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Editorial –
Pearls for the ancestors

Patrick O’Sullivan

… one of the things … I learned from both my mother and my dad … is that … wanting to make the world a better place is (part of) … a tradition that’s probably been going on for as long as people have been around. And that is a wonderful thing for a young person to discover … that he or she is not the beginning of a thing but somewhere in the middle of a long line of people … . It gives you the ability … to … that you don’t have to finish a job within the space of a lifetime. It takes a lot of pressure off if you know that all you have to do is to link up to the future. That’s the job of being a human … to make the connection to the future and hold on to the connection to the past. (Arlo Guthrie, US National Public Radio, 20 April 1985)

What is the reason for the current truly enormous interest in tracing one’s own and other people’s ancestry? In this issue we print articles both about Morris’s mother’s lineage, and that of his father, about which, for the moment at least, rather less is known. Of course, genealogy is also a professional discipline, requiring considerable knowledge and skill, but visit any UK County Record Office on any day, and you will probably meet at least one person intent on tracing their ancestry: many of these offices have long geared themselves up for this enthusiasm. I must declare that some years ago, I too became interested in this very subject – there are, apparently, some thirty million people on this planet who can claim Irish ancestry – and although I am afraid I have left the overwhelming bulk of the work to my cousin, I continue to be fascinated by her findings.

One key factor is, of course, the Internet, which means that much of this kind of activity can now be conducted from home, and, in theory anyway, at a faster rate, although that may also be a myth. And then there are numerous courses in tracing ones ancestors – some of them run or advertised by the same Record Offices – and television programmes on the same subject, although, of course
these have soon become preoccupied with ‘celebrity’.

Beyond this, I believe that there may be in many of us (but not, I am assured by a colleague, all of us) some basic need to find out not just who we are, and where we are from – although modern preoccupation with the self may be important here – but also the sequence of historical events leading to where we are, and who we are, today – hence my reference above to Arlo Guthrie. Many of us find that the answers to such questions often involve our ancestors’ lives being touched by great events – Enclosure, the Highland Clearances. For example, our grandfather, a British soldier threatened in 1917 with assassination by Irish Republicans, decided to ‘hide out’ in Wiltshire, the home of his then regiment. Without that death threat, none of my immediate family would be who and where they are today. But it was not until I saw *The Plough and the Stars*, and realised that the same regiment (but not his battalion) was responsible for ‘mopping up’ in Dublin after the 1916 Easter Rising, that I realised just how dangerous our grandfather’s life must have been at that particular time.

Further beyond, I believe that interest in one’s origins – in some of us anyway – is an expression of unease at the rootless life which modernity has imposed upon us. A second important factor – it is mostly more mature people who are interested in such matters – may, in the UK, be the 1944 Education Act, which widened access, albeit selective, to secondary education, followed by the Robbins Report on Higher Education (1963) which did much the same for universities. Both of these major educational changes created a generation uprooted from their homes and sent to study, and then to work, in places they had not grown up in. While at first they also produced new kinds of films, and a new literature, both depicting aspects of life in Britain previously ignored by elite media (for example, ‘kitchen sink’ television plays), those of us who are not film directors, novelists or playwrights need some other means of expression. Hence the interest, I think, in tracing one’s ancestry.

And rootlessness is indeed both a modern phenomenon, and a phenomenon of modernity. For example, in his study of the Parliamentary Enclosures, Mark Overton (*The Agricultural Revolution in England. The transformation of the agrarian economy, 1500–1850*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 257 pp.), points out that in 1500, most people in England made their living by farming of some kind, and that most farmers assumed that their children and their grandchildren would continue to do so, in much the same way, and in the same place. By 1800 this was no longer the case. And in his wonderful study of the !Kung San of the Kalahari (*The !Kung San: Men, Women and Work in a Foraging Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 526 pp.), Richard Lee explained how the practise of ‘bride service’ (also found among ‘first nation’ Australians) meant that each member of the band was conceived on one location (the ‘little N!ore’), but raised in another (the ‘big N!ore’), a practice which served to spread
the impact of the population across the landscape during times of dearth. But what it also meant was that the !Kung San, like many forager people, felt themselves and their ancestors to be intimately connected to the land of both N!ores—hence their usual enormous reservations about being forced to die away from what was both figuratively, and for them literally, their ancestral home.

Neolithic peoples also possess cosmologies which express intimate links between living and dead, time and place. For example, in *Pigs for the Ancestors. Ritual in the ecology of a New Guinea people* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968, 502 pp.) Roy Rappaport explains how the Tsembaga Maring of modern Papua New Guinea conceive the entire valley in which they live to consist of a ‘cool, damp’ lower zone possessed by the ‘wet spirits’ (or the ‘spirits of rot’; those who govern the lower body, and diseases of the gut) to which wastes can (and should) be conveyed, a middle zone inhabited by the living devoted to horticulture, and a hot, dry upper region which is the home of the ‘Red Spirits’ (those who control the upper body and respiratory disease; the ancestors) from where nothing can be taken without their express permission. Similar cosmologies expressing the essential role of water in connecting people, food production and pollution also exist on Bali. And it is also said that on Morris’s beloved Iceland, many people can recite their ancestry back to initial Norse arrival in 874 CE.

Morris’s concept of history is, of course, explained in *A Dream of John Ball*:

... I pondered all these things, and how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name ...

... but his vision was not a ‘progressive’ one, and he did not subscribe to what he termed the ‘Whig’ version of history. Instead what Morris saw in history was a continual struggle on the part of ordinary people to protect their livelihood, and the land which supported them, especially from the landlord. Indeed, one of the rebels’ demands in the same Peasants Revolt of 1381 depicted in *John Ball* was that all church lands should be released and given over to cultivation by the common people. The UK Miner’s Strike of 1984-1985 can also be seen as an attempt to protect both livelihoods and a way of life from ‘modernisation’.

Given discussions last year concerning the history curriculum in UK secondary schools, and current debates regarding the causes and the conduct of what my parents’ generation always called ‘The Great War’, it is to Orwell, and to *1984* and one of the slogans of Ingsoc that I would turn for another possible explanation as to why so many people are today so keen to learn about their origins:

Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past
to which we could add ‘Whoever controls the past controls the present’. This last is a key policy component of the current UK Secretary of State for Education, who has sought to control both the present and the future by purging the history curriculum of ‘irrelevant’ topics, and replacing them first with ‘Fergusonism’ – an emphasis on ‘greatness’ and Empire – and a parallel trend toward what we might term ‘Starkeyism’ (or indeed ‘Mantelism’) – a preoccupation with the doings of royalty and its lackeys. But the way was paved for this exercise by the ‘modernising’ project of ‘New Labour’, in which, as in The Glittering Plain (as explained by Terence Hoagwood, JWMS, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, Winter 2008, p. 11) in a ‘land of lies’, the past was forgotten in pursuit of ‘pleasure without cease’, and ‘no dream but the end of dreams’ – almost a perfect description of Tony Blair’s Britain.

I therefore see ‘tracing ones ancestors’ as one sign of what I would regard as a healthy refusal to adopt two of the key tenets of modernity – that history is progress, and that the past is therefore at best as ‘quaint’ as Flora Post would have regarded it, or at worst, ‘irrelevant’. As such it is part of a complex of ‘greening’ issues explored some years ago now by Jan Marsh in Back to the Land.

In addition to Dorothy Coles and Barbara Lawrence’s study of Morris’s paternal ancestry, and David Everett’s monumental investigation into Morris’s mother’s Worcester origins, we also publish articles by Roger Simpson on Morris’s unpublished Arthurian translations, by Peter Faulkner on Jane Morris and her male correspondents, and the second part of Stephen Williams’s study of Georgiana Burne-Jones in Rottingdean, this time for the period 1904–1920. We also print reviews of a new edition of what has long been key work for Morris scholars – Linda Parry’s beautifully authoritative study of William Morris Textiles, and of further books on W.G Collingwood’s Travels in Iceland 1897; on the memoirs of Gary Sargeant regarding the group of artists who helped found the William Morris Gallery; two separate publications on the Arts and Crafts Movement in Yorkshire, and in the North East of England, and a further book on the same movement in Scotland; on Arts and Crafts embroidery; on Victoria’s Madmen (a title whose explanation I leave to the reviewer); on the life of Penelope Fitzgerald, whose book on Burne-Jones is still greatly relied on by contributors to this Journal; of the life, times and thought of the anarchist writer and activist Colin Ward, and of a comparative study of three very different nineteenth-century authors – Jules Verne, Morris and Robert Louis Stevenson.

We also welcome to the Editorial Advisory Board John Purkis, who has long given great service to the Society, and to this editor in particular, and Dr Anna Vaninskaya, who, as a younger scholar than many of us, represents the future. I am grateful to both of them for agreeing to give up their time in order to assist the editorial process.
William Morris’s unpublished Arthurian translations

Roger Simpson

The Arthurian legend was a continual source of inspiration for William Morris. From his purchase in 1856 of Robert Southey’s edition of Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur*, to his own Kelmscott Press publication of *Syr Perecyvell of Gales* in 1895, he adopted Arthurian subjects for his verse, murals, easel paintings, stained glass, embroidery and tapestry. To this list should be added a pair of translations he made of early Arthurian French romances, both of which have escaped serious attention by literary critics.

As part of a bequest by May Morris, the British Library holds a notebook (BL Add MS. 45329) which contains an unfinished fragment of a translation of *Tristram* made by her father in about 1870-1871. It consists of ninety-nine leaves, the first eighty-eight being written in his ‘ordinary hand’, the remainder in his ‘fair’ hand of the period. Considerably more substantial, however, was Morris’s second venture into Arthurian translation, which ran to over six hundred leaves. Among May Morris’s bequests to the Society of Antiquaries were four notebooks containing an unfinished translation, dating from 1870-1874, of the *Lancelot du Lac* (Paris, 1513). As with his *Tristram*, in these notebooks Morris writes only on the recto of each leaf, leaving the verso blank. The first volume (905.1) is numbered 1-166, the second (905.2) from 167-285, while the third (905.3), which bears the initials GBJ [Georgiana Burne-Jones], was originally numbered from 286 onwards, but was later renumbered 1-307. A fourth notebook (905.4) contains a calligraphic fair copy of folios 1-76 of 905.1.

As both translations survive in manuscripts held by major British institutions, are listed in their catalogues, and have been made available in microform, it is remarkable that they have not attracted a wider notice. May Morris, who knew of both works, includes in the edition of her father’s *Collected Works* a facsimile page from one of these (*Lancelot du Lac*), which she correctly describes as being from ‘a copy my father had begun to make of his translation of the French romance’, but as later writers (such as Norman Kelvin and Nicholas Salmon) quote only her earlier statement that it is a ‘portion of a manuscript in a very
beautiful Italian script’, readers of these scholars may perhaps have assumed that Morris was merely copying an original rather than making a translation. Fortunately Florence Boos has recently broken the critical silence by making a large part of the *Lancelot* MS available on the admirable William Morris Online website sponsored by the William Morris Society of the United States and the University of Iowa.

The translations were undertaken during the early 1870s, a period when Morris was actively continuing to create patterns for tiles, printed textiles and embroidery, besides definitively mastering new designs for wallpaper – not to mention running a successful business. So it might be supposed that having completed his massive verse narratives of *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867) and *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-1870), he would allow his literary work to lie fallow for a time, yet he restlessly continued to explore many fresh literary approaches as he diversified into some very different genres: a novel of contemporary life (*The Novel on Blue Paper*, 1872), an elaborate masque (*Love is Enough*, 1872), and a series of translations beginning with *The Story of Grettir the Strong* (1869), before moving on to *The Story of the Volsungs* (1870), *Three Northern Love Stories* (1875) and *The Aeneids of Virgil* (1875). A letter to Aglaia Coronio in January 1873 admits that he would:

> be glad to have some poem on hand, but it’s no use trying to force the thing; and though the translating lacks the hope and fear that makes writing original things so absorbing, yet at any rate it is amusing and in places even exciting.

Perhaps, too, the routine activity of translating another man’s creations would also provide an emollient, distancing him from the pressures of daily business and the heartache caused by his marital troubles.

Morris’s interest in medieval romance was, of course, of long standing, his early attraction to it having been nurtured by access to illuminated manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, and he soon began to assemble his own collection of manuscripts and early printed books. The catalogue of his library drawn up by F. S. Ellis in 1896 lists a hundred and seventeen manuscripts and over two hundred and eighty early printed books. Among these latter appear many Arthurian items, not only the to-be-expected Thomas Malory’s *Kyne Arthur [Le Morte Darthur]* (1557), but also Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Titurel* (1477), and the great French medieval prose romances; for example, copies of *Merlin* (1498), *Gyron le Courtoys* (n.d.), *L’histoire du Saint Greaal* (1523), *Meliadus de Leonnoys* (1528), *Roman de Perceforest* (1531), *Perceval le Galloys* (1530), *Lancelot du Lac* (1531 and 1533), and *Tristan* (1496 and 1533). Unlike other collectors, however, Morris took it upon himself to translate some of the items he owned, and the two he selected, a *Tristan* and a *Lancelot* (1513), depicted heroes who continuously exerted a magnetic pull on his imagination, for they featured in many of his other works in a range of media: the Oxford Union murals, *The Defence of Guenevere*, stained glass, and
the Holy Grail tapestries.

Both works which Morris translated were of special literary importance. Continental Arthurian romance had initially appeared in verse form by known poets during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, after which it was hugely expanded in prose versions whose authors remain unknown. The widespread diffusion of the Prose Lancelot (known also as the Vulgate Lancelot or Lancelot-Grail) is indicated by the survival of over a hundred and fifty manuscript copies, and the supposed reading of one of these by Paolo and Francesca, which allegedly inspired their own adulterous passions, would raise this part of the story to another level of literary fame by incorporation into Canto V of Dante’s Inferno. These prose versions would later be among the earliest books to be printed, the Prose Lancelot appearing in 1488 at Rouen, the first Arthurian prose romance in French to be printed in France. Such versions of Tristan and Lancelot are markedly different in emphasis from their verse predecessors – and from most nineteenth-century treatments, including those by the early William Morris – in that rather less attention is given to fatally-doomed romantic love. In the Prose Tristan, for example, more regard is paid to Tristan’s knightly deeds than to his affair with Iseult, while in the Prose Lancelot the hero’s love for the Queen is initially presented quite positively: Lancelot’s consequent motivation to achieve honour and renown produces beneficial results for Arthur’s kingdom, and is therefore not seen as a destructive threat to Camelot.

Immensely important in their own right, the prose romances would also be reworked and assimilated into Malory’s Le Morte Darthur, a book which achieved near-canonical status in the reception of the legend in Britain. However, Malory’s adaptation of his copious sources necessarily involved some omissions, and thus Morris’s versions of Lancelot and Tristan contain much of this omitted material which is no longer readily available to modern readers in English. In Tristan, for example, which is a printing of the very lengthy Prose Tristan (probably composed ca 1230-1240) we gain access to early sections which have been greatly neglected by later ages.

A rare and talented exception to this neglect was Lewis Porney, a teacher of French in Richmond, Surrey, who contributed an abridgement of the Prose Tristan in A New and Complete Collection of Interesting Romances and Novels (1780). His version was a retelling he derived from the French Bibliothèque Universelle des Romans, a compendium which, in the fashion of the times, adopted an elegantly ironic tone towards its subject matter. But a complete translation of the Prose Tristan has still not been published in English, for even Renée Curtis’s modern version excludes the opening chapters.

Morris is therefore moving into virgin territory by following the early chapters of his source, the first twenty-three of which recount the largely untoward adventures of the remote ancestors of Tristram (Morris prefers this spelling of his
hero's name) stemming from Bron, brother of Joseph of Arimathea. Throughout a fast-moving, complex tale, involving a man-eating giant, religious conversion, fire from heaven, shipwreck, murder, suicide, fratricide, parricide, abduction, rape and incest (whether accidental or intentional), the heroic line of descent runs through Bron's youngest son, Sadoc, then to his son Apollo, and thence eventually to Meliadus, King of Lyonesse.

It was at this point that Malory had picked up the story, and is the occasion for Morris to adopt his 'fair' hand and to continue translating for three more chapters. These narrate Meliadus's marriage to Ysabel, daughter of the Cornish King, and her death in giving birth to Tristram, followed by King Mark's slaying of his brother Pernehen, Meliadus's marriage to King Howel's daughter, and her unsuccessful attempt to poison Tristram. But after the sentence, 'So they said among themselves that she had deserved death, and the King said: “Then shall she die” ', Morris breaks off abruptly, mid-chapter, leaving the remaining leaves of his notebook blank, having translated only about a seventh of Volume One. Unlike Porney, Morris treats the story with great respect, not demeaning it with an ironic narration but maintaining the original work's declared intention of 'pricking on and moving of the hearts of noble folk to live gloriously and virtuously'. Moreover, despite the welter of picaresque incident, we are continually aware of the narrative's core themes of loyalty, dynastic rivalry and the destructive effects of adulterous love.

Similarly Morris's translation from the voluminous Prose Lancelot (originally composed ca 1215-1235) presents material new to an English reader; material which – even more than with the early chapters of the Tristan – deals with incident which is importantly related to the central Arthurian corpus, for it greatly enlarges the hero's biography. Crucial to this is the story of how the infant Lancelot was rescued and raised by the Lady of the Lake. Though this story entered English juvenile literature during the twentieth century, by way of popular retellings by Blanche Winder (1925) and Roger Lancelyn Green (1966), it was not until Lucy Allen Paton's Sir Lancelot of the Lake (1929) and Corin Corley's version of Lancelot do Lac (1989), a forerunner of the Prose Lancelot, that even abridged translations of this material became available for an adult audience. A complete translation did not appear until Norris Lacy's magisterial edition of 1993-1996.

Abridgements and excerpts did not do justice to the work, which is of great interest on at least four levels. First, is the story of a young man's search for personal identity, and his struggle to make a famous name for himself. Second, this quest is shaped by the immense power of love, which underpins the main narrative with a dramatic tension. As Lancelot's overmastering love for Guenevere is revealed in deeds rather than words, we are required to wait 162 pages for this tension to be released by the famous kiss. Magic too plays a significant role
in his success, for not only is he crucially supported in infancy by the fairy world of the Lady of the Lake, but in his first major quest he is empowered by the use of magic shields to undo the enchantments of Dolorous Garde. Finally, the entire action is set within the conventions of the feudal society of King Arthur, which is necessarily engaged in safeguarding the king and his vassals, and extending protection to the victims of injustice.

This *Lancelot* translation accordingly presents a new angle on many characters whom we previously thought we knew well. For instance, King Arthur himself is not made immune from deserved criticism. Since the downfall of King Ban is blatantly caused by Arthur’s failure to send him requested aid, Arthur is publicly blamed by Banin (Ban’s godson) for his failure in this respect. In this instance, of course, Arthur may have had good reason for his failure, for he was at the time militarily hard pressed at home, but on a later occasion Arthur receives a very lengthy and severe admonishment, lasting nine manuscript leaves, from a ‘good man’ about his alleged shortcomings in government.\(^\text{18}\)

Notably Merlin plays neither a major nor a beneficent role. As he remains unredeemed from the evil of his semi-demonic birth, Vivien attracts no blame for cunningly acquiring his lore without yielding her virginity. This she achieves in a manner which may seem unconvincing, but which evidently worked, in her case:

> [she] wrought the spell on him ever whenso he came in unto her, so that she straightly cast him into slumber: on her two paps moreover she set two words of wizardry, such that so long as they abode there no man might deflower her or have to do with her carnally.\(^\text{19}\)

Having extracted his secrets, she puts her new powers to excellent use in nurturing the defenceless young Lancelot and his cousins, Lionel and Bors.

Most important, Lancelot emerges as a very different figure from Malory’s hero, who arrives fully-fledged at Arthur’s court. We read instead of a fatherless boy unaware of his lineage, who develops into a youth self-confident enough to strike his tutor for beating his (Lancelot’s) dog. Once arrived at Camelot, he is so smitten with love for the Queen that he is tongue-tied. Having contrived to receive his knightly sword from her rather than from Arthur, he leaves immediately on a series of adventures in order to prove his valour, yet is still occasionally so lost in reverie that he allows others to mock him or even risks absent-mindedly drowning himself. Only through the good offices of Gallehault, and the encouragement of the Queen, does this bashful, lachrymose knight manage to converse with her, and eventually kiss her.

Gallehault, Lord of the Foreign Isles, is the intriguing new addition. The son of a giantess, and so six inches (150mm) above normal height, he has conquered other kingdoms, and possesses designs on Arthur’s. But when he arrives with a
massive army, he declines to proceed against Arthur’s inferior forces lest he lose honour in gaining a one-sided victory. Arthur is therefore given time to summon reinforcements. In the eventual battle, Gallehault is so impressed by Lancelot’s prowess that he welcomes him as a friend, and soon decides to maintain this friendship by surrendering to Arthur. Then, as a further kindness, he sets up the vital meeting between Lancelot and Guenevere.

Thanks to Morris, too, we are introduced to the particular qualities of this medieval text wherein characters are made vivid through symbolic details of their appearance and habits. The young Lancelot, for instance, wore a mysteriously-supplied garland of fresh red roses which stood out wonderfully against his fine, blond hair, and wore it every day with the exception of Friday, the eve of the great feasts, and all of Lent. So too, King Claudas’s ebullient character is evoked through his stylish panache:

Rivers he loved over all places, and falcons better than hounds: never rode he but on great destriers save when he rode long journeys, and then would he have a great destrier, were it in peace or in war. 20

Systemic, violent martial conflict has the horrific immediacy which Morris had presented earlier in his tale ‘Golden Wings’, and the poems based on Froissart. Weapons slash through hauberks, slice into white skin, cutting two inches into the collar bone. Nose-guards are smashed into nose and cheeks. Pommels hammer links of mail into foreheads. Lances are jabbed between nipple and shoulder. Insides are run straight through. Swords slash through teeth. Blood pours out of mouths, noses and ears.

And the social results of such violence are poignantly expressed by the dying King Ban as he watches his castle go up in flames:

And when he saw that he had no more any dwelling on earth to turn to, and he felt that he was old and aweary, and his son was such that he might not help nor deliver; and his wife – young she was and good toward God and toward the world, and come withal of the high lineage of David – then great pity him seemed of all these things; whereas his son must needs grow up in poverty and great misery, and his wife be in danger of other men, and he himself old and sore grieving must wear away the remnant of his life. 21

Such movingly-conveyed human tenderness is revealed too in the maternal grief suffered by the widowed Queen Helaine, and in the quasi-maternal solicitude felt by the Lady of the Lake for her foster-child Lancelot.

What is more, this may be a world of very hard surfaces, but they conceal rich complexities of motive and character. Claudas, for example, may behave with treacherous villainy to men and women, old and young, but he is redeemed from mere caricature by some redeeming features: he is fond of his son, possesses great
courage himself, and admires that quality in others. Throughout the narrative, too, there is considerable psychological insight into the complexity of motives, and the personal search for right conduct, as when Pharien is required to negotiate the dilemma of preserving his honour by fulfilling his conflicting obligations both to his former liege-lord, and his present one.

Such excerpts as have been quoted are not, however, typical of the entire work, which develops into a very sophisticated, intricately interlaced plot, recording knightly adventures. Morris was, of course, creator of extensive, unhurried narratives in verse and prose, but the diffuseness of this piece lies well outside his customary range of material, and greatly contrasts with the Icelandic narratives he chose to translate, which may open with complex genealogy, but soon develop into a lucid and fast-moving story. Morris's pertinacity in translating so much of the *Lancelot* is therefore remarkable.

His translation, though apparently accurate, resembles, however, those he made from Icelandic during the same period, in which he adopts a somewhat archaic idiom in both diction and syntax. This neo-medieval style has its critics, but it possesses some merit in that it determinedly sets the narrative in a pre-modern age, the quasi-Malorian/Froissartian phraseology chiming well with the aura of medieval romance. Besides, although the translation possesses value in its own right, Morris presumably does not intend to produce a modern, 'scholarly' version, but to create a 'literary' work. In this he is very successful, as his idiom possesses a simple sinewy power, and holds additional interest for us because it is created by Morris, so we read it within the context of his artistic development, aware that the 'medieval' style will evolve into the 'default' medium of his late prose romances.

Moreover, in these Arthurian translations we are reading Morris's actual hand, for beside launching himself into translation, Morris also set about producing attractive handwritten copies. Increasingly interested in illumination and caligraphy, he consulted Italian sixteenth-century writing books, taught himself both Roman and Italic scripts, and continually experimented. Between 1870 and 1875 he worked on eighteen manuscript books and many trial fragments, producing a total of over 1,500 pages of text. The two Arthurian books thus formed a very considerable part of this achievement.

His *Tristram* is written on faintly-lined white paper, with thirty-four lines to a leaf, the text occupying only the recto sides. For the first eighty-eight leaves the writing is very plain, in Morris's ordinary hand, with an elaborate C symbol (such as was used in the 1533 printed text) and a capitalised word to mark the beginning of each chapter. There are occasional textual corrections, and very gradually the introductory capitals are made more fanciful. After completing line 15 of folio 88, however, Morris leaves a blank leaf, and begins numbering from folios 1 to 11, but then renumbers these from 89 to 99. From 89 onwards the text
contains minimal corrections, adopts rubricated chapter headings, and is written in an italic script with a somewhat ornate letter g. It immediately appears more attractive, though with a slight loss of legibility.

In his more ambitious *Lancelot*, Morris’s transcription reveals three main stages. Initially he uses lined blue paper, and writes in a fluent everyday script with many deletions and revisions. He supplies chapter headings and, as in *Tristram*, an elaborate C symbol as occasional section marker, and capitalises the initial letters of key sections. The result is very legible, but *en masse* appears rather dull and unvaried. There are a few signs of experimentation: the introduction of long lines to cross the letter t, a chapter heading in rubric, some more elaborate forms of S and N, and a sudden adoption of italic script for three pages.  

However, the next stage, 905.3, is so markedly different and immediately impressive in style that one appreciates why Morris decided to repaginate this volume from fol.1. Written on faintly-lined white paper in italic script, with fewer corrections, it employs rubric for chapter and page headings. Though very pleasantly varied, however, the text is not quite as easy to read as 905.1 and 905.2 because the script is smaller, and Morris introduces some finicky flourishes to the lettering. As he proceeds, he experiments increasingly and gradually adds bold stylistic flourishes to the first word of each paragraph and each chapter; many capital letters (especially A, D, G, H, I, S, T and W) are stylised and given double height; lower case letter g receives a curling tail; while y and sometimes final d are often given spidery extensions, as is the last letter of each line.

The final stage is reached in 905.4, again on white paper, and ostensibly a fair copy of 905.1, fols. 1-76, with occasional minor verbal rewording. In this part every aspect is made more decorative: not only does he occasionally capitalise in upright Roman, but he drastically increases the height of the initials of his opening words and elaborates these with leaf-designs. And yet once again Morris abandons the translation, two-thirds of the way through Part One on this occasion – a surprising place to stop, for he thereby omits not only the unusual incident of Arthur’s sexual escapade with Gamille, but also two climactic points in the main narrative wherein Lancelot and the Queen become physical lovers, and Lancelot is made a Companion of the Round Table. And although Morris then begins a fair copy, he soon gives that up too.

We should not, however, read too great a significance into Morris’s failure to complete this translation, for such a breaking off was not an uncommon practise of his: he completed only two of the many manuscripts he began. Similarly, he often abandoned textile work he was engaged on, and left its completion to other hands. Most probably his initial enthusiasms were overtaken both by his innate impatience and by later projects which arose in his fertile mind.

The version we are left with may often appear unassured and even amateurish, with some particularly unsuccessful features such as the g descenders which
interfere with lines below, and it cannot compare in quality with the consummate perfection of Morris’s Virgil or the copy of Love is Enough which he presented to Georgiana Burne-Jones. Elsewhere, Morris’s calligraphic work was occasionally supplemented by specialist help in illustration from Edward Burne-Jones and Charles Fairfax Murray, or in coloured initials from George Wardle. There is some indication that a similar procedure was mooted for this work too. As a letter to Charles Fairfax Murray (5 November 1873) reveals, the latter had been lent a copy of the MS but Morris wished for its return, stressing that he would like to make another MS of it again himself.27 Certainly, some pages from the translation, recounting with slight modifications King Ban’s tragic downfall, were written in a handsome italic script in double column with fine leaf and flower decorations, and with a space possibly left for illumination by another hand. These were later bound by Sidney Cockerell, retained in Emery Walker’s library, and six of these pages have recently been made available online through Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.28

Nonetheless, MS 905 (Figure 1) possesses a special appeal of its own.29 By being given access to Morris’s own working script, with its many evident imperfections, we enjoy a very privileged close relationship with the creator; for even the recurrent errors and corrections of his text serve to bring us fresh and exciting insights into his working practice. Ink-stains on the blank verso pages reveal his impatience to turn a new leaf before the old one dries. We seem to be watching from just over his shoulder as he writes; we can almost hear him breathing, and sense his heartbeats.

It is uncertain what Morris’s purpose was in creating these works. Were they intended for his eyes only, or for circulation among a select circle, or did he hope for a wider audience through eventual publication? There is, too, a curious paradox, by which an original medieval manuscript which was turned into print form, was then recreated as a manuscript by Morris. We are also aware that from this period of new approaches, false starts, and abandoned projects will develop the major printing achievements of the Kelmscott Press. By setting up that press Morris created printed books written by himself or by medieval authors, whose production received the skill, care and beauty once provided by medieval manuscripts. We may conclude that it was through his extensive study of early printed editions, and his apprenticeship in producing his own manuscripts, that Morris learned about such matters as the formal qualities of spacing and lettering, and acquired the expertise which would serve him so well in creating beautifully printed books.
Figure 1: SA MS 905.4, fol. 16. By permission of the Society of Antiquaries, London.
NOTES

1. I am grateful to the Society of Antiquaries of London for introducing me to MS 905 in 2004, and for allowing me access to it thereafter.
9. It is uncertain whether Morris translated the 1496 or the 1533 edition.
12. BL Add MS 54329, fol. 99.
13. BL Add MS 54329, fol. 1.


20. SA 905.4, fol. 40.

21. SA 905.4, fol. 17.


24. C is probably an abbreviation of capitulum [chapter]. I am grateful to Professor Peter Field and Dr Karen Limper-Herz for providing this information.

25. SA 905.2, fol. 228; fols, 276, 281; fols 266–68.


28. CAGM1991.1016.966.Z2 (‘Fragments translated, written out and decorated by William Morris from Sir Lancelot du Lac, the Saga of Howard the Halt, the Heimskringa, etc’. 1890s.). Cheltenham Museum has been unable to provide any further information. The Virtual Library is accessible online: http://www.artsandcraftsmuseum.org.uk/Arts_and_Crafts_Movement/Virtual_Library.aspx.

29. I admit that because the original is slightly larger than A4 size, MS 905.3–4 is not done full visual justice when printed from a downloaded version.
William Morris’s Paternal Ancestry

Dorothy Coles†, revised Barbara Lawrence

I. WILLIAM MORRIS’S GRANDFATHER
(1757–1817)

It is difficult to trace information about the earliest William Morris discussed here, grandfather of the famous William Morris (Figure 1), because all records about him date from the time before the introduction of compulsory registration of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales, in 1837. Local church registers contain the main surviving records of his times, and in order to consult them, one needs to know in which parish to search. Some of these registers are incomplete, or no relevant entry can be traced. Other sources include his will, and a declaration made by two of his sons to the College of Arms, some twenty-five years after their father’s death.

