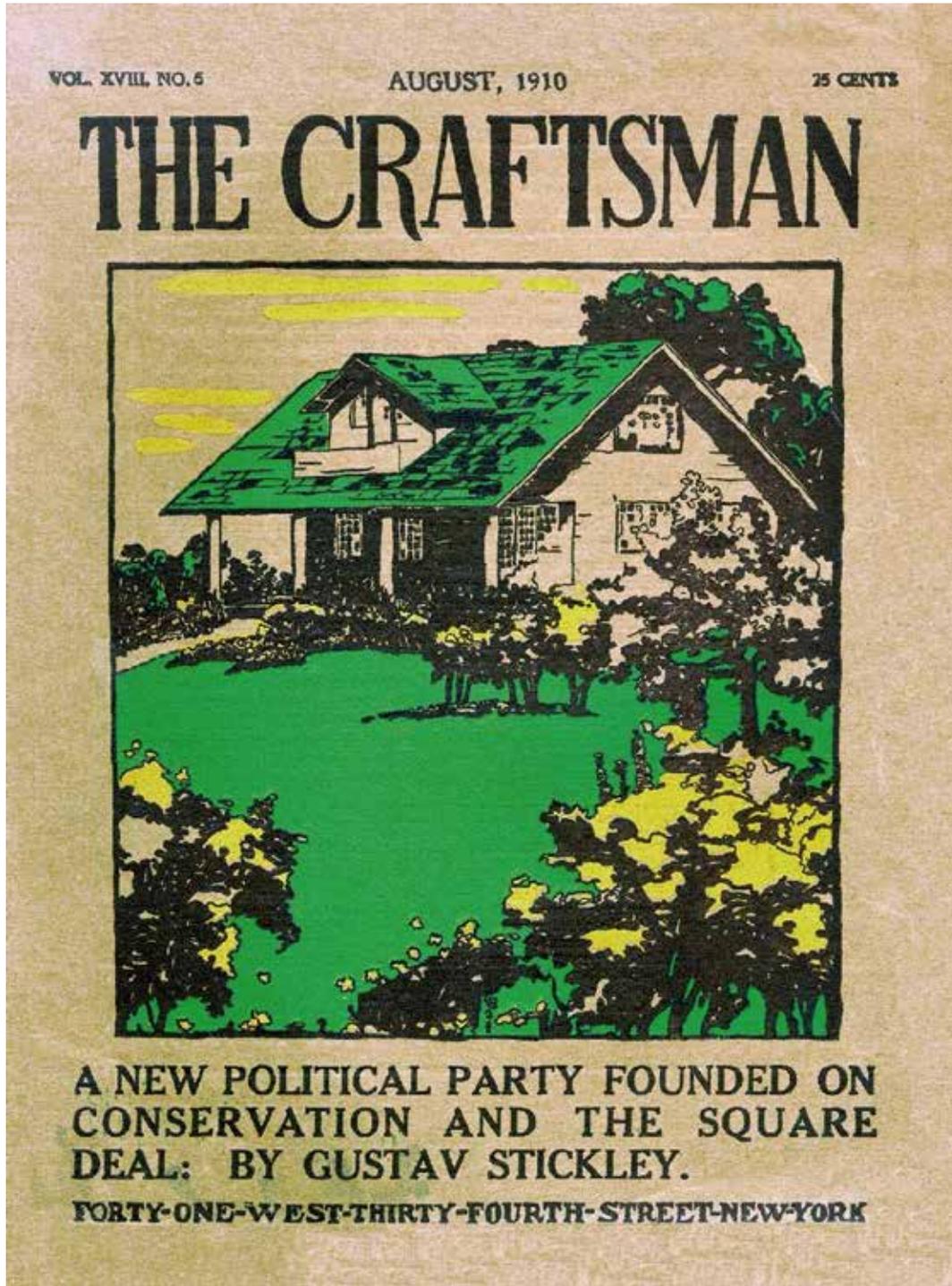


# Useful and Beautiful

Published by the  
William Morris Society in the United States  
Winter 2019.2



*The Craftsman* was published by Gustav Stickley from 1901 to 1916. In 1917 it merged with *Art World*.

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### The William Morris Society in the United States

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## LETTER TO MEMBERS:

The Governing Committee of the William Morris Society-US has been quite active these past six months. In addition to our monthly telephone meetings, we've been working at the following items:

**Facebook and Twitter:** Sarah Leonard maintains our Twitter account @MorrisSociety.US. Jane Carlin, our incoming president, has also made us a power on Facebook, with 6,700 likes thus far and new and often little-known material posted almost daily.

**Blog and E-Newsletter:** Meghan Freeman has continued to edit *News from Anywhere*, and recent issues have included reports on our Dunlap Award winner and other ongoing events. She would like to encourage members to submit suggestions and material for future posts.

Morna O'Neill has written and distributed our e-newsletter, sent out in January, April, August and November. She invites members to email her at [wmsusmembership@gmail.com](mailto:wmsusmembership@gmail.com) if they need to update their email address or haven't been getting the newsletter.

**Website and Membership:** We're planning a website redesign for late 2020 and are initiating a partnership with a professional membership database to tend to memberships.

**Ongoing Partnership with the UK William Morris Society:** The UK William Morris Society has agreed to hold bi-monthly meetings with our representatives, Jane Carlin, Michael Robertson, and Florence Boos, a move which we hope will enable us to be more fully apprised of Society events in Britain and to collaborate in future planning.

**New Affiliations:** As a result of the efforts of Maureen Meister, we've been accepted as an affiliated member of the College Art Association (CAA); and Morna O'Neill has applied on our behalf for membership in FABS, the Fellowship of American Bibliographic Societies (FABS).

**Modern Language Association 2020:** Our two sessions in Seattle January 11 and 12 were both gratifyingly successful. "Reevaluating the Pre-Raphaelites" provided new approaches by art historians to the art of Morris, Edward-Burne Jones, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the Arts and Crafts movement. The four talks were: Andrea Wolk Rager of Case Western University, "I Seek No Dream ... but Rather the End of Dreams: Exhibiting Edward Burne-Jones"; Monica Bowen of Seattle University, "The Radical Roots of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites"; Imogen Hart of the University of California, Berkeley, "Race and the Radicals: Victorian Racial Theory and the Arts and Crafts Movement"; and Julie F. Codell, Arizona State University, "Toward a Historiography of Pre-Raphaelite (Post) Modernism and the Future of the Pre-Raphaelite Past."

*Continued on page 13*

# THE THAMES JOURNEY FROM HAMMERSMITH TO KELMSCOTT

*Michael Robertson*

*Photos by Mary Pat Robertson and Martin Stott*

*Useful and Beautiful* is pleased to print the following online blog that appeared on the William Morris Society (U.K.) website from August 11-16, 2019, documenting a six-day voyage up the Thames from Kelmscott House in Hammersmith to Kelmscott Manor in Oxfordshire. Twelve Morris admirers – four from England, four from Japan, and four from the U.S. – followed in the wake of Morris, who made the voyage in 1880 and 1881 and who drew on his experiences in order to write about the journey his characters take in the climactic chapters of *News from Nowhere*. The blog was written by Michael Robertson, a member of the U.S. Morris Society, who was living in London for a year while researching his biography of Morris.



## DAY ONE

Early in the morning on Sunday, 11 August, with the Dove pub deserted and only the occasional jogger to be seen in Furnival Gardens, twenty-seven members of the William Morris Society gathered at Kelmscott House to commence the first leg of a journey from Hammersmith to Kelmscott Manor, reproducing two voyages William Morris made in 1880 and 1881.

Society Administrator Cathy De'Freitas provided the voyagers with tea and pastries, and WMS Chair Stephen Bradley lifted their spirits with a brief talk before the entire group headed the short distance to Dove Pier, where the MV Interceptor lay waiting. The Interceptor proved to be a far more commodious and much less eccentric craft than the one that Morris, his family, and four friends embarked in on 10 August, 1880: the Ark, which May Morris described as “a large punt with the body of a small omnibus on top of her, a sort of insane gondola.”

It took Morris most of the day to reach Hampton Court; we arrived there in under three hours. But we shared his delight in going up the Thames, “slipping between the lovely summer greenery.” The sun was shining, the wind whipping pleasantly,

and the moment we departed Dove Pier we were surrounded by wildlife – swans and cygnets, ducks, dozens of elegant, purposeful herons – and by hundreds of pleasure craft: sculls, sailboats, narrowboats, paddleboards, kayaks, and a gorgeous four-oared wooden rowboat that appeared identical to one that Morris might have seen.

Knowledgeable passengers pointed out landmarks: the Bull's Head pub, where Oliver Cromwell supposedly stayed while his army was encamped on nearby Oliver's Eyat; Syon



House, with an awkwardly sculpted lion perched on its summit; the gleaming white stucco façade of Marble Hill House; one of the turrets of Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill just visible above the trees of Twickenham.



Sooner than expected, we rounded a bend and found ourselves facing the beautiful, imposing gates of Hampton Court. Their elaborate gilt screens gleamed against the grey iron railings. The gates were designed in 1701 by Jean Tijou, a French refugee, for William III, though the thrifty monarch stiffed him

on his fee. Beyond the gates was the formal Privy Garden and beyond that the great east front of Hampton Court, a masterpiece of neoclassical symmetry.

The Interceptor pulled up at the mooring just beyond. The majority of voyagers scattered to have lunch, tour the palace and gardens, and then return to London; the dozen travelers staying on for the five-day voyage from Hampton Court to Kelmescott wheeled their suitcases to the Mitre Hotel.

Morris and his companions spent their first night at the Magpie Inn at Sunburg. When they arrived and sat down to dinner, Morris exclaimed, “What a stink!” “It is nothing, sir, I assure you,” the waiter placatingly replied. “Is it a sewer?” one



of the party asked. “Yes, sir, quite sure,” the waiter answered. Our twelve travelers mercifully escaped both bad smells and inadvertent puns.

## DAY TWO



Today was our first day on the Midsomer Maiden, a beautiful 12-passenger Edwardian-style launch. Departing from the dock of the Mitre Hotel in Hampton Court, we headed immediately for Molesey Lock, the first of eight locks we would encounter. All were “pound locks,” a

century-old technology that encloses boats in a “pound” – a dark, mossy holding tank. Over the course of several minutes the boat rises along with the inrushing water until you emerge into the light and air.

Freed from the lock, we moved ahead at the river’s speed limit of 8 kilometres – about 5 miles – an hour. That sounds slow, but on the low-slung launch it seemed a brisk pace, and



everyone pulled jackets from their daypacks and faced into the wind, admiring the beautiful scenery. Morris decried the “Cockney waters” of the Thames above Hampton Court; he

meant that the shores were lined with houses of the affluent middle class. We were more inclined to admire what now seem charming old houses, and we appreciated, once past Sunbury Lock, the long stretches on which the increasingly narrow river is lined only by greenery.

We quickly passed the point where the Wey empties into the Thames – mostly avoiding puns on the order of “There’s the Wey!” “Which Wey?” – and enjoyed looking, on Ruth Levitas’s cell phone, at Morris’s beautiful textile design “Wey,” part of his series of great designs named after tributaries of the Thames.

We stopped for an early lunch at Shepperton, followed by tea at the Runnymede Hotel. Our choice of teatime proved fortuitous: as soon as we entered the hotel, a violent rainstorm erupted. Fortunately, Sue McAllister had stayed behind in the boat, and

she and our skipper David battened the hatches. We’re unsure what that means: what they actually did was to unroll the plastic coverings around the Midsomer Maiden’s sides, saving our gear and seat cushions from getting soaked.

The rain soon ceased, the sun reappeared, and as we continued upriver David drew our attention to local birdlife, including multiple brilliantly coloured kingfishers and an elegant red kite. Thanks to technology, we were able to alert WMS Honorary Secretary Natalia Martynenko-Hunt to our arrival in her hometown of Old Windsor, and she took a photograph of us as we waited in the lock there.

Soon after, we arrived at our mooring place in Eton and met Keeper of Art Philippa Martin for a private tour of the celebrated Morris & Co. tapestries in Eton College Chapel. The College commissioned a copy of Edward Burne-Jones’s great “Adoration of the Magi” design in 1895; ten years later they added two flanking tapestries of Burne-Jones angels to commemorate the Old Etonians killed in the Boer War.

In “News from Nowhere” Morris’s characters stop at Eton.

Morris couldn’t resist a joke: founder Henry VI had intended the College to educate poor people’s sons, but “instead of teaching poor men’s sons to know something, they taught rich men’s sons to know nothing.” Nevertheless, concluded Morris, “it is still a delightful place.”

### DAY THREE

Travelling from Windsor to Marlow on his 1880 Thames journey, William Morris wrote, “the river was all new to me, and very beautiful.” We had the same experience on this clear, cool late-summer day.

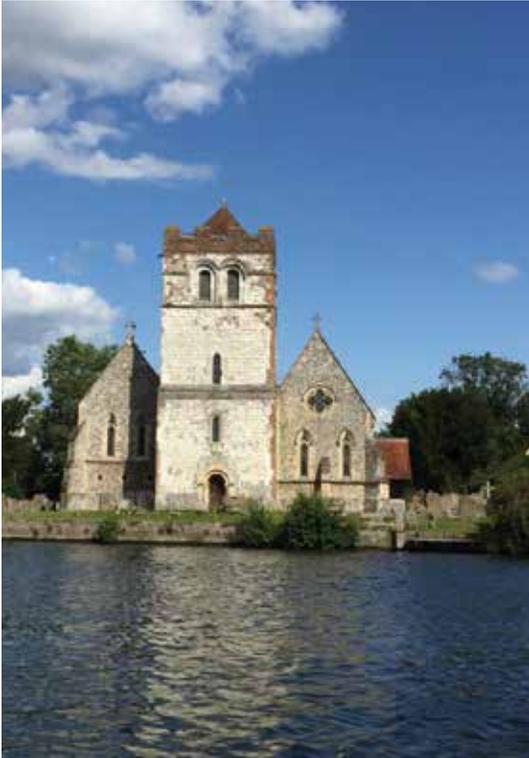
Heading out of Windsor, we soon came to Boveney Lock, where, as we waited behind a large pleasure boat, we could fully appreciate our skipper David’s skill. While the boat in front of us lurched from side to side in the narrow lock, David brought the Midsomer Maiden into the space with the ease of a hummingbird approaching a flower. When group member Richard Preston mentioned that he owns a small boat in Maine, David generously handed over the

helm, and under his guidance, Richard took the boat into the next lock with the same cool aplomb. The group responded with applause for both skippers.

Today was a long voyage, with eight locks included, but the time passed with great ease and pleasure. Ruth Levitas and Rob Hunter, no strangers to the Thames River and nearby Thames Path, looked over their guidebooks and maps, explaining sights to the rest of us. Megumi Ebina and Asa Inoue used Yasuo Kawabata’s translation of “News from Nowhere” as informal guidebook, while Yasuo and his wife Hisako read an English edition of Morris’s novel. Ann Layton suggested that people might like to stretch their legs, and so at Temple Lock everyone disembarked and met up with the boat at the next lock. The Thames Path between the two locks was narrow and bosky, an inviting refuge.

Along the way, we continued to pass all sorts of pleasure boats, countless beautiful birds, and numerous interesting buildings. Some of these structures Morris knew and loved, such as Bisham Church, with its massive 12th-century Norman tower. Some he knew and, one can be certain, hated, such





as Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Maidenhead Railway Bridge of 1839, now regarded as a marvel of Victorian engineering.

Morris certainly would have applauded our late-afternoon decision to delay our arrival in Henley in order to visit the ice cream boat moored just beyond Hurley Lock. As children played in the shallow water alongside, we gave our order to the genial captain/server, and left heavier by six cones and two tubs.

We reached Henley in early evening, delighted to arrive at this boat-mad town by water. We pulled up in front of the Leander, the famous rowing club – Henley Charter, owners of the Midsomer Maiden, had reserved rooms for the night. In addition, they had arranged for Peter Nahum, an art dealer famous for his appearances on Antiques Roadshow, to talk about Pre-Raphaelite art after our dinner at the club. Peter, an extremely entertaining speaker, brought along some spectacular items from his personal collection, which he casually passed around the table, including early drawings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones, a haunting Ford Madox Brown self-portrait formerly owned by Brown's son-in-law William Michael Rossetti, and a witty Burne-Jones caricature of William Morris mountain-climbing in Iceland. Perhaps the most striking item was a rare figure drawing by Morris, a design for a tile to be installed in Jesus College in Cambridge, one of Morris and Co.'s first important commissions.

On his 1880 trip, Morris recorded that he saw the Aurora Borealis at Marlow at 10:30 p.m. No one in our group reported any similar sighting – perhaps because by that time on a long day we were all heavily asleep.

#### DAY FOUR

"Here we were on the Thames that is the Thames, amidst the down-like country and all Cockneydom left far behind, and it was jolly."

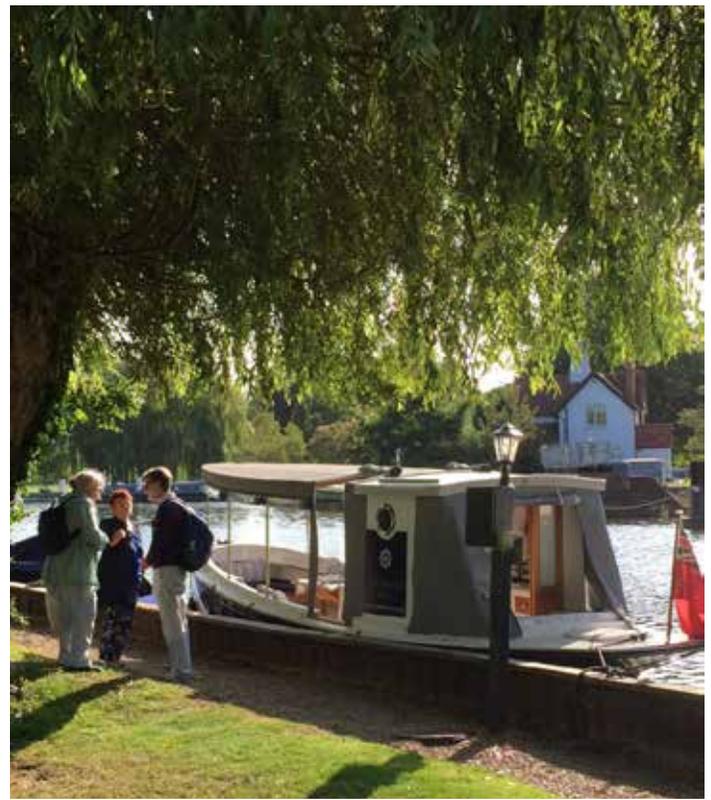
So wrote William Morris to Georgiana Burne-Jones, recounting his voyage on the river near Streatley and Goring. We also had a jolly day, despite near-constant rain. The Midsomer Maiden has clear plastic panels that can be unrolled and zipped together, and we felt exceptionally snug, and generally dry, on today's journey.

How do you pass the time on a rainy day inside a small boat? Admire the scenery, of course, though that was often obscured by the raindrops pooling down the boat's plastic windows. Michelle Preston worked on a Voysey needlework kit that she picked up at the Royal School of Needlework shop in Hampton Court. Michael Robertson read *La Belle Sauvage*, Philip Pullman's novel about a voyage on the Thames (though in the opposite direction and under different circumstances). Asa Inoue took a turn at the helm, valiantly steering us in low-visibility conditions. And after lunch at the wonderful Thames Lido in Reading (a beautiful transformation of the town's Edwardian-era Ladies Swimming Baths into a stylish pool/spa/restaurant), everyone participated in Thames Karaoke.

