

## **Mackmurdo, Arthur Heygate 1851 - 1942**



Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo [also known as A.H. Mackmurdo] was born in Edmonton, Middlesex, England on 12 December 1851 and was articled to the architect Thomas Chatfield Clarke (1829-1895) in London. In 1873 he moved to the London office of James Brooks (1825-1901), a Gothic Revival architect, to whom Mackmurdo later acknowledged his debt "as an exemplar of methodical thoroughness".

In 1875 Mackmurdo set up his own architectural practice at 20 Southampton Road, London. He relocated the office to 20 Fitzroy Street, London in 1888 and was in partnership with George Hornblower (1858-1930) and E. S. Walters as Mackmurdo, Hornblower & Walters from 1891 to 1893..

Mackmurdo was elected an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (ARIBA) in 1882, however he left in 1885 and his architectural output was very limited and scattered over several years. It included a few houses in London and the Manchester area, a cold-storage warehouse in Charterhouse Street in the City of London (1900), and the village hall in Great Totham, Essex (1929-30). It is as a designer and craftsman and for his contribution to the development of the Arts and Crafts movement that Mackmurdo is better known.

In 1882, with Selwyn Image (1849-1930), and Herbert P. Horne (1864-1916), one of his protégés, Mackmurdo founded the Century Guild of Artists. The aims of the Century Guild were outlined in a prospectus for the Guild's magazine 'The Century Guild Hobby Horse' [later The Hobby Horse]. These were ". . . to render all branches of Art the sphere, no longer of the tradesman, but of the artist. It would restore building, decoration, glass-painting, pottery, wood-carving and metal-work

to their rightful place beside painting and sculpture. By so placing them they would once more be regarded as legitimate and honoured expressions of the artistic spirit, and would stand in their true relation not only to painting but to the drama, to music, and to literature. In other words, the Century Guild seeks to emphasise the Unity of Art . . ."

Mackmurdo practised by example and as a Guild member mastered several design and craft skills. He designed wallpaper for Jeffrey & Co., furnishing fabric for Simpson & Godlee, as well as art metalwork, furniture, book plates and book covers. The cover he designed for his book *Wren's City Churches* (1883) Nikolaus Pevsner asserted was "the first work of Art Nouveau which can be traced" [Pioneers of Modern Design (1975)]

In the early 1890s The Century Guild disintegrated mainly due to the "the underlying amateurishness of the organization" [DNB entry on Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo] and *The Hobby Horse* ceased publication in 1894.

Mackmurdo participated in the 1st (1888) and 3rd (1890) exhibition of the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society at the New Gallery in London, otherwise he exhibited little.

By 1900 Mackmurdo had all but abandoned architecture and design. He subsequently largely devoted his energies to his utopian schemes for social and economic reform, a subject on which he wrote extensively. He died in Great Totham, Essex on 15 March 1942

Worked in

UK

Works

Halcyon, Enfield, London (1874–76); Brooklyn, Enfield, London (1883); 16 Redington Road, Hampstead, London (1890); 12 Hams Road, Knightsbridge, London (1891); 25 Cadogan Gardens, Chelsea, London (1893-94); Old Swan public house, Sloane Street, Knightsbridge, London (1899); Cold storage warehouse, 109-113 Charterhouse Street, Smithfield, London (1900); Little Ruffins, Wickham Bishops, Essex (c.1900); Great Ruffins, Wickham Bishops, Essex (c.1904); the village hall in Great Totham, Essex (1929-30); and a few houses in Manchester.

*See also*

[British Listed Buildings](#)

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