



C a n t e r b u r y V i g n e t t e

john

GIBB

1831 - 1909

S e r i e s

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Curator

Neil Roberts

Research Assistant

Peter Vangioni

Editorial Liaison

Merilynne Evans

Photography

Brendan Lee

Design

[**R M A G** inhouse]

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j o h n **G I B B**

Neil Roberts



Robert McDougall Art Gallery
for Christchurch City Council, Christchurch, New Zealand.



Shades of Evening, The Estuary (cat no 4)

Within a very short time of arriving in the country in 1876, John Gibb had established himself as New Zealand's premier marine painter. He quickly enjoyed a reputation and status as a professional artist in Canterbury that grew through the 1880s and was only challenged with the arrival of Petrus van der Velden in 1890. Gibb had 25 years practice behind him as an artist plus many years exhibiting in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Greenock and Manchester. As a painter he was very much a traditionalist. Stylistically he could be described as a follower of the 'academic picturesque', akin to Scottish artists like Sam Bough, Joseph Farquarson and Alfred de Breanski, senior. Primarily a studio painter, he also followed the academic practice of sketching and gathering information from the landscape which he later recomposed and worked up in the studio giving intense, almost painstaking, attention to atmospheric weather effects and naturalistic details to maximise the pictorial impact. Later in his career as an artist, Gibb developed a keen interest in photography and regularly used images made with his half-plate camera to good effect as an aide-memoire. Gibb's specialty, marine painting, depicting contemporary sailing and steam vessels under varying weather conditions emerged early in his work and gave him the opportunity to exercise his full capability as an artist in a way that was not always achievable for him with other subject matter.

During a painting career that spanned almost six decades, water was an important element in his work, especially the more major works. And it was certainly the more dramatic sea paintings that aroused interest and attracted commissions from wealthy colonial clients. Gibb has often been pigeonholed a Romantic Realist but this only partly explains his tendencies as an artist as his aim was more toward verisimilitude than exploring the expanse of his imagination. The pursuit of truth of the subject was paramount. Although most of his landscapes were made from

subjects that had a New Zealand identity, especially in attention to light, Gibb was often unable to escape totally the atmosphere of his homeland, which he carried into his New Zealand coastal and pastoral subjects. Apart from certain definable topographic features, many could have been painted in Scotland. Boats in a storm depicting scenes in Foveaux or Cook Straits or Lyttelton Harbour could easily be mistaken for the Firth of Clyde or the Irish Sea.

Gibb's focus in his painting was relatively specific. He rarely made portraits and the human figure is uncommon except as an incidental feature to add interest to a landscape or sea picture. Like many of his New Zealand contemporaries he was an admirable documentor of his immediate environs. Among his favourite subjects were the Estuary, Sumner, the bays of Lyttelton Harbour and Banks Peninsula and the Heathcote and Avon Rivers which he preferred to depict in the light of dawn or dusk. He had a fascination with sunsets. In 1975 his granddaughter, Marion Gibb, remarked that her most lasting memory of her grandfather was that he never missed a sunset. "Whatever he was doing - even if it was in the middle of tea he would get up and gaze at the sunset and afterwards you would see it in one of his paintings".¹

There is no question though that as a marine painter in the 1880s and 1890s Gibb had few rivals in New Zealand. He also had a prolific output. When, in 1900, he was interviewed by the Weekly Press², he claimed to have exhibited no fewer than 500 paintings at New Zealand Art Society Exhibitions during the previous 24 years. This was very likely a conservative estimate. Between 1881 and 1900 a total of 180 different works were shown at Canterbury Society of Arts alone, without accounting for what was exhibited in Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and at International Exhibitions overseas.

As a man, Gibb was, by nature, a rather conservative and uncomplicated personality - a staunch Presbyterian family man who spoke with a soft Scottish accent who was somewhat indulgent with his family and viewed his art as a craft that he was able to develop from the foundation of natural ability. During most of the years that he lived in New Zealand his works were popular and went into public and private collections in both New Zealand and Australia. With his son, John Walker Gibb the picture dealer his principal agent, his sales were consistent and established him as an important colonial artist.

