

The Guild of St George
The Companion

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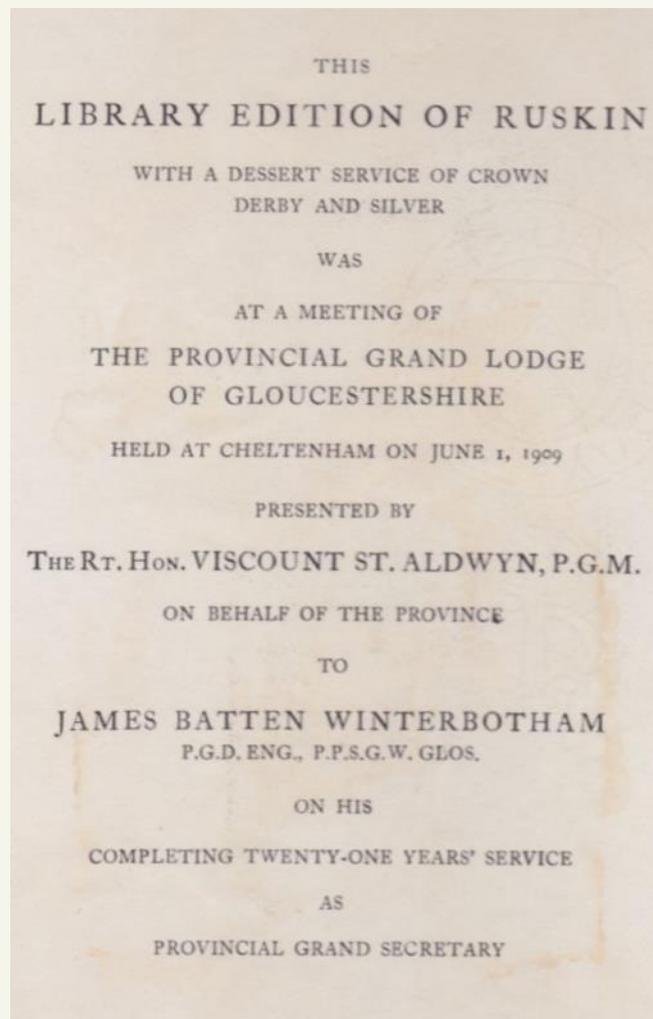


‘THE WORLD IS CREEPING AFTER RUSKIN’

It is true there are people in England who share Tolstoy’s views, but one of the chief characteristics of these views consists in the conviction that each man should be guided, not by the mental or moral authority of another, but by his own reason and conscience; and thus one of the special features of those who have these views is independence of opinion and character. In their conceptions of life they are not followers, but companions of Tolstoy.
 —Vladimir Chertkov, ‘If Tolstoy were tsar’ in *Brotherhood* vol. 5, no. 6 (October 1897) p. 63 qtd in Charlotte Alston, *Tolstoy and His Disciples: The History of a Radical International Movement* (London, 2014) pp.2-3.

As Companions of Ruskin in his Guild of St George, we too must guard against merely *following*. It is instructive to what extent Chertkov’s words, though they are couched in terms of reason rather than religion, nonetheless echo Ruskin’s: ‘*no true disciple of mine will ever be a “Ruskinian”!—he will follow, not me, but the instincts of his own soul, and the guidance of his Creator*’ (*Works* 24.371). Tolstoy and Ruskin shared a belief in the power, symbolic and inspirational, of exemplary conduct. In various ways they became examples themselves—examples, above all, of Christian dedication to service.

We have many instances of exemplary conduct and service in the Guild, but I’ll confine myself to just two of them here. Professor Van Akin Burd, to whom an entire souvenir supplement of *The Companion* is happily dedicated—in celebration of his hundredth birthday—is an exemplary scholar. For such a pioneering and dedicated researcher, it is just the latest milestone in a lifetime of notable achievements. I was fortunate to meet him at Brantwood during



The bookplate dedicating what one newspaper called the ‘de luxe’ Library Edition set of Ruskin to James Batten Winterbotham.

the events to mark the centenary of Ruskin’s death and found him as charming as he was impressive.

Dr Janet Barnes, formerly the Keeper of the Ruskin Collection at Sheffield, currently chief executive of York Museums Trust, a Director of the Guild who now chairs the steering group of the Ruskin-in-Sheffield project (see pp. 29-30), has been recognised for her dedicated service to museums in Yorkshire. It was with enormous pride that we learned that she had been made a CBE in the New Year Honours.

Sometimes a place—a physical location—exerts a kind of magnetic pull, attracting to it a certain type of person and encouraging a particular way of life. One such place is Gloucestershire. I am thinking of its myriad Ruskinian associations—for example, among those other Guildsmen, in C. R. Ashbee’s Guild of Handicraft, who migrated from Whitechapel to Chipping Campden in the early 20th century. Of yet other Guildspeople, in the Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen, whose 80th anniversary celebrations you can

read about on p 36. Of the historian, R. H. Tawney, whose country retreat was in Elcombe and whose Ruskin credentials were explored in a fascinating lecture to The Ruskin Society last year by Dr Lawrence Goldman. Of Companion Aonghus Gordon and Ruskin Mill in Nailsworth and their innovative approach to education. Of the Guild's St George's Field in Sheepscombe (neighbouring the Tolstoyan colony at Whiteway) whose donor is the subject of a forthcoming pamphlet.

As the Guild's Secretary, I felt that I ought to have volume 30 of Ruskin's *Complete Works* to refer to—what we can think of as Ruskin's Guild 'manual' (whereas volumes 27-29 containing *Fors Clavigera* are its 'Bible'). The copy I duly purchased for myself boasted an intriguing notice on the inside cover (see cover illustration). Indeed, 'Each volume ... has a front page specially printed by the publisher' the *Cheltenham Looker On* announced (June 5, 1909). Stating that the book was part of a presentation made to James Winterbotham in appreciation of 21 years' of secretarial service, it struck me as an auspiciously appropriate copy to have found. The mention of the masonic Provincial Grand Lodge of Gloucestershire piqued my interest, so I set out to discover more about the recipient of what one journalist described as this "edition de luxe" of Ruskin's works' (*Cheltenham Chronicle*, March 28, 1914) and what I found was a civic-minded pillar of the community not untypical of the Ruskin disciples I wrote about in *After Ruskin* (OUP, 2011).

James Batten Winterbotham (1837-1914) was a solicitor, a local Liberal politician, and a writer of prose and verse, who became Deputy Mayor of Cheltenham. By one of those twists of *fors*, he shared his birthday with Ruskin and was exactly 18 years his junior. He was described on his death as 'one of Cheltenham's most gifted and most honoured sons' (*Gloucester Journal*, April 18, 1914). A Conservative councillor wrote: 'We mourn a veteran in borough and county government, a man of rich intellectual endowment and many-sided culture; one who was professionally of high standing, and one whom, political opponent though he was, we recognised as the wielder of an ennobling influence alike in public and in private. The word influence, indeed, stamps and characterizes his career.' (*Cheltenham Chronicle*, March 28, 1914.)

Educated by his uncle, he made his living in his family's successful legal firm. From the late 1850s he was writing verses published in the *Cheltenham Examiner*, some of which were

collected together with essays and published as *Moretum Alterum* (1909). A Baptist-turned-Congregationalist, he was also a generous benefactor to the Anglican St Mary's Church. As a freemason he was a Senior Grand Warden and a Past Master.

He became a councillor and alderman in Cheltenham in 1881, and councillor for Gloucestershire when county councils were first formed in 1888, returning in 1897 to Cheltenham Town Council which he served until his death. He painted competently in oils and for many years was the Chairman of the Art Gallery and Museum Committee. He was Chairman of the Town Improvement Committee, overseeing the construction of the Town Hall in 1902-3. He formed and chaired the educational authority, initiated under the provisions of the Education Act of 1902. For 20 years, he was chairman of Governors of Pate's Grammar School,



James Batten Winterbotham
(*Gloucestershire Journal*,
28 March 2014)

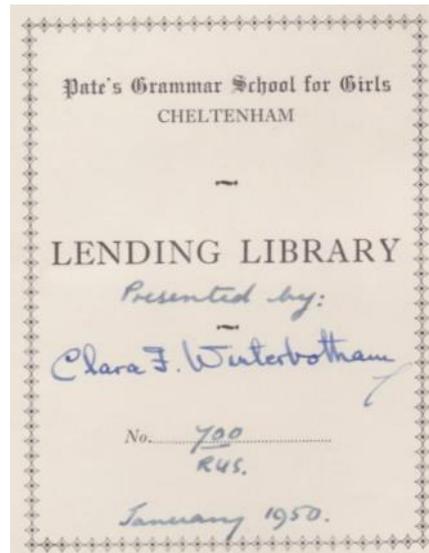
which he also served as secretary, and he was a member of the Council of Cheltenham College, whose Principal, Rev Canon Waterfield, was among those who led Winterbotham's funeral service. It seems likely that Winterbotham would have known a former Principal of the College (1868-1874), Thomas William Jex-Blake (1832-1915), who went on to be headmaster of Rugby School (1874-1887), a man who acknowledged a debt to Ruskin. Another acquaintance,

probably also a friend, was Dorothea Beale (1831-1906), someone Ruskin admired. She was the Principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College, to which Ruskin donated books and manuscripts. Among Beale's pupils was Winterbotham's daughter, Clara Frances Winterbotham (1880-1967). She became the first Lady Mayor of Cheltenham in 1921, serving until 1923 and for a second term between 1944 and 1946. She was appointed an MBE. It was Clara who in 1950 gave her father's *Library Edition* of Ruskin to Pate's Grammar School for Girls (see illustration).

Josephine Kamm wrote in her

biography, *How Different From Us: A Biography of Miss Buss and Miss Beale* (1958), that Beale

could 'bring her psychological insight to bear' on a case which called for the benefit of her experience. 'A former pupil recalls how, as an overgrown adolescent, she had given cause for her parents to complain to Miss Beale that she was doing no work. In her reply Miss Beale reminded them their daughter was growing very rapidly and told them she thought it unwise to expect a simultaneous mental development.' Kamm notes, 'Miss Beale was justified: the pupil in question—Miss Clara



Clara Winterbotham donated the
Library Edition to the
Pate's Grammar School for Girls, Cheltenham.

Winterbotham—became Cheltenham's first woman Mayor and second woman Freeman, Miss Beale herself having been the first.' We are privileged in the Guild to have another former Mayor of Cheltenham on the Board of Directors, Mr Robert Wilson.

I asserted that Winterbotham's career was not untypical of many late-nineteenth-century Ruskin disciples who involved themselves in civic life. In Manchester, for example, T. C. Horsfall (1841-1932) founded his own Art Museum and was a pioneer of town planning. You can read more about how the Guild supports his living legacy on pp. 32-35. His friend and colleague, J. Ernest Phythian (1858-1935), originally a solicitor like Winterbotham, and a non-conformist Liberal town councillor who served as chairman of the city art gallery committee too, provides the closest comparison. Phythian was a Companion of the Guild. His daughter, the educationist, historian and local politician Dame Mabel Tylecote (1896-1987), who sent her son, John, to Bembridge School, was herself not dissimilar to Clara Winterbotham. Not infrequently the network of people indebted to Ruskin share key characteristics and associations.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this issue of the magazine and in thanking them I acknowledge the time, effort and expertise they volunteer for our benefit. Ruskin's reach was great and extended far beyond Gloucestershire. You will read articles here that discuss the Wyre Forest and Westmill, Matlock and Manchester, Sheffield, Italy and the United States. But there is a danger in finding Ruskin lurking in every shadow. He was recently cited by the artist D. J. Roberts who installed a neon sign at Walthamstow's

Street Gallery in Cleveland Park Avenue, which read, 'I'm in love with the modern world!' He said, 'I have always endorsed the view of the 19th-century critic John Ruskin—that many places seem beautiful, and have the potential for beauty, not because the architecture or the setting is sublime, but because they give us a psychological hit, they capture a mood' (*sic*). I promise that I am not making this up, nor the fact that for those purchasing their books from Waterstone's last year, a quote from Ruskin was festooned on the side of the bag (see p. 22). Even the music group, Goldfrapp, recently quoted Ruskin's objection to railways on their Facebook page! Well might our old friend Phythian have observed that 'the world is creeping after Ruskin'—even if sometimes it only imagines it is.

A more significant, less improbable

example of Ruskin's influence, and highly relevant in this year that marks the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, has been discussed by Guy Cuthbertson in the recent biography, *Wilfred Owen* (Yale University Press, 2014). Owen read Ruskin from early youth and discussed him with Edith Morley, the first female Professor in Britain, who taught him English Literature at University College, Reading. Morley had contributed to the Ruskinian journal, *Saint George*, and went on to write a Fabian pamphlet, *John Ruskin and Social Ethics* (1919). Another tutor put Owen in touch with W. G. Collingwood, who taught at Reading from 1905 to 1911. Owen wrote in 1912, on reading Collingwood's biography of the Master, that Ruskin was 'my King John the Second'. Cuthbertson asserts that Owen

'shared in the Ruskinian interest in both the natural world and the world of books'. Owen became tutor to Anne de la Touche and was friends with her brothers, relations of Rose whose connection with Ruskin he well understood. In 1915, the *Westminster Gazette* had reported that a soldier in the Lancashire Fusiliers was buried in the trenches with his favourite companion, a book, Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olive*. Famously, Owen died after returning to active duty just a week before the armistice was signed. Honourable if not sweet, to misquote from his most enduring poem. That dreadful modern war claimed the lives of countless others, and Ruskin's prophetic voice was nearly lost in the shell-fire. Yet what is most remarkable is that time has not diminished Ruskin after all and the breadth of his legacy continues to expand.

A LETTER FROM THE MASTER OF THE GUILD

Dear Companions

On March 17th Jack Bishop, who lived at St George's Farm, Ruskinland, died at the age of 89. He had been our tenant since 1956, so I think I'm right in saying that none of us has been a Companion at a time when he was not there. He had had a career in the carpet industry in Kidderminster and ran the farm as a sideline. His wife Nancy died several years ago, but his three children survive him – Martin, Jim and Anne, who were all brought up on the farm. I have written to them to convey our condolences. Jack was a most dependable tenant and a good man. I know that both Cedric Quayle and John Iles, who attended the funeral on April 4th, feel that they have lost a valuable neighbour. Jack's passing will be the occasion for new developments at St George's Farm and more broadly in Ruskinland. I shall be reporting on these in my Master's Report and at this year's AGM.

There will also be changes to the Board of Directors this year. We shall be losing our two longest serving Directors. Dr James Dearden, my predecessor as Master, will not stand for re-election in November, and Dr Cedric Quayle, Secretary of the Guild for fourteen years, is also standing down.

Jim, a Companion *and* a Director since 1979, has served longer than any Director the Guild has had and was Master from 2005 to 2009. In 2010 he wrote a short history of the Guild and will undoubtedly be remembered as one of its most important Companions—especially as someone who brought us a wide range of Ruskin scholarship. Jim was, for most of his career, Curator of the Whitehouse Collection at Bembridge School and the help he has given to Ruskin scholars is legendary. He is a distinguished writer on Ruskinian topics, last year publishing the

product of a lifetime's research, his bibliography of *The Library of John Ruskin*. Before he became Master he was for many years Director for Ruskin Affairs, and since 2009 he has returned to that role.

Cedric Quayle's family have been involved in the Guild since the 1880s. The Quayles were originally from the Isle of Man, where Cedric still has relatives, but in 1914 – exactly a hundred years ago – his grandfather, then in Liverpool, was drawn to Bewdley by the Guild's presence there. When Cedric became a Companion in 1969, he was following his grandfather and uncle. He was himself to be followed by his father, and this year his wife Thelma, long a friend of the Guild, has become a Companion too. Cedric had a smallholding on the edge of Bewdley, was a chemist in the family carpet firm and ran a timber business. He became a Director in 1976, and then served as the Guild's Secretary

from 1992 to 2006. He was outstanding in that role and, when he stood down, was immediately re-elected a Director.

With their vast experience of the Guild and its work, these two Companions are irreplaceable. Because we don't want to part with their expertise, we have decided to set up an



(Above, left) Floral tributes to St George's Farm tenant, Jack Bishop, and (above right) preparing the track for Jack's funeral.

informal Advisory Board, on which they will serve together with Tony Harris, Master from 1982 to 1996.

We shall greatly miss Jim and Cedric, but this is also an opportunity to look for younger Directors who will lead the Guild into the future. I think it's true to say that we have a spring in our step at the moment and the Guild is steadily expanding. There are now 156 Companions, 26 of them living overseas. The Guild went through quite a bleak period in the post-war era and was obliged to sell-off major assets, but since the mid-1980s, it has been able to invest from time to time in large projects and enterprises, most ambitiously, of course, in the Campaign for Drawing. We have just embarked on the latest of these, the *Ruskin-in-Sheffield* project, and for several years now, we have been developing our relationship with Bewdley and the Wyre Forest.

Bewdley is our main rural centre. In recent years, John Iles, our tenant at Uncllys Farm and a Director of the Guild, has initiated a great many enterprises there. One has only to think of our involvement in the Wyre Forest Community Land Trust, the building of the Ruskin Studio, the recent electrification of our properties, the small Ruskin exhibition at the Bewdley Museum two years ago, and now the Wyre Forest Landscape Partnership, which seeks to sustain and develop the whole of that conservation area. The WFLP, of which you will be hearing more in the next few years, has close connections with the Guild. I am the Guild's representative on its Board, John is its Vice Chair, and its chief executive, Tim Selman, recently became a Companion. Because of all these developments, John has recently set up a sub-committee of the Guild – provisionally called *Ruskin-in-the-Wyre*— which will aim to co-ordinate them. The vacancy at St George's Farm will be a key issue for them, as will the cultural resonance of the Wyre landscape.

This summer, on **Saturday, July 12th**, Companions will be able to see something of our work in the Wyre when we hold a Companions' Day at Uncllys Farm (see separate flyer). It will be an opportunity for you to explore our land, share some meals, hear some Guild narratives, and see an exhibition at the Bewdley Museum. On the previous evening, I shall formally open the Anthony Page Library in Bewdley. Anthony, who died a couple of years ago, was (as some of you will recall) a Director of the Guild. His collection of Ruskin books – 400 or so volumes – was donated to us by his son Edward, and the Bewdley Museum has undertaken to keep it as a library.

Our urban, industrial centre is Sheffield and, of course, our Collection is kept in the Millennium Gallery there. Since the refurbishment three years ago it has been

growing in popularity and returning to the kind of status it held in the city in the 1980s and 90s when it was shown at our Norfolk Street gallery. In Louise Pullen it has an amazingly successful Curator; and we have recently appointed Ruth Nutter to the post of *Ruskin-in-Sheffield* Project Manager. Ruth is energetically working away at creating new relationships and partnerships. Ruth, Louise and our Keeper Kim Streets, now CEO of Museums Sheffield, are all giving thought to the endpoint of the Project, the third of our Triennial Exhibitions, on Ruskin and Craft, which will open in early 2016. This summer, from **June 28th to October 12th**, the pictures shortlisted for the John Ruskin Prize, financed by the Guild and run by the Campaign for Drawing, will be shown at the Millennium Gallery. (Companions are welcome to attend the prize-giving on **Friday, June 27th**.) The V&A's current travelling exhibition, *Recording Britain*, a selection of work from Kenneth Clark's great wartime project, will at that time be showing in Sheffield, so the theme for the John Ruskin Prize will be *Recording Britain Now*.

I like to think that we steadily deepen our involvement in these two centres, Sheffield and Bewdley, the one predominantly urban and industrial, the other predominantly rural and agricultural, the two representing contrasting English regions. Moreover, in Ruskin's way, the understanding in depth of a *particular* leads to a wider understanding of the whole world. A stone is a mountain in miniature. See the stone – don't just look at it, but focus fully upon it – and you can begin to grasp the mountain in all its vastness. Study a leaf, and you begin to know the tree. It is also the case, surely, that a real understanding of country life can only improve understanding of the city, and vice versa.

In the meantime, the Guild has a number of other projects and activities running. By the time this appears in print, some of you will have heard, on May 14th, the first of what we hope will be a long series of *Whitelands Ruskin Lectures* at Whitelands College, University of Roehampton. The speaker was our Fellow Companion, Professor Dinah Birch, and her lecture was called 'Thinking through the Past: John Ruskin and the Whitelands College May Festival'. Others of you, particularly those in our North American branch, will have attended a symposium at the Hillside Club in Berkeley, California. The title was 'Helping in the Work of Creation: Ruskin and Morris To-Day' and the speakers, all Companions, were Sara Atwood, Gray Brechin, Tim Holton, John Iles, Jim Spates and myself.

Here are some dates for your diaries.

• From **Friday, October 3rd to Sunday, October 5th**, the North American Companions will be holding a conference at the Roycroft Arts and Crafts Community in New York State, entitled *Ruskin, Morris and Hubbard: the Arts and Crafts of the Word* (see 'American Notes' pp. 26-27).

• On **Saturday, October 11th**, in collaboration with the Ruskin Research Centre of Lancaster University, we shall be holding the third of our symposia on matters of public interest (see back page for poster). It will be held at Toynbee Hall in London, and the theme will be education. The keynote lecturer will be Professor Dinah Birch, and there will be talks by Companions Dr Sara Atwood from the USA and Paul Tucker from Italy, who will be jointly running the day.

• The annual Ruskin Lecture will be given in Sheffield on **Saturday, November 15th**, coming as usual after the AGM. This year's speaker will be Professor Gray Brechin from Berkeley. Professor Brechin is one of the moving spirits behind the North American Companions' symposia and he will be in Sheffield to sign the roll as a Companion. He will speak about Ruskin's influence on the Roosevelt administration, and his title is "Necessitous Men are not Free Men": The New Deal as an Expression of Ruskin's Thought'.

• On **Sunday, November 16th**, we expect to hold a series of events under the banner, *Wealthy Sunday*, to promote our new Ruskin-in-Sheffield project.

So the Guild is working hard. You will not be surprised when I say that, if it is to go on developing in this way, it will need to expand its income. I have been saying this for a while now, and this year, I am delighted to report, Companions have returned to the practice of making donations to the Guild. We have had several generous one-off payments and a number of Gift-Aided Standing Orders, for all of which we are extremely grateful. I hope I do not spoil the effect when I add that, despite your generosity, we still need more. Every donation is used, but I should emphasise that more Standing Orders would be exceptionally helpful. (Forms for donations are included in this issue of *The Companion*.) We not only need funds; we need to be sure that the funds are predictable and, in time, that budgets can be built upon them. Reliable funding, as you know, is essential to any charity. In the case of this one, it is far more than 'plain money' (to borrow a Ruskinian phrase); it contributes, or should do, to the Wealth that is Life.

All good wishes,
Clive Wilmer.

RUSKIN AND MATLOCK, DERBYSHIRE

Donald Measham

The first hotels in Matlock owed their presence to hot springs – ‘warm’ would be a fairer description, but they do still steam *in cold weather*, as they make their way in little rivulets and basins to the River Derwent. Two hotels were built in the mid-eighteenth century around two of these springs: known reasonably enough as ‘The Old Bath’ and ‘The New Bath’. The Old Bath Hotel (later renamed ‘The Royal’) was burnt down in 1929 – its former site now occupied by a theme park. An annexe of it, called ‘The Temple’, survives. That was where Byron put up for one night in 1803/4, and left half a poem scratched on a pane of glass. The New Bath, whose future is now in doubt, is where the Ruskin family always stayed when visiting Derbyshire.

The Temple and New Bath Hotels are both in Matlock Bath; Matlock Bath being one of ‘the Matlocks’; the now rarely-used designation for a collection of Derbyshire settlements separated from each other by the River Derwent in its limestone gorge: Matlock Bridge, Matlock Bank, Matlock Town, Starkholmes, and Matlock Bath. The last of these, Matlock Bath, has become a tourist ‘honey-pot’—not necessarily to the advantage of the hotels there, particularly the long-established, larger ones.

The B&B trade has suffered too. As for the New Bath itself, it is awkwardly placed for casual lunches; and a number of

alternatives in driving distance now have facilities for wedding and funeral receptions.

But it still came as a surprise, locally, when on Monday July 12th 2012, the *Matlock Mercury* reported THE NEW BATH HOTEL’s overnight closure: ‘leaving its employees and potential guests with an uncertain future’. The freeholders repossessed the property and the owners of the New Bath, Albermarle Hotels (No. 2), went into liquidation.

The locks were changed, and the hotel was put on the market with an asking price of £2,500,000.

During the severe winter of 2012-13, its water cisterns froze, its pipes burst, lower floors flooded, and walls bulged. A lower purchase price was spoken of and, for a time, demolition seemed a serious prospect.

However, a recent (March/April 2014) conversation on site with an obliging security man has established that the mild winter of 2013-14 has helped the building dry out; that the art deco indoor swimming pool and hot spring are both working; as are a walk-in refrigeration unit, and a well-stocked wine cellar(!). ‘Rooms with fine furniture’ were also reckoned to be in good condition.

Ruskin stayed at The New Bath regularly from the age of ten. He enjoyed the hotel and its grounds. In particular, he loved the sparkling galena of the garden paths. Today, all that seems long gone, and much of the ‘five acres of gardens’ now consist of marked-out parking spaces. Yet there is one strange survival: it appears to be the Victorian lily pond. (See photograph below.) It resembles the Ruskin drawing of the Lily Pond in Lancaster’s Ruskin Library collection, though it lacks the steep banks

leading down to it which Arthur Severn refers to (*The Professor*, ed. J. S. Dearden, Allen & Unwin 1967.) The water level appears to have been raised by the oval retaining wall.

That pond was the setting for house-party frolics among Ruskin’s guest-residents in 1871: a silly game of tossing a sovereign onto lily pads, with consequent striving to

retrieve it by linking hands, leaning over – and falling in. Ruskin had booked the hotel for a month, for himself and a party of friends. Then. A chill? He had made a *plein-air* watercolour of a wild rose (‘Wild rose running in a cleft of Derbyshire limestone’, see 38.278. Reproduced in Donald Measham, *Ruskin: the Last Chapter* (Sheffield Arts, 1989) p. 33) which set him thinking unbearable thoughts about Rose La Touche. A set of strange hallucinatory dreams ensued. Dr Acland pulled the communication cord as the London express neared the local station and handed his card to the guard as he alighted to attend his distinguished patient at The New Bath (Severn, *op cit*).

The pond looks vulnerable: there are lily pads, but also weeds and dead reeds which hide something – a fountain? It is literally a step from the vast car park; hidden by a three-foot wall.



The lily pond in the car park.

The hotel is a Grade II ‘listed’ property, with one distinctive feature – perhaps now a unique one: the eponymous, original ‘New Bath’ (the hot spring). Here is part of the hotel’s listing citation:

The New Bath, as it became known, is the plunge bath in the basement of the present hotel. This was opened in May 1745 together with the hotel to its south, and utilised the warm spring water for which Matlock Bath had become well-known at the end of the 17th century. ... The original hotel was the south and west parts of the present main range and then the bath was incorporated in the building at the end of the 18th century when the north wing was built over it. The resulting U-plan was filled in and rationalised in the mid 19th century and the north wing built in 1885. This fine complex displays a long evolution as a hotel with, at its core, a particularly unusual survival of an 18th century bath with the natural warm spring supplying it, still running strongly.





'This fine complex': The New Bath Hotel, Matlock.

Ruskin first visited Matlock in the summer of 1829. Aged ten, he travelled and toured, of course with his parents; and stayed at the New Bath Hotel. The month of August was his father's annual leave; the stand-in at the firm's office being the obliging Telford, whose capital provided the company, Ruskin, Telford & Domecq, with its financial ballast. John Ruskin makes clear that he (young John) was well aware, that even on his *father's* holiday, orders for cases of sherry were still a prime concern. It does seem likely, therefore, that accompanying major-domos, as below, might well have abetted such transactions during the aesthetic and domestic house-tours:

The Midsummer holiday, for better enjoyment of which Mr Telford provided us with these luxuries, began usually on the fifteenth of May, or thereabouts. ...The holiday itself consisted in a tour for orders through half of the English counties; ... if in the course of the midday drive there were any gentleman's house to be seen, or, better still, a lord's – or, best of all, a duke's – my father baited the horses, and took my mother and me reverently through the state rooms; always speaking a little under our breath to the housekeeper, major domo, or other authority in charge; and gleaning worshipfully what fragmentary illustrations of the history and domestic ways of the family might fall from their lips. (35.32-33)

So it was the *firm* that took him on tours of Derbyshire and neighbouring counties. However, it was reading Maria Edgeworth that stimulated his special interest in Matlock, and its mineral souvenirs – she gave meaning to Ruskin's innate and conditioned liking for close scrutiny. She

also liberated him, by depicting the sweetness of dangers overcome for rational ends.

Miss Edgeworth's story of Lazy Lawrence, and the visit to Matlock by Harry and Lucy, gave an almost romantic and visionary charm to mineralogy in those dells; and the piece of iron oxide with bright Bristol diamonds, No-51 of the Brantwood collection, was I think the first stone on which I began my studies of silica. (35.130)

Maria Edgeworth's Harry and Lucy not only told him what and where to collect in Matlock, but they gave him licence to be venturesome, in spite of cossetting parents:

I pursued my mineralogical studies on fluor, calcite, and the ores of lead, with indescribable rapture when I was allowed in a cave. My father and mother showed more kindness than I knew, in yielding to my subterranean passion; for my mother could not bear dirty places, and my father had a nervous feeling that the ladders would break, or the roof fall, before we got out again. (35.75)

Visits to Matlock continued over the years. And in his mid-twenties, Ruskin had some pastoral (and mutual) thoughts of living with his mother, of the pair sharing 'a rose-covered cottage in the dells of Matlock' [or Keswick] (35.379). It is not clear how serious he was. But then, by a well-known irony, he committed himself to buying Brantwood in 1871, while resident in Matlock at the New Bath Hotel.

Installed in Brantwood, he often turned to Derbyshire. His visual memory of the place – of Matlock in particular, and the things he valued there – are clear and strong. Crystals were particularly evocative for him. As late as 1884, he inspected a

collection in Kirkcudbright (Dumfries and Galloway). He noted a mineral specimen of a familiar kind and immediately thought of Matlock's High Tor. He noted his findings and his preferred course of action:

172. Dog-tooth spar, of Derbyshire, showing at its base, with great clearness, the mode of its construction out of the rhomboidal masses of the compact calcite...To see the spar in perfection, it is well worth while stopping on the way to or from London, and to explore the cave in the High Tor of Matlock. (26.483)

*

That same year, on 19th April 1884, *The Manchester City News* published a letter from John Ruskin, intended to call a halt to the further incursion of the Midland Railway into Derbyshire. Ruskin probably overestimated the force of an argument based upon the place of the county in his own personal development. And the letter is frequently obscure and rambling. However, the best of it is also brilliant and memorable. The following three consecutive phrases, for instance – 'That little heap of crystalline hills, white over with sheep, white under with dog-tooth spar' (34.571) – constitute a kind of riddle; which, dwelt upon, conveys his deep understanding of the Derbyshire landscape: that the White Peak (the area north and a little west of Matlock) is a plateau, with collapsed caverns and dry, or seasonally dry, or partly dry – river-beds in gorges (more or less) – which he, as a sort of Scot, always insists on calling 'glens', but knows to be Dales. I reproduce part of the opening below:

Much as I love Thirlmere and Helvellyn, there are in other climes lovelier lakes and sweeter strands... But... I can't find anything like Derbyshire anywhere else. [It's a fine thing] to scale the Wengern Alps with Manfred – to penetrate with Faust the defiles of the Brocken; – the painlessly accessible turrets of High Tor, the guiltlessly traceable Lovers' Walks by the Derwent, have for me still more attractive peril and a dearer witchery. Looking back to my past life, I find, though not without surprise, that it owes more to the Via Gellia than the Via Mala – to the dripping wells of Matlock than the dust-rain of Lauterbrunnen.'(34.570)

The Via Gellia? The great significance for Ruskin of the Via Gellia may have surprised some of his supporters and even his more recent readers. Particularly if they should check the road-name, and wince to find it is the A5012, one of the most dangerous in the country. One other thing which people may wonder about, before looking anything up, is

that – yes – the brand name ‘Vyella’ is a commemorative nod to the mills here, where the fabric was invented.

