

The ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT in Surrey

ISSUE 10

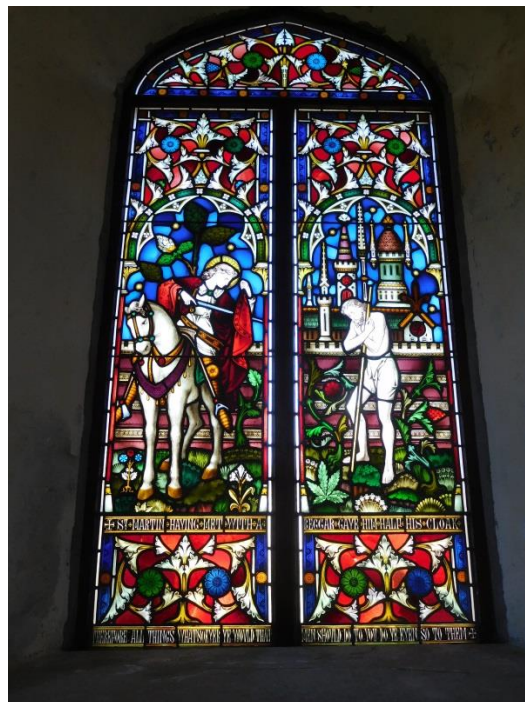
E-NEWSLETTER

MAY 2022

Chairman's Editorial by Carolyn Smith

Since the March e-newsletter, members have visited the Sime Gallery in Worplesdon and the Kitty Milroy murals in Farnham. Reports on the first of these two visits follows.

As well as visiting the Sime Gallery, we looked at the church of St Mary the Virgin with stained glass by Clayton and Bell. I am always on the look out for Victorian and Edwardian stained glass and sometimes find windows in unlikely places. This was certainly the case when I popped into the tiny church of St Martin's on the Isles of Scilly. Here I found a superb window also by Clayton and Bell.



William Morris wrote to Revd Frederick Guy in 1861 ‘You see we are, or consider ourselves to be, the only really artistic firm of the kind, the others only being glass painters in point of fact (like Clayton and Bell).’ I think that this is unfair criticism in this instance. ‘ In 1863 John Richard Clayton was among those who was experimenting with the manufacture of so-called *pot metal* or coloured glass produced by simple ancient manufacturing techniques which brought about great variability in the texture and colour of glass which is characteristic of ancient windows.’ (Painten Cowan). The colours red, white and blue predominate as they usually do in Clayton and Bell windows. The figures of St Martin on horseback cutting his cloak in half to give to the beggar have ornate 14th century style canopies over them: another of the features of Clayton and Bell windows. Their work also often has starry skies and stylised trees and shrubbery which can be seen here. The firm was founded in 1855 and continued as late as 1993 and was extremely successful. By the mid 1860s, 300 employees worked in their Regent Street workshop. St Martin’s was rebuilt in 1866 after having been damaged by lightning and so this glass was probably of the same date. I loved it and went back again the next day to have a further look. Underneath the figures is written: ‘St Martin having met with a beggar gave him half his cloak. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.’

Following on from Sarah Sullivan’s lecture about Arts and Crafts Village Halls last year, an article by her was published in April’s *Vantage* magazine, titled *Save our Village Halls!*
<https://online.fliphtml5.com/clcms/idgu/#p=9>

Another item of interest is a short video by one of our members, David Birch, about The London Pottery Co Ltd. <https://vimeo.com/690532902>

There is also an interesting article *A Stitch in Time* about the 150th anniversary of the Royal School of Needlework. You can find this in the April edition of essentialsurrey.co.uk
<https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=bb259b29-6acc-4bc2-a47d-46b8f098f62>

I hope to see many of you at the AGM when a section on grants made by the Society is always included. I am pleased to include a report about the results of a previous grant application made to conserve items from the Kelmscott Press.



Forthcoming events for 2022

18th May 2022. Annual General Meeting. Arbuthnot Hall.

29th June 2022. Visit to Thursley – home of the Lutyens family.

27th July 2022. Visit to Fintry, Brook, Surrey.

16th August 2022. Visit to Lowicks, Frensham, Surrey.