Neil Roberts

Curator



Early Years in Scotland 1831 - 1876

John Gibb was born in 1831 at Cumbernauld, Scotland one of six children of David and Mary Gibb (nee Walker). Following an occupation that had been common in the Gibb family for generations, David Gibb was a building contractor. At an early age John Gibb revealed a natural aptitude for drawing that was encouraged. John's brother, William, later Glasgow City Council Treasurer, was an able musician and painter. Within the context of his wider family Gibb had several relatives who gained distinction as artists. By 1835 Gibb's family was living at Kirkintilloch and much of Gibb's early childhood was spent in the family home, 'Merkland Cottage'.

Within a decade however, Gibb had moved to Greenock and around 1848 he began receiving his first formal instruction in painting in the studio of Greenock artist John McKenzie. In 1900 Gibb stated that there were few art schools around in the West of Scotland in the 1840s and 1850s¹. It is likely that at this time Gibb was also involved with his family in building construction and Gibb family legend has it that Gibb was, in his early years, a builder as much as he was an artist. There is no question that his livelihood as an artist would have been meagre without other employment and limited prospects would not have enabled him to marry so young. In October of 1852 Gibb married his first wife Agnes Crichton, but their life together was to be short and marked with sadness. The following year their first child was stillborn and two years later Agnes died, followed soon after by their infant son, David. At that time Gibb was living across the Firth of Clyde at Dunoon, accessible only by

steamer, but within a year he had moved a few kilometres south to Innellan, then a fashionable town undergoing redevelopment. This was to remain his home for most of the next twenty years that he was in Scotland.

Early in 1857 he married his second wife, Marion Menzies, at Innellan and before the year was over their first son, John Walker Gibb, was born, followed two years later by their second son William Menzies Gibb. By 1861 the year Gibb's third son, Herbert Buchanan Gibb, was born, his profile as an Innellan artist had increased and two works were accepted for exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) in Edinburgh. The following year he showed one painting at the RSA but had also begun exhibiting with the West of Scotland Society of Fine Arts.

In 1863 Gibb's father was drowned in the Firth of Clyde and a short time after this event Gibb moved his family to the ancient picturesque medieval town of Alnwick, Northumberland. The reason for this move is not clear but it was the home of the artist Thomas Gibb, who is thought to be a relative. Gibb soon became absorbed by the Northumbrian landscape and exhibited two works at the 1865 RSA exhibition titled respectively *On the Wansbeck - Bothwell Castle in the Distance* and *View on the North Tyne*.

Gibb returned to live at Innellan in 1867 and began exhibiting the next year at the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts with a single work titled *On the Beach Innellan - Early Morning* and at the 1868 RSA exhibition he showed *Study on a Hillside*.⁴ At this time prices that he was asking for his works ranged from five to eight pounds.

By 1870 Gibb's family had grown to seven children but that year one of his four daughters died. In 1871 with the birth of his son Gabriel, the number of children returned to seven. The paintings that Gibb exhibited in the 1860s were largely Scottish landscapes - often with water features or coastal scenes, but in 1872 at the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts he exhibited several works that were clearly sea pieces and included titles such as *Off Carnadale*, *Cantire (sic) Coast Evening* and *Fishing Boats off the Irish Coast*⁵ which suggests that Gibb was making short sea trips around the Western Isles and to Ireland to gather subjects for his painting.

The death of three of his daughters during an epidemic in 1873 may have started Gibb thinking about somewhere else for his four surviving sons to have a better life. His eldest son was already working with him as a carpenter joiner and his second son, William, was showing a clear indication that he had ability in painting and drawing. For whatever reason, Gibb then 45 years old, decided to come to New Zealand and in June 1876 he and his wife and family were farewelled by friends and Presbyterian Church parishioners at Innellan. Gibb having been an elder in



Low Tide Innellan (cat no 1)

the Presbyterian Church was presented with a clock suitably inscribed. The family travelled south to London and on the 27 June embarked at Gravesend Dock on the NZSS Co *Merope* as second saloon passengers, their destination Canterbury. The vessel *Merope* had a rather uneventful voyage around the Cape until it reached waters off Tasmania and got caught in a cyclone that threatened the ship. Despite this they survived and arrived safely at Lyttelton on 27 September, 91 days after leaving London.

