

Morris of Reading: A Family of Architects 1836–1958

by

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and

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Joseph Morris, architect, and County Surveyor of Bridges and Building for Berkshire, was joined in his practice by his son and a daughter. His earliest building is a small Victorian gothic revival village church of 1858 near Reading; the last by Violet Morris his daughter, who has, incorrectly, been called the first woman architect, is a Voysey-style house in Somerset dating from 1949. In the 1890s and the first decade of the present century the practice was responsible for some very distinctive houses in Reading and Wokingham and around Bridgwater, and for department stores, offices and County Police Stations in a fantastic Art Nouveau style.

Talwin Morris, a nephew of Joseph, orphaned and articed to his architect uncle, went on to a distinguished career as a book designer in Glasgow for W.M. Blackie and, by introducing the latter to his architect friend, C.R. Mackintosh, brought about the commissioning of Mackintosh's masterpiece of Hill House.

For ten years Joseph Morris was in partnership with a high churchman, S.S. Stallwood. The break in their partnership is significantly close to the time, in 1884, of Morris' adherence to the strange sect of the Agapemonites, the followers of the Revd Henry Prince.

In 1905 Morris, with his wife and daughters, retired to the community, the Abode of Love, founded by Prince near Bridgwater in Somerset. Morris died in 1913.

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Sidney M. Gold is an early-retired Reading businessman, who is now pursuing his lifelong interest in local artists, architects and genealogy. One of the founders of the Reading Centre of the National Trust, he was its Secretary for thirteen years and is now its Vice-President. Author of *A short account of the life and work of John Rowell* (an eighteenth-century stained-glass painter) and various articles on Reading artists. His MSS catalogue of pre-seventeenth-century painters is in the British Museum (Prints and Drawings), he is currently engaged in writing a history of the Reading School of Art in the nineteenth century and in compiling a dictionary of Reading architects and artists.

Violet was one of the executors of the will which had prudently been made by the second leader who, like the first, had claimed to be immortal. After the death of the third leader, who made no such claim, the sect declined. With the death of Violet the establishment was sold, but the last of the sisters lived on there until 1968.

Father, son and daughter in one architectural practice must, inevitably, be unusual. When the daughter is described (even erroneously) as the first woman architect, when the work of their practice includes not only buildings remarkable even among the originalities of Art Nouveau but also the only church built for an apocalyptic sect to which attached a notable Victorian scandal, and when a cousin of the younger generation, articled to his architect uncle, is found in later life as a friend of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and 'the Four' in Glasgow, something more than passing curiosity about the family is justified.

Joseph Morris of Reading, Frank his son, and Violet one of his daughters, are the three architects. The church of the Ark of the Covenant on Clapton Common in London, built by Henry Prince's Family of Love has, at crown and base of its tower, sculptures of the four winged creatures of the Book of Revelation; the building, occupied by Morris's County Department of Roads and Bridges, was not altogether more strange than the dragon with seven heads and ten horns of that same book. An elder brother of Joseph was Thomas Shewell Morris, whose son Talwin Morris worked in Glasgow as the art director for the publishing firm of Blackie, and was an artist of some distinction. The work of the practice spans some ninety years. Joseph Morris's earliest recorded work near Reading is dated 1858; his daughter's latest in Somerset is of 1949. For some ten years from 1875 to 1886 Morris was in partnership with S.S. Stallwood, a High Anglican, and the date of the ending of the partnership is close to that given for Morris's adherence to the strange sect, the Agapemonites.

This Morris family is first known at Ampthill in Bedfordshire in the early eighteenth century (Fig. 1). In Quaker records the earliest are Michael Morris, born about 1713, and, by 1747, living at Ampthill, and John Morris, born about 1715, who is described as the son of William and Ann Morris. By this account Michael and John may have been brothers but while this is not clear from Quaker records, a Morris pedigree in the family claims as the first of the line William (1669-1738), a Quaker, born at Pavenham, Bedfordshire, who moved to Ampthill to escape persecution, and was also the father of Michael Morris. From John descends a family of brewers of Ampthill who occupied Avenue House in that town, which in the twentieth century was the home of another architect, the gifted, individual, eccentric, Albert Richardson—'The Professor'. From Michael and his wife Dorcas, who bore eleven children, descends William Morris (II) born in 1753. This William and Ann Marsh, his wife, likewise had eleven children, of whom Thomas, born in 1791, was the second. Thomas became a woollen draper and tailor with premises at 11 Market Place, Reading, and was Mayor of the town in 1846-7.

It seems that this Thomas Morris was in 1827 in partnership with another Quaker woollen draper, Thomas Letchworth, at the Market Place address. Letchworth, with his wife Harriet, resigned from membership in 1840. Thomas Morris and Ann Talwin

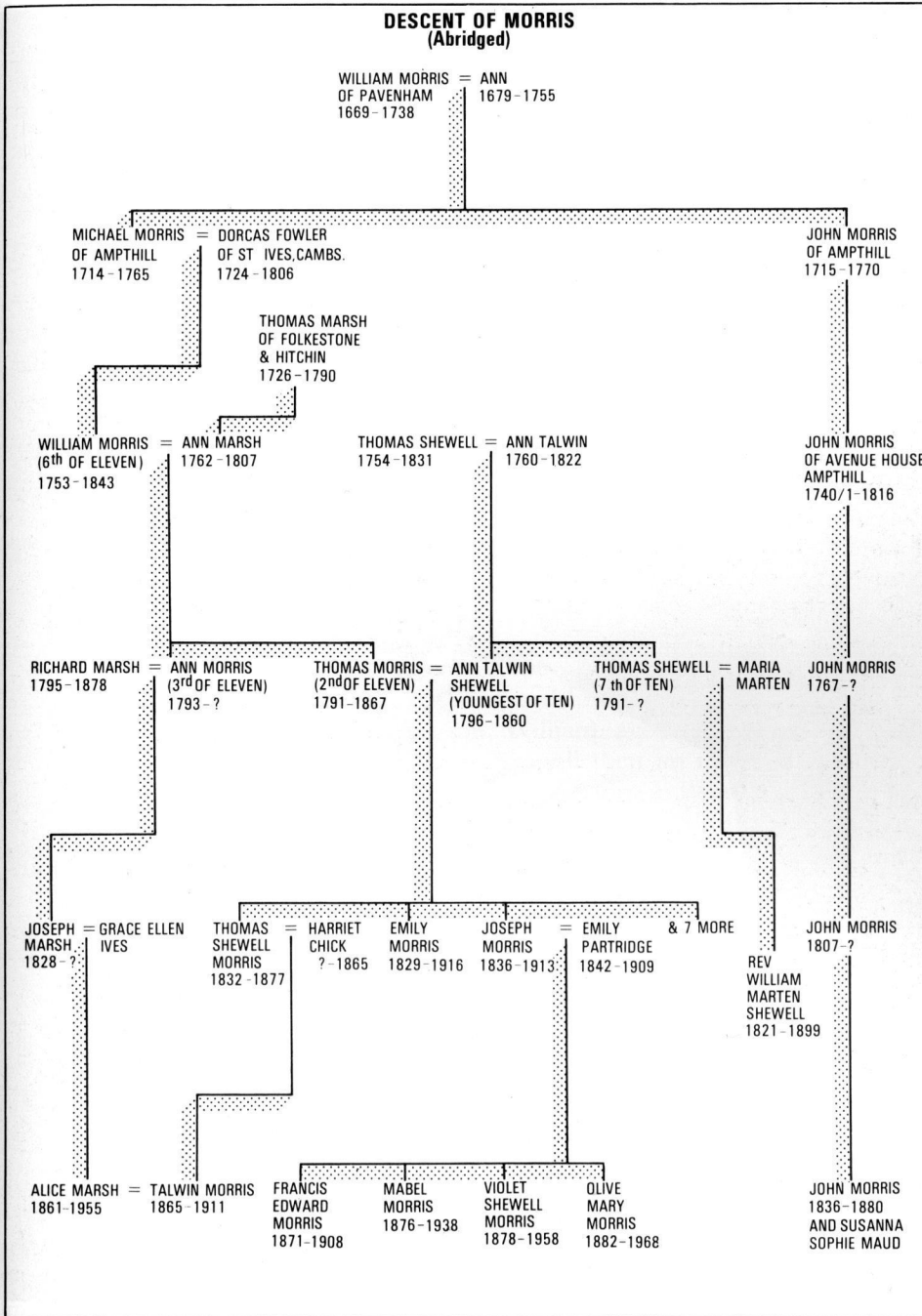


Fig. 1
The descent of the Morris family



Fig. 2
Joseph Morris
From a photograph in the possession of Mr Stephen Boorne

Shewell, his wife, had ten children and, like most of the Ampthill Morris family, these also left Friends. Only Emily was disowned; the others resigned, commonly two by two, between 1844 and 1862 generally when they had reached ages of between nineteen and twenty one. The letter of resignation of Thomas on 16 January 1844 confirms that he and Ann Talwin had found themselves out of sympathy with Friends' way of worship, but that they retained feelings of Christian love for the Friends of Reading Meeting.

After the first heroic generations of missionary work Quakers settled into being almost a closed society of related families. Quaker cousinry was notorious and the Morris genealogy provides numerous instances, with surnames travelling down in later generations as second names. Two generations down from William Morris of Ampthill a grandson, William, marries Ann Marsh in 1789. The eldest son of this William and Ann Morris, Thomas, marries Ann Talwin Shewell in 1824 and the youngest son, Charles, marries another Ann Shewell in 1846. A nephew of Ann Talwin Shewell Morris is the Revd William Marten Shewell, a cousin therefore of Joseph Morris, who officiates at the weddings of various ex-Quaker cousins and whose influence is probable in the early days of Morris's career. In the same generation as the Morris-Shewell marriages is one of Thomas Corder to Mary Shewell. A son of theirs, Frederick Corder, marries, when a widower, Maria, a younger sister of Joseph. Other marriages in the Shewell family of the same generation as that of Revd William's parents, Thomas Shewell (born 1791) to Maria Marten in 1819, include one of Shewell to Corder and another of Shewell to Marsh.

Joseph Morris, architect and county surveyor, was born in 1836 (Fig. 2). In the 1851 census records the household of Thomas Morris, woollen draper and tailor, at 11 Market Place, Reading, included a son, William, aged 26, banker's clerk, and six more brothers and sisters, with Thomas Shewell then an upholsterer's apprentice; Charles, who later became head of Cock's Sauce Factory in Reading, then aged sixteen years and a woollen draper's assistant. Last was Joseph, aged fifteen years, an articled architect. His master was John Berry Clacy.

John Berry Clacy, who lived from 1810 to 1880, included architect among his several occupations. He was simultaneously County Surveyor for the eastern half of the County of Berkshire, Auctioneer, Insurance Agent and Postmaster. The following paragraphs, quoted from the *Reading Chronicle* of 28 April 1978 describe one of his occupations.

Mr John Berry Clacy was postmaster at least from 1842, when 'receiving offices' were at Lovejoy's bookshop, then at 117, London Street, and at grocer Keeley's premises at Hampden Place in the Oxford Road.

Mr Clacy did not live by postal duties alone. He was an architect, county surveyor, and agent for a life assurance office. Assisted by his nephew, the then Master of the Greyfriars Lodge of Freemasons, he designed the Masonic Hall in Greyfriars Road erected in 1859 and opened with himself as Master . . . The 1842-3 Reading directory states the office to have been open daily from 7 a.m. till 10 p.m. closing on Sundays only from 10.30 p.m. till 1.15 p.m.

After the letterbox is closed for each despatch, stamped letters are received at the windows till the bags are sealed. A fee of one penny must be paid with all letters posted after half-past eight o'clock till nine, from nine o'clock till ten a fee of two-pence must be paid with each letter.

The first arrival of the general mail and Henley letters commences at seven o'clock a.m. in summer and at eight o'clock in winter. The second delivery (except on Sundays) of cross-post and day-mail letters commences at one o'clock p.m.

[The term 'cross-post' indicated a local service.]



Fig. 3
St Helen's Church, Dry Sandford, Abingdon, Berks, by J.B. Clacy, 1855

In the 1837 *Directory* of Reading, J.B. Clacy's address is 11 High Street. By 1842 it is 99 Broad Street which is also the Post Office. In 1867 and 1871 the architectural practice is listed as J.B. Clacy & Son. As architect Clacy is credited with churches at Burghfield (1843), Dry Sandford (1855) (Fig. 3) and Barkham (1860-1) and with King Alfred's School at Wantage. For the Norman-style church at Burghfield, dating from 1843, he was assisted by William Brown. In 1848 at St Mary's Church in Reading there were repairs to the roof and north wall and work in 1852 at a contract price of £1,460. In 1850 it was agreed to establish a Cattle Market in Reading to be closer to the railway than the ancient site at Loddon Bridge. A design by J.B. Clacy was accepted. A competition for the Corn Exchange in 1852 produced a controversial choice. Eventually the designers placed first and second were awarded the commission jointly, Francis Hawkes and J.B. Clacy. Plans for the layout of the Forbury Gardens were invited in 1855 with a similarly controversial result. Those of Hawkes and of Poulton & Woodman were both accepted and handed over to Clacy to be carried out! Canon Clarke also notes that Berry Clacy restored Basingstoke and Finchampstead churches.

