

A CALENDAR OF
TREASURES FROM
THE RUSKIN
COLLECTION
(with additional material)

SEPTEMBER

Guild of St George
With thanks to Museums Sheffield

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Welcome to Ruskin's Guild of St George

John Ruskin (1819-1900) was a polymath. As a writer, he commanded international respect. He was an art critic and an art patron, a skilled draughtsman and talented watercolourist, and a fierce critic of prevailing social and political norms. He wrote about nature and architecture, craftsmanship, geology, botany, Greek myth, education—a dizzying variety of subjects. Driven by his deep faith in social justice, he established the Guild of St George in the 1870s to right some of the social wrongs of the day and make England a happier and more beautiful place in which to live and work.

The founding aim of the Guild was to acquire land and—through labour, wind and water power—to bring it into useful production.

The Guild's activities today are mainly focused around the [Ruskin Collection](#) in [Sheffield](#) and its [woodlands and rural projects](#) in the [Wyre Forest](#). We also host [symposia](#) on issues of contemporary concern and [publish](#) a growing range of books and cards.

SEPTEMBER 1



Henry Roderick Newman, "View of the Island of San Giorgio across the Basin of San Marco, Venice, Italy" (1881).

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

SEPTEMBER 2

William Hackstoun, "Depictions of Coutances and the Walls of Mont St Michel, France" (1883).

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 3

On This Day: printmaker Thomas Goff Lupton born in 1791.
JMW Turner, "Watercress Gatherers" (1819) from "Liber Studiorum".
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 4



Turquoise parrot [*Euphema pulchella*] (1840-48) after John Gould.
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

SEPTEMBER 5

On This Day in 1907, George Allen died.

Allen was the printmaker responsible for the reproduction of this work by John Ruskin: "Light and Shade with Refusal of Colour, Elementary Drawing, Plate XII".

This was made for Ruskin's *The Laws of Fésole* (1877), a drawing guide for young people. He felt that most practical art education taught conventional rules of drawing without giving any rules in understanding art or beauty; consequently, the student had no real appreciation of beauty in the object or scene they were drawing. Ruskin illustrated every lesson in "The Laws" with diagrams and finished pictures to assist his pupils.

<http://>

www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/



SEPTEMBER 6



John Ruskin, "Study of a Peacock's Feather" (1873).

Ruskin's inscription reads: "For Miss Susie, To show how her spoiled pets dress". Susie —Susan Beever —was a close friend of Ruskin's, and his neighbour at Brantwood, his Lake District home. Whilst he travelled or worked in Oxford, Ruskin and Susan kept up a regular and intimate correspondence and this continued throughout their later lives. They shared a great interest in natural history, and Susan supplied many plants for Ruskin to draw in preparation for "Proserpina" —his book on botany; as well as feathers from her "spoiled" pet peacocks. Ruskin was fascinated by the structure of birds' plumage and the different forms it took, often describing it as the way birds "dress". In his essays for "The Laws of Fésole", Ruskin divided these forms into three categories: feathers for clothing, for action and for decoration. Here Ruskin has not chosen the most obviously attractive of peacock feathers —one for decoration —but one, probably a wing or upper tail feather, for action.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

SEPTEMBER 7

Edward Lear, "Psittacara patagonica" [Burrowing Parrot]. (1832)
guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/



SEPTEMBER 8

On This Day in 1852: Frank Randal was baptised.

Frank Randal, "Study of Stained Glass, 'The Priest and Levite' from the 'Good Samaritan' window, Bourges Cathedral, France" (1883).

Randal was Ruskin's most prolific copyist and one of the most talented. This is an exquisite example of his studies of stained glass.

