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Current Art Notes

lust for comicality is not indulged at the expense of all that goes to make a good drawing. His suburbanly intense lovers in "I heard you whisper my name among the Roses" were not only funnily characterised, but provided the vehicle for a remarkably beautiful study in penwork; while the delicate colour of his café scene, Sans Dire, was as charming in its way as the theme was amusing. With the Belvoir, a dashing caricature of a sporting subject, showing horses and riders very much from behind; Tails I lose, a racing "impression" conveying a fine suggestion of speed, stated with the maximum economy of detail; Sons of Guns, two Guards officers with bearskins growing out of their shoulders; and a number of whimsical and cleverly characterised dog studies were other intriguing items. Occasionally, Mr. Blampied's humour tended to become a trifle brutal, but in almost every case his drawings showed that vitality and command of line which have so often arrested us in his more "serious" work.

The late C. Morland Agnew, O.B.E. (1855-1931)

ONE of the best-known figures in the fine art business, Mr. Charles Morland Agnew, O.B.E., formerly a partner in the firm of Thomas Agnew & Sons, died at his residence at Croxley Green on May 23rd. Though the rise of his family dates from the establishment of the business in Manchester by Thomas Agnew (1794-1871), there would seem to be evidence indicating that they are cadets of the ancient Scottish house of Lochnaw, which received its baronetcy in 1629. The later Agnew baronetcy (1805) came to Sir William (eldest son of the above Thomas) who died in 1910. He left several children, including Sir George Agnew, who succeeded him in the title, and Mr. Morland Agnew. The second son of his father, Morland Agnew was born December 14th, 1855, and in due season took his degree at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1881, he married Miss Evelyn Mary Naylor (who survives him), the eldest son of the match being Captain

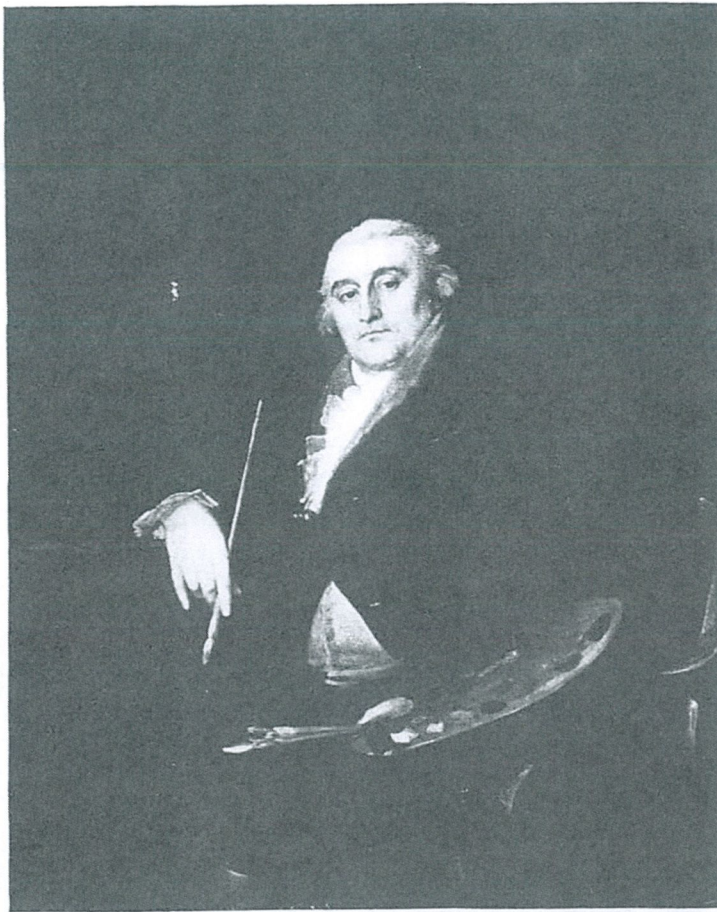
Gerald Agnew, whose name needs no introduction to those interested in the fine art market.

In 1930, Morland Agnew served the office of High Sheriff of Herts; but he was always best known for his intimate association with the histories of many world-famous paintings. Among these was Gainsborough's *Duchess of Devonshire*, which realised £10,005 at the Wynn Ellis sale at Christie's in 1870. Shortly after the sale, this celebrated canvas was stolen from the Agnew premises by the criminal, Adam Worth, its disappearance creating a sensation which still echoes down the years. When eventually the picture was traced in America, where it had been taken, it was Morland Agnew who visited the States in order to negotiate its recovery, after which it was purchased by Mr. Pierpont Morgan.

Among his other activities, Morland Agnew assisted in the formation of the Iveagh Collection, now permanently housed at Ken Wood for the public benefit; and he was concerned in many epics of the sale room. Numerous friends and acquaintances regret the passing of a kindly, courteous, cultured personality.

Fine Art Trade Guild: Annual Dinner

Owing to unusually heavy pressure on our space, we are compelled to reserve until next month an account of the Annual Dinner of the Fine Art Trade Guild, which was held at the Dorchester Hotel, London, on May 15th.