The Via Gellia has always been associated with trade and industry. Wordsworth would have hated it, for I don’t mean ‘Industry’ with a capital ‘I’, hard work as a virtue, I mean capitalism, and its beginnings: ‘It was built by Philip Gell on his land in 1792-3 ... creating a through route from his stone quarries at Hopton to the canal at Cromford and, as John Gell foresaw in his letter to his brother Philip in 1789, giving the Gells the advantage of “carrying coals back to supply upper country” on the return journey.’ (See *Cromford* 1: Endnote.)

Ruskin appears to prefer to approach the Via Gellia from above, either through the very steep heights behind Scarthin hamlet, near to the New Bath; or via Bonsall village, higher up Masson hill; in which case, he would descend by a limestone ramp, still called the Clatterway:

Yesterday [April 21st 1851] I had a long walk up the Via Gellia, at Matlock, coming down upon it from the hills above, all sown with anemones and violets, and murmuring with sweet springs. Above all the mills in the valley, the brook, in its first purity, forms a small shallow pool, with a sandy bottom covered with cresses and other water plants. (7.269)

Common sense suggests that, after the

junction of the Clatterway with the Via Gellia, at which point there is a pool, he would conclude his journey by doubling back, or continuing south along the Via Gellia in the Cromford direction, either to Scarthin Hamlet, and over the steep heights behind it; or more likely into Scarthin Nick (see endnote and sketch map): that is the way the brook travels; and then make his way easily back to the New Bath.

Where the Bonsall brook becomes a shallow pool, as Ruskin notes above, it is ‘in its first purity’. But he knows it won’t stay pure – it has work to do, and he is familiar with that work. It will drive mill-wheel after mill-wheel and perform many useful contortions – perhaps as many as twenty times. It will be culverted and emerge; it will flow across two cast-iron aqueducts, it will even power a bellows in a smelting plant; finally surfacing – after a spell underground in Cromford Village – to merge with other flows and waters, the River Derwent, the canal, its sough, and the wheel of Arkwright’s Mill.

The indications are that Ruskin does not object to any of this water-management; on the contrary, he is fascinated by it. He is level-headed and realistic about water-power. I don’t believe he wrote even one word against ‘managed’ rivers – stepped and canalised into our day still, at Alport

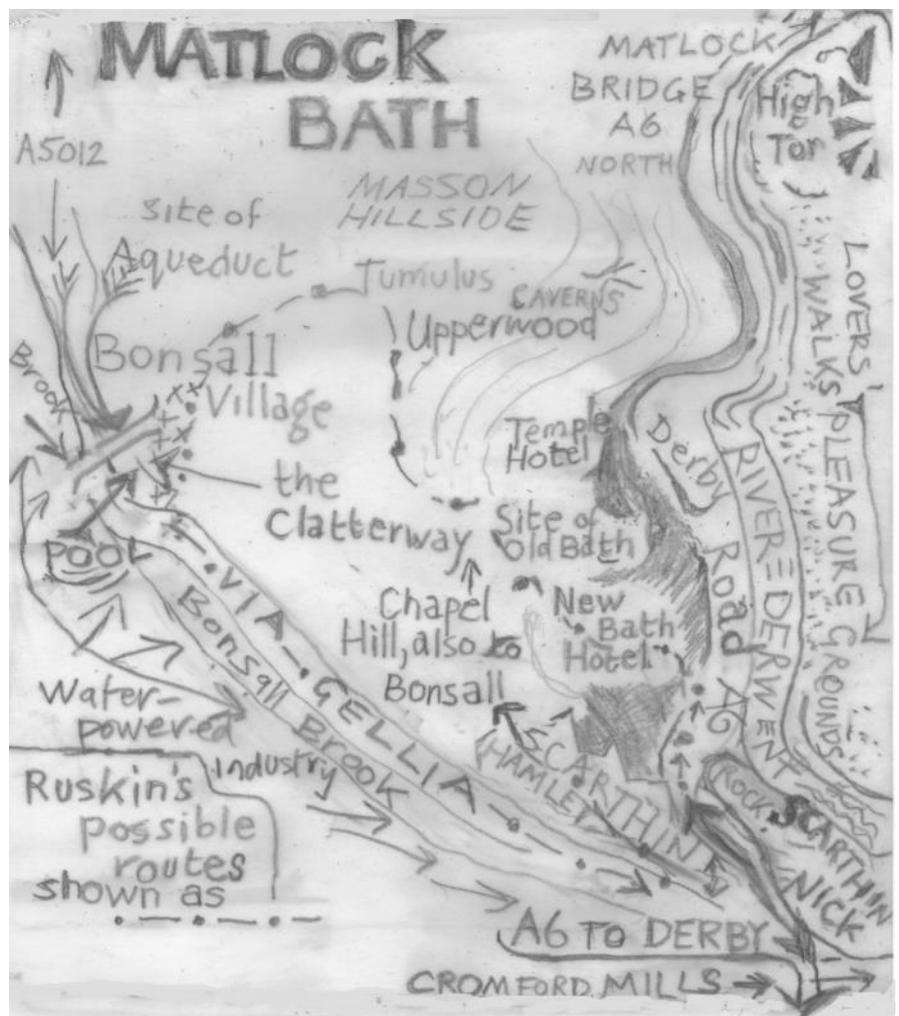
and Youlgrave and Monsal; and the many, many surviving weirs and man-made promontories – still there, where mills have been; all in Ruskin’s day, busily, usefully working. Nor is there any complaint from him about rivers such as the Lathkil which disappear into – and which generally come and go, in and out of lead mines and other workings, and which in his day would have been heavily polluted, and subject to frequent pumping operations. As someone who appeared at times to see self-contradiction as an unmitigated virtue, Ruskin was pretty consistent about water-power. Sixteen years before the Via Gellia letter, in a pamphlet concerned with ‘Employment for the Poor’, he wrote:

... Because it is always better for a man to work with his own hands to feed and clothe himself, than to stand idle while a machine works for him; and if he cannot by all the labour healthily possible to him, feed and clothe himself, then it is better to use an inexpensive machine – as a wind or water mill – than a costly one like a steam engine as long as we have natural force enough at our disposal. (17.543)

OS 1:25000 Map, *The White Peak*, shows the River Derwent, running North to South through Matlock Bath, as an almost ‘vertical’ line, with Lovers’ Walks and other Victorian Pleasure Grounds to its right, on the East Bank. The slopes above the river to the left, are known locally as ‘Masson’. The present sketch enlargement simplifies, but the sinuous river is a fact. Since the advent of Sainsbury’s (to the disused Cawdor Quarry on the Snitterton road), the A6 has bypassed Matlock Bridge and the modern town centre. But as the sketch map shows, the A6 still continues to serve Matlock Bath. Just north of the area covered by the map, the road curves around Artists’ Corner (a favoured location of William Gilpin and his followers, in pursuit of the picturesque), with views to the east of High Tor, the 400 ft limestone crag.

Where the A6 leaves Matlock Bath (bottom right hand corner of sketch map), the Derby road was for centuries limited to one-way traffic. In 1961 the limestone cliffs (still known as ‘Scarthin Nick’) were finally blasted away to allow traffic to flow continuously in each direction.

Scarthin Nick was originally no more than a ‘nick’ in the rockface, awkward for pedestrians to scramble over, and leaving carts with an lengthy detour. In 1822, it was quarried down to ground level to allow one-way horse-drawn traffic (figure 93 in *Cromford*). That would have been the position in Ruskin’s day. The road clearance and landscaping continued until 1965, with the whole foreground of the New Bath cleared away and landscaped. This phase of the scheme included provision of grandiose vehicular access for the New Bath Hotel, and demolition of the companionable Glenorchy Chapel.



POSTSCRIPT: As *The Companion* goes to press, the future of The New Bath Hotel has re-entered local consciousness. It is rumoured that a charitable agency, of good repute, hopes to add it to an existing Derbyshire holiday-lets resource. *Matlock Mercury* (March 6th 2014) has announced that Premier Inn plans to build a 58-bed hotel on the A6 about two miles north of the point where the sketch map starts. Premier Inn is likely to be welcomed (there is no other provision of this kind locally). It is not in Matlock Bath, of course, nor in quite the same market – so with good luck and good judgement, both ventures might co-exist usefully

CREDITS: Photographs by Joan Measham. Technical help with photo processing, John Measham; and with computing, Jonathan Measham. Though Ruskin is not mentioned in *Cromford Revisited* (Doreen Buxton and Christopher Charlton, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Heritage Trust, 2014), this newly-published research and photographic record was invaluable for the last part of the article, and is acknowledged in the text as *Cromford*.



HELP: A correspondent writes, ‘I was wondering if you know of any more information about the medal shown in the attached photograph. It seems to carry the insignia of Archbishop Stigand on one side and the name ‘Guild of S. George’ on the other. Do you know if any of this refers to the Guild of St. George as founded by Ruskin? I have not been able to find any direct links to Archbishop Stigand; he was Archbishop of Canterbury at the time of the Norman conquest.’

RUSKIN AND BARMOUTH: A FOOTNOTE

Bernard Richards

The Companion (2013) contains interesting pictures and information from Stuart Eagles about Barmouth and its Ruskin associations. I should like to add a couple of footnotes. Here is Ruskin in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 69 (September 1876). He says that he is writing ‘in a friend’s house in a lovely bit of pasture country, surrounding what was once a bright bit of purple and golden heath – inlaid as gorse and heather chose to divide their possession of it; and is now a dusty wilderness of unlet fashionable villas, bricks, thistles, and crockery.’ (28.697).

Cook and Wedderburn do not explain where this was, nor who this friend was, and no one else has either. Surely it must be Barmouth, where Ruskin was staying in August, at Mrs Talbot’s. The fact that the letter is ‘September’ is slightly misleading. His Diary records that he was there from August 3rd to 10th. ‘Development’ for leisure purposes creates, certainly in the short run, ‘dusty wilderness’, and this was the case with Barmouth, when the railway arrived and it became a convenient venue for trippers and holiday-makers. Ruskin goes on to moan in a characteristic way about the tourist tat one can buy in the apothecary’s shop.

When Mrs Talbot donated Dinas Oleu to the National Trust she said:

I have no objection to grassy paths or stone seats in proper places but I wish to avoid the abomination of asphalt paths and the cast-iron seats of serpent design which disfigure so largely our public parks, and it appears to me that your association

has been born in the nick of time.

Now, those ‘cast-iron seats of serpent design’ catch my eye. I suppose Mrs Talbot at this point was thinking of these modish seats partly because Ruskin had castigated them in *Fors Clavigera* Letter 52 (April 1875). He visited Kirkby Lonsdale, at the point where Turner had done a beautiful watercolour of the churchyard and the Valley of the Lune. He writes: ‘I do not know in all my own country, still less in France and Italy, a place more naturally divine, or a more priceless possession of true “Holy Land”’. And what does he find here?

Just at the dividing of the two paths, the improving mob of Kirkby had got two seats for themselves – to admire the prospect from, forsooth. And these seats were to be artistic, if Minerva were propitious, – in the style of Kensington. So they are supported on iron legs, representing each, as far as any rational conjecture can extend – the Devil’s tail pulled off, with a goose’s head stuck on the wrong end of it. Thus: and what is more – two of the geese-heads are without eyes (I stopped down under the seat and robbed the frost off them to make sure), and the whole symbol if perfect, therefore, – as typical of our English populace, fashionable and other, which seats itself to admire prospects, in the present day. (28.300).

Fig. 3 is a drawing of the serpent. A page or two later he thinks the benches at Kirby ‘are ordered and shaped by the “least erected spirit that fell”, [Milton’s Satan that is] in the very likeness of himself.’ (28.303) When I was in Kirby Lonsdale about 20 years ago the serpent benches had disappeared, to be replaced by something absolutely plain and inane in design. But I do remember these serpent seats on the sea-front at Aberystwyth when I was a child in the ‘fifties, gradually rusting away and painted lurid green. I wonder whether they are still there?

Ruskin was ‘disconsolate on the hills’ at Barmouth, and ‘tempted to the abandonment of St. George’s Company’. (*Diary*, p. 900.) A close thing.

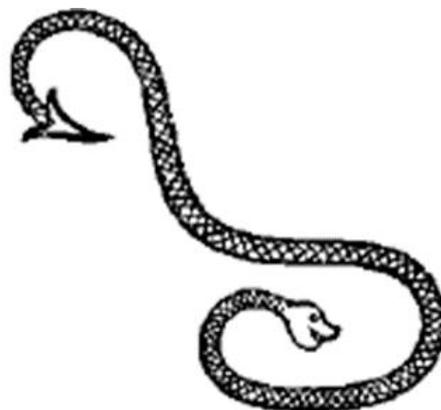


Fig 3

Fig 3 (28.300).

A RUSKIN BIRTHDAY WALK IN SHOREDITCH

Stephanie Parkin



To mark the anniversary of John Ruskin's birthday and the launch of *Celeb8Feb*, a five-year campaign of Ruskin Walks leading up to his 200th anniversary in 2019, Martin Fidler and Andrew Stuck designed a Ruskin Walk in Shoreditch.

The intermittent rain did not dampen the enthusiasm of some 20 people on the lookout for ways in which John Ruskin's life and work had historically influenced the livelihood and well-being of Shoreditch people, and the tangible links to the many and varied interests of the Victorian philanthropist.

Ruskin's life-long concern with social reform, and fulfilment through aesthetic interests in the visual arts and manufacturing industries, has left a legacy of culture, craft and small-scale industry, reflected in the community of people living and working in Shoreditch today. It is a way of life that could be interpreted as paying homage to Ruskin's ideals, but it exists alongside rapid and sustained technological development.

The Ruskin Walk was, in part, an adventure to uncover Ruskin's enthusiasms and the links between historical and contemporary issues about work, life and well-being in the streets, houses, shops, as well as places of work and exercise, that can be found in the Shoreditch of today.

The walk began at Shoreditch High Street overground station, with introductions and a short 'pre-ramble' to the furniture shop and workshop premises of Unto This Last in Brick Lane, run by local entrepreneur and Guild Companion, Olivier Geoffroy. This provided the group with a chance to warm up with a hot drink and to get to know each other by considering answers to the question, 'why are you on a Ruskin Walk?'

This was quickly followed up with hearing about the interests of John Ruskin, a short tour of Olivier's workshop and, using specially designed drawing boards for this

particular walk, a short, introductory drawing session to loosen up the chilled fingers. The Walk then continued around Shoreditch, Arnold Circus and nearby Hoxton.

There were numerous opportunities to stop and stare whilst learning about the fascinating origins of some of the

streets, who lived in them and why large, diverse immigrant populations have always collected there, making Shoreditch the vibrant cultural environment that it still is today. Particularly striking was the use of polychromatic brickwork in the 19th-century London Council social housing estate around the band-stand at Arnold Circus and Ruskin's observations of something similar during his visits to Venice.

Conversations between group members ranged from some people needing to know more about Ruskin's personal life and that of his wife Effie (to be revealed in the forthcoming film), the links with the Pre-Raphaelites and the revelation that one of Ruskin's rivals, Pugin, had a son who had designed a mural in St Monica's in Hoxton Square.

After meandering through the streets for a couple of hours the Walk finished at the Geffrye Museum of housewares, furniture and household interiors. There, the museum managers, who had been involved and very interested at the planning stage, kindly provided studio space and refreshments including a bespoke biscuit baked for the event which was, of course, cleverly nick-named a 'Rusky!'

The studio space gave the group the opportunity to discuss and share their drawings. They then worked collaboratively in two large groups using the drawing boards that were specially designed for the purpose of slotting together to create 3-dimensional modular forms and structures. During this process the group was asked to evaluate the Walk and below is a summary of them.

'Greatly enjoyable, a good way to spend a Saturday morning. The slightly serendipitous character of the journey provided a bit of everything—architecture, drawing, Ruskin, design "puzzling" and [it] was full of inspiring ideas and surprising connections. It was engaging in all senses, super-organised, the joining instructions were good, apple juice a nice touch, factory visit excellent, ply laminate "clipboard" a brilliant touch and the collaborative finale at the Geffrye Museum was spot on.'

'Amazed that some of the streets we passed down were completely unknown [to me]. It was an education and the only regret was not making a note of the name[s] of some of the places where we stopped to stare, particularly the extraordinary 19th Century London Council funded housing development clustered around that lovely circular "square".'



'The "doing" was very interesting. [As were] looking and drawing at Unto This Last, drawing at Arnold Circus, and sharing drawings and building the models at the Geffrye Museum. The unexpected "gift" of the board to take home made the Walk extra special. Well done!'

'Excellent atmosphere, warm and welcoming group and original ideas for this "constructive" and "instructive walk".'

Stephanie Parkin is an Education Consultant.

‘TREASURING THINGS OF THE LEAST’: COMPANION EXTRAORDINAIRE, MARY HOPE GREG

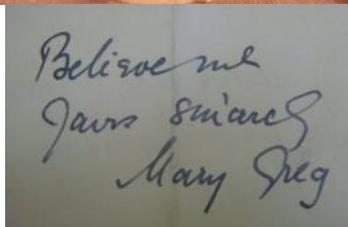
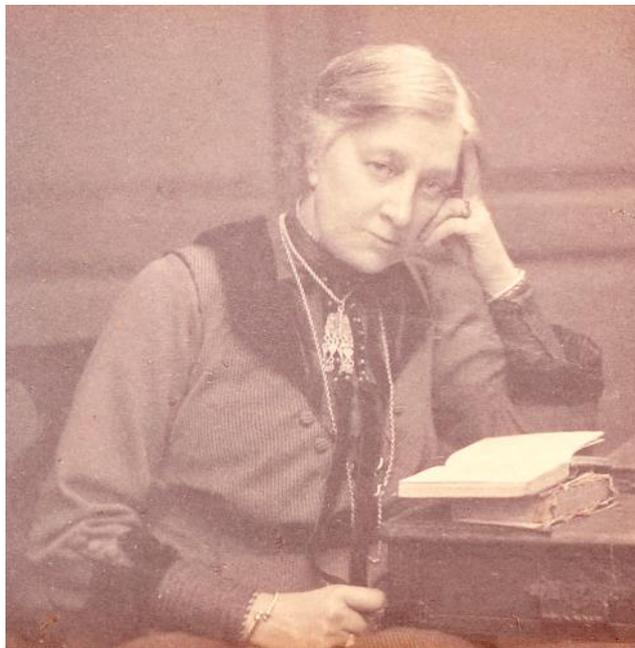
Liz Mitchell

Mary Hope Greg (1850-1949) may be best known to members of the Guild as the benefactor who, in the mid-20th century, bequeathed substantial property and land in the Hertfordshire village of Westmill. In 1935, she first wrote to the Guild’s Master, setting out her lifelong interest in Ruskin’s teachings, explaining that ‘I am anxious to do what I can to further the work but at the outset I must tell you that I am very nearly 86 years of age, and that I am rather out of reach of the younger people who ought to be interested’.¹ She went on to become a Companion Extraordinaire, donating artworks, books and furniture, contributing financially towards the distribution of Ruskin’s writings and finally, on her death in 1949, leaving to the Guild the remainder of her Westmill estate, including ten properties.

What may be less familiar, however, is the extent of Mrs Greg’s wider philanthropic and educational interests. In 1922 she oversaw the gift of her late husband’s renowned collection of English Pottery to Manchester City Art Gallery. Thomas Tylston Greg’s collection had been on loan to Manchester since 1904. With his unexpected death in 1920, at the age of 62, it was left to Mrs Greg to determine its future. Over the next thirty years, she gave over 3,000 objects to Manchester City Art Gallery: her husband’s pottery, but also some 2,000 items of domestic life, archaeology and handicrafts. The Greg collections at Manchester include a vast array of material; pottery, cutlery, keys, writing materials, scientific instruments, novelties and souvenirs, coins and medals, tobacco and snuff-related objects, seals and documents, clothing, textiles, sewing implements, books and children’s toys. Much of this material had been acquired by Mr and Mrs Greg together during their married life. Both had antiquarian interests and family connections with other well-known collectors. However, what began as a fairly straightforward gift of a private collection to a public museum, quickly became a passionate and active commitment to education and the development of museum collections that lasted for the rest of her life.

As well as to Manchester, Mrs Greg gave collections of objects to nearly thirty museums and related institutions, across Britain and as far afield as New Zealand. She established her own small museum in Westmill, devoted to preserving aspects of rural life. She championed the development

of museum collections for children, acquiring, donating and even commissioning toys, dolls and model houses specifically for museums in poor urban areas. As a result, she developed close and enduring friendships with



Mary Hope Greg (date unknown) and detail from a letter to Manchester City Art Gallery.

curators in several major institutions, including Arthur Sabin at Bethnal Green in London, Philip Entwistle at Liverpool and William Batho at Manchester. An inveterate letter writer, she maintained a lengthy and regular correspondence with all three, documented in the archives of those institutions. The surviving letters (of which there are several hundred) provide a fascinating insight, not only into the character of this indomitable and passionate woman, but also into the workings of the museum, and interwar attitudes to philanthropy, politics, class and gender. They form an invaluable historical document for the history of museums and collecting in Britain in the early 20th century.

Mrs Greg was interested in all aspects of museum work, offering suggestions, opinions and occasionally instructions, in everything from display and interpretation to conservation and museum staffing. In the preface to the 1922 *Catalogue of Handicrafts*

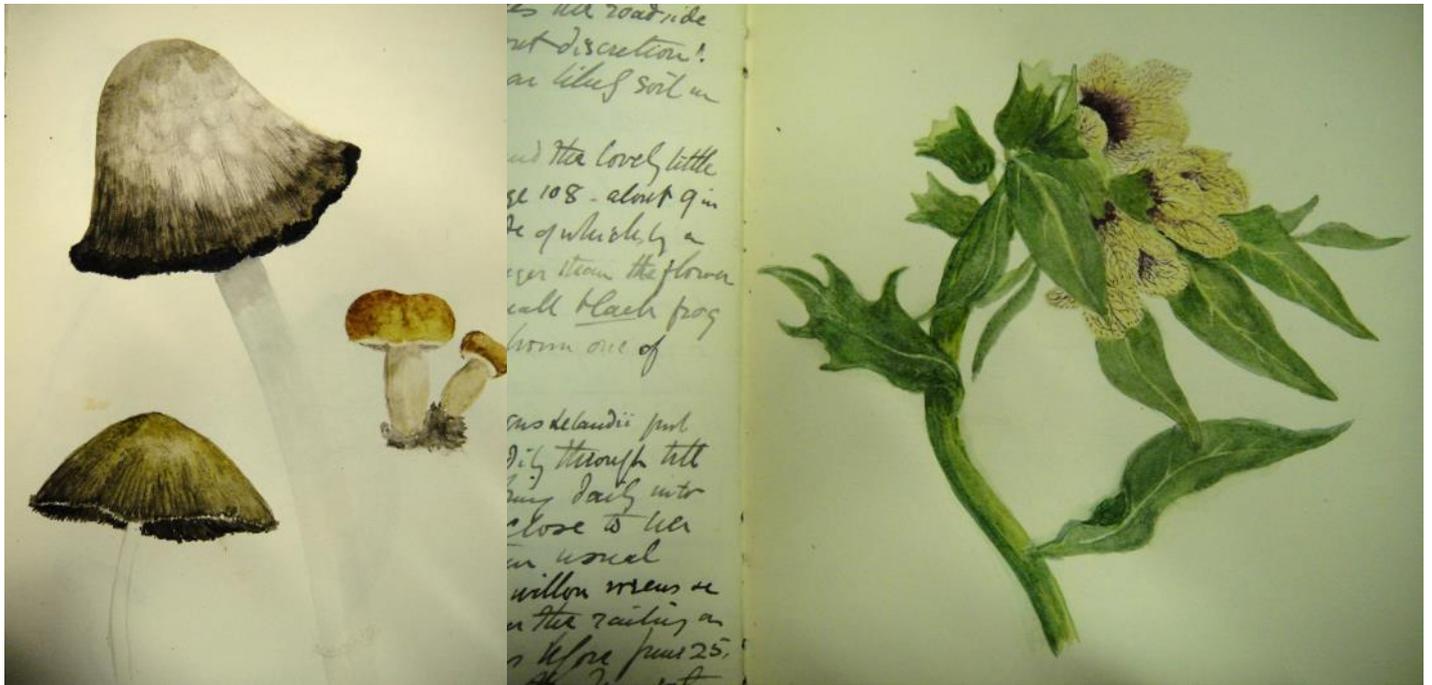
of *Bygone Times* for Manchester she explained the philosophy that lay behind her enthusiasm:

... we owe it to those who have preceded us and have left us those specimens of their painstaking and beautiful work and to those who will come after us to do likewise, to treasure good work and produce something into which we have put our best, our love, our intelligence, our power ... Machine-made things can never take the place of hand-made ones. We cannot put our love of beauty or true worth into a machine-made article. We can make useful, true, accurate things but the higher, nobler satisfaction is only to be found when we work with our head and hands and heart.²

Mrs Greg was then 72 years old. For the next 27 years, until her death shortly before her 100th birthday, she devoted considerable time, energy and money supporting this ideal. Yet prior to this moment, very little is known about her life. It

would seem as if the death of her husband, Thomas, precipitated a late flowering of philanthropic zeal and energy. To some extent, she was putting things in order; aware of her own advanced age and with no children to inherit the family estate, she was keen to underwrite the legacy of her husband’s and her own lifelong interests. But more than this, she was clearly motivated by a strong sense of duty and passionate commitment to improve the lives of others; to support progressive-education initiatives, and to share the benefits of her own comfortable position. As well as the Guild bequest, she also left sums of money to several charitable bodies, including the Governesses’ Benevolent Institution, The Societies of Women Students at Oxford University, the London Homeopathic Hospital, the London Association for the Blind, the Pontypool Educational Settlement, Hostels for Invalid and Crippled Women Workers and the RSPCA.

Her guiding inspiration appears to have been the lifelong commitment to the teachings of John Ruskin that she described to the Master of the Guild in 1935. Ruskin’s concept of the ‘great entail’, that ‘belongs as much to those who are to come after us, and whose names are already written in the book of creation’ (8.233), runs throughout Mrs Greg’s writing, in her letters, her diary and in her only published text, the catalogue



preface quoted above. Her interest in museums and her particular focus on the everyday things of domestic life and childhood were inspired by Ruskin's conception of the museum as a place of education and inspiration. In 1880 Ruskin had written that a museum

is only for what is eternally right, and well done, according to divine law and human skill. The least things are to be there—and the greatest—but all *good* with the goodness that makes a child cheerful and an old man calm; the simple should go there to learn, and the wise to remember. (34.260)

Echoing these words, Mrs Greg wrote to fellow amateur museum curator, Eleanor Adlard, in 1929: 'I feel the work of treasuring things of the least is most important'.³ She deliberately set out to collect the ordinary, the homemade and the handmade, following Ruskin's assertion that in a museum one should find nothing 'that

vanity has invented for change, or folly loved for costliness; but all that can bring honest pride into homely life' (34.262). As an amateur maker herself (the Manchester collection includes her own embroideries and homemade toys), she also believed firmly in what she described as 'the humanising and developing power of handwork'.⁴ She hoped, through her contribution to museums, to inspire the same in others, writing to Manchester curator William Batho in 1928:

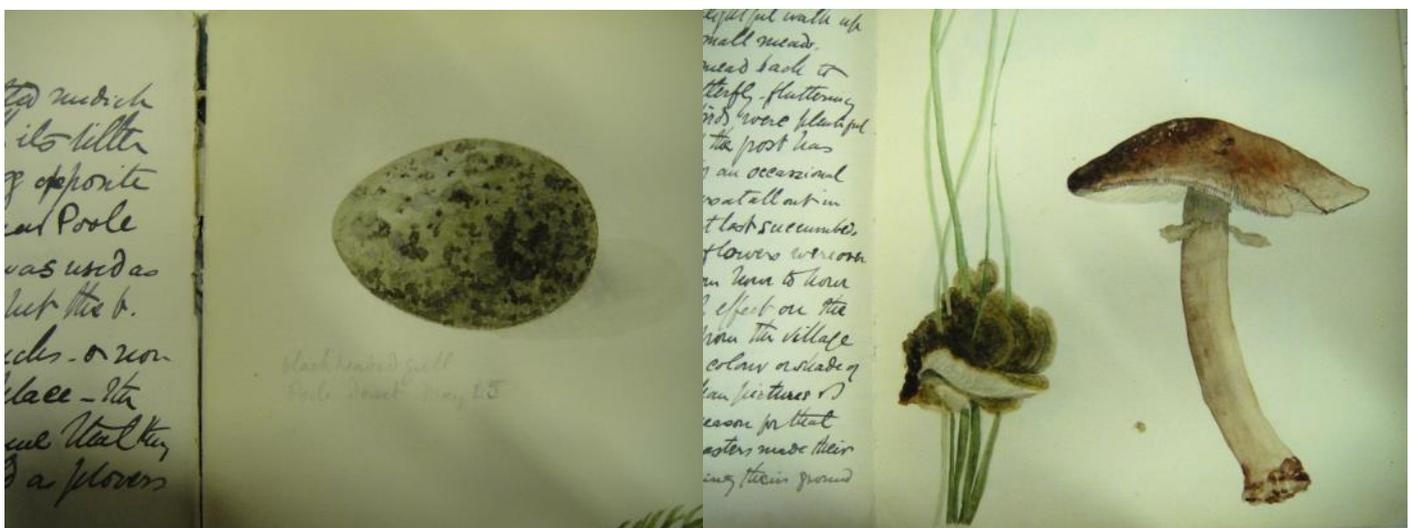
I am glad to hear so many visitors have seen the collections. How glad I should be—we all should if we could know if any of them ever make a single thing as a result which will be a delight to themselves or their children and also those who come after. We must leave the answer to the future!⁵

So what was the origin of Mrs Greg's appreciation of Ruskin? Given the paucity of documentary evidence for her early life, it is hard to be certain. However, recent

research has opened lines of enquiry that may yield further insight.

