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Meeting of the Board of Directors 2008-09

In the following article I attempt to summarise some of the main discussions and decisions that have occupied the Directors of the Guild over the past year. Inevitably I have excluded a number of minor items and, in some cases, I delay the introduction of a topic to the meeting at which it was first fully developed.

St Mary's Lodge, Marygate, York. 14 March 2008

Over the past few years we have been much preoccupied with the rural economy, especially in the context of Bewdley where we own land and where we are now deeply involved in the Grow with Wyre campaign. Those who attended the Bewdley AGM in 2007 will remember the barn at Uncllys Farm where we gathered for refreshments. John and Linda Iles are now converting it into an education studio, where classes, talks and exhibitions can be held, and where work on the sustainable economy can encounter other Ruskinian concerns. The Directors approved the application for planning permission for this studio, as well as for a fruit press and bottling facility at the farm. John has applied for grant aid to cover the architects' fees and construction costs involved.

It was also agreed that the studio might provide a use for some of the furniture originally designed for the Ruskin Gallery in Norfolk Street. Many items, including the Giuseppe Lund staircase and balustrade, were using up storage space in Sheffield. Once these objects had been catalogued and photographed, John Iles would inspect them and arrange for the transport of appropriate items. (I can now report that some of these did meet the needs of the Bewdley studio, but not, alas, the staircase and balustrade, which still languish in Sheffield unused.)

The Board viewed a picture which had been offered to our Gallery at a favourable price and on advantageous terms by Charles Nugent. This was Frank Randal's watercolour of the Grand Canal in Venice in the parish of San Giovanni Crisostomo: a vivid rendering by one of the younger artists encouraged by Ruskin. Louise Pullen was to investigate funding possibilities.

Louise was proceeding with the digitisation of the Ruskin collection at Sheffield and the updating of the catalogue. The Board had for some time been anxious about the slowness of this process – largely due to Louise's other responsibilities in the Millennium Galleries. It was considered vital that a substantial body of the collection should be online for the opening of the first Triennial exhibition in October 2009. Accordingly, the Board allocated £500 towards costs and the Master wrote to the Director of Museums Sheffield to make our anxieties known. As Louise was to inform us subsequently, this allocation of funds has proved enormously useful.

The Guild of St. George

Master: Dr James S. Dearden

Directors: Janet Barnes, James Dearden, John Iles, Peter Miller, Cedric Quayle, Clive Wilmer, Robert Wilson.

Secretary to the Board: Norman Hobbs

Editor of The Companion: Professor Graham Parry: gp8@york.ac.uk

In recognition of her dedicated work with the Collection, the Directors awarded Louise a travel grant of £500. This was to enable her to visit Venice and attend the conference Ruskin, Venice and 19th Century Cultural Travel in September 2008. (Louise has written her response to this experience for the present issue of The Companion.)

At this meeting the Directors agreed to welcome three new Companions: Sally Beamish, the chief gardener at Brantwood, who has been responsible for the magnificent development of Ruskin's own land over the past twenty-one years; Professor Stephen Gill, the distinguished Wordsworth scholar, who is, like many Wordsworthians, a lover of Ruskin and the Lake District; and Jo Harvey, the widow of our late and much lamented Director Mark Harvey. It is worth noting of Sally that, not long after she began work at Coniston, the Guild made a grant of £500 to help her get the Professor's Garden going. Her subsequent achievement has been extraordinary.

It was reported that our much expanded list of Guild publications was doing well and that sales had exceeded £700 in recent months.

We received good reports from the Campaign for Drawing, which is now independent of the Guild, though we agreed to fund the Campaign's Drawing Inspiration Award to the tune of £1,500.

Two major issues concerning the future of the Guild came under discussion at this meeting. First, with the assistance of our Secretary, Norman Hobbs, John Iles was beginning to compile a Companions Directory at the instigation of the Way Forward group (Janet Barnes, John Iles and Clive Wilmer). This will provide the opportunity for Companions to find out more about one another and, it is hoped, enable the Guild to expand its work into more local activities. Second, we began to reflect on the succession to the Mastership. Jim Dearden, it will be remembered, had already said that he would stand down as Master in November 2009.

The Studio, Millennium Gallery, Sheffield. 4 July 2008

The evening before this meeting, the Master, Peter Miller and Clive Wilmer had met socially with Nick Dodd, Director of Museums Sheffield, and Kim Streets, their recently appointed Director of Learning and Knowledge, with the intention of encouraging better communications between the Guild and MS (as they now call themselves). As the Master reported to the Board, it had been agreed that Kim Streets should be our main point of contact. The meeting had proved productive and had clarified a number of issues.

The Master had been trying to clear more space in our collection at Sheffield. There is the matter of furniture mentioned in the previous report and the Master and Peter Miller had been trying to clear our library of books which have no place in our collection. This is because, over the years, large numbers of books had been given to us, several of them irrelevant to our activities and concerns, or surplus to requirements. The spare books had first been offered to Sheffield City Libraries, who were unable to use them, and were now in the hands of auctioneers. The proceeds from their sale would go to the Ruskin Collection Fund.

In the Board's routine consideration of accounts, it was agreed to set aside £4,500 this year for the Ruskin Collection Fund. £1,000 of this sum would represent an annual commitment to increase the balance of the fund; the other £3,500 would go towards the purchase of the Frank Randal watercolour, described above. Directors expressed some concern at the level of our auditors' fees and the Secretary raised the possibility of changing to a new firm on the Isle of Wight where both he and the Master live. (This decision was eventually made at the 14 November meeting: see below.)

At most of these Board meetings I have reported on the continuing involvement of the Guild with the May Festival at Whitelands College in Roehampton. The connection still proves fruitful and I, as the Companion who presents the Ruskin books each year, have been privately encouraging more Companions and other Ruskin enthusiasts to attend. Companions wishing to do so should contact me. (The Festival is always held in May and usually on the second Saturday of that month.) As a result of our connection with Whitelands College, the current Principal, Canon Dr Geoffrey Walker, has been invited to become a Companion and has accepted.

I have also been in communication with the 2011 Trust, a body set up by Parliament and Westminster Abbey to co-ordinate events for the quatercentenary of the King James Bible of 1611. The Board has been thinking of how the Ruskin collection might be used in the celebrations, which should at the very least include some Ruskinian element. The Trust is chaired by Frank Field MP, who seems to be seriously interested in Ruskin; the possibility of inviting him to address the Guild has been considered and I have raised it with him. No conclusion has yet been reached, but a Guild Lecture from him in 2011 is perhaps a possibility.

There have been more developments at Sheffield. Louise Pullen reported that in the last four years she had catalogued over 4,000 items in the Collection out of a total in excess of 50,000. This gives some idea of how high the hill we have to climb is. It seemed to the Board essential that a substantial proportion of the Collection should be digitised by the time the first

Triennial Exhibition opens on 21st October 2009. It was accordingly decided to make a further grant towards digitisation, provided a minimum of 300 images are online by that date.

It was confirmed that the focus of the first Triennial Exhibition would be the Ruskin material. There are also to be natural elements, including some oak from Bewdley provided by John Iles and/or Cedric Quayle.

At the March meeting Directors had discussed the possibility of Guild involvement in the Wyre Community Discovery Centre, which will provide a focus and visitor's centre for the whole Grow with Wyre campaign involving the Forestry Commission and Natural England as well as ourselves. At this meeting John Iles informed us that the Centre was dependent on the success of a £1.9m bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. As a result of these discussions, the Master and I agreed to join Cedric Quayle and John Iles for a meeting with the Forestry Commission representatives at Bewdley and a tour of the key Wyre Forest locations. More of this later!

