

Neatby, William James 1860 - 1910

William James Neatby [also known as W.J. Neatby] was born in Barnsley, Yorkshire, England, on 24 May 1860. He was articled to an architect in the Barnsley area and although he described himself as an architect in the 1881 census, Neatby seems not to have pursued this as his primary profession. Instead, he became a decorative artist and painter, although he appears to not to have received any formal training in these fields.

Neatby had considerable talent for ceramic design, particularly of Faïence mural tile panels. Between c.1881-90 he worked at Burmantofts, a pottery in Leeds, Yorkshire, for whom he designed and painted ceramic building ware. In 1890 he was appointed head of the Architectural Terracotta Department of Doulton & Co. in Lambeth, London. Over the next decade Neatby produced some his finest work as an architectural ceramist and tile painter. This included decorative tiles for Frascati's restaurant and Harrod's Food Halls in London, the Royal Arcade in Norwich, the Winter Gardens in Blackpool, the Everard Printing Works building in Bristol, the Turkey Café in Leicester, and the Theatre Royal and King's Smoking Café in Birmingham. He also created terracotta building ornaments, such as those for the Palace Theatre in Plymouth, and for Manchester School of Art. Neatby left Doulton in 1900 and, with Ernest Hollyer Evans (1875-1953), established Neatby, Evans & Company [also known as Neatby & Evans], a firm based in London that manufactured furniture, art metalwork and stained glass. The partnership was dissolved in c.1908. During this period Neatby continued to collaborate with Doulton from time to time on projects.

An extraordinarily versatile artist, Neatby also designed wallpaper, metalware, furniture and stained glass. An inlaid mahogany writing cabinet designed by Neatby in 1903 is illustrated in 'Victorian and Edwardian Decor: from Gothic Revival to Art Nouveau' by Jeremy Cooper (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 1987 p.222). During the years 1907-10 Neatby was chief designer for the wallpaper manufacturer John Line & Co. He also designed wallpaper for Jeffrey & Co. An example of his work for them is illustrated in 'The Modern Home: A Book of British Domestic Architecture for Moderate Incomes' by W.H. Bidlake, M.A. Halsey-Ricardo and John Cash (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906 p.155) and in 'Wallpapers: A History and Illustrated Catalogue of the Collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum' by Charles C. Oman and Jean Hamilton (London: Sotheby

Publications in Association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982 pp.395-397). By 1909, when he was the subject of short profile in 'The Studio Yearbook of Decorative Art', Neatby had established a reputation as a muralist and wall painter. He produced a series of large wall paintings illustrating passages from Browning and Burns for the Franco-British Exhibition in London in 1908, murals at Hadham Towers for C. Fitz-Roy Doll, a painted dome and great tympanum for the Masonic Temple of the New Gaiety Restaurant in London, and a series of mural panels for the Imperial Hotel in London.

Neatby exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Royal Miniature Society and the New Gallery in London, and the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool. He also participated in Leeds Arts and Crafts Exhibition in 1901, and in the 7th (1903) and 8th (1906) exhibitions of the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society in London.

He was elected an Associate of the Royal Miniature Society (ARMS) in 1906 and a full member of the Society (RMS) in 1907.

Neatby's address is given as 6 Wellington Street, Barnsley, Yorkshire in 1861; 35 Hopwood Street, Barnsley, Yorkshire, in 1881; 3 Courthope Villas, Wimbledon, Surrey, in 1896; 2 Springfield Road, Wimbledon, Surrey, in 1903; 56 Glebe Place, Chelsea, London, in 1906; and 4 Wentworth Studios, Manresa Road, Chelsea, London, 1907, 1910.

Neatby died on 20 April 1910, at 36 Devonshire Street, Marylebone Road, London. His son was the painter Edward Mossforth Neatby (1888-1949).

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Bibliography

Anderson, Alastair Scott. William James Neatby: artist and designer 1860-1910. Leicester, England: De Montfort University. PhD. thesis, 2 volumes, March 2000 [This is the principal source on W.J. Neatby and Neatby Evans & Co. (Neatby & Evans). The thesis can be accessed online]

Anderson, Alastair Scott. 'William James Neatby: designs for furniture, metalwork and interiors'. *Journal of Decorative Arts 1850 to the Present* vol. 26, 2002 pp. 40-59

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Links

- Portal for access to 'William James Neatby: artist and designer 1860-1910' by Alastair Scott Anderson (Ph.D. thesis, 2000, De Montfort University, Leicester) Portal for access to 'William James Neatby: artist and designer 1860-1910' by Alastair Scott Anderson <https://www.dora.dmu.ac.uk/handle/2086/4130>
- Victoria & Albert Museum, London
<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O498960/orchard-oak-tree-shield-wallpaper-neatby-william-james/>
- Artist Biographies [Subscription service]
<https://www.artbiogs.co.uk/1/artists/neatby-william-james>
- Speel website <http://www.speel.me.uk/sculpt/neatby.htm>
- Barnsley on Your Doorstep <https://barnsleyartonyourdoorstep.org.uk/book/13-William-James-Neatby-Artist-Designer-Edward-Mossforth-Neatby.pdf>
- Gordon Campbell. William James Neatby. Oxford Groves Art Online [Subscription service] <https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T2073224>
- The Victorian Web <https://victorianweb.org/art/design/neatby/index.html>
- ART UK <https://artuk.org/discover/artists/neatby-william-james-18601910>
- Endymion <https://robertstephenparry.com/endymion/william-james-neatby.html>
- The Furniture History Society. British and Irish Furniture Makers Online <https://bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org/entry/neatby-william-james-neatby-evans-co-1901-1908>
- Hill House https://www.hillhouse-antiques.co.uk/en-GB/architect-designed/rare-wj-neatby-arts-crafts-screen/prod_10826