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University of the Arts London

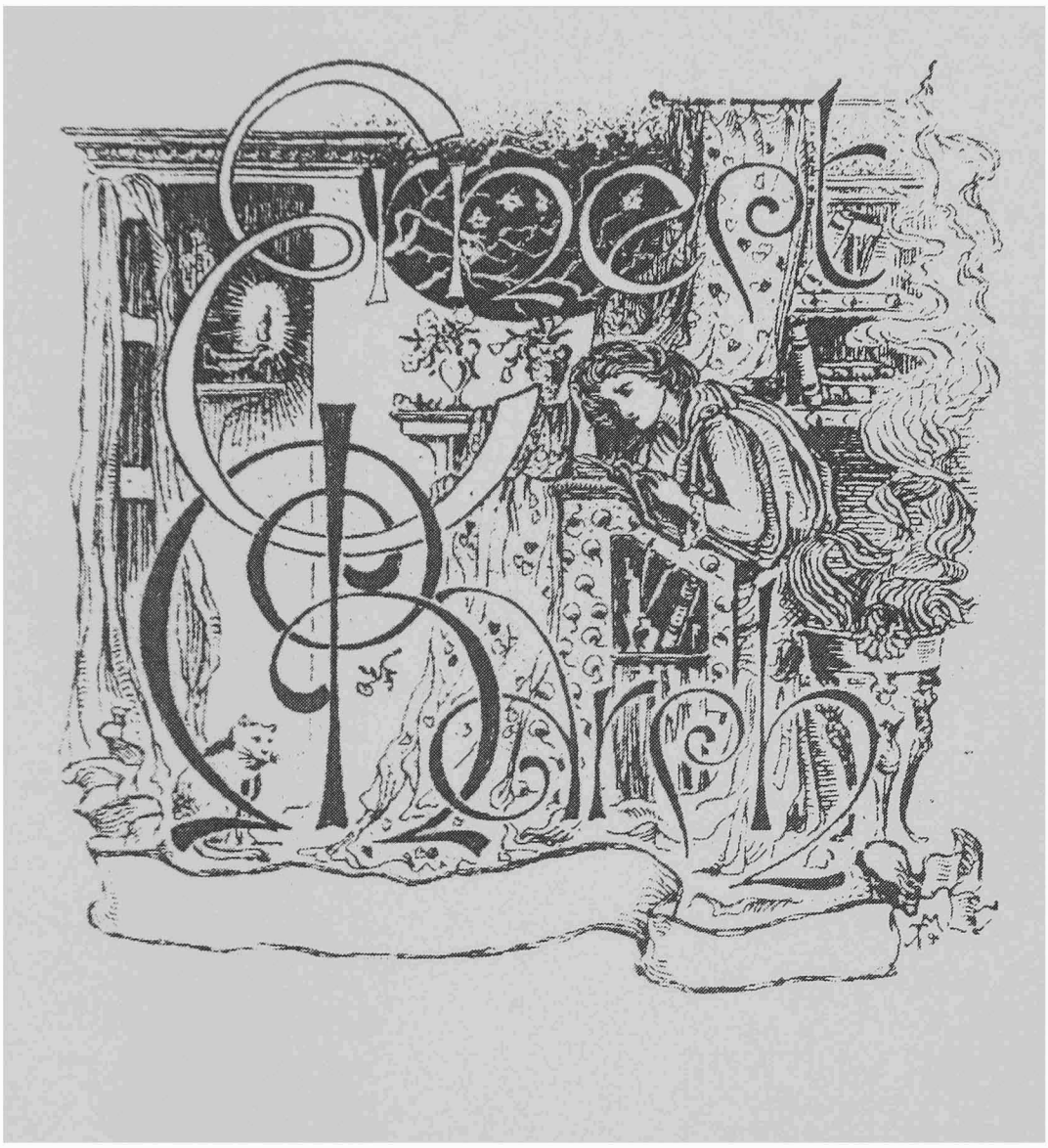
Camberwell College of Arts

Steering Taste: Ernest Marsh, a study of private collecting in England in the early 20th Century

Christopher Jordan

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2007



Over: Book plate of Ernest Marsh. Talwin Morris (1865-1911)
c. 1893. Monogram TM 9[3 ?]. Pen drawing 5.5 x 5.5 cm reproduced by lithography on white wove paper 8 x 8 cm.
Pasted inside cover of: Jekyll, Gertrude (1901) *Wall and Water Gardens*. London: Country Life and Newnes.
Talwin Morris was a cousin of Marsh. Prior to their marriages in 1893 they shared rooms together at Kingston upon Thames.
Marsh Collection

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Abstract

The primary aim of this thesis is to focus attention on the bourgeois, 'un-named' collector, the driving force behind most museum and art gallery collections of the Victorian and Edwardian period. British museum and art gallery records of gifted collections, bequests and loans usually note their donors. However, with a few notable exceptions, little is known about the collectors, their activities and motivation in making such presentations.

Using the interests and activities of the Quaker miller and collector Ernest Marsh (1843-1945) as a case study, this thesis explores how in the period 1890-1945 a collector came to be a key agent in the construction and manifestation of taste in British Applied Arts and to a lesser degree in the Fine Arts. Through primary visual and documentary evidence of the Marsh home, and reference to contemporary and later commentaries it considers the relative influences of husband and wife on decorating and furnishing the domestic interior, the evolution of taste, and, for Ernest Marsh, its impact upon his artistic interests within the public arena.

By examination of private papers, metropolitan and provincial art gallery and museum archives it also considers evidence of the inter-relationships between donors and curators, and the mutual advantages and disadvantages accruing to both, particularly focussing on the processes in bringing about changes in individual and institutional collecting policy. Further, by review of records of, in particular, the Contemporary Art Society and the Greenslade archive, it examines the degree to which private benefactors and those in public or semi-public office, acting as fund-raisers and spenders exercise influence through patronage of particular practitioners, choice of works and initiating new designs.

Acknowledgments

My first thanks must be to Prof. Oriana Baddeley for suggesting a study be made based on an aspect of the collections of the South London Gallery and to Linda Sandino and Prof. Toshio Watanabe, for their patience, encouragement and guidance during the lengthy research and writing of this thesis.

I am particularly grateful to John and Sheila Marsh, the late Michael Marsh and Barbara Marsh, the late Margaret Stuart and Pamela Thomas for welcoming me into their homes and giving access to so much information about their family, without which this thesis would not have been possible.

Thanks are also due to the patience of so many librarians, archivists and individuals who have steered me towards answers and responded so readily to my enquiries. In particular: Librarians at, Bushey Library; Camberwell College of Arts; Ealing Local History Collection; Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London; The Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture, Middlesex University; Geoff Saul, Rickmansworth Historical Society; Gordon E.Stephenson, Archivist, Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare; Maureen Attrill, Keeper of Art, Plymouth Museum & Art Gallery; Anthony A. Berry; Gill Bohee, Pitshanger Museum; Jennifer Booth, Archivist, Tate Archive; Helen Brown, Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum; Sir Adrian Cadbury; Gerald Carey; Terence Cartlidge; Jon and Kate Catleugh; Ali Clarke, Reference Assistant, Hockens Collection, University of Otago; Heather Clark, Hatch Hill; Contemporary Art Society; Emmanuel Cooper; Chris Coward, Resolution Team, The Law Society; Alan Crawford; Alan Crookham and Richard Temple, Assistant Archivists, Modern Records Centre, University Library, Warwick; Roger Cucksey, Keeper of Art, Newport Museum & Art Gallery; Richard Dennis; Sally Dummer, Registrar, Ipswich Museum; Richard Edgcumbe and Guy Turner, Metalwork Department, V & A; Donato Esposito; Ray Finch, Winchcombe Pottery; Elizabeth Fielden, Senior Assistant, Department of Manuscripts and Printed Books, The Fitzwilliam Museum; Daryl Fromm; Andrew Gent, Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Library and Archive; Luke Gertler; Diana Hawkes and Greta Turner, Haslemere Educational Museum; Martin Hopkinson, Centre for Whistler Studies, University of Glasgow; Rosemary Hull; Dr. Jeffrey Jones, Centre for Ceramic Studies, UWIC, Cardiff; Alison V. Smith, Birmingham Local Studies & History Library; Peter Entwisle, Curator, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand; Tim Everson and Emma Rummins, Local History Officers, Kingston Museum & Heritage Service; Simon Fenwick, Archivist, Bankside Gallery; Librarian, Fogg Museum Library; Elizabeth Goudge, National Society of Painters, Sculptors and Printmakers; Arthur and Helen Grogan; Philip Ward-Jackson, Deputy Librarian (Conway Library), Courtauld Institute of Art; Nicki Jarvis, Holburne Museum & Crafts Study Centre, Bath; Harvard University Library; Sheree Jones, Portsmouth District Land Registry; Ms. S. Jordan Kim, Curatorial Assistant, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York; Rose Kerr, Chief Curator, Far Eastern Department, V & A; Sue Kirby, formerly Pitshanger Museum; I. Lackajis, Area Librarian, Chelsea Library; Evelyn Lannon, Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library; Jeremy Leach; John Madin, archivist, Royal Albert Memorial Museum; Theo Mance, Liberty; Alison Midwinter, Archivist, Otago Library, New Zealand; Lilah J. Mittelstaedt, Reference Librarian, Philadelphia Museum of Art; Probate Registry, York; Duncan Mirylees; Barbara Morris; Anne-Marie Mossop; Samuel C. Mossop; David Murray, Assistant Archivist, Hocken Collections, Otago; Jennifer Opie, formerly Deputy Curator, Ceramics & Glass Department, V & A.; Victoria Osborne, Art Assistant, York City Art Gallery; Mike Page; Malcolm Parr; Linda Parry, Deputy Curator, Textiles & Dress, V & A; Norman Plastow, Archivist, Wimbledon Windmilll Museum; Julian Pooley and Martin

Pugh, County Archivists, Surrey History Centre; Alan Powers, Archivist, Art Workers' Guild; Tamara Preaud, Archiviste, Manufacture Nationale de Sevres; Lt. Col. Basil Reckitt; Adeline van Roon, Archivist, The Henry Moore Foundation; Peter Rose; Judy Rudoe, Department of Medeival and Later, V & A; Maurice Rummens, Curatorial Assistant, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Ben Stone, Office of Research Librarian, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin; Peyton Skipwith, Fine Art Society; Fiona Slattery, Fine and Applied Art Officer, Perth Museum & Art Gallery; Bill Sykes, Archivist, Knowledge Centre, Dunedin City Council; Marcus Taylor, L. & M. Taylor Ltd., Photographers, Hillingdon; Anne Thwaite; Prof. Michael Tooley, Department of Geography, Kingston University; George P. Twyman; Moira Vincentelli, University of Wales; Mr & Mrs G. A. Watson, Highmeads, Easebourne; Mr & Mrs J. Wells; Anne Wheeldon, Archivist, Hammersmith & Fulham Archives and Local History Centre; Michael Whiteway; Muriel Wilson; Mary Yule, Assistant Director, NACF.

Finally, sincere thanks to my wife Marian who feels that Ernest Marsh has become, if not exactly one of the family, part of our very existence.

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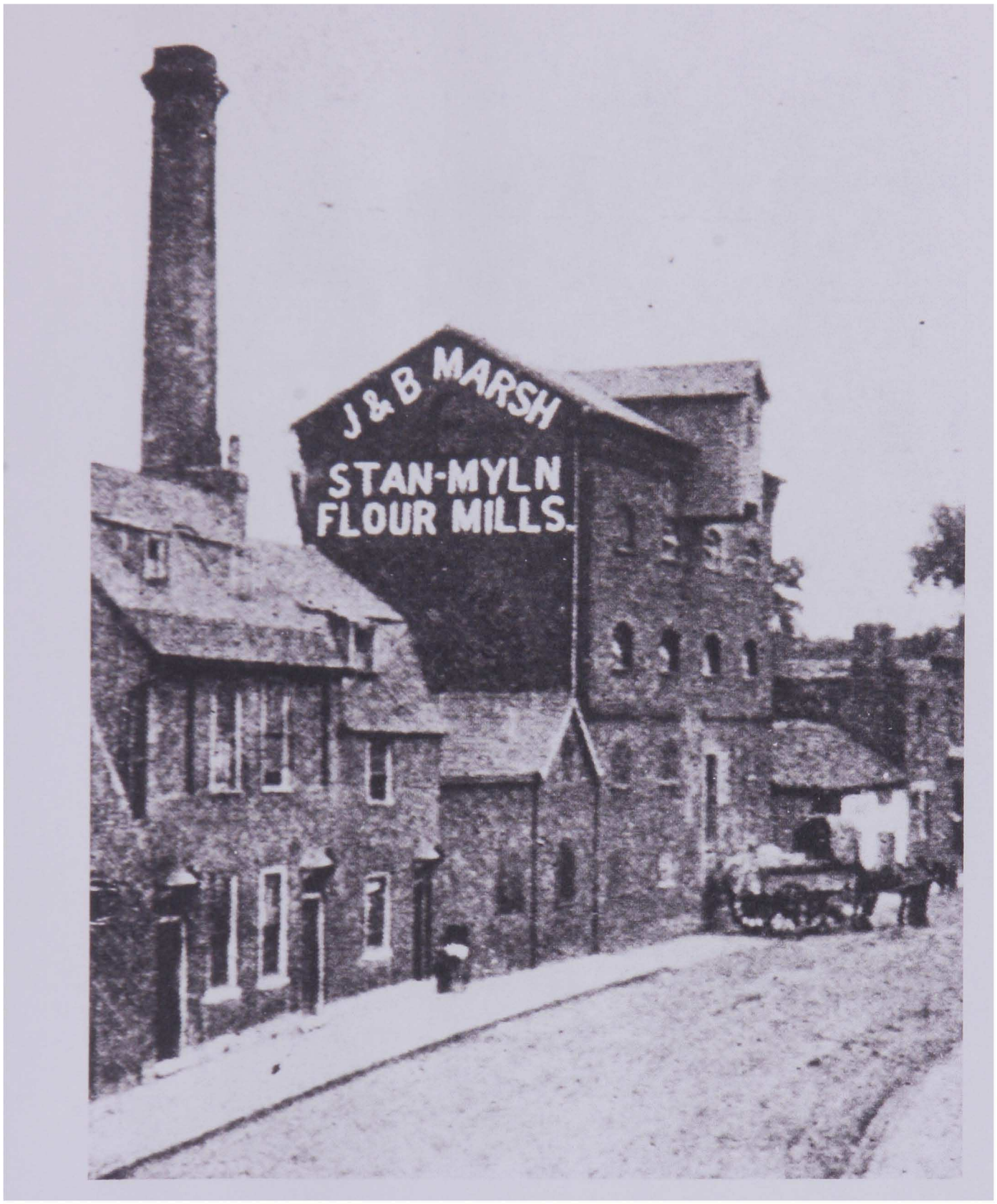
Ernest Marsh (1863-1945), Sarah Marsh, née Marriage (1862-c.1940), Francis Bedford Marsh (1896-1916), Christopher Marriage Marsh (1899-1988), Phyllis Vera Marsh (1902-1991).
Marsh Collection



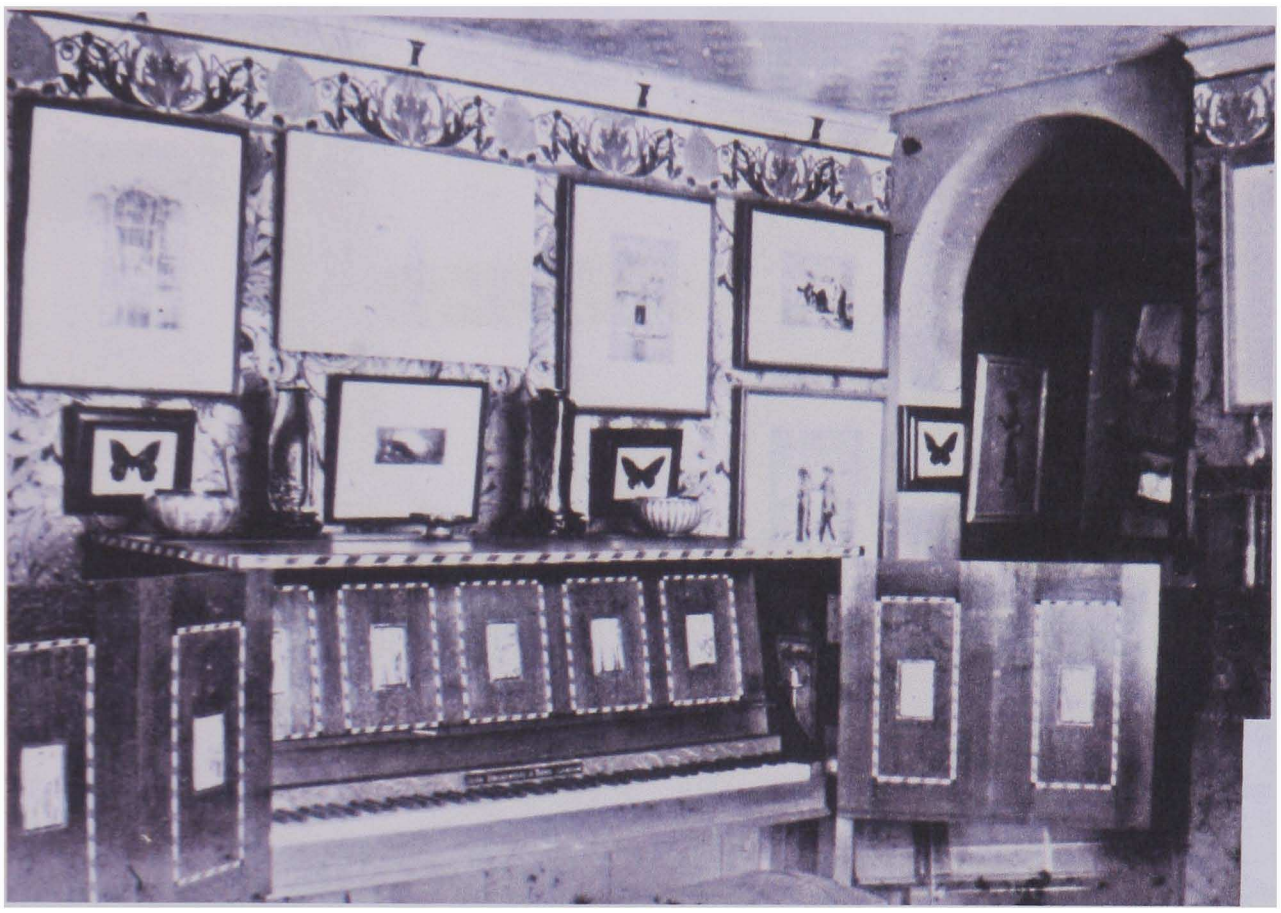
1.4. *J. & B. Marsh, Stan-Myln Flour Mills.*
Down Hall Mill, Kingston upon Thames.
1906.
The Mill was established in 1814 and closed in 1914.
Courtesy: Kingston upon Thames Museum and Heritage Service. Ref. K1-2221

1.5. *J. & B. Marsh, Coal and Corn Merchant, 2 Market Place, Kingston upon Thames.* c.1899. Watercolour. Architects design proposal.
Noted: Carter & Ashworth M.M. R.I.B.A., 86 Eden Street, Kingston on Thames.
Courtesy: Kingston upon Thames Museum and Heritage Service. Ref. K1-2281

2.1 *Coombe Bury*, Kingston Hill, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey
c. 1892.
Thought to be an illustration to an Estate Agent's brochure prior to Ernest and Sarah Marsh renting the property 1893-1914.
View from rear garden with main house left and domestic offices right.
Marsh Collection

2.2. Drawing Room *Coombe Bury* Ernest Marsh
c.1906. A Joseph Doran tapestry (1906) upholstered armchair, supplied to Liberty & Co. The book case holds a selection of post-1895 Martin vessels, the sideboard a Martin table lamp (see fig.6.5), a Richard Lunn bowl and a Cauldon Pottery teapot, handpainted by Sarah Marsh. Table left: netsuke, a Chinese bowl on stand and Georgian silver candlesticks.
Marsh Collection

2.3. Morning Room, *Coombe Bury* Ernest Marsh
c.1906.
Closed piano with case by C.R. Ashbee. Bronzes: left; *Perseus Arming*, Alfred Gilbert, rht. *Teucer*, Hamo Thornycroft. Bowl left: Salt-glazed stoneware insc. 'Martin Brothers 2-1904'. Part of Marsh 1945 bequest to the South London Art Gallery (CE14). Framed Butterflies on Denton plaster mounts. Pictures: left; James Whistler *The Doorway*, Lithotint 1880; bottom, *Early Morning* c.1895; top rht. *Nocturne: Palaces,* far rht. Millet *The Gleaners* and *Going to Work.* Wallpaper: possibly Essex & Co.
All the surviving photographs of the interiors of *Coombe Bury* were taken in or about 1906. Comparison of these images reveals that Marsh composed his pictures by moving both the bronzes and Martinware around to suit. It is also noticeable that none of the earlier style pre 1890s Martinware is displayed. Virtually all are post-1900 items decorated by Edwin Martin. Much of the earlier wares were on loan to Kingston Museum. This photograph depicts Marsh, as he no doubt intended, as being at the leading edge of contemporary taste.
Marsh Collection.



2.4 Morning Room, *Coombe Bury,* Kingston upon Thames. Ernest Marsh c.1906. C.R. Ashbee piano case open.
Movement by John Broadwood & Sons Upright Piano No. 97066. 1903. Ht. 122, W. 137.2, D. 63.5cm. C.R. Ashbee designed case and stool. Oak case. Inset floral plaques of translucent enamel, maker unknown. Candle holders inside case to left and right.
Piano now at Philip Speakman Webb (1831-1915) designed house at Standen, Sussex in care of the National Trust. Compare with Fig. 2.3. The Butterflies and some of the pictures have been changed. Two Martin vases have replaced the Bronze figures.
Note ceiling and walls papered.
Marsh Collection.

2.5. Morning Room, *Coombe Bury*, Kingston upon Thames. Ernest Marsh c.1906.
C. R. Ashbee butterfly cabinet with inlaid coloured marquetry designs of specimen flower heads (see fig. 9.1). Design en suite with piano.
Rht. Bureau probably made by Wyburd for Liberty & Co. Panels: probably from Silver Studio.
Motto: 'True Ease in writing comes from art, not chance'. *The Kiss*, Rodin Bronze.
Tortoiseshell tea caddies, Martin salt-glazed vessels.
Whistler etchings inc. *The Riva*, *San Giorgio* and *Upright Venice*.
Marsh Collection.

3.1 *Hatch Hill, Kingsley Green*, Haslemere, Surrey. Ernest Marsh
c.1914.
Designed by Ernest William Emerson A.R.I.B.A. (d.2 11 1960) and built c.1911.
In vernacular style, the house stands on a sharply sloping site overlooking Blackdown.
Bought c.1913 in name of Sarah E. Marsh, wife of Ernest Marsh.
Marsh Collection

3.2. Interior *Hatch Hill*, Kingsley Green, Haslemere, Surrey. Ernest Marsh c. 1925. (Detail)
Emerson's interior design was notable for its light and plainness, with Voysey inspired stair screen off left (out of view) and brick chimney breast.
Apart from the placing of the central vase, probably by Cox of Mortlake, the inclusion of several whimsical family items suggest, in contrast to the much earlier pictures of *Coombe Bury*, minimal composition for the purposes of recording the interior of the home. Martinware vases in alcove and on shelves. Bronze figure: *Perseus Arming* by Alfred Gilbert (out of view). Various 19th Century topograhical oils and watercolours.
On chimney breast: Pair of candle sconces. For some years Hatch Hill had no electricity supply. Pair c.1900 copper repoussé punch bowls; rht. 31.3 cm. Similar to Keswick ware, but maker unknown. Framed Exotic Butterflies in Denton mounts. Arts and Crafts (Liberty?) copper bellows, later presented by Phyllis Marsh to the National Trust, Standen.
Left: 19th Century Chippendale style dining chair.
Behind: early carriage clock. Marsh possessed over 30 18th and early 19th Century clocks of various kinds, most auctioned in 1916 to pay creditors.
Right: reclining armchair after style of 1860s design by Philip Webb.
Marsh Collection

3.3.
Interior, *Hatch Hill*, Kingsley Green, Haslemere, Surrey. Ernest Marsh c. 1925. Text overleaf.

Overleaf:
Interior, *Hatch Hill*, Kingsley Green, Haslemere, Surrey. Ernest Marsh

An unusual composition made by time exposure. Marsh experimented with various time exposures using a tripod mounted camera.

The intention appears to illustrate the diversity of his collecting interests. Hanging on the wall above the fireplace are two dishes decorated by Robert Wallace Martin with aquatic designs of fish with grotesque faces, c.1890; with, on the mantle-piece below, a tall vase decorated with a Japonesque inspired tendril design, probably by Edwin Martin.

Beneath an unidentified colour print is an etching by Marsh's friend Fred Richards. On the left is a figurine, probably by Agatha Walker, with at centre a Martin sculptured vase, probably thrown by Walter Martin and formed by Edwin Martin. In the foreground is a Chinese influenced footed dish, probably by Reginald Wells but similar to early experiments c.1919 by William Staite Murray.

A display cabinet is placed on a table into the room in front of the fire-place. It contains Martin chess figures at the bottom, with to the rear 'The Norwich Bellman', a portrait of Will Childerhouse, probably seen by Robert Wallace in 1891and modelled by him in 1900. Martin frog figures and a house at centre.

A Wells ram 'finished with the greatly esteemed "mutton fat" glaze of extraordinary quality' and Indian Runner Ducks at top. Marsh recalled: 'to possess a group of these life-like little birds is a joy!'. Marsh *Apollo* 1925 p.288. A number were presented by him through the Contemporary Art Society to the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
Photograph: Twyman Collection

3.4. Interior, *Hatch Hill*, Kingsley Green, Haslemere, Surrey. Ernest Marsh
Text overleaf

Overleaf
Interior, *Hatch Hill*, Kingsley Green, Haslemere, Surrey. Ernest Marsh c.1925.
On wall: Arts and Crafts concave mirror with unidentified repoussé surround of five portrait heads amongst entwining branches and leaves, contained within circular flat metal frame decorated with alternating inlays of flower motifs and part circular cut-outs.

On sideboard: centre: *Seated Magistrate*. Stained Ivory. h. 20.8 cm. Exhibited: Exhibition Chinese Art, Burlington House 1935-6. Ex. 2937.

On ebonised stands: left and right. Pair salt-glazed vases c.1900 by Walter and Edwin Martin.

Three bowls purporting to be Chinese but possibly by Reginald Wells or Charles Vyse.

Centre vase by William Staite Murray.

The mirror reflection shows camera on tripod standing in front of 18th. C. chest on chest against the opposite wall. Martin vases stand atop the chest with the walls double hung below the dado with prints and watercolours.
Photograph: Twyman Collection

3.5 Interior, *Hatch Hill*, Kingsley Green, Haslemere, Surrey. Ernest Marsh c. 1925.
The house was built on a considerable slope, reflected in the ground floor interior rooms which are stepped.

Left: in front of screen, on oak sidetable: tortoiseshell tea caddy with Martin ware jug containing bluebells. Marsh owned over forty 18th Century tea caddies, mostly in tortoiseshell. These were auctioned in 1916 to pay creditors.

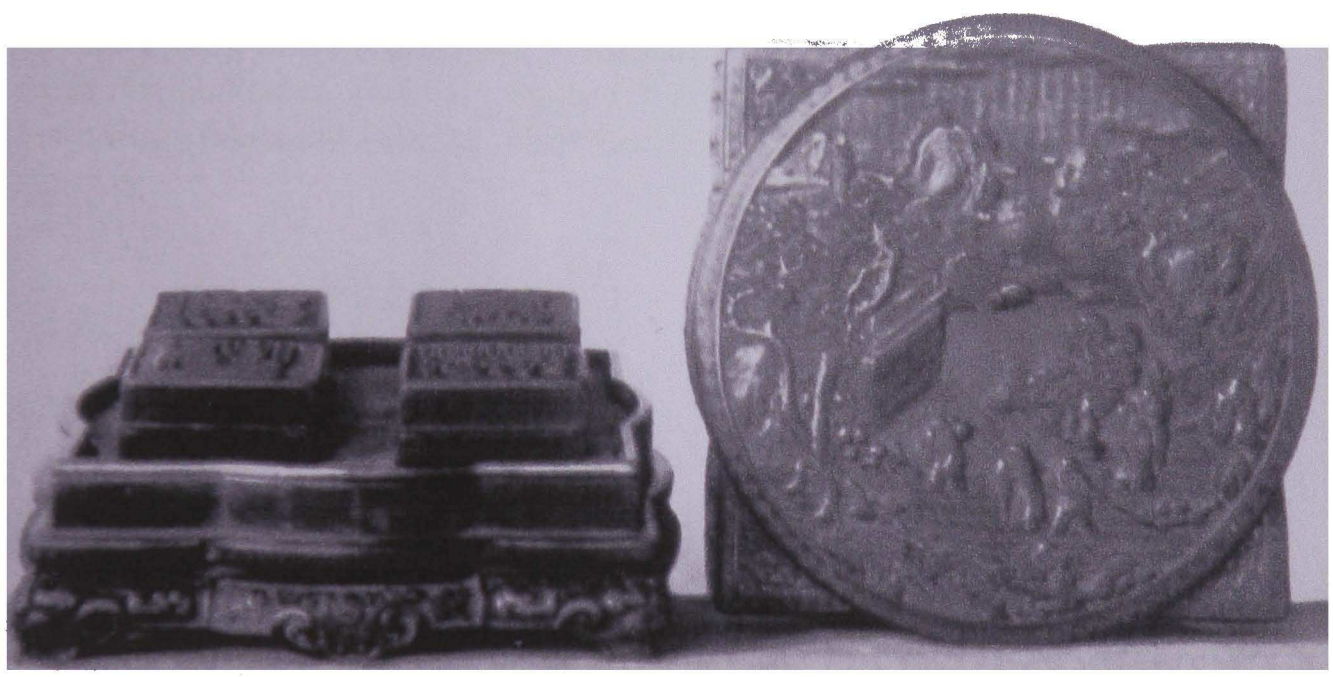
In upper room, bronze figure of *Peace* by Onslow Ford (see fig.8.1). Middle: 19th C. dining-chair in Chippendale manner. On wall: James Whistler *The Doorway*, lithotint 1880.
Marsh Collection

3.6. *Martinware: Interior view at Hatch Hill.* Ernest Marsh
28 May 1916. Contact print on postcard. 8.5 x 13.5 cm.
Verso: No.9 28/5/1916. 64 stop 6 ft focus ordinary lense yellow screen 15 minutes.

On the wall is a reproduction of Whistler's oil *Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Old Battersea Bridge*, c.1873, acquired by the National Art Collections Fund for the Tate in 1905.

Martin stoneware: bulbous vase top left dated 6.1898, central vase 8 1898. Both incised dragon decoration, probably by Robert Wallace Martin.
Part of Marsh 1945 bequest to the South London Art Gallery (CE16 & 73).
Photograph: Twyman Collection

3.7. *The Kiss. Interior view at Hatch Hill.* Ernest Marsh
c. 1916. Bronze, Auguste Rodin (1840-1917).
Reduced size copy of original first exhibited 1886. Martinware salt-glaze stoneware vase incised with dragon design. 6-1897. H.39.8 cm. Now South London Gallery (CE 84).
Picture: similar to *Opening the Fold*, etching by Samuel Palmer.
Foreground: unidentified ceramics, possibly Chinese but more likely by Reginald Wells, Charles Vyse or William Staite Murray.
Marsh Collection



4.1. *Imperial Sweetmeat Box in Lacquer (Ch'ien lung)*
Text Overleaf.

Overleaf
Imperial Sweetmeat Box in Lacquer (Ch'ien lung)
H . 20.7, Dia. Circle 24 cm. Ernest Marsh Collection.
Exhibited *Chinese Art*, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, 1915 Case B, Exhibit 44.
Probably official photograph

In square-and-circle form, and containing a tray and four small boxes, each box carved with a swastika lattice and Chinese characters. The containing box elaborately carved in relief on an incised ground, with Taoist immortals and attendants, and other figures, among mountains and in gardens, and with emblems and ideograph inscriptions.

The work is in dark tones of red, yellow and blue; interior black. The characters on the four enclosed boxes declare "no end to life," in other words, implying that the whole box was a princely gift to the occupant of the Imperial throne - the locution, which may be paraphrased "May you live forever," being restricted in application in this form to the Emperor alone.

From the Imperial Palace, Peking.

Details from sale catalogue: *Art of Ancient China; the collection formed by Ernest Marsh, J.P. of Haselmore*[sic], *Surrey, England, December 14, 15, and 16.1916*
American Art Galleries, Madison Square South, New York. Lot 228, Sold for $200.
Courtesy: Fogg Museum Library, Harvard University

4.2 *Carved Ivory Figures.* Ernest Marsh
c.1915.
Centre: *Seated Magistrate*. Stained Ivory. h. 20.8 cm. Exhibited: *International Exhibition of Chinese Art*, Burlington House 1935-6. Ex. 2937.
His right: *Figure of a Woman, Holding a Rosary*. Chi'ng Dynasty. Stained Ivory. h.24 cm. Ex. 2933;
his left: *Figure of a Woman,* Chi'ng Dynasty. Stained Ivory h. 24.5 cm.
All Marsh Bequest to British Museum 1945.

Kyan-yin with Rosary Holding Child. Stained Ivory. h. 25.3 cm.
Sold American Galleries, New York 1916. Lot 204, $20.
Photograph: Twyman Collection.

5.1 *Finished for the Day: An Equine Sisyphus.* Ernest Marsh
1911.
Photograph taken at Equihen, Northern France, during a summer holiday.
A horse tread-mill providing power for a threshing machine.

A Greek mythological character, Sisyphus was sentenced to perpetually roll a large boulder up a mountain, only for it to continually roll back to the bottom.

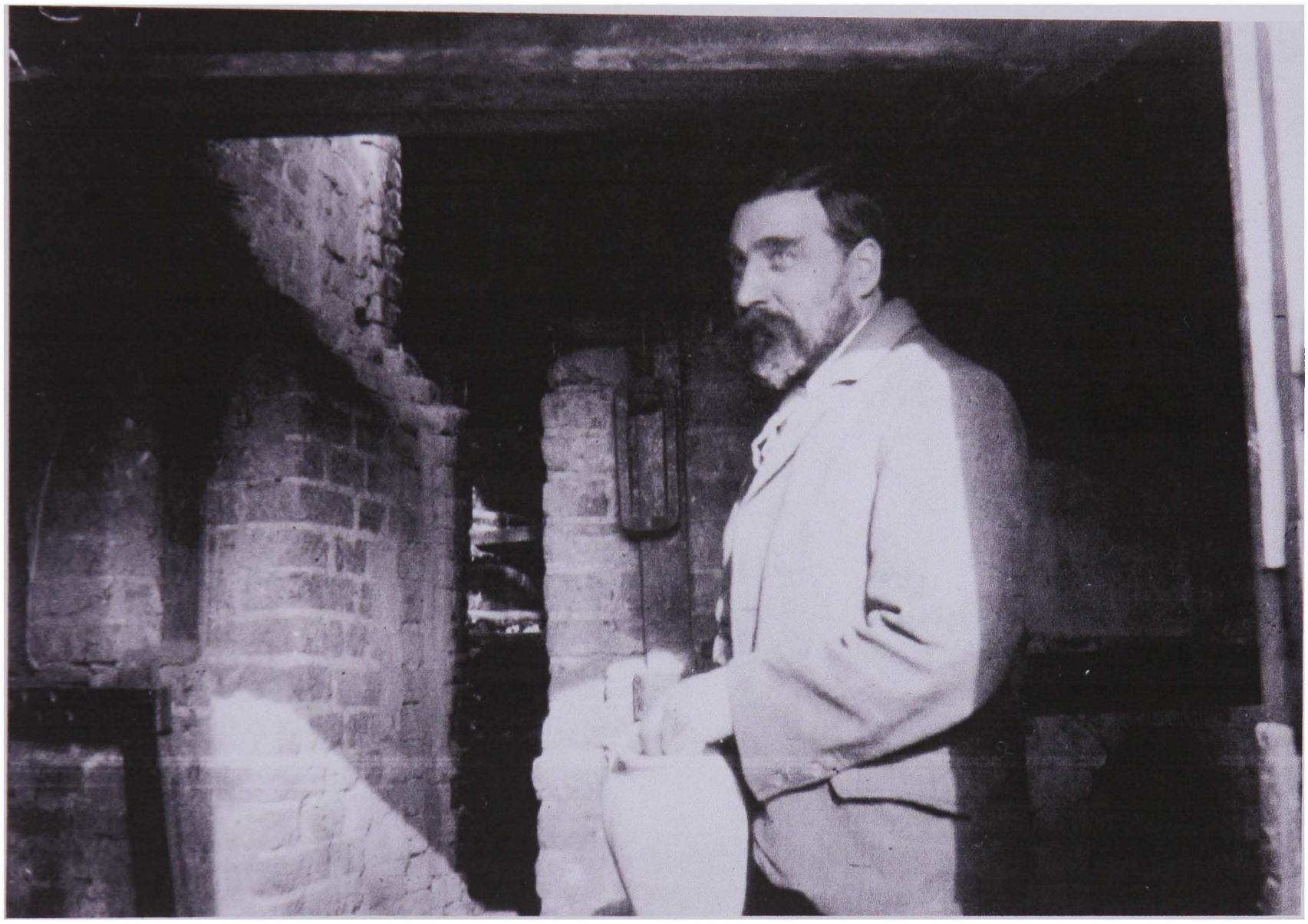
One of two illustrations to 'Agricultural Notes' in: *Country Life*, Jan. 20th, 1912, p. 105
Courtesy: British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London

5.2. *Fishers on Sands. Equihen.* (Detail) Ernest Marsh.
August 1911.
Taken on the annual family holiday.
Marsh Collection

5.3. *Ketches at Appledore Quay, North Devon.* Ernest Marsh
c.1923. On shore wind, flood tide. Three laden vessels astern possibly waiting for tow up to Bideford Quay by steam tug, arriving right. All probably laden with Welsh coal. Taken on the annual family holiday.
Marsh Collection

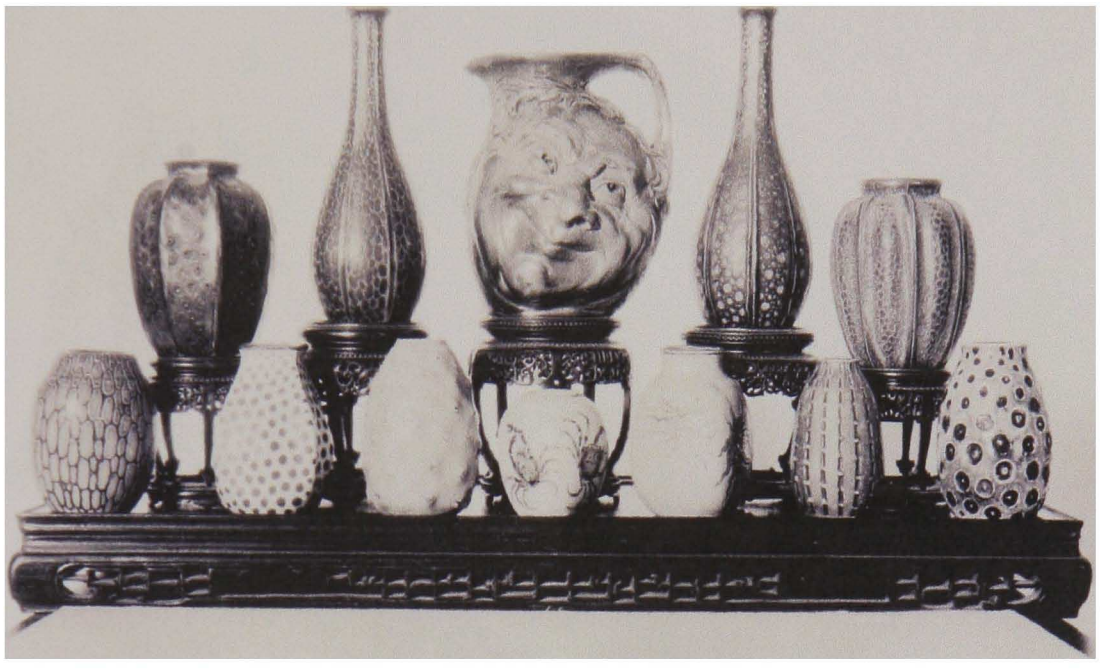
6.1. *Sydney Greenslade and Robert Wallace Martin, Southall Pottery, Middlesex.* Ernest Marsh
5 June 1906.

Contact print. 6.5 x 9 cm. One of a series of exterior and interior views taken at Southall on roll film by Marsh.
Marsh Collection



6.2 *Walter Martin packing the kiln, Southall Pottery, Middlesex*. Ernest Marsh
5 June 1906.
Contact print. 6.5 x 9 cm. One of a series of exterior and interior views taken at Southall on roll film by Marsh.
Marsh Collection

6.3. *Martin Pottery lent by Mrs. S. E. Marsh to the Louvre 1914.*
c. March 1914. One of a set of photographs sent by Ernest Marsh to Greenslade 9 April 1914.
Noted by Marsh as titled above, with additional entry: 'Photographed at Kingston Museum before removal'.
Noted, probably by Greenslade: 'Now presented to the Victoria & Albert Museum in memory of 2nd. Lieut. Frances Bedford Marsh'.
Following Marsh's financial difficulties ownership of the Martin collection was nominally transferred to his wife, probably to avoid forced sale.
Photograph: Twyman Collection



6.4. *Martinware*. Ernest Marsh
28 May 1916. Salt-glazed stoneware. Contact print. 8.7 x 14.5 cm.
A display of a face jug modelled by Robert Wallace Martin with various small vase gourd based forms, most likely all post-1900 and by Edwin Martin. All are stood on the Chinese ebonised stand used by Marsh in much of his photography. The filigree work on the miniature stands is particularly fine.

Marsh took much trouble over the photography of these images, noting on the reverse of the print of the first exposure of this composition: '20 minutes exposure. Over exposed'.

This is a print from the second exposure on which he notes: '64 stop yellow screen 3'-8' focus portrait lens. 12 minutes exposure, one window curtained. 2 small pieces changed'.

The small vase top left dated 11.1905, part of Marsh 1945 bequest to the South London Art Gallery (CE75).
Photograph: Twyman Collection

6.5. *Martinware Table Lamp*. Ernest Marsh
c.1916.
Text overleaf.

Overleaf.
Martinware Table Lamp. Ernest Marsh.
c.1916.Salt-glazed stoneware. Contact print on postcard, 13.4 x 8.3 cm.

Coombe Bury did not have mains electricity supply and *Hatch Hill* only acquired it in later years. Interior lighting at both was by oil lamp. This lamp or its pair with a later textile shade, can be seen in the interior view of the drawing room at *Coombe Bury* c.1906 (fig. 2.2).

Apart from vessel forms, the Martins made a range of functional objects such as clock cases and tiles. Rarely left plain, most were decorated in a variety of patterns, often in response to a commission. Italian Renaissance influenced patterns, as here, were made over many years from c.1880-1900. The body was most likely thrown by Walter Martin, the incised design made by either Walter Edward Willy, employed at the pottery, or Edwin Martin, both of whom were trained in drawing in this style and the Japanese manner by the artist H. F. Fawcett c.1879-1882.

Possibly ordered by Marsh soon after his marriage in 1893, the date of the body is unknown, being unlisted in his Martin catalogue of 1906. The fittings may have come from an existing lamp. However, its Arts and Crafts influenced glass and metal shade suggest a slightly later date than 1893. The burner was commonly available from any hardware supplier. The wooden base may have been commissioned by the Martins to suit.
Photograph: Twyman Collection

6.6. *Glass and Martinware*. Ernest Marsh
c. 1906. Contact print on postcard. 8.3 x 13.8 cm.

Top shelf: part of the Marsh collection of 18th Century drawn and moulded cordial, jelly and sweetmeat glasses, which with Jacobean and later wine glasses were sold by Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 1 August 1916, to pay creditors of the Marsh family business.

Bottom shelf: Numerous Martinware salt-glaze stoneware miniatures, all post-1900, thrown by Walter and decorated by Edwin Martin. The central tall spotted vase dated 7-1906, (Marsh cat.106) h. 16.5 cm part of Marsh 1945 bequest to the South London Art Gallery (CE77).
Photograph: Twyman Collection

6.7. *Martinware*. Ernest Marsh
c.1906. Contact print. 8.8 x 14.3 cm.

Two salt-glazed stoneware bowls and two bottles based on gourd forms, probably thrown by Walter, but carved and decorated by Edwin Martin.

The central tall vase is decorated in a japonesque floral design. Many of his photographs of the later vases include specimen flower sprays in the japonesque manner. Whether arranged by him or his wife is unknown.
Photograph: Twyman Collection

6.8. *Martinware*. Ernest Marsh
1922. Contact print. 8.7 x 14.4 cm.
Illustration provided by Marsh for Blacker, J. F. (1922) *The A. B. C. of English Salt-Glaze Stoneware from Dwight to Doulton.* London: Stanley Pau, p.132.

Primarily post-1900 gourd based thrown vessels decorated by Edwin Martin, with two earlier Rennaissance pattern beakers. Identified items given by Marsh 1945 bequest to the South London Art Gallery.

Back row, l. to r.; 1. 7-1906 (*E. Marsh 106, CE77), 2. Part of set of 4 (E. Marsh 160ABCD purchased 1902 for £3 Guineas. Refired by Martins at Marsh's request 1902).
3. 10-1903 (E. Marsh 182 purchase 1904, 1 guinea, CE29) slip cast and hand finished, h. 16 cm.
4: 5-1893 See notes for 2. (E. Marsh 160A. CE65)
5. 8-1899 (*E. Marsh 61. CE64).

Front row: 1-3, 5, 7-9 unidentified. 4. 4-1913 (*E. Marsh 137.6 CE55). 6. 4-1913 (*E. Marsh 139, CE57).
*Some of the objects labelled by Marsh in his own hand 'E. Marsh' with a number have different numbers to those in his 1906 catalogue, suggesting re-catalogued at a later date.
Photograph: Twyman Collection

6.9. *Beggar's Opera Figurines: left: Mrs. Peacham, rt. Polly Peachum* Agatha Walker c.1922.
Slip and saltglazed stoneware.
One of a series of time-exposure photographs (all slightly out of focus) of the Walker figurines.

In 1920 the actor-manager Sir Nigel Playfair (1874-1934) revived John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* at the Lyric Theatre, London which ran for three years. The artist, sculptress and ceramicist Agatha Walker made a number of figurines in wax and ceramic for this and others from Playfair productions. These examples fired undecorated by Alfred Hopkins at Lambeth on commission from Ernest Marsh. See 3.3.

After Marsh's death a number of figurines by Walker were sold at Sotheby's 20th December 1945:
Lot 23. The Beggar's Opera. A series of ten figures .... Modelled in salt glazed pottery and fired at the kiln of A. G. Hopkins at Lambeth, comprising:- Poplly Peacham (Sylvia Nelis), with light grey glaze [see illust.]; Jenny Diver (Angela Baddeley) with similar glaze; Lucy Lockit (Violet Marquesita) with mottled light grey and brown glaze; Mrs. Diana Trapes (Beryl Freeman) with mottled "tiger-ware|" glaze; Mrs. Peacham (Elsie French) with grey and brown mottled glaze [see illust.]; Filch (Alfred Heather) with brown glaze; Filch, similar model with mottled "tiger-ware" glaze; Macheath and Polly with light grey glaze; Lucy Locket, similar model, with light brown glaze; Polly Peacham, similar model, to the first-named, with coloured glazes, fired at Long Crendon, Bucks.; and eight wood stands. Estimate £18
* An interesting note by the late Ernest Marsh on the glazing and firing of the figures is sold with the lot
Lot 24. A figure of Gwen Francon-Davies as Etain in "The Immortal Hour" in salt-glazed pottery in light grey and brown by Agatha Walker, 121/2in.....
Photograph: Twyman Collection

6.10 *Reginald Fairfax Wells, Washington, Sussex*. Ernest Marsh
May 1925.

Behind Wells, new kilns erected at Harper's Lane following the move from Chelsea.
Photograph: Twyman Collection

6.11. *Sleep*. Reginald Fairfax Wells
c.1924.
h. 26.5 cm. Stoneware, grey glaze.
Exhibited 1924 Beaux Arts Gallery, Bruton Place, London.

One of two mother and child studies, the other, *Motherhood,* standing, taken from earlier bronze subjects. Examples of both, plus numerous others sculptural and vessel forms, purchased by Marsh.

This specimen presented by Marsh with other Wells items through the Contemporary Art Society Pottery and Craft Fund to the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool 1943. Walker 3801.
Photograph: Twyman Collection

6.12. *Shire Horse*. Reginald Fairfax Wells
c.1924.
h. 29 cm. Stoneware, opalescent glaze.
Exhibited 1924 Beaux Arts Gallery, Bruton Place, London.

One of two large studies of Shire Horses by Wells. Examples of both purchased by Marsh. A variety of different glazes used, so that all are different.

This specimen presented by Marsh with other Wells items through the Contemporary Art Society Pottery and Craft Fund to the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool 1943. Walker 3802.
Photograph: Twyman Collection

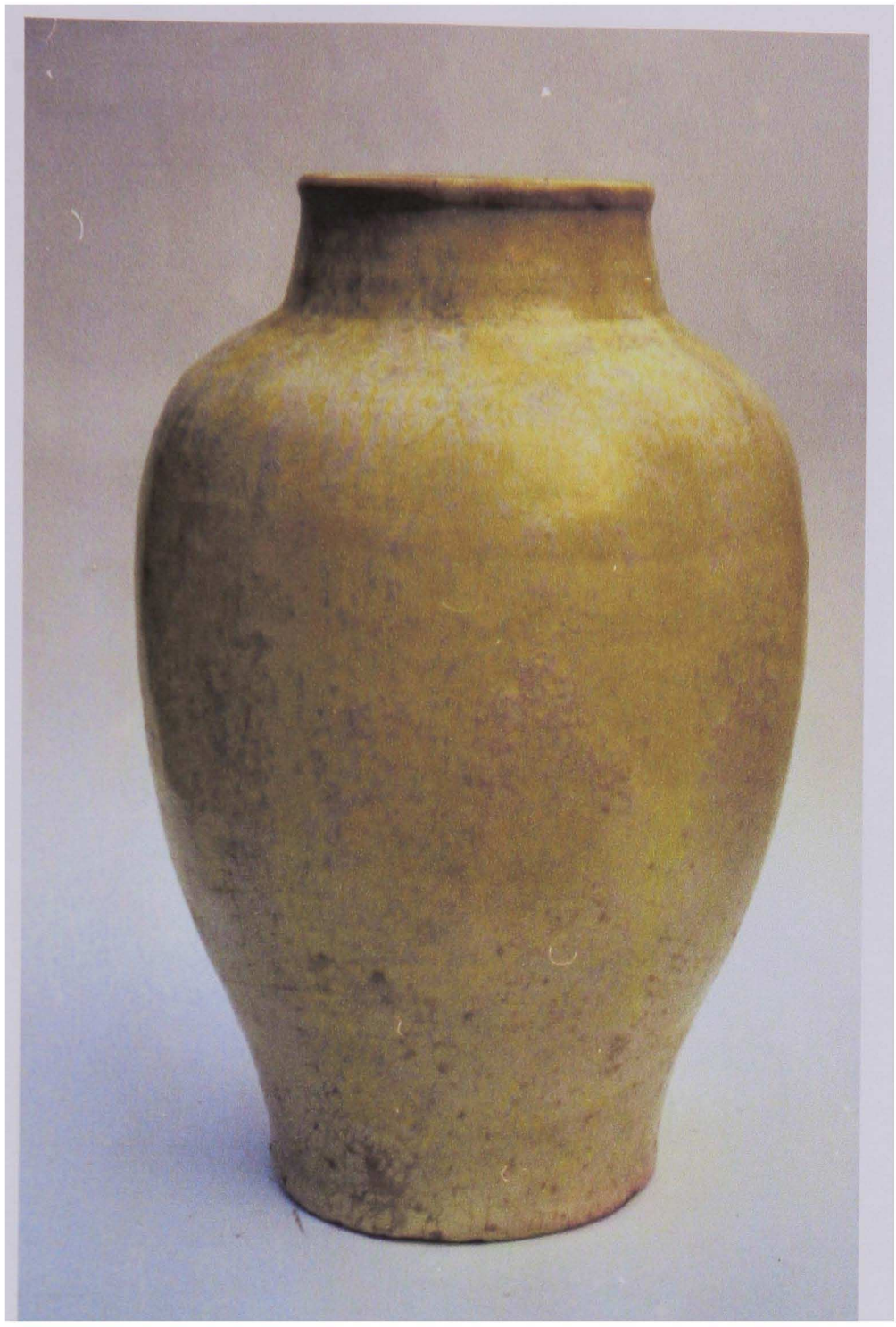
6.13. *Motherhood.* Reginald Fairfax Wells
c.1920-5.
h. 37.5 cm. Stoneware, mottled grey glaze.

This specimen presented by Marsh with other Wells items through the Contemporary Art Society Pottery and Craft Fund to the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool 1943.
Photograph: Twyman Collection

6.14 *Wood End, Storrington, Pulborough, Sussex*
c. 1925.
The home of Reginald Wells, one of a number of rustic style properties designed and built by Wells at Storrington. Several copies of this picture are known. It was possibly taken by, or for Marsh for his article for the magazine *Apollo* in 1925, but not included. It appeared later in Captain Barron's article 'The Perfect Village'in *Town and Country Homes* in November 1927.

The paintings appear to be by his brother-in-law Henry Ospovat.

Examples of the ceramic Indian Runner Ducks (see 3.13) to left and Shire Horse (see 6.12) and Bulls on mantle-piece, all by Wells, were purchased by Marsh.
Marsh Collection



6.15. *Vase.* George James Cox (1884-1946)
1913. h. 28.1, w. 18.5 cm. Based inscribed: 'Mortlake 1913' and with 'GJC' Monogram. Paper Label in Marsh's handwriting: 'E. Marsh 8 Mortlake'.

In 1922 Marsh lent seven unspecified examples of Mortlake Pottery to the South London Art Gallery for its *Exhibition of Pottery produced in London between the years 1872-1922.* Shortly before the exhibition opened he wrote to the curator W. B. Dalton saying that he was adding this vase, described as having a white and lemon glaze.

Marsh left a large number of ceramics in store at the gallery after the exhibition, from time to time borrowing some and including others. Those still stored at his death were given by the bequest to the gallery, including this vase. The original seven items appear to be those subsequently given to Kingston upon Thames (App. 24).
South London Gallery Collection. CE128

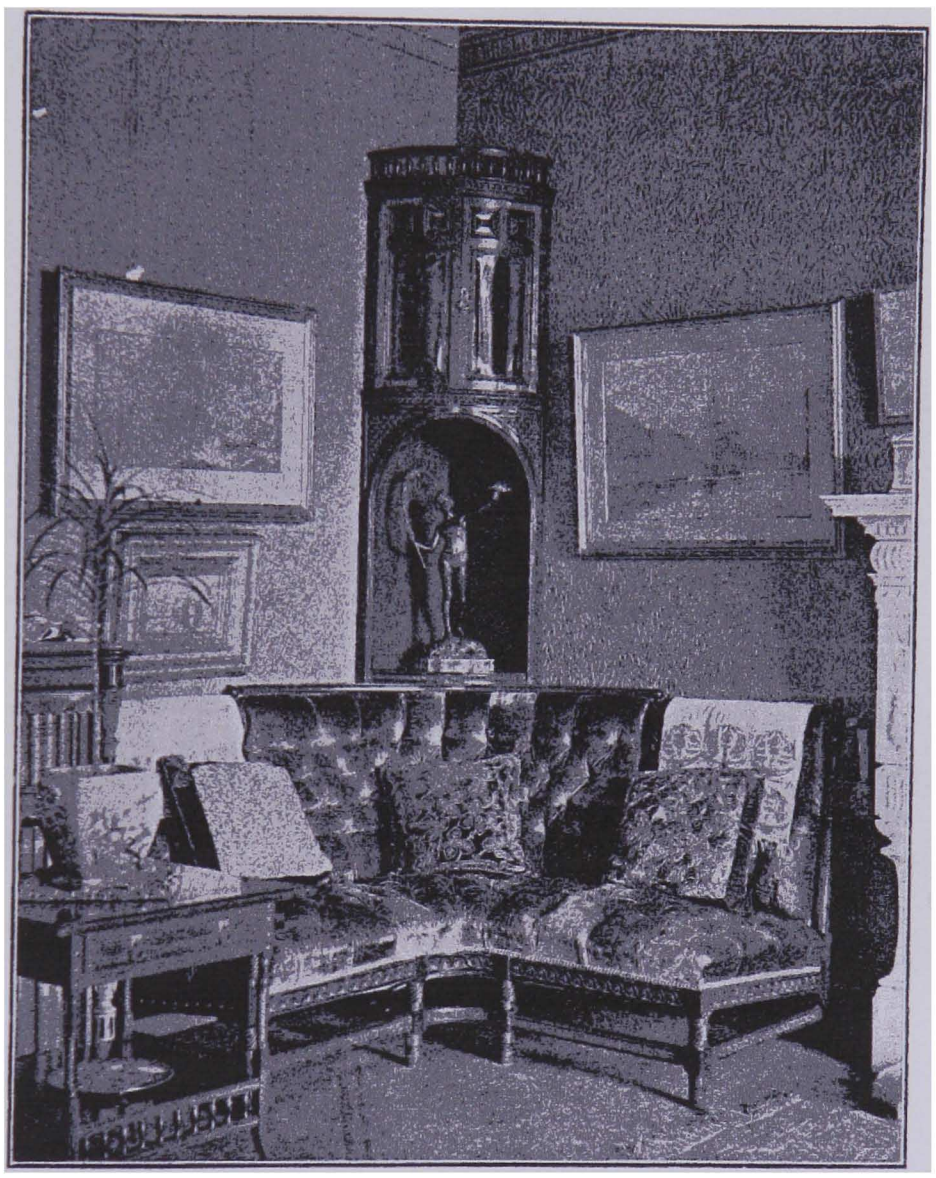
7.2. *Bowl.* Charles Vyse (1882-1971)
c.1930.
Stoneware. d.25.2 cm.Incised decoration through white slip under celadon glaze.
Inscribed 'Adsum Pene Ademall' (had some, almost had them all).
A gift to Ernest Marsh from vintner Francis Berry 1932.

A pair of Martin birds, probably intended to be Walter and Wallace (glasses) Martin, watch another pot hot from the kiln fall into Marsh's outstretched hands. The face on the left may be Francis Berry, that on the right, Sydney Greenslade.
Presented by Christopher Marsh to the V & A. V & A ref. C.83-1984.
Courtesy: Trustees of the V & A

speculation for ordinary private people. For any room but a hall such a figure is out of place. Yet our ideal artistic house must have one statue in it. There should be an imaginative female figure, some grace or nymph, to form the centre to the hall, and to rob it of its desolate look. This statue should stand on a pedestal of some fine stone or marble, not one of imitation marble of hideous and pretentious dimensions, but a base firm enough and simple enough to be appropriate for its work of support.

If I had the good fortune to be able to carry out the dreams which I create for others, this single welcoming statue opposite the threshold of my front door would be the only life-sized piece of sculpture with which I should indulge myself. I should regard it as the presiding genius of my rooms, and before I gave a commission to any sculptor to execute it, I should reflect long and should visit and revisit the studios of the best men. I would try to secure the early masterpiece of some young sculptor. I should feel it a matter of exquisite and trembling delight to choose the figure which is to welcome me every time that I enter my house, and by which every stranger will try to guess my character before he sees me. I am sure that such a statue, if it were really beautiful and noble, would become more indispensable to me than any single picture.

My love of an easy life is too great to make me wish to be rich enough to possess more than a single statue. We are not thinking of what a great nobleman or a millionaire can do with a gallery, but how a reasonably well-to-do person, who would naturally buy pictures, can make himself happy with sculpture also. We will suppose that he has one of the dark harmonious drawing-rooms or libraries which are now in vogue, rooms which Mr. William Morris first put into our power to arrange. The woodwork, I suppose, is sombre; the wall-papers glaucous green or dusky red, the furniture, as far as possible, in the taste of the last century—Sheraton and Chippendale and Hepplewhite. We cannot suppose that this taste for dark rooms will last for ever, but as long as it does last it is certain that one form of sculpture will be out of place in the dwelling-house, and this is new, white marble. In one of these coloured modern rooms anything glaringly white distresses the eye directly. I remember an exceedingly pretty room which was completely spoiled by



PEACE.

(By E. Onslow Ford, A.R.A. Published by George Collie.)

8.1. Sculpture of *Peace. (By E. Onslow Ford, A.R.A. Published by George Collie).* First cast in1886.

Illustration to: Gosse, Edmund (1894-95) The Place of Sculpture in Daily Life II - Sculpture in the House. *Magazine of Art*, pp. 368-372. Compare with illust. 3.5.

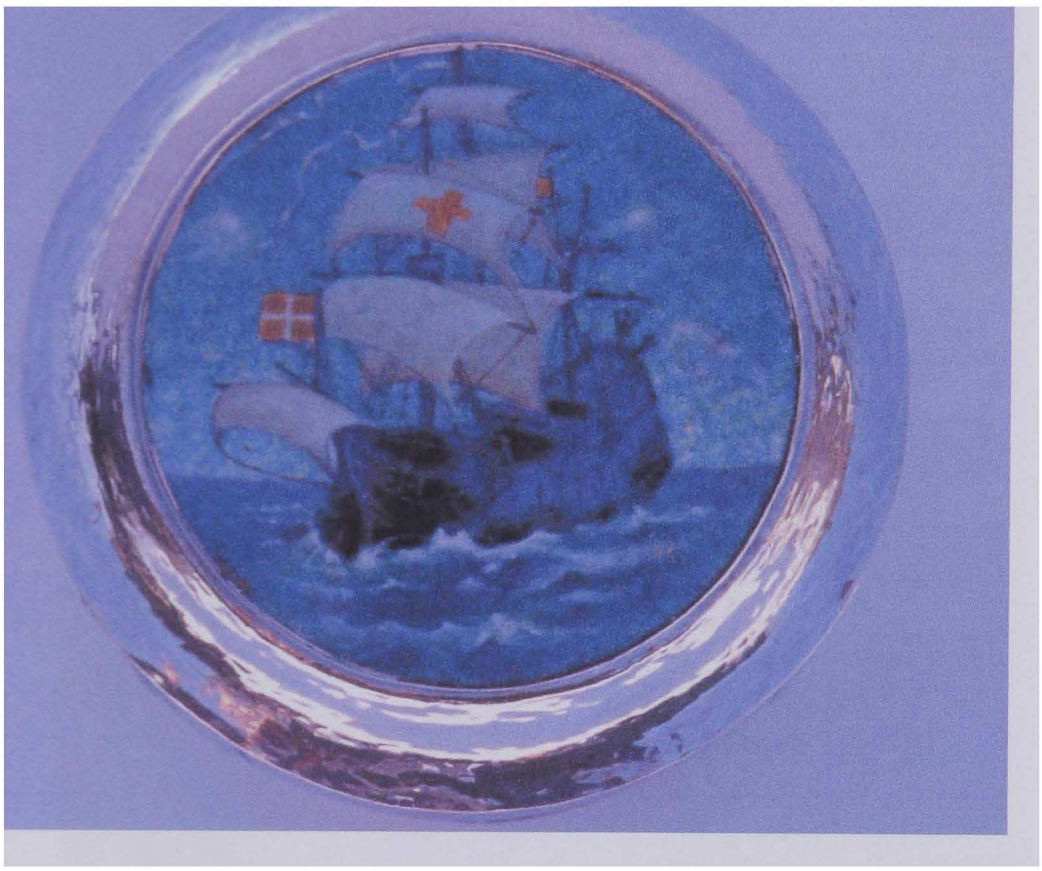
8.2. *Walking Tiger*. Antoine-Louise Barye (1796-1875)
Bronze. Undated.
Cast by Barbedienne. First cast c.1840. 23 x 40 cm
Marsh Collection

8.3. *Le Batteur de faux*. Aime-Jules Dalou (1838-1902)
c.1903.
Ceramic. Sèvres.
Marsh Collection

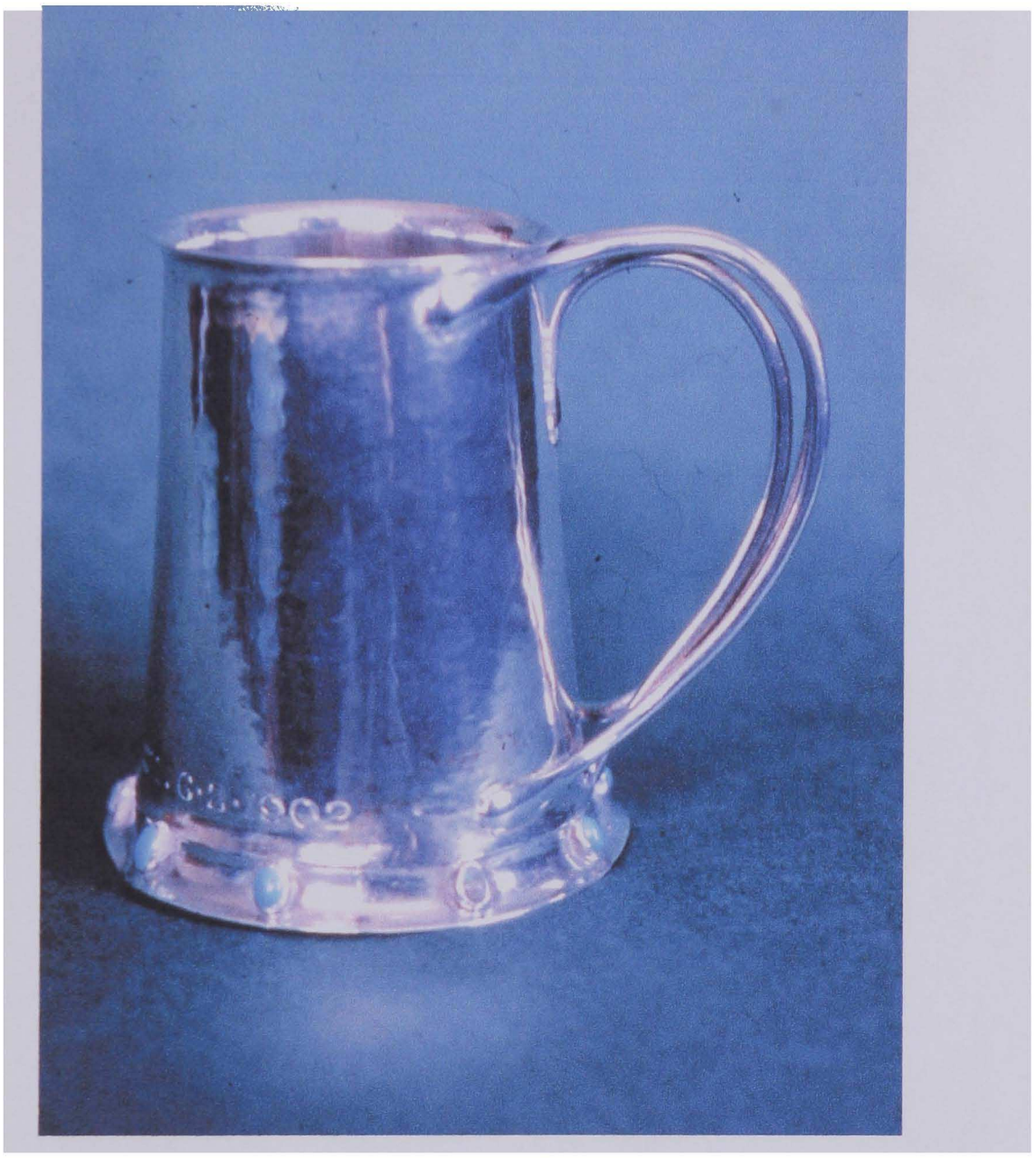
8.4. *L'Amateur.* Honoré Daumier (1808-1879)
c.1860.

