

KATHARINE ADAMS

REILTIN MURPHY

DISSERTATION

CALLIGRAPHY AND BOOKBINDING

CBBH40.007Y

1996-97

Katharine Adams

(Bookbinder)

1862-1952

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Adams

William Fulford Adams
1833-1921

M.

Catherine Mary Horton
1830-1912

Margaret
1861-?

William Dacres
1864-1951

M.

1. Regina E. Houghton

2. Millicent Etheldreda Gray

Dacres
Houghton

Marie Regina (Molly)

M.

Wray Hunt

Harry

Daughter

KATHARINE

February 15, 1862 - October 15, 1952

Married

November 25, 1913

Webb

Benjamin Webb
1819-1885

M.

Maria Elphinstone (d. of William Hodge Mill)

Son

Philip George Lancelot
1856-193

Clement Charles Julian
1865-1954

M.

Eleanor Theodora Joseph

EDMUND JAMES

October 15, 1852 - November 18, 1945

Chronology

- 1861 Katharine Adams' sister Margaret born.
- 1862 Katharine Adams born 15th February at Bracknell.
- 1864 Dacres Adams born.
- 1865 Moved to Little Faringdon, Gloucestershire.
- 1871 William Morris and family moved to Kelmscott Manor.
- 1888 Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society founded. Katharine Adams exhibited regularly with the society from 1899 to the 1930s.
- 1897 Bookbinding lessons from Sarah Prideaux and Douglas Cockerell.
- c.1898 Katharine Adams' workshop in Lechlade.
- 1899 Bound *Miscellaneous Studies*.
- 1901 Adams family move to Weston-sub-Edge.
- c.1901 Katharine Adams took a house called Eadburgha in Broadway, Worcestershire for her bindery. At the bindery she had two assistants Georgina Gwendoline Hampshire and Jessie Gregory.
- 1906 Bound the *Doves Press Bible*.
- 1907 Moved bindery to York House in Broadway, renaming it The Eadburgha Bindery.
May Morris, daughter of William Morris, founded the Women's Guild of Arts.
- 1910 Bound *Tutte le Opere di Dante Alighieri*.
Won Gold Medal in Brussels.
- 1912 Met Edmund Webb.
Bound *Queen Mary's Psalter*.
Katharine Adams' mother died.
- 1913 November 25th, married Edmund Webb.
- 1915 Moved to The Rectory, Noke, Oxford. The house in Broadway was let.
- 1916 Bound *Morte D'Arthur*.
- 1921 Katharine Adams' father died.
Moved to Waltons, Islip, Oxford.
- 1924 Decided to give up bookbinding professionally.
- 1925 Won a Silver Medal in Paris for her binding of *A Little Book of Life and Death*.
- 1929 Moved to Cherries, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.
- 1933 Sarah Prideaux died.
Bound *Ecclesiasticus*.
- 1938 May Morris died.
- 1939 Katharine Adams became President of the Women's Guild of Arts.
- 1944 Sold her collection of Private Press books.
- 1945 Edmund Webb died.
- 1946 Georgina Gwendoline Hampshire moved in to take care of Katharine Adams.
- 1947 Bound *Don Quixote*.
- 1951 Dacres Adams died.
- 1952 15th October Katharine Adams died.

Introduction

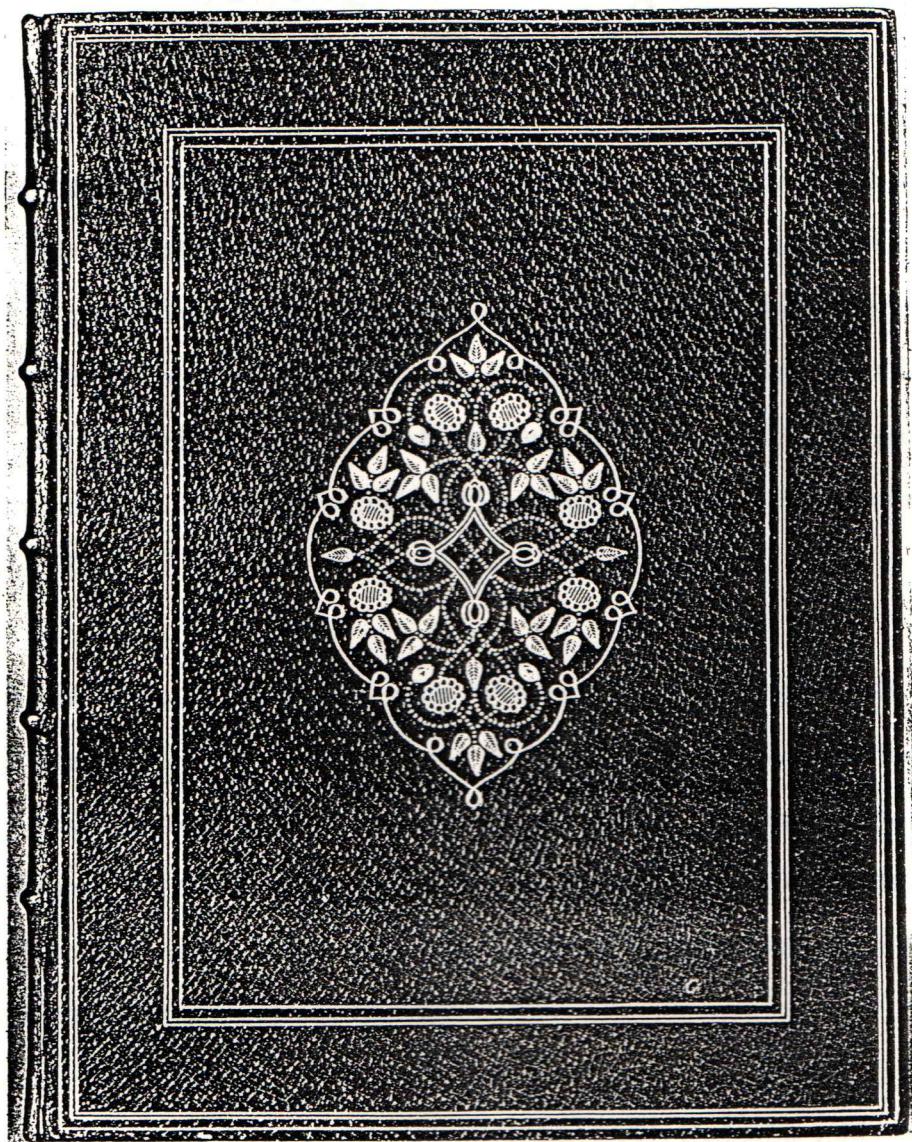
During a Foundation year study of The British Arts and Crafts Movement we looked at the work of a number of well known men behind whom stood a host of silent, and sometimes nameless, women.¹ When I read Fiona McCarthy's biography of Eric Gill, her words "Katie Adams, the leading lady bookbinder" leapt from the page.² I resolved to find out more about this Katie Adams.

The search for Katharine Adams was frustrating in the extreme: books on bookbinding mentioned her but nowhere was she treated in any depth. The less I found the more determined I became: the story which follows is the result of that search. Once I had exhausted the published accounts of Katherine and her work and had moved to the layer beneath (the layer of letters and lunches and new friendly strangers) the feeling of frustration was replaced by a thrill of triumph as each new detail took its place. As far as is possible I have allowed Katharine and her friends to tell their own story.³

Katharine Adams bound books for almost eighty years, beginning in her early childhood and ending five years before her death: the last binding a race against blindness. It is because the bindings were part of Katharine's life, and not just a means of earning money that I have found that getting to know the binder has increased my appreciation of her work. By knowing Katharine I can see that these are not simply bindings to please a client but are the expressions of Katharine's innermost creativity. The biography which follows is an attempt to fit some of the bindings into their place in Katharine's life; it is not intended as a critical study of Katharine Adams' bindings so much as a search to find Katharine herself.

Shortly before Katharine Adams died Sydney Cockerell predicted that "her fame will increase steadily".⁴ He was wrong. She became forgotten and overlooked: a background figure. Katharine's long life spanned the publication of *The Origin of Species*, to the launch of Sputnik 1 and, perhaps more significantly, to the first meeting of what would become the

Society of Designer Bookbinders.⁵ This Society took bookbinding out of its purely functional and decorative role and thrust it into the world of modern art. It is understandable that Katharine's quiet bindings should have faded into the background, but perhaps it is time to take them out and look at them again; what a pleasure it would be to see an exhibition of Adams bindings instead of the few and inadequate photocopies which are all that I can offer here.



B. Thomas and H.G. Barker, *Our Visitor to 'Work-a-Day'*, typescript, [1899]. Red-brown pigskin. (British Library). Illustration Nixon, H.M. and Foot, M. *The History of Decorated Bookbinding in England*.

CHAPTER ONE

Sewing Leaves Together 1862-1896

Katharine Adams was born at Bracknell, Berkshire on February the fifteenth, 1862, a second daughter to the Reverend William Fulford Adams and his wife Catherine Mary Horton.¹ Two years later a son, William Dacres, was born and the following year, 1865, the Rev. and Mrs. Adams moved their family of three small children to Little Faringdon, Lechlade, Gloucestershire. Fulford had been appointed vicar to this new parish, recently made from a division of the ancient parish of Langford where the tiny church dated from the thirteenth century.²

Katharine was nine years old in 1871 when William Morris moved his family to Kelmscott Manor, just two miles from Little Faringdon. Fulford Adams and William Morris had been to school at Marlborough together and then to Oxford. They remained lifelong friends. It may well be that part of the perfection of Kelmscott Manor lay in the closeness of the Adams family as playmates for the Morris girls, with Katharine "a month older than May" and her elder sister "the same age" as Jenny Morris.³

In a letter to Sydney Cockerell dated November 4th, 1934, Katharine told him of a recent visit to Kelmscott Manor which had reminded her of earlier days; the letter gives a flavour of the relationship between Katharine and the Morrises. Katharine wrote:

"I thought the Manor looked as lovely as ever. I always feel I am in a dream country when I enter that door in the wall, and as I wandered from room to room and saw it as it used to look (for May had put out all her lovely possessions) memories crowded round me — the last time I saw Morris alone there, and had tea with him; my last vision of Mrs. Morris, in the white room, and she had put on a white silk gown and silver girdle to please me, and I told her how beautiful she was, my last sight of Jenny when we walked in the garden one summer evening and she said 'I often walk here in the evening

hoping to meet my dear father, he was such a sweet companion"; then all the memories of my happy childhood when we played with the little Morris and ran away from Mr. Rossetti".⁴

Katharine recalled that from her childhood she was interested in the making of a book and can hardly remember when she began "sewing leaves together".

"I was in my teens when I first bought some yellowish leather from the village cobbler, scraped it thinner with an ordinary knife, and with it half bound some old volumes which I had sewn, and somehow backed in a carpenter's vice. Later on I bought some scraps of calf from an Oxford binder [Morley] who kindly gave me a worn out, battered A.B.C. which enabled me to make some experiments with the help of a book called 'Workshop Receipts'. About this time," Katharine added, she "bound a few books in needlework".⁵

Katherine's brother Dacres became a painter, working mainly in watercolour. He was educated at Radley College and then at Exeter College, Oxford. He studied at the Herkomer School of Art at Bushey, Hertfordshire, under Professor Sir Hubert von Herkomer, and at Munich.⁶ Dacres, evidently, did not live much at home but it seems that Katharine did live at home and may have nursed an invalid mother. The elder sister is a shadowy figure who may have died young.

Perhaps it was at a time when Dacres was studying abroad that Katharine spent some months in France, "and met by chance Mr. J. P. Heseltine, a trustee of the National Gallery. We talked of bookbinding, and he advised me to have some lessons in the art and gave me his card with an introduction to Miss Prideaux".⁷

William Morris had established the Kelmscott Press in 1890 at 16 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London W6 (the following year moving a few doors away to 21 Upper Mall). Other private presses were soon set up: the Vale in 1894 by Charles Ricketts; Eragny in 1894 by Lucien and Esther Pissarro; the Essex House in 1898 by C.R. Ashbee; the Ashendene in

1894 by C.H. St. John Hornby and the Doves in 1900 by T.J. Cobden-Sanderson. Due to these private presses this was a time when a bookbinder had new books of excellent quality with which to work. Times were changing. In 1896 T. J. Cobden-Sanderson began to teach women bookbinding at his Doves Bindery at 15 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, ending the strange situation whereby classes were open to women provided they were in the 'trade' but, of course, women were employed only to sew in the trade of bookbinding and so, in effect, there were no classes available to them. This same year William Morris died: his old friend Fulford Adams conducted the funeral.

One year later it "became necessary" for Katharine to earn her own living and so, at the age of thirty-five she decided to take up bookbinding professionally.⁸ Katharine gathered together some of her books and made an appointment to see Sarah Prideaux, using the introduction given to her years before by Mr. Heseltine.



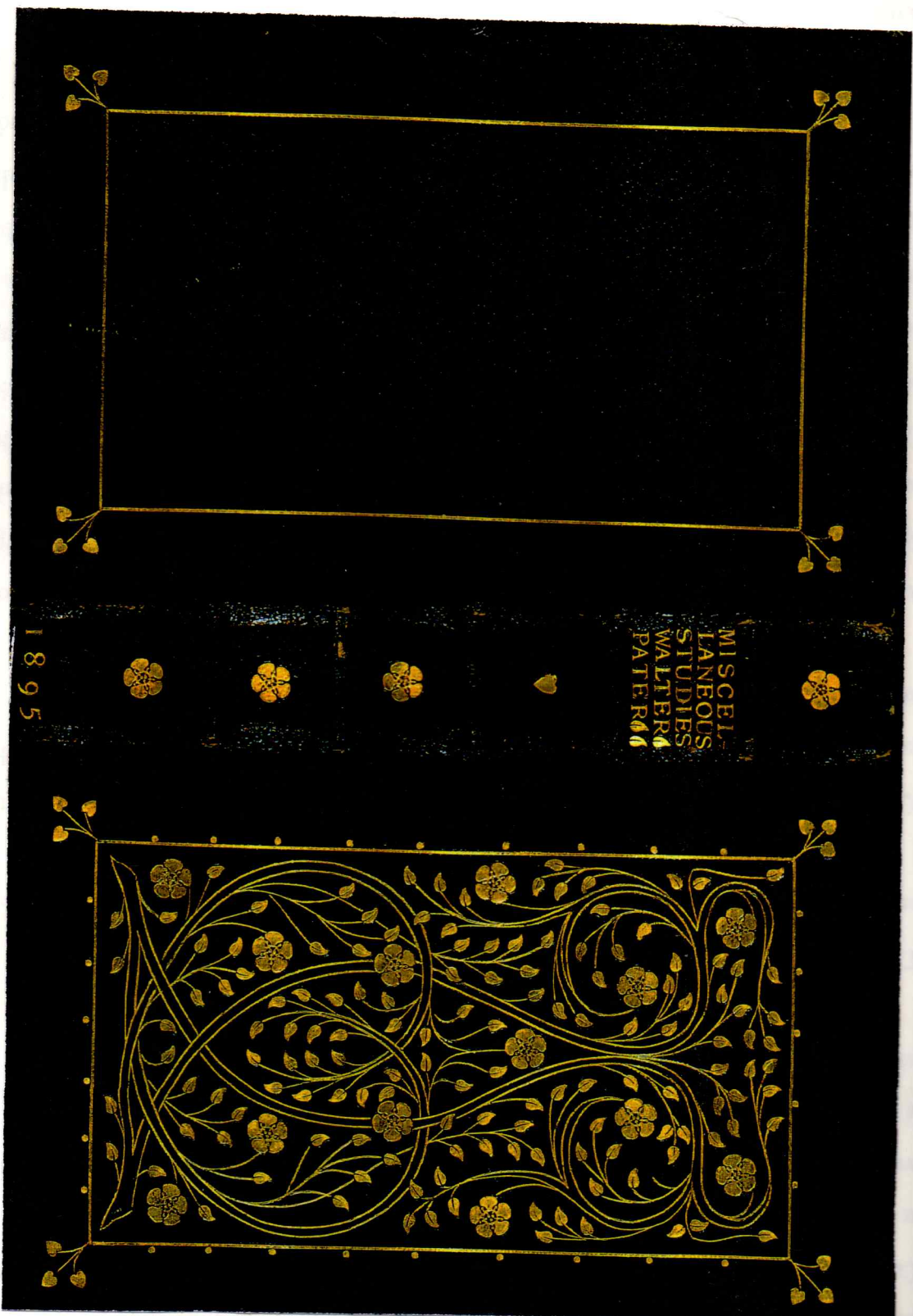
Filippi, R. *Three Japanese Plays for Children*, Daniel Press, 1897. Green goatskin. Bound in 1898. (Wormsley Library). Illustration from Tidcombe, M. (1996) Women Bookbinders 1880-1920. The British Library, p.133.

