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16 The National Radiator Building, Great Marlborough Street, London (the author).

Indian Summer: The Reinvention of the Birmingham Guild of Handicraft in the Twentieth Century

Tony Peart

In September 1890, Charles Robert Ashbee the founder of the Guild of Handicraft, addressed a meeting of the newly established Birmingham Guild of Handicraft, an organisation consciously modelled on his own philanthropic venture. He offered the assembled audience of local dignitaries (including the Lord Mayor), advice on how their nascent enterprise could be developed, based on the experience of his own Guild established at Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel, only two years previously. By 1907, the harsh commercial realities of the early 1900s had forced Ashbee's Guild into liquidation. Surprisingly, the Birmingham Guild not only managed to survive this difficult period but ultimately prospered, becoming one of the country's leading architectural metalworking firms during the inter-war years. This article will explore how and why a small-scale, philanthropic 'craft' workshop of the late nineteenth century managed to evolve, adapt and ultimately, successfully re-invent itself in the twentieth century.

The Birmingham Guild of Handicraft was established in 1890, growing out of evening classes for working men and boys run by The Birmingham Kyrle Society. It was supported by the City's wealthy, Liberal party members and grew steadily under the direction of its chief designer, the merchant and architect Arthur Stansfeld Dixon (1856-1929) and the solicitor Montague Fordham (1864-1948). Soon, those younger staff members and students from Birmingham School of Art, known as The Birmingham Group, became involved, including Claude Napier-Clavering (1869-1938) and Arthur Gaskin (1862-1928) who established a Guild Press in 1894. A year later the Guild became a Limited Company, run on co-operative principles, with Dixon, Fordham and Napier-Clavering acting as its first directors. In late 1896 the wealthy Birmingham industrialist William Kenrick (1831-1919) became the company's majority shareholder, probably to help secure the financial prospects of his future son-in-law, Claude Napier-Clavering. By 1898 the Guild had its own purpose-built workshops (designed by Arthur Dixon) on Great Charles Street in central Birmingham and was quickly establishing a national reputation for its austere domestic and ecclesiastical metal ware, its extensive range of electric lighting, jewellery designs and publications from the Guild Press.

As the twentieth century dawned, the Birmingham Guild appeared to be one of the most successful of the Arts & Crafts craft workshops. In the previous decade it had evolved from evening classes given in a church hall to a Limited Company occupying a large, purpose-built workshop with agents in London, Berlin and Paris. However, this outward appearance was deceptive as major changes within the organisation had been taking place. The first was the departure of Montague Fordham who left Birmingham in late 1899, shortly after visiting Hirschwald's Gallery in Berlin to arrange an exhibit of Birmingham Guild metalware. [1] This seems to have been something of a personal fact-finding mission as, upon returning, he established his own, very similar, fine art and craft gallery in Maddox Street, London. Arthur Dixon, the leading light of the Guild during its early years, whilst still a director and shareholder, was concentrating on furthering his career as an architect. His absence can also be explained by his disillusionment with the direction the company had taken under its majority shareholder William Kenrick. [2] In December 1899 Dixon's friend C.R. Ashbee reported finding him 'a little bitter' and recorded his concern:

'Your Kenricks and Steely Ones have got hold of it and capitalised it and the tonnage they run over it is too heavy for the rails. It ought to have been built up more gradually, more humanely, and Dixon feels this and it's true – but then why must Napier-Clavering go and marry a Kenrick... ...the thing must be made to PAY; and it don't pay, in more senses than one.' [3]



I Claude Napier-Clavering, a photograph probably taken in North America c.1911 (courtesy Julian Mulock).

By 1903 the 34-year-old Napier-Clavering had taken on Dixon's twin roles of Managing Director and Chief Designer, with most of the Company shares now held between himself and his profit-focused father-in-law William Kenrick. In retrospect, Claude Napier-Clavering (Fig. 1) appears a tragic figure – friends and family invariably referring to him as 'poor Claude'. [4] A charming, if somewhat hapless, character he was unquestionably devoted to the Guild but found himself in a very difficult position: simultaneously struggling to cope with the demands of maintaining and expanding the business while trapped in a loveless marriage to the daughter of his Company Chairman and chief financial backer who, although in his seventies, was a demanding and controlling figure. It seems clear that in the eyes of his father-in-law, 'poor Claude' had been found wanting as managing director and something had to be done to rectify the situation. That 'something' occurred in October 1906 when, in a move that has puzzled many commentators, the Birmingham Guild merged with a much smaller company, established little more than two years previously. In a formal announcement, circulated to all interested parties, it was stated that: '...an amalgamation has taken place

between the Birmingham Guild of Handicraft Ltd. and Gittins, Craftsmen, Ltd., who will in future carry on the joint business under the name of the former Company...' As a justification for the merger it concluded: 'We trust that the special capabilities of each firm will be of such service to the other that the amalgamation may prove advantageous to the customers of both.' [5] However, this statement was disingenuous as both companies undertook broadly similar work. To uncover the most likely reason for the merger, we must consider the establishment and meteoric rise of the smaller company.

Gittins, Craftsmen, Ltd. was probably established in 1904 and was named after the 23-year-old metalworker Edward Russell Gittins (1881-1949) who was the major shareholder when the Company became incorporated in October 1905. Gittins was financially supported by his extended Leicester family including his aunt, Mary Gittins (1840-1930), who had been an active committee member of the Birmingham Guild in its early years and was a woman well-connected to wealthy, non-conformist, Liberal circles in London, Birmingham and Liverpool. Mary's Liverpool connections explain why both the brother and mother of the metalworker R.L.B. Rathbone (1864-1939) were shareholders in Gittins, Craftsmen Ltd. The nascent company was able to issue a lavishly illustrated catalogue (Fig. 2) in January 1905 featuring photographs of 97 different examples of their metalwork ranging from simple door handles and finger plates, to repoussé memorial tablets inlaid with enamel and elaborate electroliers. [6] Surprisingly, the catalogue also demonstrates that Edward Gittins was not the primary motivating force behind his eponymous company since his name simply appears as one of the four craftsmen involved in making. Much more prominently featured are the names of the brothers C.A. Llewelyn and R. Hugh Roberts with the publication being described as a 'catalogue of metalwork designed by C.A. Llewelyn Roberts' and the production and arrangement credited to the company secretary, R. Hugh Roberts. The merger with The Birmingham Guild was undoubtedly conducted to allow the Guild chairman William Kenrick, to secure the services of these motivated and ambitious young men, one a talented designer, the other an astute businessman. In effect, the merger was an injection of 'fresh blood' into an ailing company.

Charles Arthur Llewelyn Roberts (1879-1951) and his younger brother Reginald Hugh Roberts (1883-1955) were 27 and 23 years old respectively at the time of the merger with the Birmingham Guild. Their paternal grandfather had been a wealthy solicitor living in a large property in Bangor, North Wales, whereas their father Hugh Stewart Roberts (1852-1907) lived a much more modest, somewhat peripatetic life employed initially as a slate merchant and later as a travelling agent for an engineers and iron founders. The brothers were born in London but by the early 1890s the family had relocated to the King's Norton area of Birmingham with both completing their schooling in the city. Llewelyn went on to study architecture and design at Birmingham School of Art (1897-1901) while his brother Hugh attended Birmingham University. The 1901 census records them still living at the family home with Llewelyn as an 'architect's apprentice' and Hugh as a 'gunsmith's apprentice'. Unfortunately, the circumstances of the founding of Gittins Craftsmen, Ltd. three years later, are not recorded although it would appear the Roberts brothers and Edward Gittins were good friends, as they were sharing a house together in Rednal, Worcestershire at the time. [7]

In 1906, at the time of the merger with Gittins Craftsmen, Ltd., the Birmingham Guild was primarily engaged in the manufacture of small-scale, hand-made, domestic and ecclesiastic hollow wares in silver and non-ferrous metals, alongside an extensive range of electric light fittings. During the following two years, probably due to the influence of Llewelyn Roberts, the Guild started to diversify and made its first, tentative forays into the field of architectural metalwork. The move was necessary as sales of its staple items were beginning to falter. Managing director Claude Napier-Clavering had a habit of seeking orders from his Kenrick in-laws and their friends but these were rapidly drying up. The company also faced those harsh commercial realities that put paid to C.R Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft in 1907. Birmingham was the leading centre for the production of cheaply made, mass-manufactured metal goods, known throughout the country as 'Brummagem wares'. Ironically, one of the founding principles of the Guild had been to demonstrate that it was financially viable to manufacture well designed, handcrafted wares in a city synonymous with the production of 'shoddy' metal goods, thus acting as an exemplar to local commercial manufacturers. However, as these companies were easily able to produce similar looking items that retailed at prices that were on average, 50% cheaper than those of the Guild, the battle was being lost. Another likely spur into the field of architectural work came from the success of the nearby Bromsgrove Guild who were rapidly establishing a national reputation, most notably for the much publicised 1905 commission to manufacture the gates for Sir Aston Webb's re-modelling of the forecourt of Buckingham Palace.

