

## Ernest Moore (1865–1940) – An Important Ernest

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ARTISTIC TALENT CAN emerge anywhere.

In a railway stationmaster's terrace house in Barnsley in the mid-19th century, a young Ernest Moore began an interest in art that eventually led him to a career that earned him an international reputation.

Ernest was born at 28 Station Road, off Summer Lane in Barnsley, Yorkshire, on 6th July 1865, the youngest of seven brothers and three sisters to his parents Joseph and Ann Moore.

Of his brothers, it is recorded that James, his elder brother became a railway labourer; Francis became a coalminer; Oliver, became a stationary engine driver, probably at a local colliery. Of his sisters, it is recorded that Catherine became a tobacconist and Mary became a domestic worker.

Ernest's father, Joseph, was born in 1822, in Burbage and his mother Ann Lilley was born in 1824, in Barwell, both villages in Leicestershire. Joseph began work with the Great Central Railway Company in 1846 and held different positions on the line for over 40 years.

By 1861 the family were living at 28 Station Road, off Summer Lane, Barnsley, when Joseph became the stationmaster at Summer Lane railway station in Barnsley, which position he held for nine and a half years.



Station Road, off Summer Lane,  
Barnsley, including extreme right, No 28  
Photographed by BAYD in 2014



Summer Lane railway station, Barnsley, 1929. Courtesy of Mr C. Sharp of Old Barnsley

The family moved by 1881, a short distance to 3 Newton Street, also off Summer Lane, Barnsley.

The line which ran through Summer Lane station was originally called the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway. It was formed to link the coal mining and industrial centres in the Midlands and North of England. In 1897 the name was changed to the Great Central Railway under the leadership of Edward Montague-Stuart-Wortley-Mackenzie, first Earl of Wharnccliffe, in anticipation of the opening in 1899 of its London Extension (Great Central Main Line).

Social class deference in Victorian times often meant that confrontation on a personal level between the upper classes and their working-class employees was not often recorded, especially if the upper-class employer lost the argument! However, such an incident was recorded in *The Barnsley Chronicle* of February 27th 1904 between Joseph and Lord Wharnccliffe which gives an insight into Joseph's character. The incident occurred when Lord Wharnccliffe, accompanied with other directors of the line, arrived at Summer Lane station to take the train. When Lord Wharnccliffe could not produce a rail ticket he was refused by Joseph to board the train.

"It is alright," said Lord Wharnccliffe, "I will take the responsibility as chairman of the company."

Joseph replied, "I don't care whether you are chairman of the company or not. That has nothing to do with me. My orders are not to allow a train to travel without presenting me with a ticket or staff." Lord Wharnccliffe and his party had to go to the nearest hotel for lunch until a train came down the line with the necessary staff to enable Lord Wharnccliffe and his party to depart!

This incident must have been remembered by Lord Wharnccliffe when Joseph retired in 1886. He was asked to go to Manchester to meet Lord Wharnccliffe and the directors, where Joseph was personally thanked for his long and faithful service to the company and presented with a purse of gold, together with a

pension for the remainder of his life. This was 22 years before the state Old Age Pension began. Joseph was remembered all over the line at the time as one of the last links with the early days of the railway in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Joseph and Ann Moore had Ernest baptised at St George’s Church on 30th July 1865 by Rev. C. E. Cobb.

Ernest may have attended St George’s school because he lived in the parish. However, he later attended Doncaster Grammar School, possibly after winning a scholarship. It would have been easy for him to travel there by rail from Summer Lane station. A second line linked Barnsley with Doncaster. Ernest is recorded as attending a school reunion of The Danesians in London in 1936.

For a young boy growing up in a working-class family in the latter half of 19th-century Victorian Britain, developing an interest in art would have been difficult and this must have been the case with Ernest. Access to art materials would have been a struggle for him. However, winning a scholarship that enabled him to attend Doncaster Grammar School would have been the opportunity he needed to begin developing his talent.

Ernest left school around the age of 13 years and was employed as a delivery boy by Guest’s, a well-established (since 1765) and prestigious provisions shop on Market Hill in Barnsley.

Ernest’s artistic talent came to the notice of his employers who either commissioned, or used one of Ernest’s paintings, titled ‘Puppy’s bath time’; a picture of a puppy being washed in a bread bowl which was used for the cover of Guest’s almanac. Almanacs were books, or magazines, issued annually by select retail stores and businesses to their customers. They contained astronomical calendars and an eclectic assortment of articles.

