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THE WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY

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THE WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY

The life, work and ideas of William Morris (1834-96) are as important today as they were in his lifetime. The William Morris Society exists to make them as widely known as possible.

The breadth of Morris's ideas and activities brings together those who are interested in him as a designer, craftsman, poet, and political activist, and who admire his robust and generous personality and his creative energy. Morris's ideas on how we live and how we might live, on creative work, ecology and conservation, politics and the place of arts in our lives, remain as stimulating now as they were over a century ago.

Established in 1955, the Society is a worldwide membership fellowship. It publishes a magazine and a journal covering all aspects of Morris's work. It also runs a small museum and holds a varied series of talks, exhibitions and events throughout the year exploring Morris's work, his wider circle and his enduring relevance.

The Society's office and museum are in the basement and Coach House of Kelmscott House, Hammersmith, Morris's last London home. Visit our website at williammorrissociety.org to find out more about the Society and the benefits of membership.

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Editorial

The present issue of the *Journal* contains four absorbing articles that broach a range of topics related to Morris's poetry and politics, as well as the Arts and Crafts movement. Annette Carruthers introduces her meticulously edited text of Robert Lorimer's lecture on Morris, which he delivered in March 1897 at the Edinburgh Architectural Society. Lorimer was a Scottish architect and furniture designer who spent time working in the London-based office of George Frederick Bodley, where he became acquainted with and influenced by Morris's ideas. As Carruthers explains in her introduction to the text, Lorimer's lecture is 'uncharacteristically positive, but his enthusiasm for Morris's work is no surprise' (p. 7). Lorimer's text, published here for the first time, clearly demonstrates that he 'understood Morris's views on work and art, and approved of them' (p. 8), and Carruthers suggests that 'the affinities [Lorimer] found in Morris's work and ideas in his early career […] never faded' in his later work (p. 10).

Carolyn Malone, meanwhile, explores the activities of the Royal Academy War Memorials Committee (RAWMC), established in 1918, and the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement upon the national approach to public commemoration of the war. The RAWMC drew together members of the Art Workers' Guild, the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society and the Civic Arts Association to offer help and guidance to the communities that were seeking to commemorate those who died during World War One. Malone discusses memorials created by a range of figures associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, including W.R. Lethaby, Ernest Gimson, C.F.A. Voysey and George Jack, and observes that '[m]emorialisation of the war dead provided people with the opportunity to express their grief and process their sense of loss', while also giving artists 'the opportunity to apply their artistic principles to the creation of these important public art works' (p. 45).

It is intriguing to speculate what Morris might have made of these commemorative monuments in view of his resolutely anti-imperialist political commitments. In that respect, Pavla Veselá's compelling discussion of Morris's narrative poem *The Pilgrims of Hope* offers an insightful counterpoint to the artisanal memorials surveyed in Malone's essay. Veselá's article reflects on the poem's 'recurrent movement […] through hope to despair and back to hope again' (p. 50). In commenting on the section of the poem titled 'Sending to the War', she observes that Morris's speaker 'envisions the imperialist enterprise transformed into the people's revolution' (p. 54), foreshadowing the poem's later celebration of the revolutionary politics of the Paris Commune. Veselá also reflects, in conclusion, on the poem's work of 'remembrance', suggesting that Morris's engagement with the recent past, and particularly the history of the Commune, took the form of an 'unreconciled re-actualisation of its

Title page for 1923 Ukrainian edition of *News from Nowhere*.

defeated aspirations and after-effects' (p. 64). Elsewhere in this issue, John Stirling explores Morris's ideas about workers' control, suggesting one possible route out of the contemporary impasse.

In different ways, the contributions in this issue of the *Journal* resonate uncannily with the present political conjuncture, since this issue appears at a moment when the grim reality of war is once again stalking the European continent. The irredentist national chauvinism of Russia's political elite (collectively known during the post-Soviet period as the *siloviki*) has eventuated in a devastating war of aggression that is tearing apart Ukraine. And as anyone who is due to pay an electricity or gas bill in the coming months will surely know, the war is also exacerbating the contradictions of the globally unsustainable and ecocidal regime of fossil capital that obtains on both sides of the conflict.

By way of a small gesture of solidarity with the people of Ukraine, it is perhaps appropriate, in these circumstances, briefly to draw readers' attention to the 1923 Ukrainian edition of Morris's utopian romance *News from Nowhere*, not least since the Russian military is presently engaged in an ongoing attempt to eviscerate Ukraine's cultural heritage.[1] The Kharkiv-based publisher, Proletariĭ, was affiliated to the communist movement of the time, and a Bolshevik daily newspaper of that name also commenced publication in the city on 12 December 1922. It is salutary to reflect on the hopes and fears which must have accompanied the publication of this Russian-language edition of Morris's text during a period of revolutionary social transformation. Today, the city of Kharkiv is under near-constant Russian bombardment and threat of occupation, which makes it equally salutary to reflect on

how desperately distant is the 'rest and happiness of complete Communism' that Morris envisioned in *News from Nowhere*.[2] The world burns while the war-mongers of the Kremlin reap their bloody harvest and the arms manufacturers of the NATO-aligned countries reap their vast windfall profits, dwarfed only by those of the energy companies.

* * * *

I must also announce that Tony Pinkney has stepped down from the editorial board. Tony has been a great friend of the *Journal* over many years, and he remains a true advocate of a properly Morrisian politics, and, one might add, a properly Morrisian vision of what The William Morris Society ought to be.[3] Since no short comments here can really do justice to the energy and commitment with which Tony has served the *Journal*, both as a contributor and as a peer reviewer, I will simply repeat the words of John Ball: 'I wish thee what thou thyself wishest for thyself, and that is hopeful strife and blameless peace, which is to say in one word, life. Farewell, friend.'[4] But this taking of leave is, I hope, more an 'au revoir' than a 'farewell'.

Owen Holland
Editor

NOTES

1 William Morris, « Вести ниоткуда: Утопия » [*News from Nowhere: Utopia*], (Харьков [Kharkiv]: Пролетарий [Proletariĭ], 1923). A copy of this edition is held in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg, and the catalogue entry is available online: <https://primo.nlr.ru/permalink/f/oo3rn7/07NLR_LMS009774398> [accessed 31 August 2022].

2 *The Collected Works of William Morris*, ed. by May Morris, 24 vols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910-15), XVI, p. 186. (Afterwards *CW*).

3 Tony Pinkney, '"The only word he was comfortable with": William Morris and the Return of Communism', *JWMS*, 22: 2 (2017), 36-47.

4 *CW*, XVI, p. 286.

Robert Lorimer's 1897 Lecture on William Morris

Annette Carruthers

Robert Lorimer was a rising young architect aged thirty-two when in March 1897 he addressed friends and colleagues in the Edinburgh Architectural Society (EAS) on the 'Work and Influence of William Morris'. Some months before this he had talked to a Fife local-history group on 'Scottish Architecture' and was then pressed by the newly formed EAS to contribute to its programme.[1] Presumably he chose the subject as Morris's recent death made it topical but, as Lorimer explained in a letter to his close friend Robin Dods, who had moved to Australia, he also wanted to understand changes in his own time:

> I thought it would be interesting to *oneself* at least to trace out the progress things had made since the time Morris entered Streets lawcourt's office, because you may scoff & sneer as you like, but the *broad fact* remains that it was impossible to get anything decent of the kind of thing that for the house beautiful $_{\wedge}$[then] & *now* those people who wish for them & insist on having them can get. beautiful things of every description, furniture dresses. hangings printed books & book bindings – *everything* There mayn't be much of it, in

> proportion to the ordinary stuff of commerce but still there it is if you have the taste & knowledge & desire to get it. & to whom is this great change due – 1st & foremost to William Morris. He was the *pioneer* & this is what I'm going to trace out to these mugs. because surely its most important of all to understand ones *own* time, to take stock of how things are drifting, in order that we may carry on the lamp. in fact I'm going to "take a text & ramble". I think it'll do me no harm getting up the subject.[2]

It is clear from the same letter that he had already begun his research. At the 1896 Arts and Crafts Exhibition in London he had bought a copy of Morris's lecture on 'Gothic Architecture' (for 1/6d), which he considered 'one of my choicest possessions'.[3] He had then 'become so interested in the wonderful books there produced' that he acquired *On the Nature of Gothic* (21/-), a copy of Tennyson's *Maud* ('30/- – lovely, vellum, binding with silk ties'), and 'a dear little book […] a translation by Morris of an old French story called "Of the friend-ship of Amis & Amile"'. Risking 'the ribbald laughter' of Dods, he had addressed his letter using the words of Amis – 'Fair, Sweet, Fellow' – and other phrases suggest he had been reading Morris and not just admiring the appearance of the Kelmscott books.[4]

Only Lorimer's letters survive from the correspondence and it is difficult to assess Dods's views since Lorimer often appears to refer back to old conversations and tease about supposed differences. For instance, he wrote that Dods 'used to scoff' about Detmar Blow 'because he was one of the "from the roots upward" crew', suggesting his friend was dubious about an architectural approach favoured in the circles of Philip Webb and John Sedding.[5] Responses imply that Dods was as frank and opinionated as Lorimer, who wrote in 1897 that he was taking his friend's advice not to bother with lectures since they distract from 'your real work' and 'the only thing that matters is to *produce* something'.[6] Overall, Lorimer's letters are enthusiastic about friends and critical of rivals, romantic in tone (verging on sentimental), professionally engaged and eagerly puzzling out a practice and philosophy of architecture and design, while often inferring that Dods was more cynical about mutual friends and overly pragmatic about his rising career in Australia.[7]

It is possible that Lorimer had heard Morris talk on the topic of 'Gothic Architecture' since the lecture of that title had first been given in Glasgow in 1889.[8] It is also feasible that the two had met in Edinburgh in October of that year, when Lorimer's brother was involved in organising the 'Art Congress' at which Morris was President of the Applied Art section; if so, he did not mention it in his notes.[9] He may have kept any personal reminiscences for his 'ramble' off text, and must have had some since he had spent two years in London around 1889–92, working first for

George Bodley and then for James MacLaren and his successors William Dunn and Robert Watson. Bodley had been an early client for Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Company's stained glass and MacLaren was a member of the Art Workers' Guild, as were several of Lorimer's London friends. Lorimer attended some Guild events and later became a member (but not until 1922), and in 1893 he showed work for the first time at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, which he joined in July 1897 though he made several cynical comments on it.[10] Despite this he exhibited regularly with the society over his career, sending in furniture, metalwork in silver and wrought iron, leatherwork, embroideries, designs and photographs of architectural projects.

Lorimer was a native of Edinburgh but had become interested in the crafts of building in his youth, when his father repaired the family's rented country house, Kellie Castle in Fife. He trained in the city's university and then with the architectural partnership of Wardrop, Anderson and Browne and at the Heriot Watt Institute, but a sketch of him by his brother from 1885 shows him working at the bench with a mallet and chisel, so he was clearly engaged with practical craftwork as well as design practice.[11] Like other ambitious young architects he broadened his experience in London and found sympathetic colleagues who shared his ideas and aspirations. Many remained lifelong friends, including Dods, who had been born in New Zealand, lived and trained in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and moved to Australia in 1896.

Lorimer's letters to Dods are a major source of information about his developing Edinburgh architectural practice, which was established with a castle restoration, Earlshall in Fife, in 1892 and continued with commissions for extensions and numerous small cottages and houses, particularly in Colinton near Edinburgh and in growing towns such as North Berwick, East Lothian.[12] By 1897 he had a fairly steady stream of work and was also designing furniture that was made for him by William Wheeler of Arncroach in Fife and by Morison & Company and Whytock & Reid in Edinburgh, though he never established his own workshops, unlike many of his contemporaries.[13] Like Anderson and Bodley he was an avid collector of antiques and was eager to produce new work for the decoration of interiors, aiming to 'take a fine model & do your own "comments" on it.'[14]

From childhood Lorimer was known as a fierce critic of 'everybody and everything' and his letters are full of pointed judgements.[15] The lecture is uncharacteristically positive, but his enthusiasm for Morris's work is no surprise. He would have been familiar with Morris and Co.'s shop in Oxford Street and with exhibits in the Arts and Crafts shows of 1893 and 1896, and probably 1890 too. He had also seen furnishings and glass in several Bodley churches. His one real criticism in his talk – of the Burne-Jones window in St. Giles, Edinburgh – shows that his taste was shaped by Morris and Co.'s early style and the more heavily leaded and expressive

work of the 1880s did not appeal to him at this time.[16]

Apart from newspaper obituaries and a few magazine articles Lorimer had no substantial published accounts of Morris's life and work on which to base his lecture, since Vallance's book did not appear until later in 1897 and Mackail's until 1899.[17] As an architect and designer he focused on the aspects that most concerned him – building and decoration – and also what he thought would interest his audience; printing was a major trade in Edinburgh so the Kelmscott books were relevant, apart from his own evident enjoyment of them. The obituary writers expounded more on Morris's literary work, but Lorimer provided good coverage of the artistic career, including the founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings which several of the obituaries omitted.[18] A letter of 1896 about a visit to Laon Cathedral – '(the inside of which has been entirely restored & be d–d to them)' – reveals that he was in tune with the society, though an account of 'a youthful crank sent down by the anti scrape to report' suggests a less positive attitude twelve years later when he was working at Lympne Castle in Kent.[19]

Despite announcing at the start that he would not discuss Morris's socialism, and by no means a socialist himself, Lorimer's text nevertheless also shows that he understood Morris's views on work and art, and approved of them.[20] In particular he suggested all would agree:

> That if you grind a man down to the last penny, and turn him into a machine that just produces a small piece of an article, that the result so produced can never by any chance be art.
>
> This is what the modern competition for cheapness not for excellence has done – it has killed the craftsman's pleasure in his work; and what Morris was always saying was if you expect a man to produce artistic work you must give him a wage on which he can live and time to enjoy the piece of work he is turning out.[21]

This message was clearly derived from Ruskin as well as from Morris, and Lorimer put it into practice by working regularly with trusted builders and craftworkers, consulting them about technical matters and crediting them for their contributions.[22] For instance, after building Ardkinglas, a country house in Argyllshire, within a tight timetable Lorimer wrote to Dods: 'never in my life have I enjoyed a job like that it all went with such a swing – I managed to make every one keen – and as I think I told you had the finest clerk of works man ever had. I do think ours is an attractive profession, the way ones life, ones thoughts & heart & soul are intimately bound up with one particular spot for a couple of years or so, then that chapter closes, & one

goes on to something else, if one has luck!'.[23] This relish for work on one project after another reminds one of Morris's serial enthusiasms for experiment in different crafts.

Lorimer gave his lecture at Dowell's Rooms in George Street, Edinburgh, to an audience of architects who had formed a society to promote the interests of the younger men, as distinct from the long-established Edinburgh Architectural Association.[24] It was probably a large audience but the several published reports give only brief details so it is difficult to say how it was received since there appear to be no accounts of questions and answers.[25] Whereas in his 'Scottish Architecture' talk he had used 'lime light' slides, the text implies that the books and a few photographs of Kelmscott Manor were his only illustrations, presumably because it would have been expensive to obtain suitable images.[26]

It seems that Dods had requested a copy and so it was transcribed by Lorimer's assistant, John Fraser Matthew, which is fortunate because his writing is more legible than his employer's scrawl, though the punctuation is eccentric and there are occasional spelling errors. Matthew had been unable to attend the talk since he had a black eye after a street fight, so the task was handed down for his instruction.[27] Lorimer also gave him improving Arts and Crafts books for Christmas and other occasions, including works by Ruskin, Mackmurdo and Sedding.[28] Lorimer himself must have owned a copy of *Hopes and Fears for Art* as he quoted from it several times in the lecture, which includes about 3,500 words of Morris's, approximately forty per cent of the text.

Lorimer's interest in Morris did not diminish and a letter of May 1897 records a visit with Robert Weir Schultz to the Kelmscott Press in Hammersmith, and the purchase of three more books.[29] The two 'saw Morris's dining room – a most charming room, & his bedroom, & a heap of his old manuscript books, one a bestiary for which he had paid £1-200 – good old socialist!!'.[30] He worked through several ideas in this letter about having new pieces of furniture made instead of buying antiques, collecting 'the typical products of *ones own time*' rather than 'the flotsam & jetsam of the so called "good old days"', and trying to '*design* on the spur of the moment', so that when you come to look at it again even years later 'you may *smile* – but you wont want to alter it – for you'll feel – it was *me* at the time – "I left a little bit of my soul there"'.[31] This is an idea quoted from Morris and one that continued to have resonance for Lorimer who mentioned it in relation to the jewels of his friend Phoebe Traquair, that 'one feels you get a little bit of her soul in each.'[32]

A direct quote from Morris also appeared on a bedcover by Lorimer, the design for which was shown at the 1899 Arts and Crafts Exhibition.[33] This is embroidered with lines from the poem on the Kelmscott bed valance, published in the 1893 Arts and Crafts Exhibition catalogue.[34] At Earlshall in Fife, Lorimer's early restoration

project, a Morris and Co. Sussex settee appears in a hall illustrated in Hermann Muthesius's *Das englische Haus*, probably from a photograph supplied by Lorimer, and his work there on the structure, interiors and garden is described by Muthesius as 'of his best'.[35] There are other such close connections, but more importantly Lorimer found ways 'to carry the lamp' in his work as an architect who brought together a range of craftspeople on collaborative projects in which he directed and coordinated the work but trusted the artists as individuals. His letters reveal that he aimed consciously to become a skilled specialist domestic architect, which partially reflects Morris's views on 'a beautiful house' as 'the most important production of Art', though it also derived from Lorimer's love of family life and contemporary attitudes to the home.[36] Muthesius praised him as the 'only true representative' in Scotland of the Arts and Crafts movement as derived from Morris's work, and continued: 'Scotland will not achieve what England has already achieved – a completely national style of house-building based on the old vernacular architecture – until it follows the lead given by Lorimer.'[37]

It is also clear that while Lorimer was eager to use new methods and modern fittings where appropriate, he believed with Morris in the value of studying the local materials and craft traditions, and in consulting artisans on how to achieve the desired effects. When building a new gatehouse at Earlshall in 1900, of 'whin with the *natural face* – not *split*, with these deep free stone lintels, and a roof of old grey slabs', he discussed with an old slater a technical problem that had long worried him, of fixing slates over gables, aiming to 'use the materials so as to get the utmost amount of *expression*' out of them.[38] This echoes Morris's claim that he wanted 'to make woollen substances as woollen as possible, cotton as cotton as possible' – a fundamental principle of his design philosophy.[39]

Lorimer developed a distinctive modern Scottish style for his many works in Scotland, and treatments sympathetic to local conditions for his commissions in England and abroad, creating an architecture that expressed his continued enthusiasm for the building crafts. Over time he became renowned for his large country houses and for the prestigious commission of the Thistle Chapel in Edinburgh, which gained him a knighthood in 1911. His last major work was the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle, a sombre late example of the Arts and Crafts Movement in action, completed by a collegial group of about seventy artists and craftspeople in 1928. I know of no later comments by Lorimer on Morris, but the affinities he found in Morris's work and ideas in his early career clearly never faded.

Note on the text

Lorimer sent the copy of his lecture to Robin Dods with a letter of 9 and 12 May

1897.[40] In 1974 two photocopies were made at Glasgow School of Art (GSA), for the School's use and for Peter Savage, who quoted from it in his book *Lorimer and the Edinburgh Craft Designers* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1980). The original document was returned to Hew Lorimer, who gave a copy to John Frew in 1982. The current whereabouts of the manuscript is unknown; it appears not to be in the GSA Archives, nor in the National Trust for Scotland, nor in the Lorimer family. The photocopy includes extra marks from the copying process, so it is difficult to be absolutely confident of the punctuation, which I have changed where needed but have otherwise left as is. Words crossed out are as deleted in the text and spelling errors have not been corrected. Words underlined in Lorimer's text are shown here in italics.

Acknowledgements
I am very grateful to Dr. John Frew for the copy of the text and to Professor David Walker for advice on architectural queries. My thanks are due also to Ian Gow, Simon Green, Stella Hook, Stephen Jackson, Antonia Laurence-Allen, the University of Edinburgh Library, Centre for Collections, and the anonymous reviewers of this journal.

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The text
[Cover sheet]
Notes on the Work and Influence of William Morris
by R. S. Lorimer A.R.I.B.A
[In another hand] Sent to his friend Dodds [sic], architect
Brisbane. June. 1897.

p.1
Notes on Work and Influence of William Morris.
Many years ago, I decided that if I ever read a paper ~~such~~ before ^such a society ^as this I would confine myself to some narrowly practical subject; the detail of some craft or something of the kind, but as one generally ends by doing the very opposite of what one intended, here I am come before you, to talk about the influence of William Morris, – a wide enough subject to tackle in all conscience.

Now before I get under way I must explain to you my reason for choosing such a theme at all, – my reason is this. We are all told to go and study old work & never mind about any thing that is modern. "Saturate yourself with old work", – that's what

we are taught now. That is all very well but it seems to me to be of almost equal importance to study the work of the best modern men. What was their point of view? What have *they* got out of the old work? – In fact not only to try to understand old art but to try and understand new art, – the very newest thing out and to learn from it which way things are drifting. That then, is my reason and though the subject as I say is a very big one I'll try & be as brisk & to the point as I can.

So we'll begin by asking ourselves a few questions & then try and answer them.
1st then – Who & what was William Morris?
2nd – What did he do for the arts & crafts during the last 40 years?
3rd – What were his theories about art & design.

I confess that 5 or 6 years ago William Morris was little more than a name to me & possibly some of you may be in the same position now.

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One knew vaguely that he had a high art shop in Oxford Street but not much more.

Now the men who have had an influence on the arts of our time are of 2 sorts. There is first the kind of man who works away quietly, trains up a few craftsmen to turn out his work, and after he has been working for 15 or 20 years his work begins to tell and to exert an influence. But he never opens his mouth in public, is never seen on a platform and never or very rarely does what I'm doing now, – reads a paper. You will readily call to mind the sort of man I mean.

Then the other kind of man is the kind who both works and fights, who does his work and at the same time tries by every means in his power, by lecturing agitating fighting, talking to push things along in the direction which he believes to be the right one. Of this latter sort was William Morris. He has been called a "Soldier in the army for beauty", and it has been a not inapt description of his life's work. He felt that the modern ~~competitive system~~ commercial system – that is the competition of cheapness, *not* of excellence, – was absolutely fatal to art of any kind and he got his coat off & his back to the wall & fought against it all he knew. – Yes, you may take that roughly as his life's work – a life spent fighting for beauty, – for sanity – trying to get people to take pleasure, real pleasure in the things they ~~the~~ have round them, – the things they must perforce use.

But to answer our first question in detail. Who & what was William Morris? He was
1st first a designer & master craftsman, a designer of fabrics, carpets, wallpapers, tiles, furniture, tapestry, every thing in fact required for the interior of a building.

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2nd He was a teacher & lecturer

3rd He was practically the founder & to his dying day the Hon. Secretary of the Society for the protection of ancient buildings

4th He was a master printer & publisher of Books.

5th He was a Socialist

6th He was an author & poet.

I do not propose to speak of him here either as a socialist or poet but I shall try to trace him through the other phases of his activity.

"He must have been a Jack of all trades & master of none." I think I hear you saying but that is just the extraordinary thing about this man, that he took up all ~~trades~~ these crafts one after another & mastered them in every detail.

I need not detain you with an account of the state the applied arts had sunk to in the early Victorian days, – how degraded everything had become. Call to mind the most dull & hideous room you can think of and you'll have a pretty fair idea of the typical room of the period. Well at this time say some 40 years ago William Morris was a young man at Oxford. He had as fellow students Rossetti,– Burne Jones & some more of the men destined to be the brighter lights of the latter part of this century.

After leaving Oxford he entered the Law Courts office of that most wonderful man George Edmund Street, intending at this time to become an Architect.[41] The training he then acquired was no doubt most valuable in the work to which he afterwards put his hand. He would learn to appreciate the value of a feeling for scale without which no

p.4

designer can ever do anything. We need not be surprized that he did not find all he sought for in Streets office. Though a Gothic man to the core it was the spirit of Gothic he was after not the letter. The Gothic of the Craftsman, not the Classical professional Gothic, – if I may so term it. While working as an architect he felt all this paper design, – this separation of the designer from the craftsman – was wrong. He felt that the only real way to approach design was through a thorough knowledge and appreciation of the material in which your design was to be carried out. This is really the whole gospel of design and I want to say something more about it later on.– Morris resolved then to apply himself to the production of actual work – things that were wanted and for this reason he established the firm of Morris & Co.

