



DAVID BURTON

David Burton (b.1883) was a 'screever', or pavement artist, who drew on the York Stone pavements of Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead and elsewhere in Britain from the mid 1920s until his death in 1945. Born blind in one eye, Burton learnt to draw from a series of his father's Mezzotints depicting scenes from the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

After seeing service with the Kings Royal Rifles in the trenches at Loos, Mons and Passchendaele during the First World War he worked for the Great Western Railway and as a dockworker at Sheerness in Kent. He was later badly injured in an explosion whilst employed by London Underground and began working the streets in penury. Gallery owner and collector Lucy Wertheim, returning from a studio visit with Henry Moore in Parkhill Road, came across Burton and became his patron and dealer.

In 1938 his first exhibition with Wertheim was reviewed in the Daily Mail, the Evening Standard, the Times, the Sunday Times and the News of the World. In 1945 he held a solo exhibition at the Charlotte Street Centre organised by the Marxist art historian, F.D.Klingender and was the subject of a British Pathé news film and a feature, 'The Hampstead Primitive', in Picture Post magazine. He died a few months later.

Amongst several group exhibitions his work was featured in were Mass Observation's 'Unprofessional Painters', organised with Julian Trevelyan, which toured Britain in 1938 and 1939. The exhibition also included works by other self-taught artists such as coal miners from 'The Ashington Group', Henry 'Bus Driver' Stockley and Alfred Wallis. Venues included the Bensham Grove Settlement, Gateshead-on-Tyne, Fulham Central Library and the Pioneer Health Centre in Peckham.

In 1983, his paintings were exhibited in 'The Story of the Artists International Association' curated by Lynda Morris and Robert Radford. The exhibition toured in 1983 from the Museum of Modern Art Oxford, to Cartwright Hall, Bradford and the Midland Group, Nottingham and in 1984 to the Ferens Art Gallery, Hull; Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh and Camden Arts Centre, London.