

THE PICKERING MASTERS

# The Letters of Philip Webb

4 Volume Set

Edited by  
John Aplin



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1864–1887

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John Aplin



# THE LETTERS OF PHILIP WEBB

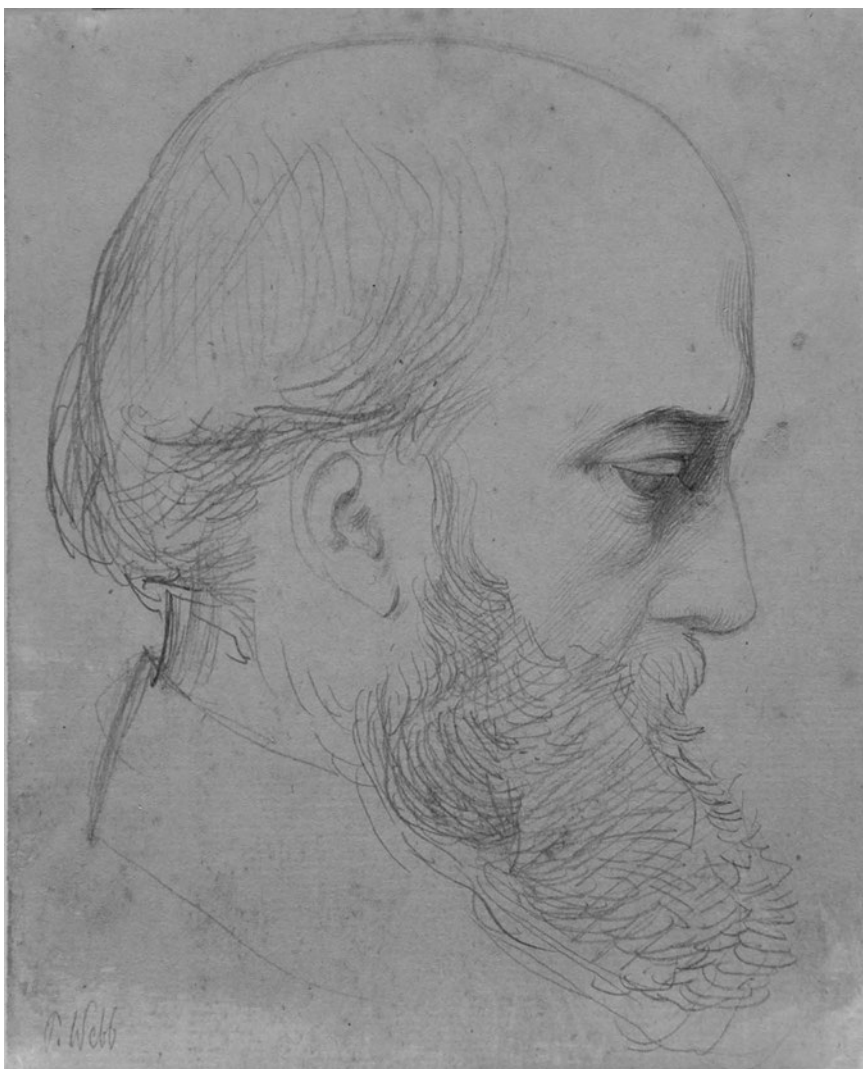
## THE PICKERING MASTERS SERIES



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Philip Webb, by George Howard, c. 1875?

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# THE LETTERS OF PHILIP WEBB

*Edited by  
John Aplin*

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1864–1887**

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# PREFACE

I quite agree that they are literature, & I think that his letters are as fine a manifestation of his personality as his architecture, or anything else. There are masses of them in existence, & it would not be very easy to make a choice for publication.<sup>1</sup>

## Editorial principles

The architect Philip Webb (1831–1915), co-founder with William Morris of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, was an important influence upon the emerging Arts and Crafts movement. This four-volume collection of letters comprises a comprehensive selection from his surviving correspondence, little of which has previously been published. As well as revealing the range of Webb's professional endeavours and the value he invested in a number of close friendships, the evidence presented in his letters confirms his position as a key member of the Morris circle.

It is unfortunate that, for many of Webb's buildings, few if any letters survive pertaining to their construction, although for some others a significant amount of material is available to show his typical ways of working. But important aspects of his professional practices, as well as his intellectual and emotional sympathies, also emerge in his private correspondence, and the legacy of his unswerving commitment to the preservation of our ancient building heritage is fully represented in the fascinating letters he drafted on behalf of the SPAB. As Sydney Cockerell suggested when writing to Webb's first biographer, W.R. Lethaby, there is something compelling and noble about Webb's writing, displaying a consistent thoughtfulness and integrity characteristic of the way in which he conducted all of his affairs.

The more than 1100 letters selected for inclusion have been newly transcribed, with the exception of a few published by John Brandon-Jones several decades ago, for which the originals have not been located, but which are too interesting to overlook. My aim has been to provide authoritative texts with a full scholarly apparatus in which the editorial interventions remain unobtrusive. Webb's alterations and deletions are therefore retained in full, as these often provide telling

information about the process of his thinking and (re)composition. As many of his letters survive only in their draft form, this is especially important. All deleted material is shown as ~~double crossed through text~~, and insertions and second thoughts, wherever they are sited on the manuscript, are placed <sup>above the line, as super-script text</sup>. Commonly used contractions and shortenings are not normally expanded, such as w<sup>d</sup> and sh<sup>d</sup>, or wh. and 'tis, but occasionally, where the sense or context requires it, a word is filled out by employing editorial square brackets, such as in dim[ensio]<sup>ns</sup>. Webb used colons and semi-colons freely, where a full closure might make for clearer comprehension, and I have tended to rationalise these, converting a number to full stops in accordance with current usage.

Occasionally I have added missing apostrophes without comment, but I have not normally amended misplaced ones. In common with many literate Victorians, Webb often used an apostrophe to indicate possession as in 'your's' and it's', and these too I have left without comment. On the other hand, I have registered most spelling errors and archaic usages either with an editorial [*sic*], or have supplied missing letters in a bra[c]ket. Webb's original underlining has been retained, and not converted into italics. All ampersands are similarly left in their original form. I have decided not to standardise the use of quotation marks – he often uses single and double marks interchangeably within the same letter – but for reasons of clarification I have occasionally changed single marks to double. One editorial intervention I have made is to break up long passages of text into more digestible paragraphs, but usually by taking the clue from Webb himself who, without starting a new line, would often leave a bigger than normal space between the end of one sentence and the start of the next. His reason for not starting a fresh line was usually to save paper.

Webb's writing is usually perfectly legible, and there are relatively few irretrievably damaged portions to his letters. All suggested reconstructions are placed within square brackets. Where I have hazarded a reading of an illegible word or two, I place this within <angled brackets>, and where that passage is hard to read because it is one which Webb has deleted, I indicate it <~~thus~~>. Where a heavily deleted or illegible passage cannot be reconstructed, I record this as [*words illegible*].

Pre-printed letterhead addresses are shown in italics, whereas those written by hand appear as standard text. For reasons of space, addresses spread over more than one line are usually contracted, with original line breaks indicated with a vertical slash. I have similarly contracted closing valedictions. I have chosen not to standardise the different ways in which Webb dated his letters, but I have consistently placed the address before the date, even on the few occasions when he reverses this.

I am conscious that in an edition of this kind, repetition within the editorial notes is hard to avoid, and is sometimes desirable. How many times, for example, should one identify a name which may be relatively unfamiliar, or explain an allusion, especially for the reader who may not be reading chronologically but

dipping in and out of volumes? I have tried to minimise this by cross-referring in the endnotes to letters, and by trusting to the reader's judicious use of the Index. But occasional repetitions have proved to be unavoidable. Wherever possible I have endeavoured to contextualise a letter by incorporating within the editorial notes cross-references to the surviving letters of Webb's correspondents, using many published and unpublished extracts where such material survives and has been traced. I hope that this will also offer new insights into some of those correspondents whose names may be well-known but about whom relatively little has previously been published.

With just a few exceptions, I have avoided repeating citations or the use of 'ibid'. For each letter, any source is therefore identified within the endnotes only after the first passage of quoted material, and any subsequent quotations from the same source simply carry forward the initial citation.

### Acknowledgements

For allowing me to include letters and other materials held within their collections, I am most grateful to the following: International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam; Local Studies, Bedford Central Library; Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections, University of Birmingham; British Library; Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum; Courtauld Institute of Art; Emery Walker Trust; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Houghton Library, Harvard University; Castle Howard (by permission of the Hon Simon Howard); Huntington Library, San Marino, California; National Archives, Kew; Red House, National Trust; Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, London; Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin; Victoria and Albert Museum, Archive of Art and Design and the National Art Library; West Sussex Record Office, Chichester (the Blunt papers by permission of John Lytton, fifth Earl of Lytton); William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest; William Morris Society and Museum, Hammersmith. In addition, I am grateful for information provided by The Crown Estate, by Trinity College Library, Cambridge and by Stratford Library Local Studies Collection, Warwickshire County Council.

I am especially indebted to Frances Cockerell for granting me permission to quote from the invaluable diaries and letters of Sydney Cockerell.

I am grateful to the following, who have assisted me in a wide range of ways, for their interest and support: Judith Bronkhurst, David Chambers, Jane Cohen, Heather G. Cole, Christine Conboy, Michael Drury, Helen Fisher, Anne George, Mary Haegert, Kirsty Hartsiotis, Kathy Haslam, Charles Hind, Lynn Hulse, Sue Hodson, Antony Hopkins, Roisin Inglesby, Carien Kremer, Karin Kyburz, Frances Lansley, Christopher Marsden, Amy Marquis, Jan Marsh, Claudia Marx, Anne Louise Mason, Jaimee McRoberts, William S. Peterson, Ines Pina, Chris Ridgway, Gayle Richardson, Nicholas Robinson, Robin Stannard, Virginia Surtees, Anne Thorne, Viem Tummers, Rick Watson, Nick Wilde and Chris Woodham.

A particular word of thanks is due to the unfailingly helpful staff of the Manuscripts and Rare Books and Music reading rooms of the British Library, as well as to the staff of the London Library.

I have been exceptionally well served by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the organisation closest to Philip Webb's heart, and I am particularly grateful for the help extended by Matthew Slocombe and Maggie Goodall, who have been generous with their time and advice. Tessa Wild, National Trust curator for London and the South East, has kindly resolved queries relating to Red House and Standen. Helen Elletson, curator of the William Morris Society and Museum, readily gave me access to Emery Walker's house at 7 Hammersmith Terrace so that I might hunt down one or two fugitive letters, and she shared in my pleasure when I found them. She also supplied an image of Webb's 'Sniffing Lion' sketch for use as a frontispiece. I am especially indebted to my former colleague Penny Lyndon, now volunteer librarian of the William Morris Society and Museum. At an early stage of my research she put me in touch with several useful contacts, and made a number of helpful suggestions.

I am particularly grateful to Mark Pollard, commissioning editor for Pickering and Chatto, for his faith in this project, and to Eleanor Hooker who helped to promote it. I have since been served well by the helpful team at Routledge, to whom the project transferred at a late stage.

Frank Sharp's compendious knowledge of the William Morris circle has meant that he has been able to provide almost instant answers to what I thought were arcane queries, and he has enabled me to plug several gaps in my editorial notes. I am grateful for his generosity. Godfrey Rubens kindly shared his expertise on W.R. Lethaby with me, lent me materials, and also allowed me to use some letters in his possession.

Chief amongst recent commentators on Webb's professional work is Sheila Kirk, whose authoritative *Philip Webb. Pioneer of Arts & Crafts Architecture*, published in 2005, is an exceptionally valuable and superbly illustrated study of his buildings. It will be evident to readers of this edition just how much I have relied upon her understanding and clear accounts of Webb's building techniques. Indeed, Webb's letters – particularly those pertaining to his buildings – are best read with her book to hand.

I am greatly indebted to Chris Rycroft, who has been most generous with his time and read virtually all of my transcriptions and editorial notes, offering many helpful suggestions. It has resulted in my reconsidering and refining a number of my assertions. Any errors and misconceptions which remain are of course my own, but without his involvement there would have been rather more.

To Peter Burman, whose sympathetic appreciation of the work of Philip Webb and his contemporaries is second to none, I owe several unpayable debts. He has generously shared with me his expert knowledge, and loaned me invaluable material given to him by the late John Brandon-Jones, including Webb's office letter-books. He also made available to me his own transcriptions of Webb's letters to George and Rosalind Howard, and these form the basis of my selections from the Castle Howard material, although the editorial notes are mine. I have much

## PREFACE

enjoyed our long discussions and email exchanges about Webb, whose world Peter understands so well.

Peter Collister has lived with this project since the beginning. Even whilst engaged in his own major editorial projects relating to Henry James, he has been able to offer suggestions on matters of style and detail, and I am grateful for his continuing support.

## Note

- 1 Sydney Cockerell to W.R. Lethaby, 2 August 1915, *BL Add 52731* ff. 117–8.



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# ABBREVIATIONS AND CUE TITLES

## Printed sources

- CAGM** *Originality and Initiative. The Arts and Crafts archives at Cheltenham*, edited by Mary Greensted and Sophia Wilson (Cheltenham: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, in association with Lund Humphries, 2003).
- CDGR** *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 9 volumes, edited by William E. Fredeman (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002–10).
- CLJM** *The Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, edited by Frank C. Sharp and Jan Marsh (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012).
- CLWM** *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, 4 volumes, edited by Norman Kelvin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984–96).
- Dakers** Caroline Dakers, *Clouds. The Biography of a Country House* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993).
- DNB** *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press: online resource consulted).
- Drury** Michael Drury, *Wandering Architects* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 2000).
- Elliott** David B. Elliott, *Charles Fairfax Murray. The Unknown Pre-Raphaelite* (Lewes: The Book Guild, 2000).
- Gaimster** Amy Gaimster, *George Jack 1855–1931. Architect and Designer-Craftsman* (Waltham Forest: William Morris Gallery, 2006).
- Greensted** Mary Greensted, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1993).
- JRIBA** *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*
- JWMS** *Journal of William Morris Studies*
- Kirk** Sheila Kirk, *Philip Webb. Pioneer of Arts & Crafts Architecture* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005).
- LeMire** Eugene D. LeMire, *A Bibliography of William Morris* (London: Oak Knoll Press, 2006).
- Lethaby** W.R. Lethaby, *Philip Webb and his Work* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935).

<b>LTF</b>	William Hale White, <i>Letters to Three Friends</i> (London: Humphrey Milford, 1924).
<b>LPW</b>	John Brandon-Jones, 'Letters of Philip Webb and his Contemporaries', <i>Architectural History</i> , VIII, 1964, pp. 52–72.
<b>LTF</b>	William Hale White, <i>Letters to Three Friends</i> , edited Dorothy Vernon White (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1924). This volume contains a selection of Hale White's letters, and some extracts from letters, to PSW.
<b>MacCarthy, LPR</b>	Fiona MacCarthy, <i>The Last Pre-Raphaelite. Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination</i> (London: Faber and Faber, 2011).
<b>MacCarthy, WMLT</b>	Fiona MacCarthy, <i>William Morris. A Life for Our Time</i> (London: Faber and Faber, 1994).
<b>Mackail</b>	John William Mackail, <i>The Life of William Morris</i> , 2 volumes (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1899).
<b>Miele</b>	<i>From William Morris: Building Conservation and the Arts and Crafts Cult of Authenticity 1877–1939</i> , edited Chris Miele (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005).
<b>NBS</b>	John Brandon-Jones, 'Notes on the Building of Smeaton Manor', <i>Architectural History</i> , I, 1958, pp. 31–58
<b>OED</b>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<b>Penn</b>	Arthur Penn, <i>Brampton Church and its Windows</i> (printed by Howe of Brampton Ltd, 1993).
<b>Peterson</b>	William S. Peterson, <i>A Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).
<b>Surtees</b>	Virginia Surtees, <i>The Artist and the Autocrat. George and Rosalind Howard, Earl and Countess of Carlisle</i> (Salisbury: Michael Russell, 1988).
<b>White</b>	Dorothy Vernon White, <i>The Groombridge Diary</i> (London: Oxford University Press, 1924).

Note: All textual references to Shakespeare within endnotes employ *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd edition (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

### Sources for manuscript material

<b>Amsterdam</b>	International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam
<b>BCL</b>	Local Studies, Bedford Central Library ('Mark Rutherford' collection)
<b>Birmingham</b>	Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections University of Birmingham
<b>BL</b>	British Library, London
<b>CD</b>	The year diaries of Sydney Carlyle Cockerell, at the British Library (Add MSS 52623–52702)
<b>Cheltenham</b>	Art Gallery and Museum, Cheltenham

<b><i>Courtauld</i></b>	Library of the Courtauld Institute, London (two boxes of PSW-related materials; most of his letters to GBO are in the form of old photostats, probably produced no later than the 1930s)
<b><i>EWT</i></b>	Emery Walker Trust, London
<b><i>Fitzwilliam</i></b>	Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
<b><i>Houghton</i></b>	Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
<b><i>Howard</i></b>	Castle Howard, Yorkshire; PSW's letters to George and Rosalind Howard, in transcriptions made available by Peter Burman
<b><i>Huntington</i></b>	Huntington Library, San Marino, California
<b><i>LB-1; LB-2</i></b>	Letter-book 1; Letter-book 2. PSW's office drafts/copies for 1874–88. Private collection
<b><i>LPW</i></b>	(See printed sources)
<b><i>NA</i></b>	The National Archives, Kew
<b><i>NBS</i></b>	(See printed sources)
<b><i>Red House</i></b>	Red House, National Trust
<b><i>SPAB</i></b>	Archive of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, London; individual case files recorded where appropriate
<b><i>SPAB W-W</i></b>	Volume of letters from PSW to William Weir at the SPAB
<b><i>Texas</i></b>	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin
<b><i>V&amp;A, AAD</i></b>	Philip Webb papers (formerly part of the Brandon-Jones collection) in the V&A, Archive of Art and Design (ref. AAD/2014/5), London
<b><i>V&amp;A, NAL</i></b>	V&A, National Art Library, London
<b><i>WMG</i></b>	William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest
<b><i>WSRO</i></b>	West Sussex Record Office, Chichester

### Main correspondents

<b>CF</b>	Charles Joseph Faulkner
<b>CFM</b>	Charles Fairfax Murray
<b>DGR</b>	Dante Gabriel Rossetti
<b>DJB</b>	Detmar Jellings Blow
<b>EBJ</b>	Edward Burne-Jones
<b>EW</b>	Emery Walker
<b>GBJ</b>	Georgiana Burne-Jones
<b>GBO</b>	Giacomo Boni
<b>GH</b>	George Howard
<b>GPB</b>	George Price Boyce
<b>GWJ</b>	George Washington Jack
<b>GW</b>	George Wardle
<b>HTT</b>	Hugh Thackeray Turner
<b>JEM</b>	Jenny Morris
<b>JM</b>	Jane Morris
<b>JR</b>	John Ruskin

## ABBREVIATIONS AND CUE TITLES

<b>JWM</b>	John William Mackail
<b>KF</b>	Kate Faulkner
<b>MM</b>	May Morris
<b>PSW</b>	Philip Speakman Webb
<b>PWY</b>	Percy Wyndham
<b>SCC</b>	Sydney Carlyle Cockerell
<b>WHW</b>	William Hale White
<b>WM</b>	William Morris
<b>WRL</b>	William Richard Lethaby
<b>WSB</b>	Wilfrid Scawen Blunt
<b>WW</b>	William Weir

## Organisations

<b>MMF &amp; Co</b>	Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co
<b>RIBA</b>	Royal Institute of British Architects
<b>SPAB</b>	The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

# INTRODUCTION

It is perhaps curious that none of Philip Webb's extant letters so far recovered date from his earliest years, and indeed that nothing survives until after he had completed the construction of his first major architectural project, Red House. Nor, with the exception of a congratulatory letter from his mother on his twenty-first birthday, did he keep any of the family correspondence that certainly would have passed between parents and siblings and which might have offered us unfiltered access to the events of his childhood and early adult life. What we know of those years is derived instead from what he chose to recall for friends in later life, unconnected pieces of information which they in turn refracted. But that Webb afforded a special status to the solitary survival from amongst his mother's letters is suggested by his careful annotation on its reverse – 'Mater Jan<sup>y</sup> 1852' – an aide memoire to indicate that this one, at least, was to be kept until the end.

Addressing him by the French spelling of his name with which he had been christened, Elizabeth Webb is affectionate but also somewhat formal and a little awkward, suggesting a woman rather shy of her sons as they began to make their own way in the world. Her husband, Charles Webb, a family doctor with a practice in Oxford, had died four years earlier when Philip was seventeen, and the black edges to her sheet of paper present a conventional image of mid-Victorian mourning whilst also emphasising the loneliness of widowhood and its obvious financial constraints when it came to assisting the careers of her children.

January 11<sup>th</sup> 1852

My dear Phillippe

Tomorrow being the anniversary of your Birthday as well as being the Most important one you having attained your 21<sup>st</sup> year, Aunt Sarah with me my dear Boy offer you our best wishes on the occasion, for your Health, & happiness as well as success in all your undertakings in your Profession. May you be fortunate, put your trust in the Almighty my dear Boy & he will give you patience & perseverance which in the end will bring you I trust, & believe to prosperity.

Imagine our disappointment that you are not at home with Harry, did you not think him looking very thin & ill? did he tell you he had a bad

knee? I much fear he is very out of health but he would not hear of it. I want much to know how long he staid with you also if anything was said to him by Mr & Mrs Billing[;] when you write give all particulars[;] everything here is going on as you left it. Yesterday was a very sharp frost today windy, wet & mild. I am sorry to say Harry tells me he cannot apprise me as regards Frank which has much disappointed me so that I must again exercise my patience again[.] wishing you many happy returns of the day believe us to Remain with true affection my dear Boy & our sincere well wishes

Mother & Aunt Sarah<sup>1</sup>

Webb had already completed three years of his architectural apprenticeship under John Billing in Reading by the time he was 21, and was committed to his chosen career path. The virtues of ‘patience and perseverance’ which Elizabeth Webb wished for her son found a resonance in him – ‘Well did my mother preach to me, that work kept people out of trouble & mischief’ (*Letter 32*) – even if he did not share her confident trust in the reality of a personal God. He was the second of four brothers, all of whom (like their sisters) were given their mother’s maiden name, Speakman, for their own middle names. The eldest, Henry (Harry) became a doctor, training at St Bartholomew’s Hospital in London, whilst Frank became a successful brewer – Philip later designed at least one label for his beer bottles, and a house for Harry, in Welwyn, Hertfordshire. The fourth brother, not mentioned in this letter, was Perceval (Percy), who entered the church: in the 1890s he would keep the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings apprised of unwelcome proposals for restorations at Chichester Cathedral, where he became a Canon.

A childhood spent in Oxford profoundly shaped the sensibilities of the intelligent, observant boy born at 1 Beaumont Street on 12 January 1831. When he was aged about three, the family moved to a large house in St Giles’s, formerly owned by the Dukes of Marlborough, not far from St John’s College. We learn from his first biographer and devoted admirer, William Richard Lethaby, who had privileged access to all the papers which passed to Emery Walker as executor in 1915, that Webb greatly admired the work of his paternal grandfather, the Birmingham-born medallist, Thomas Webb, who was known for the accuracy and technical adroitness of his portraits. Something of the grandfather’s artistry was inherited by Webb’s doctor father, who drew animals and passed that interest in turn to his own son, whose later sketches are exceptionally well-observed. Lethaby remembered being told that ‘To draw animals you must sympathize with them; you must know what it feels like to be an animal.’<sup>2</sup> The boy would accompany his father on some of his visits to patients, getting to know Oxford’s streets and buildings, storing away his direct experience of the lives of its residents to be retrieved in moments of delicious reminiscence and shared 60 years later with Jane Morris, whose recollections of an Oxford childhood were not so fond as his own. He recalled Holywell Street, where she had been brought up. ‘My father had two or three regular patients there, and when I was a little modest boy I used sometimes

to go to the house of one of them & spend the day, but that was on the north side of the street, with the garden down to the pig-styed [*sic*] path-way leading between garden palings direct – in a winding way – to Holywell Church. I loved that pig and apple tainted air, as children do in the making of mud-pies.’ (*Letter 606*) The way in which memories could be triggered by chance associations intrigued him, and Lethaby remembered being told that they ‘seemed to be stimulated by something in the nature of vibrations’.<sup>3</sup> The demolition and unsympathetic restorations of Oxford’s historic buildings (not least among them the work on the spire of St Mary the Virgin) was always a cause for distress, but his learning in 1874 of the clearing away of his own past had an almost tragic poignancy. ‘The Oxford houses are sold, and the Webbs & Speakmans swept away and the town purified. Poor old town, poor old memories.’ (*Letter 68*)

‘Being born & bred there my first perception of anything was of the beauty and seriousness of the buildings – that was my earliest and unconscious “study of architecture” – that good breeding – at all events has never left me. I may say, the manners of the Oxford buildings were the making of me.’ (*Letter 614*) His powers of recollection even encompassed the act of imagining himself as a child still haunting the old streets, an image prompted by Giacomo Boni’s first visit to Oxford in 1889. ‘If you saw a little & wonderstruck boy in Oxford trotting along the pavements of the streets there, it might have been the ghost of my youth, for I was born in that seat of learning, but not in its head.’ (*Letter 353*) This making a distinction between being a native of the town, rather than having been an undergraduate there, is telling, for Webb was acutely conscious of his lack of a formal university education. In his mind, if in no-one else’s, it set him somewhat apart from the close friendships he formed in the later 1850s, principally with William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones and Charles Faulkner, all Oxford men in a way that he was not. He comes close to confessing this sense of inadequacy in a letter to Rossetti in 1866. ‘Ever since fate was kind enough to make me acquainted with Topsy [*i.e. Morris*] & through him with Ned [Burne-Jones], [Madox] Brown & yourself I have always thought that to allow of my being considered as one of such a company, there must be something about my mental constitution wh’ excused the seeming disparity. To a certain extent I have thought the allowance to be this, that I had the capacity of understanding my men, if I could not compete with them.’ (*Letter 5*) He admired and envied those who were able to speak out in public without apparent self-doubts, for it was something other than natural reticence which inhibited him.

On completing his articles, Webb stayed with Billing for a further two years before moving to the Wolverhampton practice of Bidlake and Lovett in April 1854, carrying with him a reference which spoke warmly of his ‘assiduity and perseverance’ and the proficiency of his drawing and design skills ‘particularly in the several Gothic styles’,<sup>4</sup> but within four weeks he knew that he could not endure living and working in such close proximity to the symbols of modern industrialisation and deprivation. He was offered instead the happy chance of a move back to his hometown, and in May 1854 joined the office of George Edmund Street,

the Oxford diocesan architect, whose chief assistant he became and within a year saw his annual salary doubled to £100.<sup>5</sup> He remembered with affection the comradely spirit of the office, and would always remain grateful to Street, even after he drew away from the older man's quasi-medievalism. 'He was everything that was honourable, and industrious beyond words, a very able architect according to his lights.'<sup>6</sup> But whilst the years with Street ensured his acquisition of a sure-footed professional confidence, enabling his move into independent practice, he was shaped even more profoundly by the cementing of a friendship that was to be the most important of his life. After completing his degree at Exeter College, Oxford, William Morris joined Street's office in January 1856 as an articulated pupil, having told his mother that Street was 'a good architect, as things go now, and has a great deal of business, and always goes for an honourable man; I should learn what I want of him if of anybody.'<sup>7</sup>

Morris's restless intelligence and active interest in both visual and literary culture made him seem like a new kind of creature altogether, and Webb later told Lethaby that he remembered perfectly first meeting this 'slim boy like a wonderful bird just out of his shell'.<sup>8</sup> By the summer of 1856, Street moved his practice to London, and Webb and Morris went with him, but already Morris was thinking of moving on. Soon afterwards, influenced by his new friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti, he gave up architecture to try his hand at painting. But the friendship established with Webb was never broken, and their very different personalities seem to have created a symbiotic relationship essential to both men. A trip they made to northern France together in the summer of 1858 to see medieval cathedrals – one of only three foreign visits Webb ever made – was a seminal experience which fed his imagination thereafter. Thirty years after their first meeting, he described how the experience of knowing Morris had challenged his own reticence, recognising that he took sustenance from the other man's vitality.

I can always read Morris, partly, I think, because he is most free of modern poets from thinness of thought in verse, and partly because he enjoys doing his verse, as he does in doing a piece of dyeing, or hand weaving – and all just like a child. His very egotism is amusing and childlike. Again, you see, I am a poor non educated ill furnished bundle of strange fancies and ideas. Well, Morris understands me, and never praises what I do, so that I have no call with him to pull out my too ready scepticism. Now, don't laugh, I am most surely of a melancholy temperament, and I have found for more than 30 years it has been good corrective to rub shoulders with Morris's hearty love-of-lifedness. (*Letter 324*)

And in a real sense, Morris framed Webb's own independent architectural career. Red House, near Bexleyheath in Kent, Webb's first major project after leaving Street's office in May 1859, was designed and built for Morris and his wife, whilst the two simple workers' cottages at Kelmscott commissioned by Jane in memory of her husband were not finally completed until 1903, more than



two years after Webb's retirement to Sussex. 'Almost the very first building I set up was for you, and the very last, if I can so make it, will also be for you.' (*Letter 666*) His affection for Morris extended to the whole family, and continued almost as a duty of care to Jane and the children after Morris's death.

After Red House was completed in 1860, the happy cooperative endeavour of working on its internal decorations, which drew in Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Charles Faulkner and other friends, seemed to lead naturally to the formal establishing of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co, the first incarnation of what later became 'Morris and Co', or the Firm, in which Webb's own contribution as a designer during the early years was always fundamental. But the most fruitful and dynamic aspect of the special relationship between Morris and Webb emerges through their founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (the SPAB), which they affectionately called 'Antiscrape'. They both brought to this enterprise a belief in conservation through repair, and a fierce opposition to restoration and sham copying, attitudes born of their deep love of old buildings, and their sympathy for Ruskin's vision, who had first raised the banner for such a cause. It was a matter of fortuitous chance, but one which proved essential to the success of the new society, that they brought together a set of complementary skills. When the SPAB began its work in 1877, Morris was already a public figure, a prolific writer and, increasingly, a voice shaping the direction of interior design in middle-class homes. It was inevitable and indeed right that his energy and willingness to promote ideas effectively would make him the prominent public voice of the SPAB, even if the hard graft of its casework was shared between a few of its more active committee members. Of course, Morris also had real architectural understanding, more than that of an informed amateur, and readily engaged with controversy.

What Webb brought to the table was no less essential to the success of the enterprise. As a practising architect, he spoke with a palpable and precise authority derived from experience, and until he retired at the end of 1900 it was his meticulous analysis which found practical working solutions to many of the cases which passed before the committee. For nearly 25 years he remained the undisputed first amongst equals of the Society's working architects. The evidence for this is the number of letters he drafted to be sent to churchwardens, vicars and cathedral chapters, as well as to newspapers and secular officials, although these always went out signed by the secretary. We cannot now know quite how many of these were authored by Webb, although a good many survive in his hand in the SPAB files.

As the years passed, and as Morris's growing commitment to the socialist cause loaded more pressures upon him, not least as a public speaker, it was inevitable that he was able to give less time to the SPAB. Webb would assume an even greater importance at the heart of the Society, although he began to fear for its long-term survival as the exponential growth in casework was being handled by so few of its committee members. The confidence placed by the SPAB in Webb's exceptional expertise and professional sureness-of-touch, and indeed the affectionate respect extended to him by his colleagues, may be measured by the fact that, even after

his retirement, he continued to be asked to advise on specific repair projects. The SPAB has survived as one of the lasting testimonies to Morris's inspirational far-sightedness, but it would have struggled without the tireless commitment which Webb devoted to it, work which he quite possibly felt was of more real value than any one of his own building designs. Without Morris, the SPAB would never have been formed, but without Webb, it might not have endured.

The influence of Morris's political sympathies upon Webb are more difficult to disentangle. The journey into socialism appears to have been a shared one, with Morris as leader and Webb as a committed fellow-traveller, but there is enough evidence in the letters to suggest that Webb had always been a socialist in his beliefs, but perhaps one whose instincts were to work at a modest level, helping his fellows more practically and immediately, rather than someone who had high expectations of success through revolutionary struggle. His belief in an elected democracy, however flawed, was something he affirmed towards the end of his life.

To me, and in spite of the detested contest in declamation, either by lies or honest speech, I prefer – in the long run – this rule by parliament of tongues, & seeming waste of words, to the rule of blood & thunder.  
(*Letter 1076*)

That said, his personal notes survive to show that on two occasions he stood in for the absent Morris, leading off discussions at the Bloomsbury branch of the Socialist League in September 1886 and at the committee of the Hammersmith Socialist Society in August 1891. Webb's loyalty and simple decency is why Morris described his friend as 'the best man he ever knew', conscious also of the straightforward wisdom which allowed him to steer others towards correct decisions in their own lives. An absence of personal self-aggrandisement, coupled with an unwavering commitment to principles of honest dealing and modest living, meant that Webb was never to be wealthy. Indeed, throughout his professional life his means were slender, though he would give money to friends and causes in which he believed, often at times when he could not easily spare it. His elder brother recognised this quality, confessing that 'I consider him Quixotic in the extreme. He likes to pay double fee for all that is done for him, & will only take half its value for work he does for others.' (*Letter 1033, note 2*)

That no letters survive from his earliest years might be read as a wish to be judged by what he achieved, rather than by who he was. And yet, Webb never represented any of his buildings as being anything more than honest and workmanlike, even saying once to his assistant, George Jack, that 'I was never satisfied with any one building of my contriving' (*Letter 971*). He was almost pathologically reticent and, unlike most significant Victorian architects, he resolutely refused to write about his own work, or indeed to make any public utterance about any aspect of his profession. He carefully avoided joining any professional associations, except for one, the important if somewhat eccentrically named Sanitary Institute of Great

Britain. He turned down invitations to formal dinners as a matter of course and generally avoided anything which might loosely be termed 'society'. This was maintained until the end of his life. In 1912, he refused the offer of the Royal Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects – as had Ruskin, and as would Lethaby – having avoided membership throughout his working career.

Despite this rather ascetic modesty, he was no recluse. He had a following of friends whose admiration bordered on devotion, and invariably was one of the small company of active members of the SPAB who would repair after the weekly Thursday committee meetings to Gatti's restaurant in the Strand, where the gossip and jokes ran freely. If a man is defined in large part by his friendships, this seems especially true of Webb. For it is in the surviving resource of letters retained by his friends that we discover his charm, humour, affection and rich imaginative life, enabling a more nuanced view of his mercurial personality to emerge. At the same time, we are often offered revealing insights into the lives of those other correspondents, several of whom though important are not currently well-represented in published documents. Fortunately, letters also survive to clients, builders and other contractors, so that for some projects (such as the Palace Green town house he built for George Howard in Kensington, or 'Clouds' at East Knoyle for Percy Wyndham, or the textbook repair of the medieval tower at East Knoyle's parish church, or indeed for his new church building at Brampton in Cumbria) an enhanced understanding of his professional life is made possible, although an even clearer view of his working-methods emerges in those letters which he wrote to his long-term assistant George Jack and his former assistant William Weir. The current volumes draw in full measure from the range of these sources.

Few of Webb's letters have previously been published, but his privileged situation within the William Morris circle would alone justify this new project. At his death in April 1915 his surviving papers passed to his executor, Emery Walker, who was one of Morris's trusted intimates, and quite as reticent as Webb himself. With the help of Sydney Cockerell – Morris's former secretary and subsequently a remarkably successful Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum – Walker arranged the removal of the contents of Webb's retirement cottage in Worth, Sussex, to his own house at 7 Hammersmith Terrace, just a few hundred yards upriver from Kelmscott House, Morris's final London home on the Thames at Hammersmith. Amongst the letters were those Webb had received in later years from correspondents such as Walker himself, Cockerell, W.R. Lethaby, George Jack, George Wardle and Giacomo Boni, but Webb seems to have destroyed most of the incoming letters from earlier years. Thus there is next to nothing from his close friend and former client, the water-colourist George Price Boyce, or from Jane, Jenny and May Morris. Wardle had died in 1910, so his letters were retained by Walker, as were those from Boni, and in due course both collections were given to the Courtauld Institute. The other letters were returned to their senders.

When Webb died, his own surviving letters, naturally, tended still to be with their original recipients, but in due course several important sets found their way into public collections. Sydney Cockerell was responsible for ensuring that

a number of major holdings were secured in this way. As an instinctive but discriminating collector himself, Cockerell kept everything that he ever received from Webb, and arranged for three bound volumes of these letters to be deposited in the library of the Victoria and Albert Museum (though he had first contemplated giving them to the Courtauld), as well as a small group to Rossetti and Warington Taylor, and several important letters to Kate Faulkner, written from Italy during the winter of 1884–5. Also deposited at the V&A are the surviving letters from Webb to Morris, and Cockerell's precise prefatory note to the volume characteristically contextualises the circumstances of their survival.

William Morris died on Oct 3 1896. He was not in the habit of keeping letters and this book contains only a small number of those which he received from Philip Webb which, like those received from other friends, were too often used as pipe lights. After his death they were collected in order that they might be returned to the writer, who admitted that he would immediately burn them, and at my request gave me leave on Nov 5 1896 to keep them; which I thankfully did as a memorial of a friendship of forty years between two of the noblest men of our day. (*V&A, NAL MSC/1958/687*)

Webb's letters to Boyce, given to Cockerell by Boyce's widow, as well as letters to the wife of another of Webb's clients, Elizabeth Wickham Flower, were presented to the British Library (formerly the British Museum). Cockerell's own letters to Webb were divided between the V&A and the British Library, the latter institution also receiving a significant part of the large collection of picture postcards of ancient buildings which in later years he sent almost daily (and sometimes several in a day) to Webb. Amongst the many volumes which form the large collection of Morris papers, the British Library also holds Webb's surviving letters to Jane Morris and those to her daughters. Amongst the letters of William Hale White ('Mark Rutherford') at Bedford Central Library are those from Webb, whilst Charles Fairfax Murray gave his to the Fitzwilliam Museum. The Castle Howard archives contain Webb's correspondence to George and Rosalind Howard, whom he first knew as part of the Morris circle when Howard's own real ambition was to be a painter, long before he inherited the responsibilities and expectations placed upon him as ninth Earl of Carlisle. In the archives of the SPAB there survives an important group of letters to his former assistant, William Weir, most of them dealing with repair projects which Weir undertook for the Society and upon which Webb's advice had been sought, whilst at West Sussex Record Office are letters to the landlord of his retirement years, the poet and society philanderer, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, who counted Jane Morris amongst his successes.

Nor should the charming set of letters written during his retirement to his housekeeper be overlooked, for they show Webb's skill in adjusting his register to the expectations and experiences of any intended recipient, without ever being patronising. This might suggest that putting pen to paper came easily to him, but

if so it challenges his own claims that letter-writing was never anything other than a difficult and at times tortured process. Indeed, it was normal for him to make a draft, and sometimes more than one, before despatching a final version, the draft often being retained as his record, this being his practice not just for business correspondence but occasionally also when writing to friends. As a result, there is far more material to draw upon than if we had to rely only upon the survival of letters in the hands of his correspondents. His collection of drafts was amongst the papers which Walker and Cockerell transferred from Sussex to Hammersmith in 1915, and seems to have stayed in Walker's house until after his own death in 1933.

All of the papers that went to Hammersmith were made available to W.R. Lethaby when he was working on the series of essays which first appeared in *The Builder* during 1925, and were subsequently republished in 1935 as *Philip Webb and his Work*, providing us with the first authoritative biography. Friends had made other letters available, but there was much which Lethaby did not see, or chose not to use. It is frustrating that some letters from which he did quote (including a few of his own from Webb) have not since been traced – at least, not yet – but it is quite possible that they were destroyed by his sister-in-law after his death. The flame of interest in Webb studies was kept alive after the deaths of those who knew him – most importantly Lethaby, Walker, Jack and Cockerell – by younger champions, first amongst them being the architect, John Brandon-Jones. When he published a few of the letters in *Architectural History* in 1964, Brandon-Jones explained how 'on the death of Emery Walker, his daughter, Dorothy, inherited the Webb papers and passed them on to the present writer'.<sup>9</sup> It formed the basis of a superb personal collection, to which in due course Brandon-Jones added Webb's letters to and from George Washington Jack, given to him by Jack's twin daughters. Since his death, the bulk of this collection has been deposited in the Archive of Art and Design at the V&A, and provides the source for many of the materials within the present edition, including letters to Walker and his wife, those which survive to Lethaby and his wife, to Detmar Blow, Alfred Powell and to a wide range of other individuals, as well as letters relating to particular building projects, including St Martin's church at Brampton, 'Clouds' and the restoration of the church tower at East Knoyle.

Particularly interesting survivals from the Brandon-Jones collection are two volumes covering the years 1874–88, which probably formed part of what Dorothy Walker passed on to him. These contain Webb's drafts (rather than copies) of letters which he sent to clients, and which formed the office record. The two office books are probably a chance survival, for they are in no sense a comprehensive record of his business correspondence even for those years, and there was no particular reason for Webb having chosen to spare these whilst destroying so much else, probably on removing from London to Sussex. They feature just a few of his projects in progress, whilst others are not even mentioned, and it seems reasonable to suppose that there were once equivalent volumes which dealt with those other buildings. Nor should it be supposed that his good office habit of recording

all of his business transactions only operated during these years: doubtless, it was followed throughout his career. The fortunate recovery of these two volumes only serves to indicate the richness of what has been lost. They contain drafts of letters not just to his clients, but also to builders, clerks of works, and to other contractors, making them a fascinating insight into the working practices of a busy nineteenth-century architect.

All of the content selected from the two office books for inclusion in the current edition falls entirely within the year boundaries of this first volume, which ends in 1887, when Webb was aged 56. Much of his defining architectural work was already behind him by then, whilst some of his key friendships with men of the next generation were still in their early stages, or yet to be established. Indeed, some of the very best of his letters lie ahead. These earlier pages are underpinned throughout by the relationship which profoundly shaped the contours of his working life, and which continued until William Morris's death in 1896. Webb would later tell Morris's younger daughter that 'his brotherly love has left a mark on me which has clung as if I were branded like a sheep's back with W.M – an assertion of "property" . . . he having run me down in the chase of his early life. There was something out of the "common" in that.' (*Letter 592*). Morris had married Jane Burden in 1859, and after their daughters were born the unmarried Webb had extended his affection to encompass them all, something which would take on a particular poignancy after Morris's death, when Webb reached out to the survivors. Several other close friends during these years were acquired through a mutual friendship with Morris – including Charles Faulkner and his sister Kate (had Webb ever felt inclined towards marriage, Kate would surely have been in his mind as a possible partner), as well as Rossetti and Edward and Georgiana Burne-Jones. The strength of these affections show up clearly enough, even if there are few surviving letters to Rossetti and apparently none at all to the Burne-Joneses. George Howard, George Price Boyce and Percy Wyndham all feature importantly as friends who were also clients (or in Wyndham's case a client first, who became a friend) and to the wives of each Webb also extended his friendship, though there is always the sense that women are to be treated with a certain caution.

