A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I write to you today in my new position as President of the Governing Committee of the William Morris Society/US. I am joined by fellow officers Florence Boos, Vice President for Programs; John Walsdorf, Vice-President for Public Relations; and Elizabeth Dominique Lloyd-Kimbrel, Secretary/Treasurer. We welcome John Walsdorf and Elizabeth Lloyd-Kimbrel, who, in addition to Linda Hughes and Margaret Laster, are both new members of the Committee.

Behind the scenes we have been busy with some creative re-organization of the duties and responsibilities of the Governing Committee including the creation of several sub-committees formed to focus on some particularly demanding areas of management including Media, Membership and Publicity. We are always looking for volunteers with specific expertise to serve as lay-members of these sub-committees and I do hope you will contact me if you are interested in serving. (We generally communicate by conference call as we are geographically quite broadly represented).

The new year brings additional challenges as Mark Samuels Lasner - quite literally the voice of the William Morris Society/US since 1988 - has announced his desire to step off the Committee. Mark’s dedication and commitment to the organization over the years is reflected in the breadth of duties that will need to be re-assigned in his absence. I am grateful for his guiding hand as we work through this transitional period for the Society and wish him many joy-filled hours in his future ‘life of leisure’! One of the many tasks to address is the reconfiguration of our membership management system and I do hope you will bear with us as we work through the changes in technology this requires.

In February we announced our Fellowship winners. Kyle Stoneman of Churchill College, Cambridge was awarded the Joseph R. Dunlap Memorial Fellowship for his research on the influence of William Morris on the art and architectural criticism, photography, and art patronage of Evelyn Waugh. The William Morris Society Fellowship was awarded to Leslie Harwood, an M.A. candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Art History and Museum Studies, to help fund the exhibition “William Morris’s Earthly Paradise: Precursor to the Private Press Movement” at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee which opened in March. Many thanks to Florence Boos and her Fellowship Committee members, Margaret Laster, Elizabeth Miller and John Walsdorf.

In April we launched a Twitter account for the Society. We are entirely indebted to Clara Finley for her help in this and all of our social networking endeavors. Thank you Clara!

We are looking forward with pleasure to our two sponsored sessions at the Modern Language Association, to be held in Boston January 6th-8th. The first will be on “William Morris and the East Coast” and moderated by Andrea Donovan, with speakers Michael Kuczynski, Maureen Meister, Paul Acker, and Margaret Laster. The second, co-sponsored with The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing, will consider “Print and Beyond: Publishing Rossetti, Morris and the Aesthetes.” I will moderate this panel, which will feature talks by Sarah Storti, Elizabeth C. Miller, Laura Golobish, and Britten LaRue. The date and place for both sessions will be available on our website (www.morrissociety.org) by August. In addition, we plan a group visit to Trinity Cathedral and informal dinner.

Membership numbers are down just a bit at this time, but we will be sending out reminder letters for renewals. This decline, while not dramatic, is part of a longer-term and more concerning trend. Financially we are keeping our heads above water, but as always we need to be prudent. We are immensely appreciative of your support whether through membership or out-
right donation. If you have friends or colleagues who share your interest in William Morris I encourage you to spread the word about the WMS/US, our publications and our sponsored events.

Finally I visited London in March and attended a William Morris Society/UK Committee meeting, held in Kelmscott House in Hammersmith. The gathering included a lecture by Ingrid Hansen on “Morris and the Language of Battle” followed by a celebration (with cake!) in honor of Morris’s birthday. I was warmly received by our British counterparts and am honored to have been included in these events.

With all best wishes for a glorious summer, and a reminder: “the true secret of happiness lies in taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life.”

Margaretta Frederick

THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION CONVENTION 2013

At the annual Modern Language Convention, scheduled to be held in Boston 3-6 January 2013, the Morris Society will sponsor two panels of which the first will be “Morris and New England.” Andrea Donovan of Minot State University will preside at the session, which will feature talks by Michael P. Kuczynski, Tulane University, “Morris and Co. Windows at Trinity Church”; Maureen Meister, Tufts University, “Arts and Crafts Architecture in New England”; Paul L. Acker, St. Louis University, “Morris and Co. Windows for Vinland Cottage”; and Margaret Laster, New York University, “The Vinland Windows in Newport.”

The second panel, on “Print and Beyond: Publishing Rossetti, Morris and the Aesthetes,” co-sponsored with the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing, will be moderated by Margareta Frederick, chief curator of the Delaware Art Museum. Four talks will be presented: “Dante G. Rossetti’s ‘Proserpine’ in a Variety of Media,” Sarah Storti, University of Virginia; “Printing a Pocket Cathedral: Morris’s The Wood Beyond the World,” Laura Golobish, Nashville Public Library; “William Morris and Print Culture,” Elizabeth C. Miller, University of California-Davis; and “The Aesthetic Ideal of Beardsley’s Morte D’Arthur,” Britten LaRue, Southern Methodist University.

In conjunction with the sessions we plan a visit to Trinity Cathedral to view Morris and Co. windows, as well as a group dinner. Please watch our website for details of dates, places and times for these events. For those who are not members of the MLA and wish a guest pass, please write Florence Boos at florence-boos@uiowa.edu.

Since the 2014 MLA will be held in Chicago, we hope to sponsor a session on “Morris, Arts and Crafts, and the Midwest.” Proposals for talks should be sent to florence-boos@uiowa before 10 March 2013.

MLA 2012 ANNUAL CONVENTION WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

The Morris Society sponsored two sessions at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, held 5-8 January in Seattle, Washington, the first independently and the second in conjunction with the Society for the History of Authors, Readers and Publishers.

“Morris’s Artistic Descendants: Women Writers, Artists and Designers,” was held on 5 January in the Sheraton hotel in Seattle, with Andrea Donovan presiding. The talks are summarized below.

Anne Charlotte Leffler and William Morris

“Staging Morris: Anne Charlotte Leffler’s How to Do Good and William Morris’s Critique of Philanthropy,” Lynn Wilkinson, University of Texas-Austin.

In 1884, the Swedish writer and playwright Anne Charlotte Leffler (1849-1892) spent three months in London. On her return to Stockholm, she published a series of articles on her experiences in that city. She mentions Morris first in the article published on February 1, 1885, called “Aesthetic Circles,” calling him England’s foremost skald and naming his The Earthly Paradise and Art and Socialism. There Leffler also compares Morris to Oscar Wilde, whom she had also met and whom she called “the genius of the salon.” But she refers to Morris again in the third of her articles on “Poverty and Charity” in contemporary London.
She heard him speak at the opening of an art exhibition, where he told the audience that the right to own a work of art was open to debate and that the wealthy owners who had lent their works to the exhibition had only done what was their duty. The speech made a great impression on Leffler and she comments:

Denna tanke, att hvad som i allmänhet kallas för att göra godt, helt simpelt är att göra rätt, samt att välgörenheten i alla händelser blott är ett palliativ, som aldrig skall lyckas att verkliga bota de svåra missförhållandena, har runt om samhället lider, har många målsmän i det moderna England.

This thought, that what is generally called doing good is simply doing what's right, along with the fact that philanthropy is in any case only a palliative, which can never succeed in really improving the terrible state of affairs in society, has many spokespersons in modern England.

These words crop up again both in the title and at the end of the play Leffler wrote upon her return to Sweden, Hur man gör godt, How to do Good. This play, which juxtaposes the exploitation of workers and women in a contemporary Stockholm that bears an uncanny resemblance to London, ends with the departure of the young protagonist from the aristocratic home of her adoptive parents. Leaving in the company of a young woman who is a member of their family, but has embarked on a career as a social worker, the protagonist also plans to devote her life to improving conditions in society, but she too distinguishes between doing good and doing what's right:

Då detta kallas för att göra godt, vill jag aldrig göra en god gärning i mitt liv. [...] Jag vill helt enkelt försöka att göra rätt.

If this is what's called doing good, I never want to do a good deed in my life. [...] I want quite simply to try to do what's right.

There are other echoes in the play of Leffler's experience with Millais, as well, especially in Act 3 where the protagonist looks at the aesthetic objects in the home of a wealthy industrialist, questioning his right to own them and translating their worth into the equivalent in the lives of the workers who have made their purchase possible.

William Morris and his work thus plays a central role in what is the most radical play not only in Anne Charlotte Leffler’s production but also in Scandinavia in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Leffler is beginning to be recognized as a major playwright and writer, rivaling August Strindberg, who was born the same year as she was. During her lifetime, she was far more successful than he, especially in the theater. Thirteen of her plays were performed at theaters in Scandinavia and elsewhere, and she published two novels, several collections of novellas, and a considerable number of reviews, travel articles, and journalistic essays, as well. Unlike Strindberg, Anne Charlotte Leffler spoke excellent English. Her incorporation into her work of elements of her visit to London suggests that London plays a central role in some continental works at this time as the quintessential modern – and in some cases modernist – city. For Leffler, no writer better embodied those tendencies than William Morris.

Politics in the Arts & Crafts Movement

“Politicizing the Arts and Crafts Movement: Mary De Morgan’s ‘Bread of Discontent,’” Heidi Pierce, University of Delaware.

Mary De Morgan, sister of the famous William De Morgan, became involved with the Arts and Crafts movement through her interactions with the Morris family. Although she was a close personal friend and is known to have embroidered with both Jane and May Morris, De Morgan's documented participation in the Arts and Crafts movement is otherwise unknown. Yet, her fairy tales demonstrate the incredible influence that this artistic revolution had on her writing. In her first collection, On a Pincushion (1877), she frames several of her fairy tales as stories told by a brooch, a shawl pin, and a common pin, the characterization of which reflect De Morgan's interest in the movement, as well as Morris's injunction about the usefulness or beauty of objects. It is in her later fairy tales, however, that De Morgan truly explores the impulse behind the Arts and Crafts movement, and seeks to link art and design standards with social and political change.

