

LISMER IN SHEFFIELD

Over the past fifty years there have been several biographies of Arthur Lismer as well as a number of biographical essays in exhibition catalogues, newspapers and other publications.¹ Very little space, however, has been accorded to the first twenty-five years of Lismer's life in Sheffield, England. For example, John McLeish allots only eleven pages of his 204-page biography *September Gale* to Lismer's time in Sheffield and Lois Darroch, in *Bright Land: A Warm Look at Arthur Lismer*, only eight columns in 164 pages. In *Arthur Lismer: Paintings 1916-1919*, Gemey Kelly covers Lismer's Sheffield years in one and a half columns, citing McLeish and Marjorie Lismer Bridges for personal information on the artist. Michael Tooby, in his catalogue *Our Home and Native Land: Sheffield's Canadian Artists*, provides more details on Lismer's membership in the Heeley Art Club and describes to a limited extent, life in Sheffield in the early twentieth century. Bridges quotes her father's unpublished autobiography in *A Border of Beauty: Arthur Lismer's Pen and Pencil*, where Lismer himself only devotes five paragraphs of thirteen pages to his time in Sheffield.

Arthur Lismer was born on June 27, 1885 to Edward, a draper's buyer, and Harriet Lismer in Sheffield; he was one of six children. The family was active in the Upper Chapel (Unitarian); Lismer's sister Constance was Honourary Secretary to the *Young People's Religious Union* and he and his siblings attended, and sometimes even taught, Sunday school.² Lismer attended the Central Secondary School and studied art under John Fanshaw, whose son Hubert Valentine Fanshaw would also to emigrate to Canada.³

Lismer's father could not afford to support an artist, but when at the age of twelve his son was awarded a scholarship to the Sheffield School of Art, he did not discourage him.⁴ As part of his scholarship, Lismer was apprenticed for seven years, from 1898 to 1905, to Willis Eadon, a photo-engraver. He attended the School's evening art classes and became a member of the Heeley Art Club. In 1904, Lismer also worked as a black-and-white artist for a local paper, *The Sheffield Daily Independent* and described his activities as sketching "cartoons, courtroom scenes, 'the spot where the body was found,' and the festivals, royal visits, football matches and so on of a great manufacturing city."⁵

After his apprenticeship with Eadon was completed in 1905, Lismer attended the *Académie Royal des beaux-arts* in Antwerp. Deciding to spend time in Antwerp was not unusual. There was a regular ferry to Antwerp from Hull and Harwich (easily reached by train from Sheffield) and, in his capacity as a draper's buyer, Lismer senior would have been familiar with the city. A further incentive to travel was that Lismer had an invitation to stay with a friend, George Gale, a teacher at the Berlitz language school.⁶ It is unlikely, however, that Fred Varley, a

fellow School of Art graduate who had studied in Antwerp for two years (from 1900 to 1902), provided the primary reason for Lismer's decision to study there as has been stated in the Lismer literature. Varley returned to Sheffield in 1902, moved to London the following year and remained there until 1908, when he returned to Yorkshire, settling in Doncaster.⁷ While at the *Académie*, Lismer apparently made short trips to Holland and France, likely Paris, but did not stay long, returning to Sheffield a year and a half later.⁸

In 1908 Lismer opened his own photo-engraving business specializing in pictorial publicity in Haymarket Chambers and was listed as one of the few individuals or businesses with a telephone.⁹ Lismer's office was in the same building as that of his mentor, Willis Eadon, and this was also the location of the Great Central and Northern Railway's Ticket Agency, for which Lismer designed tickets and letterhead.¹⁰ The office of Messrs. Dean and Dawson, who advertised themselves as having the cheapest tickets to Canada, was also in the Haymarket and it may well have been there that Lismer purchased his own ticket to Canada.¹¹

Lismer's lack of regular work in Sheffield no doubt influenced his decision to emigrate to Canada. Company and government representatives from Canada regularly visited Sheffield and other English cities, in hopes of enticing skilled individuals to resettle. Lismer's school-friend William Smithson Broadhead had emigrated several years earlier and was working as a commercial artist for the Grip Engraving Company in Toronto. In 1910 Lismer met Fred Brigden, of Brigden's Limited in Toronto, who had come to Sheffield to recruit commercial artists and encourage them to emigrate to Canada.¹² It was undoubtedly because of these various incentives that Lismer emigrated to Canada in January 1911.

