

Editorial

1990 has proved to be a somewhat remarkable year for Powysians and for Powys studies. Not only did material relating to John Cowper Powys feature prominently in the *I Love Eastbourne* exhibition during the summer, but we also enjoyed a splendid conference, saw the publication of half a dozen important books of Powys studies, established an Editorial Committee, which has produced an important report, and continue the successful Powys walks, but the year draws to a close with news of the triumph of a major exhibition of the life and work of John Cowper Powys at the prestigious Uppsala University in Sweden.

Jeremy Bird informs us that the Eastbourne exhibition has proved to be very popular with the public, many of whom took away copies of the Powys Society leaflets. The exhibition included many books by John Cowper Powys, together with original manuscripts and photographs. The organisers have expressed their warmest thanks to the many members of the Society whose help made this part of the exhibition possible, in particular their thanks are due to Mr E. E. Bissell for the loan of materials from his personal collection.

Our annual conference was held this year at the Royal Agricultural College near Cirencester and our theme was *Being Missed: The Powyses In Exile*. What was to prove one of our most well attended conferences began with a reception on Saturday August 25th and continued with a lively and interesting re-consideration of the Powys family by Richard Perceval Graves, who discussed the changes and developments in his attitude towards the Powys family since the publication of his biographical study *The Brothers Powys* in 1983.

Sunday morning began with Harold Fawkner who discussed the difficult but exciting critical notion of Mineralogy which he has developed since writing *The Ecstatic World of John Cowper Powys* in 1986. Professor Fawkner adds some interesting after-thoughts to his conference paper in this issue of the *Newsletter*. Professor Ernst Verbeek, then took us into the field of the psycho-pathology of John Cowper Powys. Professor Verbeek has found substantial evidence in both the life and works of John Cowper to support his thesis that JCP suffered from epilepsy, some of the symptoms of which, allied with his creative genius, may have stimulated the visionary nature of his art. Only when Professor Verbeek's book *Tempting The Gods* is translated into English will those unable to attend the conference be able to share what may well prove to be a stimulating and productive new direction in Powys studies.

Sunday evening, following the Annual General Meeting, on which Griffin Beale will report elsewhere in this *Newsletter*, was an occasion enjoyed by all those present, for Oliver Wilkinson, who must be one of the greatest readers of Powys material, and Robert Carrington had arranged an evening of music and readings which few will forget. Our sincere thanks to Oliver, Robert and The Dunstable Doysters.

Charles Lock was to have begun Monday morning with a paper on the Powyses in America, but instead he and Harold Fawkner entered into one of the most interesting and

stimulating debates to have taken place at a Powys conference for many years: Polyphony versus Mineralogy was an intellectual joust in which members of the Society revelled as much as the participants. If future conferences can give rise to similar debates the intellectual energy of the Society will be considerably enhanced.

There has always been a danger that conferences will tend to concentrate too much on John Cowper and ignore the other members of the family. This is partly due to the difficulty of finding suitable speakers, a difficulty overcome this year when John Williams gave us his consideration of Theodore's *Innocent Birds*, relating the work to the conference themes of *Absence and Exile* and Peter Foss presented *Llewelyn's Return*, subjects which deserve more widespread consideration by members of the Society than they have hitherto been given.

Following the Annual Book Sale, an event which continues to lend its unique flavour to our conferences, where fund-raising, the opportunity to obtain books perhaps unobtainable elsewhere and a great deal of fun are combined, Ben Jones brought the conference to a close with exactly that mixture of erudition and entertainment which had been the hallmark of a conference worthy of this important year for Powys studies.

Not to be forgotten is the contribution of Eve and John Batten, who gallantly ran the Conference Bookshop. This was a new venture for the Society, a room in which members could buy copies of some of the important new Powys titles which had recently been published. Our sincere thanks to John and Eve for their efforts on our behalf.

