

Johnston

William Miles

1893 - 1974

His Life

William Miles Johnston was born in Mid Calder, West Lothian in 1893.

His parents were John Moffat Johnston (b.1853 Glasgow – d.1918 Edinburgh), analytical Chemist and Margaret Park Boyd (b.1864 Govan – d.1924 Edinburgh), who married in Partick, Glasgow in 1881.

In 1901 the family were living in Newington, Edinburgh. Bill's 3 older siblings (Sarah, Barbara and John) were all born in Edinburgh, William, age 7, was born in Mid Calder. His mother was not at home.

In 1911 census in Newington, Edinburgh, Parents John M and Margaret P Johnston were living with Sarah D. M., Barbara M., and William P. M. Johnston. William was aged 17.

To his friends and family William was always Bill, but he may have chosen to sign his paintings as W Miles Johnston (see Kirkcudbright painting below).

Bill attended Edinburgh College of Art where he won a prize for his animal studies.

His introduction to Kirkcudbright came during World War I, when he and other students were encouraged to attend art classes run there by E. A. Taylor.

In 1921 he married Dorothy Nesbitt (1893 - 1974) at Newington, Edinburgh. (See separate entry for Dorothy). On their marriage certificate Bill was an artist, Dorothy an art teacher.

The couple enjoyed visiting Kirkcudbright from their home in Edinburgh.

In 1940 the Johnstons bought 15 Castle Street, Kirkcudbright. They lived in the flat above a shop named 'The Crafts' where Bill sold his paintings and other crafts.

He was not only an accomplished painter but decorated ceramics with birds and animals - known as Zoo pottery and also decorated plywood cut out animals.

The couple had 3 children - Tony, Cecile and Pat. The girls attended St Trinian's School in Edinburgh, a progressive independent girls' school, until they were evacuated to Kirkcudbright during World War 2.

In 1941, Ronald Searle, later well known as a gifted cartoonist, was billeted with the Johnston family while on commando-training in the area. He was intrigued by the Johnston girls' tales of their school. After the war ended, Searle wrote and drew 'The Belles of St Trinians' and other books partly based on the Johnston girls and also his knowledge of girls' boarding schools in his home city of Cambridge.

In 1961 the Johnstons bought a hut at Carrick Shore named Cornerways. To make the most of the view out to sea, the family had the hut turned round.

Bill painted many pictures around Kirkcudbright and Carrick Shore.

Both Bill and his wife Dorothy died in 1974.

His Work

The links below lead to websites which contain paintings and pottery by this artist. When you have viewed the contents, remember to use your browser's "back" button to return to this page.

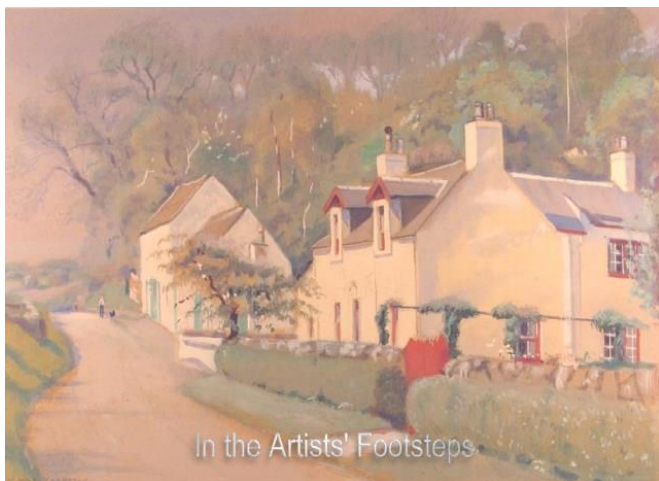
[In the Artists Footsteps](#)

