

**CONDITION REPORT**

**By**

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Charles Cooper Henderson (1803-1877)

*The Meet*

Painting: oil on canvas

332cm x 610cm

## THE ABE BAILEY COLLECTION

*The Meet* a painting by Charles Cooper Henderson (1803-1877) a British painter was one of the works collected by Bailey and belonged in the *Sporting Art* category. Sir Abe Bailey (1864-1940), in his will left his art collection of almost 400 extremely valuable works in trust to the South African people, requesting that it be housed in the National Gallery in Cape Town. The collection arrived 1947 and it significantly enriched the Gallery's small foundation collection. The stipulation in Sir Bailey's will that the Bequest always hang in entirety or in part was then easily accommodated (Proud 2001). Bailey's large collection of sporting paintings, particularly rich in works by Henry Alken (1785-1850), Samuel Alken Junior (1810-1884), Charles Henderson (1803-1877) etc.

Its bequest to the South African National Gallery made it to be one of the few gallery in the world with such major holdings in this area (Tietze 2001: 6). By far the largest number of works in Bailey's collection fall into the category of *sporting* art. This is a broad term for a genre of art popular in England from approximately 1690 to 1850. The sports featured in this art might include cricket or boxing, both established and popular in the 18th century, but the ones most commonly seen in sporting art are horse sports, images of horse races (along with single portraits of the horses who featured in these), and those of hunting on horseback in the countryside. Other common themes of sporting art include that of game shooting, and the world of horse-drawn transport, subject of the *coaching* pictures. From early on in his career, and likely before he began his main portrait collecting, Bailey was buying sporting paintings and prints. He was motivated simply by a love of and identification with the world they represented, although it needs to be remembered that this world had to a large extent disappeared by the time Bailey was collecting, and relatively few artists were still working in the genre.

## **BIOGRAPHY OF THE ARTIST**

**Charles Cooper Henderson** (14 June 1803 – 21 August 1877) was a British painter of horses and coaches. Henderson was born in Abbey House, Chertsey. The son of two artists, Henderson was taught by his parents as well as by Samuel Prout the watercolourist. On marrying 'beneath' him in 1829, Henderson was sent away from his family home in London and settled with his new wife in Berkshire. With no worries about his income, there he began to specialise in painting mail and stage coaches and, with a now-flourishing career and some important patrons, he returned to London in 1836. Many of his works were translated into engraving. In 1877 Henderson died a widower at his home, 3 Lamb's Conduit Place, London, on 21 August 1877. Many of Henderson's paintings were engraved by himself and others such as Henry A. Papprell, John Harris and the renowned Samuel William Fores. He has original paintings in several public collections in Dublin and in the UK. Henderson was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery and he has a memorial at St Nicholas's Church in Shepperton.

**SURFACE ASSESSMENT: Canvas Painting**

The painting is still in a good condition regardless of linear age and surface cracks, dullness and the film of yellowish brown on the surface of the painting. The discoloration or sunken in colors is due to old varnish at the possibility that the painting has never been restored. There's a surface deformation which is the results of dirt stuck between the canvas and the supporting frame. The painting is not sealed at the back which resulted to the frame structure and the support accumulating dirt and dust. Under UV light the painting shows no evidence of restoration or evidence of retouching.

**VARNISH LAYER**

**Shows glazed surface**



**Shows age cracks on top right corner**

**Top right corner shows a bit of green and yellow brownish white**

The varnish is thinly applied and is a natural resin varnish. However the varnish under UV light painting surface appears green and dull, which means that the varnish is old.

**FRAME**

**Upper right and lower corners show patches of dirt and minimal gold leaf paint loss.**

The frame has been painted with gold leaf; there has been some minimum loss of paint on the corners and the vertical sides of the painting and the loss of ornamental decoration. The frame is slightly opened on the corners and has fine cracks. There's dark layer of dirt on the top and bottom of the frame. It seems that the frame has not been replaced; it is still the original frame that came with the painting. The back of the frame has nail holes, which might have caused cracking of the frame mouldings and damaged corners. The back of the frame has accumulated dirt and dust with abrasion all over. Other damages on the frame might be from due to improper handling, scuffing during removal.

**STRETCHER**

**Back of the Frame:** shows the overall condition of the frame and the stretcher: nail holes, accession label, Frame company label

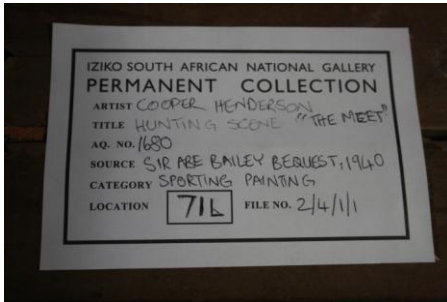


fig. 1



fig. 2

**Fig. 1 close up detail:** of National Gallery accession label. **Fig. 2 & Fig. 3** James Bourlet & Sons Ltd Label, shows signs of nail damage, and abrasion on the frame and stretcher edges.



Fig. 3

The stretcher has been nailed to all four corners of the original frame. There is an eighth inch gap maintained all around the stretcher. A thick cardboard is affixed along the stretcher to diminish the formation of ridges on the painting as the canvas support. The use of nails and hammering caused most of the damaged on the back of the frame and on the stretcher. The Frame stickers (Labels) on the top are the acquisition reports by Iziko National Gallery and others on the sides are preliminary condition report James Bourlet & Sons Ltd, describing the condition of the frame when they received the painting. According the label the stretcher and or the frame was inserted in 1946



**An example of James Bourlet & Sons Ltd Label and Signature**

## **MICROSCOPE DETAILS**



**Ageing and surface cracks.**



**Details of the painting**





**Frame dirt and ageing cracks.**



**Loose paint**

The painting under microscope reveals, ageing and drying cracks. The frame photographs on the bottom (**from left to right**) reveals dirt in the grooves of the carvings and the other shows the gold leaf paint fading, coming off and the ageing cracks. The cracks extends upwards to the surface, cracking the paint and varnish and therefore loosening the surface.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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