At this meeting the Directors considered an application for funds from Brian Lewis, who is one of our most energetic and original Companions. This was for the Rivers Project, which involves an exchange between people in Brian's home region in the West Riding of Yorkshire and people in the Indian state of Gujarat. It is a communal arts programme involving recognition of the threat of climate change. £500 was awarded to the project and it is hoped that Brian will address the AGM in 2009 as part of the Way Forward programme.

The Board continues to care for its properties at Bewdley and Westmill. Robert Wilson had recently had to authorise improvements and repairs to some of the Westmill properties. Our tenants at St George's Farm and St George's Bungalow seemed to be experiencing some of the difficulties of age. Both had been recently widowed, for instance. Jack Bishop at the farm was not interested in the restoration of orchards on our land – hardly surprising at his advanced age – and so we have instructed the land agent to negotiate a deal with him whereby he could continue as our tenant while the Guild resumed the management of the land.

After much consideration, I have agreed to be the Board's candidate for the Mastership when Jim Dearden retires.

Rainolds Room, Corpus Christi College, Oxford, 14 November 2008

Ruskin was a Professorial Fellow of Corpus Christi College during his Slade Professorship at Oxford. This was the main significance of the Board's attendance at the College, and we accepted a kind invitation to view what had been his rooms, now occupied by the Bursar. By coincidence they included a large painting inspired by Venice, but unsurprisingly there was little evidence of Ruskin's occupancy. The most strikingly unchanged aspect was the view across the garden to Christ Church Meadow. (The 2008 AGM was held the following day in Christ Church itself, where Ruskin studied as an undergraduate.)

The Board has now decided to purchase the Frank Randal watercolour from its own funds. An application to the V&A Purchase Grant Fund had proved unsuccessful and Charles Nugent had offered the picture to the Guild at £6,000 – a substantial discount – and was prepared to accept payment in two instalments. £3,500 had already been earmarked for the purchase in the financial year ending March 2008, so the Directors decided to add the further £2,500 in the current financial year.

The first Triennial exhibition is provisionally to be entitled *Can Art Save Us?*, the theme being sustainability. It was agreed with some regret that more funding would be necessary if the digitisation of the Collection was to get off the ground by October 2009, so a further £500 was allocated.

At the Master's invitation, the meeting was attended by Dr Marcus Waithe, who lectures in Victorian literature at Sheffield University. Marcus had for some time been taking an interest in the Collection and had recently been awarded £9,300 for a remarkable Knowledge Transfer Project. His aim was to set up an online reconstruction of the original St George's Museum at Walkley. This virtual recreation, based on the existing photographs, would suggest the space and organisation of the Collection as it was in Ruskin's day. The project would be hosted by the University of Sheffield, but a collaboration agreement between the Guild and the University would give us indefinite access to it. The Directors agreed to contribute to the hosting of the website at about £100 per year. Marcus went on to make a similar presentation to the Guild AGM the following day and has contributed an article on it to this issue of *The Companion*. He was invited by the Master to become a Companion and has accepted.

To the great relief of all Directors, we now have a website manager. Louise Pullen offered to take on the job, which she will execute in her leisure time and in liaison with Peter Miller. The directors allocated £1,000 towards this development.

For the past year the Board has been discussing the work of David Walker Barker, an artist who collects and works with minerals. It now seems that an exhibition of his work is to be held at the Ruskin Library, Lancaster, in 2010. It is likely that the Guild will offer some financial support nearer the time.



Guild Directors and Secretary in one of John Ruskin's rooms at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, November 2008.
 From left to right: John Iles, Clive Wilmer, Robert Wilson, James Dearden (Master), Peter Miller, Cedric Quayle, Norman Hobbs (Secretary)

Further to our discussions on the cost of auditing, the decision was made to change our accountants from Kendall Wadley LLP, of Hereford, to Harrison Black Ltd of Newport, Isle of Wight. Cedric Quayle, who as the Guild's Secretary had worked for many years with Kendall Wadley, expressed regret.

Plans for the new Studio at Uncllys are advancing. The Directors agreed to supply oak timber from the Guild's woodlands to be used in the new Ruskin Studio. The Master suggested that some appropriate Ruskin-related quotations might appear on the internal woodwork, possibly in fine calligraphy. It was hoped that the furniture from Sheffield would prove suitable. The Directors agreed to pay for materials to replace the roof on the wood store, probably to the tune of £600 or so.

The Master and Clive Wilmer reported on their visit to Bewdley and their meetings with representatives of the Forestry Commission. Several important proposals had emerged at this meeting. The Commission had suggested that the Guild be represented on the Board of the Grow with Wyre Landscape Partnership Scheme, though this would not involve financial contributions from us. With the support of Clive and John Iles, the Master proposed Cedric Quayle as our obvious representative, and he has agreed to serve. The Forestry Commission representatives had also suggested that the Guild might like to fund the training of one woodland apprentice, and this was discussed with some enthusiasm.

The following have applied for Companionships and been accepted: Emma Bartlett, who used to run the Ruskin for All programme at Brantwood; artist, craftsman, independent scholar and Ruskin enthusiast Robert Brownell; Malcolm Hardman, Ruskin scholar and Chairman of the Ruskin Society; Robert J. Knight, a devoted Ruskin collector from Canada; the distinguished Oxford Victorianist Bernard Richards.

Clive Wilmer

Ruskin and Medieval Manuscripts

My interest in medieval manuscripts was first aroused when as a boy at Bembridge School I helped the Warden, J. Howard Whitehouse (a former Companion) arrange a small exhibition in the School Library. Included in the exhibition were two manuscripts that had formerly belonged to Ruskin - a Flemish Book of Hours written in the mid-15th century, and an *Office of the Virgin* written in northern France for the English market in the 15th century. Ruskin called this one his "Salisbury Missal" because it was of the usage of Sarum.

A few years later I was able to buy my own first medieval manuscript, a Calendar written in England about 1383 - six vellum leaves with the KL at the head of each page in burnished gold. Ten years later I was able to buy a leaf from a *Bible* written about 1270 probably in the Carthusian monastery of Villeneuve-les-Avignon. The leaf contains the end of I Corinthians and the beginning of II Corinthians. In the large initial P is a picture of the seated St Paul, his right hand raised in blessing, his left holding his sword on his shoulder.

Medieval manuscripts are wonderful and beautiful works of art. How else, forty years ago, could one buy a 13th century painting for £10?

Ruskin tells us in *Praeterita* that "I had never cared for ornamental design until in 1850 or '51 I chanced, at a bookseller's in a back alley, on a little fourteenth-century Hours of the Virgin, not of refined work, but extremely rich, grotesque, and full of pure colour. The new worlds which every leaf of this new book opened to me, and the joy I had, counting their letters and unravelling their arabesques, as if they had all been of beaten gold, - as many of them indeed were, - cannot be told ...Not that the worlds thus opening were themselves new, but only the possession of any part in them."

