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Welcome

May Morris is the first focus of this, the Autumn 2017 issue of The William Morris Society Magazine. A detail of one of her embroideries is pictured on the cover; information on a new book about her work, by Anna Mason, Jan Marsh, Jenny Lister, Rowan Bain and Hanne Faurby – *May Morris: Arts & Crafts Designer* – is listed on the Books page; our curator Helen Elletson has written about May’s *Minstrels with Cymbals* embroidery; Peter Faulkner tells us about a couple of letters from May to Thomas Hardy; and curator Rowan Bain has contributed an article on some artefacts recently rediscovered in the collection of the William Morris Gallery that shed some light on her childhood. All this of course heralds the exhibition *May Morris: Art & Life* curated by Anna Mason for the William Morris Gallery, which opens early in October. It brings together more than eighty works from collections around the UK, many of which have never been on public display.

The exhibition is set to reveal the breadth of May’s creative pursuits, featuring wallpaper and embroidery alongside jewellery, dresses and book designs, as well as sketches and watercolours. It will focus on May’s development of art embroidery – elevating needlework from a domestic craft to a serious art form – and highlight the extent of her influence in the UK and abroad, particularly in the USA. Furthermore, May’s founding role in the Women’s Guild of Arts will be explored in depth, while journal entries and letters will offer unprecedented insight into May’s personal life, including her relationship with George Bernard Shaw. Be sure both to visit the exhibition and buy the book!

We have an interview with a contemporary stained glass conservator and artist, Lizzy Hippisley-Cox, who was one of the SPAB’s 2016 William Morris Craft Fellows. Her route into her craft is an interesting one, her enthusiasm for it captivating, and she is informative on how former Fellows support future ones. To complement the interview I have written an article on the stained glass of the Irish artist Harry Clarke at a Lancashire church, one of the last projects he completed; he was too unwell to make the journey for its consecration. When I first visited the place I was already aware of Clarke as an illustrator but knew nothing of his remarkable stained glass, and the muted drab of the church’s beautifully carved sandstone stands in marked contrast with the saturated colour of the windows by Clarke and his studio, of which nineteen date from the 1930s. While most of Clarke’s windows are in Ireland there a number of examples in the UK; a complete list of them can be found in Nicola Gordon Bowes’s book, *The Life & Work of Harry Clarke*.

Stephen Williams, who writes on trade union and socialist history, has contributed a fascinating article on the man who wrote under the pseudonym ‘Marxian’ and his defence of Morris’s will. Maybe this is an opportune moment to mention that we have included an advertisement in this edition from the Socialist Party of Great Britain, who have a long history of engagement with Morris’s ideas. As a charity the WMS has to take a politically neutral stand, and our position is that we take and will take paid advertising from any legal political party registered with the Electoral Commission.

There is also an item from our Chair, Martin Stott, regarding his recent visit to Iceland, and a piece by Alec Hamilton on *How I Came to Morris*. I recently received an email from a member who hopes that I am able to keep the feel that ‘the magazine belongs to the members’. I in turn hope that members realise, although I haven’t previously spelt it out, that virtually all the writers in every issue are fellow members of the Society. Suggestions for contributions are very welcome and all will be considered for publication.

If you are unable to attend Sheila Rowbotham’s Kelmscott Lecture in October (see page 24), please be reassured that I intend to publish an extract from it in the Spring 2018 magazine, along with the anticipated articles on the Society’s volunteers, on Morris’s relationship with the Howard family, and one pertaining to the National Gallery’s exhibition on the influence of Van Eyck’s Arnolfini portrait on the Pre-Raphaelites.

Susan Warlow, Editor
Rediscovering May Morris’s childhood

Curator Rowan Bain introduces newly documented material that illuminates May's early years

The William Morris Gallery’s forthcoming exhibition *May Morris: Art & Life* provides an exciting opportunity to showcase work by May that has never been on public display before. It will present new information that helps establish May as one of the leading designers of the Arts & Crafts movement, whilst providing unprecedented insight into more personal aspects of her life – from childhood through to old age. In preparing for this landmark exhibition the Gallery recently rediscovered an unpublished collection of May’s personal items, providing a delightful new insight into her extraordinary childhood.

It is now twenty-eight years since the first – and only – retrospective of May’s life was held at the William Morris Gallery in 1989. Yet in recent years there has been an increasing interest in May’s life and work. In part, this has been prompted by the discovery of a number of her most significant works: the richly embroidered bed hangings designed by May for Melsetter House on Orkney, now in the National Museum of Scotland; Kelmscott Manor’s *The Homestead and the Forest* cot quilt; as well as an illustrated valentine given by May to George Bernard Shaw, uncovered in the British Library. Showcasing her prodigious artistic accomplishments, these works will appear as glittering highlights in the new exhibition. It will start, though, by situating May in her early childhood, to look at both the environment in which she grew up and the conditions in which her artistic sensibilities first developed.

The social circles in which the Morrises moved meant that from a young age May was exposed to a range of artistic and political influences. The childhood items recently uncovered in the William Morris Gallery’s archival collection date from around 1870, when May was eight years old. Among the items is a small notebook containing an account of May and her sister Jenny’s visit to Naworth Castle in the summer of 1870, three letters written by May to her mother Jane (two written from Naworth and one during a visit to her grandmother Emma Burden’s house in Essex), as well as various ephemeral items such as May’s visiting card and her British Museum Reading Room ticket.

This material was donated to the Gallery in 2005 by CE Robins, personal secretary to Enid Rogers. Enid’s sister, Dr Una Fielding, had been given it by May’s executor Robert Steele. An accompanying letter from Steele to Una, dated 4 April 1939, expresses his wish that she have these ‘baby letters’ following May’s death the previous October. Unfortunately, when the material first came into the Gallery it was not fully catalogued. Compared to the Gallery’s collection of May’s embroideries and original designs, which have been more widely published and photographed, in the past the archival collection relating to her personally was less well documented. Happily, a re-examination of the archive in preparation for the exhibition led to their rediscovery and they are now part of the growing volume of archival material now searchable and accessible to researchers.
Of greatest interest among the rediscovered childhood material is the journal relating to May’s first trip to Naworth Castle, the Cumbrian home of George and Rosalind Howard, later Earl and Countess of Carlisle. This small, green silk-covered booklet is titled *Journal of My Visit to Naworth Castle Vol. I*, the letters carefully cut by May from silver foil and affixed to the front cover. Inside, the pages are inscribed with eight-year-old May’s immaculate copperplate writing. ‘Having spent the greater part of last summer amongst the beautiful hills of Cumberland with my sister Jane’, she explains on the first page, ‘I write this short account of our doings for the benefit of our Mamma’. Although the trip took place during the summer, May wrote the journal the following winter, as confirmed in a letter from Jane to George Howard in December 1870, in which she mentions: ‘May, I believe is writing a Journal of all their proceedings at Naworth.’

May describes how she and her older sister Jenny started the long railway journey to Naworth on Monday 27 June, accompanied by their nurse. Although William went to fetch them at the end of their visit in late July, he and Jane chose to remain in London that summer. Earlier in the year, the affair between Jane and Rossetti had intensified after Jane spent four weeks staying with him in Hastings. Free from the responsibilities of looking after Jenny and May, Jane nonetheless spent the summer at home with William in Queen’s Square, London. Fiona McCarthy suggests that even Jane realised another extended visit to Rossetti so soon after her visit in spring would have tested William’s tolerance of the situation to its limit. William himself was undertaking a furious spell of work finishing off his illuminated manuscript *A Book of Verse*.

It is with a keen sense of awareness that May introduces herself in the journal’s preface, the earliest known account of herself in her own words: ‘I am a great tomboy but I was not such a great one there because I was afraid of setting the little children we were staying with a bad example. I shall be nine next twenty-fifth of March. I am very untidy and always very dirty and sometimes I am ashamed to say very naughty.’ The Morris daughters enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom in comparison with the prevailing Victorian expectations of how girls of their age and class should look and behave. Dressed in loose-fitting clothes rather than corsets and petticoats, they worked off their juvenile energy with great enthusiasm, climbing trees and running around.

Written around the same time that May was composing her journal, William complained in a letter to Jane ‘such a rumpus this morning, May enjoying a good tease and Jenny expressing herself in boo hoo’. May’s confession of her ‘naughty’ character was perhaps written for the benefit of her mother, the journal’s intended reader. Despite this, May clearly thought herself and Jenny very grown-up to have undertaken the long trip, especially compared to the other ‘little children’, as she referred to the younger Howards. ‘They are so fond of little children as they call everyone the least mite less than themselves’, their mother Jane acknowledged in a letter to Rosalind Howard.

Her self-identity as a ‘tomboy’ is at odds with artistic depictions of young May, namely by Rossetti, who through his drawings elevated May to the position of junior pre-Raphaelite muse. May and Jenny’s appearance also appealed to their host, the painter George Howard who sketched them during their visit for an oil painting that he presented to Jane the following December. May makes no mention of this in the journal, perhaps because it was unremarkable to one used to growing up surrounded by artists. The painting is now in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries at Kelmscott Manor and will be exhibited in the exhibition along with the preparatory sketches now at Wightwick Manor, owned by National Trust. Depicted with their blunt cut fringes, white stockings and sensible black ankle strap shoes, the painting has little in common with Rossetti’s angelic portraits. Nonetheless, it has an appealing quality, capturing them more as they were, as confirmed
by May herself in the journal, ‘I have got light curly hair cut on my forehead. My eyes are blue. I am neither fat nor very thin. Now I have described myself I will have my readers judge whether I am pretty or ugly.’

