THE CHOICE
FOR PERIOD STYLE & LISTED PROPERTIES

Elegant, award-winning timber windows and doors designed for outstanding homes and a beautiful way of living. Made entirely in England, we achieve benchmark standards for your ultimate security and comfort.

**Classic™ Range** - These made-to-order slim double glazed products are available with a choice of profiles and feature individual 12-14mm slim profile units with true bars and a traditional external putty faced finish - perfect for period upgrade and replacement.

**Heritage™ Range** - Replicating original single glazed windows and doors to the finest detail, featuring true bars, a traditional hand-faced external putty finish and a choice of Float, Crown or Victorian glass - the natural choice for listed properties.

Every Mumford & Wood timber window and door is made just for you and your family, with our discreetly positioned signature logo your guarantee of the finest quality and craftsmanship.

Find out more at our website [www.mumfordwood.com](http://www.mumfordwood.com) or by calling 01621 818155

BRITAIN’S FINEST TIMBER WINDOWS & DOORS™
Contents

2 A remarkable woman – though none of you seemed to think so
Anna Morris reports on the May Morris Conference held by the William Morris Gallery

6 Fine Cell Work
Susan Warlow spoke to Founding Director Katy Emck about getting prisoners sewing

11 Opus Anglicanum: Masterpieces of English Medieval Embroidery
Linda Parry introduces a major exhibition at the V&A

16 William Morris on deskillling in art, the Turner Prize and Tiepolo
Interview by Matthew Collings

20 Bulletin

24 Calendar

26 Books

28 From the collection
Bust of Francis Ronalds, by Edward Davies, 1871

Welcome

Autumn 2016’s cover is a detail of a watercolour by Mary Annie Sloane, from the collection of the William Morris Gallery, of May Morris in the Tapestry Room at Kelmscott Manor, engaged in the colossal task of editing her father’s works for publication in 24 volumes. The May Morris conference, providing new insight into the life and work of William and Jane Morris’s younger daughter, was held in May of this year, organised by the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. Such is the interest in the lives of the Morris women that tickets for the event sold almost instantly, but a detailed report by curator Anna Mason follows on page two.

Age 23, May became Director of Embroidery at Morris & Co and it is this aspect of her life that led to two of the other features published here. Like her father, May was interested in English medieval embroidery or Opus Anglicanum, the fine needlework that was in great demand across Europe from kings, queens, popes, cardinals and bishops in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Textile historian and former President of the Society Linda Parry has kindly written an article on the subject, illustrated by examples that can be seen in a new, major exhibition at the V&A.

The second of these features is my interview with Katy Emck, the Founding Director of the charity Fine Cell Work, whose volunteers go into prisons to teach needlework to prisoners, many of whom are serving long sentences. Although it has been established for almost 20 years, I first heard of the charity just a few years ago in an item on the radio, and was enthused enough to begin donating to it myself. I’ve found pleasure in sewing since the age of five, when a kind neighbour taught me a few basic stitches to embroider a present for my mother, and I appreciate the soothing rhythm of stitching and the satisfaction that derives from the build-up of the sewn texture. To me it seems a moving and inspired idea to take these skills into places of incarceration and teach them to prisoners, in the tradition of Elizabeth Fry although without her insistence on bible reading. The article is illustrated by beautiful, intricate examples of the prisoners’ making, including works commissioned by artists Cornelia Parker and Gavin Turk.

Our final feature is an interview with William Morris by Matthew Collings, one of a series by him, Great Critics and Their Ideas, which have been published by ArtReview. However long each interviewee has been dead, they apparently continue to be interested in contemporary thought and Morris is no exception, with views on the kerfuffle about supposed antisemitism within the Labour Party and drawing comparisons between the Turner Prize and the Tiepolo frescoes in the Würzburg Residenz in Germany.

The Morrises’ older daughter, Jenny, has been commemorated in the Embroidered Minds project initiated by Leslie Forbes, who died in July and who is remembered by the Society’s President, Jan Marsh, on page 21. The undertaking has involved writers, artists, historians and neurologists, exploring the impact of Jenny’s epilepsy on the Morris family. As part of the project Leslie had recently published Don’t Remember, part one of a serialised novel, Embroidered Minds of the Morris Women, which is included in our books listings on page 26. Sadly, it will now remain an incomplete work.

Many thanks to those members who have written with comments and information; your contributions are within the Bulletin section. Articles confirmed for the Spring 2017 issue include a report on the Society’s Summer 2016 trip to Iceland; plus our Chair, Martin Stott, on the 1888 photograph of the Hammersmith Socialist League; an edited version of this year’s Kelmscott Lecture by Edmund de Waal; our librarian Penny Lyndon on both the latest developments in cataloguing the Society’s library and the significance of its contents; and further research by David Saxby on the Morris tapestry makers who went into the employ of the Marquis of Bute.

Susan Warlow, Editor
In Spring 2016, the William Morris Gallery convened the first conference dedicated to May Morris (1862–1938), exploring her life and multi-faceted career as a designer, embroiderer, jeweller, teacher and playwright, as well as the pivotal role she played in preserving and shaping her father’s legacy. The conference was a precursor to a major exhibition of May Morris’s work that will be held at the Gallery between October 2017 and January 2018, with loans from many Morris properties and national institutions including the V&A and National Museums Scotland. 2016 marks thirty years since the publication of Jan Marsh’s seminal biography – Jane and May Morris: A Biographical Story, 1939–1938 (1986) – the first exploration of the lives and achievements of the Morris women. Since then a wealth of new archival material and objects have come to light, including a pair of embroideries that May designed for Melsetter House in Orkney, recently acquired by National Museums Scotland. Other discoveries include correspondence between May Morris and her American lover John Quinn, a rediscovered play Lady Griselda’s Dream, the Women’s Guild of Arts archive, now in the collection of The William Morris Society, and a large collection of correspondence between May Morris and Sydney Cockerell, donated to the William Morris Gallery by Ronald Briggs.

Despite her significance as one of the leading female exponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement, May Morris has only been the subject of one major exhibition, curated by Helen Sloan and held at the William Morris Gallery in 1989. Building on the scholarship of Jan Marsh and textile historian Linda Parry, the conference explored May’s life and work from many different angles with contributions from thirteen speakers.

On Friday 13 May, delegates visited the V&A’s Clothworkers’ Centre at Blythe House, where Jenny Lister, Curator of Fashion and Textiles, gave an introduction to the May Morris embroideries in the collection. More than sixteen works, including large-scale hangings and portieres, were on view, with an opportunity to examine the detail of the stitching. Highlights included the superfrontal, designed by Philip Webb and worked by May Morris, that was loaned to an exhibition in Paris just before the First World War broke out. Fruit trees were a recurring motif in May’s work, and one of her most accomplished designs, The Orchard, was represented by a large hanging worked by her friend Theodosia Middlemore. Equally fascinating were the smaller commercial pieces including cushion and fire screen kits that, in their partially worked state, provide an insight into the working practices of Morris & Co’s embroidery department. The opportunity to view all these works side by side provided an invaluable overview of both May’s technical skill and her evolving approach to design, as she gradually developed her own visual language that was in sympathy with, but distinct from, her father’s approach to embroidery design.

During the second part of the day, delegates enjoyed a visit to The William Morris Society in Hammersmith, followed by a guided walk along the Thames to Hammersmith Terrace where May lived and worked. Our guide explored the incredibly rich cultural heritage of this short stretch of riverfront, which continued to attract artists well into the twentieth century. After May’s marriage to her socialist comrade Henry Halliday Sparling, she moved out of the Morris family home to Hammersmith Terrace, a short walk along the riverfront. Her neighbours included the printer Emery Walker, the bookbinder Thomas Cobden-Sanderson and the Pre-Raphaelite artist Frederick George Stephens – it was a creative environment.

In the evening, the event moved to Walthamstow, with behind-the-scenes tours of the Gallery’s archive, including a chance to view photographs, watercolours and embroideries by May Morris. The Gallery has a particularly rich photographic archive with images of May throughout her life, from a young child pictured...
Top: June embroidered frieze, May Morris, c. 1909-10, William Morris Gallery.
Left: The Orchard (or A Fruit Garden), watercolour on paper, early 1890s, William Morris Gallery.
Above middle: Maids of Honour embroidery, c. 1900, William Morris Gallery.
Above: Kelmscott Manor, May Morris, watercolour on paper, c. 1880s, William Morris Gallery.
Opposite, top right: May Morris in Iceland, 1931, William Morris Gallery.
with her mother Jane, through to some iconic portraits by Frederick Hollyer and holiday snaps from her visits to Iceland and camping trips in Wales and Cornwall with her companion Mary Frances Vivian Lobb. Both women loved nature and the outdoors and May continued to enjoy lengthy camping holidays into the final years of her life. The Gallery’s collection also includes embroideries that she designed for her own pleasure, including the June frieze worked in wool with an image of Kelmscott Manor, created for her sitting room at Hammersmith Terrace and gifts that she presented to her friend, Mary Annie Skane.

