

John Fleming of Greenock (1792-1845)



“The Father of Landscape Painting
in the West of Scotland”

George A. Woods

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INTRODUCTION

The early history of painting in the West of Scotland has hitherto been rather a neglected area of research, yet, in many aspects, the artists working in this part of the world laid the foundations for the achievements of the later nineteenth century when Glasgow and west of Scotland artists were to rise to international prominence.

In this early industrial, pre-railway period, the merchant and professional classes of local towns provided a clientele which encouraged artists, often locally trained, to develop local schools and traditions which reflected the interests of their patrons. The best of these artists were aware of recent developments and trends in the wider art world, yet found sufficient patronage locally to sustain their practices and maintain a professional artistic presence in the rapidly growing industrial towns of this part of Scotland.

Pre-eminent amongst these local schools was the group of artists who worked in Greenock and the Inverclyde area in the first half of the nineteenth century. These artists worked in the fields of portraiture and landscape painting as well as the local tradition of marine painting, a specialty of artists working in Inverclyde until the present day.

Both Robert Salmon (1775-1851?) and William Clark (1803-1883) have achieved a revival of interest in their works in recent years, both in terms of published research and rising prices in the auction rooms. The purpose of this publication is to discuss the life and work of one of their Inverclyde contemporaries, John Fleming (1792-1845), an artist highly esteemed by his contemporaries who has not yet benefitted from a modern account of his life.

Fleming was one of the most productive artists recording the landscape of the West of Scotland in the first half of the nineteenth century. He is a crucial artist in the recording of the development of the Inverclyde area and documented many locations in the River Clyde area, the Highlands, Ayrshire and elsewhere before the onset of industrialization and the resultant development and, in some cases, their destruction in the wake of the arrival of railways and steam powered industry. As such he records a landscape that in many ways seems idyllic to modern viewers, a vision of a now vanished rural west of Scotland which can be tremendously appealing in its simple beauty.

He was a much loved artist throughout Scotland in his day and his reputation remains strong with those who know his work and it is perhaps a testimony to his appeal that so many of his works remain in private hands. Given the popularity of his work it is perhaps unusual that there is relatively little known about his life but this may be partly a result of his own reticence. Fleming always seems to have been happy to let his art speak for itself and this may have been a factor in generating the high esteem in which he was held by those who knew him.

EARLY LIFE 1792-1810

Fleming was born in Glasgow in 1792 and the source for most of the details of John Fleming's early life come from his obituary notice published by the Greenock Advertiser on the 28th March 1845. It states clearly that he was born in Glasgow but

gives no indication as to his parentage or their profession. It is known that he had two sisters, Janet and Mary, from his trust deposition and settlement presented to Paisley Sheriff Court on his death in 1845.¹

Establishing a chronology for Fleming's early life is difficult but through his obituary of 1845, presumably written with the input and approval of his son, William C. Fleming, it is possible to reconstruct the pattern of his early career.

The general consensus is that the place of his birth was Glasgow, although Greenock has occasionally been cited, as in *The Dictionary of Scottish Art and Architecture*. The 1841 census simply states that Fleming was born in Scotland. There seems little reason to doubt that he was born in Glasgow.

The obituary stresses Fleming's early artistic ability:

*'at a very early age, it is said even in childhood, he manifested a disposition for drawing. The meaning and signification of lines and pictures seemed to be what his mind first awoke to a knowledge of; and in after life, though his acquirements were both numerous and various, yet it was evident that much had been sacrificed to the early bent of his genius.'*²

In early adolescence there seems to have been attempts to gain him a place in an engraver's workshop but he was eventually apprenticed as a house-painter at the age of fourteen. As part of his apprenticeship he seems to have worked at Hamilton Palace and, encountering the paintings and other art collections there, had his desire to become a professional artist reinforced.

The means by which Fleming gained his artistic training is unclear. It is known that he had some contact (the extent is unknown) with the portrait painter James Saxon who worked in Glasgow and Edinburgh intermittently from 1803 onwards, leaving Scotland around 1817. It was presumably from Saxon that Fleming gained at least some basics as a portrait painter. Unfortunately Saxon himself is a somewhat shadowy figure (born in 1772 and previously thought to have died in 1817, he now seems to have lived to at least 1828) so the precise nature and extent of the relationship is difficult at this time to establish. As far as landscape painting goes it is not clear if Fleming ever had any formal training. Perhaps he gained further instruction when he was in London after the completion of his apprenticeship.

Fleming's obituary recounts that on the expiry of his apprenticeship he moved to London, working at his trade whilst gaining knowledge of the historical and contemporary works available in the capital. He was said to have stayed in London for 'some years' so a precise timeline is not easy to establish.

That Fleming had not worked in London as an artist seems to be implied by the statement in his obituary that he 'seems not to have had sufficient confidence in his own abilities to come before the public as an artist'. This is reinforced by the initial intention of Fleming to set himself up in partnership in a decorating business in

¹ John Fleming Trust Disposition and Settlement (National Records of Scotland, online 2012) Paisley Sheriff Court SC58/42/15 fos 37-41

² John Fleming's obituary notice in 'The Greenock Advertiser' of 28th March 1845.

Glasgow. This venture never came to fruition, since it was to be overtaken by events, namely the invitation of an acquaintance to come to Greenock to paint a portrait.

This results in a chronology that provides a frame work for the early decades of Fleming's life:

- * 1792 Fleming is born
- * 1804/1805 Fleming begins his apprenticeship as a house painter
- * 1808-1810 Fleming takes some lessons from James Saxon?
- * 1809/1810 Fleming completes his apprenticeship and spends some time in London?
- * 1810 Fleming arrives in Greenock

This chronology is supported by statements in Fleming's obituary that '*he became the first resident artist which Greenock ever had*' and that he had spent '*the whole of his useful and meritorious professional career (a period of about thirty-five years)*' in Greenock. This would clearly date his arrival there to around 1810, the year before the great marine artist Robert Salmon arrives in the town.

One document which might appear to challenge the traditional chronology is the information in the census of 1841.³ As the sole 'official' piece of information about Fleming's year of birth it cites the year of his birth as being 'about 1801'. This is both vague and inaccurate, both as to Fleming's age and year of birth, as evidence from other reliable sources clearly contradicts it and it may therefore be safely discounted. The standards of census data collection in 1841 did not meet modern standards of accuracy and in any case the information may not have been supplied by Fleming himself.

EARLY CAREER 1810-1820

Fleming seems to have only shown his work in Greenock between 1813 and 1820, perhaps due to his the natural reticence referred to in his obituary. The main local vehicle for exhibiting his works in the period 1813-1820 was the 'Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science' in Greenock which held its first exhibition in 1813 and continued to mount exhibitions until at least 1823. In addition to this public exhibition society there was also a local tradition of exhibiting paintings in the shop windows of artist's colourmen and suppliers which continued into the late nineteenth century. The display of paintings in these local shops was frequently associated with the selling of engravings, and in later years, of lithographs of the work by the shop concerned as can be seen in the case of William Clark's relationship with the Greenock art dealers Laurie and Fleming.

The exhibition of 1813 was probably the key public event in establishing Fleming in the public eye as a professional artist. The exhibition was clearly aimed at those who were likely to be able to afford to commission an artist such as Fleming since the admission price was one shilling, rising to five shillings 'during the season' (the catalogue cost three pence). That the exhibition was probably Fleming's first chance to display his talents before the public is indicated by relatively wide range of genres and subjects

³ Scottish Census for 1841 (taken on the evening of 6 June 1841) Greenock St. Thomas Parish, ED26, page 4, line 675 – General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland accessed via Ancestry.com online database.

which he showed in the exhibition. He seems to have been attempting to demonstrate the widest range of his capabilities in the hope of gaining commissions.

The works included 'Peter denying Christ', 'Portrait of a Gentleman', 'View of the Trosachs', 'The Emigrant', 'Groupe of Flowers (from Nature)', 'Portrait of an Artist', 'View of Dumbarton Castle, above the Ferry House', another 'Groupe of Flowers (from Nature)', 'Leven Castle', 'Auchmugton Cottages', 'Cottage upon Loch Katrineside', 'Gypsies near Horniswood', 'Glasshoyle Cottage, Loch Katrineside', 'Cottages near Crawford's-dyke' and 'Study from Nature'.⁴

Fleming exhibited a total of 15 paintings in an exhibition of 131 works. Identifying the remaining extant works from this exhibition is problematic but the work exhibited as 'Portrait of an Artist' seems very likely to be the self-portrait now in the McLean Museum (accession number 1977.821). It shows a young, confident artist engaging with the viewer and clearly asserting his claim as portraitist.



Portrait of an Artist
76.5 x 64 cm - Oil on canvas - circa 1813
McLean Museum Collection no.1977.821

That Fleming also had inclinations to work in other genres can be seen in his following on from 'Peter denying Christ' with 'Margaret of Anjou, after the Battle of Heram' and 'Paul before Agrippa, Felix and Berenice' at the Society's exhibition in Greenock the next year (1814). Such ambitious, possibly overly ambitious, Biblical and historical subjects were unlikely to have generated commissions locally and seem likely to have been painted to demonstrate his talents in a prestigious genre to critics and public alike.

⁴ Catalogue of the First Annual Exhibition of Paintings etc., under the patronage of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Sciences, Greenock 1813. (In the archives of the Watt Library, Greenock no.R3159).

'Margaret of Anjou, after the Battle of Heram' was reviewed in the Scots magazine by an 'Admirer of the Fine Arts' from Gourrock:

*'As serpents frequently lurk under the most beautiful foliage, so in this delightful Wood Scene, the unfortunate Queen and her infant Son meet with a Robber; though luckily not one of the worst kind. This is a very pretty painted picture, and is sufficiently intelligible of its subject to everyone acquainted with the history.'*⁵

The 'Admirer of the Fine Arts' carried on with a review of 'Paul before Agrippa, Felix and Berenice' saying:

'The eloquence of Paul on this occasion is certainly a better subject for reading than painting. This picture is however very fair for an Artist of no great experience, considering the difficulty of the subject. The figure of Paul is dignified, and some of the bystanders possess considerable interest. The splendour of Royalty is rather deficient in respect of the Throne, and flow of drapery, which is a necessary appendage.'

Perhaps predictably, our admirer of the arts felt more warmly towards other works by Fleming: 'Flowers from Nature' being described as 'This is a splendid group of flowers of the choice kinds, delicately and accurately painted.' 'Cottages and Wool Mill on Loch Lomond Side' and 'Cottages near Strathblane' were considered 'very excellent specimens of this kind of rural scenery by that Artist'.

It is not clear how much portraiture Fleming carried out during this early period. All the examples in the McLean Museum collection and those elsewhere date from the 1820s onwards, so it may be that Fleming was relying primarily income from his landscapes and the hope of a commission for a painting on a historical or a religious subject. Three landscape works by John Fleming during this period are still extant: 'Alloway Kirk from the West', 'Alloway Kirk from the East' and 'Alloway Kirk from the West' have been attributed to John Fleming and dated to 1816/1817.

That Fleming was open to the ideas of his contemporaries is evident from the fact that he occasionally copied works by them. He is known to have painted a copy of J.M.W. Turner's 'View of Edinburgh from Calton Hill' of 1820 (now in a private collection). Indeed the engraving of Turner's Edinburgh works may have sown the seed of Fleming's later collaborations with Joseph Swan.

One major work which appears to date from this decade is a very large painting now known as 'Greenock from the East' (McLean Museum collection No. 1977.820). From the internal evidence of the painting and the stylistic features shown in the execution, this work would appear to belong to the first five years or so of Fleming's stay in Greenock, 1810-1815. At over 2 metres wide it is indicative of Fleming's desire to impress his viewers.

⁵ The Scots magazine and Edinburgh literary miscellany', Volume 76, 20th June 1814.



