

Beauties of the Present Age

A set of eleven fine mezzotint engravings after paintings by Sir Joshua Reynolds,
engraved and published by Valentine Green from 1779 to 1782.

This remarkable series of eleven prints is the most important and historically the most sought after set of mezzotints. My collection contains the only known complete set in first proof state.

This document is an extract of a chapter from my forthcoming book on Sir Joshua Reynolds which has the provisional title

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS
FROM CELEBRITY TO IMMORTALITY
The Golden Age of English Printmaking

This is a scholarly catalogue of about six hundred objects in my collection after or related to Reynolds, most of which are prints. It is nearly complete (so far over 110,000 words) and should be finished later this year. The whole catalogue is written in the same way as this excerpt which refers to other chapters in the completed book. This details the conclusions to which I have come from my research into the history of prints published after Reynolds.

Reynolds was very much involved in the instigation of the engraving of his prints and often selected or recommended the engraver. A significant number of mezzotint plates were engraved by his studio assistants in his studio, under his supervision. He also supervised the work of many of the other engravers, to ensure that the highest standards were achieved. As a result, the finest mezzotints, particularly in very early proof impressions, are as fine as any other engravings produced in any method, at any time and in any place. Sir Joshua Reynolds was responsible for this being the golden age of English print making.

Even though there are existing comprehensive catalogues of prints after Reynolds, I have discovered quite a few new print states and these show that the plates were often reworked to meet high demand which was clearly much higher than had been generally thought.

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Note 1: Database

This catalogue was created using my computer based system which I created for recording the history of fine and applied art and other types of history, all in one integrated system - **STIPPLE** (**S**ystem for **T**abulating and **I**ndexing **P**eople, their **P**ossessions, **L**ife and **E**verything). All catalogue entries and all text have been extracted directly for printing from the STIPPLE database.

Note 2: Quoting from STIPPLE Catalogues

The STIPPLE fine art database has separate catalogues for very many different object types, each having a separate number sequence. Whilst the very great majority of the objects recorded in the full catalogue are prints, there are a few other object types included, such as engraver's copper plates, ephemera, a wax portrait model (of Reynolds), engraving tools and some porcelain. The STIPPLE number within each catalogue is shown just below the title or description of the object. That is the number that should be used to identify the object, within the object type. Where there can be multiple instances of an object, such as prints, STIPPLE allows multiple museums and collections each to have their own accession number series.

Prints have the added complexity of states. Any change to the engraved plate, whether to the image or the inscription, counts as a change of state. These changes to the plate may have occurred so that the publisher can distinguish between early proof states and published states (and so charge more for the former), or to correct for wear caused by printing, or because the plate has changed hands. However complete the study of the engraved output after or by a particular artist or engraver may seem, there will always be new information waiting to be discovered. Thus, at any stage, it is not possible to state that a particular impression of a print is, say, state 3 of 4, as unrecorded states may be found. As STIPPLE is an online catalogue that can be updated at any time, it can be considered to be a "living" catalogue. Both the number and sequence of states of a particular plate may change as more is learnt. STIPPLE therefore gives each state of every print a unique STIPPLE state number so that a state can be identified, even when the state details of a print, and possibly their sequence, change. Thus for individual print impressions, there can be three identifiers - the number of the print in the STIPPLE Print catalogue, the accession number of individual impressions, and, if the state of an impression has been recorded, the unique state number allocated to the state. Users can access a print record and see how many impressions that they own and then find the state of each one or they can access the print record and then the states and find out those states of which they have copies, or they can access directly by accession number and then see details of the print or other object record. Each item in this catalogue has a number in bold to its left which is its number in this catalogue only. These numbers and the page numbers will be different when the full catalogue is printed.

Note 3: Object Source

All prints and other objects described in this extract and the complete catalogue and their images are taken from my collection. The complete catalogue is not a complete catalogue of prints after Reynolds in my collection nor is it a catalogue raisonnée of all prints after Reynolds. That is under preparation and, although it contains over 2600 prints, there is still much detailed work to do. I hope to make the catalogue raisonnée publicly available over the Internet in due course, but, unlike a printed catalogue, an on-line catalogue can be kept up to date with the latest findings and so may change at any time. If anyone particularly wants to access this now, this could be arranged.

Beauties of the Present Age

STIPPLE print set number #37

A set of eleven mezzotint whole length female portraits after Sir Joshua Reynolds, engraved and published by Valentine Green from 1779 to 1782.

Literature: 1780 Valentine Green; 1902 A. Whitman p.15; 1912 Lotus Vol. IV 2; 1929 J. Slater (6th Ed.) pp. 355 - 356; 1986 N. Penny p.36; 2014 M. Hallett p.281 - 283

This remarkable series is the most important and historically the most sought after set of mezzotints. It shows that the process of mezzotint is the most appropriate method for translating paintings, especially ones with high chiaroscuro. The series is undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements of mezzotint engraving and the equal of any prints engraved on the continent of Europe in any method at any time. Reynolds must have been very pleased with the outcome as it would have continued to enhance his already considerable reputation both in Britain and Europe; there was a very large export trade in English prints to the latter, where extensive collections were formed. Collectors competed to acquire prints from this set from the time that they were first published, and, by the 1920s, the enormous prices paid for the finest mezzotint impressions were frequently even higher than those achieved by the finest Rembrandt etchings, although, unlike those, mezzotint prices collapsed after the Depression and the passing of a generation of Anglo-centric collectors in the U.S.A.

Whilst quite a few prints by Green and by other engravers after Reynolds's paintings were published in pairs, this is the only group or set of portrait mezzotints after the artist to be published during his lifetime.

I have found plenty of evidence that Reynolds supervised the work of many of the leading engravers of his paintings, such as McArdell, Fisher, Doughty, Marchi, John Raphael Smith, Townley, James Watson, Grozer and Hodges. It would be surprising if Reynolds did not also supervise the work of Green, including the prints in this set.

