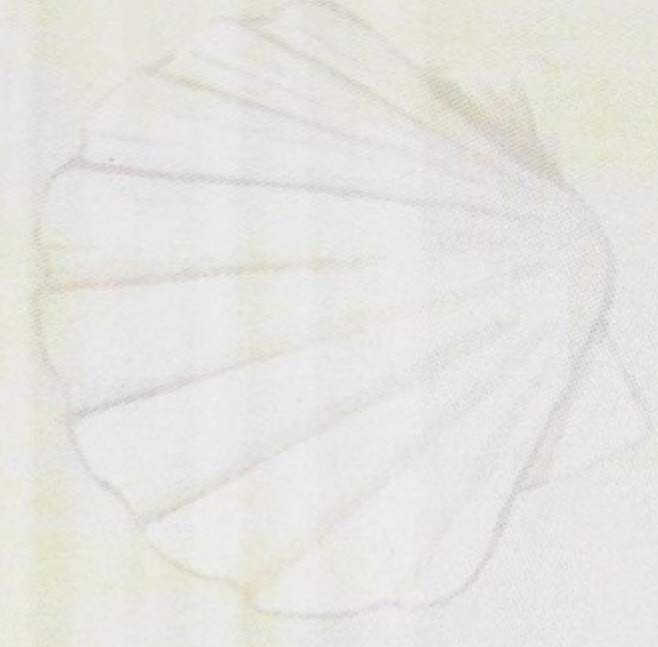


FOUNDED ON 26 OCTOBER 1988 BY THE
PROVOST OF BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL,
THE LATE VERY REVEREND BERRY, M.A.

The aims of the Pre-Raphaelite Society are:

“To promote the study of the works and lives of, and also to promote the wider appreciation of, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their successors locally, nationally and internationally; to publish, or encourage publication of, writings relating to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their successors; to hold meetings, conferences and seminars of members and others who have an interest in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their successors and to arrange visits to places of local, national and international interest; and to co-operate with other societies with similar objectives.”



Cover: *A Mermaid*, 1900 (oil on canvas) Waterhouse, John William (1849-1917)
Credit: Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK/Bridgeman Images

PRS Reviews



art and poetry offered a brief, nostalgic respite from all their 'fascinations and fears about the future'.³³ More specifically, for all its risible qualities, this well-intentioned charitable extravaganza might have presented a welcome distraction from the newspaper rumblings of growing disquiet in faraway places, such as Sarajevo where, two days earlier, Archduke Franz Ferdinand had been assassinated.

NOTES

- 1 *Gloucester Citizen*, 03 June 1914, p.6
- 2 Rather confusingly, there is evidence to suggest that an earlier 'Rossetti Matinée' may have taken place the month before. A small notice advertising a June 5th performance appeared in *The Pall Mall Gazette* on 4th of June whilst on 14th of June the *Sunday Mirror* published a photograph of Anna Stannard, the event organiser, stating beneath that she 'gave a most successful Rossetti Matinée at the Aldwych on June 5th'. Beyond these two references I have been unable to trace any mentions in the press of this earlier matinée in terms of reviews etc., which suggests the possibility that it was postponed at the last minute which the *Sunday Mirror* journalist, having pre-written the notice, was unaware of.
- 3 *Birmingham Mail*, 19 January 1914, p.7
- 4 *The Bystander*, 25 February 1914, p.36
- 5 *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 25 March 1914, p.6
- 6 *Hastings and St Leonards Observer*, 23 April 1910, p.7
- 7 *The Times*, May 29 1914, p.14
- 8 *Illustrated London News*, 04 July 1914, p.30
- 9 *The Stage*, 21 July 1910, p.16
- 10 *London Daily News*, 15 July 1910, p.8
- 11 *The Referee*, 17 July 1910, p.3
- 12 *Westminster Gazette*, 15 July 1910, p.2
- 13 *The Stage*, 22 January 1920, p.17
- 14 *The Era*, 24 October 1928, p.9
- 15 *The Sunday Times*, 28 June 1914, p.12
- 16 *Yorkshire Post*, 1 July 1914, p.9
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 July 1914, p.7
- 19 *The Manchester Guardian*, July 1 1914, p.8
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 Lady Frances Horner, *Time Remembered* (London: W. Heinemann, 1933), p.39.
- 22 *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 July 1914, p.7
- 23 *Yorkshire Post*, 1 July 1914, p.9
- 24 *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 July 1914, p.7
- 25 *The Daily Citizen*, July 1 1914, p.7
- 26 *Manchester Guardian*, July 1 1914, p.8
- 27 *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 July 1914, p.7
- 28 *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 July 1914, p.7
- 29 *The Daily Citizen*, July 1 1914, p.7
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 *The Tatler*, 21 April 1915, p.32
- 32 Philipp Blom, *The Vertigo Years: Europe, 1900-1914*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2008), p.16
- 33 *Ibid.*

