

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

**NOVEMBER**

Guild of St George  
*With thanks to Museums Sheffield*

*Text by Louise Pullen and Stuart Eagles  
Images selected by Stuart Eagles  
Images scanned by Museums Sheffield  
Edited & designed by Stuart Eagles*



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**GUILD of St GEORGE**

You are here: **Welcome** Search:

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Jobs

Press Releases

Events (Sheffield)

Events (General)

--Past Events

Background

Early Years

The Guild Today

Ruskin Collection

Triennial Exhibitions

RUSKIN in SHEFFIELD 2016

--RinS 2015

Rural Projects

The Ruskin Lecture

Whitelands Ruskin Lecture

## Welcome to Ruskin's Guild of St George

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



**RUSKIN AND POLITICS**  
CLICK TO WATCH

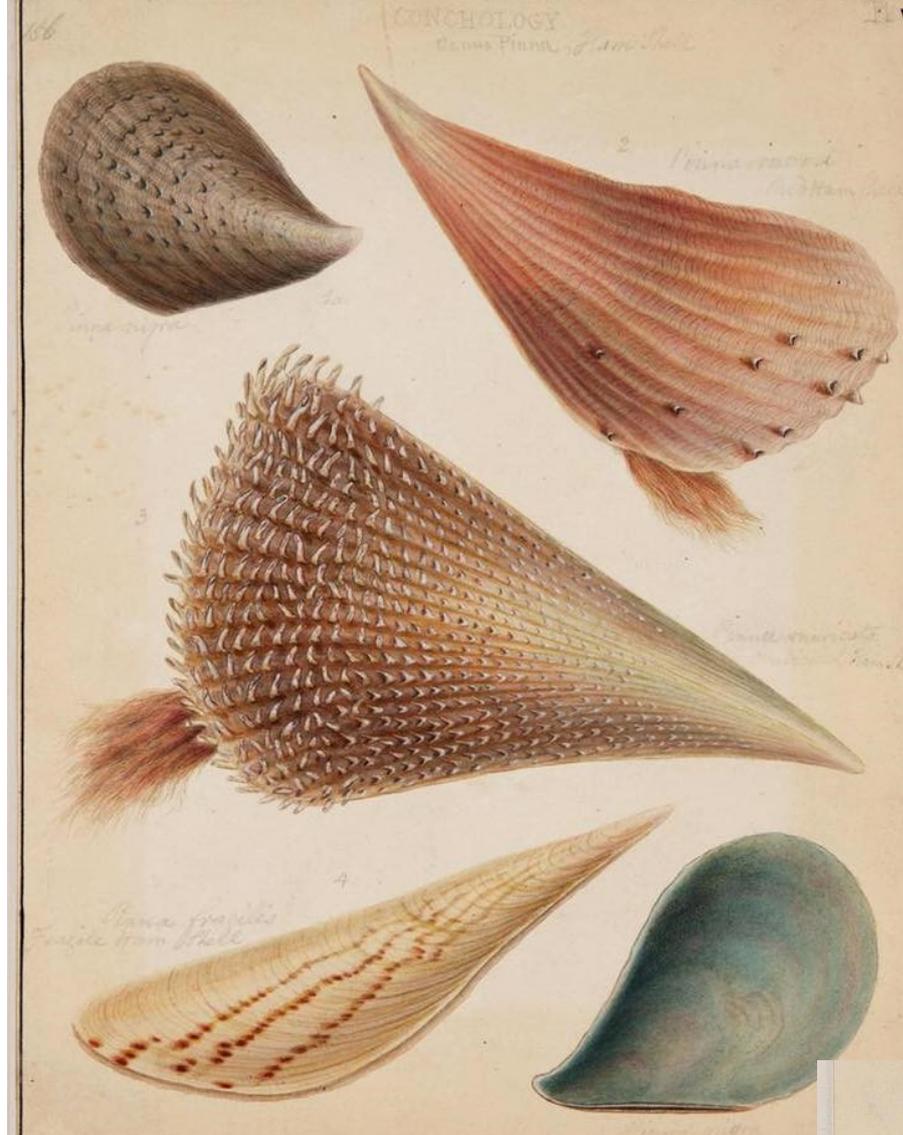
POLITICAL THEORY - John Ruskin

76,737

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

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

# NOVEMBER 1



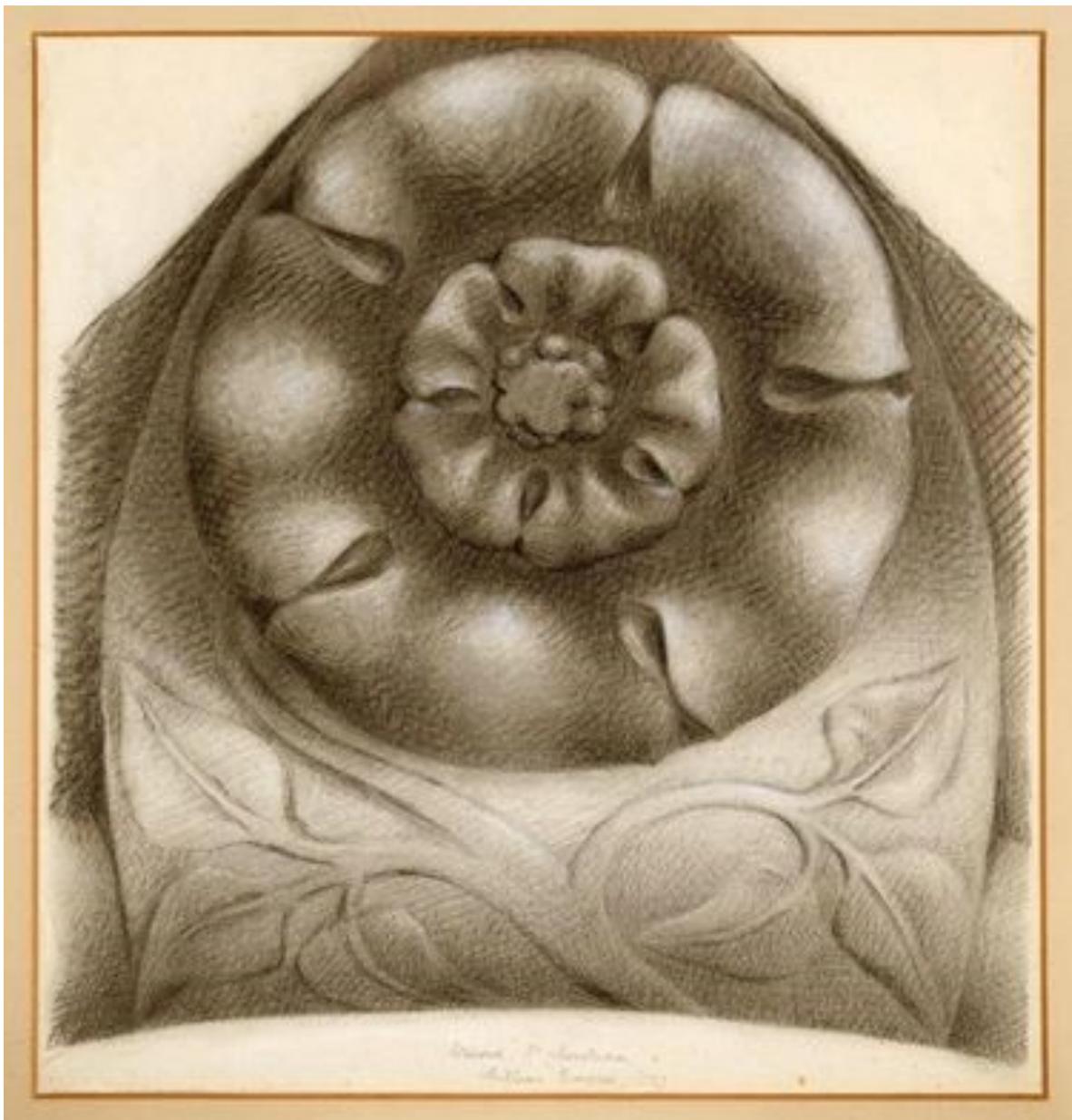
Edward Donovan, "Studies of Invertebrate Animals, Volume IV" (1790-1810). This is not a book as such, but a volume of collected watercolour illustrations that were bound together in the 1870s for the Ruskin Collection. It contains watercolour studies made towards several of Donovan's books on natural history. He produced a number of these, under titles such as "The Naturalist's Repository, or Miscellany of Exotic Natural History Exhibiting Rare and Beautiful Specimens of Foreign Birds, Insects, Shells, Quadrupeds, Fish and Marine Productions", which he published between 1822 