CHAPTER TWO

A Counsel of Perfection 1897-1899

In the 1890s Sarah Prideaux took several pupils, the last of these being Katharine Adams. Katharine's study time with Miss Prideaux was only three months but their friendship was to last until Sarah's death in 1933. Katharine remembered Sarah Prideaux as "an admirable teacher of her craft, not only inspiring and sympathetic but most kindly severe ... for hers was a counsel of perfection in all things".¹ Howard M. Nixon in *Five Centuries of English Bookbinding* described Sarah Prideaux's work as being characterised by admirable forwarding and by finishing which is always up to good professional standards.² Miss Prideaux "always used the best materials and was a very good judge of leather, using only skins of very high quality", wrote Katharine Adams in *The Times'* obituary of Sarah Prideaux. "The simplicity of her taste is shown in her designs in which she strove to avoid over-elaboration, which hides the beauty of the leather, and to keep her pattern and spaces in proportion to the limited size and shape of the book. She often said that the construction of the pattern should be easily followed without being too apparent". Sarah Prideaux wrote several books on bookbinding and, with Katharine Adams' assistance, set up a small printing press and produced *A Catalogue of Books bound by S.T. Prideaux 1890-1900*.

Katharine Adams followed these three months study with a single month in Douglas Cockerell's workshop in Denmark Street, saying that this was all she could afford.³ Douglas Cockerell was a brother of Sydney who would become such a dear friend to Katharine. In 1891, on his return from Canada, Douglas Cockerell worked for two years as a carpenter before making some trial bindings for William Morris. That same year, 1891, he began work at the Doves Bindery under T.J. Cobden-Sanderson whose sensitivity to materials and care about conservation were qualities which Douglas Cockerell made his won. Cobden-Sanderson believed in allowing his apprentices to learn all aspects of the bookbinding trade unlike the more usual apprenticeship whereby one became either a forewarder or a finisher.



Pater, W. (1895) *Miscellaneous Studies*. Dark brown goatskin. Bound in 1899. (Bodleian Library).
Illustration from the Bodleian Library.

In 1897 Douglas left the Doves Bindery and the following year set up on his own near the British Museum; it was here that Katharine took lessons.

Eric Burdett in *The Craft of Bookbinding* says that "although Katharine Adams worked with Cockerell for only a short while, her work belongs to the same school", describing her work as having "quietness and intrinsic loveliness".⁴ Howard M. Nixon says that her "technical skill was considerable", her "forwarding and finishing could be judged by the strictest professional standards" and that "as a designer she was markedly individual" being one of the few binders of any date to make "a success of pictorial designs in gold on leather".⁵

T. J. Cobden-Sanderson wrote a letter of encouragement to Katharine Adams but she was never a pupil of his,⁶ nor was she ever a member of the Women's Guild of Bookbinders.

Katharine said that after her study time with Sarah Prideaux and Douglas Cockerell "I then took a small room in Lechlade near my home. Here I worked alone for a year very hard indeed, and then took two pupils. Mrs. W. Morris gave me my first order."⁷

A book bound by Katharine in 1899 is *Miscellaneous Studies* by Walter Pater. The book is signed and dated by the binder. The tool which Katharine seems to have used as her signature throughout her career is based on a sign she found in "a Kalender against St. Katherine's Day" so she added her initials.⁸ *Miscellaneous Studies* has endbands of crimson and the head of the book is gilt. The pattern of flowers and leaves is continued inside the front and back boards on a generous leather turn-in. This book has raised bands in common with any leather binding of Katharine's which I have held or seen illustrated. Interestingly, the title on the spine of this early binding is in the more common place, below the uppermost raised band where the title has traditionally been placed by binders sewing on cords. Katharine Adams developed a preference for placing the title at the top of the spine, above the raised bands.⁹

A list of clients for whom books were produced in the small room in Lechlade lacks the three names, Cockerell, Walker and Hornby, which would soon figure so largely in Katharine's life.



Katharine Adams' signature tool.

The $\begin{smallmatrix} K \otimes \\ A \end{smallmatrix}$ sign, which I use I found in
an old MS, in the Kalender of
St Katharine's day: Nov. 25. 20 I
added my initials. I now
add a little golden webb, but I have
not had a tool made of it yet & I cannot
work it in dots small enough to use in
a book.

Katharine Adams' handwritten description of the tool. Letter to Mr.
Madan, November 7th, 1916. (Bodleian Library, Broxb. 51.8.).

The names in the list include Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Daniel (to whom Katharine gave book-binding lessons¹⁰) Mr. Bain, F.S. Ellis, Lady Cave, H. R. Hope-Pinker, and Montague Fordham.¹¹

The many books bought by Montague Fordham would have been for re-sale in his Arts and Crafts Gallery at 9 Maddox Street, London W1. At this gallery Katharine's bindings came to the notice of St. John Hornby and Emery Walker both of whom became admirers of her work.¹² The year was 1899 and the thirty seven year old Katharine Adams' bookbinding career had begun.



The Bindery Galleries, once
The Eadburgha Bindery,
Broadway, Worcestershire.
(photo., Sylvia Thomas,
1995).

CHAPTER THREE

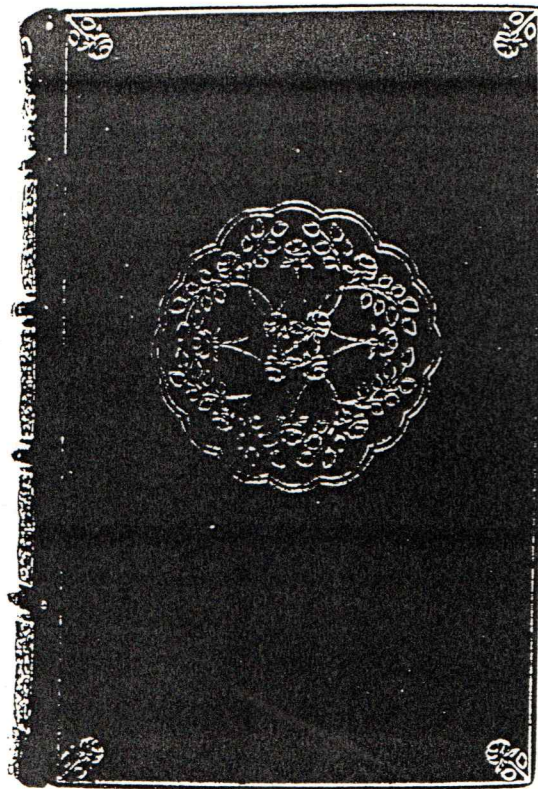
The Eadburgha Bindery 1900-1912

The meeting, mutual admiration and friendship between Katharine Adams and such leading figures in the Arts and Crafts Movement as Emery Walker, Sydney Cockerell and St. John Hornby were to have a profound effect on her work and life. Katharine exhibited with the Arts and Crafts Society from 1899 and joined some of the Art Workers' Guild excursions abroad.

In 1901 the Reverend and Mrs. Adams were moved from Little Faringdon to Weston-sub-Edge¹ and Katharine took for her bindery "a small house in nearby Broadway called 'Eadburgha' [after the local St. Eadburgha's church] which gave its name to my bindery".²

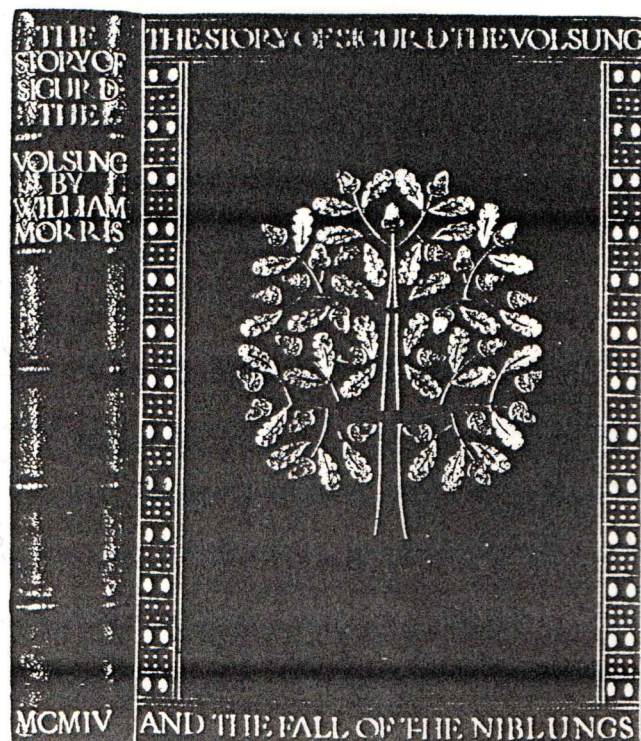
Each day Katharine cycled between Weston-sub-Edge and Broadway with her friend and assistant Miss Georgina (Georgie) Gwendoline Hampshire, "Hamp", who was with Katharine until 1915 and with whom she shared old age. The two friends were so punctual cycling each day that the villagers "reckoned they could set their clocks by them".³ Gordon Russell, musing back over forty years, remembered Miss Hampshire "vaguely as a young woman with a bun of yellow hair, hand-woven clothes and sandals".⁴ There was also a second assistant, Jessie Gregory, who helped with sewing and other needlework.⁵

Possibly one of the first books bound at the Eadburgha Bindery was *Nine Sonnets* by Louise Imogen Guiney, a book privately printed at Cambridge, Massachusetts for Christmas 1895. The binding was commissioned by F. Madan and is of "blue morocco, with gold stamped title enclosed by a wavy linear border with stars". This book later formed part of J. R. Abbey's library and was exhibited at the Arts Council in 1949 with two other of Katharine's bindings.⁶ Other books from those early Broadway years include at least eleven copies of *Song of Songs* bound, at £1 each, for St. John Hornby.⁷ One copy of this book, illuminated by Florence (Kate) Kingsford, is in the John Rylands Library in Manchester.



The Oxford Book of English Verse, Oxford, 1907. Dark blue morocco. Illustration from Sotheby's Catalogue, 1952.

William Morris (Trans.) *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung*, 1894. (Bryan Maggs, England).
Brown pigskin. Illustration from Tidcombe, op.cit.p.138.

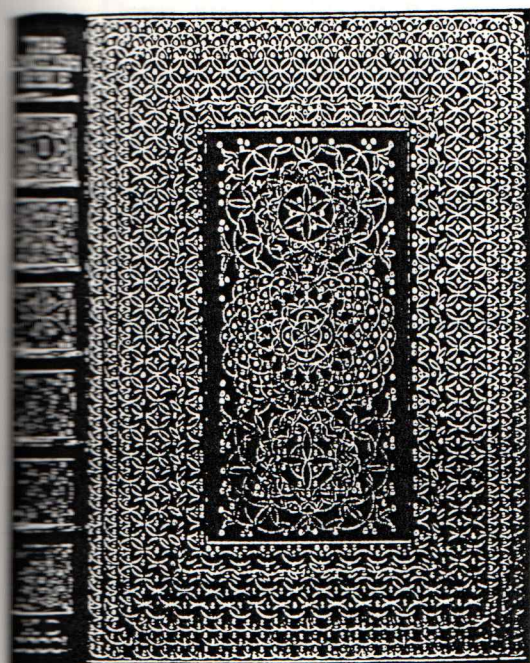


Between about 1903 and 1906 Katharine bound six books for Sydney Cockerell. These included ancient and modern manuscripts and Sydney Cockerell was quite definite about what he wanted; "please bind [this Swinburne manuscript] in the style of the Ruskin in whatever leather you think best" then, a year later, "I don't feel quite happy about the new Middlemore pig, as I find that both the Omar and the Swinburne are beginning to fray a little. So I think we must go back to Levant Morocco as the only reliable skin — unless it be that green is a harmful dye. I don't like brown, but anything else will do". Another year later and "please take tremendous care of them [two books illuminated by his future wife Florence Kingsford] and bind them beautifully in the style of my lovely Omar. Of course not in one volume and not in the same colour. And please let me see the letterings before you put them on".⁸

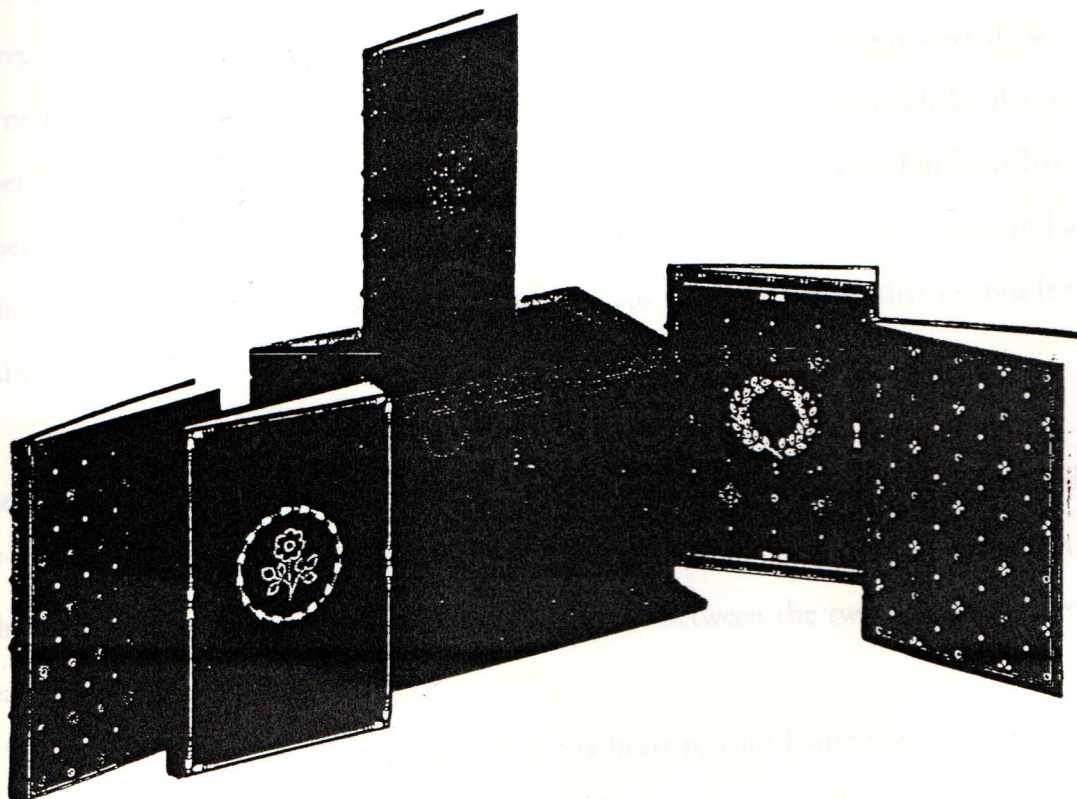
A 1904 binding of *A Treatyse of Fysshynge with an Angle* by Juliana Berners is in the John Rylands Library. This copy is one of the twenty-five printed on vellum by the Ashendene Press in 1903, all of which were bound by Katharine Adams. The binding is in dark green morocco and undecorated except for the title in gold on the upper cover and the word 'Fysshynge' lettered up the top panel of the spine. The binding is signed.⁹

Between 1901 and 1905 Katharine bound fifteen books for Mr. Bain of Haymarket; two books in 1903 for Mrs. Clegg, a friend and neighbour; five books for Elkin Mathews; one or more for C. Fairfax Murray; Harold Peirse and Charles Stickley of the U.S.A.; and for Emery Walker. A 1905-07 ledger adds Dyson Perrins to the list of famous names.¹⁰ In 1905, on the 28th and 29th of March, Katharine Adams and May Morris held a "small Exhibition of Embroidery, Jewellery and Bookbinding".¹¹

In 1906 Katharine bound the five volume *English Bible* recently printed by the Doves Press. The copy she worked with is one of the 500 on paper. She bound it in a red-brown pigskin. This was a binding which Katharine seems to have undertaken without commission as in 1908 Dyson Perrins bought it from her, perhaps on Sydney Cockerell's urging; in July of 1907 Cockerell had written to Dame Laurentia McLachlan O.S.B., of Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester "there is a chance that rejoices Miss Adams' heart that Mr. Perrins may buy her five



The English Bible, Doves Press, Volume 1 of five volumes, 1905. Red pigskin. Bound in 1906. (Wormsley Library). Illustration from The Studio 1906.



