Ceci Aldin

Cecil Aldin

National College of Art and Design

The Influences on the Life and Work of Cecil Aldin : Artist 1870 - 1935

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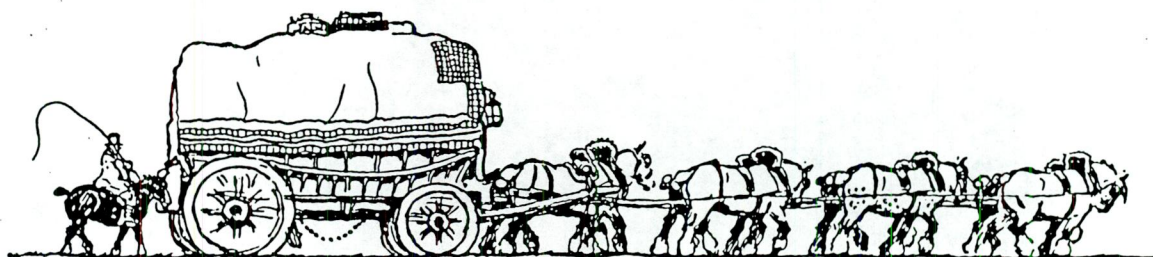March 1991

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION.

The period between the late 1870's and 1939, the beginning of the Second World War, saw an exuberant amount of work produced by artists world wide. It has been named The Golden Age of the Poster and of Illustration. The work produced was prolific and has withstood time, allowing today's generation to witness and admire it. During this period a group of artists emerged in Britain, all of whom have become renowned as Sporting Artists. These include Lionel Edwards and Alfred Munnings. However it is their contemporary Cecil Aldin and his work which is the subject of this dissertation.

Much has been written about the work of such artist's as Munnings, Edwards and Snaffles: their popularity and familiarity is undeniably evident in today's widespread reproduction of their work. In their day Aldin and his contemporaries were among the chief pioneers in the depiction of true animal action, form and character. All of them found ready markets for their work in early life and continued to do so throughout their lives. The drawings and paintings by them all were made familiar every week through the sporting and social magazines which were popular drawing-room 'glossies' in the early years of this century.

Aldin's work has not since been reproduced to the same degree as his contemporaries because of the broad range of material that he covers including book illustrations and the numerous privately owned animal portraits. Roy Heron covers a large area in his book The Sporting Art of Cecil Aldin in which he gathers together work under this Sporting theme and describes the development of this theme parallel to a brief biography. Some of Aldin's illustrations have been reproduced in exspensive special editions of books such as Black Beauty. However much of his work remains in old editions of hardback books, including his autobiography, printed between 1880 and 1940. Too old and rare for general public consumption, they have become collectors items. The bulk of his work is derived from Sporting themes but he also diversifies into Posters, advertising, series of prints and has written and illustrated numerous books of his own. For these reasons which include changing styles and the diversity of his work, Aldin's acclaim has become rather confused and often forgotten. This thesis hopes to collect together a wider expanse of Aldin's work and provide a new overall view of his various styles and projects.

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In this dissertation I will endeavor to describe the talent and drive behind Cecil Aldin the creator of this immense amount of work. To illustrate this I will analyse the various influences on his life and work and discuss them in relation to his choice of theme, style and technique. My dissertation is divided into eight chapters. The first is a brief biography and a synopsis of early influences on his work. This chapter will also describe the main motivation and aim behind his work.

Chapter two will describe and differentiate between his two major styles. I will elaborate on this first style and indicate the main sources and influences behind this aspect, which for clarification shall be called his "Linear" style. Chapters three, four and five will delve deeper into the varied influences, on this style.

Chapter three contains a description of the work of John Leech, a predecessor of Aldins in illustration. I will establish the similarities and common characteristics of theme and style between Aldin and Leech. Chapter four examines the various areas of Randolf Caldecott's influence on Aldin's Linear style. The similarities of style and technique of his contemporaries in relation to the development of Aldin's work is discussed in Chapter five.

My sixth chapter will give an introduction to Aldin's second style, his "Realistic" style. Though this chapter will mostly be concerned with a third style of drawing . This style is basically a mixture of Aldin's Linear and Realistic techniques and shall be called his "Composite" style. Aldin's Realistic style can be subdivided under two headings each of which will be dealt with in chapters seven and eight respectively. Chapter seven deals with Aldin's racing and hunting themes and with three artists who also developed these subjects. I shall also compare and contrast Aldin's work in this "Realistic" style to that of these artists. Aldin's technique of animal portraiture is described in chapter eight in relation to four other artist's work whose characteristics form the origins or stepping stones for much of his animal portraiture.

Finally, the conclusion will endeavor to sum up the main points and demonstrate the primary incentives behind the production of the majority of his work. I will make an overall consensus of the influential factors on his work and conclude with a synopsis of these factors on the individual work of Cecil Aldin.

CHAPTER ONE

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

INFLUENCES ON HIS EARLY LIFE

HIS AIM
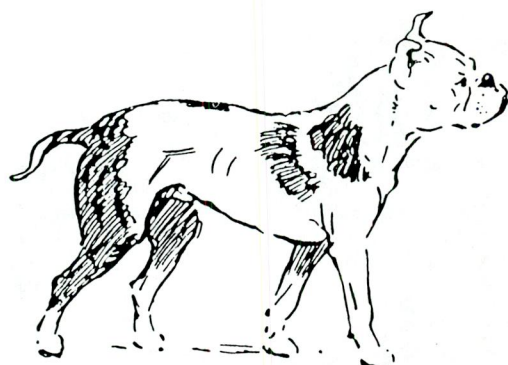
A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Cecil Aldin was an extraordinary man, not only in the prolific nature of his work, but also in his whole character and outlook on life in which he showed a lighthearted and kindly disposition. Everything he undertook to do, whether some series of prints or illustrations, taking charge of a Remount Depot during the war or being the first ever to organise children's gymkhanas, he carried out with great zest, enthusiasm and joviality. No idea or project was ever short lived or skimped and he seems to have had a never ending abundance of new ideas. He also had an amazing ability to organise. During the First World War Aldin set up a Remount Depot at his stables in Purley. This meant the caring and recuperation of over 200 horses at any one time. These horses came from Canada and were being sent on to the Canadian war effort in France. Because of the shortage of able bodied men in England, Aldin was the first to employ only women as grooms. This was frowned upon by many at the time, but Aldin, having two daughters of his own, recognised how well girls worked with even the most difficult animals, and the Depot ran very successfully. Alfred Munnings, the well known equestrian artist, worked for a short time at the Depot, before going to France as official War Artist for the Candian war effort. On arrival at Aldin's Remount Depot he summed up his commanding officer's military deamenor pithily enough; "a quick decisive sort of man, slightly ginger, with scrubby moustach, he held the rank of major and looked the part in his uniform". (1)

Cecil Aldin himself sums up his very full life briefly in his autobiography, Time I Was Dead, which was completed just six months before his death in January 1935........

> From my first hunting correspondent bluff all my jobs have been experimental; I have appeared as an artist, play producer, scene painter, animal "property man", designer of nursery friezes, dog fancier, remount officer, horseshow judge, comic or mongrel dog show inventor, toy designer, hunt secretary, MFH [Master of Foxhounds], Master of Harriers, beagles and basset, hounds, inventor of all children's pony shows, painter of golf courses, cathedrals and old inns and manor houses, maker of dry-point etchings and, my last experiment, designer of houses in Majorca. (2)

This is just a brief selection of his 'experiments' as there are many others which he excluded, including a writer of numerous books, both educational and story telling, a founder member of the London Sketch Club and quite a successful point-to-point rider to name but a few.

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The most immediate attribute to the personality and character of the man that most describes him is his sense of humour. This can be seen in all his activities including his illustrations and writings and can be attested to by the accounts of others. In a sketch done by himself of himself in 1884, for a book called Humorist's of the Pencil, he draws a clever little line sketch happily registering his personal characteristics. "You will remark that he has given himself a somewhat 'Horsey' appearance and truthfully he is in person somewhat reminiscent of the hunting field". (3) He portrays himself painting a dog portrait, dressed in old tweed baggy britches, holding a large pallet, a pipe in his mouth and a puppy in his pocket! He was "known" affectionately among his brethren of the brush and pencil as 'Puppy' Aldin, on account of the number and variety of his four footed friends". (4) In sending this sketch to the author of the book, Aldin observes, "The chief feature about me is my beautiful, ruddy golden hair," and he adds, "this picture must not be used for any 'Types of English Beauty' series without my special permission, "(5) indicating his everlasting sense of humour.

His other main characteristic was his incredible love for animals, especially dogs. He rarely went anywhere without the accompaniment of one or more of his canine friends. Indeed at the moment of Aldin's death in England Cracker, his famous bull terrier began to howl inconsolably in faraway Majorca. The man in charge of the old bull terrier, marked the date of this unprecendented behaviour on his calendar. On returning to Majorca Rita, Aldin's wife, knew that the time coincided precisely.

INFLUENCES ON HIS EARLY LIFE.