Berkshire, never having been in the Middle Ages a county of great prosperity, its village churches were mostly small and modest, built mainly of flint with the most sparing use of stone and with timber turrets for their few bells. Such churches were, many of them, rebuilt in the nineteenth century either because they were decayed, or because the squire or vicar wanted something more seemly. Burghfield Church retains from the former building a handful of monuments including a rare wooden tomb effigy. The church is in what can only be described as a caricature of the Norman style. In Reading, only a few years before, A.W.N. Pugin had completed, in the Norman style, his first church, St James, set among the ruins of the great royal abbey, and by contrast Clacy, jack of several trades, is shown as no great master of architecture. Berkshire County Council minutes provide the information that Mr J.B. Clacy, who had been Surveyor of Bridges for the eastern half of the County for thirty years by 1871, was then succeeded as Surveyor by Mr Joseph Morris, his appointment being for the whole of the County.

It is suggested that, after leaving Clacy, Morris had an office in London at 28 Queen Street, Holborn, in the 1850s. If this is so it must have been a brief episode as in 1860 his address was Market Place, Reading. From 1864 his name appears in Reading directories practising from 9 Friar Street. Morris's first recorded works are St Paul's Church, Vicarage and stables at Highmoor, a few miles north of Reading, of 1858-9 (Figs 4 and 5). It seems more than probable that the Revd William Marten Shewell was involved both in the Highmoor commission and in the introduction to Stallwood, *Crockford's Clerical Directory* for 1900 lists Shewell as having been Chaplain of the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading from 1854 to 1858 and curate of Rotherfield Greys from 1858 to 1860. Greys is seven miles north of Reading and the new church at Highmoor was built to serve that parish. In 1868 Shewell officiated at the wedding in Wandsworth of Joseph Morris of Reading and Emily Partridge of Wandsworth. After various other curacies Shewell became Vicar of Hawkinge in Kent where he was from 1874 to 1877. Hawkinge is a village only two miles north of Folkestone where work by Stallwood is certain in 1872 and probable from 1868. *The Builder* of 24 November 1877 refers to Rodmersham Church in Kent as having been re-opened after restoration

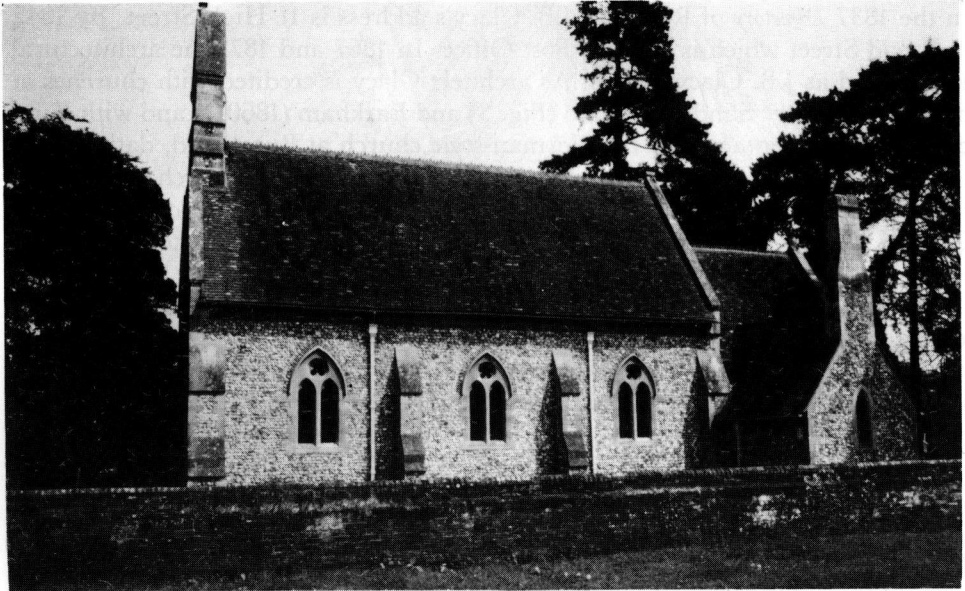


Fig. 4
St Paul's Church, Highmoor, Oxon, 1858-9, by Joseph Morris



Fig. 5
Highmoor Vicarage, 1859
Messrs Britton & Dalton, Henley

under the direction of Morris and Stallwood. This and a Methodist Church at Windsor are the first recorded works of their partnership.

Spencer Slingsby Stallwood, A.R.I.B.A., F.S.A., was born at Marlow about 1843 and died in 1922. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries on 11 January 1894, admitted on 1 March of the same year,¹ and he died on 13 August 1922. Stallwood, Morris's partner for some ten years, had a life much more conventional and characteristic of the Victorian professional man than that of Morris. He starts as a young man in the choir of a High Church parish in Folkestone, a keen sportsman and a crack shot, and ends as an honorary curator of the Silchester collection in Reading Museum and Past Grand Warden of Freemasons in Berkshire. St Peter's Church at Folkestone, a church known for its 'advanced', or High Church, practices, was built typically to serve the poorest district of the town. In one of the celebrated Victorian ecclesiastical cases concerning ritual—the Ridsdale Judgement—the defendant was the Revd C.J. Ridsdale, Vicar of St Peter's.

The *Folkestone Chronicle* notes that 'S. Stallwood, in Mr Gardner's office exhibited a pair of model cottages' (1868). Joseph Gardner, as architect, was responsible for much of Victorian Folkestone. He was a Freemason and a member of Temple Lodge, as also was Stallwood. At that time there was in the town what was described as 'a helpful association of leading tradesmen' with the few architects and builders in local



Fig. 6

Hillside, Southern Hill, Reading, 1879, by Morris and Stallwood. The extension of 1893, to the right, is probably by Stallwood

Freemasonry. Stallwood is credited with restoration work in 1872 and possibly from 1869 to 1874 at the church of St Mary and St Eanswythe, Folkestone.² In the same town St Peter's Church is ascribed to R.C. Hussey 1862-4 with a 'horrible north aisle of 1870 by Stallwood', and red brick school buildings also by him. Canon Clarke disagrees with the description 'horrible' saying rather that it is just what a young man would do in 1870—'a bit coarse and aggressive'. Later, after leaving Morris, he had an office address in 1886 at 147-148 Friar Street, Reading. In 1918 it was 27-28 Market Place and his home was at 57 Christchurch Road. He was appointed Surveyor for Oxford Diocese on 21 April 1898 in succession to Mr Clapton Crabbe Rolfe and he was followed by Mr J.B. Goodman. He died at his home at Whitley Croft in his seventy-ninth year. Amongst his most important works was the British Dairy Institute of 1898, which later became the Magistrates Courts and is now demolished. This was the first home of what became the National Institute for Research in Dairying. In 1892 the Abbey Hospice was converted by him for the teaching of science, and in 1893 the adjoining St Lawrence's Vicarage was similarly converted for the new University College, the origin of Reading University.

Christ's Hospital at Horsham owned estates in Reading from 1624 by a gift of John Kendrick. In 1879 a lease of a large plot for ninety-four-and-a-half years was granted to William Isaac Palmer, on condition that 'he engaged to erect a large residence'. Mr Palmer 'put the work into the hands of the local architects, Morris and Stallwood', who executed it in 1880-2. This is Hillside (Fig. 6). In *The Architect* of 11 October 1879 it is described as 'A House at Southern Hill'.³ In 1889 William Isaac Palmer assigned the lease to Leonard Goodhart Sutton, and five years later part of the land was let for building plots. In 1949 the lease was assigned again to the University of Reading who purchased the property in 1954.

Hillside has something of the Queen Anne style associated with W. Eden Nesfield, a distinguished but not prolific Victorian architect who is chiefly known for Kinmel Park, Anglesey. The brick ornaments include 'pies', a sunflower-like motif which was high fashion in artistic or Aesthetic circles in 1880. Splendid moulded and carved ornamental detail in red brick, dentil courses and gauged arches, all no doubt from Collier's, the local brickworks, and of the very highest quality, are used. The house was doubled in size in 1893 for the new owner and, although the grouping of bays and gables is skilful, there is no doubt that it was a more successful design before the extension.

Adjoining Hillside is The Mount, Christchurch Road, a compact estate of four streets containing terraces of small but florid Victorian houses as well as a number of larger villas. Two of the latter, facing Christchurch Road, have ornamental turrets. Brickwork is of yellow stocks, with white inlaid patterns; roofs are of slate, varied in pitch, and in the case of the two largest houses, are in two colours; window arches are incised with patterns; cast-iron railings fortunately survive. These streets were built for staff of Messrs Sutton's Seed Establishment, graded in size, grandeur, and individuality according to the status in the firm of the occupiers. Along with Hillside The Mount represents an urban and industrial counterpart of the country landowner's estate village and 'big house'.

Stallwood's lesser works include numerous items of church furniture and fittings

and church restorations. At Christmas 1887 Canon Garry unveiled in St Mary's churchyard the stone cross given by Dr Isaac Harrinson who was also responsible for promoting the clearance of ancient houses from the Butts and the fringes of the churchyard. He gave £100 to this cause and also built at his own expense the north aisle of St Mary's Church, dedicated to the free use of the poor for ever. As well as having a practice among the better class of inhabitants of Reading he was for a time also medical officer at the Dispensary in Chain Street. The cross was designed by S.S. Stallwood and made by Wheeler Bros of Caversham Road, a firm of stonemasons responsible for much Victorian church work in Reading; beyond Reading they also worked for Henry Woodyer.

A Reading architect of a later generation, William Ravenscroft reported that, when the name of Morris was mentioned, Stallwood would tap his forehead meaningfully. The evidence of dates makes it reasonably sure that matters of religious faith were involved in the break between Stallwood and Morris. Morris, a birthright Quaker, resigned from Friends on 1 June 1858. His father and mother and the two eldest children had all been baptized at St Laurence's church in 1844. Joseph and his other brethren (and sisters) were baptized on 1 July 1846 by the Revd Leonard Goodhart of St Mary's Episcopal Chapel, Castle Street. The three daughters of Joseph and Emily were baptized in St Mary's parish church by the succeeding minister of that proprietary chapel, the Revd George Ibberson Tubbs, after whom it was for long known as Tubbs's Chapel. For the Chapel Trustees Morris designed a Sunday School in 1876, but by 1884 he was a member of the followers of Revd Henry Prince, the Agapemonites. The break with Stallwood can be dated to 14 April 1886. During the partnership one articulated pupil was Morris' orphaned nephew Talwin. Several cousins of the younger generation, the first to be free of the Quaker reserve toward the arts, showed talent but Talwin is the most outstanding.

Talwin Morris, whose father resigned from Friends on 21 November 1854, married Alice Marsh, a second cousin, the daughter of Joseph and Ellen Grace Marsh, at



Fig. 7

Emily Morris, 1829–1916, an elder sister of Joseph Morris and, with him, guardian of Talwin Morris
From a photograph in the possession of Mr Stephen Boorne

Kingston in 1892. A cousin of Talwin, Henry Silver Morris, the youngest son of Edward Morris who resigned on 16 March 1852 at the age of twenty-one was an architect. Yet another artist, cousin also to both Henry Silver Morris and Talwin Morris and to Frank and Violet Morris, was Maximilian Stuart Morris, known as Max Morris; he practised as artist, painter, etcher and illustrator. His father, Alfred, younger brother of Joseph resigned on 1 June 1858 at the same time as Joseph.

The absence of direct descendants makes it unlikely that much more biographical detail of some of these will be found. However, in the family of Stephen Boorne, a collateral descendant of Edward, a pedigree with notes on family history and some *carte de visite* photographs survive, including those of Thomas Shewell Morris (1832-77), Joseph and their elder sister Emily (1829-1916). This Thomas was the father of Talwin Morris. The year of Talwin's birth, 1865, was the date also of his mother's death. By the time he was aged twelve his father also was dead and Talwin was then brought up in Reading by his aunt Emily (Fig. 7). Notes in the family pedigree characterize her as 'hard and plain-spoken but warm-hearted and, like Copperfield's Aunt, not without romance in the far-away days'. To be likened to Betsy Trotwood is to have an honourable reputation. Of Talwin Morris rather more biographical details are known. He was educated at Lancing College as his aunt wished him to enter the church, but he was then articled to Joseph from 1882 to 1885. In 1885 he won a prize from the Berkshire Archaeological and Architectural Society. From 1885 to 1890 he was employed by Martin Brooks; after that, until 1893, he was assistant art director of the magazine *Black and White*, and from 1893 until, his death in 1911 he was with Messrs W.M. Blackie of Glasgow, as art director. Alice Marsh, lived on as a widow for some forty years until her death on 24 December 1955. In Glasgow Talwin and Alice Morris were friends of Charles Rennie and Margaret Mackintosh, and belonged to the same circle of artists in that city. His work in book design has in recent times received much study and has been the subject of more than one exhibition (Fig. 8). His stature as an artist has been made clear. In an architectural study it would be presumptuous to write about this but it is relevant to say that it was Talwin who arranged for Mackintosh to meet W.M. Blackie and so made possible the architect being commissioned to design Hill House (1902-4), the largest and finest house C.R.M. ever designed. It was Mackintosh who designed the memorial to Morris in Dumbarton Cemetery.