Green's catalogue of his plates, dated 1st January 1780, contained his proposals for a series of whole length female mezzotint portraits after Reynolds, to be engraved and published by subscription by him. Green said that the series would be "on the Plan of those in the Royal Collection at *Windsor*, by Sir Peter Lely [*sic*] and at *Hampton Court* by Sir Godfrey Kneller." He followed this with newspaper advertisements on 14th February and 28th June 1780.

Green stated that six prints would be published in three pairs, and that "This series of Portraits will be extended, in proportion as the Nobility and the Public patronize the Undertaking". Six was the number of mezzotints in the set of the *Windsor Beauties* engraved by Thomas Watson after Lely and published one year earlier, on 1st January 1779, by Watson and Dickinson. The somewhat earlier *Hampton Court* series contained 12 mezzotints by John Smith after Kneller. The pairs in Green's series were published on 24th December 1779, 1st July 1780 and 1st December 1781. Clearly Green did receive sufficient patronage and published as an "extension" to each pair a single full length female mezzotint portrait to make a total of nine prints, and Whitman (Whitman 1902 p.15) believed that this was the full extent of the series, as did the author of an article in the *Lotus Magazine* (U.S.A.) in November 1912 (Volume IV, Number 2). The extensions were published on 1st May 1780, 1st December 1780 and 1st May 1782. Green also published, as a mezzotint pair on 1st December 1780, the three quarter length self-portrait of Reynolds in academic robes and Reynolds's portrait of Sir William Chambers. Reynolds's originals for these were hung in the Royal Academy's Assembly Room at Somerset House, their newly built home, of which Chambers was the architect.

Green's proposals continued: "Two Portraits will be published together, Price to Subscribers Twelve Shillings each; Price to Non-Subscribers Fifteen shillings each." He also said that "Subscriptions are received by Mr. Green, only ...". The price of proofs was normally twice that of impressions of the published state so subscribers were not being offered proofs, simply a price reduction for advance payment and earlier impressions. Presumably Green expected to pre-sell the proofs to his regular customers.

Green had already published a single full length female mezzotint portrait after Reynolds six months before the announcement of the series. This was *The Right Hon.ble Lady Betty Delmé* with her two children (STIPPLE print # 35356), published on 1st July 1779. Reynolds's original painting was one of his finest. It is likely that success with this print encouraged Green to publish a series. He would also have been aware of other full length female portrait mezzotints after Reynolds by other engravers that had already been published, such as *Lady Sarah Bunbury* and *Lady Elizabeth Keppel* by Edward Fisher, *Mary, Duchess of Ancaster* and *Mrs. Blake* by John Dixon and *Mrs Musters* and *Mrs. Carnac* by John Raphael Smith. Although there is no totally convincing evidence, it seems most likely that the creation of the series was Green's idea.

There was nothing in Green's original announcement to suggest that the already published *Right Hon.ble Lady Betty Delmé* was part of the series, but his newspaper advertisement of 25th July 1781 included it in the seven plates that he listed, even though that print had been published on 1st July 1779, six months before Green had first advertised his proposals for the series. It was not one of a pair and could hardly be described as an extension. Unlike subsequent prints in the series, this was the only one on which the name of Torre Freres, as printsellers, appeared on the proof state. Torres Freres had also been printsellers for the five mezzotints published by Green before *Lady Betty Delmé*. He also advertised the first two extensions on 25th July 1781 when he said that the series would be further continued beyond these; clearly he was happy with sales so far.

Even though Green's plates were full length, whilst those of the Windsor Beauties were three quarter length, Green's price for the set of six, totalling seventy two shillings to subscribers or ninety shillings to non-subscribers, was somewhat more ambitious than that for the Windsor Beauties which were advertised at forty shillings for the set (no subscriptions were sought).

Even if Reynolds was not the instigator of the set, he surely would have given Green every encouragement and either made the paintings available when they were in his studio or arranged for Green or a draughtsman to visit the houses where the paintings were hung after they had left his studio. Presumably it was Reynolds who obtained permission from the owners of the paintings to allow them to be engraved. He had done this before. The print shops at that time were very much part of the social scene and very popular with the public; Reynolds would have been very happy to have seen his name on the very finest prints in their windows.

I have not found any evidence that suggests how the paintings were chosen. Unlike the Windsor and Hampton Court portraits, these paintings by Reynolds were never intended to be hung as a set. Possibly it was simply that they were the most recent grand full length female portraits by Reynolds with which he was particularly pleased and whose owners were willing to have them engraved. However, all but two of them had been exhibited at the Royal Academy. These enormous portraits of the current society beauties were life size and must have left a marked impression on those viewing them. Since they could not go and buy a copy of the paintings, the only way that they could possess any of the images was to buy an impression from one of Green's plates.

Green's advertisement in the *Morning Herald and Public Advertiser* of 16th February 1782, and in other papers at around that time, announced the publication of *Emily, Mary, Countess of Salisbury* and *The Right Honourable Lady Elizabeth Compton* as plates 8 and 9. He stated that the last of the extensions, *The Right Honourable Lady Talbot*, would be "Plate 11", and included his plate of *Lady Elizabeth Laura, Lady Charlotte Maria & Lady Anne Horatia, Daughters to James late Earl of Waldegrave* as "Plate 10". This group portrait of the Ladies Waldegrave is in landscape rather than portrait format, and he presumably intended it as the centrepiece for the series. It seems likely that, whilst he may still have had impressions of the published states of all the stock, most or all of the proofs of the earlier plates had been sold by this time (probably only fifty proofs were printed - see below). On 13th July 1782, Green announced the publication of *The Right Honourable Lady Talbot* as plate 10 of the series (as we have seen he had earlier advertised it as plate 11), although it had been published on 1st May 1782. He does not mention any of the other plates in the set and it may well be that all impressions of these were already sold, in both proof and published states. The series was a significant commercial success for Green, who had been engraving and publishing other mezzotints at the same time and which he included in his advertisements.

