

Faed

James

1821 - 1911

His Life

James Faed was born on 4th April 1821, the 2nd child of James Faed and Mary McGeoch.

At the bottom of this file is a Faed family tree which shows where James fits in.

Whilst his older brother John showed a great interest and aptitude for painting and drawing, James seemed to be destined to follow his father as an engineer.

From a young age he was clever with his hands and is known to have made toy guns which he traded whilst still a pupil at Girthon School.

Later he took up dressing of fishing flies - a hobby he continued into adulthood. When he was 16 he built a dinghy, having cut down trees to provide his own wood. He used the dinghy for fishing, until it was vandalised. He went on to build a boat which he used for fishing in Loch Grannoch and another with a 15ft keel which he sailed round Wigtown Bay. He loved the sea and later in life would enjoy painting seascapes.

He developed the ability to make real pistols and guns, constructing every part of the weapon. He etched designs on the mounting and lock plates - an early attempt at what would become important work later in life.

Another hobby was making musical instruments. Starting with some very noisy bagpipes, he also made fiddles although he gave up when he was not satisfied with the quality of sound or his playing.

He helped his father with engineering projects and in 1838 he went to Maryport in the Lake District with his father and brother John. John painted and James worked with the men.

His father died in 1843 but at the time of his death was already contracted to build some mills at Killybegs, Co. Donegal for the Laird of Cally, who owned an estate there. All the preparations had been made so son James set off immediately after his father's funeral to carry out the work. He encountered many problems including the materials for the mills being shipwrecked on the Irish coast.

It was a difficult beginning for his engineering career. He missed his brothers John and Thomas so decided to join them in Edinburgh and attend engineering classes in the capital. His brothers were very successful in obtaining painting commissions and soon asked James to help them out painting miniatures. James surprised himself and his brothers with his aptitude, particularly for oil painting.

While in Edinburgh he became interested in mezzotinting - a form printing which involved engraving a design onto a metal plate so that monochrome copies could be printed. It was a difficult and time consuming process and James designed some of his own tools. Before long his skills at the process were noted, and commissions 'flowed in'. It disappointed James that many thought the skills of an engraver were inferior to the artist who had painted the original picture. When the Scottish Academy eventually recognised engravers, James was never recognised, a fact that caused him great bitterness.

Despite the disappointments, James received many commissions for his work, not only from his brothers but from wealthy families and the Royal family. He could be difficult to work with and on more than one occasion he 'improved' a portrait whilst etching the plate.

In 1853 he married Mary Cotton, a wealthy tobacconist's daughter. Soon after their wedding the couple moved to London, near Regent's Park but James did not enjoy living there so in 1855 the couple returned to Scotland, to Overshiel House, Mid Calder. Between 1854 and 1873 the couple had nine children.

He was a proud father but also very strict, and forced each of his children to become independent as soon as possible.

He began to paint more and in 1855 had 2 miniatures of his wife and mother exhibited at the Royal Academy.

In 1856 he made an engraving of his brother Tom's picture 'Evangeline' depicting a character from a Henry Longfellow poem. The poem and picture, when published, had a huge circulation throughout the world and brought him further recognition.

In the early 1870's he bought a property called Craigenveoch at Glenluce, Wigtownshire and the family spent enjoyable times there, travelling from their Edinburgh home until it was sold in 1876. James spent time there fishing and also making guns. In 1882 his wife Mary died of liver cancer, aged 62.

James loved painting the Ravenshall coast to the west of Gatehouse - such as his 'Rocks at Ravenshall' and drew a number of illustrations, some of which were used in books like Malcolm McLachlan Harper's 'Rambles in Galloway' and by Andrew McCormick work on Billy Marshall, the Gallovidian gypsy.

In 1898 James bought a farm Medwynhead, near Dolphinton, Peeblesshire and converted it into a grouse moor and also planted many trees. His family spent time there every year. As his eyesight began to fail he stopped engraving but continued to paint - often portraits of members of his family like his grandson Ronald who was killed in the First World War.

James Faed died suddenly in Edinburgh on 23rd September 1911. He was 90 years old.

His Work

Try following the links to find examples of this artist's work.. When you have viewed the contents, remember to use your browser's "back" button to return to this page.

[Wikipedia](#)

[In the Artist's Footsteps](#)



Harvest at Kirkclaugh



Ravenshall



James Faed jnr by his father James Faed snr



Willie (William Cotton Faed by his father James Faed)



Evangeline (National galleries of Scotland)
This is an etching based on a painting by brother Thomas

Faed family – artists & engravers



Barley Mill & Miln of Barley, Laurieston Road, Gatehouse

John **Fead** (b.1704? d.1788?) m.1736 Kirkmahoe Mary **Walker** (b.1722? d.1758?)