The journal remained in the Morris family’s possession until after May’s death in 1939, when it was given to Dr Una Fielding (1888-1969). Una’s grandmother was Jane Johnson (née Morris), one of William Morris’s cousins, who in the nineteenth century emigrated to Australia. Una was born in New South Wales but attended school in England. In 1920 she moved to London from Australia to take up a position at University College London, lecturing in neurology, anatomy and physiology. It was at this time that she first met May and, despite their different intellectual interests, they became good friends.

It is perhaps fitting that Una inherited this journal, containing as it does one of the earliest unpublished descriptions of May. For it is also thanks to Una that we have one of the best accounts of May in old age. In 1940 Una wrote an address for the Women’s Guild of Arts, which May had founded, for a special meeting called Some Memories of May Morris, coordinated by the Guild to mark her death. A typed transcript of the address was included amongst the Naworth journal and ‘baby letters’, although it was previously published in The Journal of the William Morris Society in 1969.

Una’s address to the Women’s Guild of Arts is full of personal details relating to May; for example she describes the pleasure May found in taking new acquaintances to foreign restaurants. She recalls how on their first meeting in 1923 they dined together in an Italian restaurant in Soho, where May introduced her to the delights of zabaglione, a cream dessert. May later taught Una how to make it herself during a stay at Kelmscott Manor, where she became a frequent visitor. May’s love of Italian food is further emphasised when Una recalls how May made pasta like a ‘good Italian housewife’. This must have seemed quite an exotic meal in rural Oxfordshire in the 1920s and 30s.

During her visits May and Una enjoyed walking and spending time in the Manor’s extensive gardens. Her account also provides a clear and detailed record of May’s daily routine, describing how she woke at eight, breakfasted, then took a turn around the garden to select vegetables for the day’s meals. After lunch she would write or undertake embroidery designs until dinner, then spend her evenings reading or knitting in the company of her guests. After they retired, she would indulge her prolific reading habit with travel books before turning to, as Una describes it, ‘a novel as a nightcap in the small hours’.

Last year’s May Morris conference at the William Morris Gallery revealed the extent of excellent research being carried out on her life and work. The proceedings from the conference, edited by Lynn Hulse, will be published by The Friends of the William Morris Gallery in time for the exhibition, together with a new comprehensive catalogue of her work, co-authored by curators from the Gallery and the V&A and published by the V&A and Thames & Hudson. The personal insights into May’s childhood, as well as her adult life at Kelmscott Manor, deepen our understanding of her life and help to bring her out from her father’s shadow. With so many new discoveries, the exhibition and the two publications will not only give a more detailed picture of both May’s personal and professional life than ever presented before, but it is also hoped they will encourage more research into one of the most outstanding talents of the Arts & Crafts movement.

May Morris: Art & Life William Morris Gallery, 8 October 2017 to 28 January 2018, open Wednesday to Sunday, free entry.


2 Fiona MacCarthy, William Morris: A Life For our Time (Faber and Faber, 1994) p257
3 Sharp & Marsh, The Collected Letters of Jane Morris, p41
The last of the Pre-Raphaelites

Harry Clarke at St Oswald & St Edmund Arrowsmith, Ashton-in-Makerfield, by Susan Warlow

‘Stained glass – medieval stained glass particularly – has always had an extraordinary fascination for me... Those rich reds, searing greens and yellows, and blues so deep that the imagination can literally drown in them are the epitome of Ruskin’s “glow of controlled fire” and neither the painted glass of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, nor that of my hero, William Morris, can begin to approach it…. I discovered the work of Harry Clarke and realised that Ireland in the twentieth century had revived an art that seemed to have lain dormant for five or six hundred years.’

Viewed from the road, the church of St Oswald & St Edmund Arrowsmith is almost entirely obscured by trees. Beyond the cast iron gates of 1822 lies a drive lined with mature limes and horse chestnuts at whose end is a broad turning circle before the asymmetrical west façade of the Romanesque building, considered by Cardinal Bourne (1861-1935), Archbishop of Westminster, to be the most beautiful Catholic church in England.

The church is dedicated to the medieval Northumbrian martyr and to a local Lancastrian martyr, whose hand is preserved in a shrine within the church. St Edmund Arrowsmith was one of the forty Catholic Martyrs of England and Wales executed during the period of the Reformation and canonised in 1970.

Owing to the growth in its congregation, an earlier chapel on the site dating from 1822 was replaced with the current building, constructed between 1925 and 1930 and designed by J Sydney Brocklesby who was inspired by the Romanesque churches of the south of France. Thus the north-west turret has a conical roof set with pointed stones as seen at Notre-Dame-la-Grande in Poitiers and the arch enclosing the west window and door is derived from French models of the eleventh century, a tympanum carrying a relief of the crowning of the Madonna above the door’s lintel. One wonders whether it was the appeal of an unbroken chain of Catholic worship in such buildings that made them the preferred influence here and at a number of Brocklesby’s earlier churches.

The stone for the church was quarried from nearby Parbold and Darley Dale in Derbyshire, and worked on site by the Howe brothers. There are carved grotesques and gargoyles on the exterior and many different capitals and corbels within. According to the entry in Pevsner, ‘Brocklesby provided very few detailed drawings, everything was set out full-size on site. He believed this method was as close to that of medieval craftsmen as was possible.’

The basilica’s interior is of the same grey and brown sandstone but two shallow saucer domes over the nave are painted with stars, and the chancel apse beyond is surmounted by a clerestory of intensely-coloured and glittering lancet windows, set into a stencilled hemispherical vault. These seven windows depict the mystical and ecstatic figures of seven saints devoted to the eucharist. Of the nineteen windows in the church executed by the Harry Clarke Studio between 1930 and 1937, only these were installed prior to Clarke’s death from tuberculosis in 1931.

Harry Clarke was born Henry Patrick Clarke in Dublin on St Patrick’s Day 1889, to Joshua and Brigid Clarke, née MacGonigal. Joshua Clarke had moved to Ireland from Leeds and set up his own church decoration business. By the late nineteenth century the tradition of stained glass making in Ireland had fallen to a low standard and initially Joshua was an agent for Mayer of Munich, before beginning stained glass production in the same style. WB Yeats, speaking at the Irish Senate in 1924, said ‘...about twenty years ago... the stained glass made in Ireland was the worst in the world...’ Then the maker of the worst glass in the world was a Dublin man named Clarke, now the acknowledged best glass in the world is made by his son, Harry Clarke.’

Harry, however, was unhappy at Yeats’s words, which he felt unjustly maligned his father’s work. From the age of seven Harry Clarke attended the Jesuit-run Belvedere College, where James
Joyce, some seven years older, was a pupil. Joyce later wrote about the college in Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Harry began making stained glass in his father’s workshop in 1903 and three years later commenced evening classes in stained glass at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art. He was taught by Arthur Ernest Child, from Christopher Whall’s studio in London, who had been invited to Dublin in 1901 in order train a new generation of Irish artists in stained glass. Granted Dublin’s stained glass scholarship initially 1910-11, Harry proceeded to win the Gold Medal for stained glass at the annual National Competition held in South Kensington, for three successive years. In 1913 the judges, among them Walter Crane and Byam Shaw, declared his Judas to be ‘a remarkably original design, both as to the subject and treatment, admirably drawn and well carried out in glass. The colour is rich, sombre and of great beauty, while the very ingenious and beautiful arrangement of the leading makes a delightful pattern in itself’.

That same year Harry also won a Bronze Medal for his designs for programme and book illustration. He went on to have a career as both an illustrator and stained glass maker, his illustrations usually being of a more sensual, worldly and macabre nature – including those for Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen, Poe’s Tales of Mystery and the Imagination, Goethe’s Faust and Selected Poems of Algernon Charles Swinburne.

Harry Clarke’s first significant stained glass commission and among his most celebrated windows were the nine windows he completed for the Honan Chapel at Cork in 1915. He used a relatively new technique of plating and aciding, which he continued to deploy throughout his career and which creates the rich and glittering effects of colour that are one of the characteristics of his glass. The technique allows the placing of several different colours of glass within one section of leading. In the studio the glass is covered with a resinous ground impervious to acid, which is removed with a sharp instrument in the areas where the acid is to bite. Detail can thus be created, and where for example ‘two sheets of blue and red were combined, by aciding away the colour in graded quantities, colours from the palest blue to the richest violet could be combined.’ Following his father’s death, Harry took over the studio. He created more than 160 stained glass windows for both ecclesiastical and commercial commissions; they include the Eve of St Agnes panels now in Dublin City Gallery and the Geneva Window in the Mitchell Wolfson Jr collection at Wolfsonian-Florida International University. This was commissioned by the Irish Free State for the staircase in a League of Nations building in Geneva, interpreting scenes from works by fifteen Irish writers including Yeats, Synge, Joyce and O’Casey, but was rejected for its licentiousness and eventually bought back by Clarke’s widow.

Father O’Meara’s commission for the windows at St Oswald & St Edmund Arrowsmith was confirmed late in 1929, after Harry had travelled to Davos in Switzerland following his diagnosis with tuberculosis. His brother and sister, Walter and Florence Clarke, were left in charge of the studio, which then had over twenty employees. But Harry remained involved in the business and he returned to Dublin to work from mid-May to early October 1930. The sanctuary windows were installed just in time for the dedication of the church in September of that year. The Eucharistic saints, depicted from north to south, or left to right, are St John the Evangelist, St Clare of Assisi, St Ita, St Juliana Falconieri, St Paschal Baylon, St Catherine of Siena and St Tarcisius. What at first glance appear to be merely decorative schemes in the background of each window are frequently abstracted representations, pertinent to the legend of the life of the saint depicted. As the judges had noted in 1913, the leading is remarkable, its placing so subtly chosen that it barely registers with the viewer, yet contributes to the rhythmic pattern of each window.

St John, depicted as a beardless youth, carries a chalice containing a dove, representing the Holy Spirit, and is framed by an arch of rocky forms scattered with lichens that suggest his cave on Patmos.