To fully understand Lismer's activities in Sheffield, however, they must be placed within the context of the city itself. Sheffield, the centre of the silver-plating industry in England in the late nineteenth century, had a long tradition of socio-political radicalism and religious non-conformity. The early development of this industry, with records as early as 1340, attracted large numbers of labourers to Sheffield, which led in turn to overcrowding and poor living conditions. By 1720 activists had already established "sick clubs" and "benefits societies" (the legal precursors to labour unions) to assist and represent the interests of the workers. This organization of the labour force meant that unpopular industrial tactics or political events were met with organized and militant action, often ending in violence.¹³

It is easy, then, to surmise how this tradition of radical political action made Sheffield amenable to alternative political positions. Lismer's brother, Edward, was one of many who embraced the new ideologies, eventually becoming a Communist and travelling to post-revolutionary Russia. Variations on the ideas of Marx and Engels manifested themselves in many ways in Sheffield. From 1880 onwards, Sheffield organizations included the Socialist Society, led by Edward Carpenter (and which included anarchists); the Workingmen's Radical Association, which discussed

socialism and promoted working-class political action; and the more extreme Central Radical Club, that called for the nationalization of land and the abolition of the House of Lords. Socialist political parties were also active in Sheffield, with branches of the communist Independent Labour Party (formed in 1893) and the Social Democratic Party (in 1894). Despite its innocuous name, the Clarion Cycling Club was founded specifically to spread socialist ideas in villages around Sheffield.¹⁴ The existence of these groups showed a committed concern for social issues.

Religion in Sheffield also had a radical and non-conformist tradition. Just as the general populace was unwilling to accept political norms, it was unwilling to find solace in the Church of England. The Church of the land had a hierarchical structure in which they could not participate; by choosing to follow the teachings of non-conformist leaders, they rejected the traditional system of "deferential relationships."¹⁵ Such non-conformist religions as Unitarianism and Methodism were by and large evangelical and encouraged lay members to become involved, both through religious recruitment and teaching in Sunday schools. The Unitarian Church had the largest membership, many of whom held key positions of power in Sheffield. In 1714 a faction of some two hundred members of the Church left the Upper Chapel congregation and formed the Nether Chapel because their orthodox candidate was not selected as the new minister.¹⁶ A distinction must therefore be made between the more liberal Upper Chapel, of which the Lismers were members, and the more conservative Nether Chapel.

The involvement of Upper Chapel's members in local government, as members of the Town Council and as aldermen, was longstanding.¹⁷ Unlike the established churches, Unitarianism did not discourage the political radicalism of Edward Lismer and others. The Upper Chapel shared with the socialist groups a concern for the welfare of its poorer parishioners and the community in general. Besides providing a Sunday school, Upper Chapel's activities included a Sick and Savings Society, a Sewing Guild and Ladies Sewing Society (which made clothes for the poor), a Literary Society and a Postal Mission (which sent out Unitarian literature through the post).¹⁸ Lismer's sisters Constance and Lucy were very much involved with these groups, the latter marrying and moving to a new Chapel branch in the Attercliffe suburb of Sheffield.¹⁹

In addition, from 1876 through to the turn of the century the ministers were men with modern ideas who were willing to accommodate the rapid scientific changes of the nineteenth century. For example, around 1880, the Reverend Eli Fay gave a series of lectures on "The Old and the New Science" which brought many new members to the Church, as did Fay's successor, the Reverend John Bland, a Freemason. The Reverend John Manning, who replaced Bland, was a prolific contemporary author with publications ranging from "Darwin and Darwinism" to "The Poets and the Flowers." The "rational" view of religion and religious tolerance brought to the congregation by well-educated, open-minded ministers gave

Lismer exposure to a wide range of contemporary religious, scientific and philosophical ideas. It is most likely that he was introduced to the theosophical ideas of Annie Besant and Edward Carpenter when they spoke to the Unitarian-founded Sheffield Literary Society. Moreover, Upper Chapel's willingness to invite speakers with other religious viewpoints helped instill in Lismer a flexibility and willingness to listen to new ideas.

In spite, or perhaps because of, his involvement with the Unitarian Church, Lismer questioned his religion during the late Victorian "crisis of faith," in which the findings of science undermined long-held beliefs. In his book *Social Evolution* (1895), Benjamin Kidd described it as a "struggle which has been waged between Religion and Science within the century and [those within the Churches] who have realised the full force of the new weapons which the latter has brought to bear on her old antagonist, have cause for reflection at the present time."²⁰ He also suggested that the questions raised by evolution and other scientific findings caused extreme shifts in religious belief; some people returned to the Church of Rome, while others sought answers of the "super-rational" kind in Theosophy and other "new" religions.²¹ Kidd's book was just one attempt to reconcile religious, social and economic thought with scientific findings.

Lismer considered Theosophy as an alternative and this was not unusual given that he lived in Sheffield and was a member of the Unitarian Church where, as mentioned, Besant and Carpenter had spoken. Little is known of Lismer's involvement with the Theosophic Society in Sheffield or the date on which he joined. What is known is that during the period when Lismer might have become a member, Carpenter was extremely active in the Society. For a brief time before his move to Millthorpe in 1878, Carpenter lived at St. George's Farm, Totley, which had been founded by Ruskin as an experimental communal farm. Once settled in Sheffield, Carpenter signed the Sheffield Socialists' Manifesto in 1886 and was an active participant in socialist functions in the city. His work with the Socialist League brought him into regular contact with William Morris, whose politics also leaned towards Communism.²² Carpenter's socialist politics would, at least in part, have been communicated to Lismer at home by his brother. As a Theosophist who was also an ardent Communist and social activist, Carpenter would have been a model of how religious and political beliefs do not have to conflict. Lismer was given a copy of Carpenter's *The Art of Creation* (1904) as a parting gift from the Heeley Art Club when he emigrated to Canada.²³ He may well have been the most important philosophical influence on Lismer in Sheffield.

