Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



William Fraser GARDEN (Gillingham 1856 - Huntingdon 1921)

The Manor House by the River Ouse at Hemingford Grey, Huntingdonshire

Watercolour.
Signed and dated W. F. GARDEN: '95. at the lower left.
Inscribed Manor-house, Hemingford Grey. on the verso.
229 x 181 mm. (9 x 7 1/8 in.)

The old Norman manor house at Hemingford Grey, situated close to the late 12th century church of Saint James, is noted by Pevsner as being 'of very special interest' for its central hall, which dates from the 12th century. The gardens of the manor house, which was the rented home of Fraser Garden's parents, extended down to the River Ouse, with a moat enclosing the grounds on the other three sides.

Provenance:

The Broderick family, Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire.

Artist description:

Born into a family of artists, Garden William Fraser changed his name to William Fraser Garden so as to distinguish himself from his six brothers, all but one of whom were also active as landscape artists. Arguably the best of the so-called 'Fraser Brotherhood', Fraser Garden exhibited his watercolours at the Royal Academy, the Royal Scottish Academy and the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours. The subjects of his watercolours were by and large views of the fen villages along the river Ouse, such as Holywell, Hemingford Grey and St. Ives, characterized by a remarkable attention to detail and crisp, cool lighting. Throughout the 1880's Garden was represented by the Dowdeswell Gallery in New Bond Street in London, who sold a number of his works. By 1890, however, he seems to have given up

exhibiting in London, and from then on relied on a small number of local collectors in Huntingdonshire. He was never, however, a very prolific artist.

As Charles Lane has noted of Garden, ‘His apparent lack of ambition and the consequently few watercolours which he painted each year, even when at his busiest, resulted naturally enough in his failing to come to the notice of all but a local audience.’ Although he was the most successful of the Fraser brothers, Garden was very poor for most of his life, and was declared bankrupt in 1899. He lived at in the village of Hemingford Abbots and in a room at the Ferry Boat Inn in at Holywell, where in his old age he is said to have paid his bills with drawings instead of bank notes. Long unknown to scholars and collectors, Garden’s body of work has only fairly recently been rediscovered, and his reputation as among the finest Victorian landscape watercolourists firmly established.