



Staging Grounds: Loutherbourg and Warley

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Detail from Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg, *The Troops at Warley-Camp, reviewed by his Majesty [Warley Camp: The Review]*, signed and dated 1780 (plate 2).

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DOI:
10.1111/1467-8365.12743
Art History | ISSN 0141-6790
46 | 4 | September 2023 | pages
778-810

In 1779, Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg exhibited a large, attention-grabbing landscape at London's Royal Academy of Arts showing a corner of the Essex countryside engulfed in great clouds of gun-smoke and overrun with clashing soldiers (plate 1). Twelve months later, he submitted an equally striking and novel companion scene of *The Troops at Warley-Camp, reviewed by his Majesty* (plate 2). A commission from a Lieutenant-General Richard Pierson, these pendent pictures marked George III's presence at a spectacular mock battle and review in which the artist's patron had played a commanding role.¹ The events Loutherbourg captured in paint were more than just a piece of grand military pageantry. They had practical purpose. Large military encampments, such as the one built on the broad, open expanses of Warley Common, near Brentwood, were staging grounds for the mobilisation and training of a combined force of regulars, militia, and newly founded volunteer regiments.² Overstretched by the conflict in America, in 1778 the British military had suddenly found its home shores vulnerable to invasion by the new French and Spanish allies of the rebellious colonists across the Atlantic. Warley and another camp at Coxheath, near Maidstone, Kent, were but the largest and most prominent of an expansive network of strategically located makeshift barracks and parade grounds, stretching the length and breadth of the British Isles, established to prepare for any attack and allay the fears of an alarmed populace. With reassurance being a principal objective, the public were positively encouraged to visit Warley and other camps. Accordingly, it is their attendance as much as the King's that was celebrated in Loutherbourg's suitably theatrical pictures. Animated by swarming crowds of visitors as well as troops, the paintings are concerned both with matters of performance and spectatorship.

On Pierson making a gift of these pictures to the Crown, the recently completed second canvas depicting the review was immediately lent by the King to what was the first of the annual Academy displays to be staged at the newly opened Somerset House on the Strand. Lining up alongside an array of militaristic and patriotic imagery, much of it focused on members of the royal household, Loutherbourg's picture contributed to the distinctly martial character of that year's exhibition.³ Given the level of investment in the defence of the nation, the opening of the Academy's new premises – which also housed the Naval Board as well as several other government offices – was clearly reckoned an ideal opportunity to parade works relating to the conflict of recent years before the public. That the nation remained vulnerable, even if the threat of invasion had now dissipated, was made worryingly apparent,

however, as the exhibition run came to its end in early June. In the wake of the so-called 'Gordon riots', which were in large part a response to the ongoing conflict with the colonies, a series of military encampments were once again established in and around the capital, on areas of common land as well as its public squares and royal parks. For those who had visited the Academy exhibition, their reappearance must have given the imagery recently encountered in the Academy's exhibition a pointed charge and currency. In some senses, this was only the latest in a series of striking overlaps or parallels, both accidental and intentional, whereby military action and service were conflated with their image. This had been apparent since the first days of the invasion crisis of the late 1770s, not least as the military camps of the day were represented in the press and on the London stage as well as in painting and printmaking. Looking to cash in on and stoke the tensions and patriotic fervour sparked by the placing of the country on a war footing, the capital's cultural movers and shakers had rushed out a mass of literary, pictorial, and theatrical commentary on the state of Britain's military. Whether of a high-minded character or of more modest aesthetic intent, the tenor of this material was frequently uncertain, at once amused and critical, bellicose and jingoistic.

Loutherbourog's Warley pictures are a potent but at first puzzling, even disarming mix of the patriotic and the satirical, the documentary and the theatrical. Taking its cue from the latter tendency, this article locates the artist's commemoration of the King's review of the troops in relation to a sequence of dramatic, performative spaces or 'theatres of war', from the 'battlefield' of the military camp to the stage of London's Drury Lane and the Academy's exhibition room. Situating Loutherbourog's Warley scenes in these three arenas, these 'staging grounds', as it were, the aim is

I Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourog, *A landscape, in which are represented the manoeuvres of an attack performed before their Majesties on Little Warley Common, under the command of Gen. Pierson on the 20th of October, 1778* [Warley Camp: *The Mock Attack*], signed and dated 1779. Oil on canvas, 122.9 × 184 cm. London: Royal Collection (RCIN 406348).





2 Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg, *The Troops at Warley-Camp, reviewed by his Majesty [Warley Camp: The Review]*, signed and dated 1780. Oil on canvas, 122 × 183.8 cm. London: Royal Collection (RCIN 406349).

to consider the ways in which the play of different tonal registers animating these pictures connected and interacted with these cultural experiences and spaces. Studies of eighteenth-century culture have been increasingly attentive in recent years to its situated and spatial dimensions, the question of ‘where’ not only joining but also establishing new modes of understanding the ‘how’, ‘why’, and ‘when’ more familiarly asked of historical phenomena.⁴ Art historians of the period have been alert to the role of new spaces both public and (nominally more) private in the display of works and constitution of audiences, for example.⁵ This tendency can be observed in scholars’ careful retracing of the geographies of London’s late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century’s gallery spaces or else detailed case studies of individual picture hangs.⁶ Here, however, the emphasis is rather more on the exhibition room’s exchanges with other kinds of performative space and the variously complementary and conflicting types of cultural and social experience associated with them. Obviously, the theatre of Drury Lane, Somerset House, and Warley were qualitatively distinct, with their own discrete rules of entry and engagement. But, in framing his Warley scenes in relation to this sequence of spectacular environments, Loutherbourg exploited their affinities to heighten the appeal and meaning of his pictures. By assigning the visiting crowds in these pictures a prominence on a par with that of the ostensible central theme of the King’s review of the troops, the artist played on the dynamic interaction of audience and performance that characterised the Georgian theatrical experience, whether that took the form of a night at a playhouse like Drury Lane or attendance at a military review or public art exhibition.⁷ That the spectators were as much a part of the event as the main attraction also meant that it was not just the ‘battlefield’ or stage or walls that in each case made up the performance space. A set designer for the London stage

as well as an exhibiting painter, trained in the art of battle painting, Loutherbourg had a perhaps unique appreciation of this dramatic interplay.

A series of compelling and incisive studies have appeared in recent years examining the literary and wider cultural response to the pronounced theatricality of the country's military at the time of the American War.⁸ Scholars have shown how the work of playwrights, poets and printmakers intersected with the anxieties and tensions of this dark period of unpopular war and political division, domestic unrest and threatened invasion. Understandably, a good deal of the attention has focused on the work of such firmly canonical cultural figures as Richard Brinsley Sheridan, whose Drury Lane theatre staged several productions addressing the invasion fears of the late 1770s in more-or-less direct ways. As the company's resident scenographer, Loutherbourg has put in the odd appearance too, though it is usually little more than a walk-on part. Turning the spotlight on Loutherbourg, and his eye-catching scenes of the King's visit to Warley camp, this article thus opens up a distinct, though not narrowly art-historical, perspective on the cultural address of the invasion crisis of the years around 1780. It considers the response of a figure whose allegiances may have appeared more than a little uncertain at this moment and whose position and public persona were both enhanced and further complicated by a dual association with the worlds of the theatre and fine art. In the first instance, despite his claims to various glamorous ancestries, the Strasbourg-born Loutherbourg was invariably identified by critics as 'French'.⁹ Writers saw marks of these origins (as we shall see) in the very surfaces of his pictures. In this respect, this discussion examines the ways in which Loutherbourg, faced with what was a potentially difficult situation for a 'French' painter, took the opportunity afforded by his military patron to paint the King's Warley visit to announce his 'loyalties'.¹⁰ At the same time, and not unrelatedly, the commission from Pierson was also to have a major part to play in the painter's launch of a campaign to secure his acceptance by the art establishment. He took a chance in bringing together and cutting across differing forms of theatricality and viewership in his Warley canvases, breaching decorum and risking censure, not least from Royal Academicians already anxious about the commercialisation of their annual exhibitions.¹¹ Yet the strategy was to pay dividends; the painter using the commission of the Warley pictures to make a powerful statement about his own abilities and loyalties as well as loyalties that would help smooth his acceptance by the Academy.

Famously, Loutherbourg had made his name in London as a set designer for the actor-manager David Garrick and his successor at Drury Lane, Sheridan. He introduced a new sense of spectacle to their productions, making novel use of ramps, different levels, and profiled wings, and earned a reputation along the way for novel special effects in lighting, movement and sound.¹² Scholarship has long acknowledged the mutuality of Loutherbourg's artistic and scenographic accomplishments. But it may just be that the fascination with his innovations in costume and set designs for the stage have served more to obscure than illuminate his career as a painter. It is a situation further clouded by the allure of the miniature, mechanical marvel that was Loutherbourg's famed *Eidophusikon*; a novel form of theatrical spectacle which the painter himself promoted as a refinement of his essays in landscape.¹³ Having arrived in London from Paris in late 1771, a man on the run from debts and scandal, Loutherbourg proceeded to fashion and maintain parallel careers in the theatre and in the art world. In a recent essay exploring his attempts to secure a position in the city's fiercely competitive and highly factional cultural worlds, Iain McCalman has argued that Loutherbourg presented the fantastical 'Moving Pictures' of his *Eidophusikon* (which debuted in

early 1781) as an ‘elite art event’, encouraging reviewers to think of it as ‘a new species of painting’, distanced from the taint of overt commercialism attached to London’s entrepreneurial culture of popular spectacle.¹⁴ Noting how the artist employed his gifts for publicity and stagecraft to court leading members of the Academy, McCalman explores Louterbourg’s attempts to facilitate his admission to the country’s premier artistic body. His election to associate status in early November 1780 and unusually swift elevation to full Academician status fewer than three months later was testament to the artist’s tactical guile in these matters. It is a persuasive argument, albeit one that overlooks the importance of the strategic display of loyalty the artist made to his new country and its Crown head with his Warley scenes in the lead up to his nomination. But then, there has been a tendency for scholars to be as much drawn in and even a little seduced by Louterbourg’s dark glamour and self-promotion as his contemporaries. They almost revel in reports of the near magical illusionism of Louterbourg’s scenography or his association with alchemy, mesmerism, occult knowledge, and Masonic mysticism. Styling himself ‘a philosopher of the most penetrating kind’, there are many instances where the painter was clearly concerned to promote himself in such consciously enigmatic, mercurial terms.¹⁵ His campaign to be accepted as one of the ‘King’s men’ required that Louterbourg undertake a performance of another order, however. Some sorcery and stagecraft were certainly involved, but it was of a solidly pragmatic, career-making kind.

3 Philippe-Jacques de Louterbourg, *Une Bataille*, signed and dated 1767. Oil on canvas, 117.2 × 149.8 cm. Cholet: Musée d’Art et d’Histoire. Photo: RMN-Grand Palais/G rard Blot.



Olivier Lefeuvre has briefly detailed the circumstances of Pierson's engagement of the artist in his magisterial study of Loucherbourg's art.¹⁶ But the wider significance of the commission to the painter's career has yet to be fully appreciated. Works of considerable visual impact, the artist's Warley scenes showcased the full power and scope of Loucherbourg's abilities. Joining a sense of wide survey and dramatic spectacle with rich detail and incident, the painter's Warley views are landscapes that the viewer is invited to travel through, occupy and explore. The artist further enriched his portrayal of what may have appeared otherwise as a somewhat unprepossessing slice of the English landscape by returning to and reworking elements of a genre that he had trained in, and which had brought him official recognition in the past. In 1767, a battle-piece shown at that year's Salon and in the vein of his former master Francesco Casanova had been his *tableau de réception* for the Paris Académie royale (plate 3).¹⁷ Playing to a different audience, however, the dramatic economy of the works he would display at its London equivalent a dozen or so years later were of a different order; rather than some imagined vision of fiery violence in a remote, exotic locale and distant time, the canvases that would secure his Royal Academy 'reception' restaged a much-publicised moment in the recent past of a very particular place, a distinct topography. Such was the level of publicity surrounding the events Loucherbourg depicted, then if the place and kind of spectacle portrayed were not familiar to the Academy's audience from their own journeys to Warley or one of the other camps, there was good reason to think they would be familiar with them through their attendance at the theatre, their reading of the newspapers or their perusal of the capital's print-shops. Loucherbourg's pictures were calculated to capitalise on such knowledge.¹⁸

