

## Turner on the Suburb

Turner Close and Drive and Ruskin Close are near by - as is appropriate, since in life they were friends, although Ruskin was 44 years younger.

Born in London in 1775, Turner lived a long and full life, dying at the age of 76. His father William was a barber and they lived on Savoy Steps overlooking the Thames. For a while he was in Margate. Thus some of his earliest impressions were of water, with sun and cloud reflected.

When his sister died, he was moved to Brentford to live with his uncle - a butcher. As a boy, he wrote poems and painted. Both showed children as active, and he enjoyed their company.

In his teens his father announced "My son is going to be a painter." At 14 he submitted a study of a cast to the Royal Academy, and was immediately accepted there as a pupil. Although he decided at an early age that his medium would be oils, no oil paintings produced before he was 20 still exist. There are many sketches and water colours from his youth.

He loved architecture, and his paintings always had architectural precision. Indeed he worked in an architect's office. Every year he submitted many paintings to the R.A., until the year before his death. By 24 he was an Associate of the R.A., and at 26 was elected to full membership. Although he was soon recognised as the outstanding British painter, this tubby unconventional little man was never elected president. Perhaps it was his cockney accent.

While still young, he started collecting patrons, whom he served well, producing many outstanding paintings for them. His great pleasure was to journey through the countryside with his sketch book. The extent of his travels is shown by paintings of

many parts of Britain.

When his close friend Danby died, Turner became the lover of his widow Sarah. Together they produced two girls. His second mistress was Mrs Booth, the widow of the family with which he lodged in Margate. From 1834 until his death, they lived together. She was a frugal housekeeper and good cook. Religion never interested him. After his death, his friend Ruskin destroyed a collection of drawings and paintings he considered obscene.

His mother developed emotional outbursts that gradually worsened until, when he was 25, she was placed in a lunatic asylum. This affected him greatly. The instability demonstrated by some of the paintings of his middle years was perhaps inherited.

### Into Europe

When the 1892 Treaty of Amiens brought the long drawn out war between England and France to a temporary end, he took the opportunity to travel to Paris and Switzerland. The Louvre collection, with many of the paintings looted by Napoleon, fascinated him. Of the masters, he was most influenced by Titian and Girtin. The Swiss mountains inspired him.

His style was developing and evolving, as was his wealth. Most of his landscapes included a



Turner Close

mansion, which usually made the painting attractive to the mansion owner. He was one of the few artists who was not afraid to charge a substantial fee.

His circle of friends included Constable and Ruskin. The former was much impressed by him when they first met at an R.A., dinner. Ruskin became one of his closest friends, in spite of the age difference. Indeed Ruskin almost idolised him. The friendship was initiated through Ruskin's defence of Turner and Constable against the attack on the modern English School of art, which included Turner and Constable. Ruskin would not permit the publication of this defence. He had a minor quarrel with Constable, over the hanging of a Turner painting.

### His Work

His daily routine was to rise early, walk and start painting during the morning. His artistic output was enormous, and outstanding. A strong moral purpose existed in both his poems and paintings. He was powerful in both. He divided his works into eight broad categories, ranging from history to mountains. His sea paintings under moonlight are his most memorable.

## Hamilton's Impressionist

During the week 15th - 23rd July Hamilton Fine Arts, the gallery in Hampstead Way, will be holding an exhibition of Impressionist oil painting by Walter Beauvais. For this week the gallery will be open every day from 10 am - 5 pm.

### Walter John Beauvais

Walter Beauvais is an impressionist painter and one of the most consistently successful British artists over the last ten years. He was born in 1942 and is the grandson of Charles Henry Beauvais, artist and lithographer, and the son of Arnold Beauvais, artist and one time President of the London Sketch Club.

He was born and brought up in the Home Counties and to all appearances as English as his passport proclaims. Walter Beauvais remains nevertheless a Frenchman in a very real sense. His father, though long settled in this country was in truth a Frenchman. In his work, it is not that Beauvais consciously adopts a French manner, or looks back sentimentally upon an imagined French past. Rather, it is simply that back in the studio reworking the rapid studies and notes he has taken on his travels, he produces paintings that not only in their imagery but in the very way they are made, could only be French.

