



History -Pupil's notes

Theme - Artistic Development

Introduction

A large collection of work by the artist Brian Hatton (1887-1916), is held by Hereford Museum. There are over 1000 paintings and drawings including items such as photographs, painting equipment, and costume. There are oil paintings, watercolours and pencil and pastel drawings, together with a small number of prints. The collection represents a large proportion of what Brian created. It ranges from slight sketches on paper to large oil paintings. Brian's work covered various themes.

Brian was born in Hereford and spent most of his childhood and early adult life here. Much of his work reflects the influence of Herefordshire, his home county. Brian lived with his family in Whitecross and later Broomy Hill, Hereford. Very early in life he made remarkable drawings which showed his considerable natural ability. His parents, Amelia and Alfred, carefully nurtured his prodigious talent. Brian's younger sisters, Ailsa Marr (b.1893) and Marjorie (b.1895), became the subject of many of his pictures. As a boy, he sketched around his home in Hereford. His subjects included: landscape views, horses and other animals, agricultural activities and country people. He also drew imaginative subjects inspired by literature.

As a young man, he travelled at home and abroad. On his travels and later as a soldier, he recorded the people and places around him.

When he began to accept commissions he painted portraits (sometimes of local people). Eventually he had a studio in London and began his professional career as a portrait painter.

Tragically, Brian was killed in action in Egypt, whilst serving with the Worcester Yeomanry, in the First World War.

Useful Web links

[Hatton Gallery](#)

Lesson activities - Nature or nurture?

Key question - In what ways do you think that Brian Hatton's background enabled him to become an artist?

Resources

- Two photographs of boys from different backgrounds –found at the end of this document
- Biography section
- Computer access for research using web links
- Source material relating to the local area in the nineteenth century, eg census returns, maps and plans, photographs and pictures
- Local History for Local Teachers CD Rom – shows photographs of the countryside in the early 20th century (contact Heritage services 01432 383383 or Herefordmuseums@herefordshire.gov.uk (Note: every school in Herefordshire was sent a copy of this. Check your school resource bank to see if you have it on site.)
- Local History CD-ROMs,

Useful web links

http://www.face-online.org.uk/resources/eastburn/women_and_children.doc
word document with information on women and children in Victorian farming.

<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/victorianbritain/default.htm>
The National Archive Learning Curve Victorian site

Background

Brian was born on 12th August 1887, into a middle-class family. He lived at Carlton Villas, Whitecross Road, Hereford.

In 1895, the family moved to a large house, called Mount Craig. It was in Broomy Hill, a wealthy suburb of Hereford. Mount Craig was a stone-fronted, mid-Victorian House with stables, a coach house and a big walled garden. His father worked owned a tanning firm.

Brian drew from an early age. He and his sisters were tutored at home and there were many books in the house. Brian learned to ride horses when he was young and horse-riding became his favourite sport.

At the age of eight and a half, he exhibited work at the Royal Drawing Society and gained a bronze medal. By the age of 11, Brian had won the Royal Drawing Society Gold star in a competition that was open to the whole of Great Britain;

the age limit was 20. The drawing came back with a comment from GH Watts, a well-known artist; 'Very great promise indeed. Of course for his age, Brian Hatton's work is quite unsurpassed; the hand is delicately felt and the drawing of the team in the reaper is quite astonishing'. Following this success, GF Watts became his mentor.

Brian was also invited to Kensington Palace where his mother took him to visit Princess Louise who was impressed with his work.

He later went to Oxford University.

Activity 1 - Two boys

Look at the two images of the boys and discuss these with a partner.

What can you tell from the images about the contrasting backgrounds of the two boys?

Activity 2 - Nature or nurture, Brian

Using the biography section of the Brian Hatton web site, and the background provided think about the social background that Brian Hatton came from. How was it different to that of an ordinary working person?

Do you think this would have influenced his ability to follow art as a career?

Activity 3 - Nature or nurture, child in field

Use the **inform** section from the Changing Landscape theme on the Brian Hatton website and the photograph of the young boy in a hat standing by a cart in a field at the end of this document.

- What is the age of the child?
- What is he doing?
- Does the hat belong to the boy?
- Did he skip school?
- What would your teachers say if you missed school to help with the harvest?

Think about the social background that the child in the photograph came from.

- How was it different to that of Brian?
- Do you think this would influence his ability to follow art as a career?

Activity 4 - Making notes

Using the information gained through your research prepare notes for class discussion on the question, '**In what ways do you think that Brian Hatton's background enabled to become an artist?**'

Activity 5 - Discussion

Using your notes contribute towards a class discussion on the key question.

Key question - in what ways do you think that Brian Hatton's background enabled him to become an artist?



A young boy in a field – photograph from Heritage Services' Collection



Brian Hatton, aged 5 on his donkey