



Magazine

Summer 2018





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Front cover

Portrait of Jenny Morris pastel on paper c1890s,
© William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest



Welcome

It is four years since members elected me Chair of the Society at its AGM in 2014. Although there is no term limit for serving as Chair, I consider it time to step down and by the time you read this the Society will have a new Chair. It has been a huge privilege to serve as the Society's Chair, especially during a period that has seen the Society both celebrate its sixtieth anniversary and undergo some profound changes. The *Magazine* you have in your hands is one of them.

Morris was a polymath and amongst his greatest and most enduring achievements are those of designer and maker. The Society reflected that heritage in its sixtieth anniversary new visual identity produced for us by Pentagram and now incorporated across all our visual media. In a way it is a metaphor for the way the Society has evolved, expanded, and grown in confidence. The *Magazine* has regularly reported on these changes but it is worth reflecting on the scale and influence of some of them. The Arts & Crafts Hammersmith partnership with the Emery Walker Trust, which finishes at the end of this year, has provided much needed investment into both the premises at Kelmscott House and our ability to display our collection, improve accessibility to it digitally, develop our outreach work and provide us with the capacity to engage in partnerships in the future.

This sense of confidence has been reflected in some of the projects that the Society has been involved in, from Jeremy Deller's *Morris/Warhol* exhibition in 2015 – which was the most popular exhibition ever staged by Modern Art Oxford – to the symposium held with the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity on *The Nature of Prosperity* in February, which attracted over 200 participants. Ken Worpole's report of the event starts on p22. There has been a noticeable increase in both new members joining – over 100 in the past twelve months – and interest in becoming a Trustee, with contested elections in the last two years. This is the core of the Society's strength: it is a bottom-up organisation created and developed by its members. Of course we are very grateful for support from outside agencies including the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and the Heritage Lottery Fund, but ultimately the unique characteristic of the Society is its democratic base and the willingness of its members to volunteer at Kelmscott House, arrange events, write articles for the *Magazine* and *Journal*, speak about what Morris means to them in their communities and workplaces, and contribute financially.

With greater ambition and profile – people I meet often assume the Society is far bigger than it actually is – comes greater expenditure. We live in times when continuing public-sector support cannot be taken for granted, and the charity sector as a whole is under scrutiny, with self-inflicted wounds, political pressures, and declining memberships for many; we are very much an exception in bucking membership trends. None of this is going to make the next few years easy. But I am confident that our new President Lord Tom Sawyer whom Stephen Williams interviews – commencing on page 12 – will be a great support in helping the Society navigate these currents successfully.

I am very grateful for all the support I have received over the past few years from fellow Trustees, our staff Helen Elletson and Cathy De'Freitas, our volunteers who do an incredible range of jobs, our retiring President Jan Marsh who has been such a great ambassador, and all of our members for their support and feedback. It has been hard work at times but I am sure my successor will enjoy it as much as I have.

Martin Stott, Retiring Chair

Lovers Listening to Music by
Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Eleanor
Siddal, pencil, pen and ink
on paper c.1854, Wightwick
Manor © National Trust





Lizzie Siddal: ‘her surprising talents – shown in verse as well as drawing’

Curator Hannah Squire on the background to Wightwick Manor’s *Beyond Ophelia* exhibition

As part of Wightwick Manor’s *Art and Activism* theme celebrating the centenary of the partial enfranchisement of women, I chose to curate an exhibition of Lizzie Siddal’s work. I have admired her art and been inspired by her story since I first volunteered at Wightwick Manor as a teenager, but during my research was appalled to discover that so little of her work was on display in public galleries and that there had only ever been one solo exhibition of her work: at the Ruskin Gallery, Sheffield, in 1991, curated by Jan Marsh.

From the 1870s the Mander family of Wightwick Manor were vocal supporters of women’s suffrage and fought in parliament for women’s rights. After they gave the house to the National Trust they collected the work of eleven professional female artists, more than is held by any other National Trust property, to be exhibited publicly at Wightwick.

Traditionally there has been rather less interest from museums and collectors in art created by women. Yet in 1961, the biographer Rosalie Glynn Grylls (Lady Mander), together with her husband, Sir Geoffrey, bought for Wightwick a large collection of Lizzie Siddal’s artworks at auction. Jeremy Maas recalled the purchase: ‘One day at Sotheby’s I spotted a parcel of beautiful drawings by Lizzie Siddal, with an estimate, I believe, of about £5. To my (and his) astonishment I was outbid for them by an elderly and distinguished-looking gentleman at about £120, thus creating a world record for her work... He, Sir Geoffrey Mander, asked his wife, Lady Mander (Rosalie Glynn Grylls), to seek out the unexpected underbidder to enquire his

interest. Most generously they offered to let me buy six of the drawings. One of them, ‘The Lady of Shalott’, is in the Tate Gallery exhibition of 1984 (no 198). Thus it was that I met the first of that redoubtable band of ladies who were to contribute so much to pre-Raphaelite studies in the 1960s and 70s!'

Lady Mander corresponded with many descendants of the Pre-Raphaelites to learn more about the artists, including Helen Rossetti-Angeli. The niece of Lizzie Siddal and Rossetti, Rossetti-Angeli loaned two of Siddal’s gouaches to the Manders, which were later acquired for Wightwick, and are on display in the exhibition.

Wightwick has the second largest public collection of Siddal’s art works, all twelve of which have been framed for display together for the first time, along with pieces of her poetry. Only the second solo exhibition of her work, *Beyond Ophelia* celebrates an artist and poet whose beauty is praised but whose work has been underestimated and overlooked. Lizzie Siddal is remembered as an artist’s model but her work as an artist in her own right has been largely forgotten. The focus of this exhibition is Siddal’s perseverance to achieve professional status as an artist, and her artistic and poetic output: to get beyond Millais’ famous painting of her as Ophelia and the drama surrounding her death.

Born a woman, lower class, with no money of her own, and lacking family connections in the art world, Lizzie’s chances of becoming a professional artist were not promising and her choice of career very unusual.

The notion that women could be artists was



Above: Geoffrey and Rosalie Mander and their children John and Anthea in Wightwick's library, 1940s

Left: Detail of the *Beyond Ophelia* exhibition showing the specially commissioned frame created to display four of Siddal's drawings

Below: *The Haunted Wood* by Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Eleanor Siddal, gouache on paper 1856, Wightwick Manor © National Trust



debated by John Ruskin and other critics at that time. Art institutions in the nineteenth century offered very limited access to women, and in some cases entirely excluded women from attending. The Royal Academy, the pinnacle of British artistic training in the Victorian era, provided its male artists with opportunities to exhibit their work and find buyers for it. It was not until 1860, two years before Siddal's death, that Laura Herford was unwittingly admitted to the RA Schools after submitting drawings with only her initials, LH. Most women resorted to private tuition, which was very costly and not something Lizzie would have been able to afford. She needed to earn a living, through dressmaking.

Lizzie met the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood while working for the artistic Deverell family as a dressmaker. As Jan Marsh, in video content she created for the exhibition, explains: 'the story is she was spotted in a milliner's shop and plucked from obscurity like a Cinderella figure. I think this is something of a romantic fiction. The inference is that she had artistic aspirations of her own all the way through.'

Initially Siddal worked as a paid model for the Pre-Raphaelite painters, which crucially gave her access to their studios. She became Dante Gabriel Rossetti's pupil, gained the patronage of Ruskin, exhibited her work alongside Ford

Madox Brown and enrolled in classes at Sheffield Art School. Lizzie actively sought out the art world and a professional status.

Lizzie had no consistent art training in figure drawing, but her study of medieval manuscripts and early Italian art inspired her own expressive, distinctive, naïve style, creating a deliberate awkwardness in her figures. This fitted with the PRB's belief that natural talent, imagination and innovation were the most important attributes of an artist, and should not be corrupted by conventional ideas about art.

The modest scale of Lizzie's art can be considered to reflect the restrictions of her position, without a studio of her own. With only

Right: *St Cecilia* by Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Eleanor Siddal, pencil, pen and brown ink on paper c1850s, Wightwick Manor © National Trust

Below: *Sister Helen* by Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Eleanor Siddal, pencil, pen and brown ink on paper c1860, Wightwick Manor © National Trust

a short working life of just over a decade – she died in her early thirties from a laudanum overdose – her drawings and paintings are imaginative and original, challenging the way women were represented in art by her male contemporaries.

The drawings in the exhibition show that Siddal's women are not the sensual, beautiful objects of masculine pleasure, depicted by the male Pre-Raphaelites. Siddal draws powerful, expressive female figures in different guises: whether as the Madonna attentive to her child; the vengeful witch Sister Helen; or the lover listening to music. Their bodies are almost columns of fabric, their heads and arms the focus of emotion. It is through the expressive nature of their hands whether clasped or outstretched, and their faces bowed in agony, thrown back in ecstasy or attentively watching an infant, that their characters are primarily expressed. The focus on the hands and heads of women – the loci of action and thought – suggests Siddal's consideration of how she, and women generally, should be judged.

For example, in *Sister Helen*, the betrayed woman seeking revenge through witchcraft, fallen to her knees, with her head bowed, clutches her throat in solemn agony at the loss of her soul. The focus of the drawing is Helen's emotional onslaught, but Siddal does not draw Helen as hysterical or villainous; she has sympathy for the torture Helen is going through.

Wightwick's collection consists of multiple drawings of the same themes, that show Siddal experimenting with her compositions. Three sketches of *St Cecilia* were bought by the Manders. Lizzie began working on sketches for *St Cecilia* in 1855. These drawings were designs for a book illustration to accompany Tennyson's poem *The Palace of Art* in which he describes a palace full of scenes from art, including an angel appearing to St Cecilia. In these sketches Lizzie suggests that art is an endeavour separate from the outside world and compares the devotion to art with that to religion. Although she never received commissions, these drawings identify Siddal as a professional artist, seizing commercial opportunities for her career. Rosalie Glynn Grylls wrote of them 'strangely good, they are not copies of his own (Rossetti) nor under his influence'.²

Comparing Rossetti's *St Cecilia* illustration for *The Palace of Art*, in the Manders' copy of Moxon's illustrated edition of Tennyson's poems, with Siddal's earlier drawings of the same theme, it is easy to see the inspiration Rossetti gained from Siddal. The pose of his *St Cecilia* with her head thrown back, eyes closed in ecstasy, and her hands resting on the organ pipes, is inspired by Siddal's earlier drawings of the saint. Rossetti, however, brings the angel and saint together in a sensual embrace. Gabriel had suggested that Lizzie should contribute illustrations to the new edition, and she worked on sketches for *St Cecilia*, *Sir Galahad* and *St*



Agnes' Eve, although her work was not used. Lizzie's work has been described as an imitation of Rossetti's, but as *St Cecilia* attests Rossetti drew inspiration from her work. The exhibition explores the influence Siddal's unique style had on Rossetti's art, suggesting the mutual exchange of ideas between them. Historically, female artists have rarely received recognition for their own art. They have frequently been accused of being derivative of their male tutors, or their work has been described as being only in part created by them with the hand of a male artist involved, and at the worst their work has been entirely reattributed to male artists.



'I care not for my Lady's soul
Though I worship before her smile'³

Siddal's poetry is even less known than her art, and deals with similar themes of lost love and death. Although Lizzie exhibited her art, her poetry was never published during her lifetime. I wanted to incorporate her voice into the exhibition, and I took inspiration from Geoffrey Mander, who added quotes from writers popular in the nineteenth century to walls around the Manor.

I feel proud of the Manders for amassing this collection of Siddal's work in order everyone to enjoy her art. She deserves to be remembered as a talented, professional artist and poet, and an important member of the Pre-Raphaelite circle. *Beyond Ophelia* celebrates her artistic output and aims to reinstate her as an artist in her own right.

