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James Lindsay – A Late Nineteenth-Century
Edinburgh Art Collector

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James Lindsay – A Late Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh Art Collector

Per Kvaerne

The rapid expansion of industry and commerce in the second half of the nineteenth century in towns along the east coast of Scotland saw the emergence of a class of merchants and industrialists.¹ Often coming from modest backgrounds, these men profited from the social mobility which accompanied industrialisation, establishing life-styles that featured – sometimes prominently – various types of philanthropic and cultural activities. As might be expected, they tended to be ‘anxious to achieve social status by furnishing their houses and lining their walls with the trappings of wealth’.² Hence amassing a collection of art works, especially paintings, was a typical feature of this new and wealthy middle class. While the aristocracy and gentry often inherited paintings by Dutch and Italian ‘Old Masters’, and by recognised British artists such as Gainsborough, Reynolds, Turner and Raeburn, acquired over the centuries

¹ I wish to thank Lindsay’s great-grandson Mike Bucher for providing a copy of Lindsay’s list of paintings and for his help with the article in many ways. Without his interest and encouragement this article would not have been written. Margaret Gent, Lindsay’s granddaughter, has very kindly placed the Dowell’s auction catalogue at my disposal, and her daughter, Ann Gent, arranged for it to be scanned. I am grateful to Penny Johnson, Lindsay’s second great-grandniece, who has written an extensive (unpublished) family history from which I have quoted. Bill Smith, author of several books on Scottish art and former Keeper of the Fleming Collection of Scottish art in London, has not only, as often before, provided important information and generously given access to his unique library, but also provided much information of great usefulness for writing this article, as well as improving my English. For all this I thank him most sincerely. I am also most grateful to Helen Smailes, Senior Curator of British Art, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, who has very kindly given me copies of pertinent material and provided relevant information. Kim Broker, Assistant Registrar for Collections, Mildred Lane Kemper Museum, St Louis, Missouri, Jane Freel, Museums Curator, Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery, Kirkcaldy, and Joy Kremler, Curatorial Assistant, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, as well as Patrick Bourne have all provided useful information, which I gratefully acknowledge.

² Frances Fowle, ‘Patterns of Taste: Scottish Collectors and the Making of Cultural Identity in the late Nineteenth Century’ in Fintan Cullen and John Morrison (eds.), *A Shared Legacy. Essays on Irish and Scottish Art and Visual Culture* (Aldershot, 2005), 173.

by their families, the newly-rich industrialists tended to focus on contemporary art, not least paintings produced by Scottish artists, as well as paintings by contemporary French and Dutch painters. Thus, starting in the late 1860s and increasingly in the 1870s, paintings by the 'Hague School' (such as Jozef Israëls, the Maris brothers Jacob and Matthijs, and Alexander Mollinger)³ as well as contemporary French art – especially paintings by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and the 'Barbizon School' – found their way to Scotland.⁴

Among art collectors in eastern Scotland in the second half of the nineteenth century may be mentioned George Buchan Simpson (1820–92),⁵ William Ritchie (c. 1818–1902), John Charles Bell (1816–97) and James Guthrie Orchar (c. 1825–98)⁶ in Dundee, and John Forbes White (1831–1904)⁷ and Alexander Macdonald of Kepplestone (1837–84) in Aberdeen. These and other collectors, while not neglecting Dutch and French artists, had a particular interest in contemporary Scottish art. Several of these collectors have secured a name for themselves as major donors to public collections of art. For example, Orchar regularly donated paintings to Dundee's permanent collection and finally 'bequeathed his entire collection, consisting of 302 oils, watercolours, prints and drawings', to the same institution.⁸ Others are less well-known or even forgotten as their collections were sold and consequently dispersed during their life-time or soon after their death. Such was the case – at least to some extent – with George B. Simpson who, due to financial difficulties, was obliged to sell the greater part of his paintings in December 1880, the remainder being sold in 1886.

Simpson's collection can be reconstructed and studied on the basis of the relevant sale catalogues and reports in the Edinburgh and Dundee press,⁹ and Orchar's collection, as mentioned, is preserved in the McManus Art Gallery

³ Frances Fowle, 'The Hague School and the Scots, a Taste for Dutch Pictures', *Apollo*, August (1991), 108–111.

⁴ Linda Whiteley, 'L'école de Barbizon et les collectionneurs britanniques avant 1918' in *L'école de Barbizon. Peindre en plein air avant l'impressionisme* (Lyon, 2002), 100–7.

⁵ Helen Smailes, 'Dundee's Forgotten Maecenas? G. B. Simpson and the Patronage of Modern Scottish Art', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, 14 (2009–10), 29–39.

⁶ Fowle, 'Patterns of Taste', 174–7; David Scruton, *James Guthrie Orchar and the Orchar Collection* (St. Andrews, 1988).

⁷ Charles Carter, 'Art Patronage in Scotland: John Forbes White 1831–1904', *Scottish Art Review*, 6 (1957), 27–30; Jennifer Melville, *John Forbes White and George Reid: Artists and Patrons in North-East Scotland 1860–1920*, PhD dissertation (University of Edinburgh, 2000).

⁸ Fowle, 'Patterns of Taste', 174.

⁹ Smailes, 'Dundee's Forgotten Maecenas', 38 n5 provides detailed references.

and Musuem in Dundee. In this article a hitherto little-known collector, James Lindsay (1847–1903), a younger contemporary of Simpson and Orchar, is considered. As will be seen below, he occasionally contributed paintings from his collection to various exhibitions, and two of his pictures were illustrated in an article contributed to the *Art Journal* in 1898 by James L. Caw.¹⁰ During the later years of his life he seems to have been a well-known member of the circle of Edinburgh art collectors, but after the dispersal of the greater part of his collection in 1920, he sank into virtual oblivion.