Although Webb was able stubbornly to defend his work when it seemed necessary – and did so during the earlier part of his career when the office of the Commissioner of Woods and Forests objected to his plans for George Howard's house at Palace Green – his instinct was to refrain from controversy and public comment, however strongly-held his private views might be. When invited to supply some notes on his principal buildings to assist in a book on the English Gothic revival, he politely but firmly refused to break his rule 'not myself to make unnecessarily public any work which I've designed or completed' (*Letter 34*), and although he was persuaded by Burne-Jones to provide quite detailed information when John Mackail's *Life of William Morris* was in preparation, he was reluctant to be publicly associated with it. 'I hope you will be able to do with as little mention of my name as may be – and if it were nil, I should be the more content.' (*Letter 614*) It seems almost wilfully obtuse. But through the confidences of his

## INTRODUCTION

letter-writing the complex and elusive character of this fiercely loyal and abundantly affectionate man is allowed to reveal itself. We are permitted to see how such uncompromising integrity lived itself out, but it is difficult to escape the conclusion that so consistent a clinging to simple ideals was bought at the high price of a sometimes heroic loneliness.

### Notes

- 1 *V&A*, NAL MSL/1958/688/5
- 2 *Lethaby*, p. 3.
- 3 *Ibid*, p. 5.
- 4 John Billing, quoted in *Lethaby*, p. 9.
- 5 *Kirk*, p. 13.
- 6 *Lethaby*, p. 17.
- 7 WM to Emma Morris, 11 November 1855, *CLWM*, I.
- 8 *Lethaby*, p. 15.
- 9 *LPW*, p. 52.



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# LETTERS 1864–1887

## 1 • To William Morris, 18 November 1864

*Transcription from Marsh*<sup>1</sup>

*I, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Nov. 18 1864*

My dear Morris.

I saw Brown<sup>2</sup> the other day upon his return from Red house, & Ned read Janie's letter to me this afternoon, so I just know something of you.<sup>3</sup> I can only hope that you are not in great pain, and that you manage to keep up your spirits.

I must say that Ned's case has been a striking example of things all coming round after a depth of trouble – and things are never quite so bad as they look.<sup>4</sup>

Charlie Faulkner comes up to town again tomorrow,<sup>5</sup> so Campfield<sup>6</sup> and I manage with him to keep things going pretty smoothly at the shop, and it will do some of your brutes of customers good to wait a bit. Some of the Cambridge glass goes off tonight which has stopped Bodley's mouth.<sup>7</sup>

I've set them going at S. Philips Bethnal Green with a pattern for the roof<sup>of chancel</sup> and I am now going to give them a wall & dado patterns for the same.<sup>8</sup>

I am rather pushed in a corner just now with work as I was away in Norfolk for 2 days & a night.

Best love to you both | Yours ever | Philip Webb.

*Red House*

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<sup>1</sup> During a programme of repairs and renewals overseen by the National Trust in 2006, this letter was discovered beneath the floor of one of the bedrooms of Red House, Bexleyheath. Designed by PSW for William Morris (WM, 1834–96) in 1858–60, Red House now attracts many visitors principally for its associations with WM, but is important in its own right as PSW's first independent architectural project. My text and notes are here informed by Jan Marsh's transcription in 'Red House: Past and Future', in Philippa Bennett and Rosie Miles (eds), *William Morris in the Twenty-First Century*, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010 (pp. 65–6). Dr Marsh also kindly shared digital images of this letter with me.

- 2 The painter and designer, Ford Madox Brown (1821–93), was one of the original seven partners in Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co ('the Firm', referred to here as MMF & Co).
- 3 Ned is WM's Oxford friend, the painter, Edward Burne-Jones (EBJ, 1813–98). WM married Jane Burden (JM, 1839–1914) in April 1859.
- 4 Three days after the date of this letter came the death of the infant son of EBJ and Georgiana (Georgie) Burne-Jones (née Macdonald, 1840–1920, hereafter GBJ). She had herself been dangerously ill with scarlet fever since the birth.
- 5 See below, Letter 3.
- 6 George Campfield was a glass painter and foreman of MMF & Co at its Red Lion Square premises, where its shop was based.
- 7 The English Gothic revival architect, George Frederick Bodley (1827–1907), commissioned decorative work and stained glass from MMF & Co for a number of his newly-built churches, including the East window of All Saints', Jesus Lane, Cambridge.
- 8 'Saint Philip's, Bethnal Green, one of twelve new churches built in the poorest parish of London's overcrowded East End, opened in 1842 to a Romanesque design by T.L. Walker. . . . Decorative work by [MMF & Co] for the interior of the church has not previously been documented, and Webb's patterns – probably stencilled – for the chancel ceiling, walls and dado are not recorded.' Marsh, p. 66, note 30.

## 2 • To George Price Boyce, 11 April 1865

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
April 11 1865*

Dear Boyce

I quite forgot on Saturday when I half accepted your invitation for Wednesday that I had a 3 weeks engagement to be at G: Rossetti's on that evening.<sup>1</sup>

I am very sorry that this will hinder me from being introduced to Wolff<sup>2</sup> – for whose work I have a great admiration.

On my next passing Chatham Place I shall look in with the hopes of see[ing] you and yours.<sup>3</sup>

Yours very truly | Philip Webb

*BL Add 45354, f. 1*

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- 1 Dante Gabriel Rossetti (DGR, 1828–82), poet, painter and founder-member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He was also a founding shareholder of MMF & Co.
  - 2 Probably Joseph Wolf (1820–99), the German-born wildlife artist and illustrator, regarded by many – Sir Edwin Landseer (1802–73) amongst them – as the finest animal painter of his generation.
  - 3 Late in 1862, DGR having moved to 16 Cheyne Walk ('Tudor House'), the watercolour painter George Price Boyce (GPB, 1826–97) took over his former studio at 14 Chatham Place. GPB had formerly shared chambers at 15 Buckingham Street with the architect, William Burges (1827–81). From Chatham Place he would transfer to West House, in Glebe Place, Chelsea, built for him by PSW (1868–70). See *Kirk*, pp. 75–6 and 297.

### 3 • To Charles Faulkner, 27 May 1865

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
May 27 1865*

My dear Charlie.<sup>1</sup>

I have waited 'till now to answer because I could only see Top last night.<sup>2</sup> – He does not take to the idea but rather makes up his mind to a more extended affair on the lower river sometime in season.

I think I could safely say I could run down to Faringdon for the 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, but I am sure I could not get away before.<sup>3</sup> – Should we go let us hope all natures stock of West wind won't be blown out, for then we might enjoy A. West Wind. B. Burgundy bottle. C. bow ripple. [*PSW sketches a boat under sail, to which these labels refer*]

Yours very surely | Philip Webb

C.J. Faulkner Esq

*Texas*

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1 The mathematician Charles Joseph Faulkner (CF, 1833–92) was a contemporary of both William Morris (WM, 1834–96) and the painter Edward Burne-Jones (EBJ, 1833–98) at Oxford, where he subsequently became a fellow of University College. He trained as a civil engineer, became a founding shareholder of MMF & Co in 1861, and was its first financial manager. These ties were loosened when he returned to Oxford in 1864, but he continued as a shareholder until the firm's reorganization as Morris & Co in 1875 and with WM and PSW would be a committed member of the early socialist movement. A stroke in 1888 left him speechless and housebound. PSW would visit daily to sit with his friend, thus easing the pressures on Kate Faulkner (KF, 1841–98), her brother's nurse in the house they shared in 35 Queen Square, Bloomsbury. See also Vol. II, Letter 587.

2 'Topsy' (or 'Top') was WM's nickname amongst his closest friends, supplied by 'Ned' (EBJ) as 'an in-joke referring to his mop of hair'. *MacCarthy, WMLT*, p. 74. The fictional Topsy was the slave girl in Harriet Beecher Stowe's influential *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852).

3 The Oxfordshire market town of Faringdon, in the Vale of the White Horse, lies about 3 miles to the south of the River Thames and WM's future country house, Kelmscott Manor. The River Ock, south of Faringdon, is a tributary of the Thames, joining it at Abingdon, and is probably what PSW means by the 'lower' river.

### 4 • To John Ruskin, 17 October 1865

*Unsigned draft; incomplete?*

1 R.B. G.I Oct. 17. 1865

Dear M<sup>r</sup> Ruskin.<sup>1</sup>

A gentleman of the name of F Warburton Stent – an Arch<sup>t</sup> & Surveyor<sup>2</sup> – wrote to me & also called, to explain a plan for forwarding the building of middle class houses of a sound & seemly character.

Mr Stent told me that he had laid the plan before you, and that you desired to have my opinion upon the subject.<sup>3</sup>

I told Mr Stent that I thought it might be possible to find tenants for houses, where the best part of the cost was put into the substance and conveniences of the building instead of into the tricking out, but that in my practice I had not found it so – that the main body of the people never really accounted for their ills of housing – & would probably refer a bad smell from the drains to the bad taste of the Architect.

Still I have seen many things for wh' I myself have not thought it reasonable ~~of~~ to make effort wh' have been carried through by abundant energy to a fair end.

Another main difficulty I think would be that it would be impossible to give an equivalent to the people in sound work for the bad ornament wh' has had its value in their eyes – in the same way that a badly painted scene at a play is accounted for and accepted.

Even the entire class of designers who are determined to solve the problem, & give solid practical decoration – by jutting a brick out here & blocking another in there – have scarcely such contented tenants as the more wise and fashionable builders.

It is found also now by the mercantile classes that they can build houses for one purpose, wh' by management can be used for another, and pay <sup>12 or 15 p ct</sup> interest – 6, 7 or 8 ~~or 9~~ per ct would be the utmost that could be got I fancy from the class of house in question, if the purpose were honestly kept in view – it is scarcely likely that there wd be rush of capitalists, for such a proposed return for their money.<sup>4</sup>

### *Texas*

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1 Indisputably the most celebrated art critic of the nineteenth century, John Ruskin (JR, 1819–1900) was also a social commentator of great importance. His writing and thinking profoundly influenced both PSW and WM, not least in the principles underpinning their founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877.

2 The London-based Frederick Warburton Stent (fl. 1846–94), architect (with Augustus Laver), of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa (1865).

3 A month earlier, the *Daily Telegraph* had published a series of letters from JR about domestic servants, in the last of which he commented on the poor quality of suburban house-building. 'Round every railroad station, out of the once quiet fields, there bursts up first a blotch of brick-fields, and then of ghastly houses, washed over with slime into miserable fineries of cornice and portico. A gentleman would hew for himself a log hut, and thresh for himself a straw bed, before he would live in such; but the builders count safely on tenants' (18 September 1865). It is surely more than mere coincidence that on the same day that PSW was writing to JR, the *Daily Telegraph* published another JR letter (dated 16 October) headed 'Modern Houses', itself prompted by a correspondence to which he would direct PSW's attention (see note 4). JR was responding to 'W.H.W.', whose letter had appeared in the paper the day before, seeking JR's advice for effecting an improvement in modest, middleclass housing. This was the author and civil servant William Hale White, 'Mark Rutherford' (WHW, 1831–1913), for whom PSW would design 19 Park Hill, Carshalton, Surrey (1867–8). They became close friends, JR bringing the two together. 'I am happy to be able to tell you of an

architect, Mr. Philip Webb . . . who will give you perfectly sound and noble work for absolutely just price.' JR to WHW, 27 October 1967. See *White*, p. 41.

4 JR's reply is somewhat equivocal.

'Sincere thanks for your letter. I have no hope in such business myself – but do not choose to discourage others, and it seems to me at least conceivable that a company might be founded for useful & permanent building – and drag on a miserable, but a very honourable and useful existence. Did you see the letters in the Daily Telegraph yesterday and Tuesday or Monday, on this subject.

I expect further communications on the matter, and will write to you again.' JR to PSW, 19 October 1865, *Texas*.

## 5 • To Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 21 May 1866

*Unsigned draft, annotated by SCC '21 May 1866'*

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*

My dear Gabriel.

I am so much obliged by your kind letter,<sup>1</sup> that I think it worth while to run the risk of boring you to explain, that, what you said in it has been carefully read & more carefully considered – let me start by saying that I quite agree with your argument in the abstract, but I cannot think that you would have ~~considered~~<sup>thought</sup> it necessary of application if you had known more of the person to whom it was applied.<sup>2</sup>

Ever since fate was kind enough to make me acquainted with Topsy & through him with Ned, [Madox] Brown & yourself I have always ~~considered~~<sup>thought</sup> that to allow of my being considered as one of such a company, there must be something about ~~such a~~ my mental constitution as mine wh' w<sup>d</sup> excused the seeming disparity.

To a certain extent I have ~~considered~~<sup>thought</sup> the allowance to be this, that ~~I knew~~ I had the capacity of understanding my men, if I could not compete with them.

I am certain that I never made a mistake in judging of either of you – and I am also certain that I know of some men whose work at first sight w<sup>d</sup> seem to lead to the belief that they were deserving of greater attention, but an experience of their ways of thought lead to a certain knowledge of their real incapacity.

Mere flattery would not blind me to defect, for instance [Warington] Taylor was treated by me for a long time in a less kind way than was <sup>his</sup> right on acc<sup>t</sup> of his sweeping praise & blame – and to a certain extent it was you who gave the casting vote to my mind for accepting him as very genuine in his way.<sup>3</sup>

I am quite sure Gabriel that you will agree with me that the present time is not an artistic one, and that any one who wishes to follow ~~it~~<sup>art</sup> with advantage to the world at large and with hope of competing with ~~that~~<sup>art</sup> gone before must be very severe on the liability of disturbance from collateral causes, such as payment, popularity, position &c. None of these are of necessity ruinous to art, but they do often ruin the workman.

In fine Gabriel if I was not so gauche a companion you would know me to be very large-minded with regard to all ability and exceedingly thoughtful of the

unhappiness of those who do not possess it, careful not to give them offence – but in reality irritated beyond measure by presumptuous ignorance & wrongdoing.

Please read this in a good temper & burn it before you are  
in a bad one & believe me, | Yours very truly

V&A, NAL MSL/1958/691/11

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- 1 'Thanks for your good letter most sincerely. I considered you grossly abusive but not in the least unfriendly, which was all right and as it should be between members of a firm headed by Topsy & sentinelled by Taylor.' DGR to PSW, 20 May 1866, *CDGR*, III.
  - 2 Of MMF & Co DGR had written that 'I do not see that our views are best fostered by notorious over-exclusiveness, nor that a gifted and enthusiastic artist who is outside of our circle [*SCC annotation*: 'Whistler'] need be described or thought of as a "blackguard" because we do not exactly agree with his aims or their result, nor even because he does not exactly agree with ours. There are such things as Art-criminals; but, such an one, if intellect and devotion to Art are worth anything, cannot be reckoned among them, whatever his style.'
  - 3 George Warington Taylor (1835–70) was appointed manager of MMF & Co in 1865, a position which he held until his death five years later. His endeavours to place the firm on a sound footing met with some success, although this was predicated on the kind of business discipline to which some of the partners were not likely to be sympathetic. A case has been made for Taylor's role being less crucial than is sometimes claimed, and that WM's own grasp of business competence was already well developed by this time. Jon Press and Charles Harvey, 'William Morris, Warington Taylor and the Firm, 1865–1875', *JWMS*, VII (Autumn 1986), pp. 41–4.

## 6 • To Charles Gore, 22 August 1867

*I, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Aug 22 1867

Sir:<sup>1</sup>

On the behalf of Mr George Howard, I left the plans of the proposed house in Palace gardens at 1 Whitehall Place today, and I explained the peculiarities of arrangement to the Clerk.<sup>2</sup>

I also saw M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne's clerk and arranged that tracings of the plans sh<sup>d</sup> be sent to M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne on Wednesday evening for his approval.<sup>3</sup>

As the building season is far advanced, both M<sup>r</sup> Howard & myself w<sup>d</sup> be much obliged by any assistance of expedition that you could give us in the matter of official assent to the plans.

Should personal explanation be required I will attend in Whitehall, at your request.

I am Sir: | Yours faithfully | Philip Webb: | Arch<sup>t</sup>

The Hon C: H: Gore.

NA CRES 35/21217

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- 1 The Hon. Charles Alexander Gore (1811–97) was Commissioner of Woods and Forests, the government office in Whitehall Place which oversaw the public and commercial interests of the Crown Estate. Approval for any building on Crown property therefore came within his authority.
  - 2 For George Howard, see next letter. In March 1867, he had ‘purchased the lease of the old grace-and-favour residence at No. 1 Palace Green for £1,600. This lease, which was for eight years from 1863, contained a provision that the old house had to be demolished and a new one built at a cost of at least £3,500.’ *Survey of London*, General Editor: F.H.W. Sheppard, XXXVII, *Northern Kensington* (London: The Athlone Press, 1973), p. 185.
  - 3 The neo-classical architect James Pennethorne (1801–71) trained under John Nash and learned drawing from Pugin. Most of his professional work involved government contracts, and he exercised significant influence from 1839 when he was appointed Architect and Surveyor to the Commissioners for Woods and Forests. His advice and recommendations would be sought for building proposals on the Crown Estate. Pennethorne received a knighthood after he retired in 1870.

## 7 • To George Howard, 7 September 1867

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Sep 7 1867

Dear Mr Howard.<sup>1</sup>

After quite unavoidable delay I have this day got tenders for the house in Palace Gardens Kensington. The amounts are tolerably satisfactory – but not quite. They are for total works & everything for use except papering – £6,664.0.0. For hot water supply to all floors with kitchen cooking apparatus grates &c and the Lift from basement to all floors up to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor £272.0.0.

The total sum will be £6,936.0.0. and is within the boundary which at your request I feel myself bound to keep, viz £7,000 but I cannot allow you to suppose that in a work of this size no unforeseen or accidental costs will have to be met – at least £300 ought therefore to be allowed for this and £50 for a temporary clerk of works which brings the total to £7,286.

At your desire upon hearing from you I will go over the quantities and reduce where possible to the amount of £286.

I am afraid that we are likely to suffer further delay on account of Mr Gore or Mr Pennethorne, for one or both of them (I cannot tell which) object to the character of the elevations.<sup>2</sup> Now this I do not think we were led to expect, more especially as I have taken particular pains to avoid anything [*sic*] like obtrusive or erratic design, and I think you know enough of my work to be able to say that it is not likely to err on the side of ostentation. In a letter which, at the request of his Clerk, I sent to Mr Pennethorne who is abroad, I explained the motives of the design and how I had endeavoured to keep the artistic impression of the Palace neighbourhood always in mind subject always to the necessity of a modern difference.

If you could bring any friendly pressure to bear on Mr Gore it would perhaps be advisable to use it, so as to avoid delay as much as possible.<sup>3</sup>

[Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

Howard

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1 George James Howard (GH, 1843–1911), who in 1889 succeeded his uncle as ninth earl of Carlisle, inheriting substantial family estates in Cumberland (Naworth Castle), Northumberland and Yorkshire (Castle Howard), was a regular member of the WM circle in these earlier years. He was a capable landscape painter, and a close friend of EBJ. After his marriage to Rosalind Stanley (1845–1921), daughter of Lord Stanley of Alderley, GH commissioned PSW to build 1 Palace Green, Kensington (1867–70), which was subsequently decorated throughout by MMF & Co. See *Kirk*, pp. 71–4 and 297. PSW also undertook projects for GH's northern estates.

2 Evidently, PSW had heard word that the plans were being challenged. Pennethorne (who was on holiday in Switzerland) had written to Gore with his initial reactions, setting the tone for an increasingly personal dispute between two architects of fundamentally different outlooks, and which has been aptly described as epitomising 'the passing of an age'. See Geoffrey Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), p. 305.

'I have looked at the plans & elevations proposed by M<sup>r</sup> Webb for Mr Howard's House at Kensington but am very unwilling to report officially upon them until you have had an opportunity to consider them.

The plans could not be reported on because only two floors are shewn – and though the arrangements are more for M<sup>r</sup> Howard than for the Office I may observe that the Dining Room is small – and the Stable yard so narrow I doubt if a carriage could be turned in it: and it might be more convenient and less objectionable to M<sup>r</sup> Huth if the Stables were turned to the North end.

The Elevations as drawn are almost unintelligible, but I am quite certain that the House if built according to them would be far inferior to any one on the Estate – it would look most commonplace – and in my opinion be perfectly hideous – it is probably intended for dutch or german but is unsuitable for London. The plain wall of the Stables and the Terrace above them would both be objected to by M<sup>r</sup> Huth.' Pennethorne to Gore, 31 August 1867, *NA CRES 35/21217*. Henry Huth (1815–78) and his wife, Augusta Westenholz, would be the Howards' immediate neighbours, having bought 2 Palace Green, the house built for William Makepeace Thackeray, after the novelist's death in 1863.

3 'I have this morning heard from Mr Webb that there is some delay in sanctioning the plans for our house in Kensington Palace gardens; I can not understand the reason for this as the design is extremely simple and purposely designed to harmonise with the palace opposite; I thought that the only stipulation that the Crown made, was that the house should be well and substantially built and over the value of £3000; now the building of this will cost £6000 and Mr Webb's building is known to be exceptionally solid and good. If I had not understood that I was free to have a different design from that of the neighbouring houses (since it will be a detached house) I should not have bought the ground.

The house will look most unobtrusive, it's only peculiarity being that it will be built of red brick & with a gable roof.' GH to Gore, 8 September 1867, *NA CRES 35/21217*. GH's father, the MP for East Cumberland, Charles Howard (1814–79), also wrote to Gore a few days later, concerned that approval was still awaited, but Gore defended his adviser for not yet having provided an official report on them. 'If M<sup>r</sup> Webb had sent these plans before everybody was scattered about, M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne's report would come to me sooner, but it seems to me not quite reasonable that because M<sup>r</sup> Webb takes several months to prepare plans, M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne is to be considered as obstructive, if his Report upon them is not made in as many days. M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne's duty with reference to plans for buildings proposed to be built on Crown Property is a very responsible one. He has



to regard the effect upon the Crown Estate, the effect upon the Crown Lessees adjoining and in the case of the Kensington Garden Estate, the effect upon the Palace itself.' Gore to Charles Howard, 12 September 1867, *NA CRES 35/21217*.

## 8 • To Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 24 September 1867

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Sep 24 1867

My dear Gabriel.

I fully understand the evils of your situation & will do all I can to help you out of them.

I am sorry to say that I am out of town on Sunday and have business engagements on Thursday but if tomorrow (Wednesday) or Saturday – both days before 3. oclock <sup>or at any time on Friday</sup> would suit you I could come up to Chelsea, & talk the matter over? As you have a good memory anything instructive wh' I may say you can report to Brown.

Unless under some extraordinary private arrangement, you would have to pay the builder in instalments. Say of half the amount, during the progress of the work, & the balance, 3 months after completion – and as for my energies in the business, they will be more likely <sup>to be</sup> employed in keeping him <sup>(the builder)</sup> from cheating you than you from making him a fool.

I have not been into your stable at all.<sup>1</sup> Let me know what you can do in the way of appointment.

Yours ever | Philip Webb:

*Texas*

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<sup>1</sup> For renovations done for DGR at 16 Cheyne Walk, including to the stable, see below, Letter 44, note 1.

## 9 • To H. Perkins, 3 October 1867 [possibly *W Perkins?*]

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Oct 3 1867

Dear Sir:<sup>1</sup>

Since your call upon me this morning, I have carefully considered the matter of your proposition that the works of M<sup>r</sup> Howard's house in Palace Gardens should be begun at once – leaving the questions, of “mere details” to be settled between the “Woods & Forests” and my client & myself at some later time.<sup>2</sup>

I'm very sorry that I cannot assent to this, for it would seriously compromise my client's interests, as I think I explained to you this morning, that the very reasons

which induced my client to purchase the lease of site, would make it very unwise on his part to enter into an agreement, which – quite possibly – would negative his purposes.

I am Sir, Yours truly | Philip Webb:

H: Perkins Esq:

*NA CRES 35/21217*

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1 Perkins was presumably an official within the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, who on Charles Gore's instruction had seen PSW in James Pennethorne's absence abroad. See above, Letter 7, note 2.

2 On 12 October, Pennethorne sent an internal memorandum to Gore, summing up his objections to PSW's plans for 1 Palace Green:

'In my opinion M<sup>r</sup> Huth might not have any legal or equitable right to object to the house if so built; but as, according to my judgment, the enjoyment of his house would be lessened by the erection of so unsightly an Elevation near it is important that his interests should be borne in mind.

So far as I understand the drawings there would be scarcely any stone visible in the fronts of the house, the whole of the surfaces would be masses of red brickwork without relief from stone or from any important strings or cornices and I fear that such a house with its high roof and gable towards the Road (the drawing for which I do not understand) would be far inferior in appearance to other houses upon the Estate; would be objected to generally by the Crown Lessees, and may hereafter become a difficulty in the event of large additions being made to Kensington Palace.'

*NA CRES 35/21217.*

## 10 • To James Pennethorne, 18 October 1867

1 Raymond Buildings | Gray's Inn London.

Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 1867

Dear M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> and to express my regret that you are still suffering from your severe attack of illness.<sup>1</sup>

If you had not so fully expressed yourself with regard to the design for M<sup>r</sup> George Howard's house in Palace Gardens, I would have at once come to Worcester Park with the hope of hastening the settlement of the business,<sup>2</sup> so as to save M<sup>r</sup> Howard from any further serious loss of time.

It is not customary for an Architect to be forced to explain to a gentleman of the same profession, what he may consider to be the merits of his own work, and I would have gladly refused the office at once, did I not hope to assist my client by the apology.

M<sup>r</sup> Howard has been allowed to purchase the site in question, without so much as a hint that the disgracefully heterogeneous forms and colours of the greater number of houses in Palace Gardens, would have to be followed in one form or another in new and more carefully considered work; or that the various crude

ideas of the uninformed inhabitants of the district would have to be considered by an architect who was desirous of attending to the really artistic character of the neighbourhood.

As an Architect who has given much and careful attention to the subject of house building in London, I must decidedly disagree with you, that the proper proportioned window opening which I have used, fitted with well-divided sashes, is an “unattractive” form; – Sir C: Wren, Sir J: Vanburgh, H: Hawksmoor, T: Ripley and many other Architects of acknowledged artistic power, who constantly used the form; and from hundreds of examples in London now existing – visibly with great simplicity & breadth of effect – support me in my opinion; and I am perfectly satisfied that for most purposes of modern convenience whether of light, ventilation, internal fittings or facility of construction, there is no form of window so suitable for English town architecture.

I must also beg to differ from your opinion that the materials used would not give the proper relief. A well chosen full coloured red brick, with pure bright red gauged brick mouldings, arches, string courses, cornices &c with the addition of white Portland stone, whiter sash-frames, lead, and grey slates, are in my opinion the very best and most harmoniously coloured materials to be used in London, & more specially in a neighbourhood so happily full of green foliage; and again, the many existing examples of work of this kind done by the above mentioned Architects, and remaining to us with a perfectly delightful effect through years of accumulated soot and dirt, give me most faithful support, even if modern carelessness and ignorance of this subject did not daily testify to the soundness of my opinion.

In conclusion, I must express my great surprise that you should consider it worth your while to hinder the erection of a building, which – whatever may be its demerits – possesses some character and originality, tempered most certainly with reverential attention to the works of acknowledged masters of the art of Architecture, and as certainly framed with the wish to avoid <sup>adding</sup> another insult to this irreparably injured neighbourhood.

A copy of your letter shall be sent to M<sup>r</sup> Howard, and I will not in any way advise him to hinder his most necessary business, by persisting in requiring the assistance of an Architect whose work seems to be so likely to cause delay.<sup>3</sup>

Believe me to be | Yours very faithfully | Philip Webb:

James Pennethorne Esq

*NA CRES 35/21217*

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1 ‘Mr Gore has returned to me your Drawings for M<sup>r</sup> Howard’s House at Kensington, with a request that I would see you upon the subject.

I regret to say that I am forbidden by my medical advisers to go to London for some time hence; but should you think it necessary to come here I shall be most happy to see you at any time.

I believe you are aware I have expressed to M<sup>r</sup> Gore a very strong opinion that the exterior of the house if built according to the design submitted would not be suitable to the locality – it would not

assimilate with others built of late years on the Estate; it would probably be very dissimilar to any buildings hereafter erected should Kensington Palace be enlarged, and, above all, it would I fear be objected to by M<sup>r</sup> Huth, and the other Crown tenants of Houses on the Estate.

My objections to the Design are perhaps, not so much to the style (though that I think unsuitable) as to the fact of the whole house being a mass of red without relief of any kind; the windows small & the forms not attractive; - the gable also of the roof towards the road would not I think produce a good effect.' Pennethorne to PSW, 16 October 1867, *NA CRES 35/21217*.

2 Pennethorne lived at Worcester Park House, Long Ditton, in Malden, Surrey.

3 On receipt of this letter, Pennethorne wrote to Gore. 'Considering the tone and purport of M<sup>r</sup> Webb's letter it appears to me hopeless to expect any good result from an interview, or from communications between us; and it only occurs to me to propose to you to follow one of two courses - viz:- First - To submit the drawings with the letters of M<sup>r</sup> Webb and myself to some impartial professional Man of high standing, and to be guided by his opinion - such a course has been pursued on former occasions: - the only one that at present occurs to me is the Convent in Osnaburgh Street the drawings for which (prepared by M<sup>r</sup> Butterfield) I objected to; though, on the advice of M<sup>r</sup> Hardwick, they were approved by the Board. M<sup>r</sup> Burn, M<sup>r</sup> Donaldson, <sup>Mr Salvin</sup> or M<sup>r</sup> T. Wyatt are names I would suggest for your consideration. The second course would be for you to act entirely upon your own judgment after having requested M<sup>r</sup> Huth to look at the drawings with reference to his own interests'. 23 October 1867, *NA CRES 35/21217*.

## 11 • To George Howard, 22 October 1867

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Oct 22 1867*

Dear Mr Howard.

In answer to your letter of the 20<sup>th</sup> - I would advise you not to consider the matter of the Palace Gardens site a hopeless affair.

It was absolutely necessary for political purposes that I should write Mr Pennethorne that most heartrendingly affecting letter of which I sent you a copy; and it would not have been quite reasonable in me to have settled upon a design for a client, if I did not think it at the time worth fighting for: - I also considered, and now consider, that I have reason on my side.

It would be wise I think to take it for granted that we shall not be able to begin building until next Spring, and that we shall thus have the winter in which to be able to make up our minds as to what we can modify, and what stand by in the design; and by a little patient pertinacity make our opponents as tired of us, as we are of them.<sup>1</sup>

I am not at all afraid of making alterations in the design, which may not injure the fundamental principles - and I have already made another drawing for the large window in the studio, the former design of which was so emphatically condemned.<sup>2</sup>

I shall be at home on Monday next at 11 oc & ready to talk over, & explain anything, which you may require to know.

[Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

- 1 Minded to follow Pennethorne's suggestion to consult another architect (see previous letter, note 3), Gore wrote to GH on 25 October to say that he was 'willing to submit the Drawings with the Correspondence that has passed upon the subject to M<sup>r</sup> Burn or M<sup>r</sup> Salvin', whereupon GH requested that a second architect, to be proposed by himself ('either M<sup>r</sup> Street, M<sup>r</sup> Bodley or M<sup>r</sup> Butterfield') should also be consulted, as 'I believe that it is usual in any case of arbitration for each party to name its professional referee and this course seems to me the more necessary in the present case, as professional differences of opinion on the most fundamental subjects are known to be so strong'. GH to Gore, 29 October 1867, *NA CRES 35/21217*. Gore acted quickly to clarify the position. 'I have no desire to refer the question to another Architect. There is no question of Arbitration. Plans of Buildings upon the Property of the Crown in London must be approved by me, and it was solely with a friendly view & to shew you I was not an obstructive, that, contrary to practice, I expressed a readiness to consult either Mr Burns or Mr Salvin, as impartial and competent judges, upon the disputed question'. Gore to GH, 31 October 1867, *NA CRES 35/21217*.
- 2 Gore evidently felt that matters could be resolved, if only PSW were prepared to be more forthcoming and amenable to compromise. 'Mr Webb had better go and see Mr Pennethorne and take with him the amended Plan of your intended House, and give such explanations as may be necessary to make it intelligible. I shall be very glad if the altered Plan and Mr Webb's explanation succeed in removing Mr Pennethorne's reasonable objections. Mr Pennethorne in his letter to Mr Webb suggested an interview, which Mr Webb in his answer declined, in terms which your own observation will best know how to characterize.' Gore to GH, 31 October 1867. Accompanied by GH, PSW did meet Pennethorne on 11 November, and showed the new window design in the east elevation, but refused to make other changes: 'M<sup>r</sup> Webb maintained that his designs are perfect, and such as would have been proposed by Sir Christopher Wren or Inigo Jones if they had lived at the present day: and he thought the objections I had stated arose from my inability to appreciate them. M<sup>r</sup> Howard approves of M<sup>r</sup> Webb's design and wishes to have the house built accordingly because it would be entirely of red brick; and he considers that before he purchased the lease he had obtained your verbal consent to use that material. I explained to M<sup>r</sup> Howard that the term "Red Brick House" did not imply commonplace forms built entirely of brick, and without any relief, but rather such buildings as the Admiralty or Marlborough House should he prefer that style: or Hampton Court Palace and many other country houses should he prefer a style of the time of Henry the 8<sup>th</sup>, Elizabeth or James 1<sup>st</sup>.' Pennethorne to Gore, 18 November 1867, *NA CRES 35/21217*. Gore now informed GH that he would submit the plans and correspondence to Anthony Salvin (1799–1881), 'whose eminence as an Architect will be a justification to me to abide by his opinion upon the subject in dispute'. 19 November 1867, *NA CRES 35/12127*. Salvin asked that he might consider the case jointly with Thomas Henry Wyatt (1807–80), but any sense of independence in their brief report is flawed by its close dependence upon Pennethorne's initial criticisms. 'It will probably be sufficient, as a guide to you in dealing with this question, if we state our belief that in their present state the Elevations could not be considered pleasing in composition, or satisfactory in their relation to the locality, & to the other Buildings on the Crown Estate. We agree with Mr Pennethorne in thinking that "they would be objected to generally by the Crown Lessees" that "the design submitted is not suited to the locality; it would not assimilate with others built of late years on the Estate; it would probably be very dissimilar to any Buildings hereafter erected there (whether Kensington Palace be enlarged or not)" and we are prepared to share Mr Pennethorne's responsibility in advising you not to approve this Design.' Salvin and Wyatt to Gore, 9 December 1867, *NA CRES 35/12127*. Gore sent the report to GH, and turned down PSW designs. GH's response was to ask for clarity as to the reasons for refusal. 'I could then ask M<sup>r</sup> Webb to consider the possibility of designing a house subject to the given conditions. I can only regret that those conditions were not stated to me before the purchasing of the land; I then stated my intention to you of building a red brick house designed by M<sup>r</sup> Webb different in character from the ordinary model of London builders houses.' GH to Gore, 16 December 1867, *NA CRES 35/12127*. See below, Letter 13.

**12 • To George Price Boyce, 20 December 1867**

*Annotated:* ‘rec<sup>d</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> 20 67.’<sup>1</sup>

*I, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,  
Friday*

My dear Boyce

I knocked at your door with the hope of being able to give you half an hour’s chat, good for convalescence as Wells<sup>2</sup> had just then said by letter that you were getting better after a severe touch of illness – but did not say that you were not at Chatham Place.<sup>3</sup>

I shall hope soon to see you at work again or hear that you are gone into the country to make hay where there is a possibility of sunshine.

In spite of an exhibition I enjoyed your pictures at the W: C<sup>o</sup>:<sup>4</sup> – Was it not a “Bradley” who did some teams of horses (or oxen) last year that were interesting?<sup>5</sup>

If it was the same man he has not done so well this.

I am trying to screw up my courage to go & hear the great “Chorale” at Sidenham [*sic*] tomorrow.<sup>6</sup> I do not know whether you know it well enough to hum it to your toes in bed.

Let me know that you are better. | Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45354, ff. 3-4*

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1 GPB often recorded the date of a letter’s receipt.

2 The portrait painter, Henry Tanworth Wells (1828–1903) married GPB’s sister, Joanna Mary Boyce (1831–61), in 1857. She had herself been a painter. Wells was a staunch defender of the Royal Academy and its traditions, and would act as Sir Frederic Leighton’s occasional deputy as President during 1895.

3 See above, Letter 3, note 2.

4 The sixth winter exhibition of the Old Water-Colour Society had opened at the end of November, *The Times* (28 November) noting several works by GPB: ‘his small drawing of “Hay-carting at Arisaig”, his autumn study in Wotton-woods [*Tate Gallery, London*], his moonlight view of San Giorgio, Venice, and his “Deserted Colliery, near Durham”, all show that characteristic quality of sweet and solemn calm and fine sensibility to the harmonies of subdued colour which give this painter a place high and apart, in spite of his systematic indifference to grace of line, amounting almost to defiance of the accepted practice of composition.’

5 *The Times* reviewer concluded with praise for two pastel drawings by Basil Bradley (1842–1904), ‘one of the most recently elected associates of the Society.’

6 On 21 December, Beethoven’s ninth Symphony (the ‘Choral’) was given at Crystal Palace, Sydenham, under its musical director, August Manns (1825–1907).

### 13 • To George Howard, 17 January 1868

1 Raymond Buildings Gray's Inn | London  
Jan<sup>y</sup> 17. 1868

Dear Mr Howard

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your note, enclosing a letter from M<sup>r</sup> Gore to you, with a copy of Mess<sup>rs</sup> Salvin & Wyatt's second report on my design for your house.<sup>1</sup>

The following are the only remarks I can make on this most unjustifiable obstruction.

I do not see why Mess<sup>rs</sup> Salvin & Wyatt should wrest your remark, of the site being overlooked, to a complaint on your part, that light was difficult to be obtained.

Mess<sup>rs</sup> Salvin & Wyatt commence with saying that “we find it difficult to define portions which appear to us objectionable, when the whole composition has in our eyes little to recommend it” and finish with “we have however, the satisfaction of knowing that M<sup>r</sup> Webb may without any interference with his general plan, and with little if any addition to the contemplated expenditure, meet the objections we have raised”[;] this, with a former regret that it was possibly on the “score of economy” that some of what was objectionable in their eyes, existed in the design, is to say the least, a strange effort of criticism.

That the ordinary mercantile Architect does design his elevations without reference to the plan, to escape labour, & please the ignorant, can be no excuse to a man who takes an artistic interest in his work.

That Mess<sup>rs</sup> Salvin & Wyatt are “unable to discover what actual style or period of Architecture” I have used, I take to be a sincere compliment, as the greater number of existing houses in Palace Gardens have their origin fairly written on their faces, though it is a question whether their fathers would be pleased with the likeness.

I distinctly deny that the parapet to the bay window on East elevation, is fantastic in the sense used by Mess<sup>rs</sup> Salvin & Wyatt. That it has some fancy or fantasy of design about it I will allow, and that in that position a most delightful effect has been gained in all ages by an extra allowance of imagination I can prove; and in fact, throughout the elevations the simple forms of decoration suited to the material, are all legitimately derived from admired examples, subject to the necessary adaptation to make them mine, & fit for the time & place.

I would willingly – to help you out of the trap, in which you have been most unreasonably caught – re-design the whole of the house, were I not certain, that

if the new design possessed any character & proper simplicity it would be again objected to by Mess<sup>rs</sup> Pennethorne[,] Salvin & Wyatt – but, if M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne will consider his objections sufficiently attended to, and that I have bowed low enough to his superior knowledge of the art: First, by redesigning the chimnies [*sic*] above the parapet (2) by broadening the pilasters of the parapet to 14" instead of 9" (3) by putting stone moulded sills to the windows instead of brick & tile, (4) by ~~arranging~~ carrying round the East and North elevations, at the level of base of drawing room bay & balcony, a stone moulded string (5) by adding broad pilasters to East wall of stables (6) and by redesigning the Entrance Porch with more ornamental stonework – I will so do at your request.<sup>2</sup>

Believe me Dear Sir: | Yours very faithfully | Philip Webb:  
George Howard, Esq<sup>re</sup>

*NA CRES 35/3106*

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1 GH having asked for more details as to the rejection of PSW's designs of 1 Palace Green (see above Letter 11, note 2), Gore asked Pennethorne to consult further with Salvin and Wyatt and seek amplification. They met on 3 January 1868, and submitted a report, the substance of which Gore communicated to GH ten days later.

'With regard to a remark in one of the letters that "the peculiarities of the ground are so great rights of light &c interfering in all directions that much of the peculiarity of the design may be attributable to the necessities of the situation" we feel that it would be very difficult to find a site in London in which fewer difficulties on the score of light or level actually exist, Light being really obtainable on all 4 sides. . . .

Dealing with the Elevations, we find it difficult to detail portions which appear to us objectionable when the whole composition has in our eyes so little to recommend it. We are unable to discern what actual style or period of Architecture M<sup>r</sup> Webb has sought to adopt. We think the combination of Square, Circular & Segmental forms for the windows & pointed arches for doors & recesses unusual & objectionable. The upper portion of the Bay window on East front appears fantastic, unpleasing, and unnecessary. The window of Drawing room on North front in which the principal attempt of Ornament has been centred, presents to us a most unfortunate & unpleasing combination of forms. We think the recess in North Elevation might be made a very pleasing & effective feature, but as treated, with the 2 Circular windows & pointed arch over the recess, we feel it to be much the reverse.

We think the Pilasters on upper storey & on the Chimney Stacks, rising from a projecting string course are not satisfactory. They are thin & poor. The very long one on the Chimney shaft in North Elevation we think especially so. We feel that the Chimnies, from the absence of sufficient base & from the poverty of their upper members, have a very meagre effect.

We think the large surface of unbroken wall on East Elevation, most unpleasing & unnecessary. We regret the necessity (if on the score of economy such exists) of so large a mass of Brickwork without any relief of color or stonework on its surface, but for the Window Sills at least we hold stone to be essential.

It is to us a matter of regret to have to express opinions so adverse to this Design, but as you have sought our candid opinion we have no alternative. We have however the satisfaction of knowing that M<sup>r</sup> Webb may without any interference with his general Plan & with little, if any addition to the contemplated expenditure, meet the objections we have raised.' Salvin and Wyatt to Gore, 3 January 1868, *NA CRES 35/3106*.

