

Reviews

Edited by Peter Faulkner

Linda Parry, *William Morris Textiles*, London: V&A Publishing, 2013, Hbk, £35. ISBN 9781851777327.

It is just over thirty years since Weidenfeld & Nicolson published the first edition of *William Morris Textiles*. The fact that the book remained in print for much of that time is testament not only to Linda Parry's prowess in the field of Morris studies but also to the enduring popularity of one of Britain's best loved textile designers. That said, during the intervening period, published research into Morris, and his contribution to the development of the decorative arts has proliferated. Furthermore, scholarship has benefitted from recent editions of primary source material, including the collected letters of William and Jane Morris. The work of Morris & Co has also featured in a number of international exhibitions, of which the William Morris centenary exhibition, curated by Parry at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1996, remains the most comprehensive display of the designer's work to date.

This new edition of *William Morris Textiles* has, in Parry's words, 'been extensively revised and rewritten to reflect a further thirty years of research'. The volume is a synthesis of the work undertaken by the author as Curator of Textiles at the V&A, a post from which she retired in 2005, and of the discoveries made by many other scholars researching into textile manufacture and design. The book's original structure, which explored 'Embroidery', 'Printed' and 'Woven Textiles', 'Carpets' and 'Tapestries', has been retained. However, the final chapter, 'Interior Design and the Retail Trade', has been subdivided into 'Business and the Retail Trade' and 'Textiles in Interiors'.

Readers familiar with the 1983 volume will be struck by the appearance of the new edition, which takes advantage of recent developments in book production. The format mirrors the earlier publication so that both volumes fit neatly side by side on the bookshelf, but that is where the similarity ends. The elegant dust jacket illustrates a detail from the 1884 block-printed cotton *Wandle*, while the endpapers, previously blank, carry the same textile but at the indigo-dyed

and discharged stage before all the other colours were printed, nicely reflecting Morris's experimentation with the indigo discharge method. The length has increased dramatically from 198 to 304 pages; likewise, the number of endnotes in each chapter has risen: twofold in the case of 'Tapestries' and nearly fourfold in Chapters 6-7 combined. A bibliography has also been added, which includes manuscripts, Morris & Co catalogues, Morris's lectures containing material on textiles and design, and a selection of relevant secondary sources. Gone, however, is the list of holdings of Morris textiles in public collections, that information being absorbed by the main text and accompanying notes.

Once again, the text is set in double columns but in a clean, modern typeface which complements the illustrations. As befits a designer for whom colour was key, the plates are printed in colour throughout with several full-page and two-page spreads; this contrasts with the first edition in which half the images were in black and white. The V&A photography studio deserves special praise for the quality of the illustrations, which enhance the reader's appreciation of Morris's skill as a draughtsman and the level of detail which went into creating his designs. The lack of definition which marred some of the images in 1983 has been swept away; sharper focus, evident in the textile samples *Eyebright* and *Apple* and in the design for *Ixia*, for example (catalogue nos 58, 96 and 119), is revealing. A particularly attractive feature is the opening two-page spread of each chapter in which a full page is given over to an apposite image. My personal favourite is the detail from the wool-embroidered hanging *Artichoke*, designed for Ada Goodman in 1877, in which one can pick out the individual stitches worked in blue, brown and pink hues which have lost none of their vibrancy.

How do the contents compare with the first edition? As before, Chapter 1 opens with Morris's apprenticeship in 1856 to the architect George Edmund Street, whose all-embracing approach to Church decoration was to exert a profound influence on his pupil, not least his views on the design and execution of embroidered furnishings. Morris cut his teeth as a textile designer on the decorative embroidery schemes he created for Red Lion Square and Red House between 1857 and 1865. Parry's revisions to Morris's early career take account of the recent discovery of the embroidered figure of *Aphrodite* or *Venus* from the partially worked frieze *The Legende of Good Wimmen*, designed for the dining room at Red House. Last seen in 1961 at the V&A exhibition *Morris & Co 1861-1940*, the panel, which was then owned by A. Halcrow Versage, secretary of the Kelmscott Fellowship (forerunner of the William Morris Society), was subsequently thought to be lost and was known only from the design at Kelmscott Manor, painted in oils on canvas. However, the embroidery resurfaced at auction in 2007 and was acquired by the National Trust for display at Red House.

The section on Morris's relationship with the Royal School of Art Needlework (RSAN), which opened in November 1872, has been expanded under a separate

heading. Initial contact with Morris came not from Mrs Madeline Wyndham, an enthusiastic client of Morris & Co., and prime mover in the running of the School, as Parry claims here, but from the art furniture maker Henry Capel. Acting as agent on behalf of the RSAN's founder, Lady Victoria Welby, Capel approached Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. in December 1872 in order to enquire whether the firm would be interested in having embroidery work done off the premises, but he received a cool response from the Works' Manager, George Wardle, who believed that Morris would not entertain such an arrangement. It was not until the spring of 1875, after the setting up of an art committee under the direction of Frederic Leighton to oversee the RSAN's desire to form a contemporary school of art needlework, that Morris agreed to supply designs to the School.

Deleted from the new edition is the figurative composition *The Musicians*, for many years thought to have been designed by Morris and Burne-Jones for the RSAN in ca 1875. The panel is in fact the work of Selwyn Image, whose lengthy association with the School began during the late 1870s. New to the volume is the *Peacock and Vine* dado panel, designed by Morris with the assistance of Philip Webb, and displayed on the RSAN's stand at the Philadelphia International Centennial Exhibition in 1876. Described by *Harper's Bazaar* as 'equivalent in conception to many of the best masters of medieval decorative arts', the panel was, in the opinion of Lady Marian Alford, vice-President of the RSAN, one of the most important works produced by the School, and is known to have been acquired by Madeline Wyndham (*Needlework as Art*, 1886, p. 398).

Chapter 1 closes with the significant contribution made by the Morrises' younger daughter May, who took over the running of the embroidery department at Morris & Co in 1885. Overshadowed by her father's achievements, she never received during her own lifetime the recognition she deserved. However, in recent years, primarily through the work of Parry, and of Jan Marsh, May has finally been acknowledged as one of the most accomplished designer craftswomen in British history.

The chapters on printed and woven textiles have been reordered and expanded. Reminiscences by past employees, including tapestry weavers trained at Merton Abbey, have added new insights to the volume. Inserted into the discourse on woodblock printing are sections on pattern development and pattern theory. Morris's determination to master natural dyeing is explored further in the context of his relationship with the dyer Thomas Wardle and the development of the Merton Abbey works, which underwent archaeological excavation by the Museum of London during the early 1990s. A welcome addition to the chapter on machine-woven and hand-knotted carpets is Morris and Webb's beautifully designed *Peacock and Bird* Hammersmith carpet, which until recently was thought not to have been put into production.

Intensive study of the Berger collection has assisted Parry in identifying the

work of, and reassessing the contribution made by, John Henry Dearle to the organisation and success of Morris & Co.: 'Dearle has finally emerged from Morris's shadow and is now recognized as a designer of considerable talent in his own right'. (p. 82) His experience at designing for the loom led to the largest number of tapestry cartoons, and more than double the number of woven textiles produced by Morris. Dearle's fascination with antique fabrics enabled the Company to meet the increasing demand for reproduction textiles during the early 1900s; *Pineapple*, for example, was copied directly from a late fifteenth/early sixteenth-century woollen hanging acquired by the V&A in 1864.

Charles Harvey and Jon Press's reappraisal of Morris's business skills have led Parry to rethink the final section of the book. Chapter 6 contains a twelve-page summary of Morris & Co's eighty-year history. The reorganisation of the Company under Henry Currie Marillier following Morris's death, and its subsequent rebranding as Morris & Co. Art Workers Ltd in 1925 are both discussed in greater depth.

Chapter 7 explores Morris interiors at home and in the houses furnished by the Company where textiles have played a significant role. While Parry has identified over ninety interiors worldwide in which Morris textiles were used, the chapter focuses on the same group of properties which appeared in the first edition, but the text has been expanded in order to include background material on the clients themselves, as well as new information about the textiles. For instance, we now know from Rosalind Howard's personal papers in the archive at Castle Howard that among the soft furnishings recommended by Morris for 1, Palace Green, London, were the printed cottons *Iris* and *African Marigold*, and that a set of embroideries worked by Bessie Burden hung in the dining room. Research into Clouds, the Wyndhams' estate in Wiltshire, has revealed that the couple were first offered *The Forest* tapestry and then *The Orchard* before settling on Dearle's *Greenery* tapestry for the hall. Likewise, more than ten different patterns of printed and woven textiles, including *Bird and Vine*, *Avon*, *Cray* and *Medway*, have been identified from photographs of the main reception rooms. Morris & Co.'s prestigious commission to provide carpets for the Orient Line shipping company, which received a cursory mention in 1983, is also discussed here in more detail.

One of the highlights of Parry's new edition is the chronological catalogue of extant repeating designs produced by Morris & Co. between 1868 and 1918, which accounts for nearly one third of the volume compared with only twenty-six pages in 1983. Where previously up to twelve pattern images filled a double-page spread, here there are at most seven, with several individual prints and weaves occupying not one but two whole pages. In the context of so many visually stunning photographs, it seems churlish to criticise, but I question why the designers chose to print such a small image in the case of *Severn and Squirrel* or

Fox and Grape (nos 70 and 102). Some of the patterns have been re-dated; for example, Dearle's *Cross Twigs*, no. 92, is now assigned to *ca* 1893 instead of *ca* 1898, having been used for bed hangings at Penrhyn Castle in 1894. Other entries have been expanded in order to take account of new information on exhibitions (*Marigold and Honeysuckle*, nos 10 and 27, were displayed by Thomas Wardle at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1878), client orders (*Madras Muslin*, no. 41, is mentioned in estimates for Aleco Ionides), and pricing (*Florence*, no. 76, for example, cost 4s 6d per yard when first offered for sale in *ca* 1890). New to the catalogue is *Derwent* (no. 89), designed by Dearle after 1892, plus a handful of textile samples where illustrations of the pattern alone were required to suffice in the first edition; the full-page image of Dearle's woven woollen fabric *Carnation*, no. 118, is a particularly welcome addition. The small selection of machine-made carpets tagged on the end of the 1983 catalogue has now been incorporated into the chronological sequence and expanded to include three new patterns (nos 15, 17 and 80).