His will, dated 12 August 1817, does tell us something about the man and his family. He wrote it himself, because he felt seriously unwell, and decided that he must record his wishes immediately, while still able to do so. He describes himself as ‘William Morris of 2 Moffat Terrace in the parish of Saint Leonard Shoreditch’. He then commends his soul to God, asks forgiveness for his ‘manifold sins’, and requests that he be buried in the churchyard of Paddington Green Church, close to his beloved mother and his daughter Elizabeth, already buried there. He goes on to leave to ‘my dear and well-beloved wife Elizabeth Morris’ a life interest in his household goods and all other possessions; subject only to the discharge of a principal sum of money to Mr John Rutter the older, of Mitcham, Tobacconist, and a few small debts of trifling amount, with £100 to be his wife’s ‘for Mourning and for the purchase of Sundries she my wife may at the time be in need of. The residue of the money to be invested in the 3 per Cent Consols’. On his wife’s death, all the household goods were to go to his daughter Ann Morris, and everything else ‘turned into money as soon as conveniently may be
Figure 1: William Morris's Paternal Ancestry

William Morris = Elizabeth Stanley
1757-1817 1761-ca 1846
m 1789 St Mary's, Aldermanbury, London

John Stanley

William Morris

| Ann Francis = 1. ?
| Thomas = Agnes Robertson
|
| 1790-? 1797-1847 = 2. Emma Shelton 1799-? 1801-? = 2. Anne Leigh 1804-1885 1818-1858
|
| 1805-1894
|
| Sarah = Robert King m 1826, St Nicholas, Worcester Four children Nine children
|
| Charles Emma Henrietta William = Jane Burden Hugh Stanley Thomas Rendall Arthur Isabella Edgar Alice
|
| 1827 1830-1915 1832-1902 1834-1896 1839-1911 1839-1884 1840-? 1842-1923 1844-1924 1846-1942
|
| m 1859 Oxford
|
| Jane Alice (Fanny) 1861-1936 Mary (May) 1862-1938
equally divided share and share alike between my dear children namely John Morris, William Morris, Ann Morris, Francis Morris and Thomas Morris’. He then made provision for disposal of their share of the money, should any of his children predecease his wife. He signed the document, dated it, and added a note; ‘this sketch very imperfectly drawn up I cannot include my wishes thereon if please God I live I will put it in better form’.

Since the will had not been witnessed, an affidavit follows which shows that ‘Elizabeth Morris of Moffat Terrace, City Road in the county of Middlesex Widow, Sarah Rendall of Dean Street Soho in the same county Widow, and John Inglis Jerdein of Fore Street in the same county, Tobacconist’ all attended before a Notary Public and were sworn. Elizabeth Morris then made Oath that she was the lawful Widow and Relict of the late William Morris who had died on 17 August last, and that on that day she found in his pocket the document which purported to be his last will and testament. She had immediately sent for Sarah Rendall to attend her at her residence in Moffat Terrace, so that she might tell her of her brother’s death; they had also read over the will together, and Sarah Rendall had then taken and kept it. They certified that between 12 August and 17 August, when William Morris died, he was too ill to make any further disposition of his property, and that the will was in the same state as it had been found. Sarah Rendall and John Jerdein then declared that they both knew well the handwriting of William Morris, and that they believed the document to have been written by him. All three then swore the truth of their affidavits before the Notary Public on that day, 7 January 1818 and endorsed their statements.

The final document is dated 15 January 1818, and states that administration of the will is granted to John Morris, the eldest son, after he had sworn to advise Elizabeth Morris according to the tenor of the will and that they (the widow, the eldest son and the four other children) would have been the only persons entitled to share in the distribution of his goods had William Morris died intestate. In this document William Morris grandfather is described as ‘tobacconist deceased’.4

This will shows the writer to have been a devout man who was also literate, and possessed some facility with words. He shows great love for his family, and seems to have been concerned only with their welfare and the right conduct of his tobacconist’s business. The stoicism with which he dealt with his illness, giving priority to the writing of his will, seems to me to resemble that of the Icelanders whom his grandson later so much admired. It therefore seems sad that the old man died too early for his grandson to have known him.

The other document which gives information about William Morris grandfather and his children is a declaration made when his sons William Morris senior and Thomas Morris applied to the College of Arms for the family to be granted a Coat of Arms. They set out details of the family, declaring the dates of their father’s birth and burial (but, unfortunately, not his birthplace), and some dates
of the births and marriages, and the current addresses of his four younger children, and of birth and baptism of their own children. John Morris, the eldest son is shown only by his name, that he was married and that he has issue. William Morris grandfather's date of birth is 16 July 1757, and he is described as 'of the City of London, Merchant'. This document (dated 23 May 1843) is signed by William Morris senior and Thomas Morris and countersigned by Bluemantle, representing the College of Arms. Thereafter all adult male members of the family were entitled to use their Coat of Arms, details of which were agreed with the College shortly afterwards. 5

Many years later, J.W. Mackail, who wrote Morris’s biography at the request of his father-in-law Sir Edward Burne-Jones, acting on behalf of the Morris family, consulted some of the surviving members, and recorded what must have been family tradition about their origins. 6 He wrote ‘the Morrices were originally of Welsh descent. ... Morris’s grandfather (the first of the family, it is said, who dropped the Welsh Ap from his surname) settled in Worcester in the latter part of last century and throve there as a burgess. ... their second son, William Morris senior was born there on 14th June 1797. 7 About 1820, his father having removed his business to London, he was entered as a clerk in the firm of Harris, Sanderson and Harris, discount brokers’. But William Morris grandfather’s will shows that he died in 1817, and that at the time of his death was living in London’s East End, seeming well-established and running a business there. The fact that his mother and one of his daughters were buried in the graveyard at Paddington Green also indicates that the old man possessed a lengthy tie with London. This connection does not rule out the possibility of Mackail’s account being correct, but if so one would expect that the older William Morris (grandfather) would appear in records in the City of Worcester, and that the births of his children during the 1790s and 1800s would all have been recorded there, when, according to Mackail, the growing family was living in the city. Recent research by David Everett shows that in the 1851 UK Census, William Morris grandfather’s youngest son Thomas is recorded in Tavistock, Devon as having been born in Worcester. There is a record of the baptism of a Thomas Morris in St Nicholas, Worcester for 3 October 1804. 8 No other records of the Morris family have been found in Worcester so far.

The marriage of William Morris grandfather and Elizabeth Stanley is recorded in College of Arms records as taking place at St Mary’s Church, Aldermanbury, London, on 5 December 1789. Both parties were of that parish. 9 Witnesses included John Rutter also mentioned in the will of 1817 when resident in Mitcham, Surrey, near London, and a Sarah Morris, possibly William Morris grandfather’s mother, later buried in the churchyard of Paddington Green Church, or his sister, later Sarah Rendall, widow, living in Soho, both also referred to in the will of 1817. This information suggests a London base for the family.
There is also a record in Nottingham of the marriage of John Stanley and Ann Wyer, on 17 September 1758, which would support the idea of an origin in that city of Elizabeth Stanley, their daughter, William Morris grandfather’s wife, which is referred to in the College of Arms records, and also in Morris’s letters. As well as a William Morris being baptised during 1797 at St James Church, Clerkenwell, Islington, Middlesex, there are records of an Ann Morris and a Francis Morris, probably William Morris senior’s sister and brother, being baptised respectively at the same church during 1799 and 1802. In the 1851 UK Census for Walthamstow, for the household of Emma Morris, (William Morris senior’s widow: see below), there is an Ann Morris, a visitor, aged 51 years listed as staying with the family and born in Islington, Middlesex, who was probably the deceased William Morris senior’s sister. In the 1871 Census for Tavistock, Devon, Anne Morris aged 71 years is described as Thomas Morris’s sister, and born in Middlesex. In the 1851 Census for Denmark Hill, Camberwell, Lambeth, Francis Morris is listed as born in Pentonville, Middlesex. All this information suggests that the family was based in the London area for some time, and that William Morris senior, Anne Morris, and Francis Morris, were all born in the London area and not, as Mackail writes, in Worcester. It could be that they spent a period of time in Worcester from around 1802, after Francis Morris’s London baptism, and that Thomas Morris, William Morris senior’s youngest brother, was born there, and that the family or part of it then returned to London, and were well-settled back there before William Morris grandfather died in 1817. This hypothetical sequence of events would also have given William Morris senior an opportunity to have met his future wife Emma Shelton Morris, in Worcester. However, another possibility is that William Morris senior’s family, or part of it, was staying in Worcester for a short period of time around Thomas’s birth. This scenario would account for the lack of any other records in Worcester regarding William Morris senior and the family.

So, was Mackail’s account of the family’s origins correct, or had he been to some extent misinformed? The careers of William Morris grandfather’s three younger sons show them to have been both ambitious and successful; the elder, William Morris senior, outstandingly so. Might they not have thought that their true background, a tobacconist’s shop in the East End of London, would be a handicap to them in their subsequent careers, and might they have deliberately taken steps in order to suppress the details of that part of their background?

Confirmation of this theory would appear to be the observations that although Morris’s own letters show that he visited Wales several times, going to different parts of the country, and that his wife Jane also went there on other occasions, neither of them ever visited the family’s home district, nor did either seem to know where that was. Morris admitted as much in his reply, in 1890, to an enquiry from Havelock Ellis when he wrote: ‘I know little of my ancestors;
nothing beyond my grand-fathers and mothers. I seem to have a good deal of Welsh blood in me. ... My father’s father was Welsh, I believe, and my mother’s mother also. My name is very common all along the Welsh border; and if my memory serves me, I saw many Morrices on the shop fronts at Brecon. The name is undoubtedly Cymbric’. 14 If some cover-up did take place, and information was suppressed, the brothers’ plan was highly successful, for Mackail’s report has been quoted again and again by William Morris’s biographers, including Fiona MacCarthy,15 and only the discovery now of William Morris grandfather’s will, and the failure (so far) to find records of the Morris family in Worcester, apart from that of Thomas Morris’s baptism, have led to any doubts as to the accuracy of Mackail’s account.

II. WILLIAM MORRIS SENIOR (1797–1847), EMMA MORRIS (1805–1894)

William Morris senior, father of the famous William Morris, was the second son of William Morris grandfather and his wife, Elizabeth Stanley. He was born on 4 June 1797, and was seven years younger than his brother John, born 1790. It is not known definitely where he was born, but it now seems likely – from the above – that it was not in Worcester, but in the London area. A person of that name was baptised on 7 August 1797 at St James, Clerkenwell, Islington, Middlesex.16 It seems probable that his sister Elizabeth, who died young and was buried in Paddington Green Churchyard, was born between John, the eldest child,17 and William. There were also three younger siblings Ann, born 1799, Francis (1801), and Thomas (1804).18 At the time of his father’s death in 1817 William Morris senior (then age 20) was already working, but no details of that employment have survived. At some time he went to work for Harris, Sanderson & Harris, bill-brokers of Lombard Street in the City of London, where he was successful, being made a partner in 1826 when he only twenty-nine. This promotion assured him a good salary and even better prospects, and made him a highly eligible young man.

On 27 July 1826, he married Emma Shelton in her home town of Worcester; she having been baptised there in the parish church of St Nicholas on 27 May 1805.19 The marriage register shows that they were both ‘of full age’, and in fact he was twenty-nine, and she twenty-one. While Emma is recorded as of the parish of St Nicholas, Worcester, William Morris senior is stated to be of the parish of St Leonard the King and Martyr in the City of London, showing that he was at that time living there. The register also records that he was a widower, but nothing is known definitely of this earlier marriage. One possibility is a marriage at St James, Clerkenwell on 2 November 1822 of a William Morris and Jane Dennis of St Cle-
ments Danes, and a Jane Morris being buried at St Mary’s Paddington Green on 28 May 1823, aged 26 years, the address being Bath Street, St Lukes, Middlesex. However it cannot be stated with any certainty that this is the same person. No record of his first marriage has been found in Worcester. At that time, the commonest causes of death of young women were consumption (pulmonary tuberculosis), fevers such as typhoid and scarlet fever, or problems associated with pregnancy and childbirth. The loss of his wife when he was still so young must have been a harrowing experience for William senior, but no other mention of it survives among the family papers.

William Morris senior’s likeness as a young man is recorded in the form of a miniature watercolour now held at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow (Figure 2). The painting is signed ‘T. Wheeler’, and bears the year 1824. A portrait of Emma Shelton by the same painter matches it, and they were probably painted for the couple to exchange at the time of their betrothal. He appears rather immature for a man of about twenty-seven years, and his features are delicate, with a jaw less heavy than that which most of his children developed. Both the sitters are smartly dressed: he wears a dark coat with a lighter-coloured waistcoat, a very high collar and a white cravat with an impressively intricate knot. The feature which most clearly links him with his eldest son is his hair, which is shown very dark and curling up from his forehead in the same unruly manner so familiar from images of the young Morris.

After they were married, William and Emma settled into rooms above Harris, Sanderson, & Harris’s offices in Lombard Street. It was customary at that time for a member of a firm to live on the premises. Emma soon became pregnant and during August 1827 gave birth to a son, Charles Stanley, who apparently seemed healthy as no record has been found of his baptism (which would probably have been arranged if his life seemed in danger). He lived for only a few days, however, and was buried on 7 September 1827 in the churchyard of Saint Edmund the King and Martyr in Lombard Street, very close to his parents’ home. It was only when a daughter was born more than three years later, on 28 October 1830 as wintry airs were much feared at that time of the year. A second daughter, Henrietta, was born on 8 November 1832, and baptised during July 1833.

At the beginning of 1833, the family moved out of what were then the fogs, smoke and dirt of Central London to the almost rural surroundings of Walthamstow, east of the city, where they rented Elm House. Their first son to survive was born there on the 24 March 1834, and was named William. Elm House was a comfortable suburban home with a large garden, and from there Morris’s father was able to travel daily up to the City by stagecoach. The family regularly attended their parish church, as the parents approved of the unadorned ‘low Anglican’
form of service in use there, but it seems to have appealed less to their children, as later, several of them turned to churches with more elaborate rituals.

Early in 1834, a group of twelve City business men met in order to discuss the possibility of opening a school for boys in Walthamstow: the plan being to finance the scheme by selling shares at £20 each. Among the sponsors of the plan was Joseph Owen Harris, one of two Quaker brothers who owned the bill-broking firm for which William Morris senior then worked. William senior decided to support the venture, and attended a second meeting shortly afterwards, even though it was held on the day on which his son was born. The group agreed that they would go ahead with the plan, and that the school be named ‘The Forest Proprietary Grammar School’. 22

At Elm House, two more sons were born – Hugh Stanley (1837), and Thomas Rendall (1839). Stanley was the surname of William Morris senior’s mother, and
the second name of their first child Charles who had died in infancy. Thomas was the name of William Morris senior’s brother, and Rendall the married name of William Morris grandfather’s sister.

By this time, William Morris senior was doing exceedingly well in the City, and was soon in almost sole charge of the bill-broking firm. As Mackail wrote, ‘Bill and discount broking was a class of business carried on by a comparatively limited number of persons, whose status and social consideration approached those of private bankers. Competition was not keen, and the members of established firms lived in ease and even opulence’. His brothers were also flourishing, Francis being connected to the Coal Exchange, and Thomas owning a coal merchant’s business in London. In 1844, William senior and Thomas invested in shares in a new copper mine on the Duke of Bedford’s estate on the border of Devon with Cornwall. The workings proved uncommonly rich in ore, so that for many years the brothers received large dividends on their shares, besides their income from other sources. Both soon became directors of the mine, the Devonshire Great Consolidated Copper Mining Company (Devon Great Consols), and Thomas moved to Devon in order to be ‘Resident Director’ in charge of operations.

After six years at Elm House, in 1840 William senior, Emma and their children moved to nearby Woodford Hall. Their new home was a Georgian mansion, in extensive grounds which included a home farm of 100 acres (ca 40 ha) which supplied the household with all its vegetables, fruit, dairy produce and meat. At the same time, the number of domestic staff they employed increased considerably. At the William Morris Gallery, a copy of a local news sheet survives which is undated, but on which is noted in pencil ‘1840’. If that year is correct, it would seem that once he had moved into the Hall, William senior lost no time antagonising local people, as the entry concerning him runs: ‘We advise the far-famed ex-auctioneer, W. Morris of Woodford Hall, not to be so uncharitable as to try to prevent poor people from getting water, this severe weather, from off his premises – his worthy predecessor did not act in this manner. Look out, old boy, for all the world knows what you are and what you have been’. Other items published on the same sheet show that it featured gossip and scandal; but nevertheless there is likely to have been some truth in the matter reported. The complaint about William senior leaves a nasty impression. For a man who was a regular churchgoer and professed to be a devout Christian, he had apparently shown a harsh, uncaring attitude toward the poor among his neighbours.

The 1841 Census shows that Woodford Hall was a large household: beside Emma and William senior, their six children, and his mother and sister, there were ten servants (one man and nine women) ‘living in’. No details of their occupations are recorded; all are just listed ‘house servant’. Other staff, living in
tied houses, were a gardener, his wife and four children; their eldest son (twenty)
working as a manservant, and their second son (fifteen) also as a gardener (it
seems probable both were employed at the Hall), while two younger children
were at school. A coachman and his wife lived at the stables, and a further man
described as an ‘agricultural labourer’ at Woodford Hall Cottage with his wife
and nine year old son. Four further children were born to Emma and William
at Woodford Hall; Arthur, shown in the 1841 census as nine months old, Isabella
(1842), Edgar Llewelyn (1844; a rare suggestion of a possible Welsh connection),
and Alice (1846).

In 1842, when the boy was eight years old, his father took the young William
on holiday in Kent. There is no mention of any other member of the family going
with them, and the father may have planned the trip in the hope of becoming
closer to his eldest son, knowing that the boy was developing a love of old build-
ings, and already showing an interest in architecture. They visited Canterbury
Cathedral and the church at Minster in Kent. These visits created a lasting mem-
yory in the child; fifty years later Morris could still recall details of both buildings,
and the thrill of seeing the great Cathedral. His father also used to take him
up to the City to see the Lord Mayor’s Shows from Harris, Sanderson & Harris’s
premises. He was planning that young William should take over the business in
due course, and these visits may have been intended to impress on the boy the
important status of men who worked in the city.

In 1843, William senior and his brother Thomas considered that their elevated
social and economic status justified their possessing a coat of arms, and in April
that year they petitioned the Duke of Norfolk at the College of Arms to approve
the use of one by the Morris family. They based their claim on the statement that
the family had held one in the past, but that it had fallen out of use, and they
did not wish to be at fault using an incorrect one. This may have been true, but
appears unlikely. However, at the time, the only conditions restricting consent
to such a grant were that applicants’ families should be of some substance, and
living at a suitable address. The petition was duly granted, and correspondence
between Bluemantle Pursuivant, representing the Kings of Arms of the College,
and William senior followed in order to determine the bearings the family would
use. According to Mackail, young Morris was ‘already of an age to be keenly
interested in heraldry’.

The device their discussion produced depicts a silver horse’s head on a deep
blue background, with three gold horseshoes, one placed centrally below the
head, and two in the upper corners. The crest is also a silver horse’s head, with
three black horseshoes on the neck, two below and one above. The motto is Pax
et Libertas. There seems to have been no special significance to the device, the
motto or the colours chosen, but Morris always said that his favourite colour was
blue, and Mackail refers to the white horse association in several future instances;
the horses painted on tiles at Red House, and regular pilgrimages to the White Horse on the Berkshire Downs not far from Kelmscott Manor. On 23 May 1843, William senior and Thomas visited the College of Arms and, in accordance with the usual procedure, presented a paper setting out the dates of birth of their parents, themselves and their brothers and sisters, and also of their children, and signed a declaration that the information was true to the best of their knowledge and belief. And when this declaration had been countersigned by Bluemantle, the formalities were complete. From that day, all adult males of the Morris family were entitled to use the coat of arms, with that right descending to their sons when they came of age; also they would have been justified in describing themselves as ‘Esquire’. The tobacconist’s shop in Shoreditch was thus put far behind.

When the young Morris was nine, he was sent to a preparatory school; in 1845, only two years later, it was arranged that he should change from dayboy to boarder – still at a local school. The boy hated this, for as a boarder, although he was able to see his family in church on Sundays, he was not allowed to speak to them; his spare time also became much more regimented than it had been when he had lived at home. The change took place at just about the time his father probably began showing signs of the disease from which he died two years later.

On 8 September 1847, William Morris senior died at Woodford Hall, the cause of his death being given on a certificate as ‘Ulceration or cancer of the stomach. Two years. Certified’. He was buried in the churchyard of Woodford Parish Church, with his coat of arms featuring prominently on the large stone memorial which his widow erected for him. It is usually stated that his death was unexpected, and that it therefore set off a chain of disastrous events in the London market, but the certificate quoted here indicates a lengthy illness, and it seems unlikely that William senior had been working regularly and in full control of the bill-broking business for some time. It may be that he feared loss of confidence in his firm, if his absence became widely known, and that he and his clerks had endeavoured to conceal it. Certainly a trade recession began at about the time of his death, and the firm, like many others, ran into difficulties. Seven days after his death, it suspended trading, stating that this was ‘an event which was wholly unforeseen and unexpected by us’, and was due to the previous retirement of one of the partners and now the ‘sudden and lamented death’ of William Morris senior.

He had not acted as though his illness was likely to be terminal, as would have been expected of a man of business, for he left no will. But once the market settled down again, his widow Emma found herself left an income which was adequate for herself and her nine children, the money coming mainly from shares in Devon Great Consols. Her husband’s brothers Thomas and Francis remained to advise her on financial and other matters until young William came of age. She did not wish to continue at Woodford Hall without her husband, however,
and during the year following his death, moved her family to a smaller house, although still a substantial one, at Water House, Forest Road, Walthamstow, now the William Morris Gallery.

**NOTES**

1. This article is based on unfinished work by the late Dorothy Coles (Obituary, William Morris Society Newsletter, Summer 2012, pp. 4-5). Some changes have been made for clarity, and in order to incorporate recent research which supports Dorothy’s new interpretation of Morris’s ancestry.

   Working as a volunteer for the William Morris Society at Kelmscott House, I made some inquiries about William Morris’s ancestry on behalf of David Everett who was researching Morris’s Worcester connections. I approached Dorothy Coles shortly before her death as I knew her as an expert in Morris textiles and Morris family history. After her death Tony Pinkney, a member of the Society and friend of Dorothy, was able to negotiate with her family that her papers relating to Morris family research, which included these unfinished chapters about Morris’s father and grandfather, should come to the Society. Nicholas C. S. Mason, Dorothy’s nephew, has given permission on behalf of the family for these to be published. There remain many uncertainties and questions about William Morris’s father, paternal grandparents and other ancestors which further research might clarify.

   In this article the famous William Morris will be referred to as ‘Morris’ or ‘William Morris’, his father ‘William Morris senior’ and his grandfather ‘William Morris grandfather’. A parallel article, by David Everett, which explores the Morris family’s connections to Worcester, appears in this volume on pp. 35–60.


4. In News from Nowhere, a tobacconist’s in Piccadilly is described as being run by two children. As Tony Pinkney points out, there is a focus in News from Nowhere on grandfather-grandson relationships

5. Documents held by the College of Arms, Queen Victoria Street, London.

indicating that ‘The Morrices were generally disappointed in Mackail’s presentation of William Morris’. E.P. Thompson (William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1955, p. 736; afterwards Thompson) refers to Mackail thus: ‘as the son in law of Georgiana Burne-Jones he was the official biographer’ of Morris. Fiona MacCarthy (William Morris. A Life for Our Time), London: Faber & Faber, 1994, p. x writes ‘It was with family support that the commission to write the authorized biography of Morris went to J.W. Mackail’.

7. There is a record of a baptism of a William Morris on 7 August 1797 at St James, Clerkenwell, Islington, Middlesex, with an entry of 4 June 1797 as his date of birth in the Church of England Parish Registers 1538-1812, London Metropolitan Archives, Northampton Road, London (research by Eva Lawrence and David Everett). This information conflicts with that given to the College of Arms by William Morris senior and his brother Thomas, who cite the date of birth as 14 June 1789.

8. Dorothy Coles and her nephew Nicholas C.S. Mason searched records in Worcester. David Everett also investigated records there with no result apart from the baptism of a Thomas Morris at St Nicholas Church Worcester in 1804, recorded in the Parish Register. David Everett adds: There are baptisms of eleven children in all, to six other couples with the surname Morris in this parish register, for the period 1779 to 1800. A further complication is that the British Newspaper Archive only covers Worcester newspapers from about 1820 onwards, and the earliest local directory also dates from 1820, by which time Morris’s grandfather was living in London. Recent work using the Ancestry internet subscription site (http://www.ancestry.co.uk) has convinced me that William Morris senior and his siblings John, Ann, and Francis (but not Thomas) were all baptised in London. I have found good matches on Ancestry for all of them apart from John.

9. College of Arms records and Parish Register of St Mary’s Church, Aldermanbury, London for 1789, p. 92, No.191

10. College of Arms records.


12. College of Arms records and recent research by David Everett. College of Arms records show Anne Morris as born 19 September 1799, and baptised 29 December. The Parish Register for St James, Clerkenwell, Islington, Middlesex record an Ann was born 1 September 1799 and baptised 5 December. (NB: The College of Arms spells Anne with an ‘e’, the Parish Register without). The College of Arms possesses no dates for Francis Morris, but the Parish Register of St James show him as born 29 September 1801 and baptised 5
February 1802. The College of Arms records Thomas Morris as being born 14 September 1804, and the Parish Register for St Nicholas Church, Worcester a Thomas Morris being baptised 3 October 1804.

13. Jackie Latham, ‘Thomas Morris, Resident Director of Devon Great Consols’, *Journal of the William Morris Society*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, p. 44 (Afterwards Latham). By 1871 (UK Census data), Anne Morris was living with her younger brother Thomas, perhaps helping to look after his family after the death of Thomas’s wife in 1858. There were nine children, two of whom died shortly after their mother’s death.

16. See note 7
17. Details of John Morris’s descendants are contained in the Dorothy Coles Archive held by the William Morris Society at Kelmscott House. These details were provided by John’s great-great-granddaughter who agreed that this information be included.
18. See note 12
19. College of Arms records and Parish Register of St Nicholas Church, Worcester.
21. Charles Morris’s burial is listed in parish records for St Edmund the King and Martyr, City of London.
23. Mackail, p. 3.
25. J.W.S. Lutton & F.W. Clerk, *St Mary’s Church, Woodford, Essex*, London: Passmore Edwards Museum, 1977, p. 33. William Morris senior served for two years as a Churchwarden at St Mary’s Church, Woodford, Essex, and for four years as Overseer of the Poor. Morris would not have approved. Asked once by an over-zealous curate whether he had ever served on a Board of Guardians, Morris is said to have thundered, ‘No, thank God!’; Arthur Compton-Rickett, *William Morris: a study in personality*, London: Herbert Jenkins, 1913, p. 28; as quoted in Thompson, second edition, 1976, p. 699.
26. UK Census for 1841. As far as is known, these details have not been given in any other account of Morris’s childhood apart from Dorothy Coles ‘My Dear Emma’: William and Emma Morris’, 2004, Journal of the William Morris Society, Vol. XVI, No.1, pp. 45-60.


28. Mackail, p. 11.


30. Copy of Death Certificate (No.151) registered 15 September 1847, Walthamstow, Essex, obtained from The General Register Office, Southport, Merseyside.


32. Harvey & Press, as Note 31, quoting Sanderson & Co. to Creditors 15 September 1847. Reprinted in The Economist, 18 September 1847.

Acknowledgements: Thanks are given to Tony Pinkney who read the text for Dorothy Coles, and the revised text, and whose suggestions have been included, and to David Everett, who kindly agreed that his more recent research should be included and who has made useful suggestions which have been incorporated, and to Eva Lawrence for her contribution to research on the Morris family. Thanks are due also to the William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest, for the use of images of portraits of Morris’s parents, and reference to their copy of a news sheet cutting about Morris’s father, and also to the College of Arms for use of their records.
The ancestry of William Morris: the Worcester connection

David Everett

Most biographers of Morris, from Mackail onwards, concern themselves only briefly with his ancestry, and one is inclined to conclude that Morris himself had few dealings with his parents’ families, either in the paternal or the maternal line. One is inevitably curious about a family background which seems shrouded in mystery. Investigating this background may possibly throw light on Morris’s most unusual and intriguing personality. The purpose of this essay is to do just that, utilising a genealogist’s methods and resources, which are expanding as a result of digitisation of original material, including some parish registers and local newspapers. Throughout, the aim is to rely as far as possible on primary sources. However, the extent to which this may help us better understand Morris, will be for the reader to judge. A simplified family tree (Figure 1) is included, in order to help readers identify individual members of the Morris family more easily.

Extensive research in Worcester has failed to substantiate reported connections of Morris’s father (William Morris senior) with that city. In a letter to Have-lock Ellis, Morris wrote ‘My father and mother both came from Worcester. My father’s father was Welsh, I believe and my mother’s mother also. My name is very common along the border’. However, he did not claim that his father was a native of Worcester, and there is no evidence of his father’s baptism at any of the city’s churches. Moreover, although the surname Morris was common in Worcester, no other city records support the view that Morris’s father had established himself in the city. It is undeniable that the surname Morris is Welsh, as is Jenkins (that of his mother’s mother), but Welsh surnames are very common throughout England, and especially in border counties such as Herefordshire, Shropshire, Gloucestershire, and to a similar extent Worcestershire. Morris’s pronouncements on the subject of his forebears are vague, and migration of the Morris family from Wales may have happened several generations earlier. What follows is therefore almost completely confined to Morris’s maternal family. A parallel article also published in this issue (pp. 19–33) explores Morris’s paternal origins.
Figure 1 – Simplified family tree of Emma Shelton Morris
I. Morris’s Parents

Morris’s mother, Emma Shelton, married William Morris senior at the parish church of St Nicholas, Worcester on 27 July 1826, Emma being described as ‘of this parish’ and her bridegroom of ‘Edmund the King & Martyr in the city of London’. The couple are said to have become engaged in 1824, at which time their portraits were painted by T. Wheeler (See Figure 1, this volume, p. 26), presumably the miniaturist based in London who exhibited at the Royal Academy forty-nine times between 1817 and 1845, and whose services, one imagines, would have been greatly in demand. Although Emma was only nineteen in 1824, the Shelton family was numerous, and it is very likely that a close relative was already living in the London area and was able to chaperone her. A marriage between the Sheltons and the Morrises was apparently regarded as a natural arrangement, the families having some similar previous connection, but the absence of detail rules out any further research in that direction. This matter is discussed further below.  

William Morris senior applied for a licence to marry in Worcester. The sworn document supporting his application (known as a marriage allegation) reveals that at the time he was a widower: the name of his first wife is not known. As in 1818 he was twenty-one years old, this leaves six years before the certain date of his engagement to Emma Shelton. One possibility therefore is a marriage at St James’, Clerkenwell, London, on 2 November 1822 of William Morris to Jane Dennis of St Clement Danes. One of the three witnesses was William Dennis, possibly the bride’s father. A Jane Morris was buried at St Mary’s, Paddington Green on 28 May 1823, aged 26, her address being Bath Street, St Lukes, Middlesex. However, it cannot be stated with any certainty that this is the same person. Further research into Morris’s male line needs to be pursued in the London records.  