The Guild maintained a London office and showroom at 7 Newman Street and Llewelyn Roberts began to spend much of his time there seeking out and working on commissions. By 1909 his reputation was such that *The Studio Yearbook* referred to him as 'a well-known designer of metal-work.' Going on to say that: 'His recent important commissions include the whole of the decorative metal-work – bronze, brass and iron, electric fittings, cast bronze and marble columns, wrought-iron balconies etc. – for Messrs. Debenham & Freebody's premises in



2 E & R Gittins, Craftsmen. Catalogue of Metalwork Designed by C. A. Llewelyn Roberts, 1905 (private collection).



3 Wrought-iron screen and gates for the Hamburg-Amerika Linie Building, 14-16 Cockspur Street, London (*Architectural Review*, 1908, vol. 24, p. 129).

Wigmore Street, London.’ [8] However, it must be noted that this large, well-publicised commission of 1908 also came about through Claude Napier-Clavering’s Kenrick family connections as Ernest Debenham (1865-1952), the proprietor of the firm, was his brother-in-law. During the same year, the Guild contributed chandeliers, other light fittings, ormolu and bronze screens and a very large wrought-iron entrance screen and gates to the newly built Hamburg-Amerika Linie Building at 14-16 Cockspur Street, London (Fig. 3). This Neo-Baroque office building was designed by the architect Arthur T. Bolton and was widely publicised in the architectural press of the day. In the same year the Guild was awarded a gold medal at the Franco-British exhibition. The following year a trade stand was taken at the Building Trades Exhibition and architectural metalwork was exhibited alongside fine, silver tableware. *The British Architect* describing a wrought-iron screen as: ‘in the best traditions of the craft.’ [9]

During the following years, a range of small-scale architectural commissions followed, including some for Aston Webb, but the Company’s finances remained in a perilous state. In November 1909, in order to ‘reconstruct the old company’ the committee resolved that it should be wound up. The following month, the Birmingham Guild of Handicraft Ltd., with total debts of £2772/1/2 went into voluntary liquidation. Shortly after it re-emerged as ‘The Birmingham Guild Ltd.’, with increased financial backing and new shareholders, although the bulk of the company’s shares remained in the hands of the chairman, Kenrick (4200) and managing director Napier-Clavering (3395). [10]

In January 1911, Edward Gittins – who had strong family ties to Merseyside – moved to Liverpool to establish The Birmingham Guild (Liverpool) Ltd., relinquishing his role of craftsman to act as an agent, with the intention of increasing the Company’s sales in: ‘Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, Cheshire and in North Wales, The Isle of Man and Scotland.’ [11]

The parent company and Charles Sydney Jones (Liverpool shipowner) were the joint majority shareholders in this venture followed by Gittins. Two other members of Liverpool’s wealthy, Liberal, political elite; Elizabeth and Georgina Holt (respectively the widow and daughter of shipowner George Holt) invested £100 each. The following year, through this connection, the Guild supplied all the light fittings to the new Holt Line offices in the recently completed Royal Liver Building. A few months later, during the summer of 1911, Claude Napier-Clavering decided to travel to New York in the hope of finding new markets for the Birmingham Guild in North America. As recounted by his son, the trip did not go according to plan; once free of his wife, family and controlling father-in-law, ‘poor Claude’ found himself distracted by the ladies of New York. He soon stopped writing home and all contact was lost. After a few months of

silence, a cousin who happened to be travelling to the United States on business was tasked with locating and returning the errant businessman. The mission was successful and late in the year Claude was returned to Birmingham a 'defeated and diminished' man. [12] By now the elderly William Kenrick must have lost all patience with his wayward son-in-law and Claude in turn was totally disillusioned with his role as managing director of the Guild. The situation limped along, unresolved, until early 1914 when Claude decided to sell his shares in the Company 'for a song'. The Birmingham Guild Ltd. was duly reconstructed with Kenrick and Gittins staying on as directors and shareholders and company secretary Hugh Roberts and his elder brother Llewelyn Roberts stepping to the fore. As was typical of the man, 'poor Claude's' decision to sell could not have fallen at a more unfortunate time, as events were unfolding in Europe that would shortly see the Company's declining fortunes change dramatically.

The commencement of the First World War in July 1914 seems to have had little immediate impact on the company which continued to manufacture architectural metalware and lighting. An elaborate, wrought-iron garden gate (Fig. 4) featuring a fruiting vine motif, was illustrated and favourably reviewed in the 1915 *Studio Yearbook*. [13] However, by August of that year advertisements were being placed in local newspapers for: 'fitters, fillers and strikers for government work'. [14] This move into 'war work' seems to have coincided with the departure of majority shareholder William Kenrick who finally relinquished his controlling interest at the advanced age of 86. Henceforth, the company would be entirely under the control of Hugh and Llewelyn Roberts and it is now, for the first time, that we get a sense of their complementary personalities. Llewelyn, although older and artistic, was a much more retiring character content to devote himself to creating designs for the company, alongside maintaining and building contacts with clients and architects in the City. To this end he remained based at the Guild's London showroom and office, leaving his brother to manage the day-to-day running of the workshop in Birmingham. Hugh, on the other hand, while outgoing and personable was not remotely artistic, although he was appreciative of fine craftsmanship throughout his life. (Fig. 5) However, he did bring a drive and natural talent for business to the partnership that was to prove crucial in the coming months and years and quickly began to demonstrate the business acumen that would eventually take him beyond the Guild and into the wider, manufacturing world as a highly successful, serial entrepreneur. [15]

Sometime in early 1915 the Birmingham Guild Ltd. turned itself over to the specialist manufacture of aircraft parts, placing it at the forefront of a cutting-edge technology little more than a decade old. This was a remarkable and dramatic re-invention of a company which, when founded 25 years before, had been inspired by the medieval guild system. Looking to the future and not the past undoubtedly saved the Guild and would characterise its approach for many years to come. A retrospective newspaper feature published in 1958 reveals:

'The Guild's first contact with the de Havilland Company goes back considerably further... Since the early days of the 1914-1918 war there has been an association between the two companies and the Guild can claim to be one of the oldest, if not the oldest of the sub-contractors to de Havilland. There are several workpeople still in the Guild's employ who can recollect manufacturing parts for the D.H.4., D.H.9., and D.H.10. Of those early days, products included petrol tanks, ammunition boxes and a peculiar circular seat fixed on a tubular ring to which three Lewis guns were attached. The gunner had to swivel round in his seat to fire whichever gun was in line with his target'. [16]



4 Wrought-iron screen and gate designed by Llewelyn Roberts (*The Studio Yearbook of Decorative* 1915, p. 149).



5 R. Hugh Roberts seated in the Director's Office of The Birmingham Guild Ltd., Great Charles Street, Birmingham c.1918-19 (private collection). Hugh is surrounded by the work of his predecessor, Arthur Stansfeld Dixon who designed virtually all the metal items on display and the hanging shelves, desk and the chair to the left of the fireplace.