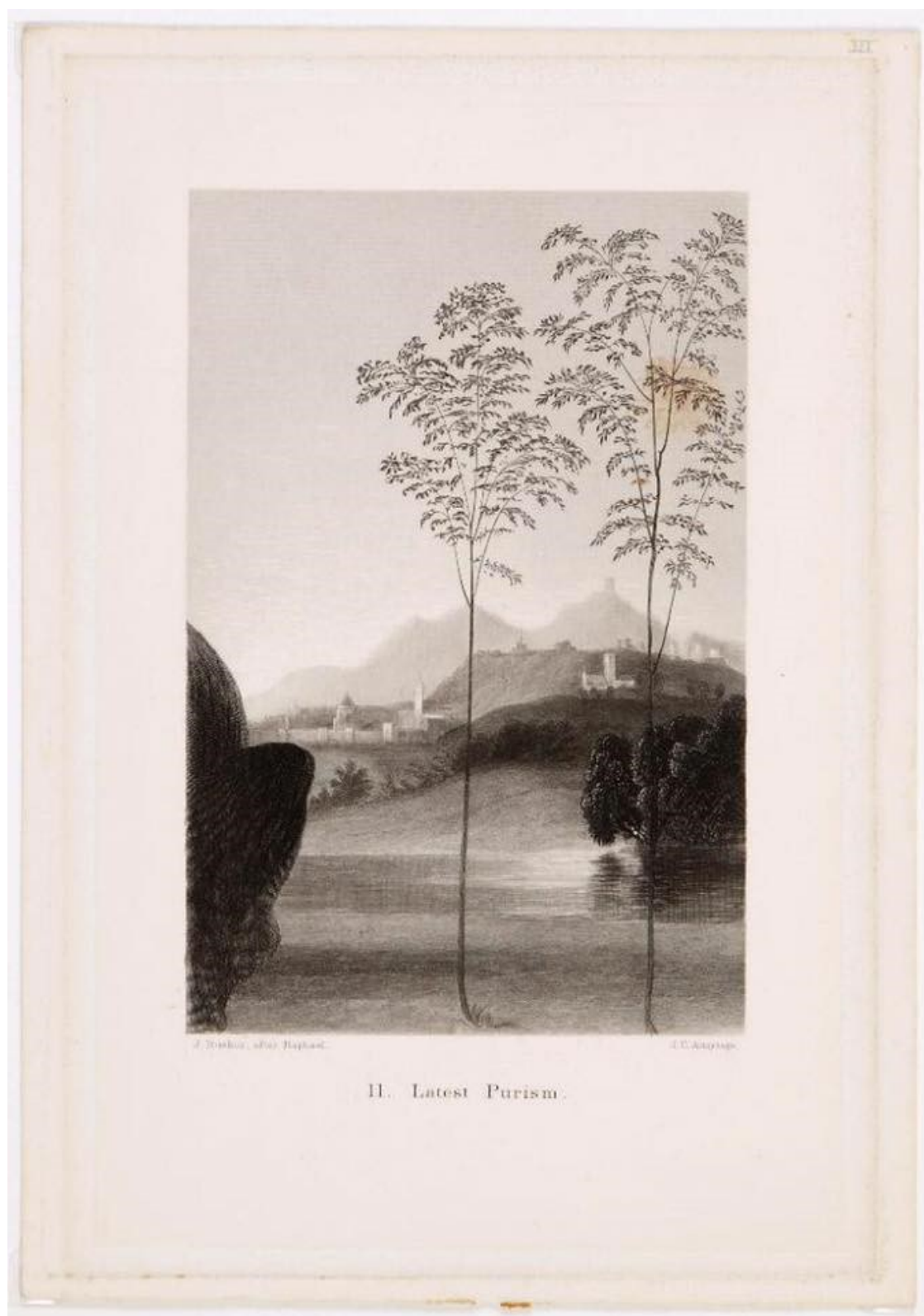
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