Laurence Hodson and Compton Hall

Hilary Boucher

The Compton Project is a joint venture between Compton Care, The Arts Society, Wolverhampton and the Arts Society, Wrekin. The group comprises Carolyn Cundy, Compton Care's Heritage Officer, Hilary Boucher, Vice Chair, Arts Society, Wolverhampton (joint leads), Glenys King, Chair, Arts Society, Wolverhampton. Helen Franklin and Nicky Lipscombe, Arts Society Wrekin.

Major support has been given by Howard Berry and Paul Tromans from the Arts Society, Wolverhampton who described and recorded the rooms, the photographer, Tim Roberts and Denise Luker who supplied genealogical information.



Laurence Hodson was not, initially, a Wulfrunian. He was born in London, the son of William Hodson, a brewer. William Hodson had been born in Burton upon Trent but moved to London where he married Helen Officer Milner. Laurence, the first of four children, was born in 1864. In 1876 William moved the family to Wolverhampton and commenced work at the Springfield Brewery. The Springfield Brewery was a successful enterprise founded by William Butler with whom Hodson worked successfully. Both men were prosperous. In 1885 William purchased Compton Hall, at Compton to the west of Wolverhampton, with William Butler living at The Cedars, an adjacent property.

Laurence attended Wolverhampton Grammar School from 1878, another pupil being Arthur Joseph Gaskin, who became headmaster of the Jewellers School of Design in Birmingham. Arthur was a lifelong friend of Laurence and possibly introduced him to the popular Arts and Crafts movement that was to become a passion for the latter. After attending the Grammar School, Laurence went on to work as a brewery clerk at the Springfield Brewery. Progression was assured and a photograph of the Board of the Springfield Brewery shows a confident young man with his hands in his pockets. (Fig.1)

Compton Hall (Fig.2), the family home was one of a number of villas around the village of Compton. There had been a building on the site of Compton Hall since the early nineteenth century. The Hall was remodelled in the middle of the nineteenth century by Edward Banks, a well-known Wolverhampton architect, who designed the classically influenced Royal Hospital in Wolverhampton. By 1885 it was the home of the Hodson family, and when William died in 1890 he left it to Laurence together with his interest in the Springfield Brewery. In 1893 William Butler died and, as his sons pre-deceased him, Laurence, aged twenty nine, was in control of the Springfield Brewery. His income was sufficient for him to indulge his appreciation of the work of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement.



Fig 1: The Board of the Springfield Brewery
 Left to right: Mr. I. Richardson, Mr. Guy, Laurence Hodson, Samuel Fellows, William Hodson, Edwin Butler, William Bailey Butler, Mr. Oxenham, and Mr. W. Holland.
 From the July 1940 edition of *Butler's Magazine*



Fig.2 Exterior of Compton Hall, photo courtesy of and with thanks to Compton Care

Laurence moved quickly to redecorate his home in his favoured style. Correspondence, now at Harvard University, indicates how keen Hodson was to welcome William Morris to his home and employ The Firm to redecorate principal rooms. William Morris finally arrived in September 1894. Morris and Co decorated three important rooms, the dining room, the library and the drawing room. The rooms are now part of Compton Care, Wolverhampton's hospice and their functions have changed but parts of the original schemes remain.

