

Reviews

Edited by Peter Faulkner

Phillippa Bennett, *The Last Romances and the Kelmscott Press*, London: The William Morris Society, 2009, 40 pp. ISBN 978-0-903283-26-7, £4.00

Anyone who takes interest in William Morris knows that his is a house of many mansions, which perfectly justifies repeated visits. Some have arrived there through his poetry, others his political activity, yet others through the 'fine' or the 'minor' arts – and of course the list is not limitative. In her 2006 Kelmscott Lecture, now offered to the reading public in the familiar attractive format of the Annual Kelmscott Lecture Series, Phillippa Bennett proposed to re-visit two of these mansions, combining a literary fresh look at William Morris's Last Romances with a re-evaluation of the Kelmscott Press. To investigate these 'interlacings', to borrow the vocabulary from a recent book (Caroline Arcscott. *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings*, Yale University Press, 2008, reviewed in this *Journal*, Vol. XVII, 2, Summer 2009, pp. 65–69), is not an easy task, even for a person like Morris, who never departed from his contention that a fine text needed a fine physical translation. Nowhere is this idea that matter (the abstract text) and manner (its concrete presentation) are inseparable better expressed than in the celebrated interviews printed in contemporary periodicals – now reproduced for our greatest pleasure in William S. Peterson's admirable *The Ideal Book* (University of California Press, 1982) from which of course Phillippa Bennett does not fail to quote. Curiously, she does not cite May Morris: 'He loved his books as a craftsman, as a poet, as a romancist: with a threefold affection and a threefold pleasure' (Joseph R. Dunlap, ed, *The Introductions to the Collected Works of William Morris*. New York: Oriole Editions, 1973, vol. 1, p. 39). With this allusion to the 'romancist', May Morris provided the perfect justification for Phillippa Bennett's undertaking.

The first connection the author sees between the Last Romances and the Kelmscott Press, is the 'happy coincidence' (her words) of 1891, when *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, 'the first of the narratives we now refer to as the Last Romances', 'was also the very first title to be issued from the Press'. One would expect a justification for seeing a 'happy coincidence' in this – was it not rather a deliberate choice, and a revealing choice at that? A *choice* would have far more weight than a mere *coincidence* in the argument – it would bring far more grist

to her mill – and we feel frustrated that this possible track is left unexplored. Evidently, it is impossible to reconstruct what really went on in William Morris's mind in 1891 (or any other date, for that matter): but it would have opened plenty of potentially interesting perspectives if the possibility that it was a deliberate choice had been considered.

Much has of course been written before on the Last Romances, and Phillippa Bennett offers a fresh angle of approach: they should be viewed from the standpoint of their wondrous content, both in the literal and in the figurative meanings. They are literally tales of wonder – and there, the quest for the ideal book (physically *and* textually) is not far from the ideal world evoked in them – and wonderful (marvellous) stories to read. This is a fascinating angle: who would not be seduced by a conception of 'mankind and the world as inherently wondrous'? The important word here is of course *inherently*, since it provides a link with William Morris's Socialism – a form of Socialism arguably derived from Rousseau, though Phillippa Bennett prefers to insist on the influence of Charles Dickens 'one of Morris's favourite authors' and the characters in *Hard Times* (1854). Likewise, she prefers to lean on relatively obscure figures such as Cornelis Verhoeven (*Inleiding tot de verwondering*, 1967 [English translation *The Philosophy of Wonder*, 1972]) rather than the flamboyant and fashionable French practitioners of *nouvelle critique* such as Derrida, Lacan *et al.* And why not? At least one understands what Verhoeven writes – and what Phillippa Bennett is driving at: 'This recognition [by Morris] of mankind and the world as inherently wondrous' is, she suggests, 'the primary impetus for Morris's vast and varied output'.

Thus the author has her guiding thread, the unifying factor behind the many strands in Morris's indefatigable activity. Drawing on Verhoeven's idea that the 'zest for living' 'characterises the attitude of wonder', she very convincingly demonstrates that the 'zest for living' found in the Last Romances – the beauty of the world, the beauty of animal and vegetable life, the beauty of other human bodies perceived by the ever-thankful protagonists – is only a literary translation of Morris's basic philosophical sense of wonder. We can also be persuaded by her tempting argument that these beautiful human bodies are in a way a wonderful compensation for the harsh realities of Morris's times, when his contemporaries' bodies were so adversely affected 'by the demands of industrial capitalism'.

One well-known problem today is that many modern readers fail to perceive this sense of all-pervasive beauty, and therefore this wonderful dimension in the Last Romances. The publication contains seven plates of illustrations, of which two really stand out, in that, thanks to them, readers will be able to follow the well-documented discussion of the two versions of 'Friends in need meet in the wild wood' (from *The Well at the World's End*), prepared respectively by Arthur Gaskin and by Edward Burne-Jones, for the Kelmscott Press. Eventually – and predictably – William Morris chose the Burne-Jones version, and one may feel that if these Last Romances are ever 'read' today outside the circle of Morris

scholars, it is first and foremost for their ‘wonderful’ drawings.

Naturally, Phillippa Bennett does not eschew the difficulty: she is fully aware of the common accusation of ‘unreadability’. The texts have been felt to be ‘almost unreadable’ (the phrase is Paul Thompson’s) or ‘literally unreadable’ (Amanda Hodgson’s expression), first because of what we could call the linguistic barrier: ‘the archaic vocabulary and willfully unusual sentence-construction’ denounced by Hodgson. Here, the connection with the Kelmscott Press books is negative – the ‘perceived linguistic difficulties’ and ‘visual difficulties’ constituting ‘mutually exacerbating’ hurdles. If we follow critics such as Hodgson, Morris’s conception of the Book Beautiful as concretely translated in the Kelmscott Press productions makes matters even worse, with ‘the glaring black-on-white print, the Gothic font, the decorative capital letters in which the letter itself is indistinguishable from the border, the way the text is laid out in narrow columns so that the reader has difficulty recognizing where sentences end’.

But then, this off-putting combination does not only apply to the Last Romances. It is obvious that Chaucer’s narrative in the Kelmscott *Chaucer* is no easier to understand than Morris’s stories. But Phillippa Bennett’s self-imposed remit only bears on the Last Romances – and she undertakes to counter the arguments of Morris’s critics respecting them. There is in fact what we could call a halfway house in Morrisian criticism, since she notes that some people (such as Lorraine Janzen Kooistra) blame the ‘unreadability’ of the Last Romances on the Kelmscott Press designs. Once the texts are printed in ordinary book form, they apparently regain readability. Needless to say, this does not satisfy Phillippa Bennett, either. She accuses these critics of exaggerating their case, selecting the more obscure passages and the most elaborately blackened pages: in fact, she argues with unimpeachable common sense that the majority of Morris’s production – whether it be text (even the Last Romances, with their negative reputation) or page design – is perfectly accessible to the modern reader. But she goes further.

Without mentioning him, she adopts in fact a Chomskyan approach: what counts is not the visible surface, but the deep structure. Here, she treads on far more controversial ground, as she argues that there is a fundamental unity and complementariness behind the apparent ‘unreadability’ of the Last Romances in the Kelmscott Press edition – a positive (*not* negative) combination resting on the uniquely wondrous nature of both text and book. This is controversial ground, concerned with personal aesthetic judgement, with which, predictably, many will not agree. But Phillippa Bennett’s arguments to justify this bold claim cannot be summarily dismissed. Even those who, unlike her, do not immediately perceive the peculiar attractiveness of the Last Romances in the Kelmscott Press edition, will examine her reasoning with the serious attention it undoubtedly deserves. It is in fact an impassioned plea in favour of forgetting one’s preconceptions – and the best compliment which this reviewer can address to the author is to confess that the miscreant is on the way to conversion. There is a major

obstacle, however. How many readers of this fine Kelmscott Lecture will have access to, say, *The Story of the Glittering Plain* or *The Well at the World's End* in an original Kelmscott Press edition – not of course as a museum piece in a showcase, but as a real book to handle and peruse?

Antoine Capet

Helen Elletson, *A History of Kelmscott House*, London: The William Morris Society, 2009, 64 pp., thirty three illustrations, eighteen in colour. ISBN 978-0-903283-27-4, pbk, £5.

‘The house is just about big enough for us, and the rooms are mostly pretty’: so wrote Morris to Jane, then wintering in Oneglia, about what was to become their home from 1878 until his death in 1896. Looking to move from Turnham Green, he had been alerted to the house in Upper Mall by Rossetti. As Helen Elletson, the Society’s Curator at Kelmscott House tells us, it was built during the late 1780s. Its third occupant, Francis Ronalds, is notable as having in 1816 constructed, in the garden, the first electric telegraph, an achievement recorded on a tablet affixed to the coach house.

George MacDonald, the poet and novelist, also lived there with this wife and eleven children for ten years from 1867. They entertained extensively, with celebrities such as Tennyson and Ruskin visiting, plays performed in the garden, and the coach house got up as a theatre. Morris acquired the house from MacDonald at an annual rent of £85. Repairs and re-decoration were to cost £1,000. Morris then changed the name of the house from The Retreat to Kelmscott House, in allusion to the Oxfordshire Manor. Thus began the period for which the house is remembered and commemorated today. It is now a grade II* listed building within the Mall Conservation Area, yet in 1878 it adjoined a slum known as Little Wapping, whence urchins would sometimes disturb Morris with their shouting.

The longest period of occupation, though, is that of Mrs. Stephenson. She and her husband moved there in 1926, and she remained until her death in 1972. During that time, one half of the 600-foot (ca 180 m)-long garden was lost to the construction of the A4, the Great West Road. A friend of May Morris and a member of the William Morris Society, Mrs Stephenson bequeathed the house to the Society, together with a number of original Morris & Co. items. The Society ran the house as the William Morris Centre from 1975 to 1980, but for lack of any endowment was obliged in 1983 to let it as a private residence, while retaining the basement and coach house for its own use. These constitute the present museum.

Writers have always been attracted to the house. After MacDonald and Morris came H.C. Marillier, W.H. Draper and, more recently Christopher Hampton,

whilst Athene Seyler, the distinguished and long-lived actress, who occupied the flat over the coach house, published a book on comic acting. The elegant proportions of the house and its position overlooking the Thames continue to enchant. Hidden away, it still has something of a retreat about it such as MacDonald recognised. All this and much more is related in Helen Elletson's history, which flows smoothly across two hundred and twenty five years. It is fully illustrated, as well being enriched with quotations from May Morris's memories of the house as she lived in it as a young woman. Five views reveal how the rooms were arranged in Morris's day, whilst there are eleven colour plates of his wallpapers and designs and, as frontispiece, his portrait photograph by Frederick Hollyer (*ca* 1876). Other reproductions show the appearance of the house at different epochs. Footnotes on each page, and a bibliography, further complement the text.

Everything the casual or more concerned visitor could wish to know about Kelmscott House lies within these covers which, imaginatively, show the house emerging from elements of Morrisian design – truly, a beautiful book for a beautiful house.