In January 1916 the Military Service Act was passed which imposed conscription on all single men aged between eighteen and 41 while a second Act, passed in May 1916, extended conscription to married men. Contemporary newspaper advertisements document the rapid growth of the company up to this time and its constant need to recruit more labour. These Acts would potentially have a hugely detrimental effect on both future recruitment and the size of the existing workforce and so, the ever-pragmatic Hugh Roberts turned his attention to an un-tapped resource. Advertisements started appearing in 1916 for: 'educated women, previous experience not essential', followed in 1917 by requests for: 'educated women, aged 20 to 35, of strong physique.' [17] (Fig. 6) Many years later he would be remembered as being one of the: 'first to undertake the organisation of the services of educated women.' [18] Concurrently, in July 1916, Edward Gittins, with no products to market, was forced to liquidate The Birmingham Guild (Liverpool) Ltd. but remained a director and shareholder of the parent company. The huge profitability and rapid growth of the Guild during the war years is strikingly demonstrated by the construction of a new building adjoining the Great Charles Street workshop virtually doubling the available space. The visual contrast between the two buildings is both striking and deliberate. (Fig. 7) Arthur Dixon's 'workshop' building of 1897-98 is a quintessential piece of understated, Arts & Crafts architecture. Although constructed for industrial use, it effects the appearance of domestic buildings and is rendered in a vernacular idiom reminiscent of certain sixteenth and seventeenth-century buildings in Dixon's beloved Cotswolds. In contrast, the new 'factory' building makes no attempt to harmonise with its neighbour, adopting a simple, rectilinear, proto-modernist aesthetic that visually reinforces the rejection of the past and the embracing of the future. Although the Guild exited the war as a highly specialised aero-parts manufacturer: 'the largest producers of exhaust manifolds in the Kingdom', according to *Flight Magazine*, the cessation of hostilities required a rapid return to the pre-war focus on architectural metalwork. [19] However, the post-1918 Guild was a radically different company to that which had 'limped' into the war. It now exhibited a bullish vigour and self-confidence that can only have resulted from the huge profits it had recently made, combined with its director's progressive and open-minded attitude to the work it was willing to undertake.

Birmingham Guild work produced before the war was hand-made, using little in the way of machinery other than a spinning lathe and some small-scale casting. Architectural projects were, out of necessity, relatively modest in scale but in the early years, this was considered a virtue and not a limitation. Arthur Dixon went so far as to state in 1895 that: ‘The Guild does not minimise the importance of this commercial aspect of its industry, but it seeks only to make as much profit as is necessary to cover the expenses of its work, and to provide its designers and craftsmen with a sufficient remuneration.’ [20] This is quite clearly the voice of a socially-minded philanthropist, but we must also remember that Dixon was independently wealthy and only had to consider the welfare of a small workforce which, at the turn of the twentieth century, numbered around 20 men. The Roberts brothers were of a younger generation and, while still exhibiting some aspects of Dixon’s idealism, were far more progressive in their outlook. War work had exposed them to the benefits of batch-production, diversification of product lines and economies of scale. They had also accrued a much larger workforce, probably numbering over 200 at the cessation of hostilities, who needed to be gainfully employed. Rather than taking stock and consolidating, Hugh Roberts saw a golden opportunity and went on the offensive. In one decisive act, the manufacturing capabilities of the Guild were massively increased by merging with a venerable, Birmingham-based metalworking company.

By 1919, although well-known and widely respected, the firm of Hart, Son, Peard & Co., Ltd. was struggling, having been in decline for many years. It was a company with a long and distinguished history, synonymous with finely produced architectural and ecclesiastical metalwork – invariably in the Gothic taste – and had executed pieces designed by many of the ‘great and the good’ of High Victorian architecture including: Seddon, Talbert, Burges, Butterfield and Waterhouse. Its history stretched back over a century to 1817, when Charles Hart opened an ironmonger’s shop in London. In the 1840s he was joined by his son and, as the business prospered, they expanded into the manufacture of ecclesiastical metalwork. Hart & Son benefited greatly from the exposure and acclaim their wares received at the 1851 Great Exhibition and the firm grew rapidly. Around 1866 they merged with Peard & Jackson to form Hart, Son, Peard & Co., Ltd. The new firm had London showrooms in Brook Street and Regent Street and a small factory in Drury Lane. For large scale manufacture and casting, however, the firm looked to Birmingham, the country’s leading centre for the manufacture of non-ferrous metal items. To this end Charles Hart moved to the city to open a large factory, including a forge and foundry, at Grosvenor Street West, named The Grosvenor Works, close to the city centre. (Fig. 8)



- 6 Interior of one of the Great Charles Street workshop spaces c.1918-19 (private collection).
- 7 The new factory extension (right) to Arthur Dixon’s original Guild Building of 1897-98 (left).
A photograph taken from Great Charles Street c.1918-19 (private collection).
- 8 The sand-casting workshop of Hart, Son, Peard & Co. Ltd., Grosvenor Street West, Birmingham c.1920 (private collection).

Fifty years later this struggling concern provided the financially buoyant Birmingham Guild with an opportunity that was too good to miss. Hart, Son, Peard & Co., Ltd. offered Hugh and Llewelyn Roberts three things: the necessary plant and equipment to undertake much larger scale architectural projects, a highly skilled workforce experienced in a wide range of metalworking techniques and much needed space in which to expand. Although technically a ‘merger’ this was to all intents and purposes a takeover. Although some of Hart’s former directors did accept seats on the board of the newly restructured Birmingham Guild Ltd. they delegated the day-to-day running of the company to the Roberts brothers, who were both joint-managing directors and majority shareholders. The brothers now had the capabilities to take on ambitious projects and embrace the opportunities offered by the post-war world. A radical transformation was now complete; the pre-war, small-scale ‘medieval’ craft workshop was gone, and the Birmingham Guild had successfully re-invented itself as a large, ‘modern’ organisation where design and craftsmanship could merge with industrial production.

Since the mid-1890s the Guild had promoted itself through the infrequent publication of illustrated trade catalogues showcasing its work. In the post-war environment the issuing of catalogues increased dramatically and so did the range of work they featured. The first: *Hand Wrought Church Metalwork* published shortly after the war ended and before the merger with Hart, Son, Peard & Co., Ltd. appears anachronistic and could easily be mistaken for a much earlier work. [21] It features standard pre-war products such as altar crosses, candlesticks, chalices and ewers, the majority executed to the designs of A.S. Dixon who by this date had severed his association with the Guild. However, the last few illustrations were devoted to bespoke memorial plaques which were in huge demand during the first few years of ‘the peace’. This booming market was specifically targeted within a matter of months by the publication of a second catalogue: *Memorials: the work of the Architect and Craftsman in the execution of war memorials illustrating examples of the crafts of enamelling & carving in marble and stone*. [22] This ‘wordy’ 28-page catalogue is a curious work that combines a lengthy polemic on the relationship between sculptor, architect and craftsman alongside a brief survey of historical and contemporary war memorial designs from the likes of Alfred Stevens, Ralph Knott and Thomas S. Tait. Finally, it launches into its intended purpose of promoting and documenting memorials recently executed by the Guild. The chosen examples all demonstrate the increased range of techniques the company now had at its disposal following the merger with Hart, Son, Peard & Co., Ltd. and for the first time, we gain an insight into the intentions and preoccupations of Hugh and Llewelyn Roberts. Various production methods and materials are discussed in some detail before an enamelling technique, recently pioneered by the Guild, is introduced for the first time. This involved using vitreous enamel as a replacement for wax, to pick out or emphasise engraved lettering on brass or bronze plaques and signs and would soon become a very profitable area of activity. (Fig. 9) The advantage of enamel was: ‘Apart from the greater brilliance of colouring to be achieved by vitreous enamel, there is the obvious advantage of its entire permanence and the fact that it only has to be dusted and cleaned.’ Common to the various technical processes discussed is an overarching focus on high quality typography: ‘the design and execution of good lettering.’ For chief designer Llewelyn Roberts, the ‘exemplar’ is the carved lettering found on the base of Trajan’s Column: ‘the source and inspiration of all noble and dignified lettering.’ Like so many others, the Roberts brothers’ response to the horrors of the First World War was to reject romanticism and adopt a cool and considered classicism. They conclude by stating:

‘We trust that our efforts in this direction, which we believe to be the only true and proper one, will receive encouragement, and that simplicity and dignity may take the place of meretricious over-ornamentation which in the past so often disfigured the walls of our Churches and Public Buildings’.



