

Ernest Stafford Carlos 1883-1917



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Introduction

The Carlos family connection with Shropshire began with the flight of King Charles II after the Battle of Worcester when Charles shared his refuge in the Oak Tree at Boscobel with Colonel Carless. As a reward for his services, Carless took the name Carlos at the time of the Restoration and the family were granted an augmentation of their coat of arms to include the oak at Boscobel.

Ernest Stafford Carlos as an artist does not appear in the standard dictionaries of artists; he was making his reputation when he volunteered for the army in 1916 and, like so many of his generation, perished in the mud of Flanders.

He is best known in Scouting circles for his picture *The Pathfinder* and other Scout subjects.

Biography

Born on 4th June 1883, Carlos received his early education at St. John's Middle Class School, Kennington. From there he moved to the Lambeth Art School and thence to the Royal Academy School in 1901 on a three-year scholarship. This was renewed for a further two years.

He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1900 with a small picture entitled *Soldiers*; he was then 17 years old. In the same year he was awarded the National Medal [South Kensington]. This was followed by the Landseer Scholarship for painting in 1903, a British Institute Scholarship in 1904 and the Royal Academy Silver Medals in 1904 and 1906. He gained a gold medal at the Bury St. Edmund's Exhibition of 1908.

He set up his studio at 42 Foxley Road, North Brixton, somewhere around 1904, and a small notebook, still in the possession of his family,

records his commissions from that year onwards. It was here that he first became involved with youth work and was also made aware of the social problems in London's East End.

In November 1908 he painted a copy of the portrait of John, Bishop of Salisbury by Sir George Reid. This was executed at Church House, Salisbury. There followed from this a long and fruitful connection with the cathedral clergy. He was held in high regard there and helped with the camps held for boys of the Bishop's School. In 1908 he painted the boys in camp [no 53 in the exhibition of his works held at Church House, Salisbury in the same year]. The Salisbury connection was also instrumental in bringing commissions from families who were connected with the cathedral clergy, particularly the Oldfields of Salisbury.

In his early days, Carlos travelled extensively around the country, painting and making copies of portraits and other works. In 1906 he was at Inverary Castle, making a copy of a Hoppner painting for the Duke of Argyll, and at a later date he supplied the Duke with a copy of a portrait of HRH the Princess Louise, Colonel in Chief of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He went to Paris in 1906 to make a copy of the portrait of Catherine II of Russia for the Princess Bobinsky.

In addition to this kind of work he was receiving commissions and steadily building up a reputation as a portrait painter. His painting *Rejected and Dejected* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1908. This had previously been shown at his Salisbury exhibition under the title *One of London's Unemployed* and was a portrait of an old soldier who the artist had met outside the Church Army Shelter in London, a man still in the prime of life but without a trade. The painting made a deep impression at the Academy and was later used by the Independent Labour Party on one of their local election pamphlets in Lambeth. It also included

Carlos' own feelings about life and conditions in London's East End, a situation which Carlos was to attempt to alleviate during the remainder of his life.

This was achieved in two ways – working through the Church organisations and within the Scout Movement. Scouting had been started in 1907 by Robert Baden-Powell who, through his defence of Mafeking during the Boer War, had become a popular hero. Scouting today is sometimes criticised as being a middle-class Movement. Baden-Powell's intention was to help the underprivileged as much as the others and to form a classless brotherhood. In London's East End such men as Ernest Carlos and Roland Philipps strove to achieve this aim.

Philipps, son of Viscount St. David, founded Roland House, a settlement for Scouts in the East End of London. He was killed in France in 1916 and the House became his memorial.

Ernest Carlos founded the 107th London Troop and he was assisted in his work as Leader by his brother, the Reverend J.B. Carlos, who was in later years to hold many positions in Scouting. The 107th London Troop still continues as the 21st Camberwell [Trinity] Scout Group.

His connection with the Scout Movement led to move away from portraiture to the production of a series of paintings with a Scouting context illustrating Scouting activities of the period. Some of the paintings especially those which were exhibited at the Royal Academy made an impact upon the viewers. If Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* had caught the imagination of boys, Ernest Carlos' paintings brought to the attention of a wider audience the meaning of Scouting and its ethos. They gained widespread sympathy and support and were reproduced as prints, post and greetings cards and even as stained glass windows.