Every one has heard of the firm of Morris & Co but may be we are too apt looking upon what Morris has accomplished to take all of it for granted and to forget what was the state of things he found at the time he started his artistic enterprize. It

was in the year 1861. That was a strangely assorted band which constituted the original members of the firm – Ford-Maddox-Brown, Dante Gabriel Rosetti & E[d] Burn Jones, – painters – Philip Webb, Architect, Peter Paul Marshall, engineer & surveyor, & Charles Faulkner an Oxford Don.

These were Morris partners in the business. Beyond them the staff was of the smallest. They set forth their aims in a circular which dumfounded those who read it by the audacity of the scheme.

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The substance of this document was "that a Company of historical Artists had banded themselves together to execute work in a thoroughly artistic and inexpensive manner and they had determined to devote their spare time to designs for all kinds of manufactures of an artistic nature."

At the present day so far have conditions changed & views progressed a notice of this kind would excite little comment, but in the period when the decorative arts as then practised were recognized as a mere polite accomplishment for young ladies, and when the line of demarcation between the gentleman, – the man who did nothing to earn his lively hood – and the professional or business man was drawn with uncompromising sharpness it was not to be wondered at if the Circular came with the force of a challenge. The enthusiasm shared by the little band of pioneers for such they were, can only be dimly imagined at the present. "Ah those were grand times," remarked one who had worked with Mr William Morris from the beginning of things. The earliest products of the firm were shown to the public at the exhibition of 1862 and in spite of misunderstandings on the part of brother artists & the most determined opposition on the part of the trade, gained such official ~~opposition~~ recognition as they might in the shape of Bronze medals, and that not withstanding that certain professionals did their utmost to get the work disqualified. In particular they singled out the stained glass which they firmly maintained, refusing to be convinced to the contrary, to be a fraud, in fact nothing else than old material retouched for the occasion.

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Thence forward that is from 1862 the business of art decoration steadily made its way and prospered. William Morris who had been the actual responsible manager from the first became the nominal, as well as the virtual, head of affairs, on the dissolution of the original partnership in 1874.[42]

For stained glass Morris prepared a few cartoons only, Maddox Brown & Rossetti furnishing more, but by far the largest proportion has been from the pencil of Morris'

stanch [sic] & attached friend Sir E. Burn-Jones.

The painted tiles wallpapers chintzes woven tapestry, printed velveteen & other textiles designed by Mr Morris & manufactured by the firm are well known & deservedly, as widely, admired. To these must be added carpets and hand-woven Arras tapestry, – the lastest [sic] branch of the work that has been developed.

The Factory at Merton Abbey on the Wandle where these industries are carried on is a model of its kind, for there the principles which Mr Morris learned of John Ruskin are litterally [sic] carried out. The workmen & women employed are themselves artists and the work is both pleasant to do and worth the doing and moreover is beautiful when done.

The mention of Mr Ruskin recalls Morris' indebtedness to that great teacher. But ~~the~~ whereas John Ruskin has written preached & raged against many things as they exist in the world at present he has remained only a reactionary – on the other hand Morris starting from Ruskin's premises carried the gospel of Ruskin's discontent to its logical outcome, and placed himself in the foremost rank of the advance movement of the day.

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That then is the direct outcome of the establishment of this famous firm & what was gradually accomplished was that all the different ^old traditional crafts were taken up one by one & breath and life given to them.

One after another Morris took them in hand studied them from the very beginning and caused to be produced in each the finest work which has been done in our time.

What he succeeded in doing in tapestry is characteristic of what he did in all the other crafts. You probably know that until recently there were Royal Tapestry Works in England. – In Spite of Royal patronage & bolstering up of every description they sickened and at last closed, some 10 years ago. Now this fact would have been enough to daunt any ordinary mortal. He would simply have said "Well! this shows there's no demand for tapestry in this country," and would have sat still & done nothing. Not so Morris, – he said to himself "There may be no demand for bad tapestry but there's always a demand for really fine work." So he started with his usual energy; Studied the finest Arras tapestry he could find, pulled some to bits, studied the wools, the thread, the method of deying [sic], – in fact thoroughly mastered the whole subject and in the course of a few years produced tapestry which it is no exaggeration to say is as fine as any that has every [sic] been done.

One piece I would particularly draw your attention to – those of you who have not already been to Oxford will be going there someday. When you do go to the

chapel of Exeter College and on the

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south side of the chapel ~~wall~~ you will see a large panel of tapestry representing the "Adoration of the Kings". This is Morris masterpiece in the way of Tapestry.

He & Sir E[d] Burn Jones were brother students at Exeter and they thought it would be a nice thing to do to make a present to their old college so Burn Jones made the design & it was woven at Merton Abbey. It is not a very large piece. I daresay not more than 14ft x 9 ft but it is not too much to say that you might hunt the world through & you would not find anything finer. This is a big order I admit but anyone who has made a study of tapestry will fully endorse what I say.[43]

I think you will agree with me that this was a great achievement in the course of a few years to produce original tapestry (not a mere copy of old work, but original design) that can bear comparison with any of the old work, – the old of course being the result not of a few years work, but of many generations of workers working under the influence of tradition.

A word about one other craft.– Stained Glass. Many of you may not have seen any examples of **s** Morris windows except the one in St Giles Cathedral – not an altogether happy example, and much of the glass produced under Morris' influence I confess I do not like, – But a man should always be judged by his best work and the best Morris Glass is as fine as it can be. To see this you must go to Cambridge & when there go to the Chapel of Jesus College and in the transept, you will see what Morris glass can be at its best.[44]

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These are large windows of the perpendicular type filled with single figures and at the bottom of each light a little panel containing a subject. Some of these were designed by Ford-Maddox-Brown, some by Rossetti, some by Burne Jones and they are absolute jems [sic] in their way. Jems in colour as well as in design, – work from which one can derive genuine pleasure & why? Because it is original work designed by Artists – men who had something to say. Not a tiresome cook up of cartoons that had done duty for 20 years

We shall now proceed to answer our 2[nd] Question – Morris as a teacher & lecturer and this will require some subdivision.

1[st] what had he to say about our own trade. – Architecture Building. 2[nd] What about the insides of Buildings. 3[rd] From what point of view did he approach design.

I said at the start that he was a Gothic man to the very core. By this I mean that a building was to him a human living thing – a "craftsman's drama" as some one has

called it, and like every other thinking man he laughed to scorn the idea of labelling modern buildings as being in the style of this or that century "correct in every detail". – The idea that you could design a classic building in the forenoon and then after lunch sit down & design a Gothic one. No, he said to talk about a building as being in the ~~th~~ 13th Century or the Byzantine style or whatever you please was equal to admitting that architecture was dead.

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– and when he was going to build a house for himself he said "don't talk to me about styles." "Let me see a real good brick now a good slate, – now what's the best kind of window to keep the weather out and let the light in." and so on he went right through. Looked at the subject from the clear headed rigorous point of view & said that a building designed to that end of the stick would have style, – of the only kind thats worth having.

I can anticipate all your objections to this. You will say this is all very fine and large but it wont carry you very far in architecture. You would wonder how far it would carry you.

Morris says, "if you have a building to put up in a country side go to the place study the district see how the old buildings were done. Build your walls of the local stone in the way the stone suggests. Use all the local materials & ways of doing things so far as you can. In fact try to make your building look at home like a bit of the country side."[45]

Listen to what he says about building in a recently published paper.

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"Builders have really ceased to understand the ground principles on which stone should be used.[46] Now I think the consideration of stone buildings has this extreme importance about it, that when you fairly begin to consider how best to deal with stone as a material you have begun then first to free yourself from the bonds of mere academic architecture. The building no longer looks as so many renaissance buildings do, as if they might as well be built of brick & plastered over with compo. You can see the actual bones & structure. But it is something more than that. You can see in point of fact the life of it by studying the actual walls.

The organic life of a building is so interesting so beautiful even, that it is a distinct & definite pleasure to see a large blank wall without any ordinary architectural features, if it is really properly built & properly placed together. In fact this seems to me almost the beginning of architecture, that you can raise a wall that impresses you at once by its usefulness, its size, if it is big, its delicacy if it is small and in short with

its actual life: that is the beginning of building altogether.

Now to go a little further into detail. The kinds of building you want in different places are very different. There is a good deal of very beautiful building about the country which is built merely as a barn or a cart shed is built and I think it would be a great pity if we lost all that. It is a very great pleasure to see the skill with which these buildings are constructed, very often not pointed at all but you cannot help noticing the skill with which the mason has picked out his longs & shorts and put the thing together with really something like rhythm and measurement, – his traditional skill that was, –

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Now if by any possibility the architects could get back the masons & workmen & what I distinctly call the old scientific method of building walls and surfaces – the really reasonable & scientific method – architecture would to a great extent be on its legs again and we need not trouble ourselves much about the battle of the styles, if buildings were but built in that living manner from beginning to end, out of that the style would arise. Too often what the modern practitioner has produced is not a building which really forms part of the living shell & skin of the earth on which we live but it is a mere excrescence upon it, a toy, which might almost as well, except for the absolute necessity of the people having a roof to cover them, have remained simply a nicely executed drawing in the architects office. *What we have to get rid of is especially & particularly that.*

I am perfectly certain that a vast amount of very beautiful buildings all over the country never had an architect at all but the roughest possible draft was made out for these buildings and they grew up without any intermediary between the mind & the hands of the people who actually built them. No doubt the great reason why this was so was that the people who built them were traditionally acquainted with the best means of using the materials which happily for them they were forced to use, – the materials that were all around them in the fields and woods amongst which they passed their time."

Then again I quote his description of a completed building.

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A true architectural work rather is a building duly provided with all necessary furniture, decorated with all due ornament according to the use quality & dignity of the building, from mere mouldings and abstract lines to the great especial works of sculpture & painting which except as decorations of the nobler form of such buildings cannot be produced at all.[47]

Then describing in another place the hardiness of Gothic.

It had shaken off the fetters of Greek superstition & aristocracy and Roman pedantry, and, though it must needs have had laws to be a style at all, it followed them of free will and yet unconsciously.[48] The cant of the beauty of simplicity (ie bareness or barrenness) did not afflict it; it was not ashamed of redundancy of material or superabundance of ornament any more than nature is. Slim elegance it could produce, or sturdy solidity, as its moods went. Material was not its master but its servant. Marble was not necessary to its beauty; stone would do or bricks or timber. In default of carving it would set together cubes of glass or whatsoever was shining & fair hued and cover every portion of its interiors with a fairy coat of splendour or would mould mere plaster into intricacy of work not to be followed nor never wearying the eyes with its delicacy & expressiveness of line. Smoothness it loves,– the utmost finish that the hand can give, but if material or skill fail, the rougher work shall be so wrought that it pleases us with its inventive suggestion. The iron rule of the classical period the acknowledged slavery of every one but the great man was gone and freedom had taken its place; but harmonious freedom.

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Subordination there is, but subordination of effect not uniformity of detail,– true & necessary subordination not pedantic.

It must be admitted I think that during this epoch, as far as the art of beautiful building is concerned France and England were the architectural countries par excellence; but all over the intelligent world was spread the bright glittering joyous art which had now reached its acme of elegance and beauty; & moreover in its furniture of which I have spoken above, the excellence was shared in various measure betwixt the countries of Europe. And let me note in passing that the necessarily ordinary conception of a Gothic interior, as being a colourless whitey-grey place dependent on nothing but the architectural forms, is almost as far from the fact as the corresponding idea of a Greek temple standing in all the chastity of white marble. We must remember on the contrary that both buildings were clad and that the noblest part of their ornament was their share of a great epic, a story appealing to the hearts and minds of men, and in the Gothic building especially in the half century we have now before us, every part of it; walls, windows floor was all regarded as space for the representation of incidents of the great story of mankind as it had presented itself to the minds of men then living; and this space was used with the greatest frankness of prodigality and one may fairly say that wherever a picture could be painted there it was painted.

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That is the burden of his song then about buildings. Go for breadth – above every thing breadth, simplicity, the local materials, if you're in England do things the English way; if you re in Scotland the Scotch way avoid shams and the manufacture of "features". I know this all seems trite enough and we've all heard it often before – but if people would only work on these lines what an amazing amount of trash & rubbish would be got rid of.

Now let us see what he has to say about interiors and I will illustrate this by reading you some extracts from his book called "Hopes & fears for art," being a collection of 5 lectures delivered at different times.[49]

First then listen to what he has to say on decorations

1st "To give people pleasure in things they must perforce *use*, that is the one great office of decoration. To give people pleasure in the things they must perforce *make*; that is the other use of it."[50]

Then again here is a description of art.

2nd "The thing that I understand by real art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labour. I do not believe he can be happy in that labour without expressing that happiness; and especially is this so when he is at work on anything in which he especially excels. A most kind gift is this of nature since all men, nay, it seems all things too must labour; so that not only does the dog take pleasure in hunting and the horse in running, and the bird in flying, but so natural does the idea seem to us that we imagine that the earth and the very elements rejoice in doing their appointed task, and the poets have told us of the spring meadows smiling, of the exultation of the fire, of the countless laughter of the sea."[51]

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Then again from the opening of a lecture at Birmingham.[52]

3rd "Those of you who are real artists know well enough all the special advice I can give you and in how few words it may be said; – follow nature study antiquity, make your own art and do not steal it, grudge no expense of trouble, patience, or courage, in striving to accomplish the hard thing you have set yourself to do. You have had all that said to you 20 times I doubt not; and twenty times twenty have said it to yourselves, ~~and now I have said it to yourselves~~, and now I have said it again to you & done neither you nor me good nor harm thereby. So true it all is, so well known and so hard to follow.

4th Then on the connection between art and history.[53]

Now as these arts call peoples attention & interest to matters of every day life in the present so also, and that I think is no little matter, they call our attention at every

step to that ~~of~~ history of which I said before they are so great a part; for no nation, no state of society, however rude, has been wholly without them, nay, there are people, not a few, of whom we know scarce anything, save that they thought such & such forms beautiful. So strong is the bond between history and decoration that in the practise [sic] of the latter we cannot if we would, wholly shake off the influence of past times over what we do at present. I do not think it is too much to say that no man, however original he may be can sit down to day and draw the ornament of a cloth or the form of an ordinary vessel or piece of furniture that will be other than a development or a degradation of forms used hundreds of years ago, and these too very often forms that once had a serious meaning, though they are now become little more than a habit of the hand;

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forms that were once perhaps the mysterious symbols of worships & beliefs now little remembered or wholly forgotten. Those who have diligently followed the delightful study of these arts are able as if through windows to look upon the life of the past; the very first beginnings of thought among nations whom we cannot even name.

5th Then listen to this about the study of tradition.[54]

"I do not think that any man but one of the highest genius could do any thing in these days without much study of ancient art, and even he would be much hindered if he lacked it. If you think this contradicts what I have said about the death of that ancient art and the necessity I implied for an art that should be characteristic of the present day, I can only say that in these days of plenteous knowledge and of poor performance, if we do not study the ancient work directly and learn to understand it we shall find ourselves influenced by the feeble work all round us and shall be copying the better work through the copyists and *without* understanding it which will by no means bring about intelligent art. Let us therefore study it wisely, be taught by it, kindled by it, all the while determining not to imitate or repeat it. To have either no art at all or an art which we have made our own.

Then on the charm of an old building.[55]

6th "How we please ourselves with an old building by thinking of all the generations of men who have passed through it! Do we not remember how it has received their joy and borne their sorrows, and not even their folly has left sourness upon it. It still looks as kind to us as it did to them. And the converse of this we ought to

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to feel when we look on a newly built house; if it is as it should be, we should feel a pleasure in thinking how he who had built it had left a piece of his soul behind him

to greet newcomers one after another long and long after he was gone.

Believe me if we want art to begin at home as it must, we must clear our houses of troublesome superfluities that are forever in our way, conventional comforts that are no real comforts and do but make work for servants and doctors.[56] If you want a golden rule that will fit everybody this is it. *'Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.'* And if we apply that rule strictly we shall in the first place show the builders, and such like servants of the public, what we really want. We shall create a demand for real art, as the phrase goes and in the second place we shall surely have more money to pay for decent houses.

Perhaps it will not try your patience too much if I set before you my idea of the fittings necessary for the sitting-room of a healthy person; a room I mean in which he would not have to cook in much or sleep in generally or in which he would not have to do any very litter-making work.

First a bookcase with a great many books in it. Next a table that will keep steady when you write or work at it; then several chairs that you can move and a bench that you can sit or lie upon. Next a cupboard with drawers; next unless either the cupboard or the bookcase be very beautiful with painting or carving ~~such as~~ you will want pictures or ingravings [sic] such as you can afford, only not stop gaps, but real works of art on the wall,

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or else the wall itself must be decorated with some beautiful & restful pattern; we shall also want a vase or two to put flowers in which latter you must have sometimes especially if you live in a town. Then there will be the fireplace of course which in our climate will be the chief object in the room. This is all we shall want especially if the floor be good; if it be not as, by the way in a modern house it is pretty certain not to be, I admit that a small carpet that can be bundled out of the room in 2 minutes will be useful and we must also take care that it is beautiful or it will annoy us terribly. Now unless we are musical and need a piano (in which case as far as beauty goes we are in a bad way) that is quite all we want and we can add very little to these necessities without troubling ourselves and hindering our work our thoughts and our rest. If these things were done for the least cost for which they could be done solidly and well they ought not to cost much, and they are so few that those who could afford to have them all *could* afford to spend some trouble to have them fitting and beautiful; and all those who care about art ought to take great trouble to do so, and to take care that there is no sham art among them, nothing that has degraded a man to make or sell. And I feel sure that if all who care about art were to take the pains it would make a great impression on the public.

This simplicity you can make as costly as you please, *or can* on the other hand. You may hang your walls with Tapestry instead of whitewash or paper, or you may cover them with mosaic or have them frescoed by a great painter; all

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this is not luxury if it be done for beauties [sic] sake and not for show; it does not break our golden rule. "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.

Then here is an extract about designing patterns[57]

7th "Without order your work cannot exist, without meaning it were better not to exist. Now order imposes on us certain limitations which partly spring from the nature of the art itself and partly from the materials in which we have to work and it is a sign of mere incompetence in either a school or an individual to refuse to accept such limitations or not to accept them joyfully and turn them to special account much as if a poet should complain of having to write in measure and rhyme. Now in our craft the chief of the limitations that spring from the essence of the art is that the decorators art cannot be immitative [sic] even to the limited extent that the picture painters' is.

This you have been told hundreds of times and in theory it is accepted everywhere so I need not say much about it – Chiefly this that it is not an excuse for want of observation of nature ~~of~~ or laziness of drawing as some people seem to think.

On the contrary unless you know plenty about the natural form you are conventionalizing you will not only feel it impossible to give people a satisfactory impression of what is in your own mind about it, but you will also be so hampered by your ignorance that you will not be able to make your conventionalized form ornamental. It will not fill a space properly or look crisp & sharp or fulfil any purpose you may strive to put it to."

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Now as to what we should aim at in design I said that Morris thought that the only way to approach design was through a thorough knowledge ~~of the~~ and appreciation of the materials you were working with and from these extracts I have been reading you will see how he insists on it.

Now this contains the whole gospel of modern design so I want to try and explain clearly what is meant by it. It is this that whatever you happen to be designing you should try & use the material in such a way as to get the utmost amount of beauty out of it. For instance suppose you are drawing marble jambs for a fireplace – what one generally sees done is the marble moulded with wretched little ogees and fillets and quarter rounds, which quite contradict the material. Now seeing the material is

very beautiful in itself the way to show its beauty is by using it either in flat slips or with a simple waved moulding with no lines in it at all.

Let the material tell its own tale.

Take another example, – suppose you have a piece of furniture to design. Morris would have said dont pretend to make it an imitation of French, or Scotch, or Jacobean, or any thing else but ask yourself what is the thing for, – make it the most convenient shape then use the most beautiful wood you can get hold of and use it in such a way as to show its utmost beauty of grain & texture.

Now I hope I have made this clear that we ~~can give a thing~~ should try to get rid of the idea that we can make a thing French, by giving it a twist one way, or English by giving it a twist another way.

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Go at design from the point of view of the material – make marble look like marble, oak like oak, glass like glass, copper like copper. I should like to say a great deal more on this theme, but we must be getting on.

Our next point is to glance at Morris as one of the prime movers of the Society for the protection of ancient buildings popularly known as the "Antiscrape". This society was formed to try & stay the hand of the so-called restorer. I hope you all agree with me that it is quite impossible to ~~stay the tide~~ restore an old Gothic building. You can *mend it*. you can keep it in repair and prevent it from falling down but to restore it is and always will be absolutely impossible. The life & traditions that gave it being are gone and can never return, – you might as well try to re-galvanize a dead horse.

It is most desireable [sic] that all we who are connected with Architecture should have our minds very clearly made up on this subject, so listen to what Morris has to say about it. In a lecture called the lesser arts he is talking about English art, – the art of quiet old pastoral England & says. "Its best too and that was in its very heart was given as freely to the humble village church as to the lords palace, or the mighty Cathedral, never coarse though often rude enough, sweet and natural and unaffected, an art of peasants rather than of Merchant Princes and of courtiers, it must be a hard heart, I think, that does not love it. Whether a man has been born among it like ourselves or has come wonderingly on its simplicity from all the grandeur over seas;

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- - - such was the English art whose history is in a sense at your doors, grown scarce indeed and growing scarcer year by year not only through greedy destruction of which there is certainly less than there used to be, but also through the attack of another foe

called now a days restoration.[59] I must not make a long story about this but also I cannot quite pass it over since I have pressed on you the study of those ancient monuments. Thus the matter stands:

– These old Buildings have been altered and added to century after century often beautifully always historically, their very value, a great part of it, lay in that. They have suffered almost always from neglect also, often from violence (that latter a piece of history often far from uninteresting) but ordinary obvious mending would nearly always have kept them standing,– pieces of nature and of history. But of late years a great rising of ecclesiastical zeal, coinciding with a great increase in study and consequently of knowledge of mediaeval architecture has driven people into spending their money on these buildings not merely with the purpose of repairing them and keeping them safe, clean and wind & watertight, but also of restoring them to some ideal state of perfection; sweeping away if possible all signs of what had befallen them at least since the reformation and often since dates much earlier. This has often been done with much disregard for art and entirely from ecclesiastical zeal; but oftener it has been well meant enough as regards art - - - - - - but from my point of view this restoration must be as impossible to bring about as the

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attempt at it is destructive to the buildings so dealt with" - - - - and again in another place he says - - - "That ancient buildings being both works of art and monuments of history must obviously be treated with great delicacy & care; that the imitative art of today is not & cannot be the same as ancient art and cannot replace it; and that therefore if we superimpose this work on the old we destroy it both as art and as a record of history; lastly that the natural weathering of the surface of a building is beautiful and its loss disastrous."

Now the restorers hold the exact contrary of this; they think that any clever architect of to day can deal off hand successfully with the ancient work; that while all things else have changed about us say from the thirteenth Century, art has not changed and that our workmen can turn out work identical with that of the 13th C; and lastly that the weather beaten surface of a building is worthless and to be got rid of wherever possible."

Now this Society for the protection of ancient buildings has sometimes got itself into a mess by always flying to the conclusion that damage was to be done and that the sole object of the architect employed was to make a big job for himself. On the whole however their influence has been for good and they must have prevented an enormous amount of ~~damage~~ destruction.

Take the instance of the West Front of Peterborough. I do not know if you have

been following the controversy that has been raging this last few months. Had Morris been alive he would have been in the thick of it. Now the point about the S.P.A.B in a case like this is that they set every one by the ears and thereby succeed in causing delay, so that the affair gets

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thoroughly threshed out and the least possible amount is done. That is the great thing; – to do as little as possible.

Such then is the S.P.A.B the establishment of which Morris regarded as one of his best achievements.

Now let us turn for a few moments to the last of his undertakings; that is the establishment of the now famous printing press called The Kelmscott press. Morris had long been an admirer of beautiful books, and gradually got together an extraordinarily rich collection of both mediaeval M.S.S. and early printed books and these afforded him an abundant choice of the best models. It was not till 1888 that he began to seriously turn his attention to the subject of modern printing.