2 'I beg to enclose M<sup>r</sup> Webb's letter to me in answer to the report of Mess Salvin and Wyatt; the general objections of those gentlemen to the whole appearance and style of the design are so strongly



expressed that I fear any new design by M<sup>r</sup> Webb would be equally objectionable to them; but you will see that M<sup>r</sup> Webb proposes to introduce six important alterations in those parts of the design which do not affect the proportion or construction of the house.’ GH to Gore, 18 January 1868, *NA CRES 35/3106*. ‘If M<sup>r</sup> Webb would have the goodness to submit to you fresh drawings for the three Elevations I could give an opinion upon them, and could if necessary consult Mess<sup>rs</sup> Salvin & Wyatt – and it is to be hoped that he will see the prudence and propriety of doing so – for upon verbal description only I could not recommend you to approve of any design.’ Pennethorne to Gore, 21 January 1868, *NA CRES 35/3106*.

## 14 • To George Howard, 18 February 1868

1 Raymond Buildings Gray’s Inn | London.  
Feb<sup>y</sup> 18 1868

Dear M<sup>r</sup> Howard

The new Elevations to your house are now ready to be sent into Mr Gore.<sup>1</sup>

I have spared no pains in endeavouring to remove from the designs anything which would be likely to incur M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne’s disapproval, and also in adding such features as would make the building more attractive to him and the general public. I have been aided in this matter by the advice of an Architect of great reputation with whom I was not before personally acquainted.

On the East Elevation, I have raised and broadened the porch, and added a considerable amount of carved decoration.

To the bay window an attached shaft cap & base has been put to support the bracket, the parapet altered and finished with pierced panels, instead of the engrailed outline as before.

To the Studio the window has been redesigned & set in a more ornamental gable of diapered brick & stone.

On the North Elevation – the recess against back stairs has been fitted with couplet windows & pilasters running up to support the springing of vault & the vault is now thrown over the recess from the staircase wall to the back of front wall – i.e. from the South to the North, instead of from East to West as before.

The buttress pilaster to chimney has been stopped at the gable, & narrow double pilasters substituted from the parapet coping upwards – the exposed portion of this gable has also been disposed as that on the East Elevation.

The Drawing room window looking north has been modified and a considerable amount of ornamentation added.

A broad band of stone, in combination with moulded sills & large string course and a massive stone moulded plinth have been run round both sides of the house, and bracketed stone moulded sills have been substituted for brick & tile to the bedroom windows.

The chimney caps have been finished with stone moulded strings & gabled hoods.

In fine both the Elevations have been much enriched, and I have taken particular care to tint the different materials in such a way that no mistake can be made as to their variety.<sup>2</sup>

You will of course not be surprised to learn that the above alterations & additions will cost a very considerable sum over and above the 7,000£ of the lowest tender, though I can assure you that I have tried to keep the cost as low as possible, but unless external decoration is of the ordinary stupid pretentious kind, it costs a good deal of money.<sup>3</sup>

If you will kindly send your letter to me I will forward it with the drawings to M<sup>r</sup> Gore at once.

Believe me Dear M<sup>r</sup> Howard | Yours very faithfully | Philip Webb:  
George Howard Esq<sup>re</sup>

*NA CRES 35/3106*

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1 'I beg to enclose a letter of M<sup>r</sup> Webb's together with fresh elevations for my proposed house at Kensington. I hope that these new designs will be approved of by M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne as the proposed alterations will add considerably to the former estimated expense of my house.' GH to Gore, 14 February 1868, *NA CRES 35/3106*.

2 'The drawings now under consideration do not shew any radical change of design but only a few extra embellishments, and as it is now clear nothing will ever convert the original into a good design, it appears to me necessary either to require M<sup>r</sup> Howard to abandon it altogether, or to permit him to proceed to build according to these new drawings, and this latter alternative under the circumstances I would submit to you as to be preferred – because M<sup>r</sup> Howard has already been greatly delayed and annoyed (though by fault of his own Architect), – the building as regards expenditure will meet the requirements of the Agreement – and (except that you refrain from using stringently your compulsory powers) you will have done all within your means to secure the building of a respectable House.

... [T]hough I have proposed to you to approve it, I would, if you should be pleased to act on this suggestion, submit to your consideration the propriety of requiring still further improvement in two of the details. First, I think the rubbed arches over all the windows should be made double the width they are shown by the drawings, and secondly that the main cornice which runs along above the heads of the Chamber windows should be of stone at least 18" in depth, and with a projection of about 18". Pennethorne to Gore, 27 February 1868, *NA CRES 35/3106*.

3 'The alterations from M<sup>r</sup> Webb's original design as proposed by these amended Elevations are enumerated in his letter, and it does not appear to me necessary to remark on them seriatim – but, with reference to his statement that "the alterations and additions will cost a very considerable sum over and above the £7000 of the lowest tender", I would observe that the additional cost occasioned by these changes ought not to be considerable; and that although the total cost to be incurred by M<sup>r</sup> Howard will be equal to his Agreement, the decoration work of the exterior will be much less than usual for the class of House.' Pennethorne to Gore, 27 February 1868.

## 15 • To George Howard, 3 March 1868

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Mar 3 1868*

Dear Mr Howard.

I am sorry that I could not send you the following information before; but I have been much pressed with work the last few days.

With regard to 1<sup>st</sup> requirement of Mr Gore's letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> of February.<sup>1</sup>

"Mr Webb will not object to modify the arches of windows as there required – that is – to double the thickness of those arches which on the last submitted elevations only show to be one course.

"Mr Webb is much surprised at the second requirement, which is that 'the main cornice which runs above the heads of the chamber windows is to be of stone at least 18 inches in depth and with a projection of about 18 inches.'

"Mr Webb cannot conceive it possible that the elevations should have been carefully examined; or such an incongruous detail would not have been specified.

"The chief feature in the design is the gauged brick band or string course in combination with the pilasters of parapet – & Mr Webb has been most careful in the altered elevations not to impair or destroy this most necessary feature, or damage the surface of colour, which the material would give; and he is satisfied that, no person desirous of injuring the design and bringing ridicule upon the architect, could have hit upon a more successful idea than that of substituting the stone cornice specified.

"Mr Webb therefore declines to accede to the above requirement on the grounds that no Architect who is worthy of the name, will allow his work to be mutilated by irresponsible hands; & he is decidedly of opinion, that the arbitrary rule of another professional man in such a matter of detail – even if he should happen to be a man of genius – would not tend to improve the work of any architect who has taken pains to make his design a consistent whole."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps you might follow up here with your surprise &ct & about the concessions made by you in regard to cost & by me in design, being entitled to more respect, and that the risk of the exposure of a great scandal with so palpably gross an assertion of right & the probable withdrawal of Mr Webb from the unequal contest, with certainty of intense annoyance, great delay, & loss of money as a consequence would be scarcely repaid by the pleasure another architect would have in seeing his own handiwork on the design.<sup>3</sup>

Please do not hesitate to cut I hope & alter in any way that you may fancy and believe me

[Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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1 See previous letter, note 2.

2 'To the second requirement . . . [Mr Webb] is altogether unable to accede, as it would completely destroy the effect of the elevation in his eyes. . . . I can only say that I agree entirely in M<sup>r</sup> Webb's objections, and was of the same opinion before I heard his strong objections. If you insist upon this condition the whole process will certainly have to be given up as the introduction of the stone cornice into the present designs is impossible. I hope however that you may give your consent to the plans without this concession, as M<sup>r</sup> Webb has spared no pains in altering his original plans and in modifying them very considerably to secure their adoption, while I shall have to make considerable

sacrifices in money to meet the increased cost which the alterations necessitate.’ GH to Gore, 6 March 1868, *NA CRES 35/3106*. Upon Pennethorne’s further advice, that ‘Mr Webb appears to forget that having regard to the Agreement he is not in a position to *accede* to anything, but that you have the power to compel compliance with the conditions named’ (Pennethorne to Gore, 18 March 1868, *NA CRES 35/3106*), Gore wrote again to GH, reaffirming that his agreement was conditional upon the need for a stone cornice.

- 3 GH responded to Gore by stating that PSW was ‘unable on this condition to continue the undertaking’, and complained that although the eight objections raised in the report made by Salvin and Wyatt had been met, approval was still being withheld, due to the ‘prejudice’ of Pennethorne. ‘[I]nstead of obtaining your assent we were met by a fresh demand which we consider entirely inadmissible. I must say that such a course as this seems to have been dictated rather by professional animosity than by a spirit of just and impartial criticism.’ GH to Gore, 22 March 1868, *NA CRES 35/3106*. He sought William Butterfield’s assistance, although in the circumstances it was an approach unlikely to succeed. ‘Since I wrote to you yesterday, I have ascertained that M<sup>r</sup> Butterfield will not undertake to design any plans for my house at Kensington Palace Gardens; he refused for two reasons. First, because he considers that Mr Webb (who is no personal friend of his) has had a great injustice done to him, and is therefore unwilling to take his place. Secondly, because he is unwilling to place his work under the control of M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne’s taste after seeing the way in which it has been exercised. You will observe I am thus placed in a position of peculiar hardship, as I am unable to obtain your consent to the plans which have been made – modified as they are according to the suggestions of your advisers, and in consequence of this refusal of yours and of the treatment of Mr Webb, I am unable to secure the assistance of an excellent architect for the designing of new ones.’ GH to Gore, 23 March 1868, *NA CRES 35/3106*.

## 16 • To Thomas Henry Wyatt, 28 March 1868

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,  
March 28 1868*

Sir:

(M<sup>r</sup> Howard’s House Ken<sup>a</sup> Pal Gardens)

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this morning.<sup>1</sup>

I shall be very willing to meet you with the hope of bringing (what you reasonably call) “this most disagreeable matter” to a conclusion.<sup>2</sup>

I will come with the drawings to G<sup>t</sup> Russell St on Monday at 11.45.<sup>3</sup>

Yours truly | Philip Webb:

T:H: Wyatt Esq

*NA CRES 35/3106*

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1 In a final effort to resolve the disagreement, and responding to GH’s heartfelt sense of injustice (see previous letter, note 3), Gore once more asked Salvin and Wyatt to advise on the remaining matter of the stone cornice.

2 ‘M<sup>r</sup> Salvin will not be in town for some time & in the hope of aiding to bring this disagreeable matter to a practical, if not satisfactory conclusion, I will waive my own feelings & propose an interview. . . . As however I believe that the only difficult now existing may be met

[by] a few minutes conversation, I am ready to make the attempt.' Wyatt to PSW, 28 March 1868, *Howard*.

- 3 Thanks more to Wyatt's pragmatism than to PSW's willingness to compromise further, the two men met on 30 March and finally reached agreement over the revised designs for 1 Palace Green:

'I gather from the correspondence which was sent from your office that the only point now at issue is the material of the cornice. In asking for stone, I conclude that M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne's principal object was to ensure greater solidity of construction & perfect protection from injury to the upper part of this projecting feature; & though as a matter of color & taste he would probably prefer a rich colored stone to the monotony of the red brick (a feeling which is shared by M<sup>r</sup> Salvin & myself) yet as both M<sup>r</sup> Howard & M<sup>r</sup> Webb are particularly anxious to retain the Brick Cornice, & as there is abundant authority for this material in cornices, I venture to advise that you should sanction such a cornice merely stipulating that M<sup>r</sup> Pennethorne should be satisfied as to the solidity & safety of its construction prior to the Lease being granted.

M<sup>r</sup> Webb would then have to bear (as the Architect always should) the whole responsibility on the score of taste and propriety.

I enclose a Section shewing the description of Cornice M<sup>r</sup> Webb proposes to erect. He will adopt any suggestions which may be thought necessary to ensure strength and safety in its construction, & the whole of the Cornice & the wall above will be executed in cement.

I trust that your concession will relieve you from further correspondence & misunderstanding on this very troublesome matter.' Wyatt to Gore, 31 1868, *NA CCRES 35/3106*. With a resolution achieved, the builders moved on site on 8 June, the contract having been awarded to Richard Ashby & Sons. The existing grace and favour house had first to be demolished. 'The poor old house was very rotten – but I have saved such things as would be possible to reuse as memorials.' PSW to GH, July 1868, *Howard*.

## 17 • To George Warrington Taylor, 27 July 1868

*Draft?*

July 27, 1868

Dear T.

I am delighted to hear that you had a nice interview with Gabriel – he is – if he chooses – very straightforward and his intellect is very keen and I take it for granted you were sure of what he was saying at the time, from the character of your letter to me.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to your reversionary interest in the property I can speak less comfortably.<sup>2</sup> I think you know pretty well my ideas on the subject, viz. <sup>that</sup> the attempt to guide by trustee or will the channel into wh' it shall finally flow is a fal[l]acy and I have the strongest dislike to preaching one doctrine & practicing the opposite. I would say appoint your solicitor in the will to see to the carrying out of it and then let the matter rest – but I am sure that there <sup>are</sup> many men who would consider this absurd – Gabriel perhaps among the number – therefore I shall not be at all surprised at your not considering my opinion worth much. And I myself have a sufficiently low estimate of its value – but that would be no reason for my going against my settled convictions however poor they may be.

By this preamble you will I suspect make ready to be offended at my refusing to be a trustee as you propose, and I can only hope that you may make an exception

to treating me with the contempt which is sure to find me out at the tail end of a friendship. I can only say that I am not quite light hearted at thus refusing your request

If possible – Believe me | yours ever | Philip Webb.

*V&A, NAL MSL/1958/691/79*

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- 1 'What a splendid woman she has been to me all through. What might she not have done – & with right too – never was there a woman so damnably ill-treated as she was by me. . . . Gabriel has told me rightly what I was – he has hit me so hard. How rightly he summed me up. He never was so splendid as on Friday when he told me what he thought of it all, & what a damned scoundrel I was. And now after all this she takes me back again.' Warrington Taylor to PSW, 26 July 1868, *V&A, NAL MSL/1958/691/77*.
- 2 'Once more I appeal to you. Will you be a trustee – & I wish to ask also William Rossetti as a man of truth & also my solicitors Cookson & Wainwright. If I had really ever given any thought to the matter I should have seen the idiocy [*sic*] of leaving a lovely woman sole trustee to her own property throwing her open to every designing villain in the world. Therefore now this must if possible be changed & may I once more ask you to take the work. You know why I trust in you but you always forbid me having confidence in you!' SCC later commented of Warrington Taylor's marriage that 'This truly remarkable man married a girl out of an eel pie shop in Bristol. He was devoted to her & much tragedy resulted therefrom'. SCC to WRL, 2 August 1915 *BL Add* 52731, f. 117.

## 18 • To Charles Augustus Howell, 17 October 1868

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Oct 17 1868

My dear Howell<sup>1</sup>

It would be very nice to get some tiles done in a genuine way by others than the British workman<sup>2</sup> but as it would be difficult to arrange matters by letter would it not be better for us to meet & talk over the matter. – 'tis true we should have to undergo the horror of seeing you but perhaps you could put up with this for once?

The bestial drawings belong to Top, but I don't mean to let him have them except for use by the firm, as they are not fit for anything<sup>else</sup> than rude decorative purposes.<sup>3</sup> The question seems to us to be, for first to get specimens of work from manufacturers and then order so many for the shop, giving you some for your trouble – if this would not add to it. But more of this if you choose to undergo the pain of a personal interview.

Yours ever | Philip Webb:

C: A: Howell Esq

*Texas*

- 1 Charles Augustus Howell (1840–90) was a complex and elusive personality, whose career is summed up in his *DNB* entry as being that of ‘agent and rogue’. Born in Portugal of English and Portuguese parents, his recounting of the story of his early life may have been imagined, at least in some of the livelier details. After his arrival in England a winning personal charm allowed him to build useful contacts, and he was soon moving in influential art circles, having, as Whistler put it, ‘the gift of intimacy’. JR, DGR, EBJ, Swinburne and Whistler all placed their confidence in him, which sometimes they had cause to regret. He often used this trust to his own advantage, for he combined an exceptional artistic eye with rather shady business practices, acting as an intermediary for unwitting artists or simply on his own behalf.
- 2 ‘I am in communication with the Lisbon people, and they are ready to try their best with the tiles. Can I have your beautiful designs the Crow, Cock & Hare? Should you like to design any flower tiles for yourself, ie for your grates, you can do so, and I will get them made for you.’ Howell to PSW, 15 October 1868, *V&A, AAD*. PSW’s Delft-style blue and white designs of a Hare, Raven and Cockerel, were sold from 1869 and 1870 by MMF & Co. See the colour illustrations of the Hare and Cock, ‘for decoration by a Dutch tilery . . . thought to have been prototypes, possibly painted by Webb, and kept by the Firm until after 1934’, in Richard and Hilary Myers, *William Morris Tiles. The Tile Designs of Morris and his Fellow-Workers* (Shepton Beauchamp: Richard Dennis, 1996), p. 55. See also *Kirk*, p. 39. This exchange between Howell and PSW places the prototype drawings a full year before PSW recorded the tiles in his account book (see Myers, p. 135).
- 3 It was in character for Howell to seek to make himself indispensable, ever alert to an advantageous business opportunity. ‘Regarding your three designs (the crow, hare &c) I should like to know exactly how the matter stands, if they belong to you or to the shop. I should like to have the drawings for myself, but not the copyright, and therefore would like to know distinctly whom the tiles belong to when ready and paid for by me. Will they be yours and sold by the shop for you. Will they belong to the shop (who will pay me their cost and sell them for what they like) or what?’

## 19 • To Jenny and May Morris, 31 October 1868

*Postmark* LONDON. W.C. OC 31 68 *Address* Miss Jane & Miss Mary Morris: |  
26 Queen Square: | Bloomsbury.

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,*  
Saturday

My dear Jenny & May<sup>1</sup>

Though I have a great dislike to eating and drinking, and can’t bear to do either at your house, I cannot resist your polite invitation to dinner tomorrow.

I will come to you at half past one, and will so carefully hide my disgust, that you shall not be able to see from my appearance that I am anything but happy & contented.

Your affectionate | Old Webb:

*BL Add 45342, f. 2*

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1 Jenny (JEM, 1861–1935) and May Morris (MM 1862–1938) were aged 7 and 6 respectively when PSW wrote this letter.

**20 • To Elizabeth Burden, probably 1868**

*I, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Tuesday 18 [[pre-printed year, not day]*

Dear Miss Burden<sup>1</sup>

I send you designs for two altar cloths wh' I hope you will like. I have told Morris what I wish Wardle to do, in drawing them out for you<sup>2</sup> – that is, to make them pretty drawings for you to shew.

I will do two more of a simpler kind, if you like these

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

Please to make any suggestions.

*Huntington MOR 578*

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1 Elizabeth (Bessie) Burden (b. 1842), youngest sister of JM, and like her a skilled needlewoman who executed many projects for MMF & Co. 'In the 1860s [Jane and Elizabeth] began to work embroideries to designs by Morris and Webb. . . . A frontal embroidered by Elizabeth in 1868, to a design by Webb, is one of only two extant pieces to represent this decade [in the history of MMF & Co embroidery].' The surviving frontal is the 'Lamb and Flag' design at Llandaff Cathedral. See Mary Schoeser, *The Watts Book of Embroidery. English Church Embroidery 1833–1953* (London: Watts & Co., 1998), p. 79; see also Schoeser, p. 80 for an illustration of the Llandaff Cathedral frontal. See also Lynn Hulse, 'Elizabeth Burden and the Royal School of Needlework', *JWMS*, XXI (Winter 2014), pp. 22–34.

2 For George Young Wardle, see below, Letter 25, note 8.

**21 • To Jane Morris, ?about January 1869**

*Annotated 'Watermark 1868 | ?Jan. 1869'*

*I, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Wednesday*

My dear janie<sup>1</sup>

I take it as very kind of you, that the nice comforter you have sent me, is not knitted in the form of a rope.

This piece of soft work done by your hands shall be to me as a promise that you are not going to withdraw from me, what has hitherto been unfailing kindness on your part.

Good luck to you at Hastings – I sincerely hope that the air will do you much good.

Believe me to be | Yours very aff<sup>y</sup> | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45342, ff. 3-4*

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1 In these early letters to JM (and occasionally to JEM), PSW sometimes uses the lower-case 'j'.



**22 • To George Howard, 2 January 1869**

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
2 January 1869*

Dear Mr Howard

Thank you very much for your new year's wish, that I may have better clients for the future. For myself, I've never grumbled at the race. They have treated me quite more than fairly and allowed me to live without many reproaches.<sup>1</sup>

For a return, I wish you a better house than you will get, and the same full of friends that you may forget your disappointment.

I have told Morris about the chairs in which matter I quite agree with you.

The building is progressing satisfactorily, as there is plenty of small work to occupy the time of doubtful weather.

I think that when you come back, a couple of pounds spread over 4 payments will be more likely [to] reach all hands, than if made in two.

With kind regards to Mrs Howard | [Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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<sup>1</sup> But he might have felt rather differently a few months later. See below, Letter 32, note 2.

**23 • To James Pennethorne, 31 May 1869**

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
May 31 1869*

Dear Sir

M<sup>r</sup> Howard's House | Palace Green

The carcase of the house is now completed and I shall be obliged by your sending me a certificate to that effect, as I believe that M<sup>r</sup> Howard's solicitor requires the same before completing certain forms.

Yours truly | Philip Webb:

James Pennethorne Esq<sup>re</sup>

*NA CRES 35/3106*

**24 • To George Price Boyce, 12 July 1869**

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
July 12 1869*

Dear Boyce

I was at Chelsea to-day<sup>1</sup> – the roof was all but on, and they will begin tiling shortly.

'Tis quite possible that we may be able to change the sewer manhole, from where it is to a less objectionable position & as soon as we apply to open into the sewer, I will try what can be done with the "board".<sup>2</sup>

I've nothing whatever to say against the red colour you propose and should be glad if you w<sup>d</sup> try in watercolours to get a tone you would like.

The use of your Bramah locks is specified.<sup>3</sup>

Here we have summer weather 80° in the shade.

I hope you are picking up health, and are making yourself good company. Here except for the hope that the "Commons" will sit upon the "Lords"<sup>4</sup> we are dull enough.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45354, ff. 13-14*

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1 West House, Glebe Place, Chelsea. See *Kirk*, pp. 75–6 and 297.

2 Under the provisions of the Public Health Act (1848), local Boards of Health were given extensive powers over sanitation.

3 The founder-designer of the Bramah lock company, Joseph Bramah (1748–1814), patented his first design in 1787.

4 The Irish Church Act, or Disestablishment Act, was an important plank in Gladstone's support for Irish Home Rule. The state (Protestant) church had the loyalty of perhaps only a ninth of the Irish population, which formed a natural Catholic majority. Despite fierce opposition from the House of Lords, the legislation passed rapidly through parliament. '[T]he bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 1 March 1869 and received the royal assent on 26 July. The Irish Church ceased to be established by law on 1 January 1871.' Alan Megahey, 'Gladstone, church and state', in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds), *Gladstone and Ireland. Politics, Religion and Nationality in the Victorian Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 56.

## 25 • To William and Jane Morris, 23 July 1869

Gray's Inn  
Friday July 23.

My dear Janey & Top<sup>1</sup>

I got your kindest of letters this morning,<sup>2</sup> and was a king for the time being, when you went away nearly my all was gone. Ned & Georgie & Gabriel are part of the family but we look at each other in a kind of rage that the rest are not by – I make solemn vows that if I see you again I will be better, kinder and less selfish, but shall please myself just now by thinking that you would not like me so well if I changed.

I was at Fulham on Tuesday,<sup>3</sup> but had the edge of my nervousness taken off by old Müller<sup>4</sup> who dined there before going to Italy. We tried to talk of anything but you but burnt our wings in that flame occasionally. Of course I sat right & then left, expecting Ned to say, "Webb, why are you such a bloody fool?" but he was good-natured & didn't. For God's sake dear Janey use your English privilege and

keep on saying “demean” instead of giving up and I shall see you tomorrow better than yesterday.

I see the effect of going into society (Brown’s!!!) by a note in the *Spectator* that the great Stephens has said that M<sup>r</sup> Morris is going to publish another portion of the E.P. in November.<sup>5</sup> I hope it will be good, Top, and free from spite. You never go a journey but you find the world – however shocking in the change – all of a piece warp & woof very much alike & you’ll tell of your neighbour there, what will amuse the thief here. As for newspapers it is this. The Lords have “caved in,” the bill is to pass<sup>6</sup> – trimmers are to be considered excellent,<sup>7</sup> and the world a marvel of beauty.

Wardle<sup>8</sup> carried me yesterday to Beddington – Oh what magnificence – what disporting – English Oak ‘in excelsis’.<sup>9</sup> I hope the whistling [*sic*] from that bird cage will be pure Handel.

Now my dear Top & Janey I ought to wind up with something unkind, for you to recognise me – but I’ve always said that people misunderstood me. Try for this once to believe that I am your most affectionate

Phil Webb:

*BL Add 45342, ff. 7-8*

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1 It is not certain when the affair between DGR and JM began, but it was almost certainly under way by the time that WM took her to Bad Ems in July 1869, where they spent two months so that Jane might take the waters. Her symptoms may have been as much nervous as physical, but it is possible that the Bad Ems treatment was for a gynaecological condition. Although her ‘ill health continued intermittently for much of her life . . . there is no evidence that she ever suffered from a serious organic disease’. *MacCarthy, WMLT*, p. 201.

2 WM and JM wrote to PSW from Ghent on 22 July, *CLWM*, I.

3 EBJ and GBJ moved from Kensington Square to The Grange, North End, Fulham at the end of 1867. It remained their London house and studio until the painter’s death.

4 Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900) was a German-born Sanskrit scholar and a specialist in the anthropological disciplines. He lived in England from 1846, was appointed Professor of Modern European Languages at Oxford in 1851, and took British nationality in 1855. His six-volume translation of the *Rig Veda* was published by OUP (1849–74).

5 PSW means *The Athenæum*, not *The Spectator*. Its art editor from 1851 to 1901 was Frederic George Stephens (1828–1907), who, with (unrealised) hopes of becoming a painter had joined the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848. He was a model in several paintings, including *Jesus Washing Peter’s Feet* (1852–6) by Ford Madox Brown, the friend whom PSW asserts to be the source of the information published in the ‘Literary Gossip’ column of *The Athenæum* on 17 July 1869. ‘We hear that Mr. William Morris has determined on publishing a further portion of his poem, “The Earthly Paradise,” in November, instead of delaying it till the whole of the work is completed. The volume to be published in November will comprise the tales for Autumn; and we understand that the final volume of tales for Winter will follow in May next.’ PSW’s own set of the six-volume edition of *The Earthly Paradise* (London: F.S. Ellis, 1868–70), of which only 25 copies were printed (presentation copies from WM), is in the Emery Walker Library. See *CAGM*, p. 141.

6 See previous letter, note 4.

7 Trimmer: ‘One who trims between opposing parties in politics, etc; hence, one who inclines to each of opposite sides as interest dictates.’ (*OED*).

- 8 The artist George Young Wardle (GW, 1836–1910) became the highly skilled general manager of MMF & Co on the death of Warington Taylor, a position he then filled for twenty years. A good number of his letters to PSW survive (mostly at the library of the Courtauld Institute), but scarcely any from PSW to him. His drawings of historic buildings were highly regarded by both PSW and WM.
- 9 The Tudor Great Hall of Beddington Park, Sutton, the former manor house of the Carew family, has a fine hammer-beam roof of four bays.

## 26 • To William and Jane Morris, 31 July 1869

1 Raymond Buildings Gray's Inn  
Saturday July 31

My very dear Top & Janey

I was delighted to hear yesterday that you had got to Ems all safe and in better condition than you could have expected. I hope you will not be astonished when I say that we feel mutilated, a great member gone – and none of our work or pleasure quite coming comfortable to us. I'm sure you won't be surprised when I say that we seldom mention you, as we thus avoid a difficulty wh' can't be got over better, than by silence – how can I tell you anything wh' you have not guessed before?

Gabriel invited us to a tent dinner last Monday and tried to make us cheerful by getting Val<sup>1</sup> & Howell to “carry us off” – the latter didn't come but Val work[ed] admirably; a grunt set him going and a roar approved him. Gabriel was very kind, and received the points of his friends' tempers in the side of his own.

Ned & Georgie are quite as well as can be expected. I bore them on Tuesdays, but they kindly put up with it, & I was there yesterday to help with Burton<sup>2</sup> & Crom Price.<sup>3</sup> Crom, I think, betters instead of worsens, as is <sup>not</sup> usual with absentees. I can only see a difference in his lobs, by their coming slower than they used to do.

Taylor is very anxious to run a tilt at Howell with a Sheriff's officer, but I am just going to write to him to stop any hasty burst of that kind – as I don't think we have any right to expect Howell to change his manners and customs – for us, particularly. We knew what he was before allowing him to draw on us.<sup>4</sup> I say Top, dont have this letter in your pocket, and drop it in his garden.

Ellis<sup>5</sup> has very politely made me a present of “Speed”, see what comes of being allied to poets but he also good natured like, sold me at what he gave for it, that large 4 vols of serpents bugs & beetles – (wh' I daresay you know) – for me to give to the 2 Neds,<sup>6</sup> for Phil is a “chip” indeed.<sup>7</sup>

We thought last night of collecting a hundred pounds to send out to you, for you to make a proper appearance at the green cloth table,<sup>8</sup> if one is allowed at Ems. Janey might make “eyes” at the people & break the bank. Sing out in your next letter, at <sup>my</sup> broad-wheel'd waggon wit if it is unbearable. We are here 72° in the shade today, & it has been much the same for some time. If you are hotter I hope you bear it with some ease, and this puts me in mind of drink – what do you

drink? – Janey, of course, water, sandwich fashion with every act of her life, but intermittently, you must both try something stronger, what is it?

I am a Father to the shop,<sup>9</sup> and go in there as a fine protecting spirit making a touch here & speech there to vindicate my character, 'tis slightly a “do” but as they don’t laugh in my hearing, what does it matter. If I could hear both yours I would forgive it, if it were against me.

Your affectionate | Phil Webb:

*BL Add 45342, ff. 9-10*

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- 1 The personable Valentine Cameron Prinsep (1838–1904), son of Henry Thoby Prinsep and Sara Monckton Pattle (patrons of the society portraitist, George Frederic Watts), was amongst the group of painters who assisted DGR in decorating the Oxford Union debating hall in 1857.
  - 2 The Irish-born watercolour painter, Frederic Burton (1816–1900), became director of the National Gallery in 1874, and received a knighthood in 1884. He supported EBJ’s 1864 election as an associate member of the Old Watercolour Society.
  - 3 Once schoolboys together in Birmingham, EBJ and Cormell (‘Crom’) Price (d. 1910) remained life-long friends. Price is best-known as the first headmaster of the United Services College at Westward Ho! in Devon in 1874, where he oversaw the education of the young Rudyard Kipling (a nephew of GBJ). He encouraged the young writer, who portrayed ‘Uncle Crom’ affectionately as the headmaster in *Stalky & Co* (1899). Late in life, Price married his housekeeper (he was 60, she 32), and they named their son Edward William, after EBJ and WM.
  - 4 WM and PSW were less easily taken in by Charles Augustus Howell than some in their circle (see above, Letter 18, note 1). Although WM had been a witness at Howell’s marriage, ‘he became disenchanted, perhaps at the point at which Howell had invoked Morris’s authority to trick Warington Taylor into letting him have wallpapers at a special discount price.’ *MacCarthy, WMLT*, p. 218.
  - 5 WM’s friend and publisher, Frederick Startridge Ellis (1830–1901), was an author and dealer in antiquarian books and manuscripts. Later, with JM and Sydney Carlyle Cockerell (SCC, 1867–1962), he was one of WM’s executors.
  - 6 PSW seems to be referring to two different books. ‘Speed’ may be John George Speed, *The Borderer’s Leap, and other Poems* (London: E. Stock, 1869); the four-volume collection has not been identified.
  - 7 Philip (1861–1926), the elder of the two surviving Burne-Jones children, was aged seven.
  - 8 The gambling table.
  - 9 In 1865, the Morrisises gave up Red House and moved to 26 Queen Square, living above the office and showroom of MMF & Co.

## 27 • To William and Jane Morris, 3 August 1869

1 Raymond Buildings Gray’s Inn  
Tuesday, Aug 3.

Thank you very much dear Top & Janey for your letter of Saturday – got last night. That you are there, is something – that you are not worse is more – let me see if I’ve virtue enough to allow me to preach – no I haven’t – therefore I won’t. I like your soberness of style in your letter dear Top. It is as if God were laying on the stripes and you changed your tone from “damn” to “whee! Whaa! ’tis all

my fault". There is no doubt, Janey in the corner on the sofa, is thinking of the "provincial" people she has left behind.

I will open your letters, keep your secrets, & send only those wh' require your own attention and tie the rest up in a bundle for future amusement.<sup>1</sup> I'll make inquisition about the cruets you mention and do what I can – the soup plates I'll take when I can get them, as a "retainer" from you both & what is more, will make an effort to deserve 'em.<sup>2</sup> You know that it has been said, that repentance is the only chance for a chap.

Dear old Taylor has written to me to say that he will be quiet, but speaks feelingly as a father to our finances. I think from his letter that he must be a shade more in spirits. I've heard of Bodley that there is great doubt as to whether he will ever use his leg again – crutches being thought of.<sup>3</sup>

Like Gabriel's parrot<sup>4</sup> I find myself going, with a "hummm – whoo!! whoo!! whoo!!" for I miss the sound of poetry – you'll test our eyelids when you come back. If Acontius has laid Cydippe on her back I hope he hasn't, you.<sup>5</sup>

I hope you got a letter of mine ~~from~~ <sup>at</sup> Poste Restante Cologne – and one wh' was addressed from here last Saturday – Poste Restante Ems 'Nassau' – they would have been dry chips, but they would put you in mind of the fellow you keep alive by your letters.

Day's poor Mother came looking after her son yesterday & Wardle & I did what we could – and it now remains for Day himself to have a try.<sup>6</sup>

The Lord Chamberlain was a little to[o] late in clothing the legs of the Drury Lane beauties.<sup>7</sup> Janey ought to pick me up a tune from brass bands at 90°. You'll be able to absorb the music of the future along with the water – and I shall scarcely be able to say Mozart – before you batter my brains out with Wagner. However they are not gone yet for I still think of you both.

Phil Webb

*BL Add 45342, ff. 13-14*

1 '[W]ill it give you too much to do to open any letters for me; if there were any secrets between (as there are not) you would hardly come across them'. WM to PSW, 31 July 1869, *CLWM*, I.

2 '[W]ill you ask Wardle to send round and ask Lucy Brown if the soup-plates and delft cruets came safe to hand – the soup-plates are for you if you care for them – the cruet bottles have had tops to them – I think: Could you get Barkentyne to fashion these again; if you think it a fitting end to them – if not silver mounted corks would do I suppose though not so well – I bought them and the plates in Ghent on Georgie's birthday and meant them . . . for her – will you give them to her with my love when what is necessary is done'. See next letter, note 3.

3 For Bodley, see above, Letter 1, note 7. He was left very lame after an illness during 1868–9.

4 At Cheyne Walk, DGR indulged his fascination with animals and birds by maintaining a small but exotic menagerie in the garden. William Rossetti would recall that, during the years after 1863, his brother's collection included such esoteric specimens as armadillos, kangaroos, a racoon, a deer, several varieties of non-native owls, an African grey parrot (the talker noted by PSW), chameleons and salamanders, as well as more standard pets – dogs, mice, rabbits and the like. One of the most

charming of DGR's sketches is a self-portrait of him weeping over the upturned body of his pet wombat. See Jan Marsh, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Painter and Poet*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 267 (the drawing is reproduced between pp. 242 and 243).

5 While he was away, WM worked on 'Acontius and Cydippe' for the forthcoming third volume of *The Earthly Paradise*.

6 Unidentified, but Day may have been an employee of MMF & Co.

7 Allusion not identified.

## 28 • To William and Jane Morris, 10 August 1869

1 Raymond Buildings | Gray's Inn.  
Aug. 10.

My dear Topsy & Janey.

This is the first letter for you that I have got.<sup>1</sup> The first glance without further reading shewd me – that it was poet's work, and must be delivered at once or the world would "smoke for it". I read the prospectus and grinned a broad, & cheerful grin – and you may thank both your stars that during your absence, there is any grin on my face. Ned don't help me to grin, Georgie don't either and I don't help them neither but we've made up our minds to do nothing else than grin during the remainder of our term.

Instead of a quick hob a knob at Fulham we meet tonight at cheerful Poynter's.<sup>2</sup> The scoundrel Barkentin is engaged upon the cruets to be done in ab<sup>3</sup> 3 weeks, cap to be this [*sketch of top of jug, with 'German silver' indicated*] without any rim to the top edge of jug. The cruets are very pretty – I've not got my soup plates yet.<sup>3</sup>

Ellis rec<sup>d</sup> me with a guffaw the other day upon <sup>the subject of</sup> the length of nets hung on the banks of upper Thames wh' we did not take proper note of – the length of bottle & countenance being our fist.

I hope your harvest is better than ours. We have a wet one, though the weather is often pleasant enough though cool – now, 4. Oc in the afternoon & 62°. Ask Janey to put a female scratch at the end of your next letter, just to keep <sup>me</sup> in mind of her fingers ends. My cheer is the usual and D<sup>d</sup> – B<sup>d</sup>. The buildings clients and architect, all, ought to be drinking the waters, at a depth of 20 feet, with a fireproof safe hung to their necks, to sink & save 'em.

Ned rather talks of going to have a day or two in Crom's Folly<sup>4</sup> – but is waiting to know if the coast is clear enough. Boyce, M'Donald<sup>5</sup> & an actor named Belford have aired the place just now – but there are sweetening gales in those parts.

My most affectionate love to you both. | Phil Webb.

*BL Add 45342, ff. 11-12*

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1 The letter (now lost) which PSW forwarded was from Edward Nicholson, an undergraduate at Trinity College, Oxford. WM responded on 12 August (*CLWM*, I), but Nicholson's plans for an undergraduate magazine came to nothing.

- 2 The painter Edward John Poynter (1836–1919) married GBJ's sister, Agnes Macdonald (1843–1906), in 1866. He was appointed director of the National Gallery in 1894, succeeded John Everett Millais (1829–96) as president of the Royal Academy in 1896, and became a baronet in 1902.
- 3 See previous letter, note 2. Barkentin & Krall, 'Goldsmiths and workers in all metals', had premises at 289–291 Regent Street. The co-founder, Jes Barkentin (c. 1815–83), was a Danish-born silversmith.
- 4 Between 1866 and 1874, Crom Price rented The Tower, a 65-foot high folly on Broadway Beacon in Worcestershire, dating from 1800, where friends visited frequently. EBJ signed the visitors' book for the first time on 22 August 1869. See Lorraine Price, 'Cormell Price Esq., The Tower, Broadway', *JWMS*, V, (Winter 1983–4), pp. 30–9.
- 5 Probably GBJ's brother, Frederic Macdonald, a Methodist preacher regarded by Rudyard Kipling, his nephew, as 'the wit of our family'. *MacCarthy*, *LPR*, p. 394.

## 29 • To William and Jane Morris, 17 August 1869

1 Raymond Buildings Gray's Inn  
August 17. 1869.

My dear Top & Janey:

Thank you very much for your two last letters. When reading them I burn to answer, but before I've sighed over the recollection of their contents business & idleness come in & stop one. As it is well as you say to get over the root of evil at once, I say that I was pleased that you depended on me in the matter, and as I thought it would save us all trouble, I cashed a cheque of my own at Praeds' and they sent me to Coutts's for the enclosed letters of credit for 60£ wh' I hope you will get all safe & that the form will be convenient.<sup>1</sup> You & Janey will give me great pleasure if you will take them as a little present from me, and as expressing only a bare outside of my affection for you both.

As I was returning from Coutts's I turned in to wet my whistle with a glass of "cocks eye" and stumbled with dew dropping mouth, on Gabriels familiar – Dunn<sup>2</sup> – who told me that he came there to cheer himself after packing off Gabriel to Scotland. Dunn said, Gabriel was pretty cheery as no doubt Dunn would be in time, if he cocked his eye sufficiently.

Since you hint at amusing contents of the Oxford poet's letter I wish I had read it. Keep it in mind to amuse on return.<sup>3</sup> I'm glad the work proceeds.<sup>4</sup> 'Tis the best cure for weariness. I'd turn-to <sup>with a will</sup> on mine if I could do it, when I did turn-to. I say Top, don't sit down on wet green banks. I've the Rheumatism in my shoulder now from a soft wet draught at the back of my neck, taken carelessly. But the adders will keep you out of that mischief. O Lord! How frightened I should have been.<sup>5</sup> I'm pretty kind to beasts as a rule, but the serpent tribe – all except the innocent worm – put me in a mortal terror & therefore make me cruel.

Ned or Georgie will no doubt write to you that the former is gone to Crom's Tower.

Out with you Janey. If you'll make your first presentiment come true, I'll insure that the second shan't.<sup>6</sup>

I've finished my Clarissa – 'tis, after all is said – a very fine, notable book,<sup>7</sup> and I can't for the life of me call it prolix, if once it has the character of merit at all,



as its accuracy is its chief merit. I do not envy the jackass who could set himself down to reduce it.

Taylor came down upon me on Friday and stayed talking for 2 hours or more – he spoke very nicely about you, put all upon his affection, wh’ I believe to be true.<sup>8</sup>

I’ve to write 2 or 3 more letters before post therefore break off – not before wanted, you’ll say.

Your affectionate | Phil Webb:

*BL Add 45342, ff. 15-16*

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- 1 ‘The root of all evil, is, if not *the* root yet one of the roots of this letter, lets get done with that first. I want to make myself safe from being kept in pawn, and set to hard labour at Ems (say sweeping up horse-dung, an office religiously observed here,) I want £60 somehow; I suppose Wardle will be able to let you have it; if not would it strain your resources to be so kind as lend it me’. WM to PSW, 15 August 1869, *CLWM*, I.
  - 2 The painter, Henry Treffry Dunn (1838–99), was DGR’s studio assistant until they quarrelled in 1880. His unpaid salary was settled only after DGR’s death.
  - 3 ‘Ah hah! the letter you sent me wasn’t sent on for nothing. Janey got a pain in her back from laughing at it; I hope you read it right through.’ WM refers to the letter from Edward Nicholson (see previous letter, note 1).
  - 4 ‘I also brought Paris’ Death to an end roughly; again I’m not very sanguine about the merit of it; but I shall get through the work I set myself to do here in some way, and have a month to turn over the first of the tales before I go to press when I come home.’ WM to PSW, 15 August 1869. ‘The Death of Paris’ appears in the third volume of *The Earthly Paradise*.
  - 5 ‘[T]he adders are lively too in this wet warm valley: yesterday morning I heard a rustle in the dry leaves behind me and out crept one as long as my umbrella. . . . I kept feeling the legs of my trousers all the way home after that, and feel a little shy of sitting down on green banks now; however they are always wet.’
  - 6 JM added a note to the letter of 15 August. ‘I have a sort of presentiment (though of course you don’t believe in such things) that I may make a rapid turn – and feel myself well all of a sudden – and then I have another presentiment that should this change come – all those I now call my Friends would also change – and would not be able to stand me.’
  - 7 *Clarissa* (1748), Samuel Richardson’s long epistolary novel tells the story of its tragic heroine, Clarissa Harlowe. ‘What a glutton at reading you must be to get through C.H in such a short time; I have done but little more than half of it, though certainly I never found it a tiresome or dull book nor, if one takes it on its own grounds, even prolix.’ WM to PSW, 20 August 1869, *CLWM*, I.
  - 8 ‘What news of Taylor again?’ WM to PSW 9 August 1869, *CLWM*, I.