and 1827. More famously, Donovan produced "The Natural History of British Shells", first published in 1799, which became one of the most popular books on shells during the 1800s, owing to its beautifully produced, hand-coloured illustrations. All of his books, however, were notable for their vivid and detailed studies. Not only did Donovan paint the preliminary illustrations for his books, he also made sure he had control over the final published illustrations themselves by etching, engraving and hand-colouring them himself.

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

# NOVEMBER 2

Arthur Burgess, "Spur in Santa Anastasia, Verona, Italy" (1869).

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



# NOVEMBER 3

Thomas Bewick, "Study of a Curlew" (1803).

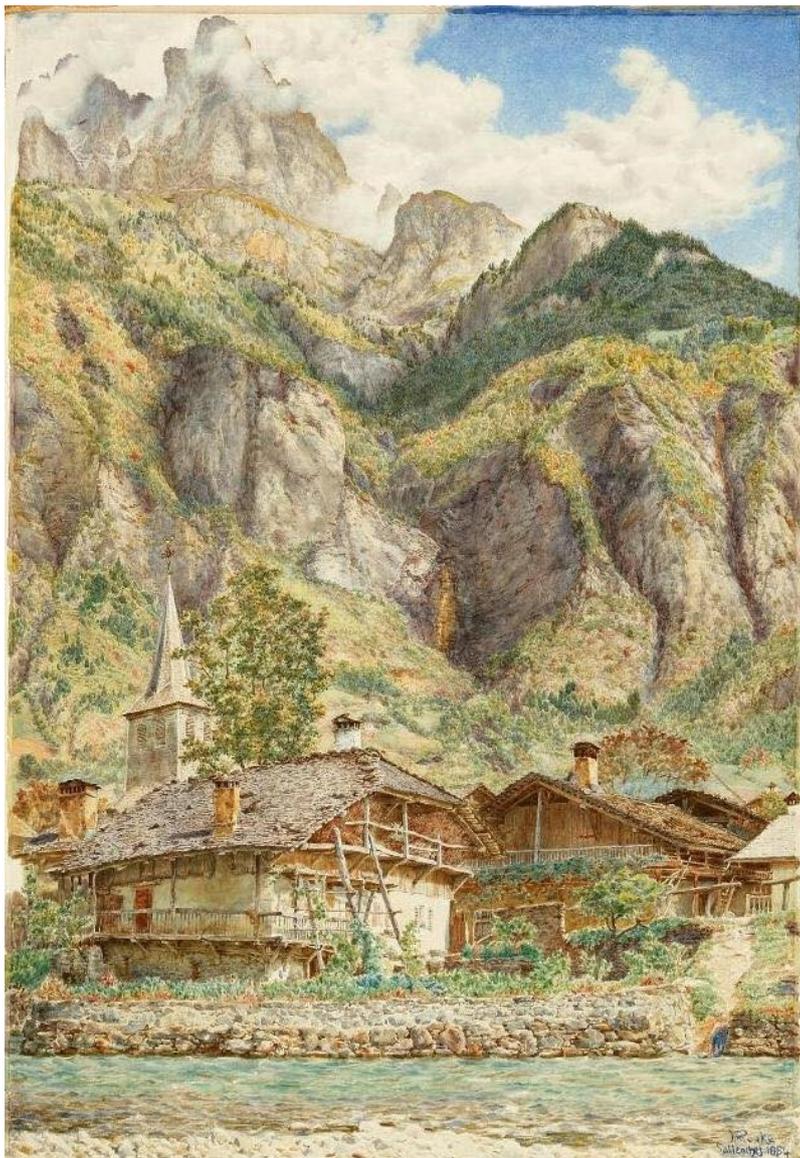
This is an original drawing for an illustration in Bewick's book, "Birds of Britain", Volume II, subtitled "A History and Description of Water Birds", published in 1804. Each bird appears in a small vignette illustration in woodcut, but the book is famous for its small illustrations of everyday life, depicted in the "tailpieces". Ruskin admired Bewick's woodcut illustrations, saying: "The execution of the plumage in Bewick's birds is the most masterly thing ever yet done in woodcutting". He described how he was one of the rare artists who could represent "many features with few lines". Ruskin also respected Bewick for showing scenes of rural life and ignoring the nobility in his books (unlike most bird books of the time, which set out to charm the rich), because Bewick was a farmer's son who represented the life he knew from personal experience.

