

accommodate unprecedented numbers of visitors.

But it has also brought into the sharpest possible relief the results of austerity. Instead of standing up for local authorities, parks 'experts' have played along with that disastrous project to reduce councils to mere commissioning bodies, siphoning public money into the private sector and selling off public assets. The warnings of history, which show indisputably that local authority management is the only option for the vast majority of public parks, have been ignored.¹⁴ As the nation recovers from covid, parks must be nursed back to health too, as part of a similar national effort to make us more resilient to the shocks coming in the future. And that means public ownership and public funding for public goods.

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CHARLOTTE GIRDLESTONE: PLEASURE AND PANORAMAS

By Todd Longstaffe-Gowan

Some cultural historians, and others with a lively interest in the development of London's Regent's Park, may know that the Outer Circle, or perimeter road, of this magnificent and novel early nineteenth-century picturesque *tour de force* was recorded in two near-contemporary panoramas.¹ What is thought to have been the earliest of the two is reputed to date from c.1828-29 and is now commonly referred to as the 'Mortimer' panorama in recognition of the bookseller and stationer that sold and published it.² The artist has hitherto been unknown. The second or 'Morris' panorama, which is better known than its predecessor, was engraved by S. H. Hughes

after drawings 'taken on the spot' by the surveyor and landscape gardener Richard Morris and published in 1831 by Rudolph Ackermann.³

The architectural historian Geoffrey Tyack examines these projects in *Two Early Panoramas of The Regent's Park: The Panoramas of Richard Morris and John Mortimer* (2015). He helpfully reproduces the two complementary views side-by-side and supplies an essay which describes the architecture and landscape features selected and portrayed. The aim of the present article is to reveal for the first time the name of the artist responsible for the so-called Mortimer panorama and to explore how this new attribution invites us to look with fresh eyes at what surely ranks among the more spirited and full-blooded early nineteenth-century representations of the metropolitan picturesque.

Although Charlotte Girdlestone has recently been described by one of her descendants as 'largely unknown outside art cognoscenti circles', she is in fact unknown even among the most ardent historians of British topographical art. Her panorama suggests, however, that she ought to be better known, and that her artistic legacy should be re-evaluated. Although she was clearly an able artist, it is remarkable that a young female amateur working in obscure circumstances should have been commissioned by a bookseller to produce a panorama of one of the most novel and fashionable districts of London. Although panoramas were by the mid-1830s a popular and well-established artform, the artists who produced them were almost exclusively male.⁴ Girdlestone appears to be among the first Englishwomen to have produced a commercially published panorama of the metropolis.

3. The title of this panorama is 'Panoramic view round the Regent's park / from drawings taken on the spot by Richd. Morris'. Morris was Secretary to the Medico-Botanical Society, and the author of *Essays on Landscape Gardening and on Uniting Picturesque Effect with Rural Scenery: Containing Directions for Laying Out and Improving the Grounds Connected with a Country Residence* (1825), *Flora Conspicua: a selection of the most ornamental flowering, hardy, exotic and indigenous trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, for embellishing flower-gardens and pleasure-grounds* (1826), and 'Observations on Water as regards Ornamental Scenery' (*Gardeners' Magazine*, vol.2, 1827, pp.286-90).

4. Among the more celebrated British panoramists were Robert Barker, Thomas Girtin, William Daniell, Edward Dayes, Joshua Cristall, William Mulready, Ramsay Richard Reinagle, David Roberts, Clarkson Stanfield. See Anne Bermingham, 'Landscape-O-Rama: The Exhibition Landscape at Somerset House and the Rise of Popular Landscape Entertainments' in David H. Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836* (2001), pp.129-30.

14. Katy Layton-Jones, *History of Public Park Funding and Management (1820 - 2010)*, Historic England Research Report 20/2016, <https://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15442>.

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1. Geoffrey Tyack, *Two Early Panoramas of The Regent's Park: The Panoramas of Richard Morris and John Mortimer*, London Topographical Society publication no.177 (2015), p.2. The park was developed from c.1816 to 1835.

2. Mortimer's premises were at No.2 Wigmore Street, next to Cavendish Square. His name first appears in London directories in 1834.

This attribution has come about by my chance encounter with a sale catalogue from a Cambridge-based auctioneer. Amidst the lots that were about to be dispersed in their January 2020 sale was a small marbled early nineteenth-century portfolio containing what was described as a 'Panorama of Regent's Park: Lithographic panorama on two sheets, no date, c.1835, each 120 x 980 mm...' The appearance of a copy of Mortimer's Panorama is in itself rare, but to find one that bears an early pencil inscription supplying the name of the artist and the date it was produced is especially serendipitous⁵ (*fig. 27*).

The inscription 'Drawn by Charlotte Girdlestone, between 1830 & 1835', poses some interesting questions: among them, who was the artist, and if her *Regents Park* was in fact produced after Morris's panorama of 1831, it suggests that Girdlestone's panorama was either a direct commentary on her predecessor's or a more general reflection on the conventions it embodies.⁶

'An amateur Artist of considerable gifts'

Much of what we know about our shadowy panoramist comes from a succinct posthumous and anonymous biographical note compiled in c.1930:⁷

Miss Charlotte Girdlestone was the sister of the Rev.d Charles Girdlestone of Kingswinford & of Canon Girdlestone of Bristol Cathedral. She was an amateur Artist of considerable gifts, & her sketches in sepia & indigo were very pleasing – She generally lived near her eldest brother, & worked in his parishes of Kingswinford & Sedgely [from 1846] – She took great interest in Education. She spent some weeks in Wales every year, and generally brought one of her nephews with her. She sketched most of the interesting places

near Carnarvon, Llanberis, Beddgelert, Capel Currig [sic] etc. & sold her sketches very readily...'⁸

This note was presumably compiled by someone who was only acquainted with Girdlestone's life from the mid-1840s as there is no mention of her early years. She was in fact born in London on the 9th February 1804⁹ and was the third child and only daughter of the chancery barrister Union Samuel Rainbow Girdlestone (1767–1836)¹⁰ and Caroline Roberts Powell (1770–1825). She had three siblings, two of whom achieved a degree of celebrity during their lifetimes – her elder brother the biblical scholar the Reverend Charles (1797–1881), and her younger brother the Reverend Edward (1805–81) who in the 1870s became known as the 'Agricultural Labourers' Friend' on account of his social activism.

