Ships and Souvenirs: Itineraries of the Golden Jubilee

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Printed Ecologies: William Morris and the Rural Thames

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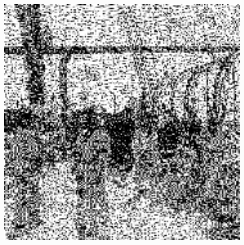
Ships and Souvenirs: Itineraries of the Golden Jubilee



Article by **Shalini Le Gall**
WORD COUNT:5,472

Abstract
This analysis explores the history of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee through an investigation of three objects: James McNeill Whistler's print *Tilbury* (1887), a photograph taken aboard the HMY *Victoria and Albert* during the Naval Review, and a Royal Worcester commemorative scent bottle. Drawing from methodologies developed in the fields of material culture studies, histories of empire, and the environmental humanities, the study traces the maritime itineraries made visible during the Jubilee. For Whistler, the Jubilee provided an opportunity to leverage Britain's imperial character in a way that would bolster his own artistic ambitions as president of the Society of British Artists. In *Tilbury*, he renders the newly inaugurated docks through a series of etched lines that convey the frenetic level of activity on the riverbank, and point to the environmental impact of this infrastructure project. In the photograph from the Naval Review, two Indian men who had recently joined the royal household mingle with the Queen's guests and companions. Identified as Abdul Karim and Muhammad Bakhsh, their presence signals the widespread visibility of Indian visitors and servants throughout the Jubilee, which occurred only a year after the Indian and Colonial Exhibition. The Queen's global reign is also celebrated in the Royal Worcester souvenir scent bottle, composed of materials mined locally in Britain and imported from South America and other regions. Collectively, these object studies delineate specific ways in which the Jubilee centered the Thames as a portal for the transit and display of colonized peoples and imperial goods, and expand art-historical approaches to the interconnected relationships foregrounded by the environmental and global humanities.

Introduction

As the sun rose on 21 June 1887, crowds lined the streets of London along the procession route from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey. The streets had been filling for days with people eager to participate in the events marking fifty years of Queen Victoria's reign. The most recent similar event had occurred for the Jubilee of King George III on 25 October 1809, so expectations were high for an experience that had been several generations in the making. Although the London proceedings would form the centerpiece of the Jubilee, celebrations

throughout Britain and the colonies solidified connections between Queen Victoria's reign, and the imperialist expansion made possible through maritime pathways.
This analysis explores the history of the Jubilee through an investigation of three specific objects: a print, a photograph, and a scent bottle. The print, James McNeill Whistler's *Tilbury*, grounds this study at Tilbury Docks, a port on the eastern end of the River Thames, approximately twenty miles from the Thames estuary, where the river meets the North Sea (fig. 1). As president of the Society of British Artists, Whistler was invited to both the Jubilee ceremonies in Westminster Abbey and the Naval Review at Spithead, which took place one month after the London festivities. The Tilbury Docks were an engineering marvel, having just opened in 1886, and the location marked the departure point for most vessels setting off for the Naval Review at Spithead. As described in the *Illustrated London News*, "The fleet which her Majesty had the pleasure of showing to the numerous Royal and distinguished personages who followed her yacht in its progress comprised every description of ironclad and modern instrument of warfare that floats upon the sea".[1] During the Naval Review, Whistler made a number of etchings, including *Tilbury*, that he later offered to the Queen in a collected volume that came to be called the Jubilee Set.

Figure 1

James McNeill Whistler, *Tilbury*, 1887, etching (first state of three), 8.1 × 17.6 cm. The Lunder Collection, Colby College Museum of Art (2013.488). Digital image courtesy of Colby College Museum of Art (all rights reserved).

The photograph, *The Deck of HMY Victoria and Albert, 23 July 1887*, is from a group of photographs held in the Royal Collection Trust documenting the events of the Jubilee (fig. 2). This specific photograph captures the ambience aboard the royal flagship, and importantly includes individuals who had traveled from the Indian subcontinent to London for the Jubilee and became part of Queen Victoria's cortège. The image provides a glimpse into how the Naval Review was experienced by London's privileged elite. Their interactions with Queen Victoria's Indian servants exemplified the imperial hierarchies that structured the Jubilee celebrations.

Figure 2

The Deck of H.M.Y. Victoria and Albert, 23 July 1887, albumen print, 14.1 × 19.3 cm. Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 2916004). Digital image courtesy of Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022 (all rights reserved).

The scent bottle, manufactured by the Royal Worcester Company as a souvenir object for visitors to the Jubilee, acts as a material trace of the event itself, whose very creation depended upon the maritime prowess celebrated by the Naval Review (fig. 3). The bottle is covered with symbolic references to the British Empire, and composed of raw materials sourced in Britain and abroad. The proliferation of such Jubilee souvenirs forces consideration of the ecological impact of this event, and the environmental legacy of Victorian economic growth more generally. This line of inquiry is shared by many of the authors in this special issue, including Jon Newman and Jennifer Tucker, who in their essays address the ways that infrastructure projects in central London impacted residential living conditions. From the global movement of Queen Victoria's subjects to the construction of new docks at Tilbury, and the mining of raw materials in Cornwall, the visual and material culture inspired by the Jubilee serve as points of entry into environmental and imperial analyses in the Victorian period.

Figure 3

Royal Worcester scent bottle, circa 1887, porcelain and silver, 7.62 × 5.4 × 1.9 cm. Collection of the Portland Museum of Art (2021.6.1). Digital image courtesy of Portland Museum of Art (all rights reserved).