Cecil Charles Windsor Aldin was born on the 28 April 1870, one of three sons of a prosperous building family. Cecil's father, Charles Aldin, was a keen amateur draughtsman and artist and, thus, from an early age Cecil was supplied with pencil and paper to create his own scribblings. He spent much of his time at home, in Kensington High Street, London, in his nursery drawing the horse drawn traffic outside the window. Whether he knew it or not, Aldin's future was settled in the nursery. He was surrounded by copies of the Punch magazine, The Graphic and other periodicals which constantly featured the work of sporting artists including illustrations by John Leech, George Cruickshank and engravings after Alken and Pollard, "whose pictures also hung on the walls "(6) of the Aldin house. The novels of Charles Dickens and Anna Sewells Black Beauty, (both of which he later illustrated), became firm favourites. But perhaps the greatest influence on his early

years was the publication of Randolf Caldecott's picture book series (Fig. 1) when he was seven years old. He copied (Fig. 2) the illustrations time and time again, taking in the "gaiety and colour and rollicking life in an idyllic countryside" (7)

When he completed school at the age of fifteen having shown no academic apptitude, his mother favoured the Church as a profession for her son. Luckily, Cecil's father recognised his talent for drawing and Aldin was sent to the studio of Albert Moore, a painter in the classical mould. He lasted just four weeks under Moore's tutorship. In later years Aldin said, "I cannot say that he influenced me very much, as his methods were entirely dissimilar, although probably excellent in their way, from any I have ever employed." (8) He transferred to the National Art Training School (afterwards the Royal College of Art) where he specialised in animal anatomy under the guidance of Frank Calderon, who in due course was to have a profound influence on Alfred Munnings and Lionel Edwards who also studied under him.

Although only five years older than Aldin, Calderon had already acquired a formidable reputation as an animal artist, and had exhibited at the Royal Academy. Calderon encouraged his students to make detailed studies of animals in their natural environments. He stated:

I do not believe it is either necessary or advantageous for an art student to dissect. He should think of his subject always as living, moving nature....Let him try to realise which are bone and which are muscle, which parts move and which parts are fixed....(9)

This knowledge and advice was to stay with Aldin throughout his career and had an immense effect on his work, redefining it later when he said he "believed that too great a knowledge and attention to animal anatomy resulted in a stiff portrayal" (10)

HIS AIM

Aldin wrote in later years...

I may as well state...that I have no pretensions to Art. My painting has always been founded on substrata of hunting possibilities, that is to say it has to provide the wherewithal to enable me to hunt and has been tainted with this aftermath of sporting commercialism...(II)

Though he had no family background in the hunting tradition he read many books on the subject, including R.S. Surtee's Handley Cross. At the earliest opportunity he acquired the use of a carthorse and began his hunting career. The main motivation of

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his art was his love of the chase, and every commission he could procure and every print or illustration sold paved the way to his ambition.

We can see that from a very early age Aldin began to show and develop his talent at drawing, the initial influences being procured from his immediate environment. This talent was brought further by the work of previous artists which was readily available to him. His father helped kindle his first notions in art but the person who shaped and moulded Aldin's skill in it's early stages was Frank Calderon.

Although Aldin loved his work, it must be clearly noted that to have the financial means by which he could exploit his love of the hunting field was the rather unethical incentive behind the production of his work. He rarely started a piece of work without targeting an eventual market for the finished product. And finally but by no means least was the influence he derived from his love of animals, this he demonstrates in his affectionate understanding portrayal of his animal subjects.

CHAPTER TWO

IDENTIFICATION OF ALDIN'S TWO STYLES

INTRODUCTION TO ALDIN'S "LINEAR" STYLE
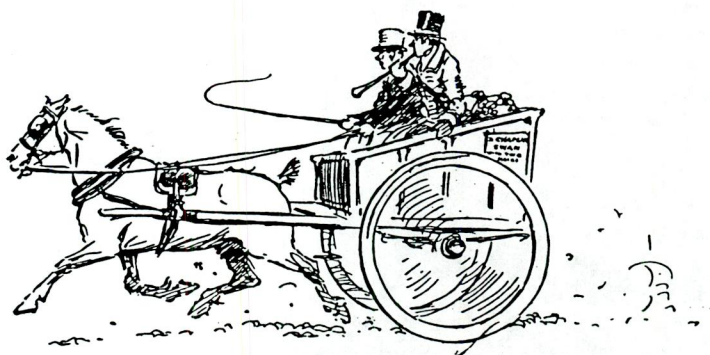
IDENTIFICATION OF ALDIN'S TWO STYLES.

It is not useful to describe Aldin's work in terms of chronological periods as his style did not evolve chronologically but varied according to his subject or projects, of which there are many, from book illustrations, posters, magazine advertisements, commissioned animal portraits etc. I will consider the work in terms of two major styles that correspond to various influences: his Linear style and his Realistic style.

Aldin alternated continuously between these two styles in accordance with his current commission. His Linear style is composed mostly of his illustrative caricatures and these dominate his book illustrations, posters and his various print series. His Realistic style is delegated mainly to his animal portraits and hunting themes. There are a few incidents in his work where his two styles merge and we can see a composite third style. This happens most usually in his coaching themes and this "Composite" style I shall discuss further in chapter six.

There is not only a noticeable differentation of technique between his two major styles but also in the treatment of humour. His Linear style deals directly with incidents of humour, where the characters are obviously involved in a precise moment of action in which Aldin extracts the amusing content. The humour of his Realistic style is more subtle and centres around an expression or a pose of a subject or model.

INTRODUCTION TO ALDIN'S "LINEAR" STYLE

A mixture of artists influenced his Linear style whom I shall discuss. I will examine the products of this style and will trace the influences of and similarities to some of his predecessors and contemporaries, particularly through the examination of movement and humour. "Some there are who assert that the mantle of Randolf Caldecott has fallen over Aldin's shoulders" (12). Caldecott did have a major effect on Aldin's Linear style. However, I think that Aldin was able to extract various traits from Caldecott's pictures and develop them to create his own unique style. John Leech, who produced many illustrations for <u>Punch</u> magazine, also entranced Aldin through his drawings and caricatures. Of Aldin's contemporaries, there were many including Dudley Hardy and Alfred Munnings, with whom he shared a common environment, producing similarities in their work.

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In the next three chapters I shall deal with John Leech, Randolf Caldecott and Aldin's contemporaries respectively. I will examine their individual work in relation to that of Aldin's Linear style and I will consider the work in such a way as to define and indicate the major influences and similaities of style in their work compared with Aldin's.
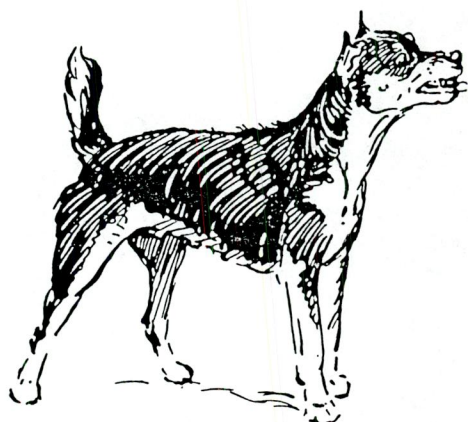
CHAPTER THREE

JOHN LEECH

IDENTIFICATION OF HUMOUR

THE "MR. JORROCKS" CHARACTER

SUMMARY OF "LEECH" INFLUENCE

THE LEECH INFLUENCE

The great period of steel engravings and mezzotints were the twenty years between 1825 and 1845. "The hardness of steel both guaranteed durability and permitted a fineness of line, brilliance and graduated range of tone beyond the capability of a copperplate". (13) John Leech (1817-1964) was introduced to this valuable new technique at the very begining, learning it from George Cruickshank. Cruickshank drew political and social caricatures in a manner which suggested the influence of Gillray, rather harsh, crude and often quite vulgar. His characters could be rather frightening, even in his illustrations for Grimm's Popular Stories (Fig. 3). Times and tastes were changing, "Serious", cartoons were more frequent, and cartoons in general became less infused with mockery. Leech offered "broad but not offensive humour, exciting melodrama, escapist romance and reassuring sentimentality". (14)This Leech displayed in his illustrations for Punch (Fig. 4) to which Aldin was introduced and which influenced him from an early age.

Street life, horsey people and middle-class families were the main sources of Leechs' work. (Fig. 5) This obviously had a great effect on the young Aldin as natural everyday incidents became the source for many of Aldin's illustrative humorous sketches and prints. Charles Dickens wrote of Leech ....

> His drawing seems to us charming; and the expression indicated, though by the simplest means, is exactly the natural expression, and is recognised as such immediately. Some forms of our existing life will never have a better chronicler. His wit is good natured and always the wit of a gentleman. (15)

Well known to Leech's friends was a certain little pocket book in which he was always making notes. He would even "follow a certain huntsman while out hunting and take down every last detail to the button-hole!" (16) This practice was later copied by the artist G.D Giles and fifty years later by the eager Cecil Aldin.

