

# The History of a Commission

## Eleanor Leighton-Warren and the Burne-Jones window in Tabley Chapel, Cheshire (1897)

*Rosalyn Gregory*

Tabley Hall in Cheshire, North West England, is a red brick eighteenth century country house designed by John Carr for Sir Peter Byrne Leicester and completed in 1767. The estate was owned by the Leicester family for over seven hundred years, the family living in the Old Hall on the island in Tabley Mere (a shallow lake) until the current property was constructed. Its extensive British art collection is now owned by the University of Manchester, whilst two floors of the house are run by a private health company. Both the art collection and the chapel are open to the public.<sup>1</sup>

Tabley Chapel's settled appearance belies a troubled history. Standing beside the Palladian family seat, completed in 1769, its position suggests that the seventeenth century chapel was *in situ* when the mansion was built: a palimpsest familiar in many English country houses. The history of Tabley's architecture is in reality the reverse – for 158 years the two buildings were separated by the waters of the Mere and the chapel was only grafted onto the house in 1927. For the intervening century and a half the Leicester-Warren family travelled by boat or by bridge to the chapel on the island for services.<sup>2</sup>

This curious weekly pilgrimage was dictated by the terms of a will. When Sir Peter Byrne Leicester (1732–1770) inherited Tabley in 1742, he was bound to maintain the estate intact. At this stage the property consisted of a hall on the island which was begun in 1380 and had been altered and extended ever since. Sir Peter was unhappy with such an antiquated arrangement and immediately began to draft plans to build the mansion which can be seen today. Unable to allow the Old Hall to fall into disrepair, the family maintained it as a separate, though sparse, establishment. It existed as an anomaly, the heavy Elizabethan woodwork illustrating its delicate poise between Romantic ruin and baronial hall.

A nineteenth century photograph shows Lord de Tabley (1835–1895), later the third Baron, with two of his sisters on the lawn outside the uninhabited property: neatly capturing the family's continued tie to the site. Lord de Tabley's pose, warily proprietorial, gives little hint of his attachment to the Old Hall. The 'Biographical Notice' appended to his posthumously published *Flora of Cheshire* proposes a cure for his crippling melancholia – retreat to the island 'bearing a hall still in substantial repair [...] The island is approached by a bridge, on which there is a locked gate, which need never have been opened save on Sundays and holidays'.<sup>3</sup> On the third Lord's death in 1895 the island was designated a wildlife sanctuary in his honour.<sup>4</sup>

The chapel itself was added to the Old Hall between 1674–5 by the noted local antiquary Sir Peter Leicester (1613–1678). By the nineteenth century it had become the victim of a twin tyranny: the mania for the decorative arts, expressed both in amateur efforts and the professional commission of the Burne-Jones window, and the pervasive passion for nostalgia. Confronted with the chapel, Ormerod's *history* of Cheshire shifts from clinical cataloguing to evaluation, albeit in parenthesis:

In the south-east part of the island is a domestic chapel of red brick, finished with large bay windows at the sides, a pointed east-window and a bell turret at the west end. The interior is neatly fitted up with oak desks, and precisely resembles a college chapel. Over the door is the date 1675. [It has been considerably altered and improved within the last twenty years, and is now adorned with two or three beautifully painted windows, by the Misses Warren].<sup>5</sup>

The chapel attracted interest beyond acts of familial piety. Elizabeth Gaskell's reminiscences of her Knutsford childhood use a visit to the Old Hall as a paradigm of her idyllic upbringing:

Here on summer mornings did we often come [...] and when a meal was spread beneath the beech tree of no ordinary size one of us would mount up a ladder to the belfry of the old chapel and toll the bell to call the wanderers home. Then if it rained, what merry-making in the old hall. It was galleried with oak settles and old armour hung up, and a painted window from ceiling to floor.<sup>6</sup>