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



# NOVEMBER 4

Thomas Matthews Rooke, "The Aiguille de Varens, Sallenches, France" (1884). Rooke drew this, and a number of other depictions of towns in the Alps, after he had received a commission from Ruskin to paint "as much of the quaint streets and general picturesque as you feel able." At Sallenches, the town depicted here, Ruskin told Rooke, "I want Savoy cottages, distant villages...all in that valley are overwhelmingly lovely in Autumn." Although the impressive mountain scenery of the Alps had thrilled Ruskin since childhood, he also felt that the picturesque villages added a humble, human element that emphasised the power and majesty of nature. As an 18 year-old, Ruskin wrote about Swiss chalets, and his comments seem to chime with this drawing: "Well do I remember the thrilling and exquisite moment when first...I encountered, in a calm and shadowy dingle, darkened with the thick spreading of tall pines, and voiceful with the singing of a rock-encumbered stream, and passing up towards the flank of a smooth green mountain, whose swarded summit shone in the summer snow like an emerald set in silver; when, I say, I first encountered ...the unobtrusive, yet beautiful, front of the Swiss cottage. I thought it the loveliest piece of architecture I had ever had the felicity of contemplating; yet it was nothing in itself, nothing but a few mossy fir trunks, loosely nailed together, with one or two grey stones on the roof: but its power was the power of association; its beauty, that of fitness and humility... it always suggests ideas of a gentle, pure and pastoral life." Ruskin



was a regular traveller in this area. The mountains satisfied his fascination with mountain and rock formations, and the Alpine villages and landscapes provided a picturesque background for his love of beauty. In 1862, Ruskin decided to retire to Bonneville, about 10 miles from Sallenches. Ruskin intended to buy land and build a home that was high up in the mountains, partly as a retreat away from his family and partly to try to work out ways in which to improve the farming land in the area. His intention with this was to help the local people. In the end, Ruskin did not buy the land and sold some other land he had bought near Chamonix, after tourism started to affect the area. Instead, Ruskin bought Brantwood, a house at Coniston, in the English Lake District. Nevertheless, as Brantwood was high in the hills, Ruskin tried experimenting on the land there to find out if he could still help villagers in the Swiss mountains.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/>

# NOVEMBER 5

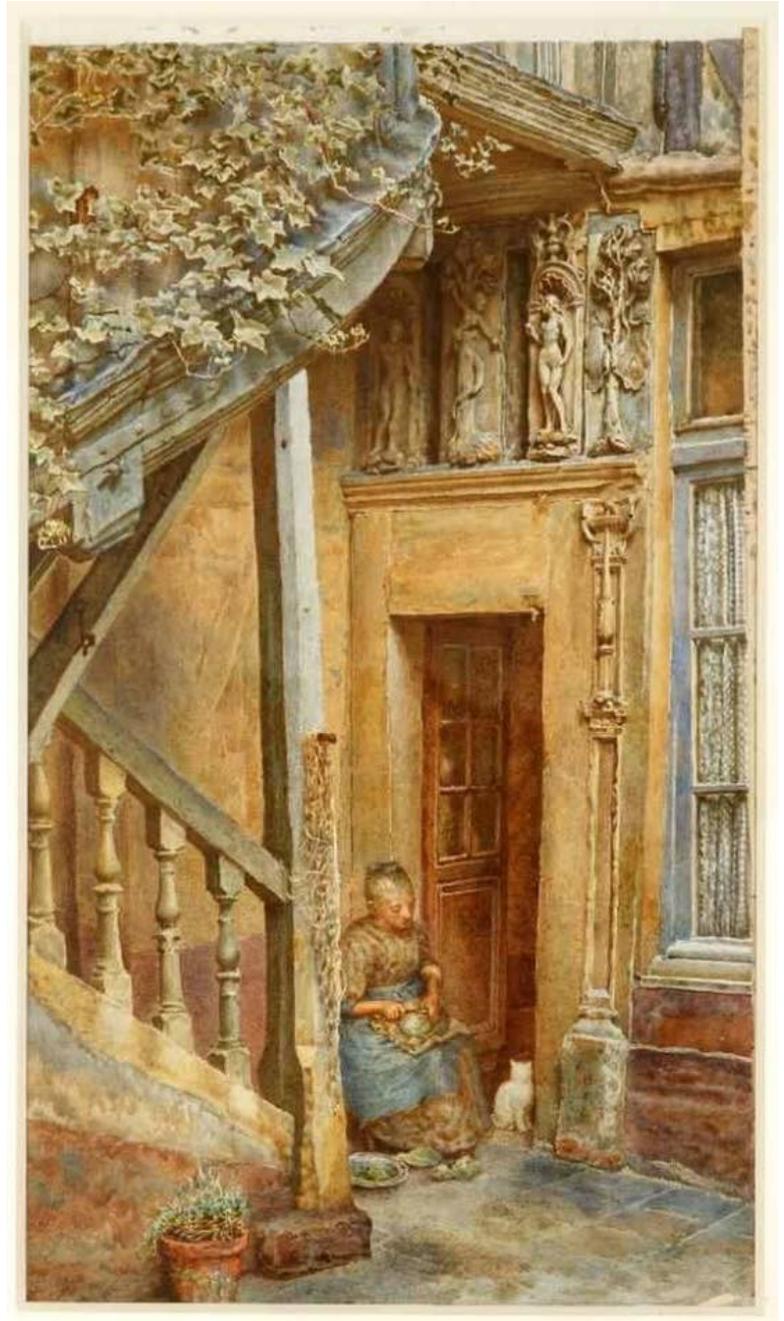
Frank Randal, "Rue des Bouchers, Amiens, France" (1881).  
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>



# NOVEMBER 6

Thomas Matthews Rooke, "Sculptured Doorway, Troyes, France" (1890). Rooke was a travelling artist skilled in painting records of medieval architecture. He said of Troyes, in northern France: "This is the sort of town in which I should like to stay just as long as ever I liked and prolong outdoor working weather at my discretion and keep it all to myself until I had quite done with it." He found, however, that there was "almost no fine carving except scattered atoms of wood on some houses." It is this type of carving that he has painted here. He was in Troyes painting for the Society for the Preservation of Pictorial Records of Ancient Works of Art, an organisation that sponsored artists to record medieval architecture before it disappeared through neglect or insensitive restoration. The scheme was initiated by collector and Birmingham-based curator, Sir Sydney Cockerell, who had been influenced by Ruskin's commissioning of "memorial studies" of works of art and architecture.