Colin Clark

Brenda King, *Dye, Print, Stitch. Textiles by Thomas and Elizabeth Wardle*, Macclesfield: Macclesfield Museum Trust, 2009, 84 pp., 60 illustrations, mostly colour. ISBN 9781870926003. £22.50 (incl. £2.50 for p&p) from the author: bm.king@btinternet.co.uk.

Brenda King is Chair of the Textile Society. During 2009 she co-curated four exhibitions which marked the centenary of Thomas Wardle's death: *Wardle: the Man*, in Leek, Staffordshire; *Dye, Print, Stitch: Textiles by Thomas and Elizabeth Wardle* in Macclesfield, Cheshire; *The Manchester Indian* at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, and *Experiments in Colour; Thomas Wardle, William Morris and the Textiles of India* at the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow. This is an achievement in itself. Her book seeks to honour Wardle's accomplishments, together with those of his wife, Elizabeth.

Thomas Wardle (1831–1909) was born in Macclesfield, Cheshire, into a family of silk dyers. His father Joshua Wardle (1802–1879) was a gifted dyer who produced 'Raven Black, the bluest black in the world'. (p. 1) In the year of Thomas's birth, Joshua moved his family and his workplace from Macclesfield to Leek in Staffordshire in order to take advantage of the waters of the River Churnet, which were particularly suited to the dyeing process. Dr King makes it clear that Thomas was a man of broad talent and experience. He could steer through the cross-currents which lay between Art and Science, East and West, Ancient and Modern and Craft and Industry ... The owner of a silk dyeing and printing com-

pany, he became an international authority on dyeing and printing textiles. He was also a designer, entrepreneur, businessman, educator, musician, composer, geologist and sportsman. (p. 1)

His wife Elizabeth (1835–1902), a gifted needlewoman and colourist, became Superintendent of the Leek Embroidery Society, training and organising a team of skilled women. The other stars of the book are silk dyeing and printing, particularly tussur silk, which had not been successfully dyed before, and Leek itself, which, it appears, became the focus of a great deal of architectural and Arts and Crafts activity as leading architects such as Richard Norman Shaw, Giles Gilbert Scott and William Sugden were commissioned to extend and re-order local churches and domestic buildings. In turn, the architects commissioned the Leek needlewomen to stitch their designs on altar frontals, vestments, and other embroideries. Some of these are still in use. The Leek Institute operated as an extension college for Cambridge and Oxford universities.

Dr King makes it clear that the Wardles formed part of a global textile network which took advantage of the efficient communications offered by the British Empire and the growth in nineteenth century consumerism. Thomas became the chief supplier of dyed and printed silks to Liberty's, amongst other retailers. He and Elizabeth also opened their own shop on Bond Street in order to sell silks and the products of the Leek Embroidery Society. He was a member of learned societies and a founder member of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. He countered the threat posed to the market by a flood of silk goods and materials from the Far East by developing important contacts with the silk industries of India, Lyon, Piedmont and Krefeld. These contacts enabled him to keep abreast of scientific and technological developments which were essential to remaining competitive. He founded a research department at his Hencroft dye works in Leek, in order to solve technical problems with raw materials such as tussur silk, and to resuscitate lost skills in the use of natural dyes.

The book really takes off with the practical details of the story of tussur silk and the exquisite textures and colours produced through the skill of the Leek dyers and embroiderers. It is well known that William Morris visited Leek at least five times between July 1875 and the spring of 1878, in order to learn the finer points of natural dyeing at the Hencroft works. He stayed in the Wardle family home, 62, St Edward Street, Leek, sometimes for a fortnight at a time, and the two men enjoyed a lively relationship while Morris struggled to perfect a method of indigo dyeing which had almost disappeared from Europe.

Morris persuaded Wardle to print some of his designs, which necessitated adding block-cutting and printing areas to the Leek factory and directing the company in an entirely new way. Between 1875 and 1877 Wardle printed Morris's *Tulip*, *Honeysuckle*, *Acanthus*, *African Marigold*, *Bluebell* and *Snakeshead*. Then came *Indian Diaper*, *Iris*, *Little Chintz*, *Marigold*, *Carnation* and *Pomegranate*. These textiles were commercially successful and were often exhibited. '20 years

later they were still acknowledged as the best of their type'. (p. 33) They continued to be produced by Wardles long after Morris and Company printed their own textiles. There is a lovely photograph on page 34 of a piece of Morris's *Bluebell* design, printed by Wardle and Co. on to silk and then embroidered with Indian tussur silk by the Leek Embroidery Society. Wardle was extremely generous in allowing Morris to use his dye recipes at Morris and Company, especially as at times 'their alliance was explosive'. (p. 32) Wardle and Co. were also to print textiles for other contemporary designers, including Walter Crane, Lewis Foreman Day and John Dando Sedding, one of whose exquisite designs, embroidered by the Leek needlewomen, is illustrated on page 45.

Dye, Print, Stitch is beautifully illustrated with the original plans of Joshua and Thomas Wardle's dye works; maps, photographs of letters and book bindings; pictures of Elizabeth and Thomas and ten of their fourteen children, and photographs of fabric designs, silk yarn and embroidery, including detailed shots which enable the reader to examine specific stitches closely. There is a delightful picture of Wardle's employees (p. 15), seventeen of them, sleeves rolled up, all wearing pale shirts and collars and ties for work in and around the dye vats. There are three chapters covering the Wardle companies, Wardle and the Arts and Crafts movement and the Leek Embroidery Society. The chapters are packed with interesting information. However, there is no index, and a fairly limited selection of notes after each chapter.

No book is perfect, but Dr King has been rather ill-served by her editor and proof reader, who might have advised a tighter focus and concision, with less repetition. Individual chapters are better edited than the Preface and the Introduction, but they possess no headings, so that one must return to the Contents page in order to discover where they begin and end. The punctuation is rather erratic, the use of apostrophes can seem odd, and there are numerous other grammatical and syntactical errors. Lichfield is spelled Litchfield, and Burne-Jones is spelled 'Burn-Jones'. All this detracts from the value of the content.

A Wardle family tree would have been useful when younger members of the family pop in and out of the story unannounced, as would a glossary of the stitches used by the Leek embroiderers and technical terms such as 'passementerie', 'orphreys' or 'glacined'. The text mentions that the names of more than fifty of the Leek needlewomen are known; a list would surely therefore offer interest, not least for their descendants.

Diana Andrews

John Simons, *Rossetti's Wombat: Pre-Raphaelites and Australian Animals in Victorian London*, Middlesex University Press, 2008. 152 pp., ISBN 978-1 904750 60-4, £12.

Talented creatures, wombats, for as John Simons informs us in this delightful book, they 'have evolved the capacity to produce more or less cubic faeces'. One cannot help but be impressed, though given that Simon also tells us that 'their faecal pellets are just about the driest of any animals' (*sic*), it sounds as though this may have been a somewhat painful talent to develop (its advantage is that cubic pellets are easier to stack to mark out territory). Wombat sperm is 'marked by its sickle-shaped heads', a feature shared with their relatives koala bears, apparently. Despite his unbridled enthusiasm for all things wombatian, Simons also tells us nothing about wombat testicles, which one might expect to be no less interesting than their faeces or sperm. But he does have a lively interest in the testicles of his fellow wombat-enthusiast Dante Gabriel Rossetti, whose hydrocele, or gross swelling of the testicle, makes it unlikely, in Simons's view, that he could have consummated his love for Jane Morris. Indeed, the plump cushions which the artist carries in the Burne-Jones cartoon of him pursuing Jane may well constitute – as Simons warms thoroughly to his testicular theme – 'a sly dig at the state of Rossetti's genitalia'.

'Now, why is all this of any interest?' as John Simons disarmingly asks of his own prose at one point (and might have asked many times more). In this self-declaredly 'whimsical book', he creates as many ingenious contexts as he can for making some sense of the brief life of Rossetti's wombat, Top (purchased for eight pounds from Jamrach's shop in September 1869, died 6 November 1869 and subsequently stuffed). Simons pursues every conceivable context with great gusto, and one cannot but admire the strange reaches of scholarship into which he has ventured on our behalf in compiling this enjoyable book. He approvingly cites Rossetti's 'apparently unquenchable desire to own what he called "beasts"', and this drive is entirely matched by the author's own unquenchable desire to know about Victorians and beasts, especially Australian ones.

Australian animals, as they begin to arrive back in the home country from the end of the eighteenth century, create problems for the categories which the European scientific imagination has invented in order to catalogue, and thus master, the natural world; and are thus both fascinating spectacles at the popular level and challenging intellectual conundrums for the scientific elite. A dead wombat is sent to Newcastle in 1799, and is still to be seen in the Hancock Museum apparently; and from then on wombat mania threatens to shape world history, for 'Napoleon's imperial ambition towards Australia might have been stimulated by the desire to have more wombats', and sweeps through the fashionable world (by the 1880s you could encounter wombat hearth rugs or wombat fur carriage rugs). Kangaroos do well too, with some early (and execrable) poems devoted to them by Robert Southey and Charles Dibden, attempts to farm them in Lincolnshire

(which persist into the 1960s), and a number of them kept in Windsor Great Park by George III. One wonders whether, in the improved environmental conditions of Morris's utopia, as William Guest, Dick Hammond and Clara make their brief visit to Windsor Castle on their way up the Thames, the kangaroos have returned.

But the whole mad world of the Victorians and their animals – not just Australian ones – is evoked for us here. William Buckland is eating his way busily through the animal kingdom ('He wondered whether bluebottles or moles tasted worse'); the Duke of Edinburgh keeps an elephant on his ship for seventeen months ('What on earth do you do with an elephant on a smallish war-ship?'); Jamrach wrestles down a tiger which has escaped from his East End animal and curios shop with a boy in its jaws, or struggles to accommodate a twenty-three-foot-long Australian crocodile he has got in stock; and Rossetti acquires an extraordinary menagerie of animals of nearly all kinds in his Cheyne Walk back garden in Chelsea. I say nearly, because his plan to keep an elephant in residence to help with the window-cleaning never came to fruition, nor did his desire to possess a lion, since it would have cost too much to run hot water pipes out into the garden in order to keep it warm in winter. His racoon 'ate a considerable number of Rossetti's poems in manuscript', so we may regard this as the animal kingdom's fitting revenge on its neglectful Cheyne Walk master.

He also, among so many other unusual creatures, possessed a wombat (or two, actually, but it is only Top who concerns us here). Wombat mania had already run rife amongst the 'jovial campaigners' in the Oxford Union in 1857 where, as Val Prinsep reported: 'Caricatures of this creature in every imaginable position in all the windows'. Wombats may have been a gift to visual artists, but they were rather more intractable material to poets; after all, what can you rhyme with 'wombat'? Rossetti himself tried 'combat' (easy), 'bomb at' (inventive, in a faintly Hopkinsian manner) and 'sweet and fat' (lazy). His sister Christina recast the beast in Italian form as 'Uommibatto' rather than 'wombat', which perhaps opens up more rhyming possibilities in that language. His more prosaic brother William did not rhyme the new little fellow, but simply referred to him unkindly as 'the most lumpish and incapable of wombats'.