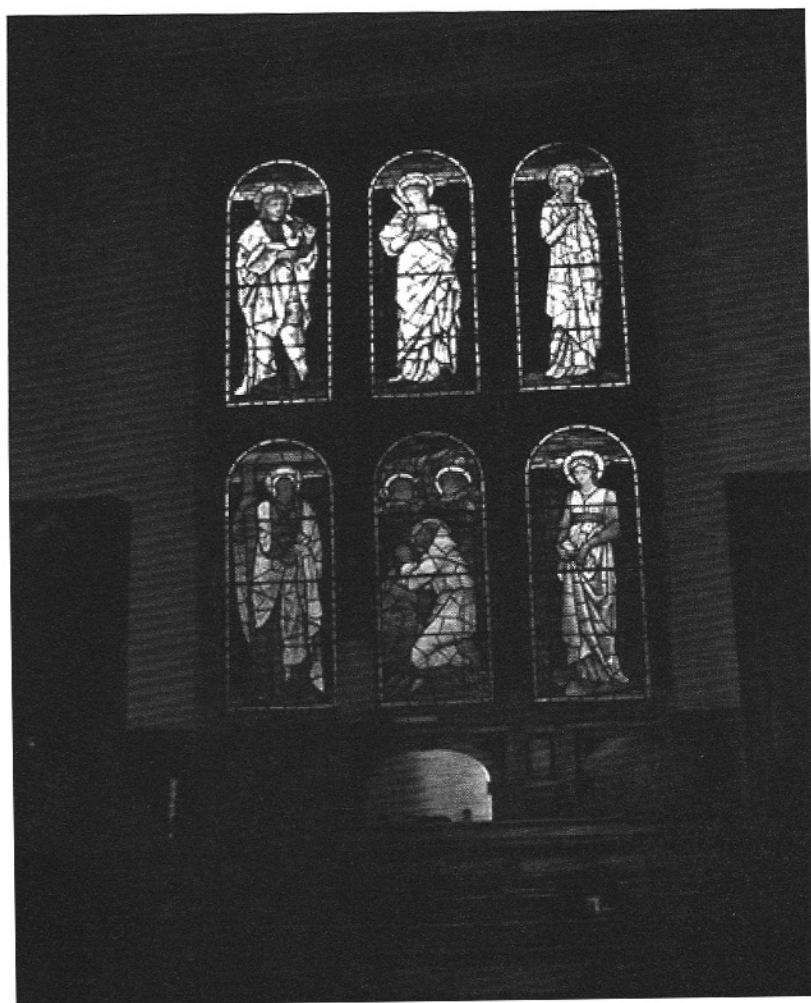
This appears impossibly idealised; yet the image of the hall as Romantic retreat persisted. By the early twentieth century Sir Peter's *mortmain* over the estate brought pressing practical problems. The owner, Cuthbert Leicester-Warren (1877–1954), could no longer afford to keep the hall in repair. Driven to act 'the owner [...] will, rather than see his picturesque and historic family home collapse before his eyes, sell it *en bloc* for re-erection elsewhere'. Confronted with such a

depressing prospect *Country Life* appealed to local feeling: 'it is desirable that an English – and, if possible, a Cheshire – purchaser will come forward; but better rebuild the Old Hall in America than let it collapse in Bucklow Hundred'.<sup>7</sup> This plan was never realised: the Old Hall was left to slowly decay whilst the chapel was, somewhat improbably, saved by the chemical industry. Industrial pumping for brine gradually eroded the surrounding ground and one day in 1927 subsidence swallowed parts of the Old Hall, necessitating the hasty removal of the chapel to the mainland.

The personalities of the nineteenth century heirs to the estate determined the decoration of the chapel. The second Lord de Tabley, George Leicester-Warren (1811–1887), married Catharina-Barbara, daughter of Count de Salis, on 21 June 1832. *Burke's Peerage* records the lives of six children, two sons and four daughters.<sup>8</sup> However, there was also a fifth daughter, Meriel Susan, who was born and died in 1837. Her existence may simply have escaped official record: an understandable omission in an age of high infant mortality. That her brief life was not dismissed is evident from the memorial window in Tabley Chapel (Figure 1), where Meriel is commemorated by 'a seraph head with red wings above; the halo inscribed "Meriel Susan"'.<sup>9</sup> Given this artistic acknowledgement, it is surprising that the baby Meriel goes unrecorded in a drafted family tree found in the scrapbook of the third daughter of the family, Eleanor Leighton-Warren (1841–1914), who eventually succeeded to the estate on the death of her brother John, third Baron de Tabley.<sup>10</sup>

Reading the family's correspondence forces a shift in perception. The letters instantly expose the falsity of any belief that all noble families in this period were distant from their children. Catharina, Lady de Tabley, hoarded a series of notes and drawings produced by the children – mostly sketches of flowers and copies of heraldic arms. Amongst these scraps there is more personal material. Margaret Leicester-Warren (1847–1921) emerges from the archive as the most vulnerable voice. Her attachment to home is evident from her earliest note: 'My dear Mama I send you a picture of Saint Barbara and Saint Catharine [*sic*] and my love and a kiss. Your affectionate Maggy'.<sup>11</sup> Margaret's contribution to a joint letter to their parents in Germany continues this tone – she promises her mother 'I will rite to you agane [*sic*]'. Every detail is recorded: Catherine Leicester-Warren (1838–1881) dutifully declares 'I clean my teeth every morning and go to bed at 8 o'clock'. Such domestic intimacy gives an insight into Eleanor's decision to commission a window to commemorate her siblings when she took over the estate.

