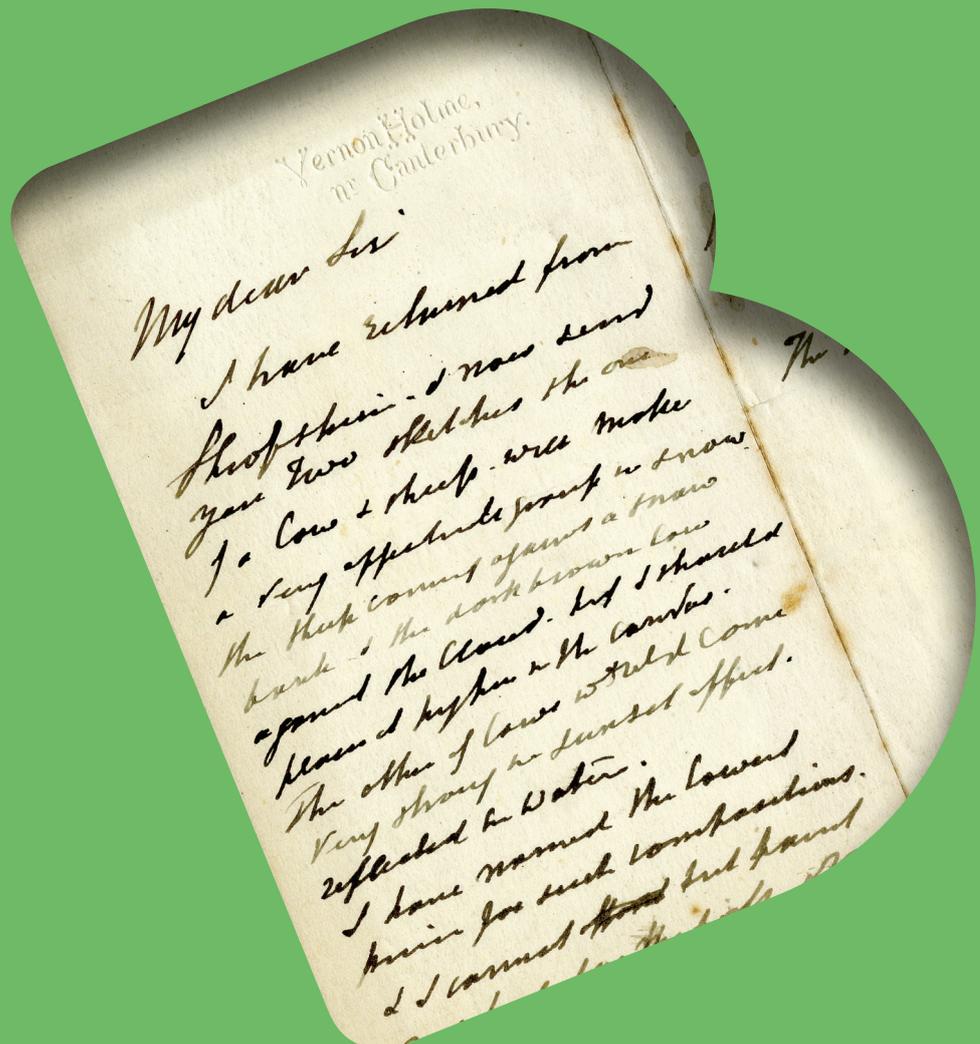


# THE GARDEN ROOM

## The Letters of Thomas Sidney Cooper 1837-1890

The letters reproduced here have kindly been lent to Canterbury Museums by Mr J.M. Goodacre. They were originally collected from many sources by Mr Kenneth Westwood.



## Business:

The letters here are to illustrate how Cooper's art was primarily a business, as well as demonstrating the difficulties he faced in receiving payment.



# *Thomas Sidney Cooper to Samuel Eglington*

28 September 1837

.....

My Dear Sir

Your favour I received yesterday in which I find an offer for my large picture of £130. I must decline it, as I have 150 Gns. in reserve with a person in town whom I believe to be a dealer. Will you have the kindness to thank the Gentleman for his offer, from me, and say I can never accept an offer so low.

You did not say who gained the prize, will you in your next.

Many thanks for your kindness – Believe me

Yours faithfully

Thos Sidney Cooper

Saml. Eglington Esq  
Liverpool Academy

27 Portland Terrace  
Sept. 28. 1937

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*Morning – A Farmyard near Canterbury*, oil on canvas, was exhibited first at the Royal Academy, London, 1937, no. 375. Unsold, it was sent to Liverpool, and exhibited no. 242, priced 200gns. Intended as a “a sort of companion picture to the evening effect ‘Milking-Time’ of three years before”, (S. Sartin suggests, P. 53, that the picture was bought at the Royal Academy by Graves & Hodgson, the London dealers and printers, who then sent the painting to Liverpool for exhibition. Cooper’s letter suggests that the picture was unsold when he entered it at the Liverpool Academy.)

