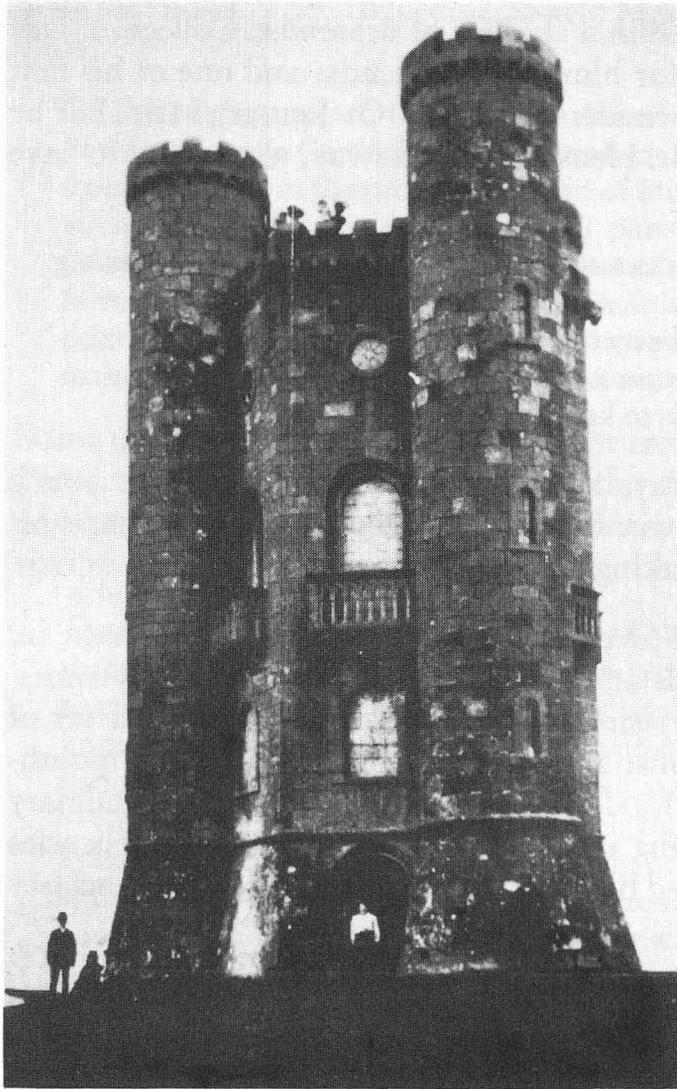


Lorraine Price

Cormell Price, my grandfather, was a contemporary and much-loved friend of William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones—one of the Oxford ‘Brotherhood’. Upon leaving the University, he studied medicine for eighteen months at the Radcliffe Infirmary under Dr. Acland, but gave this up when he found that he could not bear the operating theatre. In 1860 he became tutor to the son of a Russian Count, and spent the next three years, after travelling through Europe with the family, in Russia. Returning to England in 1863, he took a post at Haileybury College, where he rose to become Head of the Modern Side. In 1874 he moved to become Head Master of the United Services College at Westward Ho—where four years later, Rudyard Kipling, nephew of Georgiana and Edward Burne-Jones, became his pupil. In the same year, Price gave up the tenancy of Broadway Tower which he had held since September 1866.

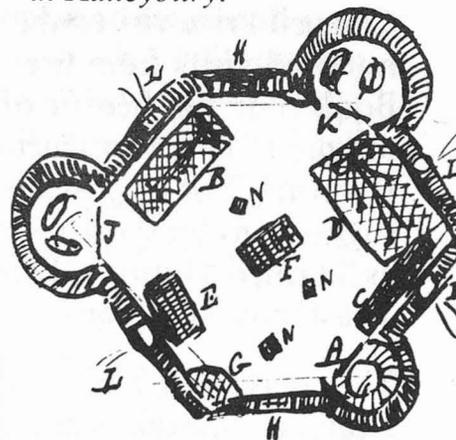
The Tower, a 65-foot Folly, stands on Broadway Beacon, 1024 feet above sea-level, and the current guide book tells us that on a clear day it is possible from its top to see twelve counties. Built in 1800 for the Earl of Coventry by James Wyatt (who built the Palace in Kew Gardens, and Beckford’s Fonthill) it was originally part of the Spring Hill Estate. In 1819 it was bought by the more than eccentric bibliophile and High Sheriff of Worcester, Sir Thomas Phillipps.



