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## William Morris Society in the United States

### Newsletter April 1990

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#### JUNE MEETING AT THE DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

On Saturday, 23 June, the Society will host a special visit to the Delaware Art Museum in Wilmington, home of the Samuel Bancroft, Jr. collection of Pre-Raphaelite art. We hope that members from along the East Coast will be able to attend what is expected to be a pleasant Spring jaunt. Rowland Elzea, curator of the museum, and his wife, Betty, who is working on a catalogue raisonné of the artist Frederick Sandys, will serve as our guides.

William Morris Society visit to The Pre-Raphaelite Collections: DELAWARE ART MUSEUM, 2301 Kentmere Parkway, Wilmington, DE. Telephone [302] 571-9590. Saturday, 23 June 1990, 2 p. m.

The Bancroft contains the largest group of works by Rossetti in North America, along with paintings and drawings by Ford Madox Brown, Burne-Jones, Elizabeth Siddal, Arthur Hughes, Marie Spartali Stillman, and others. Morris is represented by the drawing for the cover of the 1890 one-volume edition of "The Earthly Paradise" and by Kelmscott Press books and decorative objects. Tied in to the Pre-Raphaelite holdings is a collection of arts and crafts and art nouveau jewelry.

Wilmington lies within easy driving distance of Baltimore and Philadelphia and is also served by the Amtrak main line between Boston and Washington. (Taxi and bus service is available from the train station.) Other attractions nearby include Winterthur and Longwood Gardens. The Museum holds its annual crafts fair (a very Morrisian event) on the day of our visit; accordingly, its staff would like to know in advance how many of us they can expect. If you plan to come please get in touch with Mark Samuels Lasner (address and telephone at the end of this "Newsletter").

#### A NEW DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS

One of the Society's long-planned projects will soon come to fruition. Pamela Wiens, Marilyn Ibach, and Mark Samuels Lasner are working on a new directory of members, which will be distributed sometime this summer. Next month you will receive a form letter asking if your address (as kept in our files) is correct. Space will be provided to note particular interests--and to give your telephone number, if you so wish. (And, if we can figure out the computer complexities, the finished product should contain some sort of geographical index, so members can contact others in their state or city.) The "Directory" will also include a list of our many institutional members.

#### Announcing SOCIALISM AND THE LITERARY ARTISTRY OF WILLIAM MORRIS

Edited by Florence Boos and Carole Silver, with essays by Lawrence Letchmansingh, Laura Donaldson, Norman Talbote Lyman Tower Sargent, Alexander MacDonald, Darko Subin, Michael Holzman, Christopher Waters, and the editors. Issued to mark the centenary of *News From Nowhere*. Published by the University of Missouri Press, under the sponsorship of the United States branch of the William Morris Society. 168 pp., illustrations, \$25.00. For further details contact:

The University of Missouri Press,  
200 Lewis Hall, Columbia, MO 65211  
Tel: (314) 882-7641

A REPORT ON THE "MORRIS AND WOMEN" TALKS DELIVERED AT THE MLA  
CONVENTION IN WASHINGTON: BY FLORENCE BOOS

The session on "Morris and Women," moderated by Florence Boos, met on Saturday morning, 30 December. About twenty people came, good attendance for the second-to-last hour of the convention. In her introduction to the session, Florence Boos began by remarking on the changes feminist criticism has brought to Victorian studies in the last two decades. She praised Morris for his creation of vigorous and eloquent heroines, and his benignly unpuritanical presentations of sexual themes, and his lifelong advocacy of sexual choice for women, rare in his period and not to be taken for granted in ours. More critically, she commented on the recurrent tensions between Morris's clear empathy with his female protagonists, and his writings' tacit acceptance, even stylization, of the stereotypes which rule their lives.