The meeting of the Committee on April 7th at Liddon House had established an Editorial Committee, the members of which were to be Louise de Bruin, Peter Foss, Alan Howe, Timothy Hyman, Morine Krissdottir and Stephen Powys Marks. This committee was charged with the responsibility of preparing a Publications Report for presentation at the meeting of the full Committee on November 3rd. The report, which was discussed and accepted at the November 3rd meeting, is of vital importance to the future direction and activities of the Society and is printed in full in this edition of the *Newsletter*. One of the major developments to arise from this report is the founding of a new *Powys Journal*, a development which will considerably enhance the range of publications currently available to readers of the Powys family.

Perhaps the most remarkable event of the year is the exhibition of the life and work of John Cowper Powys held at the University of Uppsala from November 6th to December 1st. It is, as so often in the past, Sven Erik Tackmark that we have to thank for this exhibition, as it was his enthusiasm and persuasive skills which first convinced the University authorities that such an exhibition ought to be held and it is upon his own personal collection of books,

manuscripts, photographs and artifacts that the exhibition is based. The exhibition is held in the beautiful and imposing University library and has been professionally mounted in fourteen glass cases containing some 116 items, including a remarkably life-like doll of John Cowper made by Clara Beckett of Yorkshire, which is housed in a high case by itself.

Seventy people were invited to the opening of the exhibition, for which a number of floral displays had been especially made. Among those attending the opening were the present Vice Chancellor of the University, Stig Stromholm and his predecessor Professor Torguy Segerstedt, both of whom had particularly requested that they be invited. The Powys Society was represented by Jacqueline Peltier, whose photograph of Phudd Bottom also appeared in the catalogue. Representatives of The British Council and the Swedish press, television and

radio services were also present. During the opening ceremony Dr. Carl-Erik af Gaijerstam, the well-known Swedish writer, spoke for some fifteen minutes on the importance of JCP and this was followed by a speech given by Sven-Erik Tackmark himself who introduced many of the important guests and paid tribute to the work of the late Rene Coekelberghs, the pioneering publisher of John Cowper Powys in Swedish. A reporter from Swedish radio's Programme One also interviewed Sven-Erik, Ingemar Algulin, Gabriela Melinescu and Carl-Erik af Gaijerstam for a programme which is to be broadcast on December 12th and repeated on December 16th.

The exhibition was also supported with a magnificent catalogue of some 48 pages, containing materials in both Swedish and English, including a Foreword by the Director of the Library, Thomas Tottie, an Introduction by Sven-Erik Tackmark, an essay on the importance of Powys by Ingemar Algulin, a biographical essay by Charles Lock, recollections of his early lectures on John Cowper at Uppsala in 1941 by Cedric Hentschel and two long extracts from *Autobiography*, chosen by Glen Cavaliero, in addition to the imposing list of exhibits and a number of excellent photographs and reproductions of manuscript items.

This fine catalogue has been sent to some three hundred major libraries throughout the world and news of the exhibition was passed to all of the important media representatives by the University. One newspaper report, in Sweden's largest daily newspaper has so far appeared, but others are confidently expected to follow.

Such an exhibition, supported by so much enthusiasm and expertise, is a major achievement and one for which we must be extremely grateful to both Sven-Erik and the University authorities.

When, I wonder, will a British library celebrate one of our most important authors with a similar exhibition?

This has, indeed, been a remarkable year !

Paul Roberts.

Mineralogical Addendum

When I returned to Sweden from the Cirencester Weekend conference, a friend of mine who teaches theology handed me the following information:

The natives of Poso, a district of central Celebes, Indonesia, hold that the sky and earth were originally in a state of considerable proximity. The Creator, who lived in the sky, used to send down gifts to man by attaching them to the end of a rope. Thus he one day sent down a stone. But our first father and first mother did not want to have anything to do with the stone; instead they cried to the Lord: "What on earth do we need this stone for? Give us something else." The Creator complied with this wish and pulled back the stone all the way to heaven. The stone moved slowly upwards, bit by bit. After a while the rope could be seen descending from the sky once more, and this time a banana was attached to the end of the rope instead of a stone. Our ordinary ancestors rushed after the banana and took it. At that very moment a voice spoke solemnly out of the sky: "Since you have chosen the banana, your life will take on the semblance of the life of the banana. When the banana-tree has yielded its fruit, its fertile trunk withers and dies. In this manner you too will die, and your children will replace you. If you had taken the stone, your life would have been mineralogical, like that of the stone: transcendent, unchanging, and immortal."