His own early books are really fair examples of the printing of commerce. Now printing as you know is one of the most important trades of Edinburgh and has been for generations and if you are reading a book and it strikes you that it is good type & well printed and you turn to the end you are pretty sure to find it was printed in Edinburgh.

About this time (88 that is) the idea took hold of Morris that it would be a nice thing to print a few books he was fond of in the way they ought, as he thought, to be turned out. So he started and went into every detail of the art with the same terrific energy and care for detail that has marked everything he has ever done.

He studied type, he studied ink, he studied paper, applying himself specially to the type produced by a 15th century Venetian printer called Jenson and by the end of 1890 he produced a fount of type

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that satisfied him, with that he printed one of his Romances called "The story of the glittering plain."

Now this shows again what can be done from very small beginnings. At this time 1890 the whole staff of the Kelmscott press consisted of one man and a very small boy & was housed in a tiny cottage, but by the end of 92 The Kelmscott Press had risen to the dignity of a printed list of books and before Morris death 30 to 40 different volumes had been published, the most sumptuous being the folio edition of Chaucer with 80 designs by Burne Jones & acknowledged to be the most beautiful book ever

published in an English press.

I have one or two small books here from which you will see what his ideas were on the arrangement of the printing on the page.

Now I know what you will object to in these books. They are book collectors books; – the kind of books most people cannot afford to buy. That is quite true but the point I want to bring out is this, that the influence of these books has done a great deal already.

The printing & get up of books generally has improved immensely in the last 7 or 8 years. And this improvement is mainly due to the influence exerted by the Morris books. He showed the public what printing might be and made the public dissatisfied with the meagre paper and the printing they were in the habit of getting; the result being that such firms as R&R Clarke and Constables have risen to the occasion and have within the last few years been producing splendid work, and have in many cases adopted the exact arrangement on the page that Morris advocated.

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A few words more and I have done. I said at the beginning that I did not propose to talk of Morris either as a Socialist or as a poet but I should like to say a word about each.

I dont profess to have grasped the whole meaning of socialism – I dont suppose anybody has, but I think we can all be agreed so far; – That if you grind a man down to the last penny, and turn him into a machine that just produces a small piece of an article, that the result so produced can never by any chance be art.

This is what the modern competition for cheapness not for excellence has done – it has killed the craftsman's pleasure in his work; and what Morris was always saying was if you expect a man to produce artistic work you must give him a wage on which he can live and time to enjoy the piece of work he is turning out.

Then about the Poetry – one thing that strikes me is that Morris, like all the other big men of his time, had a very eager love for his country, for England, for the simple life and occupations of the country, for the pageant of the changing seasons. In later life he discovered and had as his home a little old Oxfordshire Manor house. These are a couple of distant photos of it. It is small wonder that he loved it; – a more perfect retreat could not be imagined. It is one of the few corners of the real England left unspoiled.

Now one other word.

We all know how things have improved in

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the last 20 years or so; and that people who can take pleasure in the things they have about them and must use in their daily life, can now get beautiful things. The percentage of good work that it produced is still very small, but still those people who care to take trouble can get good things. Well the reason I thought it a good plan to talk to you about Morris was that he was the pioneer;– the brave man who found all the arts sick unto death and yet was not discouraged but resolutely set to work to set things moving again, and it takes a big man to do this. It is comparatively easy to carry on work that has been put on the rails by somebody else, but the men we all owe a rich debt of gratitude to, are the pioneers, – the men like William Morris.

NOTES

1. Contemporary reports in *The Building News* reveal that the EAS existed from January 1896 until November 1901, when it merged with the Edinburgh Architectural Association (EAA).
2. Robert Lorimer to Robin Dods, 22 December 1896, Sir Robert Lorimer Papers, Coll-27, University of Edinburgh Main Library, MS.2484.1. (Afterwards Lorimer Papers). Lorimer's letters were often written while travelling and the punctuation and spelling are erratic.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Lorimer Papers, 15 June 1896, MS.2484.1. For Detmar Blow, see Michael Drury, *Wandering Architects: In Pursuit of an Arts and Crafts Ideal*, 2nd edn (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2016).
6. Lorimer Papers, 15 December 1897, MS.2484.2. In fact he did give at least one later lecture, as he reported on 30 October 1898 (MS.2484.3) that he had agreed to read a paper in December to the 'A-society in Edinr' on 'Scotch gardens' and could not get out of it.
7. For instance, on 15 December 1897 (Lorimer Papers MS.2484.2), Lorimer wrote that he did not like to hear of Dods making a steady £350 a year as if this were the height of his ambition and hoped his clients would find something better for him than 'these tin & match board shanties', which had presumably featured in a recent letter.
8. For Morris's work in Scotland as lecturer and decorator see Annette Carruthers, 'William Morris and Scotland', *The Decorative Arts Society Journal*, 28 (2004), 8-27.
9. The Art Congress was the second annual meeting of the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry, held at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery/Museum of Antiquities in October/November 1889.
10. Lorimer Papers, MS.2484.2, 11 August 1897; MS.2484.4, 29 October 1899; MS.2484.4, 28 December 1899.
11. John Henry Lorimer sketch, Historic Environment Scotland Archive, Edinburgh.
12. Lorimer Papers, MS.2484; for a list of Lorimer's architectural and woodwork commissions, see Peter Savage, *Lorimer and the Edinburgh Craft Designers* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1980), pp. 171-79. (Afterwards Savage).
13. For example, C. R. Ashbee, Ernest Gimson, Charles Spooner and George Walton.
14. Lorimer Papers, Good Friday 1898, MS.2484.3.
15. Christopher Hussey, *The Work of Sir Robert Lorimer* (London: Country Life, 1931), p. 5, quotes Lorimer's brother on him being 'intensely critical'.
16. Lorimer became a close friend of Christopher Whall and later commissioned work from Douglas Strachan, so his aesthetic values changed.
17. Aymer Vallance published an account of Morris and Co.'s tapestry production, which Lorimer would have seen, in *Studio*, 3 (1894), 99-101.

18. For example: *Observer*, 4 October 1896, p. 5; *Scotsman*, 5 October 1896, p. 7; *The Times*, 5 October 1896, p. 8.
19. Lorimer Papers, 15 June 1896, MS.2484.1, & 29 October 1908, MS.2484.12.
20. I have found no details of Lorimer's political affiliations but his membership of the Reform Club suggests Liberal sympathies.
21. Lorimer lecture, p. 27.
22. I have seen no evidence on the wages Lorimer paid to builders and makers.
23. Lorimer Papers, 29 October 1908, MS.2484.12.
24. Savage, p. 50, said the talk was for the EAA, but it was, in fact, for this little-known society.
25. *The Builder*, 13 March 1897, p. 253; *Edinburgh Evening News*, 4 March 1897, p. 2; *The Scotsman*, 4 March 1897, p. 4.
26. Lorimer had visited Oxfordshire in 1896 and described being charmed by the traditional stone buildings and continued use of local materials, but did not list Kelmscott among the places he saw: Lorimer Papers, 16 August 1896, MS.2484.1.
27. Lorimer Papers, 9 May 1897, MS.2484.2.
28. Savage, p. 14.
29. Lorimer Papers, 9 May 1897, MS.2484.2: the visit was around 20 March.
30. *Ibid*.
31. *Ibid*.
32. William Morris, 'The Beauty of Life', *Hopes and Fears for Art* (London: Ellis & White, 1882), reprinted in *The Collected Works of William Morris,* ed. by May Morris, 24 vols (London: Longmans Green & Company, 1910-1915), XXII, p. 75. (Afterwards *CW*). Lorimer Papers, 29 July 1906, MS.2484.11.
33. Victoria & Albert Museum, Archive of Art & Design, 1/90-1980, Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society 1899 exhibition, cat. 613. (Afterwards V&A AAD, A&CES). I am grateful to Stephen Jackson at National Museums Scotland for this information. The finished embroidery is at NMS, cat. H.SVL 31 A. Dated 1897, it was embroidered by Jeannie Skinner, who executed several of Lorimer's designs.
34. V&A AAD, 1/76-1980, A&CES 1893 exhibition, cat. 200: the poem is misquoted, firstly because the catalogue omitted a line and then presumably because the wording was inappropriate for Lorimer's clients.
35. Hermann Muthesius, *Das englische Haus* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1904-5), English edition (London: Granada 1979), p. 181, fig. 363 & p. 62. (Afterwards Muthesius). Lorimer was in touch with Muthesius, visited him in December 1902, and saw photographs he was collecting for the book: Lorimer Papers, 9 January 1903, MS.2484.8.
36. For Lorimer's discussion of specialising as a domestic architect, see Lorimer Papers, undated pages of 1899-1900, MS.2484.4. William Morris, 'Some Thoughts On the Ornamented MSS of the Middle Ages', c. 1892, *William Morris Archive* [website], available online: <http://morrisarchive.lib.uiowa.edu/items/show/1015> [last accessed 6 June 2022].
37. Muthesius, pp. 61-62.
38. Lorimer Papers, 21 September 1900, MS.2484.5.
39. Quoted in Quinbus Flestrin, 'Interview with William Morris', *Clarion*, 19 November 1892, p. 8.
40. Lorimer Papers, MS.2484.2.
41. Lorimer's early mentor Hew Wardrop had worked for Street and he may have absorbed this view from him.
42. It was 1875.
43. Lorimer himself was particularly keen on the tapestries at the South Kensington Museum and his letters reveal frequent visits there.
44. The Morris glass at Jesus College dates from 1872-76 and the window in St. Giles from 1886.
45. I have been unable to find this in Morris's writings, though it is close to his message in a lecture given

at the Art Workers' Guild on 20 November 1891, 'The Influence of Building Materials on Architecture', published in *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, 25 (January 1892), 1-14. It is definitely the source of the following quote and it may be that Matthew added inverted commas by mistake while transcribing.

46. *Ibid*. Morris's lecture was published again later but Lorimer must have had access to a copy of *Hobby Horse* to quote such extensive passages.
47. From William Morris, *Gothic Architecture* (London: Kelmscott Press, 1893), pp. 1-2; 'especial' is 'epical' in the original.
48. *Ibid.,* pp. 31-33 and 42-44; not quoted complete but all from *Gothic Architecture* to 'there it was painted'.
49. See note 32.
50. Morris, 'The Lesser Arts', *CW*, XXII, p. 5.
51. Morris, 'The Art of the People', *CW*, XXII, p. 42.
52. *Ibid*., p. 28.
53. Morris, 'The Lesser Arts', *CW*, XXII, p. 7.
54. *Ibid*., pp. 15–16.
55. Morris, 'The Beauty of Life', *CW*, XXII, pp. 74-75.
56. *Ibid*., p. 76.
57. Morris, 'Making the Best of It', *CW*, XXII, p. 106.
58. Morris, 'The Lesser Arts', *CW*, XII, p. 18.
59. *Ibid*., p. 19.

Beautiful and Useful: Arts and Crafts' Memorials of the Great War

Carolyn Malone

'The very notion that we may suffer as in the past from the multiplication of ugly and trivial memorials upon which money has been uselessly thrown away', the Lord Mayor of London said, 'fills us with shame and alarm'.[1] He made this comment at the inaugural meeting of the newly-formed Civic Arts Association (CAA) in January 1916 – the embodiment of William Morris's dream to make beautiful and useful art available to all. W. R. Lethaby, E. P. Warren, Emery Walker, Selwyn Image, Ernest Gimson and May Morris occupied prominent positions in this group.[2] The Art Workers' Guild and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society also joined forces with the Royal Academy of Art to form the Royal Academy War Memorials Committee (RAWMC) in July 1918.[3]

Through meetings, exhibitions and publications, these organisations sought to establish themselves as the experts who would guide the nation so that it would erect beautiful and useful memorials.[4] To that end, they urged communities to hire an architect, designer and/or craftsman to create a custom object that would express their feelings of sorrow, loss, gratitude and pride. They envisioned that artistic memorials could come in many forms, including stone or bronze memorials, stained glass windows, tapestries, church fittings or furnishings and rolls of honour. Whatever its form, they insisted that a commemorative object should be a simple, well-made, handcrafted object that would harmonise with its surroundings.[5]

The CAA and RAWMC, as well as the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, offered to assist the public with the selection of an artist or a design for their memorial. Additionally, W. R. Lethaby and other members of the Arts and Crafts movement promoted the construction of useful memorials, such as homes for veterans, village halls and other civic amenities to pay tribute to the dead and enhance the quality of life for the living. Members of the broader artistic community expressed support for

their approach to commemoration.[6] For example, the author of 'Beauty and Utility', published in *The Architects Journal* in 1921, praised their promotion of 'fundamental art, not freak art' in line with the artistic principles of 'Ruskin, Morris, Walter Crane'.[7] He urged them to learn from their past mistake of trying to impose art on the people and work so that the people would 'see it with their own eyes that art was a thing to be desired for itself'.[8]

This was a big undertaking that had limited success. The cost of a memorial was a key factor in the decision-making process and many communities turned to their local masons or ordered mass-produced memorials from commercial firms. However, some of them commissioned prominent Arts and Crafts figures to design and craft their artisanal memorials. In this article, I examine a sampling of those war memorials: crosses, rolls of honour, war shrines, church fixtures, stained glass windows, tapestries and memorial buildings. During this activity, I argue, members of the movement put the arts and crafts ethos into practice, and the creation of beautiful and useful memorials represents an important, but largely overlooked, episode in its history.[9]

Crosses were a very popular form of memorial and a number of prominent arts and crafts' figures designed them. Art Workers' Guild member Reginald Blomfield designed what became perhaps the most famous cross, the Cross of Sacrifice, that was erected in war cemeteries in Europe. 'What I wanted to do in designing this cross,' he wrote in his *Memoirs*, 'was to make it as abstract and impersonal as I could, to free it from association with any particular style, and, above all, to keep clear of any of the sentimentalities of Gothic. This was a man's war too terrible for any fripperies, and I hoped to get within range of the infinite in this symbol of the ideals of those who had gone out to die.'[10] Displayed at the 1919 War Memorials Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art, it struck a chord with many people. He created variations on his design for a number of places across the nation, including Rye, Haileybury College, his former public school, and Highgate School.[11]

E. P. Warren and Lethaby, who had been significant participants in the national discussion of war memorials, put their ideas into practice in a number of commissioned crosses. In addition to his work for Epping, Warren designed Celtic crosses erected in Cornwall, including in Newlyn and Hayle. The Newlyn memorial featured a cross atop a plinth with three notable features: a crest, L. S. Merriwether's sculptured relief of soldiers and sailors marching and carrying flags and various war materials, and a list of the names of the seventy-five men who perished in the war.[12] It was erected outside of the Fisherman's Mission that he had designed in 1911. Lethaby's cross for Eversley in Hampshire represented a very different take on this familiar form (Figure 1). The reporter who covered the unveiling ceremony wrote

that '[t]he design is original – we have seen nothing like it elsewhere – and its keynote is simplicity. It is an object which will arrest the notice of all who pass by and should deepen their thoughts as to what it signifies.'[13] Situated in the churchyard of St. Mary's (Church of England), the memorial consisted of a Portland stone inscribed with the names of the fallen in front of a wooden cross. The latter was made by the village wheelwright, Augustus Gibbs, out of seasoned oak from a local timber yard owned by a villager.

Annette Carruthers, Mary Greensted and Barley Roscoe have written that, because of their reputations and knowledge of tradition, Arts and Crafts architects were commissioned to make numerous memorials in Gloucestershire.[14] They drew inspiration from medieval village and church monuments for their designs.[15] Examples of Sidney Barnsley's work are found in Poulton and Minchinhampton while numerous villages, including Broadway, Painswick, Snowhill and Winchcombe, turned to F. L. Griggs for their memorial crosses. After some controversy, his hooded cross was erected in his home town of Chipping Campden (Figure 2).[16] Interestingly, it was modelled upon his 1919 print, entitled *Epiphany*.[17] Ernest Gimson's cross within a lantern for Fairford was his last work completed before his death in 1919 (Figure 3). With its cross-shaped tree and foliage (oak leaves) referencing the Tree of Life, it was reminiscent of his 1902 design for a gravestone for Frederick Vinton.[18]

C. F. Voysey's memorial for Malvern Wells in Worcestershire, a pelican feeding its young, was an unusual representation of sacrifice (Figure 4). The local vicar favored a stone cross in the churchyard with the names of the men inscribed upon it. However, at a meeting in November 1919, a member of the war memorial committee reported that he had communicated with Voysey who expressed his belief that a cross was not the best form of memorial. Instead, Voysey submitted a design of a gilt-bronze pelican feeding her young with her blood.[19] In mythology the pelican is said to revive her dead chicks by the sacrifice of her own blood while in Christian art it is a symbol of Christ. After considerable discussion, his unusual design was approved by the community. The people of Malvern Wells certainly did have a distinctive memorial with its carved stone pelican and nest of her young perched on a capital with leaf carvings atop a tall octagonal column. The inscription, '1914-1918 In thankfulness to God for victory, and in honour of devotion, self-sacrifice, and glorious achievement', also reinforced the theme of sacrifice.

Rolls of honour appeared in many public spaces associated with the fallen, such as schools, workplaces and churches. Graily Hewitt was arguably the leading figure in this form of commemoration and the *Memorial Roll of the Royal Army Medical Corps* (1924), known as the 'Golden Book', housed in Westminster Abbey, is his most well-known work.[20] In his introduction to this work, Hewitt explained his method of

Figure 1: W. R. Lethaby, Eversley war memorial (1920). Photograph by Lewis Hulbert (2013), via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0.

decoration as 'the outcome of twenty years of endeavor towards a "style" of illumination, which with the utmost reverence and observance of the technical requirements of books shall associate a vitality as of a living craft'.[21] He sought to blend the past and present in a number of ways. The names of the fallen were written in the Italian style of the fifteenth century because, he maintained, this form of lettering was very legible. He also borrowed the double upright bar of gold and colour from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries to help anchor what he called his tree-growths. They were composed of English trees or shrubs to which were added 'a delicate filigree of the humbler forms of flower and creeper' as well as 'birds, butterflies, squirrels etc.'.[22] These elements were combined in different ways throughout the volume in order to provide some variation within the uniform structure. Additionally, Hewitt marked the beginning of each letter of the alphabet with a sentence from the Parable of the Good Samaritan framed with filigree. He made this choice because St. Luke was the patron saint of the medical profession and the parable reflected the ideal of the Medical Corps. Hewitt received much acclaim for this work. In 1924, this work was temporarily displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the museum's Director, Cecil H. Smith, said that 'it may be regarded as an outstanding example of modern illumination and calligraphy'.[23] In 1930, the author of an article on the memorials for the Royal Army Medical Corps wrote that Hewitt 'has produced for us a book which is considered to be the finest piece of work of this kind in existence'.[24]

George Jack crafted numerous memorials in and around churches, including war shrines and screens. In 1918 he published a pamphlet on war shrines for the CAA. He was a keen advocate of this 'humble' form of commemoration, as he called it, because '[a]s the vast majority of the names enrolled must belong to men of humble position, it is appropriate to make the record of it as unpretentious as possible'.[25] If made with the simplest materials and workmanship, he wrote, war shrines would be impressive records of the war because of their sincerity. Jack wrote about the ways in which stone, pottery and wood could be combined for beautiful roadside or church shrines and included sketches for eight potential memorials. For example, he described design number 3 as follows: '[t]his shows a slightly more elaborate form, with a little carving on the cornice and an arched form in the panels. These panels can be either glazed for paper, or unglazed with painted panels. The panels, if painted, will in this case look well if painted white with black letters.'[26] He positioned two shelves for flowers at the bottom of this structure.

His memorial for a moorland road, design number 7, was made of 'roughly dressed' local stone with the inscription cut into the stone and exhibited the unpolished look that he recommended for stone work. He put his ideas into practice in his

Figure 2: F. L. Griggs, Chipping Campden war memorial (1921). Photograph by Kenneth Allen (2009), via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0.
Figure 3 (opposite, left): Ernest Gimson, Fairford war memorial (1919). © Alison Hobson (War Memorials Register-20870).
Figure 4 (opposite, right): Charles Voysey, Malvern Wells war memorial (1919). Photograph by Bob Embleton (2005), via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0.

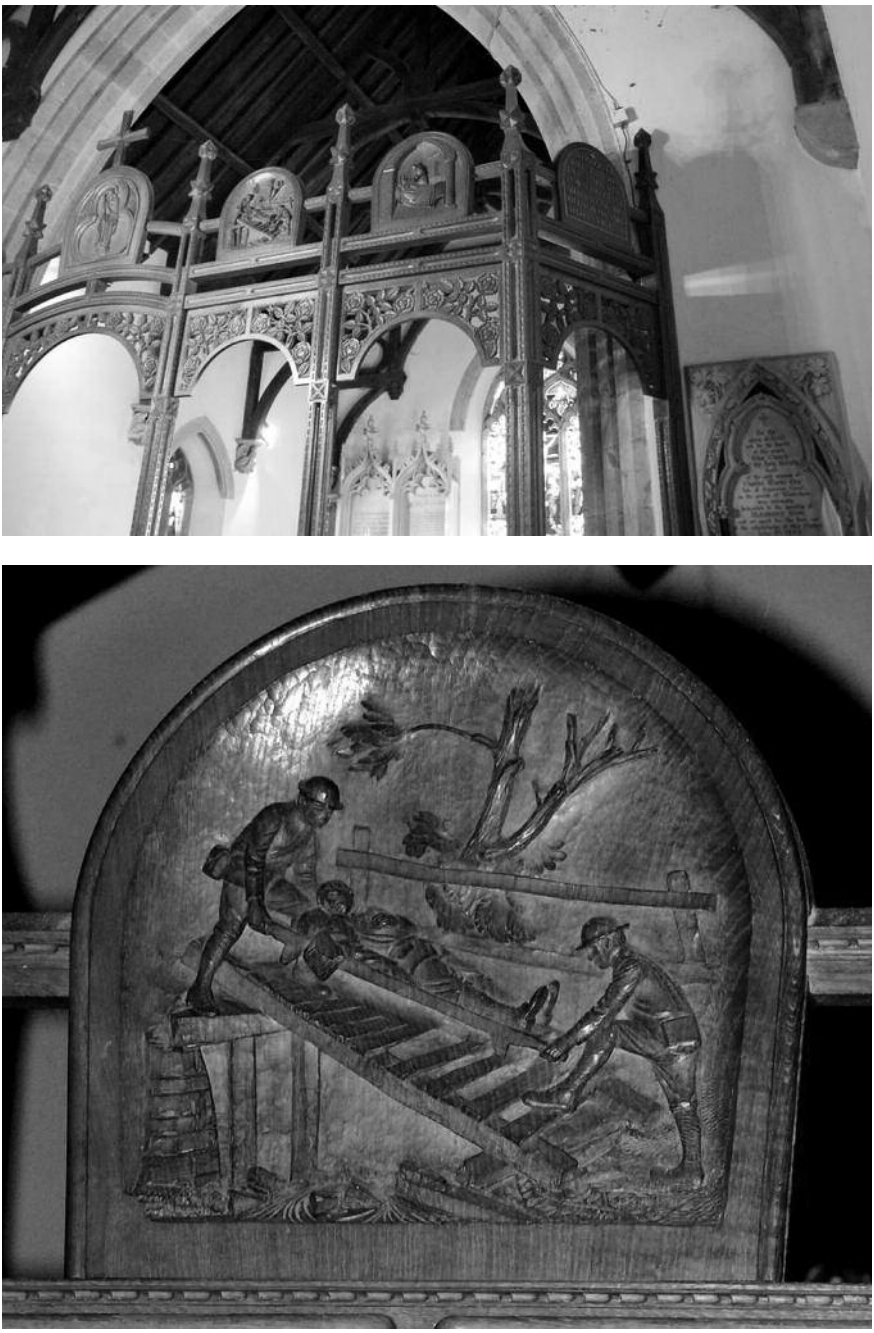
Wayside Shrine for St. George's Church, Trotton, West Sussex (1920) (Figures 5 and 6). Situated at the end of the church wall near the intersection with the road, it blended in beautifully with its environment. The centerpiece of the shrine was a stone relief of the Crucifixion and stone tablet with the inscription 'TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD and the memory of Trotton men who died in the war 1914-1918/ (Names)/ Say as ye tred the path your fathers trod these saved us the noblest gift of God'.[27] The stone enclosure and a pitched tile roof completed the design. Other church memorials involved his area of specialisation – woodworking.[28] Jack displayed his considerable woodcarving skills in his screen for Holy Trinity Church, Crockham Hill, Surrey (1920) (Figures 7 and 8). This oak screen was made up of five bays and two angled side bays with five carved relief panels at the top of the screen and two side panels with inscriptions.[29] The centre panel of Christ carrying a palm leaf was flanked by four war scenes. The trench scene included sandbags and soldiers preparing to go over the top with tree trunks suggesting the blighted landscape of the battlefield. Tree trunks also appeared in the background of his vignette of stretcher bearers carrying a wounded soldier. Such scenes would have been common ones at the front.