Carlos produced several versions of his most important works such as *If I were a boy again* and *His Country's Flag*. Upon the Scout Movement itself his picture *The Pathfinder* has made a lasting impression. Baden-Powell wrote in 1917: 'I am certain that his picture and especially *The Pathfinder* have already done an immense amount of good among boys and will live to do more.' Reproductions of the picture were made and could be found in most Scout Headquarters throughout the world. Many know of the painting but few know of the man who was responsible for its conception. It has been reproduced as a

stained glass window in several churches. *The Pathfinder* window in Holy Cross Church, Hornchurch, is the family memorial to him. The original painting now hangs in The Scout Association's national Headquarters at Gilwell Park in the Baerlein Room. He did paint two copies but always regarded the version at Gilwell as the original.

This painting has been reproduced as posters, Christmas cards, calendars and other ways. But its biggest claim to fame is that a sepia print of the painting appears in Granada tv's *Coronation Street* and has done so since the soap opera began in 1961. [First it was Uncle Albert's, then Deirdre's and now it's on Ken Barlow's wall.]

At the outbreak of war in 1914 Carlos volunteered for military service but was rejected on medical grounds. As a result he became more deeply involved in social work, particularly for the parishes of St. George in Camberwell and St. John the Divine, Kennington. He was also associated with the Belgrave Hospital for Children and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Relief Association while continuing his work in Scouting. He also continued producing paintings depicting the Scout's role in the Great War, a fine example being *Coast watching* of 1915 showing the Sea Scouts who had taken over the running of the Coastguard Service throughout the 1914-1918 War.

Carlos again volunteered in 1916 and was accepted as a Private in the Queen's Westminster Rifles [the 16th London Regiment]. After a short period of service abroad he returned to England and was posted to No 12 Officer Cadet Battalion at Newmarket from which he was commissioned as a Second-Lieutenant to the Royal East Kent Regiment [the Buffs]. He joined his regiment in France in March 1917, he still found time to sketch life in the trenches but he did not live to see the end of hostilities. Carlos was killed by shellfire in the evening of 14th June 1917 while leading his platoon in an attack and his body now lies in the Chester Farm Cemetery, Zillebeke.

Mrs. Wordsworth, the wife of the Bishop of Salisbury, writing to his mother after his death said: 'It seems to me utterly wrong that such a man as he was should be a soldier. We cannot afford to lose these gentle, high, fine natures, who do so much by their gentle kindness and understanding to help everyone to make this world a better place. He did this always, in a remarkable way.'

An assessment

For too long Carlos has been thought of as the 'apologist' of the early Scout Movement, with his famous [and much reproduced] painting *The Pathfinder* epitomising not only the ideals of Scouting but also the ethos of an age now past.

Thus, his continuing neglect by a wider public is not too difficult to understand, a neglect heightened by the fact that many of his paintings have remained in the possession of his family and as a result his talents have been seen by the comparatively few. Certainly his work reveals him as much more than a mere publicist for Scouting for Boys.

True, he appears to have been passionately interested in the Movement and his paintings of Scouting subjects reveal his own involvement and have a veracity and an almost timeless appeal to Scouts and Scouters.

It was, however, as a portrait painter that he made his reputation and his notebooks for the years 1904-1916 reveal that a substantial amount of his time and energy was devoted to this field. It is easy to understand why, for his portraits, although lacking any very great individuality reflect with some accuracy both the superficial appearance and the character of the sitter.

But Carlos had more than the artist's eye for truth – he had a social conscience. The more striking of his paintings [*Dejected and rejected* for example] indicate quite clearly his sympathy for the oppressed and reflect his concern for the state of his times. Some of his finest work embodies these sentiments and one can only ponder on the depths of creativity that the post-World War 1 situation and the Depression may have drawn from him. Indeed, his premature death may well have been a greater loss to art than is realised.

Something of the same feeling emanates from his war-time notebooks. Most of the small watercolour sketches are drawn boldly, almost as cartoons, with no great fineness of line. Some are superficially funny and the whole series reveal an ability to retain a sense of humour under extreme circumstances, but the overall impression left by them is one which seems merely to emphasise the futility of war.

Ernest Carlos was more than a mere journeyman – he was a true artist with talent, technique and imagination. His death at the early age of 34 was

a loss far more than just his immediate circle of relatives and friends.