Mary Greg, née Hope, was born in 1850 to a large, wealthy and well-connected family of Liverpool bankers and landowners. Her grandfather, Samuel Hope, was a Liberal non-conformist, noted for his philanthropic work in the city. Mary was the seventh of thirteen children born to Samuel's son, Thomas Arthur Hope, and his wife, Emily Hird Jones. The family owned land in Cheshire, Flintshire and County Tyrone; they lived in a succession of properties in Liverpool, the Wirral and London. They are known to have associated with other prominent Liberal families including the Rathbones of Liverpool and the Gregs of Styal in Cheshire.

Mary and her two older sisters, Rebecca and Harriet, remained at home well into adulthood; years later, in 1923, Philip Entwistle of Liverpool Museum wrote to Mrs Greg: 'I well remember yourself and your sisters years ago when you were in



(Above and top): pages from Mrs Greg's nature diary, 1905-1922, given to the Guild in 1940.



Carved bone fish, probably a lucky charm: one of many donations to Manchester City Art Gallery.

Liverpool'.⁶ However, in 1895, at the age of 45, Mary married Thomas Tylston Greg, great-grandson of Samuel Greg, the founder of Quarry Bank Mill in Cheshire. The Gregs were a wealthy and influential family of cotton manufacturers, with involvement in Manchester's political and intellectual circles. Thomas, however, did not go into the cotton business, instead managing the family estate at Westmill, to which he and Mary moved after their marriage.

Mary's early life was rooted in the industrial North West, informed by a Liberal non-conformist philanthropic outlook. Her early adulthood coincided with the period in which Ruskin's influence reached its height, not least because of the work of the regional Ruskin societies. Between 1879 and 1896 nine Ruskin societies were founded in cities across Britain, including Manchester, Liverpool and Birkenhead. Stuart Eagles's meticulously researched book, *After Ruskin*, notes the particularly close ties between the Liverpool Ruskin Society and the Guild of St George.⁷ Edith Hope Scott (no relation), first historian of the Guild, was a member of the Liverpool Society. It seems reasonable to speculate that the Hope family were at least aware of the Liverpool Society's work, although no evidence has so far been found to connect either Mary or any of her family directly to it.

A more promising lead comes from that first letter to the Master of the Guild, written in December 1935. Mrs Greg writes: 'For years Ruskin has been an inspiration to me. I was for a time at a school in Cheshire where he I believe chiefly organised the education and where he visited and for which he wrote *Sesame and Lilies* (sic)'.⁸ If we assume she meant *Ethics of the Dust*, this suggests that she may have been a pupil at Winnington Hall, Northwich, a

small progressive private school for girls, with which Ruskin was closely associated in the 1860s. During this period he spent much time at the school, teaching art, divinity and other subjects, playing cricket, and writing his weekly 'Sunday letters', both to individual girls and the school as a whole. Several of the Winnington girls later became early members of the Guild.

More research is required to determine whether Mary Hope was in fact a pupil there, but in 1939 she gave the Guild a number of 'Ruskin letters', which are so far untraced in the Sheffield collections. The following year, she gave two notebooks, her nature diaries for the years 1905 to 1922, modestly explaining that

They are ... amateurish, I had no lessons. I tried to paint little things which I thought of interest or beauty—this Ruskin had taught me to aim at!⁹

Did Ruskin actually teach her, at Winnington, or does this simply refer to her reading of his works? The diaries are indeed amateurish, in the sense of being done out of love; they are charming, and reveal a deeply spiritual connection with the natural world. Her entry for June 1914, the first for some years, draws on Wordsworth to express her depth of feeling, in spite of failing to keep up her diary,

... not because I care less for what I see and learn – in this world so full of beauty and interest[,] but because I have not the same leisure or strength to go about in the sweet wild places – my joy in it all is indeed far deeper, more reverent, more spiritual – for 'I have felt a presence that disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts' as I look at the sky and stars and sun and moon, birds, flowers, trees, everything!¹⁰

What is clear is that Mary Hope Greg, towards the end of her life, found an opportunity to put into action the inspiration that she had long found in John Ruskin's teaching. She did so with all her energy, determination and belief. She was a

pioneer of museum education and a champion of those who advanced its development. She laid the foundations for some of Britain's most significant collections in the fields of decorative art, craft and social history, yet remains remarkably absent from the historical record. My interest in Mrs

Greg began with the Greg collections at Manchester Art Gallery, where I was for many years a decorative art curator. However, as my research into the collections continues, I find myself increasingly fascinated by Mary herself, a woman who, as her memorial plaque in St Mary's Church, Westmill states, 'strove to the end of her life to alleviate and make more beautiful the lives of others'.¹¹

With thanks to Sharon Blakey, Hazel Jones and Alex Woodall.



Memorial tablet at St Mary's, Westmill.

NOTES

1. Letter to the Master of the Guild of St George, 22 December 1935, Sheffield Archives GSG21.
2. Preface to the *Catalogue of Handicrafts of Bygone Times* (Manchester City Art Gallery, 1922).
3. See Bridget Yates, unpublished PhD thesis, 'Volunteer-run Museums in English Market Towns and Villages', University of Gloucestershire, 2010.
4. Letter from Mary Greg to William Batho, 24 September 1922, Manchester Art Gallery archives.
5. Letter from Mary Greg to William Batho, 23 September 1928, Manchester Art Gallery archives.
6. Letter from Philip Entwistle to Mary Greg, 19 October 1923, Hertfordshire County Archives.
7. Stuart Eagles, *After Ruskin: The Social and Political Legacies of a Victorian Prophet, 1870-1920* (Oxford University Press, 2011).
8. Letter from Mary Greg to the Master of the Guild of St George, 22 December 1935, Sheffield Archives.
9. Letter from Mary Greg to the Secretary of the Guild of St George, 15 June 1940, Sheffield Archives.
10. Mary Greg's nature diary, June 1914, Ruskin Collection.
11. Inscription on memorial plaque, St Mary the Virgin, Westmill, Hertfordshire.

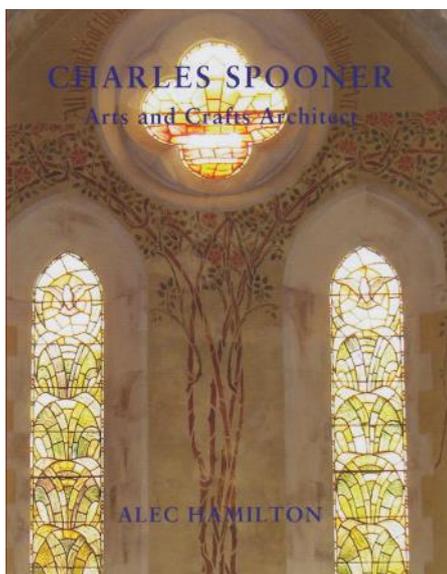
Liz Mitchell is a PhD researcher at Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Images courtesy of Ben Blackall and Manchester City Galleries; The Guild of St George; and Liz Mitchell.

KINGS' TREASURIES? BOOK REVIEWS

Alec Hamilton, *Charles Spooner, Arts and Crafts Architect* (Shaun Tyas, 2013) 320pp.

Charles Spooner (1862-1938) was an architect in the Arts & Crafts tradition. He tended to specialise in the building or improvement of churches. This is not entirely surprising since he numbered two Archbishops of Canterbury among his relations, not to mention the Warden of New College, Oxford, the inventor of 'spoonerisms'. Spooner knew all of the leading figures in the Arts & Crafts movement—Morris, Walker, Crane, Lethaby, Barnsley and others. But by nature he had a retiring personality, and has largely disappeared from human ken—until his present welcome resurrection by Alec Hamilton.



Charles Spooner should be of particular interest to Companions because both he and his wife were indeed Companions of the Guild themselves, being enrolled some time between 1925 and 1934. Spooner must have been aware of Ruskin and his teaching, and

he and his wife were almost certainly introduced to the Guild by Mary Greg who was enrolled at the same time.

The Guild's annual report for 1931-2 notes that Spooner was 'nominated, with others, for a committee to review our Articles of Association', and following his death the Master wrote, 'Mr

Charles Spooner was an expert authority on church architecture and decorative art whom we can ill afford to lose.'

The Gregs owned Quarry Bank Mill in Cheshire (now care for by the National Trust). They also owned an estate and other property at Westmill in Hertfordshire. Mrs Greg became an active Companion, and at her death in 1949 she bequeathed a number of houses in Westmill to the Guild.

Spooner was involved with a number of buildings in Westmill which the Guild subsequently inherited. In 1900 he made a number of improvements to Vine House (the village shop) and at about the same time he designed a major re-build of the adjacent Vine Barn, to form the present Village Hall. Nearby Dial House (which we also owned, but later sold) had also been a village shop. Spooner completely re-designed the interior in



Westmill, showing the pump (left) and (far right) the Guild's Vine House, bequeathed by Mary Hope Greg, now the village tea-rooms.

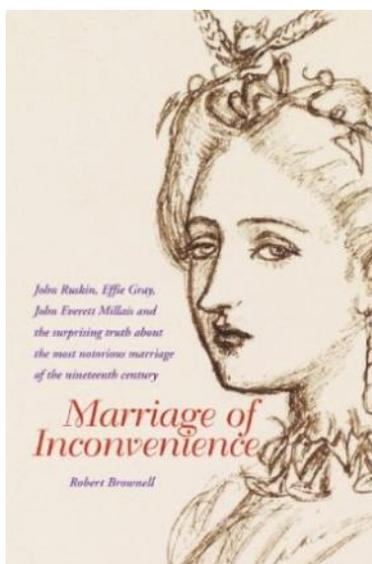
1911 to turn it into a fine house.

At about the same time he designed a couple of cottages for the Gregs. In the 1930s, Spooner designed the pulpit in the village church and also possibly the lectern. He also superintended work on the church tower and later designed another cottage. Stylistically, it seems likely that Charles Spooner designed the pump and its picturesque housing, on the village green. Both Charles Spooner and his wife are buried in the village churchyard at Westmill.

This interesting, well-produced and generously illustrated book is a valuable record of a 'lost' architect, and it will be of especial value to those Companions who are interested in architecture, the Arts & Crafts Movement, or Guild history.

James S. Dearden

Robert Brownell, *Marriage of Inconvenience* (Pallas Athene, 2013) 598pp.



I once began a review of Francis O'Gorman's *Late Ruskin: New Contexts* (Ashgate, 2001) with this sentence: 'Here's a good book.' It's an assessment I stand by. But Robert Brownell's new study is eminently deserving of that same sentence. Arriving as it does amidst the ongoing, always vexing, swirl of misunderstandings, partial truths, and predictably condemnatory remarks which, like a school of hungry sharks, surround almost all discussions of Ruskin's sexuality and failed union, *Marriage of Inconvenience* comes to the surface like a breath of fresh air, giving anyone interested in Ruskin their first chance in decades to reconsider this critical period of his life.

What distinguishes this book from all earlier efforts purporting to give us 'the

truth' about what 'really happened' during Ruskin's star-crossed union with Euphemia (Effie) Chalmers Gray, is the authority of a writer who has taken the time patiently to hunt down all the available *original documents* pertaining to that story, the majority of which have been previously overlooked, ignored, or given only cursory attention. They include documents relating to the inception, troubled duration, and ultimately catastrophic termination (at least for Ruskin) of this notorious coupling *sans* coupling. In short, Brownell is the first scholar to have really done his homework on this complex subject. The result is a book which, carefully read and considered, should go most of the distance toward discrediting the misunderstandings, help put flesh on the bones of those partial truths, and — once its

findings are absorbed by those who write in the popular arena — start to silence the knee-jerk condemnations of the less well-informed.

I first met Robert Brownell at the Ruskin Conference at Lancaster University in 2000. After we had heard each other's papers (his questioning the then prevailing interpretations of Ruskin's marriage, mine stressing the cover-up after Ruskin's death of extensive biographical information thought 'too sensitive' for publication by Joan Severn and the editors of Ruskin's *Library Edition*), he told me of his desire to undertake the research which would be needed to get to the bottom of the marital story. My own work on Ruskin's life having been inspired by the study of Helen Gill Viljoen's massive legacy of unpublished biographic materials at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York and my awareness of the Morgan's extensive archive of Ruskin holographs almost never consulted by those writing on his life — including over a thousand letters which the Morgan purchased from the Millais family which I knew to contain hundreds of pages pertaining to the marriage — I suggested that, if he were ever to get to his desired end-point, it was essential that he came to New York. Happily, he chose to do just that, and the result is a book that is by far the best that has ever been written on this pivotal event in Ruskin's life.

(This is the moment to underscore the necessity of cross-Atlantic archival research for anyone interested in writing accurately about Ruskin's life in the future. In the US, the Morgan's Viljoen holdings consist of over 40 huge boxes filled with transcripts of still unpublished letters, 34 chapters of her incomplete biography, and dozens of boxes brimming with notes cross-referencing virtually every theme on which her subject wrote and every place he ever visited. The Beinecke Library at Yale also has a vast holograph collection, including the whole series of all-important Ruskin family letters, only a portion of which have been published. Other major collections are at The Huntington Library near Los Angeles and The Ransom Library at the University of Texas, Austin. Because of previous writers' inattention to these critical materials, the definitive Ruskin biography has yet to be written.)

Significant as Brownell's overseas perusal was, his investigative research did not end there, nor did it end with examination of the usual UK Ruskin archives (though he mined all these). To complete the story with as much accuracy as possible, he undertook other studies: of Scottish and English law as they pertained to the Ruskins' marriage and annulment; of long-ignored, but intensely apposite, information at the National Library of Scotland. All these (and other previously

little-used) sources were woven into a rich tapestry of chapters which, it is a pleasure to say, answer convincingly all of the major questions and dispel all of the rumors commonly attaching to 'the most famous marriage of the British nineteenth century'.

To exemplify this, I turn to a specific aspect of Brownell's argument which is frequently the subject of uninformed discussion in both conversation and print.

As is well-known, for the six years the union endured, the Ruskins never consummated their marriage. There has been much speculation about this, almost all of it arguing that Ruskin was the party to blame: he was appalled at seeing that Effie had pubic hair (having seen only nude classical figures of women before); by her 'person'; by her body odor; by the 'fact' that she was menstruating; and more. Examining all of these 'arguments,' Brownell makes it clear that no evidence worthy of the name exists to substantiate any of them (p. 178). Consider, briefly, two.

One. The notorious 'pubic hair' argument. This interpretation first appeared in Mary Lutyens's *Young Mrs Ruskin in Venice [Effie in Venice (UK title)]* (1966, p. 21). Despite the fact that evidence has come to light showing that Ruskin was nowhere near as innocent as she first imagined, and that, in a second book, Lutyens retracted the suggestion (*Ruskin and the Grays*, 1972, pp. 108-9) the claim, bruited about in the popular press, quickly became—and remains—one of the most damaging of the critiques leveled against Ruskin, taken by many as an indication of his 'sexual abnormality.' But Brownell, presenting evidence previously missed or understudied, shows that Ruskin was neither sexually abnormal nor incapable. Indeed, before the marriage, previously unpublished holographs make it clear that he fully expected to have children with Effie.

Two. The argument that Effie's 'person' was off-putting, a word that has further encouraged the belief that Ruskin was sexually abnormal. Ruskin, in one place, remarked that there were 'certain circumstances in [Effie's] person' which checked ardour; she remarked, in another, that her new husband, on that chaste first evening, was 'disgusted with my person'. What could such comments possibly mean? Most commentators have guessed that they were further indices of Ruskin's sexual oddness. But Brownell, again citing new evidence, explains that by the time their wedding night arrived, Ruskin was newly in possession of incontrovertible knowledge that Effie's *character* — 'person' — was not as he had thought it to be. The real reason that he refused to

'make Effie his wife,' Brownell explains, was primarily moral, a consequence of his discovery that the union had been engineered by her father, George Gray, and that, more critically, Effie was well-aware of the subterfuge. Thus: Gray, having over-speculated in railway shares, was in dire financial straits, so dire that he was on the verge of losing everything, including the family home. It was in this anxiety-riddled position that he encouraged his daughter to marry the famous young author courting her. Not only would his family gain considerably in status if this transpired, but there was every reason to believe that the Grays would reap significant financial benefits. As happened. Not long before the marriage, John James Ruskin, the writer's rich, sherry-importing father, settled £10,000 on Effie (a very considerable amount at the time) so that she might have her own income. Given that there is good reason to believe that Effie used some portion of this largess to help her strapped father, Brownell argues that the intensely moral Ruskin, who always said that he would only have sexual relations with someone he loved unconditionally, having learned that he and his parents had been duped, lost, as he himself said, any impulse he might have had regarding consummation.

The book brims with such new interpretations. At every stage we find a deepening of our understanding of the story — whether we are reading about the couple's courtship, their unhappy time in Venice following the marriage, or the infamous trip to Brig o' Turk in 1853 when the Pre-Raphaelite painter, John Everett Millais (who, at Ruskin's invitation, had accompanied his patron and Effie to Scotland) fell madly in love with his benefactor's wife (and she with him). It was this event that precipitated the sundering of the marriage, a severance which, by then, both Effie and Ruskin fervently desired. About this dissolution, Brownell paints a much more nuanced picture than anyone before.

I have one reservation (see Chapters XIX-XXI). In his analysis of the Ruskin-Effie-Millais events, Brownell tells us that Ruskin, having been concerned about his wife's flirtatious relationships with other men, which had been going on for some time (the couple's months in Venice having produced much evidence to this effect), by the time the excursion to Scotland occurred and convinced that the marriage was untenable, had begun keeping an 'evidential diary.' If the boundary relating to marital fidelity was breeched, this notebook could be used in a court of law. Brownell contends that, wanting something of the sort to occur, Ruskin laid a trap for Effie and Millais, intentionally putting them in

each other's way time and time again during their days in Scotland. When the inevitable occurred and the handsome young painter and the beautiful woman who was then regularly posing as a model for him fell in love (though without sexual congress), the trap was sprung and Ruskin was able to produce documented evidence of the meetings which compromised them and hastened the end of the unhappy union.

This interpretation is difficult to reconcile with the sense, shared by many students of Ruskin, that he was one of the most intensely moral men who ever lived, a man who, as a matter of deepest personal principle, day-in, day-out, never lied, stole, or tricked—anyone, anytime, anywhere—even when he knew that such probity might cost him severely. While Ruskin remained resolutely silent about his marriage in the years that

followed, Effie and others vilified him in both the public and private arenas for his marital 'failings.' (Effie's later condemnation of Ruskin in the late 1860s as an 'unnatural man' to Rose La Touche's parents played a critical role in destroying his chance to marry the true love of his life.) In addition, Ruskin categorically denied that he had laid a trap for the young lovers (see p. 429). An alternative interpretation, which would support the idea that Ruskin would never compromise his ethical beliefs, might be entertained: that, while he almost surely did keep an 'evidential diary' (never found; Brownell's confidence about its existence derives from various remarks in holographs exchanged between the principals), it was kept, not as a part of a crafty plan, but 'in case' (even 'in hope') that transgressions might occur

which would make a legal ending to the marriage possible.

But this, as I said, is a matter of interpretation. As for the rest, the point I wish to stress is that this is an extremely important work on Ruskin's life, a work that systematically dispels many of the myths that have sullied Ruskin's reputation for more than a half century. It corrects and adds depth to all the extant accounts of his ill-starred marriage and shows that all the playwrights, opera composers, filmmakers, and scandal-delighting columnists who have produced the poorly thought through, often intentionally sensationalistic versions of the Ruskins' union are in error. It is, in short, a book not to be missed. A book of significance.

Jim Spates

Zoë Bennett, *Using the Bible in practical theology: historical and contemporary perspectives* (Ashgate, 2013) 160pp.

Dr Bennett came across Ruskin by accident. A member of staff at Anglia Ruskin University, she was intrigued to find that colleagues in a number of different disciplines took an interest in aspects of Ruskin that were relevant to them. (Ruskin gave the inaugural lecture when the Cambridge School of Art – now the oldest part of the university – opened in 1858.) When she read him to find out what he had to contribute to an understanding of her field of practical theology, she 'found treasure'. Bennett is Director of Postgraduate Studies in Pastoral Theology at Anglia Ruskin, and this study is really a text book for them and their colleagues in other institutions. The central chapters are about Ruskin, but the book itself is actually about biblical hermeneutics – hence the absence of his name from the title.

What is the relationship between the text of the Bible and the 'text' of life? Being about 'practical' theology, Bennett makes her study very personal. A confessional note is struck frequently, as when she writes about that moment sitting in the vicarage, or at a conference, or in the study at Brantwood, or reading a letter from her mother; and the final chapter begins, 'As I write this, I am sitting in Wesley House Dining Room, surrounded by six of my professional doctorate candidates and colleagues'. She does not reflect, however, on the fact that Ruskin also begins and ends with himself, which was energizing intellectually, but crippling in some personal relationships.

Her manifesto as a biblical scholar puts her firmly in the liberal camp. She calls for a 'thoughtful, imaginative, persuasive and hermeneutically sophisticated use of the Bible', and writes 'primarily for people in the churches, clergy and lay, who are wrestling with how the Bible can be appropriately related to the everyday events and problems with which they are engaged, and it is also designed for the increasing number of students in formal theological education'. The reason for using Ruskin, she argues, is that his work 'illuminates the central point of Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics: the contingency of all biblical reading'. Our lives, which come first, shape the way we read the Bible, which is an ambiguous text. Context is determinative. We are in the world of Schleiermacher, Hegel and, yes, Ruskin.

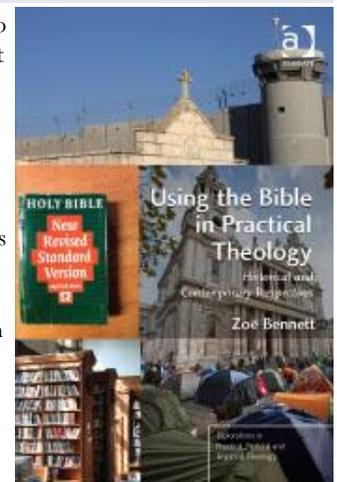
Linda Austin, who doesn't figure in the bibliography, has offered us 'practical Ruskin' (1991). Bennett's interest is elsewhere, and her main contribution to Ruskin studies is in her careful analysis of biblical typology, the importance of which has been exaggerated in Victorian studies, mainly because of George Landow's influential work in the field. Beyond typology lies 'a hermeneutic of immediacy and analogy which loosened the typological framework and widened it to include and indeed put at its heart the contemporary experience of the reader'. Ruskin's 'superimposition of the biblical text on the contemporary reality to bring each to life'

has much to tell Bennett and her students in the field of practical theology.

Chapters on aspects of sight follow – on seeing clearly, seeing with the heart and

prophetic seeing. The 'imagination penetrative' is invoked, but not, strangely, *theoria*, surely the key concept for Ruskin in this area. And there were more than three different accounts of the famous Turin event of 1858. It would have been good to hear more about Bennett's work on Ruskin's Greek lectionary, too, but that would have been another book. This one ends with a section on the public sphere today – interesting material, here, on Giles Fraser and St Paul's – and Ruskin is present in the background. Bennett, like her colleagues, takes the bits of Ruskin that she can use for her own purposes, and she does so to good effect.

Michael Wheeler



When the French historian Henri Focillon argued that no amount of historical or psychological information will ever explain the shape of the Gothic arch,¹ he posed the problem inherent in the kind of analysis presented in Rowena Trowbridge's book. She asserts that she has 'stopped short of historicism' but her attempt to trace the Gothic in Rossetti's aesthetic, spiritual and personal development by a process of what she describes as 'reader generated' intertextuality assumes common factors and categories that do not submit themselves readily to serious philosophical analysis. The result is a kind of virtual history of Gothic but how far will Gothic stretch? We have been given Renaissance man; we have 'Female Gothic'; there may well be Yorkshire Gothic (the Brontës) and Resurrection Gothic (Dickinson). Even Marx's *Capital* might be examined as a Gothic novel whose heroes (workers) are consumed by the 'phantom'-like objectivity of the commodity!

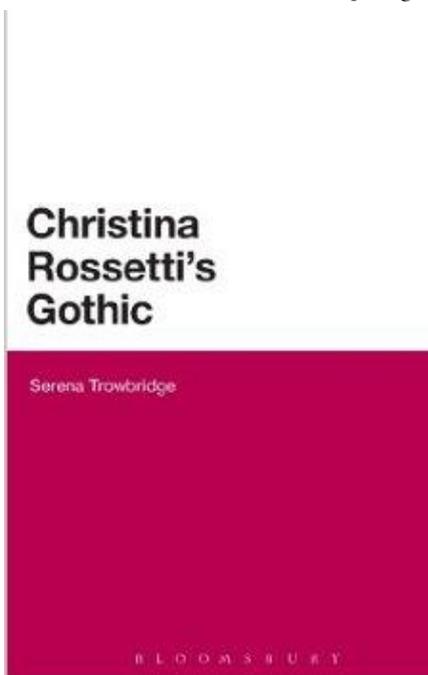
Art forms exist independently of signification. The cultural object has a dynamic autonomy and is not an empty signifier. Focillon describes it as a kind of fissure through which images pass into being. Gothic as a concept has been added to a list of aesthetic classifications, but it is not an idea (like tragedy), it defines no class; rather it is a style, a mood and a set of subjectivities. As such Gothic submits itself readily to that kind of psychological inquiry which characterises so many attempts to grapple with nineteenth-century femininity, but it is not easy to lay down theoretical foundations. Trowbridge presents the 'fractured Gothic' but was it ever whole? Is not the entire sub-text of nineteenth century literature fractured like Poe's *House of Usher*? The enormous subjectivity of the period with its almost total immersion in melancholy and yearning leads everywhere to allegories that attempt to deny the void and grasp at resurrection. This outlook has its origins in a guilt-laden physis as depicted by ecclesiastical Christianity in opposition to the naturalism of the Classical world. The Middle Ages attempted to bind together the material, magical and daemonic. Hugo's witty comment

I think I see a Gothic roof start laughing
When, from its ancient frieze

Time removes a stone and puts in a nest.² is perfectly apt. Ruskin's aesthetic stands at the pivotal point of this immense paradox. Gothic at its highest is for him the sublime, the slender, the almost infinite, emptied of the old gods but filled with the new and it is a mark of his genius that he makes no real distinction between the beauty of the

cathedral and the landscape that surrounds it.

Trowbridge's book is systematically researched and supremely well-versed in the critical context, though not a book for the general reader. Her task of teasing apart ever-finer strands of meaning and nuance – the grotesque, dream, the erotic, mourning, deferred hopes, bodily aversion, the spectral, death and so forth – is methodically pursued but strongest where she concentrates on specific Rossetti texts such as her excellent chapter on *Goblin Market* and her final chapter, 'Shadows of Heaven,' where she has original things to say about Rossetti's prose works and her Tractarianism. Comparing



the sinful Eve with the spotless Mary, she explores a dialectic and shows Rossetti's concern with the threshold: 'Life on earth is a fallen and grotesque realm corrected only in heaven – a threshold to be crossed only by death' passing from Stygian darkness to 'the city luminous.'³ Ruskin would have approved of the metaphor.

The grotesque leads her directly to Ruskin. We must remember that Ruskin was concerned with architecture and carving, the grotesque being one of six Gothic categories. Trowbridge readily admits that it is impossible to map Ruskin's distinctions neatly into literature but argues convincingly that the grotesque 'provides a framework which measures the distance between Christian perfection and the reality of fallen mankind.' Making her case with the *Stones of Venice* and *Modern Painters* she asserts that Ruskin's view of the grotesque is subtle and many-sided, examining aspects of play – *thoughtful, wise*

or inordinate – the latter a product of idleness and vanity in the workman leading to moral decline and relishing deformity (the fall of Venice), the first two delightful so long as they reflect truth and kindness. She extends Ruskin's grotesque to Rossetti's poem *My Dream* – too often interpreted in Freudian terms – to aspects of narcotics and eroticism. She rightly insists that Ruskin's aesthetic is 'human focused' and examines his distinction between divine beauty, which includes even the terrible, and an inferior ornamental beauty, the distinction depending on the mind of the artist. If it is noble it will attain sublimity, if it merely plays with terror it will be ignoble. It is the artist's *mind* not the hand that creates beauty. Where the imagination is nourished by noble instincts even the grotesque can be used powerfully as a mode of allegory both in religious literature and fairy tale. Trowbridge illustrates her argument with examples from Ruskin's allegorical *The King of the Golden River*.

Rossetti's thoughts on fallen women (she worked at the Mary Magdalene Penitentiary) describe surface beauty as potentially deceitful. Trowbridge goes far beyond Ruskin's aesthetic but it is done most imaginatively. Her chapter on *Goblin Market* is excellent throughout, partly because she puts aside the earlier feminist and now hackneyed views of Greer and Mitchell on marriage as 'market,' and also focuses on Rossetti's considerable metrical skills (a foreshadowing of Hopkins?).

The chapter on Rossetti's devotional works is the best of all, introducing less well-known material and gorgeous metaphors of spirituality. One particular gem is Rossetti watching a spider chased by its shadow: 'this self-haunted spider appears a figure of each obstinate impenitent sinner.' The argument on 'doubles' is subtle and fascinating. Clearly, Rossetti learnt more from her Bible and Dante than from Ruskin. Putting aside some reservations on the theoretical aspects of Gothic, I found this a thought-provoking book, most impressive where it deals with voices from the unconscious and their connections with religious feeling.

Celia de Piro

1. Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art* (1934)
2. Victor Hugo, *A L'Arc de Triumphant*.
3. Christina Rossetti, *The Face of the Deep: A Devotional Commentary on the Apocalypse* (1892).

And therefore, the idea that directions can be given for the attaining of wealth, irrespectively of the consideration of its moral sources, or that any general and technical law of purchase and gain can be set down for national practice, is perhaps the most insolently futile of all that ever bequiles men through their vices.

—*Unto This Last*

I have been struck, in recent years, by the number of Ruskinian ideas I've seen in action — although often those involved wouldn't identify them as such. Today, Ruskin's ideas — about wealth, the natural world and sustainability, education, labor, and community — are more prescient than ever. I'm thinking of such efforts as community gardens and urban agriculture, environmentalism, localism, Fair Trade, handicraft, the New Economy movement, New Urbanism and Slow Growth. These efforts reveal both a mounting dissatisfaction with the status quo and a desire for the sort of society that Ruskin envisioned, in which people care deeply both for each other and for the world in which we live; a society characterized by fellowship, connection, shared effort, honest work, and 'the things that lead to life.' As our Guild Master has observed, 'Ruskin is back, his ideas living vitally among us once again.'

Harvard political philosopher Michael J. Sandel's new book, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*, is one such example. Sandel does not once cite Ruskin, and his style and approach are altogether unlike, yet his book nonetheless explores questions about the proper role and character of the market that are central to Ruskin's work. Concerned about the extent to which 'markets — and market values ... increasingly govern the whole of life' (pp. 5-6), Sandel challenges readers to decide 'whether we want to live this way' (p. 6).