Stained glass was an important art form in the pre-war movement. In 1919, Cecil

Figures 5 and 6: George Jack, War Memorial Shrine, St. George's Church, Trotton (1920). © Richard Maddox (War Memorials Register-16652).

H. Smith spoke about stained glass and said that 'we are fortunate in having an excellent body of accomplished artists, and stained glass might be used to provide a monument equally appropriate for a group or an individual'.[30] As Peter Cormack has written, commemorative work provided a significant boost to glass workers after the war.[31] This was certainly the case for Christopher Whall, whose memorial windows were installed in more than fifty churches across England and further afield.[32] In 1916, for example, Whall completed his Mothers' Window for the Chapel at Denstone College in Staffordshire (Figure 9). This public school memorial is notable because it was a tribute to the mothers who had lost sons. It was positioned in the Chapel so that each time the young men opened the door they would see it. The window featured the Virgin Mary in the central light surrounded by children, including one in khaki, whom she is leading to follow her Son's example. Her dead Son is depicted 'on the field of battle – the battlefield of the Cross', and tended by angels in the left light. In the right light Jesus 'rides as the victorious soldier' with glimpses of the multitudes who follow Him. Around His helmet, the crown of thorns has become a crown of blossoms. Two angels in a rose window hold a crown, symbolising the reward for the mother's sacrifice, and a scroll that describes her as blessed among women. Finally, beams of light in each of the windows provided a sense of unity to the entire design. In November of 1916, the school magazine, *The Denstonian*, included an article on the newly-installed window. The author highlighted the fact that Whall completed the 'work with his own hands, for he [Whall] said the subject was too beautiful to be entrusted to any of his workmen'.[33] He praised Whall's 'glorious' and 'daring' colouring, writing that the artist 'has so deftly used even bright purples, crimsons, and greens, that they fall into place without a suspicion of offence'.[34] He further remarked upon the poignancy of the subject matter. Mary 'bereaved of her only Son, like so many mothers to day – walks on bright flowers, emblematical of the joys which are the lot of mothers; but there are also sharp thorns, for sorrows and anxieties also fall to every mother'.[35]

Morris & Co. windows were also installed in numerous locales across the nation.[36] For example, Henry Dearle designed his War, Victory and Peace windows for St. Bartholomew's Church in Wimslow, Cheshire in 1920. In the Peace window the figure of Christ appeared in the centre light. On the left Dearle depicted soldiers returning from war offering thanks to Christ. The right light was filled with various symbolic figures: a mother and child for 'Regeneration', a figure with an open book for 'Education', a figure with square and compasses for 'Reconstruction', a figure with the fruit and corn for 'Plenty', and children in the foreground for 'New Life'. Words from Revelation verse 14:13, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord', were inscribed below the lights. Lesley Baker argues that this window illustrates the moment when



Figures 7 and 8: George Jack, Wooden Screen, Holy Trinity Church, Crockham Hill (1920) © Les Featherstone (War Memorials Register-54509).

Dearle moved out of the shadow of Edward Burne-Jones and created a new iconography for a world facing the catastrophe of the Great War. The Peace window exhibited features that became typical of his designs for memorial windows – stolid, quiet figures, a bare, rather hilly landscape in the background and a profusion of wild flowers in the foreground. The attitude of the figures, Baker notes, was meant to 'communicate a consoling serenity'.[37] I would add that the ideals for a better post-war world represented in the window were shared by many Arts and Crafts' figures.

Members of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) foresaw that commemorative objects would appear in and around ancient buildings, including churches.[38] They were intent on ensuring that the memorial movement did not undermine the integrity of ancient buildings or undercut the restoration of such structures. Emphasising their forty years of activity and expertise, the group offered to examine and provide advice about any proposed alteration to ancient buildings as commemorative projects. The SPAB's annual reports illustrate that it took an active interest in the restoration of buildings as war memorials, such as the Old Town Hall in the town of Faringdon in Oxfordshire. The initial proposal was to demolish the unused and 'unsightly' Town Hall in order to make room for a war memorial. It met with significant opposition from members of the community and the Mayor did not grant permission for the proposed demolition.

In February 1919, the village decided that they would restore the Town Hall to its original form and add memorial tablets. Mr. Lockwood, the Chairman of the War Memorial Committee, expressed his opinion 'that the renovation and alteration of the building to its original structure was the best war memorial that could be obtained as it would be a memorial of Peace as well as War'.[39] The committee consulted with SPAB member and architect William Weir who submitted a plan for the proposed restoration at an estimated cost of £375.[40] An appeal for subscriptions for the project was sent out, money was collected and the project was started. The unveiling and dedication took place on 6 February 1921. The hall was restored with the addition of five oak panels. The inscription at the top of the panels read 'To Our Glorious Dead 1914-1919' followed by the names of the eighty-seven men who died in the war from the parishes of Faringdon, Little Coxwell, Littleworth and Thrupp. This project was lauded by members of the society, such as Miss Lena Ashwell, a famous actor and theatre manager. In her address at the society's 1921 general meeting, she described it as a 'particularly beautiful example' of how the past and present might be linked in a memorial project. As a tribute to the men of the village, Ashwell added, 'their memorial was a part of the building, carrying on a tradition of the building with its beauty, its usefulness, truth and goodness'.[41] Additionally, the author of the short notice on the hall in the SPAB's annual report drew the members' attention to

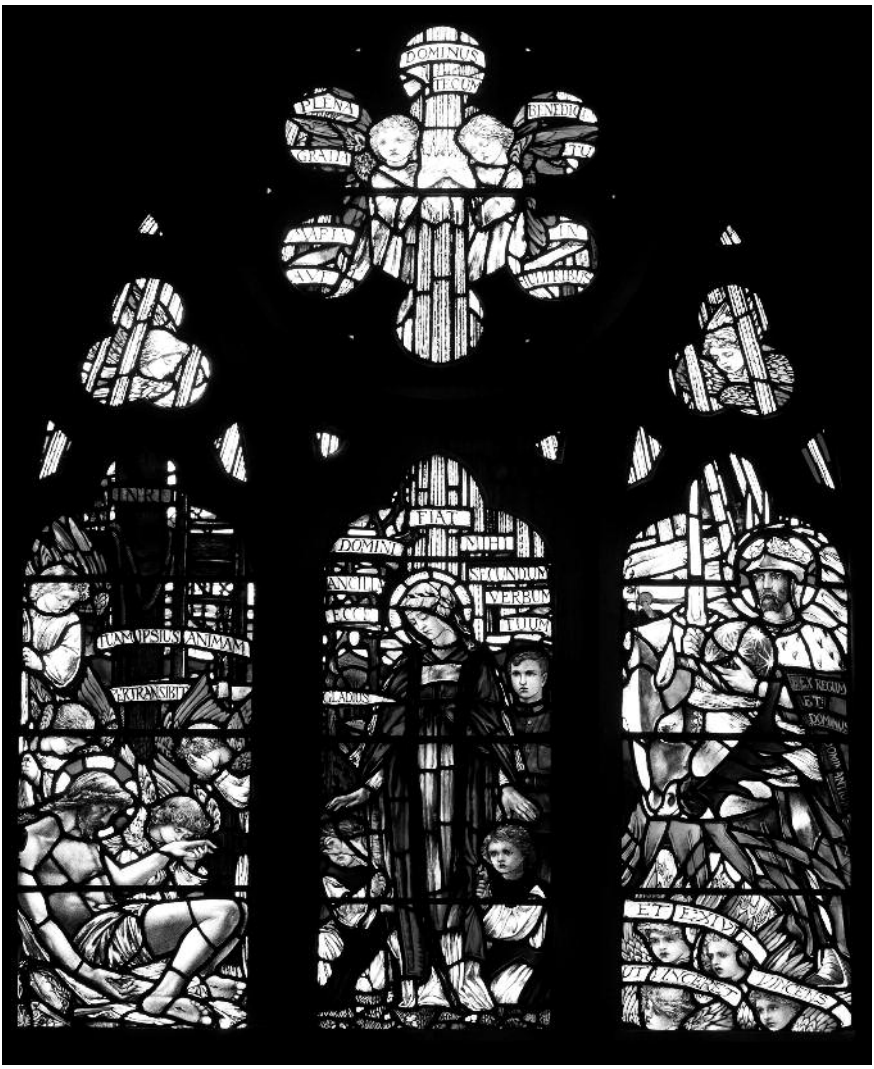


Figure 9: Christopher Whall, Mothers' Window, Denstone College (1916). Photograph by Andrew Loutit, via Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0.

the 'skilful way in which a War Memorial has been added between two columns'.[42] Pictures of the structure before and after renovation were also included with these glowing reviews.

The renovation of, or additions to, buildings figured prominently in the spate of commemorative activity at public schools across the country. C. F. Kernot's 1927 survey of public-school memorials reveals that it was typical for a school to erect

multiple memorials. This followed debates about the form of the memorial. Sarah Wearne has noted that there was often a difference of opinion about whether a school should erect an artistic or utilitarian memorial, with young masters and current students favouring the latter course of action.[43] They chose both artistic memorials, such as rolls of honour, mural tablets, stone crosses, stained glass windows and useful memorials including Chapel or Cloister additions, memorial buildings, playing fields, pavilions and libraries. These institutions had the funds for significant memorials. In some instances, members of the Arts and Crafts movement worked with schools with whom they had a personal or professional connection. Tonbridge School commissioned Henry Wilson, silversmith and jeweller, to design a monumental Gate of Remembrance leading from the Ante-Chapel into the Chapel. Two of his nephews attended this school. Bedales school turned to Ernest Gimson, who had designed their Assembly Hall in 1910, to plan their memorial buildings. He completed designs for a complex of buildings before his death in 1919 but only one of them was built. Sidney H. Barnsley supervised the construction of a magnificent Memorial Library for the school. Drawings and pictures of the library were included in a volume published as a tribute to Gimson. The description of the library highlighted that '[t]he materials are local-made bricks for the walls, hand-made tiles for the roof and English oak for all timber & joinery. The casement and other wrought ironwork, were made by S. Mustoe, one of the smiths formerly employed at Sapperton.'[44] From the use of local materials and to the fine handicraft work, evident in every component of the library, this memorial building was the embodiment of the craft ideal.

Morris and Co. completed a set of war memorial tapestries for Eton College.[45] This was a distinctive commission because they were the only commemorative tapestries made by the company. The Eton College War Memorial Committee had sanctioned £10,800 for the embellishment of the Lower Chapel.[46] In 1923 Messrs. Tapper and Reynolds installed Renaissance-style panelling on the north and south walls and treated the pews and organ-case to bring them into harmony with this panelling. The style of the panelling shaped the Renaissance style of the memorial tapestries. Designed by Lady Chilston, they were woven at Merton Abbey under the supervision of Henry Marillier and Henry Dearle. The former noted that the Renaissance character of the work, with 'an infinity of delicate tints and details' necessitated 'an extra fine pitch' which the weavers were not accustomed to.[47] Consequently, the labour involved in the creation of these tapestries was considerable; the project began in 1922 and was completed in 1928.

The four tapestries portrayed the life of St. George 'as typifying the fallen Etonian'.[48] As such, they were complex and complicated designs. In the first tapestry, St. George is seen learning, being given his sword and then going off into the world

Figure 10: Morris and Co., *Legend of St. George Tapestry: 'St. George Leaves Home'*, woven tapestry (1924). Reproduced by permission of the Provost and Fellows of Eton College (Object number: FDA-A.97:1-2010).

(Figure 10). There are a number of buildings in the background, including Eton. The translation of the Latin inscription above the tapestry reads: 'From boyhood to tender years he ever shewed a lofty mind and promise of greater distinction', while an inscription over an arch on the left reads: 'be sure to remember when you are grown up'.[49] In the second tapestry he is shown leaving home, defeating the dragon and baptising the heathen. The translation that accompanied this tapestry is 'Indomitable and eager to take his part wherever hope and indignation call him, and never to shrink from imbruing his sword'.[50] A kneeling woman, representing Belgium, appears in this tapestry, while angels carry the arms of Generals Plumer, Rawlinson, Byng and Cavan. In the third tapestry St. George is brought before Diocletian, is martyred and presented to God by St. Stephen and St. Michael. A number of other saints are depicted in the scene while the four corners are filled with the arms of four Etonian generals who had died, Roberts, Maude, Thesiger and Fitton. 'Merit opening heaven to those who have not deserved to die' is the inscription for this tapestry.[51] In the last tapestry St. George stands on the cliffs of England alongside a number of saints. Scenes on the right and left show him aiding Demetrius and the Crusaders at Antioch and saving Richard the Lionhearted from being shipwrecked. The arms of the Provost, Vice Provost, Head Master and Lower Master of Eton are found in the corners of the tapestry. The inscription reads: 'This is the people which alone received the conquered to its bosom and as mother not as mistress gave humanity a name to

share, as members of its Commonwealth'.[52] In both images and words, the tapestries were meant to record the valour and sacrifice of the 1157 Etonians who fell during the war.

Memorialisation of the war dead provided people with the opportunity to express their grief and process their sense of loss; it also shaped their ideas about this war and its meaning. Artists had the opportunity to apply their artistic principles to the creation of these important public art works. Members of the Arts and Crafts movement believed that the decorative arts, known as the 'lesser arts' before the war, were eminently suitable for memorials. Each of the examples that I have written about were, in their different ways, eloquent and thoughtful tributes to the fallen. There was great beauty and meaning in the little natural details, such as the foliage in Hewitt's roll of honour or Dearle's field of flowers. Jack used simple, but quality, materials for his humble war shrine. In each instance, they placed a premium on craftsmanship when they made these handicraft, custom-made commemorative objects. In so doing, these memorials embody the movement's long-standing artistic ideals. They also came with a substantial price tag. Whall's window at Denstone College cost over £200, Hewitt's roll of honour almost £2,500, Morris and Co.'s tapestries almost £6,700 and the Bedales library nearly £11,000. They renewed their efforts to educate the public about the value of artisanal memorials with the hope of receiving commissions from a wide audience. In the end, they primarily reached wealthier patrons while many communities turned to their local stone masons or companies that mass produced memorials. This outcome, too, represents continuity with the pre-war movement.

NOTES

1. 'War Memorials: Opportunity for English Craftsmen', *Manchester Guardian*, 29 January 1916.
2. This information was drawn from the list included in Arthur Clutton-Brock, *On War Memorials* (London: Civic Arts Association, 1916).
3. Arts and Crafts figures baulked at the Royal Academy of Art's emphasis on the 'higher arts' of painting and sculpture and the designation of their craft work as the 'lesser arts'. The Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society was formed in reaction to this stance and its exhibitions became an important way for its members to display their works to the public. For more on this subject, see Peter Stansky, *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 171-261.
4. For an in-depth discussion of these developments, see Carolyn Malone, 'The Art of Remembrance: The Arts and Crafts Movement and the Commemoration of the British War Dead, 1916-1920', *Contemporary British History*, 26: 1 (March 2012), 1-23.
5. The CAA and RAWMC, as well as the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, offered to assist the public with the selection of an artist or a design for their memorial.
6. For a more extensive discussion of this development, see Carolyn Malone, '"We do not want our war memorials turned out by the thousand, like 75 mm. shells": The Arts and Crafts Movement, Print Culture, and World War I Commemoration in Britain', *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 9: 2 (2018),

265-283.

7. 'Beauty and Utility', *The Architects' Journal*, LIII (23 March 1921), p. 34.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Most of the scholarship has focused upon the heyday of the movement during the period of the 1880s through 1914. There is some discussion of war memorials in biographies such as Annette Carruthers, Mary Greensted & Barley Roscoe, *Ernest Gimson: Arts & Crafts Designer and Architect* (New Haven: Yale University Press). (Afterwards Carruthers, Greensted and Roscoe). See also Cyndy Manton, *Henry Wilson: Practical Idealist* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2009). Peter Cormack devoted a chapter to stained glass memorial windows in *Arts & Crafts Stained Glass* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015). (Afterwards Cormack, *Arts & Crafts Stained Glass*). There have been few references to the CAA and RAWMC in the scholarship on commemoration. See, for example, Bob Bushaway, 'Name Upon Name: The Great War and Remembrance', in *Myths of the English*, ed. by Roy Porter (Oxford: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 136-67; James Fox, *British Art and the First World War, 1914-1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) and Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (New York: Berg, 1998).
10. Sir Reginald Blomfield, *Memoirs of an Architect* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1932), p. 181.
11. For information about Blomfield's public school memorials, see C. F. Kernot, *British Public Schools War Memorials* (London: Roberts & Newton Limited, 1927), pp. 149-50, 236-37.
12. See British Listed Buildings online [website], available online: <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101449444-newlyn-war-memorial-penzance#.Yn5DmOjMJPY> [last accessed 13 May 2022].
13. 'Eversley & Bramhill: Unveiling of War Memorial', *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 23 October 1920.
14. Carruthers, Greensted and Roscoe, p. 186.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Judith Ellis, 'Campden War Memorials' [n.d.], Chipping Camden History Society [website], available online: <https://www.chippingcampdenhistory.org.uk/content/history/campden_in_wartime/campden-war-memorials> [last accessed 13 August 2022].
17. The Wilson Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, catalogue available online: <https://agmlib.cheltenham.gov.uk/Details/collect/10826> [last accessed 13 May 2022].
18. Carruthers, Greensted and Roscoe, p. 86.
19. This information was drawn from an unidentified newspaper cutting, dated 8 November 1919, found in the War Memorials Register (WMR), Imperial War Museum Website, file #32991.
20. Hewitt displayed a number of rolls of honour at the Royal Academy War Memorials Committee Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1919, including his work for the Garrick Club and The Inner Temple. He also created them for Winchester College and Eton College. The volume for the latter, known as 'Libro d'oro' because of the gold used for the names of the fallen Etonians, was displayed in the school's chapel.
21. Booklet of photographic reproduction of the 'Memorial Roll ("Golden Book") of the Royal Army Medical Corps', designed by Graily Hewitt, with descriptive notes by the artist, Wellcome Library, p. 5. Wellcome Collection Catalogue, available online: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/tgyfhk6u> [last accessed 16 May 2022].
22. *Ibid.*, p. 6. He credited his two assistants, Miss Henstock and Miss Peacock, for the rendering of these natural motifs.
23. *Ibid.*, n.p.
24. 'Royal Army Medical Corps War Memorial', *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps*, LIV: 5 (May 1930), p. 323.
25. George Jack, *War Shrines* (London: Civic Arts Association, 1918), p. 5.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
27. George Jack, Shrine, Trotton, Chichester, WMR File #16652.

28. Before the war, Jack designed furniture for Morris & Co. and worked as an independent craftsman on a variety of projects. He also published *Wood Carving: Design and Workmanship* (London: J. Hogg, 1903). For more on his work, see Amy Clarke, 'George Jack, Master Woodcarver of the Arts & Crafts Movement: "In all ways excellent and inspiring"', *The Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850-the Present*, 28 (2004), 82-107.
29. The names of the fallen were inscribed on two panels on the side walls of the Church.
30. 'Annual Meeting of the Church Crafts League', *The Builder*, CXVI: 3976 (14 February 1919), p. 151. The group was very interested in the subject of commemorative objects for churches and published its *List of Artists and Craftsmen* in 1920.
31. Cormack, *Arts & Crafts Stained Glass*, p. 269.
32. Peter Cormack, *The Stained Glass Work of Christopher Whall 1849-1924: 'A Glow With Briave Resplenent Colour'* (Boston: The Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston (lecture), 1999), p. 50. See also Cormack, *Arts and Crafts Stained Glass*.
33. 'The Mothers' Window', *The Denstonian*, XL: 5 (November 1916), p. 76.
34. *Ibid*. He added that this personal attention added to the cost of the window but that it was not too much for such a beautiful piece of work.
35. *Ibid*.
36. Here are some examples: St. John's Church, Chelford, Cheshire (WMR #56972), St. Mary's Church, Kirby on Bain, Lincolnshire (WMR #54000), St. John the Evangelist Church, Calder Vale, Lancashire (WMR #51509), Unitarian Chapel, Rosslyn Hill, Greater London (WMR #58351), St. John the Baptist Church, West Byfleet, Surrey (WMR # 23485), St. Augustine Church, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire (WMR # 3507), Parish Church, Bacton, Suffolk (WMR #4680), St. Helens Church, Belle Vue Ban, Tyne and Wear (WMR # 48272), All Saints Church, Neenton, Shropshire (WMR #14108), St. Nicholas Church, Baydon, Wiltshire (WMR # 23939), St. Albyns Church, Upper Norwood, Greater London (WMR #10857), and St. Johns Church, Chelford, Cheshire (WMR #56973).
37. Lesley Baker, 'John Henry Dearle's Contribution to Morris & Co.', *Useful and Beautiful*, 15: 1 (11 June 2021), 40, available online: <https://morrissociety.org/document/vol-15-no-1-p-38-42-john-henry-dearles-contribution-to-morris-and-co/> [last accessed 13 May 2022].
38. According to the group's 1918 Annual Report, its members included A. C. Benson, Sydney Cockerell, Ernest Gimson, George Jack, Norman Jewson, May Morris, Alfred Powell, F. W. Troup, Emery Walker and William Weir.
39. *A History of the Faringdon War Memorials as reported in the Faringdon Advertiser*, collated by Dr. M.L.H. Wise, available online: <http://www.faringdon.org/uploads/1/4/7/6/14765418/history_of_the_war_memorial_as_reported_in_the_faringdon_advertiser.pdfhttp://www.faringdon.org/uploads/1/4/7/6/14765418/history_of_the_war_memorial_as_reported_in_the_faringdon_advertiser.pdf> [last accessed 13 May 2022].
40. Lockwood thought that it was likely to cost between £550 and £660.
41. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, *Forty-Fourth Annual Report of the Committee, The General Meeting of the Society, and An Address by Miss Lena Ashwell, June 1921* (1921), p. 4.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
43. Sarah Wearne & James Kerr, *To Our Brothers: Memorials to a Lost Generation in British Schools* (Warwick: Helion & Company, 2018), p. 12.
44. W. R. Lethaby, Alfred H. Powell & F. L. Griggs, *Ernest Gimson: His Life & Work* (Stratford-Upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1924), p. 40.
45. Replicas of Sir Edward Burne-Jones's *The Adoration of the Magi, Angeli Ministrates and Angeli Laudantes*, with the extension of the verdure and shields, had been installed in the school's Chapel in 1895 and 1905 respectively. H. C. Marillier, *History of the Merton Abbey Tapestry Works: Founded by William Morris* (London: Constable and Company Limited, 1927), pp. 32, 34. (Afterwards Marillier).

46. Review of the Work of the Eton War Memorial Committee, 1922-23, MISC/EWMF/14-10/7, 2. Eton College Archives.
47. Marillier, p. 26. The intricate features of the tapestries led Dearle to tell the committee that the cost of the tapestries might be as high as £40 per square foot rather than the initial quote of £6.6.0. The final cost was £6690/11/2. For more on weaving at Morris & Company during this period, see David Saxby, 'From *The Arming of the King* to *Nativity*', *The William Morris Society Magazine* (Autumn 2018), 6-10, available online: <https://morrissociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2018WMSAutumn.pdf> [last accessed 16 May 2022] and Linda Parry, 'The Revival of the Merton Abbey Tapestry Works', *JWMS*, 5: 3 (Summer 1983), 16-22.
48. Peter Bird, 'Eton College: An Inventory of Its War Memorials', June 2001, p. 10. This unpublished document by a Field Researcher at the Imperial War Museum was found in the War Memorials Register, File #41467.
49. *Ibid*.
50. *Ibid*.
51. *Ibid*., p. 11.
52. *Ibid*.

