for younger members that was advertised at the beginning is not mentioned. But in 1884 the rates for both the entrance fee and the annual subscription for all were halved to ten shillings and sixpence,³³ and one guesses that this was done in the hope of increasing the membership. In 1885 the subscription reverted to one guinea and the entrance fee was dropped.³⁴ These frequent changes suggest that the club was struggling to attract enough members to keep it afloat. In contrast, the 1889 club had an annual subscription of one guinea for all members throughout its existence and never had an entrance fee. The rental of premises close to Piccadilly Circus and Regent Street and the maintenance of dining and other facilities would hardly have been economic without a healthy membership and/or a higher subscription.

Even the 1889 club, with its larger membership,³⁵ may have struggled to fund its first premises, for in May 1891 it approached the Royal Academy of Music Club, which at that time had no premises of its own, with a suggestion that it join it at 10 Denman Street, where each club would have its own rooms, but share dining and billiard rooms. The invitation was not accepted, partly because it was reckoned that the venture would be unaffordable for the RAM Club without a substantial increase in its subscription.³⁶

In 1886, the year the 1883 club closed, its first Honorary Secretary, Samuel Brooks (born c1856–7), who had studied in the RAS and exhibited an oil painting, *A Gipsy Girl*, in the RA Summer Exhibition in 1883,³⁷ emigrated to Australia. There, 'as one who has ceased to practise in the realm of art', he voiced his frank opinions on the teaching of art in the colony in two long letters to the *Sydney Morning Herald*.³⁸ In the first letter he gives an approving account of the system of studies in the RAS. In the second he maintains that the Art Society (of New South Wales), while socially 'a distinct success', is 'as a means for inculcating a true spirit of art a distinct failure'. Moreover, he objects to the way in which painting is the only branch of the arts to which it gives serious attention. He states that he has been resident in Sydney for five years.

In choosing to go to Australia, Brooks may have been influenced by his successor as Hon Secretary of the 1883 club.



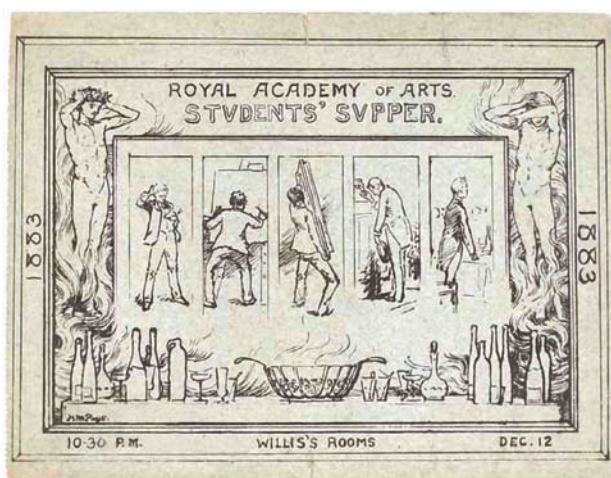
2 Royal Academy of Arts Schools: 'In the Upper Painting School – The Ladies' Class'. *The Graphic*, 4 May 1889, p475. Artist: (Charles-)Paul Renouard. Mary Evans Picture Library

3 Royal Academy of Arts Schools: 'The Men's "Long Rest" – in the Corridor'. *The Graphic*, 4 May 1889, p474. Artist: (Charles-)Paul Renouard. Mary Evans Picture Library

Charles Douglas Richardson (1853–1932) was born in London, the younger son of the portrait-painter John Richardson, who had entered the RAS in 1836. In 1858 the Richardson family emigrated to Australia and took up residence in Portland, Victoria. After school and art studies in Melbourne, Charles Douglas went to London in 1881 and entered the RAS. In 1885 he had two works in the RA's Summer Exhibition – an oil painting, *The Passing of Arthur*, and a sculpture, *The Wheelwright*.³⁹ In 1889 he returned to Melbourne, where he had a successful career as an art teacher, painter, and sculptor and became president of the Victorian Artists' Society.

Brooks and Richardson were clearly responsible people, with a serious interest in art and artists, and one imagines that they would have been enthusiastic and energetic in their service to the 1883 club. It is to their credit that during its brief existence it hosted two very important and influential lectures on art – one by a writer, the other by an artist.

The lecture by the writer took place when the club was barely three months old. It was given by Oscar Wilde at 17 Golden Square on the evening of Saturday, 30 June 1883.⁴⁰ Wilde had made an extensive and lucrative lecture-tour of the USA and Canada in 1882. On his return to England in early January 1883, he went to Paris for about five months. Then, in the second half of 1883, January–March and September–December 1884, and January and November 1885, he gave a



4 Notice of RA Students' Supper, 12 December 1883.
14 x 17.8 cm. Artist: Henry Marriott Paget



5 Notice of RA Students' Soirée, 12 December 1884.
12.8 x 18.5 cm. Artist: Sidney Edward Paget. RAA acc.2016/8.
Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London

great many lectures in Great Britain and Ireland.⁴¹ The very first of these was his lecture to the RASC – quite a coup for that body.