Eleanor's memorial was an act of artistic piety. The nineteenth century vogue for memorial windows was championed in an anonymous review of J. H. Markland's *Remarks on English Churches* as an appropriately unostentatious homage with the added incentive of permanency: reviving the medieval mindset when



*Figure 1: Memorial window in Tabley Chapel. Photo: R. Gregory.*

'church-building was a delight, a luxury, a passion'.<sup>12</sup> The Leicester-Warrens' drive for gradual embellishment was of necessity private but no less sincere. It was a communal act – the reredos in the chapel was carved by Hope Meriel and painted by Eleanor.<sup>13</sup> Employing Edward Burne-Jones (1833–1898) to design the family memorial window was testament to this shared history, one which placed

Eleanor firmly within a growing culture of aristocratic women wielding power through ecclesiastical commissions.<sup>14</sup>

Eleanor's decision to honour her siblings reveals the deep attachment to home she retained throughout her life. This emotional bond was recognised by Burne-Jones's wife, Georgie, in her letter of condolence on the death of Eleanor's brother:

I wonder where you are – if you were sent for, and if you are haunting the places of your girlhood? [...] I am so grieved for you. You clung to your own people so desperately – You will be living over so many things – and will feel so tender about them all.<sup>15</sup>

On inheriting the estate Eleanor held it in trust for her second son Cuthbert; he assumed the name Leicester-Warren and a year later Eleanor chose to couple her married and her paternal inheritance by styling herself Leighton-Warren. Her love of Tabley infects the polite forms of her speech at the ceremony to mark her son's coming of age:

It is not easy for a woman to fill any responsible position, and, as a land-owner of Tabley, let me take this opportunity of thanking you for all your help and sympathy and co-operation which I have met with from my tenants, co-operation that has made a difficult position comfortably easy to hold, for working with you is more than a mere business connection.<sup>16</sup>

The strength of Eleanor's influence at Tabley is evident from her involvement in three of the chapel's windows. Aside from the Burne-Jones commission, her hand is found both in the chancel window and the three-light painted window now placed on the south wall, above the door (Figure 2). The east window today consists simply of panes of tinted green glass – a naturalistic touch which jars with the solemnity of the chapel's heavy wooden interior. These eighteen lights replaced the 1858 window which was shipped to a cathedral in Mozambique following Eleanor's objections to something in its design. Why it was considered unsuitable yet worth preserving to the extent of shipping it to Africa remains obscure. A photograph in the tearoom at Tabley captures the chapel decked out for a Freemasons' Festival in 1918, providing a glimpse of the window in its original state. The photograph of the chancel shows the window to be made up of single figures set against canopied backgrounds: the picture is too faint to discern what could have angered Eleanor. It may be that it was an inferior Gothic imitation, unattractive to her aesthetic sense.

The painted window on the south wall was executed by the daughters of the family as a memorial to their mother, Catharina, Lady de Tabley, who died in 1869. It depicts Pentecost, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, but, placed high up in the wall, it seems curiously truncated. In Eleanor's scrapbook, there are two



*Figure 2: Detail of painted window in Tabley Chapel. Photo: R. Gregory.*

separate sketches of a design for stained glass. These are partially coloured and annotated with professional care 'white and yellow grisaille [...] yellow and red apples'.<sup>17</sup> Whilst they might represent nothing more than an artistic exercise, the evidence of the layout of the chapel prior to its removal from the island suggests otherwise. Ormerod notes 'two or three beautifully painted windows', and an article in *Country Life* supports this observation. The latter supplements its history of the family's art collection with photographs of the chapel on the island.<sup>18</sup>

The photograph 'The Pulpit and the Minister's Desk', besides offering a glimpse of a ceiling decorated with stars, shows the painted window in its original position behind the pulpit. Here the window contains six lights. The prevalence of Marian imagery in what remains, suggests that the lost lights depicted further scenes from the life of Mary. The lights have been reordered: the Pentecost light was originally placed above that depicting the Crucifixion.

Eleanor's scrapbook contains a cartoon strip in which she mocks her position as Lady Leighton in a succession of scenes which echo the spirit of George Du Maurier's cartoons on the emotional excesses of the Pre-Raphaelites.<sup>19</sup> A dedicated amateur artist and plantswoman, emotionally attuned to the ideals of Aestheticism, Eleanor maintained a lengthy correspondence with Burne-Jones. The letters covering the period 1894-9 are preserved in the Leicester-Warren archive in the Cheshire Record Office. In a nostalgic note of 3 September 1897, Burne-Jones writes: 'I have been counting my blessings if you please - and high & shining amongst them I have thought of the long dear friendship I have had with you, since that first evening in the garden of Downing (illegible) St - 20 years ago isn't it?'<sup>20</sup> Given this extended intimacy, it was natural that Eleanor would turn to Burne-Jones to design her memorial window.