Census records attest to Charlotte's close relationship with her brother Charles: in 1841 she was living with him and his family at the Rectory in Alderley, Cheshire.¹¹ She appears latterly to have lived a reasonably peripatetic life – lodging intermittently in Oxford and West London until c.1871 when she settled in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, where she died in 1884.¹²

What is clear from surviving evidence is that from at least the mid-1830s Girdlestone had an interest in sketching landscape scenery and was a competent artist. An album of her 'indigo' watercolours for the period 1837–42 survives in Cheshire Archives and Local Studies. The *plein-air* views depict Alderley and district, including Alderley church and rectory and their gardens (*fig. 28*), and Hare, Lyme and Little Moreton Halls; there are, moreover, a handful of panoramic views taken from lofty Cheshire promontories, including Cloud End, and Alderley Edge (*fig. 29*) – the latter which Thomas Moule described in *The English Counties Delineated: Or, A Topographical Description of England* (1837) as 'rising rather abruptly out of a flat country',

5. Cheffins Auctioneers, lot 33, 9 January 2020. The print had previously been with the bookseller Michael Kemp at Minster-on-Sea, Sheerness, Kent. Whereas the panorama reproduced in Tyack's book comprises two sheets of lithographs, each 12 cm high and 100 cm long, pasted together on a wooden spindle, the Cheffins panorama is 120 x 98cm, and presented in a folded format. The latter also bears printed inscriptions on the tops of the plates reading 'Regents Park No. 1.' and 'Regents Park No. 2.'

6. The handwriting on the panorama is similar to that found in Charlotte Girdlestone's sketchbook at the Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, Chester (ref. DSA/2775/1).

7. Anonymous, biographical note on *Miss Charlotte Girdlestone, amateur artist and founder of the Ragged School, Tuthill*, [c.1930], Caernarfon Record Office, Caernarfon, XPE/25/329.

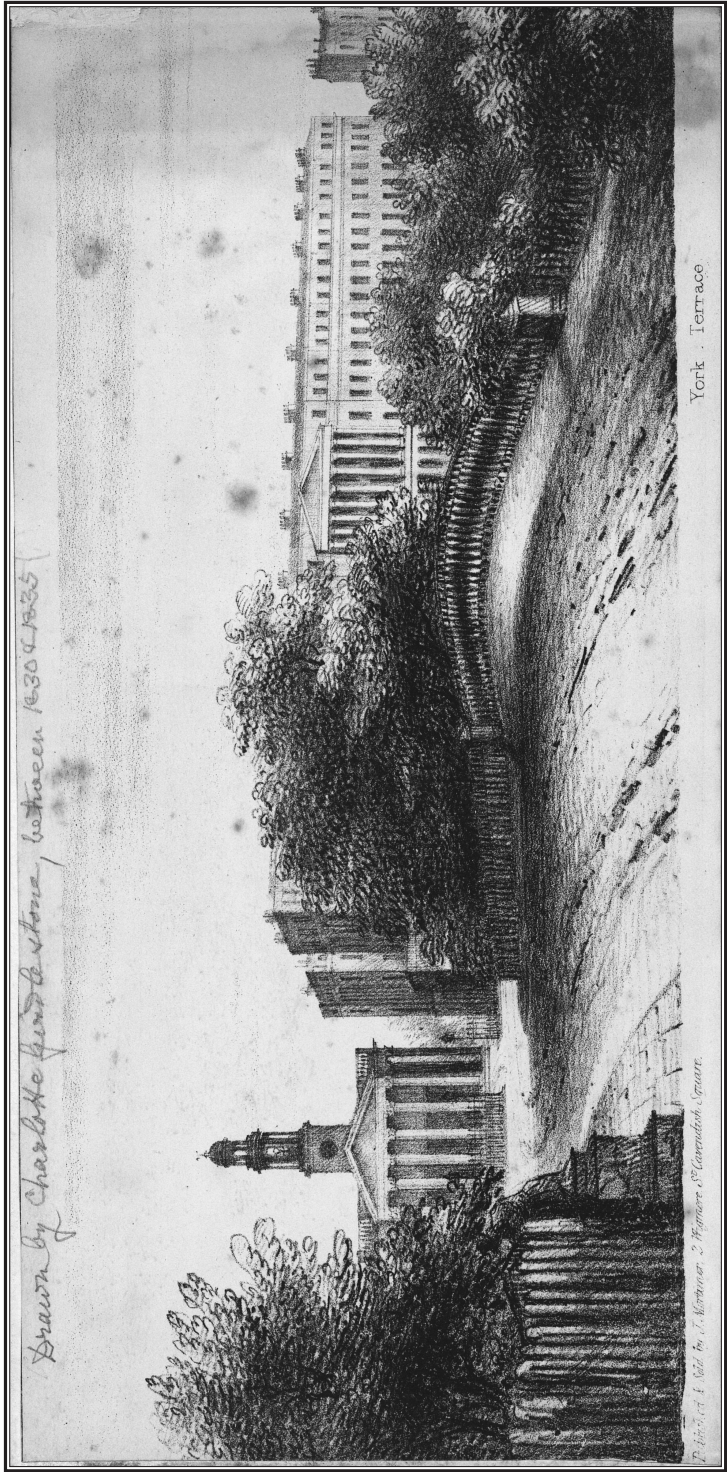
8. Biographical note *ibid*.

9. She was baptised on 9 May 1804 at St Pancras Old Church, London.

10. Union Samuel Rainbow was educated at Wadham College, Oxford, called to the bar at Middle Temple in 1797, and later had Chambers at Lincoln's Inn.

11. 1841 Census return for Alderley, Cheshire. She may, however, have begun lodging at the rectory as early as 1837.

12. The 1851 and 1861 Census returns describe Charlotte Girdlestone as a 'visitor' in Oxford and Paddington respectively. She died in 1884 with a personal estate of £2,458–48–3d.