Four talks followed during the session: Julia Atkins's slide presentation on the life of her ancestor, Morris's friend and correspondent, Aglaia Coronio; Nina Auerbach's defense of Morris's *Guenevere* against Bernard Shaw's misreading; Holly Dworkin's examination of Morris's self-conscious medievalism as a device which deepened as well as constrained his portrayals of women; and Norman Kelvin's exploration of parallels between Morris's relationships with women in his family and the romantic triangles of his later prose romances. A précis of the first talk and excerpts from the second and third follow. It is hoped that a summary of the fourth will appear in the July "Newsletter."

"Morris and Aglaia Coronio" by Julia Atkins

The Ionides family emigrated from Constantinople in the 1820s, settling first in Manchester, and then near other members of the Greek colony in Finsbury Circus, London. Aglaia Coronio, born in 1834, was privately tutored, and at age 19 was described by the German tourist, Emma Von Niendorf, as of "a poetical appearance, tall, slender—sensitive, quiet, with a dreamful air." As hostess for her father, the Greek Consul-General and director of the Crystal Palace Company, she was called by her brother Alec Ionides "the conversational star of this circle. In after years I often marvelled at that capacity of hers, which—seemed to throw fresh light on any subject she touched. It was this, I think, that led Morris, Burne-Jones, and even Legros and others to confide in her, and consult her concerning their work." At 21, she married Theodore Coronio, with whom she had two children, a daughter Calliope, born in 1856, and a son, John, born in 1857. Aglaia's friendship with Morris lasted for twenty years; he gave her lessons in Chaucer and bookbinding, wrote to her on his travels, and visited her periodically. Their paths diverged when he became an active socialist, but Sydney Cockerell reported that she visited him shortly before he died. She also remained on friendly terms with Jane Morris as well, and joined the Morrises in boating excursions on the upper Thames. Among Aglaia Coronio's other friends were Oscar Wilde, Walter Crane, Whistler, and the Burne-Joneses. The Greek businessman, Andreas Syngros, who met her in Athens in 1872, recorded a praiseful if slightly disapproving description: "[she] was a woman of exceptional education combined with a powerful intellect, sure judgment, and an addictive humor. The only fault one could have found with her was a certain eccentricity of thought and behavior and life in general, attributable, in my opinion, to the English system of rearing children and her eccentric relationships with English men and women, but this eccentricity I for one found rather pleasing, because it provided constant opportunity for debate and argument, sometimes reaching the point of altercation, between us, and—debate and argument can be very entertaining. Thanks to Aglaia Coronio that winter passed not at all unpleasantly." Her later years were less happy; depressed by the death from a heart attack of her husband Theodore (who left her in financial trouble) and her daughter Calliope's death at age 50, Aglaia committed suicide in 1906, a few months before her 72nd birthday.

"Medievalism and Morris's Women" by Holly Dworkin (University of Pittsburgh)

"Morris was somewhat distinct from other Pre-Raphaelite artists in that his medievalizing roles, while to some degree entrapping women, yet at the same time enabled them to fulfill some measure of freedom within their roles--a freedom that might not have been available to them in the greater context of nineteenth century life, as Victorian wives. Fueled by images of Morris's medieval damsels, both literary and real, the imagination provided an un-Victorian room in which women might act and have some realm of power. To extend the boundaries of their otherwise imprisoning situations, his strongest literary figures employ language. If other forms of power are restricted to male knights, they use the weapons at hand, for instance, speech. Usually it was Morris who kept the medieval fiction alive; having rescued the damsel in distress, he placed her far from here in his manor, where, ensconced in the castle of Kelmscott, the damsel embroidered her life, stitching the medieval images that reinforced her role. But once, perhaps just once, Janey stepped outside her realm by seeing herself reflected back to her in art in a particularly uncharacteristic pose: she was the model for Hippolyte. According to Marsh in "Pre-Raphaelite Women," Hippolyte was 'depicted as a medieval warrior-maiden with sword and spear, and a full suit of armor beneath her tapestried robe.' Through her husband's medievalizing images, Janey thus saw herself as an Amazon queen, far from the confines of 19th century society. Theseus's bride-to-be is far removed from the image of the ideal young Victorian wife. Because the non-traditional role of female warrior is so imbued with power, one would be hard-pressed to think of an image further removed from the passivity inherent in descriptions of 'the Angel in the House.'"