The second celebrated lecture was given by James Abbott McNeill Whistler. It was one of several repeats of 'Ten O'Clock', an address delivered before a paying audience at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly,⁴² at 10 pm (obviously) on Friday, 20 February 1885.⁴³ According to Whistler's biographers Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell, the lecture to the RASC was the fourth repeat, but they mistakenly date it just after the repeat in Oxford on 30 April 1885,⁴⁴ whereas newspaper reports, preserved in Whistler's press-cutting albums (PC) in Glasgow University Library, reveal that it was actually delivered on Saturday, 21 March 1885. And so it was the second repeat and took place over a month before the presentation in Oxford and three days before the one in Cambridge.⁴⁵ *Court Journal* describes the occasion:

Mr. Whistler delivered his famous lecture on art to the students of the Royal Academy Schools, but there were no half-guinea seats this time. It was merely a friendly gift to the aspiring children of the goddess Art, and to hear it they assembled at their pleasant social club in Golden Square. Needless to say the fascination that drew so large an audience at the 'ten o'clock' at Prince's Hall, and resulted in about £200 to be divided between the lecturer and Mr D'Oyley [*sic*] Carte, was not less deeply felt by an enthusiastic

band of students. Henceforth they will in all probability worship the name of the renowned James. Oscar Wilde, by the way, is another popular man among art students. The next generation of students will show a high quality, that is clear from the tendency of their taste.⁴⁶

This is not the place for a summary, let alone a detailed exposition and discussion, of the lectures given to the RASC by Wilde and Whistler. Both are well known. Moreover, the story of the two men's personal relations and Wilde's views on art and artists is a complicated one that changed markedly over the years:⁴⁷ in his time at Oxford (1874–9), Wilde was much influenced by John Ruskin, who famously rubbished Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*, declaring that he 'never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face' – an insult that prompted Whistler to bring an action for libel against him. The hearing was on 25 November 1878. Whistler won a Pyrrhic victory, being awarded just a farthing in damages and, since he was not awarded any costs, suffering severe depletion of his finances.

Soon after the trial, Wilde praised Whistler's work, and for several years the two were on friendly terms, with Whistler, senior to Wilde by 20 years, exerting much influence on Wilde. That influence is evident in Wilde's 1883 lecture, not heard by Whistler, but said to have been summarised for him by Wilde at a dinner the following day. However, Wilde had too brilliant and original a mind to be anyone's poodle, and, as he further developed his own critical ideas, he fell out with the autocratic and egotistic Whistler. He was in the audience at Whistler's Prince's Hall lecture and his excoriatingly witty review, published in a newspaper the following day,⁴⁸ precipitated the end of the two men's friendship. After describing the lecture's content and style with admiration, or rather mock-admiration, he set out his own views on art and the artist, expressing strong disagreement about the value of beautiful surroundings (denied by Whistler) and about only a painter being capable of judging painting.

After 1885, relations between the two deteriorated further: Whistler was annoyed that his disciple, having borrowed his ideas, had distanced himself from him and was attracting more attention and admiration than his teacher. In 1888 Wilde satirised Whistler in a story entitled 'The Remarkable Rocket',⁴⁹ and, to add insult to injury, renewed his admiration for Ruskin. The following year Whistler charged Wilde with plagiarism.

The lectures given at 17 Golden Square by Wilde and Whistler were undoubtedly prestigious occasions for the RASC, and one imagines that each would have been a matter of huge interest and a hot topic of discussion among many students in the RAS, including those of both sexes who were unable to hear them. Because Whistler was hostile to the RA at this time, Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell call the lecture to the RASC 'a curiously unexplained accident',⁵⁰ but it was definitely not that. He knew that Wilde had addressed the club, and it was understandable that he should want to give the same body his own views on art. Moreover, the 1883 club was not a creation of the RA Establishment, and its active members were predominantly present or recent students. It was an opportunity for Whistler to kill two birds with one stone, his 'avian' targets being Wilde and the RA.

After Wilde had accepted the club's invitation to lecture, he wrote to one of its members, Eric Forbes-Robertson (1865–1935), a member of a large and highly cultured family, several of whose members were or became friendly with Wilde. Eric, who was only 17 and in his first year in the RAS,⁵¹ had apparently written to Wilde, requesting him to perform at 8.45 pm instead of at 8.30. Wilde agreed and added: 'I should like it to

be confined to students entirely, and a *student* in the chair.⁵² In the event, the chair was taken by 'Mr. Forbes-Robertson, who, in making a few introductory observations, referred to himself as a former R.A. student.'⁵³ This was Eric's eldest brother, Johnston Forbes-Robertson (1853–1937), who, after showing great promise as an artist, embarked on a distinguished career as an actor. He was knighted in 1913.

A record has been found of only one other specific meeting of the 1883 club. The exact date is not given, but in its issue of 14 July 1884 the *Yorkshire Post* reports that Stuart Poole of the British Museum 'recently visited the Academy Students' Club, where he discoursed on Arab decoration, and, I believe made an impression which it may be hoped is a deep one on his listeners'.⁵⁴ This meeting will not have been an isolated one. A report by a London correspondent of the *Western Times*, written two days before Wilde's lecture,⁵⁵ states that the club 'is now in full working order', providing a 'meeting place for social intercourse and mutual improvement', with 'refreshments at a moderate rate, ... and newspapers and periodicals ... upon the tables', and continues:

Opportunities are frequently given for social gatherings, at which students of the Architectural, Modelling, and Painting Schools of the Academy are enabled to exchange views and benefit by each other's experiences... Once a fortnight there is a meeting for music or recitations, or for the reading of papers and discussions about Art and kindred subjects by members or friends, and at one of these occasions Mr. Oscar Wilde is about to deliver a lecture.

