Some facts of Richmond Hill in the time of Turner’s

Richmond Terrace, Surrey

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Oh! yes, I am quite aware of that. It is the garden of England, you know. Surry is the garden of England.

Jane Austen, Emma, 1815.¹

In this paper, some facts concerning Richmond Hill during the time Turner drew his Richmond Terrace, Surrey ²(c1836) [Pl 1] will be argued. What I would like to point out here is that while the watercolour commands the traditional view of the winding Thames from the terrace of Richmond Hill in Surrey by which many artists had been frequently inspired because of its historical, aesthetical and literary associations,³ Turner also introduces here the situation of the terrace of Richmond Hill after the middle of the 1820s. In other words, the watercolour includes an aspect of the terrace as a social attraction for visitors of upper and middle classes after some alterations of the area in the first half of the 1820s. Eric Shanes discusses Turner’s class-based depiction of figures in this watercolour by noticing the gap between classes and defines Turner’s human panorama of British hierarchical system as ‘a survey of British society’.⁴ Elizabeth Helsinger also pays attention to that detailed hierarchy of social classes and puts a question of whose view this is.⁵ In this paper, however, I am going to focus more on the place rather than the figures or the view and write about some facts of the terrace of Richmond Hill in the time of Turner’s watercolour in order to understand the appropriateness for Turner to use the terrace as a site to introduce an
aspect of the British hierarchical system.

The exact viewpoint Turner applied can be identified if we investigate several preparatory drawings. While he had made drawings from Richmond Hill since the 1790s, several drawings related to this watercolour were drawn after the middle of the 1820s. One of them drawn in watercolours at some time in the 1820s or 1830s [TB-CCLXIII, 385] is a compositional study with the same curved foreground and the same shape of the building on the far left as drawn in the watercolour of plate 1. In order to construct this colour composition, Turner might have consulted several open-air drawings especially those drawn in Turner’s ‘Thames’ sketchbook [TB-CCXII] from around 1825. For instance, the leaf 5 verso from this sketchbook shows a similar view commanding


[Pl 4] ditto, leaf 6

[Pl 5] ditto, leaf 6 verso

[Pl 6] ditto, leaf 91
the winding Thames with a slightly curved foreground and a sidewall of a building on the far left [PI 3]. This building on the left is also depicted on the leaves 6 (below) [PI 4], 6 verso [PI 5], 82 and 91. The building shown on the leaf 91 has a similar silhouette as that of the leaf 5 verso with Turner’s own inscription, ‘Star and Garter’ [PI 6]. As a map published in 1842 shows, the Star and Garter was a hotel standing at the edge of Richmond Hill [PI 7]. In addition to the Star and Garter, Turner introduces a sidewall of another building on the far right in the drawings of the leaves 5 verso, 6 (above) and 6 verso. Judging from the present day position of Wick House on the hill a short distance away from the Star and Garter, this building on the right is indeed Wick House built by William Chambers in 1772 to be occupied by Joshua Reynolds, though the above map does not identify the name of the building. In order to make these preparatory drawings, Turner stood on the terrace between the hotel and the former residence of Sir Joshua. Even now we can stand here seeing Wick House on the right, though the Star & Garter hotel Turner depicted was destroyed by the fire in 1870 and replaced by the Royal Star and Garter Homes for disabled soldiers which has been on the site since 1924. The view of the Thames cannot be seen today because of trees grown on the slope of the hill [PI 8]. However, with the above compositional similarity between the watercolour and the drawings in mind, we can conclude that Turner’s viewpoint of Richmond Terrace, Surrey is on the terrace of Richmond Hill between the Star and Garter and Wick House, though he does not include the latter in the final composition.

Having identified the viewpoint, we may now investigate the situation of the terrace after the middle of the 1820s when Turner visited there to make drawings for Richmond Terrace, Surrey. What is the situation of the terrace depicted here? Actually, identifying the building depicted in this watercolour as the Star and Garter, Shanes notes this watercolour celebrated the construction of the terrace walk by King William IV in 1834. However, the terrace walk constructed by the King in 1834 was different from that which Turner introduced here along with the Star and Garter. A paper on 7 April 1834 reads about the new terrace in the process of being added not to Richmond Hill but to the royal Richmond Park.

NEW TERRACE IN RICHMOND PARK
The property of the late Lord HUNTINGTOWER, at Petersham, has been recently purchased by the Crown, and is now in progress of being added to Richmond Park. By the removal of an extensive plantation, a view as beautiful as the one seen from Richmond Hill, will be thrown into sight, and the public will be gratified with a walk along the brow of the hill, which cannot fail to delight them, in which clumps of cedars, perhaps the finest in Europe, form a prominent feature. This admirable improvement has been effected by the good taste and perseverance of the Surveyor of his MAJESTY’S Park.