Thames Karaoke was invented when our skipper David, who can play tunes from his phone over the boat's small speaker, invited someone to name their favorite song. Rob Hunter was game and chose Judy Collins' cover of "In My Life." When we challenged him to sing along, Rob obliged, and Thames Karaoke was born. More Beatles-related songs followed. Yasuo Kawabata chose John Lennon's cover of "Stand by Me." Michael dedicated George Harrison's "Here Comes the Sun" to the next day's boating – a popular choice that led to Boatwide Karaoke.

Our skipper David, who's in his early twenties, marvelled: "You're introducing me to a whole new world of music." Our reply: "That's what comes of hanging out with baby boomers."





David made a thematically appropriate choice of his own, Bruce Springsteen’s “The River.” Ruth Levitas responded with Ewan MacColl’s “Sweet Thames, Flow Softly.” Ruth followed that triumph with a suite of Morris-related songs, including Leon Rosselson’s “Bringing the News from Nowhere” and Happy End’s version of a J. Bruce Glasier lyric, “We’ll Turn Things Upside Down.”

By the time the last round of Thames Karaoke was concluded, we were in the Goring Gap, a beautiful valley created when the Thames cut through chalk hills millions of years earlier. We docked at Streatley, a tiny village opposite Goring. For much of the day we’d been following the Oxfordshire-Berkshire border. Tomorrow we head north to Oxford, on a long and, according to forecasters, fine day. Here comes the sun.

#### DAY FIVE

“We were soon under way and going at a fair pace through the beautiful reaches of the river between Bensington and Dorchester.”

These words from “News from Nowhere” exactly describe the start of our fifth day on the Thames. We embarked with bright sun and a brisk wind up the river from Streatley towards Dorchester early this morning. We looked with pleasure on the green banks, the sparkling



water, the brilliantly colored kingfishers that seemed to be sporting with our boat, settling down in a willow just ahead of us then flashing out over the water as we approached, only to repeat the game.

David, our skipper, generously circulated steering duties during the day, and at various times Rob, Meg, Yasuo, Richard, Sue, and Michael took a turn. To our collective astonishment, the boat was not grounded, no collision ensued, and all hands remained on deck.

We ate our picnic lunches at a park by the river in Abingdon, with beautiful views both upriver (Abingdon Bridge) and down (St. Helen’s Church). Afterwards, we walked past the Abbey ruins and detoured into the Abbey gardens, where Richard, author of a book about North American redwoods, pointed out the beauties of the enormous Sequoia that had somehow found its way to Abingdon.

After lunch, it was time for a round of Thames Karaoke. Ruth and Rob had spent the previous evening assembling a playlist of River Songs that ranged from Paul Robeson to Joni Mitchell; even our barely-legal-age skipper was in awe of their eclectic good taste.

Before we knew it, we were at Iffley Lock. In the high-spirited group diary of Morris’s 1880 expedition up the Thames, William De Morgan added a marginal note: Iffley was “the original birthplace of hypotheses.” This occasioned

## DAY SIX

The last day of our six-day trip was marked by much rain, frequent laughter, regret at leaving the Midsomer Maiden, and pleasure on arriving at Kelmscott Manor.

This day, like the previous ones, began with a Morris Read-Around: each person read excerpts from the multiple accounts of Morris's voyages up the Thames. As we bobbed in the water at Godstow Lock, waiting our turn in the lock, we read a long excerpt from "News from Nowhere" that celebrates, in lushly descriptive prose, the Thames between Oxford and Kelmscott.

Even in the rain, it's an intensely beautiful part of the river. Once past the lock, we saw the remains of the medieval Godstow convent and then passed under the old, handsome, and very low stone bridge. Our boat cleared it by inches. If we had been fewer than twelve, we might not have weighed the boat down enough to make it. "Good thing we all had the full English breakfast," someone quipped.

Medieval bridges abound on this part of the river. Like Morris and his companions we passed under New Bridge – "called so," as their diary states, "because it was built in the 14th century and remains untouched to this day."

Past Oxford, all the locks are hand-operated. There are nine of them on this stretch of the river, and over the course of the day we came to love the rhythm of them: the noise of the boat's diesel engine revving in reverse as we sidled into place;



a response by Richard Grosvenor: "During this and the preceding day the whole party were frequently caused to groan in spirit by a succession of puns so outrageous that no words could describe them and no intelligent individual do ought else but shudder at the recollection of their numbers and nature."

We escaped Iffley unscathed by puns, but with time to admire the handsomest lock keeper's cottage we'd seen so far: a Cotswold stone cottage surrounded by flowers, with lashings of lavender, rococo rosebeds, and a profusion of hollyhocks, fuchsia, cardoons, ladies' mantle, and creeping geranium.

We arrived in Oxford in time to check in at the hotel before hustling to the town centre to meet Martin Stott and Jane Bingham. Martin and Jane had arranged a viewing of Morris-related sites, beginning with the famous – or notorious – Oxford Union murals executed by Rossetti, Morris, Burne-Jones and friends during the long vacation of 1857. The tour also included Exeter College, where both Morris and Burne-Jones were undergraduates, and Harris Manchester College chapel, home to an extraordinary collection of great Morris & Co. windows. In a narrow passage off Holywell Street, Jan Marsh spoke about the birthplace of Jane Burden Morris just before we passed the former stables where Jane's father worked as a groom.

By the time of our tour, the wind had died, all clouds had disappeared, and in the late afternoon sunlight the Cotswold stone of the colleges assumed its most alluring, golden hues.

William Morris fell in love with Oxford when he arrived in 1853; the city proved just as seductive in 2019.



the sudden silence when our skipper cut the engine, followed by the turbulent whoosh of water rushing into the lock as the sluices are opened; the pleasure of the boat rising from the semi-dark at the bottom of the pound to the light at its top.

We were joined on this final leg of the journey by another 12-passenger launch. A dozen members of the William Morris Society gathered in Oxford for a one-day voyage on the Golden Slumbers, an electric boat. In order to preserve the batteries, its skipper kept his speed to about four miles an hour, and we followed suit. Our Slow Travel experience became even slower, which gave us a chance to relax fully, to enjoy the sinuous course of the river, and to appreciate the wildflowers that lined its bank in a continuous display of convolvulus, willow herb, purple loosestrife, Michaelmas daisies, and teasles, along with quantities of bulrushes, reeds, and the willow trees that Morris loved so intensely.

We were on the water for nine hours; it seemed short. Before we knew it we were walking towards Kelmscott Manor, where we were greeted by curator Kathy Haslam and Morris Society Chair Stephen Bradley.

Here is how William Morris described the experience in “News from Nowhere”:

We crossed the road, and again almost without my will my hand raised the latch of a door in the wall, and we stood presently on a stone path which led up to the old house ... My companion gave a sigh of pleased surprise and enjoyment; nor





did I wonder, for the garden between the wall and the house was redolent of the June flowers, and the roses were rolling over one another with that delicious super-abundance of small well-tended gardens which at first sight takes away all thought from the beholder save that of beauty. The blackbirds were singing their loudest, the doves were cooing on the roof-ridge, the rooks in the high elms-trees beyond were garrulous among the young leaves, and the swifts wheeled whining about the gables. And the house itself was a fit guardian for all the beauty of this heart of summer.

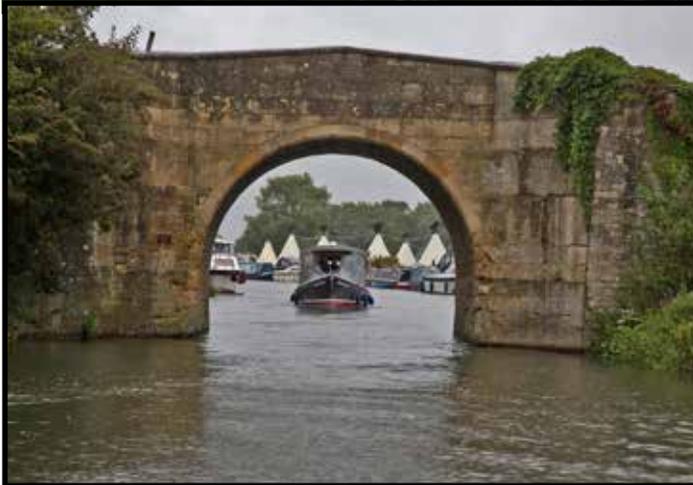
Once again Ellen echoed my thoughts as she said: “Yes, friend, this is what I came out for to see; this many-gabled old house built by the simplest of country-folk of the long-past times, regardless of all the turmoil that was going on in cities and courts, is lovely still ...

She led me up close to the house, and laid her shapely sun-browned hand and arm on the lichened wall as if to embrace it and cried out, “O me! O me! How I love the earth, and the seasons, and weather, and all things that deal with it, and all that grows out of it – as this has done!”

Above, Michael Robertson  
below, Voyagers celebrate at The Plough in Kelmescott







PHOTOS ON PAGES 11-12  
BY MARTIN STOTT

- Voyagers at The Plough in Kelmscott
- Godstow Abbey ruins
- Shifford Lock keeper
- Oxfordshire Bridge Near Kelmscott Manor
- Pastures near Kelmscott Manor
- Rainy Arrival at Kelmscott Manor

(continued from page 2)

Although held during the last conference session, “Ecosocialism and the Late Victorians also drew a good attendance. The three talks were “A Pretty Never-Never Land: Ecosocialism and William Morris’s *News from Nowhere*,” by Jude V. Nixon, Salem State University; “William Morris’s Ecosocialism, Then and Now,” by Frank A. Palmieri of the University of Miami; and “Full Steam Ahead: Ecosocialist Thinking in Late-Century Women’s Fiction,” by Heidi Aijala, Pierce College and the University of Iowa. Comments during the discussion period centered on Morris’s views on women and on female socialists and Arts and Crafts practitioners of the period.

**Dearborn House Event:** Our special event during the conference was “Celebrating the Arts & Crafts Movement and William Morris,” held Saturday, January 11, 2020, at the Dearborn House in Seattle from 2-5 p. m. Arranged in conjunction with the Book Club of Washington and coordinated and hosted by Morris Society president Jane Carlin, the celebration featured four speakers:

**Lawrence Kreisman**, author of numerous articles and co-author with Glenn W. Mason of the authoritative *The Arts & Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest* (2007), spoke on the influence of Morris on design in the Pacific Northwest;

**Gary Ackerman**, the President of the Book Club of Washington and collector of the works of noted Arts and Crafts designer and papermaker Dard Hunter, shared books from his collection and discussed the works of Hunter, who was influenced by Morris. See [www.dardhunter.com](http://www.dardhunter.com);

**Yoshiko Yamamoto**, co-proprietor and designer for the Arts & Crafts Press, presented a history of her involvement with and ideals for the press. Located in Tacoma, Washington, the Arts and Crafts Press produces outstanding letterpress, multi-color and lino block prints in a modern interpretation of the Arts & Crafts aesthetic. For her work, see [artsandcraftspress.com](http://artsandcraftspress.com);

**Michael Crow**, the author and illustrator of books on furniture design, including *Building Classic Arts & Crafts Furniture* (2013) and *Mackintosh Furniture* (2017), gave a presentation on how the Arts & Crafts movement found expression in American furniture design throughout the upper Northwest. Information about Michael’s work may be found at [www.1910craftsman.com](http://www.1910craftsman.com).

In all these presentations provided a wealth of inspiring information on the history and continuing legacy of the Arts and Crafts movement throughout the upper Northwest. After the talks, guests enjoyed conversing over a reception of wine and other refreshments.

We wish to thank especially outgoing member Kelly Fitzpatrick for her thorough and effective planning which has helped make our recent MLA sessions a success. We’re also delighted to welcome returning member Michael Robertson and new members Brandiann Molby and Imogen Hart. A fuller introduction to our returning and new board members appears next column.

With best wishes to all for 2020! From the Governing Committee: Jane Carlin, President, Paul Acker, Mark Samuels Lasner, Melissa Buron, David Lowden, Sarah Leonard, Meghan Freeman, Morna O’Neill, Maureen Meister, Michael Robertson, Brandiann Molby, Imogen Hart, and Florence Boos.

## NEW AND RETURNING GOVERNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:



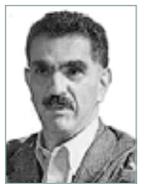
**Brandiann Molby** is an instructor at Loyola University Chicago and Rush University, and she researches 19th-century visual culture and word/image theory. Her 2018 dissertation focuses on the Kelmscott Press and Morris’s contribution to Victorian aesthetics. She is also a founding member of the Loyola University Chicago Victorian Society.



**Imogen Hart** is the author of *Arts and Crafts Objects* and co-editor of *Rethinking the Interior, c. 1867–1896: Aestheticism and Arts and Crafts*. She has contributed chapters on William Morris to various edited collections, including *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites* and the recently published *Teaching William Morris*. Her current book project explores the Arts and Crafts movement and its legacies. She now teaches at the University of California-Berkeley.



**Michael Robertson** is a professor of English at The College of New Jersey. He is the author of three award-winning books; the most recent is *The Last Utopians: Four Late Nineteenth-Century Visionaries and Their Legacy* (Princeton UP, 2018), a group biography of William Morris and three contemporaries. He has written essays for *Teaching William Morris*, edited by Elizabeth Miller and Jason Martinek, and the forthcoming *Companion to William Morris*, edited by Florence Boos, and he has published multiple essays and reviews in *Useful and Beautiful*. He spent the 2018-19 academic year in London, where he was an Honorary Research Fellow at Birkbeck College, University of London, while researching his current book project, a biography of Morris.



**Mark Samuels Lasner** is a senior research fellow at the University of Delaware Library, A collector, bibliographer, and typographer who specializes in late Victorian literature and art, he is the author of several bibliographies, including *The Bookplates of Aubrey Beardsley* (Rivendale Press, 2008), *The Yellow Book: A Checklist and Index* (Eighteen Nineties Society, 1998), and *William Allingham: A Bibliographical Study* (Holmes Publishing Co., 1993). He served as president of the William Morris Society-US 1989-2009.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE: A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH  
TIMES AND GENRES

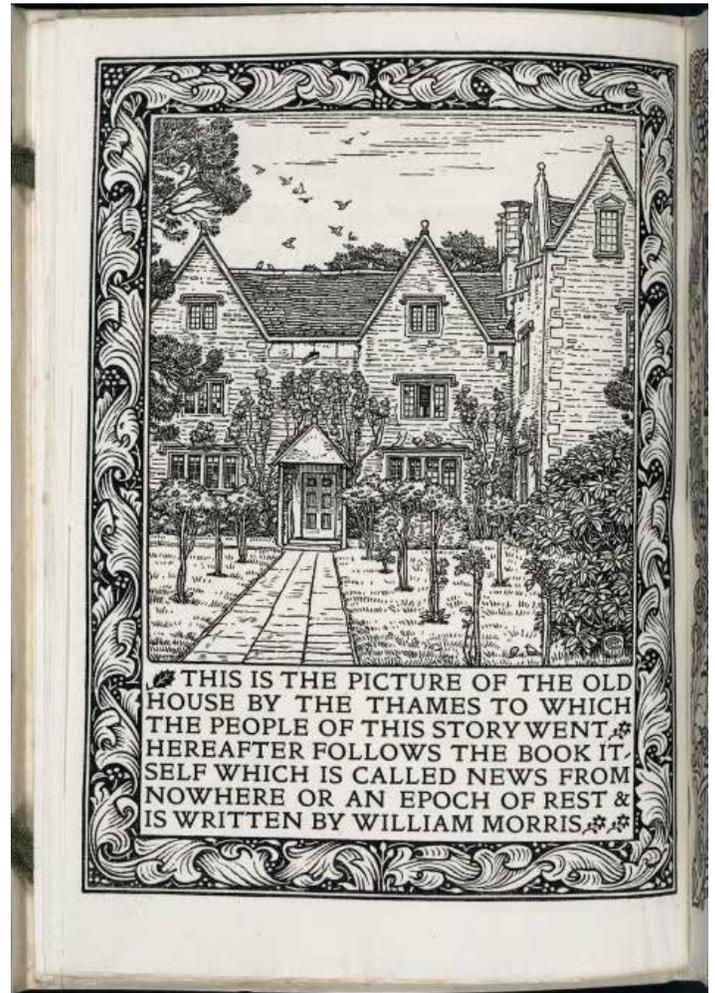
Michelle Queen

It might be said that William Morris was a man in perpetual motion. Physically restless, “his disconcerting habit of pacing up and down a room like a caged lion to work off his superabundant energy” (MacCarthy viii) describes a soul that wanted to go in all directions at once. His mastery of and fascination with topics political and artistic can make it frustrating to settle on a single point of entry. One possibility is to consider Morris as a literary pilgrim and investigate the goals of his search. True to form, when he adopts this role in *News from Nowhere*, he functions as more than a pilgrim because the narrative is much more than a pilgrimage to a set destination that concludes with enlightenment. The complete title, *News from Nowhere or an Epoch of Rest, being some chapters from a Utopian Romance*, tells the reader which genres will be included, and others—the dream vision and fairy tale—will join the first two. All of them can fit within a literary pilgrimage. Each genre can include an element of questing or pursuit, led by a pilgrim who is also a narrator-dreamer, and the search itself is to find meaning in a world currently trapped in heartless capitalism.

Morris’s conflation of three eras into one that illustrates his idea of perfection is just one of the ways this utopian romance challenges the reader. He has shifted his focus from literally bringing medieval England to life in the nineteenth century to creating a new Middle Ages. *News from Nowhere* comes from the imagination, hence the dream vision genre:

[I]t shows the past, present, and future converging in the timeless, ageless realm of dreams. The shift away from an historical base is significant, for Morris has moved from the irretrievable to the possible and from creation of historical legend to the engendering of psychological and sociological myth. (Silver 141)

As already mentioned, utopia is the narrative’s stated genre, controlling the romance’s content, and utopias can be allegorical and didactic to the point of tedium: “The Guest [William Morris] is regularly lectured ... [by its inhabitants] on how utopian [Nowhere] is. Sometimes provoked to counterarguments by what he perceives as error or complacency, but more often to ask a question, he does manage to break up the lectures somewhat. But these conventions can lead to a relentless didacticism of tone” (Lewis 57). *News*, however, still stands as a compendium of Morris’s interests and beliefs, a reflection of “his enthusiasm for his own specialized brand of aesthetic socialism” (Kelmscott *Chaucer*, ix): “The vision which he offered in *News from Nowhere*, the Utopian romance which brings together so many of his most important concerns ... is still worthy of our attention” (Faulkner ix). Peter Faulkner feels he must make an argument to encourage the twenty-first century reader to delve into this “Utopian romance,” and on a first experience, it is



Kelmscott Press frontispiece, 1892.

Engraved woodcut frontispiece designed by C.M. Gere.

clear why the urging is necessary. The organization of the book, particularly the first chapter, can feel awkward. It begins in the third person with an unnamed Morris leaving a Socialist meeting where the discussion has turned to “what would happen on the Morrow of the Revolution?” (*NN* 1). After a few pages, the storyteller realizes that the narrative would be more powerful if told with the immediacy of first-person voice. The recorder of events agrees that it “will be the easier and more natural ... since I understood the feelings and desires of the comrade of whom I am telling better than anyone else in the world does” (4). Morris thus builds duality into the story from the start, and this mysterious listener-cum-narrator quickly takes on the mantle of Morris himself.