Lindsay, who lived his entire life in Edinburgh, was by profession a master cooper. In 1874 he took over the cooperage business, William Lindsay & Sons, founded in 1829 by his father William Lindsay (1808–88).¹¹ Situated in Canonmills on the banks of the Water of Leith, the firm had produced wooden tubs for housewives to do their laundry, but James Lindsay went to Germany to buy machinery to produce casks and barrels for the beer and whisky industries in Edinburgh and its neighbourhood. As a result, the business expanded rapidly, enabling Lindsay to begin collecting art, and, in 1888, to commission the building of a handsome house at 35 Inverleith Terrace, within walking distance of the cooperage. The architect was Thomas Tolmie Paterson (1864–1933), and the house was completed in 1895, in a ‘very free Renaissance’ style in red sandstone.¹² ‘The house was named Edzell Lodge after the name of the lands of Clan Lindsay and Edzell Castle in Angus which had been the seat of the Lindsays. James was involved with the Clan Lindsay Society from the outset and Edzell was the obvious choice of a name’.¹³ In 1872 he had married Ann (‘Annie’) Harper, born in 1848, the daughter of an Edinburgh spirit merchant. They had eight children, born between 1873 and 1890.¹⁴ After James Lindsay died his widow continued to live in Edzell Lodge

¹⁰ James L[ewis] Caw, ‘The Present Condition of Art in Scotland’, *Art Journal* (1898), 45–9; 69–73. I thank Bill Smith for this information.

¹¹ I am grateful to Mike Bucher for providing this biographical information. His death on 29 June 1888 at the age of seventy nine is recorded in National Records of Scotland: statutory registers Deaths 685/5 597; I thank Bill Smith for this reference. Further information with regard to the cooperage business may be found at www.archives.gla.ac.uk/sba/sbacolls/wl.html, which in turn is based on James Archer, ‘By the Water of Leith’, *The Essanden*, Spring 1968 (this company journal has not been available to me).

¹² John Gifford, Colin McWilliam and David Walker, *The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh* (1991; London, 1984), 579.

¹³ Penny Johnson, *Wm. Lindsay & Sons, Edinburgh*, unpublished (3rd edition, 2010), 21.

¹⁴ Detailed in a genealogical chart kindly put at my disposal by Mike Bucher.

until her death in 1934.¹⁵

At Edzell Lodge Lindsay had space to hang his collection of paintings and to install 'a well-stocked library which included first editions of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson and J. M. Barrie'.¹⁶ On the basis of family tradition he is described as 'a very talented man; he was artistic, musical and well read ... he was a deeply religious member of the "Wee" Free Church on the Mound and since it had no organ he used to sit under the pulpit and sing solo the first verse of hymns and psalms.'¹⁷

Recently a handwritten catalogue, or perhaps rather an inventory, of the Lindsay collection, entitled 'Catalogue of Pictures. The Property of James Lindsay, Edzell Lodge, Inverleith Terrace', has surfaced.¹⁸ In chronological order of purchase it carefully details Lindsay's art acquisitions, commencing in January 1882 and ending in June 1903. Lindsay died on 7 December of the same year.¹⁹ The catalogue lists 171 numbered items, mostly paintings, although several engravings are also included. For each entry, the month and year of acquisition is given, followed by the serial number, a technical description ('Small Water Color (*sic.*)', 'Oil Painting', 'Chalk Portrait' and so on), the title (or lacking that, an indication of the motif), the name of the artist (sometimes with the addition of 'ARSA', 'RSA' or 'RA'), how the painting was acquired (normally from a dealer or at an auction, but sometimes bought from the artist or another private individual) and, finally, the amount paid.²⁰ What this inventory amounts to is an exceptionally complete, first-hand survey of a substantial Edinburgh art collection, typical of the kind of collection a businessman of James Lindsay's background and means would have built up in the

¹⁵ National Records of Scotland, Testament of James Lindsay dated 5 March 1904 (SC70/1/432, 601) as amended by Additional Inventories dated 11 April 1906, 10 August 1906 and 26 July 1907. I thank Bill Smith for this reference. The house, bearing the name 'Braeburn', is now a residential care home.

¹⁶ Johnson *Wm. Lindsay & Sons*, 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22–3.

¹⁸ I am grateful to Mike Bucher for placing a scanned copy of this catalogue at my disposal.

¹⁹ Johnson, *Wm. Lindsay & Sons*, 24.

²⁰ It is not clear whether the inventory is in Lindsay's own hand, as it is a fair copy of another manuscript, apparently in a different hand and containing many corrections, additions etc. Possibly the latter manuscript was written by Lindsay himself. I thank Mike Bucher for a scanned copy of this manuscript as well. I also thank Bill Smith for his suggestion that 'the Lindsay 'catalogue' looks, from its regular handwriting throughout, more like a list of Lindsay's paintings executed at one sitting, probably as late as after February 1903, perhaps as an aid to valuing Lindsay's assets for legal/tax purposes on his death in December that year' (e-mail, 24 February 2014).

1880s and 1890s. Lindsay's catalogue allows a detailed study of the provenance and history of his collection, as well as of his taste and choice of artists.

