

William Morris Society in the United States Newsletter July 1993

O CANADA!

Odd it may seem, but this year's big events for members of the William Morris Society in the United States will take place within the precincts of our Northern Neighbor, Canada. First and foremost is "The Earthly Paradise: Arts and Crafts by William Morris and his Circle from Canadian Collections," a major (and we mean MAJOR) exhibition organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario and traveling to a number of locations during 1993 and 1994. This is indeed a "Paradise," comprising some 285 objects including paintings, drawings, prints, wallpaper, books, stained glass, photographs, furniture, jewelry, ceramics, metalwork and textiles. Early reports are that this is a "must see" for all Morrisians who can make it. If you have not made holiday plans--for the summer or for the rest of the year--you now know what the best destination will be. The "where" is as follows: Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 25 June-6 September 1993; then National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 22 October to 6 January 1994; Musée de Québec, 16 February to 15 May 1994; and the Winnipeg Art Gallery, June to August 1994. The exhibition has been organized by Katharine Lochman, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Art Gallery of Ontario, with the assistance of Douglas Schoenherr, Associate Curator of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Canada, and our own member Carole Silver, Professor of English at Yeshiva University. Many connected events in Toronto are scheduled for the period June-September 1993--exhibitions of children's books and Arts and Crafts textiles, lectures, films, and tours of Victorian neighborhoods--these are listed in a brochure available from the Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas Street West, Toronto M5T 1G4, Tel.: (416) 979-6656. If you can't go, some solace will be found in the accompanying 312-page catalogue (described to us as "stunning" by one of the contributors) co-published by the Art Gallery of Ontario and Key Porter Books.

Toronto is also the site for this year's Modern Language Association annual convention, 27-30 December 1993. Of course, "The Earthly Paradise" exhibition will, as luck will have it, be in Ottawa at the time. (Clearly the MLA planners rejected our suggestion that the Toronto meeting be held in June instead of December, but then we also argued for Disney World, too.) Though the MLA schedule (and possibly the weather) may be against us, the Society may attempt to co-ordinate a journey from Toronto to Ottawa. We also hope to organize a joint gathering with the William Morris Society of Canada. Details of these activities will be found in our by now traditional leaflet mailed to U. S. members in the fall.

The leaflet will also give the precise dates and times of our two MLA sessions, the annual business meeting, and a cash bar. The first panel is on "William Morris and the Arts." Pedro Beade (Bryant College) will serve as moderator and the speakers and their topics are: W. D. Brown, "Eden Smith and the British Arts and Crafts Movement"; Keith Crudginton (Harvard), "Exporting British Culture: Morris and the Marketplace"; Isolde Karen Herbert, "William Morris and the Development of Poetry in Canada"; and Carole Silver (Yeshiva U.), "'Little Goblin Men': Morris on the Imperializers of Craft" (this last subject to change). Florence Boos (U. of Iowa) will chair the second panel, devoted to "William Morris and Imperialism." For this the speakers will be: Patrick Brantlinger (Indiana U.), "Morris and Imperialism"; Victor Shea (York U.) and William Whitla, "'Civilization' and the Classics: Morris's Critique of British Imperialism: Translating Greece and Rome"; and Pamela Bracken Wiens (Catholic U. of America), "Ultima Thule, or 'The Ends of the Earth': The Icelandic Visions of William Morris and Sir Richard Burton."

"THE TABLES TURNED"

A new edition of Morris's play, *The Tables Turned, or Nupkins Awakened*, sponsored by the Society and edited by member Pamela Bracken Wiens, has been accepted by Ohio University Press. The manuscript has been completed and publication is expected in the spring of 1994. As yet the price has not been set, but the book--clothbound and to be about 100 pages long--will retail in the range of \$30.00. Those who belong to the U. S. branch of the Society will be able to purchase it at a discount, and the Ohio people believe they can offer a similar arrangement for Morris Society members worldwide. We expect to announce details in the January "Newsletter."