An early pre-impressionist, he was avant garde. A number of his works had no horizon and his use of moon or lantern light was outstanding. Man losing against nature was a recurring theme. Several of his finest works were turned down by the R.A., and he also suffered rejections from the Munich art gallery. He was ahead of his time, using brush, palette knife and fingers. He was a Surrealist with enormous respect for European culture.

Idyllic scenes of sun, fields and countryside came from his brush during his middle years. There was also his Italian period. Connoisseur Sir George Beaumont was highly critical that he was becoming a "white painter" in that he was losing the browns and blacks of earlier landscapes and sea paintings.

Although he did a few fine portraits, the figures in most of his landscapes were blurred and poor. They were usually from memory and often were of his two daughters. His horse

provided the model when necessary. War was not glorified by Turner. He was greatly affected by Waterloo and Napoleon, and showed death as the result.

In 1830, his watercolour 'Dudley' provided a warning of what industrialisation would do to England. This was the theme picked by Ruskin. He was essentially a painter of ideas and a Professor of perspective. He regarded Gainsborough as superior to the Dutch School. 'The Fighting Temeraire' is perhaps his most famed painting, with its detail, power and majesty. He captured that as it was towed by a steam tug to be broken up. 'Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps' was another. The storm in this came from sketches of a storm on the Yorkshire Moors.

The Luddite movement of 1811-12 affected him greatly, and he was appalled that the government sent more troops to Nottingham than Wellington took

to Spain. Raping by soldiers was part of the scenario. He recorded the 1834 burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, which to him symbolised the end of the old corrupt world and the birth of the new. His 'Rise and Fall of Carthage' indicated the rise and fall of England. He rejoiced in the end of the slave trade but criticised the slavery of the industrial worker. In this, Ruskin echoed him.

In a personal discussion he was convincing. Yet when speaking publicly, he stammered and was unclear. Poetry and later music were closely linked to art for him. He was the first who realised colour as light and light as colour.

### As a Person

He was kind, but did not like others to be aware of this. In money matters he was frugal. His acquaintances often regarded him as "money grubbing". During the later part of his life Harley Street, Queen Anne Street and Mitcham all became home.

In 1832, during the RSA Exhibition, the government announced funds for a National Gallery. This encouraged Turner to will his paintings and drawings to the nation, "provided that a room or rooms were added to be called 'Turner's Gallery'". He left 370 unsold oils and nearly 100,000 sketches, water colours, and plates. His water colours are probably his finest works as to colour and detail.

During his last years he lost his teeth and was reduced to a diet of rum and milk - sometimes 2 quarts a day. He died at peace. Unfortunately, legal action by distant family, who contested the will, meant the break-up of the collection. It was only 130 years later, in 1980, that the will of Sir Charles Clore permitted Turner's paintings to come out of store. £5 million was earmarked for the wonderful Turner Rooms in the Tate Gallery. They are worth a visit. On most days a knowledgeable guide takes parties around the rooms at 12.30.

John M. Davis

**N.G. SONENFIELD**  
(INSURANCE BROKERS) LIMITED

Special rates  
for residents of  
Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Contact your  
local independent  
Insurance Brokers  
for your free quotation.

St. Albans House, St. Albans Lane,  
London NW11 7QE.  
Telephone: 081-455 3431  
Fax: 081-458 1520

**GRIFFIN STONE, MOSCROP & Co**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS-REGISTERED AUDITORS

Are you sure that all your business  
and financial affairs are arranged to  
best effect?

We have been advising companies and  
individuals on the Suburb for many  
years and would like to contribute to  
your success.

To find out more about our comprehensive  
range of accountancy, financial and business  
services call Roger Seaton on 071-935 3793  
or write to him at 41 Welbeck Street,  
London W1M 8HD.

**LOW RISK HOUSEHOLDS  
SHOULD NOT PAY HIGH  
RISK PREMIUMS**

Are you a low risk household?  
Do you belong to  
Neighbourhood Watch?  
Have you adequate security?

If so, you may substantially save on your  
Building and Contents Insurance and also enjoy  
the benefits of NO CLAIMS BONUS.

For further information and advice please  
write to:  
**Brownhill, Morris and West  
(Insurance Services) Limited**  
16 Bromley Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 2JE.  
Telephone: 081-658 4334

**General  
Accident**  
Underwritten by the  
**GENERAL ACCIDENT FIRE & LIFE  
ASSURANCE CORPORATION PLC**