Queen Victoria (1819 – 1901) reigned from 1837 until 1901. Victoria was the daughter of the Duke of Kent and granddaughter of George III. Succeeding to the throne in 1837, she influenced foreign and domestic policies of successive governments, and her reign was the longest in British history.

Queen Victoria came to the throne at the age of eighteen on the death of her uncle, William IV, in 1837 and was crowned queen on 28 June 1838. She wrote in her journal on the day of her coronation: ‘I really cannot say how proud I feel to be the Queen of such a Nation’, and some of this idealism is conveyed in Sir George Hayter's coronation portrait.

Victoria described a small version of this portrait, which Hayter painted for her private apartments, as ‘excessively like and beautifully painted’. This replica version was commissioned by Queen Victoria in 1863 from the artist who painted the original in 1838. It was given to the National Portrait
Gallery in 1900. Other versions were produced for English embassies, another was given to the Crown Princess of Russia, and there is one in the Liverpool Town Hall.

Under a huge canopy of vermilion red curtains heavily decorated with gold fringes and tassles, the delicate young Queen Victoria sits high on her massive throne. The armrests are carved in the form of large lion heads. Behind her a subdued red background shows a unicorn and a lion. Lifting the stem of the ceremonial Sceptre with the cross in her right hand, she points it in the direction followed by her own gaze up into the light shining from above to her right. The softly rounded face of the young Queen, with its long slender nose and rosebud lips, has a resolute expression. Her fine dark eyebrows are horizontal. On her head rests the Imperial State Crown. The crosses on top of the sceptre and crown symbolise the Sovereign’s temporal power under the Cross. Her heavy red and golden coronation robes are clasped across her chest by a band of gold. They spread over the lion-head armrests and trail onto the floor beside the throne.
Under the robe she wears a low-cut white dress like a wedding dress, transparent and layered. It is held in at the waist with a golden sash. Her satin white slippers are visible through the thin fabric of her long dress. They rest on a wide flat gold cushion footrest in front of the throne. At its two front corners the footrest has large fabric red rose blooms supported by ferocious looking lion paws.
Queen Victoria 1819 – 1901
Queen Victoria 1819 – 1901
Prince Albert, Prince Consort of Queen Victoria
1819 – 61

By Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1805 – 73)
Oil on canvas, 1867
95 x 61 3/4 in. (241.3 x 156.8 cm)

Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Prince Consort of Queen Victoria (1819 – 61) was the second son of Ernest, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Albert married his cousin, Queen Victoria in 1840, and played an influential role in British public life. Noted as a patron of the arts, Prince Albert was largely responsible for the Great Exhibition of 1851. The original version of this portrait, showing Prince Albert wearing the Star of the Garter and the uniform of the Rifle Brigade, was one of the last portraits to be painted of him before his death from typhoid at the age of forty-two in 1861. This replica was commissioned by Queen Victoria from the original artist for the National Portrait Gallery.

Prince Albert is forty years old in this portrait. Brightly lit in the foreground of a palace interior and standing tall, he thrusts out his chest in a commanding pose. Prince Albert wears the charcoal grey uniform of the Rifle Brigade with a black sword belt. His trousers are worn over black riding boots of
which only the toes and the spurs are visible. He stands in left profile and turns his face to engage you with the clear and gentle expression of large eyes which are light grey-green. He has a very slender long straight nose in a large egg-shaped face with a strong clean-shaven chin. His top lip is hidden by a light brown centrally parted thick moustache. His face is framed by long sideburns and soft light-brown hair which is carefully curled forwards above his ears. Parted low on the left, long hair is brushed over the receding hairline of his high rounded forehead. The bright shape of his face stands out from the tall collar of his dark jacket. On his chest Prince Albert proudly wears the Star of the Garter over his heart. His full rounded chest and narrow waist convey energy and strength. Albert’s left elbow is held out wide to rest his hand on the hilt of a long sword standing at his side. The thumb of his right hand is hooked lightly on his belt at the waist. At the right hand edge of the picture beside him, a small table is loaded with plans and folders containing his projects.

Behind him, on his left, stands a vast column, swathed with red fabric. Huge crimson and white regal robes, the robes of the Bath, which symbolise
his purification to become a knight, are heaped up against the column and slope down behind Albert onto the floor at the other side. On the robes lie the chain and star of the order of the Bath and a field-marshall’s baton.
Prince Albert, Prince Consort of Queen Victoria
1819 – 61
Prince Albert, Prince Consort of Queen Victoria
1819 – 61
The Mission of Mercy: Florence Nightingale
Receiving the Wounded at Scutari

By Jerry Barrett (1824 – 1906)
Oil on canvas, 1857
55 1/2 x 83 3/4 in. (141 x 212.7 cm)

Florence Nightingale (1820 – 1910) reformed hospital nursing during the 19th century. After her training she was invited to take nurses out to tend the wounded in the Crimean War. Her sanitary improvements there diminished the spread of disease. She travelled to Scutari, a suburb of Constantinople in October 1854, where she transformed the appalling conditions at the Barrack Hospital. She looked after soldiers’ wives and children and wounded patients christened her ‘the Lady with the Lamp’. She was subsequently consulted by foreign governments at war as an authority on hospital administration and sanitation.

In this complex narrative painting, Florence Nightingale is shown just over a third of the way into the painting from the left edge, standing under a window. She is surrounded by a semi-circle of people including many of her supporters, receiving casualties in the quadrangle of the Barrack Hospital. Close to us, situated in the right and left corners of
the picture Turkish people gaze at the scene unfolding before them. On our left with his back towards us, a richly dressed man in a gold and red turban, red jacket and voluminous white pants or sherwal rests his right hand on a child’s shoulder. The fabric of the child’s pink skirts shimmers in the sun. Just visible on the man’s right is a figure holding some prayer beads behind his back. At the extreme right there are two veiled women in dark purple-blue robes, the one closest to us wears pointed pale yellow boots.

At the right edge of the picture, visible through a wide arched gateway stretches the River Bosphorus painted a greyish green blending to ultramarine at its furthest bank. Beyond, the city of Constantinople is hazy in the distance beneath the expanse of a clear blue sky. A queue of the sick and wounded climb up from a makeshift landing stage and enter the quadrangle. Dramatic lighting brightly illuminates the curve of the left edge of the gateway and the face of an infantryman raised aloft on a stretcher. He points with his right hand towards Florence Nightingale, the red sleeve of his uniform contrasting with the dull green of a wooden door behind him.
The infantryman looks down towards a wounded soldier slumped between an orderly and a doctor, his bold pointing gesture offering reassurance to the wounded soldier. The doctor, holding a leather bag and a metal helmet in his left hand, looks gravely over the head of the soldier towards the orderly on the soldier’s right. The orderly, dressed in a light blue shirt and darker blue trousers, has a sympathetic expression as he gazes at the soldier, the palm of his right hand turned upwards in encouragement. In front of this group and standing facing to our left with his back turned towards us, an infantryman with head bowed leans on a stick, his wounded left leg bandaged below the knee with a blood soaked handkerchief. The soldier is supported round the waist by a partially obscured male figure on his right. The artist has paid particular attention to the details of gold frogging on the soldier’s open coat and the fringes catching the light on his left epaulet. The infantryman, his companion and the stretcher-bearer, form part of the group surrounding Nightingale.

Florence Nightingale herself, standing in the centre of this group, is picked out as if spot lit. Her costume is sober; the skirt and close-fitting bodice
of pale grey fabric with a white collar, the only
decoration, a small broach on a velvet ribbon
around her neck. She has a pale face and her dark
hair is smoothly drawn back from a centre parting
under a white lace cap.

She stretches out her right hand towards a
wounded soldier lying on a stretcher at her feet. In
her left hand she holds a document. As if
distracted, she looks towards the drummer boy,
Robert Robinson, who ran her errands. He is just
visible approaching the group to our left, head tilted
back as he tries to catch her attention. The
stretcher case is viewed from the side and faces
our right. Propped up on his right elbow, he gazes
at Nightingale, as he accepts a drink from one of
her most loyal nurses, Mrs Roberts. She kneels in
front of him, wearing dark clothes. Bright sunlight
glances on a green jug at the soldier’s elbow. The
soldier is tended by Dr Cruikshanks, a medical
officer who was resistant to Nightingale’s sanitary
improvements. He kneels behind the soldier’s head
and is dressed in a dark blue uniform.

To the doctor’s right a young Turkish man in a short
pale green jacket looks down solemnly at the
soldier. Other portraits of Nightingale’s close allies in the painting, include Revd Mother Mary Clare. Wearing a dark habit, the Revd Mother stands in shadow behind Dr Cruikshanks. Between her and Nightingale is the tall imposing figure of Major Sillery, military commander of the hospital at the time of Nightingale’s arrival. He has an impressive bushy moustache, waxed at the ends. To the immediate left of Nightingale stands Selina Bracebridge, her expression calmly solicitous, clutching her right hand to her breast.

She and her husband, who is situated behind her, were old friends of Nightingale, offering assistance during her first nine months in Scutari. Mr Bracebridge is depicted in conversation with Lord William Paulet, commander of British forces in the Bosphorus. He is partly obscured by the stretcher-bearer to his left.

In a dark doorway at the extreme left of the painting, appears the whiskered face of Paulet’s successor, General Henry Storks and to his left, the head and shoulders of Dr Linton, one of the medical officers at the hospital. In front of them cut off by the edge of the picture is the portly figure of the
great chef, Alexis Soyer, who revolutionised dietary regimes at the Barrack hospital. He is depicted in profile holding a sunshade. Alongside Alexis Soyer, her body obscured by the Turkish man in the foreground, a nurse, Miss Tebbut, wearing a frilled bonnet, gazes thoughtfully out of the painting.

To give authenticity to this image of life in the Barrack Hospital, the artist has included himself in the painting as a witness. He looks down on the scene below from a window in the sun baked wall above Nightingale’s head. In the foreground there are discarded items of uniform and two dogs lie sleeping in the heat.