The works of the successive practices of Joseph Morris, Morris & Stallwood, Joseph Morris, and finally Morris & Son, extend over fifty years and cover so wide a range of architectural styles that it is reasonable to ask how far these different styles can be identified with one or other of the partners. The church and vicarage at Highmoor, by Morris alone, dating from 1858-9, and St Peter's School at Folkestone, by Stallwood alone, of about 1870, are evidence that each of those could design in a Victorian gothic style related to that of William Butterfield. The early Morris buildings at Highmoor are, as one would expect, built largely of the local flint with stone dressings for the church and brick dressings for the vicarage, in correct accordance with Victorian principles of hierarchy. The vicarage, like Philip Webb's Red House designed for William Morris a year or so later, has details comparable with the work of William Butterfield, a generation older than Webb and both William and Joseph Morris. Sash windows have segmental arched heads under equilateral pointed relieving arches. The hierarchy

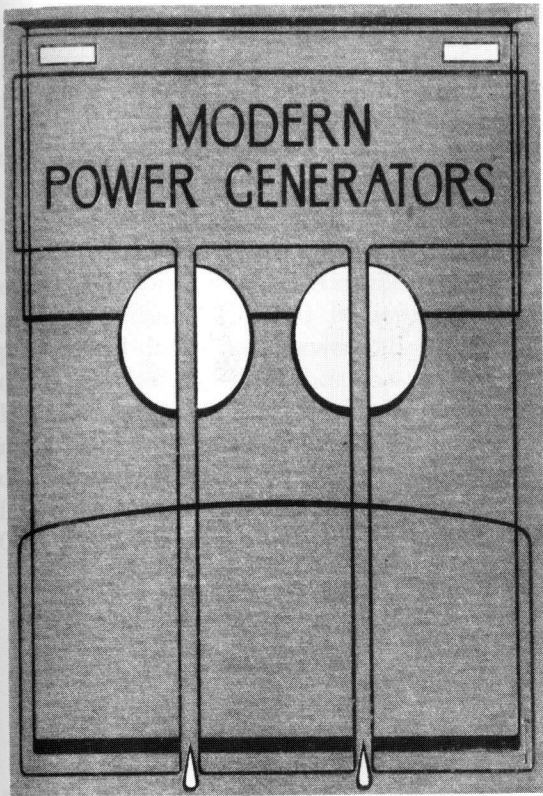


Fig. 8

A book-cover design by Talwin Morris
for W.M. Blackie & Son, 1908

Gerald Cinamon

of the rooms and passages is expressed outwardly in the sizes of the windows and the heights of storeys, although there is no comparison between Joseph Morris' work and the expressiveness of Webb's work—'more a poem than a house'. Similarly, the schools built in Reading between 1871 and 1874 are all in a brick Gothic style which relates to the work of Butterfield and Street, as does Stallwood's work at Folkestone (Figs 9 and 10). Unlike that, however, neither Morris nor Stallwood ever seem to have employed the elaborate coloured patterning in bands and diapers favoured by Butterfield and Street. This restraint is the more surprising in that the terraces erected by local builders in the great expansion of Reading between 1880 and 1900 could, in design, be classed as illegitimate children of Street and Butterfield. Patterns abound, as do multi-coloured elevations. Four colours of brick in one elevation are common and the same design can be found in various colour combinations in different parts of the town. Morris uses plenty of interesting brick detail but it is confined to corbellings, recessings and the use of moulded bricks in one uniform colour. In this alone his style is close to that of Alfred Waterhouse, who lived in Reading from 1880 and has many buildings in the town. An exception appears to be Wesley Manse of 1899 where cream-coloured band quoins and gothic arches are used, probably to harmonize with the 1872 church

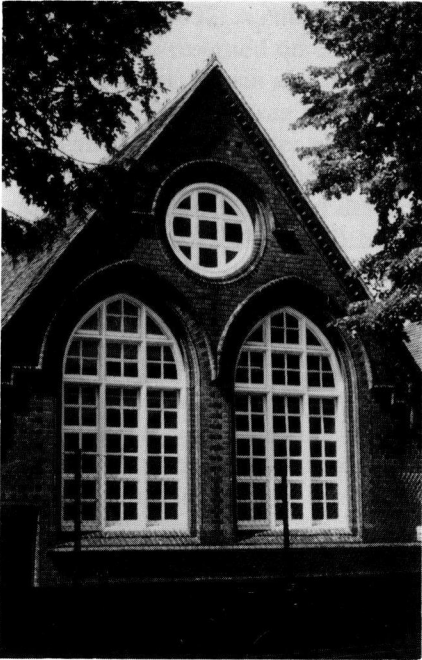


Fig. 9
Newtown School, Reading, 1874



Fig. 10
Oxford Road School, Reading, 1880-3, by Morris and Stallwood

adjoining, designed by a Methodist Minister and amateur architect, the Revd J.P. Johnson of Wood Green (Fig. 11).

The decade of the partnership with Stallwood is more particularly associated with the classical style and provisionally it could be suggested that this was more Stallwood's taste than Morris's. Hillside has been described; number 5 London Street had similar classical detail in brickwork. In Stallwood's obituary the schools ascribed to him alone are notable as being much more in the Queen Anne style than anything proved to be Morris's work. These are the Redlands and Wokingham Road Schools, where the detail of the brickwork includes classical cornices and gables which resemble the steeply-pitched pediments found in seventeenth-century 'artisan mannerism'. Even this provisional distinction between the tastes of the two partners leaves quite undecided the question of which of the two was responsible for the Greek Doric colonnades and Ionic porches in the Royal Berkshire Hospital extensions of 1881-2 (Fig. 12). The original main block of the time of William IV has a wide eustyle portico of tall Ionic columns—the orthodox classical taste for a public building of 1837. But there can have been extremely few High Victorian architects whose taste would in the 1880s allow them to use a pure Greek order, straight from the engraved plates of the classical antiquities of Athens.

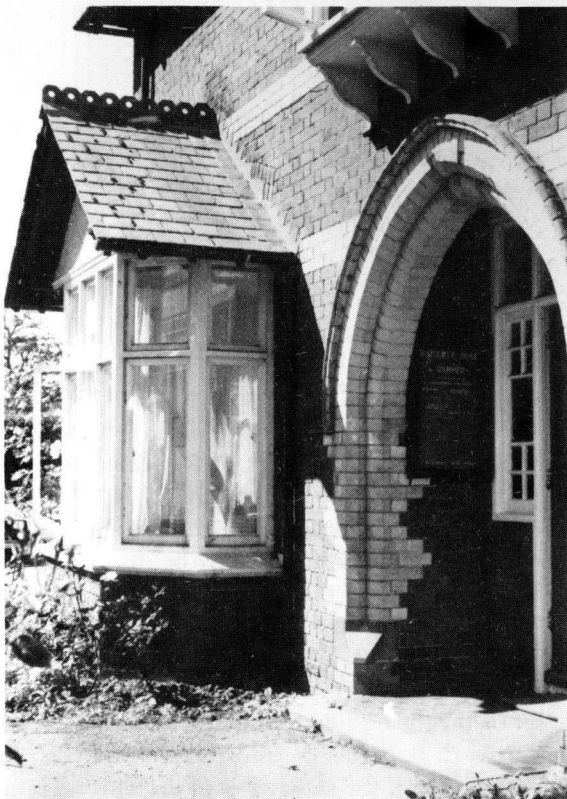


Fig. 11
Wesley Manse, Queen's Road,
Reading, 1899

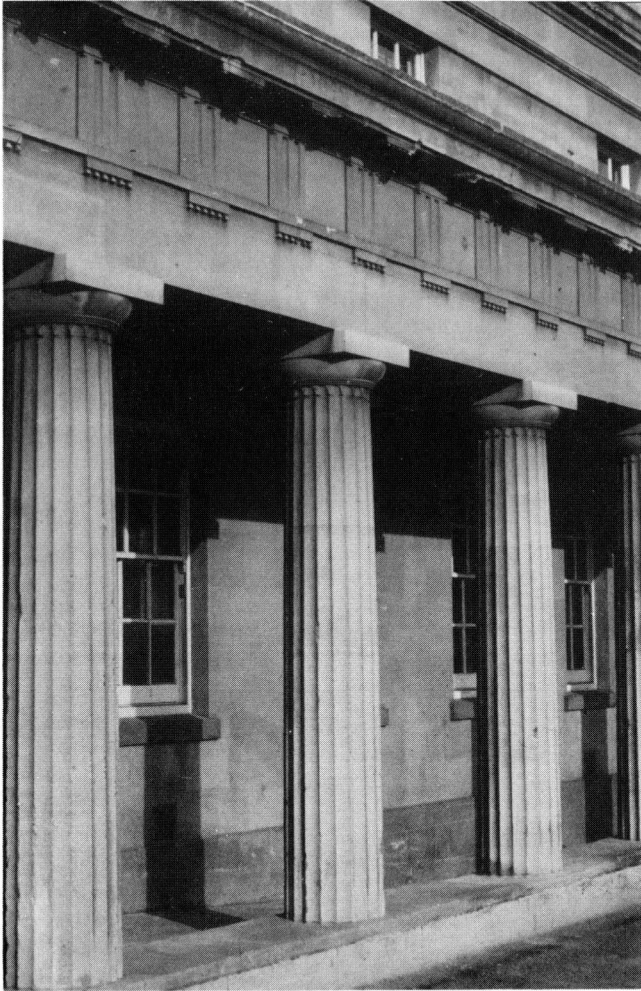


Fig. 12
Colonnade, Royal Berkshire
Hospital, Reading, 1881-2

The Church of the Ark of the Covenant at Clapton Common was built for the Agapemonites in 1893-6 (Figs 13 and 14). It is described by Violet Morris as the work of her father and brother. The church is sited near the edge of high ground, its spire conspicuous from the Lea Valley below. Its gothic style is far more vigorous than was the accepted taste in the 1890s. By then High Victorian 'Go'—'muscular Gothic'—was well out of fashion and a more delicate Neo-perpendicular style was customary. The church is designed as a simple wide hall with a single-span high-pitched roof, a shallow semi-octagonal chancel and a western tower and spire. Vestries and Sunday school rooms are set below the east end, making use of the fall of the ground at the edge of the plateau. The artwork both inside and outside the church is of fine quality. Around the base of the tower, as if the buttresses of the tower were carried by them, are the four winged

creatures of the Book of Revelation, carved in white stone (Fig. 15). Crowning the tops of the buttresses, in the place of pinnacles are the same four creatures—the lion, the ox, the eagle and the man—commonly interpreted as symbols of the four Evangelists. These at the top of the tower are boldly silhouetted, with wings upraised, cast in bronze or copper. These sculptures are the work of Arthur G. Walker, R.A. (1861–1939). Two wind vanes on pinnacles at the outer ends of the aisles are in the form of the fiery chariot of Elijah and the flying scroll of Enoch—the two witnesses, since they were translated to Heaven without death, for the expected return of Christ. These same symbols are carved in two roundels in an upper stage of the tower and likewise in roundels each side of the chancel arch. The figures of Elijah and Enoch appear in stained glass in two windows of the chancel apse, but the glory of the church is in the eleven windows, five on the south and six on the north, which depict the fruits and flowers of the Bible—rose, lily, olive, pomegranate, vine, corn and poppy, formalized in design, rich in colouring. In the tower lobbies are four small windows of flowers such as a chrysanthemum and arum lily. Westward, at gallery level, there is a pair of windows in grim colours representing the evils of disease, sin and death, flanking a glowing fiery window from which, as one studies it, the figures of angels emerge bearing the text ‘the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings’ (Malachi, 4, 2).

Each of the nave windows has at its foot a narrow band of text which reads ‘Designed by Walter Crane’ and ‘Executed by F.S. Sparrow’ each with its tiny figure, in silhouette, of crane and sparrow respectively. In a letter on the subject dated 1940, now in the R.I.B.A. library, Violet Morris writes:

It is believed the windows were Mr Crane’s first adventure into stained glass design to which he was pressed by the architects. The beauty and colouring of the windows are largely due to the workmanship of F. Silvester Sparrow who executed them and also to the use of glass found by my brother called ‘Early English’ and then made by Messrs Britten & Gilsen. It was used without painting in many cases in layers of this resilient glass to obtain the depth of colour. I do not think this glass is now made.

The rich intense, glowing colours of all these windows call to mind John Donne’s words that ‘churches are best for prayer that have least light’ (Fig. 16). Almost equal in richness of colour and design are mosaics which form a band below the chancel windows, glowing with gold and red, clear blue and black, and including such figures as the phoenix symbol of resurrection. Of the reasons for selecting Walter Crane for this work nothing is known but, interestingly, in view of Talwin’s connection with ‘the Four’ in Glasgow, Crane also had links with them. Of his connection with Reading it is known that he was in 1897 appointed Director of the Art Department of the University Extension College which had started in 1860 as the Reading School of Art under C.R. Havell, a member of a family concerned with practising and teaching art from the eighteenth century onward. Earlier, in 1895, Walter Crane seconded the election to the Art Workers Guild of Arthur Silver of Reading, father of Reginald (Rex) Silver of the Silver Studio, an Art Nouveau designer. Interestingly, Talwin Morris also had links with the Silver Studio. The building of the Ark of the Covenant church was ‘personally superintended by Mr Alderman R. Silver, J.P. by the special request of Mr Pigott’. This Richard Silver, J.P., Mayor of Maidenhead in 1871–2 and 1877–8, was a cousin of Arthur Silver. The cost of the church is reported as being upward of £15,000.