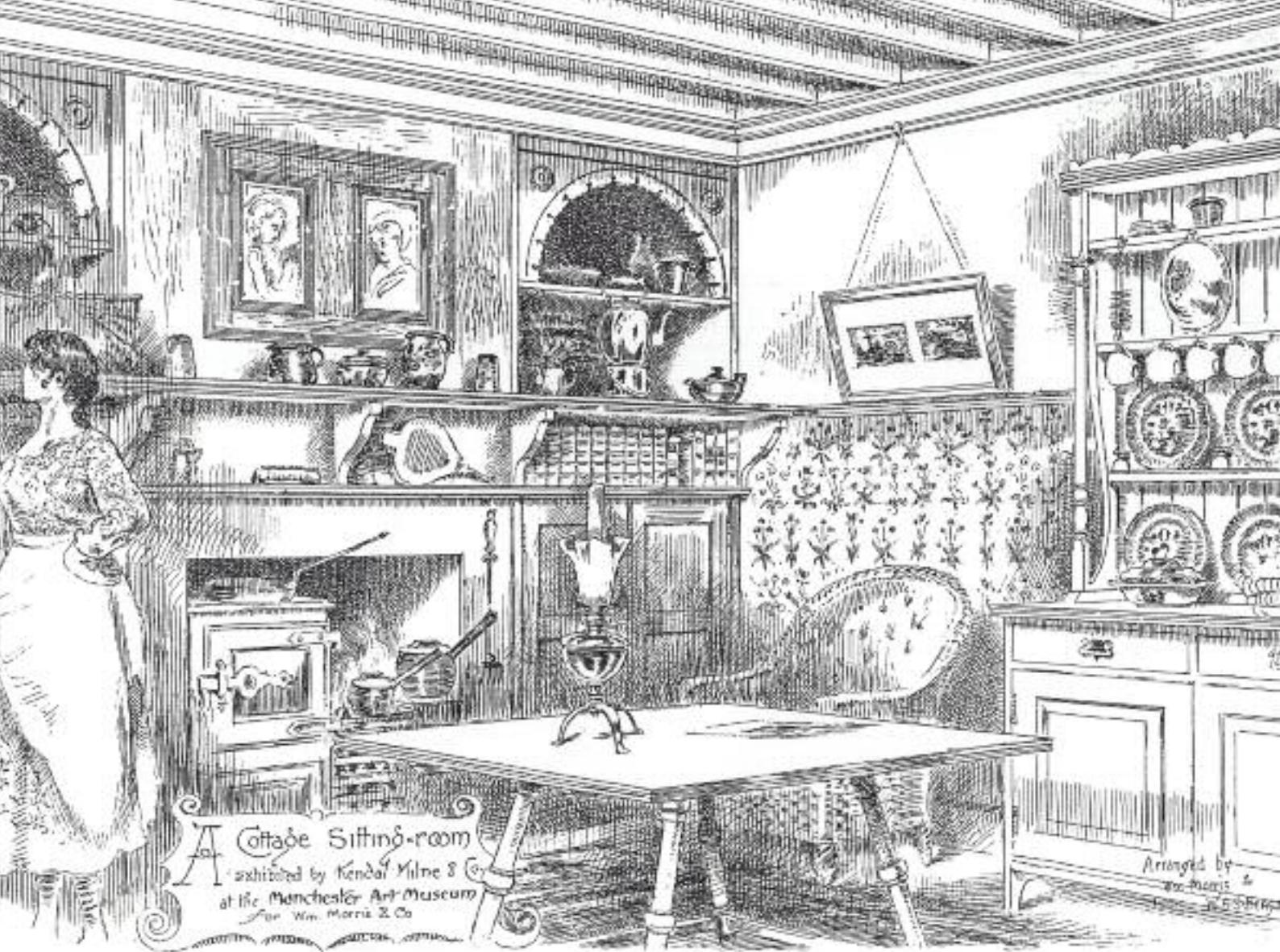
Hannah Squire is a postgraduate art historian and Conservation Assistant at Wightwick Manor, soon to be National Public Programming Assistant Curator for the National Trust.

Beyond Ophelia continues at Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton until 24 December:
nationaltrust.org.uk/wightwick-manor-and-gardens

1 Jeremy Maas, *The Pre-Raphaelites: A Personal View in Pre-Raphaelite Papers*, ed. Leslie Parris, (London: Tate Gallery, 1984)

2 Rosalie Glynn Grylls, *Portrait of Rossetti* (Macdonald & Co, 1964) – as is the quote used in the title

3 From Lizzie Siddal's poem *The Lust of the Eyes*



The Small House

Godfrey Rubens tells of an educational display of furnishings created by WAS Benson

The story of this exhibit, which occupied two rooms in Manchester's Art Museum (also known as the Horsfall Museum or the Ancoats Museum), starts with a letter to William Morris from Thomas Horsfall, a devout and wealthy philanthropist who passionately believed in the power of art to ameliorate and educate Manchester's working class. Horsfall was inspired by the teachings of John Ruskin and his proposed Sheffield Museum and in 1877 had written at length to Ruskin setting out what he planned to do: 'The plan... is, to take... a warehouse with some well-lighted walls. On these I would hang, first the life of Christ, told by the copies published by the Arundel Society, as far as can be made to tell it and with the gaps left by them, filled by copies made especially for us. Under the whole series the same history would be told in words, and under each picture there would be a full explanation.' He also wanted to display landscape paintings: 'They should be so painted that, if rocks are seen, it may be easy to

know what kind of rocks they are... if trees, what kind of trees.'¹ Ruskin published the letter but Horsfall did not secure the use of Ancoats Hall, in a suburb of Manchester, for the Museum until 1884.

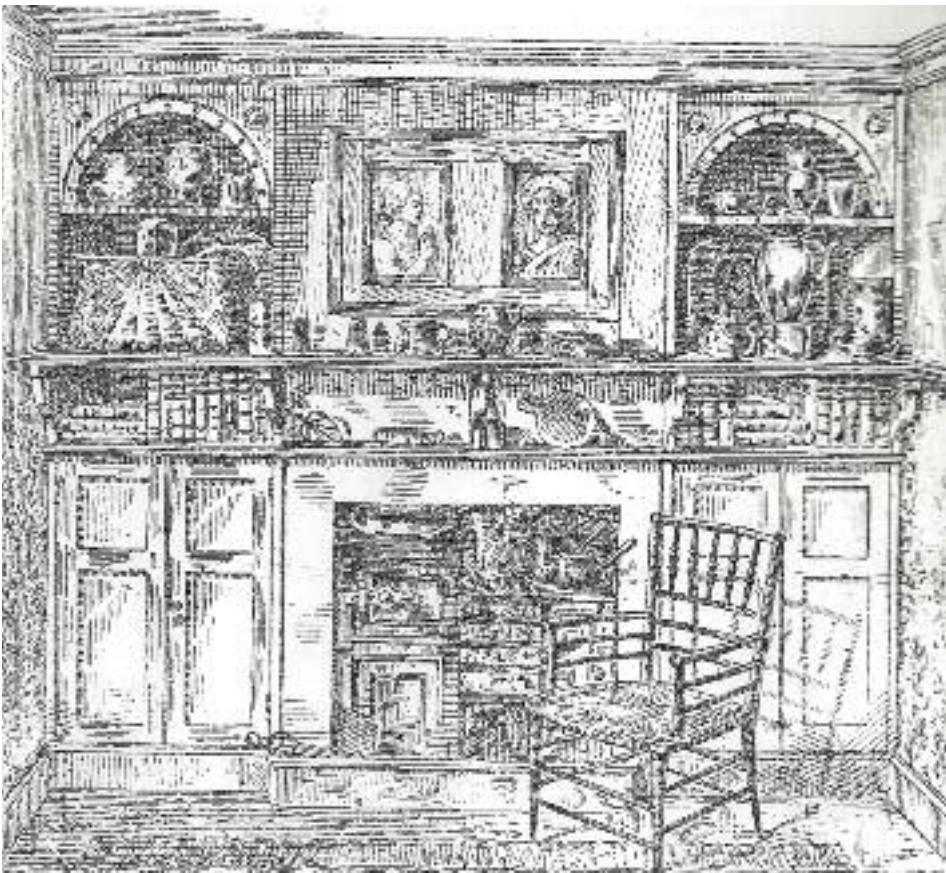
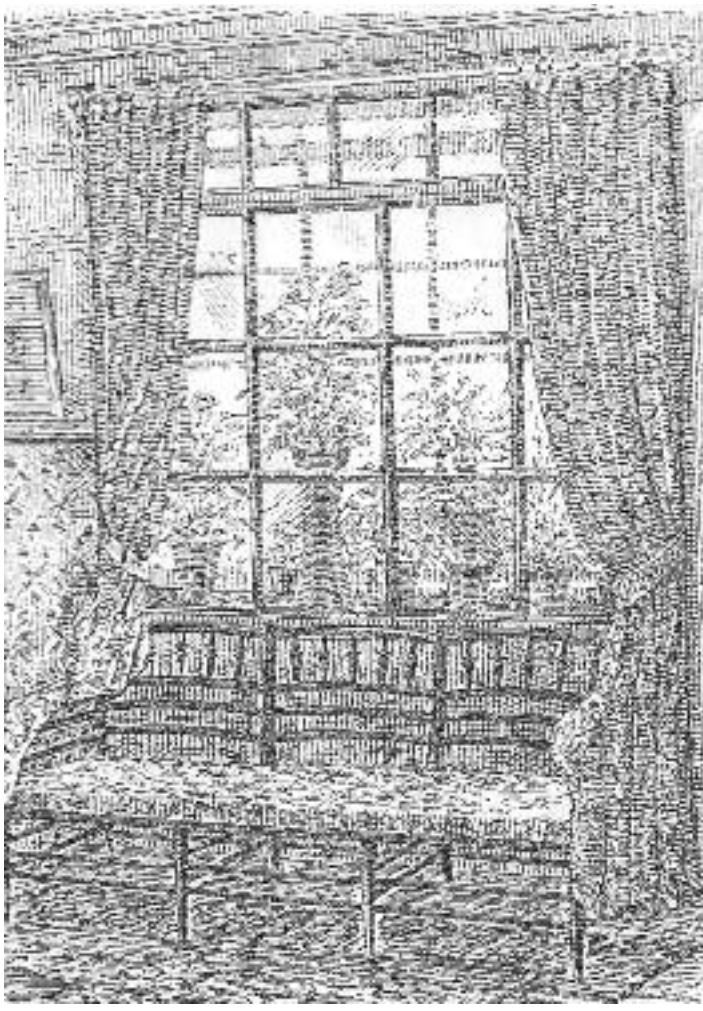
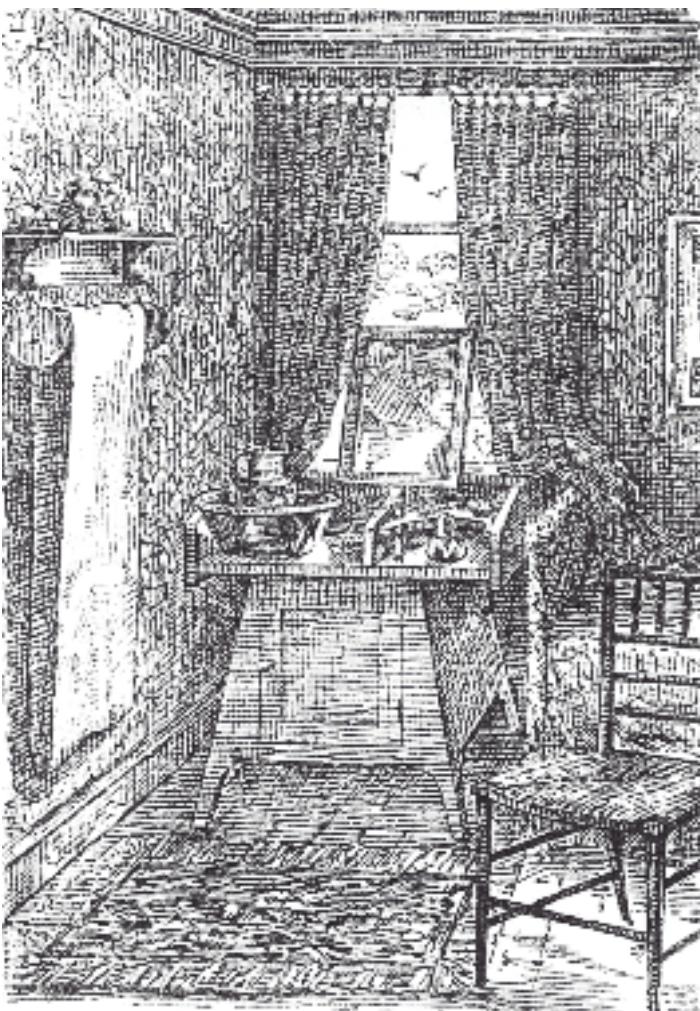
Early in 1881 Horsfall wrote about his plan to Morris, who replied, 'I am glad you are going on with your scheme of a Museum. I should be glad to help in any way; but I think you have got hold of the wrong end of the stick in 2 cases. First as to the workmen's model cottage – I'm sure it won't do. In the first place, there is no furniture fit for him (or indeed for a swine of discretion) to buy; in the next what furniture a workman can buy should be exactly the same (if his room be big enough) as the lord buys. I will have nothing to do with anything however good the intention which to my mind tends to keep up the division of men into classes; we shall have neither art nor anything else till we have got rid of that nuisance. If you will alter "workman's cottage" into "small house" I will do what I can... .

and the passage can stand, but otherwise out it must come.'²

Morris's support included a promise to write 'a brief explanation of the principles on which the patterns of some of the textile fabrics shown in the school collections are designed'.³ This note has not been traced, but may have covered the ground set out in Morris' lecture *Textile Fabrics*, delivered in 1884.

