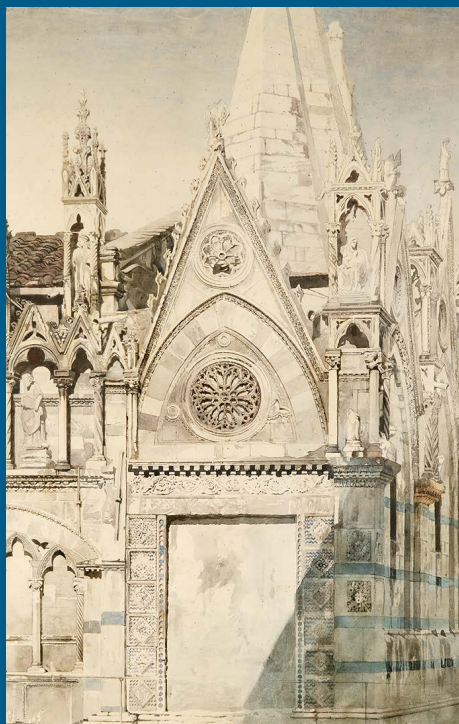


Welcome to John Ruskin's Guild of St George



Find us online
www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk

The Guild of St George is the charity for arts, crafts and the rural economy founded in 1871 by the Victorian art and social critic, John Ruskin (1819–1900).

This leaflet offers an introduction to the Guild's history, purpose, work and Companionship today. If you'd like to know more, please visit our website or get in touch.



“I have to draw a peacock's breast feather, and paint as much of it [as] I can, without having heaven to dip my brush in.”

John Ruskin

Left: John Ruskin *Study of a peacock's breast feather* (1873). Collection of the Guild of St George/ Museums Sheffield.

Top right photograph: Studio in the Woods, Ruskin Land 2018. Photograph by Jim Stephenson – www.clickclickjim.com

Bottom right photograph: Visitors making wire sculptures during the Ruskin Museum Makeover week at Meersbrook Hall, Sheffield 2018.



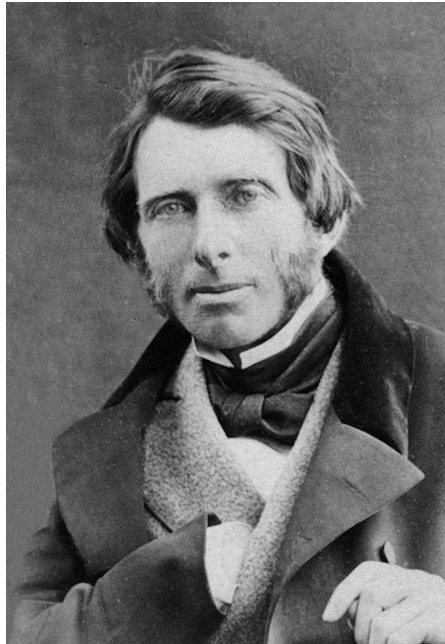
Who was John Ruskin?

John Ruskin (1819–1900) was a writer, artist and philanthropist. As an author he commanded international respect, attracting praise from figures as varied as Tolstoy, George Eliot, Proust and Gandhi and he was cited as an influence by Clement Attlee and the founders of the National Trust, among others.

He wrote on many things: art and architecture, nature and craftsmanship, literature and religion, political economy and social justice — a dizzying variety of subjects. He also worked tirelessly for a better society and the Guild of St George was part of that endeavour.

The depth and range of his thinking, his often fierce critique of industrial society and its impact on both people and their environment, and his passionate advocacy of a sustainable relationship between people, craft and nature, remain as pertinent today as they were in his own lifetime.

John Ruskin in 1863.



“There is no wealth but life. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal, and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.”

John Ruskin UNTO THIS LAST (1860)

Our Aims & Aspirations

Ruskin's aims and aspirations for the Guild are contained in the ninety-six letters he published 'to the workmen and labourers of Great Britain' under the title, *Fors Clavigera* (1871–84). His principal purpose in founding the Guild was to make Britain a happier place to live in. Now a registered charity, we try to put Ruskin's ideas into practice in the modern world.

In the 1870s, the Guild was given a beautiful area of the Wyre Forest in Worcestershire – *Ruskin Land*, where we farm and care for woods, orchards and meadows and host a diverse programme of events and activity with our partners, the Wyre Community Land Trust.

We also own and support the Ruskin Collection, works of art and other precious objects collected by Ruskin from 1875 for the people of Sheffield so the Victorian workers could see and handle beautiful objects. The Collection is now in Sheffield's Millennium Gallery, cared for and exhibited by our partners Museums Sheffield. The Collection's presence in the city is further enhanced by our *Ruskin in Sheffield* project, an annual programme of events and activities to rediscover the legacy of John Ruskin in Sheffield.

2019 sees two exhibitions to celebrate Ruskin's bicentenary: *The Power of Seeing*, to be shown at Two Temple Place in London and *Art & Wonder* at the Millennium Gallery in Sheffield.



John Ruskin *Study from Carpaccio's St George and the Dragon*, in Venice's Scuola degli Schiavoni (1872). Collection of the Guild of St George/Museums Sheffield.

The Guild's insignia is based on this drawing.

