

The painting depicts a panoramic view of a hillside, likely Old Hill in Edinburgh, Scotland. In the center, a large, ornate church with a tall, slender spire stands prominently. To its right, several other buildings with red-tiled roofs and white facades are visible. The hillside is covered in lush greenery and trees, with a few small figures of people walking on a path in the foreground. The scene is framed by large, dark trees in the foreground, creating a sense of depth and enclosure. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall color palette is dominated by greens, blues, and earthy tones.

THE OLD HILL
FRAMED IN MEMORY

JOHN MITCHELL
FINE PAINTINGS



THE OLD HILL FRAMED IN MEMORY

A selling exhibition of over sixty paintings,
prints and drawings of Harrow School and
its environs from 1750 to the present day –
to include a display of pictures on loan from
Old Speech Room Gallery

20 November - 12 December 2014

in association with the Harrow Association



FRONT COVER
William Cowen (1797-1860)
A Vista View of Harrow, 1845
engraving

LEFT
Julian Barrow (1939-2013) *Bradbys 1959³*
The Old Schools
oil on canvas
signed and dated 1982

2 MY FIRST SPEECH DAY AT HARROW, in May 1982, coincided with Pope John Paul II holding a mass audience at nearby Wembley Stadium. In concluding his account of Speech Day in the next edition of *The Harrovian*, the reviewer wrote, 'As the Pope left Wembley, we left the Hill, the spire in the sunset, the School in the trees.' That I recall this thirty-two years later is testament not to any personal yearning for Rome but to the spell cast on me by the romantic vision conjured up by the last twelve words. It is thus that I like to think of Harrow, both the village on the Hill in which I grew up and the School which I was fortunate to attend (to do more growing up!) The same idea of the Hill as some compact, wooded Arcadia, is evoked by the last verse of that most loved of Harrow Songs, *Ducker*:

*When the afternoon is over
And the evening brings the breeze
And the sunset glories hover
Round the steeple and the trees
We will wander through the meadows
Up the Hill and home again*

Whether taking leave of it or returning, the Hill imagined in both descriptions is how it has appeared to its denizens across the centuries, whether transitory or lifelong.

From afar, Harrow on the Hill is conspicuous as an island rising abruptly from the Middlesex plain, surmounted by the spire of St Mary's. It is said that King Charles II, while at Hampton Court with a group of arguing clerics, pointed to distant Harrow as an example of 'the visible church of Christ upon earth'. More than a century later, the aspect of Harrow across the plains was unchanged, as seen in the backgrounds of Julius Caesar Ibbetson's scene at Kilburn [see illus. below] in the 1790s, and of John



Julius Caesar Ibbetson (1759-1817)
Donkey boys, with Harrow beyond
watercolour on paper, signed
Private collection



Sir Herbert Hughes Stanton, RA (1870-1937)
Harrow on the Hill seen from Wembley
oil on board, signed
Private collection



John Constable (1776-1837)
Hampstead Heath, with Harrow in the distance, circa 1820
oil on paper
Tate Gallery No 1237

Constable's sketch looking west from Hampstead [see illus. above]. The spire of the church commands any view of the Hill, near or far, and only on looking closer can the school buildings be seen among the trees. Even since its addition in the 1850s to the citadel-like cluster of buildings on the Hill, the green spire of Gilbert Scott's chapel is no rival to St. Mary's, and it is perhaps fitting in this respect that parish comes before school, as it did in history. The name 'Harrow' comes from the Old English for a shrine or temple, *heargh*, alluding to the pagan nature of the earliest dwellers, and in contemplating these ancient, mysterious times on the Hill my notion of the 'wooded Arcadia' seems less whimsical. It has never been possible to look at the Hill and see only a school, nor is it possible to envisage the Hill without it, hence our emphasis in the title on '[the] School and its environs.' To artists the two have always been as one, bound together by the swathes of venerable trees that both obscure some buildings and, for others, become a backdrop of seasonal colour.

Unlike a certain seat of learning near Windsor, Harrow has never had its Canaletto and as a result there is no single, definitive landscape painting of the Hill which readily comes to mind. In a way this has made our task in putting on this exhibition easier, for we are not weighed down with the knowledge that there is a blatant omission. Harrow appears on the skyline in one of the earliest surviving true-life topographical drawings of anywhere in Britain, one of the Fleming Anton van Wyngaerde's group of sketches of royal palaces in and around London dating from 1557 and now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. But in spite of appearing in a



James Hart Dyke (b.1965)
Autumn on the Hill
 acrylic on board
 signed and dated 2014

This prominent artist is a descendant of the Rt. Hon. Sir William Hart Dyke, Bt. (*The Grove 1851*³), Amateur Rackets Champion and a founder of the game of squash rackets.