IDENTIFICATION OF HUMOUR

Not to be Played With is a picture done by Leech in Pictures of Life and Character from the collection of Mr. Punch. It depicts a horse standing in a stall, with ears flat back in anger at the four men who are regarding him with somewhat suspicion. It is a beautiful drawing capturing the expression and dangerous mood of the animal . Leech was always careful to bring out the beauty of young women and thoroughbreds even in "his most whimsical pieces" (17). This same technique can be seen in a similar

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drawing by Aldin In the Stables (Fig. 6). It shows a proportionately strong hunter with one hind leg raised to kick out at any passerby. The hunter's head is being firmly held by a gentleman, with a whip for security in his other hand. From behind the partition of the next stall, another gentleman, possibly a potential buyer, looks on with scepticism.   Both these drawings show the common awareness between the artists, of the power of fear that a horse can derive from some humans, and they both depict the cowardly humorous side of the situation. In both illustrations the horse is displayed as the beautiful, powerful creature, while the humans are meek and rather unimportant in comparison. Irritable Gentleman disturbed by a Bluebottle is a detailed drawing by Leech of an interior of an office room. It appeared in an edition of Punch and shows Leech's dramatisation of a minor incident in everyday life to the point of ludicrouscy. The room is in chaos: there is fantastic description of books fallen off shelves, chairs upside-down, papers on the floor. Yet, only the minimum amount of line is used to suggest the objects. This "minimum use of line", was of great influence on Aldin's work. Aldin uses the minimum amount of line necessary to communicate the atmosphere of the situation, though the amount varies depending on what element he wishes the viewer to concentrate, be it individual characters or the whole atmosphere and situation. Both artists depicted every important detail, especially of hunting attire and disipline, every button hole is noted and correct. Leech would inform the viewer of certain aspects of the hunting field, details of hedgerows, trees, fences etc. Aldin was less specific in this area in some of his pictures, generally giving just an impression of the surrounding scenery, such as he does with Brighton Front (Fig. 7). Overall there is very little detail in this picture, of either background, foreground or even of the tandem and it's occupants.   All detail has been depleated to a bare minimum.

The different era's in which both Leech and Aldin worked were major factors in the development of line by each artist. Leech was still tied in a way to the late eighteenth century style of trying to depict everything as realistically as possible. However he did extract from this and depicted what was necessary with as great an attention to detail but with a lesser amount of line used, than his predecessors. Because of Leech's earlier developments in the use of line and because of the changing styles and new experiments in technique and design in his time, including the development of photography, Aldin was able to develop the use of line to a further degree.   In his illustrative print of Sam at the White Hart (Fig. 8) we see a group of four gentlemen involved in a discussion. Our immediate attention is drawn to them, but eventually we become aware of a number of other activities in progress in the background.

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There are two onlookers on the main scene, inside a doorway, a woman hanging out of a window carrying on a conversation with a boy below. Another woman scurries along a balcony with a cup. There is immense attentive detail displayed in line of the surrounding inn-yard though of subtler dirtier colour than the depiction of the four gentleman.

THE "MR. JORROCKS" CHARACTER.

When he was nineteen Aldin happened across Handley Cross, the R.S. Surtees classic illustrated by Leech, finding that the adventures of Mr. Jorrocks, the main character, fitted precisely his own conception of hunting. In 1854 Leech was the first to illustrate the two volumes of the story. Originally, 750 copies of the book had been printed without illustrations and sold very badly. After the edition which included Leech's illustrations was published, the book soared in popularity and sold extremely well. Surtees well understood how much he owed to the man who had helped him in 1854. "Leech was very fond of Mr. Jorrock's M.F.H. and persuaded Surtees when Handley Cross was being republished to add the sub-title: Mr. Jorrocks Hunt" (18). This was the copy that Aldin read. He also gained a great affection for the Mr. Jorrocks character and, in 1912, illustrated a later edition of the book.

Leech's character of Mr. Jorrocks is an extremely round, dumpy gentleman, with hunting coat too long in length but too short in width for the figure. The facial features are not very animated though rather pudgey. Arterxerxes, Jorrocks' Roman-nosed" great rat-tailed brown hunter is shown as a rather ugly, knobbly kneed, long necked, stubborn animal. One etching shows "Mr. Jorrocks dismounted on a bank topped by a stiff fence and from that precarious position, imploring Artexerxes to approach in words which have become proverbial, 'Come Hup, I say, you ugly brute!'"(19) (Fig. 9) Another shows Mr. Jorrocks Hoisting himself on like a great crate of earthenware (Fig. 10) showing how Leech combined humour with serious drawing.

The influence of Leech's drawing can be evidently seen in Aldin's treatment of the character. He also depicts a rather rounded fellow, although he is more suitably comfortable as a horseman than Leech's character, as can be seen in his illustration, Did you say two chests o' black and one o' green? (Fig. 11). Arterxerxes had been drawn with the same stumpy tail and short thick legs of Leech's version. However in detail of both human and animal expression, Aldin gives a clearer more descript

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impression. This is because he reduces the amount of descriptive fine lines and colour that Leech uses, and defines these fewer lines with a confident clean line. In his illustration A Fall's a Hawful Thing (Fig. 12), Arterxerxes comes crashing down over a bank and the shocked little Jorrocks comes hurtling over the animal's head. Here Aldin shows his deep knowledge of the animal's anatomy, drawing the fallen horse with a free confidentently light line in comparison to Leech's rather stiff portrayal. Leech did not command variety of posture and gesture in movement that Aldin displayed in his drawings. But both were able to capture and illustrate the humour of Mr. Jorrock's experiences. "Leech's designs are humorous at a level of obviousness that makes good draughtmanship a sufficient substitute for imagination or sublety." (20) This is to say that Leech could illustrate a seemingly ordinary incident as it occured but he would deliver it with a delightful innocent charm so that the observer would become amused and enchanted by his characters and not necessarily the incident itself. He did not have to devise or concoct a situation in order to provide humorous content. Aldin also acquired this technique of illustrating an everyday incident in such a way that would make us laugh at his illustration no matter how many times we had experienced the same occurance in our own lives, or perhaps when we had not originally seen the humour in it. This humour is demonstrated in Aldin's illustration The Coach is Ready Gentlemen (Fig. 13), where the coach is about to leave and the meal is only just being served, to one particular gentlemen.

SUMMARY OF "LEECH" INFLUENCE.

The obvious initial influence of Leech on Aldin's work was Leech's treatment of humour. He would illustrate literally incidents of plain gaiety, or awkward or embaressing situations, to some quite normally disasterous moments though managing to extract and display only the humorous content. He also exhibited a great love and knowledge of the hunting field in which he demonstrated through his creation and portrayal of the Mr. Jorrocks character.

Aldin also learned and developed from the techniques and style of Leech's drawing. This is most consistant in Aldin's use of line. Leech believed that only the necessary amount of line was needed in order to relate a particular scene or character on paper. With this understanding he was sensitively able to create and indicate a descriptive subject with a perceptive ease and subtlety of line. Aldin acknowledged this technique in Leech's drawings and approached his own work with a similar disuse of

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line. Notably though the difference of periods in which both artists worked were a major influential factor in the development of the usage of line, and this is illustrated in their individual treatments of the Jorrocks character.
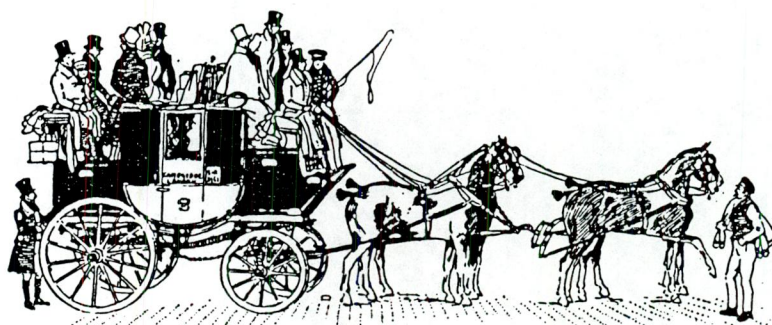
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CHAPTER FOUR

RANDOLF CALDECOTT INFLUENCE

Randolf Caldecott was influential in reviving the vigour and good natured realism of John Leech's mode of drawing. According to "His [Leech's] mimicry of the manners and customs of his fellow countrymen set the mode for the young Caldecott". (21) In time Caldecott's line loosened and the tight cross hatched backgrounds, popular in illustrated Victorian novels, gave way to large expanses of white in which the figures appeared to dance in and out of the distance or along the margin's as in Leech's work for The Graphic. Caldecott's style was unique without being determinedly novel. His illustrations as London artistic correspondent, to the New York Daily Graphic were important in being amongst the first reproduced directly from pen and ink drawings by photolithography, maintaining the spontaneous quality of the original sketches. It was these free and lively drawings that captivated and inspired the young Aldin. In Aldin's choice of subject, line, movement, colour and humour, references are clearly visible in his work to that of Caldecott's technique. In this chapter I shall analyse and discuss these points further and indicate how Aldin borrowed from Caldecott's techniques to enable him to eventually develop his own style.

USE OF LINE

A strong similarity between the two artists can be seen in their linear illustrations. An article appeared in the English Illustrated Magazine in 1886, written and illustrated by Caldecott. It was titled "Foxhunting: By a Man in a Round Hat".(Fig 14). The illustrations were done mostly in a brown line with a little shading. It is interesting to compare these to the illustrations done by Aldin for The Chawberry Hunt, (Fig. 15) a poem written by B. Fletcher Robinson. The horses are drawn by both Caldecott and Aldin as very lean and thoroughbredish, with the ladies on very elegant steeds. In his drawing of the Three Jovial Huntsmen (Fig. 16) Caldecott uses a light black outline to define the three happy characters in the foreground. He later changed to a sepia - brown outline in many of his works which reduced the harshness and often benefitted his pictures, a technique that Aldin did not take up. Aldin has a clarity and confidence in his style that is very reminiscent of Caldecott's work. This can be definately seen in an early print of Aldin's, Three Jolly Huntsmen (Fig. 17), which was obviously inspired by Caldecott's 1880 Picture Book, Three Jovial Huntsmen. Here Aldin shows three huntsmen, leaving the cobbled yard of an inn. The huntsmen are dressed in the French style of long tailed coats with large black peaked caps,

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reminiscent of the attire of Caldecott's huntsmen. Also, they ride bay, grey and chestnut horses all unmistakenly taken from Caldecott's original illustration.

