

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir

Your footnote to the article 'The Death of Topsy' brought to mind two points about Morris chronology that I should like to make.

First the family move from Horrington House to Kelmscott House can be quite well established by referring to the manuscript of *Scribbler*, the Morris and Burne-Jones children's home magazine. (BM Add Mss 45337.) May Morris describes it as fortnightly and states that it began in November 1878. Unfortunately there is no date on the first issue, but the writers' colophon reads 'Printed at the "Scribbler" office, temporarily erected at Horrington House, Turnham Green and published by J.A.Morris on Saturday afternoon.' The second issue colophon reads 'Printed by Messrs Morris and Co (Junior), and published by them at the Scribbler office, Kelmscott House . . . on Saturday, Nov. 16th, 1878.' All the early issues follow at fortnightly intervals, and with young ladies in the Morris line organising their first publishing venture, it seems very unlikely that they would have been waived from their schedule by a mere domestic move. So they were probably living at Horrington House on 2 November and the move was under way for the weeks at the end of October and the beginning of November.

Second, another date is often misquoted, that of Jenny's birthday and about this one can be quite specific. 'Kid having appeared . . .' are the opening words of William Morris's letter to Ford Madox Brown on 18 January 1861. This date has therefore frequently been taken as the birthday of his first born Jane Alice (Jenny). However in a letter from May, Jenny's younger sister, to Sidney Cockerell, in January 1931, she asks him: 'Would you have time to send my Jenny a picture-post-card

for the 17th – her birthday? She is much more herself in some ways just now, and she enjoys my picture-cards.’* It seemed unlikely that a devoted sister of almost seventy years would be mistaken in the date of her sister’s birthday. Indeed both Jane Alice’s birth certificate and her entry in the school register at Notting Hill High School confirm that the correct date of her birth was 17 January 1861.

Elizabeth Masterman

* London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Public Libraries,
Archives Department, Document:- DD/348/10 (xerox copy).