William Morris Textiles is a beautifully designed, highly readable text which will appeal to historians, practitioners, dealers and collectors and all those with a passion for Morris, and the Arts and Crafts Movement. The volume offers a compelling narrative of how one man became the most important figure in British design and textile manufacture since the mid-nineteenth century. There is every reason to believe that this new edition will enjoy as long a shelf-life as its predecessor and that Parry's position as the leading authority on Morris & Co. textiles will remain uncontested for the foreseeable future.

Lynn Hulse

W.G. Collingwood's Letters from Iceland: Travels in Iceland 1897, by W.G. Collingwood & Jón Stefánsson, edited by Mike & Kate Lea, Cardiff: the R.G. Collingwood Society, 2013, 150 pp. Numerous black and white and coloured illustrations. Pbk, £18. ISBN 978-0-9546740-1-4. Available to members of the William Morris Society at the discounted price of £15 + £3 p&p. from the R.G. Collingwood Society, Collingwood and British Idealism Centre, Cardiff School of European Languages, Translation and Politics, Cardiff University, 65-68 Park Place, Cardiff CF10 3AS.

W. G. Collingwood was a Victorian scholar with many interests. He trained himself to be an archaeologist, but was most interested in painting. He met John Ruskin at Oxford in the 1870s, and took part in the Hinksey road-building project. Later he studied art at the Slade, and tutored Burne-Jones's son Philip.

Eventually he became Ruskin's secretary and worked for him at Brantwood. He was an expert in Norse influences in the Lake District, and was greatly influenced by Morris's studies of Iceland and the sagas. Following Morris's death he decided to visit that country with his Icelandic friend Jón Stefánsson, and their journey is the subject of this book. His letters home were originally published in 1996, but this is a new and copiously illustrated edition with some ancillary material. (It is worth pointing out that it is his son, R. G. Collingwood, who is commemorated in the name of the Society which has published this book; he was the co-author of the first book on *Roman Britain* in the Oxford History series, and the last pages of his 1938 memoir, *An Autobiography*, famously describe how a reclusive philosophy don became a committed opponent of Fascism.)

The journey to Iceland took place during the summer of 1897. It lasted for ten weeks, and largely followed Morris's route in 1871, though places were seen in a different order. The two men went by ship to Reykjavik; then they stayed on the boat, sailing north to Stykkisholm. From there they saw the same things as Morris, but in reverse order, eventually arriving back at Reykjavik. Finally, still in Morris's footsteps, they travelled south to the country of the Njala saga and returned via Thingvellir. On their way home they did not take the direct route to Scotland, but sailed round the north coast of Iceland, stopping off at various points. By the end of the journey Collingwood had produced three hundred paintings of the scenery, particularly of the saga-steeds, and taken numerous photographs. This work was largely a matter of record, and it is most useful to us in the William Morris Society, because it shows the scenery as it had looked to Morris twenty-five years before. Later, as their country was modernised, the Icelanders themselves realised the value of these paintings and a considerable number have found their way into local museums.

Generally the letters are pleasant and jokey, as they were mostly written to his young children. Sometimes the puns are ghastly, and we do not want to know that the Faroes were inhabited by the Fairies, and that Iceland is Niceland. But the important thing is how the numerous asides in the letters bring out and support some of Morris's views, and I should like to mention one or two of these.

Reykjavik is a poor place neglected and bleak a mere village of wood and iron houses but there are many good and fine people living here in what we should call poverty and dullness.

Morris had been similarly disappointed with the capital city, and frequently refers to the poverty of the Icelanders, but is too kind to go into detail. Collingwood is more explicit about the dirt. At Oddi :

We slept in a tiny bedroom, in 2 beds, which left only another bed's space between them, and that was filthy with candle droppings (which must have been left since winter or spring) and rubbish and dust, the leg of a doll, bits of paper. And a battered filthy old skin of I don't remember what animal. This opened out of a rather grand drawing room: and the window didn't open. Consequently the room was very foul in the morning, and not to be ventilated except into the drawing room.

There is quite a lot of this and I suppose you could answer that, unlike Morris, who was prepared to rough it, Collingwood was a very fastidious English gentleman who did not appreciate the conditions of Northern life.

He also, like Morris, was offered antiquities. In the church at Oddi

Sira Skuli [the parson] had sold the pulpit, which had old paintings of angels and devils: and now they have a joiner's contraption instead.

In the next church,

The bishop doesn't think the chalice and paten there worth taking: they are early 14th century French silver gilt and enamelled things ... all they want is to get rid of every scrap of antiquity out of their churches.

The book as a whole is a useful reminder of the lasting nature of Morris's writings on Iceland and the sagas, and also how deeply he influenced people's lives, though sometimes in unexpected ways. Like Morris, Collingwood dutifully visits each place associated with the sagas, and retells the stories to his children, but it seems shocking to us that he excavated Gudrun's grave – the Gudrun of the *Laxdaela Saga*. 'Your daddy went back next day and dug up Gudrun. I wouldn't have done it but antiquaries have pooh-poohed the tradition; and I put her all back again, except some of the teeth and a bit of her skull bone'. On his return he wrote, in conjunction with Jón Stefánsson, *A Pilgrimage to the Saga-lands of Iceland*, a fully illustrated book with maps and diagrams. This was published in 1899, and led to other books, *Scandinavian Britain* in 1908 and *Northumbrian Crosses* in 1927.

And Stefánsson? He had met Morris when he was a young man and remained under his spell; like Morris's companion, Eiríkr Magnússon, he became a British academic and lived in London for fifty years, going home to Reykjavik in 1949.

John Purkis

Gary Sargeant, *Friends and Influences: The Memoirs of an Artist*, London: Jerusalem Press Limited and Sequim WA, USA: Holmes Publishing Group, 2013, 172 pp., approx. 150 coloured and black and white illustrations, Hbk. De Luxe Limited Edition with four prints signed by the artist, £160.00; Standard Limited Edition £30.00. ISBN 9780956700438.

It is good for our side, as the media begin to propagate the government's 'celebration' of the Great War, to read about a group of artists who were mostly pacifists during that conflict. All of them owed something to William Morris, and during their later years some of them helped to found the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. Gary Sargeant, born in 1939, regarded them as his mentors, and has put together his reminiscences in this well-illustrated book.

In 1954, as a teenager, temporarily separated from his family, Sargeant found a room in Ilford. His landlady invited him to meet Nellie Lapwood, who lived next door: 'Ellen and her brother are both artists'. As a treat Nellie took him with her to Liberty's, her favourite shop, which of course he had never seen: 'To me the store was more like a museum rather than a shop'. She astonished the assistants when she bought tiny but expensive pieces of silk: 'The small pink rose fabric will make a perfect pair of elephant's trousers'. In fact her purchases were made into nursery animals, which she gave away to the children of the neighbourhood. She was the sister of Austin Osman Spare (1889–1956). At that time Spare resembled the artist in Joyce Cary's *The Horse's Mouth*, living on 7s a week, and producing innumerable paintings, most of which he seems to have given away.

Sargeant was introduced to Spare, who liked him because he could draw. When he tried to educate the boy at the Tate Gallery, 'we always headed for the Blake Room'. Every Saturday morning Nellie took Sargeant by taxi to the Sir John Cass School of Art and Crafts in Aldgate, where they all drew from the life. At the classes he met other members of the group, including Walter Spradbery and his friend Haydn Mackey. How had these friends originally come together?

Spare had become famous early. He had exhibited at the Royal Academy when he was seventeen, and was offered a free scholarship to the Royal College of Art. But he did not attend. He exhibited his pictures at London galleries, self-published a number of books, and edited art journals, such as *Form* (1917) and *The Golden Hind* (1922-4). Towards the end of the Great War he became a war artist with the RAMC, and later helped in the foundation of the Imperial War Museum and added to its collection of paintings, working from studios in the Fulham Road. During this time he met Spradbery and Mackey, who had served as non-combatant stretcher-bearers with the 36th (East Anglian) Field Ambulance; they had both suffered from a gas attack. A lifelong pacifist, Spradbery received the DCM for his bravery in rescuing wounded comrades under fire. Paintings from this period – *An Advanced Dressing Station* by Mackey and Gilbert Rogers, and

Exterior of an Advanced Dressing Station together with *An Aid Post* by Spare – are displayed in this book.

Walter Spradbery (1889–1969) came from Walthamstow and attended the William Morris School. ‘I had gained my scholarship from the day school named after him, and lived my life in the town in which he was born’. He became famous during the thirties for his posters, a very large number of which were commissioned by Frank Pick for London Transport. Their originality derives from the fact that most of them were produced from linocuts, and showed town and countryside in glowing colours. They are still available as postcards and on mugs. Spradbery lived in an enclave of Epping Forest known as The Wilderness; the William Morris Society visited him there during the 1960s, and we were given tea by his daughter Rima.

Haydn Reynolds Mackey (1881–1979) had been a child prodigy, and was guided by Walter Crane and Lord Leighton. He had been at the Slade School for a short time, and, as noted above, spent the Great War in the RAMC as an Official War Artist. He taught art in Walthamstow, where he met Spradbery, who was training to be a teacher at the Walthamstow School of Arts and Crafts. They became friends for life. Both possessed a strong social commitment, ultimately derived from Ruskin and Morris. Later they founded the Walthamstow Educational Settlement, where Gary Sargeant met them; Nellie took him to lectures and exhibitions there. Haydn taught life-drawing at polytechnics and schools all over London.

