

EDITORIAL

I hope a new editor may be allowed some words in which to thank his predecessor and express his general hopes and intentions for the *Journal*, which are of a quite unrevolutionary kind. It will be my aim to keep going along the eclectic and lively path which has marked its entire existence, never more obviously than under Ray Watkinson's guiding mind. The *Journal* exists to spread knowledge of Morris's work and ideas, and to show the relevance of his thinking, his bold engagement with practical political issues, for our divided and confusing age. Morris was partly a visionary who looked forward to "the happy days when society shall be what its name means, and politics will be no more," as he put it in the last words of 'The Present Outlook in Politics' in 1887. But he was also a realist who ran a commercially successful company and knew that specific political decisions were constantly being made. The *Journal* should reflect his variousness. Contributions of all kinds will therefore be welcomed. The present number has something of a literary emphasis, but that merely reflects the best material currently to hand. Fortunately Stephen Ponder's account of Wightwick Manor is here to remind us of Morris as a designer or shaper of the environment. In thinking of houses like the Manor, or Standen, or the Red House (shut away behind its protective walls from the suburban sprawl of Bexleyheath), we should also reflect on the limits of that shaping of an environment which remains all too often unsuitable for a truly human life such as Morris wanted for all. Visual material will be particularly appreciated. Perhaps photographs of aspects of modern Britain would do some of the work of Morris's lectures in drawing attention to *How We Live*. An example of what is awkwardly called Creative Work (a tautology to the Morrisian) would be at least as good evidence of Morris's influence as pieces of scholarship. We have room for all kinds of material, though reproduction in colour is beyond our means. Brief – or developed – statements in response to published material will also be welcomed; it would be properly Morrisian to set up a dialogue with our readers.

At the same time I shall try to uphold the editorial standards set by my predecessors, and the typographical quality achieved recently for us by Peter Lawrence, who will continue to control the design. The *Journal* can be only as good as its contributors make it. Up to now it has fully justified itself, but we need contributions covering all aspects of Morris's work in order to maintain the standard. This is an invitation to all our readers: please do not let the *Journal* fall solely into the hands of academics!

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