In November, seven months after this article, the terrace walk was opened in Richmond Park from which the public could enjoy another panorama as attractive as that from Richmond Hill.
A splendid view of richness and beauty, seldom equalled, has been newly opened for the enjoyment of the public in Richmond Park.

With the modesty so honourable to merit, those to whom we are indebted for thus opening to us a second Richmond hill prospect, quite equal to the first, which has long been the admiration of the world, refrain even from announcing the benefit they have conferred; and we are quite sure our readers will owe us some obligation for merely directing attention to the fact.

The residence of the Earl of Erroll is between two and three hundred yards in a right-hand direction from the Park-gate, standing on the ridge which overlooks the village of Petersham and the meadows; but the thickness of the woods have hitherto wholly shut out the view. The judicious hand of taste has now, however, most happily availed itself of this hidden beauty, and, by felling some of the large trees at well-chosen intervals and clearing away the underwood, leaving only such as adds to the effect by making a foreground to the landscape, another view of the same sweet sylvan scenery as that afforded from Richmond-hill below the Star and Garter is opened to the eye, and seen from an entirely different angle.

To add a fresh interest to the beauties of Richmond is no trifling achievement; and we do not hesitate to say that the new, or Park view, as it may be called, will prove equally attractive with that seen from the ascent of the Hill, where the matchless sweep of the broad and silvery Thames forms the chief interest; whilst the scene just opened in the park embraces a more varied and extensive breadth of country through the woody masses of which we catch only occasional snatches of the shining river as it winds its mazy course along and it may be that we owe these enticing glimpses to the thin autumnal clothing of the trees, and that when dressed in their full summer richness they may wholly seclude the river’s beauties from our sight.

A broad and commodious terrace walk with seats has been also provided for the public accommodation [...] 14

After its opening in 1834, the new terrace walk in Richmond Park became a place where people could enjoy another prospect towards the Thames [Pl 9]. For instance, a topographical guide published in 1841 reads;

This delightful promenade was opened to the public in the reign of William the Fourth. Some seats are placed around the trees, where the rich and luxuriant landscape, enlivened at intervals by

glimpses of the Thames, may be viewed to great advantage. We look over the retired village of Petersham, and the clustered foliage of Ham House. The fine old cedars in the descending plain are near the spot where the seat of Lord Huntingtower formerly stood, described by Thomson, in “The Seasons”, as “Harington’s Retreat.”

Shanes also mentions the wooden board on a tree in Turner’s watercolour. He notes that it was nailed to a tree ‘on Richmond Hill in Turner’s day’ as John Burnet mentions it. However, the fact is that Burnet mentions the board to describe the terrace walk in ‘Richmond-park’. Of course, those facts about the King’s walk would not exclude the possibility that its opening in Richmond Park might have inspired Turner to choose Richmond as the subject of one of his watercolours for the ambitious topographical series, *Picturesque Views in England and Wales*. Or, it might have been possible that Turner, hearing the news of the new terrace walk, confused it with the terrace on Richmond Hill of which Turner had his memory. However, at least, it can be said that what is actually represented in this watercolour is not the situation of the newly-opened terrace walk in Richmond Park after 1834 but that of the terrace at the corner of the Star and Garter on Richmond Hill after the middle of 1820s from which Turner directly drew its preparatory sketches.

Then what was the situation of the ‘first’ terrace of Richmond Hill which Turner chose to represent in *Richmond Terrace, Surrey*? As Frank Milner points out this watercolour represents the terrace as ‘a busy public promenade’, as the terrace on Richmond Hill was a public place attracting people from around London to enjoy the panorama with the winding Thames. Whereas the panorama from the terrace had attracted artists since the seventeenth century, the terrace seems to have become much more popular for visitors especially after the 1820s when some alterations were made around the area.

One of the alterations was the gravelling of the terrace walk around 1824. A reader of *The Morning Post* signed ‘F. S.’ wrote to the editor in 1824 about ‘the shameful state of the highways and footpaths, which have lately been put under the care of a competent surveyor’.

The public may therefore expect, before the ensuing summer, to have them completed, particularly up to the spot which attracts, and is visited, admired, and considered as almost the most charming view this country can boast of.

Owing to the exertions and contributions of several private individuals, the Terrace has been put into a very improved condition, and I observe some trees which stood in the centre of the walk have very properly been removed, so as to allow of an uninterrupted and commodious promenade.