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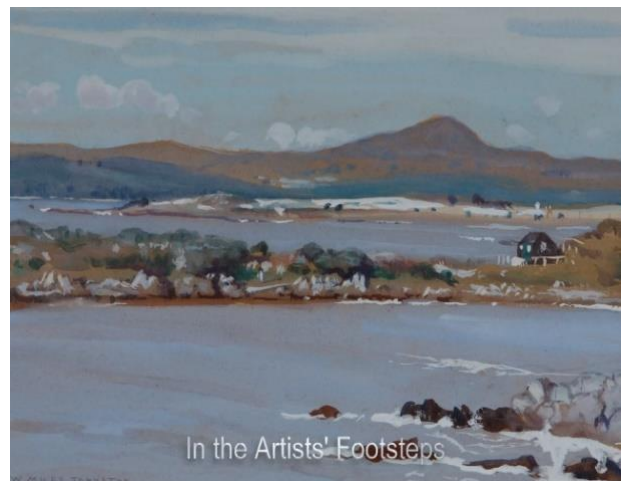


No title – signed W Miles Johnston
McLellan Castle & Harbour Cottage, Kirkcudbright



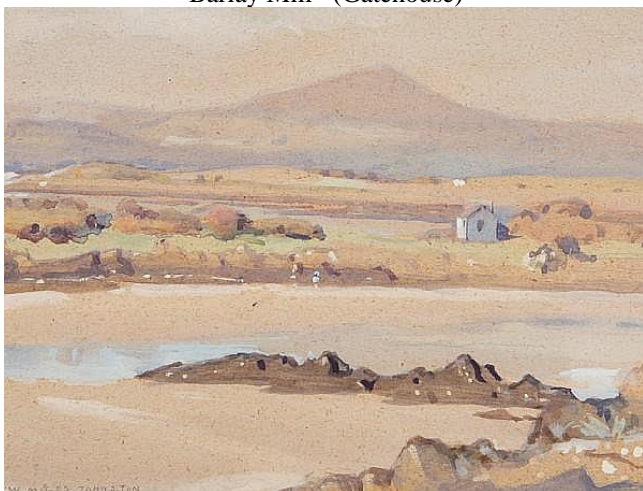
In the Artists' Footsteps

Barlay Mill (Gatehouse)

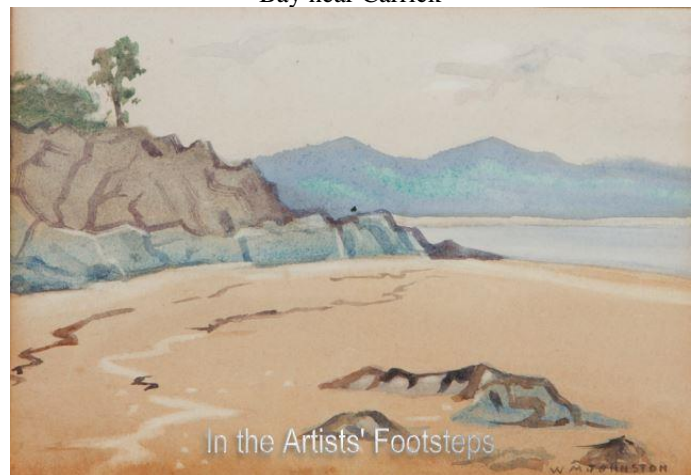


In the Artists' Footsteps

Bay near Carrick

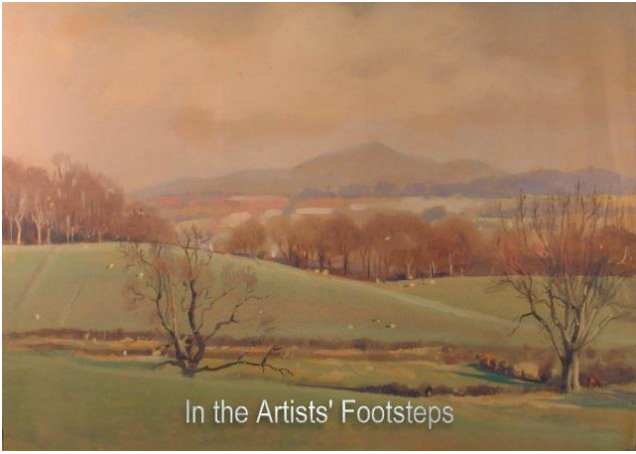


Carrick



In the Artists' Footsteps

Coastal Scene (Cardoness Shore)



In the Artists' Footsteps
Galloway Landscape, Barharrow