His interest in art grew and his ability developed to the extent that he (possibly upon leaving school) enrolled as a fine art student at Barnsley Art School in the Harvey Institute on Eldon Street, Barnsley. Students paid 1d per class. In the 1881 census, Ernest, at 18 years of age, was described as a ‘fine arts apprentice’. He may possibly have been a sponsored student.

Records of art education in Barnsley can be dated back to 1848, when a design class was held in rooms over the post office in Church Street.

BELOW

Guest’s provisions shop, Market Hill, Barnsley c. 1890 © and courtesy of the Tasker Trust

BELOW RIGHT

Guest’s Yard c. 1890, later becoming The Arcade, Barnsley © and courtesy of the Tasker Trust





Harvey Institute, Eldon Street, Barnsley  
1890/1900 © and courtesy of the Tasker  
Trust

Ernest's parents must have been keen for Ernest to aspire and have a successful artistic career. His artistic talent, formally developed as a student at Barnsley School of Art, led him in 1883 to further his studies in fine art in Paris under the French painter Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant.

Ernest's painting style has been regarded as belonging to the school of French Realism. This was part of the Realist movement in France that began around 1840 and ran to the end of the 19th century. Gustave Courbet was a leading representative and it focused on direct observation of the modern world, particularly depicting working-class life.

Around 1880 Constant began to focus more on mural decoration and portraiture becoming in England, a favourite with the aristocracy. This was the time when Ernest was his pupil. It is interesting therefore, to speculate, that being a pupil of Constant at this time may have been important for Ernest to make contacts and develop his career as a portraitist, particularly with the gentry and aristocracy.

On one of his visits home from Paris as a student, Ernest found upon his arrival in London he did not have enough money to pay for the fare to Barnsley. In desperation he had to sell a valuable picture to a dealer who drove such a hard bargain that he could only get 13 shillings for the picture and his fare was 13s 6d.

Later in the 1880s Ernest left Constant to further his studies in England under Hubert von Herkomer at his newly established Herkomer School of Art in Bushey, Hertfordshire.

Born into a poor family in Germany, Herkomer's family eventually settled in England. He received a formal art education at the South Kensington Art School and he exhibited at the Royal Academy. He had a very successful career and was appointed Slade professor in 1885 and received a knighthood in 1896. In Bushey he opened his Herkomer Art School using his own progressive

teaching methods, for he did not care for traditional methods. His personal style of painting is regarded as Social Realism.

Whilst studying under Herkomer, Ernest began to be noticed and receive commissions. One newspaper reporter acclaimed, ‘Mr Ernest Moore the clever, young artist and excellent portrait painter’.

After completing his fine art training, Ernest’s name became known locally. Full of youthful vigour and confidence, Ernest opened a studio at Church Street Chambers, 21 Church Street, in the centre of Sheffield, embarking on a career as a professional artist. He was 24 years old.

In the ‘heat’ of burgeoning industrial advancement and rapid social and urban change, philanthropy was to the fore in late Victorian Britain. Some industrialists and leading public figures developed a concern for conditions of the urban poor and were keen to initiate, or support ‘improving’ causes, virtue and the promotion of civic pride. It is therefore possible Ernest may have had an industrialist(s) as a patron(s). Indeed, it may be why a number of his portraits are of notable local civic and industrial figures.

Though Barnsley, which was a vigorous and thriving industrial and trading town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was the centre of the vast, rapidly developing Yorkshire coal mining industry, it was Sheffield and Rotherham where his talents were being mostly called upon. Sheffield with the outstanding



Houses in Pitt Street, Barnsley. The Moore family home at No 29, is second from the right © and courtesy of the Tasker Trust

and excellent quality of its steel products and Rotherham, famous for the strength of its iron, were also both rapidly expanding in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

From the beginning and throughout his career Ernest never lost contact with his home town. In 1891 his family had moved to 29 Pitt Street, at that time considered one of the more fashionable and elegant streets in Barnsley.

In 1892 Ernest painted a portrait of Rev. J. S. Lawson who was vicar of St George's Church, Pitt Street, Barnsley, from 1872 to 1904. He was regarded as an excellent preacher who attracted large congregations. Active in public life, he served on the Barnsley School Board and raised funds for schools in the parish, however, a few years before his retirement he began to suffer ill health and died three months after his retirement.

A charming picture attributed to Ernest, titled 'Woman with a Samovar' dated 1890, depicting a woman polishing brass seems to express a familiarity. Did his sister Mary, who was a domestic worker, sit for this painting?

