



Editorial

The latter part of 2017 saw two notable Morrisian exhibitions open, one on each side of the Atlantic. In Ohio, the Cleveland Museum of Art's *William Morris: Designing an Earthly Paradise* opened in October, and will run until November 2018. There, visitors can see a number of Morris's textiles, wallpapers and carpets, several volumes published by the Kelmscott Press, as well as an embroidery by May Morris on loan from the Cranbrook Art Museum. Other news from the United States brings only sadness, as readers will be sorry to learn of the passing of Jack Walsdorf, a former President of The William Morris Society in the United States and an avid collector of Morris's books and other materials. I briefly met Jack at Kelmscott House during the Society's AGM in 2016, and I was immediately struck by his warmth, his sense of fellowship and his capacity to extemporise in his introduction of the afternoon's lecture – all qualities which I know will be much missed by his colleagues. I extend condolences to his family and friends. The obituary which follows was first published in *Useful and Beautiful*, the newsletter of The William Morris Society in the United States.

Across the great Atlantic, in Walthamstow's William Morris Gallery, *May Morris: Art & Life* opened successfully during the same month of October, curated by Anna Mason and Rowan Bain. The exhibition was mounted in conjunction with the publication of two important new books: Lynn Hulse has edited *May Morris: Art & Life – New Perspectives*, published in association with the Gallery, whilst Thames & Hudson, in collaboration with the Victoria and Albert Museum, have published *May Morris: Arts & Crafts Designer*, with contributions from Anna Mason, Jenny Lister, Rowan Bain, Hanne Faurby and the Society's President Jan Marsh. The exhibition and books will undoubtedly go some way towards recovering and securing May's reputation as a designer, helping her posthumously to step out of her father's shadow. Visitors to the exhibition will enjoy being able to see some fine examples of May's art embroidery, including *Westward Ho!* (designed by May and worked by Jane during the early 1880s), May's adaptation of *Minstrels with Cymbals* (c. 1880s), *Maids of Honour* (c. 1890s), *Orange Tree* (1897) and *The Heavens Declare* (1910). The selection of materials reveals the development of May's own unique and distinctive style, honed in her early work as head of Morris and Co.'s embroidery department. On display in the exhibition, visitors can also see items including Morris's *Vine* (embroidered by May and others in the form of a wall-hanging during 1916) and *Olive and Rose* (mounted in a fire screen). Other highlights include examples of May's jewellery (two necklaces, a ring, sleeve clasps, a hair ornament, pendant and girdle), as well as some of her watercolours, early sketchbooks and a painting of Jenny and May by George Howard, based on sketches he made during their visit to Naworth Castle during 1870. The curators also give prominent

attention to May's political involvement with the socialist movement.

I am pleased to be able to introduce an issue of the *Journal* which contains an illuminating scholarly article by Peter Faulkner on the relationship between Morris and the nineteenth-century dramatist Henry Arthur Jones, based on a talk that Peter delivered at Kelmscott House on 11 June 2016. Morris was no particular fan of the theatre, but he did undertake a number of commissions for productions of Jones's plays. On the evidence presented here, this work seems to have kindled an attitude of veneration for Morris on the part of the younger man. Elsewhere in this issue, Wendolyn Weber offers a thoughtful exploration of Morris's travels in Iceland, and Stephen Williams persuasively recovers the activist contribution of Robert Banner, an often overlooked member of Morris's political network. I am also glad to publish the latest instalment of David and Sheila Latham's biennial annotated bibliography.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to make a request that has been aired once or twice before in these pages. New subscriptions to the *Journal* are always welcome, and especially so from university or college libraries. If you are in a position to do so, please consider checking whether your institutional library receives the Society's publications and, if it does not, contact the librarian to recommend a subscription. An institutional library can subscribe to the *Journal* by becoming a corporate member of the Society.

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