On the Way to Nowhere: The Revolutionary Politics of Time in *The Pilgrims of Hope*

Pavla Veselá

Among fin-de-siècle authors of utopias, William Morris stands out as one whose dedication to bettering the present and the future remains motivated by his concern for the past. Much has been written about Morris's fondness for Greco-Roman legends, Welsh mythology and Scandinavian sagas, evident in his works from the 1860s and 1870s *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867) and *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70).[1] Morris's historical interests are also discernible in *News from Nowhere* (1890; book form 1891) and *A Dream of John Ball* (1886-87; book form 1888), which Morris published after he got more profoundly involved with Marxism and socialism, and took on the editorship of the Socialist League journal *Commonweal*. In both these works, the past plays a crucial role: *A Dream of John Ball* revives the memory of the fourteenth-century peasants' revolt, while in *News from Nowhere*, the envisioned utopian future of justice and community draws its inspiration from selected aspects of the Middle Ages.

Between March 1885 and July 1886, shortly before devoting himself to *A Dream of John Ball* and *News from Nowhere*, Morris published in *Commonweal* the poetic sequence *The Pilgrims of Hope*. Unsatisfied with the result, he hoped to revise the poem for republication in book form but never got around to doing it.[2] Selections were then reissued in Morris's last poetry collection, *Poems by the Way* (1891), but the manuscript of *The Pilgrims of Hope* remained provisional. Partly for that reason, critics have been rather dismissive of the poem, with notable exceptions such as Florence S. Boos, who argued that *The Pilgrims of Hope* 'holds up well' and that the poem offers a valuable demonstration of Morris's effort to write poetry with a communal focus – poetry that would address, in an accessible form, 'a literate "popular" audience, and talk to it about certain recurrent human needs – for social justice ("fellowship"), and for a new aesthetic, one that might express the harmonies of a better social order, and encourage forms of affection wider than individual and familial "love"'.[3] On the other

hand, critics such as Nicholas Salmon and Michael Holzman reached rather discouraging conclusions: Salmon's view that instead of revising *The Pilgrims of Hope* Morris 'wisely returned to prose' is kinder still than Holzman's, who observed that the lessons of the poem 'were at once too ambivalent and too clear, too ambivalent in that the political life does not actually resolve the problems of intimate unhappiness, too clear in revealing the murderous unconscious impulses of the betrayed husband'.[4] The poem's stylistic fluctuations became the subject of further criticism; E. P. Thompson, for instance, noted that the first half in particular suffered from hesitations 'in plot and direction', 'the weakness in construction' and 'technical slackness bred of haste and lack of concentration'.[5]

The following reading of *The Pilgrims of Hope* interprets some of its perceived weaknesses as its strengths. What interests me in particular is the recurrent movement of the poem through hope to despair and back to hope again. Drawing on Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin and Georg Lukács, among others, Matthew Beaumont observed that due to the reification of consciousness caused by capitalism, 'the present time […] becomes impenetrable, inapprehensible as a moment in history', and that in *News from Nowhere*, through the character of William Guest, Morris makes the present present to itself.[6] Guest, in Beaumont's view,

> is an allegorical figure for this 'conception of the present as the "time of the now" which is shot through with chips of Messianic time'. For, if he represents a spectral rupture of the utopian present while he is in Nowhere, on his return to Hammersmith he represents a spectral rupture in the capitalist present […].[7]

I want to show that in *The Pilgrims of Hope* – before his notorious review of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000-1887* (1888) and his extended response in *News from Nowhere* – Morris was exploring the politics of time that characterises his later utopia. It is in this 'imperfect' narrative poem that the present recurrently becomes present to itself as a moment in history, a moment 'redemptive' of other such moments in history, the darkness of which is 'shot through with chips of Messianic time' (in Benjamin's sense). Or, put in another way, in these emancipatory moments, the continuum of history is ruptured, arrested through a messianic interruption. While *News of Nowhere* above all represents the utopian horizon, *The Pilgrims of Hope* dramatises the struggle towards it.

The question why the memory of the Paris Commune would have this role in Morris's evolving oeuvre is complicated and concerns both the contested interpretations of the Commune and of Morris's work. Since 1871, the Communards' impulses have been variously reactivated, in critical studies that range

from Karl Marx's 1871 'The Civil War in France' to Kristin Ross's recent analysis of the events in *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune*; in legends about Vladimir Lenin dancing 'in the snow the day Bolshevik power reached and surpassed the seventy-two days in which the Paris Commune's entire destiny was brought to a close'; in literary works such as Bertolt Brecht's play *The Days of the Commune* and, of course, in social formations such as the Shanghai Commune.[8] Morris himself, at the time of the Paris insurrection, travelled around the North of Europe and he returned to the memory of the Commune during the mid-1880s wave of the event's celebrations. The poem – the characters he envisioned, the story he gave them and the language he used – reactualises the Commune in a way that resonated with his personal concerns but also with concerns which differently preoccupied anarchist, socialist and communist circles ever since the Commune's defeats.

Before looking more closely at several instances where the present in Morris's poetic remembrance of the Paris events is reoriented towards a utopian future, let me briefly introduce the poem. *The Pilgrims of Hope* is narrated primarily from the perspective of a man called Richard, who describes his growing up in the countryside, his love and marriage, he and his wife's move to the city, their maturing into political agitators, and finally his wife's and her lover's deaths during the Commune. From its first lines, the poem raises issues recurrent in Morris's oeuvre, notably the contrast between the countryside, where earth 'with the eyes of a lover [lies beholding] the face of the sun', and the crowded, unwelcoming city, where Richard and his wife settle.[9] As the joy of 'the fiddler's old tune and the shuffling of feet' (p. 5) in the country inn turns into 'the drift of the feet of the hurrying throng' (p. 7) of people for whom joy 'hangs in heaven, high out of their reach' (p. 4), art – another of Morris's recurrent concerns – no longer embodies human creativity and communal spirit but hangs over urban blackness like a gilded picture. Poor people are lured into imperial wars and they acquiesce to their own exploitation, largely out of fear for their livelihood and due to psychological manipulation on the part of their exploiters. Mobilisation for justice in the city is difficult; moreover, political agitation is severely punished: Richard loses his job and is imprisoned. His wife falls in love with another man and despite Richard's generous love for both the woman and her lover, he suffers from her loss. The three leave together for Paris to defend the Commune, where Richard's wife and her lover are killed. Richard then returns to the countryside to raise his son. He feels misplaced and it is only towards the end of *The Pilgrims of Hope* that he realises a 'ghost from another time' still has work to do in the present.

This chronological order does not correspond with the narration, where recollections of the past, descriptions of the present and hopes for the future are out of line. Notably, in almost every section, there is a moment when attention to the

miserable present dislocates it from the time continuum and hope oriented towards a different future breaks through. As the past tense narration is interrupted with the present, and the future, the characteristically monosyllabic and bisyllabic flow of the poem is interrupted with polysyllabic words. In the beginning, these ruptures are caused by nature, passionate love and music; as the poem unfolds, it is political organisation and the memory of hope that disrupt the darkness.

'Love Has Slain Time, and Knows No To-day and No To-morrow'[10]

In the opening section of *The Pilgrims of Hope*, 'The Message of the March Wind', the present appears idyllic, yet its tranquility is disturbed with images of the brook that flows to the Thames, the city's glare three fields further and particularly the March wind that blows from London and speaks of its misery. As the vane on the spire-top swings in doubt (p. 3), the wind tells of 'the rich men' who 'have, and [...] hanker, and grip far and wide' (p. 4), and of the haggard poor. The present is demystified as part of the continuum of injustice, patiently suffered by those on the receiving end: 'How long and for what is their patience abiding?/ How oft and how oft shall their story be told,/ While the hope that none seeketh in darkness is hiding/ And in grief and in sorrow the world groweth old?' (p. 5). The wind that reveals the darkness of the world nevertheless also brings hope, which, as 'The Message of the March Wind' continues, is said to be 'coming to light' and 'now buddeth and groweth' like 'the seed of midwinter, unheeded, unperished', 'the autumn-sown wheat 'neath the snow lying green', 'the love that o'ertook us, unawares and uncherished' (*ibid.*). Hope, which grows here as a natural phenomenon, urges the narrator to 'seek for men's love in the short days of life' and work for a better future (*ibid.*). 'The Message of the March Wind' then concludes with references to this future: 'Soon for us shall be quiet and rest and desire,/ And to-morrow's uprising to deeds shall be sweet' (p. 6).[11]

The movement from the recognition of the present darkness to glimpses of hope oriented towards a different future is also evident in the subsequent section, 'The Bridge and the Street'. Here the protagonist, in the past tense, narrates he and his wife's traumatising encounter with the city. The confusion the couple felt on encountering the urban reality shattered their envisioned strife for justice that drove them there: 'A strange dream it was that we ever had seen it,/ And strange was the hope we had wandered to meet' (p. 7). Unable to differentiate in the crowd of hurrying faces and feet, Richard complains: 'What sign 'mid all these to tell foeman from brother?/ What sign of the hope in our hearts that had grown?' (*ibid.*). However, as the narrator works to reflect on the present, he overcomes his despair. Finally, on facing his sad wife, hope begins to appear:

Oh love, stand beside me; the sun is uprisen
On the first day of London; and shame hath been here.
For I saw our new life like the bars of a prison,
And hope grew a-cold, and I parleyed with fear.

Ah! I sadden thy face, and thy grey eyes are chiding!
Yea, but life is no longer as stories of yore;
From us from henceforth no fair words shall be hiding
The nights of the wretched, the day of the poor.

(p. 9)

It is not until Richard addresses the woman in the first of the two stanzas cited above that he uses the present tense. Hope – the 'fair words' that broke the complacent pastoral idyll in 'The Message of the March Wind' – was extinguished by the urban reality but the passionate love of Richard and his wife frees the present from the weight of the first defeat. New, more mature hope for future justice emerges: 'Now our fear and our faintness, our sorrow, our passion,/ We shall feel all henceforth as we felt it erewhile;/ But now from all this the due deeds we shall fashion/ Of the eyes without blindness, the heart without guile' (*ibid.*).

The third part of *The Pilgrims of Hope*, 'Sending to the War', begins with further descriptions of the wasteful brutality of the city and particularly the military. First, the narrator again uses the past tense; then the vision shifts to the 'poisoned […] sun-lit spring' of the present and glimpses of an equally miserable future (p. 12). Richard describes a military parade that passes through the city and envisions the impending imperialistic warfare: 'Read ye their souls in their faces, and what shall help you there?/ Joyless, hopeless, shameless, angerless, set is their stare:/ This is the thing we have made, and what shall help us now,/ For the field hath been laboured and tilled and the teeth of the dragon shall grow' (*ibid.*). A few lines later, departing again from the urgency of the present, he bitterly comments on the way the war will be used to divert attention from internal injustice and conflicts: 'The soldiers are off to the war, we are here to see the sight,/ And all our griefs shall be hidden by the thought of our country's might' (*ibid.*). This despairing description of the present and visions of the dismal future are nevertheless interrupted when another type of 'march' breaks in – the military march – and the narrator imagines how the alienated, glaring crowd oriented to war is transformed into a collection of hopeful faces that strive for better life:

'Neath the flashing swords of the captains – then the silence after the shout –

Sun and wind in the street, familiar things made clear
Made strange by the breathless waiting for the deeds that are drawing anear.
For woe had grown into will, and wrath was bared of its sheath,
And stark in the streets of London stood the crop of the dragon's teeth.
Where then in my dream were the poor and the wall of faces wan?
Here and here by my side, shoulder to shoulder of man,
Hope in the simple folk, hope in the hearts of the wise,
For the happy life to follow, or death and the ending of lies,
Hope is awake in the faces angerless now no more,
Till the new peace dawn on the world, the fruit of the people's war.

(pp. 13-14)

As the narrator watches the military parade and listens to the march, he envisions the imperialist enterprise transformed into the people's revolution. Unlike 'The Message of the March Wind' and 'The Bridge and the Street', 'Sending to the War' does not end with a hopeful thrust towards the better future but with further descriptions of the miserable present, yet this present is destabilised with the above 'dream […] of deliverance drawing anigh' (p. 13) – a dream during which misery is inverted into hope for 'the new peace dawn on the world' (p. 14).

Whereas in the first section of *The Pilgrims of Hope*, it was nature that stirred up hope and in the second part it was passionate love, in 'Sending to the War', the hopeful rupture in the miserable present emerges out of the dark rhythms of the military parade: 'Faint and a long way off, the music's measured voice,/ And the crowd was swaying and swaying, and somehow, I knew not why,/ A dream came into my heart of deliverance drawing anigh' (*ibid.*). Perhaps more romantic than revolutionary at the outset (to echo the title of Thompson's study of Morris), the poem now mobilises hope along the lines of Marx's classic argument that capitalism creates the conditions for its own destruction. Morris, who repeatedly denounced imperialism as 'the inevitable and most vicious outcome of "The Century of Commerce"', depicted the military procession and its marching song here as the factory into which people are forced with the objective of their being exploited but which they appropriate for their collective liberation.[12]

The role of music in the envisaged transformation invites particular attention. According to Elizabeth K. Helsinger, during the mid-1880s Morris 'composed a number of songs, or chants, as he preferred to call them, for socialist gatherings', and although their content was important, their specific lyric strategies – notably rhythm – aimed at forging 'a social body and sustain[ing] it in the complex time it must inhabit'.[13] Morris, according to Helsinger, believed that fellowship 'could be not only

taught but also realized in the performance of song and story' and in his songs, chants and poems, he hoped to 'engage both bodies and minds, but did so in order to move those his works addressed to desire a common weal, to become a new social body'.[14] His lyric at the time commonly featured 'short, vernacular forms of chant and song'; he deployed 'meter and rhyme as structures that emphasize compelling movement while preserving clarity – indeed simplicity – of language and syntax, arranged in easily followed, repeating patterns', thus reopening 'the border between literate and oral forms'.[15] Following Helsinger, in 'Sending to the War', the transformation of the military parade into an uprising may be described also in terms of appropriating its marching rhythm for revolutionary ends. Yet, to repeat, the purpose of the collective resistance here is to mobilise people's resistance from within, with the help of 'chant and song', in order to transform the established system – not in order to orchestrate people into a military body. (A parallel could perhaps be made with Fredric Jameson's 'An American Utopia', where the social structures of the army serve as the basis of the utopian system, for the sake of social justice and equality, not for expansion and combat).[16]

Nevertheless, returning to the role of music, the stylistic fluctuations of the poem are noteworthy because although 'marching' music in 'Sending to the War' leads to unrest, the poem itself is not a chant or song. 'The Message of the March Wind' and 'The Bridge in the Street' are addressed to Richard's wife, which situates the verses as personal lyrics. Both these parts use four-line tetrameter stanzas with alternate rhyme. The somewhat bucolic imagery and diction of 'The Message of the March Wind' have led Thompson to argue that Morris 'fell into the rhythms, the associations, the vocabulary of his apprenticeship to poetry'.[17] Almost all the subsequent parts of *The Pilgrims of Hope* (with the exception the more personal verses of Richard's wife) are addressed to the general 'you'; that is, Morris's *Commonweal* audience as well as the present and future exploited of the earth.[18] 'Sending to the War' introduces hexameter couplets, which energises the poem. Moreover, even if Morris in some ways continued to rely on 'words, images, rhythms coined in the romantic movement', his employment of an 'outdated' poetic style created possibilities for emphasising the difficult reality he depicted.[19] The poem does not cradle complex contents into a harmonious form because there are frequent irregularities in its romantic rhythms, rhymes and words. For example, *The Pilgrims of Hope* uses mostly monosyllabic and bisyllabic words therefore three-syllabic (and occasionally four-syllabic) words interrupt the flow. I will mention a few instances later but concerning the already discussed 'The Message of the March Wind', three-syllable words 'beholding,' 'enfolding' and 'green-growing' are used in the first stanza, where they highlight the stasis of the countryside (p. 3). Eleven stanzas further, when the next three-syllable

word appears in 'patience abiding', this continuity acquires clearly negative connotations (p. 5). All the remaining three-syllable words in 'The Message of the March Wind' represent more positively-charged breaks in the verse. The greatest concentration appears in the aforementioned stanza where Richard compares hope to the 'seed of midwinter, unheeded, unperished', to 'autumn-sown wheat' and to 'love that o'ertook us, unawares and uncherished' (p. 5). Subsequently, the words are monosyllabic or bisyllabic until the last two lines, where the flow is broken with 'desire', 'to-morrow,' and 'uprising', which further energises the hopeful ending (p. 6).

Similarly, in 'Sending to the War', most three-syllable words emphasise the harsh realities of the city, such as the 'hurrying feet', 'holiday throng', 'poisoned […] sun-lit spring', and the rush of the 'angerless' faces that 'shall bear our name triumphant' (p. 12). The down-beat ending is highlighted by the repetition of 'devoureth' (p. 14). Nevertheless, the two words that stand out in 'Sending to the War' are the four-syllable words 'deliverance' (p. 13) and 'familiar', the former of which in particular creates a more hopeful rupture in the monosyllabic and bisyllabic continuity (p. 14). Rather than beautifying the grinding reality of the city by fitting it into a smooth romantic form and creating a poetic refuge for himself, through such and other irregularities, Morris emphasised its misery as well as possibility of transformation. Although *The Pilgrims of Hope* (unlike Morris's numerous other works) does not directly consider the role of art in the mobilisation of hope (or not beyond the transformed military march), even before moving to address political organisation generally and the Paris Commune specifically, it responds to the political defeats of Morris's era and, perhaps, aims to inspire further unrest while remaining a complex, narrative poetic work of art.

'The Blended Sound of Battle and Deliv'rance Drawing Near'[20]

In the poem's fourth section, 'Mother and Son', three months have passed. Richard's wife gave birth to her son but she feels distant from her husband ('For fair and fierce is thy father, and soft and strange are his eyes' [p. 17]). Her monologue, addressed to the newborn baby, takes place at night and begins with a melancholy description of the present.[21] The woman's memories of past joys are intermingled with memories of pain: 'I will tell thee a word of the world, of the hope whence thou hast grown,/ Of the love that once begat thee, of the sorrow that hath made/ Thy little heart of hunger, and thy hands on my bosom laid' (pp. 16-17). Initially, she asks her son to remember this past: 'Then *mayst* thou remember hereafter, […]/ So *mayst* thou dimly remember this tale' (p. 16, my emphasis); 'If thy soul *could* harbour a dream of the blossom of my life!/ It *would* be as sunlit meadows beheld from a tossing sea' (p. 17,

my emphasis). Nevertheless, although the woman's nostalgic memory of the countryside initiates her hopes, she reflects on the present, admits the separation from her son as there '[*s*]*hall* rise that wall of distance, that round each one doth grow' (p. 15, my emphasis) and adds: 'never again in my life *shall* I dare to speak to thee thus' (p. 18, my emphasis). Then, new hope emerges out of the recognition of the new realities, centred on the future of the newborn baby: 'But sure from the wise and the simple *shall* the mighty come to birth;/ And fair were my fate, beloved, if I be yet on the earth/ When the world is awaken at last, and from mouth to mouth they tell/ Of thy love and thy deeds and thy valour, and thy hope that nought can quell' (*ibid.*, my emphasis).

Throughout the rest of the poem, the dynamics of hope shattered and revived through the protagonist's attention to the new present is similar although the agency behind hope's reemergence changes to political organisation and eventually, as the poem moves to the Paris Commune, the memory of utopian aspirations in the past. In 'New Birth' and 'The New Proletarian', we return to Richard. He describes his birth twenty five years ago and parallels it with his rebirth in the present: 'It was twenty-five years ago that I lay in my mother's lap, […]/ Twenty-five years ago and to-night am I born again' (p. 19). Until Richard's political maturation, time appears as a continuum of injustice, misery and 'hope grown cold' (p. 20). His marriage is happy and, initially, he has few financial worries; nevertheless, he is disturbed by 'the horror of London that went on all the while' and before becoming politically active, he sees no other future: 'And ever more and more seemed the town like a monstrous tomb/ To us, the Pilgrims of Hope, until to-night it came,/ And Hope on the stones of the street is written in letters of flame' (p. 21). The protagonist narrates these events in the simple past tense, with the exception of passages that refer to the rebirth of his hope, such as the above-cited lines 'to-night am I born again' and '[h]ope on the stones of the street is written in letters of flame', or when he directly cites an invitation to join the 'Radical spouting place': 'Come over to-morrow to our Radical spouting-place;/ For there, if we hear nothing new, at least we shall see a new face;/ He is one of those Communist chaps, and 'tis like that you two may agree' (*ibid.*). (Note how the continuum is ruptured here not only by the temporal break in the narrative but also through the concentration of three-syllable words, unmatched elsewhere in 'New Birth': 'tomorrow', 'radical', 'spouting-place' and 'communist'). The conclusion of 'New Birth' describes the present 'shot through with chips of Messianic time' (in Benjamin's sense):

> And now the streets seem gay and the high stars glittering bright;
> And for me, I sing amongst them, for my heart is full and light.

I see the deeds to be done and the day to come on the earth,
And riches vanished away and sorrow turned to mirth;
I see the city squalor, and the country stupor gone.
And we a part of it all – we twain no longer alone
In the days to come of the pleasure, in the days that are of the fight
I was born once long ago: I am born again to-night.

(p. 23)

This is the fullest description of the present in 'New Birth' and the presentness of the present gives birth to a vision of days to come without class oppression, squalor and stupor.

When subsequently in 'The New Proletarian' Richard loses his money due to swindle and his job due to his work as a political agitator, his hopes diminish once more but still motivated by his 'rebirth', he narrates his way to the new present, where he again encounters hope for a different future. The section opens with a series of questions that draw attention to the changed situation. The problem seems most clearly stated here: 'What's this? Meseems it was but a little while ago/ When the merest sparkle of hope set all my heart aglow!/ The hope of the day was enough; but now 'tis the very day/ That wearies my hope with longing. What's changed or gone away?' (p. 24). The narrator subsequently repeatedly contrasts the past with the present. The iteration of the words 'but now' and 'now' in 'The New Proletarian' is particularly notable, for example in the following lines, where moreover the pairing of 'now' with 'know' reinforces the knowledge acquired from attending to the present: 'Now know I the cry of the poor no more as a story heard,/ But rather a wordless wail forced forth from the weary heart./ Now, now when hope ariseth I shall surely know my part' (p. 27). As Richard eventually embraces his becoming 'proletarian' (p. 29), he begins to hope again ('proletarian,' as far as I have noticed, is the only five-syllable word in the entire poem, clearly striking through the flow): 'Tis the lot of many millions! Yet if half of those millions knew/ The hope that my heart hath learned, we should find a deed to do,/ And who or what should withstand us?' (*ibid.*). What inspires the narrator here is the organised resistance of the millions of the earth's oppressed and exploited.

Starting with Richard's wife's subsequent monologue in the seventh section, hope falters and it is only towards the end of *The Pilgrims of Hope* that it interrupts the darkness of the present again. First, in 'Prison – And at Home', the woman describes the misery of her life after Richard's imprisonment. As in her previous nocturnal monologue, she attempts to summon up hope by remembering the past: 'Yea, here or there he sees it: in the street, in the cell, he sees/ The vision he made me behold

mid the stems of the blossoming trees,/ When spring lay light on the earth, and first and at last I knew/ How sweet was his clinging hand, how fair were the deeds he would do' (p. 30). However, the nostalgic memory and hope for the future are not strong enough to shine through the misery:

> Ah, ever must we the deedless to the deedless dark go down,
> Still crying, 'To-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow yet shall be
> The new-born sun's arising o'er happy earth and sea' –
> And we not there to greet it – for to-day and its life we yearn,
> And where is the end of toiling and whitherward now shall we turn
> But to patience, ever patience, and yet and yet to bear;
> And yet, forlorn, unanswered as oft before to hear,
> Through the tales of the ancient fathers and the dreams that mock our wrong,
> That cry to the naked heavens, 'How long, Lord! O how long?'
>
> (p. 34)

In these concluding lines of 'Prison – And at Home', no hope breaks through the despair. The sense of endurance and immobility is created here through the rhyming of 'wrong' with 'long' and particularly through the threefold repetition of 'to-morrow' being counterweighted with the repetition of 'ever', 'deedless', 'and yet and yet', 'patience', 'cry' and 'how long'.

