

England in the 1880s Old Guard and Avant-Garde

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and
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With an introduction by
Jerome Hamilton Buckley



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England in the 1880s: a nation led in a time of transition by an aged ruler upholding the values of the past; a nation engaged in a battle between freedom for scientists and artists and the sanctity of traditional moral teachings; a nation obsessed with matters of taste and with the implications of how one chose to dress, to furnish a house, or to spend leisure hours; a nation troubled by the growing discontent of women, as they pressed for greater political influence and opportunities in the professions; a nation, in other words, much like our own.

This book, in part a record of an exhibition held at the University of Virginia Library in 1985, gives a wide-ranging but detailed account of the intellectual and cultural life of a fascinating and generally neglected period, as reflected in the more than 240 books, manuscripts, photographs, textiles, ceramics, paintings, and engravings described. It contains previously unpublished letters of Oscar Wilde, George Gissing, Samuel Butler, Charles Darwin, and others; descriptions of rare first editions and "association copies" from the libraries of writers such as Henry James; and twenty-eight illustrations of artworks, book designs, and portraits, many never before reproduced.

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NEWSLETTER

July
April 1989

Dear Member,

1. SOCIETY NEWS

We send warmest good wishes to our Honorary Member, Athene Hannen (the actress Athene Seyler), who celebrated her one hundredth birthday in May. The occasion was marked by an all day celebration in her flat above the Coach-house, when she was visited by many friends, including representatives of the Society and the Trustees. She also made another lively appearance on BBC TV, in 'Wogan'.

The garden in front of the Library is looking splendid, thanks to the work of Leslie Paton, to whom we are most grateful. Leslie's recollections of Kelmscott House go back further even than Mrs Hannen's, as he used to come to tea with the owner, Mrs Stephenson, before the War.

We again find ourselves in need of a Publicity Officer, particularly to take responsibility for ensuring that stocks of our publicity are maintained in museums, galleries, houses and other places likely to be visited by those interested in Morris. Anyone interested in helping out with this job should get in touch with the Honorary Secretary as soon as possible.

2. THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1989

The Working Men's College, an institution with which Morris and his associates had many connections, was the setting for the Society's 34th Annual General Meeting. Both the Chairperson and the Hon. Secretary emphasised that, although the Society was in good heart, with a growing membership all over the world, a number of interesting projects under way, a successful programme of events and a steady growth of visitors to Kelmscott House, it would be dangerous to be complacent. Still more could and should be done, but more volunteers were needed to make sure that both routine jobs and innovatory projects were maintained. The closer working relationship between the Society and the Trustees of Kelmscott House was bearing fruit in the repair and conversion of the Coach house, with the aid of contributions from both bodies and a grant from Hammersmith Borough Council. The Treasurer's report showed the finances of the Society to be in a healthy state, with a particularly encouraging increase in income from the sale of books and cards. In the following discussion the question of concessionary subscription rates was raised. Some members felt that the wording of the new membership leaflet was not in the spirit of the decisions taken at the Extraordinary General Meeting. It was agreed that the new Committee should give further consideration to the matter. Our member Mrs Kitty Byrne presented to the Society a relief of William Morris made by her first husband, A. A. Woolf, in 1918.

The Officers and Committee for 1989-90 were elected unanimously as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Hans Brill (Hon. Chairperson) | Daphne Jennings |
| Peter Preston (Hon. Secretary) | John Kay |
| Lionel Young (Hon. Treasurer) | Jackie Kennedy Davies |
| Dawn Morris (Hon. Membership Secretary) | Judy Marsden |
| Peter Faulkner (Hon. Editor) | Linda Parry |
| Sonia Crutchlow | Christine Poulson |
| Nicholas Friend | Margaret Simister |
| Norah Gillow | Richard Smith |

There were no nominations for the post of Hon. Programme Secretary. William Chartrey was elected Hon. Auditor.

After tea members enjoyed an interesting talk on the history of the Working Men's Coolege.

3. MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you to everyone who has already returned the questionnaire sent out with the last Newsletter. It's going to take some time to go through them all in detail but I'm very much enjoying reading them as they arrive.

Most of your comments are very positive and there have been some interesting and exciting suggestions for future activities. I hope to present some of them at the next Committee meeting so that I can give more feedback in the next Newsletter.

I have extracted offers of help for the continuous work, such as clerical, book-selling and will pass these on at the next Committee meeting, so you may hear from someone in the next month or so if you have volunteered for such work. Offers to help with project work, lecturing etc. will go into a register for future reference.

If you haven't already returned your questionnaire, would you please fish it out, fill it in and send it off, even if you have no comments or suggestions to make, so that the response is as representative of the entire membership as it can be. Thank you.

Dawn Morris

4. KELMSCOTT HOUSE

The third section of the Burne-Jones drawings from the Cecil French Bequest has been on view since April, when the exhibition was opened by our member Joseph Mirwitch, Mayor of Hammersmith. We have also been exhibiting the May Morris designs from our collection, now handsomely mounted by the William Morris Gallery. Also on display have been some Morris relics, presented to Hammersmith by May, including his pipe, snuff box, quill pen, fishing wallet and glasses, whose smallness occasioned some surprise. We have also been exhibiting a beautiful tile by Burne-Jones (generously loaned by Jon Catleugh) of Cleopatra, one of a series illustrating Chaucer's The Legend of Good Women.

The showcase in which some of these items were displayed has had to be returned. Any member who can suggest where we might find a replacement should get in touch with Christine Poulson at Kelmscott House.

5. KELMSCOTT HOUSE TRUST

Among the treasures bequeathed to the Society by Mrs Stephenson with Kelmscott House was a collection of original design drawings done for Morris and Co between the 1860s and the early years of this century. These include the designs made by Morris himself for some of the firm's most famous wallpapers and fabrics - 'Larkspur', 'Sunflower', 'Jasmine', 'Grafton', 'Windrush', 'Bird' - and several by May Morris shown in the recent exhibition at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow.