But how do you name your new creature once you have acquired him from Jamrach's? 'Of course, I shall call him "Top"', Rossetti wrote to Miss Losh; and John Simons, who is so sensitive to nuances of language throughout his entertaining book, curiously does not pick up on that casual 'of course'. But at a time when Rossetti was exhuming Lizzie Siddal but pursuing Jane Morris, and Morris was (in Simons's view) pursuing Georgiana Burne-Jones, and Burne-Jones himself was pursuing, and in John Donnean phrase 'getting', Maria Zambaco, the new furry arrival at Cheyne Walk becomes a lighting-conductor for many of these tensions, 'another link in the covert chain of signals he [Rossetti] was sending out to Janey Morris'. To call the wombat 'Top' in a social circle in which

Morris himself was ‘Topsy’ is thus a way to diminish or master Jane’s legal and sexual possessor, of restoring Morris to the subaltern role he had played during the late 1850s as Rossetti’s devoted admirer and student; and the most powerful visual image of all is Rossetti’s malicious cartoon of Jane Morris walking with a diminutive wombat/Morris figure on a lead behind her.

‘Can we stretch back into a Victorian world and smell it with the keen sense of a wombat?’ John Simon asks at the end of this stimulating book, having done a very effective job of giving us a wombat’s-eye view of the sexual tangles of Rossetti, Morris, Jane and the others. ‘Top is finally out of reach’, though, he concludes lugubriously; but I wonder. Given how intelligent wombats are (‘proportionally very large brains, that are fitted into their heads by dint of deep and complex folds’), and given that, as Simons himself informs us, as late as ‘1902 Helen Rossetti was having regular visitations from Gabriel during her spiritualist experiments with a planchette’, might there not still be ways of calling up the spirit of Top to have his firsthand say on the complex sexual matters he witnessed unfolding before him in Cheyne Walk late in 1869?

Tony Pinkney

Michaela Giebelhausen & Tim Barringer, eds, *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites: Text, Context, Subtext*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009, 262 pp., 24 b/w illustrations. ISBN 7980754657170, £55 (£49.50 online).

To include the word Pre-Raphaelite in a scholarly book makes it more saleable, and sometimes the term is invoked too loosely. This collection of papers, evidently from an unidentified academic conference, aims to ‘interrogate the texts through which Pre-Raphaelitism was constructed’ and opens with an epigraph from the late Pierre Bourdieu on the industry which brings past works into the academic ‘game’ which promotes the cultural elite. But the essays are less abstruse and form a useful if uneven contribution to Pre-Raphaelite literature – as they should, being chiefly concerned with the textual aspects of the movement. They stand independently, without over-arching structure, and are contributed by established and emerging experts in the field. However disparate, the papers are all interesting, and well illustrate the editors’ introductory claim for the scholarly rewards of writing and re-writing Pre-Raphaelite historiography.

First stands Deborah Cherry, foremost feminist art historian, who interrogates the 1984 Pre-Raphaelite exhibition at the Tate Gallery – including a wonderful photo of Prime Minister Thatcher on an official visit with Leslie Parris and Peter Palumbo, apparently poking a painting in order to make her point – and surveys the historiography of the movement from 1860. Julie Codell writes on its reputations in Britain and Europe up to 1908 in the context of ideas of masculin-

ity and national identity. David Piers Corbett, contributes a short, original paper on Rossetti's neglected story 'St Agnes of Intercession'.

Julie L'Enfant expounds the crucial and evolving role of William Rossetti as PRB and art critic, whilst Michaela Giebelhausen traces Holman Hunt's self-fashioning as a Pre-Raphaelite in terms of a 'covert romance' interwoven with character traits promoted by Thomas Carlyle, Samuel Smiles and Victorian versions of Christ. Will Vaughan analyses the critical neglect of Ford Madox Brown whose role in the movement was marginalised by his fellows, and which has continued despite the 1991 biography by Teresa Newman and the late Ray Watkinson, of the WMS; one hopes that the forthcoming book (Angela Thirlwell, *Into the Frame: the Four Loves of Ford Madox Brown*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2010, 328 pp.) and exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery (2011) will remedy this. Matthew Plampin chronicles the artists' decisions on when and where to exhibit, seeing a Pre-Raphaelite 'program' and the proto-modern creation of a brand.

Colin Cruise describes and assesses the reception of Simeon Solomon's works at the Dudley Gallery – a signally under-rated exhibition space owing, presumably, to its eclipse by the Grosvenor. Jason Rosenfeld does much the same for contemporary newspaper criticism of the Pre-Raphaelite presentation of nature, beginning with Collins's 'Regents Park', and proceeding to include works by Linnell, Mulready and Maclise, in the sole essay to venture outside the main frame. Finally Malcolm Warner provides a masterly account of the emergence and importance of mass reproduction of Pre-Raphaelite works – here, those by Millais – from fairly simple woodcuts through steel engravings, large and sophisticated mezzotints to chromolithographs and beyond. He notes in conclusion how the great revival of Pre-Raphaelite fortunes came with full-colour reproductions during the 1960s, and how the teaching methods of today, projecting 35 mm slides and digital images on white screens, replicate the luminosity of the originals.

Jan Marsh

Stanley A. Shepherd, *The Stained Glass of A.W.N. Pugin*, Reading: Spire Books Ltd, 2009, 443 pp., colour illustrations throughout. Hbk, ISBN 978-1-904965-20-6, £34.95.

It is a great pleasure to be able to welcome this massive volume, which represents a life's work, even though Shepherd kept his day-job as a chartered accountant. It is based on his Ph.D. thesis of 1997. He also wrote the chapter on Stained Glass for the Victoria and Albert Museum catalogue of the exhibition *Pugin: A Gothic Passion*.

The first half of the book is a series of introductory chapters, which explain

what Pugin was trying to do and illuminate various preoccupations throughout his short life. The second half is a gazetteer, together with other information to assist a person trying to find a particular window. Throughout the book are distributed colour plates of all the important windows; nearly all the photography is by Alastair Carew-Cox. Some of these images have never been made available in earlier publications. It is worth pointing out that stained glass windows are notoriously difficult to photograph, especially those as dark as many of Pugin's early efforts. In many cases there is a full shot of the entire window and its surroundings, supplemented by some exceptional photographs of details. On pp. 62–63, for example, are shown parts of two windows at St Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham, which depict 'glassmakers' at work. These are modelled on John Hardman's actual makers of the stained glass, and remind us of the figures of craftsmen in the windows of Chartres Cathedral. In the chapel of his own house at Ramsgate, Pugin included pictures of members of his own family posed as medieval donors beneath the images of saints (pp. 115–116).

The first chapters explain how, as is well known, stained glass had become entirely pictorial by the eighteenth century. Large squares of glass were painted upon by artists, who were simply transcribing an oil painting. From the beginning of his working life, Pugin discarded this method. He made journeys to see the best examples of medieval glass, both here and on the continent, and then designed windows which were 'archaeologically correct' – to use the terminology of the time – though of course he added his own insight. He then employed established or aspiring manufacturers, such as Warrington, Wailes and Willement; correspondence with these Firms indicates frequent disagreements, as few people could really understand Pugin's vision of the Middle Ages. So, from November 1845, he set up a partnership with the Firm of John Hardman, who had supplied his metalwork. He produced the cartoons from his own workshop, which was built on to the front of his house at Ramsgate; he employed his family e.g. his son Edward, aged 11, and one or two pupils. Hardman finished the windows in a new section of his works in Birmingham. A comparison with Morris's Firm is helpful in understanding Pugin's impatience with what the commercial manufacturers had to offer.

Like many Victorian architects, the extreme rapidity of his working methods continues to astonish us. John Hardman Powell, one of his pupils, said:

The pace at which he worked would be incredible to anyone not seeing it. His few implements were at hand and his design was in his brain distinct even to the detail, so without hesitation he pencilled or penned or brushed in; he never rubbed out or altered, all was as easy as talking, he used any quick method, ruling in straight lines, sketching in arcs with compasses; 'What does it matter how the effect is produced, the result is the thing.' (p. 169)

However, Pugin was never completely satisfied with the results and his interpre-

tation of the medieval ideal changed. In 1848 he visited Chartres for inspiration before working on the lancet windows at Jesus College, Cambridge, trying to understand the jewel-like nature of the best glass, and its 'brilliance'. In fact the resulting windows did not come out as Pugin expected:

I went to Jesus College. The windows like everything else are very disappointing I was quite astonished. They don't look as if there was a powerful colour in them. Our ornament is too faintly painted we are afraid of black. (p. 133)

In 1849 he realised that Hardman was still using coloured sheets of glass from manufacturers, and visited Evreux in order to buy specimens of the old glass. 'I assure you', he wrote to Hardman, 'we have hardly one of the old colours in our glass . . . I have several pieces of the early sort so they can be analysed if necessary'. Then he decided that he must have 'thick rich-looking unequal glass' instead of 'smooth polished' modern glass. One thinks of Morris's similar frustrations; Pugin died before this problem could be solved.

Many people have looked on glass and allowed their eyes to pass through it in order to see visions of heaven, to paraphrase George Herbert. Pugin was more conscious of the opposite purpose of the coloured glass within a religious building; it was part of the architecture, and the light that poured through it changed the interior and was part of the decorative scheme. As he said in a lecture to his Oscott College students in 1838:

The vivid colours of the glass were recalled to the eye by the mosaic enamelled tile pavements, by the gold and colours which relieved the wood and stone carvings, by the painted panels of the screens and altars, by the tapestry hangings, and antependiums of massive embroidery, by the shrines of gold and silver enriched with jewels, and lastly by the gorgeous vestments of the clergy, covered with imagery, pearls and precious stones.

In this way, as at Cheadle, for example, Pugin decorated the whole church, knowing that its richness would be enhanced by these 'vivid colours'. But later, because 'some modern people complain it is too dark', he added more white glass to the windows in order to disperse the 'dim religious light'; and of course, in secular buildings, such as the new Houses of Parliament, Pugin and Barry accepted that plain windows with heraldic symbolism would give better lighting.

The triumph of Pugin and his associates was to be asked to design the Medieval Court at the Great Exhibition. He wore himself out with the sheer amount of work he took on. For a number of years after his death in February 1852 his influence on Gothic Revival glass continued to be important, but notice the advice G. F. Bodley gave to the Dean of Jesus College, Cambridge, only fifteen years later, when he asked about commissioning a new window for the chapel.

Hardman's glass is getting worse and worse – Pugin's influence started them well,

but it is a great risk now what you get – the windows I have seen lately are terribly bad in *colour and drawing* ... I still think you [had] better get a sketch from Morris. (p. 190)

Morris did eventually get the contract for most of the other windows in the chapel. In 1913 an appeal document in the college archives described two of Pugin's chapel windows as an 'eyesore, disfiguring the beauty of the chancel and out of harmony with the series of windows in the nave and transepts' (p. 199); they were removed.