### 30 • To William and Jane Morris, 24 August 1869

1 R: B: G: I. London  
Aug 24. 1869.

Dear Top & Janey

Let me begin by saying, bother to all matters wherein “tin”<sup>1</sup> is concerned. It is a pitch which can’t be touched without defiling. Gold is never sweated half so much as it drains us of nerves-water, and I’m sorry I should have made your flesh creep.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to Taylor you need not be afraid that I shall give his dicta more than their due value.<sup>3</sup>

I hear that Ned came back yesterday and as this is Tuesday I go up to look at him this evening. I'm rather tired of standing on one leg – my own peculiar – in London, a second at Ems – and the third in Crom's tower, and shall be glad when they are drawn together again within reasonable compass. The devil will be in it, if one quarrels with ones limbs even if they be the devil's own.

I've two little bills for you when you come back and they are the only love letters of yours come to hand, since the Oxford genius's.

Wardle was here this morning, report satisfactory – he was at Cambridge yesterday. Young Scott seems to be dancing a professional hornpipe at Peterhouse to which he wants us to pipe.<sup>4</sup> I'm going to talk to Ned about it to night to see what can be arranged. Shall be cautious.

Was at Ken<sup>n</sup> Mus<sup>m</sup> on Saturday – thought the room interesting & pretty – somewhat comic in character but happily not much galvanized.<sup>5</sup>

I like your telling of the landscape at Ems. It might have been <sup>ugly</sup> ~~bad~~ <sup>this word too like a worse joke</sup> & that you w<sup>d</sup> have had to take exercise with shut eyes. You'll surely make use of it for future seasoning to your trifles of 20,000 lines? I hope Gabriels parrot has a better memory than I have, for I've nearly forgotten the sound of verse – wh' <sup>(said verse)</sup> luck has made a kind of brine or pickle to my mind to keep it from stinking.

Brown looked in 2 or 3 nights since, smoked & drank and talked most amiably – and went with the nicest steps, over the sore points of my vanity. There must have been 'ozone' or something in the air in large quantities – he even volunteered to allow of the Brumagem<sup>6</sup> <sup>Bromwichham</sup> door-knocker character of <"Teb"> in mind & body.<sup>7</sup>

My rheumatism, hangs about my shoulders in harmless fashion still – bless my soul – I said just now that I'd forgotten the sound of verse. The truth is, Janey I believe I'm a poet also. If this don't make you both laugh nothing I can write will. Therefore do laugh.

Y<sup>r</sup> affe<sup>le</sup> | Phil Webb.

*BL Add 45342, ff. 17-18*

1 Money: the term was much used by DGR.

2 WM had received the notes of credit which PSW had enclosed with his letter of 17 August 1869, but refused to accept them as a gift. 'I think the money will be much more equally divided by your keeping it, than by your casting it on the dry and thirsty ground of a ne'er-do-well – the best of thanks all the same for the offer, and for the trouble of getting & sending the money.' WM to PSW, 20 August 1869, *CLWM*, I.

3 'Taylor is better then, I hope? I hope he don't think I am seriously vexed at any thing he has said, or otherwise than very much obliged by his friendliness: I think I understand the whole matter

perfectly well; and know there is a great deal of reason in what he says, though he is not at present quite master of the details.’

- 4 George Gilbert Scott Jr (1839–97) was the eldest son of Sir George Gilbert Scott, and like him an architect. He was responsible for the restoration works at Peterhouse, Cambridge (1866–70), for which MMF & Co designed the stained glass windows and decorative tiles in College Hall and the Combination Room (1868–74).
- 5 MMF & Co’s first important secular commission came from the South Kensington Museum in 1866, for the decoration of the Green Dining Room. PSW planned and supervised the project, the frieze being his design ‘modelled in relief with a dog chasing a hare, based on a sculpture he had seen on the font in the cathedral of Newcastle upon Tyne’. *Kirk*, p. 46.
- 6 PSW seems here to use the term in both of its meanings, suggesting something cheap or counterfeit, and also alluding to Birmingham.
- 7 Allusion not identified.

### 31 • To George Howard, 26 August 1869

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,  
Aug 26 1869*

Dear Mr Howard.

I take it from Mrs Howard’s letter to me of the 17<sup>th</sup> that you are now in London, therefore I send this to Park St.<sup>1</sup>

I have to go out of town tomorrow (Friday) but shall hope to be back the same night, but at all events not later than Saturday morning.

Mr Taylor, the foreman at Palace Green, was here this morning and I told him that you would most likely be here – and would be looking in at the house. I wished him to settle with you in which room you would prefer having the Dutch tiles fixed.

If you think they would be a too shocking “lark” in the drawing room, they – or part of them – could be used in the dining room or Library fireplaces – in the last – perhaps – only.

I hope you will find the house as comfortable as you expected. Please to name to Taylor any alterations or additions you would like made. The work up to the present time has been admirably done.

Please to let me know if you would like to see me, and if here or elsewhere and I will arrange.

[Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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1 GH’s maternal grandparents were the late James Parke, Baron Wensleydale (1782–1868) and Celia Arabella Francis, Lady Wensleydale (d. 1879), whom he married in 1817. Their London house was 122 Park Street, Grosvenor Square.

32 • To George Howard, 7 September 1869

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Sep 7 1869*

Dear Mr Howard.

I will go to the house one day this week and see what can be arranged for your sending furniture to be stowed away – at present I fancy that the lady's maids rooms would be drier and more out of the way than any other – but a watchman would have to be provided as soon as you put anything into the house which is not the contractors – this, however, could be done without difficulty – & fires could be kept up by the watchman.

I quiver with fear when I think of the risk I have run of meeting, such tremendous celebrities at Naworth. Well did my mother preach to me, that work kept people out of trouble & mischief – only fancy my concentrated ignorance “cheek by jowl”, with that compendium of knowledge “Browning”, & in a country house too!<sup>1</sup> But seriously, I am sorry to be obliged to say no, to such kind reiterations of hospitality.

It is most probable that the Cortachy work will keep me here, until I am obliged to go there.<sup>2</sup> With kind regards to Mrs Howard.

[Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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1 During September, the guests at Naworth Castle included the poet Robert Browning (1812–89) and his friend the American sculptor and writer, William Wetmore Story (1819–95), his wife, Emelyn, and their daughter, Edith, later Edith Peruzzi (1844–1907). See *Surtees*, pp. 77–9.

2 In 1868, PSW was asked by David Ogilvy, tenth Earl of Airlie (1826–81), who married Rosalind Howard's sister, Henrietta Blanche Stanley (1830–1921), ‘to consider the feasibility of building a new country house on the site of the old family seat, Airlie Castle [near Kirriemuir, Angus, in Scotland], destroyed by the Campbells in 1640, and an alternative one of improving and enlarging its substitute Cortachy [Castle] – an ancient rectangular tower to which a wing, stair tower, and porch, all in the Castellated Gothic style, had been added in the early nineteenth century. . . . He produced designs for both schemes between 1868 and 1869, after warning Airlie that the costs would inevitably be high.’ *Kirk*, p. 182. PSW estimated £50,000 for the first scheme, and £36,000 for the second: only then did Airlie reveal that his budget could not exceed £25,000. Having been asked to make reductions, PSW had to insist that Cortachy could not be enlarged within that smaller figure, although a separate scheme for repairing a turret and enlarging the library was completed. Airlie did not proceed further, and paid PSW £600 for the designs and work which had already been undertaken. ‘Lady Airlie was pleased with the library but she added to Webb's distress, after his second scheme for enlarging Cortachy – over which she had enthused – had had to be abandoned, by putting it about that she disliked it.’ (ibid). As Kirk remarks, this experience led PSW to treat his clients with much greater caution, requiring that they should agree to his terms of business before he accepted their commissions.

## 33 • To William Butterfield, 27 November 1869

*Draft/copy*

1 R: B: G: I:

Nov. 27 1869

Dear Mr Butterfield

I was at Oxford yesterday for the first time since I got the permission to look over your college<sup>1</sup> – Mr Braithwait was very polite & took pains to shew me the works.

You were quite wrong in supposing that I should not like the buildings. I like them very much indeed. I admire the general arrangement, the planning, the proportions and details.

If my own work bears no resemblance to yours it is because I could not do good work like yours and therefore I do not try, but I am quite capable of observing with huge pleasure a successful effort of a contemporary – (please excuse the impudence of this last remark)

I take it that on looking round the neighbourhood of the college you saw that there was an activity of life in building w<sup>h</sup> though you might not relish the outcome – it would be wise in you not to ignore, & thus came your idea of planting a vigorous red brick work in Grey Oxford. I wish that Kebles own work had been as vigorous.

The skill you have shewn w<sup>h</sup> I wish most to praise, is that of having managed to put together the requisite little boxes of rooms and yet that your building should not look small – and this without the advantage of the larger parts, such as Library, Hall & Chapel. I think you are quite right in your large Quadrangle and in pushing the East front close to the trees – both bold ideas.

I cannot forgive you for using cold blue slates, this colour is a real drawback. You will most likely say that you had no money for grey Westmoreland slates, and I shall say in answer, 'tis a great pity that you hadn't.<sup>2</sup> The contrivances of Scouts rooms, cisterns, lifts, stairs, sliding "Oaks", paving &c were interesting and I thought quite good.

If in these days of dolour the mocking of a new peel of bells could be allowed – I should rejoice that you should have a hand in keeping up the tunefulness of Oxford and of adding yet another tower to the view from Hinksey.<sup>3</sup>

Believe me to be | Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

P.S. I tremble for the filling up of a yawning gap on the South side of Lower High S<sup>t</sup>.

*LPW*

- 1 An enthusiast of the Gothic Revival, William Butterfield (1814–1900) was the architect of Keble College (1868–70), named after John Keble of the Oxford High Church movement.
- 2 ‘I of course feel with you about the blue slates . . . A low tender helped me much, but the Committee was bent on economy and was composed of persons who did not I imagine care for the question of colour in slates, and I had not the courage, with further works in prospect for wh. I knew there was not enough money, to ask them for any extras of an artistic kind.’ Butterfield to PSW, 11 December 1869, *LPW*. PSW was not alone in expressing reservations about the chosen materials. In 1872, Charles Eastlake felt that ‘the horizontal bands of stone, of black brick, and of white brick, oppose each other so crudely that . . . one can see nothing but stripes.’ *A History of the Gothic Revival*, p. 262. For details of this book, see next letter.
- 3 Hinksey Hill, two miles south of the centre of Oxford, affords a fine view of the college spires.

### 34 • To Charles Eastlake, 14 March 1870

*I, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,*  
March 14 1870

Dear Sir,<sup>1</sup>

I should have much pleasure in complying with your request<sup>2</sup> did it not break a rule which I’ve had some satisfaction in keeping, up to the present time – viz – not myself to make unnecessarily public any work which I’ve designed or completed.

I should have been less able to have refused your polite proposal, if my work could have properly come under the category of the “Gothic Revival in England”

Yours truly | Philip Webb

*LPW*

- 1 The architect and furniture designer, Charles Locke Eastlake (1836–1906), was appointed director of the National Gallery in 1878. He was researching for *A History of the Gothic Revival: an attempt to show how the taste for mediæval architecture which lingered in England during the two last centuries has since been encouraged and developed* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1872).
- 2 ‘I am very anxious to obtain authentic information regarding the most notable buildings of a mediæval character which have been erected during the present century. May I venture to hope that you will kindly assist me in this endeavour by supplying me with a few brief notes on the principal works which have been executed from your design?’ Eastlake to PSW, 10 March 1870, *LPW*.

### 35 • To Fanny Warington Taylor, 19 July 1870

*I, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,*  
July 18 1870

Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Taylor<sup>1</sup>

I enclose you the memorandum of acc<sup>ts</sup> and I think you will find it correct.

You will see that Morris & Co have paid me the balance of acc<sup>t</sup> as I told you I should arrange with them to do – that is to pay to Warington Taylor an extra

quarter's salary. The balance paid by Morris & Co is £63.7.9 wh' leaves a balance due to me from you of £26.11.3 – but I should much prefer that you should consider me <sup>as</sup> paid, and allow me to bear this small cost in memory of my poor friend.

I am sorry to hear that you are unwell – ~~though~~ this continued beautiful weather is trying to many people, & may acc<sup>t</sup> for it.

Believe me to be | Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

Account rendered by M<sup>r</sup> Webb, of payments made & received by him for M<sup>rs</sup> Warington Taylor, with accompanying vouchers.

*[Here PSW lists various funeral expenses and payments to Mrs Warington Taylor, paid by him]*

Rec<sup>d</sup> of Morris & Co the balance of acc<sup>t</sup> with Warington Taylor

£89.19. 0
<u>63. 7. 9</u>
<u>£26.11. 3</u>

V&A, NAL MSL/1958/691/108-9

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<sup>1</sup> Widow of George Warington Taylor. It is evident from this letter that, despite his reluctance to act as a trustee (see above, Letter 17), after Taylor's death PSW responded extremely generously on his behalf.

### 36 • To George Howard, 17 August 1870

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Aug 17 1870

Dear Mr Howard.

Thank you very much for the grouse, though I prefer the letter very much to the birds. The letter certainly mixed up friendliness & business – the business I will attend to, but how can I make a return for the sacrifice of the delights & laziness at Naworth in writing to so fearful an old fogy? This letter can be no return for I am bound to write it.

My “Imperial hero” has fallen, & I fancy not all the imperial horses & men can set him up again.<sup>1</sup> I hope you are prouder of France, than I am of the “lost one”! I still think, that till now, France has been well served by Napoleon. The French must look out for some other dictator, for they evidently have no head to manage their own affairs themselves.

I am very glad that you liked “our Mr Morris” – if stroked the right way, the beast is tame enough for practical purposes.<sup>2</sup>

Thank you again for your inquiries at to my well doing. London is not so bad a place when empty, the 3 millions run on pretty comfortably, and if they are hot, they take their handkerchieves [*sic*] and wipe their faces, and go on again, with the delightful expectation, of town once more being full, when serene happiness will

take the place of dull care<sup>3</sup> – but apart from joking, I am glad that you don't look with much horror on the time of your return. You will no doubt laugh, when such a being as myself, says that he has a pleasing recollection but I distinctly remember the few days spent at Naworth as delightful & most enjoyably lazy.

I will look after the organ, and the organ hole, at once.<sup>4</sup>

[Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

- 
- 1 Napoleon III (Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, 1808–73, Emperor of the Second Empire), had suffered French defeats against the Prussians. The 'imperial horses & men' is an allusion to the children's nursery rhyme, 'Humpty Dumpty': 'All the kings' horses and all the king's men / Couldn't put Humpty together again.' For PSW's later, modified view of Napoleon III, see Vol. II, Letter 351, note 3.
  - 2 WM had holidayed at Naworth with JEM and MM, his daughters striking Rosalind Howard as 'the cleverest little things I ever knew'. WM read to the Howards from *The Earthly Paradise* 'most beautifully'. See *Surtees*, p. 87.
  - 3 'Begone, dull care! / I prithee begone from me' (*Anon: traditional*).
  - 4 See below, Letter 46, note 5.

### 37 • To George Price Boyce, perhaps December 1870

*Annotated 'Dec 70?'*

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Tuesday 1. Oclock*

My dear Boyce

I am altogether in the dark as to what you mean, all except the thoughtful kindness wh' made you send me the note just rec<sup>d</sup>.

We may be able this even<sup>g</sup> to have a few words in a corner, wh' may do away with any awkward feeling wh' may have arisen from any carelessness of speech either on my part or yours – if there is evil about in the air, it was probably brewed by me; for I find that when I get out in the evening, <sup>(sometimes)</sup> with kindly disposed friends, my natural melancholy departs, and I am merry & thoughtless enough, or more than enough, to create disagreeable mistakes by the dozen.

Please to believe me that I should deeply regret that even a careless word of mine should give you pain, much more that I should say or do anything of malice or forethought wh' should hurt – but this latter is I hope impossible.

Thank you again for your note.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

Good God! To think that while that heaven sent music was going on, any other than heaven sent thoughts should be in our hearts.

*BL Add 45354, ff. 30-1*



### 38 • To Alexander Ionides, 26 December 1870

*Draft/copy*

G[ray's]. I[nn]. Dec<sup>r</sup> 26. 1870

Dear Aleco Ionides.<sup>1</sup>

I shall have much pleasure in doing what I can for you at Walton.<sup>2</sup> The only difficulty, at present is that I am barely my own master, as this weather keeps me close<sup>at</sup> home – however I am daily hoping to get about.

I enclose a letter for Ashby & Sons (your brother's builders) wh' you can either post or take to their office – wh' is close to you in the City, and make your own appointment. Friday would be the safest day for me.

I had better tell you ~~at once~~ that it will cost very considerably more if Ashby's ~~did~~ <sup>do</sup> the work,<sup>3</sup> than if some local builder (say a Kingston bui man) ~~did the work~~ undertook it – tho' Ashby's would, of course do it much better.

Believe me to be | Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*V&A, AAD*

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1 Alexander (Aleco) Ionides (1840–98), son of Alexander Constantine Ionides (1810–90), the businessman and art collector for whom PSW made substantial alterations to the interior of 1 Holland Park, Kensington in 1879–83 and later.

2 Ionides wrote from Southend about a cottage at Walton on Thames, 'which if you will kindly lend me your assistance, I believe will realize all the wishes I had. I have only seen it once & then hastily, but I think that with very little work it would become one of the prettiest little places I have seen'. Ionides to PSW, 25 December 1870, *V&A, AAD*.

3 The builder, Richard Ashby & Sons of Bishopsgate, had undertaken a rear extension designed by PSW for Aleco Ionides's brother, Constantine, at 8 Holland Villas Road, Kensington (1870). See *Kirk*, p. 298. Ashby was also the builder for 1 Palace Green, Kensington.

### 39 • To Robert Chamberlain, 20 February 1871

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Febr. 20 1871

Dear Chamberlain,<sup>1</sup>

I have put off answering your letter with the hope of finding something to tell you of in the way of help, but I can think of none. Your advance on Butterfield was unfortunate. I think only that. But it seems to me that you had better try him again, by letter, and you may say that I have promised you to call & see him if he would like it & tell him what I think of you. This I shall be pleased to do. I would write to him openly saying that it is absolutely necessary for you to get regular work – and that harder work & less well paid under an architect whom you respect, would be preferable to easy work in most offices.<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for openly explaining your circumstances to me.<sup>3</sup> I can manage to let you have 20£ to help you pay off your debts, (the worst item of your trouble) on the only terms on w<sup>h</sup> I lend money, viz. to pay again if you can, but if you can't not to trouble about it.

If your Father can afford to let you have the allowance, I do not see why, so long as you really need it, you should not take it, for of course you would be only too glad to do without taking it.<sup>4</sup>

If you like you may say to Butterfield that you have asked my advice & that I recommended you to apply to him again. I suspect his work would be irksome – but if it is, straightforward & honest habit will soon make it less tedious but behind all is the devil of “impecuniosity” w<sup>h</sup> should be met in as manly a way as possible.

Yours v<sup>y</sup> truly | P.W.

*LPW*

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1 Not identified.

2 Chamberlain had written of his failure to obtain an architectural clerk's position with William Butterfield. 'The fact is I must get work in some office without any more delay. If it cannot be in one I like; temporary employment would be most pleasant while I was looking for some other. Can you do anything with anyone you know to help me? Terms (I think) not less than £2:10: a week, tho' I would take £2. from Butterfield – or less, if he would at any rate be civil till I was his clerk. . . . I took no introduction & probably began in a rather shoppy way. . . . I said I'd called to ask if he would be so good as to remember me when he should be in want of a clerk – if I was likely to suit him. He turned sharp round on me with "So good as to remember you Sir! Why should I do that? when I know nothing of you." . . . [I]t ended by his saying he had others in view when he wanted assistance.' Chamberlain to PSW, 11 February 1871, *LPW*.

3 '[L]et me add that my Father allows me £75 or if necessary £100 a year, indicating at the same that I ought to be independent. Also that I owe about £75: a good part of which I ought to pay off this year.'

4 'I made up my mind to take your advice when I asked it, and will do as you say. . . . For your offer of help . . . I shall always thank you most heartily, but at present, if I get work I think my debts are well in hand.' 23 February 1871, *LPW*.

## 40 • To George Howard, 20 February 1871

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Feb 20 1871*

Dear Mr Howard.

I will get the new stalls put in hand as soon as possible<sup>1</sup> – some care will be required to secure good ventilation &c.

We just missed each other the last time I was at Palace Green, for I think I saw you riding home after I left.

I have a greater repugnance than ever to having my portrait painted and not even my vanity – which you have shocked by the request – will make me sit – and

besides it is too late.<sup>2</sup> What little shew of nobleness my face may have had in youth, is quite gone now, through my own bad temper & the worse temper of the Metropolitan Board of Works, evil living, & bad company, & old age (premature).

I will look in upon you on the first opportunity.

[Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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1 For stabling at 1 Palace Green, presumably, and perhaps not unconnected with Rosalind Howard's new horse. 'I shall hope to like the look of him, and to believe that he will be safe for you – if he be tame – his 5 years only will be an advantage but perhaps I am writing to a horsewoman superior to effects of temper in a horse. I've only seen you riding the Eastern beast with long ears.' PSW to Rosalind Howard, 18 October 1870, *Howard*.

2 GH's fine sketch of PSW in profile, dating from the 1870s and reproduced as the Frontispiece to the present volume may well have been done surreptitiously.

## 41 • To George Price Boyce, 14 April 1871

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
April 14 1871

Dear Boyce.

You cannot but have eased your sense of obligation to me by writing your kind letter, because you must have known, that kindness is the thing above all others wh' repays – in fact is the only thing which can repay me for any effort I make for another. Now let me relieve you still more by quite honestly explaining myself.

When you asked me to do your house for you, I was uncomfortable, as I always am at doing work for a personal friend, and I would not have done it at all, if I had seen a graceful way out of it – however as that could not be, I did the work as well as I could – not so well as it should have been done, and I believe could have been done by someone else – and it has only been your delicate kindness which has kept <sup>me</sup> from feeling even deeper disappointment than I do.

Now please to try & get rid of any sense of obligation to me. You are under none rightly, none whatever – you gave me no more trouble than was absolutely necessary, and less than I expected you would, and you express a contentment, more than I usually get from my clients.

I will send you the original, signed sheet of plans with pleasure, for you to keep – and if you ever return architect<sup>1</sup> you may copy it put one of your own windows in it à la Pecksniff,<sup>2</sup> and spoil it & build it 20 times over <sup>with</sup><sup>out</sup> admonition from me.

I thank you for being quite sure that I could not have been content with any more than my legal payment. For the generosity of your offer to send me a memorial of your good nature, I can only thank you, and bear the thoughtful kindness in mind – really never forget it. For the “Rossettis” I cannot receive

one,<sup>3</sup> and for any work of yours I shall look forward to give you a commission, when I have the money, to do me something – that may strike me – in the way wh’ only you can do. Please let the matter remain like this, and believe this letter to be faithfully honest.

I think I shall try to hear “Israel in Egypt” on Wednesday next at S<sup>t</sup> James’ Hall. Would you care to victual with me there & go?<sup>4</sup>

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45354, ff. 34-5*

- 
- 1 GPB trained as an architect before devoting himself to painting.
  - 2 Dickens’s creation, the sanctimonious and hypocritical architect Mr Pecksniff, takes on Martin Chuzzlewit as an architectural apprentice, and sets him as an exercise the task of preparing plans for some ‘proposals for a grammar school’. Martin produces a skilful design, which Pecksniff later passes off as his own more, merely adding four windows which manage to destroy its proportions. *Martin Chuzzlewit* (chs 6 and 35).
  - 3 GPB would give him DGR’s *The Meeting of Dante and Beatrice in Paradise* in 1885. See below, Letter 267.
  - 4 St James’s Hall opened in 1858, and had frontages on Piccadilly and Regent Street. There were two restaurants. Handel’s oratorio *Israel in Egypt*, performed on 19 April, was advertised as one in a series of ‘Oratorio Concerts’, and involved 350 choral and orchestral performers.

## 42 • To William Reid, 20 April 1871

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,*  
April ~~19~~<sup>20</sup> 1871

Dear Sir

### Arisaig House<sup>1</sup>

The spring of drinking water at Arisaig House has been analysed, and it has been found that sewage or other poisonous matter finds or has found its way into the current w[ater] cistern.

Lord Abinger<sup>2</sup> – one of the trustees to the late M<sup>r</sup> Astley – has directed me to advise and obtain an estimate for providing a supply of drinking water <sup>into the house</sup> wh’ shall certainly be free from contamination.

I think the best way would be for you to send to Arisaig some competent man who ~~will~~ <sup>could</sup> look into the matter carefully, and who ~~will~~ <sup>would</sup> be able to advise as to the most economical and effectual way of supplying the water, either from ~~catching~~ <sup>touching</sup> the spring at a higher level or from taking water from somewhere else.

I have a feeling that it would be best to hit the present spring somewhat higher up, as I know the spring to be a constant one. Upon your mans returns I should be glad if you would send me an estimate for laying on the fresh water in enamelled

iron pipes to the basement – and for cutting off the present supply, or rather for securing that no more water shall be taken from it.

[*sketch plan*] The <sup>present</sup> spring supply ~~now~~ is taken at A in the basement of house. I think now it should be taken at B outside the Kitchen yard and carried to the basement ~~as~~ in iron pipes as above.

I shall be glad to hear from you on the subject.

Yours truly | Philip Webb.

Mr W<sup>m</sup> Reid.

V&A, AAD

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1 William Reid was the plumber engaged when PSW built Arisaig House (1863–6), in Arisaig, Inverness-shire, together with its adjacent stables and farm buildings. The house was commissioned by the colliery owner Francis Astley (1825–68), once a member (like PSW) of the defunct Hogarth Club. See *Kirk*, pp. 104–11 and 296, and also below, PSW to WW, 4 October 1901, note 8.

2 William Scarlett, third Baron Abinger (1826–92).

### 43 • To Jane Morris, June–July 1871

*Annotated* ‘Watermark 1870.’

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,  
Saturday*

Dear Janey.

I thank you very much for your pleasant letter. I had not forgotten that you were gone from these parts, though my not having written or sent the design for [the] cushion, might have made you think that I had – but I am a poor letter writer, and also a lazy man with much to do.

Your description of Kelmscott with landscape on one side of the river at least, is quite true it is naked & plain, but with all that I still think it has a great deal of character, at least it has that look to me, and the river makes up for the want of variety.

I have almost forgotten Lechlade church but I remember going up the steeple on to the parapet, and making out that it was built late in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and that it was very pretty.<sup>1</sup>

I looked in W. Rossetti’s life of Shelley and the following is there said – “At the end of August, (1815) Shelley, with Mary[,], Peacock,<sup>2</sup> & Charles Clairmont,<sup>3</sup> went in a wherry towards the source of the Thames beyond Lechlade in Gloucestershire. The beautiful ‘Lines in Lechlade Churchyard’ were the result.”<sup>4</sup>

I almost quite agree with you about the effect on one’s mind, wh’ Goethe’s works have, namely that of a theatrical unreality, but then after the outward effect is gone, there remains a huge reality behind; not often a pleasant one, seldom in

fact a pleasant one, but nevertheless fearfully true and therefore enchainning. I do not think I am ever happy when reading Goethe.<sup>5</sup>

I am most glad that you are stronger, so as to be able to get about.<sup>6</sup> If you could manage to get your handyman Comely<sup>7</sup> to hire a tax cart<sup>8</sup> and drive you over to Uffington you and Jenny & May could crawl up to the White horse hill and enjoy a delightful look round.<sup>9</sup>

I send you by book post the design for the cushion wh' I hope you will like.<sup>10</sup> I have coloured in the pattern over my first drawing, how I think it would look well to be worked – but you need not let the colours bind you.

Love to Jenny & May and affectionate regards to you | from | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45342, ff. 21-2*

- 
- 1 'I have been to Lechlade, I want to ask you about the church there. Is the spire as old as the church itself, and do you happen to remember if Shelley was living in the town at the time he wrote his poem in the churchyard.' JM to PSW, June-early July 1871, *CLJM*. She was writing on the occasion of her first visit to Kelmscott Manor.
  - 2 The satirical novelist, Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866), author of *Headlong Hall* and *Nightmare Abbey*, was one of the closest friends of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822).
  - 3 Charles Gaulis Clairmont (1795–1850), Mary Shelley's stepbrother.
  - 4 William Rossetti, *Memoir of Shelley* (London: 1870), pp. lxxx–lxxxi. The text from which PSW quotes reads: 'At the end of August, Shelley, with Mary (always called Mrs Shelley), Peacock and Charles Clairmont *etc*'; PSW omitted the words in parentheses, and the comma which followed them, leading the editors of JM's letters mistakenly to suppose that PSW was referring to Mary Peacock, not born until 1820. *CLJM*, p. 46, note 2. A civil servant in the Excise Office until his retirement in 1894, William Rossetti (1829–1919), younger brother and future biographer of Dante Gabriel Rossetti was also a prolific art critic and editor. He was secretary to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, editing its short-lived magazine, *The Germ* (1850).
  - 5 'I have nearly finished "Elective Affinities." I think with all due respect to Goethe it is a most unsatisfactory book. What! is nothing real? Must everything that is delightful change and leave nothing behind? I can't believe it; one begins by liking his characters very much, then they change, and one can no longer look upon them as real people.' JM to PSW, *ibid*. She was reading J. A. Froude's English translation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Elective Affinities* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854).
  - 6 'I am already so much better that you would scarcely recognise me. I have actually got some suspicion of red in my face – am feeling quite a different creature, I get down to breakfast comfortably with Jenny and May at half past eight.' JM to PSW, *ibid*.
  - 7 Philip Comely was the caretaker and his wife the housekeeper of Kelmscott Manor.
  - 8 Two-wheeled horse-drawn cart, subject to a tax.
  - 9 The White Horse on the chalk hillside at Uffington in Oxfordshire, dating from the Bronze Age, was a favourite haunt for both WM and PSW, and the place where SCC and W.R. Lethaby (WRL) would scatter PSW's ashes on 10 July 1915.
  - 10 'I shall never dare ask you for any design again. I had not expected anything half so elaborate or beautiful, thank you very much for it. I shall work it carefully in fine wool on blue serge I think, taking care to get different shades of blue for the flowers.' JM to PSW, 25 July 1871, *CLJM*.

#### 44 • To Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 29 July 1871

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
July 29 1871

Dear Gabriel

I send by ~~book~~ <sup>pattern</sup> post the patterns of paints. The green, is said by the painter who made it, to be an exact match of the lighter parts of that in your dining room, the whites & reds are such as I should use with alterations for different circumstances.

The little frame which Dunn shewed me could have an eighth of an inch cut away all round the sight opening with but little injury to the frame this would give you a quarter of an inch more in width & height. For the little pillars I would replace those wh' seem to have belonged to it, and look fairly well.

I was at No 16 yesterday and <sup>found</sup> no Brass at work. I met him in the street on Tuesday & he promised to begin on Wednesday morning last. I think you had better send him an eloquent letter, to dim the lustre of his countenance.<sup>1</sup>

There is an old fellow at N<sup>o</sup> 4<sup>2</sup> who keeps snakes by the hundred, from Lillebut [*sic*] size to <sup>that of</sup> him who could crush an elephant. One of the snakes four feet long (so tis said) got into the garden of no 6, and gave the workman a dinnertime's hunting, but without result. Who can ever <sup>again</sup> unbutton with ~~ease~~ <sup>comfort</sup> in any garden within 2 miles of the house? The price of broken bottles for topping the walls of the neighbourhood is going up.

Yours | Philip Webb.

*Texas*

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1 Lot Brass, a builder, was engaged by DGR to undertake minor repairs at 16 Cheyne Walk, under PSW's supervision. 'I have taken your advice, & written strongly to Mr. Lot Brass, who must be more brazen than his namesake Samson if he is not shamed into action by my objurgations.' DGR to PSW (written from Kelmscott Manor), 31 July 1871, *CDGR*, V.

2 4 Cheyne Walk was formerly the home of the artist Daniel Maclise (1806–70), and was where George Eliot spent her last weeks in 1880, but in 1871 it appears to have been occupied by the antiquarian William Sandys Wright Vaux (1818–85), a fellow of the Royal Society. If his various interests included keeping snakes, it is not recorded.

#### 45 • To Heynes Hardwicke, 14 August 1871

*Draft*

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Aug 14 1871

My dear Hardwicke<sup>1</sup>,

~~You~~ <sup>To get a</sup> letter <sup>from you</sup> was a bigger surprise than if anyone had gratuitously given me a hundred pounds, & was a pleasanter gift. I cannot ~~help you~~ <sup>accept your proposition</sup>

though, mores the pity, as you have troubled so kindly to write to me – but I'll try to explain.<sup>2</sup>

My business (~~of wh' I have as much as I can do~~) (with wh' I am fairly enough supplied at the present time) consists chiefly in trying to put up buildings in this country wh' shall be free from art vulgarity – no easy matter this – & with all <sup>my</sup> care I do not succeed too well; but I have only succeeded as well as I have, by strictly avoiding the attempt ~~by 1<sup>st</sup> to give people generally what they want~~ 2<sup>nd</sup> of trying to satisfy<sup>me</sup> the wants of the great majority of people in the way of architecture. There are some few people who think it worth <sup>their</sup> while ~~putting~~ <sup>to put</sup> up with my fancies on account of something wh' pleases them, after all, in my work – but this is quite apart from the fashion of the day or commercial advantage.

Now a place like Bournemouth depends much on the fashionable character & commercial value of its buildings, & to wh' everything else must be subordinated in the art of building – whereas, the art of building as a fine art, must just reverse this order of things.

Supposing that I was so unwise as to go contrary to my ~~ideas~~ <sup>settled views</sup>, & ~~undertake to attempt~~ to assist your friend, I should be doing him an injustice, for I could not do so well for him, as even an inferior man, who was experienced in the ways of the place ~~and~~ <sup>or in</sup> the manners & customs of such places generally.

Please take it kindly that I am thus open with you, ~~as I think~~ <sup>of you</sup> take it as very kind that you should have thought of me at all.

With kindest remembrances to M<sup>rs</sup> Hardwicke. Believe me to be your sincere old friend.

Philip Webb:

*V&A, AAD*

1 Heynes Roger Hardwicke (1815–1901), medical officer of health. He lived at Saxlingham Nethergate, Norwich.

2 Hardwicke had written about a potential new project in Bournemouth. 'Building is going on rapidly at B. Mr Durrant tells me he is now about to dispose of land in the very centre of the Town for public buildings &c. I mentioned your name again & he said I was at liberty to tell you that Crick was no longer his man and that there is a splendid opening for a clever fellow as Architect at B. If you entertain the least idea of doing anything there & w<sup>d</sup> like to come down here I will introduce you to him.' Hardwicke to PSW, 11 August 1871, *V&A, AAD*.

## 46 • To Rosalind Howard, 30 September 1871

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Sep 30 1871*

Dear Mrs Howard.

You will remember an old proverb "Tis an ill wind" &c, now an ill wind has blown Ned & Georgie away and cleared London of other good folk, but it has blown me



a letter from you, to make amends. The letter has somewhat of a semblance of saying, “Well, if the best are away, I must put up with the inferior” however as proverbs are afloat, I may say, “’tis rude/unwise/stupid to look a gift horse in the mouth”.<sup>1</sup>

Ned went off alone to Italy about a fortnight ago, much wanting a change.<sup>2</sup> Georgie went to her sister in Worcestershire,<sup>3</sup> when they will be back, the fates and the purses provided, only know.

Morris is returned from Iceland after a most successful journey; he is in London, having just come back from Kelmscott.<sup>4</sup>

If to dinner at Palace Green be quite quiet, I will come to you with pleasure on Tuesday, but if not I would prefer to call on you & see how you all are.

Would it not be well to let Mr Ferguson (the architect) make arrangements with Mr Lewis for the organ.<sup>5</sup> The architect should know what it best, though sometimes (I speak from experience) they have to make believe that they do.

With kind regards to George and Sir Charles  
Howard<sup>6</sup> | [Yours very truly Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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1 In Rosalind Howard, PSW had his first experience of ‘a client’s wife who took as keen an interest in every aspect of the new building [1 Palace Green] as her husband. He stood up with spirit to [her] domineering manner but consulted her about interior details and fulfilled her requests whenever he considered them wise. They soon became good friends.’ *Kirk*, p. 73.

2 Out of sorts and depressed, EBJ arrived in Turin on 21 September, spending about three weeks travelling in Italy. He had decided to leave England at short notice, with a minimum of fuss, though GBJ was upset. She wrote to Rosalind that ‘I can write of nothing else, and disappointment is an unlovely theme’. *MacCarthy, LPR*, p. 224.

3 GBJ’s youngest sister, Louisa, married to Alfred Baldwin. See below, Letter 54.

4 For WM’s Icelandic journeys, see below, Letter 57, note 4.

5 For the Carlisle architect, Charles John Ferguson, who would succeed PSW as architect to Naworth Castle, see below, Letter 104. The Howards may have been planning to transfer an organ from Naworth to 1 Palace Green: ‘I took the measurements of the organ-case opening the other day’. PSW to GH, 14 August 1871, *Howard*.

6 GH’s father. See above, Letter 7, note 3.

## 47 • To George Price Boyce, ?autumn 1871

*Annotated ‘Autumn 1871?’*

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,  
Saturday*

Dear Boyce

Thank you for your letter. I thought you had buried yourself and were rejoicing at your success. I’m half inclined to fancy that if I should take you at your word and appear in Ludlow Street, next week, you would mutter “damn the fellow, can’t he

take a civil letter as if it was meant, & stop away” but as I have great pleasure in paying people out for professing to take an interest in me when they really do not, you had better look out, and bolt if wise.

I’ve a case in point – some stranger to me wrote some time back, for a design of mine for some buildings, after considerable care of thought, I send them. I hear this morning that he is much obliged, but that some of the design he does not like, and the rest is unsuitable. So I shall send him in (with great glee) the highest possible charge I rightly can – but all this is not apropos of your politeness for I believe if I can come down, you will be very glad to see me.

If I should come <sup>(this week)</sup> it will be somewhere ab<sup>t</sup> Tuesday or Wednesday but you need in no way put yourself out, for the “Feathers” will no doubt hold me beautifully.<sup>1</sup>

Thanks for the photograph – as Carlyle w<sup>d</sup> say, the coach maker should be “more particularly damned”.<sup>2</sup>

For myself I have been working slowly and unsteadily, and as you see from the foregoing, to little purpose. I’ve been much pleased to see Beresford Hope<sup>3</sup> & L<sup>d</sup> Elcho<sup>4</sup> sit upon themselves and Ayrton on the top of that, flat.<sup>5</sup> – And the “Lords” too, but I’m afraid your fingers are already in your ears or eyes.

I’ll look after Boyd – I gave him orders to prepare a stove in the rough, some time since, but I’ve not done my part of it.

Music, I’ve had none – not even the blackbird in my neighbours window, for he has left off singing, and is having his throat relined, for it must have been worn as thin as a wafer. There, I’ll have done with this rubbish, and will bend my mind to think of hoping to leave, for 2 or 3 days, this earthly paradise in Middlesex.

Yours | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45354, ff. 38-9*

1 Featuring a striking seventeenth-century timber façade with motifs of ostrich feathers, Ludlow’s most famous building was built in 1619 as a private house. It has long served as an inn, and was named ‘The Feathers’ in 1863.

2 A precise source has not been traced, although in a letter to his wife (1 October 1852), the historian Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) picks up some of her words: ‘Driven out of the house again, and sleeping solitary in a little lodging! I declare it makes me quite sad to think of it; and --, if -- is the fundamental cause of it, deserves to be, as you say, “particularly damned”.’ Cited in James Anthony Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of his Life in London, 1834–1881* (London: Longmans & Co, 1884), p. 117.

3 Alexander James Beresford Hope (1820–87) was a politician, journalist and influential proselytiser for Gothic revivalist architecture. He was President of the RIBA in 1865–7.

4 Francis Wemyss-Charteris-Douglas (1818–1914), styled Lord Elcho from 1853, and from 1883 eighth Earl of Wemyss and sixth Earl of March, was at this time Conservative MP for East Lothian.

5 Acton Smee Ayrton (1816–86), Liberal MP for Tower Hamlets, was First Commissioner of Works, in which government position he demanded that major public spending should be constrained wherever possible, but also was sure-footed in advancing his pet projects. On 14 August 1871, the *Pall Mall Gazette* carried the report of a House of Commons debate and Beresford Hope’s failed attempt to move a resolution critical of Ayrton’s approval of a new road in St James’s Park, which Beresford

Hope called an ‘inconceivable act of subordination. . . . Mr. Ayrton replied that . . . there was, perhaps, nothing more remarkable than the mistakes which men fell into when they were carried away by feelings of personal hostility, increased by a sense of humiliation and defeat’. Lord Elcho entered the fray the next day, commenting on Ayrton’s incivility. ‘Regarded from an artistic point of view, his appointment to the post of First Commissioner of Works was most incongruous and astounding.’ Ayrton deftly brushed Elcho aside. ‘For his own part, he did not profess in a loud tone to have a profound knowledge of every question relating to art. . . . and he would therefore confine himself to the assertion that he perhaps knew as much of these subjects as the noble lord did. (Much laughter)’. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 August 1871.

## 48 • To Charles Augustus Howell, 9 November 1871

*Draft*

1 R.B. G. I.  
Nov<sup>r</sup> 9. 1871

Dear Howell

In answer to your letter rec<sup>d</sup> ~~this afternoon~~ yesterday I will I should be glad enough to lend assistance ~~to~~ <sup>in</sup> settling ~~matters~~ between you and Mess<sup>rs</sup> Dunn – for ~~they~~ <sup>the matter</sup> certainly should be settled, but I will not attempt to do so, unless you will allow me to produce to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Dunn all the memoranda you enclosed with your letter to me, and also ~~your letter~~ so much of your letter <sup>to me</sup> as relates to <sup>your</sup> dealings with them.<sup>1</sup>

I should think the torrent of virtue poured on you by the “Vox populi” whether worldly or spiritual, need not disturb your serenity, seeing that the article of virtue in any form, <sup>(according to wise-heads)</sup> is a useful one to be assumed even if we have it not.

