

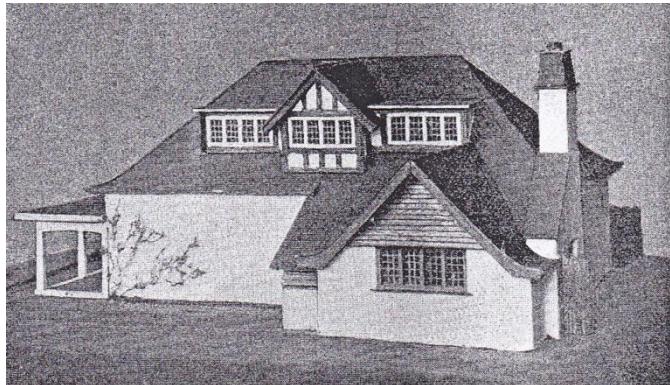
## ARCHITECTS AND ARBUTHNOTS

**Charles Harrison Townsend (1851-1928)** was a London based architect with offices at 29 Great George Street, Westminster and in 1888 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Townsend also designed furniture, furnishings and wallpaper and in 1888 was also elected to the Art Workers' Guild, of which he was to be an enthusiastic and devoted member. Townsend's beliefs were founded in Pugin and promoted by Morris and Webb - the belief that architecture must be based in reasonable building and the straight-forward use of materials and construction. He was elected Master of the Art Workers guild for the year 1903.

Townsend was clearly a remarkable architect, and his work was of European importance. The architectural writer, Nikolaus Pevsner placed him in his classic study *Pioneers of Modern Design*, in which he wrote that Townsend's designs of the 1890s '*are without question the most remarkable example of a reckless repudiation of tradition among English architects of the time*'. Similar in spirit to the experimental buildings of the Art Nouveau, they were certainly noticed and admired by Continental contemporaries. The German architect and critic Hermann Muthesius, author of *Das Englische Haus*, considered him one of '*the prophets of the new style*'.



**The Arbuthnot Institute**, as it was initially known, was a purpose built village hall, designed by Charles Harrison Townsend, for the benefit of the people of the Shamley Green. The foundation stone was laid 4<sup>th</sup> November 1904 and the building opened Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 1905, paid for by Elinor Arbuthnot in the memory of her husband Forster Fitzgerald Arbuthnot (1833 -1901). **Walter Guthrie**, Elinor Arbuthnot's youngest and ninth child from her previous marriage, gave the opening speech. Walter had lived much of his life at Upper House, Shamley Green. He was MP for Bow and Bromley Division of Tower Hamlets. He spoke of his step-father's love of books stating; '*That in books one would find friends for all time and for all days*'. Walter Guthrie concluded '**I dedicate this Hall to the glory of God, to the memory of Foster Fitzgerald Arbuthnot and to the use of the public for ever**'. The photograph shows a model of the original design that was shown at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, London in 1906 and illustrated in 'The Studio' magazine.



**Forster Fitzgerald Arbuthnot** was a distinguished orientalist, well versed in the ancient literatures of Persia and India. It is due to his laborious work that several of the Masterpieces of Arabic, Persian and Indian writers are now accessible to English readers. Mrs Arbuthnot lists his better known translations, including his collaboration with Sir Richard Burton in his translation of the "*Kama Sutra of Vatsayana*" (1833) and *The Ananga Ranga* (1885). At his death he was working on the Life of Balzac (1901).

Elinor's father was Sir James Stirling, an Admiral in the Royal Navy and commander of the 'Brazen'. He first saw Elinor's mother, Ellen Mangles when she was riding two ponies with one foot on the back of each as if practicing to become a circus performer at the age of 13. They were married on Ellen's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday at Stoke Church, Guildford and James Stirling went on to found a new settlement in Western Australia. The settlers were mainly from Worplesdon and Pirbright and included Ellen along with her son Andrew and Frederick, to whom she gave birth on the voyage. Elinor was born 8<sup>th</sup> September 1838 at the 'free settlement' alongside the Swan River area, later known as Perth.

Elinor moved to Upper House in Shamley Green after the death of her first husband, James Guthrie, to be nearer to her family for support with her own nine children. The photograph to the right is of Elinor and children. Elinor set about enlarging the property with the architect **Sir Richard Norman Shaw**.



In 1883 Charles Lutyens painted one of Elinor's daughters with her pet dog for £25 (from Lutyen's account book). It was at Upper House in Shamley Green that the young **Edwin Lutyens**, aged 15, had the opportunity to meet the Norman Shaw. It is reported by Elinor's daughter, Violet Stuart, that Edwin made amendments to Norman Shaw's drawings. Shaw exclaimed "what cheek" and that he would like to meet this boy! In 1885 Elinor urged Charles Lutyens to send his young son Edwin to London for formal architectural study and training (and may even have paid his fees). Edwin Lutyens went to the South Kensington School of Art to study architecture. He studied for a period of two years, but left prior to graduating to take a position as an architectural assistant to the practice of Ernest George and Harold Peto.

Sarah Sullivan