This is the kind of detail which can be explored further in the *Gazetteer*, which includes all the scholarship on which the book is based. There is a full county by county index of all the windows which were constructed and placed in buildings by the Firm of John Hardman, because Hardman's first *Glass Day Book* is available and everything is listed. Even windows which have been destroyed by enemy action are included. Letters from Pugin are supplied: there are no letters to Pugin because 'Every letter he received he answered at once and burnt'. (p. 192) Other sources, such as comments by the patrons, are also made available. Unfortunately the windows made by the other Firms Pugin used – which were listed above – cannot be documented in the same way because records are limited, or have not survived. Whilst every effort has been made to complete the survey it is possible that some earlier windows have been missed. At the end of the book there is a list of the windows in date order, and a fascinating index of the subject matter of Pugin's designs.

Shepherd's book is a landmark in the progressive rehabilitation of Victorian stained glass. In *The Buildings of Cambridgeshire, 1954* (p. 289), Nikolaus Pevsner could hardly bring himself to look at the glass in Ely Cathedral:

... as to Victorian glass Ely is a mine inexhaustible for those few who for the sake of historical completeness or a somewhat morbid aesthetic curiosity wish to study it.

He simply printed a list of the glass, and the Pugin window to be seen there received no special comment. Of course stained glass had other uses at that time. During the 1960s, I remember being directed by art students to stand in the south aisle of the cathedral and watch the kaleidoscopic patterns which the glass threw on the floor. I was to delight in the way these patterns seemed to move; this, they explained to me in my ignorance, was 'a psychedelic experience'. Later, the cathedral incorporated its windows into a stained glass museum with a high reputation.

The final word lies with Rosemary Hill. In *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (p. 326) she explains the deeper meaning of stained glass, and by implication places Pugin among its greatest designers:

... If the window was symbolic, in romantic portraits, of the divided self, the meeting between interior and exterior realities, then the stained glass window was perhaps the epitome of Victorian romanticism, more serious and more sacred than the Georgian. Set at the meeting point of material and immaterial worlds, as a body is animated by a soul, so the visible glass is animated by invisible and unreflected light.

John Purkis

Cyndy Manton, *Henry Wilson. Practical Idealist*, Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2009, 258 pp, 64 colour plates, 101 b & w illustrations. Hbk ISBN 9780718830977, £50.00; Pbk. 9780718830984, £19.99.

Cyndy Manton has written a lively and enthusiastic account of one of the second-generation Arts & Crafts designers that should go some way to giving Henry Wilson the prominence he clearly deserves. Wilson (1864–1934) has, it seems to me, been a rather shadowy figure among his generation, which included C.R. Ashbee, Eric Gill, Edward Johnston, May Morris and Christopher Whall. Wilson began in the architectural practice of J.D. Sedding, along with Ernest Barnsley, Ernest Gimson and Alfred Powell, and it was he who took on the considerable responsibility of completing the projects begun by Sedding before his sadly early death in 1891. These included work in the interiors of two of the buildings for which he is best known, the superb decoration of St. Bartholomew's, Brighton, and numerous contributions to that of Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, including the Lady Chapel screen and the alabaster-and-marble pulpit. Other works by Wilson which are comparatively well known are at Welbeck Abbey, the Council House in Coventry, and King's College at the University of Aberdeen – the striking Elphinstone Tomb – and in the United States the remarkable bronze doors for the Salada Tea Company in Boston and for the West doors at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. But the extraordinary range of his work and the integrity of his artistic commitment does not seem to me to have been properly recognised.

One has only to examine the colour plates in this book to realise that Wilson was a remarkably fine craftsman in many media, fortunately well enough recognised in his time to have received many fruitful commissions. Indeed, the attractive cover points the way, its nine panels each showing a work in a different medium, all of the highest quality. Manton discusses and praises Wilson's work on a large scale at St. Martin's, Low Marple, near Manchester, the Thatched House (which he built for his family at St. Mary's Platt in Kent), the granite St. Mark's Church, in the remote village of Brithdir, Gwynedd, and the powerful bronze south doors at St. Mary's, Nottingham, prefiguring his work in Boston and New York. On a smaller scale we are shown an abundance of beautiful

and finely made pieces, including the silver communion chalice for Gloucester Cathedral, made with the cooperation of Sidney Wiseman and Harry Murphy; the elaborate Chamberlain Casket for Birmingham; a tiara with the goddess Diana; a rambling rose locket; a gold enamel buckle; a gold necklace; a gold ecclesiastical morse; the gold pendant in green and white enamel with calcedony teardrop given to his wife in 1912; a silver enamel alms dish for St. John's Church, Cirencester; and stained glass in St John the Baptist, West Ashton, Wiltshire, and St Mary's, Weymouth. The jewellery in particular suggests a master craftsman, at least the equal of Ashbee, and it is no surprise therefore to find that Wilson wrote a respected book on the subject, *Silverwork and Jewellery*, in the Artistic Crafts series edited by W.R. Lethaby, in 1903; there was a revised and expanded edition in 1912. D.S. MacColl of the National Gallery is quoted as having called Wilson 'a gifted architect who went off into the minor crafts' (p. 3), but, as Manton argues, such a distinction was one that no-one committed to the ideals of Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement could have accepted. Indeed, the variety of Wilson's achievements reminds us of Morris, though the two men do not seem to have met. One unusual skill to which Manton draws attention was Wilson's ability to arrange exhibitions in a way that created stimulating wholes rather than random collections of objects. Wilson it was who arranged the British Section at the Ghent International Exhibition in 1913, the British Arts and Crafts at the Pavillon de Marsan in Paris in 1914, and the 11th Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society at Burlington House (which had previously been hospitable only to High Art) in 1916. Of this, *The Studio* wrote: 'Mr. Wilson's plan [is] bolder than anything that has been carried out before'. (p. 163)

Wilson did not restrict himself to his craft activities, or indeed to his family, to which he was deeply committed and with which he enjoyed spending time, but was also active in the public fields of education and publicity. From the useful Chronology appended we can see that he became a member of the Art Workers' Guild in 1892, joined its committee in 1898, and became Master in 1917. He belonged to the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society for a number of years, and was its President from 1915 to 1922. He edited the *Architectural Review* from 1896 to 1901, and was a member of the Council of the International Society of Painters and Gravers from 1899 to 1925. He was Chair of the London County Council's Consultative Committee on teaching Goldsmith's Work and Jewellery in 1908. He was a member of the Council of Governors of the British Institute of Industrial Art in 1920. But his publications were surprisingly few. Manton does not provide a list of these, though she quotes usefully from his book on jewellery and, in her detailed and scholarly Notes, from a number of his unpublished lectures. These include the interesting remark, in an article in *The Studio* in 1896, that 'It is not the graceful and charming designs which flowed so readily from Morris's facile hand which will place [him amongst] the most honoured English artist craftsmen, but more his teaching ...' (Note 56, p. 220). In the same year, Wilson

published three articles on 'The work of Sir Edward Burne-Jones' in the *Architectural Review*, in which, in addition to praising and analysing Burne-Jones's achievement, he developed the idea of architecture as a form of music, with the architect as a 'composer in charge of a thousand living instruments'. (Note 78, p. 224) Manton points out that here, as elsewhere, Wilson's ideas are close to those expressed by Lethaby in *Architecture, Mystery and Myth*; both men believed that works of art could be given unity by symbolism of an eclectic kind. A letter to the town-planner Patrick Geddes in June 1906 shows that Wilson's views on other architects were far from bland and were based on Webb-like assumptions about building and architecture: 'E.S. Prior is a really gifted person and a builder – Bailie Scott is no builder, neither is Voysey, I do not think Macintosh is, but both he and Voysey have grit and tenacity, a belief in themselves and a certain strange originality of which Scott is innocent.' (p. 47)

However, the most impressive quotations come from Wilson's thoughts about education, and the vital importance of creativity, which he thought best developed by craft work. He had the highest hopes for what might be achieved, and expressed these at the New Ideals Conference during the dark days of the first World War: 'When mind and activity are joined the work thus produced is the channel by which the worker receives wisdom. Craft training is indeed the ladder of humanity, with power not only to [improve] education but also in time to transform industry and to regenerate ... society'. (p. 132) He seems here to hover on the brink of a politics that he was never able completely to formulate, so that the hope expressed, however noble, now seems naive. Indeed, the book overall cannot but feel elegiac in relation to the Arts and Crafts in Britain.

Wilson moved to France in 1922, and lived there for the rest of his life, with the most impressive of his late works being created in the United States. He was keen for the crafts to contribute to the recovery of industry after the war, but was always suspicious of the power of industry to impose its own values rather than learning from the crafts. From 1919 Wilson tried, through the Association of Architecture, Building and Handicraft, to develop the 'hand craft movement' through the establishment of a craft village in the Cotswolds. The Association gained the support of many distinguished Arts & Crafts workers, including Sidney Barnsley, Ernest Gimson, Christopher Whall and May Morris, and drew up budgeted plans. Unfortunately, the sudden death of Gimson at the age of fifty-five, and the withdrawal of Barnsley from the scheme, led to its failure. This pattern of early promise and subsequent failure repeated itself with the British Institute of Industrial Art in the early 20s. Manton gives us a thorough and moving account of how Wilson, sceptical of what he saw as the subordination of design to industry in the Design and Industries Association, tried to bring his ideas into the mainstream through the Institute which he helped to launch. The Institute was established by the Board of Trade in conjunction with the Board of Education with the aim of raising the standard of British design and stimulating demand for such work.

Many prominent people from the Arts & Crafts world were involved and the first year saw several exhibitions and an Information Bureau to link craftsmen, designers and industry. However, the Treasury grant lasted only until 1921, and the work of the Institute gradually subsided. By the time of Wilson's death, in 1934, the ideals which he had embodied no longer seemed relevant. But Manton records that he remained positive to the end. She concludes with a remark scribbled hurriedly by Wilson in a notebook, which she sees as expressing the spirit of this remarkable man: 'It is not the thing you think you desire; not what you are, but what you hope to be that matters'. (p. 203)

Manton's book convinces the reader that the quality of the work Wilson produced throughout his active lifetime entitles him to a higher reputation than he currently enjoys, and deserves to stimulate a revival of interest in the man whom Gordon Craig tellingly described as a 'practical idealist' (p. 101) – surely the best kind. This is a thoroughly researched account, clearly written and with a wealth of good illustrations; it contains a welcome Gazetteer, which shows the range of Wilson's work to be seen in different parts of Britain today. *Henry Wilson. Practical Idealist* is a credit to the Lutterworth Press and to its author, and I hope it will be widely read.

Peter Faulkner

Jane Bingham, *The Cotswolds: a cultural history*, Oxford: Signal Books, 2009, xxvi + 244 pp. Pbk, ISBN 978-1-904955-62-7, £12.