The Stephen Morton Room (named for the town councillor who was the prime mover for the Compton Care project) was originally the Drawing Room. This room was a showcase for Morris & Co design and products. The ceiling is painted with a floral foliate design that flows around the ceiling and contrasts with the panelled oak walls. A major feature is the fireplace with accompanying bookcases and shelves together with drawers and cupboards on either side. The top edge of the drawers are stamped "Morris & Co". The fireplace has a brass or bronze hood and is tiled with *Tulip and Trellis* tiles designed by Morris and made by William De Morgan. Special attention was given to the door with its superb, ornately decorated brass surface mounted lock and finger plate.

The decoration continued with a Morris *Chrysanthemum* carpet, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the walls were hung with tapestries designed by Edward Burne-Jones. The tapestries were three from the Holy Grail series, originally designed for William Knox Darcy's Stanmore Hall and were prime examples of William Morris's long held ambition to revive tapestry weaving in this country. The narrative source was Malory's *Morte D' Arthur* and Hodson chose three scenes for his drawing room:

- *The Arming and Departure of the Knights of the Round Table on the Quest for the Holy Grail*
- *The Failure of Sir Gawaine*
- *The Attainment: The Vision of the Holy Grail to Sir Galahad, Sir Bors and Sir Perceval Parry*¹

indicates that the elegance of the design and the exceptional quality of the weaving make Laurence Hodson's tapestries part of the most important tapestry series in the nineteenth century.

The Study was situated next to the Drawing Room, rectangular in shape with a window on the north east wall. There is wood panelling and shelving with some shelving having glazed, lockable doors and a drop down desk with a writing surface. The fireplace has a surround of De Morgan Mongolian tiles framed within an area of reddish marble. Above the panelling is a tall frieze area with a wooden framework designed to hold the Adam and Eve series of paintings by William Strang RA (1859-1921). Strang was one of the popular artists and engravers at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century and the Adam and Eve frieze was considered one of his finest achievements.

The Dining Room now has a functional use as a staff dining room but some original features remain. The room is the same shape as the Stephen Morton Room with similar windows. The room is panelled in oak grain deal and above this is heavily embossed paper in a geometric design. The fireplace has iconic columns with scrolled capitals and plain blue tiles. Above the doorway is a plate rack with two parallel grooves to fit differing sizes of plates. The Morris pattern, *Compton*, a collaboration between William Morris and J H Dearle was named for the Hall but it is not known where the fabric was used.

Compton Hall was to become a true family home; Laurence married Mary Elizabeth Bellis at Kings Norton, Worcestershire on 22nd June 1892 and the couple had six children, William Edward Laurence (1893-1983), Helen Mary (1895-1983), Phoebe Officer (1897-1964), Margaret (1899-1972), Arthur James (1902-1965) and Martin Hodson (1903-1978).

THE 1902 WOLVERHAMPTON EXHIBITION

Laurence, as the Chairman of the Springfield Brewery had an established position in Wolverhampton, reinforced by sitting on the Town Council and being Chairman of the Fine Art Committee. He had been widely praised for promoting an exhibition of the work of Alphonse Legros at the Art Gallery in 1901, so, when Thomas Graham, editor of the local paper *The Express and Star*, promoted the idea that Wolverhampton mount an exhibition following the successful precedent held in Glasgow in 1901, Laurence took a full part. As Chairman of the Fine Art Exhibition, aided by his secretary, the future Poet Laureate, John Masefield he was fully involved with the organisation of the Exhibition. *The Saturday Review* approved: provincial it may be but there was evidence of an intelligible choice in the given space, of conviction and study and this prompted rather surprised admiration.² Hodson was seen as an admirable organiser, a friend of the late William Morris, a passionate amateur and enthusiastic student of art. The Exhibition, notable for its arrangement, had been handed over to him;³ it gave prominence to drawings and prints on the Ground Floor, together with manuscripts, printed pages and bindings. Etchings were particularly well treated including the works of Meryon, Whistler, Haden, Legros and Strang with the prints by Rembrandt and Dürer representing an earlier age. William Strang was particularly well represented as Laurence Hodson was a great admirer. In addition to prints by Strang, the Exhibition included the Adam and Eve sequence, taken from the Library at Compton Hall and pictures of the Hodson children in the style of Holbein.⁴