On 16th February 1782, Green advertised that the price for the Ladies Waldegrave would be one guinea and he also offered tinted impressions at a higher price. These were probably coloured with oil rather than watercolour or gouache, and I have seen a few by other engravers, but not Green, treated in this way. However, he could have been referring to coloured transfer engravings on glass, as I have two such “glass prints” from this set, *Isabella, Duchess of Rutland* and *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*. These plates were issued by Green as the second pair in the series. As he later sold the plate of the Duchess of Rutland and it was re-issued by Charlotte Brydon in 1793 with the head altered to represent the Duchess of York and the artists’ names removed from the inscription, this pair of impressions may well have been made into glass prints in Green’s studio. They are certainly contemporary and must pre-date 1793. I have never seen any other transfer engravings on glass of full length 18th century ladies mezzotint portraits.

The plate size for the portrait format prints was 25” x 15” (635 x 381mm), a standard copper plate size used for large full length mezzotint portraits at that time. The plate for the landscape format Ladies Waldegrave was 20” x 23” (508 x 584mm). The standard canvas size for whole length portraits at the time was 7’10” x 4’10”, according to *The Artist’s Repository and Drawing Magazine*, c.1785, and, after allowing for an inscription space on the mezzotint, the proportions of the print images and the original paintings are not very different.

Later, in 1783, Green hoped to engrave Reynolds’s famous painting of *Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse* (STIPPLE painting #298), but Mrs. Siddons selected Francis Haward to engrave it in stipple (STIPPLE print # 5628) rather than in mezzotint. Green’s unfortunate argument with Reynolds over this meant that he did not publish another plate after Reynolds for twenty four years *Sir James Innes of Innes Bar.t* - (STIPPLE print #945).

Ignoring unfinished working proofs and later republications after the plates were sold, the plates in this series were mostly published by Green in two states - proof before title in scratched letters, and ordinary published state with title in engraved letters. Only *Jane Countess of Harrington* (STIPPLE print #547) has been seen published by Green with an additional, intermediate, state - proof before title but in engraved letters. There is also an impression without letters of *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (STIPPLE print #452) in my collection. It is difficult to determine its sequence in the order of states, for, although it is printed on laid paper, it is probably a later state and the reworking does not look like the work of Green.

It is likely that Green only printed fifty proofs of the plates in this series. The 1793 catalogue for his ill-fated Düsseldorf venture stated that “The number of proof impressions of the Mezzotint Plates is limited to fifty each ...”. Green’s mezzotint technique does not have the enormous depth achieved by, for instance, Thomas Watson or William Dickinson. It is unlikely that more than fifty proofs could have been taken from each plate in this series without retouching, and, until my recent purchase of an impression of the Ladies Waldegrave that had come from the Martin Erdmann Collection, I had found no evidence of any such differences between proof impressions of the same plate for any of the plates in the set. But the Erdmann impression is finer than any other impression of this print that I have ever seen and comparison with my two other impressions in the same state suggests evidence of retouching. If this is so, then I think that it is those others that are retouched and that the Erdmann impression is the earliest. Over a forty year period, I have owned five different copies of the proof state of the Ladies Waldegrave and this seems a very high number if only fifty were printed, particularly as they were printed over two hundred and thirty years ago, and many will be in museums and others will have been destroyed or are not known today. This also suggests that the plate must have been retouched and that more than fifty proof impressions were printed but only for this plate in the set.

One copy of a three quarter length proof by Green after Reynolds in my collection (*Miss Campbell* STIPPLE print number #5861) has large margins and is numbered “49” in ink in a contemporary hand in the right margin. I am sure that, a long time ago, I noticed other proof impressions by Green with numbering in the right margin, although I did not realise its significance then. This impression is not of the quality that you would expect from a proof and shows a surprising amount of wear, perhaps confirming that Green only published fifty proofs. If, as I assume, Green did number impressions in the order in which they were printed, then this may be an early example of limited edition prints. However this was not a marketing ploy but was a limitation of the process of mezzotint engraving, superb for the highest quality early

impressions, but not so successful for producing large numbers of fine impressions unless the plates were continuously retouched or reworked, as was often the case with other engravers, such as James McArdell or James Watson. The public was very aware that, for all methods of engraving and particularly for fine mezzotints, they should buy the earlier impressions if they could afford them and that they must hasten to the printsellers to purchase them.

There is no direct evidence to suggest how many impressions of the published states of each plate were printed whilst they were still in Green's possession. The rate of wear of a mezzotint plate is greatest when it is new but reduces as the number of copies taken increases. This is because copper is relatively soft. The burrs created when the plate is grounded and which, for the darkest areas, have been scraped away only by a small amount so that they can hold plenty of ink between them are flattened a minute amount every time that the plate is printed. I have not found any evidence of these plates being reworked by Green in published state, nor have I seen any poor impressions of these plates published by him, so perhaps no more than two hundred and fifty to three hundred impressions of the published state were printed. I emphasize that this is pure guesswork. Of course, the number printed would reflect the demand and would not have been the same for all plates in the series.

If there were, say, three hundred impressions of the published states printed, then there could be six times as many copies of these surviving compared with the proofs. In my experience, over forty years, I would judge that they are perhaps only twice as common as the proofs. None is easy to find. This is not because my estimate of three hundred is far too high but because, whilst proofs were rarely framed and generally kept in portfolios, the published states were often framed, and, when fashions changed, many would have been discarded. They were not given the care received by the proofs.

