

Jericho and the Pre-Raphaelites



John William Waterhouse, *The Lady of Shalot*

The past is not dead, it is living in us, and will be alive in the future which we are now helping to make.

William Morris

Few people are aware that the area of Oxford known as Jericho has a number of striking connections with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood which, as well as being the only British art movement to take on international significance, has claims to being the best-loved art movement of all.

The Pre-Raphaelites' patron Thomas Combe, in company with his wife Martha, presided over what became a kind of "good-humoured salon" [Jon Whiteley, 'Oxford and the Pre-Raphaelites', Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1989, p. 26] in Jericho at the Combe's residence in Walton Street and the existence of this Jericho base led to the creation of a series of memorable paintings which were first of all painted, then hung and exhibited in Jericho.

In 1850 Combe, who was then printer to the university, came across John Everett Millais in Botley Wood where, together with Charles Collins - Wilkie's brother - he was engaged in painting. Combe took an interest in what they were both doing and invited them back to Jericho for lunch. Millais and Collins declined the invitation on the grounds that they were too busy. However, undeterred, Combe sent them over a hamper of food on his return and this was how the relationship began - one which would establish Jericho as a stamping-ground for Collins and Millais, later to be followed by other members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

By the end of September, 1850, Collins and Millais had both moved into Combe's house in Walton Street where Millais painted Combe's portrait and Collins finished the garden in the background of his *Convent Thoughts*. [Jon Whiteley, Oxford and the Pre-Raphaelites, Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1989 p.25]

Combe suggested ideas for and bought a considerable number of Pre-Raphaelite paintings notably *Dante Drawing an Angel*; *The School-Girl's Hymn*, *The Afterglow in Egypt*, *A Converted British Family Sheltering from Druids*; *The Return of the Dove to the Ark*, *London Bridge*; and *The Light of the World*.

William Holman Hunt would also come to live in the Combe's residence - Printer's House in Jericho - where he painted his allegory *The Light of the World*. It depicts the glowing figure of Jesus preparing to knock on an overgrown and long-unopened door; the door is thought to symbolise the human conscience and, significantly, cannot be opened from the outside but only from within.

Hunt told Combe while he was painting it in Jericho that he was sustained by the thought that 'it might find its resting place in Oxford'. Combe duly bought it - for four hundred guineas - and a side-chapel at Keble College Chapel would later be funded by Martha Combe in order to house it. Martha, or 'Mrs Pat' as she was affectionately (though inexplicably) nicknamed by Millais was a maternal figure to the young group of Pre-Raphaelites. She was an accomplished painter in her own right and had been a pupil of the water-colourist David Cox. Millais would frequently ask her to help him find props for his pictures and she was clearly quite as influential a patron as her husband. 'Mrs. Pat' persuaded her uncle, a Mr Bennet, to buy Holman Hunt's work and, throughout her lifetime, she was a regular recipient of letters from Millais who, on one occasion, commented on the reaction to himself and to his fellow painters by the inhabitants of Oxfordshire who were "given to that wondering stare, as though we were as strange a sight as a hippopotamus." [Andrea Rose, 'Pre-Raphaelite Portraits', The Oxford Illustrated Press, 1981, p.58]

When Edward Burne-Jones happened to see Hunt's picture *The Light of the World* exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1855 and when he later learned of the Combe's patronage he determined, together with William Morris, to visit Jericho in order to see the rest of Combe's collection. It was here that "the picture that impressed the friends most was a watercolour by Dante Gabriel Rossetti that had only recently entered the collection, *The First Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice*. This, Burne-Jones later recalled, was our 'greatest wonder and delight, and at once he [Rossetti] seemed to us the chief figure in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.'" [Georgina Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*. London: 1904 vol.I,

p.110]

As a medieval town, Oxford fulfilled Burne-Jones' fondest dreams and he would often make pilgrimages along the river to the ruins at Godstowe and the burial place of Fair Rosamund, the beloved mistress of Henry II, where "he saw so intense a vision of the Middle Ages as he walked beside the river that he had to 'throw stones into the water to break the dream.'