In “The Bread of Discontent” (1880), De Morgan offers a biting critique of capitalistic ventures and the impact that one individual can have on the wider community. A baker makes a deal with an imp, and in doing so, takes advantage of his neighbors by knowingly selling them “bad” bread to improve his own net gain; although he was happy with the resulting financial rewards, his corruption (and the inherent corruption of his “art”) nearly ended in his death. Through the baker, De Morgan offers a nuanced reading of the dangers of an unsustainable economy and emphasizes the mutual interdependence that members of the town have on one another. The baker’s redemption, highlighted by Walter Crane’s illustrations, forms a perfect end to a plea for a socialist agenda: “From that time forth his bread was just like that of other people’s…for now he knew that there were worse things than having his loaves burnt black, and he was only too well pleased to take his chance with other people” (155). The baker’s wealth is once more determined by the quality of his craftsmanship. Ultimately, De Morgan used “The Bread of Discontent” to examine...
for the History of Authors, Readers and Publishers, was held 6 January in the Sheraton Hotel and moderated by Greg Barnhisel of Duquesne University. The talks are summarized below:

Oscar Wilde as Pre-Raphaelite Reader

“Oscar Wilde as Pre-Raphaelite Reader,” Linda H. Peterson, Yale University.

This paper considers Oscar Wilde’s Poems (1881) as it responds to Pre-Raphaelite poets and books of poetry; I will treat Wilde’s volume as both material object and literary text.

In Poems Wilde expresses a desire for affiliation with Rossetti, Swinburne, and Morris, even in his cover design. The cover, white vellum with a gold embossed floral design, visually echoes the cover of Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s Poems (1870) and Swinburne’s Atalanta in Calydon (1865). Rossetti’s design of small circles, with 8-petaled flowers, are repeated (with variation) on Wilde’s cover. Wilde’s white vellum echoes also the white buckram of Atalanta—the startling color introduced by Swinburne for his debut volume. Nick Frankel argues that “the binding for [Wilde’s] Poems (1881) [was] a striking departure from high Victorian norms, though it is now generally regarded as imitative of Rossetti’s Poems” (3). I treat this imitation as a self-conscious expression of a desire to become a fin-de-siècle member of the Brotherhood—a material signal of what will be textually expressed within the volume.

Textually, Wilde insinuates himself into the Pre-Raphaelite tradition in two major poems: “The Garden of Eros” and “The Burden of Itys.” Wilde’s aim in Poems is to fulfill the goal that he imagined in his Newdigate prize poem, “Ravenna”; to bring back the “fond Hellenic dream” and repopulate “the woods … with gods we fancied slain”—as an alternative to the “uncouth realism” of the age. He reads Pre-Raphaelite poets as they engage this aim and offer precedents for his project. In “The Burden of Itys,” Wilde links himself, via the repeated imperative “Sing on!”, with Swinburne’s neo-Hellenism and “that brotherhood / Which loved the morning star of Tuscany”; he invokes the nightingale that sang through them now to voice his song. In “The Garden of Eros” Wilde adds himself to the tradition via the repetitious phrases “I will cut a reed,” “I will tell thee,” “I will sing,” “And then I’ll pipe”; he addresses verse paragraphs to Swinburne as a poet of democracy, Morris as a creator of “an earthly paradise,” Rossetti with “double laurels,” and Burne-Jones as painter of “The Golden Stairs.” The link to Morris is especially important for Wilde’s poetic project. In a critical review, Wilde described Morris’s literary work as a “return by a self-conscious effort to the conditions of an earlier and fresher age.” It is this...
self-conscious effort that Wilde embraces in _Poems_; he seeks to join the brotherhood by conjuring up their presence in his landscapes, praising selected aspects of their work, and adding his voice to theirs.

**D.G. Rossetti: Biographies as Reception**

“Inventing Rossetti: Biographies as Reception,” Julie Codell, Arizona State University.

Among many artists whose biographies were a popular part of the Victorian culture industry, Dante Gabriel Rossetti was the hardest biographical subject to construct. The ready, reductive link between character and work, easy for biographers of heroized artists like John Everett Millais, considered the typical Englishman, or G. F. Watts, the Renaissance man and idealist, was much harder to construct for Rossetti, whose personal life had to be carefully negotiated. Rossetti’s early death, however, provided biographers with a hagiographic context in which to biographize Rossetti.

More than this, however, his biographers could shape and determine the very reception of Rossetti’s art by the public. Rossetti’s painting had not been exhibited after 1850, so that it was only after his death in 1882 that the public first saw his work in several simultaneous posthumous retrospectives immediately after his death. Thus, his art had not yet accumulated critical interpretations, which his poetry had accumulated. Biographers are presumed to be critics and readers, but I would argue further that since most of the biographers, like the public, were seeing Rossetti’s work for the first time (even if some had seen individual works), these biographers defined public reception of Rossetti and significantly influenced that reception long after his death. Something they could not have done if Rossetti had exhibited after 1850, allowing critics and the public to assess his work during his lifetime.

Thus, his biographers, who rushed into publication soon after his death, had a chance to create a public reception of Rossetti’s visual art through their biographies, to articulate ideas about how his art and life intersected, and to offer aesthetic assessments of Rossetti’s work in the context of a newly honed Aestheticism, a hybrid Victorian modernity. Negotiating and obliterating details of his bohemian life and reputation, these biographers chose to construct Rossetti the man through his art, a construction foreshadowed by brief critical reviews by F. G. Stephens (1865) and Algernon Swinburne (1868), who read Rossetti through his painting which they described, despite its not being exhibited.

Biographers invented multiple Rossettis. William Michael’s access to letters and primary documents and his special relationship to DGR permitted him to authorize his brother as a modern icon. Both H. C. Marillier and Evelyn Waugh constructed a Victorian Rossetti, condemned by Waugh for being Victorian but celebrated by Marillier for his Victorian-ness. Ford Madox Ford constructed a modern Rossetti. Henry Treffry Dunn and T. Hall Caine presented a rather quirky but homey Rossetti. I will analyze biographical assessments of only one painting across the biographies (those I mention and, if relevant, others by F. G. Stephens, William Sharp, Arthur Benson, Joseph Knight, Ernest Radford, Bell Scott, Esther Wood, Lucien Pissarro, Arthur Symons). I will analyze variables in their assessments of the painting and how these assessments were used to portray facets of Rossetti through biographers’ Victorian or modern receptions of Rossetti’s paintings in the long nineteenth century.

**William Morris in Victorian Periodicals**


Although beloved of scholars of print culture, Morris’s utopian Kelmscott printing projects belong only to the last six years of his life, and the actual Victorian print presence of William Morris consists of almost forty years’ worth of ordinary typography. This paper will argue that periodicals and machine-press books formed the venue through which most Victorian readers accessed Morris’s writing and others’ writing about him. Before and after he became the herald of the fine press movement, Morris’s work was published in numerous ordinary printed books, and he contributed articles, poetry, and serial fiction to journals from the _Oxford and Cambridge Magazine_ to _Words and Deeds_; the _Oxford and Cambridge Magazine_ to _The English Illustrated Magazine_. In the multiple biographies, editorial commentaries, portraits, and paratextual material on Morris in these periodicals; in the dozens of second-hand reports of his lectures in the _British Architect_; in his appearances in the “Literary Gossip” column of the _Athenaeum_; and in the satires of him in spirited magazines like _Fun_, we can begin to form a picture of the popular understanding of Morris the artist and writer in Victorian reading culture. This is an aspect of Morris that has not been examined in any detail since 1936, when Karl Litzenberg went over the periodical literature to carve out an outline of Morris’s contemporary reputation as a poet. And yet it is through these often hastily-written pieces of ordinary print journalism that we gain crucial access to the unmanaged and unromanticized personae of William Morris the Victorian author, artist, and public figure.

**Pre-Raphaelites in the Netherlands**

“Pre-Raphaelite Audiences on the Continent—the Dutch Case,” Anne van Buul, University of Groningen.
The four year PhD research project I am currently working on focuses on the reception of Pre-Raphaelite literature and art in The Netherlands around 1900. It deals with the critical reception of Pre-Raphaelite art in Dutch periodicals and newspapers as well as forms of creative reception: translations, adaptations and borrowings of Pre-Raphaelite elements in Dutch literature and artworks. I first give a short overview of the critical reception of Pre-Raphaelitism in Dutch periodicals, schoolbooks, essays and studies. I discuss the introduction of Pre-Raphaelitism around 1870 (who was first to mention the Pre-Raphaelites in The Netherlands? How did he spread the word?), the growing popularity of Pre-Raphaelitism during the 1890s (what did the Dutch audience appreciate most and what image of Pre-Raphaelitism was created?), and finally, the decreasing interest in Pre-Raphaelitism at the beginning of the twentieth century. Secondly, I zoom in on a few examples of the Dutch creative reception of Pre-Raphaelitism to emphasize the function of Pre-Raphaelite art and literature for the works and thoughts of Dutch artists. To explore some of the similarities and differences of the Dutch reception compared to the reception in other countries, I also draw some parallels with the French, Belgian and American reception, as recently studied by other scholars.

Both sessions were well-attended and evoked questions and discussion. We also convened the evening of 6 January for conversation and dinner at 820 Pike, a Vietnamese restaurant near the convention hotel. Several members of the executive committee were able to attend the convention; Florence Boos, Andrea Donovan, Fran Durako, Mark Samuels Lasner and Jack Walsdorf discussed Society matters over brunch January 7 at the Talio Restaurant in Seattle.

Kyle Stoneman holds a B. A. in art history from the University of Akron and an M. A. in art history from the University of Washington, where his master’s thesis considered Victorian artist Eleanor Fortescue Brickdale (1872-1945). He is currently a Ph. D. candidate at Cambridge University, where he holds an Art Sizarship at Churchill College. At the Morris Society co-sponsored “Useful and Beautiful” conference in 2010, Mr. Stoneman spoke on “Frederick Judd Waugh and the Imagery of Sir Galahad in America.” Mr. Stoneman will use the fellowship to visit collections at the Henry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Michigan. He describes his project on “Evelyn Waugh, William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement” as follows:

My current research is an exploration of Evelyn Waugh as a visual artist. I argue Waugh’s oeuvre is an assimilation of William Morris’s aesthetic theories, as evidenced in both Waugh’s illustrations and his collection habits. One of the key issues I wish to pursue at greater length is the notion of Waugh’s artist/craftsman, which is heavily indebted to William Morris’s writings. I hope to bring new insight into the employment of Morris’s ideas in the twentieth century and to help fill in a serious lacunae in both Morris and Waugh scholarship.