The prints in this set were particularly sought after from the time they were engraved, especially impressions in proof state which have always been very hard to acquire. An article in the Lotus Magazine noted in 1912 that "To possess a complete set of these nine [*sic*] Valentine Green mezzotints is the desire of every collector and it is now a very difficult desire to gratify". Many famous collections created in the early 19th century, such as those of Sir Thomas Lawrence P.R.A. and the Earl of Essex, had to make do with ordinary published states for at least some of the plates. Clearly there were often no proofs for sale, for collectors such as these would have willingly paid whatever was necessary to acquire the best impressions. There were no impressions of any states of any of these plates amongst the twenty thousand prints in the catalogue (c. 1830) of the printseller Edward Evans. A very important collection of mezzotints was that created by William Eaton, 2nd Baron Cheylesmore, mostly in the latter part of the 19th century and bequeathed to the British Museum. Although this did include every print in the set, the impression of the Ladies Waldegrave was cut to the image so the state is unknown, Lady Betty Delmé was in published state and that of Jane Countess of Harrington was a proof before title but in the later engraved rather than scratched letter proof state. The BM already possessed a proof impression of the Ladies Waldegrave.

It has always been assumed that the plates in the series were entirely the work of Green. However, I have in my collection an unfinished working proof of *Ann, Viscountess Townshend* (STIPPLE print # 35721) which appears to be by another, somewhat less skilled, hand. Green's pupils John Dean and James Walker were well established by this time and they can surely be ruled out. Another possibility is Green's son Rupert, but he would only have been about twelve years old when the plate was published in 1780. He did become a competent but not outstanding engraver. The first finished state, before title with scratched letters, has been totally reworked in every respect and is presumably the work of Green.

The copper plate for *Emily, Mary, Countess of Salisbury* (STIPPLE printing plate #2) is the only one from the series known to have survived and it is in my collection. Green sold several of the plates from this series in about 1789 at the time he started on his Düsseldorf Gallery plates. Some went to John Brydon and Charlotte Brydon and others to William Richardson. The changing of the plate of *Mary, Isabella, Duchess of Rutland* to represent the Duchess of York is mentioned above. Two other plates, *The Right Hon. ble Lady Betty Delmé* and *Jane, Countess of Harrington* were totally reworked by Minnie Cormack in about 1890 and republished by P. & D. Colnaghi. No plates after Reynolds were included in the two auctions of copper plates belonging to Green and his son Rupert, sold by Robins in 1799 and 1807, and presumably they had all been sold before then.

During the boom in mezzotint prices in the early part of the 20th century, the prints in this series were among the most highly priced engravings of any type or method. The highest auction price for proof states for each of the prints recorded by Slater in 1929 was -

Lady Elizabeth Compton £504

Lady Betty Delmé £1,837 10s

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire £1,150

Lady Jane Halliday £472 10s

Jane, Countess of Harrington £660

Lady Louisa Manners £367

Mary, Duchess of Rutland £1,156

Emily, Mary, Countess of Salisbury £525

Lady Talbot £262 10s

Viscountess Townshend £525

The Ladies Waldegrave £3,045 (this was a world record price for any print at that time)

These prices were comparable to or higher than the prices paid at the time for really fine early impressions of the most desirable Rembrandt etchings which rarely fetched over £1,000. A first state of his *Christ Healing the Sick* (known as “The Hundred Guilder Print”) reached £1,750. With the Depression in the late 1920s, print prices collapsed. To convert them into the values of 2016, they should be multiplied by about 50, so that the equivalent price for The Ladies Waldegrave today would be an astonishing £150,000. However, I understand that a first state of the Hundred Guilder Print would probably be worth about £1,500,000 today.

The impression of the Ladies Waldegrave that fetched such an extraordinary price was sold by Christies at the auction of the Fritz Reiss collection on December 18th 1923 as lot 119 and made 2,900 guineas or £3,045. A newspaper cutting of the time (from The Times?) stated that the impression was purchased by a Mr. Arthurton against Messrs. Ellis and Smith. Mr. Arthurton, a well known commission agent, would only comment that the print would pass into an English private collection. The speculation of the time was that his client was the former owner of a group of newspapers.

I had been looking for this impression for thirty-five years, in particular because I wanted to know just how good an impression it was. I assumed that it was in a museum but, in 2013, I tracked it down to a country sale in Dorset and, to my delight, was able to purchase it at a reasonable price, somewhat less than the world record price of 1923. It is a very fine impression, certainly better than any other impression that I had seen up to then, including the fine proof impression that I already possessed

(now sold). It is in excellent condition, a very fresh impression with large margins. It is slightly time stained overall and, as I understand that it had spent the last twenty years before I purchased it in a shipping container, this may have occurred after the 1923 sale. The provenance was given by the auctioneers as Sir Edward Hulton, Kt., the publisher of the very successful *Picture Post*. It was presumably his father, Sir Edward Hulton Bt., proprietor of the *London Evening Standard* who had commissioned Mr. Arthurton to purchase it in 1923. A label on the back of the frame showed that it was the impression from the Fritz Reiss collection and this was confirmed by Reiss's collector's mark on the back of the print. Sir Edward Hulton, Kt., did not inherit the baronetcy from his father because his birth was illegitimate, but he was knighted in his own right.

I have since purchased the even better impression that had come from the collection of Martin Erdmann and that had been sold by Christies in 1937 for £700, somewhat less than the price received for the Reiss impression, and more than it cost me. The reason for the lower price may have been partly due to the market for fine mezzotints having passed its peak and of course the Depression, but another reason may be that the Erdmann impression needs some simple cosmetic restoration to small areas of the margins.

Many "unauthorised" copies of prints after Reynolds were published during his lifetime. Generally these were smaller than the authorised versions and often, although not always, were poor quality, engraved by "hack" engravers. It seems that, since this simply meant that more of his images were on view in print shops, Reynolds made no effort to stop this practice. However, no such copies were made of any of the prints in this set during Reynolds's lifetime, suggesting that he or perhaps Valentine Green were able to prevent the issuing of copies, presumably by invoking the Engravers' Copyright Act of 1735 or the Engraving Copyright Act of 1767 and other later acts. A good quality stipple engraving of Lady Louisa Manners was engraved by Charles Knight and published in 1800, eight years after Reynolds's death and after Green had sold the mezzotint plate. Although stipple plates cannot produce anything like the fine impressions that can be printed from a mezzotint plate, the plates do wear somewhat more slowly and many more copies can be produced. Clearly this image of Lady Louisa was still very popular as the stipple plate shows considerable wear on later impressions.