Warley Common, Essex

On the morning of 19 October 1778, George III and his consort left St James's Palace for the Essex countryside. Escorted by troops of Horse and Grenadier Guards and accompanied by an extensive retinue of Court officials and servants, the royal couple's progress was a piece of carefully choreographed state theatre. Saluted by the assorted regiments assigned to guard them, their arrival at Warley was greeted with great pomp. With the King's review of the troops scheduled for the next morning, the royal couple and their entourage were to spend the night at Thorndon Hall, the ancestral seat of Robert, Lord Petre, which lay adjacent to the heath. While convenient, the choice to accept the hospitality of a prominent Catholic peer was provocative. Less than six months earlier, Frederick, Lord North's government of the day had hurriedly pushed through the first of a series of proposed Catholic Relief Acts, which had among other things greatly relaxed property rights. Passed shortly after news broke confirming an American/French alliance, the proposals and their enactment were in no small part intended to swell the pool of men the government could call on in their fight.¹⁹ Given the considerable hostility to these moves, which were to factor in the riotous street protests of June 1780, the King's stay at Petre's showpiece estate could only be seen in a political light.²⁰ Nothing was therefore left to chance. Taking an active, hands-on role in planning the monarch's visit, the owner of Thorndon prepared meticulously and spent extravagantly, overseeing the refurbishment of whole suites of rooms, and hosting an extraordinarily lavish banquet in honour of the King's arrival.²¹

What was planned for the following day was just as grand and impressive as the previous evening's calculated display of fealty to the Crown. Shortly after 10.30 am, the pageantry began with the King passing along the massed ranks lined up for the

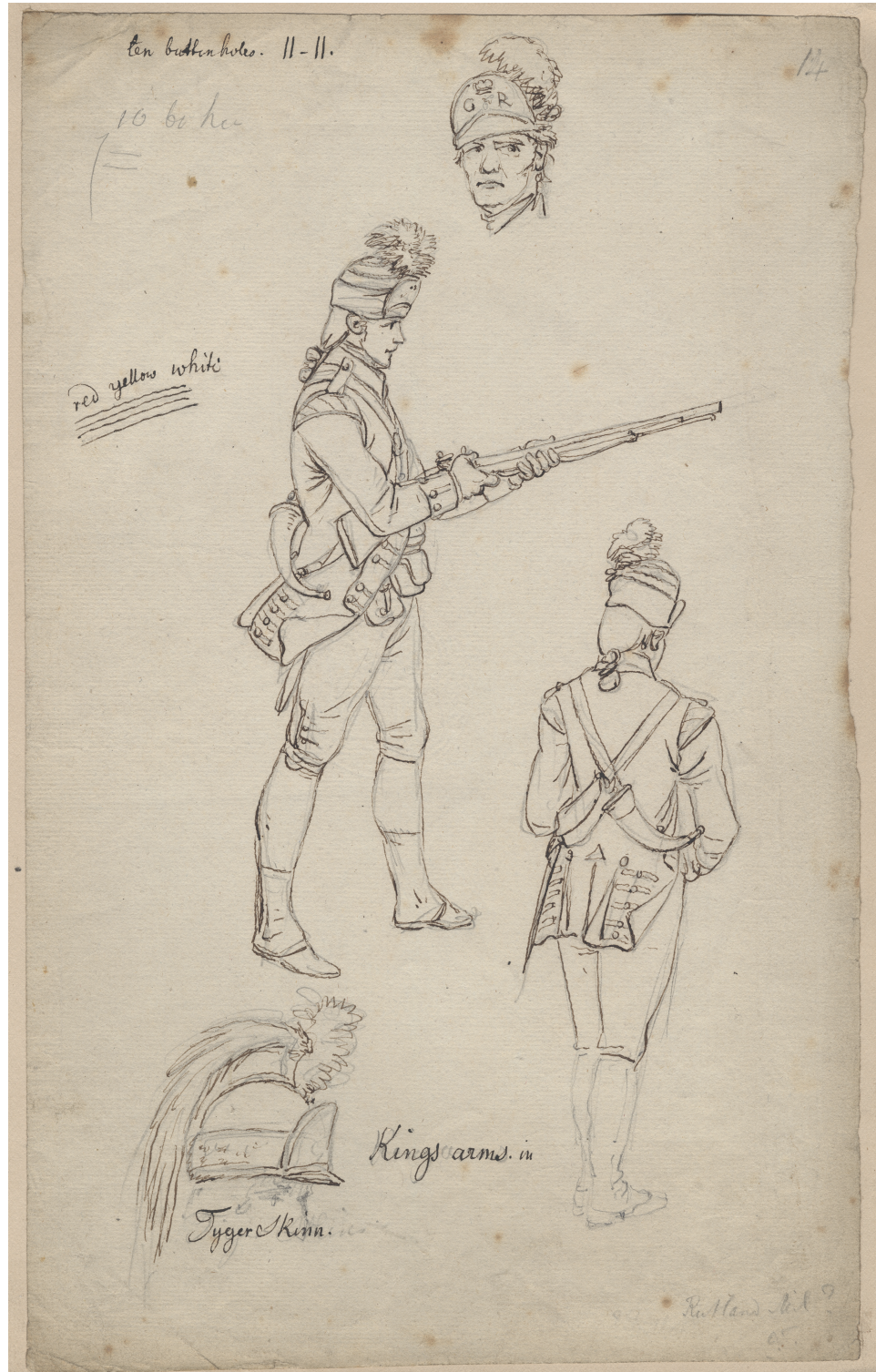
sham battle that lay ahead. Watching proceedings at a distance ‘from a stand erected by Lord Petre in the centre of the scene’ was Queen Charlotte, while the King – who remained on horseback throughout – observed the subsequent manoeuvres from the field itself.²² They were witness to a dazzling piece of carefully choreographed and rehearsed theatre. A lengthy account of the day’s events in the *London Gazette* noted how the ‘Manoeuvres of Attack and Defence were performed with a continued Fire of Musquetry and Cannon, to which the Situation and Variety of the Ground was very favourable, and afforded much Pleasure to the numerous Spectators’.²³ Making use of features of the local landscape, troops massed in the dense woodland found across the commons or else employed the ‘Variety of the Ground’ to take cover or open up fields of fire, before advancing through the clouds of billowing smoke sent up from the near constant din of gun and cannon fire. For the poet William Tasker, it was this display of firepower that proved the most memorable aspect of the day’s events, the thunderous noise making even ‘The sturdiest Oaks of Brentwood shake!’²⁴ Once the ‘enemy’ had been duly routed by the men under Pierson’s leadership, the proceedings concluded with the day’s commanders granted ‘the honour of kissing His Majesty’s Hand’. He, in turn, expressed ‘great Satisfaction at the Appearance, Discipline, and good Order of the several Regiments, and the Royal Artillery’.²⁵ Exhausted by their own performance in this magnificent ‘Military Exhibition’ (as Petre declared it), the royal couple adjourned to Thorndon for a less formal, more intimate gathering than that enjoyed the previous evening.²⁶ They took their leave of their host the next morning.

Beyond the ‘battlefield’ itself, Thorndon and its environs played a crucial role in these theatrics, with ‘the Roads and Streets of Brentwood, being lined with men’, and at the urging of Petre’s steward local people made participants as much as spectators:

Great Numbers of People were assembled at the Review, and in the Roads and Villages through which their Majesties passed, on their journey to and from Thorndon Place. The Houses were decorated with Boughs of Trees, Flowers, & c., and a general illumination prevailed in and about Brentwood, in Lord Petre’s Park, and at the Houses in the Neighbourhood of the Camp; which Testimonies of Loyalty, together with the Ringing of Bells, and the repeated Acclamations of Joy which the People expressed as Their Majesties passed, were very pleasing, and afforded great Satisfaction to Their Majesties.²⁷

Before turning to Louthembourg’s treatment of the ‘Great Numbers’ gathered to witness the day, it will be helpful to note the degree of care the artist lavished on the delineation of this local landscape. Though screening areas with great clouds of smoke, Louthembourg was still at pains to locate the ceremony of the review and sham battle precisely in the topography of this corner of the Essex countryside. With its connotations of the drily descriptive, ‘the topographical’ is not a category usually summoned by Louthembourg’s art. But it was a form of knowledge that had long been central to the tradition of battle painting in which the artist had trained and was to remain a key resource throughout his career.²⁸ Much as his art was and remains associated with the fantastical and visionary, it was often firmly situated in some particular place, whether that was in and about the lead mines, peaks and villages that comprised *The Wonders of Derbyshire* in a scenic pantomime of 1779 (researched on a sketching tour of the Peak District) or surveying London and the downriver Thames from the hilltops of Greenwich Park in the opening scene of the *Eidophusikon*.²⁹ Topography, however, was – as recent studies have begun to show – a

4 Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg, [Sketch of Rutland Militia Infantryman], 1778. Pencil, pen and ink, 20.2 x 33 cm. Providence, RI: Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection (2-SIZE UC485.G7 L68x 1778), John Hay Library, Brown University.



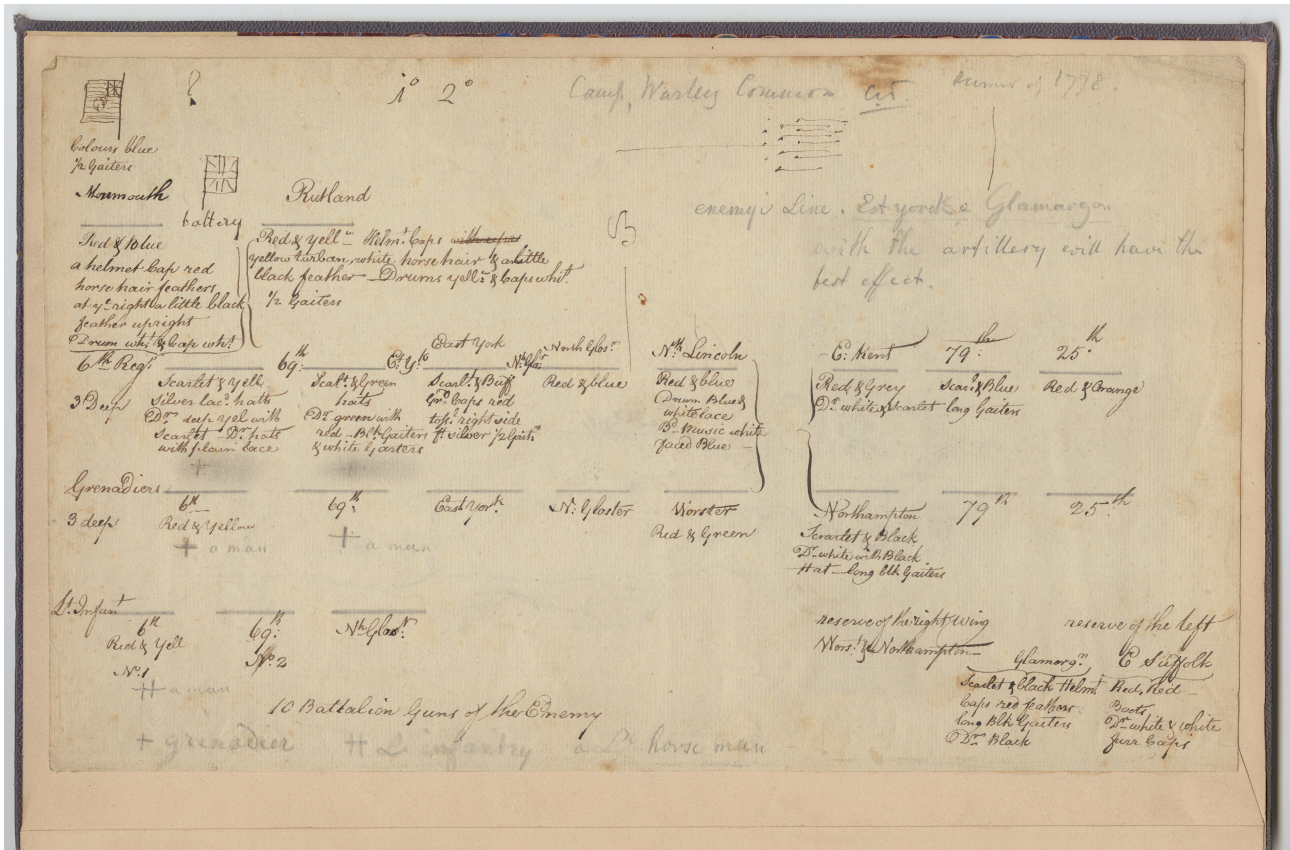
highly complex field of considerable reach and scope; a way of knowing, a form of enquiry and social practice, which would take in the natural features of a place, but also comprehend its settlement patterns, its material resources and economies, historic buildings and relics, genealogies, customs, folklore, myth and memory.³⁰ Nor was topography simply a matter of fact observation and tabulation of place; it was critical and evaluative, as likely to be prospective as retrospective, about design

as well as record. Topography, in this expanded sense, informed the theatrical travelogue that was *The Wonders of Derbyshire*, as it took the audience on a tour of the craggy outcrops, caverns and lead mines of the East Midlands as well as its antiquities and aristocratic seats, ‘untamed’ people and legends. Working on the pictures at around the same time that the Drury Lane craftsmen and painters began assembling these scenes, Loutherboung brought this eye for the distinctive character of a locality to bear on his Warley scenes too.