Hanging on the wall to the left is a small oil study for this painting measuring 16 x 24 in. (40.6 x 61cm). The paint is handled in a more fluid manner, providing us with an insight into the evolution of the finished picture’s composition. The organisation of the figures is well developed but there are significant differences in the pose of Nightingale herself and the positioning of Alexis Soyer and the others grouped around her. In the sketch, Nightingale is turned to our right and looks out of the painting and Alexis Soyer appears closer to her. The
outstretched arm of the soldier being borne into the hospital, which provides a dramatic focus in the large painting, is not yet formulated.
The Mission of Mercy: Florence Nightingale
Receiving the Wounded at Scutari
The Mission of Mercy: Florence Nightingale
Receiving the Wounded at Scutari
Florence Nightingale (1820 – 1910) reformed hospital nursing during the 19th century. She trained as a sick nurse and was invited to take nurses out to tend the wounded in the Crimean War (1854 – 6). Her sanitary reforms there lessened cases of diseases such as cholera, typhus and dysentery. She travelled to Scutari, a suburb of Constantinople in October 1854, where she transformed the appalling conditions at the Barrack Hospital. She looked after soldiers’ wives and children and wounded patients christened her ‘the lady with the lamp’. She was subsequently consulted by foreign governments at war as an authority on hospital administration and sanitation.

This bronze bust of Florence Nightingale, mounted on a curved polished pedestal of greenish marble is displayed to be viewed from the front. Her head is turned to our right and angled slightly downwards revealing a graceful neck. The hair at the front is drawn back from a centre parting, strands of hair...
modelled to convey texture. A soft-looking frilled cap covers the back of her head and ears. Her face is oval in shape; the light shining on the smooth bronze surface picks out hollow cheeks, a rather prominent, pointed nose and a small rounded chin. Finely arched eyebrows, eyes with heavy lids and a small-pursed mouth convey calm sympathy. The artist’s scrutiny has drawn attention to tiny details that make her face appear not perfectly symmetrical but suggest the character of a real person: the outline of her thin upper lip is more curved on her right, the eyes not exactly the same shape.

She wears a cloak, drawn across her shoulders, loosely gathered at the base of the neck and fastened tightly at the front. The sculpture finishes below the breasts and the diagonal folds in the cloak’s fabric describe the contours of her body beneath. The edge of her shoulders and upper arms form elegant curves and the upper body is completed in the classical manner to resemble a softened hexagonal shape.
Florence Nightingale 1820 – 1910
Florence Nightingale 1820 – 1910
‘The Secret of England’s Greatness’ (Queen Victoria presenting a Bible in the Audience Chamber at Windsor)

By Thomas Jones Barker (1815 – 82)
Oil on canvas, about 1863
66 x 84 1/8 in. (167.6 x 213.8 cm)

This painting epitomises the Victorian concept of the British Empire, which was seen as conferring the benefits of European civilisation and Christianity in particular on the peoples over whom it ruled. Although the depictions of Queen Victoria and her entourage are accurate, as is the setting of the audience chamber at Windsor, no actual occasion for the picture’s subject has been identified. It was engraved under the title ‘The Bible: The Secret of England’s Greatness’ in 1864, suggesting that it was conceived, in part, as an allegory of Empire.

In the foreground, portrayed almost full length, the young Queen Victoria presents a bible to an African man wearing elaborate native dress. The Queen is viewed from the side, standing on a dais facing the African man who kneels before her on our right.

Her pale rounded face, viewed in profile with straight, slightly pointed nose is recognisable from
many portraits and coins. The glossy dark brown hair is smoothed back over the ears and adorned with a narrow gold crown, set with diamonds at the front and a soft white feather that curls onto her shoulder. The décolletage of her costume is wide, low-cut and edged with white lace. Three strings of pearls encircle her neck. A short, fine gauze, puffed sleeve is visible beneath an over sleeve of lace. At her breast, fastened to a blue sash is a cluster of white, blue and red flowers. The train of the dress is of satin, decorated with bows along the edge, shimmering blue and mauve in the light. The wide ivory silk skirt is embellished with broad, lace ruffles, delicately patterned. She holds the leatherbound bible in front of her with both hands.

The African man leans forward, crystal necklace swinging, reaches out with his left arm and clasps the corner of the bible with delicacy, the right hand held back in an elegant gesture. The rich brown, muscular forearm, and that of the Queen, smooth and white, form a strong diagonal in the foreground composition. The man’s handsome profile with clipped beard, straight nose and high cheekbones expresses curiosity. He is magnificently attired in a cream coloured tunic,
sumptuous, leopard skin cloak, spotted shoulder strap and a long red sash lined with gold tied round the waist, the fabric where it falls, partly concealing a sword that hangs at his left side. The cloth of his turban is pink and shiny embellished at the front with a stiffened plume that curves over his head and is fastened to the turban with a turquoise jewel. A hooped earring set with pearls hangs from his left ear.

Prince Albert, situated behind Victoria is less strongly lit. He surveys the scene, a grave expression on his youthful face. The warm red of his uniform sets off Victoria’s white shoulders. A section of green throne is visible; the armrest ornamented with a gold lion’s head. A cool pinkish red curtain falls behind the armrest and frames the painting at the left edge. In the space between the curtain and Prince Albert’s shoulder, a shadowy female figure, perhaps a lady-in-waiting peers out. At the extreme right, behind the African man, the statesman, Lord Palmeston and Lord John Russell appear to exchange comments. In the background, indistinct in the darker shadows is Benjamin West’s large painting ‘The Institution of the Order of the Garter’.
‘The Secret of England’s Greatness’ (Queen Victoria presenting a Bible in the Audience Chamber at Windsor)
‘The Secret of England’s Greatness’ (Queen Victoria presenting a Bible in the Audience Chamber at Windsor)
Frederick Gustavus Burnaby 1842 – 85

By James Jacques Tissot (1836 – 1902)
Oil on panel, 1870
19 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. (49.5 x 59.7 cm)

Burnaby (1842 – 85) was an officer of the Royal Horse guards with a gift for languages. Over six feet, four inches tall, he was reputed to be the strongest man in the British Army. It was said that he once carried a pony under his arm. He became renowned for his exploits and his books. ‘A Ride to Khiva’ (1876), the narrative of a journey on horseback across three thousand miles of the Russian Steppes in winter and ‘On Horseback Through Asia Minor’ (1877) both became best sellers. In 1885, he took part in the relief expedition to Khartoum in the Sudan, where he died from a spear wound.

Burnaby leans back comfortably in the corner of a sofa with loose white covers to the left of the picture. With his body turned towards us, he elegantly holds a cigarette away from his mouth in his right hand. The upper arm is supported along the armrest of the sofa; the hand positioned half way across the painting from the left edge.
His head is turned towards our right and slightly tilted back, mouth open and eyebrows raised above small eyes as if he is confidently recounting a fascinating adventure. The dark hair, clipped short, eyebrows and moustache, waxed and twirled at the ends, stand out against a very pale complexion. His right elbow is situated on the curved top of the sofa, the forearm angled downwards against the backrest, fingers curled next to one of two piles of books at his side. Burnaby’s long legs are crossed and stretched out so that the pointed toes of his highly polished shoes almost reach the bottom right corner of the painting. He is dressed in uniform as a Captain in the 3rd Household Cavalry. The sweeping red stripe along the side of his black trousers further emphasises the length of his legs. This stripe and the gleaming white shoulder strap curving across his chest provide strong features in the composition.

The glossy surface of this painting with its array of detail and texture is striking in the bold use of contrasting black, white and red. Warm red on the band around a stiff cylindrical cap on the sofa in the foreground, on the cuffs of his uniform and other items of uniform gathered on a couch upholstered in
flowery chintz in the background, provide rich accents in the painting. The elements in the picture are carefully arranged; the falling red horsehair plume on a spiked gilded metal helmet on the couch in the background emphasises the angle of his left forearm.

The items of uniform next to the helmet are positioned in the space between his forearm and the right edge of the painting. Below, light glints on a breastplate leaning against the couch behind Burnaby’s legs. This breastplate fits neatly into the pictorial space between his knees and the right edge of the painting where a pair of long boots are just visible.

Positioned centrally above the couch in the background, on pale wallpaper covered with a pattern of tiny flowers, a section of a large map of the world, reminds us of Burnaby’s love of exploration and adventure. The countries are loosely portrayed and the artist has painted small dashes to indicate the names of geographical features.
Frederick Gustavus Burnaby 1842 – 85

The Victorians: Expansion and Empire
Arthur James Balfour, 1st Earl of Balfour
1848 – 1930

By John Singer Sargent (1856 – 1925)
Oil on canvas, 1908
102 3/8 x 59 in. (260 x 150 cm)

Arthur James Balfour (1849 – 1930) was a Conservative Prime Minister and a pivotal figure in British politics from the late 1880s to the late 1920s. He first made his mark as a philosopher, publishing ‘A Defence of Philosophic Doubt’ in 1879 and was the most admired of a group of young intellectuals known as the ‘Souls’. He entered politics as secretary to his uncle, Lord Salisbury, and in 1878 served in the government of Benjamin Disraeli. During the administration of Gladstone that followed he led the opposition in the House of Commons. When Salisbury became prime minister in 1885, Balfour became Scottish secretary and in 1887 served as Chief Secretary of Ireland, gaining a reputation as a resolute opponent of Home Rule. In July 1902 he became prime minister upon the retirement of Salisbury. The Education Act of 1902 was the major legislation of his time in office. In 1904 Balfour negotiated the terms of the Entente Cordiale. However by 1905 he was unable to keep together a
party divided by Free Trade and Protectionism and he resigned. He worked with distinction during the First World War, succeeding Winston Churchill as 1st Lord of the Admiralty, and from 1916 to 1917, as Foreign Secretary, he was employed in enlisting the support of the United States. An act of far-reaching consequences was the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 that gave British support to ‘the establishment in Palestine of a home for the Jewish people’. Balfour continued in active politics until the age of 80. He served an exceptional length of time as a member of the cabinet: 27 years.