The story starts afresh, and the dreamer-pilgrim walks out into a “beautiful night of early winter, the air just sharp enough to be refreshing after [leaving] the [Socialist meeting] and the stinking railway carriage” (*NN* 2). Breathing in the cold causes “discontent and trouble to slip off [me]” and Morris wishes for a glimpse of the world after a workers’ revolution: “If I could but see a day of it” (2). His wish provides impetus for the dream-state to begin, with dreamer and dream initially following the rules surrounding dream visions themselves. Morris

has a specific idea in mind, after the clock strikes a magical three times, and falls into a deep slumber that will be filled with “surprising adventures” (*NN* 3). The dream vision opens on a “beautiful bright morning seemingly of early June (5), and a swim in the Thames—in the nineteenth-century, a swim in a cesspool—clears the dreamer’s head as he notices the clean water and the river full of salmon nets (6-7). Then he notices a greater difference:

For though there was a bridge across the stream and houses on its banks, how all that was changed from last night! The soap-works with their smoke-vomiting, chimneys were gone; ... the lead-works were gone... . [A]nd the bridge! I had perhaps dreamed of such a bridge, but never seen such a one out of an illuminated manuscript. (7)

When Morris asks a waterman the bridge’s age, the reader finally knows, chronologically-speaking, where the pilgrim-dreamer has landed: “Oh, not very old... . [I]t was built, or at least opened in, 2003” (8). Aware of his own participation in the dream, Morris is not distressed by his anachronistic presence, maintaining the basic generic forms.

This waterman, Dick, is nonplussed by the stranger’s appearance, but Morris is fascinated with him: “[Dick] spoke in a way so unlike what I should have expected from a Hammersmith waterman, that I stared at him,”

[A] handsome young fellow, with a peculiarly pleasant and friendly look about his eyes,—an expression which was quite new to me... . His dress would have served very well as a costume for a picture of fourteenth-century life. (6)

Morris includes many more particulars, but it is most significant that he sees this futuristic century of the past as the prototype for a society where a working man, a waterman, is not a member of the lower classes but regarded as an especially manly and refined young gentleman. Dick is also confident enough to offer Morris the pilgrim-dreamer assistance: “If you think that you can put up with me, pray take me as your guide” (11). The tour Dick proposes begins in Hammersmith and goes up the Thames to Oxfordshire, and it becomes clear the destination, the end of the pilgrimage, is important.

Guest is next given a second dream guide who leads him through the social and political landscape. He is Old Hammond, Dick’s grandfather, and due to his great store of knowledge about English history, including the nineteenth century, he is also called the Sage of Bloomsbury. Morris meets the old man, and “I was now looking at him harder than good manners allowed ... for in truth his face ... seemed strangely familiar to me; as if I had seen it before—in a looking glass it might be” (58). Old Hammond is one hundred and five years old (57), and so maybe Morris meets with his future self. Old Hammond makes his home in the British Museum and has been the “custodian of books for many years... . He looks upon himself as a part of the books, or the books a part of him” (56). He seems

like a relic himself, still useful but antiquated; perhaps the pursuits and enthusiasms of the Victorian Morris, the design firm and rarefied printing press, are not wanted in this fourteenth/twenty-first century England. This society’s beauty is natural, without artifice, and its dismissal of intellectual pursuits would surely have raised the hackles of Morris the aesthete.

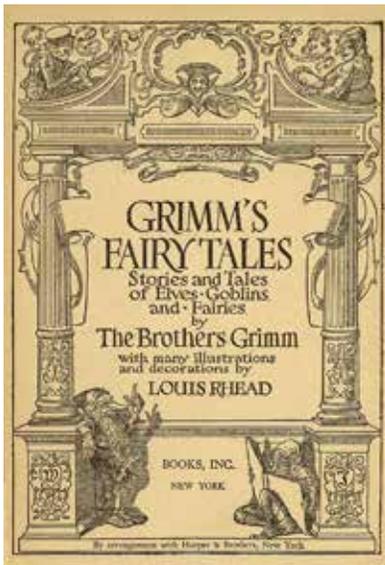
Old Hammond’s view of Morris’s era finds a society unable to find solutions to its problems. He explains that the “nineteenth century saw itself as a man who has lost his clothes whilst bathing and has to walk around naked through the town (107). No amount of finery or aristocratic posturing could disguise its mistreatment of the working people, abuse supported by a corrupt political system. As much as Morris, in his real and dream life, wanted to see significant social change, he was not eager for war, and he wonders how much worse the situation had to become to justify actual battle: “What peace was there amongst those poor confused wretches of the nineteenth century? It was war from beginning to end bitter war, till hope and pleasure put an end to it” (115-16). If one believes that unless everyone shares in the benefits of a socially-equitable system, none of its elements can exist, war—as seen by Old Hammond—is the only way to achieve total victory.

Those born after the Revolution have not experienced or seen the injustices that existed, so to avoid taking freedom for granted, they participate in commemorations. For instance, in the “easterly communities of London,” May Day is celebrated as “The Clearing of the Misery” (72), with games and feasting held “on the site of some of the worst slums” (73). Poems like Thomas Hood’s “The Song of the Shirt,” the story of the Victorian seamstress who loses her sight to endless piecework sewn in literal and figurative darkness, are performed as “old revolutionary song[s]” (73). While listening to a beautiful young girl sing, Old Hammond remarks how strange it is

“to hear those terrible words ...coming from [her] ... [while] she is unconscious of their real meaning... . [H]ow glorious life has grown!” (73).

There seems to be a disconnect here. What will happen if there is no longer an Old Hammond to remind others of the misery that preceded the joy? If the books in the British Museum are forgotten, can this utopia be supportable? Utopias concentrate on what has been perfected and is now a constant way of life; they have faith in the constancy of what has been achieved. In that sense, it is not reasonable to criticize a genre beyond its boundaries.

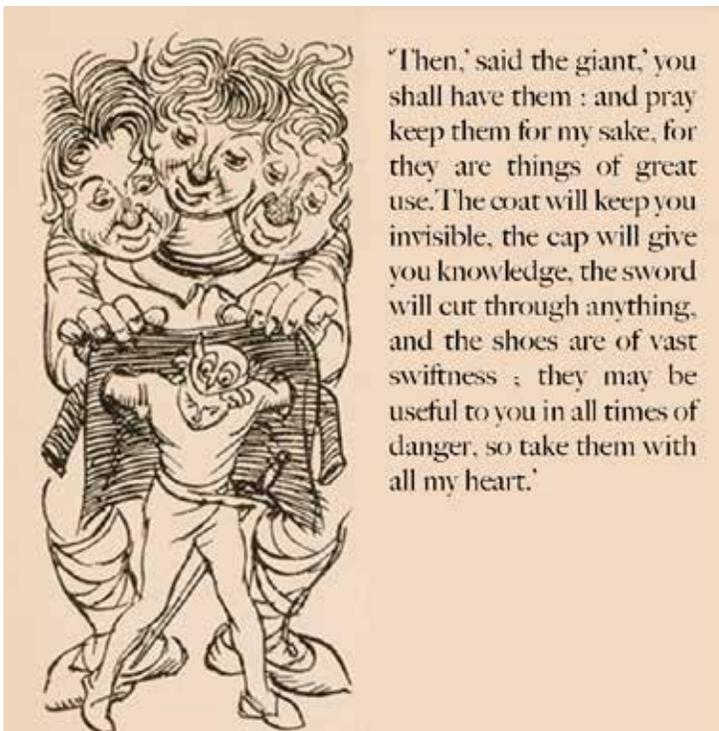
One of the last questions recalls Ruskin’s belief that work should be a personally satisfying activity, not thought of as an onerous task forced upon the worker. Morris understood the realities of a capitalist system, but he still wanted labor itself to be rewarding. So, the question could be interpreted as preparing for a socialist answer that supports its own social agenda: “[H]ow do you get people to work when there is no reward



of labour?” (101). Old Hammond believes that in the nineteenth century, all work was equated with suffering, but in the reformed society, “the reward of labour is life” (101). Prior to this conversation with Old Hammond, Guest walks through London with Dick and is curious about the numbers of children working in the shops. Dick explains that in earlier days “a good many people were afflicted with a disease called Idleness,

the object of Revolution? Surely to make people happy[,] ... and happiness without daily work is impossible” (102). Morris the dreamer thinks that Ruskin’s vision of play existing in work eludes people of the nineteenth century; Old Hammond, in the new century that embodies aspects of an older one, tells the dreamer that “**all** work is pleasurable” (102, emphasis mine). He also believes that the post-Revolution society, in which laborers do not seek pleasure but encounter it daily in work, shares much with the long-ago medieval past: “More akin to our way of looking at life was the spirit of the Middle Ages, to whom heaven and the life of the next world was such a reality that it became to them a part of life upon the earth” (147). The England of the future, progressively improving, seems an amalgamation of its past, present, and future; the rebel warriors and their descendants do not hope and wait for their Valhalla but experience it daily.

Morris the writer pushes the bliss of the society a step further into an additional genre, the fairy tale, expanding the reader’s understanding of utopia. The narrative continues to evoke a journey—a dreamer-pilgrim’s journey, the utopian tour, Morris’s journey back to a place of happiness—as Dick, Morris, and Clara—a female version of Dick that is happiest living and working in nature—row upriver towards Oxfordshire, where Dick has promised to help with haymaking. As they move through the water, Morris feels “[h]is youth come back” (161), maybe his youth as a boy in his suit of armor enacting a fairytale in Essex. Earlier in the text, Morris tells Old Hammond that the “curious pleasant imaginations ... Jacob Grimm got together from the childhood of the world” represented “childishness” and nothing more (111). However, as he floats on the river, those pleasant imaginations have nothing of that negative connotation. When the party reaches Runnymede,—certainly an appropriate place for the novel’s action—they meet a young woman whose appearance is reminiscent of a fairy. She is in the cottage where they have been offered lodging, “light-haired and grey-eyed... . [H]er gown was of silk, and on her wrists were bracelets that seemed to me to be of great value... . [She] danced around us in delight of our company” (166). Her name is Ellen—she and her grandfather live in the cottage—and she has a strange and almost wild beauty” (170). Ellen is in love with the natural world and sees the information in books as too distant from nature, which is the real source of knowledge, echoing the novel’s earlier criticisms of reliance on books and government-controlled education. Teasing her grandfather, who could be seen as another curmudgeonly figure representing Morris, she advises that instead of searching the printed page for life’s answers, he should just look out the window: “Books, books! Always books, grandfather! When will you understand that after all it is the world we live in which interests us; the world of which we are a part, and which we can never love too much” (168). Morris the writer, poet, printer has been engaged in a life of books, the life of the mind; he communicates his belief in nature’s power through words and design.



Hugh Thomson, illustrator. *Jack the Giant Killer*. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1898

because they were the direct descendants of those who had in bad times used to force other people to work for them... [They were] called slave-holders or employers... . I’m glad to say that all that is gone by now.” (43)

Guest thinks that this change is more important than any other; in his hierarchy of wrongs, “Idleness” was the source from which all other wrongs come: “Can you tell me how you have come to this happy condition?” (102), he asks. Revolutions may be inspired by a noble goal, but after the rebels have won and there is no need for the kind of unity that battle requires, the fundamental motive behind the rebel cause must be reaffirmed, and Old Hammond remembers that motive: “What is

The divide between the natural and intellectual man is not resolved, but Morris the pilgrim is definitely enchanted by Ellen, the fairy child of nature.

At this point the generic expectations and typical features of the fairy tale become more obvious. The next morning, outside the cottage Morris sees Ellen, glowing in the sun, “her eyes like jewels, and Dick comments, “Doesn’t it all look like one of those very stories out of Grimm[?] ... Here we are ... wandering about the world, and we have come to a fairy garden, and there is the very fairy herself” (174). Aware of his status as a time-traveler, Guest reminds Dick that he, the dreamer, is not part of the tale, and Dick admits, “That’s true. You had better consider that you have got the cap of darkness, and are seeing everything, yourself invisible” (174). The waterman has “touched [Guest] on [his] weak side of not feeling sure of [his] position in this beautiful new country” (174). Morris/Guest is more an observer than a participant, and he is not content with the role a dreamer must play.

As the pilgrimage continues, Guest enjoys the sights of buildings and landscapes much improved by the current society, but rowing on the river must come to a destination. On the third day, Ellen joins the party in her own green boat and takes Guest as her passenger. Here Guest reveals to Ellen that he understands the past so well because he has travelled from that time, but Ellen is not surprised: “I saw that you were not one of us” (211). On the shore, they walk along through the overgrowth to find “an old house amongst new folk [and] ... a fit guardian for all the beauty of this heart of summer” (226-27). Ellen declares, “This is what I came ... to see; this many-gabled house built by the simple country-folk of the long-past times.... It seems to me as if it had waited for these happy days” (227). The house is Kelmscott Manor, a home that Morris lived in sporadically until the end of his life in 1896; it is identified in the frontispiece of *News from Nowhere* as “the old house by the Thames to which the people of this story went; hereafter follows the book itself which is called *News from Nowhere or An Epoch of Rest.*” Kelmscott Manor is “[a]n archetypal building, the place which time forgot” (MacCarthy 312), and Morris the writer knows that Morris the dreamer’s time in the ivied house will be fleeting, as will be his time with Ellen, and he does not want to share them with anyone else: “I dreaded lest the others should come in suddenly and break the spell [Ellen] cast about me” (227). Ellen, aware that the dream is almost at an end, calls Morris back: “I must not let you go off into [your] dream so soon. If we must lose you, I want you to see all that you can see first before you go back again” (229). The dreamer is at the mercy of whatever controls his time in dreams of the future.

As Dick and Morris head to the feast that celebrates hay-making, Dick mentions the coming change of the seasons and cannot help but feel “the coming of dark days, and the shorn fields and empty gardens; ... It is, then, in the autumn, when one almost believes in death.... [I wonder why] in the midst of



Midsummer Eve (c. 1908) by Edward Robert Hughes

summer abundance ... that I must needs trouble myself about the winter and its scantiness... . If it hadn’t happened to me before, I should have thought it was your doing, guest; that you had thrown a kind of evil charm over me” (232-33).

This is the second time that Dick has reminded Morris that he is only a temporary visitor, and if the visit ends, the dreamer has his own dark magic to blame. The haymaking feast is spread in the local church, “a simple little building, ... the windows mostly of the graceful Oxfordshire fourteenth-century type” (235), and it is fitting that the feast take place in what represents the actual Kelmscott Church. Morris the dreamer observes but is not visible to those around him: “[Dick] made no response to my glance—nay, he seemed to take no heed at all of my presence, and I noticed that none of the company looked at me” (236). The pilgrimage has ended; only Ellen notices his vague presence, and “she *did* seem to recognize me for an instant; but her bright face turned sad directly, and she shook her head with a mournful look, and the next moment all consciousness of my presence had faded from her face” (236).

Morris leaves the church, “lonely and sick at heart” (236), and as his dream dissolves the last person that acknowledges him is not one of the free citizens but like someone from the nineteenth century he had left. The man “looked old, ... he eyes dull and bleared; ... His clothing was a mixture of dirt and rags long over-familiar to me... . [And] he touched his hat with some real good-will and courtesy, and much servility” (236). After some days in a society with no class division, no necessity

to tug one's forelock, Morris is stunned as he crosses the gulf between waking and sleeping, and "a black cloud roll[ed] to meet me, like a nightmare of my childish days" (237).

Morris, however, does not remain in the dark, and *News from Nowhere* is cautiously optimistic. Thinking about his dream, the narrator tries to describe his feelings: "I lay in my bed ... trying to consider if I was overwhelmed with despair at finding I had been dreaming a dream; and strange to say, I found that I was not so despairing" (226). By setting this romance in the future, Morris is not only able to construct that world according to his imagination, he is also allowed to believe that great changes are yet to come. As Guest, Morris has journeyed ahead of the rest, a pilgrim on a reconnaissance mission, and he must now be a sort of prophet, a living symbol of how good life might be. He imagines what Ellen's parting words could have been: "[Y]ou cannot be one of us... . Go back again, now that you have seen us, and your outward eyes have learned ... there is yet a time of rest in store for the world... . Go back again and be the happier for having seen us, for having added a little hope to your struggle. Go on living while you may, striving ... to build up little by little the new day of fellowship, and rest, and happiness" (228).

Since he did not make *News from Nowhere* an instruction manual for establishing his idea of a socialist world, Morris escapes critics who might point to certain laws or rules as impossible to make or enforce. His dream focuses on the spirit of Nowhere, finding "happiness and freedom of humanity in harmony with nature" (Lewis 62). Since such a dream has come to him, Morris the narrator believes that "if others can see it as I have seen it, then it may be called a vision rather than a dream" (228). Speaking to the naysayers, "The enemy of the dreamer of better times to come is the ideologist of the present, armed ... with the claim that the prevailing relationships of oppression are immutable... . [Yet] history can explode... . And when it does it is ignited by those who have dared to dream" (Coleman and O'Sullivan 11). Of course, Morris did not see the rise of state socialism and Communism and, since those systems depended on state control, would most likely have welcomed their fall. But aspects of socialism were realized, and remain a part of politics, a reality that most in nineteenth-century England could not have envisioned. Morris begins with romance, adds utopia, and layers other genres such that the result is a unified text. *News from Nowhere* is definitely one of Morris's most successful attempts at turning one of his dreams into something available to the rest of the world.

Michelle Queen completed her doctorate at the University of Georgia on the interplay between medieval and Victorian literature. She lives in Chapel Hill, NC.

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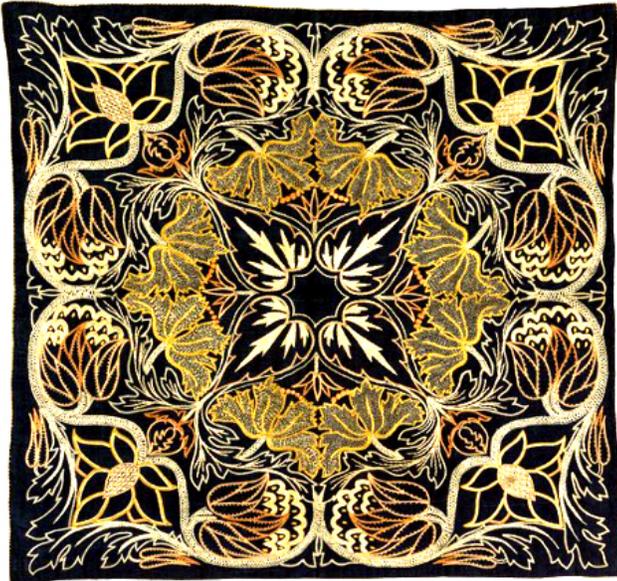
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### 2020 DUNLAP AWARD WINNER ANNA FLINCHBAUGH

The William Morris Society in the U.S. is pleased to award the 2020 Dunlap Fellowship to Anna Flinchbaugh. Ms. Flinchbaugh holds a BA in Anthropology and Environmental Studies from Middlebury College. She is currently a candidate in Pratt Institute's M.S.L.I.S. and M.A. History of Art and Design program. Her research focuses on late nineteenth and early twentieth century textile design history. Here is Ms. Flinchbaugh's summary of her project, "The Mycorrhizal Morris: A Network Analysis of the Morris & Co. Embroidery Workshop";



Drawing upon my roots in anthropology as well as my recent experiences with linked data in library and information sciences, my research in design history is centered on the deep conviction that more nuanced understandings of aesthetic impulses and influences are made possible through the examination of holistic communities than through exemplary individuals. While William Morris was certainly a singular genius, a true understanding of the reach of his ideas requires looking not simply at his own accomplishments, but at the wider network of artists, makers, suppliers, and customers that he brought together. The Morris & Co. Embroidery Workshop provides an ideal site to begin this web-weaving. My previous academic work within Pratt Institute's History of Art and Design graduate program has revolved heavily around nineteenth century textiles and embroidery, including research on May Morris and floral wallpapers for Anca Lasc's *Daughters of Eve: Glamorized Femininity, Fashion, and Interiors From Versailles To Today* and on the Medieval roots of the art needlework movement for Frima Hofrichter's *Art by Women: 15th Century to the Present*. I recently returned to research on May and William Morris in my work as a curatorial intern for the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum's upcoming exhibition *Botanical Expressions*, a project that solidified for me the feedback loops between natural environment and artistic expression that underpin the work of the Morris & Co. Embroidery Workshop.



