WILLIAM MORRIS: An Enduring Legacy

EXHIBITION
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Welcome

When the summer issue of the magazine appears, it will have been produced by a new editor. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have edited the Magazine ever since its transition from the Newsletter to a full-colour, glossy publication, but new responsibilities in my paid employment mean that I have felt it necessary to stand down and pass the role to someone else.

At the start, guidelines for the Magazine's appearance had been set out by Angus Hyland of Pentagram, but the broad details of its content and page layouts, together with choosing the paper it was printed on, were worked out by myself, trustees Michael Hall and Rebecca Estrada-Pintel, and our very patient designer, Andrew Sidford. My one resolve as editor was to have an image on every page, because I felt that a failing of the Newsletter was a lack of visual richness that seemed inappropriate to a publication about Morris, his contemporaries and his successors.

I had applied for the position of editor after seeing an advertisement in the Victorian Society e-bulletin. I wasn’t a member of that organisation, or of the WMS, but I had worked as an editor. I wrote in my application that I wasn’t passionate about Morris, but that I was interested in him and admired him, knowing of him primarily as a designer, through studying art history for my first degree and through visits to the houses I most associated with him: Red House, Kelmscott Manor, Wightwick Manor and Standen. I’d never been to the Society’s premises at Kelmscott House and was wholly ignorant of Morris’s success as a poet. I immediately bought two secondhand copies of Fiona MacCarthy’s biography, one for myself and one for my partner.

How, in the magazine, do you reflect Morris’s many and diverse interests? I have frequently been able to use the excellent pieces of research that members have submitted, while taking care to differentiate the Magazine from the Journal through introducing other kinds of articles. These have included interviews, and features relating to current exhibitions or events such as the reopening of Emery Walker’s house. Suspecting that the members of the Society, as I do, like to get their teeth into a longer read, I’ve rather favoured a length of two thousand words.

Things don’t always go to plan when commissioning writing. Sometimes it takes a while to track down that person who can give up the time to write for us. I had several ideas for this issue which didn’t come to pass, but may do so in the future under new editorship. I planned a piece on the Christina Rossetti exhibition at Watts Gallery, and the SPAB William Morris Craft Fellowship interview, and having a few pages to fill, realised that I would have to write something. I chose Philip Webb’s only church, St Martin’s at Brampton, and its wonderful Burne-Jones glass. I wrote to Tullie House museum in Carlisle which owns a couple of the cartoons for the glass, I contacted the stained-glass specialist photographer who had taken top-quality photos of it, I asked another photographer about images of the exterior and interior, and I got permission from the William Morris Gallery to use the worked-up Burne-Jones drawing in its collection. Then very late in the day, while browsing events celebrating John Ruskin’s bicentenary, I discovered that the main Ruskin exhibition in London would have finished before the summer issue of the magazine is published. I put the Brampton article on hold, got myself invited to the press view and wrote instead about Ruskin: The Power of Seeing at Two Temple Place.

Perhaps my favourite part of the role has been selecting the front cover image. My MA dissertation centred on a painting by the greatest of nineteenth-century painters, JMW Turner, and I’ve almost sneaked him in here. This issue’s cover picture, slightly cropped, is a watercolour by Ruskin on display at Two Temple Place, made after a painting by his ‘earthly Master’ four years after Turner’s death; finding inspiration in the exhilaration of nature.

Susan Warlow, Editor
Portrait of Christina Rossetti by John Brett, oil on canvas, 1857, private collection.

Opposite: If a Pig Were a Wig by Dalziel Brothers after Arthur Hughes, illustration to Sing-Song, 1872, wood engraving, collection of Stephen Calloway.
If today Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) is among the best-loved of Victorian poets, it is perhaps because the clarity and directness of her verse can still take us by surprise. She describes emotions and experiences with poetic images that we instinctively recognise. I feel disappointed if at Christmas I don’t get to sing the carol In the Bleak Midwinter – words by Rossetti, music by Gustav Holst – with its vivid wintry similes: earth standing hard as iron, water like a stone. This striking poetic imagery has always attracted artists, and visual art was a vital part of her creative life – which is why we wanted to create the exhibition Christina Rossetti: Vision & Verse. It brings together portraits from all stages of her life, illustrations to her poetry, early editions of her books, independent pictures inspired by her words – and even examples of her own intriguing drawings.

Born in London in 1830, Rossetti grew up with her three older siblings in a lively and intellectual Anglo-Italian household. Her father Gabriele Rossetti, Professor of Italian at King’s College London, was a political exile from Naples, and the family home in Charlotte Street, just south of Regent’s Park, was a hub for Italian expatriates. Among these was the poet and engraver Filippo Pistorucci, who during his visits made attractive little watercolour portraits of all the children. Captured at the age of about thirteen, Christina looks enigmatic and stiff: both sphinx and doll. Even at this stage she was writing poetry, though, and this provided the occasion for a pencil portrait of 1847, an elegant profile drawn by her brother Gabriel when she was sixteen—a pose over which she, presumably, had more say. Created for a special copy of her first collection of poetry, Verses, which was privately printed by her maternal grandfather Gaetano Polidori, it is the first image of Christina Rossetti as an acknowledged poet. Gabriel drew and painted his sister over and over again at this time: quietly reading a book; in close-up profile; catching our eye, face half lost in shadow. It was the beginning of a close and lasting creative relationship.

While Christina was honing the skill that would make her one of the Victorian era’s most celebrated poets, her brothers Dante Gabriel and William Michael were working out how to reform British art. In 1848 they created the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) which aimed to bring a new technical rigour and emotional sincerity to painting. Although never a formal member of this radical group, which had an important literary dimension, Christina was so deeply involved that she could jokingly refer to her ‘double sisterhood’ in a letter to William. She even wrote some doggerel verse to amuse her brothers:

‘The two Rossettis (brothers they)
And Holman Hunt and John Millais,
With Stephens chivalrous and bland,
And Woolner in a distant land,
In these six men I awestruck see
Embodied the great P.R.B.’

Not only did she contribute poems to the PRB’s magazine, The Germ, she also acted as a model for the group’s pictures. When in 1848 Gabriel was planning his first major painting, The Girlhood of Mary Virgin, she modelled for the Virgin while their mother sat for the figure of St Anne. In 1849 she sat for him again for a painting of the Annunciacion, Ecce Ancilla Domini!. A pencil study for the painting, in which Gabriel depicts his sister wearing a sleeveless cotton dress, knees drawn up as though recoiling in alarm and confusion from her angelic visitor, brings the siblings’ collaboration to vivid life.

Gabriel was, of course, as much a poet as a painter. What is less well-known is that Christina also studied art as a young woman. While so many of her contemporaries were keen amateur artists, she took a more serious interest and in 1851-2 attended the North London School of Drawing and Modelling, an establishment set up to provide instruction for artisans, where the headmaster was the painter Ford Madox Brown, a family friend. Her training was cut short by the family’s move to Frome in 1853 to open a small school, but her letters reveal that during her year in Somerset she continued diligently to draw and to paint in watercolour. She was characteristically self-deprecating about her abilities: ‘Just at present’, she wrote to her London-based friend Mrs Heimann, ‘I am applying a little to sketching; but I have not much faith in my achieving greatness and fame in the Art. However it is amusing.’ In these early years her work was based on close observation, as a portrait of her mother and studies of animals in the exhibition reveal. In later years when she picked up her pencils and brushes she tended instead to look inwards, consulting her imagination and making intriguing emblematic drawings in the margins of her own manuscripts and in printed books.

When Rossetti began to have success in getting her poems published in magazines, her earliest illustrators included John Everett Millais, a central member of the PRB, and Frederick Sandys, a close associate. Sandys’ involved, Dürer-esque illustrations to Rossetti’s poems...
Amor Mundi and If both capture the dark emotional intensity of her verse. But the illustrator most closely associated with her poetry was her brother Gabriel, who designed her first commercially published book, Goblin Market and Other Poems (1862). Christina composed the title poem, Goblin Market, in 1859 while volunteering at the St Mary Magdalene Penitentiary for ‘fallen women’ in Highgate. Exploring themes of transgression, sacrifice and eventual salvation, it is a moral tale about two sisters, Laura and Lizzie, who are tempted by strange merchants to buy enchanted fruit. Despite sensible Lizzie’s warning – ‘We must not look at goblin men, / We must not buy their fruits: / Who knows upon what soil they fed / Their hungry thirsty roots?’ – curious Laura exchanges a lock of her golden hair for a taste and becomes dangerously ill. Lizzie bravely seeks the goblins out, trying to buy more fruit as an antidote for her sister, but they attack her, smearing it over her face as they vainly attempt to make her eat. When she returns home, however, Laura kisses the juice from her face and is saved.

Gabriel proposed himself as the book’s designer and took control of its appearance, aiming to create a harmonious setting for his sister’s poems. He designed the entire double-page spread to incorporate not only his frontispiece image depicting the dramatic moment when Laura cuts her hair to pay the goblins, but also a title-page illustration, ‘Golden head by golden head; showing the sisters asleep in each other’s arms, dreaming of goblins. In order to make the spread visually harmonious he drew the title-page lettering rather than allowing type to intrude. It was a successful collaboration, and in time Goblin Market became a classic. From the 1890s to the 1930s numerous illustrated editions were published with designs by artists including Laurence Housman, Florence Harrison and Arthur Rackham: the poem’s vivid, sensuous imagery lent itself to pictorial treatments in the colourfull ‘gift books’ popular in those years.

Shortly after the publication in 1866 of Christina’s next volume, The Prince’s Progress and Other Poems – for which he also created a cover design and produced illustrations for the frontispiece and title page – Gabriel drew her portrait in coloured chalks. He presents her as a mature poet, looking up from her book and lost in thought as though struck by inspiration. It was her favourite of all his portraits, and she sent photographs of it to her friends and admirers; her brother William remarked that it would be ‘hard for any likeness to be more exact’. This is how William Morris would have known her.

In 1872 Rossetti published a book of poems for children, Sing-Song, made up of lullabies, counting songs, ingenious plays on words and gentle moral lessons. These range widely in tone, including both playful rhymes for infants: ‘Mother shake the cherry-tree, / Susan catch a cherry; / Oh how funny that will be, / Let’s be merry!’ and grave meditations on human life and the passage of time:

‘What are heavy? sea-sand and sorrow: / What are brief? today and tomorrow: / What are deep? the ocean and truth. ’

Each poem was illustrated by Arthur Hughes, a painter associated with the PRB and one of her favourite artists, with engaging vignettes which Rossetti said ‘deserve to sell the volume’. She herself had made drawings illustrating each of her poems in Sing-Song – the manuscript is now in the British Library – and Hughes kept these by his side while he was working on his own designs. Rossetti had been so delighted by his illustrations that when she came to write a fantasy book for older children, Speaking Likenesses, she recommended him to her publisher again. ‘About illustrations’, she wrote, ‘Nothing would please me more than that Mr Arthur Hughes (…) should do them.’