2. The Shelton Siblings

Morris’s mother Emma was the youngest child of Joseph and Mary Shelton. Each of their children was baptised at the parish church of St Nicholas, Worcester. The two eldest, Joseph and Mary Louisa, died in infancy. The remaining children were baptised thus:

11 July 1793          Caroline  
27 February 1795      Henry Hammond
Morris’s mother Emma was therefore the youngest, and lived to a great age. It seems likely that she would have made an effort to keep in touch with some of her siblings, particularly after her husband’s early death in 1847. The only direct contact Morris himself seems to have achieved is during the 1850s when he visited his aunts.\(^5\)

Caroline, the eldest Shelton sibling, remained unmarried until well into her forties. *Bentley’s Worcestershire Directory* (ca 1841, but no doubt compiled over several years) records her under ‘milliners and dressmakers’ in Lich Street, Worcester, an area close to the cathedral, which consisted mainly of ancient but modest dwellings. (It was demolished during the 1960s in order to make way for a new shopping centre despite an outcry from John Betjeman and others). She had most probably been employed in this way since her youth. The earliest *Worcestershire County Directory* (compiled by S. Lewis, 1820) lists under the same heading Shelton & Blandy at 86 High Street. These business premises would have been located at the south end of High Street, close to the Guildhall, and were probably a ‘superior’ establishment.\(^6\)

However, on 3 September 1840, at St Peter’s church Worcester, and at the age of forty-seven, Caroline Shelton married the splendidly-named Morwent Baron, gent., son of Thomas Baron, gent., her address being given on the marriage certificate as Edgar Street. This is the short street leading up to the Edgar Tower, the imposing entrance to College Green, giving access to the cathedral cloisters. Her father’s occupation is shown as lay clerk. Baron was a solicitor, and obviously retired, as he was about twenty years older than his bride.

This was to be a very short-lived marriage. A Worcester newspaper reported his death in 1846, still describing him as solicitor, and ‘late of Caerleon, Monmouthshire’. Caroline survived him by ten years, dying in 1856. Her death was not reported in the local newspaper. In the 1851 UK census she is again recorded as a dressmaker, with her niece Martha Parker, 34, a native of Usk, who can also be found as a dressmaker in the 1871 census, living with a member of the Blandy family. In the 1841 census, Martha appears as the eldest daughter of Isaac Parker, an auctioneer, in Church Street, Usk. During 1851, Caroline earned sufficient funds to employ one servant, but her late husband’s imposing name was not

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\(^5\) The Worcester connection

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4 February 1798        Ann
24 November 1799       Harvey
8 July 1801            Eliza
27 May 1805            Emma
matched by an opulent estate – he left no will and no assets. He came to public notice on one occasion in 1815, while living at Coleford, Gloucestershire, when he was convicted of the technical offence of ‘uttering and negotiating a certain undertaking in writing, for the payment of a smaller sum than 20s’ against a recent Act intended to stop the circulation of notes or cheques for such small amounts. He was fined £5.7

Caroline is not the only Shelton whose marriage prompts the question – ‘Why this particular partner?’ For example, Morwent Baron’s home at the time of the marriage was Monmouth, and hers Worcester. How well did they know each other, and what did they know of each other? Where did they meet? Baron was a widower, and described himself (and his father) as ‘gent’. Four witnesses signed the register, but none of them appears to have been a blood relative of the bride or the groom.

Henry Hammond Shelton, the second sibling and Emma’s elder brother, often referred to simply as Henry, was a prominent member of the Worcester community. He served as a lay clerk at Worcester Cathedral from 1817/8 for a long period, though absent through illness from February 1844. He finally resigned in 1852, but continued to be paid a pension at the same rate as his stipend. He also resigned his post as organist at the parish church of St Nicholas, Worcester, which he had held for forty years. He put in his final appearance at a parish Vestry Meeting in April 1851, when his successor Jabez Jones was appointed. Since 1845 the rector of this church had been the celebrated W.H. Havergal, a fairly prolific composer of hymns, and father of the even better-known Frances Ridley Havergal. Henry Hammond had also been active as a ‘music master’, and was listed as such in Lewis’s 1820 Directory of Worcestershire, where his address is given as 8, Barbourn Terrace. In 1797, an uncle, John Shelton, had married Mary Ann Hammond at the parish church of St John-in-Bedwardine (on the west bank of the Severn, now part of the city of Worcester), and it seems likely that there was an existing connection between the two families, prompting the choice of Henry Hammond’s second name. It is also worthy of note that a member of a Herefordshire branch of the Sheltons (born in Ledbury) was named John Hammond Shelton. He died at his home in the King’s Road, Chelsea [London] on 9 January 1867 after a long career as a cashier in the Bank of England.8

Henry Hammond was clearly highly thought of in Worcester. In January 1825 he was chosen to ‘open’ the new organ at St John’s (St John-in-Bedwardine), where hymns and anthems were sung by the choir of the cathedral, and the collection earmarked to assist with purchase of the instrument. His musical talents were not limited to the organ, however, and he sang at Three Choirs Festivals in Worcester in 1821, 1824 and 1827, and also at amateur concerts in the city, earning praise in the local press for his performance of ‘La mia Dorabella’ from Cosi fan tutte in an amateur concert in 1832. Moreover, he was a member of a vocal quartet
hired for some fairly prestigious events, including a meeting of the newly-formed Evesham corporation in 1833.9

Henry Hammond married Maria Trehearn with the consent of her parents (she was a minor) at the parish church of St James, Bath, Somerset, on 14 April 1819. They produced two children, Henry Richard, baptised 29 January 1820, and Maria Charlotte, 12 March 1821, both at Claines parish church. Maria died aged twenty-four, and was buried at St James, Bath in April 1823.10

Henry Richard Shelton first came to public notice when, as a thirteen year old, he was commended by a local newspaper for alerting the rest of his family to a fire which had broken out in their home. He subsequently joined the Indian Army, rising through the ranks to Colonel. In 1843, it was reported that ‘Ensign Shelton, of the Indian Army, son of Mr H.H. Shelton of this city, has been promoted to a Lieutenancy in the 48th Light Infantry, late a native regiment, in succession to Lieutenant and brevet Captain Dewar, removed to the 37th. Ensign Shelton has been attached to the division under General Nott during the whole of the Afghanistan war, and was concerned in the second siege of Ghuznee, at Canda-har, and Khelat-i-Ghilzie, in the forcing of the Khyber Pass, and other successful operations’. In 1844, his promotion to the Adjutancy of the 38th Regiment was reported. There is no further mention until 1862, when we learn that ‘Captain Henry Richard Shelton had been promoted to the rank of major in the company in which he has long served’.11

Henry Hammond and Maria Shelton’s daughter Maria Charlotte married Henry Russell, Esq., of the 7th Regiment, NI [Northern India?] at Julundhur on 23 November 1848. The event was reported in a Worcester newspaper, the original source being the Delhi Gazette. Further information is recorded below.12

On 13 December 1825, two and a half years after the death of Maria, Henry Hammond married Elizabeth Saffery, a native of Canterbury, Kent, at Whittington, a chapelry of the parish of St Peter’s, Worcester. His sister Emma was one of the witnesses, as well as his younger brother Harvey and two female members of the d’Egville family, Mary and Matilda, doubtless related to the well-known (and prosperous) dancing-master Louis (sometimes written Lewis) Harvey (sometimes written Hervey or Hervet) d’Egville – a family prominent in Worcester’s musical life. Henry Hammond’s local status is indicated by his presidency of a local Masonic Lodge, and his election as one of the two Assessors involved in compiling the burgess roll for the city (1836 and 1837), the other being a local solicitor. No doubt he would have made an even greater mark on local society had it not been for his poor health. He and his new wife moved into increasingly well-appointed houses, from 12, The Tything, to 8, Albany Terrace and then 9, St George’s Square.13

Henry Hammond’s second marriage was childless. His wife Elizabeth came from a musical family (in 1843, the death of her uncle Osmond Saffery ‘formerly
an eminent professor of music’ in Ramsgate, Kent, was reported in a Worcester newspaper), and was even more well-known in Worcester than her husband. During the 1840s, she ran her own business selling pianofortes, but sold it to Jabez Jones in April 1847, ‘in consequence of an increase in her professional engagements’. Jones subsequently succeeded Henry Hammond as organist at St Nicholas’ church, and was a prominent member of the Worcester Glee Club, founded in 1809 or 1810. Prominent members of this club included from 1850 the father and uncle of the composer Edward Elgar. Like the Safferys, the Elgars were originally from Kent.¹⁴

In her numerous advertisements in the local newspapers, Elizabeth styled herself ‘Mrs Henry Shelton’. As a businesswoman, she was clearly ambitious; she advertised visits to ‘Town’ (London), inviting potential customers to specify their needs so that she could place suitable orders with dealers. She was quite happy to trade in used instruments as well as new, including one which had been played by her teacher Henri Herz (a piano virtuoso and composer who enjoyed considerable fame in his heyday, referred to in the Morning Post as the ‘Paganini of the pianoforte’, and some time professor at the Paris Conservatoire). From 1842, she also offered for sale Wheatstone’s Patent Concertinas, still advertised as ‘a new musical instrument’ six years later, and one of the few instruments considered suitable for female performers. It is unclear when the original model was introduced, but a second patent (for an improved version) was obtained in February 1844. Elizabeth’s efforts were, it seems, directed to keeping Worcester up to date with the latest musical developments. Her shop, or ‘music room’, as she preferred to call it, was ‘adjoining the Star Hotel’ in Foregate Street, formerly the Star and Garter, but recently re-named the ‘Whitehouse’.¹⁵

‘Mrs Henry Shelton’ also gave music lessons, privately and in classes, sometimes travelling to north Worcestershire for pupils located in Kidderminster, Stourport, Hartlebury, Droitwich and elsewhere. In 1836 she even placed an advertisement in a London newspaper, addressing herself to governesses, advising them that she was offering a vacancy to anyone ‘who may be desirous of improving herself in Music, to reside with her during the ensuing vacation’. Applications were to be sent to her at 389 High Street, Cheltenham.¹⁶ As Henry Hammond was at that time both lay clerk at Worcester Cathedral and organist at St Nicholas church, Worcester, one wonders whether he too was staying in Cheltenham at holiday time (neglecting his duties, possibly), or whether Elizabeth was free to take time off in Cheltenham on her own. It is unknown, for that matter, whether her business trips to London were accompanied or not.

Elizabeth’s commitments were clearly very demanding, and in May 1844, an advertisement in the local press indicated that she had relinquished some of her pupils living at a distance, and could therefore increase her engagements [in the city]. She was also involved in organising local concerts, occasionally in person.
Some of these involved well-known performers, including her teacher Henri Herz (see above), and another piano virtuoso named Thalberg. She also featured as pianist herself. In 1835 a long account of ‘Mrs Henry Shelton’s Concert’ at the Worcester Guildhall, appeared in a Worcester newspaper, where an audience of around three hundred and fifty enjoyed the first appearance in the city of Henri Herz, ‘in turns delighting and astonishing his auditors by the brilliancy and rapidity of his execution ... ’ ‘Miss Woodyatt’ appeared as the prima donna, and other performers included the famous cellist, Mr Lindley. Mrs Shelton’s ‘well-known ballad “Oh! ask me not why” elicited a general encore’. Mr Henry Shelton performed in a group singing two glee’s and the leader of the orchestra was ‘Mr d’Egville’.17

Elizabeth had already come to public notice during the late 1820s as a composer of songs and piano pieces. Her reputation was not purely local—in 1836, she even attracted favourable comment in a prominent London newspaper: (‘This lady is decidedly a favourite ... ’, etc). She published some of her own pieces herself, but others were included in musical anthologies printed in London. In a review of The Musical Gem: A Souvenir for 1832, another prestigious London paper stated that ‘the pearl of the collection is the “Broken Vow” by Mrs Henry Shelton, a beautiful and pathetic air’. In 1836, Wheeler’s Music Warehouse in High Street, Worcester, advertised several named compositions of Elizabeth’s for sale, and offered a catalogue of these, along with her other songs and piano pieces gratis. Her high point came in 1837, when she composed a piece entitled ‘Homage à la Reine’ for the coronation of Queen Victoria, ‘with the sanction of, and dedicated by express permission to, her Most Gracious Majesty ... ’. In 1841, she very generously donated twenty guineas (£21), representing the proceeds of a song she had written for the occasion, towards the cost of erecting a new church at Wellington Heath, Herefordshire. Reports suggest that more money might have been forthcoming, but it seems that Elizabeth’s public acclaim may now have been waning, as this appears to have been a solitary (and rather extravagant) gesture. Her last production advertised in the local press, published by J.F. Shaw of London, was entitled ‘Who is Right, or The Test of Truth: an Appeal to the Judge to decide between The True and the False Prophets, The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error. With an Address to the Reader’ (price 3d). This was probably no more than a pamphlet. Its contents are not known, but the title suggests that, at the time of its composition, her spirits were rather low.18

By the time of the 1861 census, Henry Hammond and Elizabeth were living in Dover, probably in the hope that the sea air might benefit Henry. However, despite his retirement on health grounds, he outlived his wife. On October 15, 1870 died ‘at the residence of her brother, Elizabeth, wife of Henry Shelton Esq., late of this city, much lamented’. It is unclear why she was at her brother’s home (wherever that may have been), and it is also rather surprising to find that a mar-
riage is recorded on 2 August 1871 at St Mary’s, Islington between Mr Henry H. Shelton and Mrs Mary Parkes. Henry Hammond lived on until 1875, dying at 39, Crane-Grove, Holloway, Middlesex, but was ‘formerly of 139 Liverpool Road, Islington’, the address of his ‘relict’ [widow] Mary. His estate by now had dwindled, his personal effects being valued at under £100. Mary’s origins and her subsequent history are both obscure.  

None of the Shelton marriages seems to have been straightforward. The next sister, Ann (baptised 4 February 1798), married Thomas St John, gent., at St Nicholas’ church, Worcester, on 6 July 1822, but he died on 19 December 1833, aged thirty-six. It seems that there were no children. Thomas, then of Moor Place in the Tything of Whistons [Claines parish], made a will in 1831 leaving Ann all his ‘frehold, leasehold and copyhold houses, lands or tenements, goods, personal effects etc’. Thomas was probably related to St Andrew St John, a former Dean of Worcester Cathedral (1783-1795), but when he applied for a marriage licence, his bondsman was William Savage, a porter at the cathedral, which seems a rather eccentric choice. A bondsman was a surety, and would normally be someone who was financially sound. In theory, if the conditions laid down in the bond were not satisfied, the bondsman could be called upon to pay a significant sum, surely well beyond the means of a porter.  

In the 1841 census, Ann (Shelton) St John (‘Independent’, i.e. of independent means) is listed as living at Sansome Place, Worcester. On 22 January 1849, she married John Beresford Turner, Esq. at St Peter’s, Worcester. The marriage entry in the parish register gives his marital status as widower, describing him as ‘gent.’ of the parish of Claines, the son of James Turner, also ‘gent’. It is indeed a revelation to discover that only six months before, on 20 June 1848, the same John Beresford Turner was married at the same church to Ann Ursula Slater. On that occasion both parties were also already widowed: the groom was a ‘gent.’ of Brockmanton [near Leominster] in Herefordshire, and the bride’s abode was in College Precincts, close to Worcester Cathedral. The space on the form for the father’s details for bride and groom is struck through, and the witnesses’ signatures are practically illegible. A newspaper report indicates that the marriage service was conducted by the Rev. George Fleming St John, a close relative, no doubt, of Ann Shelton’s first husband Thomas St John.  

Ann Ursula Turner, John Beresford’s second wife [he married the first, a Miss Collins, at Puddleston, Herefordshire in 1819] died at Kempsey, Worcestershire, on 25 September 1848, aged 48 years. Her marriage to John Beresford was also her second marriage. Her first husband was Isaac Wane Slater of London, whom she, as Ann Ursula Holdsworth, had married in 1831 at St Nicholas church in Worcester.  

It still seems shocking that Turner should have married his third wife so soon after the second wife’s death. According to his will (written 26 January 1854),
sometime between September 1848 and January 1849, some form of pre-nuptial agreement was concluded between the parties, which also seems rather cold-blooded. The relevant passage reads: ‘To my beloved wife the annual sum of fifty pounds in the manner and conformable to my engagement to her previous to our marriage’. The family connection between Ann (Shelton) St John and George Fleming St John, the clergyman who officiated at the marriage between John Beresford Turner and Ann Ursula Slater suggests that this marriage (his third) was facilitated by influential members of the bride’s family. As indicated below, Emma Shelton’s uncle John Shelton was a minor canon at Westminster Abbey, and may have possessed the necessary connections to find a her well-heeled suitor in the same way.23

John Beresford Turner was a man of substance. He was born in Bockleton, on the border of Worcestershire with Herefordshire, where he wished to be buried in the family vault. He owned substantial properties, including farms, mainly in Herefordshire. In 1822 he was elected Vice-President of the Hereford Pitt Club, a constitutional club named after the statesman William Pitt the Younger, and in 1833 gave evidence before a Select Committee of Parliament investigating the depressed state of agriculture. The following year, he set out his own proposals for Farmer Societies, in order to defend the agricultural interest and oppose free-trade, which seem to have come to nothing. In 1844, his efforts were recognised, when he was elected a member of the Royal Agricultural Society. In March 1848, he let Romers Farm, Bockleton, and sold off the cattle, horses and agricultural implements. During August the same year (i.e. after he had married his second wife Ann Ursula Slater, but before she had died), the contents of his home at Brockmanton Hall, four miles from Leominster, Herefordshire were auctioned, he wishing to retire ‘having had three deaths in the family’. Judging by his will, he fathered no children, as among his beneficiaries are several nephews and nieces, among them two Manchester cotton manufacturers, and a Worcester coach maker. However, he also left money to the poor of the two parishes which meant the most to him – Bockleton, where the Overseers and Churchwardens were to distribute £5 annually among the ‘ancient and unfortunate poor ... distinguishing the honest and industrious from the drunken and disorderly’. In Puddleston [Herefordshire], the same amount was to go to the ‘poor and unfortunate, but to the exclusion of the drunken, dishonest and disorderly. Turner was clearly a staunch upholder of ‘Victorian values’.24

In the 1851 census, John Beresford and Ann Turner are listed as living at 3, Upper Severn Terrace, Worcester, he being by then seventy-six years old, and she fifty-two. By 1861, Ann was a widow again, and remained so until her death in 1883, living successively at Field Terrace (1861), Edgar Street (1871) and Sidbury (1881), all these addresses being close to Worcester Cathedral.

Ann Turner left an estate valued less than £600, an interesting feature being
that the executors were a local solicitor, and a great-nephew, Henry Llewellyn Shelton of Stoke Newington, Middlesex, a man descended from Ann’s brother Henry Hammond. In the 1901 census, we see that Henry Llewellyn had also named one of his sons Harvey, a forename which had been in use in the Shelton family since Emma’s generation. For the record, in 1901, this Harvey was working as a dental surgeon.

Examination of Ann’s probate material reveals more useful information. She made her will on 18 January 1878, adding a codicil on 25 July 1879. At the time she made the will, the bulk of her estate, after all debts had been settled and her property sold, was to be divided five ways, between her executor ‘Harry’ Llewellyn Shelton, ‘mercantile clerk’ then of Cricketfield Road Tower, Clapton, Middlesex, and his brother George, the sons of her ‘nephew, Col. Henry Shelton of HM Indian Army’, her nieces Mrs Maria Russell ‘now residing in New Zealand’, and Mrs Mary Jane Brown, ‘wife of Robert Gossett Brown of Hill Gardens, Hampstead, Doctor of Medicine’ and her ‘nephew, Rendall Thomas Morris’. The bequests to her nieces were for their sole and separate use. Ann died on 28 July 1883 and her real estate – freehold and leasehold – was auctioned, notice of the sale having been published in the local press. It is incidentally significant that in the 1861 UK census, three pupils named Shelton – Henry L. aged fourteen, George H., thirteen, and Edwin H.H.J., ten, all presumably sons of Henry Richard Shelton, were pupils at the Forest School in Walthamstow, an institution Morris also attended before he went to Marlborough. Their places of birth are shown as India for the two eldest boys, and ‘Singapore, India’ (sic) for the youngest.25

The will demonstrates that Ann had maintained relations with her wider family, even the Morris branch. It seems that the Sheltons were on the whole fairly close-knit, not severing their ties, despite geographical separation. What we cannot determine is the extent to which Morris himself was aware of, and influenced by, the varied fortunes of his wider family. Ann’s legacy to Rendall Thomas Morris, Morris’s second surviving brother, may come as a surprise. However, it is clear that she was concerned for the welfare of his family.

In the 1881 census, Rendall is listed with his wife Elizabeth and her unmarried sister Margaret (Maxwell), both natives of Stirling, Scotland, his eldest son Rendall McEwen (a clerk, nineteen), and five dependent children aged between two and fourteen. In 1871 there had been only four dependent children, including Ada, aged seven years, but there were also three domestic servants. Rendall (listed as Thomas R. Morris), at the age of thirty-two, was already ‘late Ens. [Ensign], 53rd Regiment’, and there is no evidence of any other employment. By 1881, Ada, aged seventeen, had found a post as a governess and was boarding with the Rev. Henry B. Hayward, Rector of Winstone, Gloucestershire, and his wife and children, aged three to six years.

It is clear that by 1881, Rendall’s family were living in straitened circumstances.
After his death in 1883, the immediate consequences are unclear, but by 1891 the children Effie and Violet, aged respectively fourteen and twelve, were both at boarding school, the School of St Lawrence Sisterhood in Belper, Derbyshire. By 1901, Rendall’s widowed sister Isabella (Gilmore; Morris’s second youngest sister) was living at the Rochester Diocesan Deaconesses’s Institution, on the north side of Clapham Common in London, with three of his daughters, namely Ada, now thirty-seven, Esmé, twenty-eight, and Daisy, eighteen. Esmé and Daisy are listed as visitors, and their usual addresses are not known. The youngest, Daisy, must have been born not long before her father’s death. Their mother, Elizabeth Maxwell Morris, is no longer traceable: she may possibly have returned to Scotland.

Emma Shelton’s younger brother Harvey is probably the most interesting of her siblings, appearing (significantly) as a witness at three family weddings. On 19 August 1824, he married Mary Jane Nott, a native of Bromyard, Herefordshire, the youngest daughter of Edward Nott, a local farmer, at Stockton-on-Teme, Worcs. Harvey clearly enjoyed considerable prosperity. In 1827, he was already proprietor of a house in Britannia Square, now in Worcester, but then outside the city boundary, in the ‘Tything of Whistons’ and the parish of Claines, one of the most desirable properties in the area, a new development where building had begun before 1820 on enclosed land previously devoted to growing flax. However, in 1829, the six-bedroomed house was advertised ‘to let’; the reason for this is not known, and it is still given as his address in Bentley’s Directory of Worcestershire (1841). However, it is understood that during 1829, houses were still being built in the square, and that when foundations were being laid, traces of an ancient tower or fort were discovered, together with about fifty Roman coins. It may well be that continuing building operations prompted Harvey’s desire to move somewhere more peaceful.

When his younger daughter Eliza was baptised at Claines parish church on 27 July 1827, Harvey’s occupation was recorded as ‘clerk at Old Bank’. The Worcester Old Bank was founded in 1785. An early partner was Elias Isaac, of whom more below. In Bentley’s Directory (1841), Harvey is described as ‘cashier’, although by the time of the 1841 census he had left Worcester. A number of notices in the Worcester press published during the 1830s refer to his acting on behalf of creditors in bankruptcy proceedings, apparently on behalf of the bank. In 1840, his name is appended as one of the two auditors to a set of Treasurer’s Accounts in connection with the city’s water supply for 1836-1839. Several advertisements for the Atlas Assurance Company also name him as their local agent for Worcester. Harvey was also elected a member of the Worcestershire Natural History Society, and belonged briefly of the Worcester Glee Club. In short, he was a man with ambitions.

By 1841, he was living with his wife and two daughters at 28, Harmer Street, Gravesend, Kent, his occupation being ‘merchant’. He cannot have lived there
for long, though, as a property deed in Worcestershire Archives of 1843, to which he was a party, gives his address as 3, St Mildred’s Court, Poultry, London, and his status as ‘gent’. In 1845, the death of his younger daughter Eliza, after an illness of nearly two years, was reported in a Worcester newspaper, when Harvey was living at Pelham Place, Brompton, London. This house was still his address when his elder daughter (also named Mary Jane Shelton) married Robert Gosset Brown, surgeon of Lansdowne Terrace, Fulham at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, London, on 5 September 1846. In the 1851 census, Harvey Shelton is listed as a wine merchant at Paulton’s Square, Chelsea (between the Kings Road and Cheyne Walk). Ten years later, he was still selling wine, but was now living in Munster Road, Fulham. At this time, two of his daughter Mary Jane’s children were living with him, though possibly on a temporary basis. By 1871, he had retired to Ledbury, Herefordshire. His wife Mary Jane died a few weeks after the Census, on 15 May 1871, at the family home, Gloster Villa, South Parade, Ledbury.28

During his seventies, like his brother Henry Hammond, Harvey Shelton married again. Even more astonishing is the fact that his bride had been in service with him, and was fifty years younger than he. Less surprising, therefore, is the fact that the marriage did not take place in Ledbury parish church, but in the Independent Chapel in the High Street. The entry in the marriage notice book at Herefordshire Record Office dated 9 November 1872 indicates that Harvey was a widower, a retired merchant ‘of full age’ and of six years’ residence in Ledbury; his bride Mary Ann Baggett, was a spinster aged nineteen.29 Mary Ann Baggett was a native of Ledbury. In 1861 she was living with her father John Baggett, a letter carrier (postman), born in Hereford. In 1871 she was working in service as a dairy maid with William Greenwood Chapman, a retired civil servant aged sixty-nine and a Londoner. He had possibly been in the consular service – his son, residing with him at the time of the census, was shown as Secretary to the Consul in Valparaíso, Chile.

Harvey Shelton may have hoped that marriage in the Independent Chapel would be more discreet, and therefore less likely to give rise to gossip. Unfortunately, it seems that his bride Mary Ann was already engaged to a seaman who was not entitled to discharge from the Navy for seven years. The young man was persuaded to buy himself out, and Harvey (or his bride) must have promised to reimburse the costs. (Presumably Harvey offered this as a sweetener so that Mary Ann could be induced to marry him). The injured party, William Henry Godwin of Ledbury, ‘labourer’, considered a breach of promise case against his fiancée, but the action was not admissible because she was a minor. However, he initiated a breach of contract action against Harvey Shelton, which also failed because Mary Ann could not be compelled to give evidence against her husband. The case, before the Ledbury County Court on 17 April 1873, was reported in some
detail in the *Worcester Journal* two days later and it seems very likely that Harvey was seriously embarrassed as a result. Despite the great differences in the couple’s ages, sometime during 1874, Mary Ann gave birth to a daughter, Frances Mary Shelton. Harvey died on 31 October 1875, and was buried in Ledbury municipal cemetery. By 1870, the parish churchyard was full. 30

The extent of Harvey Shelton’s social life in Ledbury is difficult to gauge. In 1866, no doubt soon after his move to Ledbury, he is reported to have taken an active part in the Fortnightly Penny Readings in the town, reading poems and singing. The selections were ‘very well received’. 31 However, this example of philanthropic effort seems to have been limited to one occasion. Otherwise, we can observe that his executors were regarded as close friends, and prominent members of the local community, as well as businessmen who may have benefited from his patronage.

Harvey wrote his will on 30 July 1875: it was proved at Hereford on 5 February 1876 by William Giles Taylor, postmaster, one of the executors. There, he directed that his body ‘be buried in a quiet way’. His house, Gloster Villa, with all its contents, was not to be sold but to remain with his wife for the rest of her natural life and thereafter to pass to their daughter Frances Mary. Otherwise, there were special provisions regarding some valuable bank shares, some of which were for the benefit of his elder daughter Mary Jane, wife of Dr Robert Gosset Brown. Harvey’s personal effects were valued at ‘under £3000’. 32 He was a wealthy man.

The manner in which the estate was actually disposed of is difficult to determine, as Harvey’s wife, named in the will as Susan Mary Ann Shelton, did not remain in Ledbury for long. During the final quarter of 1876, she married Thomas Oliver, a native of Barrow-on-Soar, Leicestershire, who by 1881 was keeping a boot and shoe shop in Cardiff. Thomas already possessed five dependent children, and he and Mary Ann produced a further five. By 1891, she was a widow again, and by 1901 living at 67, Forest Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, with Frances Mary, who married in 1903.

Harvey Shelton’s solicitors were Masefield & Sons – specifically, George Masefield, father of John Masefield, later Poet Laureate. There were clearly certain legal difficulties with his estate. An announcement appeared in the London Evening Standard of 15 May 1876 ‘pursuant to an order of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice, made in a cause of “Shelton against Taylor and others” (1876, S No. 44)’ calling for all creditors to submit their claims on 20 June 1876. Further developments were not publicised. 33

Emma Shelton’s youngest sister Eliza (born 1801) was buried on 12 September 1814, at the age of thirteen. When she lost this sister, in terms of age the sibling closest to her, Emma would have been eight years old. The experience may well have had a profound effect on her in later life.
3. Emma Shelton’s Parents

Emma Shelton’s father Joseph was a son of John and Mary Shelton, and baptised at the parish church of St Peter’s, Worcester on 14 January 1764. He attended the Cathedral King’s School in the city as a King’s scholar, initially ‘under Lewis Crusius’ and later ‘under Dr Torkington’ from 1771/2 till 1780/1. He is listed as a chorister of the cathedral in 1776/7, and a lay clerk from 1782/3. He was married on 22 January 1787 at the parish church of Elsfeld in Oxfordshire, where he was described as ‘of this parish’, but his bride, Mary Jenkins, was ‘of St Nicholas in the city of Worcester’. The witnesses were Edward Houlditch and John Smith. It is unclear why the marriage was celebrated in that particular parish, and not in Worcester. The National Burial Index, which includes burials at Elsfeld from 1670 to 1851, includes no Sheltons, so that I think Joseph lived there only briefly, i.e. long enough to qualify for marriage. Canon law required residence of four weeks before the granting of a marriage licence, but the party concerned was not expected to produce any proof of such residence. An ecclesiastical official, usually a representative of the bishop, and known as his surrogate, granted the licence, and risked a fine of £100 if acting fraudulently e.g. in circumstances where he knowingly granted a licence although neither party to the marriage met the residence conditions. However, the risk of discovery would have been insignificant. In any event, a stay of four weeks in Elsfeld in order to comply with canon law would not have been difficult for Joseph to arrange.

The births, marriages and deaths columns of Worcester newspapers give scant information regarding Joseph. In 1848 they announced ‘In the 85th year of his age, Mr Joseph Shelton, for nearly 75 years a chorister and lay clerk of our cathedral’ [a slight exaggeration] and in the following year ‘December 2nd In the 86th year of her age, Mrs Mary Shelton, widow of Mr Joseph Shelton, and eldest daughter of the late Rev. J. Jenkins, Rector of Donnington, Herefordshire’. Wall plaques in the parish church of Donnington, a small village near Ledbury, Herefordshire reveal that Mary’s father was the twice-married Rev. Jenkin Jenkins, who, with his first wife Elizabeth, who died in 1787, produced twelve children. His second wife Ann was too old for childbearing when he married her in 1791. He was to outlive her, as she died in 1809, whereas he lived on till April 1817, aged 88.

Jenkin Jenkins left a will, but his daughter Mary Shelton was not a beneficiary. It is possible that there was a separate financial settlement when she married Joseph, although it could also be that the marriage took place in Elsfeld, Oxfordshire because she married him against her father’s wishes. The couple married by licence, and the supporting documents, the marriage allegation and bond, have survived. The second party to the bond, who is usually a friend or relative, is recorded as ‘John Doe’, a legal fiction, which is certainly an irregularity. There seems little doubt that Joseph was no more than a visitor to Elsfeld. None of the
witnesses to the marriage seem to be related to bride or groom, and given Joseph’s apparent only brief residence in the parish, there is indeed something mysterious about it.  

