



'Saved', by Charles Vigour



'S'aved' is the best known painting by the artist Charles Vigour. It is also the most famous work of fire art in the world. 'Saved' was painted in 1891/2 and was first exhibited at the Royal Academy, UK, in 1892. In 1894 it was put on display at the Atkinson Art Gallery in Southport.

There has been much speculation regarding the house painted in 'Saved'. It is believed to be Winchester House, a large Victorian house south of the Thames in London, which currently houses the London Fire Brigade Museum. The house was originally built for Captain EM Shaw who was the chief fire officer of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (later to be the London Fire Brigade).

It was believed that the fireman shown in 'Saved' was Captain Shaw and the girl in his arms was his daughter. However, the facts dispute this, as the entrance to Winchester House

and the house in the painting are totally different. Furthermore, the fireman looks nothing like the young Captain Shaw and at the time of the painting, Shaw was 62 or 63 years old and was not known to have a young daughter.

History of 'Saved'
Alderman James Wood of Southport County Borough Council originally purchased the painting in 1894 for an undisclosed amount of money. Alderman Wood presented 'Saved'

to Southport County Borough Council (CBC) and it was put on display at the Fire Brigade headquarters for the next few years. In a small brigade this would also have served as the main fire station. At some point, probably between World War I and II, 'Saved' was placed in the storeroom below Southport council offices and vanished from public view.

By the late 1960s, John (known as Jack) Perkins who was the chief fire officer (CFO) of Southport CB FB, rediscovered the painting and put it back on display. However, during 1974, a major reorganisation of local government took place and Southport became part of the new Merseyside Metropolitan Authority.

Jack Perkins did not wish to see 'Saved' displayed in Liverpool (why, we do not know) so he convinced Southport CBC that the painting should go to the Fire Service Technical College (as it was then known) at Moreton-in-Marsh

instead. The presentation to the college took place during mid 1973.

In 1995 the painting was accidentally damaged and was subsequently sent to an art conservator for cleaning and repair. The conservator pointed out that the painting had been damaged once before and had been (luckily) repaired "by someone who knew what they were doing". He estimated that this damage took place around 1960, before 'Saved' came to the college.

"We are delighted to continue to display 'Saved' at the Fire Service College for visitors to enjoy," said Allan House.

The Fire Service College at Moreton in Marsh, Gloucestershire is an award-winning leader in fire and emergency response training and is one of the largest operational training colleges worldwide. It specialises in dedicated training for professional fire services, emergency responders and a wide spectrum of commercial and public sector clients globally. The Fire Heritage Centre, which is located at the Fire Service College, is home to a collection of 'Fire Art' which, over the last 70 years, has come into the keeping of the College. The Fire Heritage Centre displays artefacts that demonstrate the evolution of firefighting in the UK and is also home to a collection of vintage fire appliances, consisting of six manual and four steamers as well as an impressive collection of art work, including 'Saved' by Charles Vigour.

Fire and Rescue International wishes to thank Alan House of the Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh in Gloucestershire, UK, for assisting with the photograph of 'Saved' and its history. ▲