William, Laurence's first son exhibited Philip Webb's 'Fox and Hare' sketches, preliminary designs for the Morris tapestry, *The Forest*. Laurence Hodson had bought the Webb studies from Webb in 1900. The sale was facilitated by Sydney Cockerill, who was very conscious of the financial plight of Philip Webb and Hodson paid £100 for them. Hodson did not sell the studies in 1906 and they remained with the family being exhibited at the Morris Centenary Exhibition in 1934.⁵ They were ultimately sold in 2013 and are now at the adjacent property, Wightwick Manor. Upstairs there was a small collection of eighteenth century paintings including Gainsborough, Reynolds and Turner and a collection of nineteenth century



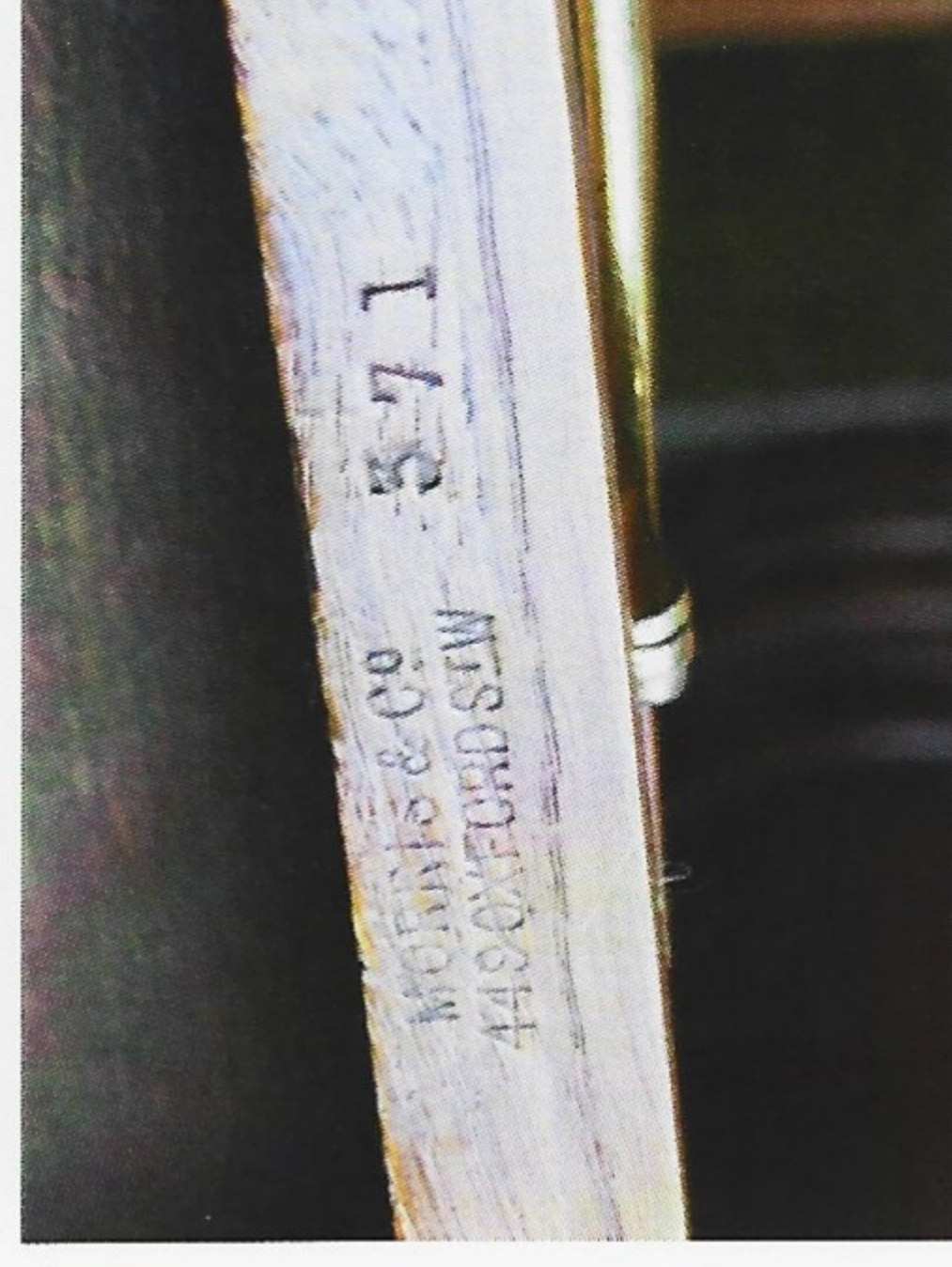
Fireplace and ceiling
(Drawing Room)