The highlight of the evening was the keynote lecture by Jan Marsh – ‘A remarkable woman – though none of you seemed to think so’: the overdue reevaluation of May Morris’s career. Marsh explored May’s bohemian childhood, growing up in an atheistic household, witnessing her parents’ experiments in art, modelling for Dante Gabriel Rossetti and forming a ‘secret society’ with the Burne-Jones children. May had little formal schooling but as an adult she attended the South Kensington School of Design, specialising in embroidery. This training helped equip her for the challenge of taking over the management of Morris & Co’s embroidery department in 1885, aged just 25. The lecture also explored May’s active involvement in socialism, her adult relationships including her flirtation with the playwright George Bernard Shaw and the career she carved out for herself as a freelance designer, teacher and founder of the Women’s Guild of Arts in 1907, set up to support her sister Jenny Morris, particularly after Jane Morris’s death.

In the third session, we heard from Helen Bratt-Wyton, House Steward at Wightwick Manor, who explored May’s role as a teacher at the Birmingham School of Art and her influence on the design curriculum. Jenny Lister and Hanne Faurby from the V&A presented fascinating new insights on the commercial side of Morris & Co’s embroidery business through a close analysis of the surviving embroidery daybook, now housed at the National Art Library. Annette Carruthers, Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of St Andrews, investigated May’s friendship with Theodosia Midlemore, who commissioned the newly-discovered Melsetter embroideries and the two women’s experiments with weaving on the island of Orkney.

The final session had an international flavour, with a lively account of May’s lecture tour and reception in the United States, presented by Dr Margaretta Frederick, Chief Curator of the Bancroft Pre-Raphaelite Collection at Delaware Art Museum. Arts and Crafts scholar Mary Greenst sponsored May’s relationship with Ernest Gimson and their wartime collaboration on the memorial cottages in Kelmscott Village. The proceedings were concluded with a thought-provoking paper from Julia Dudkiewicz, PhD candidate at Central Saint Martins, on May Morris’s role as curator of the William Morris estate.

Throughout the day May Morris’s sense of fun, developed social conscience and artistic achievements came across strongly. Despite facing challenges in her personal life, she carved out a remarkable career and lived an independent and incredibly full life. The conference also presented a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of how she worked to preserve and curate her father’s legacy. Material that other people might have treated as ephemera, May carefully preserved and presented to public collections. She was forceful and firm in her dealings with museum authorities, especially when she felt her father’s artistic achievements were being sidelined or misrepresented.

The conference reinforced just how much we still have to learn and how much material is still in private hands, or only in the process of being catalogued and attributed. For example, the recent rediscovery of an exquisite embroidered book cover by May Morris in the collection of the Grolier Club, New York, was brought to light. The William Morris Gallery welcomes any new information that readers may have and is compiling extensive research files that will be open to everyone to consult.

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the William Morris Gallery and designer Roger Huddle, the conference proceedings will be published next year to coincide with the exhibition at the William Morris Gallery. The proceedings will be dedicated to the memory of Leslie Forbes (1953-2016), another remarkable woman, whose creativity and sense of enquiry has done so much to shed new light on the lives of the Morris women.

Anna Mason is the Manager and Curator of the William Morris Gallery.
The Wandsworth Quilt, 12 ft by 6 ft
'Fine Cell Work trains prisoners in paid, skilled, creative needlework undertaken in the long hours spent in their cells to foster hope, discipline and self esteem. This helps them to connect to society and to leave prison with the confidence and financial means to stop offending.'

Founded in 1997, Fine Cell Work came about through the determination of Anne Trese, a philanthropist and prison visitor who was the charity’s first chair. For many years she lobbied government for prisoners to be paid for the work that they did in prison. A friend of Lucien Freud and Graham Sutherland, Anne Trese also had a family connection with the interior furnishing firm Colefax and Fowler, which became one of the outlets for the prisoners’ work.

Prisoners sew pieces ranging from tea cosies and cushion covers to ecclesiastical and heritage commissions. Contemporary artists who have commissioned work include Cornelia Parker, Gavin Turk and Polly Borland.

Katy Emck I think that the provenance of the work, the fact that it’s made in prison, is something of an inspiration to artists, and it adds an extra dimension. Our first piece for Cornelia was the embroidery made for Magna Carta's 800th anniversary, which was on show at the British Library. It is immense, about 13 metres long and about one-and-a-half metres wide, an embroidered facsimile of the Wikipedia entry on Magna Carta on the 799th anniversary to the day when it was signed. It is a highly conceptual piece in that Wikipedia is always subject to revision, as was Magna Carta, it’s not just one definitive moment and is the work of many hands. It’s the great legal document, so it was apt that the bulk of the embroidery was stitched by prisoners; between fifty and seventy prisoners hand-embroidered the text. For Cornelia that was a very important aspect of the whole piece, the prison provenance. She visited prison and sent a copy of the catalogue to everyone who took part in the piece. It was sewn together by an ex-prisoner as well.

SW Was it done in one prison or in a number of prisons?
KE It was done in a number of different prisons, in small sections that were all stitched together. What was remarkable from our point of view was that the quality of the work was extremely high. That was the moment when we realised that we are the largest professional body of embroiderers in Europe, as far as we know and probably in the western world. We have a really substantial workforce of trained embroiderers who will sew for twenty to forty hours a week.

That is an incredible resource and I think that the connection with William Morris is that you have people who are mostly not educated or trained to a high level, who are able to participate in craftwork as a way of life. It’s quite paradoxical that it’s happening in prisons and I’ve thought about it quite a lot. There are other forms of
Butterfly cushion cover, crewel work.

Right: Prisoner at work.
craftwork that could and should be done in prison. The modern, mechanised world was taking over from the manual world of craft in the nineteenth century and it has done so almost completely now; yet in prison where people have too much time on their hands, all kinds of machinery isn't allowed, in particular digital and computerised machinery. Craftwork is a great solace and is very well suited to the environment. Fifty per cent of the people who are in prison are illiterate, but many of those people are incredibly good with their hands. It’s a form of skill that can provide real benefit in such places. The other thing is that the money the prisoners earn from it is very meaningful in prison. The problem with the labour of the craftsman is that it’s hard for people to make a living from it, but in prison the money can be transformative and it’s supposed to be. We pay them a third of the price of any piece – that is about 50p an hour, which equates with other prison labour but it’s not a living wage in the outside world. We’ve worked with people who’ve saved hundreds, or even a few thousand, over a number of years, which is an extraordinary achievement. Imagine the hours of work!

Next year is Fine Cell Work’s twentieth anniversary and it’s been an uphill slog to build it into something that can be called a kind of business. When we started we had £2000, we didn’t know what we were doing, and in the second year we got our first commission.

**SW** Was Anne Tree involved at that point, when it was set up? Obviously she was the inspiration behind it, teaching needlework to women prisoners and campaigning for pay for prisoners.

**KE** The charity started very small, Lady Anne had a very good idea that sounded very unlikely, but she had the contacts, she knew the people who might want a needlepoint commission for a stool or a chair. The prisons world doesn’t talk to that world normally so that was unusual. The other thing that helped the charity get going was finding wonderful, skilled volunteers from all over the country, who wanted to go into prisons and share their skills with prisoners, because they understood the solace it gave them, the mental calm and greater satisfaction. All our volunteers can see that if you’re locked in a tiny space and deeply unhappy, needlework can take your mind off the problem somewhat.

We’re still very much a charity, a third of the money that we make comes from sales, the rest of it is donations. We have to raise money to get the materials in and out of prison, to train the volunteers, and we now also support more and more of the prisoners when they get out. The idea of the charity was that the work would help them be independent, but the reality is that even though it is an amazing thing for someone to come out with £500 or a couple of thousand, embroidery is not going to get them a job. We have prisoners who are coming out and training as upholsterers, one has become a costume maker, another did machine embroidery for Levi-Strauss, another became a soft furnisher, so with further training the needlework skills can translate into employable textile skills. That’s something we are now building on, and we want to establish a larger workshop than the one we have already outside of prison, where ex-prisoners can work as volunteers and be mentored and get follow-on training and support into work.

Concerning work for artists, this is not work that comes in all the time, but we’ve done some very special pieces. They are very good for the charity, both from a reputation point of view and in that the prisoners can earn more and the charity can get more money back to invest in its work.

**SW** The work commissioned by Gavin Turk for his *Gavin & Turk* exhibition in 2012 was inspired by the Italian artist Alighiero Boetti and I believe Fine Cell Work volunteers experimented to recreate the technique used by Afghan embroiderers in some of Boetti’s work.

**KE** I think the things we did for Gavin were the most beautiful we’ve ever done. Both Cornelia and Gavin’s works were what is known as surface embroidery. If they’d been needlepoint, where the whole surface is stitched, they would have taken years, and cost an awful lot more

The volunteers devised a stitch called Afghan stitch, which all the prisoners learned very quickly to stitch onto linen. We are very proud of the fact that when we have big commissions like this we are able to train our stitchers new techniques, they absorb them quickly and they can do the work to time. So we definitely now, after twenty years, have a business that can deliver, also because of the sheer number of stitchers we have to draw on. That makes us different both from the Royal School of Needlework and an amateur organisation like the Embroiderers Guild.

**SW** Can you tell me about the HMP Wandsworth Quilt, which Fine Cell Work prisoners created for the V&A’s 2010 Quilts exhibition?

