

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

JUNE

Guild of St George
With thanks to Museums Sheffield

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JUNE 1



John Wharlton Bunney, "Spring Flowers, Derbyshire: Purple from Matlock, Primrose from Haddon" (1853-58).

Acceptance by HM Government in Lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to The Guild of St George, 2002. Collection of the Guild of St George, Museums Sheffield.

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

JUNE 2

Henry Roderick Newman, "Florentine Roses" (1881).

Ruskin wrote about why people often "admire a rose so much more than all other flowers". His view was that it was because of their pure, rich colours. He added: "in the rose there is no shadow, except what is composed of colour. All its shadows are fuller in colour than its lights, owing to the translucency and reflective power of its leaves." Though he was in general an architectural artist, Newman's rose drawing reflects these observations. Ruskin felt that few artists, other than botanical illustrators, tried to paint roses properly because they could not capture the true beauty in them. In his words: "a thoroughly good workman feels the feebleness of his means when he matches them fairly with Nature, and gives up the attempt frankly - painting the rose dull red, rather than trying to rival its flush in the sunshine."

You can purchase a greetings card with this image here:

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





On This Day in 1958: (Constance) Genevieve Pilley died, aged 80.

"Genevieve Pilley, Illuminating & Heraldic Artist at work on the illuminated vellum scroll presented to His Majesty Edward the VIIIth by the Mayor, Aldermen & Citizens of Sheffield, May 1936."

Pilley was the Keeper of the Collection of the Guild of St George, based at the Ruskin Museum, at Meersbrook Park, Sheffield, from 1931 to 1949. She worked with the Collection for about half a century, having assisted her predecessors William White and Gill Parker.

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

Yours most sincerely
Genevieve Pilley.

JUNE 3

Henry Roderick Newman, "The Baptistery of San Giovanni, Florence, Italy" (1881). Ruskin described this view as "an exquisitely careful rendering of the effect of the marble walls of this building, seen in half light, reflected from the façade of the Duomo" (Florence Cathedral's bright white walls). Newman also depicted part of the busy square around the baptistery, including the carriage rank situated next to the three-arched Loggia del Bigallo, and the vendors selling items to tourists. Ruskin complained several times that these people always got in the way of Florence's best views and that he always felt in danger of being run over by the omnibuses. The baptistery, built on Roman foundations, dates from 1059 and Ruskin wrote that the "whole history of Christian architecture and painting" began with it. He enjoyed the striking effect of the white and green-black marble facing, and described how much of Florence's best architecture was influenced by it. For Ruskin, though, "no more perfect work was afterwards done."
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



JUNE 4



Frank Randal, "The Grand Canal at St John Chrysostom, Venice, Italy" (c. 1901).
Available as a greetings card: ref C11 http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/.../2016/Guild_FullCatalogu...

Read more about the Ruskin Collection:
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

JUNE 5



On This Day in 1865, Hugh Allen was born.

Hugh Allen, "Study of Young Leaf Twigs: Ash" (1880-85).

Records suggest that this plant study is one of a set made under Ruskin's instruction. There are several more of these studies at Whitelands College in London, to which Ruskin also donated a small collection. The studies may have been carried out as part of Ruskin's research for 'Proserpina', a botanical book in which Ruskin wrote in detail about each section of the leaf and the importance of recording the "biography" of each plant. As the son of George Allen, an engraver whom Ruskin had previously employed to illustrate his books and who was by then Ruskin's publisher, Hugh Allen would have known Ruskin personally, and would have made the studies to Ruskin's exact specifications. If they were meant to be for engraved illustrations, his studies would not have needed colour. Even so, Ruskin's advice for painting plants started with painting in black and white and only when that had been mastered successfully should an artist move on to colour.

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

JUNE 6



Edward Donovan (1768-1837) "Studies of Invertebrate Animals" volume II (1790-1810).

This is not a book as such, but a volume of Donovan's collected watercolour illustrations that were bound together in the 1870s for the Ruskin Collection. It contains studies made to illustrate several of his books on natural history, which he produced under titles such as "The Naturalist's Repository, or Miscellany of exotic Natural History Exhibiting Rare and Beautiful Specimens of Foreign Birds, Insects, Shells, Quadrapeds, Fish and Marine Productions". Donovan made sure he had control over how the books printed these watercolours by engraving and hand-colouring them himself. Ruskin considered Donovan's illustrations "entirely beautiful and wonderful". He also praised Donovan as one of the many artists of an earlier age who made spectacular natural history illustrations "for love and truth, and not for lust and gold".