What Money Can't Buy is not broadly philosophical or historical. Sandel's aim is to encourage us to question existing behaviours and attitudes, rather than to prescribe how we ought to live. Thus he does not explore the many and varied responses that have been given, over long ages, to this oldest of questions. Similarly, he dates his account of the insidious growth of markets to the 'market triumphalism' (p. 6) of the Thatcher-Reagan era of the early 1980s. Despite its preoccupation with enduring concerns, *What Money Can't Buy* is in this sense very contemporary. Sandel is interested in the present reach of the markets into aspects of life he cites as previously inviolable, including health, criminal justice, education, public safety, national security, environmental protection, recreation, and procreation. While it may be a matter of debate whether market influence in these areas is as recent as he claims, it is certainly true that the extent and method of that influence has increased in alarming new

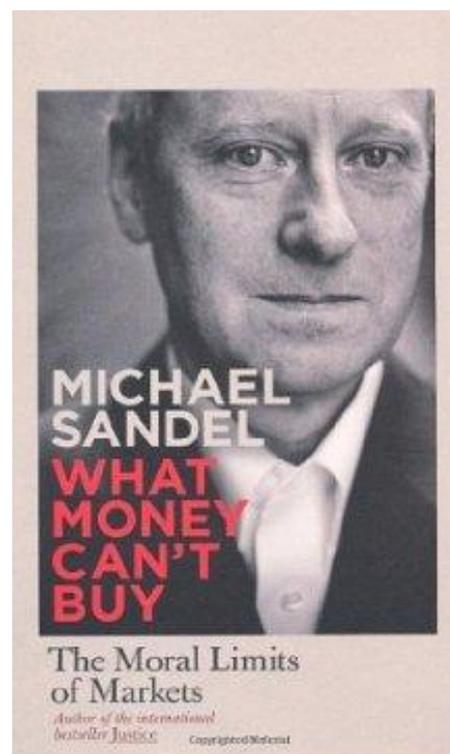
ways. When one is able, for example, to purchase a prison-cell upgrade, buy the right to emit carbon into the atmosphere, earn money for achieving good grades in school, or gamble on the death of the elderly, we have undoubtedly 'drifted from *having* a market economy to *being* a market society' (p. 10). This is, of course, precisely the sort of transformation — rather, *deformation* — that Ruskin foresaw and warned us about. Sandel does not propose, as Ruskin did, a complete transformation of the market; he writes about 'rethinking the role of markets,' rather than their fundamental structure. Yet in a move that Ruskin would surely approve of, Sandel maintains that markets have moral limits, that there are places where 'money's writ [should] not run,' and that we must 'decide what values should govern the various domains of social and civic life' (p. 9). In doing so, we must confront a market mentality that is so deeply engrained in our culture that it has become almost heretical to question it.

Sandel offers two reasons to worry about becoming a market society — inequality and corruption. Inequality, because 'the more money can buy, the more affluence (or the lack of it) matters' (p. 8). (As Ruskin points out in *Unto This Last*, the *laissez-faire* system is dependent upon 'establishing the maximum inequality in our own favour') (17.46). Corruption — and here Sandel approaches Ruskin's discussion of value, in *Unto This Last* and elsewhere — because of 'the corrosive tendencies of markets' (p. 9) and their habit of devaluing not only goods, but the good things in life. Far from being the inert mechanisms that economists would have us believe, markets are active, often damaging forces. 'Markets,' Sandel declares, 'leave their mark' (p. 9). Thus any discussion about the limits of markets requires us to consider the proper way to value goods, people, and, though Sandel doesn't say so explicitly, life itself.

What Money Can't Buy is aimed at a popular readership and Sandel's logical, accessible approach is thus perfectly pitched (I have used this book successfully with my own students, and have even found it to be an effective way into discussions of Ruskin's more challenging arguments). The book is divided into five parts, which are further divided into discussion of particular instances of market intrusion, governed by a broader

philosophical theme. Along the way, Sandel underscores the disturbing assumptions that many economists make about human behaviour, such as the belief that economic thinking can and should be applied not only to production and consumption, but to all domains of life, even the most personal. (Ruskin might say that such economists aim to apply their theories to souls as well as stuff).

In section two, Sandel explores the use of incentives (for sterilization, weight loss, carbon offsets and the right to immigrate, among other things) in light of 'the economic approach to life,' while in section three he considers the way that 'markets crowd out morals' in such disparate spheres as social networking, gift-giving, public and private apologies and day-care fees. In each section, Sandel examines specific situations by first carefully laying out the arguments both for and against them, then asking and answering a series of questions designed to deepen discussion. In regard to paying students for good grades, Sandel first relates the economist's perspective, according to which people are motivated by monetary incentives and school is akin to a job. He goes on to consider the ways in which such incentives potentially corrupt both the desire to learn and the way students value education. Next, he relates the mixed results of actual



grade-payment programmes. In this case, as in all of those which he presents, he concludes that ‘market reasoning is incomplete without moral reasoning’ (p. 81). Ruskin has been here before him, declaring in 1867 that ‘You must forget your money, and every other material interest, and educate for education’s sake only! or the very good you try to bestow will become venomous, and that and your money will be lost together,’ but it is heartening to find the argument introduced into modern debate.

I had been about to say that many of the other situations that Sandel describes would have been unimaginable to Ruskin — the purchase of human organs, carbon offsets, so-called viaticals, or ‘death pools.’ Yet while Ruskin could not have foreseen these

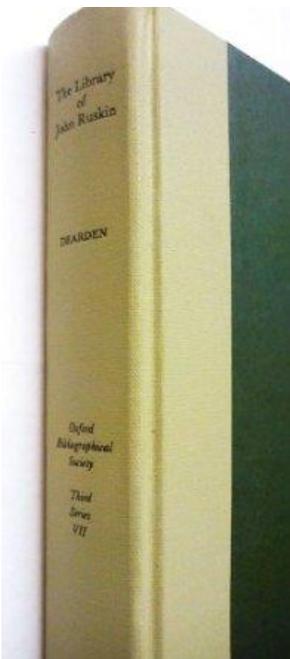
particular instances, it is certain that he predicted the twisted and sterile market thinking that makes them possible. The man who railed against bill-sticking (including onto the buildings of his beloved Venice) and who mockingly described the General Advertising Cooperative Society’s advertising scheme as ‘walking about London between two boards . . . with one Lie pinned to the front of you, and another to the back of you’ (27.43-44) would not have been flabbergasted at someone agreeing to tattoo an ad on her forehead. He would have been deeply disappointed to find us still struggling to make the case for a human and moral economy. Yet he also believed that ‘A day will come when we

shall have men resolute to do good work, and capable of reading and thinking while they rest; who will not expect to build like Athenians without knowing anything about the first king of Athens, nor like Christians without knowing anything about Christ, and then they will find my letters useful, and read them’ (27.669).

What Money Can’t Buy, while not intentionally or thoroughly Ruskinian, is one example of a growing tendency to re-evaluate the way we live in terms that Ruskin would recognise. The time has come to read Ruskin again, thoughtfully and with resolve, and to share his ideas with an increasingly receptive world.

Sara Atwood

James S. Dearden, *The Library of John Ruskin* (Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2012) i-cxxiv, 391pp, illus.



This is a lifetime’s work and each page declares it. *The Library of John Ruskin* could only have been written by a scholar who had immersed himself in the bibliographical history of one man for more than half a century; who was at the heart of one of the world’s major Ruskin archives; who was an expert

collector himself and who knew some of the most important collectors of Ruskin material after the Brantwood sales. In other words, it could only have been written by Jim Dearden. This is a work of very considerable significance for the history of nineteenth-century libraries and book collecting; it is also significant for specific areas of bibliographical study not least of medieval manuscripts. But it is a volume of unique significance for the study of Ruskin’s mind.

Of course, there was—as Dearden makes clear—no such thing as the library of John Ruskin. He had many libraries and his collection was persistently changing. He bought and sold, gave away and received. Some of the books listed in this volume were technically his mother or father’s. Some we know he read, not that he literally possessed in a library. In the final decade, as Joan and Arthur pasted the type 2 bookplates to the front of Ruskin’s books (did they throw in any that weren’t Ruskin’s?), some books no doubt lost too. The dispersals after Ruskin’s

death, and after the death of the Severns, were prolonged and, finally, a shambles. Only inexactly catalogued books were sold in the final break-up of the library on the lawns of Brantwood: they were often distributed in loose piles and were sold in the pouring rain. The books disposed during those few days had not been listed completely by the auctioneers. And they had not been listed accurately. Dr Dearden has spent many years endeavouring to track down what was actually meant by the scribbles that were translated into the sales catalogue. It seems that one assistant went along Ruskin’s bookshelves reading out authors and titles while another wrote down what he thought he heard. The results were never likely to be accurate. Imagining a Cumbrian accent sometimes helps deciphering them. What was produced is a combination of the correct, the obvious error, the comic error, the error that can eventually be solved after much hunting of paper and electronic catalogues, and the determinedly baffling. In this last category is to be found, for instance:

- 654 Voyage on Arabic, 2 vols
- 657 Z’Angon on Monuments 2 vols
- 662 Romans de Garin.

Some other titles in the catalogue are unidentified: what are the eight volumes of the ‘Memoirs of Countess de Scales’? The entry ‘Phillips, *Atlas*’ (no. 1986) is intriguing. Could this be the *Atlas for Schools* (1813) published by and for Sir Richard Phillips (1767-1840)? Certainly, Ruskin remembered owning from childhood Phillips’ popular *Geography . . . For Use in Schools*. In *Praeterita* he said it was still ‘most precious’ to him (*Works*, 35.79). The trouble is that Phillips published as ‘The

Revd. J. Goldsmith’: but perhaps Ruskin had marked the spine with the author’s real name or the dealer knew?

From the Brantwood and other lists and catalogues, letters and diaries, Dearden has built a significant document. He has also searched references to texts in the *Library Edition* (where presumably there is some ambiguity about whether a book was owned by Ruskin, simply read by him, or simply referenced by him. No doubt Ruskin did not always get to the end of books and sometimes reported on a book when he had only read a small portion of it, or a review of it, or even—perhaps—heard someone else talking about it). There are 2969 titles, many of course multi-volume. Dearden provides standard bibliographical information (author, title, publisher and place of publication, as well as volume numbers). And he presents known provenance and accession details, including from John James Ruskin’s account books, letters, and presentation records. He notes Ruskin’s original catalogue numbers where they survive and the current location of the volumes if known. He records the type of bookplate and updates his account of the Ruskin bookplates in an essay at the beginning of this exceptionally handsome and well-produced volume. Dearden first wrote on the topic of Ruskin’s bookplates in an article for *The Book Collector* in 1964. There, he listed four: the prefatory essay in *The Library of John Ruskin* now lists nine. And this too has mysteries in it including the enduring puzzle of type 5: did W.G. Collingwood really have this made, even though his family thought it unlikely? Dearden cannot think of any other way of accounting for the evidence.

The extensive introductory material constitutes a further substantial resource in Ruskin bibliography—an apt companion to the catalogue itself. Dr Dearden’s essays consider the formation of Ruskin’s libraries, their housing, the dispersals, and the



At the book-launch in the Upper Library at Christ Church, Oxford.
Jim Dearden in conversation with Stuart Eagles.

that would not lie flat. So he made sure they did. Writers on Ruskin will surely want to consult the catalogue here as a matter of course. It does not tell us everything that Ruskin and his parents owned, let alone read. But *The Library of John Ruskin* does give a unique indication of the range of printed material that, at one

he owned a copy of *Middlemarch*, even though scholars have argued for a commonality between Eliot's mature views there and Ruskin's politics on the 1870s. There is no record that he owned more of Matthew Arnold than *Culture and Anarchy* and, strange to say, *Meropis*: the latter he annotated. Did Ruskin ever read 'Empedocles on Etna'? Or 'Dover Beach'? Curiously, he knew Wilkie Collins' celebrated work only through *Mr Wray's Cash-Box* and *Poor Miss Finch* but not, it seems, through *The Woman in White* or *The Moonstone*. That is a peculiar view of Collins' achievement. While he owned Margaret Oliphant's *The Makers of Florence* Ruskin did not have a copy of her *Makers of Venice*, which discussed the author of *The Stones of Venice* at length. Ruskin seems to have possessed only two plays by Aeschylus in Greek (*Agamemnon* and *Persae*) and only one by Sophocles (*Oedipus Coloneus*). He noted in his (only) copy of *Catullus*: 'Never opened since I got it. J. Ruskin. Thrown out 5th April Brantwood'. Even more surprisingly he never possessed—so far as Dearden's evidence suggests—a copy of *The Origin of Species* and not a word of John Henry Newman or of Gladstone. Certainties are impossible here—Ruskin and his parents will have owned books that he did not record (although he was a relatively industrious compiler of lists and catalogues). He will have had to hand those he did not read, and read those he did not own. Records are not complete. But all the same this catalogue of what he did at some point in his life have on his shelves is a major monument in the advanced study of Ruskin. Dr Dearden has produced a quite remarkable piece of scholarship for which every Ruskin reader will, I have no doubt, be permanently grateful.

Francis O'Gorman

catalogues in addition to the bookplates. There is also a dismaying chapter on 'Ruskin's Treatments of His Books and Manuscripts', which details the sadly shocking attitude Ruskin had to the book as a physical artefact and, even worse, to the medieval manuscripts in his possession. 'When we build,' Ruskin said memorably in 'The Lamp of Memory' in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), 'let us think that we build for ever' (8.233). But he hardly took that view there the artefacts of his library were concerned. He extensively annotated his Medieval Greek *Septuagint*; he removed leaves from the St Louis *Psalter*, written for the sister of St Louis. He cut up the fourteenth-century *Book of Hours* prepared for Countess Yolande of Flanders, wife of Philip of Navarre. These were treasures. Yet he seemed to regard himself simply as their owner not their custodian. It is an odd difference from his more familiar attitude to paintings and buildings, to restoration, preservation, and the legacies of the past. Texts were plainly qualitatively different from 'works of art' in his mind. And where printed books were concerned, he was little better. Ruskin trimmed volumes to fit shelves; he rebound them in eccentric and destructive ways; and did not like volumes

point or another in his life, he certainly had to hand. Many of these entries prompt thought about the development of Ruskin's mind, the kinds of material he actually knew, and perhaps more surprisingly the texts he does not appear to have possessed. It is intriguing—given recent critical interest in the relationship between the organic thinking of Coleridge and Ruskin—to see that John James bought Coleridge's *On the Constitution of the Church and State* in December 1842. It is pleasing to note that Ruskin owned eight volumes of Cobbett's *Weekly Register* (1821-2), which may have helped guide the shape of *Fors*. It is thought-provoking to see that John Ruskin gave his mother a copy of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (actually issued anonymously) only a few months after it had been published. Yet major landmarks of classical and modern literature and ideas appear to have been unrepresented in Ruskin's library. He received a few early volumes as presentation copies from Algernon Charles Swinburne including the provocative *Poems and Ballads* (1866) but does not appear to have bought much himself: of later Swinburne Ruskin appears ignorant. There is no record that

RUSKIN: A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY, 2013-2014

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THE RUSKIN LECTURE, MILLENNIUM GALLERIES, SHEFFIELD (NOVEMBER 16TH, 2013) Mark Frost, Curator and Curatress' *The Swans and St George's Museum, Sheffield*. (Printed lecture available from the Guild, see enclosed flyer.)

Dr Mark Frost has been working on a book about the Guild's early years, soon to be published as *The Lost Companions and John Ruskin's Guild of St George: A Revisionary History* (Anthem, August 2014). While that study will concentrate on the agricultural dimension of Ruskin's utopian schemes, the lecture he gave at this year's Guild AGM focused on two figures more closely associated with Ruskin's museum work: Henry and Emily Swan, Curator and honorary 'Curatress' of the St George's Museum, in Sheffield. A number of recent studies have discussed the curatorial principles and physical circumstances of this institution, but Frost's lecture was novel for examining the Museum through the lens of the personalities and relationships at its heart.

Ruskin ran the Museum, as he did so many other enterprises, from a distance, relying on trusted individuals to carry on his work while he was absent. Relationships cultivated with people 'on the ground' were crucial in setting the parameters of what would be practically possible, and letters were the primary means by which Ruskin's intentions and developing plans were communicated. It was appropriate, then, that Frost based much of his lecture

on Ruskin's unpublished letters to Henry and Emily Swan. Originally compiled and bound by George Allen's son, William, they are now lodged in the Rosenbach Museum and Library, in Philadelphia. They have not been unknown to Ruskin scholars, and partial transcripts have been in circulation; but their contents have not always informed British accounts sufficiently. In the course of his lecture, Frost demonstrated the wealth of material that these letters contain, identifying many passages that illuminate Ruskin's relationship with the Swans.

Frost devoted the first part of his lecture to a re-examination of Henry Swan's character and effectiveness. In particular, he questioned the critical tendency to accept early accounts of Swan as a 'crank'. While acknowledging his unusual range of interests, he insisted that 'Henry Swan was a more substantial (and less cranky) figure than previously acknowledged' (*Curator and Curatress*, p. 3). Frost began by focusing on the evidence of Swan's

life before he was appointed Museum Curator. The audience heard that Swan was born in Devizes, Wiltshire, in 1825; and that he was living in London's Tower Hamlets by 1851. Later that decade, he came to Ruskin's

Curator and Curatress: the Swans and St George's Museum, Sheffield



Mark Frost

The Guild of St George

attention as a student at the Working Men's College, a meeting that led to employment under Ruskin on engraving and colouring work. Drawing on research conducted by Andrew Russell, Frost described Swan's subsequent career as a pioneer in an early form of stereoscopy, called Crystal Cube Photography. By the 1860s, Swan had married Emily Connell, and the couple and their first child were living in Islington. They moved to Wandsworth in 1871, before taking up residence in Sheffield (c. 1873). Frost explained that Henry was 'working there as an independent silver engraver and printer, and that Ruskin was interested in cutting-edge aspects of his work.' (p. 11). The import of this biographical information is that while Swan's relationship with Ruskin pre-dated the foundation of the Museum by two decades, he had his own career trajectory, and had developed innovative techniques independently of Ruskin's influence, albeit without much commercial success. Moreover, Swan's interests were not limited to engraving and photography: he would go on to invent new systems of musical notation and English phonetics.

Swan was not only a versatile character; he also proved influential at the level of the Museum's development, and even its political atmosphere. Frost noted Swan's 'sympathies with the most radical figures within the Guild Companionship' (p. 4), and observed that 'Swan introduced Ruskin to the Sheffield communists who would later begin the Totley experiment' (p. 20). In accounting for Swan's distinctive outlook, Frost granted most importance to Quakerism, the branch of nonconformist religion to which Swan converted in the early 1850s. He observed that the Swans did not obtain eminence among the Friends. This hint of outlying affiliation was new information, and it was suggestively linked to a quotation from an obituary in which it was noted that Henry's conversion was 'more remarkable by reason of his

passionate devotion to art and music' (Hancock 1889) (p. 11).

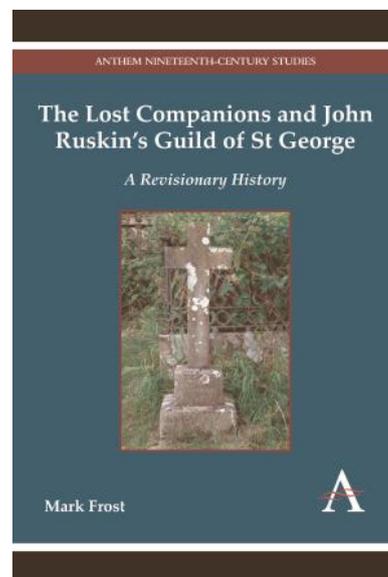
Frost also examined Swan's success as a curator. Swan was adept at welcoming the workingmen who visited the Museum, and uncomplaining in the face of the limited living space available to his family. Imputing a providential logic to his presence, Ruskin observed that 'you and your wife seem to have been sent to Sheffield to be ready for me, to take care of the place.' (p. 23). Ruskin's opening concession to the role of Swan's 'wife' set the tone for the last part of Frost's lecture, in which he argued 'that Emily Swan's contribution to the museum – something barely acknowledged before – was important and distinctive', and that 'we need, perhaps, to think of the museum Curatorship as a partnership of talented equals' (pp. 3-4). In his letters, Ruskin expressed appreciation for Emily's proven exercise of 'care' (p. 30) in receiving additions to the Collection. He also noted Emily's discernment in guessing the identity of some Holbein pictures. Frost's attention to Emily's role culminated in his quotation of a letter in which Ruskin referred playfully to 'you and the "Curatress"' (p. 31). While this quality of banter relies on the fact that Emily was not the Curator, Frost supplied convincing evidence of her practical role, and made the crucial observation that Ruskin formed a relationship with Emily that was not channelled directly through her husband. For Ruskin, she emerged as a 'positive, provocative, and interesting person, equally liable to delight and infuriate him, but always capable of making him think.' (p. 31).

This year's lecture broke new ground in illuminating Swan's past, and placing his achievement in an intellectual and religious context that might cause us to reconsider the meaning and function of the word 'crank'. It also supplied the audience with a fresh way of reading the achievement of the

Museum, based on the detail supplied by the Rosenbach letters, but also on the approach they encourage: an approach that emphasises the epistolary relationships that allowed Ruskin to operate at a distance, and in so many different locations. Frost has shown that Emily was a crucial part of the work at Walkley, and that it was not only her competence, but her offer of intelligent emotional communion, that ensured she was more than her husband's 'helper'. In this respect, she fits in to the larger pattern of friendships that Ruskin formed, through the Guild's work, and in other contexts, with intelligent and artistically inclined women.

Marcus Waithe

Dr Marcus Waithe (Magdalene College, Cambridge) is currently engaged in producing an edition of the Rosenbach letters. He is responsible for the online re-creation of St George's Museum, at www.ruskinatwalkley.org (booklet available from the Guild, see enclosed flyer).



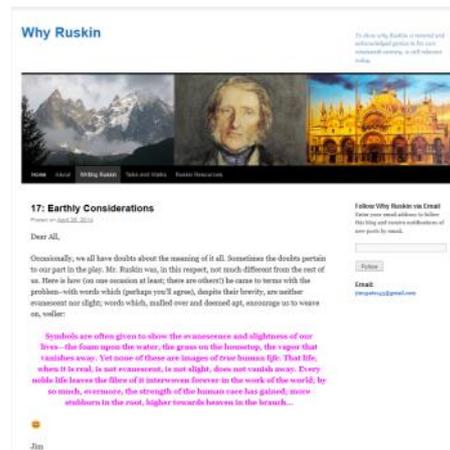
Mark Frost's The Lost Companions and John Ruskin's Guild of St George will be published in August by Anthem. A review will appear in next year's issue of The Companion.

NEW RUSKIN WEBSITE

Companion Jim Spates, Professor of Sociology at Hobart & William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York, whom many know from his scholarly articles on Ruskin and from his writings in this publication, has launched a new website. Entitled 'Why Ruskin?' it intends to give readers, via a series of (approximately) weekly postings, reason to conclude, as he and many of us already have, that Ruskin, still unfortunately not a household name on either side of the Atlantic, has more than a small claim to be one. The subject of each post will be either a notable quote or a

longer comment of Ruskin's which, a century and a half on, continues to be relevant to our own lives, as well as to the social and natural worlds in which we live. The site is interactive, allowing comments about and dialogue between readers. (Jim also invites suggestions for future posts.) Anyone interested in following the site can be notified of new posts by filling in their e-mail address on the right-hand side of the web-page and clicking the 'Follow' tab. The site address is:

www.whyruskin.wordpress.com



THE COMPANION INTERVIEW:
JOHN ROSENBERG
(Professor of Comparative Literature Emeritus, Columbia University)
Interview conducted by Companions Jim Spates and Clive Wilmer¹

*John Rosenberg is one of the iconic figures of Ruskin studies. As this interview makes clear, his work was influential not merely in stimulating the abiding interest in Ruskin shared by our interviewers, it was, more broadly, critical for ‘keeping Ruskin alive’ during a time when he had been all but forgotten. John’s eloquent critical biography, *The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin’s Genius* (1961) was the first in a generation to humanize Ruskin; his collection of some of the most significant of Ruskin’s writings, *The Genius of John Ruskin* (1963) was singularly important in making his subject’s remarkable prose and thoughts available when, save for a few antiquarian bookshops (mostly in England), they were almost impossible to find. In the years since, he has published at least a dozen scholarly articles on Ruskin, including the marvelous essays, ‘Ruskin’s Benediction: A Reading of Fors Clavigera’ and ‘Water into Wine: The Miracle of Ruskin’s Praeterita’ (this latter based on his Mikimoto Ruskin Lecture at Lancaster University in 2000); both appearing in his book, *Elegy for an Age: The Presence of the Past in Victorian Literature* (2005). Of his significance to the serious study of Ruskin, it is not inaccurate to say that, without John Rosenberg’s work, Ruskin would still be a neglected genius. John has been a Companion of the Guild of St. George since 2012.*

—JS

The interview was conducted in Manhattan on New York’s Upper West Side on December 27th 2013.

JR—John Rosenberg, JS—Jim Spates, CW—Clive Wilmer.

JS: John! It is a delight to see you again! [Introductions all around; CW meeting JR for the first time.] Both of us are here today because of the influence your so-very-important work on Ruskin has had on us! Before you arrived, we were remarking on this and thought that a good way to begin would be to tell you how and why this was the case. So, if you don’t mind, I’m going to tell you my ‘Rosenberg-Ruskin’ story first and then Clive will tell you his. [Assent.]

JS: As you know, I’m a sociologist. For my undergraduate work, I went to Colby College in Maine and, there, I had a wonderful professor—Kingsley Birge was his name—who not only made me want to be a sociologist, he taught me that the true purpose of the field was not to be content with simply reporting on how the social world worked, but to find a way to use such knowledge to create a better society.

JR: Wonderful!

JS: Inspired by that idea, I went on to graduate school, only to soon and sadly discover that nobody there was interested in that last idea at all! ‘Reportorial Sociology’ ruled! Nevertheless, I persevered, got my Ph.D. and started teaching. But during the years which followed I continued to be deeply frustrated about the myopia surrounding the moral purpose of sociology which reigned in my field. Finally, in 1986, it chanced that I taught a course on ‘London in the 19th Century’ with a colleague in Comparative Literature, Claudette Kemper Columbus. As we worked on the syllabus before the course, I said that, of course, we would read some Marx and some Engels, and Claudette said we would read some Dickens and Carlyle and Browning and some *Ruskin*. I had no idea who that was!

JR: You were that innocent then?

JS: Yes, that innocent! You probably won’t be surprised to hear that sociologists don’t know Ruskin. Most literary people have at least heard of him but, even among these, my colleague Claudette was an anomaly because she *loved* Ruskin and insisted that we use *your* book as one of our principal texts.

CW: You mean *The Genius of John Ruskin*?

JS: Yes. And, on the first day of class, she got up and told the students that they *had* to buy your book because almost no one knew about Ruskin anymore and that that was tragic because Ruskin was one of the greatest geniuses Western civilization had ever produced and that, if we lost him, we would all be the poorer for it. She went on to say that your book was the best selection of Ruskin’s writings in over a half century and said that the introductions you had written to your selections were brilliant!

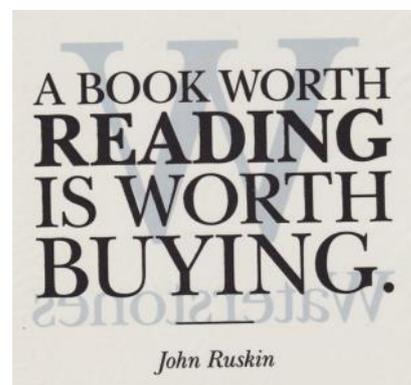
JR: [laughing] God bless her!

JS: Yes, it was all quite wonderful. And the students looked at her and I looked at her in some wonderment as she said all this. After which, she insisted again that we all *had* to buy your book!

JR: Well, I feel fulfilled...! [laughing]

JS: But that’s just the first part of the story. The second part is that as I began to read your book I realized that you were both right—you as editor and Claudette as champion—that Ruskin *was* one of the greatest geniuses. I had never encountered such beautiful and provocative writing! But, for me, there was even more of significance to come because, not long into the course we read the essays from *Unto This Last* which you had included and, as I read them, I realized that in Ruskin I had at

last found the sociologist I’d been looking for all my life, a brilliant analyst of society who was not afraid to take a moral stand and say that this way of organizing society is good for human beings and that way is bad. And then I read the note where you said that, for reasons of space, you could only include three of the four essays of *Unto this Last*! And—given that it was 1986 and there was no internet and no Ruskin in print anywhere in America—I had this great sense of frustration. This takes me to the third part of the story. Three years later, in 1989, I took a group of students to London for the semester and determined that, among the first things I was going to do was to find that ‘lost’ Ruskin essay. So, one day, I went to Waterstone’s bookstore in Earl’s Court and, right away, I was shown Clive’s book, *Unto this Last and Other Writings by John Ruskin*. I immediately bought it because it had the missing essay!



Las year, Waterstone’s produced this Ruskin-themed carrier-bag!

JR: Wonderful!

JS: And then I simply devoured the book, because most of Clive’s selections are taken from Ruskin’s sociological writings. Now for

the fourth part of the story. After I finished Clive's book, I thought, well, this fellow Wilmer lives in England; I'm going to hunt him up and go and tell him how much I admire his book and talk to him about Ruskin. It wasn't long after that that I went up to Cambridge, met Clive and our fine friendship began! Lastly: as the London semester went on, now deeply mesmerized by Ruskin, I haunted the wonderful antiquarian bookstores in Cecil Court and, each week, brought back to our apartment armfuls of Ruskin's other works. By the semester's end, I had decided that Ruskin was going to be the subject of the rest of my life's work. So *your* book was the inspiration for all that!

JR: Marvelous! [*laughing*] I feel like you are both my children!

CW: Well, my side of the story is this. I was just telling Jim, while we were waiting for you, that the first things I ever heard about Ruskin were all to his detriment.

JR: You mean the mental illness and so forth?

CW: Yes, and the Whistler trial, and the failed marriage – and mostly, of course, I heard all this in the mythologised version of those stories. So I didn't have a very good notion of what Ruskin was like at all. Except that I had a friend at school who was interested in religion and he told me that Ruskin was one of the people who had tried to get back to a purer notion of Christian ethical teaching. I think he compared him to St Francis and Tolstoy and Blake, and also Gandhi. Then, after I went up to Cambridge in 1964, I remember reading a newspaper review of your books – I think it covered both *The Darkening Glass* and your *Genius* anthology. It was a very favorable review.

JR: Good!

CW: And so I thought: 'I'm beginning to hear another story about this man'. Then the following year—I think you probably knew Tony Tanner?² He was teaching me at Cambridge at the time...

JR: Yes, of course! He and I were there about the same time, and, if I recall, I was a guest of his.³ He was a Fellow of King's College. I especially remember a dinner at King's High Table! It was just marvelous! There was a silver platter with great ornate Victorian pieces on top of it, and it was wheeled, I think the wheels were tiny, down the high table. It was a marvelous ritual!