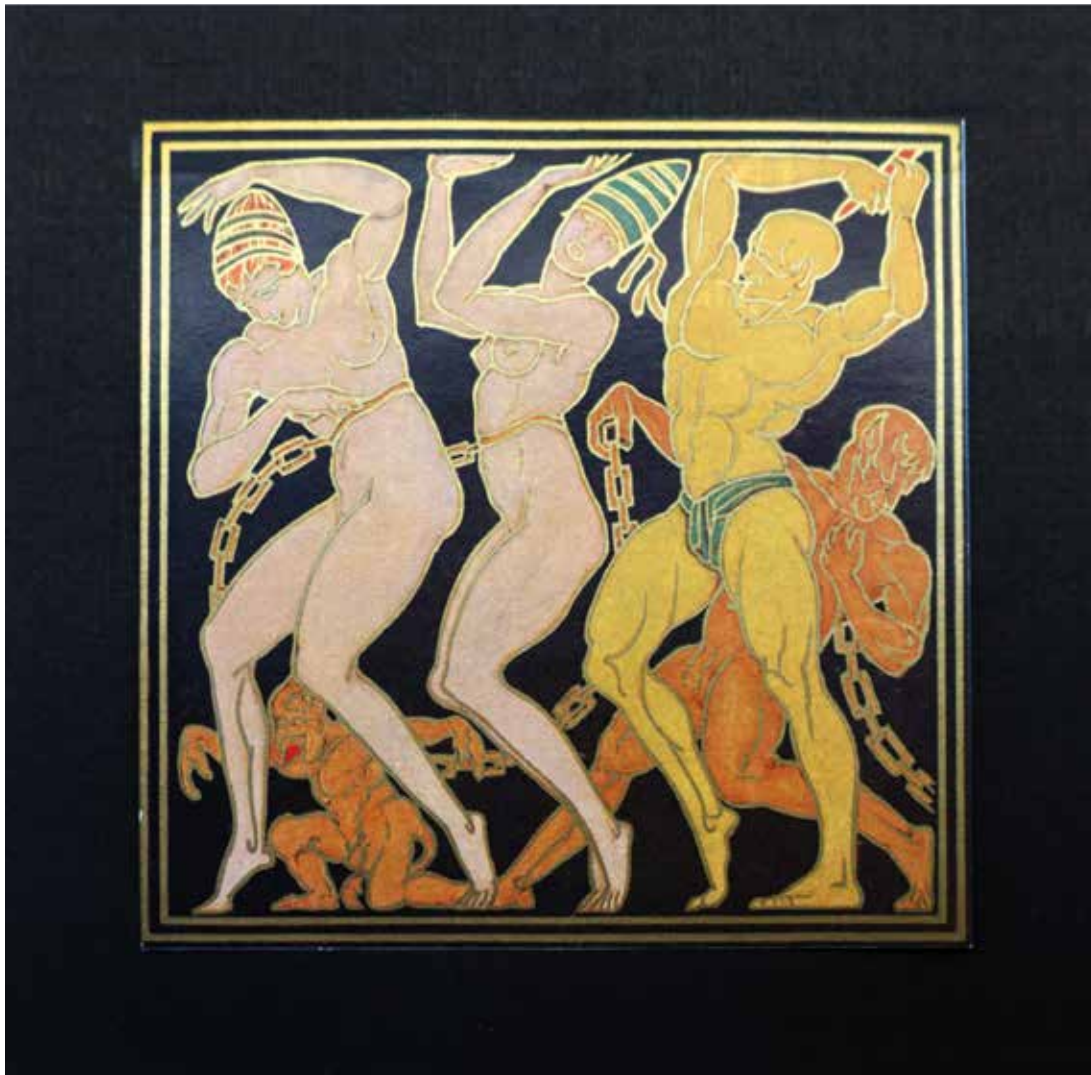
9 Examples of enamelled bronze tablets from Memorials: *The Work of the Architect and Craftsman...* c.1920, p. 27 (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery).

‘Simplicity and dignity’ would indeed characterise much of the work produced by the Guild in the years that immediately followed the war. An approach further demonstrated in a third catalogue, *Lettering*, published in January 1919 and subtitled: *examples of the productions of the Birmingham Guild Ltd. for commercial and office purposes fascia & stall board lettering, signs and name plates in brass, bronze and enamel*. [23] As verbose as *Memorials*, but aimed squarely at a commercial audience, it adopts a very direct, almost ‘hard sell’ tone. Commencing with a one-page polemic on: ‘The advantages of good lettering as a selling force’, it argues the importance of creating a positive first impression by utilising: ‘design of dignified and artistic conception which gives the initial character to the shop front and forms the best advertisement for the whole business.’ Shop owners are urged to avoid ‘the worst form of economy’ which is to not spend enough on their shop fronts! It is admitted that the Guild do not manufacture ‘cheap’ lettering, however, their services as designers would be provided to facilitate: ‘the placing and arrangement of this lettering so that your name may tell to the best advantage and guarantee the value of your goods.’ Even though recent advances in technology and production techniques allowed some cost savings to be passed on to the customer, the fact remained that costly, skilled handwork was involved in virtually all the products the Guild manufactured; the need to justify the prices it charged became a major theme of much of its promotional material.

The company’s forceful advocacy of rational design combined with the use of ‘good’ and ‘dignified’ lettering in public spaces echoes the major concerns of The Design & Industries Association which was founded in 1915. Post-war membership of this organisation, devoted to persuading manufacturers and designers to adhere to principles of ‘good design’, vastly increased the Roberts brothers’ circle of contacts and introduced them to business leaders and influential designers such as Ambrose Heal, Gordon Russell and Harold Stabler. The clarion call of the D.I.A. was ‘fitness for purpose’ and as we have seen, this criterion was eagerly adopted by the Guild, espoused in its promotional literature and applied to its own austere, in-house designs. (Fig. 10)

10 James Lyle & Co. Ltd. shopfront including iridescent enamelled, bronze letters and bronze architectural metalwork c.1919 (private collection). An example of the cool, understated, rational design promoted by the D.I.A.





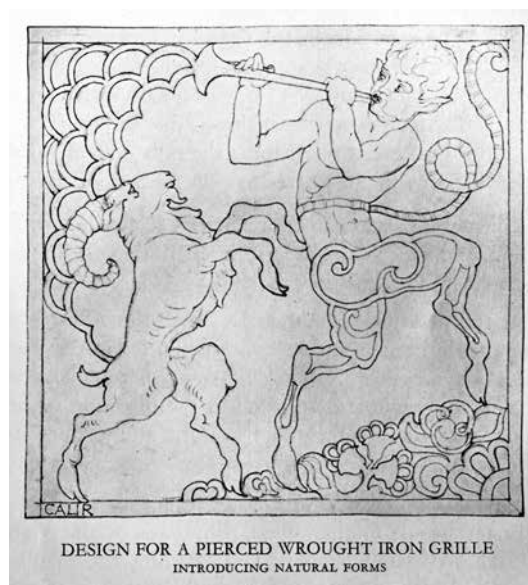
11 A large champlevé plaque designed by Llewelyn Roberts and executed by workmaster Kato c.1926. Frontispiece to *Tradition and Modernity in Metalwork*, 1929 (author's collection).