When Rossetti’s poetry became widely known, her enigmatic words and striking imagery began to inspire artists to create independent works of art. Among the first to base compositions on her verse was the pioneering photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, who created her composition The Minstrel Group in 1866, the year she and Rossetti met. The Minstrel Group was inspired by the poem Advent, but is in no sense an illustration. Instead, the poem’s lines ‘We sing a slow contented song / and knock at Paradise’ served as a jumping-off point for a new pictorial idea: three picturesque young travelling musicians.

Similarly, when Arthur Hughes exhibited his oil painting The Mower at the Royal Academy, a painting with overtones of transience and mortality, he included a line from Rossetti’s Old and New Year Ditties, 3 in the catalogue: ‘Passing away, saith the World, passing away’. Quoting Rossetti in this way allowed Hughes to gesture towards a work with a shared theme, one that lent his painting extra poetic resonance.

In the 1890s the Belgian Symbolist painter Fernand Khnopff based two compositions on Who Shall Deliver Me? – one of the most introspective and soul-searching of Rossetti’s poems. Like Cameron’s The Minstrel Group, his 1891 painting I Lock My Door Upon Myself (Christina Georgina Rossetti) is a visual response rather than an illustration. Depicting a woman in a trance-like reverie, Khnopff draws on the powerful emotional resonance of Rossetti’s poetry, but rather than the acute spiritual anguish conveyed by her words he explores a more mysterious and withdrawn psychological state.

Gabriel’s final group of portraits of his sister were made in the autumn of 1877. In poor health, he had left London in late summer in order to recuperate at a secluded farmhouse at Herne Bay in Kent, where Christina and their mother joined him. At this time his hand, Christina noticed, was ‘often visibly tremulous’, and he had become convinced that he was no longer able to draw. Thinking of a ruse to persuade him otherwise, Christina, who normally admitted to being ‘not much addicted to sitting for my portrait’, professed herself to be ‘seized by a burning desire to have her portrait drawn’. Her plan worked: an impressive group of coloured-chalk portraits Gabriel made of her during these weeks, one a joint portrait with their mother, have an extraordinary emotional intensity. They also reveal the extent of her own health problems in showing the effect that Graves’ disease, a serious thyroid condition from which she had suffered in the early 1870s, had made to her appearance.

Christina Rossetti died on 29 December 1894, at the age of 64. By that time she was widely admired and respected as a poet. In 1898 a memorial painting designed by Edward Burne-Jones, one of Gabriel’s closest friends and staunchest artistic allies, was unveiled at Christ Church Woburn Square, where Rossetti had worshipped for the last twenty years of her life.

The decades after Rossetti’s death saw the publication of numerous illustrated editions of her poetry, with Goblin Market being a particular favourite. More recently, the popularity of artists’ books has created a new arena for innovative visual interpretations of Rossetti’s poetry. The exhibition closes with wood-engravings by Hilary Paynter, designed for the pages of an edition of Goblin Market in which text and illustration balance each other on the page, components of a harmonious whole. One feels that Morris would have approved.
Fellows and scholars tour of Westminster Abbey with the Clerk of Works.

Opposite, top: Dale Perrin on the roof of Hampton Court Palace.

The William Morris Craft Fellowship

Susan Warlow spoke to carpenter Dale Perrin, one of SPAB’s 2017 Fellows

This unique training course for craftsmen involved in the repair of historic buildings, run by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, receives a portion of its funding from The William Morris Society. The course is divided into three two-month blocks of practical training, part of it shared with the Lethaby Scholars, who are architects, building surveyors and structural engineers. During the first two blocks the Fellows travel as a group, making daily site visits, studying repair projects, and meeting professionals, contractors and craftsmen, both to develop the different aspects of their chosen field and to appreciate craft skills other than their own. The final block is devoted to the individual needs and interests of each Fellow.

Susan Warlow
Why and how did you become a carpenter?
Dale Perrin From a young age I was interested in carpentry. My dad was a carpenter so I got a lot of background knowledge from him and I’ve ended up following in his footsteps. I started with a three-year apprenticeship at Bakers of Danbury who carry out a lot of listed building work. I was lucky to work there with the last of the traditional craftsmen who have since retired. I’ve been self-employed ever since, in the Braintree and Chelmsford area of Essex.

Susan Warlow
How did you hear about the Fellowship?
Dale Perrin It was via a private client who I worked for on a Grade-II-listed farmhouse. She is a member of the SPAB and had looked into the Fellowship previously in relation to the work she was doing. I didn’t know anything about it, although I’d heard of the SPAB, and she recommended it to me as a possible avenue to look into. Fortunately for me, on that project she was SPAB by the book, and the work that I carried out there was as good as it possibly could be in their eyes. I originally went there to repair a staircase, just one job, and a year and eight months later I came out of it having done a lot more. The farmhouse dates back to 1375 and the client based her conservation-degree thesis on it. She established that part of the house was a chapel, whose altar stone was found during the building works, and the house had been a resting point on a pilgrimage route.

SW How were you able to fit the Fellowship in with your own work?
DP Within the nine months of the Fellowship, you actually do three two-month stretches, and during the first break I was able to plan in work that I hadn’t finished or that people had asked me to do beforehand; after the second block I worked with a local company who I’ve sometimes worked with over the last seven years. Previous Fellows recommended that as the way to do it, staying in one place and working for one person rather than trying to fit my own work into a finite period of time.

SW What did you most enjoy learning about during the Fellowship stays?
DP We all felt, collectively, that we learnt the most when we were together with Scholars – when there was an opportunity to have the seven of us on one site, joining the professional and crafts people together. The Fellows would be asking one set of questions and the Scholars would be asking another set that maybe we hadn’t thought of. We had really good conversations with one another and with the people we were visiting.

SW What place of those you visited stood out most for you?
DP I wouldn’t say that one place was more significant for me; it was the vernacular styles of the different areas that I was most struck by. That interest only developed as we went along; the buildings that I have worked on – barns and farmhouses – tend to be local and have similar characteristics. As we travelled around I found that even the higher-class palaces, cathedrals and churches, still employed some vernacular materials and I really enjoyed seeing the regional variety. There are changes even in skills, and you could tell where things altered financially, or where there were differences in build or quality or styles, which I found really interesting. That was a learning curve for me and I’ve continued studying that in the local work I’m doing, coming to understand those differences.

We were also lucky enough to be invited to take part in the Building Limes Forum’s annual conference on all things lime, which that year took place in Trondheim, Norway, following the second block. It was marvellous to meet people from all over the world in a large gathering.

SW What did you do during the third block?
DP Often, having spent four months together, in the third block people go off in separate directions, and lose that contact and conversation, but the stonemason fellow Gregor Alcorne and I spent quite a lot of time together because we had similar interests, and that worked really well. We had a week at Hampton Court Palace with Emma Simpson on brickwork repair, which was fantastic! That job did stand out: the quality of the repairs and all the work being carried out was to a really high standard with the right ethics and processes behind it.

We spent a week at Canterbury Cathedral where they were repairing and replacing the roof, including re-melting the sandcast lead that was on there and re-forming it. That was with Dolmen Conservation who I later went on to work for.

Probably the best week-and-a-half of the third
Kennington, London. A previous Fellow has block was at the City & Guilds School of Art in Kennington, London. A previous Fellow has joined the historical stone-carving course there. They were a great bunch, welcoming us to join in with all their lessons and lectures, as well as evening events. We spent two days drawing human form and still life with their drawing tutor, and I had time in the woodcarving workshop with the third-year students, who I’m now very good friends with and continue to keep in contact with. Gregor spent the same amount of time with the stone-carving students.

I also spent a week with a carpenter in Essex who I’ve worked with previously – Joe Bishops – working on Beeleigh Steam Mill in Maldon. A group of enthusiasts want to get its Wentworth beam engine back in action and open up the place as a tourist attraction. Joe had the contract to repair the mill floor with Baltic Pine, ready to get two of the millstones back in location.

**SW** You did quite a variety of things!
**DP** Yes, I had a week with Joe on the carpentry side, but I was quite keen to follow up the recommendations of other Fellows because it’s the one chance you get to see different craftsmen and things you might never return to. I managed to mix those in with visiting a couple of companies I was particularly interested in from a professional point of view. It was suggested to us was that it’s good to see how different businesses are run. In my year, one Fellow had his own company and another had a business with his father, Holy Well Glass in Wells. People were very open to giving advice on the business side of things: how to run a business efficiently, which is much more difficult in the conservation world than in the new-build environment. They said that that they would be more than happy to offer advice in the future and shared much more information than you would imagine.

**SW** That was very supportive!
**DP** Yes, that support was across the whole year. One of the biggest things that the Fellowship gives us, to carry with us, is the network of people, for all sorts of support whether it’s interest in a building, or knowledge around another trade or material. There are around 120 Fellows, without the Scholars and other companies involved.

**SW** What have you been working on since?
**DP** Immediately after the Fellowship I went on to work on the hammer-beam roof at Westminster Hall with Dolmen Conservation, which I thoroughly enjoyed, for four months. I then came back to Essex and have been working on my own jobs: a variety of newer and older, traditional work. I’ve bought a lot of books to increase my knowledge. I’m currently working on a barn conversion for a company, trying to convince them of the value of methods and traditional materials I’ve seen over the year. I now feel confident enough to comment and have an opinion, and I’m working with some intelligent chaps. Some things are listened to, and other things, depending on the attitude of the client, and their finances, may be harder to achieve.

**SW** How do you think participating in the Fellowship has affected your work?
**DP** I would say that I’m paying a lot more attention to doing high-quality work. I always wanted to do it, but it tended to be a middle line between how long things took and how well they were done, depending on what the client wanted. I now feel much more comfortable in backing up my arguments, and being able to stand my ground with a client or architect regarding what I think is the right way. I’ve been given knowledge by the Fellowship, even outside of carpentry, that I can use. Also, you have so many discussions during the Fellowship with well-known architects and you are able to have a conversation with them and put your point across, and whether it’s right or wrong they are quite happy to have that conversation with you. It’s about learning to put things across in the right way, that you can have that discussion and maybe change their views.

**SW** Do you still have a relationship with the William Morris Craft Fellowship?
**DP** Yes, I’m a member of SPAB and I’d be more than happy to talk to future Fellows. I really appreciate all the support I’ve received, it’s a great thing! I’m now working for a Scholar on the building where she’s living. I’m also involved with the William Morris Craft Fellowship Trust, which supports the Fellowship.
How I came to Morris

Stephen Bradley, Chair of The William Morris Society

I came to appreciate William Morris early in my architectural education at Bristol, not only as the founder of SPAB but also – by virtue of his friendship and collaboration with, and patronage of Philip Webb on the hugely influential Red House at Bedleyheath – as the godfather of Art & Crafts architecture.