The Signal Books Landscapes of the Imagination series announces itself by the claim to present 'the world's great landscapes – real, mythic and imagined – explored through their history, literature and art.' So much for the intention. What of the reality? Bingham's *The Cotswolds* is an attractive book, written in a friendly, open style and dealing with the full range of cultural possibilities of a relatively small area. Thus although she covers (successively) ancient history, religion, agriculture, military history, industry, Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement, the literary and artistic Cotswolds, garden history and sports, the unity of the area she covers is never in doubt. Indeed, she seems at times to limit herself unnecessarily by adopting the Cotswolds as defined by the protected Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. She admits small deviations from this by including Woodstock and Blenheim Palace. But she might have wandered a little further – for example, the curious pre-history of Bath as a Cotswolds town, before its eighteenth-century redevelopment and reinvention as Georgian Bath, or the distinctly Cotswolds villages around Chippenham in Wiltshire, which include Kingston Langley.

Here Robin Tanner (engraver and teacher) and Heather Tanner (writer)

worked in the tradition of Morris and the Arts and Craft movement during the twentieth century, not least its moral rejection of the capitalist system of production for profit. Heather Tanner's observation about oolitic limestone, in *Wiltshire Village*, that 'When it is old and grey it is alive with new growth – emerald moss, orange spots of lichen, stoncrop and rue-leaved saxifrage, pennycress and cob-webbed ivy' will strike an immediate chord with visitors to Kelmscott Manor. Bingham also omits Faringdon, close enough to Kelmscott for Dick Dufty and Peter Locke to 'hold one another up' in the teashop during the traumatic rescue of Kelmscott Manor from years of neglect. Another conspicuous omission for those interested particularly in William Morris is the tithe barn at Great Coxwell near Faringdon.

One central question for anyone writing about an area such as the Cotswolds is whether we are dealing with a culture indigenous to a particular place, or representations of a wider, perhaps national, culture which have been introduced into it. Is it a culture which emerges from, or a culture which enters into, a place? Bingham does not address these theoretical issues directly, and yet her splendidly eclectic collection of material offers plenty of food for thought on such themes. She notes, for example, that often the remnants of folk culture surviving in the Cotswolds were introductions or revivals depending on later incomers such as Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft at Chipping Camden. At the southern end of the Cotswolds, the revival of the Marshfield Paperboys Boxing Day mummers' play was a 'community development' initiative in the 1930s led by an active member of Cecil Sharp's English Folk Dance and Song Society.

A careful reading of Bingham's book also reveals that the space for the twentieth-century 'invasion' of the Cotswolds by Arts and Crafts practitioners, weekend cottagers, commuters and assorted royals and celebrities was, created by the long decline in both English agriculture (from the mid-nineteenth century) and the weaving industries (from even earlier). At Kelmscott, for example, the population declined from 179 inhabitants in 1841, to only 101 in 1881. Against national trends, it then rose to 164 by 1901, before beginning the long twentieth-century decline to only 85 in 1981. Prices and wages fell as English agriculture faced global competition. Much rural housing was sub-standard, diets were poor, and the National Union of Agricultural Workers sought to alleviate poverty by encouraging farm labourers to emigrate to 'the colonies'. Others took themselves off to the factories of Oxford, Swindon and Gloucester. Bingham is especially strong on the long, sad decline of the weaving industry, which left buildings which might be occupied around 1900 by Arts and Crafts craftspeople, and around 2000 by Arts Centres.

Bingham also observes the growing use of the Cotswolds for military purposes. Of course, William Morris cared about foreign policy: indeed his first political involvement was through the Eastern Question Association when it appeared that the British government was determined to go to war with Russia in

support of Ottoman Turkey. In his manifesto ‘To the working men of England’ (1877) he denounced ‘*unjust war*’ [italics in original]. The phrase resonates down through to our own time. Morris, who witnessed police violence at the Bloody Sunday riot in Trafalgar Square in November 1887, would have been appalled at the action of the police in turning back coachloads of demonstrators en route for Fairford in 2003 for a peaceful anti-war rally, an action declared illegal in 2006 by the House of Lords. Nor is Fairford the only military presence in the area. A few miles north of the village is Carterton, a little known ‘new town’ of some 15,000 inhabitants which has grown up round the Brize Norton air-base. With the closure of RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire, even more of the work of Transport Command will be centred close to Kelmscott – more noise, more traffic and more pollution.

Of key interest to members of the William Morris Society are the central chapters in *The Cotswolds*, which deal with Morris and the Arts and Crafts. Bingham does not attempt to introduce new material or novel insights. What she does achieve is a clear and unblinking statement of the role which Kelmscott played in Morris’s life. She follows Fiona MacCarthy in emphasising that Kelmscott was first of all chosen as a place out of public view, where Jane Morris could conduct her affair with Rossetti. Only later did it become for Morris a representation of the contrast between the ruinous state of the English countryside towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the Utopian vision of the way things might be otherwise in *News from Nowhere*. Kelmscott is also the site of the one obvious error in the book, where the author explains the ‘sizing-down’ of Cotswolds stone roofs as larger stones at the top and smaller at the bottom, rather than the other way round. That apart, she has been meticulous in her research.

Bingham does not mention the role of Jane and May Morris as craftswomen in their own right, an omission she more than makes up for in choosing to feature the work of such distinguished Cotswolds craftswomen as Phyllis Barron and Dorothy Larcher. Checking the gender balance is also important for scholars and fans of William Morris. Apart from being a designer and craftswoman in her own right, May Morris spent a great deal of time editing the twenty four volumes of her father’s *Collected Works*, published 1910–15. As important, and in sharp contrast to her parents, she attempted to ‘do something’ for the people of Kelmscott. In 1914 she commissioned a pair of cottages, designed by Ernest Gimson, in memory of her mother; in 1916 she presided at the inaugural meeting of the Kelmscott WI. In 1934, she fund-raised and project-managed for the building of the Village Hall. Yet even so, development at Kelmscott was haphazard compared with nearby Filkins, where Sir Stafford Cripps (later Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1945 Labour government) promoted major building projects during the 1930s, including new council houses (1929), a Village Centre with doctor’s surgery, public baths, and recreational facilities (1935–1936), and an improved water supply.

Bingham's two chapters on the Arts and Crafts movement and its successors provide an excellent introduction to the subject. She suggests too the oscillation of Arts and Crafts designers between a decorative approach sometimes bordering on art nouveau and a more rationalist tradition which leads in a straightish line from Morris to Gordon Russell. It was Russell who made the link between good design and factory production, essential if it was ever to become competitive with 'bad' design. In the process he also made good design accessible to a better-educated public which was becoming increasingly discriminating in matters of interior design and furniture.

The book is well provided with black-and-white images – photographs, but also copies of engravings such as the frontispiece of *News from Nowhere* depicting Kelmscott Manor as it appeared during Morris's time. There is a very useful reference section, including both books and internet sites, as well as lists of interesting houses and churches to visit. There are good indices too, a detail too often omitted in books of this kind for the general reader who may or may not develop a lifetime interest in Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement.

John Payne

Catherine Gordon, *Cotswolds Arts and Crafts Architecture*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 2009, 182 pp., 98 b/w illustrations. Hbk, ISBN 978-1-86077-548-2, £20.00.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed a flowering of vernacular architecture in the Cotswolds, led by the most influential architects of their day. These architects were directly inspired by the writings of John Ruskin and William Morris, and possessed genuine commitment to their ideas of reforming the living and working environment, of living and working with nature, of the beauty of natural forms, and the simplicity and potential vitality of country life. They were most influential in saving the traditional architecture and the environment of villages and small towns in a swathe of central England, but they also formed part of a wider movement to revive and protect rural industries, crafts, folk song and dance damaged by the population movements of Enclosure, the industrial revolution and agricultural depression.

The architectural styles employed by these architects may look traditional, but they took an almost modernist approach towards the efficacy of healthful, natural light and aspect and to the importance of moulding a building to its site, often through the use of changing levels. Whilst they insisted upon the use of local materials where at all possible, they were not shy of modern techniques, used appropriately, as in W.R. Lethaby's concrete vaulting in Brockhampton Church. The development of the north corridor plan and the butterfly plan to

make the best use of natural light, and the cranked plan in order to mould a building to its site, exhibit real innovation. Catherine Gordon writes with elegance and clarity. Her Introduction places William Morris and his architect-disciples firmly in the Cotswolds landscape, at the centre of a 'rekindling of romanticism ... the quest ... for the beautiful rather than the sublime, for a gentle, nurturing vision of nature that offered a soothing sense of reassurance and stability at a time of rapid social and economic change'. (p. 1) 'The buildings that they [the architects] designed in the region reveal an admirable appreciation of the strong vernacular precedent, which served to channel their creativity. Their work encouraged the revival of the local building crafts and the quarrying industry, and instilled a new sense of pride among the local communities in their built and natural assets.' (p. 2)

In her first two chapters, Gordon provides a thorough background to the ideals, character, development and principles of the Arts and Crafts movement which would be valuable to any student wishing to gain an overview of the discipline. The conflict between the desire to make handmade goods, which proved to be too expensive for the majority of the population, and the growth of art in industry, is carefully delineated, as is the foundation of the various associations and societies which were to foster craft traditions in the English Lake District, Haslemere and Ditchling, as well as the Cotswolds. The keen political involvement of the architectural profession in the reform of arts and industries, led by figures such as J.D. Sedding, W.R. Lethaby and Ernest Newton, and its commitment to conservation through the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (S.P.A.B.), the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (C.P.R.E.) and the National Trust, are described.

Philip Webb's influence as 'the architectural mentor of the Arts and Crafts Movement', who 'removed "architecture" from the architect's office to the builder's yard and craftsman's workshop' (p. 9) is emphasised. He enjoyed close friendships with most of the Cotswolds Arts and Crafts architects. They designed churches and village halls, such as the one at Kelmscott for May Morris; community housing, such as that in Broadway for the Russell Workshops Housing Scheme, and war memorials, such as the one at Stanway, but the development of the small, manageable, country house remains their greatest legacy. Despite their fine ideals, it appears that these architects were unable to ameliorate the housing of the agricultural labourer. In artefact and architecture, it was the middle and upper classes who benefited from the Arts and Crafts movement.

