

William Mellor (1851-1931)

Brief biography

William Mellor was born in Barnsley in 1851, to linen weavers Joseph and Mary. The families of both his parents had been employed in weaving but when William and his sister Emmeline were children, Joseph managed to change his occupation and become a professional landscape artist. The family lived variously in Castlereagh Street, Pitt Street and Racecommon Road before moving to Leeds. The weaving industry was in difficulties but Joseph's older brother Henry had a small weaving business in Leeds. Joseph moved the family there, possibly to find employment for his children. Certainly both William and Emmeline worked in weaving in Leeds. William was a loom tuner, responsible for the efficient running of several power looms.

In 1876 he married Mary Elizabeth Watson from Ouzlewell Green, Leeds. By 1881, he too had decided to become a landscape painter. He moved his family regularly probably to gain work through commissions or patronage. His eldest child Everett Watson was born in 1878 whilst they were living in London. The births of Herbert Arthur and Hilda followed in Scarborough, Clifford in Manchester and Leonard in Southport. All this time William continued as an artist and the family's last move was to Harrogate where they lived in Dragon Road. William died there in 1931.

William painted in oils and watercolour and is said to have been taught to paint by his father, Joseph. Certainly their styles are very similar and typically Victorian. The subjects range from North Wales, through Yorkshire, Cumbria and Northumberland to the Scottish borders. It's said that his favourite season was autumn and he is highly regarded for his delicate treatment of leaves and foliage. Many examples of William's paintings appear for sale in galleries, auctions and antiques centres. Some are also held in museums and galleries hosting national and local art collections.

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