My approach to exploring this event through the study of specific objects is shaped principally by my experience as a curator in a collecting museum, a setting in which objects within institutional holdings determine the types of stories that can be told to the visiting public. This analysis also draws widely from studies of Victorian material culture, and the recent series *Crafting Communities* (and related website *Victorian Things*), developed by Dr. Andrea Korda, Dr. Mary Elizabeth Leighton, and Dr. Vanessa Warne.[2] This initiative brought together a range of scholars and professionals in a virtual setting throughout the pandemic, with each contributor focusing on a single object. The methodology for this project parallels the recent art-historical turn toward object-based teaching and learning, and the growing interest in material culture, the decorative arts, and images that circulated outside of the established realms of fine art. The print, the photograph, and the perfume bottle at the center of this study are connected by their associations with the Jubilee but, more specifically, they allow us to identify the many itineraries of this historical event.

My interest in the pathways that link these objects draws broadly from postcolonial scholarship, and methodologies adopted by scholars in British art, Atlantic history, and the environmental humanities.[3] Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (1993) established an important model for the study of modernist forms developed in transnational networks marked by histories of oppression and racial difference.[4] In the field of British art, *Colonialism and the Object* (1998), edited by Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, and *Art and the British Empire* (2009), edited by Tim Barringer, Geoff Quilley, and Douglas Fordham, were among a number of studies that centered imperial questions on the study of visual and material culture. More recently, Sarah Thomas's *Witnessing Slavery: Art and Travel in the Age of Abolition* (2019) situates renderings of transatlantic slavery within larger discussions of abolitionist policies and imperial strategies.[5]

Although this study begins with an analysis of Whistler's *Tilbury*, focusing on the environmental and imperial themes of this subject necessitates an expansive methodological approach. In "Toward a Blue Cultural Studies: The Sea, Maritime Culture, and Early Modern English Literature", Steven Mentz identifies four factors that underlie scholarly interest in the maritime world: globalization, environmentalism, technology studies, and postcolonialism.[6] These issues coalesce in the visual imagery and material culture of the Golden Jubilee. The three objects at the focus of this study trace specific points on maritime pathways that brought the empire—its people and its goods—to London, and delineate the interconnected histories on display at the Jubilee.

Tilbury

On the day of the Naval Review, a number of vessels began the journey from the newly inaugurated Tilbury Docks. At this port on the Thames, guests would have observed impressive modern technologies of dock operations. This engineering marvel designed to bolster Britain's mercantile activity served as a prelude to the more overt display of naval power at Spithead. As a tidal river, the Thames bore the physical marks of the sea, with access to some locations only possible at high tide. With a tidal basin of 19 acres and a water depth of 43 feet, the largest ships in the world could enter Tilbury during any tidal conditions, and take advantage of railway connections (see plan in fig. 4) and modern electrical and telephone wiring.[7] The economic fortunes of London, and Britain more generally, relied on an understanding of the Thames as Britain's gateway to the open sea, where the naval fleet protected national interests and ensured the security of visitors, traders, and cargo alike.

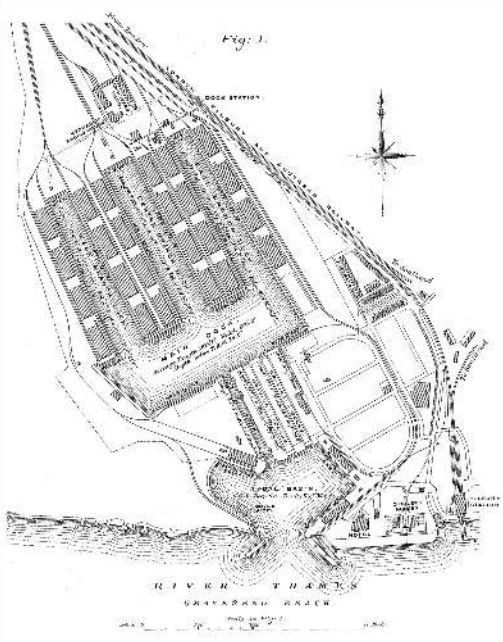


Figure 4

Plan for Tilbury Docks, in J.F. Scott, 'The Construction and Equipment of the Tilbury Docks', *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* 120 (1895): 276–288, fig. 1. Digital image courtesy of ICE Publishing (all rights reserved).

In the Jubilee Set, Whistler depicts Tilbury twice, at the beginning of the journey and at the end as the ships were returning to port in *Return to Tilbury* (fig. 5).[8] As he prepared the prints for presentation to the Queen, Whistler wrote of his interest in capturing the itinerary of the day's events.

> *Having been officially invited, as President of the Royal Society of British Artists, to attend the Review by Her Majesty of her Fleet at Spithead … I felt myself moved to offer some tribute within the scope of my own art … I have accordingly embodied my impressions and observations, on that memorable day, in a set of Etchings—notes, as I may say of the needle, not the pen, taken at the moment and from point to point of that Imperial but pacific and more than Roman triumph, from Tilbury fort to the waters of Portsmouth.*[9]

Whistler's reference to Tilbury Fort points to the importance of this location, used by both Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I as an artillery shelter and staging area in preparation for naval battles, most notably with the Spanish Armada. This historic significance would not have been lost on Jubilee visitors en route to the Naval Review.

Figure 5

James McNeill Whistler, *Return to Tilbury*, 1887, etching and drypoint (second and final state), 13 × 9.5 cm. The Lunder Collection, Colby College Museum of Art (2013.416). Digital image courtesy of Colby College Museum of Art (all rights reserved).

In *Tilbury*, Whistler renders the port through a series of etched lines that convey the frenetic level of activity both on the water, and near the buildings on the riverbank. The Tilbury Docks had opened in the year prior to the Jubilee, and they offered an important railway connection that allowed goods to move more freely to and from land and sea. This competitive advantage resulted in economic losses for the docks that were more centrally located, which also held smaller warehouse facilities and could not accommodate many of the largest ships then in operation. The development of the Tilbury Docks, however, had steep environmental impacts on the region and anticipated the labor upheavals that would occur leading up to the dockworkers strike in 1889.