From a drawing in the Durand-Ruel Collection. Illustrated in: Holme, Charles ed. (1904) *Daumier and Gavarni with critical and biographical notes by Henry Frantz and Octave Uzanne*. London: The Studio.
Courtesy: South London Gallery Collection

9.1. *Butterfly Cabinet*. C.R.Ashbee
c.1900.
One of three inlaid cabinets (see illus.2.5) designed by Ashbee and purchased by Marsh to hold both his collection of English butterflies, caught by himself, and purchased Denton boxed exotics mounted on plaster. The cabinet casing is made to the same design as the Broadwood piano (see illus. 2.3 and 2.4).
Marsh Collection. Photograph: Courtesy Alan Crawford



9.2. *Bonbonniére* William Mark (1868-1956).
1903.
Silver. 5.8 x11.9 cm. Guild of Handicraft silver mark GH Ltd. Enamel signed Bill Mark.
Marsh Collection. Photograph: Courtesy Alan Crawford



9.3. *Tankard*. Guild of Handicraft
1902.
Silver and turquoise. 9.8 x 9 cm. Guild of Handicraft silver mark GH Ltd.

Inscribed: Phyllis Vera Marsh 6 2 1902.
Marsh Collection. Photograph: Courtesy Alan Crawford

9.4. *Necklace*
c.1900.
A number of Arts and Crafts influenced items of jewellery purchased by Ernest Marsh are unmarked and so far unattributed. This gold chain necklace set with pearls, moonstone and other stones has a pendant with Pegasus motif in silver, probably made by the lost wax process. The makers mark on the pendant is worn and illegible.
Marsh Collection

9.5. *Aluto* pattern Axminster carpet. C.F.A. Voysey (1857-1941).
C.1896. Woollen pile on jute warp. Machine Made by Tomkinson and Adam, Kidderminster. Now reduced in size and consisting of two centrally joined strips 6.7 x 2.04 m with attached border 0.44 m wide. Exhibited by Shoolbred & Co., at the *Fifth Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society* at the New Gallery, Regent Street, in 1896. Purchased for £6.10.0 by Ernest Marsh 7 10 1896. V. & A. T159-1978. Courtesy Trustees of the V. & A.

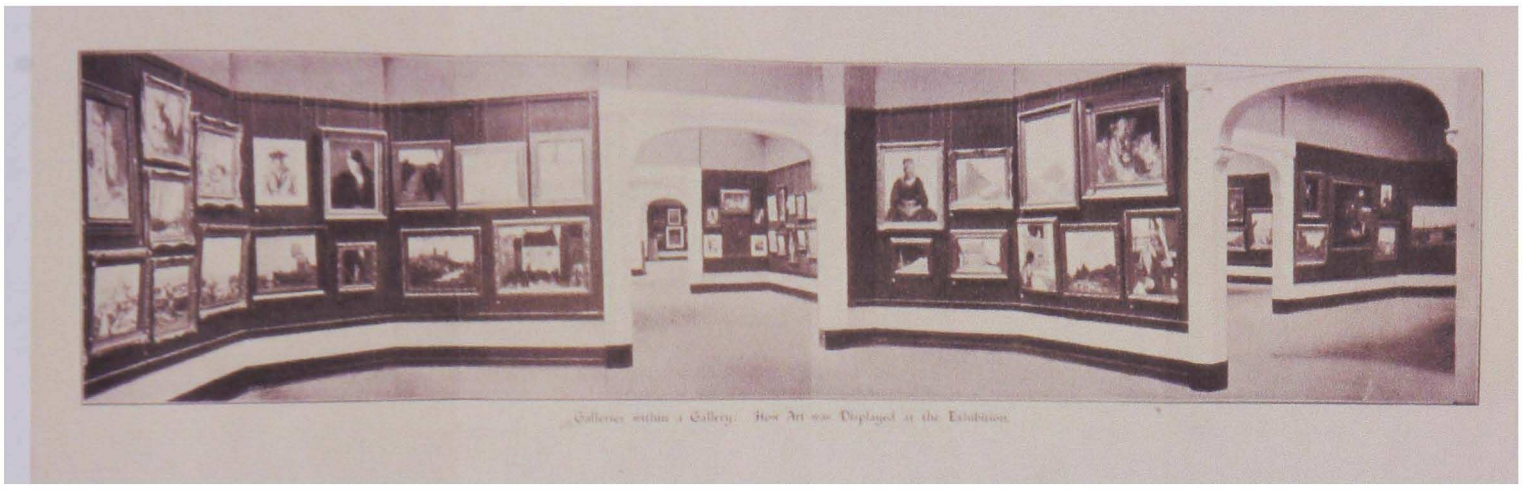
9.6. *Georgian period Silver Sweetmeat Baskets* (detail)
C. 1750-1770

Five of twenty lent by Marsh with 170 Georgian period pierced silver tongs to the Victoria & Albert Museum for exhibition in 1910.

Individual assay details, provenance and present location unknown.
Courtesy: Trustees of the V. & A. Neg. 33799

9.7. *Buckle* Guild of Handicraft
c. 1900.
14 x 5.1 cm. Silver, enamel and turquoise matrix.
Marsh Collection

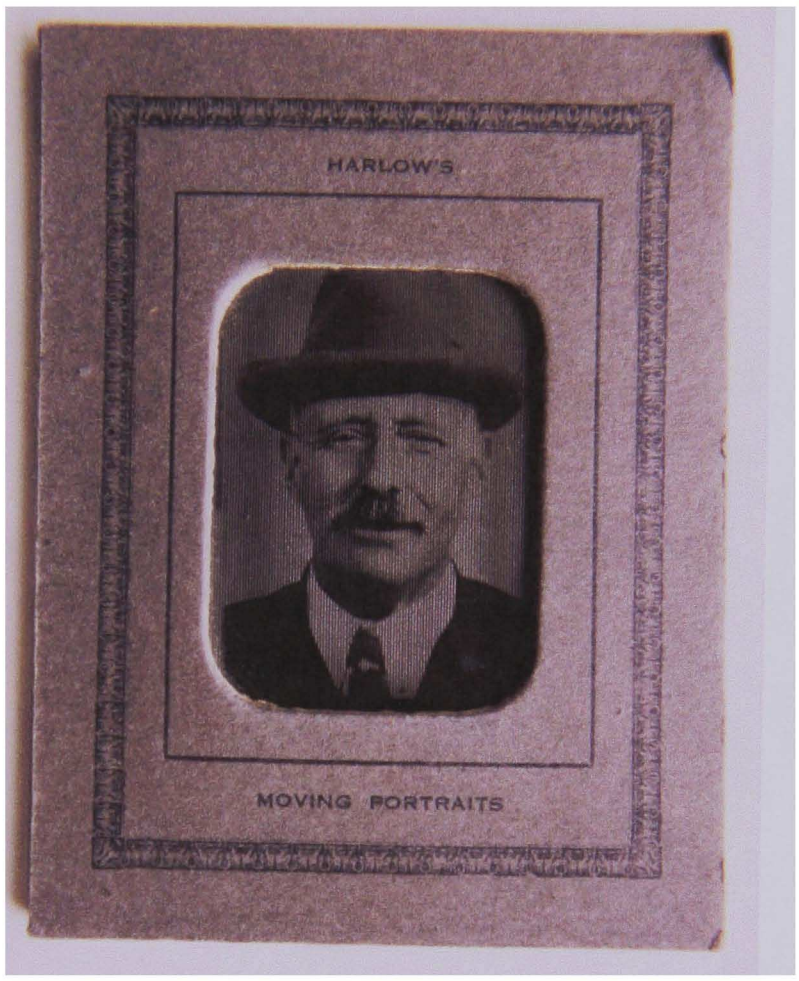
10.1. *Ernest Marsh* (1863-1945)
1926.
Director of Fine Arts, The International Exhibition of the Fine Arts, New Zealand & South Seas International Exhibition, Dunedin 1925-1926.
Marsh Collection



10.2. *Galleries within a Gallery: How Art was displayed at the Exhibition* 1925-1926.
Galleries at The International Exhibition of the Fine Arts, New Zealand & South Seas International Exhibition, Dunedin 1925-1926, arranged and managed by Ernest Marsh, as Director of Fine Arts. All works were for sale, many of which were purchased by various benefactors and presented to the gallery.

Designed by Edmund Anscombe, the gallery was subsequently purchased from the Exhibition Company by Mr. & Mrs. S. R. Sargood to become the permanent home of the City of Dunedin Art Collection. Sargood founded the Empire Art Loan Collections Society, with Charles R.Chisman and Ernest Marsh as Organising Directors.

Illustration, fold-out insert to: Thompson, G. E. (1926) *Official Record of the New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition Dunedin 1925-26*. Dunedin: Coulls, Somerville, Wilkie
Marsh Collection



10.3 *Ernest Marsh*. Harlow Moving Portrait. 1926. Marsh Collection

1. Introduction

This study arose from a suggestion that the South London Gallery (SLG) Permanent Collection, for which I have curatorial responsibility, might offer an opportunity for primary research on an aspect of its collections. Preliminary investigation established that, apart from Giles Waterfield's (1994) contextualisation of the gallery's founding (opened 1891) and his discussion of some of its Victorian works of art, no such studies have been made.

Like many institutions the content of the various SLG collections raises issues about their formation. Julian Spalding for example, has observed how

> Museums are not just passive receptacles ... they are Institutions with ... peculiar, ingrown practices [but] more importantly, select what they collect and therefore influence what we think about the past (2002: 7)

Spalding suggests that besides evidence of curatorial self-interest in selection we can expect to see evidence of the compulsion to impose order and categorisation on the collections manifested in a number of ways. For example, a Ruskinian 'divine moral order', Darwinian formalisation by categorisation, or an amalgam of both (2002: 10). Display at the South Kensington Museum, later the V & A, and other museums offered opportunities to study but as Haslam (1978), Trusted (2006) and others have demonstrated, by selectivity curatorial preference had the power to steer creativity directly and subliminally.

The inference is that institutions having determined their order of preference became in consequence protective of their status and impermeable to external influence, but this may not have been necessarily so. Oakes (2006) for example, suggests that the move by museums in the 19th Century from random curiosity to systematic acquisition, rather than limiting the opportunities for influence by outsiders presented opportunities: that those on the outside with knowledge of internal mechanisms and policy could exploit 'the system' to both encourage

and collude in acquisitions aligning with acquisition policy, and at the same time, through connoisseurship, to enlighten and open new vistas ahead of existing institutional knowledge or understanding.

Through examination of a collection at the SLG this thesis will explore these issues, asking for example, what were the collecting policies and who determined them? Who decided what was acquired and why? What were the sources of the collections? How did they 'fit' in relation to collections elsewhere? And, finally, do decisions on acquisition still appear valid?

Initial research on the SLG collections suggested the 1960s contemporary print collection might be a suitable vehicle for investigating these questions. However, evidence of cause and effect in most aspects was found to be reasonably well documented, leaving open only questions of validation, in particular in relation to other collections and artistic practice of that period. While investigation of these aspects had merit it was an area already under advanced research by Tessa Sidey, published in 2003, on the closely comparable Birmingham 1960s print collection.

The question, therefore, based on the experience gained from this initial study, was whether another part of the collection could be examined in a similar framework, and having done so, whether any aspect merited deeper investigation. For example, the ceramic collection lacked virtually any documentation, none of it being formally accessioned or catalogued.

Its primary element numerically consists of almost one hundred examples of mostly late 19th Century Martinware salt-glaze, mostly of vessel forms. At the commencement of this study they were thought not to be part of the collection, having been moved some time before within the Southwark Council Museum Service to another location. However, a trawl of SLG

records suggested the Martinware may originally have had been loaned for an exhibition in 1922 by a Mr. Ernest Marsh. Unfortunately much of the paper work relating to gallery administration and its collections is missing, presumed lost or destroyed when the lecture hall and reading room were burnt by incendiaries during bombing in World War II. It appeared therefore that in contrast to the fuller documentation of the later print collection, many of the questions relating to the ceramics collection, not least title to possession, had no immediate answer and in consequence it was suitable for further enquiry.

The value of this research

The subsequent investigation proved of immediate value as through the Probate Office a will was traced establishing the collection as bequeathed to the SLG on Marsh's death in 1945. Bibliographical searches however revealed nothing on Marsh's identity. Such findings suggested other parts of the SLG ceramic collection, also lacking in documentation, such as donated collections of William De Morgan ceramics and another of European folk could be examined in the future in a similar way.

However, for the purposes of this research enquiries were confined to the Ernest Marsh bequest of Martinware, the primary reason for this being that the will stated the SLG gift was one of a number of similar bequests to other institutions. This suggested that the scope and intention of the Marsh bequest needed to be appraised not just in the context of the SLG collection but in the light of his broader activities as donor and consumer, in particular issues relating to the role of relatively unknown donors, like Marsh, in the formation of collections.

Many donations to the SLG collections consist of only two or three items. When seen in isolation their significance as a gift can be overlooked, until it is recognised that they are sometimes part of a number of donations made by the giver to a number of institutions.

Several questions therefore arise. For example what were such donors like Marsh aiming to achieve, and, if there was an agenda, was it understood and accepted by the curators of the individual receiving institutions. Likewise do the donors' intentions to give and curators' decisions to acquire remain valid?

There are numerous studies that consider the motivation behind those who have founded a range of institutions, such as, relevant to this research, philanthropists J. Passmore Edwards (1823-1911) financer of the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts extension to the SLG and other institutions (Macdonald 1900, Burrage 1902, Best 1981, Baynes 1994 et al), and Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) a major benefactor of libraries in the United Kingdom and, pertinent to this study, of the gallery extension to Kingston upon Thames Library (Alderson 1902, Harlow 1963, Wall 1970, Edge 2004 et al). Many other studies are dedicated to collections given to a single institution (Rackham 1915, Riddick 1990 et al) but few, these included, consider in depth the motive of donors and their background. A recent and welcome exception is that by Alice Millington-Drake (2003) which, in its survey of the Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau donated by Sir Colin and Lady Morna Anderson to the University of East Anglia, details the background of the donors, the evolution of Colin Anderson's collecting through his own words, his documenting of the collections, the reasons for his and later her interest in particular artists and their work, the donations made, the reasons for giving and choice of location.

Such studies tend however to be about acknowledged major donors, such as Passmore Edwards and Carnegie rather than those lesser but far more numerous, relatively unknown donors, appreciated but largely unacknowledged (Jordan 2002b). Martin Bailey's (2006) important scrutiny of the significance of the intuition of a few collectors in relation to collecting new trends, in that instance through patronage of Van Gogh, is helpful in

recognising the pioneering role of the collector, but again focuses on the role of major names in acquiring works for the nation, rather than those of often lesser but still significant means to acquire and form collections of art.

Bailey does however (2006) make the point that where the private collector fails to step in to make up for the lack of institutional courage the loss of consequent representation in institutional collections becomes a void difficult to fill retrospectively, both through lack of availability and rising prices. For example, while Camberwell Council enthusiastically funded its South London Gallery 1960s print collection, and in the same period acquired a few works by artists associated with the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts, both teachers and students, no further funding has been forthcoming in the following years, with the result that rarity and cost severely prohibit opportunities to make good deficiencies in the collection. It is also notable that few if any private donations were made in this latter period. This in itself suggests that there remains an opportunity for research across a range of galleries into the pattern of donation to local authority galleries in more recent years, particularly as to why donations have been both few and far between.

No studies have been traced that have sought to examine the strategies of donors of collections to a broad range of institutions. By looking at the life and background of a particular individual this study therefore seeks to examine the role of many forgotten names in the formation of our museum collections and, in so doing, aims to provide insight and meaning to an aspect of museum and art gallery collections not previously examined. The implication of this research, as will be seen, is to suggest that there is potential for other institutional collections to be similarly examined. For example, during this research it was discovered that solicitor Harold Mossop (1874-1941), a contemporary of, and known to, Marsh, was a generous donor to numerous art galleries including the South London Gallery, in

this instance of William De Morgan ceramics (Jordan 2001a). Like Marsh, Mossop has hitherto been unrecognised as a major donor but the scale of the evidence that has come to light during the research on Marsh, suggests there is much material available for further research on other donors.

Criticism could be made that to concentrate on one or two lives is too narrow a field from which to draw conclusions meaningful in a broader context. Nevitt (2006: 4) refutes this notion, suggesting that where the evidence is of sufficient substance then meaning accrues to serve the larger whole. Strachey for example saw great value in separation of the singular from the mass in order to construct meaning. In his preface to *Eminent Victorians* he suggests that in the face of a wealth of available information a wise man

> will row out over that great ocean of material, and lower down into it, here and there, a little bucket, which will bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen, from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity (Levy 2002: 3).

The 'characteristic specimen' therefore chosen to 'be examined with a careful curiosity' in this study is Ernest Marsh, a man born after the middle of the 19th Century and whose life stretched half way into the next. Aged 38 at the time of Queen Victoria's death, he died towards the conclusion of the Second World War.

As will be detailed, the multiplicity of his collecting interests has required selectivity to define both the man and his role as a collector (Marsh, John 2001): each of his collections raising issues as they do about changing perceptions for the collector of beauty, curiosity, rarity and the role of order in both acquisition and control, and, not least, the motivation driving his collecting.

Summary of source material, private and public

Marsh's Will provided the primary source of information from which much evidence was subsequently traced, but its interpretation would have been extremely difficult without access to the private papers and remaining collections held by his descendants. Especially important has been the tracing of papers, photographs and other material dispersed through sale following his death. Much is with private collectors who have made them available for this research. While most evidence was fragmentary, when appraised with material found in public collections it produced a largely complete picture of Marsh's life and interests. This showed that no research had been previously made on Marsh's life.

Public records of note were the archives of all the institutions listed in the Appendices, but particularly Marsh's letters to his friend Sydney Greenslade, which with numerous others Greenslade had the foresight to deposit at the Pitshanger Museum, Ealing. Such material underlined the point, as the Acknowledgments and Bibliography attest, that for any research to be meaningful it cannot depend, if it is to have any value, on the turning over of ground already well dug: new interpretations are of course always possible but remain finite without the infusion of new material.

Methodology: limitations and opportunities

The methodology adopted for this research evolved as it progressed. The reason for this was there was little idea at the outset as to what would be found. The advancing years of some of those approached, some of whom have since died, necessitated priority being give to the tracing of primary sources. The search has embraced numerous British art gallery, museum and library archives and others in New Zealand, Canada and the United States, but the majority of the evidence is based on primary material obtained by personal contact through tracing of family and other sources.

Had this study begun just under twenty years ago it would have been possible to speak with Ernest's daughter Phyllis (1902-1991) and to provide first hand evidence of something of the personality, life and times of her father. As it is, analysis has necessarily depended on the surviving documentary material and consultation with Ernest's grand-children and extended family.

Fraser (2005) has observed, while the internet, libraries and trawling the writings of others is not without its reward, to truly understand, we need to visit and absorb what we are writing about. Initially there was considerable difficulty in tracing Marsh's descendants. For Marsh (and incidentally for Mossop also), research truly began with calling at his first home and asking the owners for help in tracing his descendants. Much insight has been subsequently gained through visiting Marsh's former homes and talking about their interiors and surroundings with the present owners as well as discussing his life and collections with his extended family. Inevitably the preliminary evidence produced on some of these first contacts was built around the little knowledge already possessed, with all the imperfections entailed in terms of probing and testing of memory to confirm or deny assumptions already made. Previous professional investigatory experience proved invaluable in this respect. It is a process, as Sandino (2006) has observed in relation to oral history that is always challenging from the point of view of objectivity, this requiring sifting and questioning of evidence to reach an informed view which might or might not challenge received wisdoms. This process required a number of repeat visits. For example, after the commencement of the research it was discovered that in addition to being a private collector and patron on an almost industrial scale, Marsh served on the Executive of the Contemporary Art Society and in consequence had a public acquisition role as well. Initially thought of as a private collector and benefactor only, this additional information added a different dimension to the research, adding

considerable weight to the intention to consider the nature of donors in relation to public collections.

The original concept, sustained through a considerable part of this study, was that his activities could usefully be contextualised and contrasted within and between the parallels of private and public life, and to compartmentalise each against both contemporary writing and more recent critical studies. However, the problem that evolved with this approach was that it was too simplistic: that while it was tempting to see Marsh as leading a form of double-life the reality was his private and public life intertwined in increasingly complex ways the more he became a public figure, to the point that the two worlds frequently merged. As a consequence assessment of the evidence led to considerable duplication.

Given that nothing had ever been written about Marsh, it also became clear that, if a true measure of his involvement was to be achieved, it was essential that each avenue of his activities be investigated thoroughly to establish their relative importance to each other and relevance to the primary thrust emerging for this thesis, that is to reach conclusions on the role of the unrecognised collector in the world of museology and how that role evolved.

The sheer wealth of material that emerged compelled a primarily thematic and biographical approach to assessment of the evidence for there to be any hope of drawing any meaningful conclusions from what was found. This was time consuming but has enabled a proper overview of Marsh's activities to be made. The objective thereafter was to assess each in turn and to define which elements vouched for the rest and were most meaningful in relation to the whole.

In this respect the concern throughout has been to attempt through the evidence of his collections and contemporary literature to engage with the life and times of Marsh as if it were the present, rather than with hindsight: that is with the rationale driving the mindset of the time.

The Literature review explores 6 primary themes relating to this thesis, all of which concentrate on literature written in or about the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th Century: collecting as an emerging subject for study; issues driving private and public acquisition and display; defining the terminology by which literature and ideas expressed the sense of being progressive both for the individual and more broadly as a movement encapsulating a time of change; the emergence of a sensory language to define objects; the presence of Imperialism as an ideaology in the arts, and its origins, in the early 20th Century; and finally, gender issues with regard to home making.

The considerable evidence amassed on Marsh's Quaker upbringing and business life, the arousal of his curiosity in collecting and his gradual involvement in determining museum display and later acquisition for public collections argued that this thesis be broadly considered in four aspects: the formative influences in his early life arising from belief, upbringing, education and work; the application of his interests in the Fine and Decorative Arts to his home; his life-long interest in collecting ceramics and finally, emerging from these, his role in the world of museology.

Given its availability, considerable space has therefore been given in Chapter 3, although by no means exhaustively, to the material available from Marsh's early years, since no study of other collectors has been found that has considered their formative years. The question therefore posed by examination of Marsh's is, is it likely to add meaning to our understanding

of him as a collector? The nearest parallel contemporary is that of his 'cousin', apparently several times removed, fellow Quaker, Roger Fry (1866-1934). Fry was Marsh's junior by three years. His early years have been well documented and this evidence suggests there is merit in also examining Marsh's early life in the light of his similar Quaker upbringing (Woolf 1929, Sutton 1972, Spalding 1980). Fry acquired a considerable range of art in various disciplines for his home through patronage of his contemporaries, in his case primarily of the Bloomsbury circle (Reed 2004: 35-50). However, in contrast to Marsh, he appears never to have been a collector for himself in the sense of systematic acquisition for its own sake. Unlike Marsh he seems to have been content to perform primarily as an encourager of institutional acquisition.

Chapter 3 therefore explores in some depth the emergence of ideas within the milieux of Marsh's Quaker home-life, schooling and the circle within which he moved, whether he was brought up in the realm of progressive, and, in late 19th Century terms, modern ideas; the expectations of Quaker upbringing, progression into the family business, its subsequent loss and his redemption through success in a new occupation. It also considers the impact of the expansion of horizons through educational opportunity on family and business interests and how the ideologies arising from policy making in business have the potential to be mutually beneficial to the promotion of other interests, in particular that of certain artistic agendas, and, as considered later in Chapter 6, how these in turn interwove with the original business.

The defined objective in sifting the available evidence has been to concentrate on those aspects most meaningful in terms of offering understanding on the role of collectors in the world of museology. Like his slightly later contemporary the Reverend Eric Milner-White CBE DSO (1884-1963) (Green 1990: 7) Marsh's various collections often do not have any obvious relationship to each other, save that each in its own way demonstrates a methodical

approach to building a comprehensive range within each subject area, a desire for learning, understanding and appreciation. A major difficulty therefore with such a richness of content and diversity of subject area, has been to choose which collection to leave out, when others could equally have spoken for the rest.

For example, contemporary with his Arts and Crafts acquisitions Marsh was a significant patron of 'New Sculpture'. Research of Marsh's 'New Sculpture' acquisitions (figs. 8.1-8.3) demonstrated that, while space has limited inclusion to the appendices (App. 15) and relevant literature in the Bibliography, a considerable part of this thesis could have been entirely devoted to issues arising from the content of and existence of this collection, most notably in relation to discussions by Kestner (1995) on assertion and defence of masculinity, possession, display (figs. 2.2,-2.5, 3.3, 3.7) and, in the context of the 1890s, the male gaze (fig. 8.4) as evoked in collections amassed by Marsh and his acquaintances.

Likewise the focus could have been on his collections of paintings and prints (figs. 2.3, 3.6-7) (App.13, 14, 19) arguably a classic example of in Macleod's terms, 'mimesis versus modernism; a cultural crisis in identity' in its desire to maintain some 'cohesion with the past' (1996: 336), but nevertheless in its print collection, one which his contemporaries, such as the critic Frederick Wedmore (1911) would have acknowledged it as representing the pinnacle of achievement in print practice at the beginning of the 20th Century. Alternatively the study could have concentrated on his photography and the influences upon it (figs. 5.1-5), books (App. 20), glassware, Georgian silver (fig. 9.6), or his superb and vast collection of, as it was later described when most of it was sold, the Art of Ancient China (App.18). Sold in New York in 1914, it was one of the major Oriental sales of the early 20th Century. It consisted of, amongst others, Chinese bronzes, ceramics, netsuke, ivories (fig. 4.2), jade and lacquers (fig. 4.1). It remains unresearched.

Finally, as touched on later, the extent of his ceramic interests have precluded inclusion of extensive primary material relating to his friendship and patronage of a number of potters and, in particular, the etcher Fred Richards (Jordan 2000: 45).

The aspects covered in chapter 4-6 and those briefly mentioned above suggest the obsessiveness of the serial collector but equally demonstrate Marsh's desire to engage with many facets of the creative arts. This offered him potentially a breadth of understanding not common for a middle class business man of such relatively modest means. The evidence gathered in this study has necessarily a narrow focus in so far as it scrutinises the documentary material relating to one man and his acquaintances. However, the considerable scope of the evidence suggested it might offer the opportunity for conclusions to be drawn on the impact of not just this small group of collectors as private and public patrons but also whether its findings might in turn imply that there is a larger picture worthy of further investigation on the relative influence of collectors as definers of art and decorative taste in the art world as a whole.

Chapter 4 therefore examines the documentary, photographic and physical evidence of Arts and Crafts patronage by Ernest Marsh, in particular the evidence for the influence of *The Studio* on his acquisitions in the early years of his collecting, whether they demonstrate concordance with or variation from accepted notions of what should be included in the Arts and Crafts home, or adorn the person. It considers the evidence for the extent of Marsh's inter-relationship with makers and his significance as a patron of Arts & Crafts designers and workshops. It also takes the opportunity to examine the methodologies and influences on the formation of taste at this period, its subsequent evolution and contrast with later interests in the Fine and Decorative Arts.

There is no evidence that Ernest Marsh had any formal education in the history of art or any instruction in artistic practice, save what he may have been taught at school. Likewise, there is no indication that in his mature years he ever sought professional advice on the forming of his numerous collections. The subsequent interest in art and or literary affairs by Marsh and his fellow pupils evolved therefore not from specific teaching or learned skills at school but through, as detailed in the discussion of his formative years, the school inculcating a heightened susceptibility to creativity and artistic ideas through appreciation of the natural world, as well as advances in the application of science in the man made world. His acquisitions, as this thesis will discuss, suggests he understood that conflation of the two produced things of beauty as well as usefulness; that one need not be separate from the other.

Chapter 5 discusses the origins of and interrelationship of Marsh as client, patron and friend with firstly the Martin Brothers and later many other potters. It considers Marsh's realisation that there were opportunities to influence institutional acquisition policies by examining in detail the formative years of his various relationships with makers and others promoting interest in craft as art. It also examines the role of public exhibitions in raising awareness of ceramic art, prior to his establishment in 1928 of the Contemporary Art Society Pottery and Craft Fund, dealt with later in Chapter 6. It also examines where appropriate, the role of other collectors collecting within the same or similar field of interests as Marsh and, where known, his relationship with them. It attempts to reach conclusions on the significance of the relationships formed between collectors and practitioners.

While Marsh was listed as a founder member of the Contemporary Art Society, the significance of his role both within it and alongside it through his various linked offices has not been recognised. When during this research the name Marsh was mentioned in relation to the Contemporary Art Society there was an automatic assumption that it was about Sir Edward Marsh (1872-1953), Private Secretary to Winston Churchill, and a member of the Contemporary Art Society Executive from 1917 (Mackenzie 1991: 157), as well as being a generous donor to it (Bowness 1991: 8-9). This assumption underlines the point that the

celebrated can obscure the significance of other names, a situation not helped in this instance by having two persons with the name E. Marsh serving on the same committee. Chapter 6 therefore traces the origins of Ernest Marsh's entry into the professional world of museology, but always operating from the fringe rather than professional employment within it. It considers his personal contribution in the promotion of British contemporary art in the first half of the 20th Century both through acquisition and through his activities within the newly built Kingston upon Thames Museum and Art Gallery, the Contemporary Art Society, the New Zealand & South Seas Exhibition, the Empire Art Loan Society, the National Society: Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, Potters but particularly as sole administrator of the Craft Fund of the Contemporary Art Society.

Marsh was pottery's lone advocate within the professional world of museums and art galleries in the period 1910-1945. Crichton-Miller has observed how:

> for much of the twentieth century pottery of all kinds laboured under a kind of cultural apartheid. Too childish, too unpredictable, too humble a medium for consideration by other artists or audiences, that the single word 'craft' confined work in clay to the periphery –that the argument continues (2004: 20).

This chapter will therefore scrutinise Marsh's activities and legacy as advocate of craft as worthy of consideration as Fine Art.

2. Literature Review

Introduction

As detailed above, this chapter considers six primary themes relating to issues raised by this research.

Collecting

If Art History is arguably a phenomenon of the 20th Century, the study of collecting is surely a subject emerging from it into the 21st Century. Human acquisitiveness in the context of Western culture has been variously scrutinised in the context of consumption for its own sake, notably in Rheims' pioneering studies (1957, 1961, 1980), Baudrillard's (1968) *Le Système des Objets,* Douglas and Isherwood's (1979) *The World of Goods*, Barthes' insights in *Mythologies* (1957) into the coding of images influencing our daily lives and Bourdieu's (1984) *Distinction, A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, in particular his observations relating to life-styles in *The Field of Cultural Perception* (Johnson 1993). Each studies facets of the relationship between objects and possessors, notably the propensity of western orientated societies to accumulate, but more particularly collecting as a vital part of material culture.

The proliferation of studies on collecting and collectors however obscures the fact that, as Janet Staiger (2005) observes, collecting as a specific field of museum and cultural studies, is a comparatively recent development. For example, not until 1986 did it become a module of MA Museum Studies at Leicester University (Pearce 2005). Leicester's primary focus was on the intellectual rationale behind museum collections (Pearce 1986a, 1986b, 1992); to acknowledge the importance of study and management of collections, but also to recognise the need to understand 'the nature of museums, of their material, and of curatorship, as cultural expressions in their own right, and to develop theoretical perspectives which help in this understanding' (1992: x). The strength of these studies has been their paring down to the

essence what museums do, how and why. Also, in recognising that the mechanisms by which these organisations think and function exist both in a parallel universe with the outside world but equally as an embodiment of it. The weakness of these studies is perhaps their failure to acknowledge that institutional collecting represents only a minority of the totality of collecting and fails to attempt to engage with other areas with the same systematic thoroughness. It is noticeable, for example, that at least in the early years scant attention was paid to individuals as collectors, the principal reason appearing to be the scarcity of documentation not just of possessions, but of how the owner felt about them (Pearce 1992: 74) although nowhere is this explicitly stated (Pearce 1994, 1995, 2002a, 2002b, Blom 2002). Others in contrast, notably Elsner and Cardinal (1994) and Belk (1995) encompass the role of the individual collector but while embracing the idea of individual case studies neither draws the conclusion of the need to maintain the growth of empirical evidence to enable broader conclusions to be drawn, nor suggests areas of collecting to which further scrutiny should be addressed.

There are also issues in relation to defining what collecting is for: for example, what is its objective? Similarly, what is the gain from the study of collecting? Staiger's survey (2005) of the reasons for collecting offered by others takes issue, in particular, with John Fiske's argument (1992: 44) that collecting is more about quantity than quality. Staiger (2005: 2) suggests this conclusion is too sweeping and is circumspect about Fiske's view that study of collecting will yield a cultural capital potentially offering pointers to economic gain. In Staiger's view, its greatest potential is not economic, but will be the broader productive understanding of collecting as a phenomenon of social need and interaction. Staiger also suggests that for Fiske and others to straight-jacket collecting by offering an explanation of what it is, is a mistake. However, he still feels compelled to indicate his own ideas on its broad parameters, for example, offering Michael Camille's view of the act of collecting (2001) as

being 'less as a pathology and more as "a socially creative and recuperative act" ' (Monaghan 2002: A18).

I suggest that the truth is that these explanations argue the unarguable, that there is no one explanation for what collecting is, or what motivates it, for, as Belk argues (1995:65-74) at any point in time a collection may have a multiplicity of reasons for its existence. Likewise as it develops its meaning both for possessor and audience may change, that as it develops and as knowledge of it grows, examination of any collection should be open to recognition that's its rationale, its justification may have changed over time, that to seek to try and pin it down to a single cause and effect will always be reductive. Belk suggests that previous commentators have spent too much time seeking reasons to justify the compulsion to collect, that the defining force is undoubtedly pleasure and its gain through self-indulgence and that 'should be reason enough' (1995: 76). It is noticeable that no commentator considers the issue of whether, without the element of pleasure, collecting as a practice would exist. For example, is the act of collecting firstly about the seeking of distraction, or in some instances to give meaning to one's life, rather than about what is collected, which is in fact incidental to the act? That what others therefore acknowledge when observing the fruits of the industry of the collector is not the collection itself, but empathy and identification with the fact that that the collector has given purpose to human existence beyond daily necessity.

The People's Shows in Walsall Museum and Art Gallery in 1990, 1992 and 1994 imparted celebrity to the many contributing local collectors and apparent status to the collections but poignantly, as Jo Digger, Curator at Walsall notes, though two collections were offered to Walsall, they were declined (2006:3). It seems to me that a debate has been opened here, as yet unaddressed, on the relative importance of the collector in relation to the status of the collection. For example, the decision not to acquire the two offered collections, or to solicit

instead others from the same series of exhibitions suggests, amongst many issues, either a loss of courage or a decision to make a statement on curatorial objectivity that reinforces, intentionally or otherwise, the status quo: i.e. to accept the loans would be to create a precedent too far. It appears that the decision was not challenged, but given that by their nature public institutions are public property then Acquisition policy and the decision making process should arguably be a matter for public scrutiny and engagement. This is an issue so far wholly unaddressed that has ramifications for all public collections.

In similar vein, one writer has chosen to take a different approach. In total contrast to the analytical approach of Pearce, Elsner and Cardinal, Blom's contribution (2003) challenges ideas about appropriate methodologies in exploring the meaning of collections by adopting a narrative style which, while largely keeping faith with academic scrutiny, through its readability invites a wider audience to the subject than hitherto. Elsner acknowledges its attributes, but sees its lack of probing of 'the deep complexities underlying the foibles and follies of collecting' revealed by his case studies as an opportunity lost (2003: 151). Phillips (2002:10) in contrast saw its avoidance of reductive explanation, for example in Blom's examining of Freud as a collector and not through his professional role, as its strength and, further, in its choice of subjects both insightful and discomforting through its holding up a mirror to contemporary collecting addictions. The level of response to Blom's lead suggests there is opportunity for a broader discussion of collecting that will potentially enrich the debate, but it is notable others have yet to follow his approach. Blom's contribution does however suggest that enlargement of the body of case studies will offer scope for systematic examination of private collecting in a broader context.

While the studies already discussed have been instrumental in preparing the ground for future studies on collecting, there had been a lack of any formal outlet for regular publication

of research on collecting and peer review of new literature on the subject; in particular on how collections have been formed, their rationale and their subsequent life. This need was identified in the late 1980s following a conference hosted by the Ashmolean Museum on 'early museums of an encyclopaedic character' (MacGregor 2005: 133-134). This led to Oliver Impey (1936-2005) and Arthur MacGregor in 1988 founding the *Journal of the History of Collections.* This provided an important international outlet for publication of papers on collectors and collecting practice but while it remains without peer, its origins within the study of earlier periods appear to impede its contributors from straying into the 20th Century. Absence may of course suggest that in some instances it is too early to form a retrospective view on a subject area within 20th Century collecting. If there is timidity in venturing forth, a little editorial encouragement and the examples of Elsner and Cardinal and Belk might offer the prospect of new insights from 20th Century practice, failing which there is surely an opportunity for studies of the later period. The collector's voice is wholly absent and those of curators still living noticeably few, an issue which again remains to be addressed.

Acquisition and Display

A common theme emerging from the above texts is that an object's creation and subsequent life possesses inherent narratives. It is an issue of fundamental importance for owners and curators of all museum and art collections.

For example, in creating a work of art the maker seeks to transform the formative materials into something that replicates by eye and hand that which is in his or her mind, from original concept through to final realisation. But this is but the first stage. In *The Love of Art* Bourdieu suggests (1991) that having left the hand of its creator an object generates by its existence a life of its own: that while the creator is not irrelevant, left to its own devices each object can assert its own authority. Its qualities, whatever they might be, possess the potential

to communicate to others in ways beyond its originator's intention, and, for each person, that experience will always be personal and different. Thus, in Bourdieu's view the cumulative human responses to the object become a continuing and evolving narrative of experience (1991: 1-4). The implication of Bourdieu's suggestion must be that our subsequent responses to the object are relevant. If so, then the record of that narrative through appraisal and acquisition, suggests recognition of perceived values can by association add to the object, the personality of its chain of possessors: that they matter. Potentially, this can add a whole set of new values and form part of a bigger picture, constantly being renewed but always open to revision.

Orcutt's 'Personal Collecting meets Institutional Vision' (2006: 267-284) expands this idea, affirming the singularity of each and every object to make its own way but also and rightly makes clear that an object in isolation distances subjectivity, that only by comparison through collecting can we form a critical view which, while it may heighten its standing, may also just affirm it or even reduce its status. Belk (1995: 125) cites also the anthithesis in perceptions between the private collector and institutional curator towards the object noted by Herrmann (1972: 20-21) and the seemingly inevitable tension between a sense of obligation to explain and expectation on the part of the viewer for explanation of what they see.

Bourdieu's view that an object should present itself unencumbered is therefore laudable but, there is no doubt that some objects will fail to enlighten without some narrative to support insight into their meaning. For example, the cultural life of an object will often be of considerable significance, but as Pratt has contended in relation to an exhibit of a Blackfoot chieftain's shirt in a British provincial gallery, without the insight offered by explanation of its historical and cultural context, in particular the siginificance of its former possessor, it

remained simply a shirt (2006: 237-247). Bourdieu concedes that some explanation is necessary (1991:108-113) but, as this example demonstrates, the narrative frequently matters.

The implicit message therefore is that if museum objects acquired by gift and purchase from collectors as consumers are to be fully understood, it is necessary not only to recognise the paramount importance of objects but also to consider their origins through intermediaries as former possessors. The response to Bourdieu's question therefore is whether we should be examining not just the creation of the object but both the background and motivation of the individual in making the original acquisition and the rationale behind their giving. Bourdieu does not raise the issue, but there is also the question of the the cultural values subsequently ascribed by a museum or gallery and how this should affect how we regard the object or, taken overall, whether these considerations impede rather than add to our appreciation.

In 'Signs of the Times' Bourdieu quotes F. Schmidt-Degener's observation that 'If works of art are allowed to express their natural eloquence, the majority of people will understand them; this will be far more effective than any guidebook, lecture or talk' (1991: 1-3). On the one hand Bourdieu again implies that most objects can manage perfectly well without explanation but by the same token acknowledges the potential for power to be given to objects through explanation by institutions.

Appadurai (1994: 81-82) has, however, picked up on one particular aspect, that of the gift exchange. Appadurai acknowledges his reasoning owes much to Bourdieu's (1977: 171) recognition of Mauss's analysis of the gift (1967: 70-73), a process, in contrast to that of most commodity exchange, striking for its seeming informality. However as Bourdieu (1977: 171) Appadurai (1994: 82) and Pearce 1995: 369) acknowledge, it is a process which never ceases to conform to economic calculation, despite its apparent disinterested appearance. The context

implied is domestic, but the argument is equally applicable within the museum environment. For example, the giving by presentation of something to an institutional collection usually entails no direct monetary gain but suggests recognition of the giver as with any present that it has merit and asks that the receiver accept it on those terms. What is not pursued is the cultural expectation, the aesthetic experience that takes place in that process of giving and receiving and what it is both parties are gaining in the process.

It is also evident that the cultural and economic value (which may not necessarily be one and the same) of a 'thing' whether in an institution or outside it will change: that for example in the offer of a gift to a museum there can often be differences in perception of the cultural value of the item by both parties. Appadurai suggests the idea of the 'thing' as possessing a social life which at any one time can be defined by its 'exchangeability (past, present or future) for some other thing, is its socially relevant feature' which he terms its 'commodity-hood' (1986: 3-30, 1994: 82-83). Its consequent 'commodity-hood' he considers can be seen in three aspects: the commodity phase, whether moving in and out; its potential candidacy for commodification, and finally the context in which it is placed, any of which may change (1994: 83).

As a theoretical structure its simplicity has proved attractive (Pearce 1995: 353). However, the term 'commodity-hood' does not seem so far to have entered general parlance, being since usurped in a different context (O'Reilly 1998) as a descriptive of premium value obtainable above cost base because of demand.

Provenance, as Orcutt describes (2006: 267-284) becomes a power in itself but in the final analysis, the question must always be: which is actually more significant, the object or the cultural baggage acquired during its life? For example, does knowledge of the possessor

and his or her cultural status give standing to an object that misrepresents its intrinsic value? I suggest there will always be tension between the 'autonomy' of the object, that is the qualities it possesses of itself and the baggage we feel compelled to attach to it.

The other essential factor is perception of the object itself: for example, did Imperialism as an attitude determine attitudes towards objects? That is, did new ideas and attitudes towards objects in the late 19th century revise and reorder what collectors acquired and make them see them in a new light? And how can we engage after the passage of several generations with the thinking and attitudes about them of that time?

Pearce (2002a) concludes that towards the end of the 19th Century we can be certain that the confidence of the times encouraged two identifiable traits; firstly 'the [Darwinist] positivist view of the object as possessing an intrinsic and irreducible character from its unique context in time and space' (a conclusion arising from categorisation and classification of both the natural world and man's past, and their absorption into our culture), and that it should be valued for itself. Secondly, recognition of the progression of objects from functionality to consumption for virtues they might possess unrelated to their practical purpose, for example a jug seen to possess stylistics not just to be identifiable with a particular era but attributes appealing for reasons beyond practicality through its form and decoration (Pearce 2002a: xiii).

Pearce here rightly acknowledges the integrity inherent in each artefact and the opportunities each potentially possesses to give new knowledge. However, she fails to make the point that the reading of what is transient, of what is seen, is considerably coloured by the received wisdoms at any particular moment in time, so that how it was read then may not be the same today; that our critical view will be different; that the hind-sight that we bring to our review is perhaps weakened because we fail to give due validity to the opinions of former

times and to contextualise them within it. The difficulty for us therefore is to comprehend how the object was read at the time. Thus, Darwinism notwithstanding, a judgment formed in an age of Imperialistic aggrandisement might reasonably be expected to be different from one made now. For example Pearce cites Bristol Museum's acquisition in 1979 of the Fawcett archaeological collection shortly before the donor's death, his stipulation being that, in the interest of coherence, it be maintained entire as an example of amateur (private) as opposed to professional (public) collecting (2002a: 145-150). Fawcett recognised that the frozen position in time is as valid as the retrospective view and that the milestone should remain for all to see, but could alternatively be seen as placing an unnecessary constraint on the evolution of ideas and paradoxically a denial of the evolutionary investigations in which he was for so long immersed. The problem for Bristol was therefore one of balance: not losing sight of recognition of knowledge at a particular point in time while at the same time through the evidence provided for future reseach, making it a usable tool for the benefit of those coming after.

Pearce rightly acknowledges that the motivation for the constraints placed on the gift, which other museums declined to accept, may also have had less to do with knowledge than with immortality. Pearce does not elucidate on whose initiative the transaction with Bristol eventually took place, and following acceptance, what retrospectively have been the intellectual constraints imposed by the terms of the gift and what is the status of the collection today. This is unfortunate given the idiosyncratic nature of the collection, the idealogical constraints already described and the competing priorities for exhibition space in all museums faced with such requests. Boyle suggests that while many items are acknowledged as unique and archeologically important, and as a whole the collection says something about ordering and knowledge of the time, much of the collection duplicates what is held and the terms of agreement place limitations on its potential for public exhibition (Boyle 2006). The argument

can also be made that if the collection were dispersed the opportunity to honour the agreement, however far into the future would have been lost.

The issue of the collector thus effectively trying to manipulate institutional policy on what is or is not displayed is therefore significant for all institutional collections. The fact is Bristol Museum has never had the resources to honour the purchase agreement. Artifacts from it are made available for academic research at the museum but the collection has remained in store since 1979, unexhibited (Boyle 2006). An electronic virtual museum may now be a possibility to overcome the difficulty of honouring the terms of the gift, a liberating opportunity available to all museums and galleries but at a cost in terms of data recording and maintenance (Boyle 2006).

Pearce argues that Institutions have themselves not assisted the process: such as in overload at the British Museum (1885) through the lack of a collecting policy and, in contrast, the British Museum (Natural History) actively soliciting gifts (1905) of specimens and observations, because of the paucity of available material in some areas. Similarly failure to acquire when offered and the consequent loss of future opportunity through subsequent dispersal and sale (Pearce 2002a: 70-77). The evidence of the effect of such practices is, as the Bristol example demonstrates, relatively plentiful. However, this like the studies of and interviews with current collectors (Pearce 2002b: 203-207, 218-221), lacks scrutiny of acquisition policy and implementation processes to arrive at a fair analysis of cause and effect, rather than simply the judgment of hindsight. This suggests that to some degree the inquisitorial and non-deferential approach, such as that demonstrated by Fountain (1999) of the post-imperial journalist in asking collectors and curators the probing question as to why certain decisions were made is a necessary tool in the search for understanding. There are nevertheless problems in the quotation and use of such material, often anecdotal, in academic

research, given that the collector may offer a response that throws a better light on their motives, rather than the decisions made at the time. Likewise the question usually arises from some partisan stance. For example, the literature of collecting demonstrates a tendency in such quoted reports to perpetuate a stereotype of the lone idiosyncratic collector (Pearce 2002a: 177-279, 2002b: 151), on the basis presumably that in journalism eccentricity holds more fascination than conformity. Pearce however suggests evidence proves that, contrary to popular perception, most collectors are 'normal' people in their relationships who do not use things as a substitute for social interaction (Pearce 2002b: 151). Nevertheless her comment does suggest that in research of any collector the collection versus the family, amongst others, is an issue to be aware of.

But, in the context of an exhibition, learning is pernicious if it fails to address the needs of the viewer. Rene Huyghe, Bourdieu notes, suggests that the task through interpretation 'is to make the power of images serve the cult of the image'; that if the baggage is meaningful then its validity needs to be clearly explained (1991: 173). Huyghe saw publicity as the engine for encouragement to an understanding of the values that chosen exhibits would proclaim. Bourdieu recognises here that learning is a danger that misused in this way it is an abuse of power in its obstruction of the view for the initiate (1991: 173). Bourdieu here seems to be drawing a distinction between facts that inform and opinions which have the power to suggest value judgments pertaining to a particular agenda, when the intention should always be for the viewer to be allowed space to form their own conclusions. Bourdieu also suggests that intellectualisation can make exhibits inaccessible to all but the well informed but also through this process deify by suggesting a status greater than is the case. He also makes clear the massive ethical responsibility that possession and curatorship entails to enlighten and never knowingly mislead (1991: 173). The problem and of course opportunity for the curator with all of these issues is an exhibit is available to all comers, from the initiate to the well-

informed. The inclusion of a work of art in an exhibition demonstrating the evolution of a practitioner's art is simply that; it does not necessarily imply any value judgment on its status as a work of art. For example, to the uninitiated, the text (Robbins 2006) expounding the apparent virtues of some exhibits in the 2006-7 National Gallery exhibition *Cezanne in Britain* highlights the difficulty. On the one hand it is right in giving overdue recognition to private collectors who acquired Cezanne's pictures when British institutions declined them, but, arguably, on the other, is ambiguous in its suggestion of artistic qualities in some of these works, beyond their contribution to the narrative, that on closer scrutiny are difficult to discern. Further, the point of the exhibition was to highlight the fundamental contribution of the private collector to the presence of so much of Cezanne's art in Britain: a point well covered in the catalogue but notably non-existent in the exhibition itself.

On occasions ambiguity is however the process to be explored, a point which Bourdieu does not explore. For example, João Penalva's (1997) work *Mr. Ruskin's Hair* created several facsimiles of a curl of John Ruskin's hair from his childhood, given by his descendants to the South London Gallery. Displayed with the original it raised issues concerning the nature of truth and the ease of misrepresentation. One facsimile was stolen, the thief's aim presumably being to obtain the original. Buck's commentary records how when subsequently retrieved, the narrative of loss and return became part of the exhibited work (2005: 224-230). In this instance the narrative of the object has thus continued to evolve and in a very public way, its authenticity has been tested, re-interpreted and offered again for comment but does not undermine its basic premise of asking where truth lies.

Defining Modernism in early 20th Century Britain

Much of this thesis is concerned with the encouragement of innovation by individuals in their particular artistic practice but within a broader sphere than simply their own work; that

is as a reflection of ideas, social ideology and cultural moment.

To Shakespeare, modern, from the Latin *modernus*, meant anything new (Blakemore-Evans 1996: 190). As used in relation to describing identity at the beginning of the 20th Century the comparative meaning of modern, Modern and Modernism is less clear, each being variously associated with ideas for being both new and also progressive, but in different ways at different times (Sabatier 1908, Caine 2005, Wilk 2006).

The progression of ideas and attitudes over the period of this study suggests that if one is to grasp any sense of how thought was articulated at this time, particularly before 1914, it is necessary to tease out from the literature some idea of what the use of certain words meant both to writers, and as far as one is now able to infer, in general parlance at that time (Jackson 1913: 128, Fry 1920: 10, Rutter 1935: 1). Wilk's 2006 exhibition *Modernism: Designing a New World, 1914-1939* as Bradbury succinctly put it, 'has a brave stab at trying to explain what on earth Modernism actually was' (2006: 26). However, while Wilk acknowledges the varied roots of its meaning he is self-evidently more concerned with the flowering of Modernism in the 1920s, than its prior origins (2006: 12-21).

For example, one of the most intractable but also most interesting issues arising in this research has been seeking understanding of how, prior to 1914, the prime subject of this study and his peers might have defined being modern, or recognised the concepts of a Modern movement or even Modernism as it is now termed. For example, did they distinguish between them, and further, differentiate them in everyday use. Modernity as Midant (1999: 162) and Wilk (2006) affirm was recognised quite early as a distinct movement within Continental Europe, but slow to appear in Britain. Even then, as Lodder argues, it was suffused in a spiritual form, for example as seen in Kandinsky's compositions, with debate more concerned

with defending values against what to be Modern seemed to represent, rather than being a force in its support (2006: 24).

The word evidently came into wider use in the Britain in the 1920s: for example, 'The Modern English Watercolour Society' held its first exhibition in 1923 (Howell 1923) Israel Zangwill's *We Moderns: A Post-War Comedy* performed as both a popular stage play (1924) and silent film (1925) underlined the acceleration of generational antipathies and to be Modern as anti-past. The critic Osbert Burdett eschews any mention of it by name but as the voice of a passing generation clearly saw it as a malevolent force destructive of past values (1925: 272-290). For example, it is plain he considered the 1920s to be more concerned with materialism than the cerebral (Burdett 1925: 284-285), but failed to recognise that, contrary to his view, many movements such as 'The Modern English Watercolour Society' were already embracing both past and present values by marrying traditional materials and processes with Modern ideas.

It is notable that at least in the period before 1914, in Germany, France and Britain the terms modern and Modernism as we now recognise them were not necessarily seen as separate but parts of one whole, each often used without discrimination. Rather than being in any sense a unified set of ideas they were a loose collection gradually coalescing, but with varying degrees of pace.

For example, in the decade prior to 1910, what began as being in touch with the present soon hardened into a wholly new sense of identity as being modern and in touch with Modernism, and, specifically in relation to Art, emerging as what Herbert Read much later (1952) defined as a "philosophy of modern art". As discussed later, this was the judgment of

hindsight and not wholly how it was perceived in the years prior to 1910, the use of the terminology then encompassing more than simply the arts.

Like Burdett (1925), Micale and Dietle (2000) and Caine (2005) consider the origins of Modernism, of being modern, to date from at least the Enlightenment in the 18th Century, and certainly as Caine argues, to 'mid-Victorian rationalism, positivism, and science' (2005: 329). As an art historical term it is by general agreement bench-marked to the 1860s, by what Wadley (1991: 84) describes as the 'disdainful simplicity' and widespread influence of Edouard Manet (1832-1883), whose economy of definition in drawing, as Roger Fry later acknowledged, dismissed precedent (Robins 1997: 15-45).

Hughes has defined Modernism as the rejection of tradition (2005: 7). The compulsion to draw such a clear distinction between past and present was not how it was necessarily seen at the time, nor for some years thence. In 1865 Charles Eastlake (1836-1906), later Keeper of the National Gallery, observed that "modern" dress, that is current styles, as with painting and sculpture (he makes no mention of recent continental trends), failed to reflect the age in which they were created (1868: 258). In 1880 interior designer Robert W. Edis (1839-1927), used it as a term defining both the present and new ideas: unfortunately much of what he offered was revivalist rather than innovatory, suggesting that being modern was also a matter of perception (1881: v). Baily (1879) used it to describe poetry of the present, Lumsden (1881) the taking of the language of the past (Beowulf) and translating it into speech of the present.

Veblen (1857-1929) frequently refers to the modern (1899) but likewise consistently uses it to define the present. In no sense does he use it as an appellation to define a new era. Baillie-Scott (1865-1945) shifted the emphasis of being modern away from being merely newly-made towards innovation (1906), but like Edis cannot honestly be seen in practice to

assert his ideas as part of a new movement called Modernism. It is noteworthy and again illustrates the point about the fluidity of meaning that Houfe's introduction (1995) to the reprint of Baillie-Scott's 1906 book, sees him as an important figure in the 'modern movement' defined as not just the early years of the 20th Century but encompassing much of it (1995: 9).

Between 1902 and 1914 *The Studio* issued a series of publications with titles beginning with the word 'Modern', as in *Modern Etching and Engraving European and American* (Holme 1902), *Modern Etchings, Mezzotints and Dry-Points* (Holme 1913) and *Modern Illustrators and Their Work* (Holme 1914), but it is evident from the contributory essays by Salaman and others that, except in the title of each publication, 'modern' was taken to mean art made recently, as distinct from the past.

In *Modern Illustration: Its Methods and Present Conditions* (1895) Joseph Pennell (1857-1926) sought to further the idea that book illustration was an art form in itself, with new standards emerging through his own example and that of others. This suggests he recognised a time of change was emerging but in no sense can his argument be construed to suggest that he was aware of the concerted growth of a wider 'Modern' movement.

The suggestion therefore is of a continuum of evolving ideas, not sudden change. Critic Frank Rutter (1876-1937) recognised 'Modern Art' (1935) as having been given a separate identity but was evidently not wholly convinced that it deserved a special name. Carefully avoiding rejecting the artistic practice of the past, he described it as simply different from what followed (Rutter 1935: 1). For him, Modern denoted art that had been made in the memory of most people then living, which in the context 'of the major events in the world of art ... in the third quarter of the 19th Century,' he thought to begin about 1870 (1935: 1).

In the 1930s Herbert Read (1893-1968) who arguably must be seen as a critic of the 20th Century rather than having one foot in the past, notably avoided any mention of the word 'modern'. For example in *Art and Industry* (1935) analysing the progession of design, form and the process of making entirely in terms of pre and post industrial practice, not whether they were modern or possessing an identity categorising them as not modern. Much later at the close of his life, and in the context of sculptural practice at the beginning of the 20th Century, Read felt able to define 'modern' (in the context of sculpture) as marking itself out 'as the peculiar creation of our age' and owing 'little to the art that preceded it'(1964: 10).

Interestingly, Read also felt able to venture that all art made at the same period could be described as contemporary, but not necessarily 'modern' (1964: 10). His subsequent discussion details the complexity of 20th Century sculptural development in Europe, suggesting that he is seeking to illustrate his point about what for him defines the 'modern', that it is 'a style that breaks with accepted tradition' (1964: 10-12). But it is noteworthy that he does not return to the debate, with one exception, that being that in his view 'The Modern artist, by nature and destiny, is always an individualist' (1964: 58). This suggests that for Read, Modernism was unrealised as a movement, and could only be seen as an expression of individuality. Or, to take the final view of Clement Greenberg (1909-1994) in his last (1979) essay on modernism, 'how after only a relatively small lapse of time the innovations of Modernism begin to look less and less radical, and how they almost settle into place eventually as part of the continuum of high Western art' (Greenberg 1980: 3).

An instructive example in the question of perception of what to be modern conveyed at different times is that of industrialist, collector and art patron Colin Anderson (1904-1980). Of similar age to the children of Ernest Marsh, he became a member of the Contemporary Art Society from 1945 and Chairman from 1962 (MacKenzie 1991). Like Marsh he had no formal

art training but in the 1930s commissioned young artists and designers to design ship interiors. Reflecting on his life at this period in later years, and in the context of his approach to redesigning the interior of a new home in 1932, he describes himself then as 'I, at any rate, was already a modern, a contemporary, which at that date was to be a member of an austere caste' (Millington-Drake 2003: 11). The quotation is valuable for its insight into how, to him, becoming a modern was a conscious assertion of difference, but also, albeit retrospectively, an acknowledgment that the terminology conveyed different messages at different times.

The polarity of views, between art of a redundant past, and a new present, as opposed to one where past and present each had its merits, and expressed some years apart, might suggest as already discussed, that understanding of the meaning of being modern and Modernity changed during the years prior to WWI with increasing hindsight. But the answer is more complex than this. For example, for those involved in the creative arts, in its widest meaning, beyond 1870, whether as practitioner or patron, there seems to have been a heightened awareness by some of the need in relation to contemporary practice, to be recognised by others as aligning themselves with new rather than traditionalist ideas. As both Darroch (1975: 113), and Caine (2005: 329-346), have discussed, this becomes particularly noticeable in British literary and artistic circles after the turn of the 19th Century.

A significant issue in changing attitudes may have been the passing of the 1870 Elementary Education Act in England. This issue is not explored in this thesis but its potential in the longer term for the widening of opportunity to express ideas, may be a significant factor in engagement with, receptiveness to, and initiation of modern thought. For example, while, as H.G. Wells observed, the instruction of teachers in the newly established teaching colleges post-1870 stifled creativity in its emphasis on the '3Rs' and learning by rote, Seed (2005) in contrast demonstrates that the enlightening influence of Carlyle, Ruskin and others brought an

increasing emphasis on enquiry and expansion of ideas, so that by the late 1890s there is evidence that new ideas were being asserted, not always welcomed, but seeping into the common consciousness and no longer the preserve of a cultured elite. Their reaction to this incursion was to embrace new ideas. As Veblen (1899) has graphically described, demand became self-perpetuating through feeding upon itself.

Holbrook Jackson (1874-1948) author of *The Eighteen Nineties* (1913) noted how much of the thinking and actions of the time 'sprang into existence out of the *Zeitgeist* of the decade, as the people in this country were beginning to call these times' (1913: 40). However, Jackson's narrative suggests that within the terminology of the late 19th and early 20th Century, "new" was the defining word, not modern such as in the example he gives that the most progressive ideas in the arts were heightened mannerisms he defined as 'the new dandyism' (1913: 105-116) expressed in indulgence in 'purple patches and fine phrases' (1913: 135-146); for, as Henry Duff Traill (1897) observed 'Not to be new is, in these days, to be nothing' (Jackson 1913: 21). A series of three poems entitled by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) 'Old and New Art' (1881) perhaps emphasises the point in his recognition of an emerging desire to break with past ideas through the appellation of 'New' to define not just change but an awareness of a new era dawning.

Edmund Gosse is credited as using the term 'new sculpture' for the first time in 1894 (Gosse 1894: 138-142, 199-203, 277-282, 310-311). But the appellation of newness was not necessarily an attribute, it could also be a term of derision: H.J.Jennings (1902) dismissed the creative output of Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) as 'Scotto-Continental "New Art"' (Cooper 1987: 211-225). Likewise considerable ambiguity can be seen in the descriptive 'new women' given to certain female participators in the arts (Beattie 1983: 196). It is disappointing that Beattie's study of New Sculpture (1983) takes the appellation of 'new' as a given without

regard to its use in that period, particularly given that newness as a concept during the 19th Century appears to be accepted rather than fully researched.

Jackson recognised 'Modern' not as a concept for a larger idea but, in lower case, used it only in the context of newness, as in his attributing the lateness in the permeating of continental 'modern' ideas, to a broader British audience to the language barrier and in consequence until translation, exclusively to the cultured classes (1913: 128).