In another letter to Horsfall, Morris wrote 'If you must give a £78 man advise about his house, it had better be to keep it as clean as a new pin, not to have much carpet, and stick up on his walls any engravings he really likes and do a little window gardening'.⁴

Morris, being entirely occupied in 'spread(ing) discontent' turned the job of creating the 'small house' over to his young associate William Arthur Smith Benson (1854–1924), known as 'Brass Benson'. He had been articled to the architect Basil Champneys, but does not seem to have had much aptitude for



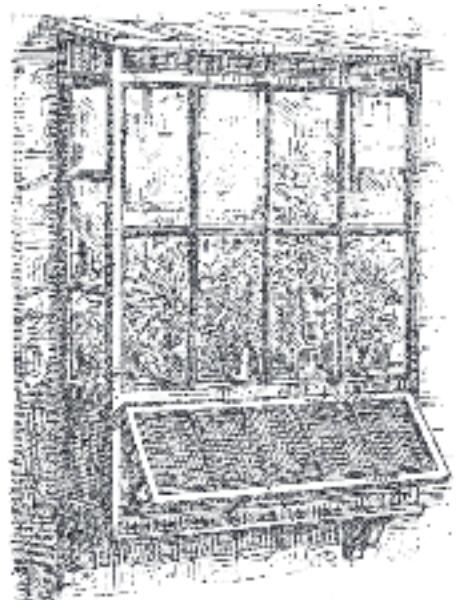
Opposite: 'A Cottage Sitting Room'

Top left: The bedroom with its controversial washstand

Top right: The living room window

Left: The living room wall designed by Benson

Below: The garden window

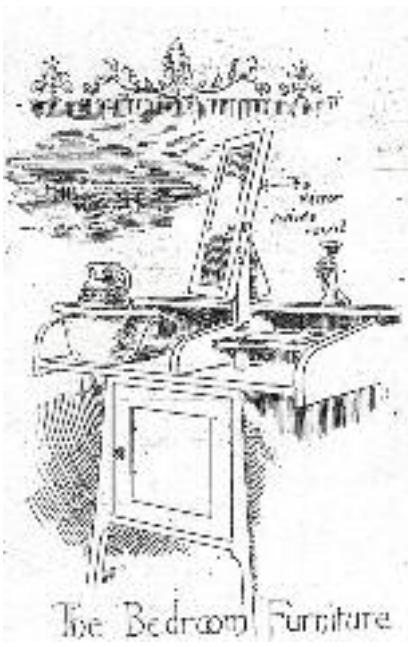


building design. A chance encounter with Burne-Jones had brought him into the Morris circle, and with their encouragement he had set up a manufactory producing domestic articles in

copper and bronze. He later became a partner in the Morris firm.

In the 'small house' Benson designed the garden window, the living room wall – with a

stove which was probably supplied by the Coalbrookdale Company – and saw to the arrangement of the two rooms. He chose the furniture from Morris & Co stock, with the



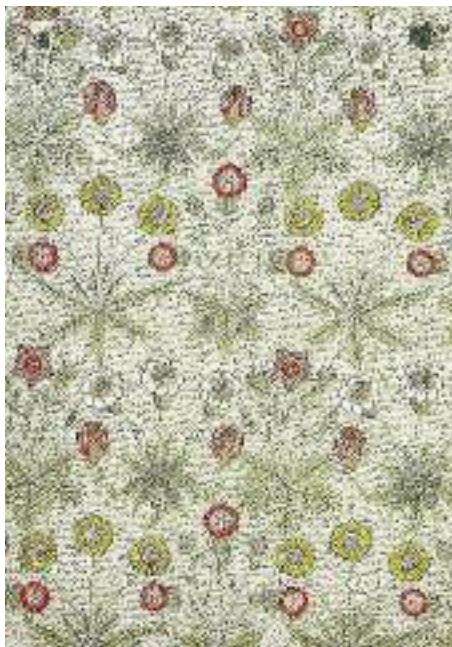
The Bedroom Furniture

exception of the table and dresser which probably came from Kendal, Milne & Co, who were Morris's agents in Manchester and described as 'carpet men, cabinet furniture manufacturers, general house furnishers etc'. It is likely that the woodwork wall containing the grate was also made by Kendal, Milne & Co. The two table lamps were of standard Benson manufacture.

Attached to the model house was this notice, presumably written by Horsfall: 'It is announced as intended to show that small homes can be made much pleasanter to the eye and more attractive than such homes generally are, and to place before working men patterns of furniture which they could easily make for themselves in their leisure hours'.⁵ But the only piece of furniture from those exhibited that the 'working man' could conceivably make was the washstand and even that would not have been easy. Help would come from a different quarter in the form of a pamphlet misnamed *Cabinet Making*, commissioned by Harry Peach of Dryad Handicrafts and written by William Lethaby, later republished as *Simple Furniture*.

The garden window was described by J Williams Benn. 'Before stepping indoors, a capital outside window deserves examination. (The drawing) will show its general appearance. It is supposed to be made as a separate article by any artizan or joiner, so that it can be placed over an ordinary flat window. The advantages claimed for it are, that it solves the problem of obtaining ventilation without the nuisance of draught, and affords, at the same time the pleasures of a miniature conservatory. The small upper and lower panels or openings are covered with scrim, so that air is constantly admitted while the dust is kept out, and thus the atmosphere can be distilled, so to speak before it reaches the window garden or the interior of the dwelling... in addition to giving sweet air and flowers its presence over a flat window relieves the exterior of the house'.⁶

Of the living room Raffles Davison, who also saw the rooms, wrote 'The rafters and ceiling are painted ivory white, as is also the upper surface



Far left: The washstand as depicted by Raffles Davison
Middle left: Fragment of Morris's Daisy wallpaper
Left: Thomas Coglan Horsfall c1910
Below: The Manchester Art Museum, courtesy of Manchester Libraries
Bottom: Lamp designed by Benson, as depicted in the drawing of A Cottage Sitting Room'



of the wall. The walls below the dado are covered with a printed paper in reds, browns, and greens, on a cream ground' ie Morris & Co's *Daisy* wallpaper. 'The woodwork framing to the recesses and overmantle cupboards and dado mould is painted dark green. The framework to the little low-relief plaster panels over the fireplace is in baywood. The sideboard is painted white and the table is in oak. The floor is stained dark.'

Benn hated the bedroom washstand: 'The looking-glass is so awkwardly placed that – notwithstanding its swivel action – it is most likely to collide with the head of the washer... It is evident that economy of space was the first consideration in the design of this simple little article, but is that any reason why the top should be specially contrived to harbor soap-suds and dirt... The desire to produce something altogether different from the old and well-tried trade models has led the designer into producing a dirt-promoting, inconvenient and disagreeable looking thing'.⁷

Raffles Davison described the same piece as 'a very handy piece of furniture' and provided a drawing of it. The design had originally been invented in the 1860s by Ford Madox Brown for Red House: such was its popularity that the Firm continued to sell it for years after.

While Benn wrote 'Does this exhibit solve the problem – How to furnish a cottage artistically at small cost? – I regretfully think not'.⁸ Davison was more sanguine: 'No exhibited example of the art of furnishing has come nearer to the spending capacity of the lower middle class than that now set up in the new Art museum at Manchester... The whole exhibit is about the most sensible and suggestive the public has seen, and if the meaning and purpose of it is clear to them, much good should result'.¹⁰



Godfrey Rubens is an art historian and painter, biographer of Lethaby and a long-time member of the VMS.

- 1 John Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera* letter 81 (Lovel & Co, 1887) p114
- 2 Norman Kelvin, ed, *The Collected Letters of William Morris* vol II, letter 671, 9 February 1881
- 3 Thomas Coglan Horsfall, *The Study of Beauty and Art in Large Towns. Two papers, ... with an introduction by John Ruskin* (London; Manchester: Macmillan & Co, 1883)
- 4 Kelvin, letter 673, February 1881
- 5 Ibid
- 6 J Williams Benn, *The Cabinet Maker & Art Furnisher* 1885. Being unaware that Morris had little or nothing to do with the exhibit, Benn uses some quotations from Morris to criticise the 'house'.
- 7 Ibid
- 8 Thomas Raffles Davison, *The British Architect*, 21 November 1884, p246
- 9 Benn
- 10 Davison



Towards *The Ideal Book*

Fiona Rose examines the Society's long relationship with the bookseller Blackwell's

This spring saw the launch of a partnership between The William Morris Society and Blackwell's, the largest academic and specialist bookseller in the UK; for the first time giving the Society a respected online platform through which to sell its publications worldwide. The Society has a dedicated page on Blackwell's website: a selling platform that receives around 500,000 visits a month. In January, a display about Morris filled the window of Blackwell's Art Shop and our membership information appeared in Blackwell's in Broad Street – both in Oxford – and in Heffers in Cambridge. The company's relationship with the Society, however, extends back much further than the age of online shopping. More than sixty years ago Blackwell's distributed publicity leaflets for the newly formed Society and Basil Blackwell – son

of the company's founder – was its President for eleven years, and a life member.

Blackwell's first opened for business on 1 January 1879, in a small room twelve feet square at 50 Broad Street, opposite the Bodleian in Oxford. The company's founder, Benjamin Henry Blackwell (1849-1924), was not the first Blackwell in Oxford; his father, also named Benjamin Henry, was the city's first librarian following the establishment of Oxford's public library in 1854.¹

Benjamin Henry senior was teetotal and involved with the local Temperance Society which promoted self-education and encouraged reading as well as religion, having separate rooms for non-alcoholic refreshment and silent reading.² The second BH Blackwell's earnest desire was that his shop be primarily a place for

self-improvement: a facility where all, be they Gown or Town, came and read under the same roof. As Mr Blackwell's shop grew so did his reputation. A local newspaper summed up his contribution: 'Many men will aver that the greatest educative influence of Oxford resides neither in the Bodleian, nor schools, nor tutors, nor lectures... but in the excellent management and most liberal facilities of one of the best bookshops in the world – Mr Blackwell's'.³

The third BH Blackwell was Benjamin's son Basil Henry, who was the first Blackwell to go to university, gaining a scholarship to Oxford's Merton College. Basil joined the family firm in 1913 and one of his first initiatives was to expand the business's publishing ventures. After his father's death in 1924 he became chair of BH Blackwell Ltd and had to concentrate on the



Left: The WMS display at Heffers (Blackwell's), Cambridge.
Above: The WMS display at Blackwell's Art Shop, Oxford.
Right: Basil Blackwell in his office above Broad Street Shop, Oxford, late 1950s.
Far right: Blackwells Broad Street, Oxford.

business of selling books which he did somewhat reluctantly, his main passions being selling antiquarian books and publishing. In 1925 to 1926 he was President of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association and in 1956 he was bestowed with a knighthood, the first to someone in the book trade.⁴ At Blackwell's Basil pioneered a series of cheaper books, from a one-volume Shakespeare to '3/6 novels', with the aim that everyone should have access to literature. Basil also wanted to preserve fine printing and together with Adrian Mott he saved the Shakespeare Head Press from bankruptcy⁵ and published a complete version of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, well-known classics such as the *Pilgrim's Progress* and works by the Brontë sisters. Under his leadership the family firm would grow into a bookselling and publishing empire, known throughout the world.

