

Weekend Wonder: Room with a View Saturday 18 – Sunday 19 April 2020

Welcome to **Weekend Wonder: Room with a View** – sharing our heritage from Bruce Castle Museum & Archive.

As our everyday experience of the world has suddenly become smaller and we view the outside from our homes, from our windows or balconies, we thought we would share some views from around the borough from our collections – as seen through or from windows by artists and photographers.

A room with a view sounds very enticing. Living high on a hill or high up in a flat can bring some fantastic views. Look at the sky. Look at the clouds. Look at the rooftops and any trees. Whatever view we have from our windows, it is said we are at our most comfortable when we can sit facing a door or a window, with our backs towards a wall.

A room with whatever view – the ability to look out at the world - can of course benefit our health. It can help us relax and contribute to reducing stress. It can help direct attention and our ability to focus. Even a picture or photograph of scenery at home could assist in maintaining an inner calm.

Here's one photographic view over rooftops in Stroud Green towards Finsbury Park and the City-scape beyond, taken from an attic window one winter morning in January 2019 when the sun was rising.



© Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)



© The artist: Inga Bystram

The delightful and life-affirming watercolour paintings (above and below) are by local artist Inga Bystram, painting at her home on Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham. She had an exhibition of her work at Bruce Castle in 2018. Inga grew her series of watercolours over a long period time to present 'an affectionate and compassionate insider's view of The Farm and its communities'. Views painted from her flat and balconies are very much part of her everyday experience of her home. Through her artist's eye, she has set out to document and capture nature and the changing seasons on the Estate, alongside life on The Farm.



© The artist: Inga Bystram

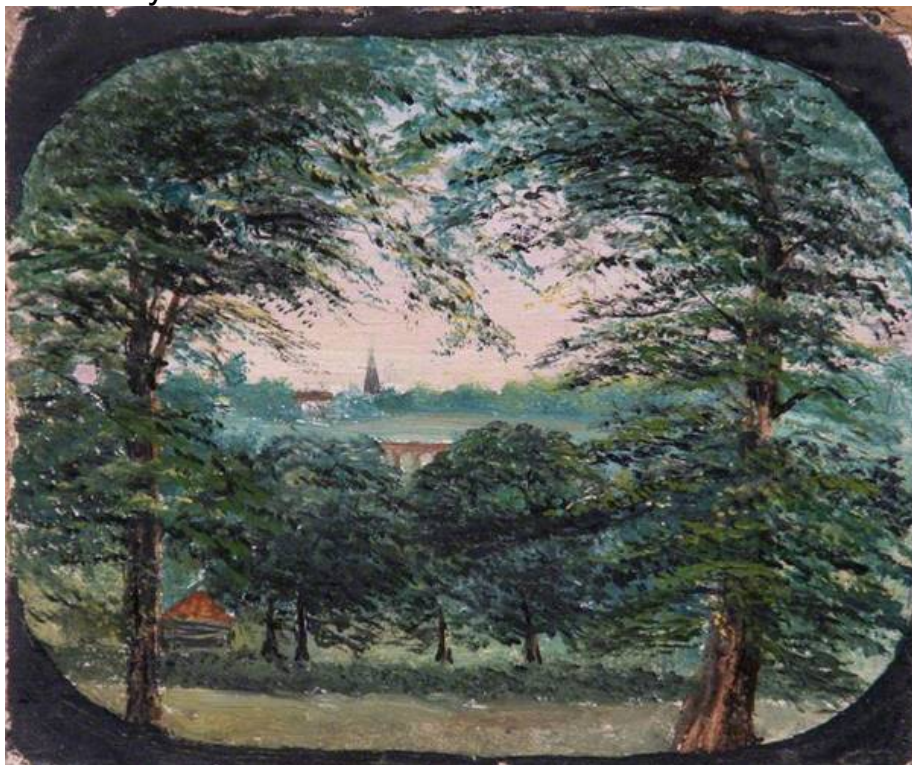
The Pre-Raphaelite artist [Arthur Hughes \(1832-1915\)](#) chose a window background to compose this painting of '[Mrs Norman Hill and her children](#)' in

1897. The details through the window beyond the family group show a garden of roses and trees with a bird in flight, just outside.



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We'd like to know who the artist 'L.H.H' was who painted this very small oil painting below. It only measures 9.7cm high by 11.6cm wide, and was likely to have been painted c.1900. On the reverse it is annotated: 'View from front window of dining room towards Muswell Hill - railway Viaduct & old Church. Painted by L. H. H.'



© Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

Over 120 years ago, this was the view from the window of the Hibbert family on Tottenham High Road.

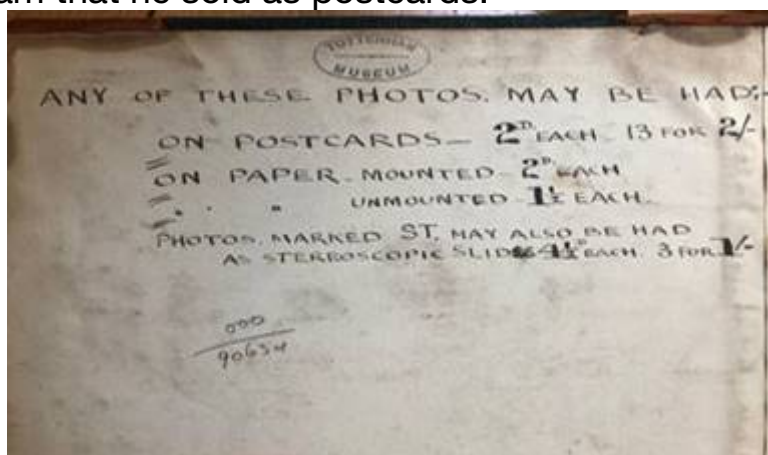


On the reverse is a note written in 1928 which says: “ *This picture was painted in 1898 by Miss Edith Hibbert (now Mrs Rowe) one of the sisters who replaced the Seven Sisters trees in 1886. She sketched it from her home opposite on the spot where the Cooperative Store now stands. (Note by W J B, 1928)*”.