Morris’s ideas underpinned my degree course, where great emphasis was placed on integrating designing and making: appreciating the value of understanding both the limitations and opportunities of manual techniques and materials, before briefing others to execute designs. In addition, one of my great pleasures as a student was carrying out a drawn study of the vast mediaeval Great Coxwell Barn in Oxfordshire, which Morris revered and described as ‘beautiful as a cathedral’. After leaving university my first building as a postgraduate architectural trainee was a new Arts & Crafts-influenced pavilion for Queen Mary College at South Woodford in east London, close to the birthplace of William Morris.

William Morris had also been an influence on my grandfather, who spent his whole working life, from 1910 to 1966, with the Bromsgrove Guild of Applied Arts. This company, established in 1898, had its origins in the Birmingham School of Art towards the end of Morris’s life and it became a refuge and fellowship for artist-craftsmen from all over Europe. One of its collaborators was George Percy Bankart, who was of Swiss descent and brought up in Leicester. Through Ernest Gimson, Bankart was introduced to William Morris and other leading architects and craftsmen including Mervyn Macartney, Sydney Barnsley and WR Lethaby, and developed a specialism in sculptural modelling for leadwork and decorative plastering.

Some time after Morris’s death, and probably after Bankart left the Bromsgrove Guild to set up an independent practice in London, he installed the distinctive decorative plasterwork to the first-floor drawing-room ceiling at Kelmscott House.

In the 1990s I became absorbed in the emerging world of new working methods, enabled by mobile-communications technology and the environmental imperative to reduce unnecessary travel. For five years I ran a membership organisation called The Workplace Forum, collaborating on research and educational activities with the Future Work Forum and the Work Foundation. This brought into view the contemporary relevance of Morris’s ideas on the value of communal physical work and fellowship. I see a similarly-valuable potential role for The William Morris Society as a collaborator with associated organisations, pursuing more sustainable integration of work, community and environmental responsibility.

After retirement from the world of property and construction in 2014, I went back to university to take a Master’s degree in Sustainable Heritage at University College London. This brought me closer to both environmental conservation and a deeper appreciation of intangible heritage; my dissertation carried out social research into the importance of heritage in sustaining community bonds with place. Having researched co-operative working communities of artist-craftsmen in Hammersmith and Chiswick as part of my diploma course in the late 1970s, the Arts & Crafts Hammersmith initiative holds special interest for me.

Since arriving in London forty years ago I have lived within a couple of miles of Kelmscott House. Through membership of the Victorian Society, which is based in Chiswick, I was introduced to The William Morris Society and subsequently encouraged by Martin Stott, the previous Chair, to become a trustee, connecting my business experience with my lifelong interest in literature, design, making and socially-responsible ways of working.

Above: The thirteenth-century Great Coxwell Barn so admired by Morris.
Left: Plasterwork by George Percy Bankart at Whitby Bay Crematorium Chapel, 1913.
Morris aficionados may have visited Two Temple Place in recent years. It is managed by the Bulldog Trust, a charity that encourages philanthropy, and the first of its free annual exhibitions, which show work from regional, publicly-owned collections in the UK, was William Morris: Story, Memory, Myth in the winter of 2011 to 2012, during the refurbishment of the William Morris Gallery.

The lavish neo-Tudor mansion is located near the Victoria embankment of the Thames in London, a little east of Temple tube station, and was built in 1895 for William Waldorf Astor as the Astor Estate Office, with the inclusion of residential space. I assume that Ruskin would have abhorred the pair of bronze lamp standards on the front steps, designed by WS Frith, each with their own plump-bellied putti, two of them

**Facade of San Marco, Venice** by John Wharton Bunney, oil on canvas 1877-82, collection of the Guild of St George / Museums Sheffield. The painting was commissioned by Ruskin. Bunney, who lived in Venice from 1870, worked on it through 'six hundred early-morning sessions'.

**Below:** Portrait Bust of Ruskin Benjamin Creswick, terracotta, 1887, collection of the Guild of St George / Museums Sheffield. Ruskin gave a similar bust of himself, also by Creswick, to Prince Leopold following the royal visit to Ruskin's Walkley museum in 1879.

**John Ruskin:**
**The Power of Seeing**

Susan Warlow has visited the Ruskin exhibition at Two Temple Place
chatting on the telephone and another triumphantly holding aloft a light bulb. Robert Harbison writes of them 'Here's a whole topic I'd like to develop: up-to-date references in backward-looking works of art.' Astor was keen to celebrate new developments in communication and technology.

It's an inward-looking building, made more so when exhibitions are installed and various windows obscured. Ruskin might have appreciated the craftsmanship of the coloured marble pavement in the staircase hall and of the carvings of the panelled interiors, but most likely not their iconography. In Frommer's London Donald Strachan writes: 'Behind the sturdy Portland stone facade, the interior has a slightly strange Victorian-meets-Disney vibe with the otherwise straightforwardly opulent rooms (lots

of marble and mahogany) adorned with bizarre details, such as the characters from The Three Musketeers (Astor's favourite book) on the banisters of the main staircase and the gilded frieze in the Great Hall showing fifty-four seemingly random characters from history and fiction, including Pocahontas, Machiavelli, Bismarck, Anne Boleyn, and Marie Antoinette.' In this curious, generous setting the exhibition occupies a number of richly-panelled rooms.

The preoccupation of film and television dramas in recent years has been with Ruskin's marriage to Effie Gray and has diminished the popular view of him to a spoilt, stern and repressed workaholic. Here Ruskin is re-established as the enthusiastic, passionate polymath, through the lens of his collections and through spirited texts on the information boards, written by the exhibition's curator Louise Pullen, Curator of the Ruskin Collection at Museums Sheffield, and the author Michael Glover.

There are many entertaining snippets about the man: that he spoke as if through a megaphone, as a result of learning and declaiming great tracts of the bible from infancy, and that 'When he lectured on the chough he strutted back and forth and flapped the wings of his cloak in playful mimicry'. In Venice Effie wrote of him 'climbing about the capitals covered with dust, or else with cobwebs'. In Sheffield he appointed Henry Swan, a former pupil and 'spiritualist, vegetarian, boomerang thrower' to look after the museum. A pair of boards in the upper gallery list 'Fifteen Things Heartily Loathed by John Ruskin', ranging from iron railings: 'Your iron railing always means thieves outside or Bedlam inside'; to Palladio: 'The architecture of Palladio is wholly virtueless and despicable'; to Victorian church statuary: 'A gross of kings sent down from Kensington'; and cycling: 'I not only object, but am quite prepared to spend all my best bad language in reprobation of the bi-, tri- and 4- 5- 6 or 7 cycles, and every other contrivance or invention for superseding human feet on God's ground'.

In the 1870s Ruskin conceived the idea of creating museums in the regions of England. The tiny, single-room St George's Museum Ruskin established in 1875 in Walkley, at that time a village separate from the urban conurbation of Sheffield, was intended to be a starting point. Ruskin bought the cottage, in which the museum was housed for its first fifteen years, sight unseen, and donated many objects from his own collections. The museum quickly outgrew its site, was extended in 1880 and moved to Meersbrook Park, nearer the city centre, in 1890. The collection of watercolours, drawings, prints, plaster casts of sculpture, minerals, illustrated books, manuscripts and coins is still owned by the utopian society founded by Ruskin in 1871, the Guild of St George.

While many of the exhibits come from the extensive reserves of Sheffield's Guild of St George Ruskin Collection, others have been borrowed from the collections of public
museums and galleries, including the Ashmolean, Calderdale Museums, the Fitzwilliam, Gallery Oldham, the Ruskin Library at Lancaster University, Leeds Museums and Art Gallery, Tate, Watts Gallery Artists’ Village and the William Morris Gallery. Newly-commissioned pieces include site-specific installations by Timorous Beasts and Grizedale Arts, and works in a range of media by artists exploring Ruskin’s contemporary legacy.

At the exhibition’s press launch, Louise Pullen explained the ideas behind both the exhibition and the Guild of St George collection. Ruskin first became known as a critic but the curatorial team wanted to express the variety of his interests, including archaeology, for which he is not particularly known, as much as Turner, for which he is very well known. The exhibition begins in the Lower Gallery, with a brief biography and his 1875 portrait by Charles Fairfax Murray. This room establishes a number of Ruskin’s abiding passions: public speaking; JMW Turner; the study of architecture; and Venice.

Among the nature studies made by Ruskin is his beautiful Study of a piece of Brick to show Cleavage in Burnt Clay, thought to date from the time of his second lecture on landscape, Light and Shade. The large scale of George Allen’s ‘Study of Thorns’ towards Modern Painters, Volume V and possible lecture diagram suggests that Ruskin planned to use it as an illustration for another of his lectures, such as Tree Twigs, at the Royal Institution in 1861. It has grey spots at each corner as if it has been stuck up on a wall and the study helps illustrate ‘The Law of Deflection’ in which Ruskin showed the way leaves ‘fall gradually back’ from the top of the stem.

There are prints and paintings bought during, and made after, his tours abroad. Ruskin first travelled on the continent with his parents as a seven-year-old child, initially to France and Belgium. In 1833 the family visited Strasbourg, Schaffhausen, Milan, Genoa and Turin, places to which Ruskin frequently returned, and he developed a lifelong love of the Alps. While his mother hoped that the young Ruskin might grow up to be the Archbishop of Canterbury, his childhood fascination was with geology and he wished to become President of the Geological Society. Through his father’s purchases of watercolours and paintings by Turner, however, Ruskin became increasingly interested in art. For him, scientific observation led to the perception of a higher truth, and it was this that he valued most highly in Turner’s work. Ruskin wrote an article in Turner’s defence in 1836 but at that time declared that Turner was ‘not so stark mad as to profess to paint nature. He paints from nature, and pretty far from it too’. By 1842 however, ‘it began to occur to me that perhaps even in the artifice of Turner there might be more truth than I had understood… it seemed to me that in these later subjects Nature herself was composing with him.’

A large group of works connected to Venice include some of the daguerrotypes – photographic images captured on silver-coated copper plates – that Ruskin used as visual aids. He initially bought them ready-made, but later created them using his own equipment, operated with the assistance of a servant. In 1845 he wrote ‘Daguerrotypes taken by this vivid sunlight are even in the artifice of Turner there might be more truth than I had understood… it seemed to me that in these later subjects Nature herself was composing with him.’