Catalogue of Pictures		13
	The Property of Mr. James Harrison, Tongue Range, Mount Allison University	
1902	1. James Harrison, Tongue Range, Mount Allison University	
	2. A View of the River, from the	2 15 0
	3. " " " "	2 15 0
1903	4. " " " "	2 15 0
1904	5. " " " "	2 15 0
	6. " " " "	2 15 0
1905	7. " " " "	2 15 0
	8. " " " "	2 15 0
1906	9. " " " "	2 15 0
	10. " " " "	2 15 0
1907	11. " " " "	2 15 0
	12. " " " "	2 15 0
1908	13. " " " "	2 15 0
	14. " " " "	2 15 0
1909	15. " " " "	2 15 0
	16. " " " "	2 15 0
1910	17. " " " "	2 15 0
	18. " " " "	2 15 0
1911	19. " " " "	2 15 0
	20. " " " "	2 15 0
1912	21. " " " "	2 15 0
	22. " " " "	2 15 0
1913	23. " " " "	2 15 0
	24. " " " "	2 15 0
1914	25. " " " "	2 15 0
	26. " " " "	2 15 0
1915	27. " " " "	2 15 0
	28. " " " "	2 15 0
1916	29. " " " "	2 15 0
	30. " " " "	2 15 0
1917	31. " " " "	2 15 0
	32. " " " "	2 15 0
1918	33. " " " "	2 15 0
	34. " " " "	2 15 0
1919	35. " " " "	2 15 0
	36. " " " "	2 15 0
1920	37. " " " "	2 15 0
	38. " " " "	2 15 0
1921	39. " " " "	2 15 0
	40. " " " "	2 15 0
1922	41. " " " "	2 15 0
	42. " " " "	2 15 0
1923	43. " " " "	2 15 0
	44. " " " "	2 15 0
1924	45. " " " "	2 15 0
	46. " " " "	2 15 0
1925	47. " " " "	2 15 0
	48. " " " "	2 15 0
1926	49. " " " "	2 15 0
	50. " " " "	2 15 0
1927	51. " " " "	2 15 0
	52. " " " "	2 15 0
1928	53. " " " "	2 15 0
	54. " " " "	2 15 0
1929	55. " " " "	2 15 0
	56. " " " "	2 15 0
1930	57. " " " "	2 15 0
	58. " " " "	2 15 0
1931	59. " " " "	2 15 0
	60. " " " "	2 15 0
1932	61. " " " "	2 15 0
	62. " " " "	2 15 0
1933	63. " " " "	2 15 0
	64. " " " "	2 15 0
1934	65. " " " "	2 15 0
	66. " " " "	2 15 0
1935	67. " " " "	2 15 0
	68. " " " "	2 15 0
1936	69. " " " "	2 15 0
	70. " " " "	2 15 0
1937	71. " " " "	2 15 0
	72. " " " "	2 15 0
1938	73. " " " "	2 15 0
	74. " " " "	2 15 0
1939	75. " " " "	2 15 0
	76. " " " "	2 15 0
1940	77. " " " "	2 15 0
	78. " " " "	2 15 0
1941	79. " " " "	2 15 0
	80. " " " "	2 15 0
1942	81. " " " "	2 15 0
	82. " " " "	2 15 0
1943	83. " " " "	2 15 0
	84. " " " "	2 15 0
1944	85. " " " "	2 15 0
	86. " " " "	2 15 0
1945	87. " " " "	2 15 0
	88. " " " "	2 15 0
1946	89. " " " "	2 15 0
	90. " " " "	2 15 0
1947	91. " " " "	2 15 0
	92. " " " "	2 15 0
1948	93. " " " "	2 15 0
	94. " " " "	2 15 0
1949	95. " " " "	2 15 0
	96. " " " "	2 15 0
1950	97. " " " "	2 15 0
	98. " " " "	2 15 0
1951	99. " " " "	2 15 0
	100. " " " "	2 15 0

By 1882 Lindsay was already a fairly wealthy man; on his death in 1903 he left a little over £160,000, including substantial holdings of British and overseas securities.²¹ However, his first art purchases, made in January 1882, were modest, consisting of two small watercolours by Henry Wright Kerr (1857–1936), the same year as the latter exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy for the first time.²² Lindsay paid only a few pounds for each. Subsequently he acquired no less than ten paintings from Kerr, including four commissioned portraits, always purchasing them from the artist. This points to a personal friendship and, indeed, it is conceivable that Kerr was instrumental in triggering Lindsay's interest in art.²³ Initially, however, this interest seems to have been moderate; there is a long period in his catalogue – from June 1883 to December 1888 – without a single purchase being recorded.

It is only in May 1894 that Lindsay pays as much as £100 for a painting, buying an Orientalist painting by the then fashionable French artist Philippe Pavy (1860–c.1920). This is number forty-four in Lindsay's list of purchases, so the remaining 127 items were acquired in less than ten years. It is in 1894 that the rhythm of his purchases picks up speed (perhaps linked to the

²¹ I thank Bill Smith for this information (e-mail, 10 December 2013), referring to Inventory of personal estate of James Lindsay lodged on 5 March 1904 at Edinburgh Sheriff Court [National Records of Scotland: Wills & testaments SC70/1/432]; additional inventories lodged on 11 April 1906 showing total movable estate of £163,300 [SC70/1/455].

²² William D[arling] McKay, *The Scottish Royal Academy 1826-1916* (Glasgow, 1917), 196.

²³ I thank Bill Smith for this suggestion.

construction of his new and spacious residence at 35 Inverleith Terrace), and at the same time he clearly becomes much more willing to spend substantial sums on expanding his collection. Thus, in December 1894 he pays £240 for *The Skipping Rope* by Hugh Cameron (1835–1918); in 1895 he buys four paintings priced between £100 and £150, and in November that year he pays £420 for Sam Bough's (1822–78) *The Rocket Cart*. Thereafter purchases follow at a steady rate. In March 1897 he pays £675 for William Quiller Orchardson's (1832–1910) *Testing the Blade*, and finally, in February 1903, as one of his very last acquisitions, he buys *Mrs. Craigie Halkett* by Henry Raeburn (1756–1823) for the considerable sum of £1,200. This painting may have had a special significance, as *The Scotsman* reported from a reception which he hosted for the annual Clan Lindsay Society gathering in June 1903: 'special notice was taken of an interesting example by Raeburn of a lady ancestor of the house of Lindsay'.²⁴

Lindsay had a preference for Scottish painters, as a count of artists represented in his collection shows. While fifty are Scottish, less than half that number are Continental (Belgian, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Russian), and fourteen are English. Moreover, the Continental and English artists are, with a few exceptions, represented by only one painting each. Among the Scottish artists on the other hand, eight are represented by four or more paintings:²⁵ Robert Gemmell Hutchison (1855–1936) and Cecil Gordon Lawson (1851–82) have four each; George Paul Chalmers (1833–78) and William McTaggart (1835–1910), five each;²⁶ Sam Bough contributes six paintings; Waller Hugh Paton (1828–95) and James Lawton Wingate (1846–1924), seven; and Henry Wright Kerr, twelve paintings. As for the paintings by Kerr, however, it must be noted that four of them are portraits of Lindsay's father, mother, daughter Margaret ('Greta') and his wife respectively.

