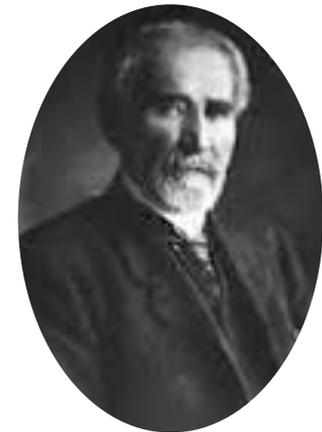


The Worthing Society

Conserving, Preserving
and
Safeguarding our Heritage

Heritage Leaflet No: 7

W.H.HUDSON



(1841 – 1922)

This is one of a series of leaflets being produced by the Worthing Society to accompany the plaques erected throughout the Town to commemorate notable people, buildings, and events in the town's history.

For more information about the Society and its activities go to our Web Site at:

www.worthingsociety.org.uk

Reg. Charity No. 286899



William Hudson, naturalist, writer and ornithologist was born on 4th August 1841 near Buenos Aires. His parents were David and Caroline and he had 4 brothers and 2 sisters, with whom he would explore the local countryside. This was the start of his interest in wildlife and nature that he was keen to pass on to other children later in life.

Hudson came to England arriving in Southampton in 1869 at the age of 28.. He described Southampton as “a beautiful place, wide clean macadam streets, grand old elm and horse-chestnut trees - parks covered with velvety turf”. The green countryside all seemed magical to him. He left Southampton and wandered through the countryside finding trees, birds and wildflowers. He eventually arrived in London and lodged at 40 St. Lukes Road, Bayswater. In 1876 he married his landlady, Emily Wingrave, who was 15years older than himself.

Hudson and Emily came to Worthing in 1914, for her health. In fact they were both very unwell. They resided at “The Cottage”, a lodging house in Park Road, run by a Mrs Crabb. Hudson described it as a decent place with a garden at the back and only a short walk to the seafront. Although called “The Cottage” it was a rambling house with 14 rooms and with the garden occupied an area of 2 acres. Sadly this house is long gone. Hudson particularly liked to relax in the garden, listening to the birds. When he recovered, he left the invalid Emily there and went off travelling. She worried about him as he was not in the best of health and they did write to each other almost daily. He visited Worthing and when there was no room at “The Cottage” he stayed at 14 Bedford Row and later Huntington House, 8 Bedford Row, which bears our blue plaque.



Emily after leaving Bath Road stayed in a boarding house in the Steyne, later she joined Hudson

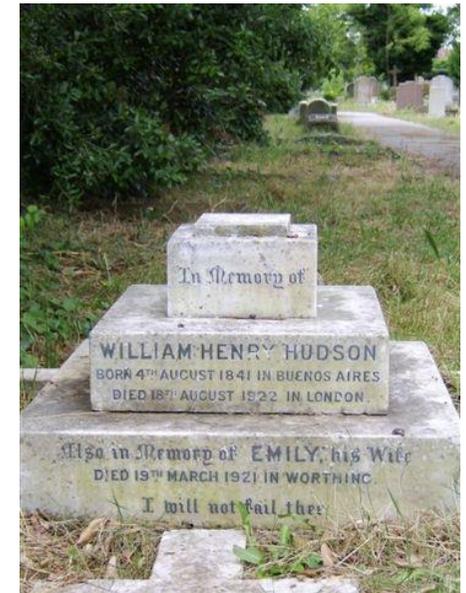
at 8 Bedford Row and finally 3 Woodleigh Road, West Tarring, where she died on 19th March 1921. She is buried at Broadwater Cemetery and Hudson arranged for the plot to be thickly planted with daisies. He wanted it to be “a continuous white sheet of flowers”. A stone was placed there inscribed “I will not fail thee”

Hudson loved Sussex, in particular the quaintness of Shoreham. He was often at the old church with the lichen of years “coat after coat, the living on the dead” He delighted in the old High Street, with its odd name of Raptigal. Another favourite place was Shoreham Beach , where he loved to sketch. One day, whilst there in the company of his friend Morley Roberts and with the help of a local clergyman rescued three girls who had got into difficulties, this despite the fact that Hudson could not swim. He was in the water up to his neck, it was only his height that allowed him to go into the deeper water and aid the girls .Another favourite haunt was the once famous Swiss Gardens, sadly not much of which remains today. He despised Chichester, which he called a priestly cathedral town of drinking shops. Chanctonbury Ring and a hawthorn wood in Findon were a particular favourite as was Devils Dyke. Although Worthing was not well liked by Hudson, he was often seen in the old library. Hudson’s book “Nature in Downland” begins in August 1899. He spends many hours on Kingston Hill, near Lewes, where there were great views of the Sussex Weald. In September 1899, he stayed in “Sea View” Goring, Jefferies house, some twelve years after his death. Hudson had a strange encounter whilst walking by the church. He was thinking of Jefferies and came face to face with a tramp, who greatly resembled the portraits of the great man. Hudson was deeply moved by this experience.

The RSPB to which Hudson left nearly all his estate, started life as The Plumage League in Manchester in 1889. Then in 1891 joined forces with the Fur, Fin and Feather Club in Croydon. Extreme cruelty was often

used to obtain these feathers The aim of the society was to discourage the wearing of feathers as fashion, unless the bird had been killed for food, except for the poor ostrich, from which feathers could be taken without killing the bird. Hudson was elected Chairman of the Committee in 1894.

On 18th August 1922, seventeen months after the death of his wife, Hudson died in his sleep at the age of 81 at Tower House. He was buried with Emily in Broadwater Cemetery.



His grave bears the inscription: “He loved birds and green places, and the wind on the heath, and saw the brightness of the skirts of God” In his will, he left £8225 to the RSPB to be used to provide village schools with illustrated pamphlets intended to instil in young children a love of wild birds. He had been very concerned throughout his life that many young boys used to trap and kill birds and steal their eggs.

In 1924 the Hudson Memorial Bird Sanctuary was erected in Hyde Park. In May 1991 a memorial to Hudson and Jefferies was opened in Broadwater Cemetery. This can still be seen there today.