**KE** For us that was a breakthrough moment, the exhibition was seen by hundreds of thousands of people. The quilt had been devised by prisoners and was a portrait of life inside HMP Wandsworth. The prisoners had the concept of the structure of the quilt being the geometric shape of the prison as seen from above. The quilt itself is absolutely fascinating, swarming with life. Each patch has an embroidered image in it, it’s almost like each segment of the quilt is a cell, with a story inside it. Some of those stories are very powerful and they’re true. We had loads of emails and letters, it made people cry, just reflecting on the lives of the prisoners, it was a very powerful piece. It was shown alongside a famous quilt, the Rajah quilt (1841), made by female convicts who were on a convict ship to Australia, who’d been taught to quilt by Elizabeth Fry’s volunteers. The quilt has a very touching embroidered inscription on it, thanking the ladies of the convict ship committee as a testimony of the gratitude with which they remember their exertions for their welfare while in England and during their passage.

**SW** How did the Wandsworth Quilt come about?

**KE** We were approached by Sue Pritchard, the curator of the exhibition. She came into prison a number of times and gave lectures to the prisoners, including a wonderful talk about Henry Moore’s textiles. She also brought in a
couple of antique quilts from the V&A's collection, into the chapel at HMP Wandsworth.

**SW** The prison supplies you with a room to work in?

**KE** Yes, it's very variable. We have taught in empty cells without furniture, we've taught at ping-pong tables in the middle of prison wings, in prison libraries with soft, comfortable chairs and low tables, and in classrooms. We can go where we're put and adapt to the environment. All the prisons are physically quite different. I remember one time going to Wandsworth and seeing our quilting group, they were just completing a very large commission, putting the finishing touches to it. They had it spread across the floor of the wing, a Victorian wing like in Porridge, and they had it all laid out, and all these prisoners stepping around it, very excitedly. The Chief Inspector of Prisons gave a talk recently, he's now the head of the parole board, Nick Hardwick, and he said that he goes to prisons all the time and is always seeing bits of embroidery in people's cells.

**SW** Good!

**KE** Our prisoners tend to be long-termers and they move through a lot of different institutions in the course of their sentences.

**SW** So it gives them a sort of continuity?

**KE** It gives them continuity, and it's the way we've grown, because they move and they take their embroidery with them and they tell their mates about it and they write to us pleadingly to set up new groups in new prisons. So it has a grass-roots force, the reason being that people in prison need things to do and they need extra money. Prisons are profoundly boring and depressing places.

**SW** What is the range of needlework that prisoners can learn? Is it initially based on embroidery or is it based on needlepoint?

**KE** They do both. We now have an apprenticeship that's just been accredited, that we ask people joining to do, and they have to learn a very wide range of stitches to complete the apprenticeship. It's what is known as canvas work and surface embroidery. They are asked to do some creative and designing work as well, and work with colour, so it's quite demanding. When we first started it was just needlepoint, then we did surface embroidery and it was mainly chain stitch, then we did a bit of crewel work and long and short stitch. Now it's much wider, they know how to do their French knots, their seeding and their fly stitch. We feel we're giving them a fairly good grounding. Our teachers are excellent – about half of our volunteers have been teachers, in schools or in adult education. No-one in their right mind would want to come and teach embroidery in prison unless they were confident! The education is also through the relationship, which is positive, supportive and straightforward. It's not about counselling or their crimes, it's about collaborating on doing a good job, and if the prisoners will do a good job they get all the respect in the world for it. In our current workforce of 280, about 200 could be said to be highly skilled.

For the prisoners it's work, it's a sense of calm, that enables them to think of the future, the money they earn can help them plan for that. We encourage them to think about volunteering for us and getting employment support when they get out. There is an emphasis on thinking about the future.

[finecellwork.co.uk](http://finecellwork.co.uk)
Opus Anglicanum: Masterpieces of English Medieval Embroidery

Linda Parry

On 1 October an important exhibition of English medieval embroidery opens at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Known at the time as Opus Anglicanum or English work, the display will include examples of some of the finest art objects produced on our shores. Apart from providing a visual feast for those interested in art and design (and of particular relevance to followers of Morris and the early Arts & Crafts Movement) it will cover one of the most fascinating periods in British history during which England’s fortunes abroad were elevated in no small part by the magnificence of its embroideries for the church and the accoutrements of the court and nobility. Produced during a period in which both church and chivalric ceremony flourished, and spurred on by the patronage of the Royal Court and the Catholic Church, the guilds, merchants and embroiderers (both men and women) of England took an increasingly influential position at the centre of the European textile trade from the Norman Invasion which was only diminished following the catastrophic spread of the Black Death in the second half of the fourteenth centuries. Although production continued for over three hundred years, the exhibition will concentrate on the period from the late twelfth to the mid fourteenth century, when the finest work was carried out.
Manuscripts predating the Norman Conquest attest to the accomplishments of Anglo-Saxon embroiderers and various historical figures are listed as being involved in production. As early as the seventh century St Ethelreda, abbess of Ely, a gifted practitioner in gold embroidery, is listed as offering an ecclesiastical stole and maniple to St Cuthbert. In the tenth century St Dunstan, the great reformer of the church in England and a notable silversmith and illuminator is recorded as working on designs for embroidery suggesting that the accomplishments of medieval draughtsmen were often transferred from one art form to another. A century later Aedgytha, queen of Edward the Confessor, is said to have embroidered robes worn by her husband for important festivals and possibly for his coronation.

The most celebrated example of early Anglo-Saxon art is the Bayeux Tapestry which is technically an embroidery. Almost certainly commissioned by Bishop Odo, half brother of William the Conqueror, for the church in Bayeux, it is thought to have been drawn by
illuminators working in Canterbury and embroidered in workshops in the south of England. Although debate continues as to who designed the embroideries, the fame of *opus anglicanum* owes much to the skills of English manuscript painters who were based almost exclusively in monasteries until the twelfth century when professional designers (ill 5) set up businesses in towns and cities. However their ability to provide some of the most expressive figurative designs seen in early European art (ill 5, 8) was closely matched by the dexterity and sensitivity of embroiderers who transferred these images to cloth by means of some of the most complex and difficult techniques. Underside couching, the one most closely associated with medieval work is an extraordinary difficult process in which the stitching is worked from the back rather than the front of the work. This was widely used for securing silver-gilt threads (gold work) on the surface of the cloth and became an accomplishment for which William of Pottier, chronicler of the battle of Hastings, claimed England was renowned.

In the Middle Ages possessions were few and embroidered clothing and furnishings, whether made for the church or the home, were viewed as indispensable symbols of status and power. Although none but the wealthiest could afford to commission work, numerous references to embroideries in early documents, inventories and fiscal accounts suggest production was widespread. Unfortunately comparatively little has survived. Most domestic examples of embroidery, hangings, wall and bed covers for example which are listed in Court documents, have long disintegrated through use, with only a few ceremonial artefacts such as seal bags, livery badges and horse trappings (ill 1) remaining. Rare survivors of battle are the funeral badges and horse trappings (ill 1) remaining. Rare survivors of battle are the funeral hatchments of Edward, The Black Prince (1330–76) who fought at Crécy and Poitier, and his surcoat and shield will be exhibited in the V&A exhibition. These are usually displayed in Canterbury cathedral, opposite his tomb, over which reproductions of these are hung in the medieval manner.

Church vestments, which made up the majority of work produced, were widely destroyed or desecrated during the Reformation in England and the centuries of asceticism that followed. Some fragments, torn or cut up at the time, survive in public and private collections. Hardwick Hall, now owned by the National Trust, has a number of small embroidered scraps from a set made for the Court of Edward I and shows the lions of England embroidered in silver-gilt thread, couched onto red velvet. © Photo RMN-Grand Palais (Musée de Cluny – musée national du Moyen Âge) / Frank Raux.

Matilda, Queen of William I, bequeathed two items to the church of the Holy Trinity in Caen, one chasuble ‘embroidered in Winchester by Alderet’s wife; the cloak wrought in gold… and another robe now being embroidered in England’. In the thirteenth century the name of Mabel of Bury St Edmunds occurs at least twenty-four times in the household accounts of Henry III (1216-72) and other known embroiderers from the time include Maud of Canuaria (Canterbury) and Rose, wife of John de Bureford, a London merchant who, in 1317, who was paid 100 marks by Queen Isabella, wife of Edward III, for an embroidered cope intended as a gift to the Pope.

As demand increased professional workshops employing both men and women embroiderers were set up in London. Directed by men, the workers served a seven-year apprenticeship acquiring skills not only in the embroidery of silk and silver gilt thread but also beadwork and the application of precious gems. Donald King, in his introduction to the ground breaking 1963 exhibition *Opus Anglicanum* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, claimed that ‘At its best’ this work ‘is unsurpassed, for delicacy and refinement of execution, by the embroidery of any other country or period’. Skills were handed down not only from generation to generation but also within the same family.

Orders came from all parts of the Christian world. For London merchants who acted as middlemen between clients and the workshops this export work proved particularly lucrative. Following commissions received from Pope
In 1246, the chronicler Matthew Paris noted ‘This command of my Lord Pope did not displease the London merchants who traded in these embroideries and sold them at their own price.’ Apart from the Vatican inventory of 1295, which lists more examples of opus anglicanum than any other type of embroidery, the extent of international trade is illustrated in the wide geographical area in which examples have been found. These include the cathedrals of Pienza, Bologna and Ascoli Piceno in Italy, Toledo, (ill 6) Madrid and Vic in Spain, Salzburg in Austria, Skå (Upland) near Upsala in Sweden, and Hólar in Iceland. This is by no means an exhaustive list but covers a number of the international loans represented in the V&A exhibition.

