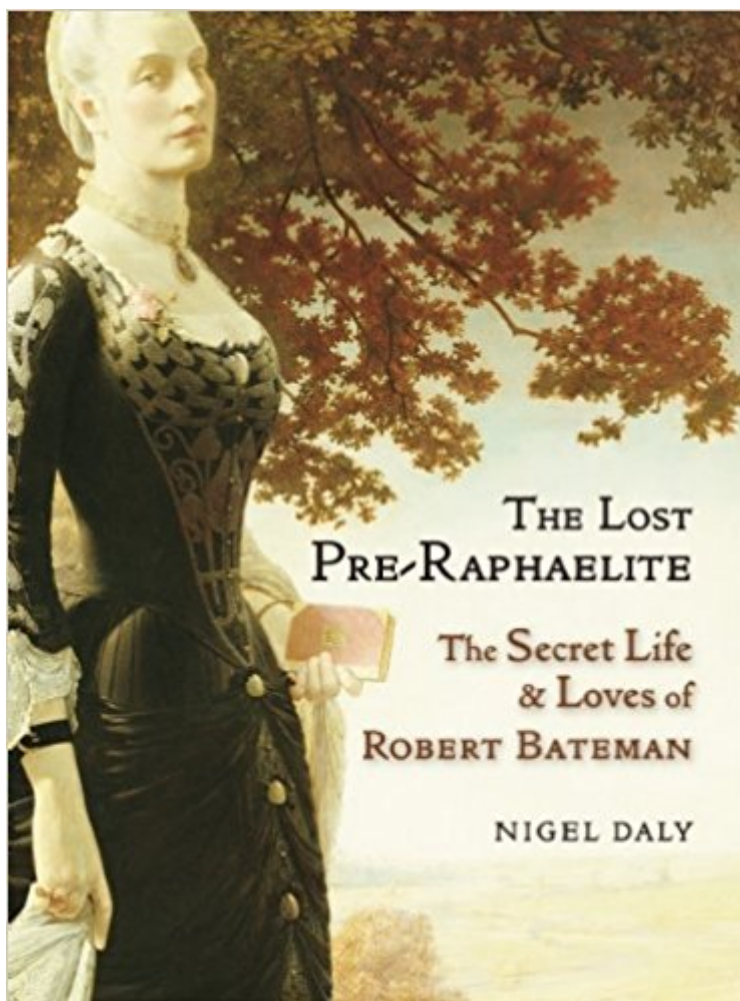


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# The Lost Pre-Raphaelite: The Secret Life And Loves Of Robert Bateman



## Synopsis

When the author bought a falling down fortified house on the Staffordshire moorlands, he had no reason to anticipate the astonishing tale that would unfold as it was restored. A mysterious set of relationships emerged amongst its former owners, revolving round the almost forgotten artist, Robert Bateman, a prominent Pre-Raphaelite and friend of Burne Jones. He was to marry the granddaughter of the Earl of Carlisle, and to be associated with Benjamin Disraeli, William Gladstone, and other prominent political and artistic figures. But he had abandoned his life as an artist in mid-career to live as a recluse, and his rich and glamorous wife-to-be had married the local vicar, already in his sixties and shortly to die. The discovery of two clearly autobiographical paintings led to an utterly absorbing forensic investigation into Bateman's life. The story moves from Staffordshire to Lahore, to Canada, Wyoming, and then, via Buffalo Bill, to Peru and back to England. It leads to the improbable respectability of Imperial Tobacco in Bristol, and then, less respectably, to a car park in Stoke-on-Trent. En route the author pieces together an astonishing and deeply moving story of love and loss, of art and politics, of morality and hypocrisy, of family secrets concealed but never quite completely obscured. The result is a page-turning combination of detective story and tale of human frailty, endeavor, and love. It is also a portrait of a significant artist, a reassessment of whose work is long overdue. Nigel Daly is an antique dealer and house restorer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

&#145;If ever there were a life that proves the adage about truth beating the wildest imaginings of