Joseph’s life seems to have been fairly uneventful. In the Worcestershire county directories of 1820 and 1841, he is recorded as living at Sansome Fields in Worcester. In 1820 he is listed as ‘gent’, but no occupation is shown in 1841, though the 1841 census gives his occupation as organist. Joseph was admitted and sworn a citizen (freeman) of the city of Worcester on 23 May 1796, having served an apprenticeship to Elias Isaac and Thomas Pitt, organists. Elias Isaac was a Gloucestershire man elected organist at Worcester Cathedral in 1748. He served forty-six years in all, during the latter part of which he was also a lay clerk. He died in 1793, and is buried in the north cloister. His nephew, also Elias, was an early partner of the Worcester Old Bank (founded 1785), dying prematurely in 1803. A nephew of the latter, also (confusingly) named Elias, succeeded him, remaining in post until his death in 1841.

Relations between the Sheltons and other prominent families in Worcester were no doubt strengthened by their membership of the Freemasons. From 1801, Joseph Shelton belonged to Worcester Lodge no. 280, as did Elias Isaac ‘the younger’ from 1805, and Lewis Hervet d’Egville, the dancing master and musician. As already indicated, Henry Hammond Shelton was a member of a separate Worcester Lodge. Connection between the Sheltons and the Isaacs probably helped Joseph’s son Harvey secure a position at the Worcester Old Bank.

The Isaacs remained a prominent Worcester family in later generations. During the late 1860s, the family made available from their property at Boughton in the parish of St John-in-Bedwardine, Worcester, a ground and pavilion for the newly-formed Worcestershire County Cricket Club. This ground continued to be used until 1896.

4. PRECEDEING GENERATIONS

Joseph Shelton’s parents, John Shelton, ‘of the city of Worcester’, ‘scrivener’, aged twenty-three, bachelor, and Mary Tibbatts of Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, aged twenty-four, were married at Wootton Wawen, Warwickshire on 23 October 1751. Their children were each baptised at the parish church of St Peter, Worcester, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 September 1752</td>
<td>Elizabeth (buried 24 May 1758)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 December 1753</td>
<td>Mary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14 April 1755
14 April 1757
11 January 1759
1760 (?)
1761 (?)
15 July 1762
14 January 1764
9 August 1768

John [buried 19 April 1758]
Ann
Susanna
Joanna (baptism not found, but suggested date calculated from marriage allegation)
John (baptism also not found – see text)
George
Joseph
Sarah

There is a considerable trend towards careers in the church for males and a marriage to a clergyman for one (or possibly more) daughters in this generation. The eldest surviving daughters, Mary and Ann, were married respectively to James Jones, and to Thomas Atkinson Silk. This information is taken from the will of John Shelton senior (1791). Neither marriage was celebrated in Worcestershire, and no further information is available regarding either couple. The next daughter, Susanna, was still single in 1788 when her father wrote his will, but no record of any marriage or burial in Worcestershire involving her can be identified either.

The fifth daughter, Joanna, spinster of St Helen’s, Worcester, aged twenty-eight, was married by licence to William Douthwaite of St Clement’s, Worcester, ‘gent’, ‘bachelor’ at St Helen’s, Worcester on 23 October 1789. The groom’s bondsman was George Childe of St Clement’s, baker. Two of their children died in infancy – Mary and John, buried respectively at the parish church of St Clement’s on 30 May 1790, and 9 August 1791. No further children were baptised at St Clement’s. As nothing further is known of them, it seems likely that Joanna and William left Worcestershire for another county.

The sixth daughter, Sarah Shelton, married the Rev. Charles Lockitt at St Helen’s, Worcester on 23 December 1793. Their future movements are unknown, but they are also believed to have moved away from Worcestershire.

24 June 1779, aged seventeen. Like his brother Joseph, he attended the Cathedral King’s School, Worcester, both being listed as King’s Scholars 1774–5, and as choristers 1776–7. George married Mary Stevenson at St Peter’s, Worcester on 5 January 1797. He made a will in 1800, when he was living at Rushwick in the parish of St John-in-Bedwardine, Worcester. He appears to have died without issue, leaving his estate, valued at under £100, to his wife Mary. The will was proved at Worcester on 31 August 1812.

The second Shelton son named John (the first having died in infancy) was apparently, like his sister Joanna, not baptised. He matriculated at Worcester College, Oxford 12 October 1790 aged eighteen (BA 1795). He served as a minor canon of Westminster Abbey, London and as Rector of Childswickham, Gloucestershire. He died at Queens Square, Westminster during February 1828. Of all of the Sheltons in this generation, he is the one most likely to have been living in London when Emma Shelton was getting to know William Morris senior. There is no trace of a baptism, but information in Alumni Oxonienses, combined with the mention in his father’s will, is convincing. 40

There is no way of determining precisely when he and his younger sister Joanna were born, but there is a gap of three years and six months between the baptisms of their elder sister Susanna and that of their younger brother George, an ample period for two further children to have been born. The absence of corresponding baptisms in Worcester itself or elsewhere in the county is vexing, and it seems highly improbable that these two children remained unbaptised. This ‘gap’ in the evidence is most probably due to an error of omission. Like any other documentary source, baptismal registers are imperfect.

Their father, John Shelton senior (scrivener) was buried at St Helen’s, Worcester on 17 April 1791, having outlived his wife Mary by nearly four years – she was buried there on 21 August 1787. In his will, proved at Worcester on 25 April 1791, he left a nominal £5 each to sons George and Joseph ‘they having been better provided for than the rest of my children’. Apart from specific household goods, such as silver and pewter items, rings, salts, tongs, tea-spoons and the like, clothing and bedding, the rest of his estate was to be shared equally between the six remaining children, although his personal effects were valued at under £100. John’s strong religious commitment is evident from some of his bequests – a testament and folio prayer book to son George, a Whole Duty of Man to daughter Sarah, to daughters Susanna and Joanna a folio Treatise on the Creed by ‘Pierson’ [Pearson], two seventeenth century texts greatly valued in the Church of England. He requested burial ‘in a frugal manner, as near to my late dear wife as may be’.

One further generation of Sheltons in Worcester takes us back to the early eighteenth century. John Shelton of St Martin’s, Worcester, barber and peruke-maker, a bachelor aged twenty-one years and upwards, married Elizabeth Greenbank of the same parish, spinster, aged about twenty-two years, by licence at St
Martin’s parish church, Worcester on 18 November 1725. They produced three children, baptised as follows at the parish church of St Michael-in-Bedwardine (near Worcester cathedral, but no longer extant). The surname is recorded incorrectly as Sheldon, but the marriage licence records bear the groom’s signature, written with a ‘t’ and not a ‘d’.

25 August 1726  Greenbank
16 January 1727/8  John
20 January 1729/30  Joseph

Their son John was a King’s Scholar at the Cathedral King’s School, under the Sub-Dean, Rice Williams, from 1741 to 1744, and a chorister from 1738 to 1744. His subsequent career as minor canon of Westminster Abbey, London, and rector of Childswickham, Glos., has already been mentioned.

The eldest son, Greenbank, given his mother’s maiden name, was the ‘black sheep’ of the family. He too appears as a King’s Scholar at the Cathedral King’s School (in 1740), but the next information we possess is that for many years he was master at Bishop Lloyd’s Charity School, Worcester. However, performance of his duties left much to be desired, and on 1 October 1778, the Trustees of the School were sufficiently concerned as to examine him regarding his conduct: they established that he lacked the most rudimentary knowledge of the rules which governed the master and his pupils. He was then supplied with a copy of the rules, but still failed to comply with them, and a sum of five shillings was deducted from his salary. Worse was to come. On 8 April 1778, the Trustees met Mr Bullock, a pawnbroker of the Cornmarket in Worcester, with whom Greenbank had pawned a bible and two prayer books, the property of the school. Not surprisingly, he was dismissed for serious misconduct. He lived on in Worcester till his eightieth year, being buried at St Andrew’s, Worcester on 2 March 1806. He remained unmarried, and left no estate. Although Emma Shelton was only one year old when Greenbank died, one wonders whether she was aware of this family disgrace, which would certainly have been known to her father.

Elizabeth Greenbank was a good ‘catch’ for John Shelton. Her brother, Francis Greenbank, came from a long line of pewterers, brasiers and other skilled metal workers in Worcester, and was a wealthy man. One of his ancestors, John Greenbank, was a prominent plumber who supplied lead and carried out work at the Cathedral during the 1670s. Francis Greenbank was also a pewterer, identified in Homer & Hall’s *Provincial Pewterers* as ‘Francis Greenbank II’. He died unmarried in 1752, leaving a substantial estate, including a legacy of £100 to his nephew Greenbank, whose failings he must already have recognised, as he
adds the words ‘tho’ undeserving of any such favour from me’. A parallel bequest to his nephew John (£300) came with the proviso that he assist Francis’s executors in recovering any debts owing to him. His other nephew, Joseph, was most generously provided for (£500), ‘as a reward in some short [blank] for his good behaviour and conduct in life’.

John and Joseph may also have shared some of the residue from the estate after all the legacies had been paid out, but these were substantial and numerous, and so this may not have added much to their already considerable benefits. Although Francis expressed the wish that ‘my body to be buried at dead of night in or as near to the same grave as possible wherein my dear father and mother lye in the vault of the parish church of St Nicholas in the city of Worcester without any pomp’, he also indicated that the clergy, pallbearers and his relations (as specified) would need three coaches as well as the hearse. The pallbearers included Dr (John) Wall, now most famous for his involvement with the newly-founded porcelain works in Worcester. Otherwise, the will reads rather like an excerpt from Crockford’s Clerical Directory, many legacies going to local clergymen.43

Joseph Shelton, Francis Greenbank’s favourite nephew, moved to Pershore in Worcestershire, where he kept the Angel Inn. He died at the age of 42, being buried at the parish church of Holy Cross on 12 June 1772. His will, written during February the same year, shows that in financial terms, he enjoyed considerable success. There was an orchard and other lands attached to the inn, and he owned a stock of cattle, corn and hay. He also owned two other properties in Pershore, and one in Great Comberton (also in Worcestershire). The will provided for three children under twenty-one, a son also named Joseph, and daughters Elizabeth and Mary. Their expectations must have been high – Joseph senior owned other lands and held leases on properties in Worcester.

Researching earlier generations seems unnecessary, and what has been established at this point is intended as a source for future researchers. One aspect of the Shelton family’s activities mentioned by Fiona MacCarthy concerns the suggestion that one member was an art teacher. There is no evidence to support this statement, though it must be admitted that during the 1830s and 1840s, the city boasted a lively Society of Artists which mounted exhibitions, concentrating on the work of local artists. Among the china painters at the city’s porcelain works were a few who also painted in oils or watercolours. There was certainly no lack of interest in art in the city. In 1835, John Constable gave a series of three lectures on landscape painting at the city’s Athenaeum.44

It may be that William Morris’s apparent reticence about his family is the reason for its having received so little attention in the past. It may also be that Morris knew little about them, or cared little for them. Even so, research into the maternal side of his family has produced some surprising results, particularly regarding
marriages, and has added much to the rather sketchy information which had otherwise come down to us.

NOTES


3. Worcestershire parish registers are held on microfilm at Worcestershire Archives (formerly Worcestershire Record Offices), The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester. Also available on microfilm are marriage licence records (allegations and bonds) and wills proved at Worcester up to 1928; Algernon Graves: *A Dictionary of Artists who have exhibited in the Principal London Exhibitions from 1760 to 1893*. Bath: Kingsmead Reprints, Facsimile Edition, 1969 (third edition), 314 pp.; MacCarthy, p. 1. Marriages in Worcestershire and Herefordshire have been comprehensively indexed and are held at the relevant County Record Office. Only one earlier marriage between Morries and Sheltons (the first listed below) can be traced, but the two which follow, appearing with a variant spelling, could also be relevant:

13 April 1763 John Shelton and Sarah Morris, Crowle, Worcestershire
12 May 1785 Susanna Sheldon and John Morris, Llangarren, Herefordshire
19 October 1810 Sarah Sheldon and Thomas Morris, Dudley, Worcestershire
In 1971, Local Government Reorganisation transferred Dudley from Worcestershire to the West Midlands.

4. London parish registers, including original manuscript entries, may be accessed via the Ancestry internet subscription site (http://www.ancestry.co.uk). All census returns and entries from the National Probate Register (from 1858) have also been accessed via the Ancestry site.


7. Worcestershire Chronicle, 11 March 1846. All newspaper articles quoted have been accessed via the British Newspaper Archive internet subscription site (http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk). As the daughter of an auctioneer, Martha belonged to a higher social stratum than the occupation ‘dressmaker’ would normally imply; Royal Cornwall Gazette, 4 February 1815.

8. Catalogues of cathedral members are held in Worcester Cathedral Archives as follows; D821: 1706-1779 (with some gaps), A132: 1779-1798, continuing in a numerical sequence up to A144 (1895-1908). Payments of stipends, pensions etc to members are recorded in numerical sequence thus A324 (1817), thereafter advancing annually to A359 (1852); resignation as organist: see Worcestershire Chronicle, 9 April 1851. Havergal refers to ‘the continued indisposition which occasions his retirement’; W.H. Havergal’s incumbency: Rev. George Miller: The Parishes of the diocease of Worcester, Birmingham: Hall & English, 1890, Vol. 2 (The Parishes of Worcestershire), p. 287: WGCD, 1820, p. 61. John Hammond Shelton, born Ledbury, Herefordshire about 1797, appears in the 1851 and 1861 UK censuses. The surnames Shelton, and Shelton, can be found in Herefordshire from the latter half of the eighteenth century, and these are doubtless related to the Worcestershire families.

9. Worcester Journal, 30 December 1824, 1 November 1832, 9 October 1833, 6 November 1834; Worcester Herald, 6 February 1830. See also Rev. Daniel Lysons and others, Origin and Progress of the Meeting of the Three Choirs of Gloucester, Worcester & Hereford, and of the Charity connected with it. Gloucester: Chance & Bland, 1895, pp. 104, 108, 113. Henry Hammond also performed at charitable events – e.g. at St Peter’s church Worcester, in order to raise funds for a new window and for ‘recent improvements’, and another for the benefit of the widow Bateman’, who died before she could receive any financial assistance (Worcester Journal 9 April 1835).
10. The marriage in Bath appears in the Worcestershire Marriage Index (see Note 3). The parish of Claines is partly rural, taking in the village of Fernhill Heath, but in those days included a large part of what is now the city of Worcester, extending to within about two hundred yards (ca 185 m) of the city centre at the Cross; Federation of Family History Societies, National Burial Index, Bury, Lancs, UK (Second edition 2004, 4 CD-ROM). This edition has been superseded. An improved third edition may be bought on-line (e-mail: sales@ffhs.co.uk). In any event, the relevant parish register should be regarded as the primary source.


13. One member of the d’Egville family, Louis Hervey, born ca 1820, probably the son of another Louis Hervey, moved to the London area, where he made a fortune as a dancing master. According to the UK National Probate Index, in 1892, his estate was valued at a little short of £15,000; Henry as Worshipful Master or President of a Worcester Lodge of Freemasons: Worcester Journal, 29 December 1841, 30 June 1842; Steward at ‘Grand Masonic Ball’, his poor health notwithstanding: Worcestershire Chronicle 25 February 1846. The Worcestershire Masonic Library and Museum at Rainbow Hill, Worcester, very kindly granted me access to nineteenth century membership lists and minute books of local masonic lodges; Worcester Herald, 10 September 1836, Worcester Journal, 10 August 1837; the first address appeared in various newspaper articles. The move from Albany Terrace to St George’s Square was advertised by the couple themselves in the Worcestershire Chronicle, 12 July 1848.


16. Worcester Journal, 8 December 1842; Morning Post (London), 8 December 1836.


18. See Worcester Herald, 9 July 1836 (quoting Morning Post); ‘Gem’: The Examiner, 4 December 1831; Wheeler’s: Worcester Herald, 6 August 1836; ‘Hom-
mage’: Worcester Journal, 16 November 1837. Other pieces mentioned in the press: Worcester Herald, 30 July 1836, Worcestershire Chronicle, 24 March 1841; ‘new church’: Worcestershire Chronicle, 9 June 1841; ‘Who is Right?’: Worcestershire Chronicle, 7 September 1853. For change in musical fashions, see ‘New Music’, Morning Post, 2 May 1845, which is quite disparaging of Henri Herz and of Thalberg (Mrs Henry Shelton’s heroes), whose music was largely ‘fantasies’ based on the work of other composers, though probably not in the same class as similar works e.g. by Liszt. The article refers to them as the ‘flashy school’, to their reputations as ‘ephemeral’, and their works as ‘pretty trifles’. Clearly Mrs Shelton’s compositions suffered the same loss of esteem.

19. Mrs Shelton’s death: Worcestershire Chronicle, 26 October 1870; Henry Hammond’s re-marriage: Worcester Herald, 12 August 1871; his will: National Probate Index.

20. Thomas St John’s will proved on 1 May 1834 at Worcester (Worcestershire Archives, available on microfilm); marriage bond also held there on microfilm.


23. John Beresford Turner’s will proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (afterwards PCC) on 2 January 1856, ref. PROB11/2226/13 (downloaded from National Archives website http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk.


27. Parish register: Under Rose’s Act (1812), which came into force the following year, all registers of baptisms for Church of England parishes were to be in


30. The birth of Harvey and Mary Anne Shelton’s daughter Frances was not reported in the press; in order to estimate the date, it has been necessary to read backward from his will. Frances’s name appears in the national index of births maintained by the General Register Office, widely available at Record Offices on microfiche and on-line through *Ancestry* and similar internet sites. Death: *Worcester Journal* 6 November 1875. The cemetery burial was confirmed by the Burial Board; no headstone can be traced.


32. Will: copy obtained from the Postal Searches & Copies Department at the Leeds District Probate Registry (a branch of HM Courts & Tribunals Service). Editor’s note: £3000 at today’s prices is ca £144,000.


37. Freemasons: see Note 13 above.

38. Gwilliam, pp. 190-191.

39. Age and occupation from marriage allegation and bond held at *Worcestershire Archives*, available on microfilm. Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, was in the diocese of Worcester.


Jane Morris and her male correspondents

Peter Faulkner

I

In recent years, feminist scholars have valuably drawn attention to the supportive role played by exchanges of letters by groups of women in the Victorian period (and after). Because my interest in Jane Morris came about through editing her letters to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, now known to have been her second lover, I thought it might be appropriate to discuss Jane Morris in relation to the men with whom she corresponded. Although Frank Sharp and Jan Marsh point out in their splendid edition of Jane’s letters from which this series of lectures derives, that the range of her correspondents was limited compared with that of, say, Georgiana Burne-Jones, especially after the onset of Jenny’s epilepsy from 1876, it nevertheless includes a number of highly intelligent men. The most important of these, in the order in which she met them, and in which they will be considered, are Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Cormell Price, Philip Webb, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, and Sydney Cockerell.

II

Rossetti was born in 1828, eleven years before Jane. At the theatre in Oxford in October 1857, Rossetti and Burne-Jones spotted a ‘stunner’ and invited her to sit for them. Through them, she came to know Morris, who fell in love with her, painted her as La Belle Iseult, and married her in April 1859; Rossetti was married to Elizabeth Siddal from 1860 to 1862, when she died. The intimate relationship between Rossetti and Jane seems to have begun around 1865, when the Morrises had given up Red House and moved to Queen Square, and Rossetti was living in Cheyne Walk. Rossetti arranged for her to be photographed by J.R. Parsons, and she became his favourite model. The details of their relationship remain unknow-
able, but there seems no doubt of the strength of their mutual attraction.

In his young manhood, Rossetti was evidently a most attractive person, as seen in the impact he made on Morris, Burne-Jones and many others, and in the vivacity of his early letters, especially those to Ford Madox Brown. Neat word-play often occurs, as in his letter to Morris in May 1857 about Burne-Jones’s physique: ‘You know no doubt of Ned’s ups and downs. I hope he’s getting round — not in the wombat sense however — that seems far off indeed’. The vocabulary is full of slang: he asks Allingham, of the first section of Ruskin’s Unto This Last which had just been published in the Cornhill in July 1860, ‘Who could read it, or anything about such bosh?’, while an invitation to a friend in November 1861 ends: ‘Two or three blokes & a cove are coming here on Friday evening at 8 or so ... Nothing but oysters & of course the seediest of clothes’. As their editor William Fredeman wrote, these early letters show a man ‘impelled by enthusiasm, curiosity and an innate joie de vivre, and, most important of all, as yet unburdened by responsibilities and guilt, and blessedly unaware of the physical and psychological maladies that would beset him in the inexorable march of time’. 3

As is known, Morris and Rossetti took the joint tenancy of Kelmscott Manor in the summer of 1871, and Rossetti wrote a number of letters to his family and friends expressing his pleasure in the place. He told his mother on 17 July:

This house and its surroundings are the loveliest ‘haunt of ancient peace’ that can well be imagined - the house purely Elizabethan in character though it may probably not be as old as that, but in this dozy neighbourhood that style of building seems to have obtained for long after changes in fashion had occurred elsewhere. It has a quantity of farm buildings of the thatched squatted order, which look settled down into a purring state of comfort, but seem (as Janey said the other day) as if, were you to stroke them, they wd move. 4

Here Rossetti wrote some thirty sonnets for his ‘House of Life’ sequence, in a group discussed by J.R. Wahl in 1954 as the ‘Kelmscott Love Sonnets’. 5 These show Rossetti at his most romantic and tender, as he places the relationship within the landscape. Rossetti sent a copy of ‘The Lovers’ Walk’ to William Bell Scott in August 1871; it runs:

Sweet twining hedgeflowers wind-stirred in no wise
   On this June day; and hand that clings to hand:-
Still glades; and meeting faces scarcely fann’d: --
An osier-coloured stream that draws the skies

Deep to its heart; and mirrored eyes in eyes:--
   Fresh hourly wonder o’er the Summer land
Of light and cloud; and two souls softly spann’d
With one o’erarching heaven of smiles and sighs: --

Even such their path, whose bodies lean unto
Each other’s visible sweetness amorously, --
Whose passionate hearts lean by Love’s high decree
Together on his heart for ever true,
As the cloud-foaming firmamental blue
Rests on the blue line of a foamless sea.

Rossetti succeeds in conveying the mutuality of the love between the ‘two souls’ by using a number of plurals – two hands, ‘meeting faces’, ‘bodies’, ‘passionate hearts’ – while the concluding simile suggests equality – sky and sea are equally significant and equally blue. There is no way in which we can know whether Jane shared the depth of feeling evidenced by the poet, but I for one would like to think so. Poems like these were to be the focus of attack in The Fleshly School of Poetry.

The relationship survived Rossetti’s breakdown in 1872, and Jane sat again for him later in that year and in 1873 and 1875. However, by 1876 she had distanced herself from him, disturbed by his dependence on chloral hydrate, although she remained friendly with him to the end, sitting for him in 1878 and 1881, the year in which he died. Some of Rossetti’s later poems and letters inevitably convey a more troubled sense of the relationship, but also on occasion assert the depth of his feeling for her, notably on 31 May 1878, when he proclaimed that he had felt for her ‘a feeling far deeper (though I know you have never believed me) than I have ever entertained towards any other living creature at any time of my life’. He was still capable of entertaining vivacity, as when he advised the young Hall Caine in March 1880 to avoid words of fashionable jargon such as ‘mythopoeic’ and ‘anthropomorphism’: ‘I do not find life long enough to know in the least what they mean. They are both very long and very ugly indeed - the latter only suggesting to me a Vampire or a Somnambulant Cannibal’. He continued to write affectionately to Jane, showing respect for her intelligence, as on 4 February 1880: ‘I suppose you have read [Keats’s] Endymion, - if not, it is worth your while, though not the easiest possible reading’. Jane’s last letter to Rossetti, probably in October 1881, refers to the publication of his Ballads and Sonnets: ‘you spoke of sending me the book last week, it has not reached me yet, I mention this fearing some miscarriage, but perhaps you put off sending it till you return to town’. (Rossetti was in the Lake District at the time).

Rossetti died on 9 April 1882 at Birchington-on-Sea. Jane wrote to Cormell Price on 28 April saying that she had not seen Rossetti since the previous August, but had had letters from him that had given the impression he was in normal
health; thus ‘The effect on me of the sudden news of Gabriel’s death was quite unlooked for’. She had ‘mourned him as one dead 6 or 7 years ago when I gave up seeing much of him owing to chloral drinking’, but found that the unexpected news of his death had come as a great shock to her, especially on a day when Jenny had also been ill.

III

The next two men to be discussed, with whom her relationships were without the passion of that with Rossetti, were both slightly nearer to Jane in age. Cormell Price was born in 1835, and so was four years older than Jane. He was at King Edward’s School in Birmingham with Burne-Jones, and went on to Brasenose College, Oxford, where he became one of Morris’s closest friends. Kelvin remarks that, although Morris and Price were lifelong friends, ‘the surviving letters are an unsatisfactory record of the fact. Price’s diaries attest to regular and frequent meetings through the years’.

After graduating, Price studied for eighteen months at the Radcliffe Infirmary, but found the operating theatre disturbing and abandoned medicine. In 1860 he became tutor to the son of a Russian Count, with whom he spent three years travelling in Europe and then in Russia. He returned to England in 1863, and began teaching at Haileybury College – a public school catering for the sons of service officers – where he became Head of the Modern Side. In 1874, Price became the first headmaster of the United Services College in the newly established Devon town of Westward Ho! The College catered mainly for the sons of families from the colonies, and prepared them for the Army Entrance Examinations. Its most famous pupil was Rudyard Kipling, the nephew of Burne-Jones. The second chapter of Kipling’s autobiographical Something of Myself deals with the years 1878 to 1882:

Then came school at the far end of England [from South Kensington]. The Head of it was a lean, slow-spoken, bearded, Arab-complexioned man whom till then I had known as one of my Deputy-Uncles at The Grange - Cormell Price, otherwise ‘Uncle Crom’.

The description of the school is distinctly unglamorous:

The United Services College was in the nature of a company promoted by poor officers and the like for the cheap education of their sons ... Even by the standards of those days it was primitive in its appointments, and our food would now raise a mutiny in Dartmoor [presumably the prison]. I remember no time, after home-tips had been spent, when we would not eat dry bread if we could steal it from the trays in the basement before tea.
Nevertheless, there was little illness, and less ‘perversion’, perhaps thanks to the Head’s policy, by which the boys were allowed to participate in ‘incessant riots and wars between the Houses’ so that they were ‘dead tired’ before going to bed. Kipling found his first term ‘horrible’ and his first year and a half ‘not pleasant’, but bullying ceased when he developed in strength in his fourteenth year, and he made two very close friends, with whom he advanced up the school in what he calls a Triple Alliance. Encouraged by his English and Classics master, Kipling began reading poetry, and writing. In later discussions, he discovered that Price had kept a close eye on him and his behaviour. He remarks: ‘Many of us loved the Head for what he had done for us, but I owed him more than all of them put together; and I think I loved him even more than they did’. It was Price who told him in the summer of 1882 that at the end of the holidays he would be going back to India to work on a paper in Lahore. Price also remarked, when awarding a prize to Kipling for a poem he had written, that ‘if I went on I might be heard of again’.12

Back in England in the spring of 1896, the Kipling family took a house in Torquay. One of their visitors was Price – ‘now turned into “Uncle Crom” or just “Crommy”’. Not surprisingly, they discussed Kipling’s schooldays:

... I reviled him for the badness of our food at Westward Ho! To which he replied: ‘We-el! For one thing, we were all as poor as church mice. Can you remember anyone who had as much as a bob a week for pocket money? I can’t ...’ Speaking of sickness and epidemics, which were unknown to us, he said: ‘I expect you were healthy because you lived in the open almost as much as Dartmoor ponies’.

It was at this time that Kipling had the idea of writing ‘some tracts or parables on the education of the young. These, for reasons honestly beyond my control, turned themselves into a series of tales called Stalky and Co’: 13 The book, relating activities of three boys, Stalky, M”Turk and Beetle, was published in 1908, and dedicated to Price. An attractive account is given in it of the Head’s study, which Beetle is allowed to use when editing the college magazine; it is hard not to feel that Kipling is remembering his own experience:

[The Head] gave Beetle the run of his brown-bound, tobacco-scented library; prohibiting nothing, recommending nothing. There Beetle found a fat armchair, a silver inkstand, and unlimited pens and paper. There were scores and scores of ancient dramatists ... The Earthly Paradise; Atalanta in Calydon; and Rossetti - to name only a few ... the Head, drifting in ... would read here a verse and here another of these poets; opening up avenues. And, slow breathing, with half-shut eyes above his cigar, would he speak of great men living, and journals, long dead,
founded in their riotous youth, of years when all the planets were little new-lit stars trying to find their places in the uncaring void, and he, the Head, knew them as young men know one another. 14

Jane will have met Price in Oxford, but the first letter in the correspondence does not appear until late February 1877. He is addressed in it as ‘My dearest Brother’, and the tone is very relaxed. Jane sympathises with him over ‘the absence of Valentines’, adding ‘I never get them and never think of sending any until too late, but you no doubt have had them in shoals all your life’. Price rented a folly called Broadway Tower in Gloucestershire from 1866 to 1878, used for holidays to which many friends were invited. A letter of Jane’s in the summer 1877 concludes, after making some sensible suggestions as to how a family visit to the Tower might be managed, with a reference to May, who was fifteen at the time: ‘May’s excitement is tremendous at the coming expedition, she wants to sleep in the top of the Tower’. A following letter conveys the pleasure Jane and May felt in their holiday visit. 15

Although Price gave up the Tower in 1878, and retired from the College in 1894 – soon after which he married and moved to London – his friendship with Jane lasted. It was to him that she wrote about her shock on hearing the news of the death of Rossetti on 9 April 1882, as we have seen. Price did not follow Morris into Socialism; his diary for 1 January 1885 records a conversation with Burne-Jones about ‘W.M.s new departure, which both of us regret, especially as it will lead to worry and perhaps broken health, and certainly neglect of art’. A later letter from Jane, of 2 September 1888, makes a strange reference to herself and to politics: ‘When shall we see you here? Don’t quite forget your poor old, bald, toothless, broken backed friend ... I have a new disease called “Socialism on the brain”. I forget if I acquainted you with the fact before - if so pray forgive me, as loss of memory is but another symptom of the same malady’. 16

Price was on good terms with May, who noted in her Introduction to the *Collected Works of William Morris*, Vol. XVIII, that ‘In later years Cormell Price came with his family to live at Minster Lovel, his companionship a lasting solace when everything was changed’. But the Prices were to move on; in October 1908, Jane asked Blunt if he knew of ‘a cottage of a very small kind’ to let in the locality: ‘I ask because a very old friend of ours, Cormell Price, is wanting to live near Horsham, as his boy is going to the school “Blue-Coats” there’. In August 1909 Jane told Cockerell that ‘Mr. Price is coming here for the day’; subsequent letters show her great sadness at the news of Price’s throat-cancer – ‘So it has come to this Dear Crom! it is heartbreaking’ – and his death in April 1910. She wrote to Blunt: ‘Our dear old friend Cormell Price has died at Rottingdean, May is going to his funeral tomorrow, it was a great grief to me that I could not go to him during illness’. 17
IV

Our next correspondent, Philip Webb, met Morris when both were working in G.E. Street’s architect practice in Oxford in 1856, and they soon became close friends. Webb was born in 1831 in Oxford, the son of a doctor, and so was eight years older than Jane. Morris commissioned Webb to design Red House in 1859, and so Jane will have come to know him in those early years. In the earliest letter we have from Jane to him, in the summer of 1871, he is addressed as ‘Dear Webb’, which is surprising in its singularity – he is the only man addressed in this way. Webb’s letter of reply addresses her as ‘Dear Janey’ and responds seriously to her enquiries about Lechlade church, Shelley’s ‘A Summer Evening Churchyard’, reputedly written there, and Goethe’s strange novel Elective Affinities. He treats her as an intellectual equal, which is all the more striking in the context of his remark earlier in the letter that ‘I had not forgotten that you were gone from these parts’, suggesting his awareness of her early life. The relationship also had a practical side; on 25 July 1871 she wrote to thank Webb for sending an ‘elaborate’ and ‘beautiful’ design for embroidery, which she would work ‘carefully in fine wool on blue serge I think, taking care to get different shades of blue for the flowers’. 18

In fact Jane had written notes to Webb two years earlier, from Bad-Ems, when Morris took her to the spa for the sake of her health. His own letter of 15 August 1869 had ended by telling Webb that Jane was asleep, but would add ‘a line or two’ when she woke up. She evidently did so, as the letter goes on:

My finger-tips are sound as you see by this - and fit for much more hard labour - I feel that I have not much else about me that is good for anything, but I have a sort of presentiment (though of course you don’t believe in such things) that I may make a rapid turn - and feel myself well all of a sudden - and then I have another presentiment that should this change come - all those I now call my Friends would also change - and would not be able to stand me.