The letters in the archive are confiding and intimate. Burne-Jones records his thoughts, confident that Eleanor will appreciate his scrawls. He writes whilst travelling, the pencil lines mimicking the progress of his journey: 'here comes a station & I can write three lines more that you can read Oh what a bump'.<sup>21</sup> The letters oscillate between self-mockery and confession

I have this luck that the morning is my time & my hour - always in the morning I am full of hope & have such strength as I ever have - and after midday comes worse & worse - well Gawain was like that & I am in good company.<sup>22</sup>

Burne-Jones clearly relied on Eleanor to appreciate and criticise his work: a hasty note bemoans that 'I have seen nothing of you - no chats - no gossips - no evenings - no talk about work'.<sup>23</sup>

Writing to Eleanor after the death of her brother, Georgie promises 'Edward is writing himself - so I give no messages from him'.<sup>24</sup> Beyond exclamations of empathy - 'What can I do for you? What on earth can I do to help?' - Burne-Jones's promised letter has not survived. Instead he writes with great practicality:

Of course - I will help you all I can about the window - anything you settle on for subjects I will see comes about.

The best way would be to have the measurements of the lights made -



roughish measurements would do to begin with – & then write to Mr Dearle – Merton Abbey Works, Surrey.

Who will ask me what the charge will be for a design, & I shall tell him, & then he will tell you the cost of the window – & so we shall be fairly started – but I shall hate you paying me anything – for I hate the money of friends exceedingly –

Anyhow you shall be thwarted in nothing that you want, as far as I can help.

He cannot quite restrain a characteristic coda: 'and in the summer I will go to Tabley & see you – if I am alive and can move'.<sup>25</sup>

For the Tabley commission, Burne-Jones disregarded the pictorial panache of his later stained glass designs, remaining alert to the architecture:

the Jacobean window sounds dolorous, but there are ways of treating such enormities & making believe they are not so bad as they are.

it looks as if single figures would be best – and at least the colour could be merry.<sup>26</sup>

The emphasis on colour was apt: the chapel remains today largely unilluminated by electric lighting and the rich tones of the glass alleviate the solemnity of the heavy panelling. In agreeing to design the window Burne-Jones was remarkably pliant. He insisted that this was to be a collaboration:

When you come up to town and we can meet & talk, all this could be decided upon – but much I like the idea – we can be free of the cleric then – sacrificial (illegible) matters or what we will.<sup>27</sup>

Given the informality of their exchanges – 'come about 3 – knocking at my studio – garden studio door' – it is intriguing to speculate what influence Eleanor exercised over the design itself.<sup>28</sup> In the *Memorials*, Georgie Burne-Jones memorably describes her husband's glass design as a domestic ritual:

begun upon very soon after dinner. He made the designs without hesitation; the result of incessant study from life showing itself in large free drawings, which came out upon the paper so quickly that it seemed as if they must have been already there and his hand were only removing a veil.<sup>29</sup>

Burne-Jones's account is far more solitary. Writing to Eleanor he provides a sketch of himself sitting in a sunless studio: 'Sometimes [the sun] never gets up & then I design for windows – rough charcoal things that I can see to do in the dark days'.<sup>30</sup>



Sewter's comprehensive catalogue of Morris & Co.'s glass offers an efficient overview of the Firm's style. The prose is business-like, yet in discussing the dying days of Burne-Jones's designs, his anger is evident: the figures 'stand in calm, relaxed, and dreamy attitudes [...] they look tired, anaemic and occasionally sexless'.<sup>31</sup> His frustration erupts again in describing the windows of the United Reformed Church in Ashton-under-Lyne (1892): 'all the main figures stand immobile against backgrounds of draped curtains, producing a curious aquarium-like stillness'.<sup>32</sup>

Sewter objects to a falling off from the intellectual energy Burne-Jones brought to stained glass. It is tempting to think of Burne-Jones struggling with the limitations of glass, eager to break out of the confines of the window. The extent of his commissions in the earliest years were clearly influenced by financial need, but his involvement in the firm's work right until his death suggests that he remained intellectually alert to the possibilities of the medium.<sup>33</sup>

In the *Memorials* Georgie Burne-Jones writes of 'the general ignorance of people who want[ed] to put up stained windows, but [had] no idea of the rules for their design'.<sup>34</sup> In order to bolster her comments, she cites a private letter by Burne-Jones in which he writes that