Another friend of Spradbery was Frank Brangwyn, who had been an unofficial war artist during the Great War; he was responsible for over eighty posters, which were given free to charitable organisations. He remained on the fringe of the group. Born in Bruges, Brangwyn was helped by A.H. Mackmurdo (1851–1942) to find work with Morris’s ‘Firm’. He began by tidying up in the shop in Oxford Street. As is well known, apprenticeship with Morris led to Brangwyn’s career as an artist. In 1936 the connection led to a meeting between the three of them (there is an excellent photograph showing Mackmurdo in his funny hat); Spradbery re-introduced Brangwyn to Mackmurdo, and this led to the proposal to found the William Morris Gallery, handsomely endowed by Brangwyn with paintings and the gift of his archive. For some years the three artists met at Water House and gave talks there to support the project.

The book also contains a wide collection of Gary Sargeant’s own works, together with an outline of his life and achievements. Partly because of the poor state of Mr Sargeant’s health, the reader is presented with an assemblage of rather disparate recollections and images, which needed to be tied together. A summative conclusion is provided by Stephen Pochin in an excellent ‘Afterword – Regarding an Elusive Constellation’. He explains that Spare, in editing his art journals from 1917 to 1924, encouraged the artists of his generation to submit

graphics of various kinds, especially lithographs and linocuts; this seems to have led to the 'inter-war renaissance of British print-making'. It was also the age of the private press, which of course goes back to the Kelmscott Press, and the role of the artist in book-making was pre-eminent. So the group, while still meeting regularly for their life class, developed into practitioners of various arts and crafts. Spradbery's posters are the best example, though Brangwyn, taking all his work together, is probably the most diverse artist.

John Purkis

Barrie and Wendy Armstrong, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Yorkshire: A Handbook*, Wetherby, Yorks: Oblong Creative, 2013, 317 pp., Pbk, £25.00. ISBN 9780957599222.

I am very pleased to be able to commend this excellent, locally produced, publication, a stablemate to the Armstrongs' previous hand book to the North West of England of 2006, and now produced together with a companion volume to the North East (reviewed below, p. 105). The book has very much to recommend it, with an unstuffy style, clear descriptions of key features or the most important aspects of the seven hundred buildings or artefacts featured, and the 'must see' designation used to highlight the most important locations. I must declare an interest: any guide which highlights Burges's sublime masterpiece of Christ the Consoler at Skelton-on-Ure is sure of a welcome from me. Admittedly Burges would not be regarded by many as a mainstream Arts and Crafts architect and designer, but his inclusion is a reflection of the volume's comprehensive approach and wide range of reference. The 'how to view' section is detailed and, recognising that we are in a time of significant changes when opening times and even openings themselves may be subject to significant revision, also includes diocesan contact details in case the local ones change.

There is a useful and well-written forty-page introduction and an excellent ninety-page 'Who's Who' section at the rear, which covers a lot of ground and includes Wikipedia references to follow up, as well as other texts. The quality of illustrations is very good throughout and does not just include the aspects/artefacts most commonly featured. It also contains an extensive and detailed bibliography, with an asterisk denoting books which the authors particularly recommend for their coverage of the Movement. The 260-page main section, with two columns of text per page, is logically divided into North, South, West and East Yorkshire, with a separate section on York itself.

The authors obviously intend this as a field guide, albeit an extremely well researched and erudite one. Feedback received following publication of their

previous volume suggested the inclusion of maps, and this was investigated, but the numbers and quality required were found to be incompatible with the economics of the book. Instead, the authors suggest the use of a good road atlas, and street maps of town centres, which can be run off from the internet. They also provide Ordnance Survey grid references, and 'sufficient information for SATNAV users to locate their destination'. In compilation of this handbook, the authors tell us that they 'visited 700 locations ... seeking out architectural and decorative art, created by people with Arts and Crafts connections and open to public appreciation'. In total they spent five years on the road visiting the various locations featured in the latest two volumes. Usefully they have extended the scope and timescale of the Arts and Crafts Movement beyond 1884-1914 in order to take in work carried out before 1884, particularly by the members of the William Morris circle, and continue the story by including much later productions. I enjoyed trying to spot their latest inclusions, and a 1943 window in St Lawrence, Adwick Le Street, and an A.J. Davies window of 1951 in St Matthew's, Bradford, are among those which sprang out.

The authors' comprehensiveness makes for a really satisfying approach. They refer to themselves as 'whizzing around' by car, visiting places, and their enthusiasm is infectious, making them excellent companions on a visit. They admit an ecclesiastical bias, arguing that 'churches are the most reliable and fruitful sources of many different decorative arts', but their approach and enthusiasms are catholic in a non-ecclesiastical sense. They feature buildings and artefacts ranging from a railway station buffet – the Sheffield Tap – to an Eric Gill headstone in Ilkley Cemetery.

They have undertaken a significant amount of original research, as they consulted the Archive of Art and Design and the National Art Library at the V&A, as well as the archives of Yorkshire art galleries and museums, and university and public libraries. They also acknowledge the assistance they received from a number of specialists on aspects or individual practitioners, so that this volume contains a significant amount of new information. The authors encourage readers to carry out research and fill in the gaps in existing knowledge of local Arts and Crafts practitioners.

Society Members who took part in the 2006 visit to Saltaire and beyond, will recall our difficulty in identifying the designer of the windows in the baptistery and nave of St Cuthbert's, Heaton, Bradford. It turns out that they are by Leonard Walker, and the authors' spadework has turned up an interesting attribution of the statute of St Joseph holding the Christ Child, commissioned from Eric Gill but not generally regarded as being executed by him, as being by Mary Bateman of Edinburgh. They also resolve some previous mis-attributions. The nave chancel and sanctuary ceilings of St Clement's, Barkerend Road, Bradford, also visited on that 2006 trip, include glorious gilded and painted decoration, which

has recently been restored. It was previously thought to be the work of Morris & Co., but the Armstrongs have located the sketch design and found it to be by George Frampton and Robert Anning Bell. The design was exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in 1893, and the work completed by them the following year. Their searches were not uniformly successful; they note of one later artefact that its 'authorship remains obstinately anonymous'. The authors have undertaken their research in the spirit of enquiry, speculating in advance about what they might find and anxious to discover local practitioners.

The book is also full of practical tips. 'It is a magnificent window, full of incident and detail but a long way up ... binoculars will aid enjoyment', we are told of St Chad's, Headingley, Leeds, and we are advised where to take particular care of our possessions – regrettably in the Municipal Buildings, Leeds. The authors also suggest when there is a particular case to linger over. Of the inestimable St Martin's, Scarborough, they remark, after extensive coverage of the many wonderful features of the church, covering over two pages of text, including five illustration, 'This is not a church to be visited in a rush. Seeing some of the earliest work of the Firm founded by the father of the Arts and Crafts Movement is a rare treat and one to be savoured'. The volume is excellent on the great set-pieces, but also comes into its own in the wealth of detail the authors provide on individual productions such as tile panels in pubs and the sculptured reliefs of war memorials.

The Armstrongs are knowledgeable and perceptive companions. There is a particular pleasure in their response to buildings you think you already know, and then finding out previously unrecognised aspects or features. Not only does the reader find that the authors share one's appreciation of some particular favourites such as St Aiden's, Roundhay, Leeds – 'This must be one of Brangwyn's finest pieces of work', – but they raise the reader's interest in items one has never seen but now wishes to. They write of the work carried out in the bar area of the Elmbank Hotel, York, by the 'experienced, risk-taking interior designer' George Walton. 'Once the surprise of the macro scheme has settled down a bit, look at the micro detail in the carving of the overmantle ... are those caterpillars? What about the snails? Walton's stained glass is of special interest as this is a rare opportunity to see his unique style at close quarters and remark on the inventive incorporation of sheet copper, the use of strong lead lines particularly in delineating leaf veins and his occasional dewdrops of clear light'. The book requires and deserves close reading, as the buildings featured in the Introduction are not cross-referenced to the main body of the text, nor are any additional illustrations included there. This is a slight criticism, but one which might cost the unwary on a chance site-visit.

I had intended to field-trial the volume, but winter and other preoccupations prevented me. However, if the test of any handbook is to generate an interest in going to see places and things, then the authors have certainly succeeded. I have ordered a copy of the book, and my own 'must see' list has swelled to

include Burges's 'Proto Arts and Crafts' vicarage at Bewholme, with its long cat-slide roofs, on the dormer windows at front and back, with tile-hung cheeks, which I had never previously seen illustrated, a five-light window in St Oswald's, Flamborough by Powell of Whitefriars, designed by William De Morgan, and a window in St Michael's Malton: 'The East window has an intriguing panel of the crucified Christ set against a field of sunflowers made c1883 possibly by Heaton, Butler and Bayne'.

Production standards are particularly high, so that this is a distinctive and attractive volume. One final suggestion is that this and any subsequent volumes should also be issued in e-book format. This would be suitable for use on a tablet, and would thus assist the authors' aim of encouraging research, by allowing attributions to be tested or even made by comparing the treatment of similar surfaces or subjects in different locations. As it is, the handy size of the volume is a natural for the rear pocket of a car seat for use out and about.

Ian Jones

Barrie and Wendy Armstrong, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the North East of England: A Handbook*, Wetherby: Oblong, 2013, 270 pp., fully illustrated; Pbk, £21.00. ISBN 9780957599215.