Although not the largest industrial town, Sheffield was, during Lismer's youth, home to three art museums (the City Museum, the Mappin Art Gallery and the Saint George's Museum), a school of art and independent art clubs, one of which was the Heeley Art Club. The small City Museum, opened in 1875, owned a variety of donated examples of the fine and applied arts. Included in the

Museum were important collections of cutlery and English pottery, as well as small collections of prehistoric antiquities from Yorkshire and Derbyshire. The Mappin Art Gallery, which opened a decade later in 1887, housed the collection of 153 paintings bequeathed by John Newton Mappin and 48 others presented by his nephew Sir Frederick Thorpe Mappin at the opening of the museum.²⁴ The Mappin Art Gallery also hosted the annual exhibition of works from the School of Art and visiting exhibitions of works by the Pre-Raphaelites, the New English Art Club, London artists George Clausen, Frank Brangwyn and William Strang and the Turner Bequest.²⁵ However, Saint George's Museum, founded by John Ruskin, would possibly have most interested Lismar.

In 1871, the same year he founded the Guild of Saint George, Ruskin began *Fors Clavigera*, a personal newsletter addressed "to the workmen and labourers of England."²⁶ In these letters he detailed his plans for the establishment of a museum and in 1876 the Saint George's Museum was founded. In his "General Statement Explaining the Nature and Purposes of Saint George's Guild" (1882), he remarked that Sheffield had been selected as the site of the Museum to acknowledge ironwork as an art; because Sheffield was in Yorkshire where inhabitants held "Old English" values; and because it was easily within reach of beautiful natural scenery.²⁷ Unofficially, the location choice was more likely influenced by the strong radical tradition in Sheffield which was sympathetic to Ruskin's own socio-political views. It has also been suggested that he might have wished to ingratiate himself with the populace of Sheffield after having supported the Governor of Jamaica's massacre of rebelling black farmers in the 1860's. Since 1791, Sheffielders had an anti-slavery trade tradition which included a boycott of West Indian produce in 1820 to protest the treatment of slaves.²⁸

Ruskin's original plan had been to establish communities, a "National Store," where, in his own words:

there were no taxes to pay; ... everybody had clothes enough, and some stuff laid by for next year; ... everybody had food enough, and plenty of salted pork, pickled walnuts, potted shrimps, or other conserves, in the cupboard; ... everybody had jewels enough, and some of the biggest laid by, in treasuries and museums; and, of persons caring for such things ... everybody had as many books and pictures as they could read or look at with quantities of the highest quality besides, in easily accessible public libraries and galleries.²⁹

Although he never realized this ideal community, the opening of the Saint George's Museum was the one aspect of the endeavour in which he did succeed. Ruskin had initially expressed his hope of finding room in Sheffield "to place some books and minerals, arranged first for 'workers in iron'," as his principal aim was education. The Museum was originally located in Walkley, a working-class district of Sheffield and its hours were extended to make it as accessible as possible to the workingman. In addition, admission for students was free.³⁰ Ruskin

retained full control of his small museum, deciding what would be shown, designing display cases and providing works from his private collection.³¹ One reviewer of the day described the Museum as "a rich mine of wealth to the earnest seeker after knowledge, an ever-fresh oasis of Art and culture amidst the barrenness and gloom of an English manufacturing district."³² In 1890 the Museum moved to larger quarters in Meersbrook Park in the Heeley district, very near to the Heeley Art Club (which Lismer would join in 1902). While Lismer was a student at the School of Art, the Museum was less than a mile from his home and a mile and a half from his school.³³

The Sheffield School of Art, which Lismer attended from 1898 to 1905, had opened in 1843 as one of the branch schools established in various industrial centres by the Board of Trade, following the institution of a national School of Design in 1837. The national school was founded as a result of a Parliamentary Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, established to enquire into "the best means of extending a knowledge of the Arts and the Principles of Design among the People (especially the Manufacturing Population) of the Country; also to enquire into the Constitution, Management and Effects of Institutions connected with the Arts."³⁴ When authority over the schools of art was given to the Department of Science and Art in 1854-55, the emphasis changed to teaching drawing to children. By 1881, however, with the appointment of painter John Cook as Headmaster, the emphasis returned to training in art and design. When designer A.C.C. Jahn was appointed to replace Cook in 1902, the traditional curriculum - which included drawing from life, technical drawing and copying from texts - was supplemented by courses such as woodcarving, lithography, china painting and metalwork. The most significant change during the period Lismer attended was made in 1901 when management of the School of Art was transferred to Sheffield City Council and the School renamed the Technical School of Art.³⁵ The South Kensington Museum's Art Department continued to set and grade the end-of-year examinations for students of the School of Art as it had done since the 1850's when control of the national network of schools had been transferred from the Board of Trade.³⁶ The School of Art had its own library and art museum.³⁷ The small art institution which opened in 1898, exhibited objects on loan from the Science and Art Department of the South Kensington Museum.³⁸