Modern and Modernism as separate terms to signify progressive ideas, are largely absent from literature before 1908. Frank Brangwyn's 1906 mural panel for the Royal Exchange was entitled *Modern Commerce* (Covey 1906: 240). The critic Konody referred to Brangwyn as 'a modern of the moderns' (1903: 483), again in lower case, but again there is only the inkling of suggestion of there being in any sense a larger movement for change.

Modernism as a movement first appeared not in relation to art, but in polemics opposed (Godrycz 1908) to and about (C.S.B. 1908, Lilley 1908) the values which it was perceived to embody in relation to issues arising from the Papal encyclical of Pope Pius X (1907) *Pascendi Domini Gregis*, on the Doctrine of the Modernists. This decried the questioning of the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church and demanded conformity, defining modernism not simply as new but heresy: a revolt all but crushed by requirement of its priests to swear an anti-modernist oath (Papalencyclical 1910). Modernism was similarly an issue for the Anglican Church (Hattersley 2006: 374-385), a movement in contrast given a freer but still contentious voice through Henry Major's monthly journal *The Modern Churchman*, founded in 1911. Perhaps mindful of Beardsley's earlier and notorious *Yellow Book* it adopted a yellow cover after its first (red) edition and was often referred to as the yellow peril (Openchurch 2006).

Jackson (1913) does not refer to the encyclical but saw the fervour permeating religious thought and the creative arts as inextricably linked through 'The wave of Catholicism' sweeping over the art world of the closing years of the 19th Century, indicative of, and legitimising the wider questioning of all norms.

Modernism, as Gablik has observed, was present at its most extreme in the 1909 Futurist manifesto published by the poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944): it was not just progressive but revolutionary (1984: 115). While its nihilistic content gave Modernism more than a hint of danger, its radicalism if known (it was reviewed in *Le Figaro* but published in Italian only), seems to have received no British public prominence prior to the Sackville Gallery's 1912 Italian Futurist exhibition.

The primary stimulus in Britain to a broader public notice of Modernism as an issue, and as a term of departure from the past, and by implication outdated values, was the fulsome press coverage (*Times* 26 2 1908) of Paul Sabatier's *Jowett Lecture on Modernism*, delivered 24 February 1908 at the Passmore Edwards Settlement, London, now Mary Ward House (Sabatier 1908). Progressive thought, particularly in a religious and moral context was defined by the word Modernism (Smyth 1908, Doan 1909, Torrey 1910), Torrey's *Protestant Modernism or Religious Thinking for Thinking Men* explicitly identifying modernism with progressive, and to some views, subversive ideas. Interestingly, Doan's (1909) *Religion and the Modern Mind: And Other Essays in Modernism* by its title epitomises the duality, confusion, or perhaps evolution of concepts of the Modern and Modernism at that time.

Its universalisation into a wider movement than simply religion appears to have come with the Christie's sale 14 March 1908 of *Modern Paintings*, the first to include the word

Modern. The first British art exhibition to use the word Modern in its title, *A Loan Exhibition of Modern Pictures, Drawings, Bronzes, Etchings, and Lithographs* was the first Contemporary Art Society Exhibition held in 1911 at Kingston upon Thames, organised by Ernest Marsh. In this instance the introduction to the catalogue speaks, not of modern art, but of 'interesting phases of the Art of recent date' (Marsh: 1911: 3) this following soon after Roger Fry's (1910) exhibition, *Manet and the Post-Impressionists.*

It would be simplistic to read any early 20th Century collector as modern simply through their interest in particular aspects of art alone. For, as Micale and Dietle have shown (2000), and as Caine has considered in her examination of the lives of the Strachey family, ideas about what it was to be modern in the middle classes in England in the late 19th and early 20th Century were rooted in and evolved within 'a traditional and familial framework', each generation seeing itself as progressive, and therefore by their own definition, modern (Caine 2005: 329).

Caine's commentary on the ideas and context of the use of the terms modern and modernity, based on the primary evidence in the Strachey papers, offers a useful contemporary insight into the adoption of the term into popular usage within a particular social circle. While not necessarily the norm, it suggests by its ready adoption into everyday parlance that 'modern' became widely used to represent a particular stance towards anything topical at that time. Caine's examination of family letters notes that the two elder Strachey brothers, Lytton (b. 1880) and James (b.1887) commonly used the term modern from around 1909-1910, 'not so much to point to particular ideas or beliefs or values as to designate a whole new approach to life' (2005: 336). It was however an approach exclusive to their Bloomsbury friends, and not within their family. This correspondence preceded Fry's art show by at least a year and suggests that 'modern' as an advance on 'new' was already entering a common understanding

of meaning "progressive" but with a cerebral edge beyond the hedonism of previous notions of being progressive. It suggests the beginning of a realisation of a time of ideas that together, irrespective of their source, whether from literature, art or architecture could be recognised as part of a larger whole, a movement of modern ideas that collectively came to be called Modern, showing traits that broke away from the past i.e. becoming ideaology.

The difference is important, for in its suggestion of judgment based on thought-out principles, there is a degree of cultural elitism offered of wider appeal to those who, while aspiring to identify with progressive ideas, may have shrunk from the horror of any suggestion of novelty and thus shallowness. It also confirms the view that for those moving in certain circles prior to the First World War, evolving notions of being modern and Modern were just that, evolving and did not have the sharp distinction that, as Wilk admits (2007: 17) we seek to give it today, a case in point being the 1914 deadline given to the 2006 V & A exhibition and catalogue, *Modernism: Designing a New World 1914-1939* (Wilk 2006: 17). Its time shift, while tidy, is somewhat unhelpful in defining boundaries. Wilk states that 'the choice of 1914 as the starting date of this publication is not meant to suggest that Modernism did not exist before the start of the First World War' (2006: 14). However, he discerns that 'the use of Modernism as an historical term, divorced from the meaning of contemporary was much more recent', an event first arising in the1950s and in the context of architecture (2006: 14). Lost in the small print, this disclaimer has done little to qualify a line of demarcation so firmly drawn for Modernism as a whole.

There is also the question of originality of thinking so evident in the Strachey correspondence. It is clear that to the Bloomsbury Group to be Modern had to be more than just of the present, it had to have that added dimension that whatever it offered it supplanted all that had gone before. This effectively universalised the scope of all artistic and literary

practice, that there were now no limits. Sabbatier's lecture was delivered a few yards from the Gordon Square family home of the Stracheys and it is reasonable to suppose that, while no connection has been traced between them (Caine 2005) the Strachey circle were familiar with his radical views through press and salon discussion. Such liberalisation of thought and practice to challenge all previous tenets, whether of faith or art, must have been seen as a world of opportunity at the beginning of a new century, so that for a time to be both modern and Modern became a fusion of ideas and attitudes, rather than having separate identities.

It is evident then that over the years c.1908-11 there evolved a distinction between the two which was however still not sufficient for those who, as related in Chapter 7, met in 1910 to form a Modern Art Association, and who chose instead to call it the Contemporary Art Society. The reasoning behind this is unfortunately unrecorded. Contemporary appears to have had no contentious baggage at that time, hence its attraction. It therefore can only be conjecture, but given the greater prominence of church affairs in daily life at that period, connotations of Modernism, as Wilk has concluded (2006: 13) was an association with anti-establishmentism, subversion and a direct challenge to vested interests. The name 'Modern' was thus better avoided.

For the purpose of this thesis 'contemporary' used with a lower case 'c' is taken to mean the present at any period, so that when used in relation to say the 1900s it means art and ideas then being made or discussed. When used with the upper case, as in 'Contemporary' it refers specifically to the art organisation given that appellation from 1910.

Simmel's (1904) trickle-down theory of fashion change suggests that when subordinate groups adopt the fashions and interests of a higher social group the latter moves on to new interests, thus maintaining social difference. However, to be Modern was more than this. It

was to stand apart, to challenge the status quo, to question values and assert new ideas, to be unafraid of expressing minority opinions, often in the face of hostility from 'traditionalists'. Although commentators have not linked the two (Hattersley 2004 excepted), there is a sense in which Modernism as a movement in Britain (as for example in the founding of the Contemporary Art Society), became an element of the regeneration that followed the passing of Queen Victoria, as of a weight slowly lifted, but as a process not truly gathering pace until the 1920s. The evidence of endeavour and progression of modern ideas are therefore considered in this thesis in this context.

The Sensory: Exploring Feelings

A recurring theme in Marsh's correspondence, as will be discussed later, is the tactility of the object. The frequent sharing of what might be regarded as expressions of femininity, rather than masculinity suggested that the ambience within which it was appropriate for such opinions to be expressed in this period between men whether considered 'new' or 'modern' warranted closer scrutiny. It is apparent that within a sexually liberal milieu at the end of the 19th Century, a particular view of the aesthetic arose wider than just the homosexual mores made explicit by publicity surrounding Oscar Wilde. The period also saw increasing interest in providing a theoretical analysis of aesthetics based on observation of the senses, particularly the tactile.

Tantalising glimpses of contemporary life, art and literature can be found in occasional reviews in, amongst others, the magazines *Portfolio, Sphere*, *Connoisseur*, *The Studio* the ephemeral *Yellow Book* and *Neolith.* However the most comprehensive and perceptive contemporary overview delineating the *fin de siècle* mood within literature and art of the period 1890-1920 is, as Burdett (1925: 6), Gaunt (1945: 217) and Clayton (2005: 38) acknowledge, Holbrook Jackson's (1913) *The Eighteen-Nineties*. Burdettt also wrote a profile

of his contemporaries but narrower in scope, and, as Hart (2006: I) observed, it is less objective. Clayton's text is valuable for its broader range of sources than either Burdett or Jackson, but understandably given the passage of years, lacks their immediacy particularly as they were writing about people they knew. The strength of Jackson's work therefore is in its universal acclamation as the contemporary voice: its weakness that it lacks commentary by others of the same period by which one may make comparison with its conclusions. For example, his assessment that the era showed no concerted action 'everybody, mentally and emotionally, was running about in different directions' (1913: 31) remains an unchallenged truism of the creative excitement of the era. Jackson endorsed Nietzsche's observation that 'unless you have chaos within you cannot give birth to a rising star', but recognised that like stars, some flourish, others wither and die (1913: 19) Jackson placed particular emphasis on the influence of literature and the arts in setting the tone of the era, especially the move to frankness, observing how 'the modernist' was only concerned with truth, not moral judgement; that ultimately beauty was only obtainable through sincerity, truth and realism (1913: 220).

While Jackson defines the outward manifestations of this new approach by numerous examples of the genre from contemporary fiction (1913: 216-230), his preoccupation with defining the era through the results of the new ideas disappoints by failing to consider in any depth their structure or origins. He acknowledges that many of the literary and artistic ideas reflected continental influence, particularly from France and Germany but does not enlarge on their source. Given the study's breadth this is surprising but it is unclear whether these arise from its being a generally accepted fact, a lack of availability of evidence or the lack of a translation. For example, he makes no mention of Gustave Fechner (1801-1887), acknowledged as a pioneer in the field of aesthetics (1876), particularly in his discussions on the pleasure to the senses aroused by certain abstract forms and shapes (Kosser 2003a: 113-

129, 2003b: 169-188). Fechner's observations appear to have been reasonably well-known abroad but largely unknown in Britain at that time and even then as little more than speculative novelty (Lee 1913: 130). Theodor Lipps (1851-1914) developed his ideas (1897), (published 1906-1914), observing, as Jarzombek (2006) has summarised, how form, size and shape are not passive but inspirational, the source of life, excitement and creativity.

The first writer in English to examine these ideas was Vernon Lee, the pseudonym for the multilingual Violet Paget (1856-1935). She acknowledged Fechner's pioneer studies in this field and evidently felt Lipps' (1897) more recent work deserved interpretation and a wider audience (Lee 1913: 66, 156). Jackson acknowledges her as one of the new fictional writers (1913: 144) but appears, surprisingly, to have been unaware of her research into the aesthetic and empathy in *Beauty and Ugliness* (1912) and *The Beautiful, An introduction to Psychological Aesthetics*, the latter published coincidentally in the same year (1913) as his own work.

Like Jackson, Lee was evidently attracted to attempting to define what in literature and common understanding was meant by sincerity, truth and realism, particularly in regard to how our senses analyse what we see. Her pioneering work in bringing the subject into English discourse seems to be unrecognised and uncited.

Responsible for introducing the word 'empathy' into the English language from the German *Einfühlung*, her 'preface and apology' in *The Beautiful* defined her objective as being 'to explain aesthetic preference, particularly as regards visible shapes, by mental science ... in terms intelligible to the lay reader' (1913: v-vi). Her definition of a 'lay reader' however is unclear, her argument being evidently addressed to the psychological establishment rather than the general reader. In a sense it thus falls between two stools and fails to satisfy the needs of either. Despite the intention to be lucid the argument presented is dense, requiring constant re-

reading to grasp its meaning. Persistence is rewarded but its lack of quotation elsewhere suggests it was regarded as difficult, avoided; an opportunity lost and perhaps remains a statement about the embryo status of psychology at this time. This is a pity as the argument is lively and superbly balances point with counterpoint, such as, on the one hand, the potential for reiteration and memory in art both for the creator and observer (1913: 109) but on the other on the potential for disappointment through 'being done to death by exaggeration' (1913: 136).

An alternative explanation for its lack of lucidity might be, that despite her disclaimer, though published as part of the *Cambridge Manuals of Life and Science*, its target was narrow and an exercise in intellectual elitism addressed to an audience of like minds, not the general public. Her circle was, after all, the Bloomsbury elite who frequented her home in Florence and she theirs when visiting London (Darroch 1975: 32, 36, 155).

Lee's strength is in introducing the concept of empathy into the English lexicon but also pushing the boundaries of meaning: for example arguing art as subject of the gaze is nothing without active collaboration by the viewer, that passivity is unacceptable (Lee 1913: 128). There is nothing particularly startling in this assertion but she suggests we should follow the lead from Germanic vocabulary and make our language similarly more reflective of the potential for the deeper layers of meaning inherent in many words: for example defining passivity as not just indifference but ultimately as a signifier of failure to strive to achieve empathy with the originator's intention (1913: 128).

Lee makes plain that true understanding, empathy, as understood in *Einfühlung* "feeling into" is a concept not recognised in the English language or understanding: to achieve it requires effort beyond that usually offered by the gallery-going public, but possessing potential to offer real insights. For example, Lee suggests that however difficult and alien in

concept a work of art might be on first acquaintance, recognition of its point of departure, however small, is the beginning of a journey from knowledge to adventure (1913: 135).

Given the evident close parallel of Lee's thinking on line and form to that of Marsh - as will be discussed in the context of, in particular, the work of the potters Cox and Wells, it is interesting to speculate, in the absence of evidence, the degree to which Lee's or similar ideas were publicly debated. It is difficult, given the evidence for example, of the work of these potters and others such as Cazin in France that appreciation with or without a vocabulary to express the emotional response was not dawning.

The writer offering similar insights, but by a different route, was the essayist and psychologist Henry Havelock Ellis (1859-1939). Unlike Lee, who made no reference to sex as in any way a factor in her argument, Ellis identifies sex as a primary factor in our attitude towards the external world. His pioneer (1905) analytical work in Britain *Sexual Selection,* as part of his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897-1928) was banned in England until 1945 (Kirjasto 2006). This examined four of the senses, touch, smell, hearing and vision, but not taste. Havelock concluded that a primary origin of each sense is the sexual drive, therefore much of our perception of the world is orientated in terms that relate to it. The unanswerable question is whether Marsh and his peers were aware of these writings, or at least the ideas driving them? I think it highly unlikely that Marsh knew of Lee but both his evident interest in form and Lee's attempt to formalise the ideas in print are indicative of a broadening public abhorrence of over-decoration and desire for simplicity, wider than among a select group of purists.

Although Lee does not say whether her book was partly in response to a wider debate it seems unlikely that it evolved simply from her reading of the work of Lipps and more likely

her writing was intended to give written form to a current debate within a particular audience at that time. However, this audience was wider, more influential and more widely understood than we today appreciate. For example, Jackson makes abundantly clear that though much lampooned, an atmosphere of Dilettantism flourished that 'the staidest of Nonconformist circles begot strange, pale youths with abundant hair [and] abandoned thoughts...' (1913: 31). From such emerged the likes of the Quaker Roger Fry (1866-1934) and, according to his daughter Angelica Garnett (1984: 140), the aspirant 'dilettante' Clive Bell (1881-1964), who, like Fry also had wealthy origins arising from commerce. Both stepped outside the conventions of the time to rethink what Art was about and the directions which it should take.

Marsh was distantly related to Fry and from at least 1909, as discussed later, became more closely associated with him and thus familiar with his ideas. In his preface to *Art* (1913: viii-x) Bell acknowledges his debt to Fry, considering his *An Essay in Aesthetics* (1909), to be 'the most helpful contribution to science since the days of Kant' (1913: ix), but it is curious that while both write extensively about aesthetics there is no reference to Lee or any suggestion that their views were a reflection not just of their own thinking but of some of their contemporaries. It is almost as if they wished to get their ideas published without the constraint or taint of the concepts debated by others.

Parallelling much of Lee's ideas, Fry's earlier *An Essay in Aesthetics* (1909), acknowledges the beauty of nature but also recognises that imagination can lead us to dispense with likeness to it; that in so doing there could be an awareness, an 'arousal of aesthetic feeling gained from consciousness of purpose on the part of the creator, of something not to be used but to be regarded and enjoyed for itself' (1920: 24-25). His attempt to create a new set of values and a 'logical' structure for analysis (although in fact a restatement, since much of what he said was repetition within new covers of previous lectures) was however not

welcomed by a reviewer for *The Connoisseur* who thought Fry 'surveyed 'the realm of art with much the same spirit that an engineer might display towards an ancient castle...' framing 'fundamental principles' and 'bias' to art conforming to them (Grundy 1921a: 127-128). As the reviewer rightly recognised, Fry was continuing to attempt to legitimise by now not so recent developments in artistic practice but in a manner still threatening to established perceptions of the hierarchy within Fine Art, particularly those which differentiated 'pictorial from merely decorative art' (Grundy 1921a: 127).

Bell's *The Aesthetic Hypothesis* observes that it was an accepted fact that aesthetic 'emotion is provoked by every kind of visual art, by pictures, sculptures, buildings, pots, carvings, textiles, &c' (1913: 6-7). Further, he suggests that a combination of line and colour might register as possessing significant form and be pleasing to some and say nothing to another: therefore any attempt to create 'a system of aesthetics can have no validity' (1913: 8). Equally, 'if a representative form has value, it is as form, ... the representative element in a work ... is irrelevant' (1913: 25).

The liberating and shocking implication of these ideas was that in art, received wisdoms could be challenged, that no longer was creativity tied to naturalism. However, it is clear from the above that, in Bell's opinion, any attempt to formalise a system of aesthetics, as propounded by Lee, is pointless.

Given the evident uncertainty as to whether there was debate worth pursuing it is perhaps understandable that none of the literature associated with collecting in any sphere well into the 20th Century sought to address Fry's, Bell's, or Lee's attempts at analysis of aesthetic judgment. Those writing about collecting in the 1890s and well into the 20th Century did so primarily from the stand point of museological art history, as numerous works cited above

attest. The question arises as to whether any other writer had more success or interest in analysing and passing on any aspects of the "zeitgeist", or, if simply regarded as a fact of life, at least by the *cognoscenti*, does the lack of contemporary critical discussion suggest it was deemed unnecessary? There is a sense also in which appreciation and experience of a higher sensibility was considered only possible for an elite and therefore their preserve. If understood amongst those 'in the know', there was no imperative to debase the ideas by offering them to a wider audience.

The tentative conclusion from the foregoing is that within a narrow literary and often multilingual circle there was a developing idea of the aesthetic but their knowledge was exclusive and contained. The difficulty was that for those outside this rarefied circle who were aware of but lacked intellectual access to this knowledge there was a potential difficulty in articulating a language with which to communicate an appreciation of the aesthetic to a wider audience. In this respect it is significant that the Duveen (1930), Rutter (1935) and Gaunt (1945) overviews of the aesthetic and attitudes towards art in the period 1880-1930s have no regard in their discussion either to the language or models of analysis proposed by Lee or Ellis, as if they never existed. Neither do they appear in more recent surveys by Marler (1997), Robins (1997), Shone (1999), Reed (2004) *et al.* All these commentators appear to take as the key point the influence on Fry of Cézanne, articulated by Fry himself (1920) as a new vision for art, as if nothing went before.

If Bourdieu (1930-2002) was aware of the Germanic idea (Lee 1913) of empathy it is not apparent from anything he wrote (Barnard 1979). It stretches credulity to imagine that he was unaware of the work of Lipps and others, as already described. These previous studies, although largely supportive of his own work are not discussed by Bourdieu. However, both he and others have suggested theories on interaction which appear pertinent to this thesis. For

example, in his 'Outline of a sociological theory of art perception' Bourdieu states the truism that 'any perception involves a conscious or unconscious deciphering operation' (Johnson 1993: 215). Much of his argument centres on the application of memory and association to establish comprehension (Johnson 1993: 218-237). Like Lee (1913), Bourdieu recognises that understanding will function at different levels according to the degree of comprehension the viewer is able to apply; but appears however to overlook (a point that Lee makes) that the viewer may not choose to engage at the same level on every occcasion. Lee recognises, as already discussed, that not all viewers will choose to engage whereas Bourdieu citing Panofsky, suggests a theoretical base that assumes active engagement at all times (Johnson 1993: 218). The point is small but nevertheless significant: there is an implied elitist assumption by Bourdieu that there is somehow an obligation on the gallery 'grazer' to work at understanding at all times. Lee (1913) observes the difference but does not condemn. Lee therefore recognises, but does not propose solutions to encouraging the interest of the unengaged.

The great strength of both Bourdieu's and Lee's arguments is in their discussion of the experience of venturing beyond the known, the falling back on the sub-conscious. Differences in their approach can be seen primarily in the starting point of their ideas, Lee (1913) encapsulated in 'the beautiful', Bourdieu's (1984) in 'distinction'. Lee's, I suggest, defines what it is in the object that engenders the human aesthetic response to form by analysis of the whole as a sum of its parts, Bourdieu does so primarily to tease out what are the analytical and momentous responses within us that produce a particular reaction to what our senses tell us, but not necessarily all at any one time. Both are concerned with aesthetic pleasure through active engagement with the object, but Bourdieu goes one step further to suggest that above the level of enjoyment that arises from *aesthesis* (sensation) there can be *delight* through 'scholarly savouring'; the assumption that learning, the effort to understand, will bring that

reward (Johnson 1993: 320). Barthes (1975) has perhaps been most successful in articulating a language that seeks to separate what he defines as, not Bourdieu's 'sensation' but 'pleasure' as the base level and 'bliss' rather than 'delight' as the pinnacle experience. However, in seeking to separate the two he concludes there can be no 'absolute classifications' and thus 'the discourse [always remains] incomplete' (1975: 4).

Lee's persuasive debate suggests we begin with interaction one on one; that the individuality of that experience be absorbed in all its fullness. Bourdieu also proposes that idea, as Pearce has observed, but notes that the experience will change every time (1992: 233). Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' (1977: 72), suggests, however, that given none of us proceed from a common base, most of our actions and reactions are conditioned by social context or class, which as Simmel (1907: 3), McCracken (1990: 80), Pearce (1992: 232) and Miller (2001: 5) observe, to be usurped requires compelling argument, whether prompted by internalised reasoning or external forces.

Bourdieu, Pearce notes, therefore argues that any consequent 'demonstration' of fact was presumptuous because of its subjectivity, that it should be treated as ideology, not knowledge (1992: 233): that the sensory experience ceases to be individual, that actions resulting from it have potentially wider consequences. This issue is of profound importance for both private and public acquisition policy and the subsequent reading of acquisitions: that acquisition or refusal is a statement about knowledge and perception at a particular point in time, and often in relation to the views of an individual or coterie and thus it is not a judgment for all time i.e. it is context specific, or historically contingent, always open to review.

The foregoing discussion, while in broad terms is applicable to all forms of acquisition whether institutional or private, it is noticeable, presumably from lack of other evidence, that

the framework of many of the theoretical constructs of Bourdieu, as considered by Pearce *et al* is frequently expressed in terms orientated towards institutional policy (Pearce 1992: 232-233). These provide many valuable insights, but rarely address the applicability of that same rationale to private acquisition.

Imperial Attitudes

Mackenzie (2001) and Caine (2005) *et al* make clear that Imperialism didn't just impinge, it permeated all walks of late 19th and early 20th Century life in Britain both as an under-current and as a direct influence on economic and artistic interests. Brendon (1991), Cannadine (2001) and Mackenzie (2001) assert the Victorian era as a time of global aspiration, of British imperialism as a vision, as an attitude insinuating itself into all walks of life, an example of political and economic force beneficial to the rest of the world but also capable of assimilating ideas and influences into its own culture (2001: 8-14). Being modern in terms of being forward looking, as Caine (2005) succinctly puts it, from 'Bombay to Bloomsbury', was a given in Imperial middle class life during this period. Mackenzie argues however that British Imperialist enthusiasm waned prior to the First World War, not least because of the experiences of the Boer War, and, suffering from the growing political maturity of its governed nations, it subsequently failed to capitalise on its commercial advantage following the defeat of Germany (1984: 147-172). Barringer's contribution to Mackenzie's most recent study (2001) endorses these views, but suggests the process was more a reluctant tapering off rather than the dramatic decline that Mackenzie suggests (2001: 332-333).

Such arguments suggest that when considering the evidence of this thesis they should be taken as a given. This may not however be so. It is surprising that both Mackenzie's works (1984, 2001) fail to consider whether, given the huge economic and cultural advantage accruing to Britain from its Empire, there were any opposing forces to acceptance of the

inevitability of decline, such as evidence of any counter action within the Establishment to reduction in Imperialist intentions. One instance, and there may be others, is the counter action of the Board of Trade in setting up the Federation of British Industries (with which Marsh was employed from its inception) to mobilise the industrial forces of Britain during the middle of WWI.

Hennessy (1992) demonstrates that while post-1918 some constituent members of the Empire certainly began to move towards political independence from Whitehall this did not mean that the ties of Empire, particularly its economic links, were rapidly severed. Indeed, to take one example, as Constantine (1986) argues, the activities of the Empire Marketing Board (under the aegis of the Board of Trade) in the 1920s successfully fostered both Home and Colonial interests.

Hennessy (1992: 91-92, 111) and Hattersley (2004: 66-69) argue that, rather than declining, British industry had been convulsed into reasserting its economic power through retooling to meet the demands of war, providing it with an unassailable production base in the early post-war years. Mass-Observation has demonstrated that lack of competition stultified innovation, resulting not in a country with a new vision but affirmed in its sense of self-belief and essentially still "Victorian" in its attitudes (Sheridan 1990) a situation perpetuating in Hennessy's view into the 1960s (1992: 436). Hennessey (1992: 436) and Cannadine (2001) demonstrate that, paradoxically, Modernism was an emerging force but British Imperialism's framework of inherited values and attitudes did not wither, they co-existed.

These differing views on the mechanisms and speed of change suggest that substantiation from evidence within the period is necessary to clarify whether we have formed a true perception of the thinking within that era. Cannadine provides much necessary

illumination on governance, particularly on the gradual transfer of diplomatic and political power during the 20th Century. However, his argument presupposes too much in terms of outcome, that is of the inevitability of the devolvement of power and resources, particularly during the closing years of the First World War and thereafter when it was apparent that Germany would be economically broken for some years (2001:136). A more discerning view might now be possible given the greater access to both public and commercial records now possible following the 2000 Freedom of Information Act.

Existing commentaries on the era suggest we may not have to look too far for the alternative view. Neither Cannadine nor Hennessey mentions the activities of various individuals such as Leonard Woolf (1880-1969) and the succession of advisory working parties established post-WWI by the Labour Party. A journalist and critic, Leonard Woolf served as an assistant government agent in Ceylon. His experience first-hand of Empire and its administration engendered a strong dislike of the Imperial system, prompting his writing of *International Government* (1916) (subsequently adopted as the basis of the League of Nations manifesto) and *Cooperation and the Future of Industry* (1918) (Woolf 1967: 222). Amongst numerous other appointments, in 1918 Woolf became a founder member of the Labour Party Advisory Committee on Imperial Affairs, actively serving on it to 1939. Woolf's evidence emphatically demonstates that in the years 1919-1939 Imperialism was alive and well, with no certainty that Britain's regarding its Empire as a resource to be managed and exploited was to change one iota: that the process of bringing about change was resisted by government at every turn, it seeking to enforce its hold (if necessarily by different administrative mechanisms), rather than reduce it (Woolf 1967: 218-248). Woolf sought to mobilise a process of change but his failure to do so, as he admits, is testimony to the strong grip, contrary to Cannadine or Hennessy's view of inevitable decline, which Britain still chose to assert over its Empire (1967: 248).

In terms of collecting *per se,* Pearce's *The Collector's Voice: Imperial Voices* shares Woolf's view, suggesting that within the world of collecting the period 1835-1960 is notable as a period of continuity of shared values, not change (2002a: xii); that notwithstanding the changes taking place within Britain's relationship with its Empire there remained through it all a constancy in 'a belief in the real, a confidence in the positivist, essential nature of things' transcending economic and social change (Pearce 2002a: xii). While taste and interests might move on, values, that is the shared and individual criteria by which acquisitions are made, remained the same or evolved slowly. This conclusion is borne out by the view from the Empire itself. Smith (1946, 1960, 1975), Hughes (1966, 1970) Hill (1991) and Mackenzie (2006) make plain that well into the 20th Century the Art establishment within the colonies, rather than being eager to shed Imperial links were slow to cast adrift from the received values that the Empire represented, slow to recognise the need to foster their own artistic voice and resistant to emerging forms of artistic expression. Thus representations of landscape were expected to be portrayed within 19th Century European traditions of realism rather than impressionism, abstraction or any stylistic that deviated from the 'proper' representation of nature (Hill 1991: 65).

In the view of Smith *et al* this situation arose largely through institutional bias, lack of vision, to some degree lack of means but also to the pervasive influence of the British art establishment. As Hughes put it in relation to Australia, but in a comment equally relevant to other colonies, 1900-1937 were 'dundreary years' (1970: 106) in which 'time slipped a cog crossing the equator' (1970: 131). Conservative interests in Melbourne sought to stave off 'the growing influence of the moderns' by establishing an Academy of Australian Art with a Royal Charter in 1937, a move which however precipitated the founding of an Australian 'Contemporary Art Society' in the Melbourne rooms of the Victorian Artists' Society in the following year (Hughes 1970: 131-132). While this might appear from an Australian

perspective to have been ground-breaking this was not an independent body like the British Contemporary Art Society, founded as a purchasing body to act as patrons of art, as detailed later, but a grouping together of artists of like interests for mutual support.

Evidence of moves for change elsewhere within the Empire have been difficult to discern, primarily it seems because they were almost non-existent. Contact with art galleries in other former Crown Colonies has produced no evidence that similar bodies emerged in South Africa or New Zealand, while in 1930s Canada it was the National Gallery and a group of artists with 'modernist tendencies' calling themselves the Group of Seven who opposed the old guard represented by the Royal Canadian Academy (Hill 1991: 65). Again, no emergent independent body mirroring the British CAS arose, despite as Lucie-Smith argues, its proven success (1991: 146-156).

The conclusion from this is that while the British establishment was evidently concerned to maintain the status quo in terms of Imperial governance in the years 1919-1939, in attitude the new forms of administration emerging within some of the former colonies remained largely conservative: within the realm of the arts and individualism in terms of cultural identity the push for change may have been present but the response of vested interests was exceedingly slow. Barringer suggests that in the late 20th Century British culture in a post-colonial world has become more introspective and reflective (2001: 332-333). The lack of any meaningful discussion of this aspect suggests that writers feel confident about comparing and contrasting pre- and post-colonial worlds but, in the absence of hard evidence, less certain about how to approach the period during which change took place.

With the exception of the works already discussed, and in those references it has to be said obliquely, literature that comments in any meaningful way on the impact of imperialist

values and thinking on the home, except in that of attitude, and that implicit rather than declared, has also proved illusive. Briggs (1988), Mackenzie (2001) and Tosh (1999) make it apparent that imperialist values are most evident in the assertiveness of the age, manifested in the burgeoning industries of Western Europe and the United States and their hold on and exploitation of the developing economies of a large part of the rest of the world. All three argue the case for the move away during the 19th Century from Western economies largely based on satisfying basic needs to one of conspicuous consumption, and of burgeoning middle classes built on success in trade and increasingly preoccupied with appearance and status. Walton (2001) and Tosh (1999) suggest a set of values for governance of the domestic and Empire which mirror each other; but that in the striving for appearance, while there was a sense of assurance felt by many, conversely others felt threatened by fear of failure (Walton 2001: 51-74). Forty (1986) Barringer (2001) and Tosh (1999) note the hypocrisy of unreasonable expectations and pressure to keep up appearances, but fail to cite examples. Such reportage as is quoted is largely anecdotal or fictional as in the accounts of Dickens and Trollop, but factual evidence is notable for its absence.

Masculinity and Domesticity

The significance of the role played by individuals as collectors in perceptions of learning and taste and the source of their confidence has been little explored. It suggests that we should be looking at the consequences of the urge to collect but in equal measure giving due consideration to its original cause. Kestner has argued how:

> One of the most powerful constructions of masculinity in nineteenth century Britain was the model of the paterfamilias, the man in the family unit required to be provider, lover, husband, supporter, moral guide, infallible authoritarian and unquestioned arbiter (1995: 141).

It is evident from much of Reed's argument in (1996b) *Not at Home: the Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture* that one source of male confidence is the

exercise of choice and decision making within the home. For example, whether or how a particular collection might be displayed. Reed's declared objective in *Not at Home* is to explore the creative tensions between modernism and domesticity, but its underlying agenda is undoubtedly about possession, control and who exercises it. For example, Tiersten's contribution to that work cites Tinayre's (1910) observation that 'for 'private delectation' bourgeois women surrounded themselves in the home with possessions reflecting their 'conceptions of happiness and beauty' (1996: 31), that men, in contrast, 'exhibited objects ... for the spectorial pleasure of others' as a demonstration of his 'erudition and taste' (1996: 31). This view however overlooks the fact that some men, while possibly fitting the case suggested, might equally see 'home' as place desire to express their sense of identity in a similar manner to their wives, as the photographic evidence of the Marsh home suggests.

I also suggest Reed's remit is larger than this; it is about exploring the differing perceptions of image makers, who, whether in a painting or photograph determine what is both included and excluded. It is also about what the creator unintentionally includes and how we interpret it, and how we determine what is intention or accident. For, as Marcoux usefully suggests, we should always be aware of the accidental inclusion: that sometimes the extent of muddle and the lack of will to impose order will allow intrusion by default (2001: 74-78). The problem with this is that the allowance of unintentional intrusion to remain could still be interpreted as the exercise of a form of choice. The issue, is always, therefore, discerning how artless or intentional are the images offered to us.

One of the most thought provoking studies in this respect has been Docherty's (1996) contribution to *Not at Home,* on the paintings of the artists William Merritt Chase and Edmund C. Tarbell. This suggests that in reading the visualisation of any subject by another there are no rules: that we revisit and interpret differently on different occasions according to whatever

agenda we are seeking to work towards in viewing what we see, and what we know. The creators/curators have their own agenda. Viewers have theirs. This said, Docherty demonstrates that whoever is the consumer, perceptions, whether of persons or objects, can be manipulated through visual representation. Docherty's argument is primarily concerned with demonstrating how the artist exercised control of the transition from situating the subject of a painting in the studio, traditionally his sphere of influence, to the domestic sphere, the woman's space. Docherty suggests that exercise of control takes various forms, that the consequent image realised can be misleading. For example, despite the apparent feminising of the subject, as in the work of Chase, who often portrayed his wife and family in the home, Docherty suggests that Chase's compositions remain what the artist wanted us to see and may not necessarily be how his family saw themselves. Chase portrayed, in Docherty's view, a particular agenda, that is the ideal to which his contemporaries should aspire; a place of order and tranquillity, but an environment in which his womenfolk exercised freedom of movement and choice.

Docherty suggests that it is in complete contrast to the domestic portrayals of women by Tarbell, who appear almost as possessions in contrived and controlled poses. Docherty also makes the point that the Chase family were willing participants in his compositions and critiqued his work, suggesting that boundaries were respected and colluded with. However, in terms of sales this was not to his commercial advantage. One of the weaknesses of his representations, in contrast to Tarbell's, was that his women as portrayed had an autonomy that prejudiced his sales. These images moved away from the realm of art. The paintings' inherent weakness was their affront to accepted norms of behaviour, in that they lacked masculine authority.

While Docherty's argument is persuasive, a more enlightened point of view might have been to suggest that Chase, rather than being outmoded, demonstrated a progressive attitude that stepped beyond the evident limitations of the work of Tarbell in his alignment with received preoccupations with masculinity. Docherty seeks to suggest that all images have an agenda, but fails to consider whether Chase or Tarbell might have painted to please themselves, that they expressed how they saw the family and not subservient to the market.

This said, both nevertheless demonstrate the power of the image to determine a point of view, which depending on the experience of the viewer, can offer a multiplicity of meanings. For example ambiguity need not necessarily be a sign of weakness but receptiveness to alternative views. Docherty rightly notes how the visual balance between the women and their setting in the work of both artists questions whether it is the setting that is artistic, the figures, or both; that without the confusion of adjuncts, particularly in the case of Chase, the subject as art is self-evident. Docherty's conclusion that ambiguity suggests weakness seems doubtful, and in truth it suggests Chase's greater sophistication and enlightened attitudes. The difficulty today is that even for such comparatively recent images the coded language they contain, through lack of any commentary by the artist, testimony of family, or his contemporaries, renders original meaning largely lost to us.

The larger picture emerging from this debate as Tosh (1999) has noted, is the degree of control that men such as Chase could choose to exercise within the home, or not. With emphasis on particular words, Tosh notes Hippolyte Taine's observation that

> Every Englishman imagines a *home*, with the woman of his choice, the pair of them *alone* with their children. That is his own little universe, *closed* to the world (Tosh 1999: 28).

Tosh implies that for the man, a fully formed home life could only be realised within the family unit of parents and children. An important additional factor is surely the manner of life within that closed world. A considerable amount of the research for this thesis has been based on the amassed photographic evidence of the home, its interior and collections. The problem for its interpretation is that one can never be sure one is seeing the whole picture. The question always remains, is there other material, which if found, will offer a different view? For example, is there further evidence, so far untraced, which might throw light on how much say Sarah Marsh had in how the home was filled. An extensive search on collecting literature of and about this period has found no comment by any collector's partner on either the collecting or its display within the home. Given the fact that collections frequently monopolised the principal rooms of the home this is perhaps surprising.

This said, Cannadine has stressed (2001: 30-34) the intense stratification of both home and governed societies within the British Empire (epitomised in *Burke's Peerage, Landed Gentry and Colonial Gentry*), but particularly its universal presence in the assertiveness of masculinity in every facet of life, whether in the home or the work-place. Robinson (1996) however, argues that this was not a new trait. From time immemorial life has been orientated towards the male, whether in the realm of daily activity or his repose and comfort when he needs or chooses to rest from his labours. Tosh (1999) observes, as do Robinson (1996) citing Masheck (1975: app.), and the familiar arguments of Baudelaire (Johnson 1993: 199-200), Simmel (1907) and Weber (1958: 47-78), how the pressures of business life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly in Western Europe, made excessive demands on individuals involved in trade: that a consequence was a heightened awareness of the need for home as refuge and distraction from work-day concerns.

Robinson (1996: 98-112) and Tosh (1999: 6) however, go further, suggesting that home should be a place where the business man should be refreshed by art and poetry to be able to recover to re-enter the fray. Robinson observes that artists such as Matisse understood that one of their functions in life was to service this need by provision of something that fed the aesthetic, without placing further demands on the intellectual and the physical (1996: 99). The suggestion is of the perceived need of the weary male mind being ministered to, rather than it exercising its own discerning judgment, playing up to the notion of the giant at rest needing calm rather than stimulation.

The weakness of this argument is its failure to consider whether for some, as the evidence of this thesis testifies, the domestic environment could also be the source of creative energies; and one in which the initiative on home creation was potentially as much within the male sphere of influence as the female. The problem, however, is that the male is rarely content to have a token presence in the home, hence Virginia Woolf's (1929) cry against the male domination of personal space, in *A Room of One's Own.* The paradox, of course, is that despite the incursion on the domestic space, control of the place of work remained assertively male.

For example, Ponder (1993) has demonstrated in relation to the Mander family at Wightwick during the years 1887-1930s, that while open to familial and other influences, in that instance family life and home decoration and design was largely at the behest of the master of the house as principal breadwinner. I suggest that the assertion of masculinity within the home should perhaps be seen, as Gaunt (1945), Ponder (1993) and, as already discussed, Docherty (1996) demonstrate, not lack of confidence but as self-belief in the ability and right to exercise control at will in the sure and certain knowledge of any goal being achieved. It

permitted a new sensibility of benevolence in which latitude was given for other models to emerge, but on terms allowed by the principal provider.

3. Formative Contexts: Belief, Home, Education and Business

Introduction

Both Ernest and Sarah Marsh came from Quaker families. Ernest, or more likely his son, Christopher Marriage Marsh (1899-1988), after his fathers' death, appears to have destroyed or disposed of virtually all Ernest's early correspondence. In consequence, the only surviving comment by Ernest on his early life are excerpts of letters about his time at *The Woodlands* Quaker school in Hertfordshire, published in *Reminiscences of a Hitchin School* (Hoyland 1935). Primary information about his family life comes from family papers and autobiographies, particularly Christopher's unpublished *Reminiscences* (1980-1981) and daughter Phyllis's (1902-1991) *So Much to Enjoy 1902-1986* (1986). Other information came orally from his surviving niece Margaret Stuart (b.1904) and letters to Ernest's father, Bedford Marsh (1832-1913), transcribed as *The Bedford Marsh Letters* (1997) by grandson Michael Marsh (1932-2000), son of Christopher Marsh.

One cannot begin to understand Quaker life, as Milligan observed (1992: 2) without appreciating the cohesive influence of their 'tightly-knit community', their small numbers (c.13, 000 in Britain in 1860) belying their importance and influence within family, education, business, political and philanthropic life (Milligan 1992: 2, Frederick 2006: 59-69). Tosh's examination of public life in Victorian England (1999) gives no example from the Quaker community but the evidence offered from other denominations suggests there are marked differences between it and other denominations. For example, while within the communities of the Established and Methodist churches there was 'associational life' in various forms Tosh concludes that while the congregations might pray together under the same roof this did not mean they might encounter each other in their social life (1999: 133).

Governed by area monthly, regional quarterly, and a national Yearly Meeting, Quakerism might have appeared 'dynastic and ingrown' it in fact remained vital and expanding (Milligan 1992: 2). Without hierarchy, its adherents met as equals, women participating in discussion as much as men. Business and social occasions between families,

and meetings led to extensive inter-marriage between Quaker clans.

Until the 1871 abolition of religious tests barring non-conformists from Oxford or Cambridge the Quaker 'guarded education' gave them a distinctive education (Milligan 1992: 2, Frederick 2006: 61), as the Cadbury (Wagner 1987, Kennedy 2000: 7-118) and Darby exemplars (Raistrick 1989, Thomas 1999), and Quaker code of moral principles in life and work (Walvin 1997) attest. The consequence was:

> Youthful energy, intellectual curiosity and practical abilities which young Quakers would otherwise have put into academic studies were channelled into industry and commerce, while their interests in natural history and in pure and applied science kept their minds supple. Quakers had a natural tendency to question received ideas - and their innate caution was matched by a sometimes ruthless pursuit of first principles (Milligan 1992: 2).

However, as this chapter will demonstrate, while Quakerism encouraged effort, the constraints on individual freedom through expectation to conform to its ideals and parental example imposed strains, but its wider connections also brought opportunities.

Antecedents

Ernest's father Bedford was the fourth of five children and named after the social reformer, Peter Bedford (1780-1864) (Marsh 1986: 7). Educated at the Friends' School, Croydon, Bedford assisted his uncle John in his corn dealership at Kingston upon Thames. After apprenticeship in the trade at Ipswich, he joined his brothers Joseph (1828-1904) and Morris (1826-1854) in his uncle's business, trading at the Market Place, London Street and Down Hall Mills, Kingston and 33 High Street, and 29b Wimbledon Road, Wimbledon. On John's retirement the business was left to Morris but due to his ill health was run by Joseph and Bedford.

Following his marriage to Hannah Hills of Prested Hall, Essex in 1858 (*Surrey Comet* 11 4 1908), Bedford lived over the shop at the Market Place (Census 1861). Ernest (Fig. 1.1) was the fourth of their six children, all boys (Marsh 1997). Bedford ran the mill and Joseph the retail trade (Census 1871). Bedford also acquired interests in cement manufacture and its

export (Census 1881). Success brought acceptance into the local business community and, in Quaker tradition, engagement in civic life. Joseph served for forty years to 1904 as an alderman to Kingston Council (*Surrey Comet* 24 10 1899), and mayor in 1868 (*Surrey Comet* 9 11 1868). Bedford served as mayor in 1873. On re-election the following year, the local press commented on the satisfaction to their parents to see 'one son [Joseph] fill the office of Chief Magistrate ... two years in succession, and now another [Bedford] enter upon second year in the same capacity' (*Surrey Comet* 9 11 1874 : 4). Bedford was elected a Surrey County Magistrate in 1894. A County Councillor, he served on the board of the Endowed Schools Trustees (*Surrey Comet* 1 1 1894) and in 1896 was elected a County Alderman (*Surrey Comet* 16 5 1896). Retired in 1904 as 'Father of Kingston Corporation', he had served for nearly forty-two years:

> Mr. Marsh is unique. He unites the past with the present, he is the ancient corporator evolved into the modern representative, he is a type of the species now almost extinct, that for generations kept itself clean midst municipal corruption by the inherent integrity of its Quaker stock. ... we can see how magnificent was the strain that salted ... the past when we find its last representatives like Alderman Marsh still models on which ... new men can ... conduct and do themselves no discredit (Feverel 1904).

'A leading member of the Society of Friends in England', he sat on the Six Weeks Meeting, which controlled the meeting-houses and other property of the society, and the 'Meetings of Suffering, which act[ed] in emergencies, such as the outbreak of war, and ... engaged in distributing relief in the Balkans' (*Times* 17 5 1913): President of Croydon Old Scholars Association (Radley 2000: 13), on Croydon School Committee (*Friend* 1875: 294-296) and later a Governor on its moving to Saffron Walden (*Times* 17 5 1913), also Governor of the Friends School at Ackworth and Treasurer of the Kingston Division Liberal Association (*Times* 17 5 1913).

The expectations of Ernest and his brothers to follow their father's precedent in both business and civic life must have been considerable. Despite, or perhaps because of Bedford's distinction in his numerous offices, none followed him into service within the Quaker movement. As Frederick has delineated, it was a process common within Quaker families and

a cause of much angst within the mid and later 19th Century Quaker community (2006: 59-60).

Education

Ernest Marsh was educated in august company. Bedford's third and fourth sons Bedford John (b.1862) and Ernest (b.1863) boarded at *The Woodlands*, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, a 'Select Boarding School for Boys', founded in 1873 (Hoyland 1935) by progressive thinkers Joseph Paxton Drewett and Cranston Woodhead.

The perhaps unforeseen problem for parents such as Bedford Marsh, expecting their children to follow in father's footsteps, was that education was changing ideas about life choices. Quakers embraced Darwinism, as recalled of their schooling by Naturalist Edward Newman (1801-1876) (Salmon 2000:145), chocolate manufacturer Richard Cadbury (1835-1899) (Crosfield 1985: vol I: 331, vol II: 361, 385, 411, Douglas 2002: intro.) and his sons Barrow (1862-1958), William (1867-1957) (Cadbury Collection MS466A 155-160, MS466/319 1-21) and Richard (1868-1935), and painter Francis Reckitt (1859-1932) of the 'Reckitt's Blue' family (Reckitt 2003). Reckitt and the Cadbury brothers were contemporaries of Ernest Marsh at *The Woodlands* (Norris 2003, Stephenson 2003).

Other contemporaries of Ernest Marsh included Philip Bright, son of free trader John Bright (1811-1889) (Marriage 1940: 29); Eustace and Francis Frith, sons of photographer Francis Frith (d.1898), artist Frederick Griggs (1876-1938) and a particular friend, Edward Spencer (Hoyland 1935: 19), possibly Edward Napier Hitchcock Spencer (1872-1938) later silversmith to Nelson Dawson, founder of the Artificers' Guild and both later patronised by Marsh (Crawford 1985: 342, Karlin 1993: 93-95, Marsh papers).

Although having execrable handwriting, Marsh succeeded F. Herbert Carling [probably of the London brewers] as editor of *The Woodlands Journal* (Hoyland 1935: 16), its transcriptions being made by the later author and art critic Edward Verrall Lucas (1868-1938) (Hoyland 1935:16). 'All', as one pupil wrote:

> Inculcating by example and practice, the ethos of pursuit and collecting owed much to school encouragement of butterfly hunting when ...seeming quite unconscious of our approach till with a dexterous sweep of the net it is captured just as it was about to rise. (Friends MS. S.14 'Butterflies').

Paralleling Marsh's own later collecting, the wayward objective once captured became the spur to the next, and the next.

An essay by Marsh (Friends MSS.14. c.1879) suggests the Quaker stance towards the cost of Imperialism and a privileged, nurturing education largely free from, but not unaware of the cares of the world. On 'The Crimean War', he argues 'The Invasion of the Crimea, as a military achievement is, on the whole, the most brilliant success that England has ever accomplished,' (Friends MSS.14: 1). However, he recognised the greatest killer was cholera, which, slaying without discrimination, denied victory for both sides. He concluded:

> Such another war may England, let us hope, never see again, but rather, let her maintain a peace that will never hurry so many brave hearts to the Judgment Seat of their Almighty Creator (Friends MSS.14: 4).

Marsh was too old to be called up or to volunteer for military service in WWI. His son Francis was killed in action in 1917.

Business

Unlike Cadbury, Marsh's subsequent career suggests school blurred rather than clarified the division between work and play. For some, the liberal education within Friends' schools led to disenchantment (Newman 1876: preface) at being shackled to the family business, rather than beingt allowed to seek ones own destiny (Bartlett 1960: 30). Other Quakers like entomologist H. T. Stainton (fl. 1857-1868) achieved a balance, observing: 'Take a pleasure in your business, and make a business of your pleasure' (1855: 13). At 15, (1879) Marsh was not enthused at expectation of employment. To former Hitchin pupil Robert A. Penney, he wrote:

> How's business? Do you attend markets or are you always at work at the desk. I shall have to go & serve behind the counter for several years, after Xmas.
>
> I do not know where I am going yet, but I believe to a corn-dealer's at Rochester.

> They wanted £300 premium at a place at Colchester where my pater tried. was not it awful ?
> (Marsh Papers 1879) (App.6).

In the event, presumably because of the cost, apprenticeship elsewhere did not happen and he joined the family business. By 1891 and joined by his brother Dick, he was groomed to take over the business. Subsequent events suggest Marsh inherited from his father, grandfather and uncle, what Edith Sitwell (1887-1964), friend of artist and critic Roger Fry, observed of her peers:

> a sense of confidence - that armour plated self-assurance of the Victorian middle classes, that peculiar and satisfactory knowledge of infallibility that is the hallmark and birthright of the British nation' (Salmon 2000: 38).

Spalding (1980: 14-15) and Sox (2000: 82) note how Quakers exhibited additional traits, like Fry's 'disinclination to practice Quakerism', that suggest not so much infallibility, but confident independence rooted within the traditions and good sense of Quakerism.

Others noticed how the instilled values and strong sense of purpose often prevailed even when a generation apart from its practice and frequently so where the extended family and business connections continued. For example, Walter Crane, a good friend of the designer Lewis Foreman Day, a descendant of Essex Quakers, noted the puritan streak within him, a trait which Day himself acknowledged and others also recognised (Crane 1903: 11, Green 1910: 329). These reflect Quaker conduct delineated in the *Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain and Australia*, (1883). This conveys a strong sense of the spiritual and temporal discipline demanded, affirming care and prudence, with no space or time left for indulgence in anything that remotely satisfied aesthetic senses for their own sake (Society of Friends 1906). But, as Frederick has demonstrated, it was a life-style that with increasing prosperity many Quakers relinquished (2006:590-60). Like Fry, to whom he was distantly related by marriage, Marsh ceased to meet or take any role within Quakerism,

but evidently never lost the touch of upbringing.

While the Quaker lifestyle of Bedford Marsh may like the Fry's have been strict, there is no suggestion that family life was austere. Christopher and Phyllis Marsh affirm home life for Ernest and his siblings, and later his own family, was happy and welcoming. Sarah Marsh like many 19th Century Quakers (Frederick 2006: 59-60) became an Anglican, both children accompanying her to church each Sunday. Ernest did not attend, though morning prayers were said by him to the family after breakfast, with the servants also present (Marsh 1986: 7). The Quaker regime thus remained implicit with high moral expectations. Biblical teaching was given to the Marsh children at home by governesses, as part of their education, through 'the simple language' of Foster's (1882) *The Teaching of the Bible* (Marsh 1986: 30).

Ambitious to build their business, the Marshes erected Down Hall Mill, Kingston in the 1860s (Plastow 1999). Steam powered, it produced fine quality stone ground flour under the trade name of Stan-Myln (Fig. 1.4), supplying the Royal family under Warrant. In the 1870s they took over Hog's Mill, renamed New Mill, had a retail shop in Wimbledon High Street (Plastow 1999) and occupied Wimbledon windmill until the enclosure of the common as a park in the 1860s (Plastow 1977: 10). It appears that on the retirement of the partnership between Joseph and Bedford in the 1890s the business was handed over to the partnership of Ernest and Frederick.

Garfield notes how to 'be recognised as a man of substance the Victorian businessman's personal fortune was expected to be £100,000' (2000: 96). Had the milling business evolved and continued to keep its market share, Marsh could have reasonably expected to achieve this objective. Given his marriage in 1893 into the large and extended Quaker Marriage family, a family acknowledged for innovation in the Essex milling trade (App. 4), it is probable that both families expected the union to result in expansion of the

Kingston business. This did not happen.

Evidence suggests the Kingston business chose to stay with traditionally produced stone ground flour, its qualities acknowledged, but facing competition from cheaper imports in a reducing market (Kingston K1-2221, 2267). Margaret Stuart (1999), Ernest's cousin, thought the introduction of the internal combustion engine was also a significant cause of the business's failure (Stuart 1999) through its consequent diminishing requirement for horse feed for Windsor and the Army. Outwardly the 1890s began well. Consolidated by disposal of New Mill in 1896, by 1899 the company occupied new offices on the market designed in Arts and Crafts style by architects Carter and Ashworth (Fig.1.5) (Kingston K1-2281). Ernest diversified into domestic insurance as agent for Royal Exchange and General Insurance (Kelly's 1899-1911) and by 1909 had trading premises at 118 London Road, Kingston Railway Station at Coombe Road, Norbiton and High Street, Esher (Kelly's 1909). Unfortunately, the diversification was too little, too late. The Kingston Market office and Down Hall Mill were sold in 1914, but continued to trade under the Marsh name and Royal Warrant until the 1950s (Kingston K1-3571, 3651).

The loss of the business (1914) had a catastrophic effect on the income of Ernest Marsh and other members of the family. Hindsight suggests Ernest's lack of experience elsewhere proved detrimental. Although undoubtedly advised by the Marriage side of the family, he was tied to daily administration under traditional practices in a declining business, with scant opportunity to gain direct experience of innovatory practices elsewhere, whether in finance, administration or processing.

Christopher Marsh however considered his father's 'uncontrollable acquisition of art and other treasures ... inevitably led to his neglect of the firm its failure and bankruptcy' (Marsh 1980-1981: 12). While his purchases, discussed elsewhere (Chap. 4 & 5), suggest wilful self-indulgence, the causes and sequence of events leading to the decline of the business are more complex than lack of business acumen or will to succeed. Close attention to business

affairs was a necessary adjunct to supporting the lifestyle to which he aspired. However, given his father's and uncle's example, with their large comfortable homes and involvement in civic life, he no doubt felt it possible to both manage the business profitably and indulge outside interests.

The rise and fall of the business suggests a collective reaping of rewards from a lifetime of endeavour, rather than following the Marriage example of capital investment in new plant and machinery. In 1906 Bedford Marsh, by then 74, had to reinvest in the business (Marsh 1913: 2) and by September 1909 was giving financial assistance to his family. Dick ceased employment in the business (Marsh 1980-81: 8) and was unable to pay his rent for his home (Marsh papers 29 9 1908). Relocated to Guildford, family connections between the Marsh's and the Quaker Fry and Tothill (Thomas 1999: 129, 164) families in Bristol (Marsh 1980-81: 3) led to financial help. Following the committal of Roger Fry's wife Helen to a mental institution, Dick's daughter Margaret Curtis (b. 1904) was placed at *Durbins* as a young companion to their daughter Pamela (d. c1958) (Stuart 1999).

In contrast, Ernest appears to have been partly insulated from the fall in income through benefit of trust income received from his wife's dowry and later legacies from her family. It is probably right to suggest that the cushioning effect of this private income encouraged Ernest's indulgence and blunted the necessity of his sharper attention to the desperate state of the business (P. Marriage 1907). As son Christopher observed, the lack of balance between business and pleasure was a significant factor in the business's demise. The private and business concerns were evidently unknown to the wider civic and business community and, following family precedent, Ernest was appointed JP to the Kingston Bench on or about 1908 (Kelly's 1908: 14).

Petitioned for Bankruptcy

By 1914 following the petition of creditors a trustee had been assigned for the business J. & B. Marsh. Gross liabilities were £25,692 (2005 equivalent £1.64m, Davies 2006), the

value of the property £24,394 (PRO BT39 81 h-p vol.1 388). However, at the Kingston County Court 4 and 21 March 1914 petitions for bankruptcy and assignment of property by creditors were not proceeded with and subsequently dismissed (Surrey Hist. Centre. 3545/12). The business was liquidated. Margaret Stuart recalled that through Waring W. Tothill (1830-1910) (Stuart 1986) some financial arrangement had been previously made and also later with the Reckitt family (Stuart 1999). As Caine (2005: 204), Emden (1940), Harvey (1988) and Jeremy (c.1988, 1998) attests, such support amongst extended middle and upper middle class Victorian families was an obligation, but particularly with Quakers (Society of Friends 1906: Section IV 'Doctrine and Practice'. Division 1.1-2 pp. 117-123, 1911: Chap. XIII. 4 p.116, Walvin 1997).

Ernest resigned from the Kingston bench and the family moved to Haslemere. It is hard not to see their removal from Kingston as banishment in disgrace (Frederick 2006: 60). Remarkably, life for the children of Ernest and Sarah Marsh, Francis Bedford (1896-1916), Christopher (1899-1988) and Phyllis (1902-1991), until 1913 seems to have been largely insulated from business woes (Marsh 1980-81: 3-7, 1986: 9-19). Francis attended Kingston Grammar School then Bilton Grange, Rugby. Educated in the early years by governesses, Christopher attended Gate House Preparatory School, Kingston, Bilton Grange, then by scholarship to Charterhouse. Educated at home, Phyllis later attended school in Haslemere (Marsh 1986: 18-23). Moving home caused Christopher considerable distress:

> I have never known, been told or tried to obtain details... It marked, for me at any rate, the end of childhood, It was also a major severance (which must have been more severe for Mother and Father) from Granny ... Mother with no domestic assistance, except a daily, ... Father with no occupation (Marsh 1980-81: 7, 12-13).

A form of purdah, their withdrawal appears to have been more public than private. Though immersed in settling in to new surroundings they were not ostracised. Friends visited (Marsh 1986: 22) and holidays were taken (Marsh 1986: 18). Recent studies (Flintoff 2005: 4.1-2) on the periodic rise and decline of the fortunes of 19th and early 20th Century families suggest that our perception of the opprobrium likely to have been visited on Ernest Marsh may

be slightly misplaced. Part of the cycle of both family and business life, it was recognised that without risk there was no reward.

Economic Imperialism: The Federation of British Industries

Ernest Marsh's life after 1915 became strongly inter-connected with the dual interests of industry and art. In particular, events soon after the commencement of the First World War were to prove significant to Marsh's encouragement of interest in promoting British artistic practice. Christopher Marsh recalled 'In 1915 - with the War just developing ... Father felt that he could, and should, do some useful war Service... at the Admiralty as a clerk, returning at weekends' (Marsh 1980-81: 15). Later moved to the Crown Colonies Office (Marsh 1986: 22), his employment, c. late 1915 (Ealing 55/1726) brought about a dramatic change in both his financial fortunes and, in the longer term (Chap. 6), the furtherance of his artistic interests. As Christopher related:

> After a year as a clerk at the Admiralty he [in 1916, age 53]:...was brought out by two senior Admiralty ...officers a Mr Nugent and Mr Tennyson (nephew of the poet) ... [who had been given] a remit to establish a Federation of British Industries ... to coordinate and develop the industrial and commercial activities of the country, primarily for the full industrial war effort. Under the directorship of Nugent and Tennyson, Father was nominated as General Manager, a post which he held to 1924. I do not know what salary was granted ... probably £700/£800 as it was after the war when he broke into the four figure level of £1000 (Marsh 1980-81: 16).

The practical intentions of the Federation of British Industries were in fact to look at industrial opportunity beyond the war and to be seen in the context of imperialist thinking within the higher echelons of Whitehall on possible 'vehicles of imperial propaganda' (Mackenzie 1984: 15-38) and 'imperial propaganda societies' in particular (Mackenzie 1984: 147-172). Mackenzie states somewhat surprisingly the

> unassailable [fact that] in some respects ... By the 1920s all residual imperial sentiment had been destroyed by the First World War. Imperialism as a sophisticated concept had been, and remained, the preserve of an elite (1984: 1).

His view that such thinking emanated from a 'fractured elite' overstates the case (1984: 1). It is evident that despite the appalling losses of the war years defeatism was never an element in public consciousness. There was also a broad spectrum of public opinion that recognised the

gains from Empire as part of Britain's place in the competitive world market and saw no reason for retraction. For example, in 1916 the eleventh exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society was held at Burlington House. The significance of the exhibition was recognised by *The Star* to be wider than a demonstration of domestic competence in handicraft. Jingoistic in tone, it noted how German art schools had built upon English ideas, following which commerce through

> the triple alliance of art, science and industry set about capturing the world market in decoration, and furniture, and books, pottery and metalwork. The war has interrupted their attempt, and given our own manufacturers the chance to awaken to the fact that art and industry pays (Greensted 2005: 75).

An important exhibitor at the exhibition was the Design and Industries Association (DIA) founded in 1915 on the initiative of the industrialist Henry McLaren, Baron and later Lord Aberconway (1879-1953), a friend and patron of Whistler. With the slogan 'Nothing need be ugly' the aim of the DIA was 'to improve the quality and fitness of goods on sale to the general public' (Greensted 2005: 75). Clearly Aberconway recognised the mutual benefit of marrying art to industry.

It is also evident from Federation of British Industries records that within Whitehall the opportunities of Empire were still accepted. At the Foreign Office Roland Thomas Nugent (1886-1962), later Sir Roland, recognised that German pre-eminence in industry and trade over Britain, particularly in the heavy industries, was being severely damaged by the war, and the prospect of German colonies being lost during the conflict represented a trading opportunity for Britain. He proposed plans be made 'to enable Britain to secure as much as possible of Germany's international trade after the war' (Tennyson 1957: 119). Secretary of a founding committee which became the Foreign Trade Department, a sub-department of the Foreign Office, he became its official head. Colonial Office barrister Charles Bruce Locker Tennyson, later Sir Charles (1879-1977) joined Nugent's committee to represent its interests. Plans progressed to the founding of the fledgling United British Industries Association later the nucleus Federation of British Industries, Tennyson becoming its second in command in

1917. Recognising the necessity for a cohesive and authoritative organisation speaking for industrialists and labour, Nugent proposed:

> establishment of a Federation of trade associations ... the promotion and encouragement of free and unrestricted communication ... amicable arrangements and relations between masters and workmen and to the avoidance and settlement of strikes and all other forms of industrial warfare... the encouragement, promotion and ...development of industries of all kinds' (Warwick MSS.200/F/3/D1/1/1.19/2/17).

The promotion aspect (Chap. 6) was to prove significant to Marsh's future artistic interests. Following government assent in April 1916 (Warwick MSS 200/F/3/D1/1/2), the Association soon occupied prestigious offices at 39 St. James Street, Piccadilly (Bulletin 1917: 40): becoming 'within two years a national ... asset' (Marsh 1980-81: 16). Outwardly independent, it was a quasi-autonomous government funded body, funded through the Board of Trade. Some staff like Marsh was employed, but Nugent and possibly Tennyson were initially Whitehall secondments (Warwick MSS200/F/3/D1/7/21). War circumscribed the choice of administrators, making credibility initially difficult: Mathias observed (c.1970) 'effectiveness depended upon the direct industrial experience of others'. As Tennyson admitted, all four chief executives, himself, Nugent, Guy Locock and D. L. Walker were 'almost entirely without industrial experience ... Ernest Marsh, the office manager, [was] a flour miller who had been chiefly known as an authority on Martin Ware' (1957: 139).