G.K. Chesterton regarded the portrait as one of Sargent’s wisest works, a summing up ‘of not just the man but also the age’.

In this very large painting the tall figure of Balfour stands life-size at the centre against a stone wall designed in the grand manner of classical architecture. Dressed in black, he wears a white collar and very discreet black bow tie, black trousers, and shiny black shoes with grey spats. His three-quarter length black coat hangs open. The edge of a carpet runs horizontally across the painting just behind his feet. It is patterned in blue
and red with touches of green, against a background of light golden brown.

He stands in front of a shallow rectangular column which is about three feet or a metre wide, resting his right arm with suave assurance along a ledge just below shoulder height. His relaxed right hand hangs from the ledge at the extreme left of the painting.

He stands in a position which suggests that from first standing alongside the wall, facing the left of the picture, he has now turned his upper body, twisting his spine, so that his shoulders rest against the ledge and his face is seen fully. He holds his left hand on his chest directly in line beneath his face, lightly grasping the collar of his coat with thumb and forefinger. His weight is on his left foot which points towards his right, while his right leg crosses in front of his left with the inner foot turned to face you. The right foot hides the left.

Balfour’s face receives the full strength of a shaft of light from the right of the painting that casts a bold shadow of his head onto the column just above his right shoulder. He has receding wavy grey hair with a centre parting above his gleaming high-domed
forehead. His level grey eyebrows shade large grey-green eyes which look steadily into the distance to your right. His long and straight nose is strongly chiselled rather than smoothly formed. A wide grey moustache is centrally parted, curling up to end beyond the corners of his mouth.
Arthur James Balfour, 1st Earl of Balfour
1848 – 1930
By Liberio Prosperi ('Lib') (active 1886 – 1903)
Oil on canvas, about 1886
13 x 19 1/4 in. (33 x 48.9 cm)

A chromolithograph after this picture was published in the ‘Vanity Fair Christmas Supplement’ in 1886.

Seventeen men stand in the wide Lobby of the House of Commons in long black jackets, trousers of sober colours and black shoes. Many wear high collars and bow ties, and some wear black top hats. They strut, stoop, lounge or wag a finger and murmur and mutter and gossip. There is an element of humorous caricature to their appearances. The gothic architecture of the Lobby of the House of Commons resembles a Cathedral interior. On the left of the painting elaborately carved arches and niches punctuate the limestone wall behind the men. High above their heads daylight enters from windows on the left whose wide stone window frames are visible just below the top of the picture. The groups of men cast dark pools of shadow onto the chequered tile floor. Tiles of pale blue and white rectangles alternate with tiles of pale red and white. Between fluted columns on the right, in a high dark
arched recess spanned by gothic niches in gold leaf, a clock hangs just above their heads.

At centre foreground, in left profile, with an over-large bald head and a residue of curly white hair, stands the elderly leader of the Liberal Party and former Prime Minister, Gladstone, surrounded by a group of four men. To the left of Gladstone the slight dark-haired Joseph Chamberlain uses the fingers of his open left hand to reinforce a point he is making. Between these two men Charles Stewart Parnell, the leader of the Irish Nationalist party, is shown standing a little further back. Parnell is one of the tallest figures and has a high domed head, long brown hair and full beard and moustache. No doubt the chief concern in this area of the painting is Home Rule in Ireland over which Chamberlain resigned from Gladstone’s cabinet in 1886.

Gladstone’s decision to pursue a policy of Home Rule in 1866 had split the Liberal party to the core. Behind Gladstone stands the slight figure of Lord Randolph Churchill facing to the right. A red rose is in his buttonhole, his right hand on his hip and his left hand in the pocket of his narrow grey trousers. Wearing a tall top hat on his high bald head he has
brown hair, protruding small round ears, bulging eyes and a wide triangular moustache that hides most of his mouth. He is talking to the taller figure of the Marquess of Hartington who faces Gladstone’s back. Hartington stoops and turns his right ear to hear Churchill better.

Churchill was an energetic campaigner against Gladstone over Home Rule for Ireland. Hartington too was vehemently opposed to Home Rule and with Chamberlain he founded the Liberal Unionists. Therefore there is significance in placing these two behind Gladstone’s back in the picture. At either end of the cluster of figures and groups stand short comical figures with white beards resembling garden gnomes. On the left there is a portly policeman, Inspector Denning, facing you and standing to attention, and on the extreme right is the aged hooknosed Mr Hansard, the printer to the House of Commons, with his walking stick. The second figure in at the right is the tall figure of Lord Hill with nose held high strutting out of the picture. The second figure in on the left is the Clerk of the House of Commons wearing a wig and peering with an exaggerated stoop towards the left.
Behind the Clerk and a few feet further away there is a group of four politicians under the high window. They are clustered around the red-haired bearded Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, Ralph Gossett, in his tight black leggings. Two figures are seen to the left of Ralph Gossett. Over the Clerk’s shoulder the head of the aged radical reformer and Liberal John Bright appears. He is a short man with a huge round white beard under his top hat. In left profile talking quietly to Bright is the tall and elderly William Harcourt.

He has smooth shiny dark grey parted hair, a heavy round nose, big grey eyebrows and sagging cheeks. Harcourt was a brilliant parliamentarian and Liberal who acted as Gladstone’s deputy. Hook-nosed Gossett is facing Charles Bradlaugh who wags his finger and leans towards Gossett with a jovial expression. Bradlaugh had been at the centre of controversy for holding atheist beliefs and had been expelled from the House of Commons, imprisoned in the Tower of London and fined for voting illegally on three separate occasions. He had been in much trouble with previous Sergeants-at-Arms. Bradlaugh has a double chin and a big face, a wide down-turned mouth with thin lips, a small nose and little
eyes. A shock of untidy grey hair behind his ears is
crammed between the rim of his top hat and his
round shoulders.

Between Gossett and Bradlaugh with hands in
pockets stands Henri du Pré Labouchere. Under a
top hat he narrows his eyes in amusement at
Bradlaugh. Labouchere has a big nose and a very
long grey beard. He was a noted wit and supporter
of Gladstone opposed to imperialism. He also
published ‘Truth’ a magazine devoted to the
exposure of social fraud.

Under the clock on the far side of the Lobby to your
right is a group of three men in the background.
On the left, in profile facing right, Henry Chaplin has
big reddish sideburns and a short top hat, a beak-
like nose and a chin that juts out. A country
gentleman associated with horseracing, Chaplin
smiles broadly in laughter as he listens to a much
smaller man opposite.

Between them, in the centre with his back to you,
the lumbering figure of Sir George Leveson-Gower
clasps his hands behind his back with his legs
planted wide apart. The man on his left, Chaplin,
was married to a member of the Leveson-Gower
family.

Leveson-Gower turns his bulbous face towards the short, very slight and very dapper figure of the 6th Earl Spencer who looks excited as he tilts his head back smiling broadly with big eyes. Spencer has a long straight nose, brown hair parted on the left, a fine moustache curling up at the ends, and a clean-shaven chin. He wears a high white collar above his black long-tailed jacket. Beneath his narrow black trousers his tiny pointed shoes have raised heels. These three might be discussing horses and hunting.
The Lobby of the House of Commons, 1886
The Lobby of the House of Commons, 1886
Ludwig Mond (1839 – 1909) was a chemist, industrialist and art collector. Born in Kassel, Germany, he moved to Britain in 1867 and became one of the foremost industrial chemists of his period. He developed the mass production of alkali for the textile industry and later ammonia, ‘Mond gas’ and nickel. He spent part of his large fortune on a collection of early Italian art which he bequeathed to the National Gallery.

This small, full-length statuette is modelled in exquisite detail. Mond stands before us with a bullish stance, the pose emphasising a broad chest and shoulders. He steps out purposefully with his right foot, a walking stick grasped in his right hand with head thrust forward and slightly turned to our left. Dressed in the outdoor clothes of a distinguished gentleman, he wears narrow trousers, a single-breasted overcoat, with two flapped pockets on his right side, one pocket on the left and three buttons down the front.
The overcoat is open to display the edge of a morning coat with a waistcoat beneath. His hat has a high rounded crown and a wide brim, pulled down low over thick curly hair. His moustache and the full beard covering his chin are also curly. Mond’s features are delineated in minute detail; the face is squarish, the nose straight and there are pouches beneath his eyes.

Moving round the statuette anti-clockwise to our right, Mond’s left hand is visible clasping a document against the small of his back. Facing the back of the statuette, the forward thrust of Mond’s head and the hunch of his shoulders are more evident, asserting his drive and energy. Continuing to our right, Mond’s right hand is pressed against his waist, the fingers curled round the top of his walking stick.
Ludwig Mond 1839 – 1909
Ludwig Mond 1839 – 1909
Sir Robert Ludwig Mond (1867 – 1938) was the son of Ludwig Mond the industrial chemist and collector of early Italian art. Sir Robert was also an industrialist and carried out research in his father’s firm which laid the foundations of Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) in 1926. In 1930 he became President of the Faraday Society. Sir Robert Ludwig Mond was also an archaeologist and devoted time and finance to a number of expeditions in Egypt. He bequeathed some very significant finds to the British Museum.

Sir Robert Ludwig Mond sitting full length is exquisitely sculpted in bronze on a very small scale. His head is just one inch long, or less than 3 centimetres. This portrait at the age of forty-five is of a distinguished figure of knowledge and learning.

He sits on a heavy wooden upright armchair using both armrests with his right leg crossed over his left. His right hand clasps a document resting on his right thigh, his thumb uppermost. His left hand
dangles from the left armrest. Flowing university gowns, which drop down to just above his ankles, hide much of the suit which he is wearing with waistcoat, collar and tie. Tilting his upper body and head over to the right, he leans their weight on his right elbow. He has the manner of someone knowledgeable and at ease when engaged in thoughtful discussion. Under calm horizontal brows his heavily lidded eyes gently rest as if on someone opposite him and towards his left.