I could not resist sharing this amusing theological anecdote with you, since it seems to convey so much that I have - and have not - wished to say about the mineral. In calling the sense of the absolute in John Cowper a "mineral", and in calling the study of the Cowperist absolute "mineralogy", I have wanted to identify a crucial process in which the Powys world avoids monotheism as well as common, intellectual relativism. John Cowper rejects not only monism and the monistic absolute, but also the complete despair of the cynical unbeliever. He does not buy the ancient doctrine of traditional faith; nor does he buy what I am tempted to call the philosophy of the banana - the juicy pluralism of the disillusioned modern cynic.

To avoid misunderstandings, I would at this point like to clarify two important issues: the question of terminology and the question of the monolith.

I have been told that members of the society are favourable to my general outlook, but that one or two members are still a bit doubtful about my terminology. They would, I assume, prefer some alternative words to "mineral" and "mineralogy".

My answer to this is that smoothing over the oddness and eccentricity of these terms is the very last intellectual act I would ever contemplate. I am absolutely convinced that the process of creating radically new moulds of interpretation also requires the process of "bending" language a bit. Conversely, I think that the act of insisting on common terms inevitably leads to a neutralization of newness: the innovation is simply conventionalized and absorbed into the standard mode of thinking. In this way, "ordinary Christian English" is not simply a language, but a style of thought. My mineralogy is not part of that world; on the contrary, it wishes to stand out of that world as a break with it. My "mineralogy" breaks with the Ordinary World in exactly the way that the Powys world breaks with the Ordinary World. "Mineralogy" does not want to be a smooth, elegant term. It wants to be a rough, inelegant word: a word that causes

some trouble, some resistance, and some unease. I do not want anybody to be able to "place" this new idea in some convenient, preexisting slot, whether linguistic, critical, or philosophical.

Finally, some words about the monolith.

The mineral is not a monolith. On the contrary, it is at the farthest possible remove from anything monolithical. Only the philosophy of the banana could possibly want to misinterpret the mineral in this way. The whole point about the mineral is precisely that it is not monolithic: that its absolute solidity is not the solidity of the dominant One. The mineral is, as I indicated in my lecture, the minutest of things -sometimes, as in *Weymouth Sands*, merely a trace (the infinitely weightless division between Dry Sand and Wet Sand). The monolith is a centre, a presence, and the organizational summit of a unity. But the mineral is not a presence, not a centre, and not the summit of a unity.

Yet the mineral is definitely not the antithesis of the monolith either: it is not something as banal, scientific, and materialist as "matter"; nor is it part of the insignificant Many that take over once the dominant One has been removed. The mineral has all the solid and transcendent properties of the dominant One, but it is itself no such monolith. It does not serve the monolithic, all-powerful godhead.

We have a problem, then: an uncertainty. The mineral occupies no secure intellectual, physical, or literary territory. It cannot be identified by the ready-made ideologies of academic criticism: humanism, Marxism, materialism, psychoanalysis, polyphony, structuralism, post-structuralism, etc. But this unplaceability of the mineral is its strength. It is this very elusiveness of the mineral that forces us back to the only homelands in which it can be found: the works, at once literary and philosophical, of John Cowper Powys.