Probably known personally by Tennyson through acquaintance and interests (Marsh 1984: 47), Marsh rented rooms at 10 Cheyne Row, Chelsea, the Tennysons at no. 37 (Marsh papers). Tennyson and Marsh had many mutual acquaintances, among others, the artist Randolph Schwabe (1885-1948), residing nearby on Chelsea Embankment (Tennyson 1957: 197). A few doors away lived Marsh's cousin Rachel, sister of the artist Wilfred Gabriel de Glehn (1870-1951) and friend of John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) then living between Cheyne Row and Chelsea Church (Wortley 1997: 9). If there was an element of nepotism in Marsh's appointment it is noteworthy that Marsh himself was not beyond the same practice, employing his brother Dick and a friend, Minnie Hamilton (Marsh 1986: 16). Starting as the

Federation of British Industries Office Manager (Warwick MSS.200/F/3/D1/-/), Marsh clearly flourished within the organisation and with seniors who shared his artistic interests. The status of his job rose with the organisation's expansion. He retired as its Financial Secretary in 1924 (*The Bulletin* Warwick MSS.200/F/4/24/4).

Marsh's record of employment at the Federation of British Industries can be read as a form of redemption for previous sins. Its interconnection with his artistic offices resulted in his subsequent appointment as a Director to the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition and international recognition (Figs. 10.1-2), discussed below in Chapter 6.

4. Reading the Private Space: Creating an Aesthetic Interior

Introduction

This chapter is largely based around examination of the interior decoration and furnishing of *Coombe Bury* (1892-1913), Kingston upon Thames, the home of Ernest and Sarah Marsh c.1893-1914, and *Hatch Hill* (1913-1938) their later home near Haslemere, Surrey.

Scott has usefully introduced the idea of 'locational value' in relation to the importance or otherwise of the link of design and decoration to, or belonging to 'particular places' (2005: 137). While that discussion related primarily to the Eighteenth century, I suggest its philosophy has potentially a broader remit applicable in both macro and micro spheres in any period: for example, whether in terms of national boundaries or within a particular domestic environment. This chapter looks at the potential for locational value of a home influenced by the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement, an art movement of its time.

As an extension of the same scenario Scott (2005: 137) also observes how the take-up of a particular idea may follow that envisaged by the maker, but once launched takes on a life of its own and may be redefined by the market. Tozer argues, as the following discussion will seek to validate, that the process of creativity has however never been one way, that for example art as produced has always been a reaction to the demands, desires and exigencies of both producers and consumers: 'a product, and an artefact ... indissolubly linked to its time' (1999: 60).

A major impediment to discerning whether trends within the Arts and Crafts movement conform to these theories has been, as Rowbotham (2003) observed, the 'almost nonexistent' documentation of purchases for the ordinary home. Given the scale of production, this is surprising. Such records as do exist are almost entirely confined to carefully composed images of the homes of and by artists and designers (Jordan 2002). Exceptions are the Hammersmith home of the founder of the Dove Press, Sir Emery Walker (1851-1933),

containing much of its original furnishing and later inventories but little or no original documentation (Reid 2004: 185-203), surviving photographs of *Durbins*, the home of Roger Fry photographed by A. C. Cooper in 1917 for *Vogue* (Reed 2004: 35-50) and the 1877 inventory of the home of Linley Sambourne (Gere 2000: 131). Furnished and decorated by buying in commissioned and readymade items supplied by others, these middle-class homes contrast with Little Holland House, Carshalton, built and furnished in the Arts and Crafts manner by pottery worker Frank Reginald Dickinson (1874-1961). Apart from ceramics by Doulton of Lambeth, where Dickinson was employed, it contains nothing bought in (Dickinson 1994). Its emulation of Arts and Crafts ideas, perhaps mostly of Baillie Scott, adapted and constructed by himself, demonstrates most purely the movements' ideal, but offers little insight on patronage of other craftsmen.

Some items acquired by Marsh, particularly the hand wrought belt buckles and brooches of enamelled silver probably by Edith B. (m.1893) and Nelson Dawson (1859-1942), echo both the Arts and Crafts influence of Ashbee (Wilson 2003) and Art Nouveau (Anscombe 1991: 161-162, Phillips 2000: 237). Stylistically they blur the distinctions between the two, as do a Guild of Handicraft (Guild of Handicraft) octagonal casket (1901) and a bonbonniere (1903) with enamel inset by William Mark (1868-1956) (Fig. 9.2). Prior to joining Ashbee Mark had worked with Nelson Dawson, who like Marsh, collected Martinware (Marsh 1937: 21) (the inter-connection of craftsmen and collectors through practice and other interests will be noticed throughout this thesis). Tinniswood (1999), Greenhalgh (2000: 15-32) and Mackrell (2005) devote much effort defining Art Nouveau (first so named in 1884), as an artistic movement with a separate identity, but at the beginning of the 1890s that separateness was and still remains unclear. As Ogata (2004: 244) Mackrell (2005: 109) argue, our present day preoccupation with differentiation between the intentions and realisation of the Arts and Crafts movement and Art Nouveau, to give the latter a separate identity, is a problematic largely of our making, unrecognised by its purchasers.

As mentioned in the Introduction, in parallel with his Arts and Crafts purchases Marsh

was a considerable patron of much else that was new in concept or new to the eyes of the British collector, 'New Sculpture' (App. 15, Figs. 2.2-5, 3.2-7, 8.1-2), Fine Art (App. 13, 14, 19, Figs. 2.2-5, 3.2-7), Ceramics (App. 12, 23, 24, 25, 26, Figs. 2.2-5, 3.2-7, 6.1-15, 7.2), and all things Oriental (App. 18, 22, Figs. 4.1-2), amongst many other interests (App. 20, Figs. 5.1-5, 6.6), so while this discussion centres on patronage of the Arts and Crafts that interest was never exclusive or considered prejudicial to his other enthusiasms.

Gere concluded that the choice of purchases by Walker and Sambourne suggests they were systematic and unsentimental 'each item was to be an educational object lesson, exemplifying beauty and artistic workmanship' demonstrating commitment to the idea of 'the total work of art' or *Gesamtkunstwerk* (2000: 131). This form of entomological specimen collecting does much to explain the eclectic range of Arts and Crafts items chosen by Ernest Marsh (App. 16, 17), each often being the sole representative in the collection of both an aspect of Arts and Crafts practice and a particular practitioner. As the following discussion demonstrates, there is a discipline and sophistication of choice within each area of his Arts and Crafts collecting suggesting not simply restraint, that less is more, but a profound understanding and sympathy with the objectives of the new thinking. It contrasts with some of his other collecting interests, such as the Oriental collection (App. 18, 22), which in some aspects, such as the jade bottles, suggests more about volume, than precision of choice.

It can only be speculation, but his Arts and Crafts suggests a maturing of his collecting habits into one of discerning selectivity, at least in this area of interest. The objects acquired, in their combination of idealogical and aesthetic values attest to a joint desire to create the ideal home, the cost of which must have been significantly borne by Sarah Marsh's own private means. While it can only be supposition, both Ernest and Sarah Marsh's Quaker upbringing suggests an inclination to liberal ideas and the socialist principles espoused by the Arts and Crafts movement, well known through the writing and public speaking of William Morris and the propagandist art of Walter Crane. There is no record of either of the Marsh's expressing any overt political opinion but their patronage of the craftsman worker, rather than

the machine made and mass produced suggests empathy with its principles.

External Influences: *The Studio*

Ernest Marsh married Sarah Marriage (Fig. 1.2) on 7 February 1893. The most tangible evidence of the influence of Arts and Crafts on their taste is the depiction of a number of designs purchased by them in the pages of the monthly magazine *The Studio*, 'a magazine of fine and applied art' founded in 1893 by Charles Holme (1848-1923). In the light of this, the ideological rationale driving *The Studio* is worth closer scrutiny. According to his daughter Phyllis, Marsh subscribed from at least the late 1890s (Marsh 1978). This confirmation of his readership is significant, for, as Ashwin (1993: 9, 89-92) and Dickinson (1994: 7) have indicated, evidence of other readers is almost non-existent. Records of *The Studio* records for this period have not survived.

Rowbotham (2003) suggests the new thinking manifested in the Arts and Crafts, Ruskinian in concept, arose from a new awareness of the value of labour and the exercise of creativity. A process recognised as idealistic it was nevertheless seen to be grounded in practical possibilities, by which the artisan could achieve a sense of fulfilment through producing artefacts by proper application of hand and eye. In terms of likely market Anscombe considers 'the movement provided a new middle-class fashion for interior decoration, displaying examples of stained glass, art pottery, furniture, wallpapers, friezes and tea-sets in order to display their modernity' (1991: 125). This said, it would be naïve not to recognise, as Turner has observed of this period, that the interest aroused might have been more akin with how 'each generation despises the taste of the generation which has gone before' (1983: 1).

Much of the preparation of the ground in terms of receptiveness to Arts and Crafts ideas can be traced back to the writings of Eastlake (1868), Edis (1881) and Lewis Day (1882) but more broadly to the *Art at Home Series* of publications (1876-8) initiated by the Rev. W. J.

Loftie. At the small price of 2/6d (12 ½p) they widened interest in creating what *The Examiner* called 'The House Beautiful' (Loftie 1878: 130), and in the words of Loftie himself,

> To lead people to think for themselves, and aim at having in their houses what is suitable, comfortable, and useful, as then they will also have what is beautiful in the highest and widest sense of the word (Loftie 1878: viii)

The impact of *The Studio* suggests however that it offered more than this, giving the virtues of the Arts and Crafts a corporal and crusading identity, through which Holme said he aimed to attack the,

> pot-pourri of so called Victorian style [in which] principles have been thrown away for the sake of the gilded butterfly of novelty, the capture of which we have deemed to be the height of civilization, and the great end of art (1890: 4).

The Studio was not in fact the first periodical to break the style of art magazines such as *Art Journal* and *Magazine of Art*. This accolade belonging to the Century Guild's relatively short-lived, and in Calloway's view (2005: 88), somewhat inward-looking *The Hobby Horse*, published 1884-c.1893. The test for *The Studio*, as Tozer (1999) has observed, was whether it could achieve a balance between proselytising and being responsive to customer demand. As Ashwin (1993: 9) Dewing (2000: 7) and Rose (1993: 11) acknowledge, Holme and Editor Joseph Gleeson White (1851-1898) recognised that the *Art Journal* and *Magazine of Art* with their 'undeclared, implicit hierarchy of the arts, with Painting and Sculpture at the top' (Dewing 2000: 7) were failing to move with the times. With a consequent gap in the market for a new publication for both male and female art-students, art-workers and the buying public, their objective became, as Dewing notes to create 'an enlightened society with artistically decorated and furnished homes' (2000: 7).

Despite his encouragement of the artisan, as a retired carpet-manufacturer Holme was under no illusion about the likely market for Arts and Crafts products. As Houfe notes *The Studio* aimed to 'cater for an emerging class of art conscious people in a middle-income bracket, ... patrons of the New Art [who] might ... visit craft exhibitions' (1995: 10-12). Manifesting Baillie-Scott's dictum, 'Whatever Art may be admitted to the house it must be

genuine Art and not Trade Art' (1906: 76), *The Studio* did not invent the ideas but became their literary voice. But to buy was to become. If the vision seemed utopian it sowed seeds (Rowbotham 2003, Crawford 1985: 23-43, Calloway 2005: 88-91), as Marsh's purchases evince, becoming probably Britain's most influential art magazine ever published (Denvir 1986: 236).

Covered extensively by *The Studio,* the annual Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society shows of commercial and amateur designs at the New Gallery, Regent Street became the primary Arts and Crafts showcase. Anscombe suggests that 'as the idiom of the liberal middle classes' there was an element of self-deception amongst those who could afford Arts and Crafts goods (1991: 54-55). For, as A. H. McMurdo remarked, they were 'beautiful things for homes of simple and gentle folk', which was just how they wished to see themselves (Anscombe 1991: 55). With objectives in many ways sympathetic to the traditions of the Quaker movement, the look became a cultural signifier (Vogtherr 2001: 232). But most pertinently, for men: for as Johnston concludes, *The Studio* 'imbued a zeal to acquire', but with men the primary earners and possessors of financial resources it was 'his aesthetic sensibilities' that were honed, not hers (1999: 136).

Other influences on Marsh may have included Edward Spencer (Chapt. 6), through their yearly school reunions: thus as Spencer's artistic ideas evolved, so did Marsh's. Marsh's brother Frances introduced him to the Martin Brothers (Chapt. 5), but whether they are the origin of his first contact with the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement is unknown. Prior to their both being married, Marsh shared rooms at Belle Vue Road, Kingston with his artistically gifted second cousin Talwin Morris (1865-1911) (Frontispiece, Marsh 1937: 22), sub-editor (1891) of the weekly review, *Black and White* and later designer of book covers for Blackie & Son (Wilkinson 2005: 1-6). Morris married the writer of children's books, his

second cousin Alice Marsh (1861-1955), daughter of Ernest's uncle Joseph and therefore Ernest's first cousin (Gold 2005). It can only be speculation, but this close association by Ernest with the urge to improve the presentation and content of machine produced printed books through the application of principles of good design, evidenced in his known purchase of many (Apps. 20, 31, 32) must have done much to inform his understanding of how any individual, through direct intervention, could initiate change.

Gendering the Home

Cohen (2003) suggests that while the influence on interior design of professional male designers such as Edis, Morris, Crane and Day is acknowledged, the role of middle class men in home making is in need of a corrective. Such interest became possible from the increased disposable income of middle class men through greater earning power in the late 19th Century With few exceptions, critical comment (Pearce 1994, Gere 1999, Anscombe 1991) emphasises the role of women, when as this study will demonstrate, and as Tinniswood (1999) and Cohen (2003) have noted, men not only collaborated but often led taste. Cohen also suggests that some of this interest lay with the changed financial status of the married man. Increased prosperity resulted in wives frequently bringing significant sums of money into a marriage (as in the case of Sarah Marsh, who brought a considerable dowry), often greater than his contribution. This did not demean his position. On the contrary spending of these resources by the husband on his preference of interior decoration as on anything else was, Cohen argues, within the conventions of the time, a balance of their joint resources; she enhanced their disposable income, he used it creatively for their mutual benefit.

Cohen further considered that until Oscar Wilde's trial, gendering of interest in the interior as female was not an issue, but its subsequent feminising through forging of links with homosexuality may be seen as a point of departure for such interests. The suggestion being

that while hardly indicative of homosexual inclinations, 'too conspicuous acquisition left [the sexuality of] men open to question' (Cohen 2003). Cohen posits that while in the late 1890s and the beginning of the 20th Century the Wilde trial may have been a factor in loss of interest by some men in decoration of the home, female repossession might have more to do with the growth of suburbia, commuting of men to work and the consequent significant absence of the male presence during the working week. The Marsh family home at Kingston was no more than a fifteen minute walk from the business. This situation did, however, change. His later employment in London after the family move to Haslemere in 1913 and consequent week day lodging at Cheyne Walk, Chelsea supports Cohen's argument that, whether by choice or otherwise, Marsh and his wife fell into a new pattern of separate lives, a relationship reduced during the week as the evidence shows (with no telephone) to communication by postcard.

Research for this thesis has further suggested that a prerequisite to understanding the results of the endeavours of British middle class male society requires appreciation of how attitudes were formed within its social groupings. In particular in regard to societal expectations of the male in providing a home but also for him to have space outside the home to be his own man. Tosh (1999) for example has provided a persuasive overview, in particular arguing how the structure of Victorian middle-class society by cause and effect produced groupings that encouraged certain behavioural responses. One of the drivers behind this was, in his view, the societal expectation of one's own home to be governed by convention and business, and on a standard at least on the level enjoyed by one's parents. Tosh suggests that to achieve this required security of income arising from attainment of responsibility in the family business, demonstrated prospects of progress in an external profession, or prosperous independence as a self-made business man. Complete fulfilment meant marriage and the setting up of an independent home, an event happening for most men in their late twenties at the earliest (Tosh 1999: 108-110).

Such findings are in themselves hardly new but Tosh further suggests there was a certain inevitability, through a combination of the social circumstances already described and

classical education that it was seemly and right, particularly given the then notably inferior education given to women, that intimate friendships also became common among young men, particularly when so many had been boarded out into private schools. Tosh considers it was an environment in which the 'phenomenon of male friendship surely subsumed a fair amount of overt homosexual feeling [although] it is seldom possible to know whether this was so in particular instances' (1999: 109-110), a classic example being the life long companionship between the artists and collectors Charles Shannon (1863-1937) and Charles Ricketts (1866-1931) (Cooper 1994: 74-76, MacLennan 2003). Generally considered to have had a life-long homosexual relationship, the evidence nevertheless remains circumstantial.

While there is no doubt that in the period after the 1880s there were preoccupations with taints of femininity, Cooper (1994) and Kestner's (1995) retrospective concentration of scrutiny on sexual identity *et al* is in danger of exaggerating the issue, that the counterpoint argument might be that for most men, whether single or married it was rarely a concern, that there was a far greater maturity and confidence of attitudes about the seemliness of male friendships than current debate implies.

Tosh's thesis, citing the example of the life of the Poet laureate Tennyson is that for the late Victorian male there could be a triangular dynamic between work, home and all male association that was potentially creative but equally destructive of relationships (1999: 5, 110). Men might therefore have found fulfilment through diversion by other interests: that marriage might also be possible to both a wife and ideas, particularly when that diversion was shared with other men; that one need not necessarily supplant the other. Tosh suggests that, for many, the pressures of companionate marriage were suffocating and allowed little opportunity for such digression (1999: 126), but where the bourgeois male entered into more cerebral

opportunities, particularly if it served the community, approbation was assured, as long as domestic harmony was maintained (1999: 132-140).

Tosh also importantly cites the instance of the Bachelor pad, the ultimate bolt-hole from domesticity maintained by Henry Ashbee in chambers at Grays Inn, suggesting that this was a rare and elitist indulgence (1999: 127). This thesis will examine further the prevalence and impact of such accommodations maintained by men financially able to do so.

In a different vein Richards (1987) and Tosh (1999) also cite instances of the often intense relationships between brother and sister, providing comforts and support (not withstanding wholly speculative ideas about incestuous relationships) and removing incentive for the male to leave home and marry (Tosh 1999: 109). Greenslade for example, while maintaining an office and rooms in town, also like Ashbee at Gray's Inn, remained a bachelor, living with his sisters in Exeter.

Richards concludes, however, that convention required the move to the married state, that anything else was an affront to masculine status. While there is no doubt from the evidence that Tosh quotes that parents were frequently disappointed if sons did not fulfil such obligations the numbers of those choosing not to marry, as he concedes elsewhere, suggests that the pressures to oblige, while they may have been recognised, failed to coerce numerous men to enter the married state (1999: 108-115).

There are other factors, such as escapism. O'Hagan has argued how 'collecting was always an extreme form of the leisure pursuit, something people did when they got tired of doing something useful' (2005: 3). When a career developed a new sense of purpose, as for a short while with Marsh, collecting and allied interests as an occupation receded in priority.

It is noteworthy how each of the Marsh homes reflected progression in Arts and Crafts ideas of both external and interior design, from the traditional vernacular of *Coombe Bury* (occupied 1892-1913), to the embodiment of its aesthetics at *Hatch Hill* (1913-1938) and, later in their final property at *Highmeads*, Easebourne (1938-1945). *Highmeads* demonstrates continuity of faith with commitment to quality of design and materials but is restrained to the point of plainness. As such it is a good example of the final architectural expression of the Arts and Crafts movement in which, as Spier has noted, it is hard without some understanding of what has gone before to discern any obvious historical association when the only link remaining is sensitivity to balance of proportion, 'the use of natural materials and simple uncluttered spaces' (2002: 36).

While they set up home jointly at *Coombe Bury*, when the milling business foundered it was Sarah who bicycled the countryside, found and, it appears, purchased the new home, *Hatch Hill* (1939: 1). A home exuding all the cherished values previously seen in *Coombe Bury* it was essentially a house, both internal and external, chosen and paid for by a woman. One of its attractions to Sarah may have been that the vendor Ethel Leeds was said to have been a Pankhurst (Clark 1999, Pugh 2003).

The location and choice of house is instructive. The Marshs would have been familiar through *The Studio* and the Home Arts and Industries Exhibitions in 1901 and 1903 with the socialist inspired self-help schemes for the poorly paid in Haslemere of Joseph King and the Peasant Art Society (Wood 1901: 109, 125, Harrod 2000: 13-24, Shepley 2000: 3-12). Haslemere's direct railway link to London from 1859 quickly attracting the artistic and literati (Shepley 2000: 3), 'Middle class invaders' transforming the small market town with their money and demand for quality property in which to live (Trotter 1996: 7).

Designed by William Ernest Emerson ARIBA (d.1960), an admirer of Baillie Scott, Rennie Mackintosh and C. F. A. Voysey, *Hatch House* (1910) renamed *Hatch Hill,* reflects Baillie Scott influence in its reserved entrance (fig. 3.1) and dramatic elevations to the rear

private garden (Davey 1996: 16) (Emerson 1896: RIBA 1980.70). Their influence is most apparent in the restrained interior details (Fig. 3.2) (Emerson c.1913), with Voysey ideas evident in the white rectilinear staircases (Fig 3.5).

In Pursuit of Pleasure: Realising the Look

Cohen suggests when viewing interiors such *Coombe Bury* and *Hatch Hill* a distinction should be made between collecting and decoration (2003), the point being well made in illustrations of the home of that determinant of late 19th taste on interior design, Robert Edis (1881), and that of the anonymous, but clearly moneyed Liverpool household, in which to Gere:

> Each item was to be an educational object lesson, exemplifying beauty and artistic workmanship: [the collecting of choice ceramics being a] serious, costly, competitive business requiring significant connoisseurship (2000: 123-132).

The unanswerable question is whether they were also acquired as part of a collection in the museological sense: that is, when viewed as a whole they severally and individually offered by comparison a historical and/or aesthetic debate on the progression of ideas and technical development of materials. Further, that not only were they acquired for the pleasure and learning of their possessor but also for the opportunity to impart knowledge to others. Pearce suggests both: 'the dark twin - the inward and private', in contrast to 'the sunlight of presentable motives and intellectual and aesthetic rationales' (1992: 89). The scale of Marsh's practice suggests rather the 'curieux', the quintessential man with 'an inquiring mind' defined by Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnnaire Universel*: as a man who wishes to know and learn everything (Pearce 1992: 92). On the other hand, particularly with the clocks and items made of tortoiseshell, some acquisitions suggest no greater interest than that of the *amateur*, defined by Pomian as a lover of fine arts, rather than a systematic buyer for the purpose of study (1990: 54). Their display around the home amongst his ceramics with every level surface covered in objects nevertheless reflects the Victorian predilection for mass (Blom 2003: 127).

The answer to the status of each item may possibly lie in part within both the manner of record keeping, if any, and the retention of documentation by the owner. Methodical listing

suggests collecting rather than simply adornment. It is perhaps no accident that, in contrast to his collections of Martinware (App. 12) and pictures (App. 13, 14), Marsh makes no mention in any traced documentation of any of his numerous clocks, tortoiseshell, silver or Arts and Crafts purchases for the home or family. On the one hand, given in many instances their personal nature, such as the jewellery (Apps. 16-17, Figs. 9.4, 7) and inscribed pieces for daughter Phyllis (App. 16, Fig. 9.3), this is hardly surprising. On the other, the nature and quality of such acquisitions suggest that if they had been acquired with the 'objective disinterest identified with most male collecting' (Cohen 2003), then they would have elicited the same degree of correspondence and recording process evident in other areas of his collecting.

Documents and photographic evidence suggests that in the living rooms at least, Ernest appears to have been the prime influence and decision maker. It is noticeable that while the communal and public downstairs rooms at *Coombe Bury* and later at *Hatch Hill* were photographed by Marsh on several occasions (Fig. 2.2-5, 3.1-7), there is none of the bedrooms or other domestic areas. Photographs of such intimate spaces at this period would probably have been considered unseemly. The first Marsh's photographs took at *Coombe Bury* are evidently experiments, often duplicated and noted with exposure times and light conditions. Later examples do not have these annotations. It is surprising that other areas were unrecorded. If, however, considered the woman's sphere it is arguably unlikely that Marsh would even have considered such an indiscretion. It is also possible the unrecorded areas were conventional in decoration and did not merit recording. Documentary evidence suggests that the jewellery and other artefacts purchased for his wife and family were, as with everything else, largely at his behest rather than Sarah's. In his *Reminiscences*, Christopher blamed his father not his mother for the scale of these purchases (Marsh 1980-81: 12).

In contrast to his parents imposing residence in Crescent Road (Marsh 1980-81: 3), *Coombe Bury's* outwardly modest vernacular mellow brick facade nevertheless fronted a one acre garden containing a substantial stable and coach house, greenhouses, informal and

kitchen gardens, a tennis court and pond (Marsh 1980-81: 3, Fig. 2.1). In the new thinking of the time (Eastlake 1878: 41, Gloag 1969: ix, Gere 2000: 70) the simplicity of the house itself was its virtue, what mattered most was the opportunity presented by the interior. With external appearance deemed an irrelevance, tenants could give free rein to their creative energies on the interior. Rather than being seen as old fashioned, the informal layout of *Coombe Bury*'s smaller rooms with their beamed ceilings fortuitously accorded with Baillie Scott's ideas on the desirable contemporary interior in which 'we may accept gladly the limitations [of] a more cottage-like home' (Anscombe 1991: 55).

If their choice of decoration in the 1890s (Figs. 2.2-5) can be seen as breaking with the past, the photographic evidence of their purchases suggests that, like in Gore's view (1991: 141) on much of the apparently progressive ideas in the pages of *The Studio*, it was tempered by a state of 'confusion and nostalgia' in its ideas which still built on a mystical vision of the past. For example, by inclusion of 'Jacobean' furniture, having the apparent virtue of age and hand-crafting were frequently reproductions or 'marriages' of old and new materials, as later proved to be the case with several Marsh purchases.

Why Marsh photographed the interior of *Coombe Bury* in 1906 is unknown. There is no evidence, for example, that he shared them with his close friend Sydney Greenslade. His success, however, in creating these images no doubt formed a precedent to do likewise when the family moved to *Hatch Hill*. Marsh created a progressive and unique home which he evidently felt merited recording not only for his private pleasure, and I suggest vanity, but also a nod to posterity.

The celebrated photographs of domestic interiors of the aristocracy by the well-to-do Quaker photographer H. Bedford Lemere may have been known to Marsh as he and his father were certainly acquainted and possibly distantly related (*The British Friend* 1875a: 294-296, *The Friend* 1875b: 326-328, Radley 2000: 13-14). However, apart from the spirit of the concept Marsh's interior views are far removed from Lemare's formal stage managed interiors

following set-piece themes (Cooper 1976, Gere 2000: 31 & 64). Marsh's photographs are very much in keeping with Keeble's conclusion on 'Photographing Home' in Aynsley and Grant's 'Imagined interiors' which argues that the photographic technological evolution universalised the medium, particularly within the domestic interior (2006: 218-9). For example, Lady Eastlake, 'a notable commentator on early photography' thought it had progressed to the extent of becoming 'a household want' (Aynsley 2006: 218). There were precedents. As Green-Lewis has concluded 'the appetite for gathering, collecting, taking, and reading cultural signs has no purer expression in the 19th Century than photography' a feast exemplified *par excellence* in the photographs of the collections of Queen Victoria whose 'avid read[ing] of these images of her wealth, was also part of their pleasure'(1996: 1-2).

Marsh's photographs do evoke other ideas. For example, some carry the mirrored image of the exposed camera on its tripod recording itself (Fig. 3.4), but without the photographer. Green-Lewis suggests that one of the compelling attractions of the process of photography in the 19th Century was its 'mirroring of nature's action', as if almost without a mediating hand and eye the subject reflected itself (1996: 64), for, as Julia Cameron observed, it allowed the subject to express itself, so that 'I felt as if she [the subject] entirely had made the picture' (1981: 182).

The Marsh pictures also exhibit a strong sense of what Green-Lewis has termed the so called 'kodaked' 1890s, of the camera becoming

> a means of establishing identity as well as verifying authenticity, and thus might be seen as a working symbol of the modernist nostalgia for origins, as well as an embodiment of the fin-de-siècle desire for the "real thing" (1996: 68).

In the case of the Marsh photograph's, as with Queen Victoria's, there is a strong sense of possession, since like her he had the satisfaction of knowing he possessed both the objects and their depiction. In the manner of late Victorian genre paintings, they are a narrative about control, as important for what is included as excluded: saying much about the personal choice of the photographer which, by inclusion, suggests approbation, in contrast to the exclusion of

things he did not wish us to see. As Dorment has noted of such contexts 'all these examples tell us much about the pride, accomplishments and aspirations of middle-class patrons' (2004: 22). Thus we see much that reflects Marsh's interest in the Arts and Crafts movement and the 'new' values it espouses.

Documentary evidence of who in the wider buying public followed the new enthusiasm for the Arts and Crafts is fragmentary or totally lacking, for example nothing survives of Liberty & Co. customer records (*Liberty,* Ashmore 2001). However, annotated Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society sales catalogues for 1893, 1896, 1899, and 1903 give a rare insight into its buyers (V & A, A & C Archive). Those customer names identified suggest the primary market to be middle and upper class residents of Kensington and Chelsea, affirming Crawford's conclusion that the Arts and Crafts movement was primarily a metropolitan creation with most of its ideas born and realised as artefacts in London and Birmingham (1985: 220).

The Marsh photographs of *Coombe Bury* and *Hatch Hill* show how the domestic interior of an enthusiast for the Arts and Crafts could embrace its ideas and blend them with other interests without I suggest debasing the driving ideologies of the Arts and Crafts movement. More importantly it was done without sacrificing domestic comfort. Each evolved almost organically, creating a home sympathetic to what the architect and designer Charles Voysey described as wanting for himself, not a set-piece but: 'a home exuding all the qualities of peace and rest and protection and family pride'(Anscombe 1991: 112).

Baillie Scott (1906) and Eastlake (1868) admired Elizabethan and later furniture, but it is noticeable none appear in illustrations of their new interiors. This is perhaps hardly surprising given that they and other designers were interested in fostering the making of new

interpretations of traditional ideas (Gere 2000: 111), rather than promoting the second-hand furniture trade. Baillie Scott took the view that a properly designed house should be largely self-sufficient in built-in seating and storage (1906: 76), as in the Carshalton home described earlier (p. 146). Other furniture, he prescribed, 'being not essential for effect but merely for use, will not include those unnecessary articles, which are merely so many stumbling blocks for the occupants'(1906: 75-76). Evidently more concerned with aesthetics than personal comfort he suggested that if additional furniture must be acquired, it be country made rush seated chairs, gate-leg tables and bureaus, 'old furniture [with] a sort of human character about it [and avoiding] the work of the drilled automaton' (Scott 1906: 76). Such opinions demanded that the reader think afresh about how to decorate and furnish a home and did not go unheeded, furniture purporting to be, but not always Jacobean and earlier being acquired for both the homes of Marsh (Fig. 2.2), the potter Reginald Wells (Fig. 6.10), and the cartoonist Linley Sambourne (Gere 2000: 112).

In their variety, Marsh's acquisitions appear to be further from the purist ideas of Baillie Scott and closer to C.R.Ashbee (Livingstone 2002). That is, less concern with the over all decorative scheme and greater interest in the quest and ethos in which things were made, imperfect though that might at times be. As Ashbee sagely observed, 'The Divine Beauty is too much for any of us, we can only get it dimly through the earthly revelation' (Crawford 1985: 211).

The Marsh household cannot be described as 'ordinary'. However, as events have shown, like others involved in trade, his income depended on its fluctuations and imperative on Ernest Marsh to create his own prosperity. The 'profit' from his industry and expenditure as revealed in the photographs is considered in the following discussion when looking at particular objects. Opportunity for Marsh to expand his artistic interests, although with some constraints, notably the acquiescence of his wife, came with his marriage to Sarah, known as Lillie or Lil, who brought with her an extensive dowry. The Married Women's Property Act of 1882 gave women independence through control of all their property, whether earned or

inherited (Shanley 1989, Caine 2005: 144). Given the possibility that wives might still feel intimidated to bow to a husband's wishes it is noteworthy and enlightened that despite the protection afforded by the new Act even tighter arrangements were made and updated to safeguard Sarah's interests, representatives from both families being appointed trustees in 1893 on behalf of the couple to manage this and later investments inherited from the Marriage side of the family. The protection afforded to her capital and income in her own right was to be fortunate in view of subsequent events.

Johnston suggests that a degree of care is necessary in assessing the motives driving acquisitions in the 1890s (1999: 135). That to assume, as with Ernest and Sarah Marsh, alignment with or aspiration to some defined higher ideal may not always be the case, that the motives may not be as clearly focussed as evidence suggests, that availability of sufficient funds to spend on a considerable scale does not imply that the objectives and motives were always thought through (1999: 135). The question therefore is how far the acquisitions of the newly married couple reflect a desire to display, to make a statement about their ideas of taste, rather than a primary interest in the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement? For example, do the items obtained evoke simplicity and truth to materials (Crawford 2000), by their relative plainness of surface with emphasis on originality of form, as in the Ashbee tankard (Fig. 9.3) and bowls, or are they compromised by their adornment with semi-precious stones, or, in the case of the GoH bonbonniere, by the expensive William Mark enamel (Fig. 9.2).

The Johnston (1999) and Salmon (2000) studies of collectors highlight the difficulty in finding written evidence of the thoughts and motivations behind collectors at this period. Marsh clearly enjoyed the approbation of fellow collectors, telling his friend Greenslade in writing on numerous occasions about ceramic purchases, lost opportunities and the visits and opinions of other collectors to see them. However, he rarely seeks Greenslade's opinion and is not known to have ever commissioned a dealer to seek items on his behalf.

While at first sight their enthusiasm for Arts & Crafts furnishings has its root in the

idealism of Ruskin and William Morris and seems progressive, can it also be seen as an adoption of the ideas of others rather than independence of mind ? Macleod argues that the visual message conveyed to us by the evidence of purchases is in fact contradictory (1996: 337). That promoted as avant-garde in the pages of *The Studio,* they can also be seen as an act of denial of reason: the conscious choice to identify with such informed ideals by association through purchase as lacking logic. The facts being that:

> the Arts and Crafts movement, was an historically regressive attempt to stay the onslaught of industrial urbanisation ... producing forms that nostalgically evoked the close-knit communities of bygone days' (Macleod 1996: 337).

I suggest the Marshs, steeped in the traditions of Quakerism and stone ground milling, would not have seen any contradiction. The ethical values espoused within Arts and Crafts were part of their way of life and the 'new' fashion therefore adopted with enthusiasm. It was also about expressing individuality and liberation from not just past ideas but perceived contemporary values, particularly love of the machine at the expense of the, again, abandonment of the qualities perceived inherent in the hand made object. An anonymous writer reviewing *La Maison Moderne* in 1901, cited by Midant (1999) was unequivocal:

> It is the entire decor of our lives that should be adapted to the trends of taste and modern spirit ... the choice of these objects reflects our individuality; they are the witnesses and confidants of our acts and daily gestures. Even women's jewellery would covet being set free and emancipated (1999: 162).

Much of the jewellery purchased by Marsh fulfilled this objective (Apps. 16-17). It could of course be argued that given that adoption of Arts and Crafts ideas rarely extended beyond the home and were not long-lasting, that they were unrealistic, the movement was self-deluding and escapist and the values said to be espoused lacked intellectual rigour. The evidence of the Marshs suggests one can argue the case to draw a distinction between accusation of self-delusion and conscious critical choice. If the external world represented the uncontrollable, the home, the internal, offered opportunity for self-expression. The ethos of values of quality inherent or aspired to, in the handmade, in contrast to machine production, as expressed in their home environment, offered and evoked by turn a mixture of stimulation, comfort and sense of well being. This I suggest can be argued as a valid and positive response

to the perceived negative values of the rapidly changing outside world.

The failure of the business twenty years later (1914), through competition and failure to modernise, also implies the ideas manifested in the home were symptomatic of Marsh's self- absorbing inward and backward looking ideology. It had the feel of progressiveness because it found a momentary popular voice, but one that vindicates Macleod's argument that its ideas were hollow and in fact like the Marsh business, failing to move with the times (1996: 337). Indeed, as late as 1908, *The Connoisseur* review of an Exhibition of Handicrafts at the New Gallery inadvertently came to the same conclusion: on the one hand failing to recognise that public taste had moved on, on the other lauding the virtues of hand craft, evinced by the Guild of Artificers in particular, and wondering why, in contrast to France, so few galleries took the opportunity:

> to bring to the notice of the public that it is possible to surround oneself and live amongst beautiful *modern* things, notwithstanding the fact that our purses will not permit us to fill our homes with the fine work of days gone by (Baily 1908: 196).

Calder unequivocally asserts that 'throughout the Victorian period the home was pre-eminently the sphere of women, whose role it was to maintain it as a place of comfort, security and domestic virtue' (1993: 29). While Sarah Marsh clearly accepted this mantle she did not accord with the stereotypical view of the Victorian women as being 'controlled by their emotions and inferior to men' and, by implication, incapable of rational thought. More particularly she exhibited all the traits, defined by Leneman, of 'the "new woman"', who by the 1890s sought emancipation from traditional restraints' (1993: 16). Financially independent, she had the freedom to make her own choices without seeking remuneration, at a 'period when "lady" and "work" were contradictions in terms' (Callen 1979: 8). According to her daughter Phyllis, Sarah, like many women in her position,

> was very fond of painting wild flowers in water colours; [had] done simply beautiful needlework and embroidery in her younger days, and painted three tea-sets...in china fired for her by Whiteleys, one winning a medal for the Best Exhibit in Class A at the

1889 Fine Art Loan and Industrial Exhibition held at Surbiton, Surrey (Marsh 1986: 2).

It is noteworthy that whatever her initial enthusiasm for decorating ceramic blanks it did not extend beyond their children's infant years. Haslam suggests that the need of women in her situation was to be usefully occupied and to be creative, coinciding as it did:

> with the years of the most rampant Aestheticism. The frustration felt by women in an age of exclusive masculinism contributed to the vogue for art-work ... embroidery and painting on pottery were two crafts which could be carried on at home without incommoding the household ...One effect of the vogue for pottery-painting was that it gave outsiders further knowledge of, and access to, ceramic processes (1975: 11-14).

The medals, money prizes and diploma's awarded at Messrs. Howell & James' Pall Mall Art-Pottery Galleries annual exhibition (Hancock 1879: v), held from 1876 (Coysh 1976: 31) and Hancock's (1879) *The Amateur Pottery & Glass Painter* encouraged amateurs to participate in hand decoration of china, emphasising the pleasures of the activity and avoided any suggestion that the skills learnt, suitably employed, could generate an income. By the time of Miller's *Arts and Crafts for Amateurs* (1901) with its wide range of suggested craft making opportunities it was clear that such practices had become a respectable pursuit. As Buckley and others have detailed there was a growing recognition and respect for the economic and creative contribution that women could make in a male orientated and managed commercial world (Buckley: 1990: 57-60; Callen 1979: 67, Clark 1995: 110-112).

I suggest that Sarah Marsh's creative statement was more than symbolic; within her family circle it asserted her share of the domestic space. The prominence of display given to her hand-painted teapot in a photograph (fig. 2.2) taken by Ernest Marsh c.1906, confronting as it does the professionally made ceramics around it, connotes an intended subversive presence and tension within their shared domestic living space. He is 'allowed' to show specimens of his ceramics, she displays the teapot as an ornament decorated by her own hand. It can only be speculation, as no evidence of either her or his opinions of the others interests has been traced, but in a home overwhelmed by 'his' choice items, it's a moot point whether

as the product of an 'amateur' its presence may have been more an irritant than a delight to him. It is, however, of note that whereas in some of his other interior photographs he composed them by removing or including items, when taking this photograph he chose to leave the teapot plainly in view. Was he in fact proud of his wife's prowess, was its inclusion in the photograph deliberate to give authenticity to the view or simply a mistake? The view exists in two forms, with some items changed, but not the teapot, suggesting at least acceptance of its presence. What remains unknown is the degree of her influence on his choice of purchases for his many collections.

Discernment and Patronage

Some items in the Marsh home, such as the carpet chairs (App.14, Figs. 2.2, 2.5) suggest a learning curve from what Edis described as the 'utter want of taste - the undistinguished carpet, chair and side tables, and other items'(1881: 25).

Edis considered homes had the potential to be:

> if not absolutely shrines of beauty and good taste, at least pleasant places where the educated eye may look around, without being shocked and offended by some vulgarity and gaudy commonplaceness. [Avoidance required focus on everything down to the] meanest object of every-day use (1881: 25).

Evidence suggests Marsh took such edicts to heart: for example buying a fine pair of beaten copper Liberty bellows (App. 16, Fig. 3.2) a style statement in itself. As Crawford has succinctly put it, home, 'it's an attitude as much as a place' (2005: 78). Marsh's photographs suggest aspiration to create a unified aesthetic interior, but one modelled around a concept of what he thought it should look like, not a magazine illustration. This is no accident. While illustrating room designs *The Studio* also depicted furnishing and jewellery on the white page on a large scale, without cross reference to a broader schematic agenda. The reader thus made the choice. As Anscombe has argued, there was:

> No single recognisable style that was Arts and Crafts. An interior could be exotic and precious, with rich colours and patterns, or whimsical and self-consciously artistic, or downright plain and homely (1991: 9)

To the older generations of the Marsh family, pillars of the Kingston establishment,

> Brought up on cabriole legs ... such simple honest furniture must have seemed daringly innovative. The social aims of the movement, too, were almost frighteningly liberal (Anscombe 1991: 9).

Not everything was photographed. *Coombe Bury* contained a number of pieces of heavy furniture from Tudor, Stuart and later periods, some originals, others a marriage of parts. Marsh was also addicted to buying clocks of every period and description. Their presence, as with so much else within the eclectic interior of *Coombe Bury*, encapsulates both the strength and weakness of the Arts and Crafts movement, being on the one hand too wide ranging in the expression of its ideals and on the other too accommodating to succeed in stamping its authority on design practice.

Saunders argues how museum displays of wallpaper, removed from their intended context have 'skewed the history of wallpaper and contributed to a disproportionate focus on the unique, the costly and the products of named designers' (2002: 9). This may be so, but the Marsh interiors do show expensive wallpapers and prominent friezes according with the then advanced taste for hand blocked papers in bold designs (Fig. 2.2-5). Though unidentified, they are typical of those produced by Essex & Co. for Voysey (Bieri 1997: 93) and exhibited by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society at the New Gallery (*The Studio* 1896: 117-135). In strongly contrasting colours, the designs appear bold and overpowering in such small rooms. Voysey observed tongue-in cheek in *The Studio* (1896), 'Mr. Morris is credited with the axiom "the smaller your room the larger the pattern you may put on your walls" ' (Denvir 1986: 186, Saunders 2002: 8), but for his own home Voysey preferred plain walls as a setting for good furniture. In the absence of such he conceded 'there is no doubt that it is better to have large and bold than small and timid patterns ...' (Denvir 1986: 186).

Dorment has noted of the period leading up to 1900, 'Like so much else in Victorian art, the furniture in a picture is part of the narrative' that both the possessors and the recorders, wished to emphasise (2004: 22). Specimen pieces of furniture detailed in the photographs of

both *Coombe Bury* and *Hatch Hill* exhibit a number of features popular within the Arts & Crafts movement. All suggest that in interior decoration and furnishing, Marsh was intent on making both an ideological and fashion statement.

For example, like his later acquaintance the ceramicist Richard Lunn, Marsh appears to have been attracted to the enduring fad for, and Baillie Scott's advocacy of, the domestic use of uplifting mottoes to elevate the mind (Baillie Scott 1906: 85-87, Cooper 1987: 108). He purchased both Lunn motto'd ceramics and, probably from Liberty (V. & A. 1975), a bureau stylistically in the latest fashion (Mance 1999) with a quotation from Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism* (Daintith 1990: 461) 'True ease in writing comes from art, not chance' across the front of the shelf (Appendix 16, Fig. 2.5). *The Studio* (1896: 97) illustrated another without motto by the Hon. Mabel de Grey and Charles Voysey, executed by William Beer, at the London Stall of the 1896 'Home Arts and Industries Association', exhibition at the Albert Hall. Marsh must have seen the exhibit or report and ordered an example with his chosen inscription.

Cooper has observed that not everyone was enamoured with mottos: to some, the enduring taste for them defied the rationale of truth, simplicity and restraint its promoters advocated. Eastlake 'repeatedly' emphasised furniture 'form and decoration [be] decreed largely by structural necessity' (Cooper 1987: 237, 108), with 'wood-carving as ...decoration ....subservient to the general design' (Eastlake 1868: 69). Despite this he recommended uplifting inscriptions for larger pieces (Cooper 1987: 108; Eastlake 1868: 85). Ideas of restraint were evidently relative. Baillie Scott's considered mottos:

> such a personal matter that every one who wishes to include them in a decorative scheme should choose their own but be mindful that the expression of personality which a room is capable of conveying ... may be misleading, but when decoration becomes articulate in the writing ... it affords a more definite revelation of the character and tastes of the owner ... helping us to understand something of the ideas and conceptions of life which a man is prepared to subscribe to... (1906: 85)

Somewhat pretentious, it surely epitomised and conveyed to each visitor to Marsh's

home the thing in life which he truly valued. If the bureau verbalised Marsh's ideas, the most prominent physical statement of both the Marsh's aesthetic interests was a 'Manxman' upright Broadwood 'cottage piano', also after a design by Baillie Scott (Baillie Scott 1897: 154-155, App. 16, Figs. 2.4-2.5). With case decoration and design by C. R. Ashbee (1863-1942) and made in 1903 by the Guild of Handicraft (Garrett 1990), it was both decorative and practical, son Christopher learning to play on it (Marsh 1980-81: 9). Purchased at a total cost approaching £100, at a time when, as Christopher Marsh noted, his father was paying the gardener a weekly wage of £1 (Marsh 1980-81: 7-8) it was a fashion statement at risk of being ephemeral in taste, and an indulgence few could afford (Lawrence 2003). Baillie Scott saw his design 'in oak, stained a dark rich green, with hinges in white metal', with plain panels, two enclosing doors to the front and a single panel lid as realising 'something more artistic than the ordinary type of case', avoiding the 'excrescence' of the traditional projecting keyboard (Baillie Scott 1897: 154-155). In his choice of piano case and desire thus not to conform, Marsh joined an elite that included the Grand Duke of Hesse and E. Peter Jones, the store owner (Wainwright 1982: 237, Crawford 1985: 292). However, like them, he debased Scott's intention by additional adornment, if admittedly fairly restrained.

While some piano cases were created as a single entity for display, Baillie Scott did acknowledge merit in their harmonising with other furniture in the room (1897: 154, 1906: 66). Marsh acquired not one but three Ashbee cabinets matching with the piano to house his collection of butterflies and moths, probably to his own specification (Marsh 1980-81: 8, App. 16, Fig. 2.5). As son Christopher recalled, by 1906/7, 'Father was then absorbed into purchase of beautiful butterflies' (1980-1981: 6). Marsh possessed the means to acquire scientifically acceptable cabinets had he wished but instead chose to obtain decorative cabinets which by the accepted standars of the day were entomologically faulty (Harman 2000). Display was evidently the point, at least where this area of Marsh's collecting was concerned, and preciousness clearly lay not with science but with aesthetics.

Further patronage of Liberty and Co. included a Joseph Doran fabric upholstered

armchair, manufactured as a furnishing fabric for Liberty between 1902 and 1906 (Parry 1999) (App. 16, Fig. 2.2), illustrated in *The Studio Yearbook* of 1906 (1906: 71). The difficulty of reconciling comfort and design was recognised:

> In the case of padded or easy chairs the problem is to provide the utmost amount of comfort and rest for the body compatible with aesthetic appearance. Many are luxurious enough, but, at the same time, most ungainly objects to behold (*The Studio* 1906: 75).

Equally the height of contemporary taste was the purchase by Marsh in 1897 of a Voysey designed *Aluto* pattern Axminster machine-woven carpet (Parry 1988: 75, Anscombe 1991: 120-121, Crawford 2005: 69) App.14, Fig. 9.5), displayed at the Fifth Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society at the New Gallery, Regent Street, in 1896 (V. & A. AAD 1/82, 1/86 & 88-1980, *The Studio* 1896: 191). Its method of manufacture, as with the Liberty chair demonstrated a degree of openness within the Arts & Crafts movement to machine production but their high cost still made them the exclusive preserve of the fortunate few.

Exclusivity particularly applied to hand-made jewellery, which while fostering the skills of their creators remained beyond the financial reach of most people. So far discussion has concentrated on some of the major furnishings for the home. There were also a number of important purchases of a more personal nature (Apps. 16-17, Figs. 9.2, 4, 7). There is a systematic discernment evidenced in the range of sources that suggest Marsh's judgment on what to buy extended beyond the aesthetic. The evidence from sales lists suggests they were bought by Marsh, not his wife. The range of silversmiths and jewellery designers and makers represented in the Marsh purchases from artisan exhibitions, the Artificers' Guild and Guild of Handicraft, suggest not random purchase on a whim, but that he understood his role as patron, and that his choice reflects recognition of the highest quality practitioners by both name and items chosen (Apps.16-17, Figs. 9.2, 4, 7).

Though intended as gifts, there is a powerful sense, by association, of continuing possession as if they were more loans than gifts. After all, when worn by his family, they reflected as much on him as donor as on them both as receptors of his benevolence and, by

adornment - of nature, by nature, harmonising them within his overall decorative scheme. It is not possible to now know, but it would be instructive to hear what Sarah Marsh felt about these gifts (App. 16, Figs. 9.4, 7), which, I suggest, as Veblen (1899) has explored, in reality say most about his seeing his home and family as a commodity expressing more about him, than them.

For example, in 1903 Marsh attended the Seventh Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. Anscombe has observed how its exhibits startled by their novelty, Ashbee breaking the mould of existing taste: his use of 'enamel, semi-precious stones, baroque pearls and inexpensive materials such as horn provided an alternative to the flashy South African diamonds and sentimental butterflies and flowers ... beloved by many Victorians (1991: 162). It was reported:

> in the annals of the Society...as the Jewellery Exhibition. The fanciful yet suggestive names attached to each [exhibit] expresses the very poetry of ornament in the exquisite combinations of material and colour (*Court Circular* 1903: 97).

The jewellery of Georgie and Arthur Gaskin particularly impressed:

> like Mr.Ashbee and some others, [they] use stones of the humblest, and produce simple things which do not profess to compete with Lalique's wonder work which Paris made known to us (*Standard* 1903: 3).

While Marsh was to buy enamelled items by others, as detailed later, it was the new wire forms that attracted his interest: for his wife he chose a Gaskin silver 'Briar Rose' necklace. Set with turquoises and chrysoprase it quintessentially represented the unpretentiousness sought by Ashbee while still being an exquisite tracery of delicate silver wire and choice stones (V. & A. AAD 1/100-1980, Crawford 1985: 354, Wild 1981b: 7, App.17). Complementary to this is an unattributed gold chain necklace, possibly from the Artificers' Guild (1901-1942) (Wilson 2003, Fig. 9.4), founded by artist, silversmith and jeweller Nelson Dawson (1859-1942). The necklace contains the same elements of Arts and Crafts ideas as seen in Gaskin designs but is distinctly richer in concept, detail and materials

used. A silver and mother of pearl brooch made from a hat pin, was made by John Paul Cooper and Edgar Simpson (Morgan 2003).

As detailed later, Marsh was to use the funds of the Contemporary Art Society to buy significant works for the nation by both Cooper and Spencer. A range of circular brooches and sets of buttons were acquired from the Guild of Handicraft (App. 14). Inspired by leaf and flower forms, and possessing what Crawford describes as 'echoes of the Renaissance' he considered them most successful of Ashbee's earlier designs (1985: 353-354).

Arguably the most eminent piece of jewellery acquired by Marsh was a belt clasp in the form of two hovering bees, probably made in the early 1900s by Guild of Handicraft craftsmen (Crawford 1985: 365-366, 369, 2004, fig. 9.7). One of the most important works designed by Ashbee, it is considered by Crawford to be an example of Ashbee's later informal jewellery at its best, observing that in comparison with some of his early designs:

> there is more expertise here, in the construction of the different layers and the flower disc of painted enamel; ... a more vigorous and original style in the spear-shaped mounts of silver open-work (1985: 365-366).

The unanswerable question, again, is for whom, fundamentally, Marsh was buying these jewels. Sandino suggests that:

> Jewellery is a cultural symbol that stands for the private body as well as the social one. its personal links even more profoundly intimate than clothing, while its symbolism extends into the drama of public display (2002: 107).

While highly personal gifts of appreciation to his wife they can be variously interpreted as visible statement of shared cultural values or, in the light of his other collecting interests possibly more about how he wanted her to be seen, rather than as she saw her herself. The few surviving photographs of Sarah are only of informal family events. These suggest she eschewed the rational dress worn by woman of progressive outlook and when at home wore little or no jewellery. However, examination of some examples shows considerable abrasion

on the reverse through wear.

Marsh acquired a range of Arts and Crafts table ware, each piece exemplifying a different aspect of the achievement of the Guild of Handicraft from its earliest days. Purchases included a pair of large copper *repoussé* work punch bowls exhibiting some similarity to Keswick School of Industrial Arts designs (Bruce 2001a, 2001b: 23) but more likely designed by John Pearson, senior metalworker of the Guild (Crawford 1985: 314, Grogan 1999, Rose 1999, fig.3.2). Many Marsh purchases epitomise what Crawford has called the classic Arts and Crafts designs (1985: 330-341), 'part of Ashbee's aesthetic of the dinner table; the essentials [being] colour and form, not wealth and display' (1985: 325). This included a decanter (Jordan 2000: 42), which Crawford considered exemplified 'Ashbee ... designing at the top of his bent; if one had to take a single piece of his work to a desert island, this would be it' (1985: 331).

While Marsh seems to have been content to buy furniture from Liberty & Co. he appears to have consciously discriminated against all silver table ware produced for and sold through them, buying entirely from the Guild of Handicraft (Marsh 1972). While some of the designers he patronised, such as the Gaskins were designers for Liberty he appears to have appreciated that in their making some Liberty goods were frequently a compromise between hand and machine production, and often not as well made. As Ashbee observed 'Messrs Nobody, Novelty and Co.' - Liberty's, crudely imitated the style, not the principles, of his Guild of Handicraft (Cumming 1991: 94). Marsh's financial ability at this period enabled him to opt for Guild of Handicraft products rather than cheaper Liberty items, conveying its own message to those within their circle of acquaintance. For example, no collection of Guild silver was complete without an example of 'the so-numerous loop-handled dishes' (Crawford 1985: 334-337), the Marsh example being a single loop of 1901 (Guild of Handicraft 1905-6: 7).

Marsh was demonstrably attracted to Arts and Craft silver ware. Arguably the most elegant Guild pieces are a small beaker of 1902 set with four opals in a belt mid-body, the oviform vessel rising from a squared base contained within four stylised fingers, these tapering

to the slightly flared upper lip, and a small tankard with a twin wire loop handle, a base ring of green stones and inscribed 'Phyllis Vera Marsh 6 2 1902' (Fig. 9.3).

Wholly different and of particular note are two Guild silver table baskets, one of 1904 (Jordan 2000: 43). Produced from 1896 onwards (*The Studio* 1897: 130), their sides formed from curved panels of solid silver alternating with open-work, recalling the mid-18th Century examples Marsh also possessed (Fig. 9.6), but exemplifying elements of Ashbee's mature style 'in their striking and untraditional simplicity' (Crawford 1985: 328-330). In different ways, each of the two baskets reflect many of these elements, one the designs of this period, such as by Lewis F. Day (1845-1910) the other, in complete contrast has a complex interlacing of jagged sunbursts of Carline Thistle like flowers that is stylistically wholly new (Jordan 2000: 43). Seen in isolation these may be recognised as just another part of Marsh's desire to obtain a discerning but representative selection of Arts and Crafts products. However, when considered in the light of his extensive collection of not just a few but twenty five Georgian period silver baskets (Fig. 9.6), they acquire a different dimension: seen together they must have demonstrated Marsh's connoisseurship (Crossley 2001) and the evolution of ideas in a way more clearly than words could possibly express.

Authenticity and supreme quality epitomise the numerous Arts and Crafts Marsh purchases. Everything demonstrated originality in design and the hand of the craftsman. As a customer, his patronage must have been welcomed.

The problem, however, as Greensted has conclusively demonstrated, was that despite the aims and objectives of the Arts and Crafts Movement being 'to influence by example', it never grew beyond the idealogical enthusiasm, as in the example of Marsh, of a privileged minority, its attributes all too often being identified with high cost (Greensted 1993: 140). As Ashbee observed, 'We have made a great social movement, a narrow and tiresome little aristocracy working with great skill for the very rich' (Ashbee 1915). It is noticeable that while Marsh continued to subscribe to *The Studio* and his ceramic interests continued to

evolve, nothing supplanted his interest in the Arts and Crafts, with no evidence of purchases beyond 1905. His Arts and Crafts interests rapidly became a time-capsule of an ephemeral taste. He later bought several items for the Contemporary Art Society, as discussed in Chapter 6, but these echoed past values, not contemporary taste.

Greensted demonstrates that while the Arts and Crafts ceased to be an influence its values were maintained through the work of Ashbee's 'stragglers' and others who chose to follow their example (1993: 141-153). It can be argued that nothing was in fact lost, it was the methodology of bringing about change that was to be different. For, as Crawford has described, the German Werkbund exemplified the integration of thinking into industrial practice, a precedent prompting the founding in 1915 of the Design and Industries Association (DIA) by a group of craftsmen, designers, architects and retailers (1985: 417, 2004: 59-64). A member, the furniture maker Gordon Russell (1892-1980) adopted a more pragmatic and business-like approach in the 1920s to produce an Arts and Crafts product that reached the widest market by a combination of quality and customer friendly price. He had little time for the philosophical rationale behind so much of the idealism behind the Arts and Crafts movement (Greensted 1993: 154-166). It is noticeable that, as discussed in Chapter 6, artistic ideas could only survive when commercial imperatives were similarly addressed. The Voysey designed carpet purchased by Marsh, previously discussed, being machine-made embodied the pragmatism necessary to marry such ideals with cost-effective practicality, a point surely not lost on Marsh. While not known to acquire such later products for himself, Marsh acknowledged their place by acceptance of presented items to his Contemporary Art Society Pottery and Craft Fund (Chapter 6, App. 31-32).

5. The Primary Obsession: Collecting Ceramics

Introduction

Ceramics were the dominant and life-long collecting interest of Ernest Marsh, from his first acquaintance with the Martin Brothers in the 1880s to his later involvement with other potters into the 1920s and beyond. This section will discuss the formative origins and interrelationships between Marsh as patron and friend with makers, and his relationships with other collectors and institutions. It will attempt to reach conclusions on the significance of those relationships to the encouragement of the advancement of British ceramic practice.

Marsh's interest functioned at two levels, the public and private. His advocacy of potters began as a private interest but from the time of his appointment to the Executive of the Contemporary Art Society in 1910 his role gradually took on a public face to the point that the two became inextricably linked. This aspect is considered in Chapter 6.

Marsh and the Martin Brothers

Without doubt, as his letters to his friend Sydney Greenslade from 1900 to the 1920s (Greenslade Papers 55), and the following discussion attests, much of the life of Ernest Marsh was dominated by a consuming interest, to the point of obsession, with the creative output, lives and well-being of the Southall potters, the Martin Brothers. The basis of most of what we know about his relationship with the Brothers is his unpublished *Reminiscences*, drafted in 1937 and revised in 1939, and his letters to the collector Sydney Greenslade. Haslam suggests the *Reminiscences* were probably prompted by Charles R. Beard following his commission by ironmonger Frederick John Nettlefold to write the history of the Martin Brothers for the (1936) catalogue of his father's Martinware (1978: 169).

As the following discussion will demonstrate, Marsh's association with the Martins made him realise that if ceramic art was to evolve and thus for potters to thrive, it was incumbent upon him and others in a position to do so to foster it by patronage, encouragement of institutional acquisition and, through exhibition, both institutional and selling, to raise

public awareness of emerging talent and new ideas.

There were five Martin brothers, four of whom were involved in the business: Robert Wallace (1843-1924) who founded the pottery in 1873 (Fig. 6.1), Charles Douglas (1846-1910), Walter Fraser (1857-1912) (Fig.6.2), and Edwin Bruce (1860-1915). The fifth, James Angus went to Australia and had no involvement in the business. Makers of salt-glazed pottery, the Martins produced both useful and decorative wares, all of highly original form and decoration. No two articles produced were ever quite the same. Many began as similarly thrown vessels on the wheel or in moulds but all were worked by hand into a multiplicity of different forms. Their uniqueness caught the attention of collectors like Marsh.

Their single-minded independence from exhibiting societies and larger manufacturers gave them freedom of expression but as de Waal has noted, a constant struggle to survive (2003: 35). Their control of the process from conception, making and decoration, to firing and selling has led to their belated recognition as the first Studio Potters (de Waal 2003: 35, Winch 2005b: 85). However, not all their contemporaries appreciated their work: Sparkes & Gandy (1896) in their *Potters, their Arts and Crafts* ignored their existence altogether, an oversight or deliberate slight noted by an anonymous reviewer for the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1897: 3).

Marsh relates how it was his elder brother Bedford John, with whom at one time he shared rooms, who was the first member of the Marsh family to buy Martinware. A solicitor practicing at Bedford Row, London, Bedford purchased some pots and an early grotesque bird c.1884-5 from their nearby shop in Brownlow Street 'to decorate their rooms' (Marsh 1937b: 1). His description of the quaint shop and the salesman-brother Charles intrigued Ernest enough to himself visit in 1888 (Marsh 1937b: 1, App. 27).

Marsh's choice of words in describing Bedford's purchases is instructive: they were to decorate their rooms, not to start a collection. Some years later Ernest bought some of these from his brother. It can only be surmised but I suggest that written many years after the event

Ernest's words, given the importance of the events narrated, could be interpreted as a wish to play down his brothers' role, and to give himself credit for recognising the importance of the work of the Martin Brothers. On the other hand, it might also be taken to imply that had his brother never introduced the Martin items, in terms of Ernest's subsequent life-long obsession with their salt-glaze ceramics, all might have been well. If so, given the considerable sums he spent on his numerous other interests, his statement is disingenuous. The total number of examples of Martinware he acquired is unknown, but surviving evidence suggests towards a thousand items. About four hundred were discovered in his garden shed after he died, many subsequently auctioned at Sotheby's (29 October 1946).

As a Martin collector, Marsh was a comparative latecomer, but probably the greatest numerically. Beside items given in his lifetime to museums, numerous others were long-term loans which, with a few exceptions, became bequests to the British Museum (App. 22), South London Art Gallery (App. 26), Kingston upon Thames Museum and Art Gallery (App. 24) and Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (App. 25).

Display

Emulating the Chinese manner, Marsh frequently displayed Martinware in his home *Coombe Bury* on black lacquered wooden stands. While having a practical purpose in protecting surfaces their signification of virtue and esteem was unlikely to be lost on visitors to his home (Marsh c.1900-c.1920, Fig. 2.5). It was a practice also followed by the potter and sculptor Reginald Wells for his Chinese derived ceramics, also bought by Marsh, discussed below (Wells archive 1926).

Comparison of Marsh's interior photographs of his home (1906), reveal his collections were rearranged to fit his intended composition (Figs. 2.3, 5). Depicting recent acquisitions, most show post-1900 and thus modern designs by Edwin Martin. For example, the gourd-shaped bowl to the right of the Rodin bronze, also newly acquired, is dated February 1904 (fig. 2.5). This suggests an awareness of a sense of something new, something modern evinced

in such displays, as Marsh must have felt with his Arts and Crafts purchases. In contrast, other photographs of both his and the Sydney Greenslade collection show other examples relegated through their sheer quantity to glass fronted cabinets which, while enabling them to be seen, make no pretence to be in any sense an artistic display (Fig. 3.3). While they both clearly enjoyed celebrating the latest designs, it is noteworthy that the correspondence between them is singularly lacking in any sense of the *fin de siècle*, so brilliantly expressed in Holbrook Jackson's 1913 overview of this period. Rather, there is more a sense of organic growth, of talents emerging over some considerable years and not suddenly appearing in 1900.

Awareness of the Martin Brothers had undoubtedly increased with Monkhouse's *Some Original Ceramicists* in 1882, soon followed by *The British Architect* (14 November 1884), *The Queen* (Feb. 1885, p.157), and *The Times* (22 December, 1885 p.8). However, without their patrons it is doubtful if they would have survived for more than a few years.