13th – 15th September 2022. Tour of the Sussex Coast.

11th October 2022. *The Art of Newlyn Copper*. Lecture by Olive Maggs at Blackheath Village Hall.

4th December 2022. Christmas Lunch at Frimley Hall Hotel.



ACMS visit to the Sime Gallery. 30.3.22 by Charles Gillespie

At the end of March 2022, a gallant group of eighteen ACMS members and friends from the Surrey Hills Society gathered under bright skies but cool temperatures to visit the Sidney Sime Gallery in Perry Hill, Worplesdon. The group had been split into two in order that they could also visit St. Mary the Virgin Church just up the road.

The Gallery

A lovely, charming Memorial Hall built in 1922 in memory of the local men killed in World War 1. The building also housed a Tea Room on the ground floor and the Sime Gallery up the stairs in a large room above.

Sime spent his early years working in the dark bleak conditions of the Yorkshire coalmines. Did this influence his style of art? He attended the Liverpool School of Art and having caught the attention of Jerome K Jerome he became a renowned illustrator of various popular magazines. A large number of Sime's paintings and drawings are displayed in the small gallery. Many are caricatures of local men whom Sime would observe and draw or paint in the local pub. No doubt after a splendid "session" in the pub, Sime often spent time throughout the night in St. Mary's churchyard, seeking inspiration and ideas for his creative work. It has to be said that they are not all for everyone. Some pictures and drawings are amazing, others rather worrying. Think Harry Potter and Arthur Rackham and dream on!



This link is to an interesting case study about the conservation of one of Sime's works.

<https://surreymuseums.org.uk/sidney-sime-gallery-case-study-conservator-hazel-neill/>

I found it interesting that Sime took his best mate on Honeymoon with him. I can't imagine being allowed to do that!

The impact of the First World War left Sime disillusioned and he became increasingly reclusive. He is buried in the nearby churchyard, with a simple rock marking the place.

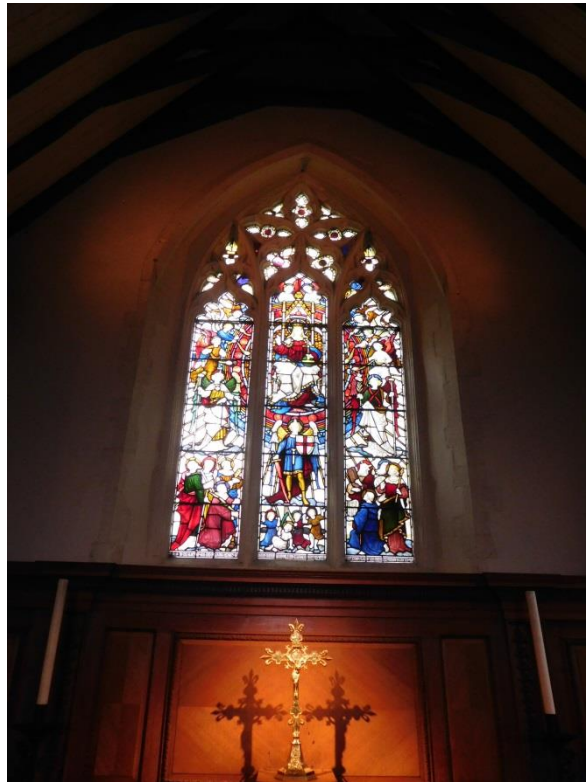


Tea and cake were (of course) happily taken in the middle of the afternoon before the groups switched over.

St. Mary the Virgin



A 13th Century Church restored in 1866 when a new chancel was built. The 1887 east window is by Clayton and Bell.



The Church had a pleasant feel about it and is in good order. I loved the story of the Great and the Good being at church and at a certain point during the service, when the Bell was rung, the coachmen scampered out of the local hostelry in order to collect them from the Common / Guildford side where the main road used to exist up to the church.

As you look down the hill from the churchyard, you can observe the old Vicarage / Rectory, a stunning looking building, a very fortunate owner. One of our members (Olive Maggs) spotted a Compton Pottery Angel sitting quietly in the Churchyard.

The church is well worth a visit if you haven't been and is usually open Wednesday and Saturday but please check beforehand.