John Inigo Richards (1731-1810)
South entrance to Harrow on the Hill
 pen and watercolour, signed

handful of successive panoramas of the city in the later Tudor and Stuart period, there are today precious few early oil paintings or drawings of the Hill itself by recognized artists, and of these one of the best-known is the view of the green outside the King's Head by John Inigo Richards (1740-1810), which has been kindly lent to our exhibition by Old Speech Room Gallery. (We are also able to include what must be his preparatory drawing of the same subject [see illus. below left].) Topographical views of Harrow on the Hill from the late Georgian period into modern times have been largely confined to the work of engravers and publishers, and this is reflected in the preponderance of prints which we offer here. As original works from the early twentieth century, therefore, the drawing by Lucien Pissarro [see illus. p 20] and the small oil study by Hughes Stanton [see illus. p 2] deserve special mention, as do the small eighteenth-century pencil drawings of the Old Schools by an unknown hand. Otherwise, the numerous engravings and lithographs presented here give a comprehensive survey of the topography of the Hill from the late eighteenth century to the present day, and as such stand on their own merits. In them our expert audience (!) will no doubt readily identify the distortions of perspective, mistaken proportions and buildings re-arranged or omitted in the name of artistic licence. At the same time they will observe how the profile and look of the Hill has genuinely changed across the centuries. See, for example, in Cowen's beautiful *Vista across Park Lake* of 1845 [see illus. front cover] how most of St Mary's could be seen before the chapel was re-built, as discussed above. Also, it is noticeable in the earlier prints (such as George Barrett's, 1802 [see illus. pp 10-11]) that there clearly were fewer trees at the top of the Hill.

School institutions such as 'footer', cricket and Bill [see illus. pp12-15] are the subjects of some of the most impressive engravings gathered here, and, as this booklet is not intended to serve as a catalogue of all sixty or more pictures, it is sufficient to end in the hope that there will be something for everyone.

This exhibition has presented a rewarding opportunity to turn our attentions to our *alma mater*, a place close to the hearts of all the Mitchell family for sixty years. My brother, William (*Rendalls 1984*³), and I run John Mitchell Fine Paintings, dealing in British and European paintings from 1600 to 1900. It was founded in 1930 by our grandfather, John Mitchell, who settled on the Hill and sent his two sons to Rendalls (our father and our uncle, P.J. 1951³ and P.W. 1959²). We wish to thank for their help our gifted 'publisher', Andrew Sinclair (*Newlands 1971*³), and that indefatigable friend of Harrow, Colin MacGregor of Macevents. We acknowledge the support and encouragement of Douglas Collins of the Harrow Development Trust, and the welcome co-operation of Julia Walton, Curator of Old Speech Room Gallery. I am also grateful to James Hart Dyke, the noted landscape painter, for doing a painting especially for this event [see illus. opposite]. Perhaps this initial foray into the subject of Harrow landscapes might in turn lead to a more thorough survey one day?

James Mitchell (*Rendalls 1982*²)
 November 2014





HARROW SCHOOL & CHURCH.

Harrow on the Hill.

1753.



To the *Women and Gentlemen* educated at HARROW. This View taken from the grounds of Richard Page Esq.
Is respectfully Dedicated by their most obedient and very humble Servant
Geo. Barrett







*John M. Henry
1897*



PAGES 6 & 7
William Nicholls (fl.1808) after Thomas Rickards
East view of Harrow School, 1819
 engraving



PAGES 8 & 9
Mason, after Mainwaring
Harrow School and Church
 engraving, circa 1840



PAGES 10 & 11
After George Barret the Younger (1767-1742)
A view of Harrow taken from the grounds of Richard Page Esq.
 aquatint, published by the artist in 1802



PAGES 16 & 17
After Thomas Hemy (active late 19th C)
Bill
 engraving published in 1888 by Messrs Dickinson
 signed in pencil



FRONT COVER
William Cowen (1797-1860)
A Vista View of Harrow, 1845
 engraving

Note the archery practice taking place in the centre of the composition



PAGES 12 & 13
Thomas M. Hemy, 1887, engraved by Walter Cox
The Cricket Fields – one of a pair
 Provenance: Frank T Sabin, New Bond Street



PAGES 14 & 15
Thomas M. Hemy, 1887, engraved by Walter Cox
The Football Fields – one of a pair
 Provenance: Frank T Sabin, New Bond Street



OPPOSITE TOP
W. Walton
Harrow, 1776
 lithograph

OPPOSITE BELOW
Lucien Pissarro (1863-1944)
Harrow on the Hill
 chalk on paper
 signed with monogram

ABOVE LEFT
Vanity Fair, 1899, by 'GAF'
The Rev. Joseph Wood D.D., (Head Master 1898 - 1910)
 lithograph

ABOVE RIGHT
William Monk (1863-1937)
Stet Fortuna Domus
 etching, signed in pencil

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