

A Just So Story with acknowledgements to Rudyard Kipling.... of which only parts are true.

“Once upon a time, oh my beloved”....how three early 19th Century Jobbing Landscape Artists got to double their sales.

Pet(h)er Abrahams and his two sons, identical twins Henry and Sebastian , were attracted to painting Landscape pictures of God’s House Tower in the early 19th century, but knew that they were nowhere near as good as Turner and Constable and consequently made very little profit.

Pet(h)er had always noticed that his elder son Henry was the gloomier of the two boys. Sebastian had much the sunnier disposition. The three of them would set out after breaking their fast and paint until dusk. Initially Henry would be happiest at noon enjoying the colours of the brightest sunlight, but then Pet(h)er noticed that Henry would start his painting with the sun rising. Sebastian would not include the sun until they were about to leave at sunset ,when it got too dark to continue painting.

It was not for a while that Pet(h)er realized that his sons (and himself) were producing identical paintings with only the sun and therefore the shade in different places. Looking at his own painting of God’s House Tower at noon Pet(h)er decided that the three of them could paint more than one identical example of the same scene quickly as a mere background. Then Henry could add sunlight (and brightness) and Sebastian moonlight (and darkness) thus doubling the potential for quicker and more profitable sales.

Sadly, the three Abrahams were not to find either fame or fortune (not unless until the twenty first century for Abraham’s ingenious idea of doubling sales potential!) Henry unfortunately went on to spend some time in a Debtors Prison.

Now Pet(h)er senior has 32 Paintings attributed to him, including “God’s House Tower by Moonlight” displayed at the Royal Academy.

Southampton City Art Gallery has in it’s own collection two of Henry’s paintings “Town Quay by Moonlight” and “Southampton Town Quay at Sunset” and also Sebastian’s ‘Moonlight Scene’. From this it can be seen that the Moonlight paintings were (and are?) by far the most popular for over two centuries.

“And that is the end of that tale”