

Diglis House and Benjamin Williams Leader (1831 - 1923) Exhibition on 27-04-18.

The Art Appreciation Group met at the Diglis House Hotel, Worcester, for morning coffee. Diglis House was the childhood home of the renowned Victorian landscape painter, Benjamin Williams Leader. This elegant house, a Listed Grade II building, has excellent views over the River Severn, and these feature in many of Leader's works. As a child, Leader met John Constable at this house, as Constable was a friend of his father, Edward Leader Williams, the Chief Engineer of the Severn Navigation Commission. Williams designed the Diglis Basin, nearby. Leader's brother, also Edward Leader Williams, was a notable civil engineer who designed the Anderton Boat Lift, Cheshire and the Manchester Ship Canal.



Self-portrait of Benjamin Williams Leader (1831 - 1923).

From Diglis House we then moved on to the Worcester Art Gallery and Museum for an introductory talk, with refreshments. The subject was Benjamin Williams Leader and the talk was given by the Curator of the Leader Exhibition, who spoke with enthusiasm and a real depth of knowledge.



A view of the exhibition, which runs until 2nd June.

Leader was an eminent and very popular painter of landscapes and two of his paintings were purchased, one by the Prime Minister William Gladstone and one by HM King George V. This painting, in the Royal Collection, was graciously lent to the Exhibition by HM the Queen.

Leader was Worcestershire's pre-eminent artist and many of his paintings were of Worcestershire, even when he moved away. He was especially noted for the intricate, almost photographic, detail of his paintings, especially his trees, leaves and water. One outstanding painting shows water crashing and foaming over rocks - it is so realistic one can almost feel the spray.

His skyscapes were also very effective, especially those depicting dawn and sunset - the paintings glow with rose-hued tints. He also captured the wonderful effects of light on water.

The consensus of the talk and visit was that it was an amazing introduction to a painter not generally heard of, who well deserves his title of Worcestershire's pre-eminent artist.

The exhibition closes on June 2nd 2018 at Worcester Art Gallery, Foregate Street.

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