CW: Anyway, it was now 1966, and Tony was teaching Victorian Literature and, one day, said to me: 'You've got to read Ruskin.' He said: 'You will love Ruskin!' I was a little surprised by this, but I had read this review and I had probably mentioned it to Tony and he went on to say, about your anthology, 'Well, that's the book to read'. So I went away and read *The Genius of John Ruskin*, and then, not long after that, I read *The Darkening Glass* as well and, well, I have never looked

back! That was what...

JR: Oh, how wonderful! That was what converted you?

CW: It was.

JR: Well, between the two of you, I feel like a male midwife!

CW: And part of my conversion was what Jim was saying just now, about there being only three essays from *Unto this Last* in your anthology. So, I had it in the back of my mind from quite early on that I would like to edit the whole of *Unto this Last* and that's how my Penguin edition which Jim found in Waterstone's came about.

JR: How interesting! My editorial decision to only include three of the four essays led to all this!

JS: My colleague, Claudette Columbus, and the reviewer whom Clive read were right. These books of yours were so wonderfully well-done and inspiring that it was impossible not to be taken by Ruskin's genius!

JR: Wow, well you've certainly made my Christmas Season! Terrific! Actually, thinking back, it's remarkable how little competition I had at that time regarding publishing on Ruskin.

JS: Well, both Clive and I think that, because your *Genius of John Ruskin* and *Darkening Glass* came out when they did, a time when Ruskin was 'all but forgotten', that they were *critical* contributions in the history of Ruskin studies.

JR: Well, we should have this little gathering more often! [*laughing*.]

JS: I've got a question for you, John. It's about Helen Gill Viljoen. As you know, I've written about her unpublished biography of Ruskin, arguing that her impeccable research—forty years of it!—had uncovered so many new and important things about Ruskin's life that, had she ever finished it, it would have transformed how we think about his life. But I also know, because of my good friendship with Van Akin Burd, that you met Helen at the time when you were just getting interested in Ruskin. Can you tell us about that? You met her in her apartment in Queens, didn't you?⁴

JR: Yes. That was a remarkable moment for me because then I wasn't fully committed to what later would become my scholarly life. I had read *Ruskin's Scottish Heritage*, the first volume of her biography, and thought it was a marvelous book. I knew that she taught at Queens College, so I got in touch and asked if I could visit.⁵ I remember an apartment that was rather dark and filled from floor to ceiling with books. My recollection is that they were all Ruskin. She *lived* Ruskin! It's easy to simplify, I suppose, and caricature that degree of fanaticism, but what she did was very important and very original, and I recognized that. But when I left her

apartment, I felt a bit like a poacher—not that she was in any way intimidating—but I left without a doubt in my mind that she was living with John Ruskin! Left with a sense that, somehow, they were in league together! [*laughing*.]

JS: I like that image! From what Van Burd has told me of her, it's perfect. He and Helen were very good 'friends in Ruskin' and he visited her apartment on several occasions when he was in New York.

JR: You know, *Ruskin's Scottish Heritage* was really unfairly treated. But, then, any book which ends with the *birth* of its hero is asking for criticism of one kind or another! To me she was very generous in making suggestions and I'm sure that meeting was more significant than I realized at the time because I left her apartment with a sense of my own mission that I don't think I had had before.

JS: Do you mind if we ask you the question we've just answered: Who got *you* interested in Ruskin?

JR: God.

JS: God?

JR: Yeah.

JS: That's a great answer! Please can you explain a bit more?

JR: I think it was while I was at Cambridge. I was reading about Ruskin's life and kept thinking about that. That was pretty much decisive for me. I remember thinking that Effie got short shrift in most of the biographies. It was a mismatch, of course, the marriage, but her letters, in so far as I can recall them at such a distance in time, have a kind of vibrancy to them, certainly a keen social awareness. But God, what a mismatch! But, then, which Mrs Ruskin would *not* have been a mismatch?

JS: That's true enough! So it was more or less like it was with Clive and myself. There was something in your reading of Ruskin which immediately had the ring of truth and, enchanted (I certainly consider myself to have been so), you decided to follow those bells down the road.

JR: Yes.

CW: So it wasn't any particular person who told you to read Ruskin or anything like that?

JR: I wish I had a more circumstantial memory. What I do recall very clearly was that, for me, as a graduate student, I was making a great big commitment. There is a marvelous book store – it's one of the two best-known in Cambridge ...

CW: Heffer's?

JR: Heffer's! You've got it! I remember as a graduate student I was very short of cash, but, one day, after I had decided that I would go down Ruskin's road, I was in Heffer's and found a vintage set of Cook and Wedderburn for sale. Carefully, I worked out how much it would cost to get the 39 volumes to the US including postage. Doing the dollar exchange arithmetic, it came, in

the end, to about a dollar a volume! I don't know how many thousands and thousands of dollars it would cost now but my set made it across the Atlantic in perfect shape, each volume individually wrapped, all the pages uncut! So I spent my early apprenticeship as a Ruskin scholar with scissors. It was really quite thrilling!

JS: I don't know whether you know the name James Smetham. He was a lesser member of the Pre-Raphaelite group and an engraver, a follower of Rossetti, I think. In any event, he and Ruskin became friends and he simply reveled in Ruskin's writing. And, in one letter I've come across, he wrote a friend and said: 'I truly envy you your first reading of Ruskin!' It's one of my favorite comments about Ruskin!

JR: That's wonderful.

CW: Earlier on Jim mentioned our talking about the importance of *The Darkening Glass* in the history of Ruskin criticism. I want to be more specific than that. What I admired so much was the way you looked at Ruskin as an imaginative writer, almost as a poet. It seems to me that *The Darkening Glass* is really the first book about Ruskin that belongs to modern literary criticism.

JR: Well, Clive, I very much appreciate that. But don't forget that quirky book by R. H. Wilenski. With great respect, I would give the honors to him. He moved Ruskin 'along' during a very fallow time.

CW: Yes, I would agree with you on that.

JR: Wilenski looks at Ruskin very much as a human being, a very flawed human being, but as a human being, and no-one had really done this for a long time. But I probably don't know all the Ruskin literary criticism as well as you two do. I'd be happily corrected by you guys.

JS: I accept your argument about the Ruskin literary tradition and moving it along, but I find the Wilenski book not only quirky but, in many ways, I think he was deeply anti-Ruskin. He doesn't like his subject much.

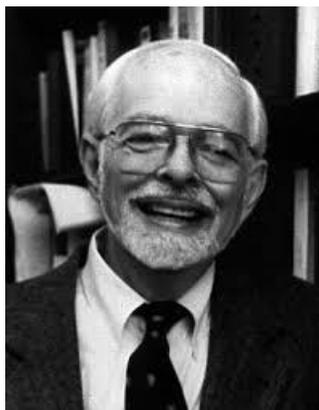
JR: That's true. That's always a mistake, I think.

JS: My choice for a true, new appreciation of Ruskin in this period would be Derrick Leon's biography [*Ruskin: The Great Victorian*]. It came out in 1949. Leon understood Ruskin – understood the greatness and genius of the man...

JR: Yes, that's a fine book.

JS: And what Leon did to make his case is something which no biographer has done since. He included short excerpts from Ruskin's writings and brief summaries of the books Ruskin was publishing as his life moved along. To take one example, it's around 1860 and Ruskin is writing *Unto this Last* and Leon is telling the life story, but, at the same time, he's telling you what's going on in Ruskin's mind and what the importance of his work is. As a result, you get a sense of man and work together. And

most of the biographies which followed—excluding yours, John, and I mean that sincerely—divorce Ruskin from his writing. It's an enormous mistake, because his mind, his heart, his soul, what he's trying to do, his whole dedication to making the world a better place is with him every day, and this intention simply vanishes in these later biographies. But Leon never loses the connection. So, by the time you get to the end of his book you say to yourself: 'This Ruskin was a very great man'. Whatever the tragedy of the ending, you understand why it's tragic in the best, noblest sense.



John Rosenberg

JR: Yes, I'm remembering now something very poignant. It's sometime not long after 1871 and Ruskin is in a period of total intellectual vertigo and says that he feels as though he were a seabird—and this is an exact quote—a sea bird with no sands to settle upon.

JS: I know that quote. It's as you say, beautiful, and so deeply sad at the same time.

JR: This sort of tragic outcome has been much on my mind for several years. I've been working on an utterly unrelated project from the Depression era, on a wonderful book by two guys – James Agee and Walker Evans.

JS: Oh, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*! It's a great book.

JR: A very great book. My work on it is somewhat unusual because, even though Agee is the writer, I give almost equal billing to the photographer, Evans, and his marvelous black and white Depression-era photographs. A whole book of sixty or seventy photographs! And then, of course, there's Agee's remarkable text and—I've not made this connection before—but there is a Ruskin element to this attempt to record the humanity of the poor people—the 'famous men'—who were so harshly affected by the Depression. The project's taken me quite a distance from Ruskin, but I think there's a very real sense in which a true Ruskinian never leaves the home of the master! It's actually a very capacious

mansion; it's got many rooms in it! Thirty-nine, to be precise. [*Laughing.*] ...

JS: You know, when you speak of Agee, John, I have admired him for a very long time because he had Ruskin's sensitivity for the poor. He felt that these disadvantaged-through-little-fault-of-their-own people are real human beings, that we needed to take care of them and that it was heinous that we did *not* take care of them.

JR: That's a profound connection.

JS: Yes, and I believe that many of those who, today, have great concern for the poor, whether they know it or not, were much influenced by writers like Dickens and Ruskin, writers who believed that the poor had a wealth of talent waiting to be released if we would only give them the chance to release it. I always think that of one of the great differences between Ruskin and almost anyone else I have read is his heart, you can feel his empathy for others. There is nothing insincere about him.

JR: Of those people with great hearts *and* great minds, he's unmatched.

JS: May I ask you one more question about your connection to Helen Viljoen? When you went to her apartment, she had recently returned from England and had brought back this huge inheritance of original documents—bits of manuscripts, many letters, and paintings by Ruskin which she had been given by F. J. Sharp on his death. He had been collecting them all over England for decades.

JR: That's right, I had totally forgotten about that.

JS: Among the things she inherited from Sharp was the 1873 self-portrait, where Ruskin's face is half in the light and half in the dark.

JR: The great self-portrait!

JS: Now the question I wanted to ask is whether you saw the portrait hanging in Helen's apartment when you visited because, not long after, she gave it to the [Pierpont] Morgan [Library in New York] for safe keeping. She was very grateful to the Morgan for helping her with her research for so many years.

JR: I don't remember it in her apartment, but I do recall visiting the Morgan shortly after they acquired it. As I was looking at it one day, I noticed an elderly woman standing next to me and the curator [Frederick B. Adams] walked over and addressed her as Miss Morgan, so I assumed that this was a descendant of the founder of the library.

JS: You used it as the dust cover image on *The Darkening Glass*. When you reproduced the portrait for the cover of your book, you asked the Morgan if you could make two color reproductions of it. Is that right?

JR: That's right. But how do you know this?

JS: And you kept one and, as gesture of thanks, gave the other to Helen. She was

deeply honored by your gift and, until the day she died, your gift hung in her apartment

JR: Oh, really? That's wonderful.

JS: Yes, and on her death she bequeathed the copy you had given her to Van Burd because she and Van were such very good friends.

JR: Yes, I think Van told me that when we met in England for the Ruskin 2000 Conference.

JS: Well, as you know, Van is now very much older—he will be 100 in April!—and in appreciation of our Ruskin friendship, which now stretches over almost two decades, last year he gave me his copy of the self-portrait. It now hangs in my study in my house. I am so very pleased and proud that Van gave it to me! It connects me to him and to Helen and, of course, to you as well.

JR: Oh, Jim, that's great! My God, that reproduction has really traveled! And—it is such a haunting thing! Ruskin painted it in the early 1870s, didn't he? This is a marvelous discussion! You know, as we've been talking, I've been reminded of another Ruskin story of my own, this one involving Sir Kenneth Clark.

JS: Oh yes? His anthology, *Ruskin To-Day*, was another great book that helped keep Ruskin alive.

JR: Absolutely. So here's my story. Clark was an extraordinary, utterly traditional, British gentleman. We met here in New York at the Morgan Library after my book [*The Darkening Glass*] came out and, over the course of our conversation, he invited me to visit him at his home on the Dover Coast the next time I was in England. Of course, I did! Only to discover, when I got there, that he lived in a real medieval castle—Saltwood Castle—the like of which, I can honestly say, I had never before encountered. You could smell the sea from the castle. At one point, he led me onto the parapets and pointed to the spot where the assassins of Thomas Becket met and conspired! One of my fondest memories, though, is of his library, where the featured item was the 39 Cook and Wedderburn volumes and an entire section devoted to Ruskin.

CW: Marvellous!

JR: It was an extraordinary day. I was served

in a Gothic dining room and the rack of lamb was carefully carried in by a liveried waiter. We were all seated around a very small table and, dining with Sir Kenneth and myself were Lady Clark (or so I surmised she was! I never was formally introduced!) and another distinguished guest whose name I can't now recall. As the lamb was served, I thought that those liveried waiters sort of shimmied along with it! It was just marvelous! It could very well have been one of the poor lambs I had seen earlier gamboling about the castle's immense acreage!

JS: Great story!

JR: All this is amazing! I will be conjuring ghosts now for weeks! You know, when I think about Ruskin, the thing I most admire is his inner strength, his resilience. I mean, God knows he was battered time and again—but he always managed to come back. And the recoveries seemed quite complete. Of course, they always carried with them the seeds of his next collapse, but what strength, what brilliance! The sheer courage or primeval strength of the man! It's remarkable!

JS: May I give you a hypothesis about Ruskin which comes out of my experience of teaching? I have some Ruskin in every course I teach and, as you know, today's students are a very long way from Ruskin and his ideas, but I have found that, if I can get them to the point where they can begin to hear just a little bit, what happens is that they start listening in some deeper place. I think that's because Ruskin tells us a deeper truth, a truth we all want to hear. None of them go on to become Ruskinians, but I believe they are changed in some positive way by his paragraphs, by the special arrangement of the words and their ability to 'seep into and warm parts of their being they didn't even know were cold'—one of my favorite writers on education, George Leonard, said that!

JR: It all comes from that spring of hope within us, doesn't it, an eternal part of life which cannot be taught, even by Ruskin?

JS: This reminds me about what he said about *Unto this Last*. He had many regrets

about what he saw as the inadequacies of his earlier books, but about that book, he always said: 'It's the one true book I ever wrote.' What he meant was that he thought the book was true from first word to last, that everything in it was right, and that one sentence — 'There is no wealth but life' — was the most important he ever wrote.

JR: Yes, but remember also the reviewer who described *Unto this Last* as written by a 'mad governess' trying to preach the world to death! How infamous!

JS: Well, our time is about up. It's been so great to see you, John.

JR: It's great to see you again, Jim, and to meet you, Clive. I mean, I've been aware of your good works, but this is a special pleasure!

CW: Well, it's a very great privilege for us, I must say.

JS: John, as we finish up, Clive and I very much want to say that, in large measure because of *your* influence, the greatness which is Ruskin goes on well!

JR: Well, I'm a kind of a contributory stream; I'm not a fountain.

JS: It's been a privilege, sir.

CW: It has indeed.

JR: Well, it's certainly been a privilege for *me*.

NOTES

1. We wish to record our heartfelt thanks to Jean Salone who first transcribed this interview.
2. Tony Tanner taught at King's College, Cambridge from 1960 until his death in 1998. His last book, *Venice Desired*, was an exploration of that great city through the eyes of various writers to whom the city meant much, among them Byron, James, Proust, Pound and Ruskin. His Mikimoto Ruskin Lecture at Lancaster University in 1997 was on 'Ruskin and the Sea'. It was published in *Ruskin's Struggle for Coherence*, ed. Rachel Dickinson and Keith Hanley (2008).
3. Rosenberg was a graduate student at Clare College Cambridge.
4. Another borough of New York City, primarily residential.
5. Part of the City University of New York system. Viljoen taught there from the late 1930s until her retirement in 1965.

RUSKIN AND COLLINGWOOD

Late last year, a major collection of never-before-seen paintings and previously unpublished letters pertaining to the significant relationship between Ruskin and William Gershom Collingwood became available for scholars at Cardiff University. Collingwood was initially Ruskin's student at Oxford, later his amanuensis and, always, his devoted friend and a promoter of his genius. As a result of his admiration for Ruskin, in the early 1880s Collingwood moved, first, to Windermere and, later, to Coniston. In 1882, he and Ruskin travelled

together on what would become Ruskin's penultimate trip on his 'Old Road'—a journey stretching from England through France, Switzerland, the French Alps, and down into Ruskin's beloved Italy. Many of the original and previously unavailable documents in this collection pertain to this trip, and to the extensive time Collingwood and his family spent with Ruskin during his decades of decline, the later 1880s and 1890s. The collection was bequeathed to Cardiff University by its caretaker, Janet Gnosspelius

(Collingwood's granddaughter). It is now housed in Cardiff University Arts and Social Sciences Library.

As an outgrowth of the new availability of these important artistic and biographic materials, a conference, to be called 'Collingwood and British Idealism', will be held at Cardiff University from 16-18 December 2014. Guild Companion, Professor Jim Spates of Hobart & William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York, will give the keynote address on the relationship between Collingwood and Ruskin, focusing



W. G. Collingwood, self-portrait.

particularly on the Continental trip of 1882. Jim will give a second talk on the importance of the Collingwood collection for scholars and biographers at another moment during the proceedings. At the heart of his keynote address will be images of many of the paintings and selections from the unpublished letters above mentioned. The conference is being sponsored by the Collingwood Society Archive at Cardiff University and the British Idealism Specialist Group of the Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom. All are welcome. Anyone interested, either in proposing a paper to be read at the conference, or in attending the proceedings, should contact Sarah Gallimore at

GallimoreSE@cardiff.ac.uk.



Companion, Suzanne Varady, at Abnot Hall, Kendal, viewing Ruskin's paintings of the Mont Blanc range, drawn 1862-3 when he lived at what became Suzanne's home near Geneva, Switzerland.

AMERICAN NOTES

Sara Atwood and Jim Spates

The whispers [of the penetrative imagination] at men's ears lift into visible angels. Veils that have lain sealed in the deep sea a thousand years, it unseals, and brings out of them Genii.

—*Modern Painters II* (4.251)

For those interested in Ruskin, this has been a year of angels becoming visible and veils lifting. Both images are appropriate for the recent and pending unsealing of some of the most important of Ruskin's ideas in North America—on *both* sides of this continent. Consider the developments on the **West Coast** first.

Building on the success of last year's Ruskin symposium at *The Hillside Club* in Berkeley, California (see last year's *Companion*), Sara Atwood and Tim Holton have organized a second Hillside event. The one-day symposium, to be held on Saturday, 31 May will have the title: "*Helping in the Work of Creation*": John Ruskin and William Morris Today.' The task of the conference will be to explore what we might learn from Ruskin and Morris about humanity's helpful contribution to the greater creation. As J. W. Mackail once said of Morris: 'The whole of [his] extraordinary powers were devoted to no less an object than the reconstitution of the civilized life of mankind.' As Morris once said of Ruskin: 'It seemed [as if his work pointed] out a new road on which the world should travel.' The symposium will explore the thinking of both men about nature, work, and architecture. Presentations will be made by six speakers, all Companions:

- *Tim Holton* (Holton Studio Frame-Makers, The Hillside Club) has entitled his talk, 'The Joiners' Tale: A Craftsman's Window on Ruskin and Morris.' Drawing on his own life and

work experience, he will underscore the truth of Ruskin's contention that frame-makers are not only essential for the proper presentation of art but are artists in their own right.

- *John Iles* oversees the Guild's work in the Wyre Forest. In his talk, 'Down in the Woods Something Stirs,' he will describe the current and future projects in the Wyre, all of which are present-day attempts to realize Ruskin's vision of 'making some small piece of England beautiful, peaceful, and fruitful.'

- *Jim Spates's* (Hobart and William Smith Colleges) illustrated talk — 'All of Us are Builders: The Enduring Relevance of Ruskin's *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* in the 21st Century'— will be focused on making palpable Ruskin's argument that architecture is the 'one form of art in which everyone participates.' He will show, using Ruskin's great book as a template, how buildings grow in greatness as they incorporate more and more of the essential qualities ('lamps') which make them of enduring interest to us all, whether now or in the past.

- *Gray Brechin* (University of California, Berkeley) will speak about, 'Bright Morning in the Far West: The Reverend Joseph Worcester's Bay Area Circle.' Even though the settling of the American West was characterized, for many, by a reckless thirst for fortune which overlooked or disdained all

thoughts of environmental preservation, some—his subject, Reverend Worcester, primarily among them— recognized the beauty of the West's landscape and climate and saw possibilities for intellectual and spiritual expansion which were available nowhere else.

- *Sara Atwood* will explore Ruskin's relationship to modern environmentalism in an effort to understand the significance of his ideas, not as mirroring our own, but as pointing us towards a richer and more meaningful understanding of nature and our place in it. She will argue that there is a great deal we might learn from him about the natural world because, at a fundamental level, his ideas are so different to ours. The title of her talk is 'A Veil of Strange Intermediate Being: Ruskin and Environment.'

- The symposium's *Keynote Address* will be given by *Clive Wilmer* (Cambridge University, Master of the Guild). His title, echoing Morris's assessment of Ruskin's work, is: 'A New Road on which the World should Travel: Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic," and William Morris.' The seminal chapter from *The Stones of Venice*, with its unhesitating emphasis on the 'value of every soul' engaged in the creative process, so impressed Morris that he based all the

crafts he embraced during his professional life, on its principles. In an increasingly mechanistic age, he searched for and sought to preserve models of craft-work that married the skills of hand and eye to the feelings of vibrant human hearts.

• These talks will be followed by a panel discussion with the audience. For the symposium's official website see: <http://tinyurl.com/hillside-ruskin-2014>.

On the day following the symposium, Sunday, 1 June, Tim Holton and Jim Spates will offer anyone interested an architectural tour of noteworthy Arts and Crafts buildings in the Berkeley Hills, including the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and the renowned Swedenborgian Church (whose one-time pastor, Joseph Worcester, is the subject of Gray Brechin's talk).

Next, the veils currently expected to be unsealed on the **East Coast**.

At last year's Annual Roycroft Arts and Crafts Conference, Jim Spates gave the Keynote Address on Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*. The success of that event has led to a three-day conference this year focused, as in Berkeley, on the continuing importance for the modern world of the work of Ruskin and Morris, as well as Elbert Hubbard, the Founder of The Roycrofters and himself deeply influenced by them. In the Roycroft Inn — once Hubbard's studio and work place — the main rooms on the upper floors still bear Hubbard's designations: "The Morris Room" and, above it, on the top floor, "The Ruskin Room." Not only Roycroft, but the entire Arts and Crafts Movement in America, owes its origin to the power and influence of Hubbard's thought, work, and unceasing championship.

The conference, which will be held from Friday, 3 October through Sunday, 5 October, is entitled, *Ruskin, Morris, and Hubbard: The Arts and Crafts of the World*, and will consist of a series of lectures and workshops open to all. The gathering will be hosted by The Roycroft Campus in East Aurora, New York (near Buffalo). For the official announcement of the conference, see:

<http://www.roycroftcampuscorporation.com/conf2014.html>.

There will be five talks, all given on Saturday, 4 October. These will be delivered by:

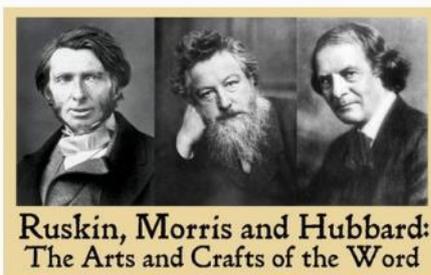
• Paul Dawson (Editor, *The Friends of Ruskin's Brantwood Newsletter*) will speak on 'George Allen — from Pupil to Publisher: A Lifetime of Loyalty.' Paul is

the leading expert on the relationship between Allen and Ruskin and his talk will have a particular resonance in the Roycroft setting. As a matter of principle — it is committed to the work of 'head, hands, and heart' — Roycroft continues to print its books, articles, and posters in the arts-and-crafts manner influenced by the teachings of Ruskin and Morris.

• Joe Weber (The Roycroft Campus Corporation), will offer an overview of the history and development of



The Roycroft Conference 2014
Friday, October 3rd - Sunday, October 5th, 2014



Online Registration has not opened yet for the 2014 Conference

Roycroft itself. His talk, "Elbert Hubbard and the American Arts and Crafts Movement," will emphasize Hubbard's critical role in promoting in North America the 'hands-on' approach to creation championed by Ruskin and Morris.

• Jim Spates' (Hobart & William Smith Colleges) illustrated talk is entitled, 'John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, and the Birth of the Arts and Crafts Movement.' Taking as its basis Ruskin's central arguments in *Stones*, the talk will follow Ruskin through what he once called 'this paradise of cities,' showing how its intensely moral way of life gave way to a more generally licentious period, a change which worked like a slowly-spreading acid, eating away at and eventually destroying altogether the city's once enviable majesty. An analogy will be

drawn with the manifest urban troubles of the modern Western world.

• Rachel Dickinson's (Manchester Metropolitan University) "Refined in Feature and Beautiful in Dress: Ruskin and Cloth," will outline aspects of Ruskin's thought about the aesthetics of dress: that all dress should be sustainable and environmentally friendly, rooted in the local and relevant to the community. It should be simple, but aesthetically pleasing and, crucially, flawed—'perfection' only being possible with machines! A comparison of these ideas of dress with those now dominant in the intensely consumerist twenty-first century will be made.

• The Keynote Address will be given by Howard Hull (Director of both the Brantwood Trust and the Ruskin Foundation). His title is: 'A Perfectly Possible Dream: Recapturing the Vision of Ruskin, Morris, and Hubbard.' He will argue that on both sides of the Atlantic, the Arts & Crafts Movement has always believed in the beauty of work as well as in works of beauty. This perpetual inter-connection is the enduring vision of Ruskin, Morris and Hubbard.

However difficult this has been to put into practice, it remains a vision of how life should be lived, a vision that has refused to die. While the movement has constantly fallen short of its own ideals, it endures in the modern context as a living legacy of these great thinkers. In this new Age of Globalism, the Golden Era of the Arts & Crafts still lies ahead.

Finally, note should be made of the important exhibition, *John Ruskin: Artist and Observer* which recently completed its highly praised run at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. The show, which moves next to Edinburgh, was curated by Companion Christopher Newall. The catalogue of the exhibition is reviewed more fully elsewhere in this issue.

It has been a stellar year for the re-introduction of Ruskin's ideas into serious discourse on this side of the Atlantic — another instance, in short, of *genii emerging*.

Flight from Cuthbert Bank

from an autumn art walk

with Emilie Taylor and Mark Doyle

In search of pigeon lofts
we cross Philadelphia Park where gusted leaves
from laden crab apple trees chase over the scrub,
seed-blown flower heads ball into skeleton fists,
and my palms itch when dock-spikes rustle
their bright cluster-crust.

Some of us have memory-maps
to share, so we retrace how Wales Road's end
met the rise of Kelvin's *streets in the sky* –
a short-lived try to flat-stack a neighbourhood.

Then to the hillside opposite
we turn our gaze, led by the potter who sketched,
in slip and scraffito, men's pigeon-kept hearts
on the shoulders of vases a child could hide in;
wood-kiln fired them, carried both down from the sky
and its edge to plinth-rest in the hallowed half-dark
of the city's main art shed.

Under instruction, out on the path,
we ink-roll glass to catch the skyline: phone mast,
overgrown ski slope, Pitsmoor's Church of Christ
– all in reverse and smudge-edged; find a line
or word to mirror-write, hail each other's art,
then bag it up to head down Neepsend clough.

We skirt the six-lane race,
part thin trees to tread the dumped gear – teapot, tyre,
paint tin, plastic chair – that bolsters the soft rot
of fallen weed flesh, spent wood, topped
by a slither of leaves, waxen and wet.

When later we wheel
round and back up to peer over that top road wall,
we'll see how these flaking roof terraces nestle
in rhododendron and yellowing birch; lean further
for a bird's eye view of fly-bundled rubble sacks
where brazen new window frames lounge;
bramble and buddleia bind it all back.

This poem was inspired by last year's triennial exhibition, *The Force of Nature*. In the letter in which Fay gave us permission to publish her poem, she wrote, 'It's wonderful that the tenderness of the pigeon racers that Emilie depicts, and that stayed with me so well, found a way onto the page. And it's fitting that in drawing out the correspondence between art and working-class toil, my work has found itself somewhere in John Ruskin's orbit.' And of the exhibition she wrote, '*The Force of Nature* exhibition was terrific, I went to it many times. On some occasions I could only gaze at Emilie's vases for a minute or two, then nip round to stand in front of the George Shaw for a few moments, and on others I lost myself in films, paintings, sculpture etc for hours.'

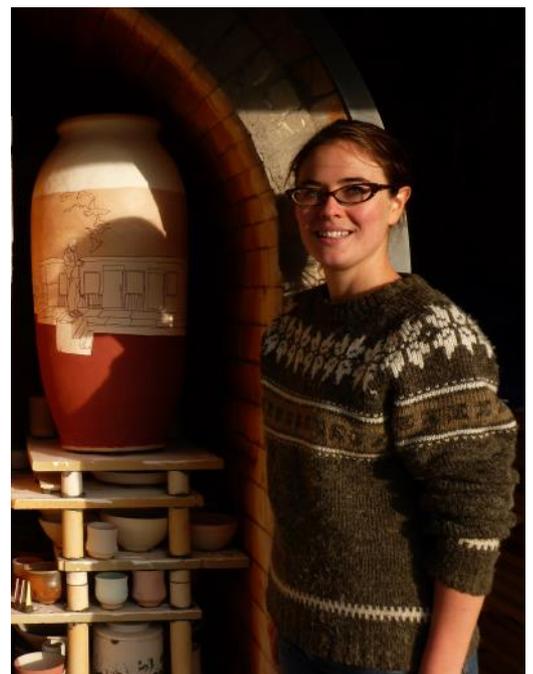
Down at the foothills
we clutch creeper-twigs as we climb to the lofts.
Their ledges, when timing those loaded returns,
must have been like massive grins, each tooth a bird,
now collapsed to grimaces, above the faded bloom
of panels tagged in urban-runic fonts,

bedded in, weathered,
rooted like they grew there in the tangle-shrub.
A couple seem to topple from the bank, one has lost
its horizontal hold, is derailed so shifted slats
leer over the drop, its cabin-body lodged
in dented trees, shaggy in grassroots,
its gape creased shut.

Ten years since the last
kept pigeon homed to here. Back five more decades
to before they razed Parkwood Spring and sucked
Neepsend dry: the valley not this fleck of factory,
a filament between car galleries
and abandoned hillside,

but like a Lowry vision: a flock
of men released by work clocks, to rise above
day's end, the valley's din, legacies of grind,
to hold the small bulk, feel its heat
pulse through feathers in cupped hands,
and send those tiny hearts and lungs
to claim their reach of sky.