Asa Briggs, The William Morris Society President from 1978 to 1991, noted that Basil was a great reader who gave reading as his recreation in *Who's Who* and was keenly interested in the relationship between the book as a saleable commodity and the book as a work of art.⁶ Basil's interest in William Morris began at an early age: he chose *The Earthly Paradise* as a school prize. It was, Basil wrote, 'a happy choice, for the idle singer enchanted me for many an empty day and led me to explore his prose romances (good reading in youth!) and so to an event of cardinal importance in my life – the reading of one of the best biographies in our literature, Mackail's *Life of William Morris*.⁷ As an adult, Basil sought acquaintance with

Morris's daughter May who was then living at Kelmscott Manor, quite near to his own home in Appleton. Basil recalled fondly his first meeting with May as, 'that happy day when I found her in knickerbockers, pruning the vine at Kelmscott'. But upon closer observation he noted a figure touched by sadness: 'hers was a face of noble and austere beauty, somewhat haggard, with eyebrows set at an angle reminiscent of a Greek tragic mask and suggesting some sad and painful happening in her life. I remember her form as tall and slender, moving with dignity, and clad in garments of rich design and of a fashion that was her own'. He also noted May's almost overwhelming devotion to her father's memory: 'her appearance and her bearing were apt to a sense of dedication which her conversation constantly revealed; for the words "My Father" were ever on her lips. It was manifest that her life was devoted to keeping her father's memory not only green but dynamic'.⁹ Basil went further: 'in the end I began to regret that in her devotion to her father's memory she had almost completely submerged her own genius. She would remind me of a spellbound princess...captive of her father's memory, and she had, as it were to complete the tapestry of it before the spell could be broken... it is the measure of May Morris's achievement that Morris had remained an inspiration and a household word to this day'.¹⁰ However, as their friendship deepened, Basil began to appreciate May in her own right and he thought highly of her lecturing, writing, and editing skills as well as her abilities as, 'an accomplished embroidress... and the virtual

leader of craftswomen in England, founding the Women's Guild of Art'.

In 1934 Basil wrote to May asking 'if any scrap of her father's writing should still be unpublished, we might help to commemorate his centenary by printing it handsomely at the Shakespeare Head Press on the hand-press which once had been part of the equipment of the Kelmscott Press'.¹¹ May's response was swift: a heavy parcel arrived in Basil's office 'set down upon the floor with a thump' by a breathless porter. The parcel contained upwards of 500,000 words accompanied by a letter in May's beautiful script, thanking him for the proposal and explaining the text was the remains of her father's writings which had not appeared in book form. Basil set about finding a publisher but to no avail and the voluminous parcel remained on his bookshelf.

A year passed and feeling guilty, he visited Kelmscott Manor to persuade May to select from the writings. Basil met with dismay and hesitancy. When leaving, an invitation by May's friend and companion Mary Lobb to show him the inside of the village's William Morris Memorial Hall, came as welcome relief. Basil reminisced that he had 'more kindly memories of Miss Lobb (*than some*)... and never heard her speak an improper word' but what he had not bargained for were Mary's firm powers of persuasion. Pinned by her against the Memorial Hall stage, 'her legs a-straddle and her arms akimbo', he was faced with a 'storm of eloquence': 'Look here, you are worrying May, and I won't have her worried. You've got to



publish all that stuff. Don't think I care a snap for the writings, I hate old William Morris – dreadful old bore – but I'll not have May worried. You go home and write *tonight* telling her you will publish *everything*.¹² The Chairman of Blackwell's was no match for this former land girl: everything did get published by Basil a few years later.¹³ Basil remained friends with May, and presumably Mary Lobb too, visiting her at Kelmscott Manor six months before she died, where he had a premonition: 'before the year was out I stood at her grave. The chapter was finished, and the book closed; William Morris had passed into legend'.¹⁴

In 1955, Basil began a relationship with the newly-formed William Morris Society that would span almost three decades. His involvement commenced with Blackwell's distributing publicity information about the new organisation.¹⁵ In 1958 he gave a lecture for the Society at Exeter College, Oxford reminiscing about May Morris.¹⁶ He became the Society's President in 1967, a role he would assume until his retirement in 1978 when he was made a life member.¹⁷ Generous with his time and advice, Basil also collaborated on several publications with the Society. In 1966 he wrote the foreword for *Morris As I Knew Him* by George Bernard Shaw, a special publication issued to members to commemorate the first ten years of the Society.¹⁸ In 1983 he worked enthusiastically on its publication *William Morris's Printing Press*, autographing copies of the special edition only weeks before his death. Morris's own 1835 Albion Press, that stands today in the Emberton

Print Room, was restored and donated to the Society by Basil.

Blackwell's association with the Society also stretches across the Atlantic to our sister organisation, the William Morris Society in the United States. Jack Walsdorf (1941-2017), a former President of the Society in the US, worked for Blackwell's for thirty-one years, his last position being Vice President of Academic Sales in America. Jack's career with Blackwell's began following a library exchange programme at the Oxford City Library. During his fifteen months in Oxford Jack struck up an acquaintance with Basil Blackwell, who would share stories with him about Morris and his friendship with May. Basil also showed Jack his own copy of the *Kelmscott Chaucer* that he kept on a stand in his library. Jack said that he 'fell under the influence of both Sir Basil Blackwell and William Morris' and started collecting Kelmscott Press and other Morris books, a hobby that continued for the next fifty years. His fourth collection, amassed four years before he died, contained twenty-six books from the Kelmscott Press.¹⁹

Blackwell was not the only well-known Morris admirer Jack met while in Oxford. Jack sent a copy of *The Hobbit* to JRR Tolkien to inscribe, Jack's colleagues at the library telling him this was an unheard-of practice. Weeks later Jack heard a knock at the door of his flat: there stood Professor Tolkien, the signed book in his hand, and delivering a letter thanking him for his interest, together with the stamps Jack had enclosed for the book's return.²⁰

Fiona Rose is a Trustee of the WMS and Chair of the Society's Business Development Committee.

The Society's publications can be viewed and purchased via the Society's page on the Blackwell's website: www.blackwells.co.uk/williammorris

- 1 Rita Ricketts, ed, *A Moment in Time: Blackwell's at the Bodleian: An exhibition of selected editions of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: Celebrating 125 years of service to scholarship by 'Blackwell's of the Broad'*. January-February 2004, (Oxford: Bodleian Library in association with Blackwell's, 2004) pp. 5-11
- 2 https://blackwells.co.uk/bookshop/editorial/services/about_blackwells.jsp
- 3 Ricketts, pp5-11
- 4 Martin Crick, *The History of the William Morris Society 1955-2005*, (Nottingham: Russell Press, 2011), p103
- 5 Ibid, p103
- 6 Asa Briggs, *Obituary of Sir Basil Blackwell*, *Journal of William Morris Studies*, Summer 1984
- 7 Rita Ricketts, *International Dateline – Earthly Paradise, Against the Grain*, November 2010, p.90
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- 14 Ricketts, p92
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- 16 Ibid, p35
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- 20 Ibid



Left: Tom Sawyer 2018
Below: Tom Sawyer
(foreground) at Robert
Stephenson and
Hawthorns, Darlington,
1962

Tom Sawyer

Stephen Williams interviews the Society's new President

It was almost inevitable that Tom Sawyer, the Society's new President, would start out his working life in engineering, having been born in the heavily industrialised railway town of Darlington in May 1943. Apprenticed as a locomotive fitter at the famous factory of Stephenson Hawthorn, Tom left the north-east in 1963, following redundancy, to work for Lockhead Brakes in Leamington Spa. Here Tom was active in the engineering trade union where he developed an interest in political questions facing the labour movement. In these years his passion for reading also began, including an introduction to William Morris's social and political writings. A move back to Darlington to work at Chrysler Cummins engine works in the late 1960s was followed by full time employment as an organiser with the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) in 1971.

The 1970s were vibrant years for NUPE with significant membership growth, involvement in major industrial disputes, and the emergence of women activists. These events had a major influence on Tom, helping to shape his belief in the need for unified industrial and political action and organisational reform within the union to encourage the participation of its overwhelmingly female membership.

Promotion to the post of deputy general secretary of NUPE in 1981 took Tom to London where he worked alongside his friend Rodney Bickerstaffe, who became general secretary. On

behalf of NUPE, Tom played an important role on the Labour Party's national executive, becoming its chairman in 1990.

The merger of NUPE and two other public service trade unions into UNISON in 1993 coincided with the post of Labour party general secretary becoming vacant, a new challenge Tom was keen to accept. Tom takes great pride that he was with the Labour Party during its election victory in 1997.

Tom has been a member of the House of Lords since 1998. He was Chancellor of the

University of Teesside from 2005 until 2017. He is the first President of the Society to come from the labour movement.

Stephen Williams What was your first encounter with William Morris?

Tom Sawyer It was through an old communist, Geoff Hatcher was his name, I worked with at Lockhead's. He was the shop steward and like all good communists he encouraged those who expressed an interest in the things he spoke about. I was impressed with his knowledge and his ability to put the men's case. I remember him talking to me about William Morris and then bringing a couple of books into work for me to borrow, one of which was *News from Nowhere*. To be honest, I found it quite hard going but I did enjoy it and over the years I went into Morris more carefully.

SW How relevant do you think Morris is in today's world?

TS Most people take from William Morris what they want. And I think that is one of his most powerful attractions. If you are interested in architecture, art, poetry, design or politics, Morris is there for you. That is his most enduring legacy. He was a polymath so could speak wisely and interestingly on many subjects. I particularly admire his essays on *Art and Socialism* and *Useful Work versus Useless Toil*. They made a great impression on me when I read them for the first





time and they still do today when I go back to them. The most powerful aspects of these essays I feel is that while they are underpinned with a strong critique of capitalism, they are also about how we live our lives. The better world won't come about just by making all property held in common, that is necessary but it is not enough. We have to change the nature of work so that people can once again get pleasure from their labour. We have to transform the relationships between men and women so that they are truly equal. And we must understand education as a lifelong activity for all, not just those who have been privileged. Of course, there is lots more in the Morris vision but there's a start.

All this is obviously a million miles away from where we are now with the neo-liberal policies of this government, the 'gig' economy, deregulation, zero hours contracts and the rest. Of course, it goes without saying that we need to keep up the campaigns against all these dehumanising changes, but we also need to keep alive the vision of the type of society we want to build, and that is where Morris is a very useful guide and inspiration.

SW I know book collecting has been an important part of your life for many years and you now have a large library. How did that start?
TS Well, as I said earlier, Geoff Hatcher helped by

Left: Tom Sawyer and Stephen Williams on the bastion opposite Kelmscott House, May 2018

Above: Neil Kinnock and Tom Sawyer (then Labour Party Chair) at the 1991 Labour Party Annual Conference

Top left: Locomotives at Robert Stephenson and Hawthorn's Works 1963

Top right: Tom Sawyer at Cummins, Darlington 1968
Right: 1884 title page of *Useful Work versus Useful Toil*

encouraging me to read while I was still an engineering worker. At that time, I would borrow books from the Coventry library and read voraciously. But it wasn't until I met Rodney Bickerstaffe in NUPE during the early 1970s that I thought a working-man could have a library of his own. I remember visiting Rodney at his home in Whitley Bay and being amazed at his library that he had inherited from his grandfather. When I was growing up we didn't have many books at home. There were times I went to his house when he would escort me into his dining room, where he had his collection, because he was on the phone. I loved being there looking through the many hundreds of books on the shelves. It was that which gave the idea of collecting books. I realised you didn't have to be wealthy or highly formally educated to love books around the home'.

SW Morris, of course, was a great collector of books and manuscripts. He spent an enormous sum on his library which was sold off at his death to give the Morris family security.

TS I think there is another question here about 'the book beautiful' and Morris was certainly part of my education on this. I enjoyed reading about how Morris started the Kelmscott Press and what he wanted to achieve. It's another part of his polymath character. It made me think about questions such as 'Do I care about the font? Am I interested in how the book is produced?' I got into that quite heavily and showed some bindings to Society members





about ten years ago. So, he helped me appreciate that the book could be beautiful, as well as something worth reading. The craftsmanship of the binding and valuing that I definitely got from Morris. Like so much else with Morris, it is as if you are walking through a door to a new discovery. You walk through the door and you find all these people who are also interested in the subject and all have their contributions to make. I have a big interest in modern architecture, and who opened the door for that? Nikolaus Pevsner tells us that Morris was a forerunner of the Modern movement, so there's another link.

I think what this tells us is how important it is for the Society to carry on in its work providing a meeting place and forum for people with diverse Morris interests and connections.

SW Is there one book with a Morris connection you are still searching for?

TS Not really. With the coming of the internet it has become easier to find what you want. I haven't really got an interest in the high value Morris books. I've always fancied a Kelmscott Press edition of *News from Nowhere* but it is expensive and quite hard to get. I have the copies of *A Dream of John Bull* and *News from Nowhere* given by Morris to John Burns in 1890 and 1891 respectively, and they are what I call 'class' books.

SW You've spent most of your adult life working for the labour movement. As you know, there was a time when Morris was important to many leading trade unionists and socialist politicians. Do you think it is possible to rekindle this connection?