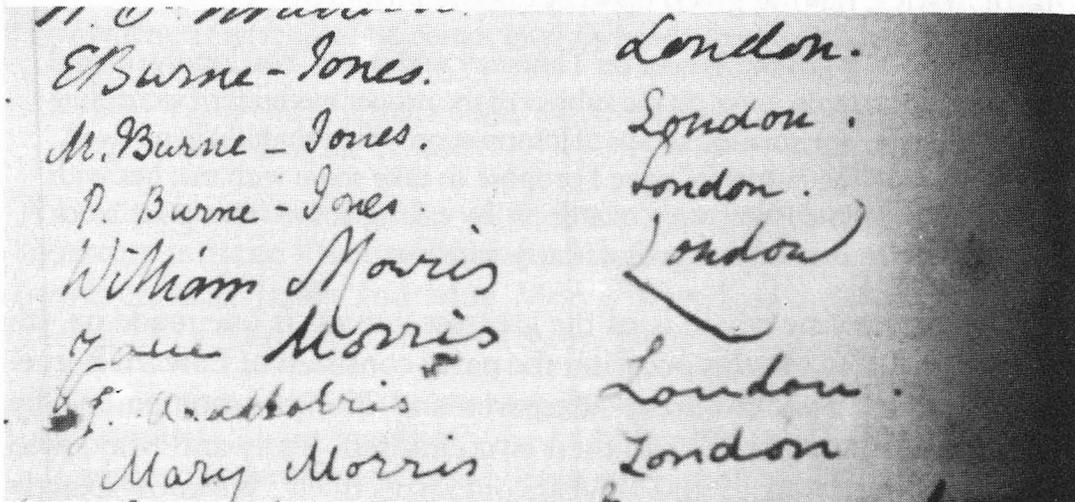
Broadway Tower.



Cornell Price when
at Haileybury.



Plan of the Tower
by Cornell Price.



Signatures in the visitors' book.

Cormell Price first rented the Tower jointly with a barrister friend, C.J. Stone who had been with him a student of Brasenose College: it was taken as a holiday home for himself and friends; and one of his first tasks was to advertise for a resident caretaker. On January 11th 1867 he received this letter from Mr. Hensley of Broadway, who seems to have been Phillipps' agent:

I have one offer from a man to reside at the Tower—He asks the following questions:

How long could he be at liberty to occupy it?

Could he give it up at the expiration of a year if he wished?

Would he have to find coals to keep the rooms aired?

This man was Mr. Stanley, who, with his wife and three young daughters, lived at the Tower for over eleven years, where he and his family performed all caretaking/housekeeping tasks necessary.

Cormell Price visited the Tower frequently, and altogether at least six hundred visits from friends and relatives are recorded in the Visitors' Book. For the benefit of visitors, my grandfather prepared a set of tongue-in-cheek instructions: and among his papers is also a mouth-watering 'List of possible food at Ye Tower' which provided culinary suggestions for those residing at the Tower, and includes such delicacies as 'Hashed Mutton', 'Potted Bloaters', 'Apricot Marmalade', 'Anchovy Toast' and 'Bon-bons'.

This may well have been sent in response to a plea from Charles Faulkner, another member of the Oxford 'Set' and founder-member of the Firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co., who wrote on 21 June 1868 from University College, Oxford (where he was now teaching Mathematics, having given up keeping the Firm's books):

I propose to go to the Tower on Thursday with Kate. You kindly offered to send me certain notes on the subject of the proper methods of victualling the garrison. The smallest scraps of information will be thankfully received.

Touching the matter of wine I propose to take *some* with me, but with your permission I will vary our drink by taking some from your stock leaving an equivalent from what I carry with me

Of course, the visit which is of the greatest interest is one made on 4th September 1876. On this occasion the party consisted of Edward Burne-Jones and his two children, Margaret and Philip, accompanied by William and Jane Morris and their two children, Jenny and May, who would then be about 15 and 14 years old respectively. We know exactly who visited the Tower on this occasion because they all signed the

Visitors' Book. The visit is described in Mackail's life of William Morris thus:

On the 4th September, 1876, a party drove from Kelmscott to pay a visit of a few days to Cornell Price at Broadway. On the way, as usual, they stopped to bait in the pretty little town of Burford on the Windrush. The alterations going on in the beautiful parish church there roused his (Morris's) horror; and at Broadway Tower he drafted a letter urging the formation of a Society which might deal with such cases, and, if the destruction done by the restorers could not be stopped, might at all events make it clear that it was destruction and not preservation

Some months later, in March 1877, Morris founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. In the summer of that year, Janey Morris wrote enthusiastically, when plans of a peculiarly complicated nature were afoot:

There seems to be a good chance of our all having as pleasant holidays as those of last year. Kate and Charley Faulkner have made a sort of promise to come to Kelmscott, and would no doubt come to your Tower, but you know their dear old Mother would go with them, and whether she could endure our not very luxuriously furnished country seats I am not sure.

