

# William Morris's Paternal Ancestry<sup>1</sup>

*Dorothy Coles†, revised Barbara Lawrence*

## I. WILLIAM MORRIS'S GRANDFATHER (1757–1817)

It is difficult to trace information about the earliest William Morris discussed here, grandfather of the famous William Morris (Figure 1), because all records about him date from the time before the introduction of compulsory registration of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales, in 1837. Local church registers contain the main surviving records of his times, and in order to consult them, one needs to know in which parish to search. Some of these registers are incomplete, or no relevant entry can be traced. Other sources include his will, and a declaration made by two of his sons to the College of Arms, some twenty-five years after their father's death.

His will, dated 12 August 1817, does tell us something about the man and his family. He wrote it himself, because he felt seriously unwell, and decided that he must record his wishes immediately, while still able to do so.<sup>2</sup> He describes himself as 'William Morris of 2 Moffat Terrace in the parish of Saint Leonard Shoreditch'. He then commends his soul to God, asks forgiveness for his ' manifold sins', and requests that he be buried in the churchyard of Paddington Green Church, close to his beloved mother and his daughter Elizabeth, already buried there. He goes on to leave to 'my dear and well-beloved wife Elizabeth Morris' a life interest in his household goods and all other possessions; subject only to the discharge of a principal sum of money to Mr John Rutter the older, of Mitcham, Tobacconist, and a few small debts of trifling amount, with £100 to be his wife's 'for Mourning and for the purchase of Sundries she my wife may at the time be in need of. The residue of the money to be invested in the 3 per Cent Consols'. On his wife's death, all the household goods were to go to his daughter Ann Morris, and everything else 'turned into money as soon as conveniently may be

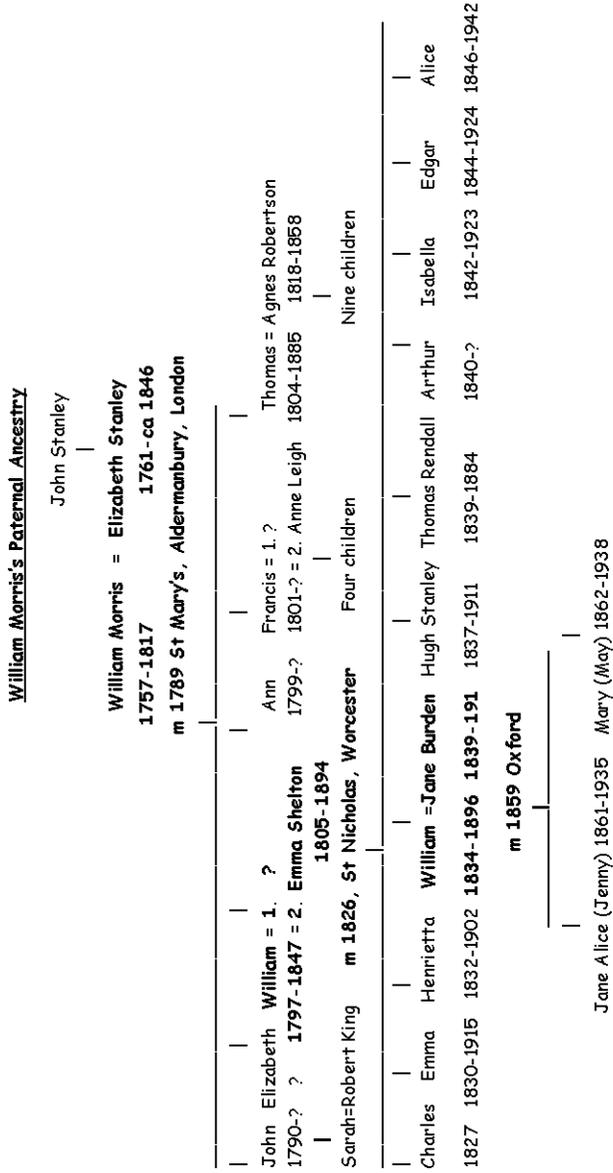


Figure 1: William Morris's paternal family tree.

equally divided share and share alike between my dear children namely John Morris, William Morris, Ann Morris, Francis Morris and Thomas Morris'. He then made provision for disposal of their share of the money, should any of his children predecease his wife. He signed the document, dated it, and added a note; 'this sketch very imperfectly drawn up I cannot include my wishes thereon if please God I live I will put it in better form'.