Samuel Eglington was Secretary of the Liverpool Academy. Cooper became quite friendly with him and his family during trips to Liverpool.



# Autograph letter from Thomas Sidney Cooper to 'The Editor of The Art Journal'

26 June 1858  
.....

'To the Editor of the Art

Journal'

Sir

In your notice of, &, criticisms on the present Exhibitions on the Royal Academy, you state – No.203 “A Highland Dairy” – T.S. Cooper, A. Simply a landscape, with cows & figures: the animals are drawn as well as Mr. Cooper usually now draws cattle, but they are by no means so careful as of yoe.” I therefore write to inform you that I have not a picture so entitled in the exhibition, nor was the one, above described, painted by me. The particular mention of it, however, induces one to imagine either, that the mistake was designedly made, or that there was great carelessness in your method of criticising the pictures.

You will see the necessity, and justice of making this statement public, in the next number of your journal.

Your very humble servant

Thos. Sidney Cooper

2 Dorset Square

26 June 1858.

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'The Art Journal' 1849 -1912 (previously 'The Art - Union Monthly Journal' (1819-1848) was the most important Victorian journal on art. Samuel Carter Hall (1800 -1889), to whom Cooper addresses his letter, was the editor from 1839 until his retirement in 1880.

Hall had commissioned a drawing of 'The Gypsy Camp' for his publication 'The Book of Gems' (1844) but Cooper had great difficulty in getting payment for it. He did eventually get the original returned but 'never had any further transactions with him'.

This letter suggests that the animosity between them continued.

# *Thomas Sidney Cooper to J. Bond*

5 December 1859

.....

Vernon Holme

5 Dec 1859

Dear Sir

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your favour. I think I decline to accept this offer of £52.10. for my picture of Winter. Tis the first I have painted of that class. I consider it a very successful effort.

Believe me

Ys faithfully

Thos Sidney Cooper

J. Bond Hon

(In ink across the top left corner: 'red Dec 6th wrote Mr Fenton same day').

---

In 1859 Cooper painted the first of many 'snow' scenes. The offer contained in this letter probably refers to a watercolour.

J. Bond had not been identified, however, three collectors by the name of Fenton owned work by Cooper: James, Joseph and W. Fenton. It is not known whether they were related, and no particular work suggesting 'Winter', or dated 1859, has been identified.



***A photo-copy of a certificate from Thomas Sidney Cooper to J. B. Behrens.***

18 December 1860  
.....

(On paper with printed heading: Vernon Holme, Harbledown).

18 Dec. 1860

(Sketch of cattle and sheep on a mound).

T.S. Cooper ARA 1860

This is to certify that the picture sent to me by J. B. Behrens, like the above sketch, is painted by me in 1853.

Thos Sidney Cooper



# *Thomas Sidney Cooper to Robert Cole*

1 December 1861

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1 Dec 1861

My Dear Sir

I am in the same circumstances with regard to prices of stock they being so low & I am engaged in some work, I wish to have ready by tomorrow week to take to town, when I shall receive the October dividend, & can then settle your act. But I shall write to a gentleman who owes me for a picture for the amount & if I receive it or any other during this week, I will send you a cheque.

Ys Very faithfully

Thos Sidney Cooper

Rob Cole Esq



# ***Thomas Sidney Cooper to L.Colls\****

10th October 1872

---

10 Oct 72

My dear sir

I go to London today – so if you can call at Chepstow Villa tomorrow morning you can have the Drawing

Faithfully Yours

Thomas Sidney Cooper

Mr L Colls

---

\*Lebbeus Colls was a fine art dealer of 168 Bond Street, London.

On the reverse of the letter is a list of pictures, including artists names: Rowlandson, De Wint, Girtin, V. Cole, and Cooper's address: 42 Chepstow Villas, (Not in Cooper's hand)



# *Copy of letter fro Thomas Sidney Cooper to Mr. Lamb*

n.d (1873)  
.....

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter from Harbledown but as I shall not return there these 14 days, I will write to my servant to send the picture to me here, & as soon as I can will let you have it & the certificate.

Yrs faithfully

ThosSidney Cooper

Mr Lamb Dundee



# **Photo Copy of Letter from Thomas Sidney Cooper to the Hon.J.Colbourne\***

21 January 1874  
.....

Jany. 21. 1874

Dear Sir,

I am not now much in Town & go up only occasionally to the meetings of the Royal Academy, but if my name can be of any service to the Club I have no objection whatever it should be placed in the list of the committee on the conditions which you name in your letter.

(over page)

The next time I am in Town I hope to be able to visit your Club. & believe me

Yrs faithfully

Thos. Sidney Cooper

Mayor The Hon. J. Colbourne Hon.Sec.