His receding hair parted on the left is brushed behind his large rounded ears. The dome of his forehead is long and high. His strong nose curves down from a high bridge. Full moustaches curve round onto his cheeks on either side while a round beard adds length to his chin. The cape of his university gown encircles his neck and spreads over his shoulders. His chair stands on a rectangular base with bevelled corners, which has two stepped layers. The lowest is of green marble. The leather lace-up shoe of his left foot protrudes over the edge of the base on which it rests and the right foot is held even further forwards. Near his left foot, in front of the front right chair leg a small object rests with a jumble of papers on the base. It resembles a temple
doorway or shrine and relates to Sir Robert’s archaeological investigations in Egypt.

On the base under the chair on his left side, the artist has engraved his signature in the bronze, ‘Ed Lanteri 1912’.
Sir Robert Ludwig Mond 1867 – 1938
Sir Robert Ludwig Mond 1867 – 1938
The great scientist, Charles Darwin (1809 – 82), formulated the theory of evolution by natural selection. His meticulous survey of life-forms and the conditions which govern their development resulted in his famous work, ‘On the Origin of Species’. He wrote other important books on botany, zoology, geology and evolution.

This three-quarter length portrait is a copy by the artist of a painting he undertook for the Linnaean Society in 1881. It shows Darwin in the year before his death. According to Darwin’s third son, Francis. The portrait represents him standing facing the observer in the loose cloak so familiar to those who knew him and with his slouch hat in his hand. Many of those who knew his face most intimately, think that Mr. Collier’s picture is the best of the portraits and in this judgment, the sitter himself was inclined to agree.

Light falls on Darwin from the top left, highlighting his sparse, silvery-white hair, long curly white beard.
and moustache.

It describes the high dome of his bald head, the pouch under his right eye and wrinkled cheek. The left side of his face is in dark shadow. The brightest accent is the bushy white eyebrow that droops down over the outer corner of his eye. His nose is slightly flat and rounded at the tip; the mouth indicated by a short thin line between moustache and beard. The wide collar of the cloak on his right side is painted almost black, a darker tone to the background, emphasising the whiteness of his beard. The cloak is broadly painted in fluid strokes of dark brown.

The light is described in cool grey tones where it touches his right shoulder and the cloak’s soft folds. He holds the brim of his hat so that the crown faces us with the thumb visible at the bottom right of the picture. The curves of brim, hat band and the left side of the crown are subtly indicated where the light catches them, the curve of the brim a delicate silvery line. He gazes out of the picture towards us with a thoughtful, rather sad expression.
Charles Darwin 1809 – 82
Charles Darwin 1809 – 82
Sir Richard Owen 1804 – 92

By Henry William Pickersgill (1782 – 1875)
Oil on canvas, about 1845
56 1/4 x 44 in. (142.9 x 111.8 cm)

From the mid 1830s Sir Richard Owen (1804 –92) was the leading British comparative anatomist and one of the most formidable opponents of Darwin’s evolutionary theories. He was superintendent of the Natural History Department of the British Museum and designed new natural history galleries at South Kensington (now known as The Natural History Museum).

This three quarter length portrait is said to represent Owen lecturing on the pearly nautilus, a mollusc with a chambered external shell, that was the subject of one of his best known works. He displays the shell with the opening facing him in the palm of his left hand at waist level. It is pale and shiny with gradations of horizontal brown stripes, the shape similar to that of a garden snail’s shell but very much larger. Owen rests his right hand next to a glass jar situated on a table at the bottom left of the picture. The jar contains the soft grey body of the mollusc depicted in anatomical detail. Some of its
many tentacles are visible pointing upwards.

Owen’s face, turned to our left is youthful and clean-shaven. Light emphasises a high, square forehead with a receding hairline and a prominent, rounded chin. Dark eyes are widely set above a broad, flat nose. His thin lips are slightly parted as if he is about to speak.

Formally dressed, the russet-coloured panels at the front of Owen’s dark academic gown drop down over a black tailcoat. A high, black velvet cravat sets off the brilliant white of his starched shirt and stiff pointed collar.
Sir Richard Owen 1804 – 92
Michael Faraday (1791 – 1867) was a chemist and experimental physicist whose discoveries provide the basis of modern electrical technology. Born the son of a blacksmith, and apprenticed to a bookbinder he devoted his leisure to science. Largely self-taught he was engaged by Sir Humphry Davy as his assistant at the Royal Institution in 1813.

Faraday liquefied chlorine and other gases, and in 1823 discovered benzene. He became involved in running the Royal Institution and in 1826 established both the Friday evening discourses for members of the Royal Institution and the Christmas lectures for children which continue to this day. On 29 August 1831 he made his greatest discovery: electromagnetic induction. This breakthrough led to a series of experiments carried out over the following ten weeks which are now acknowledged as the basis of modern electrical technology. He effectively invented the first electric transformer.
and generator.

In the following decade he rewrote the theory of electrochemistry, coining the words electrode, anode, cathode, and ion in the process, and he established the laws of electrolysis. Further discoveries culminated in the 1850s with establishment of the field theory of electromagnetism. This remains one of the cornerstones of physics.

Faraday oversaw the programme to electrify lighthouses around the British Isles. He undertook enquiries into explosions at the Waltham Abbey gunpowder factory and at Haswell Colliery, for the Home Office, as well as advising the National Gallery and other owners of works of art about conservation issues.

Throughout his life he was deeply committed to the Christian literalist beliefs of the Sandemanian sect. In 1858 Prince Albert arranged for him to have a grace and favour house at Hampton Court Palace where he spent his last years and died. He appeared on the £20 note from 1991 until 1999.

This portrait shows Michael Faraday with two essential pieces of laboratory equipment: on the left
is a Cruikshank battery of the sort he used in his electrical experiments, while on the right flames indicate the furnace that was necessary for a range of laboratory work at this time.

Although it could be that the flames represent instead his enquiries into explosions at the Waltham Abbey gunpowder factory.

The background of the painting is almost black. Michael Faraday is in a very dark setting wearing a buttoned black jacket and a wide black neck-cloth around a very high white collar. His face, shirt front and hands are abruptly picked out from the darkness by a shaft of light. He leans towards the left of the painting with his elbow resting on a tabletop and his hands clasped with interlaced fingers in front of his waist. His square chin rests between the ends of his collar. The firm shapes of his full mouth, with its regular wavy upper lip and wide bowl shape of the lower lip, add to the look of powerful concentration in his gaze. Dark brown eyes look into the distance to your right. His eyes are set between thick brown eyebrows slanting down to his nose, and high cheekbones with warm red cheeks. His nose has a firmly rounded end. Long brown hair,
centrally parted, falls down on either side of his face, hiding his ears and revealing his high wide brow, bright and clear.

The light also catches the Cruikshank battery. It is sitting on the tabletop in the lower left corner of the picture at the same level as his hands. A pale box with the proportions of a shoebox, it has an interior divided across at regular intervals. Brown tubing escapes from the nearest section and curls onto the table beside the inventor.
Michael Faraday 1791 – 1867
Octavia Hill (1838 – 1912) was a social reformer, influenced by Christian Socialism. Encouraged by John Ruskin, she devoted her life to housing reform, supervising the building and management of numerous dwellings. She was widely involved with other charitable activities and became a founder of the National Trust.

She is depicted half-length, seated with hands clasped in front of her, against a warm red, brown background. Turned slightly to our right, she holds her ample figure erect, her brown eyes gazing upwards to our left. She looks as if she might be remembering an amusing incident. The two highlights in her eyes bring her expression to life. Her features are strong with a well defined nose and firm chin. Her face is kindly but there is also a hint of the steely resolve and dedication, for which she was so admired.

Bright light falls on top of Hill’s grey hair which is parted in the centre and gathered loosely at the
back of her head. There is a vivid contrast in the darkness of the background to our right together with the softly lit black fabric of Hill’s voluminous sleeves and a creamy white diaphanous scarf, worn round her neck and gathered at the waist. The texture of the scarf is painted with squiggles, curves, dabs and downward strokes where it catches the light. Hill’s blouse is just visible beneath and is of a silvery white with a high ruffled neckline.

This portrait was commissioned from Sargent by her friends and was given to Hill on her sixtieth birthday. It has a fine carved wooden frame of leaves and flowers.
Octavia Hill 1838 – 1912
John Burns 1858 – 1943

By John Collier (1850 – 1934)
Oil on canvas, 1889
49 x 36 1/4 in. (124.5 x 92.1 cm)

John Burns (1858 – 1943) was a Labour leader and politician. He left school at the age of ten and, as an apprentice engineer, became active in the trades union. He joined the Social Democratic Foundation in 1885 and travelled the continent studying labour conditions. Burns was elected MP in 1892 but refused to join the Independent Labour Party and moved towards the liberals. He became a member of the cabinet as President of the Local Government Board, 1905 – 14 and of the Board of Trade in 1914, but resigned in opposition to the war and took no further part in public life.

This portrait was painted when Burns was forty, in the year that he became well known for his leadership in the London dock strike. It portrays him three-quarter length, standing before us, both hands firmly grasping his waist. With head slightly tilted to our left, he confronts the viewer with an enquiring expression.

The most arresting features of his face are the
prominent black arched eyebrows above large brown eyes. Burns’ complexion is sallow, his black hair cut short and dark beard and moustache neatly trimmed. He has high cheek bones and his nose is rounded at the tip.