Despite the success of trade overseas many fine examples of ecclesiastical embroidery remained in England. No longer used in church services, a few literary references from the eighteenth century mention early vestments hanging in cathedrals but these are remarked on as oddities rather than the norm and it is likely that most perished through neglect. Those that have survived owe their existence to the convents and recusant families where they were stored and cherished and many examples have since acquired the name of previous owners or the location in which they were found. Some examples do remain in an ecclesiastical setting. The cathedral treasuries of Durham, Canterbury and Gloucester contain textile remnants from the tombs of St Cuthbert, Archbishop Hubert Walter and Bishop Walter de Cantilupe, but these are exceptions and most medieval vestments are now owned by or loaned to museum collections.

Appreciation of, and research into, this important period in English art has been spasmodic and has tended to concentrate on the architecture of the time; the building of magnificent castles and cathedrals, rather than the furnishings used in them. It was not until the Gothic Revival of the mid nineteenth century, and the subsequent re-adoption of church ceremony and ritual, that a serious interest in medieval embroidery was revived due to the enthusiasm of a small but scholarly group of nineteenth century architects, collectors and historians. One of the first to study the period in detail was the architect and designer Augustus Welby Pugin (1812-1852), a Roman Catholic convert who looked on medieval embroidery as the only true guide for his own church needlework. Whereas his main interest was Continental work, he was closely followed by a number of Anglican architects notably George Edmund Street (1824-1881) who not only published articles on British medieval embroidery but went on to co-found the Ladies Ecclesiastical Needlework Society which was set up to supply altar cloths of strictly ecclesiastical design either by reproducing ancient examples or by working under the supervision of a competent architect.

It was as a pupil in Street’s architectural office that the subject first came to the notice of the young and impressionable William Morris. The paramount beauty of this early decorative work, combined with a technical expertise not seen since that time, epitomised for him qualities he spent his career endeavouring to achieve. It also provided inspiration for his earliest furnishings for Red Lion Square and Red House and the first professional hangings sold by Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company.

Morris became one of the country’s foremost
experts on early textiles advising the Victoria and Albert Museum (then known as The South Kensington Museum) on acquisitions and he would have been already familiar with two of the most important surviving early English vestments, the Clare Chasuble (ill 7) and the Syon Cope, (ill 2, 3) which were already part of the collection when he was appointed one of the museum’s first art referees. The Museum’s collections provided him, and his friends Philip Webb and Edward Burne-Jones, not only with their greatest local source of medieval decoration, which in the early days was their primary interest. It is even possible to discern in Morris’s later designs pattern motifs and colour combinations associated with English medieval embroidery.

William’s youngest daughter May had a far more technical interest in the work, adopting many long-forgotten stitches of opus anglicanum in her crusade for the revival of hand embroidery. Through her teaching and publications, which included Decorative Needlework (1893) plus four articles specifically on the subject (featuring the Ascoli and Pienza copes) for the Burlington Magazine in 1905, these became an essential part of the training of her students. She had studied embroidery at the South Kensington Schools, which was attached to the V&A, so knew the collections well. Grace Christie, who had been taught by May at the Central School of Art and Design, went on to become a teacher there and in 1938 published English Medieval Embroidery, the first significant history of the subject, which is still considered one of the most authoritative sources.

Following the keen interest which has developed in the academic and art world since the mid-nineteenth century, the Victoria and Albert Museum has been at the forefront of collecting and researching opus anglicanum, with museum staff contributing to the first public exhibition devoted to the subject in 1905 at the Burlington Arts Club in London. This was closely followed in 1907 by the publication of the first catalogue of the museum’s holdings of ecclesiastical work from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. In 1963 it housed the exhibition Opus Anglicanum: English Medieval Embroidery, which set the benchmark for later scholarship. The forthcoming display and accompanying catalogue will expand on this both in the range and number of exhibits (which will include comparative and associated items such as contemporary stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, and panel painting) and on current research. It promises to be one of the most fascinating exhibitions of its type and provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to see some of the most beautiful and skilful textiles ever created. I strongly recommend that you try to see it.

Linda Parry worked at the V&A Museum for over thirty years until her retirement. She has published extensively on textiles and the decorative arts and is a past President of the William Morris Society.

For left: 6 The Toledo Cope (detail), 1320-30. This detail shows Edward the Confessor and is one of a complex design. Owned by the Archbishop of Toledo, his 1364 will mentions such a vestment. The entire surface of the cope is embroidered in silk and silver-gilt threads in underside couching and split stitch on linen. © Toledo, Tesoro de la Catedral, Museo de Tapices y Textiles de la Catedral.

Left: 7 The Clare Chasuble (detail), 1272-94. Commissioned by or for Margaret of Clare, wife of Edward Plantagenet, nephew of Henry 111. Embroidered in silver-gilt, silver threads and coloured silks in underside couching, split stitch and laid and couched work on a silk and cotton ground. © Victoria and Albert Museum.

Below: 8 The Steeple Aston Cope (detail), 1330-40. The original cope was cut into fragments, probably during the reformation and has been refuged as an altar frontal. Owned by the church of St Peter and St Paul in Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire, it is on permanent loan to the V&A. Worked in silks and silver gilt threads on linen. © Victoria and Albert Museum.
William Morris on
deskilling in art, the
Turner Prize and Tiepolo

Interview by Matthew Collings

ArtReview It’s funny to think about skill in art. Deskilling is the buzzword today.

William Morris That’s true. Art started to become deskilled in the last part of the nineteenth century. Artists were outside academic institutions for the first time. There was a new attitude to materials and how you worked them, and to appearances and how they could be distorted – or even must be. And to yourself: what are you if you’re an artist? This was all a positive new freedom. Now, though, misunderstandings about the role in art of making cause deskilling to be understood almost as an option that an art student can choose, or a method connected to conceptual art.

AR Where did British socialism come from?

WM Its roots go back to the English Civil War. But the real rise was during the nineteenth century. Many organisations were formed. The Socialist League, which I helped create, came out of a split with the Social Democratic Federation, the first nominally Marxist organisation in Britain. I wrote up the manifesto for the league newspaper, which I edited and funded.

AR Did the organisation really change things?

WM There wasn’t much to it in real terms: only 230 members.

AR Did it lead to the modern Labour Party?

WM All the old small socialist organisations had a hand in that. But the league turned to anarchism in the early 1890s and I got out of it at that point. And then in 1901, with barely 6000 members, it disbanded. In the meantime the Labour movement really had got going. The first-ever Labour council was brought in for the London Borough of West Ham in 1898.

AR Do you think art is always better off under Labour?

WM No, I don’t know what it would mean for it to be better off. Art is such an indefinable thing, or definable in such an infinity of ways.

AR What’s the best thing you made?

WM Morris & Co stained-glass windows. They’re a version of paintings.

AR What do you think of Jeremy Corbyn and anti-Semitism in the Labour Party?

WM It was a faked-up row. The Labour right wanted him to look bad. They are at war with anyone with moral principles. These make Corbyn attractive, and everyone knows the Blairites don’t have any (they only want to get into power; they don’t have any ideas otherwise). The Labour right is always looking for ways to agitate for a coup. In this case they thought they could say if Corbyn can’t rein in his anti-Semitism and that of his fellow socialists then what does it matter if he achieved a crushing leadership victory over the Labour right due to his vision of a society based on justice and personal agency rather than despair and a sense of futility? Absurdities like a fictional plague of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party are just a continuation of malicious calumny about him not possessing a suit and only wearing vests his mother knits.

AR What do you believe in?

WM I believe in emancipation, feminism, environmentalism, social reform, educational reform and dignity through work.

AR What about art?

WM Well, I don’t think art is a matter of belief. As an artist it’s something you do. And this practical element, the tangible, factual, material element of art, its nature as a made thing, must always come into anyone’s appreciation of art. It forces attention onto times, places and contexts;
it causes art to be specific, not up in the air. In my case, like the Byzantines long ago, I was interested in a type of artistic form involving woven, lacy, interconnected linear elements, which are essentially derived from observation of nature, and from which a proposal about a very solid and convincing yet at the same time clearly flat space can be constructed. Today art is mostly a matter of faith. It really is up in the air. It’s true for creators and audience. Even if there’s occasionally a kind of art where making is, in fact, important, there isn’t an audience that’s informed about the issues involved.

AR Ideas are always good, though, aren’t they? I mean, it’s a dumbed-down society, and art is a place you can go where there are ideas.

WM Dumbing-down comes from economic competition. Mass-communication media cut down more and more on resources. Inevitably news stories become based on PR statements issued by businesses and political parties. It becomes accepted that news stories are not objectively true. That’s how you get the anti-Semitism fiasco. No one can say anything in that story that reflects a genuine examination of Israeli brutality in Gaza. Indubitably important ideas featuring in the story, like genuine anti-Semitism historically, present-day oppression of Palestinians, US and UK financial support of Israel, and odd historical anomalies where what might be thought to be straightforward turns out to have possibly unexpected twists, all appear as so many unrelated fragments in a fiction that hardly alters even though ever more narrative fragments come and go. A curious similarity occurs in contemporary art, where there are exotic ideas and lip service is paid to the us really have any sense of what their status is or why we should value them.