Since the will had not been witnessed, an affidavit follows which shows that 'Elizabeth Morris of Moffat Terrace, City Road in the county of Middlesex Widow, Sarah Rendall<sup>3</sup> of Dean Street Soho in the same county Widow, and John Inglis Jerdein of Fore Street in the same county, Tobacconist' all attended before a Notary Public and were sworn. Elizabeth Morris then made Oath that she was the lawful Widow and Relict of the late William Morris who had died on 17 August last, and that on that day she found in his pocket the document which purported to be his last will and testament. She had immediately sent for Sarah Rendall to attend her at her residence in Moffat Terrace, so that she might tell her of her brother's death; they had also read over the will together, and Sarah Rendall had then taken and kept it. They certified that between 12 August and 17 August, when William Morris died, he was too ill to make any further disposition of his property, and that the will was in the same state as it had been found. Sarah Rendall and John Jerdein then declared that they both knew well the handwriting of William Morris, and that they believed the document to have been written by him. All three then swore the truth of their affidavits before the Notary Public on that day, 7 January 1818 and endorsed their statements.

The final document is dated 15 January 1818, and states that administration of the will is granted to John Morris, the eldest son, after he had sworn to advise Elizabeth Morris according to the tenor of the will and that they (the widow, the eldest son and the four other children) would have been the only persons entitled to share in the distribution of his goods had William Morris died intestate. In this document William Morris grandfather is described as 'tobacconist deceased'.<sup>4</sup>

This will shows the writer to have been a devout man who was also literate, and possessed some facility with words. He shows great love for his family, and seems to have been concerned only with their welfare and the right conduct of his tobacconist's business. The stoicism with which he dealt with his illness, giving priority to the writing of his will, seems to me to resemble that of the Icelanders whom his grandson later so much admired. It therefore seems sad that the old man died too early for his grandson to have known him.

The other document which gives information about William Morris grandfather and his children is a declaration made when his sons William Morris senior and Thomas Morris applied to the College of Arms for the family to be granted a Coat of Arms. They set out details of the family, declaring the dates of their father's birth and burial (but, unfortunately, not his birthplace), and some dates

of the births and marriages, and the current addresses of his four younger children, and of birth and baptism of their own children. John Morris, the eldest son is shown only by his name, that he was married and that he has issue. William Morris grandfather's date of birth is 16 July 1757, and he is described as 'of the City of London, Merchant'. This document (dated 23 May 1843) is signed by William Morris senior and Thomas Morris and countersigned by Bluemantle, representing the College of Arms. Thereafter all adult male members of the family were entitled to use their Coat of Arms, details of which were agreed with the College shortly afterwards.<sup>5</sup>

Many years later, J.W. Mackail, who wrote Morris's biography at the request of his father-in-law Sir Edward Burne-Jones, acting on behalf of the Morris family, consulted some of the surviving members, and recorded what must have been family tradition about their origins.<sup>6</sup> He wrote 'the Morrises were originally of Welsh descent. ... Morris's grandfather (the first of the family, it is said, who dropped the Welsh Ap from his surname) settled in Worcester in the latter part of last century and throve there as a burgess. ... their second son, William Morris senior was born there on 14th June 1797.<sup>7</sup> About 1820, his father having removed his business to London, he was entered as a clerk in the firm of Harris, Sanderson and Harris, discount brokers'. But William Morris grandfather's will shows that he died in 1817, and that at the time of his death was living in London's East End, seeming well-established and running a business there. The fact that his mother and one of his daughters were buried in the graveyard at Paddington Green also indicates that the old man possessed a lengthy tie with London. This connection does not rule out the possibility of Mackail's account being correct, but if so one would expect that the older William Morris (grandfather) would appear in records in the City of Worcester, and that the births of his children during the 1790s and 1800s would all have been recorded there, when, according to Mackail, the growing family was living in the city. Recent research by David Everett shows that in the 1851 UK Census, William Morris grandfather's youngest son Thomas is recorded in Tavistock, Devon as having been born in Worcester. There is a record of the baptism of a Thomas Morris in St Nicholas, Worcester for 3 October 1804.<sup>8</sup> No other records of the Morris family have been found in Worcester so far.