The Combe's collection of paintings with their intensely poetic evocations of the Middle Ages, and most particularly their recently acquired Rossetti evidently struck a powerful chord with Morris and Burne-Jones, who found that Rossetti's picture "corresponded exactly to their own ardent romanticism, and they were captivated by the artistic personality behind it." [Memorials vol 1., p.97, cited in Stephen Wildman and John Christian, Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998, p.45]

Such was the spell which Combe's painting cast upon them that Morris and Burne-Jones left Jericho apparently determined to track down Rossetti and apprentice themselves to him. Rossetti agreed and Burne-Jones would subsequently spend every day in Rossetti's studio with Morris joining them both at the weekends. It was thus at the Combe's house in Jericho that the most productive ingredients of the Pre-Raphaelitism movement were first assembled.

In the summer of 1857 Burne-Jones and Morris, in company with Rossetti, returned to Oxford in order to engage in a huge collective work - painting ten Arthurian frescoes in the Oxford Union debating chamber (now the Library):

"The artists called this period 'the Jovial Campaign' and Val Prinsep described this extremely relaxed atmosphere and the general veneration for Rossetti as follows: 'What fun we had in that Union! What jokes! What roars of laughter! ...He [Rossetti] was the planet around which we revolved. We copied his very way of speaking... Medievalism was our beau ideal and we sank our own individuality in the strong personality of our adored Gabriel.'" As Tim Hilton has noted "...the group did develop a collective personality that was an extension of Rossetti's own; boisterous, yet touchingly Romantic; fun-loving yet deeply idealistic. It was perhaps not the right combination to deal with the job in hand, and actually the project was never completed." [Tim Hilton, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1970, p.164]

One evening towards the end of the summer Burne-Jones interrupted their fresco painting (and also his own stint at modelling for a portrait of the sleeping *Launcelot*), and he and Rossetti paid a visit to the theatre in Oxford where they met a 17-year-old girl called Jane Burden, the daughter of a Holywell Street stable-hand. Burne-Jones and Rossetti declared her to be "a stunner" and persuaded her to model for them. Jane promptly inspired a rash of activity and would quickly come to typify the face of Pre-Raphaelite beauty - turning into a kind of Victorian English equivalent of France's 'Marianne'.

When the novelist Henry James met Jane he was profoundly struck and wrote to

his sister the next day:

"She haunts me still. A figure cut out of a missal - out of one of Rossetti's or Hunt's pictures - to say this gives but a faint idea of her, because when such an image puts on flesh and blood, it is an apparition of fearful and wonderful intensity. It's hard to say whether she's a grand synthesis of all the pre-Raphaelite pictures ever made - or they a 'keen analysis' of her - whether she's an original or a copy. In either case she's a wonder." [Henry James, letter to his sister, Alice James, 10 March 1869, cited in Laurence des Cars, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Romance and Realism*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2000, p. 107]

Jane modelled for Rossetti's painting *The Blue Silk Dress* together with his *Proserpine*, and when Bernard Shaw met her he reflected,

"When she came into a room in her strangely beautiful garments, looking at least eight feet high, the effect was as if she had walked out of an Egyptian tomb at Luxor." [Andrea Rose, *Pre-Raphaelite Portraits*, The Oxford Illustrated Press, 1981, p.9]

She also modelled for Burne-Jones' *The Beguiling of Merlin*; for William Morris's *Queen Guinevere* and his *La Belle Iseult*; for Rossetti's *A Vision of Fiammetta* and his *Blanziflore* or *Snowdrops*; as well as Burne-Jones' window in Christ Church Cathedral of *St Catherine with Two Angels*, and his tapestry, *The Star of Bethlehem*, in Exeter College Chapel. Salvador Dali referred to these paintings of her as "lunar legends" and (speaking of himself in the third person) he described the extraordinary impact of this Pre-Raphaelite paradigm who was so often to find her way into Jericho and the Combe's house in order to pose.

"And how could Salvador Dali not be overwhelmed by the flagrant Surrealism of English Pre-Raphaelitism? The Pre-Raphaelite painters serve us up resplendent women who are at once the most desirable and most frightening ever seen. "... Pre-Raphaelitism puts on the table this sensational dish of the eternal feminine." [Salvador Dali, *Le surrealisme spectral de l'eternel féminin preraphaelite*, in *Le Minotaure*, no. 8, 1936; cited in Laurence des Cars, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Romance and Realism*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2000, p. 117]

Jane, who would later marry William Morris in Oxford, expressed the wish before her death that Rossetti's painting of her as Proserpine be presented to the Ashmolean Museum where it still hangs.