Caldecott's style was direct, clean and effective.   While his drawing set standards in relation to economy of line, these were the standards that Aldin used. Aldin began to clean up his line reducing the amount of linear description used, in some drawings such as The Amorous Coachman (Fig. 18) he uses more detail in his depiction of expressions and moods of his characters. But in some he is more lenient probably because of a lack of time and they tend to lack a little of the humour in their representation although not in the overall atmosphere of the drawing. This can be seen in his portrayal of the parson and his audience in A Likely Spot (Fig. 19). The surrounding countryside in this illustration has also been reduced in linear description and colour to let the humour of the incident become immediately clear.

In Caldecott's illustration of The Huntsman Blows his Horn (Fig. 20) for The Fox Jumps over the Parson's Gate there is great evidence of his reduction of line. The three huntsmen and the pack of hounds are all denoted in a clear brown outline against the flat pale green background. Caldecott's influence on Aldin can be plainly seen in his print Admiration (Fig. 21).   He uses fine black lines to similarly define the characters with clarity and express the innocent humour of the situation.
His qualities of accurate drawing and clarity of colour became Aldin's hallmark.
Both Aldin and Caldecott had an ability to define the gesture of an animal with a spontaneous flick of the pen. Just a few quick lines captured a movement or incident, and subtle humour is evident in the single lines of characters faces, of both artists.
Though in the depiction of movement, Aldin had one great advantage, the advent of the photograph.

MOVEMENT.

Aldin was among the first artists to be influenced by the photographs developed in the studio of American zoopraxographer, Edward J. Muybridge, "of horses of different actions and speeds, images proving unequivocally and for the first time that the rocking horse gallop, was a lie, albeit a charming lie" (22). However, even with this knowledge, Aldin "believed a modified 'rocking horse' effect, used judiciously, gave an impression of speed." The technique was used by Caldecott in all of his running animals. This is particularily evident in his illustration of the runaway on

18.

which the character John Gilpin rides in the picture book of <u>John Gilpin</u> (Fig. 1)
This book was the first Caldecott picture book that Aldin ever viewed.

Between 1899 and 1900 Aldin completed his set of six prints, collectively called <u>The Fallowfield Hunt</u>. They described the events of a whole day's hunting from <u>The Hunt Breakfast</u> through <u>Full Cry</u> (Fig. 22) to the eventual <u>Hunt Supper</u> (Fig. 23). In these he uses Caldecott's technique of the "rocking horse" run for the hounds in <u>Full Cry</u> and also humourously at the <u>Hunt Supper</u>. In these prints Aldin carried on the Caldecott tradition of depicting English country life. He captures the thrill and excitement of the chase and describes in simple attentive detail of line the traditional hunting attire of the riders while giving us a true taste of the picturesque countryside. You may note how much more clear and sharp these prints are compared to his illustrations of Mr. Jorrocks indicating the development of his style and use of line.

COLOUR

Caldecott coloured his preliminary designs for the Picture Books 'with expansive even washes, all within the confines of a single frame or border'.(23) These washes were of the subtlest pastel shades and it was this undramatic style of colouring that most influenced Aldin. The main background colour in many of Caldecott's drawings was a pale yellow-ochre. Aldin opts for a slightly lighter shade but as with Caldecott it is used to fill in roads, fields, buildings and, sometimes even sky areas in their drawings. In conjunction with this Caldecott's characters are depicted in soft lemon yellows, washed out greens and brown and red ochres. His huntsmen are always shown in orangey-red hunting jackets precisely the same colour used by Aldin for his huntsmen and coachmen. Caldecott's colours all blend in a very complementary way with each other. Also, the fact that he uses brown outlines softens the images to a further degree. In this aspect Aldin differs. He uses black outlines, sometimes fine, sometimes quite broad, and this has the effect of greatly clarifying the individual subjects, making them stand out on the page and from each other with greater definition. Even when Aldin uses deeper colours, such as those in his prints for the <u>Bluemarket Races</u> (Fig. 24), he still retains the Caldecott technique of not letting the colours clash. The blue - green of the lady's dress in the tent and on the canopy on the left, are toned down by deep red - ochres and orange - yellow ochres. The bright scarlet used on the coats of the huntsmen in <u>The Hunt Supper</u> (Fig.23) are softened by the dark bottle green rug and the brown wooden panelling in the background.

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SUMMARY OF CALDECOTT INFLUENCE

Caldecott was a true master in dealing with line in a simplified and free style. His capability in the use of line is the most dominating influence on Aldin's work. Caldecott delighted in the power of line in drawing, studying "the art of leaving out as a science" (24) " The fewer lines, the less error committed", (25) he wrote. Aldin inspired by Caldecott's sure, swift, spontaneous line delivered his own mode of expression in his drawings, with a similar vigour in line. Although Aldin did not acquire quite the same looseness of line attributed to Caldecott, he did denote a greater clarity of expression in the depiction of his characters.

Both artists delivered a subtle sense of humour in their controlled linear style. Caldecott's technique of incorporating subtle flat colours in his designs is another trait that Aldin translated into his own pictures. However it was Caldecott's harmonious depiction of colours that Aldin concentrated on, as eventually he uses bright vibrant colours in many of his drawings from his Linear style.

The 'rocking horse' gallop innocently rendered by Caldecott in his depiction of running animals was deliberately employed by Aldin in many of his illustrations despite his knowledge of true animal action. Both artists described the English country life-style with a charm that illustrated the society in a subtly humourous way. Aldin can be seen to have been a true advocate of Caldecott's style acquiring techniques and idea's from this well known and loved illustrator and developing them into his own individual style of clarity and humour.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION TO ALDIN'S CONTEMPORARIES OF "LINEAR" STYLE.

The last five years of the nineteenth century saw an explosion of activity among the artists of London and Paris, with paintings, posters, prints and illustrations the like of which had not been seen before. In France there were the new styles and techniques of Toulouse Lautrec and Jules Cheret among others. During 1898, Aldin was one of the founder members of the London Sketch Club, along with Phil May, Dudley Hardy and John Hassall. This progress and activity among his contemporaries both near and abroad was naturally to have had an influence on Aldin's work at this time. This next chapter deals with Aldin's contemporaries and in relating to their work I shall discuss the changing styles and new techniques which they learned and acquired during this period and how they inadvertently had an effect on Aldin's work. Working in close proximity with these artists, Aldin naturally would be inspired by their work and also their individual attitudes.

In Paris Lautrec was creating vividly bright and bold posters (Fig. 25) with the use of flat colour to describe large areas of his designs. These areas of colour were bordered by firm black outlines that stated defiantly the flat shapes within. There was great movement and life in his line that denoted the areas for the flat colours. Aldin was aware of Lautrec's work and the influence on him can be seen in his Fairy Tale Illustrations (Fig. 26) for children. His swirling simplified line and bright flat colours are clearly derived from Lautrec's work. Aldin also began to experiment with posters in this clear decisive style, "urged on by Hassall, Hardy and May" (26). Working together in their weekly sketching sessions for members, ideas and styles were bound to be inspired by one another.

PHIL MAY

"Phil May was mainly interested in types; not so much particular individuals as kinds of people - the kinds of people one saw in the streets"(27) Caldecott and May certainly shared the same gaiety of outlook on life and the same charming freshness and spontaneity of method in presenting it. Every artist knows of the great difficulty of retaining in the finished work the spontaneity of that first impression, but May was imminently successful in this respect due to the importance he attached to this freshness. "The drawing must sparkle", he said, "and must not look in any way strained or laboured": (28) He had a style of conciseness and eliminated everything that was not essential, drawing with complete control over his line, a talent Aldin

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greatly admired.   The jokes May illustrated were in most cases the results of his own humorous observation or invention as shown in 'Arry Experiences (Fig. 27).   May drew his figures without background suspended in space, a technique Aldin used in part for some of his illustrations, as in The Puppy Books (Fig. 28) and in individual illustrations. Neither Aldin nor May made any psychological comment through their caricatures. They are what they seem to be. May just found them "jolly to draw" (29) and so did Aldin.   They drew everyday behaviour with an understanding simplicity and charm.