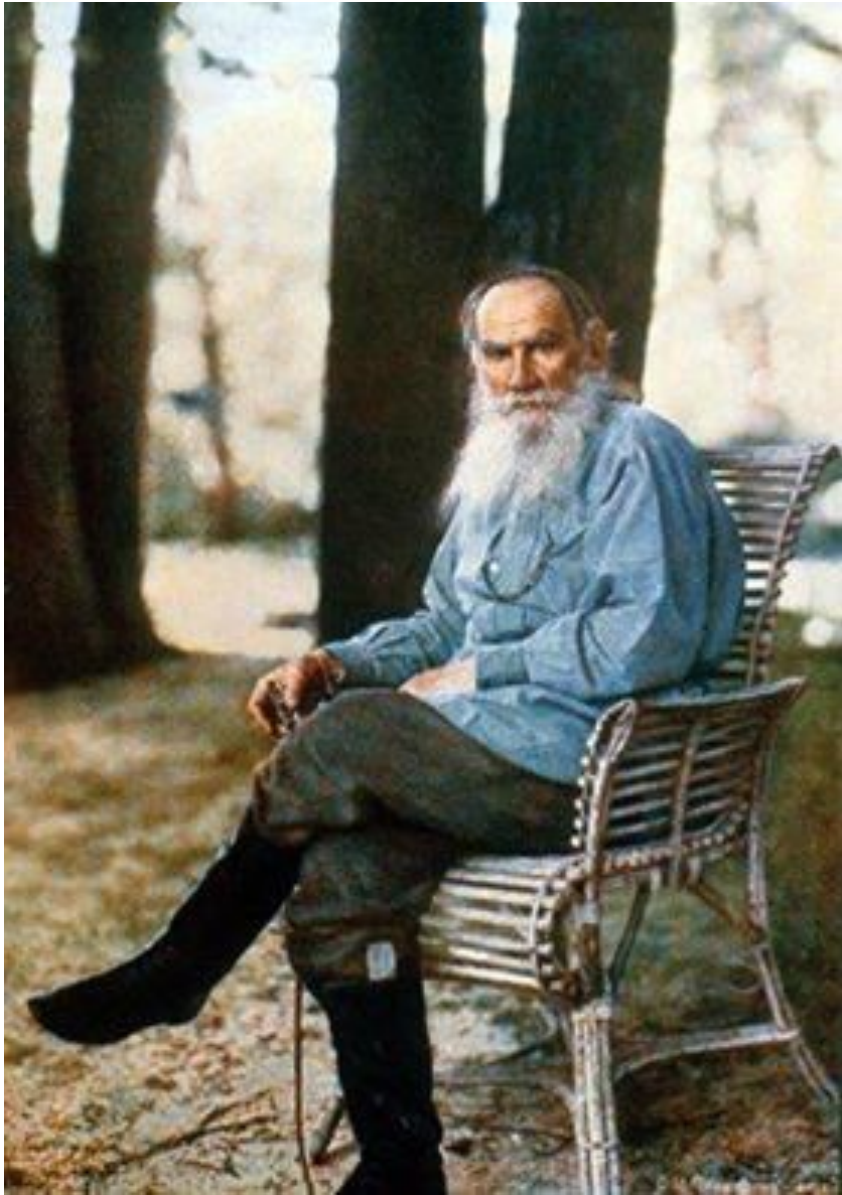