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



# NOVEMBER 7

Frank Randal, "Rue St Hilaire with the Apse of St Frambourg, Senlis, France" (1881).  
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>





# NOVEMBER 9

On US election results day:

"Red Tailed Hawk with American Hare" (1832) after John James Audubon, from the Collection of Thomas Campbell Eyton.

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



# NOVEMBER 10

John Wharltton Bunney, "The Porta della Carta, Doge's Palace, Venice, Italy" (1882).

The Porta della Carta is the main gateway into the Doge's Palace in Venice. The gateway was built to make a direct link between the Palace and the Basilica of San Marco so that the Doge, ruler of the Venetian empire and the official figurehead of the Basilica could move between the buildings privately. The name Porta della Carta which translates as Documents gate also indicates that petitioners, or people wishing to make requests to Venice's council, would have handed over their papers here. New laws were passed out from the columns seen in the painting to the far left. This painting is not part of Ruskin's original collection, but was bought by the Guild of St George in 2010. Its first owner, Quincy Adams Shaw, an American financier who was travelling in Venice with his family,



commissioned the painting from Bunney in 1876. It is one of four versions that Bunney painted as high-quality souvenirs for travellers.

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

# NOVEMBER 11

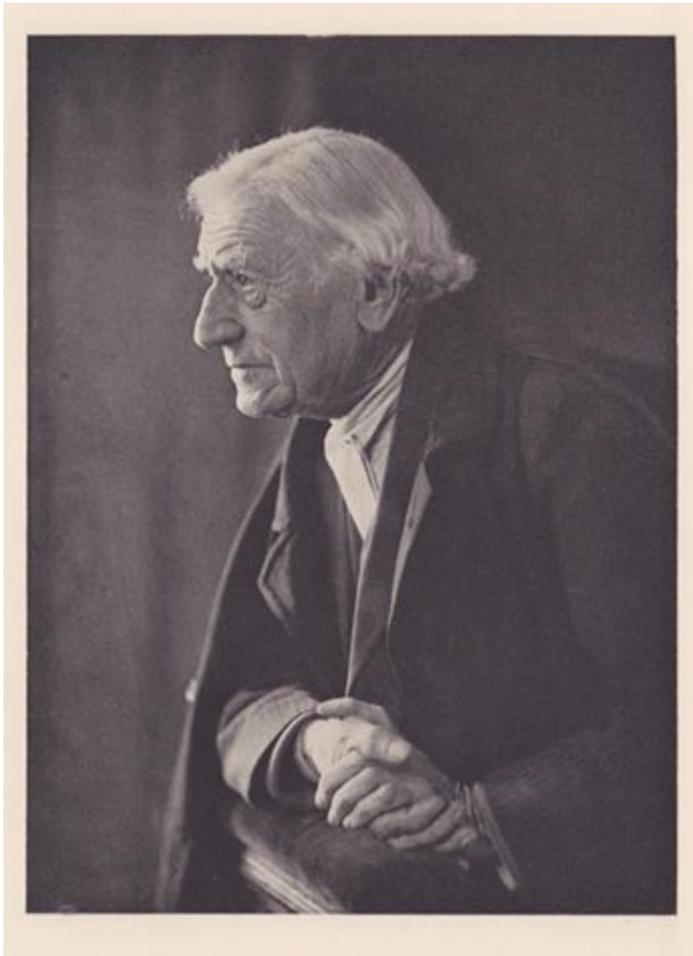
William Hackstoun, "Turin from the Portico of the Superga Church, Italy" after Turner (1880).

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



On This Day in 1926, the fourth Master of Ruskin's Guild of St George, Henry Elford Luxmoore, retired tutor at Eton, died aged 85.

<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/guild-hist.../guild-masters/>



# NOVEMBER 12

## HISTORY OF BRITISH BIRDS.

THE FIGURES ENGRAVED ON WOOD BY T. BEWICK.

VOL. II.

CONTAINING THE  
HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF WATER BIRDS.



NEWCASTLE: simplicity,

PRINTED BY EDWARD WALKER, FOR T. BEWICK: SOLD BY HIM, AND  
LONGMAN AND REES, LONDON.

[Price 12s. in Boards.]

1804.

*Compare page 56*  
*Amiable type of juvenile simplicity*  
*Compare pages 1 and 3*  
I am not sure of the meaning of this vignette. but I think it means - waste of time - the work of earth and heaven calling us, in the distance - perhaps the results of Church and Folly of British youth

Thomas Bewick, "History of British Birds" Volume II (1804).

This is Ruskin's own copy of Bewick's "Birds of Britain", and has the subtitle, "The History and Description of Land Birds". Volume II, called "A History and Description of Water Birds", was published in 1804. Each bird in it has a small vignette illustration in woodcut, but the book is famous also for its small illustrations of everyday life, known as the "tailpieces". Ruskin admired Bewick's woodcut illustrations, writing: "The execution of the plumage in Bewick's birds is the most masterly thing ever yet done in woodcutting". Ruskin also respected Bewick for showing scenes of rural life, rather than focusing on the nobility like most bird books of the time. As a farmer's son, Bewick represented the life he knew personally, rather than what he imagined it to be. Yet, Ruskin didn't always praise Bewick's work, as some annotations in this book show. Most give praise, but under one vignette, for example, is written "frightful waste of time" and under another, "miserably bad".

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

# NOVEMBER 13

Thomas Matthew Rooke, "Rampart Walls and Cottages, with the Church of St Martin, Laon, 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. This image of Laon's walls is executed from an unusual viewpoint. A more conventional painting would have made the ancient abbey and its tower the focal point, but here Rooke needed to record architecture rather than present an artistic composition. Laon's walls date back to the 1100s, when the hilltop town was of strategic importance to the area and needed to be defended.