Cushion Cover (ca. 1900) embroidered by May Morris.  
This work is part of the *Botanical Expressions* exhibition at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum.

Finally, echoing William Morris's conviction of the importance of firsthand experience, I also draw upon more than five years of work as a natural dyer and textile artist. Building upon the work of Morris scholars such as Virginia Davis and Ray Watkinson, my current research aims to explore the ways in which the personal and professional relationships between the individuals at the Leek Embroidery Society, Merton Abbey Mills, and Morris & Co. Embroidery Workshop, as well as private contractors for Morris & Co, impacted the aesthetic output of the firm. Operating within the frameworks of political economy and ecology, this work hopes to make more visible Morris's guiding belief in the dialectical relationship between the goods produced and the means of production. It will trace object histories from the gathering of dyestuffs to the purchase of pillows, taking note of all the human relationships that form along those journeys. The Huntington Library in San Marino holds a rich trove of resources that address these questions, including Morris's Merton Abbey Dyebook and letters of William and May Morris. Given the rare and fragile nature of these materials, an in-person visit to the library is a must for my research needs. Once these ideas are investigated and arranged, the Centre for the History of Retailing and Distribution's forthcoming conference *Retailing, Distribution and the Natural World: Historical Perspectives* presents an ideal staging ground for this conversation, through its emphasis on the intersections of ecology, aesthetics, and consumption. I would like to use any funding provided by the Dunlap Fellowship to support my travel to the Huntington Library and to *Retailing, Distribution and the Natural World: Historical Perspectives* conference. Ultimately, this research will form the first chapter of my master's thesis exploring the links between the Arts & Crafts movement in England and the Celtic Revival in Ireland through the embroidery and textile works produced by the two respective communities.



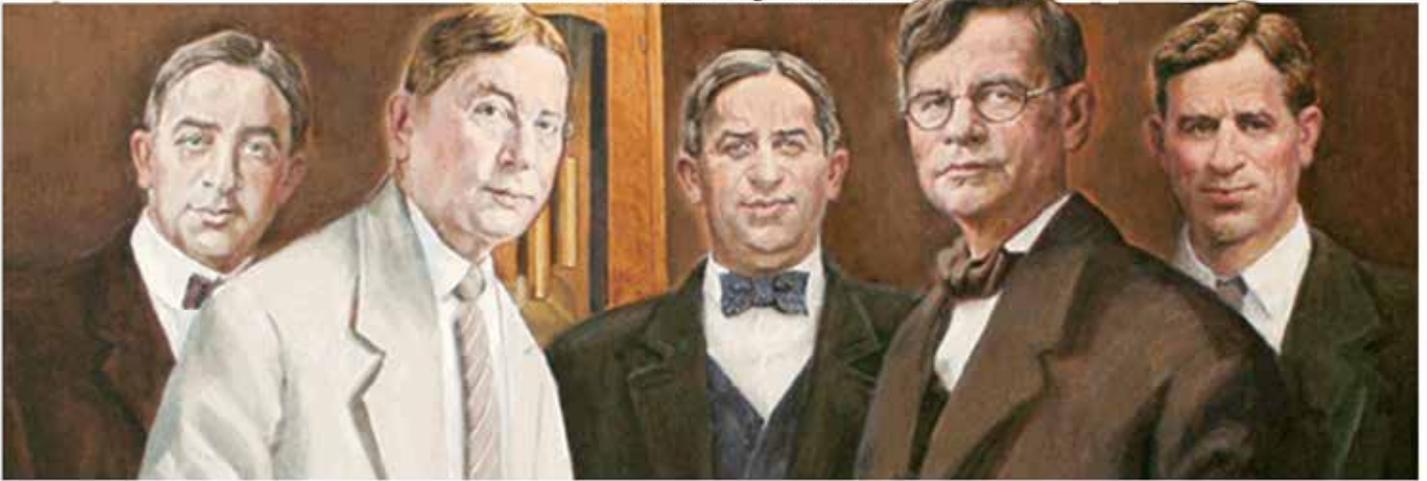
Dinner at Wild Ginger. Left to right: Paul Acker, Jane Carlin, Pamela Bracken, Florence Boos, Frank Sharp, Frank Palmieri



Heidi Aijala, MLA Morris Session, "Ecosocialism and the Late Victorians," Seattle, January 2020



## The Five Stickley Brothers



**John George**

**Leopold**

**Albert**

**Gustav**

**Charles**

"Five brothers from Osceola, Wisconsin... began making furniture at their uncle's factory in Brandt, Pennsylvania around 1877. ...Through sixty years of collaboration and competition, these men profoundly affected American furniture. From 1883 to 1918, every Stickley had worked with each brother in at least one venture, though at no time did all 5 work together." The Stickley Museum. [www.stickleymuseum.com](http://www.stickleymuseum.com)

### GUSTAV STICKLEY'S DEBT TO ENGLAND:

THE INFLUENCES OF MORRIS, RUSKIN,  
ASHBEE, VOYSEY AND BAILLIE SCOTT

*David Lowden*

#### WHO WAS GUSTAV STICKLEY?

Stickley was not the first American Arts and Crafts designer but he is generally regarded as the premier practitioner in America. This is due in no small part to the high quality, in both design and manufacture, of the furniture that he made for over 15 years, his numerous home designs and, most importantly, his influential publication, *The Craftsman*, which was published starting in 1901 until the demise of the Stickley empire in 1916.

Gustav Stickley and others in his family were long in the business of making chairs and other furniture. From 1888 until 1898 what he made was nothing special. Starting in 1898-1900, however, his products underwent a sea change, evolving through at least four different phases, according to Stickley's biographer David Cathers.

In 1899-1900 he experimented with many creative designs in an Art Nouveau/Glasgow style vein (marked as New



Furniture), including pieces reminiscent of products sold by Liberty. These included a Thebes chair and chairs with Morris-like peacock-feather upholstery, eventually evolving into what we now often call a Mission Style. These pieces often featured Voysey-style hearts and other cut-outs.

Cathers calls the furniture of the years 1900 to 1904 his First Mission Period. In what follows I will focus primarily on designs from that time period. The furniture was rectilinear, with massive proportions and undecorated but for the necessary (although often exaggerated) joinery and metalwork.

This period also saw a lighter look around the time of the arrival of architect/designer Harvey Ellis, who worked for Stickley from May 1903 until his untimely death in January 1904, less than one year later. Ellis's designs were more playful, relying on inlay, painted wall designs and a greater use of color, reminiscent of the Glasgow School and Jugendstil designers. At the same time many of Stickley's designs took on a lighter look, with arches in the skirts of case pieces and a less massive appearance. Many of the elements found in Ellis's furniture designs survived after his death; whether those elements were actually inspired by Ellis or by others associated with Stickley is not clear.

Stickley's Mature Period ran from 1904 to 1910. The proportions on his work became less massive and the detailing more delicate, although still rectilinear and straight-lined. Chamfered boards gave way to plain panels and even laminated panels; mitered muntins on case pieces were changed to butt edges. He even used veneer, so as to be able to match grain patterns. The metal work became less massive and more uniform. Wooden pulls changed from squared designs to more Shaker-inspired

round designs. His work found great commercial acceptance during this period. While less unique, it maintained the virtues which Stickley espoused of simplicity, proportion and undecorated purity.

The Final Mission Period ran from 1910 until shortly after his bankruptcy, in 1915. In his final business days, he even dabbled in historical designs, producing a Sheraton style and Chinese Chippendale lines in fumed oak, and his Chrome-wald lines' painted furniture, which featured Windsor chairs and turned legs. Designs were simplified (most likely to reduce production costs), tenon-and-key construction was rarely used, curved aprons became straight, and detailing was more likely stripped from the designs. While these changes may have been motivated by a desire to reduce production costs, they may have also reflected a consumer desire for less in-your-face designs.

#### STICKLEY'S DEBT TO ENGLAND

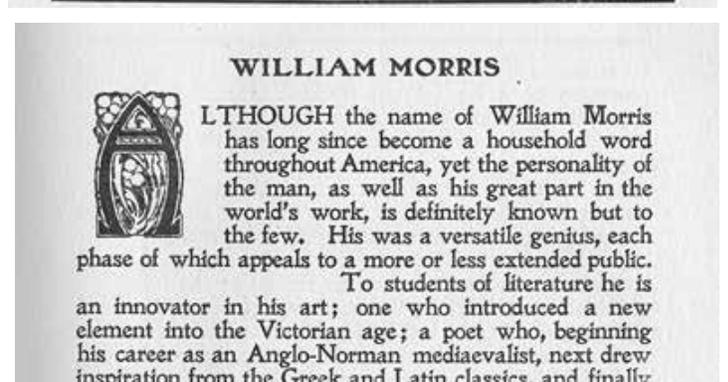
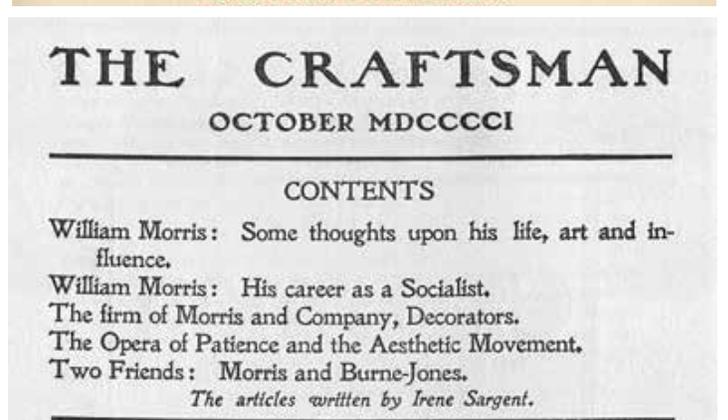
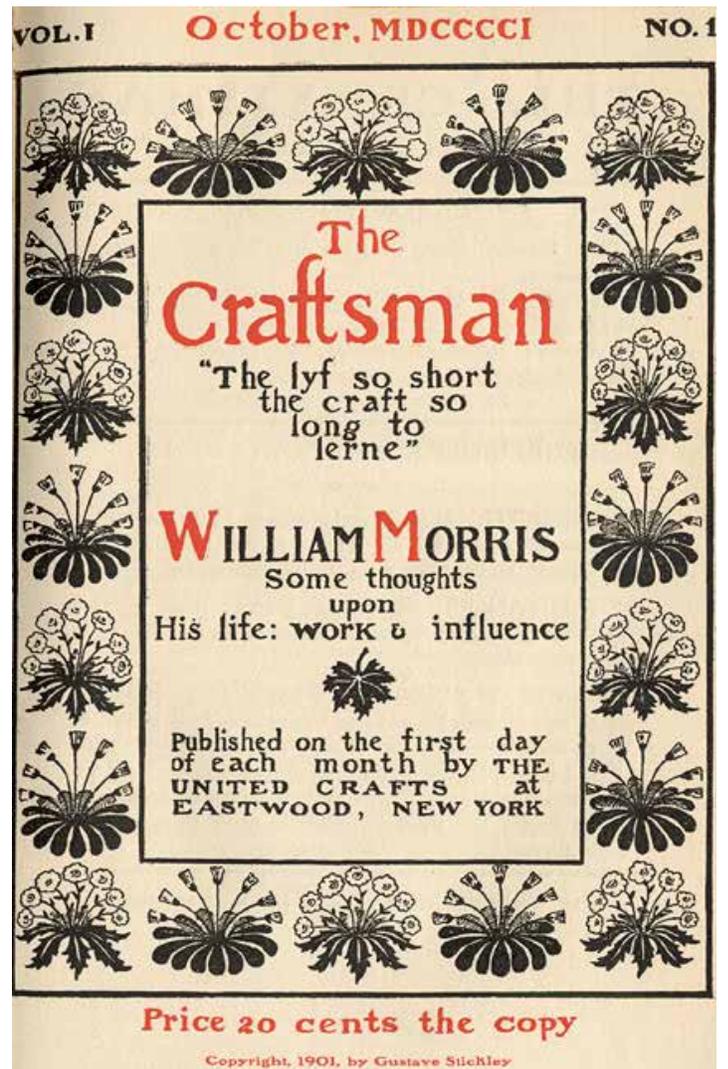
I want here to briefly address his debt to England and its premier designers. Sometimes he acknowledged this debt, as he did with William Morris and John Ruskin. Other times the debt went unacknowledged, as it did with Charles Voysey, Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, and C. R. Ashbee. With respect to Morris and Ruskin and Ashbee, Stickley's debt was philosophical or organizational. With respect to Voysey and Baillie Scott, it was directly related to designs. One might say that many of the early Stickley designs were "rip-offs" of these two architects/furniture designers.

#### STICKLEY'S TRAVELS IN ENGLAND

Various sources indicate that Stickley traveled to England in 1898 and again in late 1902-early 1903, when he visited the January 1903 exhibition by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in anticipation of his own March 1903 Arts and Crafts exhibition at his showrooms in Syracuse and in Rochester. The 1898 trip may have been a source for Stickley's experimentation in the late 1890s, but so too may have been articles in the influential English magazine, *The Studio*, begun in 1893, and its later U.S. variant, *The International Studio*, which started in 1897, both of which had significant readership in the United States. On the 1893 trip he purchased objects designed by Voysey and G.M. Ellwood.

#### WILLIAM MORRIS

As must all practitioners of the Arts and Crafts, Stickley acknowledged a debt to Morris (1834-1896). Beginning in 1901 Stickley published the influential magazine *The Craftsman* to promote his furniture and houses. His editor and designer of *The Craftsman*, Syracuse University professor Irene Sargent, devoted the entire first issue to Morris. She wrote about "... his life, art and influence," including his socialism, his company, its decorators, and his relationship with the artist Edward Burne-Jones.





**Irene Sargent** was the editor and designer of *The Craftsman* from 1901 to 1905.

Singlehandedly writing the inaugural issues, she introduced three pillars of the Arts and Crafts Movement: William Morris, John Ruskin and the Craft Guilds. Sargent and *The Craftsman* led the way in shaping public understanding of the American Arts and Crafts aesthetic.

According to the foreword to the first issue of *The Craftsman*, Stickley's company, (then known as The United Crafts) "endeavors to promote and extend the principles established by Morris, in both the artistic and socialistic sense."

[T]hey seek to substitute the luxury of taste for the luxury of costliness; to teach that beauty does not imply elaboration or ornament; to employ only those forms and materials which make for simplicity, individuality and dignity of effort.

The United Crafts will labor to produce in their workshops only those articles which shall justify their own creation; which shall serve some actual and important end in the household, either by adding to the ease and convenience of life; or yet by furthering the equally important object of providing agreeable, restful and invigorating effects of form and color ....

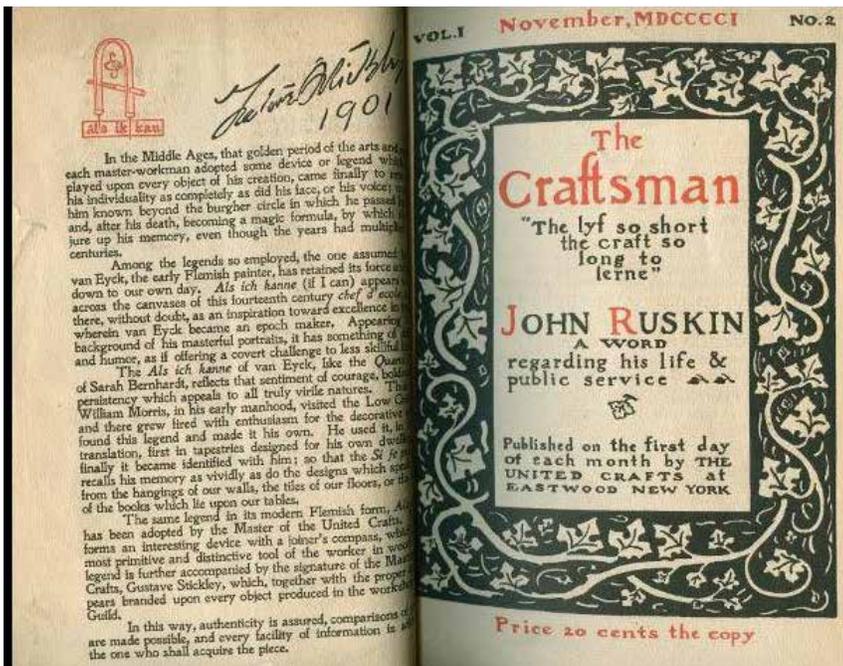
The latter is but a wordier phrasing of Morris's motto, "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful." The foreword further asserts, "Another object which The United Crafts regard as desirable and possible of attainment is the union in one person of the designer and the workman," and claims that this principle was "personally put in practice by Morris, and extended throughout his workshop."