H. W. Fawcner.

An Apology From Glen Cavaliero

Readers of John Cowper Powys's *Diary* for 1931 will have been puzzled by the unexplained appearance on page 96 of a poem called *Lane's End*, clearly not written by Powys; but their surprise will have been as nothing to mine, since I wrote the poem myself in 1980, following a visit to the country round Powys's Sussex home, Court House. How it achieved its present eminent position I have as yet been unable to find out. Most probably I sent a copy to Phyllis Playter, who could have slipped it between the pages of the *Diary*. My apologies to purchasers of this book for an unwarranted but unintentional intrusion.

Glen Cavaliero.

The 1991 Conference

Plans for the 1991 Conference are in full swing. It will be held at Kingston Maurward, near Dorchester, from August 3rd to August 6th, 1991.

The theme will be "The Powyses In Wessex". Speakers will include Jeremy Hooker on *Maiden Castle and The Mayor of Casterbridge*; John Williams on *Theodore's Fables*; Paul Roberts on *Llewelyn's Wessex*; and Angela Pitt on *Karie Powys*. As well, Oliver Wilkinson and Robert Carrington will present an evening of readings from the works of the three brothers.

This will be an unusual and exciting conference, so please mark these dates on your calendar now ! Further details will appear in the next *Newsletter*.

Reviews

In Honour Of Isobel. Compiled and published by Stephen Powys Marks.

At the 1988 Exeter Conference there was given a reading of Powys family letters, assembled by Stephen Powys Marks in honour of his mother, the elder daughter of A.R. Powys. It was a tribute of a most appropriate kind, since she is, as John Cowper observed, a 'double-dyed Powys', her parents being cousins. Something of a family occasion, it was also a piece of family self-portraiture.

The material has been selected with unobtrusive skill. Letters from most of the eleven brothers and sisters address and answer and comment on each other, to mutually illuminating effect; in addition we hear from Louis Wilkinson and, in telling contrast, from a Montacute girl who remembered the family in its clerical and pastoral aspect. Brief in compass, the collection depicts many aspects of the Powys family life, with A.R.P himself naturally to the fore. His analysis of the marriage between Alyse Gregory and Llewelyn is especially shrewd.

All those who enjoy reading about the Powyses will enjoy this booklet. Well printed and documented, it is adorned with a portrait of the dedicatee by Gertrude Powys. Purchasers can make use of the order form in the centre pages of the *Newsletter*.

Glen Cavaliero.

De Goden Verzoeken (Tempting The Gods) by Professor Ernst Verbeek. Van Gorcum, Assen/Maastricht. pp365. Softback. ISBN 90 232 2464 7.

It certainly is a frustrating task to compress the review of Professor Verbeek's psychobiographical study of JCP's life and works into a few paragraphs. *De Goden Verzoeken* (*Tempting The Gods*) is a massive book of 365 pages, crammed with facts and quotations, which unquestionably reveals an enthusiastic but critical dedication to JCP as a man and as a creative genius. Yet, Professor Verbeek's book is bound to ruffle most readers who have come to form for themselves an affectionate picture, let alone an idealized portrait of JCP as an inspired artist and a benevolent host and letter-writer.

The development of his genius is re-enacted as the sublimation of a personality suffering from epilepsy and burdened with neuroses. The latter are shown to be the outcome of unresolved childhood experiences connected with a mother, felt as a possessive and intrusive presence, and a father, unable not only to understand but also to accept his eldest son as he was. Such a brief summary may sound chilling to the reader hostile to the Freudian theory, but it must be stated at once that Professor Verbeek's essay is happily free of unnecessary jargon (save for a few clinical asides) and readily accessible to the lay reader. It cannot be denied either that the author is successful in offering a deeper understanding of JCP's psychological problems and of their influence on his work. Professor Verbeek's approach to epilepsy is particularly enlightening as it shows how JCP managed to turn crippling phobias and hallucinatory phenomena into a creative and visionary accomplishment.