Kelmscott Press grant

In May 2020, the Main Committee approved a grant to conserve items from the Kelmscott Press in anticipation of the William Morris Society 2021 exhibition and year of celebrations that were planned for the 30th anniversary of the Kelmscott Press. The William Morris Society sought funding of £790.00 which was approved. The grant was made in memory of David Ringer (6.10.21-29.12.19) who had been a member and supporter of ACMS for many

years. He was also the former Chairman of the William Morris Society and Chair of their Library Committee.

I have recently received photographs of the conserved items from Fiona Rose who was at the William Morris Society in April and was able to see in person the Kelmscott Press exhibition featuring these works. The Society remains closed due to flood damage but is hoping to open again at end May/beginning June. The Kelmscott Press exhibition will be replaced by an exhibition about May Morris but the Society is considering reinstating the Kelmscott Press exhibition for a period of three months after the May Morris exhibition closes.

The grant funding proposal is shown below with before and after photographs of the works concerned. Fiona is an ACMS member and now former Trustee of the William Morris Society. She will be giving a zoom lecture to ACMS in February next year, on the subject 'In the Garden with William Morris: Flora as Art.'

Grant Funding Proposal to The Arts and Crafts Movement in Surrey Background

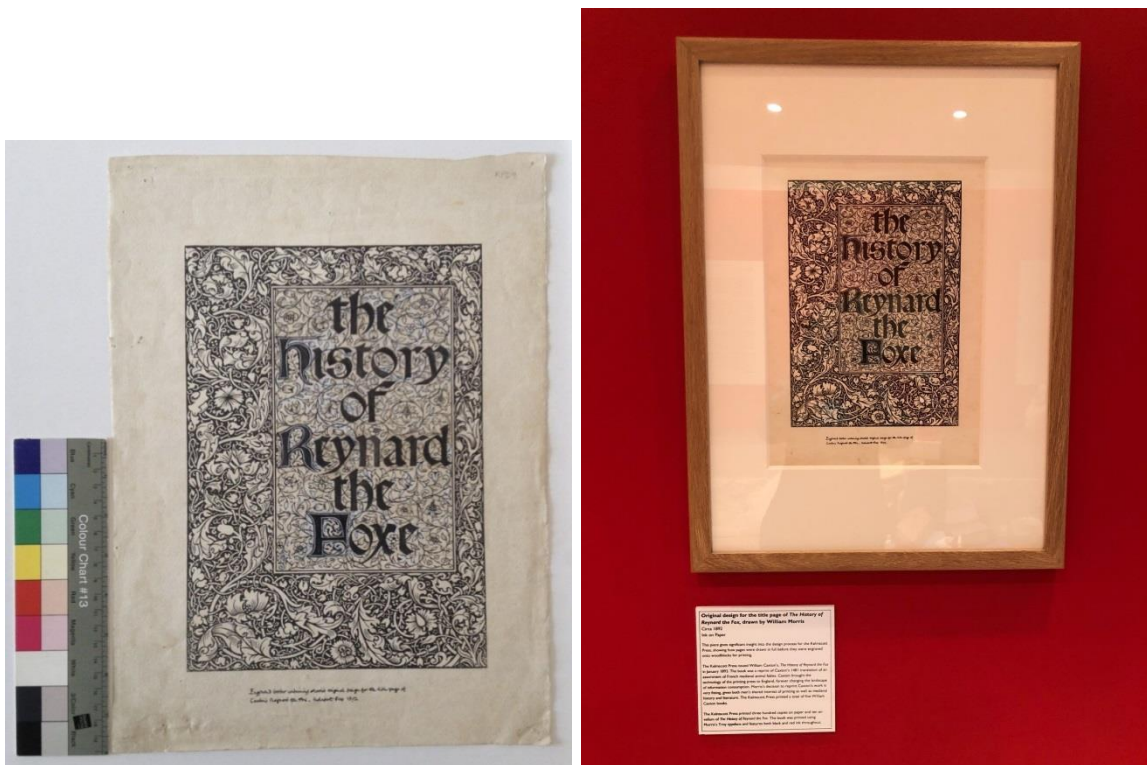


In 2021 The William Morris Society (WMS) will celebrate 125 years since the publication of the Kelmscott Chaucer, the seminal work produced by William Morris's book printing venture, the Kelmscott Press. Morris sought to show that by adding "beautiful ornament and pictures, printed books might once again illustrate that a work of utility also be a work of art". His respect for traditional craftsmanship, search for perfection in design and love of literature come together in the works produced by the Kelmscott Press. Morris's quest for the 'ideal book' culminated in the production of the full works of Geoffrey Chaucer - the Kelmscott Chaucer - in 1896, mere months before his death. Described by Edward Burne-Jones as "like a pocket cathedral", it embodies Morris's highest ideals of book design. The legacy of the Kelmscott Press has been vast, inspiring book design and private printing press movements around the world.