It is a very limited art [...] and its limitations are its strength, and compel simplicity – but one needs to forget that there are such things as pictures in considering a coloured window – whose excellence is more of architecture, to which it must be faithfully subservient.<sup>35</sup>

Such sensitivity to architectural setting echoes Morris's determined stand as a spokesman for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB),<sup>36</sup> but Burne-Jones's aesthetic aims are juxtaposed with a melodramatic tirade: 'if the merciful heavens might ordain that my affairs may be far removed from the incomprehensible ways of women – that they (women I mean) may be only a dream on canvas – what peace for me'.<sup>37</sup> As a designer of memorial windows Burne-Jones was forced to consider the demands of his patrons far more directly than when painting. His willingness to be dictated to by Eleanor shows that on this occasion Burne-Jones was prepared to be in thrall to the 'incomprehensible ways of women'.

Burne-Jones's design for the memorial window on the south side of Tabley Chapel contains all the elements which disgusted Sewter. Yet the 'calm, relaxed, dreamy attitudes' lend the window serenity; the static beauty of the individual lights illustrates the artistic coherence of the design.<sup>38</sup> Its success within its architectural setting is more doubtful. The chapel's seven windows exhibit no unifying artistic vision. Instead the chapel records the sweep of family history: a Flemish window of uncertain date testifying to the passion for art collecting, an eighteenth cen-

ture heraldic window recording the family's pedigree.

The memorial window (Figure 1) recycles six of Burne-Jones's cartoons: tracing their connections reveals how the design was modified to suit the ideas of both artist and patron. The list appended to an 1899 biography of Burne-Jones notes that three designs were 'prepared by Sir Edward Burne-Jones' for Tabley Chapel, albeit with the proviso that 'in many of these windows cartoons previously used have been reproduced together with the new designs'.<sup>39</sup> The upper left light depicts Saint John the Evangelist 'in white patterned with gold, over red; deep blue background'.<sup>40</sup> The original design was itself a redrawing designed to be paired with Saint Peter. Saint John is shown 'holding cup with winged serpent in L hand'.<sup>41</sup> Before being used at Tabley, in 1894 the design was incorporated into the glazing scheme for St. Cross Church, Knutsford, so it is highly probable that Eleanor had seen it there.

The saint represents the melancholic John Byrne Leicester-Warren, a minor poet and dedicated naturalist. The evidence for his temperament comes from the 'Biographical Notice' written by his friend Mountstuart Grant Duff.<sup>42</sup> The third Lord lived in self-imposed exile from his family seat – the reasons for this alienation are tactfully glossed as a dread of 'the details of business'.<sup>43</sup> These hidden tensions aside this posthumous volume strikes an appropriately elegiac note. Eleanor's act of memorial is signalled on the title page: an illustration accompanies the dedication "'There's Rosemary that's for remembrance" And to the memory of my brother I publish this, his Cheshire flora'. The *Flora* reveals Lord de Tabley's meticulous cataloguing of the botanical wealth of his native county: but it also attests to the family's religious sympathies. A poem included in the 'Notice' is overtly Catholic in tone: the Pope is 'Infallible, in whom the spirit-master / Hath breathed his spirit voice'.<sup>44</sup>

The second upper light equates Catherine Leicester-Warren with Saint Catherine of Alexandria. For this design, Burne-Jones has eschewed the visible symbol of her martyrdom, the spiked wheel which dominates the foreground of Rossetti's *St. Catherine*. In Roman Catholic tradition, Catherine escaped martyrdom on a wheel as 'an angel of the Lord struck the device and smashed it with such violent force that four thousand pagans were killed'.<sup>45</sup> Yet is easy to see why the looming menace of the wheel whose 'combined action could first mangle her flesh and then tear it to shreds'<sup>46</sup> appealed to Rossetti's macabre mind. Burne-Jones's cartoon is restrained, emphasising the Saint's erudition: 'full length standing figure with pen and book'.<sup>47</sup> This cartoon was first used in 1878 for the south choir aisle of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. In the Oxford window the serene figure of the saint offers only an illusion of stasis: 'the calm massive figure of the saint [...] is brilliantly contrasted with the agitated activity of the flame-bearing angel on the left and the tender passivity of the cloth-bearing angel on the right'.<sup>48</sup> Saint Catherine is part of a larger spiritual drama – in the Tabley window her vadic

calm is undisturbed.