New Zealand Beginnings 1876 - 1879

When Gibb and his family arrived in Christchurch there was no art society, school of art or gallery and less than twenty serious minded artists. Apart from Thomas S. Cousins and L.W. Wilson there were few who could be regarded as trained professionals. Gibb, with some twenty-five years experience behind him, quickly established himself as a professional artist. Within a very short time of his arrival he began getting the measure of what potential there was in the landscape - at first within his immediate environs - then further afield to Westland. Among his first paintings were subjects concerned with Christchurch, the Estuary, Sumner and the bays of Lyttelton Harbour. He set up a studio and held his first exhibition in December at James Firth's picture framers shop in High Street. Among the works shown were; *Opening of the Boating Season*, *Waitangi entering Lyttelton Harbour* and *Church of England Cemetery*. *The Press* writer who reviewed the exhibition remarked: "he is destined to hold first place among NZ artists".⁶ Also during December 1876 six works by Gibb, later auctioned, were displayed at Charles Clark's Rooms in Hereford Street. In his studio he had on exhibition a number Scottish landscapes that included paintings of *Glengarry Castle and Caledonian Canal*, and *Dunbarton*. A reporter from *The Press* who visited him there in January 1877 wrote approvingly. On examining some of Gibb's work that included a painting of the yacht *Signet* he hoped that Gibb would remain in Christchurch, writing "we are as a community amply supplied with artists who ply the metallic pencil but are short of those who use the brush and therefore I hope Mr Gibb will be appreciated here."⁷

In March of 1877 Christchurch lithographer W. C. Brunsten began making a series of lithographic portraits of local identities for which he engaged the most prominent artists to make drawings. The first in the series was a portrait of the Presbyterian minister Reverend C. Fraser and Gibb was commissioned to do it. It was a logical choice as Gibb, a committed church man, had quickly become part of the congregation of St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Cashel Street, and in the following year he was elected an elder and Clerk of Sessions - such was his standing. The lithograph was favourably received and noted in the local press which recorded "this artist, whose work in oils we have several times during the last few months had occasion to admire, has succeeded in taking a very excellent likeness".⁸

About the time the lithograph was published Gibb was negotiating the purchase of a section of land on the corner of Barbadoes and Worcester Streets which was transferred to him in July of 1877. Over time he was to build, with the assistance no doubt of his son John Jnr, a total of three houses on the site and adjacent land with two facing Barbadoes Street and a third facing Worcester Street. The most northern house on Barbadoes Street he named 'Merkland Villa' which was his home until well into the 1890s, after which his address was the Worcester Street house.

In the late 1870s opportunities for exhibiting work publicly were limited and the only Art Society established in the South Island was the Otago Society of Arts in Dunedin which held its first exhibition in November of 1876. Within two years Gibb had become an exhibiting member. In June of 1877 Gibb had paintings included in the major Canterbury Art Exhibition held at Canterbury Museum and had sent work to the 1877 Sydney Industrial Exhibition. On 23 December 1877 Gibb took an excursion on the USS Co. *SS Hawea* making his first visit to the Sounds of Fiordland. The 9-day visit was not uneventful with *Hawea* being caught in a storm entering Dusky Sound. Amongst the 65 passengers on board were a dozen or so artists - both amateur and professional - including William Mathew Hodgkins and Edward A. Gifford. For Gibb's painting it proved to be fruitful and the southwest coast was to feature as a subject for a number of his studio paintings in the late 1870s and early 1880s. In November 1878 Gibb showed for the first time at the Otago Art Society with four works titled; *Fresh Water Lake George Sound, On the Water of Leith, The SS Hawea entering Dusky Sound in a Squall* and *Lyttelton Harbour - Schooner Running for Shelter*.⁹ He began exhibiting in Australia the next year sending works to the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition where his painting *Godley Heads, Lyttelton* received high commendation from the judges of the Fine Arts Section.

With limited prospects for exhibiting, the opportunity for a good art education was even less. Gibb was keen that his son, William Menzies, had what opportunity there was and supported him in studying at the Victoria Art Gallery School and likely travelled with him to Melbourne.

The 1880s - 1890s

The 1880s were to be the high point of John Gibb's career as a professional artist in New Zealand and he became recognised as New Zealand's major marine painter. Gibb's serious concern with contemporary sea subjects that had begun in Scotland in the 1870s had progressed by the 1880s. By that time New Zealand had a highly sophisticated system of sea, river and lake transport with vessels, both steam and sail, plying the coast. Many were also regularly being wrecked which provided Gibb with the opportunity to exercise his skills even further. One of the first shipwreck paintings he exhibited was *Wreck of the Glimpse* shown at the Otago Art Society in 1879. Others followed and included *Wreck of the Benvenue* 1883 and *Abandoned* 1889.