On an extended visit to Venice with Effie, commencing in autumn 1848, he set himself two tasks: to record details of buildings that were under threat from unsympathetic restorers and to reflect upon the lessons to be learnt from the collapse of the Venetian empire. He accumulated a vast array of sketches, notes, measurements, some pieces of original stonework and plaster casts of sculptural details of St Mark’s and the Doge’s Palace, as well as Old Master paintings.
Louise Pullen finds Venice to be a turning point for Ruskin. While he was interested in its art and certain parts of its architecture – the Gothic – more importantly it came to be a symbol, for him, of a community that had worked, its art and architecture reflecting the state of the society in which they were made. When he wrote *The Stones of Venice* he wrote it as a warning to the British Empire: that pride and corruption can bring even the greatest of empires to fall. One chapter of *The Stones of Venice*, titled ‘On the Nature of Gothic Architecture: and herein of the true functions of the workman in art’ concerned the dignity that was to be found in artisanal labour and had a profound impact on William Morris. As Fiona MacCarthy writes: ‘Ruskin's claim was that the social structures of the Middle Ages allowed the workman freedom of individual expression tragically absent in the Victorian age.’

At this time Ruskin began to shape his ideas of social commentary and he grew interested in the idea that there is no wealth but life, later expressed in writing in *Unto This Last*. Life is love, joy, admiration; that’s all that is important and ‘That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest numbers of noble and happy human beings.’

Upstairs, the Library is set out, as far as possible, to resemble the museum he put together to bring joy and inspiration to Sheffield’s workers. Ruskin chose Sheffield because, while it was a deeply radical town at the time, it was a town of craftsmen metal-workers and it was surrounded by wonderful, rugged landscape. This collection for the people of Sheffield would open early in the morning, late at night and on Sundays – unheard of at that time – to accommodate the workers. Ruskin hoped that people would be drawn out of the smoky city, up the hill, into cleaner air, see something beautiful and then go for a walk into the countryside and enjoy themselves. The mock-up in the Library shows something of the mish-mash of the collection, which had a cluttered, idiosyncratic arrangement, grouped according to Ruskin's artistic and geological theories.

In the Great Hall the display reflects further Ruskin's deep interest in nature: in botany, geology and ornithology. From his childhood interest in geology developed his passion for looking at nature in its smallest details. There are beautiful mineral samples, together with expensive, leather-bound illustrated books of flora and delicate watercolours by Ruskin of peacock feathers, flowers and clouds; Ruskin kept meteorology diaries for more than fifty years. The *Study of Moss, Fern and Wood Sorrel, upon a Rocky River Bank* was initially named *Study of Moss and Wood sorrel, shown natural size for their sculpturesque forms*. Ruskin added it to a picture cabinet called *Treatment of Foliage in Sculpture*, he hoped that sculptors would find inspiration in the contours of leaves, stems and tendrils so that their work, like that of medieval craftsmen, would reflect the beauty of nature. Ruskin commented to Henry Swan about this drawing, saying 'the strawberry leaf and oxalis are well painted. The moss is a failure; but has qualities."

At the conclusion of her talk, Louise Pullen summed up this display. Ruskin wanted to use the sciences in a form of education, one that would raise ideas concerning creativity, respect and community. "The collection in Sheffield became, to use modern parlance, a collection about wellbeing, and that’s the true message of what we have chosen to show about Ruskin."
Preparing May Morris’s *Honeysuckle* for display

Below: Dr Tomasz Łojewski used microfading equipment at the British Museum to establish the design’s lightfastness.
Amelia Rampton describes the work to conserve a design in the Society’s collection, following a successful appeal for funding

This striking pattern is the only wallpaper designed by May Morris in the Society’s collection. It is a large work – 69.1 by 100 centimetres – executed in graphite and watercolours on cardboard drawing paper. The sturdy off-white wove, machine-made paper serves as robust support for a working design.

There has been some uncertainty whether May or William Morris designed Honeysuckle, as it differs from May’s other wallpaper designs, Horn Poppy and Arscilia. The technique and the heavily worked pencil outlines are, however, characteristic of her work, and the design was attributed to May Morris for the first time in around 1910.

Honeysuckle has numerous annotations along the margins in graphite and black ink, such as the list of colours that would later be used when printing the design as a wallpaper, a process that required eight blocks. On the verso, there is an annotation in black ink that reads ‘Mr Morris Esq’, and a black stamp that reads ‘Honeysuckle 34 Morris & Co Merton Abbey Works. Surrey’. Merton Abbey was of course William Morris’s textile production workshop, which he established in 1881.

The paper was in fair condition, although there was some distortion and a pronounced crease along the centre. The hinges holding the paper to its mount were loose, and the work had collapsed within the frame so that it was touching the glazing.

In addition, the work had been repaired before. This earlier treatment had addressed physical deterioration in the paper (small and large tears along the edges), using a technique that was commonly used with archival materials in the past, involving large strips of oriental paper which were pasted over all the margins with starch-based adhesives. By current standards the paper seemed over-repaired. Nowadays, each tear is repaired individually, which uses less adhesive and minimises the tension between the original paper and the paper used in the repair. At the same time, tiny pinholes, tears and creases remain visible when using the more contemporary approach, even though they have been repaired.

Before deciding to remove or retain these earlier repairs to Honeysuckle, we wanted to see whether we could flatten some of the distortions and undulations with humidification and gradual drying. The first task was to remove the hinges and reduce the distortions, although we wanted to retain the central crease as it was historical evidence of previous storage. We humidified the work and gradually dried it between felts and a light weight. The result was successful, and in the end, we decided not to remove the original repairs, preferring a course of action which involved less intervention. Instead, we realigned some of the larger tears, and applied new infilling.

Our most pressing concern was to prepare Honeysuckle for exhibition – it was going to travel and be on show for months.

When objects are on display, long or regular exposure to light, whether artificial or natural, can cause them irreversible damage. Indeed, it is internationally accepted that damage increases with length of exposure and intensity of lighting, and this may manifest itself as discoloration, fading, or brittleness. Most organic materials are affected by light, and it can be particularly damaging to watercolours, affecting many pigments, and some more than others. There are international guidelines for displaying works on paper and the recommended light levels for watercolour pigments is generally low. Ultraviolet light also harms organic materials, and it should be filtered through glazing with UV protection.

To establish Honeysuckle’s sensitivity to light, we were invited to a test of microfading at the Conservation department in the British Museum, where we benefited from the workshop and expertise of Dr Tomasz Lojewski, an analytical chemist from the AGH University of Science and Technology, Krakow, Poland. He demonstrated the light fastness of pigments using microfading equipment (see opposite).

Microfading tests evaluate colour change of materials by pointing a high dose of light at a miniscule area for a short period of time in a controlled way. The colour change is measured against the Blue Wool Standard, ISO BWS. This system uses a classification that contains eight units of blue-dye wool fading, Unit 1 being the most fugitive – i.e. the lightfastness is poor – and Unit 8 the most stable – lightfastness is excellent. The test result confirmed what we had suspected; the watercolours fall within Unit 2, meaning they are somewhat sensitive to light.

The high sensitivity of its colourants means that the piece should only be exhibited in reduced light levels of up to 50 Lux and for a limited period. Following this, it should be stored in darkness and future light exposure should be recorded.

After we had done this test, we prepared the specifications for the frame in which Honeysuckle would be displayed. This includes acrylic glazing with a high UV filter blocking ninety-nine per cent of UV radiation. The acrylic has three vital qualities: it is lightweight, which makes it more manageable for a large item like Honeysuckle; it is not as fragile as glass; and it will provide the UV protection that the item will need on display. Another requirement was the use of museum-quality, one hundred per cent cotton, boards – thick enough to avoid any contact between the artwork and the glazing – and hinges made from oriental paper and attached with starch paste.

These steps should ensure that May Morris’s design will be preserved for many more years to come.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful to Dr Tomasz Lojewski and Joanna Kosek, Head of Pictorial Art Conservation at the British Museum for the invitation to examine the work using the microfading equipment; to Peer Bower for useful comments on the paper and to Helen Elston for information on the design.

Amelia Rampton ACR MSc, is an independent paper conservator working in London.

Honeysuckle was restored thanks to a generous donation from an individual and a successful appeal for matched funding from members of The William Morris Society. It continues to tour in the exhibition Criminal Ornamentation: Yinka Shonibare MBE curates the Arts Council Collection which is at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, until 16 March; the Longside Gallery at Yorkshire Sculpture Park from 5 April to 16 June; and Southampton City Art Gallery from 27 June to 28 September.
The 2018 Kelmscott Lecture, the annual highlight of The William Morris Society lecture series, was delivered by the award-winning writer Sarah Woods, who has adapted News from Nowhere for BBC radio. Woods’s proposition was that Morris’s interest in patterns informed both his designs and his political standpoint, and that an understanding of patterns within society can create the possibility of structural transformation in the present. Patterns in nature were important to Morris in his designs; the identification of patterns in economy and society through Marxist and socialist thought can be seen as a rational next step for him. For Woods, Morris’s comprehension of the patterns within nature certainly led him towards an understanding of the patterns in politics. Morris’s interest in both workers’ rights and art informed his political pattern: socialism.

Woods highlighted some current misrepresentations of the writing of both Adam Smith and Morris. Smith was aware of a particular result of the division of labour, that workers can become ignorant as their work becomes increasingly deskilled, monotonous and repetitive. He also identified that capitalists collude to take advantage of the workers if they come together to meet, but Smith’s awareness of these pitfalls of capitalism doesn’t feature within the current public understanding of the political economist. Similarly, the popular knowledge that Morris didn’t want education for a few, or art for a few, glosses over a belief Morris held for many years: that there would be a period of darkness or a revolutionary transition stage before the time of egalitarian opportunity.

Woods said that we become unaware of the systems and structures in our lives – these patterns in our lives are ‘unknown knowns’. She suggested that we need to examine the patterns that dominate our lives in order to think unconventionally and consider new patterns. Understanding the relationship between patterns and developing a systemic way of seeing the world can improve our prospects of changing our systems or patterns of life in order to create a more equitable and sustainable world. 

Woods mentioned the journalist and writer Paul Mason, who believes the end of capitalism is at hand, this ending being suggestive of a current dystopia. But Woods claims now is the time for utopian thoughts, which are necessary in order to create the patterns necessary for the construction of the new. During the lecture Woods showed images of Morris designs and of her trip to Kelmscott Manor, which she had visited by approaching the house from the river, as it is approached in News from Nowhere. Woods spoke of News from Nowhere, and the role of utopia in the current conjuncture. Woods reported that when she approached the BBC with script ideas it never considered the possibility of the subject of utopia but was keen on dystopia. She spoke of the need to bring thoughts of utopias back into current culture. In Morris’s time there was cultural space for utopian works but is that the case now? We need to think of utopian patterns anew.