Outgoing president Fran Durako with Mark Samuels Lasner, Seattle, January 7th, 2012

REPORTS FROM FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

We’re happy to report the recipients of the William Morris Society-US awards for 2012. The Joseph Dunlap Memorial Fellowship has been awarded to Kyle Stoneman and the William Morris Society Award to Leslie Harwood.
The recipient of the William Morris Society Award is Leslie Harwood, who has just received her M. A. in Art History with a Museum Studies Certificate, and who is currently an intern at the Milwaukee Art Museum. A former co-curator of an exhibition “Visual Literacy and the Vanishing Text,” she has used the award toward the costs of printing the catalogue of her exhibition, “William Morris’s Earthly Paradise: Precursor to the Private Press Movement.” She describes this exhibition as follows:

I am currently curating a Masters thesis exhibition entitled “William Morris’s Earthly Paradise: Precursor to the Private Press Movement” at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Art History Gallery, opening in March of 2012. This exhibition will focus on William Morris’s and Edward Burne-Jones’ Earthly Paradise project in relation to the Kelmscott Press, founded nearly thirty years after the Earthly Paradise project was initiated, in order to prove the failure of the project to be the instigator in the founding of the Kelmscott Press.

This exhibition will feature several editions of Morris’s Earthly Paradise, the 1868 mass produced edition featuring only one of Burne-Jones’ woodcuts, the 1896 Kelmscott Press edition, and Arthur Richard Dufy’s 1974 reproduction of the “Cupid and Psyche” series, which was printed with Burne-Jones’ original wood blocks. Dufy’s reproduction offers his own interpretation of how Morris intended to design The Earthly Paradise. The exhibition will also feature several books printed at the Kelmscott Press such as William Morris’s News From Nowhere and Well at the World’s End.

Alongside Morris’s books from the Kelmscott Press, several private presses influenced by the press at Kelmscott will be featured, including the Vale Press, Essex House Press, and Golden Cockerel Press, all in London. There will also be two American private presses, the Philosophers Press and the Elston Press. The aims of the exhibition is to discuss Morris’s and Burne-Jones’ intentions and reasons why they founded the Kelmscott Press and how the aforementioned private presses continued the legacy of Morris’s ideals in terms of the book as a quality, aesthetically pleasing everyday object.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MEDIA MATTERS

News From Anywhere
http://morrissociety.blogspot.com

We’ve been steadily adding material to our blog. Recent posts have publicized exhibitions, new publications, and members’ activities, as well as providing new background information on figures of the Morris circle and identifying places to view Morris designs in the U. S. Please send ideas and requests for blog posts to Margaretta Frederick at us@morrissociety.org.

The Sound of Twitter!

We have started a Twitter account with the help of 2011 William Morris Society Award recipient Clara Finley, whose blog The Morrisean http://themorrisean.blogspot.com comments on Pre-Raphaelite history and recent finds. Our aim is to communicate with some of the hundreds of thousands who send and receive such messages daily. It’s a whole new genre, but one of which the author of Commonweal’s brief and spirited “Notes on News” might have approved. Even the “Notes on News” averaged considerably more than Twitter’s limit of 140 characters, however, but we will do our best to convey news, links, quotations, and Morris- and Arts and Crafts-related discoveries in abbreviated form.

Please join/“follow” us at @MorrisSocietyUS and send messages of relevant items. We would especially welcome ideas on how this form of communication might be more effectively used.

New on Website:

We continue our efforts to improve www.morrissociety.org. This past winter we upgraded its membership/donation pages and have added a biographical account of Morris’s life and works in Slovak, written by member Miša Buršíková. Ms. Buršíková is an associate research student at Oxford Brooks University and Ph. D. candidate at Charles University in Prague, writing on the relationship of Morris’s ideas to the contemporary Craftism movement (see http://cuni.academia.edu/MiladaBurcikova/About. We also owe Ms. Buršíková thanks for making available the vivid portrait of
Morris by Czech artist Daniel Krebjich which appears on the cover of this issue.

Suggestions for links or other appropriate material for the website, including non-English language translations and materials on Morris’s life and works, may be sent to florence-boos@uiowa.edu.

Illustrated News from Nowhere Online:

The illustrated online text of Morris’s News from Nowhere is now updated and available at http://www.uiowa.edu/~wmorris/NewsFromNowhere/.

The online version is designed to help students and others visualize Guest’s London and his travels through Nowhere. What did the subway which Guest so hated look like in 1890? The Hammersmith Bridge of the time? Thornycroft’s factory? The Houses of Parliament? Westminster Abbey? Trafalgar Square? What was the “Guest House”? The “Old House for New Folk”? The scenes which the rowers viewed as they followed the Thames upriver? The likely site of the final feast in the small country church?

This edition, prepared by Florence Boos and Karla Tonella, who created the designs for our website and for the Morris Online Edition, is intended to make Morris’s critique of the old world and vision of the new more accessible and enjoyable for 2012 readers. We welcome comments and suggestions for additions, which should be sent to florence-boos@uiowa.edu.

Morris Online Edition:

Through the help of the Society of Antiquaries, we’ve been able to obtain images for two unpublished Morris translations in calligraphic lettering: of the Egils Saga (a different version than that published by May Morris in vol. 1 of Artist, Writer, Socialist), and two volumes of an uncompleted translation of the Lancelot du Lac from a 1494 French version. Also through the courtesy of Mark Samuels Lasner, the edition contains a hitherto unpublished manuscript fragment of “The Tale of Haldor,” to be edited by Paul Acker of St. Louis University.

BOOK SALE OF MORRISIANA TO BENEFIT THE WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY:

Several books are still available for sale from the collection of Gary Aho, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Massachusetts, donated to benefit the William Morris Society. A list of these titles, which include editions of works by Morris, Morris biographies and criticism, and related Scandinavian and American works offered at reasonable cost, may be found on the Society’s home page, www.morrissociety.org. To place an order, please contact kelmscottbookshop.com.

WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY ARCHIVE:

Once discarded, gone forever. Records of the first known Morris Society (Chicago 1903-05) can no longer be traced. Don’t let this happen to us!

Contributions of any personal correspondence, keepsakes, or ephemeral publications associated with the William Morris Society and related endeavors are sought for the Archive of the William Morris Society in the United States, to be housed at the University of Delaware Library, Newark, DE in conjunction with the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection. As you are sorting old papers, please don’t forget to save any correspondence from past or current members, and any other Morris-related memorabilia which you think might have sentimental or historical value. Before sending anything large, please contact Mark Samuels Lasner at marksl@udel.edu.

NEW WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY BROCHURE:

Our Society brochure, designed by Susannah Horrom of the Kelmscott Bookshop, has been recently updated and reprinted. It can be found online at www.morrissociety.org/about/purpose.html. Anyone who wishes copies for distribution may write the Society at our post office address, Box 53263, Washington DC 20009.

JOHANNA LAHR (1867 - 1904)

Gerd Callesen

Introduction by Florence Boos

Very few women members of the Socialist League have been identified, and these few are mostly middle-class. It has been exciting to learn from the researches of German labor historians Gerd Callesen and Heiner Becker of a Socialist League member who was the wife of a journeyman baker as well as fervid union organizer. Born Annie Klebow in Germany in 1867, she emigrated to England around 1885-87. There she married her common-law partner in 1895 and gave birth to sons in 1899 and 1903, dying in childbirth in 1904 at the age of 37.

Lahr was a member of the Bloomsbury branch of the League and active speaker between 1888 and 1890,
"She was a brave, intelligent, strong-willed woman who went out to organise"

JOHANNA LAHR (1867–1905)

On 8 April 1889, the wife of a German journeyman baker in London wrote to Frederick Engels. He may have known the writer, Johanna Lahr, to be a member of the Socialist League, an organization of which Eleanor Marx (Karl Marx’s youngest daughter) had been a prominent member. From at least March 1888, Lahr had been one of the foremost agitators of the Socialist League. In the organisation’s weekly pamphlet, ‘The Commonweal’, she was reported to have given speeches on 13 occasions during March, most of them in Hyde Park, but several in various assembly halls all over London. On 6 April of that year, she spoke at a meeting in Regent’s Park, almost on Engels’ doorsteps for he lived at 122 Regent’s Park Road.

Two days later, she asked him for a meeting to discuss Marx and his theory and to get some advice about which of his works she should read. She claimed that her husband did remember having heard about Marx and that her father-in-law still had ‘the book’ from 1848 (which must have been the first edition of the Communist Manifesto). She was proud of being a member of a socialist organisation and being able to work for a solution to the ‘social question’ in England. There is, however, no evidence that they ever did actually meet.

Socialist theory was not her only interest, she was determined to organise the bakers’ of London, and had called for a first meeting at a public house. Her intention was to hold meetings all over London and at the same time to disseminate Marx’s theory.

A meeting of the Bakers’ Union
The first meeting was announced in The Commonweal: ‘Bakers’ Union—A meeting is to be held next Saturday evening at 8 p.m., at the ‘Prince Arthur’, Brunswick Place, City Road, for the purpose of starting a union for the district of Shoreditch, Hoxton, and St. Lukes. Meetings will be held shortly in the north, south, and west of London.’

On behalf of the BFAWU
I would like to thank Gerd Callesen for his writing of this inspiring article on Johanna Lahr, who we believe was one of the founding members of our union in the London area.

It is amazing that 122 years after her campaigning work an article like this should come to light, an article that helps us understand how our history has been shaped.

You will see from his words what a great activist and campaigner Johanna was and that her spirit and belief in working people made a profound difference.

Gerd is a truly remarkable historian with a real nose for a great story.

Ronnie Draper
to transfer his loan to Robinson to her, but she refused as she had broken off all contact with Robinson as soon as she had ‘found his principles to be bad as well his behaviour’.