The manuscript which Ruskin had bought contained twelve Calendar illustrations depicting the monthly occupations, nine full-page miniatures, thirty three historiated* initials, and decorative borders containing grotesque figures, birds and animals. It is now in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

**historiated initials are ones containing pictures of people or animals*

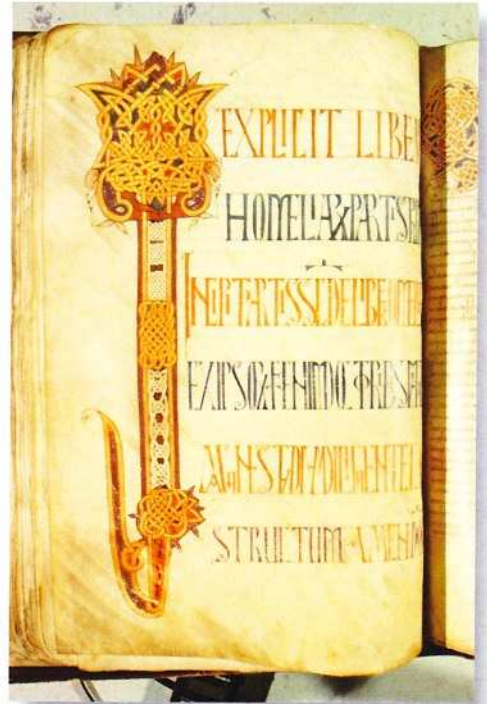
The young travelling Ruskin had seen such manuscripts "in noblemen's houses", and four years before he bought his first manuscript we know from his diary that he was examining manuscripts in the British Museum - but not until now did he have the pleasure of owning one.

When Ruskin began to collect manuscripts there were relatively few collectors and a fairly plentiful supply of manuscripts. For instance, I have an 1863 bookseller's catalogue which offers a 10th century *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis* for £6 6s 6d, and the bookseller is at pains to point out that the binding of the manuscript cost 5 guineas.

Ruskin soon launched himself into serious manuscript collecting. By 1853 he had acquired one of his finest - the "Cambrai Horae", - a 14th century *Book of Hours* written at Cambrai in northern France, and now known as "The Ruskin Hours". This manuscript probably cost Ruskin - or rather, his father- £180. When Ruskin viewed the Duke of Hamilton's manuscript collection in December 1853 he declared that he wouldn't give "my £180 one" for any he had seen. Nevertheless, when the Hamilton MSS were sold thirty years later Ruskin tried unsuccessfully to raise funds to buy the manuscripts for national museums. Ruskin had discovered something new and beautiful and wanted everyone to share the experience.

In the 1850s his father's account book records new purchases. In January 1853, "John HldMS £70, £75, £6 6s.", in 1854 "January Missal £84, £29", "February Missal £15." Ruskin's diaries of the time contain detailed notes of manuscripts in the British Museum and in his own collection. But use was Ruskin's only standard. The manuscripts did not stand safely on his shelves. He annotated them copiously, or broke them up, framing leaves and giving others away to friends or students to examine. "Missals", he wrote, "for use, not for curiosities." In December 1853 he noted in his diary "cut some leaves from large Missal", and a couple of days later, "Put two pages of Missal in frame", and "cut Missal up in evening - hard work."

Even his "greatest treasure", his "St Louis Psalter", a Psalter and Hours, c.1260, probably written for Isabelle of France, sister of St Louis, was not safe. Dean Kitchin remembered seeing it in pieces in Ruskin's rooms in Oxford. Six leaves were given to the Ruskin Drawing School and three went to Charles Eliot Norton in America.



Ruskin's particular interest in manuscripts was summed up in a letter to his friend Charles Newton who was then abroad, in the Greek islands. " ... I should at once have asked you to buy some manuscripts for me, but in general I do not like the Byzantine Missal painting, and I do not like to trouble myself with exchanges, or else I dare say I might exchange Greek manuscripts very advantageously with the dealers here against Norman French ones, which are what I want. But if you come across any very interesting MS - Interesting I mean in art, for I don't care about old texts - and can secure it for me, I will instantly reimburse you to the extent of £50; only I should expect a great deal for that price out of those convent lumber-rooms. I don't mean only to buy one, you may buy half a dozen small, or one large, as you think best - I had rather indeed have several smaller, as they are more conveniently managed."

One will notice Ruskin's frequent reference to "Missals". The *Missal* of course is a particular sort of book - the book which contains the office of the Mass. Ruskin, and others at the time, frequently used the word "Missal" to signify any illuminated manuscript. In fact Ruskin only ever owned five Missals.

Once begun, Ruskin's collection of manuscripts continued to grow, until finally he owned some ninety examples, several of the very finest quality. He bought principally from the dealers F.S.Ellis or Bernard Quaritch. He bought his last manuscript, Rudolf von Ems's World Chronicle, written in 1411 at Toggenburg in Switzerland, in 1888 when he was seriously short of money. He wrote to Quaritch on 23 March "I'll take the Toggenburg for £420 at once ... I buy it for St George's Guild ..." However a few days later Joan Severn wrote to Quaritch saying "I told my cousin a little while ago that if he spent at the rate of £12,000 a year when he only has £4000 to spend, he must get into difficulties ..." and a few months later the Toggenburg manuscript was sold back to Quaritch for £400.

Four of the manuscript in Ruskin's collection were notable for their age. His oldest was a 10th century copy of the *Four Gospels* written in eastern France, which he bought from Quaritch and whose present whereabouts is unknown to me. His second is the Guild's 10th century Homiliarium to which I refer below. Ruskin gave his late 10th century Gospels in Greek to Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1887, where the volume is now formally known as "The Cheltenham Gospels". His 11th century Greek *Gospel Lectionary*, on a blank leaf of which Ruskin wrote the original Guild Roll of Companions in 1876, is now in the British Library.

Although Ruskin *did* study the texts of his manuscripts, he was primarily interested in their decoration, thus the majority of his manuscripts were Bibles and books of devotion and service books - usually the more elaborately decorated medieval manuscripts. This is graphically illustrated by one example. He had a *Book of Hours* which was so tightly bound that it wouldn't fully open and the decoration, extending down into the gutter - towards the spine - was invisible. He sent the manuscript to his binder with instructions to re-bind it, but turning it completely inside out, binding the fore-edge, rather than the correct edge. Thus the binding of the wider margins would allow him to see all the decoration easily - but of course all of the text would be in the wrong sequence.

Subsequent owners and present locations of many of his manuscripts proclaim their quality and importance.

Some passed through the hands of such discerning collectors as Henry Yates Thompson, C.W.Dyson Perrins, A. Chester Beatty, Sir Sydney Cockerell, Dr E.G.Millar and Major J.R.Abbey, and are now to be found in the British Library, the Ashmolean Museum, the Bodleian Library, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Beinecke Library at Yale, York Minster Library, the Staatliche Museen, Berlin, and the Bibliotheque Royale, Brussels.

As part of his vision for the Guild, Ruskin foresaw the establishment of a number of Guild communities throughout the country; each would have its own school, museum and library. This part of the vision was never to be fulfilled in its original form, but perhaps partly as a compromise, Ruskin took an interest in various educational establishments, making many gifts of books to them. Three particularly received manuscripts or leaves - the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford, Cheltenham Ladies' College and Whitelands College.

The Guild Library itself has twelve manuscripts. A small number were given by Ruskin to friends who subsequently gave them to the Guild. The greater number was either given to the Guild by Ruskin or bought by the Guild at Ruskin's direction, principally using money from his endowment.

The oldest manuscript, as I have explained in a previous *Companion*, is an Homiliarium of 280 leaves 18 inches high, with over 200 decorative initials in colour. It was written in the late 10th century, probably at the monastery of San Milla'n de La Coqolla in northern Spain. This manuscript probably remained where it was written until it was bought by Bernard Quaritch around 1880 and sold at the end of that year to Ruskin, who sold it to the Guild at the end of the following year. Not many owners in its thousand years of life!

Another manuscript which Ruskin bought for himself and then sold to the Guild four years later is the *Ottobeuren Lectionary*, a manuscript of 128 leaves with large illuminated initials throughout, in gold, silver, and colours; some are historiated and many have three-quarter length illuminated borders. It was written at the south German Ottobeuren Abbey, c.1152-70 and illuminated by a monk called Reinfridus.