Shopping

As Beard relates, the Martin Brothers' pottery acquired a loyal following of collectors over some years (1936: 17-20, 34-36), many predating Marsh. If the manner of display by collectors was as choice objects this completely contrasted with their method of display in the Martin shop where they were to be discovered and in a sense waiting to be liberated from their surroundings, while still retaining the mystique of their origins. Marsh's recollection of his first and repeated visits (App.27) is important on two counts: firstly, it is the most detailed descriptive account extant of the shop, both in its contents and atmosphere. Secondly, it is also significant, bearing in mind Veblen's later (1899) discussions on the lures to consumption, for its description of the seductiveness of the whole shopping experience engendered by the shop and by its manager, Charles Martin that in this instance, not on women, but men, making the point, which Veblen does not, that, given an incentive, men were as much susceptible to shopping as women. It also speaks volumes about salesmanship, desire, compulsion, obsession and the anointing of preciousness:

> I remember my first visit very clearly. After looking at the display of pots and other objects to be seen in the shop window, exhibited with very little attempt of arrangement, I entered the dingy and ill-lighted outer shop, if such it could be described. Pots of all sorts, some of tallish dimensions, stood upon the floor and others were packed on shelves in crowded array, all of which appeared in need of dusting. In all the cases were strewn rather than arranged with many pots of varying sizes and sorts and of very mixed qualities. It is quite conceivable that on my first visit all this would not have been vividly impressed upon my mind, but as I was accustomed to call [at the shop] again and again, frequently once a week at least for considerable periods, and as the pots were seldom rearranged, except when the newly arrived wares had to be accommodated, the general effect of the arrangement of the whole place became definitely fixed upon my memory.
>
> I made my first purchase of a vase about 9 inches with fish decoration, dated 1887. I hesitated for some time between this and another. The fates were not very kind to me over the piece which I bought as our housemaid while dusting the mantelpiece on which it stood knocked it off, and the pieces were thrown into the dustbin. I recovered them - 39 in all - and a clever local mender repaired it with the exception of a small bit about the size of a sixpence and I possess it still (Marsh 1937b: 1-3).

Somewhat melodramatic, the experience was nevertheless common: as Edward Spence observed 'a conversation with Mr. Charles Martin would be sufficient to seriously injure the nervous system of a political economist' (Haslam 1978: 72).

The earliest independent evidence of Marsh's interest in the Martins is a shared gift with the newspaper proprietor F. A. Judges of 'a little bit of Martinware' to Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead after a visit in September 1890 (Judges 1890). Systematic in his record keeping, the scale of Marsh's purchases in these early years can be traced in his (c.1904) *Catalogue of Collection of Martin Saltglaze Stoneware* (V & A 73-571). No additional volumes are known, but its existence suggests others may have existed of ceramics by other English manufacturers. His watercolours, prints, and oil paintings were catalogued (1904) (App. 13-14), at least in the early years and it is therefore possible the glassware, sculpture, silver and silver plate, tortoiseshell and various categories of oriental items were similarly catalogued.. The survival of the Martinware catalogue is important, given no other private collector's catalogue of Martin items at this period is extant. Any early sales records of the Martin shop in Brownlow Street were probably lost in the January 1903 fire (Haslam 1978: 143).

All Martinware noted in the Marsh catalogue was made in the period March 1888 to December 1904. Most entries have no purchase date, the earliest being no.10 in October 1896. A vase decorated with dragons dated '10.1896', it was evidently bought fresh from the kiln. Other dated entries are post-1902, suggesting the catalogue was compiled retrospectively at or after this date. The reason for its introduction and it then being abandoned in 1904 is uncertain. The final entry, no. 211 is of a ribbed vase made 8.1904, purchased 14.12.04 and simply noted as 'museum' (V & A 73-571: 70). It is probable that new numbers were instituted when much of the collection was loaned by Marsh to the new Kingston upon Thames Art Gallery and Museum, opened coincidentally in October 1904 (Kingston Public Library Committee 1898-1921. 28.10.1904). For example, a two handled vase in 'chun glaze' (7.1903) purchased in 1904 and numbered 194 in the original catalogue was later numbered 83 under the new system. Each was given numbered labels signed by Marsh. This may also account for the reason why other pieces, seen in photographs of the home, do not have new numbers. Ernest Marsh was, after all, nothing if not methodical.

The hand-written sequentially numbered catalogue entries depict shape and pattern, a brief description in words, the height, potters date - that is the date marked on the base of the item (not the date fired) - the date bought, the price paid and a remarks column. Charles Martin must have been pleased to snare this new customer. Pencil drawings of each item are carefully done but cannot be described as artistic. Such evidence may seem nothing more than tedious detail but suggests Marsh while methodical, was no artist: that collecting the artistic creations of others was, arguably, recognition of his own limited creative capabilities and admiration for those so blessed. By 1904 Marsh had spent £395.15.0, equivalent in 2005 to over £28,000 (Davies 2006).

The catalogue is instructive for its occasional notes demonstrating the close relationship he established with the Martin Brothers. No.63 is a fire blackened grotesque face jug dated 2.1902 but inadvertently burnt again in the 1903 fire, previously mentioned. Marsh notes he part exchanged it December 1903 for another, plus the sum of 2 guineas (V & A 73-

571: 20). In the *Reminiscences* he refers to the breakage of his first 1887 purchase. Recorded at no. 16 in the catalogue it was in fact made in February 1888. Bought for £1 (2005 equivalent £96) it was the cheapest piece acquired, most being for considerably greater sums. Particularly treasured must have been a 4 guinea vase with clematis decoration presented by the Martin Brothers as a wedding present (V & A 73-571: 20).

He was prepared to experiment with his purchases, in 1902 having a set of four goblets re-fired by the Martins (V & A 73-571: 52) (Fig. 6.8), an experiment repeated in 1927 when on his initiative he had some figurines by Agatha Walker fired firstly in biscuit and then salt-glazed by Alfred Hopkins at his kiln at 149 Lower Kennington Lane, London (Fig.6.9). One figurine was destroyed in the firing, the others successful, resulting in what Greenslade described as a 'very unique and interesting group of salt-glaze stoneware, one of the most notable achievements of English salt-glaze since Dwight's time!'(Marsh 1928)

Assessment of the recollections of Marsh's children Christopher (1980-81: 7-8), and Phyllis (1986: 15) about his involvement with the Martin Brothers, as with the rest of his collecting, has to pay due regard to the fact that many of their father's acquisitions were made before they were born or when they were very young. It is plain from Christopher's comments that he was completely unaware of some aspects of his father's interests and regarded his profligate expenditure on pictures as a far greater indulgence than that of the Martin purchases (1980-81: 7-8). Phyllis recalled that as a child she visited the Southall pottery with her father and saw Walter (Fig. 6.2), Edwin and possibly Wallace, Edwin helping her to throw a pot on the wheel (Marsh 1986: 15). In later years she went with her father to the studios of Bernard Leach, Michael Cardew, Katherine Pleydell Bouverie and Charles Vyse, the latter being a family friend. Phyllis particularly valued a small bowl painted with a picture of the Vyse cat (Marsh 1986: 15).

Publicising

Beside his later article for the *Apollo*, published in 1944, Ernest Marsh wrote two

accounts of the Martin Brothers, the first speaking notes for an illustrated lecture *The Martin Brothers, the Potters*, probably for the Fulham Exhibition of Pottery and Prints in 1929, the second his *Reminiscences,* previously mentioned. The 1929 exposition details the process of making and a history of the business, but is also a passionate and highly personalised description of the shop, with graphic accounts from first hand experience of the firings of the kiln. It concludes with personal portraits of each of the brothers, their individual skills and attributes.

Greenslade was due to give the Fulham lecture but was precluded from doing so because of ill health (Marsh 1937b: 27). Marsh delivered a lecture instead, paying due tribute to his friend (c.1929: 28). Marsh freely acknowledged that in terms of contextualising the work of the Martins within the progress of ceramic art he was no match for Greenslade, who, for example, was the first person to realise that the 17th Century salt-glaze figures made by Dwight at Fulham were created by, or modelled on forms inspired by the woodcarver and sculptor Grinling Gibbons (Marsh 1937b: 27). Marsh was nevertheless at pains to emphasise that when it came to discourse on the relative merits of the Martin output he had considerable input, detailing how prior to the Fulham Exhibition he and Greenslade worked together at the latter's rooms in Gray's Inn to hammer out a text for the Martin portion of the catalogue. Given that Marsh was writing some ten years after the event there is the question of retrospective gloss, but Marsh unstintingly acknowledged Greenslade's learning:

> His intimate knowledge and accumulated data of the Martin Brothers from the time he first met them till close of the chapter as the last of the four men passed away has been wisely recorded ... and this will form the authoritative source from which the history of these men and their work will be drawn in the future (1937b: 27).

This was unfortunately never printed, with only various notes surviving in the Greenslade archive at Pitshanger (Greenslade Ealing 55/15, 790-9, 794, 796, 1126).

Production

Firings were infrequent, in earlier years twice a year, latterly only once. The following

account illustrates the manner in which the Martins, chiefly at the instigation of Charles, built up the mystique surrounding their work so that collectors were not simply buying artefacts they were colluders in creating a mythology, which continues (Haslam 1978, de Waal 2003). In 1890 on one of his many visits to the shop, Charles suggested Marsh should accompany him that afternoon to the pottery for the firing off, the kiln having been burning continually for three days, gradually raising the heat to maximum temperature to the point where salt was to be introduced into the kiln to glaze the contents (1937b: 7). During this time Walter and Edwin had fed the allotted 8-10 tons of coal into the furnace. The occasion resulted in one of the classic descriptions of a pottery kiln firing (*Pall Mall Gazette* 1890), thought to have been written by Marsh, but which he denied (1937b: 9). During the evening a high wind drew the fire, consuming the remaining coal and wood intended for the final firing off. Without further fuel the kiln could not maintain temperature and all present scavenged for anything that would burn, including broken furniture, scraps, the garden arches and arbours (1937b: 9). Marsh's considerable ensuing purchases suggest the firing was successful, his witnessing of the event inspiring him to buy many examples fresh from the kiln (Marsh 1904: 2-4, App. 9: 1-9). A subsequent firing in 1902 firing was:

> A most exciting event ... I can still picture Walter as I saw him at the entrance to the kiln, a pair of beautiful vases in his hands, to which he called my attention with evident signs of the greatest satisfaction as he surveyed the result in these things upon which he and Edwin together have devoted considerable thought and labour (1929a: 13).

Both were purchased by Sydney Greenslade and lent to the V & A (Marsh 1929a: 13). Marsh photographed the event and again made numerous purchases (App. 9).

A Shared Passion: Other Collectors

Brett has asked: 'Who were the individuals, the chairmen of boards, the parish elders, the directors of companies, the magnates that were prepared to expend such very large sums of money' (1992: 41). Marsh's *Reminiscences* and the records of the South London Gallery give an invaluable insight into who else amongst his contemporaries was buying Martinware and

from whom amongst these he himself was occasionally buying. Marsh was an acquirer, rarely a seller. Haslam (1978) and documentary evidence of bequests and gifts to Southall Libraries and the Pitshanger Museum suggest that the Martins found a certain number of sales locally, but the overwhelming evidence from Marsh, bequests and presentations to many other museums, and auction sales is that they were largely patronised by the comfortably off, their high cost a limiting factor to wider sales, but kept them the exclusive province of those able to afford them.

Patrons not only bought in profusion but willingly supported their passion by giving the Martins professional business advice and financial support. Frederick Nettlefold lent the Martins money in 1874 to enable them to move from Pomona House, Fulham to establish a new pottery at Southall, a move probably prompted by termination of firing facilities at the Fulham pottery of C.J.C. Bailey (Haslam 1978: 50- 56). Although much of their work was sold by personal contact and through Mortlock's, china-dealers of Oxford Street, the move out of London prompted a search for their own retail outlet (Haslam 1978: 53, 50). This was provided c. 1879, again by Nettlefold, leasing them shop space at 16 Brownlow Street, Holborn (Haslam 1978: 56). In the early years sales had depended to a considerable degree on carpet-bagging ceramics from one collector to another, much trade arising by recommendation (Beard 1936: 18).

A major Martin customer and associate of Marsh was John Cooper Ashton (SLG 1922: 29 12 1921) who owned Keen's Chop House, 323a High Holborn, a short distance from the Martin shop. Ashton 'adorned' his restaurant with Martinware (1937b: 21). Charles often went there for lunch and Marsh occasionally joined him. Marsh, recalled Ashton:

> was a very clever photographer and took a number of photographs of the Martins, of their pottery buildings at Southall and of their pieces of pottery. He was an expert in making lantern slides and has a most interesting series of these which he has shown on several occasions illustrating talks on the Martins (Marsh 1937b: 21).

This intimacy of connection between Marsh, other collectors and potters raises the issue of the degree of impartiality they could be expected to have in forming and expounding to peers a

critical view of the merits of the wares being produced in relation to other ceramics. The role of collectors and, later that of curators in reaching and forming an objective view was therefore crucial.

The indulgence at this time of what to the uninitiated might seem idiosyncratic interests gained strength and conviction by association with others with similar enthusiasms, with ridicule and accusation of eccentricity avoided. As Salmon has observed, conformity was an expectation, passion frowned upon: 'the passion' for butterfly collecting, as already noted a passion of Marsh, required 'a thick skin' (2000: 38), a requirement equally necessary for ceramic collectors with more arcane enthusiasms (Jordan 2001c: 539). This was particularly so given the monstrous numerical size of their acquisitions (Wright 1875), which whether thematic or eclectic, challenged rational ideas on definitions of the sensible scale for a collection. As Johnston noted, when serial collecting the urge to acquire could become an end in itself (1999: 222).

Marsh and Sydney Greenslade (detailed below) amongst others, demonstrate how many creative and professional persons were avid collectors of ceramics, a significant number also collecting Martinware. Marsh's *Reminiscences* also demonstrate his assiduity in justifying his indulgence by quoting others, equally afflicted, such as John Stewart Templeton (1832-1918), carpet manufacturer and member of the Board of the Glasgow School of Art which commissioned Mackintosh's master work (Brett 1992: 41), Sir Edwin Cooper RA (1874-1942) and many professionals in the Inns of Court (Haslam 1978: 72), George James (1843-1911), and Rosalind Frances Howard (1845-1921) 9th Earl and Countess of Carlisle (Marsh 1937b: 19), Francis Henry Crittall of the Crittall metal window manufactory (Beard 1936: 35, Pitshanger Ealing 55/1550. 18 1 1922), Frank Trier (d.1951), Civil Engineer, of Champion Hill, Camberwell, part of whose collection was later bequeathed by his sister in law to Ipswich Museum (Ipswich R1967-75) and the American journalist and biographer Charles Whibley (1859-1930), a first cousin of a first cousin of Marsh (Marsh 1937b: 19) who in 1894 married Ethel Birnie Philip (1861-1920), sister-in-law to James McNeill Whistler (1834-

1903)(ggc@arts 2003). Ruskin's pupil and later publisher George Allen (1837-1907) was also an avid collector and instrumental in introducing the artist and ceramic decorator H. F. Fawcett to Wallace Martin c.1879, who engaged him for a year or so. Fawcett was greatly influential in introducing designs in the Japanese manner at that time (Haslam 1978: 66, 72). Edward Spencer of the Artificers' Guild formed his own collection of Martinware which he sold on to his partner Nelson Dawson.

Competition amongst collectors, as Garnett notes (2000: 38) required tenacity. But Marsh's own record suggests it was a game played with a degree of rapacious ruthlessness. He took pains to note who possessed desirable pieces and to track their onward movement from owner to owner. Nothing infuriated him more than to lose contact with pieces he had mistakenly thought to be in 'safe' hands, while there is evident glee in finally getting something after the death of an owner (Marsh 1937b: 20-22). For example, Wallace made three Toby Jugs, Marsh acquiring one later from Edward Spencer. Another, to his irritation, he could not trace and the third he acquired from its purchaser's sister after his death (Marsh 1937b: 21-22). Marsh was clearly anxious that by cherry picking, his collection would represent the whole *oeuvre* of the Martin Brothers from the celebrated to the mundane. Possession and control were paramount. He hoped the British Museum will 'ultimately be inclined to accept a gift of Martinware in which case [he] would include this third jug as a gift' (Marsh 1937b: 22).

Of all the surviving evidence, a bowl presented to Ernest Marsh by the vintner Francis Lawrence Berry (Berry 1999)(Fig. 7.1), also a Martin collector, says most in this respect about the relationship between collectors at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th Century and about Marsh in particular. Made by Charles Vyse, the bowl is inscribed *adsum pene ademall* in a Latin-esque jocular spoof: 'had some, almost had them all' (Watson 1990: 256) (Fig. 7.2). Berry styled himself a one-man Anti-Marsh Society in recognition of their good-

humoured competition (V & A C.83-1984). Marsh could however be magnanimous in sharing finds with others, such as 'allowing' friend and artist D. Y. Cameron to have a piece he had reserved for himself (Marsh 1937b: 22) and R. E. Prothero (later Lord Emle) to have another in the expectation that it be subsequently donated to the V & A – to Marsh's chagrin it wasn't (Marsh 1937b: 19).

Sydney Greenslade: French Influences

Probably the most important event in Marsh's life as a collector of Martinware was his meeting in about 1898 with the architect Sydney Kyffin Greenslade A.R.I.B.A. (1867-1955) (App.36). Greenslade lived at Exeter but had offices close to Brownlow Street at 11 Grays Inn Square. Greenslade's career was in the ascendant, with John Henry Eastwood (1843-1913) designing the new (built 1902-4) and admired St Anne's Roman Catholic Cathedral at Leeds (Marsh 1937b: 26). Further commissions enabled Greenslade to indulge his collecting interests, primarily in ceramics.

On a visit to the Martin shop Charles Martin introduced Marsh to Greenslade. It appears that for the first ten years of his collecting Marsh made little or no contact with other Martin collectors. Marsh recalled,

> From that time onward an acquaintance has grown into a friendship of a most intimate and delightful character and we have been associated ever since very closely in our admiration and appreciation of the work of these men (Marsh 1937b: 26).

Oakes suggests such close relationships between collectors were not uncommon (2006: 71-83).

Greenslade is important, as the following discussion will show, not only for the evidence of inter-action between maker and consumer in terms of influence on design, but in relation to Marsh, his role as a sounding board on the collecting of Martin and other ceramics (App.36). As a late-comer in his acquaintance with the Martins, Greenslade saw their work with a fresh pair of eyes, and at a considerable distance in time from their early work. Perhaps equally significant, is his probably being responsible for enthusing Marsh in the developments

taking place in French ceramics, for which Marsh became a proponent.

This meeting must have been soon after Greenslade's first acquaintance with the Martins during an Architectural Association meeting at the Holborn Restaurant, c.1898 (Haslam 1978: 113). The Martins had been invited to show a selection of their wares at the meeting and Charles assisted by Walter and Edwin attended. Some small pots made by Edwin based on vegetable shapes attracted Greenslade's attention (Haslam 1978: 113). After Greenslade's death his collection was dispersed, some by gift and others by bequest to the Pitshanger Museum (ceramics and personal archive), Ealing, Exeter and Plymouth Museums. It is unfortunate in the interests of possible comparison that, unlike Marsh, Greenslade does not appear to have documented his purchases.

Marsh encouraged the Martins by patronage, but there is no evidence that he saw it as being in any way appropriate to steer their artistic ideas, other than, in common with their many other clients, by his choice of purchases. As Haslam has related (1978), Greenslade by contrast did. He was familiar through his visits to Paris with the work of French potters, in particular Alexandre Bigot (1862-1927) and Auguste Delaherche (1857-1940) as displayed at Siegfried Bing's (1838-1905), *Salon de L'Art Nouveau*, opened 26 December 1895 (Troy 1991: 3, Midant 1999: 160-161). 'Highly eclectic', such exhibitions were seen in France as a threat to 'the entrenched tradition of the decorative arts' (Troy 1991: 3-8). Greenslade recognised French practice was 'technically and artistically more sophisticated than anything being made in England at that time' (Haslam 1978: 113), but also realised the natural forms developed by Edwin Martin were an advance on their previous work, and akin to these new ideas. He took him to a French studio pottery exhibition at the Guildhall in 1898, the year in which *The Studio* featured Auguste Delaherche, one of those whom Mourey noted at the time realised 'the successful renaissance of the potter's art in France' (1898: 12).

Haslam concludes that Edwin's designs were developed quite independently of French

influence (1978: 113) but I suggest the evidence for this is less clear. Delaherche's work had made a considerable impact at the 1889 Paris *Exposition Universelle* and must have been widely discussed (Giguet 2001: 21). Modern French ceramics were not entirely unseen in the Britain, being exhibited at the Grafton Gallery with other French ceramics in 1894 and described by designer and critic Lewis Day (1845-1910) at the time 'as tempting to the hand as to the eye of the connoisseur' (*Art Journal* 1894: 6). Day's article contained no illustrations but the Martins cannot have been unaware of the exhibition and the stylistic Delaherche had adopted, if only by report. This said, in an acknowledgment to Greenslade of a post-card sent from the Delaherche pottery in 1910, Edwin seemed at pains to distance himself from any suggestion of influence, on the contrary suggesting that stylistically they had simultaneously arrived at similar conclusions. The post-card illustration is striking for the similarity of the organic forms of the various pots visible to those of Edwin Martin, if of greater size. Somewhat preposterously Edwin suggested that:

> That famous French Potter Mr Delaherche has the same inspiration for potting as ourselves - in fact many of his shapes & ribbings so much resemble ours that one almost feels that he has been copying. But perhaps it isn't so (Pitshanger Ealing 55/304 19 5 10).

Greenslade recognised that while still highly regarded, the Martins' former ideas fed a saturated and declining market and needed to offer something new. Through encouragement of Edwin he injected new ideas into the Martin product range (Haslam 1978: 113-162). Without benefit of artistic training, Edwin was untainted by tradition and, in Greenslade's view, potentially the most likely person in the business to be amenable to new ideas (Haslam 1978: 114). This took the form of numerous accompanied visits to the Zoo, the Natural History Museum and Kew Gardens to study natural flora and fauna, as well as frequent tours of exhibitions and the galleries of the V & A. He also took Edwin, Walter and Charles to Paris to the *Exposition Universelle*. More direct intervention took the form of frequent correspondence with Edwin enclosing drawings of his ideas, many of which have a close

resemblance to items actually made (Haslam 1978: 121). On 17 March 1907 Edwin wrote to Greenslade informing him, amongst other things, of his intention to visit the South African Produce Exhibition at Westminster, presumably to see what there was in the way of exotic vegetable forms (Ealing 55/261). If the relationship between Marsh and the Martins as a family in the 1890s was close, the relationship between Greenslade and Edwin in particular after 1900 was demonstrably closer. A particular letter of thanks from Edwin to Greenslade quintessentially sums up the closeness of that relationship:

> Thanks very much for sketches. It is most kind of you to think of us in the way you do and I can assure you give me much inspiration. I hope to have a turn at all the 15 shapes you have sent me this week ... (Ealing 55/207 29 3 03).
>
> I rec'd clay last Tuesday ...it has a most beautiful texture and the shape is famous for whole colour. Of course I shall not slavishly copy and mine will be all different (Ealing 55/209 22 5 03).

In festive mood on New Years Eve 1907 Greenslade was prompted on reading an article in the 'Burlington Magazine Vol. VII May 1905' suggesting a trilogy of the finest European ceramics , to pen a paean of praise of his own selection:

> That a mighty collection should contain .... cost 100's perhaps 1000's, yet W.R.M. [Robert Wallace Martin] today in Holborn - spent from 10.30 to 6.0 in selling one small piece of ware for 5/- & then <u>made</u> a special box to send it off by parcel post ! Yet perhaps in 200 years hence the Martins will be added to the two great Frenchmen Delaherche & Carries - as the trilogy for the collector - to shine for & certainly no men can show so wonderful a record as these three brothers & particularly Edwin B.M..... (Ealing 55/789)

While Marsh might have claimed a strong friendship with the Martins it is clear from one particular exchange of correspondence between Greenslade and Marsh that when a dispute arose between Marsh and the Martins, Greenslade's natural inclination was to differ with his friend Marsh and to show a greater degree of tolerance to their sometimes exasperating behaviour, and that of Wallace in particular, who seems on occasions to have taken a perverse delight in being obstinate in his dealings with Marsh. For example, for some years Marsh had been attempting by a process of exchange and purchase to assemble a chess set of Martin figures, with the intention of eventually donating it to the V. & A. Wallace wished Marsh to

accept two figures which the latter regarded as an unfair exchange, and, it appears, in breach of previous understandings. This led to a sharp exchange with Wallace and Marsh contacting Greenslade by telephone for support, which was not forthcoming. Greenslade evidently immediately wrote to Marsh who in return wrote a stiff letter to Greenslade expressing disappointment and declaring his opinion wrong (Ealing 55/171734 17 12 1919). It says something for the strength of their friendship, or perhaps more for the tolerance of Greenslade that the effect was not lasting, that, the cut and thrust of acquisition apart, their mutual regard for each other soon returned (Ealing 55/1735 17 3 1920).

Haslam concludes that while it is self evident from their products that the Martins thought they had little to gain in their practice from continental ideas, it is clear that the encouragement of Edwin gave him the confidence to develop his own initial explorations in the area of applying the idea of natural forms to the vessels he created. It is also obvious that, while the interpretations are Edwin's own, Greenslade's contribution has to be seen as an explicit attempt at intervention in the creative process to make their product more attractive to ther market. This said, Greenslade must also have eventually recognised the probable limitations of the response by the Brothers to his ideas, since, with the exception of the Marsh purchases showing French influence, discussed below, they failed to become a springboard to further development and broadening of the initial ideas. The cautious response of the Martins however closely parallels the reflex response within the practices of most French decorative art at the close of the 19th Century, as detailed in Troy's recent summary of the 'Paradoxes of Modernism':

> French decorators found that the only way to be modern yet remain French was to invoke the styles and, to the extent possible, the modes of production that they believed had made their decorative art so successful in the past (1991: 227).

Haslam notes, however, that though the brothers had noted at the *Exposition Universelle:*

> the small amount of decoration on French ware, as compared with their own ... the amount of decoration on Edwin's pots does not perceptively decrease after 1900, although vases and bowls with practically no decoration do subsequently appear (1978: 120).

While Haslam is right with regard to the majority of forms, post 1900, there is evidence of increasing experimentation away from their mainstream designs. While collectors such as Nettlefold (1978: 117) shunned these new designs, examination of Marsh's acquisitions suggest he recognised the innovations being made by these highly tactile objects and acquired the most desirable examples. The Marsh catalogue supports the view that until 1901 he continued to buy the regular range of items made by the Martins (V & A 73-571: 44) but thereafter purchases of works included both old and new designs. A noteworthy example is the purchase in 1904 of a small vase, a trial piece, not in fact made by Edwin but made by Walter Francis in 1901 and inscribed with his initials on the base (V & A 73-571: 64 no.198).

These pieces are innovatory, including the application of metallic glazes and a range of high gloss clear glazes, where the interplay of light with minimally faceted or plain surfaces became the sole decoration. Some utilised existing forms, others appear to be new. In complete contrast to their other designs still being made at this time, all are thoughtful, showing remarkable sophistication in their subtle and restrained decoration. The reason for this change can, I suggest, be attributed in part to new forms seen at the 1900 *Exposition* not just by independent ceramicists but also those by commercial manufacturers, particularly by Henri Barberis for Alexandre Sandier at Sèvres, who displayed many innovatory designs (Midant 1999: 36, 38). These included a small, plain chun glaze bottle - suggesting an awareness of and interest in Chinese glazes (12.1903, SLG CE13). Its long neck is straight sided, but rather than the variation of form, with the slight belling of Barberis's designs it maintains its straight line, finishing instead with a slight touch of colour to the top of the rim. The subtlety of its visual achievement is the same, but arrived at by a different route. A black metallic glazed Martin vase with plain body and pinched neck (2. 1910, SLG CE87), is strongly suggestive of the influence of Delaherche (Mourey 1898: 114). Another black metallic glazed Martin vase with a thrown ovoid body with thin vertical facets, underscores the principles advocated by Sandier, but is of wholly original design (5.1910, SLG CE50). The various gradations of density of colour in the use of black, achieved through subtle variations in the colour itself, the liquidity or stiffness of the applied glaze, its thinness or thick coating,

combined with surface textures that, in a multiplicity of variations reflect or absorb light in varying degrees, is arguably one of the most unrecognised and innovative achievements by Edwin Martin.

A pair of vases, offer a different approach. Both are tall, brown and liquid-glazed, with squared thrown bodies of slightly ovoid form and with rounded corners. One has a surface worked with a ripple effect (12.1908, SLG CE45). The other is somewhat similar, but with a surface pressed or stroked with the smooth surface of the handle of a knife or similar implement (12.1908, SLG CE53). Both have solidity and purposefulness in their functional appearance but with their sculptural angularity softened by its surface treatment. Another is a thrown vase made by Edwin when Marsh was present. For this a small rounded pad has been repeatedly pressed against the interior to create a slight blister effect on its exterior, a resist appearing to have been applied to these swellings beneath a liquid glaze (3.1908, SLG CE80). The surface hints at the idea of vegetable forms, demonstrating the increasing sophistication within Edwin's practice of abstraction of the natural world. The soft clay of the base has been initialled EBM by Edwin Martin and Ernest Marsh has recognisably signed it E. Marsh in his own hand, also in the soft clay.

It would be surprising if either Marsh or the Martins would have recognised these as 'modern', that is part of a revolution in ceramic practice, but all are innovatory and a distinct move away from former notions of form, colour and decoration.

Edwin's older brother Walter has been credited with so much in terms of the application of a lifetime of learning in the creation and use of glazes (Christie's 2003: 6) but it is evident that Edwin's experimentation in later life brought new ideas into their work of form and colour, particularly the incorporation of natural forms.

Charles Martin's introduction of Marsh to Greenslade, apart from their friendship and sharing of a mutual collecting interest, had two consequences. The first is that it is probable

that Greenslade was instrumental in encouraging Marsh to acquire a small range of French ceramics, including several by Emile Decoeur (1876-1953), Delaherche and Henri Simmen (1880-1963) (Sotheby 1945: 5). Whether all these works were acquired by Marsh in these early years from France through Greenslade or later British showings is unclear. Greenslade showed his collection to Edwin Martin (Haslam 1978: 117) and most likely also to Marsh. On 17 May 1910 Greenslade had also sent an illustrated postcard of the interior of the Delaherche Pottery, near Beauvais to Marsh (as well as noted above, to Edwin), reporting on the successful visit and the acquisition of some new porcelain that Delaherche was trying.

Marsh's interest in French contemporary pottery endured. In 1938 he wrote the preface to the Brygos Gallery exhibition catalogue of Contemporary French Pottery, part of a Government prompted initiative for cultural exchange to improve understanding and trade between Britain and France. It included items by Simmen, Buthaud, Emile Lenoble, Serre (1889-1956), Decoeur, Jacques Lenoble, Mayodon, and Chaumel (1938a: 1-3). As Marsh noted, it was nevertheless funded by the galleries concerned, and held simultaneously with another of British pottery at Rouard's Galleries in Paris (Marsh 1938a: 1). Its arrangement was probably through his role as Director of the Contemporary Art Society, discussed later. Welcoming the exhibition, Marsh used the opportunity to point out that, in marked contrast to the political aims of the exhibitions of togetherness, the few examples of modern French pottery formerly displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum were now 'relegated' to the Bethnal Green Museum (1938a: 2). He hoped that 'these and the works of the British Studio Potters will soon be returned to South Kensington', concluding with the hope for further similar exhibitions and the consequent 'successful furtherance of artistic fellowship between the two countries' (1938a: 2-3).

The Ealing Greenslade archive is tantalising in its record of correspondence between Greenslade, the Martins (primarily Edwin) and Marsh, not because of what is present, which is illuminating, but what is absent. Greenslade retained many of the letters from the Martins and Marsh, but his to them are almost entirely untraced, presumably destroyed. In July 1906

Edwin reported that he attended Kingston Regatta and called in the museum [curated by Marsh, see Chapter 6] hoping to see 'our much esteemed friend Mr Ernest Marsh' (Pitshanger Ealing 55/237 16 7 06). In November 1906 Edwin took photographs of Greenslade at his office in Holborn (Ealing 55/253 7 11 06) from which Robert Wallace sculpted a likeness on a medallion (Ealing 55/267 17 9 07, Acc. 1973/335). Another much larger portrait was made in 1910 (Haslam 1978: 148). A medallion of Marsh was sculpted by Robert Wallace in 1922 (Ealing Acc. 1972/334).

The first surviving letter from Marsh to Greenslade is a long letter detailing the visit of Dugald Sutherland MacColl (1859-1948), painter, poet, art critic and Keeper of the Tate Gallery (1906-11), accompanied by one of his sons (Ealing 55/1712 14 2 09). The purpose of the visit was to examine Marsh's print collection with a view to a loan. This aspect is discussed later in Chapter 6. The letter's familiarity suggests it was part of a regular correspondence between friends. The letter is important in its illustration of the empathetic sharing between the two collectors of the passion aroused by Martin ceramics. It also graphically defines the collision frequently evoked by art between rational examination of artefacts and the aesthetic response, as previously discussed in relation to the writings of Vernon Lee, prompted by the handling of objects.

Marsh begins his letter to Greenslade by narrating how, after looking around the house they looked at some items made by the Martin Brothers. He [McColl]

> then began to handle the Martin ware - you know the insidious touch of it ! & was immensely impressed with the colour work of Edwin's; especially the poppy head pots & the inlaid narrow worked ones: I could see the fatal poison was stealing through him & at last he began to discuss how he could contrive to get a Case for the Tate !!! (Ealing 55/1712 14 2 09).

It is clear from this account that the physical act of contact, was as important, if not more important than simply to look. de Waal has noted how, as the 20th Century progressed:

> as the identity of domestic space has changed, so has the meaning of ceramics; the idea that meaning could lie in how they were handled or placed rather than in their decoration became significant. For some, the idea that you could pick up the object and

take 'sensuous possession' of it became the endpoint for their art: for others it is an irrelevance (2003: 9).

The evident glee excited in Marsh at MacColl's response is strongly redolent of Marsh's own reaction on his visit to the Martin shop twenty years before, as narrated above and attests to the enduring fascination elicited in visitors by the Martins and their products (1936: 1-3, 6)

While most letters from Marsh to Greenslade begin with news about firings their shared interests were far wider than simply Martin ceramics. They discussed Greenslade's various architectural projects and contracts as well as ceramics going through auction and the prices obtained (Ealing 55/1714 27 1 10).

By 1910 Marsh's business was, as already related, in financial difficulties and he was in little position to make further acquisitions. Despite this and the Martin Spring 1910 firing being poor, he still felt compelled to reserve a selection of items from the kiln, only to decide subsequently, to the chagrin of Edwin, not to have them (Ealing 55/304 19 5 01). A further firing a few months later was more successful, with Marsh, and other collectors: a Mr & Mrs Back, Mr [Frank] Trier [1853-1923, from Champion Hill, Camberwell] and a Dr. Parsons attending the drawing of the kiln and selecting items for themselves as they were unpacked (Ealing 55/386 15 8 10). Greenslade had evidently not been told of the event. Clement, Robert Wallace's son felt that whatever had taken place was underhand and wrote secretly to Greenslade, with his father's knowledge, but apparently without that of the other brothers, to inform him what had taken place. Greenslade evidently went to see the results, noting that the firing was patchy, but Marsh had chosen some good ones. If there had been differences with the other brothers it evidently did not extend to any misunderstanding with Marsh. If Marsh had in consequence secured a competitive edge it was not held against him. A week later Greenslade notes going with Marsh to see another collector's recent Martin purchases without any evident disharmony (Ealing 55/386 15 8 10).

After the death of Charles Martin numerous choice examples of their work were found secreted away in the shop. Marsh and Greenslade were present when the hoard was discovered (Marsh 1937b: 12-13). These were sold soon after in a special sale for which Greenslade wrote a small booklet on the Brothers and the manufactory (Marsh 1937b: 13).

The relationship between the Martin Brothers and their customers, while mostly amicable and in most instances one of friendship, could on occasions, as already discussed, be tense. Greenslade notes how they were wary of competition from potential copyists. Thus for this reason Charles could be difficult with foreign customers and decline a sale (Haslam 1978: 143). In May 1912 Marsh wrote to Greenslade that he had called at the shop to find Robert Wallace and Edwin had just finished pricing a fresh batch of work. Robert Wallace was evasive but evidently Marsh espied that a green pot decorated with fish, promised to him, had another's name on it, a name unknown to Marsh. Robert Wallace denied all knowledge of the reservation (Ealing 55/1720 10 5 1912). An evidently incensed Marsh informed Greenslade that he would telephone Edwin:

> I am sure he knows, that I must have this and if there is any doubt I shall go up and try and take it away (by force if necessary !!) as I am afraid I cannot trust old Wallace, he has done me so many times in this way before ! If you are going round to Brownlow St. do put in a word with Edwin about this (Ealing 55/1720 10 5 1912).

The sense of ownership and expectation of possession, from the point of conception in the pottery at Southall, through the process over many months of drying, glazing, firing and delivery to the point of sale, with all the heightened sense of expectancy as if at a birth, is instructive and is perhaps the most telling summation of the relationship between the collected and the collector that can be evinced.

The letter can also be construed as saying much about Marsh's blinkered obsession with collecting, possibly as escapism from his business affairs. Two years later he wrote to Greenslade:

> I did not think when I saw you last that I should be going through the experience of the

> last two weeks: that things have turned out as they have in our business affairs is a blow to us but we thought it best that they should not be left to go worse as there seemed every probability they would. Quite what will be the end of it I do not know yet but what ever deficiency if any there may be on the firm's account will have to be made up out of our private means. So I expect most if not all my collections may have to go but I expect to be able to arrange for their disposal on good terms. The Martin will be left till last I expect & I hope may be saved (Ealing 55/1722 8 3 1914)

They were put in his wife's name.

Social Responsibility

MacDougall's biography (2002) of Mark Gertler graphically details how at the beginning of the 20th Century, at a time when British welfare provision was emerging from its embryo state, there was often a social dimension to the relationship between artists and practitioners that went beyond mere interest in artistic prowess to a real concern with their personal welfare. In 1914 Marsh wrote to Greenslade 'I have not seen Edwin since he went to see his doctor. What answer did he give him? I was rather anxious about the result' (Ealing 55/1722 8 3 1914). Edwin's letters to Greenslade at this period are a harrowing account of his decline, facial operations and subsequent death, age 55, from cancer of the mouth (Ealing 55/1914-1915). There is a powerful intimacy in his correspondence with Greenslade, a month after Marsh's letter he had written:

> I have set the kiln & am burning it in great grief this time knowing that shortly I have to place myself on the operating table & again be cut right through the lower lip & under the chin, but I will try & bear it with all the fortitude I possess & trust I may be spared to make many good pots yet (Ealing 55/132 22 4 1914).

The cause of death is unknown but was most likely cancer of the face from smoking or chemical poisoning from substances used by him in decorating the ceramics: if so, it was a sorry price for the flowering of so much creativity.

The interest of Marsh and Greenslade in the Martins extended to the care of their families after their deaths. Greenslade encouraged Wallace's son Clement with new designs to re-fire the kilns, but without much success. A partnership with a Captain H. Butterfield, who

provided capital by mortgage on the property, enabled the firing of a few remaining pots and some new pieces by Clement, but in the old styles and of inferior quality to those made before by the brothers (Haslam 1978: 162, Ealing 55/1782, 14 4 1929).

After Walter Martin died his widow and son John Robert Fraser Martin (b.1907) continued to live in Fulham. He was employed by Boots the chemists and studying to qualify as a chemist (Ealing 55/686: 2). Marsh relates in his *Reminiscences* how the MP for Fulham Sir Kenyon Vaughan-Morgan, interested himself in their affairs, approaching James Ramsay McDonald (1866-1937), the first Labour Prime Minister 'to see if it was possible to get some financial assistance to help [them], urging upon him the national work that the father had done by his share in the production of so much work of artistic merit' (1937b: 36). It is interesting how in this record for public consumption Marsh gives the impression that the action was taken on the initiative of Vaughan-Morgan. The copy of his confidential letter to Secretary to the Cabinet Thomas Jones C.H. (Ealing 55/686, 1 4 1930), copied to Greenslade (Ealing 55/1819), stating the background and financial status of each surviving member of the Martins, suggests that the initiative came about through an initial approach to Vaughan-Morgan by either Greenslade or Marsh, more probably the latter. In this he stated that:

> Mr S.K.Greenslade and I had considered that these two and the daughter of R. W. Martin were the most needy and worthy of any assistance it was possible to render them, and that in view of the wonderful work accomplished by all of the brothers between 1873 and 1923 a national recognition was due to them through their children in acknowledgment of what these simple humble and hard working and brilliantly clever craftsmen had created in the wonderful series of works of art - unrivalled in their sphere in the history of British Ceramic work - and in spite of every obstacle and without capital except what their brains and hands provided (Ealing 55/686: 2).

Marsh advised Smith that since the first approach the family had received notice from Australia of the death of James Angus Martin and an expectation of their benefiting from his estate. This sudden enhancement of the prospects for some of the family altered the situation dramatically but as Marsh pointed out did not help them all. Marsh went to the House of Commons to acquaint Vaughan Morgan with the details who then wrote to a Mr. Vincent at 10

Downing Street. The conclusion, following an interview by Marsh at 10 Downing Street with the Prime Minister's secretary was the granting of the sum of £150 in trust to Marsh, to be paid at £12.10.0 quarterly through him to the widow for the benefit of John to enable him to further his studies, take exams and the cost of any apprenticeship indenture (1937b: 36). John subsequently qualified as a chemist, later by coincidence working for the chemist who had originally leased the Southall buildings to Wallace to establish the pottery (Marsh 1937b: 36).

Lobbying the Institutions

Marsh recognised that while, as detailed above, the Martin Brothers had an extensive following, it was plainly an elitist interest within and largely fostered by a moneyed circle of middle-class business men. To obtain a wider audience for and recognition of the Martins work it was necessary to expose it to a general public unable to afford to buy but prospectively susceptible to appreciation of their work, if afforded the opportunity of seeing it. Marsh was clearly aware of the commodity value of display in museums and galleries to the cultural value given to objects and the ideas they espoused, even if he may not have expressed it in those terms. The problem was changing institutional policy on acquisition.

Today it is the norm for many art institutions to purchase contemporary art. Such practice was unknown and regarded as unacceptable until well into the 20th Century. As Hayden notes, it was equally anathema to acquire anything made in the previous hundred years but by the 1920s the mould had been broken (1924: 30). It must have given Marsh a considerable sense of achievement to read Arthur Hayden's 1924 review *Antiques Abroad: Past and Future*, in which he divided antiques into three classes: those that have stood the test of time, those whose only virtue was age, and

> the nebulous, ... such as later objects of art, which, only a few years ago, we held to be of too late a period to be collected. ...Already the London Museums are exhibiting Martin ware, that fine grotesque earthenware of the Brothers Martin of the late nineteenth century (1924: 30).

The implication from this of course was that Marsh had achieved his objective: that through

the process of connoisseurship and institutional appraisal the body of work produced by the Martin Brothers had circumvented 'the system' and moved quickly into the first rank.

As a promoter of the interests of ceramics and their makers Marsh operated in both a private and public capacity. From the establishment in 1928 of Pottery and Craft as a distinct part of the activities of the Contemporary Art Society (see Chapter 6) the emphasis in his activities became largely official. Prior to that time his activities were aimed at obtaining wider institutional interest as a private individual. While putting a large selection of his Martin collection on display at Kingston upon Thames (Chapter 6) he also made strenuous efforts, as with the MacColl visit, to obtain a wider audience for ceramics in the galleries of the Capital.

International Recognition: the 1914 Louvre Exhibition

In 1914 the Board of Trade invited contributions for an exhibition at the Louvre of the Decorative Arts of Great Britain and Ireland. This might suggest that as a body promoting trade, the Board was ahead of British Trustees of Museums and Galleries (for example, V & A policy was 'to show very little which is not at least 50 years old' (Harcourt Smith 1914: 4)) in recognising the importance of fostering emerging ideas by taking the lead, that good art and design was a commodity like any other product.

However, whatever the restrictive policies of institutional trustees on acquisition of contemporary manufactures and designs, it is evident that some of those serving within them felt the need could be met by other means. For example, while Sir Cecil Harcourt Smith (1859-1944), Director of the V & A (1909-24) considered it inappropriate for it to collect 'modern art', he proposed instead a separate British Institute of Industrial Art (BIIA) (Harcourt Smith 1914: 4). Founded in 1920 (HMSO c.1924, Pevsner 1937: 154-5), Harcourt Smith served as its Vice-Chairman (Wilk 2007). Official records of the Louvre exhibition do not appear to have survived (PRO 2003), but Marsh seems to have been commissioned with Greenslade to organise a loan to the exhibition of Martin ceramics, both from himself and a number of other collectors, including Sir Cecil (HMSO 1914: Martin Bros. ex. 330-33, Mrs S.

Marsh: ex. 334-93, Harcourt Smith ex. 394-6). As its President, Sir Cecil was thus both instrumental in arranging the exhibition and himself a collector of Martinware. Its inclusion can be construed as partial or simply recognition of its virtues, irrespective of his personal interest.

There were differing curatorial views on how the Martinware should best be displayed. What is evident is the degree of concern by various interests that it was seen to best advantage. Surviving photographs suggest that prior to departure the exhibits were pre-assembled in a case at either Kingston or South Kensington in a model display format (Fig. 6.3). However, according to the illustrations in the catalogue [untraced], when displayed at the Louvre, to Marsh's irritation (reported to Greenslade), many items were instead placed around the exhibition without makers identification (Ealing 55/1724 19 12 1914). Greenslade subsequently complained to William Burton (1863-1934), arranger of the English Pottery exhibit (Ealing 55/1299). Burton's reply implies the fault was not his but Sir Cecil's who, arriving 'rather late' had brought and arranged the Martin contribution (Pitshanger Ealing 55/1299 2 1 1915). In a comment echoed by Rackham later to Sir Cecil on the sombre effect of the Kingston Martin exhibits en masse, Burton diplomatically remarked that:

> We felt they could not be adequately displayed in the room where the bulk of the pottery was shown & Sir Cecil Smith took great pains to obtain suitable cases & show them in a good light. I regarded the collection as one of which any potter might be proud (Ealing 55/1299 2 1 1915).

Burton's comments suggest that the catalogue illustrations were compositions for photographic reasons only and not true representations of the exhibits as seen by the general public. In fact most, if not all the Martin examples were contained in cases and not, as the catalogue implies, artistically arranged around the exhibition. To Greenslade, Burton expressed the view that the French based their work,

> far too much on the Japanese & have really added very little to the sum total of the Potters Art; whereas I consider that the Martins have made a distinct contribution. The war of course has reduced all artistic pottery to nothing (Ealing 55/1299 2 1 1915).

The Burton comments were very much from an English perspective. Greenslade also wrote to Captain, later Major Alfred Appleby Longden (d.1954) of the Board of Trade Exhibitions Branch about the exhibition. His comments contradict that of Burton:

> Needless to say the public liked it immensely but quite apart from this a large number of experts showed great interest in the collection. Generally speaking the expert rejoiced most in the grotesque pieces, not as you know, from the same point of view as the man in the street. He fully appreciated their very able conventional conception while retaining a naturalative [sic] feeling. The Bird's & the darkest vases were perhaps the most liked.
>
> The specimens least appreciated were those which closely resembled enormous gourds & seed pods in strange dark fruit like forms, which, it was felt, were neither one thing or the other. Many potters from Sèvres marvelled at the quality of some of their glazes (Ealing 55/1357 undated).
>
> As detailed later (Chap.6) Longden was involved in the initial arrangements with Marsh for the 1926 New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, later serving (1940-47) as Director of the Fine Art Department at the British Council (Powers 2006: 89).

The display at the Louvre was clearly a success. The loan remained in Paris until the cessation of hostilities.

Changing Policy: The Victoria & Albert Museum

The Ernest Marsh V & A file lists his gifts and loans. It also contains all correspondence with him, drafts of letters to him and comments on both him and his collections. It is largely composed of a dialogue between three people: Ernest Marsh, by letter and records of verbal discussions with him and Sir Cecil Harcourt Smith, V & A Director and Bernard Rackham (1876-1964) employed at South Kensington 1898-1938, becoming Keeper of the Department of Ceramics in 1918 on the retirement of C.H.Wylde (Wilkinson 2003: 246). The latter two are by minuted notes and drafts of letters to Marsh passed between them.

The contents of the file are significant for the insights it gives on both institutional thinking on acquisition at this period and the analytical process of assessing the merits of items it chose or chose not to acquire (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m). It is also important for the critical views expressed by those running the premier British institution for the decorative arts, particularly with regard to the role of Sir Cecil Harcourt Smith, who it appears in principle

wished to separate 'modern' work from that of former times. He himself admitted, that,

> this break in continuity in a Museum which has for its principal object to illustrate and stimulate the craft of design and workmanship by means of the finest examples obtainable is, to say the least, unfortunate (Harcourt Smith 1914: 4).

In her study *Collecting Korean Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum 1888-1938*, almost exactly paralleling the collecting years of Ernest Marsh, Wilkinson has shown how within one area of collecting, with acquisition more often opportunistic than planned, 'the actions of various curators and collectors ... have shaped various [institutional] collections' (2003: 254). It also affirms that where the attention of those having policy oversight or responsibility for acquisition can be attracted, either by fostering a known interest or exciting a new one, it can be potentially beneficial to the receiving establishment.

A renowned archaeologist, Sir Cecil's primary interest was ancient history but, as has been shown, this did not preclude him having forward views about recent and contemporary works. Rackham was a prolific author on the history of ceramics and ancient glass, exemplified by his work jointly with Read and Glaisher on English pottery up to the 18th Century (1924a). At this period he wrote little or nothing on contemporary practice and, as the following discussion demonstrates, was clearly sympathetic to the 50 year rule and uncomfortable in being made to express any aesthetic judgment on anything made in the late 19th Century. It was not until the 1920s that he evinced any great interest in contemporary ceramics (1924b, 1925) and not until 1940, by when he felt there were glimmerings of hope, did he feel able to give a considered overview of 'modern times' which he defined as commencing at the beginning of the 19th Century:

> since when the art of the potter has in general declined, under the stress of growing industrialism. Artistic invention has stagnated and recourse has been had in its default to plagiarism. Only in quite recent times has there been emancipation from the disastrous effects of nineteenth-century thraldom to the styles of the past (Rackham 1940: 114-115).

Clearly, Rackham's opinions were completely at variance with those of Sir Cecil. His

role as Keeper of Ceramics at South Kensington for the first forty years of the 20th Century and his personal view on what was or was not to be acquired, as with Marsh's sole charge of the Contemporary Arts Society Pottery and Craft Fund 1928-1945, described later (Chap. 6), was thus crucial to institutional recognition, or otherwise. As Wilkinson notes, he was forthright in his opinions, tenacious in getting what he wanted and not afraid to upset collectors who attempted to impose their own terms on what was or was not to be acquired (2003: 250). It is noteworthy that in regard to the Martins his opinions voiced to Sir Cecil Smith did not change over the following forty years. Doulton he considered:

> suffered from the artistic limitations of its decorators. In the Doulton factory Edwin Martin and his two brothers received a training which enabled them ... to make a stoneware of genuinely ceramic quality; in their later work, under the stimulus derived from a visit to Paris Exhibition of 1900, very satisfactory results were sometimes achieved (Rackham 1940: 120).

The slight to the founder of the Martin enterprise, Robert Wallace, by not mentioning him by name was clearly intended. Rackham's opinion of his work since viewing the Marsh collection in 1909 (see below) still held, presumably because his work looked too much to the past, only Edwin learnt from the present, although, as noted above it was the technical merits of Robert Wallace's sculptural work that were appreciated in 1914 by the French (Fig. 6.4), not the aesthetics of Edwin's contribution (Fig. 6.7). Haslam has recently and rightly pointed out that the critical comment of more recent commentators, Cooper (1947), Digby (1952) and Rose (1955 and 1970), and by implication Rackham (1940) have overlooked or ignored the age differences of the Martins and failed to recognise or pay tribute to their work together being a distillation of differing generations, each contributing in a 'distinct' way; that the final achievement of Edwin began in the learning experience with his brothers, without whom it is unlikely to have happened (2003: 2).

The early V & A file entries show that, having recognised the possible opportunity posed by the acceptance of the Louvre loan and therefore the international recognition thus gained for the Martins, Marsh had apparently suggested to Sir Cecil that on return from France

it be displayed at South Kensington (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m). Harcourt Smith was evidently sympathetic, given that he had himself lent a piece of Martinware for the exhibition, wrote the section on ceramics for the catalogue and praised the work of Edwin Martin (Pitshanger Ealing 55/1724 19 12 1914).

As a matter of policy this proposal was a break with precedent, it being the rule that works by living artists were not acquired: the principle being that a sufficient period of time should elapse to allow reflection on the merits or otherwise of an artist's work. The fact that Sir Cecil appeared to be inclined to break his own rule is noteworthy and suggests more flexibility of mind than has hitherto been thought (Wilk 2007). The proposal looked likely to remain a hypothetical issue, as, with the outbreak of hostilities the exhibits remained in Paris, not returning until 1919. However, Marsh suggested to Sir Cecil in 1914 that in their place he borrow two cases of Martinware from Kingston, arguing that as they had been on display at Kingston for some years 'a change to Kensington would enable a larger public to view these & much more advantageously, as they are too crowded where they are' (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 19 12 14).

With Harcourt Smith's encouragement Rackham met Marsh at Kingston Museum to consider what was being offered. Probably mindful of the politics involved if he chose to agree to a loan, Harcourt Smith minuted Rackham:

> As you know this "Martin ware" has many remarkable characteristics, & is one [sic] which seems to me worthy of record here. It has a history of about 40 years which I believe is now coming to an end in the death of the last member of the firm. I rather think Mr. Marsh [who] has one of the best existing collections of this ware might be persuaded to give or bequeath a representative series - but I am not sure. Anyhow, it is worth a visit (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 22 12 14).

Harcourt Smith's observations on the demise of the Martins are curious. It is hard not to believe that, while he knew of the deaths of Charles in 1910 and Walter in 1912, he was not unaware that Robert Wallace survived and Edwin, although very ill, was still alive and running the manufactory, albeit on a reduced basis.

Marsh, probably aware of Rackham's predilection for historic ceramics, wrote to Greenslade asking him to be present when Rackham called: 'I should be very glad, as I expect this man knows nothing about Martinware & perhaps we might jointly be able to better impress him & influence his selection' (Ealing 55/1727 27 12 14). Greenslade was evidently unable to attend, Marsh subsequently reporting to him the negotiations that had taken place. Again, the manner of his writing in describing the pieces to Greenslade is as if he was reminding him of old friends, as no doubt they were. It was evidently a visit with robust opinions exchanged: while Rackham made a 'fairly representative' choice, he was anxious not to overfill the case, but 'nothing would induce him to take a pair of anything' (Ealing 55/1725 22 1 1915).

Marsh was right to be concerned about Rackham's critical assessment of the Martin *oeuvre*, evidently looking for innovation, not historicism, irrespective of age, which, as it turned out was to the advantage of Edwin's more 'modern' shapes. Rackham considered the Kingston exhibits divided broadly into two groups,

1. those decorated with floral groups and other patterns in slight relief or incised on the surface.

   Those which owe their effect solely to colour of glaze and form carefully considered in relation to one another.

2. The former class follows very much on the lines of Doulton's stoneware but shows decidedly greater originality of conception. It suffers however, in my opinion, from the same defects as Doulton ware, namely a prevailing sombreness of tone which the decoration does not avail to enliven; this class of wares produces in consequence, when seen in large masses as at Kingston, a somewhat dreary and uninteresting impression.

   The decorative designs employed generally reflect the types in vogue in the 'eighties, in which gracefulness is sought for at the cost of vitality; a tendency to overload the surface with decoration is also noticeable. There are however amongst this class a few pieces, mostly of recent origin, which have considerable merit and interest.

   (2) The second type, evolved as Mr. Marsh told me after a visit to Paris in 1900 and a study of Oriental and Continental colour-glaze wares there exhibited seems to me greatly superior in merit. In these the wheel and the kiln have been relied upon rather than the graving and modelling tool, with very successful results. The forms are attractive and original and the surface colours, including every shade of brown and

> drab, occasionally brightened with warmer tones and green, rival the Japanese and Chinese stonewares in beauty and effectiveness (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 4 1 1915).

His critical opinion is interesting when compared with the French view, previously quoted. While Rackham shared Marsh and Greenslade's enthusiasm for the later works, he did not share the then popular enthusiasm for the grotesque, expressed in the obsessive ceramic creations of Robert Wallace:

> Another small group, comprising pieces modelled in the form of grotesque birds, human faces ... by ... Wallace Martin, appear to me to depart too widely from the forms and proportions of nature to be altogether pleasing (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 4 1 1915).

These were exemplars of what Bown has described as the 'the not benign', the 'tangled' underside of life, a taste so well explored in the illustrative work of Rackham's namesake, Arthur Rackham and the paintings of Richard Dadd (1867-1939)(1999: 119). Despite his evident enthusiasm for some of the designs he evidently saw his role to be to put a brake on both Sir Cecil's and Marsh's desire to overwhelm South Kensington with contemporary work, and Martin items in particular. Rackham proposed that, while Marsh was prepared to lend as much as South Kensington was prepared to take, with a hint of a future bequest, he should select with Marsh's help 'an interesting selection' sufficient to fill one cabinet only.

There is also the suggestion in Rackham's prevaricating response of a bureaucratic fencing match over the prospect of changing acquisition policy, with which he clearly disagreed. After all, while the opportunity to acquire the works of living practitioners would dramatically increase the potential scope of the South Kensington ceramic collection, across the institution as a whole it represented a seismic shift in policy that had much wider implications than simply a case full of Martinware. In particular, if there was to be an expectation that contemporary works would be acquired, given finite resources in terms of manpower, space and finance, this would automatically pressure a review of acquisition

policy. To Sir Cecil he wrote:

> Another difficulty seems to me to be involved by our policy with regard to exhibiting pottery by living craftsmen. If Martinware is to be shown ought we to find space for exhibiting some of the productions of other modern potters we possess.
>
> I may add that two of the four brothers Martin still survive, though in failing health (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 4 1 1915).

Sir Cecil was clearly not to be swayed by Rackham's obfuscation, and, taking the long term view, adroitly sidestepped an immediate challenge to institutional policy by offering alternative reasons for accepting a loan from Marsh:

> I think this Martinware deserves special consideration as an English fabric which has in a quiet way attained an exceptional repute. I think you will agree further that we ought to have (some two doz at any rate) specimens of it if we are ever to form a representative English ceramic series. Mr. Marsh gave me the impression that he intended to bequest some of his specimens to us & this appears to be a reason for acceptance in the present case.
>
> I thought, though I may be wrong, that only one brother survives and that the fabric is practically abandoned: if not, it soon will be, & that differentiates this question somewhat from that of other modern pottery fabrics being received here on loan (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 4 1 1915).

Rackham was evidently not impressed by Sir Cecil's argument, adding: 'Mr. Marsh informs me that the eldest & youngest brothers survive & still occasionally produce new works' (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 4 1 1915). This must have been stated more in hope than expectation. Edwin died 3 months later on Good Friday, 2 April 1915. Robert Wallace survived to 10 July 1923 (Haslam 1978: 161-162). A firing was planned to take place in the Spring of 1915, for which Edwin had made many pieces but he died before any arrangements were made and Wallace seems to have lost interest. Activity virtually ceased thereafter.

Rackham again met Marsh at Kingston, and despite forewarning of the need for 'careful consideration in view of the limited space at our disposal', accepted not just Sir Cecil's proposal of two dozen but thirty-eight specimens (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 8 1 1915). The acceptance papers are noteworthy in that the gift was accepted, not from Ernest Marsh, but his wife. No reason for this is given, but it appears that the use of her name in the

transaction had much to do with Marsh's financial failure. As previously noted, Marsh had written to Greenslade expressing the hope that even if the rest of his collections were sold to pay their debts, the Martin collection would be spared. The works loaned to South Kensington were each labelled in Ernest's handwriting with a reference number and with Mrs Marsh as owner. It can only be conjecture but, given that, as previously detailed, she had money in her own right, it is possible that she may have been a creditor of the business and accepted the collection in lieu of loans made and not repaid. It could also be that to avoid sequestration, ownership of the collection was transferred to his wife. In 1918 Sir Cecil evidently wrote to Marsh expressing a desire to extend the loan. Marsh replied that he and his wife were happy to agree.

Besides illustrating the tensions engendered by the internal politics of acquisition policy and the manner in which despite policy, it could evolve, the South Kensington Marsh file is also an exemplar of the close and harmonious relationships that often grew between donor and institution. Despite his desire to adhere to a set of principles, Rackhams's reservations were evidently swayed by contact with the objects themselves, that Sir Cecil likewise was open to persuasion if the arguement was sufficiently strong. This example does raise the issue of whether if sufficient other files were examined it would show whether the Martinware example was an isolated case of Sir Cecil bending his own rules, or one of many.

In October 1918 Sir Cecil asked Marsh if it was possible to obtain further examples of Martinware (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 17 10 1918). This suggestion probably arose from Marsh making him aware that many items still remained at Southall. In the intervening years little had happened at the pottery. In the September after Edwin died Marsh had visited Southall and was much dispirited by what he found. No doubt in a step intended to encourage Wallace's son, Clement to emulate Edwin in carrying on the creative work after Walter's death, he spoke to Clement about making his own experiments. In a letter to Greenslade he reported he found,

> Clement pretending to work - decorating a small pot - the old man ... had done nothing for months ....that the bodies of my two grotesque birds had been made in 1908 & were still there waiting colouring & firing ! It is something that they were as far advanced as this for I believe that Wallace will never make another bird if he ever does anything else.
>
> I asked Clement to get his small pieces fired in a week or ten days so that he might see for himself for future guidance how they came out, but though he pretended to see the desirability of this I am afraid there is little chance of it being done I pointed out that there was plenty of very old stuff that could be used to fill up the kiln if necessary (Ealing 55/1726 28 9 1915).

Marsh went to Southall and secured eight unfired specimens by Edwin, five exhibiting various characteristics of the creative process, including some marked by pencil drawing, all uncompleted before he died. The other three were ready for firing and it appears that Marsh purchased these from Robert Wallace, donating all eight to the V & A on the understanding, which was accepted, that if Robert Wallace ever fired the kiln, the three completed pots be returned for firing, as potentially, they 'might turn out to be good specimens of Edwin Martins best and latest work' (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 17 10 1918). Marsh also offered Sir Cecil the Martin oil lamp seen in the 1906 photographs of his home (Fig. 2.2) and, in the absence of electricity at *Coombe Bury* and later at *Hatch Hill,* much used (Fig. 6.5). This was collected by Rackham from Marsh's office at the Federation of British Industries, St. James, together with, astutely on Marsh's part and to Rackham and Sir Cecil's evident pleasure, a 'delightful Corean bowl' unlike anything else in the collection (Marsh 1909.1914/5119m 28 10 1918, C406.1918). As Wilkinson (2003) has related, and as Marsh was well aware, Korean wares were the particular fascination of Rackham.

British Exhibitions

Following the death of his son Francis, in 1919 Ernest and Sarah Marsh donated sixty outstanding pieces of Martinware to the V & A, to be exhibited as 'the 2nd. Lieutenant Francis Bedford Marsh 1914-1918 Memorial Gift'. Marsh stipulated several conditions, firstly that they be exhibited for two years, following which half would go to the circulation department for exhibition as a unit in the provinces, the rest being exhibited at the V & A or at Bethnal Green for a further eight years (V & A. Marsh, 1914/5119 M, 30 7 1919). These were the

pieces previously on loan by Marsh to the Louvre and since returned (V & A. Marsh, 1914/5119 M, 21 2 1919).

As a move to have a significant part of his collection in the care of the major national institution promoting the decorative arts, but on terms that ensured its permanent visibility to visitors for at least ten years, with the opportunity of showing half elsewhere, this was both innovative, audacious and apparently without precedent (V & A. Marsh, 1914/5119 M, 3 6 1919). Marsh himself, as detailed below, was to be instrumental in many items being exhibited elsewhere.

With the removal to the V & A of some of his past collection Marsh evidently felt he could look around for replacements. There were limits however to how far he felt it reasonable to spend. In 1919 a considerable quantity of Martinware came up for sale at Sotheby's, demand pushing prices beyond his expectation, which given the sheer scale of his own past acquisitions is somewhat ironic. It is noteworthy that at no time did he venture to put any items from his own collection into auction to free up resources to make further purchases. He was also aggrieved that the surviving Martins lacked the business nous to take advantage of demand, given that unfired stock was still in hand. At the sale, collectors Knight and Nettlefold were said to have:

> got fearfully excited! ... In the face of these prices it is perfectly ludicrous that Wallace does not get a move on & fire some new ones. If the old man had any go in him it would make some of these buyers a bit chary of giving such prices but I fancy they all believe that the whole family is extinct & for all practical purposes it does really seem so in the face of our experience of the last few years (Ealing 55/1733, 5 11 1919).

