

The ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT in Surrey

ISSUE 5

E-NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2021



Chairman's Editorial by Carolyn Smith

This month, I was interested to read the Historic England Listing Selection Guide for Suburban and Country Houses. <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-suburban-country-houses/heag104-domestic3-suburban-and-country-houses-lsg/> Worth a look.

Gravetye and the importance of William Robinson get a mention in my forthcoming lecture this month. The article is a reminder of summer and the lecture will also transport you to sunny Italy on a cold November evening. Do apply!



Forthcoming events for 2021

18th November. 7.30pm. Zoom Lecture. *The influence of the Italian Renaissance on Arts and Crafts Gardens* by Carolyn Smith.

5th December. Christmas lunch at The Elvetham, Hartley Wintney, Hampshire.



ACMS Visit to Gravetye by Carolyn Smith

After the pouring rain of the previous day, twelve ACMS members congregated on the terrace of the South Garden at Gravetye on a pleasant afternoon. We were met by our knowledgeable guide, Amelia, who runs the nursery and propagates all the plants for the garden excepting large shrubs. She is currently one of the seven and an half permanent gardeners plus a daily volunteer who maintain the gardens. This seemed a lot to me.

William Robinson left the property and its surrounding 1000 acres to the Forestry Commission in 1935. This was on the proviso that the garden should always be open to

residents of nearby West Hoathly. Garden visitors from the village are welcomed on two afternoons a week. Robinson was very interested in trees and their uses. For example, he ran tests to see which wood was best for burning. We saw some choice trees including an enormous handkerchief tree which is covered in white blossom in spring. Amelia led us through an arch into the west flower garden which was at its most lush. The plants all seemed to be over a metre tall including cosmos which in my sandy garden is only a third of their size. As at Great Dixter, the gardeners are not wedded to an historic planting scheme but continue to experiment. There were therefore a lot of the tall grasses which are so fashionable in contemporary gardens. Dark leaved dahlias with brilliant pink flowers sat alongside huge clumps of bright yellow helianthus. I preferred the more subdued colour combinations of white or pink Japanese anemones and tall pale blue arching salvias. The attractive modern planting was absolutely not what Robinson recommended in his books. I bit my tongue when Amelia explained that most of the plants in the beds surrounding the lawn were lifted in the autumn. This is contrary to Robinson's whole premise that plants should be hardy and capable of withstanding the English climate all year round. No wonder that they need so many gardeners!

On my return home, I began to re-read Robinson's *The English Flower Garden*, first published in 1883 and followed by fifteen editions up to 1934. In this, he lists the hardy flowers in the 46 flower beds at Gravetye in 1922. Lily, clematis, rose, pansy, evening primrose, mignonette and hardy ferns feature prominently. For example, bed 36 comprised 'Rose, Christine. Undergrowth, True Blue Pansy. Edging, Tunica Saxifraga.' There are no mention of tender salvias in the whole book and dahlias only feature in the cutting garden.

The property sits on rich iron ore deposits and the extractions formed the basis of the three large lakes in the grounds. We crossed the lawn which now replaces many of Robinson's flower beds and looked back at the oldest part of the house built by an ironmaster in the Tudor period.



We were led up steps past the back of the house where we could see the North East wing added by Robinson. He had initially employed George Devey for the alterations but on his

death in 1886, Robinson turned to George & Peto for the new wing, redecoration of the interiors and to design an oak summerhouse. The N.E. wing now forms a link between the Tudor building and a new accommodation block built in 1992. The latter completely blends in with the original building as the stone weathers. How this contrasts with current planning guidelines for listed buildings which require that new work should look completely different. The new restaurant, constructed two years ago, sits in front of Robinson's work and is an easily removeable glass box. I know which I prefer!

Robinson had inserted terracing up the slope beside the house – terracing was something which Gertrude Jekyll also much preferred to a slope. At the top is the most enormous rectangular croquet lawn.



Continuing up steps and another slope, we came to the kitchen garden which was constructed in 1900-04. This equally enormous space is surrounded by a high stone wall and is in an unusual oval shape. It forms a microclimate as the temperature is always a couple of degrees higher in the kitchen garden than outside it. As the oval shape means that there are no dark corners, there is an even light distribution all round and the walls are covered in fruit – fig, mulberry, peach, pears, Morello cherries etc. Flowers spill onto the paths and there are rows and rows of seventy varieties of step- over espaliered apple trees just over a foot high. A huge range of vegetables is grown here, concentrating on those not easily available from supermarkets. The kitchen garden was derelict seven years ago but has been restored to supply the hotel restaurant. As in many Victorian and Edwardian kitchen gardens, the positioning is not at all convenient for carrying produce to the main house. This one is no different as it is situated some way from the house at the top of the hill.