Something of the artist’s process can be gleaned from a small cache of extant preparatory sketches. Most are figure studies of anonymous grenadiers and infantrymen, the margins of the paper filled with handwritten colour notes on their uniforms and hastily drawn outlines of cap designs, epaulettes, and insignia (plate 4). Loutherboung also drew up an accompanying key of sorts, setting out troop positions, and again heavily annotating it with observations on regimental colours and fine details of military regalia (plate 5). Such attention to the minutiae of military dress and planning is telling of the degree of access that Pierson ensured Loutherboung had to the day’s events as well as the two men’s appreciation of the theatrical glamour and glittering materiality of contemporary military costume and show. But it points up, too, the kinds of authenticating detail that was now expected in the portrayal of military subjects.³¹ Though his surviving field studies do not include any of Warley Common, the artist was evidently aware that such demands for exactness also extended to the portrayal of the setting, Loutherboung’s final paintings demonstrating a detailed knowledge of the local terrain.

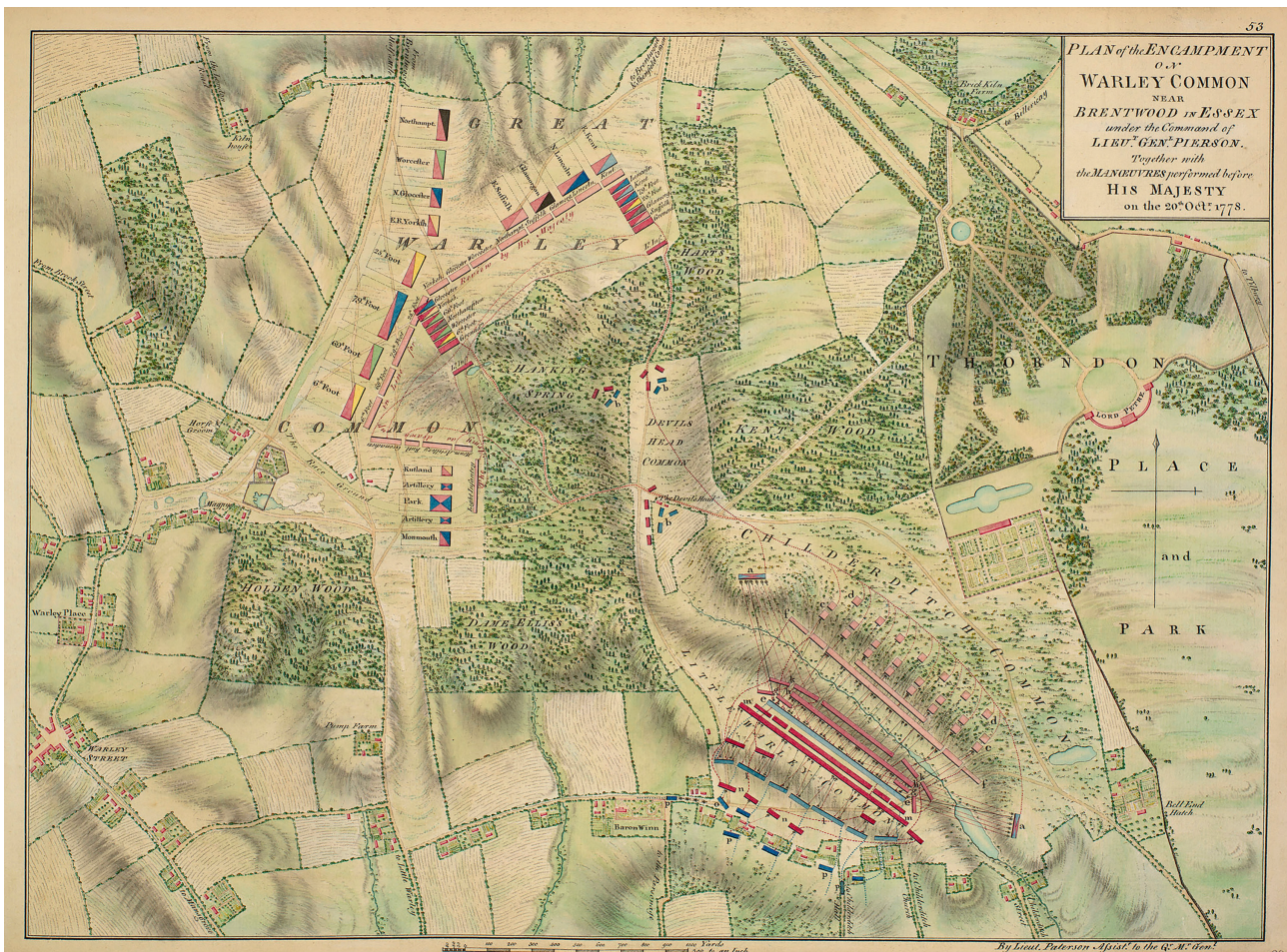
Taking up the perspective of the defending ‘enemy’ troops, the view of the mock battle is plotted with great precision. Sandwiched between the dense arboreal

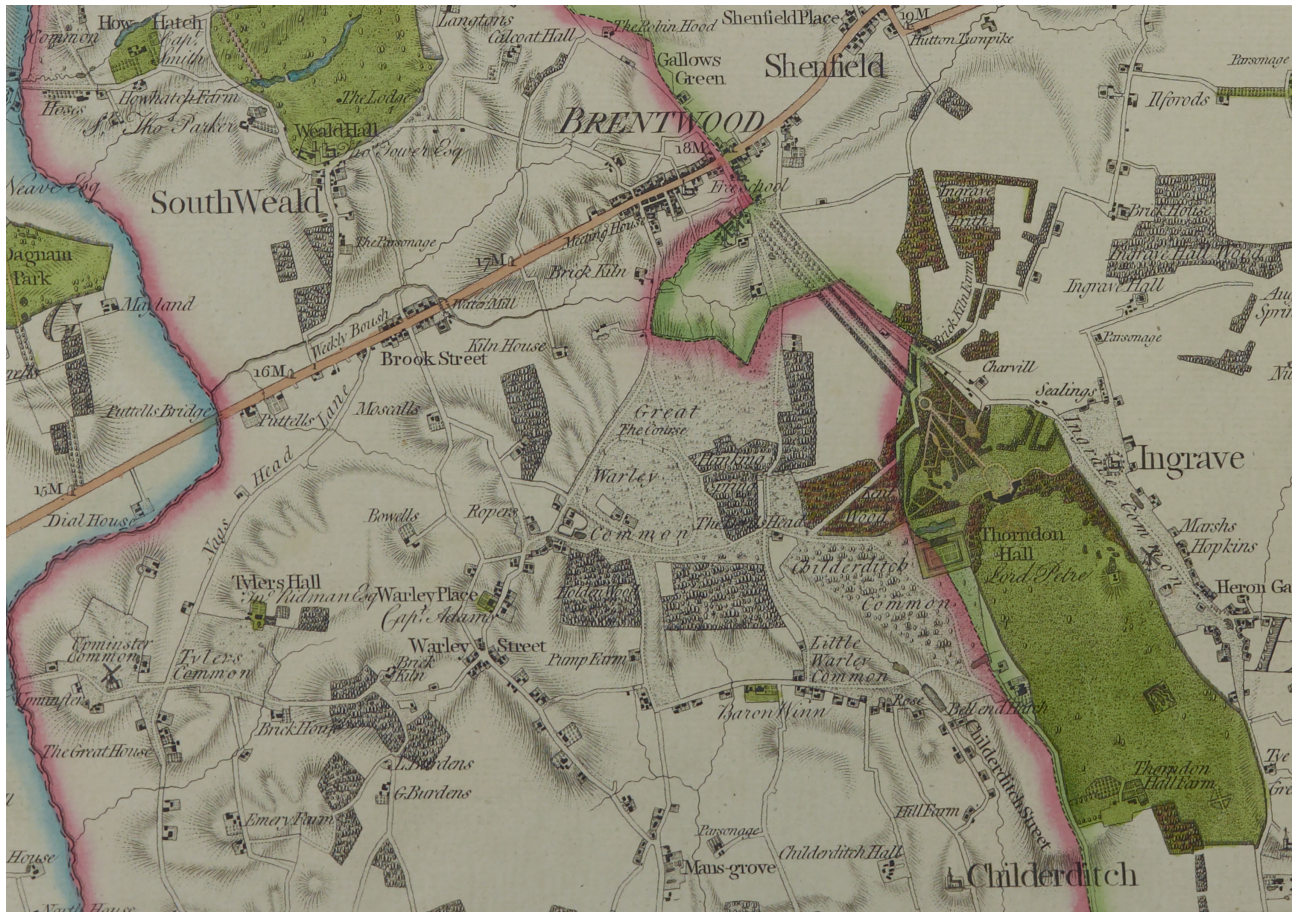
5 Philippe-Jacques de Loutherboung, *Camp, Warley Common, Summer of 1778*, 1778. Pencil, pen and ink, 20×33 cm. Providence, RI: Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection (OCOLC ocn549594984), John Hay Library, Brown University.



landscapes of Thorndon's Kent Wood to the left and Hanking Spring, the vantage point is a clearing known as the Devil's Head. Looking south-east towards the Queen's observation tower, which is seen at a distance silhouetted against a rising plume of white smoke, the high ground affords an expansive prospect of the attack led by the painter's patron along the slopes of Childerditch and the commons of Little Warley. Help in orientating ourselves in relation to the action and the landscape comes in the form of another commemorative token of this regal visitation given to the Crown; a fine, presentation quality plan of the site and the day's manoeuvres, drawn up by a team of surveyors under the command of the Quartermaster-General, George Morrison (plate 6). Something of a showpiece demonstration of the importance of the graphic arts and precise record in the waging of modern war, the plan formed part of a sumptuous volume of maps and tables documenting the encampments of southern England.³² Like other such maps and drawings being produced by the draughtsmen of the Board of Ordnance or the cadets of the Woolwich Military Academy, it is a self-consciously accomplished set, displaying a degree of competence and refinement commensurate with the order and planning of the militarised landscapes they survey. Such a concern to lay out the key co-ordinates of a place faithfully was not restricted to the military, however. When it came to matters of topography, the audiences for art and other cultural forms were becoming no less expectant of precision. Situating a picture or a play in a particular place enhanced the authenticity and immediacy of a scene. A key figure both in asserting the cultural value of characteristic British scenery in art and bringing a heightened

6 Lt Daniel Paterson, 'Plan of the Encampment on Warley Common near Brentwood in Essex under the Command of Lieut.-Gen. Pierson, Together with the Manoeuvres performed before His Majesty on 20th Oct. 1778', in *A Collection of Drawn Plans of Encampments and Dispositions of the Army in Great Britain, from 1778 to 1782*, by George Morrison, drawn by Daniel Paterson. Graphite, pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 36.2 × 53.5 cm. London: Royal Collection (RCIN 734032).





7 Detail of John Chapman and Peter André, *A Map of the County of Essex from an Actual Survey taken in MD CCLXXII; LXXIII & MD CCLXXIV*, published October 1777. Engraving, twenty-six sheets, each 55 x 75 cm. London: British Library (K.Top.13.6).

concern with locality to the London stage, Loutherboung was clearly appreciative of the peculiar power of putting a convincing likeness of the native countryside before an audience. In tracing the rises and falls of Warley so closely, in his painting of the mock attack, he met the demand for exactness in such matters as it determined the evaluation of native views in landscape art as well as 'battle pictures'.

Organised along a series of zig-zagging lines, the companion piece of the morning's royal review is no less carefully arranged to ensure that the lay of the land as well as the events taking place can be made out with maximum clarity. Here, the vantage point is the edge of Holden Wood, at the western border of the heath. In Morrison's plan of the site, the ground just ahead of this area is shown laid out as the site of the annual Brentwood races. Rather wittily then, the artillery train Loutherboung shows advancing towards the King for inspection appears to make its way along a section of the racetrack. On the horizon, marked by the distinctive tower of the historic chapel of St Thomas of Canterbury, lies the town of Brentwood. Its architecture is seen in telling scenic conjunction with the long line of brilliant white tents stretching across the gently undulating plain before it. Hedgerow marks out parcels of arable and pastureland. Brick kilns and post mills allude to local industry. Probably drawing on a recent, fine-quality county map by John Chapman and Peter André as well as his own field studies and information provided by his patron, Loutherboung was closely attentive to the management and use of this landscape, not least as it had been drastically transformed by its military occupation (plate 7).

Common land like that edging Brentwood was a valuable local resource; its appropriation and use more strictly regulated than is often assumed. Local commoners

and landowners tussled over rights to the heath, fen, and broad-leaved woodland on Warley Common, only for both to find themselves competing for access at times with various interlopers, whether 'gypsies', racegoers, squatters, or stationed troops. Indeed, the common had been a temporary military station more than once before. But neighbouring settlements had never experienced an invasion quite like that of the campaigning seasons of the late 1770s. On spending a week under canvas at Warley, as the guest of a captain in the Lincolnshire militia, Bennet Langton, Samuel Johnson was to declare it 'one of the great scenes of human life'.³³ Visiting crowds and the large number of military personnel, at times numbering over 10,000, had galvanised the local economy and landscape, with makeshift eating and ale houses quickly establishing themselves alongside the camp's artillery and parade grounds. On the ground, every bit as much as it was portrayed in the print culture of the day, the camp was framed up as a scenic and social prospect as well as a militarised one, pleasing enough to distract the eye and keep the visitor's mind from the genuine threat it had been convened to meet. '[F]ormed on the side of a hill', the camp afforded 'a beautiful view of Kent and the River Thames'.³⁴ For some, there was a certain pleasure in the prospect of the 'Riches of Peace' rubbing up against 'images of War!'³⁵ Surveyed from the site of a post mill on raised ground a little to the north, across a working landscape of neat hedgerow, tilled and fallow fields, the conjunction was also celebrated in a stretching view of the western edge of the encampment drawn up by Thomas Sandby (with figurative elements probably added by his brother Paul) (plate 8).³⁶ Another commemorative token of the King's visit destined for the royal collection, the Sandbys' broad angled but minutely delineated panorama captures the presence and sheer scale of the military's appropriation and reconfiguration of the local landscape.