DUDLEY HARDY

The 'Golden Age of the Poster' arrived in England with an explosion of work among the artists.   One of the most outstanding contributors to this era was Dudley Hardy. A fellow member of Aldins in the London Sketch Club, he was advocate to the simplicity of colour and line in this new innovative style of design that began in France with Lautrec and infiltrated to England during the last five years of the nineteenth century.   His posters lack the stark flatness of Lautrec's style, but they have acquired the same gay movement of line to indicate direction and textures.   His caricatures are realistic forms, being a representation of realism; some quite detailed in their description. His sharp defined black outlines give an overall crisp flatness to his subjects. His poster Cinderella (Fig. 29), which has a typical layout and design to that of Lautrecs's style, shows a tall, graceful white gowned Cinderella walking with austere confidence up a red-carpeted staircase, a row of bowing gentlemen look on. The design is uncluttered, the space has been carefully considered and the overall air is one of sophistication. With his designs for The Chieftain (Fig. 30) and Boots and Shoes (Fig. 31) his overall poster design becomes more minamilist with his characters retaining a semi-realistic style in their rendering. They lack movement and vitality but are bold and uncomplicated.   Aldin's poster and advertisement designs often share some of these qualities of being quite stark and plain in the amount of detail involved. Aldin's advertisements for Dormeuil Cloth (Fig. 32) are evident examples of this fresh, clean use of line and colour. His characters are outlined in black but they are quite stiff and very posed. Aldin's background scenes are not as clear cut or defined as Hardy's design's, his figures are staged in the foreground. The characters in these advertisements even the dogs, lack any life or humanising factors and they have become just like shop window figurines displaying the cloth to be sold. Aldin simplifies his illustrations to an even further degree in his Fairy - Tale Illustrations (Fig. 26). Here he uses strong black outlines with no tonal colouring at

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all, making the pictures very flat and like a children's colouring book.

JOHN HASSALL

John Hassall's caricatures are instantly recogniseable, being rather round and expressionless most of the time. He depicts a particularly masculine looking woman in many of his posters and magazine advertisements. His characters tend to display plump rosey cheeks, button noses, rounded eyes, a rather tight straight grin and an overall plumpness. Hassall's style is quite stiff and blocky with a jovial undramatic sense of humour. Aldin's simplicity of line and colour in poster design's are similar to those of Hassall's clean precise technique. Hassall's poster for Skegness Beach (Fig. 33) illustrates this bright envigorating use of colour in the flat blue sky and golden beach. The jolly character is typical of the Hassall style, a plump simplistic body with little detail except in the rendering of the hands and face. Probably one of the most well known of Aldin's series of prints are his Old English Sports and Pastimes (Fig. 34) They contain more life and atmosphere than his illustrations for Dormeuil Cloth (Fig. 32) and yet they are rendered with simplicity and charm, similar to the style of Hassall. The prints depict twelve different sports including hunting, golf, hawking and fishing using a wonderfully free, yet stylized quality of outline. Aldin does not use the bright vibrant colours that Hassall used, for these works, preferring to stick with the earthier autumn colours of browns, greens and ochres. Though he does use similarly large expanses of the same colour for areas such as skies or fields as Hassall does. Both artists share a subtle wit in the rendering of their characters expressions with Aldin's containing a humorous charm, and a sense of an idyllic old world lifestyle.

A culmination of all of Aldin's advertising designs is his poster for Cadbury's cocoa (Fig. 35). Here he uses his simplicity of line but with slightly more detail and he again shows his subtle charm and humour with the depiction of the dangling turkey, the yawning passenger and the two children sharing a mug of cocoa. His overall composition tends to be a little complicated and is inclined to incorporate more than what was actually needed, unlike Hardy or Hassall.

SUMMARY

May, Hardy, Hassall and Lautrec did not necessarily directly influence Aldin's work, but working during the same period and in close proximity to each other, they

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contributed by sparking off new idea's and encouraging experiments and techniques in styles. Each artist's individual character and personality would indirectly effect each other. May's jolly humour and his knack of extracting this humour from his surrounding fellowmen and women contributed to Aldin's own depictions of humour. Aldin may have derived some of Dudley Hardy's simplicity of line and attention to space and composition from his work. He may have learned how to delete much of the detail from his advertising designs from Hardy and Hassall, helping him to define his Linear style to an even finer degree. Though in some cases this took from his designs as it made them too stiff and flat. In most of his advertising exploits Aldin managed to include his sporting themes but also observing a subtle charm and wit that are also evident in May's, Hardy's and Hassall's designs.

SUMMARY OF ALDIN'S "LINEAR" STYLE

In his Linear style we have seen Aldin's portrayal of English life in his charming caricatures showing his ability to procure the atmosphere and individuality of everyday events of his time and of past era's. This style is clear and sharp, beginning with his prints and book illustrations culminating in development with his posters and advertisements. It is his confident simplistic control over his outline and the minimum use of descriptive lines that defines and emmalgamates to form this Linear style. The influences of his predecessors, Leech and Caldecott, the changing age and techniques and the aspirations and development of the work of his contemporaries all combine to mould Aldin's Linear style. However, the humour he derived from these factors and the everyday situations around him charicterised him most and this we will see is also evident in his Realistic style.

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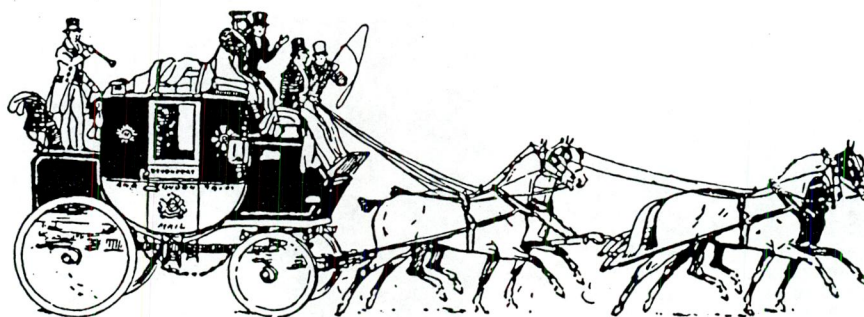# CHAPTER SIX

INTRODUCTION TO ALDIN'S "REALISTIC" STYLE.

> Cecil Aldin is a bold illustrator and has an intimate knowledge of horse and hounds, amongst which he has always lived. Many of his views of hunting countries are good. He has a great knack of catching a likeness.(30)
>
> Sir Charles Frederick.

It is this "great knack of catching a likeness" whether in human or beast that differentiates his Realistic style from his Linear style. In his Linear style he shows his ability to capture a mood or expression in concise controlled lines, almost like those of a cartoonist or animator. His illustrations and prints with this stylized approach are quite in contrast to his concentration in detail and realism of his Realistic style. The immediate motives behind this effort of capturing a likeness were most likely because of the buyers and commissions he wished to attain. This Realistic style is divided between his hunting and racing themes and his animal portraits which were all aimed at particular individuals or specific groups, such as an individual hunt pack.

THE "COMPOSITE" STYLE.

There are though some of Aldin's drawings and illustrations which are neither of completely the Linear or Realistic style. This is the most significant point in my dissertation for their inclusion as they are loosely connected to both styles showing Aldin's versatility in technique and style depending on what he felt was required by the commission or work involved.

This "Composite" style, as I will name it, is most evident in his coaching themes but also appears in individual paintings such as his A Timber Topper with the Quorn (Fig. 36) which is a specially commissioned portrait. The inclusion of both styles is shown by his accurate portrayal of the horse's conformation and likeness, similarily of the perfect position and realism of the huntsman and yet isolating the picture from true realism by the use of a thin black outline giving an overall stiff and stylized rendering.

JAMES POLLARD

The work of James Pollard and Henry Alken senior had an influential affect on this "Composite" style. Aldin's composite technique was inspired by Pollards style and

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the themes of both artists are prevalent in this style. However it must be noted here that Henry Alken had more of an important influence over Aldin's Realistic style.

Romance of the Road was written and illustrated by Aldin in 1884. In it he wished to capture the story of the roads of 1828 - The Golden Age of Coaching. During his time he saw the gradual change from the horse to the motorcar. Aldin regretted this passing as, from his youth he had loved the coaches and had even aspired to one day being one of the tough hardened coachmen. He wrote with envy and admiration of these men, adding his own humour: "When driving his horses his [Coachman's] huge back acted as a welcome protection from the wind and the weather to the traveller sitting behind him," (31) and this was how he portrayed them also in his pictures, big and burly. Aldin acknowledged his debt to James Pollard for his paintings of the period. He wrote, "Pollard shows these carts in many of his prints of the time," (32) "his coaches, to our modern mind, may perhaps be too minute in detail, but to the student of the road, every one of Pollard's pictures tells a story." (33) Pollard's work has a documental importance of it's own in relation to the coaching period. Although his horses are very well drawn and accurately observed, they have a typically conventional stiff action and movement characteristic of the paintings of the eighteenth century. His horses are all at the same moment in movement and they become like strutting regimental patterns (Fig. 37). Aldin's illustrations in Romance of the Road are not as stiff, as he understood true animal action, however in some illustrations he emulates Pollards documentation of coaching life. He succeeds in this ideal with his illustration of Through the Toll Gate (Fig. 38). Here he shows great detail in the depiction of the coach, it's occupants and the team of horses. It is interesting to note that each horse is in almost the same stride, similar to Pollard's drawings, and not one hoof is touching the ground which is unrealistic and unnatural. The figures in these illustrations are not specific individuals but characters representing typical types of people such as coachmen and innkeepers. This was most likely because Aldin was portraying a period in time and not a particular incident. The combination of both Linear and Realistic styles are used to denote this, with the technically correct buildings and coaches but with an overall stiffness of movement and atmosphere displayed by the linear outlines of his style. A clear representation of this mix in styles is shown in his print The Great North Road, The Bell of Stilton (Fig. 39) . Though the horses, coach, buildings, and figures are accurately drawn, they are stylistically rendered to a point just short of being a truely realistic representation. This can be seen by some of the rather stiff and stylized expressions on the characters, which are not quite wholly natural.