Ernest's sitters at this early point in his career included Rt Hon. Charles Beilby Stuart Wortley, whose portrait was his first work to be exhibited at the



'Rev'd John Sharpe Lawson MA LLD (1841–1904)' by Ernest Moore. Courtesy of Barnsley Arts, Museums and Archives Service

‘Woman with a Samovar’ attributed to Ernest Moore. Courtesy Rotherham Cultural Services



Royal Academy in 1892. It was reviewed as “probably as a good a piece of portrait painting as can be seen in the Academy”, when it was shown, along with a narrative painting titled ‘The black border’. The following year he exhibited a portrait of Henry Fitzalan Howard 15th Duke of Norfolk, KG.

In a review of the RA exhibition there is the note, “Mr Ernest Moore’s portrait of Mr Charles Stuart-Wortley does as much credit to the sitter’s choice of a painter as to the latter’s vigorous rendering of an attractive face.”

His portrait of Alderman Robert Marsh, Mayor of Rotherham, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1903, was praised by Sir John Everett Millais.

It is interesting to speculate whether it was through Rt Hon. C. B. Stuart Wortley that the artist Archibald Stuart Wortley, his brother, met Ernest Moore. They may have met earlier in 1895 at the 21st exhibition of the Sheffield Society of Artists, when Archibald gave a speech. Their acquaintance prospered because



Archibald Stuart Wortley, who had founded the Society of Portrait Painters, (later the Royal Society of Portrait Painters), proposed Ernest for membership, and this was seconded by Rt Hon. John Collier, a significant fellow artist. Interestingly, Hubert von Herkomer was a member and the minutes of 1897 show a meeting was held in his studio.

Unfortunately, in spite of such illustrious support, the proposal of Ernest was not accepted. Was Ernest a victim of class snobbery here?

Whatever the reason, in 1898, Ernest painted a narrative picture titled 'Rejected'. It depicts a man sitting in a chair with his head in his left hand and his right arm stretched behind him holding a rolled piece of paper. The mood of the picture is melancholic, with a shaft of mellow light across the centre of the middle ground of the picture. The viewer's immediate assumption is likely that the picture is one of a rejected lover, but as this picture was painted in the year of his rejection by the Society of Portrait Painters, could this be a self-portrait of Ernest – the figure of the man is similar in age to Ernest at this time – and his feelings about his rejection?

'Rejection' by Ernest Moore. Courtesy of Museums Sheffield



About a year earlier, in 1897, Ernest was approached by the Sheffield Press Club and commissioned to paint the first knighted and most internationally famous actor of his time, Sir Henry Irving.

Ernest was promised a sitting, but it was a while before he was able to carry out the commission due to Irving's ill health.

To facilitate the commission Ernest negotiated the arrangements with Irving's personal assistant Bram Stoker, who at the time had very recently published his most famous novel, *Dracula*. The character of Dracula, Stoker based largely on Irving.

To carry out the commission, Ernest had to cause Irving as little discomfort as possible because of Irving's increasing debilitating ill health. The portrait was painted in the Cliftonville Hotel, Margate, and Irving's Grafton Street, London home. Considering Irving was said to possess a dominating and mesmeric personality who held people in thrall, the commission was executed in congenial circumstances. When Ernest asked Irving if he would mind if he could start another canvas, Irving told him, "Not a bit. You are stage-managing this show. Go ahead, my boy."

The portrait was unveiled in the Sheffield Press Club's new premises on 6th December 1900 by Ernest in the presence of Sir Henry Irving and Bram Stoker, who both were very generous in their responses. Irving said Ernest had "great gifts and a charming personality", and, "whose charming personality I know so well as one of the most genial and delightful painters it has ever been my good fortune to meet." It is very possible this was the last portrait of Sir Henry Irving, for his health continued to decline and he died in 1905.

Ernest and Irving became good friends and remained so. Three days before his death, Irving gave Ernest a gift of a signed copy of *The Merchant of Venice*.

Ernest's portrait of Sir Henry Irving was commissioned to hang in the Sheffield Press Club's premises, but later was exhibited on the Continent and in The Walker Gallery in Liverpool by special invitation. In 1908, the painting was part of a joint exhibition held at the Knoedler Galleries in New York.

The whereabouts of this portrait of Sir Henry Irving is currently unknown. As it was commissioned to hang in the Sheffield Press Club's premises, it may have been destroyed in the heavy bombing of Sheffield during the Second World War.