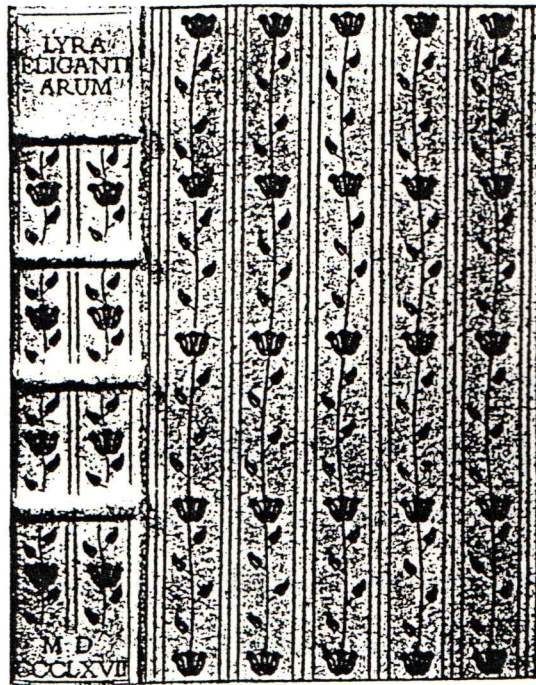
The Shakespeare Head Booklets, (1906) Shakespeare Head Press. Each booklet a different colour of pigskin. Bound in 1906, Tidcombe (1996) op.cit.p.51 or in c.1925, Nixon, H.M. (1979) Five Centuries of English Bookbindings, The British Library (The British Library). Illustration from Nixon, op.cit.p.221.

volume Doves Press Bible. He has got another copy bound by Cobden-Sanderson which would have to be displaced. I shall be so pleased if it happens so".¹² When the Doves Bible, then part of J. R. Abbey's Collection, went to auction in 1970 a letter to Dyson Perrins accompanied it. This letter was from Emery Walker saying "I well remember your Bible bound by Katharine Adams. It is, in my opinion, the most beautiful book she has bound and one of the very best specimens of tooled binding since the great age — the sixteenth century".¹³

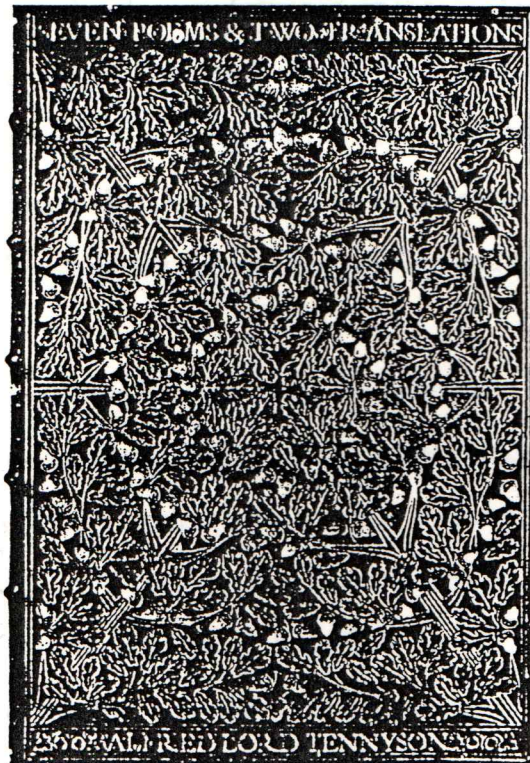
In about 1906 it "became necessary" for Katharine to leave that workshop and she bought another house nearby keeping the name Eadburgha for her bindery.¹⁴ This house now, about ninety years later, retains the memory of Katharine's occupation; it is the Bindery Galleries, having earlier been the Bindery Tearooms.¹⁵ When Katharine bought it, the house was known as York House and the application she submitted to the local authority for permission to carry out work on the house is dated 1907. The plans for the alterations were drawn up by Ernest Barnsley.¹⁶ Within Eadburgha's Bindery Katharine used a chair made by Barnsley's partner Ernest Gimson.¹⁷ The house is built of stone and timber frame and indoors has the low beams and creaking stairs one would expect to find in a building of this style and age. The house, freehold with gardens and outbuildings, was never sold by Katharine, but left to her niece.¹⁸

Sydney Cockerell was one of those people who had a genius for making introductions and in 1907 his bringing together of Katharine Adams and Dame Laurentia McLachlan of Stanbrook Abbey was to result in a lifelong friendship between the two. Of their meeting Katharine wrote to Sydney:

"I had such a delightful day and quite lost my heart to your Laurentia ... I interviewed three other nuns in the big parlour — would be bookbinders. Their bookbinding was so elementary that it was impossible to criticise it. I couldn't even find much fault with it as it served its purpose of holding an old book together fairly strongly. Laurentia came back and asked if I could arrange to give them lessons. I am to think it over. There is the journey, an hour by train and an hour by bus each way. Then it is to be done with ^{the} grille between us which will make it a most uphill job".¹⁹ Eventually a Sr. Teresa trav-



Lyra Eligantia Arum. Bound c.1907.
Illustration from The Studio 1907.

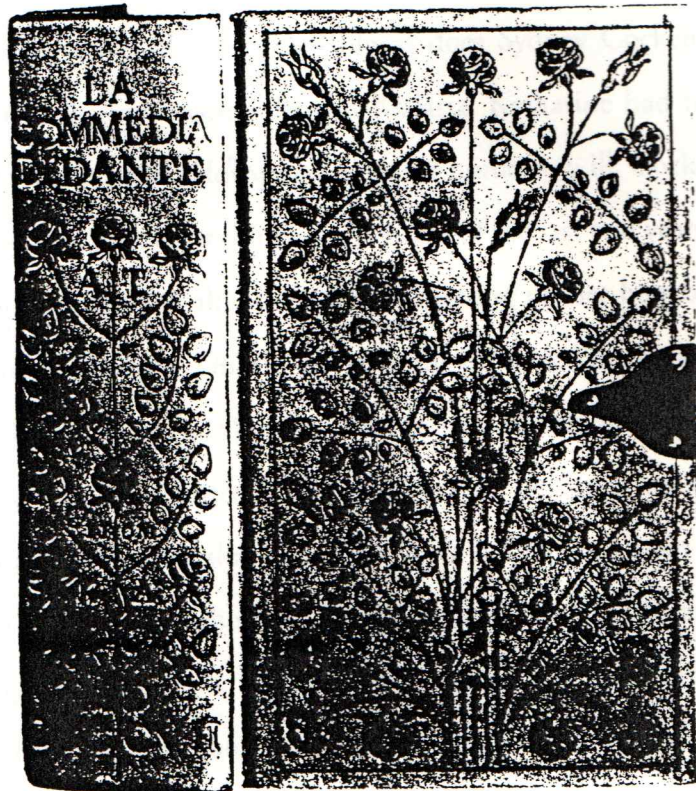


Tennyson, *Poems and two translations*. Bound c.1907. Illustration from The Studio 1907.

elled to Broadway for lessons and sometimes lodged at the Bindery. Bookbinding lessons in Eadburgha's Bindery were not in any way dull: "what do you think of luncheon at Mme de Navarro's being included in Sr. Theresa's binding lesson?" Dame Laurentia asked Sydney Cockerell, adding that Sr. Teresa liked the assistant very much and greatly admired the bindery.²⁰

Two of Katharine's bindings were illustrated in *The Studio* of 1907. *Lyra Eliganti Arum* has the title tooled on the spine in Katharine's favoured position and both volumes are typical of her work with their overall pattern and quite separate treatment of the upper and lower covers and the spine's areas between the raised bands. *Tennyson's Poems* would have pleased Sarah Prideaux with its pattern "easily followed without being too apparent". It sets a much different mood than the cool lines of *Lyra Eliganti Arum*. Seemingly almost every one of Katharine's bindings has a flower or leaf shape upon it. Sometime after 1907 Katharine bound a book as a gift for her Broadway friend Ann Thompson. The binding is of white vellum, tooled gold and painted with roses. Inscribed on the spine is 'A.T. from K.A.'. The book is now part of the Henry Davis Collection.²¹ Among Katharine's 1908 bindings were the Doves Press *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* which were exhibited in her case of bindings at the New Gallery, London that April. *Cupid and Psyche* was shown at the Grand Ducal Museum, Weimar, in the exhibition there of English Arts and Crafts.²²

It is due to the growing friendship between Katharine Adams and Dame Laurentia, and the regular correspondence between Dame Laurentia and Sydney Cockerell that we can see behind Katharine's professional life as a binder to the everyday events which give any life its richness. Twice in 1907 Katharine went abroad. The first trip was to Bruges in July with Sydney Cockerell and his fiancée Florence (Kate) Kingsford, Emery Walker and Eric Gill. It was Katharine's first meeting with Eric Gill whom she described in a letter as a "silent, shabby little fellow in a child's hat".²³ In October, accompanying the Art Workers Guild, Katharine toured Granada, Tangiers, Arles and Paris.²⁴ On November 29th, 1907 Sydney Cockerell wrote to Dame Laurentia that his wife and he "go to tea today with Katie Adams at her club, and she dines with us afterward and goes to a meeting of a tiresome new society, the Women's Guild of



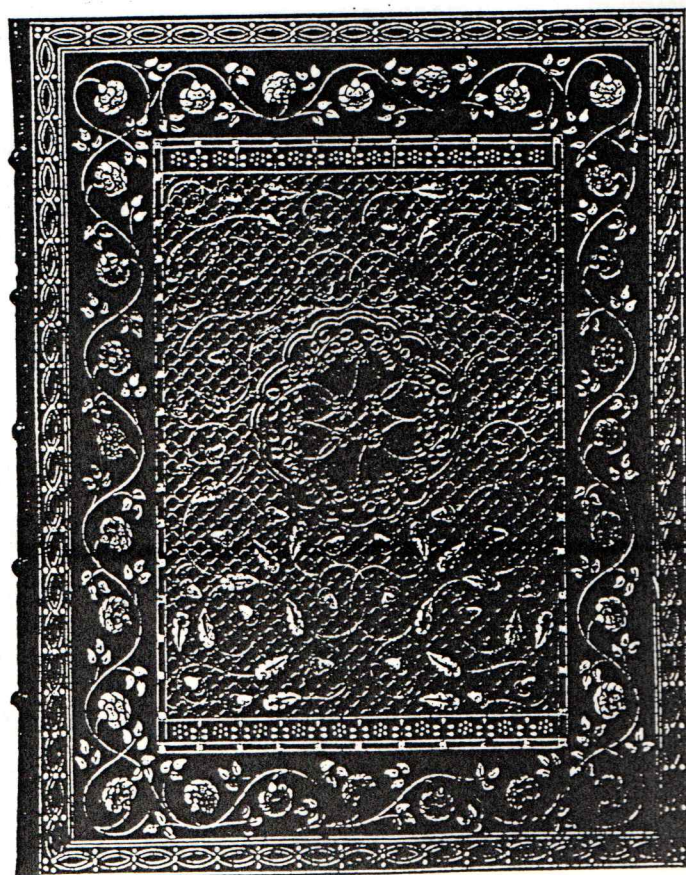
Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia*,
Florence 1907. White vellum tooled and
painted. Bound c. 1907. (British
Library). Illustration from Tidcombe
(1996) op.cit.p.50.

Arts".²⁵ This Guild was set up by May Morris and, after May's death in 1939, the seventy-seven year old Katharine took over as President of the Guild. Dame Laurentia and Sydney Cockerell also told of the darker side to Katharine's life. In January of 1909 Dame Laurentia wrote to Sydney Cockerell, "I am sorry to hear of Miss Adams' trouble, and am writing to sympathise with her".²⁶ The "trouble" was not specified but Dame Laurentia's concern hints at what was going on in the background of Katharine's life as does Sydney Cockerell's comment some months later when Katharine became ill with Malaria. Katharine had been to Greece with Emery Walker and Mr. and Mrs. Hoŕby and returned home very ill. Cockerell worried, "she is terribly run down — it is a greivous thing — the strain of the last two years has been too much for her".²⁷ Katharine Adams was almost forty when setting up her bookbinding business and sixty-two when winding it down. During this time she produced the bulk of her approximately 300 bindings. During this time also she cared for her elderly parents and grieved at their deaths. There was a war. She married, at fifty-one, a man ten years her senior; the first eight years of their marriage were spent sharing a home with her father, a man seriously ill between 1916 and his death in 1921, and whose illnesses and death were the cause of Katharine and her husband having to move house. Katharine was unlucky with her own health; throughout the rest of her life her cheerfulness and determination were at variance with the descriptions of her illnesses and anxieties sent back and forth between Sydney Cockerell and Dame Laurentia.

In 1909 The Studio illustrated two of Katharine's bindings: Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*, a manuscript on vellum by Gordon Russell and a binding of old Persian drawings. The Keats' is decorated with pointillé work and while Katharine's pointillé on the 1906 Doves *Bible* was, no doubt, excellent, there is a clumsiness in the work here. This may be due to the size of the book, which looks tiny, making the dots seem too big and at this scale even one dot slightly out of place gives an unease to a curved line. The book is bound in Niger morocco and *The Studio* describes that "it has a green silk back worked in chain stitch with strings woven of fine beads", perhaps the word "back" here is a misprint of "bag" which would make more sense. It seems quite unbelievable that the binder of the Keats was also responsible for the second work illustrated, a glorious binding of old Persian drawings in red pigskin with the central panel inlaid in blue, and showing all the grace and freedom lacking in the Keats.



Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale*, manuscript on vellum by Gordon Russell. Niger morocco. Bound in 1909. Illustration from The Studio 1909.



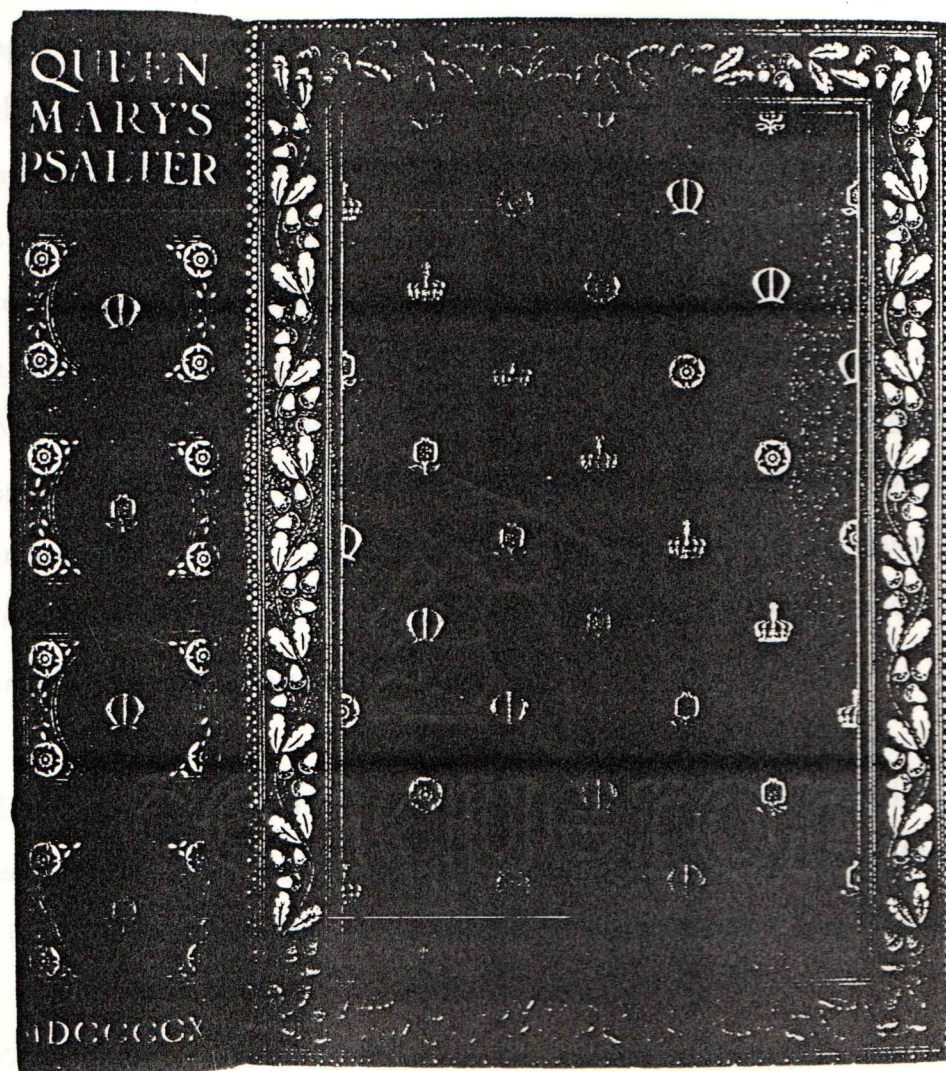
Old Persian Drawings. Red pigskin inlaid with blue. Bound in 1909. Illustration from The Studio 1909.