Among Scottish artists whose paintings adorned the walls of his home, one should mention, in addition to the ones listed above, John Burr, William Fettes Douglas, Tom Faed, David Farquharson, Colin Hunter, Horatio McCulloch,

²⁴ Quoted in Johnson, *Wm. Lindsay & Sons*, 24.

²⁵ This count includes paintings not listed in Lindsay's catalogue, but recorded in the auction catalogue of the sale of part of his collection in Edinburgh on 28 February 1920. *Catalogue of the Very Valuable and Choice Collection of Oil Paintings and Water-Colour Drawings Formed by The Late James Lindsay, Esq., Edzell Lodge, Inverleith Terrace To be Sold by Auction by Mr. Dowell... Saturday, 28th February 1920.*

²⁶ *Saved*, acquired in 1896, was exchanged the following year for *Dutch Interior* by Albert Neuhuys. Thus, among his paintings by McTaggart, this one was clearly less appreciated by Lindsay than the remaining four.

Robert McGregor, William Darling McKay, Erskine Nicol, and John Crawford Wintour. Paintings by several of these artists will be discussed below.

As for Continental painters, Lindsay, like many of his Scottish contemporaries, had a preference for Dutch artists, including Bernardus Johannes Blommers (1845–1914), Jozef Israëls (1824–1911), Jacobus Hendricus Maris (1837–99) and Anton Mauve (1838–88), all highly-appreciated members of the ‘Hague School’, as well as Johannes Albert Neuhuys (1844–1914), who was closely associated with that school of painting. The picture *Evening Pastures* by the Belgian artist Maurice Hagemans (1852–1917), a contemporary of the Dutch artists, had pride of place above the mantelpiece in the living room at Edzell Lodge.²⁷

Lindsay does not seem to have had much interest in the painters of the French ‘Barbizon School’, but he did own a painting by J. B. C. Corot (1796–1875), *A Souvenir of Normandy*,²⁸ acquired in January 1898 in exchange for another Corot, *Le clocher au bord de Lai*, for which he had paid £550 the previous year. The authenticity of Lindsay’s Corot may be open to doubt; at the auction in 1920 it fetched only £320, though by this time, however, Corot was no longer in fashion among art collectors. The French Impressionists, whose paintings were being sold in Scotland from the 1890s onwards,²⁹ were entirely absent from Lindsay’s collection.

The number of paintings by English artists in the collection was not significant. They include an enigmatic painting: in September 1896 James Lindsay bought an oil painting from the Glasgow dealers J. B. Bennett & Sons, which he enters in his catalogue as being by James (*sic*) Constable (1776–1837), the title being given as ‘Willy Nott’s [clearly a mistake for ‘Lott’s’] House’. He paid £300 for it and states that the authenticity of the painting is ‘certified by letters in Safe’

²⁷ I thank Margaret Gent and Ann Gent for this information.

²⁸ Whether the painting is another version of Corot’s *Souvenir de Normandie* or a fake is difficult to decide. According to Robaut, it was in the collection of Dr Verdier in 1874, being painted ‘vers 1870’. The image in Robaut differs from the photo of the painting in *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 68, facing 11; the former lacks the two figures and the trees are somewhat slimmer. On the other hand, the image in Robaut is not a photo, but simply a sketch of the painting, made by Robaut. Moreover, Robaut states that it is signed in the bottom left corner, while the Lindsay painting is signed in the bottom right; the dimensions also differ materially (Robaut 69 x 83 cm, Dowell’s 44.5 x 53.3 cm). Either the Lindsay Corot is a version not known to Robaut, or it is a fake. See Alfred Robaut, *L’Œuvre de Corot*, Paris, 4 vols (1905; Paris, 1965), III, 212, catalogue no. 1880.

²⁹ Frances Fowle, ‘Collecting Impressionism in Scotland’ in National Galleries of Scotland, *Impressionism and Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2008), 65–75.

– perhaps he also regarded the painting as an investment. Although of much smaller dimensions, Lindsay's painting is a copy of Constable's *The Hay Wain*³⁰, about which an expert on Constable's paintings, Graham Reynolds, writes:

Although it had been lent to a number of exhibitions after its return to England in 1838, its overwhelming popularity as the most characteristic of English landscapes and the fullest embodiment of Constable's art appears to date from its gift to the National Gallery by Henry Vaughan in 1886.³¹

Prima facie it would appear that James Lindsay owned a painting by John Constable. Perhaps he regarded it as a study for the larger painting in the National Gallery, and hence a highly prestigious item in his collection. The photo and dimensions of his painting as found in the 1920 auction catalogue³² do not, however, correspond to any recorded authentic painting by Constable,³³ so it may be assumed (without absolute certainty) that it was either a forgery or was mistakenly regarded by all parties concerned, as authentic. According to Fleming-Williams and Parris both categories of paintings were common:

there was already a considerable trade in fake Constables by 1845 ... fresh batches of forgeries also began to appear on the market or at exhibitions in the late 1860s and 1870s ... But, in general, deliberate forgeries appear to have been greatly outnumbered by the host of works wrongly attributed to him, in the execution of which there was not the slightest intention to deceive.³⁴

³⁰ Lindsay's painting seems to be an oil sketch, related (whether a real Constable or not) to *The Hay Wain*. In its composition it differs from the three oil sketches, as well as from the full-size sketch in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the finished painting in the National Gallery, London, published in Anne Lyles (ed.), *Constable's Great Landscapes: The Six-Foot Paintings* (London, 2006), 140–5. Johnson, *Wm. Lindsay & Sons*, 28, is not helpful in reproducing the Victoria and Albert sketch (see Lyles, (ed.), *Constable's Great Landscapes*, 141), giving the impression that it is the sketch in the Lindsay collection. The Lindsay collection sketch is different in significant respects. Its present whereabouts is unknown, and it would only be possible to ascertain its authenticity if were to become available for professional examination.