In 1902 Ernest received a commission from his home town of Barnsley. Miners at the Wharnccliffe Woodmoor Colliery Co. Ltd, commissioned Ernest to paint a portrait of the Managing Director and Chairman, Howard Aston Allport. Wharnccliffe Woodmoor Colliery was the scene of the last major colliery disaster in South Yorkshire when, in 1936, 58 miners were killed.

Ernest's home address in Sheffield was 6 Northumberland Road, a desirable address at the turn of the 20th century. His father, Joseph, went to live there with Ernest after his retirement until his death in 1904.

In December 1908 Ernest married Ellen Maude Blagden at St George's Church, Doncaster. He was 43 and Ellen was 29. Ellen Maude was the only daughter of Charles Washington Blagden and his wife Ellen. The family home, with three female servants, was at Hallgate, Doncaster. Charles W. Blagden was

'Ernest Moore' from *Sheffield Who's Who 1905*



the owner of a lime and stone merchant business and was very wealthy. When he died in South Kensington, London, he left £30,843 11s 2d. For Ernest, coming from a working-class background, marrying Ellen Maude gave him a secure entry into the world of the wealthy, entrepreneurial middle class.

From 1905 the RA records Ernest as being at 52a Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London, but his marriage certificate states he was at 6 Northumberland Road, Sheffield. He had, however, by 1908 acquired an international reputation as he was commissioned to paint Mr W. Dupont of Nashville, Kentucky, USA, for the Technical Institute, Louisville, Tennessee, USA.

Between 1907 and 1910 Ernest spent time in the United States of America. He sailed on 13th February 1907, travelling alone from Liverpool on the SS *Oceanic* to New York. Spending time in Washington DC and Delaware he painted the inventor of the telephone, Dr Alexander Graham Bell, with whom he became friends. He also painted Hon. R. A. Ballinger, Secretary of the Interior USA and Admiral Sebree, Commander of the Pacific Squadron USA.

His portrait of an attorney and art dealer Ralph Cross Johnson, which he painted in 1908, was bequeathed by his daughter Mabel Scott Langhorne to the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Ernest also painted four portraits that now belong to the National Portrait Gallery, a sister museum to the Smithsonian.

In 1908 four of Ernest's portraits, including His Grace the Duke of Norfolk KG, Rt Hon. Stuart Wortley K.C.M.V., James Bryce, first Viscount Bryce, jurist, historian and ambassador, and Sir Henry Irving, were exhibited at the Exhibition of Portraits in the Knoedler Galleries, (one of the oldest and most prestigious US commercial galleries), in New York, from 27th March to 4th April 1908. On another floor of the gallery was an exhibition of etchings and lithographs by James Whistler.

Reviewing the exhibition, an art critic wrote:

In the upper gallery at Knoedler's are two portrait exhibitions, one of two portraits of Englishmen, by Ernest Moore of London ... Mr Moore's exhibit includes a freshly painted, vivacious likeness of the Right Hon. James Bryce, Ambassador to the United States. Mr Bryce wears his Oxford hood, and his clear, bright color, hawk-like eye and keen profile combine with the pictorial dress in a brilliant effect. The painting is direct and vigorous, having been executed in six hours ... In the portrait of the grave gentleman wearing the Lord Mayor's chain of office there is sharper characterisation, and the general effect of the rather pale head is striking.