"Must Guenevere Grovel?" by Nina Auerbach (University of Pennsylvania)

"The oblique representation of Lancelot, to whom Guenevere refers as 'my knight' as if she has made him, frees from male definition a Queen who traditionally takes her existence from defining men. Like Holman Hunt's muscular Lady of Shalott, whose visual prominence turns the invading Lancelot into a remote, diminutive puppet, Morris's Guenevere composes her story in a way that reduces to ciphers the heroes around her. At the end of her narrative, Guenevere mourns her condition in a lament in which Shaw, at least, might find covert triumph: 'For no man cares now to know why I sigh,/And no man comes to sing me pleasant songs.' The repetition of 'no man' defines simultaneously her bereavement and her narrative autonomy. In Morris's dramatic monologue, Guenevere is not the puppet Shaw deplores, illustrating 'foolish flatteries written by gentlemen for gentlemen," but a narrator authoritative enough to force her gentlemen-judges to participate in the only world she accepts: that of her own highly-colored subjectivity. Her role as portraitist of the self that is her story is unregenerate compared to that of Tennyson's Guenevere, who also loves colors but repudiates them. Tennyson's Guenevere sees a light Morris's, as the sole painter of her world, has no interest in (that is, the 'perfect light' of Arthur) Morris's Guenevere never renounces the tints that are her palette, not a metaphor for her man. She ends with an audacious self-portrait that swallows her contours in colors and overpowers any images her judges might paint. She triumphs in Shaw's own vein, as seer, not as object seen. Her defense is to force her vision on a court that, like the reader, thinks it knows who she is. Had Shaw read his predecessors less combatively, he too might have learned to see with a Guenevere who did not need his enlightened defense. As Morris reclaims her, this fallen queen belongs with the self-defined saints about whom Shaw wrote so gallantly, who have endured repeated idiotic trials in the literature of our century."

#### ALSO AT THE MLA, A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY

The lunch and tour at the National Gallery of Art, held on Friday afternoon (29 December) was an unqualified success. Eighteen members attended--a diverse group including not only participants in the MLA meetings but a lawyer, an antiquarian bookseller, and the director of a historic site. After the meal, which was served in the private staff "refectory" on the 7th floor of the East Building (where we rather overwhelmed the servers) we went downstairs to see the Gallery's collection of 19th century English drawings. Andrew Robison, the curator of prints and drawings, greeted

us and, after a brief talk, gave us liberty to examine and ask about the works on view: sketches by Burne-Jones (including the newly acquired "St. Barbara," a gift from William B. O'Neill of Charlottesville, VA), Rossetti's exquisite pen and ink drawing of Mrs. Morris reclining on a sofa, and works by Leighton, Walter Crane, C. H. Shannon, and Poynter. A special treat were the Gallery's three major Beardsley drawings--"Tannhäuser," "Withered Spring," and "Caricature of Whistler," along with an album of juvenile sketches.

#### MORRIS AT THE COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

James R. Bennett has kindly sent along advance abstracts for the four papers to be delivered at the "News from Nowhere" Centenary Panel at the College English Association conference, Buffalo, NY, on 6 April.

Frederick Kirchoff, "Morris' Utopian Men":

Examines Morris's relative success in freeing himself from the sexual stereotypes associated with bourgeois Western culture.