The construction and planning for Tilbury took place during a period of economic hardship in which there was increasing pressure on the infrastructure of London's ports. In the 1870s and 1880s, the price of coal and textiles, among the most important exports for the island nation, decreased significantly. Wheat prices also began to fall as less expensive grain was imported from North America.[10] Unemployment increased and wages for manual laborers remained stagnant. The East and West India Docks began to carry out modernization schemes in an effort to accommodate the shifting technological and engineering needs of the modern vessels coming into London. The construction of the Victoria and Albert Docks, with their generous acreage and access to railway lines, soon overshadowed the smaller docks closer to central London. The Royal Albert Dock, completed in 1880, was an especially advanced facility lit by electricity, equipped with hydraulic cranes and steam winches, and able to accommodate the largest ships on the seas—carrying up to 12,000 tons.[11]

In the face of this stiff competition, the East and West India Dock Company decided to finance a new dock at Tilbury in the hope that the site would allow the company to effectively compete with the newer docks and avoid liquidation. In a rousing address to company shareholders on 30 September 1881, Chairman H.H. Dobree stated: "The Tilbury Docks with a great length of quay with a comparatively limited water alley would enable the dock to be constructed cheaper than other docks. The selected site of Tilbury is at the last possible point within the jurisdiction of London and well within the fortifications of the Thames".[12]

The Chadwell marshes were selected as the site for dock construction and, before the project went public, company representatives purchased 450 acres of marshland at reduced rates.[13] Preliminary borings revealed that the soil was brown fibrous clay for about six feet, followed by alternating layers of blue alluvial clay and peat, and finally a thick layer of gravel.[14] The quay of the docks was built about twelve feet above the original ground surface, and some excavated material was used to raise the site to this level. A dredger pulled gravel from the bed of the Thames to be used in the concrete. At the end of the first year of construction, approximately two million bricks had been made from clay found at the site.[15] Additional materials used in construction included Portland cement from manufacturers on the Thames and Medway, Cornish granite, and Bramley Fall stone.[16] Extant photographs from the construction site reveal the huge quantities of earth, stone, and timber needed to support the critical railway infrastructure, and create access points to the river (fig. 6). The Tilbury project also involved the construction of additional structures adjoining the docks, including a footbridge that overlooked the railway lines, a hotel, canteen houses, offices, workshops, locomotive sheds, and residential structures including individual houses for the officers, cottages for the foremen, and workmen's dwelling blocks.[17] There was also a reading room and school nearby, and a place of worship established by the Thames Church Mission.[18]

Figure 6

W.W. Roach, *Tilbury Dock construction, looking south east showing the north end of small Gravity Dock*, 1 August 1886, photograph. Collection of the Museum of London. Digital image courtesy of Museum of London (all rights reserved).

This enormous infrastructure project had a major impact on the local population and landscape. At the time of the 1881 Census, Tilbury numbered 516 people living in 129 residences.[19] As with any major construction project in the Victorian period, the workforce was a combination of men and boys who had traveled to Tilbury for the job, and local residents already living in the area. The average number of individuals on the job was 4,300, and climbed as high as 6,000.[20] Whistler had closely observed dockside manual labor during his first extended study of the London docks in the Thames Set, begun in 1859. In works such as *Black Lion Wharf*, he covered the surface of the etching plate with deep lines that rendered ships, dockworkers, and warehouses in glaring detail (fig. 7). Whistler began the Thames Set shortly after he relocated from Paris to London in 1859, and his approach to these subjects was strongly informed by his exposure to Gustave Courbet and other French artists who tackled challenging social subjects in their canvases. By contrast, Whistler etched the *Tilbury* plate while aboard the vessel that would carry him to the Naval Review, celebrating the reign of Queen Victoria. The expansive composition of the print creates a panoramic effect, forcing the viewer to study the scene from a considerable distance. Tilbury functions here as a port of embarkation, yet even in this transitory moment, Whistler skillfully conveys his impressions of this industrial site. In the print, lightermen transport passengers in the foreground, and a small group of steamers appear at the midline. The steam emanating from these vessels rises in curved forms and is noticeably different from the linear aspects of the clouds. A brig squarely positioned in the center of the picture plane grounds the composition, with its masts echoing the cranes that appear across much of the background.

Figure 7

James McNeill Whistler, *Black Lion Wharf*, 1859, etching (fourth and final state), 14.8 × 22.4 cm. The Lunder Collection, Colby College Museum of Art (2013.321). Digital image courtesy of Colby College Museum of Art (all rights reserved).

Whistler made very few alterations across the three known states of *Tilbury*, choosing only to add additional shading in the sky, and fine details to the central ship.[21] Interestingly, large warehouses were not part of the original design at Tilbury, nor do they appear in Whistler's print. Instead, a four-story warehouse at Whitechapel linked by railway with the docks was the designated holding area for goods in transit at Tilbury. The absence of any pictorial reference to the railway, which was one of the most impressive achievements of the docks, points to Whistler's interest in connecting this site to the compositional modes of his nocturnes and other riverine pictures, and more specifically to the maritime renderings of the Naval Review. For Whistler, the link to the Jubilee celebrations, and his unlikely presence aboard the vessel, presented a unique professional opportunity.