Fireplace tiles
(Drawing Room)



Library Fireplace
(Library)



The Morris & Co stamp inside a drawer



Ceiling (Drawing Room)



Pane Interior (Front door)



The door leading to the Morton Room (Drawing Room)

All photos: Tim Roberts
*(It is assumed that all the work was undertaken by Morris & Co.)

paintings which included Watts, Whistler, Legros and Millais. The Pre-Raphaelite gallery included a very early work by Ford Madox Brown entitled *Autumn Leaves*, which was considered as the germ of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, as it was painted by Ford Madox Brown when he was a student in Ghent.⁶ Works by Rossetti and Burne-Jones were also exhibited. There was a surprisingly negative and waspish note from *The Athenaeum* on the choice of Morris paper for the walls of the galleries: 'the papers may be admirable in design, but one is inclined not to bless them when one is vainly trying to exclude the reflection of the aggressive red flowers in the glass in the pictures'.⁷ Unfortunately the 1902 Wolverhampton Exhibition was not the success of the previous Glasgow Exhibition, weather was poor and insufficient people came and it closed in November 1902.

THE 1906 SALES

SALE HELD ON MAY 1ST 1906

Laurence Hodson resigned as the Managing Director of the Springfield Brewery in April 1906 and commenced the processes that would terminate his life in Wolverhampton (he would leave in 1906, moving first to Wales and then on to Derbyshire). Christies held three sales in May, June and July selling part of his collections. These sales have to be viewed from a negative perspective as they only indicate what he sold and not what remained in his extensive collection. The first sale was held on 1st May 1906 at the "Great Rooms" of Messrs Christie, Manson and Woods, St James Square at 1.00 pm prompt. The catalogue indicates that the items were the property of Laurence Hodson of Compton Hall near Wolverhampton including etchings by J.M. Whistler, engravings after J.M.W. Turner and works of Albert Dürer and Rembrandt. Edwardian collectors must have eagerly anticipated the sale.

SALE OF JUNE 25TH 1906

A second sale was held on 25th June 1906, again conducted by Messrs. Christie and Manson. This sale was described as 'the collection of modern pictures and drawings, the property of Laurence Hodson, Esq.'. This sale was larger than the May sale and included drawings and paintings by some prominent artists. Aubrey Beardsley, the disciple of Aestheticism, was represented by designs for *The Rape of the Lock* and a cover design for *The Savoy* (No 2, April 1896). Beardsley's designs fetched high prices, with *The Rape of the Lock* achieving £54. 12s Ford Madox Brown's *The Nosegay* fetched £65. 2s. There were twenty one lots of works by Sir Edward Burne-Jones including *A Sybil of Rome*, a cartoon for stained glass for Jesus College, Cambridge executed in blue and black chalk, studies of armour for *The Briar Rose* and studies for *The Golden Stairs*. Illustrations and initial letters for an illustrated Virgil and designs for the twelve books of *The Aeneid* made for illuminations in a folio manuscript achieved £430. 10s.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's stunners were well represented in a collection of eleven items including *Head of Fanny Cornforth*, a study for *The Blue Bower*, a study of Marie Ford in *The Beloved* and two Heads of Mrs William Morris. The second part of the afternoon's sale was devoted to pictures and the first item was the iconic