The Poorest of the Wage-Slaves

At some point in the course of 1889, Johanna Lahr published a two-page flyer ‘The Poorest of the Wage-Slaves’ addressing the journeymen bakers of London. She can’t have written it single-handedly, her knowledge of English would not have been good enough. She could write in English as well as in German, but only in a version that corresponded to spoken English/German. Probably she had been to school in Germany, but as she was born about 1867 she would only have attended school for a few years.

We can not be sure when she arrived in London. As it was probably between 1885 and 1887, she would naturally have needed help in formulating the flyer. In an article in Reynolds’s Newspaper from September 1888, she was described as ‘a stout female with a strong foreign accent’.

The flyer is not dated, but it was most likely written in the autumn of 1889, as she referred to The Great Dock Strike (14th August–16th September 1889) and to The Great Strike of East London Tailors, for 10 ½ hours per day (27th August – 2nd October 1889).

Critical of the Dockers

She criticised the dockers: ‘do not surrender or compromise like the dockers’. In her opinion the most important lesson to be learned from the strike was ‘what can be done if workers are united and organized’. She did not rely on Parliament; to better their future the bakers had to help themselves and become united in a Union. A strike alone would not be enough. As can be seen from the text, she was influenced by the radicals in the Labour Movement.

We do not know her maiden name, so it is difficult to trace her life in Germany; neither do we know what happened to her in later years, the full story of her life is not really known. She died about 1905, leaving her husband alone with two sons. He remarried but all we know about her so far is that she was a brave, intelligent, strong-willed woman. Some of her descendants are still living in London.

Have you any information to add?

If anyone knows any more about this woman union pioneer who has been ‘hidden from history’, please contact me:

Gerd Callesen,
Email: gerd.callesen@chello.at

The facsimile of the flyer ‘The Poorest of the Wage-Slaves’ was generously made available for this article by Ms Sheila Lahr.

She would also be pleased to receive any further information on her ancestor.

Email: leslie505@binternet.com
when she would have been 21-22 years of age. Common
turnal records that she delivered 13 speeches during March
1888 alone! During this period she corresponded with
Friedrich Engels, asking for his advice in understanding
Marx's theories. She would probably have known Mor-
riss briefly before he left the Socialist League in 1889; like
Morris she was an anti-parliamentarian, but most likely
a member of the League's anarchist wing.

There were about 2000 German bakers in England
and Wales in the period 1880-1910, and they formed a
familiar presence in London's east end, as memorialized
in Israel Zangwill's account of east London Jewish life
in *Children of the Ghetto* (1892) and in exhibits at the
present-day London Jewish Museum. Lahr's 1889 leaf-
let, “The Poorest of the Wage Slaves,” is a rare extant
instance of a polemical essay by an impoverished working-
class woman of the period. It describes with indignation
the conditions of labor experienced by those in her hus-
band's occupation, and urges all journeyman bakers to
unionize in order to gain better conditions.

Because Lahr's leaflet may be difficult to read, a few
passages are excerpted here:

The journeymen bakers must admit that they are, in
comparison with any other skilled workers, the poorest,
the most sweated, wretched slaves; that their present con-
dition is a most deplorable one, and a disgrace to civiliza-
tion. The extraordinary long hours, varying from 14 to 16
hours a day, for the first five days of the week, 22 hours
on Saturday, and Sunday work as well, makes up an aver-
age of from 90 to 120 hours each week; and in most cases
the poor wretches have to work in filthy, unhealthy bake-
houses not fit for a dog, let alone a human being. These
wage-slaves are injured in health, and are broken men
before they enter into full manhood; their lives cut short,
and an early grave their reward. Now, lads, the time has
arrived when you should bind yourselves together under
the Banner of Unity, and strike the blow. God knows,
arrived when you should bind yourselves together under
the Banner of Unity, and strike the blow. God knows,
arrived when you should bind yourselves together under
the Banner of Unity, and strike the blow. God knows,
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the Banner of Unity, and strike the blow. God knows,
arrived when you should bind yourselves together under
the Banner of Unity, and strike the blow.

Men and women, you are the producers of all wealth;
therefore courage, brothers and sisters! Come and join
hands with your fellows, no matter what creed or na-
tionality they belong to, and we will win the battle.

Have no trust in your Houses of Parliament. The
sooner they are turned into washhouses or bakehouses
the better for the workers. I am with you heart and
spirit, and will never tire of helping you to a brighter
future, where freedom, love, and harmony shall reign;
where the dawn of the morning shall be greeted with
gladness, and work be only a pleasure; and where the
burden of life and sorrow-stricken faces shall disappear
like a snow-white mist in the morning.

JOHANNA LAHR.

Henry Detloff, Printer. 18 Sun Street, Finsbury,
London, E.C.

In November 1890 a widespread strike for bakers' union
rights was conducted in London, and Johanna
Lahr's flyer might well have been distributed during
this strike. The bakers won the conflict, in part because
of the support of the London Trade Union Council
and trade unionist leader John Burns, who addressed
assemblies of the bakers. One can only regret that this
firm-minded and courageous woman died at 37, per-
haps a victim of the difficult conditions under which
women gave birth.

We owe thanks to Gerd Callesen for sending us his
article on Lahr, published in the *Foodworker* (Win-
ter 2011, 16-17), the magazine of the BFAWU (Bakers,
Food and Allied Workers Union), a descendent of the
International Bakers Union of Lahr's day; and to Ron-
nie Draper, General Secretary of the Union, for grant-
ing permission for reprinting. Since the publication of
this essay, Heiner Becker has identified Lahr's maiden
name and date of death.

Gerd Callesen is retired Librarian at the Labor Movement Library and Archive
of Copenhagen. He has written on the history of cooperation between the Ger-
man and Danish labor movements, on working-class internationalism, and on
the history of the Danish labor movement, 1870-1996. He co-edited the Den-
ish labor history journal *Arbejderhistorie* from 1970 to 1997 and has co-edited
two *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA volumes III/29 and 30). He now
lives in Vienna.

THE LIFE WORK OF
JON SIGURDSSON

Gary Abo

This past January I spent ten days in Iceland, where
I’d planned to visit old friends up on the north coast,
and while there look in at Husavik, a small village where
Alcoa has been threatening to build a new smelter.
(See my previous *Newsletter* articles on Alcoa’s massive
works in Iceland’s eastern highlands, *Spring 2006 and
Winter 2009*). I’d hoped to talk with folks who are try-
ing to impede Alcoa in this, their latest effort to ravage
and ruin the Icelandic wilderness by taming its glacial
rivers, transforming their power into electricity for yet
another aluminum smelter.

But since Iceland had been undergoing unusually
severe weather, with heavy snow and high winds mak-
ing the seven hour drive north difficult and dangerous,
I decided to stay in Reykjavik and thus spent several
long afternoons in the Landsbokasafn (The National
Library, hereafter Lbs.). The bad weather turned into
my good luck, since at the Lbs. I encountered a won-
derful exhibit, one celebrating the bicentenary of the
birth of Jon Sigurdsson (1811-80). He is called the Father of the Icelandic Constitution, and his statue stands in the central square outside the Althing in downtown Reykjavik, so of course I knew of him, but I did not realize the extent and importance of the work he completed in his lifetime. But now, after contemplating the manuscript treasures and the dozens of books he wrote and edited and the varied memorabilia and vintage photographs and the like, in this large exhibition, spread over two floors of the Lbs., I have a fuller appreciation of Jon Sigurdsson's Lifswerk (Life's Work, the title of the exhibit, which opened on April 20, 2011).

Born in 1811 in Hrafnseyri, in the West Fjords, Jon showed an early interest in Icelandic history, in old manuscripts, in vellum copies of psalms and sagas, in all manner of early written records. His abilities were recognized, and in 1829, now in Reykjavik, he was appointed secretary to Steingrimur Jonsson, Bishop of Iceland, and custodian of Iceland's biggest and most important collection of manuscripts and books. Still a teen-ager, Jon worked with the collection, copying, editing, writing critical commentaries and introductions. Four years later when Jon moved to Copenhagen, he was appointed a Fellow at the Arnamagneaske Samling (the Arne Magnusson Collection), and then a few years later, its Secretary, an important post that he held for the rest of his life. Here he made detailed catalogues of the collection's many manuscripts, often copying out their contents—in tiny hand-writing as elegant and precise as a medieval scribe's. Jon also edited several of the Family Sagas, as well as the Prose Edda, an important repository of Norse mythology. (William Morris used these editions when he began his study of Icelandic literature.)

In 1851, Jon was elected Chairman of the Idelska Bokmentafelag (Icelandic Literary Society), and he acquired and catalogued still more manuscripts: gatherings of narrative poems (rimur), of the biographies of kings, saints, knights, and bishops, of genealogical tables, of written records of all types, collecting them—as had Arne Magnusson a few generations earlier—from parishes in Iceland and across Scandinavia. Jon was also responsible for the massive Lovsamling Island (Legal Code for Iceland) whose twenty-one volumes remind us of how intensely litigious Iceland was, with judges and lawyers in every district, from the days of settlement forward. These volumes offered proofs that Iceland had its own unique legal codes, rooted in history and tradition, and thus no need to rely on Danish courts and precedents. Of even greater importance in the quest for Icelandic independence was Ny Felagsrit (New Social Writing), an Icelandic political journal that Jon launched in 1841. For the next thirty years, its articles and reviews (Jon wrote two-thirds of them, some 3200 pages) relentlessly argued for Icelandic interests, pointing out the inequities of Danish rule, of Danish monopolies controlling Icelandic fisheries, and the like. The opening of the Icelandic Althing in 1845, the granting of a free trade law in 1854, the establishment of an Icelandic constitution in 1874, all can be traced back to Jon's tireless work, his incisive political polemics in Ny Felagsrit. And so can the achievement of Home Rule in 1904, Iceland's sovereign status in 1918, and its full independence in 1944. It is therefore appropriate that Iceland's National Day, its Fourth of July, is celebrated each year on Jon's birthday, the 17th of June.