Rebecca Baird, "Beauty Through Work: Portrayals of Women in *News from Nowhere*":

In *News from Nowhere*, Morris features beautiful women throughout his text. What is unusual about their beauty is their age. Guest continually comments on physical features and clothing as yet another female crosses the page and voices his awareness when he discovers that the beauty he thought could be no more than twenty is actually older than he is. Why would Morris concentrate so on beauty? Is he promoting the theory that work, as most of the women are working in some capacity, brings beauty? Or, is it that *News from Nowhere* was intended for the general populace as a picture of the promise socialism would bring? If so, what would be more promising to a worker than to promise that his worn-out wife of forty would be a pleasant, enchanting vision who appeared as if she were twenty if socialism were to prevail?

Isolde Karen Herbert, "Perceptual Thresholds in *News from Nowhere*":

In *News from Nowhere* disparate responses to the individual or the collective past allow Morris to create an inclusive utopia which forestalls both the ideological threat of bourgeois appropriation and the perceptual error of a definitive program for the future. Unsettled by conflicting interpretations of the relevance of the past in and between the narrative levels, the point of view of the historical consciousness forms the focus of the utopia's instability. In addition, the ambiguity of the frame section suggests that the reader's perception of his present is liable to the error of reification; however, if read correctly, the indeterminacies of the narrative point of view liberate the reader from an understanding of either actuality or utopian discourse as synchronic experiences which exist in isolation from the past and future. The bridge, the Museum, and the old house are symbols of the nascence, the exposition, and the celebration, respectively, of the historical consciousness; in these settings, both reader and character confront and assess their present as future history in the terms of perception and discourse.

James R. Bennett, "U. S. Television Utopias and *News from Nowhere*":

Frederic Jameson's concept of arousal and containment of desire in mass culture is applied to the television utopian series *Love Boat* and *Fantasy Island* and to *News from Nowhere*. The narrative structure of the two television series expresses and denies utopian impulse, providing both escape and return to reality. Both reinforce dominant cultural values. In contrast, *News from Nowhere* challenges the entire system of capitalism.

#### PRE-RAPHAELITES AT THE CAA: BY SUSAN P. CASTERAS

As noted in the January "Newsletter," the College Art Association meeting, held in New York in February, included a session devoted to the Pre-Raphaelites. "Pre-Raphaelitism in its Historical Context," chaired by Alicia Faxon on 17 February, was packed in spite of heavy competition from American art and from Gabe Weinberg's 'excrement' or 'scatological' thematic session!

The first speaker was Susan P. Casteras (Mellon Center for British Art). Her talk, "The Pre-Raphaelite Legacy to Symbolism," focused on members of the Rose+Croix salons, beginning with a survey of Gallic response to the PRB from the 1855 Exposition Universelle, contemporary critical responses, and culminating in the 1890s with Rosicrucian veneration, especially for Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Millais. The mystic order of the Rose+Croix, founded by Joseph Peladan, included painters such as Eduard Aman-Jean, Carlos Schwabe, Armand Point, and Jean Delville, but it was Ferdinand Khnopff whose work owed a special debt to Pre-Raphaelitism. His inspiration from Burne-Jones and Rossetti above all in "Memories," "I lock the door upon myself," and other paintings in particular revealed his adaptation of the PRB's cult of ideal female beauty.

Herbert L. Sussman (Northeastern University) spoke on "The Pre-Raphaelites and the Problem of Manliness," using Millais, Hunt, and Rossetti as examples of different expressions of masculinity. He argued that Millais's "The Carpenter's Shop" reconfigured Jesus as an expression of contemporary "muscular Christianity," and suggested also that the artist's later career cast him into the role of country gentleman. Holman Hunt, on the other hand, adopted the public image of bard or prophet, while Rossetti assumed the machismo persona of a sexually and artistically active Bohemian painter.

In "Edward Burne-Jones: Mannerist in an Age of Modernism," Liania De Girolami Cheney (University of Lowell) considered the artist's Pygmalion series as an expression of Mannerist ideas and aesthetics. She also linked his vision of beauty and love to the French Symbolists, particularly with their paradoxical view of women as embodiments of both purity (Venus) and temptation (Salome).