The continuing interest in Martinware post-1918 was noticed institutionally and prompted a move for public exhibition of their work. There were three main events: an exhibition at Hanley, Stoke on Trent in 1921, at the South London Art Gallery in 1922 and at Fulham in 1929. Martin was also shown at other venues including, at the instigation of Marsh and its Director, Major Alfred A. Longden, a loan of 38 Marsh items from the V & A to an

exhibition at the British Institute of Industrial Art (BIIA) at Knightsbridge in May 1921 (V. & A. Marsh, 1914/5119 M, 31 5 1920), supplemented by a further 45 specimens from Marsh (V. & A. Marsh, 1914/5119 M, 18 3 1921). The originality of Martinware was evidently being seen as offering a contribution to best practice. However, with much predating 1910, while flattering to the creativity of the Martins, it was an alarming indictment of the 1920s ceramic industry.

In 1921 Harry Barnard (1862-1933) of china manufacturers Josiah Wedgwood & Sons at Etruria and Alfred J. Caddie of the County Museum at Hanley decided to hold an exhibition of Martinware at Hanley, with the help of Greenslade and Marsh (Ealing 55/1339 14 2 1921), eventually held in May 1921 as a joint exhibition with the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours (Ealing 55/1436). Barnard had trained under Mark V. Marshall at Doulton of Lambeth (Wedgwood 2004, Clark 1995: 114) and both had also worked with the Martins (Ealing 55/1436). Marsh arranged for the V & A to send the loan and his own plus nearly 60 additional examples from his weekday rooms at 10 Cheyne Row, Chelsea and other items from London collectors James Vinter and medievalist Cyril de Costa Arnade (Ealing 55/1436).

Marsh's storage of a significant part of his collection at Chelsea is itself revealing. His London rooms appear to have replaced the Kingston upon Thames Museum as an overflow repository for his once again growing collection. The question of how much Sarah Marsh was aware of this renewed acquisitiveness is unknown. It has to be said that he was not alone in this practice: in 1915 Marsh photographed a case of Martinware at the Grays Inn Square office of Sydney Greenslade containing over one hundred and twenty vase and bottle forms, mostly post-1900 miniatures by Edwin Martin (Twyman collection).

The Hanley exhibition was well received, with 20,000 visitors. It is unfortunate no catalogue was produced, the rationale being that the Marsh exhibits were well labelled and

could therefore 'act as a key to the whole collection' (Ealing 55/1345, 26 7 1921): on the day but not for posterity.

A London Exhibition: The 1922 Exhibition of Pottery produced in London between the years 1872-1922

After the close of the Hanley exhibition Greenslade proposed a London showing. Following a conversation with Alfred Hopkins 'of the pottery class' [at Camberwell] he wrote to William Dalton, Curator at the South London Art Gallery (and until recently also Director of Camberwell College), 'wondering whether it would be possible to hold an exhibition of the work of London potters produced during the last 50 years & perhaps chiefly of the Martin Brothers' (SLG 6 9 1921).

Greenslade's words were carefully chosen. The success of the Hanley exhibition was an established fact: the Martin Brothers were now institutionally recognised. An exhibition formed around their work could provide a vehicle for awakening interest in the capital in other recent and contemporary ceramic practice and facilitate it being brought to a wider audience. He was also aware that a small group of potters, and William Staite Murray in particular, were beginning exciting experiments that held great promise for the future development of British ceramics.

Encouragement to Murray, Leach and others to experiment in oriental forms and glazes came through patronage from important collectors of oriental ceramics, particularly George Eumorfopoulos and Lieutenant-Colonel K. Dingwall (Haslam 1984: 16). Stimulus also came from new insights into how the glazes were made through the chemical analyses of Chinese glazes by Professor J. N. Collie, a founder member in 1921 of the Oriental Ceramics Society (Haslam 1984: 15-16). In contrast to the inward looking approach of most British art institutions, their range of interests in all the branches of the arts transcended national boundaries; they recognised, as Whistler had observed almost 50 years before, but England had been slow to accept, that all artistic practice was a constantly evolving unrestricted

distillation of ideas (Thorp 1994: 106-108).

The degree of connivance between Marsh and Greenslade in the proposals for an exhibition can only be speculation but circumstantially seems certain. Marsh knew that the V & A were upset at having to store not only the returned loan from Hanley but also 'free warehousing' the fifty nine additional specimens belonging to him (Marsh V & A 21 10 21). It would be timely to move them promptly on to the South London Art Gallery. Rackham's draft for Sir Cecil, subsequently rephrased, demanded their immediate removal from the V & A (Marsh V & A 21 10 21). Marsh responded by saying he had hoped for their immediate removal to Camberwell but, given the deferral of the exhibition to the spring, asked for storage until then, to which Sir Cecil reluctantly acceded.

Marsh was to later gift Martinware to the South London Art Gallery, but to 'The Exhibition of pottery produced in London during the last 50 years 1872-1922', lent at least one hundred and sixty pieces, sufficient to fill eight cases, plus eleven pieces by William Staite Murray and a selection from the Mortlake Pottery (SLG 1921: 20.10, 1922: 2.5, Fig. 6.15).

Opened by Sir Cecil, the exhibition was a notable success. Haslam has mistakenly observed that the exhibition 'received few notices in the press' (1984: 17). Durrants and the General Press Cutting Association in fact assiduously provided the South London Art Gallery with a wide range of press reports (SLG Archive 1922). *The Daily Graphic* described it as the 'London Potters "Royal Academy"' (23 5 1922). Other reviews appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* (20 5 1922), *The Morning Post* (22 5 1922), *The Daily Telegraph* (27 5 1922), *The Star* (20 5 1922), *Westminster Gazette* (22 5 1922), *The Yorkshire Post* (22 5 1922), *The South London Press* (26 5 22) and with C. Lewis Hind, 'Honouring the Potter. Camberwell leads the Way' in the *Pall Mall & Globe* (31 5 1922). The trade press also gave fulsome and extensively illustrated coverage: Arthur Finch, joint editor of *The Pottery and Glass Record, A monthly*

Trade and Art Journal for the Pottery, Glass and Allied Trades, wrote two reviews, the first an overview of the exhibition (1922a: 34-36), the second 'The Work of the Brothers Martin' (1922b: 118-120). *The Pottery Gazette and Glass Trade Review* (1 8 1922: 1228-1230) and *The British Clayworker* (June 1922: 98) also gave in-depth coverage.

With most of the loans acknowledged in the catalogue as being from private individuals, it underlined both the crucial importance of the private collector in fostering new ideas in the development of contemporary ceramics and, until that time, the paucity of interest by institutions. It usefully questioned institutional policies towards acquisition of ceramics by living practitioners but also drew attention to the fact that while there was enthusiasm for the collecting of oriental ceramics by many private collectors, the number who fostered English contemporary practice was still relatively small. The systematic collecting of contemporary ceramics is today taken as a norm but it was not always so, and certainly not prior to the 1920s.

One of the first critics, perhaps the first, to write publicly about the need for change, and importantly specifically in relation to Martinware, was the 1920s writer on antiques, Arthur Hayden (1924: 30). Marsh and a few others may have been buying contemporary ceramics for many years but they were the exception: as already noted above, prior to the 1920s major collectors such as Eumorfopoulos and Dingwall only collected oriental porcelain.

Collectors had a significant role in the arranging of the exhibition: Marsh arranged the Martin display, Harold Mossop that of De Morgan, and Greenslade contributed the part of the catalogue essay about the Martin Brothers (Dalton 1922: 7-8).

Haslam has rightly noted how the exhibition reviews with few exceptions, concentrated on the Martin Brothers, Doulton and William De Morgan (1984: 17), with 20th

Century potters receiving hardly a mention. Greenslade's approach to the exhibition can be seen as either vindicated or an opportunity lost. The unanswerable question is whether an exhibition at this time of totally 20th Century practitioners would have attracted the same degree of press or public interest. I suspect not. The fact was that those attending to see the most comprehensive exhibition ever staged, then or since, of the major names of Martin, Doulton and De Morgan were also exposed to a range of new work by, until then, largely unknown practising London potters and up and coming students at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts.

Murray, exceptionally, was singled out by many reviewers, the *Yorkshire Post* considering him to 'hold great promise for the future' (22 5 1922). Curator Dalton was conscious of the fact that, in terms of numbers, Martin, Doulton and De Morgan works far outnumbered modern ceramics. As a corrective, in the exhibition catalogue he made particular reference to the case of examples by Murray, and works by Cox at Mortlake, as well as a case of 'contemporaneous French pottery' lent by the Victoria and Albert Museum (Dalton 1922: 3). He was at pains to acknowledge the exhibitions shortcomings but took the opportunity to also point out the embryo stage of much ceramic practice at that time (1922: 3). Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith thought with respect to

> pottery of today the increasing interest over the preceding 40 years in the manufactures of the Far East and the enormously increased facilities which were now given for their dissemination and study [at Camberwell and similar institutions], had had its natural effect, especially in the direction of the great lesson to be learnt (The South London Press 26 5.1922).

Within the context of the time the degree of attention given to Martin, Doulton and De Morgan was in itself exceptional and not a reflection of lack of merit on the part of all the 20th Century pottery exhibited. Indeed, where mentioned in reviews they are without exception commented upon favourably. Murray's work, as already observed, received extensive coverage. An anonymous reviewer for *The South London Press* noted that 'the work of some of the modern artists also merited, and received, unstinted admiration' (26.5.1922). The

unexpected appearance of Robert Wallace Martin caused something of a minor sensation since he had been thought long dead. It was therefore somewhat inevitable that whatever the curatorial agenda, reviewers focussed on ceramics by the Martin Brothers and their contemporaries, Doulton and William De Morgan.

I would, therefore, argue that while 20th Century pottery has been hitherto thought to have arrived largely unnoticed by exhibition reviewers this was not in fact the case. The most important outcome of the show was the stimulation it gave in encouraging commercial galleries to take an interest in the new generation of potters. Beside significant sales (SLG archive 1922) it can also be considered to have spawned the numerous commercial exhibitions that followed throughout the 1920s and encouraged magazine publishers to seek features on their work. This had benefits for Marsh as acknowledged connoisseur and prospective commentator. For example, during the successful R. F. Wells Beaux Arts Gallery show in 1924 the editor of the newly launched *Apollo* magazine asked Marsh's advice on who he should approach to write a piece 'on modern pottery with special reference to Wells's work as a potter and sculptor' (Ealing 55/1768: 27 12 1924, 1-2). Wells work is discussed below. In addition to those already mentioned Charles Vyse was to enjoy the considerable patronage of George Eumorfopoulos and Lieutenant-Colonel K. Dingwall (Haslam 1984: 16), successfully exhibited his work annually at the Walker's Galleries from 1928 until the outbreak of the Second World War. Marsh wrote all the catalogue introductions (Marsh 1928b-1938b).

Studio Pottery: A Continuum

By 1970 only five books of any significance had been written on Studio Ceramics: Leach (1940), Cooper (1947), Digby (1952) and Rose (1955 and 1970). While important in their time Haslam considers them riddled 'with historical inaccuracies, the authors guilty of such vast omissions and such narrow-minded aesthetic judgments as to limit severely the usefulness of their work' (2003: 2). With the passage of time they can now perhaps be seen more objectively as pioneering probes and a useful starting point for later writers. For

example, the latter three considered the Martins' pioneering financial independence from major manufacturers as their greatest achievement, but none considering their work of any significant aesthetic merit. Equally grudging, amongst Lambourne's 'Utopian Craftsmen' they appear as 'important precursors of the studio pottery movement' rather than as part of it (1980b: 79). Haslam, however, convincingly argues such views deny the body of work that is the legacy of their life's practice (2003: 2-4).

All of these books sought to draw a line under previous ceramic practice, as if a watershed had been crossed. But as Haldane has more recently observed, we don't look closely enough and consequently by cherry-picking misread the evidence: that we are too preoccupied with the so-called major names and do not pay sufficient attention to what is going on around them:

> the continuity of art is provided for not by great figures but by minor ones; artists who, whatever heights they may achieve in their own work, make an important contribution in maintaining and developing certain practices and techniques of object-making that may be taken up by figures whose natural talents are far greater than there own. This truth has long been a source of satisfaction to dedicated teachers (2004: 30).

For example, preoccupied by the grotesques, Leach seemed to be totally unaware of the range of the Martins other work (1940: 34). In mitigation, de Waal suggests that:

> Leach's ideas, as much as his pots, must be seen in the context of the times that shaped them. He was accustomed to using sweeping arguments and value-laden terms when scrutinising the position of potters within society... (c.1998: 6).

The difficulty is that all ignored the underlying evolutionary approach taking place in the practice of a number of makers, not least the Martins. Such misrepresentations pervade. Watson for example (1993) in attempting to define the term 'studio pottery' somewhat sweepingly categorises the Martins, and other 'team[s] of individuals', with larger units of industrial art potters producing wares that are 'consciously "artistic" (Watson 1993: 12). In his opinion 'Studio pottery was distinguished as a definite and particular enterprise by virtue

of the fact that the designer was also the maker of the objects' (1993: 12). The Martins situation, while complex, in many respects fulfil Watson's definition, for as Haslam noted, *The Art Journal* (1879) took the view that 'Mr. Martin is an artist, but he is also that which we seldom meet in England, although often encountered in France - he is also the workman, the manufacturer, and the merchant' (1978: 47).

It might have been more constructive to consider the points of convergence rather than divergence. It is true that other potters such as Edgar Kettle (1842-1877) (Fulham F.738 Ful no. 54) spent time at the pottery, but no pottery maker functions in a creative vacuum. Each Martin brother possessed particular skills on which they concentrated, but over the life of the pottery, working as a team they individually and severally designed, threw, decorated, glazed, and together fired and marketed their own highly individual products. Haslam notes that Watson, in his seeking to define a starting point for his overview of 20th Century studio potting, notwithstanding all the evidence, had unconvincingly and 'rather arbitrarily decided that, because the Martin Brothers (among others) could hardly be described as studio potters, he could leave them out all together' (2003: 2).

Opinion has shifted. Cooper considers 'The Martin brothers were the first group of potters who worked most like the studio potters of today' (1972: 167) an opinion still held (Cooper 2000) although he has concluded their artistic practice 'had little effect in stimulating other potters to follow suit, or indeed, on the work of studio potters in the twentieth century' (1972: 177). From the point of view of awareness this is not strictly true. Holbrook Jackson (1910, Ealing 55/1392, 29 10 1920) would assuredly have seen such later developments as a continuum. Robert Wallace Martin spoke about his work and practice at the Art Workers' Guild after the First World War when potters were present and, as widely reported, spoke at the 1922 South London Gallery Ceramics Exhibition to the gathering of potters, Camberwell students and collectors. He was visited at Southall on 3 March 1920 by William Staite Murray (who attended classes at Camberwell c.1909-1912) and Ida Southwell Perrin (1857-1953)

(Blessley 2000, Parkin 2003: 11, Wood 2001: 8), when both were seeking to establish potteries (Haslam 1984: 15). George Cox (dates unknown) who established his pottery at Mortlake pre-1910, thought that 'the Martin Brothers' drawing 'largely on the vegetable world for ... inspiration ...carried [decorative] skills to perfection', was aware of their work directly (1914: 131) and through Marsh, who had no doubts on the lineage of studio pottery:

> from the early "Seventies" the Brothers Martin ... reaped little financial reward for their forty years of high endeavours; but their determination to work out their own salvation free of factory conditions, and to establish a studio pottery of personal and unique character paved the way which many have trodden since. These working on their own and differing lines, and producing most interesting and excellent work, ... secured ... good remunerative returns (1928a: 1).

The Potters

As Riddick has concluded, there were few serious collectors of pots at the beginning of the 20th Century and the patronage of the few that did was therefore crucial (1990: 14). What is I think not appreciated is how small the circle of practitioners at this period, 1900-1920 actually was, that everybody involved within it knew everyone else, as will become apparent in the following discussion. The contacts between collectors and makers thus became a social glue of mutual interest that cross fertilised, each gaining and owing much to each other in knowledge and experience. Some of those whom Marsh encouraged through personal contact were Richard Lunn (d.1915) and his daughter Dora (1881-c.1955), William Bower Dalton (1868-1965), Alfred Hopkins (dates unknown) and Reginald Fairfax Wells (1877-1951), all with the exception of Dora Lunn sometime teachers or students at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts (Haslam 1984: 7). Others were known through their studio practice, such as George Cox (1884-1946), Bernard Leach (1897-1979) Michael Cardew (1901-1983), Katherine Playdell-Bouverie (1895-1984), Norah Braden (1901-2001), William Staite Murray (1881-1962), Agatha Walker (dates unknown)(Sotheby 20 12 1945: 23, Ealing 55/1774 13 4 1925, Phillips: 2001: 87, V & A TGA 9215.4.6.2), Irene Browne (dates unknown) and Charles Vyse (1882-1971) (Fig. 7.2). The sale of some of his collections in 1945 and later in 1957 reveal that Marsh purchased many items by these and, amongst many others, by Emile Decoeur (1876-1953), Auguste Delaherche (1857-1940), H.Simmen and M. Reay (dates

unknown), Shoji Hamada (1894-1978) and Kanjiro Kawai (1890-1966), the last being particularly numerous (Sotheby 1945: 3-6), Phillips 1957: 120). Many by Cox and Wells were prior to 1914, most throughout the 1920s and particularly simultaneous with acquisitions for the Contemporary Art Society.

Thus from 1900 to the 1940s Marsh appears to have had personal contact in both a private capacity and in his later public role as administrator of the Contemporary Art Society Pottery and Craft Fund with every practising potter in England, names known today and others unknown. The following discussion examining his interface with them concentrates on a selection from those with whom he appears to have built up a particularly close relationship, through meeting them at home, exhibitions, occasional visits to potteries or contact at various London meetings of artisans and enthusiasts. To make such a choice is difficult, given that to choose any individual is to suggest Marsh had a personal preference for their work when in fact the extensive range of his patronage suggests the contrary. The choice has therefore been narrowed in recognition of Marsh's own interests to the pioneers: Cox, Wells, Dalton, Lunn and Hopkins, who together represent his encouragement of potters prior to 1920. Finally, his friendship with Staite Murray must stand for the friendships made after that period, in particular that with Charles and Nellie Vyse (Fig. 7.2).

Reginald Fairfax Wells (1877-1951)

One of the most significant associations formed between Marsh and any potter was with Reginald Wells (Fig. 6.10), an energetic man of diverse talents and interests, considered by Rice 'to be one of the more interesting potters of the early years [of the 20th Century]' (1989: 16). Like Robert Wallace Martin, Wells was first a sculptor, a fact evident, as Marsh recognised (1925: 283-4) in the modelling and experimental glazing of his ceramic sculptures (Figs. 6.11-13) and later vessel forms. In all of his commentaries on potters, including that on Wells (1925), Marsh recognised innovation, not as something plucked from the ether but evolutionary and hard-one through trial and error. He became his greatest private patron.

At the beginning of the new century Wells' work was modern in terms of breaking away from much factory-made art pottery, but he seems to have avoided such terminology. In 1924 Marsh was commissioned to produce an article on modern pottery, with special reference to Wells' work as potter and sculptor (Ealing 55/1768: 27 12 1924). Neither Wells' letters to Marsh nor Marsh's ensuing monograph refers to the notion of being modern. It may be that Marsh's mixed experience (chap.6) in promoting modern pottery made him wary of asserting too positive a view at this early stage in the 1920s, when some strands of contemporary practice could by then be considered more retro than forward thinking: for example Wells' slipware experiments prior to 1910 had been an attempt to re-engage with the tradition of English slipware, while his later work responded to the Sung wares of China (Marsh 1925: 286-9). Leach had exhibited slipware (1923) in London (Watson 1993: 199) and Marsh possessed examples (Ealing 55/1773 19 3 1925), but Wells distanced himself from his slipware, calling them experimental (Ealing 55/1768 27 12 1924). It is possible that the Leach's revisiting of the English slipware tradition was also seen by Marsh, in the light of Wells' own experience, as regressive and at that stage a likely dead-end. In the event, the published work by Marsh was entirely on Wells' sculpture and his development of ceramics in the Sung tradition (Marsh 1925), with only passing reference to the earlier slip-wares and not all to Leach.

Marsh appears to have come to know Wells in the early 1900s through his bronze and ceramic sculpture, and purchase of some of the latter. His first Wells pot was acquired in 1908 when he and Greenslade were invited to a firing (Ealing 55/ 1 9 1908) at the Wells pottery at Coldrum Farm, Wrotham, Kent, founded by Wells in 1900 (Bartlett 1993: 227). At some point Wells attended pottery evening classes at Camberwell (Bartlett 1993: 227) under Richard Lunn, classes which began in late 1907. It is unclear what Wells hoped to gain as all evidence suggests that for the first few years no throwing was done at Camberwell, only decoration. It may be that he was primarily interested in techniques and glazes, the latter becoming a key feature of his work.

Marsh purchased numerous Wells ceramic sculpture and vessels in different, shapes, size and glazes, 35 being donated to the Walker Art Gallery in 1943 (Acc. 1943: 95-132, Figs. 6.11-13), in addition to 32 by Charles Vyse (Acc.1943: 64-94) and 29 by the Martins (Acc. 1943: 28-63). The Wells and Vyse gifts form the largest British donation and public collections of either potter. Others by both men, remaining with Marsh, were sold after his death (Sotheby 20 12 1945: 21, 24). Marsh made no Wells purchases as buyer for the Contemporary Art Society, suggesting that from at least 1928 he intended to donate most of his collection to the nation, thus removing the need to make purchases from Contemporary Art Society subscriptions.

There are concerns, as Watson (1993: 38) has debated, about the volume of Wells and other ceramics donated to public collections, as could equally be argued the example in Marsh's largesse in relation to Martinware. In 1919 the V & A was the beneficiary of a large gift of pre-1914 Wells Coldrum pots (C.521-531-1919 Victor Ames, Norfolk) and later examples given in the 1920s.

Inclusion or non-representation is often mistaken as a statement of status. Likewise Marsh could perhaps justifiably be accused of attempting to put a steer on public perception of rank within the pantheon of ceramic history by suggesting that scale is a validation of quality, when plainly it is not. Thus Cox, discussed later, might justifiably be included, but is unrepresented in the V & A collection. Such views are with the benefit of hindsight but overlook that, as the then artistic press validates and is still acknowledged, prior to the early 1920s only the Martins, Wells, Cox, Dora Lunn (Ravenscroft Pottery) and commercially produced Omega Pottery (Shone 1999: 172-173) were producing anything innovatory in ceramics in England. As 'Mr. London' for *The Daily Graphic* observed: 'Since William de Morgan's death I don't seem to have seen any potters. Are they dying out as a race?' (21 5 1925: 5).

There were some concerns, evidently not shared by Marsh and his contemporaries, in

the degree to which, particularly in the early years, Wells involved himself in the making of pots at Coldrum, as opposed to employing others to throw them. Such evidence as exists suggests that like de Morgan and later Leach, he concentrated on design and experiment, employing professionals to produce items for sale, although by the 1920s it appears Wells was working alone. Hyman for example has noted similarities between some of the wares of Wells, Cox and the Upchurch pottery, due to the likely employment of the thrower Edward J. Baker by Wells, possibly by Cox and certainly at Upchurch (1998: 12).

As detailed in Chapter 6, Marsh's initial attempts in 1912 to prompt interest by national institutions in contemporary ceramics, and in Wells in particular, were mixed. Critical comment on Wells' early period varies, Clark considering it 'sturdy, honest and earthbound' (1995: 138) but Bennett thought it 'weak and unresolved' (1980: 104). On balance his experiments with glazes are more startling than his shapes, which with full bodies and restrained upper lip echo some of the simplified forms then produced by Pilkington and given some prominence in *The Studio* in 1908 (1980: 203). As Watson recognised (1993: 36), Wells pioneered recreating the effect realised by Chinese potters, even if at this period there was little understanding of the processes they used, a situation remaining unresolved until Wood's (1999) *Chinese Glazes*.

A man in a hurry to prove himself, Wells' pleasure in aesthetics was tempered by a sharp awareness of commercial imperatives. On the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 he closed the pottery, reopened as R.F. Wells and Co. and later (1916) as The Wells Aviation Company produced aircraft and components under sub-contract (Bagley 1986). Short lived, the venture went into voluntary liquidation (Bagley 1986). Following the war Wells resumed making ceramics, establishing the London Pottery Company at 417 Kings Road, Chelsea (SLG 10 11 1922). Sales resumed through, amongst others, the Artificers' Guild (SLG 23 5 1922).

For the 1922 South London exhibition, Marsh advised Dalton that, in his opinion, the best Wells collection at this time belonged to the art dealers Ospovat of 69 New Bond Street

with whom Wells was connected by marriage (Onions 1911: xxxv, xxxvii, Salmon 1999: 142-144). It appears items lent (SLG 23 5, 9 11 1922) were un-shown, unless exhibited ex. Catalogue. This is puzzling but given that Wells had been working for some years, unlike other exhibitors, he may have been wary about appearing passé in such a largely retrospective show.

He was evidently keen to make a fresh start after World War I but equally concerned not to re-launch his career before he was satisfied that he had something new to say. Not without humour, he marked his 1920s wares 'Soon'. Thought to be a pun on 'Sung' (Bennett 1980: 104), this was not so. To Marsh he commented he had called:

> the new type of pot "Soon" for reasons which I shall prefer to keep to myself. "Soon" is an English word. "Sung" of which some say I have plaguerized (sic); that does not matter. One is always influenced by a master. The Chinese, Corean & Japanese are masters, so in studying them for their artistic qualities & interest, I do so because I think they excel in those qualities ... but no one will say the old Chinese has nothing to say in their pottery (Wells 6 1 1925).

'Soon' may have some reference to his private life. Having remarried he was evidently under some pressure to make a living (Wells: 6 1 1925), in 1924 beginning a rural housing development at Storrington, Pulborough, Sussex. In a vernacular style akin to Ebenezer Howard's ideas (1898 and 1902) for Garden Cities and return to a simpler life (Cumming 1991: 62-64), they were at a cost only affordable by professional men and women. Wells intended to live in one of the dwellings (Fig. 6.14) and built a kiln in the grounds (Barron 1927: 33, Barron 1929, Salmon 1999, Fig. 6.10).

In late 1924 he exhibited in a contemporary show at the Beaux Arts Gallery with Augustus John and others. Crucially for Wells his ceramic sculpture and vessels caught the attention of the press, receiving universal acclaim (*Morning Post* 11 12 1924, *Evening Standard* 18 12 24, *Daily Chronicle* 20 12 1924, *Sunday Times* 14 12 1924). He had shown the previous September jointly with Staite Murray and the Edinburgh potter Henry Wyse (fl.

1918-1927) at the Gieves Gallery, Old Bond Street, London, which presumably prompted the Beaux Arts to offer him his own show (Haslam 1984: 18)

Marsh reported to Greenslade towards the close of the Beaux Arts show that £630 worth had been sold with the promise of more sales to follow: 'I think the success will 'buck' Wells up to go ahead with pottery at once'(Ealing 55/1769: 27 12 1924). A few days later Wells was telling Marsh of his plans for a kiln: 'Mrs Wells wants me also to build a cottage & produce £1,000 worth of pottery by May...' (Wells: 6 1 1925). Marsh visited to see the building of the kiln in February 1925 and in operation in May, it possessing 3 furnaces and having the potential for a considerable output (Ealing 55/1771-2, 3 3 1925, 55/1774, 13 4 1925 (Fig. 6.10). Wells appears to have continued producing ware apace for a further exhibition, opening at the Fine Art Society 21 May 1925, and including items made in the first firing of the new kiln (Rackham 1925: 359).

Coverage by later authors (Binyon 1928, Rose 1955: 24, Bennett 1980: 104, Watson 1993: 36, Hyman 1998: 16) mean that the work of Wells and his contemporaries is now better understood, but tends to obscure the fact that at the time they were virtually unknown to the wider public; hence the Wells 1925 exhibition had a considerable impact, *The Daily Graphic* liking his 'extraordinarily virile and beautiful ... expressive pottery' (London 21 5 1925: 5). *The Architect* (12 6 1925: 426) thought architects would be particularly taken by the rich colour range of the tiles displayed. P.G. Konody considered it a 'pottery triumph', regretting that:

> his art is not represented in the British Pavilion at the Paris International of Decorative Art, [it being] difficult to think of another British craftsman who has approached so near to perfection in his own line of work or who would reflect greater credit on his country in this international contest (28 5 1925).

Taking a broader perspective, Rackham considered that the improvements to industrial design owed much 'to the efforts of pioneering artist potters [like Wells] who have had the courage to take the risks of striking out on paths of their own choosing' (1925: 360). It appears

that by this date even Rackham was beginning to see virtue in some contemporary practice. Rackham bought and presented to the V & A a stoneware bowl with opaque white glaze (1925: C.513), while with Marsh and Sir Lewis Amhurst Selby-Bigge (b.1860) he shared the cost of a vase similarly decorated to the bowl, described by Marsh:

> The horizontal ribbings running well down over the shoulder of the vase give the necessary distinction to a simple shape, and the glaze, with its delicate crackle, completes a very perfect little vase (Watson 1993: cat 699, pl. 21, V & A 1925 C.60).

Such encouragement must have spurred Marsh to begin moves to encourage good practice by founding the Contemporary Art Society Pottery and Craft Fund (Chap.6).

Marsh reported to Greenslade that Wells' first Sussex firing achieved 350 sound pots and bowls out of 500 (Ealing 55/1775 3 5 1925). One third being unsatisfactory was considered a success in relative terms, but represented a considerable financial loss in relation to the man hours spent in making them. *The Builder* expressed disappointment that prices put them beyond the means of most people (29 5 1925: 834) but it is evident that exclusivity was part of their desirability (Konody 28 5 1925, 7 11 26: 4, 14 11 26, Tatlock 18 11 25: 13, Rutter 21 11 1926: 5, Wells Archive 1925, Lessore 1926: 235, Ywain 1926: 6, Rose 1970: 24, Pearman 2000). As the Wells archive demonstrated (1926) price appeared to be no deterrent to serious buyers.

While acknowledging Watson's critical view on Wells' seemingly over-representation in public collections, it is difficult not to be impressed by the influential following that Wells had gathered in such a short passage of time. He had however become a fashionable commodity, so that when the next exhibition opened at the Beaux Arts in May 1927 the venue became both the focus of attention for collectors and critics, and a society gathering point. The visitors' book shows that Marsh called within hours of opening closely followed by Art

historian and critic and writer for *The Studio*, Alfred Lys Baldry (1858-1939), while Greenslade visited at the end of the show. Others included Arthur Bliss (1891-1975), later Master of the Queen's Musick, Harold Stanley (Jim) Ede (1895-1990) then an assistant curator at the 'National Gallery, Millbank' - now Tate Britain and later of Kettle's Yard, Cambridge; and on 25 May the august personage of H.R.H. Queen Mary (The Court Circular, *The Times* 26 5 1927: 17), Her Majesty buying a small pot for £3 guineas (Wells archive 1927).

A feature of the considerable press coverage is the total lack of dissent: Wells could do no wrong (Konody 15 5 1927: 14, *Morning Post* 25 5 1927: 5, *Staffordshire Sentinel* 26 5 1927: 9). Attitudes did however change, but not for at least a decade. The view in some quarters then being that, in particular, inspiration from the Chinese had not gone far enough, a point of view that led to a rapid eclipse in the popularity of much 1920s pottery. It was a sour note, most potently expressed by W.B. Honey, Keeper of the V & A collections who in 1944 observed:

> The widespread admiration for early Chinese wares has had its effect in directions that are sometimes overlooked. Here as in the 1900's the independent or studio-potter has often been a herald. With their passionate admiration for the Chinese the studio-potters have often been led into making wares which are little more than personal variations of Far Eastern models; I need not show you examples of these.[They] were led by their admiration into making luxury wares in a by-path rather than the main ceramic road (1946: 94).

While sales were buoyant in this 'luxury market', they were nevertheless insufficient for Wells to make a living. In *The Arts and Crafts* Wells expressed his frustration at the inability of the potter to make a living from his creative skills (Wells 1927: 10-13), a point taken up in the same journal by Winifred Wrench reviewing the 1927 Leipzig Craft Exhibition, in which numerous English practitioners displayed, including amongst the potters, Leach, Dalton, Braden and Staite Murray (1927: 14-16). She observed:

> How does the English exhibit compare with those of other countries? In England they are looked upon as more or less freaks and anyhow not as persons to whom practical

people pay much attention (1927: 16).

It was a sombre message. After the following Beaux Arts exhibition Wells appears to have lost heart, despite his success, and opted out, again notwithstanding an impressive list of visitors, including architect Oliver Hill (1887-1968), the Arts and Crafts designer Sidney G. Mawson (d.1941) and industrialist Samuel Courtauld (1876-1947) soon to become a staunch supporter of Marsh in founding the Contemporary Art Society Pottery and Craft Fund (Wells archive 1927).

It was also apparent that on grounds of cost alone the increasing numbers of potters were competing, as Wells recognised, in a finite market in which others no doubt sought to emulate his success. Rutter's review for *The Sunday Times* (20 11 1927) covered not just Wells, but simultaneous showings by Staite Murray at the William Patterson Gallery and A. G. Hopkins at the Fine Art Society, as did Konody (*Daily Mail* 14 11 1927: 17, *Observer* 20 11 1927: 15), the latter for which Marsh had written (1927) *The Revival of Saltglaze Pottery: A G.Hopkins of Lambeth.*

In addition, Therese Lessore (1884-1945) was having a successful showing of hand-decorated china fired by Wedgwood at the Saville Gallery. Therese was the second wife of artist Walter Sickert and sister to Louise, wife of Alfred Powell (1865-1960) both hand painters for Wedgwood from 1907 onwards (Batkin 1993: 92-109). Forsyth (1925), Batkin (1993), McLeod and Boyle (2004) have argued that in their successful application of art to industrial practices, Lessore and Powell demonstrated how through partnership with industry, hand painting could raise standards and compete in a commercial environment. By having their wares professionally fired by Wedgwood Lessore and Powell seem to have pragmatically recognised the reduction of the element of risk of loss. Ethically this loss of control seems to have been a bridge too far for most potters and a compromise that few chose to follow.

Despite Wells experience Marsh felt confident enough to observe:

The Art of the Studio Potter has slowly but surely come into its own. If one looks back

on the last fifty years and considers what was done in the "Seventies", "Eighties", and even the "Nineties" of the last century one realises how few were the individual workers attempting this, and how little their work came into fruition with any measure of success (1928a: 1).

Wells made something of a comeback in 1932, hosted at Bedford Square, London by the Countess of Oxford and Asquith (*Newcastle Chronicle* 13 4 1932: 6) and clearly intended by its venue to again attract 'a fashionable crowd, so long as they were smart and amusing' (Museum of London 2004). It gained scant critical notice, Konody's review had the whiff of apology. Suggesting that Wells' forms and glazes stood the test of time, he noted how his 'pottery has the simplicity of form and refinement of colour that render it particularly suitable for the decoration of the modern interior, even though it would not look out of place in any other "period setting' (*Observer* 17 4 1932: 7). Wells continued to make pots until shortly before his death but is not known to have exhibited again (Hyman 1998: 16).

In marked contrast to his critical acclaim in the 1920s, his output received little attention after this period, probably overshadowed by the rapid growth in importance and influence of the thinking and output of Leach. Rose in 1955 was not enthusiastic about Wells work, considering his 'bodies of some quality' and some of his glazes 'pleasant', but 'the forms of his pots must generally be considered clumsy' (1955: 24). Others have more recently argued for a higher status for his work, suggesting the prescience of Marsh's own very early critical opinion, Bennett for example considering 'Wells is one of the most under-rated English potters of the 20th Century' (1980:104).

George James Cox (1884-1946)

There appear to be no studies made of Cox's work. He represents a classic example of Marsh's recognition of new talent with something fresh to say. In other ways his was a talent that perhaps emerged too soon and was not understood. Marsh appears to have been the first connoisseur to recognise the inherent promise of this new maker. Cox studied at the Royal College of Art (Bartlett 1993: 170) under Richard Lunn who became his friend (Cox 1914: viii). Cox set up a pottery at Mortlake in 1911 at 42 Upper Richmond Road (Bartlett 1993:

170).

The primary question to be asked therefore is what attracted Marsh to Cox's work. Cox produced mostly rounded vessels, often tall and large but of simple form. Many shapes are illustrated in outline in his (1914) manual, *Pottery for Artists, Craftsmen & Teachers.* Applied decoration was occasionally used in the form of sinuous semi-abstract reptilian creatures, or in oriental style motifs such as tube-lined 'ying-yang' decoration (Bartlett 1993: 172). In complete contrast to the relatively thin potting of the Martins, Cox vessels are often thick walled and heavy. Their balance of bulk and form create an imposing and pleasing presence (Fig. 6.15). Although Cox admired the work of the Martin Brothers (1914: 15), his potting shows a clear shift away from the Martins' organic forms, incised decoration and controlled glazing.

Some vessels are marked with both Cox's name and other letters. These additional letters may be some form of coding but could also be the mark of a journeyman potter employed by Cox, although none has been traced. Cox includes in his manual a portrait of an older man throwing, whose identity is unknown (Cox 1914: 18). It is unfortunate that Marsh makes no mention in his letters to Greenslade of his visits to Mortlake which, had he done so might have thrown light on the working arrangements at the pottery. All of Cox's vessels show originality of form, depending for their presence on mass and simplicity (Fig. 6.15). All so far traced are, like the Martin saltglaze, in a multitude of different shapes and coloration, with no two pieces the same. This factor must have made them extremely attractive to a serial collector like Marsh, who as his Martin collection demonstrates, delighted in difference and originality.

Each vessel demonstrates Cox's particular interest in its potential as a support for exploring glazes, for, as he himself commented, to most potters the greatest interest is not in the potting, but the glazes (Cox 1914: 117). Cox and Wells were inspired by The 1910 Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition in London of Chinese Ceramics, recognised as having

been a considerable and immediate influence on future ceramic practice in England, in particular experiments in attempting to reproduce the monochrome glazes of the pre-Ming dynasties (Rice 1989: 16). Unlike the often thinly applied glazes of the Martins, Cox had a predilection for thick, poured liquid, with random coloration and streaking resulting from the mixing of various glaze compounds (Cox 1914: 109-110). Firing to a range of temperatures resulted in glazes varying from those with a lustrous sheen to others with a glass-like gloss.

Marsh may have also been attracted to Cox because of his interest in educating both practitioners and the public in a wider appreciation of potting's creative potential. Cox was concerned not just with making a living from potting but also in making available to others his knowledge gained from his own practice. Rice notes, Cox's first book, his successful and influential *Pottery for Artists, Craftsmen and Teachers* 'was virtually the only technical manual for potters in English for more than twenty years and was extremely influential on both sides of the Atlantic'(1989: 16). In fact, it was predated by Lunn's also widely used manuals on making (1903) and on glazes (1910). It has to be said that, in contrast to Lunn's drier text, Cox's combination of fact and illustration, in his own hand, plus his more technical guidance on glaze compounds conveys more of the confidence of the practicing artist and potter. Like many of his contemporaries (Skinner 1996) Cox was ideologically a follower of William Morris in wanting to encourage others into becoming craftsmen and women. His book's dedication repeats that to Chaucer in Morris's *The Earthly Paradise* (1890): 'O Master, pardon me, if ... I fail to bring, before men's eyes the image of the thing, my heart is filled with'(1914: v). This quotation surely emphasises, in its return of the message to its writer, the supreme importance to Cox that he would strive to create within each item a visual expression of his inner self. A kindred spirit to Marsh, Cox saw little to applaud in contemporary practice:

> ...yet some few have worked wonders even in this age. To mention but two instances, W. De Morgan and the Martin brothers, is to tell of high endeavour and great achievement. But we must not expect to get rich that way (Cox 1914: 15).

He exhibited a range of vase forms at the 1914 Louvre Exhibition of British and Irish Arts & Crafts, these being exhibited adjacent to the Martinware (HMSO 1914: 26). Whether

Marsh encouraged Cox to exhibit is unrecorded. Cox's contemporaries thought his work particularly meritorious but recognition came too late. Bartlett notes (1993:170) that he was thought to have lost about one thousand pounds on the business. By 1914 he had left to teach ceramics in the United States at Teachers' College, Columbia University (Cox 1914: viii). *The Studio* in a 1914 review of an Artificers' Guild exhibition expressed disappointment that, given the high standard and quality of his work, he had ceased to pot in London (Bartlett 1993: 170).

Cox's output was extremelely small and this, with the uniqueness of much of what he made, appears to have been greatly attractive to Marsh, who purchased at least eight pots, one given later to the South London Gallery, the other seven to Kingston Museum (Acc. 1367-1373). No other Cox patrons of this period have been traced. The esteemed Studio Pottery collector Henry Bergen later donated a single specimen to Stoke on Trent Museum (Bergen 2002). This suggests that Marsh was alone in recognising that a functional and in relative terms unadorned, vessel could be regarded for its aesthetic qualities as art.

Later opinions on Cox's pottery lack certainty, primarily because virtually all he produced is in private collections, and, apart from inclusion in the South London Art Gallery 1922 ceramics exhibition, has never been exhibited *en masse*. Rose's (1955) narrative on the evolution of art pottery ventured no aesthetic judgement on Cox; Watson (1993) also evidently felt his work to be so slight as not to need mention. Rice considered his pots, such as he had seen, 'decidedly dull' (1989: 16). Bennett however, like Marsh, was firmly of the view that, while the Japanese approach to aesthetics was that 'beauty without function was inconceivable', for the first time in English pottery, Cox's output exemplified a conscious move towards creating an object where 'quality, "success", beauty, were things to be measured in aesthetic terms, the question of function being largely irrelevant' (1980: 82). Clark acknowledges him with Reginald Wells and others, as one of the pioneers of the studio pottery movement, but whose efforts failed (Bartlett 1993: 170) because, they 'were tentative and academic' and ahead of their time (1995: 132). This was evident to Marsh, as with the

Martins. However, an important part of the attraction of what Cox offered was the experimental nature of his work. It was the emerging nature of ceramic practice that evidently excited Marsh and which, in his later role under the auspices of the Contemporary Art Society, he was able to foster to the benefit of later practitioners.

William Bower Dalton (1868-1965)

While, like Cox, there are occasional references to Dalton's life as a teacher and potter, there is no comprehensive study of his work. To say, on the evidence so far known that Marsh built up an intimate relationship with Dalton would be to over-state the case. It is clear however that he knew him well and recognised his strength as an educator (Dalton 1910, 1912, 1957, 1960, 1962), and, as others such as Rose (1955: 23), Rice (1989: 21), Riddick, (1990: 14), Bartlett (1993: 9), Watson (1993: 174), Clarke (1995: 138) and Winch (2005b: 86) have since acknowledged, a facilitator and organiser to realise the potential of others. In Rice's view, Dalton was 'by far' the most important figure in the development of ceramics in this period (1989: 21). He succeeded Cecil Burns (1863-1929) in 1899 as both curator of the South London Art Gallery (to c.1930) (Waterfield 1994: 87) and headmaster, later Director, of the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts (to 1919) (Vanke 1998: 5 1899). As a practicing potter his interest in ceramics and facilitation of its making is probably his most lasting legacy. As Dalton recalled, the school's possibilities,

> in the artistic crafts were great and widespread; a vast horizon lay in front, viewable from many angles in organising the work of a school, for the utmost advantage of the student. Quite early in the organisation pottery had an important place in the curriculum (1962: x).

When Marsh first met Dalton is unknown but they certainly socialised at both the Artificers' Guild and Artworkers' Guild, where at the latter Dalton was a Guildsman and sometime Master. Marsh was probably instrumental in bringing to his attention current practitioners and the talent emerging from Camberwell. Dalton's later cooperation with Marsh and Greenslade in 1922 in creating the exhibition on London potters of the last 50 years was to provide a shop window on both student work and practicing potters. No London gallery or museum has attempted to put on such an exhibition since.

There is no evidence that Dalton taught at the school (Vanke 1998: 9/1907), but under his stewardship ceramics was encouraged firstly from the part-time appointment of Richard Lunn (d.1915) in 1907, then teaching at the Royal College of Art (Holme 1916: 4-6, Daniels 1948: 7, Haggar 1950: 130-131, McLaren 1989: 33).

Lunn's hand-books of practical pottery (1903) and its decoration (1910) for art teachers and students were important and influential, being, as mentioned above, the first of any weight on the subject published in England (Rose 1955: 22). Marsh purchased a large collection of Lunn's hand decorated bowls, made in 1889, so it is possible he may have known him for some years. Remembered by his contemporaries as favouring Italian sources of inspiration, a vase (1881) by Lunn was included in the 1922 exhibition (Dalton 1922: 7). On the basis of his enthusiasm for Lunn's free style and sunny palette it might be thought that, given Marsh's subsequent close acquaintance with Roger Fry, and Lunn's teaching of Fry, Marsh would be attracted to the output later of the Omega Workshop. As a trained artist, Fry represented a link between painting and ceramics, encouraging his artist friends to embrace the ceramic medium by decorating bought-in commercial blanks (Bartlett 1993: 9). No Omega ceramics were purchased by Marsh, most likely on the basis that while the decoration may have been of original designs, their concept as a whole vessel was compromised both by their being made on mostly mass-produced blanks and decorated by amateurs, not professional potters.

After Lunn's sudden death in 1915, Dalton appointed Alfred Hopkins to succeed him, a post he filled to 1940. Hopkins was already employed to throw pots at the school, his brother Henry 'Harry' Hopkins also working at Camberwell. It is evident from the frequent references to 'Hopkins' in letters to Greenslade, that Marsh formed a close association with Alfred, leading to his writing a profile on his work (1927) and to acquire the considerable number of between thirty and forty pieces by him of mostly vase form, plus a pair of lion figurines *sejant* (Sotheby 1945: 3). In the year after the death of Robert Wallace Martin (10 July 1923),

Clement Martin evidently sought ways to resurrect the Martin business by a possible partnership with Hopkins, with Marsh seemingly acting as a sort of advisor or intermediary to them both. The Southall kiln had been used entirely for salt glazing and while unsuitable for firing other processes was probably why Hopkins was interested in using the site. It appears the scheme did not proceed as Hopkins wanted sole use (Ealing 55/1767 24 2 1924).

Dalton's own work was much influenced by French practice (Riddick 1990: 34). A kindred spirit to Marsh he admired 'the independent spirit expressed in the work of such French potters as Chaplet, Dellahershe (sic) Lenoble and [Seraphin] Soudbinine', particularly admiring the work of Emile Decoeur, whom, he considered 'the greatest of them' all (Dalton 1957: 75). A great respecter of the 'humble' materials from which so much creativity could arise, Dalton described clay as 'a sovereign substance to which all bow: ... "just clay" mans oldest, if not greatest friend' (1962: x, 78). Opinions differ on his own ceramics, Watson considered it mediocre (1993: 37) as I think did Marsh, who, while sharing his beliefs, evidently had reservations about his ability as a ceramicist, with evidence of only a single purchase, and this for the Contemporary Art Society (Contemporary Art Society TGA 9215.4.6.3). Rice more recently in contrast thought his work 'extremely fine' and likely to prove him 'a very under-rated potter' (1989: 21).

William Staite Murray (1881-1962)

Unlike later supporters such as Milner-White (Riddick 1990:15) who only bought once they were convinced of the worth of a potter, Marsh recognised the importance of support during the formative years. Accordingly, he took an early interest in the work of Staite Murray who attended pottery classes c.1909-1912 at Camberwell (Watson: 1993: 244). He worked for a while with Cuthbert Hamilton at the Yeaoman Pottery c.1915-1919. The South London Gallery collection includes two experimental dish forms from this period whose provenance is unclear. It is possible they came from Marsh but may have been obtained by Dalton. In 1919

Murray moved to 42 Lower Road, Rotherhithe where in 1922 he was visited by Marsh. In a letter to Dalton in 1922 Marsh offers for exhibition several pieces by:

> Murray which I had had reserved for me & 3 from his latest kiln so that if you want them this should make up a better representation of his work than the half dozen you have by themselves (SLG 1922: c. 4 1922).

Marsh had evidently inspected the work in progress before firing. His provision of a selection of new work (App. 28) turned out to be highly significant, gaining Murray the highest press acclaim amongst the 20th Century potters exhibiting at Camberwell in 1922. Wood block printed Christmas cards made by Murray and sent to the Marsh family in the 1930s, and references in this period of visits to his then home at Bray, suggest the acquaintance was a fairly close one, as with many other patrons, and kept up over many years (Marsh collection, Haslam 1984: 31).

Marsh's early recognition of Murray's promise was astute, over the following decade buying at least two dozen examples of his work for himself (Sotheby 1945: 4, Haslam 1984: II, 3, 4) and on behalf of the Contemporary Art Society (Apps. 31, 32, Haslam 1984: XIX, 15, 21, 270). Marsh bought across a broad spectrum of potters, displaying their pots alongside those of Murray and others for comparative purposes and keeping a photograph record of the result (Ealing 55/1733 19 3 1925).

Marsh was significant as an early supporter and later buyer for institutional presentation but was not Murray's largest patron. Eric Milner-White, following a substantial legacy from his father 'stumbled across Studio pottery' (Riddick 1990: 13) and from 1925 became Murray's greatest patron (Riddick 1990: 83). Significantly the founding gift to the Contemporary Art Society Pottery and Craft Fund by Sir Edward Marsh of one of Murray's major works, no doubt under Ernest Marsh's guidance, was an important recognition of his status as the towering figure of the 1920s, but also brought at long last recognition that ceramics could enter the world of Fine Art (Watson 1993: 21). Following the example of painting, Murray gave many of his large sculptural ceramic pots, titles. But it was a reputation that endured (Riddick 1990, Winch 2005: 86), Marsh observing in 1944 that, 'It is generally

acknowledged that Staite Murray is at the present time our foremost modern original Studio potter, as Hamada is regarded theirs in Japan' (1944a: 109).

6. Promoting Modern Art: The Contemporary Art Society

Introduction

For the patronage of craft, and ceramics in particular, the most significant event in the life of Ernest Marsh was his appointment to and long service with the Contemporary Art Society. This section will consider, beginning with his role in setting up the Museum and Gallery at Kingston upon Thames, how Marsh came to serve on the Executive of the Contemporary Art Society, and, with particular reference to his founding of its Pottery and Craft Fund, the significance of his contribution to the furtherance of its ideals. It will also examine how in its early years Marsh contributed towards Contemporary Art Society organisation, its acquisition of Fine Art and later expanded his activities into linked organisations with similar objectives.

As already discussed, Marsh's father demonstrated there could be no higher service than civic duty, the standard set to be 'honourable and enduring' (Feverel 1904: 7). Undoubtedly expected to follow family precedent Ernest became a magistrate, but, as far as is known, did not stand for election to local government. Instead, his civic spirit expressed itself in creating the new Kingston Museum and Art Gallery. An area outside the ambit of experience of his father, it was one in which he could move with a degree of independence to explore his own ideas and values. In due course this brought him recognition from those working in national art collections and an invitation to join them in a new endeavour to foster contemporary art.

Local Action: Kingston upon Thames Museum and Art Gallery

Blom has observed how:

> during the nineteenth century,... In their new public function, museums assumed the roles of public educator and arbiter of taste and knowledge with the whole-hearted ferocity of a Victorian missionary bringing to childlike natives the gospel and the rules of cricket (2003: 120).

Kingston was no backwater, science and art evening classes starting c.1875 with part-funding from the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, culminating in 1899 in the

establishment of a Science, Art and Technical Institute (AIM25: Kingston 2006). However, through want of funds to build a museum and art gallery Kingston Corporation was in this regard a comparatively late starter. Progress came through a combination of municipal and philanthropic endeavour, with a gift and loan of £14,400 from the industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) (Kingston Public Library Committee 1898-1921. 12.9.1904). Seeking local expertise to select works of art, already solicited for loan from the gentry and other persons of note, the Library Committee resolved 'that Mr Ernest Marsh be invited to assist ... in the Art Gallery arrangements' (Kingston Public Library Committee 1898-1921. 26.9.1904). Echoing Blom's observation that whatever the degree of altruism involved, there was often more blind faith than balanced judgment driving such committee's, Marsh's appointment suggests an awareness of the pitfalls of enthusiasm and the need for some expertise (2003: 120). Marsh's father may have suggested he be asked or, more likely, knowing of the development, Marsh may have already offered both help and the loan of his own collections. The Mayor, H. C. Minett presented refurbished display cases from the 'American Museum' at the British Museum (Kingston Public Library Committee 1898-1921. 28.6.1904). The involvement of local worthies was not unusual at this period. The 'unselfish' desire to make, as Macleod notes:

> philanthropic gifts and bequests [were] representative of the altruistic strain that defined the highest evolution of the middle-class character, ...enrich[ing] people of all classes and, because the objects donated were on permanent exhibition, they made it possible for working-class visitors to return time after time and thus gradually become at ease in cultural centres (1996: 354).

Honan suggests that for many men, acknowledgment of public service was sufficient of itself 'nothing mattered ... more than approval' (2003: 4).

Honan has also found, in evidence closely paralleling that of the life of Marsh, how at this period there is a demonstrable and acknowledged close link between physical and emotional uncertainty and the redemptive compulsion to seek success. There had to be

outward and publically acknowledged evidence of one's prowess. For example, in the home 'every room is a mad clutter of collections' (Honan 2003: 4). By the same token, the public display of one's connoisseurship, the offering of them for display was a naked statement of "I possess, therefore I am", but one deemed socially worthy. The more detached view might be, as Honan suggests a '"potty" way of filling an emotional vacuum -' (2003: 4). Paradoxically, public acclamation of such assiduous dedication to comprehensiveness and its achievement nevertheless becomes the ultimate validation and justification. The downside, as Honan's subject admitted, was that 'one of the most irritating things about someone seeking approval is that their desperation is apparent' (2003: 4). The Marsh evidence suggests his underlying weakness may have been this same trait, insecurity covered by a tenacious pursuit of his objectives. It is notable in this respect that while he appears never to have consulted on his purchases at the same time he sought constant approval from his peers, particularly Greenslade. Given his failure in the family business it is perhaps hardly surprising that he strove for success and recognition in another, the world of the arts.

The opportunities presented by the new museum undoubtedly furthered Marsh's personal agenda of promoting the interests of the potter. As Wilkinson has validated, South Kensington provided the model to emulate:

> to provide inspiration for designers and manufacturers and to educate the taste of the general public through the acquisition of historic and contemporary artefacts for its collections, [rather than just accepting deposits of worthy art and artefacts] (2003: 242).

Marsh did not have the advantage, or was perhaps spared, South Kensington's institutional ideas of advanced art or other technical education. By the late 1890s he had come to his own critical view on the future direction of art, in all its manifestations, primarily through observation and contact with practitioners, particularly the Martin Brothers. Through them he acquired a still forming but fairly sophisticated insight into the inter-relationship between creator, learning, ideas and process, plus an awareness that ideas did not stand still but, with appropriate encouragement could continue to evolve. His understanding of the need

for appreciation of the formative background in which the art object was realised influenced his own collecting and, by extension his subsequent activity in the world of museums and galleries. As Taylor (1978) commented of Marsh's 1937 *Reminiscences on the Martin Brothers*, how 'very good' is Marsh's awareness of the economic contrast and creative link between maker and client: 'I came away ... with a new respect for Martinware'.

The striking difference in Marsh's case between himself and his peer curators and collectors was his familiarity with the creative process and not just the end product. This I suggest led him to understand the processes of pre- and post-formative appreciation, giving him not necessarily a unique insight, but one unusual at that period.

He also acquired, like Greenslade, an artists' instinct, a recognition that objects could possess, as discussed in the Literature Review, an identity which transcended mere functionality. This took different forms and continued to evolve and be expressed in different ways. Garnett for example observed of Duncan Grant: 'For him, objects seemed alive' (1984: 93). To William Nicholson objects possessed an inner light which the artist revealed (James 2004: 24). As discussed above in relation to the work of Cox, appreciation of the aesthetic in contrast to the technical qualities of late 19th and early 20th Century ceramics was slow in realisation. The idea also that interpretation was personal to each individual and could evolve and have potential beyond the artists original conception was, it seems, recognised by very few. For example, Cummings and Lewandowska have recently suggested:

> ...it is no longer helpful to pretend that artists originate the products they make, more importantly ...control ...values and meanings attributed to their practice: interpretation has superseded intention. ... artworks and artists exist in a longer economy of art, a symbolic economy built from an interrelated web of curatorship, exhibitions, galleries, museums, places of education, dealers, collectors, catalogues, books, theorists, critics and so on (2000: 15).

Or, as Daston (2004) recently commented more succinctly, objects have the potential to become charged with significance without losing their gritty particularity.

Such statements are completely absent from early 20th century critical comment but it

is clear that a few collectors at that time such as Marsh and Greenslade saw that broader vision, the light perhaps that Nicholson strove to capture, hence their almost Messianic compulsion to foster its understanding by a wider audience. For example, both Marsh and Greenslade sought appreciation of the wider European context through which the early work of the Martin Brothers' ideas evolved, through, for example, the practice of the artist, potter and political refugee Jean Charles Cazin (1841-1901), who for a while worked with the Martin Brothers. Cazin's work reflected his admiration for the ceramic replications of natural forms of polymath Bernard Palissy (1509-1590), which came back into public appreciation in the 19th Century (Marsh 1944b: 94, Haslam 1978: 45).

In practical terms obtaining wider recognition for potters meant promotion of the Martins was an important part of the canon of continuing development of salt-glaze pottery as a sculptural medium, in particular as a tradition within their locality. As Greenslade pointed out, this dated back to John Dwight of Fulham (c.1637-1703), credited as the father of salt-glaze (Marsh 1929c: 13). As related later, origination of meaning not just for Martin ceramics but later developments was to flower through Marsh's work as writer and organiser, likewise through Greenslade's sharing with Marsh appreciation of historical precedent and development of European contemporary ceramic practice. Most important was Marsh's recognition and single-minded promotion of the aesthetic qualities of ceramics as art over and above any qualities they may have possessed as craft. There is no doubt that the catalyst for this was his intimate understanding of the work of the Martin Brothers. The primary acknowledgment of this is perhaps not just their contribution to the 1922 Camberwell Exhibition but their organising the 1929 Fulham Pottery Exhibition of ceramics, primarily salt-glaze, made in the Fulham area (Marsh 1929c: 3). Marsh wrote the catalogue which contextualises the Martins within the tradition of salt-glaze and, with Greenslade, contributed a considerable number of the exhibits, drawing for the balance from the collections of many of their friends.

Marsh was efficient, competent, met deadlines, happy to take the initiative and often

took on more than might reasonably be expected (Kingston Public Library Committee 1898-1921. 28.10.1904). In November 1904 a Museum and Lecture Sub-Committee was formed with Marsh one of its members (Kingston Public Library Committee 1898-1921. 18.11.1904). Selecting a worthy representation of acknowledged masters from the pictures offered, he chose works by George Hilditch Snr. (1803-1857), John Constable RA (1776-1837), Sir Thomas Lawrence PRA (1769-1830) and local views, including a loan from his father, a donation from himself and lending 22 unspecified pictures, a collection of Whistler etchings and lithographs and a collection of Martin 'stone-ware' (Kingston Public Library Committee 1898-1921. 18.11.1904). Over the following six years he arranged loans from the Departments of Prints and Drawings at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum (Kingston Public Library Committee 1898-1921. 9.9.1907), but the most significant was to be the first exhibition by the newly founded Contemporary Art Society, discussed below.

Impetuous and tenacious in getting his own way, some events were an illustration of much else that was happening in his life at this period. An oil painting *Kingston Old Bridge* was reportedly 'the subject of considerable controversy over its acquisition by the Council' (Cross 24 10 1945). Originally a private loan it appears in 1911 on his own initiative Marsh committed the Council to buy it for £27.5s - an agreement officially rescinded, but he obtained permission to retain it on loan (Kingston PLC 2. 7.1911). Not to be outdone, and presumably to save loss of face, Marsh was later reported to have presented the picture from 'a body of subscribers' (Kingston PLC 11. 9.1911). However, its status seems to have remained uncertain and not to have entered the collection until 1915, suggesting that in fact it may have been paid for by Marsh alone, who, then in financial difficulties, asked for a refund of the £25.

It would however be wrong to construe that his service to the new museum was not appreciated. On his resignation in 1914 following his being petitioned for bankruptcy, the Library Committee regretted his leaving and acknowledged his past 'valuable assistance and cooperation' (Kingston PLC 2.3.1914). After all, the latitude given to Marsh had been to the Museum's advantage, since large parts of his collections adorned its displays.

Marsh's exhibiting policy in including modern ceramics took a broader slant on modern trends than simply confining himself to the traditional view of Fine Art as being only exemplified in sculpture and painting, it being many years before ceramics entered the pantheon of Fine Art. W.B. Honey much later lauded the innovatory achievements of amongst others, the Martins and Wells (1933: 239-240) but it was 1940 before he proposed,

> hand-made pottery may be regarded, like sculpture and painting, as a branch of fine art, important for its own sake and for the part it may play in the training of eye and hand to appreciate the aesthetic values of form, texture and decoration in pottery, and much else besides (1940: 133).

His diffidence reflected the continuing ambivalence towards hand craft, even in 1940. The point can be validly made that, if Marsh and the few others that followed him had not actively brought the Martins, Wells and others to public attention, whether Honey would have written the words at all.

Marsh appears to have adopted a cavalier attitude towards the available museum space at Kingston, it becoming an extension of his home. Filled with his numerous loans it became an excuse to buy more. Its extent suggests a degree of conviction, one might say folly, that in doing so it was for a public good. Occasionally he advised the committee of his loans (Kingston PLC 4.4.1910), but in general his activities are unrecorded. Marsh retained affection for the collections at Kingston, in 1925 lending 82 pieces of pottery (excluding those by the Martins). However, he clearly did not regard them as a fixture from time to time calling at the museum to exchange items. Thus in 1938 there were 126 items remaining, consisting of ceramics by the Martins (79), Wells (8), Cox (7), Staite Murray (19), Leach (8), Fishley of Fremington (3), Bingham of Castle Headingham (1) and Sibley of Bristol (1), all bequeathed in 1945 with an oil sketch *Steam Tugs at Kingston Bridge*, by R. O. Dunlop, then on loan to Dunedin, New Zealand (Cross 24.10.1945).

Marsh's acquiring a collection beyond the capacity of his home was not unusual. A contemporary, hotelier Merton Russell-Cotes (1835-1922) also collected on a scale greater

than the capacity of both his home and business, in his case, The Royal Bath Hotel at Bournemouth (Olding 1999: 10). In self-justification Russell-Cotes candidly observed:

> No ordinary home could be found with space enough to contain half the pictures I desire to buy, and I know that such possessions if wisely purchased are a good investment for my money, so that whilst I am pleasing myself, and enjoying my life amongst my treasures, I am also advantaging others, and attracting those of similar tastes to the hotel ... (1921: 35-36).

Outgrowing its confines, it extended into the new and adjacent East Cliff Hall (now the Russell-Cotes Museum), built to be both home and display setting (Waterfield 1999: 10, Bills 1999: 24). Russell-Cotes' hotel and later 'home' collection was novel in its merging of public and private space, an approach also adopted at Cambridge by Jim Ede (1895-1990). Ede was Marsh's younger contemporary and colleague at the Contemporary Art Society. It was an approach not emulated in quite the same way by Marsh. While Russell-Cotes and Ede appeared content to live within a gallery-cum-home constantly thronged by visitors, Marsh divided the two; his collections were freely shared between both, but he never opened his home for public viewing. He delighted in showing his domestic collections, but only to a close circle of friends and visitors from the art world (Ealing 55/1712, 14.2.1909).

Marsh's business difficulties seem to have been no hindrance to his advance within the world of the Fine and Decorative Arts. Regular contact with the British Museum and South Kensington to arrange loans brought him into their confidence, leading to recognition of his particular interests and expertise. He assiduously cultivated those in positions of influence. Evidently familiar with print collections at the V & A and British Museum, he made a generous gift to the V & A of a copy of Mortimer Mempes's *The Grey River*, containing twelve signed proofs, his expressed intention being that, by individual mounting they would afford a wider appreciation of the artist's work (V & A 20 10 1908).

In Chapter 5 reference is made to D. S. MacColl's visit to *Coombe Bury* to consider borrowing some prints for the Tate Gallery. He was interested in supplementing existing

exhibits with a selection of Marsh's David Lucas reproductive engravings after Constable, examples of the work of Samuel Palmer and Whistler's original etchings *Little Chelsea Wharf*, *The Black Lion Wharf* and 'the Nocturnes', in addition to others by contemporary practitioners such as Cameron, Bone, Haden, Watson, Short and Legros, plus Lithographs by Shannon and Whistler. An exciting opportunity for Marsh, it appears that, unfortunately, MacColl was ahead of Trustee policy, which precluded such loans. This did not imply MacColl was uninterested: to Greenslade, Marsh confided how MacColl felt constrained by rules and on occasions was driven to subterfuge to avoid confrontation, jokingly suggesting to Marsh that to 'contrive to get a case [of Martinware] at the Tate .... he even proposed to get them in under the heading of "furnishings" ' (Ealing 55/1712).