Apart from the reference to Webb’s lack of belief in presentiments – he was well known for his down-to-earthness – it is difficult to know what to make of this remark, but it suggests some lack of confidence on Jane’s part. At the end of the letter of 20 August Jane added, less mysteriously:

P.S. I have picked you up two tunes - one called ‘The Last Rose of Summer’ and the other the ‘Mabel Walzes’. Seriously I have heard but one fine piece all this time.

This suggests that she and Webb shared some musical tastes. On 27 August Jane added a ‘word or two’ to Morris’s letter: ‘I am sorry to hear you have not got rid of those rheumatic pains. I laughed at your joke about them if I did not understand
it, but I won’t say I did not’. Morris’s letter on 3 September, when the pair were about to leave Bad-Elms, ends ‘Love from Janey’. 19

In her illuminating recent study *Jane Morris. The Burden of History*, Wendy Parkins discusses two letters Webb wrote to Jane in September 1872, after Rossetti’s breakdown and the beginning of his recovery, but before his return to the Manor, a difficult time in Jane’s life. Parkins suggests that the letters show increasing intimacy in the relationship. In the first, on the 7 September, Webb wrote:

> I was very glad to have your letter because it was written without my asking for it - and I very much wish to have your confidence in my sympathy (if you think it would be worth anything) ... Of course I know the strength of resource in despair, well enough. That is, the risk of cutting oneself off from the help of any one, so as to avoid the risk of being deserted by them ...

In the later letter, on 12 September, Webb told her:

> I have always taken a great interest in you, and none the less that time has tossed us all about, and made us play other parts than we were set upon. I see that you play yours, well & truly under the changes, and I feel deeply sympathetic on that account.

But Webb seems to shy away from greater intimacy, adding: ‘Please believe that I in no way wish to penetrate into sorrows wh I can in no way relieve’. 20

However, Webb was always one of Jane’s most sympathetic friends. In September 1898, Mackail – at work on his biography of Morris – was surprised and upset to *wind* that Jane objected to the projected inclusion in the book of a drawing by E.H. New of ‘a bit of old Oxford (off Holywell St) in which she lived before her marriage’; Burne-Jones had approved, as had Webb. But when Jane wrote to Webb explaining her reason for objecting to the inclusion of what Webb called ‘the little Holywell print’, he wrote to apologise, and gave her his strong support:

> My dear Janey,  
> Your tenderly kind letter is very comforting to me, and I am almost glad I unwittingly gave you some pain, by urging the putting into the book of the little Oxford picture, now that you have opened to me the real reason for objecting to its use there. Of course now I would be as much against putting it in as I was for it: Now that you have so lovingly written to me of your motive I think you will really like me the better for having so wished it before?

The letter giving Jane’s ‘real reason’ has not been found, but there can be no doubt of the depth of the emotion stirred in Webb, who went on to explain that he had always regarded the fact that they were both born in Oxford as a ‘kindly tie’ between them, and that he had like to think of her ‘as a child spending the
unconscious part of your life in and about that region of the beautiful place’.  

Webb never married. In her fine biography of Webb, Sheila Kirk suggests that he saw marriage as likely to interfere with the work of a serious artist like himself, and that he was well aware of the unhappiness of the marriages of some of his best friends; but he placed the highest value on friendship. His integrity impressed all who knew him. Sydney Cockerell recorded that Morris said that Webb was ‘the best man he had ever known’, to which Cockerell added ‘there are very few of those privileged to know him who would not say the same’. This does not mean that he was over-solemn – he was a popular dinner-guest at small parties, though he disliked large ones – and enjoyed what he considered the finest things in life. He told a friend, after describing a visit to Mount Grace Priory, that he found the idea of the monastic life attractive, but preferred Gray’s Inn, where he could read Dumas and Carlyle, ‘laugh very loud over Mrs Gamp’, or try to sing ‘snatches of Don Giovanni’.  

When he decided to retire from his architectural practice in 1899, Webb’s extreme probity meant that he had saved little money. Fortunately, in May 1900, Webb visited Blunt at his Sussex estate with Sydney Cockerell, who had recently become Blunt’s secretary, when the problem was discussed. Blunt generously offered to let Webb have the sixteenth-century yeoman’s house, Caxtons, which he had been planning for his own use. The rent was £15 a year, and Webb spent his last ‘fourteen peaceful, contented and, in general, very happy years at Worth’.  

Jane’s relationship with Webb continued, with Webb always it would seem available to undertake any practical task and to offer friendly support whenever it was needed. Thus it was to Webb that Jane turned when she decided to erect a memorial to her husband in the village of Kelmscott in the form of two cottages. W.R. Lethaby calls them ‘a pair of cottages, stout and trim’, adding that ‘Mr. Jack looked after the building of them and carved a delightful relief panel of Morris looking up at a tree full of birds, from a sketch by Webb - it was suggested by Morris’s words, “the town of the tree”’. Jane kept in touch with Webb after his retirement to Sussex; in August 1909 she told Cockerell: ‘I go to Crabbet on Friday where I shall be able to see Mr Webb’. She was visited there by Webb – ‘We had a pleasant time together, he seems extremely well and looked better than I have seen him for many years’, and in December of the same year we find her writing to Cockerell and expressing her concern about Webb’s finances. Webb died on 17 April 1915. Cockerell was present, and saw the event as natural and undisturbing, since Webb had lived eighty-four happy and contented years, and had lived them ‘manfully and finished his work’.
Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was born on 17 August 1840, and so was just ten months younger than Jane. He was born into a landowning family in Sussex, with its seat at Crabbet Park, and – as a result of his mother’s conversion to Roman Catholicism – educated at Stonyhurst College and St. Mary’s College, Oscott, although he never held an orthodox religious position in later life. On leaving Oscott, he went into the Diplomatic Service, his early postings including Athens and Madrid. He lived an adventurous life, described by his biographer Lady Longford as *A Pilgrimage of Passion*. He certainly had many love affairs, including an early one with ‘the most famous courtesan of the late Victorian age, Catherine Walters - the inimitable Skittles’. However, he also engaged with a more conventional relationship, marrying Lady Annabella King-Noel, the only daughter of Byron’s daughter Ada Lovelace, who was slightly older than Blunt. The wedding took place at St George’s, Hanover Square – ‘the smartest church in London’ – on 8 June 1869, when Blunt was 28. He left the Diplomatic Service in 1869 and devoted his energies to travel, love-affairs, literature and politics. His first book of autobiographical and romantic poetry, *Songs and Sonnets by Proteus*, was published in 1875, to be followed by *Love Sonnets of Proteus* in 1881.

He developed an interest in the Arab world, and set off for Arabia in 1880. He wrote in his diary in June 1880: ‘If I can introduce a pure Arabian breed of horses into England and help to see Arabia free of the Turks, I shall not have lived in vain.’ He acquired an estate near Cairo, and spent winters there, dressing in Arab fashion and involving himself in local politics, opposing the policies of the British government. He published a book on *The Future of Islam* in 1882, and the polemical poem *The Wind and the Whirlwind* in 1883. In this he describes recent events in Egypt including the rebellion led by Arabi Pasha (whom he supported) and Arabi’s defeat by the British at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir. He returned to the topic in the 1914 ‘Quatrains for Life’, which ends powerfully by contrasting the two armies on the night before the battle:

Here lay the camps. The sound from one rose clear,
A single voice through the thrilled listening air.

“There is no God but God”, it cried aloud.
“Arise, ye faithful, ’tis your hour of prayer.”

And from the other? Hark the ignoble chorus,
Strains of the music halls, the slums before us.
Let our last thought be as our lives were there,
Drink and debauchery! The drabs adore us.
And these were proved the victors on that morrow,
And those the vanquished, fools, beneath war’s harrow.
And the world laughed applauding what was done.
And if the angels wept none heard their sorrow. 27

Blunt and Jane first met in August 1883 at Naworth Castle in Cumbria, the home of George and Rosalind Howard, when they were both on their early forties. In his diaries, Blunt wrote: ‘I met Mrs. Morris at Naworth, having been invited specially for the purpose by Mrs. Howard (Lady Carlisle), and we spent a week in her company, and made friends’. In view of the way this friendship was to develop, it is interesting to find Jane writing to Price on 10 September:

Many thanks for your kind dear old affectionate letter received at Naworth. May and I had a nice three weeks visit there, which cheered me and set me up as to spirits, there were wild expeditions into the wildest loveliest country [compared no doubt to Kelmscott], temperance gatherings at the Castle, political talk and flirtation. The last I need not say, I had no part in.

Rossetti had died in 1882, and this may have left a void in Jane’s emotional life. Her first letter to Blunt began unromantically by asking him to write an article on Egypt for ‘the Socialistic Magazine “Today”’, but concluded by asking ‘When are you coming to see me again?’ Later in July, after visiting Crabbet, she thanked Blunt for his hospitality – ‘I should like to come again if you will have me’ – and invited him to Hammersmith to meet her husband. Although we do not have Blunt’s side of the correspondence, he kept a diary which often contains relevant information. In this case he referred to Morris as ‘a democratic Socialist’ and commented that although Morris’s ‘scheme of the universe’ did not correspond with his, they agreed on many points, as that ‘Gladstone is a confirmed Tory, too old to change’. 28

Blunt’s opposition to British imperialism led him to take an increasing interest in Irish affairs, which he later wrote about in The Land War in Ireland (1912). In October 1887 he was arrested at an anti-eviction meeting in Galway, and sentenced by the local magistrates to two months’ imprisonment. He was released on bail, having lodged an appeal. However, in January 1888 he was sentenced to two months’ hard labour, which he served in Galway and Kilmainham gaols. Jane wrote admiringly to him several times about these events, and when Blunt published a series of poems about his prison experience, In Vinculis, in 1889, she designed the book-cover, featuring a shamrock, although on 13 December 1888 she wrote to say that she had received the proofs but that ‘I fear it is not very like a shamrock’. 29

How soon Jane and Blunt became lovers is not clear, but her letters show the development of their intimacy, although her tone is rarely emotional and he is
addressed as ‘Dear Mr. Blunt’. Blunt’s attitude, too, often lacked emotion. On 29 Jan. 1885 he noted: ‘To Mrs Morris to wish her good bye. She is going to Italy for a couple of months. There are moments when she is still a beautiful woman and I wish I had known her in old days’. Jane’s letters to Blunt are among her fullest and most lively, and cover a good deal of ground, including politics and literature as well as domestic life. In 1889 Blunt recorded that ‘I found with Mrs Morris a quiet resting place of affection ... It was at this time that I first became intimate with Morris ...’. In his unpublished notebooks Blunt wrote, after a visit to the Manor:

Kelmscott was a romantic but most uncomfortable house with all the rooms opening off each other and difficult to be alone in ... Mrs Morris slept alone at the end of a short passage at the head of the staircase to the right. All was uncarpeted with floors that creaked ... To me such midnight perils have always been attractive. Rossetti seemed a constant presence there, for it was there that he and Janey had had their time of love some 14 years before - and I came to identify myself with him as his admirer and successor.

He also recorded that Morris was for him ‘a loveable man’, though one thing he did not know about was ‘the love of women’. 30

Blunt several times questioned Jane about her relations with Rossetti. In August 1892 'she told me things about the past which explain much in regard to Rossetti. “I never quite gave myself”, she said, “as I do now”. Perhaps, if she had, he might not have perished in the way he did’. The correspondence continued. In October 1890 had Blunt recorded: ‘we went over to see Burne-Jones and talk over a design for the tapestry Morris is to make for me’. This was a replica of ‘The Adoration of the Magi’ in the chapel at Exeter College, to which Blunt wanted an Arab horse and a camel to be added. This was done – Morris & Co. was, after all, a business. Blunt also asked Morris to produce a volume of his poems at the Kelmscott Press. *The Love Lyrics and Songs of Proteus* was the third book from the Press, appearing in January 1892; Jane ‘looked it over’ as the proofs came in, adding that ‘my husband says the printers wind it takes twice as long to print in the two colours, and it will cost nearly twice as much in consequence’. Reflecting on his relationship with Jane in May 1891, Blunt wrote that although it might seem ‘curious’ to others, ‘The result is in any case a very excellent and worthy friendship, unbroken by a single unkind or impatient word’. He visited Kelmscott Manor in October 1893, and noted that ‘Anne [his wife] and Mrs Morris made great friends’. In August 1895 Blunt recorded ‘much interesting talk with Morris’ at the Manor, and he later went to Merton Abbey to see another tapestry that he had commissioned, based on Botticelli’s *Primavera*. He noted: ‘I doubt its being equal to The Adoration of the Magi’. 31 Later critics have shared this view.

The year 1896 was obviously a sad one, and Blunt was often at Kelmscott
House. He spoke to Jane after her husband’s death, when she told him: ‘I am not unhappy ... though it is a terrible thing, for I have been with him since I first knew anything. I was 18 when I married - but I never loved him’. Blunt invited her and May to come to his Egyptian estate to recuperate. This did not work out as well as he hoped:

_Note, 29_. Mrs Morris’s visit has been rather a disappointment - her daughter May is an obstinately silent woman and Judith [Blunt’s daughter] is bored by her and I fear they are likely to be bored by us. Neither of them ride, not even donkeys, though Mrs Morris has made an attempt, and life without riding here is impossible. ... I am at my wit’s end how to amuse them for I cannot make love to either of them and what else is there to be to be done.

However, things seem to have improved by the time that the Morrises left on 5 April, as on 8 May Jane wrote to thank him, saying that ‘nothing else would have done half so well toward setting me up generally’. Jane’s letter to ‘My dear Lady Anne’ in September 1897, with which she sent as a gift a 48-page manuscript written by her husband, ends: ‘How good you were to me. /Yours affectionately/ Jane Morris’.32 This shows her confidence in writing to someone born into a high social class.

The correspondence between Blunt and Jane continued. On 2 August 1897 Jane offered Blunt the scrubbed oak refectory table made by Webb that she now found too large for the Manor. He accepted, and wrote an inscription for it:

> At this fair oaken table sat  
> Whilom he our Laureate,  
> William Morris, whose art’s plan  
> Laid its lines in ample span ... 33

In 1898 Blunt wrote an acrostic sonnet to Madeline Wyndham, ‘In Memoriam W.M. & E.B.J.’, and another addressed to Sydney Cockerell, whom Jane had recommended to Blunt when he was looking for a secretary. The undistinguished sonnet is entitled ‘To a Disciple of William Morris’.34

Blunt continued to criticise British imperialism, and in 1899 he published his remarkable poem _Satan Absolved: A Victorian Mystery_, of which Jane read the proofs, admiringly. In one passage, Satan tells God that the Anglo-Saxon races have pillaged the earth in the name of Christianity; in an anti-Kipling rhyme, he deplored

> Their poets who write big of the “White Burden.” Trash!  
> The White Man’s Burden, Lord, is the burden of his cash.

As we have seen, Blunt was later to find a home on his estate for Philip Webb and was consulted about ‘Crom’ Price. It was to Blunt that Jane wrote on 23
December 1908 to thank him for sending a brace of pheasants and remarking: ‘I have been thinking of writing a little book of reminiscences (not for publication) but just to beguile the weary hours’, and asking him to return some letters from Rossetti that she had entrusted to him. He returned the letters, but there is no evidence that she wrote any reminiscences. Blunt died in 1922, having published his Diaries in two volumes. In preparing the Diaries, he was helped by the last of our selected correspondents, Sydney Cockerell.

VI

Sydney Carlyle Cockerell (1867–1962) was younger than Jane by nearly thirty years. His family were coal merchants; he began work in the family business, but found this uncongenial, his interests being architectural and scholarly. He met Ruskin in 1888, and made a good impression; he became a member of the committee of the SPAB in 1890. He survived long enough to become President of the William Morris Society, and to see the first issue of *The Journal of the William Morris Society* in late 1961. He contributed some introductory words of reminiscence:

I first set eyes on William Morris in 1885. A year later he came, with Emery Walker, to a meal at my mother’s house in Bedford Park before delivering a lecture in the club-house. Thus our friendship started and was continued in 1890 when I was elected to the committee of the S.P.A.B. After its meetings some of the members adjourned to Gatti’s in the Strand (then a modest eating house) for a simple meal. My diaries show that I shared this meal with William Morris on one hundred and twenty five occasions. I remember these gatherings as among the happiest and merriest in my long life, during each year of which his greatness has appeared to me to be steadily on the increase.

From 1891 Morris employed Cockerell to catalogue his library, and he then went on to become involved with the work of the Kelmscott Press. He showed himself to be a diligent and scholarly worker, and Morris came to rely on him.

Their relationship became more personal, and Cockerell was invited to Kelmscott Manor in August 1892. He took careful notes on this and subsequent visits, which have proved extremely useful to later students of Morris. It would seem that Morris found the young man congenial as well as useful, as is suggested by the tone of a short letter from Kelmscott dated August 20 [1892]:

I send enclosed with. This is my 2nd day of this time. Beautiful day today my laziness extreme. I could just manage to spoil one ‘bloomer’ - that was all.
Kelvin notes that on the holograph of this letter Cockerell annotated ‘bloomer’ as a ‘Design for Kelmscott Press initial’, possibly for *The Golden Legend*. On 23 December 1892, Morris wrote a reference for Cockerell when the post of curator of the Soanes Museum became vacant. Cockerell annotated the letter: ‘Morris and others wrote testimonials, but it went no further as I learn that only architects were eligible’. Kelvin’s note to Morris’s testimonial tells us that Cockerell stated that ‘I haven’t a spark of imagination, and am only good for dry-as-dust cataloguing’, but that friends like F. S. Ellis remarked on his possessing to a remarkable degree ‘the excellent organ of orderliness’. After Morris’s death, Cockerell supervised, with Emery Walker’s help, the production of the last few books of the Kelmscott Press, which closed in 1898. The last was the characteristically scholarly *A Note by William Morris on his Aims in Founding the Kelmscott Press, Together with a Short Description of the Press by S.C. Cockerell & an Annotated List of the Books Printed Thereat*, issued in March 1898. As we have seen, after Morris’s death, Cockerell became secretary to Blunt, and helped him to prepare his Diaries for publication.

Cockerell was an obvious choice to be a trustee of Morris’s estate, and in that capacity he advised Jane on her financial affairs. In 1908 he became Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, where he confirmed his reputation for scholarship and powers of organisation. He came to know and correspond with many public figures, including Thomas Hardy, and a selection from his correspondence was published in 1956 and formed the basis of Hugh Whitemore’s play *Best of Friends*.

Most of Jane’s letters to him concern matters of business, and he is addressed as ‘Dear Mr. Cockerell’. In August 1897, Jane asked him to arrange to send ‘the old piano in the Lecture Hall’ at Kelmscott House, and possibly too ‘the big old backgammon board’, to Kelmscott, as she was hoping to start a reading room in the village. In September 1898 she was keen for him to make a visit to see ‘my cottage’, the planned memorial to her husband. In August 1907 Jane wrote to congratulate Cockerell on his engagement to Florence Kate Kingsford (1871-1949), a distinguished illuminator. At the same time she wrote to Blunt expressing her surprise that someone of Cockerell’s age, forty, who had ‘got through the stormy season of youth without entanglements ... should want to marry late on after witnessing so many bitter failures ... I hope most sincerely that all will go well with them’. (The marriage was to produce three children, but not to be a happy one; Cockerell was no family man, and Kate, diagnosed with disseminated sclerosis in 1916, was for many years an invalid). When Cockerell was appointed to the Fitzwilliam in 1908, Jane wrote to say: ‘I am delighted at your news and feel sure somehow that you will find the position an agreeable one’ – which indeed he did. In June 1909 she was hoping to meet Cockerell in Oxford for a quiet lunch: ‘Boffin High St. used to be good. Where do you go?’
Cockerell played an important part in the creation of Morris’s *Collected Works*, an idea suggested to him as a trustee by the publisher Charles Longman in May 1909. The trustees saw that an editor would be needed, and Cockerell wrote to Hornby in August:

I think May Morris would make a good editor if she would undertake it – MacKail is the best alternative. If you approve I will write to her. There would be no reason why she should not be paid liberally for the proofs, general supervision – or, if necessary, a little introduction to each volume - What would you suggest? 15 guineas a volume? They will be fat volumes.

On Hornby’s agreeing, Cockerell wrote to May via Jane. May agreed immediately, although she was about to leave for a lecture tour in America. Jane thought the edition ‘a delightful plan’. Perhaps neither she nor May realised how much work would be involved. Cockerell was to give May a great deal of encouragement and advice as the project proceeded from 1910 to 1915. It was he who reassured her when she wrote on 30 June 1910: ‘I am wondering if it is not a little beyond my powers’. When she wrote her Introductions, she asked Cockerell to read them through before they were set up in type. When she had difficulties with the ageing, sick and demanding Eiríkr Magnússon over the Icelandic translations, it was Cockerell who wrote to Magnússon to try to sort it out. A letter of 6 July 1911 shows Cockerell again at the task of encouraging co-operation, in this case between May and Longman:

It is obvious that you cannot do more than your best to see them out without avoidable delay - on the other hand the publishers do not seem to me unreasonable in asking for all the information you can give them as to the possible dates of issue.

It is agreeable to find that when publication of the edition was finally completed in 1915, Longman wrote to Cockerell that it seemed to him ‘a most satisfactory set of volumes’ and that ‘Miss Morris’s work as editor has been performed with extraordinary care and accuracy’.

Meanwhile, Jane continued to write to Cockerell, in terms of increasing intimacy. Her letter of 20 October 1912 was addressed for the first time to ‘Dear Sydney’, thanking him for a box of sweets that had caused ‘so much fun’. In 1913 there was discussion of the possible purchase of Kelmscott Manor from Mr Hobbs, which was completed in September with Cockerell’s help. Jane’s last surviving letter, dated 16 January 1914 from Bath, was to Cockerell, thanking him for a book he had sent, which she would ‘read with pleasure’. She died ten days later. Cockerell’s career would continue for many years, and he was knighted in 1934. In 1951 he wrote a letter to *The Times Literary Supplement* criticizing Oswald Doughty for being too concerned in his biography of Rossetti with ‘Rossetti’s weaknesses and
the elaboration of scandal’ – though he did not name the scandal – and describing Jane as ‘one of my heroines’.  

VII

One other correspondent whom we might have considered is Jane’s husband, William Morris, but that would be the subject of another article. For the present it is enough to remark that to have corresponded on equal terms with an outstanding poet-painter, a successful headmaster, a distinguished Arts& Crafts practitioner, a courageous anti-imperialist and a leading gallery-curator was a remarkable achievement for a woman who spent the early part of her life in one of the least affluent or romantic parts of Oxford.

NOTES

1. This is a revised version of the lecture given at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow to the Friends of the WMG on Sunday 27 January 2014.
8. DGR Letters, Vol. VIII, pp. 99-100; IX, pp. 90-94, 38; JM Letters, p. 120.
11. I am grateful to Price’s granddaughter, Lorraine Bowsher, for information
about her grandfather’s life and for permission to quote from his unpublished Diary.


30. Faulkner, pp. 69, 47; *J M Letters*, p. 220; William Peterson (A Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984; 1985, p. 10) tells us that ‘the decorated initials were printed in red at his [Blunt’s] request’, and that
Morris told Jenny that ‘it looks very gay & pretty with its red letters, but I think I prefer mine in style of printing’; Faulkner, pp. 53, 83, 95. Sharp & Marsh (JM Letters, p. 158, Note 2) inform us that Lady Anne’s diaries show that Jane wrote over one hundred letters to her between 1886 and 1909, although only one has survived.


33. JM Letters, p. 295 and Note 2, Faulkner p. 110.


38. Kelvin, Vol. III, p. 338, Note 13. Penelope Fitzgerald wrote, somewhat severely, of ‘his two ruling passions – the arts (or rather the classification and collecting of them) and the cultivating of great men’.


40. All the material cited here referring to the Collected Works is in the W.H. Smith Bequest in the collection of the William Morris Society at Kelmscott House; JM Letters, p. 426.

41. JM Letters, pp. 458, 463, 466; Perkins, p. 29.
‘A clear flame-like spirit’: Georgiana Burne-Jones and Rottingdean, 1904-1920

Stephen Williams

In 1880 Edward and Georgiana Burne-Jones bought a house in Rottingdean, Sussex, as a country and seaside retreat from London life. Later they enlarged the building, now known as North End House, and following Burne-Jones’s death in 1898 it became Georgiana’s main residence. By this time she was established as a leading radical activist in the village and its outlying district Black Rock, rallying support for the newly-created Rottingdean Parish Council, becoming a catalyst for development of public services, and acting as a bulwark against the power of landed and business interests.¹ After some initial success, but following the mobilisation of village conservatives, who won control in 1896, Georgiana became increasingly frustrated with her work on the Parish Council. Unwilling to commit herself to the new three year term of office for parish councillors, she left the Council in 1901, and intensified work on her Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, which was published in November 1904.

Georgiana submitted the manuscript of Memorials in the spring of 1904, immediately after which she turned her attention to establishing a village nursing service, a long standing ambition prompted initially by the birth in 1890 of her first grandchild Angela, to Margaret and J.W. (‘Jack’) Mackail. Although the child was not born in the village, the arrival of her grandchild made Georgiana conscious of the absence of dedicated midwifery and nursing services in Rottingdean and the prohibitive cost for working-class families of private nurses and doctors. We know very little about Georgiana’s first nursing scheme from the early 1890s, but it is certain that it was based on training a village woman, possibly following the Cottage Nursing system pioneered in Surrey by Bertha Broadwood, and that it was short lived.² We can be sure that it soon faded, because its passing was lamented by a group of village women who wrote to Georgiana in 1897 supporting her manifesto for re-election to the Parish Council, and because
she herself raised the need for a village nurse as a fitting way to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.3

The issue was kept alive in the village during ensuing years, so when the Sussex County Nursing Association was formed as the co-ordinating body for nursing associations in the county in November 1901, Rottingdean was represented by Edward Aurelian Ridsdale, Georgiana’s one-time political ally on the Parish Council and family relation by marriage.4 Through Ridsdale the village kept a watching brief on the County Association as it grew and in 1902 became affiliated to the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses, the national charity responsible for setting standards and training of district nurses. But it was not until April 1904, after Georgiana had delivered her manuscript of Memorials to the publishers, that a meeting was called in the village in order to gauge support for a village nursing association. According to the parish magazine the meeting was well attended by the ‘mothers of the village’, who endorsed the proposition that a local society be formed in order to employ a district nurse who would live in Rottingdean and be available for general and midwifery cases.

All villagers earning not in excess of 25 shillings (ca £7.2) per week were eligible for family membership, which could be paid annually at 4 shillings (ca £1.1) or 4d (ca £0.1) per month. Start-up funds for the society, formally named the Rottingdean District Nursing Association, were provided by well-off local residents, including among others Georgiana (the largest single donor), Sir Edward Carson MP, then Solicitor General, who owned a house in the village, Carrie Kipling, wife of Rudyard Kipling (who was Georgiana’s nephew and who lived with his family in Rottingdean between 1897 and 1902), and Margaret Mackail. With these financial guarantees, Georgiana elected as joint secretary, and a committee of local dignitaries – including some of Georgiana’s political adversaries – the Association engaged its first nurse in May 1904.5

Following a successful first year, during which the Association reported that it had ‘equalled expectations’, Georgiana, as the busiest member of the management committee, confronted a number of difficulties which required skilful handling.6 First, a high turnover of nurses had undermined continuity of care, rendered record-keeping difficult, and required Georgiana to take a more active role in operational matters than should normally be the case. Second, refusal of one nurse to undertake midwifery cases necessitated an amendment to the Association’s rules and practices so that a doctor could be paid for these duties. Third, and most serious, the death during late 1907 and early 1908 of two village women – one of them an Association member – of puerperal fever, required Georgiana to voice criticism of the acting doctor because he ‘practically ignored antiseptic treatment and was opposed to trained nursing and its methods’.7 Fearing village gossip, and rumours that the Association was ‘hushing something up’, Georgiana composed a statement published in the parish magazine quoting from a medical
committee of inquiry into the deaths exonerating the nurse from any blame and stating that she had acted properly throughout. Fortunately for the Association the doctor left the village and was replaced by a man whom Georgiana believed ‘to be all we can wish, and I do hope he will go on well’.

Georgiana’s proficiency in handling these delicate matters was undoubtedly decisive in establishing confidence in the Association, which by 1914 grew significantly to include ‘the great majority of families in the village’, ‘and nearly all pay their subscriptions most regularly, as they realise the benefits the Association confers, and the necessity of maintaining it’. Numbers of cases nursed, and nurse visits paid to villagers’ homes, more than doubled between 1905 and 1911, added to which from 1908 East Sussex County Council contracted the Rottingdean Association to provide a twice-weekly school medical service in the two village schools. Now on a sound footing, the Association acquired land from the local Abergavenny estate in order to build a nurse’s cottage in Nevill Road. This house was paid for within twelve months, and occupied during late 1913.

Despite only being joint secretary for many of the years up to 1914 when she relinquished the post, it was Georgiana who provided the driving force to make the Rottingdean Association a success. Although always one of two Rottingdean representatives to the General Council of the Sussex County Nursing Association, Georgiana took the leading part, standing down only in 1918. Nor did she shirk the routine work of the Association as she explained to friend Charles Norton in 1906. She was ‘much taken up by the Nursing Association we have in the village and of which I am the secretary. I cannot do anything lightly, and have no administrative power or capacity for using agents – so that all I do is at the cost of what might be called necessary labour, but my belief is that the cost of a thing does not matter if the thing is accomplished, so I toil on’.

Georgiana’s repeated appeals for working-class villagers to take an active role in the management of the Association, so that it would become ‘self-managing, as a co-operative society of this kind ought to be’, echoed somewhat Morris’s political views, repeated her aspirations for the short-lived village mutual credit society set up in 1896 which she also inspired, and distinguished her from other titled ladies participating in similar nursing schemes whose motivations were philanthropic. Achieving this degree of involvement, however, proved difficult, and during Georgiana’s years the committee remained exclusively composed of well-meaning and well-off villagers including a number of prominent conservatives whose party, the only organised political force in Rottingdean at the time, faced little or no challenge at election times and dominated the Parish Council.