Spread over several acres or so of waste, bordered by unenclosed woodland and fields as well as the elegant parkland of Petre's Thorndon estate (remodelled by 'Capability' Brown a decade or so earlier), the construction of this spectacular, temporary landscape involved an advance troop of pioneers in major earthworks. Arriving at Warley in the early summer of 1778, they cleared the heath of scrub and felled numerous trees. What they created was a blank slate, for a camp set out according to rigorous geometric principles. Grid-like layouts, where regiments were camped in rectangular blocks, lined up in strict order of rank, along the length of the different axes, were established military practice. On a practical level, the grid optimised visibility, while at the same time working to articulate and manage the interaction of the men. On a more elevated note, military theorists promoted the idea of the camp, so organised in conscious emulation of Roman models, as a school of republican virtue, a place where

8 Paul and Thomas Sandby, *The Encampment at Warley Common (Essex) in 1778, 1778.* Pen, ink and watercolour, 48 × 147.1 cm. London: Royal Collection (RCIN 734037).



patriotic citizens prepared for the defence of their native land.³⁷ But, if the Grub Street journalists filing their accounts of life at Warley in the London press were aware of such practical and high-minded principles, they scarcely registered in their coverage.

Printed in several London newspapers in mid-1778, 'A TRIP to the Camp at WARLEY-COMMON' gives perhaps the most detailed relation of what the visitor was to encounter. On approaching the outskirts of this makeshift town, the journalist met firstly with the ordinary soldiers' billets, simple 'Huts [...] built with Sticks, Straw, Turf, and Boughs of Trees', laid out in 'Streets, Courts, Lanes and Alleys'. Named to recall the thoroughfares of the capital or the hometowns of the various regiments quartered in the camp, Queen-street and Westcote-street, Pye-Corner and Gloucester-street were among them. Visitors and residents were serviced by a veritable 'army' of hawkers and criers, selling goods and cheap street food, 'Beans, Pease, Cabbages and Pies'. 'Shops of all kinds', 'Butchers, Bakers, Taylors, Chandlers, and Fish-stalls', as well as 'temporary Public-Houses' numbering 'not less than one hundred and fifty', had also sprung up to cater to the transient populace. Officers occupied grand marquees, each surrounded by 'a kind of Garden or Pleasure-Ground, intersected by Walks of Gravel, chiefly in the Serpentine Form', and having 'a very happy Effect on the Eye' it was noted. Not unlike the arbours and root-houses of contemporary garden design, the rudimentary structures housing the lower ranks only added to this sense of place-making. That this was a quintessentially urban or rather suburban experience for the author of this guide to Warley becomes clear on reading their response to the 'Coffee-Houses and Taverns of Mud-Erection, covered with Turf' on the borders of the camp, where the visitor might 'suppose himself not only to enjoy *Rus in Urbe*, but *Urbs in Campania*'.³⁸

Guides of this kind, which would often play up the pastoral, Arcadian associations of the passing respite from urban life that a day out at Warley represented, littered the newspaper and periodical press of the day. London's broadsheets provided their readers with a miscellaneous range of gossip and opinion, notices, news, and reviews, in a seemingly offhand, but at times deliberately and knowingly arranged, non-hierarchical form of presentation that frequently resulted in some startling conjunctions of material. When news that Loutherbouurg was 'to paint two military views' of Warley was first announced in the *Morning Post*, for example, the adjacent columns were filled with updates on the faltering progress of the war in America as well as the latest 'Coxheath Intelligence', passing on up-to-the-minute news and rumour swirling around the Maidstone camp. A report of the 'grand maneuvers, evolutions and a mock engagement' to be witnessed there by the King was among them which, though intended to rival or even out-do those events that the painter was to commemorate, had had to be postponed due to bad weather.³⁹ Pulled in by the cacophony of movement, colour and sound – the drills, exercises and sham battles that were an essential part of an army's preparations – many a day tripper flocked to see Warley and other sites accessible from the capital at first hand. Now as much a place of fashionable resort and spectacle as a strategic defensive measure, Warley attracted the height of London society, the 'middling Cit' and the lowest of the artisan class alike. For those unable to make the journey or wanting a souvenir, the London print market made available a wide cross-section of commentary and commemorative tokens, of an amused or critical character as well as of a variously high-minded or bellicose, jingoistic tenor. Even the briefest sampling of this mix of moods and stances is useful to an understanding of the curious tone of Loutherbouurg's Warley pictures noted above.

While carefully circumscribed, William Tasker's *Ode to the Warlike Genius of Great Britain* (first published in 1778) viewed the nation's military preparations positively. Devoting several stanzas of revised editions of his verse to the King's review of



9 William Hogarth, England, Plate 2d/The Invasion, published 8 March 1756. Etching and engraving, 31.8×38.8 cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art (1932, 32.35(127)).

encampments across southern England, the poet called for the country to rally around the Crown. For Tasker, the prospect of war with the nation's historic enemy was an opportunity to relive past victories and restore something of its recently tarnished military reputation. Unlike the many crude but stirring anti-Gallican fanfares of the period, Tasker's verse was an altogether more considered meditation on present-day dilemmas. With native-born troops, including the traditional upholders of Britons' historic liberties, the militia, coming to the defence of the nation's coastlines, rather than the mercenaries fighting in the colonies, who in Tasker's words 'Disgrac'd the state, and sham'd the land', this was an opportunity for a country divided to unite. While troubled by the war being conducted against fellow Englishmen in the colonies, Tasker was to proclaim his loyalty to King and country with some fervour when it came to taking up arms at home against the traditional enemies of France and Spain. With allegiances and sympathies so divided, Tasker and similarly conflicted contemporaries turned to 'Britannia's ancient heroes', historic and mythic, Arthur and Caractacus, as well as more recent champions of the national cause, such as Henry V or Elizabeth, Marlborough, or Chatham, in their attempts to work through this impasse. Likening the spectacle of the recent spate of royal reviews to the chivalric pageantry of old, Tasker saw the King and Queen as the respective embodiments of the arts of war and peace.⁴⁰ Reviving an ideal of statecraft datable to the time of the early Stuarts,

for Tasker George III and his consort represented the force and virtue that was held to contain the conflict and instability thought intrinsic to political life.⁴¹ A show of martial strength was the most obvious expression of force, with the additional benefit that a strong royal guard would lend majesty and magnificence to the prince and his consort. Virtue was to reside not only in the persons of the King and Queen but in the nature of the relationships they enjoyed with their subjects, as a disposition, one of mutual affection, that bound the state together. Through his presence at the review, the monarch was able to command the admiration and reverence of his subjects while still demonstrating the kind of martial authority that would elicit fear in his enemies.

Not all were so persuaded that the military theatrics at Warley and elsewhere offered much reassurance, however. In verse reflecting on the Warley review, one anonymous author took little comfort in watching troops stumbling about among 'Columns deep of Smoke', advancing towards a non-existent foe. 'The Battle now is all a Joke', they concluded.⁴² Such forms of display were all too obvious an attempt to deflect attention from the harsh realities of the day. Far from instilling confidence in the robustness of British manhood, watching a motley array of regulars and irregulars being put through their uncertain paces in dramatic shows of strength only illustrated why the nation should be unsure of its defence. Sardonic irony, a humorous enjoyment of the customary expectations of the world being

10 'Perspective View of Genl. Parker exercising the Army at Warley Camp', in *The Westminster Magazine; or, The Pantheon of Taste*, vol. VII, July 1779. Engraving, 20 x 20.5 cm. Providence, RI: Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection (GB-P1779mf-1), John Hay Library, Brown University.



turned upside down, was the prevailing spirit of the camps and, to some degree, of the whole progress of the American War. It was a suitable tenor of response to a 'revolution' in the affairs of empire; a rebellion that had precipitated a ludicrous political situation, in which the very security of the country was being compromised through a war waged, at considerable geographic remove, with her own citizens.

Laying claim to power of the kind Tasker celebrated was not unproblematic. In the wake of the violent upheavals of the previous century, the image of the monarch at the head of a military force raised the spectre of the kind of unchecked, arbitrary rule that critics detected in George III's attitudes towards the American colonies. Accordingly, Loutherbourog was mindful of the need to treat the monarch's presence at the Warley review with discretion. To this end, in his view of the advance along the slopes of Childerditch and Little Warley, the artist essayed a distinct variant on a northern tradition of courtly battle painting of seventeenth-century origin. Looking back on a model of practice developed during the reign of Louis XIV, Loutherbourog's elevated vantage-point and precisely localised setting was indebted to a set of conventions established most authoritatively in the art of the Flemish master Adam-François van der Meulen. There, the stage-like foreground rise was usually occupied by an equestrian image of the King (or one of his commanders) attended by his officers, whose theatrical gestures to the prospect before them signals their direction of the troop movements and distant affray taking place below. Turning these elements around, Loutherbourog aligns the viewpoint with that of the ordinary, 'enemy' soldier and the odd visiting spectator who has managed to join them on the Devil's Head. Here, it is the King that is the distant object of their gaze. Downplaying George III's role in events in this way helped mitigate any thought of the threat to civil liberties that an image of his command of the nation's war machine was held to pose, not least as those fears had been reactivated by the armed suppression of 'fellow English' subjects across the Atlantic. But the artist's choice to emphasise the role of the ordinary redcoat among the visiting crowd was itself fraught with complications.

Not all commentators took pleasure in Warley's improvised townscape. For all the excitement the wonders of the camp had generated 'amongst the inhabitants of this large metropolis', one London-based writer thought it 'far from being a pleasing object', declaring 'a croud of small tents and earthen hovels make a less picturesque appearance than the booths at a country race or fair, and want all the festive cheerfulness of such a scene'. They went on to observe how the 'superb appearance of some of the marquees serves only to make the miserable accommodations of the soldiers a more conspicuous, pitiable, and disgusting spectacle'.⁴³ In a move designed to discourage desertion, especially among the militia, the camp's troops had been

II Detail of Loutherbourog, Warley Camp: The Mock Attack, showing at far right polite visitors observing the manoeuvres from the edge of the battlefield.





12 Detail of Louthborough, Warley Camp: The Review, showing confrontations between redcoats and visitors rushing to view the royal ceremonials.

drawn from distant parts of the kingdom, with volunteer regiments from Manchester finding themselves quartered with men from as far afield as Yorkshire and South Wales. Far from home and confined to camp, there was little to distract the lower ranks from the day-to-day drudgery and discomfort. On walking among the tents, Johnson was to declare that the distinction between those who enjoyed 'the better conditions of life' and those who endured 'inferior ones, was never exhibited to him in so distinct a view'.⁴⁴ Such expressions of sympathy for the plight of the ordinary ranks were not uncommon. In a widely read essay on 'The Distresses of a Common Soldier', Johnson's friend Oliver Goldsmith had lamented the conditions of service these 'noble sufferers' faced, in a way that was consciously echoed by those moved by the pitiful, 'miserable accommodations' the troops at Warley experienced.⁴⁵

Such sentiments were further complicated by a widespread distrust of men in uniform. Long-held fears about the maintenance of a standing army meant that people from all levels of society frequently took offence at the sight of the military. While championing the virtues of a public-spirited militia, commentators writing in the civic humanist tradition viewed a standing force as a 'great instrument of tyranny and oppression', a precursor to arbitrary government in wartime, and a parasite upon civil society in peacetime, prone to idleness, debauchery, and viciousness.⁴⁶ They were both brutish and foppish, victims and tools of tyranny. By the time of the American War, the proliferation of auxiliary and part-time forces had further complicated the military's relationship with civil society. Culturally, this distrust manifested itself in behavioural terms. Members of the country's armed forces existed within but distinct from society as a whole; a subculture whose rituals, styles and rules of conduct defined it as, at once, separate from, but also a response to those of the wider world. Dress, language, and lifestyle were critical in consolidating the military's sense of itself as a unified, fighting whole. But they also marked it as distinct from polite and plebeian society alike. While the rough or dissolute conduct characteristically associated with members of the military was offensive to polite sensibilities, it was most frequently directed at the lower ranks of society. Yet, though occupying the margins of society, the military were at the same time central to its constituency.



