The Corn Mill at Rowsley, Derbyshire

David Cox Senior O.W.S

£290



REF: 1035

Height: 15 cm (5.9")

Width: 24 cm (9.4")

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Framed Height: 33.5 cm (13.2")

Framed Width: 41.5 cm (16.3")

Description

Watermills were one of David Cox's favoured subjects, and he showed ten at the exhibitions of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours. This watercolour shows the Corn Mill and Miller's cottage on the River Wye outside the village of Rowsley in the Derbyshire Peak District. There is a closely related study of Rowsley Mill in sepia watercolour and black chalk or charcoal in Tullie House Museum. Another watercolour by Cox of Rowsley Corn Mill, seen from the bank to the right foreground of the present work, is in the collection of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, and a further version from the Crook Collection, taken from a position further back from the mill, was sold by Phillips on 26th July 1976 (lot 41). A fourth version, dated 1836, is in a private collection. Later changes to the mill building, seen in works by other artists, would suggest a date for the present work of 1830-36, which would accord with the capitalised signature, used by Cox in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Cox made several drawings and watercolours in Rowsley and its surroundings, including of the Peacock Inn, where he stayed in 1831, while working at Haddon Hall. Cox made friends with Mr and Mrs Severn, the inn owners, and often returned to stay there. His biographer, N. Neal Solly, notes that Cox produced a "beautiful series of sketches... several were sketched before breakfast at Rowsley on the banks of the old mill-stream, very powerful and admirable in arrangement and colour..." He also records "a large folio full of sketches taken at Haddon Hall and at Rowsley in 1845, which comprise two views of Rowsley, of the old water mill there, and on the banks of the mill-stream. These views at Rowsley were generally sketched before breakfast. A Cox watercolour dated 1847 and known as Rowsley Mill is in the Birmingham Museums collection, but it does not seem to depict the same mill. Rowsley Corn Mill originated in medieval times, and in 1591, it was recorded that there was a fulling mill and a corn mill. The corn mill was demolished in 1874 when John Caudwell built the present mill building to grind flour and animal feed (provender). Cox exhibited Water-Mill near Dolbenmaen at the 1837 Society of Painters in Water-Colours exhibition (number 193, sold to John Ruskin for 5 gns), in 1840 number 123 was Mill on the Trent, 132 was Water Mill in Staffordshire, in 1844 62 was A Mill near Bromsgrove, priced at 8 gns., Frame and glass £3.10.0, 228 was A Mill on the Trent, sold for 8 gns. to Stewert Esq., in 1845 209 was Mill, near Conway, North Wales, sold for 8 gns. to F.S.Lace Esq., Ingthorpe Grange, in 1846 number 87 was Mill at Bettws y Coed, North Wales, priced at 15 gns. in 1847 number 104 was Mill near Llangadoc, S. Wales, priced at 8 gns., in 1847 number 210 was Mill in Staffordshire, sold for 6 gns. to H. Burton(?) Esq., in 1849, number 320 was Mill of Bettws-y-Coed, N. Wales.

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