Although Georgiana retained political allies in the village – she made a special effort to influence clergyman Arthur Wynne when he arrived at St Margaret’s Church in 1901, by encouraging him to read Morris – the truth was that she was swimming against the trend of events, which favoured commercialisation...
and the provision of facilities for holiday-makers and day-trippers arriving in their cars. These they drove dangerously around the village, leading one local newspaper to state that ‘Rottingdean resembles Purley Corner to a very great extent’.\textsuperscript{14} When in 1921 the Parish Council was asked how it could contribute to the growth of rural industry, it remarked that close proximity of Rottingdean to Brighton, and the fact that that town was largely a seaside resort, meant it would not be receptive to such developments.\textsuperscript{15} Prestige house-building, particularly towards East Hill and along the coast to Brighton, was significantly increasing the population, and changing the character of Rottingdean from rural working village to dormitory suburb. New houses, including some Georgiana believed to be ‘ugly’, were often out of character with village vernacular, and doubtless she would have agreed with the sentiments of her old friend Philip Webb, who visited Rottingdean for convalescence in 1903 and remarked that ‘the 20th cent carried on the 19th for brutalising all simplicity in original settlement ... the leprosy of modern vulgar ostentation is gradually eating into its grace’.\textsuperscript{16}

From these houses came the next generation of Conservative parish councillors, some of whom benefited from the practice of allowing nomination from within the Council of new members to replace those standing down between elections. The effect of this process was to re-enforce Conservative control of the Council in which business interests – now not even directly connected to the village – were to the fore. Although Wynne acted as a progressive force on the Parish and District Councils, where he served for a number of years until his departure in 1917, he was usually in a minority. Rottingdean farmer and large employer William Brown, who in 1889 had acted controversially with Steyning Beard (see below) in order to enclose waste land near his Challoners home, remained without challenge the village’s representative on East Sussex County Council.\textsuperscript{17}

Meanwhile, village refuse collection and street-cleaning were inadequate, there were complaints of defective drainage and cesspools, the pond on the Green was sometimes stagnant and foul, services to the working-class Black Rock district remained under-funded by the Parish and District Councils, and most significantly working-class housing remained primitive. Epitomising such contradictions was Steyning Beard, the once powerful squire of Rottingdean and political adversary of Georgiana, whose 3,000 acres (1200 ha) and extensive property portfolio was by the turn of the century heavily mortgaged in order to pay for his horse racing debts.\textsuperscript{18} Searching for a way to pay his creditors, he sold land for middle-class housing development east of the High Street and at Rodean – where in 1906 he had a public footpath diverted in order to facilitate access – at the same time as the Medical Officer of Health for Newhaven Rural District Council was forcing action against him because of dilapidated and insanitary workers’ cottages.\textsuperscript{19} In 1910, Georgiana supported Wynne’s proposal, when he was a member of the Rural District Council, that they enforce the Local Govern-
ment Board’s advice on rigorous inspection of houses even if it meant ‘pulling down old insanitary cottages and building new’. This suggestion was met with a retort by Ernest Beard, landowner and son of Steyning Beard, who had died in 1909, that ‘you would have to pull down half the buildings, and who is going to pay for it?’ Wynne’s answer, ‘The landlords’, was unequivocal but promptly ignored by the District Council and nothing was done about public housing in Rottingdean until the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{20} For her part, Georgiana kept up pressure on the Parish and District Councils concerning environmental matters, and still occasionally paid directly for improvements to be made in the village, but more and more she narrowed her efforts to sustaining the Nursing Association and ensuring that it would survive when she had gone.\textsuperscript{21}

Predictably, Rottingdean conservatives described by one local newspaper as ‘the principal residents of the village’, were enthusiastic members of the branch of the National Service League when it was established in October 1910.\textsuperscript{22} The presence of the League, a national pressure group seeking to alert the country to the inadequacy of the British Army to fight a major war, and proposing compulsory national service, added another layer to the already pervasive enthusiasm for militarism in the village, fostered originally by Rudyard Kipling at the time of the Boer war. Although now living away from Rottingdean, Kipling retained an interest in the ‘patriotic’ activities there and allowed the fledgling village scout-group to use a room and a large yard of his remaining property.\textsuperscript{23}

Among the scout-masters was Charles Stanford, Conservative parish and district councillor, headmaster and proprietor of St Aubyn’s private preparatory school in the village to which Oliver Baldwin, son of Georgiana’s nephew Stanley, arrived as a pupil in 1908. Oliver later wrote that Stanford had ‘a most violent temper that he was unable to control’, and that ‘the school was essentially “patriotic”. We waved flags, we marched, we beat drums, we sung “God Save the King” and “Lest we Forget”…’ The result of this teaching was to teach me that one Englishman was worth ten foreigners, six Irishmen (if they came from the south) and I forget how many other races. We thought the Army and Navy the finest professions in the world’. Given this schooling, it is no surprise that he told great aunt Georgiana that he wanted to be a soldier when he left school and remembered ‘how she explained to me that killing was hardly a Christian profession, and although I listened to her earnest and beautiful voice and knew the gentleness of her soul, hers was but a lone voice crying in the wilderness, and it is only since the war I have realized she was right’.\textsuperscript{24}

Georgiana was indeed upset by the Great War, and struggled to retain her natural optimism during those years. She told Sydney Cockerell in April 1917 that she ‘rejoiced at the Russian revolution’, but mostly her correspondence from that time includes such phrases as ‘this hideous war’, ‘the general state of the world is
beyond words’, and ‘a common calamity of so huge a size’, which for Georgiana expressed itself as loss of life within the family; Kipling’s son John died in France in 1915, and thirty seven men from the village were killed, sons of families many known personally to her. To a friend Elizabeth Beard, wife of Ernest Beard, she wrote in December 1917, expressing sympathy at the loss of her brother concluding that ‘I also mourn that we cannot “serve our country” in less terrible ways, and look forward to the extinction of war as the beginning of true civilization and perhaps Christianity’. When in 1920 the village considered erecting a traditional war memorial on the Green, Georgiana urged her friends to support an alternative proposal of ‘endowing a bed in a hospital – while for daily reminder I would put all their names, beautifully engraved, on a large tablet upon some prominent wall in the middle of the village. There they would be seen by everyone daily, and the boys and girls of the schools would be familiar with them, and many a stranger would stop and give a tender thought to them’. This appeal, issued only three weeks before her death and just as she was to depart to London, was made because Georgiana feared that a memorial would be a symbol useful to those who would glorify the war, a motivation she believed immoral.

Despite her increasingly fragile health, Georgiana made regular trips away to visit family and friends; only when such journeys were beyond her did she retreat into Burne-Joness’s old studio in North End House where, by 1917, she had installed gas heating stoves and a telephone. There, she read Chaucer – ‘and can almost hear Morris laughing for my mistakes must be many’ – Dickens, Ruskin and, of course, Morris. When a ‘Morris celebration’ was proposed in 1918 she was uncertain because ‘these two words to my ears sound like sweet bells jangled out of tune and I always feel as if I hear Morris protesting’.

Georgiana was deeply saddened in 1909 at the death of her dear friend Esther Ridsdale, and then, a year later, Cormell Price, whom she had helped rent a property in the village with his family when he became ill. But she continued to enjoy regular visits from close friends from the village, among them Alice Clarke, who lived in the nearby house known as Hillside, and Sylvia Lawrence, the arts-and-crafts enthusiast at Roedean School, which had provided the base for a Suffragette campaign in the village during 1911. Later Georgiana made the acquaintance of Isabella Rodber Horton, an independent woman whom she described as ‘the most gentlemanly lady I ever saw. Not at all unwomanly, and a personality such as one never thought to meet here in Rottingdean’. Rodber Horton had at one time been a poor-law guardian in London, but had moved to Rottingdean in 1915, first to The Dene (the Ridsdales old home) and then The Elms (where the Kiplings had lived). Georgiana became increasingly fond of her, as she told Cockerell in 1918: ‘She has fallen into a pleasant way of coming over for an hour between tea and dinner on Sunday evening, and I look forward to her visits with great pleasure. She is, I would think turned sixty years old, and vigor-
ous beyond words. Our lives have never come near each other, but we understand each other, I think; at all events to such an extent to stimulate me.’ 30 And then, of course, there were the visits from family members which were always a special treat. Edith, Georgiana’s younger sister, would come for a month in April, while, during summer, the house was thrown open to grandchildren and great grandchildren.31 On one such occasion in 1914, just weeks after the outbreak of war, a photograph was taken (Figure 1) of Georgiana and her great grandson Graham McInnes, who had been born to Angela and James Campbell McInnes in 1912, which she sent to Cockerell with a note: ‘Margaret urges me to send you the enclosed. It is curiously emblematic of what I – as the past – feel about the future. I cling to it and love it, and hope in it, in spite of the present. ... Of which there is so much to think that I can say nothing’.32

By the summer of 1919 Georgiana, now 79, encouraged by Margaret and Jack Mackail, who wished her close by, was planning taking a flat or rooms in west London ‘so as to rehearse the change as it were’. She was undecided about what to do with North End House – ‘there is no certainty I shall sell it’ – but had clearly accepted that she should move to the capital on a permanent basis. 33 In the end, she only moved to London during mid-January 1920, accompanied by her maid, and then to the home of her sister Louisa, at 55 Holland Road, Kensington. This house was convenient for visits to and by the Mackails, and Angela, who had married George Thirkell following her divorce from McInnes in 1917. As the diary entry of her maid for 16 January recorded, Georgiana was delighted to share time with her great-grandsons Graham and Colin, who were about to leave with Angela and George for Australia: ‘The final goodbyes to Mr. and Mrs Thirkell and the dear boys came to tea by special invitation to my Lady’s great joy’. 34 Acute bronchitis further weakened Georgiana’s cardiac and respiratory condition, and she died at 55 Holland Road on 2 February 1920.

Georgiana’s body was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium on 5 February. The following day, her ashes were interred at St Margaret’s Church, Rottingdean, the casket lowered by Margaret and Philip (her son) into the same grave where Burne-Jones’s ashes had been deposited in 1898. A memorial tablet to Georgiana and Burne-Jones was set into the exterior wall of the Church soon after: this remains the only obvious physical reminder of Georgiana’s life and work in Rottingdean, the blue plaque on North End House commemorating only Edward’s residence. However, a modern-day visitor could also note the presence of 15 Nevill Road, now a private residence, but from 1913 until the 1970s the home of the district nurse employed by the Rottingdean District Nursing Association (and after 1934 a second nurse). The Association is Georgiana’s most significant and lasting contribution to social progress in the village, belying Jack Mackail’s assessment that ‘when the Memorials were finished, she felt her work in this world was in a sense done’. 35 In fact, Georgiana’s social and political work,
Figure 1—Georgiana Burne-Jones and her great-grandson Graham MacInnes in 1914. By permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
which commenced properly in 1894, continued after 1904, and via her efforts to improve health-provision for the working people of Rottingdean she remained the 'clear flame-like spirit' of Mackail’s description.\(^{36}\)

Incorporation of Rottingdean District Nursing Association into Brighton District Nursing Association in 1948 served as delayed recognition of the village’s link to Brighton – Rottingdean became part of the Borough of Brighton in 1928 – but also marked inception of the National Health Service, into which district nursing services were finally integrated in 1973.\(^{37}\) Georgiana Burne-Jones only lived long enough to see the earliest Edwardian experiments in social insurance, but had she known that the socialist movement to which she gravitated (but without joining any party), would give birth to a universal and comprehensive health service it is likely that she would have been gratified that in a small way the Rottingdean District Nursing Association, in common with hundreds of similar local nursing societies across Britain, prefigured its existence and provided the infrastructure for a UK-wide district nursing service.\(^{38}\)

NOTES


2. The Burne-Joneses knew the piano-manufacturing Broadwood family. However, Bertha Broadwood’s papers, held at the Surrey History Centre (2185/BMB) do not confirm that the first Rottingdean nursing experiment was connected to the Cottage Benefit Nursing Association. Bertha’s younger sister Lucy, the well-known collector of English folk-songs, met James Campbell McInnes during 1899, and supported his training, and it is possible that she introduced Angela Mackail to McInnes (see Dorothy de Val, \textit{In Search of Song: The Life and Times of Lucy Broadwood}, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, p.119). In her biography of Angela Thirkell, Margot Strickland states that Angela’s younger sister Clare, knew McInnes prior to Angela’s introduction to him in March 1911 and was a ‘fervent member of his personal entourage’ (Margot Strickland, \textit{Angela Thirkell: Portrait of a Lady Novelist}, London: Gerald Duckworth, 1977, p. 25).


4. Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Sussex County Nursing Association, East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO) AMS 6583/1/1. Edward Aurelian Ridsdale’s sister Lucy had married Georgiana’s nephew Stanley.

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Baldwin at St Margaret’s Church, Rottingdean in September, 1892.
7. Archive of the Queen’s Nursing Institute at the Wellcome Library SA/QNI/Q.6/8; UK National Archives PRO/30/63/430.
9. UK National Archives PRO/30/63/430.
11. Annual Reports of the Sussex County Nursing Association; ESRO, AMS 6583/10.
15. Minutes of Rottingdean Parish Council 4 February, 1921; ESRO, DB/B54/3.
16. GBJ to Sydney Cockerell, 20 June 1918, National Art Library (hereafter NAL), Victoria and Albert Museum, NAL/MSL/1958/694/40. Georgiana had recommended that Webb stay in Rottingdean with Mrs Dabney in order to convalesce. Mary Dabney was the widow of Congregationalist Minister Joseph Dabney, who with Georgiana had been elected as a ‘progressive’ to the first Rottingdean Parish Council. Georgiana came across Webb staying in Rottingdean in November 1903, ‘of ancient memory – old and bent, but with the familiar voice of long ago like a ghost from the past’; GBJ to Norton, 9 November 1903, Houghton Harvard bMS AM 1088 (892). Webb’s comments on Rottingdean are from his letter to Elizabeth Flower of 12 November 1903, British Library, Add Ms 45355 f.38.
17. Georgiana’s granddaughter Angela Thirkell, wrote of this period that ‘We were not personally on visiting terms with Farmer Brown’; Angela Thirkell, *Three Houses*, London: Alison & Busby, 2012, p. 139. However, Georgiana did associate with Brown’s wife Mary on the committee of the Nursing Association.
18. Laurian d’Harcourt, *Rottingdean: The Village*, Seaford: DD Publishing, 2001, pp. 125-128. d’Harcourt, daughter of Sir Roderick Jones, managing director of Reuters and his wife Lady Jones (the writer Enid Bagnold) lived in and extended North End House from the mid-1920s. d’Harcourt’s village history is critical of Georgiana activities: ‘... one can see how shocking and absurd the goings-on must have seemed in the eyes of the Beards. She had the last laugh though, or her family did. Unfairly, owing to her husband,
and the blue plaque on North End House, they are remembered, while in spite of 400 years of residence the Beards are forgotten’. (pp. 140-141) Derek Heater’s study (*The Remarkable History of Rottingdean*, Brighton: Dyke Publications, 1993, p. 64) is equally scathing of Georgiana’s political activities, accusing her of ‘socialist do-goodery’. In contrast, Seaburne Moens, headmaster of a village private school, and for many years chairman of the Rottingdean branch of the Conservative party, provided a more balanced assessment of Georgiana, whom he knew somewhat, in his village history, where he recognises her many qualities and her role in establishing the Nursing Association. (Seaburne M. Moens, *Rottingdean: The Story of a Village*, Brighton: John Beal, 1953, pp. 96-98). Georgiana’s role in the Nursing Association – ‘entirely due to her initiative’ – was also acknowledged in *The Rottingdean Parish Magazine*, March 1920; ESRO PAR466/7/4.

21. For example, see Minutes of Rottingdean Parish Council 5 July 1905 (DB/BS4/1) and 3 October 1912 (DB/BS4/2), and Minutes of Newhaven Rural District Council, 8 September 1905 (DL/D/211/8), both held by the East Sussex Record Office.
25. GBJ to Sydney Cockerell, 12 April 1917; NAL/MSL/1958/694/16.
26. GBJ to Elizabeth Beard, 28 December 1917; ESRO BRD 14/52.
27. GBJ to ‘Friends’, 13 January 1920; ESRO ACC 8642/3/7.
29. GBJ to Sydney Cockerell, 30 May 1916; NAL/MSL/1958/694/2.
30. GBJ to Sydney Cockerell, 10 February 1918; NAL/MSL/1958/694/33.
31. Angela Thirkell’s *Three Houses* (See Note 17) is a brilliant evocation of her childhood visits to North End House during the 1890s. Georgiana was very kind to all children, as remembered by Ruth Wynne, daughter of Arthur Wynne in 1936 when she described Georgiana as ‘the fairy godmother of the village. Children would visit her because she owned a magic cupboard from which she would produce the most enchanting toys that were ever seen. She wore a fascinating little cap of lace and ribbon and kept her shoulders warm with a shawl of the softest wool’. *The Sussex County Magazine*, September 1937.
32. GBJ to Sydney Cockerell, 19 August 1914; NAL/MSL/1958/693/120.
33. GBJ to Elizabeth Beard, 21 August 1919; ESRO BRD 14/55.
34. ‘Diary of a Maidservant’, Worcestershire Record Office, Misc.705775/8229/14/iii. In Georgiana’s letter to Sydney Cockerell of 11 December 1919 (NAL/MSL/1958/694/5,4) she wrote that she planned to take her maid ‘who has been with me nearly 3 years’ to London, but does not name her. According to the UK Census, Annie Louise Gillmor (sometimes Gillmour; 1872-1948) was with Georgiana at Rottingdean in 1911 as a housemaid, but it cannot be established that she was the ‘Annie’ who kept a diary of the last days of Georgiana’s life.

35. The Observer, 8 February 1920. The obituary was written under a by-line ‘By an old friend’. Cockerell’s manuscript volume (NAL/MSL/1958/693) includes a separate printed copy of the Observer obituary notice below which he gives Mackail’s name as the author.


Reviews

Edited by Peter Faulkner


It is just over thirty years since Weidenfeld & Nicolson published the first edition of William Morris Textiles. The fact that the book remained in print for much of that time is testament not only to Linda Parry’s prowess in the field of Morris studies but also to the enduring popularity of one of Britain’s best loved textile designers. That said, during the intervening period, published research into Morris, and his contribution to the development of the decorative arts has proliferated. Furthermore, scholarship has benefitted from recent editions of primary source material, including the collected letters of William and Jane Morris. The work of Morris & Co has also featured in a number of international exhibitions, of which the William Morris centenary exhibition, curated by Parry at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1996, remains the most comprehensive display of the designer’s work to date.

This new edition of William Morris Textiles has, in Parry’s words, ‘been extensively revised and rewritten to reflect a further thirty years of research’. The volume is a synthesis of the work undertaken by the author as Curator of Textiles at the V&A, a post from which she retired in 2005, and of the discoveries made by many other scholars researching into textile manufacture and design. The book’s original structure, which explored ‘Embroidery’, ‘Printed’ and ‘Woven Textiles’, ‘ Carpets’ and ‘Tapestries’, has been retained. However, the final chapter, ‘Interior Design and the Retail Trade’, has been subdivided into ‘Business and the Retail Trade’ and ‘Textiles in Interiors’.

Readers familiar with the 1983 volume will be struck by the appearance of the new edition, which takes advantage of recent developments in book production. The format mirrors the earlier publication so that both volumes fit neatly side by side on the bookshelf, but that is where the similarity ends. The elegant dust jacket illustrates a detail from the 1884 block-printed cotton Wandle, while the endpapers, previously blank, carry the same textile but at the indigo-dyed
and discharged stage before all the other colours were printed, nicely reflecting Morris’s experimentation with the indigo discharge method. The length has increased dramatically from 198 to 304 pages; likewise, the number of endnotes in each chapter has risen: twofold in the case of ‘Tapestries’ and nearly fourfold in Chapters 6-7 combined. A bibliography has also been added, which includes manuscripts, Morris & Co catalogues, Morris’s lectures containing material on textiles and design, and a selection of relevant secondary sources. Gone, however, is the list of holdings of Morris textiles in public collections, that information being absorbed by the main text and accompanying notes.

Once again, the text is set in double columns but in a clean, modern typeface which complements the illustrations. As befits a designer for whom colour was key, the plates are printed in colour throughout with several full-page and two-page spreads; this contrasts with the first edition in which half the images were in black and white. The V&A photography studio deserves special praise for the quality of the illustrations, which enhance the reader’s appreciation of Morris’s skill as a draughtsman and the level of detail which went into creating his designs. The lack of definition which marred some of the images in 1983 has been swept away; sharper focus, evident in the textile samples Eyebright and Apple and in the design for Ixia, for example (catalogue nos 58, 96 and 119), is revealing. A particularly attractive feature is the opening two-page spread of each chapter in which a full page is given over to an apposite image. My personal favourite is the detail from the wool-embroidered hanging Artichoke, designed for Ada Goodman in 1877, in which one can pick out the individual stitches worked in blue, brown and pink hues which have lost none of their vibrancy.

How do the contents compare with the first edition? As before, Chapter 1 opens with Morris’s apprenticeship in 1856 to the architect George Edmund Street, whose all-embracing approach to Church decoration was to exert a profound influence on his pupil, not least his views on the design and execution of embroidered furnishings. Morris cut his teeth as a textile designer on the decorative embroidery schemes he created for Red Lion Square and Red House between 1857 and 1865. Parry’s revisions to Morris’s early career take account of the recent discovery of the embroidered figure of Aphrodite or Venus from the partially worked frieze The Legende of Good Wimmen, designed for the dining room at Red House. Last seen in 1961 at the V&A exhibition Morris & Co 1861-1940, the panel, which was then owned by A. Halcrow Versage, secretary of the Kelmscott Fellowship (forerunner of the William Morris Society), was subsequently thought to be lost and was known only from the design at Kelmscott Manor, painted in oils on canvas. However, the embroidery resurfaced at auction in 2007 and was acquired by the National Trust for display at Red House.

The section on Morris’s relationship with the Royal School of Art Needlework (RSAN), which opened in November 1872, has been expanded under a separate
heading. Initial contact with Morris came not from Mrs Madeline Wyndham, an enthusiastic client of Morris & Co., and prime mover in the running of the School, as Parry claims here, but from the art furniture maker Henry Capel. Acting as agent on behalf of the RSAN’s founder, Lady Victoria Welby, Capel approached Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. in December 1872 in order to enquire whether the firm would be interested in having embroidery work done off the premises, but he received a cool response from the Works’ Manager, George Wardle, who believed that Morris would not entertain such an arrangement. It was not until the spring of 1875, after the setting up of an art committee under the direction of Frederic Leighton to oversee the RSAN’s desire to form a contemporary school of art needlework, that Morris agreed to supply designs to the School.

Deleted from the new edition is the figurative composition *The Musicians*, for many years thought to have been designed by Morris and Burne-Jones for the RSAN in *ca* 1875. The panel is in fact the work of Selwyn Image, whose lengthy association with the School began during the late 1870s. New to the volume is the *Peacock and Vine* dado panel, designed by Morris with the assistance of Philip Webb, and displayed on the RSAN’s stand at the Philadelphia International Centennial Exhibition in 1876. Described by *Harper’s Bazaar* as ‘equivalent in conception to many of the best masters of medieval decorative arts’, the panel was, in the opinion of Lady Marian Alford, vice-President of the RSAN, one of the most important works produced by the School, and is known to have been acquired by Madeline Wyndham (*Needlework as Art*, 1886, p. 398).

Chapter 1 closes with the significant contribution made by the Morrises’ younger daughter May, who took over the running of the embroidery department at Morris & Co in 1885. Overshadowed by her father’s achievements, she never received during her own lifetime the recognition she deserved. However, in recent years, primarily through the work of Parry, and of Jan Marsh, May has finally been acknowledged as one of the most accomplished designer craftswomen in British history.

The chapters on printed and woven textiles have been reordered and expanded. Reminiscences by past employees, including tapestry weavers trained at Merton Abbey, have added new insights to the volume. Inserted into the discourse on woodblock printing are sections on pattern development and pattern theory. Morris’s determination to master natural dyeing is explored further in the context of his relationship with the dyer Thomas Wardle and the development of the Merton Abbey works, which underwent archaeological excavation by the Museum of London during the early 1990s. A welcome addition to the chapter on machine-woven and hand-knotted carpets is Morris and Webb’s beautifully designed *Peacock and Bird* Hammersmith carpet, which until recently was thought not to have been put into production.

Intensive study of the Berger collection has assisted Parry in identifying the
work of, and reassessing the contribution made by, John Henry Dearle to the organisation and success of Morris & Co.: ‘Dearle has finally emerged from Morris’s shadow and is now recognized as a designer of considerable talent in his own right’. (p. 82) His experience at designing for the loom led to the largest number of tapestry cartoons, and more than double the number of woven textiles produced by Morris. Dearle’s fascination with antique fabrics enabled the Company to meet the increasing demand for reproduction textiles during the early 1900s; *Pineapple*, for example, was copied directly from a late fifteenth/early sixteenth-century woollen hanging acquired by the V&A in 1864.

Charles Harvey and Jon Press’s reappraisal of Morris’s business skills have led Parry to rethink the final section of the book. Chapter 6 contains a twelve-page summary of Morris & Co’s eighty-year history. The reorganisation of the Company under Henry Currie Marillier following Morris’s death, and its subsequent rebranding as Morris & Co. Art Workers Ltd in 1925 are both discussed in greater depth.

Chapter 7 explores Morris interiors at home and in the houses furnished by the Company where textiles have played a significant role. While Parry has identified over ninety interiors worldwide in which Morris textiles were used, the chapter focuses on the same group of properties which appeared in the first edition, but the text has been expanded in order to include background material on the clients themselves, as well as new information about the textiles. For instance, we now know from Rosalind Howard’s personal papers in the archive at Castle Howard that among the soft furnishings recommended by Morris for 1, Palace Green, London, were the printed cottons *Iris* and *African Marigold*, and that a set of embroideries worked by Bessie Burden hung in the dining room. Research into Clouds, the Wyndhams’ estate in Wiltshire, has revealed that the couple were first offered *The Forest* tapestry and then *The Orchard* before settling on Dearle’s *Greenery* tapestry for the hall. Likewise, more than ten different patterns of printed and woven textiles, including *Bird and Vine*, *Avon*, *Cray* and *Medway*, have been identified from photographs of the main reception rooms. Morris & Co.’s prestigious commission to provide carpets for the Orient Line shipping company, which received a cursory mention in 1983, is also discussed here in more detail.

One of the highlights of Parry’s new edition is the chronological catalogue of extant repeating designs produced by Morris & Co. between 1868 and 1918, which accounts for nearly one third of the volume compared with only twenty-six pages in 1983. Where previously up to twelve pattern images filled a double-page spread, here there are at most seven, with several individual prints and weaves occupying not one but two whole pages. In the context of so many visually stunning photographs, it seems churlish to criticise, but I question why the designers chose to print such a small image in the case of *Severn and Squirrel* or *
Fox and Grape (nos 70 and 102). Some of the patterns have been re-dated; for example, Dearle’s *Cross Twigs*, no. 92, is now assigned to *ca* 1893 instead of *ca* 1898, having been used for bed hangings at Penrhyn Castle in 1894. Other entries have been expanded in order to take account of new information on exhibitions (*Marigold* and *Honeysuckle*, nos 10 and 27, were displayed by Thomas Wardle at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1878), client orders (*Madras Muslin*, no. 41, is mentioned in estimates for Aleco Ionides), and pricing (*Florence*, no. 76, for example, cost 4s 6d per yard when first offered for sale in *ca* 1890). New to the catalogue is *Derwent* (no. 89), designed by Dearle after 1892, plus a handful of textile samples where illustrations of the pattern alone were required to suffice in the first edition; the full-page image of Dearle’s woven woollen fabric *Carnation*, no. 118, is a particularly welcome addition. The small selection of machine-made carpets tagged on the end of the 1983 catalogue has now been incorporated into the chronological sequence and expanded to include three new patterns (nos 15, 17 and 80).

*William Morris Textiles* is a beautifully designed, highly readable text which will appeal to historians, practitioners, dealers and collectors and all those with a passion for Morris, and the Arts and Crafts Movement. The volume offers a compelling narrative of how one man became the most important figure in British design and textile manufacture since the mid-nineteenth century. There is every reason to believe that this new edition will enjoy as long a shelf-life as its predecessor and that Parry’s position as the leading authority on Morris & Co. textiles will remain uncontested for the foreseeable future.

*Lynn Hulse*


W. G. Collingwood was a Victorian scholar with many interests. He trained himself to be an archaeologist, but was most interested in painting. He met John Ruskin at Oxford in the 1870s, and took part in the Hinksey road-building project. Later he studied art at the Slade, and tutored Burne-Jones’s son Philip.
Eventually he became Ruskin’s secretary and worked for him at Brantwood. He was an expert in Norse influences in the Lake District, and was greatly influenced by Morris’s studies of Iceland and the sagas. Following Morris’s death he decided to visit that country with his Icelandic friend Jón Stefánsson, and their journey is the subject of this book. His letters home were originally published in 1996, but this is a new and copiously illustrated edition with some ancillary material. (It is worth pointing out that it is his son, R. G. Collingwood, who is commemorated in the name of the Society which has published this book; he was the co-author of the first book on Roman Britain in the Oxford History series, and the last pages of his 1938 memoir, An Autobiography, famously describe how a reclusive philosophy don became a committed opponent of Fascism.)

The journey to Iceland took place during the summer of 1897. It lasted for ten weeks, and largely followed Morris’s route in 1871, though places were seen in a different order. The two men went by ship to Reykjavik; then they stayed on the boat, sailing north to Stykkisholm. From there they saw the same things as Morris, but in reverse order, eventually arriving back at Reykjavik. Finally, still in Morris’s footsteps, they travelled south to the country of the Njala saga and returned via Thingvellir. On their way home they did not take the direct route to Scotland, but sailed round the north coast of Iceland, stopping off at various points. By the end of the journey Collingwood had produced three hundred paintings of the scenery, particularly of the saga-steads, and taken numerous photographs. This work was largely a matter of record, and it is most useful to us in the William Morris Society, because it shows the scenery as it had looked to Morris twenty-five years before. Later, as their country was modernised, the Icelanders themselves realised the value of these paintings and a considerable number have found their way into local museums.

Generally the letters are pleasant and jokey, as they were mostly written to his young children. Sometimes the puns are ghastly, and we do not want to know that the Faroes were inhabited by the Fairies, and that Iceland is Niceland. But the important thing is how the numerous asides in the letters bring out and support some of Morris’s views, and I should like to mention one or two of these.

Reykjavik is a poor place—neglected and bleak—a mere village of wood and iron houses but there are many good and fine people living here in what we should call poverty and dullness.

Morris had been similarly disappointed with the capital city, and frequently refers to the poverty of the Icelanders, but is too kind to go into detail. Collingwood is more explicit about the dirt. At Oddi:

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We slept in a tiny bedroom, in 2 beds, which left only another bed’s space between them, and that was filthy with candle droppings (which must have been left since winter or spring) and rubbish and dust, the leg of a doll, bits of paper. And a battered filthy old skin of I don’t remember what animal. This opened out of a rather grand drawing room: and the window didn’t open. Consequently the room was very foul in the morning, and not to be ventilated except into the drawing room.

There is quite a lot of this and I suppose you could answer that, unlike Morris, who was prepared to rough it, Collingwood was a very fastidious English gentleman who did not appreciate the conditions of Northern life.

He also, like Morris, was offered antiquities. In the church at Oddi

Sira Skuli [the parson] had sold the pulpit, which had old paintings of angels and devils: and now they have a joiner’s contraption instead.

In the next church,

The bishop doesn’t think the chalice and paten there worth taking: they are early 14th century French silver gilt and enamelled things … all they want is to get rid of every scrap of antiquity out of their churches.