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



JUNE 7

Charlotte C Murray, "Study of Three Flowers" (c. 1880).
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

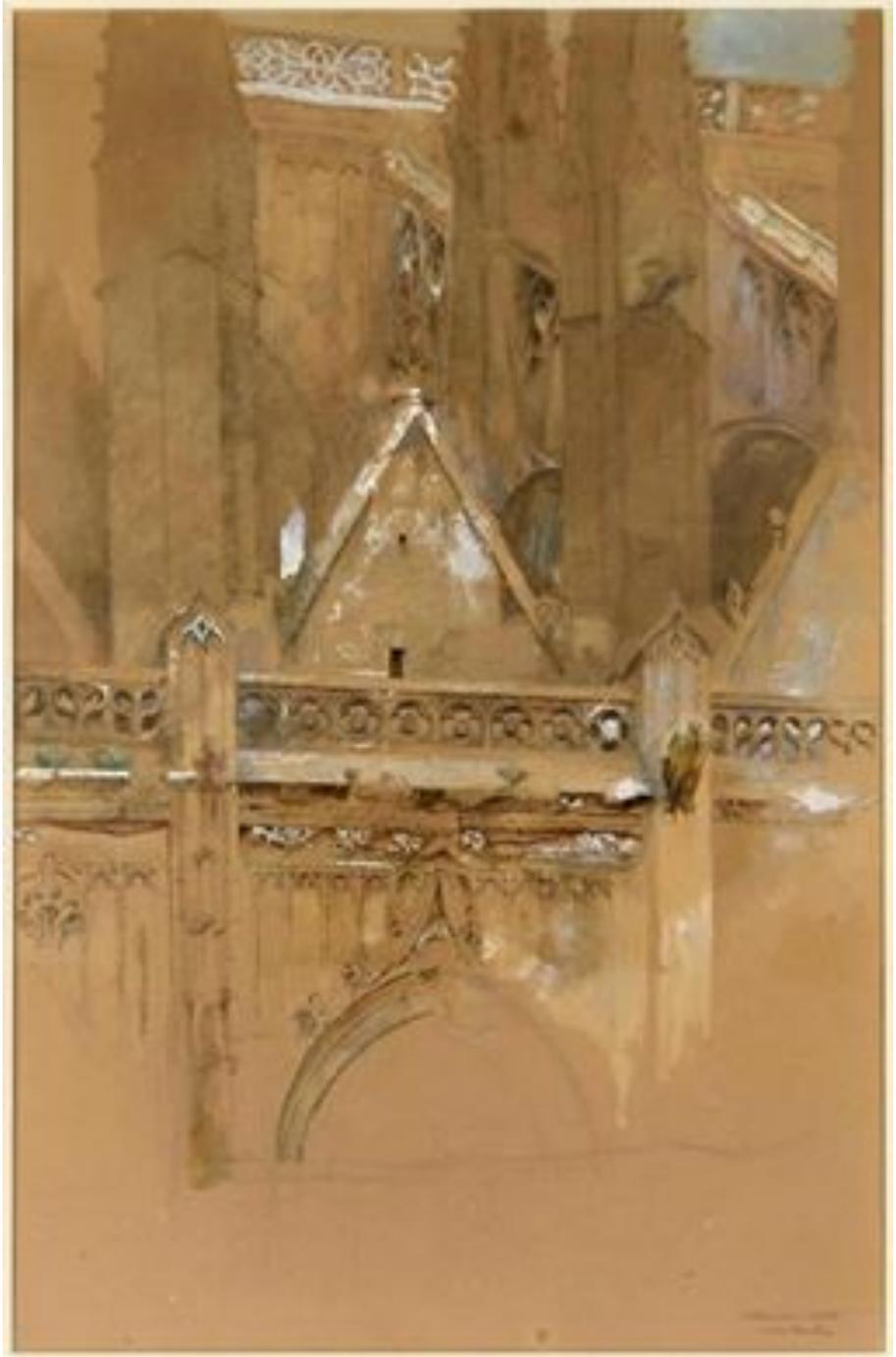


JUNE 8

John Ruskin, "Porch and Buttress, St Wulfram, Abbeville, France" (1868).

This drawing depicts part of the large church of St Wulfram in Abbeville, in northern France.

The church was built between 1488 and the mid 1500s in an ornate style called Flamboyant Gothic. Here you can see the upper part of the southern entrance to the church, with the flying-buttresses which help spread the weight of the walls above. Ruskin has not only highlighted elements of decorative carving, but also the weeds growing in the stonework. He found this an attractive feature of



the building: the leaves mirrored the natural shapes in the carving. However, Ruskin was anxious that the building would be ruined by restoration. He wrote to his friend, Charles Eliot Norton: "it is the last [late Gothic building] I know left untouched, and it is to be restored in the Spring."