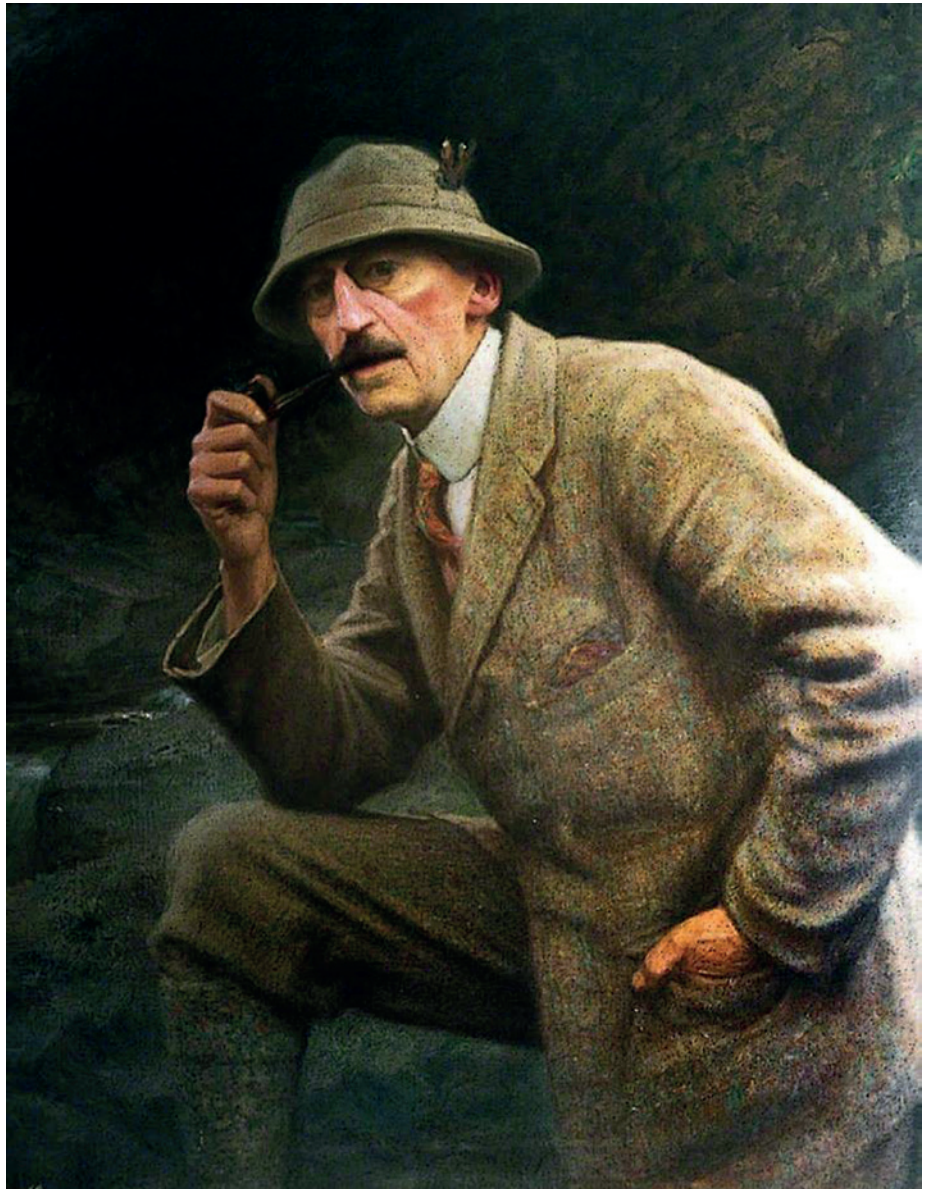
Ernest was again resident in the USA in 1909, when in August of that year he wrote an article for the *Barnsley Chronicle* titled 'The Trail of the Painter Man' about his time in USA.

The article tells of Ernest's adventures in the north-west USA and Canada in 1909. He was commissioned by Robert Moran of Seattle (who was builder of the USA battleship *Nebraska*), to paint a large canvas of the discovery of the islands of San Juan by Spaniards in 1772.

Ernest found it necessary to study the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest American/Canadian border coast. He left his wife Ellen Maude in Seattle and boarded a ship bound for Vancouver in British Columbia. Eventually, he reached the small expedition party he was aiming to join on an island called Lulu Island, around 12 miles from Vancouver and between the Cascade Mountains and the Gulf of Georgia. The expedition included the leader, a woodsman and hunter, an ethnologist from Cambridge University and a member of the local Twana tribe, who was the expedition guide and interpreter. Ernest with deft skill managed to make quick sketches for his commissioned painting of the native tribespeople he met, paying them to pose in period dress.

Along the coast were salmon cannery settlements where, from July to August each year, the population swelled with migrant workers from many nations drawn by the work on offer. Ernest and his party were camped near one of

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





the cannery towns. The rough 'Wild West' frontier life of the settlements at this time, was very lively. One day Ernest and his party were caught up in trouble involving guns. Ernest and his companions were quickly recruited by the police to help capture and hold some rough-necks, which necessitated Ernest and his companions being sworn in as policemen and guarding the mob when they became prisoners.

Shortly afterwards Ernest was recalled back to Seattle to complete his commissioned portrait of Senator Squire for presentation to the State House at Olympia. He applied for discharge, which was granted by the Chief of Police and sailed back to Seattle with his sketches. On arrival he was reunited with Ellen Maude and then he completed Senator Squire's portrait and proceeded to paint his commission, 'The Discovery of the San Juan Islands'.