fiction itâ™s that of Robert Bateman, an artist almost lost to memory. It entailed both the brutal suppression of a love affair between a Victorian artist and his social superior and the extraordinary lengths to which the lovers and their accomplices went in order to ensure that their story didnâ™t see the light of day in their life time. More lurid than any Victorian novel, it features an unconsummated marriage, a crucial will, a cruel stepfather, an abandoned child, a selfless vicar and a sudden death. Buffalo Bill also puts in a critical appearance. But perhaps the most remarkable thing about this strange story is that it has only come to light because the lovers left a trail of evidence hidden in plain sight, in the paintings of Bateman, an odd, unclassifiable painter associated with the Aesthetes and Romantics. The clues have been pieced together by Nigel Daly in a new book: *The Lost Pre-Raphaelite; the Secret Life and Loves of Robert Bateman*. He only stumbled on the trail because he bought and renovated Batemanâ™s old home, and the truth he uncovered--revealed in the final chapter--would not, with all its twists and turns, have been out of place in a novel by Wilkie Collins.â™ Telegraph (London)- Richard Dorment-July 19,2014 "The Lost Pre-Raphaelite is fascinating and engrossing book, as well as an important contribution to our knowledge of Victorian painting, Victorian gardening, and the crippling rule of Victorian social convention. Remembered because of his contemporaries' admiration, Robert Bateman, with only a single intriguing work in any public collection, has until now been an extremely difficult artist to see, truly a "Lost Pre-Raphaelite". Daly has fleshed him out with biographical information and a corpus of often beautiful (and beautifully reproduced) works, largely unearthed by his determined sleuthing, and has composed a totally unexpected but convincing portrait of the man, which bears directly upon the content of his otherwise often inexplicable pictures. This is not a book by an art historian, but perhaps a better book for that, written with an engaging freshness and originality which make it a pleasure to read." Allen Staley, Professor (Emeritus) of the History of Art at Columbia University, New York, and author of "The Pre-Raphaelite Landscape".

**Nigel Daly:** Nigel Daly is an interior designer and architect, who bought a ruined medieval manor-house, and discovered this extraordinary and suppressed story in the course of restoring and researching it.

I am not even sure how to begin. A full five star rating does not give this beautiful work enough merit. What Nigel Daly and his partner Brian Vowles have done is a stroke of pure genius! This is not a biography folks; *The Lost Pre-Raphaelite* begins with the setting of a home called Biddulph Old Hall, the remnants of a great Elizabethan mansion on the Staffordshire moorlands. You see, due to

author Nigel Daly's day job dealing in antiques and restoring houses, his presence at Biddulph Old Hall leads to the discovery of one former owner, Robert Bateman. Robert Bateman was a rather unsuccessful, not very well-known, nineteenth century artist with some very now infamous friends. For instance, a young man named Edward Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and Simeon-Solomon are brought into the fray as well. Once Nigel Daly's interest in the house and its history is piqued, well, hold on readers because you are in for an incredible artistic journey getting to know a fascinating recluse, Robert Bateman and his wife, Caroline Octavia Howard. Her marriage to Bateman was her longest but her second marriage and without giving much away let's just say that fact is very important to know beforehand. Take a good long look at that woman on the book cover in the painting by Robert Bateman called, 'The Artist's Wife' that's her! She was related to one of the most prominent nineteenth century families The Howards and cousin specifically to painter, George Howard, ninth Earl of Carlisle and his wife Countess Rosalind Howard. From the Introduction, I was engrossed and found myself begrudgingly only putting the book down when I had no choice. Nigel and Brian write not only detailed and descriptively on geographic settings and locations but manor house period room furnishings and restorations. Dear Reader the entire book is broken up into six parts, chronologically according to the life span of Robert Bateman and his wife Caroline Howard. I loved reading about the interiors of Biddulph Old Hall including gorgeous photographs leaving nothing to the imagination in a very good way! I felt as if I was on a manor house tour with both of these passionate men and when they discover Robert Bateman's presence hidden within the interior of Biddulph well, then more fun begins. The Lost Pre-Raphaelite changes in tone and texture with the 'artistic' discovery of artist RB-Robert Bateman and with each passing chapter his life unfolds from a young single recluse of a man living very Wagnerianesque to a happily married man still artistic, still creative, still passionate until his last days. Not only will the readers read about these beautiful manor homes throughout England, they will read Nigel and Brian's exquisite background on all of Robert Bateman's paintings including catalogue notes and family anecdotes! The Lost Pre-Raphaelite is a journey of discovery about one man's artistic life as he viewed the world through his paintings. For those are his legacies containing clues that he left behind. This is a detective story in the sense that you discover the human being behind the artist. Nigel and Brian take you through Robert Bateman's life into old age and trust me you do not want to miss this book. If you are an art lover of the Victorian era, or even The Pre-Raphaelites then please check out The Lost Pre-Raphaelite by Nigel Daly. I absolutely loved this entire book and it belongs on every art lovers shelf! I hope you will enjoy it and all the discoveries along the way!

I loved the mix of art and historic mystery surrounding the pre-raphaelite era and the relationship between two lovers! I especially loved the colour plates and photos which I repeatedly looked up. I could not put it down.

One of the best books I've ever read! Old ruins, art, romance, family secrets and mystery all in one book. And lot of photographs. Bet well done.

... not much here about any other pre-raphaelite personalities but a great story well told... I found the life of the vicar, the first husband of Caroline, to be heroic and moving... still, IMO it will take more scholarship to securely place R. Bateman amongst the established pre-raphaelites.

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