P. J. DE LOUTHEMBOURG, R.A. SELF PORTRAIT NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY ACQUISITION

Pewter in its True Setting

ANY exhibition of old pewter organised by Mr. Howard H. Cottrell, F.R.Hist.S., is bound to be well arranged, and the display lately on view at Messrs. Osborne's (Grafton Street, London, W.1) was no exception to the rule. To see it in a thoroughly suitable setting of paneling and old oak furniture, and with the comfortable knowledge that in a room or two away there was one of the finest "runs" of Chinese eighteenth-century wallpaper that could well be desired, was to realise the peculiar fascination of the study which Mr.

The Connoisseur

Cotterell has done so much to advance. Dating mainly from the later seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the items in the exhibition included many rare as well as many shapely examples: candlesticks, salts, mugs, tankards, plates and dishes; to say nothing of the numerous sets of measures which formed a noteworthy feature of the event. English and Scottish pieces, both religious and domestic, predominated, but the pewter of France, Russia, Sweden, and even China, did not go unrepresented; while from the sunken galleon in Tobermory Bay came a vessel of "pilgrim's bottle" shape, which is stated to have been a "Master Gunner's flask."

National Society

SINCE its first exhibition, a year ago, the National Society—Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, Potters—has consolidated itself, with the result that its second display was characterised by an air of greater consistency. This may have been due in part to the fact that the Royal Institute Galleries (105, Piccadilly) call for a more compact system of arrangement than the Grafton; but in any case the exhibition presented a suggestion of vitality in advance of that imparted by its predecessor. The use of pleasantly designed tapering stands of three-ply wood for the smaller pieces of sculpture, showed an attention to a detail of presentation which comparatively seldom receives the attention which it deserves, while the hanging of the pictures was well considered.

Among the oils there were a good many works the modernism of which was unattended by any special interest. Mr. John E. Nicholls' *The Transfiguration* was, however, a stimulating exercise in patterning which succeeded in conveying a sense of mysticism. In *Pan Triumphant*, Mr. Nevinson composed a medley of liner's smokestacks, iron girders, and skyscrapers, with a head of Pan grinning in the midst. Was it the artist's intention to symbolise how nature impulses still dominate the triumphs of invention?

Some of the most interesting water-colours were contributed by Mr. Bernard Adams, *The Church Gate, Weston Turville*, being, perhaps, the best example of his sensitive colour and pen work. Mr. Hervey Adams' *Hay Ricks* was also a sympathetic piece of work; and in *Chairs*, a beach scene, Mr. Purves Flint gave a deft example of sheer impressionism. And then there were Mr. Karl Hagedorn's *The Malting House, Cambridge*, and Mr. Frank Dobson's delicately tinted nude studies. In the black-and-white section, Miss Clare Leighton's *Breaking Camp*

was an excellent example of her skill in wood-engraving.

Sculpture was principally represented by Mr. Eric Schilsky's able and cleverly characterised bust of *Ronald*, a baby boy, and the same artist's *Eileen Mayo*, both suggestive of the Epstein manner, but in a more refined type of expression; by Mr. Barney Seale's *Cat Washing*; and, among abstract sculpture, by Mr. Maurice Lambert's *Phoenix*, of which the slender pedestal was the most gracefully designed portion. Some of the other sculpture, including works by Mr. Lambert and Mr. Cecil Brown, showed, however, that abstraction is only effective when it is significant of purpose or fully expressive of a mood. Mr. Brown's *Argemone* was a case in point. This was a sheet of galvanised metal, cut and scrolled into arbitrary forms, which, though obviously considered, gave an odd impression of uselessness in both the artistic and practical interpretations of that word. An expressive work of art is never "useless"; and, while sincere experiment should not be derided, one may be forgiven for believing that Mr. Brown is not on the right road. It is unnecessary to mention the rest of the sculpture, most of which was poor stuff; but for those who admire Miss Gwendolen Parnell's pottery statuettes, there was a liberal case-full of her dainty fancies.

Wirksworth Porcelain (June, 1931)

SIR, Students of porcelain are indebted to Mr. F. Williamson for his discovery of evidence confirming the earlier statements that a china-factory existed at Wirksworth and came to an end in 1777. His suggestion that I (amongst others) have doubted the existence of this factory is not borne out by the phrase he quotes from my *Old English Porcelain*, nor by its context. My scepticism was confined to the customary attribution of certain specimens to that factory. A cup and saucer of the same type as these is figured in my book, and I maintain that the decoration on them could not have been painted before 1777; I am afraid I do not admit its similarity to that on the Bristol pieces cited by Mr. Williamson.

Mr. Williamson does not mention the wasters found on the Wirksworth site by Mr. Tudor, who some years ago presented some of them to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Most of these are unpainted, but in form are of types current before 1777. Apart from a slight resemblance in an undercut foot-ring to some wares usually attributed to Liverpool, they are unfortunately of little help in the task of identifying the Wirksworth porcelain, which must certainly exist in quantity. —W. B. HONEY.



THE LATE C. MORLAND AGNEW, O.B.E.
FROM A DRAWING BY FRED ROE, R.I.