The marriage of William Morris grandfather and Elizabeth Stanley is recorded in College of Arms records as taking place at St Mary's Church, Aldermanbury, London, on 5 December 1789. Both parties were of that parish.<sup>9</sup> Witnesses included John Rutter also mentioned in the will of 1817 when resident in Mitcham, Surrey, near London, and a Sarah Morris, possibly William Morris grandfather's mother, later buried in the churchyard of Paddington Green Church, or his sister, later Sarah Rendall, widow, living in Soho, both also referred to in the will of 1817. This information suggests a London base for the family.

There is also a record in Nottingham of the marriage of John Stanley and Ann Wyer, on 17 September 1758, which would support the idea of an origin in that city of Elizabeth Stanley, their daughter, William Morris grandfather's wife, which is referred to in the College of Arms records,<sup>10</sup> and also in Morris's letters.<sup>11</sup> As well as a William Morris being baptised during 1797 at St James Church, Clerkenwell, Islington, Middlesex, there are records of an Ann Morris and a Francis Morris, probably William Morris senior's sister and brother, being baptised respectively at the same church during 1799 and 1802.<sup>12</sup> In the 1851 UK Census for Walthamstow, for the household of Emma Morris, (William Morris senior's widow: see below), there is an Ann Morris, a visitor, aged 51 years listed as staying with the family and born in Islington, Middlesex, who was probably the deceased William Morris senior's sister. In the 1871 Census for Tavistock, Devon, Anne Morris aged 71 years is described as Thomas Morris's sister, and born in Middlesex.<sup>13</sup> In the 1851 Census for Denmark Hill, Camberwell, Lambeth, Francis Morris is listed as born in Pentonville, Middlesex. All this information suggests that the family was based in the London area for some time, and that William Morris senior, Anne Morris, and Francis Morris, were all born in the London area and not, as Mackail writes, in Worcester. It could be that they spent a period of time in Worcester from around 1802, after Francis Morris's London baptism, and that Thomas Morris, William Morris senior's youngest brother, was born there, and that the family or part of it then returned to London, and were well-settled back there before William Morris grandfather died in 1817. This hypothetical sequence of events would also have given William Morris senior an opportunity to have met his future wife Emma Shelton Morris, in Worcester. However, another possibility is that William Morris senior's family, or part of it, was staying in Worcester for a short period of time around Thomas's birth. This scenario would account for the lack of any other records in Worcester regarding William Morris senior and the family.

So, was Mackail's account of the family's origins correct, or had he been to some extent misinformed? The careers of William Morris grandfather's three younger sons show them to have been both ambitious and successful; the elder, William Morris senior, outstandingly so. Might they not have thought that their true background, a tobacconist's shop in the East End of London, would be a handicap to them in their subsequent careers, and might they have deliberately taken steps in order to suppress the details of that part of their background?

Confirmation of this theory would appear to be the observations that although Morris's own letters show that he visited Wales several times, going to different parts of the country, and that his wife Jane also went there on other occasions, neither of them ever visited the family's home district, nor did either seem to know where that was. Morris admitted as much in his reply, in 1890, to an enquiry from Havelock Ellis when he wrote: 'I know little of my ancestors;

nothing beyond my grand-fathers and mothers. I seem to have a good deal of Welsh blood in me. ... My father's father was Welsh, I believe, and my mother's mother also. My name is very common all along the Welsh border; and if my memory serves me, I saw many Morris'es on the shop fronts at Brecon. The name is undoubtedly Cymbric'.<sup>14</sup> If some cover-up did take place, and information was suppressed, the brothers' plan was highly successful, for Mackail's report has been quoted again and again by William Morris's biographers, including Fiona MacCarthy,<sup>15</sup> and only the discovery now of William Morris grandfather's will, and the failure (so far) to find records of the Morris family in Worcester, apart from that of Thomas Morris's baptism, have led to any doubts as to the accuracy of Mackail's account.