AR People love old art though, don’t they? And contemporary art is always reprocessing the past in witty ways. Like the arse door in the Turner Prize: doesn’t it come from the 1970s?

WM I’d like to compare that work to a historical work I saw in a German palace, a vast ceiling-fresco illustrating the theme of the Four Continents. Part of it is an arch composition (an arch of course is a kind of door). Here is art — with all the powers at its disposal standing the reigning principles of the mid-1700s: exploration, commerce, power, European dominance, heaven’s approval and divine precedence. Perhaps one could say art always extracts an aesthetic meaning because of the redundany of the other stuff: the way principles and beliefs of a certain period go out of date. So Modernism sees in Tiepolo orchestrated pale

colours and marvellously fluid lazy lines; amazing aerial perspectives and looming enormous spaces; deliciously rich and complicated interactions of people and objects; and beautiful expressions and poses. And it’s possible to think of a further extraction from that extraction — a lot of abstract values from those pleasures. These extractions become codified resources for artistic making, and also for seeing clearly what it is that has actually been done when we’re admiring something artistic.

AR And the Turner Prize…?

WM Well, it’s just like that German palace, someone might say. It, too, provides a forum for art to stage the new reigning principles of life, whatever they might be each year.

AR You should work with Alex Farquharson, the chair of the Turner Prize and new director of Tate Britain. He’d love you — he’d hire you.

WM And yet, does the art in the Turner Prize really work like that Tiepolo arch picture? Extraction from substance seems meaningful. Extraction from reflections reflecting reflections is always going to be a bit dubious. The arse door by Anthea Hamilton, which manifests, in 2016, an architectural whim of 1972 that was never realised by the Italian architect Gaetano Pesce, is about archival fascination with design history. There is a world of difference between that and actual design, but no one is ever invited to consider it. It’s glossed over.

AR Oh, people don’t want to know about formal analysis with old art, they want to hear about the colourful lives of geniuses and bohemians.

WM And yet in the Tiepolo there is design amazement that answers desire. The doorway in the Turner Prize restages desire of course in its bum-ness, but it’s helpless to explore desire in the luxurious, rich way of those frescos. The historic status of the arse-door is clear if you pay attention. But the same attention will lead very quickly to un-clarity, to clouds of confusion about artistic aims. Desire operates in both works as it operates in everything at some level. The Hamilton relies on infinite levels of discursive meaning plus one inescapable obscene joke, while the Tiepolo seems to be all a middle ground by comparison. Nevertheless, it confronts you with infinite tangible visual subtleties.

AR It’s wrong to be a fogey, though: surely art can have jokes?

WM The arse-door is jokey, but so much of the farce is inadvertent. Archival fetishism is a farcical obedience strategy that young artists are brainwashed into believing is free-roaming thinking: they believe they are ‘researching’ as an attempt to resist having a reality forced on them

that’s made up of media lies serving capitalist profit. It’s true there are more complex ideas in this research than are conveyed each evening on BBC’s Newsnight. But it’s not true that the artist is actually having ideas or communicating something original in an original way. People aren’t used to thinking about whether Tiepolo had ideas, because they’ve no idea what an idea is in Tiepolo. Most of us don’t even know the colours are pale (we don’t think enough about colour to be able easily to notice that). So we can’t even wonder if paleness itself might be an idea, or who had it. (Rococo style as a whole, as an idea-generating machine, or Tiepolo the individual Rococo artist?)

AR What do you really wholeheartedly say yes to today?

WM What I would say yes to, today, is that everybody should have access to art in the sense of the practice of making.

AR Do you agree with Bob and Roberta Smith’s signs saying ‘all schools should be art schools’?

WM I’m all for those signs if you interpret them not at face value — after all, it’s an irrational demand for all schools to be art schools. But, instead, if you think of it as signalling the meaning that children being educated should not just be cogs in a profit machine, well, then I support him — if his meaning is that creativity should be prioritised in schools rather than profit.

AR What else?

WM The things I would say a definite loud yes to and support with all my might today would be a decent education for all, attention to inequality in the developing world and environmentalism.

AR Deskilling in art is right because ideas are important, aren’t they?

WM It’s not skill I’d like to bring back but making and awareness of traditions of making that built up over hundreds of years. It’s hard to know what’s meant by ideas. A dumbed-down picture of reality, one that serves the aims of the few in society that ultimately control the media, on the one hand, and the swimming giddiness of the annual Turner Prize, on the other, appear as two sides of the same coin. Not that I wish to attack the Turner Prize, I think it has its place as a public showcase.

Matthew Collings is an art critic, writer, broadcaster, and artist. This interview, one of a series ‘Great Critics and Their Ideas’ first appeared in ArtReview, Summer 2016.

The Turner Prize 2016 exhibition of works by the four shortlisted artists is at Tate Britain until 8 January 2017.
MORRIS IN OXFORD: POLITICS & DESIGN

Oxford station at the end of April: a group of twenty people joined the WMS chair and Oxford resident Martin Stott for a day-long tour of the city. It began with a walk to the Oxford Union, which is closed, so we imagined the now rather decrepit-looking murals in the Old Library showing Le Morte d’Arthur, with knights in armour and their ladies, painted by Morris, Rossetti, Burne-Jones et al in the summer of 1857. Not knowing anything about how to prepare the walls, the murals began to deteriorate not long after they were finished, but there is a wonderful story about how Morris, determined to get the details right, bought a medieval helmet, put it on his head and then stomped around in a fury because he couldn’t get it off. Poor old Topsy!

Next stop, Exeter College, where Morris and Burne-Jones studied and Burne-Jones designed the wonderful tapestry that hangs in the College chapel, The Adoration of the Mags, woven by Morris & Co between 1886-89. Then on to Harris Manchester College Chapel with its complete scheme of stained glass windows by Morris & Co, largely designed by Burne-Jones and Morris. The chancel window includes the four evangelists flanking St Paul, beautifully drawn and coloured in bright greens, blues and reds. In Christ Church Cathedral there was yet more Burne-Jones stained glass, including a window of 1859 showing at its apex a ship of souls carrying St Frideswide, Oxford’s eighth century saint, to heaven, above a highly detailed series of panels depicting her earthly life. Another Burne-Jones window, of 1878, is dedicated to St Catherine of Alexandria, her face that of Edith Liddell, younger sister of Alice who inspired Alice in Wonderland. A portrait of Alice is included in the Charles Dodgson window in the College Hall. The walk from Exeter to Christ Church took in the memorial to Shelley who lies naked, like a fish on a marble slab, in University College. Then, on to the Meadows (the site of a battle in the 1950s over plans to drive a relief road from the Plain to the bottom of St Aldate’s) which provided a glimpse of the Dean’s Garden in Christ Church, home of the Cheshire cat and where Dodgson took tea with the Liddell children.

After lunch in the New Bodleian, the walk turned north along Walton Street to visit the Blavatnik School of Government building by Herzog & de Meuron of 2015 that sits at one of the entrances to the now-demolished Radcliffe Infirmary. I found the circular and rectangular glass structure to be poorly resolved, while the building’s spiraling circulation is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Guggenheim Museum in New York. At the top of the Blavatnik building a viewing platform gives a good view of the Radcliffe Observatory.

One way and another, the tour also passed the University Church, the Bodleian Library and the Ashmolean where the floor containing a wardrobe by Webb and Burne-Jones was closed for refurbishment. (The nineteenth century galleries subsequently reopened in May 2016). The wardrobe was a gift from Burne-Jones to Morris on his marriage to Jane Burden in 1859 and its front is decorated with scenes from Chaucer’s The Prioress’s Tale (see the WMS Newsletter, Summer 2015).

So there was plenty of design but maybe not so much about politics, although Morris’ foundation of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877 was mentioned and was clearly inspired by, among other things, his love of medieval Oxford and his admiration of the medieval manuscripts kept in the Bodleian Library.

The tour had been over-subscribed, so Martin Stott is planning to repeat it in March 2017. Let’s hope it is blessed by good weather, as this one was.

Richard Carr was educated at St Catherine’s College, Oxford since when he has worked as a journalist, and taught design history at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, Dundee, for 35 years.

EDITOR’S NOTE

There is an excellent lecture from 2014 by Dr Jon Whiteley of the Ashmolean on the windows of Harris Manchester College Chapel, available on YouTube: youtube.com/watch?v=kJ0BuOp1mLdk

Also a series of short videos made by Oxford Brookes University in 2011 featuring Dr Christiana Payne and Nancy Langham in conversation concerning The Pre-Raphaelites in Oxford: youtube.com/watch?v=ndOv4pR6_B
AGM IN SHEFFIELD: PORTLAND WORKS AND DAVID MELLOR DESIGN

On Saturday 21 May some twenty of us gathered for the Society’s AGM in the Adelphi Room of Sheffield’s Crucible Theatre, famous for its in-house productions and for hosting the World Snooker Championship. Following the official business Professor Peter Marsh gave a short presentation on Sheffield’s Portland Works, which houses 32 tenants involved in high quality, small-scale craft manufacture.