Norman L. Kleebatt (Jewish Museum) examined "The Influence of Renaissance Christian Prototypes in Simeon Solomon's Early Hebrew Bible Pictures," initially demonstrating Solomon's preoccupation with Old Testament themes and his use of early Renaissance sources. He pointed out how interest in Italian "primitives" surfaced in the late 1840s and 1850s in both books and art and at the 1857 Manchester exhibition. In Solomon's case specific 14th and 15th century paintings of the Madonna and Child or saints were "hebraized" by the artist, who often painted themes of exile.

"Aubrey Beardsley: The Last Pre-Raphaelite" was analyzed by Gail S. Weinberg, who noted how this artist combined daring modernity with clear stylistic indebtedness to diverse art historical revivals of rococo, baroque, medieval, and Renaissance paintings. Tracing early Pre-Raphaelite influences--especially Burne-Jones--in Beardsley's art, she also pointed out that his first commission, an illustrated edition of Malory's *Morte Darthur*, revealed the impact of early Italian art as it aimed to compete with the success of Morris's Kelmscott Press books. While he later rejected Pre-Raphaelitism, Beardsley's later works confirmed a continuing respect for Mantegna and other early Renaissance artists admired by the PRB.

#### "NEWS FROM NOWHERE: A VISION FOR OUR TIME"

John Elford, of Green Books, a small British publisher, has sent us information about a book he will be publishing in June. Tentatively titled *News from Nowhere: A Vision for our Time*, edited by Stephen Coleman and Paddy O'Sullivan, the volume discusses Morris's ideas in the context of today's problems and issues. The book opens with a biographical introduction and a synopsis of *News from Nowhere*; these are followed by a series of essays: "The Feast's Beginning--*News from Nowhere* and Tradition" by Christopher Hampton, "How the Chance Came--*News from Nowhere* and Revolution" by John Crump, "How Matters are Managed--Human Nature in Nowhere" by Stephen Coleman, "The Obstinate Refusers--Work in *News from Nowhere*" by Ray Watkinson, "Concerning Love--*News from Nowhere* and Gender" by Jan Marsh, "An Old House Amongst New Folk--*News from Nowhere* Somewhere" by Colin Ford, "The Hammersmith Guesthouse Again--William Morris and the Architecture of Nowhere" by Mark Pearson, "A Market by the Way--The Economics of Nowhere" by Adam Buick, and

"The Journey's End--William Morris, 'News from Nowhere,' and Ecology" by Paddy O'Sullivan.

The book will be offered to Society members at a discount price. For further details write to Green Books, Ford House, Hartland, Bideford, Devon EX39 6EE, England. (A note for collectors: there will also be a special limited edition, priced at about \$40-50.)

#### NEWS OF MEMBERS

Phillips H. Martin, a new member in Cleveland (3865 Merrymound Road, 44121), reports that after collecting books by and about Morris for many years, he is considering a part-time career as a bookseller specializing in Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites.

Mark Samuels Lasner has co-authored *England in the 1890s: Literary Publishing at the Bodley Head* with Margaret D. Stetz. This is an illustrated catalogue of the exhibition held at Georgetown University Library, from 15 December 1989 to 9 March 1990. Publication--by Georgetown University Press--is expected in May, price to be announced.

Jeffrey Skoblow, the moderator for this year's MLA session on "Morris and Architecture," is working on a book chiefly concerning *The Earthly Paradise*. He will be spending much of the summer at the Huntington Library, studying the Morris MSS in that collection.

