


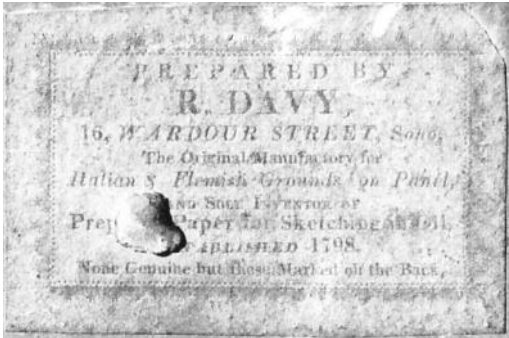
British canvas, stretcher and panel suppliers' marks: Part 4, Robert and Charles Davy, by 1811-1863

This resource surveys suppliers' marks on the reverse of picture supports. Robert Davy (c.1771-1843?) claimed to have established his business in the 1790s. He began his career as a carver and gilder and picture framemaker. By 1825 Davy's special interest in panels and millboards is apparent from his Post Office directory listing as 'Prepared Pannel & Mill-board manufacturer & Artists' colourman, Frame-maker, &c'. Charles Davy (?1800-1872?) succeeded his father in 1843. For fuller details, see [British artists' suppliers, 1650-1950 - D](#).




Davy's marks can be conveniently divided according to addresses: 16 Wardour St until 1822/23 and 83 Newman St from 1822, and then subdivided between canvas and panel marks.

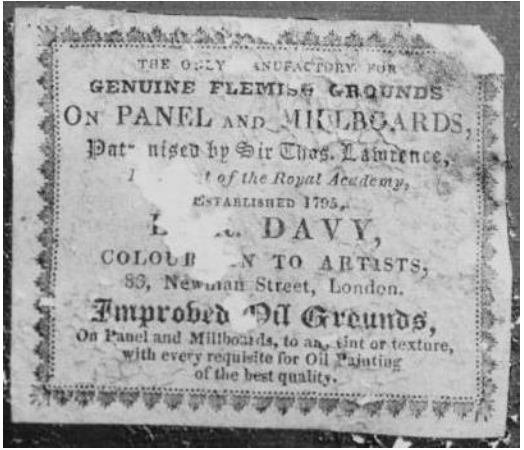

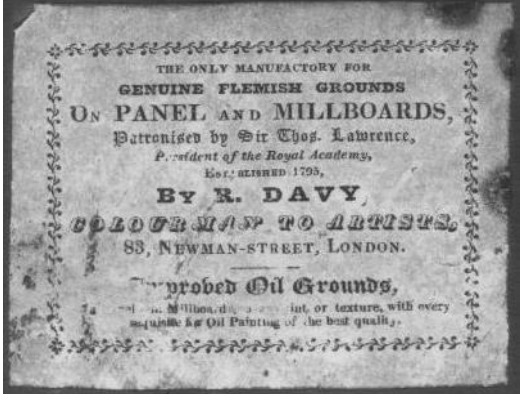
Measurements of marks, given where known, are approximate and may vary according to the stretching or later conservation treatment of a canvas or the trimming of a label. Links are given to institutional websites where the dimensions of works can be found. Square brackets are used to indicate indistinct or missing lettering in transcripts, sometimes based on other examples.

Compiled by Jacob Simon, March 2017, updated November 2018, February 2020, and based on the pioneering work of Cathy Proudlove and the suppliers' database created by Jacob Simon. With thanks to Dr Joyce Townsend for providing information on paintings in Tate and to Nicola Costaras at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Work details	Mark transcripts	Product marks (not to uniform scale)
Robert Davy	1. Robert Davy at 16 Wardour St, by 1811-23	Moves to 83 Newman St from 1822, see sections 2 and 3
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> John Linnell, 'Wood-Cutting in Windsor Forest', 1834-5 (Tate), see note 4</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> William Blake, <i>The Virgin and Child</i>, 1825? (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven)</p>	<p><i>Two impressed stamps, one above the other, on mahogany panel:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">R. DAVY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">16 WARDOUR ST</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Joseph Clover, Whitlingham Church, Norwich, 1822 (Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery)</p>	<p><i>Label, 6.0 cm wide, on millboard, within decorative border:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">PREPARED BY R. DAVY 16, WARDOUR STREET, Soho, The Original Manufactory for <i>Italian & Flemish Grounds on Panel,</i> AND SOLE INVENTOR OF Prepared Paper for Sketching in Oil, ESTABLISHED 1798. None Genuine but those Marked on the Back.</p>	