This may be the first time ever that the whole set has been assembled together in proof state, since it seems likely that the proof impressions of the earlier plates must have been sold by Green before the later ones were engraved, otherwise Green might not have continued with the series. As already mentioned, the British Museum does not have the complete set in first proof state and I am not aware of any other complete set in first proof state.

Although all my impressions are in first proof state, they are not of equal quality, demonstrating the speed with which mezzotint plates wear, particularly when the first impressions are printed. The impressions are the best that I was able to purchase over a thirty-five year period. As a collector, I was able to upgrade my impressions when the opportunity arose, although this happened rarely. All are at least very good impressions and in generally very good condition, but I consider five of them to be superb. I was lucky to be able to purchase them. These are *The Right Hon. ble Lady Betty Delmé, Mary, Isabella, Duchess of Rutland, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* and both the proof impressions of *Lady Elizabeth Laura, Lady Charlotte Maria & Lady Anne Horatia, Daughters to James late Earl of Waldegrave*. Presumably these are amongst the very first impressions printed from the finished plates. It is difficult to imagine a better impression of *The Right Hon. ble Lady Betty Delmé*. My proof impressions exhibited of the other plates in the set can reasonably be described as very fine, fine, or, at least, very good. Since these impressions have lost their ink numbers, assuming that they originally had them, I can only guess where they come in sequence within the fifty proofs and for that I need to be able to compare them directly with other impressions of the same plate in the same state. It is rarely possible to do this.

It is important to understand just how rare really superb impressions of fine mezzotints are, including those in this set. For another example of how a plate engraved by Green can wear, I have included elsewhere in this catalogue a very early superb proof impression of *Lady Henrietta Howard* (STIPPLE print 5924) and a standard published state that is not a reprint.

Also included in the catalogue are -

The original copper plate of *Emily Mary, Countess Salisbury* in the final (second) state, together with a contemporary impression in that state - see *Engraving Techniques*.

An early unfinished working proof of *Ann, Viscountess Townshend* which is clearly not the work of Valentine Green - see *Work in Progress*.

18th century coloured transfer engravings on glass of *Mary, Isabella, Duchess of Rutland* and *Mary, Isabella, Duchess of Rutland* - see *Coloured Prints*.

An 18th century reprint of *The Right Hon.ble Lady Betty Delmé* together with a late and very worn impression and an impression from the plate after it had been totally reworked in about 1890 by Minnie Cormack - see *Meeting Demand*.

The Right Hon.ble Lady Betty Delmé.

STIPPLE print number #35356

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.

I 595 x 385, Pl 626 x 385 mm (RSD P # 288)

first published 1/7/1779 by Valentine Green; 4/1790 re-published by William Richardson;

Ç 1890 re-published by P.& D.Colnaghi and Co.

portrait of Lady Elizabeth Garnier (olim Delmé, née Howard); John Delmé; Miss Isabella Delmé

Source: *Lady Elizabeth Delmé and her Children*, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington 1937 1 95

Literature: 2000 Mannings & Postle #504; 2000 Mannings and Postle fig. 1213; 2000 Mannings and Postle pl. 88

This was the first larger format (25" x 15") full length female mezzotint portrait engraved by Valentine Green after Reynolds, whose high chiaroscuro original painting was one of his finest. Green has been particularly successful in maintaining the balance of the highlights and shadows in monochrome. Although Reynolds's original was painted in 1777, there is no evidence that the Delmé family paid for the picture, which remained in the artist's studio until his death. Reynolds did not exhibit the painting. It is probable that he invited Green to engrave the painting.

Green announced his proposals for his series of *Beauties of the Present Age* (STIPPLE print set #37) in his catalogue published on 1st January 1780, six months after the publication of this print, and it is quite possible that successful sales of impressions of this print were the catalyst for the whole series. Initially this was to consist of three pairs of prints with the possibility of later extensions, but eventually Green included this plate as part of the series in his advertisement of 25th July 1781 in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*.

The plate was republished by William Richardson in 1790 and it was sold at his sale on 23d April 1814. Demand continued throughout the 19th century. At some point, probably late in the nineteenth century, the edges of the plate were bevelled to leave a small margin within the platemark, presumably to eliminate damage to the edges caused by handling. In this previously unrecorded fourth state, the plate became very worn. Clearly, very large volumes were printed to satisfy high demand. In about 1890, it was reworked all over by Minnie Cormack, an Irish mezzotinter, for P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., to make a previously unrecorded fifth state. Although the retouching was done in a generally sensitive manner, her skills of draughtsmanship let her down in reworking the face of Lady Betty, so the overall result is not entirely successful. At



about the same time, she also reworked Green's plate of *Jane, Countess of Harrington*.

An apparently contemporary impression of the plate as reissued by Richardson in 1791 is included in the chapter *Meeting Demand* and, although a very long way from being a fine impression, this might just about be acceptable to collectors who just want an impression of the print or who cannot find or afford a fine impression. This is shown together with impressions of the plate when it had become extremely worn and also when it had been totally reworked in about 1890 by Minnie Cormack.

1. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 288, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, superb impression

Provenance: Major General Sir George Burns, North Mimms Park

STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 1 July 1779 by Green, sold by Torre, in scratched letters, the inscription space not cleaned. #5805

Literature: 1884 C.S. 35, 1 of 3; 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.95, 1 of 3; 1902 A.Whitman #76, 1 of 3

The Right Hon:ble Lady Louisa Manners, Sister to the Earl of Dysart.
STIPPLE print number #37016

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.,
I 595 x 382, Pl 631 x 384 mm (RSD P # 179)

first published 24/12/1779 by Valentine Green; 1/1/1790 re-published by John Brydon,
portrait of Lady Louisa Manners, Countess of Dysart (née Tollemache)

Source: *Lady Louisa Manners*, oil on canvas, Kenwood Iveagh Bequest

Literature: 2000 Mannings and Postle #1210; 2000 Mannings and Postle fig. 1309

Reynolds's painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1779 so Green could have had access to it there or in Reynolds's studio before it was delivered to Lord Dysart's house in Piccadilly.

This plate was one of the first pair of prints engraved and published by Green as part of his series of *Beauties of the Present Age*. Green's mezzotint of Louisa Manners's sister, *The Right Hon:ble Lady Jane Halliday, Sister to the Earl of Dysart* (STIPPLE print # 35458), was the other print in the pair.

The plate was republished by John Brydon in 1790.

This portrait of Louisa Manners was also engraved in stipple by Charles Knight and published by Anthony Molteno on 21st January 1800. A black and white proof impression and an impression of the published state printed in colours is included in *Coloured Prints*.

2. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 179, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, very fine impression, in lower margin, in ink in a late C18 (?) hand, "Lady Louisa Manners".

STIPPLE description of this state and a unique state number: Before title, with Reynold's and Green's names, published 24 December 1779, in scratched letters, the inscription space was not cleaned. #10210
Literature: 1884 C.S. 84, 1 of 3; 1884 E. Hamilton 2 Ed. p. 116, 1 of 3; 1902 A. Whitman #80, 1 of 3



The Right Hon:ble Lady Jane Halliday, Sister to the Earl of Dyfart.

STIPPLE print number #35458

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.,

I 597 x 386, Pl 630 x 386 mm (RSD P # 1278)

first published 24/12/1779 by Valentine Green,

portrait of Lady Jane Ferry (olim Halliday, née Tollemache)

Source: *Lady Jane Halliday*, oil on canvas, Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, The National Trust

Literature: 2000 Mannings and Postle #804; 2000 Mannings and Postle pl. 99; 2000 Mannings and Postle fig. 1311

Reynolds's painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1779 so Green could have had access to it there or in Reynolds's studio before it was delivered to Lord Dysart's house in Piccadilly.

This plate was one of the first pair of prints engraved and published by Green as part of his series of *Beauties of the Present Age*. Green's mezzotint of Jane Halliday's sister, *The Right Hon:ble Lady Louisa Manners, Sister to the Earl of Dysart* STIPPLE Print # 37016) was the other print in the pair. Whilst that plate was republished by John Brydon in 1790, I have found no evidence that this plate was sold and no late impressions have been seen.

3. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 1278, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, fine impression

STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 24 December 1779 by Green, in scratched letters, the inscription space not cleaned. #6107

Literature: 1884 C.S. 61, 1 of 2; 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.104, 1 of 2; 1902 A.Whitman #79, 1 of 2; 1926 C.E.Russell 61, 1 of 2



Jane, Countess of Harrington.

STIPPLE print number #5547

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.,

I 596 x 387, Pl 630 x 388 mm (RSD P # 1279)

first published 1/5/1780 by Valentine Green; Ç 1890 re-published by P.& D.Colnaghi and Co.,

portrait of Jane Stanhope, Countess of Harrington (née Fleming) as Aurora

Source: *Jane Stanhope, Countess of Harrington*, oil on canvas, Harewood House

Literature: 2000 Mannings and Postle #1694; 2000 Mannings and Postle fig. 1157; 2000 Mannings and Postle pl. 78; 2005 M.Postle (Ed.) #24

Reynolds's painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1775 and was paid for in that year. There is no reason to think that Green would have considered engraving it at that time, so perhaps Reynolds arranged for Green or another draughtsman to visit Harewood House to make a preparatory drawing or reduction of the painting.

This plate was engraved and published by Green as part of his series of *Beauties of the Present Age* and was the first extension to the series, published six months after the first pair, of Lady Louisa Manners and her sister, Lady Jane Halliday, which he had issued on 24th December 1779.

This plate, together with that of Lady Betty Delmé, was re-engraved by Minnie Cormack for P. & D. Colnaghi in about 1890. There is no record of the sale of the plate by Green.

4. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 1269, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, fine impression

STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: #53249 Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 1 May 1780 by Green, in scratched letters, the inscription space not cleaned. #5966

Literature: 1884 C.S. 62, 1 of 2; 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.105, 1 of 3; 1902 A.Whitman #100, 1 of 3; 1926 C.E.Russell 62, 1 of 3



Mary, Isabella, Duchess of Rutland

STIPPLE print number #5994

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.,

I 598 x 385, Pl 631 x 386 mm (RSD P # 174)

first published 1/7/1780 by Valentine Green; 1793 re-published by Charlotte Brydon,

portrait of Mary Isabella Manners, Duchess of Rutland (née Somerset)

Source: *Mary Isabella Manners, Duchess of Rutland*, oil on canvas, destroyed painting

Literature: 2000 Mannings and Postle #1212

Reynolds's painting was completed in the first half of 1780 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1781, so may have remained in Reynolds's studio until then, if so giving Green plenty of opportunity for making a reduction of Reynolds's painting. It was destroyed in a fire at Belvoir Castle in 1816.

This plate was one of the second pair of prints engraved and published by Green as part of his series of *Beauties of the Present Age*. The other print in this pair was *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (STIPPLE print# 432).

The plate was later reworked and re-issued in 1793 as the Duchess of York by Charlotte Brydon. The head was changed and the artist's and engraver's names removed. The Duke and Duchess of York had married in September 1791. The engraver responsible is not known. It is not likely to have been Green.

A transfer engraving on glass of this print, together with one of its pair, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (STIPPLE print # 432) is in the collection of Rob Dixon (RSD P # 1333 & RSD P # 1334). They are included in *Coloured Prints*.

5. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 174, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, superb impression

STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: #53249 Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 1 July 1780 by Green, in scratched letters, the inscription space not cleaned. #6603

Literature: 1884 C.S. 115, 1 of 3; 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.129, 1 of 3; 1902 A.Whitman #103, 1 of 3; 1926 C.E.Russell 115, 1 of 4; 1927 G.S.Layard #98, 1 of 4



Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire

STIPPLE print number #432

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.,

I 599 x 385, Pl >633 x 385 mm

first published 1/7/1780 by Valentine Green,

portrait of Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (née Spencer)

Source: *Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire*, oil on canvas, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA

Literature: 2000 Mannings and Postle #327; 2000 Mannings and Postle pl. 77; 2000 Mannings and Postle fig. 1166

Reynolds's painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1776 but was not paid for until 1783. There is no reason to think that Green would have considered engraving it in 1776. Presumably Reynolds delivered the painting before payment. If the painting was hanging in Devonshire House, in Picadilly, it would have been simple for Reynolds to make later arrangements for Green to make a preparatory drawing or reduction of the painting.

This plate was one of the second pair of prints engraved and published by Green as part of his series of *Beauties of the Present Age*. There is no record of the sale of the plate.

An unrecorded proof without letters is in the collection of Rob Dixon. This has been reworked and is almost certainly later than the published state. Only one impression is known.

A transfer engraving on glass of this print, together with one of its pair, *Mary, Isabella, Duchess of Rutland* (STIPPLE print # 5994) is in the collection of Rob Dixon (RSD P # 1334 & RSD P # 1333).

6. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 1468, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, superb impression, STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 1st July 1780 by Green, the inscription space not cleaned. #7269
Literature: 1884 C.S. 37, 1 of 2; 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.96, 1 of 2; 1902 A.Whitman #102, 1 of 2



Ann, Viscountess Townshend
STIPPLE print number #35721

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.

I 598 x 385, Pl 631 x 386 mm (RSD P # 5)

first published 1/12/1780 by Valentine Green; 4/1790 re-published by William Richardson,

portrait of Anne Townshend, Marchioness Townshend (née Montgomery)

Source: *Anne, Marchioness Townshend*, oil on canvas, M H De Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco

Literature: 2000 Mannings and Postle # 1756; 2000 Mannings and Postle fig. 1315

Reynolds's painting was completed in the first half of 1780 but not exhibited so Reynolds must have allowed Green to make a preparatory drawing or reduction in his studio.

This plate was engraved and published by Green as part of his series of eleven plates *Beauties of the Present Age* (STIPPLE Print Set #37) and was the second extension to the series, published five months after the second pair, *Mary, Isabella, Duchess of Rutland* (STIPPLE print #5994) and *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (STIPPLE print #432) which he had issued on the 1st July 1780.

The plate was republished by W. Richardson in 1790.

An early unfinished working proof of this plate, clearly not the work of Valentine Green, is included in *Work in Progress*.

7. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 5, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, fine impression
STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 1st December 1780 by V.Green, in scratched letters, the inscription space uncleaned. #6859
Literature: 1884 C.S. 132, 1 of 3; 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.136, 1 of 3; 1902 A.Whitman #106, 1 of 3; 1926 C.E.Russell 132, 1 of 3



Emily, Mary, Countess of Salisbury.

STIPPLE print number #60

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.,

I 606 x 384, Pl 634 x 385 mm (RSD P # 172)

first published 1/12/1781 by Valentine Green,

portrait of Emily Mary Cecil, Marchioness of Salisbury (née Hill)

Emily, Mary, Countess of Salisbury (embossed stamp on back of plate)

Source: *Mary Amelia Cecil, Countess of Salisbury*, oil on canvas, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire

Literature: 2000 Mannings and Postle #339; 2000 Mannings and Postle fig. 1343; 2000 Mannings and Postle pl. 113

Reynolds's original oil was painted in 1780-81 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1781 so Green would have had plenty of opportunity to make his preparatory drawing or reduction.

This plate was one of the third pair of prints engraved and published by Green as part of his series of *Beauties of the Present Age*. *The Right Honourable Lady Elizabeth Compton* (STIPPLE print #5552) was the other print in the pair. The last plate in the series, and the extension to this pair, was *The Right Honourable Lady Talbot* (STIPPLE print #67), a mezzotint of Lady Salisbury's sister Charlotte.

There is no record of the sale of the copper plate by Green and no late impressions have been seen. However, this is the only copper plate from the set known to have survived, and is in the collection of Rob Dixon (RSD P # 1318). The plate and a contemporary impression taken from it are included in *Engraving Techniques*.

8. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 172, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, very good impression,
STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: #53249 Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 1st December 1781, in scratched letters, the inscription space not cleaned. #6617
Literature: 1884 C.S. 116, 1 of 2; 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.129, 1 of 2; 1902 A.Whitman #110, 1 of 2; 1926 C.E.Russell 116, 1 of 2



The Right Honourable Lady Elizabeth Compton.

STIPPLE print number #5552

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.,

I 609 x 384, Pl 639 x 384 mm (RSD P # 176)

first published 1/12/1781 by Valentine Green,

portrait of Elizabeth Cavendish, Countess of Burlington (née Compton)

Source: *Lady Elizabeth Compton*, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington 1937 1 97

Literature: 2000 Mannings and Postle #400; 2000 Mannings and Postle fig. 1347; 2000 Mannings and

Postle pl. 98

Reynolds's painting was finished in 1781 and exhibited in 1782 at the Royal Academy so Green presumably made his preparatory drawing at the RA or in Reynolds's studio.

This plate was one of the third pair of prints engraved and published by Green as part of his series of *Beauties of the Present Age*. *Emily, Mary, Countess of Salisbury* (STIPPLE print #60) was the other print in the pair. The last plate in the series, and the extension to this pair, was *The Right Honourable Lady Talbot* (STIPPLE print #67), a mezzotint of Lady Salisbury's sister Charlotte.