Professor Verbeek's extensive bibliography and his meticulous scrutiny of John Cowper's writing provide him with as many clues as are necessary to build up a multi-faceted picture without falling into a cold case-study. Yet, ruffling the book shall be. It is at least a test of open-mindedness, for the gentle quantities and the unheard of imaginative capacity of JCP lose much of their aura in the process. JCP appears as a man afraid of life (hence his cult of the inanimate, free of the ceaseless struggle of the living), totally absorbed in his own wish-fulfilling universe. His self-centred individualism is said to border on indifference and Professor Verbeek goes so far as to contend that JCP was always holding a mask when writing letters or greeting visitors: acting a part, JCP conformed to what his visitors expected of him, with the secret wish to avoid all personal involvement. Writing appears to have been the only possible way for JCP to reconcile his desperate wish to be left alone, his inability to bear the burden of his own self and his irrepressible need to seek admiration despite (or rather because of) the denial of recognition which was long inflicted upon him.

Granted its intellectual honesty, *De Goden Verzoeken*, can be irritating for other reasons. It is couched in a rather plain style, with occasional bouts of oratorical exclamations. The book also suffers from its ambiguous nature: it is meant both as a general introduction to JCP's life and works and as a specialized psychopathological study. Given the scarcity of literature on JCP in the Netherlands, one may above all wonder whether the Dutch reader will feel attracted

to a writer whose life is presented as a persistent escape from oneself and whose works turn out to have been a compensatory outlet, regardless of the acknowledged status of genius. Professor Verbeek's "contribution to the appreciation of the writer's works" is a challenge to JCP's familiar readers indeed and possibly an ordeal for those as yet unaware of his liberating influence.

Benjamin Stassen.

Echoes by Gerard Casey. Rigby and Lewis. pp 130. Hardback. ISBN 1 869887 60 3. Available only from the publisher (20, Springfield Road, Southgate, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 8AD) in a limited edition of 250 copies. £20.

The Diary of John Cowper Powys: 1931. Jeffrey Kwantner Books. pp324. Hardback. ISBN 0 9509742 2 6. Available from the publisher at 12 Venetian House, Warrington Crescent, Little Venice, London W9 1EJ at a special price to members of the Society of £28.50 + £1.50 p&p.

Although it is primarily a collection of poetry, *Echoes* takes on something of the nature of a symposium, for the poems are surrounded and buttressed by a number of prose pieces. The collection opens with Charles Lock's "Foreword and Word on the Hearing of Echoes", a consideration of the nature of translation and imitation in relation to the collection, and ends with an introduction written by David Blamires for the original 1973 publication of *South Wales Echo*. Gerard Casey also provides two essays, "The Shield Of Achilles" and "True Listening", in addition to extensive notes to the poems themselves.

Whilst these prose pieces are in themselves, both brilliant and enthralling, leaving beyond all doubt the wealth of literary, historical, theological and cultural understanding of their authors, they are also craggy, difficult and uncompromising; and here, I believe, lies a danger. Many readers will feel themselves ill-equipped to scale battlements as steep as these and may turn away from a collection which they would otherwise certainly find of real poetic significance, for having scaled those awesome walls, we find within not the confined intellectual cells which we might have expected, but the clear space of poetry. For while the prose speaks the language of learning, the poems use the more subtle, apparently simple, and evocative language of wisdom to lead us into matters too deep for the academic essay.

The first section of the book, *Versions*, offers us translations and re-workings of poems taken largely from the Greek and is, as Charles Lock says "...a dialogue of Greece with itself that is also a dialogue with and within the English language and modern civilization." The poems are arranged in pairs, ending with *nightfall* :

beyond the window
the black cypress tree
at the end of the garden
held in the empty sky

nothing more

And how often throughout the book are nothing and nothingness evoked, not with a

nihilistic horror, but with a bold welcome, emphasising the futility of our compulsion to fill space and time, no matter with what. It is the assured embrace of all in nothing and nothing in all which T F Powys, of whom Gerard Casey has so deep an understanding, would have recognised.

Echoes is completed with *Between the Symplegades : Re-Vision from 'A Mythological Story'* by George Seferis and the long-awaited republication of *South Wales Echo*.