Several of the display cases in the Exhibition had letters drawn from the Lbs. collection of Jon Sigurdsson's correspondence. Here there are over 6,000 letters he'd received from scholars and politicians, from luminaries and laymen, from all manner of folk with an interest in matters Icelandic. And there are also 1,500 copies of Jon's replies, all in that tiny and precise hand. These displays encouraged me to spend some time in the Lbs. reading room, looking through the dozens of letters that Eirikur Magnusson had sent Jon over the years. I was particularly interested in letters Eirikur had written to Jon after 1868, when he'd started teaching Morris Icelandic, and during 1871 and 1873, when Eirikur joined Morris on his trips to Iceland. To my disappointment
there was very little about Morris in these letters. Eirikur instead reported on what British politicians and journalists were saying about Danish trade, about the North Atlantic fisheries, about matters important to Iceland. Here’s a typical sentiment, this written in 1871, just after Eirikur has been appointed Librarian at Cambridge. He tells Jon that now he will have more time "to support our agitation, and help you, chief agent of Iceland’s advancement and freedom." (Journals of Travels to Iceland, Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. 26). Morris must have known something of Jon’s political weight, and what was being developed then at the Althing—namely the Icelandic constitution—but he ignores all that, bragging instead of his prowess speaking Icelandic to this kindly scholar. And then, in the final entry of the 1871 Journals, for September 7, with the party back in Edinburgh, Morris says ‘I went into a tavern with some of the Icelanders and there was a drinking of healths, and farewells, and then Magnusson and Jon Sigurdsson went with me to the railway station, and I stood before the ticket-door quite bewildered and not knowing what to ask for. Lord, how strange it seemed at first’ (Journals of Travels to Iceland). Morris mentions Jon twice in the Icelandic Journals, the first time, within an entry on July 15, 1871, when the party is gearing up in Reykjavik: ‘we went on with our packing: afterwards I went with Magnusson to see some of his friends. The most noteworthy of them was Jon Sigurdsson, the President of the Althing, a literary man whose editions of sagas I knew very well. He seemed a shy, kind, scholar-like man, and I talked (Icelandic) all I might to him’ (Journals of Travels to Iceland, Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. 26). Morris must have known something of Jon’s political weight, and what was being developed then at the Althing—namely the Icelandic constitution—but he ignores all that, bragging instead of his prowess speaking Icelandic to this kindly scholar. And then, in the final entry of the 1871 Journals, for September 7, with the party back in Edinburgh, Morris says ‘I went into a tavern with some of the Icelanders and there was a drinking of healths, and farewells, and then Magnusson and Jon Sigurdsson went with me to the railway station, and I stood before the ticket-door quite bewildered and not knowing what to ask for. Lord, how strange it seemed at first’ (Journals of Travels to Iceland). Morris must have known something of Jon’s political weight, and what was being developed then at the Althing—namely the Icelandic constitution—but he ignores all that, bragging instead of his prowess speaking Icelandic to this kindly scholar. And then, in the final entry of the 1871 Journals, for September 7, with the party back in Edinburgh, Morris says ‘I went into a tavern with some of the Icelanders and there was a drinking of healths, and farewells, and then Magnusson and Jon Sigurdsson went with me to the railway station, and I stood before the ticket-door quite bewildered and not knowing what to ask for. Lord, how strange it seemed at first’ (Journals of Travels to Iceland).

WILLIAM MORRIS AND MAY DAY

Linda K. Hughes

The month of May is rich in poetic associations for Morris—from his early twenties, when he had left Oxford University and was entering Pre-Raphaelite circles; to his thirties, when he achieved wide recognition as a poet while staying deeply involved in the fine arts design firm Morris, Marshall, Faulkner, and Company; to his last decade as a committed Socialist and activist. Because his poems responding to May provide a kind of throughline for his career, in this essay I propose to wander along their path.

In “The Defense of Guenevere,” first published in 1858, the queen does not specify in which month she and Launcelot first kissed, remarking only that it was spring:

Do I not know now of a day in Spring?
No minute of the wild day ever slips

From out my memory; I hear thrushes sing,
And where in I may be, straightway
Thoughts of it all come up with most fresh sting:

I was half mad with beauty on that day,
And went without my ladies all alone,
In a quiet garden walled round every way;

I was right joyful of that wall of stone,
That shut the flowers and trees up with the sky,
And trebled all the beauty: to the bone,

Yea right through to my heart, grown very shy
With weary thoughts, it pierced, and made me glad;
Exceedingly glad, and I knew verily,

A little thing just then had made me mad;
I dared not think, as I was wont to do,
Sometimes, upon my beauty; if I had

Held out my long hand up against the blue,
And, looking on the tenderly darken’d fingers,
Thought that by rights one ought to see quite through,

There, see you, where the soft still light yet lingers,
Round by the edges; what should I have done,
If this had joined with yellow spotted singers,

There, see you, where the soft still light yet lingers,
Round by the edges; what should I have done,
If this had joined with yellow spotted singers,

And startling green drawn upward by the sun?
But shouting, loosed out, see now! all my hair,
And trancedly stood watching the west wind run

With faintest half-heard breathing sound: why there
I lose my head e’en now in doing this;
But shortly listen: In that garden fair

Gary L. Aho, professor emeritus of English literature, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, served as president of the William Morris Society-US from 1985-87. He is working on Morris’s Icelandic diaries for the Morris Online Edition.
Came Launcelot walking; this is true, the kiss
Wherewith we kissed in meeting that spring day,
I scarce dare talk of the remember'd bliss,
When both our mouths went wandering in one way,
And aching sorely, met among the leaves;
Our hands being left behind strained far away.

Never within a yard of my bright sleeves
Had Launcelot come before: and now so nigh!

Given Morris's youthful devotion to Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte d'Arthur, May seems the likely context for the above lines. In 1855 Morris purchased Robert Southey's 1817 edition of Malory, and he and Edward Burne-Jones then made it the object of intensive study. In Book 18, the whole of chapter 25 is given over to Malory's praise of May and of steadfast lovers whose passion shares the vitality of spring:

...the month of May was come, when every lusty herte begynneth to blousomme, and to bryng forth fruyte, for lyke as herbes and trees brynghen forth fruyte and florysshen in may, in lyke wyse euerly lusty herte that is in ony maner a lourer sprygnteth and florysshteth in lusty dedes. For it gyueth vnto al louers courage that lusty moneth of may.... For thenne alle herbes and trees reneuen a man and woman, and in lyke wyse louers calle aye to their mynde old gentylnes and seruyse...lyke as may moneth floreth and florysshteth in many gardyns, Soo in lyke wyse lete every mon of worship floyshe his herte in this world, first vnto god, and next vnto the ioye of them that he promised his fette vnto, for there was neuer worshipful man nor worshipfull woman, but they louted one better than another....[S]oo far eth loue now a dayes, sone hote soone cold, this is noo stabylyte, but the old loue was not so...thenne was loue trouthe and feythfulnes, and loo in lyke wyse was vxed loue in kyngge Arthurs dayes.....therefore alle ye that be louers, calle vnto your remembraunce the moneth of may, lyke as dyd queneuer Gue-neuer. For whome I make here a lytel mencyon that whyle she lyued, she was a true louer, and therefore she had a good ende. (Southey edition, 2: 362-63)

If Guenevere's invocation of ripe eroticism has led many to read the poem as an escapist medieval fantasy (an approach vigorously refuted by Florence Boos in “Justice and Vindication in William Morris's The Defence of Guenevere” 1990), the poem's erotic intensity seems very much in keeping with Malory's passage and representation of the month of May. Guenevere's narrative of her springtime encounter with Launcelot is marked above all by an interchange between beautiful, pulsating young bodies and a riot of green growth and bright sunshine, which are perceived and experienced by the queen as if there were no boundaries between human and natural setting.

By the time of The Earthly Paradise (1868-1870), the work that transformed Morris into a well-known popular poet, the month lyric devoted to May provides a more austere poem. Though May here retains its associations with lovers, the lyric represents the body's openness to nature and shared rhythms as part of the inescapable burden of mortality:

O LOVE, this morn when the sweet nightingale
Had so long finished all he had to say,
That thou hadst slept, and sleep had told his tale;
And midst a peaceful dream had stolen away
In fragrant dawning of the first of May,
Didst thou see aught? didst thou hear voices sing
Ere to the risen sun the bells' gan ring?
For then methought the Lord of Love went by
To take possession of his flowery throne,
Ringed round with maids, and youths, and minstrelsy;
A little while I sighed to find him gone,
A little while the dawning was alone,
And the light gathered; then I held my breath,
And shuddered at the sight of Eld and Death.
Alas! Love passed me in the twilight dun,
His music hushed the wakening ouse's song;
But on these twain shone out the golden sun,
And o'er their heads the brown bird's tune was strong,
As shivering, twixt the trees they stole along;
None noted aught their noiseless passing by,
The world had quite forgotten it must die.

Nature, no less than the lover into whose sleep bird-song can pass, is subject to the same iron law of death, though its bright, growing light (“the light gathered”) and tuneful birds momentarily produce the illusion of unstinted flourishing. Even in the face of dark knowledge, however, the abiding Morrisean virtue of fellowship is available, as the Wànderers and their hosts demonstrate:

Now must these men be glad a little while
That they had lived to see May once more smile
Upon the earth; wherefore, as men who know
How fast the bad days and the good days go,
They gathered at the feast...


Within a Socialist context, of course, May is far less important for its associations with lovers than with workers. In May 1893 and 1895 Morris gave open-air speeches during May Day celebrations sponsored by Socialist and anarchist groups held in Hyde Park. But he enforced his activism through poetry as well, through Chants for Socialists first published in 1885 and his Commonweal serial poem Pilgrims of Hope (1885-1886). The latter includes, as did “The Defense of Guenevere,” lovers in a fraught love triangle and important use of
natural settings, but in Pilgrims of Hope spring is associated with March more than May, as in the opening lyric of the poem, “The Message of the March Wind.” Here nature acts upon lovers not through its burgeoning sensuous delights and fecundity but through its invisible breeze, which urges the lovers to join with others in a larger socialist cause: “Rise up on the morrow / And go on your ways toward the doubt and the strife.” When Morris published the poem's third installment in the actual month of May, his topic was neither love nor nature but a critique of war.