Work details	Mark transcripts	Product marks (not to uniform scale)
Robert Davy	2. Robert Davy at 83 Newman St, 1822-43, canvas stencils	Followed by his son, Charles Davy, in 1843 (see section 4)
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Ramsay Richard Reinagle, Sir George Nicholls, 1834 (National Portrait Gallery)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> Margaret Carpenter, <i>Henry Trial Erskine</i>, 1833 (Eton Collections)</p> <p>Thomas Bock, <i>Jane Campbell and her mother</i>, c.1842 (Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston), see note 5</p>	<p><i>Stencil, 14.1 cm wide, on canvas:</i></p> <p>R DAVY. ARTISTS COLORMAN 8[3] NEWMAN ST. LONDON</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Unknown artist, Isaac Preston, Mayor of Yarmouth, 1834-5 (Great Yarmouth Museums)</p>	<p><i>Stencil on canvas:</i></p> <p>R. DAVY. 83, NEWMAN STREET OXFORD ST LONDON.</p>	
Robert Davy	3. Robert Davy at 83 Newman St, 1822-43, panel marks and labels	Followed by his son, Charles Davy, in 1843 (see section 4)
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Thomas Woodward, The Rat-Catcher and his Dogs, exh.1824 (Tate)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> Edwin Landseer, <i>Sir Walter Scott</i>, c.1824 (National Portrait Gallery), with label, see below</p>	<p><i>Two impressed stamps, the second 4.0 cm wide, one above the other, on mahogany panel:</i></p> <p>R. DAVY</p> <p>83 NEWMAN ST</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> John Sell Cotman, In the Bishop's Garden, c.1824-25 (Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery)</p>	<p><i>Label on millboard, within decorative border:</i></p> <p>R. DAVY's MANUFACTORY FOR PREPARED PANELS, Mill Boards, &c. &c. <i>Removed from Wardour Street, to</i> 83, NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD STREET. N.B. Country Orders executed on the shortest Notice ... A liberal Allowance to Venders. ESTABLISHED IN 1798. W.Davy, Printer. 41, James Street, Oxford St.</p> <p>[reference to Robert Davy's removal to a new address dates label to c.1822 or soon after; the printer, William Davy, was his brother]</p>	