Most of the designs are in full colour and in good condition but require conserving and framing. We should like to see them made available for inspection by scholars, students and members of the public, both at Kelmscott House and other galleries with Morris collections. The undersigned would be glad to hear from any member, in Britain or other countries, who could suggest a museum, gallery or educational institution that might be interested in taking part in this. The names and addresses of people to whom we might write would be appreciated.

John Kay

6. SOCIETY NEWS

Saturday 19 August, 2.00 p.m. HENRY HOLIDAY EXHIBITION William Morris Gallery.

Full details of this 150th anniversary celebration of the artist and social activist, Henry Holiday, were given in the April Newsletter. We are privileged to have the opportunity of being guided round the exhibition by its organiser, Peter Cormack. Tickets £1.50 from Judy Marsden at the Society. (Please note that this event replaces the London walk previously announced for 12 August.)

Saturday 16 September, 2.00 p.m. A PERAMBULATION IN BEDFORD PARK

Bedford Park was the earliest of the planned garden suburbs, designed by Norman Shaw in Arts and Crafts style and begun in 1875. As early as 1880, Morris commented on its 'quaint and pretty architecture' and the preservation of its trees. The walk will be led by Roderick Gradidge, architect and author. Meet at the Tabard Inn, Bath Road, W4 (nearest tube station Turnham Green). Tickets £1.00 from Judy Marsden at the Society.

Wednesday 4 October, 6.00 for 6.30 p.m. THE ART OF WORK: AN EPITAPH TO SKILL
Central School of Art and Design, Southampton Row

Roger Coleman's book, of the same title as his talk, was enthusiastically reviewed by Ray Watkinson in a recent issue of the Society's Journal. Roger Coleman argues that the traditions of skilled work offer an antidote to the abstracted, mechanised toil industrial technology is forcing on the majority of people. Admission free, but donations for Society funds welcome; refreshments may be available for a small charge. (Please note the unavoidable change of date and location from those previously advertised; we apologise to members for any inconvenience thus caused.)

Thursday 26 October, 6.00 for 6.30 p.m. THE KELMSCOTT LECTURE: THE CHANGE BEYOND THE CHANGE London School of Economics (Main Building), Houghton Street, W1.

Each in his own time, William Morris and John Ball imagined a just society of the future and inspired others to work with him for it. For our Kelmscott Lecture this year Rodney Hilton, Emeritus Professor of Medieval Social History

at the University of Birmingham, looks afresh at Morris's A Dream of John Ball, first published just one hundred years ago, and considers its meaning for today. Prof. Hilton's most recent book is Bondmen Made Free (Methuen paperback). The meeting will be chaired by the Society's President, Lord Briggs. Admission is £2.00, including coffee and biscuits, available from 6.00 p.m. Buffet supper after the lecture costs £4.50; tickets from Judy Marsden at the Society.

Saturday 9 December CHRISTMAS IN SHEFFIELD

Dawn Morris, our Membership Secretary, is organising a Christmas event for members who find it easier to travel to Sheffield than to London. Full details will be given in the October Newsletter, but the meeting will take place in the daytime, will probably include a talk on some aspect of Morris's work, and will certainly include a buffet lunch.

7. SOCIETY PROGRAMME REPORT

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY 29 March 1989

This year's birthday party was held at Old Battersea House, formerly the home of Mrs Stirling, sister of Evelyn de Morgan, and now the London home of the Forbes family. It is stuffed with Victorian art, and as most of it was intended for a domestic setting, the effect is intimate and luxurious rather than grand or forbidding. The house made a splendid setting for our party. Fires in the grates and comfortable sofas encouraged a relaxed and convivial atmosphere. Marvellous buffet food was organised by Janet Semple.

Simon Edsor of the Fine Art Society gave us a lecture, both informative and amusing, about the house. He recounted how Mrs Stirling, in advanced old age, used to take visitors round the house in the dark with the butler carrying an electric lamp which he would plug in when required. The same butler would take visitors round after Mrs Stirling's death and would bestow a small *objet d'art* on departing guests if he liked the look of them.

We then drank a toast to the memory of Morris and cut the delicious chocolate cake, bearing the message 'Fellowship is life', made by Tricia Julian.

Thanks are due to the Forbes family for allowing us to use the house, to Hans Brill, Janet Semple and Roger Stannard, who not only took tickets at the door but also, assisted by a friend, nobly did all the washing up!

Christine Poulson

VISIT TO MUNSTEAD WOOD AND THE WATTS GALLERY 8 April 1988

Approximately thirty members formed the group visiting Munstead Wood and the Watts Gallery, Compton. From Godalming station the group joined a coach for the short journey to Munstead Wood. This justly famous Lutyens house was build in 1896 and represents a rare collaboration between architect and client, though in this case "Aunt Bumps" (Gertrude Jeckyll) was no ordinary client.

Constructed of Bargate stone, brick and tile, the oak framed casement windows are set flush with the outer walls. The house soon became an advertisement for Lutyens' talents and understandably brought in many more commissions. The plan of the house is basically U-shaped, with the entrance via an oddly arranged porch set to one side. A low, beamed living room forms the principal reception

room on the ground floor. Its exposed oak was seemingly cut from wood felled on the Jeckyll estate. Originally the oak would have looked much lighter, having been limed, but successive generations of wax polish have given the wood a rich patina making the already exaggerated pegging even more obvious. On the first floor the main feature, which proves something of a surprise, is a long (and wide) gallery, with heavy oak panelling. In 1896 the house was considered of modest size, though the six bedrooms seem less of a cottage today. Munstead Wood demonstrates many of the features which characterise Lutyens' later work - his use of local materials, a self-consciously vernacular idiom, a few touches of whimsical cleverness. The almost equally famous garden was clearly not at its best in early April. Yet Munstead Wood must always have appeared in a predominantly woodland setting, rather than the more formal arrangements we expect from the later Jeckyll/Lutyens collaboration.