To earlier editions of Chants for Socialists, however, Morris added two “May Day” poems, the first dated 1892, the second 1894. The prior lyric is especially notable because it contrasts so meaningfully with the relation of nature to the human body and ideal of fellowship articulated in “The Defense of Guenevere” and The Earthly Paradise. Sensuous bird song, flowers, and fellowship all figure in “May Day 1892,” but the human bodies of workers are irrevocably sundered from nature, and also shut out from nature’s model of labor associated with beauty and fellow-feeling:

THE WORKERS.
O Earth, once again cometh Spring to deliver
Thy winter-worn heart, O thou friend of the Sun;
Fair blossom the meadows from river to river
And the birds sing their triumph o'er winter undone.
O Earth, how a-toiling thou singest thy labour
And upholdest the flower-crowned cup of thy bliss,
As when in the feast-tide drinks neighbour to neighbour
And all words are gleeful, and nought is amiss.
But we, we, O Mother, through long generations,
We have toiled and been fruitful, but never with thee
Might we raise up our bowed heads and cry to the nations
To look on our beauty, and hearken our glee.
Unlovely of aspect, heart-sick and a-weary
On the season’s fair pageant all dim-eyed we gaze;
Of thy fairness we fashion a prison-house dreary
And in sorrow wear over each day of our days.

THE EARTH.
O children! O toilers, what foemen beleaguer
The House I have built you, the Home I have won?
Full great are my gifts, and my hands are all eager
To fill every heart with the deeds I have done.

THE WORKERS.
The foemen are born of thy body, O Mother,
In our shape are they shapen, their voice is the same;
And the thought of their hearts is as ours and no other;
It is they of our own house that bring us to shame.

THE EARTH.
Are ye few? Are they many? What words have ye spoken
To bid your own brethren remember the Earth?
What deeds have ye done that the bonds should be broken,
And men dwell together in good-will and mirth?

THE WORKERS.
They are few; we are many; and yet, O our Mother,
Many years were we wordless and nought was our deed,
But now the word flitteth from brother to brother:
We have furrowed the acres and scattered the seed.

THE EARTH.
Win on then unyielding, through fair and foul weather,
And pass not a day that your deed shall avail.
And in hope every spring-tide come gather together
That unto the Earth ye may tell all your tale.
Then this shall I promise, that I am abiding
The day of your triumph, the ending of gloom,
And no wealth that ye will then my hand shall be hiding
And the tears of the spring into roses shall bloom.

Less invested than The Earthly Paradise in the tragedy of mortality that renders the transient beauties of earth and youthful bodies at once so precious and doomed, this poem argues that nature in fact does live on without death—because nature is now seen as a large pervasive force rather than momentary site of intense aesthetic or sensuous perception. In certain respects, this shifting treatment of nature parallels the necessary shift from empirical perception of individuals to a theorized apprehension of the large abstract forces governing labor, capital, and class relations needed if others are to be converted to Socialism. Seen in less particular, embodied terms in the lyric itself, nature acts as a force that can lend itself to Socialism to propel the movement forward.

The second May Day poem is most fruitfully read as enacting by its very status as sequel the hopeful forward movement glanced at in the closing lines of “May Day 1892.” That is, “May Day 1894” posits a gap of two years between the two lyrics during which so much has been accomplished that hope, like the earth itself, has been revivified:

Clad is the year in all her best,
The land is sweet and sheen;
Now Spring with Summer at her breast,
Goes down the meadows green.
Here are we met to welcome in
The young abounding year,
To praise what she would have us win
Ere winter draweth near.
For surely all is not in vain,
This gallant show she brings;
But seal of hope and sign of gain,
Bareth this Spring of springs.
No longer now the seasons wear
Dull, without any tale
Of how the chain the toilers bear
Is growing thin and frail.
But hope of plenty and goodwill
Flies forth from land to land,
Nor any now the voice can still
That crieth on the hand.
A little while shall Spring come back
And find the Ancient Home
Yet marred by foolish waste and lack,
And most enthralled by some.
A little while, and then at last
Shall the greetings of the year
Be blent with wonder of the past
And all the griefs that were.
A little while, and they that meet
The living year to praise,
Shall be to them as music sweet
That grief of bye-gone days.
So be we merry to our best,
Now the land is sweet and sheen,
And Spring with Summer at her breast
Goes down the meadows green.

In this context, transient joy in the present (“So be we merry”) is both invited and purposeful. For it contributes toward sustaining hope in Socialism, which, when achieved as a political and social reality, will bring the human body once more into meaningful interchange with the beauties and endless renewal of May.

Linda K. Hughes is Addie Levy Professor of English at Texas Christian University. She has served as president of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals and the Midwest Victorian Studies Association, and is currently a member of the WMS-US executive committee. Among her recent books are The Cambridge Introduction to Victorian Poetry (2010) and Graham R.: Rosamund Marriott Watson, Woman of Letters (2005).

RETURN TO NOWHERE:
REVISITING MORRIS’S UTOPIAN ROMANCE

George W. J. Duncan
[continued from January 2012 Newsletter]

We arrived back at the Hammersmith Guest House before the evening meal, with a little time to spare. Andrew told me he had to return to his family and would not be joining me for dinner. I thanked him for being my tour guide, and a good one at that, and wished him well as he went on his way.

As I stood outside of the main door of the Guest House, I saw Robert the weaver at the riverside, looking out over the Thames. I wandered over to where he was standing, and we talked about the places I had visited that day. I thought I would take the opportunity to ask him about Dick and Clara, neither of whom were present at breakfast, and whose names were not mentioned when we were discussing William Guest’s visit that morning.

‘Bob, when William Guest was here twenty years ago, two of the people who were mentioned quite a lot in his book were Dick Hammond, and his wife Clara. No one spoke of them today, and they don’t seem to be around.’

Robert nodded as I spoke, considering his reply. ‘Well, I can tell you that they are both very well, but not together. Clara is a music instructor at Hampton Court, where she has been living for some time now. She mentors children with a natural inclination for music, mainly in the skills of singing and piano. Clara has become known for her song writing, and she has created many memorable poetic lyrics about love and loss.’

Robert looked a little sad after his comment about Clara’s songs. Then he continued. ‘Now as for Dick Hammond, it was not long after William Guest’s visit and sudden departure that he left our neighbourhood, and Clara, to travel to the west country. He settled in a town called Caerwent, near the Roman wall, where he continued to work at his craft of metalwork, and remains there to this day.’

He paused there, then said in a serious tone, ‘I hope you don’t mind, but that’s all I’d like to say about Dick and Clara right now.’

I sensed there was more to the story, certainly some details that made Robert uncomfortable, and dropped the subject. At that point, our awkward silence was thankfully broken when the dinner bell was rung, and we sauntered back to the Guest House to join the others in the dining hall.

Not long after I entered the dining hall, Caroline caught sight of me and gave me a warm greeting, giving me a kiss on the cheek and taking me by the hand to the place where she was sitting. She had reserved a seat for me, next to herself and some of her friends.

Caroline explained to me that she was an artist, and for several months she had been staying at the Hammersmith Guest House while she and several of her fellow artists worked on the decoration of a new building. ‘We’ve been painting at the new health centre, not far from the Guest House, and our work is now done.'
Tonight’s meal is a celebration. Everyone is just so pleased with how it turned out.’

I was happy to listen to Caroline tell me something about herself, as I was quite taken with her and wanted to know more. She was such a beautiful person, so full of life and energy. That morning, there had been no time to get acquainted with her, with the conversation focussed on myself and William Guest.

She told me that she was from a town on the English Channel called Lyme Regis, a place where extraordinary finds had been made of the remains of prehistoric sea creatures. She herself had collected fossil ammonite shells on the beach, something like those seen in a few of the floor tiles of the Guest House dining hall. The drama and beauty of the landscape of her home town inspired her to become an artist at a young age.

We enjoyed a wonderful meal, and there was much praise for the group of artists that had put the final touches on the decoration of the health centre. I saw how much the people valued their talent and commitment. I was a little downcast when I learned that this evening’s meal was also a farewell to Caroline and the others, who were returning to their respective homes the next day.

A few people lingered long after the meal was done, and I lost track of Caroline when Robert called me over to meet some of his friends who had been at the Guest House during William Guest’s visit.

As the daylight faded, I decided it was time to go back to my room. I passed Caroline’s door, which was standing open, but she was not there. I was disappointed as I wanted to be sure to bid her goodbye before she left for home.

Back in my room, I thought about what might happen if I went to sleep. Would that end my dream state? Would I find myself back in my own room when I woke up next time? I wanted to know more. She was such a beautiful person, so full of life and energy. That morning, there had been no time to get acquainted with her, with the conversation focussed on myself and William Guest.

I was just getting comfortable amid the luxuriously soft and plentiful bedding when there was a quiet knock on the door. I sat up, looking at the door.

‘Yes?’, I inquired of my door-knocker.

‘It’s Caroline. Might I come in?’

Caroline came into my room, and sat facing me at the foot of the bed. She wasn’t at all shy about coming into the bedroom of a man she had just met, I thought, but her manner was typical of the gentle and casual temperament of her people. Caroline apologized for losing track of me after dinner, saying that she wanted to show me her work at the health centre, which she was very proud of. Seeing I was prepared for bed, she stood up and asked me to meet her in the porch of the Guest House once I was dressed.

A few minutes later, we met in the porch as arranged, then walked along the river road past the place where Andrew and I had turned to go to the Hammersmith market that morning. We each carried a kerosene lantern since the only light outdoors was that of the moon, and it was mainly hidden by cloud cover.

The health centre was a red brick building of two floors, rendered in a plainer style than some of the other public buildings I had seen so far. It had a large, deep veranda running along the river side, furnished with many comfortable-looking chairs. It resembled a resort hotel more than what I would have expected of a hospital or medical clinic. The building was dark and not in use, as the paint was literally still drying inside. All the doors and windows were open, presumably to air out the odours from the wet paint.