GUILD OF HANDICRAFT TRUST

Most Morrisians will know of the move, at the turn of the century, of the London-based Guild of Handicraft to the small North Cotswolds town of Chipping Campden. This locale became the home for much of the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain--C. R. Ashbee was followed by, among others, the Gaskins, Katherine Adams, F. L. Griggs, and Paul Woodruffe. Our member Peter Stansky has sent along a brochure describing The Guild of Handicraft Trust, a new organization which aims to restore and make available a large archive of material surviving in the Guild's headquarters in the Silk Mill. The Trust further plans to provide information on all the artists and craftspersons who flourished in the Cotswolds area. Inquiries and donations can be sent to: Frank Johnson, Secretary, The Silk Mill, Chipping Campden, Glos. GL55 6DS, England, Tel.: (01386) 841100.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

A footnote to our report on last December's MLA convention in New York: Norman Kelvin, editor of the "Letters of William Morris," gave a talk on "The Commodity as Instrument of Radical Change: Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement" at the session "Victorian Political Economy: Domestic and Colonial", sponsored by the Victorian Period Division.

Jerome McGann, Professor of English at the University of Virginia, is in the process of developing a "hypermedia research archive" devoted to the study of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's writings and paintings. The aim is to incorporate and reproduce all the known texts, manuscripts, and art works in a single multimedia information source. McGann urges those with knowledge of unrecorded manuscripts and designs by the poet-painter to contact him at the Department of English, University of Virginia, Wilson Hall, Charlottesville, Va. 22903.

Alicia Craig Faxon's colleagues and other friends joined her in celebrating her mid-May retirement as Chair of the Art History Department of Simmons College at the College's Trustman Art Gallery. She will soon be moving to Rhode Island, where she expects to continue her work on Rossetti.

The Yellow Book, the quintessential 1890s magazine that made Aubrey Beardsley a household name, began publication a century ago, in April 1894. Harvard University's Houghton Library will mark the occasion with an exhibition organized by Margaret D. Stetz, Associate Professor of English at Georgetown University, and Mark Samuels Lasner. The next "Newsletter" will carry more details.

William S. Peterson's book *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure*, published by Oxford and the University of California Press in 1991 has been placed on the short list for the prestigious Felice Feliciano Award. The prize, named after the fifteenth-century humanist printer and first granted in 1989, is a biennial competition in the categories of Studies and Research and Book Design. The winner's spoils include a cash prize and a trip to Verona to receive the award.

John Benjamin is the new editor of *Victorian City*, the handsomely revamped newsletter put out by the Victorian Society in American, Metropolitan Chapter. Members in the New York ("tri-state") area will find much of interest in this publication which, aside from announcing the group's activities, lists lectures, walking tours, and exhibitions sponsored by other organizations. The emphasis is on architecture and the decorative arts, with a decided nod towards the Arts and Crafts movement. For further information contact: VSA Metropolitan Chapter, 217 East 85th St., Suite 296, New York, NY 10028, Tel.: (212) 427-2488.

LETTERS OF JANE AND MAY MORRIS

Frank Sharp and Jan Marsh report that they are at work on an edition of the Letters of Jane Morris. They would be grateful if anyone with information about Morris letters held in public, as well as private, collections would contact Sharp at 254 W. 98th St., Apt 2D, New York, NY 10025.

SPECIAL ISSUE OF "VICTORIAN POETRY"

Florence Boos has announced that she will serve as guest editor for a special 1996 commemorative issue of *Victorian Poetry* devoted to the work of William Morris: "Reevaluations or new discussions of any aspect of Morris's poetry will be welcome, of course," she writes, "but so will papers devoted to other implications of his lifework, especially those which seem relevant to more recent attitudes and problems: his concern for the environment, for example; his utopianism and anarchocommunism; his critique of imperialism; his unconventional uses of generic forms and narrative structures; his relationship to predecessors and contemporaries; and his relation(s) to subsequent feminist, materialist, postmodern, and post-colonial thought." Interested scholars are asked to submit 15-25 page essays to her by 15 August 1995 at the Department of English, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242.

