

# BEYOND THE GRAVES

Volume 10, Number 4, October 2015

## ARTISTS AND AUTHORS

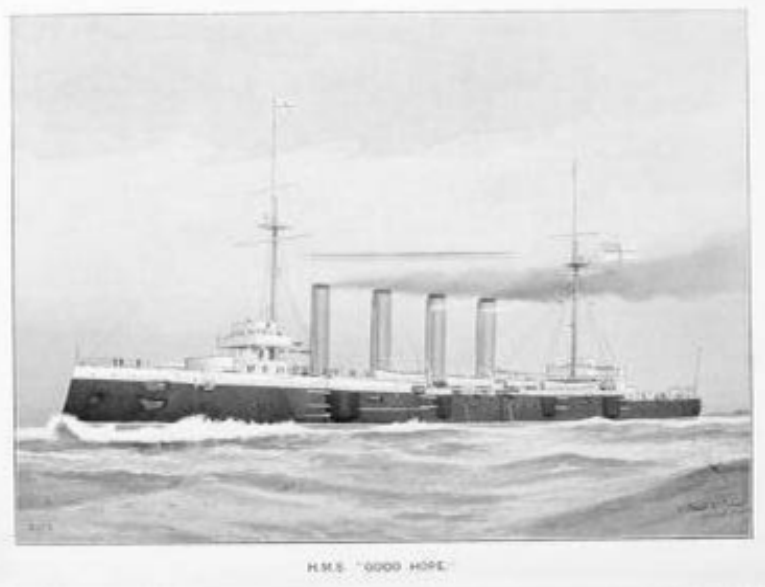
**The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance. ~ Aristotle**

Over the years Ryde has been home to a wide variety of artists. Ann Barrett uncovered these two interesting stories of Mr Drawbridge and Mr Mitchell during recent research.

**CHARLES VAUGHAN DRAWBRIDGE** was born in Scarborough in 1872, the son of a solicitor. He studied law but his passion and chosen profession was sculpting. He moved to Chelsea in London and was a pupil of the craftsman Captain Adrian Jones. He assisted in the execution of the large bronze known as the Quadriga, which was presented to King Edward VII and stands on Wellington Arch at Hyde Park Corner. He went on to do much fine work in marble. After First World War service with the London Scottish Regiment, Charles came to Binstead, where he lived with his sister until his death in 1940. He was involved with many associations in the area and was a musician of considerable ability and played the cello in the orchestra of the Ryde Philharmonic Society. (*Quadriga image from Wikimedia – "Carlos Delgado; CC-BY-SA"*)



**WILLIAM FREDERICK MITCHELL** was born at Calshot Castle, Hampshire, and the son of a Royal Navy Commander. In 1881 William was living at South Stoneham but by 1891 he had moved to 19 Argyll Street, Ryde with his wife and young son. William was listed as a Marine Artist Royal Navy, working from his home, which he named "Calshot". He was well established as a Water Colour Marine Artist, not just commissioned paintings for the wall, but illustrations for well known publications. For years he illustrated "Brassey's Naval Annual". He also illustrated "Her Majesty's Navy, Deeds and Battles" 1890 in 3 volumes, and many other books too numerous to list. (*Illustration from Brassey's Naval Annual 1902*)



William also did commissioned oil paintings - the Isle of Wight Observer 10 December 1892 reports:

Mr Fred Mitchell, the well-known marine artist, of Calshot, Ryde, is just finishing a large oil painting representing HMS Wellington at her old moorings in Portsmouth Harbour. It is a bright and pleasing picture, and the big ship and the various interesting objects in Portsmouth Harbour are painted with the scrupulous fidelity to nature for which the artist is justly celebrated. We regret Mr Mitchell is unable to publicly exhibit the picture in Ryde, as it has to be sent away next week to the gentleman for whom it was painted, Thomas Dixon, Esq., banker, of Gresford, North Wales.

In 1905, in conjunction with Christian Symons, William Mitchell brought out a book on the fleet called "The British Navy, Past and Present". This contained 30 chromolithographs. Surviving copies of the book today are on the market for between £84 and £265, depending on its condition.