Without doubt, the Home Counties are the richest repository of work produced from the Arts and Crafts Movement, but that is no reason to ignore the rest of Britain; for not only did the London-based Morris & Co. and prestigious architects such as Edwin Lutyens and C.F.A. Voysey undertake commissions for clients far away, but there also soon developed regional schools of craft and design, referencing their vernacular traditions, and typically led by an outstanding individual, a small but industrious collective, or an educational initiative. In North-East England, the Northumberland Handicrafts Guild, operative from 1900 to 1947, exercised such an influence, as did the Keswick School of Industrial Arts (1884-1984) based in neighbouring Cumberland (now part of Cumbria). The role of sympathetic wealthy patrons, such as, in the North East, the Trevelyan family, the shipbuilder Charles Mitchell and the coalmining heiress Emily Matilda Easton, should not be underestimated either. Complementing the same authors' volumes for the North West of England (2005) and Yorkshire (2013; see previous review), this handbook covers the current counties of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Teesside.

For any *afficionado* of the Arts and Crafts, there are three stately homes in the North East which must be visited: Cragside, Wallington Hall and Lindisfarne Castle. Cragside's architect was Richard Norman Shaw, and the house contains

notable fixtures, fittings and furniture by Shaw himself and by James Forsyth, Frederick Garrard and W.R. Lethaby, as well as Morris & Co., these including unique stained glass designed by Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown and Dante Gabriel Rossetti; possibly also by Philip Webb and William Morris. Under the advice of John Ruskin, employing the Newcastle-based architect John Dobson, the Trevelyans roofed over the courtyard of Wallington Hall in order to create an arcaded room resembling an Italian *palazzo*, then commissioned William Bell Scott to decorate it with murals depicting scenes from Northumbrian history. Besides Bell Scott himself, the painters included Ruskin and Arthur Hughes. This house also contains tiles by William De Morgan, wallpaper and a carpet by Morris, paintings by Ruskin and Burne-Jones and a marble sculpture by Thomas Woolner. Originally a sixteenth-century fort, Lindisfarne Castle, bought by Edward Hudson (the publisher of *Country Life* magazine) in 1901, was transformed inside and out by Edwin Lutyens to create an awesome edifice, though a barely comfortable home. As well as much of Hudson's extensive collection of antiques, the castle still contains a large quantity of metalwork and lighting by W.A.S. Benson.

If one were to visit just one church in this region, it would have to be St Andrew's at Roker (Sunderland), which the authors rightly declare 'one of the iconic Arts and Crafts churches in the UK'. (p. 113) This robust, simple, timeless-looking building, designed by Edward S. Prior (a founder member of the Art Workers' Guild) is the epitome of Arts-and-Crafts church architecture, and it contains woodwork by Ernest Gimson, a Morris & Co. tapestry of 'The Visit of the Magi', a lectern by Peter Waals, four metal panels by Eric Gill and – though not always on display – altar frontals designed by May Morris and Louise Powell. Also deserving special mention, and visits if possible, are Holy Cross Church at Haltwhistle, St Oswald's Church in the city of Durham, and Sacred Heart R.C. Church in Gosforth (a northern suburb of Newcastle), in all three cases for exceptionally good Morris & Co. stained-glass windows.

Instead of a merely worthy, possibly dull record of the region's Arts-and-Crafts treasures, the entries are much enlivened by the authors' obvious enthusiasm for this subject and their delight in fieldwork. The guide is experiential: what Barrie and Wendy Armstrong saw and felt and what the reader might also expect when visiting these places. The authors also occasionally share an opinion or a subjective judgement. For example, their unplanned visit to Brinkburn Priory 'provided one of those heart-warming surprises for which every researcher hopes', here specifically its small stained-glass window by Hugh Arnold. (pp. 13-14) At St Mary's Church, Holywell, 'The spandrels of the doorway are decorated with carved flowers but the interior does not deliver on this hint of decorative possibilities to come'. (p. 35) The Armstrongs assert, 'There is nothing ordinary about St Andrew's Church' at Roker, (p. 113) proceeding with an elaborate appreciation

of its architectural power and the numerous treasures contained within. Overall, this church is 'a fine example of the Arts and Crafts Movement's ideal of artists, craftsmen, designers and architects working together to produce a wholly satisfying work of art'. (p. 116)

The 'Who's Who' section helpfully provides concise biographies of significant individuals and companies involved in the Arts and Crafts Movement and these include more than a few lesser-known practitioners. In practice, however, the need also to use the index to find the locations of their work in the region is rather inconvenient. The relevant page-references could have been incorporated into these biographies. The entries for Morris and Burne-Jones are factually inaccurate, for instance stating that they 'went up to Exeter College, Oxford to train for the priesthood', (p. 222) which calls into question the reliability of the other biographies provided here. Unaccountably, Voysey, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, C.R. Ashbee and Sidney Barnsley are absent from this section which is by no means limited to people based in North-East England.

Closely scrutinised by someone with local knowledge, the gazetteer is also not absolutely dependable. For instance, the authors state that St Cuthbert's Church at Beltingham is 'Usually open in summer', (p. 10) but, having attempted unsuccessfully to enter it on three occasions, all in summertime, I know this not to be the case. Fortunately, the vicarage's telephone number is provided at the end of this entry, as elsewhere through the gazetteer. Potential visitors to village churches would be wise to phone beforehand in order to ensure access. Off the subject of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the authors sometimes fall into error, as when they say that King Oswald, in 634, 'raised the sign of the Holy Cross' *after* the Battle of Heavenfield, (p. 27) whereas he actually did so immediately *beforehand*, which had a rather greater significance concerning his victory over the pagan Cadwallon.

The authors do not follow all of the normal orthographical conventions, still less those of scholarly discourse. For example, in the gazetteer, book-titles are given with single inverted commas instead of being italicised. A glaring mistake is the authors' misspelling of 'Teesside' as 'Teeside' in the table of contents and throughout that portion of the book.

Despite these criticisms, it should be said that the Armstrongs have produced a worthwhile and welcome account of the Arts-and-Crafts works to be seen in this region. Its comprehensive scope and the very detailed information contained therein make it a useful resource for researchers as well as visitors. Moreover, the book is robustly bound and attractively produced, with high-quality colour photographs throughout, making it a good companion for outings or for evenings by the fireside.

Martin Haggerty

Annette Carruthers, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Scotland. A History*. New Haven and London: For the Mellon Foundation, Yale University Press, 2013, 404 pp., 347 illustrations, \$85. ISBN 9780300195767.

This is a splendid book, to be looked at with pleasure and to be generously informed by. As the author points out in her Preface, most books about the Arts and Crafts movement have been written by scholars based in southern England, where also many of the main sources of information about the movement are located; her presence in Edinburgh and St Andrews (where she teaches) has given her easier access to the materials on which this book is based, 'the surviving works of Arts and Crafts designers in Scotland - buildings, gardens, craftwork associated with architecture, and individual objects in museums and private collections'. (p. xix)

In her introductory chapter Carruthers also points out that attention has been paid to the Arts and Crafts beyond the Home Counties in such places as the Cotswolds, Birmingham and the Lake District, but less to other areas. She draws attention to the early development of Scottish industry in the expanding Central Belt of the country, from Glasgow through to Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen, and to the importance, in relation to these developments, of the social criticism of Carlyle and Ruskin, as well as the medievalism of Walter Scott – all writers significant for Morris, whose centrality is stressed throughout. The early years saw the employment of London-based architects, but native Scots became increasingly involved.

Architecture is the enabling factor for the Arts and Crafts, and Carruthers draws attention to a range of distinguished buildings, at first mainly by English architects, and then increasingly by Scots. Important factors included Queen Victoria's enthusiasm for Scotland after her first visit in 1842, which helped to encourage wealthy Englishmen to purchase estates there, and the development of the railways. The story began in 1863, when Philip Webb was commissioned to build Arisaig House, Lochaber, badly damaged by fire in 1933, and now known only through photographs. In the countryside, the work of James MacLaren exhibited Arts and Crafts characteristics, as in the new wing at Stirling High School, where MacLaren (who sadly died in 1890) designed stonework, ironwork, lettering and furniture, as well as the building. The immensely wealthy Marquess of Bute had already employed William Burges to create his Gothic extravaganzas in Cardiff. He was, however, a Scot, and, unusually, a Nationalist in a largely Unionist society, and he commissioned a number of projects, including the extensive restoration of the House of Falkland in Fife, by the Scottish architect Robert Weir Schultz; Schultz also built Scoulag Lodge on the Isle of Bute, 1897-8. George Jack, who was born in Scotland, later took over Webb's architectural practice: in 1903 he built the sturdy *Faire na Sguir* – not far from

Webb's Arisaig House.

However, English architects continued to be employed in Scotland. Baillie Scott built the impressive White House, Helensburgh, 1899-1900, and W.R. Lethaby was commissioned by Thomas Middlemore to rebuild Melsetter on the Orkney island of Hoy. This is probably one of the Arts and Crafts houses best known to Morrisians, thanks to May Morris's involvement with the project. Middlemore employed Lethaby to create a family house, which was built by local workers and lavishly furnished, with many of the furnishings coming from Morris & Co. These included two tapestries from the *Holy Grail* series designed by Burne-Jones for Stanmore Hall, the *Ship* and what May Morris, an admiring visitor to the house, called *The Shields in the Wood*. (This tapestry provides impressive endpapers for the book under review). The rooms of the house are fully described, as is the impressive chapel with windows by Morris & Co. and Christopher Whall. Apart from the high quality of the buildings discussed, the account of Middlemore reminds one that many wealthy Arts and Crafts enthusiasts saw it as their responsibility to support the life of the community in which their buildings were erected. It is encouraging to learn that Melsetter is now securely in local ownership, and attracts many visitors to the island.