Such enthusiasm in Marsh's company to circumvent the rules says much about his ability to enthuse others. Unfortunately MacColl's excitement appears on reflection to have evaporated, with no loan arising. Or, perhaps the Trustees were unenthusiastic. The episode concluded with Marsh donating his exemplary copy of Whistler's *Black Lion Wharf* (Staley 2004: 192). Subsequent print exhibitions by MacColl's successor, Charles Aitken of *Alphonse Legros* (Tate TG92/3. 1912), *James McNeill Whistler* (TG92/4. 1912) and *Liber Studiorum by Turner* (TG92/9. 1921) suggest Aitken was more successful in justifying such shows. Like Marsh, Aitken was a founding member of the executive of the newly formed Contemporary Art Society (Bowness 1991:157) but evidently did not follow up Marsh's earlier offer.

A Modern Art Association

In 1909 Marsh was invited to participate in forming a 'Modern Art Association', subsequently founded in 1910 as the Contemporary Art Society (Collins 1991: 15).

Its creation was prompted by the earlier success of the National Art Collections Fund always known as the NACF, [now the ArtFund], founded in 1903 on the initiative of D. S. MacColl and Roger Fry to stem the loss of important works of art overseas due to lack of funding (Borland 1995: 130-132). MacColl attempted to bring about change by advocacy, but

his suggestions to change acquisition policy at the National Gallery were ignored (Borland 1995: 64). Concluding direct action was required McColl and Fry were instrumental in founding the NACF, securing by purchase important works for donation to British public galleries (Borland 1995: 86-87). Funded by subscriptions, its focus was on acquiring major historic, not contemporary works.

While the National Gallery benefited from NACF donations, McColl was 'deeply critical of the Chantry Trustees [at the Royal Academy] and their inability or stupidity [in] not acquiring works by gifted contemporary painters' (Borland 1995: 177). He recognised the reservations many had about acquiring works without time for reflection, but was anxious 'to obtain work by the younger artists whom he admired - Augustus and Gwen John, William Nicholson, Jacob Epstein and Eric Gill', before the opportunity was lost (Bowness 1991: 7). He envisaged,

> some half-way house, some place of suspense, which the more courageous lovers of the arts, admirers of living as well as of dead artists, might fill with their works, and hold them till more timid people were sure of their ground (Borland 1995: 177, MacColl 1911: xv).

Institutional interest focussed on British, rather than Foreign painting (Herring 2001: 77-89). It was not until the Curzon report of 1914, following the Lane bequest of many foreign pictures to the nation, that a coherent collecting policy was formulated recommending a collection of modern foreign art be also acquired (Herring 2001: 78).

Encouragement to McColl and Fry came via Lady Ottoline Morrell (1873-1938), wife of Philip Morrell, a Liberal Member of Parliament. She had formed a circle of friends at their home, 44 Bedford Square, London, consisting primarily of artists, writers and thinkers (Cecil 1976: 3-4). A patron of Augustus John, Charles Conder and Jacob Epstein, she recognised the limitations of private patronage and shared their concern for the lack of attention given to contemporary artists (Darroch 1975: 64, Collins 1991: 15).

Meeting with them on 16 March 1909 she agreed to help create a body to encourage contemporary art (Borland 1995: 177). Three weeks later on 9 April 1909 'seven prominent members of the British art world' met at Bedford Square. Others present beside the Morrells, MacColl, and Fry were: Charles J. Holmes and Charles Aitken, respectively Directors of the National Portrait and Whitechapel Galleries, and Ernest Marsh, 'an expert on Martinware pottery' (Collins 1991: 15). A gathering of acquaintances and experts in particular spheres, it was a fine balance of artistic patronage and institutional office. Resolving to form a 'Modern Art Association', subsequently called the Contemporary Art Society, they proposed 'to do for contemporary art what the National Art-Collections Fund had begun to achieve for earlier periods, by purchase and exhibition of the best of contemporary art' (Bowness 1991: 7).

Marsh's invitation and subsequent appointment suggests that initially at least, craft and contemporary ceramics were to be part of Contemporary Art Society interests. Amongst contemporary ceramic collectors, in his direct involvement in running a museum, Marsh appears at this period to have been unique, and therefore an obvious choice. The only other possible prospect was Sydney Greenslade (App.36). After the First World War Greenslade served as Consulting Curator and purchasing agent for University College Wales, Aberystwyth for ceramics and other exhibits (Vincentelli 1980: 43-52, Evans 2004: 233, 239), but prior to this held no official connection with any art institutions.

Marsh therefore became the lone advocate of modern ceramics within the professional world of museology in Britain. His initiative predates by thirty years the activities of his nearest contemporary, Anna Wetherill Olmsted (1888-1981) and this in the United States. She had taken a great interest in the Arts and Crafts ceramicist Adelaide Alsop Robineau (1865-1929) whose collection was acquired for Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts soon after Olmsted's appointment to that institution in 1929. Her identification with that collection became the founding basis for her significant role in the Ceramic National Exhibitions, this encourageing the development of many American potters and subsequent acquisition of their work by many institutions (Buckley 2005: 497-523).

Contemporary Art Society publicity on acquisition policy of "works of Modern Art" for loan or gift was carefully non-specific, with purchases and presentations in the first few years including oils, watercolours, a drawing and the occasional bronze, but notably, no ceramics (Marsh 1911: 16). Fry, MacColl and Robert Ross were appointed to make the first purchases. Selection by committee was evidently deemed unworkable and the November 1911 meeting resolved that in future for six months each, two members would be given 'free reign' to make their own choice (Collins: 1991 17). Not everybody agreed with selections, or even if the Society's self-appointment as arbiters of contemporary taste was helpful to furthering its interests, given that their selection was itself a form of decision making on what was or was not, modern art. The independence of appointees in their selections went some way towards answering this criticism but, as subsequent disenchantment affirmed, depended on who was appointed to the committee. In the 1920s the funds were divided in two, the committee reverting to making decisions together for one half, an appointee continuing to spend the other (Spalding 1991: 57).

Some works gained acceptance at the outset, others took years, others not at all (Spalding 1991: 60). For example, despite, or in spite of their notably choosing Augustus John's *Smiling Woman* (c.1908), the artist was ambivalent about the Contemporary Art Society's function, describing Fry as 'an emancipated Quaker', its committee members weak and Fry's tool (George 1966: 118). To patron John Quinn (Saarinen 1959: 206), John commented,

> I don't think we need Fry's lead: he's a gifted obscurantist and no doubt has his uses in the world. He is at any rate alive to unrecognised possibilities and guesses at all sorts of wonderful things. ... If you sent him a gilded turd in a glass case he would probably discover some strange poignant rhythm in it and hail you as a cataclysmic genius and persuade the Contemporary Art Society to buy the production for the Nation (Holroyd 1974: 361).

Critical Exposure: The 1911 Contemporary Art Society Kingston Exhibition

To be successful in breaking new ground the activities of the association needed to be wider than acquisition, they needed exhibition to be seen and to provoke debate (Collins 1991:

19). It appears a decision was made to launch the Contemporary Art Society on the anticipated wave of publicity following the Grafton Gallery 1910 exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*. Marsh arranged the inaugural exhibition of Contemporary Art Society acquisitions at Kingston between July and September 1911. Entitled '*A loan exhibition of modern pictures, drawings, bronzes, etchings, lithographs and salt glaze stoneware*', its small number of works available from purchase and donation were augmented by loans from committee members and friends (Collins 1991: 19). Marsh evidently saw the exhibition as an opportunity to launch the Contemporary Art Society and to publicise its intention 'ultimately to enrich our National and Municipal Art Galleries' (1911: 1). Inviting subscriptions to the Contemporary Art Society, he declared that:

> This Society has been formed in the conviction that among the artists of our time are men of remarkable talent, who are imperfectly, or not at all represented in the national and Municipal Galleries. The scope of the Society is limited to Artists living or recently dead. It will be chiefly concerned with British Art; but it is open to Subscribers to allocate the whole or any part of their subscriptions to a separate fund for acquiring the works of foreign artists (Marsh 1911: 15).

No subscriptions were received for foreign art. Pride of place in the exhibition was given to the first Contemporary Art Society purchase, John's *Woman Smiling*, presentations of oils by Conder, Sickert, Nicholson, and a drawing by John (Marsh 1911: 16). An anonymously donated bronze statuette (1910) *Maternité*, by Charles Ricketts probably came from Marsh (Marsh 1911: 16). Marsh's enthusiasm to hold the first Contemporary Art Society exhibition can be interpreted as wider than simply espousing its cause. Clearly ambitious for himself, it put Kingston Museum and Gallery on the cultural map, promoted recognition of the Martins and undoubtedly raised his status in the ranks of his peers, both private and public.

From Marsh's point of view, his greatest achievement at Kingston must have been the bringing of so much contemporary art to its populace. While he had curatorial oversight, its content suggests collaboration with Campbell Dodgson, now on the Contemporary Art Society Executive and soon appointed Keeper of the British Museum Print Room. Dodgson's partiality for the Chelsea based Society of Twelve, active between 1903 and 1915, can be seen

in the works chosen (Marsh 1911) of John (Dodgson later compiled his print *catalogue raissoné*), Nicholson, Ricketts, Sickert, Shannon, Muirhead Bone, Dodd, Clausen and Orpen. Others were by the lauded Swede, Axel Zorn, Gwen John and Ethel Sands.

Marsh augmented the exhibition from his own collection, all lent anonymously. Supplementing the Contemporary Art Society bronzes, including an Epstein nude *The Dreamer* (1911) he included his Rodin bronze *The Kiss* (1898), 'full of poetic instinct', Alfred Gilbert's *Perseus Arming* (1882), 'undoubtedly one of the finest bronzes cast in recent times', and etchings, 'all fine delicate impressions' by Whistler, D.Y. Cameron, and Helleu; with watercolours by J. Aumonier and Wilfred Ball, all then the height of contemporary taste (Carey 1998: 211-23).

Given the exhibition's primary thrust was to launch the Contemporary Art Society it is somewhat surprising that, while the catalogue leaves no doubt as to its objective, the show's title '*A loan exhibition of modern pictures, drawings, bronzes, etchings, lithographs and salt glaze stoneware*' is somewhat understated. Even the word modern is printed half the size of the other words. Contemporary Art Society launch tactics are unrecorded, but the catalogue wording suggests Marsh and/or the Contemporary Art Society committee were hesitant at possible public reaction to the show.

Marsh's introductory phraseology, that the exhibition is 'arranged with a view to show some *interesting* phases of the Art of recent date, especially by contemporary artists whose works have not been previously exhibited in our neighbourhood', is equally low key. It suggests, as discussed in Chapter 2, some difficulty in finding a suitable vocabulary to describe the new art. Marsh was not alone in this respect. It was equally perplexing to others, such as A.J. Fiberg, who whether from pique or puzzlement described an unattributed *The Bay of L'Estaque* at the 1910 Grafton exhibition simply as a picture of 'rocks and water' (Robins 1997: 24). As Robins has concluded, only Fry in his vivid descriptions of Cézanne's landscapes seemed capable of formulating a language to fit the new art (1997: 24). The degree

of timidity felt within the Contemporary Art Society, is also implied in Marsh's letter to fellow Committee member Charles Aitken enclosing a catalogue 'of our little show: please overlook [its] shortcomings' (Contemporary Art Society 7817.4).

Any concern was misplaced, it receiving no national or local press critical coverage. Marsh's own notice in the local paper paraphrasing the exhibition catalogue was, like the catalogue, low key and matter of fact. The indignation that accompanied the Grafton show appears to have emptied the critical spleen. This is not in fact surprising. As Evans (2004) and Korn (2004) have comprehensively demonstrated, the until now received wisdom of a lack prior to 1910 of a wider public awareness, understanding and appreciation of both French impressionism and post-impressionism is largely myth: that while the committee might have needed to be concerned about the exposure of certain works, their worry was misplaced and underrated the receptiveness of the wider public, as opposed to the audience of art critics, to new ideas. The fact was the British middle-classes were increasingly frequent visitors to France and the Continent in general and thus more familiar with Continental artistic trends and accepting of modern trends than critics gave them credit. Contemporary Art Society loans soon following to Burnley and later Manchester, where 45,000 visited between December 1911 and January 1912 (Collins 1991: 20).

As the catalogue shows, Marsh saw the Kingston exhibition as an opportunity to raise the profile of the Stoneware pottery by Messrs. Wallace, Walter and Edwin Martin as Art, observing,

> each item they made was an original conception working independently or in unison to create what can be justly associated here, as works of Art by living artists of exceptional interest and merit (Marsh 1911: 6).

Litchfield's earlier (1895) survey of European ceramics remarked how 'the excellent stoneware produced by the firm of Martin Brothers deserves to be better known than it appears to be' (1895: 225) but by 1911, only Kingston was presenting examples in a British public collection and at this time only by loan.

Institutional involvement did however present risks to artistic independence. Marsh recalled how in the late 'eighties' or early 'nineties' the V & A borrowed some exhibits from the Martins. Refusing examples suggested by Charles Martin they insisted on certain pieces, to Charles Martin and Marsh choosing only one worthy example:

> Before leaving the shop they advised [Charles] that they should not try out new ideas in shapes and decoration but should conform to the traditional forms based on the Greek vases. This was a most fatal and futile policy and the effect was reflected for a time in much of their subsequent work until better advice was given by Mr.Greenslade and others and they sought by study and experiment to strive for something better (Marsh 1937b: 24).

Critical opinion has to a large extent validated Marsh's point of view on the merits of the later, rather than the earlier work (Waal 2003: 34) but ironically Greenslade's influence, as discussed earlier could be said to have been equally pernicious.

Advancing the Case for Ceramics

In 1919 Dodgson established a Contemporary Art Society Prints and Drawings Fund to acquire contemporary prints for presentation to the British Museum (Carey 1998: 214), emulating that for antique editions acquired through the NACF. The British Museum's policy at this time did not permit purchases of works by living artists and it was Dodgson's private patronage and gift that enabled so much contemporary work to appear in the British Museum collection (Carey 1998: 211). Marsh no doubt aspired to follow Dodgson's munificence and do likewise for ceramics but his financial situation from 1914 dictated otherwise, generous though in time and gifts he was still to be (App. 22-26). Marsh had no direct involvement in the Print fund but, as related later, in the late 1920s was instrumental in fostering print making and other crafts through the setting up of the National Society: Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, Potters.

Marsh was not solely interested in promoting ceramics but perhaps through encouragement by Dodgson also took an active interest in contemporary prints, not just in collecting them but also in exploring the creative process. Sox suggests that, with the notable exception of Roger Fry, the artist Henry Scott Tuke (1858-1929) and the Saffron Walden Gibson and Fry families, interest amongst 19th Century English Quakers in the practice of art, as opposed to being a patron, was unusual (Sox 2000: 90-98). Marsh's interest is therefore exceptional. In the 1920s he became friends with the architectural etcher Frederick Charles Richards RE ARCA (1887-1932), including some of his etchings in his later selling exhibition in New Zealand, discussed below. Richards was better known in the 1920s for his report on the teaching of art in Wales, which encouraged the establishment of the Department of Art at Aberystwyth University, rather than approbation of his own art practice (Aberystwyth 2007) (App.36). Influenced by Whistler and Short, Gibson (1918: 16-17) evidently felt it showed too much of an architect's approach to representation of detail rather than comfort with the untamed ladscape. Frequently used to illustrate his travel writing (Collins c.1940), it is meritorious rather than outstanding.

Given Marsh's interest in art advocacy, his interest in Richards probably had as much to do with his ideas as his art (App.36). Marsh spent many evenings with him acting as printers' devil and bought considerable numbers of his etchings (Ealing 55/1767: 1-2, 24 2 1924, 55/1766: 2, 14 11 1924, 55/1772: 2, 3 3 1925). The business arrangements between Marsh and Richards during this period are unclear. Endorsements suggest some of his personal collection were gifts. Richards was represented by Colnaghi but Marsh also sold his prints, whether officially or unofficially (Greenslade papers, Aberystwyth 31 5 1925). Marsh's judgment in respect of ceramics was assured but in respect of print perhaps less so. The Trustees of the Tate in the 1920s declined his offer of his copy of Richard's *Waterloo Bridge* (Gent 2004), although today his work is more highly regarded this is still perhaps more to do with his role as advocate than his own art (Aberyswyth 2007).

The need for the British Museum and similar institutions to rely on assistance from

such organisations as the Contemporary Art Society was not without criticism. Reflecting on past British Museum policy, Carey (1998) implies there was a degree of hypocrisy within the British Museum: that while there was no restriction on accepting gifts, failure to buy works rather than reliance on donations was because of institutional 'cowardice rather than prudence' by higher levels of management (Carey 1998: 241).

Although lacking Dodgson's institutional clout, Marsh sought to emulate his success in obtaining prints and drawings for the British Museum through the NACF by doing likewise with contemporary ceramics, this, despite NACF antipathy towards the modern. Marsh appears to have imperfectly understood the NACF terms of reference or regarded them as a challenge, perhaps even an opportunity to break the mould. Greenslade greeted his attempt with encouraging but circumspect humour, 'Went to the International at the Grafton & saw a fair choice of pots by R. Wells - Marsh trying to get NAC Fund to buy' (Ealing 55/-24 4 1912). A week later (May 1st), he noted that, 'Marsh has been in & suggested that 5 rather fine pieces of M. Ware be at present reserved to see if N. Art C. Fund people would buy ...' (Ealing Greenslade 1912).

The reasons for Marsh's optimism were many: firstly his newly appointed status on the Contemporary Art Society executive could reasonably have encouraged him to think that some attention would be given to his request, particularly as MacColl, the challenger of policies, and Fry, sat on both executives. As Harrod has recently noted, the NACF Grafton show gave equal showing to ceramics, paintings and sculpture (2002: 57). Marsh would have known they made a substantial profit (£587.12.1d) at the Grafton, had seen Wells' pots, as well as examples by Matisse, Derain and Vlaminck and had been favourably inclined to spend. NACF presentations had also been received of Continental, Eastern and a few early 19th Century English ceramics and on 26 March 1912, some Japanese wares from Lt.-Col. Kenneth Dingwall, a collector of both Eastern and contemporary English ceramics. An acquaintance of Marsh, Dingwall is highly likely to have encouraged Marsh to approach the NACF.

NACF subcommittee B minutes (responsible for sifting acquisition proposals and making recommendations for works of art other than pictures) have unfortunately not survived. No proposal was made to the following Executive meeting, suggesting the subcommittee was not persuaded (NACF ref. 9316 2 2), despite Marsh's optimistic reserving of specimens. The reasons for this are worth considering, given that they were probably wider than simply not being within its terms of reference. Harrod suggests that the pure forms of Delaherche [and also of Wells'] were 'the safer kind of experimentation' rather than those that confused the boundary between fine and applied art, such as those by Gauguin and, by implication the Continental artists already mentioned (2002: 61). However, irrespective of their originality and sculptural qualities, they were probably seen by the uninformed as art pottery, and thus tainted by association, weakening the case for any assertion of their status as Fine Art. Therefore, whatever the private enthusiasms of the individual committee members, inclusion within the ambit of Fine Art of ceramics by Wells, the Martins or anyone else was a step too soon and too far. Given the close links with the Contemporary Art Society, the request may also have been simply deemed as appropriate to the new body, not the NACF.

The progressive nature of Contemporary Art Society acquisitions in other media suggested an adventurous approach would be adopted in all areas. On 25th April 1912, the day after meeting Greenslade at the Grafton, Marsh raised at the Tate Contemporary Art Society executive meeting 'the desirability of purchasing or encouraging the production of pottery' by the Contemporary Art Society. At the following meeting he, Charles Aitken and others were appointed to form a sub-committee to consider 'the desirability of a scheme for acquiring pottery' (Contemporary Art Society 1912). The idea is not mentioned subsequently and must be presumed to have received a negative response.

Marsh was a lone voice, the committee more certain in its vision with regard to pictures and sculpture than pots. It can only be speculation, but the question may have been one of convincing the art world at that time that whatever the self-expression of artistic qualities in ceramics in both their form and decoration they remained primarily functional

objects tied by their shape to everyday use and in consequence outside any consideration as Fine Art. That this was so can be seen in relation to the work of Staite Murray in the 1920s, whose large named vessels, as mentioned above, were finally accepted as worthy of acceptance as Fine Art. How much Marsh discussed ceramics with Roger Fry is again unknown but it noteworthy that Fry, possibly at Marsh's sugestion, a year later attended a ceramics course at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts (Haslam 1975: 12).

Traditionally in Fine Art there was a close linking and interdependent triangle between the artist, the work and the patron customer. Such close links within ceramics were still in its infancy. Criticism of its Fine Art purchases and its thin finances (Collins 1991: 22) may have also made the Contemporary Art Society committee wary and consider inclusion of ceramics a step too far at this time. They needed convincing that artistic expression and originality of ideas was in evidence within ceramic practice, particularly in demonstrating independence from the constraints of industrial practice. The reality was pottery practice, as noted in the 1910 inspection of the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts, was too often orientated 'to the simpler forms of contemporary industrial art-pottery', with 'little relevant instruction for independent studio potters' (Watson 1993: 18).

> ... the only process of reproduction was moulding, there was no printing: vases dipped in one coloured glaze, was very tasteful. Other pieces were plates and vases painted in underglaze with Renaissance designs (Vanke 1998: 1910).

The south London market for art workers in the vicinity of Camberwell was not for innovators but production line decorators, principally at the Doulton Lambeth works. In 1916 the classes at Camberwell increased from one to two evenings per week, Alfred Hopkins' brother Henry, a foreman thrower at Doulton's, being taken on to teach throwing, none having taken place before this date (Vanke 1998: 6/1915-16). It is highly likely therefore that Fry only learnt decorating, not throwing at Camberwell, some skills being gained subsequently at a workshop in Mitchum, Surrey. Sufficient to create a range of table ware in which decoration

was clearly the priority rather than form, his newly established Omega Workshops opened in 1913. The shapes he created were replicated commercially from moulds (Shone 1999: 137, 173).

In 1910 no commercial gallery showed the work of contemporary potters. A single earlier review in *The Connoisseur*, suggests Marsh was not alone in noticing the lack of support for handicrafts (1908: 196). Reporting on the promising potential in the 'little exhibition of [English] handicrafts on the balcony of the New Gallery', it noted the prominently placed exhibits of Lalique and Gaillard in the main gallery below:

> it is quite time that this important section of art should meet with more attention in this country. In Paris each year in both salons all the eminent craftsmen have it in their power to show what they can do, and what progress the school of design and the perfection of workmanship have made. But here, although there have been of late years many more opportunities than formerly, there is no gallery that has given the craftsman the yearly chance that his brother artists, both painters and sculptors, have got of showing his work regularly, and thus coming in touch with the public at large (1908: 196)

A manifesto for Marsh's own ideas, it is possible he was the author of this piece, another apparently by him appearing in the same publication (1908: 192-193). All it wanted was opportunity:

> to carry it much further, and to bring to the notice of the public that it is possible to surround oneself and live amongst beautiful *modern* things, notwithstanding the fact that our purses will not permit us to fill our homes with the fine work of days gone by (1908: 196).

Not until the 1920s did Patterson's Gallery and others begin to show ceramics. Had the Contemporary Art Society before the First World War shown an equal vision in encouraging fledgling ceramicists, as with sculptors and painters, it may have provided the boost required. Marsh must have been severely disappointed by the negative response of the NACF and the Contemporary Art Society. After all, the work of the Martins was widely known, while the Chinese inspired stonewares of Reginald Wells, who had turned to pottery from sculpture, demonstrated the potential for change (Watson 1993: 18).

With the exception of William de Morgan, potters were poor self-publicists and had to wait for Staite Murray, and Leach much later to show the way. Given his influence on the committee Fry could have been a positive voice but prior to Omega seems to have been unfamiliar or uninterested in ceramics and then only because of its commercial potential. Marsh's failure and isolation speaks volumes for his minority status on the committee and lack of understanding by others of the interests he represented. The sculptor Gaudier-Brzeska hadn't needed to wait for posthumous advocacy and recognition by Pound (1916), Ede (1930) and Brodzky (1933) before the Contemporary Art Society acquired his work, but evidently potters did. Given Marsh's particular specialism it is surprising, even given his evident enthusiasm for Fine Art as a whole that he chose to remain on the Contemporary Art Society executive. It appears however he recognised his initiative was premature and should bide his time. His persistence was to pay off in the late 1920s, as described later.

Forming Taste: Selecting Fine Art

There was by no means a universal accord of taste on the committee. Fry appears to have been at logger-heads with the committee most of the time. Marsh's relationship with Fry was used on occasion to appeal to Fry to continue as a member of the Executive. The Contemporary Art Society records suggest that, while they are scant in detail, in the earlier years Fry and MacColl were constantly disagreeing with each other and with other members of the committee: a body self-evidently of individualists used to getting their own way, rather than working as a team. United in contempt for the Royal Academy, Fry and MacColl were poles apart in their attitudes to French art. MacColl described Cézanne as 'hopelessly incompetent' (in marked contrast to Fry's enthusiasm) and detested 'the work of the living Post-Impressionists such as Roualt, Matisse and Picasso' (Mortimer 1960: 3).

At the executive meeting on 21 June 1922 the committee heard that Fry, who was not present, wished to resign. The reason was unstated. Marsh, probably because of his close acquaintance with Fry, was deputed with another member to persuade him to stay (Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2.1). The result of their discussion is unrecorded but Fry

evidently remained unhappy. The cause seems to have been, as Spalding has argued, the Contemporary Art Society losing its sense of direction in the 1920s, with favouritism to particular artists, the acceptance of gifts - again with a marked slant to particular artists, and the problem of being tied to the taste of the buyer for the year (1991: 64).

The situation may not have been helped by Marsh's subsequent choice of works. Appointed buyer for 1922/3 at the same 1922 meeting, Marsh was authorised to spend up to £150. At the following February 1923 meeting his £30 overspend was agreed without comment. Such overspends occurred from time to time and this was clearly not an issue. The problem for Fry was that nobody seemed to be listening to his views on acquisition policy. Three weeks later on 14th March 1923 he attended the meeting at which Marsh's purchases were announced. The notes of the meeting do not draw a direct connection, but 'Mr Fry said that his presence as a member of the Contemporary Art Society had proved only a waste of time', that 'he had been for nearly 10 years in a minority of one and that he realised that given the present situation it was inevitable that his opinion could have little effect, he therefore felt that it would be better for him not to be on the Committee or to lend his name to tendencies which he does not view with enthusiasm' (Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2.1).

It is hard not to interpret this outburst as a complaint that since 1913 the acquisitions of the Contemporary Art Society, with Marsh's choice presumably as exemplar, lacked the organisation's pioneering intention. Marsh had chosen two works by Mark Gertler, then experiencing his most successful year (MacDougall 2002: 209) and others by Powys Evans, E. H. Hubbard, H. M. Livens, Miss L. Pickard, William Roberts and John Wheatley; a mix of new and familiar names, but all British. While these paintings were recent, and Fry liked Gertler's work, he considered British art, Gertler included, was saying nothing new post-the Great War (MacDougall 2002: 199). In mitigation Spalding suggests that 'in the aftermath of war contemporary art suffered a failure of nerve', it being 'difficult during the early 1920s to ascertain with any confidence where significant developments in contemporary art were taking place' (1991: 56). For example, Fry may have been pleased at Gertler's response to his

encouragement to look seriously at the latest developments in French art (MacDougall 2002: 210), but frustrated at his subsequent lack of engagement with its ideas, likewise the failure of the Contemporary Art Society buyers, like Marsh, to take the initiative.

This said, in 1925 Marsh and Contemporary Art Society subscriber Lionel Pearson presented the British Museum three undated Boudin graphite and watercolour drawings, *Carting shingle*, *Groups of women seated on a beach* and *A group of cows* (1925, 0422.1, 0428.2 and 1). Pearson was probably a mutual acquaintance of Marsh's architect friend Sydney Greenslade, a Lionel Godfrey Pearson F.R.I.B.A. (1879-1953) being architect of numerous hospitals in London and the provinces in the 1920s (*Who Was Who* 1991: 858). This gift by Marsh and Pearson has to be seen as part of the broad move, as argued by Korn (2004) and Evans (2004), to gain greater representation of French impressionist and post-impressionist art within British public collections. The acceptance of Boudin's work continues to be problematic, at least for certain critics. As Denvir has observed:

> one of the problems about the concept of realism [as exemplified in Boudin's work] is that then, as indeed now, it tends, somewhat unjustifiably, to be identified with what the nineteenth century called the 'lower orders', a tendency ...reinforced by...Millet's sanitised peasants and Courbet's svelte Parisian maidens (1991: 249).

Fry's sudden death in 1934 (Garnett 1984: 104) appears to have no perceptible effect on the Contemporary Art Society with whom, judging by surviving records, he had little contact in his final years. Its routines continued with Marsh again appointed official buyer in 1936 and 1940. On the latter occasion considerable funds in hand enabled him to be joined as buyer by other committee members: Campbell Dodgson, A. M. Hind, St. John Hutchinson, J. Maynard Keynes and Lord Ivor Spencer-Churchill. Marsh's choice of paintings was wide ranging, including works by Vanessa Bell, Jacob Epstein, John and Paul Nash, Anthony Gross, L. S. Lowry, Rodrigo Moynihan and Austin Spare (Contemporary Art Society 1940-41.10-11). As with those by his fellow appointees, some choices were ahead of contemporary taste, others as before continued to reflect the well-worn Contemporary Art Society artistic circle patronised so many times before.

Criticism of the pattern of buying revealed by purchases in the 1930s (Bowness 1991: 9) has however been reconsidered in more recent times: Shone notes how Bell's work, particularly portraits and still life, reached a satisfying maturity in the 1930s (1999: 223) while Paul Nash's work, was still evolving. This suggests, while in no way addressing Fry's criticism of the lack of patronage of continental art, that taking the long view, Contemporary Art Society buyers were right to continue to support these artists when, at times, their work was more reflective than progressive. Some works proved propitious of future acclaim, as Marsh's choice of Spare (Ansell 2005: 19) and Lowry (Lambirth 2001: 43) attest.

Artistic Imperialism: The New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition

Mackenzie has defined propaganda as:

> The transmission of ideas and values from one person, or groups of persons, to another, with the specific intention of influencing the recipients' attitudes in such a way that the interests of its authors will be enhanced. Although it may be veiled, seeking to influence thoughts, beliefs and actions by suggestion, it must be conscious and deliberate (1984: 3).

There is little doubt that while the objective of the Contemporary Art Society was to broaden British art by the infusion of new ideas, a particular steer, whether overt or covert, has always been evident and according to the particular interests of those doing the choosing. In that respect it was no different to that of the aims of the Federation of British Industries or with trade and art exhibitions overseas in which the objectives, as previously discussed, were equally understood as being to serve Imperialistic interests. Marsh's desire to promote British Art was greatly fulfilled by his appointment in 1925 as Art Director of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, the catalyst for his initiation of Contemporary Art Society loans overseas and involvement in the founding of the Empire Art Loan scheme.

As Constantine asserts in his study of the Empire Marketing Board (1986: 12-14), discussed in more detail later, the opportunities presented by harnessing art as practiced by British artists to trade in the dissemination of propaganda was overt. It is an aspect, perhaps

overlooked, surprisingly not addressed in any way by Cannadine (2001) in his exploration of the processes of imperial rule. It is also evident that the mechanism was not one of imposition but rather collusion between London and its Empire, or, on occasion, the Empire and London. The initiative in this particular instance came from New Zealand, a process begun in 1924 following New Zealand Government support for a New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition to be held in Dunedin, South Island in November 1925 (Thompson 1926: 11).

A role exuding the principles of artistic and economic imperialism, Marsh's appointment as Director practically and ideologically linked his positions within the Contemporary Art Society and the Federation of British Industries, discussed earlier. The Federation of British Industries Directors were fully cognizant of the economic opportunities of such links. Both Tennyson and Nugent supported the arts, Nugent subsequently serving as Northern Ireland representative on the 1951 Festival of Britain Committee (Packer 2003). Tennyson was instrumental in fostering links between art and industry, firstly as a member of the Council for Art and Industry and later as Chairman of the influential Council of the National Register of Art Designers (C.I.A.D.) (Tennyson 1957: 211). He knew Fry through mutual friendship with 'unconventional man of the left' and Fellow of King's College, Nathaniel Wedd (1864-1940) (Tennyson 1957: 91). Tennyson's Imperialistic views closely aligned with Wedd, author of an 'Essay on the future of the British Empire', broadcast Empire Day, 20 April 1933 (Wedd: Essays 1/7). Imperialism was thus far from dead, and art as a vehicle for conveying the home view of a meritocracy of artistic practice to the Empire, fully understood. It is probably no coincidence that, convenient to their mutual interests, they chose in 1917 to move the Federation of British Industries into permanent offices on the second and third floors of the Norwich Union Building, 39 St. James Street, Piccadilly. As Tennyson remarked:

> Christie's sale rooms ... provide an unrivalled running survey of the history of art and

taste. On Saturdays there were the great commercial galleries, including at that time the Grosvenor, the Grafton and, for contemporary art, the Goupil (1957: 195).

Divided into two departments, the Federation of British Industries 'Home' side was managed by Tennyson, 'Overseas' by Assistant Director (later Sir) Guy Locock (1883-1958) (Tennyson 1957: 143). Federation of British Industries executive influence in the economic life of the country was considerable. In an initiative strongly reminiscent of one of the Federation of British Industries founding objectives, Locock later sat on the 1945 Ramsden committee appointed by the Secretary for Overseas Trade, 'to consider the part which Exhibitions and Fairs should play in the promotion of export trade in the post-war era' (Ramsden 1946), its most significant recommendation being a 'Universal International Exhibition ... in London in 1951' (Brackenbury 2003). This subsequently became the Festival of Britain, held between May and September 1951.

Since inception the Federation of British Industries recognised the need as a trade federation to promote its member's products, particularly overseas, the tried and tested vehicle being the trade exhibition (Warwick MSS.200/F/3/D1/1/1). Disraeli described the 1851 Great Exhibition as 'raised for the glory of England and the delight and instruction of two hemispheres'; the duality of the function of exhibitions to inform and gather information was thus long recognised (Moneypenny 1910-20: iii.303). As Greenhalgh has observed, they were human showcases, assertively racial, imperial and commercial in their objectives and increasingly sophisticated in their targeting of particular audiences (1988: 82).

The Federation of British Industries's first opportunity to show in the Far East began on the initiative of New Zealander Edmund Anscombe (1874-1948) (later exhibition architect) who, following 'a tour overseas, [saw] the commercial and educational value of Exhibitions as "timekeepers of progress" and as a stimuli to trade and manufacturers' (Thompson 1926: 9). In a letter to the Dunedin *Evening Star* of January 27, 1923 he proposed the planned 1924 local Industrial Exhibition be enlarged to 'Eclipse anything previously held in New Zealand [to] typify the resources, enterprise and progress of the Dominion' (Thompson 1926: 9).

Initially voted to be an Imperial Exhibition, recognition that trading patterns were changing resulted in, with some dissension, it becoming international in scope. The return of numerous men from Europe looking for jobs at the end of the European war compelled a need to rejuvenate commerce, particularly in South Island (Thompson 1926: 6-118). By agreement between the Federation and the Exhibition Branch of the Department of Overseas Trade the Government exhibit and the British Commercial section would be housed in a British Court, in what was planned to be "The Wembley of Australasia" (Warwick MSS.200/F/4/24/10). This immediately stepped up the prestige of the exhibition, with invitation to British industry to exhibit following in December 1924 (British Industries 30 12 1924: 781). Subject to exhibitor interest, an international exhibition of art in several pavilions was planned, with approaches made to Australia, France and the United States (Otago MS-492-1-2-3: 13.1. 1925).

The British Government initially declined to undertake sending out a collection of art, suggesting instead an approach to Major Alfred A. Longden, Director of the British Institute of Industrial Art, arranger of art at the then current Wembley exhibition (Otago MS-492-1-2-3: 8.8.1924). Longden was concerned with the promotion of artistic practice in British manufacturing industry (HMSO c.1924) and, pertinent to this discussion, contributed *Art of the Empire* to Gunn's 1924 major overview of the post-war British Empire. A cable to the New Zealand High Commissioner in London suggested Longden be asked 'whether he would collect and forward [a] British Art Section his fee if any' [his estimate of costs; and the offer] of fifteen per cent commission sales' (Otago MS-492-1-2-3: 8.8.1924).

Sir Isadore Spielmann (1854-1925) was appointed Director of Art and Executive Commissioner for the forthcoming exhibition (*Who Was Who* 1929: 984), having held the same position for the 1906-7 Christchurch, New Zealand exhibition (Thompson 1926: 4-5). Known to Marsh, Spielmann was an NACF Executive member, served on the British Empire Exhibition 1924-25 and was Director of the Exhibition of Arts and Crafts at the Louvre in 1914 (Board of Trade 1914). Marsh had contributed major collections of Martin ceramics to both exhibitions.

From the foregoing one might be forgiven for thinking that art had less to do with aesthetics and more to do with being a mechanism for promoting trade. It appears that Marsh provided Federation of British Industries administrative expertise to Spielmann and Longden. He resigned from his position as Federation of British Industries Financial Manager, not it seems to retire (he was 61), but to participate more fully in arranging the 1925-26 Exhibition (Otago MS-492-1-2-3: 14.7. 1925). It may have been considered expedient that he be seen as, if hardly neutral, given his previous identification with the functions of the Federation of British Industries, at least now one step removed from it.

Spielmann died 10 May 1925 from pneumonia, leaving a vacancy for the position of Director (Ealing 55/1776). The following day Marsh went in his place to see 'Coles at the D.O.T.' following a reduction in the Treasury Grant to the British exhibition from £25,000 to £17,000, putting the British contribution in jeopardy. Marsh's representations were successful, Coles applying to the Colonial Office for additional funding. Coles said to Marsh that there was a chance he would replace Spielmann as his death meant that 'the department will not have to continue any payment to him [and] they may be able to fix it somehow' (Ealing 55/1776). Marsh was less optimistic, considering it made 'it easier for them to get out of it if they want to' (Ealing 55/1776). This was hardly the most auspicious basis on which to be appointed but, given his working in tandem with Spielmann over the previous six months he was the obvious replacement.

Longden nominally carried forward responsibility for the role but Marsh had clearly entered into the project with enthusiasm and was appointed Director of Fine Arts in place of Longden in July 1925, attending his first meeting in Otago in September (Otago MS-492-1-2-3: 16.9. 1925). His credentials evidently impressed the Fine Arts Committee of local appointees (Thompson 1926: preface) and he was appointed to act as both Director for the English contribution and the Fine Arts Exhibition (Fig.10. 1) overall with 'a free hand' in making all the arrangements (Otago MS-492-1-2-3: 16.9. 1925)(Fig.10. 2).

The crucial question regarding Marsh's involvement, both at the beginning when working under others and later when given total responsibility for the art exhibition, is the degree to which his personal artistic preferences prevailed in the choice of pictures shown. The considered view of Otago archivist Alison Midwinter, having reviewed the Exhibition archive, is that he had little to do with advocacy for certain artists, except insofar as he probably helped select the works sent to New Zealand (2000: 3).

Collections were received from Britain, France, America, Australia and New Zealand, all works being by living artists and all for sale. Each country appointed its own selection committee, so that the choice sent was theirs, not that of the Art Director. Marsh's role appears to have been to hang the exhibition to best advantage, to administer sales and to oversee the daily management of the exhibition.

The British pictures - except for the Scottish collection, which was chosen by the Royal Scottish Academy - were selected by Sir Frank Dicksee (President of the Royal Academy) (1853-1928), Sir Herbert Hughes-Stanton, R.A. (President of the Royal Water Colour Society) (1870-1937), Sir Charles Holmes, A.R.W.S. (Director of the National Gallery) (1868-1936) and Reginald S. Hunt, a British Art Director (Thompson 1926: 106). For those in New Zealand anticipating the latest trends in British art it was a role-call unlikely to quicken the pulse.

In the 1920s Jan Gordon and others had pleaded for recognition of the different 'languages of art', that, tragically through formalised teaching Nature was becoming no longer vision, but dogma' (1923: 11-12). The 20th Century modern movements were completely unrepresented. It appears that either through personal choice, artistic censorship, an imperial perception of what the dominions should receive or were receptive to receive, these various national august bodies largely delivered what Gordon stingingly described as following,

> the old road. [So], why not be content to continue that matter-of-fact representation of external fact which was so easy to understand and under which we had so much

pleasure in eating our dinners? (1923: 12)

Without evidence to the contrary one must assume Marsh was complicit in the choices made. There are however other factors, such as the strength of colonial ties post-World War I which had more to do with nostalgia than challenging norms and values. In this regard the organisers may have correctly judged a significant part of its potential audience. For example, in his discourse on 'the evocative power of objects' McCracken has explored how:

> Goods serve as bridges when they are not yet owned but merely coveted. Well before purchase an object can serve to connect the would-be owner with displaced meaning. The individual anticipates the possession of the good and, with this good, the possession of certain ideal circumstances that exist only in a distant location (1990: 110).

McCracken is talking specifically about taste and lifestyle as alluringly displayed in late 19th Century department stores, but the parallels are obvious. At the New Zealand exhibition the objects in this emporium of art had the additional dimension for the expatriate community of also being for many, images of their former home country, with all the emotional charge this conveyed.

Marsh's observation to Greenslade of the positive public response both general and from the art establishment (Ealing 55/1780: 3) was endorsed by the official report which observed 'the interest evoked by the Art Gallery display was very marked, and ...doubt[less] a great stimulus to ... appreciation of the Fine Arts in New Zealand' (Thompson 1926: 107). Excluding school groups 268, 852 people attended the art galleries (1926: 108), or as Marsh remarked, '70, 000 in the first eight weeks ... not bad for a city of 70, 000 inhabitants and a country, in both Islands, of under one and a half million' (Ealing 55/1780: 3). By any yardstick the attendance was impressive, the population of South Island in 1926 being 515, 000, the total population of both islands 1, 408, 139 (Otago 2003).

Careful to take a neutral stance on the content of the exhibition, Thompson commented: 'the policy has been adopted of making the Record as impersonal as possible':

the single and only personal comment ventured on 'the display' was that it was 'a representative one' (1926: viii). Out of 931 pictures displayed, 546 (58%) were British (including the Scottish exhibit), 216 Australian and New Zealand (23%), 119 French, and 50 American. Nearly half (441) were oils, with 234 water-colours, 256 etchings, dry points etc (Thompson 1926: 107). Sculpture was represented by 46 pieces in marble and bronze of a size suitable for the home.

Although sales totalled £11,164 and reflected well on Marsh (presumably like Longden, on commission), the bulk sold by value £7, 774 (69%) were from the British collection, suggesting that the British selection committee had chosen well. However, as the report pointed out, the sale of entirely British works at Christchurch in 1906-07 totalled £17,017, approximately one third being sold in New Zealand, mostly to North Island, the rest to Australia. In 1926 only a few sales were made to North Island centres and none to Australian galleries. Australian and New Zealand works sold less well by value, £382 (3.4%). Thompson (1926) does not explain the reason for this or the lack of British sales to Australia but it may be a reflection of antipodean institutional conservatism rather than reflection on the works themselves. For example, Hughes narrates how by 1926 Australian 'modernists', much influenced by a wide distillation of European practice, in particular the cubism of Picasso and post-impressionism 'had created a bow-wave of critical hostility' closing many doors to them (1970: 122). In the light of this the sale of a number of works to Dunedin, South Island, of pictures which, as suggested earlier, to European eyes were by these years largely conservative, but to New Zealand fresh and new, has to be seen as enlightened. Marsh's (1925) annotated copy of the catalogue lists many works as unsold at the close of the exhibition but (Fenwick 1927) suggests much was still under negotiation due to fund-raising. Just under £5,000 was spent by Dunedin Art Gallery Society, the Smeaton Bequest additionally purchasing a considerable number of British pictures for Dunedin. A further public appeal for Dunedin to also acquire a selection of American works was equally successful (Thompson 1926: 107). Sir Percy Rolfe (1865-1940) and Lady Lucy Sargood (McAloon 2003) bought the Exhibition Art Gallery as a permanent home for the city art

collection and memorial to their son, killed in the Great War (Thompson 1926: 108). A considerable number of the private purchases were also presented to public collections (Thompson 1926: 107). These sums suggest that but for the intervention of Dunedin and its people, which had a vested interest in the success of their exhibition, it was not exactly a ringing endorsement on the choice of works available, since neither North Island nor Australian galleries made any purchases. The reason, however, is more complex than this. In the case of New Zealand, it was tied up firstly with a government initiative to create a National Art Gallery (Brown 1988: 99), location to be decided, funded by a public/private partnership, which may have deterred some sales, since their likely location was unknown. Secondly the rise of independent local art societies, such as the Society for Imperial Culture in Christchurch, protective of their own interests were already making purchases not just of works of art from abroad but more particularly fostering emerging home talent. It is clear that the latter situation also applied to the state galleries in Australia where recently established art societies were following a similar path, as can be seen in the collections in, for example, Adelaide and Sydney.

So, what was Marsh's personal contribution? On the face of it the appointment of a selection committee circumscribed Marsh in influencing the choice of British exhibits. Examination of the list of pictures and Marsh's letter to Greenslade (App. 9) suggests that this may not have been entirely the case, and in fact the choice of works may have been partially his (Ealing 55/1780: 3). The British selection committee were probably unfamiliar with all the artists and works selected and it is reasonable to assume that a preparatory, and by implication, recommended list was prepared by Marsh and Major Longden. This contains names of acknowledged artistic ability, but also the suggestion of acquaintance and particular interest groups. Thus amongst the works of Laura Knight, Lucy Kemp-Welch, Lamorna Birch, Gerald Kelly, household names in England at that time, were two oils by Marsh's relative by marriage, Wilfred de Glehn, their near neighbour Randolphe Schwabe and others by Henry Scott Tuke (1858-1929) (a member of the York Quaker Tuke dynasty who established The Retreat Mental Hospital in York where Roger Fry's wife spent her final years (Sox 2000: 90)),

regular acquaintance of Singer Sargent and William Rothenstein, also represented (Sox 2000: 95).

This is not to say that in comparison with other works exhibited, the works of these artists were not worthy of inclusion. For example representative works by Wilson Steer, Augustus John, were also present, but the presence of all of these does beg a now unanswerable question of how much of the inclusion was on Marsh's initiative. The precedent of Contemporary Art Society executive practice and the evidence of his later role with the Empire Art Loan Collections Society, discussed below, suggests it was considerable. The inclusion of works by Schwabe, John and others such as Graham Sutherland and Ethel Gabain suggests his inclination to show new ideas in British art in the 20th Century, but much of it endorsed Macmillan's view that at this period, despite the influence of Paris, 'a mix of romantic symbolism with the tradition which Walter Crane called decorative was still the mainstream of British art' (1990: 331).

The most progressive were those sent by Scotland, and probably outside Marsh's influence, with sculpture by Edinburgh practitioners Benno Schotz (Macmillan 1990: 338) and Phyllis Bone (Macmillan 1990: 331), paintings by James Cowie (1886-1956) (Macmillan 1990: 336) and the 'colourist' S.J. Peploe (1871-1935) (Macmillan 1990: 310).

Direct evidence of Marsh's involvement in choice exists in a single long letter to Greenslade (Ealing 55. 1778 15 1 1926) (App. 9). Written four months after his arrival it outlines his attempts to obtain from England, with Greenslade's help, exhibits for an international exhibition of architectural drawings, apparently an afterthought on the part of the organisers (Ealing 55. 1778: 1).

While the final choice of oils and watercolours may have been determined by the selection committee, prints appear to have been left largely to Marsh. He told Greenslade he had received a selection of etchings and lithographs from Mrs Bernard Smith of the 21 Gallery

and from Bromhead, Cutts & Co. contemporary colour prints, probably wood-cuts (App.35), by William Giles, John Platt and Allen Seaby (Pitshanger Ealing 55. 1778: 2). As noted above he made many sales. Marsh's continuing familiarity with contemporary graphics and London dealers culminated in his later involvement in setting up and running of the National Society, Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, Potters.

Marsh wrote with some despondency about the New Zealand craft work exhibition (Ealing 55/1779: 2). He said that it 'went' to the British Government pavilion, suggesting that there had originally been an intention to exhibit in or in close proximity to the Art Gallery (Ealing 55/1779: 2). Whatever, it appears he had no involvement in it and thought it badly displayed: it was 'a very poor lot indeed. Of the initial display nothing of Wells or Murray's and a few pieces of Leach-nothing important' with only some *Beggar's Opera* figures by Agatha Walker and some unspecified work by Stella Croft and Irene Browne of any note (Ealing 55/1779: 2). Additional items had arrived from an exhibition in Paris, including some items by Wells, but there was insufficient space to show them all. The tone of his remarks suggests disappointment that responsibility had not been given to him to do the choosing and organisation. It appears that the throwing of pots was virtually unknown in New Zealand but he and others were able to arrange a demonstration and to hopefully get them fired (Ealing 55/1779: 2).

The longer term spin-off for Marsh and for the collections of New Zealand and Australia from his involvement in the exhibition and the esteem in which he was evidently held was firstly his advice being sought on later acquisitions of paintings and his involvement in the setting up of the Empire Art Loan Collection Society, described later.

Surprisingly given his interest in photography, Marsh's surviving photographs contain no exhibition images. His letter to Greenslade suggests he was under pressure to get the exhibition open on time and running it but, given that he had time off to visit Christchurch, Mount Cook and later Australia it must be assumed these have been lost or destroyed. The

only surviving images are a curious portrait of Marsh and a collection of glass lantern slides of the Maori people. That of himself is as much an anthropological specimen as those of the Maori people (Fig. 10.3). Photographed full face and wearing a trilby hat, when his image is turned in different directions it shows him by turn looking glum, impassive or smiling. Given that he died in 1945 its animation of his long deceased countenance is somewhat alarming. Marsh's contact, if it can be so described, with the indigenous people of New Zealand is an interesting facet of his cultural exchange, if again it can be so considered.

His boxes of black and white lantern slides, much taped and presumably shown to groups on his return, illustrate Maori people by the river with dugout canoes, their villages and some idea of the topography, natural and cultivated vegetation of New Zealand (Twyman collection). The New Zealand Government Pavilion at the exhibition included a display of Maori arts and crafts and the catalogue describes 'a series of glass stands contain interesting transparencies showing Maori life and art' (Murray 2006). It is possible the Marsh examples were copies of these offered for sale. A twin barrelled brass slide projector was owned by Marsh (Twyman collection). Its vintage suggests it long predates Marsh's visit to New Zealand.

The existence of the slides and their acquisition is instructive, if considered within the context of Mackenzie's (1984) observations on manipulation of British public opinion at this period. He argues the case by which, for a multiplicity of motives, encouragement was given by Whitehall at this period to achieving an equal understanding of cultures across the British Empire, as in for example the well intentioned but now seen as clumsy attempts to get the colonies to pay for programmes of lecture programmes and lantern slides to educate both the people of the United Kingdom and the Colonies (Mackenzie 1984:162). This is said to have been the first and only instance of the Colonial Office embarking on 'formal, official imperial propaganda' (1984: 162). However, the concept of a scheme for the mutual benefit of both the United Kingdom and the Colonies did have a further flowering between 1926 and 1933 under the Empire Marketing Board (EMB) viewed by Constantine 'as an attempt to consolidate

imperialist ideals and an imperial world view as part of the culture of the British people' (1986:1). Under the guise of encouraging closer commercial links for mutual gain, the scheme exhibited the same weakness of reinforcing existing stereotypes and Imperialist attitudes shown by the earlier lecture and slide programme. Some of the EMB publicity utterly failed to conceal the imbalance and in many ways contradicted the propaganda of mutual advantage, as in McKnight Kauffer's 1927 design *Jungles To-day are Gold Mines To-Morrow*, of two natives, one holding a pineapple and the other a club, surrounded by the words: *Growing Markets for our Goods, Jungles To-day are Gold Mines To-morrow, Tropical African Colonies in account with the Home Country - 1925, Goods we Sold £24 million, Goods we Received £20 million* (Constantine 1986: pl. 17).

Supported enthusiastically by Prime Minister Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914), the slide and lecture programme was expected to 'provide the people of the United Kingdom, the Dominions, and colonies with a more vivid and accurate knowledge than they possess of the geography, social life, and the economic possibilities of the different parts of the empire' (Mackenzie 1984: 162). The idea was received with varying degrees of enthusiasm by the Empire. Australia and New Zealand, 'belying their reputation for imperial loyalty, declined to be involved', their reasons unstated (Mackenzie 1984: 162).

It is somewhat ironic therefore that Marsh returned from New Zealand with a set of such slides, most likely acquired at the exhibition and therefore, by implication, officially sanctioned. Thompson was at pains to portray the, until recent times, pioneering and frontier nature of large swathes of New Zealand (1926: 6-8). Official reticence at an inter-government level in participating in the lecture and slide scheme has perhaps to be seen within the local context, particularly with regard to promulgating wider knowledge within the Empire of the recent struggles, still within living memory, to populate the North Island with white European settlers. This had met with stiff opposition from the many different tribes of Maori people, 'a fierce and tenacious race', described by Thompson as causing 'a half a century of retardation ... and troublous colonization' through 'the well-known reluctance of the Maori to alienate any

portion of his territory' (1926: 7). Thompson relates, without trace of irony, how lessons were learnt from the North Island experience in consolidating the hold on the remaining lands still within Maori control by bringing in settlers to districts on legally purchased and thinly populated land where danger of attack was unlikely.

> The character and composition of these [white] southern communities gave them a further advantage. They were religious in origin, and the cohesion, energy, and dynamic force inseparable from such beginnings gave them in their early years a youthful vigour which later generations look upon with admiration and envy (1926: 7).

Quite what Marsh made of this is unknown. He cannot have been unaware of the politics of colonisation even if he didn't see it first hand. This said, given his limited travels outside the long established community of Dunedin, it is probable that he had virtually no direct contact with the indigenous people themselves. It may be simplistic to say so, but his nearest contact with their actual lives, happy and smiling, was most likely through the glass slides. But they only conveyed part of the picture. Back at 'the Hub', as Shorter so aptly called Britain in a letter to Marsh, the view was somewhat different (Shorter 4 8 26). Colonial settlers still taking Maori lands were a recent reminder of Empire making practices from which the Colonial powers was now seeking to distance itself. The 'Maori House', a whare (meeting house) presented to Queen Victoria in 1874 was displayed at the 1924 Wembley British Empire Exhibition but subsequently returned to the New Zealand Government. It was however erected at the South Seas Exhibition by the University of Otago anthropologist Henry Devenish Skinner (1886-1978) (Murray 2006). Greenhalgh concludes that by the time of the 1924 Wembley exhibition 'there was a shrewd reluctance to parade racism less openly' (1988: 96), but the presence of other nationalities was still noted by race and the numbers present. The continuing display of racial types at Wembley and open sale there of such slides question whether, as Greenhalgh argues, 'the educational motive behind the displaying of peoples ... at the great exhibition ... shaded into the imperial one, often to the extent that the two were indistinguishable' (Greenhalgh 1988: 96).

Attitudes, notwithstanding the upheaval of the Great War and the contribution in it of

the many races from the colonies and dominions, had changed little. Thompson suggests that those organising the settlement programme were not unaware of the criticisms (Pember Reeves 1898, 1902) levelled against it (1926: 7). However, the continuing depiction of the Maori and other such peoples as anthropological curiosities, as Greenhalgh has noted, explicitly 'Measured [them] on the sacred yardstick of Progress, show[ing] themselves hopelessly behind the white man' (1988: 96). It was an idea with a long lineage that had become self-perpetuating, but evidently with a *raison d'etre*, summarised by Birdwood almost fifty years before, as an opportunity 'everywhere for the keen, bright, energetic Aryan race to excite other races to a higher civilization' (1878: intro). That the price for such excitement for the peoples of the South Seas was 'genocide of the Maoris and many other races to bring them round to a new thinking and subjugation, with imperial violence as a natural order, was a disturbing factor' (Greenhalgh 1988: 94), but clearly one that still did not greatly trouble those of Marsh's generation.

One wonders quite what slant Marsh put on his slides when he showed them at home and how they were received. It is highly likely that, given their ideological affinity with the primary thrust driving the creation of the Federation of British Industries, they served only to show to a home audience that, by extension, his activities in New Zealand were still bringing knowledge to the not necessarily ignorant masses, but certainly those who could still benefit from the wisdom of the home country, whether in industry or art. For example, the Official Souvenir Catalogue contained extracts from J.B. Condliffe's (1925) *A Short History of New Zealand* with such quotes as:

> From men such as these [whalers, sealers etc.] the Maori's learned the white men's vices, nor did they learn any better way of living till Samuel Marsden arrived in 1814, and taught them how to live decently, while he preached to them about the white man's God (Murray 2006).

The reality however was that those attending the exhibition were not the indigenous peoples but overwhelmingly of European origin. But nevertheless still considered by those 'at home' as in need of a steer on what constituted the best in Fine Art, from a British perspective.

It is unlikely many Maori's attended. Decimated in the 19th Century, only 41, 993 were recorded in 1891. By the 1920s numbers were recovering but most lived in considerable poverty. The official Maori population of Otago and Southland (South Island where exhibition held) in 1921 (New Zealand Year Book 1925) was 485 (0.3% of total population) and in Auckland (North Island) 39,607 (9% of total population) (Murray 2006). The surviving Maori population recognised the gains possible from the application of European farming practices. However, political activity by an educated few sought to maximise this opportunity by winning back land rights, a degree of traditional self-government and to maintain their cultural identity, rather than absorb European ideas (Montreal University 2006).

Imperial Preference: The Empire Art Loan Collections Society

Marsh's role at the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition clearly paralleled the objectives of the Contemporary Art Society, that is not only to promote interest in contemporary artistic practice, but also, with a particularly British and Imperialist perspective, the dissemination of ideas emanating from British practice. On his return Marsh suggested to the Contemporary Art Society executive that their scheme should be extended to send 'Modern British Art' from within Contemporary Art Society acquisitions to 'Colonial Galleries' (Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2.1, 16 11 1926). It was subsequently decided 'that the Society should give pictures to Colonial Galleries in particular Australia and New Zealand' and to invite Directors of Colonial Galleries to see Contemporary Art Society works when next in London 'with a view to a gift or loan' (Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2.1 2 2, 1927).

Unashamedly imperialistic and partial in intention, it is clear that despite his undoubted personal interest in continental artistic practice, Marsh had no doubt where his loyalties lay. His initiative, which led in 1930 to the founding of The Empire Art Loan Collections Society, can be directly linked to his previous discussions in New Zealand with Sir Percy Sargood (1865-1940). Conceived by Sargood on a visit to London in 1927 (McAloon 2003), it is plain much of the hitherto unrecognised credit for getting the scheme operational is down to Marsh

who recognised that Sargood had both the acumen and means to make such a scheme happen, rarely failing to get what he wanted (Strathern 1966). A 'merchant prince of Dunedin', Sargood,

> made philanthropy his life's work. In this he was motivated by an optimistic and liberal imperialism, believing in the British Empire and in the rights of all citizens to share in the advance of civilisation (McAloon 2003).

Greenhalgh suggests (1988: 96) British attitudes had begun to move on, but Sargood's imperial view on the continuing worth of the British Empire supports Mackenzie's contention that while the 'sophisticated concept' of Imperialism remained 'the preserve of an elite', it permeated the thinking of a still significant and influential group convinced that Imperialism still had values worth propagating, in this case through the medium of Fine Art (1984: 1). It also recognised the often poor quality of Fine Art in public galleries in the former colonies (Morrison 1929: 303-307). Sargood recognised 'the inability of New Zealand resources to fund extensive purchasing of fine art and intended that the society should provide a substitute' (McAloon 2003). By 1930 Sargood was in formal negotiation with Marsh and Charles Robert Chisman (Dunedin DPAG 35/1) of The Art Exhibitions Bureau, London, founded by Chisman in 1913 (Dolman 1934: 44-45) to promote and facilitate exhibitions in both Britain and Europe (Pomeroy 1999). Marsh subsequently obtained Contemporary Art Society support to explore with Chisman the mechanics of setting up an Empire loan scheme of works from British sources (McAloon 2003). Marsh was to find the pictures, Chisman to provide the administrative support. As McAloon makes clear (2003), in terms of determining taste, the concept of any one individual or small group manipulating taste to this degree was disturbing.

Based at The Art Exhibitions Bureau in Burlington House, London, Chisman and Marsh acted as Joint Organising Directors of the new organisation (Tate Archive 70-7/87, Marsh papers 28 11 1942, Entwisle 1999). The objects of the new society were:

> To arrange, from public or private sources, collections of representative works of fine art and craft work for loan to Empire Galleries and Art Societies.

> To assist the removal of the restrictions as to lending overseas, and to obtain reasonable powers to lend to the Colonies and dependencies of the Empire, works of art that could be transported to and fro without undue risk (Tate Archive 70-7/87).

Sargood lobbied for British Government support through a Bill drafted in 1931 to permit the loan overseas of works of art by the Trustees of the British Museum and National Gallery (Dunedin DPAG 35/2 (a)).

Mackenzie has noted that in the 1920s 'imperial propaganda societies' were disappearing or waning in influence, (1984:147-172), but the ready acceptance in London and 'support of leading politicians' for Sargood's ideas suggests this was not necessarily so (McAloon 2003). The roll call of vice-presidents and committee of the Empire Art Loan Collections Society, all largely High Commissioners and British Institutional Art Directors reflected the status given to it within Whitehall and the London Art establishment (Tate Archive 70-7/87). The vision of a single global organisation with representation from all Imperial interests was however only partially realised as, apart from New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa, others, notably Canada, did not subscribe (Tate Archive 70-7/87). This said, non-subscription appears to have been no impediment to participation, as: 'Between its foundation and 1940, nine exhibitions of paintings, miniatures, ceramics and prints were held under its auspices in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Jamaica and South Africa' (McAloon 2003).

Exhibits overseas in 1940 remained there until after the war. With its activities suspended during the war years, Marsh resigned his post in 1942 to reduce costs to the organisation of his 'fees and emoluments' (Marsh papers 28 11 1942). Marsh formed quite an attachment to Dunedin Art Gallery (Entwisle 1999), in 1944 donating two watercolour drawings by Henry Silkstone Hopwood (1860-1914) (Dunedin 10-1944) and Samuel John Lamorna Birch (1869-1955) (Dunedin 7-1944) then on loan to Dunedin (Otago 29 3 1945),

with other donations following his death (Otago 29 3 1945, Dunedin 8-1946).

UK records of the Art Exhibtions Bureau and the Empire Art Loan Collection Society have not so far been traced. However the considerable volume of papers of the Empire Art Loan Collection Society, deposited in New Zealand, which appear to be unresearched (Sykes 2007), suggest there is considerable scope for further consideration of the intentions and impact of the loan scheme. For example, evidence from Toronto (Pantazzi 1973: 2), Dunedin (DPAG 35) and London (Tate Archive 70-7/87) suggest organisers relied wholly on Chisman's administrative expertise and Marsh organising all loans. On Marsh's resignation in 1942 Chairman J. B. Manson thanked him 'for the excellent work you have done in the past in organising exhibitions' (Marsh papers 28 11 1942).

Able to select works from within the Contemporary Art Society collection, he no doubt exercised a similar degree of freedom in his choice of works from elsewhere. The interconnection between the interests and personnel of the Contemporary Art Society and the Empire Art Loan Collection Society was close: not only did Ernest and Sir Edward Marsh (they were un-related) serve on both committees, so did Lord Balniel, J. B. Manson and Campbell Dodgson. Edward Marsh represented both the Tate Gallery and the Contemporary Art Society (Tate Archive 70-7/87), his Contemporary Art Society appointment following Ernest Marsh announcement of 'a scheme for the loan of pictures to the Colonies' (Tate Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2, 23 9 1931). Subsequent Contemporary Art Society minutes suggest however that liaison between the Contemporary Art Society and the Empire scheme was entirely by Ernest Marsh (Tate Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2 19 10 1932). The Contemporary Art Society 1934-35 report noted participation in exhibitions in most of the capital cities of Australia, at Auckland and Toronto.

Of particular interest to Marsh was the consistent encouragement given by Canada throughout the 1920s and 1930s to the applied arts through the annual Canadian National Exhibition at Toronto, which as Pantazzi demonstrates (1973:1-2) was a model for others to

follow and where through the Contemporary Art Society Marsh later exhibited.

In February 1939 Marsh arranged a collection of 20th Century British Paintings and Drawings for exhibition in Australia and New Zealand (Tate Contemporary Art Society 8314 1.3.54 (C-H) 1938-39) and in 1944 reported that the National Gallery of New South Wales had 'laid out £1, 000 to the Contemporary Art Society to buy modern British paintings' on its behalf (Tate Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2.3, 9.1939-1.1946). Sargood's vision for the Empire Art Loan Collections Society flowered under Marsh's day-to-day stewardship, maintaining its Imperial concept of bringing its particular purview of art to the dominions and colonies. Outlasting all similar organisations, its activities seem to have escaped either contemporary or retrospective recognition.