## II. WILLIAM MORRIS SENIOR (1797–1847), EMMA MORRIS (1805–1894)

William Morris senior, father of the famous William Morris, was the second son of William Morris grandfather and his wife, Elizabeth Stanley. He was born on 4 June 1797, and was seven years younger than his brother John, born 1790. It is not known definitely where he was born, but it now seems likely – from the above – that it was not in Worcester, but in the London area. A person of that name was baptised on 7 August 1797 at St James, Clerkenwell, Islington, Middlesex.<sup>16</sup> It seems probable that his sister Elizabeth, who died young and was buried in Paddington Green Churchyard, was born between John, the eldest child,<sup>17</sup> and William. There were also three younger siblings Ann, born 1799, Francis (1801), and Thomas (1804).<sup>18</sup> At the time of his father's death in 1817 William Morris senior (then age 20) was already working, but no details of that employment have survived. At some time he went to work for Harris, Sanderson & Harris, bill-brokers of Lombard Street in the City of London, where he was successful, being made a partner in 1826 when he only twenty-nine. This promotion assured him a good salary and even better prospects, and made him a highly eligible young man.

On 27 July 1826, he married Emma Shelton in her home town of Worcester; she having been baptised there in the parish church of St Nicholas on 27 May 1805.<sup>19</sup> The marriage register shows that they were both 'of full age', and in fact he was twenty-nine, and she twenty-one. While Emma is recorded as of the parish of St Nicholas, Worcester, William Morris senior is stated to be of the parish of St Leonard the King and Martyr in the City of London, showing that he was at that time living there. The register also records that he was a widower, but nothing is known definitely of this earlier marriage. One possibility is a marriage at St James, Clerkenwell on 2 November 1822 of a William Morris and Jane Dennis of St Cle-

ments Danes, and a Jane Morris being buried at St Mary's Paddington Green on 28 May 1823, aged 26 years, the address being Bath Street, St Lukes, Middlesex. However it cannot be stated with any certainty that this is the same person.<sup>20</sup> No record of his first marriage has been found in Worcester. At that time, the commonest causes of death of young women were consumption (pulmonary tuberculosis), fevers such as typhoid and scarlet fever, or problems associated with pregnancy and childbirth. The loss of his wife when he was still so young must have been a harrowing experience for William senior, but no other mention of it survives among the family papers.

William Morris senior's likeness as a young man is recorded in the form of a miniature watercolour now held at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow (Figure 2). The painting is signed 'T. Wheeler', and bears the year 1824. A portrait of Emma Shelton by the same painter matches it, and they were probably painted for the couple to exchange at the time of their betrothal. He appears rather immature for a man of about twenty-seven years, and his features are delicate, with a jaw less heavy than that which most of his children developed. Both the sitters are smartly dressed: he wears a dark coat with a lighter-coloured waistcoat, a very high collar and a white cravat with an impressively intricate knot. The feature which most clearly links him with his eldest son is his hair, which is shown very dark and curling up from his forehead in the same unruly manner so familiar from images of the young Morris.

After they were married, William and Emma settled into rooms above Harris, Sanderson, & Harris's offices in Lombard Street. It was customary at that time for a member of a firm to live on the premises. Emma soon became pregnant and during August 1827 gave birth to a son, Charles Stanley, who apparently seemed healthy as no record has been found of his baptism (which would probably have been arranged if his life seemed in danger). He lived for only a few days, however, and was buried on 7 September 1827 in the churchyard of Saint Edmund the King and Martyr in Lombard Street, very close to his parents' home.<sup>21</sup> It was only when a daughter was born more than three years later, on 28 October 1830, that William and Emma could feel confident they were capable of producing a healthy child. They named this daughter Emma, and she was baptised at home on 14 December 1830 as wintry airs were much feared at that time of the year. A second daughter, Henrietta, was born on 8 November 1832, and baptised during July 1833.