CONFERENCES

The number of meetings in which people give talks seems to be increasing exponentially. (Or perhaps we are now on more mailing lists?) The following, all of potential interest to members, have been announced:

Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Farms in Parsippany-Troy Hills, N. J. will be the site of several events in the First Annual Arts and Crafts Symposium, scheduled for 20-22 August 1993. Participants will shuttle between the house museum (once Stickley's home and now restored) and the nearby Hannover Marriott, where a lecture series and antique show will take place. The weekend package price of \$75.00 covers all events but the Friday evening benefit party at Craftsman Farms, for which admission is an additional (and tax-deductible) \$100.00. Lecturers will address topics ranging from women's roles in the Arts and Crafts movement to Grueby Pottery to, yes, Stickley furniture. For more information, contact: Elaine M. Talec at the symposium's headquarters, 9 South Main Street, Lambertville, NJ 08530, Tel.: (609) 397-9374.

The Eighth International Conference on Medievalism will be held at the University of Leeds, England, 22-25 September 1993. Papers or sessions on all aspects of medievalism from the end of the Middle Ages to the present are invited. Inquiries, abstracts, and proposals for sessions should be addressed to Leslie J. Workman, Editor, "Studies in Medievalism," Department of English, Hope College, Holland, MI 49423, Tel.: (616) 394-7626, Fax: (616) 394-7922.

The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill is the site of this year's Victorians Institute Conference on Scientific Fantasy and Fantastic Science, scheduled for 15&endash;16 October. Nina Auerbach of the University of Pennsylvania will serve as the keynote speaker. Detailed abstracts for twenty-minute papers are due by 1 August, and should be addressed to Beverly Taylor, Department of English, CB #3520, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599&endash;3520.

"Re-thinking 'Family Values': Formations, Transformations, Resistances, Dissolutions," an Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies conference, will be held 8&endash;9 April, 1994 at the College of William and Mary. Two-page abstracts are due by 21 October and should be sent to Deborah Morse or Richard Lowry, English Department, College of William and Mary, P. O. Box 8795, Williamsburg, VA 23187&endash;8795.

Also in April: "The Pre-Raphaelites: An International Conference" will take place at Baylor University's Armstrong Browning Library, 21&endash;23 April 1994. A exhibition of manuscripts and books (drawn mostly from the ABL's holdings) and selected art works will accompany three keynote lectures and several sessions of scholarly papers. Those with questions about registration or the submission of papers should contact: Dr. Roger L. Brooks, Director, Armstrong Browning Library, Baylor University, P. O. Box 97152, Waco, TX 76798-7152.

"DANDIES & DOUGHTIES: WRITERS IN BRITAIN 1890&endash;1900"

Susan P. Casteras, Curator of Paintings at the Yale Center for British Art, recently sent news of this exhibit on view in the Berg Exhibition Room of the New York Public Library through 25 September: "I thought the selection was interesting and eclectic--from *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy* to William Morris, George Egerton, Oscar Wilde, Max Beerbohm, Ernest Dowson, Kate Greenaway, Grant Allen, Florence Farr, Yeats, Kipling, Shaw, and J. M. Barrie, among others." Morris is rather thinly represented--two Kelmscott Press books--but his influence, in aesthetics, politics, and in book design, resonates among the more than 200 manuscripts, first editions, presentation copies, portraits, and illustrations on display. While the exhibition is splendid, the accompanying publication, more a checklist than a catalogue, has an ugly design which would have appalled the founder of the Kelmscott Press. Copies can undoubtedly be obtained from the Publications Department of the New York Public Library.

AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

This spring has seen a surfeit of drawings British and 19th century at the National Gallery of Art in Washington. The exhibition of "Drawings from the O'Neal Collection," mentioned in the January "Newsletter," has continued and now has an illustrated catalogue, complete with a checklist of the whole of the collection. Among the works listed are drawings by Burne-Jones, Simeon Solomon ("King Solomon," reproduced on the front cover), Ruskin, Poynter, Holman Hunt, Alma-Tadema, and G. F. Watts. "The Golden Age of British Watercolours 1750&endash;1880," imported from the Royal Academy, concentrated--almost without respite--on landscapes before 1850. But the last section, "The Victorian Watercolour," though it seemed an afterthought after a slew of glorious Turners, did contain a few examples of "Pre-Raphaelite" art by George P. Boyce and the Hunts (William Henry and Alfred William, not Holman). These exhibitions received an unusual number of visitors due to the lines for the Gallery's "blockbuster" display of French paintings from the Barnes Collection. More British art is in the works here, with a comprehensive Whistler retrospective scheduled for 1995 and--rumor has it--a Pre-Raphaelite or Victorian exhibition to follow, possibly, later in the decade.

A GLIMPSE OF THE GOOD LIFE

We are pleased to welcome Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor and Chair of Architectural History at the University of Virginia, as a new member of the Society. Wilson has already been kind enough to send along information about "The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life," an exhibition that will arrive at the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery in Washington on 8 October 1993 and remain there through 9 January 1994. Those in other parts of the country can catch the exhibit at the Oakland Museum until 15 August, or the Cincinnati Art Museum from 18 February to 17 April 1994. "Living the Good Life" features pottery, ceramic tiles, architectural elements, furniture, metalwork, graphics, textiles, leather, and bookbindings. Look for Wilson's contributions to the exhibition and catalogue essays.

"I CAN RESIST ANYTHING BUT TEMPTATION"

So Oscar Wilde said, and so will collectors and librarians when they peruse "William Morris and the Kelmscott Press: Rare Books from the Library of Elmer and Eleanor Andersen" a handsome catalogue issued earlier this year by Rulon-Miller Books of Minneapolis. There has been nothing like it for years. Occasional Kelmscott Press books turn up from time to time, but here is a virtually complete set, offered individually along with a generous sampling of other titles by and about Morris. About the only thing lacking is the "Chaucer"; this the Andersens owned but presented some years back to the University of Minnesota (Mr. Andersen was once Governor of the state). Part 1 of the catalogue contains a comprehensive run, in chronological order, of first editions, from *The Defence of Guenevere*, Morris's first book, through *The Earthly Paradise* (variant copy) all the way to *The Collected Letters of William Morris* (2 volumes in 3, all issued so far). There are a number of exceptional items, including presentation copies of the *Volsunga Saga* (inscribed to G. F. Campfield) and *A Dream of John Ball* (given to Belfort Bax) and the special issues of *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains*. The Kelmscott books follow, with a goodly number of association copies: Rossetti's *Ballads and Narrative Poems* and *Sonnets and Lyrical Poems*, both presented by Morris to Kate Faulkner; the second edition of *The Story of the Glittering Plain* inscribed to W. H. Hooper, the engraver for the Press;

and *Psalms Penitentiales* with an inscription from the book's editor, F. S. Ellis and manuscript items laid in. A final section, arranged by author, offers material about Morris, from the first edition of Mackail's *The Life of William Morris* to recent scholarly studies. Incidentally included are most of the Society's own publications. Some 227 items in all, at prices which vary from \$25 to \$4,800. The bookseller will gladly send the catalogue to members: Rulon-Miller Books, 400 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55102, Tel.: (800) 441-0076 or (612) 290-0700, Fax: (612) 290-0646.

On a lesser level (both of importance and of price) bookseller George Robert Kane offers forty-one titles on his "Pre-Raphaelites, The Aesthetic Movement" list. An 1899 Chiswick Press edition of "Some Hints on Pattern Design" by Morris, printed in the Golden Type, and the 1894 Copeland and Day edition of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The House of Life*, illustrated with 114 initial letters designed by Bertram G. Goodhue, are among the books offered. Prices range from \$20.00 to \$195.00--modest by current standards. The list is available from George Robert Kane Books, 252 Third Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062, Tel.: (408) 426-4133.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

In "Oscar Wilde Revalued: An Essay on new Materials and Methods of Research" Ian Small sets out to "portray a writer quite different from the tragic figure in Richard Ellmann's *Oscar Wilde*." He succeeds, up to a point, but result is more an interesting miscellany of biographical data, letters, and text, than a critical re-rendering. Perhaps the book's most valuable feature is a competent and comprehensive survey of recent Wilde scholarship. This is the latest title from ELT Press, the publishing arm of "English Literature in Transition"; like previous volumes on Herbert P. Horne (associated with Morris in a number of ways), John Gray, and Arthur Symons, it is reasonably priced, \$30.00 including shipping. For more information, contact ELT Press, University of North Carolina, Greensboro NC 27412-5001, Tel.: (919) 334-5446, Fax: (919) 334-3281, E-Mail Langen@steffi.uncg.edu.