Greenock from the East
135 x 208 cm - Oil on canvas
McLean Museum Collection no.1977.820

Apart from this painting there are relatively few known works by Fleming painted during this decade outside of those recorded in the annual exhibitions of the Society. In particular, there is a notable lack of portraits from this period.

MID CAREER 1820-1835

By 1819 Fleming seems to have outgrown the exhibiting possibilities available locally and the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Sciences was itself beginning to run out of steam and was to end in 1823. This seems to have prompted to him to exhibit further afield, primarily in Glasgow and Edinburgh, during the next decade.

The establishment of The Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland in 1821 provided new opportunities and Fleming exhibited 12 paintings at their exhibitions of 'modern pictures' in 1821 and 1822.⁶

Amongst the works Fleming also exhibited at the 1st exhibition was no.136 'Gourock Watering Place.' As can be seen in the following review, exhibiting in Edinburgh was something of a two edged sword:

"Mr. JOHN FLEMING. A lively perception of the appearances of nature in ordinary circumstances, and an apparently artless representation of them, mark the character of this artist's style, although he seems to have had but little experience in the practical part, and no great acquaintance with the principles of art, No.136. Gourock Watering Place is well conceived, every object in it is truly represented according to its local colour, and its condition with respect to light and shadow; but, from the want of unity of effect, by not keeping the lights and shadows more in masses, the picture has not the pleasing repose that it would otherwise have possessed. The figures, as to position and colour, are well introduced. There are several other specimens by this gentleman,

⁶ The Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland Catalogue of the 1st Exhibition of Modern Pictures, 1821 and Catalogue of the 2nd Exhibition of Modern Pictures, March 1822.

*which are all chargeable with the same defects, although we cannot but consider them as works of great promise.”*⁷

Fleming also exhibited four works at the 7th exhibition held in February 1828 at the Institution's new premises on Princes Street.⁸

This expansion of his exhibiting activity was matched by Fleming becoming established as a professional portrait and landscape painter with a network of local contacts producing a series of commissions. From the mid-1820s Fleming's partnership with Joseph Swan of Glasgow enables his landscape work to become known further afield.

An interesting aspect of this progress was that although Fleming was well established painting landscapes, portraits of local eminent figures and other subjects he generally avoided marine subjects. Indeed throughout Fleming's career he seems to have avoided this subject area. The relative absence of this type of work in his output may be explained by the presence in Greenock during Fleming's career of two of the most outstanding marine painters of the nineteenth century.

The Greenock of the early nineteenth century offered a painter a range of opportunities but the main ones were in the fields of portraiture, local landscapes and marine works. Although, apart from Fleming himself, there was no resident portrait painter in the town, the great marine artist Robert Salmon (1775-1851?) had been resident there since 1811 and would have made any artist think twice about competing for commissions in the field of marine painting.

Robert Salmon [1775-ca.1844] arrived in Greenock in 1811 and stayed there until October 1822, returning to the town off and on until 1828 when he left for the USA. As a specialist 'ship portrait painter' it seems likely that he was able gain most of the available commissions from the local captains, merchants and ship owners. In any case, Salmon's meticulous style would have been more likely to have found approval with men of the sea who wanted, above all, an accurate record of the vessels they sailed and owned.

Shortly after Salmon's departure this niche was filled by William Clark who started out as a house painter but set up his business as a marine artist on 1st March 1830. Until his death in 1883 Clark was a successful painter of marine subjects. Both Salmon and Clark painted, as did Fleming, views of Greenock, but their primary reputations rested on their marine works and Fleming seems to have been content to concentrate on landscape and portraiture as his two main genres.

Portraiture was a much clearer field locally and Fleming seems to have had both the inclination and personality to become the resident portrait artist for the local merchants, shipbuilders and other local notables and their wives. Throughout the 1820s Fleming

⁷ Edinburgh Monthly Review, January-June 1821 page 499/500 Art VIII Catalogue of Paintings by Living Artists exhibited at the Third Annual Exhibition in March 1821 of the Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland.

⁸ The Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland Catalogue of the 7th Exhibition of Modern Pictures, 1828

paints a series of portraits of local figures and his membership of local clubs such as the Watt Club would have facilitated the social connections necessary to develop his portraiture commissions.

Having his base in Greenock offered Fleming several other benefits. It was close enough to Glasgow and Edinburgh to allow him to participate in the exhibitions (especially after the opening of the Greenock, Paisley and Greenock railway in 1841 and the Glasgow-Edinburgh line in 1842). It was also a useful point to start on his journeys to Argyll and western Highlands as well as having the Loch Lomond area and the Trossachs within reach. Locations in Ayrshire and points on the lower Clyde were also easily accessible, especially after the arrival of steamships on the Clyde in 1812.

That Fleming had settled well into Greenock society is clear by his membership (recorded in 1824) of the Watt Club in Greenock. The nature and purpose of the Watt Club was described by Daniel Weir in his 'History of Greenock':

*'The members hold their meetings in the James Watt Tavern, at the low west corner of William-street; and what renders this place doubly conspicuous, is the fact that on this identical spot stood the house in which Mr. Watt was born. The members consist of gentlemen belonging to the town, and honorary members in other places. The meetings cannot be said to be for any particular object, as regards science or literature, as no subjects are brought forward farther than the social conversation of the day; and, we believe, all subjects of a political or theological nature are excluded, lest their introduction should tend to injure the harmony and kind feeling which have hitherto been their principal characteristic.'*⁹



Portrait of Daniel Weir (1796-1831)
29.8 x 25 cm - Oil on wood - circa 1830
McLean Museum Collection no.1977.825

⁹ History of Greenock by Daniel Weir, Greenock 1829, page 81

Daniel Weir, the first historian of Greenock, was born on 31 March 1796 and died on 11 November 1831. His father was a merchant. Weir served an apprenticeship in book selling and had a business at 57 Cathcart Street, Greenock. He contributed several songs to 'Scottish Minstrelsy' by R.A. Smith and edited three volumes of lyric poems under the titles of 'The National Minstrel', 'The Sacred Lyre' and 'Lyrical Gems'. Other poems by him appeared in Glasgow newspapers and in the Greenock Advertiser. His 'History of Greenock' appeared in 1829 and Fleming was a subscriber to the first edition of Weir's History of Greenock. In 1829 Fleming appears on the list of subscribers to Daniel Weir's History of Greenock, perhaps in connection with Fleming's portrait of Daniel Weir (now in the McLean Collection). Fleming's presence as a subscriber may be taken as an indication of his status and prosperity within Greenock society although it was not entirely without an element of self-promotion: the frontispiece reproduced Swan's engraving of Fleming's 'View of Greenock from the South East'.

By 1826 Fleming was being commissioned to paint prominent local figures such as Robert Steele (1745-1830) and his wife and, via his Watt Club contacts, other local luminaries such as Henry Bell (1767-1830).



Robert Steele (1745-1830)

Oil on canvas – 120.5 x 91 cm. Signed and dated 'J. Fleming pinxit 1826'
Private Collection on loan to the McLean Museum.

Robert Steele spent his early years building fishing vessels and small coastal vessels at Saltcoats. In 1786 he went into a partnership with John Carswell at Greenock. That partnership was dissolved in 1816, when Robert Steele established a new partnership with his sons Robert and James, the enterprise being known as Robert Steele & Co. The firm successfully built many steamships became one of the leading Clyde by the time he of his death in 1830. His son James had died before him, so the leadership of the firm passed to Robert Steele jnr. (1791-1879).



Portrait of Henry Bell (1767-1830)

Oil on canvas – 78 x 65.2 cm - Signed and dated 'J. Fleming pinxt 1826'
McLean Museum Collection no.1978.369

The painting was originally commissioned by the Watt Club of Greenock.

He also seems to have found a ready market for landscapes of the town of Greenock. He painted several versions showing a view of the town from the east, an attractive view which took in the sweep of the lower Clyde with recent local achievements such as the harbour and the new Customs House visible.

This new theme of the industrialized Scottish town, combining the topographical recording of a rapidly changing Inverclyde with an element of pride in these changes, he accomplished in series of views nowadays usually entitled 'Greenock from the East, Old Greenock' etc. (none of the titles appear to be Fleming's). Demand for this view of the town seems to have been considerable with Fleming painting various versions ranging in size from near miniature to the very large. Indeed it was an engraving of one of the versions of this subject that was used as a frontispiece illustration to Daniel Weir's 'History of Greenock' published in 1829.



Greenock from the South East
20.8 x 31cm - Oil on wood - Late 1820s
McLean Museum Collection no.1977.823

As one of the earliest towns in Scotland to industrialise, Greenock was something of a phenomenon, offering an artist the chance to include the dramatic new features of an urban landscape with tall chimneys and refineries, bottle works and ironworks, shipyards and foundries adding interest to the scene.

This fascination with the industrial town is also seen in his painting *A Panoramic View of Dumbarton from the North West Featuring the Dumbarton Glassworks Company*, now in the National Museums of Scotland Reserve Collection, which features the cones of the glassworks set against Dumbarton Rock.



Greenock from the East
63.7 x 89 cm - Oil on canvas – 1827
McLean Museum Collection no.1977.818

Fleming was to find a further outlet for his work via engravings of his paintings printed and published by Joseph Swan (1796-1872) of Glasgow. Swan's main business seems

to have been a hybrid of engraver of book illustrations and portraits with being the publisher and promoter of his works.

The arrival of Fleming's son in the early to mid-1820s may have been part of the impetus encouraging his partnership with Joseph Swan around the same time, since it would have provided a valuable extra income source to offset the innately erratic nature of portrait commissioning.

When, in September, 1828, the Glasgow Dilettanti Society opened in their exhibition rooms in the Argyle Arcade, Glasgow they offered through their 'first exhibition of works by living artists' a new exhibition outlet for Fleming's works. He took full advantage of the opportunity, exhibiting 10 works in 1828 and showing over 65 works between 1828 and 1838. In 1830 he was designated an 'Extraordinary Member of the Glasgow Dilettanti Society'. These paintings were generally a mix of local Inverclyde scenes combined with landscapes of the Highlands, Trossachs and Argyllshire. The 'Portrait of a Lady', 'Portrait of a Gentleman' and the 'Portrait of Henry Bell', painted in 1826 but shown in 1830 being the sole exceptions.¹⁰

Several of the works were the originals from which Joseph Swan derived his engravings and the general nature of Fleming's paintings exhibited with the Society tend to reinforce the long standing impression, outside of the Inverclyde area, that Fleming was mainly or exclusively a landscape painter.

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¹⁰ Exhibited at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1830



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Fleming's first contact with Swan seems to have come about in 1828 when he collaborated with the Glasgow artist John Knox (1778-1845) and Swan on publishing a set of views of Glasgow entitled '*Select Views of Glasgow and its environs*'. The subsequent publication of *Views on the Clyde* (1830) and *The Lakes of Scotland* (1834) helped to consolidate his reputation as a landscape artist and brought his work to a much wider audience. The public reception was enthusiastic:

*"The same trio of talented individuals, in their various departments, who produced so beautiful a volume "Views of the Clyde", have in this work combined to favour the public with a work on the "Lakes of Scotland". The first number contains three plates of Loch Lomond, and these are accompanied with a very full description. The plates are highly beautiful; the points of view are picturesque and happily selected, and the prints are executed in the highest style of line engraving. Each part will be illustrative of one, or two, of the principal lakes. The whole will be comprised in about a dozen numbers; and the present work will form an excellent companion to "Views of the Clyde". It is highly deserving of encouragement."*¹¹

*"The silvan shadow above our heads is Beiti-bhuridh a portion of Cruachan. This used of old to be one of our favourite stations, and our ingenious friend John Fleming has done it justice, with a fine poetical feeling, in one of his Views, engraved by our ingenious friend Joseph Swan, for the Select Views of the Lakes of Scotland, a publication which deserves the patronage of the public, and we are happy to hear receives it, for it is true to the character of the Highlands, and we remember with delight the shadow of this scene on paper, even with the glorious reality before our eyes."*¹²

¹¹ The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle, September 1830.

