

SIR EDWARD BURNE JONES' SEASIDE RETREAT

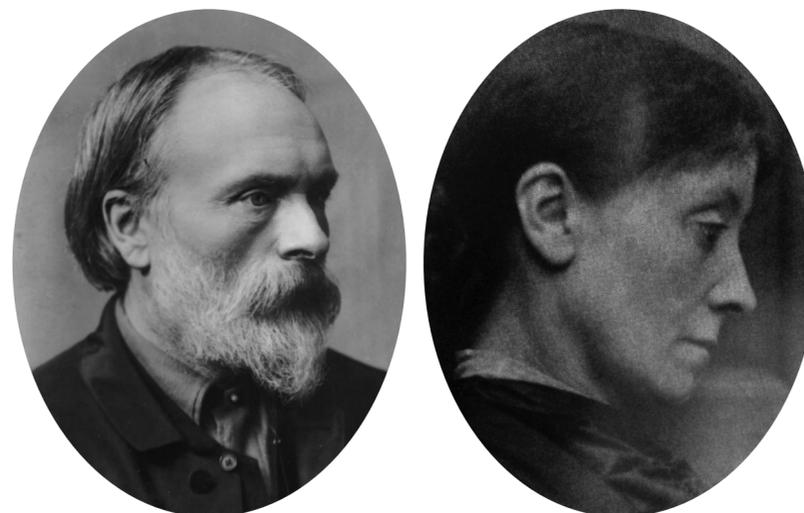
A blue plaque on Prospect Cottage indicates the seaside home of Pre-Raphaelite artist, Sir Edward Burne Jones (1833 – 1898).

The son of a Birmingham picture framer, he went to Oxford with some ideas of the priesthood but never obtained a degree. However, he did meet William Morris. This led him to become part of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood under Ruskin's patronage. The group produced carefully detailed medieval style paintings.



While living at The Grange, North End, Fulham, Burne-Jones' wife Georgiana took the train to Brighton and walked over the downs to discover that Prospect Cottage was for sale. With a nod to Fulham, as well as its position in the village, they called their purchase North End House.

They soon needed more space so bought the adjacent Aubrey Cottage and knocked through, resulting in a strange layout on many levels. Note the narrow vertical window to enable artists' canvases to be moved.



Georgiana (1840-1952) was one of the notable MacDonald sisters. Her sister Alice married John Kipling and was mother to Rudyard. Her sister Agnes married the artist Sir Edward Poynter, who became Director of the National Gallery and President of the Royal Academy. Their son Ambrose (Ambo) became an architect and advised Kipling on alterations to the Elms. Her sister Louisa married Alfred Baldwin MP. He was the father of Stanley Baldwin, three times Prime Minister between 1923 and 1937. Stanley married into the Ridsdale family, who lived at the Dene on the south side of the Green.

Burne Jones had two surviving children, Philip, also an artist, and Margaret. They and their cousins, Rudyard Kipling, Stanley Baldwin and Ambo Poynter spent many happy hours in the village. Margaret's daughter married and became the writer Angela Thirkell.

On the occasion of Margaret's wedding the family donated the three east windows to the village church and more followed. Following a Memorial service at Westminster Abbey, Burne-Jones' ashes were scattered near the church door in sight of his home, a spot he had chosen during his lifetime.

During the next twenty-two years, Georgiana's socialist activities, which she had shared with William Morris but not her husband, were somewhat out of touch with the local villagers.

She won a seat on the Rottingdean Parish Council in 1895, supporting the working class. At the end of the Boer War in 1902, she controversially hung a banner at North End House reading "*We have killed and also take possession*".

After Georgiana's death the property was sold to artist Sir William Nicholson then to Sir Roderick Jones (Chairman of Reuters) and his wife Enid Bagnold (playwright and author of National Velvet.) They amalgamated the three properties into North End House but the three properties are once more separate.



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