Chaucer at the Court of Edward III by Ford Madox Brown, completed in 1868. A full provenance was provided, the work fetched £262. 10s and was purchased by Agnews. A second work by Ford Madox Brown was *Elijah and the Widow's Son* which fetched £68. 5s. Other major artists whose paintings were auctioned included Constable, Ittenbach and, again, Burne Jones. One of the most interesting items sold was *The Waterfall* by John Everett Millais - this was the original outdoor study for the *Portrait of John Ruskin Esq.* The work was exhibited at Glasgow in 1901 and then in Bradford and fetched £220. 10s. Philip Wilson Steer's *The Japanese Gown* and G.F.Watts's *Neptune's Horses* both fetched £136. 10s. A handwritten note on the catalogue indicated that, overall, the sale realised £6414. 3s. 6d.

SALE HELD ON JULY, 8TH 1906

The third sale held on the 8th July 1906 moved from fine art to the decorative arts. The three *Holy Grail Tapestries* had been removed from the Drawing Room and were auctioned together. They were purchased by Morris and Co, who, the following year, sold them to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The drawing room carpet was also auctioned and fetched £27. 6s. The sale concluded with four items of decorative furniture, including an item described as:

A CABINET with three doors in the front, the panels painted by William Morris, with the story of Saint George and the Dragon, 24 in high, 17 in wide, on stand.

This was the famous *St George's Cabinet* designed by Philip Webb, it fetched £63.

Meanwhile the next item would have been extremely practical at Compton Hall:

A cabinet made by Morris and Co., of *Oxford Street*, to hold drawings, of holly and other woods, inlaid with geometrical designs, arabesque foliage and chequer borders and containing holly wood frames 50 in high, 82 in wide.

Such decorative practicality realised £29. 8s, the item being followed by a Morris & Co secretary:

A secretary, made by Morris and Co., of Oxford Street, with fall-down front enclosing writing slide, and doors at the sides enclosing drawers, inlaid with oak foliage, acorns and thistles in satin and other woods and ivory, on mahogany ground - 51 in. high 56 in wide.

The secretary fetched £52. 10s and the sale concluded with an Italian marqueterie table. In just a few minutes the glories of Compton Hall's interior decoration were dispersed.

Hodson's break with Wolverhampton was to be complete. It is thought that he was in financial difficulties although there are no records of a bankruptcy. Compton Hall and adjacent property were offered for sale in September 1906 but at the auction were not sold. Hodson later sold both to Tom Adams who lived there until the outbreak of World War Two. In 1982 it opened as a hospice (which is currently not open to the general public).

Work on the Compton Project is on-going.

If any reader has details of items with a Hodson provenance, we would be pleased to hear about them. Additionally, if anyone would like further details of the items auctioned in 1906 or further details of the project, please contact the author at: hilaryboucher@talktalk.net

NOTES

1 Parry, Linda, *William Morris Textiles* (London: V&A Publishing, 2013), p.149

2 *The Saturday Review* 19 th July 1902 p. 74

3 *The Athenaeum*, No 3889, 10 th May 1902, p. 600

4 *The Saturday Review* 19 th July 1902 p.74

5 *Arts Buildings Collections Bulletin*, Winter 2013-2014 p. 4

6 *The Athenaeum*, No 3899 10 th May 1902 p. 601.

If any readers have any further information on this painting (and whether it inspired Millais's 1856 painting of the same name, for example) the PRS Editor (editorprsoc@gmail.com) would be very keen to hear any details. Thank you.