A *Decretals* of Gregory IX was written and decorated elaborately on 292 leaves at Bologna in the mid-14th century. There are two bibles, one either French or Spanish, written in the mid-13th century, with historiated initials for each book of the work. The other, of similar date, and also beautifully decorated, was probably produced in Paris. We have a Missal written in Paris in 1330-40 and by 1380 in the chapel of Charles V in the Tour de Vincennes.

Charles V of France, in fact, features frequently in the provenance of Ruskin's manuscripts. In addition to this *Missal* Ruskin also owned two other volumes from his library - the "St Louis Psalter", France, c.1260, and the Hours of Yolande of Navarre, written in France about 1353 for Countess Yolande of Flanders, wife of Philip of Navarre.

We have two *Books of Hours*. One is a worn little volume written in Flanders or Artois about 1310. The other is much more interesting. Ruskin bought "The De Croy Hours" from Ellis and White for the Guild in 1881, telling Henry Swan, the Guild's Curator, that £500 was "an extravagant price but I think Sheffield will be a little proud of having saved it from going to America."

This is an interesting volume of 178 leaves. It was written about 1460 in Paris or Tours. There are fourteen large miniatures probably by the important miniaturist, Jean Fouquet, and a further six 16th century miniatures have been added. Shortly before 1572 the manuscript came into the hands of Diane de Dammartin. She married Phillip de Croy about 1572 and it was probably at this time that the six extra miniatures were added.

Diane de Croy used the volume as an *album amicorum* and many of the margins and originally blank leaves were filled by verses and other good wishes from family and friends. One of the *amicorum* was Mary Stuart, daughter of James V of Scotland. She became queen of Scotland and was married to Francis II of France. Beneath one of the additional miniatures she has signed "Marie", and added "Royne de France".

In his 1884 *Master's Report* Ruskin said that "the three most costly acquisitions yet made for the Guild have been the twelfth-century Lectionarium of the Monastery of Ottobeuren, in Bavaria, £550, of the Queen of Scots' Missal, £500, and Miss Alexander's *Roadside Songs of Tuscany* £600 (sold for the help of the poor of Florence and the north Apennine".

It is indeed fortunate, thanks to Ruskin, that we have such a fine and interesting collection of medieval manuscripts. We could not afford to buy them today!

James S. Dearden

A Research Trip to Venice

Last September, the Guild of St George very kindly sponsored my attendance at a three-day conference entitled 'Ruskin, Venice and Nineteenth-Century Cultural Travel', organised by the Ruskin Centre at Lancaster University, the Ca'Foscari University of Venice and the scholarly organisation, Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies. The conference was held in Venice, and I was able to stay a few extra days after the conference to carry out some much needed Venetian research – Ruskin related, I must add. Together, these events have added much to my understanding of Ruskin's association with Venice and have been beneficial to my work with the Collection of the Guild of St George.

The conference began with a somewhat awe-inspiring session. Held in the flamboyant Scuola Grande di San Rocco, delegates were surrounded by Tintoretto's spectacular paintings as we received our opening lectures, and indeed, heard some of Ruskin's comments upon these very works. There is nothing like being able to look directly at works of art during a lecture to gain a truer appreciation of them, and certainly, in the grandiose atmosphere of the Sala Superiore, there was no way of dozing off after the 3.00am start I had that morning!

The majority of the conference papers were given in a system where each ninety-minute session had a panel of five speakers, each of whom gave a short presentation: a reduced form of a longer paper which had been made available to delegates several weeks earlier. Thus whilst the formal papers were given in the first third of the session, the rest of the session invited questions to the panel and discussion amongst the delegates. The method behind this system allows for a great range of public debate, rather than the usual confined discussions after the event.

Three sessions were always held concurrently, and such was the range of papers, it was difficult to decide which to attend or be most useful to my role as curator of the Ruskin Collection. Accordingly, sessions I attended were entitled 'Architecture and Politics', 'Visual Media', 'Conservation', 'Architecture and Aesthetics' and 'Modern Painting'. Papers that particularly interested me included the social and political background of Ruskin's chapter, 'The Nature of Gothic', the role of photography and engraving in Ruskin's book illustrations, Ruskin's role in the Oxford Museum and Ruskin and JMW Turner's views of Venice.

Conferences are not conferences without a special dinner, and the dinner on this conference was a particular treat. It was held on the mostly-uninhabited Venetian island of Torcello, and apart from an excellent meal, a visit was organised to the Byzantine basilica of Santa Maria Assunta. Here, delegates were able to wander around the otherwise deserted basilica after dark, which enabled me personally to see the building and its ornaments literally in a new light. Artificially lit, and with so few people there, the true beauty of the carving, and the colours in the wonderful mosaics could more easily be seen. The quiet atmosphere, which I have previously found to be a welcome relief from the busyness of Venice 'proper', was that evening particularly delightful.

Closing the conference was an absorbing lecture from Robert Hewison entitled 'Ruskin and Zorzi; Observations on an Anglo-Venetian Alliance', which in part, looked at JW Bunney's oil painting, 'Façade of the Basilica of San Marco', from the Guild's Collection. I was very pleased to see this work analysed in front of an international audience and that a work from the collection should make its appearance at the conference. I was also rather tickled that some of those mosaic chips Professor Hewison mentioned, that Bunney and Ruskin 'rescued' from the floor of San Marco are now resident in the Ruskin Gallery.

Overall, I found the conference most interesting and useful, with some fascinating papers and comprising a multitude of disciplines. I had interesting conversations with a number of international Ruskin scholars and introduced the Guild's Ruskin collection to others. Additionally I have added the academic papers to the Guild library for further reference. At times however, I did feel that a few of the speakers, when talking about artistic works had not actually looked at the works in question, and had simply read the theory or critique behind them. As a result, there seemed to be something rather lacking in their analysis of, or theories behind Ruskin, Turner or other travellers to Venice. Their approach to these artists and their output rather reinforced for me the importance of looking at, and not just reading historical subjects, and made me additionally appreciative that I work with a historical collection of such visual significance.

With this in mind, I spent the rest of my visit to Venice looking at buildings and at art, albeit with Ruskin's books in my hand. This is not the first trip I have made to Venice: I have been as a tourist a number of times and also carried out a research visit several years back. Though Ruskin might turn in his grave at the thought, I have previously spent time in Venice researching the architect Palladio. So whilst on that visit I studied buildings and an architect that Ruskin gave the epithets 'base', 'barbarous', 'childish' and 'without wit', on this visit I went to look at some of the buildings about which Ruskin was rather more complimentary, and re-visited with my Ruskinian hat some of the buildings which Ruskin found 'of no interest' or 'without merit'.

I went around the city with various guides in hand, such as Ruskin's 'The Stones of Venice', and smugly 'ticked off' as far as possible each of the buildings and works mentioned in Ruskin's 'Venetian Index' and his 'Examples of the Architecture of Venice'. While this was somewhat exhausting, many of these buildings are completely off the tourist trail, which helped me discover a side of Venice that the average visitor rarely sees; deserted back-alleys leading nowhere, except to a beautifully decorated dead-end, or crumbling palazzi with just a few Byzantine carvings left amongst a jumble of newer additions. Whilst I had read and even lectured using Ruskin's notes on many of these buildings previously, and seen reproductions illustrating them – both Ruskin's own illustrations and modern photography, I found there really is nothing like standing in front of a building, notes in hand, for absorbing their meaning and seeing just where Ruskin was coming from.