³¹ Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, (New Haven, 1984), 69.

³² *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 71, facing 11.

³³ Cf. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable* (New Haven, 1996) and Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings*.

³⁴ Ian Fleming-Williams and Leslie Parris, *The Discovery of Constable* (London, 1984),

Lindsay preferred to buy from Edinburgh dealers and auctioneers. Thus he acquired seventeen minor paintings from the auctioneers Lyon & Turnbull, all of them in the course of 1894, constituting two lots bought in February and March respectively of that year. In 1895 he bought three paintings from the firm Ciceri & Co., likewise in Edinburgh. While two were of little importance, the third was Sam Bough's *The Rocket Cart* mentioned above. By then Lindsay was prepared to spend substantial amounts on the purchase of individual paintings. He also bought nine paintings from Dowell's, including five water-colours by Waller Hugh Paton in January 1890. The most important single source, however, was the Edinburgh art dealer and frame maker Aitken Dott of A. Dott & Son, whose business was taken over by his son, Peter McOmish Dott, and further developed as McOmish Dott & Co in 1896.³⁵ Starting in May 1894, Lindsay bought no less than forty-one paintings from the firm, of which more than thirty were by Scottish painters, including Sam Bough, Hugh Cameron, George Paul Chalmers, David Farquharson, Alexander Fraser Jr., Horatio McCulloch, Robert McGregor, William Darling McKay, William McTaggart, Erskine Nicol, William Quiller Orchardson, Tom Scott, Edward Arthur Walton, James Lawton Wingate, and John Crawford Wintour. Among the few Continental artists acquired from A. Dott & Son are Jozof Israels and Philippe Pavy. In contrast, Lindsay seldom availed himself of the services of Glasgow dealers. The only ones recorded in his catalogue are J. B. Bennett & Sons and James Connell & Sons. His total purchases from Glasgow dealers amounted to no more than four items.

Starting in March 1896, Lindsay bought twelve paintings from Arthur Tooth & Son in London. Four were by British artists: Cecil G. Lawson, Erskine Nicol, and John W. Oakes, while the remainder were by Dutch and French painters – Bernard Blommers, Jacob Maris, J. B. C. Corot, Charles-Émile Jacque (1813-94) and Léon Augustin Lhermitte (1844-1925). In the last years of his life he also bought three paintings from J. Silva White, likewise in London; this included the Raeburn referred to above.

In some instances, Lindsay bought paintings direct from the artist; as has been mentioned, this was the case with Henry Wright Kerr. In 1893, 1898,

145.

³⁵ Originally a frame maker and gilder, the business of Aitken Dott (1815–92), A. Dott & Son, was taken over by his son, Peter McOmish Dott (1856-1934) who developed the firm into a fine art dealers. In 1897 it opened as The Scottish Gallery and it is still an art gallery today. Until 1897 Lindsay refers in his inventory to A. Dott & Son. For purchases in 1897 and 1898 he refers to P. M. Dott & Co., and from 1899 onwards again as A. Dott & Son (occasionally simply Dott & Son).

1899 and 1901 he purchased pictures by various artists at the annual exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy. In five instances he bought paintings from private individuals other than artists, and in a further seven his catalogue does not disclose the source of his purchase.

As Lindsay was a businessman, one may ask to what extent his collection – besides giving aesthetic pleasure and acting as a status symbol – could be viewed as a successful investment. While a final answer to this question probably cannot be found, there are several indications of his overall sound judgement. Certainly, Lindsay seems to have chosen his pictures with care. His handwritten catalogue of his collection keeps careful track, month by month, of the total sum spent on purchasing paintings, and ends in April 1903 with the sum of £10,987 and 3 shillings.³⁶ In 1915 his collection, according to a report in *The Scotsman*, had an estimated value of 'between £14,000 and £15,000'³⁷ – a fair, but not spectacular increase in its value.

Nevertheless, on 28 February 1920 a substantial part of the collection was sold at auction by Dowell's in Edinburgh. It may have seemed foolish for the family to do so a mere fifteen months after the end of the war. Great Britain, once a major creditor-nation, was now a debtor-nation. There was less wealth to support art and artists. As it turned out, however, the sale was providential, because in the twenties and thirties the social and economic climate would get worse rather than better.³⁸ The auction catalogue, entitled *Catalogue of the Very Valuable and Choice Collection of Oil Paintings and Water-Colour Drawings Formed by the Late James Lindsay, Esq., Edzell Lodge, Inverleith Terrace*, lists 101 paintings; all except one were sold.³⁹ It contains illustrations of twenty-six paintings.

The sale report, published in *The Scotsman* on Monday, 1 March 1920, lists seventy-two items together with the prices fetched for each.⁴⁰ The newspaper noted:

Exceptional interest attached to the sale in Dowell's Rooms, George Street, Edinburgh, on Saturday of the collection of oil paintings and water-colour drawings formed by the late Mr James Lindsay, Edzell Lodge, Inverleith Terrace, Edinburgh, and high prices were recorded for several works.

³⁶ Handwritten inventory of Lindsay's collection.

³⁷ *The Scotsman*, Friday 8 January 1915, quoted in Johnson, *Wm. Lindsay & Sons*, 27.

³⁸ I thank Bill Smith for pointing out this macro-economic context of the sale.