William died suddenly in 1914 aged 69 but what makes his story so incredible is that he and his wife Elizabeth were both deaf and dumb from childhood. In those days a lot of people with disabilities were put into institutions but this was obviously not the case for William and Elizabeth who must have received lots of support and encouragement from their families. It was said in their obituaries "they suffered the great affliction". However, they were both described as "always bright and having a happy disposition".

### An artist of a different kind was -

**ALFRED DANIEL COAR** came to the Island from Brighton around 1879. He and his family lived at 7 Surrey Street for about 30 years and in 1908 moved to the newly built house called Stockland (later numbered 49) in Well Street. Alfred was to live here for the next 37 years until his death in 1945, having reached the grand old age of 94.

His trade, from which he retired when he was 68, was a coach painter and heraldic artist.



Examples of his work may be seen in many public buildings and churches, both on the Isle of Wight and on the mainland - including Arundel Castle. He did the coats of arms and crests for the carriages of Queen Victoria and of Princess Beatrice, from whom he received personal compliments on his artistic skill.

Alfred was most widely esteemed in Ryde, where he was also commissioned to do quite a lot of work in St Thomas' Church.

*(Coach image from [www.playbuzz.com](http://www.playbuzz.com) and thanks to Sue Tucker for photo of her great-grandfather Mr Coar)*

**CECIL WHEELER** died at 38 Melville Street in 1934, aged 70, and this was the house in which he was born. He was a retired architect, who had practised in various places, London, Sheffield and Leeds, to name but a few. He also did sketches for "Seraps" and "Ally Sloper" in his spare time, and was a painter of no mean ability. In 1911 he came back to Ryde to live in retirement.

*(Ally Sloper image from [www.chrisharrisproductions.co.uk](http://www.chrisharrisproductions.co.uk) & obituary Isle of Wight Times 14 June 1934)*

### French Academy Artist – Obituary

**WILLIAM DE LAUNCEY WARD** passed away at his residence in Paris on the 19th ultimo. The body was conveyed to Ryde on Friday last and interred in the grave of his mother, Mrs Susan Barclay Ward, of New York. The deceased was an artist of considerable repute, having exhibited many pictures in the French Academy. Both he and his mother have been frequent visitors to Ryde for the past 40 years.

*(Isle of Wight Observer 12 June 1920)*



**Art is not what you see, but what you make others see. ~ Edgar Degas**

**THOMAS JOHN PURCHAS** was well known in Ryde where he lived at "The Cedars" and later at "Leaholme", St John's Park, where he died, aged 80, in 1930. He had also spent a large number of years in residence at both Guildford and Bournemouth. He was a retired member of the Exchequer and Audit Department and a gentleman of high intellect.



He took a keen interest in practically everything, but his chief hobbies were painting in oils, music, and gardening. He had exhibited at the Royal Academy at different times and was a member of the Bournemouth Orchestral Society.

*(Isle of Wight Times 30 October 1930)*

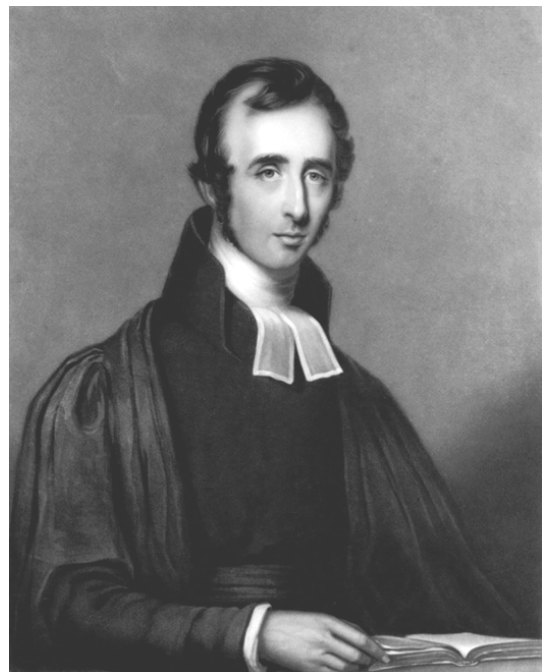
*(Gathering seaweed, by T J Purchas, 1886, by permission of Bonhams)*