Ruskin in Sheffield

The Guild is currently running a series of activities and events under the title *Ruskin in Sheffield*, which builds on the links between the Ruskin Collection, the Guild and Sheffield's communities. This began in 2015 with the financial support of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Over the last four years, the *Ruskin in Sheffield* programme has:

- Engaged more than 15,000 adults and children with what Ruskin called 'hand-power and heart-passion', qualities exemplified by his collection for Sheffield.
- Worked with local communities to explore their Ruskinian heritage, with drawing and craftsmanship, with their local natural environment, and above all, with one another.
- Introduced new audiences to Ruskin through a Pop-Up Ruskin Museum, Use & Beauty Parlour, a Museum Makeover at Meersbrook, new talks and publications, outdoor walking performances and projections, and Big Draw Festivals involving entire neighbourhoods.

The award-winning Pop-up Ruskin Museum, Walkley, Sheffield 2015.



Ruskin in Wyre

The Guild owns orchards, meadows and woodland in the Wyre Forest, known as Ruskin Land, which it manages sustainably for the long-term improvement of both timber quality and biodiversity.

Reinterpreting and revitalising Ruskin Land is a key part of the *Ruskin in Wyre* project supported by the HLF. The Guild works in close collaboration with a social enterprise, the Wyre Community Land Trust, to deliver shared goals in restoring, conserving and managing the landscape and in promoting rural skills and craftsmanship.

Restored orchard on Ruskin Land. Photograph by John Iles, Guild Companion and Director.



“ We will try to take some small piece of English ground, beautiful, peaceful and fruitful. We will have no steam-engines upon it, and no railroads; we will have no untended or unthought-of creatures on it; none wretched, but the sick; none idle, but the dead.”

John Ruskin FORS CLAVIGERA (1871–1884)

Other Guild Activities

— We collaborate with a growing number of partners. For example, *The Big Draw* (which the Guild founded in 2000 as The Campaign for Drawing), a project which encourages drawing for everyone; the *John Ruskin Prize*; *42nd Street* (a mental health charity for young people in Manchester); and most recently *Studio in the Woods* on our land in the Wyre Forest.

www.thebigdraw.org

www.ruskinprize.co.uk

www.42ndstreet.org.uk

— We continue to support the *May Day Festival* initiated in 1881 by Ruskin at Whitelands College in London (University of Roehampton), presenting a selection of Ruskin’s books every year to the May Monarch elected by her or his peers.

— The Guild owns and lets some properties built in the Arts and Crafts style in the Hertfordshire village of Westmill. We also care for a wildflower meadow in Sheepscombe, Gloucestershire. Called St George’s Field, it is maintained on the Guild’s behalf by Natural England.

— In recent years we have created forums for the discussion of Ruskinian ideas and practices in modern contexts. Symposia on craftsmanship, the environment, education and economics have attracted engaged audiences. Similar events have also taken place under the Guild’s auspices in the United States, Canada and Italy.

— We have an active publishing programme, including the annual Ruskin lecture and our journal *The Companion* together with a range of booklets on subjects relating to Ruskin and the Guild. These are available via our online bookshop.

Become a Companion

Directed by a Master and a Board of Directors, all of whom are voluntary, the Guild employs two or three part-time officers to run its daily affairs and projects. There are currently more than 270 members, who are known as Companions, a fifth of whom live overseas. They vary greatly in their skills and interests, but share a sympathy for the aims of the Guild and a common interest in Ruskin and his ideas. While we are honoured to have many of the world's most respected Ruskin scholars among our ranks, the value of the Companionship is in its diversity, including artists, makers, thinkers, writers, enthusiasts, neighbourhood activists, collectors, poets, farmers, ecologists and environmentalists, among others. An online directory of all Companions can be found on the Guild's website –

www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk

Everything the Guild has, it was given. Companions volunteer their time and expertise to contribute to Guild events and research. Many make financial donations to support the wider work of the Guild.

We welcome applications from anyone interested in Ruskin and the Guild's work. Details of how to apply can be found on the website. All applicants are subject to election by the Board of Directors. Companions receive the annual Journal, AGM reports, e-newsletters and invitations to Guild events and lectures.



The Guild is proud to be a member of Ruskin To-Day, the informal network of people and places devoted to promoting wider knowledge and understanding of Ruskin in the modern age

www.ruskinto-day.org

www.ruskin200.com



Photograph above: Companions of the Guild gathered on a new bridge made of Ruskin Land oak, Bewdley, June 2018. Photograph by Guild Companion Jack Haddon.

Photograph below: Visitors sitting in the sculpture made from Ruskin Land oak by Guild Companion Henk Littlewood, in Ruskin in Sheffield's 'Use and Beauty Parlour', 2016.

Find us online
www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk

Connect with us –
Facebook: guildofstgeorge
Twitter: @ruskintoday
Instagram: ruskintoday

If you have any questions about the Guild, would like to apply for Companionship, or wish to make a donation to assist the Guild in its endeavours, please get in touch with our Membership & Communications Officer on communications@guildofstgeorge.org.uk.

The Guild of St George is a Registered Charity 231758 Limited Company No. 12583

Our Partners

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Cover Images

Left: John Ruskin *Santa Maria della Spina, East end, Pisa, Italy* (1845)
Collection of the Guild of St George/Museums Sheffield.

Top right: Participants in The Big Draw at Ruskin Land, 2018.

Bottom right: Ruskin in Sheffield: Make Good Livelihoods weekend,
Portland Works, June 2016.

Text ©Guild of St George. With thanks to Clive Wilmer and Stuart Eagles.
Design: Cafeteria.



The mark of
responsible forestry