St Clare, the frailty of whose face reflects her life of ill health, is dressed in the brown habit of
the Poor Clares whose order she founded. She clasps to her breast a combined chalice and monstrance, the latter in the form of a church. Green shapes on a blue background suggest cypresses set against the skies of Umbria.

St Ita, perhaps the most startlingly depicted of the saints, could have stepped from the set of a 1920s film, with her jewelled headdress, chin-length bobbed haircut and cupid’s bow mouth. Three triangular shapes floating before her, that Costigan and Mullen state to be three jewels representing the Trinity, I believe to be the three heavenly lights that guided the saint, one at the top of the Galtee mountains, the second on the Mullagheireirk mountains and the third at Killeedy where she founded a nunnery. Small pointed forms that sometimes resemble the mountains of early renaissance painting are dotted around her.

St Juliana Falconieri, founder of the Sisters of the Third Order of Servites, wears their black habit and white veil. At the time of her death when about to receive communion, due to constant vomiting she requested that the priest placed the host on her breast, from where it vanished to be replaced by the image of the cross, and she is thus represented with a radiant host before her breast. She holds a cross whose arms terminate in scourges, symbolising penance, a green cross behind her. Perhaps the glittering background represents the contrasting life of wealth she was born into and rejected.

St Paschal Baylon, a shepherd in his youth, has a lamb at his feet and carries a staff with a small bundle of possessions tied to it to denote his chosen life of poverty as a lay brother in the Reformed Franciscan order. Bands of stone walling suggest the monastic life of contemplation that fed his ecstatic visions.

St Catherine of Siena’s veil is held in place by a crown of thorns, symbolic of her mystical marriage with Christ. Her face seems to express her life of abstinence. She is dressed in the habit of a Dominican tertiary and her cross is entwined with stems of white roses, a reference to a miracle that took place after her death, when her head was removed from her body to be smuggled out of Rome back to Siena. When Roman guards examined the bag containing the head, they found only rose petals within. The directional rays of the background may represent her reception of the stigmata, the Holy Spirit coming upon her like rain.

The final window depicts St Tarcisius, the Roman boy who carried the eucharist to condemned Christians in the catacombs, whose carved rock face is shown behind him. He was attacked and killed by a mob rather than relinquish the sacrament and like St Juliana Falconieri is marked with a radiant host on his chest.

The nave is flanked by chapels and confessionals separated from it by an ambulatory. Three further Harry Clarke Studio windows, of St John Fisher, St Columba and St Thomas More, are in St Joseph’s chapel to the north. In the continuing ambulatory behind the apse there are six windows representing Christ’s Passion, Resurrection and Ascension – three on each side of the tiny chapel that houses the original shrine of the Holy Hand, designed by the Liverpool-based church architect Francis Xavier Velardem. This is lit by a small, highly-detailed window depicting St Edmund Arrowsmith. Another striking window, that of St Agnes, is in the chapel on the south of the church, dedicated to St Theresa of the Child Jesus, and the resurrected Christ, King and Priest, is depicted in the west window. There are also three very late Harry Clarke Studio windows in the Chapel of our Lady and English Martyrs, commemorating Father O’Meara, which date from shortly before the studio’s closure in 1973.

An Irish scholar and former director of the Abbey Theatre, Walter Starkie wrote of Harry, many years after his death: ‘Harry Clarke was one of the most lovable personalities I have ever met in Dublin; he had a wistful, imaginative gaiety that haunted me and I still find myself evoking his ghost like a wonderful lost soul from the Limbo of Memory.’
The William Morris Craft Fellowship

An interview with stained glass conservator and artist Lizzy Hippsley-Cox, one of SPAB’s 2016 Fellows
This unique training course for craftsmen involved in the repair of historic buildings receives a portion of its funding from The William Morris Society.

Susan Warlow What inspired you to learn to work with stained glass?
Lizzy Hippisley-Cox I always liked art, particularly medieval art and I went on an art foundation course but I was frustrated at the lack of traditional skills that were taught there. I spent more time in the library looking at historic artworks and reading. That led me away from practising art; I had a change of direction and did a BA in Medieval Studies at Manchester. I really got into the wall paintings and medieval architecture, and particularly enjoyed one module on medieval and Arts & Crafts – including Morris – stained glass. So I wrote my thesis on the apocalypse cycle in art, which happened to coincide with the restoration of the Great East Window in York Minster.

SW Where did you train?
LH-C After my BA I moved to York and started a twelve-month internship through Icon’s (the Institute of Conservation) Skills in Practice framework. I spent it at the York Glaziers Trust, which takes projects from all over the country, as well as from York.

SW I love All Saints North Street in York.
LH-C Actually I wrote something on the Pricke of Conscience during my Bachelor’s. I was reading some manuscripts with the poem in and obviously went to view the Pricke of Conscience window (in All Saints North Street) when I moved to York, and later I wrote something about the conservation history of the windows in that church, that was part of my Master’s. And it’s a great window to study because it’s not high up.

SW Yes, it’s in the north aisle isn’t it...
LH-C That’s right. I ended up staying in York for seven years, doing the internship, an apprenticeship, then a conservation technician qualification, and I also studied at the University for a Masters in Stained Glass Conservation and Heritage Management.

SW How long had you been a stained glass artist when you started the Craft Fellowship?
LH-C I had been working professionally with glass for about seven to eight years, although I had attended evening classes in Bolton at the time that I was studying in Manchester. I went freelance in 2015, then I was down in Somerset, working on some projects, before I began the Craft Fellowship.

SW How did you hear about the Fellowship?

LH-C The first I heard about it was talking to Helen Bower – she was my colleague and mentor at the York Glaziers Trust. There are quite a lot of Fellows in York, but she had been the first, and until me the only, stained glass Fellow. She had such a breadth of knowledge and I loved hearing about her adventures on the road. In fact lots of companions (Compagnons or French guild members) and journeymen pass through York. They come from the continental systems of travelling programmes for craftsmen which preserve the guild base and an artisanal culture. There is also the Cathedrals Workshop Fellowship, which is mainly aimed at stonemasons, and has about eight participating cathedrals. But the Morris Fellowship had more appeal to me in the variety of its visits.

SW How were you able to fit the Fellowship in with your own work?

LH-C Since qualifying I had been working freelance and managed to continue some of this work during the interim blocks that divide the Fellowship programme. It was great to have that degree of flexibility, as there were always interesting things cropping up outside of the programme dates, so work and Fellowship blurred somewhat for me! It was also important for me to spend time, when I wasn’t travelling, with my family. The way that the Fellowship is structured, there are three blocks each of two months, over a nine months spread. There are lots of Fellowship opportunities within the blocks, and extra events, such as I visited the BSMGP (British Society of Master Glass Painters) annual conference down in Kent.

SW What did you most enjoy learning about during the Fellowship stays?

LH-C Gosh, it’s really difficult to pinpoint the most interesting or enjoyable stays, as there was just so much to take in. Obviously during visits to see glass projects, or in a church setting I was able to get into more depth and detail with the hosts, but then I learnt so much about vernacular architecture during the Fellowship – because I knew so little about it at the start – I was like a sponge in that respect. Another very important thing I learnt was just through the travelling, getting to see so many parts of the UK I had never visited before – and really appreciating what a rich variety we have. It was such fun, there was something quite Enid Blyton about setting off on so many different adventures – and we all got into reading News from Nowhere and would tell each other when we were reminded of something in the book.

LH-C We travelled independently of one another, and were given the freedom to choose our own placements, subject to being able to arrange them. Because I wanted to set up my own business and start a studio I knew I would have to make the most of this opportunity and I had a really great time. I focused on visiting manufacturers making the materials of my trade, starting in France, in Normandy and Tours, looking at glass paints, which are ground,
artists that I really admire, and talked to craftspersons running their own small practices, and it helped me enormously in picturing the path I should follow – something which can otherwise be very daunting when striking out alone.

SW What have you been working on since the Fellowship, and where?

LH-C During the Fellowship I relocated from Yorkshire to Cumbria, right up on the borders. Visiting the area on the Fellowship, I fell in love with it. I decided it would be a great place to make a home and build a new business. North Cumbria is so rich in natural beauty and has such a fascinating built heritage that is remarkably preserved through the lack of industrialisation and so-called ‘development’, but is crying out for maintenance. Of course it’s got Roman history – the wall – and later a terrifying medieval and early modern period during the English-Scottish wars and the Border Reivers – its fortified church towers and houses date from that time – then wonderful cruck-framed vernacular houses and farms.

More recently it has some great examples from the Arts & Crafts era, like Philip Webb’s only church, St Martin’s in Brampton, also a church in a village a few miles from our home called Kirkhampton. The Norman church, St Peter’s, has a beautiful little triplet of lancet windows by Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co with new designs of musical angels for the church by Morris and Burne-Jones, executed in 1870. I’m working on a condition assessment of these at the moment, as they are very badly deteriorated, with terrible paint loss. It would be great if someone could find some funding for their conservation. There’s a drawing over in California in the collection of Sanford L Berger, he collected through his lifetime lots of documents and artworks and paraphernalia connected to Morris & Co and when a chap called Charles Sewter wrote a catalogue of all the Morris and circle stained glass he relied quite heavily on this archive. They were able to send me a photograph of the drawing – a sketch design watercolour – for the window in Kirkhampton. It’s not very detailed but it’s possible to see how the design changed. It gives a good impression of how the real window would look with its paint, if it were in a better condition.