Similarly, I looked more closely at paintings described by Ruskin in his writings. I had felt rather obsessive several days earlier at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco using the conference registration period to look at Tintoretto's paintings, Ruskin's description of them in hand. Yet I repeated the experience in the Accademia and the Scuola San Giorgio degli Schiavoni. The Scuola houses one of my favourite cycles of painting, a series by Carpaccio, of which there are many studies in the Ruskin Collection, and indeed from where the Guild draws its St George logo. Vittore Carpaccio is just about my favourite artist and thus no visit to Venice would be complete without a trip to see these paintings. Yet visiting this time, and on my own and firmly wearing my art historian hat, I could engross myself in them without having to bore attendant friends or relatives.

I also had a few collection-related research tasks to make on this trip. Firstly, amid the confused faces of various tourists I stood outside the Basilica of San Marco and the Doge's Palace with pages of photographs I had taken of plastercasts in the Ruskin Collection, trying to match the casts with the parts of the building they were cast from. A number of the casts are clearly not from these buildings, and thus I had taken these images around me on my architectural tour as well. I had limited success with locating some casts, but in one instance, in getting lost and trying to find the name of a building so I could

re-navigate my path, I found myself in front a certain sculptural frieze that exactly matched one of the casts (the cortile of the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista incidentally). Such is the magic of Venice!

Finally, I had with me some views of Venice from watercolours in the collection, and tried to do some matching up. Venice does seem to be one of those places where to some extent time stands still, particularly when off the beaten track, and I was continually struck how little had changed. In particular, a watercolour made by the Venetian artist Angelo Alessandri of a covered entrance to an alley-way appeared now, almost identical to his view of it 130 years ago.

Despite having visited Venice a number of times previously, I came away this time feeling that I had my eyes opened further than before regarding the city's beauty and history. With Ruskin's comments humming in my mind, following in his footsteps and within the peace and quiet of the back-streets it was very hard to see a brick wall without finding its decoration, or to see a building without finding in it a half-destroyed but intricately carved ornament. Yet even in Ruskin's nineteenth century, he knew that Venice was a vanishing city in more ways than one. He saw reflected in it a moral tale for England's then flourishing dominion and the state of things to come. Thus, I find it important that conferences such as 'Ruskin, Venice and Nineteenth-Century Cultural Travel' are organised so that we can re-visit the past and see through the eyes of our forebears what has changed, how and why. Also, that writings such as Ruskin's 'Stones of Venice' still exist to show people how and why to look, even if they do not necessarily agree with the opinions held by the author. Therefore, I would like to thank the Guild once more for the opportunity to re-visit Venice and sincerely hope that the inspiration gained on this visit will be demonstrated though my work with the Ruskin Collection.

Louise Pullen, Access Curator, Ruskin Collection

Ruskin in the Year of the Credit Crunch

If there are two things, since this journal last appeared, that are certain to have caught the attention of Companions, however briefly, they are surely the credit crunch and the Darwin bicentenary. I make no apology for being an admirer of Charles Darwin, and have been delighted by the opportunity we have had in recent months to celebrate one of the greatest of all thinkers. But as a champion of John Ruskin, I can't help feeling a little embarrassment, for as Companions will be aware, my view is one that Ruskin did not share. He didn't share it in print, at any rate, and attacked Darwinism whenever the chance arose. In spite of those attacks, he and Darwin knew and liked one another. They shared a great many enthusiasms. For instance, both of them loved nature for its extraordinary richness and variety and therefore, in their different ways, lavished their full attention on what Darwin called 'its endless forms, most beautiful and most wonderful'.

What Ruskin disliked, I suspect, was not so much the theory of Evolution as the sort of argument Natural Selection seemed to justify. It is sometimes forgotten that the subtitle of *The Origin of Species* is 'The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life', a phrase that has had appalling consequences. Darwin compounded the issue by adopting, for a later edition, a phrase from the sociologist Herbert Spencer: 'the survival of the fittest'. Those notorious words have played a significant part in the malign political uses to which the theory has been put, but the subtitle suggests that Darwin himself was not entirely innocent.

I was discussing these matters last year with one of our American Companions, Jim Spates, and he asked me if I thought that, in this context, the date of Ruskin's *Unto This Last* was significant. *The Origin of Species* appeared in 1859. Until 1860 Ruskin was primarily known as a writer on art and architecture. Was it, asked Jim, an accident that only a few months after Darwin's book appeared, Ruskin launched his attack on the economists?

The thoughts Ruskin sets out in *Unto This Last* have bearing on the credit crunch. That may or may not be surprising. But what has it got to do with Charles Darwin? Why connect economics with biology? I think the book answers that question in one neat sentence, which Ruskin calls 'The Law of Help': 'Government and co-operation,' he says, 'are in all things the Laws of Life; Anarchy and competition the Laws of Death.'

That is to say, if we are simply engaged in a struggle with one another – in the jungle or the marketplace or anywhere else – the values we like to associate with humanity are simply delusion. But life is so much more than struggle, as anyone knows who has started a family or created a business with a friend. It is collaboration that makes us human, as well as our ability to govern ourselves, to make order of our lives. If life is all competition, the only certain end to it is biological death – to say nothing of spiritual death.

Why is there a credit crunch? Because in the immortal words of the 1987 film *Wall Street*, our society has come to believe that 'greed is good'. For at least the past thirty years we have been encouraged to compete with our neighbours without regard to morality: to win the struggle for survival by triumphing over others.

When, as an undergraduate of 21, I first read *Unto This Last*, the honesty of the book, its truth-telling simplicity, was like a hammer-blow to the chest. Here, for instance, is Ruskin's response to some assumptions implicit in the orthodox economics of his day:

"I know no previous instance in history of a nation's establishing a systematic disobedience to the first principles of its professed religion. The writings which we (verbally) esteem as divine, not only denounce the love of money as the source of all evil, and as an idolatry abhorred of the Deity, but declare mammon service to be the accurate and irreconcilable opposite of God's service: and, whenever they speak of riches absolute, and poverty absolute, declare woe to the rich, and blessing to the poor."

Is not this simply true? One does not have to be a Christian to see it. One does not even have to be religious. Indeed, when Ruskin wrote it, he was having difficulty with his own Christian faith. But he never doubted the moral teaching of the Gospels. If we are to love one another, then human life is a co-operative endeavour. What is more, morality is indivisible. You cannot have one law for your friends and another for the market-place. How can behaviour we take to be wrong in our private lives be elevated to the category of 'wealth creation' in the context of a national economy?

I first read *Unto this Last* in 1967, when I was an undergraduate. In the same period, I also read Kenneth Clark's anthology *Ruskin To-Day*, first published in 1964. Clark's introduction to that book perfectly captures the spirit and the illusions of the mid 1960s. The majority of Ruskin's social ideas, Clark says, 'are now the truisms of the Welfare State'. When fifteen years or so later I found myself editing *Unto This Last* for Penguin Classics, I reread that introduction and was shocked to find how platitudinous it had come to seem. For one thing, it quite failed to register the visionary aspect of Ruskin's social thought, and for another, the truisms had turned into heresies. Britain and America had reverted to *laissez-faire* and had begun all over again to accept the deification of free markets, de-regulation, the trickle-down effect (savagely satirised in Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera*), and usury – which is to say, money made out of money, the haves living off the labour of the have-nots. Our present Prime Minister has declared that the second era of *laissez-faire* is over and President Obama seems to agree with him. It has been a long wait. But the time has come, it seems to me, to revisit *Unto This Last* and the notion of an ethical economics. How apt that this should happen in Darwin's year.