"William Morris and the Kelmscott Press," a catalogue of the exhibition held at the University of Miami's Richter Library from 15 November to 15 December 1991, has appeared--at last. (See the January 1992 "Newsletter.") The descriptions of the books displayed are by Bonnie J. Robinson and there is an essay, on "William Morris and William Caxton," by Thomas A. Goodman: both writers are members of the University's English department. About the catalogue's appearance all we will say is that--through a miscue--it was printed before the designer could see a proof or blue-line. The use of a digitized version of the Golden Type (what you are now reading) is appropriate. Copies can presumably be obtained from the Friends of the University of Miami Library, Box 248214, Coral Gables, FL 22124.

Here are two special offers on books of interest published by the Edwin Mellen Press: *Pre-Raphaelitism and Medievalism in the Arts*, edited by Liana De Girolami Cheney, is available for \$39.95, and our member Florence Boos's *The Design of 'The Earthly Paradise'* for \$49.50 from the publisher's Order Fulfillment Department, P. O. Box 450, Lewiston, NY 14092, Tel.: (716) 754-2788. These prices, available for a limited time, represent a 50 percent discount and orders must be made by phone using a Visa or Mastercard.

The distinguished bibliographer and bibliographical theorist G. Thomas Tanselle recently succeeded Irby Cauthen as president of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia. One of his first acts was to inaugurate a series of occasional publications under the direction of editor David Vander Meulen. The first two are Tanselle's own *The Life and Work of Fredson Bowers*, available in a cloth edition for \$25.00, and *A Preliminary Handlist of Books to which Dr. Samuel Johnson Subscribed* by Donald D. Eddy and J. D. Fleeman, a paperback for \$10.00. One hopes that as the University of Virginia Library's 19th century holdings--much Morris, Kelmscott Press, and Pre-Raphaelite material--grow stronger, the Bibliographical Society might, just might, show interest in "our period" in their publications program. Contact the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, Alderman Library, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

ARTS AND CRAFTS TOURS

The Guild of Handicraft in Chipping Campden is but one of the highlights of the "Arts & Crafts Tours" organized by Elaine Hirschl Ellis. Her eight-day itineraries include visits to Red House, homes by Edwin Lutyens, gardens by Gertrude Jekyll, the workshops of Edward Barnsley, and examinations of private collections of silver, furniture, textiles, and ceramics. For information about the five tours scheduled for the 1993-4 season, contact Ellis, Director, Arts & Crafts Tours, 110 Riverside Dr., Ste. 15E, New York, NY 10024, Tel.: (212) 362-0761, Fax: (212) 787-2823.

LINENS A LA MORRIS

Member Jonathan D. Keep writes: "I would like all Society members to know that I make bed linens with Morris prints." Keep creates linens using a single pattern or two complementary patterns. He notes that the cotton used in his creations is unusually thick and possesses "more of the durability of good linen sheets." His prices may seem high (\$500 for a standard queen-size set that includes a fitted sheet, a flat sheet, and two pillow cases) but the quality of the material is superb. So is the workmanship. Those interested in receiving fabric swatches or photographs of his linens should write to him at Box 27, Solebury, PA 18963.

BITS AND PIECES

A good cause with good taste: The Chicago-based Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association packaged a recent fundraising plea in envelopes bearing a Morris design.