Fay Musselwhite



Emilie Taylor with one of the fire pots.

REVEALING, RECONNECTING AND RE-IMAGINING RUSKIN IN SHEFFIELD

Ruth Nutter



RUSKIN in SHEFFIELD

What do an artist, a writer, the founder of a Higher Academy of Happiness, an archaeologist, an

architect, a Cemetery Friends' group, a heritage interpreter and a vegetable entertainer have in common? John Ruskin, of course. This is the enthusiastic group of people with whom I had the pleasure of exchanging ideas for creating events in Walkley as part of the Ruskin-in-Sheffield programme in 2015. It's not only in Walkley, the original home of the Ruskin Collection at St George's Museum, that the passion and sense of connection with Ruskin runs deep in Sheffield, it's across all quarters of the city.

Over the last few weeks, I've had similar experiences with people wanting to help bring alive Ruskin's historical and contemporary connections with the city in imaginative ways which can involve people who may never have heard of Ruskin, as much as for those who are disciples and followers. I have had encouraging and thought-provoking conversations with individual artists, craftspeople and food growers, as well as with numerous organisations. So far, these have included Museums Sheffield, the University of Sheffield, Freeman College (part of the Ruskin Mill Trust), Galvanize (festival of contemporary metal), Portland Works (community-owned workspace for small manufacturing businesses, artists and craftspeople), Yorkshire Artspace (one of the largest and most established studio providers in the UK, currently housing over 140 artists and craftspeople) and Sheffield



Industrial Museums. It's timely in many ways to be re-igniting Ruskin's relationship

At Portland Works, Sheffield, one of the partners Ruskin-in-Sheffield is working with.

with Sheffield. Interest has been re-building over the last few years through the popular Guild-funded 'Can Art Save Us?' and 'Force of Nature' exhibitions at the Millennium Gallery. The third of this triennial series will culminate in 2016, with an exhibition focusing on the theme of craftsmanship. Ruskin-in-Sheffield will offer a variety of events, walks and talks to engage heads, hands and hearts so that by 2016 – and looking beyond, to Ruskin's bicentenary in 2019 – he will have been widely reclaimed and re-evaluated in Sheffield and beyond.

The Ruskin-in-Sheffield programme will have three main threads running through it:

- **Revealing Ruskin in Sheffield** is about making visible the full history of Ruskin in the city. As well as increasing awareness of the origins of the Ruskin Collection in Walkley, we aim to tell the lesser-known story of St George's Farm in Totley, and raise the profile of the ongoing story of the Guild's farm and woodland in Bewdley.

- **Reconnecting Ruskin in Sheffield** explores how the Ruskin Collection can be more effectively linked to its roots in nature and its original social purpose. One idea is to hold an event which combines an introduction to the Collection, followed by a nature walk, culminating in the creation of an artwork from collected natural materials. Another is to create an experience for visitors to the Collection so that they can directly experience a sense of the working conditions of the metalworkers for whose benefit Ruskin originally established the Collection. 'Reconnecting' is also about offering events which offer a sense of the value and beauty of the combined power of art, crafts and the land – to share the insights that Ruskin offered into working, caring for, and taking creative inspiration from the land. This may combine a community-growing or land-based arts project, leading to an exhibition, and a celebration of Sheffield's thriving city-wide sustainable-land initiatives. Equally important is a focus on

reconnecting people with making – shining a light on the love of making in the city, the people who make, and the places they make them in. As well as opportunities for people to share why, what, where and how they make, there is a desire to create events in which people can come together to pass on skills between generations to keep alive the hand-power and heart-passion of making.

- The third strand, **Re-imagining Ruskin in Sheffield**, has already sparked widespread interest. How can we draw on Ruskin's ideas and legacies in Sheffield to help make the city a better place to live and work in? How can we draw on his writings, lectures, ideas and the Ruskin Collection to re-imagine how we design, power, enjoy, work and build communities and create wealth in the city? Ruskin formed the Guild of St George at a time when people were becoming increasingly disconnected from the land, losing their autonomy, their artisanal skills and being separated from each other. At a time when we face similar patterns of economic, social and environmental disconnectedness, Ruskin has a lot to offer to a city where so many people are trying to make it a better place to live in. One idea is to create a neighbourhood 'Community Collection' inspired by the Ruskin Collection, inviting people to display things they make or collect, create maps of local beauty spots, and fill in their own local nature journals. It is a way of giving a community a voice through the creation and curation of its own collection.

Over the last few weeks I have discovered, among other

(Right) Ruskin House, a residential block of flats in Walkley, was once St George's Museum. (Below) is the view from the top floor, added after the Swans' time



things, that someone in Sheffield is about to make a xylophone from stone, inspired by a similar instrument created by Ruskin at Brantwood, and that Sheffield has the largest number of artists and craftspeople outside London. A wood-turner and zoologist has offered to lead a Ruskin-focussed version of the classic Sheffield 14-mile round walk, the idea of a Ruskin "Readathon" has been raised, and I have been asked by someone who works with homeless people whether we can draw on Ruskin to keep the creation of community at the heart of the project.

When the Ruskin Collection marks the 140th anniversary of its arrival in Sheffield

next year, I'm looking forward to seeing a range of collaborations come to fruition between the Guild and Sheffield people, and between the networks and organisations that have such a rich range of perspectives on and stories about Ruskin in Sheffield.

The Steering Group of Guild directors for Ruskin-in-Sheffield is Janet Barnes (chair), Clive Wilmer, Jacqueline Yallop and Peter Miller, with input from Sian Brown and Louise Pullen from Museums Sheffield.

Later this year, Companions will be invited to an official launch event. We very

much hope that as many of you as possible will become actively involved in the project, contributing your ideas and expertise. I can be contacted on ruskininsheffield@gmail.com

NOTE

1. Creator of home-made legume creatures and costumes.

For the latest information on the project, visit www.ruskininsheffield.com

AN ITALIAN RESEARCH TRIP (MARCH 2013)

Louise Pullen

Last year, I was exceptionally grateful to the Master and Directors of the Guild of St George for providing me with a bursary enabling me to carry out research in Northern Italy. I designed a tour to encompass towns and cities that are substantially represented in the Ruskin and Bunney collections, along with several places which are relevant to Ruskinian investigation. It was a somewhat whistle-stop tour, but over seven days I was able to visit Milan, Bergamo, Lecco, Ravenna, Ferrara, Verona, Mantua and Padua.

First on my itinerary was a particularly hurried dash around Milan. Milan is not represented in any great detail in the Collection itself, but as Ruskin frequently mentioned the city's architecture in his writing, I felt it was still pertinent to my tour. First off was my fifteen-minute allocation to see Leonardo's *Last Supper*, mentioned perhaps rather casually in Ruskin's writings, and then slightly more leisurely trips to the Basilica of Sant'

Ambrogio and the cathedral's rooftop which are both mentioned in more detail. I particularly enjoyed Sant' Ambrogio's caricature-like grotesques which seemed to peep from any suitable crevice, rather than just the regular capital and tympanum sculpture. As one of the buildings I saw earliest on my visit, it became the benchmark for studying what Ruskin called the 'Lombardic Gothic' and indeed the Gothic sculpture for the rest of my trip. My tour among the 'marble frost-work' of the cathedral's innumerable pinnacles and buttresses I found awe-inspiring in its imaginative and skilful carving, made visually more fascinating for its structural contrast with the spiniest and most tightly-wrought scaffolding system I have ever seen (38.338). Alas, however, the view Ruskin so much admired from the roof, that of the Monte Rosa mountains rising up from the Lombardy plains, was lost in fog and drizzle.

It was, therefore, in puddled streets, if

not driving rain, that I arrived later that day in the hilltop city of Bergamo. The city is mentioned little by Ruskin, but its Church of Santa Maria Maggiore is the subject of eight of Frank Randal's watercolours, commissioned by Ruskin in 1885. These are mostly details of the church's several porches, along with one of the tower, and they show little change, deterioration or indeed restoration since Randal was there.¹ The city, too, has seen few obvious changes, so much so that it was very easy to pinpoint the exact doorways and nooks in which Randal tucked himself to paint, presumably to escape the notice of rubber-necking pedestrians. Most of Randal's drawings of the church have survived with excellent colouration and likewise the coloured stone used in the portals was intensified by the rain to splendid effect, so that it brought to mind Ruskin's joy in the colourful façades of Italy's buildings. The view of the principal north portal, a study in early Lombardic Gothic, situated so that it almost touches the 'incrusted' renaissance façade of the Capella Colleone, also highlighted how useful it is to see in person the buildings Ruskin mentioned. His vituperative comments regarding the later work become immediately more reasonable when directly compared with the simpler beauty of the earlier one (I apologise for my personal bias here) (8.51).

According to Lord Avesbury, Ruskin commented that there was 'no such thing as bad weather, only different sorts of good weather'. With no real wish to criticise Ruskin's sage words, I did rather feel that the constant stream of heavy rain which accompanied me for much of the trip is not the best type of weather to spend large amounts of time in looking at the façades of buildings, or indeed noisily squelching around dimly-lit interiors. This was especially the case at Lecco, a southern tributary of Lake Como, which is dominated by the saw-like Resegone



Bergamo Then (by Randal, left) and Now (photographed by Louise Pullen).

mountain. The town and landscape were not basking under the blue sky and fluffy light clouds of my imaginings (and as depicted by Frank Randal in all his studies of the area), but being lashed by torrential rain, with the cloud base almost at lake level.

Clearly, this was not going to be a day of copious note-taking and I had hoped to climb the mountain paths to trace Randal's routes and painting sites. The paths were by then, unfortunately, resembling streams, and the closest I got to a mountain view was an advertising hoarding for mountain-view new-builds, but amidst the modernity I still managed to trace some of the buildings Randal painted in the oldest parts of the town: the ramshackle but picturesque Pescarenico fishing district and, upwards in the lower slopes at Bonacino, the location for Manzoni's novel, *The Betrothed*. Here I discovered that Randal took some liberties in naming one of his drawings after the homestead of the book's fictional 'Lucia'. It was not, however, my most successful day. I had hoped, if possible, to travel further around the lake to look at the geology around Varenna. Instead I travelled back to Bergamo to find that the Academia had closed early for unspecified reasons and, beaten by the rain, I fell back on 'visiting the sites' in a purely touristic manner and looked forward to a sunnier day upon the morrow.

After an early start and a sprint to peek at Bologna's piazza during an hour-long train connection, I reached Ravenna for a much more successful day of discovery. Ravenna, perhaps a little off the beaten track, was helpful not only in facilitating a better understanding of watercolours by Thomas Matthews Rooke and Frank Randal, but I was able to identify exact locations and buildings in quite a number of works from the Bunney Collection, an exercise which I feel could only have been undertaken by making a visit there. Randal and Rooke, who were commissioned to paint high-level mosaics, seemed particularly to have soothed their craned necks by choosing subjects with easy vantage points. It became clear, for example, that at San Vitale Randal painted only high subjects directly opposite a clerestory gallery that runs around the church, whilst Bunney and Rooke's exact choice from the almost identical female saints that run along the entire length of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo's nave, must have been chosen for the elevated pulpit built exactly opposite their chosen ladies.²

I was very glad too to have wandered the streets to find myself in the footsteps of John Wharleton Bunney. I found that he certainly deviated from the main streets of Ravenna, as some of his subjects were off the beaten track, and again often little-

changed in the subsequent century. A favoured subject, what he called 'the fire tower', is now dangerously leaning and has obviously been lowered for safety, but a tiny chapel built out on the outskirts upon the ramparts, seems untouched if overgrown by foliage. These wanderings were also particularly useful in that I was able to identify buildings in Ravenna that had no previous attribution other than that they were studies in Italy. I found, too, that like Randal and Rooke, it seemed that Bunney also had a sensible penchant for hanging over balconies and high galleries to paint mosaics at the more extreme angles.

It was now time for my principal stop in Italy: three days spent in Verona and its environs. En route, I stopped for a few hours in Ferrara, my suitcase bumping across the cobbled streets behind me, and I took pleasure in watching the residents of a slightly less touristic city enjoying their *passaggiata* on foot or rather more chaotically by bicycle. I particularly wanted to look at the façade of the cathedral with its arcades of fascinatingly varied columns, but also enjoyed a wander in an ancient warren of narrow streets.

My main priorities in Verona were to track down some more locations of Bunney's work and to make comparisons with sites depicted in works by Arthur Burgess and Randal in particular. The buildings and places of most interest were the Piazza delle Erbe and its surrounding palaces, the churches of San Fermo, San Zeno, Sant' Anastasia and the Duomo, and the Scaligeri, Cavalli and Castelbarco monuments. This proved to be a particularly useful exercise in that I found that over the years several of the watercolours had been given misattributed locations: a 'capital in Sant' Anastasia'

turned out to be part of the tomb of Can Mastino II for example, whilst a study correctly attributed to another of the Scaligeri tombs had in fact been mounted and displayed upside down since at least the 1890s. I discovered, too, that Randal did not know which tower was which in Verona, whilst one of the 19th-century inventories has confused different buildings on the Piazza delle Erbe. Once again, trawling through the emptier streets was useful in discovering Bunney's routes through the city, but perhaps a highlight for me was looking at the 'true griffin' from the Duomo's portal (as opposed to the 'false' Roman griffin that would have got earache whenever it flew: a favourite passage that I often cite) (see 5.140-147). San Zeno's sculpture provided an interesting comparison with Sant' Ambrogio's intricate grotesques and carved characters, and it deserved special attention. It felt like a particularly good illustration, too, of Ruskin's comments that it shows the development from a secularised to a more overtly Christian iconography in sculpture, and I could feel the fun and humour he felt that the early sculptors had in their work (9.427).

From my base in Verona I also managed two half-day excursions, one to Mantua, the other to Padua. Ruskin did not think much of Mantua due to its midge-infested waterside. This has not changed, but perhaps more disappointing was that, despite my crossed fingers, Mantegna's Camera degli Sposi in the Ducal Palace was still shut due to the earthquake of 2012. Nevertheless, it was still an enjoyable visit, the colourful rooms of the palace having survived well. In Padua, I had paid for two frustratingly-short sessions in the Scrovegni



Ravenna Then (by Bunney, left) and Now (photographed by Louise Pullen).



Verona

Chapel. I had visited the chapel before as a student, but wanted to view Giotto's frescoes again having read Ruskin's notes on the fresco, which makes an intriguing comparison with a general reading of them.

One highlight for me was an afternoon spent in the hills above Verona following a route set out by Ruskin in his lecture, 'Verona and its Rivers'. His tour was by horse and carriage, but there being a dearth of such vehicles today, I walked the route, following the city walls out to a great round tower, and then out into the foothills beyond, to reach a high point, with escarpments either side, from which one can see the plains toward Mantua on the one

hand, and the Alps on the other. There was a deserted mini-golf course up there too, and an overflowing set of grubby skips, but still among the rocky outcrops and fluttering poppies, it was possible to capture something of the power of the place which Ruskin felt through associations of geology, history, poetry and art.

It remains for me to thank the Guild once again for their generosity in sponsoring this research trip. All my findings and thoughts, together with a photographic log have been added to the Collection catalogue in the hope that they will prove useful and will be preserved.

The trip has certainly left me with both useful and happy, if damp, memories.

Louise Pullen is Curator of the Ruskin Collection, Museums Sheffield.

NOTES

1. The major portal sculptures have been replaced, as have some lintels. Some originals are now displayed inside the church.
2. All this of course is nothing new; however, it remains interesting to find these 'easy' vantage-points in such obvious connection with the drawings, and it gives a better idea of the techniques they used.

HORSEFALLING ABOUT: THOMAS HORSEFALL AND A DIFFERENT SPIRIT IN ANCOATS

Julie McCarthy



Ancoats Art Museum, reproduced with kind permission of Manchester Libraries.

EDITOR'S NOTE. Last year, I was approached by Julie MacCarthy from 42nd Street, a mental-health charity for young people under stress based in Ancoats, Manchester. She wanted to know more about Thomas Coglean Horsfall (1841-1932), a cotton carding manufacturer and Ruskinian philanthropist, whose Art Museum for the people of Manchester was established in Ancoats in 1884. Horsfall had been directly inspired by reading Ruskin's plans for St George's Museums in Fors Clavigera.

Julie had read various pieces I have written, including *After Ruskin* (2011) and Horsfall's entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, and wondered how feasible it would be to establish a project based at 42nd Street that could engage the young people there in a cultural programme that would prove worthy of Horsfall's example. Furthermore, it would learn from and build on the cultural history of Ancoats. With the effects of recent public-funding cuts being keenly felt, it seemed like a timely intervention and the right moment to turn for inspiration to the pioneering benefactors of the past. Horsfall was one of a large group of late Victorian civic leaders who articulated what Diane Maltz has called a 'missionary aesthetic' or, in other words, the virtues of art in social reform. Amy Woodson-Boulton has shown in her aptly-titled study, *Transformative Beauty* (2012), that Horsfall and the Ancoats Art Museum were part of a large network of people and institutions that owed a considerable debt to Ruskin.

I was delighted to become a heritage consultant on the project which won Heritage Lottery Funding, and was extremely satisfied when the Board of Directors of the Guild of St George decided to provide a grant to support two sub-projects. In this article, Julie describes the first of these – a residential weekend with Grizedale Arts, near Brantwood. Addressing the Royal Manchester Institution in 1911, the educationist Michael Sadler asked:

Who of us, after having been kept for weeks continuously in Manchester by the claims of absorbing and insistent work, has not felt the thrill of pleasure with which, as the train carried him into real country and beyond the drab film of the smoke-cloud, he looked out of the window into Cheshire fields, or on to Pennine moorland, or the delicate contours of the limestone landscape of the Peak? Was it possible that sky could be so blue, grass so green, clouds so white? But after all, so far as we consciously range our impressions of the beauty of it, so far as we see pattern in its landscape, balance in its structure and design, are we not seeing what we see through the vision of some dead and gone painter...? (Pictures in a Great City, p. 5)

For Sadler, and those of us fortunate to know art and the countryside, this is certainly true. But as Ruskinians like Sadler and Horsfall knew only too well, the city-dweller can only truly appreciate the canvas as a window on to natural beauty, with some first-hand experience of joy in the countryside it depicts. As Julie shows, such a journey – and it is a journey on many levels – is just as valid and vital in the twenty-first century, proving that the lessons Ruskin and his disciples sought to teach more than a hundred years ago remain relevant today.

1884: Ancoats. Thomas Horsfall opens The Ancoats Art Museum to 'alleviate the miserable dullness and emptiness of the life lived by a very large proportion of the inhabitants of Manchester'.

2013: Ancoats. Young people's mental-health charity, 42nd Street, launches *A Different Spirit*, a programme of work exploring the role of creative engagement in positive mental health and wellbeing.

As a bridge across the 130 years between these events, In November 2013 ten young people from Manchester travelled to Cumbria to make jam, design wallpaper, walk the fells and explore the philosophy of John Ruskin. Their three-day residential was the first step in an 18-month project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Guild of St George to explore, celebrate and represent the mission and principles underlying the Ancoats Art Museum.

A friend and self-appointed disciple of Ruskin, Thomas Horsfall was committed to demonstrating that art and nature could stimulate the character, the morals and the skills of the working classes. In 1884, Horsfall opened his Art Museum with rooms dedicated to painting, sculpture, architecture, and domestic arts. Horsfall also installed a Model Workmen's Room and Mother's Room with the aim of influencing the working man and woman to improve their own surroundings. To that end, classes were offered in woodwork and drawing. The

exhibition spaces were complimented by an evening and weekend programme of free music, lectures, children's concerts and readings.

The Ancoats Art Museum made an important early contribution to thinking around the role of culture in social change and was a pioneer in explicitly linking cultural activity to social progress and spiritual enlightenment, promoting what would now be termed *wellbeing*. This is an area of practice that is particularly pertinent in the 21st century and has been taken up by the health sector and central government through initiatives such as the Five Ways to Wellbeing (New Economics Foundation) and frameworks for public health.

Recovery and a sense of place

42nd Street is an Ancoats-based working with young people between the ages of 11 and 25, who are experiencing mental health and emotional wellbeing difficulties. We offer therapeutic interventions combined with opportunities for young people to develop new skills, be creative,

have fun and demonstrate to themselves and others that they are able to recover from mental ill-health and achieve their goals and ambitions.

In early 2013, I began working at 42nd Street as a cultural producer, with the remit to expand access to arts and culture. The idea for *A Different Spirit* emerged quickly from an afternoon spent googling the history of Ancoats. The resulting project is creating opportunities for 42nd Street to embed itself in the local area, to interrogate the relationship between culture and mental wellbeing and it presents a framework for the engagement of young people who had very little access



Ancoats today (picture courtesy of 42nd Street).



Wallpaper-printing at Coniston Institute. (Photo: Grizedale Arts.)

to the arts, the natural environment, and heritage.

Many of the young people who access services at 42nd Street have problematic relationships with family, have little knowledge of their own heritage and lack a sense of place in the world. Numerous barriers to engaging with social and spare-time activities are also prevalent: difficulties in travelling, chaotic home lives and the perception that emotional and support needs are not addressed by mainstream cultural provision are all complicating factors.

A Different Spirit is a response to appeals by young people who use our services for more opportunities to engage with cultural activities: to express themselves creatively, to understand their place in the world and to leave a positive mark in and on the neighbourhood of Ancoats.

As an organisation, 42nd Street is increasingly interested in understanding the benefits of creative engagement to health and wellbeing. *A Different Spirit* enables us to look to and understand the past as we project forwards. Working with young people and local residents we are drawing together the rich histories and narratives of the Ancoats Art Museum and guiding young people through an exploration of the role of creative engagement in their own recovery.

Over the next year we will be creating a series of public events which provide a contemporary response to Horsfall's endeavours. An online photographic exhibition will be followed by a contemporary 'model room', public art commissions and finally The Ancoats Recital where 19th-century popular song will meet contemporary urban and migrant sounds in a new performance piece for Ancoats.

I have found out what a quince is

A Different Spirit has been constructed to advance participant understanding and an

ability to interpret the history of the Ancoats Art Museum, to see its relevance to life today and to explore this through collaborations with artists and heritage experts.

And so we return to ten young people on the fells of Cumbria.

To deliver the weekend residential with our core group of participants, we commissioned Grizedale Arts to help lead an exploration of the ideas of Ruskin and Horsfall and their enduring relevance.

Grizedale Arts is based in the historic Lawson Park Farm above Ruskin's Brantwood estate in the Lake District. The site is run as a productive smallholding with an ongoing programme of events, projects, residencies and community activity underpinned by a philosophy that emphasises the use and value of art, and promotes the functions of art and artists in practical and effective roles.

Since 2011 Grizedale Arts has been working on the renovation and development of the local village hall in Coniston. The building was originally established as a Mechanics' Institute in the mid 1900s, with a later rebuilding initiated and overseen by John Ruskin in 1878. This was an early model for the modern-day arts centre, built for the then industrial mining village of Coniston, with facilities such as a bathhouse, kitchen, library, reading-room, artists' studios, theatre and a display of stuffed animals donated by Ruskin and Collingwood.

Grizedale Arts' brief was to ground young people in Ruskin's thought through practical experience and to initiate a discussion on the usefulness of art.

The residential was described to participants as a chance to learn rural life-skills for urban living. Participants would then become the core delivery group for *A Different Spirit* and be able to access training

in research skills with Manchester Metropolitan University, interviewing techniques with the North West Sound Archive as well as taking part in creative workshops and projects. Initial interest was high with 25 young people attending information meetings about the project. A group of 12 self-selected young people joined the residential, their suitability being largely decided on a self-assessment of emotional and physical readiness to meet the challenge. For the majority of the group this was a rare chance to leave the city and, for some, it was a first trip into a rural area. None of them had ever made jam.

For three days the group worked with a team of three artists at Lawson Park Farm and the Coniston Institute. Friday evening began with an introductory talk on Ruskin and Grizedale Arts, setting the scene for the hands-on activity to follow. The challenges involved in listening to a talk on Ruskin, Horsfall and the usefulness of art cannot be underestimated when considering the profile of the group. Participants live with a range of challenges including depression, (social) anxiety, autism, attention deficit disorder and mild learning difficulties.

The next two days were structured around a range of tasks offering participants what Grizedale described as 'the choice between being practical and being artistic'. Jam-making was a skill that all the young people were keen to learn. Sausage-making proved less popular but was enthusiastically taken on by a smaller group who were able to provide lunch for everyone using the locally-sourced ingredients made available to them.

On Saturday, the group began to explore techniques for creating handmade, bespoke wallpaper using lino-print techniques. Individual prints were designed and created by each participant and the group then moved on to design and produce prototypes

for wallpaper.

The process intentionally echoed Horsfall's work. Two model rooms at the Ancoats Art Museum (a children's room and a parlour) demonstrated how the design and furnishings of a workman's dwelling could be improved by selecting affordable yet beautiful items which in turn would improve quality of life. Horsfall encouraged a series of instructional classes at the Museum where men and women could learn skills such as carpentry and embroidery – an attempt to improve the surroundings of the poor by stimulating personal creativity.

The wallpaper produced at the residential has been included in Tate Liverpool's exhibition, *Art Turning Left: How Values Changed Making, 1789-2013* as part of Grizedale Art's installation, *The Office of Useful Art*. A small group of participants continued working with Grizedale Arts at the Tate Gallery to create further wallpaper designs. These will also be incorporated into our own Ancoats model-room which we are currently creating in collaboration with Grizedale Arts and Victoria Square sheltered housing.

We enjoyed making this wallpaper very

much. We got obsessed with it. We got really excited. Everyone was shouting at us, telling us 'we need to eat, we need to sort the tables out! stop doing it' and we were like, 'no, we need to continue [with it]'.

A Long Way for a Sausage

The focus of the final day of the residency involved experiencing what rural life was



Young people from 42nd Street, Manchester, exploring the Cumbrian landscape. (Photo: 42nd Street.)

like in the 1800s. To this end, the group spent the morning at Lawson Park touring the smallholding and getting involved in duck husbandry. Towards lunchtime everyone set off on the hour-long walk

towards Parkamoor, a remote and isolated farmhouse. Unaccustomed to outdoor exercise, some of the group struggled with the physical and emotional challenges of the uphill climb. Everyone was able to reach the house in time for a home-made sausage lunch cooked on the wood-fired range.

As we sat in the half-light around the grange we reflected on what life would have been like in the 1800s. Would the workers

that Horsfall was trying to reach have had the personal resources to engage with his museum or would all their creative energies have been taken up with day-to-day survival? Did art and nature contribute to the wellbeing of slum dwellers in Ancoats? Could art and nature have a role in the recovery process and the building of personal resiliencies? It was an engaging informal discussion that rounded off the weekend perfectly. On the return journey to Manchester, the

conversation returned to these themes, plans were made to make more jam and ideas for wallpaper designs were discussed. Horsfall would have been thrilled.

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE GUILD OF CRAFTSMEN MARKS ITS 80-YEARS' ANNIVERSARY

Mary Greensted

In October 2013, the Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen, a registered charity with about seventy professional designer-makers and a trading arm, opened its new shop *The Guild at 51* in Cheltenham's town centre with the support of the Guild of St George. This exciting event marks the Guild's eightieth year and a number of new partnerships.

Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum has re-emerged from over two years of building works as *The Wilson*, a reference to local hero, Edward Wilson, physician, natural historian and artist, who accompanied Captain Scott on his expeditions to Antarctica and died there. But for many people the real joy of a visit to this outstanding institution is the opportunity to see the nationally important Arts and Crafts Movement collection. The collection includes work by almost all the main

practitioners.

The core of Cheltenham's collection is the Cotswold Arts and Crafts with examples by C. R. Ashbee, Gimson and the Barnsleys, Alfred and Louise Powell and many others. There is a very real link between the collection and the Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen, founded in 1933 by the second generation of Arts and Crafts Movement designer-makers working in the Cotswolds. These included the potter, Michael Cardew; George Hart, silversmith, who had joined C. R. Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft in 1902; cabinet-maker, Peter Waals, who had come to the Cotswolds as foreman to Ernest Gimson; and stained-glass artist, Paul Woodroffe. This community of craftsmen and craftswomen joined together with the support of the then curator at Cheltenham, Daniel Herdman, and the

Rural Industries Council for the very Ruskinian purpose of breathing life into the countryside.

The new shop at 51 Clarence Street provides visitors with the opportunity to see, buy, and commission work by professional designer-makers and helps to bring the museum collection to life. Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, it is the only craft shop in Cheltenham. Getting it off the ground has required a tremendous effort of a small charitable organisation. We have had to raise a substantial sum of money as our contribution to the building work and fit-out. We are very fortunate to have had a great deal of help and support, from Arts Council England, from the Guild of St George, and a number of other grant-giving organisations, as well as from individual donors.

The Gloucestershire Guild worked

closely with Berman Guedes Stretton, the architects of the overall project, to establish the character of the shop. We wanted a space that was practical, welcoming, and contemporary with a strong craft and design element that doesn't overwhelm the display. The two features which particularly create this feel are the Vitsoe Universal Shelving System, a classic design by the German industrial designer Dieter Rams from 1960 that remains in production, and the sales desk designed and made in ash by Gloucestershire Guild member, Matthew Tradgett, to our specifications. This last item was largely funded by a grant from the Guild of St George.

Matthew was unable to use Guild oak from Bewdley as originally envisaged

because of regulations laid down by the architects, but we hope to find an opportunity to work with the Guild of St George on this project in the future.

The opening of *The Guild at 51* in October 2013 has revitalised our community. It has been a very hands-on project over more than three years involving all the membership in a variety of ways. Members have organised fund-raising events from coffee mornings to French country-dancing parties, they have moved equipment, installed lighting and organised press coverage – all while making sure they kept their own work in production. Its impact has been felt in a number of different areas. Matthew Tradgett, the Guild furniture-maker whose design was selected for the sales desk, says that winning this commission and undertaking the work gave a real boost to his confidence. He has since decided to give up his employment with a firm making bespoke kitchens to concentrate on his own work. He has also been able to give additional time to the Guild and is making a series of short video clips showing Guild makers at work which we hope to use in the shop and on our website.

The Guild at 51 is helping to bring the museum collection to life by showing contemporary work in the same tradition, organising workshops and demonstrations and above all, forging a

relationship between the maker and purchaser that can add another layer of significance to what are already well-designed and beautifully made pieces of craftwork. And makers are now using the Arts and Crafts collection at Cheltenham as an inspiration for new work. Liz Lippiatt, one of the Guild's most successful and innovative members, has adapted an embroidery by Ernest Gimson, surviving only as a glass plate negative at The



The Guild at 51.

including young up-and-coming designer-makers. One such maker, Kristian Pettifor, has spent the last eleven years working in leading workshops in Britain and Ireland. He has recently taken the major step of working on his own and joined the Gloucestershire Guild for additional support. Kristian designs and makes functional pieces using native certified-sustainable timber; his current work is inspired by studying visual patterns within the natural environment.

The Guild at 51 has provided an opportunity to introduce new craftwork to Guild members and the wider public.