Ernest and Ellen Maude finally returned from the USA in 1910 and to their home in Cromwell Road, London.

Between 1910 and 1920 he continued to paint leading figures in industry and public life, including Sir William Henry Ellis GBE, Master Cutler, a Sheffield

'A Yorkshire Dales Landscape' by Ernest Moore. Private collection

Photograph of original oil painting of  
Wilfred Rhodes by Ernest Moore  
Courtesy of Archives Committee,  
Yorkshire Cricket Foundation (Yorkshire  
CCC)



steelmaker and civil engineer. In 1926 Ellis led a commission to enquire into the conditions of mining and drainage in the mining and heavy industrial areas around Sheffield, Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. The portrait was purchased by the National Portrait Gallery in 1973.



'The Very Reverend Dr William Foxley Norris KCVO' by Ernest Moore. Kirklees Collection, Huddersfield Art Gallery

Although based in London, Ernest continued to maintain his northern connections. In 1910 he painted two landscapes in the Yorkshire Dales, (he painted very few landscapes). One was of Hebden Ghyll near Grassington and one of the banks of the River Wharfe looking across to Netherington Hall.

Also in 1910, he painted Halliwell Sutcliffe, a well-known author of the early decades of the 20th century. Sutcliffe was a keen walker and promoter of the Yorkshire Dales.

By 1910 Sutcliffe and his wife Mabel were living in the village of Linton, near Grassington. Ernest often stayed with Sutcliffe and his family at their home, Troutbeck, later named White Abbey. They became good friends and indeed Sutcliffe and Ernest went into business together at one time.

Ernest maintained friendships with many well-known people. When Dr Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, died in 1922, Ernest paid

tribute to him as a friend. In his tribute, Ernest told how Dr Bell's invention was developed. Bell had told Ernest how in the early days a young girl, who was deaf, heard the human voice for the first time using Bell's invention. She fell in love with Bell and interested her father, one of the richest men in America, in the invention. He backed Bell and his invention. The rest of course, is history. Bell and the young woman? They were married.

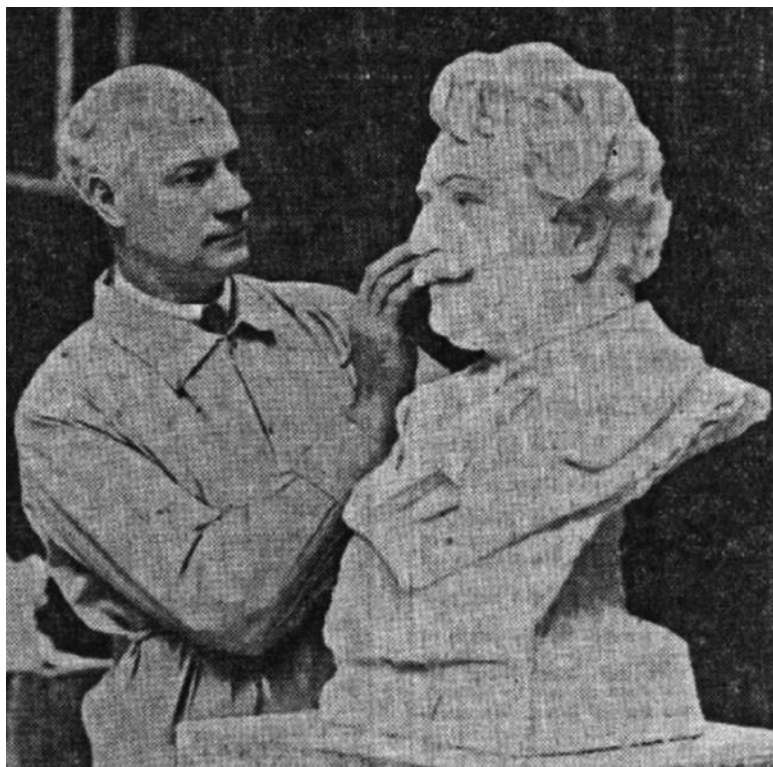
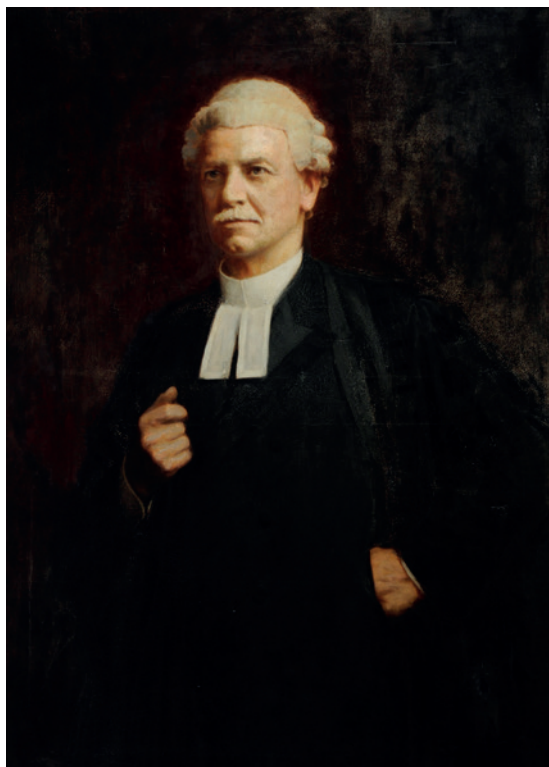
In 1923, Ernest was commissioned to paint Yorkshire CCC's greatest ever all-rounder, Wilfred Rhodes. In an interview in the *Yorkshire Post* in 1932, Ernest recalled making the portrait, Ernest had difficulty in capturing Rhodes in bowling action, as he desired. So he tried using film. Yet, with the film stock moving through the projector at 20 frames per second, it was still difficult for Ernest to adequately discern Rhodes' arm movement. So Ernest finally relied on his own skill to capture Rhodes in bowling action. The portrait was presented to the 'Father of Yorkshire cricket', Lord Hawke, by Captain Marple in 1923. Around the same time, a portrait by Ernest of Lord Hawke was presented to the Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