In the chapter devoted to Robert Lorimer, Carruthers shows him to have been 'the most dedicated and productive of all the Scots who developed house architecture in the 20 years before the First World War'. (p. 199) Lorimer began in Edinburgh, worked in G.F. Bodley's London practice, and then returned to Scotland to work on Earlshall Castle, Fife, 'mending' rather than restoring, to use his own terms, and set up a practice in Edinburgh in 1893. In 1903 he built Wayside in Ayrshire, the extensive documentation of which enables Carruthers to give an illuminating account of his methods, showing his concern for both outer and inner aspects of a building. Wayside was followed by Rowallan in Ayrshire, Ardkinglas on Loch Fyne, Formakin in Renfrewshire, and the remodelling of the Hill of Tarvel in Fife, 1907-8. Lorimer went on to design the Thistle Chapel at St Giles's Cathedral in a highly decorated Gothic style, employing a team of skilled craftworkers on the remarkable interior. This was to lead, after the war, to the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle, a fine work again involving many collaborators in its creation.

In Glasgow, Charles Rennie Mackintosh built the remarkable and well-known School of Art in 1899, described by Carruthers as 'an image which proclaimed Glasgow's confidence in its own unique style'. (p. 26) That style owed much to Arts and Crafts precedents, but Mackintosh and other Glasgow designers were also open to the influence of continental *art nouveau*. In Carruthers's view, Mackintosh's work in the twentieth century, however distinguished in its way, rejected many of the principles of the movement, so that in his furniture, 'appearance was more important than the manner of making'. (p. 79) In Aberdeen the

architect William Kelly was responsible for the impressive church of St. Ninian's (reproduced) as well as for high-quality house-building. His tribute to Morris is quoted:

... since William Morris showed the way, many men are turning to the crafts and decorative arts for their lifework; because they want to enjoy the pleasure of making things – expressive, beautiful, or merely good and fit of their kind. And this is one of the hopes of Architecture in our day. (p. 106)

Kelly contributed further to the city by encouraging two highly talented craftworkers, J.C. Watt, enameller and jeweller, and Douglas Strachan, muralist and stained-glass maker.

This takes us to the crafts work of the movement, which Carruthers treats equally thoroughly. The Scottish Home Industries association was founded in 1893, and good use is made of its 1895 publication in order to show the range of the crafts it encouraged, from various kinds of textiles to woodwork, with some of the products being sold in London by Liberty's. Development of the railways led to the growth of towns and the building of villas for middle-class clients, usually by local architects. The most remarkable manufacturing enterprise to be developed in the countryside was the textile business of Alexander, and later James, Morton, at Darvel in Ayrshire, which came to employ some 1,000 workers, using freelance designers, including Voysey, and exhibiting and selling its products, especially carpets, in London.

In Glasgow, Francis Newbery, Principal of the School of Art from 1885, acted energetically to encourage the movement, and his School taught and encouraged a whole range of crafts; among the numerous workers in these media, many of them women, Anne Macbeth included designs for silverwork and differing styles of embroidery (as illustrated in three fine plates), while Jessie Newbury became well known as a teacher and creator of her art needlework. Meanwhile Patrick Geddes worked with his associates in Edinburgh through the Social Union. The range of crafts was impressive, perhaps best represented through the work of the remarkable Phoebe Traquair, who came to Edinburgh from Dublin in 1873. She produced watercolours, embroidery, bookplates, illuminated manuscripts, murals, bookbindings using embossed pigskin, and enamelling. Her two major projects, undertaken simultaneously, each took her eight strenuous years. The first was painting the murals for the Catholic Apostolic Church, to act as background for the spectacular and colourful services which took place there. The work was on a huge scale – the chancel arch for decoration was 66 ft (*ca* 20m) high – and she also decorated the chancel aisles and the walls of the nave, culminating in the west wall depicting the Second Coming. Simultaneously with this great work, Traquair created a very large, four-panel embroidery of *The Progress of the Soul*, based on a story in Walter Pater's *Imaginary Portraits*. The Royal Scottish

Academy refused to make her a member in 1900 on the grounds of insufficient professionalism, but the growth of her reputation in Scotland and beyond meant that in 1920 she became the first woman to be awarded Honorary Membership. It is good to read that her Song School murals have been restored, as has the Catholic Apostolic Church, which is now the Mansfield Traquair Centre. The illustrations in the present book provide a good introduction to her remarkable *oeuvre*.

Carruthers devotes a whole chapter to Scottish stained glass, showing it to have been 'A Medium Revitalized'. She emphasises the rapid development of the medium in the forty years following the 1859-1864 installation in Glasgow Cathedral of stained glass brought over from Munich, which seemed at the time the necessary choice. Stained glass was well suited to Arts and Crafts methods and became a popular medium for public art both secular and ecclesiastical, as the Scottish churches became more favourable to the representation of religious subjects. Daniel Cottier, Stephen Adam and Oscar Paterson are shown to have been good early practitioners, followed by George Walton, David Gauld and William Morton. But the outstanding artist was Douglas Strachan, who produced some 340 windows overall (several illustrated). These include the four great windows *The Evolution of the Peace Ideal* in the Great Hall of Justice at the Peace Palace in the Hague in 1913, where the International Court of Justice now sits. Strachan also provided windows for Lorimer's Scottish National War Museum. The growing confidence of the Scots in their own work is demonstrated by the decision to remove the Munich glass from Glasgow Cathedral in 1935; it was replaced after World War II with glass by a large number of makers, mostly Scots.

Carruthers concludes her book with a judicious summary:

The ideals of art for all, for makers and users, espoused by William Morris and the pioneers of the Arts and Crafts Movement were no more achieved in Scotland than they were elsewhere, but they left a significant and valuable legacy behind them. (p. 369)

Although no attempt is made to claim that every piece of Arts and Crafts work in Scotland is included here, for clearly more research may lead to more discoveries, that legacy can now be more widely known and appreciated than before. To an Englishman who has spent little time in Scotland, it is a revelation, and a credit to all those associated with it.

Peter Faulkner

Laura Euler, *Arts and Crafts Embroidery*, Atglen, PA, USA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd. 176 pp. illustrated in colour and black and white; \$49.99. ISBN 9780764344091

Arts and Crafts was the first truly original artistic movement in America. Whereas the British origins of the style provided the initial inspiration, American architects, designers, craftsmen and practitioners moulded these ideas into a wholly different form embracing all aspects of their own multi-cultural heritage and social history and – for the first time, producing a range of work-buildings, interiors and all forms of the decorative arts – which was truly their own. This book professes to cover all aspects of the development of embroidery in Britain and America, just one small aspect of a movement which has sadly become a very popular subject for coffee-table publishing, a genre in which this book belongs.

Schiffer Publishing is an American company which specialises in the decorative arts, but in books written for the modest collector or the casually interested rather than the more serious scholar. It is not new to the subject and has published other books on embroidery including *The Glasgow Style: Artists in the Decorative Arts, circa 1900* by the same author. As with the previous publication – the book adds little to the existing bibliography and makes many factual errors and misassumptions about the subject. Consequently it cannot be recommended as either an informed or accurate survey. Despite well-meaning efforts to seek out new sources and produce a large and miscellaneous range of images, it is only when the author deals with the American commercial market of embroidery kits and amateur needlework that the book has value. Most illustrations in the book are taken from auction sales catalogues and private collections rather than museums and other public organisations so that many of the most important aspects of the subject are illustrated by secondary examples of their type.

The first part of the book concerns British work examined through chapters on the origins of the Arts and Crafts Movement, Morris embroideries, Art Needlework, Societies and Guilds, Liberty & Co., and Glasgow Style. This follows the form first explored by Barbara Morris in her influential 1962 history *Victorian Embroidery* and developed further by a number of others since that time. There is nothing new here. In fact much is muddled, omitted and in some cases, wrongly identified, including an illustration of a silk embroidery (which looks surprisingly like wool) that the author has attributed to May Morris but which bears no characteristics of her work either in design or technique. Furthermore the idiosyncratic, chatty style of the author (for example in one section she introduces a group of unidentified embroideries from a private collection with the words ‘More pretty ladies up next’) would have been better edited out of the text altogether.

The American section runs through developments in embroidery beginning

with the work of Candace Wheeler followed, rather abruptly, by Gustav Stickley, and a range of illustrations of embroidered commercial kits. Few aesthetic distinctions are made between individual craft studios producing one-off commissions of much originality such as the excellent Newcomb College (mentioned only briefly) and the Deerfield Society, with commercial factories such as Bentley-Franklin and Brainerd & Armstrong, which mass-produced commercial patterns for sale. In reality they were worlds apart and have little or no connection. The overall preponderance of illustrations in the book concern the latter type – kits for bags, tablecloths, runners, cushion-covers, dress accessories and all manner of practical items (a ‘galoshes bag’ is included) – made by amateurs in their hundreds of thousands. This will be useful for collectors hoping to identify items they own, even though many examples are not identified, including a section of twenty-six pages devoted to ‘Unknown Makers and Designers’. In many ways this egalitarian development of the movement has proved the most enduring vision of the craft movement in America and explains why it is so popular and widely collected today.

Linda Parry

Clive Bloom, *Victoria's Madmen. Revolution and Alienation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 309 pp., £30. ISBN 9780230313828.

This book, its jacket tells us, will give us ‘a unique view of Victoria’s reign through the eyes of the neglected figures of the age – assassins, occultists, anarchists, terrorists and revolutionaries’, and provide a ‘gripping account of the dark underbelly of Victoria’s Britain’ that ‘captures the unrest bubbling under the surface of a strait-laced society’. This gives warning of the reader’s likely experience, that of being hit over the head with overstatement and melodrama, all exaggerated by the publisher’s decision to combine large black type with tiny margins. The problem is compounded by the jokey titles given to many of the chapters, such as ‘Tinkerbelle on Mars’, ‘Playing Cricket in the Corridors’, and ‘Vegetarian Revolutionaries’, and by the total absence of critical apparatus. It is also difficult to see who among the main figures treated has been ‘neglected’: the names in the index with the most frequent citations – Annie Besant, Aleister Crowley, Conan Doyle, Engels, Hyndman, Jack the Ripper, Kropotkin, Eleanor and Karl Marx, William Morris, Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst, Ruskin, Shaw, Wells and Wilde – are not obscure figures to those interested in the Victorian period. What is peculiar to the book is its omission of the overall history of the period of which these characters and ideas are part. The resultant effect is of rush, and sometimes incoherence.