At the beginning of 1833, the family moved out of what were then the fogs, smoke and dirt of Central London to the almost rural surroundings of Walthamstow, east of the city, where they rented Elm House. Their first son to survive was born there on the 24 March 1834, and was named William. Elm House was a comfortable suburban home with a large garden, and from there Morris's father was able to travel daily up to the City by stagecoach. The family regularly attended their parish church, as the parents approved of the unadorned 'low Anglican'



Figure 2. *Miniatures of Emma Shelton Morris and William Morris senior by 'T. Wheeler', 1824. By permission of the William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest.*

form of service in use there, but it seems to have appealed less to their children, as later, several of them turned to churches with more elaborate rituals.

Early in 1834, a group of twelve City business men met in order to discuss the possibility of opening a school for boys in Walthamstow: the plan being to finance the scheme by selling shares at £20 each. Among the sponsors of the plan was Joseph Owen Harris, one of two Quaker brothers who owned the bill-broking firm for which William Morris senior then worked. William senior decided to support the venture, and attended a second meeting shortly afterwards, even though it was held on the day on which his son was born. The group agreed that they would go ahead with the plan, and that the school be named 'The Forest Proprietary Grammar School'.<sup>22</sup>

At Elm House, two more sons were born – Hugh Stanley (1837), and Thomas Rendall (1839). Stanley was the surname of William Morris senior's mother, and

the second name of their first child Charles who had died in infancy. Thomas was the name of William Morris senior's brother, and Rendall the married name of William Morris grandfather's sister.

By this time, William Morris senior was doing exceedingly well in the City, and was soon in almost sole charge of the bill-broking firm. As Mackail wrote, 'Bill and discount broking was a class of business carried on by a comparatively limited number of persons, whose status and social consideration approached those of private bankers. Competition was not keen, and the members of established firms lived in ease and even opulence'.<sup>23</sup> His brothers were also flourishing, Francis being connected to the Coal Exchange, and Thomas owning a coal merchant's business in London. In 1844, William senior and Thomas invested in shares in a new copper mine on the Duke of Bedford's estate on the border of Devon with Cornwall. The workings proved uncommonly rich in ore, so that for many years the brothers received large dividends on their shares, besides their income from other sources. Both soon became directors of the mine, the Devonshire Great Consolidated Copper Mining Company (Devon Great Consols), and Thomas moved to Devon in order to be 'Resident Director' in charge of operations.<sup>24</sup>

After six years at Elm House, in 1840 William senior, Emma and their children moved to nearby Woodford Hall. Their new home was a Georgian mansion, in extensive grounds which included a home farm of 100 acres (*ca* 40 ha) which supplied the household with all its vegetables, fruit, dairy produce and meat. At the same time, the number of domestic staff they employed increased considerably. At the William Morris Gallery, a copy of a local news sheet survives which is undated, but on which is noted in pencil '1840'. If that year is correct, it would seem that once he had moved into the Hall, William senior lost no time antagonising local people, as the entry concerning him runs: 'We advise the far-famed ex-auctioneer, W. Morris of Woodford Hall, not to be so uncharitable as to try to prevent poor people from getting water, this severe weather, from off his premises – his worthy predecessor did not act in this manner. Look out, old boy, for all the world knows what you are and what you have been'. Other items published on the same sheet show that it featured gossip and scandal; but nevertheless there is likely to have been some truth in the matter reported. The complaint about William senior leaves a nasty impression. For a man who was a regular churchgoer and professed to be a devout Christian, he had apparently shown a harsh, uncaring attitude toward the poor among his neighbours.<sup>25</sup>

The 1841 Census shows that Woodford Hall was a large household: beside Emma and William senior, their six children, and his mother and sister, there were ten servants (one man and nine women) 'living in'. No details of their occupations are recorded; all are just listed 'house servant'. Other staff, living in

tied houses, were a gardener, his wife and four children; their eldest son (twenty) working as a manservant, and their second son (fifteen) also as a gardener (it seems probable both were employed at the Hall), while two younger children were at school. A coachman and his wife lived at the stables, and a further man described as an 'agricultural labourer' at Woodford Hall Cottage with his wife and nine year old son.<sup>26</sup> Four further children were born to Emma and William at Woodford Hall; Arthur, shown in the 1841 census as nine months old, Isabella (1842), Edgar Llewelyn (1844; a rare suggestion of a possible Welsh connection), and Alice (1846).