13 Detail of Loutherbourog, Warley Camp: The Review, showing a group of spectators made up of various social types.

Domestic order and the prosperity that was the reward of the fight for empire were dependent upon the actions and ultimately the lives of those marginalised and feared by civil society. Thus, in the wealth of literary and visual images of the military found in late Georgian culture, fear and distrust were frequently tempered by degrees of circumscribed approbation and attraction. In another sense, for example, the military's unruliness and propensity for disorder were viewed as 'patriotic', indicative of an independence of spirit which made the soldier the very embodiment of liberty, of self-sufficiency and fellow feeling. For Johnson, in pointed contrast with the 'discipline and regularity' expected of Prussian troops or the enslavement of the French, it was the English common soldier's very unruliness that made him brave and successful in battle.⁴⁷ Such assertions had any number of corollaries in the visual arts of the period, with William Hogarth's *Invasion Prints*, first published in March 1756, being perhaps the best known (plate 9).⁴⁸ Here, the soldier was to be associated with the alehouse, with amorous and drunken carousing, and – in Garrick's accompanying verse – with national freedoms and liberties. Yet, Hogarth – who was an important reference point for Loutherbourog – was careful to moderate this display of licence. The principal target of the well-fed, stout troopers' insolence and irreverence is the tyrannical French King, who appears brandishing gallows rather than a sceptre in a crudely drawn caricature on the pub wall. Their roughhousing is also offset by the reassuring discipline and order of the drill taking place in the distance.

Developing a theme familiar from the print culture of the period, when assembling his Warley scenes, Loutherbourog placed the variously distinct and fluid, respectful and fraught relationship between the military and civilian worlds front and centre. Among those to explore their meeting at places like Coxheath or Warley, satirical printmakers had been especially quick to seize on the comic potential of the social diversity of the visiting London throng and the absurdity of their presence in such contexts. Published

to accompany a brief guide to Warley, which also gave advice on etiquette to those looking to visit, a *Perspective View of Genl. Parker exercising the Army* was not untypical in focusing on the rough mix of high, 'middling' and low, of patrician officers and ladies, pot-bellied 'Cits' and servants, that were widely depicted as representative camp followers (plate 10). Flirtatious couples, mischievous children and gossiping soldiers all make for an image of unbridled and undisciplined licence. It is not threatening, however. While graphic and literary satires treating of the camps were at times vicious, the humour here is amiable and the massed lines of the troops on the horizon offer a reassuring counterpoint to the burlesque of the foreground. Humour, diversity, and energy were qualities that had long been associated with ideals of liberty and patriotic fervour in the portrayal of the English crowd.⁴⁹ Here, the absence of social regulation among the crowd could be taken as a marker of the national liberties in part guaranteed by the martial display of the distance. Trafficking with this imagery of cavalcade and revelry against a backdrop of patriotic display, Loutherbouurg's Warley pictures are filled with comic asides and incongruities: a well-dressed female visitor sits on the edge of the battlefield; troops are caught in variously tense confrontations and comic pratfalls with

14 Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbouurg, *An Exhibition*, published by Victor Marie Picot, 29 January 1776. Etching and aquatint, 22.7 x 26 cm New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Elisha Whittelsey Collection (1959, 59.600.55).



the visiting hordes (plate 11 and plate 12). Whether waiting patiently and respectfully or else jostling for position, climbing trees or carriages for a better view, in some ways, it is the presence of those visitors that is the focus of attention, not the procession of horse-drawn cannon or massed ranks lining up for inspection by the royal party (plate 13).

Such comic accents had been part of Loutherbourog's art for some time. In the mid-1770s, the artist had produced a series of graphic satires taking aim at the odd high-profile individual as well as assorted social types: the gallery of variously bewildered, bored and slack-jawed grotesques captured gawping at the pictures in *An Exhibition* being not untypical of Loutherbourog's work in this line, not least in the tendency of his comedy to rely on gross corporeal and physiognomic distortion (plate 14).⁵⁰ He had also begun to incorporate figures of this kind into scenes of 'rural amusements' – as they were titled in the exhibition catalogues – destined for the walls of the Royal Academy. Recycling many of the character types and much of the humorous incident found in those pictures, Loutherbourog's Warley scenes were therefore in some ways just the latest, albeit the most ambitious and grandiose examples of a form of satirical landscape art that the painter had been developing for some time. Near relatives of the *Exhibition* audience gather beneath the framing tree of the King's review, for example, the focus on the spectator in both instances serving as a reminder of their part in the theatre of such events.

Doubtless as he intended, critics had been quick to align the artist's talent for social satire with that of a notable native precedent, whose art was widely thought expressive of the national character. By the end of the decade, that the painter was held to 'possess the Humour and Spirit of Hogarth' was critical commonplace. It was just as usual to wonder at and celebrate how this 'Foreign Artist' was able 'to enter so thoroughly into English Humour, and to express it so happily'.⁵¹ Reviewers were well primed then to detect the strain of droll, Hogarthian humour coursing through the Warley paintings. Though the comic elements of the battle scene are relegated to the far-right margin of the picture they did not escape the notice of critics:

The figures are finely grouped, and at the same time that the *tout ensemble* gives a strong and true idea of the scene it represents, a vein of humour pervades the piece, and renders it irresistibly laughable. The figure of the Post-boy, and the fat fellow's refusing to obey the centinel are natural touches of humour, and evident marks, that Mr. Loutherbourog's genius has an uncommon bent towards the droll and ludicrous.⁵²

That this 'vein of humour' was held in tension with the more straightforwardly commemorative aspects of Loutherbourog's pictures was clearer still in the response to the companion scene. One commentator judged Loutherbourog's Warley review 'a masterly performance, in which dignity and humour are very happily blended', declaring it all but 'impossible to look upon this piece without being differently affected':

When looking at the centre you beheld the King, attended by his generals and aid-de-camp, with his troops in lines on his right and left, and his artillery passing in review before him, you could not help being struck with the grandeur of the scene before you; and, turning your eye to the remoter parts of the picture, your gravity is discomposed by a variety of laughable objects

so naturally represented that it was hardly possible to imagine them not alive. The fore-ground of the picture was filled with horses, cannon, implements of war, & c. and at a distance were seen views of the country, and the humours of the camp.⁵³

While it was a picture 'full of business, composition, and character' observed another reviewer, such that the eye was 'constantly deviating into particular groups', it was never unintelligible. It had order and a central point of interest: 'We look for miles into the picture: His Majesty, attended with his Aids-de-Camps, Equerries, & c. is seen in the centre of the piece, while the Camp and Line extends from right to left; the Artillery are marching before the King; the ground is richly filled with horse drawing cannon, which are splendid and finely drawn'.⁵⁴

Spectacular, securely situated, and teeming with colourful incident, Louthenbourg's Warley pictures had broad appeal. Not only did they meet that need for precision as regards matters of topography demanded by the military-minded tactician and touristic prospect hunter alike. They were engaging and humorous too. It all made for a curious, but potent, mix of the real and the fictive that was finely judged in its appeal to a taste for an imagery not of war or battle so much as their theatrical semblance. Primarily places of display, the camps were immediately appealing to those who made their living from exploding illusions: satirists were eager to expose the clear tensions between the starched militarism and chaotic farce to be witnessed there, for instance. But it also ensured that they were no less attractive to those who dealt in theatrical make believe. That Pierson set his sights on Louthenbourg as the artist best suited to capturing the Warley review in paint suggests how members of the military were themselves acutely aware of the sense of theatre around their defensive preparations. In the words of one critic, above all the artist's Warley scenes afforded the best evidence of those 'talents for stage decorations' in which he was 'unrivalled'.⁵⁵

The Drury Lane Theatre

Magical and otherworldly as it appeared to many a contemporary, Louthenbourg's stagecraft was of calculated commercial appeal and often highly topical. 'Before his time, the back was one broad flat', one of his collaborators was to recall. Making use of carefully carpentered, overlapping flats of varying dimensions placed on different levels, his designs had broken 'the scene into several pieces'. By combining a knowledge of the mechanics of illusion with a painterly command of perspective, Louthenbourg had greatly enhanced the depth of field, creating the impression of vast outdoor landscapes of 'miles and miles distance'.⁵⁶ His innovations emphasised the three-dimensionality of the stage, fashioning a world that enveloped the actors. No longer confined to the forestage in front of the proscenium, they were able to inhabit and interact with this new scenic space.⁵⁷ Ever on the lookout for ways to capitalise on their set designer's talents, there were several notable instances of Garrick and Sheridan putting this crowd-pleasing wizardry to patriotic effect.

Working closely with the marine painter Dominic Serres, in 1773 Louthenbourg had provided Garrick with a startling perspective scene for his revival of James Thomson and David Mallet's seldom staged masque *Alfred*, against which model ships, built to scale and kitted out with 'Rigging, Masts, & c.', performed a series of manoeuvres.⁵⁸ This dramatic re-enactment of the King's recent review of the fleet at Spithead was to prove an important precedent for another patriotic military spectacle the company's resident scenographer was to

plan five years later for Garrick's successor. With audience numbers dropping, Sheridan had looked to revive the company's fortunes by sending Loutherbourg off on a tour of the English countryside to search out scenes suitable for translation into popular dramatic spectacle. Before making the journey northwards to take *The Wonders of Derbyshire*, however, the artist was directed into the Kent countryside to make sketches for what would be advertised as 'a striking perspective of Coxheath encampment'.⁵⁹ Preceded by a couple of scenes set along the road and in a rural tavern, this by all accounts remarkable scenic view, before which troops of automaton or more likely puppet soldiers marched and drilled alongside members of the cast, in precise time to martial music, concluded Drury Lane's production of *The Camp*. A collaboration between Loutherbourg and Sheridan, working in conjunction with the composer Thomas Linley, this comic afterpiece or 'Musical Entertainment' was one of several London productions to address 'the prevailing panic' and 'Camp furor' of the day.⁶⁰ A rival camp satire, Frederick Pilon's *The Invasion*, was performed at Covent Garden, while the playhouses also staged a series of productions that drew parallels between the anxieties and fears of the moment and the nation's Roman as well as Elizabethan pasts. Such weighty, historic parallels were not the stuff of *The Camp*, however. Little more than a series of 'laughable incidents and sketches' satirising the vogue for all things military, with a few nods to the absurdities of contemporary fashion but otherwise filled out with stock characters and plot twists, Sheridan's hastily assembled script was slight. As reviewers were quick to point out, it was a production where 'the eye' had 'the lead of the mind'.⁶¹ Judged 'as a mere spectacle', then the production could only be thought 'grand, astonishing, and *vraisemblant*'. But 'as a dramatic entertainment', it was no more than a mildly 'humorous' diversion.⁶² It was 'the Talents of Mr. Loutherbourg' that were the real draw.⁶³

In sly acknowledgement that it was neither the author nor the players that were the production's main selling point, Sheridan had made his set designer an off-stage character, his *dramatis personae* listing an Irish painter named O'Daub, who was to 'take the Camp' for his master Mr Lanternberg. Gesturing to the sense of theatre attached to the army's preparations for war, Sheridan had O'Daub employ the language of the stage when taking their measure; adopting a vantage point on the camp from 'the Prompter's Side' before switching to one 'opposite the Prompter'.⁶⁴ When a group of bumbling, overly officious sentries arrest O'Daub as a spy, they seize on the theatrical abbreviations of 'O.P.' and 'P.S.' appended to his sketches as evidence of the Irishman's Jacobite sympathies, mistaking them as references to the 'Old Pretender' and the 'Pretender's Son'. It is one of many instances in Sheridan's script where the actual dangers the nation faced are reduced to the merely droll. But then, there was a certain archness about the whole of a production sold on spectacle but dedicated to lampooning the appetite abroad for the military's own patent theatricality. Significantly, the character of O'Daub had trod the boards before, having first appeared in a Drury Lane production of 1774 entitled *The Maid of Oaks*. A piece based on a much-publicised *fête de champêtre* or pastoral masquerade held in the grounds of Edward, Lord Stanley's Surrey estate, its script had been penned by the soldier-playwright John Burgoyne. It is understated, an in-joke, but this allusion to Burgoyne, who – adding further to the sense of knowing self-awareness that ran through the production – may well have contributed bits of business or even dialogue to *The Camp*, as a man of the theatre was more than a little newsworthy and not a little pointed. Since appointed to join General Thomas Gage in the energetic suppression of rebels in Boston and promoted to

major-general, Burgoyne had – following a series of disastrous military blunders in the colonies – recently been returned to London as a prisoner on parole to answer charges in parliament.⁶⁵

Several reviews of Sheridan's latest production were to pick up on its allusions to the uncertain distinction that now existed between theatres of war and those of dramatic performance. In a reference to the air of dissemblance around North and his commanders' military preparations, one critic was to think Louthembourg's 'masterly use of the secrets of his art', which had so deceived the audience that they were willing to imagine the stage a landscape of great 'extent, and variegated appearance', not unlike how '[u]nder political government, disagreeable circumstances are thrown as much as possible into distant perspective'.⁶⁶ Other commentators admiring of the designer's achievements were to note how his remarkable effects served only to throw the poverty of the theme into relief. Struck by Louthembourg's 'plentiful distribution of lamps and candles', another reviewer thought the subject hardly worthy of the 'luxurious softness' that gilded the scenes:

Notwithstanding all this art, the scene is far from presenting a spectacle equal to what the frequenters of the theatres are accustomed to see when the Painter is left to exercise his genius and invention on subjects of a pleasing and more picturesque kind [...].⁶⁷

Despite this critic's lament for the set designer wasting his talents on such a flimsy piece, there was an audience for it. Opening in mid-October 1778, and no doubt much to the profit-focused Sheridan's relief, *The Camp* was good box-office, proving popular enough to run for two seasons. Timed to capitalise on the publicity around the event, and once again blurring the line between fact and fiction, it had premiered just days before its designer was to take on O'Daub's role for himself and attend the King's Warley review with a view to commemorating the day in paint.