27. Charlotte Girdlestone, *Regents Park*, detail showing York Terrace, with inscription:
'Drawn by Charlotte Girdlestone between 1830 & 35'
(PRIVATE COLLECTION)



28. Charlotte Girdlestone, 'Alderley Rectory and Church (shewing [sic] the Dutch Garden)', Cheshire 1837
(COURTESY CHESHIRE ARCHIVES AND LOCAL STUDIES, CHESTER)

29. Charlotte Girdlestone, Alderley Edge, Cheshire (c.1837-42)
(COURTESY CHESHIRE ARCHIVES AND LOCAL STUDIES, CHESTER)

and affording 'one of the richest and most extensive prospects in the country'.¹³ Although operating outside established professional networks, formal or informal, Girdlestone sold her sketches. Indeed, the biographical note suggests that she turned a good profit from the sale of her topographical views, as 'on one of her visits [to Wales] she told the Vicar of Carnarvon that she wishes to use the proceeds of her Welsh Sketches for the benefit of some work in his Parish'. She was at the time 'much troubled as to how the children of parents who could not pay the school pence could be taught, as there was a considerable residue of children who got no education at all'. This galvanised her to 'build a school to be called The Ragged School' on Twthill in Carnarvon.¹⁴

The Panorama and 'Panoromania'

Girdlestone's *Regents Park* appeared at a time that the historian John Brewer in his essay 'Sensibility and the Urban Panorama' has termed 'the extraordinary culmination' of an art form that flourished over a sharply delimited historical period:¹⁵ in 1829 the Colosseum in Regent's Park had opened its door to reveal Thomas Hornor's enormous 24,000 square-foot panorama of *London as seen from the cross of St Paul's Cathedral* – described at the time as 'an assemblage of grandeur unparalleled in art, as the reality is in the history of mankind' ¹⁶ (fig. 30). Although unquestionably among the grandest panoramas, such spectacles were by this time not only well-established and popular landscape entertainments, they were essentially an urban artefact, and one which gave rise to a sort of urban sublime.¹⁷

The panorama had its origins in Robert Barker's view 'at one glance, of the Cities of London and Westminster... represented in one Painting containing 1479 square feet',

which was first exhibited in London in 1791. The artist-inventor proclaimed that it was 'as large, and in every respect the same as reality'.¹⁸ His colossal painting in the round, which was displayed in a purpose-built building in Castle Street, Leicester Square, is said to have portrayed the metropolis with such striking veracity and powerful illusionism that it prompted Sir Joshua Reynolds, upon seeing it, to exclaim that the exhibition proved 'it is capable of producing effects, and representing nature in a manner far superior to the limited scale of pictures in general'.¹⁹ Barker's panorama, like its successors, was created on a grand scale, with a view to enveloping the spectator in a 360-degree illusion of town or countryside. Anne Bermingham remarks in her essay *Landscape-O-Rama: The Exhibition Landscape at Somerset House and the Rise of Popular Landscape Entertainments* (2001), that the 'suppression of the frame and of anything that might distract from the sensation of a three-dimensional view allowed spectators to experience the illusion as real landscape'. The panorama, she continues, 'in this sense, domesticated what had in the eighteenth century been an experience of real landscape scenery, and mechanically reproduced it as a popular commercial entertainment'.²⁰

Whilst many artists created enormous panoramas with a view to abolishing the frame, some, such as Girdlestone and Morris, deployed intimacy of scale to convey scenes of comparable magnitude. Their annotated paper-strip engraved panoramas depicting continuous journeys were miniature portable counterparts of 'moving panoramas' – or contiguous views of passing scenery, as if seen from a carriage, boat or latterly a train window – which were often sold as souvenirs and served as touristic guides. As Richard Daniel Altick remarks in *The Shows of London* (1978): these 'elongated representations of a wide

13. Sketchbook of Charlotte Girdlestone. It contains one landscape panorama – spread over two pages.

14. She did so 'with the help of Mr and Mrs Assheton Smith'. The Twthill Free or Ragged School was licensed in 1850 as an 'additional Place of worship'. The school flourished 'until compulsory education came in & the school was no longer necessary'.

15. John Brewer, 'Sensibility and the Urban Panorama', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol.70, no.2 (June 2007), p.237.

16. 'Some Account of the Colosseum, in the Regent's Park', *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, etc., vol.13, no.352, January 1829, p.35.

17. Bermingham, *op. cit.*, p.130.

18. *The Times* coined the word 'panorama', which is derived from the Greek words 'all' and 'view', when advertising Barker's view. *Times*, advertisement, 6 September 1791. See also Ralph Hyde, *Panoromania* (London: Barbican Art Gallery exh. cat., 1989), p.13.

19. William T. Whitley, *Artists and their Friends in England 1700-1799* (London & Boston, The Medici Society, 1928), vol. II, p.106.

20. Bermingham, *op. cit.*, p.130.

outdoor view', which were conveniently folded and packaged, 'did not necessarily presuppose a high vantage point and a complete sweep of the horizon, which was the true panorama's unique characteristic'.²¹ They therefore not only offered a form of vicarious travel, but were meant to be taken along on an actual journey – in the cases of Girdlestone and Morris – a walk through Regent's Park.

The Regent's Park panoramas

The Outer Circle at Regent's Park formed the basis for what Terence Templeton described in 1836 as the 'circular tour of observation' of the park:²² the road was in fact no less than a panoramic promenade, conceived by the master scenographer of the park, John Nash, in order to allow a circumnavigation of the entire landscaped area (*fig. 31*). As Nash remarked in 1832, his aim was to create 'so many distinct pictures' that perambulators 'will see a succession of views distinct from each other'.²³ The road was flanked on either side by a broad footway lit with gas lamps, and planted with trees placed singly or in clumps or groups, which complemented and distinguished the palatial terraces on the outer edge of the carriageway.

Richard Morris's hand-coloured panorama provides an interesting record of this popular 'circular tour' and its immediate surroundings (*fig. 32*). His view is that of a perambulator walking along the footpath on the inside edge of the Outer Circle with his eyes trained on the carriageway, the terraces and their gardens. The road and its users are ever-present. The panorama charts a linear progression through the urban landscape, where there is animation but little dramatic tension. Curiously, Morris focuses primarily on the buildings surrounding the park, but supplies us with no hint of the park landscape itself. The 'romantic beauty of the decorated landscape scenery', as the topographer James

Elmes terms it, is absent.²⁴

Girdlestone's monochrome panorama, on the other hand, is more emphatically picturesque: the viewer senses that her perambulator is following a digressive, meandering route through the park landscape (*fig. 33*). Here there are few roads or paths, and fewer people. It evokes the characteristic of Nash's landscape that Prince Puckler-Muskau writing in 1826, emphasises when he praises it as 'faultless': 'Art has here completely solved the difficult problem of concealing her operations under an appearance of unrestrained nature'.²⁵ The Prussian prince's words echo those of Charles Ollier, editor of the *Literary Pocketbook* (1823), who had earlier described the park's trees as:

...already becoming umbrageous. The water is very extensive. As you are rowed on it, the variety of views you come upon is admirable; sometimes you are in a narrow stream, closely overhung by the branches of trees; presently you open up in a wide sheet of water, like a lake, with swans sunning themselves upon its bosom...and then again you catch the perspective of a range of superb edifices, the elevation of which is contrived to have the effect of a palace. The park, in fact, is belted with groups of these mansions, entirely excluding all signs of the streets...There will be nothing like this in Europe.²⁶

Girdlestone's view, unlike Morris's, does not show bustling metropolitan scenes. The newly built palatial terraces that encompass the park look desolate and uninhabited as they emerge from billowy shrubberies and tufted trees set within an extensive landscape of gently rolling hillocks and reflective pieces of water (*figs. 34 & 35*). It is as if the artist has sought to escape the blandly topographical, to move away from the dreary monotony of conventional urban geography. Girdlestone appears to be fighting against the constraints of the traditional panorama. Her view is in fact in the spirit of Nash's original vision of the

21. Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Harvard University Press, 1978), p.231.

22. *Court Magazine and la Belle Assemblée*, 7 (1836), p.117. James Elmes had earlier conducted his readers around the park in *Metropolitan Improvements*. See Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, 'Reinstating John Nash's Picturesque Vision at Regent's Park, London', *Garden History*, 43, suppl. 1, *The Proceedings of the Edinburgh Gardens and Squares Conference* (Spring 2015), pp.87–96.

23. Undated letter from John Nash, The National Archives (TNA), CRES 2 742.

24. James Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements, or London in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Jones & Co., 1829), p.47.

25. E.M. Butler, ed., *A Regency Visitor* (London: Collins, 1957), p.39.

26. Quoted in J. Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements, op.cit.*, p.86.



30. Interior view of the Colosseum showing workmen, including painters suspended in cradles, preparing Thomas Hornor's panorama of London
(RUDOLPH ACKERMANN (PUBL.), 'REGENT'S PARK, MARYLEBONE', 1829)

park landscape. The architect's idiosyncratic picturesque vision informed the development of this strikingly innovative urban landscape. His early thoughts on the projected character of the park were graphically conveyed in two enormous panoramas in c.1818²⁷ (*fig. 36*).

Girdlestone was part of a generation of topographers who endorsed the poet and garden writer William Mason's principle that the 'Picturesque Point [of view] is always [...] low in all prospects' – where the spectator is intended to feel a sense of being enveloped, or absorbed, by the landscape, and the gardens were perceived as extensions of the park scenery into which the palace facades were also submerged and absorbed.²⁸ By adopting this viewpoint, topographical artists were better able to capture the dramatic change in taste that swept through the metropolis from the third quarter of the eighteenth century, during which many of the earlier enclosed fields were transformed into leafy gardens. This observable shift was in part precipitated by a redefinition of the ever evolving idea of *rus in urbe*: '*rus*' is no longer seen as a view of untamed countryside; instead it becomes a reference to the rural rusticity of the picturesque gardens of the country estate. The aim to bring the country into town thus takes on an entirely new meaning. Pictorial views of such agreeable retreats tend to emphasise an abundance of verdant foliage, and to indicate the extent to which this new planting could serve as a deliberate contrast and complement to the surrounding buildings. Girdlestone's enthusiasm for this new interpretation of *rus in urbe* may explain the selective editing of her *Regents Park* panorama. Whereas Morris illustrates a complete circuit of the park, Girdlestone curtails her survey: she refrains from depicting the regimented gardens of Park Square and the unimproved semi-rural landscape of Primrose Hill beyond the northern boundary of the park, focusing instead in portraying the robust vitality of Nash's artfully contrived landscape.

27. Each of the panoramas was over 11 ft. long (?). See John Summerson, 'The Beginnings of Regent's Park', *Architectural History*, vol.20 (1977), pp.56–62, 90–99.

28. William Mason (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Gray, with Memoirs of His Life and Writings* (London: Harding Triphook and Leard, 1827), p.294 n.

Despite the obvious difference of scale already noted, Girdlestone's *Regents Park* does in fact share one feature with Thomas Horner's view of London – and also with the early morning view of the city evoked in William Wordsworth's well-known sonnet '*Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802*', which John Brewer describes as 'peculiarly drained of business, babel, movement, and flux – drained, in fact, of the sort of fluid indeterminacy that so worried and disturbed critics of metropolitan life.' (Wordsworth's poem concludes with the lines: 'Dear God! the very houses seem asleep; | And all that mighty heart is lying still.'²⁹) The stillness of the scene suggests that Girdlestone has represented the Park early on a fine summer morning – a time described by Nathaniel Whittock in *The Modern Picture of London* (1836) as one that presents 'an extraordinary spectacle [of the metropolis]':

The brilliancy of the atmosphere – the almost perfect stillness of the street... the few living beings that pass along those lines which in the day are crowded like some vast mart, such as the traveller hurrying to his distant starting-place, or the labourer creeping to his early work – all these circumstances make up a picture which forcibly impresses the imagination.³⁰