The group was doubly fortunate in being gently guided round the house and gardens by Lady Clark and Joe Acheson, whose erudite comments helped explain Munstead Wood's many intricacies.

From Lutyens to Watts: the initial shock of green painted walls, gold ceiling and silver arches (the original colour scheme) was lessened by a feast of culinary delights - tea at last. The paintings on display may not have been to everyone's taste, indeed there were mutterings over the sandwiches. Richard Jeffries, the Gallery's curator gave a disarming account of Watts' life, work and his formidable sounding second wife (the first being Ellen Terry). The paintings took on a new life. So much so that many of the group were reluctant to leave. Compton had clearly cast its spell, even causing several of the group to miss the coach back to Godalming station.

Those members fortunate enough to be involved in the visit were rewarded with a memorable afternoon and the Society owes a special debt of gratitude to Joe Acheson for organising the visit and to Lady Clark and Hilary Morgan for their generous hospitality.

Roger Smith

APPRECIATING THE DRAWINGS OF BURNE-JONES 15 May 1989

Julian Hartnoll began by recounting how he fell in love with Burne-Jones's drawings almost exactly twenty-five years ago when he was working for the Folio Society. They were so cheap then that the Folio Society's Burne-Jones drawings were in the 'cellar' collection. Julian Hartnoll remembered a customer who had only five pounds to spend on a Burne-Jones drawing being sent to the Folio Society by Jeremy Maas. A shop in Cecil Court had so many that the assistant used to sit on a pile of them.

Mr Hartnoll explained that Burne-Jones had no academic training whatsoever, and said that in his opinion this was fortunate as the R.A. schools would have crushed his individuality. It was this individuality which Rossetti encouraged him to foster. Rossetti gave him the confidence to develop along his own lines and Burne-Jones's debt to him was immense. Julian Hartnoll felt that Burne-Jones's strength lay always in texture rather than in line; he showed us some of the marvellous effects which Burne-Jones produced through rubbing and smudging chalk. He saw Burne-Jones's work at its best as intensely personal, reflecting his inner life, in particular his emotional experiences.

We were shown a splendid range of drawings, ranging from the awkwardness of the early illustrations to Archibald Maclaren's The Fairy Family to the accomplishments of Burne-Jones's maturity. The audience very much enjoyed a selection of Burne-Jones's comic illustrations, in particular those from the charming Letters to Katie. Julian Hartnoll provided us with a fresh and fascinating insight into Burne-Jones's draughtmanship; his lecture was delivered with an elegance and confidence which made it hard to believe that this was his first public lecture.

Christine Poulson

8. THE SOUTH MIDLANDS GROUP

The 1989 season opened in March with a meeting in Leamington to hear Lyndon Cave, a local architect, talk on the S.P.A.B. We were able to examine copies of the early Proceedings, with contributions by the great names of the period in the field of architecture and design. In April Adrian Larner gave an illustrated talk on the work of John Everett Millais; he argued interestingly that Millais' problems arose not from his abandonment of Pre-Raphaelite principles but from his attempt to adhere to them when the subject was not suitable for P.R. treatment.

In May a small group travelled to London for the A.G.M., spending the morning at Kelmscott House. We are grateful to Dorothy Coles for meeting us there, showing us some of the treasures and providing us with refreshments. Seeing how much had been done with the basement, we could not but regret the loss of the rest of the house. Our June meeting was an excursion into the deepest Cotswolds. We gathered for lunch at Sapperton, the base for Gimson and the Barnsleys, drove to Avening to examine the excellent stained glass by Christopher Whall, and on to Woodchester to view St Mary's church (S. S. Teulon 1863-4, mildly roguish). A short distance away was Selsley church with its superb set of early Morris & Co glass, some of which is not being cleaned and releaded. We plan to make another visit next year when the work will have been completed. Then back into Nailsworth for tea and the drive home along the Fosse Way in the mellow evening sunlight.

Plans are well advanced for our autumn programme, the highlight of which is the long week-end in Newcastle at the end of October. Any members of the Society who would like to join us on this visit would be very welcome, but should get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Malcolm Pollard

9. MORRIS AND THE PRINTED BOOK: THE SIXTH KELMSCOTT LECTURE

John Dreyfus's Kelmscott Lecture on Morris and the Printed Book (1986) - itself handsomely printed - was available in time for the AGM, where all copies displayed were quickly taken up - at £5.00. The subtitle - A reconsideration of his (WM's) views on type and book design in the light of later computer-aided techniques - promises a new and fascinating angle on Morris in his last aspect as designer, beginning with his simple impulse to design a type-face, and in no time stretching to embrace the great venture of the Kelmscott Press.

Here we have a Janus-approach to a well worn subject, and while John Dreyfus is far from going all the way with Morris in matters medieval, he makes the point that Morris's early researches into calligraphy had involved analyses of ratios of letter-area to margins, a comparison of inner and outer, head and foot margins

in medieval books and brought him to the original understanding that the book is to be seen and designed whole, as a double spread, not page by page. This gave us a corner stone of modern typography: and he was no less original in his use of photographic blow-ups, made by Emery Walker from books in his own collection, for the patient drawing and redrawing of individual letters for his punch-cutter: the first use of the camera in type-design.

We were reminded at the lecture that 1986 was the centenary of the first use of the Linotype machine - and that Morris would not have wished to celebrate than occasion any more than he would have rejoiced in the first demonstration, in 1965, of the potential of the computer for digitising type faces.

