



**William Rainey (1852-1936)**

**Interior at Cocking Forge, West Sussex, 1929**

**Watercolour. Gifted to Towner 1935.**

**Dimensions 55.5 x 78.2 cm**

This work has been chosen to support 'Our Place' – Annual Schools Exhibition 2015 - celebrating the built heritage of the South Downs.

Towner Gallery in partnership with South Downs National Park Authority, Worthing Museum and Art Gallery and the Flora Twort Gallery Petersfield

### **About the artist**

William Rainey was an artist and illustrator. Born in Kennington, London, in 1852, he studied at the South Kensington School of Art and the Royal Academy Schools.

Working in watercolour, Rainey is noted for the delicate brushstrokes which he uses in his landscape and figure painting. During his lifetime he won awards in both America and France, and many of his paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Glasgow Institute of Fine Art. He lived in London before moving to Chichester and finally Eastbourne within the South Downs.

In addition to his work as a watercolourist, Rainey also illustrated numerous books, including works by Charles Dickens, and was also a regular contributor to numerous magazines, including *The Illustrated London News*.

## Understand & Evaluate

William Rainey has painted the interior of a building. What type of building do you think it is – domestic or working? What makes you think it is this type of building?

How important do you think the figures are in this painting? Why do you think this? Where has the artist placed the figures? What are they wearing? Do their clothes give you an idea of the period of the painting and who the characters are?

Look down the right hand side of the painting. What do you see there? Why do think the artist has framed the painting in this way? Where is he focussing the eye of the viewer?

There are no windows in this building only a doorway. What do you see in the doorway? Can you see anything outside? How does this make you feel about the building? Do you have a sense of where the building is?

We can only see a doorway in the painting and one small window next to it yet there appears to be light in the middle of the room. Where do think this light could be coming from? How do you think the artist has depicted a sense of light?

The artist has used a very limited palette of colours. What are these colours? Why do you think he has used these colours?

The L-shape of the wall on the right of the painting, leads us to the middle of the painting and the one small area of bright colour. What is this colour? Why do you think the artist has led our eye to this area? How important do you think it is to what is going on in the interior of the room and to the light in the painting?

If you were painting the inside of a room, what type of room would you paint? Would you put figures in your room or would you leave it empty? What is your reason for this?

## Explore and create

Think of different working buildings in the South Downs. What type of sounds do you imagine would come from these buildings? Look for example at William Rainey's painting and think of the sound of the hammers on the horseshoes, the hissing of the red hot metal, the roaring fire. As a class, create a soundscape of a working building that you have found in the South Downs.

The men in the painting are making horseshoes. What other products can you think of that are made in or linked to the South Downs? Using clay, plasticine or found objects, recreate a scene depicting working objects from the South Downs.

As a class, create a 3D scene that includes a working building and objects either made or used within the building. Think of the people within the building and the sounds that would be made whilst they work. Recreate the sounds that you think you would hear and record a soundscape which you can play. Listen to how the soundscape brings your scene to life.

## Further links to the National Park

Use the South Downs National Park Learning zone to explore <http://learning.southdowns.gov.uk/>.

[Learning outside the Classroom](#) including links for health and safety and practical support in planning your work away from the classroom.

[About the National Park](#) The South Downs National Park is the newest of the National Parks established in 2009. All National Parks are special places that are recognised for their stunning landscapes, amazing wildlife and rich heritage, as well as providing fantastic opportunities for enjoying and learning about what makes them special.

[Geology and landscape](#) Cocking is located on the edge of the Rother Valley and Central Wooded Downs landscape character areas. The Rother Valley area is characterised by a wide range of landscapes, from open chalk grassland and woodland hangers to heathland and wet meadows around the River Rother and is framed by the dramatic chalk escarpment of the Central Wooded Downs. Find out more about the different landscape types across the South Downs by looking at the [Sense of Place](#) toolkit that includes fantastic maps and information about each distinctive area.

[Farming and Land management](#) Like much of the south east, some parts of the National Park are heavily wooded. Woods have long provided an invaluable source of fuel for both domestic and industrial use. The forge would have used this local wood fuel to fuel the forge fire.

[Habitats and wildlife](#) This area is dominated by vast fields dotted with ancient woodlands, such as the Charlton Forest near Cocking, one of the largest beech plantations in Europe, Eartham Wood near Chichester and the vast Houghton Forest near Arundel.

[Culture and heritage](#) Almost every village will have had a forge for ironmongery related to houses, farm implements and horse shoes. Villages were much more self-sufficient in the past and the forge was an important part of village life. They would have mainly died out around the Second World War although some still exist and are used by artist blacksmiths e.g. gate making etc. For more information about the building materials used across the national Park see the presentation on [Buildings in the South Downs Landscape](#).

[Access and recreation](#) There are many great places to explore the industrial heritage of the National Park. The South Downs National Park is also a very accessible landscape with over 3,000 km of right of way including the South Downs Way, a 160 km National Trail stretching from Winchester to Eastbourne, see: <http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/south-downs-way> for more details.

[Economy and industry](#) Forging is one of the oldest known metal-working processes and was traditionally performed by a smith using a hammer and anvil. Nowadays the industry of the South Downs is dominated by farming and tourist related businesses. There are also a wide range of other businesses, for example new technology and science, which support local employment. You can find out more about these different types of industry in the [State of the National Park Report](#).