



# The Extraordinary Gertrude Bell

Classroom activity 2

KS3-KS4



# 2

## THE ARTS AND CRAFTS AT RED BARNs



The Arts and Crafts Movement was one of the most influential design movements of the Nineteen century. It began in Britain around 1880 and quickly spread across America and Europe. Some of the leading figures of the movement were the textile designer William Morris and the architect Philip Webb. Gertrude's father Hugh employed them to design and decorate the Bell family home at Red Barns, Redcar (1868).

Gertrude Bell grew up in this house and came back here from her numerous travels and adventures. Many of her letters were addressed to her family in Red Barns. After the First World War, luck ran out for the Bell family. The property was sold and Red Barns became a boarding house for school pupils from the Sir William Turner School and was later converted into a pub and hotel. Now the hotel has closed, leaving the house vulnerable to vandalism.

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### RESEARCH TOOLS:

- Discover Gertrude Bell Research website: [click here](#).
- Read Gertrude Bell Comics: [click here](#).
- Watch the introductory video: [click here](#).
- Discover Gertrude Bell's house in Red Barns and some of its interior decoration:
  - Search "Red Barns" in the Gertrude Bell Archive: [click here](#).
  - Look carefully at the picture of Red Barns, designed by Philip Webb: [click here](#), [here](#).

- Look carefully at William Morris' decorations inside Red Barns: [click here](#).
- Discover more on the Arts and Crafts Movement at the Victoria and Albert Museum: [click here](#).
- Discover more on the Arts and Crafts Movement at the Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum that holds a nationally-important collection on the Arts & Crafts Movement in Britain [click here](#).

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#### FURTHER READING:

- Jackson M. P. and Parkin A. (eds.), 2015, *The Extraordinary Gertrude Bell*, Tyne Bridge Publishing (opens a pdf file): [click here](#).

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#### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:

- Discuss with your pupils about the role of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Nineteen century Britain, and on the effects of industrialization and of mass-production on British design and manufacture.
- Ask your pupil to produce their own artworks inspired by the textiles and print designs of William Morris. As an alternative project, you can also explore the intricate designs from the Umayyad palace of Qasr el Mushatta, in Jordan. The monument is one of the most important works of early Islamic architecture. In 1903, a few years after Gertrude Bell had visited the place and had taken some photos, a large part of the facade was sent to Berlin, as a gift from the Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid II to the German emperor Wilhelm II. The intricate decorations of the palace show a remarkable similarity with some of the most popular designs created by William Morris. [Click here](#) for some of Gertrude Bell's photos of the palace.

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#### LINKS TO THE CURRICULUM:

Art and design, History (local history study).

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#### KEYWORDS:

Arts and Crafts, Red Barns, British design.