The white collar and cuffs of his shirt stand out in contrast to his black double breasted jacket and black trousers and the warm red of his tie is picked up in the reddish brown colour of the background.
The Royal Family at Buckingham Palace, 1913

By Sir John Lavery (1856 – 1941)
Oil on canvas, 1913
134 x 107 in. (340.3 x 271.8 cm)

This large and imposing group portrait depicting King George V (1865 – 1936) and Queen Mary (1867 – 1953) with their two eldest children, Edward, Prince of Wales (1894 – 1972) and Princess Mary (1897 – 1965) was commissioned by the publisher W. H. Spottiswoode and presented by him to the National Portrait Gallery in 1913. The setting is the magnificent White Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace.

King George V became successor to the throne on the death of his elder brother, the Duke of Clarence in 1892. He married Mary of Tek in 1893 and together they travelled widely through the empire and greatly popularised the monarchy in Britain.

Edward, Prince of Wales spent most of the First World War visiting troops and raising morale. His concern for the unemployed and his travels abroad made him a popular figure. He reigned between January and December 1936.
His abdication followed insoluble constitutional problems raised by his proposed marriage to the American divorcee, Wallis Simpson.

Queen Mary and Princess Mary visited hospitals and welfare organisations during the First World War. After a nursing course in 1918, Princess Mary worked at Great Ormond Street and in 1926 was appointed Commandant in Chief of British Red Cross Detachments.

The cavernous drawing room is shadowy. Light filters into the background, softly illuminating crystal chandeliers, a grand piano at the left edge, small in the background and the polished floor of a room glimpsed through an open doorway. In the foreground at the right edge, pale pink flowers stand in a large round vase, a tall stem with a profusion of narrow, drooping leaves stand out in silhouette against a sunlit window.

The Royal Family are portrayed full length and posed together in the lower half of the painting. About a quarter of the way into the portrait from the left edge, George V stands formally, both hands resting on the hilt of a sword pointing downwards in front of him. He gazes directly at the viewer with
large grey eyes. His brown hair is cut very short, moustache and beard, neatly clipped. The King is dressed in naval uniform. Light from two floor to ceiling windows at the right edge glints on the gold of such details as his golden epauletts, stiff collar and cuffs and the medals across his chest. The King and Queen both wear vivid blue shoulder sashes, the only strong colour in a composition of muted greys, pale yellows and white.

Queen Mary holds herself erect and gazes with a serious expression in the same direction as her daughter. There is a resemblance between the two; the Queen’s hair, swept back is also light brown and curly, her eyes large and blue, her lips full. The visible brush marks on her dress are in tones of cream, bright white and greys giving the effect of ivory silk. Three long strands of pearls fall down across her chest, one strand reaching to her waist. She wears silvery chokers and a coronet glistens on her hair. The badge of the Red Cross is visible pinned at her left breast.

Princess Mary, aged sixteen, sits on a footstool in front of a sofa between the King and Queen. She leans gracefully against the Queen, who is seated
on the sofa to her left. The Princess rests her left arm on her mother’s knee. The raking light from the windows delineates the left side of her face, defining a straight nose and full lips. Her blue eyes look out of the painting to our right. Bold brushwork describes the three ruffles at the bottom of her long white skirt and a pale blue sash, tied at the waist that drops to the floor. Light falls in a bright lozenge on her lap and picks out a bracelet on the Princess’s right arm and a string of pearls at her neck. The Princess’s hair is light brown and wavy and brushed behind her shoulders.

The Prince of Wales stands behind the Queen and Princess Mary, his hands resting on the top of the sofa so that only his upper body and head are visible. He appears younger than his nineteen years. His clean-shaven face is turned to our left with a proud expression. The white wing-collar of his shirt stands out in contrast to his dark waistcoat and jacket. Medals gleam on his chest.

This portrait was the centre of attention at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition where it was exhibited in 1913. The critics noted its ‘romantic impressionism’ and hailed it as ‘a veritable triumph.
over the formalism to which in some pictures we are accustomed’.
The Royal Family at Buckingham Palace, 1913
The Royal Family at Buckingham Palace, 1913
Charles Dickens 1812 – 70

By Daniel Maclise (1806 – 70)
Oil on canvas, 1839
36 x 28 1/8 in. (91.4 x 71.4 cm)

Charles Dickens (1812 – 70) was the most famous and most popular of all Victorian novelists. Dickens was a highly prolific writer. The combination of comedy, pathos, and social satire in his serialised novels won him thousands of contemporary readers, and many of his characters, such as Mr Micawber, Mrs Gamp, Mr Pickwick, Quilp, and Uriah Heep, have entered the British national consciousness. Through his fiction he also did much to highlight striking abuses of 19th-century society and to prick the public conscience. The Irish painter Daniel Maclise was a close friend of the novelist and portrayed Dickens on more than one occasion as well as making portraits of his wife and children. This portrait was made just after the publication of ‘Nicholas Nickleby’ and was regarded by contemporaries as a good likeness. Dickens’ fellow novelist Thackeray wrote, ‘as a likeness perfectly amazing: a looking-glass could not render a better facsimile. Here we have the real identical man Dickens’.
Charles Dickens is a slight, agile looking figure wearing a narrow sleeved long-tailed dark brown jacket with very wide lapels and matching narrow trousers. He sits on the left side of the painting at a writing table which stands on the extreme right.

Dickens directs his body towards the table. His left hand reaches over onto the table to press down on some handwritten pages. His feet wearing sharply pointed winklepicker shoes rest on the carpet almost at the extreme right edge of the painting. From the window behind him bright patches of sunlight cast the shadow of the window frame onto the wood-panelled wall above the writing desk. Charles Dickens looks away from his desk and turns to his head round to look up at the window over his right shoulder. He has large blue-grey eyes.

Long brown wavy hair is swept away from his forehead and hangs in a rounded mass over his ears and above his shoulders. His face is very fine featured with high brows arching into a long very slender curved nose. The full red lips of his bow-shaped mouth are relaxed.

His chair is upholstered in red and has elaborately decorative carved armrests and legs. His coat-tail
escapes through the gap under the armrest and dangles down to the floor. Behind his chair a green curtain is drawn back from a window in line with the extreme left edge of the painting. The curtain spreads over the floor around the back right leg of the chair on which Dickens sits. With his right elbow on the armrest Charles Dickens raises his small right hand as if ready to clutch a pen as inspiration shines down.
The Brontë Sisters (Anne Brontë, Emily Brontë and Charlotte Brontë (Mrs A.B. Nicholls))

By Patrick Branwell Brontë (1817 – 48)
Oil on canvas, about 1834
35 1/2 x 29 3/8 in. (90.2 x 74.6 cm)

This is the only surviving portrait of the three celebrated novelists, the Brontë sisters.

Charlotte Brontë (1816 – 55) first published ‘Jane Eyre’ under the assumed male name ‘Currer Bell’. She was the eldest, born in 1816. Emily Brontë (1818 – 48) was author of ‘Wuthering Heights’ published under the name ‘Ellis Bell’ and Anne Brontë (1820 – 49) was author of ‘The Tenant of Wildfell Hall’ published under the name ‘Acton Bell’.

The artist was their brother, Patrick Branwell Brontë, born in 1817. He went to London to study painting at the Royal Academy but only stayed a few days. The Brontë children grew up in a parsonage surrounded by moorland at Haworth near Bradford in Yorkshire and remained there. All four died young. Emily and Patrick both died in 1848, Emily was thirty and Patrick was thirty-one. In the following year their younger sister Anne died at the age of twenty-nine. Charlotte was the eldest and lived the longest, dying at the age of thirty-nine.
in 1855.

The novelist Elizabeth Gaskell gave a description of the portrait as she had seen it in 1853. After that it was thought to have been lost until it was discovered folded up on top of a cupboard in 1914. She stated elsewhere that at the time of the portrait Charlotte was eighteen, Emily was sixteen and Anne was fourteen. In the centre of the group a male figure, previously concealed by a painted pillar, can now be discerned; it is almost certainly a self-portrait of the artist, Patrick Branwell Brontë.

This painting is damaged with cracks in the form of a cross through the centre where the canvas has been folded. The original canvas has been laid on a new canvas so that the original stretcher marks and unpainted edge are all visible. It shows three young women from the waist up, standing around a small writing table in front of a limestone pillar. All three wear white collars with v-neck openings which spread wide across their shoulders above long-sleeved velvet dresses which have belts. Their sleeves are very wide at the elbow but tight along the wrist.

Anne, the shortest and youngest, is to your left in
dark blue, Emily is in the centre in green and Charlotte, the tallest, is to your right in brown. Each has a pale complexion, pink cheeks, dark fine eyebrows and brown hair parted in the centre. All three have their hair drawn forward at the front so that ringlets dangle down beside their faces.

Anne stands with her right shoulder towards you, at the extreme left of the painting, with only the front of her figure within its frame. Hers is the smallest head and the most dainty. Anne has large horizontal almond-shaped blue eyes. Beneath a wide forehead her fine dark eyebrows slant down to a gently curving long finely pointed nose. She has shapely bow lips above a small round chin.

Emily stands behind both Anne and the writing table wearing green. Her chin is level with Anne’s forehead. Emily has a high forehead and a tall oval shape to her face. She looks directly at you with eyes that are also light blue and set further apart than Anne’s. Her nose is broader and flatter at its tip and her mouth with full lips neither as evenly shaped nor as wide. Between Emily and Charlotte the pillar stands. Within the pillar it is possible to find the image of a man in a dark jacket with a white
shirt-front.