WMS is in a unique position to host a celebration of the Kelmscott Press: the Society owns the last of Morris's Albion printing presses in the UK - used in the production of the Kelmscott Chaucer - as well as a large collection of Kelmscott Press books and ephemera. Our headquarters at Kelmscott House are a few doors away from the site of the Press production and we have close working links with the Emery Walker House, home to Morris's partner in his printing endeavors. Our charitable purpose is to further knowledge of the life and works of Morris, and in 2021 we will dedicate part of our varied exhibitions, talks and events to the celebration of the Kelmscott Press, its history, material processes and contemporary relevance. A symposium, workshops and family activities are also being planned.

Central to these celebrations will be, over the course of the year, two exhibitions where we will show for the first time several original designs by Morris for borders and decorative lettering as well as other artefacts relating to the Press. If WMS can secure conservation costs then two unique paper items from our Collection will form part of the exhibition: the title page of *The History of Reynard the Foxe*, by William Caxton and The Initials A, B & C.

The History of Reynard the Foxe, by William Caxton, 1892, Kelmscott Press



The History of Reynard the Foxe translated by William Caxton was the tenth book produced by William Morris's famed Kelmscott Press. This piece perfectly exemplifies the care and detail that went into every book. Printed on handmade linen paper, using a typeface designed and handmade by Morris, this title page and book highlights his mantra of reviving the skill and purity of Medieval printing, in Morris's own words: to print books "which would have a definite claim to beauty." After 1891, Morris withdrew from the day-to-day running of his endeavours at Morris & Co. and focused his craft and skill into the printing of beautiful books, setting out to prove that the high standards of past craftsmanship could be repeated. This design is a print on paper of the intricate title page for *The History of Reynard the Foxe*, a collection of stories surrounding a character who often symbolises craft over brute-strength - perhaps an icon that resonated with Morris? This translation by William Caxton also had a special meaning for Morris, with Caxton thought to be the first person to introduce the printing press to England, often labelled the 'Father of English Printing.' Working on publishing one of Caxton's translations was deeply personal for Morris, writing that Reynard was "one of the very best of [Caxton's] work as to style; and being translated from a kindred tongue as delightful as mere language. In its rude joviality, and simple and direct delineation

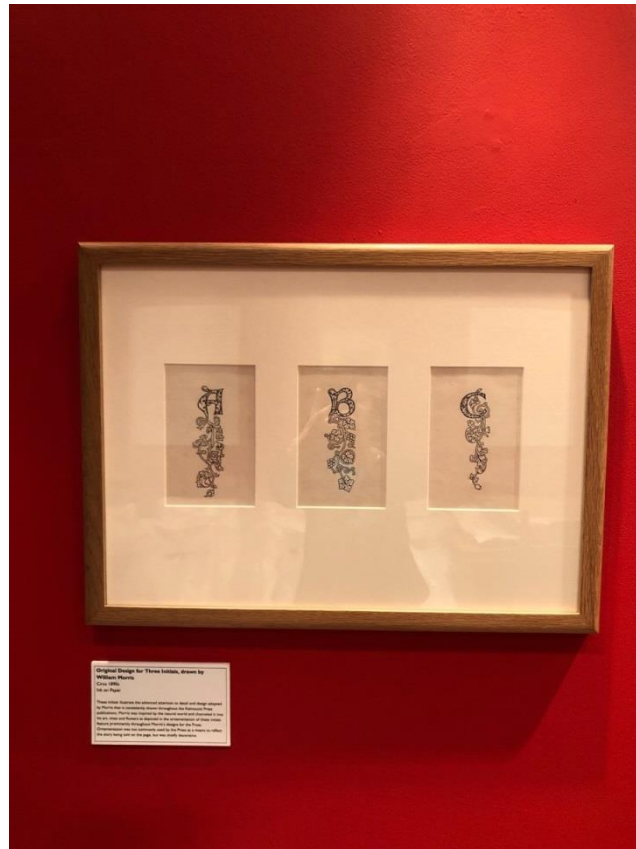
of character, it is a thoroughly good representation of the famous Beast Epic.” Decorated with a beautiful floral design, the piece is iconic and instantly recognisable as a product of the Kelmscott Press.