¹² Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine June 1833 page 990.



Loch Fad and Kean's Cottage, Buteshire, from Bardarach Looking North
Hand coloured engraving by Joseph Swan after John Fleming.
McLean Museum Collection no.2007.23

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LATE CAREER 1835-1845

Fleming's personal life during his stay in Greenock is not well documented. His addresses in Greenock during the 1820s remain unknown as Post Office directories for Greenock do not appear until the 1830s but by 1836 he is sufficiently well known to merit an entry. He is recorded as a 'portrait and landscape painter' living at 5 William Street, Greenock.¹⁴ In 1836 William Street was a busy thoroughfare leading from

¹³ Exhibition records of the Glasgow Dilettanti Society 1828-1838

¹⁴ Fowler's Commercial Directory for the Lower Ward of Renfrewshire for 1836 page 37.

Cathcart Square to Greenock Harbour and would have been close to the economic and social heart of Greenock. It was also the street where the marine artist William Clark lived.

Exhibition records for the Glasgow Dilettanti Society and the Exhibition of works by British Artists record him as living at 12 William Street in 1837/1838. By 1841 he is listed as a 'portrait and landscape painter' living at 38 Hamilton Street, Greenock.¹⁵ The address at 38 Hamilton Street seems to have been Fleming's longest and final address. This property was a lodging house which may well have served as Fleming's studio as well since no evidence of such a property has been found. Since Fleming had a young son to look after it may be that he found this arrangement more convenient than running an independent establishment. There is evidence to suggest that Fleming was sufficiently well off to have done so had he wished.

The census of 1841 shows the property had four inhabitants:

- * Mary Carr, a lodging house keeper
- * John Bankier, a bookseller
- * John Fleming, artist
- * William Fleming, artist

Throughout the 1830s Fleming's career continued with portraits of local notables still in demand and he seems to have been fairly successful financially, or at any rate successful enough to have had some surplus funds to invest. In 1837 he was wealthy enough to invest £100 in shares of the Greenock, Glasgow and Paisley Railway (interestingly his fellow artist William Clark invested £50 – perhaps an indication of how well an artist could do in Greenock in the 1830s).¹⁶

His participation in Greenock's social life continued to yield benefits as in 1838 when he was commissioned by the Watt Club to paint the portrait of local novelist and colonial entrepreneur John Galt.¹⁷ The Watt Club already owned portraits of James Watt and Henry Bell by Fleming. The portrait was presented to Galt at a dinner given by the club in 1839, the presentation being the last time Galt appeared in public. At the annual dinner of the Watt Club in January 1839 the portrait was officially 'hung' by John Fleming.¹⁸

¹⁵ Hutcheson's Directory for Greenock 1841 page 120.

¹⁶ House of Commons Papers Volume 48 No.24 1837

¹⁷ Greenock Advertiser 22 January 1838

¹⁸ Greenock Advertiser 22 January 1839



Portrait of John Galt

76.3 x 63.4 cm - Oil on canvas - Signed and dated 'Fleming 1838 Greenock'
McLean Museum Collection no.1978.367

This portrait was commissioned by the Watt Club of Greenock in 1838. The reverse of the painting carries a label stating that it showed Galt 'after 13 attacks of paralyses'.

In addition to Fleming's well known relationship with Swan he also maintained contact with his fellow professionals and a wider public through exhibiting and membership of professional bodies. The establishment of the West of Scotland Academy of Fine Arts in 1841 not only provided Fleming with another exhibiting venue, it also gave him professional recognition from his peers.

The West of Scotland Academy of Fine Arts was founded as a response by artists to the generally unsympathetic treatment they believed they received from the Royal Scottish Academy and other fixtures of the Edinburgh art establishment. It had high ambitions, being founded 'upon the same principles as the London, Dublin and Edinburgh Academies'. It was intended that it should support an annual exhibition and form a School of Design. Interestingly the Committee of Management for 1841-1842 included Joseph Swan as Secretary. Eleven Academicians were chosen in 1841 and these included John Fleming, thereafter being styled as 'John Fleming RWA'.¹⁹

John Fleming exhibited seven works with the Academy in 1841, five works in 1842, six in 1843 with nothing in 1845 (the catalogue for 1844 is missing).²⁰ The Academy also provided an opportunity for his son, William Fleming, to show his work with 2 works being shown in 1841, 4 in 1843 and 2 in 1845.

¹⁹ Glasgow University Archives MS Gen 924 Membership receipt book, West of Scotland Academy of the Fine Arts 1841-1847

²⁰ Glasgow University Library Special Collections Catalogues of the Exhibitions of the West of Scotland Academy of the Fine Arts 1841-1853 Shelf Mark Sp Coll BG54-c.24.

Paintings from the last two years of Fleming's are difficult to find but this relative lack of works may have been due to ill health as the announcement of his death states that he had died after 'a lingering illness'.

Fleming died on the morning of the 16th February 1845, the precise cause of his death remains unknown. He was aged 53 years old. There was a brief announcement of the event on the 18th in the 'Deaths' column of the Greenock Advertiser: 'Here, at Hamilton Street on the morning of the 16th instant, MR. JOHN FLEMING, artist' followed by the following statement in the main newspaper:

'It is with sincere regret we have to announce the death of our townsman, Mr. John Fleming, artist, who died here on Sunday morning after a lingering illness. He was the father of landscape painting in the West of Scotland, and for many years delighted and captivated the admirers of the art with the various productions of his pencil. He excelled especially in the beauty of his compositions and was by no means deficient in producing pictorial effect. He succeeded well as a portrait painter in producing good likenesses, free from that stiffness of position which so much prevails, and which is so difficult to overcome in this branch of art. Mr. F. was altogether destitute of that prejudice which refuses due praise to the works of others; and when he indulged in criticism, it was always done with that caution and openness characteristic of an honourable mind, and in a way by no means calculated to give offence. His death will be deeply regretted by a large circle of friends, by whom he was held in much esteem.'

²¹

John Fleming's obituary was published later on the 27th March 1845. The obituary is anonymous, but was presumably written with at least the assistance of his son William Fleming, since it contains interesting details about Fleming's early life which are not recorded elsewhere. It fully conveys the important and affectionate place he occupied in the life of early nineteenth century Greenock.

²¹ Greenock Advertiser 18th February 1845

THE LATE MR. JOHN FLEMING

John Fleming's obituary as published in the Greenock Advertiser of the 27th March 1845, page 2:

'The desire which is generally felt to know the history of anyone whose labours have afforded matter of public attention and gratification, induces us to offer to our readers the following brief notice of the late Mr. Fleming. His works have been, and will continue to be, a source of delight and improvement to the lover of art. They still live with us, a tangible good, though the hand that executed them is at rest for ever. We would have felt proud in claiming Mr. Fleming as exclusively a Greenockian, but we must rest satisfied with the not much less important claim of his being so during his professional life.

Mr. Fleming was a native of Glasgow: at a very early age, it is said even in childhood, he manifested a disposition for drawing. The meaning and signification of lines and pictures seemed to be what his mind first awoke to a knowledge of; and in after life, though his acquirements were both numerous and various, yet it was evident that much had been sacrificed to the early bent of his genius. There is little of general interest in Mr. F's life unconnected with his professional career. At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to a house-painter in Glasgow, but previous to that, some attempts had been made to get him placed with an engraver. From the nature of both these professions we see that his disposition for drawing must have held a ruling influence in the choice of a trade. During his apprenticeship we may with certainty view him as devoting all his leisure hours to the pencil, and a circumstance occurred at this time which must have materially aided in confirming the disposition which had already taken root in his mind: he was sent to work at Hamilton Palace. There it was, during a lengthened opportunity of studying that splendid collection of pictures, that we may consider him as receiving the first deep draught of knowledge regarding what constitutes the higher qualities in the art of painting, and of acquainting himself with the particular character of a very great portion of the best old masters. Another favourable circumstance occurred about this period: he was brought into the notice of Mr. Saxon, a very eminent portrait painter, then residing in Glasgow, and we may infer, not without benefit as to his views in the art.

As might have been expected, at the expiration of his apprenticeship, he went up to London, where he wrought at his trade for some years, making it subservient to his maintenance while studying the various collections of pictures to be seen there, and familiarising himself with the merits of the artists of the day.

On his return from London to his native city he seems not to have had sufficient confidence in his own abilities to come before the public as an artist. This appears to be the case from the circumstance of his having entered into an agreement with another person to commence business as a house-painter. This intention was abandoned in the birth or nearly so, and our embryo artist was cast back on his favourite studies. Some productions of his pencil had begun to make their appearance, but amongst the first of his engagements was his coming to Greenock to paint the portrait of an acquaintance. Here he was warmly received as a portrait painter; and although the promise of support, in so small a town, could not be very inviting, yet to his modest views and economical habits it seemed sufficient, and he was induced to make Greenock the place of his abode. In doing so, he became the first resident artist

which Greenock ever had, and it is much to be admired in the man and the artist, and much to the credit of the liberal community amongst whom he has so placed himself, that the whole of his useful and meritorious professional career (a period of about thirty-five years) has been spent amongst them.

Although at home chiefly known and employed as a portrait painter, and still to be gratefully remembered as such, yet, in other places and the country generally, Mr. F. was better known as a landscape painter. Landscape, indeed, was his favourite study, and it may be presumed as certain that had he had the means in early life of following this branch of the art exclusively he would have arrived at great eminence. As far back as 15 or 20 years ago, there is a complimentary notice taken of him in the Noctes of Blackwood's Magazine, "that chiel Fleming in the West". It is in reference to some of his pictures then in the Edinburgh Exhibition. His greatest work also, and that which has gone farthest to establish his reputation as an artist, is in the landscape department of the art, namely: his Views for Mr. Swan's Lake Scenery of Scotland, which, for faithful drawing, and the judicious selection of these points of view, could not be surpassed. Truth-the faithful delineation and strict adherence to what was before him, were the aim and achievement of his pencil.

*He was particularly fond of, and had long practised, not only drawing but painting from nature. The glens and romantic scenery of the West Highlands were, it might be said, his studio. There are but few places, even spots, of interest, which he had not visited, and many of the best bits of his pencil are these little sketches down in the fields. It was in this way that he sought and obtained from nature's self that power of discriminating and condescending so happily upon the requisite objects of interest for his picture; and to this practice, devotedly carried out, may be ascribed the principal excellence contained in his productions. That which gives character - that on which their sterling merit rests, is, that however weakly expressed the intention may be, still it is evident that he had data and facts for what he aimed at, and that truth was as well the guide of his pencil as the groundwork on which he proceeded. At the same time that he thus rigidly adhered to the "literal", he always endeavoured to find, and only adopted, those combinations which were in accordance with the acknowledged principles of his art, of which he was by no means ignorant. He sought the "living flower" for himself, and if nature be the beginning and end of an artist's studies, as Sir Joshua Reynolds says, then he was in the right path. The lover of nature and her truthful representation will sympathise with the feelings which directed his labours, and regard with regret the loss of the artist; while to those who had opportunities of knowing his integrity of heart and honest worth, no small portion of their regret will arise from the loss of the man.'*²²

The inventory of Fleming's estate gives some indication of his economic status at the time of his death. It included:

* Household furniture, wearing apparel, stock in trade & c per appraisement £56.13.3

* Five shares of Western Bank stock held by the deceased at £75 per share £375

* Four original or £25 shares in the Glasgow Paisley and Greenock Railway Company

(current selling price £16 per share) £64

²² Greenock Advertiser 27th March 1845, page 2

- * Two half or £12.10/- shares in the said undertaking (current selling price £8 per share) £16
- * Five preference shares in the said undertaking (whole calls paid up price per share £8.15/-) £43.15/-
- * Cash in Greenock Bank with interest till death of the deceased £491.17.4
- * Outstanding debts due to the deceased: James Kippen £2.12;
Hugh Allan £18;
James Hill £4;
Mrs. Ross £6.6/-;
West of Scotland Association for the promotion of the Fine Arts Glasgow £7.7/-;

Total £38.5/-

The total value of his personal estate was £1085.5/- .7.