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



# NOVEMBER 14

John Ruskin, "Traceries and Mouldings from Rouen and Salisbury", Sketch towards "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" (1849).

"The Seven Lamps of Architecture" was written and illustrated by Ruskin. It was first published in 1849, his first major work on architecture. He wrote in it of the emotional and moral power of buildings, and the principles and development of good design. This study is for Plate 10 in the book. The first four figures or diagrams show Rouen Cathedral's north door and the detail of its decorative mouldings. Ruskin wrote admiringly about the carved stonework, saying that the architect was interested not only in the shape of the opening, but also in the form, shadows and contours of the stone surrounding it. He felt the design captured the essence of the Gothic style and "unites fantasy and [architectural] law". The last diagram shows the decoration from Salisbury Cathedral. Ruskin described it as "piquant and spirited" but felt it lacks the "nobility" of the French version of Gothic.

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



# NOVEMBER 15



J. W. Bunney, "Study of Trees" (1860-80).  
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

# NOVEMBER 16



John Ruskin, "Study of a Spray of Dead Oak Leaves" (1879).

It took two hours for Ruskin to make this study, and according to Susan Beever, a friend who sat with him while he made it, they did not speak for the entire time. He considered that leaves were one of the hardest natural objects to draw and said: "If you can paint one leaf, you can paint the World." He promoted his technique of drawing them in his books of art lessons, "The Elements of Drawing" and "The Laws of Fésole". Following his own advice, he laid the opaque bodycolour first, before adding what he termed "clear colour". Most importantly, the two paints were never mixed or overlapped. Ruskin felt that the leaf's undulating form could be recorded swiftly but accurately using this method. He also felt that one could not paint a wider landscape correctly, until one understood every aspect of it, such as each tiny flower or leaf. For this reason, he urged artists to learn to draw leaves correctly before tackling landscape drawing.

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

# NOVEMBER 17

Thomas Matthews Rooke, "Lower Storey of an Old House, Brieg, Switzerland" (1884). Rooke worked in Brieg (usually spelled Brig) and other towns in the Swiss Alps after he was commissioned by John Ruskin to paint the area's "quaint streets and general picturesque." Although the impressive mountain scenery of the Alps had thrilled Ruskin since childhood, he also felt that the picturesque villages added a humble, human element that emphasised the power and majesty of nature. In this watercolour, Ruskin was particularly struck by the "old shutters of [the] arched window and ancient grating on the left." Ruskin was also interested in people who lived in the Alps. He was intrigued by their work ethic and the effect this had on their religious beliefs. Ruskin intended to write about this in a book called "Our fathers Have Told Us" in which he aimed to relate "sketches of the history of Christendom." This interest stretches back to when Ruskin was an 18 year-old: in his book "The Poetry of Architecture" he wrote about the construction of Swiss chalets and cottages. He wrote that they "always suggest ideas of a gentle, pure and pastoral life."

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# NOVEMBER 18



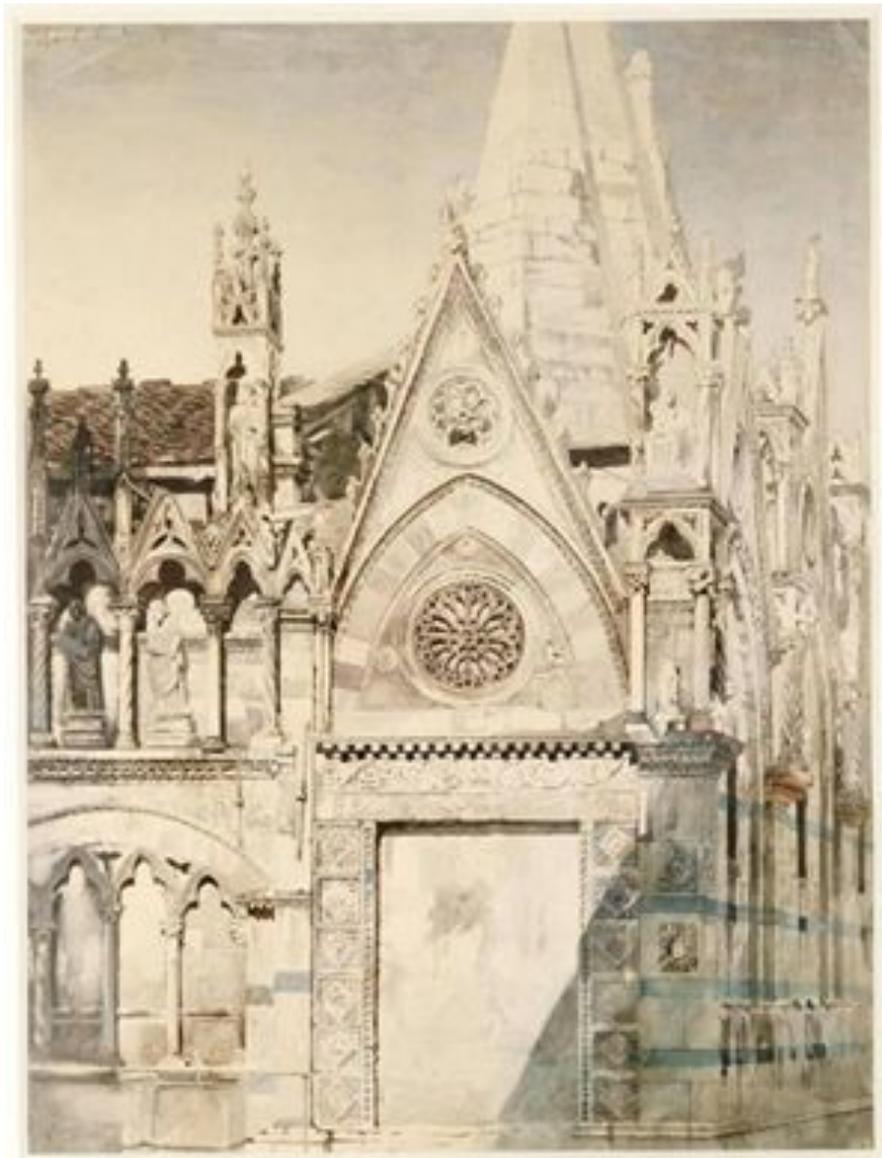
"Black-bellied Darter" (1836) after John James Audubon.  
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

# NOVEMBER 19

John Ruskin, "Santa Maria della Spina, East end, Pisa, Italy" (1845).