For some years, Robinson was not keen on having greenhouses as he saw them as somewhere for his staff to hide out of sight! He was apparently a rather cantankerous person. However, he finally gave in and a large peach house was constructed along with other glasshouses and cold frames. These have all been reconstructed. Robinson, of course, had little need of the glass houses for overwintering tender plants. However, today, the many different varieties of salvias from the garden are overwintered in the peach house and the dahlias in a shed.

We continued down from the greenhouses past an orchard of apples on our right which was replanted eleven years ago. The restaurant uses these entirely for juice which is pasteurised. The orchard is at the far end of the west flower garden to our left where we began our tour. The path continues down to the view over the lakes and the meadow where Robinson planted thousands of spring bulbs.



Turning left back towards the house, we walked along the long herbaceous border of the South Garden past the pergola and the summer house designed by Ernest George. The pergola is covered in white wisteria underplanted with white lupins and is magnificent in June. Robinson disliked hedges – no yew or box here – but he used pergolas to break up spaces and this pergola is the only one remaining of several that were previously here.



A long herbaceous border runs beside the wall. Here, the planting of the herbaceous border would be a little more to Robinson's taste which again relied heavily on roses. However, at the far end were a host of giant Cannas which Robinson emphatically rejected 'as seldom attain(ing) their true beauty in our country.'



We returned to the small terrace ready for our afternoon tea in the new oak garden room which seats twelve , hence the number restriction applicable to our visit. It seemed a long wait with a complicated order for different varieties of tea. However, it was worth it when we were presented with an array of teas and delicious goodies.

We all cut back through the hotel in order to sneak a glimpse of some of the ground floor rooms restored by Robinson. There was a lot of panelling, plaster ceiling work and splendid carved fireplaces. We emerged at the front of the building at the end of a golden afternoon.



George & Peto wing with re-positioned front door. Two gables of 1992 extension on far right.



Pugin Stained Glass book

Alastair Carew-Cox, author of various books on stained glass has sent me this crowd funding appeal which at the time of writing is 32% funded. The Main Committee will consider making a grant in December but you may also be interested in donating.

<https://gogetfunding.com/the-stained-glass-of-a-w-n-pugin/>

10 Limited Edition A.W.N. Pugin Stained Glass Greetings Cards. Donate £35 and receive 10 greetings cards, 2 of each of 5 designs, featuring unusual Pugin stained glass, which are printed on Carbon Captured Paper which helps to capture CO2 and plant trees.

20 Limited Edition A.W.N. Pugin Stained Glass Greetings Cards. Donate £65 and receive 20 greetings cards featuring unusual Pugin stained glass, which are printed on Carbon Captured Paper which helps to capture CO2 and plant trees.

Donor's name added to the website and 24 Limited Edition A.W.N. Pugin Stained Glass Greetings Cards. Donate £120 and have your name (or logo) added to the website, with thanks for your support in making this exciting project possible, as well as 24 Limited Edition A.W.N. Pugin Stained Glass Greetings Cards, 2 of each of 12 designs, which are printed on Carbon Captured Paper which helps to capture CO2 and plant trees.

'Around 20 years ago I was commissioned by the scholar, Stanley A. Shepherd, to photograph some of Pugin's work for a book on his stained glass. This I duly did, on and off, for several years. At first I had not realised how meticulous Stanley's research was, he wrote everything by hand, and he would often ask me to visit another church, in the middle of nowhere, because of the importance or rarity of the glass design. The book was published in 2009, to stunning reviews, although with much research and photography still left to be done.

In the intervening years, the late Margaret Belcher published several volumes of Pugin's letters which gave an even greater insight into Pugin's stained glass. Stanley went through every word of each volume, adding all references to stained glass into his text. This, and other new research, took around 10 years. In the meantime I was travelling the United Kingdom photographing more Pugin glass. I was kindly allowed into the wonderful St Margaret's Convent in Edinburgh to photograph the Scottish Kings and Queens, I was given access to a derelict church in Castlemartin in Pembrokeshire and I even was given permission to have Bicton Mausoleum, in Budleigh Salterton, opened up for me after years of trying.

The potential new book, by now, had turned into two volumes, due to the sheer thoroughness of Stanley's research and the addition of around 300 new unpublished photographs. Perhaps the greatest part of Stanley's work is the Gazetteer. It painstakingly catalogues every known piece of Pugin glass in the world with a description of the design, the position in the church, size, corresponding comments from every one of Pugin's relevant letters, who the client was, the selling price of the windows, manufacturer etc. A truly remarkable piece of research that Stanley had been working on a lifetime, so thorough that there will be no point anyone else

undertaking similar work for generations. The majority of Stanley's work was typed up and corrected, other than the Gazetteer and the captions when, sadly, Stanley died. He died on the day we had our last meeting arranged before we started the actual layout.

Stanley's brother, Arnold Shepherd, was keen for Stanley's research not to be in vain. We discussed the best way forward and decided that we would produce the books in the form of a website, thus negating the horrendously expensive printing costs of the books and allowing my photographs and Stanley's superb research to be accessible to students, scholars, universities and the general public at no cost whatsoever. Stanley's remarkable work could be seen by all and would live on.

