

EDITORIAL

With this double number of the Journal, the Society celebrates the one-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of William Morris at Elm House, Walthamstow, on 24 March 1834. In it, we are pleased to bring to members unfamiliar drawings of Morris by two of his friends, Burne-Jones and George Howard, each in its own way affectionate and perceptive: it is a pleasure no less to offer also new material on another of his dearest friends, Cornell Price.

To cater for the whole range of interests that bring people to Morris is far from easy; but in this expanded, if still too little space we have tried to come as close as available material allows. We may be pretty sure that a William Morris Society would have been one of the last things he would have wished for; but the justification of our existence lies in our keeping the whole man before the world. In the course of 1984 we shall do this in many ways, as doubtless other bodies will: among other things, we shall celebrate the Birthday in the surroundings of the *William Morris Today Exhibition*, which will run for seven weeks from early March at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Carlton Place, London. The Society itself will be arranging, and encouraging others to arrange, special events, lectures, publications, in honour of this Anniversary and to signalise how much Morris has to offer our own times.

In this number we pay a farewell tribute to one of our distinguished founders, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, who died last August. To two others, Sir Basil Blackwell (aged 94) and Robin Page Arnot (93), we also pay tribute, rejoicing that they are still with us. Sir Basil, who was for some years our President, did signal service to the memory of Morris by the publication of the two invaluable May Morris volumes of 1936 which so richly supplement the *Collected Works*. Two years before that, in the centenary year, 1934, Robin Page Arnot planted the fruitful seed of his little *William Morris: a Vindication*. Later, he encouraged younger people to pursue in depth the studies which he, and G. D. H. Cole with his fine Nonesuch selection had pointed to. Philip Henderson's *Letters of William Morris to his Family and Friends* (1950) and E. P. Thompson's *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (1955) were both directly stimulated by Robin Arnot, while many others, like Paul Meier, would acknowledge an immeasurable debt.

He himself would acknowledge a debt no less to Beatrice Webb, under whose guidance both he and G. D. H. Cole worked in the years just before the 1914–18 war, in the Labour Research Department which she founded.

R.W.