HORSES IN PAINTINGS.

By SANDY ROBERTSON

The art of painting is as old as human civilization; it is believed to have originated in prehistoric times, and paintings of horses have been found in the caves of Lascaux in France, and Altamira in Spain. It is believed that these paintings may have been done to "capture" the animal's spirit so that they might be hunted successfully.

The horse is often a historic status symbol, a sign of wealth and high standing in society. In many cases, equestrian portraits command a sense of power – influenced not only by the strength of the animal and also that of its owner. Kings, Princes and other high up persons had themselves painted on their horse. Napoleon on his horse Marengo was a favourite subject.

Around the 17th century it was considered normal for a horse to be the entire focus of a work of fine art in Western Europe. It was popular during the first three decades of the 19th century. The horse was now shown in sports such as Horse Racing, and Hunting; various types of transport; showing military uniforms; historical events; pleasure pastimes and even in war scenes.

Sometimes the horse was painted to be the record of a particular person's favourite animal or a winner of awards. Or even just a group in a field.