

## William Morris Society in the United States

### Newsletter July/August 1996

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#### CENTENARY YEAR AT MID-POINT

As we write the William Morris Centenary Year is a little more than half over. The last six months have seen a remarkable amount--almost a surfeit--of activity. On the part of the William Morris Society in the United States this has meant the inauguration of the "William Morris Home Page" on the Internet and a fellowship program, lectures by two distinguished speakers in Washington, and work towards an exhibition at the Grolier Club, a symposium at the City University of New York, and panels at the Modern Language Association annual convention. These activities, together with events in the UK and elsewhere, have led to publicity, and, in turn, to a continual stream of inquiries and new members to the Society. The name, work, and ideas of William Morris are becoming better known--a pleasing prospect, and what the William Morris Society is all about.

#### THE "WILLIAM MORRIS HOME PAGE"

In mid-June the Society went where it had not been before and offered the unsuspecting world a "William Morris Home Page" on the Internet. This "web" site will function, first and foremost, as the cyberspace nexus for the William Morris Society in all its regional incarnations, with full information about activities, membership, dues, and publications. It also aims to provide what is meant to be a regularly updated master list of Morris-related events throughout the world (at this point including Canada, Germany, Iceland, Portugal, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States). Writings and designs by Morris will be found on the site, along with bibliographies of books by and about Morris, and links to some of the Internet's vast array of resources relating to Victorian art and literature and the Arts and Crafts movement.

 Many "visitors" to the "William Morris Home Page" have praised its graphic design and organization, the work--for which we are very grateful--of David Lopez and Professor Annette Weintraub of the Robinson Center for Graphic Arts and Communication at City College, City University of New York. Alta Vista and other Internet searching tools have now indexed the site. It also was chosen for inclusion on the "New Internet Services" page of the 28 June issue of the "Chronicle of Higher Education."

 The "William Morris Home Page" can be accessed by anyone with a computer, a modem, and the right kind of dial-up connection now commonly available from universities, businesses, online services (such as America Online or Compuserve) or a commercial Internet service provider. Its URL (or "web address") is: <http://www.cuny.cuny.edu/wmorris/morris.html>. Comments on the page, items for listings, news, and the like may be sent via E-mail to Mark Samuels Lasner at [Biblio@aol.com](mailto:Biblio@aol.com).

#### MORE INTERNET NEWS

Some updates and additions to information which appeared in previous issues of the "Newsletter": Holly Dworken Cooley's "William Morris Page" has "moved" (e.g. the files have been placed on a different server computer). The new URL or "address" is: <http://www.goblinmarket.com/morris/index>. Patrick Leary, moderator of the "Victoria" mailing list has a new, wonderfully useful "Victorian Research Web" with links to a wealth of information: <http://www.indiana.edu/~victoria>. Also worth investigating are two sites with good graphics, the work-in-progress Kelmscott "Chaucer" project contributed by students in the "Book in Western Culture" course at Harvey Mudd College (<http://www4.hmc.edu:8001/humanities/hum2g/hum2g4/index.htm>) and

the "William Morris and his Circle" exhibition, depicting highlights from the "real" show held this Spring at the University of Texas (<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/HRC/HRHRC/morris.html>).

 Still on the same topic--and those of you who are thoroughly sick of it can move on just a very few lines below--Volume 23 (1995) of "Victorians Institute Journal" contained a special section on "Electronic Sources for Victorian Studies." This featured an article by Patrick Leary explaining the "web" with an appendix listing some of the major Internet offerings of interest to scholars. The Morris Society's first venture in this arena (kindly placed on the "NVSA Home Page" by Glenn Everett) was among those mentioned dealing with a specific literary figure.

#### **THE FIRST WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY FELLOWSHIPS**

The Society's new fellowship program had an auspicious start this Spring. Following the announcement in the February "Newsletter"--circulated in other publications and on the Internet--we received a flurry of inquiries. More applications came in than expected, with the result that the fellowship committee had some difficulty in making a decision. In the end they divided the inaugural award of \$1,000.00 equally between two recipients, Kevin Melchione and Chatham B. Ewing. (Incidentally, both are from New York.)

 Kevin Melchione recently received his Ph.D. in philosophy from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His dissertation in aesthetics was entitled "Cultivation: Art and Aesthetics in Everyday Life" and his work on Morris is part of a larger project examining the role of craft in contemporary culture.

 Chatham Ewing is a graduate student in English at New York University. His William Morris Society Fellowship will be used towards producing an "electronic facsimile of the Kelmscott 'Chaucer'" which aims to combine the best features of a visual facsimile with those of a critical edition complete with essays and bibliographies.

 The second fellowship will be tenable in 1997. As before, our aim is to support projects on the life and work of William Morris. Up to \$1,000 per year is granted to individuals (there can be multiple, partial awards) for research and other expenses, including travel to conferences. Projects may deal with any subject--biographical, literary, historical, social, artistic, political, typographical--relating to Morris, and may be scholarly or creative in nature. Fellowships are limited to citizens of the United States or permanent residents; applications are particularly encouraged from younger members of the Society and from those at the beginning of their careers. An academic or institutional appointment, and the Ph.D. are not required. Applicants are asked to submit a resumé and a one-page proposal to the Society. Two letters of recommendation should be sent separately. The deadline is 1 December 1996 for a grant paid after 1 January 1997. To apply contact: Mark Samuels Lasner, President, William Morris Society in the United States, 1870 Wyoming Avenue N.W., Apartment 101, Washington, DC 20009. Please note that the Society will not accept materials sent via E-mail.

#### **EXHIBITION & SYMPOSIUM IN NEW YORK: DECEMBER 1996**

In "Some Thoughts on the Ornamented MSS. of the Middle Ages" Morris wrote: "If I were asked to say what is at once the most important production of Art and the thing most to be longed for, I should answer, A beautiful House; and if I were further asked to name the production next in importance and the thing next to be longed for, I should answer, A beautiful Book. To enjoy good houses and good books in self respect and decent comfort, seems to me the pleasurable end to which all societies of human beings ought now to struggle." With these thoughts in mind--and the recent rediscovery of a considerable number of books from Morris's library--the Society has again altered the theme of our centenary exhibition planned for the Grolier Club in New York. More precisely, we have reverted to the original idea of "William Morris: The Collector as Creator". (One of the luxuries of sponsoring the final exhibition of the year is that you can see what others are doing; in this case there seemed enough of the "revival of printing" at various libraries and museums to go around.)

 So here's the final, official word: "William Morris: The Collector as Creator," an exhibition to commemorate the centenary of the death of William Morris, will open at the Grolier Club in New York on 11 December 1996 under the auspices of the William Morris Society in the United States. The show, which runs until 15 February 1997, focuses on the importance of books in Morris's multifaceted life as poet, translator, designer, craftsman, traveller, political reformer, and ultimately printer and typographer.

 The considerable library he amassed makes it clear that Morris was both a collector in the usual sense of the word, acquiring and treasuring rare editions, and a collector in a broader sense, accumulating and then transforming ideas and influences that came to him via the printed word and image. His own great intellectual and creative impact on Victorian literature, publishing, and printing can be traced, in turn, through the texts that he himself produced. This exhibition will present a wide selection of the books collected by Morris that served as creative sparks for his work: medieval manuscripts; incunabula; guides to architecture, the decorative arts, and printing; "books about books"; nineteenth-century poetry and popular fiction. Examples of Morris's own publications and achievements in the book arts will also be included, along with letters, manuscripts, photographs, drawings, and portraits of Morris and members of his circle.