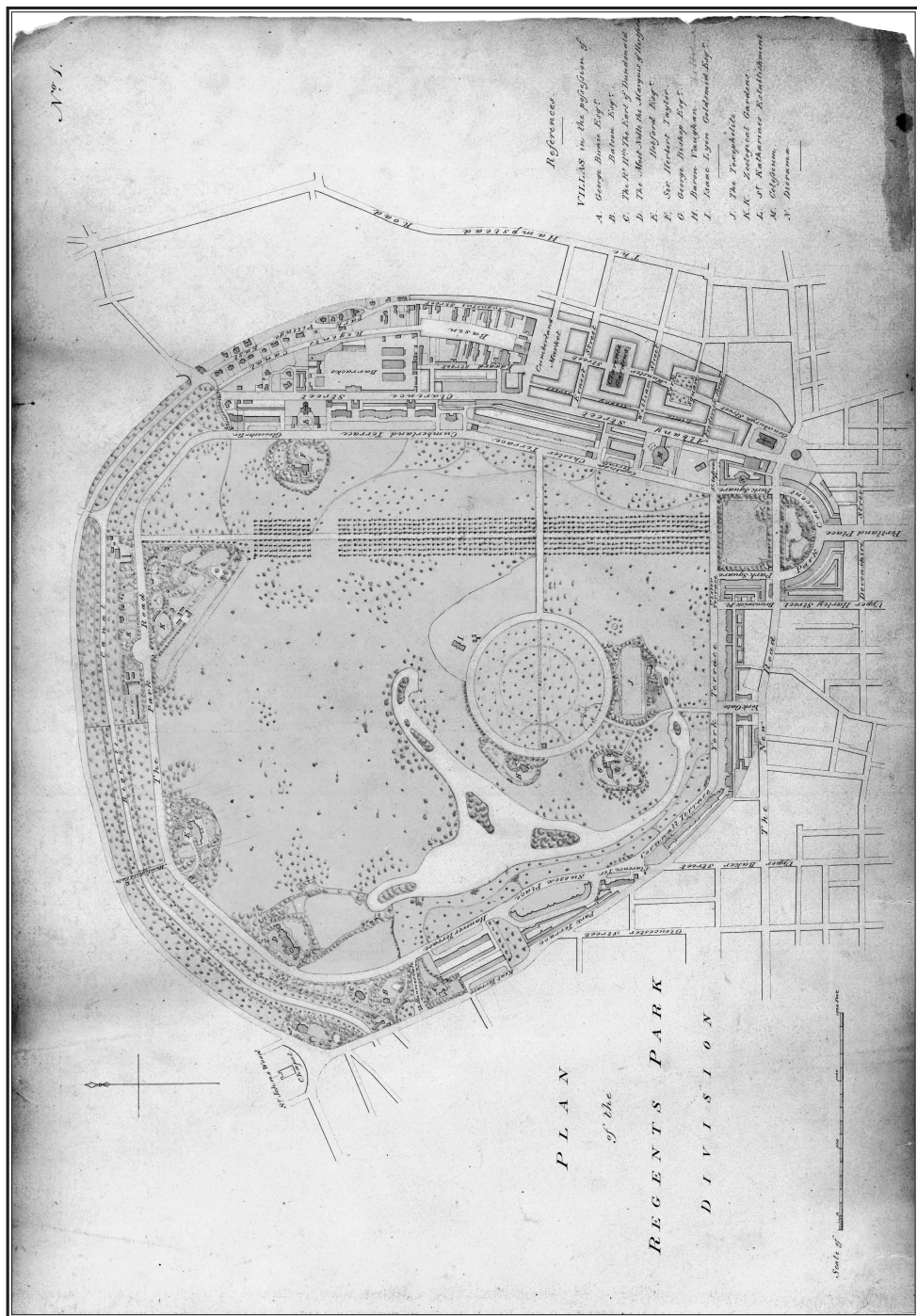
As Brewer observes, it is the 'absence of life' in such views that makes the city 'such an attractive object'. This was the point of such views – they 'seem to embrace modernity but also turn away from it. They offer a refuge or escape from it in the form of an urban simulacrum, one that is recognized as nonexistent – it cannot be seen in the real world – but is all the more potent for that'.³¹

Girdlestone, however, through her use of a low viewpoint and an intimate scale, adopts a very different strategy for producing an effect of a space emptied of human life. She maps out not so much a space of 'order and coherence', but one of calm detachment. 'Disruptive chaos' – or, at least, teeming urban

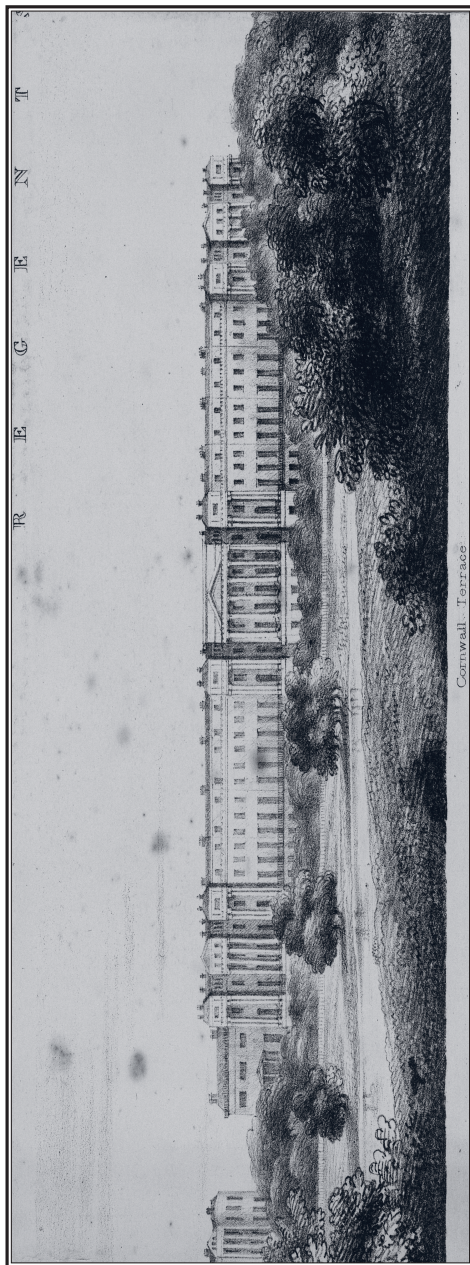
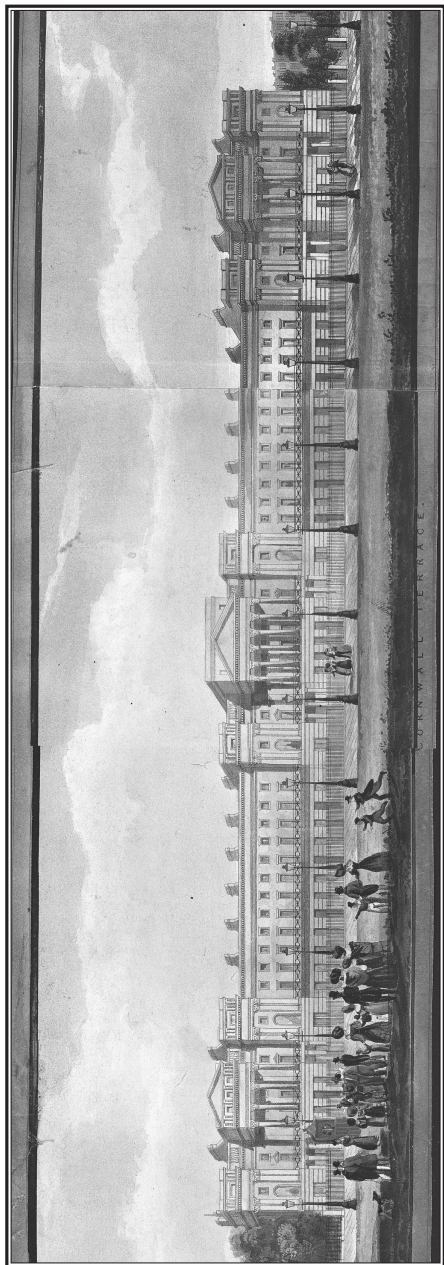
29. Brewer, *op.cit.*, p.238.

