Family and Friends

Many of Whistler's figure subjects portrayed his immediate circle of family, friends and acquaintances, from his mistress Fumette in Paris in the 1850s, to his wife Beatrice and her sister 'Bunnie' in the 1890s. One of the largest and earliest groups featured the family of his half-sister Deborah and her husband, the surgeon, etcher and collector Seymour Haden, who became an influential figure in the revival of etching in England. The relationship between Whistler and Haden quickly deteriorated. Whistler grew jealous of the public success of Haden's landscape prints, while Haden was outraged by Whistler's lifestyle (living openly with his new mistress). Whistler's relationships with numerous other people suffered the same fate. When he turned his scathing wit on former friends his butterfly monogram acquired a barbed tail to match the sting of his wit.

Annie

Etching printed on Japanese paper, 1857-8

One of the earliest etchings included in The French Set, featuring Whistler's nine-year old niece, the daughter of his half-sister Deborah and her husband, the surgeon, etcher and collector Seymour Haden (1818-1910). It was actually Haden who sketched the few lines outlining the lower legs on the plate as he did not approve of the way Whistler had finished the figure at the knees. After he fell out with Haden, Whistler annotated an impression of this print: 'Legs not by me, but a fatuous addition by a general practitioner.'

Given by Mrs T. H. Riches 1923

P.2071-R

Seymour, seated

Etching printed on Japanese paper, 1857-8

Like Annie (above), this was among the earliest etchings that Whistler made whilst staying with the family of his half-sister Deborah and her husband Seymour Haden. Whistler's nephew Seymour was about seven years old at the time. This is one of a group of impressions of early plates in the Fitzwilliam (like Fumette, The Tinker, Mother Gerard, Street at Saverne, The Mustard Seller and Vauxhall Bridge) that were probably printed at the same time on similar Japanese paper, and have remained together ever since. One of the other plates is dated 1861 (Vauxhall Bridge), giving the earliest possible printing date for the whole group; this was a time when 'The French Set' and other plates by Whistler were being printed in London by Delâtre for Serjeant Thomas.

Given by G. J. F. Knowles 1954 in exchange for an impression given in 1921

P.2075-R

The Wine Glass

Etching printed on 'antique' laid paper, 1858

Made shortly after Whistler's return to London on completing The French Set. Over two months he and Haden worked closely together at the latter's house in Sloane Street, where Haden had installed an etching press. Haden also made an etching of a wine glass, and another of the cup and saucer that appear in Reading by Lamplight (below). Whistler's friend Henri Fantin-Latour made his own painted study of a cup and saucer a few years later during a visit to his friends and patrons Edwin and Ruth Edwards, in 1864 (now in the collection of The Fitzwilliam Museum 1016). This impression is printed on a fly-leaf taken from a sixteenth-century book.

Bought from the Print Duplicates Fund 1941

P.51-1941

Reading by Lamplight

Etching and drypoint printed on Japanese paper, 1858

Evidently observed from life, this print shows Whistler's half-sister (and Haden's wife) Deborah. Haden also made an etching of this scene at the same time, although his composition was in landscape rather than portrait format, and he subsequently added the figure of Annie, copied from Whistler' separate etching (Annie, seated below). Like many of the etchings that Whistler and Haden made together at this time, the use of chiaroscuro and shading recalls Rembrandt; Whistler would have been increasingly familiar with Rembrandt's etchings from his opportunity to view Haden's fine collection at this time.

Given by Mrs T. H. Riches 1923

P.2072-R
Annie, seated
Etching printed on old laid paper, 1858
Another study of Whistler's niece Annie (see Annie above).
The paper has a watermark of 1814, and the uneven edges are typical of the scraps of old paper that
Whistler collected for printing. He later explained to the printer of his lithographs, Thomas Way: 'when the
sheet has a cut edge and a rough one, I would always put the straight cut edge at the top' (compare
Reading in Bed).
Given by Mrs T. H. Riches 1923
P.2088-R

The Music Room
Etching printed on 'antique' laid paper, 1858
As in Reading by Lamplight above, Deborah Haden is reading by
lamplight, but this time she is joined by her husband Seymour (left) and his medical partner James
Reeves Traer. The setting is the music room at the Hadens' house in Sloane Street. Using the press
installed at the top of the house, Whistler printed proofs on a wide variety of papers, leaving a varied
amount of ink on the surface of the plate. This impression is printed on the sort of Dutch 'antique' laid
paper that Whistler preferred (with Japanese paper) for its golden tone and quality.
The Hadens' music room, but with Deborah and Annie at the piano, was the subject of one of Whistler's
first two paintings submitted to the Paris Salon in the following year.
Given by Harold J. L. Wright 1923
P.2095-R