For the most part the Pre-Raphaelites were free to paint whoever they wished and sell on their paintings later rather than being dependant on commissions, with the result was that they were able to carry out something of a realignment, if not a subversion, of the whole system.

With rare exceptions, their predecessors such as Reynolds and Gainsborough merely serviced a stagnant class-system by aggrandising the aristocracy with courtly paintings, whereas the Pre-Raphaelites were able to forge a new kind of contract between painter and model.

In the words of Andrea Rose:

"Painter and model sit as more equal partners, and within this artistic democracy the painter is free to create his own imaginative hierarchies. Where Reynolds painted his patrons in the dress appropriate to their status, Rossetti can make a queen out of a shop-girl, a goddess out of a stable-groom's daughter, a deity out of a cockney trollop. Elizabeth Siddall, the milliner's assistant becomes *Regina Cordium*, the *Queen of Hearts*; Jane Morris is Proserpine; Fanny Cornforth [a Soho prostitute] is *Lilith*. In this new contract, the traditional constituents of aristocracy - blood, breeding, estate - are cancelled." [Andrea Rose, *Pre-Raphaelite Portraits*, The Oxford Illustrated Press, 1981, pp12-13]

Jane Morris's look, "the full pouting lips, the heavy-hooded eyes, the unbound and luxuriant hair", created a new and germinative aesthetic: it was one which would go on to influence European symbolist painters such as Fernand Khnopff, Arnold Böcklin and Gustav Klimt (who would transmute Pre-Raphaelitism into Art Nouveau) and it would also come to influence Hollywood.

In 1915 Theda Bara made 'The Vamp' and the look which she established on screen caused her to be known as 'The Burne-Jones Woman.' "The image," as Andrea Rose has pointed out, "was to influence a host of aspiring screen stars from Louise Brooks to the young Garbo." [Andrea Rosa, *Pre-Raphaelite Portraits*, The Oxford Illustrated Press, 1981, p.4]

Jericho - from where this look was first disseminated and where the Pre-Raphaelite Movement had its most fertile generation - was originally named after the *Jericho Tavern* which lay outside Oxford's old city wall and which was a place for travellers to rest if they had reached the city after the gates had closed.

Around the corner from Combe's salon there is a boatyard which has operated in Jericho for over a hundred and fifty years, initially as a cargo wharf. After a series of particularly cold winters in the late eighteenth-century Oxford would often find itself with serious shortages of coal with the result that several of its poorest inhabitants froze to death each winter. It was therefore decided that a canal should be built through Jericho in order to bring coal from the Midland coalfields into Oxford.

Canal-borne coal was not only cheaper than the 'sea coal' which had previously come up the Thames from London, but, according to a local paper, it needed "no stirring, as is necessary for sea coal" and it made "an exceedingly cheerful fire".

When the Oxford canal was first opened on 1st January 1790 the arrival of two hundred tons of cheap coal was played into Jericho by a band of the Oxford Militia. The canal would soon cause an economic transformation of the city from a quiet university and market town into a commercial and industrial centre and it would be Jericho that would supply its fuel as well as much of industrial Oxford's labour

force.

In the nineteenth century life in Jericho largely revolved around the canal and its wharves, together with a foundry at Walton Well, Lucy's Eagle Ironworks, which produced ornamental ironwork, and the Clarendon Press, run by Thomas Combe, in Walton Street. The area consisted of a maze of cobbled streets, artisan houses, a small shop on almost every corner and eight public houses; it was populated by bargemen, colliers, coach builders, print-workers and bookbinders together with their families and later on by railwaymen when the railway arrived in 1844.

The Jericho boatyard was built by a coal-merchant and boat-builder called Henry Ward and it had a forge, a chandlery, and stabling facilities for the mule and horse-drawn barges and narrow boats that plied their trade up and down the canal. Ward even converted a barge for use as a floating church for his colliers and bargees as it was considered that their behaviour needed tempering. (One hapless visitor recorded being chased out of Jericho with a series of missiles that included "oyster shells and rats' tails.").