N.Z. Inside the Breakwater, Lyttelton Harbour, 1886 (cat no 15)

The year 1880 was a momentous one for Gibb in many ways, especially with regard to exhibiting in Australia. He sent four oil paintings to Melbourne to be shown at the Melbourne International Exhibition and also began exhibiting at the New South Wales Art Society. In Christchurch he was part of the small group of artists and supporters who got together to establish the Canterbury Society of Arts. In July when he exhibited at the 1880 Christchurch Industrial Exhibition, *The Press* writer commented; "Mr. Gibb fully sustains his reputation as a faithful delineator of New Zealand scenery. Mr. Gibb also demonstrates on the present occasion that he is a highly successful painter."¹⁰

When the Canterbury Society of Arts first exhibition opened in January 1881 Gibb exhibited just four works but such was his standing as an artist that one of these, *Shades of Evening, The Estuary* (cat no 4) was chosen as the first work for the Society's collection. At the second CSA exhibition held in December of the same year Gibb showed a total of 11 works. He had also begun exhibiting in Auckland in 1881 and continued to maintain a good presence in Dunedin. In addition he started exhibiting at the Victorian Academy of Arts in Melbourne. In December 1881 Gibb travelled south visiting Lake Wakatipu and took the steamer to the head of the lake where he spent from 24 December 1881 until 9 January 1882 at Kinloch sketching and painting. On his return, he went out to Sumner to stay painting there until the end of January 1882.¹¹ Later that year Christchurch was the venue for a major International Exhibition organised by Jules Joubert and R.E.N. Twopeny at which Gibb had a good place in the Colonial Section gaining a First Order of Merit Award for his paintings.

Before the year was out he made a trip to Bealey on what was to be the first of many encounters with the alpine and bush landscape of that region. Just prior to Christmas 1882 Gibb took the steamer to Kaikoura in the company of one of his relatives, young John Innes, then assistant master at Timaru High School where they stayed at the Club Hotel. Gibb spent two weeks sketching and painting through to the beginning of 1883.¹² The products of both trips were put to full benefit in his studio in the months that followed. By March Gibb was able to include at least one substantial painting of Kinloch and one of Kaikoura in the CSA Annual Exhibition but the painting that year that aroused the most interest and was much admired was *After the Storm Timaru Beach - Wreck of the Benvenue* which depicted a recent maritime disaster that had occurred in the Port of Timaru on 14 May 1882 when the 999 ton iron hull *Benvenue* was driven ashore with loss of life. Much of the disaster was witnessed by hundreds of people who lined the cliff tops - all of which was documented in Gibb's painting.

In July of 1883 Gibb was an inaugural exhibitor at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in Wellington and continued to send works to their annual exhibitions for the next 20 years. During the winter of 1884 Gibb sought subjects west of Christchurch, sketching around Lake Coleridge. The studies he made in the area were later developed in the studio and at least three of the paintings from this visit were exhibited the following year.



Clearing Up After Rain, Foot of the Otina Gorge (cat no 12)



Bottle Lake (cat no 20)

In 1885 Gibb journeyed further west to Bealey, Otira and the Teramakau Valley where he stayed at Jackson's Hotel painting and sketching. As with other artists before and after him the scenery of Otira, because of its atmosphere, had a strong attraction and formed the subject of many works well into the 1900s.

By the mid 1880s Gibb had a regular presence at the major annual exhibitions around New Zealand, frequently showing more works than most of his contemporaries and often of a larger scale. At the special art section of the 1885 Industrial Exhibition in Wellington he exhibited nine paintings including three devoted to subjects concerned with Wellington Harbour. Included among the larger works was *Loading a Coaster in the Wool Season*, also known as *The Wool Season* (cat no 9).

The Colonial and Indian Exhibition held in London in 1886 was an important event for New Zealand works to be seen beyond Australasia and was Gibb's first opportunity in more than a decade to show in Britain. Unfortunately works were not shown to best advantage in the gallery of the Royal Albert Hall and notices related to what New Zealand artists had sent were few, but Gibb fared better than most. Of the nine paintings he exhibited *Flood in the Otira Gorge* aroused some interest and was engraved as an illustration for an article titled "Art in New Zealand" that appeared in "The Magazine of Art" in 1887. Another work shown in London was *N.Z. Inside the Breakwater, Lyttelton Harbour* (cat no 15) which tested his knowledge and skill at depicting contemporary shipping.

