

## EXHIBITION CASTS NEW LIGHT ON WILLIAM MORRIS' GREATEST INFLUENCE

AN EARTHLY PARADISE:  
WILLIAM MORRIS & THE THAMES

THE RIVER & ROWING MUSEUM



*Kennet, furnishing fabric, by William Morris for Morris & Co. (1883) © Victoria and Albert Museum, London*

**1 February – 14 July 2019**  
**Press view: Thursday 31 January 2019**

- **The River & Rowing Museum**, supported by the **V&A, British Library** and **Kelmscott Manor**, casts new light on Morris' fascination with the River Thames
- Exhibition will explore the River's influence on his most iconic works
- Features **never-before-seen** artefacts alongside over 50 textiles, prints, books and more
- For media requests please contact Kitty Langton on [rm@kallaway.com](mailto:rm@kallaway.com)
- Find high-res images via the link here: <https://bit.ly/2Rmb4DN>

In an exhibition first, The River & Rowing Museum will explore one of William Morris' most important and little-known influences: the River Thames.

*An Earthly Paradise: William Morris & The Thames* will feature original printed textiles and sketches by the 19th century's most celebrated designer, and cast new light on Morris' lifelong passion for the river.

Telling this story for the very first time, the exhibition will explore how a lifetime spent boating and fishing infused Morris' designs, inspired his poetry, fuelled his manufacturing, and filled his leisure time.

From 1879 the river even connected his two homes: Kelmscott House in London and Kelmscott Manor, upstream in rural Oxfordshire. Morris' instantly recognisable textile designs including Wandle and Windrush are inspired directly from his days exploring and fishing in the upper reaches, and passages from his celebrated 1867 epic poem *The Earthly Paradise* are directly drawn from pleasurable afternoons spent on the river.

Highlights from the exhibition include:

- Morris' original hand-drawn designs for his famous printed textiles named after Thames tributaries including Evenlode and Windrush
- The British Library's handwritten daily journal of Morris' seven-day boat trip with family and friends that inspired his socialist novel *News from Nowhere* and passed through Henley
- Hand-carved wooden printing blocks and a 19th century furnishing fabric showcasing Morris' celebrated indigo discharge printing method
- Morris' socialist utopia novel, *News from Nowhere*, bound in vellum and signed by William Morris to his daughter May
- A 2.7m long embroidery, *June*, featuring poetry from William Morris' *The Earthly Paradise* by his daughter, and Arts and Crafts pioneer, May Morris
- William Morris' own spectacles, pipe and fishing kit

**Director of The River & Rowing Museum, Dr Sarah Posey commented:**

*"The River & Rowing Museum brings the River Thames to life – a window on its cultural, social and natural history. As one of our most celebrated designers, it's fascinating to understand how the river flowed through William Morris' work, inspiring his creative practice and core beliefs, based on his lifelong love of angling. Morris' designs are instantly recognised around the world as quintessentially British. This one-of-a-kind exhibition explores what shaped his vision"*

Set against the idyllic riverside backdrop of Henley on Thames, the exhibition offers an exciting new insight into one of Britain's most influential designers.

**END**

**An Earthly Paradise: William Morris & The Thames**  
**1 February – 14 July 2019**

The River & Rowing Museum  
Mill Meadows  
Henley on Thames

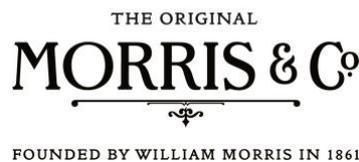
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Opening hours:  
Monday – Sunday, 10am – 5pm

Press View:  
31 January 2019  
10am – 2pm

For all media requests and to RSVP to the press view please contact Kitty Langton at Kallaway on [rrm@kallaway.com](mailto:rrm@kallaway.com)

For more information visit the website [here](#)



**Sanderson**

**The River & Rowing Museum** is one of the U.K.'s leading independent museums. Situated in picturesque Henley on Thames, on the banks of the river Thames, the Museum is housed in an award-winning building by world-renowned architect Sir David Chipperfield. The Museum explores the River Thames, the international sport of rowing and the town of Henley. The galleries include interactive displays as well as internationally significant collections, including the family-friendly 'Wind in the Willows' gallery and a permanent display of the work of artist John Piper. In addition, the Museum hosts a lively programme of temporary and visiting exhibitions, working with partners such as the National Portrait Gallery, the V&A and the Hayward Gallery in London. Working closely with organisations in our area, the Museum has recently opened a Community Gallery that showcases a wide variety of local projects. Twice shortlisted for Family Friendly Museum of the Year, the Museum is a registered educational charity, and welcomes over 114,000 visitors per year, including 20,000 children and adults who taking part in our fun and inspiring learning and events programme. The museum has delightful café with a terrace overlooking Mill Meadows, and a shop specialising in children's books and games, fashion and craft.