

SPORTS AND PASTIMES enjoyed in the outdoors were a source of inspiration to or featured in the art of certain past artists who had a connection with the Barnsley area. Their works include the paintings of fox hunting and fly fishing by K. L. Graham; the grouse shooting drawings of A. J. S. Wortley; the game and birds' nests paintings of the Hold family of painters, the landscapes of the Mellors and Spence Ingall and the cricket paintings of Wortley and E. Moore.

Kenneth Leslie Graham, whilst living a good deal of his life in London, still enjoyed the countryside and wildlife subjects for his drawings and paintings.

The detailed paintings of game birds and birds' nests by Abel Hold, his sons Ben and Tom and daughter Florence, who lived in the village of Cawthorne, near Barnsley, show a close association with the countryside. Their paintings of game birds and the variety and intricacy of birds' nests show a joy and totally absorbing passion in natural history, which was a great passion in the Victorian period.

The linen industry in Barnsley produced the artists Joseph Mellor, his son William and John Spence Ingall, who were all inspired by the outdoors as a source for their art. The sense of liberation that came from fresh air and the countryside for Joseph Mellor and his son William after toiling long hours in a damp, dark cellar must have been overwhelming.

BELOW

'Nest with four eggs' by Abel Hold 1891
Courtesy of Cawthorne Victoria Jubilee
Museum

BELOW RIGHT

'Four partridges' by Abel Hold. Courtesy
of Cawthorne Victoria Jubilee Museum





The effect of their passion for and experience of the natural world on all these artists was that their paintings draw the viewer's attention to the wonders of the natural world. Their works reveal its beauty in such a way that would otherwise be overlooked.

As an artist and author who enthusiastically wrote about the primitive thrill of stalking quarry in wild country, Archibald John Stuart Wortley, whose family seat was at Wortley Hall, lived the lifestyle of the gentry and aristocracy which had traditionally involved a great passion for the field sports their lands provided.

Whilst enjoying the elegant and sophisticated lifestyle of country house living with its strictly regulated social etiquette, Archibald also developed keen field skills which he drew on for his artistic and literary ventures. He contributed both text and drawings to the field sports books *Fur and Feather Series*. The books met a demand from the rising *nouveau riche*, as well as satisfying the long established passion of the gentry and aristocracy for field sports. In his writing, Archibald shows his familiarity with wild places and he gives detailed advice on the necessary field skills needed for stalking game.

Hunting, shooting and fishing were not the only outdoor sports to provide inspiration for artists. Apart from his recognised artistic and literary passion for hunting and shooting, one of Archibald's best known paintings is of the most famous cricketer of his day, possibly of all time, W. G. Grace.

Ernest Moore was commissioned to paint another famous cricketer of his day, Yorkshire CCC's greatest ever all-rounder, Wilfred Rhodes. This painting was exhibited to acclaim in his *Men of Yorkshire* exhibition in 1926.

Also included in the exhibition was Ernest's portrait of the famous Yorkshire cricket veteran, Lord Hawke, who was presented with his portrait in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Yorkshire cricket and the sport's administration and worldwide development.

Contrasted landscapes as exhibited in the *Hidden Art of Barnsley* exhibition, June to August 2014 at the Cooper Gallery, Barnsley: from the left, 'Country lane with figures' by Joseph Mellor, 'River over rocks' by William Mellor and two more modern landscapes by Barker Fairley
Courtesy of private owners



ABOVE
Archibald John Stuart Wortley in his
outdoor tweeds and with field gun

RIGHT
Wilfred Rhodes by Ernest Moore.
Courtesy of Archives Committee,
Yorkshire Cricket Foundation (Yorkshire
CCC)



In preparing to paint his portrait of Rhodes, Ernest decided to try and capture the physical action of Rhodes' bowling, at the moment that best articulated the act. In an interview for the *Yorkshire Evening Post* in 1932, he said he used film stock of Rhodes bowling, running it slowly through a projector. This did not work satisfactorily, so Ernest finally relied on his own artistic skill to capture what he was after.

In 1910 Ernest painted Yorkshire writer Halliwell Sutcliffe who had a passionate love of the Yorkshire Dales. The stunning landscape, its history and legends was the inspiration for his many romantic novels. Ernest painted Halliwell Sutcliffe in his walking tweeds, indicating his love of rambling.

Both Ernest and Sutcliffe became great friends and Ernest stayed many times with Sutcliffe and his wife at their home in Linton near Grassington. During these visits Ernest also painted two landscapes in the Wharfedale area.

The turn of the 20th century was the time when the countryside was becoming popular, particularly with the leisured classes to walk in and enjoy.

When viewing their paintings it is easy to sense the artists' delight in depicting and celebrating the outdoor sports and pastimes which had captured their imaginations.

SOURCES

Yorkshire Evening Post May 23rd 1923

The London Illustrated News October 31st 1925

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'Halliwell Sutcliffe' by Ernest Moore
Courtesy of the Grassington Folk
Museum