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

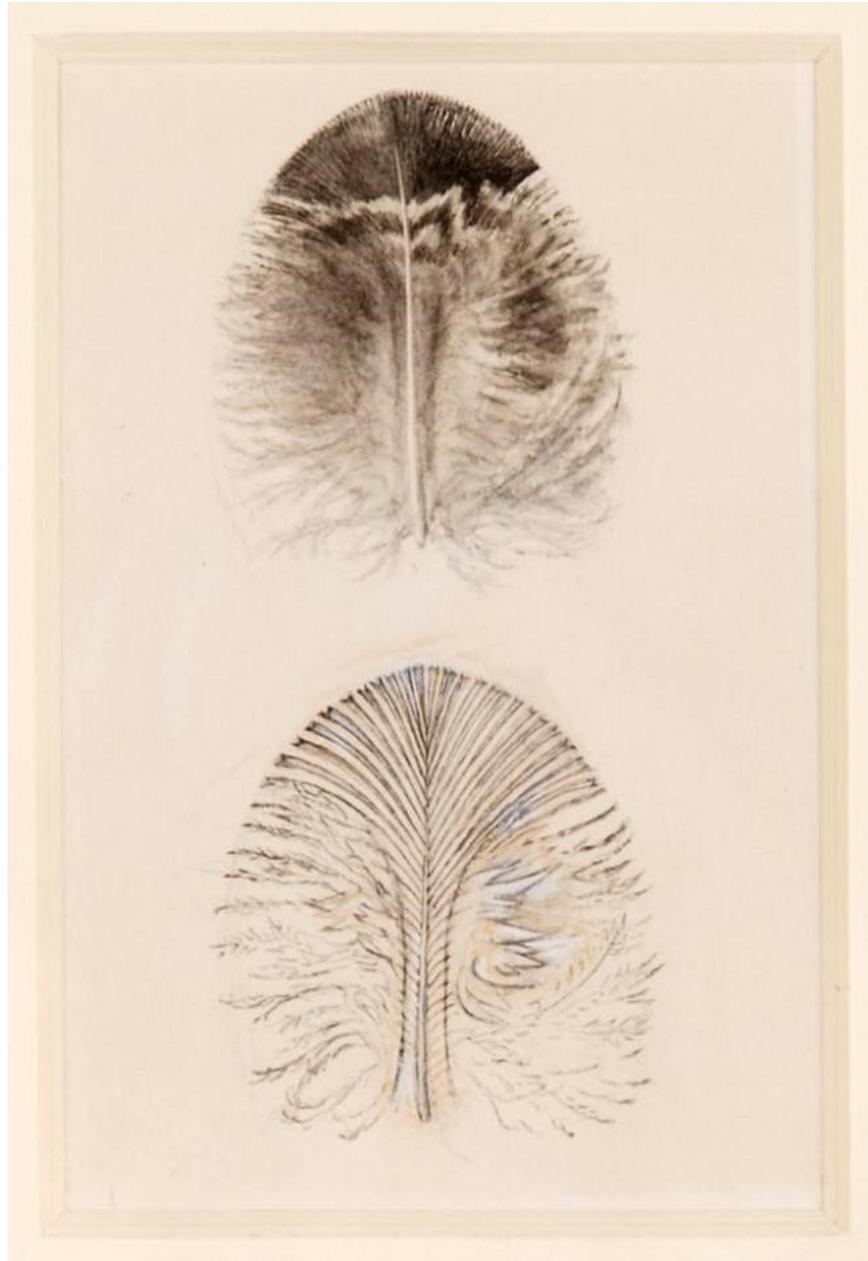
JUNE 9

John Ruskin, "Panorama of the Alps from above Brieg, Switzerland" (1844).
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



A detail.

JUNE 10



John Ruskin, "Peacock's Dorsal Feather with its Analysis; drawing towards 'The Laws of Fésole'" (1877).

Ruskin drew these feathers to illustrate his book, "The Laws of Fésole" a collection of practical art lessons. The final plate, in a chapter called "Elementary Organic Structure" looks in detail at the shapes of birds' feathers. Ruskin re-named the work "Decorative Plumage: Peacock" for the book. The lower feather, which was "to be copied by beginners" depicts a simple feather structure and provides the basis for the more detailed study: "true painters' work." Characteristically, Ruskin makes a link with otherwise unassociated objects. He sees a similarity between the feather's structure and the structure of a honeysuckle plant, as used in classical or ancient Greek architecture. Ruskin generally wrote about the form of feathers, dividing them into three categories: feathers for

clothing, for action and for decoration. He frequently used them for practical lessons in observation for drawing. Ruskin got his peacock feathers from his friend and neighbour Susan Beever, who kept the birds, he said, as "spoilt pets".