But it is just these most up-to-date techniques which the lecture brings to bear on a fresh examination of ideas of type-design and of Morris's own craft practice. Here - finely printed on a large scale - we can compare Morris's drawing for the lower-case a of his Troy type with the face of the punch cut from it by Edward Prince (who cut all Morris's punches) and of the corresponding d - both showing the modifications that arose in the cutting - the cumulative effect of which could greatly modify the character of a face - which does not live until it is used in those infinite combinations of letter and word and space on the actual page which the eye reads, rather than every individual letter. Such a page, printed from Morris's Troy, is compared (pp.22-23) with the same passage printed from a digitised version and casts strong light on the differences between traditional craft and the product of modern computer technology. The lecture closes with speculation on the new but already firmly established world of desktop publishing.

Of course this is of special interest to typographers, printers, typophiles, bibliomaniacs - of whom we have a decent proportion in our varied membership - but many not so concerned will find it illuminating of Morris - past and future both.

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iam traducta sunt praestātissimum sanctitas tua iur
dicet: atq; ideo quæcūq; apud graecos ipsius opera

Regrettably, a couple of folios were omitted on page 12 - references are to pp 16 and 18: and we shall sadly look in vain on page 9 for the word CAESAR spoken of in the text. An unfortunate transposition of photographs has given a different page though set in the same Jenson type of c.1470 which was Morris's model. Here, though, we show (thanks to twentieth century photocopying!) the right passage: and a proper erratum will be available for insertion in the

actual printed lecture - so please write for one to Kelmscott House. It will be inserted in all copies as sold but those who have already bought will need it to perfect their copy.

Ray Watkinson

10. THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

When the news broke, in February, of the scandalous measures suddenly introduced at the Victoria and Albert Museum, many of us wrote individually to the Minister for Arts, Richard Luce, to the Chairman of Trustees of the V & A, or to our own MPs, giving what support we could to staff at the Museum - not a few of whom, of course, are themselves long-standing members of the Society. A letter also went from our Chairman to Lord Armstrong expressing grave concern.

Not many of us recognised in the Chairman of Trustees a former Cabinet Secretary who last year so distinguished himself, at some cost to the public purse, by his original practice of economy in the Australian courts: but reading his answer to our letter of concern, and his longer, perhaps more oblique performance in the place to which he has been elevated, as Armstrong of Ilminster, he is easily recognisable. One sees that he was simultaneously rewarded for his lustrous antipodean displays by that elevation and by being, most suitably, put in place to set up the radical reconstruction of one of the world's greatest museums.

The essential criticism to be made of the changes is twofold: one, as to the manner: two, as to the substance. First comes the simple matter of what industry likes to call man-management - which so often appears more like the re-arrangement of things. Changes deeply affecting the life and work of members of staff were imposed without consultation and virtually at the very moment when they were laid before a too acquiescent body of Trustees - from whom too important facts were withheld.

In the House of Lords debate on March 22nd, Lord Goodman, who knows rather more than Lord Armstrong about these matters, asked a most cogent question: "Can he (Lord A.) tell the House whether the Trustees were told that the employees concerned would have their employment terminated on this sort of notice? They would have 14 days in which to make a decision and they were not told of any alternative."

Lord Armstrong's reply was that "the Trustees were aware that early retirement would be involved. How that early retirement would come about was not quite clear ... the advice given by those best qualified to give it was that we were not to discuss with those concerned the alternatives at that stage We were precluded from a discussion of alternatives at that stage."

Lord Goodman. "Can the noble Lord say who gave that extraordinary advice?"

Lord Armstrong. "My Lords, the advice came from the Government."

Need more be added to that?

Nobody doubts - the staff least of all - that the Museum needs many improvements - in establishment, in management, of better conservation, storage, cataloguing. There are few museums that do not need such changes from time to time; and they cost money. But management is not improved by separating knowledge and care of collections from administration of either people or things in an institution where the relation between them is necessarily so intimate. Nor is it true that

computerisation will as the Noble Lord claims, enhance knowledge: it will make information more readily available and that is good; but that does not constitute knowledge, still less understanding which comes of years of actual handling, of familiarity with process and substance, history and cultural links great and small - and this resides in the minds, the very lives of those who actually look after and study the objects which make up this great collection.

In so far as the Museum needs better publicity, as perhaps it does - though it is not so secretive about its treasures as its elder sister, the British Museum - this is not to be confused with advertising the brand names of sponsors; nor will it be best handled by an agency one of whose directors happens to be a Trustee. The ultimate thrust of such changes as are being made is, whatever else, to turn a century-old centre of delight and knowledge into a superior Earl's Court or International Trade Fair - and who then will be needed to work in it but a letting agency which will negotiate contracts for periodical exhibitions whose sponsors will bring in their own technical personnel to mount them to the greater glory of Soap? Already we have seen as wholly-sponsored exhibitions have appeared at the V & A and other places, how inadequately they show what they pretend to offer, how they lack intellectual, aesthetic, or historic coherence. Of the educational, the inspirational functions of the V & A, we shall see less and less - though we are promised that the Museum will help with the GCSE exams: in Wigan, in Carlisle, in Sunderland? One of the greatest losses the Museum suffered, already years ago under a different administration, was the closure of its Circulation Department, which did indeed serve, nationwide, an educational function.

Both Henry Cole, to whom the Museum more than anybody owes its inspiration and the definition of its functions, and William Morris, so intimately concerned with its development, were capable of arbitrary action - but at least they knew well what they were doing. It is very much to be doubted whether the present Trustees do. A last point. When Sir John Pope-Hennessy, a former Director, wrote early to protest, he made a rather graceless attack on the present Director, and one yet more ill-advised on the sort of people now widely in post in the Museum Service as a whole: gone are the days when Keepers were, almost of necessity, scions of noble and gentle houses who did not care to enter the Army, the Church, the Law - but from childhood familiarity had an intimate and caring knowledge of the sort of artefacts that over the years find themselves at last in Museums. There are of course other ways of knowing and loving such work of men's and women's hands - and what is needed in the service is such knowledge, such love: which is not bought with the packaging.