Pictures by Carlos exhibited at the Royal Academy

- 1901 *Old Soldier*, no 132
- 1907 *Sir Louis Coward, KC*
- 1909 *Rejected and dejected*
Gained Gold Medal at Bury St. Edmunds; no 43 in Salisbury, exhibited in 1908 as *One of London's unemployed*
- 1912 *Be prepared**, no 732
- 1913 *Good service work in a London slum**, no 309
- 1914 *The Bishop of Kingston*, no 572
- 1914 *Raw material**
- 1915 *Separation allowance*

* Pictures now owned by The Scout Association

The paintings of Ernest Stafford Carlos

Self portrait

20in x 16in, oil on canvas, signed
Exhibited at Salisbury 1908 as no 28, *The painter painted painting*

The artist's father

20in x 30in, oil on canvas, signed
[John G. Carlos]

Edward R. Carlos, ARCO

28in x 36in, oil on canvas, signed, no date
Exhibited at Salisbury 1908, no 20
[E.R. Carlos. the artist's brother. was organist at St.Peter's, Walworth]

Salisbury Cloisters

12in x 18in, oil on canvas, signed, no date

Ach-na-cloid, Loch Etvie

13in x 17in, oil on canvas, signed
Probably painted in 1906 when the artist was in Scotland working for the Duke of Argyll

Wash day, Newlyn

12in x 8in, oil on canvas, unsigned, no date

Low tide, Appledore

13in x 17in, oil on canvas, signed monogram, no date

Soldiers

15in x 17in, oil on canvas, signed
Exhibited at the Royal Academy 1901, no 132.
Painted when the artist was 17 years old.

Ulysses recognised by his nurse Eurydea

40 ½in x 50in, oil on canvas, signed
Exhibited at Salisbury 1908, no 26

Charles II with Colonel Carless at the Penderella

38in x 51in, oil on canvas signed
Exhibited at Luton, no date and the London Fine Arts Exhibition, also no date

A Suffolk Plough

11 ½in x 15 ½in, oil on board, signed

Steps leading to the Abbey Gate [St. Michael's Normandy]

12in x 10in, oil on canvas, signed no date

Separation allowance

19 ½ in x 15 ½in, oil on canvas, signed, no date
Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1915

Oil House, Newlyn

7in x10in, oil on canvas, unsigned, no date

Woman with shawl

22in x13 ½in, oil on canvas, signed, no date

West Highland terrier

20in x 24in, oil on canvas, no date

The windmill

15in x22in, oil on canvas, signed, no date

War service Scout

39in x 49 ½in, oil on canvas, unsigned, no date

Scouts playing draughts

19 ½in x 24in, oil on canvas, unsigned, no date
Exhibited at Gilwell Park, 1973, no 18

Sketch of a Scout by candlelight at table

22in x13in, oil on canvas, unsigned, no date
Exhibited at Gilwell Park 1i973 as The Cowshed, no 15

If I were a boy again

39in x 49in, oil on canvas, signed
A smaller copy of the original is in the family's possession. Purchased and presented to Roland House, Stepney, London. Now hanging in the Group Room at The Scout Association's national headquarters at Gilwell Park.

Scout at window/Day dreams

23 ½in x 19in, oil on canvas, signed, no date
Purchased for The Scout Association 1982 by Col R.H. Hall; now hanging in the Founder's Room at

The Scout Association's national headquarters at Gilwell Park

The Pathfinder

41in x 30in oil on canvas, signed, no date
Copy in the family possession. The published reproductions were made from this copy and there are slight variations between this and the original. The first painting was sold twice and finally presented to Scout Headquarters, London by the Trustees of Roland Philipps. Now hanging in the Baerlein Room at The Scout Association's national headquarters at Gilwell Park. The boy in the painting has now been identified as Percy Greaves.

The Pathfinder [a preliminary study]

36in x 24in, oil on canvas, unsigned
Exhibited at Gilwell Park 1973 no 3

Portrait of a Scout

23in x13in oil on canvas unsigned
Exhibited at Gilwell Park, 1973 no 20

Scouts map reading

23 ½in x 19 ½in, oil on canvas, unsigned, no date
Exhibited at Gilwell Park 1973 no 22

Scouts filling water bottle

12in x10in, oil on canvas signed, no date
Exhibited at Gilwell Park 1973 as *Refreshments*

Good service work in a London slum

48 ½in x 68 ½in, oil on canvas, signed, dated 1912
Exhibited at the Royal Academy no 309, 1913; Gilwell Park 1973, no 26; Derby art gallery, no date
Purchased by The Scout Association 1995. Now hanging outside the Group Room at The Scout Association's national headquarters at Gilwell Park

Raw material

49 ½in x 73in, oil on canvas, signed
Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1914, number unknown; Gilwell Park 1973, no 27
Purchased by The Scout Association 1995. Now hanging by the Crinoline staircase in the White House at The Scout Association's national headquarters at Gilwell Park.