Georgie will be with us part of the time, but you know she never leaves home at the same time with Ned. Wouldn't the best way be for the good walkers of the party to go to the inn at Broadway to sleep? and then we could all be together in the day, or another way of managing would be to divide, and part of us to stay at Kelmscott while the rest went to the Tower, but this plan I think does not promise as much fun as the other. We can bring down plenty of provisions from London so that we need only cook for amusement when we feel inclined; I can also furnish some bedding, in the way of large sofa-mattresses and blankets from Kelmscott if necessary. These are all the suggestions I can make dear Crom at this moment. If anything else comes into my head afterwards I will write you again.

May's excitement is tremendous at the coming expedition, she wants to sleep on the top of the Tower.

We cannot be sure that this visit did take place, although May Morris's signature is in the Visitors' Book for 8th August that year. We do know, however, that Janey and May Morris stayed at the Tower possibly during 1878. Writing from the Tower, Janey says:

I am writing a line to say we have got here though not without some adventures; leaving London by the 2.15 I found the train did not stop at Campden, so went on to Honeybourne, where the fly had gone to meet us. It is a good train to come by all the same, it is so fast. Another time I should get out at Moreton.

I have brought wine and all stores necessary with me, and I promise not to play the Colorado beetle among your potatoes, of which you have a fine crop, cabbages good too, and there will be beans by the time you come. May and I are getting on famously. We went out early this morning to enjoy the lark's song, we made friends with the poor old dog, admired the hills, got very cold, and came in and got up a good fire, the chimney not smoking much. I have found one of the plugs for the doors in case of a storm. I must hunt for the others with Polly's help. There was some wind last night, more tonight, but not enough, May says, she will not have to wait long, I fancy, before she calls out, Enough. Our beds are luxurious, being the two of us, and I brought a sofa to use in the daytime, having a vivid recollection of the legless one of last year—everything is very clean and comfortable, if only the weather holds good, I believe I am getting fatter already. Don't forget to write and tell me the exact day when I may expect you.

The entire Morris family visited the Tower on 2nd September 1878, shortly before my grandfather gave up his tenancy. All signed their names on that occasion, but there is no other record of the visit that I know of. It is evident that plans for visits by both Burne-Jones and Morris had been mooted in the first days of his occupation, as early as August 1867. On the 24th, Faulkner writes to Crom from Oxford:

. . . Ned and Topsy are coming here today to stay for three weeks or so, and it is possible I might persuade them to make an expedition to the Tower. Will it afford accommodation for so large a party? On the other hand could you not come over here for some days? The four of us, besides enjoying ourselves in other ways, would form a delightful party for evening whist

On 3rd September he writes again:

I have several times laid your proposal about a visit to the Tower before Ned and Topsy, but the first is too busy and the second professes to be so, to be able to spare the necessary time which would be consumed in such an expedition. Ned in especial is the more unwilling as he has to subtract from his work two or three days for a visit to Birmingham, whither he is going on Friday or Saturday to stop till Monday. It is therefore proposed that you come over here and stop for a day or two or three or as long as you will. You can have a bed in college here. If anything more than the proposal were needed to induce you to accept it, I may tell you that Wilfred Heeley is coming down here on Monday evening to stop for several days, how many I don't exactly know.

So come along: if two or three men with families cannot come to you, do you, being free from such impedimenta, come hither.

In fact, Burne-Jones's first visit to the Tower did not take place until two

years later, when there is an entry in the Visitors' Book for 22nd August. Prior to that visit he had written to my grandfather:

Write and tell me if Friday week (this day week I should say)—let's see, that's next Friday—will next Friday be convenient to you and will the coast be clear—I have a serious subject I want to design, and the rest, remoteness and solitude will be admirable for me—don't meet me anywhere. I can really find my way and made more of the difficulty than I really felt. I shall (be?) at Chipping Campden by the second train of the day. You know what I mean by the coast being clear—assure me of this—and I will really come to you.