When writing an Appreciation of Katharine Adams for The Times of 1952 Gordon Russell recalled that Katharine gave him "the benefit of her wide experience without stint" introducing him to people whose knowledge of calligraphy "made their constructive criticism of immense value" to him. Russell was free to wander around the bindery any time he liked and said that the "absolute integrity which she applied as a matter of course to every detail of her work, coupled with her fine sense of design and intuitive skill in handling material, have inspired" him ever since.²⁸ Gordon Russell also wondered if it might have been Katharine who first told him about Edward Johnston's book *Writing, Illuminating and Lettering*.²⁹

In April of 1910 Sydney Cockerell wrote "My dear Katie, I enclose suggested lettering for the [13th Century] Psalter ... yes, I am afraid it must have a hollow back, or a flexible back that will throw up. In my opinion everything must be sacrificed to the *interior* appearance of a fine manuscript, and the writing and decoration must be displayed to the very best advantage. I like the open book, unless the inner margins are wider than usual, to be as near as possible flat. With these provisos I will leave you to do whatever you think best for a sum not exceeding £3 — which is to include the cleaning off of dirt where possible and the flattening of dog-ears, also at least six end-leaves, at each end, of vellum that can be written on". Less than a month later he wrote again "the white pigskin is as lovely as cream cheese. The pattern is delightful. The lettering is exactly right. The sewing of the slits in the vellum looks very nice".³⁰

Some of Katharine's books were exhibited in Brussels in 1910, winning her a gold medal, but the good luck turned to bad when a number of her books were burnt there. "Seventy pounds worth, and they were only half insured", lamented Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia, but exactly where or how this tragedy occurred, Cockerell does not say.³¹

In 1910 Katharine bound a thirteenth century illuminated *Psalms of David* for St John Hornby. The book was bound in white pigskin with an all over floral pattern tooled in blind. There is a border of panels alternating a horn and bee, a rebus of the name 'Hornby'. The bookmarkers are of silk and coloured beads. This book later formed part of J. R. Abbey's library.³²



Queen Mary's Psalter, facsimile of 14th century Manuscript in the British Library, London 1912. Dark blue goatskin. Bound in 1912. (The Royal Library, Windsor). Illustration from Tidcombe, op.cit.p.142.

The year 1911 brought more ill health to Katharine. Letters between Cockerell and Stanbrook Abbey suggest that she lost several months of working time in that year. In March Katharine went to London for a spinal operation which was successful, but a month later she was dangerously ill as pneumonia and pleurisy set in. "Our dear Katie", wrote Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia,

"has had awful pain all the time and has borne it valiantly. In a letter I had from her this morning she says 'curious to say at my worst moments I couldn't (or wouldn't) think of spiritual things, and it fills me with dismay to think that after nearly fifty years of trying to subdue the flesh, yet in its weakness it got the better of my spirit'. Katie has lived a brave and unselfish life and has won the *silent applause of a host of good men and women*". In August Katharine was still reported to be "low and weak" and in October "far from well". By the following February she was again "full of vigour" and spent Shrove Tuesday with Dame Laurentia who had an ivory triptych on loan which she wanted to show to Katharine.³³

In 1912 the Trustees of the British Museum commissioned Katharine to bind a Psalter later presented to Queen Mary. Two years later the Trustees again commissioned Katharine, this time to bind *The Buildings of the British Museum* for presentation to King George V.³⁴

Books from these dozen productive years at the Eadburgha Bindery include Private Press books as well as ancient and modern manuscripts. Sydney Cockerell, Emery Walker and St. John Hornby were by far her most regular customers "making it seem as if they had their books bound by Katharine Adams as a matter of course".³⁵ or, as Sydney Cockerell would say, had their books 'Katie'd'.³⁶ Indeed Cockerell went so far as to say that he would have married Katie but for the fact that she being five years older than he, they could not have had children by the time he could afford to marry.³⁷

Katharine's Adams' life changed in 1912. The Art Workers' Guild excursion was in Sicily that year and the Master of the Art Workers' Guild, E.P. Warren, brought his friend Edmund Webb along. Edmund was an amateur astronomer and Warren jokes in a letter that the

engagement a year later between Katharine and Edmund was due to all those flat-topped
mofs and star-gazing opportunities.³⁸ Katharine and Edmund had met, but 1912 was not yet
over and a week before Christmas Katharine's mother, Catherine Mary Adams, died, aged
eighty two. Sydney Cockerell reinforces the suggestion that Katharine's mother had long been
an invalid by writing to Katherine "death always leaves us dumb and wondering even when
it is expected", and to Dame Laurentia "a great blow to Katie now but when she gets used to
it it should be a cause for thankfulness".³⁹

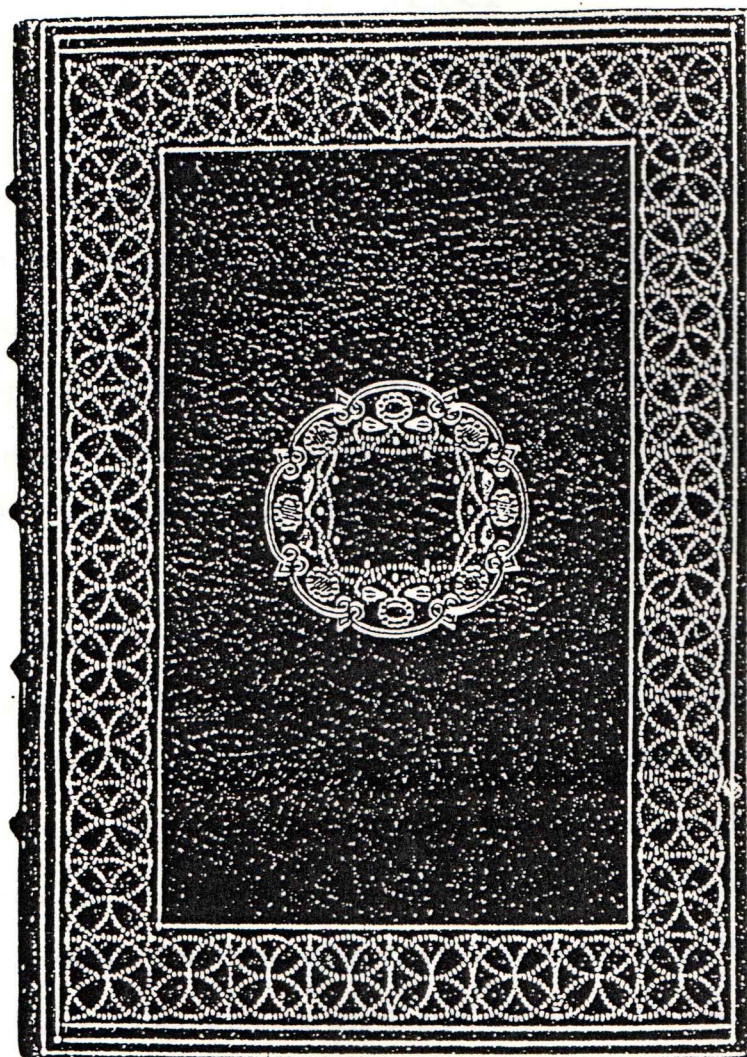


Illustration from Maggs Bros. Ltd. Catalogue, 1951.
The Bodleian Library.

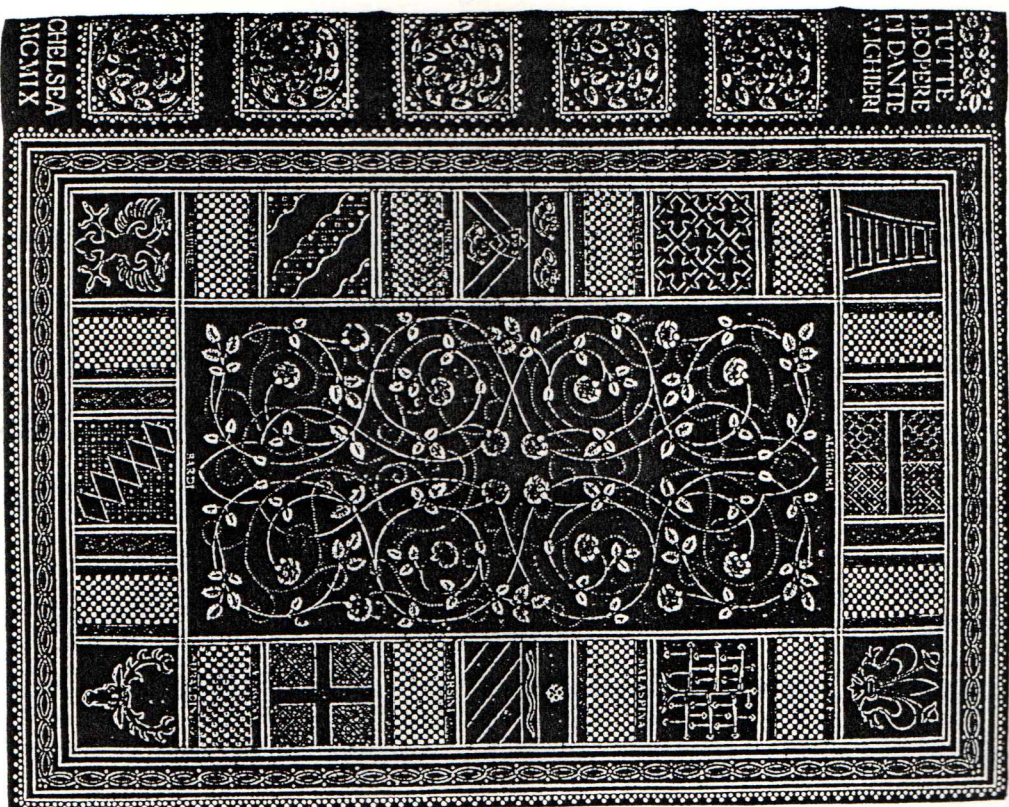
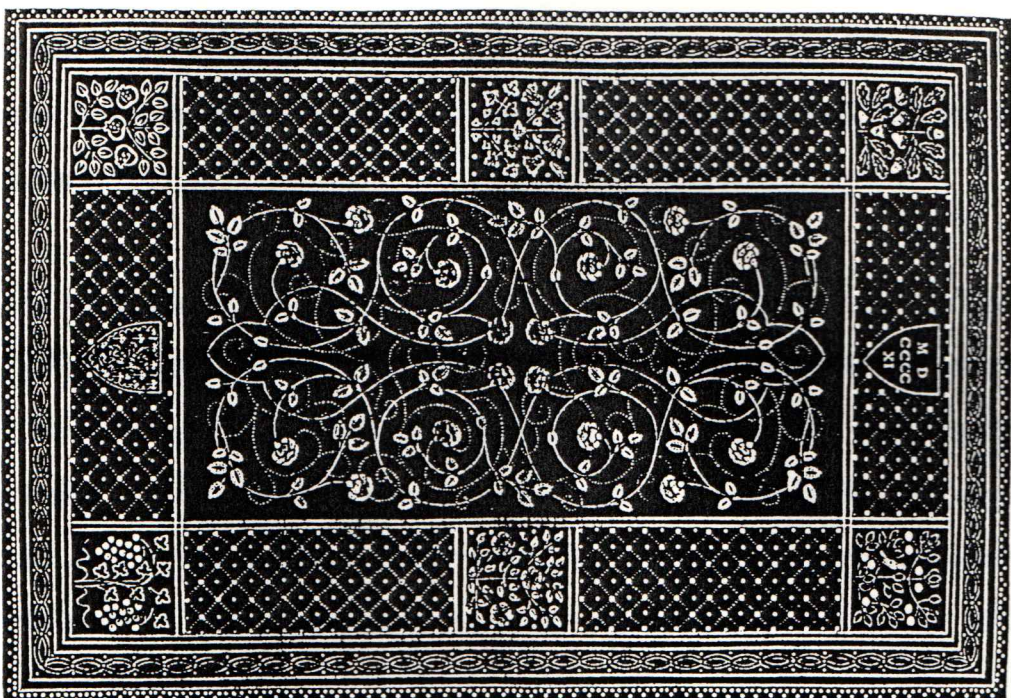
CHAPTER FOUR

Star-Gazer¹ 1913-1929

"Have you heard the great news that Katie is to marry a very nice man named Edmund Webb, a fine scholar and very learned about the stars and the songs and ways of birds?" asked Sydney Cockerell.² Dame Laurentia replied: "I am delighted to hear of her happiness, and I hope Mr. Webb is as nice and good as she deserves her husband should be. She has been accustomed to considering others at her own cost, and now I hope she is going to be repaid for all her devotedness. I have had such a nice, happy letter from her".³

Edmund James Webb's father, the Reverend Benjamin Webb, was Vicar of St. Andrew's, Wells Street, London, and Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral. The Reverend Webb had been recommended for St. Andrew's by Mr. Gladstone and continued there until his death in 1885. Under Benjamin Webb St. Andrew's became known for the musical excellence of its services and for the various classes and organisations which he set up, including probably the first crèche in London.⁴ The three Webb boys were all pupils at Westminster School. Edmund was admitted to the school in 1864, aged Eleven. In 1870 he was captain of the school and in 1871 went to Christchurch, Oxford, where he gained a B.A. in 1875.⁵ In January of 1875 Edmund was admitted as a student member of Lincoln's Inn but did not proceed to be called to the bar; in June of 1892 he had his name taken off the books of the Society.⁶ Edmund Webb is the author of *A History of England for the use of Schools and Colleges* (1889)⁷ and of the astronomical part of the *Revised Greek Lexicon* (1919)⁸. At the time of his marriage Edmund's address was Burghclere, Hampshire.⁹

The reaction of Katharine's friends to the proposed marriage seems to have been entirely positive — with Sydney Cockerell and Emery Walker confessing to a few jealous tears.¹⁰ Katharine chose for her wedding the 25th of November, St. Katharine's Day, 1913. The ceremony was performed by her father in St. Laurence's Church, Weston-sub-Edge; the wit-



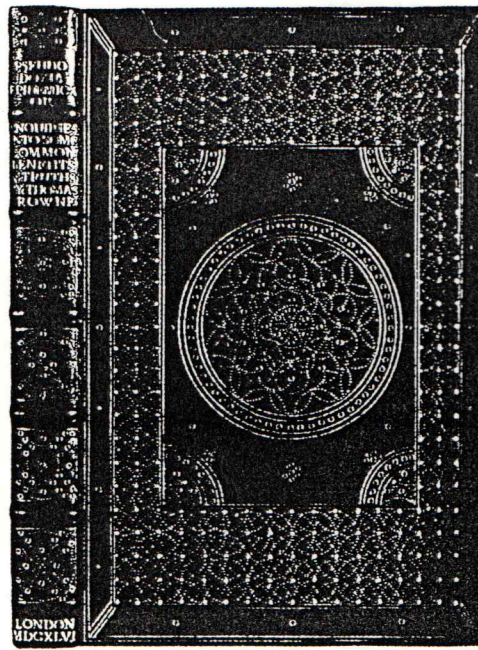
Tutte le Opere di Dante Alighieri, Ashendene Press, 1909. Blue pigskin. Bound in 1910.
(Mancroft Library). Illustration from *The Studio* 1914.

nesses being Katharine's brother Dacres, Edmund's brother Philip, and Charles Henry Daniel D.D.¹¹ At the time of the wedding Edmund was sixty-one years old and Katharine ten years younger. Sydney Cockerell reported that Katharine's wedding "went off very well and she looked like a queen", he added that Mr. and Mrs. Webb then went to Cornwall.¹² It is very likely that Katharine and Edmund returned to Katharine's old home in her father's rectory; certainly Katharine continued to use her Broadway bindery, until, as she said, "the war put an end to all that".¹³

The Studio of 1914 showed two books of Katharine's. The Ashendene Press's *Tutte le Opere di Dante Alighieri* is probably the "lovely Ashendene Dante" shown to Dame Laurentia in 1910. "The Dante", wrote Sydney Cockerell in agreement, "is a masterpiece both of printing and of binding".¹⁴ This binding is of blue pigskin with an heraldic border enclosing a panel of a floral design and a background of pointillé. The flower tool seems to be the same as one used in her 1909 Persian drawings; the acorn and oak leaves were on the 1907 Tennyson and the little bird appeared on later bindings accompanied by his mate. The Hornby arms are amongst those on the binding. The second book illustrated in *The Studio* is also from the Ashendene Press. P. Vergili Maroni *Opera*, printed in 1910. The main decoration is the Hornby arms and the binding shows a cool, calm use of Katharine's pointillé.