There is no reason to doubt that advantage was taken of the offer to receive members' works of art for forwarding to London exhibitions at no cost in addition to that of carriage. Such works were hung in the club's rooms on the Saturday previous to the sending-in day.⁵⁶ The club was clearly still flourishing early in 1885, for a brief newspaper report of Whistler's lecture at 17 Golden Square concludes:

It is evident that the social advantages of this pleasant gathering-place are daily increasing. The students are now starting a year book which will contain a good deal of useful information relating to exhibitions, metropolitan and provincial, schools of art, prize lists, &c.⁵⁷

Given that *The Year's Art* was already providing much information of this sort in abundance, one may question the need for the students' project, but their enthusiasm and earnestness are not in doubt. Despite its incompleteness, the picture of the 1883 club is one of youthful enterprise, commitment, and good intentions.

Alongside but seemingly outside the activities of the club, RA students organised annual social events. Records have been found of four held during and shortly after the club's life. All were held in mid-December, an important time for the RA, because on 10 December, or on 9 December if the 10th was a Sunday, it celebrated the anniversary of its foundation by awarding prizes at a ceremony, presided over by the PRA, after which competition-works were on display for two days.

The earliest event was an RA Students' Supper on 12 December 1883, 8.30 pm, in Willis's Rooms, a fashionable venue, originally Almack's, in King Street, St James's. The invitation card (Pl 4) for the event, held two days after the prize-giving, was designed by Henry Marriott Paget (1856–1936), the eldest of three brothers who studied in the RAS and were to have notable careers as artists and illustrators.

The notice of the 1884 event (Pl 5), an RA Students' Soirée on 12 December, 8 pm, is initialled lower left 'SP'. This is Sidney Edward Paget (1860–1908), younger brother of Henry Marriott and elder brother of Walter Stanley, and the most famous of the trio, best known for his illustrations of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. He had entered the RAS in 1881. The venue for the soirée was the Society of



6 Notice of RA Students' Soirée, 15 December 1885. 11.1 x 17.2 cm. Photo-lithograph by Whiteman & Bass. Artist: unknown. RAA/LIB/10/4/1. Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London

British Artists' Galleries, Pall Mall East. A manuscript note at the foot of the invitation in the RA Archives suggests that the Royal Artillery Band supplied part of the entertainment. The same premises were used for the RA Students' Soirée on 15 December 1885, 8 pm. The invitation (Pl 6) portrays a man dressed much like King Henry VIII, with a sword, being pleaded with by two women, one of whom points out the information about the soirée, displayed on a poster which a bending male has nearly finished pasting on a wall. There is no indication of who the artist is, but the card is a photo-lithograph production of Whiteman & Bass. The possibility that the drawing is Walter Paget's seems worthy of consideration. It would be remarkable, but also remarkably appropriate, if in three consecutive years the three brothers designed the three notices in order of seniority. Is it too fanciful to suggest that 'Henry VIII' may be a Paget marker, William Paget being the King's famous adviser? Perhaps it is, but it would at least explain the otherwise incongruous presence of the gentleman in 16th-century attire if the situation were that a Paget artist is, through the two women, advising the monarch to attend the event.

Another RA students' soirée was held on 14 December 1887 at 9 pm in the British Artists' Galleries in Suffolk Street.⁵⁸ The holding of this event over a year after the 1883 club had ceased to exist usefully confirms that the entertainments, although no doubt strongly supported by club members, were not actually club events. The word 'club' does not appear in the publicity for any of the parties.

About the activities of the 1889 club there is much more information, and some of this comes from the attractive posters, invitations, and tickets produced by some of its members, following the tradition established by earlier RA students. The inaugural meeting, at 10 Denman Street on 23 November 1889, has been described above. An early initiative of the club was to establish on the premises a Bohemian Sketch Club.⁵⁹ It met every Wednesday under the presidency of the sculptor Alfred Gilbert, ARA, and a 'Costume Model' sat on Thursday evenings.⁶⁰ Gilbert is said to have been 'the most popular member of the club' on account of the frequency of his visits and the quality of his conversation and advice.⁶¹ Smoking concerts were held at 10 Denman Street once a month, and what is described as the 'Annual Smoking Concert' was held in November or December. The timing of it suggests a likely adaptation of RA students' earlier practice of holding a party close to the time of the RA's anniversary. Anyhow, the occasion was a special one, often attended by



7 Ticket for the Annual Smoking Concert of the RASC, 13 December 1890. 21.5 x 13.5. Artist: GE Moira. Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London

the President and other leading members of the Academy. In 1890 and 1891 it took place not in the club's own premises, but in more spacious premises elsewhere.

The location in 1890, on Saturday, 13 December, 9 pm, was the Meistersingers Club in St James's Street, with Bertram Lond in the chair.⁶² Evening dress was required, and the programme was long and varied.⁶³ The ticket for it was designed by Gerald Edward Moira, an RAS student 1887–9 (Pl 7). On this occasion the President and most of the other leading members of the RA were absent, the reason being the sudden death, on 12 December, of the sculptor Sir (Joseph) Edgar Boehm, RA.⁶⁴

The annual smoking concert in 1891 was held on 4 December in the rooms of the Society of British Artists in Suffolk Street, off Pall Mall, a venue used by the RA students for their December soirées in 1884, 1885, and 1887. The chairman was Alfred Gilbert. Leighton attended for part of the proceedings and was observed chatting to the sculptors Hamo Thornycroft and Edward Onslow Ford. It is reported that 'there was the best of company, cigars, entertainment, and good humour prevailing throughout the evening, and young Art talked hopefully of its budding future'. But such was the crowd and so dense was the smoke that it was well into the early hours of the morning before the pictures of the winter exhibition hanging on the walls could be viewed properly.⁶⁵ The invitation card was designed by Robert Anning Bell.