 Many of the items--drawn from the Grolier Club's holdings, as well as from private and public collections in England and the United States--have never before been exhibited. Among the expected highlights will be Morris's own copies of such books significant to his artistic development as the "Hypnerotomachia Poliphilis," "Gerard's Herball," and Malory's "Le Morte D'Arthur." Morris's annotated copy of Chaucer's "Works" will be displayed alongside his last great achievement, the Kelmscott "Chaucer," for which it served as copy-text. The exhibition is organized by Mark Samuels Lasner, President of the William Morris Society in the United States, with the assistance of William S. Peterson, the historian and bibliographer of the Kelmscott Press.

 "William Morris: The Collector as Creator" can be seen at the Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street, Monday through Saturday, 10am-5pm, except 24, 25, 26, and 31 December, when the Club closes for the holidays. The exhibition is open to the public and free of charge.

 Plans for the associated symposium are well under way. On Friday and Saturday, 6 and 7 December 1996, the City University of New York and the Grolier Club will host "William Morris in Our Time," a two-day symposium on Morris featuring internationally-known speakers in a variety of disciplines. The sponsors are The William Morris Society in the U. S.; the Grolier Club; the Humanities Division of City College in conjunction with the City College Fund; the Ph.D. program in English, and the Center for the Humanities, City University of New York.

 Two publications linked to "William Morris: The Collector as Creator" are planned. One, a checklist of the exhibition, will be issued by the Grolier Club. The other is a new, definitive edition of William Morris's "A Note on his Aims in Founding the Kelmscott Press"--the final book issued by the Press in 1898 and the central source of information about it. Edited by William S. Peterson from heretofore unknown materials, this is to be a co-publication of the Club and the William Morris Society. Details about both volumes will be sent to members in the Fall.

## MORRIS AT THE MLA 1996

This year's Modern Language Association annual convention will take place 27-30 December in Washington, DC. As usual the dates fall between Christmas and New Year's and, as usual, the William Morris Society in the United States is planning activities to which all Morris Society members--not just those attending the MLA convention--are welcome. Two sessions of papers are scheduled, both dealing with the topic of "William Morris the Critic." There will also be a social gathering and (we hope) a specially arranged visit to one of the many local museums or historic houses. A flyer announcing the full MLA schedule will be mailed in November.

 The speakers (and their paper topics) for the William Morris Society sessions at the 1996 MLA Convention are as follows: "William Morris the Critic I: Art and Literature," with Corinne McCutchan presiding: Peter Hoffenberg (University of Hawaii at Manoa), "Socialist, Orientalist, and Imperialist? William Morris and the Eastern Question of Indian Art"; Bonnie J. Robinson (North Georgia State University), "Morris Reading Browning"; Mark Poland (DePaul University), "William Morris, Photography, and Frederick H. Evans"; and Hartley Spatt (Maritime College, SUNY), "The Morality of Architecture: William Morris as Critic." "William Morris the Critic II: Politics and Literature," chaired by Pamela Bracken Wiens, will have David Gross (University of Oklahoma) speaking on "'How We Live and How We Might Live': Morris on Environmental Degradation and Capitalism and the Importance of his Prophetic Vision"; S. I. Wisenberg (Northwestern University) on "Jews from Nowhere: The Utopian Novels of William Morris and Theodore Herzl"; Alex Shisin (Kobe Women's University) on "'News from Nowhere' as Key to Morris's Criticism: William Morris's War on Repressive Progress"; and Michelle Weinroth (McGill University) on "Communist Appreciations of Morris's Literary Legacy."

## UPCOMING MORRIS SOCIETY EVENTS

We have organized two lectures for the Fall, one in Washington, DC, the other in New York. Details of both will be found in the "box" below and in the list of centenary events at the end of this "Newsletter." Briefly, however:

 Stephen Calloway, curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and noted author of "Baroque, Baroque" and other works on the decorative and fine arts, will speak on "Palaces of Art: The Pre-Raphaelites at Home." This will take place Friday, 18 October, 7pm at Chapters, 1517 K Street NW, Washington, DC. (Chapters, you may recall, is the excellent independent bookstore which graciously hosted James Benjamin's talk in March.)

 Less than a week later, on Thursday, 24 October, Barbara Castle, Baroness Castle of Blackburn, will speak on "William Morris's Politics: A Personal View" at the English-Speaking Union in New York. This is a real coup, for Lady Castle is without question the most eminent female Labour political figure in England. The first woman to serve in a Labour Cabinet, she has had a long and distinguished career as an educator, parliamentarian, and writer--a career in which the ideas of William Morris have played an important role. Co-sponsored by the English-Speaking Union, New York Chapter, with assistance from Arts and Crafts Tours, this event will take place at 6.30pm at the Union's headquarters, 16 East 69th Street, New York. There is an admission charge, \$10.00 for ESU and Morris Society members, \$15.00 for others. Reservations are strongly encouraged since space is limited. Call the ESU at (212) 879-6800 to reserve a place.

## PAST SOCIETY EVENTS

Our two events this Spring in Washington were a decided success. Both brought out audiences of more than 100, showing that interest in William Morris and his circle is widespread even in a city famed for its lawyers, politicians, and philistines. Design historian James Elliott Benjamin gave an excellent and entertaining talk, "Through English Eyes: C. R. Ashbee and The American Arts and Crafts Movement," at Chapters bookstore on 22 March. He explained, *inter alia*, how Morris's precepts--along with the writings of Edward Carpenter--were a major influence on Ashbee, who proselytized for the Arts and Crafts movement on his several visits to the United States at the turn of the century. On 21 April, William S. Peterson, Professor of English at the University of Maryland and known to all as the bibliographer and historian of the Kelmscott Press, spoke on "Illustrating the Kelmscott Press Books" in Hannan Hall at the Catholic University of America. This event was co-sponsored by the Catholic U. School of Library and Information Science (with much logistical help from Susan Hyatt, who should be blessed for her efforts) and for many of the future librarians present it served as their introduction to the wonderful world of William Morris. Professor Peterson's topic was an unusual one. We tend to think of the Kelmscott books, apart from the "Chaucer" as mainly typographical, but he examined Morris's quest, not always fulfilled, to unite illustration and text into an organic whole in the printed book.

## EXHIBITIONS

Details of dates, times, contacts of the numerous Morris exhibitions over, current, and coming will be found in the list of centenary events at the end of this "Newsletter." We should like to mention that several other institutions, including the Pequot Library, Southport, CT (probably 15 October through 15 December) and the Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE (dates uncertain at time of writing) will have or are planning Morris shows.