The story of the Abode of Love is told briefly in Ronald Knox’s *Enthusiasm* and

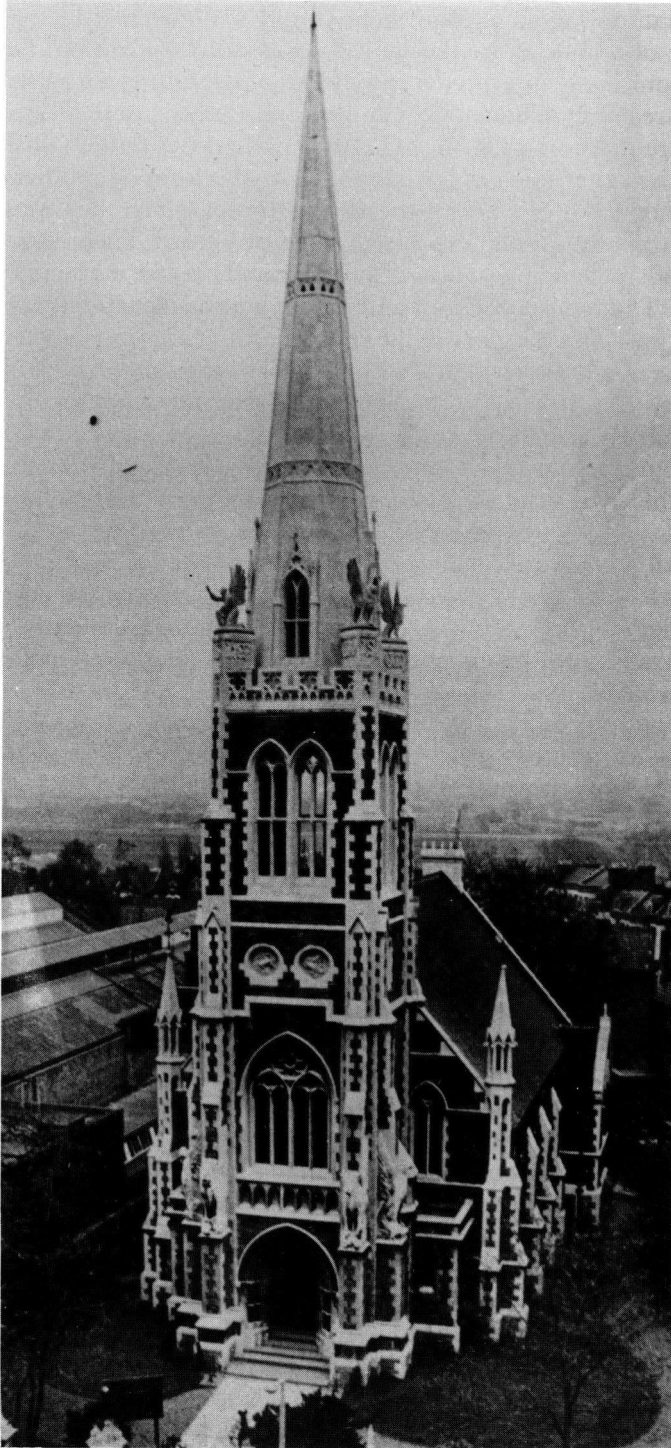


Fig. 13
Church of the Ark of the
Covenant, Clapton Common,
London, 1893-6, by Joseph
and Frank Morris
*From a photograph in the collection
of Mr A. E. Harris*

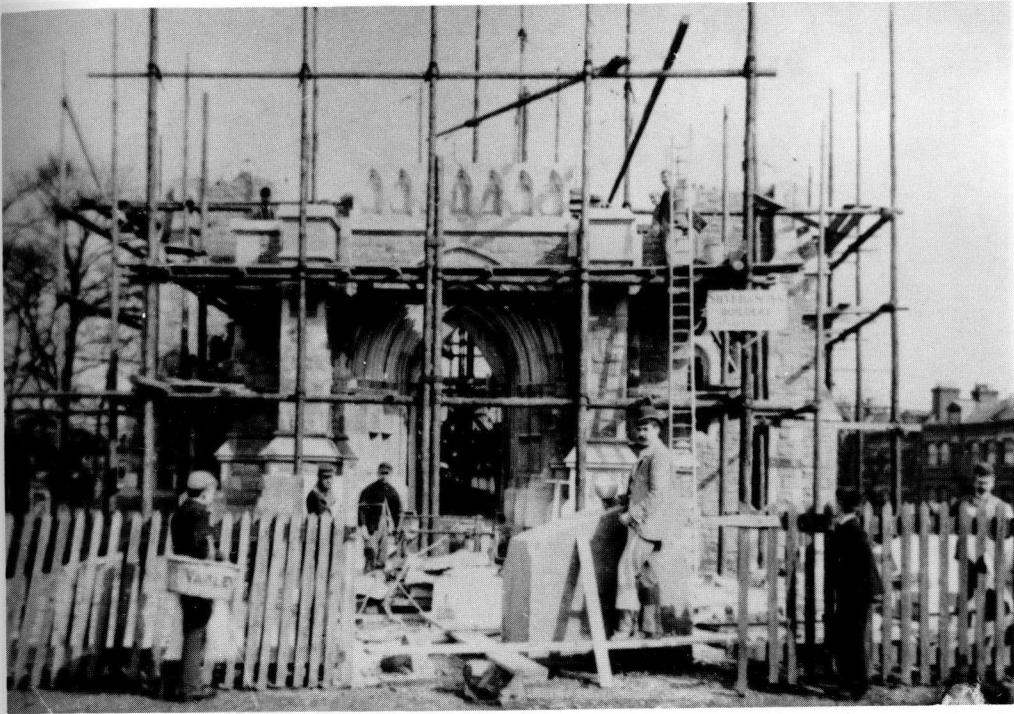


Fig. 14
Clapton Church—built by Silver & Son, of Maidenhead—under construction
From a photograph in the County Library, Bridgwater, Somerset

at more length in Charles Mander's *The Revd Henry Prince and his Abode of Love*. Locally in London they had a reputation rather like that of the Moonies—once in their hands there was no escape. There are also folk-memories of a clergyman standing on Clapton Common with his arms raised, announcing his imminent ascent to Heaven. As recorded in the local newspapers the announcement in the church by the Revd John Hugh Smyth Pigott that he was the Messiah provoked such disorder that he had to retreat to Spaxton in Somerset, becoming successor as head of the community to Henry Prince whose claim to immortality had not proved justified. Like many another sect of enthusiasts the Agapemonites believed that they were of the company of the redeemed and living in the last days—the imagery which haunts their minds is drawn from the Revelation of St John. So it came about that, in September 1902, at Amphill, 3 Craven Road, Reading, the home of the County Surveyor of Roads and Bridges, it was announced to a fellowship of worshippers that 'Jesus Christ has come again and is upon the earth'. London journalists failed in attempts to interview members of the Reading congregation but to a reporter of the *Berkshire Chronicle* Mr Morris earnestly repeated that 'Jesus Christ has come again and is once more upon the earth. That is not an opinion. I testify that as a fact'.



Fig. 15
 Winged creatures from Clapton Church. Sculptor: A.G. Walker, A.R.A.
From a photograph in the County Library, Bridgwater, Somerset

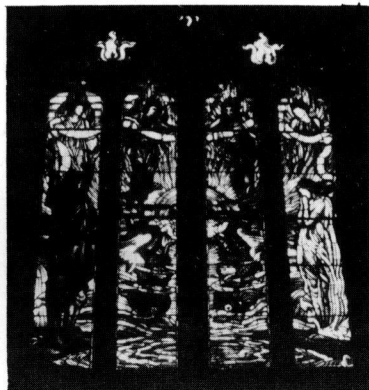


Fig. 16
 The west window of Clapton Church, designed by Walter
 Crane and made by F. Sylvester Sparrow

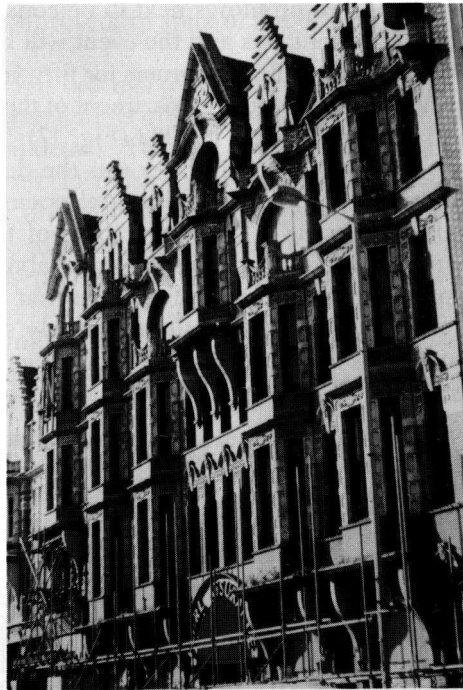


Fig. 17
The Pearl Building (Broadway Buildings),
Station Road, Reading, as demolition started



Fig. 18
McLroy's Store, Reading
*From an old picture postcard
reproduced by Reading Libraries*

The two buildings next to be considered are not much less astonishing than that announcement was and the event will be. Broadway Buildings—latterly known as the Pearl Building after its owners for fifty years, the Pearl Assurance Company—was found by an Inspector of the Department of the Environment not to be suitable for preservation and was demolished in 1982 (Fig. 17). This building is described elsewhere.⁴ Scarcely less fantastic, and far larger was the department store built for William McIlroy and described in an ecstatic doggerel poem in the local newspaper as ‘Reading’s Crystal Palace’ (Fig. 18). This used some of the same details of corbelled overhanging bay windows, crow-stepped gables and elaborate chimney-stacks and no doubt suffered from similar problems of maintenance that eventually led to the destruction of Broadway Buildings. McIlroy’s building largely survives, pruned and trimmed, but even what remains is hardly credible. Facing it across Cheapside are two smaller buildings which share the same details of terracotta arches and banded chimneys as the two larger buildings.

County Council Minutes record quarterly payments to Morris of a retaining fee of £1. 6s. 3d. and of a fee for attendance at one or two Council meetings of one guinea each. In addition there are from time to time his professional charges for work, for example on repairs and alterations to the Assize Courts (1893–5), on considerable programmes of repairs to bridges (1872–1905) and to police stations (1895–1906). Certainly, during the years from 1895 to 1905 Morris was in partnership with his son but Violet also states in her letter of 1940 that her father and brother were the architects of the 1893–6 Ark of the Covenant Church. She herself has been credited with the design of the Maidenhead Police Station of 1905. Since her father resigned as County Surveyor in November 1905 on the grounds both of ill-health and of his removal from



Fig. 19
Police Station, Wokingham, Berkshire

Reading, this attribution becomes credible, if unproved, in spite of the drawings being marked clearly 'Joseph Morris'.

The next group of buildings to be considered belongs to the years 1896-1906 and includes police stations throughout the county, and houses in Reading and Wokingham. These belong together in that they share common details. The Wokingham Police Station (Fig. 19) is extended by a group of station houses. Details of these houses match those of houses elsewhere in the two towns; a stone doorway at Wokingham reappears on 20 Redlands Road, Reading. These instances, together with evidence from both the Reading Corporation drainage records and Joseph Morris's obituary established with certainty that the Morrises were the designers. The first owners of some of the houses in Reading were members of local business families. The earliest, in 1896, is Dryland Haslam, Jnr., F.S.I., an estate agent: H.O. Serpell (1900) at 20 Redlands Road was a biscuit manufacturer, and a pillar of Liberalism; Guthrie Allsebrook, at 36 Redlands Road in 1902, and five years later at a similar but larger house at number 46, was a water engineer; and in 1908 Edward Heelas had a house in Wokingham Road. The style has affinities with Art Nouveau and the houses and the clients together suggest the typical links of trade, business, liberal politics, nonconformist faith and artistic taste (Figs 21 and 22).

Recognizably belonging to this group are some three dozen houses in the two towns, of which over twenty have proven connections with the Morris family as owners or architects or with the People's Investment Company. Characteristic features of all these include chimneys set diagonally with wide-spreading chimney-caps, wide overhanging eaves often with straight wooden props somewhat after the style of chalet roofs, and bay windows of unconventional shape. Gables can be defiantly unsymmetrical, with unequal pitches each side or varied in pitch in the same roof. Windows, unusually for the period, have large-paned casements, for Arts and Crafts architects tended to favour small panes with wooden glazing bars or leaded lights. Brick corbels and band courses usually occur and internal woodwork, as in stair balustrades and fireplace surrounds, likewise has a distinctive style. Open fretwork, cut in large conventionalized floral designs, sometimes fills pendant arch-spandrels.

From deeds in possession of Reading University and from documents in the University archives it can be established that the Crown Fields estate in Reading in 1851 was apportioned between the Trustees of the Will of John Kendrick and the Governors of Christ's Hospital in London. Sale particulars and a map of building plots in Redlands Road date the sale of leases as 16 April 1898. The auctioneers were Messrs Egginton. Denis Egginton later owned 26 Redlands Road (Fig. 20). Plots were taken by Frank Morris, Joseph Morris, Violet Morris and by Henry Higgs, a builder who worked frequently for Morris. The same names, without Higgs, turn up at the development of the Batty's Barn Farm Estate in Wokingham, now represented by Sturges Road and Murdoch Road (Fig. 23). Plots in the Wokingham development and one in Redlands Road (number 18) were taken by the People's Investment Company. This existed from 1888 to 1914 and the eight founders listed in the Memorandum and Articles at the formation of the Company included F.B. Parfitt, who in 1899 was Chairman of the Borough Drainage, Streets and New Buildings Committee, Joseph Morris and William McIlroy, draper.



Fig. 20
26 Redlands Road, Reading

The *Berkshire Chronicle* of 7 May 1898 advertised the sale of fifty-seven acres of land at Wokingham to be conducted by Mr J.J. Cooper of Reading. This was John James Cooper, one of a family with two hundred years of connection with building, architecture and surveying. A fortnight later the paper records that about forty-five acres had been bought by Mr J. Winter for the People's Investment Company for £7,500. The whole realized £9,935 and 'fairly shows the value of land at Wokingham'. The Wokingham houses are generally larger and on larger plots than the Reading houses, and for this aspect of the Morrises work the former town is the more worth visiting. The largest of all, dated 1904, was built for Canon Edward Sturges, on his retirement from the benefice of All Saints. His earlier Rectory of 1873, costing £3,000, also by Morris, has been demolished. His second house still contains some fine oak doors but it must be a matter for great regret that, in what was by far the grandest of the firm's houses, not one of their elaborate fireplaces survives.