The remainder of *The Pilgrims of Hope* is narrated from the perspective of Richard, who returns to the countryside after the defeat of the Paris Commune. His depiction of the pastoral tranquility in 'The Half of Life Gone' echoes the beginning of 'The Message of the March Wind', except now Richard observes it from the outside. At the end of the poem, his wife is dead but he is not yet ready to part with the hope she inspired in him, as he dreamily resurrects her: 'Nay, let me look and believe that all these will vanish away,/ At least when the night has fallen, and that she will be there mid the hay,/ Happy and weary with work, waiting and longing for love' (p. 36). Similarly, towards the end of 'The Half of Life Gone', Richard scorns himself for the melancholic illusion in a manner that recalls his wife's self-admonishment in her first monologue. Even so, he remains entrenched in nostalgic contemplations of the past, disconnected from the present: 'But here and to-day I cannot; for ever my thought will stray/ To that hope fulfilled for a little and the bliss of the earlier day./ Of the great world's hope and anguish to-day I scarce can think:/ Like a ghost from the lives of the living and their earthly deeds I shrink' (p. 37).

It is in the subsequent section that Richard begins to narrate the events that culminated in his return to the countryside. First, in 'A New Friend', he remembers

his friendship with Arthur (his wife's lover) and his death: 'He loved me; he grieved my soul: now the love and the grief are past;/ He is gone with his eager learning, his sadness and his mirth,/ His hope and his fond desire. There is no such thing on the earth' (p. 42).[22] Then, in sections ten to twelve, 'Ready to Depart', 'A Glimpse of the Coming Day' and 'Meeting the War Machine', Richard devotes himself to the Paris Commune. He comments that '[t]he city's hope enwrapped us with joy and great amaze' and although he is disturbed by the violence, he adds: 'we saw but the hope of the world, and the seed that the ages had sown,/ Spring up now a fair-blossomed tree from the earth lying over the dead' (pp. 48, 51). His retrospective vision is nevertheless also disillusioned: 'I can see that I might have seen what the end would be from the first,/ The hope of man devoured in the day when the Gods are athirst' (*ibid.*).

Even though Richard's past-tense narrative in 'A Glimpse of the Coming Day' and 'Meeting the War Machine' centres on the Commune and its defeat, in a few instances new hopes arise. They stem from the memory of the Commune's unfulfilled past aspirations (rather than from a nostalgic recollection of some imagined fullness). First, as Richard describes the defense of the Commune (using folk-tale imagery of dwarfs, swords, foes and fools), he mentions that 'Paris was free;/ And e'en as she is this morning, to-morrow all France will be' (p. 48). A few lines later, the protagonist recalls how in Paris he remembered that the struggle waged there was not for the Commune only. He remembers the countryside, and the memory of this memory causes him to switch to the present (tense) and to call for a better future of the planet: 'But now are all things changing, and hope without a fear/ Shall speed us on through the story of the changes of the year./ Now spring shall pluck the garland that summer weaves for all,/ And autumn spread the banquet and winter fill the hall./ O earth, thou kind bestower, thou ancient fruitful place,/ How lovely and beloved now gleams thy happy face!' (p. 49). Here Richard's remembrance of the Commune's internationalist aspirations causes him to switch his attention to the present and momentarily to overcome the darkness of the lived moment. Later on, however, he worries that '[f]or few of you now will be thinking of the day that might have been,/ And fewer still meseemeth of the day that yet shall be,/ That shall light up that first beginning and its tangled misery' because of the Commune's brutal defeat (p. 52). At the end of 'Meeting the War Machine', Richard feels again like a misplaced ghost: 'our lives began with death to blend;/ Though we were long a-dying though I dwell on yet as a ghost/ In the land where we once were happy, to look on the loved and the lost' (p. 53).

The conclusion of *The Pilgrims of Hope* is not a happy ending; nevertheless, the miserable present gets oriented towards a better future. The defeat of the Commune

is undeniable but the protagonist's narrative in the poem becomes a source of hope. Like the Frenchman who taught Richard about 1848, Richard is envisioned as the flash from the past that reminds present and future generations of unfulfilled aspirations of 1871. 'The Story's Ending' both opens and ends with the protagonist situating himself in the present and resolving to subvert it with his memory of 'hope and its defence'. This reorientation of Richard to the future is apparent already in the opening stanza:

> How can I tell you the story of the Hope and its defence?
> We wrought in a narrow circle; it was hither and thither and thence;
> To the walls, and back for a little; to the fort and there to abide,
> Grey-beards and boys and women; they lived there and they died;
> Nor counted much in the story. I have heard it told since then,
> And mere lies our deeds have turned to in the mouths of happy men,
> And e'en those will be soon forgotten as the world wends on its way,
> Too busy for truth or kindness. Yet my soul is seeing the day
> When those who are now but children the new generation shall be,
> And e'en in our land of commerce and the workshop over the sea,
> Amid them shall spring up the story; yea the very breath of the air
> To the yearning hearts of the workers true tale of it all shall bear.
> Year after year shall men meet with the red flag over head,
> And shall call on the help of the vanquished and the kindness of the dead.
> And time that weareth most things, and the years that overgrow
> The tale of the fools triumphant, yet clearer and clearer shall show
> The deeds of the helpers of menfolk to every age and clime,
> The deeds of the cursed and the conquered that were wise before their time.
>
> (p. 54)

Richard, now situated in the present, moves from the past-simple description of the defeat in Paris to a present-perfect complaint about inconsiderate historical accounts which he foresees as short-lived. In commenting that '[y]et my soul is seeing the day', he highlights the presence of the present through his use of the present-continuous tense; this allows him to depart to a vision of the future, which he summons up with the more prescriptive and prophetic 'shall'. 'Forgotten', 'overgrow' and 'triumphant' – the three words that break the monosyllabic and bisyllabic flow here – are outweighed by the double meaning of the word 'generation' (repeated in the concluding section a few lines later). Admittedly, 'The Story's Ending' then resumes a narrative of past mourning particularly when Richard describes his awakening after

being injured, he stumbles on heavy words like 'delirium' (a sad echo of 'deliverance'), 'helplessness' and 'misadventure' (p. 56). The very end, however, shifts again to a hopeful, future-oriented vision:

> I came to look to my son, and myself to get stout and strong,
> That two men there might be hereafter to battle against the wrong;
> And I cling to the love of the past and the love of the day to be,
> And the present, it is but the building of the man to be strong in me.
>
> (p. 57)

At last, the emphasis is on the present – it is a present filled with reactualised aspirations of the past and oriented towards the 'day to be'.

'Come, Then, Since All Things Call Us, the Living and the Dead'[23]

Returning now to my opening discussion of *The Pilgrims of Hope*, it may be reiterated that the poem is far from perfect. Yet its very rawness reveals the revolutionary politics of time that underwrites Morris's later work, particularly *News from Nowhere*, where '[h]uman history is seen as a dialectical development from tribal communism, or from Morris's beloved Middle Ages, through capitalism to classless society, "from the older imperfect communal period, through the time of the confused struggle and tyranny of the rights of property, into the present rest and happiness of complete Communism"'.[24] Unlike *News from Nowhere*, *The Pilgrims of Hope* does not envision a leap to a communist utopia; instead, it depicts a brutal world where hope that things may be otherwise is repeatedly imprisoned in the continuum of misery and great efforts are necessary for it not to be extinguished altogether. Nowhere here shines only through the cracks.

Remembering the Paris Commune fifteen years later allowed Morris to reactivate hope in spaces that resonated with his and his era's present concerns. Given that many writers at Morris's time were disillusioned about capitalism but unwilling to consider alternatives, his exploration of hope was all the more pertinent. As has been observed, hope in the poem has various sources that range from nature, passionate love and music to political organisation and memory of unfulfilled hopes of the Communards. The role of nature and passionate love in particular may appear as the heritage of romanticism. However, as Anne Janowitz argued, 'rurality is never posited as a revolutionary goal in the poem, but rather as the first moment in a spiraling dialectic, and the political possibilities that are seen in the city mean that it is not a simple repository of negative value'.[25] Nature in *The Pilgrims of Hope* provides the initial impetus to resist capitalism but it does not lead to its abolition. Richard's final

settlement in the country – rather than evidence of Morris's nostalgia for the pastoral idyll – suggests a link to communitarian traditions of the country while also stressing the need for work in the rural areas, which in the context of the Paris Commune acquired special significance (see note 11). Passionate love motivates Richard and his wife as well, although, as the poem proceeds, the focus shifts to political love that would bind an entire community, and the tension between passionate (personal) and political love is not well resolved. The lingering conflicts are nevertheless not merely between personal and political love but also, considering the characters, conflicts of different classes and, again, the city and the provinces.

The poem's subsequent emphasis on music could be related to romanticism too, were it not for it being a military march, which brings it closer to the fourth source of hope in the poem –political organisation emergent out of capitalist conditions. As Morris's daughter May recalled, the poem 'was written in sorrow and anger, in revolt at the things he saw and the things he divined, and the slight, effective sketches of the narrative bring home to many of us who have lived on into the time of tragedy and violence of the Twentieth Century, the meetings and street-corner gatherings of those days of scarcely articulate unrest and discomfort'.[26] The writer's insistence on the importance of organised opposition to capitalism transpires from *The Pilgrims of Hope* clearly; Kristin Ross writes that the poem 'is situated firmly in the present of a British reader of *Commonweal* in 1885 to the extent that Morris incorporates material from British struggles of the 1880s and from his recent experiences among London workers and yet makes the poem's events lead up, chronologically, to the Commune'.[27] The Frenchman, who in the poem teaches Richard about 1848, may therefore have his real-world inspiration in the political refugees of the Paris Commune. If the poem depicts the Commune as part of contemporary struggles, the transformation of the military march into an uprising in 'Sending to the War' is particularly significant in that it confronts both the ferocity of the Commune's suppression and the ferocity of (colonial) wars. When viewed through Jameson's aforementioned speculative essay 'An American Utopia', the transformation could be perhaps imagined as appropriation of social structures of the army for peaceful, non-military purposes, which, in the poem, would emerge alongside other political struggles.[28] *The Pilgrims of Hope* is not a chant aiming to transform 'heterogeneous, disorganized individuals to a unified, galvanized (electrified), yet (in Morris's words) "orderly" mass', but it does call for political organisation.[29]

Perhaps the most potent mobiliser of hope in the poem is nevertheless the memory of unfulfilled utopian aspirations of the past in general and the Paris Commune in particular. As Vincent Geoghegan observed, for Morris, progress to the communist utopia was not linear cancellation of all things past but involved three forms of return

to the past: 'treasuring of the past in the society', 'a revival of the best values of the earlier ages' and 'an ingression, at both the individual and societal level, of child-like qualities, where a parallel is drawn between individual and social childhood'.[30] The Paris Commune for Morris embodied some of these 'best values' because although it 'failed in conquering immediate material freedom for the people' it 'quickened and strengthened the ideas of freedom by their courageous action and made our hope of to-day possible'.[31] Indeed, after the defeat of the Commune, 'the specter of communism forgotten for a generation after 1848, once again stalked Europe' and efforts were made to erase its impact and crush its memory.[32] Morris in the poem resisted those tendencies. *The Pilgrims of Hope*, admittedly, does not depict the brutality of the Commune's suppression, the suffering of those who were tortured in prisons or the number of casualties. Nor does it detail the utopian aspirations of the Commune, its internationalism, restructuring of education, debates about art and politics, its own internal conflicts and problems. Morris discussed the Commune in this manner in his other works, notably the speeches he delivered on its anniversary.[33] *The Pilgrims of Hope* is not such a memorial but a modest reactualisation of the struggles of several fictional insurgents.

Morris argued that 'all progress, every distinctive stage of progress, involves a backward as well as a forward movement and the new development returns to a point which represents the older principle elevated to a higher plane; the old principle reappears transformed, purified, made stronger, and ready to advance on the fuller life it has gained through its seeming death'.[34] Indeed, in the view of Boos, '[t]he sympathetic reader of *Pilgrims of Hope* and Morris's other socialist romances is caught again and again in renewed cycles of communal effort, and suspension or failure of each cycle suggests the need once again to redeem past experience within another'.[35] By the end of *The Pilgrims of Hope*, Richard is changed by his experience and he 'clings to the love of the past and the love of the day to be' (p. 57). His conditions are new and so is his thinking because 'something actually can't be thought until something else has come into being'.[36] His wife and Arthur are dead, along with thousands of other casualties. As Max Horkheimer wrote to Benjamin, the slain remain slain and past injustices are completed unless one believes in the Last Judgment, of which Benjamin could be equally doubtful when he remarked that '[w]e ask of those who will come after us not gratitude for our victories, but the remembrance of our defeats. This is a consolation – the only consolation afforded to those who no longer have any hope of being consoled'.[37] Morris's final promise – not unlike Benjamin's – was remembrance, not in the sense of contemplating the past at a distance or desiring to return to it in a literal sense but as unreconciled re-actualisation of its defeated aspirations and after-effects. As Richard both returns and does not return to the same

point, so does the spiral of history. The Paris Commune disturbed though did not destroy the war-machine of military-industrial capitalism, and reactivated memories of these events, in constellation with the present, continue to encourage hope of another break towards a better future.

To conclude, however, on a more specific note: 'the chips' from *The Pilgrims of Hope* formed a utopian picture in *News from Nowhere*. In the later text, Morris revisited the defense of the Paris Commune and this time the series of political struggles in 'How the Change Came' leads to the establishment of the utopian society. As in any utopia, Nowhere is not void of contradictions yet here nature is in harmony with humans, passionate love may lead to conflicts but tends to create joy and music along with other arts is intrinsic to everyday life. Just like *The Pilgrims of Hope*, *News from Nowhere* ends with the protagonist's return, although the return is less suffused with sadness as William Guest calls upon others who might transform the utopian dream into a vision powerful enough 'to disrupt – at an existential level – the taken-for-granted nature of the present'.[38] Next to this utopian thrust of *News from Nowhere*, the poem may appear rather pale; yet as the pages above hope to have illustrated, the uncertainties and defeats of *The Pilgrims of Hope* were openings to the fullness of Nowhere.[39]

NOTES

1. Multiple critical studies referenced below mention Morris's inspiration in the past. See, for example, Jessie Kocmanová, *The Poetic Maturing of William Morris: From Earthly Paradise to the Pilgrims of Hope* (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1964). (Afterwards Kocmanová). See also Kristin Ross, *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2016). (Afterwards Ross).
2. Kocmanová, p. 194.
3. Florence S. Boos, 'Narrative Design in *The Pilgrims of Hope*', in *Socialism and the Literary Artistry of William Morris*, ed. by Florence S. Boos and Carole G. Silver (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), pp. 147-66 (147). (Afterwards Boos, 'Narrative Design'). Florence S. Boos, '"The Banners of the Spring to Be": The Dialectical Pattern of Morris's Later Poetry', *English Studies*, 81 (2000), 14-40 (31). Other critics who mentioned *The Pilgrims of Hope* more favorably include Ross in the above-mentioned *Communal Luxury* and Anne Janowitz in *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). (Afterwards Janowitz).
4. Nicholas Salmon, 'The Serialisation of *The Pilgrims of Hope*', *JWMS*, 12: 2 (Spring 1997), 14-25 (24). (Afterwards Salmon). Michael Holzman, 'Propaganda, Passion, and Literary Art in William Morris's *The Pilgrims of Hope*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 24: 4 (Winter 1982), 372-93 (391). Ken Goodwin dismissed *The Pilgrims of Hope* for exactly the opposite reason. According to him, '[w]hat has happened, in fact, at this late stage of Morris's poetry, is that the single-minded vision of life he had previously held no longer dictates the structure of his poetry. His political activities, his commitment to Communism, made it impossible for him to express any longer the notion that life oscillated inexorably from happiness to misery, from hope to fear.' Ken Goodwin, 'The Summation of a Poetic Career: *Poems by the Way*', *Victorian Poetry*, 34: 3 (1996), 397-410 (406).
5. E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1955),

pp. 777-78. (Afterwards Thompson).

6. Matthew Beaumont, *Utopia Ltd.: Ideologies of Social Dreaming in England 1870-1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 174.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 188. Beaumont quotes a passage of Walter Benjamin's essay 'On the Concept of History' (1942).
8. Alain Badiou, 'The Paris Commune: Marx, Mao, Tomorrow', *Monthly Review*, 1 May 2021, available online: <https://monthlyreview.org/2021/05/01/the-paris-commune-marx-mao-tomorrow/> [last accessed 9 August 2022].
9. William Morris, *The Pilgrims of Hope and Chants for Socialists* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1915), p. 3. All subsequent in-text references are to this edition.
10. William Morris, 'Rhyme Slayeth Shame', *The Atlantic Monthly* 25 (1870), p. 144.
11. Referring specifically to 'The Message of the March Wind', Thompson argued that '[t]he effect of the poem is not one of unmixed joy, of courage and decision in the awakened struggle. Rather, there is an undertow of regret at the passing of this peace'; in other words, in Thompson's view, the poem depicts an 'idealized pastoral scene' and is underwritten by nostalgia concerning its loss. (Thompson, p. 776). I read 'The Message of the March Wind' differently. The pastoral scene is a moment of respite but it is revealed as complacent and unjust. As Thompson himself observed, besides drawing attention to the true state of the world, the wind speaks of 'hope and unrest', which does not suggest nostalgia for the restoration of the rural 'idyll' but rather hope for the remedy of the unjust global realities. Moreover, in the context of the Paris Commune, as 'rural boys from the countryside complied with the order to gun down thousands of their own countrymen in a carnage never before seen in French history', nostalgia for the pastoral idyll would not make much sense (Ross, p. 85). If anything, the task was to heal the split between the city and the provinces. Consequently, rather than mourning the pastoral idyll, *The Pilgrims of Hope* hopes for the country and the city being involved in a common struggle.
12. Thompson, p. 297.
13. Elizabeth K. Helsinger, *Poetry and the Thought of Song in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 2015), p. 150. (Afterwards Helsinger).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 150, 151.
16. See Fredric Jameson, 'An American Utopia', *American Utopia: Dual Power and the Universal Army*, ed. by Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2016). (Afterwards Jameson).
17. Thompson, p. 780.
18. At certain points, Richard addresses the Earth, which is depicted as suffering from capitalism, but elsewhere in the poem he addresses himself primarily to humans.
19. Thompson, p. 775.
20. William Morris, 'The March of the Workers', *The Pilgrims of Hope and Chants for Socialists*, pp. 70-72 (72).
21. Compare the first line of 'The Message of the March Wind' – 'Fair now is the springtide' (p. 3) – with the melancholy entry into 'Mother and Son' – '[n]ow sleeps the land of houses' (p. 15).
22. Returning to Morris's diction, it may be interesting to note that the subsequent section, 'Ready to Depart', which depicts the estrangement of Richard's wife and her falling in love with Arthur, is marked by an unusual accumulation of the word 'together': whereas in all the remaining sections, the word is used once or twice if at all, in 'Ready to Depart', 'together' appears nine times. In addition, the primarily monosyllabic and bisyllabic flow of this part is interrupted negatively rather than positively charged words such as 'betrayers', 'beguiled', 'bewildered', 'reproaching' and 'confusion', although there are exceptions, notably two four-syllable words 'February' and again 'deliverance' (pp. 43-46). Several critics have found the love triangle particularly lamely resolved. Salmon argued that 'there is

something deeply unsatisfactory about the way in which Morris sidesteps the implications of this conflict between personal happiness and communal aspirations, and allows the two lovers to be killed in the defence of Paris. In the end Richard never has to confront their relationship in the bitterness of defeat.' (Salmon, p. 22). Inarguably, Richard tries not to waver in his political dedication after his wife's estrangement and to accept his wife's 'sisterly love' ('A sister amidst of the strangers and, alas! a sister to me' [p. 50]), yet he does suffer from the lack of reciprocity of passionate love and his final memory of his wife is when she was not yet a 'sister'. Critics such as Boos suggested that at the time of the Paris Commune, Morris was concerned about his wife's withdrawal and considered the poem's motifs of 'disappointment, loneliness, and renunciation of sexual rivalry; inward struggle to retain and deepen an ethic of generosity; and transference of private hopes to strenuous public activity and revolutionary socialism' as the author's revisiting both a 'private' and 'public' trauma. (Boos, 'Narrative Design', p. 162).

23. William Morris, 'The Day is Coming', *The Pilgrims of Hope and Chants for Socialists*, p. 63.
24. Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 187.
25. Anne Janowitz, p. 228.
26. Cited in Kocmanová, pp. 194-95.
27. Ross, p. 76.
28. See Jameson.
29. Helsinger, p. 151.
30. Vincent Geoghegan, 'The Utopian Past: Memory and History in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and William Morris's *News from Nowhere*', *Utopian Studies*, 3: 2 (1992), pp. 75-90 (84-85). (Afterwards Geoghegan).
31. William Morris, 'Why We Celebrate the Commune of Paris', in *William Morris on History*, ed. by Nicholas Salmon (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 137-40 (139).
32. Matthew Beaumont, 'Cacotopianism, the Paris Commune, and England's Anti-Communist Imaginary, 1870-1900', *ELH*, 73:2 (2006), pp. 465-87 (465).
33. Ross, p. 96.
34. Cited in Geoghegan, p. 83.
35. Boos, 'Narrative Design', p. 166.
36. Ross, p. 93.
37. Cited in Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'* (London: Verso, 2016), pp. 31, 84.
38. Ruth Levitas, 'More, Morris, Utopia ... and Us', *JWMS*, 22: 1 (2016), pp. 4-17 (7).
39. This article would not have emerged in its final form without the comments of the editors and the reviewers of *JWMS*, specifically Owen Holland, and without the encouragement and suggestions of Tom Moylan and Antonis Balasopoulos.

William Morris and the Control of Work

John Stirling

For William Morris it is possible to say that 'work is life' and that he thought pleasure in work should be available to everyone. Such an argument was a central tenet of his socialism. That view, however, did not become the dominant approach to the 'socialist project' in the UK. Nevertheless, as I will argue here, work itself remained a significant undercurrent that re-emerged, particularly in relation to ideas of workers' control during the 1970s. It is the notion of 'control' that I will take here as a mechanism for exploring work in both Morris's socialism and in his practice. It is precisely the lack of control for many workers in the twenty-first century which will return us to the significance of Morris's thoughts and actions.

Morris's thought reflects a revolutionary strand in a 'dual socialism' which is based on his conception of work and the implicit notion of control. It is a socialism focused on the *production* of wealth rather than its *distribution*, although the latter has become the dominant element in reformist or 'social democratic' socialism. The argument here, then, differs from the more widespread commentary which simply aligns Morris's revolutionary socialism with his anti-Parliamentarianism.

I will begin with Morris himself and seek to contextualise the argument in relation to Victorian industrial capitalism. Following this I will discuss Morris as a businessman who inevitably faced the contradictions of work under capitalism, as an employer of labour at his workshops. This raises questions about the trade unions as an alternative source of power and control – for Morris himself, for ideas of workers' control and for work in the twenty-first century.

The second part of the article will focus on models of workers' control developed in the UK during the 1970s and how they relate to Morris's ideas of pleasure in work and, a less discussed point, in work's products or outcomes, before concluding with some reflections on the nature of work today. However, I will begin by 'clearing the

decks' with an overview of how we might conceptualise ideas of 'work'.

What is Work?

What, then, is work? In a common sense and very general way, we can define work as the expenditure of physical or mental effort or both together in achieving a goal. We might also find the term used interchangeably with the word 'labour', as often happened in the discussions of the newly emerging socialist movement at the end of the nineteenth century. Marx, in particular, used the word to formulate his labour theory of value in which it takes on a more abstract formulation than the more concrete use of 'work' as a task. Labour often carries with it negative connotations that are less likely to attach themselves to work: hard labour is different to hard work and the 'labouring poor' loomed large in Victorian reality and fiction, whereas today we have the political rhetoric of 'hard working families'.

The word 'work' is also often used in a way that is indistinguishable from what is meant as 'paid labour'. However, Morris's socialism specifically distinguishes work as 'attractive' and pleasurable, just as paid labour cannot be under capitalism: it may be ameliorated, or be more or less pleasurable, but its exploitative nature is unchanging.