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JUNE 11



On This Day: the Feast of St Barnabas. Charles Fairfax Murray "'St Michael' from the 'St Barnabas Altarpiece'" after Botticelli (1876).

Ruskin was a great admirer of Botticelli, calling him "the greatest Florentine workman". He always looked for poetic symbolism in Botticelli's painting, which did not necessarily emerge in the principal figures. The San Barnaba altarpiece depicts several saints and angels surrounding the Virgin Mary and Christ. For Ruskin, St Michael - usually seen as a soldier and conqueror of the Devil - stood out as "a simple knight of Florence... [with] no dragon beneath him, and no look of victory in his face... Only at last you see that he holds a globe in his hand, the globe of the world, and on its surface the dark seas take the cloudy shape of the dragon. He is the St Michael of Peace." Accordingly, he wrote of Murray's study, which he commissioned: "I wish you had done the ball in St Michael's hand more carefully instead of his leg armour."

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

JUNE 12



John Wharltton Bunney, "Choir and High Altar in the Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Italy" (1875).

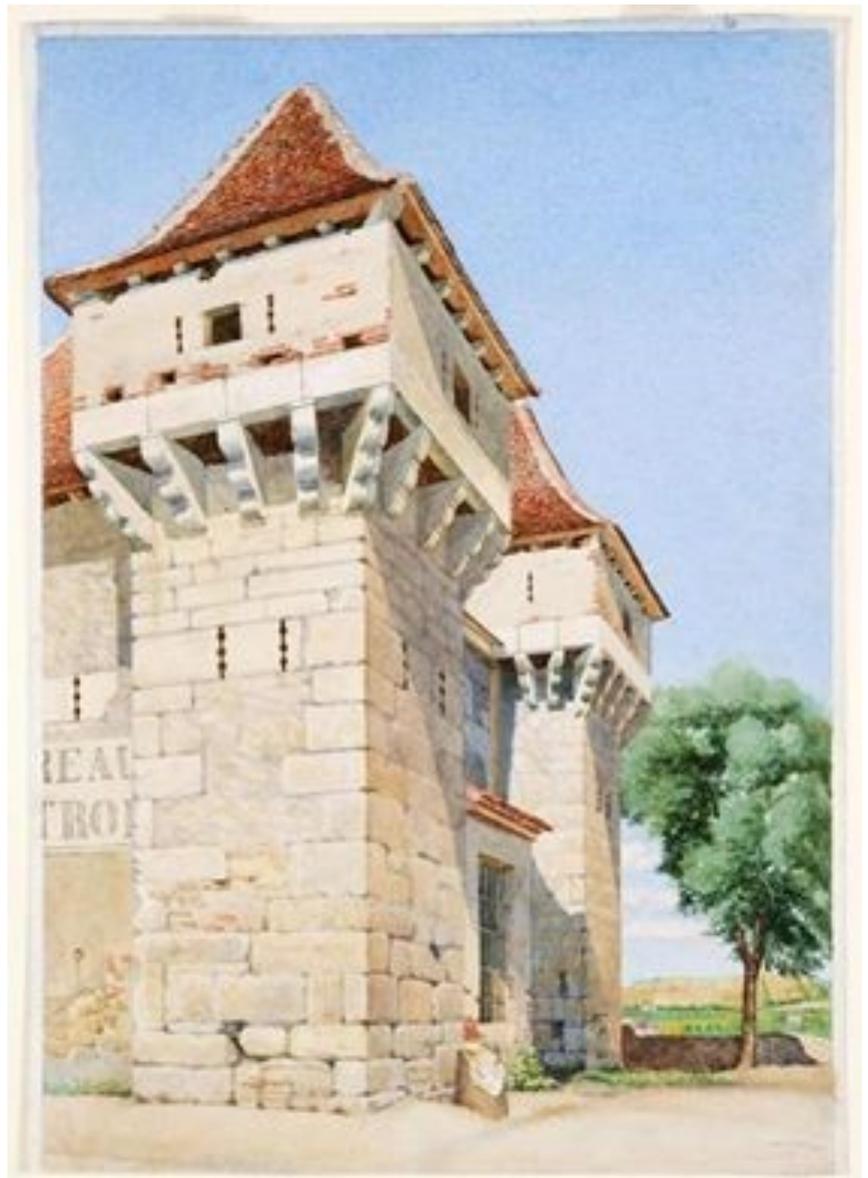
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JUNE 13

