

Hidden Histories - coded lives

Edward Carpenter (1844 – 1929)

Edward Carpenter was an early supporter of equality for a variety of groups in society. He himself lived relatively openly with his male partner, George Merrill, at their home in Millthorpe in Derbyshire.

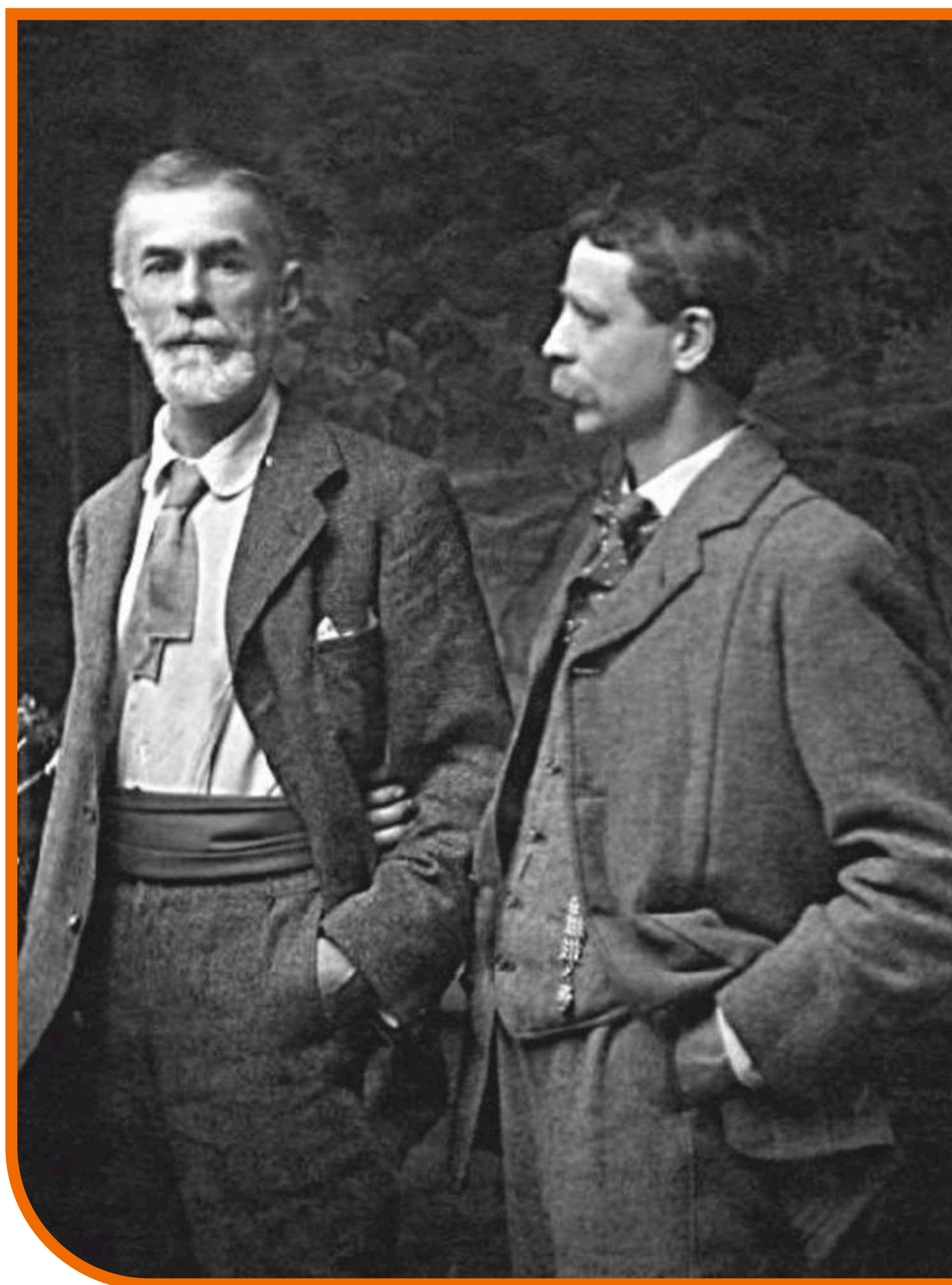
Carpenter actively campaigned for what many would consider alternate lifestyles.

He was a firm believer in rights for homosexuals and women; he promoted vegetarianism, socialism, spirituality and simple living. His breadth of writing was quite phenomenal and his influence spread across Britain and further afield.

His extensive correspondence includes letters from E M Forster, Siegfried Sassoon and Ramsay MacDonald.

The relationship between Carpenter and Merrill was the template for the relationship between Maurice Hall and Alec Scudder, the gamekeeper in EM Forster's novel **Maurice**.

The 1987 Merchant Ivory Productions film **Maurice** starred Hugh Grant and was one of his first cinematic appearances.



Find out more

Edward Carpenter : a life of liberty and love by Sheila Rowbotham is available at Derbyshire libraries.

A web-based archive of works by Edward Carpenter can be found at www.edwardcarpenter.net