## Local Water Colour Artist – Obituary

**MISS SYBIL READY** died suddenly at her home Waxham House, High Park Road on Friday. Miss Ready, who had resided in Ryde for the majority of her life, was well known locally as a water-colour artist, her pictures having been exhibited in past years at the shows of the Isle of Wight Art Society. She was cousin of Lord Methuen. *(Isle of Wight Times 17 October 1940)*

**EDWARD TURTLE** of the Art Gallery, Union Street, belonged to an old and respected Ryde family, and in his youth betrayed so much artistic ability that he determined to devote himself to art. After studying under very good masters, he became a portrait painter, and painted many Island residents amongst them being the Rev J Sibthorpe, of St James' Church, Ryde, who later became a Roman Catholic. This portrait was so admired that it was engraved and published by subscription. The artist James Scott painted Rev Sibthorpe's portrait which hangs in the London National Portrait Gallery and this is recognised as 'after Edward Turtle'.

The invention of the daguerreotype led Mr Turtle to take a rather gloomy view of a portrait painter's chances of a successful career and, having a musical ear, he opened a music saloon in Union Street. This rapidly prospered but he never lost his interest in art. Painting became his beloved recreation, and he was a born collector, having personal acquaintance of many famous artists at home and abroad. As the collection increased with time, Mr Turtle found his pictures filling every part of his premises so he retired from the music trade and devoted himself entirely to art and the building of a gallery in which to store his treasures.

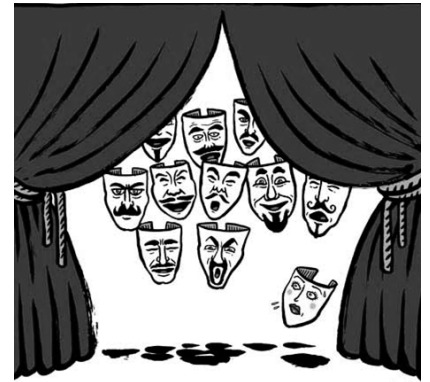


He still devoted several hours a day to drawing but with age turned his attention to charcoal, in which medium he drew many pictures of local scenery remarkable for delicacy, softness, and aerial effect. Mr Turtle died in 1898, aged 86. *(Isle of Wight Observer 26 March 1898; Portrait of Richard Waldo Sibthorpe, 1839, by James Scott, published by and after Edward Turtle - NPG D8573 creative commons licence from London National Portrait Gallery.)*

**Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.**  
~ Pablo Picasso

## Scenic Artist and Sculptor –

**ROBERT PIERPOINT LLOYD** came to Ryde from London, where the 1901 census had stated his profession to be a scenic artist and sculptor. He married in 1906 at All Saints Church, Ryde. The 1911 census records that Mr Lloyd was living with his wife, mother, sister and two boarders, at Belmont, Well Street, Ryde and that he was a scenic artist. Later he moved to Binstead where he resided for 15 years until his death in 1926, aged 60. Mr Lloyd's obituary states that he was well-known as a scenic painter, having executed considerable work at the Theatre Royal and Scala Theatre, Ryde. (*Isle of Wight County Press* 30 October 1926)



## A Family of Artists -



**WILLIAM GRAY** lived in Ryde for many years and was a water-colour artist of acknowledged talent. His works were distinguished by a mellow richness of colouring. His celebrity was not merely local; he had frequently exhibited in London. He was most at home in the Isle of Wight scenery but being a good colourist he was also at home with the rich blue skies and waters of sunny Italy. He died in 1876, aged 56.

**WILLIAM HAL GRAY** was the only son of William Gray and was also a landscape artist. His water colour drawings were much sought after, and his work was to be seen in all the chief exhibitions in the country.