The book as a whole is a useful reminder of the lasting nature of Morris’s writings on Iceland and the sagas, and also how deeply he influenced people’s lives, though sometimes in unexpected ways. Like Morris, Collingwood dutifully visits each place associated with the sagas, and retells the stories to his children, but it seems shocking to us that he excavated Gudrun’s grave – the Gudrun of the Laxdaela Saga! ‘Your daddy went back next day and dug up Gudrun. I wouldn’t have done it but antiquaries have pooh-poohed the tradition; and I put her all back again, except some of the teeth and a bit of her skull bone’. On his return he wrote, in conjunction with Jón Stefánsson, A Pilgrimage to the Saga–steads of Iceland, a fully illustrated book with maps and diagrams. This was published in 1899, and led to other books, Scandinavian Britain in 1908 and Northumbrian Crosses in 1927.

And Stefánsson? He had met Morris when he was a young man and remained under his spell; like Morris’s companion, Eiríkr Magnússon, he became a British academic and lived in London for fifty years, going home to Reykjavik in 1949.

John Purkis

It is good for our side, as the media begin to propagate the government’s ‘celebration’ of the Great War, to read about a group of artists who were mostly pacifists during that conflict. All of them owed something to William Morris, and during their later years some of them helped to found the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. Gary Sargeant, born in 1939, regarded them as his mentors, and has put together his reminiscences in this well-illustrated book.

In 1954, as a teenager, temporarily separated from his family, Sargeant found a room in Ilford. His landlady invited him to meet Nellie Lapwood, who lived next door: ‘Ellen and her brother are both artists’. As a treat Nellie took him with her to Liberty’s, her favourite shop, which of course he had never seen: ‘To me the store was more like a museum rather than a shop’. She astonished the assistants when she bought tiny but expensive pieces of silk: ‘The small pink rose fabric will make a perfect pair of elephant’s trousers’. In fact her purchases were made into nursery animals, which she gave away to the children of the neighbourhood. She was the sister of Austin Osman Spare (1889–1956). At that time Spare resembled the artist in Joyce Cary’s *The Horse’s Mouth*, living on 7s a week, and producing innumerable paintings, most of which he seems to have given away.

Sargeant was introduced to Spare, who liked him because he could draw. When he tried to educate the boy at the Tate Gallery, ‘we always headed for the Blake Room’. Every Saturday morning Nellie took Sargeant by taxi to the Sir John Cass School of Art and Crafts in Aldgate, where they all drew from the life. At the classes he met other members of the group, including Walter Spradbery and his friend Haydn Mackey. How had these friends originally come together?

Spare had become famous early. He had exhibited at the Royal Academy when he was seventeen, and was offered a free scholarship to the Royal College of Art. But he did not attend. He exhibited his pictures at London galleries, self-published a number of books, and edited art journals, such as *Form* (1917) and *The Golden Hind* (1922-4). Towards the end of the Great War he became a war artist with the RAMC, and later helped in the foundation of the Imperial War Museum and added to its collection of paintings, working from studios in the Fulham Road. During this time he met Spradbery and Mackey, who had served as non-combatant stretcher-bearers with the 36th (East Anglian) Field Ambulance; they had both suffered from a gas attack. A lifelong pacifist, Spradbery received the DCM for his bravery in rescuing wounded comrades under fire. Paintings from this period – *An Advanced Dressing Station* by Mackey and Gilbert Rogers, and
Exterior of an Advanced Dressing Station together with An Aid Post by Spare – are displayed in this book.

Walter Spradbery (1889–1969) came from Walthamstow and attended the William Morris School. ‘I had gained my scholarship from the day school named after him, and lived my life in the town in which he was born’. He became famous during the thirties for his posters, a very large number of which were commissioned by Frank Pick for London Transport. Their originality derives from the fact that most of them were produced from linocuts, and showed town and countryside in glowing colours. They are still available as postcards and on mugs. Spradbery lived in an enclave of Epping Forest known as The Wilderness; the William Morris Society visited him there during the 1960s, and we were given tea by his daughter Rima.

Haydn Reynolds Mackey (1881–1979) had been a child prodigy, and was guided by Walter Crane and Lord Leighton. He had been at the Slade School for a short time, and, as noted above, spent the Great War in the RAMC as an Official War Artist. He taught art in Walthamstow, where he met Spradbery, who was training to be a teacher at the Walthamstow School of Arts and Crafts. They became friends for life. Both possessed a strong social commitment, ultimately derived from Ruskin and Morris. Later they founded the Walthamstow Educational Settlement, where Gary Sargeant met them; Nellie took him to lectures and exhibitions there. Haydn taught life-drawing at polytechnics and schools all over London.

Another friend of Spradbery was Frank Brangwyn, who had been an unofficial war artist during the Great War; he was responsible for over eighty posters, which were given free to charitable organisations. He remained on the fringe of the group. Born in Bruges, Brangwyn was helped by A.H. Mackmurdo (1851-1942) to work with Morris’s ‘Firm’. He began by tidying up in the shop in Oxford Street. As is well known, apprenticeship with Morris led to Brangwyn’s career as an artist. In 1936 the connection led to a meeting between the three of them (there is an excellent photograph showing Mackmurdo in his funny hat); Spradbery re-introduced Brangwyn to Mackmurdo, and this led to the proposal to found the William Morris Gallery, handsomely endowed by Brangwyn with paintings and the gift of his archive. For some years the three artists met at Water House and gave talks there to support the project.

The book also contains a wide collection of Gary Sargeant’s own works, together with an outline of his life and achievements. Partly because of the poor state of Mr Sargeant’s health, the reader is presented with an assemblage of rather disparate recollections and images, which needed to be tied together. A summative conclusion is provided by Stephen Pochin in an excellent ‘Afterword – Regarding an Elusive Constellation’. He explains that Spare, in editing his art journals from 1917 to 1924, encouraged the artists of his generation to submit
graphics of various kinds, especially lithographs and linocuts; this seems to have led to the ‘inter-war renaissance of British print-making’. It was also the age of the private press, which of course goes back to the Kelmscott Press, and the role of the artist in book-making was pre-eminent. So the group, while still meeting regularly for their life class, developed into practitioners of various arts and crafts. Spradbery’s posters are the best example, though Brangwyn, taking all his work together, is probably the most diverse artist.

John Purkis


I am very pleased to be able to commend this excellent, locally produced, publication, a stablemate to the Armstrongs’ previous handbook to the North West of England of 2006, and now produced together with a companion volume to the North East (reviewed below, p. 105). The book has very much to recommend it, with an unstuffy style, clear descriptions of key features or the most important aspects of the seven hundred buildings or artefacts featured, and the ‘must see’ designation used to highlight the most important locations. I must declare an interest: any guide which highlights Burges’s sublime masterpiece of Christ the Consoler at Skelton-on-Ure is sure of a welcome from me. Admittedly Burges would not be regarded by many as a mainstream Arts and Crafts architect and designer, but his inclusion is a reflection of the volume’s comprehensive approach and wide range of reference. The ‘how to view’ section is detailed and, recognising that we are in a time of significant changes when opening times and even openings themselves may be subject to significant revision, also includes diocesan contact details in case the local ones change.

There is a useful and well-written forty-page introduction and an excellent ninety-page ‘Who’s Who’ section at the rear, which covers a lot of ground and includes Wikipedia references to follow up, as well as other texts. The quality of illustrations is very good throughout and does not just include the aspects/artefacts most commonly featured. It also contains an extensive and detailed bibliography, with an asterisk denoting books which the authors particularly recommend for their coverage of the Movement. The 260-page main section, with two columns of text per page, is logically divided into North, South, West and East Yorkshire, with a separate section on York itself.

The authors obviously intend this as a field guide, albeit an extremely well researched and erudite one. Feedback received following publication of their
previous volume suggested the inclusion of maps, and this was investigated, but the numbers and quality required were found to be incompatible with the economics of the book. Instead, the authors suggest the use of a good road atlas, and street maps of town centres, which can be run off from the internet. They also provide Ordnance Survey grid references, and ‘sufficient information for SATNAV users to locate their destination’. In compilation of this handbook, the authors tell us that they ‘visited 700 locations ... seeking out architectural and decorative art, created by people with Arts and Crafts connections and open to public appreciation’. In total they spent five years on the road visiting the various locations featured in the latest two volumes. Usefully they have extended the scope and timescale of the Arts and Crafts Movement beyond 1884-1914 in order to take in work carried out before 1884, particularly by the members of the William Morris circle, and continue the story by including much later productions. I enjoyed trying to spot their latest inclusions, and a 1943 window in St Lawrence, Adwick Le Street, and an A. J. Davies window of 1951 in St Matthew’s, Bradford, are among those which sprang out.

The authors’ comprehensiveness makes for a really satisfying approach. They refer to themselves as ‘whizzing around’ by car, visiting places, and their enthusiasm is infectious, making them excellent companions on a visit. They admit an ecclesiastical bias, arguing that ‘churches are the most reliable and fruitful sources of many different decorative arts’, but their approach and enthusiasms are catholic in a non-ecclesiastical sense. They feature buildings and artefacts ranging from a railway station buffet – the Sheffield Tap– to an Eric Gill headstone in Ilkley Cemetery.

They have undertaken a significant amount of original research, as they consulted the Archive of Art and Design and the National Art Library at the V&A, as well as the archives of Yorkshire art galleries and museums, and university and public libraries. They also acknowledge the assistance they received from a number of specialists on aspects or individual practitioners, so that this volume contains a significant amount of new information. The authors encourage readers to carry out research and fill in the gaps in existing knowledge of local Arts and Crafts practitioners.

Society Members who took part in the 2006 visit to Saltaire and beyond, will recall our difficulty in identifying the designer of the windows in the baptistery and nave of St Cuthbert’s, Heaton, Bradford. It turns out that they are by Leonard Walker, and the authors’ spadework has turned up an interesting attribution of the statue of St Joseph holding the Christ Child, commissioned from Eric Gill but not generally regarded as being executed by him, as being by Mary Bate-man of Edinburgh. They also resolve some previous mis-attributions. The nave chancel and sanctuary ceilings of St Clement’s, Barkerend Road, Bradford, also visited on that 2006 trip, include glorious gilded and painted decoration, which
has recently been restored. It was previously thought to be the work of Morris & Co., but the Armstrongs have located the sketch design and found it to be by George Frampton and Robert Anning Bell. The design was exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in 1893, and the work completed by them the following year. Their searches were not uniformly successful; they note of one later artefact that its ‘authorship remains obstinately anonymous’. The authors have undertaken their research in the spirit of enquiry, speculating in advance about what they might find and anxious to discover local practitioners.

The book is also full of practical tips. ‘It is a magnificent window, full of incident and detail but a long way up ... binoculars will aid enjoyment’, we are told of St Chad’s, Headingley, Leeds, and we are advised where to take particular care of our possessions – regrettably in the Municipal Buildings, Leeds. The authors also suggest when there is a particular case to linger over. Of the inestimable St Martin’s, Scarborough, they remark, after extensive coverage of the many wonderful features of the church, covering over two pages of text, including five illustration, ‘This is not a church to be visited in a rush. Seeing some of the earliest work of the Firm founded by the father of the Arts and Crafts Movement is a rare treat and one to be savoured’. The volume is excellent on the great set-pieces, but also comes into its own in the wealth of detail the authors provide on individual productions such as tile panels in pubs and the sculptured reliefs of war memorials.

The Armstrongs are knowledgeable and perceptive companions. There is a particular pleasure in their response to buildings you think you already know, and then finding out previously unrecognised aspects or features. Not only does the reader find that the authors share one’s appreciation of some particular favourites such as St Aiden’s, Roundhay, Leeds – ‘This must be one of Brangwyn’s finest pieces of work’, – but they raise the reader’s interest in items one has never seen but now wishes to. They write of the work carried out in the bar area of the Elmbank Hotel, York, by the ‘experienced, risk-taking interior designer’ George Walton. ‘Once the surprise of the macro scheme has settled down a bit, look at the micro detail in the carving of the overmantle ... are those caterpillars? What about the snails? Walton’s stained glass is of special interest as this is a rare opportunity to see his unique style at close quarters and remark on the inventive incorporation of sheet copper, the use of strong lead lines particularly in delineating leaf veins and his occasional dewdrops of clear light’. The book requires and deserves close reading, as the buildings featured in the Introduction are not cross-referenced to the main body of the text, nor are any addition illustrations included there. This is a slight criticism, but one which might cost the unwary on a chance site-visit.

I had intended to field-trial the volume, but winter and other preoccupations prevented me. However, if the test of any handbook is to generate an interest in going to see places and things, then the authors have certainly succeeded. I have ordered a copy of the book, and my own ‘must see’ list has swelled to
include Burges’s ‘Proto Arts and Crafts’ vicarage at Bewholme, with its long cat-slide roofs, on the dormer windows at front and back, with tile-hung cheeks, which I had never previously seen illustrated, a five-light window in St Oswald’s, Flamborough by Powell of Whitefriars, designed by William De Morgan, and a window in St Michael’s Malton: ‘The East window has an intriguing panel of the crucified Christ set against a field of sunflowers made c1883 possibly by Heaton, Butler and Bayne’.

Production standards are particularly high, so that this is a distinctive and attractive volume. One final suggestion is that this and any subsequent volumes should also be issued in e-book format. This would be suitable for use on a tablet, and would thus assist the authors’ aim of encouraging research, by allowing attributions to be tested or even made by comparing the treatment of similar surfaces or subjects in different locations. As it is, the handy size of the volume is a natural for the rear pocket of a car seat for use out and about.

*Ian Jones*


Without doubt, the Home Counties are the richest repository of work produced from the Arts and Crafts Movement, but that is no reason to ignore the rest of Britain; for not only did the London-based Morris & Co. and prestigious architects such as Edwin Lutyens and C.F.A. Voysey undertake commissions for clients far away, but there also soon developed regional schools of craft and design, referencing their vernacular traditions, and typically led by an outstanding individual, a small but industrious collective, or an educational initiative. In North-East England, the Northumberland Handicrafts Guild, operative from 1900 to 1947, exercised such an influence, as did the Keswick School of Industrial Arts (1884-1984) based in neighbouring Cumberland (now part of Cumbria). The role of sympathetic wealthy patrons, such as, in the North East, the Trevelyan family, the shipbuilder Charles Mitchell and the coalmining heiress Emily Matilda Easton, should not be underestimated either. Complementing the same authors’ volumes for the North West of England (2005) and Yorkshire (2013; see previous review), this handbook covers the current counties of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Teesside.

For any *afficianado* of the Arts and Crafts, there are three stately homes in the North East which must be visited: Cragside, Wallington Hall and Lindisfarne Castle. Cragside’s architect was Richard Norman Shaw, and the house contains
notable fixtures, fittings and furniture by Shaw himself and by James Forsyth, Frederick Garrard and W.R. Lethaby, as well as Morris & Co., these including unique stained glass designed by Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown and Dante Gabriel Rossetti; possibly also by Philip Webb and William Morris. Under the advice of John Ruskin, employing the Newcastle-based architect John Dobson, the Trevelyan roofed over the courtyard of Wallington Hall in order to create an arcaded room resembling an Italian palazzo, then commissioned William Bell Scott to decorate it with murals depicting scenes from Northumbrian history. Besides Bell Scott himself, the painters included Ruskin and Arthur Hughes. This house also contains tiles by William De Morgan, wallpaper and a carpet by Morris, paintings by Ruskin and Burne-Jones and a marble sculpture by Thomas Woolner. Originally a sixteenth-century fort, Lindisfarne Castle, bought by Edward Hudson (the publisher of *Country Life* magazine) in 1901, was transformed inside and out by Edwin Lutyens to create an awesome edifice, though a barely comfortable home. As well as much of Hudson's extensive collection of antiques, the castle still contains a large quantity of metalwork and lighting by W.A.S. Benson.

If one were to visit just one church in this region, it would have to be St Andrew's at Roker (Sunderland), which the authors rightly declare 'one of the iconic Arts and Crafts churches in the UK'. (p. 113) This robust, simple, timeless-looking building, designed by Edward S. Prior (a founder member of the Art Workers' Guild) is the epitome of Arts-and-Crafts church architecture, and it contains woodwork by Ernest Gimson, a Morris & Co. tapestry of 'The Visit of the Magi', a lectern by Peter Waals, four metal panels by Eric Gill and – though not always on display – altar frontals designed by May Morris and Louise Powell. Also deserving special mention, and visits if possible, are Holy Cross Church at Haltwhistle, St Oswald’s Church in the city of Durham, and Sacred Heart R.C. Church in Gosforth (a northern suburb of Newcastle), in all three cases for exceptionally good Morris & Co. stained-glass windows.

Instead of a merely worthy, possibly dull record of the region’s Arts-and-Crafts treasures, the entries are much enlivened by the authors’ obvious enthusiasm for this subject and their delight in fieldwork. The guide is experiential: what Barrie and Wendy Armstrong saw and felt and what the reader might also expect when visiting these places. The authors also occasionally share an opinion or a subjective judgement. For example, their unplanned visit to Brinkburn Priory 'provided one of those heart-warming surprises for which every researcher hopes', here specifically its small stained-glass window by Hugh Arnold. (pp. 13-14) At St Mary’s Church, Holywell, ‘The spandrels of the doorway are decorated with carved flowers but the interior does not deliver on this hint of decorative possibilities to come’. (p. 35) The Armstrongs assert, ‘There is nothing ordinary about St Andrew’s Church’ at Roker, (p. 113) proceeding with an elaborate appreciation
of its architectural power and the numerous treasures contained within. Overall, this church is ‘a fine example of the Arts and Crafts Movement’s ideal of artists, craftsmen, designers and architects working together to produce a wholly satisfying work of art’. (p. 116)

The ‘Who’s Who’ section helpfully provides concise biographies of significant individuals and companies involved in the Arts and Crafts Movement and these include more than a few lesser-known practitioners. In practice, however, the need also to use the index to find the locations of their work in the region is rather inconvenient. The relevant page-references could have been incorporated into these biographies. The entries for Morris and Burne-Jones are factually inaccurate, for instance stating that they ‘went up to Exeter College, Oxford to train for the priesthood’, (p. 222) which calls into question the reliability of the other biographies provided here. Unaccountably, Voysey, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, C.R. Ashbee and Sidney Barnsley are absent from this section which is by no means limited to people based in North-East England.

Closely scrutinised by someone with local knowledge, the gazetteer is also not absolutely dependable. For instance, the authors state that St Cuthbert’s Church at Beltingham is ‘Usually open in summer’, (p. 10) but, having attempted unsuccessfully to enter it on three occasions, all in summertime, I know this not to be the case. Fortunately, the vicarage’s telephone number is provided at the end of this entry, as elsewhere through the gazetteer. Potential visitors to village churches would be wise to phone beforehand in order to ensure access. Off the subject of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the authors sometimes fall into error, as when they say that King Oswald, in 634, ‘raised the sign of the Holy Cross after the Battle of Heavenfeld’, (p. 27) whereas he actually did so immediately beforehand, which had a rather greater significance concerning his victory over the pagan Cadwallon.

The authors do not follow all of the normal orthographical conventions, still less those of scholarly discourse. For example, in the gazetteer, book-titles are given with single inverted commas instead of being italicised. A glaring mistake is the authors’ misspelling of ‘Teesside’ as ‘Teeside’ in the table of contents and throughout that portion of the book.

Despite these criticisms, it should be said that the Armstrongs have produced a worthwhile and welcome account of the Arts-and-Crafts works to be seen in this region. Its comprehensive scope and the very detailed information contained therein make it a useful resource for researchers as well as visitors. Moreover, the book is robustly bound and attractively produced, with high-quality colour photographs throughout, making it a good companion for outings or for evenings by the fireside.

Martin Haggerty

This is a splendid book, to be looked at with pleasure and to be generously informed by. As the author points out in her Preface, most books about the Arts and Crafts movement have been written by scholars based in southern England, where also many of the main sources of information about the movement are located; her presence in Edinburgh and St Andrews (where she teaches) has given her easier access to the materials on which this book is based, ‘the surviving works of Arts and Crafts designers in Scotland - buildings, gardens, craftwork associated with architecture, and individual objects in museums and private collections’. (p. xix)

In her introductory chapter Carruthers also points out that attention has been paid to the Arts and Crafts beyond the Home Counties in such places as the Cotswolds, Birmingham and the Lake District, but less to other areas. She draws attention to the early development of Scottish industry in the expanding Central Belt of the country, from Glasgow through to Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen, and to the importance, in relation to these developments, of the social criticism of Carlyle and Ruskin, as well as the medievalism of Walter Scott – all writers significant for Morris, whose centrality is stressed throughout. The early years saw the employment of London-based architects, but native Scots became increasingly involved.

Architecture is the enabling factor for the Arts and Crafts, and Carruthers draws attention to a range of distinguished buildings, at first mainly by English architects, and then increasingly by Scots. Important factors included Queen Victoria’s enthusiasm for Scotland after her first visit in 1842, which helped to encourage wealthy Englishmen to purchase estates there, and the development of the railways. The story began in 1863, when Philip Webb was commissioned to build Arisaig House, Lochaber, badly damaged by fire in 1933, and now known only through photographs. In the countryside, the work of James MacLaren exhibited Arts and Crafts characteristics, as in the new wing at Stirling High School, where MacLaren (who sadly died in 1890) designed stonework, ironwork, lettering and furniture, as well as the building. The immensely wealthy Marquess of Bute had already employed William Burges to create his Gothic extravaganzas in Cardiff. He was, however, a Scot, and, unusually, a Nationalist in a largely Unionist society, and he commissioned a number of projects, including the extensive restoration of the House of Falkland in Fife, by the Scottish architect Robert Weir Schultz; Schultz also built Scoulag Lodge on the Isle of Bute, 1897-8. George Jack, who was born in Scotland, later took over Webb’s architectural practice: in 1903 he built the sturdy Faire na Sguir – not far from
Webb’s Arisaig House.

However, English architects continued to be employed in Scotland. Baillie Scott built the impressive White House, Helensburgh, 1899–1900, and W.R. Lethaby was commissioned by Thomas Middlemore to rebuild Melsetter on the Orkney island of Hoy. This is probably one of the Arts and Crafts houses best known to Morrisians, thanks to May Morris’s involvement with the project. Middlemore employed Lethaby to create a family house, which was built by local workers and lavishly furnished, with many of the furnishings coming from Morris & Co. These included two tapestries from the *Holy Grail* series designed by Burne-Jones for Stanmore Hall, the *Ship* and what May Morris, an admiring visitor to the house, called *The Shields in the Wood*. (This tapestry provides impressive endpapers for the book under review). The rooms of the house are fully described, as is the impressive chapel with windows by Morris & Co. and Christopher Whall. Apart from the high quality of the buildings discussed, the account of Middlemore reminds one that many wealthy Arts and Crafts enthusiasts saw it as their responsibility to support the life of the community in which their buildings were erected. It is encouraging to learn that Melsetter is now securely in local ownership, and attracts many visitors to the island.

In the chapter devoted to Robert Lorimer, Carruthers shows him to have been ‘the most dedicated and productive of all the Scots who developed house architecture in the 20 years before the First World War’. (p. 199) Lorimer began in Edinburgh, worked in G.F. Bodley’s London practice, and then returned to Scotland to work on Earlshall Castle, Fife, ‘mending’ rather than restoring, to use his own terms, and set up a practice in Edinburgh in 1893. In 1903 he built Wayside in Ayrshire, the extensive documentation of which enables Carruthers to give an illuminating account of his methods, showing his concern for both outer and inner aspects of a building. Wayside was followed by Rowallan in Ayrshire, Ardkinglas on Loch Fyne, Formakin in Renfrewshire, and the remodelling of the Hill of Tarvel in Fife, 1907–8. Lorimer went on to design the Thistle Chapel at St Giles’s Cathedral in a highly decorated Gothic style, employing a team of skilled craftworkers on the remarkable interior. This was to lead, after the war, to the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle, a fine work again involving many collaborators in its creation.

In Glasgow, Charles Rennie Mackintosh built the remarkable and well-known School of Art in 1899, described by Carruthers as ‘an image which proclaimed Glasgow’s confidence in its own unique style’. (p. 26) That style owed much to Arts and Crafts precedents, but Mackintosh and other Glasgow designers were also open to the influence of continental *art nouveau*. In Carruthers’s view, Mackintosh’s work in the twentieth century, however distinguished in its way, rejected many of the principles of the movement, so that in his furniture, ‘appearance was more important than the manner of making’. (p. 79) In Aberdeen the
architect William Kelly was responsible for the impressive church of St. Ninian’s (reproduced) as well as for high-quality house-building. His tribute to Morris is quoted:

... since William Morris showed the way, many men are turning to the crafts and decorative arts for their lifework; because they want to enjoy the pleasure of making things – expressive, beautiful, or merely good and fit of their kind. And this is one of the hopes of Architecture in our day. (p. 106)

Kelly contributed further to the city by encouraging two highly talented craft-workers, J.C. Watt, enameller and jeweller, and Douglas Strachan, muralist and stained-glass maker.

This takes us to the crafts work of the movement, which Carruthers treats equally thoroughly. The Scottish Home Industries association was founded in 1893, and good use is made of its 1895 publication in order to show the range of the crafts it encouraged, from various kinds of textiles to woodwork, with some of the products being sold in London by Liberty’s. Development of the railways led to the growth of towns and the building of villas for middle-class clients, usually by local architects. The most remarkable manufacturing enterprise to be developed in the countryside was the textile business of Alexander, and later James, Morton, at Darvel in Ayrshire, which came to employ some 1,000 workers, using freelance designers, including Voysey, and exhibiting and selling its products, especially carpets, in London.

In Glasgow, Francis Newbery, Principal of the School of Art from 1885, acted energetically to encourage the movement, and his School taught and encouraged a whole range of crafts; among the numerous workers in these media, many of them women, Anne Macbeth included designs for silverwork and differing styles of embroidery (as illustrated in three fine plates), while Jessie Newbury became well known as a teacher and creator of her art needlework. Meanwhile Patrick Geddes worked with his associates in Edinburgh through the Social Union. The range of crafts was impressive, perhaps best represented through the work of the remarkable Phoebe Traquair, who came to Edinburgh from Dublin in 1873. She produced watercolours, embroidery, bookplates, illuminated manuscripts, murals, bookbindings using embossed pigskin, and enamelling. Her two major projects, undertaken simultaneously, each took her eight strenuous years. The first was painting the murals for the Catholic Apostolic Church, to act as background for the spectacular and colourful services which took place there. The work was on a huge scale – the chancel arch for decoration was 66 ft (ca 20 m) high – and she also decorated the chancel aisles and the walls of the nave, culminating in the west wall depicting the Second Coming. Simultaneously with this great work, Traquair created a very large, four-panel embroidery of The Progress of the Soul, based on a story in Walter Pater’s Imaginary Portraits. The Royal Scottish
Academy refused to make her a member in 1900 on the grounds of insufficient professionalism, but the growth of her reputation in Scotland and beyond meant that in 1920 she became the first woman to be awarded Honorary Membership. It is good to read that her Song School murals have been restored, as has the Catholic Apostolic Church, which is now the Mansfield Traquair Centre. The illustrations in the present book provide a good introduction to her remarkable œuvre.

Carruthers devotes a whole chapter to Scottish stained glass, showing it to have been ‘A Medium Revitalized’. She emphasises the rapid development of the medium in the forty years following the 1859-1864 installation in Glasgow Cathedral of stained glass brought over from Munich, which seemed at the time the necessary choice. Stained glass was well suited to Arts and Crafts methods and became a popular medium for public art both secular and ecclesiastical, as the Scottish churches became more favourable to the representation of religious subjects. Daniel Cottier, Stephen Adam and Oscar Paterson are shown to have been good early practitioners, followed by George Walton, David Gauld and William Morton. But the outstanding artist was Douglas Strachan, who produced some 340 windows overall (several illustrated). These include the four great windows *The Evolution of the Peace Ideal* in the Great Hall of Justice at the Peace Palace in the Hague in 1913, where the International Court of Justice now sits. Strachan also provided windows for Lorimer’s Scottish National War Museum. The growing confidence of the Scots in their own work is demonstrated by the decision to remove the Munich glass from Glasgow Cathedral in 1935; it was replaced after World War II with glass by a large number of makers, mostly Scots.

Carruthers concludes her book with a judicious summary:

> The ideals of art for all, for makers and users, espoused by William Morris and the pioneers of the Arts and Crafts Movement were no more achieved in Scotland than they were elsewhere, but they left a significant and valuable legacy behind them. (p. 369)

Although no attempt is made to claim that every piece of Arts and Crafts work in Scotland is included here, for clearly more research may lead to more discoveries, that legacy can now be more widely known and appreciated than before. To an Englishman who has spent little time in Scotland, it is a revelation, and a credit to all those associated with it.

*Peter Faulkner*

Arts and Crafts was the first truly original artistic movement in America. Whereas the British origins of the style provided the initial inspiration, American architects, designers, craftsmen and practitioners moulded these ideas into a wholly different form embracing all aspects of their own multi-cultural heritage and social history and – for the first time, producing a range of work-buildings, interiors and all forms of the decorative arts – which was truly their own. This book professes to cover all aspects of the development of embroidery in Britain and America, just one small aspect of a movement which has sadly become a very popular subject for coffee-table publishing, a genre in which this book belongs.

Schiffer Publishing is an American company which specialises in the decorative arts, but in books written for the modest collector or the casually interested rather than the more serious scholar. It is not new to the subject and has published other books on embroidery including *The Glasgow Style: Artists in the Decorative Arts, circa 1900* by the same author. As with the previous publication – the book adds little to the existing bibliography and makes many factual errors and misassumptions about the subject. Consequently it cannot be recommended as either an informed or accurate survey. Despite well-meaning efforts to seek out new sources and produce a large and miscellaneous range of images, it is only when the author deals with the American commercial market of embroidery kits and amateur needlework that the book has value. Most illustrations in the book are taken from auction sales catalogues and private collections rather than museums and other public organisations so that many of the most important aspects of the subject are illustrated by secondary examples of their type.

The first part of the book concerns British work examined through chapters on the origins of the Arts and Crafts Movement, Morris embroideries, Art Needlework, Societies and Guilds, Liberty & Co., and Glasgow Style. This follows the form first explored by Barbara Morris in her influential 1962 history *Victorian Embroidery* and developed further by a number of others since that time. There is nothing new here. In fact much is muddled, omitted and in some cases, wrongly identified, including an illustration of a silk embroidery (which looks surprisingly like wool) that the author has attributed to May Morris but which bears no characteristics of her work either in design or technique. Furthermore the idiosyncratic, chatty style of the author (for example in one section she introduces a group of unidentified embroideries from a private collection with the words ‘More pretty ladies up next’) would have been better edited out of the text altogether.

The American section runs through developments in embroidery beginning
with the work of Candace Wheeler followed, rather abruptly, by Gustav Stickley, and a range of illustrations of embroidered commercial kits. Few aesthetic distinctions are made between individual craft studios producing one-off commissions of much originality such as the excellent Newcomb College (mentioned only briefly) and the Deerfield Society, with commercial factories such as Bentley-Franklin and Brainerd & Armstrong, which mass-produced commercial patterns for sale. In reality they were worlds apart and have little or no connection. The overall preponderance of illustrations in the book concern the latter type – kits for bags, tablecloths, runners, cushion-covers, dress accessories and all manner of practical items (a ‘galoshes bag’ is included) – made by amateurs in their hundreds of thousands. This will be useful for collectors hoping to identify items they own, even though many examples are not identified, including a section of twenty-six pages devoted to ‘Unknown Makers and Designers’. In many ways this egalitarian development of the movement has proved the most enduring vision of the craft movement in America and explains why it is so popular and widely collected today.