SEPTEMBER 9

"Latest Purism": Plate from "Modern Painters" Volume III, after John Ruskin, after Raphael, printmaker: James Charles Armytage.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>





On This Day in 1828, Leo Tolstoy was born: he admired Ruskin as one of the greatest writers of all countries & times. Look out for the revised second edition of Stuart Eagles' "Ruskin & Tolstoy" coming soon...

SEPTEMBER 10

On This Day in 1791: Sarah Bowdich [Mrs Robert Lee] illustrator, author and naturalist, was born.

Sarah Bowdich (1791-1856) "The Freshwater Fishes of Great Britain" (1825; this edition, 1828).

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 11

Angelo Alessandri:
“St Gregory, St
Augustine, St
Monica and other
Saints”, detail from
“The Paradise”
after Tintoretto
(1880-81).

This is a small
detail from
Tintoretto's
massive work
“Paradiso” which
he started in 1588.
Tintoretto's original
shows a vision of
heaven with Christ
and the Madonna at
the centre,
surrounded by
hundreds of saints
and angels. At over
10 metres tall and
25 metres wide it
covers the entire
wall of the massive
council chamber at
the Doge's Palace
in Venice.

Alessandri's detail
depicts an area

from the upper right portion of the work, with St Augustine prominent at the centre surrounded by numerous other figures. These, according to Ruskin, include St Augustine's family: “his mother, watching him, her chief joy, even in Paradise,” and “[Mary] Magdalene ... on the right, behind St Monica.” Ruskin considered that Tintoretto's “Paradiso” was “the most precious thing Venice possesses” and the greatest work Tintoretto ever created. He considered that Tintoretto himself was “the most powerful painter whom the world has seen.”

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 12



F. T. Underhill, "Norham Castle on the River Tweed, Northumberland" after Turner (c. 1891).

Ruskin admired Turner's "perfect landscape art", his use of colour to create emotional expression, and his truthful representation of detail. He felt that the original watercolour "exhibited Turner's power to the utmost" and was a "consummate example" of his work. He didn't commission this copy from Underhill though and it's more likely that the Guild of St George commissioned the work later as an example of a work that Ruskin admired. Norham Castle is on the banks of the River Tweed, which runs through Northumbria and the Scottish Borders. Turner made his original watercolour in about 1822 towards a set of engraved plates entitled "The Rivers of England", which were mass-produced for publication in 1824. He also etched a very similar scene for his "Liber Studiorum" series of mezzotints earlier in 1816.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

SEPTEMBER 13



On This Day in 1829: Henry Stacy Marks was born. Henry Stacy Marks, "Two Studies of an Avocet" (1877). Marks and Ruskin enjoyed a friendly relationship characterised by gentle teasing: Marks' jovial nature was matched by Ruskin's positive critical observations; both men shared a love of birds and admiration for the art of drawing them. During the late 1870s, Marks sent studies of birds to Ruskin who greatly admired them. As

Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, Ruskin showed them in lectures as "examples of true natural history drawing". He said that they were "the first perfect pictures of birds." At a time when most bird illustrations were made from stuffed specimens, Marks' study of live birds at the zoo meant that his quick sketches were full of life and character, though the detailed recording of colour and plumage was understandably rougher. He sent this study with some others to Ruskin in a badly-wrapped parcel, which Ruskin told Marks he intended to open during an art lecture to help build suspense about its "crushed contents"!

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SEPTEMBER 14

On This Day in 1804, John Gould was born.
Rose breasted cockatoo [Cacatua eos] after John
Gould (1840-48).

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SEPTEMBER 15



On This Day in 1949, Mary Hope Greg died.
Mary Hope Greg, "Study of Pussy Willow" (c. 1895).
In addition to this study and her amateur nature diary, Mary
Greg bequeathed arts-and-crafts houses and the village
stores at Westmill in Hertfordshire to the Guild, most of
which are still in its care.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

SEPTEMBER 16



William Hackstoun: View of the Town from the
Cathedral, Dieppe, France (1883)
guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/

SEPTEMBER 17

On This Day in 1783: Samuel Prout was born.

Samuel Prout: "St Maclou, Rouen, France" (1823).

Ruskin was familiar from childhood with Prout's work, sometimes copying his style of drawing with its intricate outlining of detail. Ruskin's father collected Prout's work, and together father and son visited the places Prout drew. As an adult, Ruskin championed Prout, writing that "there is nothing but the work of Prout which is true, living or right, in its general impression, and nothing, therefore, so inexhaustibly agreeable." He also praised his works because they were "faithful and fond" records of buildings and towns spoiled by industry and modernisation. The church of St Maclou in Rouen, was first built in around 1200 and, in the 1400s, was remodelled in the ornate late Gothic or Flamboyant style. Ruskin admired the "wild" imaginative carving on its door and portals, and the "vitality" and "daring" of its craftsmen. He was upset that the church's stained glass was, as can be seen in this print, boarded over and forgotten.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 18

William Hackstoun, "Study of Broom and a Snail's Shell" (1883).

Ruskin felt that the act of intense observation required to draw natural objects properly helped artists to respect nature more fully. He also felt that an artist should paint natural objects to celebrate beauty and that it was everyone's duty "to attain accurate knowledge, as far as may be in his power, of the peculiar virtues, duties and characters of every species of being." He taught too about the extreme difficulty of drawing the curve of a snail-shell; that only the human hand could draw a spiral coil such as this, because a machine could not replicate an organic form accurately, owing to the minute imperfections found in all organic structures. Ruskin added that drawing spirals would help people to complete botanical illustrations because it replicated the spiralling of a plant's stem and tendrils.