In 1877 the *Isle of Wight Observer* reported:

During the week there has been exhibited at Mr Osborne's, in Union Street, a water-colour painting, representing what the new boating lake to the east of the Victoria Pier will be like - when it is completed. The painting is the work of our talented local young artist, Mr W H Gray.

A gentle slope, crowned with seats and neatly turfed, leads down to the margin of the lake, which is crowded with people who watch with interest a lot of children who, wading in the water, are sailing their miniature yachts and boats. Further out, in the centre of the lake, are other lads racing each other in their canoes or narrow galleys.



In the distance is Portsmouth, which is lighted up by sunbeams breaking through the clouds. Spithead too looks picturesque studded with its white sails, forts and ironclads. Shadows are thrown artistically over the sands and water.

William Hal later lived in Binstead where he died in 1911, aged 60.

**ANNA MARIA EMMELINE GRAY** was the wife of William Hal and a valued member of the Isle of Wight Amateur Fine Art Society, to whose exhibitions she was a contributor and her clever sketches of Island scenery generally won the commendations of the judges. She died, aged only 49, in 1900. (*Isle of Wight Observer* 25 March 1876; 25 August 1877; 10 February 1900; 4 November 1911)

**Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures.**  
~ Henry Ward Beecher

## Artist and Poet –

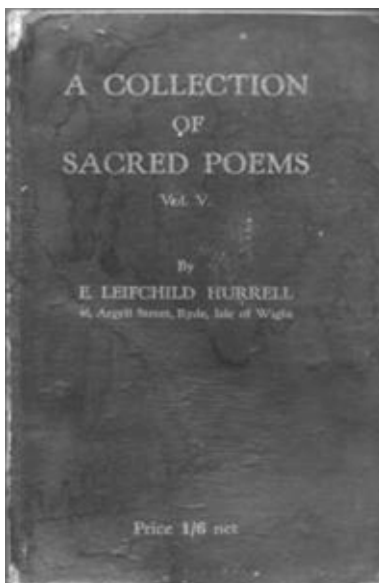
### THE COMTESSE GEORGETTE DE MALET ROQUEFORT

was one of the Island's foremost artists. She was co-director and co-tutor of the Seaview School of Painting which was founded with Mr Alfred (Paddy) Kerr in 1959. Born in Agen, Southern France, she married the late Comte Hugne de Malet in Paris. The Comtesse achieved great acclaim on the continent for her poetry, and during the last war, she had two books published in London. Later she gave up poetry in favour of painting and received her first lesson from Mr Kerr, at a Chelsea Art School. After further education in Paris, she specialised in portraiture under the instruction of Bernard Adams, also in Chelsea. For more than 20 years, she regularly exhibited at the leading London art exhibitions. During her years on the Island she was a regular contributor to local art exhibitions. She died in 1967 at the age of 64 and was at work up to the day before her death. She is buried in Binstead. (*Isle of Wight County Press 16 December 1967*)



**Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen. ~ Leonardo da Vinci**

**Over the years Ryde has been home to or hosted a wide variety of authors as well as artists.**



### Religious Poet -

**ELIZABETH LEIFCHILD HURRELL** came to live in Ryde in the mid 1920s. She took a great interest in all religious work, especially foreign missions and was herself a missionary in Italy some years before. She was a prolific writer of religious poems, of which six volumes were published and widely distributed.

A book review of 1929 reads:

A COLLECTION OF SACRED POEMS. Vol.1V. By E Leifchild Hurrell. London. Thynne & Jarvis, Ltd. Cloth, 1s.6d. net.