30. Nathaniel Whittock, *The Modern Picture of London, Westminster and the Metropolitan Boroughs... forming a complete guide and directory* (London, 1836), pp.492–3. Quoted in Brewer, *op.cit.*, p.239.

31. Brewer, *op.cit.*, p.239.

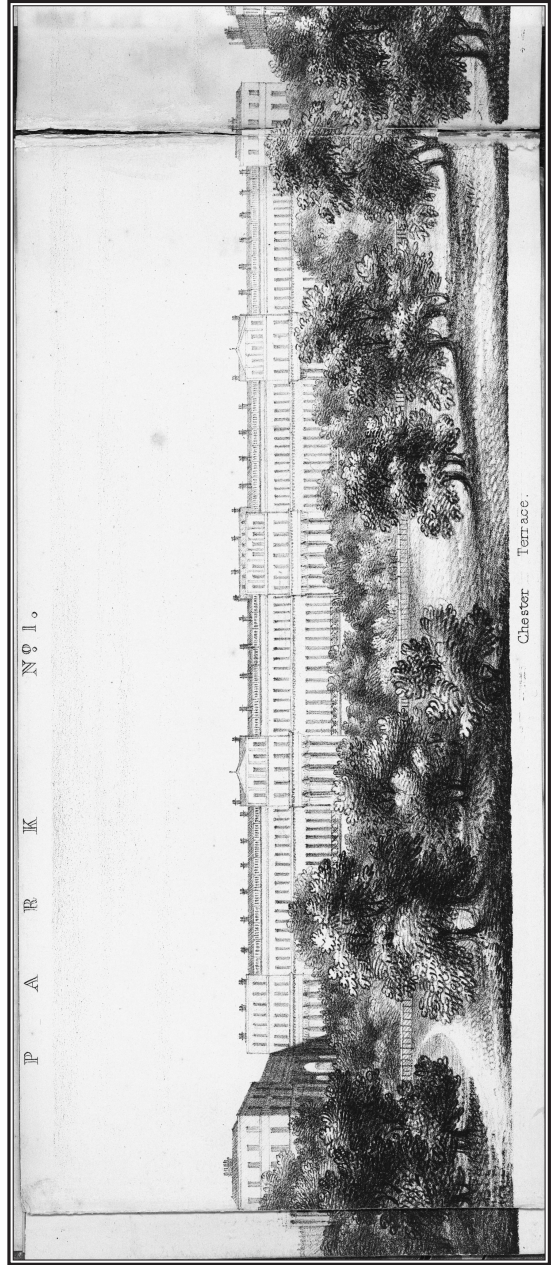
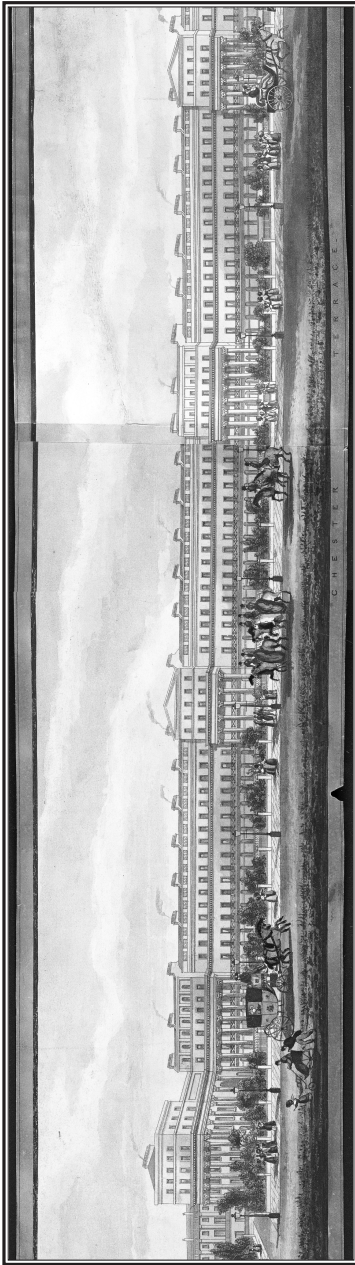


31. *Plan of the Regents Park Division* from Charles Mayhew, *Plans of all the Ground, Houses and other Buildings within the Jurisdiction of the Commissioners for Paving the Regent's Park, Regent's Street, Whitehall, &c. from an actual survey made in the years 1834 and 1835* (COURTESY CROWN ESTATE PAVING COMMISSION)