Among the Redlands Road and Wokingham Road groups are some five other houses which likewise have their own distinctive, but different, style. These include that now provisionally ascribed to Violet Morris, 26 Redlands Road, and are likewise in an Art Nouveau style. They, however, feature leaded lights and small panes in their



Fig. 21

Number 40 and other houses, Redlands Road, Reading, *c.* 1902, from a contemporary photograph in the possession of the University of Reading Institute of Agriculture History and Museum of English Rural Life

Dann & Lewis Collection



Fig. 22

103 Connaught Road, Reading, of *c.* 1898

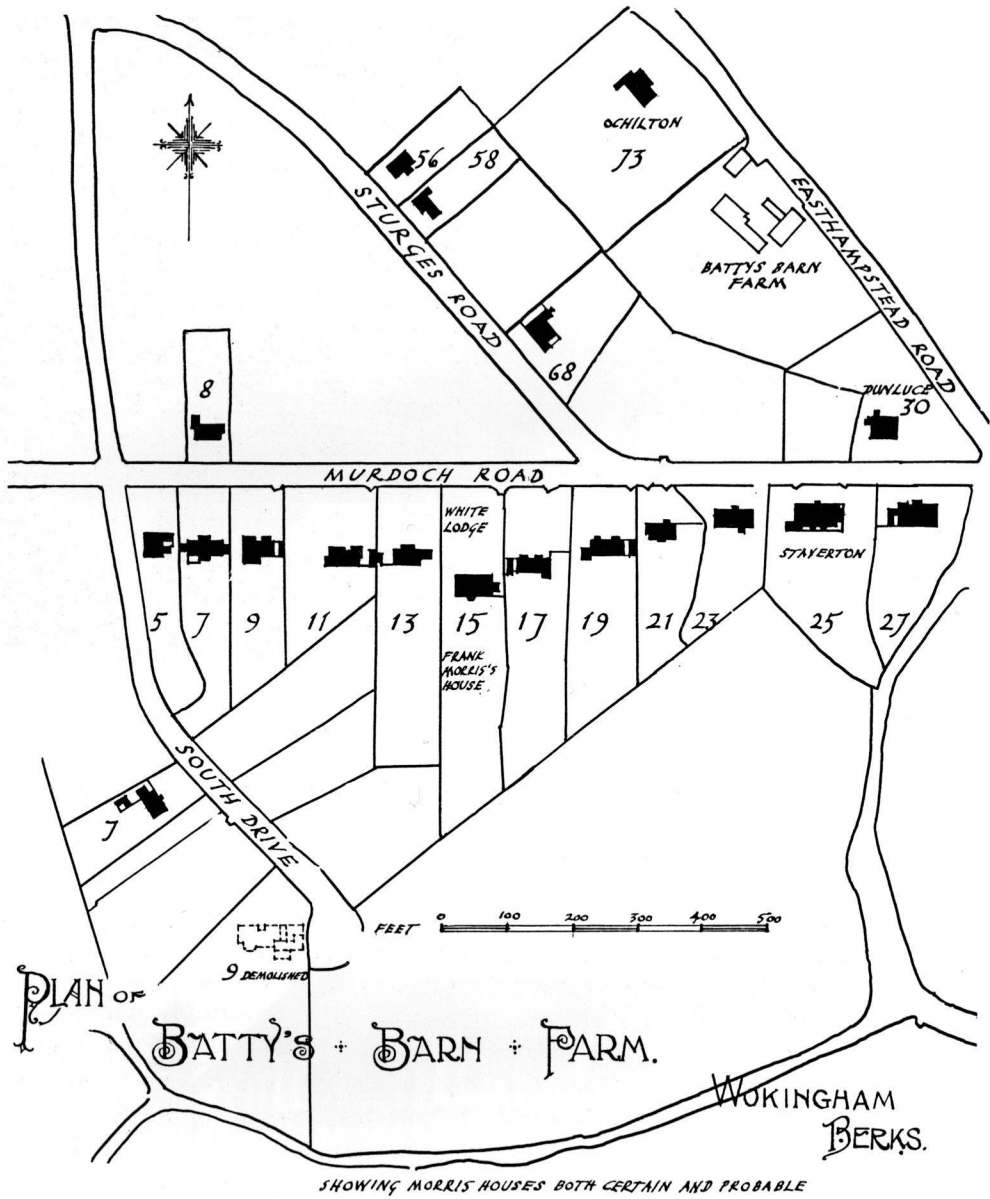


Fig. 23
Batty's Barn Farm Estate, Wokingham, Berkshire

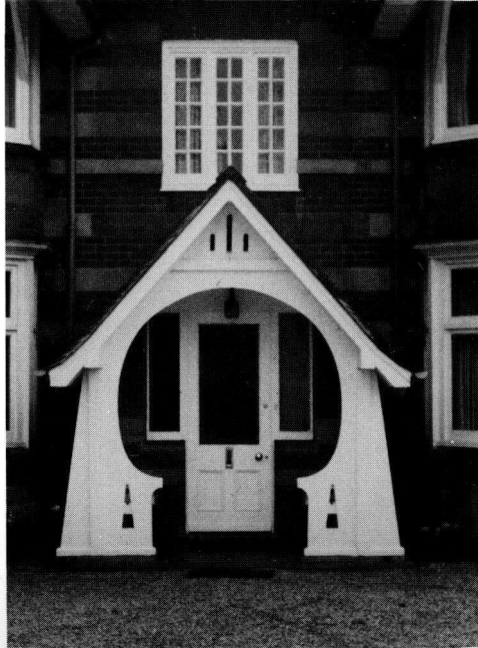


Fig. 24
7 South Drive, Wokingham, Berkshire

windows and, unlike the wide eaves and gables of the first group, tend towards close eaves, modillion cornices and a pyramid form for the roof. Wooden porches, white painted with arches and pillars, appear in several instances; the detailing is altogether more delicate (Fig. 20).

This provisional re-assignment on grounds of style is further supported by the evidence of the surviving drawings for one of the Wokingham houses, Staverton, being the house of Joseph Morris. The house in Somerset to which Morris retired, designed by Violet, is clearly not in the style tentatively assigned to her but is in that which could be assigned to Frank or Joseph. Indeed, the attribution of the houses dating from 1896 to about 1910, all late works from the period when Morris was between sixty and seventy years of age, Frank between twenty-four and thirty-six years, the age at which he died, and Violet, some six years younger than he, is a question very difficult to resolve. Violet has been described as 'the first woman architect' and while this is not the case she was certainly one of the earliest. She was born in 1878, on the 3 February (Fig. 25). Ethel Mary Charles, who lived from 1871 to 1962, was the first woman to be elected a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. She passed the R.I.B.A. examinations in 1898 and her sister Bessie Ada in 1900. If Violet did indeed design some of the Reading and Wokingham houses around the turn of the century, and since she certainly designed her father's house, and other Somerset houses into the 1930s, and had some responsibility, as yet undefined, for the Maidenhead Police Station of 1905, she was certainly a member of the same generation of pioneers.



Fig. 25
Violet Morris (centre) in a group
photograph of Spaxton Red Cross
unit during World War II
*From a photograph in the possession of
Mr A.E. Harris*

The mother of Frank, Violet and their sisters, whom Joseph married on 27 October 1868 at St Anne's Church, Wandsworth, was Emily Partridge. The eldest daughter of Edward Partridge and Ann Isabel his wife, she was baptized at St Marks, Kennington, in 1842. After their wedding Joseph and Emily were 'At Home' on 18-19 November 1868 at Caversham Hill, Reading. Their son Francis Edward was baptized at Caversham parish church on 3 May 1871. From 1873 to 1879 his parents' address was Norbiton, Maitland Road, Reading, and after that there are changes of address every few years.

The *Berkshire Chronicle* reported in 1909 the death on 16 August at East Gate, Spaxton, Somerset, of Emily, wife of Joseph Morris, late of Reading, daughter of the late Edward Partridge, in her sixty-eighth year. There has come down an account of Joseph having as a young man a long flowing beard. On his wedding morning he shaved it off so that as his bride Emily came to the altar she nearly fainted at the sight of the stranger waiting for her!

Of Francis Edward, who was commonly known as Frank, very little is now known; his sisters, who outlived him by fifty or sixty years, are still remembered. Frank died of typhoid at his chambers, 12 Park Lane, London, on 11 January 1908 in his thirty-seventh year and was buried at Brompton Cemetery. He left £30,988. 2s. 8d. at his death, to be divided between his three sisters. Joseph left £19,044. 11s. 11d. in 1913 to



Fig. 26

East Gate House, Spaxton, Somerset, by Violet Morris, 1905, for her parents' retirement



Fig. 27

Carved newel post, the work of Olive Morris,
at East Gate House

his three daughters. Violet Shewell died on 23 December 1958 leaving her estate of £27,398. 13s. 10d. mostly to her surviving sister Olive Mary Morris. Olive died in 1968.

Information from several correspondents provides at least a sufficient minimum of family biographical detail. From one of these we learn that a housekeeper-companion and friend to the last Morris sister refused to pass on any souvenir of the family and destroyed an invaluable photograph or photographs of the Agapemone in its heyday 'fearful that more rubbish would be made up by the press or the media if these fell into their hands'. If this was at the time of the television series on 'Victorian Scandals' and its sensational account of the early days of the sect, this is understandable. Mabel, born in 1876, the eldest sister, who must have been invaluable, kept house for the family. She is described as a gifted needlewoman and very charming as a hostess. She and Violet are buried in Spaxton churchyard. Olive was cremated, Frank buried in London, and Joseph and Emily were buried in the garden of East Gate House (Fig. 26).

As much as is known or inferred of Violet's professional work is given above. John Betjeman visited her at Four Forks in 1940 and later invited her to an architectural conference at the Arts Centre in Bridgwater where he honoured her as one of the first women architects, and called the very frail but dignified old lady to the platform. When the second 'immortal Messiah' died in 1927, having prudently made a will, the executors were Douglas Hamilton, secretary to the community for many years, and Violet Morris. Olive Mary Morris, the youngest of the sisters is similarly worth mention. She is remembered after Violet's death in 1958 as an old and very deaf lady, a person of tremendous character and intelligence and also great fun. She has been said to have been a qualified engineer but there is no trace of her in the records of the Institution of Civil Engineers. There are memories of her riding around on a motor cycle and driving a three-wheeled Morgan. At least she is said to have been very gifted in handling automobiles and radio and also as a wood carver. Evidence of this last skill is shown by the mantelpiece of the hall fireplace of East Gate House and the newels and bannisters of the staircase which are carved individually with different designs such as dragons interlaced, somewhat in the Celtic style which had a contemporary vogue also in jewellery and ornament (Fig. 27). Her carved organ case from the Spaxton chapel is now in the Catholic Church of the Holy Cross in Bedminster, Bristol, bought at the sale of 1958. Of her it is recorded that she, like the rest of the family was a loyal Agapemomite, grieved to see the place sold up, and that she made provision for the old age of two sisters who had been laundresses, members of the community, and for her friend and housekeeper by having the old laundry converted into a house for the three. Her address at her death was The Haven (formerly called the Laundry) at Four Forks.

The buildings of the community, many of them now altered and subdivided, can still be seen, at Four Forks, a crossroads near the village of Spaxton. The chapel facing the road resembles many another minor Gothic-revival Victorian village chapel. Close to it is what could equally well have been a Victorian vicarage. These belong to the early days of Henry Prince's establishment. The house was bought by Prince; the chapel was designed by an early convert, William Cobbe, the engineer of the Bristol and Exeter Railway. It appears that only Prince could have chosen Morris to design the London church. While it has been suggested that Pigott had charge of London congregation in 1889, it is certain that Prince kept firm control until the end of his life. From Morris's



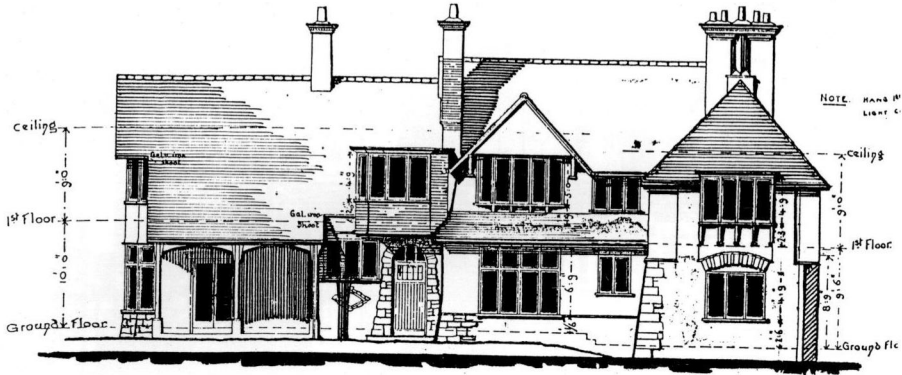
Fig. 28
The Agapemone, Spaxton, Somerset—extension by Morris, 1888
A.E. Harris

obituary it appears that he had joined the Agapemonites in 1884, some ten years before the building of that church and twenty years before a last, third, phase of building work at Spaxton (Fig. 28). This is marked by a number of houses in the 'Morris style'—The Larches, East Gate House, North Gate House, all spacious and rambling, and one much smaller cottage, West Gate House (Fig. 29), close to the Lamb Inn. Their style is very similar to that of the Reading and Wokingham houses, but it is here translated from the red brick of Berkshire into rendered walls with colour wash and roofs of dark Bridgwater pantiles (Fig. 30). For his house at East Gate Morris bought two small cottages which were incorporated as coach house, stable and loft into the rear wing of a large house. The specification, with drawings by Violet, survives in the house (Fig. 31).