The Jubilee Set

An accomplished printmaker by the time of his election as the president of the Society of British Artists in 1886, Whistler hoped that the Jubilee would allow the society to gain new recognition. He described his gift of the Jubilee Set to the Queen in a letter to Joseph and Elizabeth Robins Pennell, his biographers. Whistler wrote that he had,

made decorations all round the text in water-colour, at the top the towers of Windsor, down one side a great battleship plunging through the waves, and below, the sun that never sets on the British Empire … The following pages were not decorated, just the most wonderful address, explaining the age and dignity of the Society, its devotion to Her Glorious, Gracious Majesty, and suggesting the honour it would be if this could be recognised by a title that would show the Society to belong specially to Her.[22]

Whistler was hoping for a title that would add an honorific prefix to the society's name. In correspondence from August 1887, just following the Naval Review, Whistler requested that the Society of British Artists be recognized as the Imperial Society of British Artists.[23] The Home Office responded asking the artist to amend his request and instead proposed the word Royal, which was ultimately selected to newly designate the Royal Society of British Artists. In his short tenure as the society's president, Whistler had transformed the visibility of the group, and

aligned it with British institutions such as the Royal Academy of Arts.[24] Whistler's original request, however, pointed to how Britain's imperial expansion shaped the way that artists thought about their work within a larger global context. For Whistler, the Jubilee provided an opportunity to leverage Britain's imperial character in a way that would bolster his own artistic ambitions. The artist's personal attitudes toward the British Empire were mixed. As an American, he recognized the value of self-rule and national independence, yet he also held racist beliefs that reinforced colonial rule and white supremacist attitudes. During the Civil War, Whistler notably left the Union cause when he learned that abolition became a central issue in the conflict.[25] His perspective was deeply shaped by a worldview in which white Americans and Europeans exerted dominance, and objects and materials from around the globe, including Japanese prints, were available for collecting. However, the imperialist character of his maritime renderings is also closely linked to the tradition of British maritime art more generally.

In the exhibition catalog *Spreading Canvas: Eighteenth-Century British Marine Painting*, Geoff Quilley discusses the centrality of maritime life and culture in British history, arguing that connections to the sea transcended political differences. He cites J.G. Dalyell's preface to *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea* (1812), writing that, "in a country such as Britain, where every individual is either immediately or remotely concerned with the fortune of the sea, the casualties attendant on the mariner must be viewed with peculiar interest".[26] Quilley's analysis in the exhibition catalog is focused on the eighteenth century, but many of the same themes continued into the nineteenth century, particularly as Romanticism provided a framework for artists to engage with some of the more harrowing aspects of maritime imagery.

Although most visual artists avoided many of the darker aspects of maritime culture, including images of the slave trade, maritime labor, and the pillaging of foreign villages and cities, these themes were sometimes discernible, such as in J.M.W. Turner's *The Slave Ship* (1840).[27] Like Turner's reference to the slave trade, made during a period of abolitionist sentiment, Whistler's depiction of dock labor in the Thames Set is fairly unique for its direct treatment of working-class conditions. Kathleen Pyne has argued that Whistler was able to "aestheticize the tragic historical conditions of his human subjects", in these early renderings of London's East End.[28] By contrast, the scenes in the Jubilee Set are closely aligned with the celebratory images of naval power found in more conventional British maritime imagery. For example, in *Troopships*, a number of ships sail in formation, distinguishable only by the masts visible behind one another beyond the horizon line (fig. 8). In *The Fleet: Monitors*, large vessels stretch across the sea, while in the foreground, five individuals sail in another boat (fig. 9). Although monitors were not especially seaworthy, because of their slow speed and short sailing range, the ships provided strong coastal defense.[29]

Figure 8

James McNeill Whistler, *Troopships*, 1887, etching and drypoint, second (final) state, 13.1 × 17.6 cm. Lunder Collection, Colby College Museum of Art (2013.490). Digital image courtesy of Colby College Museum of Art (all rights reserved).

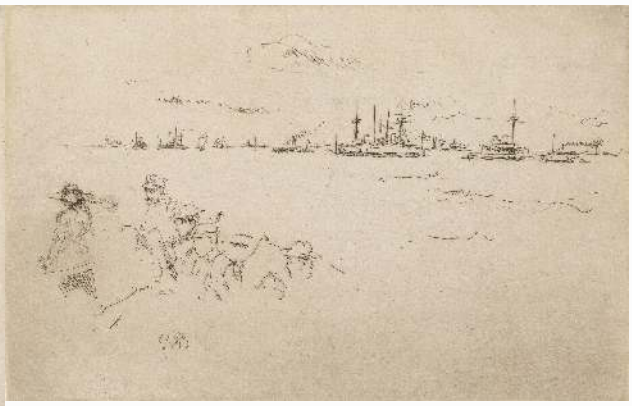


Figure 9

James McNeill Whistler, *The Fleet: Monitors*, 1887, etching (first state of two), 14.1 × 22.2 cm. The Lunder Collection, Colby College Museum of Art (017.2007). Digital image courtesy of Colby College Museum of Art (all rights reserved).

While Whistler's maritime depictions drew from some of the compositional elements of celebratory naval battle scenes, the Jubilee Set remained tied to the itinerary of the Naval Review.[30] In describing Whistler's process for making the set, the Pennells noted:

Whistler, carrying the small plates about with him, sketched the subjects he found on copper as other artists sketch on paper … the whole set of ten [were made] during the Naval Review, with a plate at Tilbury, on his embarking, and another at Portsmouth on landing. The prints of this Series,

as we know the exact space of time in which they were done, prove strikingly his wonderful power of giving a momentary impression in a few lines on a piece of copper, for they suggest, in extraordinary fashion, the picturesque aspect of the great naval spectacle.[31]

In preparing his gift to the Queen, Whistler included additional prints made at Westminster Abbey, Windsor, and his own residence in Chelsea, and embossed the back cover with his signature Butterfly.[32] With images spanning from central London, to Tilbury, and out to the open sea, the collection ultimately functioned as an account of a journey, a moment in which Whistler's personal itinerary briefly paralleled the Queen's own movements.[33]

Empress of India

After a month of celebrations that began in London, and included receptions, garden parties, and public addresses, the Queen had arrived at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight on 19 July, just four days before the Naval Review. As sailing craft and vessels assembled on 23 July, all eyes were on the Queen's flagship, the HMY *Victoria and Albert*. *The Deck of HMY Victoria and Albert, 23 July 1887*, one of several photographs taken aboard the Queen's ship during the Naval Review, provides a glimpse of how the event was experienced by guests, servants, and workers, closest to the Queen (see fig. 2). The photograph is in a leather-bound album containing thirty-six albumen prints that depict Jubilee events during the summer of 1887. In this highly composed image, sailors in uniform spread across the foreground of the picture plane, with the central

figure looking directly at the camera, holding a line that extends upward. Vertical masts and funnels frame the scene, and multiple lines soar into the sky suggesting the height of the vessel. In the background, individuals in formal dress are assembled in small groups, some looking toward the camera and others looking away toward the sea. Among these figures are two men dressed in Indian clothing. Their presence, both on the ship and in the archival holdings of the Royal Collection Trust, points to the singular importance of Indian subjects at the Jubilee.