The right hand upper light uses the figure of Mary the Virgin to commemorate the life of Hope Meriel, who died of smallpox during childbirth. The Virgin gazes out at the viewer indifferently; her eyes veiled. The cartoon 'full length standing figure, one hand at breast holding scarf, the other down at side'<sup>49</sup> was used by Burne-Jones at St. Margaret's, Rottingdean – a task he undertook 'in gratitude for Margaret' his daughter.<sup>50</sup> At Rottingdean, this image of the Virgin is paired with the Saint Margaret design which appears in the lower right hand light of the Tabley window. There are telling differences between the two. Given Tabley's poise between secular memorial and ecclesiastical statement, the lettering of the saints' haloes has been removed: they are no longer identified as 'Sancta Maria' and 'Sancta Margarita'. Rather than replicate the fronds emerging from Mary's head – a deliberate disruption of perspective – Dearle opts for uniformity: each light is set against a backdrop of sumptuous fabric and azure sky.

J. H. Dearle was a dedicated employee of Morris & Co. who became increasingly entrusted with the bulk of the business. His autonomy was, in theory at least, extensive: particularly during the late 1890s as Morris became alarmingly ill. Dearle contributed original designs for backgrounds to stained glass, but his artistic input was limited – particularly during Burne-Jones's lifetime.<sup>51</sup> Even after Burne-Jones's death, Dearle's originality was suffocated by his status as acolyte. In a 1905 article on Dearle, Lewis F. Day dubs him a 'Disciple of William Morris', one so devoted that

he entered entirely into his spirit [...] he could be relied upon to do much what he himself might have done [Morris's] material presents itself as, not only the best way of doing it, but for him the only way.<sup>52</sup>

The lower left hand light is Saint Helena for Eleanor, making the window a memorial to the living and the dead. The cartoon for this light 'full face, grasping upright cross', was first used at St. Helen's in Welton, Yorkshire, in 1879.<sup>53</sup> A recent article on the sale of Burne-Jones's stained glass cartoons records the purchase of this design, on 1 July 1901, by J. R. Holliday, a prolific collector of Pre-Raphaelite art and a major benefactor to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, which now owns the cartoon.<sup>54</sup> The Welton window shows Helena in a sequence with Constantine, Bertha and Ethelbert, and contains a background text on 'S. Helen Empress' which is understandably absent at Tabley. Yet there is a more revealing alteration to the design. The cartoon, which fetched £40, shows Helena crowned.<sup>55</sup> The adaptation of this to suit Eleanor is a curious mixture of headscarf and bonnet, a hint of rural simplicity in an otherwise forbidding pose.

The next light shows Saint Francis to mark the brief life of Francis Peter Leicester-Warren (1842–5). Though the cartoon of Saint Francis was first used at Weybridge in 1887, and again in 1897 at Saughton Grange, Chester, the seraph

heads are an addition. Sewter notes that these were drawn by Dearle, a division of labour which would account for their incongruity in the shape of the general design. Dearle's seraphs are unappealing workshop productions, lacking the inventive stylisation of Burne-Jones's angels. They impose upon the design, which conveys both the asceticism of Saint Francis and his childlike simplicity. This atmosphere is fitting given that the window is a memorial to the children of the family, albeit that the majority survived into adulthood. The fairy-tale quality to the birds at the Saint's feet, and the detail of the robin at his elbow, head severed by the lead line, captures Francis's idiosyncrasies; his fondness for impromptu exhortations to 'all creatures to love their Creator; he preached to the birds and they listened to him'.<sup>56</sup> It also alludes to the contemporary fashion in stained glass for animals to represent the death of children.

The lower right hand light of Saint Margaret replicates the Rottingdean design.<sup>57</sup> In choosing this particular cartoon for Tabley, Burne-Jones has retreated into Pre-Raphaelite romanticism – Margaret's dreamy abstraction reveals something of what angered Sewter about the late Burne-Jones. The dragon at her feet is bewilderingly benign, drained of its moral import: hagiographically it embodied the saint's enemy and 'sprang at her to devour her'.<sup>58</sup> Given that this is St. Peter's Chapel, he could have taken inspiration from his design for Bramley, Yorkshire (1881), where Margaret is paired with Saint Peter. The details of her drapery are patterned with wood grain designs, and the eye is drawn to her feet encased in Roman sandals. She is an active figure – seeming to break out of the window to confront her adversaries. Margaret Leicester-Warren was still alive when the window was designed: perhaps she preferred to be more Janey Morris than Joan of Arc.