Work details	Mark transcripts	Product marks (not to uniform scale)
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Edwin Landseer, Boy, Donkey and Foal. Mischief in Full Play, 1822 (Tate)</p>	<p><i>Label on board, within decorative border:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">R. DAVY's MANUFACTORY FOR PREPARED PANELS, Mill Boards, &c. &c. <i>Removed from Wardour Street,</i> TO 83, NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD STREET. N.B. Any Size made to Order</p> <p>W.Davy, Printer, 41, James Street, Oxford St.</p> <p>[reference to Robert Davy's removal to a new address dates label to c.1822 or soon after]</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Edwin Landseer, Sir Walter Scott, c.1824 (National Portrait Gallery), with impressed stamp (see above)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> William Mulready, <i>Mary Wright, the carpenter's daughter</i>, c.1828 (Victoria and Albert Museum)</p>	<p><i>Label, 5.1 cm wide, removed from panel, within decorative border:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The only Manufactory for <i>Genuine Flemish Grounds</i> ON PANEL & MILL BOARD, PATRONIZED BY SIR THOS. LAWRENCE, <i>President of the Royal Academy,</i> ESTABLISHED 1795, BY R. DAVY, Colourman to Artists, 83, <i>Newman Street, London.</i></p> <p>Davy, Printer, 41, James-st. Oxford-st.</p> <p>[the two addresses, Newman St and James St, date this label to c.1822-5]</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> John Linnell, William Mulready, 1833 (National Portrait Gallery), see note 4</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> Richard Parkes Bonington, <i>Ships at Anchor, Dieppe</i>, c.1825 (Sudley House, National Museums, Liverpool)</p> <p>George Richmond, <i>The Creation of Light</i>, 1826 (Tate)</p> <p>John Linnell, <i>Mrs Anna Young</i>, panel, 1831 (Sotheby's, 22 March 2005, lot 71)</p>	<p><i>Label on panel, within decorative border:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The only Manufactory for <i>Genuine Flemish Grounds</i> ON PANEL & MILL BOARD, PATRONIZED BY SIR THOS. LAWRENCE, <i>President of the Royal Academy,</i> ESTABLISHED 1795, [BY] R. DAVY, Colourman [to] Artists, 83, <i>Newman Street, London.</i></p> <p>Davy, Printer, 8, Gilbert-st. Oxford-st.</p> <p>[label dates to c.1824-30. Similar to preceding example but for printer's address; W. Davy was at 8 Gilbert St by 1824 or 1825, see note 6]</p>	

Work details	Mark transcripts	Product marks (not to uniform scale)
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Source: Courtauld - Colourmen Online database (note 3)</p>	<p><i>Label on board, within decorative border:</i></p> <p>THE ONLY MANUFACTORY FOR GENUINE FLEMISH GROUNDS ON PANEL AND MILLBOARDS, Patronised by Sir Thos. Lawrence, P[resident]t of the Royal Academy, ESTABLISHED 1795, B[Y] R. DAVY COLOUR[MA]N TO ARTISTS, 83, Newman Street, London. Improved Oil Grounds, On Panel and Millboards, to any tint or texture, with every requisite for Oil Painting of the best quality.</p> <p>[label dates to c.1822-30]</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> James Atkinson, Gilbert Elliot, 1st Earl of Minto (National Portrait Gallery)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> George Jones, <i>Utrecht</i>, exh.1829 (Tate)</p>	<p><i>Label, 5.8 cm wide, on millboard, within decorative border:</i></p> <p>THE ONLY MANUFACTORY FOR GENUINE FLEMISH GROUNDS ON PANEL AND MILLBOARDS, Patronised by Sir Thos. Lawrence, <i>President of the Royal Academy,</i> ESTABLISHED 1799, BY R. DAVY COLOURMAN TO ARTISTS, 83, Newman Street, London. Improved Oil Grounds, On Panel and Millboards, to any tint or texture, with every requisite for Oil Painting of the best quality.</p> <p>[text as preceding but as established 1799]</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> J.M.W. Turner, Christ Driving the Traders from the Temple, c.1832 (Tate)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> J.M.W. Turner, <i>Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the Burning Fiery Furnace</i>, exh. 1832 (Tate)</p> <p>Joseph Bartholomew Kidd, <i>Yellow Warbler</i>, c.1832 (National Gallery of Art, Washington, repr. Katlan, p.459, as <i>Sharp tailed Sparrow</i>), border ornament differs</p>	<p><i>Label, 8.4 cm wide, on mahogany panel, within decorative border:</i></p> <p>THE ONLY MANUFACTORY FOR GENUINE FLEMISH GROUNDS ON PANEL AND MILLBOARDS, Patronised by Sir Thos. Lawrence, President of the Royal Academy, ESTABLISHED 1795, BY R. DAVY, COLOURMAN TO ARTISTS, 83, NEWMAN-STREET, LONDON.</p> <p>Improved Oil Grounds, [On Panel and Millboards, to any tint or texture, with every requisite for Oil Painting of the best quality.</p> <p>[label dates to c.1822-30]</p>	