The D.I.A. was an organisation deeply suspicious of ornament and decoration. However, by slavishly following its 'approved' principles of 'good design', many competing manufactures found their products becoming very similar. The widespread use of the Guild's favoured 'Trajan' font by many of the exhibitors at the British Empire Exhibition in 1924, was wryly commented upon in the publication *Commercial Art*. Their reporter states: 'at the exhibition it has been "Trajan, Trajan, all the way".' [24] For the Guild a watershed had been reached and whether it was through commercial concerns, or born out of creative frustration, or simply a response to the zeitgeist of the Roaring Twenties, the wholesale adoption of D.I.A. principles was jettisoned. Presaging this change in direction was the arrival at the Guild during the early 1920s of the mysterious Japanese workmaster, Shozo Kato (b.1863). [25] Kato was a master enameller and sometime dealer in Japanese art, who worked closely with Harold and Phoebe Stabler during the years 1912-1918. It was probably through this connection that he met Llewelyn Roberts who successfully persuaded him to relocate to Birmingham. He had an immediate impact on the work of the Guild as his expertise, previously applied to jewellery, was used to pioneer the use of large-scale vitreous enamelling within an external architectural context. (Fig. 11) *The Studio* magazine commenting in 1921:

‘The Guild has recently experimented with the use of enamel for exterior decorative effect, and an example of its use may be seen in the entrance hall of Messrs. Marshall & Snelgrove’s premises in Oxford Street, London, where this form of treatment has been employed. Attention has been called in *The Studio* and elsewhere to the need for a little more colour in London exteriors, and this experiment, therefore, is a move in the right direction’. [26]

Kato, despite steadfastly refusing to reveal his techniques to his fellow craftsmen, did develop a close working relationship with his employer and appears to have been a major factor in spurring him towards a remarkable Indian summer as a creative designer. Previously content to work in the background, interpreting architects’ drawings and sometimes making his own, understated contribution to architectural schemes, the Guild’s chief designer Llewelyn Roberts, now in his mid-40s, unexpectedly stepped into the limelight.

There were more contributing factors to this remarkable turn of events than simply the arrival of workmaster Kato. The move away from restrictive D.I.A. design principles opened up new approaches and it is important to understand that by the mid-1920s, the day-to-day responsibility for running the Guild had been delegated to Llewelyn. His younger brother Hugh was preoccupied with other, even more profitable businesses that he had been developing since 1920. The middle-aged Llewelyn must also be credited with taking a keen interest in, and much inspiration from, the latest developments in the applied and decorative arts, particularly those of France and the USA. He wholeheartedly embraced the stylistic treatments and decorative motifs of the design trend that would become known as Art Deco. (Fig. 12) A major stylistic influence on his work at this point derived from the art of ancient Egypt. Llewelyn was not alone as many designers fell under the spell of ‘Egyptomania’, a transatlantic vogue, massively stimulated by widespread media coverage of the major archaeological discovery of the decade: Howard Carter’s excavation of Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922. He would also have had plenty of opportunity to study the detailed reconstruction of that tomb that proved to be one of the most popular exhibits at the British Empire Exhibition. Prior to 1925 Llewelyn’s designs can be characterised as being stylistically eclectic, earnest and a trifle staid; after this date they become coherent, colourful, dynamic and playful. In mid-life, Llewelyn Roberts proved himself to be a highly inventive designer of decorative architectural metalwork.



12 Original design in pencil by Llewelyn Roberts from *Smithcraft* c.1926 (private collection).

A pair of Guild catalogues, *Smithcraft* and *Enamelcraft* (c.1925-26) serve as a suitable introduction to the ‘reinvented’ Llewelyn Roberts. They feature striking examples of his design as cover images and contain an introductory text that serves both as a succinct history of each craft and as a brief autobiography of the designer. *Smithcraft* talks about the industry’s reaction to the ‘extravagances of the *New Art* movement’ by retreating to a position of austere oversimplification but concludes on an optimistic note:

‘At the present moment partly under the influence of the notable French Smiths’ work exhibited at the *Paris Exposition des Arts Décoratifs Modernes* there appears to be a far more wholesome trend in the direction of real imagination in design, and the right and proper use of material’. [27]

Four of the illustrations in *Smithcraft*, show the work or design drawings of Llewelyn Roberts although the first image is of a large set of wrought iron memorial gates recently executed by the Guild for the British Medical Association to the designs of Sir Edwin Lutyens. The Guild were by now executing designs for the leading architects of the day: Lutyens, in particular, would have a long, close relationship with the company, often overseeing the manufacture of his designs at the Grosvenor Works. (Fig. 13) In *Enamelcraft*, a publication that features many colour illustrations, Llewelyn Roberts subconsciously undermines his younger self by gently mocking the, ‘finger plates, hearth canopies and curbs embellished with spots and roundels of enamel – bright assertive patches – the last relic of commercialised *Art Nouveau*.’ [28] The Guild distances itself from these ‘trifles’ by explaining that its motivation was to explore, ‘the possibility of colour decoration in architecture – a colour decoration that would be permanent, harmonious, strike a note of gaiety without being bizarre, and capable of production at a moderate cost.’ (Fig. 14, See p.34) Then follows a long description of the Guild’s development of memorial tablets, name plates and signs. By the mid-1920s, these had become so successful they were becoming ubiquitous with clients including: the London General Omnibus Co. (bus stops), the General Post Office (location signs) and the Royal Borough of Kensington (street name signs). (Fig. 15, See p.34) In conclusion Roberts explains that the Guild’s experiments with enamel techniques were,

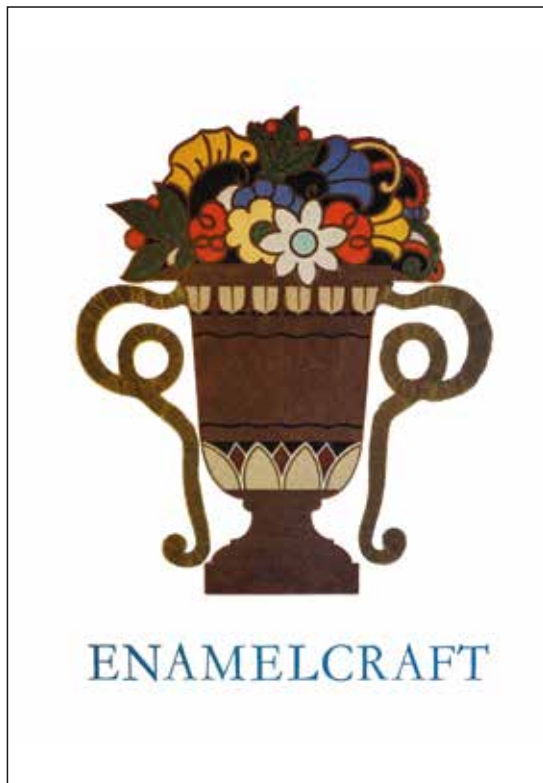
‘with a view to evolving a serious form of exterior decoration of buildings on a scale hitherto unattempted – Its designers considered that on many types of architectural elevations such as shop frontages, entrance doors, windows etc., colour decoration might well take the place of mouldings and enrichments in relief; that it was quite unnecessary that it should be crude or assertive, but that it could be used soberly and with distinction...’.

The publication ends by stating, ‘*The Birmingham Guild*’s designers welcome the opportunity of co-operating with architects who desire to use this new form of decoration on their buildings.’ This appears to have had the desired effect, catching the attention of a New York-based architect who had taken on a large, commercial commission in central London.