Work is also often defined in contradistinction to leisure but this is not straightforward for Morris. He would have been horrified if his time away from paid work was characterised by simple idleness, although he recognised the importance of rest (which is not the same as leisure). Ruth Kinna has discussed Morris's evolving thought in this respect arguing that he had two different conceptions of work:

> as a socialist Morris not only explicitly acknowledged two different conceptions of the relationship between work and leisure but also defended them both simultaneously. On the one hand, recognizing the stressfulness of labour, he contrasted work with leisure and argued that leisure as free time was labour's reward. On the other hand, maintaining the pleasure to be derived from work, he defined leisure as voluntary or unforced production, comparable with labour and the fulfilment of desire.[1]

Kinna's argument is surely correct: this conception of work is central to Morris's socialism and Kinna re-emphasises the critical difference between work in a general sense and paid labour under capitalism. Furthermore, what is also identified implicitly by Morris, and by Kinna's analysis here, is the difference between the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards of work; succinctly, and in a phrase in common usage in working-class communities: do we live to work or work to live?

Morris evidently lived to work, as is clear in many places both in his writings and

his life, and as is reflected in these musings from his lecture 'The Prospects of Architecture in Civilization':

> I tried to think what would happen to me if I were forbidden my ordinary daily work; and I knew that I should die of despair and weariness, unless I could straightaway take to something else which I could make my daily work [and for the leisure] part of it [that] I also spend in work; which work gives me just as much pleasure as my bread-earning work […]. Next I turned my thoughts to my friends; mere artists and therefore, you know, lazy people by prescriptive right; I found the only thing they enjoyed was their work.[2]

Work, then, can be pleasurable even under capitalism but only for a few such as Morris or his artist friends. This is particularly so if the activity of work can be divorced, or at least distanced somewhat from the marketplace through patronage or wealth, for example. In a sense, this was what many utopian communities were seeking to do in becoming self-sustaining; or what workers' cooperatives (producer cooperatives as they were known then), were trying to do in managing themselves differently from conventional capitalist enterprises (see below for Morris's view on this question). At the heart of this point, and of the argument here more generally, is the question of control. To make work pleasurable the worker requires some measure of control over both its quantity (its relation to leisure) and its quality.

Work in Victorian Capitalism

Victorian capitalism is characterised as an 'industrial' revolution and it is the factory and the workplace which illustrates both factual and fictional accounts of its growth. Details of the immiseration of the working class – the new industrial proletariat – provide not just shocking stories but also the factual data that becomes the building blocks of Marx's revolutionary analysis. Engels, whom Morris knew and with whom he discussed politics, provided an influential account based on his own knowledge and experience of the Manchester working class.[3] Such accounts and much of the data were generally based on the working worlds of men rather than the private sphere of women's lives, other than the generally lurid accounts of prostitution found in the popular press. Domestic service was a major form of employment for women dominated by the patriarchal control of the household and requires separate discussion from the argument presented here.

The conditions of factory work attracted criticism not just from socialists, and in the context of Morris's own arguments, particularly from Carlyle and Ruskin. Such discussions were by no means semantic in the age of Victorian capitalism in which

work could be regarded as having a moral dimension alongside its role as an economic activity and a means of subsistence. Work takes place within an employment relationship in which employers might regard workers as simply a cost (or a commodity in the way that Marx develops his argument). Alternatively, there may be some regard to the moral obligations that an employer has to his or her workers as human beings. These arguments are ones that might be developed practically by paternalistic employers or by those driven by religious values such as, most notably, Quakers and their model communities.

The influence of Carlyle and Ruskin has been widely discussed and the latter is of particular significance for Morris. Their perceived conservatism has also been contrasted to Morris's socialism. Rob Breton has reviewed this relationship and suggests that whilst neither Carlyle nor Ruskin is as 'reactionary' as they are commonly portrayed, he argues Morris breaks decisively from them.[4] Whilst this is accurate in terms of Morris's socialism, we can still find him looking back idyllically as in 'Art or No Art? Who Shall Settle It?' (1884):

> From the 12th to the end of the 16th century […] all craftsmen were more or less artists […]. They worked […] under such conditions that they themselves were masters of their time, tools and materials, and, for the most part, their goods were exchanged by the simple process of the user buying from the maker. Under those circumstances it was a matter of course that a man, being master of his work should choose to make it pleasanter for himself.[5]

Central to this view is, again, the concept of control: *'being master of his work'*. Morris is not talking about an agricultural labourer, controlled by the necessity of subsistence, subservient to the Lord of the Manor and responding to time and the seasons. Rather, Morris describes the situation of artisanal workers who possess a skill that gives them some control over their working life. Unlike the conditions of the medieval artisan, however, Morris argued that nineteenth-century workers 'should again have control over [their] material, [their] tools, and [their] time; only that control must no longer be of the individual workman, as in the Middle Ages, but of the whole body of workmen'.[6]

However, it is not simply the general conditions of factory life and its depredations that concerned Morris although he certainly wrote about alternatives in essays such as 'A Factory As It Might Be'. What is also important is the quality of the daily working life itself: what we would now refer to as the 'labour process'.[7] Two points are of particular significance here: how that labour process is controlled and by whom, and the division of labour associated with it.

The first point is intimately related to questions of ownership. It is a classic element in Marxist thought that workers own nothing other than their power to labour and socialism requires the abolition of private ownership of the means of production. At the level of the workplace, ultimate control of the labour process resides in such ownership and is expressed through and by the agents of the owners. It is in this period of industrialisation that we see the emergence of management as an occupation alongside direct supervision of workers and the often-quoted factory discipline regimes with their fines and punishments. For Marx and Morris, it is the machinery of production that also imposes its own discipline on workers leading to Morris's much posited distaste for machine production. Without pursuing that argument in depth here, it is clear that Morris's chief concern is the *relationship* with the machine, rather than the machine in itself. Under capitalism it is an exploitative, demanding and demeaning relationship for the worker as an 'appendage' to the machine.

The second point is that control was exercised through the division of labour which was not simply a mechanism for increasing productivity and output as depicted in Adam Smith's classic discussion of pin manufacture.[8] Its implications are far wider in terms of the worker's daily life. Thus, the division of labour becomes an important area for Morris not least through Ruskin's riposte to Smith that it is the man that is divided not the labour. Kinna also explores this question in Morris and, again, we can see two points emerging: the delight in doing one particular job to the best of one's ability, as in a particular trade, and as compared with a desire to participate in the whole process of production from conception to outcome.[9] For Morris personally, each of these aspects from design to conception might be combined and this approach became a central tenet of the Arts and Crafts movement more generally.[10]

For the worker in Victorian capitalism labouring on the same repetitive task daily was a characteristic of their working life. This characteristic remained a feature of working life well into the twentieth century and, for many, became its defining feature, often identified with the Fordist production line, adopted in numerous workplaces from vast car plants to small fast-food outlets. A key part of this process, though less discussed in Morris's writings, was the division between 'hand and brain' to which I will return in the later discussion of workers' control.

Thus far, the argument developed here has focused on Morris's ideas about work and how they fit into the development of work in his era and I have suggested that an understanding of the concept of control is critically important. I now want to turn from ideas to practice in two ways. Firstly, trade unions offer an alternative focus of control at the workplace, so how did Morris engage with them and related ideas of worker-owned businesses? Secondly, how did these ideas manifest themselves in those

places where he had control: namely, his own workshops?

Morris and the Trade Unions

Taking the argument here about the dual nature of the socialist tradition between the production and distribution of wealth that I suggested at the outset, we can see this point embedded in ideas about trade unions within the Marxist tradition. Richard Hyman explores what he calls the 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' approaches in Marxism and suggests that trade unions have sometimes been seen as agencies of class struggle but, more often, they are regarded as necessary expressions of capitalism rather than catalysts for its revolutionary change.[11]

In the context of the 'dual socialism' argument offered here, trade unions can be seen as mainly concerned to influence the distribution of wealth (rewards) through the negotiation of wages and salaries. However, their very existence at the workplace – where wealth is produced – also provides a contrary source of power, through the potential for collective action, to that of the employer. Trade unions seek to exert control over what has come to be called 'the right to manage'. Alongside wage bargaining, they may seek to negotiate other conditions of employment and, in relation to direct control, seek to reach agreements over the pace of work, demarcation lines between trades and the operation of disciplinary or grievance procedures. Such actions might occur through formal negotiations with management or informal collective control of work as it is actually carried out.

Morris encountered unions at his own workplaces, in the wider socialist movement and in the debates about them. He would, and did, find a trade union movement in Britain that had founded itself in the first industrial revolution and on the basis of skilled tradesmen: 'the aristocracy of labour'. This led to a particularly British model of trade unionism characterised by collective bargaining and a use of legal enactment as an adjunct to this.[12] It was not until the 1889 wave of strikes, particularly in the London docks, that unskilled workers would begin to organise.[13]

British trade unions had also begun life before organised socialist parties became a feature of the industrial landscape. This was unlike the unions of continental Europe that Morris encountered at international conferences, which were allied to and may have been rooted in socialistic and communist ideologies and political parties where they existed. Such divisions, along with Roman Catholic-inspired trade union centres, remain a characteristic of some European countries today.

Commenting on the International Trade Union Congress in 1888, Morris writes:

> [It] took the course which might be expected: that is to say, it was a contest between the reactionary trades unionism of the ordinary English workmen

> and the Socialism more or less pronounced of their Continental brethren.[14]

Morris's indifference – not objection – to unions in his own workplaces at Merton Abbey and at the Kelmscott Press, and his assessment of their likelihood of revolutionary engagement, can be understood in this context. However, Morris's views on the shortcomings of British trade unionism did not stop him from engaging in discussion about them. Equally importantly, his reservations about trade unions did not stop him supporting strike action, although he rarely did so uncritically.

Commenting on the 'quarrelling' at the Miners' gala in Blyth in 1887 Morris expresses a characteristic view in his *Commonweal* 'Notes' for 13 August:

> The indignation of the more thoughtful of the men at the 'soft fighting' of their leaders shows a gathering determination for real union founded on a complete sense of the fact that the interests of all workers are the same, and that workers' organisations cannot stop short at merely fighting a matter of wages in the passing day; but must aim at the one thing worth aiming at, a condition of things in which the workers should control their own affairs, and not as now pay the heavy price of slavery to the employers for managing matters for them.[15]

Again, we see Morris's concern with questions of workers' control which might also have been expressed through the growing cooperative movement that roughly divided between consumer and producer or worker cooperatives. Socialists concerned with the production of wealth and relationships at the workplace might envisage producer cooperatives as an alternative model of ownership, offering, by implication, alternative mechanisms for controlling the labour process. The contradictions of capitalism generate 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' views about the ability of workers to manage their own affairs and the constraints that inhibit them from doing so. Morris makes his own position clear in a response to a leading co-operator G. J. Holyoake when he argues:

> The fact is, the very success of co-operation shows how very far it is from being a solution of the labour question. Let us admit that they have exploded the superstition that workmen could not combine in production and distribution […]. They have shown us that co-operation is desirable; but they are not allowed to co-operate.[16]

Morris goes on to list the constraints of market capitalism and argues that co-

operators must ultimately encounter such barriers to true cooperation, suggesting they will become 'a form of joint stockery differing slightly (scarcely at all in most cases) from that already established'.[17]

In effect, to compete, workers must manage their business along the lines of a conventional capitalist company. Morris himself was regularly criticised for his role as a socialist and a businessman but his argument here illustrates his lack of interest in turning his own business into a cooperative. As one of the regular attacks on Morris put it, this leaves him as '[a] poet (at least fifth in the leading poets of the day), a wallpaper hanger and – a legalised thief […] he has up to this time made no proposals that his workmen shall go shares in the profits of his business'.[18] Bringing both militant trade unionism and cooperation (profit sharing) together, Morris makes his own position very clear:

> the present strike-war, though it *is* wasteful and laden with misery, has two advantages over this twaddle [profit sharing]. In the first place, it is the only way of compelling the master class to share any of the profits with the men; and in the second, it will lead to the sweeping away of profits, masters, and all – and that long before the twenty-first century.[19]

How, then, did the arguments Morris engaged in work themselves out in the workplaces he ran, in particular the workshop at Merton?

Working for Mr Morris

For Morris, questions of control were also part of his daily life. He was an employer of domestic servants, of paid labour at Merton Abbey and the Kelmscott Press, as well as elsewhere in the various business activities of Morris and Co. from production to retail. Some of these relationships were familial ones as with May and Janey's work with the embroidery side of the business and others were in relation to non-craft skills in which Morris had little interest, such as the administrative side of the Tapestry Works or the Oxford Street shop. Morris also outsourced work such as wallpaper production, carpet weaving and textiles to others.[20]

We do not find a great deal about ownership in Morris's writings, and Morris and Co. was, of course, privately owned by him. Whilst Morris could, in theory, have adopted a co-operative model and, as we have seen, he was not unaware of that option, he chose to limit participation at the level of ownership of his business to a degree of profit sharing.

Morris was an employer and businessman and his business interests were carried out on a profitable and commercial basis.[21] His workshop at Merton has been the

focus of much attention in this respect. Can we see any elements of workers' control here? Emma Lazarus gives a much-quoted account of the pleasures of working in a pleasant factory.[22] James Leatham, meanwhile, comments that:

> Neither adequate time nor the very finest materials were grudged them for the doing of worthy work worthily. They were set above the tyranny of the market price and the prime concern was for perfection in the product whatever that might be. Within reasonable limits they came and went as they pleased.[23]

Other commentators have been less sanguine. Peter Stansky, for example, has argued that jobs at the works could be 'repetitive' and 'divided up in a "modern" assembly line'.[24] Harvey and Press's more detailed analysis is even harsher:

> Morris and Co employees were not free to enjoy their work in the leisurely, contemplative way recommended by their master: piecework for long hours is, by its very nature, intense and demanding of energy […]. Morris employed older technologies mainly because they gave him, as a designer and manufacturer, the close control over the production process that he felt he needed.[25]

By contrast, a worker at Merton quoted by E. P. Thompson suggested that Morris

> substituted piece work founded on the advanced rates of wages for the time work wherever the occupation permitted it, thus giving the workman a greater liberty as to the disposal of his time … Piece workers … could then occasionally knock off for an hour's work in the garden.[26]

It is difficult to draw an accurate picture of working life at Merton but it is clear that Morris remained firmly in control even if it was doubtless better to be employed by him than most of Victorian manufacturing industry.

The Kelmscott Press was a much smaller enterprise and although Morris exerted considerable control over what was produced, his direct control of production was limited by his lack of printing skills. I have discussed this in more detail elsewhere but germane to the argument here is Michelle Weinroth's view of the Press as a model for Morris's socialism and her reflection on its nature as a 'medieval guild'.[27] Nevertheless, a division of labour remained along traditional craft lines and Morris's conception was divorced from the workers' production: the hand separate from the

brain, which figures centrally in the following discussion of the re-emergence of Morris's ideas and publications in the debates of the 1970s and 1980s on workers' control and the concluding commentary on contemporary work.[28]

The Re-emergence of Workers' Control

It would be possible to trace a linear progression of Morris's ideas about the control of work and further discussion of syndicalist ideas about trade unionism and, in particular, the work of G. D. H. Cole and Guild Socialism.[29] I will not repeat here what has been covered in John Blewitt's book on Morris; rather, I will continue to discuss the progression of the 'dual socialisms' and the questions of the creation of wealth rather than its distribution.[30]

As I have suggested earlier, the control of work has a causal relationship with ownership under capitalism and this raises two related issues: the control of the organisations that provide work, and the control of the work which takes place within organisations. The former has been challenged through nationalisation by a social democratic socialism when its parties are in government, but the latter, rarely so.

In the UK an 'institutional approach' to control has focussed both on nationalisation (or 'municipalisation' during the nineteenth century) and the participation of workers through their trade unions, in matters of economic planning and the governance of large corporations. For example, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the Labour Party joined forces in a corporatist vision of employment relations in the context of proposed national planning agreements and legislation that would put workers' representatives on the boards of companies. This strategy was encompassed in the proposals of the 'Bullock Report' and reflected a debate at the European as well as the UK level.[31] The arguments were developed in a series of debates and proposals that were, perhaps surprisingly, still ongoing after the Thatcher government was elected in 1979. The TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee published a document called *Economic Planning and Industrial Democracy* just two years before the miners' strike of 1984-85.[32]

However, the focus in the institutional debate had shifted to employee participation in management decision-making rather than the more challenging project of workers' control. This was a side-line of the legislative process pursued by the then Secretary of State for Industry (1974-75), Tony Benn, in his championing of the so-called 'Benn Cooperatives' such as Meriden Motorcycles. These were to be experiments in workers' self-management and developed alongside the emergence of a more grass roots worker cooperative movement supported by the Industrial Common Ownership Act of 1976. As Morris would have suspected, cooperatives had to exist in a commercial marketplace leaving them open to failure or 'joint-

stockery'. A different approach was taken in initiatives from workplace-based trade unionists associated with a growing shop steward organisation in manufacturing industry.

The strand of the socialist argument which drew on Morris's ideas about work and the production of wealth became significant as a counterpoint to the institutional approach. Two university academics, Ken Coates and Tony Topham published wide-ranging historical collections alongside their own arguments for workers' control and all this found expression in the Institute for Workers' Control.[33] This came into being in 1968 (after earlier conferences) and called successful conferences with over one thousand delegates in 1969 and 1970.[34]

At the heart of these debates was the role and power of trade unions as a collective and transforming force. The emergence of a strong base of workplace organising and shop steward activity was envisaged as a locus of power against the employers, but also as a positive force in shaping meaningful work for workers themselves – and here we are back to Morris. The focus of the argument is not just one of ownership, although this remains significant in terms of power relations, but the product of labour; its division and its relegation of workers to an 'appendage' of a machine, devoid of power and control. These ideas were exemplified by the Lucas Aerospace campaign for socially useful production, alongside others that were less well-known.[35]

Morris often railed against the 'shoddy' goods that were produced by the factories of the industrial revolution. Not only was the quality of the goods at issue, although that was a critical point for him, but also their value to society more generally. This argument became embodied in the ideas of 'socially useful production'.

Lucas Aerospace was, as its name suggests, heavily engaged in the defence sector and in the 1970s was suffering a significant decline in jobs. The 'combine committee' of the trade unions developed an 'alternative plan' of socially useful products to preserve jobs, but also to switch the company in a different direction that was more ethical and environmental. This focused on areas such as medical equipment and alternative energy resources.

The argument about the nature of work in the company became the second focus of attention. The workforce was relatively skilled in an area requiring particular technical expertise. The trade unions argued that Taylorist (production line) strategies and the division of labour that separated 'hand from brain' was further accentuated by information technology and the use of computer systems. The machine not just taking over productive labour but also mental labour. The workers had become driven by the systems they operated but with little control over them – a precursor of more recent debates about the role of surveillance and other technologies in the workplace.

Mike Cooley's evocatively titled book *Architect or Bee* became a focus for this

discussion.[36] Cooley was closely involved in the Lucas campaign and in the establishment of the Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems (CAITS) in 1978 at North East London Polytechnic. He took further the argument about workers and machines in to the newly automating world of technological change, taking up the argument that 'computers increase the authoritarian control which an employer has over his employees'.[37] This argument clearly foreshadows contemporary debates, almost forty years before today's focus on such issues.

All of which returns us to Morris in three particular, but distinct, ways. Firstly, for Morris, the control of work was usually presented as a matter for the individual: attractive labour under socialism would be defined by what the *individual* might desire. Here, on the other hand, we see an argument about the *collective* control of work through workers' organisations within the constraints of capitalism. Secondly, the division of labour is of critical importance, but here, as the distinction between 'hand and brain'; conception and process that leaves the worker divorced from contributing holistically to the labour process. Thirdly, the workers' control movement was concerned with the product of the worker's labour. In Morris's case, Victorian capitalism would and could only produce 'shoddy' products. Giving workers some control of tapestry weaving at Merton might change things somewhat but it could never give the worker complete satisfaction in the way labour under socialism could. Today, by contrast, the control of work by workers themselves is ever diminishing for the majority in deindustrialising capitalist economies such as the UK, whether by hand or by brain.

Contemporary Control

There is a range of factors which distinguish work today from that which Morris would have been familiar with in Victorian industrial capitalism, but he would, nevertheless, have recognised a number of the underlying issues and the questions he raised about the control of work and the intrinsic pleasure of work itself that remain fundamental. To begin with, he would see the obvious shift from an economy based on industrial capital with its related factories and workshops to one dominated by finance capital and its related offices and work spaces, including the home. In contemporary parlance, this can be construed as a shift to the 'knowledge economy', which equates to a shift of *production* from the UK to elsewhere in the world rather than its abolition. Alongside this we see shifts towards retail work both physically in shops and on-line and to the social care sector, following on from changing population demographics. Globally, much manufacturing employment has been displaced from the UK to countries with generally cheaper labour costs, poorer standards and little or no trade union organisations. The women workers in sweated garment factories

making today's fashions would, no doubt, find Morris's ideas about pleasure in work highly fanciful. They would, of course, be right. Beyond these macro patterns of employment I want to consider the shifts that have taken place in the control of work in the UK and I will do this in four particular ways.

Firstly, there is the generalised shift of notions of control from the worker to the consumer; that is, from the workplace to the marketplace. Judgements of organisational success are based on levels of consumption and the meeting of targets. This movement within the dual socialism I have suggested here is reflected clearly in the UK in the period of New Labour Government under Tony Blair's leadership. In opposition he had worked to remove Clause IV (4) from the Labour Party's constitution which read, in part:

> To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry […] upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production […] and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.[38]

At the Labour Party conference in 2002 he further argued that the role of 'progressive politics' was to build reforms 'around the needs of the individual as consumer and citizen'.[39] In such a scenario, trade unions are given little role to play as representatives of workers rather than consumers – it is not workers who set targets but citizens in the marketplace.

Secondly, this shift coincided with the decline in influence and power of trade unions at the workplace and in their relationship with the Labour Party. The statistics make the case compellingly: in 1979 (when Margaret Thatcher was elected) over half of the workforce was in trade union membership and by 2020 this had declined to less than a quarter. Not surprisingly, the coverage of collective agreements, and, therefore, the degree of control they gave to unions had declined from approaching three quarters in 1979 to barely one quarter in 2019 and sixty per cent of this coverage was in the public sector. Moreover, this can be related to perceptions of workers as individuals rather than as part of a collective who might enforce their rights through Employment Tribunals and have their 'living wage' determined by government rather than through trade union representation. The worker as a 'citizen' rather than part of a workplace organisation.

Thirdly, this 'de-collectivisation' of working relationships is reflected in the nature of the employment contract or lack of it. The spread of zero hours contracts is commonplace but equally there is the growth of enforced self-employment which takes workers out of a direct relationship with an employer and leaves them

responsible for their own sickness and holiday payments and arrangements. Some of this has been challenged by trade unions at tribunals which have ruled that there is a de facto employment relationship for people such as couriers. It also leaves workers isolated from each other as they work from home with little or no contact with those doing the same work.

Finally, there is the question of automation and artificial intelligence as a mechanism of control. Morris will have been familiar with the worker as an appendage to a machine in a factory but today this is much more sophisticated. Performance can be measured electronically both inside and outside a workplace; targets can be set by employers and workers measured against them. Even workers in professional jobs who might have previously experienced some autonomy in their working lives can be quantitatively and qualitatively measured and may be required to pass on 'their' knowledge through, for example, online programmes.

The use of technology in this way is contested terrain both by those who are its 'victims' and those who see technology as opportunity. It is certainly the case that technology can be both 'labour saving' and make knowledge freely available. However, much of the contemporary debate about work within a broadly socialist paradigm focuses on what might be seen as the decline of the working class, by which is commonly meant, male manual work organised through trade unions. There is no doubt that such a class that dominated the discussions of work in Marx and Morris has been reconstituted yet it has by no means disappeared.

Some commentators question the nature of this process of decomposition and recomposition. Paul Mason, for example, argues that '[t]he modern, global working class no longer thinks or acts like the classic proletariat of the twentieth century – and no amount of exposure to the class struggle will remedy this'. Nevertheless, Mason suggests that capital's gravedigger has been 'reincarnated' as the 'networked individual'.[40] Others see opportunity in new technologies for increased leisure and different work opportunities. Indeed, increased and enforced leisure might be hard to avoid given the apocalyptic job losses envisaged by, for example, Aaron Bastani. As with Mason, Bastani is also an advocate of what the former calls 'collaborative business models'.[41] In Bastani's case, he offers the much lauded 'Preston model' as a basis for localised transitions:

> where other authorities privatised Preston grew its own businesses even encouraging worker-owned cooperatives […] [and] replicating the Preston model is the first step in building an alternative that breaks with neo-liberalism.[42]

So then, we might appear to be a long way from Morris in the twenty-first century, although it is not without interest that cooperatives re-emerge as at least one form of 'salvation'. We also have artificial intelligence as both potentially liberating and equally enslaving. Furthermore, we find authors in a broadly-defined socialist tradition, struggling not just with the decline of the working class, but the associated decline of trade unions and, alongside them, social democratic political parties. Ever widening gaps between rich and poor undermine the redistributive project of one arm of the 'dual socialism'.