For myself, with regard to you – ~~I say one~~ I have said ~~very~~ little in public <sup>next to</sup> nothing, ~~& in private~~ & to myself but little more. Except that <sup>I thought ~~that~~</sup> you did not know when you were well off, or if you did know, did not care.<sup>2</sup>

The habits of my life and its surroundings would make it impossible for me to get on well ~~with~~ in your society – ~~and~~ I have always held it best, to live in quiet good nature with as many as possible and to do that ~~one must have no reason to~~ <sup>one has to live apart from a good many in order to</sup> avoid a <sup>stupid</sup> failure.

I am yours faithfully | Philip Webb.

C: A: Howell Esq

V&A, AAD

<sup>1</sup> Howell was in dispute with the builders, Samuel and Samuel Dunn, of Brewer Street, Golden Square, who were pursuing him for unpaid money, and as PSW employed the firm for some of his own work (they were currently completing repairs under his direction to the church of St Dunstan, Hunsdon in Hertfordshire), Howell sought his advice. The fault and prevarication probably lay all on Howell’s side, despite his pleas for sympathy. ‘I find myself accused of crimes I never committed, some of them being really old stories of the time of Queen Anne, and the Georges, quite spoiled

by being badly dressed in shoddy, and thrown on my poor shoulders.’ Howell to PSW, 5 November 1871, *V&A, AAD*.

- 2 ‘What Mess<sup>rs</sup> Dunn may have said to astonish you I do not know, the only – to me – astonishing thing in the affair is the bill itself, and the letter which I enclose. On the other hand let me say that I am heartily sorry if the fact of my having been unable to meet this bill at the time it was sent in has caused you the least annoyance. Believe me or not, I would do very much to please you, and suffer much to save you pain.’

## 49 • To Charles Fairfax Murray, 26 November 1871

*Annotated* ‘Nov 26/71’

1 Raymond Buildings | Gray’s Inn.  
Sunday.

Dear Murray<sup>1</sup>

I went in to Ellis’s yesterday to ask him to come to me on Wednesday evening at 7. oc. to victuals and meet you & Morris – but he told me that he thought you might be obliged to say no. I hope you can get into a cab at your door and out at mine, and I will pack you off again in the same way at good time. Try & come if you think it right, as I should like to see you go before you go to “happy land”.<sup>2</sup> I fancy that by shutting the sash down of a Hansom you need not fear – and as you must be proof against all other diseases, perhaps a closed cab would be as good as your own room, and your company would soften our manners.

I am indeed sorry that fate is pegging at you so, but, somehow envy you your way to Italy.<sup>3</sup>

Come if you possibly can to yours, | Philip Webb:

*Fitzwilliam 3*

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1 Early in his career, the painter, art connoisseur and collector, Charles Fairfax Murray (CFM, 1849–1919), undertook copying work of various kinds for DGR, EBJ, JR and WM. His personal life was complicated, for as well as marrying an Italian girl in 1875, with whom he had six children, he also raised a family in London with Blanche Richmond (d. 1952). He continued to visit his Italian family in Florence, whilst also maintaining a house in London. His complex domestic arrangements came to light after his death, when his legitimate Italian children disputed the will, and SCC spent considerable time advising his English son, Arthur. CFM was generous in gifting paintings and manuscripts from his collection to the Fitzwilliam Museum during SCC’s early years as Director.

2 Italy.

3 During this first Italian trip of several months, CFM began the close studies which resulted in his detailed technical understanding of Italian paintings, based on ‘painstaking examination of hundreds of works of the great masters allied to an extraordinary visual memory’. *Elliott*, p. 36. JR wrote ‘with somewhat mortified respect of my friend . . . as knowing more in many ways of Italian pictures than I do myself . . . [E]very picture he buys for you is a good one’. *Fors Clavigera*, letter 79, in E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, *The Works of John Ruskin*, XXIX (London: George Allen, 1907), p. 155, note 3. JR described him as ‘a heaven-born copyist’. *Elliott*, p. 43. In 1885 PSW commissioned from CFM a copy of Carpaccio’s *St George and the Dragon* at the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, in Venice. See below, Letter 253.

**50 • To George Price Boyce, 22 August 1872**

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Aug 22. 1872

Dear Boyce

I have to go to Shrewsbury on the 27<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday next) and ~~that~~ on my way back I could look in on you—but, it also occurs to me that possibly you might like to join me on Wednesday morning at Shrewsbury and that we might take a cart and go & look at Wroxeter (is not that the Great Roman Station?)<sup>1</sup> then to Buildwas Abbey & back by Wenlock Abbey<sup>2</sup> & Acton Burnell<sup>3</sup> to Dorrington on the Shrewsbury & Ludlow line.<sup>4</sup>

The round would give an embarrassment of riches, but the wealth would not injure us, I hope.

Possibly you have seen all these, or probably your work ties you to Ludlow, & you could not give the day – in either case do not hesitate to say that it would be inconvenient.

You could leave Ludlow by the 10.14 am train for Shrewsbury & hear of me at the “Raven” on Wednesday morning ab<sup>t</sup> 11.30.<sup>5</sup> We could spend ½ an hour in looking at Shrewsbury & then journey away as above.

Let me hear, but in no case inconvenience yourself. | Yours | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45354, ff. 45-6*

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1 The village of Wroxeter in Shropshire, on the River Severn, is the site of Viroconium Cornoviorum, the fourth largest Roman city in England. Excavations had begun in February 1859, and Charles Dickens was an early visitor.

2 Buildwas Abbey, a ruined twelfth-century Cistercian abbey, is situated on the Severn not far from the ruins of Wenlock Priory, a Norman foundation of Cluniac monks. See also below, Letter 85.

3 Near the Shropshire village of Acton Burnell are the ruins of Acton Burnell castle, a thirteenth-century fortified manor house.

4 Opened in 1852 on the Shrewsbury and Hereford Railway, Dorrington station closed in 1965.

5 The Raven Hotel in Castle Street, Shrewsbury, was demolished in 1960.

**51 • To Jane Morris, 7 September 1872**

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Sep 7. 1872

Dear Janey

I was very glad to have your letter, because it was written without my asking for it – and I very much wish to have your confidence in my sympathy (if you think it would be worth anything).<sup>1</sup> By “sympathy” I do not mean to express anything more than a wish that you – an old friend – should find a comfort in liking me, and being liked by me and that no real untruth sh<sup>d</sup> pass between us, and as little mistake in expression as possible.

Of course I know the strength of resource in despair, well enough – that is, the willingly cutting oneself off from the help of any one, so as to avoid the risk of being deserted by them – but, “nothing venture”, you know – well, one must venture in friendship, for such a thing to be possible; and, assured friendship is very beautiful, and at times deeply soothing in the mere belief in it.

I send 3 books, not at all knowing whether you have read all or any of them. I’ve not seen Topsy to ask him.

Very much should I like to come to Kelmscott again, and will try to do so, if you stay much longer. The last visit, on arriving, did give my soul a twist, wh’ I hope my face did not express, as it was quite unavoidable (i.e. the unfortunate circumstance). Like a fool I stayed in my damp shoes at Kelmscott, and have had a return of Bronchitis, slightly, wh’ still hangs about me. I spent a day & a half free from business in Shropshire last week, and rather enjoyed going to the Roman station Uriconium, [*sic*] (Wroxeter) – Buildwas, Much Wenlock and Acton Burnell – all very interesting places, specially the Roman one, for, I cannot resist (& don’t try) the effect of looking on these strange visible expressions of long past life.

To see twenty miles of Roman ruins in Italy would be trifling, but as many yards of the same in this northern place, is entrancing.

Yours affectionately | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45342, ff. 23-4*

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1 Although the letter has not survived which prompted this notably sensitive response (and also the letter following), JM’s turning to PSW at this time was prompted by DGR’s mental collapse and probable suicide attempt in June 1872. ‘Many friends blamed his infatuation with [her] for this.’ *CLJM*, p. 49, note 2. It is touching to see PSW’s refusal to rush to judgment. He wanted Jane restored to health and happiness no less than he wished for the peace of mind of her husband, his closest and oldest friend, though it is hard to see how both outcomes were equally achievable.

## 52 • To Jane Morris, 12 September 1872

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,  
Sep 12. 1872*

Dear janey.

Thank you for your letter, wh’ is simple & straightforward, to my minds content. I do not think I misunderstood your former letter, for I had no idea that you would think it worthwhile to tell me a lie, any more than I would really lie to you. There is something in human nature, pure & simple, wh’ touches me closely, and when I see any one clinging to the natural parts of life, I feel much inclined to become one of their friends. This is not often, as you know. So many things come between a human being & simplicity, and so few can resist the inter attraction.

I have always taken a great interest in you, and none the less that time has tossed all <sup>of us</sup> about, and made us play other parts than we set out upon. I see that you play yours, well & truly under the changes, and I feel deeply sympathetic on that account – for, my ~~old~~ own tumbles are not so absorbing that I cannot attend to the tumbles of those who are wrapt about, with the pains of life wh' are not ignoble.

Please believe that I, in no way wish to penetrate into sorrows wh' I can in no way relieve. I, from my own self, know the impossibility of two people bearing one's burden.

Yours affectionately | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45342, ff. 25-6*

### 53 • To Rosalind Howard, 17 September 1872

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Sep 17 1872*

Dear Mrs Howard.

Your letter gave me real pleasure, for though I can manage to steel myself against offers of friendship pretty well, any resuscitation of what has looked in passed times to be real good nature, always overpowers me – is irresistible – and so, your kind letter coming after such persistent silence & in itself seeming to be so full of spontaneous good nature, beat down my natural defence, and has laid me open to the possibility of finding one of these days that I have been mistaken. This is pride, mere pride, is it not? but then one has a right to one's pride, as much as to the shape of one's nose and no amount of education will get rid of the latter, without destruction.

I rejoice that you acknowledge that you are a “hum bug” for a portion of your time, for the mere acknowledgment shows that it oppresses you to be it. In fact I think you do better, and look better, when you are quite honest – i.e. it “becomes you”.

Your notice of the effect of your scepticism interested me very much; but what I should like to know, is, if you ever believed? Also, do you not think it quite as difficult to be sure of what you disbelieve, as to what you believe? I think you might perhaps have answered your friend the organist by saying that you were not certain of your disbelief and therefore did not attempt to help others into the same difficulty.

I am afraid you will have some difficulty in teaching your boy that injuring live things is not beautiful; I believe that the love of injuring is deeply ingrained in humanity, and that all interference will be mere education, to be washed away with change of fashion. In myself there is a strong natural bent that way, and, perhaps only the advocacy of such an advocate of sporting as Anthony Trollope makes me look upon it with disgust, & keep it down.<sup>1</sup> This education however is

self education & therefore the best of that matter. Let me return you your quotation “Lord what fools these mortals be”.<sup>2</sup>

I met Colvin the other evening & he told me he had been with you & had had wet weather.<sup>3</sup> I am sorry for you, tho’ I think you wise to brave it and make up your mind to enjoy even the bad weather. The heavy grey clouds & driving wind must be very fine on your lovely hills for, lovely they are, though so far north, and if it were not for my habit of making & keeping to “shallow excuses” I would come and look upon them (the hills) with you.

Your own self-addressed birds came this morning and at same time a letter from George, to say that they were all right &c. Thank you very much for them, though your letter was the more delightful. You must have enjoyed your laugh (I even did myself) at my writing to remind and then to send me a present.<sup>4</sup>

Please to forgive the rudeness of this scrawl, & write me a lecture (for education’s sake) when you have time and inclination.

[Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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1 Trollope contrived to include extended fox-hunting scenes in many of his novels, even when incidental to the plot.

2 Puck, in *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*, III.ii.115.

3 The fine arts critic, Sidney Colvin (1845–1927), like GH a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge. Through his close admiration of the work of EBJ, he was drawn into that circle of friendships, which also included DGR, WM and Robert Browning. Colvin was appointed Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1876, and Keeper of the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum in 1884. He was an occasional guest at Naworth Castle.

4 ‘Some time since, 3 brace of grouse were sent to me from the north, and I wrote and thanked a friend of mine for them; this was a bad shot of mine for he had not sent them to me, but he took my letter as a reminder & sent me some birds later on; since then, another friend has sent me birds and now I think all have sent who usually do send; so that I may safely label you with the first gift of 3 brace; you ought to be ashamed of yourself for not letting me know that you were doing the kind turn, so that I might have avoided one blunder in my life.’ PSW to GH, 13 September 1872, *Howard*.

## 54 • To Louisa Baldwin, 15 December 1872

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,  
Dec<sup>r</sup> 15. 1872*

Dear Louie.<sup>1</sup>

I am not sure that it is pleasant to be quite forgotten <sup>even</sup> by ones enemies, but I am quite sure that it is very delightful to be remembered by ones friends.

Thank you & Baldwin, very much for your kind invitation.<sup>2</sup> I cannot come to you just now but I intend to come when it is possible for me to do so.

For many years I have gone to my mother at Oxford at X’mas time, and should do so this year is she were in better health; but, she has taken to her bed and I think



will never be able to leave it – however, as she is over 80 years of age this is not wonderful. When this X'mas engagement is broken through, I think I shall please myself by never making another, as I so much prefer, seeing my friends when I can, even at a moment's notice, ~~than~~ to looking forward to the pleasure, wh' ~~is so often~~ <sup>may end in</sup> disappointment.

I have often to go northward and north westward on business, and if it would not be unpleasant to you & Baldwin I sh<sup>d</sup> be glad on one of my journeys to turn out of my way, & stay a day with you, after giving you due notice of my coming? I say, a day, but I sh<sup>d</sup> like to stay a week, though this, as time has gone for years with me, seems quite impossible.

The last time I saw Georgie, she was looking very well. Agnes I have not had the pleasure of seeing for a long time.

With kind regards to Baldwin | Believe me  
to be | Yours very truly Philip Webb.

*V&A, AAD*

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- 1 Louisa Macdonald (1845–1925) was the youngest of the four celebrated Macdonald sisters: her eldest sister, Alice, was mother of Rudyard Kipling; the second eldest was Georgiana (Georgie), who married EBJ; Agnes, who was closest in age to Louisa, married the painter Edward Poynter who became Director of the National Gallery in 1894. In 1866 Louisa married the Stourport industrialist Alfred Baldwin (1841–1908). Their only child, the future Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin (1867–1947), succeeded his father as MP for Bewdley in Worcestershire in 1908. PSW probably came to know the Baldwins through his friendship with GBJ.
- 2 Louisa wrote to PSW on 12 December, from Wildern House, Stourport, inviting him for Christmas Day, 'or failing that between then and New Year's day'. *V&A, AAD*.

## 55 • To Charles Fairfax Murray, 18 March 1873

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn | London,*  
Mar. 18. '73

Dear Murray

You brought me last evening the most graceful as well as the most delightful present you could have made me – namely, the portrait of my life's friend.<sup>1</sup> In sending you 10£ I only wish to recognise the value of ~~the~~ <sup>your</sup> gift in a way that cannot intend that such a gift should even appear to be repaid, only that my present shall cost me some thing, to shew my gladness. The mere money will defray (perhaps) the cost of the antiquarian's print but cannot in any way represent the value of the gift.

Yours, in the flesh you have kindly laboured to represent, | Philip Webb:

*Fitzwilliam 4*

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1 CFM's fine watercolour portrait (Tate Gallery, London) is one of the very few known images of PSW, and therefore much reproduced. None of the few surviving photographs of PSW are formal poses, and were usually taken without his knowledge, most of them late in his life. It is therefore surprising that he should ever have agreed to this portrait, but despite himself seemed pleased with the outcome.

## 56 • To Charles Faulkner, 26 May 1873

*Draft/copy*

1. R.B. G.I.  
May 26 '73

My dear Faulkner,

Thank you for your very kind letter of Saturday.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot but admire your boldness, your quite wonderful courage. Supposing it possible I could agree to undertake the work in question, if it were offered to me, and that I succeeded in building it. Your life in Oxford would be simply unbearable for ever afterwards, and I do not know if you could quite escape obloquy if you spent the rest of your natural life in Wagga Wagga.<sup>2</sup>

In the second place therefore know my deep aversion to having any hand in turning exceptional Oxford into a place of ordinary architectural expression – well, my mind is in no way changed, since I said to you that I never w<sup>d</sup> help in that way.

There is great improbability that any committee w<sup>d</sup> think of allowing me to try my hand at a design, and even if it did and I was so far lucky as to moderately satisfy myself, I am quite sure that I should never satisfy anyone else, except perhaps, Morris.

There is only one architect living who I think could do something w<sup>h</sup> w<sup>d</sup> not seriously hurt Oxford and who w<sup>d</sup> be capable of carrying with him some opinion more extensive than that of himself and one dis-honourable friend (this friend will be here in half an hour & I'll tell him what I've said) and that is Butterfield.

So, accept my very sincere thanks and forgive any seeming  
rudeness | from yours ever | Philip Webb:

*LPW*

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1 'Yesterday convocation was called on to approve of designs for new Examination Schools prepared by John O. Scott (a son of GGS) but convocation by a large majority rejected and sat upon the designs, & this I think they deserved. . . . I hope that opinion may now prevail that it will be better to appoint a committee to select an architect . . . [without the university] reserving to itself any right of subsequent approval or rejection. If such a committee were appointed and were to crawl up the steps of No 1 Raymond Buildings on their knees, would you kick them out or would you consent to entertain the idea of making designs for these examination schools? I know you dislike Oxford

being pulled about and still more of having anything yourself to do with the matter. But this is a case of necessity. We must have a building and it does seem as if we might as well have a decent one while we are about it.' CF to PSW, 24 May 1873, *LPW*. For the Examination Schools, see also below, Letter 169.

- 2 Now the largest inland city in New South Wales, Australia, Wagga Wagga grew rapidly between 1850–70 from a small village to the size of a modest town. PSW's point here is to suggest a location almost inconceivably removed from CF's Oxford.

## 57 • To Charles Fairfax Murray, 6–17 July 1873

1 Raymond Buildings Gray's Inn.  
July 6. '73

Dear Murray

From one of your own natural instincts you will have allowed exactly for the cause of my not writing – idleness to wit. I was very glad to have both your letters – the first of date May 7 – & the second of June 1. I cannot but think that a blessing has been laid on your black-haired head, and that often you must shake it with intense satisfaction, that the fates laid it, for once, in such a bed of clover.<sup>1</sup> I assure you that the evil sights, smells, and associations of London, have in no way changed for the better – so that you may comfort yourself during any time of depression with the certainty of your better surroundings.

When you had <sup>last</sup> the tingling of vexation, at your hindrances in getting to see what you had to see at Rome, you must have had great satisfaction also, that for once, railways had been made for one useful purpose – that you had been able to use them for it in particular. Your liking or disliking the Sistine ceiling <sup>pictures</sup> w<sup>d</sup> have all depended on your way of having thought of them. I sh<sup>d</sup> not easily forgive myself if they disappointed me at first sight. The quantity of saffron colour in them, of wh' you speak, does not surprise me – and the white being a pale blue one also seems to me to follow naturally. Would it not be possible to make a tracing of one of the photographs and try and fill in the colour of one of them it would not take long in that way, and it would interest me immensely?<sup>2</sup>

July 17 – 4 pm. There, you see when this letter was begun & you see the new ending – unless I send it off in 10 min time, you will never hear from me.

In case no one has written to you I will just say, that M<sup>r</sup> Jones is much better, I suspect the over stimulant of wonderful Italy is just subsiding, for I've heard him calling for more of that liquor.<sup>3</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Morris is I suspect at this moment leaving the embraces of the chaste "Diana" & preparing to pickle his bottom on the Iceland poneys.<sup>4</sup> [*sic*] M<sup>r</sup> Rossetti is I believe flourishing.<sup>5</sup> For myself – well! here I am! With my bottom thoroughly pickled by my usual chair, or, if it is not, it will be, by continued use for at least 12 months to come – I've expended a pound or two more on some photographs of MAB<sup>6</sup> over which I dream, and try to believe that there is "such such person" or has been.

I think of you often, and always with that kind of pleasure, wh' you know human nature will take, in seeing unworthy persons receiving the rewards of merit

wh' properly belong to the sigher. Dear Murray, write to me if it is no trouble, and only expect an answer from me when it is no trouble to me to write.

May the shadow of your hair never be less, | Yours sincerely | Philip Webb:

Phil & Margaret [Burne-Jones] & Jenny & May all flourish, so also flourishes the birch rod.

*Fitzwilliam 7*

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- 1 He means CFM's being in Italy.
  - 2 In January 1885, PSW would eventually see the Michelangelo Sistine frescos for himself. Meanwhile, he relied on photographs and the reports of others for his impression of the impact of these works.
  - 3 Towards the end of his protracted affair with Maria Zambaco, EBJ left for the last of his visits to Italy, in April 1873. His companion for the first few days was WM, on this his first Italian journey, but on 13 April WM started his return trip from Florence. EBJ continued to Siena (where he met CFM, himself on his way to Rome to make Botticelli copies for JR) before travelling to Ravenna, where he developed a fever. 'Returning homewards at Bologna, he collapsed for several days, delirious, having to abandon his plans for Umbria.' *MacCarthy, LPR*, p. 249.
  - 4 WM and CF made two trips to Iceland, the first in 1871 in the company of the Icelandic scholar Eiríkr Magnússon. They embarked on this second expedition in early July 1873, transported once again on the Danish mail boat, *Diana*. PSW's thought of WM on horseback was perhaps prompted by EBJ's sketch inspired by the previous trip, reproduced in *MacCarthy, WMLT*, p. 294.
  - 5 DGR was living at Kelmscott Manor at the time, and had recovered much of his strength since his collapse of just a year earlier (see above, Letter 51, note 1). During these years he painted JM many times.
  - 6 Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). The earlier mention in this letter is evidence enough to reveal the reverence in which PSW held the work (particularly the sculptures) of Michelangelo. Amongst other masters whose portraits he admired for the same truthfulness, and flawless technique, are Durer and Holbein. His annotated copy of C. Heath Wilson, *Life and Works of Michelangelo Buonarroti* (London: John Murray, 1874) is in the Emery Walker Library. See *CAGM*, p. 147.

## 58 • To George Howard, 25 July 1873

*I, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
July 25 1873

My dear Howard.

After struggling with Ashby's I have brought their estimate for the new south addition to Palace Green House down to 1066£.<sup>1</sup> I've no doubt that by putting the work out to tender we could get it done for 100£ less, but it is a question if Ashby's and Taylor's proved care would not be worth the other hundred pounds.<sup>2</sup>

Will you let me know, as soon as possible, if I shall proceed with the work as it is, or reduce the design?

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*Howard*

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- 1 Ashby Brothers (formerly Richard Ashby & Sons) had been the original builders for 1 Palace Green. They now undertook to add a schoolroom and bedroom to the third floor. See *Kirk*, p. 296. 'Mr Cates – the Archt to the Crown lands – since the death of Mr Pennethorne – was pleased to say that he thought the addition to the house was a great improvement and that he would forward its carrying out as much as possible'. PSW to GH, 4 July 1873, *Howard*.
- 2 Taylor was the works' foreman for Ashby Brothers.

### 59 • To Frances Hohenthal, 29 July 1873

*Postmark* LONDON. W.C. JY 29 73 *Address* Frances Hohenthal | Hamilton | Canada.

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
July 29. 1873

Dear Frances Hohenthal<sup>1</sup>

I was very glad indeed to have your letter, telling me of your safe arrival in Canada & Niagara, and of your having met with an employer. Now, there looks to be a good chance for you to do well. You are free from the impediments to right progress wh' met you at each step in England, and you can depend upon your own honourable labour to carry you through life, without unreasonable drawback.

I have been very busy ever since you left, or I sh<sup>d</sup> have answered your letter before. My business gives me many letters to write, wh' has caused me to put off writing this for so long.

London has not changed since you left – it is still a very dirty overcrowded place, and it makes me very often wish to be – where you are – that is, with more fresh air about me.

Keep up your courage – behave honourably – (that you can always do) and you will live to be happy on your own exertions.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*LB-1, loose insertion*

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1 Although the identity of this correspondent is uncertain, and her relationship with PSW unclear, it is evident that this was someone whom he had done his best to assist and presumably encouraged in her decision to emigrate. He had also provided her with a reference.

### 60 • To George Howard, 4 August 1873

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Aug 4 1873

My dear Howard.

Ashby's will begin as soon as possible.<sup>1</sup> I was only able to settle with them today as I had not included the parquet &c &c in the 1066£ and have had to cut and

carve a little to get it to fit – however now we are straight & I will urge on as fast as possible. Ashby's will sign the accurate bills of quantities and for their own sakes will hurry to get covered in before the autumn wet & frost comes on them.

I have not put in the carving for at the present moment I don't see my way to its being done properly.

I am surprised at your suggesting a journey to Cumberland when I must be on the ground to push the Palace Green affair forward.

Also, you know my sentiments as to taking the appropriate morsels out of the mouths of local men. The Cumberland men must be of different mould (& no doubt are very different indeed) to Scotch men or the whole county would have howled at the thought of a London architect having so much as been inside Naworth.<sup>2</sup> Please take care – both of Naworth & Lanercost – there was a good article in the *Athenæum* on Saturday on the subject of historical monuments which have nearly ceased to remain with us.<sup>3</sup>

The stable door however is I believe reduced to one broken hinge and half a bolt.

Yours | Philip Webb:

*Howard*

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1 See above, Letter 58, note 1.

2 Between 1873 and 1879, PSW undertook a number of works for GH at Naworth Castle, including converting the Moat House into a studio for GH, creating an additional room in the Morpeth Tower, and designing staircases, fireplaces, bookcases and other library fittings. See *Kirk*, p. 299.

3 On 2 August, *The Athenæum* carried an anonymous article headed 'Exeter Cathedral' (pp. 152–3), which used the then current restoration work of Sir Gilbert Scott to bemoan such practices, anticipating by a full four years the underpinning philosophy of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, founded by WM and PSW. 'We prefer to speak of the "renovation" of Exeter Cathedral, rather than describe the works we carefully examined the other day as "restorations," which they are not, in the opprobrious sense of that term, at least. . . . Whether it is desirable to turn an old cathedral into a new one, is a question upon which we need not give our opinion. There is now no first-class cathedral left to be meddled with, and Westminster Abbey is the sole work of the kind which remains substantially unrenovated. We do sincerely trust that the Abbey Chapter will control the iconoclastic zeal of their Dean, and that the church may be allowed to remain as it is, if only that we may have a specimen of what churches were before the avatar of Sir G. Scott.' p. 152.

## 61 • To George Howard, 27 August 1873

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,  
Aug 27 1873*

My dear Howard.

I should be very sorry to vex you. Would indeed sacrifice some of my own most valuable moral satisfaction to avoid doing so, provided, that I find your wish to

have me as a coadjutor is not more vicious than wishing to join me with you to rob the Bank of England of 100,000£; prove that, & I'll make some effort.

You will know that it would be utterly impossible for me properly to advise you upon the Brampton work, without my looking into the affair on the ground.<sup>1</sup> Well I cannot come just now at all events for I am kept close by two or three things which have to be roofed in before the end of December. Would it be possible & well for us to journey to Brampton in the winter, and look into affairs there, in the calm of blood, caused by the thermometer being at 32 degrees? I dare say that I can arrange this, and it might not be inconvenient to you.

I will not forget the vane, but shall probably raise difficulties about the carving at Palace Green.

We could surely find a place for the small terracotta, easily, in the new study.

I've been obliged to arrange for scaffolding to be bracketed out from our ground, as the tenants in the court, whether of their own will or by superior advice, refuse to allow scaffolding to be used on their ground.<sup>2</sup> This will cost us 10£ but we should have had to pay more than that in bribes the other way.

I'm sorry you have had bad weather – hope it will give over for a fortnight at least before you leave. London is dull, but we bear up under the loss of beauty & fashion.

With kind regards to Mrs Howard & your father. | Yours | Philip Webb:

*Howard*

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1 As the patron of the existing parish church at Brampton, which was 'of poor quality, badly in need of repair, and had no free pews for the poorer townfolk' (*Kirk*, p. 261), GH was keen to replace it with a wholly new building on the same site. See below, Letter 75, note 3.

2 This relates to the additional works carried out at 1 Palace Green in 1873–4. See above, Letter 58, note 1.

## 62 • To Charles Fairfax Murray, 3 October 1873

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn | London,*  
Oct 3. '73

Dear Murray.

Thank you very much for your letter – and also for the photographs, or, as they might better be called the invisible pictures.<sup>1</sup> By the aid of strong magnifying glass I can make out that it must be beautiful at Siena. Your description is a great help. 'The invisible part on the left is so & so, that in the middle such & such the jet black of the right hand is very delightful'. The architecture is evidently good as also the round crested horses. Italian horses are always well done. They must have been a good breed of horse. Your pleasant description of the colouring of the MA Holy family is a great help to me over & above my own power of divination.<sup>2</sup>

It rather enrages me, however, that I cannot see it with the eyes that water in my own head. What a blessing it is that pictures & music don't want translating. If you were to buy a live Italian he would have to be translated before <sup>being</sup> of any use to an Englishman.

I've lately got some Philpotti photographs of ivory carvings,<sup>3</sup> very much more interesting & valuable than I expected – of Byzantine & pre-Byzantine date & with mediævae many of the designs quite wonderful & some of the execution wonderful to a degree.

I take it that you have heard from Morris, who has come back very like a Scandinavian skipper, as brown as a berry – & much less portly, on acc<sup>t</sup> of hard fare & laborious journeys – if he writes he will tell you of his doings, no doubt.

I am glad to find you are so industrious, it confirms what I have often felt that this damp oppressive climate is a serious breaker of good resolutions. The fine climate of Italy making you feel inclined to work as long as light & your back hold out, confirms me in my opinion. The little awkwardness of your desiring to do the work you ought not to do, will also give way under the better climate, no doubt. Heaven help you in your strife. For myself, my work goes a little awkwardly, but I try to frighten it by making faces at it. I sometimes succeed in frightening it to death, wh' keeps it from killing me. You will be pleased to hear that they are diligently searching for coal in the remaining pleasant places of England & sometimes finding it. In another 20 or 30 years most of the country will be more or less of a cinder heap, at that time America will have gained the iron trade so that we can then enjoy our wealth & witness the ruin – perhaps, for <sup>a</sup> great treat, now & then, going over to American to see Canterbury Cathedral, wh' they will have there under a glass case – no doubt. If this something bitter spirit of mine does not “inspire” you & make you “speak like an oracle” tell me in a long letter what will.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*Fitzwilliam 10*

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1 Throughout his professional life, and on into his retirement, PSW placed great value on the detailed evidence to be gleaned from photographs about historic buildings or works of art, and he was always grateful to receive them from friends. The development of the commercial picture postcard was a godsend in this respect, but he was equally pleased to receive the traveller's own snapshots.

2 The circular panel painting of the Holy Family by Michelangelo (c. 1506–7; Uffizi Gallery, Florence) was commissioned by the businessman Agnolo Doni at the time of his marriage.

3 John Brampton Philpot (1812–78), a British photographer resident in Florence. His photographs of art works included a series of 265 images of fictile ivory (now in the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest).



63 • To William Morris, December 1873<sup>1</sup>*Draft*1. R.B. G.I.  
Dcr. '73

My dear Morris,

Some time I ago I wrote to Wardle upon what I considered was necessary for the good of the Firm under its present circumstances, namely, to have an accurate account made of its value and financial state by some perfectly unconcerned and professional accountant, & he agreed with me (at least such is my recollection) that it would be well to do so. Since then I have further considered the matter, and am more sure that I was then right as to what would be for the good of the Firm, as well as I am now, for myself. For, I know that the “concern” is active, and therefore very considerably involved in a mercantile way, but, I also know that I, personally, have no control over the business; though I am personally interested in its prosperity, and sh<sup>d</sup> be involved in its adversity. In either case the result would be unjust. ~~Now, this is not a reasonable state of affairs; and, although I am dealing with artists, perhaps it would be as well to try and amend it.~~ I have therefore concluded to withdraw from the Firm as a mercantile partnership – though proposing to keep to the friendly and artistic conjunction, so long as I can be of any use to it. I must ask you – whose daily work it is to interest yourself in the matter – not to fancy that I am suspicious of the Firm’s stability, but to understand only that my work will not let me be as certain of the “Queen Square” affairs as I am of those w<sup>h</sup> keep me alive every day. Also let me say, that I am glad of the business activity shewn, (though as before explained I cannot involve myself in it) because I am sure of the usefulness of the Firm’s labours, as well as the harmlessness of them, in comparison with the monstrous rubbish usually turned out under the name of fine art w<sup>h</sup> makes such sober work as yours (apart from drunken poetry) most agreeably honourable.

Yours very affectionately, | Philip Webb.

P.S. You can use all, or any part, of the above, in letting the other members know that I wish to put myself on a new standing with the business.

Also, I sh<sup>d</sup> propose that in the Christmas account, the value of each of the members shares should be named, and that any portion belonging to me sh<sup>d</sup> remain in the business as long as it is required, at the rate – say – of the English Funds – 3 per cent.

*LPW*

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1 This is an important letter in the history of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co, for it was almost certainly written with the intention of assisting WM in his subsequent decision to re-organise the firm so as to take sole control, against much opposition from three of the partners (Madox Brown, DGR and Marshall). It may even have initiated the momentum for change. It is a skilfully constructed document, for although PSW may seem to be protecting his own interests, it can be argued that his real motive was entirely selfless. Ever since the initial equal investments from the original partners at the firm's founding, subsequent capital injections had come from WM, and although he was the sole partner taking a regular salary, he was also the only one who was 'full-time', and much of the risk fell on his shoulders. By seeking to initiate a debate between the partners (the postscript suggesting that his ideas might be circulated was probably no afterthought, but the whole point of the letter), PSW probably hoped that the ensuing discussions would be amicable and reasonable, and might lead to the kind of outcome which WM eventually achieved in March 1875, the dissolution of the partnership and the re-branding of the business as Morris & Co., under his sole ownership. WM agreed a settlement of £1000 to each of Brown, DGR and Marshall, but EBJ, CF and PSW all waived this payment. It is entirely characteristic that PSW should additionally refuse to take the £640 of fees due to him for work done over the years for the firm, and should continue to recommend Morris & Co. whenever possible to his own clients. For the protracted negotiations which led to the establishment of Morris & Co., see MacCarthy, *WMLT* pp. 341–7 and Charles Harvey and Jon Press, *William Morris. Design and Enterprise in Victorian Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), ch 3.

### 64 • To Elizabeth Burden, 4 April 1874

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
April 4. '74

Dear Miss Burden

Thank you very much for your letter, I shall be very pleased to become a subscriber or double subscriber as you may feel the want.<sup>1</sup> Mind, I take it on your responsibility, if a church & state ware sh<sup>d</sup> happen, not on mine

With kind regards | Yours very truly | Philip Webb.

*Huntington MOR 579*

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1 Bessie Burden taught students for the School of Art Needlework (later the Royal School of Needlework) from 1872, and also took on private pupils before endeavouring 'to set up her own teaching establishment. On 13 April [1874], she received a letter from Rossetti . . . offering to be a "large Donor to your School".' Lynn Hulse, 'Elizabeth Burden and the Royal School of Needlework', p. 33 note 16.

### 65 • To George Price Boyce, 16 May 1874

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
May 16. '74

Dear Boyce

I've written to my "sawbones" brother to ask him to look in upon you on his next visit to London.<sup>1</sup> If you feel able, & inclined you sh<sup>d</sup> go down to Welwyn & have

lunch with him. It is a pleasant place & the fresh air w<sup>d</sup> probably do you good. Journey under an hour, and cab at Welwyn Station – address

“H: S: Webb Esq<sup>r</sup>

Welwyn | Herts.”

There are many old fashioned plants in the garden wh’ has a gravel bottom & poor soil. Trains, Kings Cross to Welwyn Station, wh’ is the next below ~~Welwyn~~ Hatfield.

My brother is a careful & patient surgeon, knowing the exceeding value of both.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

My brother is a Bartholomew’s man & keeps up his connection, & knows of new hospital treatments &c & knows Paget very well.<sup>2</sup>

*BL Add 45354, ff. 58-9*

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1 PSW’s elder brother, Henry (Harry) Speakman Webb (1827/8–1911) was a general practitioner in Welwyn, Hertfordshire. Their younger sister, Caroline (d. 1909), lived with him, and after her death another sister, Sarah (?1826–1922), moved in, by which time he had retired to Winchester. All three, like PSW himself, never married. PSW often spent Sundays with Harry and Caroline, and would design and build New Place (with surgery) in Welwyn (1877–80). See *Kirk*, pp. 224–6 and 300.

2 St Bartholomew’s Hospital (Barts) in Smithfield, in the city of London, was founded in 1123. The surgeon, Sir James Paget (1814–99), had a long association with Barts, having trained there before returning to teach, serving as curator of the museum and as warden of the medical school. Paget was celebrated for his surgical and pathological work, and for new procedures in treating a range of diseases.

## 66 • To Lady Fitzhardinge, 7 July 1874

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]

July 7. ’74.

To Lady Fitzhardinge.

Cranford house | Hounslow.

Dear Lady Fitzhardinge<sup>1</sup>

I have obtained an estimate from Morris & Co of Queen Square<sup>2</sup> for reglazing the Hall windows of Berkeley Castle from my design, with reinsertion of the <sup>existing</sup> shields of arms. I propose to glaze the lower portion of each light with a flowered quarry and coloured border, and the upper portion, in wh’ the shields are set, with a flowing grisaille<sup>3</sup> border. Each window, composed of two under and two upper lights w<sup>d</sup> cost between 18 & 20 pounds, and as there are 4 windows, this w<sup>d</sup> amount to about 80£. There w<sup>d</sup> in addition be the usual charge for carriage & fixing.

Yours very truly, | Philip Webb:

*LB-1, p. 1*

- 1 Georgina Holme-Sumner (d. 1897) married Francis Fitzhardinge Berkeley (1826–96) in 1857. On the death of his father in 1867, Berkeley became the second Baron Fitzhardinge. The family seat was Berkeley Castle, in Gloucestershire, where between 1874–7 PSW oversaw various alterations, decorations and glazing work, the latter involving MMF & Co. See *Kirk*, pp. 183–4 and 299.
- 2 PSW here uses the Morris & Co. designation about eight months before the official demise of MMF & Co, though perhaps as a convenient shorthand rather than in deliberate anticipation of the future changed status of the firm. See above, Letter 63, note 1.
- 3 Grisaille: ‘Decorative painting in grey monotone to represent objects in relief’ (*OED*).

## 67 • To George Frederic Watts, 8 July 1874

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
July 8. ’74.

To G: F: Watts Esq<sup>f</sup>  
Little Holland House | Kensington

Dear Watts.<sup>1</sup>

In answer to your letter just rec<sup>d</sup>. It is with real distress that I find come true, what I could not but have anticipated. The encouragement offered to the interested people in the Isle of Wight to gratify their angry disappointment at the employment by me of a London builder <sup>on your house</sup> has told.<sup>2</sup>

When I paid my lawyer for his advice in the disgraceful matter of Saunders & Waterfield<sup>3</sup> I resolved not to further trouble myself where great care and anxiety had been of no avail, and my professional reputation had gained no consideration for my opinion.

I will send for Tyerman, and as carefully as possible put the matter before <sup>him</sup> to see if there is any probability of his considering himself responsible, since (as I heard from Tyerman) other workmen than those employed by him have been engaged upon the house, and wh’ report is confirmed by your letter <sup>& enclosure</sup> of today.

There is still a balance of 30 or 40£ due to Tyerman under my direction and I will do the best I can, though I am not at all hopeful. ~~The rest~~ <sup>Each day</sup> of this week I am engaged and I have to go into Yorkshire next week,<sup>4</sup> so that I cannot possibly go to Freshwater ’till the week after next.

Yours faithfully, | Philip Webb.

*LB-1, pp. 1-2*

1 The painter, George Frederic Watts (1817–1904).

2 The difficulties which arose in connection with the building works for The Briary, the studio-house PSW designed for Watts at Freshwater, on the Isle of Wight (1872–4), made this an unhappy commission. In order to reduce the costs for Watts, PSW turned to the London builder, John Tyerman, whom he had previously employed to build houses for GPB and the painter, John Roddam Spencer

Stanhope (for whom see below, Letter 96, note 6), and risked doing without a clerk of works. A disgruntled Isle of Wight builder chose to make trouble and criticised the work as inadequate: ‘after examining it, Webb found that this was not the case, and the accusation was withdrawn. Unfortunately, Watts took up residence before the house was finished and, finding the house damp, he wrote angrily to Webb impugning his professional integrity, got the local builder to investigate the problem, and brought in local tradesmen.’ *Kirk*, p. 274.

3 The dispute resulted from PSW’s work being challenged.

4 He was overseeing work on his house for Isaac Lowthian Bell. See below, Letter 73, note 5.

## 68 • To Jane Morris, 13 July 1874

*I, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,*  
July 13. ’74

Dear janey

Thank you for your affectionate letter. I’m afraid I shall not see you before I go.

I’ve no recollection of Morris having mentioned your wish for me to come up, but then I know that my memory is worse than his, & therefore he may have done so. I have been very busy, partly unavoidably, & partly through a bad way I have of letting work get into a knot. ’Tis in that state now, & I’m untying it.

I go into Yorkshire tomorrow morning, & shall not be back ’till Thursday or Friday night. It pleased me to think of your going to the Flemish towns, a van Eyking. How the childrens eyes will round in their heads.<sup>1</sup>

I am glad that you liked the Goethē conversations. The old boy found out his <sup>own</sup> proper Boswell, did he not? Johnson managed his, with verbal bangs & buffets – Goethē with the most delicate flattery.<sup>2</sup>

Oh the wonders for the 2 girls & the boy.<sup>3</sup> You and me never had such wonders.

The Oxford houses are sold, and the Webbs’ & Speakmans’ swept away<sup>4</sup> – and the town purified.

Poor old town, poor old memories. I commission you to drink a bottle of wine for both of us, for forgetfulness sake.<sup>5</sup>

Yours faithfully | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45342, ff. 31-2*

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1 WM took JM, their daughters, and the Burne-Jones children on a trip to Belgium in July, from Calais travelling to Tournai, Ghent and Bruges. Jan van Eyck (c 1395–1441) was one of the most significant Flemish painters of the fifteenth century, and is known to have worked in The Hague and Bruges.

2 Much of Goethe’s biographical history depends upon the published work of Johann Peter Eckermann (1792–1854). *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret* first appeared in English in a translation by John Oxenford (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846). James Boswell’s *The Life of Samuel Johnson* was first published in 1791.

3 Philip Burne-Jones.

4 The end of the Webb family home in St Giles’, Oxford.

5 It was a regular theme of PSW’s that he and JM had a special link through their Oxford childhoods.

69 • To George Frederic Watts, 17 July 1874

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
July 17. '74

To G: F: Watts Esquire  
Little Holland House | Kensington

Dear Watts.