Ruskin was obviously fond of this building, referring to it as his "pet La Spina Chapel." In 1845, he was worried that it would be demolished and asked permission to make studies of the chapel "before they throw [it] in the river." The building wasn't demolished, but was rebuilt in a higher position in 1871. Whilst this was intended to protect the building from river floods, it altered its shape and caused the destruction of some of its facings and ornaments. In 1872, for example, Ruskin described how a marble cross was "dashed to pieces" as he tried to draw it for a lecture diagram. Ruskin copied this drawing from a daguerreotype he had made. He found daguerreotypes useful for recording scenes quickly but they were small and had very shiny surfaces. Ruskin therefore made the drawing "so that people might not be plagued ...by the lustre."

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



# NOVEMBER 20

J. W. Bunney, "Gondola with figures, at Night, Venice, Italy" (1868-82).  
<http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/the-collection/>

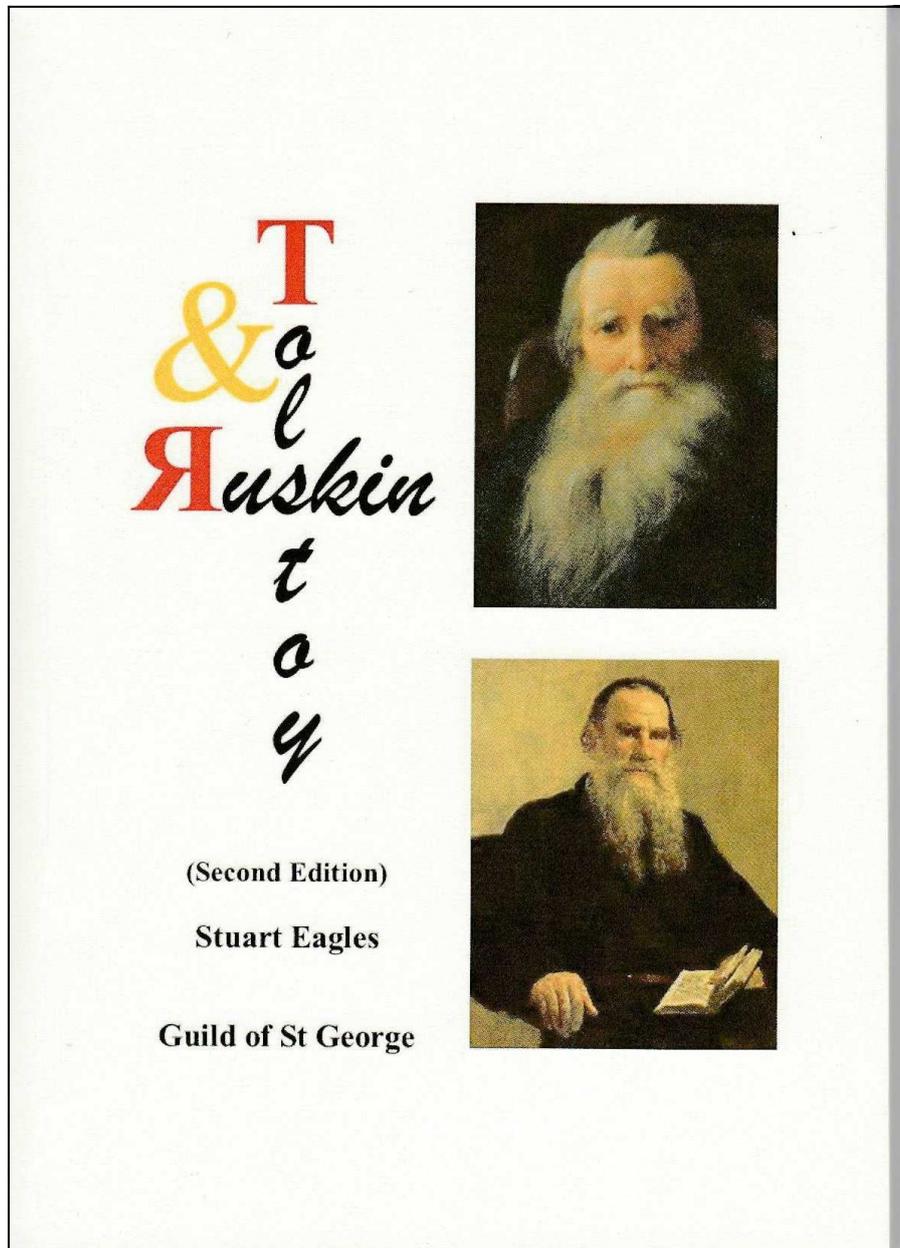


On This Day in 1910, Leo Tolstoy died.

He wrote:

‘John Ruskin is one of the most remarkable men not only of England and of our generation, but of all countries and times, He is one of those rare men who think with their hearts (‘les grandes pensées viennent du coeur ’), and so he thinks and says what he has himself seen and felt, and what everyone will think and say in the future.’

You can read about *Ruskin and Tolstoy* in the published version of the 2010 Ruskin Lecture by Stuart Eagles (2nd edn, 2016) see <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/shop/>



# NOVEMBER 21

A late nineteenth-century photograph by an unknown artist: Capital, Doge's Palace, Venice, Italy.

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



# NOVEMBER 22



On This Day: François Lavaillant died in 1824. François Lavaillant, "Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux de Paradis, et des Rolliers, suivie de celle des Toucans, et des Barbus" (Volume 2) (1806).

These paintings are by the artist Jacques Barraband.