In his speech at the Technical School of Art's 1906 *Conversazione*, Headmaster Jahn noted the ideals of a school of art:

It had long been the ambition of the managers to make the school not only an institution for the study of the fine arts, which, of course, was of extreme importance, but also a thoroughly practical school, where artisan students and apprentices might obtain a sound art and technical education, enabling them to become art craftsmen and so directly benefit the trades and crafts of the city.³⁹

The School provided training in both the "higher" and "lesser" arts; and it appears

that most students attended evening classes - 71% in Lismer's first year and 82% in his second.⁴⁰ The curriculum of the School followed traditional lines. In his first year, 1898-99, Lismer followed the curriculum of the Male Evening Elementary Class:

Freehand drawing of ornament, from copies. Shading ornament, from copies. Drawing models, such as cubes, cones and cylinders, objects of utility, furniture, &c. Drawing and shading flowers and foliage, from copies. Drawing and shading the figure, from copies. Elementary designing and colouring for decorative purposes. Lectures on Geometry and Perspective, each subject occupying one evening in each week, the courses extending from September to May.⁴¹

This curriculum thus consisted of eight subjects: Freehand Drawing, Model Drawing, Geometrical Drawing, Light and Shade Drawing, Perspective, Modeling Clay, Principles of Ornament and Design. In his first year, Lismer was awarded a First Class in both Elementary Freehand Drawing and Model Drawing, a Second Class in Elementary Drawing from Light and Shade and Modeling in Clay and a Pass in Geometrical Drawing.⁴² However, the School of Art's *Annual Report* for 1898-99 shows that Lismer, in spite of his two Firsts, was an average student, with many others receiving more Firsts, as well as special Commendations from the examiners.

During his second year, Lismer began studies in the Male Advanced Evening Course, which included:

Drawing and shading ornament, from the cast. Study of the history of styles in ornament, from books, copies and casts. Drawing, shading and modeling details of the figure, head, feet and hands, &c. from the cast. Drawing, shading and modeling whole figures (the antique), from the cast. Modeling ornament, fruit, flowers, &c., from copies, the cast and nature. Painting ornament, from copies and the cast. Painting landscapes, from copies. Painting flowers, fruit and still life, from copies and from nature. Painting the figure, from copies and the cast. Anatomical studies of the figure. Architectural drawing, shading and colouring. Designing for manufactures (applied design, either drawn or modeled), including gold and silver work, wrought and cast iron and brass work; pottery, china and glass; laces, muslin's and other fabrics; furniture; wall and other surface decoration; and architectural decorations, &c. - Students in this class who have not passed the Elementary subjects, should do so with as little delay as possible and should also present themselves for examination each year in at least one of the subjects of the Advanced.⁴³

There was a total of twenty-three subjects including seven in elementary drawing and shading, three in painting flowers, landscapes and still life and one each in elementary and applied design.⁴⁴ At the end of his second year, Lismer sat two advanced-level examinations: Drawing from Light and Shade and Freehand Drawing. Surprisingly, given his later reputation for sketching, the young Lismer

received only a Second Class in both courses.⁴⁵

As one of the criteria for receipt of a scholarship to the School of Art, Lismer was required to complete a seven-year apprenticeship with a local tradesman. Willis Eadon had been a teacher at Sharrow Vale School, where Lismer had been a pupil prior to attending the School of Art. When Eadon left Sharrow Vale to set up his own business in specialist illustration and engraving in 1898, he accepted his former pupil as an apprentice in his new company.⁴⁶ Perhaps the most important aspect of the relationship between the two was that Eadon, who had previously been a member of the Surrey Art Club, was a founder and member of the Heeley Art Club. Lismer served as Assistant Secretary in 1904, then as Honourary Secretary until 1906.⁴⁷ He was described as an "energetic secretary" and, with the President, W.B. Hatfield, was credited for the "vigorous condition" of the Club.⁴⁸

There is no clear consensus amongst Lismer biographers on the Club's identity: it is said to have been a working men's club,⁴⁹ a group of mainly local businessmen,⁵⁰ and an offshoot of the Sheffield Society of Art.⁵¹ It was organized in 1895 as the Sheffield Art Society and Sketching Club. The name change to the Heeley Art Club reflected the fact that the group met in a classroom in Wesleyan School on Thirwell Road in Heeley and that a number of its members lived in or near Heeley.⁵² The Club carried on the tradition of art clubs in Sheffield. For example, the Sheffield and District Art Club had been founded in the 1880's by John Cook, shortly after his appointment as Headmaster of the School of Art. It was formed for the benefit of a few of the advanced students, though outsiders could join for a fee. Two or three years later, when a number of the members wanted a club which was not associated with the School, a second club was formed - the Surrey Art Club (named after the street where they met). Besides Willis Eadon, other members included Frank Saltfleet, Charles Ashmore and W. Hunt, all of whom were to become members of the Heeley Art Club, which was established a short time after the Surrey club was dissolved.⁵³