As an illustration of current productive patterns Woods discussed the garment industry. We need clothes and we also appreciate the high cost of sustainable production, which is probably too high at present to be affordable to most people. Woods highlighted, however, the restrictive nature of our wider imagination. If we change the structure of economy and society – if we think of new patterns of organisation, not just make small changes to the current structure/system/pattern – then maybe sustainable garment production would be possible.

Following the lecture there were a series of interesting questions and comments. Woods responded to the question of how to make ethical choices within the constraints of affordability by acknowledging that we face difficult choices in our consumption patterns.

The session had drawn to a close I had the opportunity to discuss with Woods some of the issues within her lecture. I suggested that people fear to identify systems or patterns in society in case it would be judged totalitarian, giving as an example the historic misuse of the patterns of Marxist ideology in the Eastern bloc. Woods felt that the tide is turning and people again want to see new patterns of organising, following the thirty-year post-Cold-War status quo. I agreed that we should push for grand narratives, and for certain patterns being re-emphasised and we both thought that we should refute post-modernism. It made me think of the political theorist Chantal Mouffe’s recent book For a Left Populism in which she describes the current conditions as being ripe for a hegemonic paradigm shift. We can now imagine shifting to new patterns of economy and society.

In the weeks after the lecture I read Francis Fukuyama’s Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment in which Fukuyama emphasises the need for universal recognition, as the solution to the damaging, fractious nature of identity politics. In thinking about our need for universalising narratives – or universalising patterns – Morris’s artful utopian vision is a great place to start.
Spending time in the William Morris Society's current exhibition, Drawing with Light: Photographs from the William Morris Society Collection, you are immersed in the world of Victorian photography, with photographs by Emery Walker, Frederick Hollyer, Robert Parsons and Arthur Halcrow Verstage, as well as the rich and unique history of the Kelmscott Fellowship and The William Morris Society. The exhibition is split into two distinct parts: the first, which opened in the Coach House in August, focusing on the work of the four noted photographers, is now supplemented by a second display in the Emberton Room of the Verstage Collection. The exhibition features original Morris & Co works and previously unseen photographs of William Morris, his family and his homes. It brings together the works of Walker, Hollyer, Parsons and Verstage, revealing the importance of the use of photography within the Arts & Crafts Movement. Walker and Hollyer are recognised names, while Parsons and Verstage are lesser known but equally important in their contribution to photography within Morris's circle.

Uniquely, Drawing with Light also includes previously unseen items from the Verstage archive, on display in the second part of our exhibition of photographs from the Society's collection. Philip Boot considers items from the Verstage archive, on display in the second part of our exhibition of photographs from the Society's collection. The first part of the exhibition Drawing with Light runs until 4 April in the Coach House at Kelmscott House, Hammersmith, west London, while this second part will continue for longer.

Drawing with Light

Above and left: Outbuildings at Kelmscott Manor and The Houses of Parliament by Arthur Halcrow Verstage, digital prints made from glass lantern slides dating from c1920s

The first part of the exhibition Drawing with Light runs until 4 April in the Coach House at Kelmscott House, Hammersmith, west London, while this second part will continue for longer.

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As well as being an award-winning photographer, Verstage played a crucial role in the formation of the Kelmscott Fellowship, a precursor to The William Morris Society. Founded in 1918, the Kelmscott Fellowship aimed to promote the life, work and teachings of William Morris. Verstage was a founding member and Secretary of the Fellowship and a strong supporter of the merger between the two organisations in 1966. Verstage was an avid collector and kept an archive of documents and letters relating to the Fellowship, with correspondence between him and May Morris as well as other founding members of making up a large part of the collection. Some of this material is on display as part of the Drawing with Light exhibition, including original letters from Emery Walker discussing the design of the Fellowship's membership card, which are displayed next to the original proof of the proposed card that uses Morris's own Troy font. Another treasure in the exhibition is an original photograph of May Morris taken by GC Beresford in 1909, a seemingly informal and tender shot that she had originally gifted to Philip Webb.

Since a large quantity of the Kelmscott Fellowship's papers and records were destroyed in a fire at Verstage's house in 1966, these surviving documents form vital documentation of The William Morris Society's history, and offer visitors a unique glimpse into the Verstage Collection. Drawing with Light provides an insight into the importance of Victorian photography and its use, not only as part of William Morris's artistic practice but as an archival treasure trove for curious visitors and Morris scholars alike.
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Above and left: Outbuildings at Kelmscott Manor and The Houses of Parliament by Arthur Halcrow Verstage, digital prints made from glass lantern slides dating from c1920s

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In Fellowship

Educator and writer John Blewitt describes why he’s a member of The William Morris Society, and his new compilation of articles about Morris and Ruskin

My interest in Morris goes back over forty years, and I joined the Society three years ago. I first became acquainted with him while studying History and Politics at university, when I attended a lecture on Morris given by a most enthusiastic lecturer who used 35mm slides to illustrate his discussion on socialism and art. I was hooked then and have remained so ever since.

I joined because I wanted to develop my interest and commitment to understanding Morris’s achievements and philosophy of life and politics. He wrote and did many things, more than 120 years ago, that resonate powerfully today and which show how, despite the great changes that have occurred since the late nineteenth century, some things do remain the same. He speaks to us still, which means that his legacy is important even if not fully, or completely, understood.

As a member I enjoy being in a community of like-minded people who have varied interests and backgrounds and because of this have a great deal to offer in term of knowledge, skills, experience and understanding.

The Society’s archive of books and other materials offers members an avenue into his world and, in so doing, helps us navigate our own. WMS also organises lectures and events that are invariably interesting though, not living in or near London, I rarely get to experience. Thinking of what I would like to see the Society doing in five years’ time, given that we already have a most useful website, it would be helpful if all members, wherever they are, could have access to video recordings of lectures, opportunities to listen to podcasts of interviews with interesting authors, speakers and artists, even specially-curated online exhibitions on various topics. Thanks to Morris’s immense talents, there is no end of possibilities.

John Ruskin was very important to William Morris. His writings on art and architecture were a profound influence on Morris’s understanding of the value of art, the dignity of labour, the significance of craft skill and his developing belief that there was something very wrong with the world. Ruskin’s social criticism helped give form to Morris’s own social and political philosophy, but in many ways they were very different people both temperamentally and politically. Morris was a socialist and Ruskin ‘a Tory of the old school’. Together, their relationship and enduring influence has fascinated many people over the past one hundred plus years and has been an important subject which the Journal of the William Morris Society has explored in a number of articles published since its inception in 1961.

These articles offer different perspectives and demonstrate different interpretations of a wide range of subjects that concerned both men: art, craft, social criticism, architecture, publishing and so on. As editor I decided early on to include a review article which is but one of many perceptive reviews of books published on Ruskin in the last fifty years.

Indeed, the Journal is a wonderful repository of scholarly writing by people whose interests and connections to the worlds of Morris and Ruskin vary considerably. Some writers have an academic interest, others a personal, political or professional one. What is common to them all is the high quality of their writing and their depth of understanding.

Given this, and since 2019 is the bicentenary of John Ruskin’s birth, it seemed appropriate to carefully examine the Journal’s archive and select some of the most interesting and representative articles for republication in a new book. In addition to the eleven articles first published between 1977 and 2012, there are two new pieces which address issues not covered particularly generously by these contributions to the Journal. It was clearly important to work with a publisher who would be willing and interested in the project and in collaborating closely with the Society. The University of Exeter Press, who in 1999 published a volume William Morris: Centenary Essays edited by a former editor of the JWMS, Peter Faulkner, emerged as a most appropriate partner.

William Morris and John Ruskin: A New Road On Which The World Should Travel will be published in May. A number of events including a formal launch, lectures and discussions are being organised by the Society. I will also give a lecture at Brantwood, Ruskin’s home by Coniston Water, in October.

Above: St Maclou, Rouen, Porch, daguerrotype (image reversed), c.1854 © Ruskin Foundation. Taken during Ruskin’s 1854 visit to the cathedral; William Morris also visited Rouen that year.

Full details of the book, together with events celebrating Ruskin’s bicentenary will soon be available at williammorrisociety.org.

John Blewitt is a Distinguished Fellow of the Schumacher Institute and a core member of Green House.
The last and loveliest section of William Morris's utopian romance *News from Nowhere* involves a voyage up the Thames from Hammersmith to Kelmscott. The arrival at Kelmscott Manor forms the novel's climax, as one of the characters lays her hand upon the manor's wall and gives voice to the themes of beauty, harmony, and equality that suffuse Morris's utopian vision. Morris based the novel's Thames voyage on trips he made from Hammersmith to Kelmscott in the summer of 1880 and repeated in 1881. Contemporary diaries and letters provide a detailed record of that high-spirited adventure, filled with beautiful scenery, much joking, and minor nautical mishaps.

The William Morris Society is supporting a recreation of Morris's river voyage, to take place from 11 to 17 August 2019. Twelve places for the complete journey are being made available to members on a first-come, first-served basis. Additional opportunities for members to participate are also planned, including celebratory gatherings at the departure from Hammersmith and the arrival at Kelmscott.

Departing from Hammersmith after a Bon Voyage celebration at Kelmscott House on 11 August, the first leg of the trip, to Hampton Court, will take place on a twenty-eight-person launch, allowing space for additional people to join one day of the adventure. Subsequent legs of the trip, on the narrower upper reaches of the river, will take place on the Midsomer Maiden, a twelve-passenger Edwardian-replica launch equipped with a sun canopy, a toilet, and a galley. The itinerary will closely follow Morris's two voyages, while reducing his seven days on the river to six. As Morris did, guests will spend each night onshore in a hotel or inn, although the accommodation will be superior to what Morris could find in 1880 and 1881.

The voyage includes transportation on the skippered boat, lodging, breakfast, and transportation of guests' luggage from one destination to the next by minibus. Participants will also receive minibus transportation on 17 August from Kelmscott to Oxford railway station. A lunchtime break ashore is planned each day, either at an inn or with picnic lunch arranged. Each day will also feature a reading from the diaries, letters and memoirs of Morris's two trips, and every evening guests will be free to explore the surroundings.

**ITINERARY**

**Sunday, 11 August**
Departure from Hammersmith and arrival at Hampton Court
Lodging at the Mitre Hotel

**Monday, 12 August**
Hampton Court to Windsor
Lodging at the Christopher Hotel, Eton

**Tuesday, 13 August**
Windsor to Henley
Lodging at the Leander Club

**Wednesday, 14 August**
Henley to Streatley
Lodging at the Swan

**Thursday, 15 August**
Streatley to Oxford
Lodging at Christ Church College

**Friday, 16 August**
Oxford to Kelmscott
Lodging at the Plough
Tour of Kelmscott Manor
Transportation provided to Oxford for national rail services

The intention is to publish a daily online blog or video diary about the voyage. Subject to level of interest, a second boat may be arranged to accompany the last day, Friday 16 August, from Oxford to Kelmscott.

