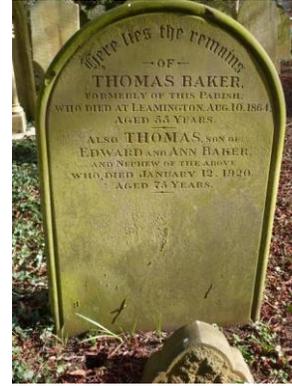


THOMAS BAKER



Lord Leicester Tower, Kenilworth Castle



Thomas Baker's grave in St Peter's Churchyard

Thomas Baker (9 October 1809 – 10 August 1864) was a Midlands landscape painter and watercolourist often known as "Baker of Leamington" or "Landscape Baker".

Born in Harborne, Birmingham, Baker was a student of Vincent Barber (1788–1838) at the Barber family's Charles Street Academy in Birmingham. Exhibiting publicly with the Birmingham Society of Artists from 1827 onwards, he painted landscapes throughout Warwickshire, the Midlands and the Welsh border regions and occasionally producing depictions of the Lake District, Scotland and Ireland. More often than not Baker's landscapes include cattle, although sheep and human figures are also fairly common in his works.

Baker kept comprehensive records of his work and usually signed each major picture "T Baker", dated it to the year and numbered it on the back. Smaller pieces, studies and pencil sketches tend to be signed "T.B." (sometimes to be found playfully hidden around gravestones, fenceposts, treeroots etc.) and dated more precisely. His diaries and notes – which contain an 800-strong list of his major works - are held in the Birmingham City Art Gallery while the art gallery at the Royal Pump Rooms in Leamington Spa has a collection of over sixty Baker landscapes, a couple of which are nearly always on display in the Art Gallery. The art historian Alison Plumridge and local historian Charles Lines have both highlighted how Baker provided artistic tutoring to the local middle classes in order to supplement his earnings from major local patrons such as Lord Leigh. In terms of wider success, Baker exhibited four oil paintings at the Royal Academy between 1831 and 1858 with his work appearing more frequently at the British Institution (where he exhibited 19 paintings) and the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists.

After his premature death in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, at the age of 55 (amid suggestions of murder that led to the suicide of his housekeeper, Hannah Hewitt), Baker's body was returned to his birthplace and buried in close proximity to the famous Midlands landscape artist David Cox at St. Peter's Church in Harborne, Birmingham.



Witnash, Warwick



Stoneleigh Deer Park, Warwicks



On the Leam, Warwicks