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WILLIAM, EARL OF CRAVEN & THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Noel Chanan

In 1998, the discovery in a private archive of a long-abandoned group of folios of large-scale nineteenth century photographs led to the recognition of a new name in the pantheon of British pioneers of the art of photography in the formative years of the 1850s. The name was that of William, 2nd Earl of Craven. A year later, Craven's masterpiece, a noble album of his most favoured works, entitled *A Record of the Earl of Craven's Photographic Experiments*, emerged from a separate source. This album confirmed the rich promise of the earlier discovery.

Previously unknown to photographic historians, Craven's work was unique, covering an extraordinary range of experimentation in the developing techniques of the art, and in his treatment of mood and subject matter, which revealed a profound knowledge of and relationship with the traditions of painting. Though a member of the newly formed Photographic Society, Craven rarely exhibited, preferring to develop his ideas in the privacy of his estate, Ashdown Park, some forty miles west of London.

The selection of masterworks, published in bookform here for the first time, is set in a narrative of Craven's life and times.



After art school and school of photography, serendipity led Noel Chanan (b.1939) into a thirty-five year career as a documentary film-maker, commencing with four years at the BBC, then, from 1966, as a freelance director and editor. Over the years his output included a number of films on the history of photography in Granada Television's *Camera* series, and film biographies of contemporary photographers including Bert Hardy, George Rodger, and David Goldblatt, as well as occasional writings on photography. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of photography in 1989, Chanan curated a festival of over one hundred films about photography and photographers.

Since easing himself out of the television world in the late 1990s, Chanan has returned full time to photography, as a consultant, writer and photographer, with three one-man shows to date, as well as participation in a number of group shows.

William, Earl of Craven & the Art of Photography is Chanan's first full-length book on photography.



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FEATURE CHAPTERS AND GALLERY – WILLIAM, EARL OF CRAVEN

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- Chapter 4 **The Photography of William Craven**
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- Chapter 8 **Ashdown, 1855 – The Summer Trees**



Wild Dayrell, winner of the Derby, 1855.



Example of William's photography.



Example of a double page spread.

Left: William Craven, self-portrait as traveller, in a somewhat eccentric ensemble of garments. The embroidered jacket is probably of Serbian origin.

Right: Example of William's photography.



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