

The ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT in Surrey

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E-NEWSLETTER

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Chairman's Editorial by Carolyn Smith

Welcome to another new year of Society news. Last year, I very much welcomed articles submitted by Diane Crouch, Olive Maggs, Michael Drakeford and Peter Andrews. This is your newsletter - for members and by members - so do please keep articles coming!

Last year, I visited the tiny exhibition at Dorking Museum about E.M. Forster. I expect that some of you may have studied *A Passage to India* for A Level. However, how many of us know that the proceeds from this book paid for the purchase of a wood in Surrey! I went in search of the wood and this inspired to write the following article



Two E.M Forsters by Carolyn Smith

Edward Morgan Llewelyn Forster was born in 1847. His father was a clergyman. Eddie was educated at Charterhouse School and Trinity Cambridge before deciding to train as an architect with Arthur Blomfield. In the 1860s and 1870s, Blomfield was mainly a church architect. Eddie travelled through Europe between 1874 and 1876, drawing and studying French and Italian architecture. This link gives examples of his detailed sketches.

<https://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/online-resources/online-exhibitions/eml-forster-a-passage-to-italy>

He then began practising as an architect. He married Alice Whichelo in 1877 and two years later their son, also named Edward Morgan, was born.

Eddie designed the house, West Hackhurst in Abinger Hammer, Surrey in 1877 for his sister, Miss Laura Forster. 'The site is charming, on a ridge with a view both ways – southward over the Tillingbourne valley to the coniferous range of Leith Hill and northward across a rural railway-line, to Hackhurst Downs.' (*West Hackhurst: A Surrey Ramble*). The latter

publication was a memoir written by Forster junior in the 1940s about his life in Surrey. The house comprised ‘a traditionally-styled, two-storey dwelling constructed of brick with principally tile-hung elevations under a tiled roof. The roof-scape is varied with dormer windows, hipped and gabled ends. The dwelling sits in a large plot.’ (2015 *planning application*). It was originally known as ‘Laura Lodge’ . The freehold of the property was owned by the Farrer family from Abinger Hall and so the property was leasehold. *West Hackhurst: A Surrey Ramble* also contains an account of Forster’s relationship with this family which was not a happy one. Jason Finch explores this in *Genuine and Distorted Communication in autobiographical writing. E.M. Forster’s “West Hackhurst” and its contents*.

file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Genuine_and_Distorted_Communication_in_A.pdf

An early photograph of the house <https://dorkingmuseum.org.uk/west-hackhurst/> shows a substantial Surrey style house with two gables at the front. The one above the entrance door is half timbered. It has two very large brick chimneys. An interior photograph shows a book lined room with what looks suspiciously like Morris wallpaper.

Eddie sadly died of tuberculosis in October 1880, leaving his son to be brought up by his mother and his paternal great-aunt, Marianne. E.M. Forster was educated as a day boy at Tonbridge in Kent and King’s Cambridge. From 1905 to 1924, he lived at a house called Harnham in Weybridge. He inherited the remaining leasehold of West Hackhurst from his aunt Laura in 1924 and lived there with his mother until her death in 1945. They employed two servants: a gardener, Henry Bone and Agnes Dowland, whom he described as ‘the last parlourmaid in England’. Forster wrote in the 1940s that the house was ‘a little inconvenient and smaller than it looks. And there was and still is no gas, no electric light, no central heating, no hot water supply or baths. The drinking water is pumped from a well and carried to the kitchen in buckets, and when the well goes wrong we have to carry from High Hackhurst. The washing water is pumped up every morning into a cistern from a tank which is filled by the rain off the roof. But it is prettier to look at than Abinger Hall.’ Forster did not live there for much longer as the lease expired in 1946. Laura and Alice are both buried at nearby Holmbury St Mary. ACMS visited the church by G. E. Street in 2019. Forster was ‘very sorry to leave a neighbourhood which I have known all my life and in it so many good friends’.

I have only been able to find one other photograph of the house from a planning application of 2015. It is a far off with poor photographic resolution. My attempts to photograph it myself were thwarted by a high fence right around the property.