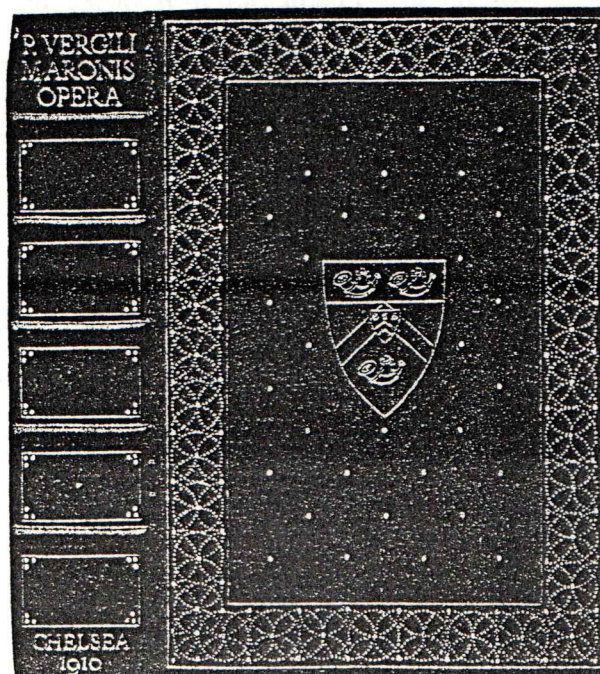
An order book for 1911-15 records work for Lady Bathurst, E. W. Bulkley, Mrs. Millet, May Morris, T. de Navarro, Gordon Russell, Mrs. Russell, Yates Thompson and, of course, Cockerell, Hornby and Walker. This order book also has a request from George Bernard Shaw that Katharine bind a rough proof of 'Fanny's First Play' "in some cheap and pretty not to say tawdry — binding suitable for a trumpery present".¹⁵

In August of 1914 Sydney Cockerell travelled to Paris to 'rescue' some of Katharine's books which had been on exhibition there when the war broke out. It was not, however, only Katharine's books which concerned Cockerell. St. John Hornby wrote to Sydney in March of 1914 "I am very glad that you are showing Mrs. Cockerell's books at the Paris Arts and Crafts Show. I was not sending any of my 'Song of Songs', but I will certainly show the one with



Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudoxia Epidemica*, 1646. Bound goatskin. Bound in 1912. (Wormsley Library). Illustration from Tidcombe, op.cit.p.138.

P. Vergili Maronis Opera, Ashendene Press, 1910. Bound in 1913. Illustration from The Studio 1914.



the seraphs to make your arrangement symmetrical. I feel less nervous about sending it, as I hear you are going over to arrange the books yourself and keep the key of the case".¹⁶

Christmas of 1914 brought an outbreak of scarlet fever to Broadway and it is possible that Katharine caught it; early in 1915 Dame Laurentia said that Katharine "came yesterday to fetch the 'Worcester manuscript' - she seems very weak still". At Whitsuntide Katharine and Edmund revisited Stanbrook Abbey to deliver the 'Worcester manuscript' newly bound in red pigskin.¹⁷

In July of 1915 Katharine wrote to Mr. Madan, "I was sorry you did not find my workshop in all its usual glory, but removed to a restricted upper chamber instead of the roomy old room downstairs, but such a purely luxurious business as mine has been hard hit by the war, and most of poor St. Eadburgha's Bindery has been let to a vulgar American for Gold. Alas!" In the same letter Katharine told Mr. Madan that she had "no stamp of St. Eadburgha and The Broadway. It is an idea and I will think of it, but I think from what little I know of her, she followed the narrow way".¹⁸ The following year she described to Mr. Madan how she now sometimes added as part of her signature "a little golden webb (sic), but I have not had a tool made of it yet and I cannot work it in dots small enough to use inside a book".¹⁹ Possibly the last binding to come from the Eadburgha Bindery was a volume of letters between Warrington Taylor and Philip Webb which Katharine bound for Emery Walker. Sydney Cockerell wrote to her on November 17th, 1915, "The Warrington-Taylor volume is very nice. If you have not yet sent the bill to Walker send it to me. He is hard up now and I might just as well pay".²⁰ By Christmas of that same year Katharine had let the whole of the Broadway house and she and Edmund, along with the Reverend Webb, moved to The Rectory, Noke, near Islip in Oxford. Katharine's father's "sudden and serious illness" was, no doubt, the reason for the eighty two year-old Reverend Adams' retirement from Weston-sub-Edge.²¹

Due to the move to Noke and her father's illness, Katharine was more than a year in carrying out a commission for Mr. Madan. She explained to him in June of 1916 that the book



Walter Pater *An Imaginary Portrait*, The Daniel Press. Olive green pigskin. Bound in 1916. (Bodleian Library). Illustration from the Bodleian Library.

had been bound before Christmas and that there was only some tooling to do. She added "I am very sorry at leaving my delightful bindery, and have here only a very small room, and no fellow workers, but I hope now we are more or less settled down that I shall be able to go on with my work a little".²² It was November before the book was delivered. Katharine advised Mr. Madan to visit the Arts and Crafts Exhibition at Burlington House where she exhibited two cases of "my best books", including a recent work, the *Morte d'Arthur* from the Ashendene Press.²³

These two books of which Katharine wrote to Mr. Madan, his commissioned binding of Walter Pater's *An Imaginary Portrait* and Katharine's uncommissioned work on *Morte d'Arthur*, are as extraordinarily different to one another as were the two bindings which had been shown in *The Studio* of 1909; namely the old Persian drawings and Gordon Russell's manuscript *Ode to a Nightingale*. Of these four bindings *An Imaginary Portrait* and *Ode to a Nightingale* are the less successful. They are among the least successful of any of Katharine's bindings which I have seen; the binding on Emery Walker's fifteenth century *Horae B.V.M.*, bound about 1916, is another which I would include in this group. The clumsiness in the pointillé work on *Ode to a Nightingale* is repeated on *An Imaginary Portrait*, bound seven years later. The images on these bindings are uneasy, their design mediocre compared to the best of Katharine's work. Katharine is known for her pointillé designs, but my impression is that the pointillé works best in association with other tools as on the *Doves Bible* or on her 1934 binding of *Ecclesiasticus*.

When Katharine Adams wrote to Mr. Madan in July of 1915 to accept his commission, *An Imaginary Portrait*, she said "I shall be delighted to bind your book for you in Olive Green and with Pointillé design and I will do my best with initials 'half revealed and half concealed'".²⁴ Mr. Madan had asked for Pointillé and had given a restricting brief, more, he had given a brief which asked that Katharine play tricks with his initials: Adams bindings have a quietness, a serenity alien to the playing of tricks. In a later letter Katharine explained to Mr. Madan how she managed to make the initials half revealed and half concealed, she said "the effect of the dotted background is quite intentional. The effect of light on the gold can be



Horae B.V.M., Fifteenth century.. Red goatskin with green silk case. Bound in 1916. (British Library). Illustration from Tidcombe, op.cit.p51.

varied by the angle at which the tool is used. That background was worked with the book upside-down, if you turn it so you will see the difference".²⁵

The *Morte d'Arthur* which Katharine told Mr. Madan about, and the 1909 binding on old Persian drawings, could not be more different to *An Imaginary Portrait*. The old Persian drawings has a design swirling but controlled; an overall abstract pattern of flowers based on the traditional design device of the book's rectangular shape divided into quarters and repeated. The *Morte d'Arthur* has comparable skill but a completely different design. The design on *Morte d'Arthur* is pictorial, illustrative;²⁶ it has a quality shared by *A Little Book of Life and Death*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Queen Mary's Psalter* and *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung*. Sydney Cockerell talked of having books "Katied"; for me these books are "Katied".²⁷ Katharine Adams best designs are calm and still, but never stiff. They have a strong presence but do not ask to be removed from the book and displayed as paintings.²⁸ They are content to be applied art. They would not stand as paintings, but some would work as embroidery; also an applied art.

Katharine grew up a frequent visitor to the Morris household, the embroiderer May Morris was her friend. Sydney Cockerell, Emery Walker, Dame Luarentia and others of Katharine's friends and colleagues had countless pieces of art from the past through their hands, much of which Katharine would have seen. The Arts and Crafts Movement looked back at traditional design and excellent craftwork rather than forward to the art movements in Europe at the time: while Katharine bound *Tutte le Opera di Dante Alighieri* Roger Fry was busy with the Omega Workshops;²⁹ Mondrian was painting while *Morte d'Arthur* was being bound;³⁰ the Bauhaus was years in existence before *A Little Book of Life and Death* won Katharine a gold medal.³¹ Katharine's early works such as *Outlines and Miscellaneous Studies* show a touch of Art Nouveau and the influence of Sarah Prideaux. Apart from these few, Katharine Adams' bindings owe nothing to contemporary art movements: the strongest influence on Katharine's bindings came from deep within herself.

Katharine sent Mr. Madan a description of the *Morte d'Arthur* hoping, perhaps, that he might buy it. Katharine wrote:



Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Ashendene Press, 1913. Black goatskin, painted. Bound in 1916. (Bancroft Library). Illustration from Sotheby's Catalogue, 1944.

"the *Morte d'Arthur* printed by St. John Hornby at the Ashendene Press is bound by Katharine Adams at Noke, a small village near Oxford. As the name of Noke is derived from "An Oak" the design used is a large forest oak in gold tooling. On the branches hang the shields of "Kyng Arthur" and eight of his principal knights, tooled in gold and silver and painted in gay colours. Beneath the tree are a Hart and Hind and at the foot of the tree is an heraldicly treated beast. Mentioned in the book as "The Questyng Beest" having a serpent's head, a leopard's body, the tail and buttocks of a lion and hart's feet. The foreground has a row of Columbines with rabbits squatting among them. The edges are gauffred (sic.). The top edge has the printer's Coat of Arms and a horn and bee, a play on his name "Hornby", and the Spanish quotation from Don Quixote "Qualquiera historia de cavallero andante ha de causar questo y maravilla". The fore-edge has three oak trees in medallions and the following anagram of 41 letters "Noke is an oak: behold a forest. Trees of kingly kind. By skill of Katharine so, for Noke at Noke designed". The tail edge has the date of binding, the sign KA, and a golden webb (sic.) and "of the making of many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh". The back cover is not yet finished".³² Sotheby's catalogue of 1944 described the back cover as having a "forest of trees...fully gilt."³³ A fox stalks rabbits on the back cover. The front cover has the little bird perched on one of the shields accompanied by his mate in her nest hidden among the branches. The *Morte d'Arthur* had such impact that fifty years after Katharine sold the book in 1944 her maid was able to describe the volume vividly and with great admiration.³⁴

Sydney Cockerell gives us another glimpse into Katharine's private life in 1917 by telling Dame Laurentia that Katharine is having "very trying times".³⁵ Katharine's father's health is the most likely cause of this anxiety.

In August of 1920 while staying in Dorchester with her in-laws Katharine

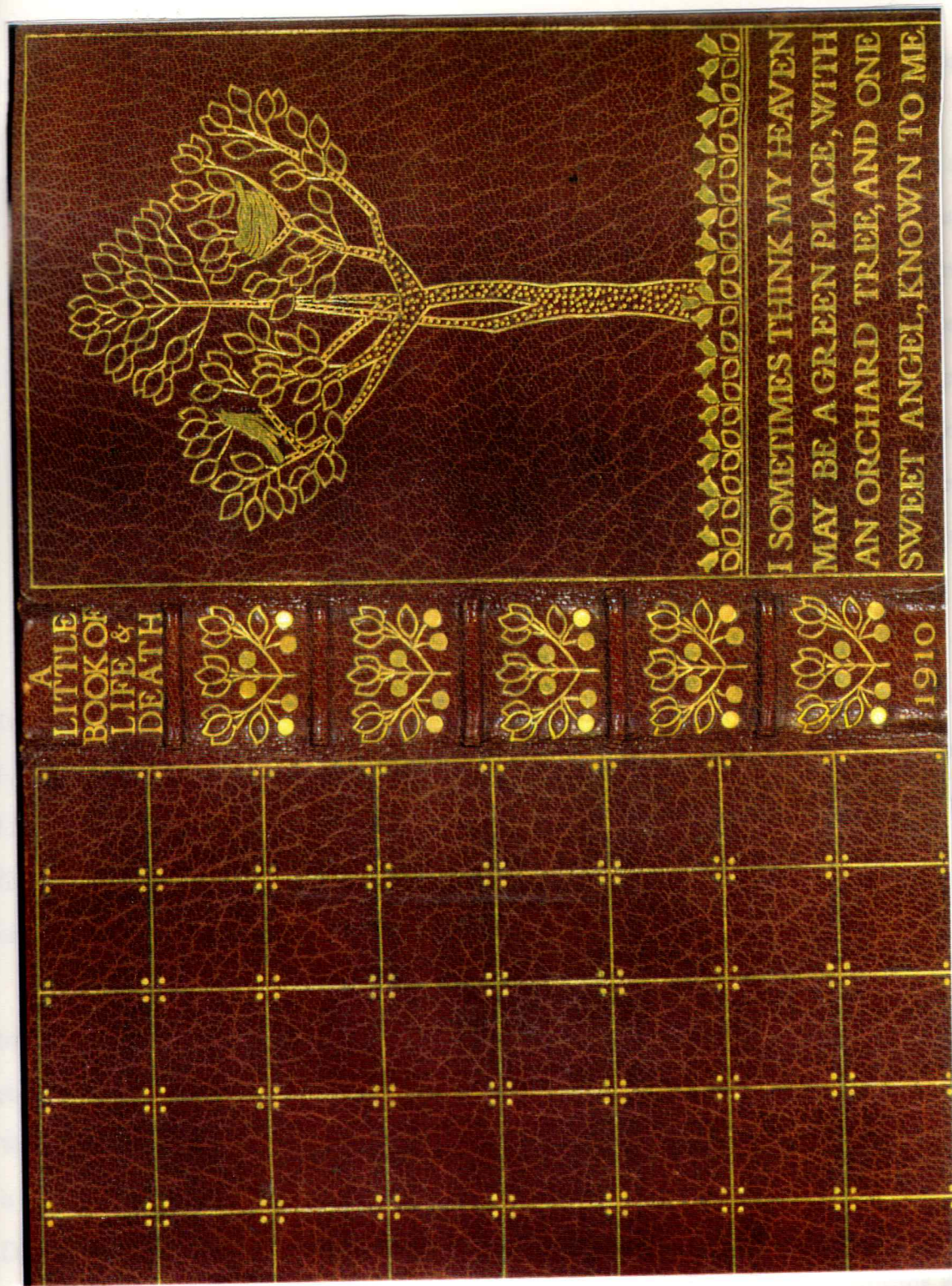
"ventured to accept an invitation from Mrs. Hardy to tea, and with a beating heart penetrated into the very secret and sacred circle of the great man. I was received by Mrs. Hardy and Wessex [the dog], and was shortly after joined by the Man himself. I looked

at him with curiosity. I think it is thirty years since I saw him and talked with him before, and the impression that was with me was of a rough-looking man, dressed very unlike his fellows, with a very keen, alert face and a decided accent of some kind. Now I see a refined, fragile, gentle little old gentleman, with a rounder looking head, as he has but little hair, a gentle and smooth voice and polished manners. He was very charming to me ... Mrs. Hardy was much younger than I expected to see and the most melancholy person I have ever seen. I think she smiled once, but the smile only expressed sadness".³⁶

Katharine bound more books for Cockerell in 1920, "the manuscripts of Lady Burne-Jones into a second volume. Miss Guest's letters are now similarly enshrined".³⁷ Cockerell boasted "I have now ninety-three Katie bindings and must not have less than a hundred if I am to retain my self respect".³⁸

The following February Katharine father's died aged eighty eight, and was buried in Weston-sub-Edge. Sydney Cockerell wrote to Dame Laurentia "It is difficult for them to decide how to order their lives now that her old father has at last departed", and in October Cockerell "spend two nights with the Katies recently at Noke. They have to leave their house this month and have not yet found another. Katie was her old self and as nice as ever".³⁹ Edmund and Katharine's new home was Waltons, Islip, near Oxford, where they were to live until 1929, and where Katharine again set up a bindery for herself, continuing to exhibit with the Arts and Crafts Society.