William Morris features quite prominently in the book, but it cannot be said that the presentation of him is convincing or consistent. At one point, Morris is said to have believed that the 'religion of humanity' would allow the world to flourish as 'a rebuke to utilitarianism', but that the same new world was 'at the same time the very product of its way of thinking. Sociology was to be the new religion of the humanist'. (p. 9) How has Morris, who never called himself a humanist or took much interest in sociology, become so confused with Auguste Comte, who was responsible for the idea of 'the religion of humanity'? – Morris preferred 'the religion of socialism'. Bloom observes that Morris turned to 'practical socialism' via the Democratic Federation 'as a way of restoring the medieval craft society he so loved' – a disputable statement in itself, which is followed even less convincingly by the assertion: 'However, his socialism was only tangentially linked to the theoretical intricacies of Marxism?' (p.115) It is not surprising that no biography of Morris is cited in the Bibliography; certainly not that of E.P. Thompson, who as long ago as 1955 provided overwhelming evidence of the importance of Marx to Morris's political thought.

It is not that the material in the book lacks interest. Chapter 4, for instance, 'Massacre at Trafalgar', though it begins with Mme Blavatsky and the occult, goes on to give an interesting account of the life of Annie Besant, and quotes her vivid description of Bloody Sunday in 1887, which we are told comes from her 'autobiographical reminiscences' of 1893 (though there is no reference to the book in the inadequate Bibliography). Bloom then tells us that the atheist republican Charles Bradlaugh, whom Besant knew, refused to take part in the demonstrations at this time because he considered them 'stage-managed to produce violence and thus show the police in the worst possible light'. Bloom then adds: 'This proved correct, as the subsequent writings of Besant, the journalist W.T. Stead and William Morris proved'. (p. 52)

This is a serious allegation, but Bloom provides no more evidence to back it up: nothing by Stead appears in the Bibliography, and Morris is represented only by *News from Nowhere*, which certainly contains no such admission. Indeed, when Bloom discusses *News from Nowhere* in Ch. 16, he remarks that the novel's account of the demonstration in Trafalgar Square shows that Morris was 'still musing over the defeat of the Radicals on Bloody Sunday in 1887!' His exclamation mark suggests that it was absurd for Morris still to remember a highly important and disturbing event that had taken place only three years earlier. Bloom's summary ends with the unexpected remark that Morris's 'utopian dream was a "vision" of future times and future possibilities. Others looked to the past for their vision of the future'. (p. 220). Emphasis on the orientation to the future of *News from Nowhere* is welcome, but consorts oddly with Bloom's earlier statement about Morris's preoccupation with medieval society.

A number of statements in the book turn out to be erroneous: we are told, for instance, that ‘Octavia Hill began the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (which later became the National Trust) in 1877’ (p. 221) – the date is right, but the founder of SPAB was Morris, and it is still an independent organisation (Octavia Hill did help found the Trust in 1896); and while Ezra Pound could be impolite, his phrase about ‘an old bitch gone in the teeth’ referred not to the late Queen (p. 247) but to the ‘botched civilization’ whom so many had died to defend; characteristically, Bloom gives no indication of where his quotation comes from; in fact, it is from the poem *Hugh Selwyn Moberley*, published as late as 1922.

Bloom draws most of his material from the lives and writings of public figures; he shows little interest in literature or the arts. Poetry appears only three times, with quotations from Tennyson, Clare and Hopkins. Tennyson’s ‘Locksley Hall’ is quoted because of the disturbed state of mind of its speaker, but the account of the poem given is scanty, and Bloom destroys the pace of the poem as carefully constructed by Tennyson by leaving no gaps between the lines, although the whole poem is written in separate couplets. Similarly, Clare’s fine poem ‘I Am’ is printed without any gaps to indicate its three stanzas, thus speeding it up inappropriately. As to Hopkins, I doubt if he would have recognised that ‘The Windhover’ showed that for him ‘the idea of destruction was the self-fulfilment of the beautiful’, or that ‘sheer plod’ is denigrated in the poem’s final section, as Bloom suggests. Since Bloom is everywhere on the lookout for the dramatic and subversive, it is surprising that he fails to invoke the strident anti-Christian rhetoric of Swinburne.

The most interesting part of the book for me was the chapter called ‘On the Frontier’, which gives a lively and informative account of the frontiersman ethos of Archie Belaney or ‘Grey Owl’, relating it to the cult of nudism, the break-off from the Boy Scouts by John Gordon Hargarve to found the movement known as Kibbo Kift (said to be archaic Kentish for ‘proof of great strength’), which attracted admiration in Nazi Germany although its members were largely pacifistic, and Leslie Paul’s left-wing Woodcraft Folk. (It is notable that none of this material has anything to do with the period given in the book’s title). Elsewhere I enjoyed the account of Sylvia Pankhurst’s murals for the Independent Labour Party hall in Salford, in the style of Walter Crane, decorated with ‘lilies, sunflowers, bees, roses, apple trees, doves, butterflies and allegorical symbols of plenty, honesty, industry and purity’. (pp. 261-262) And the final chapter is effective in reminding the reader of the disturbing prominence of the idea of violence as expressed around 1914 – though again it is frustrating to have no guidance as to where to find the comments of Edmund Gosse (on war as ‘an awakener from the idleness of opium dreams’) and Sir Charles Stanford (on war as ‘awakening the

highest forces of musical art') that are quoted so tellingly. All in all, regrettably, *Victoria's Madmen* is a rushed work of popular history of which neither the author nor the publishers can be proud.

Peter Faulkner

Hermione Lee, *Penelope Fitzgerald: A Life*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2013, 508 pp., 63 plates. Hbk, £25. ISBN 9780701184957.

This is the first biography I have read of someone I have actually known. Penelope Fitzgerald joined the William Morris Society in 1973. Over the years she was a loyal friend of the Society and she was much liked and respected. My own memories of her include standing with her on a bitterly cold day at the site of Burne-Jones's house, The Grange, in Kensington, to watch a blue plaque being unveiled. In 1982 she edited Morris's only novel, the unfinished *Novel on Blue Paper*, and of course her greatest and most lasting contribution to Morris studies is her biography of Burne-Jones, published in 1975. Penelope combined a scholarly concern for exactitude with a novelist's sensibility, producing what is as much the portrait of a marriage and of a remarkable woman, Georgiana Burne-Jones, as a biography of an artist. Though she is best known now for her fiction, Penelope was a fine biographer, and books on the Knox brothers, and the poet Charlotte Mew, were to follow.

What then would she have made of her own biography? Hermione Lee writes that 'perhaps self-deceivingly, I have felt while writing this book that she might not have disapproved of me as her biographer – if there must be a *Life* – because she had liked my book about Virginia Woolf, and had been kind to me when we met'. (p. 433) I will return to that *proviso*, but let me begin by saying that, like Penelope's own biographies, this is an absorbing read: thoroughly researched, judicious, sympathetic, yet pulling no punches. It is also a visually attractive book with Penelope's own charmingly idiosyncratic drawings scattered throughout the text.

Above all, Lee sets out with great skill the ways in which the work grew out of the life. Penelope said that in her writing she aimed to be true to 'the courage of those who are born to be defeated, the weaknesses of the strong and the tragedy of misunderstandings and missed opportunities which I have done my best to treat as comedy, for otherwise how can we manage to bear it'. (p. xvii) She had plenty of this in her own life: the courage as well as the weaknesses, the tragedies, and the missed opportunities.

Penelope was the daughter of Evvoe Knox, the editor of *Punch*, who was one of

four extraordinary brothers: the others were Dyllwyn, a brilliant mathematician and Bletchley Park code-breaker, Ronald Knox, a Monsignor, writer of detective stories and the most famous Roman Catholic convert in England, and Wilfred, ascetic Anglo-Catholic priest and welfare worker. Lee succeeds in creating a more nuanced picture of the Knoxes than was possible for Penelope in her biography of the brothers. Highly talented, the family was also highly competitive and unforgiving of failure. This heritage was a mixed blessing, as Lee points out, and part of the pain of Penelope's difficult middle age must have come from knowing how far she had fallen short.

Yet it had begun so well for her. At Oxford, she seemed effortlessly brilliant, a golden girl of whom much was expected. A fellow student at Somerville commented that 'Everyone else wrote [essays] at length, but Penelope Knox wrote one paragraph and that was enough' and, as Lee comments, 'It would always be enough'. (pp. 56-57) She got a First. Soon after she graduated the war began. After a spell with the Ministry of Food, she joined the BBC and after the war ended reviewed books and did some script-writing for the BBC. Penelope herself expected that she would write fiction. 'Women, if they possibly can, *must* write novels', she said in a review of a novel by Elizabeth Taylor in 1947. (p. 88) But her literary career petered out and her first novel, *The Golden Child*, did not appear until 1977, when she was sixty-one. What went wrong?