Alongside setting up my conservation studio, Eden Stained Glass, I’ve been working on a new series of medieval- and Arts & Crafts-inspired quarry panels of new stained glass designs. I showed them recently at Rose Castle, the old Bishops’ Palace near Carlisle. This has led to some commissions that I’ll be starting in October. I’ve continued to take freelance conservation work further afield too, and have been very lucky to continue working with a large studio in the south-west, where I’ve been involved with the conservation cleaning of medieval and sixteenth-century stained glass from Winchester Cathedral – a fantastic project, working with a great team. I’ve also been doing some work for the tremendous stained-glass artist Tom Denny at his studio near Blandford in Dorset, working on a window for a church in Wallsend, which I helped him install, and I’m helping him glaze his next window, for a church in Tralee, in Ireland.

SW How do you think participating in the Fellowship has affected your work?

LH-C It has vastly altered the perceptions I had of the craft and conservation field in the UK, by taking me out of the bubble of the stained-glass world and relating my work to other craftsperson’s experiences. It has given me so much more confidence at a pivotal time, and after a long struggle to get trained and established it has given me the inspiration and new energy to move forward in my work. It also, importantly, introduced me to a wonderfully supportive community of like-minded ‘obstinate refusers’ (see News from Nowhere) who take a stand for preservation and maintenance, to protect the fragile and fading fabric of our historic buildings.

SW Do you still have a relationship with the William Morris Craft Fellowship?

LH-C Fellows are encouraged to stay involved with the SPAB and with the William Morris Craft Fellowship Trust and give back to it in the future. A couple of weeks ago we had some Fellows to stay up in Cumbria and that’s part of the process, that once you’ve done the Fellowship you take future Fellows when they come round on their visit. It’s a reciprocal process, so the majority of the hosts we had were either Scholars or Fellows at some point. We had both Scholars and Fellows staying, and made a wattle and daub kiln to fire glass in. We had Mud and Glass Day up there, because my partner is a Fellow as well but he does vernacular crafts, mostly mud buildings – cob buildings. The Fellows also do events, like crafts skills demonstrations to the public.

SW So where do those take place?

LH-C The last two years have been in Warwickshire, at Charlecote Mill, which is a water mill that was bought by a Fellow – Karl Grevatt, a carpenter – and he mills flour there. We normally have paying people coming there to learn wattle-and-daub or some carpentry skills and the money that we raise from that goes to finance future Fellows.

SW That’s really interesting, that structure around the Fellowship, that it brings it back full circle.

LH-C Yes, it’s all based on the principle of good fellowship, like going back to the guild system, helping the next ones along, which is lovely.

The closing date for applications for the 2018 William Morris Craft Fellowship is 1 December: www.spab.org.uk/education-training/fellowship.

Lizzy can be contacted at www.edenstainedglass.co.uk
‘Marxian’ and the death of William Morris

Stephen Williams on a self-confessed graphomaniac who defended Morris’s will

Of the numerous personal tributes made in memory of William Morris on his death in October 1896, perhaps the most unusual was that of ‘Marxian’, columnist of the Labour Leader, the socialist weekly edited by Keir Hardie. Writing in the days immediately following Morris’s death, Marxian described how he was alerted to the news, while walking in the City of London on Saturday 3 October, by the sight of a newspaper billboard announcing The death of Mr. Morris.

‘What happened just afterwards I do not precisely remember; nor do I know what was the idea at the back of my mind. But, without haste and without rest, I drifted westward, passing St. Dunstan’s Church, in Fleet Street, and marvelling that a wedding should be taking place there – a carriage with grey horses and white favours and a gaping knot of loiterers and afternoon men, among whom were two letter carriers in their new “Landwehr” shako’s. And William Morris was lying dead at Hammersmith. At last I found myself in Hammersmith Broadway. There was no mistaking the news. A bell tolled menacingly, and a young girl at the top of King Street wonderingly asked her mother, “Is it our Mr. Morris?” Down the narrow riverside byways, across the little creek spanned by Bishop Sherlock’s wooden footbridge, and so into the Upper Mall, fringed with its centuries-old elms, the red leaves from which, stretched in hecatombs on the sidewalk, deadened every earth-borne sound. The gate of Kelmscott House was open. Still not knowing exactly what I wanted, I mechanically ascended the steps. A white slip of paper, fastened on the dull black of the door, wore these words, writ in a woman’s hand: ‘Mr. Morris died peacefully at 11.15 this morning, 3rd October.’ Marxian knocked gently, and then realised how heavily the iron knocker was muffled. What business has a vulgar
journalist to thrust himself into the house of the Dead at such a moment? I wait a minute or two, not daring to repeat my noiseless summons. I read and re-read the quavering message across the door, and begin to feel older and graver. The quiet sheet of silver water, beyond the gnarled elm trees, rebukes me with its calm acceptance. My business is clearly to go away. And I go.

It is possible that some readers would have found Marxian's account mawkish and self-indulgent, but he did not lack candour in admitting his faux-pas of failing to respect the Morris family's privacy. An admirer of George Bernard Shaw since the mid-1880s, Marxian was sometimes accused of imitating his fellow Fabian's journalism, and in this piece—as in so much of his journalism—the influence of GBS is apparent. Earlier in Marxian's career Shaw advised him that if his writing was to be in the 'egotistical style' he must be aware that 'you are taking privileges which can only be earned and maintained by exceptional caution, good sense and command of your subject.' In fact, Marxian had already made a start in that direction, warning readers in his first column for Worker's Times to expect an 'egotistical and unreasonable cuss.' A month earlier he had advised the editor of the London Star evening newspaper that its literary column could only be trusted to Shaw or a 'Young man at present unknown and obscure, whose rare genius, ripe judgement and splendid literary resources have driven him at times to ventilate in your newspaper. Modesty forbids that I directly name him.'

Unsurprisingly, Marxian's reflections on Morris included reference to Shaw: 'We have lost our greatest man. Not simply the first of contemporary English poets, but our foremost champion of English Social Democracy. To this the meanest of us will subscribe as readily as Shaw, and Blatchford, and Hyndman, and
Top left: A handbill dating from 1899 advertising a meeting at which 'the great Marxian' would speak.
Top right: George Samuel self-portrait from 1896.
Above left: Samuel was at the centre of pioneering work to establish socialist organisation in Hackney. The first (joint) secretary of the East London Fabian Group, Samuel's efforts focused on taking the messages of socialism and militant trade unionism to the workers of Hackney and east London. Invited speakers were frequently from this wing of the labour movement, such as Tom Mann, socialist and Dockers' Union leader. Samuel's writing and editorial skills often meant he was behind distributed literature such as Proletarian. He was also instrumental in setting up the Hackney Labour League and the local branch of the Independent Labour Party.
Above right: George Bernard Shaw, 1889. Samuel knew and admired Shaw from when he first heard him speak at Kelmscott House in the mid-1880s. Samuel often imitated Shaw and wrote a number of satirical sketches of the man.
Right: A drawing of George Samuel from 1895. Samuel regarded this as an accurate representation of himself. No known photograph of Samuel has been found for the 1890s.
Hardie... Everyone knew William Morris. He was one of the most get-at-able men around London. Yet it was not my lot to be intimately in his friendship. What struck me most concerning his character was his wholesome hatred for cant and pedantry... Even Bernard Shaw openly respected Morris. Indeed, there were few prettier sights than to see the rugged Saxon viking and the daring Celtic sabreur on the same platform. If you imagine a father and son deeply attached to one another – the elder man warmly admiring yet at times questioning the adroit cleverness of his boy, and the younger man eager to suppress himself and his sardonic humour where touched by a genuine regard for the dignity of his sire – you can picture Morris and Shaw together.

'Marxian' was the nom de plume of George Archer Hilleary Samuel, who between 1891 and 1904 intermittently wrote a weekly column for Workman's Times, Clarion and Labour Leader, making him one of the most prolific freelance contributors to the socialist press. Born into a middle-class family in Swansea in October 1861, Samuel moved to London in 1876 when his father took up a job as a coal agent in the City of London. The family settled in Hackney where young George was privately educated at home. This experience fired an enthusiasm for reading and learning which was to encompass economics, history, philosophy and politics, but did not – as with Shaw – lead to university study. George instead began work in the late 1870s as a junior clerk at the Western Counties and London Life Assurance Company, earning what he later described as a paltry wage, barely enough to exist on.

By the early 1880s Samuel was involved in a number of London's debating societies where he became familiar with progressive and secular movements, and by 1886 he was attending meetings organised by the Hammersmith branch of the Socialist League at Kelmscott House, including a number featuring Shaw as the main speaker. Samuel was admitted to the Fabian Society in early 1890 and quickly linked up with the influx of young militants who had joined in the aftermath of the London dock strike and new unionist upsurge. Samuel became the first secretary of the East London branch that would challenge the Society's executive for its luke-warm support for a comprehensive legal eight-hour day, and its indifference, and sometimes hostility, to the establishment of an independent labour party.

With no journalistic training but an obvious gift for writing newspaper copy, Samuel was asked by Joseph Burgess, the editor of Workman's Times, to pick up the regular Fabian Notes column when Henry Read withdrew in October 1891. Samuel's introduction of himself as 'Marxian' followed established journalistic protocol of adopting a pseudonym and helpfully disguised his identity in the City, where he was now working as a clerk at the Pearl Life Assurance Company. The pen-name reasonably approximated Samuel's perspective at this time, believing as he did in the labour theory of value, the struggle between competing classes and the inevitability of socialism, brought about by working-class action to achieve political and economic power. For a time in the early 1890s Samuel was a member of the Marxist Social Democratic Federation as well as the Fabian Society.

Samuel's three-year residency at the Workman's Times came to an end in October 1894 when the newspaper closed because of financial shortcomings. Burgess personally thanked Samuel for his efforts, which amounted to more than one hundred columns offering a sideways look at the politics and personalities of the labour movement. Hardie immediately snapped up 'Marxian' for the Labour Leader and within eighteen months he was occupying the front page, where his article on Morris's death, 'Shadowed London,' appeared on 10 October 1896.