Given that a significant percentage of the population of New Zealand attended the South Seas Exhibition, in particular countless school groups, the argument can reasonably be made that, in presenting a host of 'selected' works from the 'mother country', the exhibition and subsequent Empire Art Loan Collections Society loans similarly defined for New Zealanders and other nations a particular view on the pinnacle of contemporary artistic achievement. After all, as Constantine concluded, in relation to the EMB campaign, there was not,

> much in the personal experience of most people [in England] to enable them to judge independently the affairs of the wider world and the nature of Empire. Accordingly the imperial messages written on the mind [by the EMB poster campaign]... may indeed have been absorbed, if passively, because of the absence in this instance of contradictory data' (1986: 17).

Sargood clearly considered New Zealand an artistic intellectual desert, providing an opportunity to present a particular perspective on developments in artistic practice. In so doing, by its exclusions, it gave a distorted view of European and American contemporary art, particularly given that the quantity of British and Scottish works significantly outnumbered contributions from other countries. As a business man used to identifying markets, Sargood

similarly recognised the potential of the Empire Art Loan Collections Society to exploit the vacuum. If such a situation existed in New Zealand, the same situation probably pertained in other parts of the Empire.

No statements by Marsh on the ideological rationale being followed by the Empire Art Loan Collections Society are known. He could justifiably be accused of jumping to the organ-grinders tune, but was evidently a willing participant. This said, the collective responsibility was wider, given that their selection was endorsed, reflected by the representatives of British institutions and high commissioners on the executive committee. Pantazzi has argued of the Toronto Canadian National Exhibitions (run on broadly similar lines to the Empire Art Loan Collections Society and host to some of its loans), if attendance numbers are accepted as a measure of popularity, the scheme was successful 'and consequently ... the role they played in the diffusion of art was not negligible' (1973: 8). The collective adherance to Imperialist values is less evident within the Toronto scheme than with the Empire Art Loan Collections Society, but the popular reception of such exhibitions in the former colonies suggests they were largely in tune with audience expectations (Pantazzi 1973: 8). However, in contrast to the heady optimism following the 1911 Grafton exhibition, they did little to challenge them with new ideas from emerging artists, or influences from elsewhere. Essentially inward looking, the failure of the Empire Art Loan Collections Society to take the leap of faith to embrace a more encompassing vision of contemporary art in the 1930s, both in source and ideas missed a great opportunity, the scheme fading away after the Second World War. Its demise was however not wholly for this reason: as Pantazzi noted, the growing independence of established galleries making their own exhibition choices largely removed the need for touring exhibitions and loans formerly instigated from elsewhere (1973: 8).

Developing the British Market: the *National Society: Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, Potters*

Evidence suggests that Marsh constantly sought further opportunities to promote the interests of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers and Potters, whether in a private or public role. In 1928 he was elected from the waiting list to membership of the Print Collectors' Club, founded in 1921 with club membership limited to 300 (Royal Society Painters-Etchers and Engravers REP 1: 11. 1 1928, App. 21). Fred Richards was a founding committee member and designed its monogram. It is possible that Marsh joined at his suggestion, or, more likely saw an opportunity to promote its wider interests through the Contemporary Art Society.

Founded to foster interest in print-making and print-collecting, the club directly supported the work of The Royal Society of Painters-Etchers and Engravers. Membership combined altruism and personal gain. A selection committee chose annually three plates (or blocks if wood-engravings) by different artists, members being able to select one for themselves (Royal Society Painters-Etchers and Engravers REP 4 1928-1931). None of the choices available to Marsh appear to have entered his collection, suggesting donation elsewhere. He resigned 31 December 1931, probably to avoid any conflict of interest connected with his allegiance to a new body, the National Society: Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, Potters which, with Chisman, he was instrumental in creating and running.

This, rather than just fostering the interest of collectors, sought to directly promote the, to their view, so far unrecognised interests of painters, sculptors, engravers and potters. As Robert Medley recalled from personal experience, with the honourable exception of the Leicester Galleries, no established dealer was regularly showing the work of contemporary artists (1983: 91). And, as Goudge (1996:1) notes 'The Royal Academy and the various Royal Societies ... were considered dull, conventional and stuffy', epitomised by their requirement that works be shown in gold frames (1996: 1). The Grosvenor Gallery had moved away entirely from modern art, with the Grafton Galleries also showing less (Duveen 1930: 97).

An earlier body entitled the The Faculty of Arts had been founded in 1922 to advance contemporary art in all its forms, including music, dance, literature theatre and model theatres and the welfare of artists (Connelly 2006: 16). Later based at 190-195 Piccadilly, the galleries of the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour (RI), it arranged exhibitions and like the Empire Art Loan Collections Society sent exhibitions on tour abroad, but in their case specifically of Contemporary Art (Connelly 2006: 16). While the organisations affinity to Marsh's own ideas is self-evident there is no documentation of his having any connection with it. Activities appear to have ceased by 1930 (Faculty of Arts vol.6 1928).

Its failure left a vacuum soon filled when in 1930 a group of artists met at the studio of George Harcourt RA (1868-1947) to form a new body with the somewhat stilted title, the 'National Society: Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, Potters' (Goudge 1996: 1). This attracted some of the most exciting, successful and creative artists of that period, much of its initial success being due like the Faculty before it to, from 1931, exhibiting in the Royal Institute galleries (Goudge 1996:1).

Marsh appears to have also been actively involved in recruiting exhibitors for the first show (1930), held at the Grafton Galleries. Bernard Leach, Staite Murray, Charles Vyse and Miss Parnell, represented the potters (Ealing 55/1784). Its prompt beginnings caught some potential exhibitors unawares, Michael Cardew being unable to contribute and Playdell Bouverie and Norah Braden already committed to show at the Paterson Gallery. Sculptors Eric Gill, John Skeaping (1901-1980) and Henry Moore were also forced to withdraw (Ealing 55/1784).

Its origins were more complex than simply being a successor to the Faculty. A previous body with the august title, The International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, founded in 1897 by Whistler and others (ISSPG 2004) had flourished under Whistler and Rodin but post-war 'sank into oblivion' (Duveen 1930: 97). The National Society of Portrait Painters and the Allied Artists Association had similarly failed. To promote the work

of lesser known artists, in 1926 Duveen instituted a series of highly successful provincial and international selling exhibitions under the aegis of the British Artists Exhibition Organisation (Duveen 1930: 97-160).

The similar aspirations of the new National Society in 1930 suggests its founders intended to give new impetus to these past initiatives, but with one important difference, that of also promoting the work of potters. Writing on 20 April 1930, on the organisations headed notepaper to Sydney Greenslade (from the home of the potters Charles and Nell Vyse, in Deal, Kent where he was staying) Marsh gives the reason why the organisation was so titled:

> the point that interested me ... was that for the first time the [status of the] Potters have been recognised as one of equal consideration as the others & so [I] offered to help in any way I could & so am in with Chisman as joint Secretary: he is doing all the office work with his staff at [the Grafton Galleries 7] Garrick St. & I shall be at the Galleries only during the Show (Ealing 55/1784).

What is unclear, and now unlikely to be known because its records were lost in a fire in the 1970s, is whether this egalitarian initiative was by a group or at Marsh's suggestion (Goudge 1996: 3). Marsh did have powerful support. Staite Murray, the greatest exponent for many years thereafter of ceramics as the equal of fine art (Murray 1925a: 11, 1925b: 201) became a founding member of its executive. The 1932 exhibition reiterated its intention to exhibit 'all aspects [of artistic practice] under one roof, without prejudice or favour to anyone' (Goudge 1996: 1).

Marsh appears to have managed and invoiced all sales. There was a close inter-connection through these exhibitions between maker, show space, sales promoter, private and institutional buyers. On behalf of the University College of Wales Sydney Greenslade bought through Marsh several Pleydell Bouverie bowls and another by Leach (Greenslade, Aberystwyth 1931, 1933). Marsh wrote to potter Walter Vivian Cole advising of sales to Arthur Wesley Wheen (1897-1971), later Keeper of the Victoria and Albert Museum Library (NLA 1999) and his desire of a purchase for the Contemporary Art Society (Contemporary Art Society: TGA 9215, 26 2 1935).

Marsh ceased to hold office about 1936 (Goudge 1999). Goudge argues that though potters were numerically small, the inclusion of Leach meant their voice was significant for a time. However, it suffered an ignominious end when in 1947 'the Pottery Group had to be abandoned because the galleries were let out for evening functions, requiring exhibits to be taken down and replaced each morning - Drawing was inserted instead' (Goudge 1996: 3).

Vindication: The Pottery and Craft Fund

Ernest Marsh's greatest contribution to the aims of the Contemporary Art Society was the founding of a pottery and craft fund. It was not, however, to be established until 1928, late on in his life and only after the Contemporary Art Society had been functioning for eighteen years. He had actively promoted fine art, and continued to do so, but now had the opportunity to act independently in an organisation of his own making specifically aimed at the support of pottery and craft.

It is clear that from the inception of the Contemporary Art Society Marsh recognised the duality of his role as both patron and educator in the virtues of certain artistic practices and to promote these by various mechanisms to a wider audience, such as, already discussed, direct contact with the major acquiring institutions, such as the V & A and the British Museum, the distribution of Fine Art through the Contemporary Art Society to regional museums and art galleries, overseas exhibition such as through the New Zealand Exhibition and Empire Art Loans and commercial exhibition of the work of members of the National Society. What was still lacking was a body to represent Craft and particularly the potter. The first real stirring of practitioner, institutional and collector interest in the Capital came, as already related, with the holding of the ceramic exhibition of London potters at the South London Art Gallery in 1922. For all its magnificence and celebration of the achievement of London potters in recent times, it highlighted the gulf between the progressive ideas within craft practice in contrast to the weakness of much commercial practice, seen as self-regarding and indifferent to innovations in some European practice and in the USA.

For example, British commercial ceramics exhibited at the 1921 British Industrial Fair (Grundy 1921: 244-245) and the 1925 Paris International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts were acknowledged as technically brilliant, but Gordon Forsyth's (1879-1952) report on the 1925 show considered the pottery exhibited, with the exception of the Danish contribution, self-complacent and lacking innovation (1925: 126-138). Herbert Read's later influential (1934) *Art and Industry* endorsed much of what Forsyth had to say, while Dowling's survey noted (1935: 47) how ten years on little evident progress was being made. Forsyth considered the problem was partly to do with 'centuries of careful and scientific' mastery of materials and workmanship, but which had resulted in a boring sameness (1925: 129). He considered the British Section overall disappointing and 'a lost opportunity in terms of trade' (1925: 129). A designer in his own right (Forsyth 1934) and formerly Art Director at Minton, Hollins & Co.(1903-1906), and later at the Pilkington Tile and Pottery Co. (1906-1919), Forsyth was well placed to express an authoritative opinion on the state of early Twentieth century European ceramics and the importance of the exhibition:

> The Paris exhibition was of more than ordinary significance, for Art is not only a reflection of current thought, but vital Art is usually just ahead of its time and an indication of future developments. It is a kind of intellectual measure whereby we can assess the quality of any civilisation (1925: 12a).

He was aware of two areas which had the potential to innovate industrial practice and which industry had so far ignored. Firstly, he welcomed the Europe wide 'healthy return to a restrained simplicity characteristic of early work', an 'age of realism' he perceived as begun pre-war. To him, all extraneous ornament was anathema: 'unless the ornamentation is an expression of the joy of the craftsman in his work, it is wholly worthless as a work of art ... Pottery of the simplest shape can rank as a work of art' (1925: 126-128). The recapturing of this spirit he saw to be based on two factors, knowledge and economy: discoveries of Han Dynasty pots were 'a revelation' to contemporary potters, stimulating wider interest in ancient ceramic practice, but potters:

> must have the courage of their convictions and belief in the artistic possibilities of their material. Every factory should have a small, but definite, department entirely devoted to experimenting and developing the art side of its production (1925: 128).

Secondly, the initiative for creativity lay not with the major commercial manufacturers, but with the studio potter. Studio pottery was:

> in its infancy [but] great hopes are entertained for its future development [although] at the present moment it cannot be said that it has yet contributed much to the history of English Pottery. It is yet lacking in virility and it is inclined to be affected or to err on the "pretty-pretty" side. Notable exceptions to this criticism [were] the work of Miss Gwendoline Parnell and ... W. Staite Murray (Forsyth 1925: 134)

In Forsyth's view, the work of Staite Murray 'a worshipper at the shrine of the Old Chinese Potters', represented the summation of all the values, which, if adhered to, offered the greatest potential for success:

> [A] fine virility [in] simple shapes, at times reaching great virility of form. The stoneware bodies covered in a thick rich glaze, his decorations ... usually abstract, conventional, and always an integral part of the pot. He is a great artist potter. The high artistic qualities of his work have yet to be generally known, and recognised as a great asset to English Pottery (Forsyth 1925: 134).

Forsyth also particularly noted the 'good work' of Bernard Leach, Harry Parr, W. B. Dalton, Misses Sleigh and Simpson, Stella Crofts, Dora Lunn, Phoebe Stabler, Aline Ellis, and Reginald Wells, as well as exhibits from the Royal College of Art, the Woolwich Polytechnic and the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts. The first two of these institutions were praised for their potential in 'showing the possibilities of turning artistic talent into a very fascinating craft' (1925: 134).

Marsh must have been considerably encouraged by Forsyth's recognition of the role of the Studio potter as innovator and educator. Progress was however, slow, not least in the Contemporary Art Society itself. Supposedly a beacon of progressive thinking its lack of lead was hardly encouraging.

The catalyst for a change of attitude towards pottery within the Contemporary Art Society appears to have been the presentation to it in 1927 of a Staite Murray vase by Chairman Sir Edward Marsh (Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2.10, 23 9 1931). Fifteen years after his first attempt Marsh tried once again to encourage the other members of the executive to take an interest in fostering craft. This time his proposal for a Pottery and Crafts Section was successful (Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2.13, 1 3 1928). His tenacity in pursuit of this objective over so many years is admirable, a 'proselytizing zeal' (Johnston 1999: 77) akin to the similar depth of feeling so evident in the character and vision of Roger Fry, from whom I suggest Marsh drew much of his inspiration not to give in. However, his lack of success does question whether the base of support from which he was arguing his case was based on too few practitioners to sustain the argument: that the broader base resulting from the success of Staite Murray, Vyse and Leach, following the pioneer work, primarily of Wells provided the the necessary persuasion.

There was also, I suggest still a lack of acceptance that it was equally, or arguably more important to encourage emerging ideas rather than simply following accepted trends. In the catalogue of the second Post-Impressionist Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in 1912, published collectively with other writings in *Vision and Design* in 1920, Fry observed how, when the first had been held:

> Accusations of clumsiness and incapacity were freely made, even against so singularly accomplished an artist as Cezanne. Such darts, however, fall wide of the mark, since it is not the object of these artists to exhibit their skill or proclaim their knowledge, but only to attempt to express by pictorial and plastic form certain spiritual experiences; and in conveying these, ostentation of skill is likely to be even more fatal than downright incapacity (1920: 156).

Fry recognised that to reveal the struggle rather than an allegedly finished work demanded a new expectation from its audience. Like Fry, Marsh recognised that the journey, as in life, was more important than reaching the destination, a point which, mirage like,

offered moments of clarity but remained an illusion. It can only be speculation, but it is reasonable to assume that discussions on such issues must have taken place between them on a number of occasions.

The problem for Marsh as for Fry, was how to enlighten the general public, in what was necessarily a fairly sophisticated appreciation that the 'imperfect' work of art in progress by the relatively unknown should be as desirable for the home or the public collection and hopefully more so, than the 'recognised' perfection of an established name. The Read (1934) and Dowling (1935) surveys suggest that despite the widespread recognition of the need to innovate, little evident progress was being made (1935: 47). Where it did arise, as with the Doulton and Foley ceramic factories it came after 1930 through in-house commissions from established names in Fine Art (Horner 2006: 174-181), not existing Studio potters.

Early minutes of the Executive of the Contemporary Art Society cease after its meeting on 2 6 1927, later papers being lost in a flooding of the Tate basement. This is particularly unfortunate as at a subsequent meeting [noted in the published 1927 report] a discussion took place in which the committee 'decided [in addition to a separate foreign fund for the purchase of work by contemporary artists of foreign nationality] to organise a special fund to acquire for the Nation, Pottery and Craft work by modern craftsmen, both British and foreign'. As Spalding observed, 'If the committee was unadventurous [in other areas] it did not lack informed taste' (1991: 65). The report went on to say that:

> The Pottery and Craft work purchased by this fund of the Society, will remain for a limited period in the Society's possession, and will be available for exhibition in London, in the provinces and abroad. They will then be offered to the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, to Provincial, Colonial and to the public British Museums and Galleries for presentation to the various departments interested in these works.
>
> Experience has shown that the best results have been obtained where these funds have been administered by a single responsible buyer ... this fund shall be administered by Mr Ernest Marsh, ...who will make such purchases and accept such gifts of craft work as he thinks desirable, and will distribute them to the various Public Institutions interested ... . Private liberality, organised in support of this new fund, can, it is believed, aid very considerably to develop and extend many of the national collections

> of modern Pottery, Porcelain, Glass, Metal Work, Jewellery, Fine Printing, Book, Bindings, Furniture, Hand Woven Textiles and other Craft work, which, owing to the restricted amount available for purchases, it would otherwise be difficult, if not impossible, for the Museums to acquire (Tate Contemporary Art Society 1927.6).

On the evidence of his appointment to administer it, it is certain that Ernest Marsh was the moving spirit behind the idea, particularly in its intention to include colonial loans. Had the committee minutes survived, it would have been instructive to know if the original proposal to the executive was sponsored by him, who supported him, how well it was received and what, if any modifications were made to the eventual terms of reference.

His sole freedom to buy seems remarkable but the Contemporary Art Society decision was evidently founded on the view, gained over its preceding seventeen years of purchases of pictures, prints and sculpture, that 'Experience has shown that the best results have been administered by a single responsible buyer'(Tate: Contemporary Art Society 1927). Marsh retained the position for the following fifteen years. Ensuing minutes contain no suggestion or inference that acquisition policy should change or he should step down in favour of someone else. This suggests members and recipients must have been well satisfied with his services to the Fund, choosing items, as Bumpus has noted, that have stood the test of time (1986: 7).

At the March First 1928 executive meeting at the National Gallery Marsh reported donations of money and presentations coming largely from members of the committee, friends and collector acquaintances and the world of commerce (Tate: Contemporary Art Society TGA 9215.2.2). Founding subscribers included Contemporary Art Society executives the artist Muirhead Bone, Campbell Dodgson, the historian and educationist Sir Michael Sadler and the 9thEarl of Sandwich (App.30). Others attracted included members of the Debenham family, Hugh R. Dent of publishers Dent & Co., Frank Pick of Underground Group, founder member and later President (1932) of the Design and Industries Association, Miss Margaret Pilkington of Pilkington glass, and the collector George Eumorfopoulos (Marsh 1928c: 35-36).

With hindsight, Marsh did not choose a good time to start the fund. It was badly hit by

the Economic Recession in the late 1920s, as was the Contemporary Art Society as a whole. Fund-raising was affected but it is arguable that the need then to support the potters and other craft workers was never greater. The £100 15s. received in 1929, was to be its zenith, with £71 2s. and £79 7s. respectively in the two years following (App.30). Marsh wrote in January 1932: 'Notwithstanding the financial depression and the regrettable loss of several regular subscriptions due to this cause, I have every confidence that the support given to the fund will be maintained and added to in the coming year' (Marsh 1931b: 40). In fact, while subscriptions were largely maintained, donations for specific purchases never recovered their initial generosity (1929, £33 17s; 1939 £5 5s). Marsh's scope for acquisition was perforce circumscribed and increasingly restricted to finely printed books and pottery, later almost entirely to pottery. This said, generalisations, such as Borland's observation that 'with the Wall Street crash; overnight millionaires became paupers and the savings of the middle-class disappeared' (Borland 1995: 288), does not entirely read across in any interpretation of the Contemporary Art Society financial accounts, either for the Contemporary Art Society as a whole or the Craft Fund. Expansion may have been curtailed but the scheme did not close. Subscribers may have reprioritised their spending but most remained loyal and, as noted, maintained their subscriptions, if not their gifting.

Marsh did his best to talk up the potential for the fund, maximising its exposure by exhibition and mention of particularly choice purchases, especially items other than ceramics. His knowledge in making informed acquisitions in the field of contemporary ceramics was without peer (Apps. 31-35). Outside of this his judgment may have been open to question. Had he the opportunity to spend in other areas it is however evident that the same level of qualitative judgment would have pertained, such as his acquisition, for the considerable sum of £21 (Marsh 1942: 40) of 'the exceptionally fine example of the late J. Paul Cooper's Shagreen and silver work ... one of the principal exhibits at the [Dunthorne] memorial Exhibition of this artist's work in 1934' (Marsh 1935b: 40), presented to the Fitwilliam Museum, Cambridge in 1944 (Tate: Contemporary Art Society TGA 9215. 4.6.2). This followed an earlier purchase of a Cooper shagreen and silver cigarette case, one of two

exhibited at the Burlington House Arts and Crafts Exhibition in 1931 for six guineas, the other purchased by Queen Mary (Kuzmanovic 1999: 39). A silver cup and salt cellars were acquired from Edward Spencer for £11 and donated to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Marsh 1942).

The fact that they remained the only such purchases was disappointing but did not diminish Marsh's enthusiasm to develop the scheme, however depleted the funds. Kuzmanovic (1999: 38-39) affirms Marsh's judgment in choosing these works by Spencer and Cooper, but, as was acknowledged at the time, their acquisition in the 1930s said most about established artistic values and lack of emerging ideas.

These purchases were exhibited alongside pottery and books at the Society's Silver Jubilee Exhibition at the Tate Gallery, in July and August, 1935. Other purchases from Dunthorne included 'beautiful specimens of Powell's Whitefriars Glass for £3.3.6 (Marsh 1933b: 39), (also bought for himself) and from the Fine Art Society, Steuben glass, £2.2.0. and Battersea coloured glass £3.7.6 (Marsh 1935b: 40).

Others included a Ronald Grierson rug and its original drawing from Bloomsbury Gallery, £4.3.6, given to Halifax Museum in 1943 (Marsh 1935b: 40). Later, hand-printed textiles by the Misses Barron and Larcher from the Little Gallery £8.17.3 (Marsh 1937c: 41) were presented to, respectively, Aberdeen & Halifax museums in 1941 (Marsh 1942: 41). Small in number, these textile purchases were a significant recognition of these important practitioners, followed later by gifts by others to the Holbourne Museum at Bath (Roscoe 1993: 122-139). The lack of textile purchases also reflects that while Barron and Larcher were exemplars in innovatory design, the general standard was poor (Grundy 1928: 262). Based at Painswick, Gloucestershire, Phyllis Barron (1890-1964) and Dorothy Larcher (d.1952) were notable exhibitors at the 1927 Leipzig Applied Arts Exhibition where their 'refreshing hand-printed materials' exemplified their efforts to 'continue to keep their standards of work on a high and satisfying level' (Wrench 1927: 16). If the scope of the Contemporary Art Society

scheme was restricted by lack of funds, quality was not.

In the choice of purchases for himself and for the Contemporary Art Society Marsh clearly felt an affinity with what Callen has termed 'utility' as 'a logical product of the Arts and Crafts ethic': a 'reaction against non-functional applied ornament' (1979: 114-5). With few exceptions, Marsh's choices for the Contemporary Art Society evinced a symbolic and important link reaching back to May Morris's ideal that 'executive skill and the desire and feeling for beauty, could be realised in a work of definite utility' (Morris 1893 pref.). Functionality had to be its primary attribute, any design element in its form or decoration subordinate. It was a belief widely shared, not only at the commencement of the Twentieth Century but also in the practice of ceramicists, under the influence of Leach, until the 1950s. To have evident utility was the highest accolade. An anonymous reviewer of the silversmith Edward Spencer in 1909 remarked how 'His designs are always well considered in relation to the material to be employed and the utility of the article, and they invariably bear the stamp of originality, without any suggestion of eccentricity' or ornament for which there was no physical function (*The Studio* 1909: 158-159).

Apart from ceramics, the other primary area of significance was the acquisition of modern fine printing and bindings. As mentioned in the introduction, these are worthy of a separate study in themselves. By any yardstick, the evidence of his choice of purchases suggests he was exceedingly well informed on contemporary trends in private press printing in the 1920s (Tate: Contemporary Art Society TGA 9215, App. 6, 19, 20, 21, 22, 31).

Ceramics

From its inception it is self evident that the primary interest of its administrator, subscribing members and donors was in promoting the acquisition of newly made representative contemporary pieces, primarily from the smaller studio potters, but also from individual practitioners working within major commercial potteries. The subscriptions, gifts of ceramics and generous and specific donations - principally from industrialist and art collector

Samuel Courtauld (1876-1947) [Contemporary Art Society executive] 'to purchase a very fine stoneware vase by Edouard Decoeur'[through Heal & Sons] and later funds for specific purchases from others, set the trend (Apps. 31-33). This enabled forty pieces to be quickly acquired, including pieces by Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai, Katharine Pleydell Bouverie, Norah Braden, Michael Cardew and Louise Powell, all exhibited at Hanley Museum in 1929 (Tate: Contemporary Art Society TGA 9215.2.2 11a, 16 12 29).

An extremely important aspect of Marsh's purchases is that he did not commission, but in common with Contemporary Art Society practice, bought art already made. The purchase itself recognised the merits of particular works. As noted elsewhere, his friend Greenslade sought to encourage the Martin Brothers to create new designs but there is no evidence that Marsh in either public or private patronage ever sought to initiate by commission. His consistency in this approach throughout his life, certainly within the sphere of ceramics and Arts and Crafts purchases strongly suggests that even when in early years he would have been financially well able to do so, he considered idealogically that influence on the creative process was unethical. It is also possible that while he acknowledged Greenslade's efforts he recognised that, if the Martins were the test case, that initiatives had to come from the potters themselves, any direct attempt, despite often feigned interest, was largely frustrated by resistance from the potters.

It could however be argued that his patronage by choice of particular potters and of certain of their works after the creative process in either his private or public capacity gave a steer on whose ideas were favoured and what or was not acceptable. This might influence the potter and perhaps their contemporaries to follow that course, particularly when the level of purchases from some potters for himself and for the CAS was considerable.

The only qualification to his non-interference in the creative process is that for a small number of his private purchases from the Martin Brothers. These were refired at a higher temperature to attempt to obtain an aesthetically more pleasing glaze. In a similar way, he

asked Hopkins to saltglaze some figurines already acquired. No such action was attempted with Contemporary Art Society acquisitions. Late in life he also obtained from Robert Wallace Martin a portrait medallion of himself. It is unclear on whose initiative this was done but it followed one of Greenslade. Marsh commissioned a drawing in 1920 of Robert Wallace by Marsh's 'cousin' Jane De Glehn, now in the National Portrait Gallery but is not known to have commissioned any other works (Haslam 1978: 162)

Individually sponsored gifts by others frequently came from the same exhibitions as Marsh's purchases on behalf of the Contemporary Art Society. This suggests that his advice as administrator was sought before choices were made (Marsh 1930b: 32). As administrator, the final choice was always his. Marsh's years of personal acquaintance with the potters meant that he bought widely with an informed judgment. His 1928 report noted:

> Other [1927/28] purchases comprise a terra-cotta "Goose" by Barbara Skeaping [Beaux Art Gallery], a salt-glaze stoneware bowl by Mark V. Marshall, [formerly working with the Martin Brothers] of Doultons, and specimens of pottery by Frances Richards [Shields Gallery], Doulton, the New Chelsea Pottery Co., and three pieces by Bernard Leach, Beatrice Uusman and Amy Leeming; these last three were bought at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition recently held at the Royal Academy, Burlington House. ...A very fine salt-glaze stoneware vase by the Martin Brothers was presented in the names of Mr & Mrs A.H.Leon of Hindhead, Haslemere [neighbours of Marsh] to be given ... to either the V & A or British Museum (Marsh 1928c: 33-34).

Leading by example, Marsh donated 'Two other specimens of Martin ware ... five vases and bowls by Charles Vyse, a pottery figure by Agatha Walker, of "Polly Peachum" from the Beggar's Opera series [and] a stoneware vase by Reginald Wells' (Marsh 1928c: 33-34). The potter William Howson Taylor (1876-1935) presented a group of his own Ruskin Pottery and the Redfern Gallery a Stella Croft animal pottery group (Marsh 1928c: 33-34).

Some of these were exhibited specifically as a Contemporary Art Society collection at the Royal Academy. An eclectic mix of contemporary potting, Marsh reported that:

> During the past year [1929] exceptional opportunities were afforded of seeing very representative exhibitions by two of the most noted of Japanese living potters: Shoji

> Hamada and Kanjiro Kawai: and from the exhibition at Patterson's Galleries by S. Hamada, the most inspired of these artist potters and the one whose art has influenced very materially the work of the best English Studio potters of to-day, a very fine brown decorated vase was acquired by the generosity of D. Moir Carnegie, Esq., of Blackheath Park, and a covered jar and bowl were purchased. At the show of K.Kawai's at the Beaux Arts gallery the most important piece exhibited was purchased by means of generous contributions from S. Courtauld Esq., and S.K. Greenslade, Esq., ... and three exceptional plates and bowls by him were also bought as they are of particular interest because they show very clearly in their slip-ware decoration the influence of early Western and especially English inspiration on modern Eastern art - a reversal of the usual experience - and traceable as the direct result of Mr. Hamada's first visit to England about six years ago, when he worked with Mr. Bernard Leach at St. Ives, Cornwall (Marsh 1930b: 32).

Marsh's emphasis on the range of donors suggests he was anxious to impress on Contemporary Art Society members the diversity of the interest in ceramics, but by so doing highlights the essentially middle class nature of its interest group. The statement also emphasises the cross-fertilisation of ideas arising through contact between east and west, whereas in earlier years this was one-way, through the adoption of historic eastern ideas into western practice.

The spontaneity of Marsh's private letters is in sharp contrast to the formal comments in his Contemporary Art Society annual reports. In these, his attempt to find a vocabulary, to be dispassionate and to resist making value judgments is somewhat laboured. He struggled to find suitable words conveying aesthetic delight in a public code of words that his informed audience would understand; so that words like 'good', 'important and 'interesting' conveyed deeper meanings than they perhaps do today, while 'exceptional' was a superlative reserved for the truly outstanding. The potter and critic Edmund de Waal has remarked how, in contrast with our ease in finding a vocabulary to discuss Fine Art, we continue to suffer from 'an impoverished language in trying to talk about craft', suggesting that the problem is not resolved (2002). The names of the potters themselves would of course have been a signifier sufficient to the informed reader and, it could be, that he preferred to let that knowledge speak for itself. So, for example, he acquired:

> Five good specimens of the stoneware pottery work of Miss Pleydell-Bouverie and Miss Norah Braden [The Little Gallery, Sloane St.], a gallena glazed jug by Michael

> Cardew [Artificers Guild], and a very interesting decorated stoneware bowl, "Fawns", by W. Staite Murray [W.S. Patterson] were obtained by purchase, also a large lustre plate by Louise Powell [Brook Street Art Galleries], a saltglaze stoneware mask of John Drinkwater by Mrs S. Kingham, and a stoneware pottery dish by the Danish artist, Svend Hammershoj, which was exhibited at his exhibition at the Royal Institute of British Architects. C. H. St. John Hornby of Shelley House donated an important pair of tall vases decorated by Louise Powell ... (Marsh 1930b: 33).

It is difficult not to read into Marsh's words the barely concealed excitement he must have felt in getting the scheme off the ground, when so much innovative, and, to use his occasionally used adjective, 'exceptional' work, was available to the market. From the outset of the Contemporary Art Society Craft fund, Marsh acquired many specimens through London dealers representing the potters. He was also not slow in asserting the institutional prestige of the Contemporary Art Society as a priority customer by selecting the most choice examples, as in 'A good dark bowl [at R. Dunthorne and Sons] made by Hamada [with Leach in the early twenties], bought by the Fund prior to the exhibition' (Marsh 1930b: 33). Himself a generous donor, Marsh presented a black oil-spot vase by Bernard Leach and three specimens of the Vyse's stoneware pottery (Marsh 1930b: 33). Over the following fifteen years he was able, on behalf of the Contemporary Art Society, to encourage and patronise potters, distributing examples of his choice of the very best of their work to museums and galleries throughout the country (Tate: Contemporary Art Society TGA 9215.4.6.1) Apps. 31-35).

There is little evidence in any surviving correspondence that Marsh ever took advice on his choices, but equally, no record of any dissent. Its popularity suggests that it was well received. Criticism was most likely from D.S. MacColl, but this did not materialise. Still a member but by 1928 no longer on the Contemporary Art Society executive, MacColl had, as previously mentioned, much earlier expressed an interest in Marsh's collection of Martin ceramics, but did not subscribe to the Pottery Fund. Given his criticism of virtually everything else the Contemporary Art Society did, as its minutes attest, Marsh must have been most grateful.

As with the procedure for pictures, acquisitions were toured before eventual distribution to galleries and museums, the first showing being at Hanley in 1929. Reception around the country was encouraging and reassuring. Moved the following year to Leicester it then went to Plymouth and Bristol, with a part display from Bristol transferring to Truro. Two cases were displayed at Birmingham in 1933, moving to Nottingham the following year. A Scottish tour began at the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh before moving on to Perth, Aberdeen and south to Newcastle-on-Tyne and Hanley. Additional displays were sent to the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, subsequently seen at Oldham, Darlington and Lincoln (Marsh 1937c: 40). The Walker showing is particularly significant, it forming a close relationship with Marsh and subsequently acquiring many examples through the Fund and from him by gift and bequest (Apps, 5.33).

The opportunity to expose contemporary ideas about ceramics through these touring exhibitions was clearly enthusiastically welcomed by galleries, resulting in the 'English portion' of [the Nottingham exhibition] supplementing a selling exhibition of British graphic and applied art at the Toronto 1935 Canadian National Exhibition of the Arts (Toronto 1935: 88-111). Finally, with all loan requests exhausted, most were issued to the V & A and provincial museums (Marsh 1935b: 41-42, App. 19-23). A representative spread of many 1920s potters, they included many still revered names such as Kawai, Leach, Pleydell-Bouverie, Braden, Staite Murray and Vyse. Others were less known such as Allinson, Uusman and Irene Browne. Following the ethos of the Contemporary Art Society the aim was to constantly seek out the new idea irrespective of its source. All specimens had something new to say in terms of form, decoration or glaze, irrespective of the maker.

Despite funding limitations, Marsh ensured the range of British potters patronised by the Contemporary Art Society increasingly broadened to reflect the burgeoning number of

practising studio potters, also taking steps to obtain examples of continental practice. If in its early years most members of the Contemporary Art Society executive had reservations about continental influences, it was not an opinion shared by Marsh, as already discussed, and particularly with regard to ceramics. He acquired a large selection of contemporary French ceramics for himself (Sotheby 1957) and at the 1938 Brygos Gallery exhibition obtained for the Contemporary Art Society important examples by Emile Decoeur, Emile and Jacques Lenoble, H. Simmen, Henri Chaumeil, Paul Beyer and Rene Buthaud (Marsh 1939: 43) (Apps. 31, 32, 330

The question must always have been how contemporary were Marsh's acquisitions and how far did he push exploration of emerging talent? For example, MacColl recalled his observation to Newton in 1935 of 'the battle of the eternal Conservative against the eternal Radical - a battle that never ceases, because though the Radical always wins, he always finds that he has at the moment of victory, turned Conservative, and a new radical has come into being to renew hostilities' (Borland 1995: 310, Newton 1935). The popularity and eclipse of Reginald Wells, as previously discussed, is perhaps a case in point. The Marsh purchases demonstrate that he constantly patronised promising new practitioners, such as Funeki (Japan), Syra Lungran (Finland), an unnamed Czech student (Marsh 1937c: 40), and from the artist K. Hairi Badran (Syria), a student at the L.C.C. Central Schools, an example of his own work, probably at Marsh's invitation (Marsh 1939: 43, 1944a: 34). Also received, by gift, were examples of stoneware by Erling B. Olsen (Norway), purchased from the Brygos Gallery and presented by manufacturer W.T.Copeland & Sons Ltd. (Marsh 1937c: 40).

Marsh's choices also suggest that, aware of past and continuing strifes between factions within the Contemporary Art Society and the seeming chasm of differences between Fry and MacColl, he adroitly avoided favouring one faction or style above another. There is also no sense that Marsh's decisions on choice in any way ossified with his advancing years. In fact, quite the opposite: within the Contemporary Art Society ceramic collection he

assimilated the positive elements of both representation and abstraction and, by their broad range, kept the debate open.

Through the Contemporary Art Society Marsh was able to extend support beyond the fair weather friendship and sometimes capricious interest of private patronage. The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 and the subsequent restrictions on material led Marsh to observe:

> I have tried to help some of our hard hit craft workers as far as my funds permitted. Most of the materials used by them do not have to be brought from overseas. Many are engaged either on full or part time war work in various directions, and some have suffered damage by air-raids. I hope the assistance I have been able to render from my funds, generously contributed by a few of those interested in keeping our native craft work alive, will I hope have been appreciated by the donors, and have been of some encouragement to the craft workers to persevere either fully or in spare time. I trust that I may receive sufficient financial aid to continue, and if possible extend, this help to enable them to carry on during the present anxious times, and so be in a position to develop the sphere of work in the peacetime reconstruction ahead (Marsh 1942: 41).
>
> The craft people have had a very trying time during the war restrictions and the Central Institute of Art and Design have made considerable efforts to get some modifications in those imposed by the Board of Trade (Marsh 1944a: 34).

With so many potters on national service or diverted into war work the restricted range of available ceramics led Marsh to cast his net wider (Marsh 1944b: 37). This might suggest a drop in standards but not so. Following air-raid damage to his Chelsea studio Vyse moved to Farnham, Surrey and taught throwing and modelling at the School of Art (Watson 1993: 255). It appears that Marsh consulted him on possible purchases of pots by former students at Farnham, resulting in acquisition in 1942-43 of pieces by Pamela Ascherson, Barbara Waller, Charles Bone and James Moorey (Marsh 1944b: 37). All had shown great promise, with Ascherson, Waller and Bone obtaining scholarships to study at the Royal College of Art, Ascherson winning the RCA Gold Medal in 1942 (Marsh 1944b: 37). Post war Waller joined Vyse in producing stoneware with Chinese glazes and animal figures (Watson 1993: 255).

From his experience of the First World War Marsh realised that despite the best efforts of himself and others there were likely to be long term implications to the creative output of

potters arising from this second conflict. As always seeking the practical solution, in the 1942-43 CAS report he commented:

> There is a great danger that after the war there will be few crafts people left in existence when their activities will be more than ever required in the period of reconstruction, unless some relief is afforded to enable them to carry on now and to train others in preparation for the work ahead (Marsh 1944b: 34).

As previously noted, Marsh took on the *Apollo* commission in 1924 to write about Wells (Marsh 1925). As discussed, the original concept for this had been an overview of modern potting. It might have been expected that other articles for *Apollo* would ensue but this did not happen. The attraction for the *Apollo* appears to have been Wells' previous practice as a sculptor, rather than specific interest in him as a potter.

In the early years of the Second World War Marsh offered or was commissioned by *Apollo* to produce further articles, the subjects of which may have been determined by the magazine. However, the warmth with which they were written and the potters chosen, suggest they were largely the personal preference of Marsh. Published between 1943 and 1946 - the final article after Marsh's death, in order of publication they were: Leach, Cardew, Vyse, Playdell-Bouverie and Braden, all 1943; Staite Murray and The Martin Brothers, both 1944, and Lily Markus (1946). The sequence of the articles is interesting in itself, suggestive as it is of an order of artistic rather than historical precedence. Their frequency suggests they were written over a lengthy period prior to publication. The contribution on Marcus, a refugee from the European conflict, is a surprise and perhaps a fitting epitaph to Marsh's and the Contemporary Art Society's enthusiasm for encouraging the little-known, highlighting as it does a relatively new practitioner about whom virtually nothing is now known (Kozma 1939, Forsyth 1946: 10). In the same way that his first article on the new talent of Wells was the first published work upon him, that on Marcus was to be the first illustrated article in English about her. Its writing suggested a promising potential for a new series on emerging talent, unfortunately curtailed by Marsh's death.

Aftermath

Between 1928 and 1945 Marsh raised by subscription £1,109, the purchasing power equivalent in 2003 being £34, 000. A significant portion of this sum (34%) was contributed by just two donors: out of a subscription list of 30 (1930), later dropping to 10 (1945), Samuel Courtauld gave £255 and Sir Robert Mond £126 (App. 18) Donations other than subscriptions totalled £147. In addition to these sums, many items were wholly or partly funded by donors. Three hundred and twenty two known items, primarily pottery, were distributed to 21 English and Scottish museums and galleries (App. 31-35). In 1946 the Contemporary Art Society displayed a selection from its acquisitions of paintings, sculpture, drawings, etchings, and pottery at the Tate Gallery, illustrating the 'help those particular types of work' gained from its members, enabling them 'to be well represented in the public collections' (Tate 1946: 2).

The death of Ernest Marsh was announced at the Contemporary Art Society executive meeting 7 February 1945, when he was described as 'always devoted to the Society's interests; he was the founder and administrator of the Pottery & Craft Fund and his services in this capacity had been greatly valued' (Tate: Contemporary Art Society 9215.2.2.3, 9.39-1.46). It is noteworthy that the fund began on his initiative and ended soon after his death. The 1946 report had spoken optimistically of hope,

> to buy more in the future, but recently the majority of potters have only pre-war work to show, and the purchase of textiles has been handicapped by the necessity of supplying coupons (Contemporary Art Society 1946: 26).

There was plenty of support from members, about 30 galleries and individuals continuing to subscribe. But two years later the fund was wound up 'owing to a sad dearth of production of worthy objects. It can always be recreated if the position should change' (Contemporary Art Society 1948: 13).

The reasons for closure were deeper than these comments imply and revolve around five principle factors: difficulty in obtaining raw materials and the consequent inability of practitioners to produce items for sale; until the 1950s restrictions on what manufactured

goods could be bought due to the limitation of the coupon scheme; failure to effect an earlier change of management of the scheme and finally a lack of vision in not seeing that pro-active measures on behalf of practitioners in the period of post-war reconstruction, when England was desperate to earn foreign currency to pay off lend-lease debt, could have been an effective vehicle for encouraging new ideas.

Initially the new pair of hands looked auspicious, Lady Cecilia Sempill (1903-1984) being appointed in 1945 to succeed Marsh. Her co-founding of the shop Dunbar Hay in the 1930s and its fostering of both ceramic and textile design suggested it was an apt appointment. It is therefore surprising that Sempill did not pursue a more aggressive policy on behalf of craftmakers (Powers 2003: 60). Josiah Wedgwood was keen for her to reopen the shop after the war. She herself ascribed her not doing so as down to her committee work moving into a higher strategic level, such as those involving post-war exhibitions from *Britain Can Make It* to the *Festival of Britain* (Powers 2003: 60). These avenues might have provided the vehicle for her to effect policies to encourage resources for arts practitioners. After all, it was not that she was unaware of the possible means to effect change within the rules on supply after the war. For example, appointed a consultant to Liberty's, she wished to open an account with the china manufacturer Copeland, but Liberty's could not do so as they had no pre-war trading rights. As a pre-war trader she held allocated rights of purchase for Dunbar Hay, the 'good will' for which enabled her to circumvent the rule and pass on the entitlement to Liberty's (Powers 2003: 60). Similar rights probably existed for potters and other craft-workers ceasing to trade but whose good will could in the right hands have been similarly organised.

Prior to closure Lady Sempill acquired a small selection of wares by Bernard Leach, of which Marsh would have approved, but also some he would not: a piece of machine embroidery, by Grace Peats (Contemporary Art Society. 1946. 5) and six small covered pots decorated by Duncan Grant (1885-1978) and Vanessa Bell (1879-1961). While Marsh supported the acquisition of pictures by Grant and Bell, like his friend Greenslade he seemingly did not look favourably on their ceramics and, while readily available, acquired

none.

As Bumpus has unequivocally asserted, 'Just at a time when the crafts needed special encouragement, the Fund was - inexcusably it seems now - wound up' (1986: 7). As noted above, Marsh had raised his concerns that the scheme should be planning for the post-war years, but it was not to be (Marsh 1942: 44, 1944: 34). It is almost as though Contemporary Art Society activities in the area of contemporary ceramics had run their course and with Marsh's death, was conveniently buried with him. The Contemporary Art Society exhibition *The First Fifty Years 1910-1960*, failed to show or mention any Craft and Pottery Fund acquisitions. John Rothenstein's observation, that Contemporary Art Society 'gifts stand out rather less dazzlingly today is in large measure due to the beneficent influence that the Society has exercised upon prevailing taste' (Rothenstein 1960: 1), suggests that a veil of silence was being drawn over the perceived partiality of Marsh and others, rather than offer them for debate. Listed as part of the founding executive, Marsh like Charles Aitken, director of the Whitechapel Art Gallery gained no special mention, undoubtably sidelined amongst those whom Raymond Mortimer, then a Contemporary Art Society executive, considered 'some of the less glittering members of the C.A.S. Committee' (Mortimer 1960: 2). Ten years later Bumpus implies that the post-war Contemporary Art Society, and Mortimer and Sutherland must have had something of a blind-spot, as 'many galleries must be cherishing the inspired buys of this new Fund' (1986: 7).

It was not until 1983, following the appointment of textile designer Ann Sutton, that the Contemporary Art Society executive with start-up funding from the Crafts Council launched a new scheme, covering (excluding books and bindings) the same areas as that of 1927. This initiative was preceded by Wigglesworth's important survey of contemporary craft collections in England published by *Crafts* magazine (1980: 17-29). This revealed that some museums, notably Leeds, had from the 1970s begun to acquire contemporary craft items. Their experience (reiterating that of Marsh in former years) stressed the need for curatorial independence on acquisitions, rather than decision by committee. Peter Walton of Leeds

acknowledged the risk of 'mistakes' but felt these to be minimal, that through 'studying the field closely ... you're bound to know what is good or bad', by, for example, getting to know the maker (Wigglesworth 1980: 19). It is notable that while Wigglesworth poses the question "how do you define 'craft'" (1980: 17) neither she, or later for the Contemporary Art Society, Sutton (1983) or Bumpus (1986) felt obliged to justify the status now given to Craft: that there was no longer a need to raise the issue of its status in relation to Fine Art, that Craft had gained a position of authority that required no need to justify itself. As Sutton remarked, 'the quality of craft today has encouraged the [Contemporary Art] Society to re-establish the Craft Fund' and this was sufficient argument in itself (1983).

The response from museums to the new Contemporary Art Society scheme, 'was warm and enthusiastic' (Sutton 1983). Bumpus was able to report on the Contemporary Art Society 75th birthday on its success with purchases and acceptance of gifts of contemporary ceramics and textiles, and distributions of turned dishes and glass (1986: 7). If the Contemporary Art Society was beginning to reappraise, the response from elsewhere has been less than enthusiastic. As late as 1997 the Barbican exhibition *Modern Art in Britain 1910-1914* distorted preconceptions of what modern European art in that period was really interested in by unforgivably failing to show or give any mention of the extensive displays of British and Continental ceramics in exhibitions in Britain prior to 1914, particularly the Grafton exhibition, *Manet and the Post-Impressionists* (Robins 1997). It was an opportunity lost. The 1998 Royal Academy show 'Picasso: Painter and Sculptor in Clay' by title associated Fine and Applied Art but again missed an opportunity by almost exclusively focussing on the painted surface of the pot as a separate medium to all others. Park's more recent assertion that works in clay 'are a true art form equal in imagination, originality and execution to ... paintings, drawings and sculptures' suggests that, a century on, the argument for the equality in staus of ceramics to other art forms is still alive (2002: 12).

Marsh's all encompassing powers of purchase beyond pictures and sculpture must have been seen as by others as both enviable and potentially inhibiting. Enviable in that he had

opportunity to choose what he wanted but also inhibiting in that he was putting all his ideas on craft as art under public scrutiny. It is perhaps surprising therefore that there is not a single mention of dissent or censure on his choices in records of meetings, correspondence or contemporary comment. This contrasts with opinions on Fine Art acquisition for the CAS in general in which some provincial galleries by the mid-1930s expressed the view that 'purchases remained worthy, but unrepresentative of the avant-garde', to the extent that the selection process lacked rigour and should reflect a broader opinion (Spalding 1991: 66-67). That suggestion was declined. This suggests that Marsh's judgment in respect of ceramics remained well regarded and his choice pleasing to the eventual recipients.

7. Conclusion

The main thrust of this thesis is that it throws new light on the collecting of applied art in the early 20th Century, the collections put together by an undocumented collector and the degree to which philanthropy can become part of the rationale driving the urge to collect. It has focused on certain aspects within public and private taste of the period in order to understand the interconnections, or networks, of the public and private sphere through the particular focus on ceramics. It particularly notes that, while largely a resident of the suburbs and later a weekly commuter into the city, Marsh was very much a metropolitan in outlook, lifestyle and interests. My research has revealed the considerable extent of Marsh's collecting interests which included paintings, watercolours, prints, New Sculpture, books, Georgian silver and glass. Chinese art and photography. The information now made available through this research offers further opportunities for research into patterns of taste in the early 20th Century by comparison with other contemporary collectors, many of whom are mentioned in this research. The appendices document much of the primary evidence that has emerged on the considerable breadth of Marsh's collections.

Research into the Marsh archive and habits demonstrate how aspects of individuals' life histories can contribute to an understanding of their professional lives as collectors and connoisseurs; in this particular instance the evidence of the upbringing of Marsh and others within the Quaker community. Alternative formative influences on the lives of other collectors may offer different interpretations. Particularly striking has been the evidence of an inward driving force within the life of Marsh that was not just his tenacity in striving to achieve particular objectives and to sustain them. It was a pattern of life that, as has been discussed, in its sense of being driven by forces inculcated by upbringing and peer example, mirrored his contemporaries Roger Fry and Lewis Day, likewise also from Quaker families. Within the Quaker ethos it was recognised that life's journey could be difficult but problems were to be

surmounted and ultimately the objective achieved. It could be argued that such an approach to life was no greater or less than that expected of all those of means of his generation, but I have argued that it is more than this, that as Quaker Doctrine and Practice required and as the body of 19th. Century Quaker archives and the Marsh's family receipt of help also demonstrates, it stemmed from inherited Quaker expectations of social responsibility, not only to do good works, learn from experience and to make amends, but also to be patient and never be discouraged by setbacks.

Perhaps the most meaningful evidence of the influence of a Quaker upbringing in his life as a collector and connoisseur is his campaign long after the deaths of the Martin Brothers to seek state financial support for their surviving relatives. This is not to argue that such behaviour was exclusive to Quakers – the example of the help given to Gertler by a non-Quaker has already been cited. It does however demonstrate that, as Quaker Doctrine required in its obligation on its adherents to help others in the wider community, Marsh considered his responsibilities as a collector and friend of the maker as greater than simply the act of purchase, that true patronage fostered more than just the art. Evidence suggests that Greenslade supported Marsh's decision to lobby for a pension but it was Marsh alone who negotiated with Downing Street, obtained and administered the pension.

So far there has been little other photographic and documentary evidence of purchases of Arts and Crafts artefacts for the home *in situ* and the evidence of the Marsh homes has revealed much about Arts and Crafts ideology, taste and patronage in a middle-class home. As discussed, *The Studio* propounded the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement and was an excellent shop-window on what was being offered for sale, particularly in the extensive reporting of what was exhibited annually by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. However, it gave little indication of the impact of Arts and Crafts on the buying public; on what was

chosen, by whom and how it was assimilated into the home. The fact that Arts and Crafts ideology and its artefacts predominate within its pages from its inception until the First World War suggests that subscribers liked what they saw but this did not necessarily indicate what they chose to buy. The Marsh documentary and photographic evidence and records traced of sales by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society affirms the middle-class status of the purchasers of Arts and Crafts artefacts. These testify to their high prices, their consequent exclusivity on grounds of high cost and the fragility of such a market due to the transience of progressive taste, as the span of the Marsh Arts and Crafts purchases appears to demonstrate. In his ceramic purchases Marsh followed the developing trends within the work of each practitioner over many years. In contrast, it is notable that after 1905/6 his Arts and Crafts purchases cease. It can only be surmise but the lack of new acquisitions suggests that he did not discern any progression of ideas in design within the Arts and Crafts movement and felt no compulsion on artistic grounds to make further purchases.

The evidence also demonstrates that, contrary to current wisdom on social norms of this period, as Pearce and others have argued, when men chose to do so they had considerable say in the furnishing of the home; that the private sphere, as here, was as much the man's domain as his wife's, if not more so, at least in the public rooms. In this study it has been disappointing that through slight documentary evidence (as in daughter Phyllis's testimony of her mother's interest, in the fashion of the time, in decorating white china blanks) we only have circumstantial knowledge of how much say Mrs Marsh had in decisions on the decorating schemes for the Marsh home. As has been seen, all purchases traced were made by Mr. Marsh, even though as has been noted Mrs. Marsh had means of her own. Comparative evidence of the relative roles within other couples in this period may emerge in due course through their purchases, for example through identification and analysis of other persons named in the lists of buyers from the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society.

The Marsh interior photographs of *Coombe Bury* and *Hatch Hill* attest to the complex matrix of ideas within Arts and Crafts, particularly the ideological clash between the hand and machine made, for example in the commercial production of wallpapers, carpet and furniture but to designs by acclaimed Arts and Crafts designers. Marsh's purchases suggest he understood the distinction between the ideological rationale of the Arts and Crafts movement and adopted the ideas in principle, that is in design, truth to materials and quality of making, but pragmatism in relation to process, as the Voysey designed but factory woven carpet clearly demonstrates.

The same principles are evident in the interior decorating schemes. Rather than following the ideas illustrated in *The Studio* the Marshes adapted them to suit themselves. Their example suggests others who chose to furnish their own home with Arts and Crafts items may similarly be found in future research to have done so within its spirit rather than feeling tied to creating a comprehensive scheme in the manner suggested in *The Studio*. The illustrated ideas of, for example Baillie-Scott, advocate whole schemes with nothing that intrudes on the overall effect. However, the Marsh evidence shows that while the home could be a show-case for the Arts and Crafts, this was not at the expense of personal comfort or sacrificing personal expression through the clutter of objects often occupying every surface. For, as detailed in the Appendices, Marsh's varied collections were considerable by any standard. The rooms of *Coombe Bury* were relatively modest in size and must have been extremely crowded with his acquisitions. In addition to the Arts and Crafts furnishings already described he possessed towards 1, 000 examples of 19th. Century ceramics, mostly Martinware in addition to his acquisition in later years of two to 300 20th Century Studio ceramics, both vessels and numerous figurines, many of large size. Prior to 1914 he possessed more than 400 Chinese artefacts ranging from small agate snuff bottles to Tang ceramic horses, in addition to about 100 examples of Stuart and later period English glassware and around 200 items of

Georgian and later silverware. The walls were hung with several hundred oil paintings, watercolours and prints and Marsh commissioned display cabinets for his exotic butterfly specimens (each holding at least a hundred mounted examples). Individual mounted butterfly specimens he juxtaposed in his photographs of *Coombe Bury* with Whistler etchings on busy and colourful block printed Victorian wall papers and, on his Ashbee piano, New Sculpture and new purchases of Martinware; an arrangement unlikely to have been illustrated in *The Studio*. In others we see a later purchase of a Doran upholstered armchair placed adjacent to 'Jacobean' furniture that, while in its principles of honesty of construction and traditional design accorded with Arts and Crafts ideals, and, it appears, purchased in good faith, have been proven to be marriages of old and new or, possibly, reproductions.

The photographs of the Marshs' later home, *Hatch Hill,* also importantly illustrate the gradual change of tastes and interests in the Arts and Crafts in decorating, collecting and placing of objects in the home. They suggest that Arts and Crafts idealism did not fade away but evolved over time. The effect is more thoughtful and restrained with interior walls plain or of exposed brick. Objects are placed as single specimens for contemplation or effect. Later photographs still, suggest the entering of a phase of transition brought about by the purchase of new ceramics by emerging practitioners espousing the same ethical values, these new acquisitions side-lining but not always supplanting earlier interests. By this period much of Marsh's collection of earlier Martinware was on loan and much of the Chinese collection sold for financial reasons. Specimens were nevertheless retained. Thus in the years after World War I scope for the incorporation of new areas of interest, in particular Studio pottery and figurines – popular in the 1920s, became his primary focus of interest, enabled by force of circumstance as much as choice.

This research demonstrates the influence of the dynamic relationship between collectors, collecting and ceramic practitioners in promoting the development of ceramics at the beginning of the 20th Century. The Marsh evidence has revealed, as with Arts and Crafts patronage, the crucial role of collectors and in this instance of Marsh in particular in fostering certain potters in the development of their talent by taking an interest in and by buying what they made. The evidence amassed in this study shows conclusively that he was a major patron and friend to the Martin Brothers, and, whereas many collectors chose to collect particular aspects of their varied *oeuvre* or from particular periods, for example as evinced in the work of Wells and Staite Murray, he recognised that creativity evolved and bought from the whole range of their work, buying from the earliest years to latterly gaining first choice by buying direct from the kiln.

Previous research on the Martin Brothers has rightly given due recognition to the importance of Sydney Greenslade in both patronage and development of the work of the Martin Brothers but underplayed the importance of Marsh in relation to them. This research re-asserts the importance of Marsh, as was acknowledged by his peers, as patron and in his obtaining national and international recognition for their work.

An important difference that has emerged in this research between Marsh and other collectors of this period is his continuity of support to the Martin Brothers while at the same time fostering emerging talent elsewhere. Some of this evidence suggests that support was not without risk and may to some have raised questions concerning his judgment. Marsh appears to have been George Cox's lone patron of any note and may have encouraged expectations which were subsequently unrealised, at least in Britain. Similarly no other purchasers of Richard Lunn's wares have been traced and, when in the 1920s Marsh contacted Reginald Wells about his early work, he preferred to emphasise the importance of his newer work and

his earlier experimental work be forgotten. This research has revealed that, unlike most collectors, Marsh was as interested in the experimental as the show piece, recognising the importance of acquiring such examples to record the evolving of each artists creative ideas. Thus the South London Gallery possesses rare examples Staite Murray's early work in evolving new forms and glazes, which appear to be from Marsh..

The evidence of this study acknowledges Marsh, until evidence to the contrary, as the pioneer of recognition in Britain of the status of the Applied Arts, and of ceramic practice in particular, as having the potential to emerge as the equal of Fine Art (Jordan 2000). The research also documents the close world of collectors of ceramics in this period, all of whom pursued their specialised interests but appear not to have felt compelled as Marsh did to fight for its wider recognition. Greenslade in his capacity as buyer purchased many Studio ceramics for Aberystwyth but only as part of the intention to form part of the demonstration of use of materials and technique. At no time did he enter the politics of the status of craft as Marsh chose to do.

Marsh's singular self-appointed role as advocate for the higher status of craft has offered a number of new insights on the inter-relationship between collections in public and private spheres, firstly, the inter-play between his home collection and their public exhibition at Kingston upon Thames, and, secondly, in his appointment to the executive of the newly formed Contemporary Art Society (CAS) as the sole representative of the Applied Arts. The evidence of his subsequent role in forming a CAS Pottery and Craft Fund and its interplay with his private passion for collecting ceramics and giving support to the potter has until now been little recognised (Jordan 2000). Able now to implement his ideas on a national platform the vicissitudes in achieving that objective appear to have been previously un-researched and are considered here for the first time. This evidence demonstrates the considerable influence of

the CAS in becoming from its inception the leader in conceptions of British ideas of the avant-garde in British art, and in following the model of the National Art Collections Fund, the dissemination of taste. As a consequence, when Marsh successfully proposed and in 1928 introduced a Pottery and Craft Fund under its auspices its immediate success can now be seen, as evidenced in this research, as an important step towards legitimising the Applied Arts. Its subscription list of both private and institutional subscribers, numerous acquisitions and subsequent distributions demonstrate its meeting a demand from subscribing museums and galleries.

The difficulty, as this research shows, was the problem of sustaining expectation both in range and scale within the Applied Arts. The General Slump of the early 1930s imposed severe financial constraints with creativity similarly affected. Buying was sustained by patronage of existing makers but dealt a further blow by the commencement of the Second World War and a loss of confidence in the sustainability of the Pottery and Craft Fund following Marsh's death in 1945, when as the CAS now acknowledges, it would have been more helpful to practitioners had a more enlightened attitude of support to potters been followed.

This research also demonstrates how Marsh honed his skills in steering taste, firstly at Kingston but also in his grappling with, and lobbying to change, institutional policy on acquisitions. It also shows how taste and policy, frequently seen as a reflection of an institution's overview or reflection of a body of opinion, usually undefined, is in fact often down to the personal intervention and force of a particular individual. In the case of Marsh, his time at the Federation of British Industries, as that organisation's papers shows, bears witness to his recognition that the pursuit of an objective managed by an often small group of people can be a powerful influence for change, and that working within such legitimising institutional

structures, influences can be brought to bear on areas of common interest for their mutual benefit, in this case the promotion of British art.

This research shows that by the 1920s Marsh was proficient in setting up and utilising sound administrative bodies that obtained recognition at the highest level amongst practitioners and government, in his organisation of loans for the Fine Art Exhibition for the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, The Empire Art Loan Society and in setting up the National Society, legitimising his ideas on promotion not just of the Applied Arts but of Fine Art as well. It is therefore evident that by this period in addition to his private patronage Marsh had involved himself in creating with others mechanisms and strategies to further influence taste and collecting interests primarily of his own making far beyond the areas of his private collecting interests.

In terms of steering taste in the applied arts a major concern has been to define whether, given the fact of choice being wholly his own, whether Marsh by virtue of his status and patronage both private and public influenced the status of practitioners by favouring some at the expense of others. The evidence produced, as detailed in the appendices, suggests, however, an astonishing degree of even-handedness, to the extent of fostering not just those who have since become internationally recognised within the Studio pottery movement but also those for whom it has been extremely difficult to find information outside Marsh's own and CAS papers. Further, subscribed funds might have been expected to have been allocated to, given their recognised status in the 1920s, purchases of ceramics by Vyse and Wells. None were, Marsh instead donating extensively from his own collections.

With regard to Fine Art it is evident that Marsh's formidable range of contacts in Britain and abroad gave him opportunity to exhibit art largely of his own choosing that

propounded a particular critical taste on artistic practice in this period, his view clearly being that the provision of British art to the former colonies would stimulate artistic practice in the prescribed manner. Contrary to what might be expected, the evidence of this research demonstrates that rather than being resented he was actively encouraged by colonial art institutions to send them touring exhibitions of British art. Their correspondence also suggests that his choices were largely approved. While some of the art Marsh sent challenged colonial taste, as press coverage suggests, and to that extent showed British art that could still be demanding in its ideas in relation to colonial preference, its showing was influential. As discussed, for all its good intentions, the pervading influence of British art is now seen to have stultified recognition of home-grown and often original talent in the colonies well into the 1930s, perpetuating the expectation of many aspiring colonial artists that they would expose themselves to European and certainly British art by going to Europe, as many did, if they had any hope of gaining acceptance at home for their work. The longer term legacy is that nevertheless, in terms of a broader perspective of the development of artistic practice, colonial galleries now possess a broad range of British art of the late 19th and early 20th Century to compare and contrast with art emerging from the traditions of colonial influence.

The evidence of this research therefore gives recognition to the evolving methods of steering taste adopted by a hitherto unresearched collector within both the Applied and Fine Arts in the 20th Century. It also shows how someone who was evidently a well-known figure in the museum and art world in a particular period and whose role was clearly understood and accepted by his peers can be lost to view, and questions whether there are others similarly waiting to be discovered and whose lives potentially also offer insights on the world of collecting and the steering of taste.

References

Notes

1 Ernest Marsh and Edward Marsh were unrelated. Confusingly, both served on the Committee of the Contemporary Art Society at the same time and are often referred to in many records as simply E. Marsh. All references in this thesis to the activities of Ernest Marsh are believed to be correctly attributed.

2 Where sources have been difficult to trace their location has been stated.

3 Marsh papers refer to family archives held by descendants of Ernest Marsh.

4 For comprehensiveness this section contains all relevant references consulted and is divided into four sections: primary material, the writings of Ernest Marsh, sources cited in the text, and, finally, other references consulted. This final section includes all references traced in relation to 'New Sculpture', Oriental and print collecting and all other aspects of Marsh's numerous collecting interests both private and through the CAS not fully discussed in this thesis.

All traced contemporary newspaper and periodical references referring to potters mentioned in the text, particularly the Martin Brothers, have also been included. Those signed or known to be by a particular writer are listed under their name. Where quoted in the text the name of the publication is shown in italics and listed in date order at the beginning of each section under Anonymous. Some of these items are extracts endorsed with the supposed source and print date but which do not however match with archive newspapers and periodicals. These are noted 'unstated'.

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