Contemporary accounts show that in its heyday – when members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood first saw it - the Jericho Boatyard echoed the feverish activities such as those depicted in Ford Maddox Brown's painting *'Work'* - a radical painting that would later become an emblem of Christian Socialism and a trade union icon. Members of the Brotherhood would almost certainly have been alive to the fact that when the coal arrived in Jericho several barge loads of it were always parked up at Ward's boatyard at the beginning of winter and that this coal was made available to the poor of Jericho without charge, since this was done at the instigation of their patron, the philanthropic Thomas Combe.

Despite its industrial past, the Jericho canal still retains a lush and magical flavour full of "the poetry of the things about us" to use a phrase from the Pre-Raphaelites' magazine, *'The Germ'*, and on a balmy summer's evening it is no great stretch to see Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*, as visualised by John William Waterhouse, floating through Jericho in her barque, bedecked with exotic hangings; or indeed to detect Millais' flower-strewn Ophelia lying just beneath the watery surface - the painting's richly burgeoning detail prompting John Ruskin to describe it as 'the loveliest English landscape; tinged by Sorrow.' Millais had used the daughter of an Oxford auctioneer, Elizabeth Siddall, as his model for Ophelia and in March, 1852, he wrote to Mrs Combe "To-day I have purchased a really splendid lady's ancient dress - all flowered over in silver embroidery - and I am going to paint it for 'Ophelia'. You may imagine it is something rather good when I tell you it cost me, old and dirty as it is, four pounds." [John Guille Millais, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais*, vol. 1, 1899, p.162].

Ford Maddox Brown, who had originally taught Rossetti to paint, would visit Millais at his Jericho lodgings in order to research the life of the fourteenth century Oxford scholar John Wycliffe. Wycliffe had initiated the first translation of the Bible into English and Brown's visits were to inspire and inform his narrative painting, *'Wycliffe Reading his Translation of the New Testament to his Protector, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, in the Presence of Chaucer and Gower,*

his Retainers' - a painting which was also first acquired by the devout Thomas Combe.

The old Jericho Boatyard is adjoined by Jericho's architectural high spot and its most important building: Sir Arthur Blomfield's church of St. Barnabas whose basilica was modelled on the style of the cathedral of Torcello, near Venice.

The church was chosen by Thomas Hardy, who had worked on it as an assistant to Blomfield, for a scene in *'Jude the Obscure'* where he describes the church's levitating cross - seemingly suspended in mid-air by barely visible wires and swaying gently – beneath which lay the crumpled, prostrate figure of Sue Bridehead, forlornly covered in a pile of black clothes.

St Barnabas' lofty Byzantine tower was described by A.N. Wilson in his book *'The Healing Art'* as "the most impressive architectural monument in sight" and the poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins' biographer, Robert Martin, records a University friend of Hopkins as saying "When I want a spiritual fling I go to St Barnabas".

The church was enthusiastically acclaimed by John Betjeman in his poem *'St Barnabas, Oxford'*, and with the subtly complex earth-tones of its tracery (what Betjeman described as the "polychromatical lacing of bricks") and its Romanesque style the church is a paragon of Pre-Raphaelite taste - not unsurprisingly since it was Thomas and Martha Combe who enabled it to be built and were its principal benefactors. They were given the land on which it now stands by William Ward, a fellow of Balliol and the son of the Jericho Boatyard's founder.

Despite the fact that Jericho spawned the most widely known British art movement its landmarks are currently at risk of being swept aside by a development of more than usual insensitivity. A group of speculators have recently produced their plans for an aggregation of yellow, Stasi-like container-buildings which, were planning permission to be granted, would promise to crush the old canal-side yard together with its boating traditions and ruin the unencumbered views of St Barnabas. A spokesman for the developers was rash enough to let slip that he regarded St Barnabas' Church as "an anomaly."