## "BEING WILLIAM MORRIS" ETC. AT THE MORGAN LIBRARY

The William Morris shows--there are three: "Being William Morris," "Morris's Medieval Manuscripts," and "Pre-Raphaelite Drawings: The Book and Beyond"--at the Pierpont Morgan Library draws from the rich mine of the Morgan's splendid collections. Consequently, full justice is done to Morris's interest in the book. The main exhibition, "Being William Morris," includes such treasures as the Kelmscott "Chaucer" and the Kelmscott "The Tale of Beowulf" (one that was presented in 1923 to T. E. Lawrence). Manuscripts, Morris's own and those which he collected, trace the sources of his fusion of medieval and modern printing techniques. Besides books, Morris's other crafts skills appear with samples of his fabrics and wallpapers. And the relation of these skills to his

interest in socialism is documented with several of his essays on politics and art. Reflecting Morris's extraordinary dimensionality, the items displayed also delightfully acknowledges the personal Morris, with references to his many friends and activities. Outstanding in this regard was the stuffed toy version of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's pet wombat named "Topsy" (Morris's nickname), who would amuse itself by consuming the cigar ends left by the Morris Circle. In effect, this exhibit covers a lot of ground--books, fine printing, textile and pattern, drawing, the binding arts, illumination, the history of socialism, and the influence of a circle of artist on one another. Well-mounted with extremely useful and engaging labels, this exhibit is certainly one of the highlights of this centenary year. An interesting Internet review appears on the Wilson Web site: <http://www.hwwilson.com>.

 Michael Kimmelman gave the exhibitions front-page status in a provocative article in the "New York Times." In it, he contends that Morris is a household name which remains obscure. To prove his point, Kimmelman asks who has read "Sigurd the Volsung?"--which some might consider a little unfair. He blames this obscurity on Morris's prolixity as well as on his multi-faceted talents: "We are instinctively wary of anyone who does more than one thing well. How, then, to cope with Morris, who was a businessman, a rabble-rousing political reformer and pre-eminent Socialist, an early environmentalist, an architectural conservationist, a poet, a novelist, a translator (of Icelandic sagas, no less), an engraver, a book designer and publisher, a calligrapher, a painter, and a maker of embroidery, furniture, stained glass, textiles, tapestries, wallpaper and murals?" Due to this daunting range of talents, the Morgan exhibition, Kimmelman writes, only begins to suggest the man and his achievements--but this fact does not take away from the Morgan's effort. The Morgan show includes the publication by Morris's Kelmscott Press of the chapter on Gothic architecture from Ruskin's "Stones of Venice" which Morris especially admired, and also Morris's own lecture to the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in London in 1889. Kimmelman quotes from the Morgan's curator of printed books, H. George Fletcher, who relates Morris's love of bookmaking with his love of Gothic architecture, describing the Kelmscott publications as "cathedrals built of black type and strong white paper." Kimmelman also finds Morris's love of nature--including the man-made in harmony with nature--in his textile designs, "with their combination of bucolic opulence and order. There is the sense of nature as redolent and also as symbolic." Morris, thus, can be found in his work; yet he also emerges "through others," appearing through his collections of books, through designs done for his company, and through his biographies and portraits. Kimmelman returns to his initial point by concluding that this gestalt-Morris may suggest one reason for his paradoxical renown and obscurity: "his legacy is to be found in the art of other designers, the writings of other novelists, the statements of other liberal politicians."

#### **OTHER SHOWS FROM THE SPRING**

The Kalamazoo College Library offered "William Morris Makes the Ideal Book" from 15 January through 14 March. Drawn mostly from the College's collection, the exhibition included many Kelmscott Press titles--Shakespeare's "Poems," "Utopia" by Sir Thomas More, "The Earthly Paradise," "The History of Reynard the Foxe," among them--and other publications such as Morris's lecture on "Art and the Beauty of the Earth" and volumes from "The Collected Works of William Morris." Such an exhibition helps present-day book-lovers to "go off their heads", just as Edward Burne-Jones claims that he and Morris would have done had such books as these come out when they were "little chaps at Oxford." Susan M. Allen, Director of Libraries and Media Services at Kalamazoo, was the organizer.

 Much larger in scale (as you would expect for Texas) was "William Morris & His Circle" at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, at the University of Texas. This exhibit opened on 12 February and continues until 16 August. Timed to commemorate both the centenary of Morris's death and the issue of the Kelmscott "Chaucer," the exhibit goes beyond the usual Morris-as-solitary figure theme and takes on Morris's friends and associates in literature and art. The highlights include the Center's vellum copy of the "Chaucer" (one of only 13 in existence), Morris's copy of an Augsburg Bible, pastels by Rossetti, designs for stained glass windows by Burne-Jones, a notebook with Morris's sketches, and a selection of letters to and by virtually everyone Morris ever met. On 15 February, the English bookseller and private press expert Colin Franklin delivered the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Lecture on "A Return to William Morris." Pictures of items in the exhibition and descriptive notes by its curator, Richard Orem, will be found on the HRHRC's web site on the Internet: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/HRC/HRHRC/morris.html>.

 In Tampa, the Henry B. Plant Museum put on "William Morris: The Flowering of Fine Design," an exhibit which complemented the museum's concurrent show, "Strolling in a Perfect Paradise: The Gardens of the Tampa Bay Hotel." The display, organized by Society member Richard Mathews, included Morris fabrics and tapestry motifs including flowers, vines, birds, and other natural forms. The exhibit also

contained some Kelmscott Press titles, including the rarely seen full-page illustrations from "The Golden Legend" (lent by another member, Helen Fogle). Dates: 12 April through 12 July.

 "Lasting Impressions: William Morris and the Kelmscott Press" at the Rosenbach Library in Philadelphia was Morris in miniature. Only seven Kelmscott volumes were shown, rather a poor sampling of what the publicity called "some of the most beautiful in the history of printing." These included the ubiquitous "Chaucer" and the copy of "The Tale of King Florus and the Fair Jehane" presented by Morris to Swinburne. The exhibit ran from 19 September through 10 December 1995--rather ahead of the pack.

 The Charles E. Shain Library at Connecticut College (the alma mater of the president of the Society) held "William Morris and the Kelmscott Press" from 1 April to 29 June. According to special collections librarian Brian Rogers this was the first occasion all seventeen of the College's Kelmscott volumes have been brought together in one display, the "Chaucer" serving as centerpiece. Books by and about Morris--some of them in print and affordable--gave viewers an invitation to study the man and his works on their own. Also displayed were two autograph letters by May Morris and a handsome Morris wall hanging. The exhibition received a feature article in the 26 May issue of the New London "Day"; titled "An Eye for the Ormate" the article included several illustrations of Kelmscott books and a wood-engraved portrait of Morris by contemporary artist John DePol.

 The Kelmscott Gallery in Chicago offered something unusual, a commercial show (that is, the items were for sale) centered on the theme "William Morris and Frank Lloyd Wright: Art, Craft and the Machine." The show ran from 26 January to 2 March and contained many temptations: of superstar quality (and price) was Morris's original watercolor design for "The Woodpecker" tapestry; for Morris collectors with a more modest budget there were leaves from the Kelmscott "Chaucer" and the Kelmscott "Tale of Beowulf"; for those interested in Morris's influence on Arts and Crafts there were wallpapers by Walter Crane, watercolors by Charles Robert Ashbee, a Sussex rush-seated chair designed by Dante Gabriel Rossetti for Morris and Co., photos by Julia Margaret Cameron, "The Angel of the Children" by Simeon Solomon, and ceramics by William de Morgan. Living up to its title (and to this focus on Morris's influence), the exhibit also contained many items concerning Frank Lloyd Wright, such as leaves from disbound copies of "The House Beautiful." Of interest in its own right--but especially influential in winning Morris's dislike for the artist--was a copy of "Le Morte Darthur" illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley. A priced checklist is available for prospective purchasers.