Of the tens of thousands of spectators at the Jubilee, perhaps none attracted more attention than the Indian visitors and servants. Indians participated in a specialized cavalry in the procession to Westminster, they formed part of the contingent of invited royal guests, and also served in the royal household. Victoria had been proclaimed Queen-Empress of India in 1877, in a ceremony developed in the tradition of the Mughal *durbar*, and the impact on the Queen's surroundings was immediate.[34] Growing interest in Indian art and architecture eventually led to the creation of the Durbar Room at Osborne House.

Much of this interest in Indian peoples and objects was spurred by the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, which Queen Victoria opened on 4 May 1886, just one year prior to the Jubilee.[35] Covering over 100,000 square feet, the exhibition was open for five months and welcomed over five million visitors. Like the other universal exhibitions and world fairs of the nineteenth century, the exhibition included examples of art and trade from the colonies, as well as artisans who had been expressly brought to Britain for the occasion. A number of scholars, including Tim Barringer, Julie Codell, and Saloni Mathur, have shown how this exhibition relied on the labor of prisoners who had been forcibly displaced to London, and were required to "perform" for visitors, while also fostering a fascination for Indian craftsmanship at a time when British producers increasingly embraced mechanical production.[36] In his *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (1886), Frank Cundall identifies eight craftsmen by name and describes them as representing "many different types of race".[37] Cundall's volume also describes how Indians and other displaced colonized peoples worked as servants and attendants during the exhibition.[38]

Following the success of the imperial display in the 1886 Exhibition, the organizers of the Jubilee made considerable efforts to incorporate Indian dignitaries and attendants into almost every public aspect of the celebration. Notes and letters arrived from all over the subcontinent, praising the Queen, describing her as "Empress of Hindoostan, Head of all Kings and Rulers, and King of all Kings".[39] In her personal journal, Queen Victoria noted the Indian presence at the Jubilee, writing, "Just in front of my carriage rode the 12 Indian officers".[40] On 30 June, she held a grand reception for the Indian princes and delegation, during which elaborate gifts were exchanged.[41] A number of photographs in The Royal Collection Trust depict Indian visitors and guests, including *Queen Victoria's Jubilee Procession, 1887: The Indian Princes* (fig. 10) and *Queen Victoria's Indian Escort for the 1887 Jubilee Procession* (fig. 11).

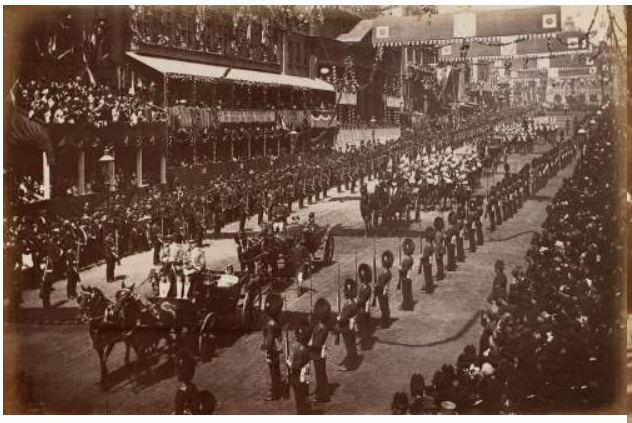


Figure 10

Francis Frith & Co. Ltd, *Queen Victoria's Jubilee Procession, 1887: The Indian Princes*, 1887, albumen print, 19 × 29 cm. Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 2915907). Digital image courtesy of Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022 (all rights reserved).

Figure 11

Francis Frith & Co. Ltd, *Queen Victoria's Indian Escort for the 1887 Jubilee Procession*, 1887, albumen print, 24.1 × 29 cm. Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 2915909). Digital image courtesy of Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022 (all rights reserved).

In light of the increased visibility of Indian visitors to the Jubilee, the presence of the two Indian figures on the deck of the HMY *Victoria and Albert* during the Naval Review appears to be part of a general pattern. However, these individuals are not performing or processing in the manner of cavalrymen or princes; they are socializing with the Queen's closest companions. Identified as Abdul Karim and Muhammad Bakhsh, both Indian men were attendants who arrived during the Jubilee to serve Queen Victoria.[42] Karim would go on to have a long career in the royal household: by 1889, he had been promoted to *munshi* (a term used by the British in India for local secretaries or clerks). Queen Victoria commissioned portraits of Karim, gave him property and, by 1894, he became the "Indian Secretary".[43] As controversy swirled around Karim's growing influence, calls emerged for Queen Victoria to re-evaluate her relationship with him. Courtiers alleged that a "thoroughly stupid and uneducated man" should not have had access to politically sensitive information, and they feared that Karim's friends and relations had contact with "disorderly elements in India".[44] Although Queen Victoria eventually distanced herself from her attendant, the public persecution of Karim laid bare the paternalizing racist attitudes at the foundation of the colonial mission in India.[45]

Aboard the HMY *Victoria and Albert* during the Naval Review, both Karim and Bakhsh glimpsed the extraordinary fleet that reinforced Britain's power across the globe. A photograph of the flagship, *HMY Victoria and Albert passing through the Fleet*, captures the extraordinary number and variety of craft on the sea that day, including yachts, steamships, paddle steamers, steam tugs, and rowing boats (fig. 12). The *Illustrated London News* reported that the Naval Review numbered 135 vessels, including armored and unarmored ships, torpedo vessels, gun boats, and troopships, and required the assembly of 20,200 officers and men.[46] As the *Victoria and Albert* passed to examine each vessel, all eyes were on the Queen, who "sat surrounded by her grand-children and the ladies of her suite … the expression on her face was clearly visible to

all who had good glasses".[47] To many visitors on the open sea, the impressive display testified to the success of the British imperial mission during Queen Victoria's reign, yet the presence and enduring influence of Abdul Karim signaled interconnected histories that belied this prevailing narrative.