<http://>

[www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/
the-collection/](http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/)



SEPTEMBER 19

F. T. Underhill, "Stangate Creek on the Medway, Kent" after Turner (c. 1891).
Ruskin described Turner as "the man who beyond all doubt is the greatest of the age; greatest in every faculty of the imagination, in every branch of scenic knowledge; at once the painter and poet of the day." Ruskin's five-volume book, "Modern Painters" began as a response to Turner's work. Ruskin celebrated Turner's paintings and engravings throughout his life. He admired Turner's "perfect landscape art," his use of colour to create emotional expression, and his careful representation of scenes and details. Most of all, he believed that Turner painted in true praise of nature and that "because he meant always to be true ... he was able always to be bold." Whilst the Ruskin Collection contains only one watercolour by Turner, it does contain a number of copies like this one. Ruskin recommended emerging artists to copy Turner's works in order to learn about his use and application of colour, but he cautioned that these copies weren't to be thought of as artworks in and of themselves.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 20

Stirling Castle, Scotland, by an unknown artist, possibly after Turner (late 19th Century).

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 21



Edward Lear, "Black Grouse" [*Tetrao tetrix*] (1832-37).
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

SEPTEMBER 22

most enduring and beneficent effect on his contemporaries, and will have through them on succeeding generations. ¶ John Ruskin the critic of art has not only given the keenest pleasure to thousands of readers by his life-like descriptions, and the ingenuity and delicacy of his analysis of works of art, but he has let a flood of daylight into the cloud of sham-technical twaddle which was once the whole substance of "art-criticism," and is still its staple, and that is much. But it is far more that John Ruskin the teacher of morals and politics (I do not use this word in the newspaper sense), has done serious and solid work towards that new-birth of Society, without which genuine art, the expression of man's pleasure in his handiwork, must inevitably cease altogether, and with it the hopes of the happiness of mankind.

WILLIAM MORRIS,
Kelmscott House, Hammersmith.
Feb 15th, 1892.



THE NATURE OF GOTHIC.

WE are now about to enter upon the examination of that school of Venetian architecture which forms an intermediate step between the Byzantine and Gothic forms; but which I find may be conveniently considered in its connexion with the latter style. ¶ In order that we may discern the tendency of each step of this change, it will be wise in the outset to endeavour to form some general idea of its final result. We know already what the Byzantine architecture is from which the transition was made, but we ought to know something of the Gothic architecture into which it led. ¶ I shall endeavour therefore to give the reader in this chapter an idea, at once broad and definite, of the true nature of Gothic architecture, properly so called; not of that of Venice only, but of universal Gothic: for it will be one of the most interesting parts of our subsequent inquiry, to find out how far Venetian architecture reached the universal

John Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic, a chapter from 'The Stones of Venice'" — William Morris's Kelmscott Edition of 1892.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 23

On This Day 1882: John Wharltton Bunney died.

J. W. Bunney, "Palazzo Manzoni on the Grand Canal, Venice, Italy" (1871).

According to Ruskin, this palazzo or palace was "a perfect and very rich example of Byzantine Renaissance" architecture — that is, a building of the late 1400s which was influenced by the styles of the 1100s. He thought that the palace's "warm yellow marbles [were] magnificent" and particularly admired the decorative coloured roundels or discs. Ruskin approved of craftsmen using marble on the face of buildings because he believed that they praised nature by using coloured stone in their decoration. The architect Giovanni Buora built the palace in the late 1400s for the powerful Contarini family and its first name was the Palazzo Contarini dal Zaffo. By the time Ruskin visited the city, Venice was no longer the powerful centre it had once been and the palace was a fire station, although it was still known as Palazzo Manzoni or the Palazzo Angarani after another previous owner. Today, the palace is called the Palazzo Polignac-Decazes.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 24