In 1842, when the boy was eight years old, his father took the young William on holiday in Kent. There is no mention of any other member of the family going with them, and the father may have planned the trip in the hope of becoming closer to his eldest son, knowing that the boy was developing a love of old buildings, and already showing an interest in architecture. They visited Canterbury Cathedral and the church at Minster in Kent. These visits created a lasting memory in the child; fifty years later Morris could still recall details of both buildings, and the thrill of seeing the great Cathedral.<sup>27</sup> His father also used to take him up to the City to see the Lord Mayor's Shows from Harris, Sanderson & Harris's premises. He was planning that young William should take over the business in due course, and these visits may have been intended to impress on the boy the important status of men who worked in the city.

In 1843, William senior and his brother Thomas considered that their elevated social and economic status justified their possessing a coat of arms, and in April that year they petitioned the Duke of Norfolk at the College of Arms to approve the use of one by the Morris family. They based their claim on the statement that the family had held one in the past, but that it had fallen out of use, and they did not wish to be at fault using an incorrect one. This may have been true, but appears unlikely. However, at the time, the only conditions restricting consent to such a grant were that applicants' families should be of some substance, and living at a suitable address. The petition was duly granted, and correspondence between Bluemantle Poursuivant, representing the Kings of Arms of the College, and William senior followed in order to determine the bearings the family would use. According to Mackail, young Morris was 'already of an age to be keenly interested in heraldry'.<sup>28</sup>

The device their discussion produced depicts a silver horse's head on a deep blue background, with three gold horseshoes, one placed centrally below the head, and two in the upper corners. The crest is also a silver horse's head, with three black horseshoes on the neck, two below and one above. The motto is *Pax et Libertas*. There seems to have been no special significance to the device, the motto or the colours chosen, but Morris always said that his favourite colour was blue, and Mackail refers to the white horse association in several future instances;

the horses painted on tiles at Red House, and regular pilgrimages to the White Horse on the Berkshire Downs not far from Kelmscott Manor.<sup>29</sup> On 23 May 1843, William senior and Thomas visited the College of Arms and, in accordance with the usual procedure, presented a paper setting out the dates of birth of their parents, themselves and their brothers and sisters, and also of their children, and signed a declaration that the information was true to the best of their knowledge and belief. And when this declaration had been countersigned by Bluemantle, the formalities were complete. From that day, all adult males of the Morris family were entitled to use the coat of arms, with that right descending to their sons when they came of age; also they would have been justified in describing themselves as 'Esquire'. The tobacconist's shop in Shoreditch was thus put far behind.

When the young Morris was nine, he was sent to a preparatory school; in 1845, only two years later, it was arranged that he should change from dayboy to boarder – still at a local school. The boy hated this, for as a boarder, although he was able to see his family in church on Sundays, he was not allowed to speak to them; his spare time also became much more regimented than it had been when he had lived at home. The change took place at just about the time his father probably began showing signs of the disease from which he died two years later.

On 8 September 1847, William Morris senior died at Woodford Hall, the cause of his death being given on a certificate as 'Ulceration or cancer of the stomach. Two years. Certified'.<sup>30</sup> He was buried in the churchyard of Woodford Parish Church, with his coat of arms featuring prominently on the large stone memorial which his widow erected for him. It is usually stated that his death was unexpected, and that it therefore set off a chain of disastrous events in the London market,<sup>31</sup> but the certificate quoted here indicates a lengthy illness, and it seems unlikely that William senior had been working regularly and in full control of the bill-broking business for some time. It may be that he feared loss of confidence in his firm, if his absence became widely known, and that he and his clerks had endeavoured to conceal it. Certainly a trade recession began at about the time of his death, and the firm, like many others, ran into difficulties. Seven days after his death, it suspended trading, stating that this was 'an event which was wholly unforeseen and unexpected by us', and was due to the previous retirement of one of the partners and now the 'sudden and lamented death' of William Morris senior.<sup>32</sup>

He had not acted as though his illness was likely to be terminal, as would have been expected of a man of business, for he left no will. But once the market settled down again, his widow Emma found herself left an income which was adequate for herself and her nine children, the money coming mainly from shares in Devon Great Consols. Her husband's brothers Thomas and Francis remained to advise her on financial and other matters until young William came of age. She did not wish to continue at Woodford Hall without her husband, however,

and during the year following his death, moved her family to a smaller house, although still a substantial one, at Water House, Forest Road, Walthamstow, now the William Morris Gallery.

