

The Jury by John Morgan, 1861 (downloadable pdf)



About the painting:

The Jury was painted by John Morgan in 1861 at the Assizes held at County Hall, Market Square, Aylesbury. This expressive and witty painting depicts twelve local figures sitting as a jury, all listed in a plaque beneath the painting giving their surname and occupation. Many of the names, such as Ivatts and Horwood, are long standing local names and information about sitters can be found in the census, newspapers and trade directories of the time. The painting is signed and dated in the lower right corner 'J Morgan/ 1861'.

The picture was first displayed in the spring of 1862 in an exhibition held at the British Institution, London. On 15 February 1862 The Bucks Advertiser recorded that The Jury in the exhibition 'has been placed in the most advantageous situation, and is noticed in the most laudatory terms by all the daily journals. All who saw the work will congratulate our townsman on a success which has been earned by none of the tricks or vulgarities of art, but the keen eye for and strict fidelity to nature, of which the picture bears such evident marks'.

The importance of The Jury in Morgan's body of work was clearly shown by a later reviewer writing in the Illustrated London News in 1867. Speaking of another of Morgan's paintings the reviewer noted 'he has proved himself specially endowed; and we trust he may well still redeem the great promise of his picture The Jury exhibited at the British Institution a few years ago'.

The popular appeal of the painting was soon realised and in 1863 a mezzotint engraving of the painting by W Joseph Edwards was published by Henry Graves and Co. It was the first of Morgan's paintings to be engraved as a print and because of his habit of signing his works J Morgan it earned him the title of 'Jury' Morgan.

It isn't possible to trace the whole history of the painting's ownership. At the time the mezzotint engraving was made The Jury was owned by Thomas Ball JP of Bramcote, Nottingham. It later passed into the collection of Sir Stafford Cripps, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer 1947-50.

The painting was sold at Mallams Auction House, Oxford in 2005 and acquired by Buckinghamshire County Museum from Johnathan Coulborn with generous assistance from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund (38%), the Heritage Lottery Fund (31%), the Art Fund (19%), the Patrons of Buckinghamshire County Museum (6%), Aylesbury Town Council (3%), Bucks Archaeological Society (2%) and by many local donors to our fundraising appeal. The painting is always on display in the Discover Art section of the Discover Bucks Gallery.

About the artist:

John Morgan was a highly successful Victorian artist well known for his genre scenes, in particular those which portray children. He was born in Pentonville, London in 1822 and as a young man was apprenticed to a business which designed frames and furniture for Gillow, Jackson and Graham. He studied at the School of Design at Somerset House, and later spent some time in Paris as a pupil of Couture and Delaroche.

By 1860 the Morgan family were living in Aylesbury where they remained until the mid 1860s. The 1861 census records them living in Church Yard, Aylesbury and describes Morgan as an Artist Subject Painter in Oils. His wife Henrietta is described as an Artist's Counsellor. By 1864 the Morgans had moved to Tring Villas, a group of three large houses on the corner of New Road and Britannia Street. During his time in Aylesbury Morgan painted at least three pictures which depicted local scenes and people, including the Jury and the Country Auction (which shows the spire of the local church, St Mary's).

John Morgan suffered from a bad chest and by the mid 1860s he seems to have begun visiting a number of places with a view to finding a home more congenial to his health. By the 1870s the family had moved to Guildford.

Morgan's work was clearly influenced by the work of other Victorian genre painters, most notably Thomas Webster and William Powell Frith. He exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy, the British Institution and Society for British Artists (SBA). Morgan was elected a member of the SBA in 1875.

In 1882 Morgan moved again to Hastings and died here in 1885. His studio sale was held at Christie's on 1 March 1887. According to the V&A Catalogue of Oil Paintings his dates are usually given as 1823-1886 but the dates 1822-1885 were given by his son Frederick Morgan to T S R Boase.

John's son Frederick Morgan was an equally popular 19th century genre artist. While in Aylesbury he worked in his father's studio and the photographic studio of Samuel Payne, which was across the road from Tring Villas. Frederick married the artist Alice Havers in the 1870s although they later divorced. One of Frederick's most famous paintings, His Turn Next (Lady Lever Art Gallery), which shows two children about to bathe a dog, was used by as an advertisement by the Pears soap company.

John Morgan's Aylesbury paintings		
Title	Date	Current location
The Income Tax – the day of the appeal	1861	Government Art Collection
The Jury	1861	Buckinghamshire County Museum
The Auction	1863	Private Collection, The Netherlands

About the Jurors:

Top row, L-R: Joseph Ivatts, Thomas Horwood, William Ezra Eagles, Charles Isaac Clark, Walter Batley Rudland, Richard Loosely

Joseph Ivatts

A cattle dealer who in 1861 lived in Silver Street, Aylesbury. He came from a family of Aylesbury shoemakers, who had been working in the town since the 1720s. In 1882 The Bucks Herald recorded with much regret the death of this 'old, well-known and much esteemed inhabitant of the town'.