#### THE GOLDEN TYPE

Thomas Hardy, a member in San Francisco, recently "made my day" when he told me that a digitized version of Morris's Golden Type was now available for computer use. This issue of the "Newsletter" is set in the typeface, produced by the International Typeface Corporation in New York (ITC) and marketed by a number of distributors, including The Font Company (12629 North Tatum Blvd., Phoenix, AZ 85032, Tel: [800] 442-FONT). It comes in three weights--Golden Type Original, Golden Type Bold (actually a semibold), and Golden Type Black--all in standard Postscript form for the Apple Macintosh computer; equivalent versions for IBM machines will presumably be available also. An improved version, incorporating oldstyle figures and the floreat used to mark paragraphs, is said to be on the way.

ITC Golden Type Original  
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As with other computer typefaces there is a full complement of special symbols such as the British pound sign £, and the © copyright notice. Speaking of typography and computers: CompuServe, the largest "on-line" bulletin board network (I believe it is international in scope) now carries a special "Type & Typography" forum in its "Desktop Publishing" section. The discussions are rather lively, and while some of the messages deal with esoteric subjects there is much of interest to those concerned with good design and the history of printing. Morris's turns up from time to time, along with that of Eric Gill and a number of the turn-of-the-century private press founders such as Charles Ricketts. Two of the "regulars" on the forum expressed an interest in the Morris Society (and, we trust, have joined and are reading this now).

#### VICTORIANS AT SOTHEBY'S

A large number of Victorian paintings and drawings were recently sold by Sotheby's New York on 28 February--with surprising results, at least to those who follow the steadily escalating market in Pre-Raphaelite art. The 41 works came from the collection of the late Edward J. McCormick, who began buying 19th century English art in the late 1970s, after the dispersal of his wide-ranging group of American paintings. It is fair to say that Mr. McCormick's taste was influenced by the Forbes collection and, perhaps to a lesser

degree, by his principal London dealer, Christopher Wood; for the most part he seemed to prefer Royal Academicians to the Pre-Raphaelites and artists associated with the Aesthetic Movement. Nonetheless, along with paintings by Etty, Frith, Landseer, Henry O'Neill (the matching pair "Eastward Ho!" and "Home Again," separate lots in the sale but apparently reunited again), Egg, and Frank Stone, among others, he found room for a representative sampling of Pre-Raphaelite works, most of which fared better at auction than the "academic" pictures. A rare oil by James Collinson, "Temptation" (1855) brought \$55,000, while Millais's "Sweet Emma Morland," a late (1892) and rather sentimental subject, went for \$100,000. The stars of the sale were Albert Moore's "An Embroidery"--a staggering \$270,000 (mind, this was still in the middle of the pre-sale estimate!) and Rossetti's pen and pencil head of Annie Miller, a beautiful and evocative portrait, which, at \$130,000, set a record for a drawing by the artist. (A smaller sketch of Ms. Miller, by George P. Boyce, sold for \$12,000.) Another Pre-Raphaelite work, Burne-Jones's small pencil study for the angel in "The Annunciation," soared beyond its estimate to \$30,000. Most of these works--and two Holman Hunt silverpoint portraits, of his second wife, Edith, and of his son, Cyril--were purchased over the telephone by an unidentified but obviously determined bidder.

#### WILLIAM MORRIS IN WAIKIKI

by Gary L. Aho

I was an exchange professor at the University of Hawaii last year, and my wife and I lived in a single room (the real estate agents called it an "economy condo") on the 44th floor of a hotel in Waikiki. This hotel with its 600 rooms has literally dozens of counterparts in Waikiki, some not quite so high, but all cut from the same dreary pattern. They resemble clusters of ice-cube trays standing on end. And they all serve the same dreary function: to provide temporary holding cells and changing rooms for tourists, anxious to move from cramped jumbo jets to jam-packed beaches. Those jets have made these hotels possible, indeed obligatory, for the huge 747's bring in the 1,000's of sun-worshippers who arrive each and every day of the year.

That such astounding numbers of people can be accommodated at all in so small an area--Waikiki is a narrow band of landfill between the Ala Wai Canal and the Pacific Ocean--is a marvel of the modern world, a credit to the so-called "tourist industry," and to the entrepreneurs and architects and builders who have raised up with such amazing speed these steel and concrete and shimmering glass rectangles, these many Hyatts and Hiltons, these Astons and Colony Resorts, these Marriotts and Outriggers, these Regents and Sheratons.

