

Isabel Hobbs

1885 - 1974

Isabel Oldfield was born in Norfolk, England in 1885. Both her parents were artists. She took her training and her degree at the South Kensington School of Art, London. She became proficient with oils, watercolours, stained glass, ceramics and other forms of art. Her pencil sketches won her third prize out of hundreds of entries in an international competition.

After a period of teaching in England, she came to Victoria on a visit in 1914. Unable to obtain a teaching post without a Canadian degree, she took a job as a companion-housekeeper, and during this time met her future husband, Captain S. Morgan Hobbs. The couple was married at the end of the World War I, and went to live in James Bay, next door to a rather eccentric lady who ran a rooming house called "The House of All Sorts". This lady was Emily Carr. The two struck up a life-long friendship and combined to write "The House of All Sorts".

As her two children grew, Hobbs found time for painting classes. She joined the Island Arts and Crafts Society and became friends with Josephine Crease of Pentrelew. She also joined the group of Ina Uthoff, Will Menelaws and others attempting to sponsor an art gallery for Victoria. These efforts came to full fruition in 1951.

Isabel Hobbs was acted with other Society veterans in beginning art life anew under the Sketch Club banner. She practised an "oil on wood" technique, allowing the paint to run through the grain of the wood panels, although she was also a very capable watercolourist and sketcher. Her dogwood paintings became widely renowned, and in 1963 she signed and donated a sketch of her friend Emily Carr to the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. She was made a life member of the Victoria Sketch Club in 1967.

Isabel Hobbs died in Nanaimo in 1974.



Portrait of Emily Carr
AGGV D01167