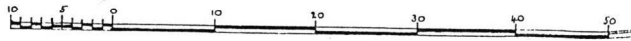
Morris resigned as County Surveyor on 4 November 1905. The partnership with Frank was dissolved in September of the same year. Joseph, Emily, Mabel, Violet and Olive presumably then all moved to Somerset. Frank had a house in Wokingham as well as chambers in London. In the loggia at East Gate House is an elaborate carved date-stone lettered 'Easter Sunday 1905 Isaiah 54'. The Authorized Version reads:

The prophet for the comfort of the Gentiles, prophesieth the amplitude of their church, their safety, their certain deliverance out of affliction, their fair edification and their sure preservation.

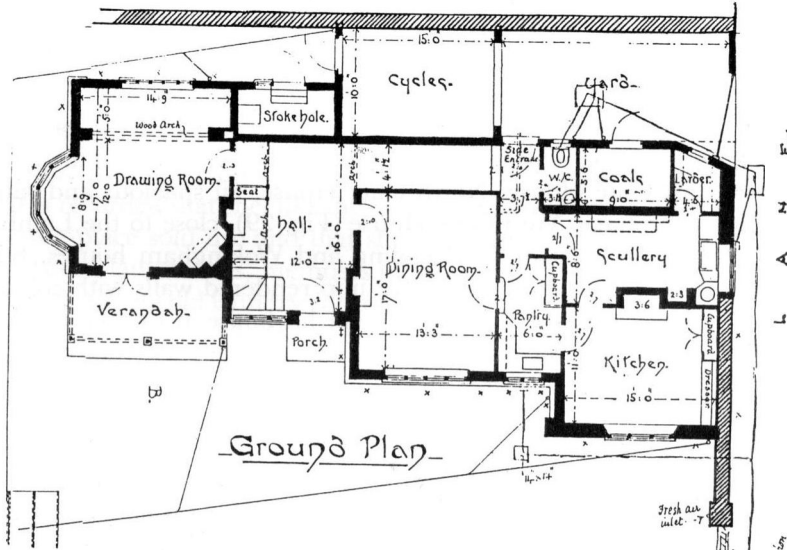
Proposed New House. Spaxton. Somerset.



South Elevation



Scale of feet



Ground Plan

Fig. 29

West Gate House, Spaxton, Somerset (based on deposited drawings of 1908)

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. (v. 4)

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours and thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. (vv. 11, 12)

As has been noted, people who remember the last years of the community are concerned to defend it from the taint of scandal. The legendary fifteen foot high surrounding walls prove, when seen, to be merely eight feet high. An account given of the community locally, by one whose memories cover the years of the third leader, Douglas Hamilton, is that 'anybody in need in Spaxton had only to go to the Agapemone and they would never be turned off empty-handed. Whatever the misinformed public at large might think, to the villagers of Spaxton they were not objects of calumny or vulgar comment—that in a very conservative/Conservative area is quite remarkable'.



Fig. 30

Brookside, Spaxton, built in 1949. From the drawings of 1936 for *The Holt* by Violet Morris

Specification of House at Durligh, N^o
Bridgwater, Somerset for C. Sellick Esq^r,
in accordance with plans prepared by

Miss P. S. Morris,
Architect,
Four Larks,
N^o Bridgwater.

August 1930.

Water

Contractor may draw water for the works from the new well to be provided & sunk by him. The sinking of this well is not included in this specification and will not form part of the estimate herein.

Materials & Workmanship.

Provide all materials, which must be good, and all labour & everything required for the carrying out of the work in a substantial & workmanlike manner & finish off complete.

Drainage

Dig for & construct proper cesspool of required capacity with fresh air inlet & dig trenches for & provide & lay 4" socket stoneware pipes with cement joints for sewage as shown on plan with all bends, junctions, lapses, interceptors, inlets and inspections to the satisfaction of the local authorities & pay fees, if any, to them.

Manholes of required size, bottoms to have glazed pipe channels, sides ~~smooth~~ in cement. Iron airtight cover with airtight joints.

Rain Water

Dig for & construct R. W. tank of required capacity in brickwork in cement rendered in cement. Carry overflow to road away.

Digging.

Perform all excavators' work, wheel surplus soil, clear away all rubbish, clean windows & scrub floors & leave all clean & tidy.

(61)

Fig. 31

The obituaries of Joseph Morris in the *Bridgwater Mercury* are entirely consistent with this report:

Death of Mr Joseph Morris

A Well known Agapemone.

The death took place last week after a brief illness at his beautiful residence at Four Forks, Spaxton, of Mr Joseph Morris, a well-known and highly respected resident of this parish. The deceased gentleman, who was aged 76, had resided in a house adjacent to the Agapemone of which he was a prominent member for some years.

Mr. Morris was a man of great culture and kindly personality, and his demise is keenly regretted by a wide circle of friends. Previous to coming to Spaxton, Mr Morris was in practice at Reading as an architect, in which profession he attained considerable repute. Mr Morris was a frequent visitor to Bridgwater, where he was well known and highly esteemed by those who had the privilege of his acquaintance.

The funeral took place on Sunday morning in the deceased gentleman's garden, and according to the rites of the sect of which he was a faithful adherent.⁵

Spaxton

The late Mr Joseph Morris of Spaxton

Respecting the death of Mr Joseph Morris, a prominent member of the Agapemone and a gentleman of kindly character and much culture and an obituary notice of whom we gave last week, a Reading contemporary contains the following appreciation.

'Although for some years', says a Berkshire paper 'he had left Reading, yet amongst the last generation of inhabitants and many of the present, he was well known as an architect and land surveyor of exceptional ability and good standing. He for a long period held the responsible position of Surveyor of bridges and buildings to the Berkshire County Council and he also prepared the plans for the main building of the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

As a business man Mr Morris was remarkable for shrewd common sense and the ease with which he could overcome difficulties. The sound sterling advice he could give almost at a moment's notice on any important matter made his presence and assistance always welcome.

Mr. Morris was for many years Chairman of the Peoples Investment Company Ltd in which position he gained the respect and esteem of the whole Board of Directors. It was during his chairmanship that the Company acquired a large estate at Wokingham, which at the present time forms one of the best parts of the town. Mr Morris took an active part in laying out of the town and a good number of the pretty and commodious houses and villas now standing in Murdoch Road, Sturges Road and other parts were erected from his designs. His buildings were characterised by a great deal of originality in elevation but the general internal arrangements appealed strongly to those who were desirous of possessing or occupying a comfortable and convenient dwelling house.

As a member of the Reading Union Lodge, Mr Morris was well known in Masonic circles, although he never took an active part in the work of the Lodge. Mr Morris was sincere in his religious convictions, and for the past 28 years he had counted it his greatest privilege to be a member of the Church of the Son of Man, who honour Agapemone as the House of God. The Agapemones formerly met at Victoria Hall, and Mr & Mrs Morris and their family were members of the sect. Mrs Morris has been dead for some years.

It will be remembered that for some time before leaving Reading for Bridgwater seven or eight years ago Mr Morris practised in partnership with his son, who was an architect of great originality and ability. His early death a few years since cut short a career which bade fair to be very much above the average.

The many friends of Mr Joseph Morris who still remain in Reading will greatly sympathise with his three daughters, who are naturally overwhelmed at their great and sudden bereavement.⁶

In giving the judgment which permitted the demolition of the Pearl Building, the Inspector wrote:

In my opinion the fact that the building was designed by Joseph Morris does not give it special importance. I do not consider that he was one of the principal architects of the period between 1840 and 1914 which is one of the principles of selection of listed buildings of this period given in Appendix I of circular 23/77.

This may be true, but Joseph Morris and his family were justly regarded in their time and in their communities with affection and respect for both their character and their skills. An unusual and talented family, they deserve that their memory be honoured.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank Mr Paul Joyce for the first list of Morris's work; Mr A.E. Harris for personal memories of the Morris sisters, for information on Violet's professional work and for many photographs; Mr Richard Hosking for information on the Wokingham buildings; Mr R.H.C. Ascott, University Bursar, for information on properties now owned by Reading University; Reading Corporation for preserving their drainage records and for giving access to them; Mrs Schroder and the late Revd C.R. Schroder for help at Clapton; Mr Joshua Schwieso, the present owner of East Gate House, for drawings and specification by Violet Morris; Mr David Payton for the use of his drawing of Wokingham Police Station; Betty M. Morgan for details of contracts for Reading schools; Revd Alan Gibson for particulars concerning S.S. Stallwood and Folkestone; Mr C.J. Spittal of Bristol for sundry information; Somerset County Library at Bridgwater for use of the album of photographs of Clapton; Dr and Mrs Henry Parris who lived in Frank Morris's own house; Mr Keith Jones for copies of contract drawings of Maidenhead Police Station; Mr Gerald Cinamon for information on Talwin Morris; Mr Stephen Boorne for genealogical details and the loan of family photographs; Edward H. Milligan for extracts from draft entries in the Dictionary of Quaker biography; and above all to the late Sir John Betjeman who opened the eyes of all of us to Victorian architecture, its interest and its merits.

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5. *The Bridgwater Mercury*, Wednesday, 8 January 1913, p. 10.
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Appendix 1

In order of date, works of the practices are as follows:

Joseph Morris

- 1858-9 St Pauls Church, Highmoor (*Building News*, 4 Nov. Builder—Owthwaite of Henley; Mason—Wheeler & Son).
- 1859 Vicarage and stables at Highmoor.
- 1860-1 St Laurence's Church, Reading. Reseated with oak pews.
- 1861 New wings at Royal Berkshire Hospital. Lowest tender £3,999. 17s. 9d. from Chinnock.
- 1861-2 National School and Schoolhouse, South Stoke, Oxon.
- 1862 Whitchurch. An ornamental cottage for Captain Fowler.
- 1862 Berkshire Military Depot, Mill Lane, Reading (Demolished). Alterations and repairs. Tender £969.
- 1862 Premises in Market Place, Reading. Alterations—Tender £223.
- 1862 Villa at Reading for Mr G. Palmer. Total of trade tenders £2,547. 16s. 11d.
- 1863 Gardener's cottage at Purley Park, nr Reading (Demolished). Tender. Briant £350.
- 1863 Carpenters and joiners work to a house at Whiteknights, Reading. Tender £394.
- 1863 House at Redlands, Reading, for Mr Palmer. Separate trade tenders totalling £1,431. 5s. 10d.
- 1863 Police Station, Hungerford. £862. 0s. 0d. As Clacy was still County Surveyor this could have come on his recommendation.
- 1864 Public house, Greyfriars, Reading.
- 1864 Likely to be his work is the re-roofing of St Laurence's Church Tower. J.T. Morris, one of the Churchwardens, was his brother.
- 1865 Pair of houses for Mr Richard Attenborough at Christchurch, Reading. £2,297.
- 1865 Rebuilding in London Street (? now number 67) £696.
- 1865 Additions to Royal Berkshire Hospital, Benyon and Sidmouth Wards, plain and classical. (Builder—Wheeler Bros). £2,132.
- 1866 Public house. Great Knollys Street, Reading. £437. 16s. 0d.
- 1867-8 St Laurence's Church, Reading, restoration and refurnishing.
- 1868 Memorial in St Laurence's north chancel to Revd John Ball who was Vicar for more than thirty years.
- 1868 Labourers' cottages, Binfield. Two pairs to plan A. £294. 10s. 0d.

In Directories from 1864 Joseph Morris is listed at 9 Friar Street.

- | | | |
|--|--------|--|
| | 1868 | House on the Redlands Estate for Mr Holder. £399. |
| | 1868 | Stabling at Messrs Brown's Brewery. (Dymore Brown—Queens Road, Reading). £212. 19s. 0d. |
| | 1870 | A pamphlet, <i>Cheap Cottages for Rural Districts</i> . |
| | 1871 | St Stephen's School (demolished). |
| | 1871 | North aisle added to St Mary's Church. (Builder—Henry Lovett, a firm also responsible for Reading Station). |
| | 1872 | Appointed County Surveyor on 1 January. |
| John Shewell Corder
(1856-1922) article
c. 1872-7. Stepson of
Maria, younger sister
of Joseph. | 1875 | Alterations to St Mary's Vicarage (demolished). |
| | 1872-3 | Silver Street School (demolished). Cost £1,489. 5s. 0d. Later extensions also by Morris. |
| | 1872 | Tenders invited for Out-patients Wing and Nurses' Home, Royal Berkshire Hospital. |
| | 1872 | Supervised the construction of Wesley Church, Queens Road, which had been designed by the Revd J.P. Johnson of Wood Green, an amateur architect; and gave the pulpit. |
| William Thomas
Mynors Walker
(1855-1930) article,
1872-5 | 1872-3 | Coley Board School. |
| | 1873-4 | Katesgrove Board School (Work in 1891 and 1902-3 was signed Morris & Son). Cost £3,689. 9s. 0d. |
| | 1873 | A public House at Woodcote (?King Charles's Head). |
| | 1873 | All Saints Rectory, Wokingham (demolished). For Canon Edward Sturges. |
| | 1874 | All Saints School, Wokingham (demolished, except house). Builder—Maynard. Originality of detail appears long before Frank joined the practice. |
| | 1874 | Tenders for a new school near the Cemetery (Newtown School). Later work: 1879 new classrooms; 1883 Infants School; 1897 Caretaker's house etc. All by Morris. Cost £5,169. 1s. 7d. |
| | | |
| Morris & Stallwood 1875-86 | | |
| | 1876 | Sunday School behind St Mary's Church, Castle Street (demolished). |
| | 1876-7 | Wesleyan Chapel, Alma Road, Windsor. |
| | 1877 | Rodmersham Church, Kent. Restoration. |
| | 1878 | New Infectious Wards, Royal Berkshire Hospital. |
| | 1878 | <i>The Builder</i> illustrates Caversham Church restored and enlarged (not as executed—a level parapet slightly more resembling the former white weather-boarded wooden tower was substituted for the saddle-backed tower of this design). |
| | 1878-9 | Restoration of St Peter's Church, Caversham and a new tower. (Builder—Wheeler & Son.) |