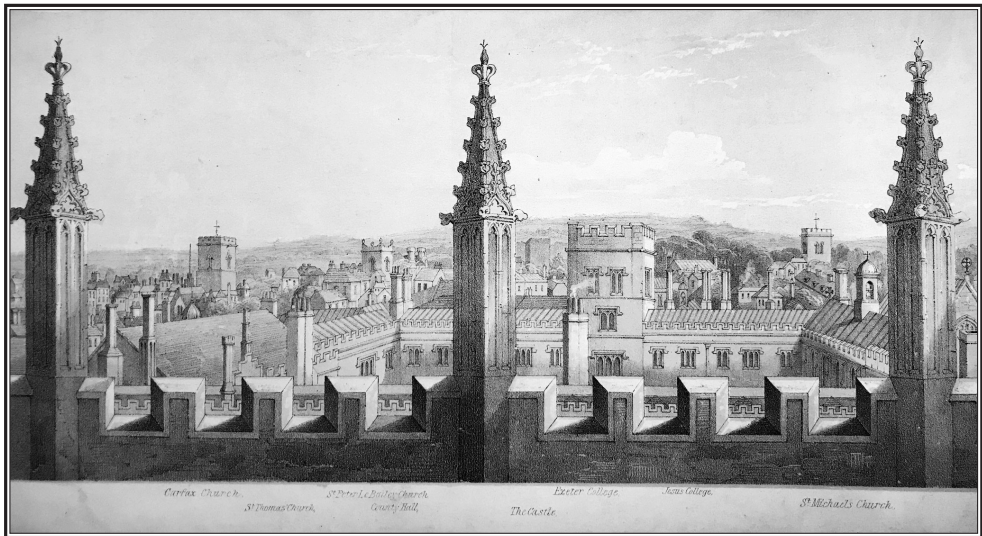
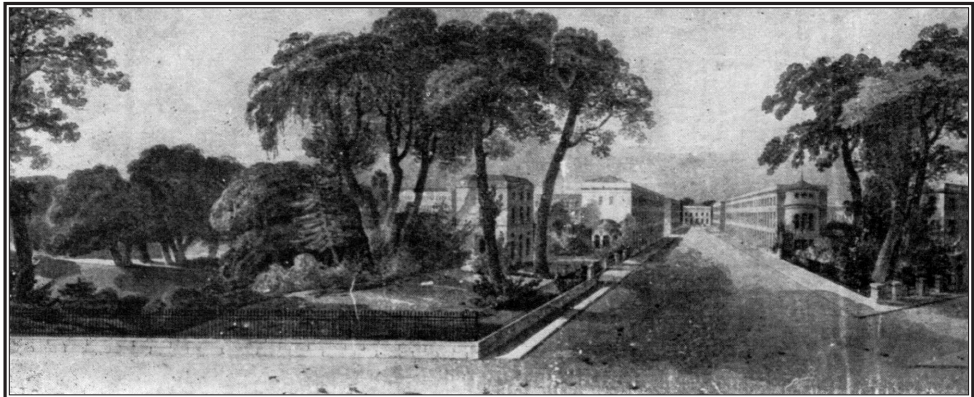
32. Richard Morris, *Panoramic View Round The Regent's Park*, detail showing Cornwall Terrace (1831)
(COURTESY YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART, PAUL MELLON COLLECTION)

33. Charlotte Girdlestone, *Regents Park*, detail showing Cornwall Terrace (1830-35)
(PRIVATE COLLECTION)



34. Richard Morris, *Regents Park*, detail showing Chester Terrace (1831)
(COURTESY YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART, PAUL MELLON COLLECTION)

35. Charlotte Girdlestone, *Regents Park*, detail showing Chester Terrace (1830-35)
(PRIVATE COLLECTION)



36. John Nash, *A Panoramic View of Marylebone Park*, 1811, watercolour, 32.5 cm x 543.5 cm (detail)
(THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, MR 1/1047 (FORMERLY LERO 1/1051B))

37. Charlotte Girdlestone, *Panorama of Oxford, from the roof of the Bodleian Library* (1845).
(COURTESY THE BRITISH LIBRARY)

activity – is assumed to exist beyond the borders of the image, since the panorama recognisably represents a park situated within a great city, but the viewpoint ensures that such activity is invisible (*see fig. 35*). At the same time, the smallness of scale prompts an absorptive experience of a world of natural rather than cultural vitality, in which more mundane forms of life are kept at bay. Girdlestone's panorama is not strictly speaking a 'miniature', in the sense in which Susan Stewart deploys this concept in *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (1993), but, like the miniatures that Stewart analyses, it presents 'a world of arrested time': 'its stillness emphasizes the activity that is outside its borders. And this effect is reciprocal, for once we attend to the miniature world, the outside world stops and is lost to us.'³²

'Towers, pinnacles and temples'

In 1845 Girdlestone produced a second panorama³³ (*fig. 37*). The imminent publication of her lithographic 360-degree *Panorama of Oxford, from the roof of the Bodleian Library* was announced in *The Times* on 25th November 1845,³⁴ and it was warmly reviewed in *The Art-Union, Monthly Journal of the Fine Arts and the Arts, Decorative, Ornamental* in January of the following year:

The beauty of Oxford is so generally allowed by foreigners, as well as Englishmen, that it may justly be considered as our finest city. The eye never wearies in looking at its colleges and halls, which are ever-varied, ever-new, as the spectator shifts his position.

A first walk up the High-street is an event never to be forgotten: the palatial homes of learning crowd the scene, and ensure an admiration which remains for after years. There is no single spot in Oxford more central than the Library, from whose roof the present view is obtained, and none which commands so entirely the panorama. From thence "Towers, pinnacles, and temples lie/ All open to the air and to the sky;" and the eye roams uninterruptedly, from one college to another, in quick succession of gratification. But as such pleasures are short-lived, it is a great home-gratification to be enabled thus to revisit and dwell upon a scene so beautiful, – to have it, in all its summer beauty, brought to our winter hearth, where we may linger uninterruptedly and at our ease. The details of all the buildings are carefully given; and there is a singular truthfulness in this elaborate and well-executed panorama that must insure its welcome reception by all who would wish to preserve a remembrance of this home of learning.³⁵

The artist's *Panorama of Oxford*, like her *Regents Park*, was produced in monochrome in a diminutive format.³⁶ It had, nonetheless, taken on elements of more conventional panoramas: the point of view is supplied from a single elevated vantage point, the view is more comprehensive, and the representation of the architecture is more topographically correct.

Comparing the two views, prepared almost fifteen years apart, accentuates the adventurous nature of Girdlestone's earlier panorama: it is more expressive and inventive. One precondition for this can be located in the artist's grasp – whether intuitive or explicit – of the panoramic dimension of the park. Nash, with his Outer Circle, was providing a version of Horner's panorama of London that celebrated the possibilities of a view outwards into the great city, but, instead of choosing a time of silence and emptiness as a guarantee of

32. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Duke University Press, 1993), p.67.

33. It is not known how Girdlestone came to be commissioned to produce the *Oxford Panorama*. Given the fact that she appears to have been particularly close to her sister-in-law Anne Elizabeth Morrell (nee Morrell), it seems likely that the introduction was made by the latter's father, Baker Morrell, who was Solicitor to University of Oxford. Charles Girdlestone married Anne Elizabeth Morrell in 1826. Her father was a prominent Oxford lawyer and Steward of St. John's College who followed his father into the law practice. See Brigid Allen, *Morrells of Oxford – The Family and their Brewery 1743–1993* (Oxfordshire Books, 1994).

34. *The Times*, 25 November 1845: 'On Wednesday next will be published, in an oblong 4to. Volume, price 12s, ornamental boards, A Panorama of Oxford, from the Roof of the Bodleian Library. From a Sketch by Miss C.G. London, Longman, Brown, Green and Longman.'

35. *The Art-Union*, January 1846, [vol.8], p.21.