Not long after, the terrace of Richmond Hill was an attractive place for the public and was frequented by visitors as, for instance, a topographical text of 1825 writes.

THE TERRACE is extensive, where the company, in various groups, seem not a little delighted to promenade backward and forward till the whole landscape on a summer evening is withdrawn from view by the shades of night! It has been lately gravelled, and is now kept in the neatest order. In fine weather it is crowded; for it is a charming spot, having those attractions which cannot fail to operate in drawing hither all the respectable visitors both of Richmond and its vicinity. Within the last few years it has undergone material improvements, the expense of which was defrayed by subscription of the principal inhabitants.

The ‘material improvements’ also included that of a road heading northward from the Star and Garter which was carried out in 1825. This road now named Queen’s Road was also mentioned by the above reader writing to *The Morning Post*.

With your assistance, I trust this neighbourhood and the public may derive another important
advantage, which is, that part of road from Richmond Hill to the Marsh Gate will be put into complete repair: at present it is unpassable either for carriage or horse.  

Expenses for its improvement were paid by Joseph Ellis, the owner of the Star and Garter perhaps because he hoped visitors from London could come directly to the terrace in front of the inn without going into the town centre of Richmond.

These alterations around the terrace was made just a few years after Ellis acquired the original Star and Garter inn in 1822 to make alterations to contain much greater accommodation for more visitors and to promote it as a place of interest for tourists. Before Ellis’s ownership, the Star and Garter was deserted and there was hardly a whole pane of glass left in any of the windows when Christopher Crean, the previous owner before Ellis, took it in 1809. Crean renewed the inn and the fame of the place become high but it was about the year 1825 when Ellis made the northward road from the inn that the inn’s attractions were so highly esteemed. John Evans in his Richmond and its Vicinity published in 1825 described the inn’s appearance after the alterations as ‘more like the mansion of a nobleman than a receptacle for the public; looking down with stately aspect upon the adjoining valley, and seen to advantage from every part of the horizon’.  

With these efforts to redevelop the area around the Star and Garter from 1822 to 1825, the terrace became a famous spot for emerging modern tourists in London in the age of tourism. As the term ‘tourism’ was coined in the beginning of the nineteenth century, visits to beautiful spots including Richmond ceased to be the privilege of upper classes of society but became an infrastructure and a more democratic activity for increasing numbers of tourists.

Hither, in the summer season, crowd visitants from the overgrown metropolis, to inhale the pure air, and exhilarate their spirits by contemplating a wide spreading circumference of rural scenery! The distance from town is so inconsiderable that it is a most agreeable excursion for the day.

While inns or taverns in Richmond provided relaxation for those tourists, the Star and Garter was ‘unrivalled in the kingdom’. It was a popular place for tourists to dine or take a rest after a walk around the terrace. In Mary Shelly’s Lodore, for instance, Mr. Villiers plans to go to Richmond to find a house for a woman, saying, ‘Let us drive there [to Richmond] to-day, […] we can dine at the Star and Garter’. A later text in 1840s also writes about the famous inn.

“So great is its [the inn’s] fame, that, to have been in Richmond without wetting a cup at it, would be to avouch oneself utterly indifferent to reputation as a traveller” – only the traveller here must remember that the Star and Garter is quite as celebrated for its dinners as it is for its wines.

In fact, Ellis founded Ellis & Co., a wine company in 1822 when he bought the inn.

Actually, many contemporary topographical prints in 1820s including, for instance, those drawn by Peter de Wint and engraved by Charles Heath [Pl 10] started to represent middle class tourists flocking to the terrace. While they were less distinctly depicted in prints before 1820s where the winding Thames rather than the terrace and figures seems to be the dominant subject, Turner also introduced such middle class tourists as a woman with a furled
white parasol wearing a white walking dress. This kind of walking dress began to be worn in the end of the eighteenth century as women started to walk outdoors as a recreational activity. The women walking around the terrace on the right side also wear walking dresses and are accompanied by men wearing black top hats, trousers, and frock coats, which were preferred by younger men partly because of a trend towards practicality and simplicity for ease in sports or leisure. They might be here to enjoy sipping a cup after wondering around the terrace.

Not only for those middle class tourists, the terrace was also socially important for upper classes as the Star and Garter afforded such attractions for them as parties, balls or concerts at its assembly room.

The ASSEMBLY ROOM is lofty, and of a noble size, being eighty feet in length and thirty in breadth, with glass chandeliers, and every suitable embellishment, including an orchestra, recently put up. Three balls during the winter take place here (in November, December, and January), under the patronage of her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch, and others of the nobility and gentry, nearly three hundred of whom attend on these occasions.