Frank Randal, "The Bureau D'Octroi, Place Lucterius, Cahors, France" (1883). In the later part of Ruskin's life, many of the ancient buildings he had studied for his books such as "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" and "The Stones of Venice" had changed. Historical buildings across Europe were, in Ruskin's view, under constant threat of destruction by neglect or restoration. Unsympathetic restorers ignored the original spirit of the craftsman. Ruskin was keen to capture everyday street scenes in the drawings he commissioned in order to record the transformation from a slow pace of life to a busy, competitive and materialistic existence. Randal was the most productive of the artists whom Ruskin commissioned to record medieval architecture and village life, particularly in France and Italy. Randal made this study on a tour of France in 1883. It was the third "season" Randal had spent in France under Ruskin's sometimes vague instructions of what and where to paint: "For your French work you may really go where you have a fancy to ..."; "... If the railway from Limoges went south to Cahors there is or was a bridge there." At the time Randal painted this work, the Bureau d'Octroi was an official building in the medieval town of Cahors, in southern France. It acted as a customs office, where the Octroi tax was paid on goods coming in and out of the town. Originally, it was the barbican or fortified part of the Barre Gate, built as part of the city walls. The Octroi in France was an ancient taxation system by which farmers, importers and exporters had to pay duty on goods entering or leaving the town. Such commodities as food, drink, fuel, animal fodder and building materials were all taxed, although basic food such as flour, fruit, vegetables and fish were not. By the late 1800s, the taxes applied mostly to luxury products such as alcohol and in 1948 they were abolished altogether.

<http://>

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



JUNE 14



William Hackstoun (1855-1921), "The Coast at Dieppe, France, from the Castle" (1883).

By the 1800s, the town of Dieppe was a tourist destination as well as a port for English ferry crossings. Dieppe's beach, which was by Ruskin's time a popular location for artists, can be seen in the background of this work, along with its cliffs, which Ruskin wrote about in early geological diaries. Dieppe's castle dominates this watercolour. The town's ancient walls surround the castle, which was built on a hill above

Dieppe. Most of the castle dates from the mid 1400s and it survived an attack in 1694, when the English and Dutch navies destroyed most of the town. Today, the castle is a maritime museum.

Ruskin wrote little about Dieppe in his published works. It seems that his interest in the city derived mostly from comparing its appearance with the topographical views of it taken by the artists JMW Turner and Samuel Prout. Certainly, most of its medieval buildings, which might have been of interest to Ruskin, had been destroyed by the 1800s. Yet in 1883 Ruskin commissioned Hackstoun to draw views in northern France with a set route: Boulogne to Abbeville, Abbeville to Amiens and Amiens to Dieppe. At each town, Hackstoun made a number of records and there are many pencil sketches and some watercolours of these towns in the Ruskin Collection. Coming from Amiens, only 54 miles away, a long stop in Dieppe might have been a relief for Hackstoun; as Ruskin wrote of the local railway: "Of all the beastly, blockheady, loggerheady, doggish, loggish, hoggish-poggish, filthy, fool-begotten, swindler-swallowed abominations of modern existence, the Railways around Dieppe beat the world. I can't possibly get from here to Amiens in less than seven hours!"

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

JUNE 15



Charlotte C. Murray, "Study of Two Flower Heads" (1880).
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

JUNE 16



William Ward (1829-1908) "The Bridge of Meulan on the Seine, France" after Turner (1882).

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

JUNE 18



Arthur Burgess, "Study of Arch Mouldings, Spandrel and String Course, Bourges Cathedral, France" (1880-87).

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JUNE 19

Edward Donovan (1768-1837) "Study of a Perna Shell" (c. 1799).

Donovan probably made this study as an illustration for his book, "The Natural History of British Shells" (1799). This was one of the most popular books on shells during the 1800s, owing to its beautifully produced, hand-coloured illustrations. He produced each of his original watercolours in minute detail, creating iridescent layers of paint and finishing them with egg-glaze varnish. Donovan took direct control of his book illustrations by engraving and hand-colouring them himself. According to John Ruskin, Donovan's illustrations were "entirely beautiful and wonderful". They reminded him though of "the loss to the entire body of the nation of all this perfect artistic capacity". By this, Ruskin was referring to the many artists of an earlier age who made spectacular natural history illustrations "for love and truth, and not for lust and gold". <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



JUNE 20

On This Day in 1828: John Wharltton Bunney was born.

J. W. Bunney, "Church of San Miniato al Monte, Florence, Italy" (1866-69).

Bunney was from London and by his early twenties was painting, exhibiting and selling as an amateur artist, while working in his family's stationery business. Late in 1855, he began attending evening art classes at the Working Men's College in London and probably soon after took a new job as a clerk at John Ruskin's publishers Smith, Elder & Co. Bunney benefited from the art classes so much that he had left the publisher's employment by early 1859 and had become a professional artist, working as a drawing tutor and selling paintings.