Marxian returned to the subject of Morris's memory in December when the Morris will was published. Amid the widely reported news of Morris's decision to leave the bulk of his £55,000 estate to his family, there was some comment about his failure to provide for the hard-up socialist movement. The liberal-leaning Daily News – a newspaper read by Morris and to which he sometimes sent correspondence – suggested it was 'first to last, the will of a bon bourgeois... little or nothing is frittered away on public objects. Kelmscott House is not to become a phalanstery; and no part of the £55,000 is to go on the endowment of research in schemes of community life. The “comrades” of socialism, in fact, are cut off with less than a shilling. This only serves to show that socialism as now professed is not community of goods, if indeed it ever was.'

There was some disquiet in the mainstream press about the vitiputation of the Daily News, but it was Marxian who summed up what most socialists felt about the man to whom they had looked for inspiration. In his fierce defence of Morris, Marxian wrote: 'Certain half-baked creatures have been vomiting their spleen upon William Morris's grave because the dead artist did not abandon his relatives to the workhouse. The modest fortune he received from his forefathers he bequeathed, unimpaired, to his successors. Had he chosen, William Morris, with his immense and many-sided genius, could easily have died a millionaire. He did not so choose. And sweater-souled Liberals now rail at his name and insinuate – if their frothy words mean anything at all – that he should have begged his widow and daughters. There is quite enough beggary in the world already. Socialism does not mean chucking your money into the gutter: it means the intervention of the state to alter our present system of producing wealth. Another bundle of paper-babies sneer that Morris left no bequest specifically for socialist propaganda. These intelligent critics should put on their clean pinafores and trot off to Sunday school. Morris gave his life to Socialism. Morris was no egotist. But he would have been a fool had he not known something of the value of his own life. He gave himself to us – quietly, generously, and fully. And I note the pride of the man in his refusing to add to that rich gift the trader’s philanthropic dole. How heavily Morris’s purse was drawn upon to help socialists and socialism will never completely be known. And it is not right his traducers should know. Let them wallow in their native ignorance.'

Marxian's reputation on the Labour Leader continued to grow as he piled up weekly reflections, with relentless consistency, over a decade of freelance journalism. In the years of Keir Hardie's absence from Parliament (1895-1900), Samuel's reporting from the House of Commons and access to Radical Liberal politicians provided a valuable link for the Independent Labour Party at Westminster. Hardie and his sub-editor, David Lowe, were particularly appreciative of Samuel's brilliant investigative journalism following the Jameson raid in South Africa over the Christmas and New Year period of 1895-96. In what was effectively a concerted campaign of exposure, Samuel provided detailed evidence of the vested interests and links between Cecil Rhodes, the Prince of Wales and a coterie of politicians and businessmen on the make in South Africa. These same economic interests continued to drive British government policy in relation to South Africa and led directly to the outbreak of war in October 1899, provoking a public clash between Marxian and his one-time exemplar Shaw, who threw in his lot behind the war effort against the Boers.

Although Samuel was still at this time a Fabian, he had drifted away from the Society somewhat, having focussed his efforts on the Independent Labour Party (ILP), which he had joined in 1895 when a branch was formed in Hackney. Increasingly Samuel offered himself as a speaker for the ILP where he was often announced as 'The Mighty Marxian,' a playful sobriquet he invented and obviously relished. Press reports of these meetings frequently mentioned how Samuel had the audience in fits of laughter at his brand of badinage and use of the Fabian Notes, Labour Leader, W orkm an’s Times, W orld Leader
Hardie had transferred ownership of *Labour Leader* to the ILP. Detached from any direct contact with socialist organisation, Samuel adopted tariff reform policies and by the 1906 general election was supporting the local Conservative candidate in Lewisham. In later years he hardly mentioned his socialist adventures and for a self-declared graphomaniac – ie one with an obsessive desire to write – it is curious that Samuel never published a volume of reminiscences.

Employment at Pearl Life Assurance continued until 1920 when Samuel retired. He now found more time for research in the British Museum Reading Room and his freelance journalism on economics which had started in 1893 at the *Post Magazine* and continued later at the *Policy Holder*, both trade journals for the insurance industry. When he died in January 1946 the *Policy Holder* carried an obituary revealing the identity of its long-standing contributor ‘B di C’ as George Samuel. ‘B di C’, the notice stated, stood for ‘Badwr di Cobyn, the Ferryman’, a reference Samuel had made known to friends at the magazine as relating to his origins in south Wales. In truth, Samuel had adopted ‘B di C’ as a pseudonym when he started insurance journalism on the *Post Magazine*, making it clear to readers that it was an abbreviation of ‘Basso di Cornetto’, a thinly veiled homage to Shaw who had written music criticism for the Star newspaper as ‘Corno di Bassetto’.

George Samuel’s politically formative years between 1885 and 1895 coincided with the emergence of the principal strands of British socialism which he either participated in or wrote about in his journalism. For a time there was enough blurring of the lines between the different socialist groups for individuals to straddle more than one group, as Samuel himself did in the early 1890s. However, by the mid nineties Samuel had fixed on the ILP as his political home because it envisaged transformation to socialism through parliamentary means, a course he believed possible if workers would vote for Labour candidates.

At Hardie’s *Labour Leader* Samuel was given an almost free hand to write what he wanted, and in the ILP he found an environment that gave space to individuals with a certain eccentricity, of which he was clearly one. If his journalistic style was too heavily declamatory for some, Marxian certainly had followers who read his column before turning to other sections of the paper. In this period of intense activity, enthusiasm and socialist advance Samuel worked alongside many who knew William Morris well. Although a regular participant at Kelmscott House meetings, Samuel appears to have been only a distant acquaintance of Morris. Nevertheless, when the time came to declare an admiration for Morris and support the integrity of his memory, Samuel was not found wanting.

**Stephen Williams** worked for NULPE and UNISON and has written on trade union and socialist history. This article is part of a forthcoming longer study of George Samuel.

1 Undated note from George Bernard Shaw to George Samuel, probably of November 1892, in the possession of Samuel’s grandson, Dr. Andrew Samuel-Gibbon. The author would like to thank Dr. Samuel-Gibbon for permission to consult and quote from his collection.
2 *Workman’s Times*, 16 October 1981, p1
3 *Star*, 15 September 1891, p2
4 *Daily News*, 17 December 1896, p5
5 *Labour Leader*, 26 December 1896, p1
6 *Labour Leader*, 6 and 13 January 1900, p1
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THORSMORK AND THE STORY OF MORRISHEID

Martin Stott visits a geologically youthful Icelandic valley that enchanted Morris

Morris was attracted to Iceland for many reasons: the romance of the sagas, his desire to learn Icelandic, his friendship with Einkir Magnusson, the call of the wild, and his wish to escape his difficult domestic circumstances. He travelled there in both 1871 and 1873, and the Journals he initially wrote privately, for his friend Georgiana Burne-Jones, became classics of travel writing when published after his death. They are considered to be some of his most personal and reflective pieces of writing.

Morris travelled all over Iceland on those journeys. But in particular he was drawn to an area of the south of the country, both for its associations with the Njals saga and for the dramatic landscapes of the Markarfljot and Krossa rivers, which meet at Thorsmork, before flowing across a huge floodplain to the sea. The Thorsmork valley is, as it was even more so in Morris’s time, hemmed in by steep cliffs and the towering glaciers of Myrdalsjokull and Eyjafjallajokull, whose volcano sprang to world-wide attention when it erupted in 2010.

Morris was enchanted by Thorsmork. He spent two days exploring the area in July 1871. His journal entry for 22 July records his impressions of entering the valley: ‘the mountains on our right were both steep and high and just before us ran up into a huge wall with inaccessible cliffs in it projecting into the valley and crowned by a glacier that came tumbling over it… they had caves in them just like the hell mouths in thirteenth-century illuminations’. Two years later he returned for a more extensive exploration, from 23-28 July. On the first journey, Magnusson had introduced Morris and his party to a local guide, a saddler called Jon Jonsson, a distant relation of Magnusson’s wife’s who lodged at a farm called Lithendcot: ‘a man deep in old lore: he was very shy but seemed a very good fellow: he talked a little English and offered to guide us the next day to a place called Thorsmork…’. This time Jon took them on a much more extensive exploration of the area. On 26 July they reached Thorsmork on horseback and after two hours very rough ride including the venomous little Steinholtsa [a tributary that is still difficult to cross] came to the smooth grass of Godaland just where a ridge divided the two valleys of Markarfljot and Krossa, and presently we were in that awful place: all along we had had before us of course that terrible ice-capped wall I have told you of before…’.

It is over 140 years since Morris’s visits to Thorsmork, and the landscape has changed dramatically with the passage of time: volcanos have emerged from under the ice, glaciers have retreated, floods and glacial melt have reshaped the valleys and enormous rock falls have redirected the outflow of rivers. The landscape, still young in geological terms, is considered to be one of Iceland’s most beautiful spots and the area has become a firm favourite of Icelanders seeking to unwind by tackling the numerous trails in the area, or as a destination for some serious party-going. Infrastructure is still primitive; campsites, hostels and mountain refuges, a bus service that operates to the vagaries of the weather and the river crossing conditions, access for 4WD’s and drivers with nerves of steel. For me an eight-day trek across the mountains from Landmannalauger to Thorsmork was crowned with an amazing final couple of days exploring the Thorsmork valley and climbing up to the newly-minted double volcanic peaks of Eyjafjallajokull,
Mødi and Magni – the sons of Thor. Getting there was a twenty-three kilometre round trip requiring ropes at one point, and traversing the narrow Cat’s Spine ridge with its 800 metre vertiginous scree slope drop. Above the ridge is a large muddy gravel plateau with incredible views of the Godalandspjall and the upper reaches of the Krossa valley. Its name! Morrisheidi – ‘Morris Heath’. Morris explored this area with Jon in 1873 at a time when it was only just becoming accessible for the first time since the fourteenth century, as the glaciers had begun to retreat after over three centuries of the ‘Little Ice Age’. The area was largely unmapped and certainly unnamed, so knowing that Morris was a famous ‘English Skald’, Jon, a much respected man in that part of Iceland, named the area Morrisheidi in recognition of this pioneering expedition.