TS I think a lot of the people you are talking about picked up on Morris through the workplace and trade unions. If we are talking about the large factory settings where trade unions tended to be strong, there just aren't as many as there used to be. They are the exception rather than the rule. But I still think there are plenty of opportunities to talk to people about Morris. I noticed the other day that John McDonnell, the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer mentioned William Morris as one of his major influences. So, there's something there worth noting. I'm sure Jeremy Corbyn is also an admirer of Morris.

And if you think of all the work done by the Morris groups at Hammersmith, Walthamstow,

Kelmscott Manor and Red House, and add up all the visitors to these places you get a sense of how influential Morris still is. So, people might start out with the wallpaper but then go on to think about what Morris has to say about society. The interest is therefore coming from different channels than we began with in the labour movement. We were lucky to have that introduction to Morris and I'd like to think it can be, to use your word, rekindled, particularly among young workers.

SW The Green Party and the wider environmental movement have shown an interest in Morris. Caroline Lucas has spoken to the Society about Morris's influence and certainly seems to frame her politics in language that I think Morris himself would understand and support. Do you think there is more the traditional labour movement should be doing to link their work and aspirations to these new social forces?

TS I understand your point. I think historically the labour movement, that is both the trade unions and the Labour Party, have been locked into questions of economic growth because they believed it would sustain and create jobs. This

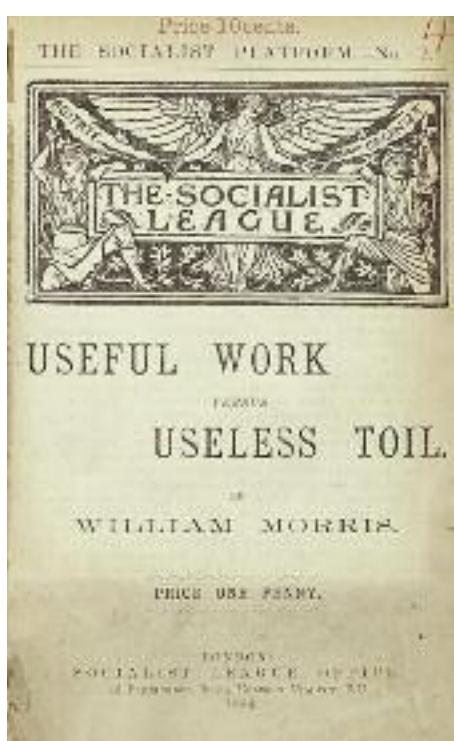
was very much an economic view of society with limited scope for fundamental change. I agree that the big environmental issues, particularly the most urgent one of climate change, sets a challenge for the left to come up with a coherent view. I do feel that the new generation of young people who have recently come into the Labour party will have a different perspective than our generation, and I welcome that. I don't think they will be satisfied with a narrow way of thinking about the world and Morris should have something to say to them. I'm quite optimistic about that.

By their very nature environmental issues transcend national boundaries, making international collaboration of progressive forces vital. In a very small way, I'd like to see the Society play its role by stating clearly how Morris's ideas can help sustain the planet. We are lucky in already being an international society with members all over the world who can play their part. Although the UK component of the Society is the largest, we need to ensure that all voices are heard and listened to equally and fairly.

I think we, if I could include myself in the Morris 'family', need to be more modern in the sense of who you get to listen to what you have to say. So that is something I might be able to talk to the Society about. Remember Jeremy Deller's image of Morris and the luxury yacht, nobody had done anything like that before. I'm sure many who saw that had never thought of Morris before. The artistic community is very likely to be interested in Morris so there's some work to do there.

SW If you could make one thing happen in the Society during your presidency what would it be?

TS I think it's probably too early to answer that properly. My overriding aim will be to help the Board, staff and chairman of the Society to go in the direction they want to. I'd be very keen to be known as a strong supporter of what they want to achieve. I don't think the office of president gives you a mandate to be too independent. But I'm sure that after twelve months or so I will have ideas I will put to the Society. I'm looking forward to that learning process and beyond.



Stephen Williams worked for NUPE and UNISON and has written on trade union and socialist history.

Jenny Morris and the Malvern mystery

Celia Davies looks into the epilepsy treatment sought for Morris's younger daughter in the Worcestershire spa town

With May Morris deservedly in the spotlight recently, and a wealth of new scholarship assessing her contribution, what of her older sister? In outline, the story of Jane Alice (Jenny) Morris is well known. There was the diagnosis of epilepsy at age fifteen and the protective cloak that the family cast around her in face of the stigma and lack of effective treatments for the disease. Jenny was never left entirely alone lest a seizure should occur. Family and friends rallied round; later, nurse-companions were employed. Hopes of a cure were repeatedly raised then dashed. William's letters, his wife's letters, and now also an examination of some of the correspondence of their younger daughter May, give glimpses of the family's love of Jenny and the anguish her illness caused.¹

There are good reasons why there is no more sustained work on Jenny. While she was clearly an enthusiastic correspondent, none of her replies to William's frequent letters to his daughter when they were apart seem to have survived, and although one correspondence lasting around eighteen months is available,² little more has been found. Practical questions therefore abound. Who were Jenny's doctors and what treatment did they offer? How were nurse-companions found? And if, as Wilfred Blunt

once observed, William would not countenance a long-term solution of sending Jenny away,³ what was the thinking of the family, not to mention of Jenny herself, about the various arrangements made for her?

Unlikely as it is that these questions can ever be answered satisfactorily, now and then it is possible to dig deeper. Jenny's time in Malvern in 1888 to 1889 is a case in point. It followed one of the many moments of hope, then despair.

Early in 1887 Jane had decided to take her elder daughter to Italy, reasoning that a change would do them both good. She was feeling worn down by the constant worry that epileptic seizures might occur at any moment. Mother and daughter stayed in Italy for around three months and Jane came back triumphant. 'There is no doubt that Jenny has benefited in every way, her father is delighted with her, she is more like her old self than she has ever been since her illness began 11 years ago.' (Jane Morris to Rosalind Howard, 3 June 1887).⁴

The following June, Jane was again being positive, reiterating that in the Spring Jenny had been better than she had ever been (Jane Morris to George Howard, 4 June 1888). Nonetheless, Jane herself was exhausted and her nerves were frayed. She had been particularly dismayed by

medical advice that for her own health, she ought to live apart from Jenny. With no long-term plan in mind, Jane left for a stay in Malvern to consult a 'nerve-doctor' there. Back home, feeling better but worrying that it would still take very little to tip her over the edge, she confided a new possibility for Jenny to Wilfred Scawen Blunt. 'We hope... to get her cured by some new treatment we are about to try, but nothing is settled for her yet.' (Jane Morris to Wilfred Scawen Blunt, 11 July 1888).

Something was settled fairly rapidly, since three weeks later, Jenny herself was in Malvern and, as we learn from a letter to her in September from William, she was under the care of a Dr Tyrrell. Norman Kelvin, in his four-volume collection of Morris's letters, suggests this was Walter Tyrrell (1851-1931), a West Kensington physician and senior anaesthetist at St Thomas's Hospital who was an acquaintance of Bernard Shaw.⁵ But there is another possible and highly plausible candidate – an older Walter Tyrrell.

Walter Astley Tyrrell (1831-1911) was the son of a surgeon. Following in family footsteps, he became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1854, registered with the General Medical Council in 1859 and practised in London. His name appears in the medical press





on a range of topics over the years, but he took a special interest in epilepsy and other nervous disorders. There had been a series of articles on the topic in the *Medical Times and Gazette* between 1867 and 1869, later reprinted in booklet form, and a brief article in the *British Medical Journal* in August 1869. *The Illustrated London News* ran repeated advertisements for his pamphlet *On Epilepsy and Its Treatment by a New Process* in the mid 1870s. *The Spectator* provided a review of a more extended work early in 1888: the very year of Jenny's Malvern stay.

Tyrrell's home and much of his practice was in Malvern. Following his marriage, the family moved from London to Claremont House, Church Street, Great Malvern. Both sons, Walter Guy Beauchamp Tyrrell (1861-1920) and Francis Astley Cooper Tyrrell (1871-1933) were to become members of the medical profession. By the 1880s, Walter Tyrrell held various posts in the town. Alongside his private practice, he was Medical Officer of Health to the urban sanitary authority, for example, and honorary physician and surgeon to Malvern Rural Hospital. However, his ties to London remained. The Medical Register of 1888 shows him with accommodation in Victoria Street, London. And indeed, after his wife died in 1897, Walter Tyrrell moved back to London, with rooms in Westminster for a number of years. He was buried in Malvern in 1911.

The dual locations of his medical practice and the background in epilepsy both point strongly to Walter Astley Tyrrell as Jenny's doctor. Could she have lodged with the Tyrrell family? Medical men of the time often offered residential care, especially for those of the middle classes with family members suffering from mental health problems, alcoholism, epilepsy and other conditions requiring long-term care. Coastal or

spa towns such as Great Malvern were an attractive proposition. The Tyrrell family home was large enough for boarders, but the censuses of 1871, 1881 and 1891 show family members and servants only. Could Jenny have resided where Jane herself had stayed shortly before? Coombe Lodge, Foley Terrace was set above the town, commanding wonderful views over the Worcestershire plains. It is tempting to imagine Jenny, inveterate walker, happily walking down into the town and back up to the Lodge.

Great Malvern had long had a reputation for the quality of its mineral water. It was renowned

too for its mild climate, and the quality of its air. Royals, poets, novelists and scientists were counted amongst visitors taking the water cure earlier in the century, and the coming of the railway extended its attraction and prosperity further. While the water cure was no longer in its heyday by the 1880s, Malvern remained popular for treatments, leisure, rest and recuperation. Walter Tyrrell himself published a series of articles about health resorts in the medical press, urging the superior benefits of Malvern⁶ and suggesting a number of diseases that he considered could benefit from the aspect, the elevation and the nature of the soil. Malvern at the time of Jenny's stay thus offered many opportunities for long and short stay residence by invalids and those recuperating from illness, as well as for holiday-makers. Given the numbers of boarding houses and lodgings in this popular resort, locating Jenny's place of residence on her first visit is probably impossible.⁷

Having spent about a month back at Kelmscott Manor from late September 1888, Jenny returned to Malvern at the end of October. Shortly after that, she took up residence at a new address. And that address and the members of the household can be traced.

The clue comes from something William wrote: 'I do so hope my dear Jenny that you will be comfortable in your new abode, and will get on with the Miss Coates. What a queer name for their house. I really am shy of writing it on the address.' (William Morris to Jenny Morris, 4 December 1888).

Amy, Mary and Katherine Coates were teachers; single women, the daughters of a doctor. They had been living with their grandfather in Great Malvern. At some point in the 1880s they set up home independently at a house called St Sunniva's in Avenue Road and





began to run a school together. The 1891 census gives a picture of the situation three years on from the time Jenny was in Malvern. Amy was head of household and school principal, while her two sisters taught at the school. A teacher of German was in residence as were three scholars, a cook and a housemaid. There were two further women residents, described as boarders living on their own means. The fact of three Misses Coates, the unusual name of the house, and its size, accommodating boarders not seemingly associated with the teaching business, all point to this as the place where Jenny took new lodgings during her second stay in Malvern.

There is a strong hint of the reasons for this move. Before it occurred, Morris had made some highly disparaging comments about those with whom Jenny was living. 'As to the persons you speak of, it is quite true that they mean they know nothing about it; you may add that they

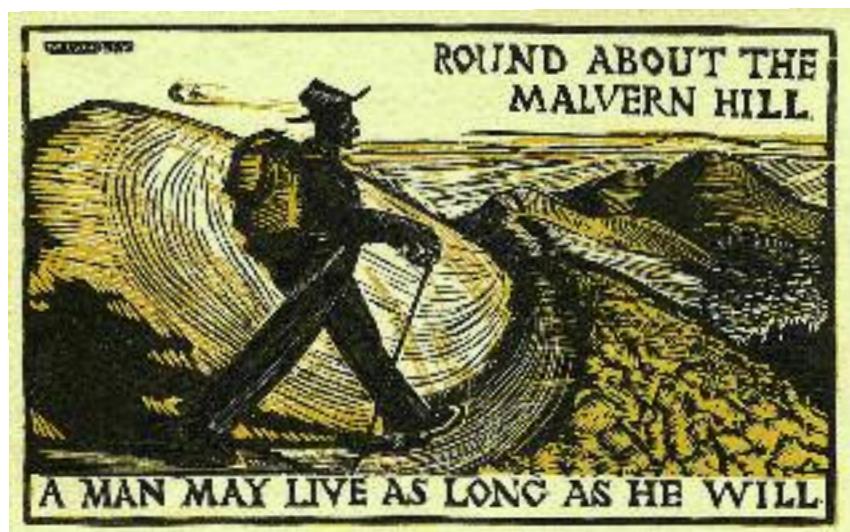
are quite prepared to tell you all about it; and bring forward stale objections as if they were new discoveries of their own with an air of naïf superiority which is intensely delicious.' (William Morris to Jenny Morris, 17 November 1888)

Kelvin suggests in a footnote to the excerpt above that Jenny had reported on the political views of others in the household. This could have been the factor precipitating the move to St Sunniva's – although, of course, it still leaves open just how the family got to know about the ladies and their school.