There will undoubtedly be further changes and further effects of the present changes: it is up to this Society and other like bodies to keep a weather eye open and that means individual members, not only officials.

Ray Watkinson

11. ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Leslie Paton has presented the library with a copy of Survey of London, volume 6, 'Hammersmith', 1915. This very rare volume has excellent plans and photographs of Kelmscott House. It makes an interesting comparison with a photograph of 1892, also in Leslie's remarkable collection of local history. 'The Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race 1892', published by the Type Etching Co., Ludgate Buildings at 4.00 p.m. on 9 April 1892 and taken by Alfred and Charles Dawson, shows Kelmscott House with only two (instead of three) dormer windows and ten or twelve

people dotted about the roof. The upper floor has only three windows and two have been blocked up. Each of the five windows of the Long Room is open and crowded with people, as are the windows of all the neighbouring houses. Perhaps a sufficiently fine magnifying glass could pick out Morris! The Mall, too, is a mass of people, as are the barges moored to the wall. The Coach-house appears to have a round-headed two light window on the first floor and a pitched lean-to-roof. All the windows of the house have shutters. Twenty years later the shutters have gone, the windows are unblocked and the third dormer is present.

Ideas about Politics, the newsletter of the Hackney WEA Political Philosophy Group, devotes its March 1989 issue to the question 'William Morris: what kind of socialism did he believe in?' There are articles on Morris and Marx, News from Nowhere and the relationship between Morris's socialism and post-war developments in the Labour Party. One of the publications mentioned in the newsletter is Utopian Thought and Communal Experience, the record of a conference in New Lanark in July 1988. A copy of this has also been obtained for the Library and it will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the Newsletter. Ideas about Politics also quotes a question from the 1987 Politics exam at the London School of Economics: 'Why might Morris's wallpaper tell us more about his socialism than we could discover from assessing his understanding of Marx?'

Ursula Bruck, already a generous donor, has presented the Library with two more books: William Holman Hunt, Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 2 vols, 1905 and A. W. M. Stirling, The Merry Wives of Battersea.

Lilliane Abensour has sent copies of her French translation of 'The Ideal Book' and her paper on Morris, 'Ceci est un livre'.

A copy of 'William Morris, Poet and Artist and Socialist Pioneer', a lecture recently given in St Patrick's Church, Hove, Sussex by Revd Alan Ecclestone, has been presented to the Library by Revd Hugh Hellicar. Ray Watkinson reports that the lecture was a great success. Further copies of the lecture are available from Revd Hellicar at 14 Lewes Crescent, Hove, Sussex BN2 1FH

Christies have presented us with a copy of the catalogue of part 4 of the Estelle Doheny Collection sale held in New York on 19 May, including, with beautiful illustrations, the Kelmscott Aeneid.

Finally our member Prof. Edvige Schulte has presented us with a copy of her volume of essays, Scritti minori, which not only includes 'Formazione del pensiero estetico e politico di William Morris', but also shows her wide range of interests, from Milton to Ezra Pound by way of Swift.

We are grateful for all these gifts and would remind members and others that we are always glad to receive new volumes relating to Morris for the Library. Indeed, gifts of any interesting printed items will be welcomed: those not needed for the Society will be sold to boost the Library purchasing budget.

12. SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Ray Watkinson's account, elsewhere in this issue, of John Dreyfus's Kelmscott Lecture, should inspire members to purchase their copies quickly.

Still available is the first book ever published by the Society, Morris and Eirikr Magnusson's version of The Story of Kormak. It is a beautiful volume, with illustrations from Morris's calligraphic manuscript, an introduction by Grace J.

Calder and a note on the manuscript by Alfred Fairbanks. It is a great bargain at £5.00 plus postage and packing. Do not include cheques with your orders; an invoice, including postage, will be sent to you. Overseas members are asked to make payment in sterling wherever possible; copies will be sent surface mail unless air mail is specified.

A complete set of the Society's Journal is being bound for us by one of our members, Mr R. F. Howell of Welling, Kent. The opportunity has been taken to bring the index up to date, including all the book reviews. Surveying the contents, it is remarkable how little it has dated; there is an amazing amount of fascinating material from the first issue in 1961, which was devoted to Sidney Cockerell. All issues of the Journal are still available from the Society at £3.00 per copy plus postage and packing. We don't sell the Journal to anyone outside the Society so this is a privilege reserved for members. Copies of the Index are available for £1.00, the cost of photocopying. Also any members interested in completing their sets and having them bound should get in touch with the Society.

13. THE MORRIS ESTATE

Valuable information about the Morris Estate can be gleaned from the manuscript account books kept by Sidney Cockerell, Morris's former secretary. These accounts have only recently come to light and have been loaned to the Society by John Paul Getty. The book shows that Dettmar Blow paid 10 guineas for nursing and lettering on Morris's coffin. The GWR train from Paddington which transported the coffin cost £7. 8. 0., while at the other end of the journey lunch at the Swan and hire of a carriage cost £16. 2. 0.

14. PEVSNER MEMORIAL ESSAY PRIZE

The Victorian Society has sent details of its annual prize in honour of the late Sir Nicholas Pevsner, its former Chairman and a founder-member of the William Morris Society. Sir Nikolaus was well known for the encouragement he gave to research students and others who were just beginning to do original research and writing, and the prize reflects this. It will be awarded for an essay by someone whose work has not been published before. The essay should be concerned with British art, architecture or decorative arts in the Victorian or Edwardian periods, and should be about six thousand words long. The winner will receive a cash prize of £500 and the essay will be published in the Victorian Society's Annual. If you wish to compete for the prize, please send for an entry form to The Secretary, The Victorian Society, 1 Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT. The closing date for receipt of manuscripts is 30 September 1989.