Be prepared/Headquarters

36in x50 ½in, oil on canvas, signed
Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1912 no 732; Gilwell Park 1973, no 25

Now hanging in the Betty Clay Library at The Scout Association's national headquarters at Gilwell Park

Coast watching

50in x 55in, oil in canvas, signed, no date
An interesting picture in that the Scouts are wearing normal uniform but with Sea Scout caps. Studies in his sketch book suggest that the old Scout hats had been substituted for the caps. Now hanging in the Betty Clay Library at The Scout Association's national headquarters at Gilwell Park

Scout writing/ Time for thought

15in x 13in, oil on canvas, signed and dated 1911. Exhibited Gilwell Park 1973 as Kim's Game, no 12
Now hanging in the White House at The Scout Association's national headquarters at Gilwell Park

Scout Drummer Boy

11in x 19 ½in, oil on canvas, not signed
Exhibited at Gilwell Park 1973 as the *Drummer*, no 9

Scouts reading

10in x 14in oil on canvas, unsigned
Exhibited at Gilwell Park 1973 as the *Readers*, no 21

His Country's Flag

12 ½in x 12in, oil on canvas, signed monogram
Exhibited at Gilwell Park 1973 no 7. Used by Scout Headquarters as a Christmas card and in other publications

Camp stories

19in x 30in, oil on canvas, signed
Exhibited at Gilwell Park 1973 no 23

Portrait of a Scout

22in x 13in, oil on canvas, unsigned
Exhibited Gilwell Park 1973 no 13

A letter from home

8 ½in x 11 ½in, oil on canvas signed, no date

Camping days

21 ½in x 12in oil on canvas, unsigned, no date

Tent pitching

16 ½in x 19 ½in, oil on canvas signed, no date
Exhibited at Gilwell Park 1973 no 19

The head of a man

30in x 21 ½in, pencil study, unsigned, no date
Royal Academy study

Head of a woman

30in x 21 ½in, pencil study, unsigned, no date
Royal Academy study

General fitter

Photogravure from painting by E.S. Carlos

**Other material exhibited at Shrewsbury Art Gallery, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury
2nd February – 9th March 1974**

A folio containing sketches and photographs. The watercolour sketches are studies for the painting Raw Material. It also contains photographs on paintings and portraits.

Scrap book containing obituary notices, details of the various Pathfinder stained glass windows in churches. A catalogue of paintings left in the studio after his death and a notebook giving details of his commissions.

A sketch book with studies in pencil for various Scouting pictures including The Pathfinder

The artist at war 1: sketches and watercolours made around Roubeck, Poperighe, Dickebusch and other places in the Ypres Salient.

The artist at war 2: Pencil and watercolour sketches of his regiment at rest and in action.

Scrapbook of postcards, etc made by Ernest Carlos and sent to his family over a period of years.

Boys identified in the paintings:

It is known that in many cases Carlos used real people to pose for him. In recent years the Archivist of The Scout Association has been able to identify some of the individuals to modelled for these paintings.

Good service work in a London slum:

Albert Emins [PL]

The Pathfinder:

Percy Greaves

Be prepared:

George Wild, Bob Blackett, Dennis Patterson
[map is SW England]

If I were a boy again:

Bob Blackett

Raw material:

Wellington Troop, Lambeth, SM Maurice Gamon; PLs were Maurice's boys who nurse him through a serious illness in his little digs off Waterloo Road when his own relatives knew nothing of it. The recruit eventually took over the Troop.

Personal details

Family

The Carlos family consist of both parents and six sons and one daughter:

Rev Jack, George, Ernie, Sid BSc, twins Ted ARCO and Bob, Nina

Ernest

A tall, loosely built man with a long easy stride. Never seemed to be in a hurry and with a wonderful sense of humour; 5ft 10in tall, lean and very active