Figure 12

HMY Victoria and Albert passing through the Fleet, 23 July 1887, 1887, albumen print, 14.7 × 19.3 cm. Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 2916003). Digital image courtesy of Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022 (all rights reserved).

Jubilee Remembrances

In a satirical *Punch* illustration referencing the Jubilee (*Mr. Punch's Celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, 1886*), Queen Victoria is framed by imperial attributes, including dark-skinned figures accompanied by elephant tusks, a kangaroo, and a tiger (fig. 13). Symbolic forms of Victorian industry and innovation also appear throughout the print, acknowledging the importance of gas, electricity, and train lines in this Jubilee celebration. These technical innovations extended into familiar visible markers on the landscape and seascape (such as modern docks, gas and train lines, and naval ships). However, on a smaller scale, hand-held souvenir objects functioned as microcosms of the Jubilee.

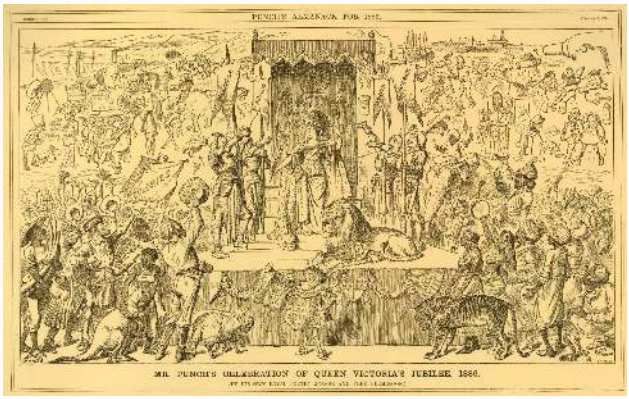


Figure 13

Joseph Swain, *Mr. Punch's celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee*, 1886, wood engraving, 24.5 × 39.2 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1902,1011.9787). Digital image courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

In possession of royal warrants and actively experimenting with porcelain materials and techniques since the mid-eighteenth century, Royal Worcester was a model for how quality-made British goods in the Victorian era relied on local mining as well as raw materials supplied by the empire. These materials were secured and processed through time-consuming labor performed by workers, both at home and abroad, in conditions that ranged from the unhealthy to the inhumane. For the Jubilee, Royal Worcester produced a special edition scent bottle that prominently featured Queen Victoria's profile in a medallion format. Her name, as well as the dates 1837 and 1887, appear in circular text under her image. The verso depicts the Tudor rose, Scottish thistle, and Irish shamrock. The cap of the bottle is an ornate metallic crown. In another version of this commemorative scent bottle, the cap is made of silver and the verso of the bottle is embossed with text identifying Canada, India, and Australia—calling attention to the imperial references mocked in the *Punch* illustration.

In a forty-seven-page publication, titled *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works, Worcester* (circa 1895), the company described the process by which their celebrated objects were made.[48] The opening pages state that beginning on 1 April 1880, each visitor to the manufacturing facility was charged sixpence, and also received the guidebook.[49] Images throughout the publication illustrate the on-site museum, porcelain-making techniques, and the extensive facilities (including the mill, slip house, thrower, ovens, and dipping and painting rooms).[50] Many of the raw materials were sourced in Cornwall, including kaolin (referred to as china clay), and petuntse (referred to as Cornish stone).[51] Feldspar was imported from Sweden, and ox bones were brought in from South America. The guide states that, "The use of bones is peculiar to English porcelain, and constituted the great difference between it and the porcelain made on the continents of Europe and Asia".[52] In a discussion of throwing, a line drawing illustrates traditional techniques used in Egypt and China, where the power to turn the wheel is supplied by the hand, a foot, or a loose strap.[53] In contrast, the writer claims, "At the Royal Porcelain Works, and at most of the large manufactories, steam power is now used and the thrower regulates the speed of the wheel by a motion of his foot".[54] A large, detailed accompanying image visually illustrates the differences between these techniques (fig. 14).

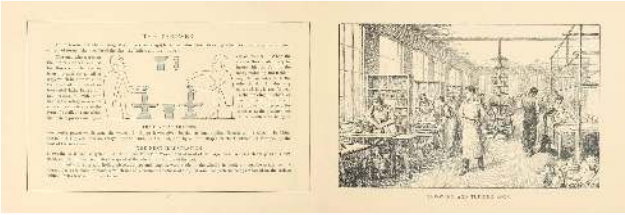


Figure 14

E.P. Evans, *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works*, (Worcester: Royal Porcelain Works, circa 1895), 18–19. Collection of University of California Libraries. Digital image courtesy of Internet Archive (public domain).

Along with the advanced manufacturing technology and the use of the steam power, the varied geographic origins of materials used at the Royal Worcester facility are expressed as a point of pride in this publication. Referencing Simeon Shaw's text on Staffordshire pottery, the writer quotes:

To give our readers some idea of the various ramifications of a single piece of *earthenware* before it arrives at completion, we may note that at the present day to produce the commonest painted bowl used by the poorest peasant wife to contain the breakfast for her rustic husband, the clays of Dorset and Devonshire, the flints of Kent, the granite of Cornwall, the lead of Montgomery, the manganese of Warwickshire, and the soda of Cheshire, must be conveyed from their respective districts, and by the ingenious processes, the results of unnumbered experiments, be made to combine with other substances apparently as heterogenous, obtained from other nations.[55]

Developed through a process that spoke to the broad reach of the British Empire, the commemorative scent bottles and other objects made by the Royal Worcester Porcelain Works pointed to the cosmopolitan nature of apparently quintessentially British objects.