1. Barbara **Fead** (b.1737 Kirkmahoe d.???)
2. William **Fead** (b.1739 Kirkmahoe d.1816?)
3. Samuel **Fead** (b.1740 Kirkmahoe d.???)
4. James **Fead** (b.1743 Kirkmahoe d.???)
5. Margaret **Fead** (b.1747 Kirkmahoe d.???)
6. John **Fead** (b.1751? d.1804?)
7. Robert **Fead** (b.1754 Kirkmahoe d.1821?)
8. Simon **Fead** (b.17--? d.???)

Agnes **Robson** (b.?? d.???)
 Janet **Ferguson** (b.?? d.???)
 Beatrix (Bessie) **Smith** m.1850 Gordon (b.?? d.???)

N.B. The father of this family was born and died with surname Fead, probably pronounced 'Fede'. The children were all called Fead at birth but during their lifetimes the surname was changed to Faed, probably without changing the pronunciation.

- John **Farish** (b.?? d.???)
 Jane **Chalmers** (b.?? d.???)
 Janet **Smith** (b.?? d.???)
- John **Fead** (b.1780? d.1841?)
 - Samuel **Fead** (b.1782? d.1849?)
 - Barbara **Fead** (b.?? d.???)
 - William **Fead** (b.1787? d.1850?)

Margaret **Fead** (b.1772? d.1852?)
 James **Fead** (b.1777 Kirkton d.1843 Girthon) m.1819 Girthon Mary **McGeoch** (b.1790 Girthon d.1866 Anwoth)
millier & engineer

1. John **Fead** (b.1819 Girthon d.1902 Girthon) **artist** m.??? Jane **MacDonald** (b.1820 Gigha d.1897 Girthon) no children
2. James **Fead** (b.1821 Girthon d.1911 Edinburgh) **engraver**
3. William **Fead** (b.1823 Girthon d.1888 Melbourne) **farmer**
4. Thomas **Fead** (b.1825 Girthon d.1900 London) **artist** m.1852 London Frances Mary **Randz** (b.?? d.1895?) 2 children
5. Susan Bell **Fead** (b.1827 Girthon d.1909 Girthon) m.1887 London John **Walthew** (b.1822 Hyde d.1899 Stockport)
6. George **Fead** (b.1829 Girthon d.1852 Edinburgh)

Mary **Cotton** (b.1827 Edinburgh d.1887?) m.1853 Edinburgh

- male stillborn (b.1854?)
1. James J K **Faed** (b.1856 W.Calder d.1920 New Galloway)
 2. William Cotton **Faed** (b.1858 W.Calder d.1937 Jersey)
 3. John **Faed** (b.1860 Edinburgh d.1861?) died 7 mths
 4. Ellenor Merry **Faed** (b.1864 Edinburgh d.1955 Edinburgh)
 5. Francis Grant **Faed** (b.1867 Edinburgh d.1914 Edinburgh)
 6. Stewart **Faed** (b.1869 Edinburgh d.1898 Nice)
 7. Mary Annie **Faed** (b.1871 Edinburgh d.1945?)
 8. Mark George **Faed** (b.1873 Edinburgh d.1951 Edinburgh)

Eleanor Annie **Herdman** (b.1873 Edinburgh d.1951 Edinburgh) m.1897 Corstorphine

- Janet **Armstrong** (b.?? England d.???) 5 sons; lived in Channel Islands m.?? Australia
- 1. James **Brechin** (b.?? d.???)
 - 2. Arthur Edward W **Barclay** (b.?? d.???)
- David **MacMillan** (b.?? d.???) m.1898 Edinburgh
- 1. Margaret Corson **Smith** (b.?? d.???)
 - 2. Frances Helen **Whitwell** (b.?? d.???)

James Ronald Herdman **Faed** (b.1899 London d.1915 Dardanelles)
 John Alastair **Faed** (b.1905 London d.1981 Zimbabwe) m.1933 South Africa Frances **Herdman** (b.1905 Edinburgh d.1996 Edinburgh)
lived in Zimbabwe

Brian Collins (b.?? d.???) m.??? Fiona Joan **Faed** (b.1934?)
 Martin James Collins (b.1978?)
 Carline Corsar Wilson **Smith** (b.?? d.???) m.1990 Glasgow Stuart Alastair **Faed** (b.1964?)
 James Alastair (b.1992) Charles Simon (b.1994) Georgina Frances (b.1999)

Simon James **Faed** (b.1937?) m.??? Philippa **Milne** (b.?? d.???)
 Janet Frances **Faed** (b.1967?) m.??? Kevin **Foulkes** (b.?? d.???)
 Sasha Hayley (b.1992) Kathryn Emily (b.1995) Mathew Alastair (b.2003)

Sources of information for this tree include :
 1. The Faeds – A Biography
by Mary McKerrow (1982)
 2. James Faed Junior – Celebrating 150 Years
by Stuart Faed (2006)