As cited in a 1902 catalogue, the principle objectives of the Heeley Art Club were "to bring together all who take an interest in Art matters and to foster a love of the beautiful in Nature."⁵⁴ The following year this sentiment was expanded: "to encourage the study of Pictorial Art, including drawing from the Human Figure. The Club will foster the wish to attain excellence in Landscape work, whether in oils, water-colours, or black-and-white in which members may be interested. They will also have the opportunity of hearing the criticisms delivered at the Monthly Exhibitions by the leading Artists of the City."⁵⁵ The Art Club held weekly meetings for drawing and painting from the model and organized Saturday afternoon sketching parties to visit some of the scenic spots around Sheffield. The regularity of the monthly exhibitions and criticisms is evident in the fact that the Club had pre-printed announcement cards with blank spaces for

the date and the name of the invitee. Fred Varley, who was living in London at this time, was one of the invited artist/critics (March 7, 1906).⁵⁶

The Club held its first public exhibition in 1898; Lismér exhibited from 1902 to 1907. Prices were generally affordable, but it is not known if any of the young Lismér's works were purchased.⁵⁷ The number and type of works displayed were varied and Lismér usually contributed watercolours and black-and-white works, including some portrait studies, but most were landscapes of the greater Sheffield area.⁵⁸ He regularly entered pictures of Norton Lees and Alms Hill in Ecclesall, which were close to Nether Edge where he lived. Later, his works also included watercolours of the River Rivelin, its system of weirs, the surrounding farms (further away, but still within five miles of Sheffield), as well as views of Flamborough and Whitby on the north-east coast of England. It was not until the exhibition in 1907 that Lismér, who had by then returned from studying in Antwerp, presented oils; all but one of his works that year were images from Belgium.

In light of the general acceptance of radical political and social ideals in Sheffield and of Lismér's acquaintance with Carpenter, it is not surprising that members of the Heeley Art Club gave him Carpenter's *The Art of Creation* in 1911 when he left for Canada. The publication describes the process of the creation of the world and how, once this process is understood, humanity becomes a participant. Carpenter describes the system of creation, then addresses each of its different aspects, including religion, physical and mental being, Platonic love and Beauty and Duty. He situates art favourably within this process of creation:

It is the foundation of all human Art. The painter, the sculptor, the musician are forever bringing their dreams of Beauty and Perfection forward from the most intimate recesses and treasure-houses of their hearts and giving them a place in the world. And not only the Artist and Musician, but every workman who makes things does the same. The world of Man is created by this process; and I have given reasons for supposing that the world of Nature is continuous with that of man and that there too innumerable Beings are for ever labouring to express themselves and so to enter into touch and communication with each other.⁵⁹

It is thus no surprise that, given his experiences in Sheffield, Lismér's interests easily coincided with the other artists of the Group of Seven. Lismér's early life gave him not only the skills to become an accomplished artist, but also exposed him to progressive social and spiritual ideas. In Sheffield, he came to believe that art was the right of the many, not a privilege of the few. This was the background which Lismér brought with him to Canada in 1911 and which was to serve him so well as both an artist and educator the rest of his life.

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Notes

- 1 The principal monographs on Lismer's life and career are: John MCLEISH, *September Gale* (Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1955); Marjorie Lismer BRIDGES, *A Border of Beauty: Arthur Lismer's Pen and Pencil* (Toronto: Red Rock, 1977); Lois DARROCH, *Bright Land: A Warm Look at Arthur Lismer* (Toronto: Merritt, 1981); and Dennis REID, *Canadian Jungle: The Later Work of Arthur Lismer* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1985).
- 2 J.E. MANNING, *A History of Upper Chapel, Sheffield* (Sheffield: Independent Press, 1900), 175.
- 3 Michael TOOBY, *Our Home and Native Land: Sheffield's Canadian Artists* (Sheffield: Mappin Art Gallery, 1991), unpaginated.
- 4 Lismer's aunt was married to Sir Thomas Barlow, R.A., an engraver known for his mezzotints of Landseer's work and she encouraged her young nephew to pursue his interest in art.
- 5 BRIDGES, *A Border of Beauty*, 11.
- 6 DARROCH, *Bright Land*, 6.
- 7 Eric MACKERNESS, unpublished research notes from the files of the Heeley Art Club, Sheffield. For biographical information on Varley, see Christopher VARLEY, *F.H. Varley* (Edmonton Art Gallery, 1981).
- 8 BRIDGES, *A Border of Beauty*, 12.
- 9 *White's Directory of Sheffield* (1910), 175.
- 10 TOOBY, *Our Home and Native Land*, n.p.
- 11 *Sheffield Daily Independent*, 15 Mar. 1904, 1. During this time Lismer lived at 100 Sharrow Street.
- 12 MCLEISH, *September Gale*, 17-18.
- 13 In 1832 the Riot Act was read after an election; in 1839 there were armed chartist riots; in 1843 a factory was bombed; in 1854 industrial chimneys were packed with gunpowder; in 1866 explosives destroyed houses.
- 14 Bill MOORE, "What attracted Ruskin and Carpenter to Sheffield?" (Unpublished paper delivered at the conference *Ruskin, Morris and Carpenter - A Vision of Britain: Industrial and Beyond*, Sheffield, Sept. 11-12, 1993), 7.
- 15 Alan D. GILBERT, *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (London: Longman, 1976), 145-46.
- 16 MANNING, *A History of Upper Chapel*, 54-55.
- 17 Three such men were John Hobson, Robert Thomas Eadon and Michael Hunter, all of whom served first on the Town Council and later as Aldermen. Hobson was also treasurer of the Literary and Philosophical Society and sat some years on the Council of the School of Art. Eadon, a businessman, helped found the School Board in 1873 and was named a Justice of the Peace in 1886. Hunter had been a Master Cutler, was elected Mayor twice and was an Upper Chapel and Town trustee. *Ibid.*, 152, 155-56, 161.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 176, 179.
- 19 Basil SHORT, *The Unitarian 1046* (February 1991): 10.
- 20 Benjamin KIDD, *Social Evolution*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1895), 15.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 17-18.
- 22 Sheila ROWBOTHAM, "Commanding the Heart: Edward Carpenter and Friends," *History Today* 37 (September, 1987): 42.
- 23 TOOBY, *Our Home and Native Land*, n.p., n. 46.