The scent bottle also functions as a type of coda, both to the Jubilee and this analysis. Like Whistler's Jubilee Set, it is a souvenir of a specific event, meant to activate memory and nostalgia, and mark the significance of a historic moment. It symbolically celebrates Victoria's reign, and its physical composition delineates a network of material itineraries that span from Cornwall to South America. As an event, the Jubilee followed the model of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition of 1886, and relied on dislocated Indian subjects to display the range of British domination. Yet, some of these subjects charted their own journeys through the innermost circles of the royal household.

Described through the narrative histories of three objects—Whistler's rendering of Tilbury as part of the Jubilee Set, the photograph aboard the HMY *Victoria and Albert* during the Naval Review, and the Royal Worcester scent bottle—the Jubilee emerges as an event that made visible the fundamental importance of maritime pathways critical to the national achievements celebrated in the Victorian period. The juxtaposition of these objects also points to the interpretive shifts that can occur, both in museum galleries and in written analyses, when biographical modes of analyses are disrupted and developed.

This study originally began as an analysis of Whistler's Jubilee Set, specifically looking at *Tilbury*. Yet, as questions emerged about dock construction, naval power, Indian subjects, and souvenirs, the analysis grew to incorporate additional objects that, in institutional terms, are often identified as archival material or decorative art objects representative of Victorian material

culture. As scholarship in the global humanities asks us to consider the transnational histories of works of art made and exhibited in a fine arts context, art historians and museum curators must equally shift their methods and their galleries in ways that will allow the public to better understand the history, legacy, and ongoing relevance of these interconnected narratives."

About the author

Shalini Le Gall is the Chief Curator and Susan Donnell and Harry W. Konkel Curator of European Art at the Portland Museum of Art in Maine. Le Gall co-curated the exhibition *River Works: Whistler and the Industrial Thames* (2019) at the Colby College Museum of Art, where she previously served as the Linde Family Foundation Curator of Academic Programs (2014–2020). She also recently co-curated the exhibition *Inside Out: The Prints of Mary Cassatt* (2021), and co-edited the accompanying catalog. Le Gall has previously written on the Pre-Raphaelite painters, nineteenth-century photography and folk art, and museum education. Her current research interests include French modernism, American and British art of the Victorian era, and contemporary postcolonial and ecocritical approaches to curatorial practice. She received her BA from Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and her MA and PhD in Art History from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

Footnotes

1. "The Jubilee Naval Review", *Illustrated London News*, 30 July 1887, 126.
2. Crafting Communities is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada, and the Universities of Victoria, Alberta, and Manitoba; for more on *Crafting Communities*, see https://www.craftingcommunities.net/about; see also *Victorian Things*, https://omekas.library.uvic.ca/s/crafting/page/about.
3. Foundational studies in postcolonial scholarship include Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) and Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).
4. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
5. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, eds., *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture, and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998); and Tim Barringer, Geoff Quilley, and Douglas Fordham, eds., *Art and the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009). See also Julie F. Codell and Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Orientalism Transposed: The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones and Mary Roberts, *Edges of Empire: Orientalism and Visual Culture* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005); and Sarah Thomas, ed., *Witnessing Slavery: Art and Travel in the Age of Abolition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019).
6. Steven Mentz, "Toward a Blue Cultural Studies: The Sea, Maritime Culture, and Early Modern English Literature", *Literature Compass* 6, no. 5 (2009): 1000.
7. Richard Burrell, *Victorian Freemasonry & the Building of Tilbury Docks* (Thurrock: Thurrock Local History Society, 2015), 20–21.
8. Information on the complete Jubilee Set is available in the online Whistler catalogue raisonné maintained by the University of Glasgow: https://etchings.arts.gla.ac.uk/catalogue/sets_texts/?eid=jubilee. Margaret F. MacDonald, Grischka Petri, Meg Hausberg, and Joanna Meacock,

James McNeill Whistler: The Etchings, A Catalogue Raisonné, University of Glasgow, 2012, at http://etchings.arts.gla.ac.uk.

9. Whistler to W.H. Smith, 1 December 1887, GUL, MS Whistler G214, 01849. Online edition, University of Glasgow, *The Correspondence of James McNeill Whistler, 1855–1903*, ed. Margaret F. MacDonald, Patricia de Montfort, and Nigel Thorp; including *The Correspondence of Anna McNeill Whistler, 1855–1880*, ed. Georgia Toutziari, http://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/correspondence. All references to Whistler's correspondence come from this source.
10. Burrell, *Victorian Freemasonry & the Building of Tilbury Docks*, 5.
11. Burrell, *Victorian Freemasonry & the Building of Tilbury Docks*, 15.
12. Burrell, *Victorian Freemasonry & the Building of Tilbury Docks*, 19 and 141.
13. Burrell, *Victorian Freemasonry & the Building of Tilbury Docks*, 19.
14. Jesse French Scott, "The Construction and Equipment of the Tilbury Docks", *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* 120 (1895): 277.
15. Burrell, *Victorian Freemasonry & the Building of Tilbury Docks*, 35–36.
16. Scott, "The Construction and Equipment of the Tilbury Docks", 278–279.
17. Scott, "The Construction and Equipment of the Tilbury Docks", 286.
18. The *Chelmsford Chronicle* reported that the mission organized an exhibition of artworks, made mainly by the navvies and their family members, at the Mission Hall on 30 May 1885. Burrell, *Victorian Freemasonry & the Building of Tilbury Docks*, 55.
19. Burrell, *Victorian Freemasonry & the Building of Tilbury Docks*, 19.
20. Burrell, *Victorian Freemasonry & the Building of Tilbury Docks*, 45. Some workers had come after construction on the Hull–Barnsley railway line had stopped in 1884 (due to dried-up funds), others came from the Alexandra Dock in Hull, and casual laborers arrived from throughout the area.
21. For information on states, see MacDonald et al., *James McNeill Whistler*.
22. Elizabeth Robins Pennell and Joseph Pennell, *The Life of James McNeill Whistler*, Vol. 2 (London: William Heinemann, 1908), 66.
23. Godfrey Lushington to James McNeill Whistler, 30 July 1887, MS Whistler G202, Glasgow University Library.
24. Godfrey Lushington to James McNeill Whistler, 25 August 1887, MS Whistler G209, Glasgow University Library. https://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/correspondence/recno/display/?cid=01844. Godfrey Lushington to James McNeill Whistler, 9 August 1887, Archives of Art and Design, RBA Archive, AAD 1997/8/105, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. https://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/correspondence/recno/display/?cid=13418.
25. Daniel E. Sutherland, *Whistler: A Life for Art's Sake* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 87.
26. Geoff Quilley, "Placing the Sea in Eighteenth-Century British Art", in *Spreading Canvas: Eighteenth-Century British Marine Painting*, ed. Eleanor Hughes (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 53. Quilley cites J.G. Dalyell, *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea; or the Historical Narratives of the Most Noted Calamities and Providential Deliverances Which Have Resulted from Maritime Enterprise* (Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co., 1812), xi–xii. Quilley also references Tory politician Lord Bolingbroke's famous description of Britons as "amphibious animals"; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), 4, as cited in Quilley, "Placing the Sea in Eighteenth-Century British Art",