- 1879 Hillside illustrated in *The Architect*, 11 October, as House at Southern Hill. (Builder—Wheeler & Son.)
- 1879 A design for Hosier Street chapel (not built; being too costly).
- 1880 House for Samuel Palmer in Finchley Road, Hampstead. Tender accepted from Messrs Brass. £11,769. (Now a Nurses' Home.)
- 1880 Springbank, 18 Southcote Crescent (Morris's own house—demolished.)
- 1880 Principal's Room, Huntley Boorne & Stevens (London Street) illustrated in *Building News*, 2 April, suggests that the bold street frontage was theirs also (demolished). (Builder—Wheeler Bros.)
- 1880 All Saints Church, Wokingham. Repair of tower. Cost £1,443. (Builder—Wheeler Bros.)
- 1880-3 Oxford Road School, Reading. Cost £8,104. 16s. 0d.
- 1881-2 Colonnaded forecourt wing to Royal Berkshire Hospital with Doric colonnade in a style remarkably sympathetic to the 1839 original. Illustrated as 'Nurses' Home' in *The Builder*, 31 December 1881. Laundry—Royal Berkshire Hospital. Chapel—Royal Berkshire Hospital.
- 1881 Restoration of tower and pinnacles of St Laurence's Church. Mr Higgs was the builder and contractor. The cost was about £2,000.
- 1881 Restoration of Hungerford Church.
- 1881 Restoration at Sulhamstead Abbots Church (earlier restored by W.F. Poulton in 1849).
- Talwin Morris (1865-1911) article 1882-5 1882 5 London Street, Reading (demolished).
- 1883 Old Town Hall, Battersea, London. Illustrated in *The Builder*, 17 March 1883 (other references: 25 November 1882 and 19 April 1884). Never completed.
- 1883 Christ Church Board School, Milman Road, Reading.
- 1883 Huntley Boorne & Stevens—Crown Street entry.
- 1884 St John's School, Caversham.
- 1885 Joseph Morris's own house, Lindfield, 16 Southcote Crescent.
- 1886 Organ chamber, St Laurence's Church.
- 1886 Dissolution of partnership, 14 April.

The list of Stallwood's independent works appears to commence with 1887. From 1898 Stallwood was surveyor of Ecclesiastical Dilapidations for the Diocese of Oxford. In the notice of 1886 he gives 148 Friar Street as his independent address.

Joseph Morris

- 1887 Co-op premises in Caversham Road to be enlarged (possibly one wall with the initials R.I.C.S. in blue brick is a relic).

Frank Morris articulated 1887-92	1888	Alterations and additions to The Agapemone, near Bridgwater.
Peoples Investment Company— 8 May 1888, wound up in 1914	1890	New iron bridge at Arborfield, Berks.
	1891	Methodist Schoolroom, Gosbrook Road, Caversham.
	1892	Alterations and repairs to Assize Courts, Reading.
	1892	Drainage plans for houses in Norton Road, Radstock Road, Cholmeley Road in Newtown (Palmer leaseholds).
	1892	The Athenaeum Club, Friar Street (behind an elevation by F.W. Albury). Now rebuilt behind the elevation and used as offices by Haslams.
	1893	Police station, Sandhurst. Tender of £1234. 15s. 6d. from George Smith of High Wycombe. This is almost identical with a Morris design for the Police station at Hungerford of 1864 and a Clacy design of 1856 at Newbury.
	1893-6	Church of the Ark of the Covenant, Rookwood Road, Upper Clapton, Hackney, London. (Now the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd of the Ancient Catholic Church.) (With Frank Morris according to Violet.)
	1894	Alterations to Amersham Hall to form the first building of Queen Anne's School, Caversham, as successor to the Grey Coat Hospital, Westminster.
	1894	Assessor for a Board School Competition in Lowestoft. (<i>The Builder</i> , 24 May.)
	1895	Parish School, Caversham (St John's).
	1896	Infant School, Sunninghill. (Very similar to the Milman Road School in Reading). Cost c.£900.
	1896-7	Numerous bridge works—presumably repairs (see below).

Morris & Son

Partnership probably dates from 1894.	1896	5 Craven Road, Reading (for a Charles Morris, not of the same family).
Houses identified by Morris name as owner or on drawings or identical with such houses.	1897	11 Craven Road.
	1898	Wyvenhoe, 12 Redlands Road. Lydford, 14 Redlands Road. Rotherwood, 16 Redlands Road. Estover (later Tanfelde), 20 Redlands Road. (Builder— Henry Higgs). House in Southcote Crescent West (demolished).
	c. 1898	Not confirmed, but stylistically unmistakable is: 103 Connaught Road, Reading—a gardener's house for the Treasurer to Berkshire County Council.
	1898	Wesleyan Church, Gosbrook Road, Caversham.
	1899	Wesley Manse, Queens Road, Reading.
	1899	32 Redlands Road (Builder—Higgs).

- c.1899 30 Murdoch Road, Wokingham (identical with 5 Craven Road and 20 Redlands Road, Reading).
- 1899 Proposed extensions to National Infants School, Caversham.
- 1899 Mornington, 32 Redlands Road.
Wrington, 34 Redlands Road.
(Builder—Higgs.)
- 1900 Cleeve Court, Streatley for Sir William Ingram (demolished, except Lodge).
- 1901 Staverton, 3 Murdoch Road, Wokingham, (originally number 25).
- 1901 15 Murdoch Road (originally number 13). Owned by Frank Morris, sold by Violet as executor in 1922.
(As developers or owners—25, 21, 17, 13, 7, 5 Murdoch Road, Wokingham).
- Henry Bryan Gilbert c.1902 36-38 Redlands Road.
articled c.1902-? Calthorpe, 40 Redlands Road.
- 1901-2 Katesgrove School, Reading, enlarged.
- 1901-3 Broadway Buildings, 17-27 Station Road, Reading.
- 1901-3 All Saints Church House and Hall, Wokingham.
Foundation stone laid by Mr Howard Palmer.
- 1901-6 Police Stations in Berkshire (see below).
- 1902 Cordes Hall, Sunninghill.
- 1902 The Toll Bridge from Whitchurch to Pangbourne rebuilt (for the Company of Proprietors of Whitchurch Bridge).
- 1903 18 Redlands Road.
- 1903 Completion of McIlroy's store, Reading.
- 1904 McIlroy's Store, Regent Street, Swindon, attributed to Frank Morris (now shorn of turret and gables).
- 1904 McIlroy's factory, Reading, attributed to Frank Morris.
- 1904 5-15 Station Road, Reading.
- Charles Edward 1904-8 Police Station, Broadway, Maidenhead. (Demolished.)
Lovick articulated 1905 Attributed also to Violet. The County Surveyor was authorized to make payments of nearly £12,000 for Maidenhead.
- 1908 The West Gate, Spaxton, for the Hazleton family. Cost £1,000. Builder—Messrs Willis & Son, St Mary Street, Bridgewater.
- Berkshire County Council minutes for 4 November 1905 report the resignation of the County Surveyor on grounds of ill-health and his removal from Reading.
- Partnership dissolved in December 1905.
- Violet Morris** c.1900-1 (68 Sturges Road, Wokingham and 9, 15, 19 Murdoch Road as owner.)
Pevsner's *Berkshire* attributes a house, number 76 (an error for 26) in Redlands Road to May Morris, daughter of William Morris. Violet Morris is much more probable.

Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society

- 1904 (226, 228 Wokingham Road, Reading, as owner.)
- 1904 East Gate House, Spaxton, Somerset, for Joseph Morris as his home (her drawings and specification exist).
- 1915 The North Gate, Spaxton. Built for the Mould family on land adjoining the Agapemone Chapel by E.H. Coles & Sons of Enmore. (Text: Isaiah, 32, 18-19.)
- 1921 The Larches. Built on land adjoining the crossroads at Four Forks, Spaxton, for the seven Misses Howlett by Coles—cost £3,750. (Text: Isaiah, 65, 17-25.)
- 1930-2 1 Durlough Hill, Spaxton. Built on land adjoining the Bridgewater—Enmore Road for Mr C. Sellick.
- 1936 The Holt (bungalow), Spaxton. On land adjoining Lower Aisholt Road for Mr Scott Waterman (now much enlarged).
- 1937 Crossway. Built on land adjoining Church Road, Spaxton, for Miss F.H. Newenham, the District Nurse, by Coles—cost £700.
- 1949 Brookside (bungalow) on land adjoining Twinhill Road, Spaxton, for Mr C.E. Butt. Almost identical with The Holt.

Attributions to one or other of the Morrisses on grounds of ownership, style or detail can reasonably include:

- c. 1898 10 Redlands Road (similar to number 12 and both related to number 26).
- 1901 St Paul's Church Hall, Reading.
- 1903 56 Sturges Road, Wokingham.
- c. 1904 58 Sturges Road, Wokingham (details as 11 Craven Road, Reading).
- 1904 Cheapside, Reading. Two buildings (numbers 1,3 and 5).
230, 232 Wokingham Road, Reading (Frank Morris—owner).
- 1904 The Tithe Barn Hotel, Glebelands Road, Wokingham (built as a private house for Canon Edward Sturges).
- 1904 Police Station, Wargrave, Berks.
- c. 1906 Harestone, 46 Redlands Road.
Murdoch Road, Wokingham, has other houses altered in various degrees but likely also to be Morris work (e.g., number 27 originally number 1, and numbers 9, 11, 19, 23).
- c. 1909 7 South Drive, Wokingham, first named Clun and built for Miss Emily Georgina Howard.
- Undated Wroxton, South Drive, Wokingham (now demolished).
- Undated 8 Murdoch Road.
- Undated 24 Murdoch Road.
- Undated 240 and 242 Wokingham Road, Reading (? c. 1903).

- Undated Ochilton, Easthampstead Road, Wokingham (now Covent of the Presentation).
- Undated A design for a small bungalow (drawing exists at Spaxton).
- Undated Woodside, Shinfield Road, Reading.

Other Works**Attributed**

Restoration at Hurst church and supposedly at Wokingham (but this also attributed to William Henry Woodyer, architect of Christ Church in Reading which, stylistically, is far more probable).

As County Surveyor

In addition to the quarterly retaining fee of £1. 6s. 3d. (a guinea and a quarter), and a fee of one guinea for each attendance at County Council meetings the County Minutes record Morris's professional charges for numerous works, e.g:

- 1892 Repairs to Assize Courts.
- 1896-7 Repairs to some two dozen bridges and contract for a new bridge at Jesus Hospital, Bray.
- 1898 Bracknell Police Station.
- 1899 Repairs to some twenty bridges.
- 1900-1 Police Cottage at Binfield.
- 1901-2 Bridge repairs and Pangbourne Bridge.
- 1902 Twyford Police Station.
- 1903 Ascot Police Station.
- 1904 Wokingham Police Station.
- 1904 Wargrave Police Station.
- 1905 Thatcham Police Station.
- 1906 Work at seven bridges.

In July 1904 terms were agreed for the appointment, from 1 December 1904, of Mr John Frederick Hawkins as County Surveyor. The salary was to be £500, increased to £600 when he took over County Bridges, and there were allowances for staff, expenses and a furnished office. The increase was being paid in 1906.

Appendix 2

Spencer Slingsby Stallwood

(For the 1875-86 partnership with Morris see above.)

His works include:	1866	Second premium for buildings in the competition for Newcastle Cemetery awarded to Mr Stallwood of Scarborough.
	1872 or 1869-74	St Mary and St Eanswythe's Church, Folkestone. Restoration by him but some work was done by R.C. Hussey—perhaps the chancel restoration of 1869.
	1870	St Peter's Church, Folkestone. North aisle to an 1862-4 church.
	1872	St Peter's C. of E. School, East Cliffe, Folkestone, an extension of an 1870 work of R.C. Hussey.
	1872	Design for tower, Sandgate Church, Folkestone.
	1873	(Brookland, Kent, C. of E. School is similar in style to Folkestone.)
	1873	Capel le Ferne, near Folkestone. A cottage residence.
	1885	Competition entry. Library at Folkestone.
	1886	Upton (Didcot) restoration.
	1887	Cross in St Mary's Churchyard, Reading. Memorial to Dr Isaac Harrinson (constructed by Wheelers).
	1887	West Street Hall, W.I. Palmer's gift of a terracotta doorway.
	1887	Chedzoy, Somerset. Restoration at sole cost of the Rector and his family. New altar and reredos. Old embroidery restored by sisters of St Mary's Covent, Wantage, under the architect's direction.
	1892	Abbey Hospitium converted for science teaching.
	1893	St Laurence's Vicarage converted for the new University College.
	1893	Hillside—a large extension is reasonably certain to be by him.
	1894-6	The British Dairy Institute (Builder—Henry Higgs & Son). Later converted to Magistrates' Court and now demolished.
	1899	St Michael (a building later disposed of).
	1901-3	Queen Victoria Street, Reading.
	1902-4	St Agnes' Church, Silver Street (later superseded by the new St Agnes' at Whitley and never completed).
	1904	Wing at Cuddesdon College.
	1908	Spencers Wood—St Michael's Church.
	1908-10	Enlargement of Twyford Church (of 1846 by Benjamin Ferrey).
	1909	Designed screen, stalls and lectern in the south chapel of St Giles. The stalls were postponed, the other items were made

by Elliotts of Caversham. Screen at west end of nave, St Giles.