Sydney Cockerell told of Katharine's health and travels during 1922 and 1923 in his letters to Dame Laurentia, "Katie Adams and her husband come to us for Easter",⁴⁰ then in May, "Katie was very poorly. First a sprained ankle, and then some sort of chill. She is home again today after wandering to Derbyshire and Leicester. They let their house and the weather was constantly against them".⁴¹ In September Sydney Cockerell wrote excitedly to Dame Laurentia "and who should we encounter [at a little community for tramps near Dorchester run by some Anglican Franciscans] but Miss Hampshire, for a long while Katie Adams' assis-



A Little Book of Life and Death, 1910, Red-brown leather. Bound c.1925.
(Bodleian Library). Illustration from the Bodleian Library.

cant, who is now cook to the treasurer of the Brotherhood!!”⁴² In October Cockerell spent “two nights with Katie at Islip”⁴³ and reported in April of 1923 that “Katie is very well. I stayed a night at Islip and she came into Oxford the next morning to meet Mr. Walker”.⁴⁴

In April 1924 Katharine, now sixty-two years old, began to wind down her bookbinding business. One of her last books was for Sydney Cockerell and she wrote:

“I’m glad the book arrived safely. As to price you must accept it as an offering, and a very poor one, to friendship. I kept the book eighteen months and your patience has been very great. I have now only Hornby’s last book to bind, which will be my last. I am not at all well, and my bookbinding strength is failing or even already in the past tense. I suppose I have worked fairly hard for one who was never very robust, and has perhaps felt rather keenly the ups and downs of life, but my bookbinding career has been full of joy and delight and wonderful friends, and my life is now peaceful and happy, sheltered by the devoted love of one of the best of men. I think I shall sometimes try to do a little binding for my own amusement”.⁴⁵

Katharine won a silver medal the following year in Paris for her binding of *A Little Book of Life and Death*. This happy little binding rests in the Bodleian Library. It is signed with Katharine’s tool but not dated. The two birds from the *Morte d’Arthur* give an idea of the vast difference in scale between the two books, but there is also a similarity about them, a sureness and joy in their design.

In their letters Sydney Cockerell and Dame Laurentia again told of Katharine’s health, travels and family anxieties between 1925 and 1929. In February of 1925 Cockerell wrote: “Katie Webb has been dangerously ill these last days with pneumonia”;⁴⁶ a month later and “Katie is off to Sidmouth as soon as the weather allows her to travel”.⁴⁷ In August Cockerell told Dame Laurentia “Katie Webb is in Norfolk — we saw her on her way through Cambridge. Her arm is still painful. It seems that the surgeon set it none too well”.⁴⁸ The following year Katharine went abroad and “speaks a little more kindly of Switzerland but all the world is getting spoilt”.⁴⁹ In October of 1928 Cockerell “met Katie Webb who is having a bad time nurs-

ing a dying sister-in-law".⁵⁰ The following Spring "poor Katie Webb has been terribly bad with conjunctivitis".⁵¹

In the middle of 1929 Katharine and Edmund planned to move from Islip to St. Briavels in Gloucestershire. Katharine was sixty-seven and Edmund seventy-seven.



Cherries, St. Briavels,
Glostershire. View of the
house from the presumed
location of the Bindery.
(photo. Sylvia Thomas,
1996).

CHAPTER FIVE

Cherries

1930-1952

Set high above the River Wye and close to the Forest of Dean, Cherries, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire seems to have had everything that Katharine and Edmund could desire. Apart from the natural beauties of river and woodland Cherries' position on the hilltop gave an excellent view of the whole sky for Edmund's star-gazing, and for Katharine's bindery a small house in the garden.¹

Katharine and Edmund moved into Cherries with their housekeeper, Lylia Minnie Collett, who had been with them for years.² They also employed a cook, and a local girl as parlour maid. This local girl, Berenice, now Mrs. Morgan, has vivid memories of her time with Mr. and Mrs. Webb.³ The seven acres of garden, which included terraces, large lawns, flowerbeds, rockeries, a kitchen garden and orchard demanded that the Webbs also employ a gardener.⁴

Mrs. Morgan describes Katharine as being tall and well built, with a lovely smile. She could be "strikingly lovely" in a favourite blue dress which she often wore for dinner. Edmund, a "nice old boy", changed into formal evening dress for even everyday dinners which were lengthy affairs. They had a cat called Peggy, made friends nearby, travelled, entertained, and adored one another. One of their favourite pastimes was to walk in the woods and see the birds and animals.

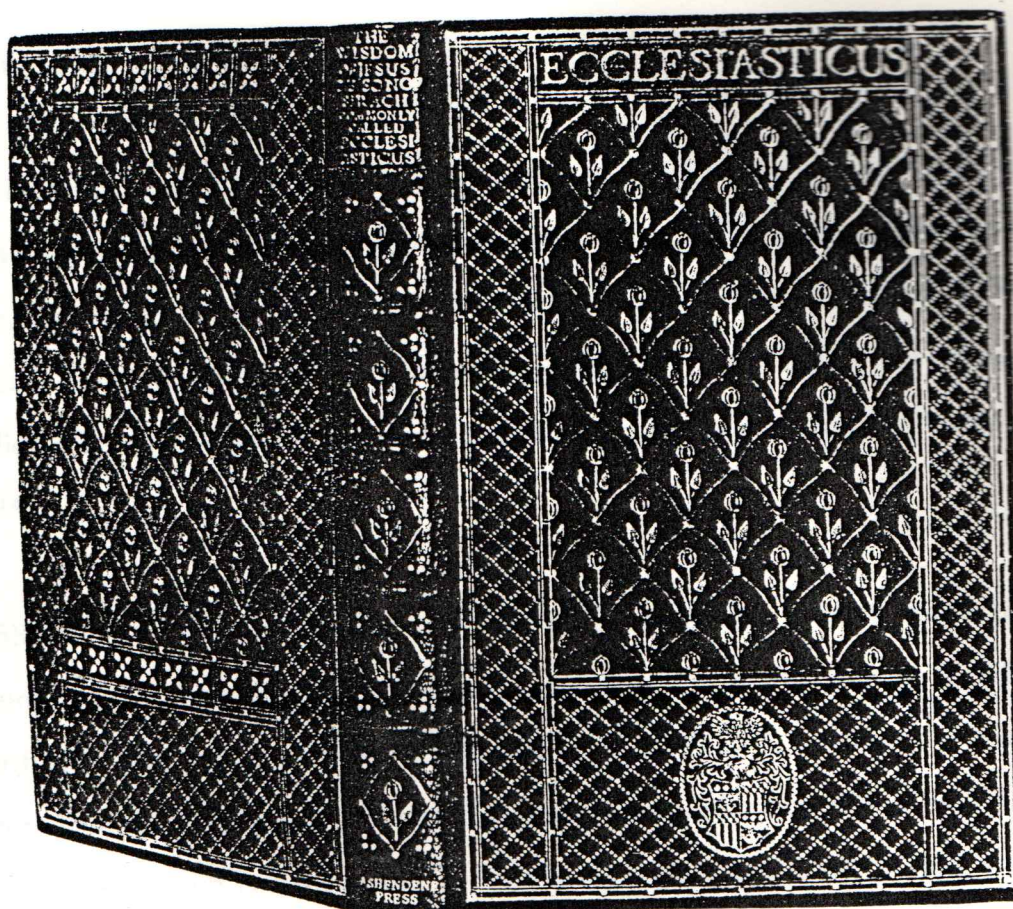
Katharine's bindery at Cherries was a two-roomed bungalow built of timber with a corrugated iron roof, a porch entrance and big windows looking across the valley.⁵ The bindery was used at irregular intervals, usually in warmer weather. Edmund's study had its own entrance from the garden and a balconied window overlooking the valley. Arthur Thomas, who lives nearby, remembers coming to the house with a group of boys to look through Mr. Webb's telescope set up on this balcony.⁶

The house itself is not particularly large considering that two servants slept there and had their own separate lives within Katharine and Edmund's home. Servants were essential in this house of solid fuel, oil lamps and water from wells in the garden. The drawing room had a turf fire; Katharine and Edmund's bedroom was heated with an oil stove. There was no electricity in Cherries during Katharine's lifetime. Sydney Cockerell gave the Webb's new home his full approval when he visited there in July: "you can't think how beautiful or in what amazing surroundings of river and wooded hills".⁷ The guest bedroom, like Katharine and Edmund's had an uninterrupted view across the garden to the River Wye and Wales beyond.

Katharine's health was again of concern to Sydney Cockerell; he wrote to Dame Laurentia in 1930 that "there is no one quite like [Emery Walker] in all this world. Nor anyone like Katie. Did she tell you that she was very much of an invalid — kept in bed till twelve each day, etc. etc. with what we hope is not a deadly form of that horrid malady pernicious anaemia. It is a sad business at best — but of course she is brave about it."⁸ In September Katharine was well enough to go on a Mediterranean cruise with Edmund, Cockerell and one of Edmund's brothers.⁹

Once a month Katharine would take a taxi to Cheltenham for shopping and on alternative Sundays the Webbs and their friends taxied one another to church. Visitors came; and Katharine sang to the piano played by Edmund's brother Philip.¹⁰ A myrtle bush flourished outside the front door, grown from a sprig in Katharine's wedding bouquet, and Katharine made for herself a bog-garden.

In June 1931 Katharine went to the opening of the Courtauld Galleries in the Fitzwilliam Museum where Sydney Cockerell was Director. She later wrote to him saying "you, my dear Sydney, were as ever a perfect host and friend. As I stood between you and Walker I felt that you were both so bound up with my life that I could not live without you, and yet how seldom I see either of you now that our paths lie so far apart, but I offer up many a thanksgiving for such a friendship and such inspiration as you have brought me".¹¹



Ecclesiasticus, Ashendene Press, 1932/3. Golden-brown goatskin. Bound in 1934. (Wormsley Library). Illustration from An Exhibition of Modern English and French Bindings from the collection of J.R. Abbey, The Arts Council, 1949.

J. R. Abbey, in 1934, commissioned from the seventy-two year-old Katharine a binding on one of the twenty-five copies printed on vellum of the Ashendene Press's Ecclesiasticus. This is one of Katharine's most dignified bindings yet its overall pattern of flowers also expresses a quiet joy; J. R. Abbey's coat-of-arms is on the front cover. This book was exhibited at the Arts Council, London, in 1949.¹²

Katharine visited Lady Laurentia in 1935, telling Sydney Cockerell "I had a most delightful two hours with Laurentia, and was received at the door by Teresa, open-armed and affectionate, who pressed me to her bosom with kisses".¹³ Sydney Cockerell also heard of the visit from Lady Laurentia who said of Katharine "I admire her fine character and courage. It is splendid to find one whom life has not treated tenderly so young and fresh in heart and outlook".¹⁴

In 1938 May Morris died. Katharine went to the funeral and then in 1940 read a "perfectly charming paper" in honour of May Morris at a special meeting of the Women's Guild of Arts of which Katharine was now President.¹⁵ Katharine said of May "... at times she revealed to me a turbulent spirit at war with so much that is imperfect and unbeautiful in life".¹⁶ Sydney Cockerell had tea with her afterwards "she has many tribulations as her brother and other members of her family are penniless and she does not know how she can go on living at St. Briavels when there are so many demands on her purse".¹⁷ Cockerell went to stay in St. Briavels in August 1940 "to spend two days with our dear Katie on this hilltop overlooking the river Wye. The searchlights were wonderful last night and a bomb woke us all up just before 2.00a.m.. Katie and the maid declare that their beds rocked".¹⁸

Another war. This one bringing two small children, Katharine's grandnephew and grand-niece, into the Webb's life. It cannot have been an easy adjustment for the young or the elderly to fit this extra two into a house so calmly ordered. The children attended the local school.¹⁹ Money was becoming scarce, help in the house was hard to find and old age was taking its toll on Katharine and Edmund. For Christmas of 1943 Katharine wrote to Sydney Cockerell:

"the fact is I am a very slow old woman, very forgetful, very stupid, nearly bent double and getting deaf, and besides doing all the cooking I have to mend the clothes and stoke the fires and have a great deal to do for poor Edmund who is rapidly going blind, though the oculist tried to cheer him up. But I managed to do a half binding the other day, which I much enjoyed. It made me feel quite young and gay and filled me with happy memories. What fun we had in those past days. Clement is staying with us for Christmas.²⁰ Kind friends have sent us food, so we have got a goose which I thought was an extinct species these days, and a chicken, and two of the farmers have given me a dozen eggs between them, so we shall certainly have too much food to eat and shall go into the highways and hedges and compel people to come in".²¹

In March, of 1944 Katharine again wrote to Sydney Cockerell "I wonder so much what is happening to all our friends in London in these horrible days of raids and hatred and slaughter. We are very cold here, wind and fog, and the sound of many fleets of planes overhead".²²

Times must have been extremely hard to make Katharine think of selling her beloved books: in November she wrote to Sydney:

"Have you written my Post Obit for The Times? I think it will be wanted soon. Mr. Hobson said the van would call for my books, so I got them in order and made a catalogue.²³ The van was to call from Gloucester on Saturday, but did not turn up till Tuesday afternoon when two hideous ruffians came and carried off all my books (without even a paper round them) with filthy hands, piling up the books as they seized them off the shelves, with a nice white pigskin binding on the top, on which they rested their black unshaven chins. They just stuck them anyhow in the van amongst what appeared to be a heap of old sacking. I should think they are all scratched and dirty and their poor gold edges ruined. I really felt inclined to cry. I said I had better give them a proper list which I had ready, but they wouldn't have it, and the whole transaction was over in ten minutes, and off they went. I have sent all my private-press books (even those which were given me by Walker, Hornby and Mrs. Morris, etc., and my heart is broken quite in two) for the necessity is dire".²⁴ In another letter that same month Katharine says:

"but alas, I am wearing out. This last week I have had three reminders that a stroke may strike me to the ground, for the constant fatigue, anxiety and work is I suppose beyond my eighty two years. My head is so terribly confused, and the house and everything in it is in a muddle".²⁵ Sotheby's sale in December, of which Katharine's books were a part, was a great success for her, bringing in about £2,000.²⁶ Sydney Cockerell was at the sale and wrote immediately to Katharine "...the Malory in its own binding fetched £74 and in your splendid binding £370, which I think ought to make you a proud woman".²⁷ Katharine and Edmund's financial worries were ended.

