Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



TRISTRAM JAMES ELLIS

Epping Forest

Pencil and watercolour, with touches of bodycolour, heightened with gum arabic, laid down on a thin board.
Signed with the artist's monogram TJE at the lower left.
Inscribed by the artist No.6 / -ber. Epping Forest. / Price £10.10- / Tristram J. Ellis / 25 Argyll Road / Kensington W. on a label attached to the backing board.
339 x 482 mm. (13 3/8 x 19 in.)

Epping Forest is an area of ancient woodland, comprising nearly twenty-four square kilometres, located along the eastern edge of London, on the border with Essex. The forest today is the remnant of the former Royal forest of Waltham, established by King Henry III in the 12th century, and popular with Henry VIII and Elizabeth I for hunting. At the end of the 19th century responsibility for the forest was transferred from the Crown to the City of London Corporation. The Epping Forest Act of 1878 allowed for greatly increased access to the forest, which was formally opened to the public by Queen Victoria in 1882. Two years later one of the first comprehensive guides to the forest and its features was published by Edward North Buxton; the book proved immensely popular and was reprinted several times.

At the time that Tristram Ellis produced this watercolour, therefore, Epping Forest had only recently been made accessible to all. Undoubtedly intended as a finished drawing for sale to a private collector, the present work is exhibited in a contemporary frame. The artist's particular interest in Epping Forest is seen in the existence of another highly finished (albeit unsigned) watercolour view in the forest, of similar dimensions and technique to the present sheet but seen from another vantage point and with different staffage, which appeared at auction in London in 2007.

Provenance:

Anonymous sale, London, Christie's, 24 November 1998, lot 189
Isabel Goldsmith-Patiño, London.

Artist description:

Tristram Ellis began his career as an engineer on the District and Metropolitan Railway in London, but around 1868 he decided to devote himself to working as an artist, leaving England in 1874 to train in the studio of Léon Bonnat in Paris. In 1878 he visited Cyprus, the first of an extensive series of travels

throughout Europe, Asia Minor, the Middle East and North Africa. Visits to the Near East in 1879-1880, Egypt in 1881-1882, Portugal in 1883-1884, Greece and Turkey in 1885-1886 and Norway in 1894 resulted in a large number of landscape views in oil and watercolour. Ellis published several books about his travels, and also contributed illustrations to numerous books by other authors. In 1879 he published Twelve Etchings of the Principle Views & Places of Interest in Cyprus, followed two years later by On a Raft and Through the Desert: The Narrative of an Artist's Journey Through Northern Syria and Kurdistan, by the Tigris to Mosul and Baghdad, and of a Return Journey Across the Desert by the Euphrates and Palmyra to Damascus, Over Anti-Lebanon to Baalbek and to Beyrout, illustrated with etchings after his drawings.

Ellis produced watercolour views of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Russia and elsewhere. Elected an associate member of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers in 1887, he exhibited regularly in London between 1868 and 1893; at the Royal Academy, the Grosvenor Gallery and the New Watercolour Society. In 1882 he published Views of Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park, followed the next year by Sketching from Nature: A Handbook for Students and Amateurs; a technical manual that set out many of his precepts of successful landscape draughtsmanship.