Upon finding it impossible for myself to visit Freshwater at once, I considered it w<sup>d</sup> be best to employ another Arch<sup>l</sup> (whose professional character w<sup>d</sup> be ~~above~~ <sup>beyond suspicion</sup> ~~dispute~~, and who might be considered unprejudiced –) to visit the works and examine them, in the presence of Tyerman <sup>the builder employed by me,</sup> and the several tradesmen who had been called in without my consent or approval to report upon Tyerman's work.

I enclose a copy of the report of M<sup>r</sup> Vinall<sup>1</sup> – the Architect I employed – and wh<sup>'</sup> <sup>report</sup> I consider to be a careful and dependable one. It will be seen by the report that M<sup>r</sup> Tyerman expressed to M<sup>r</sup> Vinall his willingness ~~even now~~ <sup>– even now –</sup> to do all that was required of him to remedy defects. I beg to say for myself, that Tyerman has never hitherto objected to do any work to the house that I expressed a wish sh<sup>d</sup> be done.

I propose, now, ~~to request~~ that Tyerman ~~shall~~ <sup>should</sup> receive the instructions of from M<sup>r</sup> Vinall, and carry out the necessary repairs under his direction, before ~~any further~~ the balance or balances due <sup>from you</sup> to Tyerman are paid to him.

I shall be obliged if you will let me know at what time it w<sup>d</sup> be convenient to you for M<sup>r</sup> Vinall to direct Tyerman to begin the repairs. As soon as these repairs are completed I must beg you to release me from any further interference in a matter wh<sup>'</sup> has been so ~~little~~ <sup>far from</sup> satisfactory to me.<sup>2</sup>

Yours faithfully, | Philip Webb.

*LB-1, pp. 3-4*

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- 1 Charles George Vinall, of Goodman and Vinall in Buckingham Street, the Strand, from whose architectural practice GWJ would join PSW's office, in early 1882. Vinall would serve as an Honorary Secretary for the SPAB (1880–89), and a regular committee member, reporting on particular cases.
  - 2 Vinall oversaw the completion of the project. Finding the whole affair distasteful, PSW refused to accept any fee from Watts. Remarkably, their relationship was not permanently soured. See *Kirk*, p. 77.

**70 • To William Tatham, 25 July 1874**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
July 25. '74

To W: Tatham Esq<sup>f</sup>  
118 Pall Mall | S.W.<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir:

I beg to acknowledge the rec<sup>t</sup> of and to thank you for your letter of the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst and to say in answer, that it will be impossible for me to enter upon any fresh work for some time to come on acc<sup>t</sup> of present engagements. Also, to avoid any possible<sup>ity</sup> of misunderstanding I will ~~tell you~~ say, that for some time past, I have decided not to undertake ~~work~~ to build for any one who is not conversant with my work, and able to judge of what would be the finished effect of ~~what~~ that wh<sup>i</sup> I should ~~propose~~ agree to carry out.

Yours truly, | Philip Webb.

*LB-1, p. 6*

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<sup>1</sup> William Tatham (1834–76), wine merchant.

**71 • To Reverend Oswald Sharp, 4 August 1874**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Aug 4. '74

To Rev<sup>d</sup> Oswald Sharp.  
Martyrs Mem<sup>l</sup> Ch. | S<sup>t</sup> John's S<sup>t</sup> R<sup>d</sup> E.C.<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir:

I awaited your answer to my letter of Saturday <sup>last</sup> & deferred writing again, thinking it possible that you might not have rec<sup>d</sup> ~~my letter~~ it in proper time.

In your letter of Saturday you presuppose that it is my wish to keep Alice Burbridge away from her duty. The suggestion is completely erroneous, and I must beg to refer you to my letter ~~of~~ to you at the time when Alice's mother's life was in such a critical state, that it was absolutely necessary that her daughter sh<sup>d</sup>

attend upon her personally.<sup>2</sup> I rec<sup>d</sup> no answer from you to this<sup>at</sup> letter though in it I proposed to become responsible for ~~any~~<sup>the</sup> cost of providing a ~~monitor~~ substitute for Alice during her <sup>enforced</sup> absence from school.

If from your continued silence I sh<sup>d</sup> be obliged to consider the necessity of applying to the <sup>committee of</sup> Privy Council for assistance, I must beg you to remember that I sh<sup>d</sup> only do so, because you deny me the usual business attention to my appeal to you <sup>as</sup> manager of <sup>the</sup> School to which Alice Burbridge is attached.

Y<sup>rs</sup> truly | Ph. Webb.

*LB-1, pp. 7-8*

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1 The Reverend B. Oswald Sharp was the first vicar of the new church of St Peter's, Clerkenwell, also known as the Smithfield Martyrs Mission Church, consecrated in 1871. The building stood on the site of the former town house of the Marquesses of Northampton, used as a school until its demolition in 1869. The church suffered severe bomb damage in 1940, and was demolished in 1957.

2 'A quarter's salary is due to-day for Alice Burbridge's services: but as she has rendered scarcely any service of late & you still propose to keep her away, it is fair to the Managers to ask if you are prepared on her behalf to make some arrangement on this score.' Sharp to PSW, 1 August 1874, *Cheltenham* 1991.1016.665.i. The history of PSW's philanthropic interest in Alice Burbridge is unknown. She was employed as a pupil-teacher at the parish school attached to the Martyrs Church, based at 12 St John Street Road, but the critical illness of her mother kept her away from work. Earlier in the year, PSW had written to explain this: 'The comfort of her daughter's attention is so great, that I sh<sup>d</sup> be much obliged if you could arrange that Alice's place at the school sh<sup>d</sup> be filled by a substitute, 'till such time as death or increased strength relieved Alice of the sad necessity of breaking in upon her work. If the providing a substitute sh<sup>d</sup> cause the school an additional expense, I shall be glad to be responsible for the same.' PSW to Sharp, [1874], *Cheltenham* 1991.1016.665.h.

## 72 • To the Managers of the Martyrs Memorial Church Schools, 5 August 1874

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Aug 5. '74.

To the Managers of the "Martyrs' Mem<sup>l</sup>" Ch' schools.  
S<sup>t</sup> John's S<sup>t</sup> R<sup>d</sup> E.C.

Gentlemen.

Having been enabled to see The Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Sharp – one of the managers of your School – I explained to him that it was the wish of Alice Burbridge's mother, expressed to me just before she died, that her daughter should be transferred from your school to one in the country, more particularly on acc<sup>t</sup> of her health.

I beg therefore to ~~give~~<sup>send</sup> you this as a formal notice that <sup>it is necessary that</sup> Alice Burbridge sh<sup>d</sup> leave your school at the end of 3 months from this time. I sh<sup>d</sup> ~~also~~



be obliged, if I <sup>shd</sup> succeed in shortly finding a proper school in wh' to place Alice Burbridge, that you will <sup>arrange to</sup> let her leave ~~you~~ – if necessary – before the whole time of 3 months has expired.<sup>1</sup>

I am Gent<sup>l</sup> Yours faithfully, | Philip Webb.

*LB-1, p. 8*

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1 'I beg, in the name of the Managers to accept your 3 months notice for Alice Burbridge, from Aug 5. If you get a School before that time & they can obtain a candidate in her place, they will release her as you wish.' Sharp to PSW, 10 September 1874, *Cheltenham* 1991.1016.665.e. PSW found an equivalent position for Alice Burbridge as a pupil-teacher at a parish school in Datchworth, Hertfordshire, but two years later was writing to the vicar there, fearing that she might be wanting to join her stepsister in Russia. 'I think, if Alice goes to her sister to live with her, it will be one of the worst things that could happen to the girl. However, I have no power to hinder it, personally; and I could only hope that some aid might have been given, if it had been this wish as well as in the power of Rector or Church (or School) wardens, ~~to~~ <sup>by</sup> keep<sup>ing</sup> her to her signed indentures 'till they were completed.' PSW to Reverend John Wardale, 3 August 1876, *LB-1*, p. 44.

### 73 • To George Price Boyce, 1 September 1874

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Sep 1. '74

Dear Boyce

I have your double dampy [*sic*] letter, and therefore let me begin at once by damning you, for no force of words can lower your tone; let us hope they may brace you with echoes of many damns from the ring of the one “damning” against Dartmouth rocks. I see, that if you are not worth coming for to see, the old church is. I beg you to preach at the parson on each Sunday & Saints day, that he may not blast his church by restoration. Tell him what evil minded persons all Church restorers are, and that you have it from the highest authority, that if he does not keep the Scotts' & Streets' & Burgesses'<sup>1</sup> out of the church he – the parson – will never see Heaven or, if he does he will not be able to appreciate it, & it will be Hell to him.

If you sh<sup>d</sup> go to church please make one or two notes of the details of arches <sup>capitals</sup> &c, wh' I see are peculiarly Devonshire – the parson will think you are taking down the heads of his sermon, & he will fire up with disestablished force. I have<sup>d</sup> a book with the pulpit in it, but someone has stolen the book from me. Altogether, I fancy the screenwork & pulpit &c must be very beautiful.<sup>2</sup>

It looks to me that it may be very well for you to be at the warm end of England, even if it is not bracing now, for you will be able to stop on late into the Autumn. You probably want 3 or 4 months of real change. I shall not see my brother for a fortnight, unless he looks in upon me, but I will give him your message when I do see him.

There is not any probability that I shall come down and see you as I'm fairly tied by the leg – worse luck for me, better for you, if it is not unkind to say so, & I don't mean it as such – but, I'm losing that natural sweetness of temper, a characteristic of me wh' you can't have forgotten.

As ill luck w<sup>d</sup> have it I've made a deadly enemy of Wells,<sup>3</sup> by building stables at Bowman's in front of a telescopic view of his (<sup>Wells</sup>). I'm very sorry to have done it, but nothing will make him believe that is not malice on my part.<sup>4</sup> How shall I ever get to be an RA now, good God! What ill luck.

I go to Rounton again next week for a day I believe,<sup>5</sup> & am only anxious to avoid beautiful Doncaster with your bloody aristocracy & their brutal sports.<sup>6</sup> I suppose you are setting-to at a large picture, one that will torture you well, & keep you from troubling about any other evil on Earth. Hope you've got pleasant rooms, & feeling Landlady, and many bottles of good wine; O Lord how lazy I could be, & what a lot of wine I could drink.

Yours with a pinch for remembrance, | P Webb.

*BL Add 45354, ff. 62-3*

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1 For William Burges, see below, Letter 76, note 2.

2 Mention of the roodscreen makes it clear that PSW refers to the fourteenth-century church of St Saviour's, Dartmouth, in Devon.

3 See above, Letter 12, note 2.

4 PSW had built Joldwynds, at Holmbury St Mary, Surrey (1870–5), for the eye surgeon William Bowman (1816–92), created first baronet in 1884. Bowman was consulted by DGR on his eye disorders, and also became PSW's oculist.

5 PSW was currently engaged in overseeing the construction of Rounton Grange at East Rounton, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, the house he had designed for the iron and steel manufacturer, Isaac Lowthian Bell (1816–1904). 'The interior, which was comfortable rather than grand or luxurious, [would be] furnished and decorated almost entirely with Morris & Co. products, many of them designed by Webb'. *Kirk*, p. 123.

6 The annual St Leger horserace was run at Doncaster on 16 September.

## 74 • To Lord Sackville Cecil, 11 September 1874

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Sep 11. '74.

To The Lord Sackville Cecil.  
Great Eastern Rail:<sup>y</sup> Bishopsgate  
My Lord.<sup>1</sup>

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9<sup>th</sup> ins<sup>t</sup> enclosing <sup>a</sup> cheque for £218.1.8 wh' I return.

If your Lordship will refer to my letter to you of the 16<sup>th</sup> of April last, you will see that I declined to accept ~~no~~<sup>any</sup> remuneration whatever for my work in respect of your house at Hayes.<sup>2</sup>

I told Mess<sup>rs</sup> Goodman & Vinall that I sh<sup>d</sup> not object to their charging the whole 5 per cent for their works, as I considered, & still consider that they would barely be remunerated – even by the full amount – for their labours in the matter.

Yours faithfully. | Philip Webb.

*LB-1, p. 9*

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1 Lord Sackville Arthur Cecil (1847–98), for whom PSW designed Oast House, Hayes Common in Kent (1872–3). He was a younger half-brother of the third Marquess of Salisbury, the future Prime Minister.

2 As in the case of The Briary, PSW's house for Watts (see above, Letter 67), here is evidence of the upset which followed a client's interference in the building work, with the result that (as before) PSW refused his fee. 'Cecil might have been expecting to get on well with Webb, with whom he had in common a capacity for conscientious work and sympathy for those in difficulty. However, during construction in 1873, a problem arose, probably as a result of Cecil attempting to direct the building work himself, which certainly Webb would have taken as an insult to his experience and skill. Charles Vinall took over the supervising of construction.' *Kirk*, pp. 217–8.

## 75 • To George Howard, 29 September 1874

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Sep 29 1874

Dear Howard.

In answer to your letter of the 24<sup>th</sup>. It does not at all surprise me that your working estimate for the Brampton houses should be as much as £2,990, as on referring to my papers, I find that I estimated the work at £3,350.<sup>1</sup> You must bear in mind that practically there would be 9 houses, namely the Carpenter's or archway house, 6 intermediate houses, and we must count the lodging house as two, for it has that capacity. There is no doubt that the size of the houses could be reduced, but the plans would have to be re-drawn, so as to reduce everything in proper proportion. You must know that I always considered that they were to be larger & in every way somewhat superior as town houses, to the cottages you ordinarily build in the fields. Therefore if Warwick<sup>2</sup> puts down £250 as the price of a country cottage, I do not think that £332 or thereabouts would be unreasonable for the town houses. Don't you think you could get an average of 25£ a year for each house?

Mind you, there would be no difficulty in reducing the size of the houses and still keeping the character of them.

As to the Church – when I looked at the present church and its site in Brampton, I made up my mind as to the character of the church for a new one to suit that site,

which is a good one for a town church.<sup>3</sup> So that if you would let Warwick make me a plan of the ground with a section from north to south giving the fall of the ground and position of the present building I would make a plan of new church in sufficient manner to let me make an estimate of the cost which would enable you to set to begging with some certainty as to how much you would want to collect. I would do this at once on your sending me the plan of the ground – and section [*small sketch of existing church and churchyard*]. The section, if I recollect rightly is something like this sketch.

Our branch of the family of the Smiths has been very remiss.<sup>4</sup> I've no doubt in my own mind that they have only just now begun upon the clock. A workman came here this morning and promised that the clock & dial should be ready in 15 or 16 days from this time. Warwick has the address of Smith, and you can thunder at them as soon and as often as you please.

I saw Ned on Friday last and I thought him pretty bright, but perhaps this came of the reflection from some new Botticelli photographs which he was shewing me.<sup>5</sup> However, I did think that he was looking pretty well. I hope that Rosalind is stronger than she was.<sup>6</sup> Please to put my kind remembrances to her in as pretty a form as possible. I don't believe so much in your "beastly" weather as you are too far from London or any of the "black countries" – wind & wet are as nothing in comparison with the clouds of prosperity. I cannot come and see you now, or I would do so, as I encourage a feeling that you would not ask me to come unless you wished to see me.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

Morris is laid up with a strong touch of rheumatism first in one foot & then in the other.<sup>7</sup> P:W:

I was at Palace Green last Thursday. I think they must have nearly if not quite done the work they had to do there. I was obliged to give orders for them to paint the iron trellis over the stable wall as it was rusting through. Indeed outside painting should be done generally as soon as it can be arranged. PW.

*Howard*

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1 GH was wanting to erect a terrace of workers' houses in Brampton, close to the Naworth Castle estate (see also below, Letter 77). PSW drew up three different schemes between 1874 and 1876, but they were never executed. See *Kirk*, p. 299.

2 Thomas Warwick was GH's clerk of works for the Naworth estate.

3 The appointment of a new incumbent to the parish church of Brampton, the Reverend Henry Whitehead (1825–96), made GH's wish to replace the dilapidated existing church more likely of success. See also above, Letter 61, note 1, and for Whitehead, below, Letter 214.

4 The London clock-making firm, John Smith of Clerkenwell, founded in 1780, had been engaged to make a clock for Naworth Castle – and is not to be confused with the unrelated but equally prestigious firm of clock-makers, Smiths of Derby.

5 EBJ had visited Naworth during the summer, and was joined there by WM. 'They had been given for their use a room in one of the towers, once the old library, and not touched since Tudor times.

Twenty tourists were ushered in one day: Rosalind thought that “two lions in the old room ought to enhance its interest”.<sup>7</sup> *Surtees*, p. 101. For EBJ’s admiration of Botticelli (‘no one is like him and never will be again’), see *MacCarthy*, *LPR*, p. 101.

6 Rosalind Howard’s elder sister, Kate, Viscountess Amberley (1844–74), had died in June, having caught diphtheria from her daughter.

7 Probably gout, to which WM was prone.

## 76 • To George Gilbert Scott junior, 6 October 1874

*Draft/copy*

[1. Raymond Buildings . . .]

Oct 6 ’74.

To G: G: Scott Jun<sup>r</sup>

7 Duke St. Portland Place W:

Dear M<sup>r</sup> Scott.

In answer to your letter of yesterday. The <sup>firm of</sup> London builders who have done most work for me is that of ~~the firm~~ R Ashby & Sons of 24 Bishopsgate without, and I have always found them ~~both~~ willing, & capable and responsible men of business, and doing good sound work.<sup>1</sup> They have never built a church for me, but I hear that they have built one for M<sup>r</sup> Burges.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to Washington Church, I sh<sup>d</sup> be very glad to lend you any assistance.<sup>3</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Lowthian Bell is abroad for 3 months, but I shall see his son, Hugh Bell, in a few days & I will mention the matter to him & urge him to use any influence he may have <sup>for you</sup>.<sup>4</sup>

I shall be glad when the foundations of your church are getting in to go and look at them, as the new ground with its varieties is always useful.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb.

*LB-1, pp. 11-12*

1 PSW had used Richard Ashby and Sons for at least four of his London commissions by this time. See above, Letters 16 and 38.

2 The architect and designer, William Burges (1827–81), much of whose stained glass and other decorative work rivals that of Morris & Co. He was close to many in the broader Pre-Raphaelite circle. The Ashby firm would be the contractors for his own Tower House, in Melbury Road, Kensington (1875–7). The foundation stone for Scott’s new church of St Agnes, Kennington Park, Lambeth, was laid in August 1874, but there was ‘a succession of difficulties with different contractors. Dove Brothers were to have undertaken all the work but a dispute over prices confined their contribution to the foundations.’ Gavin Stamp, *An Architect of Promise. George Gilbert Scott Junior and the Late Gothic Revival* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2002), p. 75.

3 Scott prepared designs in 1874 for a new chancel and tower at Holy Trinity, Washington, co Durham, but the plans did not proceed.

- 4 Although currently engaged on work for Lowthian Bell (see above, Letter 73, note 5) PSW had previously designed Red Barns at Coatham, Redcar (1868–70) for Bell's son, Thomas Hugh Bell (1844–1931), who succeeded his father as second baronet. The celebrated archaeologist and diplomat, Gertrude Margaret Lowthian Bell (1868–1926), was Hugh Bell's daughter.

## 77 • To George Howard, 15 October 1874

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Oct 15 1874

My dear Howard.

I do not think anything can equal your good nature towards me, except your folly towards yourself. Bundles of rods are you binding together with which to birch yourself. However, don't say that I did not try to open your eyes – when some years hence you have to stand in that “Public” at Brampton, & lay your hand on your heart, & speak of the help you have been to the town,<sup>1</sup> what'll you answer to the little fresh coloured farmer wife, who will sing out in Cumbrian treble ‘how about that “shitten yellow coloured” architect who you saddled us with’? Oh sirs! where'll you be I should I like to know? By good luck I have to go to Rounton in the early part of next week, so that I can come on without much loss of time to myself, or expense to your committee.<sup>2</sup> I think that trains will serve for me to get to Naworth-gate by the train 7-oc there on Wednesday evening. I could spend Thursday in the several businesses, and get back to town by the 8.41 train from Naworth to Carlisle on Friday morning.

By these means I could be better judge of the amount of mischief you intend for the “moat house”,<sup>3</sup> Brampton cottages &c &c, and display a dignified face before your church committee; the interspaces of time being filled up with Naworth ale. I went to Clerkenwell today, and taxed the Smiths with negligence; but they, with unblushing effrontery (which could only have come from their relationship to the Foreign Office) turned to memoranda to see if such a thing as an order had been given: however, it stands now that their man is to come to me on Saturday with such dimensions &c as will allow me to look into Warwick's part of the clock business.<sup>4</sup>

If you see “your committee” will you be so good as to say that I will attend to their request, and be at Brampton on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>.

You will understand this light letter of mine for what it is worth and believe, that beneath the lightness, there remains very real appreciation of your kindness, mixed with grave doubt as to the object on which you expend it.

With kind remembrances of Rosalind [Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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1 PSW envisages GH canvassing in a future election campaign. Indeed, after his father's death in 1879 he was elected in his place as MP for East Cumberland.

- 2 For the Brompton church building committee, see below, Letter 80. PSW was remarkably prescient in foreseeing some of the local opposition which would surround the erection of his new church, something which he would put down to mean-spirited provincialism.
- 3 The room at Naworth which PSW converted into a studio for GH.
- 4 See above, Letter 75, note 4.

## 78 • To Rosalind Howard, 26 October 1874

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Oct 26 1874

My dear Mrs Howard.

Thank you very much for your admirable letter. A mere word or two saying that Howard was better of worse would not have satisfied me, for I was very anxious to know clearly something of his state – now, I can think reasonably of his attack.<sup>1</sup> I rejoice to hear that your sister is going to be with you so that you may more easily get some rest for yourself, for unless you are careful of your own health you will not be kind to anyone.

On the whole Dr Baylis's opinion seems to me to be a hopeful one, and the disappointment at George having to go away this winter, is as nothing compared to the confidence given at his pulling through, if care is taken. Indeed, I am very much relieved by your letter, and also impressed by your kindness in thinking it worthwhile to write it to me.

I found our friends all fairly well on my return but they were quite upset by my dolefulness. Fortunately, I had not to write it to them, for Morris and Burne-Jones were at Queen Square, where I saw them by 9 o'clock on Friday night, and I was able to speak clearly of George's state; their expressions of affection were also very agreeable to me.

The ending of your letter is something of a relief to my mind, for, on finding George ill when I had looked forward to seeing him well, was a trial to my spirits, and made me rather savage I thought, and that again vexed me. If there was any apparent kindness in me, it was my real feeling shewing through, in spite of circumstances.

When George is well enough, I will write him word of how his Naworth affairs have been working in me, and that will help to drive away the bogies of weakness & weariness from him. Pleasant Naworth, I know of no country house, so free from the things which make them so really dismal, as yours; you will understand, then, why I do not wish to be an instrument of change in it.<sup>2</sup>

As you say nothing of the children I take it that they are getting on well.

I send your letter on to George<sup>3</sup> at once.

[Yours very truly | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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1 GH was suffering from 'pneumonia and severe bronchitis'. *Surtees*, p. 101.

2 See above, Letter 60, note 2.

3 GBJ.

## 79 • To Ford Madox Brown, probably 8 November 1874

Gray's Inn  
Sunday

My dear Brown

I heard last night of the fatal end to the illness of your poor boy.<sup>1</sup>

Please accept my sincere sympathy with you, in this great loss to you and your wife.

Believe me to be | Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*Huntington HM 45439*

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1 Oliver ('Nolly') Madox Brown (1855–74), son of Ford and Emma Madox Brown, was a gifted painter and writer. He died on 5 November from peritonitis and septicaemia, leaving his father bereft.

## 80 • To Thomas Forster, 17 November 1874

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Nov<sup>r</sup> 17. '74

To Tho<sup>s</sup> Forster Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Brampton Cumb<sup>d</sup>

Dear Sir.<sup>1</sup>

### Brampton Parish Ch

I beg to acknowledge the rec<sup>d</sup> of your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> instant, conveying to me the directions of the Committee for me to proceed with the necessary plans for rebuilding Brampton ~~Parish~~ Church.<sup>2</sup>

I will put the matter in hand in due course, keeping in mind the memorandum as to the cost <sup>that it shd</sup> not <sup>exceeding</sup> £6,000.<sup>3</sup>

I am dear Sir | Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*LB-1, pp. 13-14*



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- 1 Thomas Forster, a local solicitor, was secretary of the Brampton church building committee.
- 2 PSW had attended a meeting of the committee on 22 October, and sent them a report a week or so later. 'As I have sent in to the Brampton people my reports as to the Church affair and as Howard will not be there, to see the babe he has so tenderly nursed, I send a copy to you to read to him if he is well enough to undergo it; if you are too anxious to be bothered by it, just put it in the fire.' PSW to Rosalind Howard, 4 November 1874, *Howard*.
- 3 'I think I am right in the way of taking the Brampton instruction.' PSW to GH, 21 November 1874, *Howard*.

## 81 • To Charles Fairfax Murray, 25 November 1874

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn | London,  
November. 25. '74*

My dear Murray

It was very good of you to send me those translations of the Ourchael Angelo letters.<sup>1</sup> They have stirred me to read Grimm again.<sup>2</sup> None of my enthusiasm about OA. is at all dimmed. He is a very good expression of the best kind of power of the Italian artists, because he has such a variety of their capacity almost unmixed with any other faults than his own. I would rather that you sh<sup>d</sup> go through the letters in order, than pick out the plums. First, because it will induce you to translate them and secondly, because I don't know wh<sup>r</sup> are the plums. Also, I can stick them into my Grimm. I've lately read again George Eliot's "Romola" – it is, as you must know, all about Florence & Savonarola – but there is not a word about the said master.<sup>3</sup> This reading on my part came from a longing to read of Italian matters, as I could not see the places & remains of the people. Also, the thoughts of the places counteract the catarrh & rheumatic pains, which rack our northern noses and joints, in this November weather here. So you are at beloved Pisa again! Though, if you are warm, is a question, for, I heard from Florence the other day, saying that it was very cold there, and snow on all the hills.

I've nothing whatever to tell you, except that our Burnejones is doing pretty well, though nearly chained to his hearth. M<sup>r</sup> Morris is at work on his Italian parchment and doing very pretty things on it<sup>4</sup> – but is "so so" in health. I am building houses for people who w<sup>d</sup> prefer them other than I can do – this they find out when they are done. Poor them.<sup>5</sup> The newspapers are banging about the poor pope, "him not caring one straw".<sup>6</sup> Quaritch<sup>7</sup> is in despair since your departure as he sells no books, except a pounds worth to me in the shape of Plutarch's lives – but what is a pound? There, if this cheers you up, a very little will do so indeed. Again I thank you for the translation.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb.

*Fitzwilliam 14*

- 1 'Ourchael Angelo': a wordplay on Michelangelo. CFM presumably sent his own translations of letters from the recent *Le Lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti* (Florence, 1875).
- 2 Herman Grimm, *Life of Michael Angelo*, translated by F.E. Bunnnett, 2 volumes (London, 1865).
- 3 George Eliot's historical novel, *Romola*, first appeared in serial form in the *Cornhill Magazine* (1862–3).
- 4 On 18 February 1874, WM had written to CFM, seeking a supply ('100 skins') of Italian vellum, as he wished to try his hand at his own illuminated manuscripts. 'In March, he began a vellum manuscript of the *Odes* of Horace. At the same time, he planned to transcribe one of his own tales, "Cupid and Psyche," which was to include the pictures and designs made by Burne-Jones in 1869 for the original scheme of an illustrated *Earthly Paradise*.' *CLWM*, I, p. 214 note 2: see also WM to CFM, 9 and 26 March, 1874, 1 June 1874 and 11 March 1875, *CLWM*, I.
- 5 He means G.F. Watts and Lord Sackville Cecil.
- 6 W.E. Gladstone's article, 'Ritualism and Ritual', *The Contemporary Review*, XXIV (October 1874), pp. 663–81, prompted some discussion, initiated by *The Times* which, as well as publishing substantial extracts, commented in a leading article that 'we shall esteem that to be the safest error which keeps us at the greatest distance, we will not say from Popery, but from those doctrines and influences which have made Popery detestable' (28 September 1874). For Gladstone, see letter following, note 3.
- 7 The second-hand and antiquarian specialist bookseller and publisher, Bernard Quaritch (1819–99) operated from a shop at 15 Piccadilly, although much of his business came from the postal distribution of his catalogues. '[A] voracious though discriminating collector' (*Elliott*, p. 166), over the years CFM would amass an important collection of rare printed books, pictures, manuscripts and autograph letters. PSW's comment suggests that his buying habits were already in place.

## 82 • To Rosalind Howard, 6 February 1875

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Feb 6 1875

My dear Mrs Howard.

If a kindness comes after some delay perhaps it is none the less sweet. Your good natured letters burst upon me with equal surprise and pleasure. I have delayed answering them till now, because I have had before me the risk I shall run of endangering the continuance of "that firmly established friendship" of which you, in your sweetest manner, have given the name.

Let me ask you in future not to use the word "snub" in connection with me and any one, much less you. If there is anything in me which has such a horrid appearance please believe that it is only my nervousness putting on armour. In fact I must be in mortal fear, but thinking it best to cry out "who's afraid?" Your absolutely & purely delightful description of the joys you could give me if I came to you in Italy were not dashed by my feeling that I would prefer to be with other people in that land, for I know of none with whom I should so well like to be with amongst those scenes and associations;<sup>1</sup> I am sure both of you would put up (with infinite kindness) with my dulness, my entranced spirit or witless wonder. So, when I tell you that I cannot come, you will know that I shall feel very much the loss of the opportunity of being with you, and in Italy. It is impossible that I should leave England now; death & destruction with all kinds of malignant influences

would attend upon me. I am 3 deep at least with work promised, and 50 deep with work which people promise themselves of me. You will understand I am sure, and not wilfully disbelieve me.

I go to Yorkshire in next week, which will cost me four days, and having turned off my clerk of works there something more is added to my own work and annoyance.<sup>2</sup> All this means, you see, that I am afraid that you will be angry with me, and nip the friendship in its 8 years bud. Your cheering news of the good & promising health of you all is wonderful and makes me hopeful of your good temper and forbearance. When people are not well they are apt to be snappish. Don't let George be reckless if you can help it. They tell me, that at this time of the year the Italian towns you name are almost always fearfully cold, and that not before April should people go there who have not been living there regularly, excuse the Irishism.

It does not seem to me to matter one way or the other as to which man the leadership of the Liberals is given (Lord Hartington has it) for, with a few exceptions, they are a base lot.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps Lowe would have been the wisest choice, as he might have been able to frighten the small fry of the Conservatives – and, Oh, what a small-fry!<sup>4</sup> Happy, thrice happy Gladstone, to be quit of them. Have you read the Newman pamphlet? If you have not, do so, for 'tis the sweetest of reading, and Gladstone may well study the style and exercise his faculties in answering it.<sup>5</sup>

I was at Northend last night and gave your letters to read as best conveying your “love” to them.<sup>6</sup> The weather here has turned out very cold and villainous foggy. Ned is I think quite as strong as could be expected. Morris has been really unwell but is very much better, having wisely studied to be so.<sup>7</sup> In answer to your kind expressions as to my health, I've got through the cold very well indeed, and shall do very well if you are not hard upon me. Is it of any use telling you to be careful of yourself? To the children please give my prettiest remembrance, and to you my most distinguished esteem and valorous efforts to continue

Yours very faithfully | Philip Webb:

*Howard*

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1 For the Howards' invitation to PSW to join them in Italy, see next letter.

2 For his work on Rounton Grange for Isaac Lowthian Bell, see above, Letter 73, note 5. The clerk of works had initially been John Graham, 'who, having failed to give satisfaction, was replaced by W. Taylor in early 1875'. *Kirk*, p. 298.

3 The former Liberal Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone (1809–98), resigned as party leader in December 1874 after losing the general election earlier in the year. Spencer Compton Cavendish, Marquess of Hartington and later eighth Duke of Devonshire (1833–1908) became leader on 3 February 1875.

4 PSW believed that Robert Lowe, later Viscount Sherbrooke (1881–92), who had held the cabinet posts of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary under Gladstone, would have been a stronger replacement.

- 5 Angered when his friend J.J. I. von Döllinger was excommunicated for opposing the doctrine of Papal infallibility, Gladstone attacked British Catholics for falling into line with the Vatican. His pamphlet *The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance: a Political Expostulation*, published in November 1874, prompted responses from the English Catholic divines, Henry Manning and John Henry Newman (both of whom became Cardinals). Newman's *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* appeared in January 1875, which in February was answered by Gladstone's *Vaticanism: an Answer to 'Reproofs and Replies'*.
- 6 Since 1867, EBJ and GBJ had lived in Fulham, at 'The Grange, Northend'. It was to be their London home until his death in 1898.
- 7 At the beginning of the year, WM had complained of 'cold & – liver' (to Aglaia Ionides Coronio, 1 January, *CLWM*, I) and of being 'so full of indigestion' (to Eiríkr Magnússon, 4 January, *CLWM*, I).

### 83 • To George Howard, 6 February 1875

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Feb 6 1875

My dear Howard.

I am like that one of them in the Bible story, who when invited to the feast said "I cannot come". I've not bought a horse or a house or married a wife, but still I cannot come & that is Gospel truth.<sup>1</sup> I fully enter into your enthusiasm about the little "estate", and, if you can lay hands on the money without going to Monaco for it, I don't see that you will be unwise to pour it out on pretty Italian soil.<sup>2</sup> 'Tis much better that you should do so than find a coal mine there. And now about the house, if you get the ground I would advise you to get hold of some small Italian architect who will make plans by your side, and you can send me memoranda of what you are about, and I can probably help you as well from here as there. I think I should try to keep the old house, unless it is very badly situated, and add on where you want and cut off what you don't; and have nothing architectooralooral about it<sup>3</sup> – whitewash of course, and window openings and doorways, thus: [*sketch*] and you can't go far wrong.

You will see by my letter to Rosalind, how I appreciate your anger at my refusing to listen to the voices of the charmers.<sup>4</sup> But, how can I? Here I have had Routledge and Colonel Thompson conning over the Church plans,<sup>5</sup> and at Mr Whitehead's urgent request to name a date, I have promised that they shall have the general plans by the end of this month.<sup>6</sup> Then, I have not touched the Estate cottages for Brampton, and other things in number that I don't like to think of, but must. I went to see the Naworth clock before it was sent off, & tried the bells. Smiths' write me word with their bill (they have kept to their estimate of 142£) that the clock is fixed, so that I hope it will "ting tang" on your arrival there in the summer.<sup>7</sup>

Now listen, please. Do take care not to run risks 'till you get fearfully and wonderfully strong. Don't be a wilful fool and try to have breakfast lunch & dinner of Italian delights all at once. If you get the house, please make little sketches of it from the S.W. & N.E. and East-North by South-West, and trace them for me as "consulting" architect – surely my years ought to allow me that dignity. If only

you could see what I see at this moment (1:00) out of my window – a cold white fog, with spiderswebs of tree boughs, and thermometer at 37 degrees – you would hug yourself with joy, and be good. I am sorrowful, and yet keep good. What it will be in Yorkshire next week heaven only knows, or the dormice & squirrels.

I will give your love to Morris but I will tell him not to go to you, for he ought not to go: write to him and ask him yourself if you want to do him an injury.<sup>8</sup> I've said nothing of your kindness in wishing me to come & help you & enjoy myself, but I feel it very much, more particularly as you are a man for whom I have built. I find it very general that so soon as I have walled a man in, he walls me out of his esteem. You have not done this, & therefore I want you to get hearty-strong, and live for ever, and when you die be sorry for it.

[Yours very faithfully | Philip Webb:]

*Howard*

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- 1 'Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; / And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were hidden, Come: for all things now are ready. / And they all with one consent began to make excuse. . . / And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' St Luke 14:16–8, 20.
  - 2 'For some few weeks George was fired with the possibility of buying property at San Remo and rebuilding an old house on it.' *Surtees*, p. 105.
  - 3 'Architectooralooral' – used to suggest something over-fancy in design – is coined by Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, in Dickens's *Great Expectations* (ch 27).
  - 4 GH had urged PSW to come to Italy to advise and make designs for his San Remo venture.
  - 5 The publisher George Routledge (1812–88), a Brompton man, was a committed member of the church building committee. 'He acted as agent in soliciting subscriptions from people in London with a Brompton connection.' *Penn*, p. 12. Thompson was presumably another member of the committee.
  - 6 For the Reverend Henry Whitehead, see above, Letter 75, note 3.
  - 7 See above, Letter 75, note 4.
  - 8 See previous letter, note 7.

## 84 • To Sir Baldwyn Leighton, 15 March 1875

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Mar: 15. '75

To Sir Bal[d]wyn Leighton Bar<sup>t</sup>  
2 Upper Berkeley St Portman Square

Dear Sir Bal[d]wyn<sup>1</sup>

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter to me of the 13<sup>th</sup>.

You will possibly remember some of my strictures on those people called Architects who go about the country, and, under the pretence of "restoring" ~~old~~

the remains of <sup>old</sup> buildings, end in destroying them. ~~and~~ If so, you will be able to advise your friend M<sup>r</sup> Gaskell, that, if he wants to know how not to do anything, to such notable works as the mediæval buildings at Wenlock (wh<sup>'</sup> I went to see some two or three years ago) I could, perhaps, advise him as well as most architects.<sup>2</sup>

But, if the reverse is his intention he would only find me a hindrance instead of a help. My charge would be 6 guineas and travelling expenses if the visit did not occupy more than two days.

Thank you for your good-natured wish to have me to dinner at your house, but, though I do not altogether refuse to go out I do ~~so as little seldom~~ <sup>refuse as often</sup> as possible.

With kind regards to Lady Leighton<sup>3</sup> | Believe me to be  
Yours very truly P: W:

*LB-1, pp. 17-18*

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- 1 Sir Baldwyn Leighton (1836–97), eighth baronet, became Conservative MP for South Shropshire in 1885, and positioned himself as a liberal.
  - 2 The lawyer, Charles Milnes Gaskell (1842–1919), became Liberal MP for Morley in 1885. In 1873 he inherited Wenlock Priory, in Much Wenlock, Shropshire, from his father, James Milnes Gaskell, who having purchased the site in 1857 from his wife's cousin, Sir Watkins Williams-Wynn, set about restoring the Priory ruins and turning the Lodge into a family home. PSW's previous visit to the Priory ruins was in the company of GPB. See above, Letter 50.
  - 3 The Hon Eleanor Leicester Warren (1841–1914), daughter of George Warren, second Baron de Tabley.

## 85 • To Thomas Forster, 23 March 1875

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Mar: 23. '75

To Thomas Forster Esq<sup>re</sup>  
Hon Sec<sup>y</sup> to New Ch' Committee <sup>Brampton</sup>

Dear Sir.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> enclosing several questions put to me by your Committee, and wh<sup>'</sup> I will answer in the order given.<sup>1</sup>

1<sup>st</sup> It certainly would be possible to transpose the vestry, putting it on the South instead of the North side as shewn, but I w<sup>d</sup> seriously recommend that this sh<sup>d</sup> not be done. The composition as it now stands is one of very careful consideration, and the position of the vestry has considerably regulated the disposition of parts of the whole of the North side – the displacement of one ~~side~~ part w<sup>d</sup> affect the whole. Also, the vestry chimney as it stands is at the greatest distance from the highest or central roof & is best placed there with regard to <sup>the</sup> South West wind.

Again the effect of the chimney (artistically) will help to balance the tower at the West end.

2<sup>nd</sup> The so called prayer desks are in reality mere extensions of the stalls Westward. The ~~western~~ desk <sup>facing West</sup> on each side is intended for a lectern<sup>2</sup> use, instead of a separate lectern – however these desks could be omitted and a lectern standing clear substituted.

3<sup>rd</sup> The exact position of the pulpit as shewn need not be insisted upon, but it w<sup>d</sup> not do to put it more eastward, as that would be into the stall space behind ~~them~~ the stalls, but it might be moved more south, as then the sloping roof of south aisle would act as a sound board, but I have, myself, no fear but that all persons in the church w<sup>d</sup> be able to hear the preacher distinctly.

4<sup>th</sup> Answered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

5<sup>th</sup> There are examples of double sedilia, but if the Committee w<sup>d</sup> prefer it, I see no reason why the seats sh<sup>d</sup> not be three instead of two as shewn.<sup>3</sup>

6<sup>th</sup> I w<sup>d</sup> put a credence table<sup>4</sup> & piscina<sup>5</sup> combined in the southern jamb of great east window.

7<sup>th</sup> The mullioned screen between nave and ringers loft is to be glazed.

8<sup>th</sup> The screens to chancel are to be of fair ashlar stone, and I think about 3 feet 6 in <sup>high</sup> from pavement on the chancel side. They will be higher by the height of the added steps on the aisle sides.

I am Dear Sir, Yours very truly | P: W:

*LB-1, pp. 18-20*

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1 PSW had estimated that, by leaving the construction of the belfry tower to a later time, when more funds might become available, the building costs would be £6070.

2 Lectern (obsolete).

3 The sedilia (usually three in number) are the clergy seats normally on the south side of the choir, near the altar.

4 'A small side table or shelf to hold the Eucharistic elements before consecration' (*OED*).

5 'A perforated stone basin for carrying away the ablutions, generally placed in a niche on the south side of the altar' (*OED*).

## 86 • To Charles Fairfax Murray, 25 March 1875

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn | London,*  
Mar: 25. '75

Dear Murray

It was partly your own fault that I did not answer your last letter but one. If I'd written at once (a most improbable thing with me) it w<sup>d</sup> have been all right, but your saying you were shortly going to Rome & giving me no address <sup>for</sup> there made me seize the idle excuse & wait 'till I heard again. Now that I have your Pisa (in an aureole)<sup>1</sup> letter of the 13 of this mo: you see, I do write, tho' late as usual.

You see <sup>also</sup> the reason why M'Angelo is a lasting joy to me, is, that he never dropped the mediæval directness of expression and yet is free from archaic mannerism. In truth I fancy he had the power of giving the greatest amount of collected good in his work, though no doubt some of the earlier folk were purer and more direct in some one characteristic. With all of Raffaele's<sup>2</sup> wonderful facility & grace he did drop into sentimental sloppiness (forgive the slang) and gave smiles of uninteresting cleverness. Then you see again I'm a huge lover of frescoe painting over every other kind, well, I find the execution of the Sistine work incomparably the finest. I w<sup>d</sup> give a good deal just to fly up to the ceiling and rub eyes over the surface before I die, or restorers have their own wicked will on it.

