

Editorial

Nicholas Salmon

No doubt many readers will have read in the last *Newsletter* of my decision to step down from the editorship of the *Journal* after this issue. My editorship has spanned Morris's centenary in 1996 and the new millennium. It is going to be a thousand years before anyone else can say they edited a journal during such an exciting period.

My successor is to be Rosie Miles. Rosie teaches English at the University of Wolverhampton and was the joint winner of the latest Peter Floud Award. I wish her the best of luck.

Readers will know that it is not my habit to write long editorials. However, I am going to be self-indulgent on this occasion. There is one thing that immensely annoys me about the portrayal of Morris's political legacy. This is the assumption that Morris's influence on the socialist movement disappeared after his death and was somehow resurrected by R. Page Arnot in 1934.

This is so far from the truth that it makes me cringe! My grandfather was born when Morris was still alive. Percy Clement Salmon joined the ILP at the age of 19. He became secretary of his local branch and then led the strike at Silvertown against the CWS during the First World War. The strike only ended when the King intervened. My father recently gave me Percy's gold half-hunter watch inscribed to him by the strikers for his 'Services to Labour'.

My grandfather's secretary was Ellen – 'Red Ellen' – Wilkinson who led the Jarrow March. If I wasn't in Somerset as I write this, I would have printed an account of their exploits on May Day in 1923. Percy had a warrant out for his arrest in the General Strike of 1926. He then went on to defend trades unionists in the courts. His offices were in the house that had previously been owned by the Pankhursts. He was three times asked to stand for the Labour Party – when it was a Labour Party – but had to decline due to ill-health.

The point is that his union – ASDAW – never lost touch with William Morris. They printed his works in their magazine *New Dawn* throughout the 1920s. They all thought the world could be changed, as did Morris. I am dedicated to their memory, and that of Morris who inspired them. The chain is unbroken. There is a better world – it is our job to achieve its fulfilment.

All good wishes to the many friends and correspondents that I have made during the last five years. It has been a pleasure to know so many like-minded people.

Nicholas Salmon
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