It is tempting to say that she married the wrong man. There was an unrequited love – Penelope never divulged his identity – and a hurried war-time wedding to a dashing young Irish officer and barrister, Desmond Fitzgerald. The early years of her marriage were occupied by attempts to get and stay pregnant. Her first baby died soon after birth and she suffered numerous miscarriages before the birth of her first son, Valpy, in 1947. Two girls, Tina and Maria, followed. No doubt these were busy years, but the real problem lay with Desmond, who had come back from the war with what would now be diagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder, and began drinking heavily. Their marriage was dogged by money problems and finally in 1962 Desmond was caught forging signatures on cheques. He escaped prison, but was disbarred and forced to leave his Chambers. He spent the rest of his working life as a clerk in a travel agent's. Penelope worked at several jobs as a teacher to make ends meet. In her Burne-Jones biography she writes: 'The fact that Morris, Burne-Jones and Rossetti could live through those days and months and maintain such a convincing everyday life will only seem strange to those whose marriage has experience no crisis'. (p. 223) Yet her marriage endured and when Desmond died aged 59 in 1976, she wrote to an old friend that it was a 'dreadful blow ... the truth is that I was spoilt, as with all our ups and downs Desmond always thought that everything I did was right'. (p. 237)

But for a writer no experience is wasted and of no-one is that truer than Penelope Fitzgerald. Sensibly Lee breaks with chronological order and discusses the

novels, *Human Voices*, *The Bookshop*, *Offshore*, and *At Freddie's* in the context of the events which inspired them, though the books were not published until many years later. Penelope had always been a novelist in the making. Working in the war-time BBC, leaving London with her children to run a failing bookshop in Suffolk, living on the Thames on a dilapidated barge, teaching at a stage school: these experiences provided rich material for her first four novels.

Even the teaching jobs she found demanding and exhausting were part of her long apprenticeship. Lee examines her annotated copies of her teaching texts and concludes that 'the conversations she was having with writers in her teaching books show her thinking deeply and intently about art and writing. They show how the deep river was running on powerfully, preparing to burst out'. (p. 202) The same was true of her biographies: 'the questions she asked herself about how to enter into another person's life, the melancholy and the mess of the lives she was drawn to, all fuelled her novel writing, the more so as fictions of history replaced autobiographical fictions'. (p. 263) Of those last novels, *Innocence*, *The Beginning of Spring*, *The Gate of Angels*, and *The Blue Flower*, Penelope said 'the moment comes when you have to step outside your own experience because you have used everything you want to write about and maybe many things that are too painful for you to mention'. (p. 464) Reviewers commented on the ease with which she appeared to evoke the past, but Lee shows what extraordinary pains she took with her research, whether the setting was Italy in the 1950s and earlier or Moscow in 1913. And what an extraordinary late flowering these four short novels represent. Her last novel, *The Blue Flower*, published when she was seventy-eight, gained her an international reputation.

Lee admits that 'there are many things [Penelope] did not want anyone to know about her, and which no-one will ever know'. (p. 434) Many family documents, including letters from her mother, who had died when Penelope was eighteen, were lost when their barge sank in the Thames. Her war-time letters to Desmond have not survived. But it was also Penelope's nature to be reticent and to guard her privacy. Some of those things too painful to mention included Desmond's disgrace and her relationship with her daughter-in-law. Deeply attached to Valpy, she was horrified when he became engaged at eighteen to a Spanish girl and married her as soon as he left Oxford. Lee does not gloss over Penelope's sometimes unwelcoming and unkind behaviour and she would not have been doing her job properly if she had. And Lee shows her too as an admirable person: stoical, unassuming, devoted to her children, loyal to her husband. Still, I found myself wincing from time to time and I closed the book thinking how much Penelope would have disliked her private life being laid bare. Yet she was a biographer, too, and someone to whom the truth was important. She would have understood the need for honesty.

So, yes, returning to that earlier proviso – if there had to be a Life – and perhaps for a writer of Penelope's stature there did have to be one – it is difficult to imagine a better one than this.

Christine Poulson

Carl Levy, ed, *Colin Ward. Life, Times and Thought*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2013, 144 pp., £12.99. ISBN 9781907103735

This book gives the reader the impression that Ward was a thoughtful, humane and sympathetic person, but there is little here to show that he was an influential writer. Perhaps the cover, with its curious image of a yellow face on a green background – though attributed to Clifford Harper, an admired anarchist artist, and based on a photograph of Ward – helps to set a mood in which hopes and aspirations figure more strongly than achievements. In fact, the editor's claim for Ward is modest: he was 'one of the most significant thinkers and activists in the British anarchist movement in the second half of the twentieth century'. (p. 70) How many others can most of us name? By contrast, the back-cover blurb is extravagant: 'He was a prolific journalist who had a profound impact on political thought ...' It is exactly evidence for such a claim that the book fails to provide. Perhaps the fault lies with the form of the book. It is arguable that had Levy written it all, it would have been more coherent and less repetitive. As it is, we are given Levy's introductory chapter, followed by seven short chapters by different academic authors with anarchist sympathies.

The story, as it emerges – not made any clearer by the absence of a Chronology and a Bibliography, though there is a good Index – is of birth in 1924 in a Labour-supporting family in suburban Essex, and working as a teenager for the architect Sidney Caulfield, who we are told 'acted as a living link with the Arts and Crafts movement and the memory of William Morris'. (p. 8) While serving in the army in Glasgow in 1944, he discovered anarchism, which was to hold his lifelong allegiance. We are told that he took his inspiration from the great anarchists, Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin (whose influence has a chapter to itself), and later by Herzen, Gustav Landauer (who was particularly important for him), Geddes, Mumford, Buber and Isaiah Berlin. The essential conviction, which sustained him throughout his life, was that ordinary people could develop for themselves better social institutions than could be created by the State, always seen as an agent of repression. It was the job of anarchists to offer an alternative perspective and prospect. He was a witness at the trial in 1945 of the anarchist group behind *War Commentary*, and its members became his friends and collaborators.

During the 1950s and '60s he worked as a draughtsman for some unspecified architects involved with schools and municipal housing, but (for reasons not explained) he then retrained to teach in further education. He taught at Wandsworth Technical College, concentrating presumably on social issues, since there is no suggestion that he was ever interested in the arts – no painters, musicians or writers appear in the Index. He later became education officer for the voluntary Town and County Planning Association, founded as the Garden City Association by Ebenezer Howard, whose ideas he admired. He edited the *Bulletin of Environmental Education* for the TCPA (no dates are given for these activities). He became a prolific journalist, writing principally for *Freedom* and *Anarchy*, but also for more mainstream journals such as *New Society* and the *New Statesman*. In a lively passage from *Freedom* in 1957 Ward called upon anarchists to

develop those forms of social organisation which are the alternative to the government and authoritarian social structure ... This means, by lending our support to whatever tendencies we can find towards workers' control in industry, toward local autonomy in social affairs and public services, towards greater freedom and responsibility for the young, towards everything that makes for more variety, more dignity and quality in human life. (p. 42)

Pietro Di Paola, who quotes this passage, also tells us that Ward was aware that anarchists were not successful in winning over potential sympathisers such as members of CND, 'because of the incapacity to formulate and offer anarchist alternatives in the most important fields of life'. (p. 46) This he clearly aimed to do in *Freedom* and more widely; but how far did he succeed? David Goodway – in a lucid discussion of the relation between the ideas put forward in the 1960s in *Anarchy* and in the *New Left Review* – draws attention to the fact that, after the Labour landslide of 1945, anarchists became 'very isolated indeed' in their hostility to the government's 'nationalisation and welfare legislation'. (p. 57) This point is developed by Carissa Honeywell in her account of the ideas Ward put forward when he was appointed as Visiting Centenary Professor in the Department of Social Policy at the LSE in 1995-6. These included a severe critique of the Welfare State as developed by the Labour government, and of Council Housing: 'We took the wrong road to welfare', he argued, by creating a state-administered system following on from the Fabian-influenced minority report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law in 1909. 'The great tradition of working-class self-help and mutual aid was written off, not just as irrelevant, but as an actual impediment, by the political and professional architects of the welfare state'. He envisaged instead 'a welfare society of socially embedded economic relationships'. (p. 89)

In a lively passage he expressed his fundamental preference for voluntary to State action, with reference to Victorian society, using italics to underline the contrast:

When we compare the Victorian antecedents of our public institutions with the organs of mutual aid in the same period, the very names speak volumes. On the one side the Workhouse, the Poor Law Infirmary, the National Society for the Education of the Poor in Accordance with the Principles of the Established Church; and the other, the *Friendly Society*, the *Sick Club*, the *Co-operative Society*, the *Trade Union*. One represents the tradition of fraternal and autonomous associations springing up from below, the other that of authoritarian institutions directed from above. (p. 94)

This is undoubtedly appealing, and the argument that state action can result in dependency needs to be faced, but what Honeywell, like the other contributors to this book, fails to do is to give any idea of the effects of Ward's arguments on his audience or his colleagues or, when they were published in 1996 in the form of the book *Social Policy: An Anarchist Response*, on the books' readers. There must have been reviews, but these are not mentioned, and no idea is given of whether they were taken up in any way in the Labour movement. Perhaps they appealed more to Conservatives, but of that we hear nothing either. Honeywell summarises Ward's position: 'Ward offers a model of social policy that separates the public sphere from top-down ideologies of social provision'. (p. 103) She concludes that Ward's work is relevant to the 'pressing' present need now for 'the left-wing reclamation of mutualist and self-help welfare idioms from the free market right, and from the theoreticians of the "Big Society"'. (p. 104) But she gives no indication as to if or where this might be happening.

Robert Graham gives a clear account of Ward's ideas about anarchism and social organisation, suggesting that he believed that 'given a common need, a collection of people will, by trial and error, by improvisation and experiment, evolve order out of the situation'. (pp. 112-113) We are told that he 'provided extensive evidence that workers' control of industry is entirely feasible', (p.113) with a reference to his book *Anarchy in Action*, but offers no account of why the very idea has disappeared so completely from recent politics in this country. Graham was encouraged by the Zapatistas in Mexico during the 1990s, the 'Battle of Seattle' in 1999 and Arab Spring of 2011, suggesting that Ward had paved the way for the 'resurgence of anarchism in the twenty-first [century]'. (p. 114) But has this occurred? Not as far as I can see.