At the college, Bunney had met John Ruskin, who was then its drawing master, and in 1859 and 1860 Ruskin sponsored Bunney's first two tours in Europe. It was again Ruskin's idea to send Bunney to Italy in 1863. Bunney and his wife lived first in Florence but they and their children moved to Venice in 1870. In Italy, Bunney received commissions from Ruskin for various projects, including the Guild of St George, but he remained independent of Ruskin and the Guild and therefore also fulfilled numerous commissions for other patrons. Bunney died in Venice in 1882.

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JUNE 21



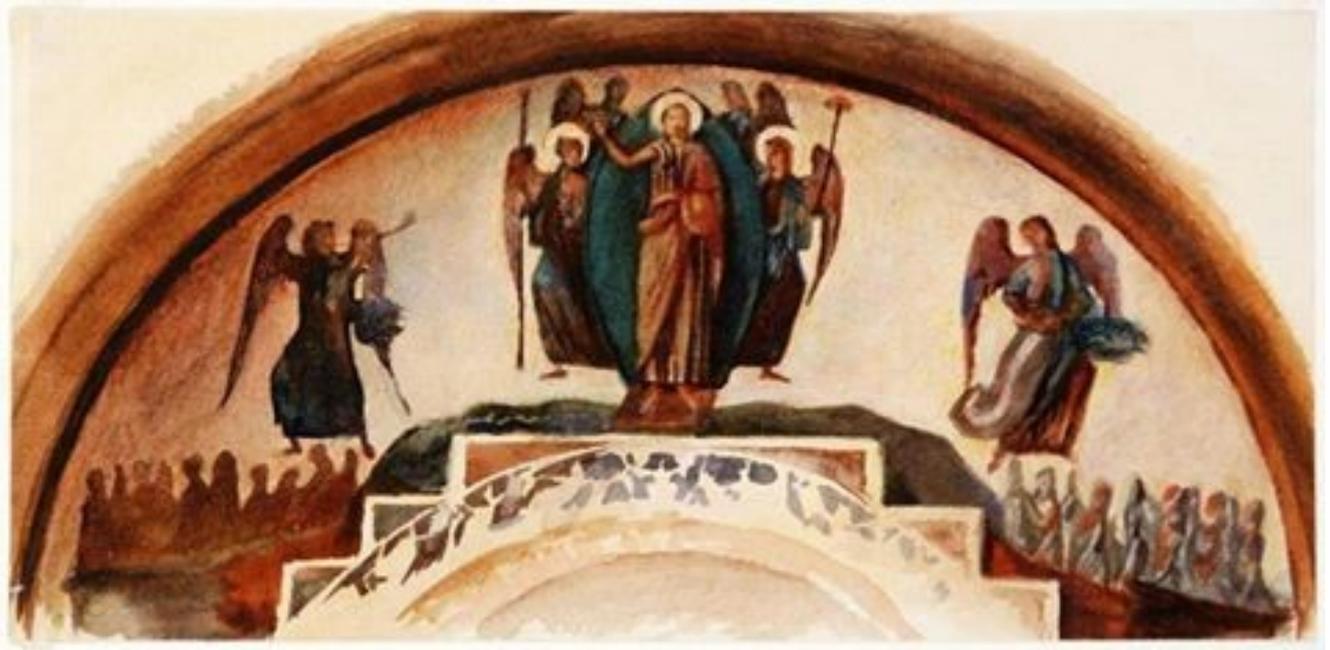
Frank Randal, "Eastern Tower, Le Pont Valentré, Cahors, France" (1883).

This watercolour is an example of a "memorial study"--a view commissioned by John Ruskin to record medieval architecture that was under threat of destruction by neglect or restoration. Restoration was in Ruskin's eyes nearly always destructive, as he felt that the original spirit of the craftsman could not be preserved or meaningfully substituted by replacement. Ruskin regularly engaged Randal for this type of work. He had been in France for some time when he received a letter stating, "If the railway from Limoges went south to Cahors there is or was a bridge there... You are not to draw the bridge... in colour, but only any bit

of it you like." Randal made a number of studies of the bridge but conveniently forgot the instruction about colour. In fact, Randal and Ruskin were too late. The bridge, which dates from the 1300s had already been restored in 1879.

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

JUNE 22



Angelo Alessandri, Detail of Mosaic from "The Procession of the Holy Cross" after Bellini (1879).