26.

Henry Alken senior came from one of the most important families in the history of sporting art. Among his works there are numerous hunting, racing and coaching themes all of which influenced Aldin in their themes, colourings, likenesses and humour, which is very noticeable in his Realistic style and I shall analyse this in greater detail in the next chapter. But Aldin was particularily captivated by Alken's delightful oil paintings of coaches by moonlight" (34) and his snow scenes. (Fig.40) Aldin's picture Galloping Across the Map (Fig. 41) shows the Edinburgh Mail at full stretch across a moor underneath the sliver of a white moon. Many of his illustrations for Romance of the Road dramatically describe the hazards of coaching during the harsh elements of the winter months such as the effort enduced by eight strong horses to pull a heavy cart through the snow shown by The King's Highway (Fig. 42)

DENDY SADLER - OLD INNS AND COACHING HOUSES.

Aldin's interest in ancient buildings and Georgian settings in the "Golden Age of the Stage-coach" was encouraged by Dendy Sadler whose own outlook was moulded by the old - world habits and dying traditions. Sadler, who was Aldin's mentor and host on numerous painting expedition's, was famous for his interiors of stately homes and inns. A description of his output in 1905 stated:

> His art is both ingenious and suggestive, always kindly, agreeable and amusing.
> It reveals a healthy vigorous outlook on life and as he has a perfect gusto of
> amusing humanising intention, he may be taken as a most welcome contributor
> to the joy of the world (35)

This statement could well have applied to a description of Aldin in later years. Aldin spent seventeen years building up his series of Old Inns and Manor Houses (Fig. 43) they were to prove to be his most popular series during his lifetime which is interesting since the majority of his work is derived from hunting and sporting themes. He used references from Paterson's Roads, a book describing the old coaching days and Cary's Survey, which provided strip maps of coaching routes which he followed and, later created his own versions of for Romance of the Road (Fig. 44). His prints of the inns describe in detail the quaint beauty and style of these old buildings but with a technique just on the fringe of true representational realism by his subtle fading out of the buildings near the boarders of his pictures. An interesting inclusion in these prints was the use of figures, dogs or horses (sometimes all three) to give some life to the buildings. These figures are useful representational characters not true beings. Each picture was worked up from a series of sketches to a

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large finished pastel drawing in which his carefully constructed layering of colours allowed a freedom of style and economy of time which a fully finished oil or watercolour would have denied him. This series was followed by <u>Cathedrals and Abbey Churches of England</u> (Fig. 45) also in the same technique.

SUMMARY.

This combining of his two styles tends to weaken the impact of some of Aldin's drawings. Being not quite representative of either of his two major styles, which makes the viewer a little unclear as to whether to become involved in the action or to stand back and be amused and captivated by the narrative the picture implies. However it is interesting to note here that most of the illustrations and prints using this "Composite" style are documenting the same era, this being the Golden Age of Coaching. Pollard, Alken and Sadler were all influential and useful to Aldin because of their typically unique themes on this same subject of the coaching period and not necessarily their individual styles, though Aldin does use a few of Pollards techniques such as those in the depiction of movement. However the representation of Aldin's humour is not lost by his implication of this Composite style, where he intends it, such as in <u>The Bell at Stilton</u> (Fig. 39) and his humour also gives us a link to his Realistic style.
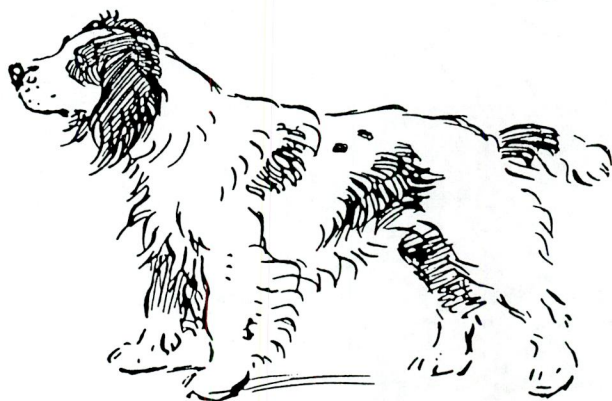
CHAPTER SEVEN

INTRODUCTION

As I have previously stated Aldin's capability of catching a likeness in his drawing is demonstrated in his Realistic style. This style he employed when he wished to portray a particular event or individual, human or animal. I have divided this style into two sections his "Hunting" and "Racing" themes, and his animal portraits, these I shall deal with respectively in the next two chapters. In his hunting and racing themes he was inspired by the work of Henry Alken and of G.D Giles, also of the work of his young rival and contemporary, Lionel Edwards, who became an equally devout lover of the hunting field and it's portrayal.

ALKEN AND GILES.

When Aldin wished to portray a particular hunt, huntmaster, race-horse or any subject of individuality, he had the remarkable ability to catch the very likeness of his models in his pictures. He was influenced by both Alken and G.D. Giles in their methods of gathering information. Alken's prints provide...

> proof of his immense powers of observation of men and animals, and the ease
> which he could draw on a fund of memories that can only have been gathered in
> in the hunting field, the ditch, on, off and even under his horse. (36)

Alken had an outstanding ability to paint human detail in the smallest area and his draughtmanship, atmosphere, colouring and, most of all, his painting of the actions of horses and riders were remarkably loose and unstylized for his period. In Aldin's watercolour painting of The South Berks (Fig. 46) he also shows his ability to emmulate particular individuals' characteristics no matter how small the figure is depicted in the picture, by capturing a pose, stance; profile or even the individuals unique outline. In this painting, which is 13 x 26 inches, fifty individuals of the hunt can be clearly identified.

Giles also blazed a trail for Aldin to follow. He portrayed various named hunting countries which were reproduced as prints. He would sketch many a "field" and "pack" from horseback. His work tended to be a little heavy and stilted and his colouring muddy, but he had a "good feeling for hunting, full of activity." (37) He normally showed a view of the hunt from a distance with the riders spread out across several fields. In his picture of the The Atherstone (Fig. 47), Aldin mimicks this technique completely, where his field of riders can be traced back over a view of five fields, to tiny brown shapes in the distance. Giles was the first of his era to place his

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hunting scenes on well drawn natural backgrounds of nearly every hunt pack in England, breaking the Alken tradition of contrived staged landscapes. However in landscape portrayal in hunting pictures, the most outstanding sporting artist, and a contemporary of Aldin's, was Lionel Edwards.

LIONEL EDWARDS.

Edwards and Aldin knew one another from the Sketch Club days in London, but the relationship was somewhat strained, especially when Edwards, eight years the younger (than Aldin), began his own excursions into the hunting countries. "That chap Edwards" Aldin asserted, was following him around everywhere. Edwards wrote of their habit of sketching from the saddle:

> In every case these sketches were painted out of doors, and in winter - which is a
> very different thing, I might add, from that delightful pastime known as
> "sketching"by the amateur under summer skies (38)

Edward's skies often took over the major part of his canvas and really did convey the mood of a hunting day. He softened his outlines with mist while at the same time retaining their volume and weight. Aldin, however would rather concentrate on the mood of his huntsmen, horses and hounds of a specific day, the sky providing a useful adjunct to a distinct landmark. But in the truthful depiction of events both were adherant, capturing the events, hazards, pleasures and individuals of a day's hunting. According to Edwards...

> We most of us flatter ourselves in the belief that so long as we don't have to wear
> glasses we can see! That our eyes do not really perceive is daily thrust upon the
> notice of the artist. Our half - trained powers of observation are chiefly
> remarkable for their ignorance (39).

Concern for the realistic portrayal in their pictures occupied both artists. Preston Rawnsley of the Southwold, on Bluebird (Fig. 48) is Aldin's adept rendition of the distinguished huntmaster and his faithful mount Bluebird. The hounds which can be identified include Heedful, Artful, Decanter and Helen, illustrate the knowledge and time spent by the artist in his quest for likeness, even to the extent that it encompassed the individuality of the hounds. Aldin preferred to use pastels for these portraits but like so many of his contemporaries, Edwards preferred to use water - colours or oils. Aldin found paint, especially oils, too time consuming and time was of the essence, for the more pictures Aldin could create, the more he could sell and therefore the more he could hunt.