Their proposals represent a clash between community spirit imbued with a much-loved and living heritage - and a vandalising, money-grubbing juggernaut confiscating social space. Neither the boaters nor Jericho residents find it too simplistic to characterise the situation as being a battle between Good and Evil. The writer Philip Pullman has declared:

"I have never lived in Jericho. But I count myself a citizen, and I bristle with indignation when this vivid and interesting part of the city is under siege. I lament the loss of every curious corner, I deplore the creeping invasion by the forces of Greedi-Build plc, I abominate the disappearance of old landmarks and familiar views [...] as with all places that we cherish for their value to us as human beings, we have to be ready to defend them against those who can understand only the value of

money. And unfortunately, people like that are in the ascendancy now; we live in a theocracy whose god is Profit. If Jesus were alive now, it wouldn't be ritualistic Sabbath-observance he'd be criticising, but the worship of money: "The market was made for man, and not man for the market," I think he'd say. And that remark would make him just as popular as the previous one did.

"I used part of Jericho and the canal in my trilogy His Dark Materials, because people who lived and worked on the water, and the network of canals that spread through the whole kingdom, were useful for my story [...]

"But I didn't realise how much the present-day life of the canal was under threat until recently, when the boatyard business came to a head. I've always enjoyed walking along the canal, and looking at the activity - useful, human-scale, craft-based, untidy, interesting - in the boatyard, with the campanile of St. Barnabas watching over it, and the calm water in front."

Reflecting on the idea that "All that useful social activity" may have to "done away with, because it was not making sufficient profit" Pullman observes: "Well, we've gone wrong somehow in the way we live. Jericho is a place where it ought to be possible to maintain a working boatyard, to give a meaning and a focus to the life of the canal. If it does go, something irreplaceable will go with it." [Philip Pullman, 'The Bohemian Republic of Jericho: Philip Pullman on a place made to human measure', The Jericho Echo, Issue 60 - July 2006]

In Lyra's Oxford, Pullman called this part of the city "the coastline Oxford shares with Bohemia" and the Pre-Raphaelites could certainly lay claim to having made a contribution to Jericho's Bohemian atmosphere. "While still an undergraduate Oscar Wilde had caused a sensation by appearing at the private view [of Burne-Jones's painting] in a specially tailored coat in the shape of a cello." [Stephen Wildman and John Christian, Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998, p.192]

Interestingly, it is not the first time that the Pre-Raphaelites have found themselves recruited into the ranks of those who have wished to change the world for the better:

"There is no question that the Hippy movement and its repercussive influence in England owed much of its imagery, its manner, dress and personal appearance to the Pre-Raphaelite ideal... It was observed by all of us who were involved with these exhibitions that visitors included increasing numbers of the younger generation, who had begun to resemble the figures in the pictures they had come to see." [Jeremy Maas, gallery-owner, quoted in Leslie Parris, 'The Pre-Raphaelites: A Personal View, in Pre-Raphaelite Papers' 1984]

Forty years after the 1967 'Summer of Love' a Reader's Digest survey showed just how much today's Britons had been affected by the hippie movement of the Sixties with its Pre-Raphaelite forerunners:

"From concerns over global warming to sex before marriage and owning a wind chime, 21st century Britons owe much to their long-haired, sandal-wearing predecessors. In politics, almost half of today's Britons said they believed in questioning the establishment and agreed there were too many rules in society. The archetypal hippie desire to save the planet is also still upheld in contemporary society, with 82 per cent of respondents believing it needed to be saved. The slogan "Make love not war", famously used by hippies across the US during the Vietnam War, has also retained its relevance. Placards carrying the slogan reappeared at Iraq war demonstrations, and this latest survey reveals almost half of Britons now agree with the once controversial sentiment".

Katherine Walker, editor-in-chief of the Reader's Digest, said 'Our poll shows that the hippie era produced many innovative, enduring ideals that British people of all ages have come to live by. In some ways they really did change the world.' [*Emily Dugan, 'How hippies shaped the way we think now', London: The Independent, 25 May 2007*]

If nothing else the Pre-Raphaelite movement – whose Arthurian and gothic dress was destined to be mimicked in a quite different social context - has stood for a certain nobility of soul, intensely concerned to honour the aspirations of John Ruskin, the movement's Oxford mentor and - as Morris and Burne-Jones both referred to him - "a Luther of the arts" who declared in *The Arts of England* that "the Pre-Raphaelitism common to us all is in the frankness and honesty of the touch".