Tickets of admission may be obtained by applying to the stewards, gentlemen of Richmond and its vicinity. From the balcony of the assembly room may be seen seven countries; and in the adjacent grounds Mr. Ellis, its present occupier, has made very considerable improvements.

Splendid balls were reported by papers throughout the year. For instance, Easter Ball on 26 April 1832 held at the Assembly Room under the patronage of the Countess of Dysart was attended by nearly 300 fashionables including captains with their spouses. Turner’s soldiers depicted in full uniform wearing red jackets and biornes in the shape of a crescent and their companions ascending the slope of the hill to the Star and Garter inn might come here to attend an assembly and wait for its opening. A topographical text from 1838 reads, for instance, that the terrace ‘which is always kept in the neatest order, affords a charming promenade, and is every evening crowded with genteel company’. It was when the area was flourishing after its redevelopments for the trend of tourism that Turner came here to make the drawings developed into the composition of Richmond Terrace, Surrey. He might have felt that bustling air around the inn which might have inspired him to compose the view with animated figures including a couple with a child in highland clothes of tartan kilt whom Turner drew in ‘Thames’ sketchbook [90 verso], probably at the site. Turner should have experienced the situation of the terrace with different people enjoying the site around the Star and Garter, which was described in some topographical texts at the time. For instance, ‘in the summer season it [the village of Richmond] is a place of great resort for all classes’, and ‘The celebrated ‘Hill’ is the first and principal object of the stranger’s attraction’. Turner’s representation of the site around the Star and Garter with various figures is strongly related to the contemporary situation of the terrace after the alterations of the area in the 1820s. While Helsinger points out that the alterations of the convention of picturesque views can be observed in Turner’s topographical prints, the change of the terrace into a social place for various classes in the age of tourism is also represented in Turner’s Richmond Terrace Surrey. The terrace of Richmond Hill was not a mere background for Turner to represent British hierarchical society but the very site for various classes. Turner articulated the spirit of the place occupied by the people in the age of tourism by introducing the sidewall of the Star & Garter as an indication of the contemporary situation of the terrace.

