**George Henry 1858–1943 [Draft]**

A Scottish painter born at Irvine, on the North Ayrshire coast, on 14 March 1858: he was only child of William Hendry and his wife Anne Cowan Fisher (*c*.1833–1909). After his father died when he was very young, he and his mother lived with her brother James (*c*.1845–1913) at 4 Binnie Place, Calton, Glasgow. He continued to do so until moving to London in his mid-forties, his early Glasgow exhibiting addresses being those of his changing studios there. From early adulthood he used ‘Henry’ as his surname, perhaps to avoid family confusions, since there were three other contemporary ‘Hendry’ Scottish painters including a ‘William Hendry’ who exhibited in Glasgow in 1884.

Henry trained at the Glasgow School of Art to 1882 where he met ‘[James] Guthrie, [Joseph] Crawhall and [Edward Arthur] Walton, with whom he worked at Brig O’Turk and Roseneath, and later at Eyemouth and Cockburnspath’ (cf. C. Wood, *Dict. of Victorian Painters*) then gained further experience in the studio of the landscape painter William York Macgregor (1855–1923). He also reportedly derived great benefit from early nature studies made at and round Kirkcudbright, Dumfriesshire.

He first exhibited in 1882 at the Glasgow Institute and became a significant member of the ‘Glasgow Boys’, especially for influencing their use of colour into higher decorative key, for which his ‘Galloway Landscape’ (1889, now at Kelvingrove) is a significant example. He was himself influenced by and a friend of Edward Atkinson Hornel (1864–1933) whose family home from 1866 was also in Kirkcudbright: they met in 1885, after the Edinburgh-trained Hornel returned from studying in Antwerp and became one of the Glasgow Boys. He and Henry for some time shared a studio and occasionally collaborated, the most notable and earliest example of this being ‘The Druids: bringing home the mistletoe’ (exh. 1890 at the Grosvenor Gallery, London, and now also in Glasgow). In 1892 Henry was advised to go abroad to recover from poor health and in 1893–94, sponsored by William Burrell and their friend and Glasgow art dealer, Alexander Reid, he and Hornel made an eighteen-month study visit to Japan, which had lasting effect on both. In 1895 Reid organised a successful exhibition of their work from it at which Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, one of the founders of the National Trust for Scotland, was a major purchaser.

Apart from landscape and genre work Henry also painted portraits. They have been noted as more technically striking than individualistic as to sitter character and many have generic titles like ‘The Blue Gown’ (in Cape Town) and ‘The Grey Hat’, which suggests his greater ability in likeness, figures and dress than catching individual personalities.

While he continued to exhibit in Scotland, Henry moved to London about 1903/4, probably for greater sale and portrait commission opportunities. By 1905 he had a studio at 26 Glebe Place, Chelsea, where he worked for the rest of his career and where immediate studio neighbours over the years were the sculptor Francis Derwent Wood, George Augusts Holmes, George Washington Lambert and his sculptor son, Maurice, Alfred Egerton Cooper and Charles Cundall. Several, including Henry, were members of the Chelsea Arts Club.

Henry did not marry and his London domestic life, though stable, was unconventional for a successful artist. From 1905 he lodged for 22 years at 89 Sydney Street, Chelsea, with Jacob Minty (d. 1913), a retired London policeman and former Wiltshire agricultural labourer, and his wife Emily (1857–1932): on her husband’s death she continued to run it as a boarding house. They had a son, William, and four daughters – Maria (1888–1974), Rachel (d.1929), Hilda (1898–1979) and Simla Rose (1901–1982) – and the Mintys appear to have become Henry’s surrogate family. The recurrence of female faces among his models for figure work suggests one or more of the daughters – all in modest occupations – may have sat for him. In 1928, four years before Emily Minty died, Henry moved to 132 Fulham Road and shortly afterwards Emily, Maria and Hilda joined him there, with Hilda’s husband on her marriage in 1933. After ‘Mr Henry’ – as they appear to have called him – died there aged 85 on 23 December 1943, the Mintys continued living in the house until 1953, though on what basis remains to be found.

This long association suggests Henry was easy to get on with, as do his many professional associations. He was a member of the New English Art Club from 1887, was elected Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy from 1892 and RSA in 1902. He was also President of the Glasgow Art Club, 1901–02 (which presumes significant prior involvement) and an Associate of the Royal Scottish Watercolourists, 1900–06. In London he became a member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 1900, was elected ARA in 1907, RA in 1920 and ‘Senior RA’ in 1934.

His exhibited output was prolific. He showed 104 works at the Glasgow Institute, 1882–1944, (three for sale in 1944 after his death and two lent, one by Sir Thomas Dunlop, a Scottish patron who was also one of his executors); 34 at the RSA (1889–1937), 121 at the RA, 20 at the Royal Society of Portrait painters, 15 and the New Gallery, 14 at the Walker Art Gallery exhibitions in Liverpool, and single figures elsewhere.

It was perhaps Dunlop who arranged for his name (‘George Henry, RA, RSA’) to be added to the family gravestone that Henry presumably put up on his parents’ –or at least his mother’s – grave in Cathcart Cemetery, East Renfrewshire, since it also calls his father ‘Henry’. He is likely to have done so after 1913, since it also records his maternal uncle James Wilson, who died that year. Whether his own ashes were added there is not known. A good oil portrait of him by Thomas Cantrell Dugdale, dated *c.*1940–43, is in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

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