15. THE JOURNAL OF PRE-RAPHAELITE AND AESTHETIC STUDIES

We would like to call attention - again - to this important publication, in which so much new research has been published in the twelve years since it was conceived and first produced by Francis and Barbara Golfing from their home in Middle Hancock Road, Peterborough, New Hampshire. Many members will know it, many no doubt subscribe to it. Two years ago, for reasons of failing sight and uncertain finances, Francis had to hand it over to its new Editor, leading Rossetti scholar William B. Fredeman of the Department of English in the University of British Columbia. With its somewhat expanded title and new design - though unchanged format - it comes to us at ten dollars for a single copy: fifteen for the two issues per year; twenty-four for two years. Write

to Mrs Joan Selby, at 1649 Allison Road, Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA V6T 1S7. It carries new and important articles, fully illustrated, on the work and lives of artists and writers of, or relating to, the Morris and Rosetti circles and is too good to miss.

Ray Watkinson

16. MISCELLANY

We have been interested to learn from our member Ruth Bartlett about a film for which she has written the screen-play: 'Lucy Parsons meets William Morris'. It is based on the visit made to London in 1888 by Lucy Parsons, a black American socialist activist. The film is a pilot for a major project. The Society is hoping to arrange a showing of the film and when this is in prospect we shall publish an article by Ruth Bartlett describing the background to the story.

The Victoria and Albert Museum has sent details of an exhibition devoted to the work of Clementina, Viscountess Hawarden (1822-65), a photographer whose work covered a full range from landscapes to costume tableaux. The exhibition will run from 27 September to 28 January 1990.

17. NEW MEMBERS

We are happy to welcome into membership the following:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Mrs Kay Artingsoll, Workington, Cumbria | David Paul, Castle College, Sheffield |
| Revd Hugh Hellicar, Brighton, Sussex | Paul Johnson, Madison, Wisconsin |
| Wendy Moffat, Carlisle, Pennsylvania | Frank Sharp, New York |
| Clarence Wolfshohl, Fulton, Missouri | O. P. Hardwick, Luton, Beds. |
| Mr W. Mendelsson, London | Mr D. W. Peers, London |
| Mrs Jette Simonsen, Denmark | Kathleen Lochridge, New York |
| Robert Delcamp, Sewanee, Tennessee | Mrs R. N. Robinson, Agnor, South Carolina |
| Mr L. Bowkett, Worcester | Louise Holgate, London |
| Dr Paul Rich, Qatar | Garry Boatman, Hillingdon |
| Ruth Bartlett, London | A. M. K. Bradford, London |
| Sarah Woodside, London | Tracy Jones, Sheffield |
| M. I. Crozy, Reading | Universite de Haute Normandie |
| Miss E & Mrs L. Daughtry, Ewell, Surrey | A. E. J. Diamond, London |
| Mrs Elisabeth Pollard, Shipston-on Stour, Warks. | Mr & Mrs Luxmore, Lechlade |
| Deborah Grubb, Twickenham | Mrs E. Radaelli, Chiswick |
| Caroline Stanley, London | Matthew Beesley, London |
| Mrs P. J. Adams, Kingston-upon-Thames | Miss Marion Owen, Woodford Green, Essex |
| David Medd, Welwyn, Herts. | Mrs Marian Bishop, London |
| Mrs Sandra Lee, Washington DC | Mark Burger, Chicago, Illinois |
| Richard Currie, New York. | Carolyn Sigler, Tallahassee, Florida |

18. REQUESTS AND QUERIES FROM MEMBERS

Neil Barker, a recent recruit to the Society, is interested in getting in touch with other younger (18-35) members. His address is 57 Zodiac Court, London Road, Croydon, Surrey, CRO 2RJ. He is particularly interested in design.

Wolfgang Schulze is seeking information about William Morris and environmental ethics and ecology in relation to conservation movements in the late nineteenth century. Members who have any information to offer should write to Wolfgang at Am Tiergarten 14, 6000 Frankfurt 1, Federal Republic of Germany.

19. TAILPIECE

In the editing, this has felt like a bumper issue, which I hope you have all enjoyed reading. My thanks are due to those members who have responded to a desperate editor's pleas by sending contributions and items of news. Please continue to do so. The next issue will be published in October and contributions should be sent to me at 7 Bromley Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7AP, no later than 22 September.

Good wishes to you all

Peter Preston

Peter Preston,
Hon. Secretary.

WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY IN THE UNITED STATES
NEWSLETTER • July 1989

'THE WIDOW'S HOUSE BY THE GREAT RIVER'

•Later this year, the American branch of the William Morris Society will publish an edition of Morris's The Widow's House by the Great River. Details of price and date of issue will be included in the October newsletter.

•Edited by Helen Timo, this is one of several unfinished prose romances of the 1890s which are to be found in the May Morris Bequest at the British Library. This tale is possibly an early version of The Water of the Wondrous Isles (1897). As Ms Timo writes: 'The story's appeal consists, not only in its foreshadowing of the ideas later dealt with in The Water of the Wondrous Isles, but also in its lively characterization and sensitive handling of the relations between the heroine and her various suitors. Morris seems particularly interested in the problem of how to portray a female protagonist. In his earlier work, female characters sometime seem to play a rather decorative, passive role. In The Widow's House, however, Morris grows dissatisfied with his heroine's lack of initiative and abandons her in Chapter XI, after giving us tantalizing glimpses of a future in which she may share the fate of a fair lady in a spaeman's tale, who 'was wedded to a good knight' but 'taken in the snare of love with a monk, a priest to wit . . .'