Two more questions are worth exploration: how did the Morris family know of Walter Tyrrell and what was the new treatment he offered? On the first question, there are several possibilities. Family or friends may have seen advertisements for his publications. Jane could have got to know about him during her own stay at Malvern and

indeed Tyrrell could well have been the 'nerve-doctor' she had consulted for herself. Conceivably, his name could have come from a medical referral. Tyrrell quoted key figures associated with the new scientific research on epilepsy at the National Hospital for the Epileptic and Paralysed in his own work. But given the challenging way he presented his ideas he may well have been seen as something of a maverick.

What then of the actual treatment Jenny experienced at Malvern? Here one can be a little more certain. Despite the volume of research and publication on epilepsy since 1860, much doubt remained about both causation and treatment. Potassium bromide had become the treatment of choice for many practitioners, though other medicines certainly continued in use. Tyrrell attacked this orthodoxy.⁸ He conceded that bromides were effective, but argued that their effect was merely temporary. Instead, the aim should be to rectify the loss of control involved. He had long used strychnine with his patients – but in more and more minute doses. By the 1880s, he was using *nux vomica*⁹ as a safer and even less active preparation which he argued had a nutrient effect over time. Alongside this, and taking account of a range of specific patient characteristics, he added other medicines and prescribed a detailed daily regime. Patients needed dry, cold mountain air, doses of cod liver oil, cold water baths, regular massage and a strictly specified diet. They should enjoy a life of



Above: Group at Kelmscott Manor (from left to right): Ada Culmer, who was Jenny Morris's carer, two unidentified seated women, Jane Morris, May Morris, and Jenny Morris, photograph, 1905 © William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest

Left: *Round about the Malvern hill...* by Mabel Varley (1907-1992), postcard

Opposite top: View down Church Street

Opposite bottom: Walter Astley Tyrrell (1832-1911)



'almost entire repose': no reading, no concerts, no theatre.

How successful was this for Jenny? Early the next year, with Jenny still at Malvern, having spent more than four months there thus far, Jane called on the doctor at his London consulting room. Things looked promising: '...he said he was more hopeful than ever about her, he expected to cure her entirely in time, she is certainly very much better than she was two months ago, the attacks are getting slighter and she does not quite lose consciousness – so you see I have cause to be happier than formerly' (Jane Morris to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, 16 January 1889).

But after Jenny's return home in March, she was not free from seizures. William spent much time this year with Jenny at Kelmscott Manor, giving Jane a break when he could. May held the fort while Jane went away in the autumn and

Jenny's major seizure in December meant that family plans of going to Kelmscott for Christmas had to be abandoned. Good times and bad times continued in the years that followed.

The Malvern episode proved to be a one-off. Never again was Jenny to spend a protracted time away from the family in the quest for a cure. The years leading up to William's death in October 1896 found him prioritising care of his wife and daughter, although at times clearly feeling somewhat torn about cancelling work commitments. As for Jane, having moved into Kelmscott Manor with Jenny in her widowhood, she spent much time trying out different living arrangements which enabled the two women to spend time apart as well as time together. It was not until 1909, and facing her own worsening health and Jenny's deterioration, that a separate home was finally found for Jenny. At this time,

and indeed for years to come, it is quite clear that potassium bromide – the drug about which Dr Tyrrell had had such doubts, was still the main medical treatment for Jenny Morris.

Celia Davies is Professor Emerita at The Open University. Her interest in William Morris was awakened by volunteering at Kelmscott Manor and she is now a member of the Kelmscott Manor Volunteer Research Group.

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank Jill Halliwell, Kathy Haslam and Barbara Vowles for their help and encouragement in the preparation of this article.

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5 See William Morris's letter to Jenny Morris 8 September 1888. All quoted material from the letters of William Morris can be found in Norman Kelvin *Collected Letters* (see note 1).

6 Walter Tyrrell, *Health Resorts in the West of England and South Wales V. Malvern*, in the *Bristol Medico-Chirurgical Journal*, (1883) 1891 9, (34) pp267-77

7 On 21 August 1888, shortly after Jenny arrived in Malvern, William wrote to her mentioning giving Mrs Ball her money. It is likely that this was the landlady, though she cannot be traced.

8 Walter Tyrrell *The Tonic Treatment of Epilepsy and kindred Nervous Affections*, (London: Trübner and Co, fifth edition 1887)

9 Strychnos nux-vomica is a toxic plant substance that comes from the seeds of the poison-nut or strychnine tree. It is recognised as affecting the brain and causing muscle contractions. It is used in various homeopathic remedies although there are also safety concerns.



Bulletin

Below: Illustration of the author frying griddle cakes, from recently discovered May Morris diaries



MAY MORRIS DIARIES

A recently-discovered collection of extensive holiday diaries written by May Morris between 1919 and 1937 has been acquired by the Society of Antiquaries of London, owner of Kelmscott Manor. The holiday diaries, along with other papers and photographs, came to light last year at Coleg Harlech in west Wales, and were passed to May Morris expert Jan Marsh for safe-keeping prior to being deposited with the Society.

The diaries describe the lengthy annual camping trips to remote destinations that May embarked on with the companion of her later years at Kelmscott Manor; Mary Frances Vivien Lobb, or 'M.F.' as she invariably refers to her.

The pair explored the British Isles from Cornwall to the Hebrides, staying in Wales, Lancashire, Northumberland, Herefordshire and many other counties. They thought nothing of walking or cycling many miles and their heavily-laden bicycles, upon which were balanced many nondescript and bulky bundles 'looked shocking sights'. After a few weeks camping May and Mary too

could be quite disreputable-looking: May refers to themselves as appearing 'fearful vagabonds' and 'the strangest of untidy travellers'.

While on holiday May valued her anonymity, which freed her to engage informally with the people the pair encountered, from farmhands, shopkeepers and hikers to academics and churchmen. May's keen eye stored up every detail for her diary.

The diaries are currently being transcribed, and are proving to be a revealing and rich source. They abound with details of the people they met along the way, descriptions of nature and cultural references: exhibitions visited; churches admired or deplored for their irresponsible restoration; archaeological remains sought out and explored. The intrusion of modern buildings, which were reshaping traditional communities, was lamented by May in terms such as 'mangy villadom' and 'built-up vulgarities'. The holiday itineraries often included visiting locations known to her father and May made many references to him in the course of recording her responses to people and places. This was most

notably the case when May and Mary went to Iceland, as they did on three occasions between 1924 and 1931.

The weather was often unkind to them. May was so tired from lack of sleep because of repeated night-time squalls during one trip to Wales that she was overcome by a sensation she likened to having sea-legs on dry land. But the sheer exhilaration she felt at being on holiday, anonymous, and free of convention or expectation, was never dampened: 'the wet days have been absurdly happy'.

Several of the diaries will be on display at Kelmscott Manor during the 2018 season. Once catalogued, they will be available to researchers. sal.org.uk/kelmscottmanor

MORRIS LETTERS FOUND AT GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Letters written by Morris and other great figures of the late nineteenth century have been uncovered at Glasgow School of Art. Morris, HG Wells and Rodin are among those who wrote to Francis Henry Newbery, the director of the art school from 1885 to 1918 and the man responsible for commissioning

a young Charles Rennie Mackintosh to design its world-famous building.

Archivist Rachael Jones discovered a box of uncatalogued material in the art school's archive, including a pack of four letters written by Morris discussing an invitation to give some lectures in Scotland in the spring of 1889.

In the earliest of the letters, dated 14 January, Morris declares that he does not like to say no, but that he has 'memories of early spring in Glasgow from last year which rather terrify one'.

GSA lecturer Dr Helen McCormack said the letters revealed Morris was a much more frequent visitor to Glasgow than had been previously believed and that Mackintosh, who was still a student there in 1889, would have had the opportunity to attend Morris's Arts & Crafts lecture.

'It is generally agreed among scholars that Mackintosh's work, not least the building at GSA which bears his name, conveys some stylistic and architectural details determined by Arts & Crafts ideals,' she said.

'Here in these letters we learn about an event at which the young

designer would almost certainly have learned about these principles from one of the leaders of the Arts & Crafts movement, William Morris.'

bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-43415337 16 March 2018

OUR NEW CHAIR

Following the resignation of Martin Stott, the new Chair of The William Morris Society is Stephen Bradley. Stephen is a retired architect with an MSc in Sustainable Heritage, has lived in and around Hammersmith for 40 years and has a strong network both locally and more widely within the heritage sector. He currently serves on the fundraising committee of the National Museum of the Royal Navy and has been involved with community engagement and capital project funding for the Fulham Palace Trust.

EMBROIDERED MINDS EPILEPSY GARDEN

Visitors to this year's Chelsea Flower Show may have seen this garden, which aims to raise awareness of epilepsy and the challenges that both sufferers and their families face today. *Embroidered Minds*, a cross-disciplinary collaboration, was instigated by Leslie Forbes and based around her researches into Jenny Morris, whose life was drastically changed after she developed the condition, and the Morris family's experience of



epilepsy. The garden design was initiated by Leslie and her old friend Kati Crome but since Leslie's death in July 2016, following an epileptic seizure, has been realised by Kati, Leslie's husband Andrew Thomas and other members of the collaboration. Included in the garden are plants often seen in William Morris designs, such as acanthus, and others used as early treatments for epilepsy. The garden was designed with three sections representing different lived experiences of epilepsy: the calm pre-seizure mind; the chaotic state of the brain during seizures; and the cumulative effects of unusual neural connections after living with seizures for a long time. A vertical

living wall referencing Morris-designed surface patterns, an oak bench, tiled path and foreground planting are interrupted by a seizure represented through planting. The vitality of the post-seizure section is to reflect the hope of a brighter future for epilepsy sufferers and their families through greater awareness and understanding of the condition.

The oak bench, representing an EEG readout, starts as a calm resting place and is then disrupted with the chaos of a seizure. Specially commissioned from furniture designer Toby Winteringham, the bench has been created with steam-bent oak secured with copper rivets and supported by rusted steel legs.

Running below the bench is a ceramic tiled path designed by artist Sue Ridge and designer/ceramist Andrew Thomas. Based on designs by William Morris, the tiles are laid in a disintegrating pattern representing different aspects of epilepsy, transforming into neurological and seizure-based images and glitches as they run under the chaotic end of the bench.

The garden is partly sponsored by Epilepsy Society and Young Epilepsy, with some of the young people resident with Young Epilepsy at their site in Surrey helping to grow a selection of the plants. embroideredminds.co.uk



THE NATURE OF PROSPERITY

Report of a seminar jointly organised by the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP) and the William Morris Society, held at BMA House, London on 16 February 2018

This provocative and rewarding afternoon conference was called to discuss what principles for the good life and human flourishing might be harmonised with current economic thinking, especially in the face of a pressing need to find ways of inhabiting a finite planet sustainably, now and for generations to come. The gathering took the form of two discussion panels followed by a concluding talk – a thoughtful, reflective commentary on William Morris's *News from Nowhere* by Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury – in front of an audience of more than 200, with questions and contributions from the floor.