Whether in the use of broken and raked wings, heightened colour and pyrotechnics, or the illumination of the skies and great wafts of gun smoke, Louthembourg was to bring all his stagecraft to the pictures that would result from this trip to the country. What he created was a suitably fiery and raucous setting, for scenes brimming with dramatic incident, movement, and noise. Much like the perspective view of *The Camp* or the tourist attractions of the Derbyshire harlequinade, they are also full of the kinds of specifically local, anecdotal detail that locate the action in a very particular place. More than just the setting of the events portrayed, and as with the scenery that the performers were now able to roam in his Drury Lane spectacles, it is an environment that establishes the situation and sets the drama in motion. In some ways, however, what Louthembourg took most from his recent experience of designing for Sheridan was Drury Lane's patent combination of dramatic, patriotic spectacle and broad comedy. Ultimately, it is this curious tonal blend which is maybe the most remarkable aspect of the painter's Warley scenes. It is as if the painter was looking to prompt the theatre goers among the Royal Academy's viewing public to recall their night out at *The Camp* as much as any visit to Warley they may have undertaken. Alternatively, and more likely as not, it may be that he was encouraging them to take that train of thought further and reflect on what was common across these experiences. Still, while these qualities granted his treatment of what was a high-profile, national event an arresting immediacy, which was assured to catch the eye of audiences and critics alike when the pictures went on show, they were properties just as likely to draw censure as approbation. For all that

Loutherboung's theatrical triumphs brought him an enviable level of press attention, it was a reputation that at the same time prompted the accusation that in his art he was in some way or other too concerned with playing to the crowd. For some, there was just too much of the theatre about it.

The Royal Academy of Arts, Somerset House

When on display in the Great Room, the Academy's new, purpose-built exhibition space at Somerset House, Loutherboung elected to complement his view of the King's review with a series of other equally spectacular landscapes. Animated by a range of dramatic atmospheric effects, they captured an 'approaching storm', 'a Sunset' and 'a Summer's Evening' at twilight. While *The Troops* at Warley-Camp furthered his renown as a painter of landscapes filled with Hogarthian comic incident, these other exhibits maintained Loutherboung's reputation for showmanship. His attempts to capture such fleeting effects were as frequently condemned as praised, however.⁶⁸ The painter's trademark use of often intensely acidic colours was widely seen as giving his canvases a certain 'lustre' or eye-catching 'vivacity'. But reviewers also detected a 'wonted luxuriance' or 'corrupted Taste' about the artist's manner.⁶⁹ In their use of these terms, critics hinted that there was something altogether superficial, even morally uncertain about Loutherboung's pictures. It was all just 'stage tricks', as one had it. Such concerns also extended to the comparison he deliberately invited with Hogarth. In 'his satyres we see all the extravagance of the Caractura', it was argued. '[H]e indulges a licentiousness of feature which nature, even in his own country, never displayed'. With some justification, his humour was thought too dependent on the merely grotesque, with:

Heads too large for their bodies, bodies blown up to an immense bulk, placed upon legs unable to support them; absolute skeletons performing all the evolutions of life. These are again coupled and contrasted with every possible exaggeration, – covered with rags, or trimmed up in all the fooleries of dress. Corpulency is made to shudder at its own enormity, and Decrepitude at its own misfortunes.

In this writer's estimation, Loutherboung's wit led him to prefer 'Grimace to Sentiment, and Extravagance to Nature'. Hogarth had had 'a different aim': 'Vice and Folly were his object'.⁷⁰ Lacking the moral compass of his illustrious English model, Loutherboung's humour was merely pointless and cruel. All gaudy glitter and coarse comedy, his works were 'admirably well suited to transient Exhibitions'.⁷¹ But there was little of substance beyond that surface appeal. All told, there was something of the charlatan or trickster (to use an appropriately dramatic archetype) about Loutherboung that his criss-crossing of the artistic and theatrical worlds and slipperiness about his past only compounded.

Paradoxically, some were to condemn the painter for the very qualities they thought praiseworthy in his art. In an *Essay on Landscape Painting*, published by the clergyman and minor poet J. H. Pott in 1782, Loutherboung was commended for his 'most bewitching pencil', 'his touch exquisite', only to be then censured for his tendency towards artificiality. 'His pictures are visionary, without a trait of nature' observed Pott, 'and are painted with all that French pomposity so unlike the truth of the Flemish, or the chaste elegance of the Italian manner. His cattle, trees, and every object, labour under the same charge of Affectation and extravagance'.⁷² Pott's judgement was made in the context of a series of 'Hints for forming the

Taste of an English School'; a call for landscape painters to celebrate the 'infinite variety of character' to be found in the national landscape remarkable for its date. The author argued that painters needed but turn to 'copying from nature', as it was to be encountered in the native landscape, with all 'its characteristic charms and graces', to distinguish themselves from continental masters. He praised the scenic charms of the country's human and physical geographies, 'the remains of Gothic architecture' as well as areas of rugged uplands, especially as viewed against 'the great variety and beauty of our northern skies'.⁷³ In highlighting the distinctive atmospheric and climatic character of the national territory, the richly varied appearance of landforms under Britain's ever changeful 'skies', Pott saw landscape as a site for the inscription of qualities widely associated with the temperate regions of the north, and the independent-mindedness, imagination and 'genius' of its peoples. In the words of another young poet, writing on painting a few years earlier, Britons' 'northern Genius' was 'dark, confin'd, and cold', while 'foreign Theorists' tied themselves to 'System blind'.⁷⁴ In this sense, Pott's distaste for Louthembourg's 'French pomposity' was part of his broader concern to promote a school of landscape art founded on a native observational tradition, and which encouraged an unaffected, individual sensibility distinct from the unnatural mannerism thought characteristic of the painting styles taught to students of the Paris académie. For Pott, the artist best placed to lead this advance in taste was Thomas Gainsborough.⁷⁵

Over the last few years, Pott's leading light had been sending landscapes to the Royal Academy with some regularity.⁷⁶ Following a disagreement over the hanging of his pictures, Gainsborough had not exhibited with the body for several seasons. But he had made a spectacular return in 1777 with *A large landscape* (the work now known as *The Watering Place*) attracting extravagant praise. Critics clearly understood this consciously Rubensian picture as a statement piece, demonstrative of the artist's 'superior taste and execution in the landscape way'. Always favourable to the artist, the critic of the *Morning Chronicle* declared Gainsborough 'one of the first living' in the field.⁷⁷ In making this move, the painter was one of several figures geared up to take the opportunity afforded by the troubled circumstances of the men who had commanded the upper end of such market as there was for landscape a decade or so earlier to advance their claims to pre-eminence in the art. Both George Barret and Richard Wilson were in serious ill-health and financially straightened circumstances. By the second half of the 1770s, Wilson was reduced to living on past glories, only sending works from earlier in his career to the annual exhibitions. A view of the Leicester family's Cheshire seat of Tabley from the 1760s shown at the first Somerset House exhibition was his final submission. It was, in the words of a contemporary reviewer, 'an old picture [...] painted in his prime'.⁷⁸ Taking advantage, firstly, of Gainsborough's temporary absence from the exhibition room, as well as the decline in Barret's and Wilson's fortunes, Louthembourg had been perhaps the most determined to assert his standing as the leading exponent of landscape. Now looking to rival those claims, Gainsborough submitted six landscapes to the exhibition of 1780.

Of course, such naked competition gave lie to the Academy's outward projection of shared values. If anything, the show of apparent unity made at the first Somerset House exhibition only served to heighten that familiar tension. A carefully planned celebration of the forces safeguarding the country, the display had clear political purpose. In an opening address to the King, the author of *A Candid Review of the Exhibition* praised the sovereign's 'gracious encouragement' of the polite arts by evoking an implicit parallel with ancient Rome and the rule of Augustus, while tempering the

association of military supremacy with cultural achievement by acknowledging the recent tribulations of empire, specifically the accusations of despotism that were widely held to result from imperial overextension:

It is the most eminent evidence of the virtues of a Sovereign, when the Arts flourish beneath his eye, and they transmit his fame to posterity with a purer luster than even the applause of conquest. Conquest indeed may extend the territories of an Empire, and make unwilling subjects; but where the Arts flourish in the greatest perfection, they invite the world, and the Man of polished Manners is ready to exclaim,

ubi literæ, ibi patria.

It had therefore been the study of those Sovereigns whose memories are the dearest, to cherish and protect the Arts; and it is a pleasing reflection, that the age in which Literature shone with the greatest splendor, was also the age of the greatest Martial Glory.⁷⁹

Written by an Academy insider, this carefully worded tribute to the King's role in facilitating a new age of national artistic and military achievement set the tone for a series of laudatory commentaries treating the parade of royal images on display in 1780 in the lengthy review that followed. Pictures of the royal family had pride of place in the Great Room, with several making topical reference to the recent invasion crisis. Among them, Benjamin West's full-length *Portrait of his Majesty, two general Officers on Horseback, and the Royal Navy in the background* (almost certainly hung in a central position 'on the line'), stressed the monarch's controlling hand in the defence of the nation's coastlines, in an image that conflated his review of military encampments with the ceremonial inspection of naval manoeuvres (plate 15).⁸⁰ Half unrolled, the scroll the King is shown holding is labelled 'Plans of the Camps of Cox Heath, Warley, St. Eden [Port]smouth and Plymouth with a General Return of Your Majesty's Forces in Great Britain Aug 18 1779' (possibly in reference to the set assembled for the monarch by Morrison). West paired this portrait of the monarch as military strategist with one of the Queen attended by the 'Royal Progeny', some in naval uniform, in a display of the feminine and masculine attributes of Hanoverian virtue that echoed the iconography of the reviews of recent years. The device sent the author of *A Candid Review* into raptures, the writer applauding it as a means of at once describing 'the Solicitude of a King' and testifying to the 'maternal Affection' of his consort. All told, the display amounted to a calculated reaffirmation of the Crown's moral and social authority, a rebuke of the challenges to that power wrought lately by rebellious colonists and domestic sympathisers for their cause. With the Great Room hung with a wealth of other pictures reflecting on the country's military fortitude, both past and present, the walls also offered up a reassuring counter to press reports of losses and military blunders across the Atlantic and rumours of chaotic defensive measures at home.

A picture celebrating the monarch's martial competence and grace in command, *The Troops at Warley-Camp, reviewed by his Majesty* slotted neatly into this carefully staged programme, even augmenting it to subtle but powerful effect perhaps; most notably by placing the King amongst his people, fraternising almost with the visiting throng, Loutherbourg's picture mollified the potentially troubling implications of the imagery of a militarised monarchy surrounding it in the Great Room. For those critics approving of the artist's comic asides, the humour of the crowd punctured but

15 Benjamin West, *Portrait of his Majesty [George III], two general Officers on Horseback, and the Royal Navy in the background*, signed and dated 1779. Oil on canvas, 255.3 × 182.9 cm. London: Royal Collection (RCIN 405407).



did not disturb the 'dignity' of the scene. That is not to say, however, that the more troubling associations of the confrontation of civilian and military worlds captured in Louthembourg's picture, which takes in anxious stand-offs between redcoats and a near riotous, marauding crowd alongside the more obviously 'comic' caricatures of visiting day-trippers, would have sat so easily with all who attended the exhibition (see plate 12). That the pictorial celebration of the recent defence of Britain's shores from threatened invasion mounted at Somerset House was indeed as likely to remind visitors of the shambolic failings and tyrannical employment of the country's military as its potency as a global power is evident from the writer Horace Walpole's typically acerbic comments on the display: much as the author of *A Candid Review* was wanting to encourage reflection on the mutual triumph of British arts and arms, for

Walpole the comparison of the classical grandeur of Sir William Chambers's design of Somerset House and the 'poverty and degradation' of the country's military only served to highlight its decline as an imperial power. Of West's portrait of the King, Walpole observed wryly that the sheaf of campaign maps and plans the monarch was shown clutching merely reminded him that the monarch 'was at Coxheath when the French fleet was in Plymouth Sound', preferring to oversee the theatricalised charade of camp life rather than face off against the enemy.⁸¹