#### EXHIBITIONS CURRENT AND COMING UP

"William Morris and Medievalism" at Harvard's Houghton Library (actually displayed in the rotunda of nearby Widener Library) will be on from 15 July through 30 August 1996. Drawn entirely from Harvard's own collection, the focus is on the Kelmscott "Chaucer" and how Morris's 19th century medievalism influenced his work.

 Craftsman Farms, the National Historic Landmark home of noted American Arts & Crafts designer Gustav Stickley, will pay homage to Morris's influence on the art of the book by hosting an exhibition from 8 September until 27 October. The exhibition, entitled "[William Morris and the Printed Page: English Influence on American Book Design](#)" will include several examples from Morris's Kelmscott Press, a sampling of the work of other contemporary English presses such as the Ashendene, Doves, Eragny, Essex House, and Vale, and various examples of American book design inspired by Morris. In the field of book design especially, the expression of Morris's ideas found fertile ground in America, even earlier than did his influences on architecture and interior design. Indeed, the first issue of Stickley's magazine, "The Craftsman," was devoted to Morris.

 From 25 October through 31 December the Huntington Library Art Gallery in San Marino, CA will host "William Morris: Works from the Berger Collection." This should be the West Coast's answer to the V. and A. and the Morgan, drawing on the Huntington's books and manuscripts (much of Morris's literary output) and the unrivalled private collection of Society members Sanford and Helen Berger. A one-day symposium on Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement is scheduled for 14 December.

#### "THE KELMSCOTT PRESS AND ITS LEGACY" AT BRIDWELL LIBRARY

In Dallas, the Bridwell Library at the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, has announced "The Kelmscott Press and Its Legacy." This exhibition--dates 3 October through 18 December and possibly a few days after--will contain all four of

the library's copies of the Kelmscott "Chaucer" (such riches!), including the vellum copy given by Morris to Burne-Jones and the paper copy inscribed with a presentation by Burne-Jones to his daughter Margaret. Also exhibited will be several early printed books from Morris's collection and examples from the Ashendene (as well as materials from the Ashendene Archives), Vale, Eragny, Essex House, and Doves presses.

## OTHER EXHIBITIONS

"The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England" was on view 2 March to 28 April at the Yale Center for British Art. The exhibition, which is now at the Denver Art Museum (1 June-25 August) and goes on to the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, England (13 September -24 November), consists almost entirely of artworks actually exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery, the emporium Sir Coutts and Lady Blanche Lindsay started to propagate the Aesthetic Movement. Among the paintings displayed are such archtypical "aesthetic" examples as George Frederick Watts's "Orpheus and Eurydice," Burne-Jones's "Laus Veneris," and Whistler's "Thames: Nocturne in Blue and Silver." In some ways this show is an excellent follow-up to the Birmingham Pre-Raphaelites which toured the country last year. If you don't get to see "The Grosvenor Gallery" the accompanying publication is available (in both soft and hard covers) from Yale University Press. Edited by Susan Casteras and Colleen Denney, this book presents the late Victorian art world in its full cultural context, with essays dealing with issues of architecture, class, gender, and travel. The British Art Center held several events associated with the exhibition, the most important of which was a symposium, "Palaces and Temples: Changes in Art and Institutions in Victorian England," on 1-3 March. This included a series of scholarly papers and a personal appearance by James McNeill Whistler (as portrayed by actor David Cohen).

 On 15 May "Summer Stock," comprising three small exhibitions, opened at the Wolfsonian Museum in Miami. "Wish You Were Here!" commemorates Miami's centennial, and presents a select group of objects, posters and other works on paper that capture the Roaring Twenties in Miami and Miami Beach. "Culinary Culture" demonstrates how innovations in kitchen appliances and tableware were advertised and incorporated into the early twentieth-century home, and even were used to promote government policies. A dazzling use of color and abstract styling characterizes the "Modern Dutch Posters" installation which houses the largest holdings outside the Netherlands of Dutch works from the period of 1885 to 1945. "Wish You Were Here!" and "Culinary Culture" will continue through the end of the year, while "Modern Dutch Posters" will be on display through September. For information contact the Wolfsonian at (305) 531-6287.

 Craftsman Farms offers an exhibit (9 June to 1 September) of "Women's Work: The Role of Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement." Organized by guest curator Suzanne Perrault, the show features 60 pieces of ceramics, textiles, metal, china painting, printmaking and photography. Other exhibits this year at the Farms are "By Hammer and Hand: Metalwork of the Arts and Crafts Movement" (14 April-1 June) which displayed 50 fine examples of hammered copper from many of the noted metal shops of the period, including Craftsman Workshops, the Roycroft Shop, Karl Kipp, Benedict Studios and Stickley Brothers; and "Will Bradley: Illustrations" (9 September -27 October) which displays Bradley's books, posters and other publications.

 "Last of the Ultimate Bungalows: The William R. Thorsen House of Greene and Greene" is an exhibition (from 14 June-18 August) of architecture and furnishings designed by renowned turn-of-the-century California architects Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene. The exhibition features the re-installation, for the first time in over fifty years, of the complete, original furniture and related decorative arts designed by the celebrated Greene brothers for the William R. Thorsen House in Berkeley, CA. The Thorsen commission was the last of the Greenes' "ultimate bungalows," a rarefied handful of elaborate wooden residences with furnishings designed and crafted during the Greenes' brief, but classic, period of design from 1907-1909. In the words of Greene and Greene scholar Randell Makinson: "the Thorsen House remains the most significant example of the Greenes' bungalow architecture in the northern part of California and is one of the finest examples of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the Bay Area." Like Pasadena's Gamble House, the Greenes' commission for William R. Thorsen was carried out using the finest domestic and exotic woods, art glass, custom metalwork, and ceramic art tiles of the period. Superior craftsmanship and the Greenes' particular aesthetic sense were united to produce a uniquely northern-California house, simultaneously influenced by Japanese design and the robust and rustic Arts and Crafts architectural tradition of the region. In addition to original Greene-and-Greene-designed furniture, the exhibition will feature important antique Oriental rugs which were originally used in the house, as well as outstanding examples of decorative arts of the Arts and Crafts movement, including metalwork, textiles, and art pottery. A symposium of lectures by noted scholars in the field will accompany the opening of the exhibition, and original Greene and Greene drawings for

the Thorsen House and other commissions will be mounted in a related exhibit at the University Art Museum in cooperation with the College of Environmental Design Documents Collection, University of California, Berkeley. Early photographs of the Thorsen house, never before exhibited, will comprise a special component of the exhibit. For further information, contact Robina Mapstone or Edward R. Bosley at The Gamble House, 4 Westmoreland Place, Pasadena, CA 91103, tel. (818) 793-3334.