Perhaps one of these days you'll be able to get a photo: of the new-old Baptist statue. I don't much care whether it be the one or other master's work – Donatello being so splendid a master.<sup>3</sup> The fretful stupidity of most people in thinking of any particular part of the earth – where they happened to be born – as "home", makes them, I suppose, when they are in Italy to wish to get to New York or Paris or London again. Everybody goes to Italy who can, but they grumble at being away (for more than a few months at a time) from soot and ugliness. This is what I thought when I heard that you hoped to get back shortly: as for coming back to see friends, it is ridiculous for when you do see them you find all their bad qualities rampant – whereas when away from them you remember their good only. Also, in England at least, it is thought degrading to be prettily unfettered with wasteful encumbrances of living.

Painters even, <sup>in England,</sup> who cannot design a proper fold of drapery, look to keeping a carriage & pair, be knighted & dine with the L<sup>d</sup> Mayor – damn them! So you have not yet done "it" and therefore Pisa is so.<sup>4</sup> When you have done it, I hope it won't be London [*sketch of smoking chimney stacks either side of 'London'*] and so – with you, with <sup>pleasure</sup> you must know, that I am very glad of your translations & take it as kind of you to do them.<sup>5</sup> I forgive all crowing as well as disgust on your part, & I look for more at your leisure.

There is nothing amusing going on here, people are so rich in England that they can't afford to be interesting and that blasted dilettantism is creeping over the nation more than ever before I fancy – so there is even less of hope for the next future. M<sup>r</sup> Jones is doing good work, though I've not been able to see it by day time, and M<sup>r</sup> Morris also is not idle & his work is also good.<sup>6</sup>

Our weather is pickling, [*sic*] with fast wind, but the spring is well kept back by it; always a good thing for this climate.

Yours. | Ph Webb.

Please tell me how properly to address an Englishman (on envelope) who is living in Italy.

*Fitzwilliam 15*



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- 1 Presumably CFM had highlighted his current location by placing ‘Pisa’ within a halo.
  - 2 Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino (1483–1520), the Italian painter and architect whose name was purposefully chosen to lend significance to the intentions of the ‘Pre-Raphaelite’ Brotherhood.
  - 3 The bronze statue by Donatello (Donato di Niccolò di Betto Bardi, c.1386–1466), of St John the Baptist (1457) is now in the Cappella di San Giovanni Battista of the Duomo at Siena, in which city the sculptor was resident between 1457–61.
  - 4 He highlights ‘Pisa’ by encircling it, in imitation of CFM (see note 1).
  - 5 CFM seems to have sent more of his translations of Michelangelo letter. See above, Letter 81.
  - 6 The protracted arguments over the future of ‘the Firm’ had finally been resolved. ‘On 31 March, an announcement was made that Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. was formally dissolved and the business would continue under Morris’s sole ownership, trading as Morris & Co.’ *MacCarthy, WMLT*, p. 342. EBJ became sole designer for the company’s stained glass.

## 87 • To George Howard, 9 April 1875

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,*  
April 9 1875

My dear Howard.

Your letter – at last but a very kindly long one. ’Tis true, being indolent, I did not so much care about the answers to questions, but I did want to know how you were both getting on. Of course I had heard of Mrs Howard’s safety, but I wanted to know that you were both doing well.<sup>1</sup> If I look with “microscopic eye” in to your letter<sup>2</sup> I distinguish a tone of depression, which may only be the natural outcome of nature, and if so it cannot be helped, & we must take you as we find you.

The Italian Villa interests me very much.<sup>3</sup> I hope you are sure of the ground. Surely you might tell the owner, & he, the Pope, that your ancestors were good Catholics, and you yourselves are not much better; and that in your Castle in the north of England you have a Catholic Chapel – even Cardinal Manning would approve of such Catholic deceit:<sup>4</sup> also your most Catholic architect in England (consulting architect) is quite free from a “bloody-bones” spirit of desecration. Your ideas look pleasant enough on paper, as to what you hope to do in pulling down & putting up again, and if your architect is not a dunderhead he will be careful in knocking about the thick walls, brick vaulting &c. I hope you will keep to paved floors. They stop out bugs & beetles, and make a place quiet. How will the colonnaded balcony be covered?

The Brampton Committee are taking their own sweet time in making up their minds.<sup>5</sup> It will take to the middle of June at the least to get ready to start, and if much later than that, I should advise putting it off ’till next year. I do not mean to say that it is extraordinary, their not seeing the merits of the design as I do, for you know what even “cockeyed” children are to their mothers – well, a few dabs of the brush or architectooralooral pencil,<sup>6</sup> are of more value in the toorallooral eye, than many cockeyed children. The said chimney is part of the composition, the pulpit is a moveable feast, and eloquence could swell from any of the 4 corners of the church.

Now, about the cottages.<sup>7</sup> I redesigned them & sent the plan to Warwick, but he only took off two hundred pounds, when he should have taken 5 or 600 at the least from the whole block, so that when I went to DuCane he shook his head,<sup>8</sup> and I initiated him, & of my good nature promised to make a third plan which should come in a winner. This is not yet done, as you may guess, for, I am a little pressed with work, but it will be done in time. Also, I'm something malevolent at this time, and frown & bite my lip, & frown again. However, the sun of laughter will re-gild this countenance upon the return of the faithful. I will send the grates for the nurseries. Warwick has never sent me the memoranda of the moat house, but I will gird him to do so.

No Rome, poor you, I am sorry for you indeed I am for 'tis one of those disappointments which I should keenly feel myself; never mind, youth is on your side, and if steam holds good, you'll go a many times yet.<sup>9</sup> You people also are so greedy. It was not at all foolish my supposing you might be angry at my not coming at your call to San Remo, for I was vexed myself and could not expect you to be more reasonable.

Ashby's sent Heath to me the day before yesterday, to say that you had directed that the outside painting of Palace Green house should be done now. I've promised to go up on Monday and direct, and also meet Boyd, the engineer's man about some broken boiler which the frosts did for you. I passed the house yesterday on my way from Ned's, it looked solitary; some kind critic told me the work looked Italian, somewhat, and I forgave him. Good God! like me, he never can have been in Italy.

The Northend works looked very beautiful to me, and they are progressing finely, though not finished; however, much comes on at the head if little drops off at the tail, so the studios are full for our benefit.<sup>10</sup> I have the photographs of the Hampton Court Mantegna series, so that time is pleasant while I look at them and I do not care that Agnew & others have been paying between 2 & 300£ for D. Cox's landscapes when the Cox only got 30, 40 or 50£ for them.<sup>11</sup> My Mantegna's only cost 2 guineas the set.

It has been said that Mr Gladstone & the Prince of Wales, are the two orators who most aptly notice accidental circumstances during their speeches. I see that the latter used an unusual appearance of the sun with tremendous effect the other day.<sup>12</sup> There, that is all my scandal, and now I wish you well, with very kind regards to Mrs Howard and remembrance to the children.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb.

*Howard*

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1 On 14 March, Rosalind had given birth to Oliver Howard (1875–1908) whilst in San Remo, following which GH fell ill with congestion of the lungs. His thoughts of building in San Remo were set aside. See above, Letter 83.

2 This may have been one of Ford Madox Brown's sayings. William Holman Hunt recalls Brown visiting his studio and in commenting on his work 'he cited certain artists as unappreciated whom

he championed earnestly and humorously in turns, meanwhile indulging in playful irony upon what he termed my “microscopic detail”.’ *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co., 1905), I, pp. 126–7. PSW uses the coinage again in Vol. III, Letter 835 (see note 7).

- 3 See above, Letter 83, note 2.
- 4 For Manning, see above, Letter 82, note 5. He had been appointed Cardinal only a few days previously, on 29 March.
- 5 See above, Letter 85.
- 6 See above, Letter 85, note 3.
- 7 See above, Letter 74, note 1.
- 8 As clerk to the trustees of the Earl of Carlisle, Richard Du Cane was the formal contact in PSW’s relations with the Naworth Estate. See below, Letter 112.
- 9 In fact, the Howards set out in January 1876 for a three-month visit to Rome.
- 10 Almost certainly this refers to the work which EBJ was doing for Morris & Co.’s extensive decoration work at 1 Palace Green, which continued through the 1870s and into the next decade. ‘In designing the dining room . . . Webb had carefully provided a “very good space” flowing around the upper panelling, awaiting s sequence of murals by Burne-Jones [who] had already planned out the frieze and made preliminary watercolour designs when the canvases were ordered. It was an ambitious sequence, a cycle of twelve panels in the grand Italian manner of Pinturicchio, Perugino and Mantegna, painters that the Howards, like Burne-Jones, had admired on their travels in Italy. . . . The panels were begun in Burne-Jones’s studio and gradually moved to Palace Green to be worked on *it situ*. But as so often with Burne-Jones’s ambitious projects, progress was extremely slow.’ *MacCarthy, LPR*, pp. 266–7.
- 11 On 8 April, the auctioneers Christie, Manson and Woods had sold the Quilter collection of British watercolours, with works by the landscape painter David Cox (1783–1859) selling very well. The buyers included the art dealer, William Agnew (1825–1910). *The Times* recorded (9 April) that one of Cox’s drawings, *Green Lanes* (originally sold by the artist for £33), went under the hammer for £1,470, and that *The Hayfield*, sold by Cox in 1850 for 50 guineas, was the subject of spirited bidding between a Mr Addington and Agnew, the latter securing it for £2,950.
- 12 Although the precise allusion remains unclear, this probably refers to the visit on 7 April of the Prince and Princess of Wales to the Chatham dockyards for the launch of the ironclad ship, the *Alexandra*, named after the Princess. The weather earlier in the day had been torrentially wet, but the sun appeared for the launch. The Prince of Wales was Queen Victoria’s son, Albert Edward (1841–1910), who as Edward VII succeeded her in 1901.

## 88 • To Lady Fitzhardinge, 18 May 1875

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
May 18. 1875.

To the R<sup>t</sup> Hon The Lady Fitzhardinge  
Berkeley Castle

Dear Lady Fitzhardinge.

In answer to yours of the 14<sup>th</sup> instant. I well recollect the window in question in the other drawing-room at Berkeley Castle and I will make a diagram for the Carpenters to work by, but I must first get from them, fuller dimensions & instructions as to the present frame of the window. In comparing your drawing

with a tracing of the window already altered, I fancy it may be better to put only one mullion but this will depend upon the ~~diagrams~~ <sup>notes</sup> I get from the foreman.

With regard to the Hall fireplace, I am very anxious to do this quite rightly. The fireplace itself does not belong to the date of the hall, and though I think it sufficiently good to be kept, the treatment of its decoration will have to depend upon the woodwork adjoining. I propose to decorate it <sup>(the fireplace)</sup> with gold on a dark ground and by this means soften those parts wh' are incongruous, but to do this properly, it w<sup>d</sup> take more than two months and I must make some trials here first before sending a man down to do the work. Upon your request I will make these trials. Also, if you wish it, I could put in hand one of the lights of the hall windows as a specimen, but in that case the glass itself of the light w<sup>d</sup> have to be sent to town.

I enclose mem<sup>a</sup> for the Carpenter.

Yours very truly | P.W.

*LB-1, pp. 22-3*

**89 • To Lieutenant-Colonel William James Gillum,  
13 September 1875**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Sep 13. 1875.

To L<sup>t</sup> Col<sup>l</sup> Gillum  
Ch. Hill H<sup>se</sup> East Barnet

My dear Colonel<sup>l</sup>

In answer to your letter rec<sup>d</sup> on Saturday ~~containing~~ <sup>enclosing</sup> Mr Sydney Turner's objections to school building scheme. I must insist again that it is for the very purpose of spreading the warm fresh air that a gill stove is strongly recommended by me (& others) for large school areas, when simplicity & economy of heating is absolutely necessary. I have proved this in as many as three artists' studios where two open fireplaces were quite ineffectual. Let me explain again that a good gill stove allows of the introduction of an immense body of fresh air into the room (the first necessity for effective ventilation) and this abundant supply of fresh (external) air keeps the surface of the gills from overheating. After 4 or 5 days of use the smell of the iron ceases. Of course, rather than throw any hindrance in the way of your committee getting what they want at once, if Mr Turner still insists, I w<sup>d</sup> put in two open fireplaces, for, at some future time a stove could be applied.

With regard to the windows I must still be firm, as it is absolutely necessary for the proper lighting & ventilation of the school that they sh<sup>d</sup> be as high as they are shewn, for a diffused light – not a direct light – is what is required – the reflection from the ceiling ~~taking~~ <sup>doing</sup> away with all shadows.

Will you be so good as to stop Bradley<sup>2</sup> proceeding with the part of the wall against wh' the stove was to be set, and at the middle of the south east end wall.

Yours very truly, | P.W.

P.S. M<sup>ts</sup> Gillum will explain to you what I have just told her as to the concrete.

*LB-1, pp. 27-8*

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1 PSW had known the former army officer and philanthropist, Lieutenant-Colonel William James Gillum (1827–1910), since their days as fellow-members of the Hogarth Club (1858–61). Gillum provided PSW with one of his earliest commissions, the construction of a terrace of six craftsmen's houses, each with a shop and workshop, in Worship Street, Shoreditch (1861–3), and followed this by funding the erection of an innovative Boys' Farm School, in East Barnet, Hertfordshire (1867–8) to which PSW also made later modifications, including the conversion of the cow house into a new schoolroom (the subject of this letter), dining room and kitchen (1874–5). Gillum's own Church Hill House, also in East Barnet, was executed by PSW in 1868–70. See *Kirk*, pp. 112, 208–10, 296–7 and 326–7.

2 The builder William Bradley, of Cockfosters, who was undertaking the current work at the Boys' Farm School.

## 90 • To Jane Morris, 28 September 1875

*Annotated 'Watermark 1873'*

Kelmscott Lechlade  
Tuesday Sep 28

My dearest Janey

Thank you for your note. I guessed the minute that I saw the pencil marks, that you were bodily very weak again.<sup>1</sup> I shall ask Morris – who is expected to eat some of a duck of M<sup>r</sup> Hobbs's here this even<sup>g</sup> – who & what your new doctor is.<sup>2</sup> I hope he will try to help you.

Fortunately for me there was not a clear space in my rooms on wh' to put the sole of one of my feet, I was practically squeezed out of the house, and had not to make up my mind if I could stay or not.

I am most methodically trying to get stronger here, and no doubt another week will tell upon my weakness.

You w<sup>d</sup> have laughed to see me yesterday afternoon striving toes nails & teeth to get the boat out of its shed & up the little canal. The stream ran & the wind blew & I was so weak, that it took me ten minutes to do it, to say nothing of being twice blown down the small stream south of the house.

I eat all the fish Philip [Comely] catches but they don't tax my powers much. I live in the Hall, or passage room, & sleep over, & have not seen even the skirt of a bogey.

Y<sup>ts</sup> affectionately | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45342, ff. 29-30*

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- 1 The choice of pencil by the Victorians for letter-writing almost invariably indicates illness, and certainly a letter being written somewhere other than at a table or writing-desk with an ink stand.  
 2 R.B. Hobbs was a Kelmscott farmer, and the owner of Kelmscott Manor. According to MM, in later years, he became a successful stock breeder.

## 91 • To George Howard, 1 October 1875

Manor House, Kelmscott, by Lechlade  
 Oct 1 1875

My dear Howard.

I am here as you see & your letter reached me this morning. It is quite against my inclination that I find I must not come to you as you ask. For the last 4 or 5 months I have been gradually sinking into a state of great bodily weakness & general want of vitality. Indeed I had sunk into such a state of worthlessness, with regard to my work in particular, that I let out all the reef of my sails & drifted down here, which place Morris most kindly put at my service. Here I am trying to revive, with the hope at some time or other of getting at least strong enough not to be a nuisance to my friends and to get power enough to think it worth while fighting my enemies. Do you not see from this that it would be impossible for me to come as you ask? I shall probably stay here for another week or even two, as my chambers are being scrubbed & painted.

If I do anything for Naworth I should wish it to be the best of me and therefore I must see the site of new Agent's house.<sup>1</sup> Could not you & the authorities make notes of what you want and I could get to Naworth in November or December and make up my mind what should be done in the shape and make of the house.

As for the church. The bishop is very stupid in the matter & I suppose is incapable of understanding a design.<sup>2</sup> (1) I should wish not to do away with the outside or ringers' stair. (2) The tower would have to be completely redesigned to ring from the nave floor, & thereby the effect of the design would be quite changed of the whole church. (3) I should have no objection to putting 3 dormers instead of one. (4) The little south door (which would air the organ-chamber) can be omitted. I put it in by particular request.

Moat House.<sup>3</sup> I would put the new chimney (if there is to be one) in the opposing corner to the present one, & carry up the flue without cutting in any way into the old walls. Warwick could leave a hole in the roof, thus: [*sketch*] I would let him have a drawing for flue &c when I get back to town.

Will you write me just a cheering word saying that you are not angry with me for not thinking your works of more value than my own health, as certainly they are.

Yours very sincerely | Philip Webb:

*Howard*

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- 1 PSW would design Four Gables, near Brampton, a house with stable for the agent to the Naworth Estate, John Grey. See *Kirk*, pp. 221–3 and 300.
- 2 The Right Reverend Harvey Goodwin (1818–91), Bishop of Carlisle, had written to GH on 20 November 1875. ‘I ventured to make notes of all the points which struck me with regard to Mr. Webb’s plans. Of course on questions of pure architecture I should not venture to criticize him; but there are certain points of a practical kind to which I dare say he will give a little further consideration at my suggestion, e.g. The importance of not giving the ringers an outside entrance; of not having a corner for seats as at the S.W. angle of the plan; and the necessity in this latitude of giving tolerably capacious windows to the south. I am much obliged to you for kindly submitting my remarks to Mr Webb, and I cannot doubt that we shall have an excellent church.’
- 3 See above, Letter 60, note 2.

## 92 • To George Howard, 7 October 1875

Manor House, Kelmscott by Lechlade  
Oct 7 1875

My dear Howard.

It is particularly good of you to put your natural feelings in your pocket & write me so good natured a letter as your last. You are probably right as to my perversity, but the clear truth is that I am exceeding weak in body just now, and some persistence in not doing much work is necessary. I cannot get much strength as yet, but am determined to find myself all the better for the rest and fresh air shortly.

If you could go with me to Naworth it would be very agreeable & for the good of the businesses. I would try to make the particular date suit you.

I hope that you have some good Bordeaux at Castle Howard to smooth away all discomforts and statelinesses.

Morris came down here last night with Faulkner of University, for a day.<sup>1</sup> They brought me a good bottle of wine of which you are now having the next morning effect. They two are gone afishing, & I wish they may catch ’em. We caught an eel in a basket last night; he did look slippery as we took him out this morning. The river is in that condition, however, with puzzled anglers, and takes their vocabulary of damning. Hooks in breeches, worms in your eye, oars in your back, stretchers on your shins & the fish visibly saying ‘bother your poverty stricken enducements’.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*Howard*

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<sup>1</sup> CF was a fellow of University College, Oxford.

**93 • To Lucy Faulkner Orrinsmith, 22 February 1876**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]

Feb. 22. 1876.

To M<sup>rs</sup> Orrinsmith  
Beckenham Kent.

My dear Lucy Orrinsmith.<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for believing that I sh<sup>d</sup> have pleasure in being of any assistance to yourself or husband if it were in my power. Your question is perfectly clearly put.

To build a detached house of 10 rooms (or even a “semi-detached”) with any careful arrangement of plan & proportion out of the ordinary run of suburban buildings, in a sound & workmanlike way, with the most simple of good materials at present prices, would, I am satisfied, cost you more than £1200. If quite detached the cost would be nearer 15 or 1600£ I believe. Therefore I cannot recommend you to incur the preliminary cost of finding out the truth of this in practice.

You will easily understand that any departure from the usual way of building in or near large towns, even if there is no more space covered in or materials used than in the usual house, costs more in labour from the mere departure from routine. If the house is not to be better planned & better built it is never worth while to <sup>go</sup> through the trouble & run the risks of building for oneself – added to which, an exceptional house is not so easily let or sold for its cost value as one of an ordinary type.

With very kind regards. | Believe me to be | Yours very truly | P: W:

*LB-1, pp. 31-2*

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<sup>1</sup> Lucy Orrinsmith (1839–1910), sister of Charles and Kate Faulkner, had undertaken work for MMF & Co in its early years, including tile-painting. In 1870 she married Harvey Edward Orrinsmith (d. 1904), a wood engraver, bookbinder, and a director of the bookbinding firm, James Burns & Sons. Lucy Orrinsmith published *The Drawing Room: its Decoration and Furniture* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1877), in the successful Art at Home Series. See Emma Ferry, “‘The other Miss Faulkner’: Lucy Orrinsmith and the ‘Art at Home Series’”, *JWMS*, XIX (Summer 2011), pp. 47–64.

**94 • To Charles Fairfax Murray, 1 April 1876**

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn | London,*

Sat: April 1. '76

Bless you my Murray for sending those wonderfully sweet & strong Donatello's.<sup>1</sup> They are after my heart altogether. I w<sup>d</sup> that the other sides of the pulpits were also photographed that you might send them likewise. Your proposition of sending me what you yourself delight in will be sure to fit my ease, because you will be quite



aware when you are getting any for yourself if you are doing wrong. I'd like the MA drawing of "Ganymede" as I have it not.<sup>2</sup>

M<sup>r</sup> Morris is in Staffordshire up to his thighs in dyes and "darning his eyes" & Staffordshire lies,<sup>3</sup> for the former are too few & the latter too many. I am but weak & poorly, & do what I will I cannot get off for Florence before Wednesday week.<sup>4</sup> The Calligraphy of your letter was wonderful to say nothing of being easy to read. You'd better write to M<sup>r</sup> Morris at once before this style has worn out & your third period begins. Should you come across any Raphael drawings free from vanity affectation simpering &c please send me some photo<sup>s</sup> as I have not any of the "wonderful boy".

This is asking you to do things with a vengeance, but I merely mean, when you are wasting your time in the shops you might salve your conscience by picking out good for me. My state is "flat stale & unprofitable"<sup>5</sup> & I can say no more but thank you again for the blessed Donatello's.

Yours very sincerely | Philip Webb.

*Fitzwilliam 16*

1 CFM had sent photographs of the two late bronze pulpits by Donatello in the basilica of San Lorenzo, Florence, probably left unfinished at his death and completed by others.

2 In 1532, Michelangelo presented his drawing of *The Rape of Ganymede* to the young Roman nobleman Tommaso Cavalieri (1509–87). The lost original was widely copied.

3 Between 1875–8, WM made frequent visits to Leek in Staffordshire, determined to master traditional dyeing techniques from the silk manufacturer Thomas Wardle, brother-in-law of GW, by then manager of Morris & Co. He persuaded Thomas Wardle 'to co-operate with him in large-scale experiments, using the dye vats at Wardle's Hencroft Works'. *MacCarthy, WMLT*, p. 348.

4 PSW probably had no serious plans for visiting Italy at this time: it is unlikely that his work commitments would have permitted it. But see his next letter to CFM (12 June 1876), in which he contemplates an autumn visit to Florence.

5 'How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable | Seem to me all the uses of this world!' *Hamlet*, I.ii.133–4.

## 95 • To W. A. Cardwell, 6 May 1876

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings]  
May 6 1876.

To W: A: Cardwell Esq<sup>re</sup>  
6 Spencer R<sup>d</sup> Eastbourne  
My dear Sir.<sup>1</sup>

I have delayed answering your letter of ~~yesterday~~ <sup>the 4th</sup> 'till today so that some of the annoyed surprise with wh<sup>ch</sup> I read the same sh<sup>d</sup> have time to subside.

I think many of the facts ~~have~~ <sup>of</sup> the case must have escaped your memory, or you ~~have~~ <sup>would</sup> hardly <sup>have</sup> expressed your irritation in the way you have.

I will endeavour to call back to your mind <sup>several circumstances</sup> since your letter to me of August 28. '75. In that letter you say, that you hope to be able to secure my assistance, and I perfectly remember having recommended you to go & see Mr Tomes's house at Caterham,<sup>2</sup> so that you might be fully aware of the kind of work I sh<sup>d</sup> be able to do for you; this visit you made, so that I was assured in my further proceedings.

After my visit with you & Mr Wheatcroft to Eastbourne, when I exerted myself to advise you to the best of my ability as to selection of site, <sup>materials &c.</sup> I had an interview here with Mr Wheatcroft, and in a letter to him in answer to his opposition to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Wallis fixing the prices for the materials & labour of the new house, I wrote the following – "That Mr Cardwell's arch<sup>l</sup> sh<sup>d</sup> let his surveyor prepare bills of quantities, and that Skinner should price & money them out, & that then they sh<sup>d</sup> be subject to the approval of Mr Cardwell's arch<sup>l</sup> & surveyor". By a letter to Mr Vinall of the 16<sup>th</sup> of March last you thus express yourself "I received the plans safely and we are ~~much~~ <sup>very</sup> pleased with them. I have shewn them to Skinner. I shall be glad to have a duplicate of his estimate & should also like to see the bill of quantities if it can be managed".

After <sup>I had many &</sup> repeated conferences with Mr Vinall in making changes, alterations and adaptations to perfect the plans to your particular wishes so far as they could be done, consistent with economy & the character of the design, Mr Vinall wrote as follows "I have seen Mr Webb who approves of all the alterations we made in the plans on Friday".

In a letter of Mr Vinall's to you 21<sup>st</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> '75, he says, "I send you with this a tracing of plans showing another arrangement for your house". To some of the propositions made to me by Mr Vinall at your suggestion, I told him (more than once) they ~~can~~ <sup>could</sup> not be allowed, as the house w<sup>d</sup> already cost at least £1800.

The "sketches" you speak of, & for wh' if we had gone no farther, I sh<sup>d</sup> have been quite willing to charge a nominal price, w<sup>d</sup> have been the first plans I made, from wh' in the final drawings we have completely departed. In these final drawings, from wh' only could accurate quantities be taken, everything is laid down with precision, all the important parts being amplified in half inch scale detailed working drawings, from wh' if the estimates had turned out satisfactorily we could have made tracings & proceeded with the actual works instantly – and this care & forethought was to meet your urgent wish; for in a letter to Mr Vinall on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb<sup>y</sup> 1876 you say "I am very glad to hear that you are getting on with the plans, for I am extremely anxious to get into the house before next winter.

I need scarcely say more, for you will probably have a copy of your letter to me of last Thursday, and you will see how ~~thoroughly~~ <sup>completely</sup> the changes, therein made, are here met. I think Sir, when you quietly reconsider the ~~matter~~ <sup>subject</sup>, you will understand how thoroughly & carefully both Mr Vinall & I have worked in your matter, sparing ~~no~~ <sup>neither</sup> pains & ~~nor~~ cost on our parts, to prepare for you a house wh' sh<sup>d</sup> be both pleasant & comfortable to you as well as a credit<sup>table</sup> to ourselves. That the work did not proceed further was your own wish, or reductions could

have been prepared on the existing data to meet the too high estimates caused by the high price of labour & materials.

In conclusion I beg to say, that neither I nor M<sup>r</sup> Vinall can make any reduction in our charges, wh' are barely sufficient to cover the expenses of the work of ourselves & our assistants.

Yours truly | Philip Webb:

*LB-1, pp. 35-8*

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1 W.A. Cardwell, son-in-law of the surgeon, Sir Benjamin Brodie, to whose Regency country house in Tadworth, Surrey, PSW made alterations in 1872–4, commissioned plans for a new house in Eastbourne. Cardwell's failure to pay the fees, once the project was abandoned, led PSW to go to law. 'I feel it w<sup>d</sup> be useless for me to enter further into personal discussion with you. I will, therefore, put the matter into the hands of my solicitors' (PSW to Cardwell, 11 October 1876, *LB-1* p. 47). The action was unsuccessful. See *Kirk*, pp. 275 and 299.

2 PSW's house, Upwood Gorse at Caterham, Surrey (1868–9), for the dental surgeon, John Tomes (1815–95). See *Kirk*, p. 297.

## 96 • To Charles Fairfax Murray, 12 June 1876

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn | London,*  
June 12. '76

My dear Murray

Your photographs have all reached me – viz. The paradise of Orcagna & the Inferno (also I suppose by him)<sup>1</sup> the roll of Benozzo Gozzoli's wh' EBJ has rec<sup>d</sup> <sup>2</sup>– the early Pièta of MA & two copies of the late one, all of wh' are admirable, &, to my wilfully bad taste, good in the extreme.<sup>3</sup> The Inferno you need not have been nervous ab<sup>t</sup> as it suits me to a T – Also I've rec<sup>d</sup> your two last letters, the first written 29<sup>th</sup> May, the last rec<sup>d</sup> this morning. I w<sup>d</sup> have answer<sup>d</sup> the former before, but awaited your new address, not being willing to enrich the Italian dead-letter box.

The Inferno, it is marvellous, so much so that I can put up with its indistinctness. The late Pièta my MA madness can rejoice in likewise, as I see so little of giggling company, and RA<sup>s</sup> never venture up my stairs. Glory be to God for my tiring staircase and inhospitable countenance. If any of the filthy should come, I'll shew them the early Pièta, the Ultramontane black whirligig of wh', will just suit them.

I send you by this post the comic annual you ask for,<sup>4</sup> it will make you grin, & overcome seasickness on your voyage home, & save you the trouble of going to the Academy where you w<sup>d</sup> be picture sick.

Please bring me a photo' of Orcagna's tabernacle work of which you ~~spea~~<sup>k</sup> write.<sup>5</sup> I dined with Stanhope the other evening.<sup>6</sup> M<sup>rs</sup> S told me that she had begun to slaughter chickens & the fatted calf, when she heard a shout of laughter from her husband & stayed her hand.<sup>7</sup> This was from your message on your last

return from England. I'll talk to you when I see you about my return with <sup>you</sup> to Florence this autumn (you may laugh if you can) of wh' I am considering;<sup>8</sup> as, since the Q was made Emperess [*sic*],<sup>9</sup> Architecture has been on the decline, & fifty flunkies to a Lord, absolutely necessary. What the devil do you mean, in sending your address, by writing "(ultimo piano)"?<sup>10</sup> does it imply 'ring the bottom bell softly'? I'm going to re-create myself this evening by listening to Mozart's "Jupiter" symphony, of wh' there is no parallel.<sup>11</sup> I dont know much of the cost of Pieta photo<sup>s</sup>, save, that Wallis got me a small Mantegna the other day, private handed, wh' cost I think 5 francs<sup>12</sup> – he considered that high, but I thought it worth £20,000, ie double the cost of the lost Gainsborough. I'll tell Boyce of your kind regards, and Crippa's<sup>13</sup> address. I don't know about war, but expect shortly to have to pay 5/- income tax, but as architecture will only bring me £50 a year shortly it won't matter – to me – & the P of W is not nervous I believe, or anxious as to his debts.<sup>14</sup> Please bring me any outlandish Photo<sup>s</sup> you may fancy as good food for my corrupt imagination. Is there such a thing as a photo of the Pandolfini Palace at Florence ascribed to Raffaele?<sup>15</sup> If there is will you bring it. Please accept my very sincere thanks for all the trouble you have taken in so kindly helping on my education. Also bring your little bill, for my pocket burns to pay it before the war comes on.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*Fitzwilliam 17*

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- 1 A number of problems surround the traditional attribution of works to the Florentine painter, sculptor and architect Andrea di Cione, called Orcagna (c. 1315/20–68). The frescoes of the Triumph of Death and the Last Judgement in the Campo Santo in Pisa, attributed to Orcagna by Vasari, are now ascribed to Francesco Traini (d. after 1347). Similarly, the frescoes of Paradise and the Last Judgement (1354–7) in the Strozzi Chapel of the basilica of Santa Maria Novella in Florence (where the retable is certainly his work) are mainly the work of his brother, Nardo di Cione (c. 1320–1365/6). PSW probably refers to these Florentine frescoes.
  - 2 CFM had probably sent reproductions of the Gozzoli frescoes in the fifteenth-century Magi chapel of the Palazzo Medici Riccardi in Florence, works which PSW valued highly when he visited in 1884–5. See below, Letter 242. EBJ's interest in the work of the Florentine painter Benozzo Gozzoli (1420–97) was fired during his Italian visit in the autumn of 1871. In the Campo Santo in Pisa he saw Gozzoli's celebrated series of biblical scenes (irreparably damaged during World War II), and in San Gimignano examined the fresco cycle on the Life of St Augustine (1463–7) in the church of Sant'Agostino, as well as an Assumption and a Martyrdom of St Sebastian in the Palazzo Comunale. See *MacCarthy*, *LPR*, pp. 227–9.
  - 3 The 'early Pietà' is the sculpture completed in 1500 for the tomb of Cardinal Jean Villiers de La Grolais, in St Peter's, Rome. There are two candidates for 'the late one' – that in the Duomo in Florence, and the incomplete and radically reductive Rondanini Pietà in the Castello Sforzesco, Milan.
  - 4 Irony, surely. It is likely that PSW was sending a catalogue of the Royal Academy Exhibition, which ran from May to August.
  - 5 Orcagna's ornately Gothic tabernacle (1355–9) in Orsanmichele, Florence.
  - 6 The painter, John Roddam Spencer Stanhope (1829–1908), a friend of CFM for whom PSW had designed a studio-house in Cobham, Surrey (1860–1), his first work after Red House. See *Kirk*, p. 296.

- 7 Elizabeth King married Stanhope in 1859.
- 8 See above, Letter 94, note 4. He did not visit Italy until the autumn of 1884.
- 9 Encouraged by her Conservative Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, Queen Victoria assumed the title of Empress of India from 1 May 1876, but a Royal Titles Act had to pass through Parliament, and it received opposition from Liberals who objected to the aura of absolutism. The Queen's title formally changed from 1877.
- 10 The top floor (*It*).
- 11 He heard Mozart's 41st (and final) symphony in C major at the Royal Philharmonic Society Monday 'Pops' concert at St James's Hall, which also included Beethoven's fifth piano concerto in E flat major (the 'Emperor').
- 12 The painter and collector, Henry Wallis (1830–1916), became an authority in foreign ceramics, his researches being published in twenty volumes. He served as secretary for the committee formed for the preservation of St Mark's, Venice (1882–90), though PSW would come to doubt his commitment to protecting Italian buildings. He is best known for *Chatterton* (1856, Tate Britain), his early painting of the dead poet.
- 13 Identity uncertain.
- 14 See above, Letter 87, note 11.
- 15 Work started on Raphael's design for the Palazzo Pandolfini in Florence in about 1518.

## 97 • To George Milburn, 3 July 1876

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
July 3. 1876.

To M<sup>r</sup> Geo' Milburn (carver &c)<sup>1</sup>  
Gillygate York.

Sir.

Being in want of a good carver in the north capable of doing ~~good~~ work in sound sandstone of the Cleveland quarries, I applied to M<sup>r</sup> Robert Johnson Arch<sup>t</sup>, of Newcastle on Tyne, and he recommended me to apply to you as a person likely to suit ~~me~~ for my kind of work. What I want done, is carving of a bold & simple character on the outside of the house.

If you think you w<sup>d</sup> care to undertake the work, and could do so at once, would you meet me at Rounton Grange on Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> of this month to consider the matter? The house on wh<sup>ch</sup> the work is to be done is "The Grange – East Rounton by Northallerton". The station to book to, is "Welbury" on the North Eastern Railway, and the station is about 3 miles from the Grange – a porter w<sup>d</sup> direct you to the house.

Yours truly | Philip Webb. Architect.

*LB-1, pp. 38-9*

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<sup>1</sup> The sculptor and wood carver, George Walker Milburn (1844–1941) had an established York business by 1881. Several of his statues are to be seen around the city.

98 • To Lady Fitzhardinge, 25 July 1876

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
July 25 '76

To The R<sup>t</sup> Hon' The Lady Fitzhardinge  
Cranford House Hounslow.

Dear Lady Fitzhardinge

I went to Berkeley on Thursday last, and I was fortunate in having M<sup>r</sup> Morris with me.

I examined the "Princes" room, and came to the conclusion that the safest colour to use with the tapestry there, w<sup>d</sup> be white, "flatted", of the same shade as that I used in your bedroom. After the Hoppner portrait is removed<sup>1</sup> (is it necessary to remove this picture?) M<sup>r</sup> Morris suggested hanging over the fireplace any piece of handsome old silk or other embroidery – that is, needle work wh' w<sup>d</sup> be sure to go well with the existing tapestry.

I found the windows in the first drawing room, inserted under my direction, very simple & unostentatious & therefore satisfactory; I sh<sup>d</sup> have no objection to changing the large drawing-room windows in the same way, with a difference, on acc<sup>t</sup> of their size.

I cannot agree ~~to your~~ with the proposition to remove the organ from the music room & place it in the chapel, for these reasons, that, it suits the room it is now in, and is out of character with the chapel, & w<sup>d</sup> too much encumber ~~the chapel~~ it.

With regard to the small window on the landing of the great oak staircase, I w<sup>d</sup> propose that the <sup>coloured</sup> glass in the lead of it be removed, as it is very harsh & discordant, and plain white glass inserted, instead, to match the lower part of the window. M<sup>r</sup> Morris & I made up our minds as to what ~~to do~~ w<sup>d</sup> be best to be done with the rest of the glazing of the great hall windows on the court side, when it is decided to have ~~them~~ it changed. I told M<sup>r</sup> Cooke<sup>2</sup> that when you ~~agreed~~ <sup>had settled</sup> that the work sh<sup>d</sup> be done he was to send up to London the whole of the four compartments of the window of wh' one quarter has been altered and I w<sup>d</sup> insert the shields of the upper ~~glass~~ parts in a proper ~~frames~~ <sup>borders</sup> and slightly alter that wh' has been done to bring the whole together.<sup>3</sup> I considered the change already made, a great relief to the hall. ~~With regard~~ <sup>As</sup> to the new oak seats, it seemed to me that the simplicity of the ends was more suitable than any addition that I could make & that they had better remain as they are.

The decorating of the fireplace is ~~slowly~~ advancing and will come out satisfactorily when finished, as M<sup>r</sup> Morris's man has put on a very good ground colour, in a right manner. I have directed him to leave the work at the end of this week, and he shall return with an assistant when the Castle is empty again, wh' M<sup>r</sup> Cooke told me it w<sup>d</sup> be in August & a part of September.

Will you allow me to urge upon you the great necessity there is for providing a large quantity of <sup>English</sup> oak to be cut to proper size & stored in a dry airy shed, so as to be ready for use when repairs must be done, as they will have to be before many years have passed. This oak sh<sup>d</sup> be cut from the park or procured elsewhere

~~at once~~ as soon as possible. Also, whenever it is found that any of the chimneys must be rebuilt a proper design sh<sup>d</sup> be supplied and the right stone & way of building sh<sup>d</sup> be employed, all as to wh<sup>t</sup> I carefully explained to M<sup>r</sup> Cooke.

It was discomfoting to find that the gas had already begun to discolour the walls & ceiling of the Great hall, but that is not the most serious evil – for, certain & more rapid decay will go on in the timbers of the roof, unless the gas is removed. Permit me to urge you to have it removed at once.

I must ask your pardon for writing so decidedly on these points, but, unless I did so, I sh<sup>d</sup> not consider it w<sup>d</sup> be of any use my visiting the Castle at all.

Believe me d<sup>r</sup> Lady Fitzhardinge | Yours faithfully | Philip Webb:

*LB-1, pp. 40-3*

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- 1 The portrait painter, John Hoppner (1758–1810) was elected RA in 1795. In the Catalogue Raisonné which forms the main part of William McKay and W. Roberts, *John Hoppner; R.A.* (London: P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., 1909), two Hoppner portraits at Berkeley Castle are described (pp. 22–3). One shows the fifth Earl of Berkeley, Frederick Augustus, with his son, William Fitzhardinge; the other, the Countess of Berkeley, the fifth Earl's wife (he being her second husband), born Mary Cole, of Wotton, Gloucestershire.
  - 2 J.H. Cooke was the Castle's Estate Manager, and something of a local historian, producing a Handbook on the Castle in 1881. After returning to London, WM sent Cooke a copy of *The Earthly Paradise*. 'I enjoyed my visit to Berkeley exceedingly; I think the castle can scarcely be matched among all the famous houses of England for romantic interest, using that much abused word in its best sense.' WM to Cooke, 24 July 1876, *CLWM*, I.
  - 3 '[E]xcept in the case of the Great Hall windows, there seems to be no evidence of Morris's having supplied any new stained or coloured glass. The shields of arms were eventually reset by Morris & Co., in quarries and borders, since an entry in the Catalogue of Designs, dated November 1884, for a window for Holmstead, Mossley Hill, Liverpool, mentions that the same quarry and border design was used as for Berkeley Castle.' A. Charles Sewter, *The Stained Glass of William Morris and his Circle – A Catalogue*, 2 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), I, p. 15.

## 99 • To George Black, 21 August 1876

*Draft/copy*

Aug 21. 1876

To M<sup>r</sup> George Black.  
Builder Devonshire S<sup>t</sup> Carlisle  
Sir.

### Brampton Ch

As the tenders for the above works (only 3 in number after advertising) were far too high, I am going to Cumberland to arrange matters for getting fresh tenders to begin the work next spring.<sup>1</sup>

As your tender was the lowest, perhaps you w<sup>d</sup> like to meet me there, when you w<sup>d</sup> be able to look into the matter more closely with me, and perhaps come to the

conclusion to give a more reasonable price for the works required to be done, and so avoid the necessity, otherwise, of getting altogether fresh tenders.

I shall be at Naworth Castle on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> of this month, and if you sh<sup>d</sup> think it worthwhile I sh<sup>d</sup> be glad to see you there (at the Castle) at 11. oc on that morning. Please give me an answer by return of post.

Yours truly | Philip Webb. Arch<sup>t</sup>

*LB-1, pp. 44-5*

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1 The tendering process at Brampton was rather laboured. PSW had initially approached eight local builders, of which only two seemed interested in the work. Even after inviting tenders by advertisement, George Black's was one of only three received. After a further invitation in October, the contract was awarded to Beaty Brothers, of Wetherall Quarry. See *Penn*, p. 17.

### 100 • To Percy Wyndham, 28 December 1876

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Dec<sup>r</sup> 28. '76

To The Hon' Percy Wyndham M.P.  
Wilbury House Wilts

Dear Sir.<sup>1</sup>

I was sorry to find on going to Stanfords',<sup>2</sup> that neither the 6 in[ch] nor 25 in[ch] scale maps of your district were yet published, ~~as~~ either of these maps w<sup>d</sup> be of great use to you.

I directed Stanfords' to send you four sheets of the 1" scale geologically coloured map of the district round Knoyle. The packet was to be addressed, to remain at Grateley station until called for.

Since my visit with you & M<sup>rs</sup> Wyndham to Clouds estate, I have carefully considered the matter, both from your point of view & my own, with regard to my entering upon the business of building a house for you there, if you sh<sup>d</sup> wish me to do so.<sup>3</sup> I have no doubt that the site of the small existing house, keeping in mind the absolute necessity of preserving the fine yew trees, w<sup>d</sup> answer very well in all respects as the position for a new house, & in many ways I consider it to have exceptional advantages.