‘This is our new health centre. Some of our neighbours have chosen to study the fine points of medicine and human health will live here and help any of our people who might happen to fall ill or injure themselves. We are generally a people of robust good health, but from time to time, people do get sick, or hurt themselves in the course of work or play.’

We went inside, where more lanterns were found, and Caroline lit a few of them to provide better light with which to view the decorative work she wanted to show me. In the lobby, which was large enough to be a waiting room as well, I noted a painted frieze that ran around the entire space. The frieze was a series of panels portraying a host of different people, all in the best health, enjoying everyday activities. The lower parts of the wall were enlivened with stencilled flowers and their stems and leaves, and the ceiling was made up of narrow tongue and groove planks, artistically arranged in a complex frame and panel pattern.

‘The figures on the front and left side walls are mine,’ Caroline told me. ‘Many of the people I painted are those I met here, and a few are from my home. I wish I could have met you earlier, then I could have added you in as well.’

I would have been honoured indeed to have something of myself left behind in this wonderful place.

We left the lobby and went into a number of other rooms in the health centre, the majority of which had some decorative embellishment, even in the most utilitarian of spaces. Caroline showed me the dining hall of the new building, which had large windows looking out over the Thames. The position of the dining hall, and its colour scheme of soft green and light wood tones, were obviously designed to foster a calming effect on those receiving treatment, and those giving it. Caroline was particularly proud of a blessing which she had lettered over a brick fireplace centred on the wall opposite the windows.
I couldn’t resist the temptation to speak about how the state of people’s health, and access to treatment for those in need of it, was an issue in my country, and even more so for the neighbouring United States.

‘I’m surprised that in these enlightened times,’ Caroline responded, ‘anyone would knowingly harm their bodies with foods and other things they knew were unhealthy. But I think you must be mistaken about what is happening with the health centres where you come from. Perhaps you’ve never been ill?’

This was a difficult topic to venture into. I decided it was easier to agree with her that I must indeed be misinformed about health centres, since I was generally in a good state of health and had not been to one for some time.

It was getting late, so we ventured back to the Guest House, and I said goodnight to Caroline as we stood outside the door to her room. She kissed me warmly, briefly at first, then a bit longer the second time, and we parted company for the night.

When I awoke the next day, I was pleased to find that I was still in my room at the Hammersmith Guest House. I thought that this was rather a long dream, but then recalled hearing somewhere that dream time is more compressed than real time, so that by the clock, a long dream may last only a few minutes.

I washed up and got dressed, then went down the hall to the dining room, where only a few people remained. I realized that I must have slept late, and slept so soundly that I missed the call to breakfast. Annie welcomed me, and motioned to me that I should sit down. There was still ample food left for me to enjoy a good morning meal.

When I asked about the artists, I was disappointed to learn that they had risen early and departed for their respective homes in various parts of the country. I regretted that I did not have an opportunity to say a proper goodbye to Caroline. I had become quite infatuated with her, and had savoured some thoughts of romance while immersed in my dream world of Nowhere.

As I drank a strong cup of coffee and had some toast and jam, I thought I would ask Annie about some of the other people that William Guest had written about.

‘From yesterday’s conversation, I know that old Hammond has passed away. I’m sorry that I cannot meet him, because he was such an important part of William Guest’s story.’

‘Yes, old Hammond is gone, but his work continues,’ Annie told me. After a brief pause she asked, ‘Was Ellen mentioned in the book?’

My heart raced at the mention of Ellen’s name. Of all of the people described in News from Nowhere, she was the most captivating character. I wondered if she was still as beautiful as she was twenty years ago.

‘Ellen? Yes, she’s in the book. Quite a bit, actually.’ I tried to downplay my interest with a matter-of-fact statement about what I knew of Ellen from the book, saying, ‘She accompanied Dick Hammond, Clara and Guest on their journey to hay-harvest in Oxford.’

Annie went on to tell me that after old Hammond had died, Ellen came back to the neighbourhood and moved into his rooms at the British Museum to become the keeper of historical records. She had been there for several years now, and had done an excellent job of organizing some of the more interesting books and artefacts connected with the former way of life and the transformation into the new society.

I asked if there was someone who would take me to see her so I could have a look at the collection and talk to her about William Guest’s visit. Annie asked a young woman at another table if she would arrange for a horse and carriage for me, and after a few minutes, she returned and signalled that I should come outside.

‘Good morning, neighbour. My name is Jane, and Annie has asked that I take you to the British Museum to visit with our historian. It’s a lovely day to make the trip, but I hope you won’t spend too much time indoors with all of those dusty books and relics.’

We travelled much the same route as I had done with Andrew the previous day, stopping to refresh our horse and have an early lunch at the inn at Piccadilly.
Suresh, the gregarious inn-keeper, was surprised to see me again so soon, and inquired about how I was enjoying my visit, and how long I might be staying. To his question I replied, ‘For as many days as I can. I hope to stay long enough to see more of your beautiful country. Maybe long enough to enjoy another fine meal at your inn.’

The inn-keeper chuckled at my last comment, and cheerfully said, ‘Good then, neighbour, I certainly hope you stop here again. I can see that you’re a man that appreciates excellent food and drink.’

After our meal, we bid farewell to our friendly inn-keeper and resumed our journey. As we drove along, enjoying the day and the scenery, I asked Jane about what her contribution was, having learned that term from my previous tour guide, Andrew. To ask what she did for a living somehow seemed out of context here.

Jane was pleased that I had taken an interest in her vocation, and offered, ‘Most days, I assist Clara with instructing our musically-gifted children with their lessons. I’m not usually at the Guest House, but rather live at Hampton Court. I was visiting a cousin of mine at Hammersmith this week, taking a small break from my music.’

I was relieved that Jane was intent on describing the various sites we passed along the way, rather than asking me a lot of questions. The time slipped by, and before long, we had arrived at our destination.

II

I immediately recognized the venerable British Museum from photographs I’d seen in books and on the Web, and we stopped outside the residential wing of this enormous Classical building. Jane made no move to exit the carriage, but instead directed me to the appropriate door that led to the historian’s rooms, adding that I would find Ellen at the end of the hallway on the second floor. She told me that she had to return to Hammersmith that afternoon, and regretfully could not stay long enough to bring me back. She said that Ellen could easily find someone locally to take me back to the Guest House when I was ready to leave.

I thanked Jane for bringing me out here, and stepped out of the carriage, taking in the sights of this extraordinary place that was supposed to be the future, but seemed so much a picture of the distant past. As my companion drove away, I wondered why, if the revolution that changed society happened in the 1950s, there was a total absence of evidence of the history of the 20th century. There were old, historical buildings such as the British Museum and Hampton Court, and certainly many new buildings designed with a flavour of the medieval past, but nothing in the mode of modernism that I knew. Surely something would have survived all of the changes that had taken place, just like there were old farmhouses intermixed with the suburban sprawl where I lived. And what about the innumerable cars, trucks and buses, and all of the infrastructure connected with their use?

For the moment I put aside my puzzling over these questions, and made my way past a group of colourfully-dressed people who must have noticed me musing about where I was. They were talking excitedly among themselves, probably discussing my hair style and clothing, since these were so different from what they were used to.

‘Are you needing some directions, neighbour? You seem a little lost,’ a kindly gentleman asked. He couldn’t help but follow that with, ‘We can see that you’re not from around here.’

‘Thank you for noticing, and for your offer of help, but I think I know where I’m going,’ I replied. ‘My friend, the lady that just left, gave me pretty good directions. I’m here to see your historian.’

The man, and the people he was with, smiled and nodded in response, then wished me well. They stayed where they were, and continued talking as I walked away. I imagined that they continued on the subject of the oddly-dressed stranger in their midst, and what he might be wanting with the historian and her ancient records.

I soon approached the door that Jane had directed me to, and found it unlocked. There were no signs to follow and no people to ask. I entered the building and found a staircase that took me to the second floor.

Looking down the corridor, I saw a number of doors, some opened, some closed, but at the very end of the hallway, one door stood wide open. With my eyesight not being quite what it once was, it was hard to focus on the interior of the office from where I stood. Light from a window inside the room made everything in front of me into a silhouette. As I walked down the hall, getting a little closer, I saw that a woman was seated at a table, holding a book in one hand, propped up on the table-top, and writing on a sheet of paper with the other hand.

Ellen! This was the woman described by William Guest as having a strange, wild beauty. I stopped in my tracks and stood there, looking ahead, suddenly becoming aware of the nervous excitement building at the very thought of her. What would I say to Ellen? What could I say?

The woman at the table looked up from her work when she heard the approach of my footsteps, and looked right at me.

‘Ellen?’ I inquired, with a question in my voice. The woman smiled, seemingly amused at my suddenly-apparent mistake, and said in a playful, somewhat mocking tone, ‘Ellen is my mother. She’s a few years older than me. My name is Claire, but then people do get us confused since we look a little alike.’
This was the second time I had a case of mistaken identity since my arrival in Nowhere.

'I'm sorry,' I said, 'it's just that you look just like I imagined Ellen would look like. You're so beautiful...' As I said the last, my face heated up and I knew that I was blushing.

Claire smiled at me, enjoying my moment of awkwardness, and I suppose feeling an awareness that she was indeed beautiful and pleased to have that acknowledged. She looked me up and down, taking in the fact that I was a visitor, not someone from another town or city, but from somewhere far more interesting and perhaps, out of the ordinary. I introduced myself, not offering much in the way of information at this point.

'From Canada, you say. How very interesting. I would have expected you to speak in the French tongue. But never mind. My mother will certainly want to speak to you. Can you stay?'

Claire went on to explain that Ellen was not far away, but in the British Museum's library looking for a couple of old books about something called "The Industrial Revolution." It was a line of inquiry that her research had been following in an effort to piece together the story of the old way of life and how it started.

'Mother is looking into what she calls "The Rise of Capitalism," something that led to a lot of problems for our ancestors. A good enough idea to begin with, in some ways, I suppose, but with human nature being what it is, it went terribly wrong. Do you know anything about it?'