<https://www.molevalley.gov.uk/CausewayDocList/DocServlet?ref=MO/2015/0874&docid=567237>

However, I was able to see Piney Copse on a lovely walk from the Abinger Roughs National Trust car park on White Down Lane past Abinger Hammer. (Do not rely on the National Trust satnav directions which take you to the wrong place!)



Forster bought the four acres of woodland adjacent to his house at Piney Copse with funds from the sale of *A Passage to India*. He left it to the National Trust on his death in 1970. He wrote an essay entitled 'My Wood' in *Abinger Harvest* published in 1936. 'It is not a large wood – it contains scarcely any trees, and it is intersected, blast it, by a public footpath.' He questions the effect of property ownership of this wood. It makes him feel 'heavy... that it ought to be larger... and that he ought to do something to it.' *Abinger Harvest* is a collection of essays, reviews, poetry and a pageant play written between 1903 and 1935. Further information on Forster's life can be found at <https://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/online-resources/online-exhibitions/edward-morgan-forster-1879-1970>

A Room with a View which was the first of Forster's novels to be written, was published in 1908 and Summer Street was based on Holmbury St Mary. The film location for the Honeychurch's Surrey home, Windy Corner, is actually Foxwold, Pipers Lane, Braxsted in Kent. This Arts and Crafts house was built in 1883 by Sir Alexander Stenning. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1455408> Stenning was an architect and former President of the Surveyors' Institution. His works include St Barnabas Church in Beckenham; St James' Church, Elmers End and St Hames & Christ;s Hospital, Hertford. He died in 1928.

I always imagine the house in *Howard's End* to be Arts and Crafts. The house used for the film location in the 1992 version was Peppard Cottage in Rotherfield.



Graham Horn / "*Howards End*" /

This house dates back to the fourteenth century and was extended in 1905. It was for sale in 2017 and the *Daily Mail* link gives details and lots of pictures.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4746054/Home-Howards-End-market-3-95m.html>

Rooks Nest was actually based on Forster's childhood home near Stevenage, Hertfordshire. He lived here from 1883 to 1893. This house dates from the seventeenth century and is Grade 1 listed. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1176972?section=official-listing>



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rooks_Nest_House,_Stevenage.JPG

I hope that you have enjoyed this tour round some properties associated with E.M. Forster and his father.

Forthcoming events for 2022

17th February 2022. A Most Surprising Church in Lower Kingswood

30th March 2022. Visit to the Sidney Sime Gallery, Worplesdon, Surrey.



Other organisations – Events of interest.

Watts Gallery

The Younger Madox Browns: Growing Up Pre-Raphaelite

Wednesday 19 January

12.30-1.30pm

£6 | £5.40 | Students free with valid card

Online, Zoom webinar

Speaker Dr Ruth Brimacombe

Join Dr Ruth Brimacombe as she considers how the Madox Brown children were ‘endowed with rare sympathies for the beautiful’ thanks to their Pre-Raphaelite childhood. Drawing on the memoirs of Catherine Madox Brown and her children, this talk will reveal how Pre-Raphaelite thinking progressed to Modernism down the line of creative descendants.

History of Art & Design: Music, Art & the Victorians

Mondays, 17, 24 & 31 January and 7 & 14 February

11am-12.30pm

Full course £50 | Friends £45

Single lecture £12 | Friends £10.80

Online, Zoom webinar

Speakers: Dr Suzanne Fagence Cooper

This course considers the many ways in which music helped Victorian artists to experiment with the depiction of women, heaven, sensuality and death. Discover how artists were influenced by past and contemporary pieces of music to create radically beautiful and modern works of art.

As always, we would welcome any ideas for events, visits and lectures that you would like to propose to the Events Committee and any news or articles that you might like to submit for the Society e-newsletter or printed newsletter. Also, if you are aware of any planning applications relating to Arts and Crafts buildings in Surrey we should be pleased if you would bring them to our attention.

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