

Reynolds, William Bainbridge 1855 - 1935

William Bainbridge Reynolds was born on 6 March 1855 at the Royal Military Asylum [an Army orphanage where his father was headmaster] in Chelsea, London, England. He was articled to John Dando Sedding (1838-1891) in c.1871 and then worked for George Edmund Street (1824-1881) from c.1874, following which he employed in the office of John Pollard Seddon (1827-1906).

In the 1870s Reynolds developed an interest in the applied arts, particularly metalwork, and after working for a period as a draughtsman for the Royal Engineers, appears to have abandoned all thoughts of pursuing a career in architecture. In the early 1880s he began working for John Starkie Gardner (1844-1930), a successful art metalworker who had recently set up a workshop on the Albert Embankment in London. About this time Reynolds became acquainted with the architect Hugh Rumieau Gough (1843-1904) who had received a commission to design St Cuthbert's in Earls Court, London (built 1884-87). He requested Reynolds to design the interior furnishings for the church. It includes a rare example of Reynolds' stained glass.

In c.1894 Reynolds set up his own business, W. Bainbridge Reynolds Ltd. The firm, which specialised in the manufacturer of decorative metalwork had premises at 28 Victoria Street in Westminster, and in Walworth and Camberwell, London. In 1904 he established Manor House Metal Works at 7b Old Town, Clapham Common, which was near his home in Rectory Grove.

W. Bainbridge Reynolds Ltd. was responsible for executing ornamental metalwork for a number of houses designed by C.F.A. Voysey (1857-1941). Reynolds had met Voysey in the 1870s whilst he was working as an architectural assistant in the office J.P. Seddon. They subsequently became lifelong friends.

Examples of W. Bainbridge Reynolds Ltd.'s art metalwork featured in 'The Studio Yearbook of Decorative Art' 1908 include a bright-iron dog grates (illustrations B134, B135, B136, B137), brass hanging lamps (illustrations B217, B219), a polished iron electric pendant (illustration B220), a bronze electric pendant designed by C.F.A. Voysey (illustration B221), a wrought-iron electric pendant (B222), an iron and copper wall lantern (illustration B227); a wrought-iron and copper gilt weather vane (illustration B228), a polished iron fire screen (illustration B229), and two lamps and seven items of door furniture designed by

C.F.A. Voysey (illustrations B230, B231, B232, B233, B234, B235, B236, B237, B238). Most of the early work of W. Bainbridge Reynolds Ltd. was designed by Reynolds himself.

Among Reynolds' later commissions were The Kitchener Chapel gates designed by Detmar Blow (1867-1939) for St Paul's Cathedral in London, and ornamental metalwork for cathedrals, several Cambridge colleges, and country houses.

Reynolds was a member of the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society and frequently participated in their exhibitions in London. In 1888 he was also elected a member of the Art Workers Guild. He died in Brighton, Sussex on 31 March 1935. Voysey wrote his obituary for The Times on 11 April 1935 p.19.

Worked in

UK

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Gray, A. Stuart. Edwardian architecture: a biographical dictionary. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1985 [Reynolds' date of birth incorrectly given as 1845]

Mills, K. S. . 'William Bainbridge Reynolds (1855-1935), craftsman in metals', Transactions of the Ecclesiological Society, new series, vol. 3, no. 1, 1954 pp. 77-85

'Obituary'. Royal Institute of British Architects Journal 11 May 1935 p. 789

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Victorian Church Art. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1971 [Catalogue of an exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum]

Links

- Rosemary Hill, 'Reynolds, William Bainbridge (1855-1935)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2007 [Subscription service] <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/75303>

- Mapping the Practice & Profession of Sculpture in Britain & Ireland 1851-1951

https://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/mapping/public/view/person.php?id=msib2_1203113576&search=

- Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Bainbridge_Reynolds

- The Victorian Web <https://victorianweb.org/sculpture/reynolds/1.html>

- The National Archives

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/fa4956fa-6778-4ffd-be24-6ebd04320070>

- Historic England - contains 16 records of work by William Bainbridge Reynolds and W. Bainbridge Reynolds Ltd.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/sitesearch?searchType=site&search=Bainbridge%20Reynolds>