7 *The Athenaeum*, No 3889 10 th May 1902 p.601

The Models for *Convent Thoughts*

Douglas Somerset

The identity of the model for Charles Allston Collins's picture *Convent Thoughts* (1851) has been a subject of discussion.¹ Jean Gilliland identified three claimants – Laura Thistlethwayte née Bell; Sarah Eliza Hackett; and Frances Sarah Ludlow – and made the suggestion that more than one of them may have modelled for the painting at different stages.² Since then Susan Haines has shown that Sarah Hackett was almost certainly the model for the final stage.³ Here we review the discussion and draw attention to a miniature which strengthens the claims for Sarah Hackett.

Collins commenced the painting in June 1850 when he and John Everett Millais took a cottage at Botley near Oxford.⁴ Later in the summer they moved to the house of Thomas Combe and his wife in Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, and the background to the painting was taken from the Combes' garden.⁵ While he was there, Collins changed the theme of the painting. According to Millais: 'When [Collins] left Oxford he got hipped about a fancied love affair and, becoming a High Churchman, changed the subject of his picture from being an illustration of the lady in Shelley's 'Sensitive Plant' ... to a picture of a nun with a missal in her hand, studying the significance of the passion flower.'⁶ This change of theme is borne out by the preliminary sketches, the two in the British Museum being evidently secular – the one with the gothic arch presumably being the earlier – and that in the Ashmolean being religious and much closer to the final painting.

In fact the change of theme must have been before he and Millais left Oxford in the first part of November,⁷ because his High Church views were one of the reasons for his rejection as a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.⁸ The formal proposal for his membership seems to have been in October, and a letter of William Rossetti's dated 5th November 1850 shows that there was already strong opposition.⁹ Thus Collins's High Churchmanship was manifesting itself long before he left Oxford.¹⁰ By the time he left, *Convent Thoughts* must have been in an advanced state of composition, with the main work remaining being on the nun. The passion flower in her hand had probably already been painted, and perhaps her right hand also.

We now look briefly at the three candidates for the model mentioned by Gilliland before returning to the history of the painting.

FRANCES SARAH LUDLOW (1829-1879)

Frances Sarah Ludlow was born in Iffley, Oxford in 1829.¹¹ In the census of March 1851, she was a housemaid with the Combes at the Clarendon Press, but it is likely that she had been working there for some time because she appears to have modelled for Millais in 1849. In 1856 she was married to William Brucker, a builder. A photograph of her in middle years is given in Gilliland's article. She died aged fifty in 1879 and is buried in St Sepulchre's cemetery, Jericho, Oxford.

One of her sons William Thomas Brucker (1860-1914) had a daughter Mrs Marion Tilley (1899-1996) who was the head-teacher of the St Barnabas Infant School in Jericho. Marion had heard from her father that his mother was the model for the novice and 'was painted at home'.¹² Allowing for the unreliability of detail in oral transmission, it is fairly certain from this that Frances Ludlow did model for the picture at some stage. Presumably this was when Millais and Collins were staying with the Combes in Oxford, and she is probably the woman in the preliminary sketch at the Ashmolean [Fig. 1]. Though dated 1851, much of this must have been the work of 1850. Collins borrowed a nun's habit from Holman Hunt but probably this was after his return to London, so that part of the sketch may be based on imagination, and the left hand certainly appears to be so.¹³ The face in the sketch has less expression than the final painting, but this may reflect the limited detail of the sketch rather than the model herself.

LAURA BELL (1829/31-1894)

The remarkable Laura Bell was born in County Antrim, supposedly acting as a courtesan in Dublin, and then in London after 1849.¹⁴ In January 1852 she married Captain Frederick Thistlethwayte and thereafter became religious, an evangelist and woman-preacher. From 1865 onwards, she developed a very close friendship with W.E.