Those interested in either of the following options should immediately contact Society Manager Cathy DeFreitas: societymanager@williammorrissociety.org.uk:

**OPTION A. 11-17 August**
Full seven-day trip from Hammersmith to Kelmscott

**OPTION B. Friday, 16 August**
One-day trip (on a second twelve-person boat) from Oxford to Kelmscott, with lodging in or near Kelmscott and return by minibus to Oxford on Saturday 17 August following a reception at Kelmscott Manor.

The Society is also seeking expressions of interest in the following additional options, the prices for each of which will be set to cover costs only:

**OPTION 1. Sunday, 11 August**
Bon Voyage midday celebration at Kelmscott Coach House with a short talk about Morris's voyages

**OPTION 2. Sunday, 11 August**
Bon Voyage celebration plus boat trip from Kelmscott House to Hampton Court

**OPTION 3. Saturday, 17 August**
Lunchtime reception at Kelmscott Manor with a members’ talk and visit to the Manor.

To express interest in one or more of these three options, please contact Society Manager Cathy DeFreitas by 30 May: societymanager@williammorrissociety.org.uk.
SYLVIA PANKHURST
PAINTINGS
In December Tate announced that it is acquiring four watercolours by Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960), who used her skill as an artist to highlight the fight for women’s rights. She trained at the Manchester Municipal College of Art, and went on to design badges, banners and flyers for the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), a group set up by her mother and sister in 1903. In 1907 Pankhurst spent several months visiting industries in northern England and Scotland, documenting the poor working conditions and low wages experienced by women. She lived in the communities she studied, creating vivid watercolours and written accounts of the people she met, which were later published in the London Magazine and the WSPU journal Votes for Women. In 1912 she gave up art to dedicate herself fully to the suffrage campaign, founding the East London Federation of Suffragettes to ensure the representation of working-class women in the movement.

The four watercolours come from the artist’s 1907 tour of industrial working environments. Two of the images were made at the Staffordshire potteries, where she was horrified to discover women earned no more than seven shillings a week while being exposed to hazardous flint dust and fumes from lead glazes. She also observed how women were often restricted to the lower-paid unskilled jobs at the potteries, such as turning the wheel for throwers or treading the lathe for turners: ‘Each was employed by the man she tasted for – the slave of a slave, I thought’.

JOHN PURKIS 1933-2018
John Purkis joined the Society in 1933 -2018. In December Tate announced that it is acquiring four watercolours by Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960), who used her skill as an artist to highlight the fight for women’s rights. She trained at the Manchester Municipal College of Art, and went on to design badges, banners and flyers for the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), a group set up by her mother and sister in 1903. In 1907 Pankhurst spent several months visiting industries in northern England and Scotland, documenting the poor working conditions and low wages experienced by women. She lived in the communities she studied, creating vivid watercolours and written accounts of the people she met, which were later published in the London Magazine and the WSPU journal Votes for Women. In 1912 she gave up art to dedicate herself fully to the suffrage campaign, founding the East London Federation of Suffragettes to ensure the representation of working-class women in the movement.

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JOHN PURKIS 1933-2018
John Purkis joined the Society in 1933 when he was a WEA organiser in Nottingham; he later worked for the Open University. He joined the committee in 1960, and won first prize for his essay ‘The Icelandic jaunt’ when the Peter Foulod Memorial Prize was established in 1961. When The Journal of the William Morris Society was established in 1962, he wrote an article entitled ‘What I expect from the Morris Society’, in which he argued that the idea of Morris as a whole man must be respected and that over-specialisation was to be avoided. This has proved to be the ethos of the Society. John continued to be active in the Society throughout the 70s and into the 80s; in 1987 John and Hans Brill provided detailed notes for the Society’s Whitsun tide tour of Northern France. In 1990 he took over from Peter Preston as Secretary, serving efficiently and courteously until 1993. He then became chair of the sub-committee set up to plan for the forthcoming centenary of Morris’s death, with its full programme of events, in 1996. John was one of those who have helped to make the William Morris Society so lively and creative over the years.

Peter Faulkner

APEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS
The William Morris Society is a fellowship dedicated to promoting the appreciation of Morris’s life, work and ideas and their contemporary relevance. The charity runs a small museum in Morris’s former home close to Hammersmith Bridge and organises a regular programme of talks, events, learning activities and publications including a prestigious literary journal and a topical magazine.

We are currently looking for new volunteers/potential trustees to help develop the Society and its activities, seeking self-motivated individuals with business skills and experience to get involved with projects and committee work, including:

• business development/ income generation
• general fundraising and application-writing
• charity accounting and business planning
• social media and digital marketing
• outreach work and community relations.

Our trustees and volunteers cover a wide range of roles which are unpaid although travel costs to attend meetings are reimbursable. Working from home and outside normal business hours is encouraged for many of our roles; it is not necessary to live near us in Hammersmith although we encourage all volunteers to take an active part in our talks and events. If you are interested you can look at our volunteer charter at williammorrissociety.org/support-us/volunteer/ and find out more about what we do.

Please apply by sending a short profile of your skills and experience and your area of interest in William Morris’s multi-faceted life and works to societymanager@williammorrissociety.org.uk.

OUR COLLECTION ON TOUR
The Society currently has a number of items from its Collection out on loan to exhibitions. Criminal Ornamentation curated by Yinka Shonibare is now at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter until 17 March, then moves to the Longside Gallery at Yorkshire Sculpture Park from 5 April to 16 June. William Morris – More than Floral Wallpaper, continues touring to Nivaagaard near Copenhagen and will continue to Iceland and Edinburgh.

An Earthly Paradise: Morris & the Thames is at the River & Rowing Museum in Henley until 14 July. See page 24 for more details.

A new exhibition, Christiana Herringham: artist, campaigner, collector runs until 8 March at Royal
Holloway, University of London at Egham in Surrey. Although now relatively unknown, Christiana Herringham was an influential figure in the Edwardian art world and the women’s suffrage movement in the UK. Independently wealthy, Herringham was one of the founders of the National Art Collection Fund, now known as the Art Fund, in order to retain works that would have otherwise been sold overseas. Herringham also used her money to improve the lives of women, and her close friendship with Millicent Fawcett and her sisters saw Herringham heavily involved in the fight for women’s right to vote. She donated money to found scholarships for women’s education and was one of the founding directors of the Ladies’ Residential Chambers & Co, which built housing for “educated working women.”

Admission is free but the Picture Gallery is only open on a Wednesday.

royalholloway.ac.uk

GIGGLESWICK CHAPEL
Established to mark Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, the chapel at Giggleswick School near Settle in North Yorkshire was designed by the architect Thomas Jackson to the specifications of its benefactor, U.K. Independently wealthy, Walter Morrison: a Gothic structure with a dome, that would fit naturally into the surrounding landscape.

Its interior is filled with the work of craftsmen: stained glass from Burlison & Grylls, sgraffito decoration by William Nicholls and Douglas Stewart and wood and stone carving by the firm of Farmer & Brindley, including the work of Francis Childs. The inside of the octagonal dome is richly ornamented in mosaics designed by drawn by George Murray and executed in glass from James Powell & Sons of Whitefriars by Robert Gregory and his team of workmen. To secure the long-term maintenance of the chapel, a fund has been established. Enquiries regarding donations can be made to jpbella@giggleswick.org.uk

TILES IN TEXAS
The Rise of Everyday Design: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain and America exhibition has opened at the the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin runs until 14 July. The exhibition will display more than 200 items including books, drawings, furniture, decorative arts objects, photographs, and flyers, broadsides and advertising ephemera that offer a new and detailed look at the history of the Arts & Crafts movement. The exhibition considers how theorists and makers — like John Ruskin and William Morris, along with lesser known figures like Lucy Crane, in Britain and Candace Wheeler, Alice and Elbert Hubbard, and Gustav Stickley in America — spread their ideas through books, retail showrooms, and world’s fairs, and how Arts and Crafts objects, which were originally handmade and costly, came to be manufactured and sold to the everyday consumer;

A companion book of the same title is published in association with Yale — see p. 26 for details.

hrctexad.edu/exhibitions

REMEMBERING MALCOLM POLLARD
Malcolm and I met on an architecture course in Warwick and over coffee were discussing William Morris and we both joined the national Society. Soon we realised that there was plenty of Morris-related things and places to visit in the West Midlands, and so the South Midlands branch of The William Morris Society was born. Day trips were full and always included a ‘nice lunch’: a Malcolm speciality. The foundations that Malcolm set are still our model now that our branch is in its thirty-second year;

Sadly Malcolm passed away on 16 January, but the inspiration and dedication that, along with his encyclopaedic knowledge of Victorian glass, singled him out, will be our influence and will enhance our enjoyment in the coming years.

Helen Lamer

SPAB SCHOLARS CYCLE RIDE
A group of Scholars of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) are completing a 377km fundraising cycle from the grave of John Ruskin at St. Andrew’s Church, Coniston to the grave of William Morris at St George’s Church, Kelmsgott, from 17 to 19 April. They are fundraising for the SPAB Dance Scholarship Trust (named after former SPAB Secretary Monica Dance), which sponsors a SPAB scholar every year: SPAB Scholars are architects, engineers or building surveyors working in conservation of historic buildings, who are passionate about protection of built heritage and promotion of traditional craft skills. https://www.justgiving.com/DSTFundraiser2019?utm_source=Sharethis &utm_medium=fundraisingpage&utm_content=DSTFundraiser2019&utm_campaign=pfp-email&utm_term=wGw8dGpJ.

MEET A TRUSTEE
Jane Ibbunson has worked and volunteered in the charity sector for 22 years. She is a professional fundraiser and has implemented successful growth strategies for arts organisations, including working as Head of Development at the Holburne Museum in Bath. Jane was particularly attracted to the Society as an educational charity that is active in promoting its heritage and how arts and crafts remain relevant today.

Jane is Chair of the Society’s Business Development Committee.


Below: Trustee Jane Ibbunson.
Kelm scott House

Lectures, workshops, exhibitions, concerts and visits organised by
The William Morris Society

DRAWING WITH LIGHT:
PHOTOGRAPHES FROM THE
WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY’S
COLLECTION

Until April 2019
The current exhibition in the Society’s premises at Kelm scott House, Hammersmith, features previously unseen photographic images of William Morris, his family and his homes, as well as Morris & Co pieces. It brings together both original prints and digital prints taken from glass lantern slides, by Frederic Hollyer, Emery Walker, John Robert Parsons and Arthur Hallow Verstage.