Faulkner, too, found the Tower provided the peace and quiet he needed, to work on his students' papers, despite certain drawbacks. On 7th July 1868 he writes:

We left the Tower yesterday after having passed a most delightful decade of days there. I can indeed feel the difference between the air of the Cotswolds and that of the valley of the Thames. I never got over such murderous work as this Local Examination so easily. I shall ask you to let me go there again if I have the same kind of work next year

The following year, however, the weather was not so kind. On 1st July, 1869, Faulkner writes from University College:

Kate and I enjoyed ourselves very well, as much at least as that was consistent with grinding at papers about 8 hours a day. The weather however did not suit so well as last year. It was rather too cold . . . so much so that we made some havoc in your stock of coal. However I left two or three bottles of wine behind me, in which I hope you will drink my health under a clearer sky and with a wind from some other quarter than the North East

There is little doubt that those who visited the Tower had to be prepared to put up with the elements. Before Crom Price took on the tenancy in 1866, substantial repairs and redecorations were apparently carried out—at a cost to the tenant of £9. It was a constant battle to keep the Tower waterproof. We have a graphic description of 'weathering it out' at the Tower from Price's co-tenant, C.J. Stone, writing in June 1867—who manages to make it all sound quite cosy, nonetheless:

I've just arrived—alone—in weather, compared to which, that which greeted us on our arrival was fine—It is blowing and raining like what its name and the Tower is simply in the clouds—I took Mrs. Stanley by surprise but everything was in capital order—except in so far as affected by the weather—The rooms look most comfortable—the dark, polished oak floor and table,—the mirror over the chimney piece and red curtains

on the two windows on each side—the mended sofa and little table,—all combine to give the place a most pleasant aspect—the walls too are sufficiently clean—BUT!—the rain has been so heavy during the last day or two, that the water came through that old place in the bedroom roof, soaked through the floor,—soaked through the sitting-room floor and finally trickled on the noses of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley as they reposed—The bedroom ceiling is a dropping spring in several places and I mean to have my bed made up in one of the turrets off the sitting room tonight—The bedroom however does not feel damp, though several baths and basins are about it, catching the water—I must go and tell Hensley about it immediately . . .

He writes a good deal more brightly on 25th September, 1870, following a visit from ‘the Worth girls’:

Certainly the Tower looked quite gay—regularly bewitched by the three graceful girls flitting about it and as they wear short dresses without crinolines, they didn’t occupy too much space . . .

He concludes by saying:

We must endeavour, as soon as possible, to take the walk across the hills to the Roman remains at Chedworth, and then see Cirencester—I think both will repay us—according to my map, there is a great park at Cirencester, with a tower in it, called Grismond’s tower—I should like to take the trip now, but want company for that sort of excursion . . .

One of Stone’s most entertaining letters is written on 6th August 1871, when he reflects on the effect the Tower might have on Ruskin:

As Ruskin would say, it is wanting in ‘truth’—for it combines the modern pavilion with the ancient Tower—a room with French sashes opening to balconies is out of character, perhaps, with battlemented turrets—Then there are machicolations, moreover, round those same turrets, which are humbugs—that is to say, they are not really machicolations—No—I imagine that Ruskin would look at the Tower, sigh, as he reflected what might have been made of it, and walk away, sorrowfully saying ‘It is not truthful’ . . .

Sir Thomas Phillipps did not die until 1872, so that he was alive during most of my grandfather’s tenancy: from the following letter written by Charles Stone from his chambers in the Temple, we learn that Price had never applied for a formal lease prior to Sir Thomas’s death:

So, Sir Thomas is dead—I have not seen the announcement in the paper myself, but I was so informed at the Arundel last night—What do you intend to do—if I might advise—and you want to keep the Tower—I should say that you ought to apply for a lease—represent the ruinous condition it was in—say that you have laid out much money upon it—and

ask for the lease as some compensation for your improvement to the property—Because, indeed, you have improved the present owner's property to the amount which you have laid out—As he (or she) proposes the power to eject you at six months' notice—you have no surety that you have not expended the money for his benefit—if you don't get a lease—Mrs. Halliwell, or whoever it is, might at any time visit the Tower, accompanied by some enthusiastic, romantic young female friend—or young man of artistic soul—they would go into raptures and demand to know why Mrs Halliwell didn't have the Tower for herself—She would then probably tell her agent to get it for herself (& women have no bowels of compassion for others than their own kindred—and know nothing usually about business—and would have you turned out without a moment's compunction)—By the bye,—I forgot that these remarks might open a controversy—as you advocate 'women's rights'.