The artistic interplay between Eleanor and Burne-Jones emerges in a comparison of Eleanor to Wilde's essay 'The Decay of Lying' (1889): 'for under the guise of a paradox is many a truth and often it minded me of you'.<sup>59</sup> Moral approbation aside, Eleanor gave practical assistance to Burne-Jones's art. She supplied stems of wild roses for the 'Briar Rose' series, a work which confirmed Burne-Jones's artistic stature:

the enthusiasm created by their transcendent qualities was immediate and universal. It was admitted very generally that works of highest art distinguished alike for execution and conception had never before been brought to such perfection by an English painter.<sup>60</sup>

Receiving the roses, Burne-Jones's response was ecstatic: 'The briars have come and are all my soul lusted for – how shall I thank you enough?'<sup>61</sup>

*The Flower Book* is further evidence of their collaboration. The volume is Burne-Jones's private record of the names of flowers, taking their poetry and

translating it into an image. The flowers themselves are subordinated to Burne-Jones's vision of the name. The volume is 'a series of illustrations to the names of flowers and that is the point of it – the names: not a single flower itself appears'.<sup>62</sup> Georgie records that

Lady Leighton-Warren had much to do with the beginning of these drawings [...] by her knowledge of names and legends belonging to flowers. He collected suggestive names in every direction, but she gave him the largest number.<sup>63</sup>

The miniatures and their accompanying captions were only published after Burne-Jones's death. The small-scale of the illustrations, pictures-in-little for the larger canvases, offer a window on Burne-Jones's friendship with Eleanor.

Throughout their correspondence, Burne-Jones was extravagant in his praise of Eleanor's aesthetic sense, but such sentiments were more than conventional compliments. The letters show that Eleanor knew precisely what forms of beauty Burne-Jones responded to. Her gifts to Georgie were predominantly practical: their letters are littered with references to the 'delicious little green bundles I have been feeding Edward on' or 'the raw damsons go to London where Cook will grapple with them'.<sup>64</sup> Eleanor's presents to Burne-Jones were altogether more outlandish. The arrival of a peacock filled him with mingled horror and adoration: 'I couldn't bear to eat him [I] could have soon have cooked an angel – he looked like one of the feathered company of heaven'.<sup>65</sup> The letters reveal a shared understanding of the spiritual power of beauty which elevates the 'tabley window from a professional commission to an act of love. Eleanor's inclusion in the window is a private testament to her friendship with Burne-Jones: the design is both a memorial to the dead and a tribute to the living.

#### NOTES

1. Tabley Chapel, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 0HB, UK, Telephone (+44) (0)1565 750 151. The house contains portraits of the second Baron de Tabley and his wife Catharina, Lady de Tabley, three of their eldest son John, one of Eleanor, and one of her son Cuthbert, and is open from 3 April to the end of October from Thursday to Sunday, and on Bank Holidays, from 2 pm to 5 pm; <http://www.tableyhouse.co.uk/index.html> [last accessed 28 March 2008].
2. 'The island is now reached by a footbridge, on the North-West side, but the foundations of the old stone bridge, at the apex [...] of the island, are still to be seen'. H. Taylor, *Old Halls in Lancashire and Cheshire*. Manchester: J. E.

- Cornish, 1884, p. 153.
3. M.G. Duff, 'Biographical Notice', in Lord de Tabley, *The Flora of Cheshire*. London: Longmans, Green, 1899, liii. (Afterwards *Flora*).
  4. For overviews of the life of J.B. Leicester-Warren, see *City News*, 11 May 1901, and *Gorton and Openshaw Reporter*, 13 March 1970.
  5. G. Ormerod, *History of the County and City of Chester*. London: Routledge & Sons, 1882, 3 vols; 1, p. 626.
  6. 'To W. & M. Howitt, May 1838'. J.A.V. Chapple & A. Pollard, eds, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966, p. 15.
  7. Anon. 'Wanted – Preservers', *Country Life*, 31 Dec 1927, pp. 997–9 (998).
  8. Sir B. Burke, ed, *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*. London: Harrison, 1895, 2 vols. 1, pp. 421–22.
  9. A. C. Sewter, *The Stained Glass of William Morris and his Circle: A Catalogue*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975, p. 183. (Afterwards Sewter, 1975).
  10. Leicester-Warren archive. Cheshire Record Office (afterwards CRO), Catalogue number DLT 5524/21/1.
  11. CRO, DLT 5524/36/24. Grammatical peculiarities are preserved in all manuscript quotations.
  12. Anon. review of J.H. Markland's *Remarks on English Churches*, *Quarterly Review*, LXX (1842), pp. 417–446 (443) – the quote is a citation from 'Wilberforce on the Parochial System'.
  13. R. Richards, *Old Cheshire Churches*. Manchester: E.J. Morten, 1947, p. 262.
  14. What Michael Hall describes as the appeal of 'churches and chapels [which] provided the only major opportunity to exercise architectural patronage over a public building, and that was largely because churches, especially on a rural estate, had a well recognised private, family aspect'. See 'Emily Meynell Ingram and Holy Angels, Hoar Cross, Staffordshire: a study in patronage', *Architectural History*, 47, 2004, pp. 283–328. Also P. Snell, 'John Dado Sedding and Sculpture in Architecture: the fulfilment of a Ruskinian ideal?' in R. Daniels & G. Brandwood, eds, *Ruskin and Architecture*. Reading: Spire Books, 2003, pp. 321–353.
  15. 26 Nov 1895. CRO, DLT/C39/4.
  16. *The Manchester Weekly Times*, 11 November, 1898.
  17. CRO, DLT 5524/36/24.
  18. C. Hussey, 'Country Homes & Gardens Old & New', *Country Life*, 28 July 1923, pp. 114–20 (119).
  19. Series in *Punch* 'The Legend of Camelot' (1866).
  20. CRO, DLT/C39/4.
  21. 14 Feb 1894, *ibid.*
  22. 11 Sept 1895, *ibid.*
  23. 23 April 1895, *ibid.* Even making allowances for Burne-Jones's extravagant