This is probably their brother, the artist Patrick, now painted out. Charlotte, the most brightly lit, stands at the extreme right and turns towards her sisters looking up towards the light above your left shoulder. Charlotte’s eyes are brown matching her dress and they stand out sharply against her very light skin. She also has the reddest cheeks adding to an excited or inspired expression rather like Anne’s. Behind a dark hair band, her hair is gathered into a bun at the top of her head, making her the tallest. Her jaw is wider and slightly heavier, and her bow shaped mouth has a thinner top lip, than those of her sisters. With her left arm Charlotte reaches across amongst the books on the table. This area is painted without exact perspective so that there is confusion about the positions of their hands and the books appear to hover above the table. Elsewhere the painting has a bold and elegant simplicity of a tapestry. However Mrs Gaskell considered that it was ‘not much better than sign painting’.
The Brontë Sisters (Anne Brontë, Emily Brontë and Charlotte Brontë (Mrs A.B. Nicholls))
The Brontë Sisters (Anne Brontë, Emily Brontë and Charlotte Brontë (Mrs A.B. Nicholls))
Sir Edwin Henry Landseer 1802 – 73

By John Ballantyne (1815 – 97)
Oil on canvas, about 1865
31 1/2 x 44 1/2 in. (80 x 113 cm)

Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1802 – 73) was a celebrated animal painter, a sculptor, and an engraver, who was born in London. Landseer was a child prodigy, first exhibiting at the Royal Academy at the age of fourteen. He went on to become Queen Victoria’s favourite painter. He was highly successful, being probably the most popular painter of his age. Edwin Landseer earned vast sums from the sale of engravings made from many of his paintings by his brother, Thomas.

Landseer established his reputation with animal subjects which parodied human behaviour. He became known for acutely realistic portrayals of dogs, usually of highbred species in gallant poses. Landseer also gained fame as a painter of deer, eagles and other wildlife, often using them to express moral sentiments.

Sir Edwin Landseer worked in the studio of Baron Marochetti sculpting the lions for the base of Nelson’s Column in Trafalgar Square. The project
occupied him for eight years between 1858 and 1866 and contributed to ill health in the last ten years of his life.

The portrait is one of a series of artists in their studios by the artist Ballantyne and was exhibited with the set in November 1865.

In a high draughty red brick hall a huge white male lion sits on a wooden stand facing your far right. Between front paws each as long as a man, the tiny figure of Sir Edwin Landseer sits on a low wooden box in opposite profile to the lion’s huge head above. Landseer’s lower leg and foot are hidden by the lion’s nearest paw. He is reaching out with his right hand to add clay with a modelling knife to the lion’s chest, while his left hand holds a lump of dark wet clay and rests on his knee. Wearing grey trousers and a wide-sleeved mid-brown jacket with black lapels, his left shoulder is nearest us. The crouching body of the lion is about six times larger than life and dominates the left of the painting. His dry white clay head rises at the centre of the painting towards the skylight in the roof with his deepset eyes cast in dark shadow. The lion’s mouth opens as if to snarl at an adversary while he looks
ahead down his nose. Alongside his stand there is a set of three steps and a large pair of measuring callipers. Ahead of the lion there is another set of two large steps also for mounting the stand.

The lion is looking over Landseer’s head towards a picture propped up against studio furniture in the lower right hand corner of the painting. It shows another snarling lion in profile walking towards him. Sir Edwin Landseer too has a tousled mane of white hair around his ears, a powerful brow and a beard on his chin. The angles of his short nose and nostrils answer the lion’s. The face of the lion begins to look like a large self-portrait. Landseer’s face is not shown in detail but instead it is lost in shadow and in concentration on his work. Also lying on the box a dog faces you dozing warily between the lion’s paws and between the sculptor and the edge of the stand. This dog might represent Lassie the collie dog known to have been Landseer’s constant companion in the studio at this time. Lined up on wooden supports against the far wall at the right of the painting are two lions identical to the one in progress. Above them high on the wall is a large painting of a male lion seen from below against the sky. These three huge heads rise above the artist
and his dog from such a height that they seem to be watching his progress and roaring him on.
Sir Edwin Henry Landseer 1802 – 73
Carlo, Baron Marochetti 1805 – 67

By Gabriele Ambrosio (1844 – 1918)
Bronze statuette, 1888
24 5/8 in. (62.5 cm) high

Carlo Giovanni Battista Marochetti, Baron Marochetti (1805 – 67), was an Italian baron and sculptor patronised by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Marochetti was born in Turin and studied art in Rome and Paris. His patrons already included Carlo Alberto and Louis Philippe before his move to London in 1848. He regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy and became a noted member of the London art world. Marochetti executed statues of Queen Victoria and the Duke of Wellington as well as many decorative works and busts. He was also appointed to advise and assist the painter Sir Edwin Landseer in sculpting the lions for Trafalgar Square, much to Landseer’s indignation.

This portrait in bronze of Carlo Marochetti was made twenty years after his death. It shows Marochetti the sculptor at work, resting on a set of portable wooden steps in contemplation, surrounded by sculpting tools, plans, and a bronze relief.

Seen from in front, he is sitting on the second of the
set of three tall steps wearing a long coat which hangs open while the lapels meet at the top button. Leaning back on his left elbow, the weight of his upper body is supported by his left elbow and forearm resting on the top step. His right forearm reaches across his lower chest so that the forefingers of both his hands are engaged in working clay. Between the fingers of his left hand rests a clay-working knife.

Carlo Marochetti lifts his gaze towards his right tilting his head back towards his left shoulder. He purses his lips and frowns thoughtfully. He has a long fine nose with a high bridge. His wavy thick hair is parted on the left above a high domed forehead. Brushed away from his face, his hair hangs thickly around his ears and the back of his head. Long heavy sideburns run along beneath his cheeks almost to the corners of his clean-shaven mouth and chin.

Underneath the figure and the steps, a low rectangular base provides a narrow ledge and curves forwards carrying an inscription in capital letters: CARLO MAROCCHETTI. He stretches his left foot forward so that his elegant leather slip-on shoe
with its chisel toe protrudes beyond the inscription. His right knee drops down beside the step on which he sits. He bends his lower right leg beside him at a low angle to the base. With his instep resting on the edge of the base his right foot hangs over the side. He is not settled but ready to leave the steps and rise to his feet.

Seen from his right, Marochetti’s head is at the top of a tall triangular shape made by the long line of his right thigh and upper body on one side, and on the other by his left arm resting its elbow on the top step in line with a scroll of paper hanging over the back of the top step. These extend towards a jumble of studio clutter at the base of the triangle, on the floor behind the steps. Also visible from this side is the cord belt of Marochetti’s cloak hanging from his waist down to just above the heel of his right foot. A mallet lies beside the steps.

Seen from the back, a sculpting wire-tool rests on the open scroll on the top step. Engraved into the surface of the scroll are the outlines of the sculpture in progress; a horse in profile. More scrolls of paper and riding stirrups carelessly abandoned on the floor, are heaped against the steps.
Seen from Marochetti’s left, a picture in shallow relief propped against the steps comes into view. Just taller than the bottom step, and half as high as his knee, it is three times as wide as it is tall. Under a canopy eight Renaissance courtiers in two groups are in attendance on either side of two central characters making dramatic declarations.
Carlo, Baron Marochetti 1805 – 67
Carlo, Baron Marochetti 1805 – 67
Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 – 61) a poet, political thinker, and feminist, married another poet, Robert Browning, at the age of forty and bore a son at the age of forty-three.

‘The Seraphim and Other Poems’, of 1838, put Christian sentiments into classical Greek tragedy. For nearly a decade after 1838 Barrett Browning was severely troubled by a childhood spinal injury and lung ailment, her physical pain amplified by grief at the drowning of her eldest brother in 1840. She continued writing and produced a volume of poems in 1844 with an American edition introduced by Edgar Allan Poe. This collection included ‘Lady Geraldine's Courtship’, an experiment in combining poem and novel. Narrated by a male poet, a dialogue between lovers considers woman's status as the object of art.

In 1850, when William Wordsworth died, Barrett Browning was proposed as his successor as Poet Laureate of England. Elizabeth Barrett Browning is
now known chiefly for ‘Sonnets from the Portuguese’, dedicated to her husband with whom she eloped in 1846. Written in secret before her marriage, and published in 1850, the lovers of this sequence are recognizably Victorian, and their mutual desire is a matter of passionate equality.

Her most ambitious work was ‘Aurora Leigh’, of 1856, a novel in blank verse. It tells the story of a female poet's artistic development in the face of a male accusation that ‘women, personal and passionate’ cannot comprehend ‘universal anguish’. Women are therefore denied the source of poetic profundity.

This portrait was commissioned by the friend who introduced Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Spiritualism, Sophia May Eckley. Elizabeth Barrett Browning sits on a chair with a high upright back, level with the top of her head. It carries carved floral features on either side, suggesting a stately setting. Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s body faces your left and her head bows slightly in that direction so that her high-domed forehead is brightly lit. Her face is surrounded by long very dark hair spreading wide across her shoulders from a central parting.

She looks up directly at you with large brown eyes
from under dark eyelashes and the firm arcs of dark eyebrows. Her long nose is slightly bulbous at the tip. Her mouth has full lips that look ready to smile above her strong round chin. There is a faint glow of pink in her pale round cheeks. Her full-sleeved dark brown dress has a silken sheen. It is decorated from the neck down to her waist with five pairs of crocheted lace floral discs. A gold brooch bearing a large blue precious stone sits on top of the topmost pair of lace decorations and clasps a dark blue velvet ribbon around her neck so that its ends hang down to partly conceal the other lace discs. Where her under sleeves emerge at the wrist they are also exquisitely decorated with fine decorative white lace cuffs. Her left hand is partially hidden by the bottom edge of the painting as it dangles from a wide dark wooden armrest. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wears rings on all fingers apart from the index finger.

This portrait is a companion piece to that of her husband. A label on the back of the frame, states that it was 'pronounced by Robert Browning to be the best Portrait ever taken of the Poetess'. However Robert Browning also wrote that 'The portrait is not perfect certainly; the nose seems over long and there are some other errors in the face;
also, the whole figure gives the idea of a larger woman than Ba'.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1806 – 61
Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1806 – 61
Robert Browning 1812 – 89

By Michele Gordigiani (1830 – 1909)
Oil on canvas, 1858
28 1/2 x 23 1/8 in. (72.4 x 58.7 cm)

Robert Browning (1812 – 89) was one of the great poets of the nineteenth century, admired for his intellect and for his use of psychological monologues. He married Elizabeth Barrett in 1846 and lived mostly in Italy until her death in 1861. Some of his most famous works include, ‘The Ring and the Book’, 1868 – 9, ‘Balaustion’s Adventure’, 1871 and ‘Dramatic Idylls’, 1879 – 80.