Nowadays Morrisheidi is on the trekking route over from the Thorsmork hostel – located in exactly the place that Morris and his companions camped all those years ago – to the mountain refuge at Skogar on the other side of Eyjafjallajökull. Even the Rough Guide to Iceland, whose maps are illustrative rather than anywhere near detailed enough to tackle the journey, marks Morrisheidi. All the maps, however, have one quirk. In the 1920s when the names for local landscape features were being collated and systematised onto a complete set of maps of Iceland, the mapmaker, not recognising Morris’ name, mistranscribed it from Jon’s hand-written notes, and to this day it is printed as ‘Morrisheidi’.

Martin Stott is Chair of The William Morris Society. His chapter on Morris and Iceland in the Routledge Companion to William Morris is due for publication in 2018.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN HARDY AND THE MORRISSES

For many years I was aware of one letter from Morris to Thomas Hardy, included in the third volume of The Collected Letters of William Morris, edited by Norman Kelvin and published by Princeton University Press in 1996. Here is the letter as it appears in this edition:

Kelscott House
Upper Mall,
Hammersmith
December 15 (1891)

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much I shall be very pleased to receive your book & to read it. I have read two of your books, with much pleasure. Far from the Madding Crowd, & The return of the Native. The first one is the most pleasing and I suppose you would look up to it as the most typical of your works. But there is a great deal of close study of nature, (I mean human save of that ilk) in the return, besides the beauty of the mise en scène which with you is a matter of course. Again with many thanks

I am Yours faithfully

William Morris

Kelvin refers us to Michael Millgate’s Thomas Hardy: a biography (New York: Random House, 1982); on p319, Millgate states that Hardy sent Morris a copy of Tess in November 1891, adding that the two men never met. Kelvin agrees that there is no evidence of a meeting, but suggests that the two men might have met at a meeting of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, which Morris founded in 1877 and which Hardy joined in 1881 or 1882. In 1882-3 Hardy offered...to keep a watchful eye on Wimborne Minster and in 1889 he was concerned about Stratton Church. (Millgate, pp235 & 302).

Knowing the letter in this form, it was a great pleasure to be invited by Helen Anear to read the original handwritten version. Helen is writing a PhD on the letters sent to Hardy, which are held in the archive at the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester. Helen is also involved, through the Exeter Digital Humanities Team, in the digitisation of the over 4000 letters, a process which they hope to complete later this year.

A considerable surprise was the small size of the piece of notepaper on which Morris wrote – the seven lines of Kelvin’s main paragraph take up no fewer than fifteen short lines, while the address is printed in small capitals, with the date written in beneath. As a reader, I became aware of the extent of regularisation in the Collected Letters – which is no doubt typical of all such editions. I felt more than usually involved. There is a special pleasure in this proximity to a text.

I was also shown two letters from May Morris to Hardy. The first is from 8 Hammersmith Terrace on 28 April 1913, and asks a favour: At the time, May was engaged in editing her father’s Collected Works, and she wrote introductions to all the twenty-four volumes, published between 1910 and 1915. In that for Vol XVIII, she wanted to give an account of the buildings in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire that particularly interested Morris, and she recalled reading in Tess of the D’Urbervilles – ‘that delightful and tragic book’ – Hardy’s memorable account of the ‘noble tithe-barn at Little Coxwold, near Farthing’. Her request was that Hardy should allow her to quote the passage in her introduction. Morris’s admiration for the barn is well known, though it is usually cited as being located at the nearby Great Coxwell. It would seem that Hardy gave permission for the account to be included, as two pages of Hardy are quoted in the introduction, together with a photograph of the barn taken by FH Evans; ironically, though, the fine descriptive passage is not from Tess but from Far from the Madding Crowd, the novel referred to favourably by Morris in his letter. May remarks appreciatively: ‘I know no writer who has understood and interpreted so keenly well the past and present spirit of these simple and majestic buildings! The Great Shearing-barn is not given a location in the novel, but one can readily understand why May associated it with Coxwell.

The second letter from May is from Kelscott Manor, where she was then living, on 27 November 1926, and addresses ‘Dear Mr Hardy’: ‘I am getting out an appeal for subscriptions for the building of a Village Hall in memory of my Father; and in doing so am anxious to get the support of those who care for the things he cared for’. A note dated 5 December thanks Hardy for allowing his name to be added to her committee: ‘I am indeed glad to have it.’ Funds were slow to come in, and it was not until 1934 that the Hall, designed by Ernest Gimson (who had died in 1919) was opened, with Bernard Shaw in flamboyant form and the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, who as a young man had known
CONSERVATION OF THE MORRIS MEMORIAL HALL

Early in 2016, a small group of residents in the tiny community of Kelmcott set out to raise enough money to conserve the roof of our village hall, the beautiful grade 2 listed memorial to William Morris. Thanks to our generous supporters and a great deal of hard work, we managed to raise the necessary funds and we are now delighted and very proud to be able to show you the results with a truly stunning and beautiful roof.

The Raise the Roof appeal was formally launched in January 2016 and requests for grants and donations both large and small were submitted to a variety of organisations and individuals during 2016. Village fundraising activities ranged from Arts & Crafts lectures to bingo!

Heritage Roofing Company (Oxford) to carry out the project 13 March. To ensure the integrity of this listed building, all work was done on a like-for-like basis following guidance from a local conservation architect, a SPAB scholar and West Oxfordshire District Council Conservation Officers.

Where possible, we used the original, existing slates but where new slates were required, we adopted English Heritage Policy than second-hand should be used, promoting the development of stone slate production and saving many old buildings from having their roofs pillaged for supplies, occasionally through theft.' Cotswold Stone Quarry slates were the closest match in terms of geological type, colour and texture, and were approved by the Council’s Conservation officer. To conserve energy, the roof was insulated. We also used traditional roofing felt, a bat-friendly material, should any bat colonies decide to take up residence at any time in the future!

The roofing work was completed on 26 June. We can now turn our attention to restoring the rest of the building! May Morris endowed the hall to the village in memory of her father, William Morris, and responsibility for its upkeep lies entirely with the residents. We are a registered charity and still in need of funds to complete our ongoing conservation of the building; therefore if you would like to make a financial contribution, it would be most gratefully received.

More information, including a full list of sponsors and many more pictures, can be seen on our Facebook page and will shortly be available on our website.

For further details please contact the Society: societymanager@williammorrissociety.org.uk / 020 8741 3735.

GEOFF COLEMAN

On Wednesday 21 June we were delighted to welcome Geoff Coleman to Kelmcott House. Geoff made the library bookcase dedicated to Eric Heffer, MP installed in 1994, and this was the first time he had been back to look at it since then.

Shortly after the death of Eric Heffer in 1991, Geoff was contacted by the Society’s librarian, David Rainger, with the idea of making a memorial bookcase. Eric Heffer MP (1922-91) was a Labour politician, member of parliament for Liverpool Walton from 1964 until his death. He was especially concerned with the construction industry and employment practices. A member of The William Morris Society, he had played a prominent role in the campaign to save the William Morris Gallery.

The bookcase had been designed by Society member John Kay and was to be made of English oak. Geoff, a retired joiner, was pleased to accept the commission. He had been in the same union as Eric Heffer; the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, and had known him from union activities. Geoff made the bookcase in the workshop at the end of his garden and remembers bringing it in pieces for assembly at Kelmcott House. The inscription was carved by a stone mason; Geoff can’t remember his name – I wonder if anyone knows it?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHAIR THE WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY?
The William Morris Society is looking to appoint a new Chair of Trustees when Martin Scott steps down in 2018 after four years in post.

The role involves:

• leading the Trustees and membership • chairing Trustee meetings and managing Trustee/staff and Trustee processes – including convening and chairing the Finance and General Purposes Committee – between meetings • engaging with external partners eg through the Heritage Lottery Fund-supported Arts & Crafts Hammersmith project • managing the Society staff • acting (with others) as the public face of the Society

Enthusiasm for the ideas and legacy of William Morris and his circle, the ability to lead and take a strategic perspective, and having the skills and experience to manage staff and chair meetings are essential. Knowledge of the charity sector and its governance, and of the museums and arts sector are highly desirable. Fundraising and financial skills are very helpful.

The Society is in an exciting period of its development as it takes up the challenges of the successful Arts and Crafts Hammersmith project. The post is unpaid – though expenses are paid – takes approximately three to four days a month, requires reasonable accessibility to London (the Society is based in Hammersmith) and might attract someone recently retired from senior management in the public, private or voluntary sectors.

The post holder will be co-opted onto the Trustee Board as soon as is convenient, to take up the post from the May 2018 AGM.

For further details please contact the Society: societymanager@williammorrissociety.org.uk / 020 8741 3735.

MORRIS, in the audience. As far as I know, none of these May Morris letters has been published, and I am grateful to the Dorset County Museum at Dorchester for permission to publish them here.

Peter Faulkner
At the inauguration, Society member Ray Watkinson recalled Morris’s words ‘Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful’, commenting that the bookcase excelled on both counts. It now holds the bulk of our collection of biographies of those known to Morris or influenced by him, and biographies of Morris himself.