Arnold Shepherd kindly donated Stanley's large collection of books on Pugin and his correspondence with Lady Wedgwood and numerous clergy to Birmingham Reference Library Central Archives which also houses The Hardman Archives, the manufacturers of much of Pugin's glass. This aspect of Stanley's research now has a permanent home for scholars to access. While sorting through these papers I came across the numerous notes I had sent him for the final corrections to the Gazetteer. Amazingly, Stanley had made the corrections, so the work could now be finished to the standard that he would have wanted.

Over the past 18 months I have been writing the captions, using the *Corpus Vitrearum* system of positioning the windows which Stanley explained to me, and we have been adding in all of Stanley's final corrections. I have also had to change all the image numbering throughout the text and Gazetteer, a huge amount of work, as the image section in the Gazetteer has over 250 new unpublished images, which Stanley wanted me to layout in the order of Pugin's production. In addition, the summer before he died, we were kindly given access to a private collection of Pugin sketch books from his various tours of Cathedrals in France. I was allowed to photograph them, to add to this exciting project, and they give huge insights into the way he worked. Many of the sketches are of medieval Cathedral windows, some of which he copied, with references to colour within the sketches. These have never been published before, and there are many, and I have been adding them to the main body of the text. A hugely important unseen body of work.

Although Arnold is very kindly paying for the actual design work there are other associated costs. I have had to pay the photographic Laboratory that I use for work on a large number of my more recent images. Sadly, Stanley never got to see the photographs from Bicton Mausoleum and other sites. I am still hoping to photograph other key locations which incurs travelling costs, bed and breakfast etc. There are the website production costs as well as further editing, finishing the captioning etc. I am trying to raise around £8,000 to finish this work hence this GoGetFunding appeal. Any additional money raised over this figure would enable further photography. Please do give this hugely important research your due consideration so that it can be added to the world wide web for posterity.'



Can you help? Surrey Local Heritage Asset Project

The Surrey Local Heritage Asset Project has gone live. You can find the nomination form and associated notes and guidance on this web page: [Local heritage list project - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk) The nominations page is open until Tuesday, 16th November. Please do consider whether there are any buildings that you would like to nominate in Elmbridge, Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Surrey Heath, Tandridge or Woking. You may like to email a copy of nominations to me which would be of interest to our members.



Property for Sale

Wicksted Hall, Whitchurch, Cheshire. This house was built in 1907 by Lt Herbert Ethelston of the Grenadier Guards, who was killed in action at Neuve Chapelle, France on March 14, 1915. It is a brick and timbered building with a stone portal. A descendant of Robert Peel, he was born in 1881. Herbert had married in 1903 and moved to Wicksted Hall with his wife, Muriel. They had no children. He was educated at Eton and Sandhurst. A keen cricketer, a good shot and a keen angler. He was Vice-President of the Whitchurch Dairy Farmers' Association. In the 1911 census, he was described as a 'Gentleman'. The Hall had 28 rooms and 9 servants. He looks entirely Edwardian with his moustache in the photograph from the Imperial War Museum. How many more such tragedies must have occurred in Arts and Crafts houses up and down the country. Probate records show his effects as valuing £98,609. Pdf attached.

Geldards, Great Chesterford, Essex Village house by unknown architect.

<https://search.savills.com/property-detail/gbcarscas210293>

Honer House, South Mundham, West Sussex Also, frustratingly, architect unknown.

<https://www.struttandparker.com/properties/honer-lane>



Books

William Morris edited by Anna Mason. Thames and Hudson. This is an update of the 1996 publication which accompanied the V&A's centenary exhibition.

Published to mark the 125th anniversary of Morris's death, this book includes contributions from a wide range of Morris experts, with chapters on painting, church decoration and stained glass, interior decoration, furniture, tiles and tableware, wallpaper, textiles, calligraphy and publishing. Additional materials include a contextualized chronology of Morris's life and a list of public collections around the world where examples of Morris's work may be seen today. This study is a comprehensive, fully illustrated exploration of a great thinker and artist, and essential reading for anyone interested in the history of design.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/William-Morris-Victoria-Albert-Museum/dp/0500480508>



Other organisations – Events of interest

Rossetti's Portraits Exhibition at The Holburne Museum, Bath until January 9th 2022.

As always, we would welcome any ideas for events, visits and lectures that you would like to propose to the Events Committee and any news or articles that you might like to submit for the Society e-newsletter or printed newsletter. Also, if you are aware of any planning applications relating to Arts and Crafts buildings in Surrey we should be pleased if you would bring them to our attention.

Chairman and e-newsletter editor: Carolyn Smith,
chairman@artsandcraftsmovementinsurrey.org.uk

The Arts and Crafts Movement in Surrey website :

www.artsandcraftsmovementinsurrey.org.uk