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Aldin's precision and detail in capturing a likeness in figure drawing is more acute than that of Edwards. However Edwards held the upper hand in depicting particular hunting countries. It is difficult with contemporary artists to know if they were influenced by one another but there's no doubt both were avidly aware of each other's work and most likely inspired by each other in style and technique. In Lionel Edward's oil painting of <u>The Grand National 1960</u> (Fig. 49) he gives his impression of the field of horses and jockey's coming down over a fence. He clearly illustrates the movement and volume of the horses in a more impressionistic style than that of Aldin's water - colour, <u>The Grand National, The Canal Turn 1920</u>. (Fig. 50) Aldin's rendition is flatter, there is more precision in his likenesses but it is a stiffer more stylized portrayal. This painting and three others in the set of <u>The Grand National</u> (Fig. 51) lack the freedom and verve of most of Aldin's work in his Realistic style, being rather lifeless and stade. There is the knowledge of form, grace and colour in the horses, jockey's and scenery but it is almost as if Aldin wished to imitate the sporting prints of the eighteenth century. This is further paralled in the number nineteen horse in <u>The First Open Ditch</u> (Fig. 52) where he depicts the galloping horse in the impossible unnatural "rocking horse" run. Every horse drawn in these prints are rather elongated in neck, body, legs and even the ears, all of which are traits used by the eighteenth century painters, such as Stubbs's <u>Willaim Anderson with Two Saddle Horses</u> (Fig. 52)

SUMMARY

Aldin shared a talent in the observation of life with Alken and Giles, and this he demonstrated in his attention to detail in his hunting and racing pictures. Each of Aldin's pictures with these themes strived to portray a realism that was instantly recogniseable. The purpose for this concentration was because the picture had either already been commissioned of a particular hunt or individual or he wished to obtain a specific buyer for his work. Often this led to a rather hasty and haphazard rendering of the background and scenery. As his main objective was to capture a true likeness in his subject, his overall depiction of trees, hedgerows and even the grassy fields lack the attention needed to glue the composition together. Aldin followed in the path of Alken and Giles in his methods of gathering information from the hunting field so that he could be correct in every detail of his subject, and of the particular hunting country. But in this description he was outdone by Lionel Edwards, however Aldin may have procured some ideas and techniques for dealing with the scenery from some of Edwards paintings.
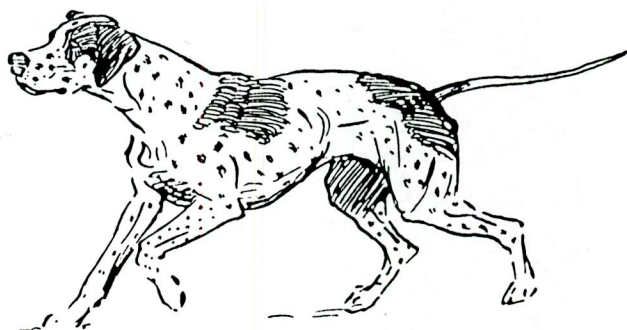
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CHAPTER EIGHT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with Aldin's animal portraiture of dogs and horses. He was influenced by various techniques of four different artists who also painted animals these were Munnings, Stubbs, Gilpin and Calderon. I will analyse in general each of the individual works and attempt to show Aldin's development of his skills in portraiture in accordance with this information. This chapter also demonstrates the development of Aldin's Realistic style which culminates in his dog portraiture.

A.J. MUNNINGS.

> They feel there is something in this so called modern art... I myself would rather have - excuse me my Lord Archbishop - a damned bad failure, a bad muddy old picture where someone has tried to do something, to set down what they have seen, than all this affected juggling.... these violent blows at nothing....foolish drolleries! (40)

This was part of a speech made by Alfred Munnings which was broadcast live during the Royal Academy Banquet of 1949; he was president at the time. These sentiments were also held by Aldin, although he did not display them to the same eccentric degree as Munnings. An account from William Orpen, who was in France with Munnings during a period, as official war artists, describes Munnings painting a portrait of Prince Antoine. "He used to make the poor Prince sit all day, circumnavigating the chateau as the sun went round". (41) Munnings kept on changing the colour of the horse's belly according to the reflected light as the day went on, from warm yellow, to bright violet, to bright green. Aldin could be as painstaking with his portraits: while sitting for a pastel study, Lord Hillingdon posed for hours a day astride a saddle in the harness room and later rode his horse, The Sower, repeatedly over a fence at Aldin's behest.

Aldin rarely used oils in his commissioned portraits due to the length of time involved in this process. Many of his large pictures are done in pastel, in which he was extremely adept, others were in water - colour and some were of pencil on paper or ivorine. His equestrian portraits show of his perfect knowledge and understanding not only of conformation but also that of the character and disposition of each individual animal.

During his charge of the Remount Depot during the First World War Aldin developed

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a friendship with the equestrian artist A.J. Munnings which was an important factor in his progress as an artist. Munnings had immense powers of concentration in observation and yet his style was loose and alive. Although each brush stroke seems haphazardly placed, each has been carefully contemplated so that together they construct a form of great perception in colour, perfection and clarity. It was his attention to exact colourings that so impressed Aldin. Though a horse is not blue, the reflected light from a glossy hide sometimes is and this is how Munnings would paint it. In his painting <u>Changing Horses</u> (Fig. 53) he shows his wife in mid - hunt, changing over from a tired black horse to a magnificent alert grey. He uses an emerald green for the sweaty highlights of the black, along with a dirty yellow ochre. The flanks of the grey, he depicts with a soft heathery purple, the legs and underbelly are shaded in a light green tone. Similar colouring techniques can be seen in Aldin's hunting scenes, such as his large watercolour picture of <u>The South Berks</u> (Fig. 46) In this Aldin uses a cold blue to highlight the dark horses and the straining backs of the black and tan hounds. Some of his hound portraits use this colour technique, as does <u>Cynthia</u> (Fig. 54). Here he uses a smudged light violet to highlight the ribcage, back and ear tips.

GEORGE STUBBS.

Stubbs's <u>Anatomy of the Horse</u>, written and illustrated by him in 1766, revolutionised animal painting. No equestrian artist could fail to acknowledge the contributions he made to his particular field of art. "Stubbs was no sportsman.... the scenes he depicted were 'before' or 'after', the specific action or contest was off stage" (42) Free and untrammelled by the demands of sport, his models exist gracefully in parkland, beneath sturdy oaks, on riverside meadows to which the painter gives a paradisal air. The influence of these staged settings can be seen in some of Aldin's work such as <u>Activity</u> (Fig. 55) a pastel study of a polo pony, beneath the shade of tall trees on a smooth grass lawn. The horse is in an almost contrived pose of perfection, showing off his every feature but also his training and willingness in his profession. <u>Mare and Foal</u> (Fig. 56) is a delicate drawing of Aldin's, which may have been in preparation for a larger work as it lacks the usual attention to detail but it emulates Stubb's technique of grouping horses. Because of the use of pastel in many of his equestrian portrait's Aldin's pictures tend to lack the truely exquisite fineness of detail and quality that Stubbs attained. This can be seen in Aldin's picture <u>Quality</u> (Fig. 57) which is a beautiful rendering of a chestnut being led, it shows all the qualities of the horse but just lacks that truely lifelike and finished ideal.

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Dogs often formed a vital part in the construction of a Stubbs picture. Sometimes they formed an essential link between two halves of a composition such as <u>Two Hunters with a Groom and a Terrier</u> (Fig. 58) and often they added "a hint of domestic informality" (43). Both these devices are used in Aldin's painting of <u>Brains, The Hunter</u> (Fig. 59) with two hounds balancing the composition as well as illustrating further that 'Brains" is a typical hunter and probably owned by the huntmaster. In all of Stubbs's dog portraits the animal is given the artist's full attention. <u>White Poodle in a Punt</u> (Fig. 60) describes the artists ability to show the contrasting crispness of the woolly coat and the wet smoothness of the dog's nose. He shows some of the character of, intelligence and inquisitiveness through the attitude of the dog's head. However Aldin went further in his realisation of individual characteristic's in his dog portraits. Aldin's concentration of liikeness and realism was fully aware in his dog pictures and this I will describe in detail later.

SAWREY GILPIN

'Mr. Gilpin is inferior to Mr. Stubbs in anatomical knowledge but is superior to him in grace and genius," (44) wrote Anthony Pasquin, art critic for <u>The Morning Herald</u>. Gilpin's horses have fire and grace, he liked to display flared nostrils, tensely arched necks and flowing manes. There is inevitably a slight stylization in his horses but they are loose and natural in style for the period in which he worked (Fig. 61). Aldin also strived to display this naturalness and sheer elegance. He also wished to capture the individual fire and liveliness of his models as Gilpin had. Aldin's success can be seen in <u>The Introduction</u>, (Fig. 62) with his magnificent portrayal of inquisitive amusement on the noble faces of his horses. In the medium of pencil on ivorine, Aldin was most prolific. These tiny drawings are superb examples of his attention to detail. <u>Mrs. Aldin on a Piebald with her Dogs</u> (Fig. 63) immortalises all four subjects in a display of grace, fun and exhilaration. Sometimes though, Aldin's compositions were just a little too posed and stiff, such as his <u>Showjumper; The Water Jump</u> (Fig. 64). He captures all the determination of both horse and rider but the action and movement are not as free or truthful as what he was able to achieve in his dog studies.

FRANK CALDERON.

"He loved painting dogs and probably no painter of today or yesterday ever quite caught the soul of dogdom as Cecil Aldin did," (45) wrote Willaim Fawcett, critic

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with The Apollo, for Aldin's obituary in 1935. Aldin had an amazing ability where he seems to reveal even the most innermost thoughts of his dogs by being able to capture individual moods. In his dog portraits he devoted more time, patience and understanding to each model and his skill developed through his life long love and devotion to mans best friend. Some of his initial grounding may have come from his early tutor Frank Calderon.

Calderon taught, "In all things that live there are certain irregularities and deficiencies which are not only signs of life but sources of beauty. No painting or drawing can be scientifically exact in every respect, but it should always give the impression of truth" (46) Calderon's own drawings show an incredible awareness and perception of his animals (Fig. 65). With a few quick strokes he captures a pose, a movement or likeness; he believed wholeheartedly in drawing from life, to gather the essence and natural environment of a subject. It was Aldin's belief, though, that the key to an animal's true soul was through it's eye. He was "particularily talented at portraying an animal's inner thoughts of joy, fear, triumph, disgrace - emotions as recognisable in his paintings as they would be in life". (47) He shows his devotion and knowledge of behaviour in such portrayals as An Irish Wolfhound, Micky (Fig. 66). The detail, colouring , softness and deftness describes this gentle giant hound with enormous realism.