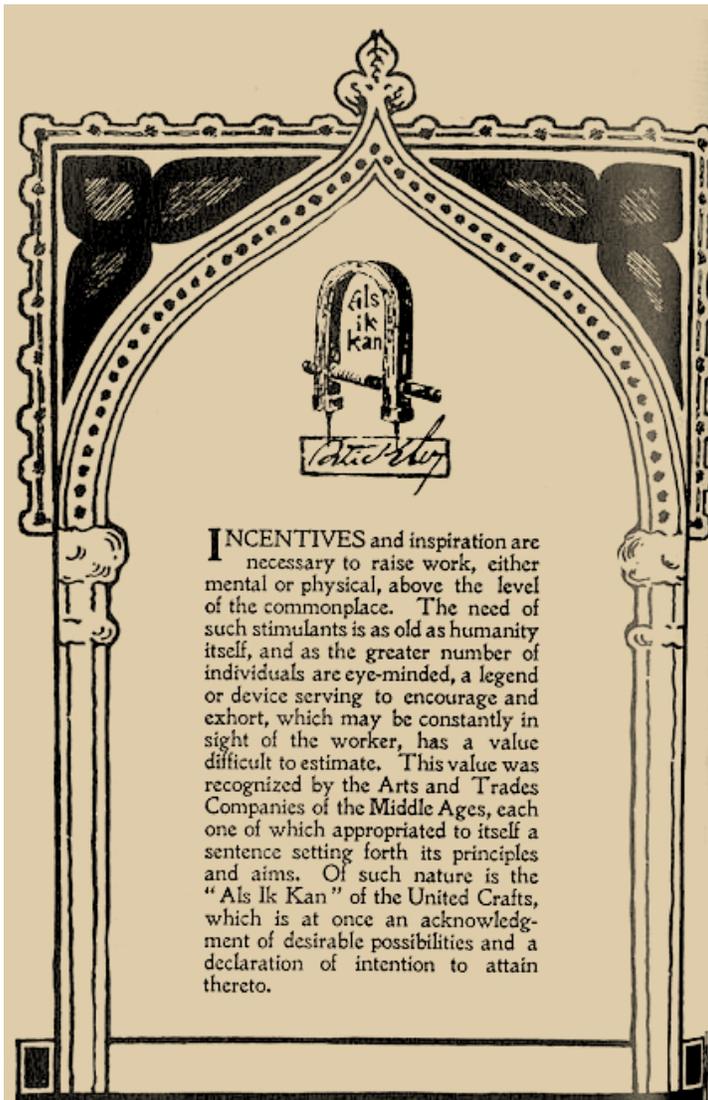
We might question whether all these aspirational goals were truly desired by Stickley, or whether he was just using the cooperative venture as a façade for his hoped-for successful business. Stickley himself was not a hands-on designer, unlike Morris. He was not known to draw well and there is little documentation of his making any of the items sold by the company (either in prototype or form). He was not known as a good critic, however – he could tell the designers to make modifications to prototypes to come up with the final creation. He had

a good "eye." But is that the same as the objective of making the designer and the craftsman one and the same that he espoused in this foreword? He was also not known to give credit to his designers or workers, and it is most likely that his workers were merely carrying out to a "T" the designs created by his designers. But maybe we shouldn't fault the Stickley of 1901 for what Stickley became as his business became more successful.

The back page of the first issue of *The Craftsman* sets out an explanation of the legend of the "Master of the United Crafts" (i.e., Stickley), *Als ik kan* (translated as "if I can" and understood to mean "the best I can"), derived from the legend first assumed by Jan van Eyck, the Flemish painter (as *Als ich kanne*). He also notes that it was later used by Morris in the French variation, *Si je puis*, another way that Stickley sought to claim lineage through Morris.

How much these articles about Morris reflected Stickley's own ideas is something we will never know, but we can safely assume that Stickley's ideas did not diverge much from what Professor Sargent espoused. I will therefore assume that the words appearing in the cited articles reflected Stickley's thoughts, if not his actual text, and they served as an important introduction to Morris's philosophy to America.





#### JOHN RUSKIN (AND THOMAS CARLYLE)

Similarly, Stickley acknowledged his debt to Ruskin (1819-1900) in the second issue of that magazine. Ruskin long promoted, as did one of his mentors Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), the virtue of work and handwork. According to Oscar Lovell Triggs (*Chapters in the History of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, 1902, pp. 1-10), Carlyle espoused the central doctrine of Duty, which found its application in three secondary doctrines: (a) that work is the first and chief duty of man, (b) that silence is the eternal duty of a man since it shapes thoughts and leads to action, and (c) that in sincerity economic doctrine is embodied – the test of manhood is to attain truth in all things. Inherent in this last duty is the idea that objects which are cheap and nasty are not to be desired – “If I want an article, let it be genuine, at whatever price; if the price is too high for me, I will go without it,” Carlyle said.

While Ruskin may be best known today for his ideas on art and design, he was a well-regarded economist. He called mercantile economics (what most of us mean today when we speak of economics) a science of avarice. He instead focused on

political economy. According to Triggs (p. 24), he felt that the true question was, “How can society consciously order the lives of its members so as to maintain the largest number of noble and happy beings.”

For him, art and handwork played a crucial role in that economy. The article in *The Craftsman* most credits him for these ideas on political economy. It quotes his ideas on “intrinsic value,” which he defined as the “absolute power of anything to support life. A sheaf of wheat ... has in it a measurable power of sustaining the substance of the body; a cubic foot of pure air, a fixed power of sustaining its warmth; and a cluster of flowers of given beauty, a fixed power of enlivening or animating the senses and heart” (3). The economic value that Ruskin ascribed to air and flowers (is this a prescient reference to “flower power”? Is he a godfather of the environmental movement?) was recognized by Stickley to be revolutionary. He said these qualities had been previously ignored as being “removed from the arena of Supply and Demand.” Stickley states that Ruskin’s advocacy of the principle that intrinsic value lies in the power of anything to support life is his greatest claim to consideration and remembrance (a thought especially comforting in times of trouble).

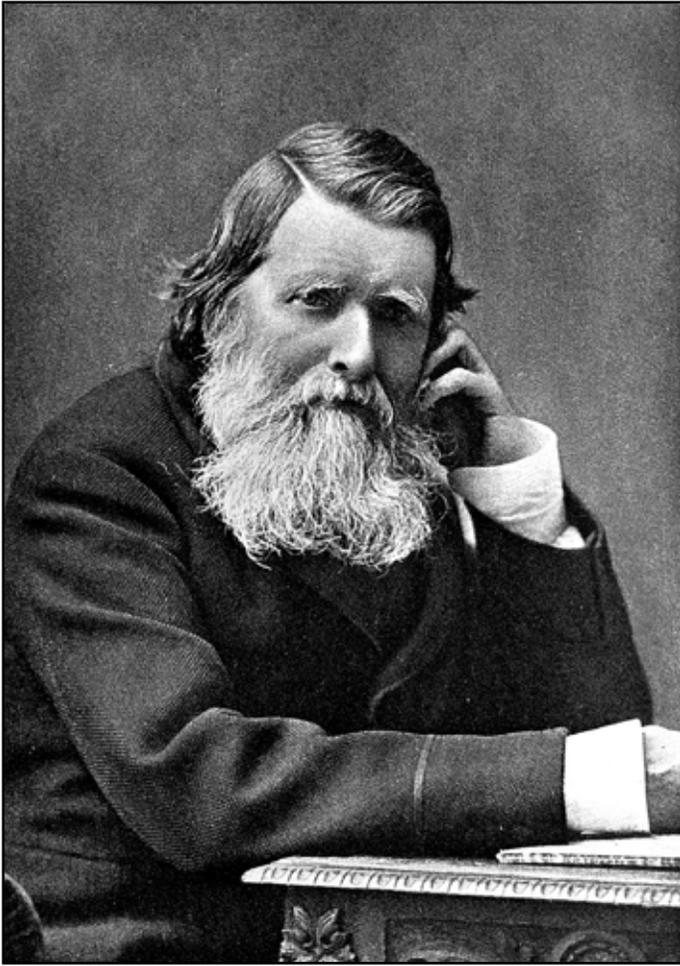
Stickley includes in this second issue of the *Craftsman* a page of Ruskin quotes, including “It is only by labor that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labor can be made happy.” This is similar to Voysey’s motto on one of his furniture designs: “Head, Hand and Heart.”

Stickley also begins his collection *Craftsman Homes* (1909) with a famous Ruskin quote: “Great nations write their autobiography in three manuscripts: the book of their words, the book of their deeds and the book of their art.... [O]f the three, the only one quite trustworthy is the last. The acts of a nation may be triumphant by its good fortune, and its words mighty by the genius of a few of its children, but art can be supreme only by the general gifts and common sympathies of the race.” In his view, the arts are not just those of the “fine artist,” but also those of the common craftsman.

#### C. R. ASHBEE – THE GUILD IDEAL

Stickley owed to Ashbee the concept of a guild of workers. The designs of Ashbee and his Guild of Handicraft were one-of-a-kind works, frequently as jewelry executed in silver and inlaid with semiprecious stones, or as hammered silverware or copperware, or as more ornate decorated furniture, rather than in oft-replicated practical home furnishings.

The guild was an idea that Ashbee had successfully espoused with his Guild of Handicraft, started in London in 1888 and moved to Chipping Campden in the Cotswolds in 1902. Ashbee was able to maintain some semblance of a cooperative guild structure for much of the period until 1909, when his operation ceased as a cooperative venture.



John Ruskin 1882, published 1900 in *The Works of John Ruskin*

Stickley overtly claimed the guild ideal when in June 1901 he renamed the three-year old Gustave Stickley Company The United Crafts. The forward to the first issue of *The Craftsman* asserts that The United Crafts was a “guild of cabinet makers, metal and leather workers, which has been recently formed for the production of household furnishings.” However Stickley soon dropped the idea of operating as a cooperative venture (if he had ever truly desired to do so), again changing the name in October 1904 to The Craftsman Workshops. He did announce inchoate plans in 1904 to establish a cooperative crafts community in Southern California on the guild line, but these failed to materialize.

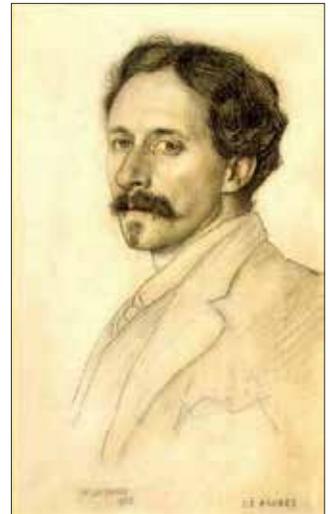
He may have harkened back to that ideal when he sought to establish Craftsman Farms in Parsippany, New Jersey, as a farm school, the original plans for which date from around 1908, but the Farms never were successfully operated as one. Instead they became a private home for Stickley, where he produced some produce for his restaurant at the Craftsman Building in New York. Indeed it is not even clear that such production was economically viable, so that his venture might have been more in the nature of the modern hobby farm.

It is interesting to note that Stickley never acknowledged any debt to Ashbee, although in 1908 he had contributed an



Charles Francis Annesley Voysey, by Lafayette, 16 August 1928  
Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott by Elliott & Fry, 1895

article to *The Craftsman* about the Guild of Handicraft’s operation in Chipping Campden (which nonetheless failed to name Ashbee), and similarly Ashbee never acknowledged the operations and aspirations of Stickley, even though Ashbee was a frequent visitor to the United States, other than in a complaining letter to *The Craftsman* in 1909. However, Ashbee got along famously with Frank Lloyd Wright, another pre-eminent architect/designer who ignored the influence of Stickley, only deigning to use his designs in servant’s rooms or other rooms of lesser importance. I suspect that Ashbee viewed the Craftsman operation as too commercial, as it used batch production producing multiples of various set designs with some division of labor (although still reliant on handwork rather than the assembly line), instead of the more-or-less one-of-a-kind products of the Guild. Alternately, perhaps Stickley snubbed Ashbee since Ashbee ignored him. Who knows?



Charles Robert Ashbee  
by William Strang, 1903

#### VOYSEY AND BAILLIE SCOTT AND THE IDEAL OF SIMPLICITY

While C.F.A. Voysey (1857-1941), M. H. Baillie Scott (1865-1945) and C.R. Ashbee [what was it with those initials?] were architects, they were also noted for their work in other fields including furniture and graphic design. Voysey was known for his wallpapers and carpets, the latter often used by Stickley, and for his designs for the cover and first binding of *The Studio*; and Ashbee for his jewelry and silverwork. Many of the furniture designs of Voysey and Baillie Scott, as also the designs of Ashbee, were highly decorated (in the words of *The Studio*, “now elaborate and gorgeous”) and sometimes quite



"While this furniture has traditionally been attributed to Harvey Ellis, an architect who began working in Stickley's shop in 1903, recent research has shown that Ellis was not solely responsible for this development, and that it might have been a collaborative effort among all of the designers at United Crafts. The delicate copper and pewter inlay pattern relates to the furniture of contemporary British designers M.H. Baillie Scott and Charles Rennie Mackintosh." Quoted from The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Adjustable-Back Chair No. 2342, Gustav Stickley, 1902, exhibited in the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

ornate. Voysey was famous for cut-out metal work, which as mentioned earlier, often employed a heart motif.

But Voysey and Baillie Scott both also produced for less wealthy clients many designs that are the epitome of simplicity (in the words of *The Studio*, "now severe and almost archaic") relying (as does Stickley's furniture) on the design elements of joinery, strap hinges and the grain found in quarter-sawn fumed oak. In fact, in their teachings they espoused simplicity, although many of their designs showed a lack of this virtue.

An article in *The Studio* (May 1896, p. 216), "Some Recent Designs by Mr. C. F. A. Voysey," quotes his statement, "*Simplicity in decoration is one of the most essential qualities, without which no true richness is possible. To know where to stop and what not to do is a long way on the road to becoming a great decorator,*" [emphasis in original], and claims that it deserves to be inscribed in gold in every architect's office. Voysey is also quoted as saying, "Simplicity requires perfection in all details, while elaboration is easy in comparison with it."

Baillie Scott's ideas on simplicity in design were also set out in *The Studio* (April 1897, pp. 152-157), "On the Choice of Simple Furniture,"

The furniture should appear to grow out of the requirements of the room, to represent the finishing touches of a scheme which had its inception when the first stone of the house was laid .... Many people appear to imagine that



#### MUTUAL INFLUENCES. SUBTLE CHANGES

"A premium was not placed on originality and innovation until the end of the twentieth century when a market for what is now called 'mid-century modern' began to kindle. ...It became more important to decide who was first rather than to discuss what was pleasing. Gustav Stickley's clumsy table number 935 was more desirable (i.e., valuable) than L. & J. G. Stickley's more refined 'director's table' because Gustav copied Baillie Scott first."

—Robert Edwards,  
"The Apotheosis of Gustav  
Stickley at Newark" [www.americandecorativeart.com/  
internalpages/exhibitions/newark/](http://www.americandecorativeart.com/internalpages/exhibitions/newark/)

they cannot afford to have artistic surroundings, whereas the wonder is they can afford so much expensive ugliness. .... Instead of crowding as many things together as possible, it will be better to remove everything which is not essential, and to aim at having a few choice things rather than many inferior ones. ... The necessary restrictions imposed by a limited purse often proved to be the best safeguards against vulgar extravagance; and so to those who can appreciate the beauty of simplicity and restraint, necessity in this case may become a virtue indeed ....

In his book *Houses and Gardens* (pp. 76-77), Baillie Scott stated, "To the man about to furnish perhaps the best advice is that contained in the single word: 'Don't.' ... The art of furnishing is perhaps best understood by the Japanese, who have no furniture at all in their houses. ... The great fault of nearly all modern rooms is that they are over-furnished...." In talking about the drawbacks of wood joined by nails, he notes that "in all other details of construction a virtue has been made of frankness [with] ... the pegs of the tenon ... displayed to view..." (p. 80). These expressions could have been written by Stickley.

Stickley described his work as being characterized by a "fine plainness." Simplicity was his watchword:

In all that concerns household furnishings and decoration, present tendencies are toward a simplicity unknown in the past. The form of any object is made to express the structural idea directly, frankly, often almost with baldness. The materials employed are chosen no longer solely for their intrinsic value, but with a great consideration for their potential beauty. ("An Argument for Simplicity in Household Furnishings," *The Craftsman*, October 1901)

[F]urniture need not be expensive, but .... Each must frankly and directly reveal its purpose .... The attractiveness of



Gustav Stickley Arts & Crafts oak and leather slat back rocking chair. Top slat with V notch, original leather seat with beveled square upholstery tacks. Early 20th century

a Craftsman room comes from the structural purity of all designs ..., from the nice sense of proportion ... and from the care bestowed on the selection and blending of colors. (*The Craftsman Story*, 1905, p. 218).

The new decorator must "first learn the wholesome lesson of simplicity. ("Unity – Simplicity – Beauty," *The Craftsman*, 1.2, November 1901, p. v)

In the words of Joseph Cunningham in the 1910 *Catalogue of craftsman furniture made by Gustav Stickley at The Craftsman Workshops*, (Eastwood, N. Y.):

*The Craftsman's* new trinity was sure and bold – Utility, Simplicity, Beauty. ... The key principles are honesty and authenticity: the truth that objects can convey even more deeply than words" (p. 63).

#### WAS BAILLIE SCOTT THE VICTIM OF COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT?

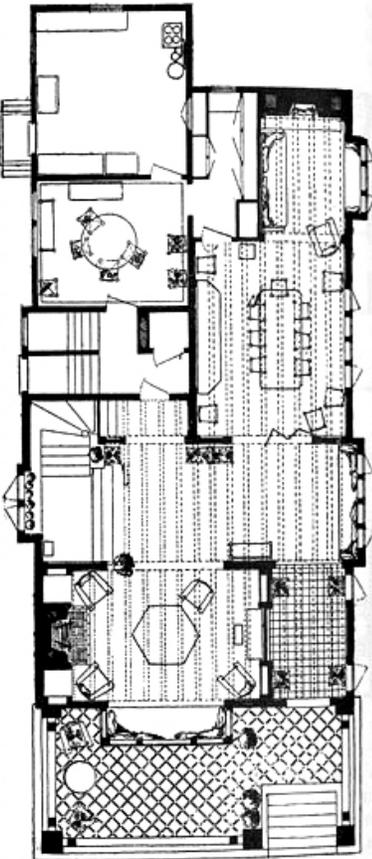
While I can see some lineage in designs by Voysey in the work of Stickley (see these massive pieces which bear a superficial resemblance to a more delicate Voysey design), a more direct connection can be seen in the works of Baillie Scott, most particularly in his designs for one of his oft-appearing products, a long aproned table with splayed "A-frame" paired legs, first appearing in designs for the town hall of Onchan on the Isle of Man in 1896 and later repeated in designs for various homes, including Springcot (1903), Rose Court (1904), The Crossways (1905) and White Nights (circa 1906) (all as pictured in drawings in *Houses and Gardens*), and also appearing in his 1901 catalog.

## A Visit to Mr. Stickley's House

and jelly mold enrichments. Here is a house that has qualities generally lacking in architectural schemes, where their details too often smack of the dust of the drawing-office. Quiet harmony is the prevailing note of the composition, characterized by singular uprightness and sturdy independence. The work of a leader who, striking out a path for himself, following neither school nor man, it is yet devoid of restless, picturesque or wilful irregularities. No one would accuse Mr. Stickley of being blind to the strength of ancient traditions, though he scornfully rejects their coercion.

In olden times a man in building unmistakably revealed his character and nationality, but now, thanks to Europeanized architects, whose smooth, intuitive touches exhale but little flavor of the soil, we have a cosmopolitan house, as international as the people who

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First Floor Plan

## A Visit to Mr. Stickley's House

design them or who live in them. We have taken plans, elevations, sections, from every country, adapting and readapting them to our needs and to the demands of our climate.



Second Floor Plan

Big halls and firesides from dear, moist old England, verandas from sunny Italy, general sense of proportion from France, robust, simple, vigorous paneling from Spain; while many of the huge beams which now support our ceilings remind us of Russia, Norway and Sweden. Yes, from the Norse we too often borrow without acknowledgment. The internationalization of the house is an entirely new feature of modern civilization. There have always been, it is true, architects who possessed a universal appeal, due in some cases to a fine, academic reflectiveness and in others, of a broader type, to a disregard of mere social distinctions.

In France, the most conservative of all countries in art, many workers have freed themselves from the cosmopolitan influence, and given us the style they call new, or L'Art Nouveau, which, however, somewhat embarrasses the architectural world and adds rather to its difficulties by a sensational imposing of amazing contradictions presented in a fascinating manner.