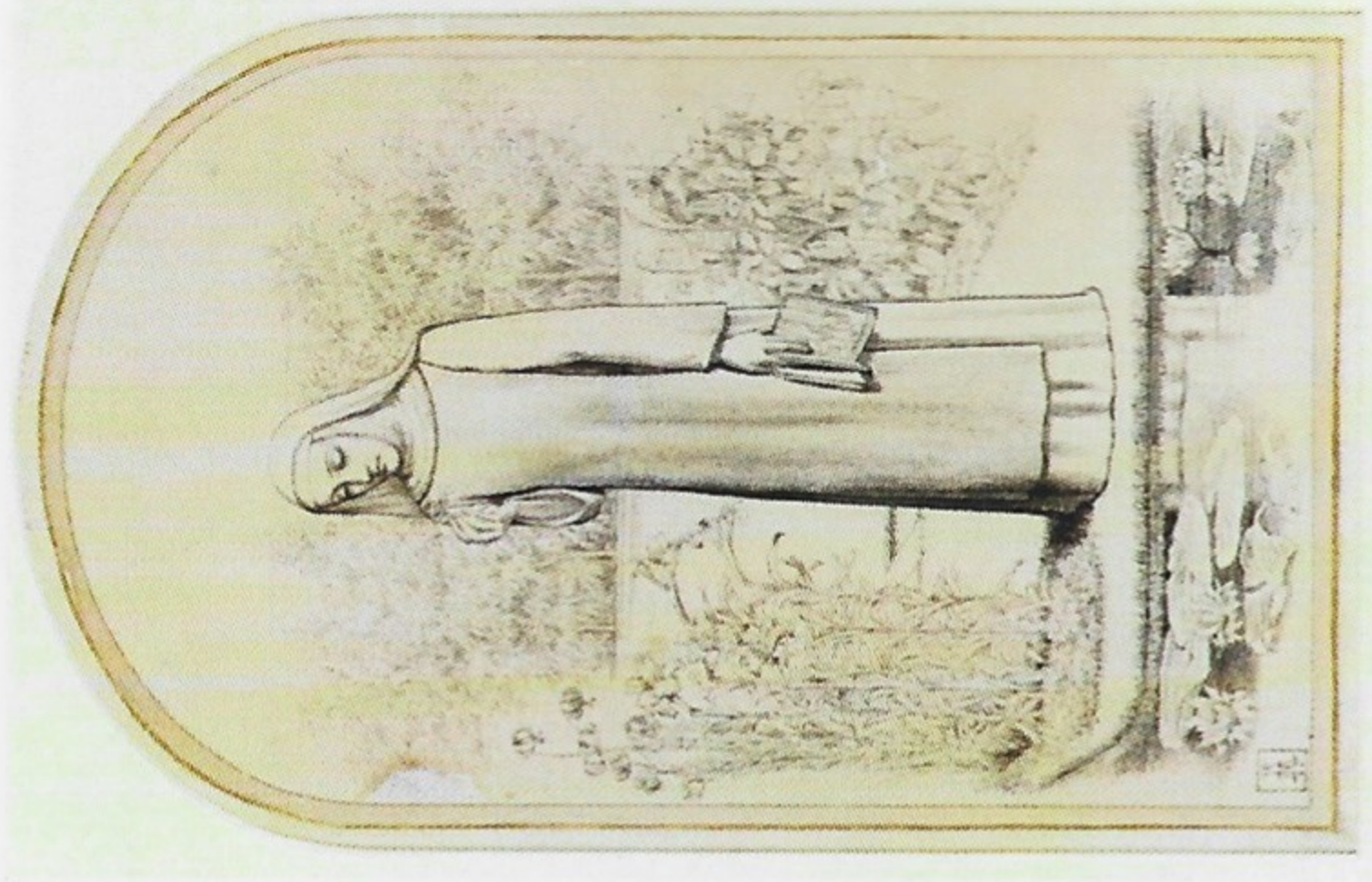


Fig. 1. Charles Allston Collins, 'Finished study for *Convent Thoughts*.'

Graphite on paper, 1851.
© Ashmolean Museum,
University of Oxford.