This portrait was commissioned by an American admirer, Sophia Eckley when Browning was living in Florence. Mrs Eckley was determined that it would be the best available likeness of him and wrote on the stretcher at the back of the picture that Browning had described it as an ‘Incomparable Portrait, by far the best ever taken’.

Browning’s head and upper body are depicted in close up. Turned to our right, with head inclined, his grey, slightly hooded eyes gaze at the viewer with a sombre scrutiny. Two faint lines between the eyebrows contribute to the seriousness of
his expression.

His nose is prominent and bony, the lips thin and pursed. His strong chin and rather pointed jaw-line are clean-shaven and emphasised by a full grey fringe beard worn under the chin and jaw. His dark grey hair is brushed across a high wide forehead and is quite long, covering the ears. Browning’s head casts a shadow on a stonewall to our left and a pillar at the right edge of the painting counterbalances the tilt of his head.

His right elbow rests on the arm of a chair, upholstered in dusky pink with a grey floral design that appears as a horizontal shape at the bottom of the painting. The right hand is strongly lit and positioned with the fingers loosely curled against his chest. Part of his other hand appears in the bottom right corner. The dark grey-brown jacket is alleviated by a brilliant white shirt cuff on his right arm and a hint of white shirt where the jacket opens at the front.

M.W. Rossetti wrote after Browning’s death, ‘The face in this portrait is certainly a highly intellectual one, but I think it is treated with too much “morbidezza”, so as to lack some of that extreme
keeness which characterised Browning'.
Robert Browning 1812 – 89
William Morris 1834 – 96

By George Frederic Watts (1817 – 1904)
Oil on canvas, 1870
25 1/2 x 20 1/2 in. (64.8 x 52.1 cm)

William Morris (1834 – 96) was one of the principal founders of the British Arts and Crafts Movement. Best known as a designer of wallpaper and patterned fabrics, he profoundly influenced Victorian taste. He was also a writer of poetry and fiction, and an early founder of the socialist movement in Britain. At Oxford he met his life long friends and collaborators, the artists Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones and Ford Madox Brown.

On 15 April 1870, William Morris wrote to his wife, Jane (who at the time was having an affair with Rossetti), ‘I am going to sit to Watts this afternoon, though I have got a devil of a cold in the head, which don’t make it very suitable’. According to Mrs Watts, the portrait was painted at a single sitting, although it is possible that Watts may have done more work on it when it was exhibited in 1880.

In this half-length portrait, Morris’s head is positioned centrally in the upper half of the painting. His bulky body is situated so that the outline of his right upper
arm is visible and the left shoulder extends to the edge of the picture.

His body is painted with little detail and appears as a dark brown shape blending into the background. Morris seems to be embedded in the portrait; a few loosely painted silvery petal-like patterns on the very dark greenish-grey background float over the edge of his hair on his left and just overlap the top of his right shoulder. The powerful impression of Morris's appearance owes much to the shock of thick, curly, rich brown hair, greying at the temples, that frames his forehead like a mane. His full beard is reddish brown in tone and cut square, the moustache neatly trimmed. The texture of the paint on his face has a luminous quality. Small dabs are visible in the modelling of the cheeks and chin. The colour of the background emphasises Morris's ruddy complexion and the creamy tones where light touches his high forehead. His face is imposing with a strong but finely chiselled nose and thin pursed lips.

It is evident that he had a cold; the eyes, small and grey appear watery; the lids of the right eye are noticeably a little reddened. His expression could be described as both resigned and miserable. There
was little contemporary comment on this painting apart from a later, well judged remark from G. K. Chesterton that, ‘There is something in the way in which the living leonine head projects from a background of green and silver decoration. This immersion of a singularly full-blooded and aggressive man in the minutiae of aesthetics was a paradox that attracted men to Morris’.
William Morris 1834 – 96
Louise Jopling-Rowe (née Goode) 1843 – 1933

By Sir John Everett Millais (1829 – 96)
Oil on canvas, 1879
49 x 30 in. (124.5 x 76 cm)

Louise Jopling (1843 – 1933) studied art in the mid-1860s and supported her family financially through painting and illustration. After the collapse of her first marriage, she married the watercolourist, Joseph Jopling in 1874. She exhibited portraits and subject paintings at the Paris Salon from 1869, the Royal Academy from 1871 and the Grosvenor Gallery from its inception in 1877. Jopling was a central figure in the artistic and literary circles of her period and a close friend of Whistler and Millais. She established her own art school to train women painters and was a supporter of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage.

In this three-quarter-length portrait, Louise Jopling stands turned to our left, clasping a fan behind her back. She is positioned against a broadly painted, warm-brown background. The pose is elegant and conveys confidence. Her dark hair is caught behind her head; the short wispy fringe giving the style an informal, contemporary look.
Her face is pale and beautiful; large dark brown eyes gaze out of the painting to our right with a serious questioning expression although there is the hint of a smile on her small shapely mouth.

An elaborate evening dress displays the contours of her ‘hour glass’ figure. A close-fitting over-dress of black satin, slightly ruched at the hips and edged with black lace is cut away at the front and shoulders to reveal a bodice, skirt and three-quarter length sleeves of patterned gauzy fabric. The bodice is long and similar to a waistcoat with two points at the bottom and fastened at the front with buttons. It has a low, narrow neckline edged with white lace and black ruffles lined with red. There is a profusion of large red flowershaped ruffles at the breast and at the bottom of the sleeve visible on her left arm. The texture of the different fabrics is conveyed with great skill. The satin is painted with broad strokes that glisten with oil and the gauzy fabric has a delicate Japanese-inspired pattern of tiny sprigs of leaves and flowers. The design is vibrant in colours of red, white, lilac and pale green on a black gauze background.

Millais’ monogram and the date 1879 appear at the
bottom left. The painting was completed in five sittings and was exhibited to critical acclaim in the 1880 Grosvenor Gallery exhibition. For Whistler, who also painted Jopling, it was a ‘superb portrait and a great work of art’.
Louise Jopling-Rowe (née Goode) 1843 – 1933
Louise Jopling-Rowe (née Goode) 1843 – 1933
Gertrude Elizabeth, Lady Colin Campbell  
1857 – 1911

By Giovanni Boldini (1842 – 1931)  
Oil on canvas, about 1897  
72 5/8 x 47 3/8 in. (184.3 x 120.2 cm)

Lady Colin Campbell (1857 – 1911) was a journalist and socialite. She separated from Lord Campbell after a notorious court case in 1886 in which he alleged her adultery with four co-respondents. After Campbell’s death in 1895, she re-established her standing in society as art critic of ‘The World’ and the ‘Art Journal’ and editor of the ‘Ladies Field’, which reflected her interests as a sportswoman and dilettante.

This portrait is striking in its bold brushwork and limited palette of black, mid silvery grey and pale cool pink. The artist has ignored the rules of anatomy in favour of an impression of allure and glamour.

Lady Colin Campbell is seated, full length at one end of a chaise longue against a grey background. She wears a long black satin evening gown with a low neckline.

The pose is provocative; she leans to her left,
against the high arm of the chaise longue, the tilt of her body emphasising the rounded contour of right hip and thigh, the rich fabric of the gown clinging to her legs. Her head is slightly lowered and she looks directly at the viewer with dark eyes beneath well-defined black eyebrows. Her expression is challenging and seductive, a smile playing on her red lips. A broad, rather flat nose gives her face a certain strength of character. Black curly hair piled loosely at the back of her head with a feathery fringe over her high forehead sets off her very pale pink complexion. Lady Cambell’s left arm is raised to toy with her hair and rests on the arm of the chaise longue. The elbow comes forward but appears to be too large in proportion to her face. The puffed sleeve of her gown is made of stiff net that brushes her cheek and fans upwards and out over the top of the armrest.

Lady Campbell’s right arm is held out and touches her hip forming an elegant curve, the fingers elongated towards the left edge of the painting. Her upper arm is glimpsed through the net of the sleeve. A yellow flower in her décolletage and three pale but warm pink roses at her right breast alleviates the black satin of Lady Campbell’s dress. Her legs
are bent and slightly parted, the knees beneath the shiny fabric of the evening dress are turned to her left.

The artist has exaggerated the forward thrust of her knees so that the legs appear out of proportion to her head and body. The feet in dainty black high-heeled shoes peep out from below her gown in the left corner of the painting further enhancing the length of her legs.

The flamboyant zig-zag rhythm carried through the contorted pose is set off by the graceful vertical curve of the arm rest on her left side and the sweeping curve of her right arm.
Gertrude Elizabeth, Lady Colin Campbell
1857 – 1911
Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 – 94) wrote stories and essays remarkable for their style, charm and humour. He is best known as the author of such classics as ‘The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde’, ‘Kidnapped’ and ‘Treasure Island’. He suffered from ill health but travelled widely and spent the last years of his life in the South Sea Islands.

This portrait was painted in one sitting, at Richmond’s house, on a hot afternoon in August 1886, amid a jovial company including Sidney Colvin, Edward Burne-Jones and Burne-Jones’s daughter, Margaret. Margaret recalled their lively conversation, ‘They discussed suicide; compared notes as to their feelings towards policemen; told ghost stories and most of the time Mr Richmond painted and Mr Stevenson sat easily talking, smoking and drinking coffee’.