## NOTES

1. This article is based on unfinished work by the late Dorothy Coles (Obituary, William Morris Society Newsletter, Summer 2012, pp. 4-5). Some changes have been made for clarity, and in order to incorporate recent research which supports Dorothy's new interpretation of Morris's ancestry.

Working as a volunteer for the William Morris Society at Kelmescott House, I made some inquiries about William Morris's ancestry on behalf of David Everett who was researching Morris's Worcester connections. I approached Dorothy Coles shortly before her death as I knew her as an expert in Morris textiles and Morris family history. After her death Tony Pinkney, a member of the Society and friend of Dorothy, was able to negotiate with her family that her papers relating to Morris family research, which included these unfinished chapters about Morris's father and grandfather, should come to the Society. Nicholas C. S. Mason, Dorothy's nephew, has given permission on behalf of the family for these to be published. There remain many uncertainties and questions about William Morris's father, paternal grandparents and other ancestors which further research might clarify.

In this article the famous William Morris will be referred to as 'Morris' or 'William Morris', his father 'William Morris senior' and his grandfather 'William Morris grandfather'. A parallel article, by David Everett, which explores the Morris family's connections to Worcester, appears in this volume on pp. 35-60.

2. Will of William Morris (grandfather) of 2 Moffat Close in the parish of St Leonard, Shoreditch, London, 1817 Records of Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858, PROB11/1600, National Archives, Kew.
3. Sarah Rendall, William Morris grandfather's sister.
4. In *News from Nowhere*, a tobacconist's in Piccadilly is described as being run by two children. As Tony Pinkney points out, there is a focus in *News from Nowhere* on grandfather-grandson relationships.
5. Documents held by the College of Arms, Queen Victoria Street, London.
6. J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899, p. 2. Afterwards Mackail. In *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, edited by Frank C. Sharp & Jan Marsh, Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K: The Boydell Press, pp. 325-6, there is a note relating to letters by Jane and May Morris.

- indicating that 'The Morrises were generally disappointed in Mackail's presentation of William Morris'. E.P Thompson (*William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1955, p. 736; afterwards Thompson) refers to Mackail thus: 'as the son in law of Georgiana Burne-Jones he was the official biographer' of Morris. Fiona MacCarthy (*William Morris. A Life for Our Time*), London: Faber & Faber, 1994, p. x writes 'It was with family support that the commission to write the authorized biography of Morris went to J.W. Mackail'.
7. There is a record of a baptism of a William Morris on 7 August 1797 at St James, Clerkenwell, Islington, Middlesex, with an entry of 4 June 1797 as his date of birth in the Church of England Parish Registers 1538-1812, London Metropolitan Archives, Northampton Road, London (research by Eva Lawrence and David Everett). This information conflicts with that given to the College of Arms by William Morris senior and his brother Thomas, who cite the date of birth as 14 June 1789.
  8. Dorothy Coles and her nephew Nicholas C.S. Mason searched records in Worcester. David Everett also investigated records there with no result apart from the baptism of a Thomas Morris at St Nicholas Church Worcester in 1804, recorded in the Parish Register. David Everett adds: *There are baptisms of eleven children in all, to six other couples with the surname Morris in this parish register, for the period 1779 to 1800. A further complication is that the British Newspaper Archive only covers Worcester newspapers from about 1820 onwards, and the earliest local directory also dates from 1820, by which time Morris's grandfather was living in London. Recent work using the Ancestry internet subscription site (<http://www.ancestry.co.uk>) has convinced me that William Morris senior and his siblings John, Ann, and Francis (but not Thomas) were all baptised in London. I have found good matches on Ancestry for all of them apart from John.*
  9. College of Arms records and Parish Register of St Mary's Church, Aldermanbury, London for 1789, p. 92, No.191
  10. College of Arms records.
  11. Norman Kelvin, *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 4 vols in 5, 1984-1996; Vol.1, p. 292, Vol. 3, p. 162. (Afterwards Kelvin)
  12. College of Arms records and recent research by David Everett. College of Arms records show Anne Morris as born 19 September 1799, and baptised 29 December. The Parish Register for St James, Clerkenwell, Islington, Middlesex record an Ann was born 1 September 1799 and baptised 5 December. (NB: The College of Arms spells Anne with an 'e', the Parish Register without). The College of Arms possesses no dates for Francis Morris, but the Parish Register of St James show him as born 29 September 1801 and baptised 5

