

Corbiere Rocks

J.F. Draper



1870's
Oil on Canvas
176 x 89cm

'Corbiere Rocks' is a large and masterful oil on canvas by James Finucane Draper (1836-1876) depicting the rocky coastline around 'La Corbiere' on Jersey's south west coast with stormy sky and steamer in the middle ground. The name 'Corbiere derives from 'Corbeau' meaning the haunt of crows or ravens who were known to bring bad luck. Many unlucky ships have been wrecked on the jagged reef which sits below the water. Eventually in 1873 the States of Jersey decided to prevent further disasters by building a lighthouse. Corbiere lighthouse was the first in the British Isles to be built of concrete and it still stands today as a warning to shipping to navigate away from the unforgiving rocks.

Draper was born in Guernsey in 1836 and had moved to Jersey by the time he was 24. He lived at a number of addresses in St Helier and was a talented watercolour painter and a caricaturist.

Some of these works were published but he was also a playwright and several of his plays were performed at the Theatre Royal, Don Road and the Royal Hall in Peter Street.

By 1869 he had acquired a studio at the Masonic Temple, Stopford Road, but he was to die only seven years later aged only 41 in 1876. He is best known for his watercolours of Channel Island scenes, but they are comparatively rare. He taught his nephew, Charles Draper, who was also born in Guernsey.

Collections of his work are held by the Jersey Heritage Trust and the Guernsey Museum and Art Gallery.