Additional debts owing to Fleming were accounted for and presented to Paisley Sheriff Court in August 1845. These included:

William Fyfe, Ship Chandler, Glasgow 14/-;
John Clark, watch maker, Greenock £4.4.-;
Robert Bruce, surgeon, Greenock £4.4/-;
James Turner, writer, Greenock £12.12/-;
John Hill, residing in Greenock £2.2/-;
Miss McKay, Seafield, Greenock 7/-.

Leading to a revaluation of his estate at £1116.1.7.²³

The disposition of his estate throws some further light on Fleming's familial relationships and with other Inverclyde figures. His trust settlement states that his entire estate was to be made over to *'William Fleming my natural son, presently residing with me, and the heirs of his body but failing him by decease without issue then to my sister Mary Fleming wife of John Henderson Tailor in Glasgow, and my other Sister Janet Fleming'*.²⁴

Because of the date of the trust settlement (24th July 1839), William Fleming was still a minor when it was written and so Fleming had made provision for his son nominating James Mackie, a physician in Greenock (he was the physician at Hillend Lunatic Asylum²⁵), Archibald McVicar, a gilder (and subsequently an artist) and David Glassford, a writer, to be 'tutors and curators' to his son during his minority.

Archibald McVicar (1796-1861) is an interesting figure and may have had a role in connection with Fleming's paintings after his death. A fuller discussion of this appears in the second part of this publication which contains a list of Fleming's works.

²³ Paisley Sheriff Court SC58/42/15 fos 264-6 25th August 1845

²⁴ John Fleming Trust Disposition and Settlement (National Records of Scotland, online 2012) Paisley Sheriff Court SC58/42/15 fos 37-41

²⁵ 'This Asylum was established in 1824 at Fancy Farm, but removed to Hillend in 1840. It has been much extended and improved since removal to this healthful situation ; every attention is paid to the comfort of the inmates, and the cures, we understand, are at least equal to any similar establishment in Scotland.' Hutcheson's Greenock register, directory and general advertiser 1841-1842 page 47

The status of Fleming within Greenock society and the widespread appreciation of his work were later emphasized by the erection of a monument to him in the Duncan Street Cemetery, Greenock in the 1850s. The monument was the result of a public subscription campaign led by the notables of the town.²⁶

John Fleming's monument today



²⁶ Greenock Advertiser 6th May 1856 page 2

The monument, now mounted in a wall, bears an inscription and is surmounted by an artist's palette and brushes.

The inscription says:

IN MEMORY OF
JOHN FLEMING
ARTIST

WHO DIED AT GREENOCK
16 FEBRUARY 1845

ERECTED BY A FEW FRIENDS
& ADMIRERS OF HIS GENIUS

FLEMING'S SON: WILLIAM C. FLEMING

The 1820s also brought major change to Fleming's personal life. The West Parish register of Greenock records the birth of his son. Under those 'born and baptized' for October 1824 (p183) is the entry for William Fleming: 'William, son, to John Fleming, Portrait Painter, & Isabella McKinlay, Born 17 Oct Bap 20 Dec'.²⁷

No record of John Fleming's wedding appears in local newspaper announcements of the period. Therefore it may be assumed that William Fleming was John Fleming's natural son. William Fleming seems to have spent his early life living with his father. The census of 1841 records him living with his father at 38 Hamilton Street, Greenock. Interestingly his profession, at the age of 15, is already being recorded as 'Artist'.²⁸ John Fleming had presumably trained him in the requisite skills and by 1845 he is already exhibiting at the Royal Scottish Academy.

A Greenock Advertiser newspaper article, now badly degraded, reads:

"Mr. W.C. Fleming, son of the late Mr. John Fleming, (who was generally and deservedly regarded as the father of landscape painting in the West of Scotland, and many of whose productions have not only stood the test of time, but elicited the highest praise of the best judges) has given evidence of the possession of a fair portion of the ability of the sire. In the exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy, now open in Edinburgh, Mr. Fleming has four pictures which have been much admired; they are, "A scene in Cadzow Forest", "Loch Awe – clearing up after a shower", and two landscape compositions.

He had also several pieces in the last exhibition in Glasgow, which were highly spoken of. The Courier wrote this of two of them:

"Sketch with Cattle by W.C. Fleming, - a quiet pleasant subject, bearing the manifest traces of a master hand; but we have another sketch, even superior, a little further on in the catalogue, by Mr. Fleming, "Clearing up after a shower", of its class it is exquisite; in conception, delineation, and general effect, admirable."²⁹

It may be that he is the same artist as the William C. Fleming, listed in The Dictionary of Scottish Art and Architecture as: "a Glasgow painter of landscapes and coastal scenes, exhibited RSA (10) 1844-1848, including 'The Mill, Castleton of Braemar'".

William Fleming is later recorded in the 1851 census as a 'landscape painter', resident in Inverkip and married to Jane Fleming with a one year old daughter Jane.³⁰ At that time he is recorded as living at Campbell's Land, Inverkip. The details are unclear but William C. Fleming seems to have died in 1863.

²⁷ Greenock Old or West Parish register 1824 page 183, October 1824

²⁸ Scottish Census for 1841 (taken on the evening of 6 June 1841) Greenock St. Thomas Parish, ED26, page 4, line 720 – General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland accessed via Ancestry.com online database.

²⁹ Greenock Advertiser 25th March 1845

³⁰ Scottish Census of 1851, Parish of Inverkip Register, ED3, page 13, Line 17, Roll 1094. General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland accessed via Ancestry.com online database.

Documents

- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: Opening of exhibition - Greenock Advertiser 26.06.1812 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: Exhibition of paintings, letter - Greenock Advertiser 22.01.1813 page 3
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: Managers and Committee elected - Greenock Advertiser - 10.09.1813 page 3
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: General meeting on 25th September 1813 - Greenock Advertiser - 24.09.1813 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: Report of meeting of directors - Greenock Advertiser - 16.03.1814 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: Meeting in the Gardener's Hall - Greenock Advertiser - 27.04.1814 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: 2nd annual exhibition of paintings in the Gardener's Hall - Greenock Advertiser - 25.05.1814 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: Meeting - Greenock Advertiser - 27.09.1814 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: Exhibition - Greenock Advertiser - 30.09.1814 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: Review of exhibited works in Greenock - Scots Magazine June 1814
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: 3rd annual exhibition opening June 3rd 1815 - Greenock Advertiser - 05.05.1815 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: General meeting of subscribers - Greenock Advertiser - 23.06.1815 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: 4th annual exhibition - Greenock Advertiser - 17.05.1816 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: 5th annual exhibition on 4th August 1817 - Greenock Advertiser - 29.07.1817 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: Article on society and its aims - Greenock Advertiser - 12.08.1817 page 3
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: 6th annual exhibition - Greenock Advertiser - 08.01.1819 page 1
- Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science, Greenock: 7th exhibition of paintings etc. - Greenock Advertiser - 12.12.1823 page 3
- Catalogue of the First Annual Exhibition of Paintings etc., under the patronage of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Sciences, Greenock 1813. (In the archives of the Watt Library, Greenock no.R3159).
- The Scots magazine and Edinburgh literary miscellany', Volume 76, 20th June 1814
- Edinburgh Monthly Review, January-June 1821 page 499/500 Art VIII
- Catalogue of Paintings by Living Artists exhibited at the Third Annual Exhibition in March 1821 of the Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland.
- The Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland Catalogue of the 1st Exhibition of Modern Pictures, 1821 and Catalogue of the 2nd Exhibition of Modern Pictures, March 1822.
- The Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland Catalogue of the 7th Exhibition of Modern Pictures, 1828
- History of Greenock by Daniel Weir, Greenock 1829, page 81
- Address listed as 5 William Street - Fowler's Commercial Directory for 1836/37 page 7
- Purchase of Railway Shares - House of Commons Papers Volume 48 No.24 1837

- Information on Fleming and William C. Fleming: 1841 Census
- Address listed as 38 Hamilton Street - Hutcheson's Directory for Greenock 1841 page 120
- John Fleming Trust Disposition and Settlement (National Records of Scotland, online 2012) Paisley Sheriff Court SC58/42/15 fos 37-41
- Announcement John Fleming's death, 16th February 1845 Greenock Advertiser 18.02.1845 page 2
- Obituary: Greenock Advertiser 28.03.1845 page 2
- Scottish Census for 1841 (taken on the evening of 6 June 1841) Greenock St.
- Thomas Parish, ED26, page 4, line 675 – General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland accessed via Ancestry.com online database.
- Erection of tablet to memory of John Fleming Greenock Advertiser 06.05.1856 page 2
- Sale of his paintings for 'Swan's Views of Scottish Lakes' Greenock Advertiser 28.02.1860 page 2
- Details of painting done in 1819 of Port Glasgow Greenock Advertiser 12.09.1863 page 2

William C. Fleming

- Notice concerning recent work - Greenock Advertiser 25.03.1845 page 2
- Information on William C. Fleming household - 1851 census

John Fleming
1792-1845

Part Two - List of Known Works

- INTRODUCTION
- IDENTIFICATION OF FLEMING'S WORKS
- CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF DATED WORKS
- UNDATED WORKS
- DERIVATIVE WORKS
- WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO FLEMING
- SPECULATIVE WORKS AND MISATTRIBUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

This list of Fleming's works is based on exhibition catalogue records supplemented by works in museum collections and works which have appeared at auction in recent years. It also includes engravings and other derivative works which were issued in Fleming's lifetime since they occupy a sizeable proportion of Fleming's output and, in many cases, the original work by Fleming has either not survived or has not yet been recognised. An ongoing difficulty in identifying Fleming's works is that the titles by which these works are known today are not necessarily those with which they were originally exhibited by Fleming.

IDENTIFICATION OF FLEMING'S WORKS

Identifying Fleming's work can be difficult as he did not consistently use the same form of signature on all his paintings. Some works are simply initialled 'J.F.' followed by the date; others are signed 'John Fleming' and even 'John Fleming pinxit' with the date. Frustratingly, many of his works are unsigned, resulting in several works being somewhat dubiously attributed to him.

This confusion has not been aided by the cataloguing of his work by art galleries. The Allgemeines Künstlerlexicon/Internationale Künstlerdatenbank lists him as "Fleming of Greenock" and the Witt Library Computer Index lists him as "John B. Fleming" and this form has also been adopted by others such the Public Catalogue Foundation, Glasgow Museums, the University of Edinburgh Fine Art Collection and Clackmannanshire Council Museum and Heritage Service and various publications. Why he is listed thus is unclear, as there seems to be no justification in contemporary sources for using this version of his name.

Whatever the inconsistencies are when it comes to signing his work, Contemporary records show that Fleming only ever seems to have used one form of his name: "John Fleming" and this is what appears in:

- * 1841 census records.
- * Signatures on his works.
- * Local Post Office Directories.
- * Contemporary newspaper and magazine accounts of exhibitions of his works.
- * The subscription list to Daniel Weir's History of Greenock published in 1829
- * His published obituary in 1845.
- * The John Fleming Monument in Duncan Street Cemetery, Greenock

The prescience of the term 'John B. Fleming' in so many art reference books seems to be a case of mistake which was then repeated with no one ever consulting original or contemporary sources. Perhaps someone, somewhere, has confused him with John B. Fleming (John Baxter Fleming 1912-1966 – another Scottish artist entirely).