In 1892 the club moved to 9 Conduit Street, Hanover Square. The house, designed by James Wyatt in 1779, had been acquired by the Architectural Union Company Ltd, founded in 1857 with the principal purpose of providing



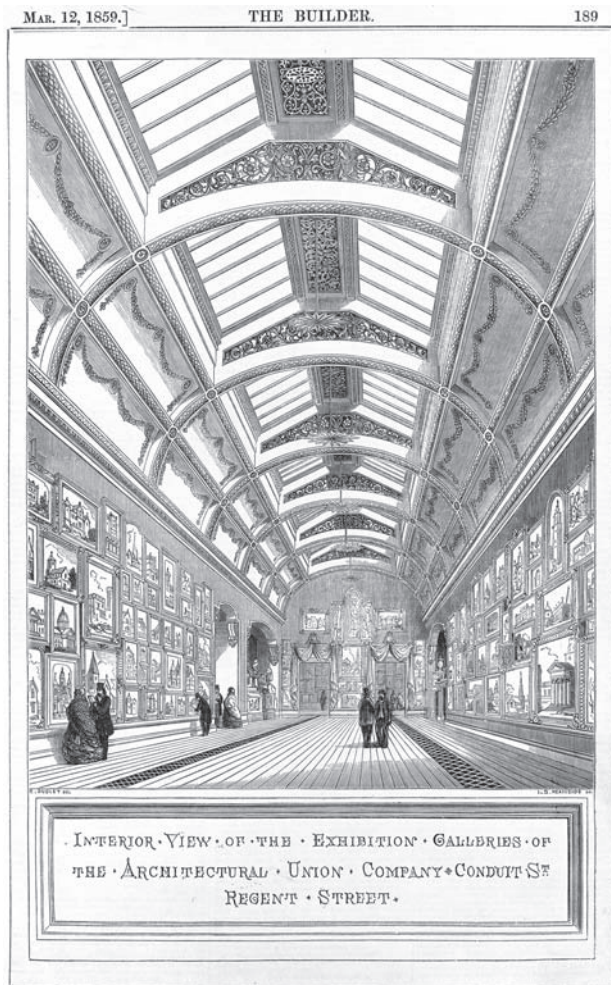
8 No. 9, Conduit Street, London, 1920s. Drawing by Walter Monckton Keesey. RIBA Collections 114066. Royal Institute of British Architects

9 Exhibition Galleries of the Architectural Union Company, 9 Conduit Street, London. *The Builder*, 12 March 1859, p189. RIBA Collections 10021. Royal Institute of British Architects

meeting rooms and exhibition galleries for the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Architectural Association, and other architectural and art societies. The RIBA was there from 1859 to 1934. The building has four storeys and a basement. Prominent among its external features (Pl 8) are: two recessed Doric columns at the entrance; four very tall Ionic pilasters that rise through the first and second floors; above them, a frieze of garlands and paterae and a cornice; and pediments above the first-floor windows.

The club's new premises were declared open by Leighton at the annual smoking concert, chaired by Lawrence Alma-Tadema, on 5 November 1892.⁶⁶ They consisted of a reading room, tea room, and billiard room, with the use of galleries on the ground floor for concerts and other functions.⁶⁷ The rooms had been vacated by the Architectural Association. The galleries (Pl 9) were those of the Nineteenth Century Art Society. In November 1892 they contained an exhibition of students' work, including examples of metalwork. On display too, in a place of honour, was an autograph copy, in photogravure, of a painting by Leighton – a gift to the club.⁶⁸ Although the club continued to hold some of its functions elsewhere, it now had more space than in Denman Street, and the building was much more appropriate, aesthetically, as a meeting place for artists and architects.

The annual smoking concert in 1893 was held at 9 Conduit Street on 18 November. It was chaired by Alfred Gilbert and attended by Leighton and other Academicians and Associates.⁶⁹ In the archives of the British Museum is the admittance ticket (no. 348) issued to Hamo Thornycroft (Pl 10). Designed by Laurence Koe, it depicts a man reclining somewhat à la Jacob Rees-Mogg in the Westminster Parliament, but wearing evening



10 RA Students' Club. Admission ticket issued to WA Thornycroft for a smoking concert, 18 November [1893]. 12.7 x 23.4 cm. Artist: Laurence Koe. British Museum 1983.U.505

11 Poster for RA Students' Annual Dance, 4 May 1894. 14 x 21 cm. Artist: Byam Shaw. Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London

dress, smoking, and resting his head on the lap of a comely female with streaming hair who is playing a lyre and singing. In 1898 Koe exhibited an oil painting entitled *Sappho* at the RA Exhibition.⁷⁰ It shows the dying poet, with long black hair, lying back on sea-rocks and clutching a lyre in her right hand. Despite the very different contexts, it is tempting to see some similarity between the females portrayed. Perhaps the one on the ticket is even meant to be Sappho. The ticket does not give the year of the event, just the date and time, 18 November, 8 pm, and the venue. The British Museum estimates the production date as '1880–1885 (circa)', but, as we have seen, the club did not have a presence at 9 Conduit Street before 1892, and it was only in 1893 that it held its annual smoking concert there on 18 November.