So ubiquitous are the vertical boxes that tourists now look out on other Hiltons and Hyatts, rather than on ocean views and swaying palms. And more of the boxes are going up all the time; one day a family hacienda is razed, and a few weeks later a vertical hive is in its place. In less than a generation--since the advent of those jumbo jets--Waikiki's skyline has come to resemble Manhattan's or Hong Kong's.

What might William Morris have thought of this skyline, these dreary structures, their transient guests come here to the middle of the Pacific on a "cockney holiday"? A society's architecture reflects its values, and here in this dense mass of perpendiculars, the prospects, in every sense of the word, are dispiriting.

There are, however, a few exceptions. The pink stucco walls of the Royal Hawaiian, an ocean-front fixture for fifty years, still rise only a few stories above green lawns and white sands. And three hundred yards towards Diamond Head, down Kalakaua--Waikiki's main drag--stands the Moana Hotel. This graceful beaux arts wooden structure opened its doors in 1901 to guests who came over from the port of Honolulu, five miles distant, on trams pulled by mules. Waikiki was then mainly rice paddies and swamp and that soft arc of golden beach with hundreds of palm trees, a few bathing pavilions, and this single hotel, the Moana, known affectionately as "the first lady of Waikiki."

Four stories high, the Moana was once one of the tallest buildings on the entire island of Oahu. Its guests had splendid, unimpeded views of the blue-green Pacific, of Diamond

Head, of the dark valleys shrouded in clouds and graced with rainbows that plunge down from the Koolau Range, twenty miles to the south, the sharp spine of Oahu.. Those guests could appreciate the same vistas described by 19th century visitors like Mark Twain and Robert Louis Stevenson. Like those writers they'd come on ships that took days--even weeks--rather than hours to cross the Pacific.

With its 75 rooms (each with its own bath and telephone), its spacious lobby and broad verandas made from teakwood, and its saloon and billiard parlor and its upper three floors finished in, respectively, oak, mahogany, and maple, connected to a lush garden on the roof by an electric elevator, the Moana Hotel was the last word in elegance. As a contemporary journalist bragged, it was "the rival of the finest hotels which are to be seen in the most metropolitan cities on the Mainland or the Continent." But it wasn't in a crowded city; it stood instead on a splendid and isolated beach, and it offered rest and provender to travelers who had indeed made a journey, long and tedious, sometimes hazardous, to get there. Travel at the turn of the century was adventure, and the Moana must have seemed a marvelous haven, a white wooden castle at the world's end.

A Banyan tree grew just a few yards from the verandah overlooking the ocean, and in 1917 two wings were built at either end of the hotel, extending toward the beach and enclosing the Banyan inside what thus became a large courtyard. From 1935 to 1975, the music program "Hawaii Calls" was beamed from there to radios on the mainland. Guests at the Moana included royalty, Amelia Earhart and Eleanor Roosevelt, assorted celebrities and honeymooners, and during World War Two hundreds of servicemen. The Moana and its Banyan Court had become an institution, well known in the islands and to many on the mainland.

But by 1975 the Moana was in sad shape, the victim of successive renovations. Ceilings had been lowered, and those spacious lobbies and saloons had been partitioned into fast food restaurants and gift shops; the ample rooms had been rearranged into tourist coops, cells for those hordes now deplaning daily from the jumbo jets. A bulldozer was coughing and chugging in the wings, but in 1976, happily, the Moana was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and thus saved from the razers while at the same time offering its owners tax credit incentives for preservation and restoration.