Whilst Lyttelton remained a constant source of imagery for Gibb, he also found equal fascination over the years with the activities in the ports of Bluff, Port Chalmers, Wellington and Auckland. Gibb's interest in depicting harbour-shipping vessels was wide ranging and included dredges, tugs and ballast boats. Included with the monochrome oil paintings that he exhibited at the first Black and White Exhibition held by the Canterbury Society of Arts in September 1886 was *Lyttelton Ballast Boats* (cat no 14).

In October 1887 Gibb travelled to Bluff and joined a vessel for two weeks cruising around Stewart Island and Foveaux Strait. It was during the height of the oyster season and Gibb made careful studies of the oyster fleet. He was referred to in the *Southland Times* as "one of the leading men in his profession".¹³ Out of the trip came a series of paintings depicting the oyster boats in a variety of weather conditions and light effects, which he continued to paint well into the 1890s. Among the paintings that Gibb sent to the 1888 Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne was *Oyster Dredging off Stewart Island*.

By 1888 Gibb had his studio in a new, very desirable, central location in Cathedral Square. Two years earlier Gibb's eldest son, John Walker Gibb, had opened a picture framing and artists' material business on the ground floor of Morten's Building facing Cathedral Square. His father's studio was incorporated within the building. This meant that Gibb's paintings were always on display either in the shop or in his well appointed studio. It is very likely that he initiated this venture as a canny solution to cutting costs and selling his work, which may be the reason why, in the 1890s, it was often referred to as his studio and shop. Gibb also made both his studio and the shop available for other artists to display their work. He also had pupils who included both young and mature students alike. In the early 1890s Lady Onslow, wife of the Governor of New Zealand, took painting lessons from him and it is likely that it was through this association that J. W. Gibb as a business was given Special Appointment status.

In 1889 Gibb was a prominent exhibitor at the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition in Dunedin with a total of 11 paintings that included *Fishing Boats Off Lyttelton Heads* which was awarded a Second Order of Merit and *In the Heart of the Southern Alps*, which was a work made following a trip to the Mt Cook region in 1889. Gibb made another trip to the area early in the autumn of 1890, sketching and making studies. A number of alpine paintings followed. Such was the interest in his alpine work, that by July of 1890 it was reported that 'he was working on nine canvasses of New Zealand scenery mostly Mt Cook views for visitors to the Jubilee Exhibition as souvenirs of their trip'.¹⁴

For many years Gibb had painted works for New Zealanders on commission, including making portraits of homesteads for prominent landowners, but in 1890 his profile in Australia, particularly in Victoria, was rising. Among the Australians who had visited the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition in Dunedin early in 1890 and ordered pictures were E.G. Fitzgibbon, President of the Melbourne Board of Works, Sir Thomas McIlwrath, former Premier of Queensland and George Simmie, a member of the Legislative Council of Victoria. In August 1890 George Simmie advised the Bendigo Art Gallery that he was going to present it with one of John Gibb's Mt Cook landscapes. Two paintings were sent for the Bendigo Art Gallery committee to make a choice. One depicted Mt Cook and Lake Pukaki in morning light, the other an evening study. As the committee was unable to come to a decision as to which they preferred, George Simmie agreed to donate both.

As Gibb reached his seventieth year in 1891, he was still maintaining a steady output of work. That year at the CSA Annual Exhibition in April he exhibited seven works and a further nine in November at the third Black and White Sketch Exhibition. In Australia his reputation was enhanced when, in July, it was announced that he had been awarded a one hundred pound prize for the best landscape exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria that year. The painting *Evening Shadows, Otira Gorge NZ* was also purchased for the Gallery's collection. In contrast to the

exhilaration this must have brought that year, there was also sadness when his wife of 32 years died on 27 May 1891. Following his wife's death, his niece, Isabella Menzies, who occupied one of Gibb's houses on Barbadoes Street, became his housekeeper and cared for him in the years that followed.

During the early 1890s Gibb continued to make trips to places around the South Island in search of new subjects but he also reworked imagery made on earlier visits. In 1895 he exhibited *Bluff Oyster Drifter BeCALMED Foveaux Strait* (Cat no 23), a subject he had worked on in the late 1880s. Over the previous fifteen years he had worked mostly on South Island subjects with some made after trips to Auckland or Wellington but apart from the Bay of Islands he did not paint elsewhere in the North Island. He was essentially very much a South Island painter as it had the landscape he preferred.