•Helen Timo lives and teaches at Cambridge. She has been working on Morris since 1977. Her doctoral thesis was a study of the popular use of religious imagery in Morris's prose romances and unfinished novel. Her edition of The Widow's House by the Great River was prepared during her term as Schoolteacher Fellow at St. Hugh's College, Oxford in Summer 1980. She hopes to prepare more of Morris's other unfinished romances for publication in the near future.

MORRIS SESSION AT THE MLA

•'Morris and Women' is the topic for the Society's session at this year's MLA Annual Convention, to be held in December in Washington, DC. The speakers will be follows: Norman Kelvin, on women in Morris's later letters and prose romances; Julia Atkins, on 'The Ionides Family'; Nina Auerbach, 'Must Guenevere Grovel' From the dramatic monologue to pictorial theatre'; and Holly Dworkin, 'A Design of One's Own: William Morris and Women.' Florence Boos writes that there seems to be considerable interest in the topic. Two other offered papers and that she, too, has written an article on the subject.

•While plans are still uncertain, the Society hopes this year to sponsor an event outside the noise and tumult of the MLA convention itself. This may take the form of a lunch at the National Gallery of Art, followed by an opportunity to see the Gallery's growing collection of Pre-Raphaelite drawings. Members who are not attending the MLA meeting will be especially welcomed.

THE DOHENY MORRIS SALE

•We have all heard the reports that the art market is booming. High—should one say heretofore unimaginable—prices are expected and received for paintings by Picasso and Van Gogh, for illuminated MSS, for Walt Disney cartoons. Those of us whose interest in Morris and his friends includes collecting their work have always felt pleased that ours was an out-of-the-way area, undiscovered (or at least neglected) by big-time collectors. A few exceptional Pre-Raphaelite pictures have brought large sums—\$3 million for Rossetti's Proserpine, probably the last major Rossetti left outside a museum, but the market has been relatively calm, some lots at auction actually going unsold. In the course of a single morning all this has changed. On Friday, 19 May 1989, Christie's sold the sixth and final part of the Doheny collection devoted to 'William Morris and his Circle'. A papal countess and the wife of a California oil millionaire, Doheny formed her library during the years 1930 to 1950. Morris was but one of her interests, which included also miniature books, Americana, Mark Twain, Kate Greenaway, incunabula, and many 'high-spots' of English and American literature.

•Christie's did a lot of publicity for the sale, much of it featuring the obvious 'star' item, Morris's spectacularly beautiful illuminated MS of the Aeneid. The catalogue, hard-bound in bright Socialist red, contained an 8-page description (not counting two fold-out colour plates) of this item alone, giving an estimate of \$250,000-300,000. Weeks before the sale there was talk of the Aeneid bringing perhaps half a million dollars, if the right buyer could be found. But the fate of the lesser items—a complete (or nearly so) run of Kelmscott Press titles, numerous Morris presentation copies, books in bindings by Cobden-Sanderson or the Doves bindery, a few decorative objects—was a bit uncertain. As it turned out no one needed to worry, especially the auctioneer or the sale's beneficiary, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

•The auction was attended by several Society members, among them Carole Silver, Mark Samuels Lasner, and our former American secretary, Joseph R. Dunlap. The well-known dealers were there in force, though as it turned out, most of us, booktrade and Morrisians alike, were there for the show not the bidding. What was apparent, even by the third lot, was that this was an extraordinary affair, soon to be dominated by three buyers.

•Lot 2234 (the sale began with 2232) was a copy, nicely bound, of The Flower Book of Edward Burne-Jones. This volume, issued posthumously in 1903, reproduces the artist's symbolic watercolours (now in the British Library) inspired by the names and meanings of flowers. It is not a particularly scarce item, and the stated limitation to 300 copies is not necessarily to be believed. The catalogue estimate of \$1,000 to \$1500 was realistic if a little low. After a minute of spirited bidding it was purchased by the London bookseller Simon Finch, for \$8500. Mr. Finch was clearly a man to watch; he seemed particularly interested in material connected to Burne-Jones. Following The Flower Book came Morris's copy of Marx's Le Capital, in a leather binding by Cobden-Sanderson. Some might find it odd for this title to be gorgeously bound; certainly the \$50,000 paid for it must count as ironic. (Somehow it is not Marx, but Veblen that comes to mind here.) This price was—believe it or not—below the estimate. However, the buyer was another London dealer, Maggs Brothers, who are believed to represent a tenacious yet generous private collector who has filled his (very appropriate) Chelsea house with Pre-Raphaelite treasures. Had there been more competition they would certainly be prepared to go higher. As the sale progressed Maggs purchased virtually everything bound by Cobden-Sanderson or his Doves bindery, paying \$7000 for Ruskin's Pre-Raphaelitism and \$16000 for the Kelmscott edition of Shakespeare's Poems inscribed by Cobden-Sanderson to his wife.

•Various relatively minor books went to various bidders and it was not until lot 2260, the first of a series of non-Kelmscott presentation copies from Morris, that a third

strong force made himself known. For this book, The Earthly Paradise inscribed (well, only the first volume, volumes two and three un-inscribed) to John Ruskin, went for \$6000 to a man with bidding paddle number 699. As book after book followed no. 699 either snapped them up or bid them up, the momentum and prices of his purchases becoming so remarkable that whispering arose regarding his identity. As a rule book-sellers at an auction do no care to have their turf intruded upon, and the unknown bidder was as upsetting as he was mysterious. A number of others, Ximenes (purchasing some of Morris's original drawings), William Salloch (buying Kelmscott versions of medieval literature) and the Lathrop Harper firm (the MS of News from Nowhere for \$75000, destined apparently for the Morgan Library), were able to withstand Mr. 699 but it was difficult. The least expensive book inscribed by Morris went for \$950, everything seemed to sell for at least the high estimate or, often, double it. In the Kelmscott section Maggs was able to pick off the corrected proofs for The Tale of King Cousians and Over Sea (\$12,000) and the MS (mostly in Sydney Cockerell's hand) of Morris's 'Note on his Aims . . . in founding the Kelmscott Press' (\$13,000); but the Chaucer on vellum went elsewhere for \$300,000. Simon Finch, again attending to Burne-Jones, had success with the Kelmscott edition of Rossetti's Hand and Soul, inscribed 'To Edward Burne-Jones from William Morris December 15th 1895'; this little 16mo—which I coveted—brought \$7500, ten times Christie's estimate.