LIST OF DATED WORKS

1813

Exhibited at The Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Sciences, Greenock 1813

Peter denying Christ	Catalogue Number: 3
Portrait of a Gentleman	Catalogue Number: 7
View of the Trosachs	Catalogue Number: 9
The Emigrant	Catalogue Number: 11
Group of Flowers (from Nature)	Catalogue Number: 13
Portrait of an Artist	Catalogue Number: 17
View of Dumbarton Castle, above the Ferry House	Catalogue Number: 26
Groupe of Flowers from Nature	Catalogue Number: 33
Leven Castle	Catalogue Number: 48
Auchmugton Cottages	Catalogue Number: 55
Cottage near Loch Katrineside	Catalogue Number: 57
Gypsies, a scene near Horniswood	Catalogue Number: 81
Glasshoyle Cottage, Loch Katrineside	Catalogue Number: 83
Cottages, near Crawford's-dyke	Catalogue Number: 86
Study, from Nature	Catalogue Number: 92

Other Works:

Whitefarland Point below Greenock

This work was sold at Christie's, Glasgow in 1998. It was described as 'oil on panel, 25.3 x 38.2 cm, signed and dated 'J Fleming 1813' (lower right) and inscribed 'Whitefarland Point/below Greenock' (on artist's label attached to the reverse)

1814

Exhibited at The Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Sciences, Greenock 1814

Margaret of Anjou after the Battle of Heram Catalogue Number: 7

This painting was reviewed in 'The Scots magazine and Edinburgh literary miscellany', Volume 76, 1814 from 'An Admirer of the Fine Arts, Gourrock 20th June 1814': 'As serpents frequently lurk under the most beautiful foliage, so in this delightful Wood Scene, the unfortunate Queen and her infant Son meet with a Robber; though luckily not one of the worst kind. This is a very pretty painted picture, and is sufficiently intelligible of its subject to everyone acquainted with the history.'

Paul before Agrippa, Felix and Berenice Catalogue Number: 6

This painting was also reviewed in 'The Scots magazine and Edinburgh literary miscellany', Volume 76. 1814 from 'An Admirer of the Fine Arts, Gourrock 20th June 1814': 'The eloquence of Paul on this occasion is certainly a better subject for reading than painting. This picture is however very fair for an Artist of no great experience, considering the difficulty of the subject. The figure of Paul is dignified, and some of the bystanders possess considerable interest. The splendour of Royalty is rather deficient in respect of the Throne, and flow of drapery, which is a necessary appendage.'

Flowers from Nature Catalogue Number: 14

Review in 'The Scots magazine and Edinburgh literary miscellany', Volume 76. 1814 from 'An Admirer of the Fine Arts, Gourrock 20th June 1814': 'This is a splendid group of flowers of the choice kinds, delicately and accurately painted.'

Cottages and Wool Mill on Loch Lomond Side

Catalogue Numbers: 38 & 39

Cottages near Strathblane

Catalogue Number: 46

Review in 'The Scots magazine and Edinburgh literary miscellany', Volume 76. 1814 from 'An Admirer of the Fine Arts, Gourrock 20th June 1814': 'These are very excellent specimens of this kind of rural scenery by that Artist'

1816

Alloway Kirk from the East

Oil on canvas, 42 x 30 cm, 1816.

Now in the collection of The National Trust for Scotland, Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.

The Cottage

Oil on canvas, 42 x 30 cm, 1816.

Now in the collection of The National Trust for Scotland, Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.

Brig o'Doon

Oil on canvas, 42 x 30 cm, 1816.

Now in the collection of the The National Trust for Scotland, Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.

1817

Catalogue of the 5th Exhibition of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Sciences, Greenock. Printed in Herald Office, 1817.

Available at the Andersonian Library, Special Coll. Dilettanti Soc., Glasgow

1821

1st exhibition of modern pictures of (Royal) Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland, Edinburgh, March 1821

Inverary

Catalogue Number: 92

Gourock Watering-Place

Catalogue Number: 136

This painting was reviewed by the Edinburgh Review: 'Mr. JOHN FLEMING. A lively perception of the appearances of nature in ordinary circumstances, and an apparently artless representation of them, mark the character of this artist's style, although he seems to have had but little experience in the practical part, and no great acquaintance with the principles of art.'

No. 136. Gourock Watering Place is well conceived, every object in it is truly represented according to its local colour, and its condition with respect to light and shadow; but, from the want of unity of effect, by not keeping the lights and shadows more in masses, the picture has not the pleasing repose that it would otherwise have possessed. The figures, as to position and colour, are well introduced. There are several other specimens by this gentleman, which are all chargeable with the same defects, although we cannot but consider them as works of great promise.'

Old Bridge, Dunrod Glen, near Greenock

Catalogue Number: 145

1822

2nd exhibition of modern pictures at the (Royal) Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland, Edinburgh March, 1822

Study from Nature	Catalogue Number: 17
View near Crawford's Dike	Catalogue Number: 18
View from Munn's Building Yard, Greenock	Catalogue Number: 70
View from the West Bridge, Greenock	Catalogue Number: 75
View of Stirling Castle	Catalogue Number: 155
View near Crawford's Dike	Catalogue Number: 170
Mill in Cartsburn near Greenock	Catalogue Number: 200
View near Cartsburn	Catalogue Number: 213
Doone Castle	Catalogue Number: 216

1823

Extensive View of the Clyde from Dalnottar Hill, 1823

Oil on canvas, 72.4 x 121.9 cm, dated 1823.

Now in the collection of the is now in the collection of The Fleming-Wyfold Art Foundation.

1825

Portrait of Reverend Robert Steele, Minister of the Old West Kirk 1825

Oil on canvas. Acquired by the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock in 1878 and disposed of by them in 1961. Current whereabouts of the work are unknown. An engraving of this portrait was made by Joseph Swan.

1826



Henry Bell (1767-1830)

Oil on canvas, 78 x 65.2 cm, 1826, Signed and dated at the lower left: 'J. Fleming pinxit 1826'.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock accession number 1978.369.



Highland Landscape with Cattle Drinking

Oil on canvas, 19.5 x 29.5 cm, signed and dated 'J. Fleming 1826' at the lower right by the artist.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock, accession number 1977.812



Robert Steele (1745-1830)

Oil on canvas, 120.5 x 91 cm, 1826, signed and dated 'J. Fleming pinxit 1826' at the lower left by the artist. Private collection, on loan to the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock. no. L1977.815.



The Town of Greenock

Oil on canvas, 20.8 x 31 cm, 1826, signed and dated 'J. Fleming pinxit 1826' at the lower right by the artist.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, 1977.817.

1827

Glenfalloch

Oil on panel, 22 x 32 cm, 1827.

Now in the collection of Bury Art Museum, Accession Number: 0383: acquired in 1915 via the Aitken Bequest.



View of Greenock

Oil on Canvas, 86.4 x 127 cm, 1827.

Now in the collection of Glasgow Museums, Accession Number: 432, acquired via the William Euing Bequest in 1874.



Greenock from the East

Oil on canvas, 63.7 x 89.3 cm. Initialed and dated with a monogram 'JF 1827' at the lower right by the artist.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock, accession number 1977.818. The painting was purchased by the McLean Museum Trustees from Messrs. Laurie and Fleming of 1 Bank Street, Greenock, the purchase price being 'no more than £30'.



Highland Landscape with Cattle drinking

Oil on panel, 15.3 x 22.8 cm, initialled and dated 'JF 1827' at the lower left by the artist. Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock, accession number 1977.811.

1828

7th exhibition of modern pictures at the (Royal) Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland, Edinburgh February, 1828

Village of Drips, near Loch Eck, Argyleshire	Catalogue No: 76
View from White Farlane Point, near Greenock	Catalogue No: 85
View in Glenlyon	Catalogue No: 146
View, Head of Lochlomond	Catalogue No: 166
View on Loch Tummell	Catalogue No.49

Other Works:

Town and Bay

This work is an oil painting on panel, 18.5 x 28 cm dated 1828. Now in the collection of Bury Art Museum, Accession Number: 0307: acquired in 1915, Aitken Bequest. This work would appear to be the original painting on which Joseph Swan based his engraving 'Campbeltown from Daruan' published in 'Select views on the River Clyde' in 1830.

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1828

Head of Gare Loch, Argyllshire	Catalogue No.50
Village of Drips, near Loch Eck, Argyllshire	Catalogue No.66
View from White Farlan Point, Greenock	Catalogue No.67
View, Head of Loch Lomond	Catalogue No.108
View in Glen Lyon	Catalogue No.109
View near Gourock	Catalogue No.194
Cottage at Luss	Catalogue No.217
View of Cartland Bridge	Catalogue No.297 (not for sale)
View of Greenock	Catalogue No.298 (not for sale)

1829

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1829

Mill of Drips, Glenfinnart, Argyllshire	Catalogue Number: 32
Waterfall, Glenlyon	Catalogue Number: 41
Lint Mill, Dunrode Glen	Catalogue Number: 51
Cottage near Luss, Lochlomond	Catalogue Number: 64
Loch Fad, Isle of Bute	Catalogue Number: 86
View from Inverary Quay – Morning	Catalogue Number: 133
This may be the painting which appeared at auction under the title 'View from Inverary Quays' at Sotheby's, USA in 1997 where it was described as an oil painting on panel, 19 x 12 in.	
Inversnaid Ferry, Loch Lomondside	Catalogue Number: 153
Sketch from Nature	Catalogue Number: 171

1830

Lake and Mountain Scenery

Oil on panel, 25.5 x 38.5 cm, dated 1830.

Now in the collection of the Bury Art Museum, Accession Number: 0306. Acquired in 1915, Donor: Aitken Bequest.

Loch Vennacher & Loch Earn

Oil on panel, 25.5 x 38 cm, Signed and dated 1830 on a pair 'Loch Earn' (2) 1830

Sold at Lyon and Turnbull, United Kingdom Auction Date: 2008

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1830

View on Lochlomond, with Cattle	Catalogue Number: 27
View near Killin, Perthshire	Catalogue Number: 51 (Not for Sale)
Brodick Glen, Arran	Catalogue Number: 74 (Not for Sale)
Portrait of a Gentleman	Catalogue Number: 147 (Not for Sale)
View of Holy Loch, Argyllshire	Catalogue Number: 170 (Not for Sale)
Portrait of Henry Bell Esq.	Catalogue Number: 174 (Not for Sale)
View - Head of Loch Hourn, Inverness-shire	(Not for Sale)
Gerry Water, Benrachy, Perthshire	Catalogue Number: 221
Portrait of a Lady	Catalogue Number: 230 (Not for Sale)
Pencross Castle, Ayrshire	Catalogue Number: 245
View on Loch Lomond	Catalogue Number: 266

1831

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1831

Mill - West Kilbride, Ayrshire	Catalogue Number: 88
Landscape with Cattle	Catalogue Number: 192
South-end of Loch Eck	Catalogue Number: 239

**Glen Lyon Bridge, Glen Lyon
Lochlaggan**

(Not for Sale) (Painted for Swan's Views of the Lakes of Scotland)

Catalogue Number: 240

Catalogue Number: 310

1832

Cattle - Landscape near Greenock

Exhibited at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1832, Catalogue Number: 331

Panoramic view of Dumbarton from the Northwest

Oil on canvas, 50.80 x 78.74 cm, 1832, Signed and dated 1832. Sold as Lot 1158 by Phillips, Edinburgh (August 24, 2001) Scottish Art (Sale E3601). This is a very fine depiction of Dumbarton at a period crucial to its development into a centre of the Industrial Revolution. The central feature of the composition is undoubtedly the three brick cones of the Dumbarton Glassworks Company. Other important documentary features of the composition include the juxtaposition of the rural hinterland with the town at a time when agriculture and industrial development were much more intertwined.

A Panoramic View of Dumbarton from the North West Featuring the Dumbarton Glassworks Company

This painting is described as an oil on canvas, 52 x 80 cm', now in the National Museums Scotland Reserve Collection no. K2001.856. the work was purchased in 2001. The work is listed on the ArtUk website but without an image. This would appear to be the same work as auctioned in Edinburgh in 2001.