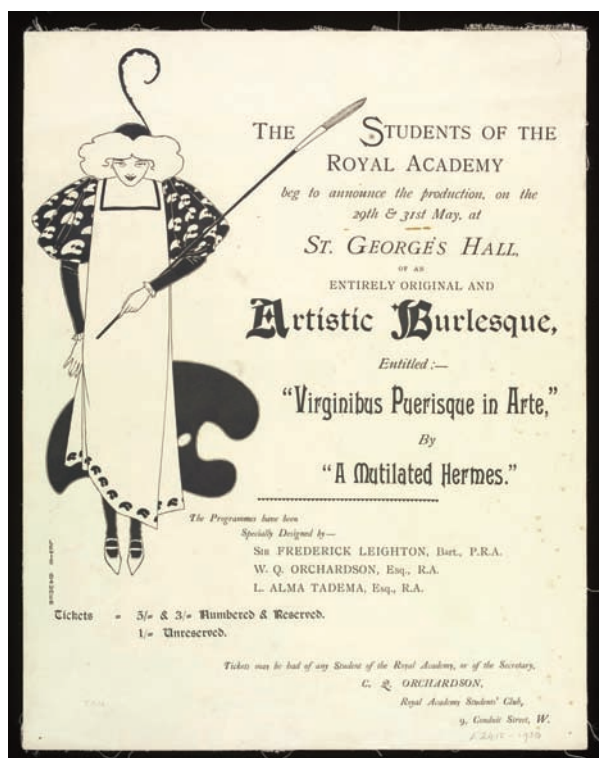
Unlike the Royal Academy of Music Club (see n19), the RASC never seems to have held a ladies' night. The RA students held an annual dance or ball in May, but the publicity for these dances does not identify them as RASC events. Byam Shaw designed the poster for the dance held on 4 May 1894 (Pl 11) at the galleries of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, Piccadilly.⁷¹ Four lady patronesses are named on a panel behind two cupids. All are wives of leading figures in the RA – Philip Hermogenes Calderon (Keeper), William Quiller Orchardson, (Samuel) Luke Fildes, and Marcus Stone. On the left two ladies implore a seated man, apparently reluctant to leave the painting he has been working on, to join the dance, while a third lady behind is already dancing. From this group a scroll guides the viewer to top right, where elegantly dressed couples emerge from behind it.

The same venue was used for the RA Students' Ball on 3 May 1895. The RA website displays a digital scan of the cover

and back of the programme, designed by 'HP' (with the letters in ligature), who is probably to be identified as Henry Poole (1873–1928).⁷² The statuesque, stylised figures on the cover seem plausibly attributable to one who was first and foremost a sculptor. The back gives the names of the five stewards, and also the six members of the committee, including two women, Miss Pyke-Nott and Miss E Venn, Byam Shaw, and the Honorary Secretary, F Lynn Jenkins. The list confirms that the event was not organised by the RASC.

Rex Vicat Cole, after describing the varied entertainment at the smoking concerts, including comedy, singing, and the making of lightning sketches, writes: 'Other occasions of enjoyment were the School dances, beginning at 7 p.m., and ending at 6 a.m., and made up of quick waltzes, polkas, galops, and kitchen lancers at that!'⁷³ It is not clear that these energetic dances were, like the smoking concerts, RASC events. In any case, the *annual* dances are likely to have been somewhat more sedate affairs, and the event in May 1899 began at 9 pm.

In or just before 1893 the RA Students' Dramatic Club was formed, and women certainly participated in its productions. Its second one, described as 'an entirely original artistic burlesque' and entitled *Virginibus Puerisque in Arte*, by an author identified only as 'A Mutilated Hermes', was staged in St George's Hall, Langham Place, on 29 and 31 May 1894. The poster advertising the event was designed by Lewis Baumer, whose drawing of a female artist holding a paint brush almost as long as she is tall, is in obvious imitation of Aubrey Beardsley (Pl 12). The poster states that the programmes have been designed by Sir Frederick (*sic*) Leighton, WQ Orchardson, and L. Alma Tadema (*sic*), and that tickets are



obtainable from any student of the RA or from the Secretary at the RASC, 9 Conduit Street. The Secretary, evidently of the Dramatic Club (he was never Secretary of the RASC), is named as CQ Orchardson. Charles Moxon Quiller Orchardson (1873–1917), the eldest son of William Quiller Orchardson, was a student in the RAS 1893–8. Like his father, he was a painter. His first RA exhibit was in 1897 – an oil painting entitled *The Two Corbies: 'And naebody kens that he lies there'*, inspired by the famous Scottish-border ballad.⁷⁴ For several years in the first decade of the 20th century he was a Principal of the St John's Wood Art Schools. An army captain in the First World War, he was mortally wounded in Egypt and is buried in Port Said.

The Dramatic Club's choice for its third season was *Pallettaria*, another burlesque, described as 'an original musical anachronism in two acts by the Brothers Brush'. Three performances were given in St George's Hall, on 4, 6, and 8 June 1895. The RA archives contain a copy of the programme;⁷⁵ and the illustrated programme-cover can be viewed online.⁷⁶ Also preserved is a poster for *Pallettaria (sic)*.⁷⁷ It is the work of GE Moira and the lithographer Carl Hentschel and depicts three young persons watching a string-puppet show. No doubt the Dramatic Club was supported by members of the RASC, but, like the annual-dance committee, it was formally a separate organisation.

