

Solo Retrospective Exhibition - William Morris Gallery 2010

I have been invited to exhibit my work at the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow in 2010. The Gallery is situated in the house where William Morris was born and lived his early years and contains wonderful collections highlighting the many and varied aspects of his life. The exhibition is envisaged as a solo retrospective of my work to date. Selecting examples to create this exhibition presents a wonderful opportunity to assemble work most of which has never seen by the public before. Also on show will be artefacts relating to design and making processes which will offer insights into commissioning and working with individual clients.

Exhibition dates: 20 March - 6 June, 2010

Ernest Gimson and The Arts and Crafts Movement Exhibition in Leicester, Nov 2008 - March 2009

This major Arts and Crafts Exhibition at New Walk Museum brought the work of Ernest Gimson before the public for the first time in over twenty years. The exhibition illustrated the many facets of Gimson's working life in a range of materials, including his architectural drawings, furniture, plasterwork, metal and fabric. His personal life from his birth in Leicester to his philosophy was traced in great detail. Furniture by Ernest and Sidney Barnsley, his contemporaries, Peter Waals, Gordon Russell, Frank Lloyd Wright and Edward Barnsley placed the work of Gimson in a broader context. I was one of six contemporary makers invited by the curator, Mary Greensted, to participate in the Exhibition.



A Museum Piece

In the lead up to the Gimson Exhibition, I was commissioned by Leicester City Museums to make an oak blanket chest. This was displayed in the exhibition, alongside the many magisterial and well known pieces by the leading lights in the Arts and Crafts movement. Very humbling and yet very rewarding. The chest is now part of the permanent Arts and Crafts collection in the city.

Commissions

During the last eighteen months I have made three blanket chests - one for New Walk Museum, one as a result of the exhibition (with two further enquiries pending) and one for existing customers who collect Arts and Crafts furniture. The more diverse commissions undertaken this year have involved collaborating with clockmakers, engineers and a bronze foundry. This collaboration is set to continue as forthcoming commissions will have me working with silversmiths, a jeweller and a calligrapher. Designs have incorporated mechanisms (one used to lift a coffee table to dining height) and the mathematical (geometric elements of ellipse, parabola and sine wave). Notwithstanding the technical challenges involved, my thanks to the many customers who are prepared to offer me the leeway to develop these design ideas into working pieces of furniture.



Coffee table - Under frame contains the initials of clients and also alludes to the runic alphabet

Timber Supplies

My stocks of highly figured Cumbrian oak from Hutton in the Forest will be supplemented later in the year by a supply from the Ullswater area (different soils and microclimate). Also in stock and available for commissioned work are four large matched boards of spalted beech for cabinet work, a small quantity of mazor birch for jewellery box or inlay, burr elm and elm with a wonderful grain and green stripe (coffee table), and a set of matching walnut feathers/curl suitable for drawer fronts.



Desk - Made for a family in Windsor in figured oak and maple, the desk features a parabolic under frame and single drawer



Audio Visual Cabinet - Made in zebrano and maple, the doors feature a textured white on white sine wave

Talks

These have taken off somewhat this year and include:-

- *A Spirit of Optimism - Furniture for the future*, during Buxton Festival
- A talk delivered to the Mother's Union (and friends) at Beeston Church on the development and making of the furniture for their church
- A demonstration in the use of routers to the Derbyshire Dales Woodworking Group
- *Designing Church Furniture* delivered to the Friends of Melbourne Church as part of the Festival there

Next year I will be giving talks at the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow and to Wirksworth Civic Society.

Forthcoming commissions

Currently on the bench is a dining suite for eight including an octagonal table. Balance, comfort and visual attractiveness are to the fore within the suite which also includes a drinks cabinet and display shelving, the whole being constructed in a combination of figured oak and birds eye maple. Orders placed include a set of wardrobe doors to match existing commissions of upholstered chest and headboard; a complex and detailed hall table, featuring an inlaid Australian burr timber top; presents for two birthdays and one wedding, and a kitchen in maple and purpleheart. Whilst most of the work is bound for Derbyshire residences, the kitchen will be delivered to Berkshire and the commissions for presents to Lancashire, Yorkshire and Leicestershire.

Potential commissions - Ecclesiastic

My newly available portfolio of church work has led to many enquiries from around the country. Discussions are under way with a cathedral and a number of churches in Derbyshire, Cheshire, Leicester, Oxford, and West London.



Holy Family Church, Slough - Sanctuary lamp holder and cabinet for the Holy Oils in maple and walnut

St John the Baptist, Beeston, Nottingham, is a thirteenth century church rebuilt by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1843. Internal reordering was undertaken by Lathams Architects, Derby in 2008, the commission being part of this process.

The Church building is open to visitors Monday - Friday between 11.30 and 1.30.

Beeston Church, Nottingham -
Altar, three chairs, and lectern in oak and ebony



Calendar of events 2009 & 2010

2009

30, 31 Oct, 1 Nov **Craft in Focus**
Wellington College, Crowthorne, Berkshire

14, 15 Nov **Craft in Focus**
Sherrardswood School, Welwyn, Herts

2010 (to date)

18 March **Designing Church Furniture**
Talk to Wirksworth Civil Society

20 March - 6 June **William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow**
Solo retrospective exhibition

11 - 14 May **Christian Resources Exhibition**
Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey

Visitors are always welcome at the workshop - but please phone first to check I'll be there.