Reading in Bed
Etching printed on 'antique' laid paper, 1858
A study of Whistler's half-sister, Deborah Haden, made shortly after
Whistler's return to London having completed 'The French set'.
This impression is printed on a fly-leaf torn out of an old book. It bears the inscription in graphite 18/2/62,
which may have been the date of printing or purchase. The Rag Gatherers has the same date
inscription, so it is possible that this etching was also printed for Serjeant Thomas by Delâtre after
Thomas had acquired the plates of 'The Set' in 1861.
Given by Mrs T. H. Riches 1923
P.2087-R

Seymour standing under a Tree
Etching printed on thin Japanese paper, 1859
After seeing two of his 'French Set' etchings exhibited at the Paris
Salon, Whistler returned to London in May 1859 in time to see two of the etchings exhibited at the Royal
Academy exhibition. Over the summer he worked with Haden again, and this print of Whistler's nephew
was made on a trip to Kensington Gardens with etching materials. Haden etched his own view of the park
at the same time, and collaborated with Whistler on another. Whistler followed The Music Room with a
number of other views in and around the leafier parts of London, often with one of his artist friends or
relatives in view (see Landscape with Horse, the two impressions of Nursemaid and Child, The Punt
and The Thames (Sketching No.1).
Given by G. J. F. Knowles 1954
P.277-1954

Landscape with the Horse
Etching and drypoint printed on Japanese paper, 1859
One of several etchings of figures in a rural landscape (Nursemaid
and Child below) made during the visit of Henri Fantin-Latour to stay with Whistler at the Hadens' in the
summer of 1859. The figure in the foreground is probably young Seymour (see Seymour, seated and
Seymour seated under a Tree). Earlier in the spring in Paris Whistler had formed the Société des Trois
(Society of Three) with Fantin-Latour and Alphonse Legros. They shared an admiration for older French
artists such as Gustave Courbet and Camille Corot. Traces of the influence of Corot and Legros are
evident in this second state in which Whistler added the scribbled draughtsmanship of the trees and the
troubled sky (as well as the second horse). The labourers erecting telegraph poles reinforce Whistler's
own realist rather than idyllic approach to landscape.
Given by G. J. F. Knowles 1954
P.278-1954

Nursemaid and Child
Etching, first state, printed on 'antique' laid paper, 1859
This plate was etched around the same time as Landscape with Horse (above), and shows Deborah Haden sitting in a park near Holloway with one of her younger children.

Compare the second state below.
Given by G. J. F. Knowles 1954

Nursemaid and Child
Etching, second state, printed on thin Japanese paper, 1859

After printing the plate in its first state (see above), Whistler changed the profile of Deborah's nose and altered her hair. This impression of the second state was printed on Japanese paper, whilst the first state was printed on European 'antique' laid paper using a browner coloured ink.

Given by G. J. F. Knowles 1921

Drouet
Drypoint printed on 'antique' laid paper, 1859

It was not until Whistler returned to Paris in October 1859 that he drew complete subjects in drypoint for the first time. He wrote: 'The tiny thread of metal ploughed out of the line by the point as it runs along, clings to its edge through its whole length, and produces, in the proof, a soft velvety effect most painter-like and beautiful—precious too, for this raised edge soon falls off the plate, from the continuous wiping in printing' (see also Weary).

Most of Whistler's early drypoints were portraits of artists and friends. He knew the sculptor Charles L. Drouet (1836-1908) from his student days in Paris, and they remained close friends. Drouet said this plate was finished in two sittings, totalling five hours.

Given by John Charrington 1933

Fumette
Etching printed on Japanese paper, 1858

Made in Paris in the summer of 1858 before Whistler's trip to the Rhine. 'Fumette' was the nickname of the seamstress Héloïse, a grisette (a fun-loving Bohemian working girl from the Latin Quarter) who was Whistler's mistress for two years. She posed for several drawings and etchings in 1859 (see A Venus below).

This is one of a group of impressions of early plates in the Fitzwilliam (with The Tinker, Mother Gerard, Street at Saverne, The Mustard Seller, Seymour, seated and Vauxhall Bridge) that were apparently printed at the same time and on similar Japanese paper, and have remained together since. As one of the plates is dated 1861 (Vauxhall Bridge), the group was probably not printed until that date, when 'The French Set' was reprinted by Delâtre for Serjeant Thomas.

Given by G. J. F. Knowles 1954

A Venus
Etching printed on 'antique' laid paper, 1859

This Venus is closer in spirit to the realistic fleshy nudes of Rembrandt (particularly his etching Jupiter and Antiope) than it is to the idealism of the traditional classical nude, or the more sensational sensuality of Courbet's painted nudes that had been exhibited recently in Paris.

The model was Whistler's mistress 'Fumette', a grisette from the Latin quarter in Paris (see Fumette). She knew the verses of the Romantic poet Alfred de Musset by heart and would recite them to Whistler. She was reportedly passionately attached to Whistler and once tore up his drawings in a jealous rage.