In July of 1945 Sydney Cockerell got his books back from their "war-time lairs" and told Katharine what a pleasure it was to handle her books again. "I have nearly a hundred of them, and though but a few are patterned with tooling, the fine taste expended on the very humblest of them makes the whole series a delight and a very precious possession. I wonder how many decades will pass before any future collector will be able to get his treasures so perfectly and appropriately bound. I have been immensely fortunate in having such a binder and also such a very dear friend".²⁸

Edmund died on November 18th, 1945. He was ninety-three years old. The following June Sydney Cockerell visited Katharine. He told Lady Laurentia that he

"spent two nights at St. Briavels, and although our Dear Katie pulled herself together and was much more like her old self than I feared to find her, I came away in rather low spirits about her. We had some very good and rather merry talks, but she has been hit very hard and I could see that she was suffering acutely not only from failing strength but from intense loneliness which is anything but mitigated by the presence of her old assistant "Hamp". This good lady threw up everything in order to come to Katie's rescue, but her isolation for thirteen years has turned her into a different person. She has been for all that time in the wilds of Canada and she does not fit too well into her previous environment. She is moreover terribly deaf and not in the best of health. Instead of waiting on Katie she may at anytime need to be waited on herself. She has nowhere else to go and Katie realises with dismay that she is saddled with her for the rest of her life. I feel extremely disquietened about the whole situation — and also quite powerless to amend it".²⁹

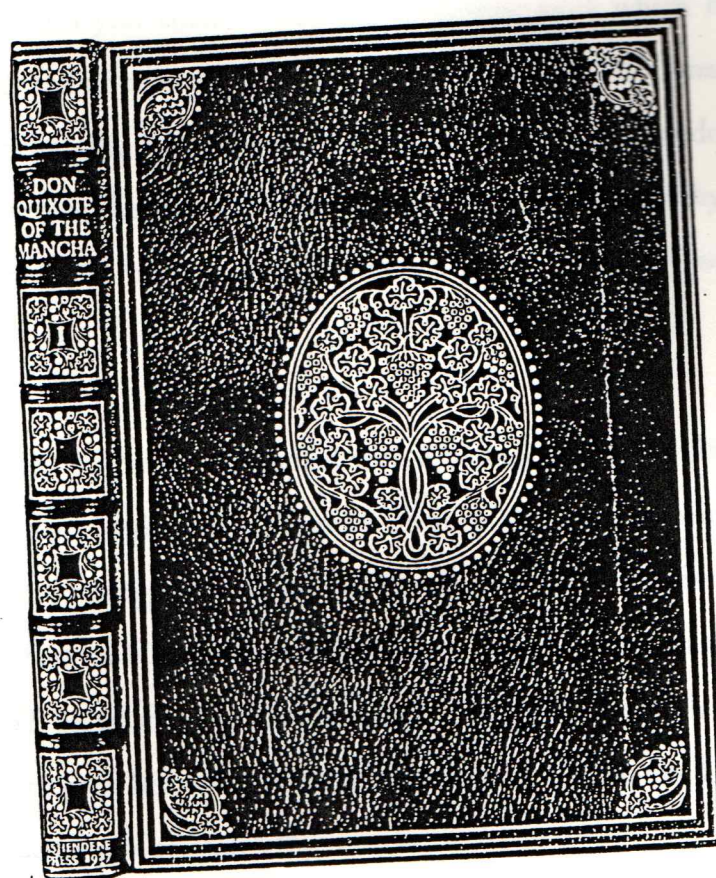
The visit seems to have done Katharine a lot of good because she wrote:

"My dear, dear, dearest Sydney, 'I have found a good many account books in the Bindery, and am astonished at the amount of books we bound or mended, including ninety-nine for Fairfax Murray, over seventy for St. John Hornby, twenty-seven for Walker. I find I bound eleven Song of Songs at £1 each for Hornby in 1903. I have not looked through all the account books as I am quite alone today and have some household work. Sydney, dear, I cannot tell you what a joy it was to see you again, and to feel your kind hand in mine. You are my oldest and best intimate friend and what lovely times and wonderful friends we rejoiced in all those years ago. When in Chepstow I called on my doctor, and he is most definitely against my going to London. He says I have already had two warnings of a stroke and it might be the end. I said 'does it matter'. It would be better for me than this lonely helpless life, as I can't help weeping day and night, and no companion who wishes to be with me. He replied: 'do as you like but I won't consent!'"³⁰

Later in June Sydney Cockerell again wrote to Lady Laurentia:

"I have no news of Katie. This pack contains superlative bindings by her. She is certainly one of the great binders of our day. Her fame will increase steadily". However in September "our dear Katie is in fresh trouble. Her little house has been struck by lightning which tore off half the roof and did a lot of other damage. Do you think the Devil wants to take it out of old Hamp, who has been very industrious in Canada as a sort of evangelical she-parson? She helped Katie to collect the fire, which had been thrown out into the room by bricks falling down the chimney. But for this action I suppose the house would have burnt down".³¹

By October the house was "at last" watertight, and the following June Sydney Cockerell stayed at Cherries and thought Katharine "distinctly more active than she was a year ago. She is eighty five. She has a wonderful constitution, and she has got over the strain of her husband's long illness and death".³²



Cervantes, *Don Quixote of the Mancha*, (2. volumes), Ashendene Press, 1927. Green goatskin. Bound in 1947. (British Library). Illustration from Sotheby's Catalogue, 1948.

Katharine was indeed feeling better for in August she wrote to Mr. Ehrman "I have this very day been working on what I suppose must be my last binding as I am not quite sure that I shall see well enough perhaps to finish it".³³ The writing betrays a shaking hand but these two volumes of the Ashendene Press's *Don Quixote* (tooled by Sangorski and Sutcliffe) sold for £170 at Sotheby's a year later.³⁴ These bindings were work which Katharine made to please herself, a late and unexpected flowering from this determined woman. In July of 1948, just after the Sotheby sale, Katharine visited friends, going from London to Dover, from Dover to Lechlade, from Lechlade to Broadway travelling by bus and by car. "She is quite dauntless and is deterred by no risk and disaster from making her way from friend to friend".³⁵

June of 1951 brought Katharine to hospital with a broken thigh.³⁶ In August, Dacres died. Her handwriting that Christmas is "almost illegible".³⁷ The following August Sydney Cockerell said "I have had a pitiful account of our dear Katie — that she is nearly blind and very helpless. The faithful Hamp watches over her — but she is herself getting aged".³⁸ On October 15th, 1952, on what would have been Edmund's one hundredth birthday, Katharine Adams died. "What a great hearted and loveable woman she was," wrote Lady Laurentia, "her friendship was something to treasure".³⁹

Katharine Adams' long life brought her many friendships and gave us in excess of three hundred bindings.⁴⁰ The trust Katharine's clients had in her taste allowed her to treat their books as she felt best, resulting in bindings which have the ageless quality of any artwork produced from the heart. Illustrated here are twenty-three of Katharine's bindings, the earliest dated 1898 and the last almost fifty years later. Seeing these bindings together allows several qualities to emerge. Almost every binding has flowers or foliage yet they lack a superficiality which flowers can give; the reason being that Katharine's design ability and deep love of nature had combined to give her patterns a serious presence, they are floral not because flowers' prettiness may attract customers but because flowers are fundamental to Katharine's life. The images on the bindings are contained within a frame (sometimes narrow, sometimes broad), this frame connects Katharine to the generations of binders who went before her.⁴¹ The bindings are

rarely more than one colour: exceptions being the painted vellum *La Divina Commedia*, the old Persian drawings which is of red leather with the central panel inlaid in blue and *Morte d'Arthur* on which the shields are painted different colours onto the black leather. Any text on the upper cover is made to be part of the overall design, words do not leap distractingly from the binding but stay back on the same plane as the decoration. Katharine's tools are small so that her gilding is like a fine drawing upon the leather. The pattern and texture given to the bindings by the tooling is beautiful, from the simplicity of *P. Vergili Maronis Opera* to the complex set of textures on *Ecclesiasticus*. Where the image is contained within a shape such as on the Story of Sigurd the Volsung or on the *Don Quixote*, the relationship between the areas of tooling and of plain leather is most pleasing. Work must be excellent if one is to use simplicity and subtlety; Katharine Adams' work is excellent. These books have not been bound in the height of fashion but have been "Katied", to use Sydney Cockerell's term, and as such are the more durable aspect of her life, standing alongside her bog-garden; Peggy, the cat; Edmund; a favourite blue dress; or plans for a strawberry party.

Sydney Cockerell wrote Katharine Adams' obituary in which he said: "being gifted with exceptionally deft hands, as well as a rare sense of design and a determination to excel, she steadily mastered the craft and began to make a reputation. Wealthy patrons gave her carte blanche commissions which enabled her to employ her utmost powers on valuable printed books and manuscripts worthy of her skill . . . her popularity was not confined to artistic circles — for her great charm and keen sense of humour won her friends and admirers wherever she went".⁴²

INTRODUCTION FOOTNOTES

1. The British Arts and Crafts Movement, a module in the Foundation Level B.A. (Hons.) programme in Calligraphy and Bookbinding, Roehampton Institute, 1995.
2. McCarthy F. (1989) Eric Gill, London: Faber and Faber p.77.
3. Dr. M. Tidcombe's book Women Bookbinders (published in November 1996 by the British Library) appeared after my research was almost complete. Dr. Tidcombe gives the whereabouts of tantalising letters between Katharine Adams and Sydney Cockerell, letters spanning at least forty years: I have not read those letters. In first year study I wrote a 1,500 word essay on Katharine Adams; here is my third year 10,000 word dissertation — these letters ask for an even fuller treatment; there is a lot more yet to be found on Katharine Adams.
4. Sir Sydney Cockerell, secretary to William Morris between 1892 and 1896 and from 1898 Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge; was a friend of Katharine Adams. The quote is from a letter dated June 24, 1946 in Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester.
5. Darwin, C. (1859) The Origin of Species. Katharine Adams was born in 1862; she died in 1952 and three years later Sputnik One was launched. That same year, 1955, the Guild of Contemporary Bookbinders was formed, changing its name to Designer Bookbinders in 1968.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester, holds the correspondence between Katharine's friends, Sydney Cockerell and Dame Laurentia McLachlan O.S.B.. In a letter dated February 21, 1938 Sydney Cockerell says "our dear Katie Adams was seventy-six on Tuesday last".
Tidcombe (1996) o.cit.p. 131 gives November the twenty-fifth as Katharine's birthdate; this date was dedicated to St. Katharine: Katharine Adams chose it for her wedding day.
2. Little Farringdon Church, A Short History. (1985). Little Farringdon Parish.
3. Katharine Adams' address to the Women's Guild of Arts commemorating Mary Morris, March 1940.
Jenny Morris, 17 January 1861 — 16 July 1935: Mary Morris, 25 March, 1862 — 16 October 1938.
My thanks to Alan Crawford, author of C.R. Ashbee, Architect, Designer and Romantic Socialist, 1981, London and the pamphlet A Tour of Broadway and Chipping Campden, for generously sharing his unpublished research on Katharine Adams as well as his vast knowledge of who was who in the Broadway area.
4. Meynell, V. (1956) The Best of Friends, Further Letters to Sydney Cockerell p.49. Katharine Adams to Sydney Cockerell; November 4, 1934.
5. Katharine Adams' autobiographical contribution to Hobson, G.D. (1940) English Bindings, 1490-1940, in the Collection of J.R. Abbey p.180.. The "worn out battered A.B.C." which Morley gave to Katharine has been interpreted as a bookbinding primer in Tidcombe, M. (1996) Women Bookbinders 1880-1920, The British Library p.132; I feel that it may just as well have been a set of tools.
6. Who Was Who. 1951-1960.
7. Hobson, Op.Cit. p.180.
8. Ibid. P.180.

2 FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. The Times, March 22nd, 1933.
2. Nixon, H.M. (1979) *Five Centuries of English Bookbinding*, London, The Scolar Press, P.212.
3. Hobson, op.cit. pp 180. Four months study does not sound like a very long time but it works out at about eighty days. In comparison, over the three year B.A. Bookbinding programme, 'Principles of Bookbinding', 'Principles of Book Structure' and 'Advanced Bookbinding' add up to about seventy days; however, from the student's point of view there can be no comparison between the same number of days over four months and over three years.
4. Burdett, E. (1975) The Craft of Bookbinding, David and Charles p.261.
5. Nixon, H.M. (1956) Broxbourne Library, London. p.224. The binding Mr. Nixon illustrated is A Little Book of Life and Death.
6. Tidcombe, M. (1991) The Doves Bindery, London, p.64. Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson (1840-1922) left his career as a barrister in 1893 to take up Jane (Mrs. William) Morris's suggestion that he become a bookbinder. The Doves Bindery (1893) and the Doves Press (1900) were both set up by T. J. Cobden-Sanderson.
7. Hobson, op.cit. p.180.
8. Bodleian Library, Boxb. 51.8. Letter from Katharine Adams to Falconer Madan; November 7, 1916. Miscellaneous Studies is in the Bodleian Library.
9. It may be Katharine Adams' adherence to the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement with its emphasis on tradition which is responsible for her books being sewn on cords all through her life. The industrial Revolution produced a machine-woven tape which binders have increasingly used instead of cord on which to sew their books. The tape, being flat, means that the spine no longer has the design restriction imposed by the presence of the raised bands.
10. Franklin, C. (1991) The Private Presses, Scolar Press, p.26.
11. Katharine Adams' order books. My thanks to Alan Crawford for generously sharing his research. Mrs. Emily Daniel, wife of Charles Henry Daniel who ran the Daniel Press from about 1845 to 1903, was a friend of Katharine Adams. Mr. Bain had a shop in Haymarket, London SW1. F.S. Ellis was William Morris's publisher. Lady Cave was mother of the architect Walter Cave. Henry Richard Hope-Pinker was a sculptor and Master of the Art Workers' Guild in 1915. Montague Fordham (1864-1948) was Director of an Arts and Crafts Gallery at 9, Maddox Street, London W1 between 1899 and 1908.
12. Charles Henry St. John Hornby (1867-1946) established the Ashendene Press in 1894; he also had a collection of ancient manuscripts and early printed books. Emery Walker (1851-1933) was a process engraver and typographical expert: his expertise was crucial to the setting up of William Morris's Kelmscott Press and T.J. Cobden-Sanderson's Dove Press.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. Miss Doris Court, a local historian in Weston-sub-Edge, has kindly sent her memories of the Adams family. Miss Court's grandfather was parish clerk and Fulford Adams officiated at the wedding of Miss Court's parents in 1912. The Reverend Adams was remembered by Miss Court's father as being "small and pernickety, a studious man immersed in his books". Miss Court says that "the minutes of the Vestry meetings give little away, being short and limited mainly to confirmation of accounts". Before Fulford Adams' arrival the Weston-sub-Edge church was dedicated to St. John the Baptist but the Reverend Adams soon discovered that a previous dedication had been to St. Laurence and he reverted to this older one.
2. Hobson, Op.Cit. p.180.
3. Letter from Miss D. Court, 1995.
4. Russell, G. (1968) Designer's Trade, p.61. Gordon Russell (1892-1980) grew up in Broadway and became a furniture designer there; his early designs were much influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement.
5. Tidcombe (1996), Op.Cit. p.134
6. Catalogue to an Exhibition of Modern English and French Bindings from the collection of J. R. Abbey (1949, The Arts Council. Falconer Madan (1851-1923) was a Lecturer in Palaeography and Librarian of the Bodleian Library.
7. Meynell, O.Cit.p.174. Katharine Adams to Sydney Cockerell; June 4, 1946.
8. Ibid. pp.12, 13. Sydney Cockerell to Katharine Adams; October 11, 1904. Florence (Kate) Kingsford was an artist, bookbinder and illuminator. In 1907 she married Sydney Cockerell; one of their daughters, Katharine, was Katharine Adams' god-daughter.
9. Franklin, Op.Cit. p.55
10. Katharine Adams' Ledgers. Alan Crawford's research. Elkin Mathews was a publisher noted for using Arts and Crafts artists to illustrate his books. Harold Perrins was an agent of the New York Life Insurance Company, the owner of a splendid library and a house decorated in the Morris style. Dyson Perrins was a collector of valuable books and manuscripts as was Charles Fairfax Murray.
11. Notice of exhibition on display in the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstowe.
12. Dame Laurentia McLachlan O.S.B. became Lady Abbess of Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester, in 1931. The long friendship between Dame Laurentia and Sydney Cockerell is contained in eight volumes of letters at Stanbrook Abbey, which holds the copyright. The letters span fifty years and hold many references to Katharine Adams. Sotheby's catalogue of October 19, 1970 describes the Bible as bound in red-brown morocco, but a 1906 exhibition catalogue, reproduced in Tidcombe (1996) Op.Cit.p.203, describes it as red pigskin.
13. Sotheby's catalogue. October 19th, 1970. Tidcombe (1996) Op.Cit.p.139 says that the Bridwell

Library owns the vellum copy of the Doves Bible which Katharine bound for Emery Walker. Only two copies of the Doves Bible were printed on vellum, the second copy being bound by Cobden-Sanderson.

14. Hobson, Op.Cit.p.180.
15. Houghton, C.C. (1980) A Walk about Broadway.
16. Information from Alan Crawford. The partners Gimson and Barnsley were noted for the Arts and Crafts furniture which they made in their workshop at Sapperton, Gloucestershire.
17. McCarthy, F. (1982) British Design Since 1880, Lund Humphries, p.70.
18. Katharine Webb's Will.
19. Meynell, Op.Cit.p.14. Katharine Adams to Sydney Cockerell, May 18, 1907.
20. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Dame Laurentia McLachlan to Sydney Cockerell; 9 July, 1907 and 17 July, 1907. Alan Crawford, Country Life. New Life for an Artist's Village, January 24, 1980. Alan Crawford says that Mme. de Navarro was the American actress Mary Anderson, wife of Antonio (Tony) de Navarro, a wealthy New Yorker. Mme. de Navarro was a devout Catholic and much involved in the Catholic community in Broadway.
21. Tidcombe (1996), Op.Cit.p.150.
22. The Studio Yearbook of 1909.
23. McCarthy (1989) Op.Cit.p.77.
24. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; October 25, 1907.
25. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; November 29, 1907. Marsh, J. (1986) Jane and May Morris. A Biographical Story 1839-1938. Pandora Press p.251. Jan Marsh says that virtually all records of the Women's Guild of Arts have been lost or destroyed.
26. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Dame Laurentia to Sydney Cockerell; January 10, 1909.
27. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; November 16, 1909.
28. The Times, November 14th, 1952
29. Russell, Op.Cit.p.60. Edward Johnston (1872-1944) published Writing, Illuminating and Lettering in 1906. This book, and Johnston's teaching, began the revival of interest in formal lettering and calligraphy.
30. Meynell, Op.Cit.p.16. Sydney Cockerell to Katharine Adams; April 17, 1910.
31. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; August 23, 1910.