³⁹ I am indebted to Margaret Gent who has kindly made the auction catalogue available to me, and to her daughter, Ann Gent, who scanned it.

⁴⁰ The prices reported by *The Scotsman* include Dowell's premium.

Of the four paintings by William McTaggart (1835–1910) listed in Lindsay's handwritten catalogue, three were sold at the auction, fetching particularly high prices.⁴¹ The record was set by *Where the Smugglers Came Ashore* (1890), which fetched £1,750; when Lindsay acquired it in 1896 he had paid £250.⁴² A smaller version is in the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock.⁴³ *Bonnie Muirland* (1900)⁴⁴ fetched £1,000; Lindsay had bought it in July 1901 for £210.⁴⁵ The same price was obtained for *Cauldron Bay*, styled *Galdren Bay*, *Macbrihanish* in the auction catalogue, in which a photo is included.⁴⁶ This painting, acquired by Lindsay in April 1895 for £145, depicts almost exactly the same view as the artist's famous *The Preaching of St Columba* (c. 1897, City of Edinburgh Museums & Galleries).⁴⁷ Gauldrons Bay is seen from the north, but the saint and the crowd listening to him are absent, while children, painted in McTaggart's characteristic fluid style, are seen in the foreground and middle background. It is probable that Lindsay's painting antedates *The Preaching of St Columba*, and thus it might be the same painting as *The Gauldron Bay*, dated by Caw to 1892. Caw, however, does not give the dimensions of the latter painting; a further problem is that he states that it is signed 'W. McTaggart 1891–7', whereas Lindsay's painting is signed 'W. McTaggart 92'.

⁴¹ Here and below I quote the handwritten notes in the auction catalogue of the hammer prices.

⁴² Illustrated in Caw, 'The Present Condition of Art in Scotland'. James L[jewis] Caw, *Scottish Painting Past and Present* (Edinburgh, 1908), 261 gives the title as *Where the Smuggler Came Ashore*. Lindsay gives the alternative title *A Silken Sea*, which is not to be found in James L[jewis] Caw, *William McTaggart, R.S.A., V.P.R.S.W.: A Biography and an Appreciation* (Glasgow, 1917), 'Index to Pictures'. Also reproduced in *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 91, facing 15.

⁴³ This small version is illustrated in Per Kvaerne, '*Singing Songs of the Scottish Heart*'. *William McTaggart 1835–1910* (Edinburgh, 2007), 143 and www.inverclyde.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/mclean-museum-and-art-gallery/museum-collections/fine-art/william-mctaggart-1835-1910/?galleryindex=4&show=large

⁴⁴ Image, see www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2009/the-scottish-sale-l09815/lot.28.html

⁴⁵ The catalogue of Sotheby's *The Scottish Sale, September 2009*, 24 indicates that it was bought by the art dealers Alex Reid & Lefevre, Glasgow before 1920 and then sold to 'Alex Buist Esq., by 1920'; however, the 1920 auction catalogue lists it as no. 72, and the pencilled note of the price is £1,000. This is only one of several conundrums relating to the Lindsay collection. However, at the time Sotheby's did not have access to the present information. The hammer price at the Sotheby's 2009 auction was £58,850, cf. Johnson, *Wm. Lindsay & Sons*, 23.

⁴⁶ Illustrated in *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 78, facing 12.

⁴⁷ Illustrated in Kvaerne, '*Singing Songs of the Scottish Heart*', 200.



The auction resulted in a net payment to the owners of £16,473 and 5 shillings, according to a handwritten note on page sixteen of the copy of the auction catalogue placed at my disposal.⁴⁸ The prices quoted in *The Scotsman* are generally 5 per cent higher than the prices noted in pencil in the margins of the auction catalogue. Presumably the latter is the hammer price, whereas *The Scotsman* reports the price including the buyer's premium. In the case of *A Surrey Landscape* by Cecil Lawson (see below), the purchase at the auction was made through The Scottish Gallery (Aitken Dott & Son), who added their own commission of 2.5 per cent. Possibly this dealer handled other purchases as well.

Compared to the estimate of £14,000 to £15,000 published by the Scotsman referred to above, the sum obtained by the owners at the 1920 auction might seem to have been somewhat disappointing, but more than sixty paintings from Lindsay's collection, including *Mrs Craigie Halkett* by Raeburn, do not figure in the auction catalogue. It has not been possible to ascertain whether these paintings had already been sold or given away by 1920, or whether they were retained by the Lindsay family and dispersed later on. On the other hand,

⁴⁸ See handwritten inventory of Lindsay's collection. This was the sum paid after the auctioneers' commission of £1,830 and 7 shillings had been deducted.

at least twelve paintings are listed in the auction catalogue that are not found in Lindsay's own list. Again, the reason for this discrepancy is not known. For these paintings, the information otherwise provided by Lindsay's own catalogue – provenance, cost, year and month of purchase – is not available. It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that the total value of the Lindsay collection was at least £20,000 by 1920.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss to what extent the value of Lindsay's collection might throw light on the larger context of the Scottish art market. However, in the case of one artist, at least, namely William McTaggart (1835–1910), it is clear that the art market had come to appreciate his work. Lindsay owned four paintings by this artist, for which he had paid prices ranging from £145 to £265; when three of them were sold at auction in 1920, they fetched prices between £1,000 and £1,750 – a significant increase in value.



Where the Smuggler came ashore. By William McTaggart, R.S.A.

In the possession of James Lindsay, Esq.

A fourth painting by McTaggart, not included in the auction, was *Snow in April at Broomieknowe* (1892). It may be assumed that this is the same painting as *April Snow* (1892), as the latter is a large canvas (90 x 138 cm), which fits well with the price of £265 paid by Lindsay in 1897.⁴⁹ Caw gives the owner of the painting (in 1917) as 'Mr. J. Howden Hume, Glasgow',⁵⁰ which would indicate that it was sold by the Lindsay family before the auction in 1920. What the price at that time may have been, is not known. The painting now belongs to

⁴⁹ Illustrated Kvaerne, *'Singing Songs of the Scottish Heart'*, 216.