I have thought that the suggestions I made, & the expression I gave as to what I sh<sup>d</sup> consider would be the best way of meeting the circumstances of the case (apart from the rude way in wh' I am afraid they often were given) seemed to meet your wishes, & therefore I sh<sup>d</sup> be quite willing to undertake the designing & superintending of the works in question if you sh<sup>d</sup> wish me to do so, subject to the following conditions – viz – That all drawings, whether of works done or only proposed, sh<sup>d</sup> be my property – (This not to exclude my providing you with all the



necessary plans &c for your future use after the work was done). That my payment sh<sup>d</sup> be at the rate of 5 per cent ~~for~~ <sup>on the cost of</sup> all works done under my direction, & further payment of ~~all~~ travelling expenses for myself and assistants. That if plans in whole and in detail are prepared <sup>by me</sup> ready to be laid before contractors and the works sh<sup>d</sup> not be carried out ~~by me~~, 2½ per cent on my estimated cost of the ~~same~~ <sup>execution of the works</sup> be paid to me. That if only preliminary <sup>sketches and</sup> plans be made ~~by me~~ 1¼ per cent on my estimated cost be paid me for the same.

I must ask you to excuse these particulars, as it has been found that such care & explanation <sup>between client & Architect</sup> before any work has been entered upon, tends very much to the avoidance of any dispute or awkwardness afterwards.<sup>4</sup>

I am Dear Sir yours truly | Philip Webb:

*LB-1, pp. 50-2*

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- 1 The Hon. Percy Scawen Wyndham (PWY: 1835–1911), Conservative MP for West Cumberland, married Irish-born Madeline Campbell (1835–1920) in 1860. At the end of 1874, they became tenants of Wilbury Park House, near Salisbury, and in November 1876 bought the estate of Clouds, East Knoyle, with the intention of building a new house as their family seat. As friends of the George Howards, they had seen the results of PSW's work when in June 1872 they were dinner guests at 1 Palace Green, whereupon they settled that he should design their house in due course. Indeed, PSW had already undertaken minor work at their London home, 44 Belgrave Square. For a full account of the Wyndhams, and more particularly of PSW's design and construction of Clouds (1877–86), see *Dakers*. See also *Kirk*, pp. 132–42 and 300.
  - 2 Edward Stanford (1827–1904) established his business as a map-seller and printer in 1853, with shop premises in Charing Cross and a printing works at Long Acre.
  - 3 PSW stayed overnight with the Wyndhams at Wilbury House on 15 December, in order that they might visit the prospective site for Clouds. 'I will bring any drawings I have wh' w<sup>d</sup> be likely to assist, though I shall hardly be able to shew you anything but working drawings.' PSW to PWY, 12 December 1876, *LB-1* p. 50.
  - 4 PWY replied at once: 'I give my adherence to all your propositions, and think your method of doing business a very satisfactory one'. *Dakers*, p. 51.

## 101 • To Percy Wyndham, 30 December 1876

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Dec<sup>r</sup> 30. 1876

To The Hon' Percy Wyndham M.P.  
44 Belgrave Square.

Dear Sir.

I rec<sup>d</sup> your letter of yesterday, this morning. I fully understand your caution with regard to the future water supply for Clouds, but I am persuaded that at the present state of proceedings, it w<sup>d</sup> be sufficient for you to express dependence, on the vendors of the estate proving to you, that the reservation of the water from "Barnes

Hill springs" would not leave ~~the estate~~<sup>you</sup> without an equally good supply from elsewhere on the estate.<sup>1</sup> I think it probable that Mr Rawlence will be able to shew this without difficulty,<sup>2</sup> and if so, ~~I am inclined to think~~ that the proposed new house w<sup>d</sup> be better supplied than from the lower situation of the Barnes Hill springs.

I am inclined to think that it ~~might~~<sup>may</sup> be advisable to have the opinion of a skilled engineer to aid in carrying the best water in the best way to the site, but I ~~think~~<sup>believe</sup> it w<sup>d</sup> be premature to have him on the ground 'till after the vendors had proved their words, or at least given good grounds for their assertion. It is very likely that Mr Rawlence will do this when he meets you on Saturday next. I also have been thinking of the water supply & have thought it possible that the windmill might be turned to account as <sup>the motive power for</sup> a pumping engine as the soil in the neighbourhood must be full of springs.

With regard to the latter part of your letter about the sizes of rooms, I am very glad that you are so carefully considering the subject, and I shall not <sup>be</sup> likely to obstruct, <sup>except</sup> on the score of cost. I sh<sup>d</sup> ~~be inclined~~<sup>like</sup> to have the chief rooms 20 feet wide, and this width, with recessed fireplaces <sup>on the sides of the rooms,</sup> w<sup>d</sup> give the right amount of serving way.

Yours truly | Philip Webb.

*LB-1, pp. 52-3*

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1 When PWY purchased the Clouds estate from Alfred Seymour, a distant relative, there was an existing four-bedroom house dating from the late eighteenth century, with adjoining stone cottage, and two further cottages. 'The old house would have to be demolished, though Webb made a careful note of parts that could be used again: oak floorboards, oak stairs, cast-iron grates and even "a good brass knocker on N door".' *Dakers*, p. 51.

2 James Rawlence, of the Salisbury firm of land agents and surveyors, Rawlence and Squarey.

## 102 • To Lord Fitzhardinge, 10 January 1877

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]

Jan 10. 1877

To the R<sup>t</sup> Hon<sup>'</sup> The Lord Fitzhardinge  
Berkeley Castle.

My Lord.

I enclose you my charge for work done by me for Berkeley Castle since my first visit in April 1874.

In letters wh<sup>'</sup> I have written to Lady Fitzhardinge, I have mentioned that considerable works w<sup>d</sup> have to be done in coming years in repairs to the Castle, more particularly in timber & lead work to the roofs. Also, at my last visit I carefully examined the several ~~new~~ chimney stacks wh<sup>'</sup> have been <sup>re</sup>built, & wh<sup>'</sup>

~~have~~<sup>are</sup> not ~~been~~ at all satisfactory as to the stone used or <sup>as to</sup> the design. If other chimnies [*sic*] are rebuilt, I w<sup>d</sup> advise the use of different material, different design & the flues <sup>to be</sup> lined with fire-clay pots.

I also spoke to M<sup>r</sup> Cooke as to putting by oak timber for future use, & if necessary the cutting down as soon as possible of oak trees for the sake of such timber, or, when any <sup>oak</sup> timber is in the market from 5 to 7 years old, from <sup>time of</sup> felling, it w<sup>d</sup> be well to purchase.

I am my Lord, yours faithfully, | Philip Webb:

*LB-1, p. 55*

### 103 • To Percy Wyndham, 16 January 1877

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]

Jan: 16. 1877.

To The Hon' Percy Wyndham M.P.

Wilbury House by Salisbury

My dear Sir.

I sent to M<sup>r</sup> Grantham a note of the probable height of the cisterns in the proposed new house at Clouds,<sup>1</sup> but I shall not be able to decide as to the position & arrangements of the house until I have spent some hours in particular examination of the site and surroundings. No arrangement can be made as to the Laundry until I can send down to take <sup>the plan &</sup> measurements of the cottage, and this, of course, could not be done until the tenant had left.<sup>2</sup>

I have been ~~carefully~~ considering the plan of the new house, & I have concluded that it w<sup>d</sup> not be necessary to make the hall or common room more than one story in height; this w<sup>d</sup> make a ~~very~~ considerable saving in the cost of the building. And, as I sh<sup>d</sup> propose to make the hall itself large enough to give 1760 cubic feet of air space to each of 10 persons using it at the same time, the room w<sup>d</sup> be ~~much~~ more thoroughly warmed than if ~~it~~ the <sup>ceiling</sup> was raised 2 stories or even 1½ stories in height, but of this & other matters I sh<sup>d</sup> like to consult with you & M<sup>rs</sup> Wyndham personally.

Yours very truly | Ph Webb:

*LB-1, pp. 56-7*

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1 'I went this morning to M<sup>r</sup> Grantham, a Civil Engineer who has lately arranged the water supply to Lord Normanton's house at Somerley in Hampshire. . . . The arrangement I made, was that M<sup>r</sup> Grantham sh<sup>d</sup> go on to the groins especially to advise you as to such supply of water as w<sup>d</sup> be suggested by M<sup>r</sup> Rawlence, and also generally to look to the high ground of the Estate for a good supply, beyond what might be pointed out to him.' PSW to PWY, 2 January 1877, *LB-1*, p. 54.

2 The tenant of the cottage adjacent to the existing Clouds House was the former estate gardener.

**104 • To Charles John Ferguson, 6 February 1877**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]

Feb 6. 1877.

To Cha<sup>s</sup> Ferguson Esq<sup>re</sup>  
50 English Street. Carlisle

My dear Sir.<sup>1</sup>

A Mr J: Morland – ~~Clerk of works~~ – applied to me some time since for the situation of Clerk of works to the new church at Brampton. I was not then in a position to advise the committee to accept his services. We are now ready for a Clerk of works, and I again applied to Morland, & he wrote to say that he had again engaged himself; however, I had a letter from him this morning saying he had reconsidered the matter & wished to work for me. Now, if he was engaged to you, I sh<sup>d</sup> be very sorry to cause him to leave <sup>you</sup> without ~~you~~ looking to your convenience in the matter. Morland also referred me to your firm for his character as to fitness for the position in question.

Will you kindly let me know, if it w<sup>d</sup> inconvenience you his coming to me; and if it did not do so, if you thought him honest, sober, & ~~fit~~ & a fit & capable person to look after the building of a church over a contractor.

I hope you will not be disagreeably surprised at my so soon using your most friendly offer of assistance.

Believe me yours <sup>very</sup> sincerely, | P.W.

*LB-1, pp. 59-60*

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1 The Carlisle architect C.J. Ferguson (1840–1904) was at this time in partnership with John Cory. PSW's respect for Ferguson's work was such that in 1879 he recommended to GH that Ferguson should succeed him as architect to Naworth Castle. See *Kirk*, p. 183.

**105 • To Thomas Forster, 10 February 1877**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]

Feb: 10. 1877

To Tho<sup>s</sup> Forster Esq<sup>re</sup>  
Brampton Cumber<sup>d</sup>

Dear Sir

(Brampton Ch)

In answer to your letter of yesterday's date. The sum of £5678.6.3 only includes the cost of the works authorised by the Committee to be entered upon and the cost of preparing the necessary "quantities".

I sh<sup>d</sup> be anxious if possible to avoid the use of gas in the church, as it is found in practice that gas does serious injury to public buildings. A few lamps or candles at the darkest season of the year w<sup>d</sup> be all that w<sup>d</sup> be necessary in a Country parish like Brompton.

Yours truly | Ph Webb:

P.S. I sh<sup>d</sup> like to have the drawings &c back as soon as possible, as Mess<sup>rs</sup> Beaty are writing pressing for working details.<sup>1</sup>

*LB-1, pp. 62-3*

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<sup>1</sup> Beaty Brothers had been awarded the building contract. See above, Letter 99, note 1.

### 106 • To George Howard, 15 February 1877

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*  
Feb 15 1877

My dear Howard.

Glory be! I am indeed glad that Mrs Howard has pulled through so well. I was a little anxious, but her courage is great & her constitution good, & so we rejoice again.<sup>1</sup> Yes, I will come with pleasure some day next week; perhaps you will have some evening when you will be dull & alone. Then would be the time for me to bring you my dulness. Two dulnesses making one round jolly face.

Let the Bromptonians fight it out together, I have done my part, & be damned to them. They are not bad sort of fellows though, but to want to go to church & have gas to pray by, Good Lord! One dim lamp (a la Tooth) at the East end,<sup>2</sup> & beating of breasts on account of having quarter day in front of them, would be ample. However, they shall have gas like to Drury Lane theatre if they please. I am glad it was Beaty who praised the Architect, not Webb who praised Beaty.<sup>3</sup> I can't have given him a "Commission", my pet law suit wouldn't allow of that, & he didn't offer me one.

Our poet, "on the premises", has returned, all glorious with Tyrian dyes – he didn't show me his feet, but I saw his hands.<sup>4</sup> A stammering lover would want to know if he was be-be-blue all over.

Kindest remembrances to Mrs Howard. | Yours sincerely | Philip Webb:

*Howard*

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<sup>1</sup> Rosalind Howard had given birth to her seventh child, Geoffrey, on 12 February.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Tooth (1839–1931) was an Anglican clergyman whose fondness for ceremonial ritual led to accusations of Papist sympathies. Having been instructed to refrain from practices such as the use of incense and altar candles, in January 1877 he was taken into custody for contempt of court, and was regarded as a martyr by Anglo-Catholic opinion. PSW's reference to a 'dim lamp . . . at the

East end' denotes the discreet candle in (Anglo)-Catholic churches which marks the location of the Blessed Sacrament (the consecrated communion wafer).

3 See previous letter, note 1.

4 For WM's involvement with dyeing techniques, see above, Letter 94, note 3.

**107 • To Major Arthur Godman, 22 February 1877**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Feb. 22. 1877.

To Major Arthur Godman  
Smeaton by Northallerton

Dear Major Godman<sup>1</sup>

I enclose you proposed plan of stables, cow byre, kitchen garden &c, for your consideration. I believe that the stable & cow byre without garden walls, greenhouse & pig styes [*sic*] would cost, as [I] have shewn, as much as £3,000 – so I should be glad if you w<sup>d</sup> consider the matter, & on the basis of this plan suggest any reductions you can.

You will see that I have indicated two small Cottages for groom & coachman & helps bedrooms – but I should like further information as to what you would like for this part of the system. The hay, straw & corn lofts w<sup>d</sup> be over the north wing of stables & loose boxes. You will see that I have allowed room for 2 (large) carriages only, would you require more?

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*LB-1, pp. 68-9*

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1 PSW designed Smeaton Manor with stables and farm buildings in Great Smeaton, North Riding (1876–9) for the army officer and horse-breeder, Major (later Colonel) Arthur Fitzpatrick Godman (1841–1940) and his wife Ada Phoebe Bell (1850–1900), a daughter of PSW's client, Lowthian Bell. See *Kirk*, pp. 126–31 and 300.

**108 • To Thomas Forster, 22 February, 1877**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Feb: 22. 1877.

To Tho<sup>s</sup> Forster Esq<sup>re</sup>  
Brampton Cumberland

(Brampton Ch')

Dear Sir.

I have directed a Mr J: Morland, Clerk of Works, to call upon you. After considerable negotiation<sup>1</sup> I have selected him as a fit person ~~to advise~~ <sup>for</sup> the Committee to

appoint; first, on acc<sup>t</sup> of his experience in church work, and secondly on acc<sup>t</sup> of the recommendation I have rec<sup>d</sup> from his late employers – Mess<sup>rs</sup> Cory & Ferguson – as to his honesty & capability.

The salary he will require will be £3.0.0 a week, and the committee could not get a properly experienced man for less, if he had to spend his whole time on the works of the church, wh<sup>ch</sup> it ~~will~~ would be quite necessary for the Clerk of works to do.

Mess<sup>rs</sup> Cory & Ferguson have kindly facilitated the transfer of Morland's services.

Yours truly. | Philip Webb:

P:S: The Clerk of works sh<sup>d</sup> be appointed by the time the contractor commences work on the site.

*LB-1, p. 69*

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<sup>1</sup> This spelling, common enough in the nineteenth century, was favoured by PSW.

### 109 • To George Price Boyce, 15 March 1877

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, | London,*

Mar: 15. '77

My dear Boyce

Thank you very much for your trouble about the idea Utopian, as to preservation of noble old buildings. All I could expect was, that of your good nature you w<sup>d</sup> lay the matter before friend Norbones,<sup>1</sup> leaving it to him to write or not, as he might please or be able.

We shall, I think make an effort to start a Society, not, however, anticipating any great success.<sup>2</sup> Tewkesbury will certainly be destroyed, but there are still some fine buildings, like Selby,<sup>3</sup> Howden<sup>4</sup> & others wh<sup>ch</sup> might be saved, if sufficiently loud screaming were set up. A steam fog-horn blowing night & day in Trafalgar square might do good – and when the blood-thirsty have fixed their blasting eyes on a new found remnant, the fiery cross sh<sup>d</sup> be sent round.

I have to go to Cumberland on Monday, but shall hope to be back by Wednesday night at the latest, and therefore in time for the Philh<sup>c</sup> on Thursday.<sup>5</sup>

My calculation is easy for your work, and I send you the charge.<sup>6</sup> It w<sup>d</sup> have been much more pleasant for me to have done this work for you out of pure love; but, if my enemies won't pay, my friends must, or society be shocked by the death of an arch<sup>l</sup> from starvation appearing in the radical papers.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb:

*BL Add 45354, ff. 91-2*

- 1 The Reverend Thomas W. Norwood (1829–1908), from 1878 vicar of Wrenbury, Nantwich, was a founder member of the SPAB, and became the local correspondent for casework in Cheshire.
- 2 In a letter in *The Athenaeum* on 5 March, WM deplored the imminent ‘restoration’ of Tewkesbury Abbey, asserting that it would be ‘destroyed by Sir Gilbert Scott’. The letter concluded with a statement of intent. ‘What I wish for, therefore, is that an association should be set on foot to keep a watch on old monuments, to protest against all “restoration” that means more than keeping out wind and weather, and by all means, literary and other, to awaken a feeling that our ancient buildings are not mere ecclesiastical toys, but sacred monuments of the nation’s growth and hope.’ This is the earliest reference to the imminent founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (hereafter, the SPAB). Its first meeting was at Queen Square on 22 March, and GPB was present.
- 3 The eleventh-century Selby Abbey, in the former North Riding of Yorkshire, which, in the words of its website, was ‘overhauled and repaired’ in the nineteenth century. <http://www.selbyabbey.org.uk/selbyabbeyhistory.htm> [accessed 10 July 2014].
- 4 The east end of Howden Minster, in the former East Riding of Yorkshire, fell into ruin after the Reformation, although the nave survives as the parish church of St Peter and St Paul.
- 5 The Philharmonic Society concert at St James’s Hall on 22 March was a mixed programme of orchestral works by Beethoven, Wagner, Schumann and others. When the inaugural meeting of the SPAB was fixed for the same day, PSW and GPB gave up their concert plans.
- 6 In 1876 PSW added a dressing room to GPB’s Chelsea house.

## 110 • To George Price Boyce, 17 March 1877

*Annotated* ‘March 17. 1877’

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, | London,  
Friday night.*

This will never do my dear Boyce. It w<sup>d</sup> be justice wrong way upwards. I’ve a devil of a lot of weakness in good, & strength in evil, but that of taking in-justice kindly, when I know it, is neither a strength nor a weakness of mine. If I’d done the same work for an enemy, or say a lord, I sh<sup>d</sup> have made the same charge – so as you are a friend & not a lord I can not charge you double for your sweetness. To shew you that I was just, I did think of not putting <sup>in</sup> the item of £1.13.0 for Clerk’s travelling expenses, but thought it w<sup>d</sup> be affectation not to do so, & there & then writ it down.

Please be as just yourself & be not falsely “ashamed”. Tho’ I don’t take the cheque I take the kindness of the thought, and shall put it in the balance against the unkindness of having to go to law with another client of mine for my due.<sup>1</sup> I suspect my rude jokes about my delightful lawsuit, have in some way made you over-sensitive. You a great deal more than repay me, if the bit of work I’ve done for you is not a torture to you.

I was at Dannreuther’s last night, and had Brahms & Chopin.<sup>2</sup> I’m looking now for the choral Fantasia on Thursday,<sup>3</sup> if I’m not killed by the Midland<sup>4</sup> or by a stone “out of the blue” for meddling in church building. An arch<sup>t</sup> w<sup>d</sup> die properly, if a der[r]ick gave way, & a good lump of red sandstone dropped on his ignorance box.



I see Norland's letter is not in the Athenæum.<sup>5</sup> If damning & blasting w<sup>d</sup> only bring Tewkesbury church tower down on the assembled destroyers I sh<sup>d</sup> think the noble old building well "restored" to mother Earth, and w<sup>d</sup> damn away like Hell itself.

I'll tell Morris about your promised name. Wallis also is willing to join in – but our vandals, like our parliament foes, are in a "brutal majority".

Best remembrance to M<sup>rs</sup> Boyce<sup>6</sup> from your touched but "lean" | "P.W."

*BL Add 45354, ff. 93-4*

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1 The reference is to his grievance against W.A. Cardwell. See above, Letter 95.

2 Having added a teaching studio/recital room (1874–7) to the Orme Square, Bayswater house of the German pianist Edward Dannreuther (1844–1905), PSW attended a number of the chamber music concerts held there. Dannreuther's wife, Chariclea Ionides, was the sister of another of PSW's clients, Alexander Ionides. See *Kirk*, p. 299.

3 See previous letter, note 5.

4 The Midland Railway ran trains from St Pancras to Leeds, connecting with routes to stations further north.

5 He means Thomas Norwood. Presumably, a letter from Norwood to *The Athenæum* supporting that from WM of 5 March about Tewkesbury was not published. Instead, Sir Gilbert Scott was defended in the edition of 27 March, to which WM responded on 4 April.

6 GPB had married the French-born Augustine Aimée Caroline Soubeiran in August 1875. After his death, she gave his PSW letters to SCC, who later gifted them to the British Museum.

## 111 • To Robert C. Driver, 22 March 1877

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
Mar: 22. 1877

To Robert C: Driver Esq<sup>ts</sup>  
4 White hall.<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir

M<sup>r</sup> Prinsep's H<sup>se</sup>

I am really very much obliged to you for your temperate letter of yesterday, and I hope from it that you are quite willing to believe that it was ~~complete~~ <sup>simple</sup> inadvertence on my part that the right & proper notice & inspection of the plans were omitted to be laid before you before ~~commencing~~ <sup>was begun</sup> the work.

I can only acc<sup>t</sup> for the omission by the pressure of the business, for M<sup>r</sup> Prinsep, having gone to India, left me but too short time in wh' to carry out the work during his absence.<sup>2</sup> It is the more surprising that the necessary notice escaped my memory, as M<sup>r</sup> Prinsep left me a cheque for the estate fee, before he left. My clerk brings with him the plans, & will explain what is proposed to be done, and on his return with them a tracing shall be made for you at once.

Please accept this expression of my regret that you sh<sup>d</sup> have been put to the trouble of reminding me of my negligence.

Yours very truly | Philip Webb.

*LB-1, pp. 72-3*

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- 1 Robert C. Driver was the buildings surveyor acting on behalf of the Metropolitan Board of Works.  
 2 In 1876–7 PSW made some enlargements to the studio-house which he had originally built in 1865 for Val Prinsep at 1 Holland Park Road, Kensington. See *Kirk*, p. 296. Prinsep had gone to India at the invitation of the viceroy, Lord Lytton, to witness the formal ceremonial in Delhi celebrating the Queen's new title as Empress of India, and to prepare a commensurately grand painting, 'The Imperial Assemblage at Delhi', 27 feet in length. See also above, Letter 96, note 9.

## 112 • To Richard Du Cane, 22 March 1877

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]

Mar: 22. 1877.

To. Richard DuCane Esq<sup>re</sup>  
 Gray's Inn Square.

My dear Sir.<sup>1</sup>

I visited the works for the new agents house at Naworth on Tuesday last, and I am sorry to be obliged to ~~state~~ <sup>say</sup> that the state in wh' I found them was not at all satisfactory to me.<sup>2</sup>

I considered that undue haste had been used, and work begun on the ground without any information having been given to me that ~~the work~~ <sup>any building</sup> had been ~~begun~~ <sup>done</sup> upon the ground at all <sup>was quite contrary to the requirements of the specification</sup>. I ~~found~~ The work over the main part of the ~~building~~ <sup>house</sup> had been brought up to the finished ground line, and levels arranged for without regard to the possibility of any necessary deviation from the plans if the foundation ~~had~~ <sup>did</sup> not prove satisfactory – but, beyond this, I found the bricks being used were on the whole inferior, ~~but~~ what was worse than this, was, that no care had been taken to sort the bricks and reject those, wh', even a hasty glance w<sup>d</sup> have been sufficient to ~~prove~~ <sup>have shewn</sup>, sh<sup>d</sup> not have been used even in a quite inferior class of building.

The result has been that the <sup>wet & succeeding</sup> frosts have ~~most~~ injuriously affected the work, & the workmen have thus been encouraged to consider that bad work would be allowed & passed from the beginning. Added to this, the damp proof course, wh' it was most important sh<sup>d</sup> be laid in the very best ~~manner~~ <sup>way</sup>, has been put on the walls in a careless manner & without questions having been asked as to the composition of the material to be used. I cannot acquit Tho<sup>s</sup> Warwick of having been ~~much~~ to blame in these proceedings,<sup>3</sup> as, when talking with the mason I found no reason for believing, that, if proper attention and direction had been

exercised by the clerk of works, the <sup>builder</sup> w<sup>d</sup> have been perfectly willing to do his work in the proper way and according to my instructions.

May I ask you to aid me, by insisting that no unsound bricks shall be brought on to the ground at all, and that Warwick shall be required to superintend the carrying out of this order. The bricks sh<sup>d</sup> first be sorted at the kiln, and those brought on to the ground picked over again, & ~~those~~ <sup>any</sup> of them found to be inferior sh<sup>d</sup> be then broken up at once and only used for concrete or levelling up of ground under floors. That the most irregular shaped bricks sh<sup>d</sup> only be used in the solid parts of brick work, as without this regulation the bricklayer cannot keep his narrow walls true & level. Even with the best of the bricks, only, being used, there will none of them be found sufficiently even & good for facing work, so that those walls in wh' facing is shewn to be done in bricks will have to be thickened out to allow of stone facing being applied.

A question was raised by Mr Grey<sup>4</sup> as to the use of fireclay flue pipes throughout the work. Now, tho' I prefer a good brick flue, pargetted with cowdung mortar, to any other flue, still, under the circumstance that the bricks are uneven, and that the <sup>best</sup> bricklayer w<sup>d</sup> be unable to make a <sup>quite</sup> sound flue with their use, I sh<sup>d</sup> be inclined to advise the use of the fireclay pipes. If you sh<sup>d</sup> decide upon this, the bricklayer sh<sup>d</sup> give an estimate for the extra cost of supplying & using the pipes, after deducting the cost of the labour of shaping the flues in brick. Also, Warwick should be particular in watching <sup>that the pipes are procured of proper shape for bends & in</sup> the use of the pipes that hasty filling in, and unsound bond in the chimneys sh<sup>d</sup> be avoided.

I am going to write to Warwick to give him <sup>directions</sup> <sup>instructions</sup> as to the manner of remedying, as far as possible, the defects of the work already executed. May I ~~also~~ request that you will give orders that no <sup>further</sup> building in mortar be proceeded with 'till all ~~danger~~ <sup>risk</sup> of frost is over.

Yours very truly | P.W.

*LB-1, pp. 73-6*

1 Richard Du Cane was clerk to the trustees of the Earl of Carlisle. See above, Letter 87, note 7.

2 Whilst working on St Martin's Church, Brampton, PSW also built Four Gables (near Brampton), a new house and stables for John Grey, the agent to the Naworth Estate (1876–9). See *Kirk*, pp. 221–3 and 300.

3 Thomas Warwick was clerk of works to the Naworth Estate, but his role in this project was not productive. Warwick had himself initially estimated a price for the house which PSW considered 'most extravagant', so 'competitive tenders for the separate trades were requested by advertisement', PSW having to insert clauses into the individual contracts 'that required all trades not to hinder one another and to submit daily records of work done, materials used, and all extras' (*Kirk*, p. 221). PSW wrote to Warwick on 24 March with very precise instructions about the future supervision of the work. 'No more mortar work should be done until all danger of frost is over, in the meantime, I should wish you to have all the worthless & frost bitten bricks cut out of the cellar walls and replaced with sound bricks. Also, I sh<sup>d</sup> wish you to carefully examine the tar damp course and remove such parts as are defective and irregular and make good with fresh asphalt. The asphalt to

be made of equal parts of pitch tar & sand constantly stirred while boiling, the same to be laid over the walls on a perfectly even bed.' *LB-1*, pp. 76–7. The relationship of trust had been irreparably undermined, and Warwick was replaced by William Marshall in September.  
4 Agent to the Naworth Estate, for whom the house was intended.

### 113 • To Percy Wyndham, 18 April 1877

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
April 18. 1877.

To The Hon' Percy Wyndham M.P.  
Wilbury Park Salisbury.

My dear Sir.

I delayed answering your letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> as I had hoped that the printer w<sup>d</sup> have sent me some copies of the Old Buildings society statement.<sup>1</sup> As soon as they do come I will forward some ~~copies~~ to you.

The weather was fortunate for me on the 11<sup>th</sup> and I had a good time on my return to Clouds. I went on to the first hill to the north – that with the fine Scotch firs – and then on to the top of the taller one north of that – the hill covered with gorse. From both places I could better make out the possible disposition of the <sup>parts</sup> of the new house. I felt, when there that it would be well if possible to keep as many trees as possible on the east of the present house including the two walnut trees – and I made out that the <sup>east end of the</sup> new house could very well be swung round more towards the south.

I have had a letter from a M<sup>r</sup> [John] Harding of Salisbury recommended by Rawlence & Squarey as a surveyor who would plot the ground. M<sup>r</sup> Harding is quite willing to do so, and I have sent him instructions today. I return you the reports on water supply. I agree with M<sup>s</sup> Grantham that the Green & Trodwell springs are <sup>the</sup> most promising for supply.

In conversation with M<sup>rs</sup> Wyndham I gathered that she was not quite content with the groundplan scheme for the house; now, as it is very important that she sh<sup>d</sup> be quite satisfied as to the objects to be gained I sh<sup>d</sup> be glad if she w<sup>d</sup> again closely consider the matter since my explanation. The point I've aimed at in the hall, is to get north and south light & view – in the dining room north view and east light – in the staircases to serve the more private & the more public rooms, and in the offices, to screen the east garden. Nothing I saw on my last visit made me wish for another kind of plan, but as I am not to live in the house and you & M<sup>rs</sup> Wyndham will, I sh<sup>d</sup> like to have your expression of opinion <sup>again</sup> before anything further is done.

If you sh<sup>d</sup> happen to be in London shortly & could find time to call here, I w<sup>d</sup> gladly enter upon these points <sup>with you & M<sup>rs</sup> Wyndham</sup>.

Yours very truly | P: W:

*LB-1, pp. 82-4*

1 The inaugural manifesto of the SPAB. PSW circulated copies to those of his clients and acquaintances whom he thought would be sympathetic to the cause, hoping to recruit members. PWY became the local correspondent for the SPAB in Wiltshire, and played a vital role in the conservation efforts for East Knoyle church, in which PSW was the supervising architect. See Vol. II, Letter 410, and subsequent letters.

## 114 • To Thomas Forster, 24 April 1877

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
April 24. 1877.

To Tho<sup>s</sup> Forster Esq<sup>ts</sup>  
Brampton  
Dear Sir.

(Brampton Ch. Coulthard mem[oria])<sup>1</sup>

I am much obliged to you for your communication rec<sup>d</sup> this morning. I am, naturally, much interested in the proposal, as it will altogether depend on the character of the <sup>stained</sup> glass put into the window as to whether the Church will be injured in appearance <sup>by it</sup> or not.<sup>2</sup> Mess<sup>rs</sup> Morris & Co of 26 Queen Square Bloomsbury, London do all such work for me, and I do not know any other stained glass manufacturer ~~to~~ on whom I could depend for <sup>such</sup> work <sup>being</sup> in accordance with the design of the Church and of sufficient artistic excellence.

Yours truly | P: W:

*LB-1, p. 84*

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- 1 The inscription in the most westerly window on the north side of the church, reads ‘To the glory of God and in memory of Joseph Coulthard of Croft House Brampton the founder of Croft House School who died on the 18th day of October 1871 and was buried in Lanercost Abbey churchyard.’ See Sewter, *The Stained Glass of William Morris and his Circle*, II, p. 29.
- 2 Morris and Co. would design and supply fourteen stained glass windows for St Martin’s, Brampton. See below, Letters 127 and 136.

## 115 • To Charles Fairfax Murray, 26 April 1877

*1, Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn | London,*  
April 26. ’77

My dear Murray.

I had your last letter of Wed: evening.<sup>1</sup> I do not think you will find any letter from me awaiting you at Florence. You hit the mark when you supposed I deferred writing as I expected a face to face argument. M<sup>r</sup> Morris was here when your letter came, & I read it to him to kill 2 birds with one Stone of Venice. What does

Venetian Ruskin mean by his objurgations? (thank the stars, I do, for so fine a word).<sup>2</sup> Are not his friends as well as enemies always ducking their heads to avoid his broadcast missiles? Do they not raise them again when the malignant darts are past, & say, 'please forgive, & don't do so any more'? Do not I remember when "he took the mighty metal & kissed the brass of war"<sup>3</sup> against a modest God of mine, MA to wit, who was once felt to be a giant even by his enemies?<sup>4</sup> Am I and the likes of me always to forgive? No! Sometimes we'll not forgive no, not for any wheedling. I'm really glad of the proposed His: of Venice tho'<sup>5</sup> and hope he won't treat it as once did a high church parson with the "Pilgrim's Progress" viz, turn it into a High Church novel. It sh<sup>d</sup> be real hist<sup>y</sup> (the Venice one) and not transform<sup>ation</sup> of good into bad, & bad into good to bias luckless, pudding headed English boyish & girlish people. There, that is my infantine lesson as to how to suck eggs.

In your letter of Feb: 22, you speak of the landscape photographs you sent me, of yours, to look at and enjoy. Have I not done so & delighted myself with "threshing floors . . . haystacks & even vin[e]yards"? And the gentle white oxen, how I w<sup>d</sup> rejoice to rub their patient noses; how much more interesting they are than Punch's jokes – the horn of whose scantiness is raised in this miserable capital, alas! once a week. Yea, truly 80£ w<sup>d</sup> be nearer my mark (or 8£) than 800£ for the pleasant house for sale in Siena. The water w<sup>d</sup> be cheap & nice tho: while here it is dear & nasty – what a place of fountains Siena is – and gardens too, there is one garden, back-with an arcade, wh' I covet intensely.<sup>6</sup> I'd rather be a gardener in that place than live in Burlington House & call myself RA:<sup>7</sup>

WM is still deep in his blue vats, occasionally recreating himself in red & yellow.<sup>8</sup> He is doing admirable work, and is as gentle in his dabbings as one of Pliny's doves.<sup>9</sup> I'm very glad to hear of your industry, not carried on in an architectural sooted brick house on the Regent's canal but in a place on a Canaletto's canal (the spelling, right or wrong, to suit the alliteration, you see) – yon eye shot windows quite delightful. Happy Murray, master of the situation.

The shop in Oxford Street is for fine ladies to go to for their half yards of chintz & carpet & paper.<sup>10</sup> The malefactor<sup>11</sup> still sits in the Old house in Queen Square, originating pretty devices in the old den – books, I fancy will again populate the cases, but no feasting & upturning of glasses. By the way, is good wine to be had in Venice? suppose one drank water for 6 days, could one get a fine bottle of wine on the 7<sup>th</sup>, say for 5 francs? If so, I'll come – one of these days.

I've no news, except that we have started an anti-scraping society to stop blasting restoration of old buildings.<sup>12</sup> In fact, backing up Ruskin, in his protests, so far back as "The Stones of Venice". This new thing is all of a piece with the fulmination from Q Square, ab<sup>t</sup> not putting new wine – I mean to say – new glass into old windows.<sup>13</sup> The wind is East, East by north north East here & again by East – drying up the watery humours of the last 9 months or so. 'Tis a fine country

this of ours – pity 'tis so small – not in land but in the men's manners of it. Adieu, after this grumbling. Many thanks for your letters, and kindest remembrance to the Signora.<sup>14</sup>

Yours sincerely | Philip Webb:

*Fitzwilliam 19*

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- 1 CFM was in Venice, copying parts of Carpaccio's series of large wall paintings in the Accademia, the Legend of St Ursula, for JR. A portrait of JR himself (now lost) was also under way. From June CFM would base himself in Florence, spending several weeks in London during the summer. See *Elliott*, pp. 79–80.
  - 2 Relations between JR and CFM were not always easy. CFM 'liked to challenge Ruskin's interpretations, and pointed out the inconsistencies in the St Ursula cycle; hence Ruskin's comment that his help was "given much in the form of antagonism".' Robert Hewison, *Ruskin on Venice* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 348.
  - 3 'But Hogni turned to the great-one who the Niblung trumpet bore, / And he took the mighty metal, and kissed the brass of war,' from 'Atli speaketh with the Niblungs', Book IV ('Gudrun') of WM, *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs* (London: Ellis and White, 1877), p. 359. PSW's presentation copy is in the Emery Walker Library. See *CAGM*, p. 142.
  - 4 JR attacked the mannerism of Michelangelo in 'The relation between Michael Angelo and Tintoret', a lecture given at Oxford in June 1871 and published 1872. EBJ, to whom JR had read the lecture privately in 1871, was especially upset. 'He read it to me just after he had written it, and as I went home I wanted to drown myself in the Surrey Canal or get drunk in a tavern – it didn't seem worthwhile to strive any more if he could think or write it'. Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones* (London: Macmillan, 1904) II, p. 18.
  - 5 JR was contemplating a revised edition of *The Stones of Venice*, and adding a fourth volume.
  - 6 His comments are based on CFM's photographs of Siena and the countryside round about.
  - 7 'I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.' Psalms 84:10.
  - 8 See above, Letter 94, note 3.
  - 9 A Roman floor mosaic at Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli, depicting doves at a drinking bowl, is thought to be a copy of a Greek original at Pergamon, described by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* (c. 77 AD).
  - 10 'In the spring of 1877 [WM's] position as a general household furnisher was strengthened when the Firm leased a shop at 264 (later 449) Oxford Street, on the corner of North Audley Street. . . . [A] shop so close to Morris's most fashionable competitors – Liberty's in Regent Street, Morant's in Bond Street – contributed enormously to the future expansion of the Firm.' *MacCarthy, WMLT*, p. 409.
  - 11 WM.
  - 12 In 1878–80, CFM was the corresponding secretary of the SPAB in Italy.
  - 13 After the foundation of the SPAB, WM decided that Morris & Co. should no longer provide new stained glass for ancient buildings, and announcements appeared in papers such as the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It led to misunderstanding from potential clients, as GW recalled. 'In the minds of most people who took any interest at all in Mr Morris's work the *raison d'être* of "Morris glass" was its so called mediaevalism, & it was supposed nothing could be more suitable for an ancient building. The profound misconception which this opinion implied & the other hopeless mistake which assumed that Mr Morris's work was purposely "mediaeval", made it impossible that the circular could be understood.' 'Memorials of William Morris. Christmas 1897' (prepared for JWM as he worked on *Mackail*), *BL Add 45350*, f. 24.
  - 14 CFM had married Angelica Colivicchi of Volterra in April 1875. Of their several children, two died in infancy.

**116 • To Lord Fitzhardinge, 4 May 1877**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
May 4. 1877.

To the R<sup>t</sup> Hon' The Lord Fitzhardinge  
Berkeley Castle Gloucester<sup>sh</sup>

My Lord.

On Jan<sup>y</sup> the 10<sup>th</sup> of this year I sent to you my charge for professional assistance begun in April 1874, & on March the 5<sup>th</sup> last I wrote to your Lordship to remind you of my charge having been sent in: also, <sup>in</sup> requesting payment I said that it w<sup>d</sup> be a convenience to me <sup>to receive it</sup>. I have had no answer from your Lordship to either of these letters.

If this present letter is not acknowledged, I shall suppose that your Lordship is unwilling to pay me for my work, and shall not again press the matter upon your ~~Lordship's~~ attention.

I am my Lord, | Yours faithf<sup>ly</sup> | P: W:

*LB-1, pp. 89-90*

**117 • To Lady Fitzhardinge, 10 May 1877**

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
May 10. 1877.

To The R<sup>t</sup> Hon' The Lady Fitzhardinge  
Berkeley Castle Gloucestersh.

Dear Lady Fitzhardinge.

In answer to your letter to me of the 6<sup>th</sup> instant, I was very glad to find that the touch of irony in my last letter to Lord Fitzhardinge was not really necessary. M<sup>r</sup> Cooke has sent me the cheque this morning, & if any blame was due for the delay in answering my letters, he has taken it on himself.

With regard to the glazing of the Great Hall windows. When M<sup>r</sup> Morris was with me at the Castle <sup>last year</sup> <sup>1</sup>, we came to the conclusion that <sup>the</sup> piece of glazing done ~~under our direction~~ at his works, was not quite satisfactory in its place, and we noted then & have decided since, that the better plan would be to glaze the windows with plain white glass of good kind <sup>in small panes in lead</sup>, and simply insert the shields in this glazing in the upper part of windows. This w<sup>d</sup> not take long to do, & one or two windows could be done at a time, & at such times as you may be away from the castle. So that, if you sh<sup>d</sup> decide upon having this



done the glass (of, say 1 or 2 windows) could be taken out & sent to M<sup>r</sup> Morris at 26 Queen Square Bloomsbury and could most likely be returned in a month afterwards.

Believe me, yours faithfully, | P: W:

P.S. As I think it possible that you will take an interest in the subject of protecting ancient buildings, I enclose a couple of copies of the statement of a Society to wh<sup>o</sup> I have lately become a member. It explains itself & so I need say no more.<sup>2</sup> P: W:

*LB-1, pp. 91-2*

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<sup>1</sup> See above, Letter 98.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Fitzhardinge joined the SPAB, but her membership lapsed after 1883.

### 118 • To Thomas Forster, 10 May 1877

*Draft/copy*

[1, Raymond Buildings . . .]  
May 10. 1877.

To Tho<sup>s</sup> Forster Esq<sup>re</sup>  
Brampton Cumb<sup>d</sup>

Dear Sir.

Brampton Ch<sup>h</sup>

In answer to your letter rec<sup>d</sup> this morning enclosing copy of a letter from M<sup>r</sup> Hough. I think it ~~quite~~ possible that some very slight diminution of light may occur to M<sup>r</sup> Routledge's house, but as the Church is a public building for the good of the town, and as we could not have used the site for the new church without placing it as we have, M<sup>r</sup> Routledge is not likely I sh<sup>d</sup> think to object in any way when he knows the circumstances.<sup>1</sup> For, if the church had been built elsewhere that part of the site w<sup>d</sup> have had to be let for building on, and cottages small shops or a forge or public house w<sup>d</sup> really have injured M<sup>r</sup> Routledge's property, whereas, the church will considerably enhance the value of it – and the loss of light, if any, will be so trifling that it is not worth consideration in any other way than I have mentioned above.

Yours truly | Ph<sup>o</sup> Webb:

*LB-1, pp. 92-3*

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Routledge, who owned a house to the east of the church, had conveyed through his solicitor, Mr Hough, 'his apprehension that his lights may be interfered with by the building of the new church'. See *Penn*, p. 18.