Subsequent chapters address the development of Arts and Crafts architecture and architectural conservation in the Cotswolds. Gordon describes individual architects, touching upon their background, their characters and their particular strengths and examines specific building projects in some detail. William Morris's admiration for the Cotswolds landscape, and the art embodied in its architecture, exerted great influence upon his immediate followers. The expanding

railway system made travel from Birmingham and London relatively easy, and a fashion in migration to the Cotswolds countryside began. The artistic gentrification of Broadway was an early manifestation of this enthusiasm. The town formed a focus for American and British artists, musicians and writers, for actors and craftspeople and, most important, for those who would become the patrons of the Arts and Crafts architects, such as Lady Elcho, the American actress Mary Anderson, and the Russell family. Architects were drawn into the artistic ferment as it became desirable to improve and extend old buildings and design new ones. 'By 1920 barely a domestic or agricultural building remained unaltered in Broadway's famous street. However, the damage was mercifully slight, due largely to the influence of families like the Flowers and the Russells, whose attitudes to architectural design and conservation had been influenced by Arts and Crafts ideals, and also to new pressure groups such as S.P.A.B.' (p. 26)

The architects, like most of their client-patrons, all came from somewhere else. One of the first to arrive was Guy Dawber (1861–1938), later to become the first President of the C.P. R.E. Ernest Gimson (1864–1919) and the Barnsley brothers, Ernest (1863–1926) and Sidney (1865–1926), were raised in Leicester and Birmingham respectively. They jointly took Daneway House in Sapperton as a showroom and workshops in 1902, after training with Sedding and Shaw in London. They were all experienced in furniture making, but Gimson was also accomplished in decorative plasterwork. A broad range of talents is common amongst these architects. C.R. Ashbee (1863–1942) moved his Guild of Handicraft to Chipping Campden in 1902, establishing the Campden School of Arts and Crafts in 1904. The Guild did not survive long, but many of its craftsmen stayed on and started their own businesses. The Ashbees attracted talented artists, craftsmen and thinkers from all disciplines, many of whom were to settle in the area. F. L. Griggs (1876–1938), architect, artist and conservationist, was one of these. He was to develop an important creative friendship with Sapperton architect Norman Jewson (1884–1975), from Norwich. The story of the architects and their commissions, their talents and their personalities is fascinating and too involved to enumerate here; Gordon relates it fluently.

Clients could come from the aristocracy, for instance Lady Elcho or Lady Plymouth. They might be artists such as William Rothenstein, retired colonels and majors, new money such as the jam heiress Miss Hartley, other architects, craftsmen such as the Birmingham stained glass artist Henry Payne, or designers such as Gordon Russell. In the new architectural designs, favourite features included battered, local stone walls, cladding with oak boards, cruck frames, stone slate roofs or moulded thatch sweeping from the apex of the roof almost to the ground, with thatched eyelids peeking open over the upstairs windows. Fittings were handmade by the Guild of Handicraft or other, local craftsmen. Interiors were decorated simply with white walls, substantial fireplaces, wall sconces for candlelit evenings, delightful plasterwork in natural forms and shaped elm

planks or stone flags for flooring. There was a penchant for the handmade in preference to machine goods, but a realisation that modern materials, concrete floors and foundations and steel joists, could cut structural costs and be successfully camouflaged. A great deal of time and energy was spent on conservation and conversion work. Most of the architects were committed conservationists, many of them serving on the committee of S.P. A.B. They were prepared to fight for the integrity of old buildings and the use of traditional building materials and techniques, with the occasional aberration.

Catherine Gordon's text is leavened with an excellent selection of quotes and her notation is professional, with interesting digressions, for instance that fake adze marks were made on the steel beams of Baillie Scott's Blackwell. (p. 171, n. 14) Her bibliography is useful. A glossary of architectural terms might help the lay person, together with a list of the architects with their dates and major works and interests. Likewise, a gazetteer of the houses, halls, memorials and churches studied in the text would be most useful for a visitor to the region. This reader was longing for more photographs of fittings, stained glass, furniture, interiors and gardens, Jewson's plasterwork, portraits of the architects, their clients and their workers, and many more plans, to go with the exhaustive descriptions of each house and its construction.

Having said that, most of the photographs provided are contemporary with the period being described. There is a delightful picture on p. 88 of a collection of proud workmen just after the completion of Drakestone House, Stinchcombe. Phillimore, excellent publishers of local histories and historic maps, have published the book. On initial inspection the pages are set with rather narrow outer margins, and sometimes the justification can affect the spacing between words. This gives a slightly dated look, which, perhaps, is intended to be in keeping with the period described in the text. The content is obviously the result of exhaustive research and provides a most valuable overview of Cotswolds Arts and Crafts architecture. The book deserves to become a classic of its kind.

Diana Andrews

Vicki Halper & Diane Douglas, eds, *Choosing Craft: the Artist's Viewpoint*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 328 pp. Hbk, ISBN 9780807831199, £31.50.

Choosing Craft is an anthology of the thoughts of makers who have worked in America since the Second World War. The extracts (one hundred and twenty five of them) vary in length from a few paragraphs to a few pages, and each is prefaced with information about the maker and the context of the extract, which varies considerably. Passages from craft journals, monographs and blogs all feature, but

a surprising number come from what the editors describe as ‘oral histories’. Many of these interviews were collected under the ‘Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America’ now housed at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Given the unquestionable value of many of these interviews, I could not help wondering whether any parallel project has been undertaken to document British Craft during the twentieth century – I suspect not.

Choosing Craft is a fascinating read: much more absorbing than it might sound. The informal nature of many of the extracts gives an accessible feel to the book, but this comment does not indicate a lack of substance: often the opinions of the featured makers are deeply felt and at times profound. There are several real gems: the book begins with an inspiring piece by Anni Albers, a Bauhaus student and teacher who emigrated from Germany to America in 1933. The extract from *Design* in 1944 holds extraordinary power and conviction: ‘We learn courage from art work. We have to go where no one was before us. We are alone and we are responsible for our actions. Our solitariness takes on a religious character. This is a matter of my conscience and me.’ (p. 6)

From the ambition of the post-war era the reader is led through an entertaining range of cultural contexts. The counter-culture of the 1960s emerges in Judy Kensley McKie’s account of the ‘New Hamburger Cabinetworks’, where members of the group shared wages and ‘charged whatever we gauged the client could afford’. (p. 120) The revival in blacksmithing is described in L. Brent Kinton’s account of the ‘Artist-Blacksmith Association of North America’ conference of 1976 (the ‘Woodstock of the blacksmith’s association’) after which fifteen ‘dirty-faced, grubby guys’ called upon a surprised arts administrator at the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington D.C. in order to point out that they had just undergone a life-changing experience.

The eclectic nature of more recent craft is represented by Sabrina Gschwandner’s reflections on the resurgence of knitting in the last decade; she is described as someone who works in ‘film, video and textiles’ and ‘started knitting in college as a way to pass time while I was waiting to graduate. I liked to space out while knitting as a break from bouts of dense art theory reading.’ (p. 136) She works by inviting ‘extreme knitters’ to the installations and performances she creates.

Much of this has little to do with Morris directly, but the whole structure and thematic arrangement of the book shows that debates central the Arts and Crafts Movement persisted right through the twentieth century. Pervasive themes include the conscious decision to become a craft practitioner rather than an artist, the relationship of the maker to capitalism (in a whole section called ‘Making a Living’), and the potential of craft practice to act as an effective political strategy. Makers express wide-ranging and contradictory attitudes towards commercialism, fine art, gender and ethnicity, whilst at the same time seeing their creative practice as in some way connected with these issues.

One quite distinctive feature of the anthology is a marked stance against

academia. Whilst some makers argue for the positive aspects of university-educated makers, many see university art departments as a negative influence. Several commentators suggest that an atelier-based apprenticeship is superior to art school, whilst other makers complain that university-based makers are given an unfair commercial advantage, owing to their regular salaries and free workshops.

When Morris is mentioned directly, the allusions are negative. Stanley Lechtzin, a metalworker and jeweller, in a rather polemical piece from 1988, suggests that there is no intrinsic merit in hand-making and that this is a 'romantic notion' still relying on the ideas of 'William Morris and his friends'. (p. 259). Garth Johnson, a ceramicist involved in the 'Pottery Liberation Front', suggests in an extract from a blog in 2000, that the way Morris sold his products is a 'direct corollary to the philosophy of modern advertising, that the objects one owns makes them *different* than the rest of society'. (p. 294) The former comment is an offhand reference to justify computer aided design, whilst the latter shows a fundamental misconception about both the history of consumer culture and the significance of Morris's work.

It is disappointing that when Morris is mentioned it is in the narrow context of his belief in the value of handicraft: his much broader aim to reconnect human labour with dignity and creativity is a central concern of the book but never directly associated with Morris. There are plenty of makers who, without mentioning Morris, show how his ideas have been perpetuated and developed. A thoughtful and perceptive piece extracted from a monograph by Warren Seelig (a weaver) in 1992 argues that materials are essential to craft. Whilst questioning the relationship between material and maker he suggests: 'The answer goes beyond truth-to-materials or the notion that a material is merely a means to an end. Materials contain clues that allow us to discover our own personal sense of reality through a subconscious process, an intuitive, creative process in which material is an active partner'. (p. 55)

As an object the book is very pleasing. The photography is handled really well, it is extensively illustrated, all the reproductions in matt black and white. The most memorable images are of the makers in their workshops: George Nakashima dwarfed by enormous planks of wood (p. 45) is a captivating example. The list price seems reasonable value, although it is worth pointing out that at the time of writing the book is available at under half this price from internet vendors. The editors have done an excellent job. The preface and introductory sections are concise, pertinent and unobtrusive. It is clear that the extracts have been carefully selected and shaped to produce a coherent volume. No doubt those who follow them up will find a messier picture, but the book does its job really well in opening up an enticing window onto this diverse and fascinating field of study.

Jim Cheshire

John Potvin & Alla Myzelev, eds, *Material Cultures, 1740–1920, The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting*. Farnham, U.K. and Burlington, U.S.A: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2009, 234 pp., 39 b & w illustrations. ISBN 978-0-7546-6144-3, £55.00.

For his part, Morris believed that beauty and function, through the hands of a good craftsman, entered into an eloquent and sensuous sort of dance, in which the viewer, the user and the collector overlap in as much as they easily neglect to differentiate where the desire for beauty ends and where the appreciation for technical skill begins. (p. 6)

This beautifully written sentence belies the bulk of the introduction to *Material Cultures, 1740–1920*, which runs to nearly seventeen pages and is a tough read for anyone not of a philosophical bent. Potvin and Myzelev seem determined to out-Baudrillard Baudrillard, or out-Benjamin Benjamin, Stewart, Pearce or Kant in this section, as if thesis-speak is necessary for peer validation; it probably is. Part of the aim of this book is to extend theoretical boundaries, and so a display of theoretical virtuosity and obfuscatory language is inevitable. Try this typical sentence:

The fourth line of investigation ... is an intervention moving beyond the disciplinary ethos of material culture to argue more firmly for the aesthetic, visual and semiotic potency inseparable from any understanding of material objects integral to the lives of their collecting subjects without falling into a traditional, isolating and aggrandising connoisseurial elitism, which reifies the Kantian object/subject divide in its avocation of aesthetic disinterest. (p. 9)

Had I not been reading for Morris, I would have flung the publication from the Tarpeian rock on reaching page seventeen. This would have been a shame, as the essays which follow the introduction, by eleven different scholars, including Potvin and Myzelev, are informative, amusing, and by and large not over-weighted with philosophical deconstruction. This collection studies collectors and their collections of craft, design and fashion, providing them with historical context and meaning.