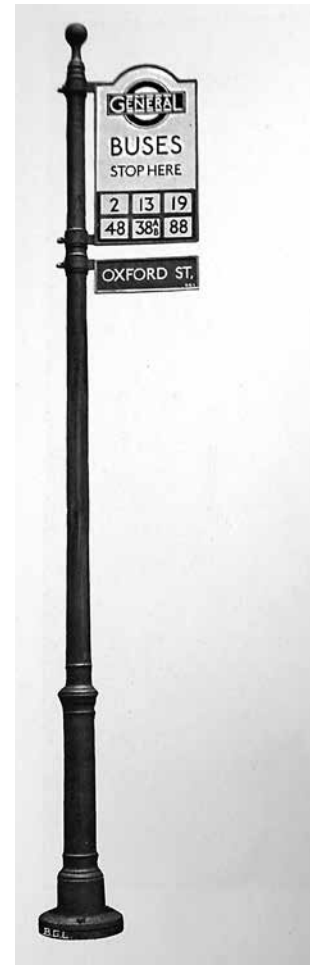
The National Radiator Building on Great Marlborough Street was designed in 1928 by the leading American architect Raymond Hood (1884-1931) working in collaboration with the Scotsman, S. Gordon Jeeves. (Fig. 16, See p. 20) It was a reduced version of Hood’s 1924, American Radiator Building on Bryant Park, Manhattan, the New York premises of the parent company of the English firm. It stands as Hood’s only European building and is a rare example of an American tower block design on a London scale. Clad in polished black marble, picked out with vibrant enamel trimmings manufactured by the Guild, it is a striking edifice, especially when compared to Liberty’s Tudor-revival building opposite, built only four years previously. The Egyptian-influenced, enamel trimmings of formalised lotus and geometric patterns in yellows, oranges and greens that surmount the ground floor windows and doors are likely to have been designed by Llewelyn Roberts, since they feature many motifs similar to those found in his signed drawings of this period. [29]



13 The towering gates of Government House, Delhi, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens c.1929 (private collection).



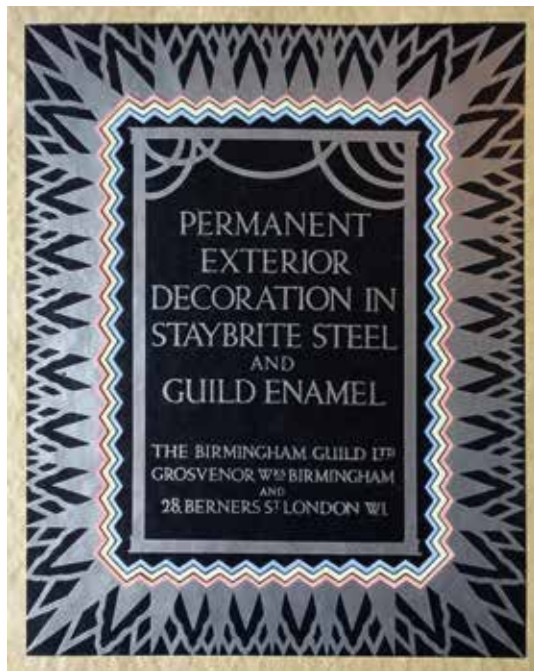
- 14** A typically exuberant champlevé bronze architectural adornment designed by Llewelyn Roberts graces the cover of *Enamelcraft* c.1925 (private collection).
- 15** Cast iron and enamelled bus stop designed by Llewelyn Roberts from *The Birmingham Guild Ltd., Architectural and Decorative Metalworkers* c.1932, p. 78 (author's collection).



The architectural application of another innovative material, Firth's 'Staybrite' steel, was pioneered by the Birmingham Guild during the mid-1920s. This was a stainless steel invented in 1924 which included nickel in addition to chromium, in its composition. This combination created a highly polished, corrosion-proof, silver metal, ideally suited to exterior use. A catalogue was issued (Fig. 17) demonstrating the combined potential of vitreous enamel and stainless steel, *Permanent Exterior Decoration in Staybrite Steel and Guild Enamel*. [30] The virtues of this 'wonder' material were extolled as follows:

'The advent of *Firth's Staybrite Steel*, in combination with the *Guild Vitreous Enamel* decoration has made it possible to have a Shop Front of polished silver effect with colour cunningly introduced like that of a jewel – and this effect is permanent – proof against rain and weather, acid-laden atmosphere, sunshine or fog. The frame needs cleaning only in the same way by the same method, and by the same man who cleans the plate-glass window'.

The publication also explains the benefits of shop fittings manufactured in stainless steel as 'silver clashes with no colour' and was therefore an ideal backdrop to any product. To promote the material further, it created a striking 'Staybrite' trade exhibition stand, showcasing Llewelyn Roberts' most recent designs, for the 1927 British Industries Fair. (Figs 18, 19) 'Staybrite' was such a commercial success for the Guild that by the early 1930s, when The Bureau of Information on Nickel produced a richly illustrated guide: *Decorative Uses of Nickel Alloys*, almost all the examples shown were designed by Llewelyn Roberts and manufactured by the Guild. [31] (Fig. 20)



17 A suitably 'jazzy' cover design for the Guild's introduction of Staybrite Steel c.1927 (private collection).



20 The cover of *Decorative Uses of Nickel Alloys* 1932 (Birmingham Library, Wolfson Collection).



18 The Guild's exhibition stand, designed by Llewelyn Roberts, for the 1927 British Industries Fair, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham (private collection).



19 Promotional postcard for the British Industries Fair, 1927 (private collection). The repoussé panel is that featured lower right in the Guild's exhibition stand for the fair.



21 Zodiac themed lift enclosure for Selfridge's department store, Oxford Street, London, 1928: as displayed at The Museum of London (the author).

The September 1928 edition of *Architectural Review* contained a long, well-illustrated appreciation of The Guild's work by the leading architectural writer Sir Lawrence Weaver (1876–1930). It was re-printed shortly afterwards as a lavishly produced catalogue entitled, *Tradition and Modernity in Metalwork*, printed on hand-made paper with tipped-in illustrations. [32] This celebratory off-print contained a long and frequently inaccurate history of the Guild, painting Hart, Son, Peard & Co., Ltd. as the more significant 'parent' company. One illustration features a small detail of a very recent work that must rank as Llewlyn Roberts' masterpiece: the lift enclosures for Selfridge's department store on Oxford Street, London. (Figs 21, 22) These elaborate, monumental wrought-iron screens were installed on all eight floors of the building and feature many highly stylised foliate and figurative cast-bronze panels emblematic of the figures of the zodiac. These openwork panels are backed with yellow glass which could be backlit to spectacular effect. The quality of Llewlyn Roberts' design is such that for many years the whole scheme was thought to be the work of the designer of the lift interiors, the leading artist-blacksmith of his era, Edgar Brandt (1880-1960). Weaver uses the Selfridge's lifts as an example of the Guild's pragmatic approach to a commission that necessitated much repetition of the cast elements, making batch production the most cost-effective method for the client. He congratulates the Guild and defends their approach refuting, 'That there is something essentially base about repetitions and something of outstanding virtue about making everything

different, [these] are among the delusions which die hard.' The publication ends with a postscript added by Llewelyn Roberts, aimed squarely at architects, in which he argues passionately – from the standpoint of a designer of architectural metalwork – for more creative collaboration within the process. He states, 'It seems wise that designer craftsmen should not be regarded as outsiders working to precise and dogmatic instructions, but rather as essential elements in an orchestra of which the architect is the unquestioned conductor, without the desire to play every instrument in turn.' The piece ends with a remarkable *cri de coeur*:

'It is over twenty years ago that I ceased to be an ironmonger's bagman, but during the many years it was my business to supply various sorts of metalwork, under the direction of architects, I was not too often treated as a person whose fairly close study of his trade entitled his views to much respect. Where I was recognized as an expert in my own very small field I think I was able to give a service which was of real value to architects who employed and treated me as not wholly negligible in the field. I know at least that those who did encourage me got a first class job'.

The Wall Street crash of 1929 followed by the worldwide depression seemed to have had little immediate effect on the Guild but it may be the reason why, in that year, it formed an association with the Crittall Manufacturing Company Ltd., well-known makers of metal casement windows. This close cooperation had great benefits for the Guild as it now gained world-wide representation through Crittall's many overseas agents, giving it access to new markets in South America, Africa, Asia and Australasia.