Work details	Mark transcripts	Product marks (not to uniform scale)
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> George Jones, The Burning Fiery Furnace, exh.1832 (Tate)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> George Jones, <i>Godiva Preparing to Ride through Coventry</i>, exh.1833 (Tate), bottom border ornament runs in opposite direction</p> <p>Clarkson Stanfield, <i>Vessels off the Dutch Coast</i> (Birmingham Museums Trust)</p>	<p><i>Label, 7.9 cm wide, on mahogany panel, within decorative border:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE ONLY MANUFACTORY FOR GENUINE FLEMISH GROUNDS ON PANEL AND MILLBOARDS, Patronised by the Royal Academy, and the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, ESTABLISHED 1795, BY R. DAVY, COLOURMAN TO ARTISTS, 83, NEWMAN-STREET, LONDON.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Improved Oil Grounds, On Panel and Millboards, to any tint or texture, with every requisite for Oil Painting of the best quality.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">W. Davy, Printer, Gilbert-st. Grosvenor-sq.</p> <p>[label dates to 1830 or later]</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Thomas Webster, Late at School, 1834 (Tate)</p>	<p><i>Label, 9.2 cm wide, on mahogany panel, within decorative border:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE ONLY MANUFACTORY FOR GENUINE FLEMISH GROUNDS ON PANEL AND MILLBOARDS, Patronised by the Royal Academy, and the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, ESTABLISHED 1795, BY R. DAVY, COLOURMAN TO ARTISTS, 83, NEWMAN-STREET, LONDON.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Improved Oil Grounds, On Panel and Millboards, to any tint or texture, with every requisite for Oil Painting of the best quality.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">W. Davy, Printer, Gilbert-st. Grosvenor-square.</p> <p>[label dates to 1830 or later; different border; 'square' in printer's address now spelt out]</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Martinus Rørbye, <i>The View from the Temple of Athena on the Acropolis</i>, 1844 (Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> Charles Robert Leslie, Griselda, 1840 (Victoria and Albert Museum)</p> <p>Thomas Uwins, <i>An Italian Mother Teaching her Child the Tarantella</i>, 1842, and <i>Suspicion</i>, exh.1848 (both Victoria and Albert Museum)</p> <p>Thomas Webster, <i>A Dame's School</i>, 1845 (Tate)</p>	<p><i>Label on board, within decorative border:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE ONLY MANUFACTORY FOR GENUINE FLEMISH GROUNDS ON PANEL AND MILLBOARDS, Patronised by the Royal Academy, and the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, ESTABLISHED 1795, By R. DAVY, COLOURMAN TO ARTISTS, 83, NEWMAN-STREET, LONDON.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Also his NEW SKETCHING BLOCK, Consisting of Thirty Sheets of Drawing Paper, prepared for Sketching in Oil, presenting the solidity of Panel, each Sheet being separable. This Article is exceedingly valuable to Artists and Amateurs in Tours and Excursions, and will be found equally useful in the Studio for preparing Memoranda of Colour.</p> <p>[label dates to c.1830-43; perhaps early 1840s]</p>	

