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How Stean Gorge

Long-lost Nidderdale art work comes home



A long-lost painting of How Stean Gorge in Nidderdale has been reunited with the owners of the gorge visitor attraction and adventure centre after it emerged for sale on Ebay.

The oil painting, by the celebrated London-based landscape painter, Robert Gallon – who lived from 1845 to 1925 and also painted in Wharfedale – depicts a bridge at the upper end of the limestone gorge, with Stean Beck flowing beneath it.

How Stean owner Stan Beer said: “We knew about the painting’s existence and had spent some time trying to trace it but with no success. We had just about given up hope of finding it when a local builder happened to spot it on Ebay and told us about it. We were determined to get it back and restore it to the gorge where it belongs and as luck would have it we were able to put in a high enough bid to secure the picture.”

How Stean Gorge was a popular beauty attraction in Victorian times, when the ravine was known as Yorkshire’s Little Switzerland because of its dramatic, picturesque scenery. From 1907 until 1929 visitors from Harrogate, Leeds and all over Yorkshire could visit the gorge on the Nidd Valley Light Railway, which ran between Pateley Bridge and Lofthouse.



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“It may be that Robert Gallon came to the gorge on the railway as many visitors did. We do know that he did some paintings over in Wharfedale in the 1920s so he might have heard about the unusual beauty of How Stean and travelled to Nidderdale to see for himself.

“The canvas has pride of place in our restaurant now and is drawing lots of attention from visitors”, said Mr Beer. “We regularly hold exhibitions by local artists here and it is fantastic to have this historic painting back here where it belongs.”