⁵⁰ Caw, *William McTaggart*, 265.

The Royal Bank of Scotland.⁵¹

Although a large part of Lindsay's collection was dispersed in 1920, a number of paintings from his collection found their way into public collections in Scotland and abroad. The first work to be so acquired was *Surrey Landscape*, a small oil painting by Cecil Gordon Lawson (1851–82).⁵² It was bought at the Dowell's auction for £147 by The Scottish Gallery (formerly A. Dott & Son) on behalf of the Trustees of the National Gallery of Scotland.⁵³ The gallery already had a painting by Lawson,⁵⁴ an artist held in high esteem by James Caw, the Gallery's director:

His [*Lawson's*] pictures are pregnant with the life and change of Nature, with its growth and lusty life, its decay and perennially renewed youth, and with those emotional symphonies which the ever-changing sky plays upon the enduring features of the earth.⁵⁵

In the same year *The Peacock* (1900) by Edwin John Alexander was acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria.⁵⁶ At Dowell's it was sold for £400. It was bought from the new owner by the Felton Bequest on the recommendation

⁵¹ An oil sketch of the same scene entitled *Snow in April* belongs to the Scottish National Gallery (NG 2138). Its modest dimensions (19.7 x 26.8 cm) makes it unlikely that this is the painting for which Lindsay paid £265.

⁵² NG 1372.

⁵³ I thank Helen Smailes, Senior Curator of British Art at the National Gallery of Scotland, for this information, including a copy of the receipt from The Scottish Gallery, preserved by the Scottish National Gallery. An illustration of the painting is found in *The National Gallery of Scotland. Concise Catalogue of Paintings* (Edinburgh, 1997), 190, and at www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/a-surrey-landscape-212560

⁵⁴ *The Old Mill: Sunset*, purchased in 1908. *The National Gallery of Scotland. Concise Catalogue of Paintings*, 190.

⁵⁵ Caw, *Scottish Painting*, 315–16, which also has an illustration of this painting.

⁵⁶ Illustrated in *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 26, facing 1. I thank Bill Smith for supplying the following comment: 'I think originally it may have been called "A Study", according to James Paterson's article on Alexander in *The Old Water-Colour Society's Club*, 1926–27, Fourth Annual Volume, and was lent to the RSA by Lindsay (as "A Study") in 1900 (though the list says Lindsay acquired it in December 1902). The watercolour turns up in 1901 at The Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours as "A Study (Peacock - illustrated)" (no mention of being lent by Lindsay). One and the same painting perhaps?' (e-mail, 24 February 2014). Cf. McKay, *The Scottish Royal Academy*, 1917, 10, which lists 'A Study', exhibited at the RSA in 1900. In the Lindsay collection inventory it is named *The Peacock*, acquired in December 1902.

of Frank Rinder, the Bequest's advisor in London,⁵⁷ and shipped by the *Orsona* in July 1920 to Melbourne.⁵⁸

No less than four paintings from the Lindsay collection were in the course of time acquired by Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery, the first being Robert Alexander (1840–1923), *My House is My Castle* (1898), purchased in 1931.⁵⁹ In Lindsay's catalogue it is named *Cat and Dog Life*. As the painting is dated 1898 and was acquired by Lindsay in May that year, one may assume that he bought it from the artist as soon as it was finished. In his catalogue he notes that he lent it to the RSA exhibition in 1899.⁶⁰ Sam Bough's (1822–78) *The Rocket Cart* (1876) was acquired in 1947.⁶¹ The title refers to a rescue operation mounted by an Isle of Wight coastguard crew, who by means of a rocket apparatus succeeded in saving fifteen men out of a crew of seventeen from the cargo ship *Glenarary* that had run ashore during the night of 1 March 1876.⁶² Lindsay had bought it from Ciceri & Co, Edinburgh in November 1895 for £420 (at the auction in 1920 it fetched £550).⁶³ In the year it was painted, 1876, the work had received some attention, being exhibited both at the Royal Scottish Academy and the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition. Lindsay lent the painting to the Sam Bough Loan Exhibition organised at Carlisle in July 1896, where it was exhibited as *Rocket Cart – Isle of Wight*, along with another painting by Bough titled *A Gale on the East Coast – Sea Running* (1869).⁶⁴ A second painting by Sam Bough from the Lindsay collection came to Kirkcaldy in 1960, viz. *Dysart Harbour*, donated by Dr Douglas Guthrie.⁶⁵ In the 1920 auction cata-

⁵⁷ Frank Rinder was advisor to the Felton Bequest 1918–1928. See *The Glasgow Herald*, 9 March, 1937, 13 ('Death of Mr. Frank Rinder Well-Known Art Critic and Author: Secured Famous Works for Australia').

⁵⁸ I am grateful to Joy Kremler, Curatorial Assistant, International Art, at the National Gallery of Victoria, for the information regarding the purchase of the painting by the Felton Bequest.

⁵⁹ Ellen McCance and Dallas M. Mechan, *Catalogue of the Fine Art Collections, Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery* (Kirkcaldy, 1996), 72. Illustrated in *Catalogue of the Collection to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 55, facing 7.

⁶⁰ At the RSA exhibition it had the title *Dog and Cat Life*, McKay, *The Scottish Royal Academy*, 12; the owner is not indicated.

⁶¹ McCance and Mechan, *Catalogue of the Fine Art Collections, Kirkcaldy Museum*, 73.

⁶² <http://www.clydeships.co.uk/view.php?ref=13786>

⁶³ Illustrated in *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 85, facing 14.