Will Davies of CUSP opened the proceedings by arguing that the economy is a space in which moral questions are always being asked. It soon became clear however that too often such questions were asked too little and too late, as witnessed in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. His panel members, two philosophers, Melissa Lane and Ingrid Robeyns, and Danish MP Uffe Elbaek, were quick to differentiate between material and immaterial satisfaction, asking

Left: Design for the Embroidered Minds Epilepsy Garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2018

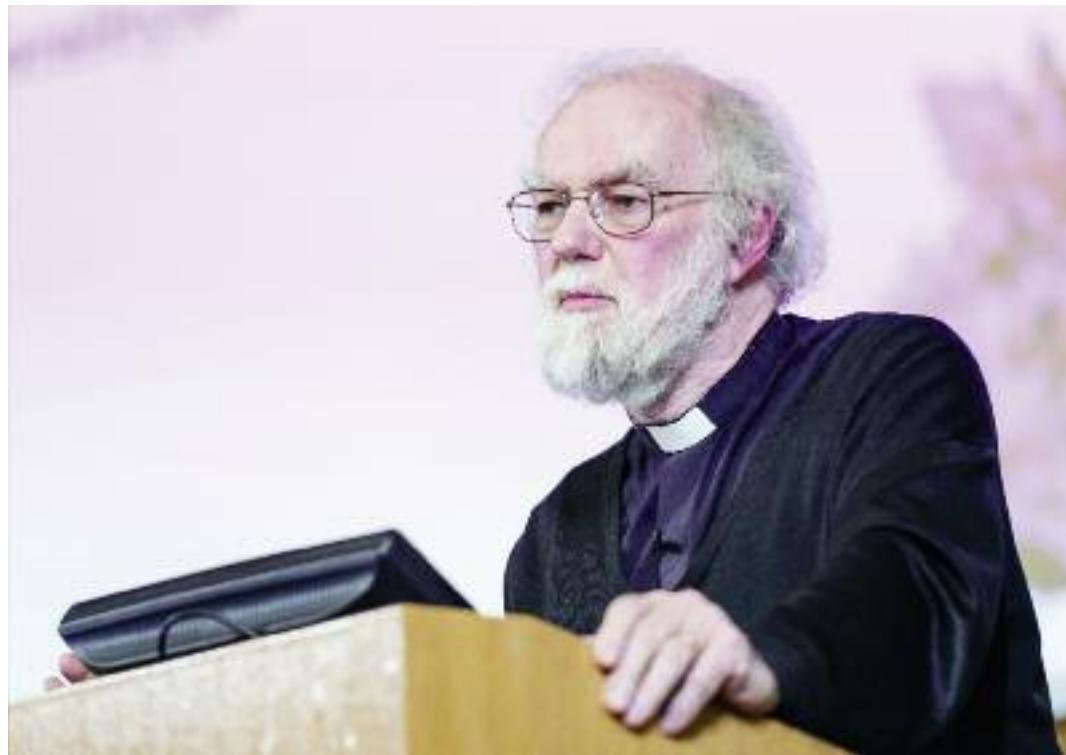
Below left: The William Morris Society's new Chair, Stephen Bradley

Right: Rowan Williams speaking on 'The Nature of Prosperity'

how one measured, or in some other way evaluated, the human pleasures of happiness, contemplation and the rewards of close human relationships. Uffe Elbaek, speaking as a politician who has now broken away from the mainstream in government, said that it was still impossible for a politician to 'stand on the parliament floor' and call for an end to growth – the steady-state economy – let alone the need to reverse growth – the lean economy – even though there no longer appears to be any correlation between increased GDP and higher quality of life. How do we address both material poverty and emotional poverty at the same time, particularly since the two are often closely related?

Increasing numbers of people believe that democracy seems not to be working any more, in the sense of representing and responding to new ideas and new social circumstances; on the other hand panellists did not want to give succour to anti-democratic forces now at work across the world. A contributor from the audience made the point that the reshaping of ethical values often results from a personal crisis, though this may not be true at a political level – in fact major political and economic crises often result in a retreat to the old ways of doing things rather than seeking out newer, more imaginative solutions.

The question of 'what motivates people to renounce their immediate desires in favour of protecting the future' was asked by philosopher and farmer, Roger Scruton, for whom existential dilemmas such as these prompted the main disagreement of the afternoon. For Scruton, altruism towards others, past, present and future, along with an associated



ethic of self-renunciation, had to be grounded in love of family, home, neighbourhood, landscape and a sense of national belonging. His fellow panellists, sociologist Ruth Levitas and economist John O'Neill, dissented.

Chair and interlocutor Tim Jackson probed further. Scruton's fellow panellists argued that in a highly mobile world and global economy, only forms of national and international regulation of contracts, environmental standards, trade agreements, criminal and commercial law, could prevent a 'runaway world' of environmental despoliation, where short-term advantage takes precedence over long-term security. Melissa Lane in her published paper – all panellists had been commissioned to write papers in advance – quoted Rousseau's remark that it was not possible to be both a man and a citizen, a precept that might well have divided the audience as it did the panellists, though Rowan Williams in his closing remarks thought it quite possible to be both a man and a neighbour (Morris's preferred term of fellowship in *News from Nowhere*).

Levitas argued that we need

utopian thinking as a form of 'speculative theology', providing fictions that suggest how things could be otherwise – as *News from Nowhere* intended. O'Neill argued against human and environmental interests being reduced to the economicistic lexus of capital – social capital and natural capital – all of which suggested human communities and natural settings could be traded, offset, substituted or monetised, even to other places or other times, away from the real world landscape of the here and now. The natural world was not a chessboard.

Much of the disagreement was about means rather than ends, and largely emerged from two different vocabularies being employed – the existential and the social/institutional/political – often pivoting on or refracting that complex word and concept: home. We may want to be at home in the world, but not necessarily be at home in the same building for most of our lives. Some people find a home in nature, others in music, some in solitude and contemplation, others in the noise and bustle of the city. And is home where we start out from or the

place to which we arrive at the end? This was a trenchant discussion but one of considerable thoughtfulness and deliberation, as many people I spoke to after agreed.

In his closing remarks Rowan Williams took up this theme of a disappearing world (of things, customs and values) by asking another question: what cannot be lost? While we can lose things, we cannot lose our embodied selves, or the awareness that we are embedded in the world and in a complex network of events and relationships. We are always acting on the world, and for the most part people are endlessly creative in trying to bring about change for the better, as friends, colleagues, family members and social beings. Echoing Uffe Elbaek's earlier observation that people say they are at their happiest when helping others, Williams concluded by saying that prosperity was either a shared goal or a pointless one.

Martin Stott, Chair of the William Morris Society closed the proceedings with heartfelt thanks to everybody who had made this event such a memorable occasion. Ken Worpole

Calendar



MORRIS EVENTS

Please see the Events leaflet enclosed with the *Magazine* for forthcoming events organised by the Society. We wish particularly, however, to draw members' attention to the following:

THE 2018 KELMSCOTT LECTURE

PATTERNING: IN STORY, SOCIETY AND WALLPAPER

Kelmscott House, London
20 October 2.15 pm

Through Morris's ideas on usefulness and beauty, imagination and order; together with his political thinking, playwright Sarah Woods will explore patterns and stories in our own society, now. Sarah works in collaboration with communities, scientists, academics and charities to communicate current issues through innovative drama.

Her theatre work has been produced by the RSC, The Hampstead, Soho Theatre and the BBC, regional theatres and touring companies. Sarah has written extensively for BBC Radio 4, including an adaptation of William Morris's *News From Nowhere* and most recently an adaptation of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*.

She ran the MPhil in Playwriting at Birmingham University from 2002 to 2006 and currently teaches playwriting and Art For Change at Manchester University.

Pre-booking for all events is strongly

advised. Book online at williammorrisociety.org or email events@williammorrisociety.org.uk

EXHIBITIONS

THE OLD HOUSE SHOW

The Old Naval College,
Greenwich

7 to 8 September

This free event, organised by SPAB in partnership with *Period Living*, will include a programme of both talks and live demonstrations of traditional building crafts. Among the talks are 'Exploring your Home's History', 'William Morris and Arts & Crafts Style' and 'Historic Surfaces: Paints, Papers and Plaster'. spab.org.uk/whats-on/Old-House-Show

'ONLY THERE IS LIFE': THE ARTISTS EDWARD AND STEPHANI SCOTT-SNELL AT KELMSCOTT MANOR 1940-48

Kelmscott Manor, near Lechlade
23 June to 31 October

The Society of Antiquaries recently acquired paintings and drawings by Edward and Stephani Scott-Snell, created during the period they were tenants of the Manor. Pieces made in direct response to the house and its setting will be on display alongside other works representing 'Thessyros', the erotically-charged imaginary world central to their output.

sal.org.uk/kelmscott-manor

AN ELIXIR OF LETTERS

Chelsea Physic Garden to 31 October

Seventeen lettering artists present new works that take the theme of drink as their inspiration. The trail of sculptures, inscriptions and garden ornaments feature plants and botanicals that grow in the Garden, which are the basis for beverages, bubbles and brews.

BEYOND OPHELIA – A CELEBRATION OF LIZZIE SIDDAL, ARTIST AND POET

Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton
to 24 December

A professional member of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, Lizzie Siddal has been remembered mainly as the model for the iconic Millais painting *Ophelia*, and as wife and muse of the Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Beyond Ophelia examines Siddal's style, subject matter, depiction of women, influence on other artists, and the prejudice she then faced as a professional female artist. nationaltrust.org.uk/wightwick-manor

CORITA KENT: GET WITH THE ACTION

Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft
to 14 October

Corita Kent (1918–1986) was an artist, a charismatic educator and a Roman Catholic nun based in Los Angeles during the 1960s. A

contemporary of Warhol and Ruscha, her vibrant screenprinted banners and posters drew on pop and modern consumer cultures and became increasingly political throughout the decade, aiming to capture the public imagination in order to influence social change. ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk

WOMEN IN THE ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT

Court Barn, Chipping Campden 27 July to 28 October

Celebrates the work of May Morris – designer; needlewoman and political activist – Louise Powell – calligrapher; embroiderer and painter – and Nelly Erichson – artist and illustrator. courtbarn.org.uk

MARY WATTS: PIONEERING SUFFRAGIST

Mary Watts Gallery at Watts Studios, Compton, Guildford To 2 December

Drawing on new research by Dr Lucy Ella Rose, the display explores Mary Watts as a figurehead of non-militant feminism, convening suffrage meetings at her studio-home.

Includes images of Mary Watts and some of the strong female figures and symbols of freedom that appear in her work, such as a Compton Pottery terracotta figure of St Joan of Arc, the patron saint of the suffragettes. wattsgallery.org.uk

Left: *Alcestis* by Walter Crane, hand-printed wallpaper frieze 1875, The Whitworth, The University of Manchester

Below: *Kelmscott above the Fafnir Hedge* by Edward Scott-Snell, watercolour on paper c1943, Society of Antiquaries of London

ANNIE SWYNNERTON: PAINTING LIGHT AND HOPE

Manchester Art Gallery

to 6 January 2019

The first female RA, Annie Swynnerton (1884–1933) represented women of all ages and walks of life, challenging conventions of beauty and capturing female strength and potential at a time when women's roles and opportunities were changing. Her shimmering nudes, winged figures and portraits of suffragettes show the importance of female solidarity to Swynnerton's art.

manchesterartgallery.org

EDWARD BAWDEN

Dulwich Picture Gallery

to 9 September

Brings together 160 works to show the full breadth of Bawden's work over his sixty-year career, arranged thematically to explore the evolution in his style across recurring motifs. The great sweep of his production includes prints and watercolours not shown publicly before, commercial work for Fortnum & Mason, and works made as a War Office Artist.

dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

BODIES OF COLOUR: BREAKING WITH STEREOTYPES IN THE WALLPAPER COLLECTION

The Whitworth, Manchester
to May 2019

Uses the Whitworth's extensive and significant wallpaper collection to focus on how imperial attitudes to people are reflected in wallpaper. While the wallpapers in this show span three centuries and were designed in western Europe and North America, inspiration for the patterns comes from across the globe and represents a mix of commercially-available wallpapers and those made by artists.

whitworth.manchester.ac.uk

WOMAN'S HOUR CRAFT PRIZE

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery
7 July to 2 September

Marks the seventieth anniversary of BBC *Woman's Hour*. Through huge hand woven willow structures,



darned high street hoodies and bespoke bicycles, to unfired clay installations, futuristic glass figures, and jewellery made with eighteenth-century pins found in the mud of the river Thames, the twelve finalists explore current issues.

bristolmuseums.org.uk

CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH MAKING THE GLASGOW STYLE

Kelvingrove Museum & Art
Gallery, Glasgow
to 14 August

Celebrating the 150th anniversary of Mackintosh's birth, this exhibition spans the lifetime of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and presents his work in the context of Glasgow, his key predecessors, influences and contemporaries, particularly those working in the Glasgow Style.

glasgowlife.org.uk

RAQIB SHAW: REINVENTING THE OLD MASTERS

Scottish National Gallery of
Modern Art, Edinburgh
to 28 October

Eight works by Raqib Shaw are on display alongside two paintings

which have long obsessed him: Joseph Noel Paton's *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*, 1849, and Lucas Cranach's *An Allegory of Melancholy*, 1528. Shaw paints with enamels, using a needle-sharp porcupine quill to create intricate, complex and flamboyantly-coloured paintings.

nationalgalleries.org

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN

Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle
to 7 October

The Dustman or The Lovers by Stanley Spencer is brought into the context of major works that explore the garden as a stage for the extraordinary, the magical, the atmospheric and the nostalgic. Artists include Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Beatrix Potter, Morris and Claude Monet.

laingartgallery.org.uk

LUSTROUS SURFACES

V&A, London
to 16 September

Featuring a great many, primarily Asian, lacquered objects located throughout the Museum, including shrines, chests and rare Latin American examples. This display highlights the varied manufacturing

techniques, surface treatments, decorative styles and applications around the world

vam.ac.uk

RUSSELL-COTES CERAMICS: CONNOISSEUR OR CONNED?

Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth
to 26 August

Merton Russell-Cotes, a collector of Victorian art and artefacts, acquired many ceramics and this exhibition features some of the museum's highlights. But can you tell the fakes from the genuine articles?

russellcotes.com

EMAIL BENEFITS

If you supply us with your email address you can receive the Society's e-bulletins, which are sent out between issues of the Magazine with up to date news of the Society and other Morrisian developments as they happen, and a pdf of the US Society's Newsletter.

To add your name to the list for either item please email membership@williammorrisociety.org.uk

Books



IN SEARCH OF RAMSDEN & CARR

by Helen Ramsden

Unicorn, 252pp, £25 hb
unicornpublishing.org

The author became interested in these Arts & Crafts silversmiths through hearing from an early age of The Cumberbatch Trophy, commissioned by a great aunt, and which she discovered to have been made by Omar Ramsden. Finding a dearth of information on the pair, she carried out three years of research to create this double portrait of their work and lives.

RITA AND GERALD: THE ART OF ADULT LEARNING IN BRITAIN TODAY

by Philip Stevens

Trentham Books, 172pp, £24.99 pb
ucl-ioe-press.com

Written by a member of the Society who also acts as an education adviser to our new education group, *Rita and Gerald* traces the history of adult learning in the UK from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Both a celebration and a defence of adult education, it shows how lifelong learning has adapted to change over the last two centuries and why the sector is today needed more than ever. The book

combines a theoretical perspective with insight into human aspirations, built around the hopes and educational stories of real people.

LA PLAINE ÉTINCELANTE (THE GLITTERING PLAIN)

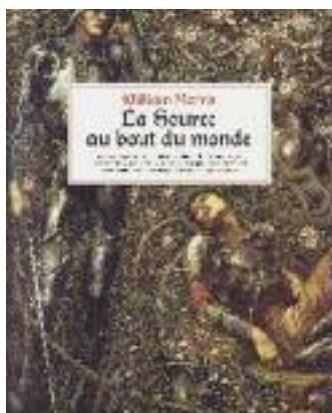
by William Morris, translated from the English by Francis

Guévremont, Editions Aux Forges de Vulcain, 210pp, €19 pb
auxforgesdevulcain.fr

LA SOURCE AU BOUT DU MONDE (THE WELL AT THE WORLD'S END)

by William Morris, translated from the English by Maxime Shelledy & Souad Degachi

Editions Aux Forges de Vulcain, 400pp, €28 pb



auxforgesdevulcain.fr
Illustrations by William Morris, from the original Kelmscott Press edition. With preface by Anne Besson. Both this and *La Plaine Étincelante* have been published by a small press, Aux Forges de Vulcain, thanks to a French government grant administered by the Centre national du livre to help the translation of 'lacunes', great foreign texts that have not previously been translated into French.

ARTHUR: GOD AND HERO IN AVALON (October 2018)

by Christopher R Fee

Reaktion Books, 224pp, £16 hb
reaktionbooks.co.uk

Views Arthur in terms of comparative mythology, arguing that he remains relevant because his story speaks eloquently about universal human needs and anxieties. It discusses the tales of King Arthur from the earliest medieval texts to film and television adaptations.

RESIST! HOW TO BE AN ACTIVIST IN THE AGE OF DEFIANCE (August 2018)

by Huck, foreword by Owen Jones

Laurence King Publishing, 208pp, £14.99

A how-to guide for people looking

to make a stand, with advice, practical tips and inspirational stories from those who have stood up and made a difference. Explores the principles of direct action, strategies for tackling social media, ideas for motivating others, how to get access to the people in power and getting a message across.

LOVE IS ENOUGH

by William Morris

The Folio Society, £250 hb
foliosociety.com

This facsimile is a copy of Morris's dramatic poem owned by Frederick Startridge Ellis that is now kept in The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, but is rarely displayed. The original was bound by Thomas James Cobden Sanderson and the pages are illustrated with tumbling foliage, delicate flowers and wild fruits by Ellis's niece, Beatrice Pagden. Its binding is replicated in cowhide blocked in gold and the edition is limited to 750 hand-numbered copies.

ABC:AN ALPHABET

by Mrs Arthur Gaskin

Art / Books, 64pp, £14.95 hb
artbookspublishing.co.uk

A new facsimile of an 1895 book for children by Georgie Gaskin, the Arts & Crafts jewellery and metalwork designer who with her husband was one of the original members of the Birmingham Group of Artist-Craftsmen. It reproduces the original clothbound trade edition and has woodcut illustrations and rhymes by Gaskin to accompany each letter of the alphabet.

IMAGE ON THE EDGE: THE MARGINS OF MEDIEVAL ART (October 2018)

by Michael Camille

Reaktion Books, 208pp, £16.95hb
reaktionbooks.co.uk

New hardback edition of Camille's book, which brings an understanding of how marginality functioned in medieval culture, when the underbelly of society and resistance to social constraints were depicted in the margins of medieval prayer-books or as gargoyles on the outside of churches.



DELAWARE ART MUSEUM



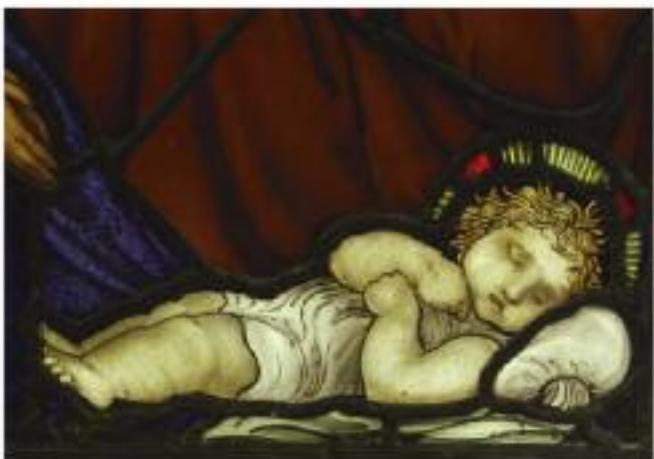
AMY P. GOLDMAN FELLOWSHIP IN PRE-RAPHAELITE STUDIES

The University of Delaware Library and the Delaware Art Museum invite applications for the 2019 joint Fellowship in Pre-Raphaelite Studies. This one-month Fellowship is intended for scholars working on the Pre-Raphaelites and their associates. Up to \$3,000 is available and housing is provided. Application deadline: November 1, 2018. For more information, email fellowships@delart.org or visit delart.org.



2301 Kentmere Parkway
Wilmington, DE 19806
302.571.9590 | delart.org

Lady. 1869 (detail). 1868–1869.
Oiled 1872–1873; Dante Gabriel
Rossetti, British Pre-Raphaelite painter
(1828–1882). Oil on canvas, 36 x 34
inches. Delaware Art Museum, George
and Mary R. Bendell Memorial, 1935.



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From the collection

LILY OF THE VALLEY

Helen Elletson writes on *Lily of the Valley* embroidery designs for the Barr Smith family

The William Morris Society has nine embroidery designs for the

Barr Smith family of Adelaide, Australia, in its collection at Kelmscott House, from the bequest of Marion Helena Stephenson. They include a *Lily of the Valley* (c1896) series for table covers and mats,

believed to have been a special commission for the Barr Smiths.

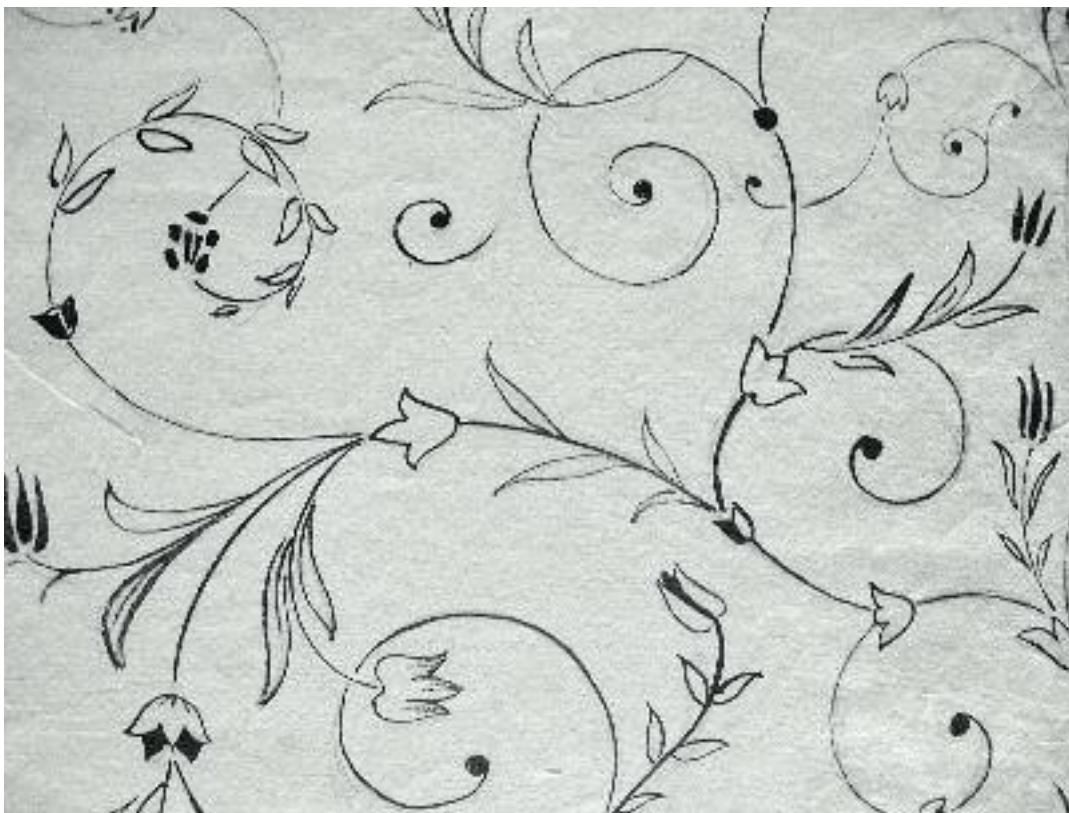
Robert Barr Smith (1824-1915) and his wife Joanna (1835-1919) were among the most important of Morris & Co's international clientele

during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Between 1884 and 1929 three generations of the family furnished at least seven houses, in and around Adelaide, using Morris & Co as their main supplier of textiles, carpets, of which they purchased over thirty, and wallpapers. Their greatest expenditure was in the 1880s and 1890s when Robert and Joanna were extending and refurnishing their two principal residences, Torrens Park, Adelaide, purchased in 1874, and Auchendarroch, their summer home in the nearby countryside, acquired in 1878. How the Barr Smiths came to choose Morris & Co is unknown; a family tradition that their daughter Mabel (1861-1946) attended Notting Hill High School with May is improbable, but as they were frequent visitors to London they may well have met some of the company's English clients.

The females in the Barr Smith family were accomplished needlewomen, and Joanna is known to have embroidered John Henry Dearle's design for a three-fold screen, *Pomegranate, Vine and Apple Tree*, an ambitious piece of work. The Morris & Co Day Book for 1892-6, (V&A, London) lists fourteen items of embroidery, in kit form, ordered by Mrs Barr Smith, which almost certainly included some of those for which the Society holds the designs although, sadly, the evidence is inconclusive. Further designs for embroideries in the Society's collection, such as *Australia* (c1887) *Gladiolus* (c1896), *Rosebush* (c1888) and *Design for Small Anemone Border* (c1888) were also ordered by the Barr Smith family. Several of the completed embroideries, created from the Society's designs, can be seen in the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

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



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