Thomas Horwood

At the time the Jury was painted Thomas Horwood was 41 and a solicitor in Temple Square. By 1869 he was partner in the firm James and Horwood and was listed in trade directories as a 'solicitor and commissioner for oaths and perpetual commissioner for taking acknowledgements of married women, registrar of the court of the archdeaconry of Buckingham and secretary to the savings' bank'. He was much involved in the life of Aylesbury being a member of the Bucks Rifle Volunteer Corps and a member of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological and Architectural Society.

William Ezra Eagles

Described on the plaque beneath the painting as a lawyer but the 1861 census records that he was actually a solicitor's managing clerk. He lived at 43 Castle Street, Aylesbury and like Thomas Horwood was a member of the Bucks Rifle Volunteer Corps. He was also involved in the Mechanics Institute and in December 1861 he gave a talk at the Institute on the subject of 'Jurors'. The Bucks Advertiser noted that the talk '... was appropriately illustrated by a picture recently painted by Mr. John Morgan ...

Charles Isaac Clark

Lived in Aston Clinton and is described on the plaque beneath the painting as a butcher. However, he also ran the Half Moon and Seven Stars public house in Aston Clinton. By 1869 he had moved to the Rose and Crown in Aston Clinton, but was still described as a 'butcher and publican' in the trade directories. After his death in 1874 his wife, Mary Ann, continued to run the Rose and Crown.

Walter Batley Rudland

Like William Ezra Eagles, a solicitor's managing clerk. In 1861, when The Jury was painted, he was a lodger at 86 Church Yard. He also audited the accounts for the Mechanics Institute. The Bucks Advertiser for 4 November 1865 recorded that he died very suddenly at the age of 49, a 'highly respected' resident of the town.

Richard Loosely

The 1861 census describes him as a 'miller and grazier employing 2 men'. At that time he lived at Haydon Mill although previously he had lived in Castle Street, Aylesbury. He died in 1867, aged 73.

Bottom row, L-R: Thomas Smith, Philip Payne, Thomas Wootton, Joseph Howard, James Hobday, John Dukes

Thomas Smith

First listed in Aylesbury trade directories as a coal and salt merchant but when The Jury was painted he was a butcher in Walton Street, Aylesbury. By 1863 he was also running the Bear Inn, Walton Street (now demolished) and continued to do so until at least 1887.

Philip Payne

Some Aylesbury historians think that this is a portrait of Samuel Payne, the well-known postmaster of Aylesbury. However the plaque beneath the painting describes this man as a draper and in 1861 there was a draper called Philip Payne living in Aylesbury who was 62 years old. He owned shops on Market Street and Temple Street and lived at 126 Walton Grove. By 1877 the business appeared in trade directories under his son's name, Bartholomew Payne.

Thomas Wootton

In 1861 Thomas Wootton ran the Bell Inn, Market Square, Aylesbury. It was described in trade directories as a 'commercial inn, licensed to let horses and gigs'. Earlier however, Wootton had run the Bear Inn, Walton Street and by 1869 he was running the Crown Inn, Market Square. In November 1861 The Bucks Advertiser reported 'Mr T Wootton, of the Bell Inn having kindly invited the Volunteers (Bucks Rifle Volunteers) to supper on Thursday evening a large number attended, Corporal Lehmann presided and a very pleasant evening was spent'.

Joseph Howard

He was 66 when The Jury was painted and living at 194 Walton Street, Aylesbury. For many years he had been a coal merchant in the town, often dealing in other commodities like brick, lime and salt. In the Mussen and Craven 1853 trade directory he is also listed as a road surveyor.

James Hobday

Described on the plaque beneath the painting as a silk manufacturer and was listed in the 1861 census as a 'manager of silk works employing about 220 persons'. The silk mill had been established on the Oxford Road in 1844, as a form of employment for people who would have otherwise entered the town's poor house. However by 1869 the Kelly's Post Office Directory records that Hobday was a bookseller and stationer in the Market Square, also selling sheet music and running a circulating library. He died in 1870 at the age of 60.

John Dukes

Very little is known about John Dukes who is described on the plaque beneath the painting as a bricklayer. Hayward Parrott, the Aylesbury historian, believed that this was not actually a portrait of John Dukes, but of a Mr Gates. However, the 1861 census recorded a John Dukes, aged 55, living at 48 Castle Street who was a 'Pensioner of the 57th and 25th Foot, now a Bricklayer's Labourer'.