Linda Parry


This book, its jacket tells us, will give us ‘a unique view of Victoria’s reign through the eyes of the neglected figures of the age – assassins, occultists, anarchists, terrorists and revolutionaries’, and provide a ‘gripping account of the dark underbelly of Victoria’s Britain’ that ‘captures the unrest bubbling under the surface of a strait-laced society’. This gives warning of the reader’s likely experience, that of being hit over the head with overstatement and melodrama, all exaggerated by the publisher’s decision to combine large black type with tiny margins. The problem is compounded by the jokey titles given to many of the chapters, such as ‘Tinkerbell on Mars’, ‘Playing Cricket in the Corridors’, and ‘Vegetarian Revolutionaries’, and by the total absence of critical apparatus. It is also difficult to see who among the main figures treated has been ‘neglected’: the names in the index with the most frequent citations – Annie Besant, Aleister Crowley, Conan Doyle, Engels, Hyndman, Jack the Ripper, Kropotkin, Eleanor and Karl Marx, William Morris, Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst, Ruskin, Shaw, Wells and Wilde – are not obscure figures to those interested in the Victorian period. What is peculiar to the book is its omission of the overall history of the period of which these characters and ideas are part. The resultant effect is of rush, and sometimes incoherence.
William Morris features quite prominently in the book, but it cannot be said that the presentation of him is convincing or consistent. At one point, Morris is said to have believed that the ‘religion of humanity’ would allow the world to flourish as ‘a rebuke to utilitarianism’, but that the same new world was ‘at the same time the very product of its way of thinking. Sociology was to be the new religion of the humanist’. (p. 9) How has Morris, who never called himself a humanist or took much interest in sociology, become so confused with Auguste Comte, who was responsible for the idea of ‘the religion of humanity’? – Morris preferred ‘the religion of socialism’. Bloom observes that Morris turned to ‘practical socialism’ via the Democratic Federation ‘as a way of restoring the medieval craft society he so loved’ – a disputable statement in itself, which is followed even less convincingly by the assertion: ‘However, his socialism was only tangentially linked to the theoretical intricacies of Marxism’? (p.115) It is not surprising that no biography of Morris is cited in the Bibliography; certainly not that of E.P. Thompson, who as long ago as 1955 provided overwhelming evidence of the importance of Marx to Morris’s political thought.

It is not that the material in the book lacks interest. Chapter 4, for instance, ‘Massacre at Trafalgar’, though it begins with Mme Blavatsky and the occult, goes on to give an interesting account of the life of Annie Besant, and quotes her vivid description of Bloody Sunday in 1887, which we are told comes from her ‘autobiographical reminiscences’ of 1893 (though there is no reference to the book in the inadequate Bibliography). Bloom then tells us that the atheist republican Charles Bradlaugh, whom Besant knew, refused to take part in the demonstrations at this time because he considered them ‘stage-managed to produce violence and thus show the police in the worst possible light’. Bloom then adds: ‘This proved correct, as the subsequent writings of Besant, the journalist W.T. Stead and William Morris proved’. (p. 52)

This is a serious allegation, but Bloom provides no more evidence to back it up: nothing by Stead appears in the Bibliography, and Morris is represented only by News from Nowhere, which certainly contains no such admission. Indeed, when Bloom discusses News from Nowhere in Ch. 16, he remarks that the novel’s account of the demonstration in Trafalgar Square shows that Morris was ‘still musing over the defeat of the radicals on Bloody Sunday in 1887!’ His exclamation mark suggests that it was absurd for Morris still to remember a highly important and disturbing event that had taken place only three years earlier. Bloom’s summary ends with the unexpected remark that Morris’s ‘utopian dream was a “vision” of future times and future possibilities. Others looked to the past for their vision of the future’. (p. 220). Emphasis on the orientation to the future of News from Nowhere is welcome, but consorts oddly with Bloom’s earlier statement about Morris’s preoccupation with medieval society.
A number of statements in the book turn out to be erroneous: we are told, for instance, that ‘Octavia Hill began the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (which later became the National Trust) in 1877’ (p. 221) – the date is right, but the founder of SPAB was Morris, and it is still an independent organisation (Octavia Hill did help found the Trust in 1896); and while Ezra Pound could be impolite, his phrase about ‘an old bitch gone in the teeth’ referred not to the late Queen (p. 247) but to the ‘botched civilization’ whom so many had died to defend; characteristically, Bloom gives no indication of where his quotation comes from; in fact, it is from the poem Hugh Selwyn Moberly, published as late as 1922.

Bloom draws most of his material from the lives and writings of public figures; he shows little interest in literature or the arts. Poetry appears only three times, with quotations from Tennyson, Clare and Hopkins. Tennyson’s ‘Locksley Hall’ is quoted because of the disturbed state of mind of its speaker, but the account of the poem given is scanty, and Bloom destroys the pace of the poem as carefully constructed by Tennyson by leaving no gaps between the lines, although the whole poem is written in separate couplets. Similarly, Clare’s fine poem ‘I Am’ is printed without any gaps to indicate its three stanzas, thus speeding it up inappropriately. As to Hopkins, I doubt if he would have recognised that ‘The Windhover’ showed that for him ‘the idea of destruction was the self-fulfilment of the beautiful’, or that ‘sheer plod’ is denigrated in the poem’s final section, as Bloom suggests. Since Bloom is everywhere on the lookout for the dramatic and subversive, it is surprising that he fails to invoke the strident anti-Christian rhetoric of Swinburne.

The most interesting part of the book for me was the chapter called ‘On the Frontier’, which gives a lively and informative account of the frontiersman ethos of Archie Belaney or ‘Grey Owl’, relating it to the cult of nudism, the break-off from the Boy Scouts by John Gordon Hargarve to found the movement known as Kibbo Kift (said to be archaic Kentish for ‘proof of great strength’), which attracted admiration in Nazi Germany although its members were largely pacifistic, and Leslie Paul’s left-wing Woodcraft Folk. (It is notable that none of this material has anything to do with the period given in the book’s title). Elsewhere I enjoyed the account of Sylvia Pankhurst’s murals for the Independent Labour Party hall in Salford, in the style of Walter Crane, decorated with ‘lilies, sunflowers, bees, roses, apple trees, doves, butterflies and allegorical symbols of plenty, honesty, industry and purity’. (pp. 261-262) And the final chapter is effective in reminding the reader of the disturbing prominence of the idea of violence as expressed around 1914 – though again it is frustrating to have no guidance as to where to find the comments of Edmund Gosse (on war as ‘an awakener from the idleness of opium dreams’) and Sir Charles Stanford (on war as ‘awakening the
highest forces of musical art’) that are quoted so tellingly. All in all, regrettably, *Victoria’s Madmen* is a rushed work of popular history of which neither the author nor the publishers can be proud.

Peter Faulkner


This is the first biography I have read of someone I have actually known. Penelope Fitzgerald joined the William Morris Society in 1973. Over the years she was a loyal friend of the Society and she was much liked and respected. My own memories of her include standing with her on a bitterly cold day at the site of Burne-Jones’s house, The Grange, in Kensington, to watch a blue plaque being unveiled. In 1982 she edited Morris’s only novel, the unfinished *Novel on Blue Paper*, and of course her greatest and most lasting contribution to Morris studies is her biography of Burne-Jones, published in 1975. Penelope combined a scholarly concern for exactitude with a novelist’s sensibility, producing what is as much the portrait of a marriage and of a remarkable woman, Georgiana Burne-Jones, as a biography of an artist. Though she is best known now for her fiction, Penelope was a fine biographer, and books on the Knox brothers, and the poet Charlotte Mew, were to follow.

What then would she have made of her own biography? Hermione Lee writes that ‘perhaps self-deceivingly, I have felt while writing this book that she might not have disapproved of me as her biographer – if there must be a Life – because she had liked my book about Virginia Woolf, and had been kind to me when we met’. (p. 433) I will return to that proviso, but let me begin by saying that, like Penelope’s own biographies, this is an absorbing read: thoroughly researched, judicious, sympathetic, yet pulling no punches. It is also a visually attractive book with Penelope’s own charmingly idiosyncratic drawings scattered throughout the text.

Above all, Lee sets out with great skill the ways in which the work grew out of the life. Penelope said that in her writing she aimed to be true to ‘the courage of those who are born to be defeated, the weaknesses of the strong and the tragedy of misunderstandings and missed opportunities which I have done my best to treat as comedy, for otherwise how can we manage to bear it’. (p. xvii) She had plenty of this in her own life: the courage as well as the weaknesses, the tragedies, and the missed opportunities.

Penelope was the daughter of Evoe Knox, the editor of *Punch*, who was one of
four extraordinary brothers: the others were Dyllwyn, a brilliant mathematician and Bletchley Park code-breaker, Ronald Knox, a Monsignor, writer of detective stories and the most famous Roman Catholic convert in England, and Wilfred, ascetic Anglo-Catholic priest and welfare worker. Lee succeeds in creating a more nuanced picture of the Knoxes than was possible for Penelope in her biography of the brothers. Highly talented, the family was also highly competitive and unforgiving of failure. This heritage was a mixed blessing, as Lee points out, and part of the pain of Penelope’s difficult middle age must have come from knowing how far she had fallen short.

Yet it had begun so well for her. At Oxford, she seemed effortlessly brilliant, a golden girl of whom much was expected. A fellow student at Somerville commented that ‘Every one else wrote [essays] at length, but Penelope Knox wrote one paragraph and that was enough’ and, as Lee comments, ‘It would always be enough’. (pp. 56-57) She got a First. Soon after she graduated the war began. After a spell with the Ministry of Food, she joined the BBC and after the war ended reviewed books and did some script-writing for the BBC. Penelope herself expected that she would write fiction. ‘Women, if they possibly can, must write novels’, she said in a review of a novel by Elizabeth Taylor in 1947. (p. 88) But her literary career petered out and her first novel, The Golden Child, did not appear until 1977, when she was sixty-one. What went wrong?

It is tempting to say that she married the wrong man. There was an unrequited love – Penelope never divulged his identity – and a hurried war-time wedding to a dashing young Irish officer and barrister, Desmond Fitzgerald. The early years of her marriage were occupied by attempts to get and stay pregnant. Her first baby died soon after birth and she suffered numerous miscarriages before the birth of her first son, Valpy, in 1947. Two girls, Tina and Maria, followed. No doubt these were busy years, but the real problem lay with Desmond, who had come back from the war with what would now be diagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder, and began drinking heavily. Their marriage was dogged by money problems and finally in 1962 Desmond was caught forging signatures on cheques. He escaped prison, but was disbarred and forced to leave his Chambers. He spent the rest of his working life as a clerk in a travel agent’s. Penelope worked at several jobs as a teacher to make ends meet. In her Burne-Jones biography she writes: ‘The fact that Morris, Burne-Jones and Rossetti could live through those days and months and maintain such a convincing everyday life will only seem strange to those whose marriage has experience no crisis’. (p. 223) Yet her marriage endured and when Desmond died aged 59 in 1976, she wrote to an old friend that it was a ‘dreadful blow … the truth is that I was spoilt, as with all our ups and downs Desmond always thought that everything I did was right’. (p. 237)

But for a writer no experience is wasted and of no-one is that truer than Penelope Fitzgerald. Sensibly Lee breaks with chronological order and discusses the
novels, *Human Voices*, *The Bookshop*, *Offshore*, and *At Freddie’s* in the context of the events which inspired them, though the books were not published until many years later. Penelope had always been a novelist in the making. Working in the war-time BBC, leaving London with her children to run a failing bookshop in Suffolk, living on the Thames on a dilapidated barge, teaching at a stage school: these experiences provided rich material for her first four novels.

Even the teaching jobs she found demanding and exhausting were part of her long apprenticeship. Lee examines her annotated copies of her teaching texts and concludes that ‘the conversations she was having with writers in her teaching books show her thinking deeply and intently about art and writing. They show how the deep river was running on powerfully, preparing to burst out’. (p. 202) The same was true of her biographies: ‘the questions she asked herself about how to enter into another person’s life, the melancholy and the mess of the lives she was drawn to, all fuelled her novel writing, the more so as fictions of history replaced autobiographical fictions’. (p. 263) Of those last novels, *Innocence*, *The Beginning of Spring*, *The Gate of Angels*, and *The Blue Flower*, Penelope said ‘the moment comes when you have to step outside your own experience because you have used everything you want to write about and maybe many things that are too painful for you to mention’. (p. 464) Reviewers commented on the ease with which she appeared to evoke the past, but Lee shows what extraordinary pains she took with her research, whether the setting was Italy in the 1950s and earlier or Moscow in 1913. And what an extraordinary late flowering these four short novels represent. Her last novel, *The Blue Flower*, published when she was seventy-eight, gained her an international reputation.

Lee admits that ‘there are many things [Penelope] did not want anyone to know about her, and which no-one will ever know’. (p. 434) Many family documents, including letters from her mother, who had died when Penelope was eighteen, were lost when their barge sank in the Thames. Her war-time letters to Desmond have not survived. But it was also Penelope’s nature to be reticent and to guard her privacy. Some of those things too painful to mention included Desmond’s disgrace and her relationship with her daughter-in-law. Deeply attached to Valpy, she was horrified when he became engaged at eighteen to a Spanish girl and married her as soon as he left Oxford. Lee does not gloss over Penelope’s sometimes unwelcoming and unkind behaviour and she would not have been doing her job properly if she had. And Lee shows her too as an admirable person: stoical, unassuming, devoted to her children, loyal to her husband. Still, I found myself wincing from time to time and I closed the book thinking how much Penelope would have disliked her private life being laid bare. Yet she was a biographer, too, and someone to whom the truth was important. She would have understood the need for honesty.
So, yes, returning to that earlier proviso – if there had to be a Life – and perhaps for a writer of Penelope's stature there did have to be one – it is difficult to imagine a better one than this.

Christine Poulson


This book gives the reader the impression that Ward was a thoughtful, humane and sympathetic person, but there is little here to show that he was an influential writer. Perhaps the cover, with its curious image of a yellow face on a green background – though attributed to Clifford Harper, an admired anarchist artist, and based on a photograph of Ward – helps to set a mood in which hopes and aspirations figure more strongly than achievements. In fact, the editor’s claim for Ward is modest: he was ‘one of the most significant thinkers and activists in the British anarchist movement in the second half of the twentieth century’. (p. 70) How many others can most of us name? By contrast, the back-cover blurb is extravagant: ‘He was a prolific journalist who had a profound impact on political thought … ’ It is exactly evidence for such a claim that the book fails to provide. Perhaps the fault lies with the form of the book. It is arguable that had Levy written it all, it would have been more coherent and less repetitive. As it is, we are given Levy’s introductory chapter, followed by seven short chapters by different academic authors with anarchist sympathies.

The story, as it emerges – not made any clearer by the absence of a Chronology and a Bibliography, though there is a good Index – is of birth in 1924 in a Labour-supporting family in suburban Essex, and working as a teenager for the architect Sidney Caulfield, who we are told ‘acted as a living link with the Arts and Crafts movement and the memory of William Morris’. (p. 8) While serving in the army in Glasgow in 1944, he discovered anarchism, which was to hold his lifelong allegiance. We are told that he took his inspiration from the great anarchists, Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin (whose influence has a chapter to itself), and later by Herzen, Gustav Landauer (who was particularly important for him), Geddes, Mumford, Buber and Isaiah Berlin. The essential conviction, which sustained him throughout his life, was that ordinary people could develop for themselves better social institutions than could be created by the State, always seen as an agent of repression. It was the job of anarchists to offer an alternative perspective and prospect. He was a witness at the trial in 1945 of the anarchist group behind *War Commentary*, and its members became his friends and collaborators.
During the 1950s and ’60s he worked as a draughtsman for some unspecified architects involved with schools and municipal housing, but (for reasons not explained) he then retrained to teach in further education. He taught at Wands- worth Technical College, concentrating presumably on social issues, since there is no suggestion that he was ever interested in the arts – no painters, musicians or writers appear in the Index. He later became education officer for the voluntary Town and County Planning Association, founded as the Garden City Association by Ebenezer Howard, whose ideas he admired. He edited the *Bulletin of Environmental Education* for the TCPA (no dates are given for these activities). He became a prolific journalist, writing principally for *Freedom* and *Anarchy*, but also for more mainstream journals such as *New Society* and the *New Statesman*. In a lively passage from *Freedom* in 1957 Ward called upon anarchists to develop those forms of social organisation which are the alternative to the government and authoritarian social structure … This means, by lending our support to whatever tendencies we can find towards workers’ control in industry, toward local autonomy in social affairs and public services, towards greater freedom and responsibility for the young, towards everything that makes for more variety, more dignity and quality in human life. (p. 42)

Pietro Di Paola, who quotes this passage, also tells us that Ward was aware that anarchists were not successful in winning over potential sympathisers such as members of CND, ‘because of the incapacity to formulate and offer anarchist alternatives in the most important fields of life’. (p. 46) This he clearly aimed to do in *Freedom* and more widely; but how far did he succeed? David Goodway – in a lucid discussion of the relation between the ideas put forward in the 1960s in *Anarchy* and in the *New Left Review* – draws attention to the fact that, after the Labour landslide of 1945, anarchists became ‘very isolated indeed’ in their hostility to the government’s ‘nationalisation and welfare legislation’. (p. 57) This point is developed by Carissa Honeywell in her account of the ideas Ward put forward when he was appointed as Visiting Centenary Professor in the Department of Social Policy at the LSE in 1995-6. These included a severe critique of the Welfare State as developed by the Labour government, and of Council Housing: ‘We took the wrong road to welfare’, he argued, by creating a state-administered system following on from the Fabian-influenced minority report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law in 1909. ‘The great tradition of working-class self-help and mutual aid was written off, not just as irrelevant, but as an actual impediment, by the political and professional architects of the welfare state’. He envisaged instead ‘a welfare society of socially embedded economic relationships’. (p. 89)

In a lively passage he expressed his fundamental preference for voluntary to State action, with reference to Victorian society, using italics to underline the contrast:
When we compare the Victorian antecedents of our public institutions with the organs of mutual aid in the same period, the very names speak volumes. On the one side the Workhouse, the Poor Law Infirmary, the National Society for the Education of the Poor in Accordance with the Principles of the Established Church; and the other, the Friendly Society, the Sick Club, the Co-operative Society, the Trade Union. One represents the tradition of fraternal and autonomous associations springing up from below, the other that of authoritarian institutions directed from above. (p. 94)

This is undoubtedly appealing, and the argument that state action can result in dependency needs to be faced, but what Honeywell, like the other contributors to this book, fails to do is to give any idea of the effects of Ward’s arguments on his audience or his colleagues or, when they were published in 1996 in the form of the book Social Policy: An Anarchist Response, on the books’ readers. There must have been reviews, but these are not mentioned, and no idea is given of whether they were taken up in any way in the Labour movement. Perhaps they appealed more to Conservatives, but of that we hear nothing either. Honeywell summarises Ward’s position: ‘Ward offers a model of social policy that separates the public sphere from top-down ideologies of social provision’. (p. 103) She concludes that Ward’s work is relevant to the ‘pressing’ present need now for ‘the left-wing reclamation of mutualist and self-help welfare idioms from the free market right, and from the theoreticians of the “Big Society”’. (p. 104) But she gives no indication as to if or where this might be happening.

Robert Graham gives a clear account of Ward’s ideas about anarchism and social organisation, suggesting that he believed that ‘given a common need, a collection of people will, by trial and error, by improvisation and experiment, evolve order out of the situation’. (pp. 112-113) We are told that he ‘provided extensive evidence that workers’ control of industry is entirely feasible’, (p.113) with a reference to his book Anarchy in Action, but offers no account of why the very idea has disappeared so completely from recent politics in this country. Graham was encouraged by the Zapatistas in Mexico during the 1990s, the ‘Battle of Seattle’ in 1999 and Arab Spring of 2011, suggesting that Ward had paved the way for the ‘resurgence of anarchism in the twenty-first [century]’. (p. 114) But has this occurred? Not as far as I can see.

Stuart White’s final chapter on social anarchism and lifestyle anarchism, distinguishing varieties of anarchism that the often-quoted Murray Bookchin claimed were incompatible, argues that Ward had, in his conciliatory way, shown that this was not the case and that a bridge could be built. He was thus able to offer a ‘balanced perspective’ which, for White, helped to make Ward’s work ‘a major and stimulating contribution to anarchist, and wider progressive, thought’. (p. 131) Similarly, Peter Marshall describes Ward as ‘a determined sower of anar-
christ ideas in many fields and one of the most influential anarchists since the Second World War’. (p. 20) But these claims lack force because no evidence is offered at any point that Ward had any influence in any of the policy areas about which he wrote. How were his works received? We are left to guess.

How good a writer was Ward? None of the contributors tells us except in the most general terms. Levy found Ward’s ‘strangely foreign and exotic language ... alluring to an American’ – he did not know what ‘adventure playgrounds’ were, and could not understand why squatters did not get their heads ‘staved in by a billy club’– and enjoyed being introduced to ‘interesting names’ like Landauer, Comfort and Buber. Thus he judges Anarchy to have been ‘a wonderful journal’. But is personal testimony like this enough? A piece of what seemed to me good writing is quoted from an article on ‘Anarchism and the Informal Economy’ in 1986; in it, a craftsman is imagined

sitting in his shop with a copy of William Morris’s Useful Work versus Useless Toil on the workbench, his hammer in his hand, and his lips full of brass tacks, his mind full of liberating his fellow workers from industrial serfdom in a dark satanic mill. (p. 108)

This is an appealing if rather backward-looking picture – especially when preceded by a criticism of ‘a Big Brother State with a responsibility to provide a pauper’s income for all and an inflation-proof income for its own functionaries’. It would be nice to think that Ward often wrote like this, but little evidence is given on this matter. Ward’s numerous books, often co-authored, include Anarchy in Action (1973) as to which of these are most worth reading today. Overall, therefore, though it contains many interesting ideas, this book strikes me as a missed opportunity.

Peter Faulkner


According to the publisher’s website, this book has been widely well-received, but I am sorry to report that I found it an immensely frustrating read. The author’s overall mission – she is professor of the history of science and technology at MIT – is to review the artistic predicaments facing three authors – Jules Verne, Morris, and Robert Louis Stevenson – at the close of the nineteenth century, and also the closing of ‘the frontier’, and of the Earth’s limits, which are said by then to have been fully explored, hence finally establishing Francis Bacon’s ‘Human Empire’
of *The New Atlantis*, and of the title. A factor uniting these authors’ work is said to be that in order to cope with an increasingly modernising world, in which ordinary life is ‘no longer “realistic” ‚ they each of them retreated from realism into romance. A second factor also said to unite them, is that they each ‘repeatedly’ left the land for water, and that they all grew up, and lived, around the shores of the North Sea, and therefore need to be understood as ‘regional’ writers.

Searching for similarities between such a disparate trio seems to me a hazardous exercise, and one whose inherent dangers I am not sure the book has escaped. Verne, for example, has always struck me, and, I suppose, everyone else, as an arch moderniser who eulogised technology, and who indeed invented ‘hard’, ‘techie’ science fiction with its obsession with powered machines. Although apparently he sometimes pointed out the disadvantages of rapid change – for indigenous, tribal and other pre-modern societies, whose causes he then championed – his remedy for their predicament was an enlightened colonialism, and the dragging of pre-modern peoples into the modern world. His own politics were conservative libertarian. In contrast, ‘apart from the desire to produce beautiful things, the leading passion’ of Morris’s life was, as widely known, ‘hatred of modern civilisation’, fired by ‘a deep love of the Earth and the life on it, and a passion for the history’ of the human past. Stevenson, although he came from the distinguished Scottish family of engineers, in contrast to Verne forsook modern technology for historical romance, and for the earthly paradise of the South Seas, but he too was no socialist.

I am less competent to comment on the first and third sections of the book – those on Verne, and on Stevenson – but when we come to Morris, there are a number of inaccuracies, and perhaps more serious, a series of obfuscations (some of which, I suspect, are intended to make Morris more ‘accessible’) which are the root of my frustration. Thus members may be interested to learn – in no particular order – that Morris was a ‘folklorist’; that he was both ‘an engineer’, ‘an entrepreneur and innovator’ (which makes him sound like James Dyson), and a ‘manufacturer of consumer goods’; that he was a ‘Little Englander’; that at many points in his life he expressed views which would now be regarded as ‘unenlightened at best’; that he could easily be called ‘a revolutionary conservative’, or (according to Fiona MacCarthy, apparently) a ‘conservative radical’; that he was ‘no more interested in socialist theory than in literary theory’ (in which he was also ‘disinterested’; *sic*); that his reputation today rests largely on his late books and his invention of modern fantasy fiction (yet another author who has not heard of ‘Morris the Green’); and perhaps most serious, that by the end of his life Morris had concluded that ‘neither poetry, nor romance, nor the decorative arts, nor socialism, could do much to keep modern civilisation from devouring ... the Earth’. *News from Nowhere*, meanwhile, is depicted ‘as more like a farewell to paradise than a description of one’ (‘more an elegy than a utopia’), and as
‘hardly utopia, but neither is it dystopia’. In fact, according to the author, it is an ‘alienated’ utopia.

There are also many inaccuracies: for example, that Kelmscott House is a ‘three-story’ house ‘upstream of the Thames embankment’, lying just ‘downstream’ of London’s first suspension bridge; that Morris was educated ‘west of London’ (well, in the sense that San Francisco is ‘west of London’, I suppose, yes); that Morris’s school at Marlborough is ‘near Swindon’ (not in any socio-economic sense, it ain’t!); that ‘Kelmscott Manor House’ (sic) is in ‘rural west England’. More generally, the North Sea does not include the Irish Sea or the Celtic Sea; the climate of the North Sea region is not ‘rainy’ (that would be the weather, as this year we all know all too well), but ‘humid’; the Italian Alps are not ‘more or less’ in the same location as the German forests of the Wolfings; the steep slopes up and down which Morris rode his pony in Iceland were probably not composed of ‘shale’ (a deep-ocean, sedimentary deposit), but of ‘scree’ (i.e. frost-shattered rock, in this case, volcanic); that a jökulhlaup is caused by melting ice, not by volcanic activity; that Iceland was inhabited by human beings before its ‘discovery’ by the Norse (although only by Irish monks, whom the Vikings chased away); that the Althing is indeed one of the earliest-known expressions of democratic self-government, but may not pre-date the Greek polis, the Iroquois League, or egalitarian Neolithic villages. And (perhaps most important for understanding the point of the entire story) the emaciated, worn-out, ragged old man who touches his hat to Guest at the end of News from Nowhere is clearly not part of Nowhere, but of the capitalist world to which Guest – although he does not quite know it yet – has already returned.

Such deficiencies (the above list is not exhaustive) are a great pity, because the book does contain much information which may be of interest to Morrisians. For example, during the 1860s, Verne began writing Paris in the Twentieth Century, an ‘exaggerated version of the Second Empire’ only published long after his death. Here, the city has become a port, connected to the sea by a canal 140 km long, 70 m wide, and 20 m deep. Ocean liners with thirty masts and fifteen chimneys (still powered by a mixture of steam and sail, then?) draw up alongside the quays. There are also ‘fax-like’ machines used to send information, a giant analog computer for keeping accounts, driverless trains on the Metro, and ‘gaz-cabs’ running silently on the roads. However, under a kind of ‘global cooling’, a new Ice-Age has begun – eerily Verne assigns the beginning of this trend to the winter of 1961/2, just twelve months prior to one of the coldest winters of the real twentieth century – and the starving city is now a frigid waste-land controlled by ‘unrelenting capitalistic and political bureaucracies’. Such ‘steam punk’ dystopias are nowadays two-a-penny, of course, but Verne’s is surely one of the earliest. But his strategy of projecting current trends into the future, is much more that of Bellamy than of Morris.

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Stevenson, after giving up engineering for romance, eventually left Scotland, first to travel steerage across the North Atlantic, and then by train to California, in order to seek out Fanny Osbourne, the (already married) woman with whom he was in love, but his accounts of those journeys, and of the mainly working people he met, and the harrowing conditions of their everyday lives, was rejected by his publisher as too ‘squalid’. ‘Across the Plains’ was published a few years later, but ‘From the Clyde to Sandy Hook’, the story of the ocean voyage, did not appear until after his death, and not in full until the 1960s. As is well-known, Louis and Fanny did eventually marry, and made their way to the South Seas, where they encountered the phenomena Jared Diamond has epitomised (again not always accurately) as *Guns, Germs and Steel* – disease, dwindling populations, deserted islands. Stevenson developed great sympathy for these peoples oppressed by colonialism, comparing their experiences to those of the Highlanders subjected to the Clearances in his homeland, and of the victims of the Irish ‘potato famine’. (NB: throughout all the years of this so-called ‘famine’, Ireland remained a net exporter of food, mainly to the British mainland) Like Morris, better to understand their mindset and their traditions, he learned what were in his case several local languages, but could do little for them, as his own politics were ‘neo-feudal paternalism’.

In a way, I am sorry to write such a negative review, as I know how wounding they can be. My problem is, I think, that I did not really learn anything much about Morris from the book. This might not matter to readers who are new to him, except that it contains so many inaccuracies that I could not possibly recommend it as a starting point. What it needs, I think, is a thorough editing, but then, as someone once did not quite say, ‘Well, I would, wouldn’t I?’

*Patrick O'Sullivan*
Notes on Contributors

Dorothy Coles (obituary, William Morris Society Newsletter, Summer 2012, pp. 4-5) was a long term stalwart of the William Morris Society. As well as organising Society expeditions to Iceland, she conducted research into Morris textiles, and into his family relationships.

David Everett is a native of Worcester. A modern languages graduate, since retiring from the civil service he has worked as a freelance genealogist.

Peter Faulkner taught English at the University of Exeter until his retirement in 1998; he is a former editor of this Journal and Honorary Secretary of the Society.

Martin Haggerty served on the committee of the William Morris Society from 1997 to 2004 and was the editor of its Newsletter. He now lives - without a car, television or central heating – in a sixteenth-century bastle house in deeply rural Northumberland. His recently-acquired skills include dry-stone-walling, and the use of a scythe.

Lynn Hulse is Trustee of the Brangwyn Gift at the William Morris Gallery, and Editor of Text, the journal of the Textile Society. She is Former Archivist of the Royal School of Needlework, and an expert on the development of art embroidery. Her book Decorating the Anglo-Irish Interior: Lady Julia Carew (1863-1922) and the Revival of Crewel Embroidery in the Jacobean Style will be published later this year.

Ian Jones is a long-standing Society member and former Committee member. He is an enthusiast for the Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic Movements, and is also interested in ‘High Victorian Dreamer’, William Burges. Ian lives in Saltaire, West Yorkshire, the model village built by ‘Sir Titus Salt, Bart’.

Barbara Lawrence has worked as a volunteer for the William Morris Society since 2003, acting as librarian from 2004 to 2008.
Patrick O’Sullivan is Editor of the *Journal*.

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Christine Poulson is a former Curator and Chair of the William Morris Society. Her novels, *Dead Letters, Stage Fright* and *Footfall* have recently been reissued as ebooks, and her new novel, *Invisible*, will be published by Accent Press later this year. Her blog, *A Reading Life*, can be found at [http://blog.christinepoulson.co.uk/](http://blog.christinepoulson.co.uk/)

John Purkis joined the William Morris Society in 1960, and is a former Honorary Secretary. He was with the Open University from 1970, and is currently writing a memoir of his time in Finland during the 1950s.

Roger Simpson, who has retired from the University of East Anglia, is the author of *Camelot Regained* (1990), *Radio Camelot* (2008), and many articles on the post-1800 Arthurian Revival.

Stephen Williams worked for the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and UNISON in an education capacity, and has written on trade union and labour history, including co-authoring two volumes of official NUPE history.
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