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*The Craftsman*, Vol.3.3 (December 1902). Howe, Samuel, "A Visit to the House of Mr. Stickley," pp. 162-3.



GUSTAV STICKLEY  
Unsigned. Early maple  
Poppy table (no. 26), with  
carved floriform top, lower  
shelf, and legs, ca. 1900.  
Craftsman Auctions,  
Lambertville, NJ.



Two drawers with original copper pulls, long corbels, and lower shelf.  
Signed with branded signature

This design, “Suggestion for the Dining Room,” appears in the first glossy plate of the first issue of *The Craftsman*, and shows a room with repeating patterned wallpaper and ceiling beams that could have come straight from a Scott drawing along with two chairs and a Manxman piano-style sideboard.



The dining table appears in a form nearly identical to the Baillie Scott version; (as with the Baillie Scott version, a piece on the floor connects the two A-frame sets of legs, presumably for added strength).

A similar table also appears in Volume 1.5, now in its classic Stickley style with more graceful proportions and without the floor stretcher, but without the pronounced dowels appearing on the legs, as will appear later.

While Stickley may have borrowed heavily (is that a polite word for “steal”?) from Baillie Scott, he improved the earlier design in the process by eliminating the floor stretcher, making the top out of what appears to be a single piece, and adding the doweling.

(I must confess to a fondness for this piece, which was my first Arts and Crafts purchase in 1978 [for \$100 – talked down from \$150; the seller thought it was medieval but I told him it was only 100 years old!]. I own one of the smaller 6 foot versions of this piece, manufactured in the Mature Period and with a 1907-1912 label pasted underneath.)

This is an iconic piece. An early Arts and Crafts dealer used a closeup as his shop mark. It continued to be made in more-or-less the same massive form for most of Stickley’s business



Dietrich home design, *The Craftsman*, 1903

life. While called a dining table in the sales literature, it is now sometimes called a “directors table.” The Stickley family’s 8-foot version was exhibited along with other Stickley-owned pieces at an exhibition at Nabisco Galleries in 1983.

Another piece which Stickley “lifted” is a settle designed by Baillie Scott, which is mirrored in a Stickley design.

Additionally, a Stickley-designed chest is reminiscent of a Baillie Scott-designed Manxman piano. There are other early period designs, such as a Stickley desk and Baillie Scott secretary that share a passing similarity.

BAILLIE SCOTT’S ARCHITECTURE –  
ANOTHER CASE OF BORROWING,  
BUT WHO BORROWED FROM WHOM?

In addition to “borrowing” numerous furniture designs from Baillie Scott, Stickley’s home designs were heavily influenced by Baillie Scott’s ideas.

For Baillie Scott, the fireplace was the heart of the home. He saw it as “practically a substitute for the sun,” drawing the family to its warmth. Baillie Scott often placed this all-important centerpiece in an inglenook, carefully positioned to avoid pulling in drafts from elsewhere in the room. It usually contained a built-in wooden high-backed settle, small windows and a copper chimney hood.

So too in Stickley’s home, the fireplace and the inglenook played a key role. Stickley wrote that “[n]ext in importance [after the need for sunlight] is a suitable open fireplace.” (*The Craftsman Story*, 1905). Stickley’s inglenook was usually symmetrical, located at the narrow end of the living room, while Baillie Scott’s were less balanced, with usually just one settle. Stickley’s mature inglenook designs usually have two small windows, one on each side of the fireplace, whereas Baillie Scott’s often had only one window above the settle.

Almost all of the Baillie Scott designs used high-back settles; Stickley’s earlier designs often did too but his later designs used lower benches. Here we see high-back Stickley settles that are very reminiscent of Baillie Scott’s designs.

The copper chimney hood was often used, especially in the mottoed hoods at Craftsman Farms (circa 1910), the most prominent one that in the living room inscribed with words from Chaucer, “*the lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne*,” (which Stickley had placed on the covers of the initial 1901 numbers of *The Craftsman* and which Ashbee also had inscribed on the interior walls of the School of Arts and Crafts in Chipping Campden after 1902).

I should point out that in one instance, Baillie Scott may have borrowed from Stickley, or more precisely, he may have borrowed from the person who designed the first of Stickley’s Craftsman homes, E.G.W. Dietrich. Dietrich’s home design for Stickley appeared in the May 1903 issue of *The Craftsman*. But



Stickley impressed stamp to lower right corner of back rocker

Bearlier Dietrich had designed a seashore house, a representation of which was published in *The American Architect* in December 1897. That house, and another one by T. Nolan that appeared in *The American Architect* in February 1889, bear a striking resemblance to Baillie Scott's earliest surviving design, from July 1890, for a bungalow in Douglas, Isle of Man. *The Craftsman* magazine home bears a striking resemblance to both the original Dietrich plan and the Baillie Scott knock-off in its Dutch gambrel roof line.

An interior sketch of "the hall" in that *Craftsman* issue could have been lifted straight from a Baillie Scott house – it features an odd-angled inglenook with a single high-backed settle and copper fireplace hood, with our friend the A-frame dining table off to the side.

So the borrowing appears to have been a two-way street. All is fair in love, war and architectural/furniture design!

#### OR WAS IT JUST "IN THE AIR?"

We should not automatically assume that the idea of simplicity came from these English Arts and Crafts designers. The idea was "in the air" in America at the time as well. As noted in the catalog of a 2010 Stickley exhibit, in 1896 *House Beautiful* promoted "the wisdom of restraint" in home decoration. An 1899 article in *Harpers Weekly* at the time came down hard on furniture "overloaded with ornament." A March 1900 article in the *Furniture Journal* was entitled "A Plea for Plainer Furniture." This appeal for plainness was, in part, an attempt to evolve in response to what was called "the servant problem": fewer women were entering domestic service due to growth in other forms of employment, leading to a need for homes that were easier to care for. The simple designs were also seen as healthier, with a growing awareness of germs and the need for sanitation.



Gustav Stickley. Rare three-panel hazelwood screen designed by Harvey Ellis, its panels embroidered with Glasgow roses, ca. 1904

#### STICKLEY – THE STUDENT WHO LEARNED HIS LESSONS WELL

While he was, no doubt, indebted to his English predecessors, Stickley was not a slavish replicator of their work. While one critic found Stickley to have more talent as an entrepreneur than as an artist "readily ... confirmed by his innocuous design for small houses and his somewhat less than original furniture and writings" (James Kornwof, *M. H. Baillie Scott and the Arts and Crafts Movement*, 1972), others take the view that he often improved upon the designs of his English tutors. While many design elements can be traced back to English progenitors, Stickley would often refine and simplify them, making them in the process a unique expression of American culture – plain spoken and forthright. And, in fact, they may have been truer to the espoused ideals of simplicity and proportion than many of the designs of the English masters with their elaborations of inlays, cutouts and other expressive decorative add-ons so often found in the designs of Voysey, Baillie Scott and Ashbee.

#### POSTSCRIPT – BAILLIE SCOTT IN AMERICA

Baillie Scott designed one home built in America, the Close in Short Hills, New Jersey, built in 1913 by McKim, Mead and White, a large half-timbered house built around a close. It is probably the only fully half-timbered house designed by Baillie Scott. It has been recently restored and furnished with period Stickley furniture—whether it was so furnished originally can only be conjectured. But one must agree that the furniture looks like it was meant for the house.

This article is based on a presentation made at the 2010 "Useful and Beautiful" conference at the University of Delaware.

David Lowden has been an attorney in New York City specializing in the law of nonprofit organizations; he retired in 2020. He is active with many nonprofits devoted to the art and history of the turn-of-the-last-century, especially the Stickly Museum and Craftsman Farms, and groups related to the book arts, as well as the William Morris Society.



This 1913 Short Hills, New Jersey stucco & half-timber house known as "The Close" was designed M.H. Baillie Scott. It was fully restored under the direction of John Ike, AIA.

### One-Story Craftsman Bungalow

Published in THE CRAFTSMAN, November, 1908.  
House No. 53.

FLOOR PLAN.

### Craftsman Two-Story Bungalow

Published in THE CRAFTSMAN, December, 1909.  
House No. 81.

This house, although what is ordinarily termed a bungalow, is really a cottage embodying some features of bungalow construction. It is especially adapted for summer use or for country life, as the wide veranda running around two sides of the house gives ample space for an outdoor living room.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN.

SECOND FLOOR PLAN.

Ample head room is allowed on the second story by the large dormer that breaks the line of the roof, but even so the accommodations would serve only for a small family, as there is room only for two bedrooms, the necessary closet room and bath.

Estimated Cost—\$1,200 to \$2,500.

## WOMEN IN DESIGN AND THE AMERICAN ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

*Maureen Meister*

When I was invited to write about female architects who were associated with the American Arts and Crafts movement, I thought I'd come up with a short profile about Lois Lilley Howe. Howe practiced in Boston and was active in the city's flourishing Arts and Crafts society at the turn of the twentieth century. Focusing on her would be logical as the article would be published in *ArchitectureBoston*, the online magazine of the Boston Society of Architects. But once I started thinking about it, my topic began to grow.



Portrait of Lois L. Howe. Courtesy of MIT Museum

Several questions came to mind. Who were other female architects who ought to be mentioned? What concerns at the heart of the Arts and Crafts movement appealed to these women? How did they address these concerns in their work? And wouldn't I want to let the topic grow, even if just a bit?

The essay, published at the end of 2019, recognizes women who have become fairly well-known: Marion Mahony of Chicago and Julia Morgan of San Francisco. Others are less familiar: Boston's Howe and Hazel Wood Waterman of San Diego. I also decided to include architectural designers: Mary Colter, who worked in the Southwest, and Mary McLaughlin Craig of Santa Barbara. These women shared Arts and Crafts interests in enhancing domestic environments, embracing regional architectural traditions, and encouraging the preservation of historic buildings.

All of these interests were pursued by Howe. Like female colleagues elsewhere, she specialized in residential work. To be sure, clients were inclined to think women were well-suited to designing houses, but the women also embraced the commissions, to which they brought an Arts and Crafts perspective. Howe, hired by clients in New England, favored colonial and federal style designs. Her knowledge of the region's seventeenth-century dwellings, with steep gables and overhangs, is reflected in the Cornish house in Cambridge, Massachusetts, dating from 1916. Howe also was frequently asked to restore and expand authentic colonial and federal houses, preserving and adapting them for modern use.

The essay appears online at:

<https://www.architects.org/stories/designing-women>

Maureen Meister is the author of *Arts and Crafts Architecture: History and Heritage in New England* (University Press of New England, 2014). She is a member of the Governing Committee of the William Morris Society in the United States.



Lois L. Howe, Cornish house, Cambridge, MA 1916.  
Photo by David Feigenbaum



Concord Center for Visual Art, Concord, MA.  
Photo by David Feigenbaum



Florence Boos, Kim Maher, Katharine DeLameter

## THE WILLIAM MORRIS ARCHIVE ENTERS A NEW PHASE

*Florence Boos*

We are excited to announce major changes for the William Morris Archive. The site has been redesigned, is moving to a new internet location, and in addition will now be able to display photographs and manuscripts on multiple devices and in several formats. Users will be able to choose between separate page and page-turning displays, and to zoom into manuscripts, enabling a closer-than-original view. We are slowly adding digital maps, and hope there will be more in the future. Most important, the site is now hosted by the software program Omeka, available anywhere, so it will be no longer tethered to a specific location.

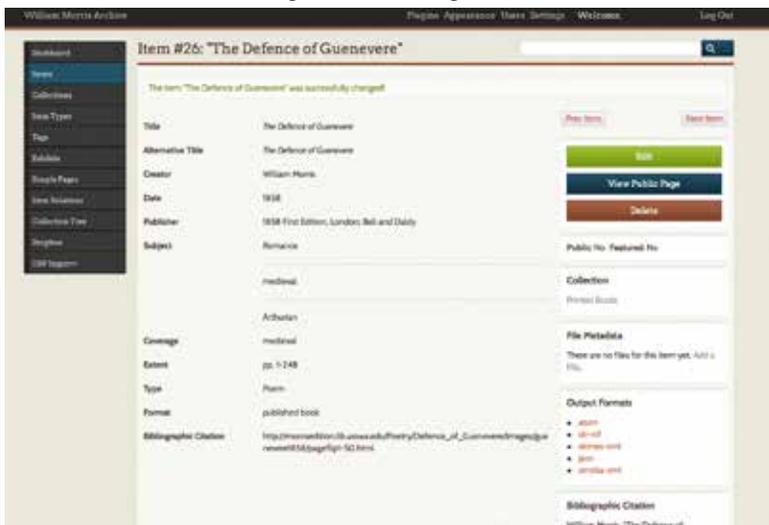
Behind the scenes, all of the Archive's more than 30,000 files have been uploaded in Dublin Core format, which provides for better indexing and searching. We don't claim to rival

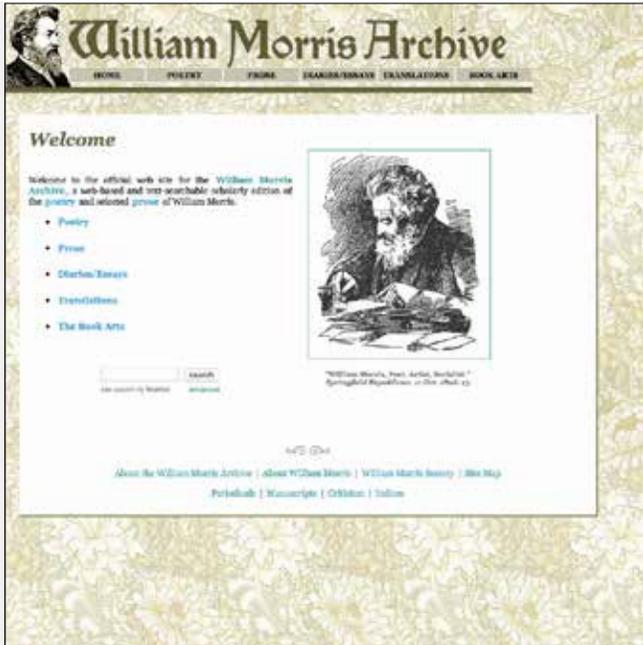
William Guest's radical forward leaps in time, but these changes do represent a major advance in the fifteen years since the founding of the Archive (formerly the William Morris Edition) in 2005, and one which we hope will help provide for the site's foreseeable future.

We've simplified the organization as much as possible granted software constraints. Materials are organized under exhibits, which link to collections. For example, here is the exhibit for the Book Arts:



We continue to add new Morris manuscripts, most recently drafts of "The Tale of Thorstein," "The Tale of Sigi," and "The Deeds of Jason" from the Bodleian and Huntington Libraries. We're working on a digital map which links all the manuscripts to their locations, both on the Archive site and in the real world, by genre, date, and subject matter. If resources permit, we also project creating other maps for editions such as *Jason*, the *Icelandic Journals*, and the *Saga Library*. We continue





**COLORS:**

	#F2F54 Background Navigation Font Category/Button Font		#D7Co6D Button: "Featured Exhibit"
	#3E4556 Header Body text and Captions		#022742 Header with Hover/Selection Footer Navigation Button: "Resources"
	#D7Co6D Button: "Titles" Search Bar		#D7Co6D Button: "Advanced Search"

**FONTS:**

**NAVIGATION HEADER/FOOTER** Qudraat Sans OT [FULL CAPS]

**Header 1** Qudraat OT Italic

**HEADER 2** Qudraat OT Regular [SMALL CAPS]

**Header 3** Qudraat Sans OT Regular

This is the body/caption text. Qudraat Sans OT

**CATEGORIES** Qudraat OT [FULL CAPS]

**PLUG INS / Advanced Features:**

- BookReader  
for Manuscript, Diaries, etc. viewing. (See *Lancelot of the Lake*, page 123)  
Additional example site: <http://therealwinnie.ryerson.ca>
- Tool tip functionality  
for General Site navigation
- Open Layers  
for Mapping capabilities
- BEHAVIORS:**
- Linked Items:  
Inactive  
Active
- Cursor: Monotype Sorts Glyph unicode: F02A



to add editorial content; our latest new completed edition is that of Morris's *Poems by the Way*, with an introduction, notes, and editorial apparatus by David Latham, editor of the *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* and co-editor of *The Collected Works of Walter Pater*.

Many hours of work lie behind the Archive's transition-in-progress. Over the several past years the project manager, Kim Maher, a lecturer in the Book Arts at the University of Iowa and the co-proprietor of the Stonecreek Studio, a letterpress printery, has edited thousands of raw manuscript pages and untangled the complicated Omeka processes needed for labeling and uploading our files in the correct sequence. For the past eighteen months Katharine DeLameter, a recent graduate of the Master of Fine Arts in the Book Arts program at the University of Iowa, has mastered the page-formation techniques for Omeka in order to transfer hundreds of items to our new site. And I've continued my pilgrimages to libraries in Britain and the U. S.--most recently to the Wormsley Library in Buckinghamshire as well as the Huntington Library in Pasadena, California, with its huge repositories of materials initially sold by May Morris to UK purchasers and later transferred to the US.

The target for completion of the new Archive is 1 September, 2020, at which time it will be accessible at [www.morris-archive.lib.uiowa.edu](http://www.morris-archive.lib.uiowa.edu). Meanwhile the current version remains at [www.morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu](http://www.morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu). At this stage, some of the new material already uploaded to the new Omeka site has not been added to the previous one, and we apologize for these temporary gaps. This has been a multi-year task, and we are eager for its successful conclusion. It has been very satisfying to see how extensively the William Morris Archive has been used thus far, as demonstrated in site visits, queries, and image reproductions, and it is our hope that the Archive will continue to make Morris's literary works and ideals available to the largest possible audience into the foreseeable future.



"Jane Morris (The Blue Silk Dress)", Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1868



A reading room at the Bodleian Library

"Water Willow," D. G. Rossetti



"The Homestead and the Forest" cot quilt, designed by May Morris and embroidered by Jane Morris

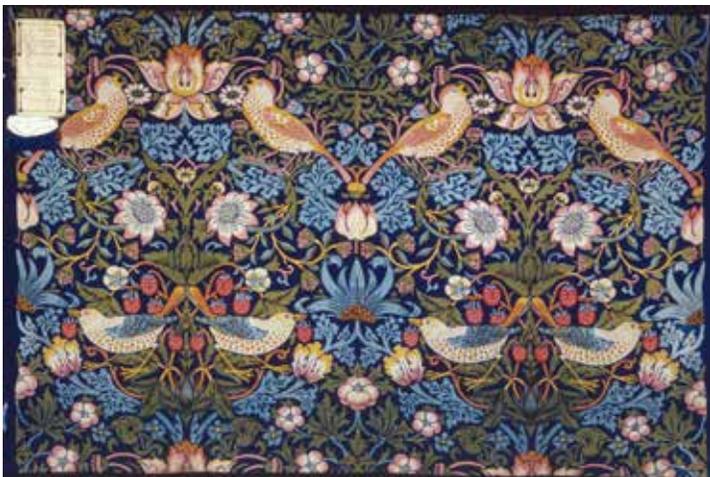




‘A HOUSE THAT I LOVE’: WILLIAM MORRIS AND KELMSCOTT MANOR  
 THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES, LONDON  
 BURLINGTON HOUSE, PICCADILLY, LONDON W1J 0BE - 9TH JULY- 21ST AUGUST 2020  
 PETER CORMACK, MBE FSA, HONORARY CURATOR, KELMSCOTT MANOR

The Society’s exhibition *‘A house that I love’: William Morris and Kelmscott Manor* will show work by Morris and his artist friends, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones, along with artefacts by his wife Jane and daughter May, whose own devotion to Kelmscott helped to preserve Morris’s enduring legacy for future generations.