36. Produced in five sections, mounted on linen (200 x 1745 mm) and bound in red cloth covers.

sublimity and awe, he trenchantly asserted the role of vegetation and landscape in keeping too troubling a proliferation of human activity at a distance. Morris showed little interest in such symbolic play: he concentrated on the world of fashion and bustle beyond the vegetation. Girdlestone, on the other hand, realises that an awareness of this very world of fashion and bustle (so clearly known to be present beyond the boundaries of the park) could only accentuate the delights of *rus in urbe*. The two figures gliding about in their boat in the lake east of Sussex Place, literally floating away from everyday cares, could hardly seem more distant from the high-velocity consumer culture that, as any viewer would have known, was pullulating in its usual manner just a few streets away (*fig. 38*). Girdlestone internalises Nash's plan for a landscape of uplifting escape from dull reality within a sharply delimited urban space: her decision to explore the possibilities of this landscape of escape on a small and almost miniature scale registers a sense that her project was a little bit different from Nash's – her panorama perhaps endorses the park more as a witty throwing into question of the grandeur of the city than as an ingenious means of accentuating its glories – but was nonetheless deeply in sympathy with it.

Acknowledgements

This essay is in memory of the late Ralph Hyde – an old friend and doyen of London topography. Ralph published extensively on the subject of metropolitan panoramas, and introduced me to this intriguing artform when I was a post-graduate student. I am also grateful to Chloe Chard for her very helpful suggestions and invaluable editorial assistance, Sarah Flynn at Cheffins Auctioneers, Norah Davies, Geoffrey Tyack, and Ffion Wyn Jones at Gwynedd Archives.

'THE STORY OF MY OLD-WORLD GARDEN' GEORGE HILLYARD SWINSTEAD, HAMPSTEAD, 1910 By Carrie Cowan

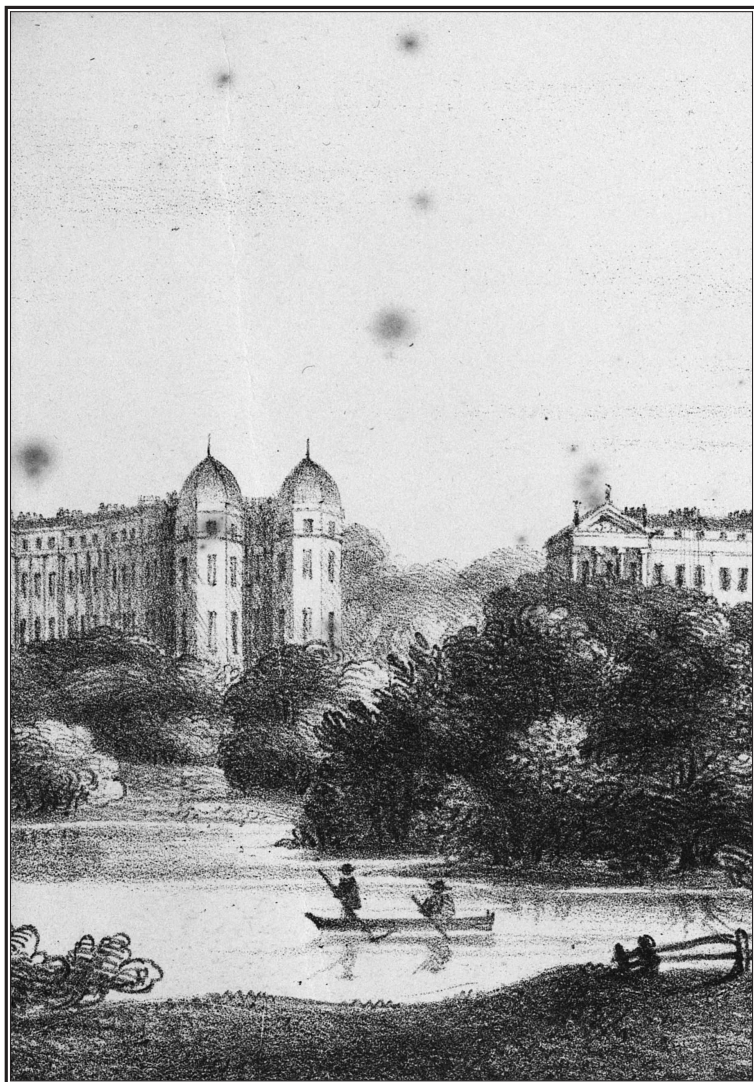
In 1901 the painter George Hillyard Swinstead (1860–1926) designed and built 'Atelier' at 14 Kidderpore Avenue, Hampstead, as his art studio and family home (*fig. 39*). He was a genre, portrait, landscape and coastal painter who exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Royal Society of British Artists, although few of his paintings are in public collections.¹ However, a representative example of his best work is 'White Comrade', which shows two First World War soldiers, one badly wounded, being comforted on the battlefield by a vision of Christ (*fig. 40*).²

At his Hampstead home, Swinstead set about creating a garden, which was some 45 x 55FT (13 x 16M) in extent, and in 1910 he published his methods and plant lists in 'The Story of My Old-World Garden'. The book was beautifully illustrated by his photographs and drawings, some of which are reproduced here.

Keen to move away from what he perceived as the conventions of the day, Swinstead envisaged an 'old-world' garden, inspired by a Shakespearean stage-set, such as that described in *Richard II*, with trim hedges, a rose bower and a faraway greensward. Swinstead suggested that 'few realise that they can get an equally beautiful scene in reality in that little suburban garden at home'. Often, he said, a garden was already laid out in a conventional way by a local gardener 'devoid of imagination', with turf, gravel, laurel, privet, rope-shaped edging tiles and symmetrical beds of bedding plants – typically geraniums, lobelia and calceolaria chosen regardless of any tasteful colour scheme. Swinstead suggested starting afresh, drawing a new design and perhaps also using plasticine models and plans such as a theatre artist or artist-cum-gardener would use (*fig. 41*). Like a theatre stage scene,

1. The Sheffield Art Gallery holds Swinstead's work 'When trumpets call, then homes are broken'. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1883.

2. George Hillyard Swinstead was the fourth son of the painter Charles Swinstead who founded the Hornsey School of Art, the building for which still exists, now as part of Coleridge School, at the top of Crouch End Hill, <https://www.hornseycricketclub.co.uk/all-time-1st-xi>, accessed 3 December 2019.



38. Charlotte Girdlestone, *Regents Park*, (1830-35)
Detail showing two figures in a boat in the lake east of Sussex Place
(PRIVATE COLLECTION)