Clive Wilmer

Our forgotten Archangel

The Guardian newspaper turned its attention to *Unto This Last* as a tract for the times in June of this year, when its architectural correspondent Jonathan Glancey reminded readers of the historic influence of this work on members of the Labour Party, whilst doubting that the current crop of Labour MPs would have any time for it. In asserting its relevance to present conditions (he had in mind especially the failure of the financial system and the failure of Parliament to provide moral leadership because of its venality and self-interest), Glancey quoted Ruskin with telling effect. 'I feel the force of mechanism and the fury of avaricious commerce to be at present so irresistible', wrote Ruskin, that he had put all other concerns aside in order fight for justice and a form of wealth we could all believe in, and share. Glancey urged Labour MPs to take *Unto This Last* with them on holiday this summer. 'They will dislike it, and be disturbed by it, just as their predecessors were, when Ruskin wrote this, his finest book, a polemic in favour of health, education, hope, welfare and decency, and, in spirit, entirely against the crude, New Labour revival of liberal economics and our debilitating obsession with money, aspiration for aspiration's sake, shopping malls, PFI, PPP, destruction of craft and industry, MPs' expenses and every other form of dismal economics and head-hanging greed'. Those men and women in public life who so urgently need 'a moral compass with practical, humane and honest bearings' should read this book as a matter of necessity. It is undeniably 'a heavenly book, written by our largely forgotten national archangel'.

Graham Parry

The Ruskin Comics II

The story so far: about four or five years ago, as readers of the last issue of the Companion may recall, Howard Hull of the Ruskin Foundation approached me with an intriguing proposal: would I care to try adapting *Unto This Last* into the form of a comic strip, suitable for, among others, children up to the age of about twelve or thirteen, recent immigrants to the UK with only a limited command of English, and adults (including prison inmates) who had fallen through the gaps of our educational system? Oh, and by the way, the end product also had to be very funny - funny enough to seduce even the most hard-bitten of junior cynics into reading it from cover to cover.

This was so obviously a quixotic, not to say doomed enterprise that I accepted the challenge at once, with just one condition: that we recruit the most talented cartoonist we could find to do the drawings. My vote went to the taciturn but brilliant Hunt Emerson, whose work I have admired ever since I saw his illustrations to the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* way back in the 1980s. After a certain amount of brooding, shoe-shuffling and muttering, Hunt said he thought he would give it a bash. After a further certain amount of wrangling and brainstorming, the comic appeared. Please consult my article for more details.

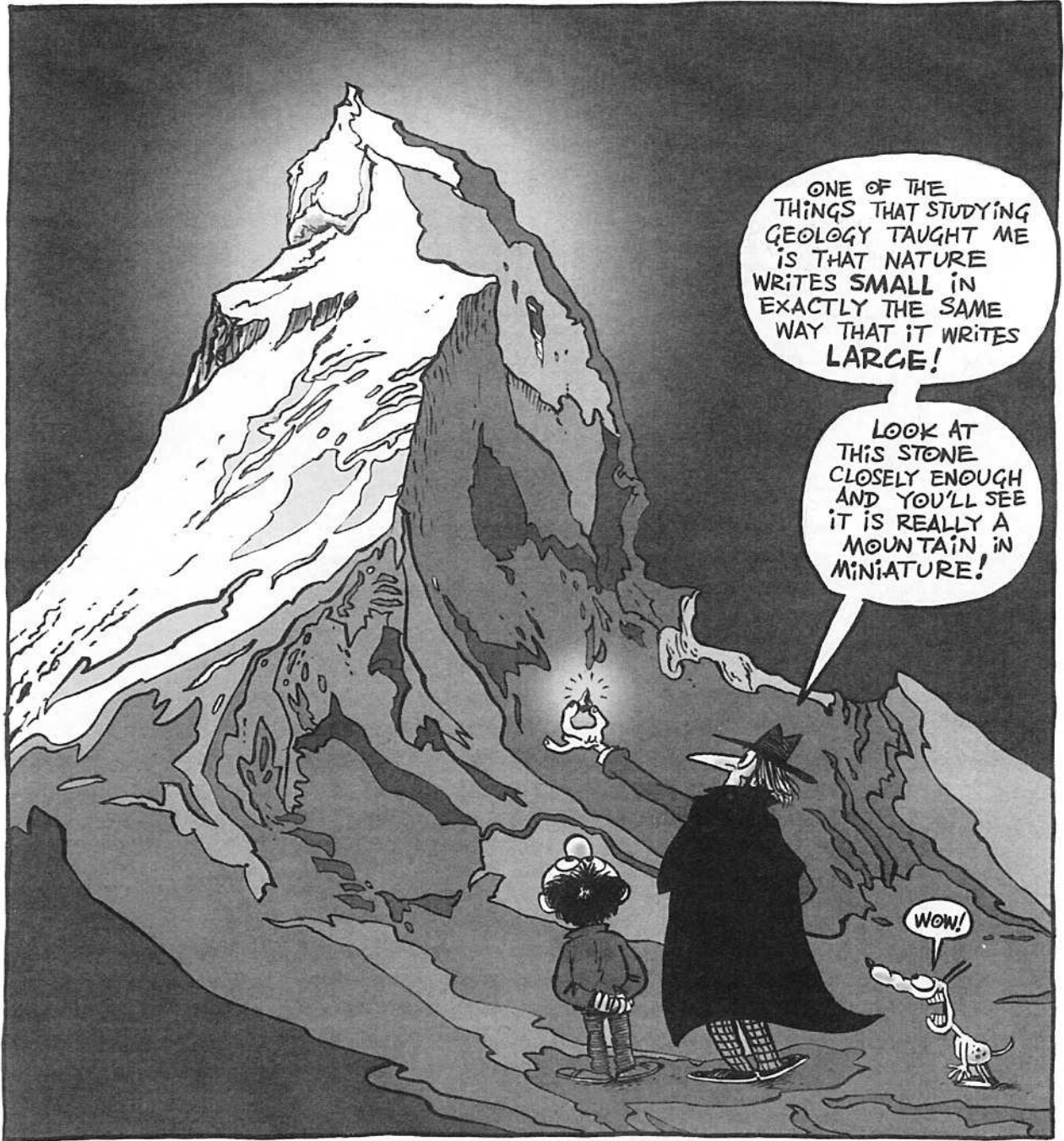
Though I had approached the task with some trepidation - I recognised that not everyone would approve of the idea, and still freely admit the force of the argument that to convey the nobility of Ruskin's ideas in a defiantly scruffy, knockabout medium is not so much translation as travesty - the outcome was far more successful than we had allowed ourselves to expect. Teachers loved it. So did a lot of children. It went down a storm in prisons. Some of the most eminent and scholarly Ruskinians (Robert Hewison, for example, in a sympathetic article for the *New Statesman*) gave it approving nods. If there were learned dissenters - and I have a sneaking feeling that there must have been - they maintained a polite and diplomatic silence. *Gratias ago*. In fact, the only people who appeared to hate the thing were not erudite Ruskin specialists, but a few assorted ideologists and/or killjoys who (a) felt that it did not adequately toe their particular party lines and (b) didn't get the jokes.

Encouraged by all aspects of this response, Howard Hull soon raised the funds for a second comic in what we were now starting to think of as a three-part series. Having outlined a simplified version of Ruskin's social ideas, it was time to draw on some of his wisdom in the field of vision; in other words, our theme would be *How To See*. And this is where the real furrowing of brows began. *Unto This Last* is not always an easy book, but it is crammed with little parables - such as the tale of the American millionaire who drowns rather than let go of his gold - that could either be lifted wholesale or easily updated to some modern equivalent. Even quite small children can be led to understand why the tobacco industry creates "illth". And each of these little fables was embedded in an overall humorous morality tale about an everyman figure, Darren, who suddenly becomes rich and learns, to his astonishment, that his new life is full of unexpected woes.