‘Over 60 objects from the collections at Kelmscott Manor and Burlington House, including works of art and a diverse range of historical material never previously on public show, will explore the impact of Kelmscott on Morris’s visual and literary imagination while also illustrating the impressively wide range of his achievements and interests.’



‘Strawberry Thief’ Morris textile print



Jewel Casket hand painted by Dante Rossetti and Mrs Rossetti, (Lizzie Siddal), 1860-62

Circular Table designed by Philip Webb for Red House



IMAGES COURTESY OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF LONDON

## WILLIAM MORRIS AT THE HERMITAGE, ST. PETERSBURG 2019

*Anna Matyukhina*

The last quarter of 2019 was marked by two important Morris-associated events at St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum. After decades of being in storage, the Merton Abbey Adoration tapestry was finally put on display, and a "News from Nowhere" concert lecture was held in one of the Winter Palace halls.

On September 18, 2019 a temporary exhibition, "Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Tapestries in the Hermitage Collection," was opened in the General Staff Building (for a fuller description, see the Hermitage website, <https://tinyurl.com/qs98bcg>). Among the new exhibition's gems is undoubtedly the Hermitage version of 'the Adoration tapestry', woven in 1902 for Sergei Shchukin, the seventh of ten versions of

previous owner--all entirely new information for most visitors to the Museum. In addition, for those who are aware of Morris's genius as well as of Christian iconography, the opportunity to see pictures of the previous owner's Moscow mansion and the pre-1917 decoration of Gauguin Hall is rather precious. This short film can be viewed on the web site, although only in Russian, (<https://youtu.be/Jn8eJwNaaLA>), but it is a delight for the eye even without a translation because of some of the lovely details shown.

Among the exhibited items are tapestries using methods and styles of which Morris would have disapproved. Others could be regarded as following his steps in pioneering a tapestry revival which conceived of weaving as a form of applied art rather than a mere copy of a painting. Jean Lurçat (1892 - 1966), whose work is exemplified in the "Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Tapestries" section of the Hermitage Collection by the tapestry "Blaze of Fire" (1950s). Although Lurçat is often proclaimed the main progenitor of the tapestry revival,



Tatyana Nikolaevna Lekhovich

one of the most famous creations of Morris and Co.'s Merton Abbey Tapestry Works (see my previous article in the *William Morris Society Newsletter*, March 2006. This Hermitage tapestry – the sole Merton Abbey tapestry on the territory of the former USSR – had not been displayed at the Museum for more than ten years, and this exhibition is accompanied by an 11 minute video in which the curator of the exhibition, Tatyana Nikolaevna Lekhovich, PhD, senior researcher in the State Hermitage's Department of Western European Applied Art, narrates the story of William Morris, Morris and Co., the Adoration tapestry at Exeter College, and the Hermitage version of the tapestry, its subject matter, flower symbolism, and

it was William Morris who was the first to devote a great deal of time and energy to reviving the medieval spirit and traditions of the tapestry weaving.

Interestingly, although William Morris and Jean Lurçat lived in different countries and time periods, the two artists had much in common. Both of them were many-sided persons: there is no need to list Morris's activities; as for Lurçat, his name is associated with the tapestry revival to such an extent that other aspects of his work are often neglected, but he made important contributions to painting, literature, and art criticism, and moreover, like Morris, he was a political activist. Both artists were often compared with the great humanists of the Renaissance and both were noted for their love of natural forms. Moreover both regarded tapestry weaving as "the noblest of the weaving arts" and took a profound interest in tapestry from the very outset of their careers, as both started from embroidery in which they tried to reproduce the qualities and texture of

tapestry. The four main principles of tapestry weaving formulated by Lurçat on the base of his *Apocalyps Tapestry* notably coincide with William Morris's theoretical inferences and practice based on his fascination with the tapestries of the "Golden Age" of tapestry weaving (the second half of the fifteenth to the first half of the sixteenth century – the time of Gothic-Renaissance transition). It should be stressed here, however, that for both William Morris and Jean Lurçat the revival of tapestry meant creation of highly original individual works based on an understanding of the principles and spirit of medieval tapestries without being a copy of the medieval source (see also my prior essay, "St Petersburg Workshop for the Revival of Tapestry).

Working at the Hermitage New Acquisitions Department I remember well how 'Blaze of Fire' by Lurçat was acquired in 2009. Unfortunately we have had no opportunity to acquire any of William Morris's works during the almost 20 years of my work in the Museum.

The second event held to honor William Morris at the Hermitage in 2019 took place on December 6, when one could enjoy an evening devoted to his work in the Picket Hall of the Winter Palace. This hall was created by Vasily Stasov during the restoration of the Winter Palace after the 1837 fire. The name derives from "picket" in the old sense of "a detachment of soldiers", and it was there that the ceremony of the changing of the guard was performed by the palace grenadiers who guarded the state rooms of the Winter Palace. Alena Petrovskaya from the State Hermitage Scientific and Educational Department gave an hour and a half presentation, in which she discussed William Morris's multifaceted personality as well as the Arts and Crafts movement. Afterwards the soloists of St Petersburg Chamber Orchestra performed several pieces by key composers of the Baroque era including Johann Sebastian Bach, Antonio Vivaldi, and English Baroque composers John Jenkins and Henry Purcell. As a finale, they also presented their own interpretation of the 'Greensleeves'.

Since this concert lecture was part of a Hermitage cycle titled a "Dialogue of Cultures," it would have seemed more than appropriate to include Morris's "Masters in This Hall" in the programme, but unfortunately, Morris's song wasn't even mentioned. William Morris wrote the lyrics of this translation of a French Noel in 1860 and set them to an early 18th century French dance tune by Marin Marais obtained from the organist of Chartres cathedral by William's friend Edmund Sedding, an architect and musician (*Collection of Ancient Christmas Carols*, arr. Edmund Sedding, 1860). The Hermitage concert would certainly have benefitted from the performance of this very carol, and had I lectured I would have asked the musicians to prepare it for the event, especially in anticipation of the upcoming Christmas. Despite this slight omission, the concert as a whole constituted a very pleasant ending to the informative and well-received lecture on William Morris.

Anna Matyukhina is a senior curator of the New Acquisitions Department at the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. She has published articles on William Morris and tapestry weaving as well as on Morris-related artworks in Russia.



Members of the St Petersburg Chamber Orchestra



## WITH MORRIS IN ICELAND 2020

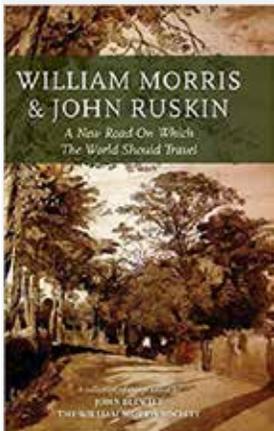
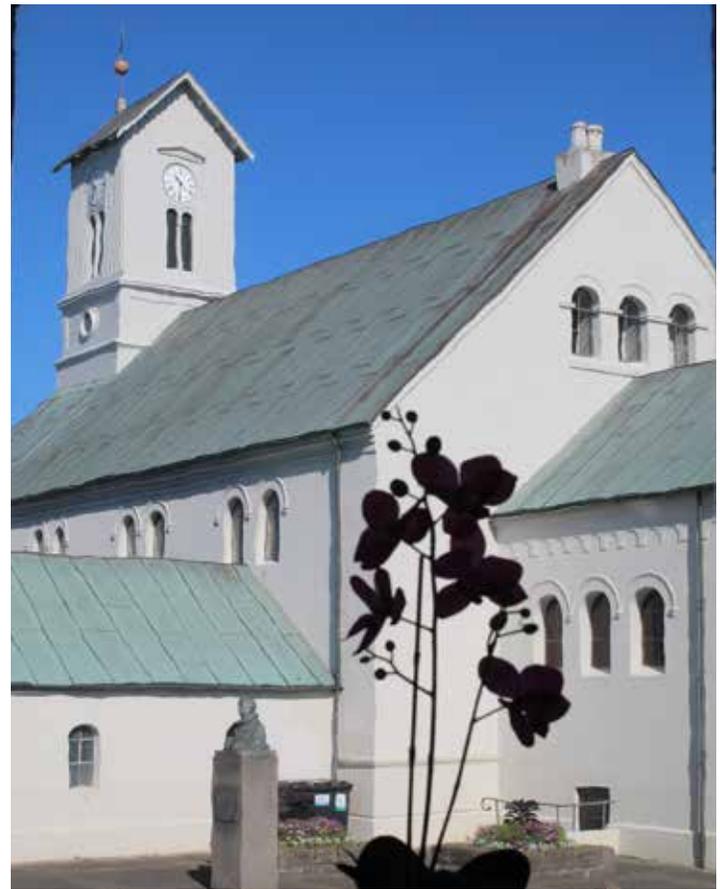
*Martin Stott*

It was in the summer of 1871 that William Morris embarked on the first of his life changing expeditions to Iceland. The *Journals* which he wrote during that trip and the second he made in 1873 are some of the most powerful of all his writings.

The Society in collaboration with its sister Societies in the USA and Canada is planning to mark the 150th anniversary of this important moment in Morris's life with a trip to Iceland in the summer (probably late July) of 2021; an expedition in the footsteps of Morris.

It will draw on the experience the Society has gained from trips organized in 2013 and 2016 to provide an all-round sense of Morris's two journeys, combined with contemporary context and the ever present sense of mystery that the geological and natural wonders of Iceland provide today and which were an inspiration to Morris in his own time.

The trip will have no more than 24 participants plus local guides, to ensure manageability in terms of transport and accommodation in what remains a wild and often desolate country. Duration about 10-12 days and cost likely to be around £2,500- £3,000 per person though this will depend on the value of the pound at the time. Expressions of interest - with no commitment at this stage, are welcome to assess likely demand, to the Society office: [admin@williammorrisociety.org.uk](mailto:admin@williammorrisociety.org.uk)



### ***William Morris and John Ruskin: A New Road on Which the World Should Travel.***

John Blewitt, Editor. A wide-ranging collection of essays written for the William Morris Society exploring the various intersections between the life, work and achievements of William Morris (1834-1896) and that of John Ruskin (1819-1900).

Subjects covered include Ruskin's connection with the Pre-Raphaelite movement, the promotion of craft skills and meaningful work, Morris and the division of labour, Ruskin's engagement with education and the environment, Ruskin and the art and architecture of Red House, the parallels between Ruskin's support for Laxey Mill and Morris's Merton Abbey Works, the illustrated manuscript and the contrasts between Ruskin's Tory paternalism and Morris's revolutionary socialism. The book includes articles first published in *The Journal of William Morris Studies* between 1977 and 2012 and new pieces written especially for this volume.

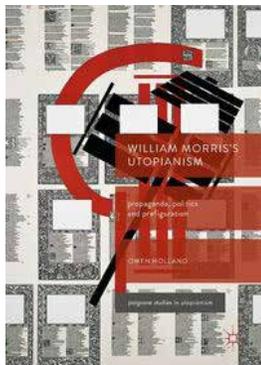
Ruskin's beliefs had a profound and lasting impact on Morris who wrote, upon first reading Ruskin whilst at Oxford University, that his views offered a "new road on which the world should travel" - a road that led Morris to social and political change.

WILLIAM MORRIS'S UTOPIANISM:  
PROPAGANDA, POLITICS, AND  
PREFIGURATION BY OWEN HOLLAND

PALGRAVE, 2017

Reviewed by Florence Boos

Owen Holland's *William Morris's Utopianism: Propaganda, Politics, and Prefiguration* explores the socialist/Marxist ideas permeating Morris's writings from the mid-1880s onward as these respond to the events and debates of his time, and as such, it supplements and corrects the work of E. P. Thompson and other previous commentators on Morris's utopian and political writings. Chapter 1, "No Where and Now Here," stakes out Holland's basic thesis, that Morris's utopian writings respond directly to contemporary literary and cultural trends and, more often than has been explored, comment on political issues of immediate interest to him and his Socialist League audience. *News from Nowhere* thus constitutes a "now here" rather than a "no where," and Holland observes that this "present-oriented, propagandistic function" of Morris's text has been more difficult for later generations to recover than its "futural, heuristic" aspects (p. 20).



Chapter 2, "Twentieth-Century Critical Readings of Morris's Utopianism," identifies what Holland sees as a flaw in earlier readings of *News from Nowhere* by such noted predecessors as R. Page Arnot, Paul Meier, Miguel Abensour, Raymond Williams, and E. P. Thompson, who had viewed Morris's political and utopian writings as largely distinct, and he suggests that their Communist affinities during the 1930s–1970s had prompted them to consider Morris's journalistic writings as less valuable than his utopia. Holland's account here offers a valuable synthesis of much-earlier Morris criticism; but it should also be noted that critical fashions of the time favored structuralist rather than historical or political readings of imaginative works, and so critics who wished to uphold Morris's literary reputation would have avoided such contextual approaches. As instances of *Nowhere's* political commentary, Holland identifies several scenes that relate directly to contemporary Socialist League debates, including conflicts over the limits of reformism, the need for compromise in decision-making, and the dangers of treating "politics" as a compartmentalized, specialized activity. He suggests that Morris was less concerned with "imagining transcendent alternatives" (p. 39) than in presenting "scenes in which his readers, or at least some of them, would be called upon to act" (p. 44).

Chapter 3, "At the Crossroads of Socialism and First-Wave Feminism," provides valuable context for *Nowhere's* statements on gender and marriage. Holland reviews the concerns of "New Woman" novels of the period, noting that the latter

were chiefly realist fictions that celebrated the struggles of middle-class women for independence, whereas *Nowhere's* romance form suggested a broad, historically rooted narrative of an entire people. *Nowhere's* critique of the bourgeois novel plot in which the protagonists marry and live "happily in an island of bliss on other people's troubles" thus constitutes a rejection of realist strategies of representation as well as the limited ideologies that favor a single and relatively favored protagonist.

Holland also reviews Morris's own history of engagement with the feminist causes of his day, from his initial support for women's trade unions through his later warnings that "equal rights" under capitalism would continue the exploitation of both sexes at each other's expense. He supported "free unions," however, and Holland points out that all three of his explicitly political narratives, *A Dream of John Ball*, *The Pilgrims of Hope*, and *News from Nowhere*, present a central character who forms an extramarital union without narrative censure. In assessing Morris's later prose romances such as *The Wood beyond the World* in the context of Victorian feminism, however, he concludes that these generally rely on a sexual double standard and conservative view of gender relations. Finally, Holland considers the scene in *Nowhere* in which Guest and his guide are served by three women at breakfast. He notes that one of these women bears the name of an actual Morris family servant and suggests that Morris may be attempting to portray a world in which former servants and housekeepers have attained equal status with their former employers.

In chapter 4, "The Pastoral Structure of Feeling in Morris's Utopianism," Holland argues that *Nowhere's* pastoralism was "an attempt to appropriate and channel the pastoral structure of feeling dominant in fin-de-siècle radical culture in the direction of political organization," that is, toward social revolution rather than quietist communitarianism (p. 107). Holland considers Morris's qualified response to an array of contemporary pastoral experiments—land colonies, utopian settlements, campaigns for land reform, and environmental pressure groups—all of which he felt failed to confront the necessary task of altering society itself.

Holland traces parallels between the pastoralism of *Nowhere* and the idyllic accounts of rural life in John Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera* and between the peasants' struggle against dispossession of their land in *A Dream of John Ball* and contemporary movements for land nationalization. However, as the ruptured endings of *A Dream of John Ball* and *Nowhere* illustrate, a utopian outcome remains impossible under present social conditions, and Morris's preferred task of "making Socialists" required at least propinquity to a city and large numbers of potential recruits. In evoking the desire for pastoral landscapes within his socialist writings, Morris instead emphasizes the need for his audience to reclaim and create, rather than "find," a nature-based utopia. *Commonweal* pointedly juxtaposed accounts of the dire conditions of rural labor with the pastoral sections of *Nowhere*, and the romance ends with a "counter-pastoral turn"

(p. 155), as upon reentering the nineteenth century, Guest encounters a dilapidated farm laborer rather than *Nowhere's* happy and prosperous denizens. Holland concludes that for Morris pastoral was merely one attempt to tie socialist agitation “to the strategic goal of social revolution, without predetermining the complexity or otherwise of a post-capitalist future” (p. 166).

In chapter 5, “Imperialism, Colonialism and Internationalism,” Holland examines Morris’s many anti-imperialist writings from 1876 until his death, a period when Britain claimed control over nearly one-fifth of the world. He explores Morris’s indebtedness to other Marxist writers such as Ernest Belfort Bax for his analysis of the effects of the “World Market” and examines *Nowhere's* critiques of colonial adventurers in the context of *Commonweal* condemnations of imperial wars. Appropriately *Nowhere's* anti-imperialist critiques are spoken by Hammond from his quarters in the British Museum, the central repository of imperial artifacts, and echo Morris’s own attacks on the ethos of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition of 1886. Holland notes the ironies in John Ball’s innocent but misguided happiness at the news of a future (that is, nineteenth-century) world market, as his nineteenth-century interlocutor corrects his enthusiasm by citing the criticisms of “free trade” also featured in *Commonweal*.

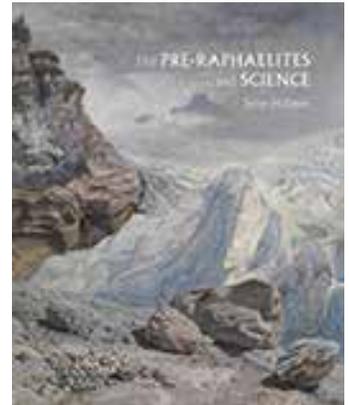
Morris was not merely gradualist and “cosmopolitan” but revolutionary and internationalist in his approach; as a delegate to the founding conference of the Second International held in Paris in 1889, he may have met many of the European socialists who would later translate *News from Nowhere* into at least fourteen other languages. Holland argues that *Nowhere* also “manifests an internationalist outlook in symbolic and figurative terms” (p. 208) in such scenes as *Nowhere's* re-creation of Trafalgar Square as a fruit orchard, although Morris’s embeddedness in a Eurocentric historical tradition also led him to assume that in some contexts British emigration might be benign.

A final chapter, “Where Are We Now?,” considers how a contextual reading of *Nowhere* might remain relevant to our present. Holland suggests that “Morris’s reflections on the nature of work in capitalist society and the possibility of pleasurable labour, so central to his utopianism, continue to have an important purchase on present debates and concerns” (p. 251); specifically, he applauds Morris’s advocacy of the right to creative work (as opposed to merely shorter hours) and his warning of the limits of gradualism. Both are embodied in *Nowhere's* chapter “How the Change Came,” an imagined future retrospective in which Hammond recounts a series of gradualist reforms that had preceded—but failed to encompass—“the great change.” Holland concludes that Morris’s utopianism was “both romantic *and* utilitarian” and that the tension between these elements was “a process which could only be worked out through praxis—not in utopia, but in the very world” (p. 267).

*THE PRE-RAPHAELITES AND SCIENCE*  
BY JOHN HOLMES,  
NEW HAVEN: YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018.