He does not seek his humorous effects by humanising the features of his dogs as Caldecott did with his "smiling hounds". Temporary Partnership (Fig. 67) illustrates a wolf hound and bulldog sharing a small couch. The mutual expressions of annoyance and disdain between the two dogs provides a totally natural and undevised atmosphere of humour. No I'm not your Father (Fig. 68) is a lithograph of a lost, soleful looking Dalmation puppy, sidling up to a "not too impressed" bull terrier lying sheepishly on a chair. One cannot, but smile at the situation. Aldin would sit, patiently waiting for his dog model to adopt a natural posture and then he would commence drawing with a quick impression of the eyes. This can be seen in his drawing of a Spaniel (Fig. 69) where we become instantly aware of the soleful, watchful eyes inspecting us. Here we see Aldin's culmination of true realism in his drawing, and he achieved this with the help of his own dogs including Cracker the bull terrier and Micky the Irish Wolfhound. Aldin constantly drew these dogs and they became famous through being featured in popular books, prints, etchings and magazines including the Illustrated London News. It is astounding how often Aldin included a dog or more in his illustrations and paintings, whether a prominant feature

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and focus, or a runaway on a racecourse, chasing a carriage, a hunting hound or just a silent observer. An Aldin work is seldom finished without his dogs.

SUMMARY OF REALISTIC STYLE

Aldin's Realistic style reaches it's culmination in his animal portraiture. His racing and hunting themes are part of the development of his realism, but are lacking the instantly recogniseable moods and atmosphere that his portraiture so efficiently acquires and illustrates. From Munnings he learned how to concentrate on reflective light to give a literal representation, moulding and creating a true sense of colour. Although he did not acquire Munnings's looseness in the application of this colour. Stubbs's knowledge of anatomy and his design in composition, along with Gilpin's equestrian studies helped Aldin to captivate the true stance and sentiment of his subjects. Stubbs's horses show greater time spent in the capturing of likeness and realism, than Aldin's, however Aldin acquires these traits in his dog portraits. Calderon's idea's and perceptions of animal behaviour aided Aldin in what was less significant in rigid anatomy to convey a sense of natural movement and emotion.

CONCLUSION
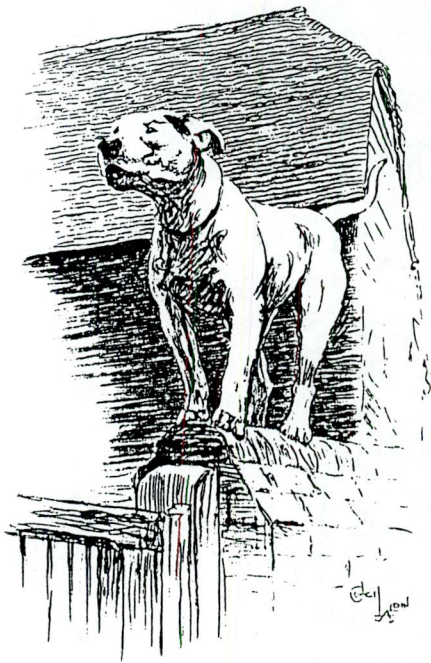
CRACKER ON THE WALL

CONCLUSION.

> ....this work is designed not so much for the connoisseur, as for the "general reader". Only in a little way is its purpose critical; to entertain is its chief object.(48)

This is what Hammerton wrote of Cecil Aldin's work in Humourists of the Pencil in 1905, and he indicates generally the main appeal behind most of Aldin's work. However, not only was Aldin's work to entertain, but it was to entertain by showing the humour in ordinary everyday situations and through this entertainment document the charm of the traditional English lifestyle. The motivation and incentive behind the volume of Aldin's work stemmed from his love of the hunting field and a large portion of his subjects and themes were derived from this occupation. In 1904 he managed to become a hunting correspondent for Land and Water magazine (Fig. 70) in which he wrote and illustrated articles on the hunt for very little payment, but it allowed him to spend the time hunting. Aldin was painting for the day, and not posterity. Maybe his motivations were unethical and unconventional to the usual art incentives of love for the work, but his work shows quality and standards indicating a certain devotion to his work. Without these standards and talent he would not have been able to sell his work so profusely and therefore he would not have been able to pursue his hunting ambitions. Aldin's style of drawing was dictated by the various individual commissions he received but he created and developed his own individual styles and techniques to illustrate these commissions.

Aldin developed his own natural talent by acquiring techniques and ideas from his predecessors and contemporaries of illustration and sporting art. His work can be sub-divided into two main styles. His Linear style recalls in subject and treatment the animal pictures of Randolf Caldecott. However he is in no sense an imitator as his drawing is characterised by a strong and original personality; the comparison with Caldecott springs form a fellowship of temperament. It is a combination of artist's work that influence and help mould Aldin's styles. Aldin simulates various techniques of these artists and combines them together in his own compilation, to form his own unique representations of theme in line, colour and form.

In some instances Aldin carries on the ideas from where his predecessors left off. In particular he shows this in his choice of themes. He continues with Caldecott's subjects of the English countrylife and with Leech's "street life, horsey people and middle - class families", illustrating life styles and incidents from these sources. He

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was " ... one of our gayest and most trustworthy guides to the fragrant realm of the Out - of - Doors" (49). Aldin's love of all things old and his wish to keep them alive, if not in reality, then in pictures and illustrations continued on from the ideas of Dendy Sadler on Inns and Coaching Houses. His coaching themes were directly influenced by the work of James Pollard and Henry Alken whose work can be clearly seen to document the revolving of life around the coaching era. Many of the artists and friends whom Aldin associated with in his lifetime had similar sources for their work including Phil May's "jolly" characters and Munnings's and Edwards's hunting backgrounds. This documentation of "old world" and every day events and happenings is intended for generations of viewers to experience and become aware of the lifestyle and charm of the times. Aldin's work continues the intentions of his predecessors in giving   an incite into the customs and norm of the days gone by for us to remember and cherish.

Humour was a major source for much of Aldin's work and it can be seen that much of the work that influenced and inspired him also contained a similar humour. He aspired with Leech in illustrating calamities of the hunting field with a natural humour that was not distasteful.   As with Caldecott, Leech and May, Aldin did not have to invent humour for his illustrations, they all procured it from the events and situations occurring around them. He developed his style around this humour, creating his simple charming characters to portray a situation or event. His humour knew no bounds and where he found it he drew it. This can be seen in the numerous hunting scenes with Mr. Jorrocks, coaching prints such as The Portsmouth Coach (Fig. 71) and themes such as The Bluemarket Races (Fig. 24) All this work relates to Aldin's Linear style, however much of his humour is conveyed through the uncontrived realism of his Realistic style. This humour is described in the detailed attention applied to the expressions and situations of his dogs. Aldin displays a natural loveable humour in the capturing of a pose such as that in Relaxation (Fig. 72) or by revealing a dogs inner thoughts through a facial expression as in Ready for Mischief (Fig. 73). The sentiment and understanding with which he conveys these situations in his dog studies is to my mind the epitome of Aldins' success as an artist.

With his caricatures Aldin displays situations of excitement and joviality in simple lines and bright descriptive colours. His series of prints illustrate the charm and idyllic nature of the old English country lifestyle and his hunting pictures show of the exhileration, drama and elegance of the popular tradition. Although in all of these there occurs individual failings of technique and style. His caricatures occassionally

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are a little expressionless, lacking individuality, the background scenery in some of his prints lacks attention and some of his hunting and racing figures and situations become stiff and contrived. The main cause behind these particular deviations of attention was due to an insufficent amount of time spent. Occasionally Aldin's choice of medium in dealing with particular subjects led to shortcomings in his work. He was not so adept in the use of paint as he was with pastels in his Realistic work and yet he worked meticulously well with water-colour in his Linear style such as his coaching pictures. It seems that on a larger scale he worked better with pastels and he handled water-colour superbly in his smaller more intricate pieces. However in his dog portraits of pastel and pencil Aldins' skill and knowledge of canine behaviour all combine to create unreproachable pictures of realistic emotion and individual character.

Unfortunately, much of Aldin's work remains unavailable to the general public. During his lifetime his work became a customary sight, "Look where you will in London, into the shop windows, at the posters on the walls, even in the depths of the Tube, "(50) a critic wrote in 1990, "and there is always some of his work to admire and amuse you". This work has now disappeared into private collections and any revival has been hampered by the insufficient amount of affordable reproductions. Much of his work remains in limited editions of his old hardback books unviewed by most. However there have recently been a number of exhibitions held in England of collections of Aldin's work which have revived his popularity and may have helped re-establish him in the ranks of appeal of his contemporaries such as Munnings and Edwards. On visiting a recent exhibition of Aldin's work, I noticed some of the comments written by previous viewers..."Very enjoyable," "Excellent, not at all the kind of sentimentality I half expected," "More please", and perhaps one which Aldin would most have appreciated, "Forward Oh!"

"With the death of Cecil Aldin, there passed a world famous artist whose portraiture of dogs in particular has never been surpassed; he is dead but his work will live".(Or will it ?)

Illustrated London News 1935

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