Loch Tay and Ben Lawers

Oil on canvas, 12.5 x 17.5 cm, initialled and dated 'JF 1832' at the lower left by the artist.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock No. 1977.809. The painting was purchased in 1907 by the McLean museum Trustees from Messrs. Laurie and Fleming, 1 Bank street, Greenock for £15.

1833

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1834

Clachan of Aberfoyle, from Easter Park

View near Greenock, looking up the Clyde

View from Gemmell's Point, looking down the Clyde

Loch Tummell

Lochlomond, from Battaragh Castle

Rossdoe [i.e. Rossdhu], Lochlomondside

Catalogue Number: 7

Catalogue Number: 177

Catalogue Number: 181

Catalogue Number: 222

Catalogue Number: 241

Catalogue Number: 279

Other Works:

Whiteforeland from below Greenock

This painting appeared at auction at Sotheby's USA in 1999 where it was described as 'oil on panel, 25.5 x 38.5cm, Signed and dated at the lower right: J. Fleming 1833 with title on an old label attached to the reverse.

Captain John Orkney

Oil on canvas, 92.8 x 80.1 cm.

Now in Glasgow Museums, Accession number: PP.2000.13.2, Donated in 2000.

Captain John Orkney lived in Greenock. Elizabeth, daughter of Captain John Orkney, late of ship 'Christian', died at Greenock in Aug 1843 age 9 (recorded in the Greenock Advertiser 8.8.1843). The death of Captain John Orkney himself is recorded in the Greenock Advertiser of 7.4.1854 as being a 'former shipmaster in Greenock' who had died at 24 Patterson Street, Glasgow on 3rd April 1854.

The Clyde from Greenock Towards Dumbarton

This painting appeared at auction at Sotheby's UK in 2000. It was described as 'oil on panel, 52.5 x 76 cm, Signed and dated lower right: J.Fleming.1833, provenance: Alexander Hamilton Des Barnes. 1833

1834

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1834

Crawford Castle
Sale)

Catalogue Number: 122 (Not for

Nidpath Castle

Catalogue Number: 134

Mill at Cladich, Loch Awe side

Catalogue Number: 248

Mill, Loch Tay side

Catalogue Number: 267

Other Works:

View of the Clyde from Dalnottar Hill

Oil on panel, 53.3 x 81.3 cm, 1834.

Sailing Vessels on a Loch

Oil on panel, 13 x 17.5 cm, 1834.

1835

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1835

View near Greenock

Catalogue Number: 3

Bridge over the Lochy near Killan [sic]

Catalogue Number: 61

Landscape with Cattle

Catalogue Number: 112

View - Cartsburn Glen

Catalogue Number: 156

Shipping - with Rainbow

Catalogue Number: 168

Balloch Ferry, Water of Leven

Catalogue Number: 169

Cottage, Head of Holy Loch

Catalogue Number: 190

1836

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1836

View near Greenock, Sunset
View near Greenock
View, Cartsburn Glen
Loch Achray and the Trosachs

Catalogue Number: 22
Catalogue Number: 36
Catalogue Number: 60
Catalogue Number: 226

1837

William Holburn Fyfe (1812-1868) of Greenock

This painting, now in a private collection in Toronto, Canada is described as an 'oil on canvas, 16" x 19", signed lower right 'J. Fleming 1837', provenance: with James Connell & Sons, Ltd. Fine Art Dealers (Glasgow). Sold by Baraset House, Toronto, Canada. See <http://www.barasethouse.com/fineart.html>

William Holburn Fyfe was born on 5 July 1812 in Greenock, Scotland, son of John Fyfe of Port Glasgow and Elizabeth Holburn. Fyfe became a highly successful ship chandler in Greenock, supplying the countless merchant ships in the Port Glasgow area. This portrait was commissioned by his father in the year 1837 for the occasion of William's marriage on the 11th of June 1837 to Mary Mitchell, at the East Parish of Greenock. By Mary, his first wife, he had one son - Hugh Mitchell Fyfe - who continued the business after William's death in 1868.



Margaretta Eliza Reid (1791-1855)

Oil on canvas - 90 x 75 cm - Inscribed and dated 'John Fleming Pinxit 1836' on the frame. Private collection on loan to McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock No. L1977.816 Margaretta Eliza Reid (1791-1855) was the wife of Robert Steele (1792-1845), the prominent Greenock shipbuilder.

1837

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1837

Arnisdale - Lochurn Head
View of Dumbarton Castle from the West Ferry

Catalogue Number: 4
Catalogue Number: 66

Dunrod Bridge
White Foreland Point near Greenock

Catalogue Number: 176
Catalogue Number: 206

1838



John Galt (1779-1839)

Oil on canvas, 76.3 x 63.4 cm. Signed and dated 'Fleming 1838 Greenock' at the lower right by the artist. Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock, no. 1978.367.

This was the last portrait of John Galt and was unveiled in January, 1839, at the annual dinner of the James Watt club (John Fleming had been a member since 1824). It was to be John Galt's last public appearance and his ill health necessitated being carried to and from the dining room in an arm chair. The reverse of the work carries an inscription 'Aged 59 years after 13 attacks of paralyses'. A canvas stamp on the reverse indicates that the canvas was from Thomas Brown of 163 High Holborn, London who operated as an 'Artist's Colourman' at this address from 1805 until 1853.

A View of Dumbarton

This painting was sold at Bonham's in 2009. It was described as 'oil on panel, 50 x 71 cm, Signed and indistinctly dated 'Fleming 18[.]8' (lower right) and inscribed 'Dumbarton 1838' on an old label verso.

<http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/16606/lot/164/1838>

Exhibition at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society, 1838

Castle Hill near Greenock

View in Glenderual

Mill, Cartsburn Glen near Greenock

'Brig of Turk'

Cartsburn Glen

View near Greenock

Catalogue Number: 45 page 9

Catalogue Number: 56

Catalogue Number: 65

Catalogue Number: 92 page 10

Catalogue Number: 93

Catalogue Number: 133

(not for sale)

Back of Glen House, near Greenock

Catalogue Number: 276 page 16

Shaw's Water Road, near Greenock

Catalogue Number: 284

(not for sale)

1841

Exhibited at the West of Scotland Academy of the Fine Arts, 1841

View near Greenock	Catalogue Number: 35 page 7
Bridge of Turk, Perthshire	Catalogue Number: 44
View near Greenock	Catalogue Number: 48 page 8
View of Strathblane from near Milldowie	Catalogue Number: 87
View on Loch Lomond	Catalogue Number: 190 page 13
Bay of Onich, near Greenock	Catalogue Number: 244 page 14

The title here should read ('Bay of Quick, Greenock').

1842

Exhibition at the West of Scotland Academy of the Fine Arts, 1842

At Ladyburn, near Greenock	Catalogue Number: 18
Loch Long, and the Entrance of Lochgoil	Catalogue Number: 91
View - Head of Loch Lomond	Catalogue Number: 144
Doune Castle	Catalogue Number: 183 page 13

1843

Exhibition at the West of Scotland Academy of the Fine Arts, 1843

Dundera Castle, Loch Fyne	Catalogue Number: 18 page 7
Nidpath [sic] Castle	Catalogue Number: 30
Cattle Piece - Cartsburn Glen	Catalogue Number: 64 page 9
Cattle - Whin Hill, near Greenock	Catalogue Number: 99
View on Loch Hourn, West Highlands	Catalogue Number: 110
View near Greenock	Catalogue Number: 159 page 12

1844

No catalogue for the 1844 exhibition at the West of Scotland Academy of the Fine Arts has survived so it is unclear if Fleming exhibited that year. No other dated works for this year have been found.

LIST OF UNDATED WORKS

Portrait of an Artist	Catalogue Number: 17
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This painting is an oil on canvas, 76.5 x 64 cm, unsigned and undated by the artist. Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, no. 1977.821.

This self-portrait is very likely to be the work exhibited in the 1813 exhibition as 'Portrait of an Artist'. At the time Fleming would have been around 21 years old which appears consistent with his age in the picture.

Greenock from the South East



Oil on panel, 20.8 x 31 cm, initialed 'JF' at the lower right by the artist.

This work is now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, 1977.823.

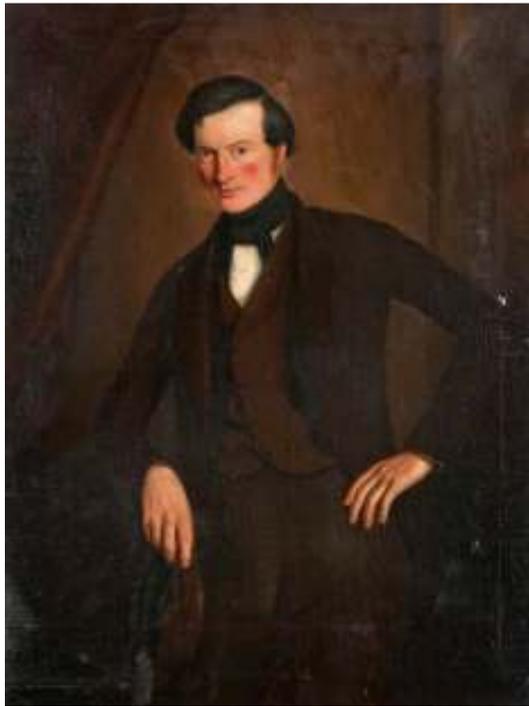
This work is undated but given that an engraving of the painting was published in Swan's *Views of the Clyde* in 1830 it seems reasonable that Fleming would have executed the original within the previous two years or so. The appearance of a work with an appropriate title in the 1828 exhibition of the Glasgow Dilettanti Society with the accompanying information that it was 'not for sale' may consolidate the view that the reason for retention was that it was awaiting translation into an engraving by Swan.

Portrait of Mrs. Margaret McIver

Oil on canvas. Acquired by the McLean Museum and Art Gallery Greenock when it was bequeathed by Miss Janet McIver, 5 Lyle Street, Greenock 1879. Work disposed of, current whereabouts unknown.

Portrait of Thomas Ramsay

This painting was acquired by the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock in 1890 as the result of a bequest by John C. Hunter. The painting was disposed of in 1949. Current whereabouts are unknown.



Portrait of Captain Newman of Smith & Jordanhill

Oil on canvas. This work was acquired by the McLean Museum in 1894 from Mrs. R.N. Scott and Miss Newman of Helenbank, Robertson, Abington. See the note on this work under speculative works.

Portrait John Gilchrist of the Union Bank

Oil on canvas. Acquired by the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock in 1906 when it was donated by the subject's daughter Mrs. Elizabeth Gilchrist, 10 Saxe-Coburg Place, Edinburgh. The painting was disposed of by the Mclean Museum in 1961; the current whereabouts of the work are unknown.

Shipping

The title of the above work is almost certainly not Fleming's. It was acquired by the McLean Museum as part of the Stuart Anderson Caird Bequest in 1917 and disposed of by the Museum Trustees in 1949; the current whereabouts of the work are unknown.



Landscape with Cattle Drinking

Oil on canvas, 15.7 x 21.7 cm, Initialled 'J.F.' at the bottom centre by the artist.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock no.1977.822



Cartsburn House

Oil on panel, 19.5 x 28 cm, Unsigned by the artist.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock no. 1977.810.

There is some doubt as to the authenticity of the title of this work, which seems to date from after its arrival into the Museum's collection in 1917. The title seems unlikely as no building is featured in the work and Cartsburn House was in any case a large structure (see the engraving by J.H. Lizars). Fleming is known to have painted Cartsburn on several occasions and this may be one of those works, his exhibited works include: 'Mill in Cartsburn near Greenock' exhibited at the (Royal) Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland, Edinburgh, 1822 as Catalogue Number: 200 and 'View near Cartsburn' exhibited at the (Royal) Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland, Edinburgh, 1822 as Catalogue Number: 213



Greenock from the East

Oil on canvas, 135 x 208 cm, unsigned by the artist.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock no.1977.820.