 Mention should also be made of "Frank Lloyd Wright Furniture from the Boynton House". An exhibit of Frank Lloyd Wright furniture from the Boynton House in Rochester, NY, (owned by the Western New York Landmark Society), this runs from 16 July-12 January 1997. Contact: (716) 473-7720.

## **DESTINATION MORRIS**

The editors of the Sunday "New York Times" travel section evidently continue to believe that Morris is of great interest to the eminent newspaper's readers. The issue for 28 April 1996 offered a useful summary of several Morris events during this centenary year. Not surprisingly, the first on their list was the V&A show, followed by the exhibitions at the William Morris Gallery ("half an hour by subway from the center of London") and the closer-to-home Pierpont Morgan Library. A little more than a month later, on 9 June came a feature article, headlined on the front page, entitled "A Design Revolutionary at Home." Here the centers of attention were two "shrines" particularly attractive to Morris pilgrims: Kelmscott Manor, the Elizabethan farmstead west of Oxford that Morris leased and later owned; and Wightwick Manor, an opulent West Midlands country house that epitomizes the Arts and Crafts movement. In the words of the writer Kelmscott Manor was for Morris "at once an embodiment of folk wisdom and a workshop where he forged his ideas." The article described at length Kelmscott Manor's cluster of stone buildings with its mullioned windows and gables, its shrub enclosed garden, and its various rooms, including the White Dining and the Tapestry Room. An information box at the end gave details of opening times and mentioned other items of Morris interest, including the William Morris Society in the United States.

## **IN THE PITTSBURGH PAPER**

"Walloping Wall Patterns" by Bob Batz, Jr. appeared in the 8 June edition of the "Pittsburgh Post-Gazette." This article--the length and depth of which is not obvious from the title--told us, in no uncertain terms, that Morris is "hot." (As if we didn't know!) Noting the various exhibitions, including the biggest ever at the V&A, and the production of millions of goods based on or adapted from Morris's designs, Batz goes on to give a quick biographical blurb of Morris before turning to Pittsburgh's own participation in the year of Morris. Local merchants and interior designers are apparently proffering many "gorgeous" Morris-inspired products. But Pittsburgh isn't alone in this trend. Batz cites the V&A's almost-astonishing statement that Morris accounts for \$47 million to \$57 million of the \$130 million retail sales of V&A-brand goods. "Worldwide licenses of Morris designs add up to retail sales of \$162 million. In Japan, his flowery fabrics ring up to \$32 million." Batz brilliantly supports his thesis by bringing attention to our Society: "[The] growing Washington, D.C.-based group has about 400 members, plus about 125 member libraries (which treasure Morris's beautiful Kelmscott Press books)." As one could predict the article has brought us a number of inquiries and several new members.

## **NEWS OF MEMBERS**

The largest and most important showing of William Morris's works in the V&A's Morris exhibition includes 33 pieces lent by Sanford and Helen Berger of Carmel, CA. All of these pieces were chosen by the curator, Linda Parry, in 1994 when she spent eight days with the Bergers in order to examine their remarkable holdings in all areas of Morris's life and work. Among her choices: the Merton Abbey dyebook, 1882-91, a meticulous record of the dye processes for the famous fabrics produced by the Morris firm; the Minute Book, 1862-74, recording business meetings for the period when the firm's name was Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co.; and Morris's schoolboy copy of Horace's "Works" which contains the earliest Morris drawings (1851) that have come to light. Also lent to the V&A; from the Berger collection were one carpet drawing, three embroidery drawings, ten drapery-study drawings, seven drawings for the design of stained glass windows, and eight drawings related to the development of the Kelmscott Press. Sanford and Helen Berger, both architects by profession, are well known also in the book and art worlds for the distinguished collection they have not only amassed, but studied, documented, and generously made available to scholars.

 Debra Mancoff has been tirelessly sharing her love of all things Morris by lecturing on "Friends in Deed: Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, and the Kelmscott Press" in Wisconsin, Arizona, and Texas. She also will lecture in Chicago, Dallas (for the Bridwell Library Morris exhibit), and London, teach a course on Morris through the Newberry Library, and consult with Janice Griffin at Glessner House on an exhibition concerning the influence of Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement on turn of the century taste in decorative arts in Chicago. In a letter, she reviews this activity and recommends a recent SMU acquisition of Burne-Jones's "The Pilgrim at the Chapel of Idleness," which she describes as being "very lovely and very well placed in the collection."

 John Burrows writes that he has just returned from a "Morris Pilgrimage," including the V&A's Morris exhibit. He also visited Kelmscott Manor, where he worked with a photographer for "Old-House Interiors Magazine." They tried "to show the house from different points of view than previous photographs," and also to illustrate Morris's "Gossip about an Old House on the Thames" article from "The Quest" in 1895. His trip also included visits to Wightwick Manor, and the Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. Not satisfied with these better known sites, Burrows also visited the Savernake Forest and the Avebury Stone Circles. No wonder he claims to feel "completely immersed in Morris at this point!" The upbeat letter in which Burrows offers this interesting information concludes with the far less positive, even outrageous, comment concerning the V&A Morris exhibit. Apparently (and this "rumor" has considerable basis in fact) the world's largest Morris show did not come to America because "the Baltimore Art Museum, when negotiating contracts for another upcoming traveling exhibit of 'Masterworks of the V&A' demanded and were conceded that the Morris Exhibit be barred from any American venue." If you are as disappointed and outraged that this museum has seen to block the Morris Exhibit from coming to the United States, express your feelings to: Arnold Lehman, Director, The Baltimore Museum of Art, Art Museum Drive, Baltimore, MD 21218, Tel. (410) 396-7101.

 David Ryan, director of Norwest Corporation's Art Program, writes of the firm's collection of Modernism: "The concept of the Norwest arts program, begun in 1985, was to acquire a core collection comprised of late 19th- to mid 20th-century decorative and applied arts, and paperworks. Within a very short period, the Center has collected approximately 400 works, divided almost equally between objects and paperworks, with objects ranging from William Morris wallpaper sheets dating as early as the 1870s to a 1935 futuristic Buck Rogers football." Ryan deplores the ease and rapidity with which the Center acquired these works, finding this ease of acquisition due in part to a lack of design awareness in the United States. He points to the fact that the Federal government (unlike in Europe and Japan) has yet to consider design industry to be part of our national identity or even a critical factor in our economy. These factors facilitated the Center's collection, which represents these movements: English Arts and Crafts, American Arts and Crafts, European Art Nouveau, American Art Nouveau, Wiener Werkstatte, De Stijl, Bauhaus, European Art Deco, and American Art Deco. Since the opening of Norwest Center in 1989, six exhibitions have been presented, all based on themes related to Modernism, and all comprised of works from the collection.