A piece as significant and as personal to Morris as this deserves to be brought out of art storage and put on display for the first time at the home of the Kelmscott Press. The piece also allows opportunity to talk about the design process of Kelmscott Press books displayed alongside other parts of the creative process. However, the current condition of the piece would need light conservation and framing before WMS can safely put it on display.

To display the piece WMS would need a specialist paper conservator to have the piece photographed and documented, conduct a good surface clean and it also needs humidification inside a Gore-tex sandwich and flattening underneath boards. All of this specialist conservation work needs to be undertaken before it can be brought out of storage to be displayed for exhibition in 2021 in celebration of the Kelmscott Press.

Initial Letters A, B & C, Kelmscott Press c.1890s:

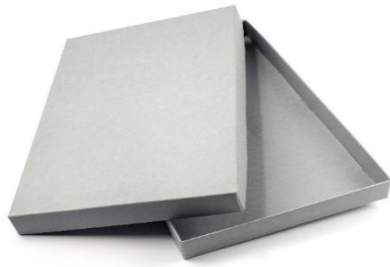




The Initials A, B & C illustrate the advanced attention to detail and design adopted by Morris in his mission to produce beautiful books, which stand as art in their own right. The series portrays the two main merits of what is necessary and essential in Morris's elaborate printing craft through their decorative and story-telling qualities. The three initial letters require specialist light conservation by a paper conservator and framing, so they can permanently continue to demonstrate Morris's highest level of craftsmanship and process of designing and printing fonts, at the home of his Kelmscott Press. This series can then document the passion of book craft through the hand of Morris by displaying the prints as historically important pieces of art.

Premier Library Print & Newspaper Conservation Box

WMS require a conservation standard, acid free box for the safekeeping and protection of fragile, original Kelmscott Press material. The box will extend the life span of these historic paper-based works that illustrate the printing process and can be used in further studies to understand the references used in his seminal Kelmscott Press series. This specialist box has double wall construction offering extra strength and improved protection against fire and water.



Summary of Funding Sought

Description	Size	Mount size	Conservation	Conservation cost	Mounting and framing cost
The History of Reynard the Fox, title page	380 x 280mm	Royal	Documentation and photography, surface cleaning, humidification and pressing	£180	£171
A, B, C, small printed letters	195 x 140 mm each	Royal	Documentation and photography, surface cleaning, paper repairs, humidification and pressing	£240	£168
Premier Library Print & Newspaper Box	628x518x50mm				£31.00

Total funding sought £790.00

Acknowledgement of Support

The Kelmscott Press celebrations in 2021, including the exhibitions, will be marketed widely by WMS including via: e-news bulletins to WMS supporters and mailing list subscribers, the Society's website, articles in the WMS Magazine, special edition of Journal of William Morris Studies, social media posts on the Society's Instagram, Facebook and Twitter pages, local and national press and reciprocal marketing with various Heritage and Arts organisations including The William Morris Network.

Funding support for the conservation of these items will be acknowledged next to these pieces when they are on display during the exhibition and at subsequent exhibitions including if the items are loaned to other organisations for public display. Funding support will also be acknowledged in the WMS Annual Report which appears on the Society's website and is made available to members and supporters.

Fiona Rose, WMS Trustee

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.

Chairman and e-newsletter editor: Carolyn Smith,
chairman@artsandcraftsmovementinsurrey.org.uk

The Arts and Crafts Movement in Surrey website :
www.artsandcraftsmovementinsurrey.org.uk