Penny Lyndon

LOCKWOOD KIPLING ON MORRIS

At the annual prize-giving of the Salisbury School of Science and Art in 1900, Lockwood Kipling, Rudyard’s father and an enthusiast for sculpture and for Indian art, praised Morris’s numerous achievements, but concluded: ‘As an artist he had his limitations... he never seemed to greatly care for sculpture, the antique left him cold, and apparently he had no eyes for the sculpture and ornament of recent periods. His work was first and foremost characteristically English’ (Salisbury and Winchester Journal and General Advertiser, February 24, 1900, p6)

Peter Faulkner

OPPORTUNITY TO BE PART OF THE SOCIETY’S NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Society is looking to recruit individuals to the Charity’s newly formed Business Development Committee. The Committee will be responsible for identifying and overseeing implementation of commercial opportunities and initiatives; in keeping with the Society’s aims and objectives, in order to increase the Charity’s revenue. We are looking for people with knowledge and experience in business planning, strategy and implementation in the commercial as well as charity sectors. Candidates should have an interest in William Morris and his circle and be familiar with the aims and objectives of the Society. We are specifically looking for people with skills and experience in the following areas:

• business planning and strategy implementation

• retail

• licensing

• e-commerce – particularly design and maintenance of an online shop

• membership organisations – recruitment, retention and development

• event planning

• fundraising

We are looking for the commitment to attend and participate in around four meetings a year – some of which could be held via Skype – and to follow through on actions initiated by the group. Agreed out of pocket expenses will be paid.

For further information please contact the Chair of the Business Development Committee, Fiona Rose: fiorarose@yahoo.co.uk / 01799 531233.

VISIT TO WATTS GALLERY AND ARTISTS’ VILLAGE

On a sunny Friday in June, a group of Society members and friends gathered in the Old Kiln café at Watts Gallery and Artists’ Village in Compton, Surrey, for a day exploring the home and legacy of Victorian artists George Frederick Watts and Mary Watts.

The first part of our visit was to the De Morgan collection, housed within the Watts Gallery which showcases ceramics by William De Morgan and oil paintings by Evelyn De Morgan. Curator of the collection Claire Longworth gave an introduction to the works on display and to the lives of the two artists who were both significant figures in the Arts & Crafts movement: William De Morgan collaborated with Morris to design ceramic tiles for Morris & Co. It was fascinating to hear about his experiments with glazes and manufacturing techniques, as well as to learn more about Evelyn de Morgan who, along with Mary Watts, was one of the first women to be admitted to the newly-opened Slade School of Art.

A short stroll away is the Watts Chapel, an extraordinary Arts & Crafts building constructed in red brick and richly decorated terracotta tiles and adorned inside with brightly painted and gilded plasterwork. We were delighted to discover that our guide to the Chapel was Desna Greenhow, WMS member and editor of Mary Watts’s journals. Desna explained that Mary was the artistic force behind the building, recruiting the villagers of Compton to produce the thousands of tiles that decorate it and running evening classes to teach the art of modelling the tiles from local terracotta clay. Behind the Chapel yew-lined paths lead up to a cloister; many of the gravestones also feature Arts & Crafts terracotta decoration.

The final part of our visit was to Limnerslease, the house designed for the Wattses by the Arts & Crafts architect Ernest George and completed in 1891. To modern eyes it seems a house of generous proportions, but George and Mary referred to it as their ‘little house’ and increasingly spent their time there, finding the surrounding area a source of inspiration and a refuge from their busy life in London. Following Mary’s death in 1938, Limnerslease became separated from the Watts Gallery Trust estate and was divided into three separate residences. However, the east wing of the house has now been secured by the Trust and transformed into Watts Studios, a recreation of George’s studio and a gallery dedicated to the work of Mary. The central part of the house has also recently been opened to visitors and gives a flavour of the house as a domestic residence.

2017 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of GF Watts, and the Watts Gallery is marking this with an exhibition entitled Watts 200: Celebrating England’s Michelangelo. Between the guided parts of our day there was time to explore the exhibition, and it was fascinating to see the range of Watts’s work, from works of harrowing social realism such as Found Drowned, to Symbolist paintings, mythical subjects, society portraits, sculpture and colossal murals. Watts painted William Morris in 1870 (the painting now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery) – one of the very few occasions on which Morris submitted to having his portrait painted, though he complained later of suffering ‘a devil of a cold-in-the-head’. We can easily imagine the workaholic Morris’s impatience at having to sit still for any length of time.

It was a most enjoyable and educational day. Do keep an eye on the Society’s website for more events, and if you would like to suggest other places to visit in the future, please contact: societymanager@williammorrissociety.org.uk
MORRIS EVENTS
Please see the Events leaflet enclosed with the Magazine for forthcoming events organised by the Society. We would particularly like, however, to draw members’ attention to the following:

DESIGN & CRAFTSMANSHIP IN THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES
Coach House, Kelmscott House
14 October, 2.15 pm
A talk by Corin Mellor on the past history and current projects of David Mellor Design

REBEL CROSSINGS: WILLIAM MORRIS AND SOCIALISM IN BRISTOL AND MANCHESTER
Coach House, Kelmscott House
28 October, 2.15 pm
The 2017 Kelmscott Lecture will be given by the internationally renowned historian of feminism and radical social movements, Sheila Rowbotham.

JOIN SYMPOSIUM ON THE NATURE OF PROSPERITY: ETHICS AND UTOPIAS
Central London
26 February 2018, 2 to 6 pm
A Centre for the Understanding of Urban Prosperity/The William Morris Society event led by Rowan Williams
This joint event will offer an afternoon of philosophical conversations on the themes of ethics and Utopian thinking in relation to sustainable prosperity. It marks the launch of the new edition of William Morris’s influential utopian work, News from Nowhere, with an introduction by Rowan Williams, as well as CUSP’s collection of essays on The Morality of Sustainable Prosperity, edited by Will Davies and featuring The William Morris Society’s former Chair, Professor Ruth Levitas.

Professor Tim Jackson, Director of CUSP. They will be joined in conversation by Rowan Williams and contributors to the CUSP collection Roger Scruton, Ingrid Robeyns and Melissa Lane. It concludes with a drinks reception along with book signings and sales.
Tickets are free but booking is essential and demand will be high, so look for updated information on our website. williammorrissoct society.org

WILLIAM MORRIS GALLERY EVENTS
FRIENDS’ TALK: FRENCH ARTISTS IN LONDON
22 Feb 2018, 7.30 pm
In the 1870s France was devastated by war and an uprising in Paris. Artists fled to Britain and their remarkable works created in London are discussed by Tate Curator Caroline Corbeau-Parsons.

WILLIAM MORRIS BIRTHDAY LECTURE: THE SOCIALIST DIARY
22 March 2018, 7.30 pm
A fascinating insight into a period of intense political activity. Ahead of a new edition, Professor Florence S Boos reveals the essence of Morris’s Socialist Diary. wmgallery.org.uk
EXHIBITIONS

MAY MORRIS: ART AND LIFE
William Morris Gallery, London
7 October to 28 January 2018
Whilst the gallery owns a number of important works by May Morris, this exhibition hopes to bring together important examples held elsewhere including the National Museums of Scotland and Wales, regional museums and galleries, National Trust properties and university collections
wmgallery.org.uk

REFLECTIONS: VAN EYCK AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITES
National Gallery, London
2 October to 2 April 2018
Acquired by the National Gallery in 1842, the Arnolfini Portrait informed the Pre-Raphaelites’ belief in empirical observation, their ideas about draughtsmanship, colour and technique, and the ways in which objects in a picture could carry symbolic meaning
nationalgallery.org.uk

NEW TRUTH TO MATERIALS: WOOD
Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft
to 1 January 2018
This is the first in a series of multi-disciplinary exhibitions at Ditchling that consider how we respond and relate to materials and objects, addressing how artists, craftspeople and designers harness our emotional engagement with different materials and consequently exploit, manipulate and reinforce this in their work. Includes work by Graham Sutherland, Sebastian Cox and Anna Maria Pacheco
ditchlingmuseumartandcraft.org.uk

BURRELL AT KELVINGROVE: TAPESTRIES
Kelvingrove Museum & Art Gallery, Glasgow
30 November
Of the over two hundred tapestries collected by William Burrell, nine works from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries are currently on display at Kelvingrove, the Burrell Collection being closed for refurbishment until 2020.
events.glasgowlife.org.uk

RADICAL CLAY: TEACHING WITH THE GREATEST POTTERS OF THE 1960S
Bristol Museum & Art Gallery
to 10 June 2018
In the 1960s the Bristol & Avon Schools Loan Service had a significant pottery collection which was lent out to schools to inspire young minds. Fifty items from the collection are on display, including works by Lucie Rie, Bernard and Janet Leach, Hans Coper and Ruth Duckworth.
bristolmuseums.org.uk

GRAYSON PERRY: COMFORT BLANKET
Graves Gallery, Sheffield
Described by the artist as ‘A portrait of Britain to wrap your self up in, a giant banknote; things we love, and love to hate,’ this eight-metre long tapestry is a new addition to the Visual Arts collection at the gallery
museums-sheffield.org.uk

RAOJB SHAW
The Whitworth, Manchester
to 19 November
A solo exhibition by contemporary artist Raqib Shaw examining real and imagined spaces between the East and West. Shaw’s opulent paintings of fantastical worlds are combined with historic textiles, furniture and drawings from the Whitworth collection. New wallpaper designed by Shaw creates the backdrop to his work
whitworth.manchester.ac.uk

BEYOND BORDERS
The Whitworth, Manchester
to 3 June 2018
Explores South Asian textiles, bringing together four artists, based in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and England, working on issues around post-colonial identity, ruptured spaces, authenticity, displacement and belonging, using textiles, fibres, embroidery, film, photography and performance.
whitworth.manchester.ac.uk