(On the reverse the recipient has written:

T.S.Cooper R.A.

21.1.74

Will Serve [crossed out] join Committee)

# ***Photo-Copy and photograph of letter from Thomas Sidney Cooper to Thomas Agnew\****

15th May 1877  
.....

15 May 1877

Dear Tom Agnew,

Ys to hand - & I acknowledge with thanks the cheque for the last two pictures. Inside I have sent you a very rough sketch of the subject you saw begun at my house. I have not yet drawn in the background figures yet, but you recollect (sic) something of the colour; I think it will make the most effective pictures I have yet painted. I shall paint on it again this week; come down & see it. You said you should like to & your daughter How is your brother William? remember me to him with best wishes

Ys faithfully

Thos Sidney Cooper

(Over page – sketch of mounted figures and sheep in a mountainous landscape, annotated with size 6 feet and 5 feet)

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\*Thomas Agnew, 1827 – 1883, and his brother William, 1825 – 1910, were partners in the most important fine art business of the nineteenth century. Begun by Thomas Agnew Snr, 1794 – 1871, Messrs Agnew and Sons, began in Manchester, then opened a gallery in Liverpool, and eventually set up business in London in 1860. At the period of this correspondence they were perhaps the major buyer of Cooper's work, (in the decade following their move to London, the Agnews bought over one hundred works directly from the artist's studio). Cooper naturally became very friendly with both brothers. William, later Sir William, joined the firm in 1840 and retired in 1895; Thomas joined in 1842.



Personal:

The letters here convey Cooper's personality and his attitude towards his own art.



# ***Photo-copy of letter from Thomas Sidney Cooper to D. Colnaghi.***

22 January 1841  
.....

16 Wellington Terrace

Jan.y 22 1841

My Dear Sir,

Will you allow me to ask your assistance in my endeavours for the fatherless.

I assure you tis a case in which benevolence will be well bestowed. & Believe me I shall esteem it a personal favour.

I am Dear Sir

Faithfully Yours

Thos. Sidney Cooper

---

Address on reverse: Mr D. Colnahgi, Publisher, Pall Mall East.

Postmarked: Jan. 23, 1841 & marked: P. Paid.

Dominic Paul Colnaghi (1790 - 1879), was a print dealer of 14 Pall Mall, London. He succeeded his father as head of the firm of Paul and Dominic Colnaghi in 1833. He was also a noted connoisseur of arms and armour.

The date of the letter suggests it was written following the death of George Chambers (1803 - 1840), when Cooper acted as chairman of a committee formed to raise funds for Chambers' widow and children. Reference to Cooper's efforts are contained in John Watkin's *Life and Career of George Chambers*, published in 1841. D. Colnaghi was one of the sponsors named on a prospectus for the publication.

Brandeis University Library, Waltham, Massachusetts, U.S.A. J.M. Whistler Manuscript Collection. (Folder 46).



# ***Autograph Letter from Thomas Sidney Cooper to unidentified correspondent.***

No date (Sept. 1842 - Sept. 1843).\*

.....

Sir

In answer to yr favour I am usually at home ay morning before 3oclock after which time tis uncertain I know of any engagement that will take me from home for a few days.

I am Sir

Your Humble Serv.

Thos Sidney Cooper

16 Wellington Terrace

St. Johns Wood

---

\*Cooper was using black-edged mourning writing paper between these dates following the death of his wife Charlotte on 31 August 1841.

Cooper was living at 16 Wellington Terrace from 1840 to 1853. However, from mid-1847 the house became "Douro Villa, Wellington Road."

The name "Merchant" is writing in pencil on the reverse of the letter.



# *Thomas Sidney Cooper to Mr. Hogarth*

5 September 1867

.....

(On black edged mourning paper with embossed black printed crest and address: Vernon Holme, Harbledown).

5 Sepm. 1867

Dear Sir.

You will put me in hand immediately two boards covered with paper, as usual. But be careful there is no blemish in it, as I found two small flaws in one of the last large boards. The size 34inches by 20in. & let me have them as soon as possible.

Yr Very Obliged

Thos Sidney Cooper

Mr Hogarth

---

It is not known for whom Cooper was using mourning stationary in 1867. Cooper's mother died two years earlier in 1865. Sir Charles Eastlake P.R.A died in 1866, but although a friend and colleague it seems unlikely that Cooper would adopt mourning stationary for anyone outside his immediate family.



# *Thomas Sidney Cooper to W. Sherlock*

26 October 1867

.....

(On black-edged mourning paper with embossed black printed crest and address: Vernon Holme, Harbledown).

Oct. 26 1867

Sir

My son sent me the package of photographs to me here, but they are too small of any purpose of mine, but you can tell me what you charge for some of them, perhaps my children may choose a few of them. If you had any larger of cattle, or could make me a few for myself only, & not others could have, I might purchase them if suited.