Miss Hurrell's output is tremendous! This is the fourth volume of her poems. They are saturated through and through with Holy Scripture. Many of them are of very considerable merit and some of them fasten attention on obscure passages. Mr Wilkinson, of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews, contributes an appreciative forward, commending them for their "very direct and faithful message" - praise they very well deserve. ([www.biblicalstudies.org.uk](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk))

(Photo image: from [www.bidorbuy.co.za](http://www.bidorbuy.co.za) - Miss Hurrell's Argyll Street address is on the front cover; details from obituary *Isle of Wight Times* 14 March 1935)

### Poet and Journalist -

**INNELL JOLLIFFE** was from Bonchurch but frequently worked in and visited Ryde, especially during the First World War -

In the Southampton Pictorial there appears a charming photograph of Miss Innell Jolliffe a well-known Island poet and journalist, whose articles on "Things as they are" are now appearing in our columns. Miss Jolliffe was one of the first ladies in the Island to take up the cause of the Belgian Refugees. (*Isle of Wight Times* 24 December 1914)

Miss Jolliffe arrives at her office at a quarter to eight every morning, and it is late in the evening before she leaves her day's work, and then she frequently has to attend meetings and social functions of various kinds. Miss Jolliffe's literary aspirations are by no means confined to her press activities, for she has written articles for magazines, published two volumes of verse, and edited *The Island Sunbeam*, a temperance paper for young people, for two years. Sometimes she writes under the form of an allegory, and her spirited patriotic poems will be published shortly in book form dedicated by his gracious permission to the heroic King of the Belgians. (Extract from *'Poets of the Wight'* by C J Arnell 1922 - [www.forgottenbooks.com](http://www.forgottenbooks.com))

**The waking Earth, with joy and mirth, Greeted this month of Spring;  
But now forlorn, doth Nature mourn, For bitter is thy sting.**

(From Innell Jolliffe's poem 'A Lament')

## **Journal Writing -**

**ADELAIDE CASE**, as a young woman, survived the five month Siege of Lucknow during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. She and her sister were trapped at the Residency, along with many other women and children. All around them people were dying of smallpox, typhoid and injuries sustained in battle or from the enemy bombardment. Mrs Case's husband, Colonel William Case of the 32nd Queens Regiment, was killed in the early stages of the siege. Mrs Case kept a journal throughout the siege and it was published in 1858 in London under the title 'Day by Day at Lucknow.' This remains in print today.

"The natives in the garrison say that the insurgents are constructing a mine to blow us all up, but we have heard no real information to that effect. How long is all this to last? My poor heart is so weary and sad, that I feel truly desolate and lonely now in the world; and well indeed may I feel so, having lost one who was truly everything to me."

*(Extract from 'Day by Day in Lucknow')*

Mrs Case lived in Ryde for the last 36 years of her life and was known as the heroine of Lucknow. She reached the ripe age of 82 and survived all her family. Her obituary in 1900 stated that she retained to the last all the vivacity and warm feelings of youth and those sterling qualities which enabled her to bear with fortitude and resignation the many sorrows and bereavements of her life.

*(Isle of Wight County Press 6 January 1900)*



**FLORENCE BYNG** lived in Bellevue Road, Ryde with her family for over 20 years. She and her husband Arthur Hervey Byng had 7 children. In November 1892 the Isle of Wight Observer reported:



Mrs Byng, wife of Captain Byng, of Wydford House, Ryde, has written a book, entitled "The Revolution amongst the Flowers". Mr T Fisher Unwin is the publisher.

A month later a London paper, the Spectator, in its book review columns wrote:

The Revolution amongst the Flowers. By Florence Byng. (T Fisher Unwin)

- This is an amusing fantasy. A little girl has various curious notions about her flowers, whom, indeed, she treats as if they were her friends. One year they take it into their heads to come out all at once, much to their own delight, but to the young lady's disgust, for they do not by any means look their best.

One might wonder if Florence had written the story to share with her own children. Arthur Maitland Byng, her eldest son, was killed in one of the earliest conflicts of the First World War, the Battle of Aisne, on 14 September 1914. It would appear that Florence, on receiving the tragic news, went into decline and she died within two months.

*(Isle of Wight Observer 19 November 1892 and London Spectator 3 December 1892; picture from antique images blogspot.co.uk)*

**Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart. ~William Wordsworth**

*(Quotations on art and writing from [www.quotegarden.com](http://www.quotegarden.com))*