I nodded in the affirmative and was grateful to be able to converse with Claire, and maybe later with Ellen, on a topic that I was intimately acquainted with. I lived in an environment that I sometimes characterized as "the landscape of greed," where nearly every piece of land was built upon, or more often over-built upon, to yield its highest and best use in the crass terms of the real estate business.

Gate and Entrance to Kelmscott Manor, Edward H. New, Gossip About an Old House.
viewed under the lens of someone from the late Victorian period, when women were indeed “upholstered like armchairs,” as William Guest so aptly put it in his narrative. With her long, slightly wavy blonde hair, hand-crafted long dress, and bare feet, she was something akin to women I would consider “artsy” in the world I knew. She had lovely grey-blue eyes and an oval face, with delicate features, similar to Claire, but with a touch of maturity in evidence. Unlike the Ellen I read about, she had a healthy colour but was not as tanned or sunburned as described in the book. She wore no bracelets, but wore a striking gold necklace interlaced with semi-precious stones. It looked like something an ancient Egyptian queen or goddess would have worn.

‘I see you like my necklace,’ Ellen mentioned, noticing me gazing at it. ‘Then, as if she had read my thoughts she said, ‘Yes, it is Egyptian - 18th Dynasty. From the rein of the pharaoh Akhenaten, the so-called heretic king.’

‘That’s amazing. Where did you find it?’ I asked.

‘It was a gift from an old friend of mine, given to celebrate a special occasion. The birth of my daughter.’ Claire smiled proudly at her mother’s comment and her loving glance when she mentioned her birth.

‘We found the necklace right here in the museum, all in pieces of course, in a box we were moving in a basement storage room. My friend, a skilled metal-worker, restored it and strung it back together as best as he could figure it was intended to be. I like to think that it was once worn by Akhenaten’s queen, Nefertiti, as she sailed lazily down the Nile, and now it’s being worn by me, an ordinary person.’

I was familiar with the story of Akhenaten, the New Kingdom pharaoh who introduced the world to monotheism and fostered a naturalistic form of art not seen before in the ancient Egyptian civilization. I liked the idea that this dazzling necklace was being worn by a warm, living woman, instead of sealed in a display case or adorning a dried-up mummy. That one of the “common people” was wearing something originally intended only for royalty spoke loudly of the new society’s egalitarianism.

[to be continued in the next issues of the Newsletter]

George Duncan is senior heritage planner in Markham, Ontario and an architectural historian interested in the documentation of Ontario’s heritage buildings, local history and cultural landscapes. He has authored several books, including York County Mouldings from Historic Interiors (2001) and Thoreau MacDonald’s Sketches of Rural Ontario (2004), and has recently published a chap-book concerning Ontario’s vanishing barns.

MORRIS BY TWITTER

Ameneh McCullough

The Life of a Humble Man with Grand Beginnings, or William Morris: Tweetified

**edwardburnejones** At least he got to see the final Kelmscott Chaucer. RIP @williammorris

**1896**

**williammorris** It’s time to bring beauty back into bookmaking. Opening the Kelmscott Press. Someday I’ll make my own Chaucer...

**1891**

**williammorris** Socialism is the new democracy. My new books, Art and Socialism and A Summary of the Principles of Socialism are out! #socialistleague

**1884**

**williammorris** Founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings to stop the restorers from removing all of our history.

**1877**

**morrisandco** Looking for @mmfandco? Find new updates here!

**1875**

**dgrossetti** Staying with @janeburden at Kelmscott Manor #winning

**1871**

**williammorris** The Industrial Revolution is really getting on my nerves. Time to make a change

**1870**

**williammorris** Time to get to work on my poetry #relationshipsuck

**1865**

**mmfandco** Launch party tonight! Our decorations are old-school cool.

**1861**

**williammorris** Moving into #redhouse with @janeburden and our daughter. Come on over to decorate!

**1860**

**williammorris** Just got married to @janeburden! #justmarried

**1859**

**janeburden** @williammorris just proposed. Sorry @dgrossetti, but you left me

**1858**

**williammorris** @dgrossetti Back off, she’s mine.

**1857**

**dgrossetti** Just found my new muse, @janeburden. She looks different from any woman I’ve seen before.

**1857**

**williammorris** Back at Oxford w/the boys, painting the Oxford Union frescoes.
williammorris Apprenticing for @gestreet. I guess I’m not going to be a clergyman after all. On the plus side, I just met @philipwebb and @dgrossetti
1856
edwardburnejones Saw the Gothic cathedrals in Northern France; decided to become an artist with @williammorris
1855
williammorris @johnruskin is a genius. Stones of Venice rocked my world.
1853
williammorris Met @johnruskin and @edwardburnejones #studyingatoxford
1853
williammorris Can’t wait to be a High-Church Anglican clergyman. #studyingatoxford
1853
dgrossetti Formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with @williamhunt and @johnmillais. Say goodbye to chiaroscuro! Anyone wanna join?
1849
emmamorris @josephshelton Just gave birth to a boy!
1834
Nature is both beautiful and useful; it’s a pleasure to look at, but without it we could not survive.

Ameneh McCullough, an Economics major, is a sophomore at the University of Puget Sound. She was first introduced to William Morris through a class called William Morris and his World. After learning about Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement, she now sees their influence wherever she goes.

BOOKS & EVENTS
BEAUTIFUL BOOK, BEAUTIFUL HOUSE


This book is a collaborative publication of students from both universities and reflects the design ideals of William Morris. There are a limited number of copies available for purchase for $75. All proceeds will be directed towards enriching the student experience of book arts. If you are interested, please contact Jane Carlin: jcarlin@pugetsound.edu.

WILLIAM MORRIS PORTRAIT:

Prints of this contemporary image of William Morris are available for $135 including postage from UK artist Jenny Barnish, at www.jennybarnish.co.uk /jennybarnish@hotmail.com.

FIRST ROMANIAN TRANSLATION OF
News from Nowhere:

We are happy to announce that Andreea Mardar, the 2011 recipient of the Joseph Dunlap Memorial Fellowship, will bring out her translation of Morris’s News from Nowhere with Editura Junimea in July. This is the first Romanian translation of Morris’s utopia, and the second of his works to appear in Romanian.

The July 2011 Newsletter provides a photograph of Andreea and her explanation of the work involved. News from Nowhere “is highly embedded in its source culture, containing thousands of references which were familiar to its first British and American readers, but difficult to understand and even cryptic to present-day readers. Things can be even more problematic when it comes to understanding, interpreting, and translating them for a foreign audience. Because of this fact, extensive research has to be conducted first in order to understand the information contained in the source text, with all its presuppositions and implications, and then to render it in an accessible form to the Romanian reader.” We hope that Ms. Mardar’s careful rendition of Morris’s work will attract a receptive audience, and look forward to posting a small segment of her work on our website.

ARTS AND CRAFTS TOURS:
PRE-RAPHAELITES AT HOME

Arts and Crafts Tours is offering a tour of Pre-Raphaelite sites from October 6th-13th, 2012. Participants will join members of the Delaware Art Museum on a week-long examination of the artists and their works. The tour will begin in Liverpool, move south into Manchester, then to Birmingham and Oxford, before ending up in London with a private tour by the curator, Alison Smith, of Tate Britain’s Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde. For further information, please contact artsandcraftstours@gmail.com.
THE LAST WORD

Thinking Toward the Elections (and Beyond)

WM on health care: First of all I claim good health; . . . a vast proportion of people in civilization scarcely even know what that means.” (“How We Live and How We Might Live,” 1885)

WM on education: Now the next thing I claim is education. And you must not say that every English child is educated now; that sort of education will not answer my claim. . . . What I claim is liberal education; opportunity, that is, to have my share of whatever knowledge there is in the world according to my capacity or bent of mind. . . . (“How We Live”)

WM on elected officials: Politicians, as you well know, take good care to shut their eyes to everything that may happen six months ahead . . . . (“How We Live”)

WM on contemporary politics: Now, if you think I have exaggerated the power of . . . solid, dead, unmoving resistance to progress, I must call your attention to the events of the last few weeks. (“Whigs, Democrats and Socialists,” 1886; Morris referred to the suppression of Irish desires for independence)

WM on “development”: No man who consents to the destruction or the mutilation of an ancient building has any right to pretend that he cares about art; or has any excuse to plead in defence of his crime against civilization and progress, save sheer brutal ignorance. (“The Beauty of Life,” 1880)

WM on waste: What shall I say concerning its mastery of and its waste of mechanical power, its commonwealth so poor, its enemies of the commonwealth so rich, its stupendous organization—for the misery of life! (“Why I Became a Socialist,” 1894)

WM on “Citizens United”: These fighting firms. . . have now, in our times, got into their hands nearly all the political power, and they band together in each country in order to make their respective governments fulfil just two functions: the first is at home to act as a strong police force, to keep the ring in which the strong are beating down the weak; the second is to act as a piratical body-guard abroad, a petard to explode the doors which lead to the markets of the world . . . (“How We Live”)

WM on the 1%/99%: For what is visible before us in these days is the competitive commercial system killing itself by its own force: profits lessening, businesses growing bigger and bigger, . . . lack of employment therefore becoming chronic, and discontent therewithal. (“The Hopes of Civilization,” 1885)

WM on environmental regulation: Though we are bound to wait for nobody’s help than our own in dealing with the devouring hideousness and squalor of our great towns. . . .; yet it would be idle not to acknowledge that the difficulties in our way are far too huge and wide-spreading to be grappled by private or semi-private efforts only. (“The Prospects of Architecture”)

WM on the United States: A country with universal suffrage, no king, no House of Lords, no privilege as you fondly think; . . . and with all that, a society corrupt to the core, and at this moment engaged in suppressing freedom with just the same reckless brutality and blind ignorance as the Czar of all the Russians uses. (“Whigs, Democrats and Socialists,” 1886; Morris had in mind the Haymarket trials)

WM on “how we might live”: It is the province of art to set the true ideal of a full and reasonable life before him [the worker], a life to which the perception and creation of beauty, the enjoyment of real pleasure that is, shall be felt to be as necessary to man as his daily bread, and that no man, and no set of men, can be deprived of this . . . . (“Why I Became a Socialist”)