This impression is printed on the Dutch 'antique' laid paper that Whistler favoured.

Given by G. J. F. Knowles 1954

Kenneth and Lena Graeme
Wood engraving by the Dalziel Brothers (Edward (1817-1905) and Thomas (1823-1906)) from Whistler's drawing on wood, published in Good Words, 1862.

Like Joanna Douglas below this is similar in spirit to those designed by the Pre-Raphaelites and their
circle. They illustrate *The Trial Sermon*, by 'M.C.', in which Kenneth Graeme, a divinity student, decided to base his graduation sermon on an old sermon in a book that his sister Lena was reading, but rather than lose his fiancée, Joanna Douglas, he abandoned his plan and the chance of immediate graduation. The model for Joanna was Joanna Hiffernan, a red-haired Irish woman who had been Whistler's mistress since 1861. She was his model in several other prints (see *Weary*).

Reitlinger Bequest 1950 (received 1991)

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Reitlinger Bequest 1950 (received 1991)

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**Weary**

Drypoint printed on thin Japanese paper, 1863

The model was Whistler's agent and mistress Joanna Hiffernan (see Joanna Douglas), who is here depicted rather in the manner of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's drawings of his mistress Fanny Cornforth, which were made around the time that he and Whistler became friends in 1862. There was a tradition associating *Weary* with Rossetti's poem about a prostitute called Jenny:

'Why, Jenny, as I watch you there
For all your wealth of golden hair
Your silk ungirdled and unlaced'

This fine and rare impression was printed in a state before the signature was added but with some of the work seen in the usual 'second' state. Whistler liked to print this plate on this very thin, silky Japanese paper.

Given by Sir Herbert Thompson 1920

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**The Menpes Children**

Etching, c.1886, printed on laid paper as the frontispiece to *Whistler as I knew him* by Mortimer Menpes, London 1904, no. 398 of 500 copies.

Whistler was a frequent visitor both professionally and socially to the house of Mortimer and Rosa Menpes in Fulham (see Studies of James McNeill Whistler). Menpes had set up a printing room there so that Whistler's Venetian etchings could be printed. Whistler was godfather to the youngest of the Menpes' daughters, born in 1884 and christened Dorothy Whistler in his honour. She sits on the right of this plate, with her brother standing in front of her and her sister (sketched twice) on the left. Dorothy was also the subject of a painting made at this time. Menpes's book, which is dedicated to Dorothy, remains an important source of information on Whistler's methods of biting, inking and printing.

Reitlinger Bequest 1950 (received 1991)

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**The Winged Hat**

Lithograph printed on thin Japanese paper, 1890

After his marriage to Beatrice Godwin in August 1888, Whistler made a number of lithographs of her close family, especially her assured and elegant sister Ethel Birnie Philip, whom he nicknamed 'Bunnie'. This print and *Suede Gloves* below show Bunnie wearing a fashionable plumed hat. Both were drawn in early autumn 1890 and preceded Whistler's more formal, painted portraits of her.

This proof was hand-printed, but the image was also machine-printed in a large edition published in October 1890 in the new periodical *The Whirlwind*, after being transferred to new stones. Whistler sent several copies of *The Whirlwind* to be distributed in Paris by Mallarmé, who admired the draughtsmanship as 'biting and elegant, of supreme charm'.

Given by Sir Herbert Thompson 1920

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**Suede Gloves**

Lithograph printed on 'antique' laid paper, 1890

One of a pair of studies (with *The Winged Hat*) showing Whistler's sister-in-law, Ethel 'Bunnie' Philips, in fashionable attire. Ethel's sister Beatrice Whistler referred to this print as 'Le Mosquetaire' (a name for the sort of glove worn by a musketeer).
This delicate proof was hand-printed on the eighteenth-century paper that Whistler loved to use for printing. His approval is marked by the addition of his butterfly in graphite (pencil), in addition to the butterfly that was printed as part of the lithograph.

A separate edition was machine-printed in large numbers on modern machine-made paper to appear in the journal *The Studio* in April 1894.

Bequeathed by G. J. F. Knowles 1959

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**The Red Dress**

Lithograph printed on machine made laid paper, 1894

A number of late lithographs feature Whistler's wife Beatrice, or her sister Binnie, in the interior or garden of the house in Rue du Bac, Paris, where the Whistlers moved in 1892. This is one of two portraits of Beatrice drawn on a single evening, 22 September 1894. She was already suffering from the cancer that killed her in May 1896, leaving Whistler devastated.

The embossed blind stamp indicates that this is one of the impressions published in November 1895 in *The Studio*. The original stone was printed onto transfer paper and transferred (with corrections) onto other stones to sustain the machine-printing of this large edition. The effect is crude compared to *Suede Gloves* above.

Bequeathed by G. J. F. Knowles 1959

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