Free admission

IN DEFENCE OF HENRY
HALLIDAY SPARLING
23 March, 2.15 pm
Peter Faulkner
Henry Halliday Sparling, who was briefly and unhappily married to May Morris from 1890 to 1894, has often been portrayed as feeble and ineffectual. In this talk Peter Faulkner will discuss whether this is a fair judgment on the author of The Kelmscott Press and William Morris Master-Craftsman.

WILLIAM MORRIS AND THE
ART OF BIOGRAPHY
13 April, 2.15 pm
Michael Robertson
William Morris has attracted attention from dozens of biographers and memoirists since his death in 1896. How have depictions of Morris been shaped by culture, politics, and the conventions of life writing? This talk will place Morris biographies from JW Mackail’s two-volume Victorian ‘life and letters’ to Fiona MacCarthy’s ‘definitive’ work of the 1990s in a broad context and will consider the future of Morris biography.

Michael Robertson, Professor of English at the College of New Jersey, is an Honorary Research Fellow at Birkbeck, University of London. A member of the governing board of the US William Morris Society, he is author, most recently, of The Last Utopians: Four Late Nineteenth-Century Visionaries and Their Legacy, a group biography of William Morris and three of his contemporaries. His current book project is a biography of Morris.

THE DEAR WARP AND WEFT
AT HAMMERSMITH:
A HISTORY OF KELMSCOTT
HOUSE
18 April to 26 October
William Morris reported to his wife Janey that he had found one of the most beautiful houses in London when he bought Kelmscott House in Hammersmith, where he spent the last eighteen years of his life. Certainly this eighteenth century riverside house is one of the most significant of Morris’s homes. While living here he set up the Kelmscott Press and his textile production works at Merton Abbey, established the Hammersmith branch of the Socialist League in the Coach House, where speakers included George Bernard Shaw and WB Yeats, began carpet weaving and continued his innovative approach to design, printing and dyeing techniques.

This is the first exhibition about this most magical of Morris’s homes and will feature original designs, textiles and wallpapers, complemented by beautiful photographic prints. They faithfully convey the atmosphere of Kelmscott House, bursting with creative activity and providing a welcome to some of the most influential minds of the period. The exhibition also includes details of its history and the people who inhabited the house before and after Morris, as well as incorporating interesting quotes and anecdotes from Morris’s contemporaries.

Free admission

LONDON CRAFT WEEK:
WALLPAPER MAKING WITH
ALLYSON MCSERMOTT
8 and 10 May, 10 am to 1 pm

£30 per person

THE WILLIAM MORRIS
SOCIETY AGM
18 May, 2.15 pm
All members welcome
The meeting will be followed by a free talk by Professor Florence Boos on Morris’s Uncollected Essays: From Liberal Party Speaker to Socialist Elder Statesman.

At his death Morris left behind an amazing array of manuscripts, including unpublished poems, translations and socialist essays, as well as uncollected essays and poems which had appeared in contemporary periodicals such as Liberty. After briefly detailing the fates of these materials and why some were never issued in print, this talk will examine an interesting series of uncollected political essays ranging from Morris’s earliest political talks to several reflective lectures and articles composed in his final years.

We will also examine these writings digitally in their original form through the William Morris Archive, which by May 2019 will have begun migrating to a new and more accessible format.

MEMBERS’ GARDEN PARTY
8 June, 2 to 5 pm
The owners of Kelm scott House, Mr & Mrs J Birney, are kindly opening their garden to members for the Society’s biennial Garden Party. There will also be tours of the main part of Kelm scott House. Please note: numbers for the tours will be strictly limited.

‘PLEASURE IN LABOUR’:
JOHN RUSKIN AND WILLIAM MORRIS
15 June, 2.15 pm
Professor Robert Hewison
The first in a series of three lectures on Ruskin and Morris, brought together under the title There is no Wealth but Life. John Ruskin and William Morris were born a generation apart. They were both wealthy men (at least to start with) but their political paths diverged. In this lecture Professor Hewison will ask what it was that Morris found in Ruskin that was so important to him, and why he should create a masterpiece of the Arts & Crafts movement, his reprint of Ruskin’s Nature of Gothic, in Ruskin’s honour.

Robert Hewison is one of the world’s leading scholars on Ruskin and is currently an Honorary...
Professor at the Ruskin Centre, Lancaster University. As well as publishing a number of books on Ruskin, he has written widely on British cultural history.

RUSKIN & MORRIS: A VIEW FROM AMERICA
22 June, 2.15 pm
Professor David Faldet and Dr Sara Atwood
The second in a series of three lectures on Ruskin and Morris, brought together under the title There is no Wealth but Life. Professor David Faldet of Luther College, Iowa and Dr Sara Atwood of Portland State University, Oregon will discuss with Dr John Blewitt the reasons why many Americans find John Ruskin and William Morris relevant and interesting today. Topics will include the Arts & Crafts movement, the environment, education, gender, social economics and what William Morris would make of Iowa today.

Both Dr Atwood and Professor Faldet are contributors to William Morris and John Ruskin: A New Road On Which the World Should Travel published by the University of Exeter Press for the William Morris Society and edited by John Blewitt in celebration of the bicentenary of Ruskin’s birth.

UTOPIAN DREAMS: RUSKIN’S TORY PATERNALISM
6 July, 2.15 pm
Dr John Blewitt
John Ruskin was a major influence on William Morris but many of Ruskin’s political views were decidedly conservative. Whereas Morris was a libertarian eco-socialist who imagined a utopian future with no masters and no hierarchies, Ruskin looked at the laissez-faire capitalism of his day and yearned to recreate social relationships characterised by a reciprocal bond between wise masters and their godly and honest workers. In this lecture Dr John Blewitt will examine their contrasting views on masters, workers and political systems.

THE 2019 KELMSCOTT LECTURE AT THE V&A
WILLIAM MORRIS: SOUTH KENSINGTON AND SOCIALISM
8 October, 7 pm
Dr Tristram Hunt
‘I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few.’ So said William Morris, a great champion of the Arts and Crafts Movement and a key figure in British socialism at the end of the nineteenth century. Morris’s belief in equality of access to the arts made him a great friend to the South Kensington Museum (later renamed the V&A). Today he remains one of the most famous names in the V&A collection. Morris had an important influence on some of the museum’s earliest collecting policies, but as an artist he was also inspired by its collections. His legacy can still be found all over the V&A, not only in its extensive collections of Morris’s work, but also in the very fabric of the building which Morris helped to design.

In this lecture, V&A Director Dr Tristram Hunt traces the history of Morris’s engagement with the V&A, exploring how the museum helped to shape both his artistic endeavours and his political beliefs.

£15 / £12 (WMS member) / £8 (student)
Exhibitions

NEW
AN EARTHY PARADISE: WILLIAM MORRIS AND THE THAMES
River and Rowing Museum, Henley on Thames to 14 July
The influence of the Thames and its tributaries flowed through Morris's life and work. The river provided the setting for his leisure time spent angling and boating, inspiration for his designs and writing, and the ideal water conditions for the manufacture of his textiles. Highlights include his Thames series of textiles alongside his original hand-drawn designs, a signed copy of News from Nowhere, and his personal fishing tackle and spectacles.

JOHN RUSKIN: THE POWER OF SEEING
Two Temple Place, London to 22 April
Draws on the Ruskin Collection at Museums Sheffield and a number of other publicly-owned collections, bringing together over 190 paintings, drawings, daguerreotypes, metal work, and plaster casts to illustrate how Ruskin’s attitude to aesthetic beauty shaped his radical views on culture and society. See also pp10-13.

twotempleplace.org

THE ESSEX HOUSE PRESS: POETRY AND MUSIC
Court Barn, Chipping Camden to 24 March
The Essex House Press formed part of the Guild of Handicraft from 1898, when following the death of Morris, CR Ashbee acquired the Kelmscott presses together with three of the Kelmscott Press staff. Its production included the Great Poems of the Language series: fourteen volumes printed in a more or less uniform treatment on vellum using Caslon type, with initial letters drawn in and coloured by hand, a frontispiece engraved on wood and also coloured by hand, and a vellum binding blind-stamped with a design by Ashbee.
courtbarn.org.uk

ROSSETTI, PRE-THE PRE-RAPHAELITES
4 March to 24 December
Whitwick Manor, Wolverhampton
Thanks to a gift accepted in lieu of inheritance tax, 52 drawings by Rossetti from his early career have been acquired by the National Trust and more than 20 of these will be on display to the public for the first time. All of the drawings date from between 1844 and 1848 when the teenage Rossetti was receiving his art education. Many illustrate the preoccupations of a young man, what he was reading, the gothic macabre and ladies of questionable virtue.
nationaltrust.org.uk

RUSKIN.TURNER & THE STORM CLOUD: WATERCOLOURS AND DRAWINGS
York Art Gallery
29 March to 23 June
Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal
12 July to 5 October
The exhibition, one of the biggest in the UK during the 200th anniversary of John Ruskin's birth, examines Ruskin's response to Turner's work. It includes a dozen works by Turner, more than forty by Ruskin, art by their contemporaries including Constable, John Inchbold and Hubert Herkomer, and large-scale drawings by Emma Sibbbon reflecting on the effects of climate change on the Alpine landscapes treasured by Ruskin and Turner.
yorkartgallery.org.uk
abbothall.org.uk

MOONSCAPES
2 April to 22 June
Watts Gallery, Compton, near Guildford
Considers how nineteenth-century artists have drawn inspiration from the moon, including the 'Moonlight Pethers' whose glowing landscapes balance detailed technique with intricate meteorological observation. William Holman Hunt sought to represent the eerie lunar atmosphere by portraying solitary figures in contemplation of the moon, while from the 1880s, oil paintings featuring the personification of the moon were produced by symbolist painters including Evelyn de Morgan and GF Watts. Also on display are some of the scientific tools that astronomers have used to expand lunar knowledge and early stereoscopic photography used to capture the moon in astonishing detail.
wattsgallery.org.uk

RUSKIN’S GOOD LOOKING!: ABSENCE AND PRESENCE IN JOHN RUSKIN’S CLOTHING
Brantwood, near Coniston to 7 April
Ruskin thought of architectural and natural ornament as forms of dress which simultaneously cloak and reveal. References to textiles and clothing occur throughout his work.
and he contributed to the establishment of the Langdale linen industry. Sarah Casey applies Ruskin’s ideas about drawing, looking and appearance to explore in her drawings the details of his own clothes, many items of which survive at Brantwood.
brantwood.org.uk