We've introduced a series of temporary displays, 'Maker in Focus', bringing the work of a different maker into the shop for two months. So far we have shown the work of an exciting young designer from Manchester, Joseph James Hartley, winner of the prestigious Business Design Centre New

Designer of the Year Award in 2012. Joseph designs and makes thoroughly usable objects from traditional materials using simple techniques. The results are objects that are pure and honest that feature virtually no decoration or surface treatment. His products are playful and are intended to be used and enjoyed.

In January through to the end of February, we shall be featuring the work of our second guest, Mary Butcher, mixed-media sculptor and one of the foremost willow specialists in the country. Mary is based in Canterbury and in 2009 was the Crafts Council designer-in-residence at the V&A. She was originally a willow specialist, learning to create local, traditional work from apprenticed makers. She went on to research basket history, a little-recorded subject. A Fellowship in Basketmaking at Manchester Metropolitan University and contacts with basket-makers in Britain and abroad, gave her freedom to explore creative possibilities and generate other ways of making. Her techniques and materials now vary from the traditional to the contemporary using natural stems, leaves, bark, wire, plastics, vellum, paper, and lots of colour.

This partnership between a distinguished craft guild and a highly-respected provincial museum is a very exciting and appropriate new initiative. *The Guild at 51* is doing well financially and has been received with great enthusiasm by the public. We look forward to the next eighty years, to



Inside The Guild at 51.

growing the Guild and developing educational initiatives, in particular mentoring young makers and developing the public understanding of the crafts. We were thrilled to have the support of the Guild of St George at an early stage and are very grateful particularly for the help of the Master, Clive Wilmer, and Trustee, Robert Wilson. We are hoping that the connection we have created will develop and that our two organisations, which share many of the same objectives, can work together in the future.

Mary Greensted is Chairman, Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen
www.guildcrafts.org.uk

Please note: you can see a short film of Matthew Tradgett making the sales desk by following this link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SawL5oupBLA



Guild shop stock including the cushions by Liz Lippiatt based on an Ernest Gimson design.

EXHIBITION & CATALOGUE REVIEWS

Christopher Newall, *John Ruskin Artist and Observer* (with contributions from Christopher Baker, Ian Jeffrey and Conal Shields) (Paul Holberton publishing, 2014) 376pp, ill.

Published in conjunction with the exhibition, *John Ruskin: Artist and Observer*, and presented in Ottawa from 14 February to 11 May 2014, and in Edinburgh from 4 July to 28 September 2014.

This magnificent new book contains essays by Christopher Newall on 'Ruskin's Drawings', Conal Shields on 'Ruskin as Artist: Seeing and Feeling', Ian Jeffrey considers 'John Ruskin and the Daguerreotype' and Christopher Baker explores 'Ruskin and Scotland'. The book includes an excellent catalogue by Newall covering seven headings: Architectural Detail and Ornament, Buildings, Town and Topography, Geology and Foregrounds, Mountains and Skies, Nature Studies, and Figures. There are beautiful colour illustrations, a Chronology and Bibliography.

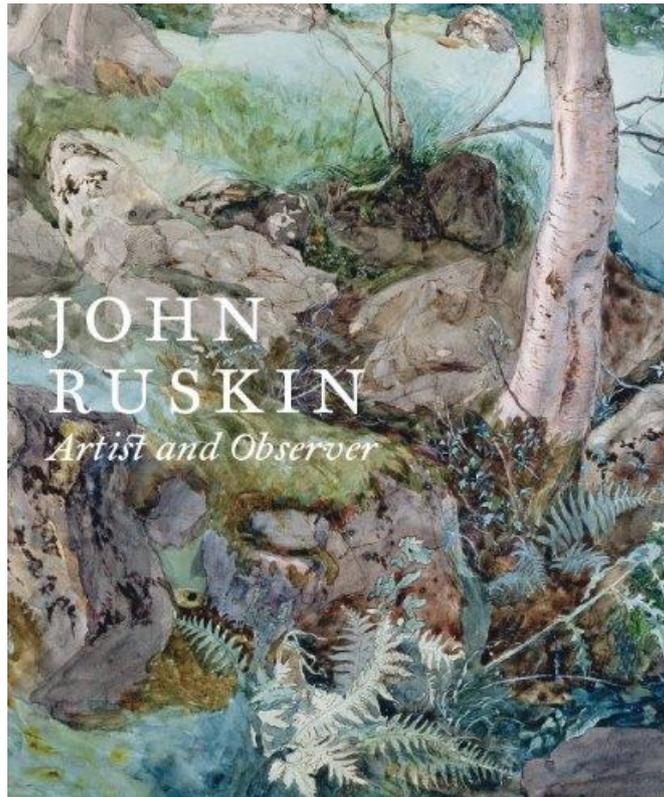
Ruskin is perhaps best known as an artist through books in which his drawings could well be regarded as the 'essential visual text upon which the author writes his commentary'.¹ For example, the study of architecture was facilitated through the drawing process, there being aspects of a building which could 'only be known by drawing it' (13.502), whilst the real beauty of St Mark's, Venice would remain hidden 'unless you will learn to draw' (24.287). Ruskin proudly claimed in *Modern Painters* (1843) that 'it is proper for the public to know that the writer is no mere theorist, but has been devoted from his youth to the laborious study of practical art' (3.5).

Charles Eliot Norton established a general view that Ruskin largely used drawing 'as a means from which to deduce a principle of art, or to preserve a record'.² This was reinforced in Arts Council exhibitions in 1954 and 1960 when his watercolours were seen to be 'made generally as working notes or illustrations to a thesis'.³ His 'more ambitious works such as his large watercolours of Alpine scenery' were seen by Kenneth Clark as 'very seldom a success' being 'simply too difficult for him'.⁴

Ruskin undoubtedly utilised drawing as a tool for the enhancement of looking, learning, understanding and explaining, but this aspect has tended to dominate critical writings. In more recent times there has been a growing appreciation of Ruskin's drawings as artworks, by, for example, Peter Fuller.⁵ Christopher Newall has previously examined Ruskin's drawings in an important essay for the Maas Gallery in 1991,⁶ followed by a more lengthy study

'Ruskin and the Art of Drawing' in 1993.⁷ This current work, *Ruskin: Artist and Observer*, is a superbly researched, beautifully written and splendidly produced book; its central theme being that Ruskin was indeed a great artist.

Newall's introductory essay is comprehensive in scope. It deals with



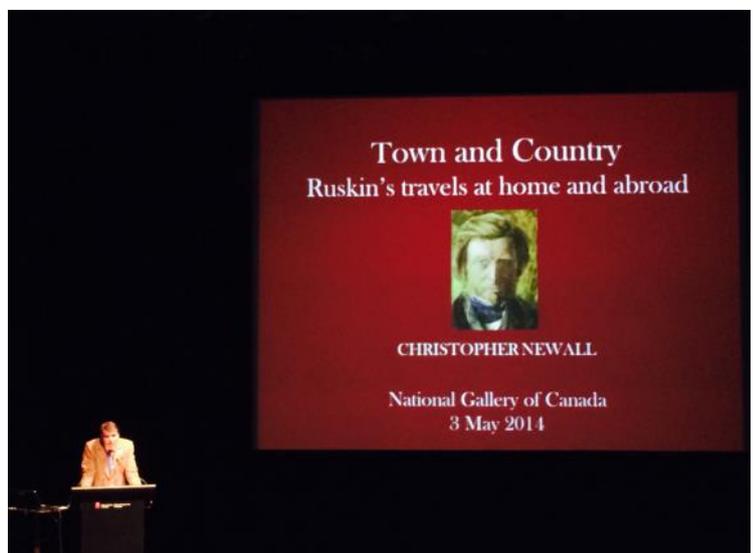
Ruskin's 'extraordinary acuity of sight' and his artistic education. His growing awareness of the importance of Turner's 'delight-drawings' is examined and the well-known 'moments of epiphany' at Norwood and Fontainebleau are explored. Interesting consideration is given to his situation as 'privileged by his financial independence' against the approaches demanded of the professional artist. Much use is made via quotation of

Ruskin's own explanations and feelings concerning his aims and achievements as an artist. This, Newall admits, with regard to the latter, is 'something of a conundrum'. I remain unconvinced, however, by his suggestion that Ruskin's landscape work 'may be recognised on occasion as stemming from unfulfilled sexual desires'.

Attention is given to all aspects of Ruskin's art practice and is written in a form both accessible to a person engaging with his works for the first time whilst making deeply rewarding and illuminating reading for those already possessing a considerable knowledge of the subject.

Conal Shields provides a penetrating and sensitive analysis of Ruskin's development and achievement in 'Ruskin as Artist: Seeing and Feeling'. He begins with an important (as far as I am aware, unpublished) letter by Ruskin, writing about his work to his friend the Reverend Daniel Moore of Camden Chapel. Shields notes that Ruskin's 'playing down of purpose and the mix of diffidence about his abilities with a claim to some degree of artistic virtue is entirely typical of Ruskin'. He rightly believes that 'Ruskin's art has been, in the main, ignored or at best treated casually', examining his upbringing and influences 'mentors and models' and his experiments to 'invoke and inhabit Turner's mental processes'.

Some of the most brilliant and



Companion Christopher Newall lecturing in Ottawa.

enlightening parts of the essay are those in which Shields re-creates the practical and technical methods Ruskin used, through a detailed examination of the paintings. Processes and materials are shown to be utilised in what he calls ‘Ruskin’s technical evolution’ where a drawing is able to ‘convey simultaneously a vast quantity of highly specific information and an impression of mass and weight’. The conclusion is that ‘Ruskin’s art had a fluency and control as well as an emotional capacity that sets him among the greatest of English painters and draftsmen’ and that ‘the relative neglect of his achievement is simply bewildering’.

The seven-sectioned *Catalogue* compiled by Christopher Newall includes the range of works collected and arranged for the exhibition. The illustrations are very fine,

several being full-page enlargements which allow for satisfying examination of details and technique. The text is wonderfully researched and detailed. This information enriches enormously the experience of viewing the drawings. There is a useful Chronology which includes a small error relating to 1849 when Ruskin arrived in Venice in November of that year in order to commence the collection of information for *The Stones of Venice* (staying until March 1850).

John Ruskin Artist and Observer is a major production and it is a highly important addition to the field of Ruskin studies. The exhibition when it arrives in the UK is not to be missed.

Ray Haslam

NOTES

1. John Dixon Hunt, ‘Oeuvre and footnote’, In John Dixon Hunt & Faith M. Holland, *The Ruskin Polygon* (MUP, 1982) p. 5.
2. *Notes on Drawings by Mr. Ruskin Placed on Exhibition by Professor Norton* (CUP, 1879) (13. 583).
3. *John Ruskin 1819-1900: An Exhibition of Watercolours and Drawings* (The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1954) p. 9.
4. *Drawings by John Ruskin* (The Arts Council 1960) p. 8.
5. Peter Fuller, *Images of God: The Consolations of Lost Illusions* (London, 1983).
6. *John Ruskin and His Circle* (Maas Gallery, June 1991).
7. Christopher Newall, ‘Ruskin and the Art of Drawing’ In *John Ruskin and the Victorian Eye* (Abrams, 1983) pp. 81-115.

Veronese: Magnificence in Renaissance Venice (The National Gallery, 19 March—15 June 2014)

People who value John Ruskin’s insights and enthusiasms, and who seek to defend him against charges of wilfulness or eccentricity, will get a pulse of satisfaction to find his favourable opinion of Veronese’s *The Family of Darius before Alexander*, expressed in a letter to *The Times* of 7 July 1857 on the occasion of its purchase by the National Gallery. The letter is quoted in Xavier Salomon’s opening text in the catalogue of the present exhibition. Contradicting those who had said

of the gallery’s administration in the belief that its educational purpose depended on the display of superlative works by all European schools.

As the beneficiary of the wealth accumulated by his father from the sherry importing business, and who only in his later years ever found himself constrained financially, Ruskin had the opportunity to travel and to see great works of art in their original settings. Through his writings—

‘discovered’ artists whose works seemed to give evidence of intensity of feeling—religious or otherwise—in past centuries, and whose works he then recommended and explained to his readership. In 1845, during the summer of which he travelled in Italy looking at historic art in preparation for *Modern Painters II*, his attention was drawn to the art of Tintoretto, an event which—as he wrote many years later—caused him to write the ‘Stones of Venice’ rather than the ‘Stones



Veronese, *The Family of Darius* (1565-70).

that the painting was second-rate work and too expensive, Ruskin pronounced that, in his view, ‘no price [could be] too large for it’, while in evidence to the National Gallery Site Commission he reckoned it ‘the most precious Paul Veronese in the world ... and quite a priceless picture’. Thus, Ruskin lent his support to a bolder and more expansionist policy of acquisition on the part

notably the second volume of *Modern Painters* (1846), and the three volumes of *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53)—he encouraged a generation of Britons to travel and to seek out works of art and architecture in faraway locations. In his diaries and letters, and eventually in his autobiography *Præterita*, Ruskin described moments of epiphanic excitement as he

of Chamouni’. Tintoretto became for him an artist who expressed the virility and confidence of Venetian artistic traditions, and an exemplar of how faith informed an understanding of the narratives of the Old and New Testaments (although in later years when Ruskin’s own belief in God had lapsed, in a like spirit he came to doubt whether Tintoretto necessarily believed the stories for

which he found such spectacular pictorial expression in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco).

Ruskin never described works by Veronese with the same attention that Tintoretto's received in *Modern Painters II*. It may be noted that he seems to have been hardly aware of the church of San Sebastiano, in the Dorsoduro and a short distance from San Rocco, which is almost entirely decorated by Veronese. However, in *Præterita* he recalled how in 1842 George Richmond had drawn attention to the quality of colour in Veronese's work. Two years later, describing *The Marriage at Cana* in the Louvre, Ruskin credited Veronese with 'manly, fearless, fresco-like attainments of vast effect'. Several times in his early writings Ruskin included Veronese in check-lists of the painters he regarded as among the very greatest (in 1844, in the preface to the second edition of *Modern Painters I*, the artist appears among a list of five names from which Tintoretto's was omitted).

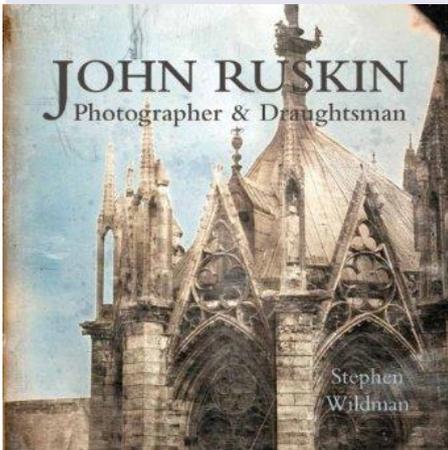
Of all Veronese's works, the one most frequently referred to by Ruskin was *The Family of Darius before Alexander*, but the two

paintings by which he was most thoroughly absorbed were *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* (in the Galleria Sabauda in Turin, although now regarded as a work from the artist's studio), and the great banquet subject, *The Feast in the House of Levi*, painted for the Dominican Fathers at SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice but seen by Ruskin in the Accademia. Ravished by the sumptuous colour and richness of texture that he found in the former painting, Ruskin marked it as having prompted his own departure from the austerity of taste that had been inculcated in him by the evangelical Protestantism of his mother. The second of these two works also gave him pause for thought, as in the winter of 1876-77 in Venice he studied the surviving archival records relating to Veronese's summons before the inquisition and the refusal of the inquisitors to accept the painting as a legitimate representation of The Last Supper on the grounds that that subject departed in so many respects from the Biblical account. Ruskin added as an appendix a transcription of the exchanges between artist and inquisitors to his *Guide to the Academy of Fine Arts at Venice* (1877), in

which such questions were asked as 'What is the meaning of those men dressed in the German fashion, each with a halberd in his hand', and 'That fellow dressed like a buffoon, with the parrot on his wrist,—for what purpose is he introduced into the canvas?'; to which Veronese is quoted as having replied: 'We painters take the same license that is permitted to poets, and jesters', and that he simply sought 'to ornament the picture as I judged best, which, being large, requires many figures, as it appeared to me'. Ruskin's own footnoted interpolations and his concluding explanation as to how the painter had simply retitled the work so as to avoid having to repaint the subject according to the doctrine of the counter-reformation, make clear his own view of the absurdity of the process of legalistic interrogation as applied to works of art and the primacy of the aesthetic purpose, thoughts that must have returned to him a year later at the time of the case brought against him for professional defamation by James Whistler.

Christopher Newall

John Ruskin: Photographer and Draughtsman at the Watts Gallery, 4 Feb – 1 June 2014.
Stephen Wildman, *John Ruskin: Photographer and Draughtsman* (Watts Gallery, 2014).



The invention of the daguerreotype in 1839 represents an extraordinary moment in the history of western culture. For the first time ever it was possible to capture and preserve the appearance of the physical world in a moment of time. But although it was effectively the first practical photographic method, it differed in significant ways from the photography that has so triumphantly followed it. Crucially, daguerreotype images, formed on polished metal plates, are unique; they cannot be reproduced, except by lithography or engraving – as in some of the illustrations to Ruskin's books – or by re-daguerreotyping

the original. Photographs on sensitised paper, by contrast, can be reprinted again and again; and the exposure times they require are relatively short. As a result, the daguerreotype was rapidly superseded and, by the mid-1850s, no longer much in use. But there is a strange magic to those daguerreotypes of the 1840s that no other sort of picture can quite capture.

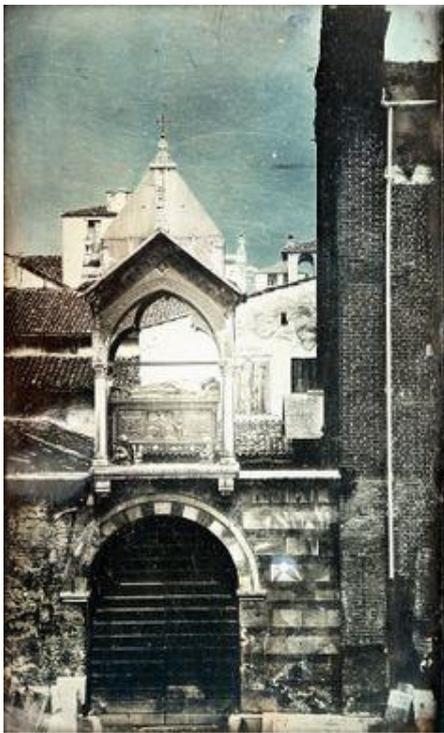
Ruskin was strongly opposed to any notion of art produced by mechanical process, and for much of his life he expressed an aversion to photography. This did not prevent him using photographs when, as a critic of sculpture or architecture, he needed reliable records. But he consistently argued that nothing could supersede draughtsmanship as a truthful means of representation, for the good draughtsman is inwardly responsive to his subject and the inherence of human feeling is the essence of art. But for a period in the 1840s – the most important

decade of Ruskin's life for the development of his taste – he was bewitched by Louis Daguerre's new process, admiring its products more than he was ever to admire photographs. In 1846 he writes that he has 'brought away some precious records from Florence'. The daguerreotype is, he adds, 'the most marvellous invention of the century; given us, I think, just in time to save some evidence from the great public of wreckers.' In other words, though the rage for false 'restoration' and rebuilding could not be halted, 'precious records' of the old buildings could be kept. Part of the appeal of the new process for Ruskin is located in that word 'precious'. The daguerreotype was not art, but it did have – accidentally perhaps – one of the qualities of art. It seemed to hold the image in an enchanted space, as if it were secreted within the shining plate.

To see into a daguerreotype, the viewer needs to hold the plate and avert it very slightly from the light. That simple fact



The Tomb of Ilaria del Carretto: Ruskin's drawing (left) and daguerreotype (right).



The Tomb of Castelbarco, Verona: Ruskin's daguerreotype (left) and drawing (right).

illustrations to Ruskin's books. Though I was familiar with all the drawings and most of the daguerreotypes, I was occasionally surprised to find how closely related they were – for instance, the famous 1869 watercolour of the Castelbarco Tomb in Verona turns out to be, for the most part, a copy of a daguerreotype taken as many as seventeen years before.

But the Swiss section is perhaps the most striking of them. There are fine townscapes in Rheinfelden and Fribourg, the floral iron balcony in Bellinzona that was engraved for *The Two Paths*, and some spectacular Alpine scenes. In such images, the visitor is conscious of Ruskin's presence directing the photographer, presumably one of his two valets, both of whom were taught to handle the machines. Where views of famous façades are concerned – and Wildman has not included many of these – it is reasonable to detect the hand of some local professional, a dealer in the nineteenth-century equivalent of picture postcards. The pictures by Hobbs or Crawley are far more interesting.

In 2006, as Companions will be aware, a box of 188 of Ruskin's daguerreotypes was discovered – courtesy of Fors – in an auction in the Lake District. Also courtesy of Fors, they were found by Ken and Jenny Jacobson, dealers and collectors of antique photographs, who quickly realised what they had stumbled upon. Some experts argue that their collection is a finer one than Lancaster's. Whether it is or not, admirers of Ruskin have hoped for a long time that the Jacobson collection could be shown, perhaps together with the Lancaster set, in a single exhibition. Both Tate Britain and the Royal Academy looked into the possibility, and Companion Ian Warrell, formerly of the Clore Gallery at Tate Britain, offered to curate. But both galleries at the last moment rejected the proposal. Stephen Wildman's much more limited show was perhaps intended as a sort of consolation. It helps us to see what Ruskin saw in a unique way – and one cannot ask for better than that – but it also whets the appetite for more.

Clive Wilmer

makes daguerreotypes difficult to exhibit. If you hang them on the wall – and what else are you to do in an exhibition? – the light is likely to be either too direct or too remote. Companion Stephen Wildman, Director of the Ruskin Library and Research Centre at Lancaster University, has struggled with this problem at Lancaster and tries to solve it in a different way in this marvellous show at the Watts Gallery, near Guildford. When he shows daguerreotypes at the Ruskin Library, he is often able to place them at careful angles in display cases. I shall never forget the first time I saw Ruskin's daguerreotype of the tomb of Ilaria del Carretto on show there, set at an angle in the display case with Ruskin's beautiful drawing placed beside it. The picture seems to disclose a double mystery. First of all, the effigy appears to float inside the polished metal – one cannot believe this is simply a flat image – and secondly, it calls to mind the effigy itself, that life-like

appearance that Ruskin describes so well – as if the stone breathed, as if Ilaria's spirit lived on inside it.

From that perspective, *John Ruskin: Photographer and Draughtsman* has one inescapable shortcoming – which is not at all to say that the exhibition fails. It is, indeed, a spectacular success: an event of historic importance. What Stephen Wildman has done is to bring together the daguerreotypes themselves, enlarged photographic reproductions of them on paper, and drawings by Ruskin derived from them or intimately connected with them. He has divided the show into four sections, representing the four regions Ruskin visited and studied throughout the period: Venice and Verona, Tuscany, northern France and Switzerland.

The first three sections are mostly architectural, and many of the images will be familiar to Ruskin enthusiasts, recurring as they do in watercolours and in the

RUSKIN IN ST PAUL'S

James S. Dearden

My friend, Tim Hilton, has recently drawn my attention to a 'portrait' of Ruskin which is omitted from my 1999 book, *John Ruskin, A Life in Pictures*.

My No.148 is a bust of Ruskin modelled in clay at the end of 1879 by Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm. This clay model was probably destroyed after two terra cotta casts had been made from it. One of these casts is now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. Next, Boehm executed a marble bust, which is in the Ruskin Drawing School

at Oxford. Several plaster casts were made from this bust, one of which is in the Guild's collection at Sheffield.

The January 1881 issue of the journal, *Vanity Fair*, contained a caricature by 'Spy' (Sir Leslie Ward) of Boehm (No.150 in my catalogue) working on his clay bust of Ruskin.

Writing in 1915 in his autobiography, *Forty Years of 'Spy'*, Ward recalled that

When I made my drawing of Sir Edgar Boehm, the famous sculptor,

I depicted him working in a characteristic attitude upon his bust of Ruskin, which was in the rough clay and half finished. He was engaged also at the time upon a bust of Queen Victoria, to whom he was 'Sculptor in Ordinary'. Imagine my surprise when I received the following letter from Sir Edgar:
Feb 2nd, 1881
Dear Mr Ward,
... Did you hear that the Queen



Plaster cast of the bust of John Ruskin by Sir J. E. Boehm (Dearden 149).
(Collection of the Guild of St George.)

when she saw your excellent portrait of me was under the impression that Ruskin's bust was meant for one of herself! till some time after the mistake was pointed out to H.M. I have heard it now from three different people who know, else I should not have

believed that we could be for one instant suspected of being disloyal

...

Yours sincerely,
J. E. Boehm.

When Boehm died in 1890 he was buried in St Paul's Cathedral. Five years later both Millais and Leighton were also buried there. Ward went to visit the three tombs, and he recorded: 'I was almost staggered when I beheld on Sir Edgar Boehm's tomb a crude reproduction in brass of my *Vanity Fair* cartoon!'

In the crypt of St Paul's, on the wall very near the tomb of Millais, is a brass and marble memorial panel to Boehm, placed there by his family. It was made by Elkington & Co. A few feet away in the floor of the crypt, is the brass, marble and mastic ledger stone covering Boehm's tomb. The maker's name does not appear on the panel, but because of its similarity to the wall memorial, it is assumed that this is also the work of Elkington & Co. The name of the designer is not known. The panel at the foot of the ledger, containing the caricature, measures 19 inches square. reproduce here the various versions of the Boehm bust of Ruskin.



Caricature by 'Spy' (Sir Leslie Ward) of Boehm sculpting his bust of Ruskin.



The portion of the tomb of Sir J. E. Boehm containing the 'Spy' caricature (Courtesy of St Paul's Cathedral).



The caricature from the tomb, as reproduced in 'Spy's' autobiography

GEOFFREY HILL IN RUSKINLAND

Clive Wilmer

Ruskin's *influence* is a subject all Ruskinians talk about and, when they do so, the names of Proust, Tolstoy and Gandhi are almost certain to arise. There are also cases where the influence is more marginal and others where it's a matter of speculation, but what is most striking is the extent, depth and range of Ruskin's influence, especially in the first half of the twentieth century.

But what about today? Who are the great Ruskinians of modern times, especially if we exclude the academics who write about him? Who are the modern thinkers, campaigners, artists and writers who look to him as their master? For me, the outstanding example is Sir Geoffrey Hill. Now 81, still hugely prolific and stirring the waters a good deal with his lectures as Oxford Professor of Poetry, Hill is widely regarded as the outstanding poet currently writing in our language. Some would go further: to the novelist A.N. Wilson, for instance, Hill is 'probably the best writer alive, in verse or in prose'.

Hill has made no secret of his attachment to Ruskin. The great Victorian makes frequent appearances in his massive *Collected Critical Writings* (2008), one whole 100-page section of which centres on Ruskin's notion of 'intrinsic value'. In a number of interviews given when he – somewhat surprisingly, given his age – took on the Oxford Professorship, Hill went out of his way to affirm his Ruskinian allegiances. When an undergraduate interviewer asked him about his politics, for instance, he replied: 'I would describe myself as a sort of Ruskinian Tory. It is only Ruskinian Tories these days who ... sound like old-fashioned Marxists. I read and re-read Ruskin, particularly *Fors Clavigera*, and I am in profound agreement with William Morris's "Art under Plutocracy"'. I may need to remind some readers that the latter is the incendiary attack on capitalism Morris delivered in Oxford in 1883. On that occasion, many respectable dons stormed out of the room when Morris invited them to convert, as he had, to Socialism. Order was only restored when Professor Ruskin rose from the floor, defended Morris and identified with his analysis. This was Ruskin in his *Fors* mode: 'a violent Tory of the old school' and at the same time 'a Communist of the old school ... reddest also of the red'. The Morrisian phrase that Hill has picked on to characterise the evils of our modern polity is 'anarchical Plutocracy', one of the phrases that Ruskin would have found it easy to endorse.

But it is not only in his prose and oral polemics that Hill addresses Ruskin. Allusions to Ruskin also occur from time to time in the poetry. Outstanding among these is section XXV of *Mercian Hymns* (1971), probably Hill's most widely admired work. This is a sequence of prose poems about the West Midlands in history, geography and autobiography. Hill was born in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, in 1932. His background was modest – his father was a village policeman and his immediate forebears were distinctly working class. *Mercian Hymns* centres on Offa, the eighth-century King of Mercia, mainly remembered today as the builder of Offa's Dyke. Hill's Offa appears in several guises: as the historical monarch; as a kind of local deity, 'the presiding genius of the West Midlands'; and as a projection of Hill himself, a 'staggeringly gifted child' of tyrannical character, growing up at the time of the Second

World War. Sections XXIII-XXIV are concerned with medieval craftsmanship in the West Midlands. Hill first imagines the embroiderers of the *Opus Anglicanum*, and then the stone masons working on the Romanesque churches of the region. No doubt recalling the church at Kilpeck, he envisages one mason as 'intent to pester upon tympanum and chancel-arch his moody testament, confusing warrior with lion, dragon-coils, tendrils of the stony vine'. In the energy of the language here, and the vivid evocation of medieval craftsmanship, we may pick up just a hint of Ruskin, and then in section XXV we suddenly find ourselves amid 'the utilitarian metal-work of the nineteenth century' with Ruskin as a presence:

Brooding on the eightieth letter of *Fors Clavigera*,
I speak this in memory of my grandmother, whose
childhood and prime womanhood were spent in the
nailer's darg.

The nailshop stood back of the cottage, by the fold.
It reeked stale mineral sweat. Sparks had furred
its low roof. In dawn-light the troughed water
floated a damson-bloom of dust –

not to be shaken by posthumous clamour. It is one
thing to celebrate the 'quick forge', another
to cradle a face hare-lipped by the searing wire.

Brooding on the eightieth letter of *Fors Clavigera*,
I speak this in memory of my grandmother, whose
childhood and prime womanhood were spent in the
nailer's darg.

There is much more connecting this to both Ruskin and the Guild than the simple reference to *Fors Clavigera*. There is also the setting, which, as we gather from that 'eightieth letter', is near Bewdley: 'Worcestershire for "Beaulieu",' says Ruskin, always concerned with the origins and exact meanings of words – beautiful place, much as it is today. Hill's concern is more specifically local, he being a native of the same region and having roots in the poorer communities of the West Midlands. (Bromsgrove is not a great distance from Bewdley.) Their shared interest in words surfaces most strikingly in that last but repeated phrase from Hill's poem: 'the nailer's darg', which, as we shall see, comes straight from the *Fors* letter. What is a *darg*?