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JUNE 23

Charlotte C Murray, "The River at Linz, Austria" (1867).
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



*Summer view at the Dettbachsee
July 1867*

JUNE 24

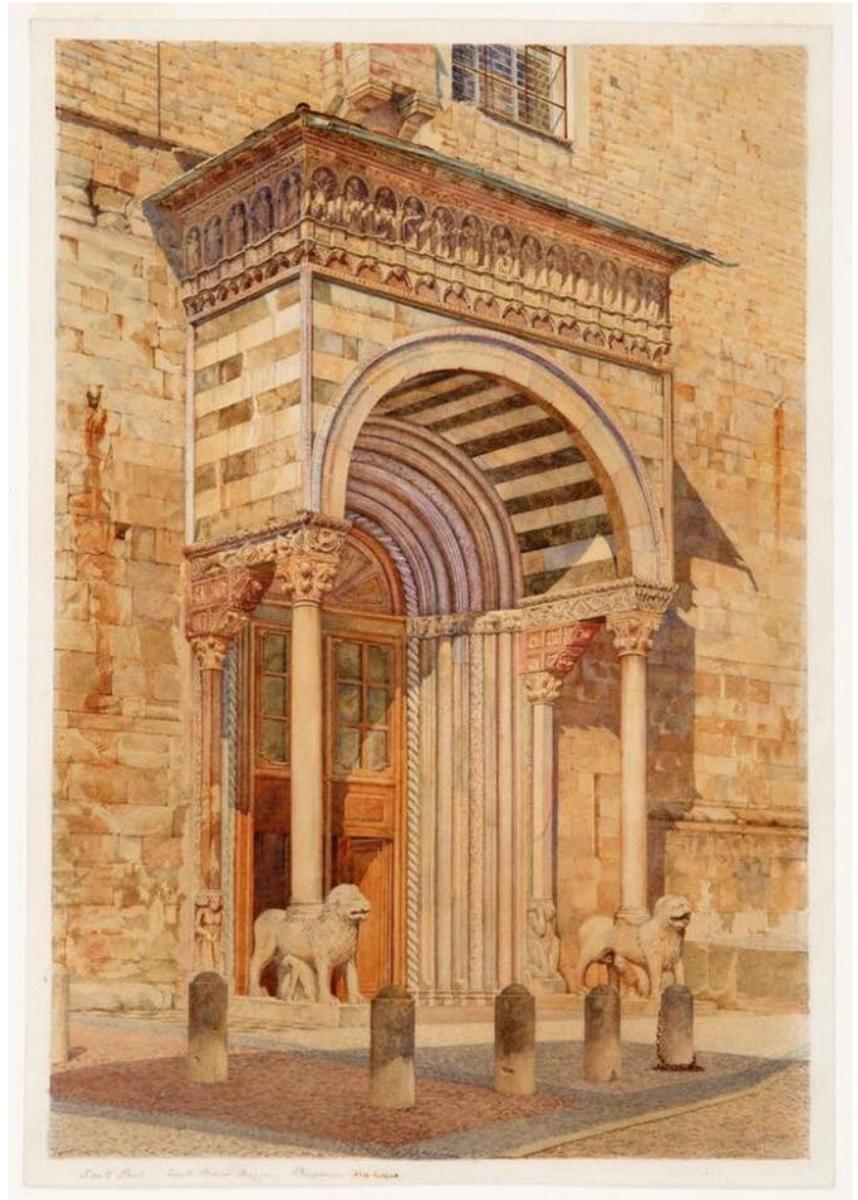
On This Day: Feast of John the Baptist.

Frank Randal, "The South Porch, Santa Maria Maggiore, Bergamo, Italy" (1885).

This porch is on the southern transept, or right wing of Santa Maria Maggiore. The church, or basilica, is unusual in that it has no central doorway; instead, the main entrances are to the side under each transept. This is because the central wall of the church was once part of the Bishop's palace. Both porches were individually decorated by Giovanni da Campione during the 1350s and 60s. Randal's records of both porches are in Sheffield's Ruskin Collection. The porch, though Gothic in style, is an unusual mixture of traditions drawn from different areas of Italy. The green and white porch is decorated with stripes of travertine and white marble. This is a style that is used in early

architecture in Florence. The lions at the base of the columns are found in Byzantine architecture but also in Pisa. The frieze or relief sculpture is similar to architecture from Verona. In this case, the stories told are "Christ Crowned by Saints" and "The Birth of St John the Baptist." Ruskin greatly admired this architectural record by Randal and wrote "Nothing has ever yet been done ... in accuracy of form and precision of colour to surpass Mr Randal's porch at Bergamo." Randal was painting in Italy under commission from Ruskin, who had asked him to paint records of architecture in "rather out of the way bits that are perishing." He had spent the winter in Lecco near Lake Como and moved on to Bergamo, situated to the east of Milan in the Spring. Ruskin sent Randal to France and Italy for several long tours. Often he painted with other artists who worked for Ruskin, such as Angelo Alessandri and T M Rooke. They were all commissioned to paint records of buildings and picturesque scenes of vanishing ways of life, either for Ruskin's Sheffield Collection or his Oxford teaching collections. Their work also helped inform Ruskin's own studies. Ruskin was anxious that so many buildings were being restored (destroyed in his eyes) so he sent a number of artists abroad to assist him in his work of recording the buildings so that others could learn from and about them.