- February 1802. The College of Arms records Thomas Morris as being born 14 September 1804, and the Parish Register for St Nicholas Church, Worcester a Thomas Morris being baptised 3 October 1804.
13. Jackie Latham, 'Thomas Morris, Resident Director of Devon Great Consols', *Journal of the William Morris Society*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, p. 44 (Afterwards Latham). By 1871 (UK Census data), Anne Morris was living with her younger brother Thomas, perhaps helping to look after his family after the death of Thomas's wife in 1858. There were nine children, two of whom died shortly after their mother's death.
  14. Kelvin, Vol. 3, p.162
  15. Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: a Life for Our Time*, London: Faber & Faber, 1994, p.163. Afterwards MacCarthy.
  16. See note 7
  17. Details of John Morris's descendants are contained in the Dorothy Coles Archive held by the William Morris Society at Kelmscott House. These details were provided by John's great-great-granddaughter who agreed that this information be included.
  18. See note 12
  19. College of Arms records and Parish Register of St Nicholas Church, Worcester.
  20. David Everett, 'The ancestry of William Morris: the Worcester connection', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 4, pp. 37 (this volume).
  21. Charles Morris's burial is listed in parish records for St Edmund the King and Martyr, City of London.
  22. Adrienne Reynolds, 'Forest Proprietary Grammar School and the contemporaries of the Morris and Guy Families: 1834-1896', *William Morris Society Newsletter*, Summer 2006, p. 8.
  23. Mackail, p. 3.
  24. For details see Florence S. Boos & Patrick O'Sullivan, 'Morris and Devon Great Consols', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, Vol. XIX, No. 4, p. 11; Latham, pp. 41-46, and Charles Harvey & Jon Press, 'The making of the Morris family fortune', *Journal of the William Morris Society*, Vol. IX, No. 1 1990, pp. 3-11.
  25. J.W.S. Lutton & F.W. Clerk, *St Mary's Church, Woodford, Essex*, London: Passmore Edwards Museum, 1977, p. 33. William Morris senior served for two years as a Churchwarden at St Mary's Church, Woodford, Essex, and for four years as Overseer of the Poor. Morris would not have approved. Asked once by an over-zealous curate whether he had ever served on a Board of Guardians, Morris is said to have thundered, 'No, thank God!'; Arthur Compton-Rickett, *William Morris: a study in personality*, London: Herbert Jenkins, 1913, p. 28; as quoted in Thompson, second edition, 1976, p. 699.

26. UK Census for 1841. As far as is known, these details have not been given in any other account of Morris's childhood apart from Dorothy Coles "My Dear Emma": William and Emma Morris', 2004, *Journal of the William Morris Society*, Vol. XVI, No.1, pp. 45-60.
27. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries*, London: Martin Secker, 1919, p. 229. Entry for 31 May 1896.
28. Mackail, p. 11.
29. Mackail, p. 12.
30. Copy of Death Certificate (No.151) registered 15 September 1847, Walthamstow, Essex, obtained from The General Register Office, Southport, Merseyside.
31. MacCarthy, p.26; Charles Harvey & Jon Press, *William Morris: Design and Enterprise in Victorian England*, Manchester; Manchester University Press, 1991, p.11.
32. Harvey & Press, as Note 31, quoting Sanderson & Co. to Creditors 15 September 1847. Reprinted in *The Economist*, 18 September 1847.

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