On looking around the Great Room, there were indeed plenty of reminders of the taste abroad for sanitised spectacle over the brutal actualities of conflict: West's royal portraits of course, but also nearby on the line, and most provocatively perhaps, a swaggering whole length by the Academy President Sir Joshua Reynolds of Lady Seymour Worsley, the wife of an officer in the Hampshire militia and a regular of the London dailies gossipy 'camp intelligence'.⁸² Like the cross-dressing ladies Gorget, Plume and Sash of Drury Lane's production of *The Camp*, whose appearance satirised the vogue for aristocratic women to dress *en militaire* in shows of support for the war effort, Reynolds's Lady Worsley is depicted wearing a riding habit replete with epaulettes and military buttons in the deep, warm scarlet colours of her husband's regiment. It is an image that trades with the contemporary fashion plate as well as literary and graphic satires of such 'camp followers' but, as Mark Hallett has suggested, Worsley's red woollen jacket and skirt must have also afforded the visitor to Somerset House 'a resonant visual echo' of the uniforms worn by the King and his attendants in West's portrait too.⁸³ Indeed, it is an image that would have resonated with a whole series of portraits on display by the likes of George Chalmers, John Singleton Copley, Philip Reinagle, and others, depicting serving military officers. Unlike the politically and socially problematic identity of the common soldier, the officer's rank and privilege granted their holder a privileged status; one alternately questioned, sustained, and played out in their depiction on the London stage and the walls of the capital's exhibition rooms as well as a broad range of other media. There were plenty of precedents for officers employing artworks and increasingly the still novel public art exhibitions of the period in the fashioning of a military career.⁸⁴ In highlighting the monarch's role in events rather than that of the patron's, the canvases Pierson ordered from Loutherbourg made a distinctive and distinctly astute contribution to that tradition, however. It was a clearly targeted one too. On hatching the plan to make a gift of the Warley pictures to the monarch, artist and patron were doubtless also clued into the King's predilection for artworks on patriotic themes filled with naturalistic detail.⁸⁵

That Loutherbourg's pictures were now part of the Crown collection presumably played no small part in the critical approval they met with on exhibition, though the artist's moderation of the excesses for which he had been censured in the past was clearly also a factor. 'Were we to judge from the great prices his pictures bear' remarked Pott, 'we should rank him on a level with Gainsborough or Wilson'. Nevertheless, despite the artist's overblown sense of self-worth, Loutherbourg had gone some way towards redeeming himself in the writer's eyes with 'the two pictures of the review at Warley, painted for the King'. They showed 'that when he is fastened to his objects, when he is to copy from nature, and not compose from his own ideas, that he deserves every praise that can be bestowed on him'.⁸⁶ Here, Pott was echoing the judgements of critics made at the time of the pictures' original exhibition. Writing of *The Troops at Warley-Camp*, the reviewer for the *London Courant* had commended the painter for having tempered that overly theatrical 'tawdry profusion of excessive colouring, and those flaming and purple tints, which were predominant in most of his former pieces'. He had 'checked the luxuriance of his pencil'.⁸⁷ Not

all commentators were convinced of the sincerity of Loutherbouurg's embrace of native values, one complaining that the crowds of spectators animating the King's review were patently 'not English characters'.⁸⁸ But, the odd equivocal notice aside, and with critics perhaps not wanting to be seen to find fault with paintings of such close royal association, the praise for the Warley pictures was all but unanimous. Seen in the context of the artist's attempts to steal a march on his main competitors in the landscape line, the commission from Pierson had indeed proved something of a gift. Together with the rousing subject matter and the fact that the pictures were now part of the royal collection, the artist's less showy handling had been enough to persuade critics that Loutherbouurg had at last overcome the worst excesses of his French training. While pictures so 'full of business' were at odds with their outward commitment to common, universal forms, these things also surely helped sway the Academicians who were to make the artist one of their own only nine or so months after the first public showing of *The Troops at Warley-Camp*, reviewed by his Majesty.

By all accounts, Loutherbouurg and his patron had originally planned to have the scenes of the Warley review and mock battle engraved by the leading printmaker Francesco Bartolozzi.⁸⁹ While the painter probably sensed that the topicality and patriotic nature of the subject matter would have marketable appeal, Pierson was alert to how such ventures served to enhance ambitious young officers' profile. Though the reason why this scheme was abandoned is now obscure it seems likely that the decision to make a gift of the original oils to the Crown played a part.⁹⁰ That was no less an act of self-promotion, of course, done in the service of furthering both men's careers and reputations, but one that dressed that ambition in less commercially minded, more patriotic terms. The strategy paid off handsomely, with Pierson being made a Knight Companion of the Order of the Bath for services to the Crown in November 1780, the same month that Loutherbouurg became an associate member of the Academy. But, while the two men's elevation in their respective fields was coincident at first, their paths diverged dramatically on 13 February 1781: the day Loutherbouurg was elected to full Academician status, it also saw Pierson die suddenly having fallen ill on a visit (appropriately enough) to the theatre.⁹¹ While these events probably also factored in the change of plan to have the Warley scenes engraved, there is perhaps another way of accounting for the abandonment of the scheme; one which leads us back to that disconcerting mix of humour and patriotic display playing out across the pictures.

Loutherbouurg and his patron were not alone in recognising the potential appeal of pictures of camp life and dramatised martial spectacle. Twelve months after the first Academy exhibition at Somerset House, and with an eye on their designs going into print, both Paul Sandby and Samuel Hieronymus Grimm were to exhibit gently humorous views of the military encampments hastily reassembled in the capital in the wake of the Gordon Riots.⁹² Both of these artists delighted in the comic potential of the urban tourist's fascination with all things military. But, unlike Loutherbouurg, they made the redcoat, not the visitor, the butt of the joke. With the soldiers' low-key amorous and drunken antics taking place before a series of historic set-piece London landmarks, the mood of these urban pastorals was also serene, more that of the *fête galante* than a battle picture. While alert to the narrative and scenic possibilities, as well as the commercial appeal of such subject matter, it is as if, following the horrific ferocity of the mob-led disorder of early June 1780 (which had seen Petre's London townhouse among the targets), Grimm and Sandby thought it prudent to downplay the dramatic energy of the crowd that so enlivened and troubled the French painter's epic canvases (and which this article has puzzled over).

Obviously, Loutherbourg's Warley pictures were of a time as much as a particular place; a moment of genuine alarm and division that many were only too happy to forget. They baffle in part perhaps because their fleeting topicality goes against the grain of a genre so often viewed through a nostalgic, timeless rural lens. But while the setting that Loutherbourg delineated with exacting precision was distinctly local and rustic, the audience for the pictures was resolutely urban and the scenes depicted very much of a moment. Being firmly rooted in a wide-ranging knowledge of the local topography, the Warley paintings demonstrated the artist's sensitivity to audiences' growing curiosity about the nation's localities and their patriotic associations. But in their arresting conjunction of naturalistic illusion and theatrical slapstick they also engaged with often overlooked humorous and parodic aspects of the British landscape tradition. Indeed, the commission from Pierson required Loutherbourg to juggle various agendas and narratives. Some were founded upon the artist's aspirations for academic and critical acceptance as well as the performance of his loyalty. Others were determined by Pierson's courting of royal favour. In this, the artist and his patron's interconnected strategies also knowingly played on the close bonds between various theatricalised forms of cultural and social experience and space that present-day scholars tend to hold apart. They keyed into the period's taste for war as carefully choreographed spectacle as well as its keen fascination with the overtly performative brand of militarism that fed it. Knowingly superficial, even ludicrous at times, and as likely to be the cause of unease as confidence, the showiness of that culture was seductive; artists, writers and their audiences all revelling in the spectacular displays of firepower and majesty paraded in the country's localities and then re-enacted and reimaged in the capital's print culture, theatres, and exhibition rooms. Loutherbourg's Warley scenes were designed to exploit the permeability of these staging grounds.

Notes

Thanks are due to Stephen Daniels and the journal's anonymous readers for their insightful and helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

- 1 On exhibition, the first picture was captioned in the catalogue as *A landscape, in which are represented the manoeuvres of an attack performed before their Majesties on Little Warley Common, under the command of Gen. Pierson on the 20th of October 1778*. For Pierson's commission of these 'two military views', see *The Morning Post*, and *Daily Advertiser*, 6 November 1778.
- 2 For discussion and analysis of these camps, see J. A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715–1815*, Oxford, 1981, 322–346; and Stephen Conway, 'Locality, Metropolis and Nation: The Impact of Military Camps in England during the American Revolution', *History*, 82: 267, 1997, 547–562. On the invasion scare more generally, see A. Temple Patterson, *The Other Armada: The Franco-Spanish Attempt to Invade Britain in 1779*, Manchester, 1960.
- 3 Holger Hoock was the first to note the bellicosity of this exhibition programme in *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and Politics of British Culture 1760–1840*, Oxford, 2003, 150–157. Militaristic themes in Academy exhibitions of the period have also been discussed in Mark Hallett, 'Reading the Walls: Pictorial Dialogue at the British Royal Academy', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 37: 4, 2004, 581–604, 596–597; and Eleanor Hughes, 'Ships of the Line: Marine Paintings at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1784', in *Art and the British Empire*, ed. Tim Barringer, Geoff Quilley, and Douglas Fordham, Manchester, 2007, 139–152.
- 4 For a helpful recent summary, see Charles Withers and Robert Mayhew, 'Geography: Space, Place and Intellectual History in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34: 4, 2011, 445–452.
- 5 See the essays in David H. Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780–1836*, New Haven and London, 2001.
- 6 Hallett, 'Reading the Walls'; Rosie Dias, "'A World of Pictures': Pall Mall and the Topography of Display, 1780–99', in *Georgian Geographies: Essays on Space, Place and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Miles Ogborn and Charles Withers, Manchester, 2004, 92–113.
- 7 On the social experience of the London theatre in this period, see Daniel O'Quinn, *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London, 1770–1800*, Baltimore, 2005.
- 8 Gillian Russell, *Theatres of War: Performance, Politics and Society, 1793–1815*, Oxford, 1995, 33–51; Robert W. Jones, 'Notes on The Camp: Women, Effeminacy and the Military in Late Eighteenth-Century Literature', *Textual Practice*, 11: 3, Winter 1997, 463–476; Daniel J. Ennis, 'Invasion of the Afterpieces: Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Richard Pilon, 1778–79', in *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers and Afterpieces: The Rest of the Eighteenth-Century Stage*, ed. Daniel J. Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle, Cranbury, 2007, 214–237; Robert W. Jones, 'Sheridan and the Theatre of Patriotism: Staging Dissent during the War for America', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 26: 1, 2002, 24–45; Robert W. Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics in Britain, 1770–1785*, Cambridge, 2011; and Daniel O'Quinn, *Entertaining Crisis in the American Imperium, 1770–1790*, Baltimore, 2011.
- 9 See the family history sketched in 'Anecdotes of Mr. de Loutherbourg', *The European Magazine*, and *London Review*, I, March 1782, 181–182, 181. The author of this piece is usually thought to be the artist himself: see William Whitley, *Artists and their Friends in England, 1700–1799*, 2 vols, London and New York, 1968, II, 352.
- 10 Interestingly, in the years around 1800, after a lengthy break and at a time when his loyalties may once more have appeared uncertain