Byam Shaw, the creator of the invitation to the annual dance in 1894, designed at least two other invitations. One, for a dance on 1 May 1898 (Pl 13), is reproduced in Rex Vicat Cole's biography of him.⁷⁸ Actually the event had to be postponed until 20 May,⁷⁹ almost certainly because of the death of PH Calderon on 30 April. The other card, advertising a smoking concert on 8 December 1900, with Lawrence Alma-Tadema in the chair, can be seen on the RA's website.⁸⁰

The annual smoking concerts of the club in 1894 and 1895 were held at 9 Conduit Street. The 1894 meeting, the fifth, chaired by WQ Orchardson, was held on 17 November;⁸¹ the 1895 one, presided over by Alma-Tadema, on 9 December.⁸² There is no mention of Leighton being present at the 1894 meeting, and he certainly missed the 1895 one on account of



12 Students of the RA, poster for production of *Virginibus Puerisque in Arte*, May 1894. Line-block print, 39.9 x 31.4 cm. Artist: Lewis Baumer. Victoria & Albert Museum E.2412-1938

13 RA Students' dance invitation, 1 May 1898. Artist: Byam Shaw. From Rex Vicat Cole, *The Art and Life of Byam Shaw*, p38

14. Poster for the Eighth Annual Smoking Concert of the RASC, 11 December 1897. 33.2 x 52.1 cm. Artist: Percy James Billinghamurst. Published in *The Studio* 14 (1898). Alamy Stock Photo

illness. He had been President of the RA since 1878 and of the 1889 club since its beginning. He was energetic, efficient, tactful, and congenial, and during his presidency of the RA continued to produce much fine work as an artist, but early in 1895 he suffered heart failure and on medical advice stopped work and went abroad. He returned towards the end of the year, seemingly improved, but died on 26 January 1896, just one day after he was raised to the peerage as Lord Leighton of Stretton. The elaborate and extravagant mourning procedures that preceded his funeral in St Paul's Cathedral on 3 February have been described by Annette Wickham.⁸³ The sorrow at his death was certainly shared by RAS students, past and present. Students were represented in the funeral procession, and the RASC sent 'a large wreath of bay, with an inner wreath of gold leaves'.⁸⁴ 1896 was, both for the Academy and for the 1889 club, the year of the three presidents. Leighton was succeeded by Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, but the latter died on 13 August 1896. His successor was Sir Edward John Poynter.

I have encountered no record of a dance or annual smoking concert in 1896, although the latter event at any rate undoubtedly took place. It would have been the seventh. Preserved is the invitation card for the 'eighth annual smoking concert' on 11 December 1897, with Thomas Brock RA in the chair. Featuring a dunce-hatted monkey-cellist and an adjutant stork (Pl 14), it was designed by Percy James Billinghamurst, who was soon to win deserved praise for his illustrations of *A Hundred Fables of La Fontaine* and *A Hundred Anecdotes of Animals*, published in 1900 and 1901 respectively by John Lane at The Bodley Head.

George Moira designed the invitation, displayed on the Royal Academy's website,⁸⁵ to the dance on 1 May 1899. It presents a Grecian scene with a dancing satyr enjoying him-



self in female company. The event was held under the patronage of the wives of eight leading figures in the Academy, including the President's wife, Lady Poynter. The venue, the Portman Rooms, was in Baker Street. The large, lavishly decorated ballroom was much in demand not only for dances, but also for concerts, conferences, and a great many other functions. The Great Room, as it was previously called, had been the home for nearly 50 years (1835–84) of Madame Tussaud's waxworks exhibition.

Hutchinson, who only knows of the 1889 club and mentions it in just one short sentence, says that it 'seems to have lasted about ten years'.⁸⁶ It lasted longer than that, but not much longer. In 1898 it moved from 9 Conduit Street to rooms at 99 Great Titchfield Street, a four-storeyed late 18th-century terraced house in Fitzrovia, north of Oxford Circus and not quite as close to Burlington House as 9 Conduit Street. The census of 31 March 1901 shows it occupied by six households containing 35 persons. The professions of the household-heads do not indicate a classy address. In 1901 the club moved again, for the last time, to 5a Arundell Street, Piccadilly Circus, next door to the West End Hotel and Restaurant at nos 2–4, and close to its birthplace in Denman Street. Why the club left the Conduit Street premises and then moved again the present writer cannot say,⁸⁷ but a likely explanation is that the same decline in membership that probably brought about the club's closure had already begun, and that economy was required. The later premises were clearly nothing like so grand or spacious as the accommodation in Conduit Street, and it may be that their inferiority, as well as being a symptom of decline, accelerated it.

The last RASC event known to me is a concert, almost certainly a smoking one, held at the galleries of the Society of British Artists on Saturday, 1 March 1902.⁸⁸ The club is listed

in *The Year's Art 1903*, compiled in 1902, but, ominously, without an address, and the 1904 issue reports: 'This club apparently no longer exists.'⁸⁹

Although its fortunes declined towards the end, for most of its life the 1889 club was lively and successful, thanks to the strong support it received from senior members, including the PRA, as well as the enthusiastic and talented participation of younger ones, several of whom designed decorative and sometimes humorous posters, invitations, and tickets for the main events.

The RASC in its second incarnation was more successful than in its brief first life,⁹⁰ but if it was ever addressed by a guest as interesting and inspiring as Wilde or Whistler, we do not hear of it. Moreover, the earlier club prepared the way for the later one, not least in that the latter was able to learn from its plucky forerunner's mistakes, the chief of which was to have been over-ambitious with respect to accommodation and services without having secured the healthy membership needed to support them.

The end of the later club did not mean the end of social and other activities involving RA students, but those activities were henceforth less frequent and regular. One may conjecture that the main loss was that there were fewer opportunities than before for present and recent students to socialise with senior artists, including Academicians and Associates, which was the club's declared purpose.

