The artist's Cutter 'Snail' beached by a Pier

Charles Gore

Guy Peppiatt Fine Art Ltd.
Riverwide House, 6 Mason's Yard, Duke St. St. James's, London, SW1Y 6BU
T: 020 7930 3839 M: 07956 968 284 E: guy@peppiattfineart.co.uk www.peppiattfineart.co.uk

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Description

Charles Gore (1729-1807)
The artist's Cutter 'Snail' beached by a Pier

Inscribed upper centre: Snail Cutter.
Pen and grey ink and watercolour over pencil on laid Whatman paper
28.7 by 18 cm., 11 ¼ by 7 in.

Gore was a knowledgeable sailor and keen amateur shipbuilder. He designed several boats and the 'Snail' was a cutter that he designed and had built whilst living in Southampton. He accompanied the Royal Navy on annual manoeuvres and its handling and design proved so successful that the Royal Navy adopted Gore's improvements for their own small, fast vessels.

The `Snail' was a small cutter-rigged pleasure yacht. The hull is clearly clinker construction, not plank-on-frame carvel, as in the larger coastal trader shown on the left which is under maintenance or painting from temporary platforms hung over the bow. The Snail's legs would have been bolted on when moored in tidal harbours so that it settled upright as shown given its profile. Broad-bottomed vessels like that to the left could heel over safely at low tide but those like Snail, which tip right over without the legs, too easily swamp if the tide comes in over their gunwales before they 'unstick' from the mud. Such legs are still widely used today with deep-keel boats that won't settle more or less upright.

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