In 1785 Karl Philipp Moritz wrote, 'it follows that an object cannot be beautiful purely because it gives us pleasure, for otherwise everything that is useful would also be beautiful. The thing that gives us pleasure without being of any real use to us is what we call beautiful'. (p. 5) Not mentioned in this book, despite his mastery of glorious ornament, which, through modernism's lens would be labelled an 'excess', the book collector William Morris said something slightly different, and rather modernist, on 19 February 1880, in his lecture 'Labour and Pleasure versus Labour and Sorrow' at the Birmingham School of Design:

Believe me, if we want art to begin at home, as it must, we must clear our houses of troublesome superfluities that are for ever in our way, conventional comforts

that are no real comforts, and do but make work for servants and doctors. If you want a golden rule that will fit everybody, this is it: have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.

Stacey Sloboda's essay 'Porcelain bodies: gender, acquisitiveness, and taste in eighteenth-century England' describes how Adam Smith had tried to unite beauty and utility through the notion of 'fitness' in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). 'He argued that the more perfectly an object is suited to its use, the more beautiful it becomes'. This seems to lead directly to Morris.

A gender divide has traditionally equated women with consumption but men with collection, but Sloboda deconstructs the 'mythomorphic' figure of the female china collector. She describes the acquisition and display of china collections and china's correlation in literature with the fragility of female virtue, intellect, and the delicate feminine body. Clive Edwards's essay describes craft collections made for the home by women between 1750 and 1900. Gendering, partly influenced by determinist philosophies and 'promoted both in schools and in print, meant that by the mid-eighteenth century, any visual awareness which women had developed was particularly directed towards their homes'. (p. 37) During the nineteenth century, homemade collections of shell work, spill work or lace, joined others in the home: books, art, 'cult of death' ephemera, taxidermy, and so on. (p. 38) The interior became the collection 'en masse', an exhibition space, a public expression of the self, central to the 'performance' of family life. (p. 50) The making and collection of objects was literally a labour of love, filling up time and providing comfort and a creative outlet, but they also filled up the interior alarmingly, which has been equated with mania or what philosopher Max Nordau described as 'an irresistible desire among degenerates to accumulate useless trifles'. (p. 44)

In her essay 'Spatializing the private collection: John Fiott Lee and Hartwell House', Anastasia Filippopoliti describes the collections of Lee (1783–1866), his observatory, and his eclectic displays of scientific and antiquarian artefacts at Hartwell House which was open to the public by arrangement. Lee was a patron and member of numerous learned societies. The collection, of 4,650 artefacts on his death, reflected well upon his standing both through its public display and through his largesse in donations to institutions such as the British Museum and the Society of Antiquaries. Lee's taxonomy was influenced by international exhibitions so that groups of objects were exhibited in series, rather than individually, and he used the classification systems of public institutions.

Nadine Rottau discusses the aftermath of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in her essay, 'Everyone to his taste', or "truth to material"?: the role of materials in collections of applied arts'. New materials such as hard rubber and xylonite defied the accepted definition of 'truth to materials' because they were able to imitate the qualities of others such as ivory, bronze or marble. They were thus rejected by

gurus of good taste and condemned as ‘moral delinquencies’. (p. 83) The displays of the ‘Chamber of Horrors’ at the Museum of Ornamental Art in London made connections between materials, bad taste and morality in its collected displays.

Several essays study issues of ‘colonial and capitalist strategy’, or Orientalism, in the process of collecting artefacts from other, exotic, cultures. Artist John Frederick Lewis (1805–76) made a large collection of Middle Eastern women’s costume while living in Egypt. On his return to England, he employed his collection in order ‘to fetishize’ harem women’s clothing, and made a series – a collection – of paintings which used the harem as its subject. (p. 102) He dressed his models with the rich fabrics and clothing from his own collection, with an excess of colour, sumptuous pattern and weave. His clothing collection ‘functioned to reiterate racial and gendered difference, keeping at bay any similarities between the Western viewer and the Easterner’. (p. 105) The harem is itself a collection of course, and Joan DelPlato’s essay provides an interesting critique of Lewis’s pictures and the collectors who purchased them. John James Ruskin owned two. Whilst the paintings reference the Orient and the real harem, they are in fact simulacra. Lewis’s young wife Marion was his most frequent model.

Anne Anderson’s essay ‘“Chinamania”: collecting Old Blue for the House Beautiful, c. 1860–1900’ is a delightful account of the influence of the mania for Old Blue china upon James McNeill Whistler, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Movement. Old Blue provided its owner with ‘otherness’ and exoticism. However, Anderson argues that china collection also signalled the feminine and the effeminate and brought accusations of decadence, perversity and sexual ‘inversion’.

The heightened emotionalism of the aesthete connotes an erosion of masculinity, while the transference of affections to objects and an insatiable appetite may be read as a subversion of sexual desire. As a ‘rule-governed passion’ collecting can be likened to a degenerate mental condition with the potential to undermine gender relations and negate sexual differentiation ... was Blue itself a sign of ‘negative characteristics?’ (p. 111)

Old examples of Blue could be purchased from Marks on Oxford Street or Joel Joseph Duveen, as well as junk and bric-à-brac shops. Marks’s business card was said to be a collaboration between Whistler, who supplied the pictured ‘Hawthorn’ jar and peacock feather, Rossetti who designed the Japanese background, and Morris, who designed the typography. (p. 124) Rossetti ‘purchased two “sumptuous” Hawthorn jars with covers from Marks for £120 in 1867’. (p. 117) However, he was forced to sell them back, at a loss, following his breakdown in 1872. They were bought by William Armstrong, and one is included in his portrait hanging in the dining room at Cragside. Rossetti and Whistler often included Old Blue in their paintings and the intense rivalry between them sparked full-blown Chinamania.

When Whistler bragged about his own pots, Rossetti evidently retorted, 'My dear Jimmy, if I take to it, I will beat your collection in a week'. This he did by purchasing for £200 an entire collection of blue and white from the Marquis d'Azeglio, the retiring Sardinian ambassador: 'since I lately bought all in a bunch this gorgeous collection, I pant and gasp for more.' (p. 120)

In 'From specimen to scrap: Japanese textiles in the British Victorian interior, 1875–1900', Elizabeth Kramer discusses collections of decorative Japanese art in Britain following the London International Exhibition of 1862, when Japanese objects were displayed for the first time since the reopening of Japan to the West in 1854. She challenges the accepted chronology of the craze for Japanese design, which placed interest from collectors, artists and critics in the 1860s, the espousal of Japanese art by the Aesthetic Movement in the 1870s and a full-blown mania for all things Japanese in the 1880s. The real situation was more complex, with Japanese textiles and artefacts 'blurring class distinctions, elite and popular culture and masculine and feminine spheres and roles in Victorian Britain between 1875 and 1900'. (p. 130) Kramer describes the dictates of domestic advice literature about the display of exotic collections and the artistic positioning of artefacts and draperies.

In *Beautiful Houses* (1882), Mary Eliza Haweis examined the relationship between collections of exotica and interior display in famous homes. 'Hints of Japan' were 'detected in the furniture, curtains, and portières' in the home of painter George Henry Boughton. His studio was 'swathed in *Oriental* rugs, embroideries, and old tapestries, with Persian and Indian rugs and cushions adorning settee and floor'. In Alma-Tadema's studio, 'an entire wall was covered in shelves with innumerable "draperies" rolled up – protruding enough to be distinguished'. (p. 133) Edward Burne-Jones's studio contained 'heavily carved furniture, stained glass, embroideries and tapestries'. Artists carefully arranged their studio collections to appeal to the sensibilities of prospective customers. In *Hints on Household Taste* (1872), Charles Eastlake dictated how to display collections in a domestic environment, by placing associated groups together so that 'a little museum may be formed and remain a source of lasting pleasure to its possessors, seeing that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever".' (p. 140) Displays in department stores and curio shops of middle range 'oriental' fabrics and objects inspired emulation. Middle-class homemakers were 'encouraged to participate in collectorly behaviours'. (p. 145)

Judith Codell is scathing about Viceroy George Curzon's influence upon the representation of Indian craft during the early twentieth century. Indians had to be seen to be producing purified, completely Indian craft, whilst the British were able to produce both high art and crafts. In 'Indian crafts and imperial policy: hybridity, purification, and imperial subjectivities', Codell details the influence of Curzon's speech at the opening of the Delhi Coronation Durbar in 1903. By

1851, many Indian objects were already European in form, and Indian art was traditionally hybrid. Indians mimicked European dress and furniture, which threatened the authority of colonial discourse and endorsed hybridity. However, George Birdwood's influential publications, written between 1878 and 1880, and inspired by the 1877 Coronation Durbar, nurtured the myth of the spirituality of the Indian village craftsman, who 'polluted no rivers, deformed no pleasing prospects, nor poisoned any air'. (p. 153) Displays from the 1880s on consciously policed Indian goods for signs of Europeanisation, 'differencing and "othering" Indian things as *not* European. ... Curzon's purification was as important to fantasies of a pure Britishness as it was to fantasies of restoring Indian traditions.' (p. 154)

Alla Myzelev describes the formation of the Peasant Arts Society and the Peasant Arts Museum in Haslemere in 'Collecting peasant Europe: peasant utilitarian objects as museum artefacts'. Owing to Enclosure, Britain had lost her own peasantry, and thus her vernacular traditions, and it was intended that this void be filled through the import and display of foreign peasant objects and the revival of peasant handicrafts. This initiative formed part of an international Romantic Nationalism movement which led to the formation of open air museums of peasant art and architecture, such as Skansen (Stockholm), and art and craft revival groups. The myth of an idealised past and a pure Nordic race was implied. Gerald Davies, one of the leaders of the Haslemere group, acquired only 'those objects that were to produce pleasure in the making and in the use, but not to produce direct gain of money'. (p.174) Pottery was thus excluded.

In another nod to Romantic Nationalism, 'Collecting the Sublime and the beautiful; from Romanticism to revolution in Celtic Revival jewellery', Joseph McBrinn makes a study of Irish jewellery designers, who created and collected objects impregnated with nationalistic messages during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, an era of growing revolutionary horror, and collates the revival in Celtic jewellery with Edmund Burke's ideas of 'terror' and 'pleasure'. Between 1839 and 1896, a number of precious Celtic artefacts were discovered across Ireland, the Cross of Cong, the Tara Brooch and the Ardagh Chalice among them. These were collected and would form the nucleus of a new national collection. Copies of them were copied and sold, together with other derivative Celtic designs. 'Jewellery became the epitome and embodiment of the sublime in the sense that as an object it came to reflect the ravages of the era as opposed to an abstract ideal of beauty.' (p. 212) 'These precious objects betrayed not only the political inclinations of their wearers, but also helped to construct an historical continuum between the medieval mastery of the Celtic craftspeople and a modern nationalistic awareness.' (p. 12)

Illustrator Charles Ricketts (1866–1931) and artist Charles Shannon (1863–1937) enjoyed a long and devoted domestic relationship which transgressed the gender codes of late Victorian and Edwardian economic and domestic systems.

In ‘Collecting intimacy one object at a time: material culture, perception, and the spaces of aesthetic companionship’, John Potvin shows how what he calls their ‘queer’ collection of beautiful things made it possible for them to re-imagine their home – The Vale, their house in Chelsea –away from the dominant bourgeois definitions of domesticity and masculinity. It became a popular destination for artists and writers.