Stuart White's final chapter on social anarchism and lifestyle anarchism, distinguishing varieties of anarchism that the often-quoted Murray Bookchin claimed were incompatible, argues that Ward had, in his conciliatory way, shown that this was not the case and that a bridge could be built. He was thus able to offer a 'balanced perspective' which, for White, helped to make Ward's work 'a major and stimulating contribution to anarchist, and wider progressive, thought'. (p. 131) Similarly, Peter Marshall describes Ward as 'a determined sower of anar-

chist ideas in many fields and one of the most influential anarchists since the Second World War'. (p. 20) But these claims lack force because no evidence is offered at any point that Ward had any influence in any of the policy areas about which he wrote. How were his works received? We are left to guess.

How good a writer was Ward? None of the contributors tells us except in the most general terms. Levy found Ward's 'strangely foreign and exotic language ... alluring to an American' – he did not know what 'adventure playgrounds' were, and could not understand why squatters did not get their heads 'staved in by a billy club' – and enjoyed being introduced to 'interesting names' like Landauer, Comfort and Buber. Thus he judges *Anarchy* to have been 'a wonderful journal'. But is personal testimony like this enough? A piece of what seemed to me good writing is quoted from an article on 'Anarchism and the Informal Economy' in 1986; in it, a craftsman is imagined

sitting in his shop with a copy of William Morris's *Useful Work versus Useless Toil* on the workbench, his hammer in his hand, and his lips full of brass tacks, his mind full of liberating his fellow workers from industrial serfdom in a dark satanic mill. (p. 108)

This is an appealing if rather backward-looking picture – especially when preceded by a criticism of 'a Big Brother State with a responsibility to provide a pauper's income for all and an inflation-proof income for its own functionaries'. It would be nice to think that Ward often wrote like this, but little evidence is given on this matter. Ward's numerous books, often co-authored, include *Anarchy in Action* (1973) as to which of these are most worth reading today. Overall, therefore, though it contains many interesting ideas, this book strikes me as a missed opportunity.

Peter Faulkner

Rosalind Williams, *The Triumph of the Human Empire. Verne, Morris and Stevenson at the end of the world*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013, 416 pp, Hbk \$30, E-book \$18. ISBN10: 0226899551.

According to the publisher's website, this book has been widely well-received, but I am sorry to report that I found it an immensely frustrating read. The author's overall mission – she is professor of the history of science and technology at MIT – is to review the artistic predicaments facing three authors – Jules Verne, Morris, and Robert Louis Stevenson – at the close of the nineteenth century, and also the closing of 'the frontier', and of the Earth's limits, which are said by then to have been fully explored, hence finally establishing Francis Bacon's 'Human Empire'

of *The New Atlantis*, and of the title. A factor uniting these authors' work is said to be that in order to cope with an increasingly modernising world, in which ordinary life is 'no longer "realistic"', they each of them retreated from realism into romance. A second factor also said to unite them, is that they each 'repeatedly' left the land for water, and that they all grew up, and lived, around the shores of the North Sea, and therefore need to be understood as 'regional' writers.

Searching for similarities between such a disparate trio seems to me a hazardous exercise, and one whose inherent dangers I am not sure the book has escaped. Verne, for example, has always struck me, and, I suppose, everyone else, as an arch moderniser who eulogised technology, and who indeed invented 'hard', 'techie' science fiction with its obsession with powered machines. Although apparently he sometimes pointed out the disadvantages of rapid change – for indigenous, tribal and other pre-modern societies, whose causes he then championed – his remedy for *their* predicament was an enlightened colonialism, and the dragging of pre-modern peoples into the modern world. His own politics were conservative libertarian. In contrast, 'apart from the desire to produce beautiful things, the leading passion' of Morris's life was, as widely known, 'hatred of modern civilization', fired by 'a deep love of the Earth and the life on it, and a passion for the history' of the human past. Stevenson, although he came from the distinguished Scottish family of engineers, in contrast to Verne forsook modern technology for historical romance, and for the earthly paradise of the South Seas, but he too was no socialist.

I am less competent to comment on the first and third sections of the book – those on Verne, and on Stevenson – but when we come to Morris, there are a number of inaccuracies, and perhaps more serious, a series of obfuscations (some of which, I suspect, are intended to make Morris more 'accessible') which are the root of my frustration. Thus members may be interested to learn – in no particular order – that Morris was a 'folklorist'; that he was both 'an engineer', 'an entrepreneur and innovator' (which makes him sound like James Dyson), and a 'manufacturer of consumer goods'; that he was a 'Little Englander'; that at many points in his life he expressed views which would now be regarded as 'unenlightened at best'; that he could easily be called 'a revolutionary conservative', or (according to Fiona MacCarthy, apparently) a 'conservative radical'; that he was 'no more interested in socialist theory than in literary theory' (in which he was also 'disinterested'; *sic*); that his reputation today rests largely on his late books and his invention of modern fantasy fiction (yet another author who has not heard of 'Morris the Green'); and perhaps most serious, that by the end of his life Morris had concluded that 'neither poetry, nor romance, nor the decorative arts, nor socialism, could do much to keep modern civilisation from devouring ... the Earth'. *News from Nowhere*, meanwhile, is depicted 'as more like a farewell to paradise than a description of one' ('more an elegy than a utopia'), and as

'hardly utopia, but neither is it dystopia'. In fact, according to the author, it is an 'alienated' utopia.

There are also many inaccuracies: for example, that Kelmscott House is a 'three-story' house 'upstream of the Thames embankment', lying just 'downstream' of London's first suspension bridge; that Morris was educated 'west of London' (well, in the sense that San Francisco is 'west of London', I suppose, yes); that Morris's school at Marlborough is 'near Swindon' (not in any socio-economic sense, it ain't!); that 'Kelmscott Manor House' (*sic*) is in 'rural west England'. More generally, the North Sea does not include the Irish Sea or the Celtic Sea; the climate of the North Sea region is not 'rainy' (that would be the weather, as this year we all know all too well), but 'humid'; the Italian Alps are not 'more or less' in the same location as the German forests of the Wolfings; the steep slopes up and down which Morris rode his pony in Iceland were probably not composed of 'shale' (a deep-ocean, sedimentary deposit), but of 'scree' (i.e. frost-shattered rock, in this case, volcanic); that a *jökulhlaup* is caused by melting ice, not by volcanic activity; that Iceland *was* inhabited by human beings before its 'discovery' by the Norse (although only by Irish monks, whom the Vikings chased away); that the *Althing* is indeed *one* of the earliest-known expressions of democratic self-government, but may not pre-date the Greek *polis*, the Iroquois League, or egalitarian Neolithic villages. And (perhaps most important for understanding the point of the entire story) the emaciated, worn-out, ragged old man who touches his hat to Guest at the end of *News from Nowhere* is clearly *not* part of Nowhere, but of the capitalist world to which Guest – although he does not quite know it yet – *has already returned*.

Such deficiencies (the above list is not exhaustive) are a great pity, because the book does contain much information which may be of interest to Morrisians. For example, during the 1860s, Verne began writing *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, an 'exaggerated version of the Second Empire' only published long after his death. Here, the city has become a port, connected to the sea by a canal 140 km long, 70 m wide, and 20 m deep. Ocean liners with thirty masts and fifteen chimneys (still powered by a mixture of steam and sail, then?) draw up alongside the quays. There are also 'fax-like' machines used to send information, a giant analog computer for keeping accounts, driverless trains on the Metro, and 'gaz-cabs' running silently on the roads. However, under a kind of 'global cooling', a new Ice-Age has begun – eerily Verne assigns the beginning of this trend to the winter of 1961/2, just twelve months prior to one of the coldest winters of the real twentieth century – and the starving city is now a frigid waste-land controlled by 'unrelenting capitalistic and political bureaucracies'. Such 'steam punk' dystopias are nowadays two-a-penny, of course, but Verne's is surely one of the earliest. But his strategy of projecting current trends into the future, is much more that of Bellamy than of Morris.

Stevenson, after giving up engineering for romance, eventually left Scotland, first to travel steerage across the North Atlantic, and then by train to California, in order to seek out Fanny Osbourne, the (already married) woman with whom he was in love, but his accounts of those journeys, and of the mainly working people he met, and the harrowing conditions of their everyday lives, was rejected by his publisher as too 'squalid'. 'Across the Plains' was published a few years later, but 'From the Clyde to Sandy Hook', the story of the ocean voyage, did not appear until after his death, and not in full until the 1960s. As is well-known, Louis and Fanny did eventually marry, and made their way to the South Seas, where they encountered the phenomena Jared Diamond has epitomised (again not always accurately) as *Guns, Germs and Steel* – disease, dwindling populations, deserted islands. Stevenson developed great sympathy for these peoples oppressed by colonialism, comparing their experiences to those of the Highlanders subjected to the Clearances in his homeland, and of the victims of the Irish 'potato famine'. (NB: throughout all the years of this so-called 'famine', Ireland remained a net exporter of food, mainly to the British mainland) Like Morris, better to understand their mindset and their traditions, he learned what were in his case several local languages, but could do little for them, as his own politics were 'neo-feudal paternalism'.

In a way, I am sorry to write such a negative review, as I know how wounding they can be. My problem is, I think, that I did not really learn anything much about Morris from the book. This might not matter to readers who are new to him, except that it contains so many inaccuracies that I could not possibly recommend it as a starting point. What it needs, I think, is a thorough editing, but then, as someone once did not quite say, 'Well, I would, wouldn't I?'

Patrick O'Sullivan