## **"BIBLIO": A NEW MAGAZINE FOR BOOK COLLECTORS**

Readers of this "Newsletter" who are also bibliophiles should enjoy a new quarterly, "Biblio: The Magazine for Collectors of Books, Manuscripts, and Ephemera." The first issue (June 1996) contains several very good articles: Robert K. O'Neil on Boston College's strong collections of Irish literature, Colin Franklin on "The Kelmscott Press and William Morris" (much too short); Richard K. Landon on the importance of provenance; and William L. Sullivan on Joaquin Miller, the American "Wild West" poet whom the Pre-Raphaelites adored when he came to London in the 1870s. Regular features include reports on auctions, book reviews, calendars of exhibitions and bookfairs. The William Morris Society and our fellowship program are listed in departments devoted to "Society Pages" and "Grants, Awards, and Fellowships." For further information contact: Biblio Magazine, 845 Willamette St., Eugene, OR 97401, Tel. (541)-345-3800. Subscriptions are \$34.95 in the U. S., Tel. (800) 840-3810; [circulation@bibliomag.com](mailto:circulation@bibliomag.com) (for U.S., Canada, and Caribbean); Tel. 44-1952-200-207; [richardlawson@bibmap.dean.co.uk](mailto:richardlawson@bibmap.dean.co.uk) (Europe and rest of world).

## **WOLFSONIAN FELLOWSHIP**

The Wolfsonian Research Center announces the following fellowships for its academic term of February 1997 to July 1997: the Wolfsonian Scholar, Wolfsonian Senior Fellowships, the Wolfsonian Senior Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome, the Wolfsonian/Victoria and Albert Museum Senior Fellowship, Visiting Scholars, and Associate Fellowships. The Wolfsonian operates museum and research facilities in Miami Beach, FL and Genoa, Italy, and oversees more than 70,000 European and

American objects, from the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. Collections encompass furniture, paintings, sculpture, glass, ceramics, books, and works on paper, as well as archives relating to the period. The Research Center was established in 1993 to promote multi-disciplinary research through fellowships, publications, and special events. It supports a broad range of projects examining the aesthetics, production, use, and cultural significance of the decorative arts, design, and architecture.

 Senior Fellowships offer full-time research for six weeks at the Wolfsonian in Miami Beach, Florida. One Senior Fellowship is available with residency divided between the Wolfsonian in Miami Beach and the American Academy in Rome, and another is available to enable a scholar to use collections of both the Wolfsonian in Miami Beach and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The Wolfsonian Research Center also selects Visiting Scholars for research on a collection-related project in conjunction with Wolfsonian curators. For those scholars who do not seek funding, the Wolfsonian Research Center offers honorary Associate Fellowships. To request an application or additional information contact: Joel Hoffman, Ph.D., Program Officer, Wolfsonian Research Center, 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33139, Tel. (305) 535-2650; FAX (305) 531-2133.

### **KELMSCOTT CHAUCER CENSUS**

Debra D. Wynn, a librarian in Japan, wonders if anyone has ever attempted a worldwide census of copies of the Kelmscott "Chaucer" and is thinking of compiling one. If you know of such a survey or can locate a copy of the book let her know: Debra D. Wynn, Foreign Section Librarian/Rare Books and Special Collections Cataloger, Information Center Nagoya Shoka Daigaku (Nagoya University of Commerce & Business Administration), Sagamine, Nisshin-shi, 470-01 Aichi-ken, Japan, [dwynn@nucba.ac.jp](mailto:dwynn@nucba.ac.jp).

### **CRAFTSPEOPLE**

K. D. Gandola, in a joint venture with the Loft Bed Store, has designed a Wright and Stickley inspired glass panel screen with the title "Lake Geneva Inn Panel Screen." Constructed of quartersawn white oak or any of five other woods available for customized desires, each screen has authentic 24 gold plated glass accent pieces similar to the fine art glass windows of Oak Park, Illinois and walnut butterfly spacers which dramatically highlight the panel's fine cabinetry. For further information visit the Loft Bed Store's World Wide Web site: <http://www.LOFTBED.COM> or call their locations at Alexandria, VA, (703) 379-7299, Rockville, MD (301) 340-0998, or Chantilly, VA, (703) 803-7785.

 Glass artist Don Robinson specializes in the techniques of fusing and slumping in the creation of unique pieces of glass in such unusual forms as double drop slumping, handled baskets, embedded brass bubbles and hollow core picture frames. He lives in Surprise, Arizona, where he works out of an 84 square foot shop that contains two kilns. He has already won the President's Special Award and a first place blue ribbon at the May, 1995 Glendale (AZ) Art Glass Association art competition. Contact Don Robinson in any of the following ways: Tel. (602) 546-2456; fax (602) 546-2456; [ddr@goodnet.com](mailto:ddr@goodnet.com).

 Munder/Skiles offers a portfolio of garden furniture reminiscent of Arts and Crafts designs. Each piece offers distinctive detailing, complex joinery, as well as ecologically safe materials and finishes. The designs for their pieces--ranging from Windsor Chairs and dining tables to planter boxes--draw from museums and historical collections. All have been reproduced by their craftsmen, using the same methods and the same care that made the originals so enduring. Their brochure looks to Oscar Wilde for approval. For they point out that Oscar Wilde once observed: "Nature is so uncomfortable. Grass is hard and lumpy and damp, and full of dreadful black insects." They assure us that he would have "appreciated our welcoming garden seats." And as Wilde also said, a Morris chair at least had a proper sense of proportion, a proportion and pleasure which these products seem to perpetuate. For further information about Munder/Skiles products please contact: John G. Danzer, 799 Madison Avenue, Floor 3, New York, NY 10021, Tel. (212) 717-0150; fax (212) 717-0149.

### **A WILLIAM MORRIS POSTER**

**Thomas G. Boss Fine Books** offers for sale the second release in a series of posters based on classic Art Deco and Arts and Crafts book designs. This 18" x 24" **poster**

**commemorating the William Morris Centenary** reproduces a pen and ink design by the German-American artist Carl Jung. It portrays Morris seated in a spindle chair holding a pen. The poster is available in two editions, a limited edition signed by the publisher priced at \$50.00, and a trade edition, unsigned, priced at \$35.00. Contact: Thomas G. Boss Fine Books, 355 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116, Tel. (617) 421-1880.

#### **ARTS AND CRAFTS TOURS**

Arts and Crafts Tours offers a "Homage to William Morris" from 13 to 21 July. This tour includes such important sites as the Red House, Kelmscott Manor, Wightwick Manor, and Oxford. It takes special advantage of the William Morris centenary exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, for the exhibit's curator will offer the tour a talk and will join the tour for dinner. Other tours of interest to Morrisians are the "Northern Independents" (7-17 August), "Center of Creativity" (17-21 September), and "An Arts and Crafts Sampler in Wales" (12-19 October). Interested tourists, please contact: Elaine Ellis, President, Arts and Crafts Tours, 110 Riverside Drive, Suite 15-E, New York, NY 1002, Tel. (212) 362-0761; fax (212) 787-2823.

#### **WILLIAM MORRIS BOOK ARTS WORKSHOP AT DARTMOUTH**

A Book Arts Summer Workshop, "William Morris and the Kelmscott Press," will be offered at the Dartmouth College Library from 21-24 August 1996. This Workshop will, within the context of an intensive examination of printed examples that issued from the Kelmscott Press, undertake a hands-on approach to the actual creation of individual broadsides--broadsides based, in their design and their execution, on the program's particular focus on William Morris and the Kelmscott Press. Each participant will, through instruction and guidance provided by the workshop staff, prepare such a printed piece, utilizing foundry types, handmade papers, and hand presses. In addition to this craft activity, there will be interaction with historical and bibliographical scholars, variously focusing on special aspects of the work of William Morris and that of certain other late nineteenth-century British artists and printers of his circle. Attendance will be limited to twenty persons. The faculty includes Mark Samuels Lasner, president of the William Morris Society, and William S. Peterson, author of "The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure." The deadline for receiving applications was 8 July but we print this notice on the chance that space may be available in what has become a very popular annual program sponsored in part by the Stinehour Press. For further information contact: Book Arts Summer Workshop, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, NH 03755, Tel (603) 6446-2236.

