

JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

A view of the Cascade in the garden of Sir Francis Dashwood's West Wycombe Park with a view to the house to the left and the hilltop church of St Lawrence's at West Wycombe to the right

W TAYLOR

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Description

Attributed to W TAYLOR Mid 18th century English School A view of the Cascade in the garden of Sir Francis Dashwood's West Wycombe Park with a view to the house to the left and the hilltop church of St Lawrence's at West Wycombe to the right Oil on canvas 96.5 x 152.5 cms 38 x 60 inches

Ex. Collection: David Pleydell-Bouverie, grandson of the 5th Earl of Radnor The painter W Taylor is unknown in that where he was based and his dates are unrecorded. However, there is one painting of Stanway House in Gloucestershire, signed and dated 1748, which bears striking similarity to the treatments in this work. The Stanway painting, described by John Harris, in his *The artist and the Country House*, as: "This attractively naïve view might suggest a local painter from Gloucester or Cheltenham..." The colouration, depiction of the trees and foliage and the staffage all bear comparison in both paintings. Bibliography: *The Artist and the Country House* – John Harris *The Dictionary of British Eighteenth Century Painters* – Ellis Waterhouse

WEST WYCOMBE PARK The house at West Wycombe Park was built between 1740 and 1800 and was designed to be where Sir Francis Dashwood, the renowned 18th century dilettante and libertine, could indulge his friends and himself. It is a unique design with architectural quirks but it exemplifies the transition in 18th century Britain from Palladian to Neoclassical. Sir Francis inherited the house from his father in 1724 and between 1726 and 1741 the former undertook several Grand Tours which informed his taste and aspirations throughout his life. He had his father's rather simple red-brick Queen Anne style house redesigned in the classical manner with references to the Palladian and Veneto styles. It sits within a contemporaneous landscaped park which contains many follies and small temples. The gardens at West Wycombe are extraordinary and along with Stowe Park, is one of the finest to survive in England from the 18th century. It has a large number of classically inspired buildings and follies which reference those from Italy and Greece. The design was undertaken by Thomas Cook, who was responsible for landscaping the garden and Nicholas Revett who worked more on the ornamental features. There was a ready source of water with the river Wye close to the park and it was Cook who took advantage of this and conceived the lake which covered nine acres and took the form of a swan. The replenishing of water is constant as it flows in from the river and out down the cascade and into a canal at a lower level. The lake had islands to create perspective and added intrigue and one of these had a Temple of Music in which Sir Francis staged theatrical delights and fêtes champêtres. The temple was based on the Temple of Vesta in Rome. The size of the lake meant that it was large enough to have a boat and this sailing vessel came complete with its own captain and it had several cannon that were fired regularly to add to the excitement.

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