- 24 J. Edward VICKERS, *A Popular History of Sheffield* (Sheffield: Appelbaum Bookshop, 1992), 229-30.
- 25 TOOBY, *Our Home and Native Land*, n.p.
- 26 Robert HEWISON, *Art and Society: Ruskin in Sheffield 1876* (London: Brentham Press, 1981), 6.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 9-10.
- 28 MOORE, "What attracted Ruskin and Carpenter to Sheffield?," 5-6.
- 29 HEWISON, *Art and Society*, 8-9.
- 30 Susan P. CASTERAS, "The Germ of a Museum, Arranged First for 'Workers in Iron': Ruskin's Museological Theories and the Curating of the Saint George's Museum," *John Ruskin and the Victorian Eye: with essays by Susan P. Casteras, Susan Phelps Gordon, Anthony Lacy Gully, Robert Hewison, George P. Landow and Christopher Newall* (New York: Harry N. Abrams and Phoenix Art Museum, 1993), 194.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 184.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 193.
- 33 In 1900 the Lismers moved from Heeley to 7 Raven Road, in Nether Edge across the River Sheaf.
- 34 Christopher FRAYLING, *The Royal College of Art: One Hundred & Fifty Years of Art & Design* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1987), 13.
- 35 John KIRBY, "Useful and Celebrated," *The Sheffield School of Art 1843-1940* (Sheffield City Polytechnic and Sheffield Arts Department, 1987) 2-4, 14-15, 20-23.
- 36 The examiners in South Kensington awarded the certificates and, as noted in the School Prospectus (under revision) in 1901, they even restricted who could sit these examinations by imposing strict regulations concerning attendance.
- 37 "The Reference Department contains many valuable books on Art and includes a large number of the best illustrated books on Ornamental Art. There are also collections of photographs of the figure and ornament and electrotype reproductions of celebrated examples of ornamental metal work (tankards, tazzas, shields, caskets, &c.) Loans and grants of works on Art from South Kensington are made to the library from time to time." *The Fifty-Seventh Annual Report of the Sheffield School of Art* (Sheffield: Independent Press, 1901), 10-11.
- 38 The 1899 loan included "many valuable and important specimens of silver work, both antique and modern, the former being specimens of the Hildesheim and Bernay treasures, which were executed between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. There is also a collection of Indian metal work, Turkish and Damascus tiles, wood carving, copies of Scraffito decoration, &c., some studies of drapery in chalk and Chinese white by Lord Leighton and large photographs of sections of his frescoes." *The Fifty-Fifth Annual Report* (1899), 12-13.
- 39 "Proceedings at the Conversazione of the Sheffield Technical School of Art," 23 Feb. 1906 (Sheffield Hallam University Archives), 1-2.
- 40 Records are incomplete for the School of Art, due to the bombing of the School during World War II. Annual Reports for only the first two years Lismer attended the School are available. Letter from John Kirby, Campus Librarian, Sheffield Hallam University to the author, 26 September 1994. Kirby maintains the database of materials related to the School of Art.
- 41 *The Fifty-Sixth Annual Report* (1900), 9.
- 42 At this time examinations were graded First Class, Second Class and Fail for most subjects; for others, simply Pass or Fail.
- 43 *The Fifty-Seventh Annual Report* (1901), 10.

44 The complete list is as follows: Subjects 1-7. Elementary drawing and shading. 8: Drawing the figure. 9: Anatomy. 10: Drawing flowers and foliage from nature. 11 and 12: Painting ornament. 13, 14 and 15: Painting flowers, landscapes and still life, in oil and water colours, from copies and nature. 16 and 17: Painting the figure from copies and nature. 18: Modeling ornament. 19 and 21: Modeling the figure from copies and nature. 20: Modeling fruit and flowers from nature. 22: Elementary designing. 23: Applied design and Architectural drawing from measurement. *The Fifty-Sixth Annual Report* (1900), 8.

45 *The Fifty-Seventh Annual Report* (1901), 30-31. Elizabeth Nutt and Fred Varley, who also attended the Sheffield School of Art but were several years ahead of Lismar, fared somewhat better academically. Both received free studentships, commendations and prizes for their work. Additional information can be found in the *Fifty-Fifth* and *Fifty-Sixth Annual Reports*.