53. For more on the navy and British identity, see Jan Rüger, "Nation, Empire and Navy: Identity Politics in the United Kingdom 1887–1914", *Past & Present* 185 (November 2004): 159–187.
27. Quilley, "Placing the Sea in Eighteenth-Century British Art", 54.
28. Kathleen Pyne, "Whistler and the Politics of the Urban Picturesque", *American Art* 8 (Summer/Autumn 1994): 61.
29. "The Jubilee Naval Review", *Illustrated London News*. The name monitor came from the famed Union ship *USS Monitor*, the steam-powered ironclad vessel with a revolving gun turret that had fought in the American Civil War. A correspondent of the *Daily News* reported on the especially imposing presence of the Minotaur and Agincourt, writing, "These five-masted ironclads are the most imposing in appearance of all our modern men-of-war"; an excerpt from the *Daily News*, as reprinted in "The Jubilee Naval Review", *Illustrated London News*.
30. As early as the seventeenth century, the Dutch artists William van de Velde (father and son) made drawings and paintings documenting royal visits to the naval fleets. Eleanor Hughes, "Taking and Making of Draughts of Sea Fights", in *Spreading Canvas: Eighteenth-Century British Marine Painting*, ed. Eleanor Hughes (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 139.
31. MacDonald et al., *James McNeill Whistler*; Pennell and Pennell, *The Life of James McNeill Whistler*, Vol. 2, 81–82. https://etchings.arts.gla.ac.uk/catalogue/sets_texts/?eid=jubilee.
32. Pennell and Pennell, *The Life of James McNeill Whistler*, Vol. 2, 66.
33. The gifted album would go on to have its own voyages, as it was sold by Edward VII, purchased by Charles Lang Freer, and later sold to Rosalind Birnie Philip, who gave it to the University of Glasgow in 1935.
34. Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 45.
35. Elizabeth Longford, *Queen Victoria: Born to Succeed* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 489.
36. For more on Indian craft and display and the 1886 exhibition, see Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007); Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture, and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998); Antoinette Burton, "Making a Spectacle of Empire: Indian Travellers in Fin-de-Siècle London", *History Workshop Journal* 42 (1996): 127–146; Julie F. Codell, "Indian Crafts and Imperial Policy: Hybridity, Purification, and Imperial Subjectivities", in *Material Cultures, 1740–1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting*, eds. John Potvin and Alla Myzelev (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 149–170.
37. Frank Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition* (London: William Clowes & Son Ltd, 1886), 29–30. For more, see also T.N. Mukharji, *A Visit to Europe* (Calcutta: W. Newman, 1889); Arindam Dutta, "The Politics of Display: India 1886 and 1986", *Journal of Arts and Ideas* 30–31 (1997): 115–145; and Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (London: University of California Press, 2001).
38. Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition*, 37.
39. Quoted in Longford, *Queen Victoria*, 497.
40. Extracts from the *Queen's Journal*, Buckingham Palace, 21 June 1887, in George Earle Buckle, *The Letters of Queen Victoria: A Selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence and Journal Between the Years 1886 and 1901*, Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1930–1932), 322–323.

41. Extracts from the *Queen's Journal*, Windsor Castle, 29 June 1887 in Buckle, *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, Vol. 1, 333–334.
42. The Royal Collection Trust has identified both men, who entered service in May 1887; Visram, *Asians in Britain*, 45. Visram describes both Karim and Bakhsh as having arrived at the Queen's court in 1887.
43. Visram, *Asians in Britain*, 44–49.
44. Cited in Visram, *Asians in Britain*, 47.
45. After Queen Victoria's death in 1901, Karim returned to India and settled in Agra, where he would live until his death in 1909, at age 46.
46. "The Jubilee Naval Review", *Illustrated London News*.
47. "The Jubilee Naval Review", *Illustrated London News*.
48. E.P. Evans, *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works* (Worcester: The Works, circa 1895), University of California Libraries: https://archive.org/details/guidethroughroya00royarich/page/4/mode/2up.
49. Evans, *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works*, 5.
50. Evans, *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works*, 7–8. The mills had a number of tools to grind a variety of materials into the fine substances used to make porcelain.
51. Information on materials comes from Evans, *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works*, 14–15.
52. Evans, *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works*, 15.
53. Evans, *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works*, 18.
54. Evans, *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works*, 18.
55. Evans, *A Guide Through the Royal Porcelain Works*, 32.

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