



COURT BARN MUSEUM -Press Release

Exhibition: Essex House Press types: C R Ashbee and his circle

Friday 21 March to Sunday 8 June

C R Ashbee, one of the most important figures in the Arts & Crafts movement, set up the Essex House Press in London in 1898. The press, one of the best known of the private presses that flourished in England around 1900, moved with Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft to Chipping Campden in 1902. This move from London's East End to the Cotswolds is one of the most romantic and well-known stories of the Arts and Crafts movement.



The 90 or so books published by the Essex House Press clearly reflect Ashbee's interests and friendships. This exhibition, the second major show from the collection since it was acquired in 2009, will concentrate on this aspect of the Press.

Ashbee saw his work as a direct descent from the writings and example of John Ruskin and William Morris. Many of the books, such as *An Endeavour towards the Teaching of John Ruskin and William Morris*, emphasise this link. Ashbee was first introduced to the

work of John Ruskin while a student at Cambridge University. His circle of friends at Cambridge remained close; many supported his work and their interests and researches were reflected in the output of the press. Also on display will be books illustrating his range of interests and his new friendships following the move to Chipping Campden. These included Archie Ramage, a young Glaswegian who worked as a compositor for the Essex House Press, and Ananda Coomaraswamy, the Anglo-Sinhalese scholar who settled in Campden in 1907 with his wife, Edith.



Ashbee was also a great patriot and supporter of English traditions. He published many books illustrating the highlights, as he saw them, of British literature and poetry, and promoting the established Church.



One of the most visually interesting books in the exhibition is *The Masque of the Edwards of England*, published in 1902. It tells the story of those English kings named Edward and was published to coincide with the coronation of Edward VII and includes many double-page illustrations by Edith Harwood.

The exhibition is sponsored by Cutts of Campden

Notes

Court Barn, Chipping Campden has the most extensive collection of Essex House Press books in the world. It is also an important collection because the books belonged to Ashbee himself; many of them are signed and annotated by him.

CONTACTS

For information please contact Carole Reynolds, Administrator:

E: admin@courtbarn.org.uk

T: 01386 841951.

W: www.courtbarn.org.uk

Notes to editors:

COURT BARN

1. How to find us:

Court Barn, Church Street, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, GL55 6JE

Admission charges:

Adults £4; Concessions (students, senior citizens) £3.25; Children under 16 are free

Opening times: April - September: Tuesday - Sunday 10.00 - 5pm

October - March: Tuesday - Sunday 10.00 - 4pm

Closed Mondays (except Bank Holidays).

2. About Court Barn

Court Barn is an award winning independent museum and the brainchild of a group of local enthusiasts called the Guild of Handicraft Trust. The museum was created through the generous support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and monies raised by the Guild of Handicraft Trust.

This groundbreaking museum, situated in the Cotswold town of Chipping Campden, tells the story of how a small town, in a beautiful setting, became a gathering place for creative people at the start of the 20th Century and continues to attract designers and makers today. Highlights include work by C.R. Ashbee, F.L Griggs and Katharine Adams.