⁶⁴ Gil Hitchon and Pat Hitchon, *Sam Bough R.S.A. The Rivers in Bohemia* (Lewes, 1998), 259. The work, being among those not listed in Lindsay's own catalogue, is a watercolour, sold at the Dowell sale for £90. *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 22, illustration facing 2.

⁶⁵ McCance and Mechan, *Catalogue of the Fine Art Collections, Kirkcaldy Museum*, 72, illustration: 33.

logue it is entered as 'Sunset, East Wemyss'; it fetched £100.⁶⁶

Lindsay's *Dordrecht* by James Campbell Noble came to Kirkcaldy in 1947, bequeathed by William Innes.⁶⁷ Lindsay had bought it from the artist in April 1903 for £210, purchasing a new frame for £10 from 'Dott & Son'. It was the last painting acquired by James Lindsay before his death in December the same year.

Other paintings from the Lindsay collection in public galleries are Thomas Austen Brown (1857–1924), *Turnip Singling*, Sheffield Museums (titled *Turnip Hoeing*);⁶⁸ Hugh Cameron (1835–1918), *The Skipping Rope* (1894), Perth Museum and Art Gallery;⁶⁹ David Farquharson (1840–1907), *Canty Bay, North Berwick, East Lothian*, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums; Sam Bough, *Ben Ledi from the Pass of Leny*, Dundee Art Gallery and Museums;⁷⁰ and Sir William Quiller Orchardson (1832–1910), *Testing the Blade*, McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock.⁷¹ As has been noted, Lindsay's Raeburn was not included in the Dowell's sale. In 1932, however, it was acquired by the Mildred Lane Kemperer Art Museum in St Louis, Missouri.⁷²

It is a tribute to James Lindsay's good taste and acumen that so many paintings from his collection may now be seen in public collections. As mentioned above, he also submitted a number of paintings to temporary exhibitions at the Royal Scottish Academy and elsewhere. This practice was continued by his family after his death. Thus, Raeburn's *Mrs Craigie Halkett* was exhibited at the Scottish National Exhibition in Edinburgh in 1908,⁷³ and Robert Alexander's

⁶⁶ *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 41, illustration facing 5. I am grateful to Helen Smailes for having made this identification. Why the painting was given this title in the catalogue is not clear, as in Lindsay's list it is styled "Dysart".

⁶⁷ McCance and Mehan, *Catalogue of the Fine Art Collections, Kirkcaldy Museum*, 83.

⁶⁸ Image at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/turnip-hoeing-71962>

⁶⁹ Image at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/the-skipping-rope-128955>. Also reproduced in *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 45, facing 5.

⁷⁰ www.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-000-191-601-C

⁷¹ www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/testing-the-blade-183424. Also reproduced in *Catalogue of the ... Collection ... to be sold by Mr Dowell*, Lot 80, facing 13.

⁷² Kim Broker, Assistant Registrar for Collections at the Mildred Lane Kemper Museum, St Louis, Missouri, has kindly provided the following information: 'The Museum purchased the painting from Newhouse Galleries in New York in 1932, the same year that they acquired it from Van Diemen and Company. The painting was in Van Diemen's inventory by October 1929, but we have no record of when they acquired it' (e-mail, 22 November 2013).

⁷³ James Greig, *Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A. His Life and Works with a Catalogue of His Pictures* (London, 1911), 47.

My Home is My Castle at the Japan British Exhibition in London in 1910.⁷⁴

Evaluating Lindsay's collection one hundred years after its dispersal at auction in 1920, one may ask what vision informed his art acquisitions? Was his collection primarily the expression of a conventional wish to beautify his home and display his wealth and good taste? Or did he harbour a vision of Scotland, its history, culture and landscape? Lindsay's somewhat conservative taste in art comes out clearly – his interest was in landscape and genre paintings. However, while his taste may have been conventional, it was by no means backward-looking. Out of a total of ninety artists represented in his collection, at least fifty were living at the time Lindsay acquired their work. He was in touch with the mainstream contemporary art world in Scotland, although not with the more innovative among the artists, such as the group of painters known as the 'Glasgow Boys'. His purchase in 1897 of a painting by Edward Arthur Walton (1860–1922), a member of the 'Glasgow Boys' is an exception.

On the other hand, it does not seem that Lindsay was particularly fascinated by the fashionable Romantic visions of the Highlands and Islands. Among the painters whose works adorned Lindsay's home in Edinburgh, Horatio McCulloch (1805–67) can certainly be considered a painter of the Highlands, and to some degree Sam Bough and David Farquharson (1840–1907) also. However, it is evident that Lindsay's heart was not in the Highlands, but rather in the Lowlands, the industrial and commercial hub of Scotland, where he himself lived and had developed a successful business. Scottish artists such as Peter Graham (1836–1921), John MacWhirter (1839–1911), and Joseph Farquarson (1846–1935), who had established themselves in London (at least for extended periods) as highly successful landscape painters of the romantic Highlands, are conspicuously absent from Lindsay's collection. William McTaggart – well represented in Lindsay's collection – might be considered as an artist of the Highlands (or at least, the Islands). However, it can be argued (convincingly, in my opinion) that McTaggart was above all inspired by a personal and poetical vision of landscape as a context for human presence, especially that of children, and a considerable part of his work portrays not his native Kintyre, but Fife and, especially, the gentle landscape of Midlothian.

Painters such as Thomas Austin Brown (1857–1924), George Paul Chalmers (1833–78), Robert McGregor (1847–1922), William Darling McKay (1844–1924), and the traditional agricultural work and landscape in the Lowlands (rapidly becoming anachronistic at the time of Lindsay's activity as a collector)

⁷⁴ I thank Jane Freel, Museums Curator, Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery, for this information.

depicted by them, were, it would seem, more visibly represented in Lindsay's collection, together with numerous genre paintings. This choice was not, I would argue, due to chance, but to his personal preferences. James Lindsay was, in a rather conventional way, a man of his times and of his social context, and this constitutes the significance of his collection.