

Helen Bradley

Painter

(1900, Lees Lancashire -1979, Wilmslow)

Helen Bradley began painting in her later years to bring to life her tales of her Edwardian childhood that she loved to share with her grandchildren.

She was born **Helen Layfield** at 58 High Street, [Lees](#), a village on the outskirts of [Oldham](#), Lancashire.

She was educated at Clarksfield School, and from age thirteen at [Oldham Art School](#), having won the John Platt scholarship. Despite this, she did not begin to paint seriously until she was in her sixties. In the 1960s she met fellow painter **L. S. Lowry who encouraged her in the creation of a narrative style based on her own childhood memories**. From 1965 she became as popular in the United States as in the United Kingdom and her paintings now sell at auction for tens of thousands of pounds.

Many of her paintings feature a character called "Miss Carter", a woman who always wore pink.

In 1971 Jonathan Cape published the first of **four books And Miss Carter Wore Pink: Scenes from an Edwardian Childhood**, which was an instant success. Editions were then published in German, French, Dutch and Japanese, and a special edition produced for the US. **The series, illustrated with Bradley's naive paintings**, topped the bestseller lists in the early 1970s. Bradley appeared on a number of television chat shows of the 1970s, including Pebble Mill at One and the Russell Harty Show. In July 1975 she was a guest on BBC Radio 4's Desert Island Discs.[3] The BBC and the NBC network made documentaries about her life and the Northern Ballet adapted her work for the stage, with live narration by actress Pat Phoenix.

In the 1978 Birthday Honours she was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE),[4] but **died at her home**, 2 Green Villa Park, Wilmslow, Cheshire, on 19 July **1979**, before her investiture.

Her works are in several public collections, including those of the Yale Center for British Art,[5] Salford Museum and Art Gallery,[6] and the Saddleworth Museum,[7] with several at Gallery Oldham.[8][9] The gallery also has a bust of Oldham.[10] Her portrait in oils, painted circa 1975 by C. Harrison, is in a private collection.[1]

In **May 2013 Bradley's Going for a Walk Before Bedtime sold at auction, at Bonhams of London, for £37,250**.^[11] Two of her paintings, one in oil and one in watercolour, featured in an October 2019 episode of the BBC Television programme Antiques Roadshow. Expert assessor Rupert Maas commented on the "wit and levity" in her work, and compared her to the **American naive painter Grandma Moses**.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Bradley

Naïve art is characterised by childlike simplicity of execution and vision. As such it has been valued by modernists seeking to get away from what they see as the insincere sophistication of art created within the traditional system.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/n/naive-art>



L S Lowry. Huddesfield. 1965



L S Lowry. Lancashire Fair, Good Friday, Daisy Nook. 146

And Miss Carter Wore Pink

SCENES FROM AN EDWARDIAN CHILDHOOD
BY HELEN BRADLEY





the first signed 'HELEN/
BRADLEY' and with fly insignia
(lower left); further signed and
inscribed 'Spring,/It was the first
warm day of Spring,/so
Grandma, the aunts, mother,
George/and I, also Miss Carter
(who wore pink)/and Mr Taylor
(the Bank Manager) decided/to
go for a walk to Alexandra Park./
There we met a little May
Queen/with her friends holding
her train./Grandma said they
looked so/nice and clean, she
gave them/a penny each and so
that George/and I shouldnt feel
left out, we/had one also and the
year was 1908./Helen Layfield
Bradley'

The Four Seasons 22.9 x 29.9 cm



We Loved Our Walks
Through The Little
Woods
signed 'HELEN
BRADLEY' and signed
with a fly (lower left),
signed again,
inscribed and dated
'We loved our walks
through/the little
woods which borders/
the fields at Blackpool.
Today/we had to turn
back because/a tree
had fallen across our
path/and two men had
arrived to saw/the tree
up and cast it away.
Aunt/Mary said it was
a pity because/Miss
Carter was being very
nice and/mother
whispered to Aunt
Mary, 'We'll let them/
go on ahead and
perhaps Mr Taylor will/
propose' and the year
was 1907./Helen
Layfield Bradley 1975.'
(on a label attached to
the backboard)
watercolour and
bodycolour
10¾ x 15 in. (27.3 x
38.1 cm.)



HOLLINWOOD MARKET
oil on canvasboard 50 by 75cm.

'For a special treat we all went to Hollinwood Market... Mother, George and I called for grandma and the Aunts, also Miss Carter (who wore pink). She and Grandma thought they would look at the stall selling lace curtains, but George and I saw a man with a basket full of lovely toys. We were so delighted, we let go the dogs' leads, but Gyp and Barney didn't run away. Mother was cross and said toys were only for Birthdays and Christmas and the year was 1906.'

HELEN LAYFIELD BRADLEY, 1972

We are bringing home the Holly and the Ive [sic] to decorate the Church and our homes for it will soon be Christmas. Father said 'It is a beautiful day. Let us gather the Ivy from the trees around Rostherne Mere (our summer picnic place) so we saddled up 'Fanny' and drove through the crisp December Day, but instead of lingering and laying out our picnic tea, we cut our long fronds of Ive [sic] and branches of Holly

Mother said 'How quiet and peaceful it is, but we musn't stay. The sun is going down' and the sky and the lake turned to Glory and the year was Christmas 1906.



WE ARE BRINGING HOME THE HOLLY AND THE IVY

oil on canvasboard
41 by 51cm



signed 'HELEN BRADLEY' and with fly insignia (lower left); and inscribed 'Going for a walk before bedtime...warm Summer Evening Mother would/say, "Children, its too nice to go to bed, let/us get our hats on, and go for a walk,"./The country behind Grandpa's was mainly/ farms and country Lanes, Lovely Cottages and/lots of trees. The aunts and miss Carter (who/wore pink) and also Mr Taylor (The Bank Manager)/always came with us. Mother said that she liked/Mr Taylor when he walked with us, because he always/had his stick with him, because we never knew/what we might meet. It might be cows or a horse,/but tonight it was Geese which hissed and looked/very fierce, but he shooed them away and the year was 1907.'

Going for a Walk Before Bedtime 40.6 x 50.8 cm

PERSPECTIVE LANDSCAPE DEPTH & STRUCTURE

COLOUR - DARK + LIGHT PERSPECTIVE

Helen Bradley
Going for a walk before bedtime