46 TOOBY, *Our Home and Native Land*, n.p.

47 A list of officers of the Heeley Art Club was provided by Sue Graves, the Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield.

48 For example, in organizing the Fall 1905 exhibition Lismar coordinated the display of 382 works by thirty-six members. "Local Art Clubs - Past and Present," *Sheffield Weekly Independent* (Nov. 18, 1905).

49 MCLEISH, *September Gale*, 11.

50 DARROCH, *Bright Land*, 5.

51 TOOBY, *Our Home and Native Land*, n.p.

52 There is some confusion as to the date the Club was founded, probably due to the name change and the fact that the Club did not begin to exhibit until 1898. Keith Oates, former President of the Club, has indicated that it may have been formed two years earlier, in 1893, but that traditionally the 1895 date has been used. Nevertheless, Tooby, McLeish and others have named Lismar a founder member - unlikely, given he would have been only ten years old at the time. There is also no evidence that the Club met at Lismar's home as has also been suggested. Letter from Keith Oates to the author, 21 Apr. 1995.

53 "Local Art Clubs - Past and Present."

54 Heeley Art Club, *Catalog of Exhibits* (8-10 Oct. 1902): 1.

55 Heeley Art Club, *Catalog of Exhibits* (25-27 Nov. 1903): 1.

56 Copy of an invitation, provided by John Kirby. Sheffield Hallam University Archives.

57 In surveying the exhibition catalogues for 1902 through 1907, Lismar's prices seem to have been average, at least until 1905 (the year he graduated), when his prices were among the highest.

58 A list of works, taken from the *Catalogue of Exhibits* for the years 1902-1907 follows. 1902: *Coast Scene, Isle of Man*, 3 watercolours, *Fawcett's Farm, Norton*, watercolour; 1903: *Ludgate Hill, Country Lane, Norton, London Bridge, Market Day, Cocksbutts Farm, Ecclesall, Norton Lees*, watercolours, *Study, Portrait Study*, black and white; 1904 (Spring): *The Stackyard, The Village Pump, Near Little Norton, In Padley Wood, Market Hall Alterations, Farm (Alms Hill), Off Greenwich, Alms Hill*, watercolours, *Portrait Studies*, 3 black and white; 1904 (Fall): *Low Tide, Whitby, Whitby Harbour, A Farmyard, Rivelin, The Cottage Door, A Wayside Cottage, At the Quay Side, Market Day, Low Tide, Beached, Tin Ghaut, Whitby, Waiting for the Tide, A Greyday Whitby, An Ancient Street, Whitby, Hagg Farm, Rivelin*, watercolours, *Studies*, 2 black and white; 1905: *Eastcliffe, Whitby, Low Tide, A Wet Day, Whitby, Whitby Harbour, Farm, Norton Lees, Bridlington Harbour, Sphinx Rock, Flamboro', A Winter Landscape, Up the River, Whitby, The Old Town, Whitby, Beuchief, Staithes, Seascape, Flamboro', On the Moors, Alm's Hill, Ecclesall, Robin Lytbe's Hole, Flamboro', Runswick Bay, Evening, Sketch, Seascape, Whitby Harbour, A Wayside Trough*, watercolours, *Clubites*, black and white; 1906: *On the Canal, Doncaster, Sketch at Rivelin, The Pool, A Belgian Landscape, A Grey Day, Flanders, Antwerp, On the Scheldt*, watercolours; 1907: *Alms Hill, Autumn Morning, Antwerp, Sketch, Autumn, Wyming Brook, A Belgian Landscape, Sketch, Antwerp*, oils.

59 Edward CARPENTER, *The Art of Creation* (London: George Allen, 1904), 31-32.

LISMER À SHEFFIELD

Au cours des cinquante dernières années, on a publié plusieurs biographies d'Arthur Lismer, ainsi que nombre de notices biographiques, dans des catalogues d'exposition, journaux et autres publications. Cependant, on a très peu parlé des vingt-cinq premières années de la vie de Lismer, à Sheffield, Angleterre. Ce qu'on en dit est généralement bref et tourne autour des mêmes faits. Né en 1885, Lismer est un membre actif de l'Église unitarienne; il étudie à la *Sheffield School of Art* grâce à une bourse, et se met en apprentissage chez un photographe. À la fin de ses études, en 1905, il passe dix-huit mois à l'Académie des beaux-arts d'Anvers. De retour à Sheffield, il fonde sa propre entreprise spécialisée en art publicitaire. Deux ans plus tard, en 1911, âgé de vingt-cinq ans, il émigre au Canada. Tout cela, cependant, nous renseigne fort peu sur les années que Lismer a passées à Sheffield, ou sur l'environnement qui a contribué à former ses idées.