Appendix

Officers of the Royal Academy Students' Clubs⁹¹

1883 Club

PRESIDENT

1883–1886 (?) Sir Frederic Leighton (?)⁹²

HONORARY SECRETARIES

1883–1884 Samuel Brooks

1884–1886 Charles Douglas Richardson

1889 Club

PRESIDENTS

1889–1896 Sir Frederic Leighton, PRA

1896 Sir John Everett Millais, PRA

1896–1902 Sir Edward John Poynter, PRA

VICE-PRESIDENT

1899–1902 Ernest Crofts, RA

HONORARY SECRETARIES

1889–1890 Robert Scamp Lovell

1890–1892 John Ernest Newberry

1892–1898 John Adamson (joint)

1892–1895 J Murray (joint)

1895–1899 FH Michael (joint)

1898–1899 Edmund Lawrence van Someren (joint)

1899–1901 R O'B North

1901–1902 Edward Constable Alston

HONORARY TREASURER

1889–1890 Ernest Spence

I most gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following: Royal Academy of Arts Library, especially Mark Pomeroy (Archivist), Adam Waterton (Head of Library Services), and Andrew Potter (Research Assistant); Royal Institute of British Architects, especially Lauren Alderton, Assistant Curator, Drawings & Archives Collection; City of Westminster Archives Centre, especially Susie Hilmi, Senior Archives and Local Studies Officer; Matthew Sturgis; Joan M. Harper (Whistler Society); Daniel E. Sutherland; Linda Merrill for valuable information concerning the lectures given by Wilde and Whistler; Lucinda Ferguson Smith for much assistance with research; and Robin Simon for his warm encouragement.