- epistolary style, his affection for Eleanor is evident. Beyond factual references in the *Memorials*, and in Penelope Fitzgerald's biography to Eleanor's role in the 'Briar Rose' series and *The Flower Book*, the correspondence offers the only evidence of their friendship. Georgiana Burne-Jones, *The Memorials of Edward-Burne Jones*, London: Macmillan, 1912, 11 vols (afterwards *Memorials*); Penelope Fitzgerald, *Edward Burne-Jones*. London: Michael Joseph, 1975 (1997), pp. 198, 217.
24. 26 Nov 1895. CRO, DLT/C39/4.
  25. 24 Dec 1895, *ibid.*
  26. 24 Dec 1895, *ibid.*
  27. 29 Jan 1896, *ibid.*
  28. 4 July 1896, *ibid.*
  29. *Memorials*, 11, pp. 5–6.
  30. *ca* 1895. CRO, DLT/C39/4.
  31. A. C. Sewter, *The Stained Glass of William Morris and his Circle*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974, p. 58. (Afterwards Sewter, 1974).
  32. Sewter, 1974, p. 67.
  33. For figures see C. Harvey & J. Press, *William Morris: Design and Enterprise in Victorian Britain*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991, p. 179. Between 1891 and 1898, Burne-Jones was credited with £3111.10s for eighteen commissions – though in 1896–8 he withdrew £226 more than he earned. In 1897, Morris & Co. received their highest number of commissions for the decade between 1891–1901, approximately thirty-one (p. 197).
  34. *Memorials*, 11, p. 109.
  35. *Memorials*, 11, *ibid.*
  36. Morris's involvement with this organisation was a challenge 'both to the new-found bourgeois identity of the architect and the Church of England's militant role in English society'. C. Brooks & A. Saint, eds, *The Victorian Church*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 169.
  37. *Memorials*, 11, p. 109.
  38. Sewter, 1974, p. 58.
  39. M. Bell, *Burne-Jones: A Record and Review*. London: George Bell & Sons, 1899, p. 138. (Afterwards Bell).
  40. Sewter, 1975, p. 183.
  41. Sewter, 1975, p. 299; BJ20.
  42. *Flora*, liii.
  43. *Flora*, *ibid.*
  44. 'Rome, November 1869', *Flora*, xv.
  45. J. de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*. C. Stace & R. Hamer, eds, London: Penguin, 1998, p. 337. (Afterwards *Legend*).
  46. *Legend*, p. 337.



47. Sewter, 1975, p. 284; BJ328.
48. Sewter, 1974, p. 50.
49. Sewter, 1975, p. 305; BJWB68.
50. Fitzgerald, 1975, p. 246.
51. 'The 'first reference to designs from the hand of John Henry Dearle [...] was in November 1884, when he and Bowman are recorded as having drawn the treework for the apse windows at Broughty Ferry.' Sewter, 1974, p. 76.
52. L. F. Day, 'A Disciple of William Morris', *Art Journal*, 67, 1905, pp. 84-9, (p. 88).
53. Sewter, 1975, p. 296; BJ527.
54. D. E. Schoenherr, "'The Cartoon Book" and Morris & Co.'s Sale of Burne-Jones's cartoons in 1901-4', *Journal of Stained Glass*, 29, 2005, pp. 82-136.
55. *ibid.*, p. 114.
56. *Legend*, p. 263.
57. Sewter, 1975, p. 305; JWB68
58. *Legend*, p. 163.
59. 1 Feb 1889. CRO, DLT/C39/4.
60. Bell, p. 68.
61. *Memorials*, p. 145.
62. S. Wildman & J. Christian, eds, *Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist Dreamer*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998, p. 134.
63. *Memorials*, 11, p. 118.
64. 11 May & 7 Sept 1895. CRO, DLT/ C39/4
65. 29 Jan 1896. *ibid.*