DESIGN: HAND, HEAD, HEART
Court Barn, Chipping Campden
to 19 November
Celebrates nine contemporary craftspeople who are distinguished in their field and echo the rich heritage established by CR Ashbee and his Guild of Handicraft.
courtbarn.org.uk

A BETTER, MORE BEAUTIFUL WORLD?
Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton
to 23 April
The first in a series of displays from the De Morgan Foundation, resulting from a new partnership that has made Wightwick the Midlands centre for the De Morgan Collection for the next ten years
nationaltrust.org.uk/wightwick-manor

MONUMENTAL MURALS
Watts Gallery, Compton, Guildford
to 5 November
Showcasing GF Watts’s ambitious mural projects, focusing particularly on two rare, large-scale murals that he painted for private houses in the 1850s
wattsgallery.org.uk

DESIGNING THE V&A
V&A, London
to 31 December
Through original drawings and photographs, this display highlights the artists, designers and engineers who created the V&A, charting the building’s transformation from the 1850s to today, culminating with the opening of the Exhibition Road Quarter
vam.ac.uk

ALPHONSE MUCHA: IN QUEST OF BEAUTY
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
to 29 October
Around 100 works by the Czech-born artist, one of the most prominent of the Art Nouveau movement, including drawings, paintings, photographs and a rare sculpture, together with a selection of sculptures by his friend Auguste Rodin
liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

THE EDWARDIANS
Manchester Art Gallery
to 31 December
Works from the gallery’s collection illustrate the glamour, rural nostalgia, evocative landscape and the city of the 1900s, the sparkling point between the Victorian and Modern periods
manchesterartgallery.org
Books

MAY MORRIS: ARTS & CRAFTS DESIGNER
by Anna Mason, Jan Marsh, Jenny Lister, Rowan Bain & Hanne Faury
V&A/Thames & Hudson, 224pp, £25 hb
thamesandhudson.com

The first fully illustrated and comprehensive introduction to May Morris’s work as an artist, designer and embroiderer, which places her firmly among the leading British designer-makers of the Arts & Crafts movement. Published in association with the exhibition May Morris: Art & Life at the William Morris Gallery.

MORRIS
by Charlotte & Peter Fiell
Taschen, 96pp, £9.99 hb
forthcoming

A richly illustrated book offering an introduction to Morris’s life and all aspects of his design work, including interiors, tiles, embroidery, tapestries, carpets, and calligraphy. The book explores the pioneering craftsmanship and natural motifs that inspired his patterns and forms, as well as Morris’s remarkable cultural legacy, through British textiles, Bauhaus, and modern environmentalism.

VICTORIAN WATERCOLOURS
by Peter Raissis
Art Gallery of New South Wales, 208pp, £25 hb
thamesandhudson.com

Featuring more than eighty artworks by over seventy artists, including Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Miles Birket Foster, drawn from the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Entries on each of the works give insights into the painters’ lives and the differing subject matter; ranging from everyday lives and landscape to creations of fantasy and the imagination.

BESTSELLERS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA: AN ANTHOLOGY
edited by Paul C Gutjahr
Anthem Press, 1200pp, £120 hb
anthempress.com

Many of the most famous American novels of the nineteenth century that are read today, such as Melville’s Moby Dick, were not widely read when they first appeared. This collection offers readers a glimpse of the literature of popular culture. Who could resist Ten Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There?

ATLAS OF FURNITURE DESIGN
edited by Mateo Kries, Henrike Büscher and Jochen Eisenbrand
Vitra Design Museum, 1088pp, £149 hb
thamesandhudson.com

Based on one of the largest furniture collections in the world at the Vitra Design Museum, the book documents almost 1700 objects, with 550 texts detailing key items as well as in-depth essays, designer biographies, bibliographies, and a glossary of manufacturers.

DAMOZELS AND DEITIES: PRE-RAPHAELITE STAINED GLASS 1870-1898
by William Waters
Seraphim Press, 404pp, £60 hb plus £7 p&p
quartoknows.com

Showcases the often-overlooked paintings of Mackintosh, James Herbert MacNair, and Margaret and Frances MacDonald, known by their contemporaries as ‘The Four’, an informal creative alliance who were instrumental in developing the Glasgow Style of decorative arts.

ECHOES OF VALHALLA: THE AFTERLIFE OF THE EDDAS AND THE SAGAS
by Jón Karl Helgason
Reaktion Books, 240pp, £16.95 hb
reaktionbooks.co.uk

A study of how during the last 150 years the Icelandic eddas and sagas have been reinvented and adapted in music, films, plays and comic books, from Wagner to Led Zeppelin and Ibsen to Peter Madsen, creator of the Valhall comic book series.

ODE TO FLOWERS: A CELEBRATION OF THE POETRY OF FLOWERS
by Samuel Carr
Batsford, 96pp, £9.99 hb
batsford.com

A diverse collection of poetry celebrating the beauty and symbolism of flowers, by authors who include Chaucer, Shakespeare, Coleridge, Tennyson, Whitman, Dickinson and Heaney, as well as less famous names.
How I came to Morris

ALEC HAMILTON

He came to me, rather: in 1970 it was difficult to escape him. Our first sofa, in our first house, was in 'Golden Lily', by Sanderson – a greeny/ginger colourway. (We had a ginger carpet too – zowie!) My wife had a makeup bag in something similar – 'Chrysanthemum', perhaps? Morris – suitably – seemed to be a sort of ground bass to our nice, safe, middle-class hippydom.

The next year he became serious: Gillian Naylor's 1971 *The Arts and Crafts Movement: a study of its sources, ideals and influence on design theory* established the canon, and placed William firmly at its apex. Though I knew nothing of that then.

In 1994 I wrote a one-man show about Warden Spooner – the Spoonerisms man except, he wasn't – but that's another story – and it had a joke in it about Morris. Spooner was a surprisingly sociable man, and I imagined him giving parties – at which odd couples met: in this case, William Morris the designer and William Morris the car maker. Spooner had them form the 'Carts and Rafts Movement'. Well, they could have met.

I sensed the Great Man looking down at me – disapproving or twinkling? I wondered.

In 2004 I was asked to write some visitor guides for Gloucester Cathedral. There, in the cloisters, is a Morris window. Actually, it's by 'poor old Dearle': I don't know why he seems always to be called that. It set me thinking about Arts & Crafts in churches – there's an amazing 1900 clock by Henry Wilson in the North transept, and about 20 other Arts & Crafts objects in the cathedral. But no-one goes to a medieval cathedral looking for Arts & Crafts – do they?

I started an MA on Charles Spooner – yes, Warden Spooner's cousin, as you're asking – an architect who designed ten churches. He was a friend of Morris's – and a member of the Hammersmith Socialist Society. He lived just along from Kelmscott House and Hammersmith Terrace, at Eyot Cottage, Chiswick. May Morris once lent him a guitar.

I went to VicSoc lectures at the Art Workers Guild. There was Morris. I went to Iceland to look at churches. There was Morris. I read lots of Arts & Crafts books and articles. There was Morris: his spirit, energy, poetry, skills, politics, beard, waistcoat, loom, breadth, multivalency. I kept reading that he was the 'Founder of the Arts & Crafts Movement' – when I knew he wasn't quite that. It wasn't founded for a start, and if it was, it wasn't by him; and it wasn't a movement, except to Cobden-Sanderson and Walter Crane, and, later, Ashbee. But he was the presiding spirit – more: he looked a bit like God, with the same omnipresence and, to some, omnipotence. He was almost too big to get around.

My DPhil was on 'Arts & Crafts in church-building in Britain 1884-1918'. Here I escaped him, to some extent – he never built a church, and I tried to shield my eyes from all that dazzling glass. Yes, the men of the Art Workers Guild all knew, revered, admired, and eventually mourned him; and some were followers, fans, even disciples. But he was strong meat for the mild-mannered architects I was working on – not just Spooner; but church-building men like Percy Currey, Charles Ponting, Edgar Wood, Arthur Keen and others. Men who were undemonstrative, un-theatrical, fugitive.

Like them, I found I could take him in small doses. It's enough, it's plenty.

WMS member Dr Alec Hamilton is currently crafting his DPhil into a book: *Arts & Crafts Churches*.
her annoyance over the title ‘The Red House’ and dislike of the modern conveniences, such as radiators and gas fires, which had now been installed. May and Patrick Rice became actively involved in an appeal to preserve Red House, with May urging him to gather local support. May wished ‘this monument of the beginning of modern English Art to be saved from destruction or neglect’.

Writing personally about her former home, May believed that, out of all Philip Webb’s buildings, Red House was ‘the jewel’ and it should have a useful purpose such as a school of art and handicraft. Ultimately, May’s wish came to fruition; the house was saved for the nation when the National Trust purchased Red House in 2003.

Minstrel with Cymbals will feature in the May Morris exhibition at the William Morris Gallery this October.

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

MINSTREL WITH CYMBALS
Curator Helen Elletson writes about an embroidery on linen donated by Pamela and Elizabeth Rice in memory of Patrick Rice

This beautiful embroidery, designed and stitched by May Morris, was adapted from a stained glass window by her father. May changed the colour scheme to delicate silvery shades, altered the background foliage, and added the patterned tiling which is picked out with gold thread. It is rare example of a figurative embroidery by May’s hand. A stained glass version of Minstrel with Cymbals, originally from Dilton church, can be seen at the William Morris Gallery and there are several others in churches up and down the country.

The Society is fortunate to have a fascinating ten-year provenance to this object as a small archive was donated along with the embroidery. Mr Patrick Rice, owner of Minstrel with Cymbals, began an interesting correspondence with May in 1925 when alerting her to his purchase of her embroidery. They shared similar interests including the preservation of Red House. In one letter, May expresses
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