#### **CONFERENCES AND TALKS**

Millikin University in Decatur IL. will host the first Prairie Arts and Crafts conference on 28-19 September 1996. The conference will include lectures by Robert Winter, Linda Dyke, and Wilbert Hasbrouck. It will also feature tours of Prairie Style architecture, namely the Adolf Mueller, Robert Muller, E.P. Irving, and Dana-Thomas houses in nearby Springfield. There will be exhibits from local collections and an antique show and sale-- with collectibles, Roycroft books, and prints and watercolors from Kathleen West. For a brochure and registration forms contact: Ed Walker, Tel. (217) 424-6228; [ewalker@mail.millikin.edu](mailto:ewalker@mail.millikin.edu).

 The 6th Annual Conference on 18th and 19th Century British Women Writers, to be held at the University of California, Davis on 27-29 March 1997, has issued a call for papers. This yearly conference, which is devoted to expanding the literary canon and to developing critical and theoretical understanding of women's writing traditions in literary, political, legal, religious, medical and scientific discourses, especially encourages papers addressing the past and present significance of noncanonical British women writers in various disciplines. Inquiries, 1-2 page abstracts for papers, and proposals for panels should be sent by 30 September 1996 to: Jacqueline Dello Russo at Sproul Hall, English Department, University of California, Davis, CA 95616, [jadellorusso@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jadellorusso@ucdavis.edu).

 A conference on "Walter Pater and His Circle" will be held on 2 and 3 August at West Virginia University. We don't know who the speakers are but more information can be had from: Hayden Ward, Department of English, West Virginia University, PO Box 6296, Morgantown, WV 26505, Tel. (304) 293-3107; fax (304) 293-5380, [u1668@wvnm.wvnet.edu](mailto:u1668@wvnm.wvnet.edu).

 The first annual conference of the Victorian Interdisciplinary Studies Association of the Western United States (VISAWUS) will be held on the campus of California State University, Northridge on 9-10 November 1996. The topic of the conference is "Success: Victorian Concepts." Professor James Kincaid of the University of Southern California will be the keynote speaker. For details contact the chair of the program committee: John Nuckols, Department of English, University of Southern California, University Park, Los Angeles, CA 90089, [Nuckols@scf.usc.edu](mailto:Nuckols@scf.usc.edu).

 A call for papers on the subject of "Death and Life" has come for the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies (INCS) conference to be held 4-6 April, 1997 at the University of California, Berkeley. Proposals go to: INCS-Berkeley, English Department, 322 Wheeler Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720, [incs@violet.berkeley.edu](mailto:incs@violet.berkeley.edu). (200-word abstracts or papers by 15 October 1996; notification sent 1 December 1996; completed papers due 15 January 1997). For more information check the INCS web site: <http://www.nd.edu:80/~incshpl>.

 "Victorians and the Germanic" is the topic of the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association, Chicago, IL, 25-26 April 1997. Twentieth-century conflicts have effectively heightened the differences between England and Germany, obscuring the ties that linked the two nations during the nineteenth century. But the connection with Germany and the rest of the Germanic world--part kinship, part rivalry--was a central fact of Victorian culture. The conference seeks papers that explore this connection. We have in mind topics like the economic and political relations between Great Britain and the emerging nation state of Germany; the influence of German philosophy, art, science, and literature on their British counterparts and the reciprocal influence of British philosophy, art, science, and literature on the German world; travel between the nations; German settings in British fiction; British settings in German fiction; the British search for its past in Germanic or Anglo-Saxon language or custom; the shift in technological ascendancy from Britain to Germany over the course of the century; common institutions, like the family or the dwelling; the reception of German music in England. For our purposes, the term "Germanic" includes Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and other areas where Germanic languages are spoken. Proposals due 15 November 1996. Send 250-500 word abstracts to: Keith Welsh, Department of Literature and Language, Webster University, 470 E. Lockwood Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63119, [welshke@webster2.websteruniv.edu](mailto:welshke@webster2.websteruniv.edu).

#### **STICKLEY CHAIRS IN THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Elaine Louie in "From One Stickley Design Spring Many Contenders" published in the 23 May 1996 issue of the "New York Times" gives the interesting results of "a day of comparison shopping for one of the most coveted Arts and Crafts designs--Gustav Stickley's Morris spindle chair, introduced in 1905." Amongst the contenders in this marathon shopping search were "the Original," a "lady's" armchair from 1905, the year Stickley introduced the design, priced at \$8,050; a Warren Hile Version at Scott Jordan, 137 Varick Street, NY, priced at \$2,450; the "man's" size, newly made by E. J. Audi, 160 Fifth Avenue, NY, priced at \$2,688; and the Morris chair from Crate and Barrel, priced at \$1,499. "They are all made of oak, have commodious cushions and slender square spindles under the arms. They recline by adjusting a dowel-and-peg system. Similar but different, they can confuse the uninitiated." According to Elaine Louie who turned to two experts, Kate Carmel, the acting director and senior curator of the American Craft Museum, and Eric Silver, the specialist in 19th- and 20th-century decorative arts at William Doyle Galleries, the Original has just one con: its price. The Warren Hile version doesn't compare to the Audi in terms of "finish and perfection of detail." The Audi, of all the reproductions, is the "only one which had great integrity of intent and fulfillment." However, it's neither inexpensive nor original. And the Crate and Barrel version is "a Brand-X" piece. One wonders if late Victorian Londoners tramped from Liberty's to Heal's to Morris and Co....

#### **ANGELA THIRKELL SOCIETY**

Many people enjoy the fiction of Angela Thirkell but few, probably, realize that the writer--who is often compared to Trollope for her comic depiction of English life--was the granddaughter of Edward Burne-Jones. William Morris is in fact mentioned in several of her Bassetshire novels and of course figures in her recently reprinted memoir of her childhood, "Three Houses." If you like Thirkell you may wish to join the North American branch of the Angela Thirkell Society, founded in 1985 and closely allied with the Thirkell Society in the U.K. The Society organizes meetings at 18 month intervals; members receive a newsletter three times a year and the "Journal" published each autumn by the U.K. group (doesn't this program sound familiar?). Dues are \$10.00, payable to Vera Jordan, Treasurer, Angela Thirkell Society, 3821 Regal Place, St.

Louis, MO 63109. For U. K. membership contact: Betty Self, Hamstreet Road, Shadoxhurst, Ashford, Kent TN26 1NL.