The arrival of Petrus van der Velden in 1890 must have presented Gibb with something of a challenge and unsettled his place as the senior professional Canterbury artist, but they were very different, not only in personality, but in the way in which they painted. There was no rivalry - they were good friends and Van der Velden was often at Gibb's studio. In fact it was Gibb who encouraged Van der Velden to visit the Bealey and Otira.

By 1894 Gibb was being described as 'the doyen of Canterbury artists'¹⁰ and as a marine specialist had no rivals. His place in the Canterbury Society of Arts Council advanced and he was elected a Vice President of the Society, a place he held until 1908. Although not travelling quite as much, in 1894 Gibb did visit Nelson and Takaka, adding his experience of a new location to his landscape imagery. Within a few years 'the doyen of Canterbury art' was being referred to as 'the veteran'¹¹ and as a new century began, though he was well respected, he was seen by some as being of the 'old school'.

Later Years 1900 - 1909

In 1900 Gibb was a member of the Fine Arts Committee of the Canterbury Jubilee Industrial Exhibition. He was also an exhibitor of several paintings - prominent among these was a pair of works, one depicting Lyttelton in 1850 and its companion, *Lyttelton in 1900*. In the early 1900s, although his output had in no way diminished, Gibb tended to confine works exhibited to the Christchurch area.

In 1906 Gibb's son was obliged to relocate his business to High Street as Morten's building was being converted to the United Service Hotel in anticipation of the accommodation demand for the 1906 -07 New Zealand International Exhibition. This meant that John Gibb Jnr had to vacate his prime premises, but this may not have greatly affected Gibb as he had worked in the studio in his home at 56 Worcester Street for many years. Gibb exhibited several works at the New Zealand International Exhibition but the painting that attracted the most attention and praise was a marinescape, *A Gleam of Sunshine, Akaroa Heads* but he was unsuccessful in receiving any award.

During the last years of his life, Gibb maintained his presence as an exhibitor at the CSA and continued to pursue his leisure time interest in bowling. He was an early member of the Christchurch Bowling Club that was established virtually on his boundary in Worcester Street. By late 1908 he had become mentally and physically weak and during the months that followed, his health steadily declined and on 14 September 1909 he died. He had made his mark in Canterbury as the region's foremost marine painter - a position that has remained unchallenged in the years since his death.

Notes

1. Gibb family notes (Robert McDougall Art Gallery archives)
2. Weekly Press 'The Veteran Canterbury Artist' 12 December 1900 p49 - 50
3. *ibid.*
4. Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826 - 1990 Vol. 11 Hilmarton Manor Press 1991 p 126
5. The Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts 1861 - 1989 The Woodend Press Glasgow 1989 p
6. The Press Exhibition at James Firth's Picture Framer High St 2 January 1876 p2
7. The Press 29 January 1877 p3
8. Lyttelton Times 23 March 1877 p3
9. Otago Art Society Third Annual Exhibition catalogue 1878
10. Report of the Industrial Exhibition Held at the Drill shed Christchurch 15 - 20 July 1880 p26
11. Extract from the diary of John Innes 1880 - 1885 (unpaged) Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives
12. *ibid.*
13. The Press 'Picturesque New Zealand' 25 October 1887 p 4
14. Canterbury Times 'Pictures for Australia' 10 July 1890 p 22
15. Lyttelton Times 30 May 1896 p6
16. Lyttelton Times 28 March 1898 p6



Clearing Up Otira Gorge (cat no 21)

1. *Low Tide Innellan* 1871
Watercolour
239 x 357mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
2. *Rapaki* 1877
Oil on canvas
475 x 690mm
Collection: Canterbury Museum
3. *Summer* 1878
Oil on board
290 x 447mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
4. *Shades of Evening, The Estuary* 1880
Oil on canvas
543 x 1002 mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
5. *Low Tide, Governors Bay* 1883
Oil on canvas
511 x 765mm
Collection: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
Purchased 1964
6. *Kaikoura West End and Lyell Creek* 1883
Watercolour
170 x 347mm
Collection: Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
7. *Lake Wakatipu from Queenstown Park towards Kingston* 1884
Watercolour
165 x 350mm
Collection: K. Coe, Wanaka
8. *Amuri Bluff* c 1885
Oil on canvas board
498 x 750mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
9. *The Wool Season* 1885
Oil on canvas
940 x 1524mm
Collection: Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa. Gift of Mr H.A. Lamb, 1936
10. *Kaikoura from the South* 1885
Oil on canvas
1200 x 1900mm
Collection: Kaikoura District Council, Kaikoura.
11. *Ferrymead* 1885
Oil on canvas
395 x 605mm
Collection: Canterbury Museum
12. *Clearing Up After Rain, Foot of Otira Gorge* 1886
Oil on canvas
827 x 1252 mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