Oscar Wilde was a close friend and introduced the artist Sir William Rothenstein who was ‘quickly charmed by both the men and “their simple dwelling”’. He recalled the ‘primrose walls, apple-green skirting and shelves, the rooms hung with Shannon’s lithographs, a fan-shaped water-colour by Whistler, and drawings by Hokusai’. (p. 199) Potvin describes the entire home functioning as a sort of ‘phenomenological cabinet of curiosity’ and quotes a delightful description of the now depersonalised collection, displayed in the Fitzwilliam Gallery in Cambridge in 1939, after the death of Ricketts and Shannon. ‘It is like going to a cemetery, gazing at a mummy in a crystal coffin: the presence that once informed it all, the daily life which flowered among these things, the flow of conversation, of laughter, the sense of being in the intimate company of great art collected by a zealot, himself a genius, all that is gone, gone.’ (p. 201) The objects assumed identities all of their own; Shannon once referred to three Sheffield jugs as ‘Bullfinch,’ ‘Swallow,’ and ‘Fatty’. (*Ibid.*)

As *Material Cultures, 1740–1920* is written by eleven different authors, there is bound to be slight unevenness in its presentation, but by and large it achieves a unity of approach. There is the odd inaccuracy, however: on p. 153, Julie Codell describes how ‘In a *Times* letter of 1 May 1879, the who’s who of the arts and crafts movement (such as William Morris and C.R. Ashbee ...) praised Birdwood’s condemnation of industrialization and of the government for eviscerating Indian arts’. This does not quite ring true, as Ashbee would only have been sixteen at the time, and I can find no record of the letter in the literature. Alla Myzelev repeatedly uses the term ‘natural history museums’ to describe museums specialising in the collections of art and artefacts, which sounds odd to an English ear. It may have been altered in trans-Atlantic translation.

Diana Andrews

Vanessa R. Schwartz & Jeannene M. Przyblyski, eds, *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, London: Routledge, 2004, 405pp. Hbk ISBN 0415308658, £75; pbk 0415308666, £22.99.

At first sight, the title of this book might lead readers of this *Journal* to expect some considerations of such prominent Victorian visual topics as Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement. However, that is emphatically not the case: the index offers ‘art’ only under ‘art galleries’ and, oddly, ‘*art pour art*’. Ruskin does make

a brief appearance, but only in context of his contention, in Wolfgang Schivelbusch's illuminating account of 'Panoramic Travel', that 'all travelling becomes dull in exact proportion to its rapidity' (quoted p. 96). The editors point out that the kind of attention to visual culture now to be found 'everywhere in universities' (p. xxi), and of which this book is a product, is an extension of the interest in 'the social history of art' developed during the 1960s and '70s. Just as literary criticism influenced by feminism, Marxism and Said's critique of Orientalism extended its range beyond the traditional literary canon, so art criticism began to take an interest in a range of images not restricted to the accepted masterpieces of Western art. Academic studies in visual culture took this process further, moving away from the aesthetic towards a variety of cultural concerns.

In this book seven artists – none of them British – are discussed in some detail, of whom Cézanne, Delacroix and Manet are accepted masters. But their works are considered here not for their aesthetic qualities, but for their cultural and historical significance, Cézanne in relation to prostitution in Paris during the 1870s, Delacroix to Orientalism, and Manet to the depiction of French society during the 1860s. Four less-known artists are also considered, Jean-Leon Gérôme, Guillaume Guillon-Lethière, J.Q.A. Ward and Adolphe Willette. Gérôme is discussed with great insight by Linda Nochlin, in the context of 'The Imaginary Orient', focussing on his *Snake Charmer*, painted during the late 1860s and used on the cover of Said's great book. The charmer himself has his back to the viewer, exposing what Nochlin describes as 'the manifest attractions of [his] rosy buttocks and muscular thighs'. (p. 290) She goes on to show the painting's avoidance of history and of any allusion to the Western viewer for whose benefit the painting exists, emphasising also its claims to realism and the attitude to the Orient which it embodies. Guillon-Lethière, by contrast, discussed by D.C. Grigsby, was born in French Guadeloupe, the illegitimate son of a French official and a black slave, but came to Paris around 1785 and made a successful career there. The painting principally discussed is the *Oath of the Ancestors*, 1822, which shows the alliance during the revolution which had taken place in Sainte-Domingue (now Haiti) of the mulatto officer Alexandre Petion and the black slave leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines. The discussion of this painting and of the career of this remarkable artist, previously unknown to me, is both surprising and illuminating.

Also remarkable is the sculpture of *The Freedman* by John Quincey Adams Ward, first exhibited, as Kirk Savage tells us in an article tellingly entitled 'Molding Emancipation', in New York during the spring of 1863. It contrasts strongly, we are shown, with the conventional images celebrating the victory of the Union, in which the slave is a crouching kneeling figure being raised by the hand of a white man, often Lincoln himself. Ward's *Freedman* is very different: he 'does not beg or despair. He has gotten off the ground and broken his own chains, which he still clenches in one fist ... No longer passively awaiting salvation from above, this figure exudes an active force shaping his own destiny'. (p. 267) Sav-

age discusses other aspects of the figure, including its realism and its nudity, and considers why it failed to become the favoured image for Civil War monuments. He regrets that Ward soon gave up working in the mode of *The Freedman*, to provide more traditional and popular monuments, pointing out that 'there was precious little public sculpture in the nineteenth century (or even the twentieth) that did any justice to African Americans'. (p. 274) It is a revealing story and well worth telling.

Finally, Marcus Verhagen discusses some work by Adolphe Willette, described here as 'the Bohemian artist' (p. 327). Verhagen is interested in the culture of Montmartre in the 1880s, in which, he argues, the Bohemians offered a kind of aesthetic critique of 'the materialism of contemporary French society' (p. 327). Willette was prominent in this as an illustrator for magazines and caricaturist, producing in 1885 a stained-glass window of *The Golden Calf* for the Bohemian cabaret Chat Noir, in which the Calf is shown presiding over the dissolution of French civilisation. Unfortunately, as Verhagen shows, the basis of the critique could be crudely anti-Semitic; an unpleasant election poster of 1889 by Willette ('Candidat Antisemite') exhibits this disturbingly. It is not surprising to read that Willette became an anti-Dreyfusard in the 1890s, though it is reassuring to find that there could be other attitudes in Bohemia: Théophile-Alexander Steinlen produced a series of lithographs celebrating the Commune of Paris, and became supporter of Dreyfus. Again, this is material well away from central aesthetic concerns that is well worth encountering.

However, as this *Reader* makes abundantly clear, the range of visual culture extends far beyond painting and sculpture. The basic – and surely unchallengeable – assumption is that the nineteenth century greatly increased the amount of visual material confronting the spectator, especially in the expanding cities of Europe and North America. In this process, crucial parts were played by the development of electricity, by photography, by advertising, and later by cinema, in parallel with the proliferating modes of reproduction of images in the press and on the streets.

This indeed is part of the understanding of 'modernity' promoted by the editors. As historical background, they include some of the classic accounts of this development to be found in the writings of Baudelaire, Marx, Freud (on dreams, and their necessary visibility), Benjamin and Foucault. They then organise their material in six further sections in order to demonstrate the new visual experiences of the era. The first is concerned with official exhibitions, beginning in Hyde Park in 1851, but also with the educational slide collection built up in the Edwardian era by the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee to educate the young in knowledge of the British Empire, and with the expanding social activity of shopping, particularly for women; Erika Rappaport's 'A New Era of Shopping' offers a thoroughly entertaining as well as informative account of how Gordon Selfridge succeeded in bringing American business practices to Oxford Street in

1909 (the book does not confine itself strictly to the century indicated in its title) The next section concerns the City, with accounts of the Ringstrasse in Vienna, Haussman in Paris, street signs in New York, Henry James in London in 1888 (that 'dreadfully delightful city'; p. 206), and photography promoting the image of Los Angeles. (Morrisians may note that James's essay roused Morris's ire in a contribution to *Commonweal* in December 1888: James's 'ingenious paper' was written from the standpoint of the 'superior middle-class person who looks upon the working classes as a useful machine and having no experience of their life, has not imagination enough to realise the fact that the said machine is composed of millions of men, women and children who are living in misery ...')

The following section is devoted to 'Visualizing the Past' and includes the accounts of Guillon-Lethière's paintings and Ward's sculpture, already discussed, as well as commenting on illustrated history books and on Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West show, which reached some six million spectators in a six-month season during 1893 (p. 285). The section on 'Others' includes Gérôme's Orient, Cézanne's erotic scenes, German ethnographic shows (Carl Hagenbeck held shows of non-Western people in Berlin, with 93,000 visitors attending on one day in 1883 in order to see a Mongolian troupe in the Zoological Gardens; p. 31), and the work of the Bohemians. Finally, the section on the public/private issue concerns itself with Suffragist banners (the third and last chapter with a British orientation), with the Parisian portière, with family photograph albums ('Baby's Picture is always treasured', according to Cyclone Cameras in 1898; p. 359) and the development of new psychological ideas at the end of the century.

Here, Debora Silverman, in her account that Jean-Martin Charcot, known for his interest in hysteria and his influence on Freud, takes us, rather unexpectedly, into the area of domestic design. She argues that 'The tension between reason and fantasy, order and disorder that shaped Charcot's artistic-medical persona was expressed in his personal practice of interior design'. (p. 385) Charcot not only collected decorative objects on his many trips abroad, but, in conjunction with his wife and daughters, created many original works in various media: a faience and painted lamp by Madame Charcot is illustrated, as is the elaborate mantelpiece and fireplace of their mansion home on the boulevard Saint-Germain. (pp. 386, 387) Silverman concludes that the new psychology of the period, which emphasised the irrational and the visual, 'provided the intellectual vehicle for the transformation of the domestic interior from a place to display a historical anchorage to one that expressed personal feeling'. (p. 388) Although this observation is provided with a French psychological basis, it is interesting to consider its possible application elsewhere. Can we see any parallel development in the history of design in Britain, to which Morris contributed? Perhaps one does not need an altogether new psychology to account for the desire of later Victorians – or indeed ourselves – to decorate homes in ways which related to more general attitudes to life rather than simply to indicate family histories.

As will have become obvious, the more recent work included in the *Reader* is largely that of North American scholars. The focus is therefore often on the United States, although it is noticeable that when these scholars come to Europe they nearly always gravitate towards Paris, France, and much less often to Berlin, Vienna or London – the cover photo (of which I could find no discussion, though it is credited to the Musée Grévin, Paris) seems to be of chorus-girls and toffs at a Parisian show. However, the book was simultaneously published in New York and London, and it is obviously also aimed at scholars and students of nineteenth-century culture in this country. Anyone reading it here will find a wealth of interesting material about a historical situation which they will recognise, and may be stimulated to investigate parallel aspects of British culture, as it developed towards our present condition in which the visual plays such a central role, for good or ill.

Peter Faulkner