La ville, dont l'industrie métallurgique remonte à 1340, attirait un grand nombre d'ouvriers, d'où surpopulation et mauvaises conditions de travail. En réaction, l'activisme politique et social se développe. On y trouve dès 1720 les premières formes de syndicalisme, ce qui entraîne l'établissement d'une tradition d'action politique radicale. Vers la fin du XIX^e siècle, Sheffield était devenu le foyer de nouvelles idéologies, telles le socialisme, le communisme et l'anarchisme.

La vie religieuse aussi est affectée. Les ouvriers ainsi que les classes moyennes rejettent les structures hiérarchiques de l'Église catholique et de l'Église d'Angleterre, en faveur de mouvements religieux non-conformistes, comme l'unitarisme. Ces mouvements ne s'opposent pas au radicalisme politique ni à la participation au gouvernement, et plusieurs de leurs membres sont échevins ou conseillers municipaux. Ces liens se traduisent également en bonnes œuvres pour la communauté. Certains chefs religieux clairvoyants, dont ceux de l'Église unitarienne à laquelle Lismer appartient, encouragent la discussion de nouvelles idées qui mettent en cause les dogmes de l'Église, aussi bien scientifiques que religieux.

Pendant un certain temps, Lismer s'adonne à la théosophie. C'est durant cette période qu'Edward Carpenter, communiste et libre-penseur avoué, est membre actif de la Société théosophique de Sheffield et signe le manifeste socialiste de Sheffield. Au moment de son départ pour le Canada, Lismer reçoit en cadeau un exemplaire du livre de Carpenter, *The Art of Creation*, qui reflète certainement sa propre attitude vis-à-vis l'art. Carpenter est une connaissance de William Morris et de John Ruskin dont les idées s'étaient de plus en plus radicalisées durant le dernier quart du XIX^e siècle. Les liens de Ruskin avec Sheffield se consolident lorsque, en 1876, il fonde le musée Saint-Georges, dans le but spécifique de mettre en valeur la région et son industrie. Grâce au mandat de Ruskin de former le goût «des ouvriers de l'acier», le

musée leur est facilement accessible par sa situation et ses heures d'ouverture. Des trois musées de la ville c'est celui qui fait le moins provincial, et des étudiants comme Lismer peuvent y trouver une source importante d'oeuvres d'art originales et d'antiquités.

Le milieu artistique de Sheffield comprend aussi la *Sheffield School of Art*, où Lismer étudie de 1898 à 1905, et le *Heeley Art Club*, dont il devient membre en 1902. La *School of Art* avait été fondée comme filiale de la *National School of Design*, en 1843. À l'époque où Lismer la fréquente, on met l'accent sur l'enseignement de l'art et de l'esthétique industrielle. Le programme d'étude comprend vingt-trois cours, dont certains traditionnels, tels la copie d'après des textes et le dessin d'après nature, et d'autres non traditionnels, tels la lithographie, la peinture sur porcelaine et la ferronnerie d'art. Lismer, comme la plupart de ses confrères, fréquente les cours du soir. D'après les rapports annuels de l'école, durant les deux années où Lismer y étudie, il semble avoir été un élève plutôt moyen. Pour se conformer aux critères de sélection, il se met en apprentissage pendant sept ans chez un graveur illustrateur, William Eadon. C'est Eadon qui devait le faire entrer au *Heeley Art Club*.

Le *Heeley Art Club* était le dernier avatar d'une société artistique d'abord constituée dans les années 1880 par celui qui était alors directeur de la *School of Art*. D'abord fondée en 1895 sous le nom de *Sheffield Art Society and Sketching Club*, elle est bientôt rebaptisée *Heeley Art Club* avec pour objet «de réunir tous ceux qui s'intéressent aux choses de l'art et de promouvoir l'amour du beau dans la nature». Bien que le Club montre de l'intérêt pour le dessin de figures, il s'intéresse principalement au paysage. Parmi ses membres on trouve des maîtres de l'école des beaux-arts, des graphistes, d'autres professionnels du monde de l'art et des étudiants amateurs d'art. En tant que membre, Lismer participe aux réunions hebdomadaires du groupe pour dessiner et peindre d'après modèle. Il soumet aussi ses oeuvres à la critique du groupe, lors de leurs expositions mensuelles. Les fins de semaine, il se joint le plus souvent aux excursions du club pour dessiner d'après nature. De 1904 à 1906, il occupe le poste de secrétaire honoraire, ce qui l'amène à s'occuper activement de l'organisation de ces activités. Il contribue régulièrement, de 1902 à 1907, aux expositions publiques du club. Alors que ses premières oeuvres avaient été principalement des aquarelles de la région de Sheffield, il présente plus tard des vues de Belgique, peintes à l'huile.

Il ne faut donc pas s'étonner si, après ses expériences à Sheffield, les intérêts de Lismer aient coïncidé avec ceux des autres peintres du Groupe des Sept. C'est pendant ses premières années à Sheffield, qu'il avait acquis l'habileté technique qui devait en faire un artiste accompli et découvert des idées sociales et spirituelles progressistes. C'est là qu'était née sa conviction que l'art est un droit pour tous et non le privilège de quelques-uns. C'est ce contexte culturel qu'il apportait avec lui au Canada, en 1911, et qui devait le servir pour le reste de ses jours, aussi bien comme artiste que comme professeur.