William Hackstoun, "Aysgarth Force, Richmondshire", after Turner (c. 1880). John Ruskin gave Hackstoun art lessons via correspondence. Whilst he later used him to make architectural copies in French cathedral cities, he also told him to copy Turner's works as a way of learning about watercolour. In general, Ruskin did not approve of artists copying another's work, calling it the "degradation of the art [which reduces] head-work to hand work." However, in the case of Turner, whom Ruskin admired above all other artists of his day, he wrote that art students would be "compell[ed by his] decisive and straightforward execution. ... The most rapid appreciation of Turner will be obtained by accurately copying his work". Hackstoun had access to Turner's original watercolours in the British Museum (now the Tate collection), however, as this study is in monochrome, it is possible he was studying tone rather than colour for which the readily-available engraved version would be sufficient. This print originally appeared in Turner's set of engravings for Whitaker's "History of Richmondshire", published in 1823.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 25



F. T. Underhill, "Arundel Castle on the River Arun, Sussex" after Turner (1891).

Turner made his original watercolour of Arundel Castle and the Sussex countryside in about 1824 to be engraved for a set of prints called "The Rivers of England", published in 1827. John Ruskin, who described Turner as "the man who beyond all doubt is the greatest of the age," tried to teach his students by means of Turner's watercolours, and the more readily available prints. He commissioned copies of Turner's watercolours, so that Turner's use of colour could be considered in relation to the work's structure in the engraved version. Ruskin did not write specifically about this watercolour nor did he commission Underhill to do this. William White, curator of the Ruskin Museum, commissioned this for the Guild of St George in the 1890s. This was clearly a favourite watercolour of White's, who wrote: "[Turner] has almost excelled himself in the representation of transparent atmosphere, for here the loveliness of the heavens and earth meet together in delightful unison."

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

SEPTEMBER 26

Henry Stacy Marks, "Eight Studies of White Cranes" (1877).

Marks and Ruskin enjoyed a friendly relationship which, despite Marks' jovial nature and Ruskin's critical observations, was founded on a shared love of birds and some banter. During the late 1870s, Marks was working on wall paintings for the Duke of Westminster that included drawings of birds. Marks sent some of these studies to Ruskin who greatly admired them. As Professor of Fine Art at Oxford he showed them in lectures as "examples of true natural history drawing". He also said that they were "the first perfect pictures of birds." Here, Marks has sketched cranes in various poses, with notes regarding the colours: "White Crane", "yellow eye", "red forehead", "bill blackish red" and "legs reddish white". He sent it with some other bird studies to Ruskin in a badly-wrapped parcel, which Ruskin told Marks he intended to open during an art lecture to help build suspense about the "crushed contents".

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 27



Thomas Matthews Rooke, "Fiesole from Fra Angelico's Convent" (1887).
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

SEPTEMBER 28

Frank Randal, "Pescate, from Pescarenico near Lecco, Italy" (1885).

Here, Randal has depicted a villa on a narrow stretch of water joining Lake Lecco and Lake Garlate, both tributaries of Lake Como. Randal seems to have been loosely following some instructions from Ruskin who had sent him to Lecco to "always try to get interesting groups of cottages...near rock". This small study is part of a series sketched at Lecco when Randal was supposedly on holiday over the winter of 1884. Ruskin told him: "Get a warm cell of a lodging under the rocks, with window to the lake, and study skies and distant mountains, until further orders; and row and fish, if the days are fine, but don't work more than five minutes of sketch in pencil out of doors." The fisherman's village of Pescarenico is full of winding alleys leading down to the water and a group of jetties. The view across to this villa from the jetties is still the same today.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



SEPTEMBER 29

Edward Lear, “*Sarkidiornis africanus* “ (1836).

Lear painted this for naturalist Thomas Campbell Eyton, towards his book “A Monograph of the Anatidae or Duck Tribe”, published in 1838. In 1837, Eyton employed Lear to make bird studies from life, or if this was not possible, then from stuffed birds as the first step in producing the illustrations. Six of Lear's duck drawings were later developed for the book, and unused ones were kept in Eyton's private collection. Interestingly, the Royal Academy of Arts has an almost identical drawing by John Halphead Smith (1826-1896), painted in 1837. This too was painted for Eyton. It's possible that Smith copied Lear's work, and that Eyton allowed his collection or specimen drawings to be used by other artists and authors. Certainly, one of Lear's drawings from Eyton's collection was reproduced for Sir William Jardine's book “Illustrations of the Duck Tribe” (1839), showing that natural scientists of the time collaborated. There is some confusion over what species this study depicts. It is probably a female comb duck or an African swan goose.