Ruskin required his disciples to "Go to Nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thought but how to penetrate her meaning, and remember her instruction..." [John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol.1, 1843]

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood stood also for a staunchly high-minded political radicalism - an aspect that has often been overlooked, due in all likelihood to the movement's beguiling and often mysterious medievalism. William Morris, however, made no bones about the movement's utopian philosophy, declaring, for example, that "No man is good enough to be another's master."

In Ford Madox Brown's painting *Work* which depicted workers tearing a hole in the ground (a symbolic hole, it has been suggested, that tears through the class-bound social fabric of the period), a crowd is being urged to 'Vote for Bobus' through an election campaign which Brown indicates by people carrying sandwich boards and posters in the streets displaying the name of the candidate 'Bobus'. The fictitious name of the political candidate which Brown had chosen for his painting was a sly reference to the name of a character in Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present*: Bobus Higgins, was

a corrupt sausage maker who used horsemeat in his products in order to undercut competitors. At the left of the painting Ford Maddox Brown shows a 'Vote for Bobus' poster. However, closer inspection reveals that it has been hit by a ball of mud or even faeces and has the word "don't" chalked onto it.

As things presently stand, British Waterways, a public body responsible for the Jericho canal and its adjoining land, has chosen to evict Jericho's boating community (which, until now, it has been responsible for), and to do so by force, in the company's quest for any old 'Bobus' to sell the site to. In sweeping aside the interests and affections of Jericho's residents, both land and water-based, they swiftly earned for themselves the unwelcome sobriquet 'British Waterways'.

Jericho's intensely local and distinctive nature currently threatens to be sacrificed to the mercantilism of property privateers and ribbon developers whose plans, on close examination, amount to no more than a jobbing architect's hand-me-downs: atmosphere-proof, Lego-like dwelling-units predictably built not to house the needy but to satisfy the inexorable greed of 'buy-to-let' property investors; and which, were such plans to be approved, would go towards rendering Jericho indistinguishable from Milton Keynes in an insidious erosion.

A decade or so ago Oxford's planning panjandrums were deftly satirised by Bill Bryson in his 'Notes from a Small Island':

'You know, we've been putting up handsome buildings since 1264; let's have an ugly one for a change.' Then the planning authorities had to say, 'Well, why not? Plenty worse in Basildon.'

"Then," Bryson continues,

"the whole of the city -students, dons, shopkeepers, office workers, members of the Oxford Preservation Trust - had to acquiesce and not kick up a fuss. Multiply this by, say, 200 or 300 and 400 and you have modern Oxford. And you tell me that it is one of the most beautiful, well-preserved cities in the world? I'm afraid not. It is a beautiful city that has been treated with gross indifference and lamentable incompetence for far too long, and every living person in Oxford should feel a little bit ashamed." [Bill Bryson, Notes from a Small Island, London: Black Swan, 1995, pp.156-7]

Bryson asked "What sort of mad seizure was it that gripped the city's planners, architects and college authorities in the 1960s and 1970s? Did you know that it was once seriously proposed to tear down Jericho, a district of fine artisans' homes, and to run a bypass right across Christ Church Meadow? These ideas weren't just misguided, they were criminally insane."

Bryson acknowledges Oxford's many virtues: in his view "it has moments of unutterable beauty" and "a scattering of prospects that melt the heart" and he speaks too of "being immersed in an architectural treasure house, one of the densest assemblages of historic buildings in the world" but he also warns that in the light of

the city's planners' appalling lapses over the years there is little room for complacency. It now seems astonishing that yet another predatory beast from Mammon's sickly abyss should surface and yet again threaten a unique place such as Jericho with being buried alive beneath breeze-block service-station architecture and all because the city council seems only to be fulfilled when cravenly pleasuring ruthlessly commercial outside interests.

In the words of Karl Kraus, "Progress is a Pyrrhic victory over nature". and it is a short-sighted form of progress that requires the destruction of a place where people feel happy, and where once a group of seminal artists enjoyed a "spiritual fling" and whose work was devoted to celebrating a kind of ethereal, but enduring goodness.

Heathcote Williams