13. *From the Foot of the Hills* 1886
Oil on canvas
766 x 1275mm
Collection: Christchurch Art Gallery Trust
14. *Lyttelton Ballast Boats* 1886
Oil on board
208 x 303mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
15. *N.Z. Inside the Breakwater, Lyttelton Harbour* 1886
Oil on canvas
745 x 1251 mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
16. *Dunedin Harbour* 1887
Oil on canvas
740 x 1250 mm
Collection: Port Otago Limited
17. *Horseshoe Bay, Stewart Island* 1887
Oil on board
115 x 173 mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
18. *Eventide*
Oil on canvas
490 x 750mm
Collection: Burwood Anglican Parish, Christchurch
19. *Caswell Sound, West Coast* 1887
Oil on board
190 x 295 mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
20. *Bottle Lake* 1888
Oil on canvas
715 x 1275mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
21. *Clearing Up Otira Gorge* 1891
Oil on canvas
764 x 637mm
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery
22. *Summer Weather, Taylor's Mistake* 1894
Oil on canvas
850 x 1275mm
Collection: Private, Christchurch
23. *Bluff Oyster Drifter BeCALmed Foveaux Strait* 1895
Oil on canvas
840 x 1505mm
On loan from South Port New Zealand Ltd., Bluff

- 1831 Born Cumbernauld, the son of David Gibb, a building contractor, and Mary Gibb (nee Walker).
- 1835 Gibb family living at 'Merkland Cottage', Kirkintilloch.
- 1848 John Gibb living at Greenock where he begins receiving tuition from John McKenzie.
- 1852 21 October marries Agnes Crichton at Cumbernauld.
- 1853 First child still born.
- 1855 Living in Dunoon. Death of Agnes Gibb and infant son David.
- 1857 19 February marries Marion Menzies. Living at Innellan. Son, John Walker Gibb born.
- 1859 William Menzies Gibb born.
- 1861 Herbert Buchannan Gibb born. Exhibits 2 works at the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA).
- 1862 Exhibits 1 work at the RSA.
- 1863 David Gibb dies (drowned).
- 1865 Living at Alnwick. Exhibits 2 works at the RSA.
- 1867 Living back in Innellan.
- 1868 Begins exhibiting at the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts (1 work). Exhibits 1 work at the RSA.
- 1870 Death of a daughter.
- 1871 Gabriel Gibb born.
- 1872 Exhibits 4 works at the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts.
- 1873 Three daughters die during an epidemic.
- 1876 Decides to leave Scotland for New Zealand. Is presented with a clock for his services as an elder of the Presbyterian Church. On 27 June embarks at Gravesend Dock, London on board *Merope*. Arrives at Lyttelton 28 September.
December holds the first exhibition of his work at Firth's picture framers, High Street.
Also an auction of paintings at Charles Clark, Hereford Street.
Establishes a studio. Gibb makes a number of paintings based on subjects around Christchurch and Lyttelton Harbour.