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ON THIS DAY

Ruskin's Lake District friends and allies, Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley and Robert Somervell, early Companions of the Guild of St George were born in 1851 <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/>



SEPTEMBER 30

On This Day: St Jerome (Feast Day) and (1849) the birth of Charles Fairfax Murray.

(1) Angelo Alessandri, Detail from "St Jerome introducing his Lion into the Monastery", after Carpaccio (1879).

St Jerome was a scholar who lived around 400AD. Initially, Jerome studied law in Rome, where he later returned to become secretary to Pope Damasus. He also spent time as a hermit in the Syrian desert, using the time there to study Hebrew. Much of his life, however, was spent in a monastery in Bethlehem, where he translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Latin. Previously, Latin translations were made from the Greek Bible. St Jerome's version of the Bible, known as the Vulgate, was officially used until 1979. There are a number of legends attached to St Jerome, the most famous of which is the story of the lion. According to "The Golden Legend", a book from the 1200s that relates the lives of the saints, a lion hobbled into Jerome's monastery with a thorn in its paw (other texts say the lion came to him whilst he was in the desert). Jerome removed the thorn and befriended the lion, which became his companion for the rest of its life.

Alessandri copied the lower left quarter of a larger panel painting, and has depicted the lion raising its injured paw to St Jerome. One of the monks is seen running away in the background. The rest of the original work includes other terrified monks running across the flower gardens towards the chapel and monastery buildings behind them. The original work is by Vittore Carpaccio, a Venetian painter who worked in the late 1400s and early 1500s. The painting is part of a cycle of paintings in the Scuola San Giorgio degli Schiavoni in Venice, which Carpaccio painted between 1502 and 1507. Carpaccio decorated the Scuola with paintings showing the stories of the patron saints of the Schiavoni brotherhood: St George, St Jerome and St Tryphon. Ruskin admired the work of Carpaccio, finding great truthfulness and expressiveness in it. Ruskin found this scene rather amusing, however, mostly because of the terrified monks shown running across the monastery garden. He wrote in his guide to Venice, entitled "St Mark's Rest": "Nothing surely could be more perfect in comic art. St Jerome, forsooth, introducing his novice lion to monastic life, with the resulting effect on the vulgar monastic mind... —what a curious witness to the timidity of Monasticism! Here are people professing to prefer Heaven to earth ... and this is the way they receive the first chance of it that offers!" Ruskin comments more positively on Carpaccio's depiction of St Jerome: "The saint is leading in his new pet, as he would a lamb, and vainly expostulating with his brethren for being ridiculous. The grass on which they have dropped their books is beset with flowers; there is no sign of trouble or asceticism on the old man's face, he is evidently altogether happy, his life being complete, and the entire scene one of the ideal simplicity and security of heavenly wisdom."



(Pictured on following page)

(2) The Feast Day of St Jerome is also the anniversary of Charles Fairfax Murray's birth in 1849. Here is his "The Flying Monks": Detail from "St Jerome introducing his Lion into the Monastery" after Carpaccio (1877).

Ruskin wrote: "there was much debate between Mr Murray and me, as he sketched the picture for the Sheffield Museum, whether the actions of flight were indeed well given or not; he maintaining that the monks were really running like Olympic archers, and that the fine drawing was only lost under the quartering of the dresses:- I on the contrary believe that Carpaccio had failed, having no gift for representing swift motion. We are probably both right; I doubt not that the running action, if Mr Murray says so, is rightly drawn; but at this time, every Venetian painter had been trained to represent only slow and dignified motion, and not till fifty years later, under classic influence, came the floating and rushing force of Veronese and Tintoret."

(3) Finally, Murray's Detail from "The Funeral Obsequies of St Jerome" after Carpaccio (1877).

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