Forbes magazine, in an article entitled "Pots of Gold," labeled American art pottery "a solid if unspectacular investment" in a March discussion of the market. Writer Christine Wood interviewed a Cincinnati collector of Rookwood pottery and noted that New York's American Craft Museum is undertaking a series of exhibits on American 20th-century crafts. The first, "The Ideal Home: 1900&endash;1920," which includes pottery, will run from 21 October 1993 through 27 February 1994. An eight-volume survey of American arts and crafts will be published in conjunction with the exhibits. (Followers of art collecting trends may recall that Christopher Forbes, son of the famous Malcolm and currently an associate editor of the patronymic publication, has long had an interest in things Victorian: his collection of Royal Academy paintings is housed in Old Battersea House in London.)

Nanette Pyne recently sent word that her institution, the Seattle Art Museum, will host "The Pre-Raphaelite Vision: The Birmingham Collection" from March through May, 1995. Pyne mentions that the collection contains works by Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Morris, among others. She promises more details as soon as they become available--the show is expected to have other venues in the United States.

Those members who have come to term with end-of-the-century technology (e. g. computers) may recall that the last "Newsletter" featured a description of "KelmScott," a digitized "font" based--sort of--on Morris's Troy and Chaucer typefaces. An inquiry to the maker, Ragnarok, elicited no response until a week ago, when we received two flyers describing the firm's offerings. "KelmScott" is still available, as are a whole range of decorative typefaces, many of which veer on the edge of ugliness. But some are proto-crypto art nouveau and others have the feeling that one gets from a certain "over the top" style of Victorian medievalism. The comparison is made apt by Ragnarok's series of computer games. How these work and precisely why they exist is a bit of a mystery, but many of them, in the "Ysgarth" role-playing series have a distinct link to a Morrisian romance world of knights, dragons (or other creatures), ladies, and mysterious landscapes over sea. (Doesn't "Uttgart Adventures" have the ring of a trip to Iceland?) The background graphics illustrated in the flyer show the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites and their successors, too, with echoes of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Laurence Housman, and (perhaps) Charles Ricketts. There's also a group of "TCT Games" (whatever they are) which includes the tantalizing "London by Night" which appears to "upload" the 1890s period to a computer screen (Macintosh variety) near you. Ragnarok/Scriptorium Font Library, P. O. Box 140333, Austin, TX 78714, Tel.: (512) 472&endash;6535, data (512) 472&endash;6905, Fax: (512) 472&endash;6220 (they also have E-mail and Compuserve addresses).

What can Hilary and Bill be thinking? Lois Romano, the self-proclaimed "Reliable Source" of *The Washington Post*, reported in May that the Clintons' decorator Kaki Hockersmith turned to the British supplier Busby and Busby when it was time to select the fabric for the White House master bedroom drapes. Her choice was none other than "Rossetti," described as a "peachy-pink raw silk" named after a "Romantic" figure. Always on the lookout for potential members, the Society has sent a brochure and application form to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

A SHOPPING GUIDE TO WILLIAM MORRIS:

These are additions to the lists of purveyors of Morris-related items which have appeared in previous "Newsletters." We hope to incorporate them all in a single "shopping guide" which may well become an adjunct to the next membership directory.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Department 0006

Washington, DC 20073&endash;0006

(800) 322&endash;0344

"Summer 1993" catalogue offers "Acanthus Leaf Tie" and "Poppy Tie," both of silk and adapted from Morris designs. Each is \$30.00. A silk twill "William Morris Muffler" lined with navy wool is also available for \$30.00.

DELTA AIRLINES SKYMALL

P. O. Box 20462

Phoenix, AZ 85036&endash;9888

(800) 424&endash;6255

"Winter/Spring 93" catalogue includes a collection of 22 press-out gift boxes inspired by Morris designs. The \$19.95 set is made of heavy-duty coated paper.

LAST UPDATE 4 JAN 2001 · PLEASE REPORT BROKEN LINKS TO
WEBMASTER@MORRISOCIETY.ORG

[<<Newsletter Home](#)

Copyright © 2011 William Morris Society in the United States. All rights reserved.

Contacts: United States: us@morrissociety.org · United Kingdom: uk@morrissociety.org · Canada: info@wmisc.ca

Updated 2 July, 2011