But Ruskin's comments on vision, though eminently suited to a graphic exposition, do not so easily lend themselves to narratives - let alone decent jokes. Take his observation - which nowadays comes as rather a surprise to almost everyone who lacks a background in botany - that there is as much of a tree below ground and out of sight as there is above ground, and in sight. We duly represented this point in *How to See*, but I fear that many of our younger readers will respond much as Darren does: "Sorry, but I don't find trees that exciting." To make this sort of point more engaging and memorable to the surlier ranks of our audience, we needed, for want of a more dignified term, some showbiz. A touch of danger can help. So, when it comes to explaining Ruskin's discussions about the similarity of wave forms and rock forms....well, with the unique magic of comics, we can whizz a terrified Darren off to the peak of an alp, and then, on the facing page, to a vast wave in the middle of the Atlantic. Darren is too busy screaming to notice the fact, but even the most slow-witted reader is made immediately aware that the outlines of the Alpine peaks and the Atlantic waters are exactly symmetrical.

So far, so faithful to our original. We continued in this more or less purist vein with other points taken directly from the Master. On p17, for instance, we show that a mountain range which looks formidably threatening and jagged from below may look much smoother, rather like a wrinkled tablecloth, when seen from above. At certain points, we even reproduced Ruskin's own drawings in the midst of Hunt's: on page 25, we see his sketches of how rock formations may retain the forms they had when they were molten; and on p28, reprint the famous drawing which presents a snow-covered hill echoing the shape of a bird's wing. The cover of *How To See* announces this theme of patterns in the natural world. Darren stares at a small piece of rock through a magnifying glass; above and behind him, mountain peaks repeat the shape of the fragment; below the peaks, wave formations join in the pattern.

Now, this is fascinating, if you are already adult, intellectually receptive and ready to be fascinated. But it doesn't have the primal appeal of a story, let alone a story that would make much sense to children of the twenty-first century. And this is where it seemed time to take some liberties, and to find ways of making our audience think along Ruskinian lines at the risk of using wholly un-Ruskinian examples. (The diffidence I had felt about tampering with Ruskin's social ideas was by now growing into something like full-blown alarm.) For good or ill, here are some of the explanations we devised.



ONE OF THE THINGS THAT STUDYING GEOLOGY TAUGHT ME IS THAT NATURE WRITES SMALL IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY THAT IT WRITES LARGE!

LOOK AT THIS STONE CLOSELY ENOUGH AND YOU'LL SEE IT IS REALLY A MOUNTAIN IN MINIATURE!

WOW!



IT TELLS US LOTS OF OTHER THINGS TOO... STONES WERE ONCE LIQUID, AND SOMETIMES YOU CAN SEE HOW MUCH THEY LOOK FLUID...



THESE DRAWINGS ARE BY JOHN RUSKIN HIMSELF!

Principle: the eye can be educated. Exposition - a true story freely adapted, as it happens, from Malcolm Gladwell's best-seller, *Blink*. A senior American policeman and his much younger colleague have chased down and cornered a young hoodlum. The suspect reaches down into his baggy pants and pulls out a gun. Understandably, the younger cop takes aim and is about to shoot, but his partner shouts at him to hold his fire. Sure enough, the miscreant drops his gun to the floor and surrenders. The junior patrolman is amazed. How did his buddy know that they were not in mortal danger? And the older cop can't really put his certainty into words; it's just that, after all these years on the force, he can now simply "read" criminals' intentions from their posture and movements. In the original draft of the comic, we went on to some other stories of the trained versus the untutored eye (there was a nice yarn, again from real life, about a forged sculpture); but we eventually decided to leave the development of that theme to the imaginations of teachers and pupils.

Principle: what we see depends - both literally and figuratively - on our point of view. A page of mug-shots illustrates the figurative sense: is the carefully neutral portrait of a policeman intended to represent a hero or a state thug? (Somewhere deep behind this example is Wittgenstein's famous duck-rabbit drawing: a visual pun that shows how expectation shapes perception.) The following pages elaborate the point, and add the proposition that everything in the universe is, at least potentially, interesting. A dead rabbit (not, this time, a duck-rabbit) might be a sorry sight to most of us, but - we suggest - consider how it looks to, say, a chef? A zoologist? A taxidermist? A furrier? A nature poet with a morbid streak...?

And so on. I will not so much as attempt the claim that one can find adequate chapter and verse for these digressions in Ruskin's prose; only that there is surely a fidelity to Ruskin's spirit in inviting young people to think about vision, and about the natural world. At one point in its long-ish development, *How To See* culminated in a sequence about the Golden Section, and the place of symmetry and proportion throughout both art and nature.

The principal remnant of this is a one-page joke, the naughtiest thing in the book, which parodies Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, and shows Darren's raffish dog Skittle in the classic pose, nonchalantly peeing. (We expected teachers to shudder at this; reports suggest that it is usually the children who think we have been too cheeky.) Blame Hunt, it was his idea.

This final part was eventually replaced by a more general sequence on the power and virtue of true seeing, scripted mainly by Howard Hunt and Emma Bartlett. Other parts were changed, too: in my first draft, we encounter a semi-reformed Darren suffering from nothing worse than listlessness and boredom. In the final version, we find him far more gloomy - indeed, in despair at the condition of the world. And so on. A more substantial addition to the comic as I scripted it came in the form of its packaging; Howard and Emma commissioned a young designer, Alex Metcalfe, to come up with a "looking tube" - a simple cardboard spy-scope that can be used for optical experiments in the classroom or on study trips, as well as just for fun. Every copy of the comic given to schools was accompanied by this gadget. Howard and Emma also commissioned Paul Musgrove to set up a *How to See* website, which takes the comic's lessons on vision a stage or two further. It is still active, and thriving.

Launched in grand style at Brantwood, on a glorious afternoon last summer, and used as the basis for a number of subsequent educational events in Birmingham and elsewhere, the comic once again proved hugely popular with its target audience of pupils and teachers. By this time, we were fully confident that there was both need and demand for a third and probably final comic, *How to Work*, which would begin with themes from "The Nature of Gothic" and then take flight in our usual style. ("Probably" final, because we have also been musing about the possibility of creating one additional, slightly more advanced and specialist comic in the same mode about Ruskin's views on architecture, *How to Build*. Watch this space. Or, if you are keenly interested in architectural education for the young, please send us money.)

How to Work will ask its young audience to think about the both the miseries and splendours of labour; why for some people it is a curse or a torture, and for others the main joy of life; why only some forms of strenuous directed effort are classed as "work"; why different forms of work are regarded and rewarded in such dramatically different ways, and so on. With impeccable dramatic timing, as you may have noticed, just as we were developing these themes, the global economy suffered a massive cardiac arrest from which it has yet to recover. A bad time to go out with the begging bowl for an educational comic? No doubt; but surely an ideal time to revisit what Ruskin had to say about our money and our lives. With luck, Hunt and I will soon be at work - or play? - on *How to Work*.

Kevin Jackson

Copies of *How To See* can be obtained from Howard Hull at Brantwood, Coniston, Cumbria LA21 8AD.