V. Obliged

Thos Sidney Cooper

Mr. W. Sherlock

---

Across the top of the page is written in ink: 'Private 1'.

It is not known for whom Cooper was using mourning stationary in 1867.



# ***Photo-copy of letter fro Thomas Sidney Cooper to the Hon.J.Colbourne***

16th January 1874  
.....

16 Jany 1874

Dear Sir,

Your Letter has been forwarded to me here. & I beg you will thank the Committee of the "Temple Club, for the honour they have conferred on me in electing me an Honorary Life Member of their Cub & Believe,

Yrs Faithfully

Thos. Sidney Cooper

The Hon. J. Colbourne Hon.Sec.



## ***Thomas Sidney Cooper to Cook***

10 July 1877

.....

10 July 1877

My dear Cook,

I have some important work I must finish this month, or it would have been a great pleasure to me to have joined your party. & I have also made arrangements to leave with my family for Cornwall. But I thank you all the same for your kind invite & believe me

Ys faithfully

Thos Sidney Cooper



## *Thomas Sidney Cooper to William Agnew\**

30 April 1880  
.....

30 April 1880

Dear W Agnew,

I was much disappointed I did not meet you at the Royal Academy private View today. I wished to congratulate you on the Very distinguished honour you have lately received long may you enjoy it. Should you be in the neighbourhood tomorrow or Sunday morning, I shall like to see you, as I must leave on Monday, having lost my only Brother.

Ys faithfully

Thos Sidney Cooper

\*Sir William Agnew, 1825 – 1910, London Art Dealer (See letter dated 15th May 1877)



# Copy of letter from Thomas Sidney Cooper to Mrs Gladstone

28th March 1881  
.....

March 28th 1881

Dear Mrs Gladstone,

I have had a dreadful accident to my right hand, and write this with my left hand, to say how highly I should esteem the honour if Mr Gladstone would [word crossed out by TSC] honour me with a visit to see them. I don't know Miss Balfour's address. She would like to see them if she knew it, and believe me,

Yours most faithfully

Tho Sidney Cooper

left hand.

---

Mrs Gladstone wife of four-times Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, was the sister and heiress of Sir Stephen Glynne. Through their marriage in 1839 the castle of Hawarden in Flintshire passed into the Gladstone family.

On the 22nd March 1881, while arranging his paintings for the private view at Vernon Holme, an easel holding a heavy picture gave way and Cooper's hand was caught between the edge of the frame and the centre bar of the easel, resulting in the skin of his right hand being torn from just below the wrist to his knuckles. The wound necessitated a trip to Canterbury to have it dressed. The accident was reported in the Kentish Gazette 29 March 1881.

In his autobiography Cooper recounts two visits to Mr Gladstone, one in 1870 and another in 1890, but does not mention a visit in 1881.



# ***Photo-copy of letter from Thomas Sidney Cooper to Sir Fredrick Leighton, PRA\****

27th April 1890  
.....

To the President & Council of the Royal Academy.

Gentlemen,

When I was elected an associate of the Royal Academy, I received the following advice.

“When you send your picture for Exhibition; if more than one; you must place your finished work no 1 on your list, which will be hung in the large gallery, (which you are entitled to) and when you are raised to an Academician, and hanger, you must be sure and do the same, to all the members works who are not on the Council &... The President is not on any hanging Committee, but he attends to see this law is observed also that no injustice is done to any member” I have been 45 years a member of the Academy, and this has always been observed, and fulfilled to e, & and by me, till last year, and this year, again my principal work is placed out the way, while 5 or 6 members have to (sic) pictures, & one has three pictures hung in No. 3 Gallery, who have right, to only one, hung there. I need not tell you, how deeply I am pained by this indignity, and injustice. I have exhibited at the Royal Academy, for 57 years, and not been absent one year during that long period. I have had an honourable and industrious life always anxious that my latter days should be free from blight or dishonour. I was associated with Callcott, Wilkie, Collins, Constable Etty Shee &...and I am quite sure, not one of them would have acted to the dishonour of any member.

Your Humbled Servant

Thos Sidney Cooper

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At the time of this letter, Sir Fredrick Leighton, 1830 – 1896, was president of the Royal Academy. Fredrick Alexis Eaton was Secretary, Phillip Hermogenes Calderon, the Keeper, and John Callcott Horsley, the treasurer. Cooper exhibited four pictures in 1889 and again in 1890.

Early associates of Cooper’s mentioned in the letter were:

Sir Augustus Wall Callcott, 1779. Sir David Wilkie, 1785 – 1841. William Collins, 1788 – 1847. John Constable, 1776 – 1837. William Etty, 1787 – 1849. Sir Martin Archer Shee, 1769 – 1850.





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**THE STUDY**  
The Letters of Thomas Sidney Cooper  
1837-1890