32. Catalogue (1949), Op.Cit.
33. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Dame Laurentia to Sydney Cockerell; February 20, 1912.
34. Tidcombe (1966), Op.Cit.p.143. Obituary. The Lydney Observer. 24th October, 1952.
35. Letter from Alan Crawford, 1996.
36. Blunt, W. (1964) Cockerell, Harnish Hamilton, p.4.
37. McCarthy, F. (1981) The Simple Life, Lund Humphries, p.104.
38. Unpublished letter. Alan Crawford's research.
39. Meynell, Op.Cit.p.20. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; December 25, 1912. Sydney Cockerell's letter of sympathy to Katharine Adams does not specify whose death had occurred. Cockerell empathised with Katharine by remembering his own father's death: the resulting footnote which states that Katharine's father had died is an understandable error.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. This title 'star gazer' is taken from Katharine and Edmund's gravestone: "In dear memory of Edmund James Webb who died the 18th November, 1945 aged 93 years. Star-gazer. 'He telleth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names'. (ps. cxlvii v.4) and of his devoted wife Katharine who died the 15th October, 1952 aged 90 years". Filled with the Son of God in understanding and in all manner of cunning workmanship".
2. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; October 14, 1913.
3. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Dame Laurentia to Sydney Cockerell; October 20, 1913.
4. Dictionary of National Biography.
5. Westminster School Records
6. Lincoln's Inn Library.
7. Westminster School Records
8. Tidcombe (1996) op.cit. p.135.
9. Weston-sub-Edge church records. Edmund Webb has proved elusive: I have found no record of his profession, no obituary. It seems certain that Edmund had an income of some sort as he and Katharine lived comfortably until the second world war.
10. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; October 23, 1913.
11. Church register, Weston-sub-Edge. Charles Henry Daniel of the Daniel Press.
12. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; December 13, 1913.
13. Hobson, op.cit. p.180.
14. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Dame Laurentia to Sydney Cockerell; September 28, 1910 and Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; October 5, 1910.
15. Alan Crawford's research. Lady Bathurst of Cirencester was a patron of Gimson and Barnsley. Edmund Bulkley was a book collector. Mrs. Millet, wife of the painter Frank Millet, lived in Broadway. Henry Yates Thompson had a collection of illuminated manuscripts. George Bernard Shaw, playwright, was closely connected with May Morris and with Sydney Cockerell and Dame Laurentia McLachlan O.S.B..
16. Meynell, op.cit.p21. St. John Hornby to Sydney Cockerell; March 30, 1914.
17. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Dame Laurentia to Sydney Cockerell; April 7, 1915 and June 10, 1915. The Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral. On being asked in 1996 if the Worcester Manuscript was in Stanbrook Abbey Dame Eanswythe Edwards O.S.B. (archivist) replied,

"I always thought that the manuscript referred to as 'The Worcester MS' was the Worcester Antiphoner, found in Worcester Cathedral Library in the time of Dame Laurentia, and identified by her when Canon Wilson, then the Cathedral Librarian, brought it to Stanbrook for her to see. A little later we bound it and it is now in the Cathedral Library. [Dame Eanswythe's memory of Stanbrook Abbey having bound the Worcester Antiphoner turned out to be incorrect]. I think the MS mentioned in Cockerell's letter must be another one, and I cannot find a trace of any MS bound by Katharine Adams here. If only people did not die, or else lose their memories, it would be so much easier to trace these things! I knew plenty of people who knew Katharine Adams, but they are all dead!"

A few weeks later Dame Eanswythe wrote,

"by the way, Katie did bind the Worcester Antiphoner. I came across a letter in the collection from Dame Laurentia, for 13th July, 1914, which says, 'as you will see from the enclosed my Worcester book is coming up for another, (its fourth) visit. I told you the MS had been disgracefully bound within the last few years, half leather with cloth sides — a real desecration — and to add to the mischief the binding was so tight that much of the text is hidden etc.' and a later letter of 4th January, 1915 says 'I have at last persuaded Canon Wilson to let Katie rebind our Worcester Antiphoner'. It is now in the Cathedral."

Canon Iain MacKenzie of Worcester Cathedral sent a photocopy of Katharine Adams' signature tooled inside the Antiphoner which includes a pencil note on the vellum doublure saying that K. Adams was a friend of Sydney Cockerell. Canon MacKenzie described the binding as being of "red leather with the inscription Liber Wigorniensis on the top of the spine and F.160.MS.SAEC.xiii at the bottom. The lettering is in gold". The Canon continued, "We have a record of a letter written by Dame Laurentia to Sir Ivor Atkins in 1946 concerning the first rebinding of the Antiphoner, presumably before the binding by Katharine Adams. This first rebinding is described as 'in half leather with marbled paper sides, and it would not open'. She also adds 'Heaven forgive the villain responsible! I think the villain was another female friend of George Bernard Shaw's'".

18. Bodleian Library, Broxb.51.8, letter from Katharine Adams to Mr. Madan; July 8, 1915.
19. Bodleian Library, Broxb.51.8, letter from Katharine Adams to Mr. Madan; November 7, 1916.
20. Meynell, op.cit.p.22 Sydney Cockerell to Katharine Adams; November 17, 1915.
21. Bodleian Library, Broxb.51.8, letter from Katharine Adams to Mr. Madan; June 19, 1916.
22. Bodleian Library, Broxb.51.8, letter from Katharine Adams to Mr. Madan; June 19, 1916.
23. Bodleian Library, Broxb.51.8, letter from Katharine Adams to Mr. Madan; November 7, 1916.
24. Bodleian Library, Broxb.51.8, letter from Katharine Adams to Mr. Madan; July 8, 1915.
25. Bodleian Library, Broxb.51.8, letter from Katharine Adams to Mr. Madan; November 7, 1916.
26. It is a risky thing to do, to put an illustration on a binding: if it is not strong, well designed and relating to the shape of the book it gives a visual weakness implying a structural weakness. A style of illustration working within a text does not necessarily mean that it will work on the cover.

27. Blunt, W. (1964) Cockerell, Hamish Hamilton p.4
28. Bindings by Sybil Pye (1879-1958) are illustrated in colour in Tidcombe (1996) op.cit. pp54-59, these binding designs are strong; so strong that Howard Nixon preferred to see them from the opposite side of a room (Tidcombe (1996) op.cit.p.155). It seems to me that some of Sybil Pye's bindings want to be hugh paintings in vast rooms; they do not ask to be picked up and held closely as Katharine Adams' do. Katharine Adams' designs are part of her books, some of Sybil Pye's (and many other binders') designs are imposed onto the book.
29. Roger Fry (1866-1934) founded the Omega workshops in 1913. The workshops were set up as a reaction against the Arts and Crafts movement, the Omega emphasises being on a spontaneous decorative art, often at the expense of craft. Ford, B. (1922) *Early Twentieth Century Britain*, Cambridge University Press, p.260.
30. Between 1916 and 1921 Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) was developing abstract art; the brightly coloured grid compositions for which he is best known. Bowness, A. (1992) *Modern European Art*, Thames and Hudson p.140.
31. The Bauhaus (1919-1932), established in Weimar by Walter Gropius (1885-1969), was based on William Morris's ideals except that it taught a positive attitude towards the use of machinery. Bowness, op.cit.p.205.
32. Bodleian Library, Broxb.51.8, letter from Katharine Adams to Mr. Madan; November 7, 1916.
33. Sotheby's Catalogue 1944, lot 212.
34. Conversation, 1996, with Mrs. Berenice Morgan who worked for the Webbs in the 1930s.
35. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; February 26, 1917.
36. Meynell, op.cit.p.24, letter from Katharine Adams to Sydney Cockerell; August 4, 1920.
37. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; September 10, 1920.
38. Meynell, op.cit.p.25, letter to from Sydney Cockerell to Katharine Adams; September 8, 1920.
39. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; March 22, 1921.
40. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; March 28, 1922.
41. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; May 9, 1922.
42. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; September 11, 1922.
43. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; October 1, 1922.
44. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; April 25, 1933.

45. Meynell, op.cit.pp.35, 36. Letter from Katharine Adams to Sydney Cockerell to which Cockerell replied: "I think I must one day put all my beautiful Katie bindings in a row, and caress them in turn as I recall the pleasure that each one has given me on its arrival and whenever I have handled it since". (Meynell,op.cit.p.36).
46. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; February 22, 1925.
47. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; March 14, 1925.
48. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; August 3, 1925.
49. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; July 17, 1926.
50. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; October 28, 1928.
51. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; March 4, 1929.

FOOTNOTE TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. The present owner of Cherries, Patricia Lawrence, said "we often spend time looking at the stars here, we get such a good view of the whole sky set up on top of the hill and away from the dreaded street lights. [My husband] is now keen to acquire a telescope. I'm sure it must have been one of the main reasons why the Webbs moved here". (Letter, 1995).
2. Lylia Minnie Collett moved into Cherries ahead of Katharine and Edmund to have all in order for them. The 1930 electoral rolls have Miss Collett's name, the 1931 rolls add 'Edward' and Katharine Webb. In 1932 there is also the name Dulcia May Worgan, presumably the cook. (Thanks to Patricia Lawrence for her research at Gloucester Records office). Mrs Morgan, (see footnote 3) described Miss Collett as "an 'old retainer' who had been with them for years". (Letter, 1996).
3. One magical, snowy day early in 1996 I stood by Katharine's grave and then lunched in Cherries with the present owner, Patricia Lawrence, who kindly opened her house and garden to my inspection (having already shared by post all the research she had done on the house, and the huge amount she did on Katharine and Edmund on my behalf.) Berenice Morgan then called at Cherries and took us back in time to the 1930s: descriptions which follow are thanks to Mrs. Morgan's excellent memory. None of this could have happened without the kindness of my friend and fellow student Sylvia Thomas who 'found' St. Briavels and made the initial contacts. Perhaps it is fanciful but I felt nothing while standing by Katharine's grave, however, Sylvia and I both gasped on entering Cherries' drawing room as Katharine and Edmund seemed to be there, sitting by the fire.
4. The gardener, Harold Cox, was a much appreciated member of staff, being rewarded in Katharine's Will with the sum of £500, a generous amount in 1952.
5. Details are from the 1952 sale document for Cherries. The bungalow was demolished by 1971 having, at one time, been let to a local doctor who lived in it for a while.
6. Conversation between Arthur Thomas and Sylvia Thomas (no relation), summer 1995. One of Mrs. Morgan's memories hints at Edmund's character — having spent some time in the woods birdwatching, Edmund relaxed by the fire only to find a mouse under his lapel. He quietly and quickly took the creature outside and released it before Peggy, the cat, might know of it. Mrs. Morgan also said that Edmund always wrote with a quill.
7. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; July 29, 1930 (on a postcard of Tintern Abbey).
8. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; January 28, 1930. Emery Walker was knighted in 1930.
9. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sydney Cockerell to Dame Laurentia; October 1, 1930.
10. Philip George Lancelot Webb was the Honorary Secretary of the Handel Society since 1882 and wrote various works of poetry, he worked in government and lived in number 12 Lancaster Gate, London W2, where he employed a staff of eight.
11. Meynell, op.cit.p.42.
12. Catalogue (1949), op.cit.p.12.

13. Meynell, op.cit.p.50. Letter from Katharine Adams to Sydney Cockerell; September 7, 1935. In 1931 Dame Laurentia had been made Lady Abbess. Teresa is the Sister Teresa who had studied at the Eadburgha Bindery.
14. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Lady Laurentia to Sir Sydney Cockerell; September 28, 1935. Sydney Cockerell had been knighted in 1934.
15. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; March 25, 1940.
16. From the paper which Katharine had written on May Morris. Alan Crawford's research.
17. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; March 25, 1940. In 1940 Dacres Adams' wife died; he remarried that same year.
18. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; August 30, 1940.
19. About ten years ago Katharine's grand-nephew, Harry Hunt, revisited Cherries and spoke to the present owner. One of the things Harry Hunt said of his grand-aunt was that in her Will she had requested that her bookbinding tools and equipment should be thrown into the River Wye. Neither the Will nor the Codicils mention anything of the kind, so it may have been said in frustration at the seeming lack of interest expressed by her family: Sydney Cockerell's letter to Mr. Ehrman dated 1956 says "[your letter] asks a question that interests me very much indeed, about what has become of Katharine Adams' records. These have been pretty well kept and when I was last at St. Briavels, perhaps ten years ago, I implored an assistant she had living with her to collect all the data and get them into order. I don't think anything was done. Mrs. Webb was in a feeble state for some time before her death at the age of ninety. The house and its contents were left to a nephew and niece who have no interest in their aunt's work. I do not know their address or whether any records are preserved. This is very exasperating! I was already bedridden in 1952 when she died, or I should have done something about it". The records do seem to have been preserved as Alan Crawford saw them in 1978. (The Cockerell letter is in the Bodleian Library) (Broxb.52.21.), Katharine Adams' tools are in the British Library).
20. Clement Charles Julian Webb, brother of Edmund Webb. Clement Webb was a tutor in philosophy in Magdalen College, Oxford, between 1890 and 1920.
21. Meynell, op.cit.p.113. Letter from Katharine Adams to Sir Sydney Cockerell; December 19, 1943.
22. Ibid.p.117. Katharine Adams to Sir Sydney Cockerell; March 8, 1944.
23. G.D. Hobson of Sotheby's.
24. Meynell, op.cit.p.138. Katharine Adams to Sir Sydney Cockerell; November 2, 1944. Katharine's books sold at Sotheby's on December 18, 1944.
25. Ibid.p.139. Katharine Adams to Sir Sydney Cockerell; November 30, 1944.
26. In comparison to the £2,000, Cherries with its seven acres sold for £1,850 after Katharine's death in 1952. (Patricia Lawrence's research).

27. Meynell, op.cit.p.140. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Katharine Adams; December 18, 1944 (the day of the Sotheby's sale).
28. Ibid.p.161. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Katharine Adams; July 6, 1945.
29. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; June 9, 1946. Katharine Adams' Will states that Miss Hampshire had furniture in Katharine's house in Broadway.
30. Meynell,op.cit.p.173. Katharine Adams to Sir Sydney Cockerell; June 4, 1946.
31. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; June 24, 1946 and September 29, 1946.
32. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; October 11, 1946 and June 5, 1947.
33. Bodleian Library, Broxb.55.14. Letter from Katharine Adams to Mr. Ehrman; August 7, 1947.
34. Tidcombe (1996) op.cit..231 mentions several of Katharine's books which were tooled by Sangorski and Sutcliffe. I am interested to notice that the Don Quixote is titled on the spine in the traditional place rather than at the top which is Katharine's usual favoured position. Katharine is likely to have known Sangorski and Sutcliffe from her study time with Douglas Cockerell.
35. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; July 19, 1948.
36. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; June 10, 1951.
37. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; December 8, 1951.
38. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Sir Sydney Cockerell to Lady Laurentia; August 8, 1952.
39. Letters. Stanbrook Abbey. Lady Laurentia to Sir Sydney Cockerell; October 28, 1952.
40. Tidcombe (1996) op.cit.p;137, says "During her working life Katharine Adams bound 300 or so books ...". If we take the whole of Katharine's life to be her "working life" then that "or so" must be quite a large number, as the 300 can be made up of Sydney Cockerell's "almost a hundred"; ninety for Fairfax Murray; twenty-seven for Emery Walker and over seventy for St. John Hornby, admittedly some of these may be repairs.
41. Every binding, except one, shown in the H.M. Nixon's *Five Centuries of English Bookbinding* has a frame around the image on the front cover. Some of these frames may have been placed there at the time of repairing the binding, but it shows the strength of this tradition. When binders began to use flat tapes on which to sew they were able to rethink the design of a binding. The tapes allow that a single image be wrapped around the book so that the book may best be viewed in the open position; the covers and spine are uninterrupted by any raised bands. Katharine Adams' bindings belong at the end of a long tradition. Nixon, H.M. (1979) Five Centuries of English Bookbinding. The Scolar Press.
42. The Times, October 20th., 1952.

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