Work details	Mark transcripts	Product marks (not to uniform scale)
Charles Davy	4. Charles Davy at 83 Newman St, 1843-62, canvas stencils and panel labels	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Copy after Michael Dahl, Sir John Pratt, undated (National Portrait Gallery)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> Edward Villers Rippingille, <i>Mendicants of the Campagna</i>, 1844 (Victoria and Albert Museum)</p>	<p><i>Stencil on canvas:</i></p> <p>C. DAVY ARTISTS COLOURMAN. 83 NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD ST. LONDON.</p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Arthur Boyd Houghton, Volunteers, 1861 (Tate)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> Edwin Cockburn, <i>Afternoon</i>, 1855 (Private coll., Canada, image from Cyndie Lack)</p>	<p><i>Stencil on canvas:</i></p> <p>C. DAVY, ARTISTS COLOURMAN. 83 NEWMAN STREET OXFORD ST., LONDON <i>Established in 1795</i></p>	
<p><i>Illustrated:</i> Thomas Webster, A Village Choir, exh.1847 (Victoria and Albert Museum)</p> <p><i>Also found on:</i> William Powell Frith, <i>Isabelle Frith reading</i>, 1844 (Christie's, 16 June 2015, lot 75)</p>	<p><i>Label, 10 cm wide, on panel, within linear border:</i></p> <p>THE ONLY MANUFACTORY FOR GENUINE FLEMISH GROUNDS ON PANEL AND MILLBOARDS, <i>PATRONISED BY THE</i> Royal Academy, and the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, ESTABLISHED 1795, By C. DAVY, COLOURMAN TO ARTISTS, 83, NEWMAN STREET, LONDON.</p> <p>Also his NEW SKETCHING BLOCK, [not line-for-line:] Consisting of Thirty Sheets of drawing paper, prepared for Sketching in Oil, presenting the solidity of Panel, each sheet being separable. This Article is/ exceedingly valuable to Artists and Amateurs in Tours and Excursions and/ will be found equally useful in the Studio for preparing memoranda of colour.</p>	

Notes

For an historical survey with time chart and map, see Cathy Proudlove, 'Technical focus: suppliers' marks and labels', *The Picture Restorer: The Journal of the British Association of Painting Conservator-Restorers*, no.55, autumn 2019.

1. **Acknowledgments:** With thanks to Dr Joyce Townsend for providing information on paintings in Tate, collected by members of the Tate Conservation Department since the 1970s, Dr Tim Moreton, who for many years recorded canvas markings on the reverse of portraits at the National Portrait Gallery, and Nicola Costaras for access to conservation files at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Thanks also to Cyndie Lack and Troels Filtenborg for providing images.

2. **Earlier research:** In the early 1970s, Cathy Proudlove (née Leach) distributed copies of her unpublished list of artists' colourmen. In the course of her professional career at the former Area Museums Service for South East England and with Norfolk Museums Service, Cathy has seen and recorded, or been sent by professional colleagues, details of many suppliers' marks and labels, some from private collections. She has published on the subject: '19th Century Prepared Artists' Canvases', *Antique Collecting*, July 1973, pp.2-4, and 'London Artists' Colourmen. Part I: A to D', *The Picture Restorer*, no.10, autumn 1996.
For a period, 1974-77, Alec Cobbe arranged for marks on paintings in sales at Sotheby's Belgravia and Christie's to be photographed (see his article on Winsor & Newton, *Studies in Conservation*, vol.21, no.2, May 1976, p.94). The photographs were later acquired by the late Richard Kissack, who planned to publish a book. Eventually he gave them to Cathy Proudlove, and images deriving from this collection have been reproduced when an image from a public collection has not been found.
3. **Courtauld Institute database:** A searchable database, [Courtauld - Colourmen Online](#), was launched in 2011 and was frequently consulted in the preparation of the current compilation. An image from this database has been used here as indicated, with thanks to Aviva Burnstock.
4. **John Linnell:** From 1816, John Linnell began to use Davy's panels extensively as his account books reveal (Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 20 & 21-2000). In 1818, he purchased 14 prepared panels at a cost of £1.4s.6d, and over the two following years he bought panels etc to the value of £18.9s.8d. He continued to purchase panels until 1833.
5. **Robert Davy canvas stencil:** In addition to Davy's stencil, Bock's *Jane Campbell and her mother* has a stamp, partially obliterated, R & M 1601 (for Roberson & Miller). Davy had an account with Roberson's, 1828-39, and may have been supplied the canvas by this business.
6. **William Davy:** The printer, William Davy, brother of Robert Davy, is recorded in James St until 1824 and Gilbert St from 1825 in Land Tax records, available at www.findmypast.co.uk; it remains to be established whether he moved in 1824 after the Land Tax register had been completed or in early the following year.

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