As we all know, William Morris disapproved of architectural restoration, but I wonder what his reactions might have been at this point to the fate of this wooden structure in Waikiki. The alternatives to restoration were far from pleasant. Left alone, the gerrymandered Moana might have been used as an instructive relic, one offering glimpses of Waikiki's growth as a resort in the 20th century. With its aforementioned segmentations and additions, the Moana could have been turned into a museum of mendacity. Torn down, the Moana would surely have been replaced with yet another concrete and glass tower, a frame for still more "mean, idiotic rabbit warrens." More mendacity. And an eyesore as well.

The restored Moana, on the other hand, is pleasing to the eye, providing a welcome contrast to the gray towers and the commercial clutter up and down Kalakaua. First, it is constructed entirely of wood, wood that's been squared, turned, sanded, carved, polished, painted, lovingly handled, set, nailed and pinned together by craftsmen who have obviously taken pleasure in their work and therefore created here something beautiful, even magic. The horizontal mass of the Moana, stretching over one hundred yards down the avenue (perhaps the only structure on Kalakaua wider than it is high) is striking. Its great portico, or porte cochere, as the brochures have it, its recessed balconies, its many pillars and arches, all tease the eye and imagination.

So extensive had the decay and repairs and changes been over the years, this restoration involved much more than merely scraping away time's accretions. The workers had to begin again. Guided by remnants of the original plans and by old photographs and memorabilia that she turned up in area archives and museums--wholly engaged in what she called a "wonderful detective game"--chief architect Virginia Murison oversaw all



phases of the work. She had every reason to be pleased with her labors, her six-year endeavor, when the new Moana opened last Spring.

I spoke with her twice last July, and she pointed out that more hand work was needed for the restoration than for the original, since back in 1901 many of the building's features, from intricate cornice carvings to the huge ionic columns supporting the portico, were catalogue items. They could be ordered through the mail! Not today. Those concrete box hotels don't require decorative medallions and fleur-de-lis, nor leaf and grape clusters atop columns and pillars, nor fluted rails and curved banisters, nor latticed window shutters. All such structural and decorative features, and more, were part of the original Moana, and they have now reappeared, newly carved and freshly painted, in this fascinating, beautiful, and faithful restoration.

Despite her painstaking attempts to find out everything about the hotel's original appointments, Murison was unable to determine what kinds of carpets, if any, were used. Some guests remembered rich, floral rugs and Murison hoped to turn up something similar, something appropriate to the hotel's general decor, something that would also embody turn-of-the-century elegance and warmth. Then one day while leafing through an architectural magazine, she saw what seemed the perfect pattern. She clipped the illustration and sent it off to a carpet factory in Northern Ireland (Ulster Carpet Mills Ltd.), asking if they could duplicate it and manufacture it in quantity.

They could, they did, and thus did William Morris come to Waikiki. Literally hundreds of yards of his Tulip and Rose pattern, one of his first designs for woven textiles, and one very popular in Morris and Company's line of Kidderminster carpets, cover the floors in the restored Moana. This wool axminster carpeting, with its red-orange roses and pinkish tulips amidst swirling vines and leaves, adds a lavish and serene grace to the lobbies, the grand salon, and to the five guest corridors (each of these is over one hundred yards long) of the hotel.

The carpeting has drawn favorable reactions, and that's easy enough to understand. The design is beautiful, the rug is heavy and thick, and it fits nicely with the beaux arts decor and the ornate decorations throughout the hotel. But for me, there was something strange and somewhat unsettling about seeing a Morris pattern in such ample plentitude. Repeated roses and tulips march down the corridors and across the wide lobby and up to the edge of the teakwood verandah.

A piano plays there, guests sip their exotic rum drinks, the leaves of the Banyan turn in the ocean breeze, and the blue-green Pacific thuds and slaps on the sands of Waikiki's famous beach. Yes, the luxuries of the rich are being catered to here, but I like to think, because of the bold restorations--because of a William Morris design--they are less swinish at the Moana than at other hostelrys in Waikiki.

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Updated 9 July, 2016