The large scale, subject matter and internal evidence of the image strongly indicates that this painting was executed during the early phase of Fleming's career in Greenock, probably before 1815 and at any rate no later than 1818. The lack of steamships in the image (they had become common on the Clyde by 1815) and the absence of the Greenock Customs House in the image indicates that this work must belong to Fleming's early period.



October Pastoral

Oil on board, 17.3 x 23.2 cm, initialed 'JF' at the lower left by the artist.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock no. 1977.814



Daniel Weir (1796-1831)

Oil on panel, 35 x 29.8 cm.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock no. 1977.825. The portrait was donated in 1918 by Mr. R.G. Muir.

Daniel Weir, the first historian of Greenock, was born on 31 March 1796. His father was a merchant. Weir served an apprenticeship in book selling and had a business at 57 Cathcart Street, Greenock. He contributed several songs to 'Scottish Minstrelsy' by R.A. Smith and also edited three volumes of lyric poems under the titles of 'The National Minstrel', 'The Sacred

Lyre' and 'Lyrical Gems'. Other poems by him appeared in Glasgow newspapers and in the Greenock Advertiser. His 'History of Greenock' (the first history of the town) appeared in 1829 with John Fleming listed as one of the subscribers to the first edition. He died on 11 November 1831.



Mrs. Jane Barclay Angus (d.1849)

Oil on canvas, 75.9 x 63.5 cm.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, 1977.819.

Mrs. Jane Angus was born around 1796 in Greenock and was the wife of Robert Angus (1791-1874), a ship store merchant in Greenock. In 1841 they were living at Shore Street (Brougham Street), Greenock. She died on the 17 December 1849.



Bay of Quick

Oil on canvas, 620.5x 30 cm.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, 1977.824. For many years this work was titled 'Burning the Bottom' but that seems to be a latter day imposition, the titled when donated to the McLean museum was 'Bay of Quick' and this accords more closely with Fleming's original titling. Marine subjects are quite rare in Fleming's work and this may be a reflection of his own preferences. It may also simply be recognition that with Robert Salmon working in Greenock until the early 1820s, and with Clark painting from 1830, the market for ship portrait paintings was already well served by two masters of the genre.



Gourrock

Oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, 1992.11. Although it is undated this may be work exhibited at the Glasgow Dilettanti Society in 1828 as 'View near Gourrock'. It would appear to be the original which was engraved by Joseph Swan.



John Fleming

Oil on canvas, 50 x 43 cm.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, 1977.826

The Greenock Telegraph of the 27th February 1893 recorded the acquisition of the painting by the McLean Museum: *'In Greenock and the West of Scotland are to be found a considerable number of oil paintings by John Fleming, which were commissioned by Swan, an engraver in Glasgow, for a work entitled 'Swan's Lakes'. As these are much prized by their owners, it will be of interest to state that a portrait of Fleming, painted by himself, probably about 1835, has just been presented to McLean's Museum, through the instrumentality of Mr. John Rodger, of the Clydesdale Bank. It is a half-length portrait, is said to be an excellent likeness, and has been much admired as a work of art by those who have seen it. The Museum is to be congratulated on their acquisition.'*



Seashore at Gourock

Watercolour on paper, 6.9 x 11.6 cm.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, 1977.808



Landscape with Trees

Watercolour on paper, 7.7 x 11.5 cm.

Now in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, 1977.813

Campbell Castle

Oil on panel, 51 x 71 cm.

Now in the collection of Bury Art Museum, Accession Number: 0298:1915, Aitken Bequest

Robert Andrew Macfie (1811-1893)

Oil on canvas, 92.7 x 78 cm.

Now in the City of Edinburgh Council, Accession Number: HH2014/1960, Presented by M.S.S. Macfie 1960.

Robert Andrew Macfie (1811-1893) was a businessman and, in later life, a Member of Parliament. He was born in Leith and later studied at Edinburgh University until around 1827. He moved to Liverpool where he was in charge of the local branch of the family sugar business. He was interested in Postal Reform and campaigned publicly for this cause incurring the disapproval of his father. He later returned to Greenock before moving once more, standing for and winning a Parliamentary seat. He married in 1840. It was doubtless the Greenock connection that brought him into contact with Fleming.

Landscape

Oil

Now in the University of Edinburgh Fine Art Collection, Accession Number: EU0785

Dunkeld

Oil on canvas, 46.5 x 66 cm. Whereabouts unknown.

Cottage by a Lake

Oil on board, 20.3 x 30.5 cm Whereabouts unknown.

The Clyde

Oil on canvas, 133 x 207 cm. Now in the University of Edinburgh Fine Art Collection, Accession Number: EU612

The Ferry

This painting was sold by Bonham's in Edinburgh on 26 August 2005. It was described as 'oil painting'.

Eglinton Castle

Oil on canvas, 105 x 132.3 cm. Now in the collection of the North Ayrshire Heritage, Saltcoats. No. Fine Art – 139.

WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO JOHN FLEMING

The Clyde at Jamaica Bridge, Glasgow

Attributed to John Fleming, oil on canvas, 61 x 91 cm. This work sold at Bonham's on 17 August 2010.

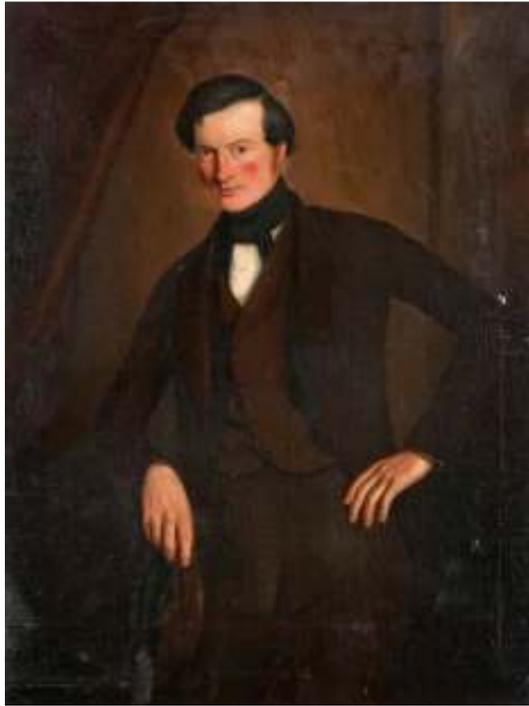
View of Rhu with the "Comet" steamship on the River Clyde, Dumbartonshire

Attributed to John Fleming, oil on canvas, 86.4 x 133.4 cm. This work sold by Christies' at King Street, London on 28 October 1999 Lot 79 / Sale 6237. Provenance with the Parker Gallery, London

View of Banff with the Bridge over the River Deveron

Attributed to John Fleming, Oil on canvas, 47.1 x 62.9 cm, Date painted: c.1825. Now in the collection of the National Galleries of Scotland. Accession no. NG 2847, acquired by purchase 1994

SPECULATIVE WORKS BY FLEMING



This painting is currently listed as *'Portrait of an Unknown Man by an Unknown Artist'* in the collection of the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock with the accession number 1978.200. It is an oil painting on canvas 114 x 84. 5cm.

Recent detailed examination of the Museum's accession registers now suggest that this may well be a work by John Fleming. Specifically, it would appear that this work is in fact the *'Portrait of Captain Newman of Smith & Jordanhill'* acquired by the Museum in 1894. This work was acquired by the McLean Museum in 1894 from Mrs. R.N. Scott and Miss Newman of Helenbank, Robertson, Abington, indicating a provenance derived through the family. In terms of subject and style the portrait is consistent with Fleming's other known works.



The major question concerning McVicar's output relates to the portrait reproduced above, Portrait of Sir Gabriel Wood, which is of a standard and quality beyond anything else known to be by McVicar. Indeed it is the only portrait attributed to him which leads to doubt about him being the artist, since in terms of subject, style and quality it is more consistent with a portrait by Fleming from the 1830s. The attribution only goes as far back as 1933 and it is possible that what we have here is a clerical confusion between the owner and the artist. Such confusions were not uncommon at that time since no professional art curatorship was available and attributions and provenances were accepted at face value.

The role of Archibald McVicar and Fleming's works remains unclear at this point but there are sufficient reasons to doubt some of the work which has been attributed to him. McVicar obviously had a close relationship with Fleming, being named in his will as one of his executors. McVicar was a carver and gilder by trade and it was presumably through this that he made contact with Fleming. Whatever the relationship between the men, the question as to Fleming ever taught McVicar has been raised as after Fleming's death he appears as an artist in various local exhibitions such as the 1861 West of Scotland Art Exhibition. There he exhibited oils of local scenes with titles reminiscent of Fleming's.

DERIVATIVE WORKS

1828

From the late 1820s the Greenock based artist John Fleming went into partnership with Joseph Swan (1792-1872), a Glasgow landscape engraver and publisher, who focused on Scottish publications. In the pre-photographic era there was a considerable demand for illustrated books showing famous locations. This provided a welcome additional source of income for artists and Joseph Swan catered to this market by engaging artists such as John Fleming and his contemporary John Knox (1778-1845) to provide originals for engraving.

Swan was born in Glasgow on 11 November 1796 and is supposed to have trained under John Buego. He first appears in Glasgow directories when he takes over the business of Charles Dearie at 124 Trongate in 1818 when he is listed as an engraver and copperplate printer. He seems to have regularly moved around Glasgow with addresses in the Trongate, St. Vincent Street, Bothwell Street, Buchanan Street and elsewhere.

His main publications Fleming were *Select Views of Glasgow and its Environs* (1828), and *Views of the River Clyde* (1830) and *Strath-clutha; or Beauties of the Clyde* (1839). He also published a *History of the County of Fife* (1840), *Views of the Lakes of Scotland* (1836), and two books after Charles Mackie: *Historical Description of Paisley* (1835), and *Historical Description of the Town of Dundee* (1836).

Select Views of Glasgow and its Environs 1828.

'Historical and Descriptive Illustrations of the Progress of the City. Engraved by Joseph Swan from drawings by Mr. J. Fleming and Mr. J. Knox with historical and descriptive illustrations and an introductory sketch on the progress of the city by John M. Leighton Esq., Published by Joseph Swan, Engraver, Glasgow'.

Only the plates derived from Fleming are listed here.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. View of the Interior of the Choir of Glasgow as it appeared before the erection of the pews and galleries which have been introduced for modern accommodation | Frontispiece |
| 8. View of Hunterian Museum &c., from the West | Facing page 118 |
| 9. View of Hunterian Museum, Library and Common Hall &c., from the Garden | Facing page 118 |
| 14. View of Old Bridge &c., from the South of the River | Facing page 145 |
| 15. View of Bridgegate, from the West | Facing page 148 |
| 17. Gorbals, Chapel &c. | Facing page 157 |
| 20. Broomielaw Bridge, Carlton Place, Clyde St. &c., &c., from Wood Lane | Facing page 167 |
| 21. View of Broomielaw, Shipping &c., from the south side of the River | Facing page 169 |
| 24. Blythwood Place, St. Vincent St. &c., from the south side of Blythwood Hill | Facing page 190 |
| 25. View of Glasgow, from Arns Well | Facing page 191 |
| 27. View of Theatre and Royal Bank, from the South | Facing page 199 |
| 28. View of George Square, from the East | Facing page 203 |
| 29. Assembly Rooms &c., &c. from the West | Facing page 206 |

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| 17. Gorbals, Chapel &c., | Facing page 157 |
| 20. Broomielaw Bridge, Carlton Place, Clyde St. &c., &c., from Wood Lane. | Facing page 167 |
| 21. View of Broomielaw, Shipping &c., from the south side of the River. | Facing page 169 |
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| 25. View of Glasgow, from Arns Well, | Facing page 191 |
| 27. View of Theatre and Royal Bank, from the South, | Facing page 199 |
| 28. View of George Square, from the East, | Facing page 203 |
| 29. Assembly Rooms &c., &c. from the West, | Facing page 206 |

1830

Select Views of the River Clyde

Copperplate line engravings from 'Select views on the River Clyde'. Engraved by Joseph Swan, from drawings by J. Fleming. With historical and descriptive illustrations by John M. Leighton, Esq.