A DESIGN LINEAGE: THE RUSLAND MOVEMENT AT BLACKWELL
Blackwell, Bowness-on-Windermere
to 9 June
Based in workshops on the edge of the Lake District, The Rusland Movement draws on the philosophy of the Arts & Crafts movement to create beautiful furniture inspired by nature. Unique pieces of furniture are on display at Blackwell, reimagining how the house could have been while the Holt family lived there. The exhibition explores how the pieces of furniture were sketched, realised in three-dimensional models and crafted.
blackwell.org.uk

LAST CHANCE TO SEE CHRISTINA ROSSETTI: VISION & VERSE
Watts Gallery, Compton, near Guildford
13 November to 17 March 2019
An exploration of the poet’s significant connection with, and complex attitude towards, visual art, bringing together paintings, illustrations, works on paper and photography. Presenting portraits of the poet and highlights from the Wightwick Manor’s collection, this exhibition recognises the enduring appeal of Rossetti’s verse to artists.
wattsgallery.org.uk

MAX GILL: WONDERGROUND MAP
Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft
20 October to 28 April 2019
Max Gill (1884-1947), younger brother of Eric, was a well-known illustrator, letterer, map-maker, architect and decorative artist. His best-known piece, the large 1914 Wonderground Map, was hung at every London Underground station, and in 1917 he was appointed by the Imperial War Graves Commission to design the lettering used on the Cerne Apostle and every military headstone since WWI.
ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk

BODIES OF COLOUR: BREAKING WITH STEREOTYPES IN THE WALLPAPER COLLECTION
The Whitworth, Manchester
to May 2019
Uses the Whitworth’s extensive and significant wallpaper collection to focus on how imperial attitudes to people are reflected in wallpaper: While the wallpapers in this show span three centuries and were designed in western Europe and North America, inspiration for the patterns comes from across the globe and represents a mix of commercially-available wallpapers and those made by artists.
whitworth.manchester.ac.uk

LUCY RIE: CERAMICS AND BUTTONS
CoCA, York Art Gallery
to 12 May 2019
After emigrating to the UK to escape Nazi Austria, the potter Lucy Rie produced ceramic buttons for the fashion industry in order to make ends meet; many British button factories had been requisitioned for the War effort.

This exhibition highlights this less well-known area of her practice, displaying hundreds of her buttons alongside many examples of the domestic wares she became celebrated for.
centreofceramicart.org.uk

CONTINUING WOMEN POWER PROTEST
Gas Hall, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
to 31 March
Marking a century since the first women won the right to vote, ‘Women Power Protest’ brings together modern and contemporary artworks from the Arts Council and Birmingham’s collections to celebrate female artists who have explored protest, social commentary and identity in their work including Susan Hillier, Lubaina Himid, Mary Kelly, Sam Taylor-Johnson, Sonia Boyce and Margaret Harrison.
birminghammuseums.org.uk

CRIMINAL ORNAMENTATION: YINKA SHONIBARE MBE CURATES THE ARTS COUNCIL COLLECTION
Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter
to 16 March 2019

Longside Gallery, Yorkshire
Scuplture Park
5 April to 16 June 2019

Southampton City Art Gallery
27 June to 28 September 2019

Borrows from The William Morris Society’s collection as well as those of the Arts Council, the V&A and the Crafts Council to consider the political, cultural and social dimensions of the use of pattern within craft, sculpture, painting, costume design, film and photography, celebrating the display of pattern, repetition and colour as freedom from the elitism of good taste.
arts councilcollection.org.uk/exhibitions/criminal-ornamentation-yinka-shonibare-mbe-curates-arts-council-collection

PORTMEIRION: POTTERY TRENDSETTER
V&A, London
to 28 July 2018 marked the centenary of the birth of Susan Williams-Ellis, founder of the pottery, whose designs include Totem, Magic City and Botanic Garden. Portmeirion’s innovative designs have set trends in the pottery industry over six decades and the company has thrived at a time when many of its famous, long-established rivals have not managed to survive.
vam.ac.uk
**Books**

**THE RISE OF EVERYDAY DESIGN: THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN AND AMERICA**

Monica Penick and Christopher Long

Yale Books, 256pp, £45 hb

yalebooks.co.uk

In its spread from Britain to the USA the Arts and Crafts movement was transformed, as its tenets, of simple design, honest use of materials and the social value of handcrafted goods, were adopted and commodified by firms such as Sears, Roebuck and Co. In early twentieth century America the movement was stripped of its reformist ideals by large-scale manufacturing and mail-order catalogues while its designs gained greater geographical reach.

**RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM**

Edward Fitzgerald; transcribed and illuminated by William Morris

The Folio Society, 32pp, £29.95 hb

foliosociety.com

A beautiful pocket-sized facsimile of Morris's 1872 version of Fitzgerald's popular translation of 1859, calligraphically written and decorated by Morris with painted and illuminated borders. The figures in the borders were designed by Morris and Burne-Jones, and were painted in by Charles Fairfax Murray. The book is bound in blocked cloth based on the original binding, is printed in colour and gold ink and comes in a blocked cloth slipcase.

**A KNIGHT FOR THE AGES: JACQUES DE LALAING AND THE ART OF CHIVALRY**

Elizabeth Morrison

Getty Publications, 192pp, £40 hb

yalebooks.co.uk

The Livre des faits de Jacques de Lalaing (Book of the Deeds of Jacques de Lalaing) is a Flemish illuminated manuscript that was produced in the tradition of chivalric biography, a genre developed in the mid-fifteenth century to celebrate the great personalities of the day, and reads like a fast-paced adventure novel. Essays written by leading medievalists reveal the full complexity of this illuminated romance, accompanied by reproductions of all of the manuscripts' miniatures, together with a plot summary and translations.

**THE PRE-RAPHAELITE TRAGEDY**

William Gaunt

The Folio Society, 296pp, £39.95

foliosociety.com

First published in 1942, the book delves into the intimate dramas, cliques, love triangles and feuds of the central figures of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, underpinned by a discussion of their art and philosophy. It was not entirely well-received by The Australian Quarterly, whose critic wrote in 1943 'That this tentacular organism finally succeeded in swallowing its own mythopoetic tail, thus bringing about its piecemeal obscurantist dissolution, was no doubt inevitable; but this process, although no doubt determined by dialectical necessity, was nowhere in the least accompanied by tragedy'.

**THE AMERICAN PRE-RAPHAELITES: RADICAL REALISTS**

edited by Linda S Ferber and Nancy K Anderson

Yale Books, 320pp, £45 hb

yalebooks.co.uk

Published to accompany an exhibition opening at the National Gallery of Washington in April 2019, this group of essays analyses the history of the American Pre-Raphaelites, led by the English expatriate Thomas Charles Farrer. They followed Ruskin's dictum to depict nature close up and with great fidelity, and several were abolitionists who created works with a rich political subtext.

**ICELAND AS IT IS**

Max Milligan

Nýhöfn, 272pp, 10,199 ISK

tham esandhudson.com

Max Milligan is a distinguished photographer, who has produced fine books about several countries, including Ghana, the Lebanon, Scotland, Peru and Gabon. His most recent book gives us no fewer than 269 beautiful, full-page – 30 cm square – photographs of Iceland, nearly all in colour, showing both its varied and extraordinary landscape and many of its buildings and inhabitants, farmers, musicians, artists and writers. One recalls William Morris’s admiration for these remarkable people when we are shown some sheep herded into a small boat with the following description: ‘All generations turn out to herd them onto a cod boat. Reminiscent of the old drove roads in Scotland, seeing a community all work together is like living history and the spirit of fun and teamwork and satisfaction is abundant.’ (p221). The book is a real work of art. A copy will be presented to the Society’s library at Kelmscott House.

Peter Faulkner

**THE BOOK OF DURROW**

Trinity College Library, Dublin, Rachel Moss

Thames & Hudson, 96pp, £14.95 pb

thamesandhudson.com

The Book of Durrow is among the earliest surviving decorated manuscripts in north-western Europe, pre-dating the Book of Kells by more than a century, and reflects the formative years of a distinctive age of artistic production in Ireland and Britain. The guide explores the manuscript’s distinctive artwork and tells the story of its preservation and its acquisition in the seventeenth century by the Library of Trinity College Dublin.

Above: A page from the facsimile of Morris's 1872 illuminated version of the Rubayat of Omar Khayyam.
Our next selling exhibition is
**Ambrose Heal & the Heal Cabinet Factory 1897-1939**
05 March to 07 April 2019
Tue to Sat 11am - 6pm, Sun 12 - 4pm
EDWARD BURNE-JONES
CARICATURE OF MORRIS
Helen Elletson writes on the Edward Burne-Jones drawing
William Morris lectures at the New Gallery on Tapestry weaving, 1888
Edward Burne-Jones, well-known for his beautiful paintings, also loved to create amusing caricatures of those dearest to him. Included among these were many of his lifelong friend and colleague William Morris. His cartoons of Morris, many of which date from the 1860s and 1870s, mostly focus on Morris actively undertaking the many crafts and pursuits he was involved with over the years. From sketches of him eating and drinking and riding his pony in Iceland to reading poetry and cutting a woodblock, Burne-Jones’s fond drawings of his great friend provide a delightfully entertaining visual insight into his varied pursuits.

This delightful and affectionate caricature shows Morris demonstrating weaving, with the following inscription by Burne-Jones:

“I should like to see him at work”
E. Burne-Jones ARA. Nov 1, 1888

The first Arts and Crafts Exhibition took place in 1888 at the New Gallery in Regent Street and was accompanied by a series of lectures by arts and crafts practitioners. Morris spoke on ‘Tapestry’, with a display of examples of tapestries, including his own seventeenth century Persian carpet from the dining room at Kelmscott House. Morris also gave a practical demonstration of weaving, inspiring this cartoon by Burne-Jones.

The New Gallery at 121 Regent Street, London, was an art gallery from 1888 to 1910, founded by J. Comyns Carr and Charles Edward Hallé. From the outset it was supported by Burne-Jones, who served on its Consulting Committee, as well as lending paintings for the opening. In October and November 1888, the New Gallery hosted the first showcase of industrial and applied arts by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society under the direction of its founding president, illustrator and designer Walter Crane.

Members may be familiar with a similar drawing of the same event, owned by the William Morris Gallery, which has the addition of an audience watching Morris’s demonstration.

Morris considered tapestry to be the noblest of the weaving arts and he began mastering the art when a loom was installed in his bedroom at Kelmscott House, Hammersmith. It is therefore particularly appropriate that we will be able to display this charming drawing at the site where Morris’s love of weaving first began.

This newly acquired drawing has been generously donated to The William Morris Society by Gillian Pengelly, who inherited it from her step-mother Sally Owen. It was previously owned by John Sparrow, Warden of All Souls College, Oxford.

Members wishing to view any aspect of the collection are welcome to do so, by contacting Helen Elletson at Kelmscott House.
Great Bardfield & Beyond: Mid-Century Art & Design in East Anglia
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