I have not come across any evidence that a lease was applied for or granted, but the Tower remained badly in need of further repairs, for in September 1874 Stone writes miserably—

Here I am—solitary—the landscape is shrouded in misty rain and drops are coming through the ceiling upstairs—I sadly want you to be cheerfully going about with a sponge, stopping vents

In the same letter, he gives an amusing description of an unexpected meeting with the new landlord:

I arrived yesterday by the 10.15 from Paddington, ate a heavy lunch at Moreton and walked leisurely over to the Tower—found the door locked and a pony-chaise (or rather, cart) in the hollow—couldn't make matters out—only Jet by the Tower eating a bone and he couldn't give any information—Presently two men appeared with a pony and a gun—and the cart proved to belong to the Tower's landlord, Phillipps—who addressed me (perceiving me loafing by Jet in a desultory and somewhat disconsolate manner, with a small bag) and enquired whether I could give him any information about Mrs Stanley—We coalesced and introduced one another—both he and I wanted to get into the Tower and as no signs of Mrs S. appeared I thought of your original entrance into the place and recommended an escalade at a window—We pushed his cart against the Tower and having discerned an unfastened window—Phillipps (who is a fine looking fellow, by the bye) gallantly mounted and got in—and then descended by the stair to let in myself and his friend—I found a bottle of good red wine in the store turret, which I emptied into a tankard (he had previously given me a glass of sherry which he had in his cart)—and we smoked pipes and chatted very pleasantly—I showed him the repairs you had effected in the roof etc, and enlarged generally upon the ruinous condition in which you found the Tower—he seems to be a very agreeable old fellow and we parted (seemingly) mutually pleased

My grandfather finally gave up his tenancy in September 1878, when he wrote to George Phillips as follows:

I leave the Tower tomorrow and shall not be able to return before its final surrender—but some of my friends will still be here till about the 29th.

I beg to enclose a valuation of a few fixtures put up by me but which I will leave if you decide upon taking to them. Kindly let me know your decision regarding them at your earliest convenience. I leave besides sundry fixtures, some of which I am not entitled to remove, such as flagstaff and conductor, zinc doors to turrets, shelves throughout, weatherboarding etc. The bed-room had never been occupied previous to my tenancy, and had no grate in. If you should feel inclined at any future time to let the Tower for a week or two during the summer I dare say I or my friends would be glad to renew its pleasant memories.

I am much obliged to you for your kind loan of one or two articles, which I leave to Mrs. S. to restore to you

On his last day at the Tower, Crom Price wrote a glowing reference for Mrs. Stanley:

I have great pleasure in testifying to the admirable qualities of Mrs. Stanley as a housekeeper. She has acted for me in that capacity at the Tower, Broadway, for upwards of eleven years, and she has been never-failing in her earnestness to do her duty and in her study of our comfort during the visits from time to time of myself and friends. I cannot sufficiently praise Mr. and Mrs. S. and their three children who have grown up here for their industry, quietude, good sense, and scrupulous honour; and I heartily and with confidence recommend others to entrust themselves to the same housekeeping.

The Stanleys' regret at leaving is evident in this letter written from the Tower on 20th September:

We have sent your goods to Chipping Campden Station today Friday 20th—4 Cases Bed and Mattress. Waiter and one bundle of Spears and Walking sticks and the green Washslave. It is in 9 lots. I was sorry we could not send the Dessert Dish but we was afraid it would break but we will keep it quite safe until you come if you do not want it before but if you do we will send it. We have sent the account of the horses and Waggon hire to Mr. Stone. The poor old Tower looks miserable already We shall never forget you and the dear old Tower

Stone had already paid tribute to the Tower in his own inimitable fashion, in a letter written in June, and addressed to 'Cormell Price, Knight of Broadway Tower'; it contains a drawing of the Tower in tears, waving a hand in farewell.

It does seem 10,000 pities to abandon one of the most picturesque, and

the most *unique*, habitation in this fair realm to the yokels—to brutal, unpoetical yokels—but 'tis the fault of old Sir Thomas Phillipps Why didn't the old curmudgeon leave it to you At the seeming stern bidding of necessity the Tower must be surrendered and degraded—unhappy Tower—where poets, artists, philosophers etc etc have smoked their intellectual pipes swinish bucolics will puff theirs of the coarsest clay (metaphorically)

And just what did the Tower mean to my grandfather who gave so freely of his hospitality all those years? Perhaps a clue can be found in this typically understated diary entry for 2nd August 1870:

Tower as usual in apple-pie order; family increased by a pig and a kitten: earwigs abound.

To my mind, the tone is unmistakably one of affection, tinged with the smallest degree of exasperation.

Illustrations to Cormell Price, Esq. are from the family papers; the heading to the article is a facsimile of a postcard sent to C.P. at Broadway Tower by E. B. J.