Around 1925 Ernest painted the Very Rev. William Foxley Norris, who was a much respected cleric. He was made Dean of Westminster, after being Dean of York, around the time Ernest painted his portrait. Norris founded The York Art Society in 1921 and was Chaplain to the Royal Academy of Arts; he was himself a noted artist. Educated at Charterhouse and Oxford, he went on to clerical training at Leeds Clergy School. Afterwards he was Rector of Barnsley and Rural Dean of Silkstone. Memories of Barnsley must have figured in their conversation during the making of the portrait. Dean Norris is buried in Westminster Abbey.

Ernest held a prestigious exhibition titled *Men of Yorkshire* at the Walker Galleries in New Bond Street, London from 4th–18th November 1925 and it was reviewed in *The London Illustrated News* October 31st 1925. It consisted of portraits of individuals who made outstanding contributions in public life, various professions, industries and institutions and who were either born in Yorkshire, or had some significant connection with the county. He did however, include one woman, Dame Madge Kendal, who was a very famous stage actress at the time. Other portraits included Admiral Sir Francis Bridgeman; The Dean of York, Dr Foxley Norris; Sir Frank Dyson, FRS, The Astronomer Royal; Sir Hugh Bell Bt, ironmaster and colliery owner; famous cricketer Wilfred Rhodes; Lord Danesfort, QC and former MP for York; Lieut-Colonel Sir Arthur Leetham KCVO; W. Jackson Bean, Curator of Kew Gardens; General Sir Edward Bulfin KCB, The Green Howards; Yorkshire cricket captain Lord Hawke who advanced the worldwide development of cricket; Barnsley-born educationalist Sir Michael Sadler; Sir Charles Sykes and Halliwell Sutcliffe, Yorkshire writer.

A reviewer of the exhibition referred to Ernest as "a painter of distinction".

Ernest continued to paint many commissions. In 1926, his portrait of Dr Benjamin Daydon Jackson, the eminent botanist and Curator of the Linnean collections was presented to The Linnean Society of London at the anniversary meeting on 26th May 1926. In unveiling the portrait, Sir David Prain noted the



excellence of Ernest's character study. Dr Jackson responded by acknowledging the honour done him by the presentation of the portrait.

Henry Horsfield was Barnsley Town Clerk from 1879 until he retired in 1912, after many years of acknowledged 'long and faithful service' to the town. Horsfield befriended Ernest at the beginning of his career, gave him encouragement and followed his career with interest through the years. After his death, his widow commissioned Ernest to paint a portrait of her late husband in 1932.

In 1936 Ernest was once again in Sheffield, this time to celebrate a locally born great man, the recently knighted Sir Arthur Hall, whose portrait Ernest had been commissioned to paint. Hall was influential in developing medical teaching and created the Chairs of Physiology, Pathology and Medicine in Sheffield.

