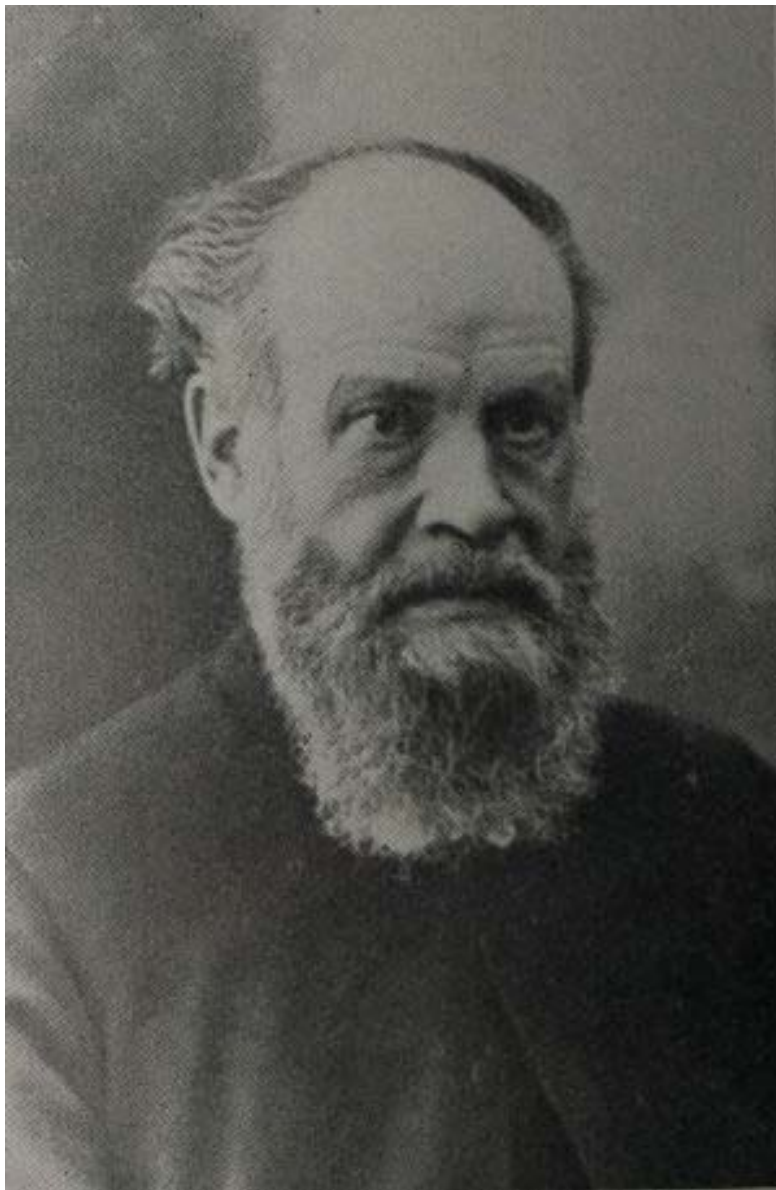


WILLIAM HUNT PAINTER (1835-1910)

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This is one in a series of articles about prominent British and Irish field-bryologists of the past. The author would be very pleased to learn of any information which supplements its content.

A Social and Biographical History of British and Irish Field-bryologists is also available on-line at <http://britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk/>



Botanical career

Painter took up interest in botany in the 1860s through the influence of the Reverend Robert Wood (1796-1883) of Westward, Cumbria, participated in the Botanical Exchange club's annual exchange of vascular plants in the 1880s and 1890s, and contributed substantially to corporate understanding of Derbyshire's flora. He took up the study of mosses in 1898, whereafter bryology occupied most of his botanical interest. He published articles on the bryofloras of Falmouth, Derbyshire, Breconshire and Cardiganshire in the *Journal of Botany* in 1900, 1902, 1904 and 1906 respectively.

He joined the Moss Exchange Club in 1903 and remained a member until his death. He contributed to the exchange. Painter found no rare bryophytes, but contributed significantly to our understanding of Shropshire's bryoflora, recording species such as *Campylophyllum calcareum* and *Sphagnum teres*.

His herbarium is at University College, Aberystwyth, with additional plants at Kew and the Botany School at Oxford, in the Department of Botany at Aberdeen, the Natural History Museum in London, Birmingham University, the National Botanic Garden at Dublin, the City Museum and Art Gallery at Derby, Glasgow University, the Hancock Museum at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Kew, Manchester Museum, Cardiff and Oxford. The National Museum and Gallery of Wales at Cardiff has 123 of Painter's bryophytes.

Family background and biography

Painter was the eldest of five children born to William Painter (1803-1878) and Sarah (*née* Hawkes, 1800/01-1890). William and Sarah were haberdashers of Bull Street, Birmingham in 1851, but William subsequently worked as a commercial clerk. He was a son of William and Catherine Painter. Sarah was probably a younger daughter of James Hawkes (died 1834), gamekeeper of Aston, Birmingham. Her sisters were Rebecca (1790/1-1861) and Mary (1794/5-1879), both of whom died unmarried.

WHP's siblings were Benjamin (1836/7-?1842), Rebecca Hawkes (1838/9-1925) and Sarah Lucy (1840/1-1926) who both became governesses and died unmarried, and John (born 1832/3), who was an apprentice merchant tailor in 1861.

WHP was a banker's clerk in 1851, but in 1861 he entered the ministry of the Church of England at Islington Missionary College with the intention of becoming a missionary, but "owing to obstacles" he followed a career in England, with successive posts at Barbon in Westmorland (1861-65), where he first took interest in botany, High Wycombe (1865-66), Edgbaston in Birmingham (1866-71), Derby (1871-79), Bedminster in Bristol (1879-84), and Biddulph in Staffordshire (1885-93). From 1894 to 1909 he was rector of Sturchley, near Shifnal in Shropshire, during which time he took up the study of mosses in 1898. Failing health caused him to retire to Shrewsbury in 1909.

Painter married Jane Stamps (1841-1930) in Birmingham in 1871; they had no children. Jane's parents were Joseph Stamps (1804/5-1878), an iron and hardware merchant, and Louisa (*née* Wynn, 1813/4-1898). Louisa was probably a daughter of William Wynn (died 1838), a steel toy manufacturer of Birmingham, and Jane (*née* Cook).