There is no record of the sale of this plate and no late impressions have been seen.

9. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 176, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, fine impression,

STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 1 December 1781 by Green, in scratched letters, the inscription space not cleaned. #5648

Literature: 1884 C.S. 27, 1 of 2; 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.92, 1 of 2; 1902 A.Whitman #109, 1 of 2; 1926 C.E.Russell 27, 1 of 2



Lady Elizabeth Laura, Lady Charlotte Maria & Lady Anne Horatia, Daughters to James late Earl of Waldegrave.

STIPPLE print number #6027

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.,

I 477 x 579, Pl 506 x 580 mm (RSD P # 332),

I 469 x 567, Pl 502 x 576 mm (the plate bevelled - RSD P1459)

first published 1/12/1781 by Valentine Green; 1/1/1790 re-published by John Brydon,

portrait of Charlotte Maria Euston, Countess Euston (née Waldegrave) L; Elizabeth Laura Waldegrave, C'tess Waldegrave (née Waldegrave) C; Anne Horatia Conway (née Waldegrave) R

Source: The Ladies Waldegrave, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh 2172

Literature: 1986 N.Penny # 122; 2000 Mannings and Postle #1810; 2000 Mannings and Postle pl. 102; 2000 Mannings and Postle fig. 1340

Reynolds's painting was commissioned by Horace Walpole who was the great-uncle of the three Waldegrave sisters. It was painted in 1780-81 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1781 so Green would have had plenty of opportunity to make his preparatory drawing or reduction.

Green advertised on 16th February 1782 in the *Morning Herald and Public Advertiser* that this was 'Plate X' of his series of *Beauties of the Present Age*. Unlike the other prints in the series, which are full lengths in portrait format, this is a group portrait in landscape format. It seems likely that Green intended it as the centrepiece for the series.

The plate was republished by John Brydon in 1791. Brydon's address was later removed and impressions continued to be printed well into the later part of the nineteenth century, even though the plate was in extremely bad condition by then.

Another plate of the *Ladies Waldegrave*, STIPPLE print # 36432, was engraved in mezzotint by G.S.Shury in the second half of the nineteenth century, presumably because of the continued demand for the image. This is not an adequate substitute for Green's fine plate.

Another superb impression of this print from the Fritz Reiss collection can be seen in *Meeting Demand*. That is the copy that made a world record price for any print when sold in 1923 at auction. It is shown alongside an extraordinarily worn impression from the plate.

10. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 1477, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, superb impression,

Provenance: Martin Erdmann, of New York, NY and Sir Philip Haldin of Lympne Place, Kent

STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 1 December 1781 by Green, in scratched letters, the inscription space not cleaned. #6875

Literature: 1884 C.S. 133, 1 of 5 (in Ad. & Cor.); 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.137, 1 of 4; 1902 A.Whitman #111, 1 of 5; 1926 C.E.Russell 133, 1 of 5

Comparison of my two proof impressions of this state, and another that I have sold as it was a duplicate, suggests that this is the finest and that the other two impressions, including the Fritz Reiss impression, have been retouched although it is impossible to describe the retouching or even to illustrate it photographically. If so, it is the only plate in the series with evidence of retouching in the proof state and might explain, why, if Green otherwise only printed fifty proofs, the Ladies Waldegrave is the proof from the set of which I have seen the most impressions for sale.



There is a proof copy of the Ladies Waldegrave in the Royal Collection which was displayed in 1902 as part of an exhibition of fine mezzotints at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. This was described as an “Advanced Trial Proof (Before C.S. First State)” lent by his Majesty the King (Edward VII). Rosie Razzall, a curator of Prints and Drawings for the Royal Collection Trust, has kindly sent me an image of this and there is not obviously anything particularly remarkable about it, but I need to go and see it and take my own impressions with me for comparison. These show that there are two, slightly different, versions of the first state, but neither could be described as an “Advanced Trial Proof”.

The Right Honourable Lady Talbot.

STIPPLE print number #67

mezzotint

Valentine Green after Sir Joshua Reynolds P.R.A.,

I 603 x 384, Pl 635 x 385 mm (RSD P # 286)

first published 1/5/1782 by Valentine Green,

portrait of Lady Charlotte Talbot (née Hill)

Source: *Lady Charlotte Talbot*, oil on canvas, Tate Britain, London N 5640

Literature: 2000 Mannings and Postle #1730; 2005 M.Postle (Ed.) #26

Reynolds's painting was at the Royal Academy in 1782 so Green would have had plenty of opportunity to make his preparatory drawing or reduction. The publication date suggests that the print was published to coincide with the exhibition of the painting.

This mezzotint was the final extension to Green's series of *Beauties of the Present Age*. Green advertised his latest additions to this set in the *London Morning Herald and Public Advertiser* on 16th February 1782, and stated that he was working on this plate which would be plate "XI", whilst another advertisement said that it would be plate "X".

There is no record of the sale of the plate. Late impressions are recorded by Russell as a third state, but, as he does not record any changes to the plate, this is not an additional state.

11. Rob Dixon Print Collection RSD P # 286, proof before title, scratched letters, inscription not cleaned, fine impression, in tab below lower platemark (part of original sheet), in ink in a late C18? hand, "Lady Charlotte Hill, second daughter of Wills Hill, first Earl of Hilsborough /and wife of Lord Talbot", STIPPLE description of this state and unique state number: Before title, with Reynolds's and Green's names, published 1 May 1782 by Green, in scratched letters, the inscription space not cleaned. #6848
Literature: 1884 C.S. 128, 1 of 2; 1884 E.Hamilton (2 Ed.) p.135, 1 of 2; 1902 A.Whitman #114, 1 of 2; 1926 C.E.Russell 128, 1 of 3

