

NO. 7 HAMMERSMITH TERRACE

Friday 13th & Thursday 26th May

Tucked away by the Thames riverside, a stone's throw from the roar of the A4 as it leaves London is a little known village oasis which includes a brick terrace dating from the second half of the 18th century. No. 7 was the home (fig. 12) of Sir Emery Walker, the typographer, printer and close friend of William Morris and his circle.

Walker came here in 1903 and, although he died in 1933, his daughter Dorothy (d.1963) and then her companion Elizabeth de Haas continued to live here until 1999. Over this period very little was altered and, although it is not large, with two rooms per floor over five floors, the house contains an accumulation of some 3200 objects and artefacts which offer a unique insight into the family's history, with the particular importance of its close connection with the Arts and Crafts Movement. It is also extremely rare for an urban middle class home to have survived in this way – only Linley Sambourne House in Kensington remains from the late Victorian period in London and is accessible to the public.

Emery Walker was born in Paddington in 1851, but at the end of the decade his parents moved out to Hammersmith. Here he left school at 13 and took up experiments with printing and photo reproduction techniques. Marrying in 1877, he and his wife Mary Grace moved into 3 Hammersmith Terrace two years later, which brought him into contact with Morris who came to live nearby the same year. The two men shared strong socialist beliefs and his printing interests were the inspiration for the establishment of the Kelmscott Press in 1891. In 1900 Walker set up his own Dove Press with a neighbour, the bookbinder T.J. Cobden-Sanderson. He has been called the father of the private press movement. He was also involved with the Art Workers' Guild (Master in 1904), the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society and had close links with many great names of the era such as Philip Webb (for whom he was executor), Walter Crane, Rudyard Kipling and George Bernard Shaw. In 1930 he overcame his socialist principles and accepted a knighthood.

Our intimate tours of the house and garden in groups of eight included Morris & Co. wallpaper and textiles, needlework by May Morris, (William's daughter lived next door at no. 8), Whitefriars glass, Powell and de Morgan ceramics, and a stained and painted oak bookcase, plan chest and cabinets designed by and for Philip Webb. There is also a fine walnut secretaire by Edward Barnsley, one of Walker's particular friends who inspired him to rent Daneway, a manor house at Sapperton near Cirencester as a second home from 1922. But not all the contents are of the Arts and Crafts period. The furniture includes an 18th century card table of Webb's and Morris's 17th century oak wainscot 'visitor' chair which came with some hangings from Kelmscott Manor after his death. Interior photographs

of the rooms taken in the 1930s show how little has changed since then, although the original bed in the main bedroom has been replaced by a rather small Heal's four poster.

In spite of the sale of Walker's private press books, the Emery Walker Trust, which was set up by Elizabeth de Haas to preserve the house and its contents, does not have sufficient funds to open this small property with its restricted access to the public on a permanent basis and unless it can raise an endowment soon, it will have to be sold and the contents dispersed. To increase public awareness, there has been limited opening this year but a decision on the future of this charming house and equally lovely little garden hangs in the balance. The limited groups of members were very privileged indeed to be able to experience it.

Christopher Claxton Stephens



Fig 12. Home of Sir Emery Walker, the typographer, printer and close friend of William Morris and his circle.



Fig 13. Stool originally belonging to Philip Webb