Stevenson leans back in a chair to the right of the painting. His head is positioned centrally in the upper half of the picture, inclined towards our left.
His gaunt, sallow face is oval in shape. Painted with a light touch, it is the most fully realised element in the composition. Some white dabs of paint suggest the reflection of light on a high forehead. A streak of light helps to define a narrow, straight nose. Stevenson’s eyes are arresting; hollow and large, almost black with dark circles beneath. Richmond has emphasised the shape of the eyes against the translucent skin with some delicate thin black lines. Stevenson’s expression is lively and enquiring but at the same time thoughtful. A faint smile plays on his full lips. His hair is black and long, nearly shoulder length and tucked behind his left ear. His moustache is a lighter brown. The ends of the moustache curl up, suggested by a few wisps of paint.

His chin casts a shadow on a brilliant white shirt collar. The tie is a rust red patch contrasting with the blue-black of his coat. The coat is painted with vigorous marks. Paint is scrubbed into the canvas and a few rapid white lines convey the collar of the coat, the right sleeve and the edge of Stevenson’s right arm where Richmond has redefined its position. A faint diagonal smear describes the shape of the chair and the back of the chair.
behind his left shoulder is composed of a narrow, horizontal, yellow brown ochre area. The background space is divided into sketchily painted rectangles. The largest extends behind Stevenson’s head, almost half way across the painting from the left side and reaches to just below his right shoulder. It is ochre in colour with a darker brown area where Stevenson’s head casts a shadow. Next to this there is a narrower rectangle, which picks up the colour of his tie. An area of pale grey completes the background at the right edge. These abstract shapes frame Stevenson and counterbalance the tilted position of his head.
Robert Louis Stevenson 1850 – 94
Robert Louis Stevenson 1850 – 94
Augustus Edwin John 1878 – 1961

By Sir Jacob Epstein (1880 – 1959)
Bronze bust, 1916
14 in. (35.6 cm) high

Augustus Edwin John (1878 – 1961) was a painter born in Tenby in South Wales who became a leading figure in the London avant-garde of the early twentieth century. Augustus John’s sister Gwen was a fellow student at the Slade School of Art in the 1890s and also achieved widespread recognition as an artist. Augustus John had an extravagantly flamboyant personality and cultivated an extremely bohemian lifestyle. He eventually lived peaceably with two women, continually painting them and their seven children. He was familiar with avant-garde artists in Paris and knew those in the circle of Picasso. He participated in the meetings of the Camden Town Group and showed in their first exhibition in June 1911. In the 1920s he was a leading portrait painter whose sitters included Thomas Hardy, George Bernard Shaw and T. E. Lawrence (‘Lawrence of Arabia’).

Cast in blackened bronze, the imposing head of Augustus John was first sensitively modelled in
clay. The surface is roughly pitted because the modelling was not smoothed over. It is an almost life-size likeness of the head and neck as they rise naked from just above the shoulder. The entire left collarbone is included while the sculpture ends immediately beside the neck on the right. The naked left collarbone conveys informality. Augustus John’s head narrows from a wide low dome and high wide cheekbones under a wide unruly mop of centrally parted hair. This mop hangs thick and bushy around his large ears with their deep round hollows. At the back his hair tapers sharply to his strong vertical neck. John’s eyes are long horizontal almond shapes with the right eye narrower than the left. They combine with his cheekbones and his heavy wide angular eyebrows to convey an air of serenity and defiance. A robust medium length nose with a strong bridge arches forward boldly, bent over to his left. His gaunt lower cheeks and long firm chin carry an untidy forest of beard under the thick moustache which hides his mouth and rises as it spreads out wide. This is not an idealised image of perfect proportions but a forceful figure full of irregularity and unruly vitality.

Shortly before the time of this portrait, while serving
as a war artist at the Western Front, Augustus John was allowed to retain his facial hair and with a more fully rounded beard he was easily mistaken for King George V by the troops.
Augustus Edwin John 1878 – 1961
Sir Edmund William Gosse 1849 – 1928

By John Singer Sargent (1856 – 1925)
Oil on canvas, 1886
21 1/2 x 17 1/2 in. (54.6 x 44.5 cm)

Edmund Gosse (1849 – 1928) was a poet, writer and critic. As a poet, he became involved in the circle of the Pre-Raphaelites and became a close friend of Algernon Swinburne. Gosse introduced Henrik Ibsen to the English public, translating two of his plays. He also introduced the work of the French writer André Gide and was honoured by the Académie Française for his services to French literature. However he is best remembered as the author of ‘Father and Son’ which contains an acute psychological study of his own father; a dedicated naturalist and puritanical Christian. Gosse held posts as a librarian and translator in the British Museum, the Board of Trade and the House of Lords Library; published many volumes of verse, criticism and biography and he became one of the most influential literary figures of the age. He was knighted in 1925. Gosse and Sargent first met in 1885 at Broadway in Worcestershire, where both were part of a summer community of artists and writers. Sargent apparently gave this portrait to his
fellow painter, Alfred Parsons, who was also a member of the Broadway set. Sargent has painted a head and shoulders portrait of Edmund Gosse with broad sweeps of the brush and a light informal touch. There is a feeling of animated intimacy and fresh encounter with the sitter. Details are suggested loosely rather than dwelt upon minutely. Against an atmospheric mushroom grey background Edmund Gosse has a delicate pale complexion and engages you with a friendly attentive gaze. His haircut of warm brown hair is parted at the centre of the high wide dome of his forehead and sweeps back over his ears on either side. His straight brown eyebrows gently slant down towards the bridge of his nose above large green-grey eyes. They look at you with a sparkle of intimacy. He wears very fine light spectacles with horizontal oval lenses in thin silver frames. Under his short straight nose a walrus moustache surrounds his full lips above a clean shaven square chin. A light blue bow tie holds the loose white collar at the base of his long neck. He wears a black waistcoat under a very pale mushroom brown jacket. The left shoulder and the right upper arm of Edmund Gosse both disappear beyond the edges.
of the painting on either side. This adds strongly to the sense of being very close to him.
Sir Edmund William Gosse 1849 – 1928
Spencer Gore (1878 – 1914) was a painter who became a leading figure in the London art scene just before World War I. As a young man in 1877 his father had won the first ever Wimbledon Tennis Championship. Spencer Gore trained at the Slade School of Art on Gower Street and developed a style associated with the French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. Gore worked in Paris and Dieppe from 1904 to 1906 and was familiar with their work. This was at a time when the British press generated much hostility towards such artists as Monet, Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin. When Roger Fry organised the Post-Impressionist exhibition in 1910 a vitriolic attack by the British press prompted London artists to make a stand together. Spencer Gore became the president of The Camden Town Group. Their name declared the aim of expressing the intimate character and colour of local reality. In the attempt to convey the fleeting bustle of everyday life, the group style favoured bold statements of shape and colour and emphasised
rapid brushwork. The Camden Town Group soon merged with others to form the London Group.

In March 1914 Spencer Gore died of pneumonia at the age of thirty-five. There is a look of alert and wide eyed innocence on his gaunt angular face. This self-portrait at the age of thirty-five, shows the artist’s head and shoulders in an interior with his shadowed right cheek towards us. Only the left side of his face catches the light. The inquisitive gaze of his deeply set dark blue-grey eyes is held by something above you and to your left.

He still looks boyish, with his simple ‘short-back-and-sides’ haircut, big ears and rather humble appearance. He wears a commonplace white shirt, narrow blue tie, and dark jacket or blazer. His facial features have a heightened brittle physicality. His nose has a slender violet ridge that catches a ray of light in front of the dark pools of his eyes. The way each facet of his bony face catches the light at a different angle is portrayed with distinct patches of colour. These are yellow, pink and violet in lighter areas with darker tones of red and violet in the shadows. The shadows of his large angular right ear are defined by a few bold red marks. The
background on his right shows the wall of the room as a broad expanse of light tobacco brown colour. There is a shallow alcove on his left where the light entering the room falls strongly on a large radiant decorative image containing rectangular shapes of blue and violet with orange floral dabs and patches of vibrant yellow. It resembles a Japanese scroll painting of the kind Van Gogh also treasured.
Spencer Frederick Gore 1878 – 1914
By Robert Polhill Bevan (1865 – 1925)
Oil on canvas, about 1913 – 14
18 x 14 in. (45.7 x 35.6 cm)

This is a self-portrait by the British artist Robert Polhill Bevan (1865 – 1925). In the 1890s Bevan studied Velázquez and Goya in Spain before working for several years in France. He met Gauguin and Renoir at Pont-Aven in 1894 and saw the work of Cézanne. Bevan settled in London in 1900, and became a founder member of the Camden Town Group in 1911. Street scenes, cab yards and horse sales dominate his subject matter. As a companion to this self-portrait he also painted the portrait of his wife Stanislawa.

In this head and shoulders self-portrait Robert Bevan stands in his studio, the front room of a Victorian house. He has receding brown hair parted on the right in a shortback- and-side cut. Bevan is sideways-on at the right of the painting with his left side towards you and his back hidden by the picture frame. He wears a white raised collar with a velvety dark bow-tie and a violet grey jacket. The dark brown wood of a doorframe runs along the extreme
left edge of the painting.

In the centre of the room beyond the artist’s right shoulder a stack of framed paintings leans against the panelled lower section of the back wall. The pale shapes of unframed drawings are displayed across the light grey upper section of the wall. High on the wall to his left a reddish wooden clock sits on a narrow shelf.

Bevan turns his agile bony face to scrutinise you intently with dark blue-grey eyes. His left eye is nearest, at the centre of the painting, and he frowns with bold angular brown eyebrows. The light enters the room from behind him and bathes his left ear, his left cheek and this side of his nose with a warm pink glow. In the shade around his eye and on the far side of his face there are cool violet and green accents. These colours are delicate, but the angles and edges of his features are accented with intermittent bold outlines. This heightens the sculptural quality of the portrait. Every colour is applied with a clear and fluent brush mark. The picture creates an elegant contrast between warm red accents and the cool violet and green greys of his jacket and the blue-grey studio wall. The reds
are found in the warm pinkish glow of his flesh tones and the brown wooden features of the room.
Robert Polhill Bevan 1865 – 1925