*Reviewed by Florence Boos*

John Holmes’s beautifully presented and illustrated *The Pre-Raphaelites and Science* brings a new sophistication to the discussion of Pre-Raphaelite “truth to nature” in painting and art. His introduction notes that for John Ruskin, as well as for several of his contemporaries, Pre-Raphaelite painting was closely allied with the development of nineteenth-century science; in Ruskin’s words, “the grotesque and wild forms of imagination” characteristic of Pre-Raphaelite art were “a part of [recent] science itself” (p. 1). Holmes explains that two divergent Victorian interpretations of scientific discovery accorded with Pre-Raphaelite practice. During the 1840s and 1850s, a respect both for detailed observation as the basis for “natural laws” and for nature as an orderly creation expressive of “natural theology” underlay Pre-Raphaelite practice in both art and poetry, as seen in the paintings of Holman Hunt and John Tupper’s poems in the *Germ*. By the 1860s and 1870s, however, professional scientists had moved toward a paradigm of scientific naturalism, characterized by skepticism and objectivity, features that their supporters found in the poetry of D. G. Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne (p. 11).



Two chapters deal more directly with Pre-Raphaelite poetry, and both demonstrate the ability of Holmes’s approach to unlock meaning from what had seemed relatively marginal texts. Chapter 3, “The Knowing Hand of the Anatomist: Embodied Psychology in Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Poetry,” outlines what mid-Victorians saw as the relationship between anatomy and the emergent field of psychology. Though not phrenologists per se, the Pre-Raphaelites believed that emotions would over time imprint themselves on the face and body; observation of gestures and postures were thus seen as granting access to an inner mind. In Rossetti’s early, uncompleted poem “The Bride’s Prelude,” for example, the shock and pain experienced by its central characters, Aloyse and Amelotte, is expressed in outward signs of repressed emotion; in five stanzas cited by Holmes, a character is portrayed as sighing, gasping, bowing her head, covering her eyes with her hands, or experiencing disrupted speech, throbbing temples, or loss of consciousness. For the Pre-Raphaelites, “All emotion, all psychology, is experienced as bodily sensation ... and expressed in the minute details of our changing gestures and postures” (p. 77).

Holmes offers several examples of the sophisticated presentation of emotion in Pre-Raphaelite paintings. He notes Rossetti's special interest in the annunciation, as conveyed both in a sonnet for the *Germ* and his painting *Ecce Ancilla Domina*; the "absolute harsh nether darkness" experienced by the poem's Mary similarly appears in the painting's representation of a tearful maiden who shrinks in fear from the angel and his message (p. 85). Holmes also suggests the value of psychological approaches in interpreting Pre-Raphaelite narrative poems; in "A Last Confession," for example, the speaker's increasing obsession with the body of his child ward, whom he murders to avoid loss of control, exposes "the possibility for the willful misinterpretation of one's own bodily impulses and desires inscribed on other people's bodies" (p. 92). William Michael Rossetti's "Mrs. Holmes Grey," another less-frequently-discussed poem, offers three forms of external testimony to the circumstances of a wife's sudden death—medical, legal, and journalistic—but Holmes concludes that for its author, "it is poetry, not such morally and intellectually bankrupt 'quackery,' that can lead us to a proper understanding of psychology" (p. 95).

In chapter 7, "The Facts of the Case: Scientific Naturalism and Pre-Raphaelite Poetry," Holmes argues that literary critics who espoused the new scientific naturalism of the 1860s and 1870s were attracted to the aesthetic poetry written by Rossetti, Morris, Meredith, W. B. Scott, and Swinburne during this period. The contributions of these authors were solicited by John Morley, editor of the liberal *Fortnightly Review*, who advocated radicalism in politics, naturalism in science, and literary explorations of human psychology freed from the constraints of a narrow morality. As Holmes explains, "Science was for Morley a key precondition for the growth of aestheticism, which [embodied] the synthesis of a dialectic in which science is the antithesis of sacramentalism" (p. 185). As examples, poems such as Meredith's "In the Woods" and Swinburne's "Child's Song in Winter" employ natural symbols and poetic rhythms to suggest an immortality confined to natural cycles; W. B. Scott's "Anthony" places the tale of a pious life within a distancing, skeptical frame; and Rossetti's sixteen-sonnet sequence "Of Life, Love, and Death" (an earlier version of "The House of Life") meditates on loss and death from the perspective of "the interior of one man's mind" (p. 191).

Morris's *The Earthly Paradise* likewise attracted Victorian readers, including those of a scientific bent, because of its precise attention to surface details of landscape, wildlife, and external signs of human emotion. As its twenty-five tales unfold, the narrative unflinchingly explores signs of the protagonists' increasing sense of loss and frustration, reminding readers that no temporary satisfactions can escape the forces of time and change, and refusing all hope of an afterlife or even an earthly paradise; in Holmes's eloquent words, "The poem itself becomes the thing its prologue shows us cannot be found. For as long as it lasts, it is an earthly paradise in itself, as, like the tellers and listeners within the poem, we are transported for a time

into a clearer and more intense world" (p. 202). In Rossetti's late poems, "The Cloud Confines" and his two untitled sonnets on his drawing "The Question," the poet suggests that even the possibility of knowledge is denied us, confirming aestheticism's ability to remind science of its limitations and "the hubris of its more totalizing ambitions" (p. 205).

*The Pre-Raphaelites and Science* is distinctive in its ability to identify common principles in both Pre-Raphaelite artwork and poetry, as well as its placement of iconic Pre-Raphaelite works within the context of the less noted poems, essays, and artworks with which they share common features. In moving the debates over the innovative features of Pre-Raphaelite art and poetry from the realms of medievalism and sexual politics to those of science, Holmes also furthers our understanding of why Pre-Raphaelite poetry seemed avant-garde and liberating to its Victorian audiences and why its search for the "truth" of the emotions remains essentially modern and relevant.

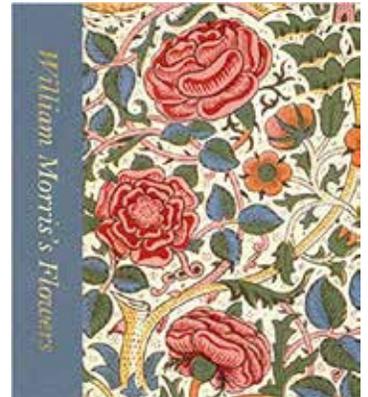
## WILLIAM MORRIS'S FLOWERS

BY ROWAN BAIN

LONDON: VICTORIA AND ALBERT PUBLISHING /  
THAMES & HUDSON LTD., 2019.

*Reviewed by Sarah Mead Leonard*

This lovely, compact book was written by Rowan Bain, Senior Curator at the William Morris Gallery, and is lavishly illustrated with objects from the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the William Morris Gallery. Marketed as a gift book, it is also a useful (and beautiful) reference to many works by William Morris and other Morris & Co. designers.



The majority of the book's 144 pages are devoted to a collection of seventy-five objects, each shown in color images and accompanied by a short text. Despite the title of the book, the objects chosen were designed not only by William Morris but also by May Morris, J.H. Dearle, and Kate Faulkner. The range of designs represented is impressive: printed fabrics, wallpapers, and embroideries make up the majority, but other objects such as tiles, tapestries, carpets, and books also appear. The accompanying texts are brief but thorough, identifying flower forms and placing the objects within the larger contexts of the designers' works. Some of the objects are illustrated both in whole and in detail, while others are shown with their designs or printing blocks. This wealth of illustration is one of the book's greatest strengths, allowing for lingering inspection and comparative study.



Design for Rose, 1883.  
Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour on paper.  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Wey, furnishing fabric, designed 1883. Indigo-discharged and printed cotton. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Wey, furnishing fabric, designed 1883. Indigo-discharged and printed cotton. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

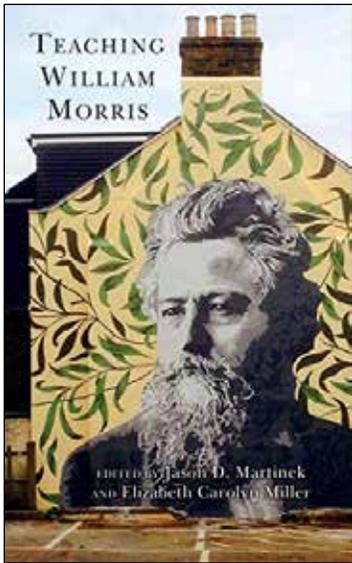
The introductory text which precedes the objects provides a succinct summary of William Morris's life and design career, with particular attention to his interest in plant forms. Botanically, the emphasis is on Morris's relationship with gardens and garden plants, even though a more diverse range of plants – including many countryside wildflowers – appear in the objects themselves. There is also a close consideration of how Morris's taste in flowers intersected with his views on design and beauty. Other subsections provide helpful overviews of subjects such as the dye techniques used in Morris & Co. fabrics, Middle Eastern and South Asian influences on Morris designs, and his work for a range of media including embroidery and book arts. The focus is almost entirely on William Morris, which does create a slight disjunct with the object section which follows, as May Morris's work receives only a brief discussion, J.H. Dearle is mentioned only in passing, and Kate Faulkner appears not at all. However, the introduction is nevertheless a neat and accessible overview of a complex subject and a vast body of work. And like the rest of the book, it is heavily illustrated with high-quality images, providing further opportunities for inspection and comparison of Morris, Morris & Co., and Kelmscott Press designs.

## TEACHING WILLIAM MORRIS

*Edited by Jason D. Martinek and Elizabeth Carolyn Miller.*

Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Vancouver, BC

A prolific artist, writer, designer, and political activist, William Morris remains remarkably powerful and relevant today. But how do you teach someone like Morris who made significant contributions to several different fields of study? And how, within the exigencies of the modern educational system, can teachers capture the interdisciplinary spirit of Morris, whose various contributions hang so curiously together? *Teaching William Morris* gathers together the work of nineteen Morris scholars from a variety of fields, offering a wide array of perspectives on the challenges and the rewards of teaching William Morris. Across this book's five sections—"Pasts and Presents," "Political Contexts," "Literature," "Art and Design," and "Digital Humanities"—readers will learn the history of Morris's place in the modern curriculum, the current state of the field for teaching Morris's work today, and how this pedagogical effort is reaching well beyond the college classroom.



Editors Jason D. Martinek and Elizabeth Carolyn Miller. Contributors: Susan David Bernstein, Florence Boos, Pamela Bracken, Julie Codell, Helen Elletson, KellyAnn Fitzpatrick, Amanda Golden, Imogen Hart, Elizabeth Helsinger, James Housefield, Linda Hughes, Deanna Kreisel, David Latham, William M. Meier, Morna O'Neill, Tony Pinkney, John Plotz, Michael Robertson, Michelle Weinroth.

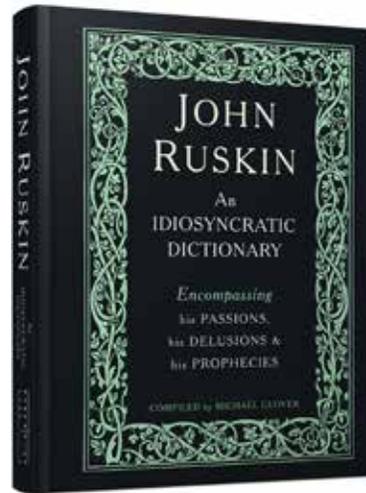
## JOHN RUSKIN:

*AN IDIOSYNCRATIC DICTIONARY*

*ENCOMPASSING HIS PASSIONS, HIS DELUSIONS*

*AND HIS PROPHECIES*

*by Michael Glover. Lund Humphries, London*



"Ruskin revived, re-considered – and lightly reimagined. Michael Glover's entertaining approach invites us to explore the byways of Ruskin's life and thought, without losing sight of his essential greatness. A bicentennial bonus."— Robert Hewison, Honorary Professor at the Ruskin Centre, Lancaster University

From Aesthete to Ziffern, Baby-Language to Verbosity, Badgers to Railway Stations: this gloriously serendipitous dictionary presents the life, times, and strong opinions of John Ruskin (1819-1900)—art critic, patron, draftsman, watercolor painter, social thinker, and philanthropist.

Michael Glover's delightful A-Z distills the essence of Ruskin, revealing a lighter side to the man known for his thirty-nine volumes of ponderous prose. When off his guard, Ruskin could write pithily and amusingly, but he was also a fascinating amalgam of self-contradictions. Combining judiciously selected extracts from Ruskin's writings with the author's wittily insightful interpretations, this book is essential reading for all those curious to know what Ruskin did with a cyanometer, why he hated iron railings and the Renaissance, and how Proust's admiration of the man was tinged with distrust.

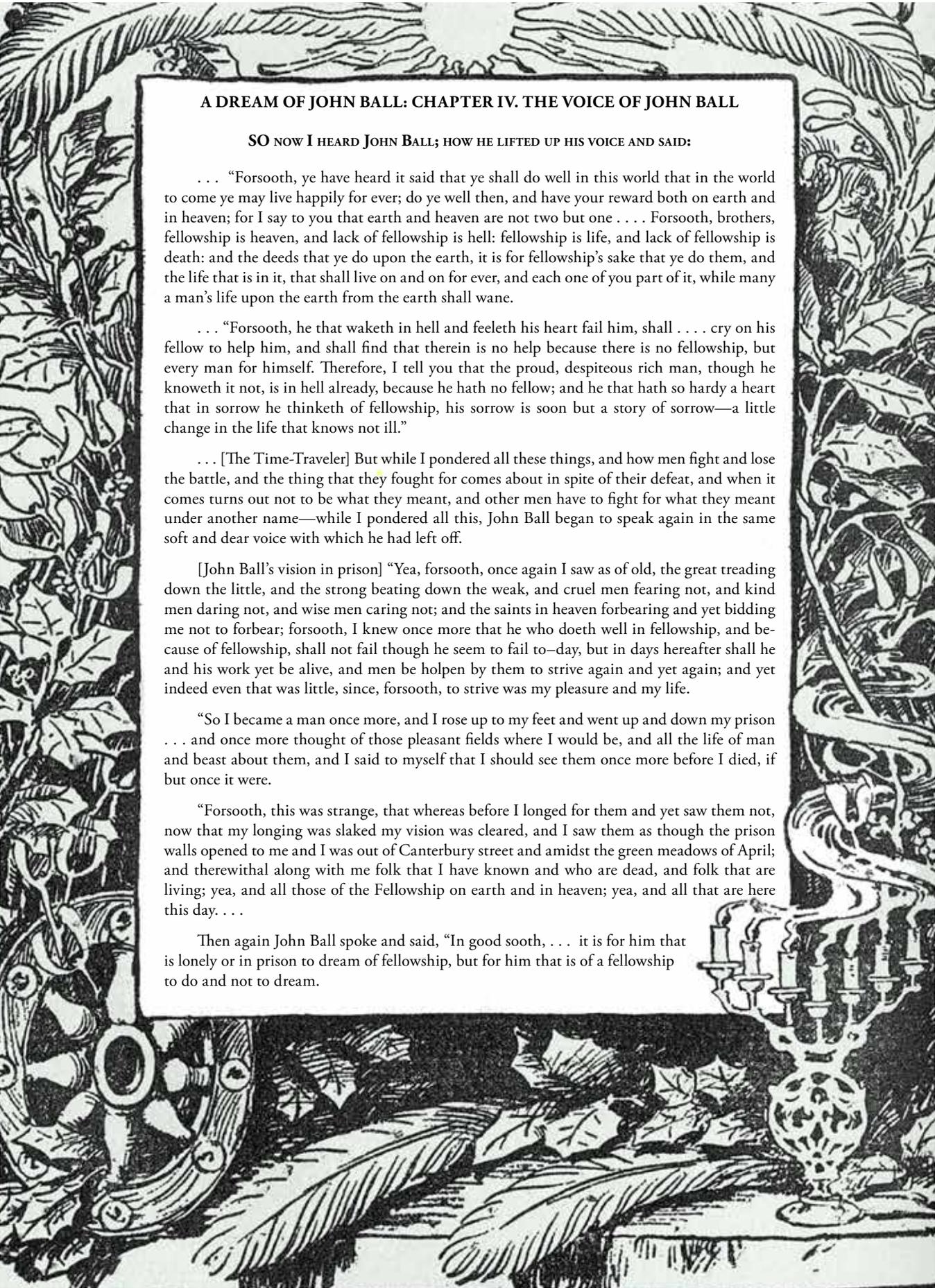
## MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION TORONTO CONVENTION JANUARY 7-10, 2021

**GUARANTEED SESSION: MORRIS AND HIS CIRCLE: BIOGRAPHY, ARCHIVES, ARTIFACTS**

**PROPOSED JOINT SESSION**

**WITH THE MLA FORUM ON BOOK HISTORY, PRINT CULTURE AND LEXICOGRAPHY**

A joint social event with the William Morris Society of Canada is planned. For information on times, locations, and attendance passes, please see our website and/or email [Florence-Boos@uiowa.edu](mailto:Florence-Boos@uiowa.edu).



#### A DREAM OF JOHN BALL: CHAPTER IV. THE VOICE OF JOHN BALL

SO NOW I HEARD JOHN BALL; HOW HE LIFTED UP HIS VOICE AND SAID:

. . . “Forsooth, ye have heard it said that ye shall do well in this world that in the world to come ye may live happily for ever; do ye well then, and have your reward both on earth and in heaven; for I say to you that earth and heaven are not two but one . . . Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell: fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death: and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship’s sake that ye do them, and the life that is in it, that shall live on and on for ever, and each one of you part of it, while many a man’s life upon the earth from the earth shall wane.

. . . “Forsooth, he that waketh in hell and feeleth his heart fail him, shall . . . cry on his fellow to help him, and shall find that therein is no help because there is no fellowship, but every man for himself. Therefore, I tell you that the proud, despiteous rich man, though he knoweth it not, is in hell already, because he hath no fellow; and he that hath so hardy a heart that in sorrow he thinketh of fellowship, his sorrow is soon but a story of sorrow—a little change in the life that knows not ill.”

. . . [The Time-Traveler] But while I pondered all these things, and how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name—while I pondered all this, John Ball began to speak again in the same soft and dear voice with which he had left off.

[John Ball’s vision in prison] “Yea, forsooth, once again I saw as of old, the great treading down the little, and the strong beating down the weak, and cruel men fearing not, and kind men daring not, and wise men caring not; and the saints in heaven forbearing and yet bidding me not to forbear; forsooth, I knew once more that he who doeth well in fellowship, and because of fellowship, shall not fail though he seem to fail to-day, but in days hereafter shall he and his work yet be alive, and men be holpen by them to strive again and yet again; and yet indeed even that was little, since, forsooth, to strive was my pleasure and my life.

“So I became a man once more, and I rose up to my feet and went up and down my prison . . . and once more thought of those pleasant fields where I would be, and all the life of man and beast about them, and I said to myself that I should see them once more before I died, if but once it were.

“Forsooth, this was strange, that whereas before I longed for them and yet saw them not, now that my longing was slaked my vision was cleared, and I saw them as though the prison walls opened to me and I was out of Canterbury street and amidst the green meadows of April; and therewithal along with me folk that I have known and who are dead, and folk that are living; yea, and all those of the Fellowship on earth and in heaven; yea, and all that are here this day. . . .

Then again John Ball spoke and said, “In good sooth, . . . it is for him that is lonely or in prison to dream of fellowship, but for him that is of a fellowship to do and not to dream.