What, then, remains of Morris? Firstly, his socialism rooted in ideas of production rather than distribution. It is this, I have argued, that constitutes the revolutionary nature of his socialism as much, if not more so, that his anti-parliamentarianism and non-statist utopia. Work and how it is organised, rather than how much there is of it, remains a central question in our shifting economy.

Secondly, there is the issue of control and its inevitable corollary of power. Is it the 'networked' individual that controls social media and its technology or is it a controlling influence on them? This is not simply a question of theory but part of the everyday life of those, like couriers for example, whose 'network' leaves them to be controlled by others in a low-paid and precarious economy. As with Morris, it is the relationship with the 'machine' rather than the machine itself that is the issue. It is the power to control that is critical. Morris might rarely get a mention in the discussions of contemporary work yet his demands for work that is satisfying to the individual and productive of goods that have art in them could not be more relevant in a society where workers have increasingly less control over their work.[43]

NOTES

1. Ruth Kinna, 'William Morris: Art, Work, and Leisure', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61: 3 (2000), 493-512 (497). (Afterwards Kinna).
2. William Morris, 'The Prospects of Architecture in Civilisation' (1881), in *Hopes and Fears for Art* (Bristol: Thommes Press, 1994), p. 142.
3. Friedrich Engels wrote *The Condition of the Working Class in England* based on his experience working in Manchester during the 1840s. It was first published in English in New York in 1887 and London in 1891 with numerous reprints.
4. Rob Breton, 'William Morris and the Gospel of Work', *Utopian Studies*, 13: 1 (2002), 43-56.
5. William Morris, *Political Writings: Contributions to Justice and Commonweal 1883-1890*, ed. by Nicholas Salmon (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994), p. 19.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
7. See, for example, Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1974). This book, written within a Marxist tradition, critiqued the process of 'scientific management', pioneered by F. W. Taylor and exemplified by 'time and motion' studies and production line work. In particular, it drew attention to the division between 'hand and brain' and sparked an academic debate on the labour process.
8. Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* was first published in 1776 and the famous passage on the division

of labour and the manufacture of a pin has been reprinted extensively.

9. Kinna, p. 497.
10. See Mary Greensted, ed., *An Anthology of the Arts and Crafts Movement* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2005) for examples of original documents. For a fascinating account of architectural and SPAB-inspired ideals in this respect, see Michael Drury, *Wandering Architects: In Pursuit of an Arts and Crafts Ideal* (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2016).
11. See Richard Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unions* (London: Pluto Press, 1991).
12. See Sydney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902) for the classic and influential discussion.
13. For a comprehensive and well-illustrated account, see Terry McCarthy, ed., *The Great Dock Strike, 1889* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988). Eleanor Marx was a significant figure in the strike and in other trade union unrest and a Socialist League member for some time.
14. William Morris, *Journalism: Contributions to Commonweal, 1885-1890*, ed. by Nicholas Salmon (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), p. 483. (Afterwards Morris, *Journalism*).
15. *Ibid*., p. 262.
16. *Ibid*., p. 238.
17. *Ibid*.
18. *Shields Daily Gazette*, 12 April 1887, p. 2. For a fuller discussion of the circumstances surrounding this particular quote, see John Stirling, 'Striking Miners and the Cockney Socialists', *North East History*, 46 (2015), 99-115.
19. Morris, *Journalism*, p. 661.
20. I discuss this further in John Stirling, 'The People of the Kelmscott Press', *JWMS*, 24: 1-2 (2020-21), 95-105. (Afterwards Stirling, 'The People of the Kelmscott Press').
21. For a full account, see Charles Harvey and Jon Press, *William Morris: Design and Enterprise in Victorian Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991); Charles Harvey and Jon Press, *Art, Enterprise and Ethics: The Life and Work of William Morris* (London: Frank Cass, 1996). (Afterwards Harvey and Press, *Design and Enterprise*).
22. Emma Lazarus, 'A Day in Surrey with William Morris', *Century Magazine*, 32: 48 (1886).
23. James Leatham, *William Morris: Master of Many Crafts* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994), p. 74. Reprint of 1900 edition.
24. Peter Stansky, *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s and the Arts and Crafts* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 3.
25. Harvey and Press, *Design and Enterprise*, p. 154.
26. E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London: Merlin Press, 1977), p. 321. (Afterwards Thompson).
27. Stirling, 'The People of the Kelmscott Press', p. 102.
28. See, in particular, Thompson; A. L. Morton, *Political Writings of William Morris* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1973); and the Exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, *William Morris Today* (London: ICA, 1984).
29. See G.D.H. Cole, *Self-government in Industry* (London: Heinemann, 1972). A reprint of the 1917 edition with an excellent introduction by J. G. Corina.
30. See John Blewitt, *William Morris and the Instinct for Freedom* (Dagenham: Merlin Press, 2019), ch. 8. (Afterwards Blewitt, *William Morris*).
31. Lord Bullock, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Industrial Democracy* (London: HMSO Cmd 6706., 1977). After a long gestation, European debates culminated in the establishment of European Works Councils in which British workers lost their rights to participate following Brexit.
32. TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee, *Economic Planning and Industrial Democracy* (London: TUC/Labour Party, 1982).

33. See, for example, Ken Coates, ed., *Can the Workers Run Industry?* (London: Sphere Books/Institute for Workers Control, 1968) and Ken Coates and Tony Topham, *The New Unionism* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1974).
34. See Richard Hyman, 'Workers' Control and Revolutionary Theory', *The Socialist Register*, 11 (1974), 241-278.
35. Hilary Wainwright and Dave Elliott, *The Lucas Plan: A New Trade Unionism in the Making?* (London: Allison & Busby, 1982). See also Huw Beynon and Hilary Wainwright, *The Workers' Report on Vickers* (London: Pluto Press, 1979); Collective Designs/Projects, eds., *Very Nice Work If You Can Get It* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1985).
36. Mike Cooley, *Architect or Bee? The Human/Technology Relationship* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1980). This book was republished by Spokesman in 2016, with a Foreword by TUC secretary Frances O'Grady, as debates about control at work, or the lack of it, re-emerged.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
38. Interestingly in this context, Tony Benn's defeated amendment was to replace 'by hand *or* by brain' with 'by hand *and* by brain'.
39. Quoted in Huw Beynon and Ray Hudson, *The Shadow of the Mine* (London: Verso, 2021), p. 317.
40. Paul Mason, *Post Capitalism; A Guide to our Future* (London: Penguin, 2015), p. 230.
41. Paul Mason, *Clear Bright Future: A Radical Defence of the Human Being* (London: Penguin, 2019), p. 275.
42. Aaron Bastani, *Fully Automated Luxury Communism* (London: Verso, 2019), p. 200. The 'Preston model' was also drawn on in Blewitt, *William Morris*.
43. Morris's personal and artistic life remain of continuing interest but the political debates of the twenty-first century have also seen further publications about his socialism. See, for example, Blewitt, *William Morris*; Ruth Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000); Phil Katz, *Thinking Hands: The Power of Labour in William Morris* (London: Hethereington Press, 2005); Hassan Mahamdallie, *Crossing The River of Fire: The Socialism of William Morris* (London: Redwords, 2008).

Reviews

Edited by Rosie Miles

Anna Mason, ed., *William Morris* (London: Thames & Hudson with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 2021), 432 pp., 660 illustrations, many in colour, £50.00 hbk, ISBN 9780500480502.

This handsome – and very heavy – hardback, with its striking jacket based on an exaggerated detail from Morris's St. James's wallpaper of 1881, has been published, as the editor explains, to mark the 125th anniversary of Morris's death in 1896. It is, to a large extent, an updated reissue of the book edited by Linda Parry in 1996, which accompanied the V&A's 'landmark exhibition' held on the occasion of Morris's centenary year (p. 6). The new material consists of the editor's brief Preface (pp. 6-7), in which she explains the situation described above, and expresses the conviction that '[i]f this publication conveys the complexity, originality and radical spirit of Morris and his co-workers, it will have succeeded' (p. 7).

The book consists of fourteen substantial chapters from the original volume: five on 'The Man' (by Fiona MacCarthy, Charles Harvey and Jon Press, Nicholas Salmon, Chris Miele and myself), and nine on 'The Art'. In this section, 'Painting' by Ray Watkinson is replaced by 'Painting and Drawing' by Julia Griffin, but the eight other

sections, by Martin Harrison, Linda Parry (twice), Frances Collard, Jennifer Hawkins Opie, Leslie Hoskins, John Nash and John Dreyfus, retain their original form. The final 'Legacy' section is quite different: instead of Norman Kelvin's 'The Morris Who Reads Us', Clive Wainright's 'Morris in Context' and Paul Greenhalgh's 'Morris after Morris', we have 'William Morris and the V&A' by its director, Tristram Hunt, and 'Britain and Beyond: Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement' by Karen Livingstone.

The new material is of high quality. In addition to the editor's scholarly work, the contributions from Hunt and Livingstone are both cogent and informative. Hunt, now Director of the V&A, is able to show how significant the museum was for Morris. The section 'Morris as socialist' remarks on his regretful awareness that 'art cannot have a real life and growth under the present system of commercialism and profit-mongering' (quoted p. 400). Under the heading 'Legacy', Hunt notes that 'most designs in the collection were acquired posthumously'. It was May's determination that helped to bring about the V&A's William Morris Centenary Exhibition in 1934, and on her death in 1938 she left 'a sizeable collection of her father's work' to the V&A, and to May is due the credit for the V&A's possessing 'such a prominent and expansive collection relating to Morris's life' (p. 402). Credit is given to Peter Floud (1911-60) for his work on the significant exhibition 'Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts' in 1952 as unexpectedly popular with the public. Hunt then praises the major Morris exhibition at the V&A curated by Linda Parry in 1996 to mark the centenary of Morris's death, which showed that 'Morris did not simply revive, he adapted and reinvigorated craft practices to create something new for the world in which he lived and the future that he longed to see' (p. 403). Hunt concludes emphatically by declaring that 'by continually updating the meaning of this museum as a contemporary force for democratizing access to art, culture and, above all, beauty for all, I hope we are honouring his memory with honesty and conviction' (p. 403).

The second new article is 'Britain and Beyond: Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement', by Karen Livingstone, Deputy Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. Her fourteen pages cover a wide range of material, mostly illustrated, in the light of her assertion that Morris was the 'spiritual father' of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The movement took its name from the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, founded in London in 1887 to raise the status of the decorative arts, and had both 'a sophisticated urban dimension' in such cities as London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Edinburgh, and 'a simple life dimension', with workers in the Lake District, Surrey, Cornwall and the Cotswolds (p. 405). The architect and designer M. H. Baillie Scott (1865-1945) took his lead from Morris; his attractive design for a dining room at Falkewood, published in *Houses and Gardens* in 1906, is illustrated (p. 405). Arts and

Crafts ideas were widely disseminated in newspapers and magazines such as *The Studio, Art Quarterly* and others (p. 406). The section 'Britain 1880-1914' tells us that there was no single manifesto for the Movement, but that various societies, workshops and manufacturers spread Arts and Crafts ideas in this period. The idea of a Guild was popular for its suggestion of a pre-industrial world, as in Ruskin's still surviving Guild of St. George from 1871. The Century Guild was set up by Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo (1851-1942) with Herbert Horne (1864-1916) and Selwyn Image (1849-1930), publishing *The Hobby Horse* from 1884 and The Art Workers' Guild encouraged cooperation between designers and manufacturers. Morris was at first sceptical about the chances of the Movement, but became fully engaged as exhibitor, and served as its president from 1890 to his death. Followers of Ruskin and Morris ran initiatives across the British Isles, and women played very important roles as 'designers, artists, makers, writers and patrons'. As the Art Workers' Guild did not admit woman members, May Morris and others founded the Women's Guild of Crafts in 1907. May is rightly described as 'a dynamic and influential force, creating a lasting legacy in her own right', as well as being 'a highly skilled and original embroiderer, a designer, author, editor and teacher'. She was head of the embroidery section of Morris and Co., 'and used her energy and contacts to write, teach and travel, including to America in 1909-10' (p. 407).

The page ends with a striking illustration of 'The Love Cup', an enamel and gold pendant designed and made by Phoebe Anna Traquair in 1907; information about the Scot Traquair is given on the following page. She produced remarkable work in many media, and through her association with Patrick Geddes she carried out several art murals in Edinburgh. The Dun Emer Guild was a collective of women craft workers established in 1902 by Evelyn Gleeson (1855-1944) with the sisters Lily (1866-1949) and Elizabeth (Lolly) Yeats (1868-1940). Followers of Morris discussed on the ensuing pages include Charles Robert Ashbee (1863-1942), founder of the Guild of Handicraft. Livingstone writes that 'Ashbee was not just a disciple but became an inspiration and model, at home and internationally, for how to put Morris's ideas in to practical application' (p. 408). A handsome decanter with silver mounts and with a chrysophrase set in the finial is shown on p. 409, together with St. Chad and St. Agatha, smaller versions of stained-glass windows designed as a part of a large window illustrating 'The Childhood of the Blessed Virgin' by Christopher Whall for the Lady Chapel at Gloucester Cathedral 1899-1913. Whall (1849-1924) departed from Morris's practice in insisting that the craftsman should undertake both the design and the execution of a window. His windows in Gloucester Cathedral are, Livingstone claims, 'among the finest modern glass works in an ancient setting' (p. 408).

Another craftsman greatly influenced by Morris was Ernest Gimson (1864-1919),

architect, designer and furniture-maker (p. 408). In 1893 he moved to the Cotswolds, and learned how to make furniture, and set up his own furniture workshop and, later, a blacksmith's forge. He was a friend of May Morris, and worked with her at Kelmscott to design some cottages and a village hall in memory of her parents (p. 409). On the next page we are shown a ladder-back armchair designed and possibly made by Gimson, c. 1895, and now in the V&A. Next we encounter C.F.A. Voysey (1857-1941), who was a 'different kind of Arts and Crafts figure, but no less a direct successor of Morris' (p. 409). Voysey was a very fine pattern designer; in 1896 *The Studio* stated that 'a Voysey wallpaper' was as familiar to customers as 'a Morris chintz' (p. 410). In his unpublished autobiography, Voysey admitted that Morris was his greatest influence, but that he refrained from entering the Morris shop because he was afraid of being too influenced by what he would see. Voysey's 'Minto' wallpaper, manufactured by Essex and Co. in 1901 and shown on p. 410, is a delightful composition, with rows of charming bluebirds and tulips.

Leaving Voysey, Livingstone next reminds us that Morris and Philip Webb 'forged a new appreciation of old buildings and the quality of materials and craftsmanship to be found in them', and this led the next generation of architects, such as Edward Shroder Prior (1852-1932), to develop a style combining 'tradition and innovation in the use of vernacular materials, pattern and building techniques' (p. 410). Prior was both scholar and architect, and his St. Andrew at Roker in County Durham is a masterpiece. The last follower of Morris considered here is W. R. Lethaby (1857-1931). Livingstone argues convincingly that Lethaby did as much as any of Morris's followers to find practical ways to pass on craft skills and to take a leading role in ensuring an appreciation of older buildings. He 'pushed the boundaries of traditional and modern building techniques', as can be seen in his fine All Saints, Brockhampton, of 1902 (p. 411). Lethaby became co-Principal of the progressive Central School of Arts and Crafts, founded in London in 1896. He appointed excellent tutors, including May Morris and the calligrapher Edward Johnston (1872-1944). Among Johnston's pupils was Louise Lessore, later Powell, whose magnificent illuminated manuscript 'Gloria in Altissimis Deo' of 1905 is shown on p. 411. During this period new art schools were founded in many large industrial cities. The teachers and students at the Glasgow School of Art are credited with producing 'a unique and influential style through multiple media' (p. 411). Fine embroidery was produced under Jessie Newbery (1864-1948), and furniture by, among others, Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928); a high-backed chair designed by Mackintosh appears, strikingly, also on p. 411. Livingstone notes that his work used traditional forms and placed an emphasis on craftsmanship, but that Mackintosh exaggerated the height of the chair's plain, tapering back, as can be seen in the illustration.

The following pages take us first to North America, then to Europe, and finally to Japan. In Europe, we are told how national versions of the Arts and Crafts Movement developed in many European countries; an attractive illustration shows a tapestry woven in hand-spun and hand-dyed wool, designed by Frida Hansen for the Norwegian Weaving Society in 1900 (p. 414). Livingstone notes that '[a] common thread was the revival of traditional crafts in the face of increased industrialization' (p. 414). Magazines and other publications helped to make Morris and his ideas widely known. Frida Hansen travelled around Norway learning about Nordic techniques, and set up her own weaving studios in Oslo. In Russia, an artists' colony was founded in Abramtsevo in 1874, followed by another in Talashkino in 1898. In Hungary, the Godollo Artists' Colony was founded in 1902, and in Poland organisations like the Krakov Workshops association developed. In Denmark and Germany, artists and designers worked more closely with established manufacturers. Centres of reform developed in cities like Darmstadt, Dresden, Munich and Weimar (p. 415). A larger illustration higher on the same page shows a tender painting entitled 'When the Children have Gone to Bed' by the Swede Carl Larsson, from a series published in *Ett Hem* (at Home) in 1899. Carl Larsson and his wife Karin made a family home together, which they filled with their own artworks, and published the results in a series of illustrated books providing a new model for living (p. 416).

The final section is entitled 'Japan'. In it we learn that the ideas of Ruskin and Morris played an important part in the creation of the radical new craft movement known as the Mingei (Folk Crafts) movement led by the critic Yanagi Soetsu (1889-1961), once described as 'the Japanese William Morris' (p. 416). Yanagi was associated with a distinguished new generation of Japanese potters, and the English potter Bernard Leach (1887-1979). Leach's attractive 'Tree of Life' dish is shown on p. 417, the last illustration in the book. Morris first became known in Japan in 1891, when his work as a poet was featured in some magazines, and some scholars, most importantly Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904), began to study and lecture on his poetry. *News from Nowhere* was translated into Japanese in 1904, and the relevance of Morris's ideas to Japan was widely discussed. The scholar Tomomoto Kenchiki was in London from 1908 to 1910, where he was able to visit the V&A, and to study Morris's wallpaper and textile designs. This led him to see that art and craft could have the same value (p. 417). On returning to Japan, Kenkichi took up weaving, established a design office, and experimented with the making of ceramics, aiming to make useful objects at the lowest possible price. The Mingei movement also included Hamada Shoji, who met Leach when the latter returned to Japan in 1909 to teach etching. In 1918 Hamada and Leach came to England together, where Leach had been invited to set up a pottery at St. Ives in Cornwall. They discovered the English slipware

tradition, and began to make their own versions of it, thus inaugurating the studio pottery movement which dominated the next decades of the twentieth century (p. 417). Leach remained at St. Ives, producing the simple pottery that was to make his name throughout England.

Livingstone concludes that:

> This rich, deep and far-reaching story comes to life through the individual endeavours and skills of many hundreds, or thousands, of individuals who committed to making the world a better place, and to a life made better through art and good work. Morris's extraordinary vision inspired a new generation, and, when addressing art students in Birmingham in 1894, he encouraged those who came after him to do the same: 'so that the next after you may need no encouragement save what they will get from their own work, the pleasure of creating beautiful things, which is the greatest pleasure in the world'.
>
> (p. 417)

This excellent volume concludes with a William Morris Chronology, a Select Bibliography, Notes on Authors, Acknowledgements, Picture Credits and a lengthy Index.

Peter Faulkner

Chris Caseldine, *Most Unimaginably Strange: An Eclectic Companion to the Landscape of Iceland* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021), 344 pp., 103 illustrations, 97 in colour, £25.00 hbk, ISBN 9781789144727.

That this book begins not just with an epigraph from Morris's Icelandic Diary but uses part of it for its title is of immediate interest to Morris readers. Its subtitle, *An Eclectic Companion to the Landscape of Iceland*, describes the book fairly but undersells its richness, as the author notes in his postscript:

> An encounter with the Icelandic landscape cannot be simply a matter of seeing and understanding in a straightforward, objective, scientific way – a more satisfying awareness comes with a broadening of the mind and accepting a need to see the country through a variety of different critical prisms.
>
> (p. 282)

Chris Caseldine does this, using for some of the prisms the writings of earlier visitors,

and in particular William Morris, who figures more often than any foreign visitor except Ebenezer Henderson; these together with Icelanders' writings are combined with recent academic research, including his own. The result is a rich and highly readable book.

Opening with a review of visitors' experiences and writings, and drawing attention to some important women travellers, the book sets them all in the history of Iceland with its first occupants coming from Scandinavia and Ireland. The country commenced with an early democracy and a literary flowering through its sagas. One of its grandest geological and social features is the site of the first Alþingi, the Icelandic Parliament, founded in 930 AD and set between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates. This was followed by the imposition of autocracy, translating into a repressive theocracy until the late nineteenth century when the Icelandic people once again began to flourish.

In keeping with Caseldine's background as former Professor of Quaternary Environmental Change at the University of Exeter, the chapters are structured around the geological processes that have formed many of the features that have attracted scientists, artists and visitors over the years. The presentation of the geology, whilst not shying away from the technical elements, is delivered in a manner that makes it easy to understand and which is fully integrated with the human response to it, not only of visitors but also Icelanders from all walks of life.

Hekla, described often as the 'gate of Hell' by outsiders, was, as early as 1593, described as volcanic by Arngrímur Jónsson but as many Icelanders' work was published in Icelandic this was not recognised by the international scientific community. An exception to this was Sigurður Þórarinsson, as much of his pioneering work using the analysis of tephra (ash deposits) from the Hekla volcano to establish a chronology of eruptions was written and published in English and became the bedrock of an essential tool used worldwide.

Part of the attraction of Iceland is that its geology is not historic (at least in human terms) but current. Hekla is an active volcano but there are also many others. The eruption of Eyjafjallajokull in 2010 drew great international attention because it interfered with air travel and transatlantic flights and thus impacted immediately and unpredictably on the lives of 'the masters of the universe' and their excessive, first-class standards of carbon production. Unfortunately, as soon as they could resume life as normal, they forgot about it. But for those living in Iceland, not only are eruptions a danger (Reykjanes Peninsula is erupting as I write this in August 2022) but the effects of Anthropogenic climate change are present and active. The penultimate chapter deals with this period, scientifically and socially, summed up by the plaque erected at the site of the Ok glacier that disappeared in 2014. It reads, in

Icelandic and English:

A letter to the future
Ok is the first Icelandic glacier to lose its status as a glacier.
In the next 200 years all our glaciers are expected to follow the same path.
This monument is to acknowledge that we know
What is happening and what needs to be done.
Only you know if we did it.
August 2019
415ppm CO2 (268)

In May 2022, three years later, the measurement of parts per million of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere is now 421.

This book does not deserve a review that finishes in such a depressing manner. For all its unflinching engagement with the violent geologic activity that created (and still creates) Iceland, its history of oppression for centuries (especially of women), and its emergence from Danish, briefly British, and then American occupation, it is a book that, whilst recognising the contribution of foreigners to our knowledge and understanding, gives Icelanders their proper role and recognition. This is seen not least in Caseldine's championing of the novels of Halldór Laxness, five of which are now in print by Vintage.

One of the other glories of this book is the range of superb photographs and their reproduction. This carries through into the high production values of this book, including a tipped-in photograph in a recess on the front cover. This is perhaps the best modern book on Iceland and whether or not a trip has been taken, or is envisaged, it makes for a valuable and satisfying read, especially as Morris appears so often.

Ian Wall

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ANNETTE CARRUTHERS worked with the Arts and Crafts collections in Leicestershire and Cheltenham museums and taught at the University of St Andrews until 2014. Her publications include *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Scotland* (2013) and *Ernest Gimson: Arts & Crafts Designer and Architect* (with Mary Greensted and Barley Roscoe, 2019).

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