The painting is a watercolour and shows the house 'Fairlawn Villa' on the corner of Tottenham High Road and Lordship Lane. Edith the artist also painted the same view in oil which can be seen [here](#). The site is now '[The Trampery Tottenham](#)' at 639 High Road, although others might know it better as the former Gas Offices for Tottenham, or Haringey Council's former Planning Department Offices. A note on the reverse of the painting says that at the time of this painting, Mr and Mrs Higdon lived at Fairlawn House. A horse and [phaeton](#) were kept in the stables at the side of the house. When they died, the site was sold and the Gas Offices were built in its place.

Looking through the photograph album of Frederic Fisk (1860-1935), we can discover this small series of photographs (far below) taken from the window of a house in Lordship Lane. Fred Fisk was a local bookseller, printer, publisher and photographer who authored and published his own book (in different editions) – the '*History of Tottenham*' in 1913. He had his main shop at 605 Tottenham High Road (where Millicent Fawcett Court is now). Alongside selling books, from his shop Fred also sold postcards of local views for 2d each. It was a popular service and customers could choose from the album of photographs that we now have at the Museum in our collection. Each page was crammed with small photographs, about 6 per leaf. We have been planning a talk about Fred Fisk for the Ray Swain Memorial Lecture this coming September, to mark the 160th anniversary this year since Fred's birth, so for now we shall leave more details about this extraordinary recorder of local life in Tottenham between 1880 – 1910

until then (and for a new book about his photographs which must surely be on the cards!). Below is Fred's handwritten pricelist from his photo album of Old Views of Tottenham that he sold as postcards.



© Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

The photographic views by Fred (below) are tantalising for us in trying to establish from which window at which house they are taken. The first view must be looking east along Lordship Lane towards Bruce Castle (where the large trees are in the distance). The immediate house in view on the north side of the road opposite, is likely to be the neighbour of Bruce Castle, where the Hardy family had once lived. It is now the site of the electrical substation and the beginning of The Roundway (A10).

Church Farm and its hedge-lined fields line the rest of the Lordship Lane. The third view shows the parish church of All Hallows in the distance. The remaining two views look the other way towards the west, where the road leads to Broadwaters Farm - the next cluster of farm buildings along the lane on the south side.

This house must have been newly built on Lordship Lane. We can see they have small front gardens and a garden wall. It seems likely that these photographs must have been taken by Fred during the later 1890s, though which precise house number remains unclear. (Note that the numbers written below each photograph denote the number of the photograph in Fred's photograph album, not the door number of the house). The 1894-6 OS map shows no houses built along that stretch of road at that time. But it was all set to change, with The Elmhurst pub built in 1903 on the corner of Mount Pleasant Road and the south side of Lordship Lane, and the small estate of houses built by The Peabody Trust on the north side, completed in 1907. The remaining [Tower Gardens cottage garden estate](#) (Britain's second only municipal cottage estate) was built along the rest of the north side of the lane by the London County Council in 1910.



49¹ OLD LORDSHIP LANE



49^F OLD LORDSHIP LANE 203



49^D OLD LORDSHIP LANE, TOTTENHAM



All five views are photographs taken by Fred Fisk from a window in a house in Lordship Lane.
© Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

Finally, we thought we would share some recent work from Bruce Castle Museum from the painting with watercolour workshops for 11 – 16 year olds, taught by architect and local artist [Tania Pascoal](#) last October 2019. Tania's exhibition of her own watercolours of local views of Tottenham was on at Bruce Castle Museum at the time. It was a wonderful and inspirational setting for the young participants.





Tania (above left) leading the way in drawing what is outside the windows at Bruce Castle, along with her friend Elizabeth, a fellow architect (far above) © Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)



© Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

As you can see, looking out of the magnificent windows at Bruce Castle to draw the autumnal trees and views of the park (whilst using the window frame to frame each person's artwork) was the focus of Tania's workshop.

This is definitely something that we could all do at home! Have a go! If you do create your own artwork or take a photograph from your window, then we would

love to see them. Please do send us any photographs of your work and we can then add them to our growing collection for our online galleries.

And whilst looking out of our windows, we must remind ourselves to use the opportunity to rest our eyes too. We are all looking at our computers or screens a lot more at the moment, and so it is good to take time (for at least ten minutes or longer everyday) to rest our eyes and look out into the distance. We need to relax and look far away enough to a point in the distance. Know that when we look, we don't have to stay focused on that one point; remember to blink and to avoid straining to see it. If it is fuzzy, let it be fuzzy.

On that note we will leave you to be inspired by our artists and photographers past and present - look out from windows, relax and take time to wonder in the coming week – and we will look forward to seeing the results of any artwork you create.

Stay safe, stay home, stay well.

Best wishes

From us all at Bruce Castle

Deborah Hedgecock

Curator

Haringey Council

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