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JUNE 25

A manuscript *Biblia* of unknown French origin, on parchment and bound in leather, dating from the mid 13th Century.

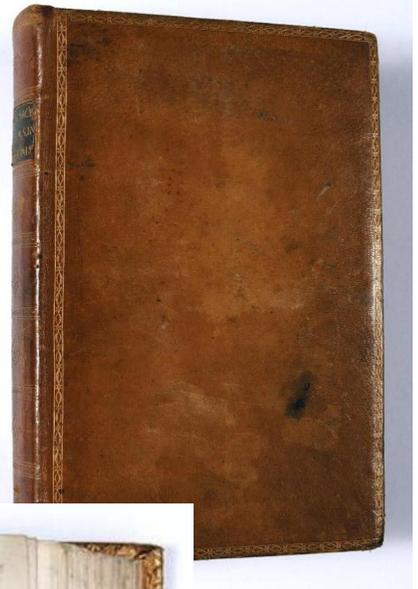
<http://www.gildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



JUNE 26

A second manuscript *Biblia* of unknown French origin, on parchment and bound in leather, dating from the mid 13th Century, formerly belonging to John Ruskin.

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



JUNE 27



On This Day in 1923: the death of William Henry Gill. William Henry Gill, "From Bud to Fruit: The Life History of a Cherry, Opening Buds and Developed Leaves" (1881). This study is the third in a series of ten showing the development over 74 days of a sprig of cherry tree. Gill was responding to a lecture by John Ruskin in which he said: "What we especially need to know of plants for educational purposes, is, not their anatomy, but their biography... We want them drawn from their youth to their age, from bud to fruit." Later, in his botany book "Proserpina," Ruskin looked at the development of the cherry plant in reverse order,

concluding that the function of the fruit is to make the flowers: "You are fond of cherries perhaps, and think that the use of the cherry-blossom is to produce cherries. Not at all: the use of cherries is to produce cherry-blossom, just as the use of bulbs is to produce hyacinths, - not of hyacinths to produce bulbs." Ruskin concluded that the flower is more important than the fruit because plants don't only multiply through fruit seeds, but also by means of bulbs and roots.

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

JUNE 28

Thomas Matthews Rooke, "Central Tower at Sunset from Rue Sérurier, Laon Cathedral, France" (1886).

In 1886, Ruskin sent Rooke to paint at Laon, writing, "I am going to avail myself of your divine sympathy with the French character and your exquisite architectural drawing. I want you to go first to Laon and see how you like it... The mouldings at Laon are the finest in the world, and for the town - you'll see." Although descriptions of Laon rarely appear in Ruskin's books, he wrote of the town and its location with affection in his letters and diary notes. Rooke painted a number of views of Laon for the Ruskin Collection, including views of the cathedral tower from different angles, the town's picturesque streets and scenes of the townspeople at market or in religious festivals.

This scene depicts one of Laon's principal streets, the Rue Sérurier, which is named after Comte Sérurier, a Marshal or

General, who fought in the French Revolution for Napoleon. Laon Cathedral's central tower can be glimpsed in the background, with one of the western towers partially visible to the left. Rooke painted this scene from an unusual viewpoint, drawing attention to the ancient houses, and painting only part of the church tower. In a more conventional painting, he might have painted the tower in its entirety, making it the work's focal point. Ruskin commissioned studies of towns and buildings as pictorial records, rather than as traditionally composed or "artistic" scenes, so Rooke was used to painting from these unusual viewpoints. He included some figures. Rooke's letters suggest that when he began adding figures to his street scenes, Ruskin initially criticised the practice, but he later accepted that the figures added character and atmosphere to pictorial records.

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



JUNE 29



Frank Randal, "The North Door, Santa Maria Maggiore, Bergamo, Italy" (1885). This canopy is found above the northern transept, or left wing of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. The church is unusual, having no central doorway. Instead, the entrances are to the side, under each transept. Both doors are decorated by elaborate porches and were individually carved by Giovanni da Campione during the 1350s and 60s. The lower canopy contains sculptures of St Barbara, St Vincent and St Alexander. The upper niche contains sculptures of St Esther and St Grata, with the Madonna and Child at the centre. Ruskin greatly admired the style and colour of early decoration such as that of Santa Maria Maggiore, which he described as "Lombardic Gothic". Ruskin wrote very little about this church itself, but Randal probably drew this detail for him in response to a commission to record architecture in "rather out of the way bits that are perishing".

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

JUNE 30

Frank Randal, "Study of Stained Glass, the 'St Germain' window, South Side of Lady Chapel, Auxerre Cathedral, France" (1882).

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