JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

A sportsman shooting duck with his spaniel in a marsh landscape

DEAN WOLSTENHOLME SNR.

Sold

London, England

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REF: 374760

Height: 39 cm (15.4")

Width: 54 cm (21.3")

Framed Height: 47 cm (18.5")

Framed Width: 62 cm (24.4")

Description

English School
1757-1837

A sportsman shooting duck with his spaniel in a marsh landscape

Oil on canvas

There is comparatively little known of Dean Wolstenholme's background and upbringing apart from the fact that he was born in Yorkshire to a family which had considerable estates which they farmed. The young Dean was also involved in this work but was also a keen artist and apparently Sir Joshua Reynold's noted his artistic talent and made the prediction that he would become a professional painter. Besides painting recreationally, he was also a keen huntsman and J C Wood writes that, because he was a sportsman, he "…was in full sympathy with his subjects."

In around 1793, Wolstenholme became embroiled in a litigation over some property at Waltham Abbey in Hertfordshire where he was also living at that time and following three unsuccessful chancery suits this case cost him a significant amount of money, the consequence being that he no longer had sufficient income from his estates to support himself. He had a determined character and although self-taught, took up painting full time to earn a living in about 1802.

Initially he remained in the county of Hertfordshire though as when he exhibited his first painting at the Royal Academy in 1803, Coursing, it was sent from an address in Turnford, Cheshunt. When he sent his Epping Forest Hunt 1805 exhibit to the RA he was living in London at 4, East St, Red Lion Square, remaining there until 1820 when he was at 22, Chad's Row, Gray's Inn.

Wolstenholme's early work was a series of paintings which featured brew yards and the magnificent dray-horses that were an integral part of the business. He expanded his subject matter to include locations outside London and portraying hunting, coursing, shooting scenes, dog and horse portraits as well as animals such as stags, sheep and cattle. Grant describes these as being "…of great vigour, and in the Landscape, of beauty, employing considerably more positive colour than his son, presenting indeed a more rural aspect."

Dean Wolstenholme's son, Charles Dean Wolstenholme, painted similar subjects to that of his father, particularly of brew yards, but his paintings have a brighter overall feel whereas his father's backgrounds tend to be a little more sombre in tone and the father's technique is rather more tight than his son's which can be a little looser. Another difference is that Wolstenholme Snr frequently did not sign his paintings whereas his son, who also signed Dean Wolstenholme, tended to do so and any signed works after 1824 are by Wolstenholme Jnr.

Like many good sporting artists of the time, Wolstenholme and his son engraved their own work, enabling them to exercise complete control throughout the process thus ensuring the quality of the final prints and protecting their reputation. They are prime examples of this, as was Henry Alken also, and the high degree

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of technical ability combined with practical knowledge of their subject is most apparent. Wolstenholme Jnr, who had initially studied engraving as a young man, engraved much of his father's work as well as his own. R G Reeve also worked with Dean Wolstenholme and p...

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