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



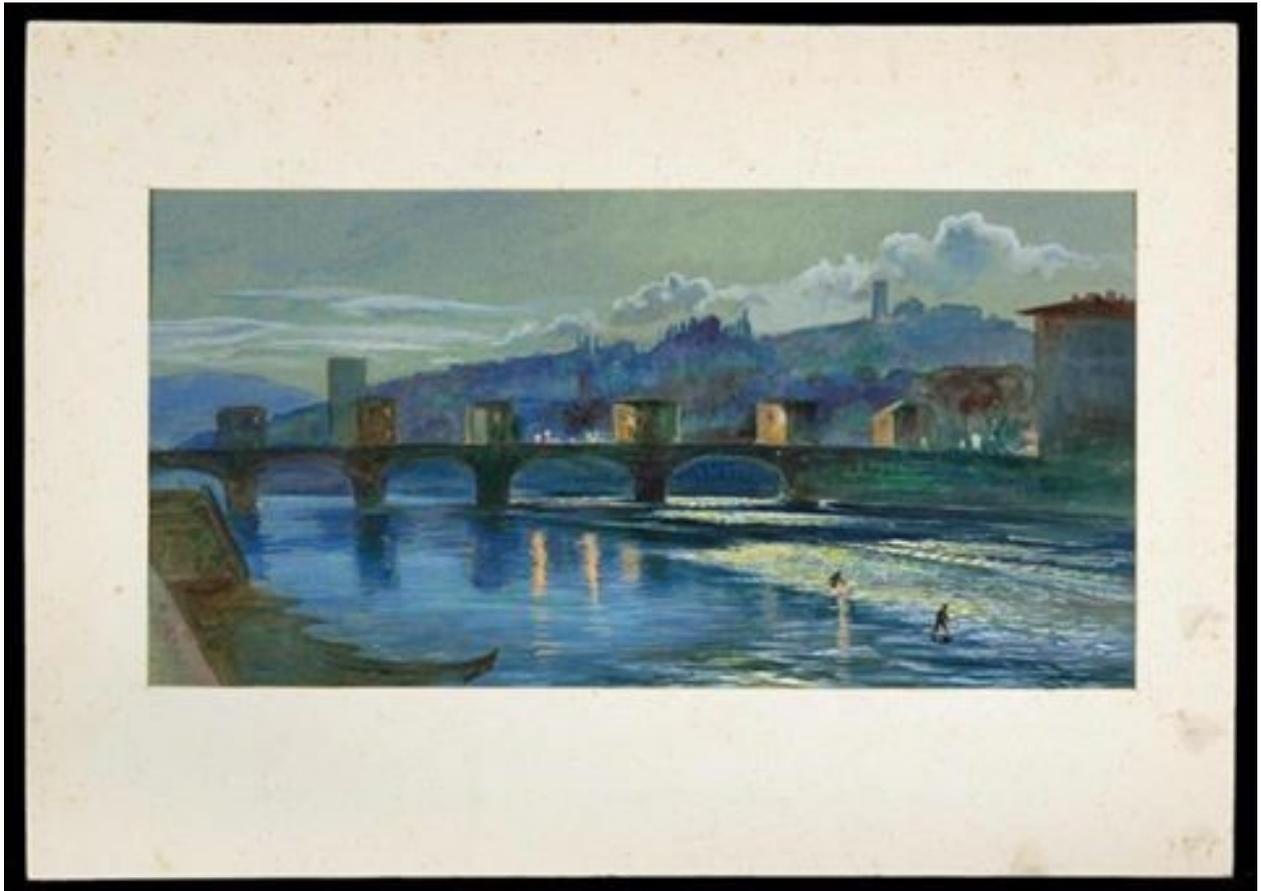
George Eliot born on this day in 1819 considered Ruskin's eloquence uncommonly persuasive & called him a "prophet of realism".

# NOVEMBER 23

J. W. Bunney, "Ponte alle Grazie, Florence, Italy" (1865).

The Ponte alle Grazie is an ancient bridge that crossed the River Arno at Florence, Italy. Built in the 1200s, the bridge was the longest in Florence. Buildings dating from the early 1300s lined the bridge, as can be seen here. The first building on the bridge was a chapel called Santa Maria alle Grazie, Our Lady of the Graces. The bridge took its name from this chapel. Bunney has captured this bridge as it appeared in 1865. Several years later, all the buildings on the bridge were demolished to make way for a new tram system. The Nazis, who occupied Florence from 1943, blew up the rest of the bridge in 1944 as they retreated from the city. This watercolour is therefore documentary evidence of a lost treasure.

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



# NOVEMBER 24



William Hackstoun, "Ingleborough from Hornby Castle Terrace, Richmondshire", after Turner (c. 1880).

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

# NOVEMBER 25

On This Day: St Catherine's Day.

Charles Fairfax Murray, "Madonna and Child with St Catherine in a Rose Garden", after Stefano da Verona (1876-80).

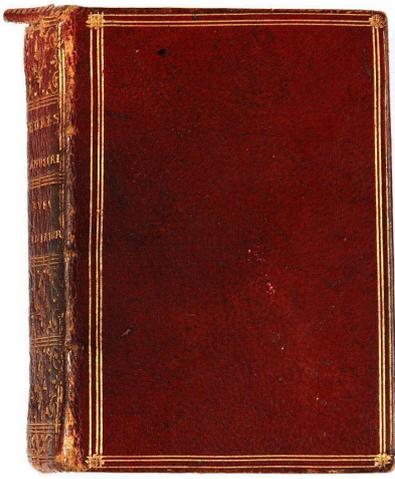
Stefano da Verona's painting is highly decorative but is also full of religious symbolism. Blue and red colours predominate. The white roses are suggestive of the



Madonna's purity, whilst the rose is one of her emblems. She herself sits on the ground in a gesture of humility. Attributes or personal emblems surround St Catherine. The wheel and sword are the symbols of her torture and death, and she is being presented with a martyr's palm. She also holds a ring, denoting her vision of her engagement to the King of Glory. Other significant objects includes the golden fountain, symbolising the fountain of life, the rivers of heaven and salvation itself. The peacocks also represent salvation; it was believed that their flesh never decayed.

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

# NOVEMBER 26



Illuminated manuscript.

The "de Croy" Book of Hours (1460-65) by or from the workshop of Jean Fouquet, c. 1415-20-1481.

Contains a selection of decorated texts, prayers and psalms for Christian devotion.



The volume begins with a calendar which on magnificently decorated double-leaves illustrates the course of the year. All other miniatures are of equally excellent quality. All pages with large-format illustrations are surrounded by richly carved bronze-gold Gothic frames. The same framing system is used throughout, providing a uniform visual impression when opening the book. All 58 miniatures are of stunning quality and conform to the standard content of a Book of Hours: the twelve initial calendar miniatures are

followed by diverse illustrations related to the devotion in the face of Christ, of the Holy Cross and the Holy Ghost, and by illustrations referring to an Office of the Virgin and to

pericopes of the four Gospels. The Office of the Virgin forms the core of the book around which the Penitentiary Psalms, an Office of the Dead as well as prayers dedicated to various saints are grouped. Post 1 of 4.