Llewelyn Roberts' voice is also clearly distinguishable in a feature article devoted to the Guild, in the *Birmingham Gazette* of Tuesday 24 June 1930, commencing as follows:

'Perhaps it is not realised or appreciated by those with artistic talent what a wealth of opportunity is offered in the designing of decorative metal work. For it is among metalworkers more than any other group of related craftsmen, that a liking for new forms and new treatment is most visible to-day. New processes of metal working are opening up vistas which may lead to an era of metal architecture which will supremely affect the range of contrasts and associations of colour in relation to neighbouring materials. In fact, we may one day awake from a world largely dull and drab with its unpretentious wood and brick buildings to a world embellished by rust-less metal architecture because its decorative value is recognised by commerce'. [33] (Fig. 23, See p.38)



22 Details (compilation) of figures emblematic of the four winds from Selfridge's lift enclosure, 1928 (the author).



23 Repoussé Staybrite steel entrance doors for The National Provincial Bank, Coventry, 1929-30 (the author).

The article continues as a lengthy history of the firm and documents more recent developments including the merging of the sales organisation with that of the Crittall Manufacturing Co. It also reveals that the Grosvenor Works were in the process of being almost doubled in size with the workforce rising to approximately 500. Under the heading, 'Craftsmanship First', the feature concludes by explaining that very little machinery is used, since all workers were highly skilled and the Guild was the biggest firm in the country confined entirely to this type of architectural work. It commends the Guild for, 'The part it is playing in retaining the old craftsmanship of the blacksmith and in beautifying the outward signs of commerce with the aid of influential architects is incalculable and must inevitably be reflected in a raising of the aesthetic standard in years to come.'



24 The Guild's showroom at 22 Bruton Street, London, illustrated in *The Birmingham Guild Ltd., Architectural and Decorative Metalworkers* c.1932, p. 120 (author's collection). The table, lamp, chairs, metal doors, panelling and plaster ceiling were all designed by Llewelyn Roberts.



25 Table lamp in ebony and champlevé enamel for the Bruton Street showroom designed by Llewelyn Roberts c.1930 (private collection).

Around 1930 the Guild moved its London showroom from 28 Berners Street (north of Oxford Street) to 22 Bruton Street in fashionable Mayfair. Here Llewelyn Roberts designed every element of what must rank as one of the capital's greatest, 'lost', Art Deco interiors. (Figs 24, 25) This stylish scheme was an interior worthy of a Hollywood movie, featuring an extensive use of colourful, decorative enamels and much use of expensive, exotic materials including ebony, cloisonné enamel and vellum. This, and other recent work, were included in the largest of the Guild's inter-war catalogues, *The Birmingham Guild Ltd. Architectural & Decorative Metalworkers*, published c.1932. [34] A testament to how far the Guild had come in little over a decade, it featured work ranging from huge architectural schemes such as the monumental,

cast-bronze doors for the Bank of Boston in Buenos Aires and Lutyens' towering, wrought-iron gates for Government House, Delhi to more humble shop frontages, cast balustrades and a popular line in decorative, enamelled pub signs. (Figs 26, 27) The catalogue graphically captures the company at its zenith and proudly records that the Birmingham Guild Ltd. is,

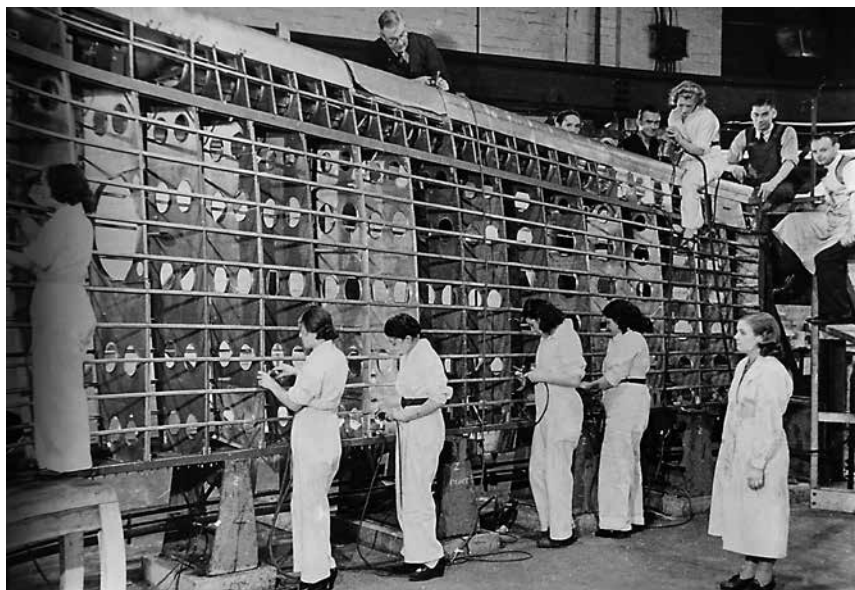
'A company of metalworkers, who produce from their own and architects' designs, wrought and cast ironwork, such as gates, railings, grilles, staircases, lift enclosures, fireproof steel doors, and escape staircases, bronze doors and windows, bank grilles, shopfronts, nameplates in bronze and enamel, memorial tablets, door furniture, electric fittings, cast lead work, fibrous plaster work, stained glass and woodcarving.'



26 Cover of *Public House & Inn Signs* c.1934 (private collection). 'By Hammer & Hand' was the Guild motto from its earliest days.



27 Vitreous enamel pub sign in a bronze frame from *Public House & Inn Signs* c.1934 (private collection).



28 Female workers fabricating an aircraft wing at the Grosvenor Works c.1944 (private collection).

The company continued to provide all these services throughout the 1930s but as the prospect of war loomed, returned once more to aircraft production, recruiting female, oxy-acetylene welders as early as June 1939. [35] During the Second World War all architectural work ceased and, as in the First War, it returned to aviation contract work with a largely female workforce. It also renewed its connection with the de Havilland Company and much of the war was spent fabricating a wide range of parts for the iconic Mosquito fighter-bomber. (Fig. 28) However, unlike the First War, following the cessation of hostilities the Guild continued in the aviation industry well into the 1950s, eventually making parts for the de Havilland DH 106 Comet, the world's first commercial jet airliner, which entered service in 1952. Hugh Roberts' son, Roger Wyatt Roberts (1912 - 1997) became director of the Guild in 1940 with his father staying on as chairman, ultimately celebrating 50 years with the firm in December 1954. Hugh's older brother Llewelyn, the true driving force of the Guild, left before him, retiring at the close of the war aged 66.

The story of the post-war Guild is one of diversification and a long, slow decline. The company concentrated on four areas of work: architectural metalwork, aircraft components, Hart Agricultural (concerned with the manufacture of 'muck-spreaders' and potato elevators) and a foundry, still trading as Hart, Son, Peard & Co., Ltd. The architectural side of the business was hard-hit by a combination of post-war austerity and the younger generation of architects' wholesale embracing of 'Modernism'. Finding itself in a world where there was little place for ornate decoration or expensive materials, it tried to adapt as best it could, turning to utilitarian architectural metal fittings. It even had some success with a modular spiral staircase it had devised, named the 'Grosvenor' after its Grosvenor Works. [36] (Fig. 29) However, as the post-war Birmingham car industry boomed, it also proved difficult to attract and retain the skilled labour it had always relied upon as automotive work was better paid, not as dirty and much less strenuous. The decline continued into the early 1970s when the workforce had shrunk to under 100. In 1974 Roger Wyatt Roberts sold the Birmingham Guild to another pair of brothers who had a long association with the glass industry, Michael Weston and Brian Wynyates Smith. Henceforth, the Guild was a company specialising in the manufacture and installation of double-glazing units, with the Grosvenor Street West site being sold for redevelopment in 1985. The Birmingham Guild name was sold for a final time in 1997 to a Swiss glass manufacturer although it had long since ceased to exist as a trading company. [37]



29 The Grosvenor Spiral Staircase as displayed at the Ideal Home Exhibition c.1964 (private collection).



30 Cast bronze ornaments designed by Llewelyn Roberts c.1930 from *The Birmingham Guild Ltd., Architectural and Decorative Metalworkers c.1932*, p. 116 (author's collection).