Dating from circa 1879, the grade 2* listed building is one of the last remaining purpose-built metal trades factories in Sheffield. As was typical, workshops were sublet soon after the building opened. An 1888 Sheffield trade directory (The Industries of Sheffield: Business Review, British Industrial Publishing Company, Lincoln’s Inn, Birmingham) describes it as, ‘A well erected premises [that] provides every facility for the class of trade carried on. It comprises offices, handsome showrooms, systematically arranged stockrooms, well equipped packing, cutters, silver and electroplating rooms, forge shops and grinding mills. The different workrooms being provided with all the necessary steam power, machinery and appliances required. Messrs Mosley & Co. manufacture every kind of cutlery and have earned a high character for the quality of their productions.’

In 1913/14 Portland Works became the first place in the world to produce stainless steel, which had been invented in Sheffield a year or two before by Harry Brearley. The man who had originally commissioned the building, Robert H Mosely, put Rusnonstain cutlery into production and his company operated from the site until the late 1950s. A number of metal trades businesses, including Wigfull Tools, Stuart Mitchell Knives, Shaw Engraving and PML Plating have continued to be based there, ensuring that the forge area has been well used and preserved.

By 2009 much of Portland Works was in a terrible, dilapidated state, and under threat of being bought for conversion into flats. This was the point at which the campaign to save the building began, culminating in a £300,000 buy-out of the landlord through a shares launch with some 500 shareholders. Renovation works are continuing.

The workspaces are small and useable. Fair rents ensure they are affordable, making them ideal for start-up businesses. Among the current tenants are:

- Stuart Mitchell, a third generation cutler who, unusually for someone in his trade, makes the whole item including the handles and manufactures bespoke knives to fit an individual’s grip; hand-tufted rug maker Pippa Elliott, working on both her own designs and special commissions; Michael May who makes folding pocket knives; Ed and Graeme create bespoke bicycle frames; Locksley Distilling Company, founded by Sheffield born John Cherry produces the artisan gin, Sir Robin of Locksley; Peter Ledger, a silver plater; and Mick Shaw, a traditional engraver who makes stamps, punches and dies for printing names into wood, such as are used by stringed instrument makers.

Later in the afternoon following the AGM we visited the David Mellor Cutlery Factory and Design Museum outside Sheffield in the village of Hathersage, on the edge of the Peak District. David’s son Corin, who has been Creative Director of David Mellor Design since 2006, gave us a guided tour of the factory. This is located in the Michael Hopkins-designed, RIBA award-winning Round Building, which is based on the concrete foundations of an old circular gas holder. The tour included an overview of the building, the company, and how David Mellor cutlery is made. Corin has agreed to give a talk to the Society on David Mellor in 2017 at Kelmscott House.

The day was rounded off with drinks generously hosted by Fiona MacCarthy in Corin’s office. portlandworks.co.uk davidmellordesign.com

LESLEY FORBES

Leslie Forbes, novelist (and much else) who at the start of 2016 shared her research and interpretation of the relationship between William Morris, epilepsy and the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases next to the Morris home in Queen Square, sadly died at the end of July.

Born in Canada, Leslie studied science and politics before switching to film and design at London’s Royal College of Art. She then wrote food/travel books including A Table in Tuscany and collaborated on the Molecular Gastronomy conferences 1992-2001. She presented BBC radio documentaries, before turning to fiction, with the best-selling Bombay Ice, Fish, Blood and Bone, ‘a learned whodunit’, and Waking Raphael, evocatively set in Umbria.

Leslie’s interest in epilepsy was sparked after she developed the condition in 2005. Learning of Jenny Morris’s situation prompted Leslie to investigate the family connection – Morris and his mother being said to have experienced milder forms of the neurological disorder – and to link Jenny to the then experts in the field, notably William Gowers. This was pioneering research: surprisingly, no biographers or Morris scholars had thought to explore this. Endlessly inventive, Leslie then devised the Embroidered Minds project, recruiting artists, neurologists and her designer husband Andrew Thomas, to create a site-specific display imaginatively and visually exploring Jenny’s situation. This was part of an ongoing project, to include a four-part illustrated novel centring on Leslie’s fictive account of Jenny’s reaction to her treatment.

Tragically although Leslie’s condition appeared mild and indeed creatively energising, she died following a sudden major seizure, having completed only the first part of Embroidered Minds of the Morris Women (see Books, p26).

Jan Marsh
AWARD-WINNING WALLPAPER

The Aphasia Wallpaper designed by Sue Ridge for the Embroidered Minds collaboration, and used in Embroidered Minds of the Morris Women has won the Printmaking Today Prize at the international neo:printprize biennial. Along with her Seizure Epileptic Wallpaper for the same project, it uses references to Morris’s design and the history of neuroscience to comment on Victorian society and its attitude to epilepsy and mental health. Morris was knowledgeable about herbs, which he purchased for his wife’s illnesses, and he used The Great Herbal, dating from 1526, as inspiration for his pattern designs. Aphasia Wallpaper includes images of mugwort, which was used to cure epilepsy. Ridge has worked with wallpaper previously, playing with its undertones of domestic respectability, its use to conceal structural cracks, to transform it into a political and artistic statement. The neo:printprize exhibition is at neogallery23, Bolton, until 30 October.

APhA SI A WAllP APE R

ARTS AND CRAFTS HAMMERSMITH

The project is at an intense phase, with building works at both Kelmscott House and 7 Hammersmith Terrace now in full swing. At the former, operations and public opening suspended temporarily in late August, to allow the more disruptive and messy aspects of the work – refurbishments to the office, kitchens and toilet areas; and the relining of the cellars. In general, works are progressing well, and aim to complete in October, following which the collections at both properties can be reinstated and final fit-out of spaces can take place.

We are delighted to announce two new colleagues joining the Arts and Crafts Hammersmith team, Jessica Loukaides joins the team as Learning and Volunteer Development Officer this week. Some of you will remember Jessica – she worked with us in the autumn of 2015 as a trainee under the Orleans House Gallery HLF initiative Skills for the Future, and worked at the sharp end of the collections management processes at both Kelmscott House and 7 Hammersmith Terrace. She also worked extensively on learning and participation projects whilst at Orleans House. She will spend a little time reacquainting herself with the project, and starting to realise our own strategic plans for learning and volunteering as tactical and practical activity.

Lucinda MacPherson joins the team as Marketing Officer from mid September. Lucinda has huge experience in heritage PR and marketing, and has most recently been involved in the relaunch of Chiswick House. She is a Hammersmith resident, and will, like Jessica, begin by looking at priorities within strategic plans, mainly around the relaunch of both properties next Spring, post-refurbishment.

We are already pleased to have seen new colleagues Michele Losse (archivist) and Nicola Carr (volunteer assistant project manager) join us in the last few weeks, and with Jessica and Lucinda the project family is now complete.

We can also confirm that Alice Woodhouse returns to the team in October after a period of study leave, to work on the reinstatement of the collections and objects to both properties from storage in Stockwell, until the end of January.

We are also delighted to have launched the project’s website, with up to the minute information on activities, and blogs from the team. Please visit artsandcraftshammersmith.org.uk.

And don’t forget our Twitter and Facebook feeds.

Simon Daykin

AMY P GOLDMAN FELLOWSHIP IN PRE-RAFAELITE STUDIES

The University of Delaware Library, in Newark, Delaware, and the Delaware Art Museum are pleased to offer a joint Fellowship in Pre-Raphaelite studies, funded by the Amy P Goldman Foundation. This one-month Fellowship, awarded annually, is intended for scholars conducting significant research in the lives and works of the Pre-Raphaelites and their friends, associates, and followers. Research of a wider scope, which considers the Pre-Raphaelite movement and related topics in relation to Victorian art and literature, and cultural or social history, will also be considered. Projects which provide new information or interpretation – dealing with unrecognised figures, women writers and artists; print culture; iconography, illustration, catalogues of artists’ works; or studies of specific objects – are particularly encouraged, as are those which take into account transatlantic relations between Britain and the United States.

Applicants whose research specifically utilises holdings of the University of Delaware Library, the Mark Samuels Laser Collection, the Delaware Art Museum and the Helen Farr Sloan Library and Archives are preferred.

A stipend of $3,000 is available for the one-month Fellowship. Housing will be provided. Personal transportation is recommended (but not mandatory) in order to fully utilise the resources of both institutions.

The Fellowship is intended for those who hold a PhD or can demonstrate equivalent professional or academic experience. Applications from independent scholars and museum professionals are welcome. By arrangement with the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT, scholars may apply to each institution for awards in the same year; every effort will be made to offer consecutive dates.

The deadline to apply for the 2017 Fellowship is 1 November 2016. Notification of the successful applicant will be announced by 1 December 2016. The chosen candidate will then be asked to provide a date for assuming the Fellowship by 1 January 2017.

If you have any questions or would like to request more information, please contact: Margaretta S Frederick, Pre-Raphaelite Fellowship Committee, t: 302 351 8518 e: fellowships@delart.org

THE SOUTH MIDLANDS WILLIAM MORRIS GROUP

Although the South Midlands group set up by Malcolm Pollard and Helen Lamer is still meeting, we are hoping to recruit new members and we are extending the area to include Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. For those who may be interested here is a summary of our 2016 programme.

