

Brian Hatton

Citizenship -Pupil's notes

Theme - Identity

Introduction

Brian Hatton (1887-1916)

Brian was born in Hereford and he spent most of his childhood and early adult life there. Brian lived with his family in Whitecross and later Broomy Hill, Hereford. As a young child he made remarkable drawings, which showed his natural artistic ability. His parents, Amelia and Alfred, encouraged his talent. In 1898, at the age of eleven he was awarded the 'Gold Star' by the Royal Drawing Society. Following this the artist G.F. Watts took a keen interest in his development and became his mentor. Brian's younger sisters, Ailsa Marr (b.1893) and Marjorie (b.1895), became the subject of many of his works. Brian suffered from asthma as a boy and spent periods of time in Swansea for health reasons. As a young man, he travelled at home and abroad. In 1908, he travelled to Egypt as part of the Petrie expedition. He continued to love Herefordshire, where his work was inspired by local people and places. On his travels and later as a soldier, he recorded the people and places around him.

Brian had a studio in London, where he 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. He died on 23rd April, 1916. He left a wife, Lydia May and a daughter, Mary Amelia (b.1915). Had he not belonged to the generation who fought in the First World War, Brian may have become known nationally as a talented artist.

During his life, he created over 1000 art works including oil paintings, watercolours, and pencil and pastel drawings, together with a small number of prints. His subjects included: landscape views, horses and other animals, agricultural activities and country people. He also drew imaginative subjects inspired by literature. When he began to accept commissions, he painted portraits, some of which were of local people.

Brian Hatton - timeline

1887: 12th August, was born at Carlton Villa, Whitecross, Hereford.

1893: Brian's sister, Ailsa Marr Hatton was born

1895: Hatton family moved to Mount Craig, Broomy Hill, Hereford.

1895: Brian's sister, Marjorie Hatton was born.



- 1895: Aged 8, awarded his first medal by the Royal Drawing Society.
- 1897: Aged 10, sent to Swansea for health reasons, stayed with Dr and Mrs Lancaster.
- 1898: Awarded the 'Gold Star' of the Royal Drawing Society. The artist G F Watts admired Brian's talent and began to take a keen interest in his development.
- 1899: Became a pupil at Swansea Grammar School.
- 1904: Visited St Ives and Newlyn, Cornwall.
- 1905: Attended Trinity College, Oxford.
- 1906: Visited Amsterdam and the Hague with his uncle, Charles Marr.
- 1906: Attended Hospitalfields Art School, Arbroath, Scotland.
- 1908: Shared rooms in London with his cousin, Geoffrey Vevers.
- 1908: Set up a studio at home in Mount Craig, Hereford.
- 1908: Travelled to Egypt to accompany the archaeological expedition of Professor (later Sir) William Flinders Petrie.
- 1909: 27th July, Brian's mother, Amelia Hatton died.
- 1910: November, visited Paris, paints at the Academie Julien.
- 1912: January, shared a studio in London with friend, Gerald Siordet. Worked on portrait commissions.
- 1914: 4th September, joined the Worcester Yeomanry.
- 1914: 5th November, married Lydia May Bidmead of Hereford in Newbury.
- 1915: 21st September, Brian's daughter, Mary Amelia was born.
- 1916: 23rd April Easter Sunday, Brian was killed in action at Oghratina, Egypt.

Lesson activities - What did Brian contribute to society?

Key question - What did Brian Hatton contribute to society?

Podcast

There is a podcast of an expert talking about the character of Brian Hatton as shown through his letters-go to [Identity, Podcasts](#)

Resources

- Go to [Suitcase Activity Image Bank](#)
- Brian Hatton letter to his grandmother October 12th 1915 – found below in this document.

Useful web links

http://www.bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/content/articles/2007/10/30/hatton_exhibition_090108_event_feature.shtml

BBC site on Hatton exhibition

Activity 1 - Evidence

(Working in a group of 4-6)

Look carefully at the images in the suitcase image bank. Discuss the images with a partner. Discuss how you can tell from the contents of this suitcase that this individual has made a useful contribution to society?

Write down the most important contributions that you think Brian made to society.

Activity 2 - The volunteer

There were many reasons for volunteering to fight in the First World War, including, peer pressure, propaganda and the heroic ideals about war. In your group discuss whether you think that Brian made the right decision to volunteer for the army knowing that he might be sacrificing his career as an artist?

Activity 3 - The letter

Read the extract from Brian Hatton's letter to his grandmother.

Extract from Brian Hatton's letter to his grandmother

12th October 1915

I left Hereford at 3.37 a.m. this morning! Having spent most of my scant leave in unpacking and packing again. I am allowed to take a good deal of stuff so no doubt we are going to Alexandria at any rate for a time I am thankful to be leaving my little wife and baby well and both making good progress, and all is well at Mount Craig. Dad came down to see me off this morning like a good angel at that uncivilised hour. I shall not be able to see my wee mite being christened unfortunately. Mrs Lancaster is the god mother and has good-heartedly offered to look after her if I should get knocked out. Somehow I haven't much fear of that. Nor do a V.C. or a D.S.O. come into my calculations! I shall be thankful to return with a sound right hand and eyesight.

In your group discuss the extract. Think about the following

What is the tone of Brian's letter? What do you think his mood might be as he writes? What do you think the last line tells us?

Activity 4 - What did Brian Hatton contribute to society?

Nominate one person from each group to share their conclusions with the rest of the class.