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1 Austen (1933), p.273.
2 Wilton (1979), no.879.
3 The view from the hill provided such painters as Leonard Knayff, Antonio Joli, Francesco Zuccarelli, Joshua Reynolds, Joseph Farington, Thomas Hofland and George Hilditch subjects of landscape from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. For some of these examples, see De Novellis (2002). In quite a few contemporary topographical texts of Richmond as
Allen (1831), II, pp.380-444, such were frequently mentioned as a long history of the abode of royalty, the picturesque landscape from the hill, and several literary tributes to the view, for instance, by James Thomson, Thomas Maurice, and Walter Scott. As to Richmond and Turner, see Hill (1993), pp.53-62.
5 Helsinger (2002), p.111. Her discussion could be developed by identifying the person who is not depicted in the composition but seems to have just arrived at the site, which is implied by the attentions of those who are looking at us such as the woman with a parasol in the middle of the picture or two women sitting on the far right.
6 Some examples include View from Richmond Hill [TB-XXVII, K], ‘Studies for Pictures; Isleworth’ sketchbook [TB-XC, 22, 23, 24, 25], ‘Hastings to Margate’ sketchbook [TB-CXL, 69v, 70v, 71v, 72v, 76, 76v, 77, 78, 78v, 79, 81v, 82], ‘Hints River’ sketchbook [TB-CXLI, 10v-11, 11v-12, 12v-13], and drawings from Colour Beginnings [TB-CXCII, B; TB-CCCLXIII, 348, 386].
7 Finberg notes its watermarks shows the year 1824. See Finberg (1909), II, p.844.
8 TB-CCXIII, 5v, 6, 6v, 82, 88, 88v, 90, 91. Another sketchbook, ‘Worcester and Shrewsbury’ [TB-CCXXXIX, 89v-90], also includes views from Richmond Hill. However, one of their viewpoints looks nearer to that used for Richmond Hill [W518] in terms of the shape of the Thames and the architecture on the slope of the hill.
10 For the history of the Star & Garter, see Ellis (1983). And for its later history after the fire to the present date, see Weinreb (2008), p.734.
11 Golt’s identification is inaccurate as he notes the view is ‘looking down the lane at the corner of Reynold’s house.’ See Golt (1987), p.17.
12 Shanes (1990), p.257.
13 The Morning Chronicle, 7 April, (1834).
14 The Morning Post, Thursday, 13 November, (1834).
15 Cooke (1841), p.12. The first edition was published in about 1838.
16 Shanes (1990), p.257.
17 Burnet (1854), pp.91-92.
18 Milner (1990), p.47.
19 The Morning Post, Wednesday, 21 January, (1824). However, in the next issue of 22 January, another reader condemned the removal of trees as ‘proofs of very bad taste’.
20 Evans (1825), p.73.
21 The Morning Post, Wednesday, 21 January, (1824).
22 Evans (c1875), p.11.
23 Evans (c1875), pp.19-20. To a poet of the same surname living in Richmond, Charles Ellis, Turner sent a letter replying to the request from him for a drawing for a plate to Charles’s Richmond and other Poems published in 1845. See Gage (1980), p.204. Alexander Finberg’s typescript Life of Turner, which I investigated at the Prints and Drawings Room, Tate Britain originally quotes this letter though he does not write any information about Charles Ellis nor his address. Indeed, Charles is the name of the fourth son [1818-1908] of Joseph Ellis of the Star and Garter. In addition, Charles the poet in his Richmond and other Poems writes ‘To My Brother Joseph These Verses’ [p.iii] and Joseph was the name of the second son [1815-91] of Joseph (the elder). See Ellis (1983), p.13. However, no details to trace them could be found in the Parish Records in spite of the kind help of the Local Studies Collection team of Richmond.
24 Evans (c1875), p.11.
28 Evans (1825), p.74.
30 Shelly (1835), II, p.83.
31 Anon. (1847-50), I, p.59.
33 Anon. (1825), n.p.
34 As to several examples before 1820s, see Gascoigne (1978). Their accompanying texts seldom contain information about visitors of the terrace around the Star and Garter but focus much more on the view from the terrace and its historical, aesthetical, or literary associations. See Oulton (1805), II, p.476; Cooke (1811), II., n.p.; Lysons (1811), I, p.335. An exception is Simons’ journal which mentions ‘walkers on the terrace’ but does not mention the Star and Garter or its social meaning. See Simons (1815), I, p.153.
36 Evans (1825), pp.74-75.
37 The Morning Post, Saturday, 28 April, (1832).
38 Brady (1838), pp.493, 496.
39 Brady (1838), p.493.
41 On the other hand, contemporary topographical texts on Richmond do not mention street vendors depicted in Richmond Terrace, Surrey such as a female walking along the terrace among the tourists with flower baskets in both hands, a man leaning against the tree with a birdcage-like box and a mother in black cape sitting beside her daughter with flowers on their barrow. Though they might have been deliberately ignored by those texts, Turner’s preparatory figure drawings of the place suggest that those working class people could be there. For instance, the sitting women on the right hand side of the composition can be related to the sitting female figures with bonnet drawn on folios 88 verso and 89 verso from the ‘Thames’ sketchbook.
References cited
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De Novellis, Mark (2002): Highlights of the Richmond Borough Art Collection, Twickenham, Orleans House Gallery.


Gascoigne, Bamber (1978): Images of Richmond, Richmond upon Thames, Saint Helena Press.


ターナー作《リッチモンド・テラス、サリー》と同時代のリッチモンド・ヒル

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要約
本論文は、イギリスの風景画家ジョゼフ・マロード・ウィリアム・ターナー(1775-1851)が1836年頃に制作した水彩《リッチモンド・テラス、サリー》(リヴァプール、ウォーカー美術館蔵)について論じるものである。

本作は、ロンドン近郊のテムズ川沿いの街リッチモンドにあるリッチモンド・ヒルの高台を描いている。この場所から眺めるテムズの風景は17世紀以来多くの画家によって描かれ、美しい風景の典型として認識されてきた。しかしターナーのこの水彩作品は伝統的な構図を用いた単なる美しい風景にとどまらず、1820年代以降に再び活況を呈した当地の社会的状況をも描いている。

というのも、本作の直接的な準備素描は1825年頃に描かれたが、これはリッチモンドの高台周辺でいくつかもの改修作業が行われ、その結果、より多くの訪問者を引き付けるようになった時期であるからだ。

1822年には本作の左手に建物の一部が描かれている宿屋を拡張する改装が、1824年には遊歩道の整備が、1825年にはロンドンから遊歩道に通じる街道の改良工事が行われている。こうした再開発の取り組みが一層の魅力をリッチモンドの高台に付与したことで、ターナーの作品に描かれるように、ここは様々な階層の人々が集まり典型的な英国の風景美を楽しむ場所となったのである。

ターナーが様々な階層の人物を取り込みつつ描いた本作は、彼が1825年頃、準備素描の制作に取り組んだ際にも触れられ、当地の新たな活況に着想を得たものと考えられる。

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