- 1910 St Bartholomew's Church Hall—(Builder G.S. Lewis & Bro.).
- 1922 Screen in St Laurence's Church, Reading. Completed after Stallwood's death by Charles Steward Smith.

Also attributed are Church restorations at Uffington and Marlston, and schools in Reading at Redlands, Wokingham Road, and Battle. These three schools are all classical in style. Stylistically, the former Parish Rooms (1883) of St Peter's, Caversham, could be by Stallwood, as could also a church school at Twyford. In both parishes he did work on the church. Messrs Simonds Maltings, Castle Street, Reading (demolished), was also attributed to him.

Stallwood died at his home at Whitley Croft in his seventy-ninth year. There is a lengthy obituary in the *Berkshire Chronicle* for 18 August 1922 which, in the spacious reporting which the period enjoyed, records in a full column not only his career, but the music of the funeral service, the names of representatives, friends and relatives present and of those abroad or who, absent in the holiday season, were prevented from attendance.

His first work in architecture as a young man was the building of St Peter's Church, Folkestone. He was in the choir of this church and closely associated with the parochial work of the church which was then famed for its advanced practices . . . Mr Stallwood was a Churchwarden of St Giles, Reading, for over a quarter of a century. . . He represented Church Ward on the Town Council from 1887 to 1893 . . . chairman of the Survey Committee and a co-opted member of the Library Committee. . . He was an active Freemason . . . he held the provincial rank of Past Grand Warden of Berkshire . . . Mr Stallwood was the architect of the residence of the late Mr William Isaac Palmer now occupied by Mr Leonard Sutton . . . and the old College Buildings opened by the late King Edward (then Prince of Wales) in 1897.

Appendix 3

The Peoples Investment Company Limited

A copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Peoples Investment Company is filed among Reading University's property deeds. The objects of the Company were essentially to act as property developers, to deal in land and buildings, grant mortgages, invest in money, lend or borrow. The nominal capital was £50,000 in 1888, increased to £100,000 in 1908. At the foundation the 10,000 shares of £5 each were divided as to thirty Founders Shares, 3,950 Preference Shares and the balance of 6,020 to be Ordinary Shares. Most of the founders held three Founders Shares and 150 Ordinary Shares; Morris held two and one hundred respectively.

Annual reports sometimes appear in the local paper, particularly in later years. Morris had become Chairman in 1888. From the year's report in 1894 we learn that the Company then paid 5% on the Preference Shares, 7% on the Ordinary Shares and £2. 16s. on each Founder's Share. The Company operated in Reading and Wokingham and the *Berkshire Chronicle* includes many references. Taking as an example the year 1898 references to Wokingham include:

7 May 1898 p. 1

ON THURSDAY MAY 19th
IMPORTANT LAND COMPANIES, BUILDERS AND INVESTORS
WOKINGHAM, BERKS

A Valuable FREEHOLD ESTATE situate close to the centre of the town, within a few minutes walk of the Railway Station and possessing very extensive frontages to Easthampstead-road, Langboro' lane and Gipsy-lane, and known as 'BATTY'S BARN FARM' together with the Homestead, Cottages, etc.

The Property, which comprises an area of over 56 acres, is situate on high ground commanding beautiful views of the surrounding country, and is ripe for immediate development for building purposes, there being a good demand for all classes of houses in the district.

Mr. J.J. Cooper (of the Firm of J. Omer Cooper and Son) is instructed by the Owners to offer the whole of this valuable FREEHOLD ESTATE by Auction in Lots, at the Rose Hotel, Wokingham on Thursday May 19th, 1898 at 3 o'clock precisely.

Particulars and conditions of sale, with lithographed plans, may be obtained of Messrs. Ford, Lloyd, Bartlett and Michelmore, Solicitors, 38 Bloomsbury Square, London W.C. or of the Auctioneer, 17 Blagrove Street, Reading.

7 May 1898 p. 8

Report of a presentation to Canon Sturges of a silver tea and coffee service from the parishioners of All Saints, on the conclusion of 25 years work amongst them. 110 guineas were collected from nearly 600 subscribers. Mr. C.T. Murdoch presided.

21 May 1898 p. 8

On Wednesday (sic) afternoon, . . . 'Batty's Barn Farm' estate, consisting of fifty-seven acres of land and several cottages, . . . were submitted to Auction by Mr. J.J. Cooper . . . The 'Batty's Barn Farm' proper, containing about 45 acres and a small farm house, were bought by Mr. J. Winter for the People's Investment Company, Reading for £7,500. A small cottage, let at 3s.6d. a week, realised £300, and two enclosures of meadowland in Langboro' lane, containing 3¼ acres, fetching £400 were also bought by the same company. . . Altogether the estate, which is in close proximity to the heart of the town, realised £9,935, and fairly shows the value of land at Wokingham.

9 July 1898, p. 5

An extensive obituary of Mr C.T. Murdoch, M.P.

6 August 1898

Survey and General Purposes Committee

BATTY'S BARN FARM ESTATE. A letter was read from Messrs. Joseph Morris and Son, agents for the People's Investment Company Ltd., Reading, stating that it is proposed to form a new road running in a straight line from the top of Langborough Road to Mr. H.B. Blandy's gate in Easthampstead Road . . . and it will be seen that it

renders the footpath from C to D useless, as the road from C to B makes a much shorter cut, saving a distance of more than 100 yards. It is therefore proposed to close the path from C to D, and they hope that they will concur in this and support the proposal. . . .

Batty's Barn Farm Estate. The Plans of a proposed new road leading from Langborough road through the above estate were submitted. It was agreed that the Council had no objection to the work being carried out, subject to a proper sewer being provided and the bye laws complied with.

For one of the Wokingham houses it is known that the Indenture of Conveyance of land at Wokingham, now 56 Sturges Road, dated 1902, to Miss Louisa Ultra Mary Hollis from the People's Investment Company bears the signatures of Jos. Morris and Felix B. Parfitt (Directors) and Donald Kennedy (Secretary). In January 1898 the newspaper had reported the death of Mr Frank Hollis, a bachelor, his mother and sisters surviving him.

The Company was wound up in 1914, the liquidator being Dryland Haslam (Jnr) F.S.I., who occupied one of the early Morris houses, 11 Craven Road, Reading.

Four letters
at Wokingham
April 1st 1912

Joseph Morris
Miss Violet Morris
Wokingham

Mr E.H. Cole
Bullock
Ramsay
St. Barnabas

Dear Sir

The Landlord's Question

I have this morning received a letter from Miss Howitt, which enables me to put before you the following proposal. If you would be willing to grant Miss Howitt by way of a loan the sum of £1,000 (One Thousand Pounds) in full settlement of the job including the alterations to the 5th and 6th floors, and the making good of woodwork, doors, locks and any defective workmanship, I am authorized to hand her a cheque for £200, and the remaining balance of £800 not later than December 31st, 1912.

Appendix 4

Violet Morris

Among the papers at Spaxton there are, as well as drawings of four Morris houses, a handwritten specification by Violet for Mr Sellick's house at Durleigh. Page 1 begins:

Specification of House at Durleigh, Nr Bridgwater, Somerset for C. Sellick Esq^{re}, in accordance with plans prepared by

Miss V.S. Morris,
Architect,
Four Forks,
Nr Bridgwater.

August 1930.

Water Contractor may draw water for the works from the new well to be previously sunk by him. The sinking of this well is not included in this Specification and will not form part of the Estimate herein.

Materials and Workmanship Provide all materials, which must be good, and all labour and everything required for the carrying out of the work in a substantial and workmanlike manner and finish off complete.

Drainage Dig for and construct proper cesspool of required capacity with fresh air inlet and dig trenches for and provide and lay 4" socket stoneware pipes with cement joints for sewage as shown on plan with all bends, junctions, tapers, interceptor, inlets and inspections to the satisfaction of the Local Authorities and pay fees, if any, to them . . .

Page 8 ends:

. . . (pack cistern and pipes in roof to secure from frost). ¼" galvd flow and return pipe to Ideal Boiler with round angles all complete and safety valve. Steam escape pipe carried 3 feet above roof. Cold supply to 2 W.Cs. and hot and cold supply to Bath sink with proper taps complete. Glazing 21 oz English sheet throughout, specially selected for Drawing and Dining Rooms Kn and Bedrooms. All external wood and ironwork 4 coats good oil color to choice. Internal work Manders' Old Oak Matsine—depth of tint of this stain to be approved by Mr. Sellick. Finish woodwork of Kn. and offices with best oak bright varnish, and the rest of woodwork with best Eggshell flattening varnish. Back doors, 6/6 Bell to Board and Front doors. Iron scraper to Front and Back doors.

An example of her correspondence with Messrs Coles is:

Joseph Morris
Miss Violet Morris
Architects

Four Forks
Near Bridgwater
April 3rd, 1922

Mr. E.H. Coles,
Builder,
Enmore,
Nr. Bridgwater.

Dear Sir,

The Larches, Spaxton

I have this morning received a letter from Miss Howlett, which enables me to put before you the following proposal.

If you would be willing to meet Miss Howlett by accepting the sum of £1,000 (One Thousand Pounds) in full settlement of this job including the white taps to kitchen & Wash house sinks, and the making good of wood shrinkage, door locks and any defective workmanship, I am instructed to hand you at once a cheque for £500, and the remaining balance of £500 not later than Saturday the 15th. inst.

The bill rendered to Miss Howlett was as per your final account for labour & materials nett cost	3,498. 9.10
Plus Builder's profit @ 10% on £3,000	300. 0. 0
	3,798. 9.10
	2,750. 0. 0
	£1,048. 9.10

So that you would be reducing this amount due by £48. 9.10, and accepting the responsibility of providing & fixing the white taps & making good as described above.

If you will call & see me as soon as possible, I will go round to The Larches with you and point out such matters as already show shrinkage or need of adjustment, and after seeing these, you will I expect be able to give me your decision.

W.P. Cox Esq. Cottages. I have this morning heard from Mr. Cox, who sends his cheque for £100 on account of the final bill, and promises the balance of £112. 8. 9. this week. I enclose the cheque received for £100. Mr. Cox asked me to convey to you his thanks for the work, with which he was satisfied and to say that he was sorry not have met and thanked you personally.

Orchard Cottage. The snow has come through the roof in several places, damaging the whitened ceiling in the East Bedroom, and I shall be glad if you will get this seen to as soon as the weather makes it possible.

Your faithfully,

Violet S. Morris

E.H. Coles & Sons of Enmore were responsible for four of Violet's houses. The firm was founded 150 years ago and she had such confidence in them that she did not carry out site supervision unless requested.

Appendix 5

Wheeler of Reading

The earliest appearance of their name so far known is 'Wheeler, Reading' on the stone panel now in the porch of Mapledurham Church recording donations in 1830 to the village school (a rather meagre brick Gothic building, now demolished). From Canon Clarke's essay on Henry Woodyer, architect, Messrs Wheeler appear to have carried out the following works under his directions (Fig. 32):

John Wheeler

1853 Restoration of Sonning Church.

Wheeler of Reading

1858-9 Restoration of Hambledon Church, Bucks.

1858-63 Restoration of chancel of St Nicholas, Newbury (stonework only).

1861-2 Christ Church, Reading.

1864-5 Newtown, Hants.

1866-7 Restoration of rest of Newbury church (as general contractor).

1870-1 St Stephen, Clewer (builder for the chancel).

1871 St John, Woodley, Berks (masonry contractor).

Wheeler & Sons

1877 Cholsey, restoration of chancel and transepts.

1885 East Hagbourne, a reredos of Caen stone.

For other architects (including Morris & Stallwood) the following are known:

Wheeler & Son

1859 Masonry at Highmoor Church (Morris).

1862 Masonry at Mr Palmer's villa in Reading. Tender £190 (Morris).

1862 Tender for Berks Military Depot, not the lowest (Morris).

1864 Restoration at St Mary's (Morris).

1865 Additions to Royal Berkshire Hospital (Morris).

1876 London & County Bank (now National Westminster Bank, Market Place). Tender of £4585 for Messrs W. & J.T. Brown and F.W. Albury.

1878-9 Restoration of St Peter's Caversham (Morris & Stallwood).

1879 Hillside (Morris & Stallwood).

1879 Restoration of St Mary's Church, Sulhampstead Abbots. Cost £900 (Morris & Stallwood).

1880 All Saints Church, Wokingham. Restoration of tower. Cost £1,443 (Morris & Stallwood).

1880 Principal's Room at Huntley, Boorne & Stevens (Morris & Stallwood).

1887 St Stephen's church (William White). Cross in churchyard, St Mary's Butts (Stallwood).



Fig. 32

The premises of Messrs Wheeler Bros, Caversham Road, Reading, as demolition started, 1984

- 1887 Jubilee Fountain (G.W. Webb, 14 Friar Street).
- 1888-9 Restoration, Holy Trinity (Webb).
- 1895 Conversion of the Augustine Chapel, Friar Street to a theatre (F.W. Albury).
- 1902 Martin Hope Sutton Memorial Hall, Greyfriars (Ravenscroft, Son & Morris).
- 1910-11 St Andrews Church, Caversham (James Haslam & E. Ravenscroft).
- 1926 Extension of Pugin's St James' R.C. Church, Reading (Wilfred C. Mangan).

Their yard in Caversham Road, Reading, survived until 1984. A panel of virtuoso Victorian stone carving was salvaged before the demolition. Pevsner's *Northamptonshire* refers to a memorial to G.H. Arnold in Ashby St Ledgers church, a 'sumptuous Gothic shrine without effigy', signed by J. Wheeler of Reading (1844).