•Even more staggering was the \$26,000 paid for a copy of Doheny's own privately printed 1934 A Pre-Raphaelite Aeneid of Virgil. This book about the Morris MS in her library is not, as one might suppose, any sort of facsimile. In fact it is a rather sedate piece of work by the California printer Ward Ritchie and has been known to be a slow seller on bookdealers' shelves. Certainly the book offered was made more interesting by the insertion of 47 letters and cards from people to whom Doheny had sent copies, but still \$26,000 is, even by the standards set by other things in this sale, exceptional. Then there was the little section devoted to 'Arts and Crafts', four items of which Mr. 699 purchased two, a pair of painted wood panels described as not by but after Burne-Jones—\$7000, and an unattributed photograph of Morris which brought %1900. The stage was set for the last two lots, Morris's calligraphic MS of The Story of Frithiof the Bold and the much-ballyhoed Aeneid.

•For Frithiof Christie's had a pre-sale opinion of %30,000-40,000, not perhaps a modest sum. While not in the same class as the Aeneid this was a wonderful MS of a translation made by Morris and Eirikr Magnusson. Any Morrisian would be happy to take it home—even a facsimile would be nice. Frithiof went to Maggs for \$120,000, at that moment probably the record for a single nineteenth century MS of any kind. Records are made to be broken (so the art world tells us) and shattered this one was by the Aeneid. There was silence as the bidding went on, quickly reaching \$500,000, then with longer pauses, moving up notch by notch until 'one million two hundred thousand dollars' was called out twice by the auctioneer, 'all done.'

•With this last purchase Mr. 699 had spent possibly \$1.5M or more on Morris, building a sizeable collection in an hour and a half. Who was he? It is thought that he was an associate of Andrew Lloyd Webber, the composer who has (I am told) four London shows running simultaneously. The same buyer is reputed to have added to his collection two Burne-Jones paintings (at £300,000 each) recently sold at Sotheby's. What's next?

•And what would Morris himself make of all this? He would be pleased that his handiwork was so highly thought of. As a collector himself—the Kelmscott House library held some of the finest English illuminated MS available a century ago—he would have a certain empathy for the bidders and purchasers. Would the prices have bothered him? Possibly, but remember that Morris so coveted the Aldenham Psalter that he paid £1000 when it had cost its previous owner only £75/36/-.

OTHER NEWS

*Florence Boos reports that the copy-edited manuscript of Socialism and the Literary Artistry of William Morris, a volume of essays sponsored by the American branch of the Society, has gone to the publisher, the University of Missouri Press. Publication is expected sometime next year. Ms. Boos also reports that she is negotiating with another publisher over her projected edition of Morris's writings.

*Joshua Heller, a Washington, DC bookseller who specializes in fine illustrated and private press books—including the work of Morris and his followers such as Ashbee, Cobden-Sanderson, Eric Gill, and others—has moved. His new address and telephone number are: Joshua Heller Rare Books, Box 39114, Washington, DC, 20016. [202] 966-9411.

*A recent issue (no. 10, 198) of the French journal, Cahiers Charles V, included a pair of articles relating to Morris by Lilianne Abensour. The first, 'Ceci est un Livre', dealt with Morris, his utopian ideas, and the Kelmscott Press. The second was Abensour's translation (almost certainly the first into French) of Morris's lecture 'The Ideal Book'.

*Please send announcements or newsworthy items to Mark Samuels Lasner, Apartment 101, 1870 Wyoming Avenue N. W., Washington, D. C. 20009 (Tel: [202] 745-1927).



WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY
President Lord Briggs of Lewes
Honorary Secretary Peter Preston
Kelmscott House, 26 Upper Mall,
Hammersmith, London W6 9TA

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Newsletter October 1989

Dear Member,

1. SOCIETY PROGRAMME

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PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN ARRANGEMENTS

Thursday 26 October, 6.00 pm (note change in time) THE KELMSCOTT LECTURE: THE CHANGE BEYOND THE CHANGE London School of Economics, Houghton Street, W1.

Each in his own time, William Morris and John Ball imagined a just society of the future and inspired others to work with him for it. For our Kelmscott Lecture this year Rodney Hilton, Emeritus Professor of Medieval Social History at the University of Birmingham, looks afresh at Morris's A Dream of John Ball, first published just one hundred years ago, and considers its meaning for today. Prof. Hilton's most recent book is Bondmen Made Free (Methuen paperback). The meeting will be chaired by Dr Paul Thompson of Oxford, author of The Work of William Morris. The lecture is now part of the LSE's autumn programme and there will be no charge for admission. However, please apply to the Society for a ticket. If you have already sent a cheque this will be returned to you. The lecture will be followed by a sherry reception.

Wednesday 15 October, 6.30 pm MORRIS AND THE ARTHURIAN LEGENDS

This talk will be given by Dr Christine Poulson, Curator at Kelmscott House. Her doctoral thesis was on the Arthurian legend in the fine and applied arts of the nineteenth century and she contributed chapters on this subject to William Morris and the Middle Ages