Tel: 01539 441 396. Email enquiries@brantwood.org.uk. "Kevin Jackson's illustrated book *The World of John Ruskin* will shortly be published by Pallas Athene press"

Ruskin at Walkley: Reconstructing the St. George's Museum

I'm pleased to report news of a project that uses materials from the Guild's Collection to create a virtual 'reconstruction' of the St George's Museum as it stood in the Sheffield suburb of Walkley. Ruskin founded the museum in 1875, having purchased for the purpose a cottage surrounded by generous grounds and fruit trees. He came to the city to visit Henry Swan, an engraver he had taught at the Working Men's College in the 1850s. Much taken by Walkley, Ruskin saw the opportunity for a museum that would meet the needs of local workingmen, with Swan serving as curator. 'Sheffield', he wrote, 'is in Yorkshire, and Yorkshire yet, in the main temper of its inhabitants, old English, and capable therefore yet of the ideas of Honesty and Piety by which old England lived' (Library Edition, XXX, p. 52). He also noted that 'Sheffield is within easy reach of beautiful natural scenery, and of the best art of English hands, at Lincoln, York, Durham, Selby, Fountains, Bolton, and Furness'. The Walkley site was considered particularly suitable, located on a hill within walking distance of the Sheffield's industrial heart, yet overlooking the pastoral beauty of the Rivelin Valley. Ruskin explained that 'The mountain home of the Museum at Walkley was originally chosen, not to keep the collection out of smoke, but expressly to beguile the artisan out of it' (Library Edition, XXX, p. 317). Metal workers from the city were invited to undertake a symbolic ascent to the museum. There, they would find fresh air, and art treasures that included Verrochio's 'The Madonna Adoring the Christ Child', illuminated medieval manuscripts and 'memorial studies' of Venice.



The current project aims to restore links between the Collection as we see it today in Sheffield's Millennium Galleries and its original setting. Using surviving photographs of the interior and exterior, the website will allow visitors to navigate a series of interactive pages, evoking the way that one might move between the rooms of a physical museum. Exhibits visible in the Victorian photographs will be tagged with 'hotspots'. Visitors who activate these 'hotspots' with their cursor will be presented with modern, museum-quality photographs of objects accompanied by descriptive captions. There are several advantages to presenting items in this way. Most obviously, it reminds visitors of the original curatorial scheme, in which copies were hung alongside valuable originals. We also see the unconventional layout: a photograph of the 'little room' in the cottage shows a museum interior that seems strikingly domestic and casual to modern eyes. Drawings and prints are propped on

the room's mantelpiece, as if jostling for space. Such images also register the role of Ruskin's museum furniture, which worked to display objects at the same time as preserving them. In these respects, the Collection will be exhibited less as an assemblage of Ruskinian objects than as an experimental Victorian museum. Photographs of the museum exterior, and of the immediate locale, will provide a means of visualizing the views and environment that Ruskin considered central to his experiment in promoting 'the liberal education of the artizan' (Library Edition, XXX, p. 39).

Funded by a grant of £9299 awarded by the University of Sheffield's 'Knowledge Transfer Project Fund', the project has involved a formal collaboration agreement between the University and the Guild. Museums Sheffield have also played a major role, providing photographic material and curatorial expertise. The sum awarded has covered the cost of web design; it has also funded photography of items for which images were not yet available and the purchase of a computer, to provide access to the website from the physical space of the Ruskin Gallery. I am pleased to report that good progress has been made so far. With the help of the curator Louise Pullen, a complete list of items visible in the old photographs has been collated. The web designers have been briefed and are currently turning the agreed designs into code. On completion, the site will be available for viewing at <http://www.ruskinatwalkley.org>

The project will form the first stage of further work on the St George's Museum at Walkley, providing a foundation for published research and for further funding bids. Possible directions include the integration of room measurements and virtual space, based on a physical exploration of the surviving building (the cottage subsists behind the expanded property now known as Ruskin House, with most of the original ground plan intact). I also hope to digitize the museum's visitor books, and to explore the functioning of the furniture Ruskin designed for the museum.

Other plans include exploration of the Venetian connection, in particular the implications of storing copies of Venetian art treasures and buildings in an English industrial city. We tend to imagine that a copy disrupts the aura of the original, but what happens when the original has been destroyed? As the last worldly remnant of the original, the copy may develop an aura of its own. I'm interested in how Ruskin's copies may be more than merely derivative, and in how their meaning was configured by the peculiar conditions of the Walkley site.

Dr Marcus Waithe

University of Sheffield

A Grant from the Guild

The Guild awarded writer and Companion Brian Lewis a grant to further 'The Rivers Project' that he had initiated. The project is, in the words of The Yorkshire Post, 'an arts initiative which compares accounts of two natural disasters – the floods which killed hundreds of people in the Gujerat region of India in 2006 and the deluge that swept through Toll Bar, near Doncaster, a year later'. Interviews with people affected by these events will lead to books on the experience of climate change in vastly different circumstances. In spite of the disparity between the two disasters, common responses can be identified, and the project will draw attention to the problems of changing river systems and to the interdependence of local populations and the natural environment.

A New Watercolour

We have recently added a new watercolour to our collection. It is a fine, large (22" x 15") view of the Grand Canal at St. John Chrystom, Venice, by Frank Randal. The watercolour was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1901 (no. 1028) and was probably painted in that or the previous year. He had also exhibited there in 1887 and 1893. The present picture was his last exhibit.

Comparatively little known about Randal who worked for Ruskin between 1881 and about 1885. He produced some hundred and thirty studies for the guild collection. These are principally detailed studies - of wood carvings in Amiens cathedral, stained glass at Chartes and Auxerre, sculpture at Avallon, and other studies required by Ruskin.

Thirteen years ago we added a portrait sketch of Ruskin, Collingwood and Randal waiting for a train at Avallon to the collection. This is by Charles, Frank's brother, and must have been based on Frank's description of the event. The Guild's collection has just been given a small self portrait watercolour of Frank Randal sitting sketching, and surrounded by a small admiring crowd. Our new Venetian watercolour is a view of palaces on the Grand Canal, just north of the Rialto bridge. In the foreground is the Pal. Mangilli Valmarana and the Rio S.Giovanni Crisostomo. Behind the foreground buildings is the church of St.Giovanni Crisostomo, a church which Ruskin described in his Venetian Index as "one of the most important in Venice". It contains Sebastian del Piombo's *St John Chrystom enthroned with other saints*, and a Bellini of *SS. Jerome, Augustine and Christopher* which Ruskin considered would be thought the most precious pictures in Italy, unless they were "restored". The church itself has now been restored by American Save Venice Inc.

The watercolour is a fine example of Randal's work and an interesting record of an area well-known to Ruskin.

James Dearden

Changes at Sheffield

After eight years as the Keeper of the Guild's Collection at Sheffield, Dorian Church has fallen a victim to the current financial crisis and has been made redundant. We thank her for all she has done for the Guild during this period and we wish her well in her future career as a freelance museums and exhibitions advisor.

In recognition of her services to the Guild, the directors have happily and unanimously elected her a Companion.

Kim Streets, who was appointed Museums Sheffield's *Director of Learning and Knowledge* in 2008, has been formally appointed our new Keeper.

Kim is a curator by training, specialising in Social History and community engagement practice. Based in Sheffield for much of her museums career, Kim has extensive experience in collection research and development, events and exhibitions and a wide variety of community involvement projects. Recent projects include a high profile programme of involvement activity as part of the re development of the HLF £19 million Heritage Lottery Funded Weston Park Museum, and *Burngreave Voices*, a two years government funded project that sought to celebrate the lives of people living in one of Sheffield's most culturally diverse communities. As Director of Learning and Knowledge Kim is responsible for the strategic direction and development of the cultural and learning teams.

She will soon be much involved in the process re-designing of the Ruskin Gallery's exhibition space.

We wish her every happiness and success as our new Keeper.

Louise Pullen's role as our Research Curator remains unchanged. She continues to work on our catalogue, and of course is much involved in the arrangements for the first of our Testimonials Exhibitions which opens in Sheffield in October

J.S.D

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