

**AN EXHIBITION OF WORK
BY
SIR DAVID WILKIE RA & HIS CIRCLE
17th Sept - 21st Dec 2002
Tues - Sat 10am - 5.30pm**

A show of works by Sir David Wilkie RA (1785-1841) and his contemporaries to coincide with David Wilkie - Genre Painter at the Dulwich Picture Gallery.
<http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/>

This long overdue exhibition of works by Sir David Wilkie offers an opportunity to view the work of this major nineteenth century artist, in the context of his Scottish contemporaries. A number of works by Wilkie will be on display including studies for 'Old Mortality' and 'George IV in Edinburgh'. The exhibition will include works by Alexander Carse (c.1770-1843), Thomas Faed (1826-1900), Alexander Fraser Snr (1786-1865), Walter Geikie (1795-1837), John Knox (1778-1845), Alexander Nasmyth (1758-1840) who Wilkie described as 'the father of Scottish landscape', and William Simson (1800-1847) to name but a few.

It is no exaggeration to say that all Victorian genre painting in England and Scotland derives from Wilkie. Wilkie was pre-eminent genre painter with an exceptional gift for observation of character, his early work being in the manner of the Dutch painters Teniers and Ostrade. Subsequently he turned to historical genre and, later, to portraiture. His work attracted the widest popularity, especially through the medium of engravings.

Born at the Manse of Cults in Fife, the third son of the parish minister, Wilkie enrolled for art classes at the Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh when he was 14. In 1805 he moved to London, studying at the RA Schools. He exhibited 'The Village Politicians' at the RA in 1806 and became an overnight success and the most talked about artist in the country, embarking upon one of the most spectacularly successful careers of any British artist. When his masterpiece 'Chelsea Pensioners' (celebrating Wellington's victory at Waterloo) was exhibited at the RA in 1822 at the astounding price of 1,200 guineas, there was such a clamour to see it that a crush barrier had to be erected to protect the painting!

The show will contain several well-known works by Wilkie including the unfinished oil painting 'The Village School', c. 1815, (identified as Kingskettle School, Fife) which gives an insight into Wilkie's technique and commissioning process. In September 1815 the Marquess of Stafford assured Wilkie of his intention of inspecting a sketch for 'The Village School' to add to the collection he had inherited of Raphaels, Titians and Poussins which now constitute the Sutherland loan to the National Gallery of Scotland. After a second offer in 1821 to the Marquess of Lansdowne, Wilkie received a firm offer from Jess Watts Russell, the Staffordshire MP, however, progress was further disrupted by Wilkie's breakdown and subsequent departure for Europe. It shows Wilkie's interest in works by the Dutch and Flemish Schools and particularly the influence of Jan Steen (1626-1679).