## **VICTORIAN ART**

According to Barrymore Laurence Scherer--surely a pseudonym?--in his February 1996 "Art at Auction" article entitled "Victoria . . . Victor!", Victorian art is "holding its own once again." Recording prices up to \$5,532,500 (for J. J. Tissot's "Le banc de jardin"), Victorian art is performing strong on the markets and will by the 21st Century, as dealer Christopher Wood predicts, "be likened to Old Masters." Scherer cites many possible reasons for this resurgence of interest. For instance, he points to the parallels between the Victorian Age and our own. He also suggests that we are beginning to appreciate once more content over form in art. And he reminds us of the variety of Victorian achievement in art, achievement which was not limited solely to saccharine subjects. In this regard, the Pre-Raphaelites loom large; indeed, they were "among the first Victorians to regain popularity in our time." Considering content over form, Scherer describes the narrative quality of Victorian art as its strongest characteristic, a characteristic encouraged by the newly rich "merchant princes and robber barons, manufacturers of everything from team engines to liver pills" and by a nation of readers (of Dickens, Trollope, etc.) who looked to pictures to offer them, like novels, anecdotes and realism. He also traces the effects of the Aesthetic Movement, which privileged art over life, on such artists as Leighton, Alma-Tadema, and Burne-Jones. Unlike Gertrude Himmelfarb, who decries the discarding of the opprobrium that Victorians attached to "behavior like drug addiction, illegitimacy and divorce," Scherer refreshingly points out the sexual tensions, the sensuality, the frankness of late Victorian art, qualities which make this art extremely palatable to modern viewers.

## **ARTHURIANA--WILLIAM MORRIS SPECIAL ISSUE**

We strongly recommend that members get a copy of the special issue of "Arthuriانا" devoted to "William Morris and King Arthur" to be issued this fall. If you don't know this excellent journal you ought to. Edited by Society member Debra Mancoff and Bonnie Wheeler, this issue (price \$10.00) contains articles by Florence Boos, Frederick Kirchoff, Debra Mancoff, and Laura Struve. "Arthuriانا," described as the quarterly of the International Arthurian Society, North American Branch, is published at Southern Methodist University. For further information contact: Arthuriانا, P. O. Box 750432, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275.

## **"THE VULGARIZATION OF ART"**

Linda Dowling's "The Vulgarization of Art," just out from the University Press of Virginia, reinterprets the Victorian Aesthetic movement by arguing that Victorian classics of criticism and art history, such as Ruskin's "Stones of Venice," can only be completely understood within the context of the Whig aesthetic tradition. She traces the genesis of Victorian Aestheticism to the Whig polity, which proposed itself as an alternative to the older theories of natural law and divine right. The idea of a "moral sense," articulated by Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftsbury, gave the Victorians hope that their own nightmare landscape of commercial modernity and mass taste might yet be transformed by a universal pleasure in art and beauty. "The Vulgarization of Art" goes on to explore the consequences of the conflict faced by the Aesthetic movement between Shaftsbury's assumption of the "aristocratic soul" and the Victorian ideal of "aesthetic democracy" which repeatedly shattered the hopes of such writers as Ruskin, Morris, Pater and Wilde for social transformation through an appreciation of the truth and beauty of art. At \$32.50 for 134 pages, the book may seem a bit expensive but Dowling's unique insight and very readable style in fact make this a groundbreaking study which links culture, politics, and aesthetics into one Victorian whole. Order from: University Press of Virginia, Box 3608 University Station, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

## **SOME OTHER BOOKS**

Still available is the catalogue "William Morris and the Kelmscott Press." This 1994 exhibition at the University of Scranton consisted of books selected from the collection of John J. Walsdorf supplemented by works from the collections of Bucknell University, Franklin and Marshall College, Hofstra University, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, New York University, and the University of Scranton itself. Copies may be ordered (price \$12.00 each) from the Friends of the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Memorial Library. Write to: Charles Kratz, Director, Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Memorial Library, University of Scranton, Scranton, PA 18510.

 Several recently published books boast Pre-Raphaelite art on their covers. Indeed, John Bidwell, Curator of Graphics Arts at Princeton University, wonders whether A. S. Byatt's "Possession," which had Burne-Jones's "Merlin and Vivien" on the dust jacket and paperback front cover, started a trend in the design of romance fiction. He's pointed out to us Alice Borchardt's novel "Devoted" and Deborah Randall's verse "White Eyes, Dark Ages," the latter described by the publisher (Dufour Editions) as "a portrait of John Ruskin ... the inner man through the eyes of his women...."

## A SHOPPING GUIDE TO WILLIAM MORRIS

### THE LINEN SOURCE

(800) 431-2620.

"Vineyard Rug." Inspired by the William Morris Collection, each of these rugs features eight different colors. Thick pile in navy, green or beige heat-set polypropylene. Imported. Allow 4 weeks for shipping. #V7742B. 4' X5'3" \$136.0; 5'3" x 7'9" \$274.00; 7'10" x 11' \$580.00.

### THE SMITHSONIAN CATALOGUE

(800) 322-0344.

"Peacock Tapestry." This tapestry reproduces a detail of the William Morris tapestry, "The Forest" (1887), which depicts a peacock, hare, lion, fox and raven on an acanthus background. Made in France. 44"l. X 29"w. #3376 \$220.00. \* "William Morris Colossian Vase." This vase, with its lush flowering foliage, is adapted from "Leicester," an original turn-of-the-century Morris & Co. Wallpaper design. Brilliantly handcrafted in cloisonne by master artisans. Rosewood-finished base. 4"h. overall. #7200 \$95.00. \* "William Morris Wool Rug." This rug is evocative of Morris textiles in the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. Their sumptuous rug, Axminster woven of 100% Spanish wool, is derived from his "Redcar" pattern (c. 1885). Rich and elegant, the graceful vine and floral motifs are rendered in shades of ecru, mauve, blue and navy on a deep hunter green ground. Imported. Please specify size. #3319 6' x 9': \$440.00. 4' x 6': \$250.00; 2'3" x 8' (runner): \$220.00. \* "Poppy Fields Scarf." This scarf is adapted from William Morris's "Wreath" design. 100% silk crepe de Chine, this scarf presents Morris's creative genius with a wonderful interplay of colors as rich red poppies blossom from a green ground, contrasting with the center's black and white outline. 34"sq. Made in Italy. #2153 \$45.00. \* "William Morris 'Pomona' Tapestry." Adapted from a turn-of-the-century original, this sumptuous tapestry presents Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit trees, amid a profusion of flowers and fruits. Jacquard woven in France of cotton/rayon blend, backed with 100% cotton and fitted with eyelets for hanging. 47"l. X 29 1/2"w. #3364 \$250.00. \* "William Morris Textiles." The first comprehensive survey of William Morris's prolific textile designs, this magnificent compilation details the many techniques used in their design and manufacture, supplemented with Morris's own philosophy on textile art. Includes the only complete, fully illustrated listing of his patterns ever published. Hardcover. Over 100 color and 100 b&w; illustrations. 192 pages. #1023 \$18.95. \* "William Morris Tie." Adapted from "Compton," a magnificent textile design, circa 1896, which can be found in the collections of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Morris's striking botanical pattern is rendered in lush shades of green, teal, blue, and salmon on a navy ground. Printed in Italy on imported 100% silk and handsewn in the U.S.A. #2035 \$35.00.

LAST UPDATE 4 JAN 2001 · PLEASE REPORT BROKEN LINKS TO  
[WEBMASTER@MORRISOCIETY.ORG](mailto:WEBMASTER@MORRISOCIETY.ORG)

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