

## IN FOCUS

# William Morris

24 MARCH 1834 – 3 OCTOBER 1896

William Morris was a British textile designer, poet, artist, fantasy writer, and socialist activist associated with the British Arts and Crafts movement. He was a major contributor to the revival of traditional British textile arts and methods of production. His literary contributions helped to establish the modern fantasy genre.

## WHO WAS WILLIAM MORRIS?

William Morris was born in Essex in 1834, to a wealthy family. He was educated at Marlborough College, and then studied at Exeter College, Oxford, where he met Edward Burne-Jones and with other artists, formed the Birmingham Set. While studying for a degree in Classics, he became bored of the way that it was taught, and instead became very interested in the Medieval period, which influenced a lot of his later works.



## EDWARD BURNE JONES

After meeting at Oxford, Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris became fast friends. They remained close and collaborated for the rest of their lives. The pair both went to Oxford wanting to become priests, but soon realised that the art world was better suited to them. Burne-Jones introduced Morris to the rest of the Birmingham Set, and they referred to themselves as 'the Brotherhood'.

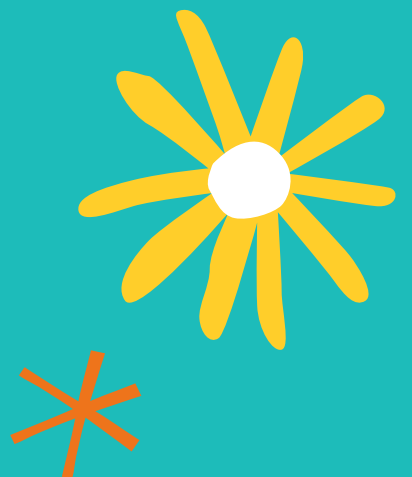
## STAINED GLASS WINDOWS



In the late 19th Century, St Philip's Church commissioned a stained glass window depicting the ascension of Jesus into heaven. Edward Burne-Jones was chosen as the designer, and William Morris chose the colours for the window. Following its completion, Edward Burne-Jones was so inspired by its beauty that he decided to make three more, showing the Nativity, the resurrection and the Last Judgement. William Morris chose the colours for all of the windows, however both his and Burne-Jones died before seeing the completion of the final window.

## AN ARTISTIC PIONEER

Morris is recognised as one of the most significant cultural figures of Victorian Britain. The William Morris Society is devoted to his legacy, while multiple biographies and studies of his work have been published. Much of his work can be found in art galleries and museums, and his designs are still in production.



## SOURCES:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/william-morris-388>  
<https://birminghamcathedral.com/windows/>