- to some, Louthembourg returned to painting military subjects, exhibiting a series of epic, set piece canvases treating battle scenes from the war with revolutionary and Napoleonic France to no little commercial success and critical acclaim: in the first of which, *The Grand Attack on Valenciennes by the Combined Armies under the Command of HRH Duke of York*, the artist consciously recycled elements of the earlier Warley scenes. See Oliver Lefeuve, *Philippe-Jacques de Louthembourg: 1740–1812*, Paris, 2012, 287–289.
- 11 David H. Solkin, ‘“This Great Mart of Genius”: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780–1836’, in *Art on the Line*, ed. Solkin, 1–8.
 - 12 Ralph G. Allen, *The Stage Spectacles of Philip James de Louthembourg*, unpublished PhD thesis, Yale University, 1960; Christopher Baugh, *Garrick and Louthembourg*, Cambridge, 1990. For an invaluable recent account of the art and career, see Lefeuve, *Louthembourg*.
 - 13 Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London*, Cambridge, MA and London, 1978, 117–127; Stephen Daniels, ‘Louthembourg’s Chemical Theatre: *Coalbrookdale by Night*’, in *Painting and the Politics of Culture: New Essays on British Art 1700–1850*, ed. John Barrell, Oxford, 1992, 195–230; Iain McCalman, ‘The Art of de Louthembourg’s *Eidophusikon*’, in *Sensation and Sensibility: Viewing Gainsborough’s Cottage Door*, ed. Ann Bermingham, New Haven and London, 2005, 181–197; Christopher Baugh, ‘Phillipe de Louthembourg: Technology-Driven Entertainment and Spectacle in the Late Eighteenth Century’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 70: 2, 2007, 252–253; David Kornhaber, ‘Regarding the *Eidophusikon*: Spectacle, Scenography, and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Theatre Arts Journal*, 1, 2009, 45–59; Lefeuve, *Louthembourg*, 76–80, 370–373; Ann Bermingham, ‘Technologies of Illusion: de Louthembourg’s *Eidophusikon* in Eighteenth-Century London’, *Art History*, 39: 2, 2016, 376–399; and Shearer West, ‘Virtual Reality *Avant la Lettre*: Louthembourg and the Origins of Urban Spectacle’, *Theatre and Film*, 46: 2, 2019, 119–135.
 - 14 Iain McCalman, ‘Conquering Academy and Marketplace: de Louthembourg’s Channel Crossing’, in *Living with the Royal Academy: Artistic Ideals and Experiences in England, 1768–1848*, ed. Sarah Monks, Mark Hallett, and John Barrell, Farnham, 2013, 75–88.
 - 15 ‘A View of the *Eidophusikon*’, *The European Magazine, and London Review*, I, March 1782, 180–181, 180. This article prefaces the ‘Anecdotes’ referred to in n.8 above and was probably also authored by Louthembourg.
 - 16 Lefeuve, *Louthembourg*, cat. no. 150, 154, 246–247, 248–249. See also Rüdiger Joppien, *Philippe-Jacques de Louthembourg, RA, 1740–1812*, exh. cat., London, 1973, cat. no. 59–60, u.p.
 - 17 Lefeuve, *Louthembourg*, cat. no. 46, 22, 201–202.
 - 18 For a fuller discussion of this kind of dialogue in relation to another contemporary work on a military theme, see John Bonehill, ‘Exhibiting War: John Singleton Copley’s *The Siege of Gibraltar* and the Staging of History’, in *Conflicting Visions: War and Visual Culture in Britain and France c.1700–1830*, ed. John Bonehill and Geoff Quilley, Aldershot, 2005, 139–168.
 - 19 See most recently John Seed, ‘“The Fall of Romish Babylon anticipated”: Plebian Dissenters and Anti-Popery in the Gordon Riots’, in *The Gordon Riots: Politics, Culture, and Insurrection in Late Georgian Britain*, ed. Ian Haywood and John Seed, Cambridge, 2012, 69–92; and Brad A. Jones, ‘“In Favour of Popery”: Patriotism, Protestantism, and the Gordon Riots in the Revolutionary British Atlantic’, *Journal of British Studies*, 52, 2013, 79–102.
 - 20 See, for example, the graphic satire *Grace before Meat or a Peep at Lord Peter’s*, usually attributed to a young James Gillray, and published by William Humphrey shortly after the King’s visit to Thorndon. Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum, London, BM5362.
 - 21 For an account in Petre’s own hand of the preparations as well as the ‘Most Material Circumstances’ of the visit, see Essex Record Office, Chelmsford, D/DP Z13/17.
 - 22 *The Annual Register, Or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature, For the Year 1778*, London, 1779, 237.
 - 23 *The London Gazette*, 20–24 October 1778.
 - 24 William Tasker, *An Ode to the Warlike Genius of Great Britain*, third ed., London, 1780, 19.
 - 25 *The Annual Register*, 237.
 - 26 See n.21 above.
 - 27 *The London Gazette*, 20–24 October 1778.
 - 28 Julie Anne Plax, ‘Seventeenth-Century French Images of Warfare’, in *Artful Armies, Beautiful Battles: Art and Warfare in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Pia F. Cuneo, Leiden, 2001, 131–158.
 - 29 On the Derbyshire sketches and production, see Allen, ‘The Stage Spectacles of Philip James de Louthembourg’, 187–208; Ralph G. Allen, ‘The Wonders of Derbyshire: A Spectacular Eighteenth-Century Travelogue’, *Theatre Survey*, 2, 1961, 54–66; and Daniels, ‘Louthembourg’s Chemical Theatre’, 210–214. For the opening scene of the *Eidophusikon*, see *The Morning Herald, and Daily Advertiser*, 1 March 1781; and Ephraim Hardcastle [William H. Pyne], *Wine and Walnuts; Or, After Dinner Chit-Chat*, 2 vols, London, 1823, I, 284–285.
 - 30 Felicity Myrone, ‘“The Monarch of the Plain”: Paul Sandby and Topography’, in *Paul Sandby: Picturing Britain*, ed. John Bonehill and Stephen Daniels, exh. cat., London, 2009, 56–63; John Barrell, *Edward Pugh of Ruthin 1763–1813: ‘A Native Artist’*, Cardiff, 2013.
 - 31 John Bonehill, ‘Laying Siege to the Royal Academy: Wright of Derby’s View of Gibraltar at Robins’s Rooms, Covent Garden, April 1785’, *Art History*, 30: 4, 2007, 521–544.
 - 32 A second, nearly identical but less polished copy of these plans once belonging to Morrison is in the collection of the British Library, London, Add. MS 15533.
 - 33 Samuel Johnson, letter to Hester Maria Thrale, 15 October 1778, in *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, 5 vols, ed. Bruce Redford, Oxford, 1992–94, III, 128.
 - 34 *Gazeteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 29 May 1778. For a compelling discussion of the ‘picturesque’ in relation to military landscapes of the late Georgian era, see Finola O’Kane, ‘Military Manoeuvres in Dublin’s Phoenix Park, 1775–1820’, in *Military Landscapes*, ed. Anatole Tchikine and John Dean Davis, Washington, DC, 2021, 311–329.
 - 35 Tasker, *Ode*, 20.
 - 36 Bonehill and Daniels, *Paul Sandby*, cat. no. 49, 142–143.
 - 37 Matthew McCormack, *Embodying the Militia in Georgian England*, Oxford, 2015, 139.
 - 38 *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, 31 July–3 August 1778.
 - 39 *The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 6 November 1778.
 - 40 Tasker, *Ode*, 21.
 - 41 On the origins of this iconography in European court culture and its employment by the early Stuarts, see Malcolm Smuts, ‘Force, Love and Authority in Caroline Political Culture’, in *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays in Culture and Politics in the Caroline Era*, ed. Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders, Manchester, 2006, 28–49.
 - 42 *The Public Advertiser*, 22 October 1778.
 - 43 *General Evening-Post*, 7 October 1778.
 - 44 James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, 2 vols, London, 1791, II, 273.
 - 45 [Oliver Goldsmith], ‘The Distresses of a Common Soldier’, *The British Magazine; or Monthly Repository for Gentlemen and Ladies*, 1, June 1760, 369–372.
 - 46 John Millar, *Observations Concerning the Distinctions of Ranks in Society*, second ed. rev., London, 1773, 231; J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton, 1975, 401–422.
 - 47 [Samuel Johnson], ‘The Bravery of English Common Soldiers’, *The British Magazine; or Monthly Repository for Gentlemen and Ladies*, 1, January 1760, 37–39.
 - 48 Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth’s Graphic Works*, third ed. rev., London, 1989, cat. no. 202–203, 169–170.
 - 49 Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III*, New Haven and London, 1996, 109–141.
 - 50 Joppien, *Louthembourg*, cat. no. 20–28. On the ‘comedy’ of somatic distortion in the art of the period more generally, see Shearer West, ‘The De-formed Face of Democracy: Class, Comedy and Character in Eighteenth-Century Portraiture’, in *Culture and Society in Britain 1660–1800*, ed. Jeremy Black, Manchester, 1997, 163–188.
 - 51 *The Public Advertiser*, 26 April 1777.
 - 52 *The Morning Chronicle, and London Advertiser*, 26 April 1779.
 - 53 ‘Some Account of the late Exhibition at the Royal Academy’, *The Gentleman’s Magazine; and Historical Chronicle*, 50, June 1780, 318–319.
 - 54 *A Candid Review of the Exhibition (Being the Twelfth) of the Royal Academy, M DCC LXXX: Dedicated to His Majesty, By An Artist*, London, 1780, 14–15.
 - 55 Joseph Holden Pott, *An Essay on Landscape Painting*, London, 1782, 78–79.
 - 56 John O’Keefe, *Recollections of the Life of John O’Keefe*, 2 vols, London, 1826, II, 114.

- 57 On the lasting implications of these developments for the architecture of the theatre and the nature of the dramatic experience, see Baugh, 'Technology-Driven Entertainment', 265–268; and Iain McCalman, 'Loutherbouurg's Simulations: Reenactment and Realism in Late-Georgian Britain', in *Historical Reenactment: From Realism to the Effective Turn*, ed. Iain McCalman and Paul A. Pickering, Basingstoke, 2010, 200–217.
- 58 *The St. James' Chronicle and Evening Post*, 4–9 October 1773.
- 59 *The General Evening-Post*, 1–3 September 1778.
- 60 *The London Chronicle*, 20 October 1778; *The Morning Chronicle*, and *London Advertiser*, 16 October 1778. For discussions of the production, and especially Sheridan's text, see Russell, *Theatres of War*, 26–51; and Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 159–194.
- 61 *The General Advertiser and Morning*, 17 October 1778.
- 62 *The Morning Chronicle*, and *London Advertiser*, 16 October 1778.
- 63 *St. James' Chronicle and Evening Post*, 15 October 1778.
- 64 Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 'The Camp: A Musical Entertainment' [1778], in *The Plays and Poems of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, 3 vols, ed. R. Crompton Rhodes, New York, 1962, III, 296.
- 65 Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 84–118.
- 66 *The General Evening-Post*, 7 October 1778.
- 67 *The General Evening-Post*, 7 October 1778.
- 68 On critical responses to Loutherbouurg's art, see Anne Puetz, 'Foreign Exhibitors and the British School at the Royal Academy, 1768–1823', in *Art on the Line*, ed. Solkin, 229–241; and K. Dian Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter: Genius as Alibi in the Early Nineteenth Century*, New Haven and London, 1997, 106–110.
- 69 Roger Shanahan [William Porden, Robert Smirke, and Robert Watson], *The Exhibition, Or A Second Anticipation: Being Remarks on the principal Works to be Exhibited next Month, at the Royal Academy*, London, 1779, 64, 66.
- 70 Shanahan, *The Exhibition*, 69. Loutherbouurg was one of several established figures subjected to vehement criticism by the young Academy students behind this publication, their animus presumably motivated by some now obscure sleight.
- 71 Shanahan, *The Exhibition*, 65.
- 72 Pott, *Essay*, 56.
- 73 Pott, *Essay*, 56, 59.
- 74 William Hayley, *A Poetic Epistle to an Eminent Painter*, London, 1778, 24.
- 75 Michael Rosenthal, *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough: 'a little business for the eye'*, New Haven and London, 1999, 95–96.
- 76 Rosenthal, *Gainsborough*, 90–92; Michael Rosenthal and Martin Myrone, eds, *Gainsborough*, exh. cat., London, 2002, 3; Susan Sloman, *Gainsborough's Landscapes: Themes and Variations*, exh. cat., Bath, 2012, 68.
- 77 *The Morning Chronicle*, and *London Advertiser*, 25 April 1777.
- 78 *A Candid Review*, 24. For an account of Wilson's decline, see David H. Solkin, *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction*, exh. cat., London, 1982. On Barret's career difficulties, see John Bonehill, 'House Painting: Place and Position in Estate Portraiture circa 1770', in *Politics and the English Country House, 1688–1800*, ed. Joan Coutu, Peter Lindfield, and Jon Stobart, Montreal and Kingston, 2023, 171–196, 185.
- 79 *A Candid Review*, iii; Douglas Fordham, *British Art and the Seven Years' War*, Philadelphia, 2010, 249–250.
- 80 Helmut von Erffa and Alan Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*, New Haven and London, 1986, cat. 549, 464; Hoock, *The King's Artists*, 152.
- 81 Horace Walpole, letter to William Mason, 19 May 1780, in *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols, ed. W. S. Lewis et al., New Haven and London, 1937–83, XXIX, 33.
- 82 Nicholas Penny, ed., *Reynolds*, exh. cat., London, 1986, cat. 118, 289–290.
- 83 Mark Hallett, *Reynolds: Portraiture in Motion*, New Haven and London, 2014, 386. On the satirical treatment of aristocratic female 'camp followers', see Russell, *Theatres of War*, 33–51; and Jones, 'Notes on The Camp'. George Huddesford's two-part *Warley: A Satire*, London, 1778, a text dedicated 'To the First Artist in Europe', Reynolds, is a particularly vicious example of such commentary.
- 84 Martin Postle, ed., *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity*, exh. cat., London, 2005, 89–111; Eleanor Hughes, ed., *Spreading Canvas: Eighteenth-Century British Marine Painting*, exh. cat., New Haven, 2016, 237–253.
- 85 Fordham, *British Art*, 251.
- 86 Pott, *Essay*, 78–79.
- 87 *The London Courant*, and *Westminster Chronicle*, 4 May 1780.
- 88 *The Morning Chronicle*, and *London Advertiser*, 20 May 1780.
- 89 *The Morning Post*, and *Daily Advertiser*, 6 November 1778.
- 90 Based on the timing of their exhibition and the first press mentions of the pictures being presented to the Crown, it seems likely that the paintings passed straight from Loutherbouurg's studio to the Royal Academy to the royal collection. While it would be useful to know more about the pictures' subsequent display history, there is no record of where they were hung prior to the early nineteenth century, when they were listed as being in the Music Room at Kew Palace (see Oliver Miller, *Later Georgian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, London, 1969, OM 932).
- 91 *The Morning Chronicle*, and *London Advertiser*, 15 February 1781.
- 92 Bonehill and Daniels, *Paul Sandby*, cat. no. 50–52, 144–147.