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Post 2 of 4.

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







# NOVEMBER 28

On This Day in 1757: William Blake was born.

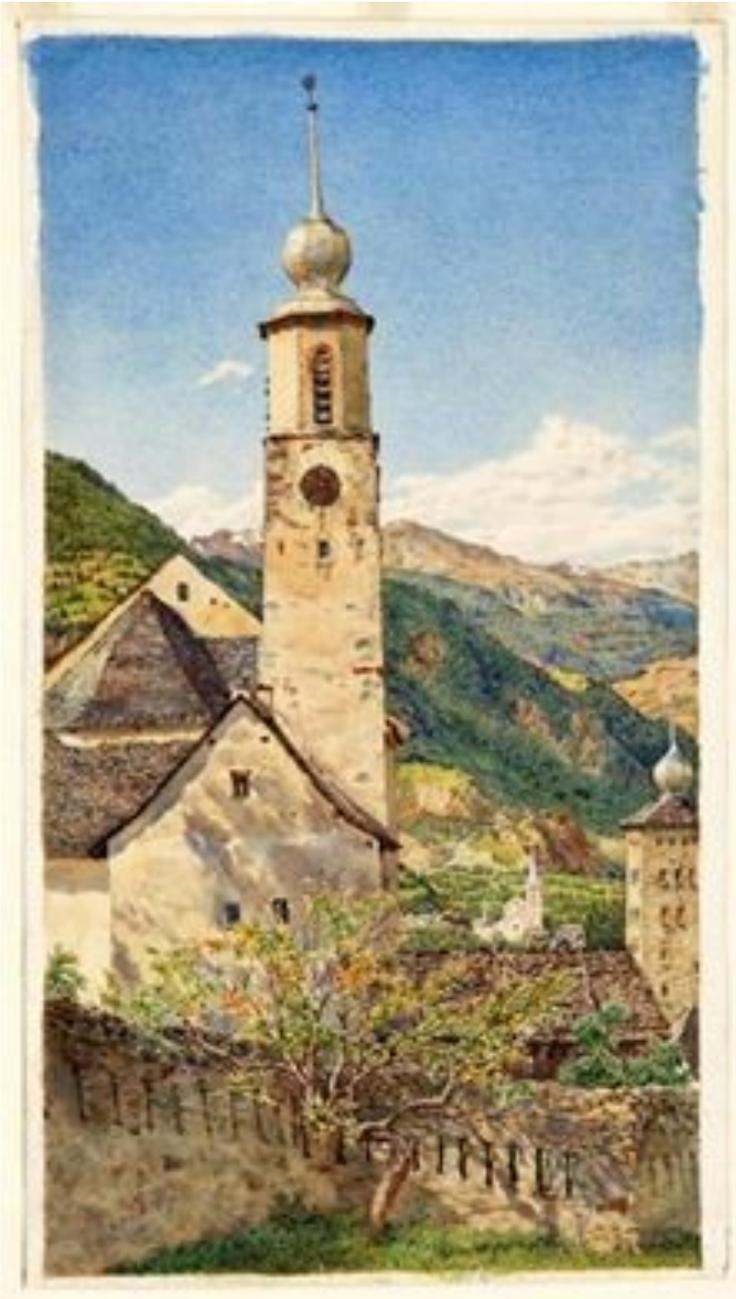
William Blake, Illustrations to Thornton's "Pastorals of Virgil": "With Songs the Jovial Hinds return from Plough" (1821).

Thornton's Virgil, properly called "The Pastorals of Virgil; with a course of English Reading, adapted for schools" was edited by Dr Robert John Thornton (1768-1837) and contained stories written in imitation of the Roman poet, Virgil. This woodcut is from a series commissioned to illustrate one by Ambrose Philips (1674-1749) entitled "Imitation of Virgil's First Eclogue." It tells the tale of two shepherds, Thenot and Colinet. The young Colinet, dissatisfied with his life, argues with the elderly but contented Thenot, and sets off to see more of England. He travels through many storms and is ridiculed by people in the cities he visits. Colinet and Thenot later find each other again, and Thenot, taking pity on Colinet, invites him home to share in the happiness of the world around him. This woodcut, the penultimate in the series, depicts the animals returning to the farm at the end of the day.

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



# NOVEMBER 29



Thomas Matthews Rooke, "Looking down the Valley, with the Tower of the Jesuits' Church, Brieg, Switzerland" (1884).

Brieg (usually called Brig) is a historic town in the mountainous Valais region of Switzerland. The area was thriving by the 1500s due to the Simplon Pass, a natural route through the mountains from Brig into Italy. By the 1800s, the area had become a focus for Alpine tourists owing to a new carriage road through the Pass which meant that the region could be reached more easily. Rooke based himself in Brig after receiving a commission from Ruskin to paint "as much of the quaint streets and general picturesque as you feel able." Although the impressive mountain scenery of the Alps had thrilled Ruskin since childhood, he also felt that the Alpine villages typified the power and majesty of nature. Here, Rooke has focussed on Brig's more important buildings. The Jesuit's College dominates the left side of the watercolour, and one of the three towers of the Stockalper Castle is in the middle ground to the right. Both were built in the late 1600s.

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

# NOVEMBER 30

Late 13th-century manuscript: Decretales Gregorii IX et Innocenti IV.

Decretals are official letters of decisions made by popes. Rather than laws, they are written as the Pope's definitive answers to problems and disputes encountered by Catholic authorities. The first decretals were written down as a series in the AD380s and 390s. Pope Gregory IX commissioned his personal priest, St Raymond of Peñafort, to compile a new set of Decretals to replace all previous versions in 1230. At this time the papacy was the most influential ruling authority in Europe, and Pope Gregory intended to assert his power by means of this commission. Pope Gregory sent copies of his new Decretals to different Universities including the University of Bologna, in northern Italy. It is probable that this particular manuscript was made in Bologna, probably in the late 1200s. The scribe was possibly called Albertus, as his signature appears in this manuscript.

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