**Carstairs House, the seat of Henry Monteith Esq.,
 Bonniton Lynn, from the North
 Cartlane Craig's and Bridge, from the East
 Corra Lynn and Castle, from the North-East
 Corehouse, the seat of the Ho. Lord Corehouse
 Fall of Stonebyres, from the South-West
 Lee House, the seat of Sir Charles McDonald Lockhart, Bart. of Lee and Carnwath
 Craignethan Castle, and the River Nethan, from the North
 Mauldslie Castle, the property of Arch. Nisbet, Esq., of Carfin
 Cambusnethan House, the seat of Robert Lockhart, Esq., of Castle Hill
 Hamilton Palace, the seat of His Grace the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon
 Bothwell Castle, the property of the Right Hon. Lord Douglas
 Glasgow, from beyond the Humane Society House
 Govan, from the East
 Blythswood House, the seat of Arch. Campbell, Esq., M.P.
 Erskine House, the seat of the Right Hon. Lord Blantyre
 The Clyde from Dalnotar Hill
 Dunglass Castle, and Bowling Bay, from the east
 Dumbarton Castle and Town, from the South
 Port-Glasgow, from the South-East
 Helensburgh, from beyond the baths
 Roseneath House, the property of His Grace the Duke of Argyll
 Greenock from the South-East
 Gourock, from the East
 Laven Castle etc. from the South-West
 Dunoon and Castle, from the South-West
 Cloch Light House, from the South
 Innerkip and Ardgowan House, the seat of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Bart. M.P.
 Kelly House, the seat of Robert Wallace, Esq., from Wemyss Bay
 Skelmorlie Castle, the property of the Right Hon. Earl of Eglinton
 Castle Toward, the seat of Kirkman Finlay Esq.,
 Rothesay, from the South-East
 Millport, from the East
 Largs, from the North
 Kelburn House, the seat of the Right Hon. Earl of Glasgow
 Saltcoats, from Ardrossan Castle
 Eglinton Castle, the seat of the Right Hon. Earl of Eglinton
 Ayr, from Castle Hill
 Dunure Castle, from the North
 Culzean Castle, the seat of the Right Hon. Earl of Carlisle
 Pladda Light House, from the East
 Campbeltown, from Dalruan**

1834

THE LAKES OF SCOTLAND

'A Series of Views From paintings Taken Expressly For the Work by John Fleming
 Engraved by Joseph Swan, With Historical and Descriptive Illustrations by John
 Leighton'.

This is the full set of the 16 part issues of the book published in 1834 (A.116.a.12-13) as 'The lakes of Scotland'. That it was a work of some popularity is evidenced by the lengthy subscription list in part 16, the enthusiastic reviews reprinted inside the lower cover of each part and the publication of further editions in 1836 and 1839. The 48 engraved plates contained in this set were printed on what the publisher and engraver, Joseph Swan described as 'very superior India paper, which for purity, clearness and colour, will be found equal to any which has yet met the public eye' The India proofs cost 7s. 6d. per part with Royal folio copies at 12 shillings per part and the cheapest fine impressions at 5s. 6d. The work was aimed at 'all lovers of the fine arts' as well as 'admirers of Scotland's picturesque and romantic scenery'. According to the preface, which was written for and included in the final part in 1833, this was the first work 'entirely devoted to this branch of Scottish scenery'. Not only the well-known lakes were described but also but also those 'seldom visited and little heard of, and others which were quite terra incognita to tourists'. Joseph Swan had previously published 'Select views of Glasgow and its environs' (1828) and 'Select views on the Clyde' (1830), both of which were collaborations with the author of this work, John M. Leighton and the artist, John Fleming. Greenock-born Fleming (1792-1845) specialized in painting mountain scenery in oils and watercolours, was a member of the West of Scotland Academy and exhibited in Glasgow.

Dumbartonshire

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Inverary Castle and Dun-Y-Quaich

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Loch-Awe and Kilchurn Castle

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Loch-Camel, &c., looking South

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Loch-Leven and Castle, looking West

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Renfrewshire
Loch-Winnoch, looking West

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Isle of Bute



Loch-Fad and Kean's Cottage

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1845

Scotland Illustrated in a Series of Eighty Views
from Drawings by John C. Brown, William Brown, Andrew Donaldson, John Fleming, David M. Mackenzie, W. B. Scott, T. Stewart and other Scottish artists,
With Letter-press Descriptions and an Essay on the Scenery of the Highlands by Professor Wilson.

Lochwinnoch

A steel line engraving on paper with an engraved surface: 140 x 186mm showing a view over Castle Semple Loch towards Lochwinnoch with cattle in the foreground, deer in the woods, and a flock of birds in the sky. The plate was engraved by Joseph Swan from an original study by John Fleming.

Castle of Loch Leven

A steel line engraving on paper with an engraved surface: 141 x 195mm showing a view of Loch Leven Castle from the landward.

Loch Lochy

A steel line engraving on paper with an engraved surface: 134 x 184mm showing a view of Loch Lochy looking north-east from Clunes. It was engraved by Joseph Swan from an original study by John Fleming.

Loch Awe

A steel line engraving on paper with an engraved surface: 129 x 182mm showing an island on Loch Awe with a small boat making ready. The plate was engraved by Joseph Swan from an original study by John Fleming.

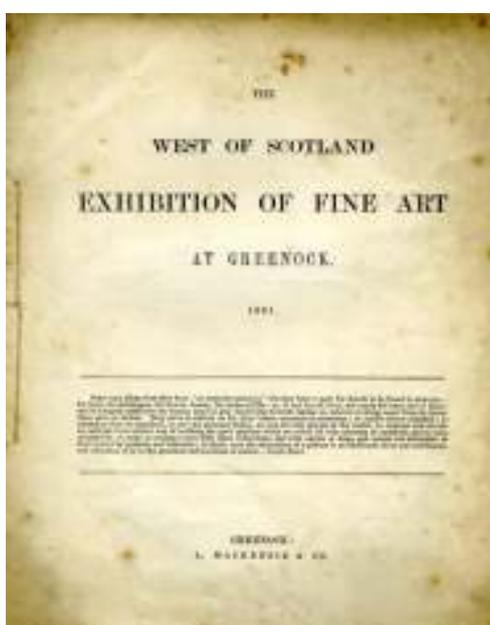
Loch Eck

A steel line engraving on paper with an engraved surface: 130 x 188mm showing a view across Loch Eck. It was engraved by John T. Smith from an original study by John Fleming.

WORKS EXHIBITED AFTER FLEMING'S DEATH

Much confusion exists over the titles of Fleming's works which is enhanced by Fleming frequently painting the same scene more than once. His work continued to be exhibited in Greenock in the later nineteenth century and these displays may have included works which have not been previously listed. For the sake of completeness and to assist provenance research a list of these works has been included.

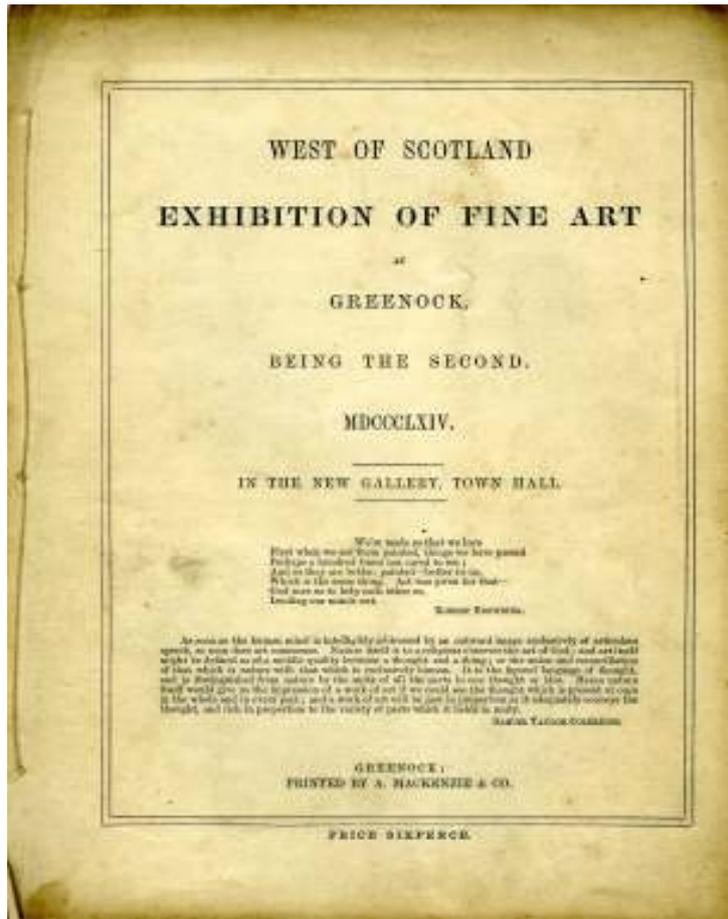
1861 - West of Scotland Exhibition of Fine Art, Greenock (1st Exhibition)



Shaw's Water road near Greenock	Catalogue Number: 58
Loch Awe, Argyllshire, from the Island of Fraoch, looking North	Catalogue Number: 75
Landscape (copy)	Catalogue Number: 117
View in Glenlyon	Catalogue Number: 122
Owned by Archibald McVicar	
Landscape	Catalogue Number: 131
Landscape (after Turner)	Catalogue Number: 132
The Trossachs	Catalogue Number: 146
Landscape	Catalogue Number: 175
Lochlomond from Inveruglas	Catalogue Number: 11
Brig o'Turk	Catalogue Number: 40
Cattle Piece	Catalogue Number: 65
A View of Greenock from the South	Catalogue Number: 67
Cattle Piece	Catalogue Number: 87

1864

1864 - West of Scotland Exhibition of Fine Art, Greenock (2nd Exhibition)



**Loch Katrine and Ellen's Isle, looking South
Landscape
Loch Achray from the Black Rock
Kennedy's Mill, Greenock**

Catalogue Number: 116
Catalogue Number: 140
Catalogue Number: 171
Catalogue Number: 185

1887 - Loan Art Exhibition, Greenock 1887



**The late John Fleming Esq., Artist, Greenock
Black Esq.,
Cattle Piece**

Catalogue Number: 43
Catalogue Number: 47
Catalogue Number: 75

Scene (Lochlomond)	Catalogue Number: 111
Scene (Lochlomond)	Catalogue Number: 112
Loch Eck	Catalogue Number: 113
Loch Eck	Catalogue Number: 114
Bay of Quick	Catalogue Number: 117
Dunderave Castle	Catalogue Number: 123
Bay of Quick	Catalogue Number: 126
Foot of West Burn	Catalogue Number: 130
Cloch Lighthouse	Catalogue Number: 133
Loch Awe (1832)	Catalogue Number: 134
Loch Awe	Catalogue Number: 135
Battery Point	Catalogue Number: 136
Landscape	Catalogue Number: 137
Helensburgh Quay	Catalogue Number: 139
Hell's Glen	Catalogue Number: 140
Landscape	Catalogue Number: 142
Glen Levern Castle	Catalogue Number: 143
Battery Point	Catalogue Number: 144
Loch Arkeg	Catalogue Number: 147
Trossachs	Catalogue Number: 148
Brig o'Turk	Catalogue Number: 150
Kilchurn Castle	Catalogue Number: 152
Murdiston	Catalogue Number: 153
Loch Goil	Catalogue Number: 155
Sheep	Catalogue Number: 156
Loch Achray	Catalogue Number: 157

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