But before I answer that question, I must raise another. Why is Ruskin writing about Bewdley and what significance do the nailers have for him? In Letter 80 he introduces his readers to George Baker, Mayor of Birmingham, who has donated twenty acres of Wyre Forest woodland to the Guild. Writing from Baker's Birmingham home, Ruskin reports on his first visit to 'St George's land ... in the midst of a sweet space of English hill and dale and orchard, yet unhurt by hand of man': the same land that is managed for us today by John and Linda Iles. At exactly this time Baker is engaged in building his Worcestershire mansion, Beaucastle, beautiful

castle – the connection with Beaulieu is probably important, and the workmanship was influenced by Ruskin. He is clearly a wealthy man and, as part of the visit, has introduced Ruskin to ‘a representative group of the best men of Birmingham’, who (Ruskin tells us) ‘have been very kind to me, and have taught me much’. But admirable as he finds these ‘conscientious’ men – presumably men of business – he is made uneasy by what he calls ‘the conditions’ in which he meets them. It soon becomes clear that he is thinking of the prevailing social context, for ‘all they showed me, and told me, of good, involved yet the main British modern idea that the master and his men’ – interesting that in this of all contexts he uses the word ‘master’ – ‘should belong to two entirely different classes; perhaps loyally related to and assisting each other; but yet, – the one, on the whole, living in hardship – the other in ease...’ and he goes on to elaborate this distinction. Letter 80 shows us Ruskin at his most sensitive to the tragic distinction between rich and poor, master and servant, employer and employee. And it is in this mood that he is invited, quite by chance – by *fors*, as he would say, for these chance connections determine the structure of his ‘Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain’ – to visit a workshop where nails are manufactured.

This is in the region of Halesowen, which Baker tells him – and Ruskin is more than conscious of some irony – is ‘happily far away from St George’s ground’ and (Ruskin adds) ‘from all that is our present England’s life, and – pretended – glory.’ What he finds in the nail-shop takes him by surprise, for the workers at the forge are a pair of women, one seventeen or eighteen, the other thirty-five, ‘both gentle and kind’, labouring away in the heat and darkness. In Ruskin’s imaginative grasp they become mythical figures, ‘The Two

Clavigerae’ – nail-bearers, bearers of fate, victims of circumstance or economic necessity.

So wrought they, – the English Matron and Maid; – so was it their darg to labour from morning to evening, – seven to seven, – by the furnace side, – the winds of summer fanning the blast of it. The wages of the Matron Fors, I found, were eight shillings a week; – her husband ... could make sixteen. Three shillings a week for rent and taxes, left, as I count, for the guerdon [reward] of their united labour, if constant, and its product providently saved, fifty-five pounds a year, on which they had to feed and clothe themselves and their six children; eight souls in their little Worcestershire ark.

Geoffrey Hill’s memory shows how closely linked we are to Ruskin’s world and how easily our economy of profit produces these conditions of existence – one can hardly call it life. The nails the women forge, it strikes Ruskin, are destined for the railways, where ‘a thousand lives [will] soon ... depend daily on its driven grip of the iron way’.

And the darg? It means, according to Cook and Wedderburn, “‘a day’s work’”—the word being a syncopated form of *daywerk*,’ and this is not its only appearance in *Fors*. Hill, as conscious of words and their roots and resonances as Ruskin was, draws it from its context in *Fors* to exhibit it as an emblem, standing in effect for the equation of time with money, and therefore for the economic system that oppresses the clothing workers in Bangladesh as surely as Ruskin’s women, their beauty in that beautiful place ‘marred by the labour’.

RUSKIN AND THE ARTISTS OF TODAY

Howard Hull

E. H. Gombrich memorably began his history of western art with the words ‘There is no such thing as art, only artists.’ It was an acknowledgement tinged with more than a touch of wryness that in the field of what is generally called contemporary art – or more simply let us say the art of the present day – the bewildering variety of work claiming our attention defies even the loosest definition. The twentieth century so comprehensively demolished the foundations on which art could be evaluated that by the 1950’s the artist’s *intention* was beginning to qualify as the primary – even sole—feature of his or her work deserving of attention.

Filled with anger in the aftermath of the Great War, artists of the early part of the last century were understandably eager to eradicate their links to the past and demonised the nineteenth century in particular. On the surface at least, Ruskin fared no better than any of his contemporaries. However, time has been on Ruskin’s side and today he stands accused less of being a dinosaur in such an evolution than a rogue gene. It is precisely because Ruskin got under the skin of his own era so incisively

that he liberated many of the conceptual and philosophical forces which drove radical change when it erupted in the post-war period. This universalism is a famous hallmark of Ruskin, though ironically it has not received much critical notice in the field of art. Every day, year in, year out, Ruskin is still quoted somewhere in the world in the field of art criticism and yet no-one pauses to consider what a phenomenon this endurance and range constitutes.

Consider what some of the following Ruskinian thoughts actually mean: greatness in art stands in direct proportion to the number of ideas that an artist communicates; nothing but art is moral; art without industry is sin; industry without art is brutality; all great art is praise. Even Ruskin’s comments on individual artists remain deeply challenging – for instance, his argument that Turner failed to produce work as truly great as he might have done because the world failed to nurture him; and Ruskin’s famous rejection of Whistler: so often represented as Ruskin being too

old-fashioned to appreciate the modern, when in reality his anger was that a talented young artist would be content with showmanship when he was capable of greater industry and depth – a potential young Turner. To push any of these thoughts to their logical conclusions is to see how profoundly radical they are and how little sympathy they extend to the indulgences of the art market in any era.

Ruskin’s call to society to nurture its artists; his observation that a society gets the art it deserves; his constant association of moral value and creative power: – all of these are social messages which place the artist at the heart, not the periphery, of civil society. They place upon that society a responsibility to value, challenge and defend the imagination and vision of its most creative people, and to cherish in all people the innate creativity that can accompany their work and social relations. Typically, he puts upon the shoulders of those who practice such creativity the heaviest burden of all: truth to such a trust, wherever it may lead.

It is against the background of such

observations as these that we can assess Ruskin's appeal to artists today. And the first thing we can observe is that both the climate in which art is made and received, and the commitment of many who practice it, are split along some deep fracture lines. The worlds of public and private art are so much chalk and cheese.

In the public sphere I believe art reflects remarkably well upon the core principles that Ruskin espoused. Ironically, the medium and form of such art is often 'difficult'. It is exploratory, allusive, and ephemeral. It loves installation, documentation, film, performance and social action. Amazingly, public patronage has exerted a light touch when it comes to shaping the work of artists working in this arena. It has wanted both to hear what they have to say and to help that voice reach as far as possible. It has been progressive, encouraging artists to work in whatever way most effectively communicates their ideas. The ideas have been the thing. In England this has largely been at the behest of the Arts Council, and English culture has been the richer for it, even though the patronage of the public purse is not an ideological prerequisite of socially relevant art. Through the relentless energies of museums and galleries, the public have come to engage with artists working in this way.

There is a flip side. The global scale of the art market today beggars belief. Artists who become darlings of the market, the 'culture casino' of endless art fairs and pop-up galleries, learn to varnish their work with an altogether different gloss. Here the object is the thing – something that can be traded. And as in any market, getting noticed is paramount. Virtuosity, vanity, even violence – anything that calls attention to itself. This merry-go-round is a return to the world in which John Ruskin grew up. The new art of his day mostly adorned the great houses of the land, hidden from the view of the millions toiling in the industrial ghettos of polluted cities. As the number of the super-rich and their aspirants multiplies around the world, art has become a colourful currency, taking its place alongside Bitcoins and Brands. The prestigious public palaces of aspiration that were the early galleries and museums were initially treasuries, designed to declare national or regional holdings of such wealth. Even now they are being built in every industrial city of the new economic giants from China to India, Brazil to Indonesia.

These museums, are nonetheless interesting. They have evolved in a profound sense from their forbears. The difference is not in the grandiose architecture on the face of institutions but of the attitude inside them. Taking their

curatorial cues from leading western galleries, they are more interested in ideas and intangibles, upon process and perspective, above all upon social relations. It is all surprisingly Ruskinian.

There isn't room here to trace directly the lineage of thinking from Ruskin to today's artists and their curators, for as with all chains of influence the source is often obscured from the consciousness of the recipient and to expose the roots is a lengthy and considered process – and not necessarily popular. Nonetheless, the rapidity with which Ruskin's ideas became associated with the most progressive and avant-garde of writers, artists and architects in the twentieth century is astonishing and reveals something very important about his way of thinking: its fugitive nature. The fact that a man lauding the work of Kate Greenaway and Francesca Alexander could so deeply influence such hard-headed and aggressive modernists as Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, Ezra Pound and Mies Van de Rohe shows how Ruskin's own way of getting to the heart of creativity would speak to any serious minded artist regardless of the context of their own time. Listen to the German artist Joseph Beuys in the 1970s:

If we want to achieve a different society where the principle of money operates equitably, if we want to abolish the power money has over people historically, and position money in relationship to freedom, equality, fraternity... then we must elaborate a concept of culture and a concept of art where every person must be an artist.¹

The concept of the social artist seems to me to be profoundly Ruskinian. Under the glossy carapace of the 'Art World' the social agenda is a powerful moving force. Witness this year's Turner Prize winner, Laure Prouvost. Her associated installation, *Wantee*, which has just finished a period of exhibition in Derry and Coniston, features Ruskin and Brantwood directly. Behind this work is the presence of Grizedale Arts, Arts Council funded and working a distinctly social agenda in the village of Coniston, bringing artists and artist-curators into direct relation with the challenges of the small rural community where Ruskin made his home. The complex interplay of creative factors that they are working with is further stretched by their international projects, such as the installation of a 'Mechanics Institute' at the Sao Paulo Biennale, or their work with a hill-farming community in Japan.

Grizedale is part of a wider movement of the artist-curator, one of the contemporary terms for the social artist that has included Ruskin in its sweep. Liam

Gillick and Jeremy Deller (another Turner Prize winner) are examples. Within this sphere conceptual artists, social theorists, architects and designers cross-over. Close readers of Ruskin in the architecture category are the New York-based Spanish artist/architect Jorge Otero-Pailos (his installation at the Doge's Palace in Venice was a remarkable examination of our ideas on time and memory reflected against Ruskin's thinking) and radical Dutch architect Lars Spuybroek, author of *the sympathy of things: Ruskin and the Ecology of Design*.

So far I have emphasised the conceptual side of things. What of artists whose work is altogether more craft-driven and personal, for whom the creative instinct of the individual is paramount? What of the philosophy of heart, hand and eye that Ruskin espoused? If anything, Ruskin's influence is even stronger. Some of today's artists who are most tactile in paint, delicate of eye and most personal in revelation are keenly energised by the power of Ruskin's words and the inspiration afforded by his own painting.

Brantwood has been privileged to encounter and show many such artists. With an average of eight contemporary exhibitions a year, it has worked with more than 120 living artists in the last ten years, in many cases with periods of residency. Some of these artists have read Ruskin and take the opportunity to exhibit at Brantwood to make work with very direct connections. Others may be said to wear their Ruskin lightly, but nonetheless proudly. I am mindful of Derek Hyatt, a Companion, the Guild's very own one might say. Derek has found inspiration in Ruskin almost all of his working life. Can one detect anything of Ruskin in his work? Principally that he attains an extraordinary and distinct imaginative freedom and that he always exerts himself to express the most significant and valued of his perceptions. Ask Derek about Ruskin and you will see how, by way of a magical labyrinthine weaving, Ruskin's thinking has adapted to its new host and become Hyatt-thought, not Ruskin-thought. Then there is George Rowlett, another artist who, like Derek, is represented by Michael Richardson of Artspace, London with whom we have collaborated on numerous occasions. George's journey through the Alps and then Coniston in the footsteps of Ruskin released an extraordinary volley of work which is among his very best.

In many cases I am pleased to say, there is a sort of Ruskin association that arises from the very distinctive place that is Brantwood itself. Many artists respond to the opportunity to work and exhibit at Brantwood, absorbing Ruskin more by osmosis than by direct consideration. Following the first Ruskin Prize exhibition in 2012, I invited one of the entrants, Bettina Reiber, to undertake a residency at Brantwood. The exhibition of her work this September will satisfy all who

rejoice in paint applied with the meditative care and expressive force that arises from intense observation and indwelling of place.

In the long tradition of painting and drawing Ruskin very much remains a force to be reckoned with. In particular, Ruskin is an inspiration to thousands, probably tens of thousands, with no aspirations to professionalism, let alone greatness, who pick up a pencil or brush and begin a journey of discovery and self-expression that hugely enriches their lives.

Whether you respond more warmly to the conceptual or the tactile, the tangible or intangible is ultimately insignificant: such aspects are all part of the spectrum of experience and our many ways of knowing. What all the artists I have mentioned have in common is an openness to Ruskin's ideas which comes without any degree of pre-formed critical prejudice. Ruskin's power resides in his ability to stimulate and inspire their own perceptions and reserves of feeling, meeting them on mutual terms

across the divides of time and culture. For too long we have considered Ruskin's works in a series of silos, particularly intent on keeping art criticism and the political economy apart. Ruskin worked hard to bring them together. It seems that artists today have a shrewd instinct for their connection. Let's applaud that.

NOTE

1. Joseph Beuys, *What is Money?* (Clairview Press, 2010).

TWO EARLY COMPANIONS

Stuart Eagles

In 2002, our former Master, James Dearden, presented us with an account of the thirty-two Companions on the first Guild roll (see James S. Dearden, 'Who were Ruskin's early Companions?' in *The Companion*, no. 2 (2002) pp. 35-39). At the end of that article, he wrote, 'If any *Companion can offer any further information about these early Companions the author would be glad to receive this information*' (p. 39). I am glad, all these years later, to offer information on two of them.

The first is Silvanus Wilkins, of whom Dearden wrote, 'Wilkins survived the 1884 list, but was not a Companion by 1899' (p. 39). But Dearden has also consistently noted, including in this article and in his recent booklet, *The Roll of Companions of the Guild of St George* (2013) that 'the probability of bad record-keeping' (p. 8) complicates our understanding. (For information on how to order the *Roll* booklet, see separate flyer.) The second Companion I write about here is the Rev. William Sharman: 'The Rev. W. Sharman of Plymouth probably also became a Companion as a result of reading *Fors*.' ('Ruskin's early Companions', p. 37). I cannot say specifically what brought Ruskin or the Guild to the attention of either of them, but I am able to identify who these interesting individuals were and to glimpse what might broadly be termed Ruskinian sympathies among them.

Silvanus Wilkins (June 30, 1828. Bethnal Green—December 28. 1912, York) was a banker, the son of John Wilkins, a clerk in Merchants' House, and his wife Jane. In 1861, at Islington, Silvanus married Julia Merrett (nine years his junior), the daughter of William Gwillim Merrett, a surgeon.

A merchant's cashier living in Marylebone in his early twenties, Silvanus Wilkins seems initially to have followed in his father's footsteps, but to have quickly prospered. Before the age of 40, he was a director of the London and General Permanent Land, Building and Investment Society (*South London Chronicle*, January 20, 1866). Around this time (1866/7) he moved with his growing family to Bilston,

Wolverhampton, and for 'upwards of sixteen years' he was general manager of the Staffordshire Joint-Stock Bank retiring in January 1883 (*Birmingham Daily Post*, January 30, 1883).

Wilkins appears to have been a rare sort of banker, as his later membership of the Guild would suggest. The clue comes in 1870, when he was dispensing advice on banking at the Co-operative Congress in Manchester, recommending that £50,000 of capital would be needed if the Wholesale Co-operative Society wished to act as its own banker, though the Congress remained determined to establish, as it later did, a separate Co-operative bank (see Percy Redfern* (ed.), *The Story of the CWS* (c. 1913) p. 64). (*The prominent Co-operator, Percy Redfern, was Manchester's leading Tolstoyan, incidentally.)

On December 24, 1874, Wilkins survived the Shipton-on-Cherwell Railway Accident, one of the worst incidents on the Great Western Railway; at least 31 people died. Wilkins identified a family friend among the dead at the mass inquest. 'I reside in Bilston, Staffordshire, and am the general manager of the Staffordshire Joint Stock Bank,' he told the Court.

The victim was John Howard Harper, celebrating his twentieth birthday on the day of the accident. He was the son of John Harper of Brueton House, Bilston, the owner-manager of the Albion (Iron) Works, Willenhall (founded as a lock-making business in 1790 by William Brueton and William Harper). 'The deceased J. H. Harper was coming from the Reading Iron Works to Bilston to see his father,' Wilkins related. Harper had just finished his 'technical education' there. 'The deceased was a promising youth and had gained several prizes and certificates offered alike by the Society of Arts and the South Kensington authorities.' (*Tamworth Herald*, January 2, 1875) Young Harper was evidently no typical iron-worker. What the effect of being involved in this accident had on Wilkins, then in his mid-forties, might only be guessed at. Perhaps it engendered an objection to trains that reading Ruskin

could have done little to mitigate.

Wilkins was an amateur naturalist, contributing among other papers a treatise 'On a Dragon-fly' and a 'Popular Account of the Fish's Nest, Built by the Stickle-back' both read in the 1880s before the Birmingham Natural History and Microscopical Society of which he was a member, and published by the *Midland Naturalist*.

Wilkins was almost certainly the 'SW' donating or subscribing £55 to the Guild according to the *Fors* for February 1876 (28.530), but was not among the names then marked as Companions, nor do his initials appear earlier as having been admitted as a Companion prior to December 10, 1875 (28.503). He did, however, attend the first annual meeting of the Guild in Birmingham on February 21, 1879 (Sheffield Archives, GSG/22 Minutes, p. 1).

In 1881 Wilkins lived with his family in Kings Norton, perhaps suggesting a connection with another Guild Companion, Ferdinand Walter Bladon (1857-1937) who was, like his father, Thomas Nicholls Bladon, and his wife, Lilian Ruth Dixon, a 'professor of music' (music teacher, presumably) living then in the same district.

Following his retirement from the Staffordshire Joint Stock Bank, Wilkins went to America. On September 27, 1884, *The Graphic* reported on 'New Rugby in Tennessee': 'An effort is now being made to supply a want much expressed by good American people, viz., to establish in New Rugby, a real "Rugby School" on the English model. Mr. Silvanus Wilkins, an old fellow-worker with Mr. Hughes and Charles Kingsley and F. D. Maurice, in former days, is now in the United States engaged on this work, in co-operation with some eminent American gentlemen. A Head Master, an old Rugby boy himself—since graduated at Oxford—is already found and ready, so soon as the school can be erected.' Evidently a Christian Socialist, Wilkins was perhaps involved with the Working Men's College when he was based in London in the 1850s. Wilkins did not remain in America long, and was listed in various British newspapers and

directories as the Director of Ladies' Stores (Limited) and the Manager at the London Office of W. C. Belcher Land Mortgage Company (bankers) of Austin, Texas, roles he may have held concurrently, or in quick succession, between 1885 and 1887.

By the time of the 1891 census, he had retired and returned with his family to the English capital, settling in Islington. (One of his daughters, Lilian, was later described as an artist.)

He appears to have continued to take an interest in Ruskin as he is named as a member of the Ruskin Memorial Scheme Committee, Bournville (*Saint George*, vol. 6, no. 24 (October 1903) p. 359) and although this probably indicates nothing more than his acquiescence in J. Howard Whitehouse's use of his name in support of the scheme, he was evidently still in touch with the 'Ruskin world', and appears also to have remained a Companion until his death, which came on December 28, 1912. His passing is duly noted at the meeting of the Guild on May 11, 1920 at the Queen's Hotel, Birmingham, there not having been an earlier meeting at which Wilkins' death might have been noted (the latest one having been at Manchester on June 27, 1912, six months before Wilkins' death). (Sheffield Archives, GSG 22 Minutes 1879-1925, 1926 + 1927).

Rev. William Sharman (1841-1889), a Unitarian minister, was born in Sheffield, the eldest son of John Sharman, a grocer. He does appear to be among the earliest Companions, since two Companions with the initials 'WS' are listed as having been admitted prior to December 10, 1875 (28.503)—the other being William Smithers. We might also assume that he was the 'Mr Sharman' listed as having donated a guinea to the St Mark's (Venice) Fund in April 1880 (30.65). For his biography we can turn to an obituary:

In early life he was a member of the Methodist Free Church, and was for some time a local preacher, and subsequently, we believe, a minister in that denomination. A Preston correspondent stated that it was a visit to America which led to a change of Mr. Sharman's theological views. There (says the writer) he became associated with men of advanced views, and finally he was led to cast in his lot with the Unitarian body. He became one of their recognised ministers, and since his return from America has held charges at Aberdeen, Hull, Plymouth, and elsewhere. Mr. Sharman's experiences in the United States, where, by the way, he married Miss Russell, a relative of Mr. Channing, had the effect of

enlarging considerably his views on current political questions. He became a warm sympathiser with the Irish people long before their cause was brought into prominence, and his aspirations generally led him to take up the weak, which he invariably did, utterly regardless of personal consequences. Five years ago, Mr. Sharman took up his charge in Preston, and he had not been there long before his fearless expression of advanced Radical principles brought him into conflict with the old, staid leaders of local Liberalism. By degrees, however, he brought the general body more towards his own standard, and he had long been an acknowledged force in the councils of the party. Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule measure had, naturally, in Mr. Sharman, an enthusiastic supporter, and he lost no opportunity of advancing the cause. A close personal friend and a warm admirer of Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Sharman some years ago gave up a ministerial charge in order that he might the more readily lend his assistance in the solution of the oaths question, a result which he had the satisfaction to see accomplished. The rev. gentleman also enjoyed the friendship of Mr. William Morris, the Hon. Auberon Herbert [(1838-1906) MP, writer and individualist], and other leaders of advanced thought, with whose views he ardently sympathised. He was a scholarly preacher, an effective platform speaker, and he had made some valuable contributions to current literature. (*Sheffield Independent*, November 18, 1889.)

Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891) was the radical Liberal MP who in 1866 founded the National Secular Society and fought a long campaign to amend the law to allow a non-religious oath of allegiance to Parliament, a campaign partially won with the passing of the Oaths Act in 1888. Sharman's role in Bradlaugh's fight was, initially, to preach sermons in his favour and use his position to promote his case: A strange service was conducted in the Plymouth Cathedral (sic) on Sunday night. The local authorities had refused to permit Mr. Bradlaugh to have the use of the hall. The Rev. William Sharman, Unitarian minister, thereupon claimed the use of the Guildhall for a Sunday religious service, and announced his intention of giving

an address on the question, 'Who are the Infidels?' The 'Free Trade Hymn' having been sung, Mr. Sharman delivered an impassioned address, denouncing the persecutors of so-called atheists as the real Infidels, and declaring that the records of the bench of bishops were those of infidelity to humanity. The sermon was repeatedly applauded by the large audience, particularly when allusion was made to infidelity to the nation practised in the exclusion of Mr. Bradlaugh and his constituents from the privileges of citizenship. (*Derby Daily Telegraph*, January 24, 1882 and syndicated widely in other municipal newspapers).

In 1883, Sharman supported Mr Cousins, who withdrew as a Parliamentary candidate in Leeds because of his views on repealing the blasphemy laws. Sharman led a deputation in protest and 'thereby incurred considerable opprobrium. On Sunday Mr. Sharman astonished his congregation by announcing his resignation, in order that he might go forth to advocate the repeal of the Blasphemy laws. The fight, he said, would be the hottest and bitterest this century had seen.' In 'preaching to a crowded congregation on the Blasphemy laws and the *Freethinker* prosecution, [Sharman] did so in such powerful and vigorous language that the congregation frequently and loudly applauded his remarks... and went on to say that the recent prosecution was full of hypocrisy, conceived in sin, and had done an injury to Christianity which could only end with the repeal of these laws.' (*Northampton Mercury*, March 17, 1883.) The *Freethinker* is the self-styled 'voice of atheism'—a secular humanist magazine—founded by G. W. Foote (1850-1915) in 1881. Following the publication of anti-religious cartoons in the Christmas 1882 number, Foote was convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Sharman duly became secretary of the National Association for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws which he founded in May 1883. He was a vice-president of the Land Law Reform League and of the League for the Defence of Constitutional Rights. (See Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland: A Regional Survey* (2006) p. 155.) Elsewhere we read that 'Protest meetings were held and petitions arranged as the radicals joined with Headlam's Guild of St Matthew to campaign for repeal. Influential support was gained.' (Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists, and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain, 1866-1915* (1980). Recently, Peter Yeandle has demonstrated the extent of Rev. Stewart Headlam's sympathy for Ruskin, see e.g. his chapter in Keith Hanley and Brian Maidment (eds.), *Persistent Ruskin* (2012)).

Sharman inspired loyalty in his congregation. When he left Plymouth he 'was presented by his Congregational and political friends with a purse of 150 sovereigns' (*Exeter and Plymouth Gazette Daily Telegrams*, April 19, 1884). And we are told by the *Dundee Courier*:

At the close of his discourse yesterday in the Unitarian Christian Church, the Rev. Henry Williamson said he felt he ought to make some reference to the death of the Rev. William Sharman, late of Preston, whom many religious inquirers in Dundee would still remember. Previous to 1866, Unitarians could find no regular services in Dundee, and a temporary arrangement had been brought about by obtaining a monthly discourse or lecture from Mr Sharman, who was then minister in Aberdeen. He succeeded in attracting public attention, and no doubt he was to some extent misled by the appearance of individuals of the class sometimes termed 'church vagabonds' who keep up their adherence to their own sects, but roam about every Sunday evening so near the last strange voice that appears. Mr. Sharman made such representations to the Unitarian Societies that it was resolved to make the attempt to form a Unitarian Christian Church here. He, however, left Scotland, and for a time settled in America, returned to Britain, and had been minister at Plymouth and at Preston until his death on the 15th inst. Mr Williamson was quite sure that all who knew their late brother would share his expression of sincere regard for his memory and sympathy for his widow. (November 25, 1889.)

The Companion (logo) John Ruskin, after Carpaccio. *St George and the Dragon*. Sepia, pencil, and ink with white highlights on paper. 1872. (Guild of St George Collection, CGSG00191).

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Please address all enquiries to:
 Dr Stuart Eagles,
 Secretary, The Guild of St George
 The Eyrie,
 90 Water Road,
 Reading, Berks RG30 2NN
 Email
secretary@guildofstgeorge.org.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday, July 11:
 Bewdley Museum, exhibition launch
 and Anthony Page
 Library opening;
Saturday, July 12:
 Companions' Day on Ruskinland
Saturday, October 11:
 Education for Education's Sake
 (symposium) Toynbee Hall
Saturday—Sunday, November 15-16:
 AGM & Ruskin-in-Sheffield,
 Sheffield.

THE COMPANION

Editor and Designer: Dr Stuart Eagles
 American Notes Editors: Prof James Spates
 Dr Sara Atwood
 Proof-readers: Dr Sara Atwood
 Dr James Dearden
 Chris Eagles
 Clive Wilmer

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Please note that all references in the form '(x.x),' where x is a numeral, refer to the Library Edition of Ruskin's *Works*, namely *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London, 1903–12). American spellings have been retained in articles by American authors.

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at Toynbee Hall

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Saturday, 11 October, 2014

(10am – 4.30pm)

The purpose of this symposium will be to look closely at the problems confronting education today. In a time of great educational upheaval, as new types of school proliferate and disagreement persists about access, curricula, standards, teacher training and other issues, we will consider how Ruskin's ideas might productively inform contemporary debates.

The keynote speaker is Prof. Dinah Birch (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Professor of English Literature, University of Liverpool). A panel discussion will be chaired by

Dr Andrew Tate

(University of Lancaster).

The symposium has been organized by Dr Sara Atwood and Paul Tucker.

Participants will include:

Prof. Dinah Birch

Prof. Anthony O'Hear

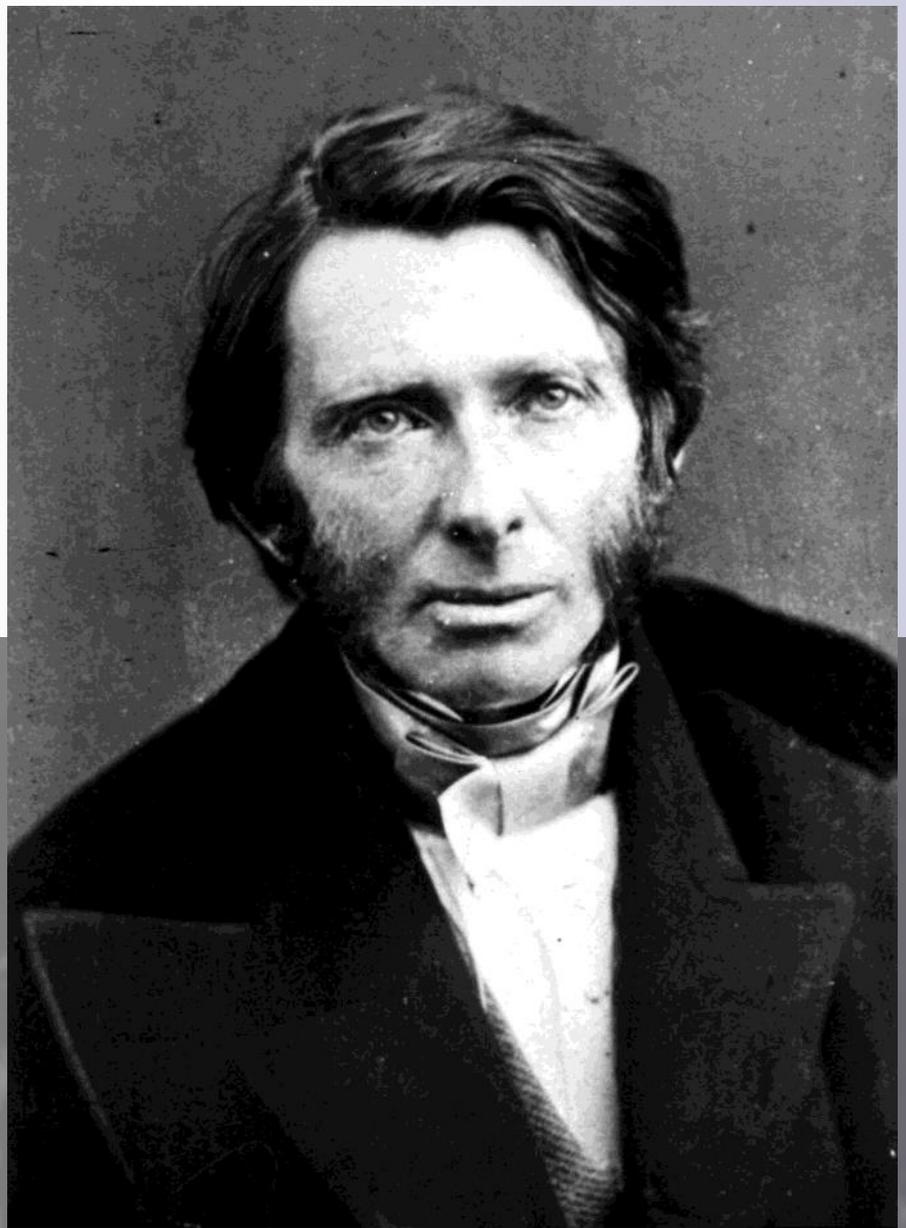
Melissa Benn

Dr Sara Atwood

Paul Tucker

Aonghus Gordon

Dr Andrew Tate



The conference fee is £17.00 for students and £22.00 general admission.
This includes morning coffee/tea and a sandwich lunch.

Further details will be posted at the Guild of St George and Ruskin Centre websites. Contact Dr Stuart Eagles, Secretary of the Guild of St. George, at secretary@guildofstgeorge.org.uk

