Morris, William (1834-1896) An important figure in the history of socialist* journalism, William Morris has been credited with bringing a literary* and aesthetic dimension to the British socialist movement. Throughout his professional life (1852-1896) as an author, designer socialist and fine-press publisher*, William Morris contributed to, edited* and financed journalism in Oxford and London. Because he had so many spheres of activity, his journalistic endeavours cannot be separated from his other pursuits. Morris addressed a wide audience, proselytizing about design, beauty, peace and racial and social equality. After taking his degree from Oxford in 1855, he supported and contributed to the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine (1 Jan.-Dec. 1856). Although he gave up the editorship after only nine days, his contributions to this literary 'little magazine' foreshadow his later lifelong interests including 'The Story of the Unknown Church' (architecture), reviews* of Browning and Ruskin (poetry* and literature), 'Svend and his Brethren' (Nordic lore) and 'A Night in a Cathedral' (socialism).

Between 1869 and 1888, Morris contributed signed articles to the Fortnightly Review*, importantly 'The Revival of Architecture' (June 1888) and 'The Revival of Handicraft' (Dec. 1888). Together, Morris contributed to 58 newspapers and journals throughout the United Kingdom on subjects as diverse as the 'Eastern Question', proposed destruction of historical buildings, Pre-Raphaelite poetry and the need for social equality in England.

During his brief membership of the Social Democratic Federation, Morris helped to found the movement's periodical Justice* and kept the publication afloat by regular financial contributions. Justice helped to establish Morris's reputation as a socialist writer with his 33 articles for the journal, publishing commentary such as 'Socialism in England in 1884' (1884) and 'A Factory As It Might Be' (1884), short stories such as 'An Old Fable Retold' (1884) and poetry such as 'The Voice of Toil' (1884). At the end of 1884 Morris broke with the Federation and its leader Hyndman* to found the Socialist League and a new periodical, the Commonweal*. Morris's journalism for Commonweal is especially prolific; 433 articles include the serialized works* with Morris's most famous socialist work including 'How We Live and How We Might Live' (1887), 'Pilgrims of Hope' (1885-1886), 'A Death Song' (1889), 'A Dream of John Ball' (1886-1887) and 'News from Nowhere' (1890).

When Morris was ousted as editor in 1890, he continued his financial support of the periodical, and his final contribution was 'Where Are We Now' (Nov. 1890). As the Socialist League disintegrated under Anarchist pressures, Morris worked towards building socialist unity in Britain, refusing to join any group and writing for various periodicals including the *Labour Leader**. DM/TT Sources: *CBEL* 2000, Faulkner 1973, Mitchell 1987, Morris online, Mutch 2005, *ODNB*, Thompson 1955, Tobin 2002, Wellesley.