In February we had our annual ‘show and tell’ with members bringing along an original painting by Marie Steadm an Stillm an plus an overview of her life; jewellery by

Above: Aphasia/Wallpaper by Sue Ridge, large scale digital print, 2015
the Gaskins, items of Doulton Lambeth Pottery; and photos of a visit to the Eden Project.

April saw a return visit to the Watts Gallery with a tour of Limnerslease and the newly opened original studios built by Watts and his wife Mary. Temporary exhibitions of two leading Pre-Raphaelite women artists, Evelyn de Morgan and Marie Steadman Stillman made this a very worthwhile visit.

In May the group visited Cambridge to see an 1887 two-up two-down terraced cottage, the amazing and surprising former home of the artist-craftsmen David Parr. In his day job Parr painted ecclesiastical and civic interiors for the Cambridge decorators FR Leach and Sons. He worked on St James’s Palace, Jesus College Chapel, Queen’s College Old Hall, and All Saints’ Church, Cambridge.

By night, this remarkable working class man recreated the awe and wonder in his own home with hand painted walls, friezes, doors and ceilings of every room, by candlelight. His carefully written diaries tell the story. This humble house has survived against all odds. Now in the capable hands of Tamsin Wimshurst it can be visited (davidparrhouse.org).

The following month we visited Sapperton and Rodmarton Manor as well as two interesting Saxon churches at Daglelington.

In July the group had a guided tour around three very different churches in Oxford – the Arts & Crafts Church of St Alban which has Stations of the Cross by Eric Gill; the twelfth century Bartlemas Chapel, Queen’s College Old Hall, and All Saints’ Church, Cambridge.

The Bradford Cathedral altar frontal which is the inspiration for an exhibition (see p24) had been forgotten for many years. The Head Verger, Jon Howard, joined the Cathedral in February 2005 and some months afterwards, exploring the linen press in the Sacristy he came across the frontal pushed to the back of one of the large drawers. He asked the Head Verger Emeritus – at the Cathedral for 50 years – who couldn’t remember ever seeing it.

It was in a poor state so could not be used. Furthermore, the Cathedral didn’t have anywhere for it to be used, since it was far too small for the main altar and slightly too small for the Lady Chapel altar.

The V&A confirmed that it was a Morris design, although the original had strawberries rather than the pomegranates seen in this design. In Christian iconography pomegranates bursting open symbolise the fullness of Jesus’ suffering and resurrection.

Bradford’s William Morris connection was through Sarah Whituck, whose mother came from Bradford, and who paid for the church of St Clement on Barkerend Road in 1892. The church has a rich Arts & Crafts interior, including a chancel ceiling by Morris and Burne-Jones, Burne-Jones gesso angels all down the nave and a Morris-designed pulpit. Morris and Co also designed windows in the Cathedral, which date from 1864.

Being one of the poorer cathedrals in the country Bradford couldn’t afford to restore the frontal so it remained in the drawer for many years. Its restoration was eventually triggered by the Cathedral’s wish to restore a World War I frontal for this year’s Somme commemoration events, as well as the need for new textiles. For injured and shellshocked soldiers returning from the bloody battlefields of the First World War, embroidery was therapy and the result of their efforts was a beautiful altar frontal which has long been in use at the Cathedral.

Jacqui Hyman (textilerestoration.co.uk) was commissioned to restore the World War I frontal and subsequently the William Morris frontal, which was returned to the Cathedral in August.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I read with interest the article in the summer issue of the magazine on the innovative approaches to sustainable housing by Elemental and Assemble. While in no way wishing to detract from Assemble’s prizewinning project in the Granby Streets area of Liverpool, an adverse consequence of the publicity they have received has been to give the impression that no one else has been actively involved in housing regeneration in the former Pathfinder streets in Toxteth.

For instance, Equfund, an Industrial and Provident Society, has worked since 2002 to bring tinned up properties back into use as decent, affordable housing. To date they have restored 60 terraced houses on Merseyside and hundreds more across the UK (examples can be seen at flickr.com/photos/eqfund/sets/). Over the past six years, Equfund has worked with a number of interested parties in Liverpool to save over 355 boarded up houses in the Welsh Streets area. Although the contract to restore many of these properties has finally been awarded to a Manchester-based developer, it would be safe to say that the survival of these wonderful late-Victorian terraces (the architect was Richard Owens 1831-1891) has been the direct consequence of the vigorous campaign by SAVE Britain’s Heritage and the continuing support of Equfund. William Morris would surely have approved of both organisations.

Peter Hirschmann, Harrogate

CORRECTION

In the Summer 2016 edition of the Magazine, on page 21, the item Ted Hollamby on Television refers to ‘Edward Hollamby and his wife Ursula’. Ted Hollamby’s wife was Doris (née Doris Isabel Parker). There may have been some confusion with the names of two sheltered housing blocks in Sidcup, called Bertha Hollamby Court and Ursula Lodges.
MORRIS EVENTS
All forthcoming William Morris Society events are detailed in our enclosed events leaflet but a few highlights are listed below.

RETELLING THE TALE OF TAYLOR: A NEW LOOK AT THE LIFE OF WARRINGTON TAYLOR
Kelmcott House, London
15 October; 2.15 pm
Fiona Rose on the Business Manager of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co from 1865 until his early death in 1870.

THE ARTS & CRAFTS RENEWAL OF STAINED GLASS
Kelmcott House, London
12 November; 2.15 pm
Talk by Peter Cornack, the author of Arts & Crafts Stained Glass (Yale, 2015).

WILLIAM MORRIS GOES ATOMIC: A PROVISIONAL MEMORIAL TO NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT
Kelmcott House, London
3 December; 2.15 pm
Artist David Mabb’s talk introduces works made in response to a visit to HMS Courageous, a decommissioned nuclear-powered submarine furnished with William Morris fabrics.

THREAT AND PROTECTION: ISLAMIC ART AND THE SUPERNATURAL
Ashmolean, Oxford
20 October to 15 January 2017
Objects and works of art from the 12th to the 20th centuries, including astrological charts, dream-books, talmic clothing and jewel-encrusted amulets

STILL WANTED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS
The Society is broadening its communications more and more through its website, twitter account and regular e-bulletins. The e-bulletins are sent out between issues of the Magazines with up to date news of the Society and other Morissan developments as they happen.

In the Spring issue of the Magazine it was announced that printed copies of the US Society’s Newsletter would no longer be sent to UK and Overseas members due to the ever increasing postage costs. A pdf of the Newsletter is available, however:

To add your name to the list for the e-bulletin or for the pdf of the US Society’s Newsletter can you please email Penny McMahon, Membership Secretary:
membership@williammorrisociety.org.uk.

EXHIBITIONS
THE EDWARDIANS
Manchester Art Gallery
to 31 December 2017
Works from the gallery’s collection illustrate the glamour, rural nostalgia, evocative landscape and the city of the 1900s, the sparking point between the Victorian and Modern periods

WILLIAM MORRIS GOES ATOMIC: A PROVISIONAL MEMORIAL TO NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT
V&A, London
to 5 February 2017
Discover the luxury and artistic embroideries from the 12th to 15th centuries that England was...
famed for, and that were in demand across Europe
vam.ac.uk

GARNITURES: VASE SETS FROM NATIONAL TRUST HOUSES
V&A, London
11 October to 30 April 2017
This display explores the history of the garniture, a set of vases unified by their design, from early 17th century porcelain imported from China to the versions made by British and European potters
vam.ac.uk

PAUL NASH
Tate Britain, London
26 October to 15 March 2017
Fascinated with Britain’s ancient past and inspired by the equinox and the phases of the moon, Nash (1889-1946) interpreted his environment according to a unique, personal mythology
tate.org.uk

MADE IN SHEFFIELD
Millennium Galleries, Sheffield
To 8 January 2017
Featuring work by more than 100 Sheffield companies, showcasing the remarkable diversity of design and production in the region
museums-sheffield.org.uk

TEENAGE BEDROOMS: ‘LIKE A HOUSE INSIDE OF A HOUSE’
The Geoffrye Museum, London
4 October to March 2017 (tbc)
The bedrooms of 26 London teenagers are explored and documented by Carey Newson and photographer Kyna Gourley
geffrye-museum.org.uk

FRANK BRANGWEN
(1867-1956): ‘A MISSION TO DECORATE LIFE’
Court Barn, Chipping Campden
to 13 March 2017
Exploring the links between Brangwen and the Arts and Crafts Movement, with works drawn from private collections and the William Morris Gallery
courtbarn.org.uk

SHADOWS AND REFLECTIONS
Bradford Cathedral
to 1 November
Andy Fullalove has made a series of paintings reflecting the themes and colours of Bradford Cathedral’s newly-restored hand-embroidered Morris altar frontal and Morris stained glass, accompanied by an electro-acoustic soundscape by Monty Adkins
bradfordcathedral.org

THE BOOK BEAUTIFUL: WILLIAM MORRIS, HILARY PEPLER AND THE PRIVATE PRESS STORY
Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft
to 16 April 2017
Works from the Kelmscott Press, Doves Press and the later Ditchling-based, St Dominic’s Press, founded by Hilary Pepler
ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk

DYING NOW: CONTEMPORARY MAKERS CELEBRATE ETHEL MAIRET’S LEGACY
Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft
to 16 April 2017
Mairet was a pioneer of the 20th century modern craft revival and the author of the definitive text on natural dyes
ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk

WOMEN’S WORK — WOMEN IN THE RURAL LANDSCAPE
Acorn Bank, Grasmere
to 27 November
Celebrating the 150th anniversary of Beatrix Potter; artist-in-residence Freya Pocklington has been recording, drawing and making animations of women in farming and their animals
nationaltrust.org.uk/acorn-bank

AN ARTS & CRAFTS STORY
Blackwell, Bowness-on-Windermere
New permanent display illuminating the movement through craftsmanship, sense of place and nature with designs by Morris, Voysey and Baillie-Scott
blackwell.org.uk

WARRIOR TREASURES: SAXON GOLD FROM THE STAFFORDSHIRE HOARD
Bristol Museum and Art Gallery
22 October to 23 April 2017
Gold ornaments studded with garnets from the largest Anglo-Saxon hoard ever found bring to life the Old English poem Beowulf in which kings reward loyal warriors with precious gifts
bristolmuseums.org.uk

PHOEBE ANNA TRAQUAIR: WORKS IN MINIATURE
Watts Gallery, Compton, Guildford
to 23 October
Phoebe Anna Traquair (1852-1936) was a key figure in the Arts & Crafts Movement, producing embroidery, illuminated manuscripts and enamels
wattsgallery.org.uk

WILLIAM AND EVELYN DE MORGAN
Watts Gallery, Compton, Guildford
to 13 April 2017
Showcases the work of William and Evelyn De Morgan alongside the partnership of GF and Mary Watts
wattsgallery.org.uk

VISIONS OF THE FRONT
1916-18
Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
to 20 November
Includes works by Paul Nash, CRW Nevinson, David Bomberg and Henry Lamb, whose visions imply the mythical character of ancient landscapes
whitworth.ac.uk

BAWDEN BY THE SEA
The Higgins Bedford
to 29 January 2017
Edward Bawden’s nostalgic and whimsical depictions of Britain’s seaside towns are the subject of the latest exhibition in the Edward Bawden gallery
thehigginsbedford.org.uk

Above left: Gold and garnet fitting, c.600-800 CE, on display in the Warrior Treasures exhibition in Bristol. © Birmingham Museums Trust
Above right: The Love Cup by Phoebe Anna Traquair, painted enamel and gold pendant, Edinburgh 1907, © Victoria and Albert Museum
Books

East of the Sun and West of the Moon is a collection of 15 Norwegian fairy tales, illustrated by Kay Nielsen and gathered in the mid-nineteenth century, when Norway was forming its own national identity after 400 years of Danish dominance. This reprint features 46 illustrations, including many enlarged details from Nielsen’s rare original watercolors. Three accompanying essays explore the history of Norwegian folktales and Nielsen’s life and work; 25 years later he was employed by Disney, creating two sequences for Fantasia.

EMBROIDERED MINDS OF THE MORRIS WOMEN: A NOVEL

by Leslie Forbes

This novel explores the ripple effects of epilepsy on William Morris’s family - tragic effects that could also have been strangely creative. Central to Embroidered Minds is the ‘conspiracy of silence’ around Jane and William Morris’s eldest daughter Jenny, who suffered from epilepsy. The novel details previously untold aspects of the Morris family, their Pre-Raphaelite circle, and the groundbreaking Bloomsbury neurologists close to that circle.

ENGLISH MEDIEVAL EMBROIDERY: OPUS ANGLICANUM

edited by Clare Browne, Glyn Davies and MA Michael

Yale University Press, 336pp, £40

hb yalebooks.co.uk

A sumptuously illustrated book, that draws on new research and detailed photography to offer an introduction to the design, production and use of embroidered textiles. Symbols of wealth and power in medieval Europe, they were worked by embroiderers living in a tightly knit community in London, many of them women who can be identified by name today.

TINY CHURCHES

by Dixe Wills

AA Publishing, 320pp, £16.99 hb

shop.theaa.com

Tiny Churches, in the format established in the author’s Tiny Islands and Tiny Stations, contains details of 60 little churches around Britain, including how to reach them and where to obtain a key if necessary. Each church is so small that no more than 50 people can fit inside comfortably. They range from a seventh century wooden church in Essex to a self-built one in a back garden in Sutton.

THE RED VIRGIN AND THE VISION OF UTOPIA

by Mary M Talbot and Bryan Talbot

Jonathan Cape, 144pp, £16.99 hb

penguin.co.uk

Celebrating the utopian urge in nineteenth-century literature and politics and the origins of science fiction, this is a graphic novel chronicling the life of Louise Michel, the revolutionary feminist dubbed ‘The Red Virgin of Montmartre’. A utopian, anarchist, teacher, orator and poet, she fought on the barricades defending the short-lived Paris Commune, and following deportation to a penal colony took up the cause of the indigenous population against French colonial oppression.
You will see a child of Strawberry prettier than the parent and so executed and so finished! – Horace Walpole

Lee Priory (circa 1780) designed by James Wyatt (1746 – 1813)

Full plaster ceiling, bookcases, doors and elements available
From the collection

BUST OF FRANCIS RONALDS
BY EDWARD DAVIES, 1871
Curator Helen Elletson
commemorates the bicentennial
of Francis Ronalds’ invention of
the electric telegraph

2016 marks 200 years since Francis
Ronalds (1788-1873) constructed
the first electric telegraph, in the
house at Kelm scott House. The
garden was then 600 feet long,
nearly an acre in area, and eight
miles of wire were suspended from
overhead bars by silk hooks, looping
back and forth throughout. This
overhead construction was
superseded by a subterranean
experiment consisting of a trench
525 feet long by four feet deep, dug
in the garden. The insulated cable
has emerged over the years, being
dug up accidentally by subsequent
owners. The first section appeared
in 1862 and is now in the Science
Museum. A portion is also in the
collection of the William Morris
Society at Kelm scott House and
remains in the original display box,
complete with an accompanying
letter written in 1930, which states:

‘Hereewith I enclose a small
portion of the original copper wire
and glass covering which Sir Francis
Ronalds laid down at Kelm scott
House. It was recently dug up by
Mr. Stephenson the present owner
and occupier.

I will not comment on the
interest of this specimen but I
should like to present it to the Library to be kept for all time. I do
this with Mr. Stephenson’s full approval.

At the time, the electric
telegraph was said to be ‘totally
unnecessary’, with semaphore being
in common usage. It was not until
1871, shortly before he died, that
Ronalds received the recognition
he deserved in the form of a
knighthood.

It is interesting to note Morris’s
views on Ronalds. In 1896 a Mr.
Kempe from the Institution of
Electrical Engineers approached
Morris with the aim of placing a
memorial stone to Ronalds on
Kelm scott House. He recalled: ‘The
suggestion met with wrath. Morris
declared that for their brutalising
influence upon humans, telegraphs
were as much to be blamed as
railways. However, with Morris’s “full
approval” the tablet was placed on
the Coach House.’ Visitors to
Kelm scott House will doubtless be

familiar with this plaque, which
reads:

‘The first electric telegraph, 8
miles long, was constructed here in
1816 by Sir Francis Ronalds FSA’

Ronalds is unfortunately little
remembered today; Charles
Wheatstone and William Cooke
are often credited with the
invention of the electric telegraph.
However, the Society is fortunate
to own this marble bust of Ronalds
by Edward Davis from 1871, and
the intention is to conserve the
bust during Ronalds’ bicentenary
year, thereby raising awareness of
his groundbreaking achievement.

Members wishing to view any
aspect of the collection are
welcome to do so, by contacting
Helen Elletson at Kelm scott House.

1 For a discussion of various aspects of
communication utilised in the coach
house, see Alan Read, ‘Speech Sites’, in
Alan Read, ed., Architecturally Speaking,
(London, Routledge, 2000). The
quotation from Kempe is on p.138.
CLIVEDEN CONSERVATION

FOR THE CONSERVATION OF STATUARY, MASONRY, MOSAICS, MONUMENTS, PLASTERWORK & DECORATIVE ARTS

With offices at:
Cliveden Estate, near Maidenhead
t. 01628 604721
Ammerdown Estate, near Bath
t. 01761 423300
Hoar Cross, Nortfolk
t. 01695 529070

www.clivedenconservation.com

Conservation & reinstatement of plaster & statuary: Stowe House

NICK COX ARCHITECTS

www.nickcoxarchitects.co.uk

Nick Cox Architects combines experience and expertise in conservation with an enthusiasm for new and innovative design solutions. Our clients include the National Trust, the Churches Conservation Trust, Blenheim Palace, Woburn Abbey, The Goldsmiths’ Company, Winchester and Wells Cathedrals. We also work for a number of private clients on projects of varying size and complexity.

77 Heyford Park
Upper Heyford
Oxfordshire
OX25 5HD

Tel: 01869 238092
info@nickcoxarchitects.co.uk

Nick Cox Architects - creative solutions
SIMON GILLESPIE STUDIO

ART RESTORATION & CONSERVATION

Meleager and Atlanta by Jordaens during cleaning and removal of overpaint, including the overpaint of the red dress and pink legs.

City and County of Swansea:
Swansea Museum Collection

104 New Bond Street
London W1S 1SU

ENQUIRIES
+44 (0)20 7493 3900
info@simongillespie.com