- 1 *The Times*, 26 November 1889, p3.
- 2 The equivalent of nearly £140 in 2020.
- 3 Sidney C Hutchinson, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768–1968*, London 1968, p136, says that Leighton's 'Christian name seems to have been spelt without the final "k" from about 1891 onwards'. This may well be largely true, but 'Frederic' is sometimes found earlier than 1891 (eg, in the report of the inaugural meeting in *The Times*) and 'Frederick' is common in post-1891 sources. Throughout the present article he is 'Frederic'.
- 4 *Eastern Daily Press*, 25 November 1889, p8. Lovell, a former student of the Royal Academy Schools, as well as of the Slade School of Fine Art, was, according to his obituary, 'one of the prime movers in the formation of the Royal Academy Students' Club'. But he soon abandoned a promising artistic career to become a Church of England priest. See his obituary in *The Times*, 19 July 1920, p21. Understandably, he seems to have preferred not to divulge his unfortunate second name. Spence too soon left his post. From 1890 on, the club had no honorary treasurer, but from 1892 until 1899 two honorary secretaries. A complete list of the names and dates of the officers of the club and its predecessor is to be found in the Appendix below.
- 5 As stated in a report in *Western Morning News*, 7 December 1891, p4.
- 6 *YA 1884*, p150.
- 7 President of the Royal Academy.
- 8 'Art in April,' *The Magazine of Art* 6 (1883), pxxv.
- 9 'Fine-Art Gossip,' *The Athenaeum* 2891 (24 March 1883), p385.
- 10 Mark Pomeroy comments: 'Students from the RA would have approached both Denman Street and the Golden Square building starting from the rear entrance ... the "West Yard", which opens into Burlington Gardens. The walk for both venues is thus dramatically shortened' (email, 2 February 2021).
- 11 Ch 2.
- 12 <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vols31-2/pt2/pp154-156> accessed 18/01/2021.
- 13 1841 Census; *Royal Academy Exhibition Catalogue 1841*, p64.
- 14 Keith Alan Bailey, *The Metamorphosis of Battersea, 1800–1914: A Building History*, PhD thesis, Open University, 1995, p182, relating to a mortgage in December 1869; London Metropolitan Archives, Mortgage 18 July 1873, ref. A/CSC/2821/8.
- 15 *Eastern Daily Press*, 25 November 1889, p8.
- 16 *Eastern Daily Press*, 25 November 1889, p8.
- 17 J Percy Baker, 'The R.A.M. Club: A Twenty-five Years Retrospect', *Royal Academy of Music Club Magazine* 42 (May 1914), pp1–6, at p1.
- 18 The establishment of the club and the inaugural dinner are described in *The Musical Standard*, 3 August 1889, p93.
- 19 *The Musical Standard*, 10 August 1889, p122. The RAM Club relaxed its 'gentlemen-only' rules to the extent of holding a Ladies' Night on 3 June 1893, which was so successful that it became an annual event. See Percy Baker, p3.
- 20 See Ellen C Clayton, *English Female Artists*, London 1876, vol II, pp2–3.
- 21 RAA/PC/1/XII, p138.
- 22 M. H. S., 'The Schools of the Royal Academy,' with illustrations by (Charles-)Paul Renouard, *The Graphic*, 4 May 1889, pp473–6, at p473. M.H.S. can be identified as the learned art critic and connoisseur Marion Harry (Alexander) Spielmann (1858–1948), whose books were to include a history of *Punch*.
- 23 RAA/KEE/1/2.
- 24 RAA/KEE/1/1/2.
- 25 RAA/SEC/8/15.
- 26 RAA/PC/1/XVIII, p92.
- 27 Royal Academy *Annual Report 1894* (RAA/PC/10), p18, quoted by Hutchinson, p143.
- 28 M.H.S., p474.
- 29 Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide*, London 1999, p442, errs in giving Naylor's date of birth as c1866 and her middle name as 'Isabel'. The second mistake seems to derive from Kelly's *The Post Office London Directory for 1893*.
- 30 C d'Hennebaut, 'Petits Salons: exposition de Miss Marie Naylor', *Le Moniteur des Arts* 43, Nouvelle Série 34 (3 juin 1898), p559.
- 31 *Western Times*, 3 July 1883, p2.
- 32 P150.
- 33 *YA 1885*, p164.
- 34 *YA 1886*, p165.
- 35 200 members at the start (*The Morning Post*, 25 November 1889, p5), 230 in 1893 (*YA 1894*, p109), 260 in 1895 (*YA 1896*, p120), 217 in 1897 (*YA 1898*, p132).
- 36 Percy Baker, pp2–3.
- 37 Cat. no. 680. His address at the time is shown as 35 Howland Street, Fitzroy Square.
- 38 3 October 1891, p10; 14 November 1891, p10.
- 39 Cat. nos 539, 2001.
- 40 Oscar Wilde, 'Lecture to Art Students', *Essays and Lectures*, 4th edn, London 1913, pp197–212. Wilde accepted the club's invitation in a letter postmarked 2 June 1883: see Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis, eds, *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, London 2000, p212.
- 41 For a list of the lectures, see Geoff Dibb, 'Oscar Wilde's Lecture Tours of the United Kingdom, 1883–85', *The Wildean*, 29 (July 2006), pp2–11.
- 42 Wilde had lectured on his 'Personal Impressions of America' at the same venue on 10 July 1883.
- 43 *Ten O'Clock: A Lecture by James A. McNeill Whistler*, 2nd edn, Portland ME 1925.
- 44 *The Life of James McNeill Whistler*, Philadelphia 1908, vol II, p43.
- 45 I am extremely grateful to Linda Merrill for drawing my attention to this archive and for generously sharing transcripts of relevant cuttings with me. She has also been very helpful with information about, *inter alia*, the RASC's invitation to Oscar Wilde.
- 46 *Court Journal*, 28 March 1885 (Glasgow University Library, Whistler PC 3, p103). An identical report, except that it lacks the last sentence, is in *Yorkshire Post*, 25 March 1885, p4.
- 47 See Anne Bruder, 'Constructing Artist and Critic Between J. M. Whistler and Oscar Wilde: "In the Best Days of Art there were no Art-critics"', *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*, 47, 2 (2004), pp161–80.
- 48 Oscar Wilde, 'Mr Whistler's Ten O'Clock,' *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 February 1885, pp1–2.
- 49 Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, London 1888.
- 50 Loc cit.
- 51 He was born on 9 August 1865.
- 52 Holland and Hart-Davis, p213.
- 53 *Lady's Pictorial*, 7 July 1883, p3.
- 54 P4.
- 55 *Western Times* [Tuesday], 3 July 1883, p2, but the report is dated Thursday, [28 June 1883].
- 56 *YA 1885*, p164.
- 57 *London Daily News*, 24 March 1885, p3.
- 58 *The Morning Post*, 14 December 1887, p5.
- 59 *Northern Whig*, 14 January 1890, p7.
- 60 *YA 1891*, p108.
- 61 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 December 1890, p4.
- 62 The Meistersingers Club's occupation of the building, constructed in 1886–8, was very brief. In 1894 it became the home of the newly-founded Royal Societies Club.
- 63 Details are given in *The Referee*, 14 December 1890, p3.
- 64 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 December 1890, p4.
- 65 *The Western Morning News*, 7 December 1891, pp4–5.
- 66 *The Morning Post*, 7 November 1892, p5.
- 67 *YA 1894*, p109.
- 68 *The Globe*, 16 November 1892, p6.
- 69 *Lloyds Illustrated Newspaper*, 19 November 1893; *YA 1893*, p107.
- 70 *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts, 1898*, cat. no. 307.
- 71 The choice of venue is not without interest, given the unfavourable attitude the Royal Academy of Arts long took to watercolourists. The Institute acquired premises in Piccadilly, opposite Burlington House, in 1883.
- 72 RAA/LIB/10/4/2.
- 73 Rex Vicat Cole, *The Art and Life of Byam Shaw*, London 1932, p40.
- 74 *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts 1897*, p12, no. 262. The quotation is of line 7, 'he' being the slain knight, whose body is lying behind a wall. The Orchardsons were Scots.
- 75 RAA/LIB/10/4/4.
- 76 RA Collection: Art, object no. 08/3034.
- 77 RAA/LIB/10/4/3. The poster measures 23 x 29.3 cm.
- 78 Cole, p38.
- 79 *The Morning Post*, 4 May 1894, p7.
- 80 RAA/SEC/1/160.
- 81 *The Daily Telegraph and Courier (London)*, 19 November 1894, p5; *Sporting Gazette*, 24 November 1894, p7.
- 82 *Birmingham Daily Post*, 11 December 1895.
- 83 'The Death and Funeral of Frederic, Lord Leighton', in Robin Simon, ed (with Mary Anne Stevens), *The Royal Academy of Arts: History and Collections*, New Haven and London [2018], pp98–9.
- 84 *The Morning Post*, 4 February 1896, p5.
- 85 RAA/SEC/1/160.
- 86 Hutchinson, p143.
- 87 There may be some information about the club's occupancy of, and departure from, 9 Conduit Street in the collections of the RIBA, especially in the Architectural Union Company Archive, 1857–1914 (ref. AUC/1-5), but government restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic have made it impossible to investigate.
- 88 *Bedfordshire Mercury*, 7 March 1902, p5.
- 89 *YA 1904*, p157.
- 90 Cf *Western Morning News*, 7 December 1891, p4. It calls the 1889 club 'a revival of an old institution which has been attended with more success than its predecessor'.
- 91 The main basis of this list is the information given in the issues of *YA* for 1884–6 and 1890–1904.
- 92 The question of whether Leighton was President of the 1883 club is discussed above.