- 1877 Visits Otira for the first time.
 Invited by Christchurch lithographer, W. C. Brunsdon to make a portrait of Reverend C. Fraser as the first in a series of portraits of local identities.
 Sends work for exhibition in Sydney.
 June, has work included in the Art Exhibition, Canterbury Museum.
 Purchases a block of land on the corner of Worcester and Barbadoes Streets and begins constructing a house fronting Worcester Street. Later two more houses facing Barbadoes Street were constructed with the help of son, John Walker Gibb.
 Exhibits at the 1877 Sydney Industrial Exhibition.
 December, travels on board Union Steam Ship Company's SS Hawea to Fiordland for the first time.
- 1878 Makes a number of paintings of Sumner and the fiords.
 Made an elder of St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Cashel Street and Clerk of Sessions, a position he held until 1887.
 Begins exhibiting at the Otago Art Society with 4 works.
- 1879 Exhibits 5 works at the Sydney International exhibition. *Godley Heads, Lyttelton* is Highly Commended.
- 1880 Gibb's youngest son, Gabriel, dies.
 Becomes foundation member of the Canterbury Society of Arts.
 Exhibits 6 works at the Melbourne International Exhibition.
 Begins exhibiting at the Art Society of New South Wales.
 Exhibits 3 works at the 1880 Industrial Exhibition.
 Begins exhibiting with the Auckland Society of Arts.
- 1881 Exhibits 4 works at the first CSA Annual Exhibition and 11 at the second exhibition.
Shades of Evening is purchased for the CSA collection.
 Elected to the Council of the CSA, a position he held until 1893.
 Visits Auckland and Bay of Islands.
 Visits Bealey.
 In late December visits Lake Wakatipu and sketches and paints at Kinloch for two weeks.
- 1882 Exhibits at the New Zealand International Exhibition Christchurch, awarded First Order of Merit.
 Spends two weeks in December sketching at Kaikoura.
- 1883 Begins exhibiting with the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington and remains an exhibiting member until 1902.
 Exhibits 11 works at CSA Annual Exhibition.

- 1884 January, visits Fiordland.
 Visits Lake Coleridge.
 Exhibits 6 works at the CSA, *Evening Glow, Lyttelton Harbour* is purchased for the Canterbury Museum collection.
- 1885 Exhibits 9 works at the New Zealand Industrial Exhibition, Wellington.
 Visits Otira Gorge and Teramakau Valley.
 Exhibits 10 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
 Last year as Clerk of Sessions in Presbyterian Church.
- 1886 Exhibits 6 works at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London.
 Moves studio in Morten's Building, Cathedral Square.
 Exhibits 6 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1887 Is featured in the "The Magazine of Art".
 In October travels on a sailing vessel cruising the waters around Stewart Island. Exhibits 11 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition and 9 at the second Black and White Exhibition.
 The painting *Will She Weather it* is purchased by the Auckland Society of Arts for its collection.
- 1888 Exhibits 8 works at the Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition.
 Exhibits at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1889 Exhibits 12 works at the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, Dunedin.
 Exhibits 9 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1890 Visits Mount Cook.
 Travels to Melbourne. Two paintings are purchased and presented to the Ballarat Art Gallery.
 Exhibits 10 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
 Has Lady Onslow, wife of the Governor General, as one of his pupils.
 Works on commissions for Australian clients. Two purchased and presented to the Bendigo Art Gallery.
- 1891 The death of his wife, Marion, in May.
 Exhibits 7 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition and 9 at the third Black and White Exhibition.
 July, awarded £100 prize for best work exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria and is purchased for the collection.
- 1892 Travels to Mt Cook.
 Exhibits 5 works at CSA Annual Exhibition.

- 1893 Visits Melbourne.
Exhibits 6 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
Serves last year on CSA Council.
- 1894 Exhibits 8 works at CSA Annual Exhibition. Elected Vice President of the CSA, a post he retained until 1908.
Travels to Takaka.
- 1895 Visits Auckland.
Exhibits at the 1895 Industrial Exhibition.
Exhibits 9 works at CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1896 Exhibits 8 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
Working from his Worcester Street studio.
- 1897 Exhibits 5 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1898 Exhibits 5 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1899 Exhibits 7 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1900 Elected a member of the Canterbury Jubilee Fine Arts Committee.
November exhibits 5 works at the Canterbury Jubilee exhibition.
- 1901 Exhibits 8 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1902 Last year exhibiting with the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts.
Exhibits 8 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1903 Exhibits 5 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1904 Exhibits 3 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1905 Exhibits 6 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1906 Exhibits 6 works at the New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch.
Exhibits 6 works at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1907 Does not exhibit.
- 1908 4 works are shown at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
- 1909 6 works are shown at the CSA Annual Exhibition.
Dies at his residence, 56 Worcester Street, 14 September. Buried Addington Cemetery.

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Otago Art Society Annual Exhibition catalogues 1878 - 1881 (HL)
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Abbreviations

AAG	Auckland Art Gallery
CPL	Canterbury Public Library
HL	Hocken Library, University of Otago
LINZ	Land Information New Zealand
RMAG	Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch



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