The history of the Guild is the tale of two interlinked but very different organisations, each creating a significant body of work under the leadership of two remarkable designer-directors. The better known is the first: the Birmingham Guild of Handicraft which, in the 1890s, under the direction of Arthur Stansfeld Dixon, produced some of the most radical and austere metalwork of the whole Arts & Crafts Movement. [38] The second iteration is largely forgotten today but during the 1920s and 30s, the Birmingham Guild Ltd., under the leadership of designer-director C.A. Llewelyn Roberts, became the country's leading manufacturer of architectural metalwork and was responsible for creating some of the most exuberant and progressive examples of British Art Deco design. (Figs 30, 31, 32) For too long, a veil of obscurity has masked the achievements of this second Guild and, those of its director Llewelyn Roberts, a man who considered himself to be a designer-craftsman, sympathetically interpreting in metal, designs made by architects and sculptors. When, in the mid-1920s he came to the fore as a designer, his graphically dynamic, two-dimensional work fell somewhere between each of the two professions, placing him in a no-man's land. This undeserved obscurity was further compounded by the protocol of the time whereby only the supervising architect would receive credit for a given project, irrespective of how significant Llewelyn Roberts' own contribution had been. Today the architectural sculpture of figures such as Gilbert Bayes and Charles Sargeant Jagger is widely known and appreciated as is the architectural metalwork of Edgar Brandt. A forgotten figure of twentieth-century British design, C.A. Llewelyn Roberts deserves a place alongside these names as an outstanding architectural decorator and technical innovator, a designer who demonstrably made a significant impact on the streets of towns and cities both at home and abroad.



31 Wrought iron pub sign designed by Llewelyn Roberts c.1928 from *The Birmingham Guild Ltd., Architectural and Decorative Metalworkers c.1932*, p. 77 (author's collection).



32 Champlevé enamel bronze door over-mantel, attributed to Llewelyn Roberts, for The National Radiator Building, Great Marlborough Street, London, 1928 (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank: Mark Roberts, Alison Higgins, Tim Spencer, Mark Weston Smith and the staff of the Wolfson Centre for Archival Research within the Library of Birmingham.

NOTES

Please note: For brevity, publications of (Birmingham: The Birmingham Guild Ltd.) are credited as The Guild Ltd.

- 1 Hermann Hirschwald (1849-1906) opened his Berlin *Kunstgewerbehaus* (Arts and Crafts House) shortly after S. Bing opened his well-known gallery in Paris in 1895. The *Kunstgewerbehaus* hosted regular, themed exhibitions showcasing leading, contemporary European applied arts including one devoted to the British Arts and Crafts Movement in 1898.
- 2 William Kenrick (1831-1919) was a director of the family firm; the iron founders and casters, Archibald Kenrick & Sons. He served as mayor of Birmingham and MP for Birmingham North. His home The Grove (demolished), was rebuilt by J. H. Chamberlain. A highly decorated, panelled room from this scheme survives and is on display at the Victoria & Albert Museum.
- 3 King's College, Cambridge, Ashbee Journals, letter of 11 December 1899. The 'Steely One' was Joseph Chamberlain, who had no direct involvement with the Guild.
- 4 Alan Napier, *Not Just Batman's Butler: The Autobiography of Alan Napier* (North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2015), p. 16. Claude's son Alan became an actor, best remembered for playing Alfred, the butler, in the TV series, *Batman* (1966-68).
- 5 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG): uncatalogued papers bequeathed by Hugh Birkett in 2002.
- 6 Only one copy is known, in the possession of the Roberts family.
- 7 Public Record Office (PRO). BT 31/11278/86238. Company No: 86238 Gitting [sic] Craftsmen Ltd.
- 8 *The Studio Yearbook of Decorative Art 1909* (London: *The Studio*, 1909), p. 153.
- 9 *The British Architect*, 23 April 1909, p. 289 and *The British Architect*, 30 April 1909, p. 312.
- 10 PRO. BT 31/19132/106403. Company No: 106403; Birmingham Guild Ltd.
- 11 PRO. BT 31/19802/113531. Company No: 113531; Birmingham Guild (Liverpool) Ltd
- 12 Napier, (as note 4) pp. 29-30.
- 13 *The Studio Yearbook of Decorative Art 1915* (London: *The Studio*, 1915), p. 149.
- 14 *Birmingham Mail*, 24 August 1915, p. 1.
- 15 At his death in 1955 R. Hugh Roberts was: Chairman of The Birmingham Guild Ltd; Chairman and managing director of Super Oil Seals and Gaskets Ltd.; Chairman of Whitfield's Bedsteads Ltd.; Chairman of Bay Tree Hotels Ltd. and a former chairman of Fisher & Ludlow, a highly successful manufacturer of pressed motor body parts.
- 16 *The Birmingham Post & Gazette*, 4 October 1958, p. 9.
- 17 *The Birmingham Daily Post*, 18 December 1915, p. 1 and 10 September 1916, p. 1.
- 18 *Western Mail & South Wales News*, 1 March 1941, p. 4.
- 19 *Flight* (London) 28 November 1918.
- 20 *The Quest*, (The Guild Ltd.), vol. 2, 1895, p. 27.
- 21 *Hand Wrought Church Metalwork* (The Guild Ltd.), c.1918-19. Copy at Birmingham Library, Wolfson Collection, LS10/B/154/1/6.

- 22 *Memorials: The Work of the Architect and Craftsman in the Execution of War Memorials Illustrating Examples of the Crafts of Enamelling & Carving in Marble and Stone* (The Guild Ltd.), c.1920. Copy at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (uncatalogued).
- 23 *Lettering: Examples of the Productions of the Birmingham Guild Ltd. for Commercial and Office Purposes Fascia & Stall Board Lettering, Signs and Name Plates in Brass, Bronze and Enamel* (The Guild Ltd.), February, 1919. Copy at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (uncatalogued).
- 24 F.A. Baker, *Commercial Art*, (London) vol. 3, July 1924, p. 60.
- 25 Shozo Kato was born in 1863 in Osaka, Japan. At the time of the 1911 census he was living in London with his English-born wife Edith and was a self-employed dealer in Japanese art with a gallery at 8 New Oxford Street, London.
- 26 *The Studio*, vol. 81, issue 337, April 1921, pp. 160-62.
- 27 *Smithcraft* (The Guild Ltd.), c.1925. Copy at RIBA Library, 729.9:691.7 // BIR.
- 28 *Enamelcraft* (The Guild Ltd.), c.1925. Copy at RIBA Library, 729.9:691.7 // BIR.
- 29 See *Smithcraft*, (as note 27) p. 4 for a drawing of a wrought iron gate featuring a similar, central flower motif with scalloped backdrop.
- 30 *Permanent Exterior Decoration in Staybrite Steel and Guild* (The Guild Ltd.), c.1927. Copy in the possession of the Roberts family.
- 31 *Decorative Uses of Nickel Alloys, With Illustrations by the Birmingham Guild Ltd.* (London: The Bureau of Information on Nickel, 1932). Copy at Birmingham Library, Wolfson Collection, LS 11/5/63/247162.
- 32 Sir Lawrence Weaver K.B.E., F.S.A. *Tradition and Modernity in Metalwork* (The Guild Ltd.), c.1929. Copy in the author's possession.
- 33 *Birmingham Gazette*, 24 June 1930, p. 10.
- 34 *The Birmingham Guild Ltd. Architectural & Decorative Metalworkers* (The Guild Ltd.), c.1932. Copy at Birmingham Library, Wolfson Collection, LS10/B/154/1/3
- 35 *Birmingham Mail*, 16 June 1939, p. 1.
- 36 *Guild Spiral Staircases*, c.1977. Leaflet at Birmingham Library, Wolfson Collection, LS10/B/154/1/2/1-4.
- 37 Telephone conversation with Mark Weston Smith, 8 August 2019.
- 38 Arthur Dixon's middle name was regularly mis-spelled as 'Stansfield' during his lifetime, a practice which has continued to the present – he was given his mother's maiden name of 'Stansfeld'.

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