Also in 1936, Ernest painted a portrait of the late King George V, which was described as "one of the happiest and most natural pictures" of King George V. It was unveiled by Her Royal Highness Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, daughter of Queen Victoria, at Kensington Town Hall on 4th June 1937 in the presence of 62 dignitaries, plus chief officers of the Royal Borough of Kensington. The painting was of King George V in the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet standing on the steps of Windsor and wearing the robe and insignia of the Order of the Garter. It was donated by Alderman Sir William Davison who, inviting Princess Louise to unveil the painting, said her Royal Highness had postponed a trip to Scotland to be present at the unveiling ceremony and that it was fitting that a portrait of King George V should be unveiled by his aunt. After

ABOVE LEFT  
'Henry Horsfield' by Ernest Moore  
Courtesy of Barnsley Arts, Museums and  
Archives Service

ABOVE  
Photograph of Scottish sculptor  
G.H. Paulin putting the finishing touches  
to a bust of Ernest Moore in his London  
studio in 1933



‘Sir Arthur John Hall’ by Ernest Moore  
Courtesy of University of Sheffield



unveiling the portrait Princess Louise congratulated Ernest upon a most genial and pleasing portrait. She said he had the difficult task of painting the picture without a sitter, but he had succeeded admirably in conveying the character of the late King. Sir William Davidson in thanking Princess Louise for performing the ceremony and presenting the portrait to the Mayor of Kensington, said the council already possessed portraits of Princess Louise and Queen Victoria and this portrait would complete three generations of the Royal Family and would be greatly treasured.

Although predominantly a portrait painter, Ernest also produced occasional paintings of dogs.

Of his painting technique it was recorded he “attacked his work with a fine life and energy which was of course reflected in his studies.” He was remembered on one occasion as being dissatisfied with his ‘reading’ of a subject he was painting; so four days before it was to be presented for an Academy exhibition he tore up the canvas, began the painting again. He presented it, and it was accepted and hung while still wet!

Constantly in demand with commissions, Ernest was still producing paintings into his last years. Around 1939 he painted a portrait Wa-Sha-Quon-Asin, better known as Grey Owl and otherwise known as the Englishman Archibald Belaney.

Ernest's paintings commanded high prices. For instance, at the United Artists Exhibition at Burlington House in February 1940 a portrait he painted of the Sheffield industrialist Joseph Ward was quickly sold for 100 guineas within an hour of opening.

Ernest died on 14th September 1940 at 54 Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London, from coronary thrombosis with his nephew Powers Moore, in attendance. His estate of £1,403 15s 7d was bequeathed to his widow Ellen Maude. They had no children.

Well remembered as a gregarious person, Ernest was a much-loved raconteur and was said to be able to 'recite Shakespeare by the yard'. In an article in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, it was noted that Barnsley, along with many West Riding towns, had many strong personalities and also its share of raconteurs, "not the least skilful of whom is Mr Ernest Moore, the portrait painter". He had a large store of stories, which included the Barnsley character Watta Joa, and was remembered for his relish in telling them.

It is notable that, although born into a working-class family in Barnsley, Yorkshire, Ernest had a very successful career as a portrait painter which enabled him, by his talent, to make an extraordinary journey across the strict class barriers of late 19th-century and early 20th-century Britain. He also seems to have possessed a very gregarious and captivating personality which would also have been a great asset in his social networking.

Ernest never lost contact with his native district of Yorkshire. He was fondly remembered for his visits to the Sheffield Reform Club and in an obituary in the *Sheffield Independent* newspaper he was remembered as being a "most entertaining companion, for he had travelled far, had observed men and things closely, and had a delightful sense of humour. It is our regret that those stimulating conversations are no more – but his works will remain."

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ernest Moore's paintings in public institutions can be viewed on BBC 'Your Paintings' website.

Thank you to the following without whose contributions and support this booklet could not have been written:

Barnsley Arts, Museums and Archives Service

Sally Hayles

The Tasker Trust

National Portrait Gallery

Sheffield Library and Local Studies Library

Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service

Doncaster Archives

Kensington and Chelsea Local Studies and Archives

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Leighton House Museum

Museums Sheffield

Grassington Folk Museum

University of Sheffield

Kirklees Museums and Galleries

Archives Committee, Yorkshire Cricket Foundation (Yorkshire CCC)

The Linnean Society

The Irving Society and Henry Irving Foundation

Mall Galleries/Federation of British Artists

St George's Church, Barnsley

The Hall Cross Academy, Doncaster

Mr I. McLaughlin