That Gerard Casey is a poet of tremendous power is in no doubt and *Echoes* is a book to be read and re-read, slowly, patiently and with growing illumination.

Members of the Society can, I am sure, imagine the excitement and delight with which I seized upon my copy of *The Diary of John Cowper Powys: 1931*. Having read the book, the delight is still there, for this is a book which every member of the Society will want to own, but it is a delight tempered with disappointment. Let there be no doubt that we owe a great debt to Jeffrey Kwintner for his courage and commitment in publishing this second volume of John Cowper's Diary, but having said that we cannot shirk the responsibility of wishing that it had been better done. It is a handsome and substantial volume and the lack of an introduction, footnotes and an index, while perhaps unfortunate, will not destroy its essential importance. The fundamental flaw of the book is that it has not been edited, merely printed directly from a typescript which has clearly not been proof-read by the publisher. Errors, mis-spellings of the names of characters and inconsistencies abound and we are even given the unexpected bonus of a poem by Glen Cavaliero written fifty years after the *Diary* was completed. Having undertaken to publish the book, it was surely irresponsible not to have appointed an editor worthy to succeed the meticulous work of Frederick Davies.

The *Diary* itself covers the period during which Powys was writing and revising *A Glastonbury Romance* and provides many insights into his working methods and the extent to which he relied upon Phyllis Playter, as well as introducing a new character into the Powys story, Magda Hagen, the elderly German housekeeper employed at Phudd Bottom for several months during the year. We learn also that during the same year JCP translated a novel from the French of one "Mr d'Aoust". Although we are never told the title, it is clear that a typescript of the translation was prepared, but whether it was ever published is something which ought to be investigated.

Two elements in the nature of JCP's imagination emerge clearly from this *Diary*. The first is his need to name things, including the smallest pebble or flower, and hence, perhaps, to re-create the physical world into one of his own making, over which he could exercise some control. The second is his obsession with colour, which illustrates his remarks to Ichiro Hara that: "...my dislike of the whole conception of the Absolute is the result of being so enamoured, as painters are, with the colours and forms of the visible worlds...." and "What I think old age has done for me is to turn my attitude to Nature from that of a poet into that of a painter."

This is, as I have said, an essential book for any Powys library and while maintaining that it ought to have been more carefully prepared for the press, one must express one's thanks to Jeffrey Kwintner and to Mrs Sally Powys for her enormous effort in transcribing the original text.

Paul Roberts

Visions and Vices: Essays on John Cowper Powys by G. Wilson Knight. Edited by John D. Christie. pp147. Hardback. ISBN 0 900821 94 9. £14.95. Cecil Woolf, London.

This book, which the author was working on at the time of his death, opens with an essay entitled "Ultimate Questions: Powysian Answers" which considers the answers of T.F. , Llewelyn and J.C. to the question What after death? T.F. condemned personal survival; Llewelyn expressed his belief " it is most sure that when we are dead, we are dead". J.C. ranged more widely:

The difference between John Cowper and his brothers lies in their unchanging certainties throughout and his own life-long wrestle with ultimate issues

Wilson Knight points out two books, *The Inmates* and *A Glastonbury Romance*, as being "crammed with occult and numinous happenings" yet when J.C. was "old and tired" he averred in 1961 "That when I die it is the complete and absolute end of me" but he may have been deceived for in 1963 a medium, Mrs Horsfield, on the evidence of Knight clearly transmitted messages from J.C. in Exeter Spiritualist Church.

In "Powys on Death" Knight further marshalls all the incidents in J.C.'s books, in others writers' work, and his own thoughts on this great matter; and in "The Complex Vision: An Analysis" this matter, either alone or in relation to other issues, is further discussed.

The chapter "John Cowper Powys and T.S. Eliot" brings together two writers, whom many might conceive as totally opposed, and shows that they are in essentials - when their thought is teased out from their styles - much alike, though "where Eliot differs sharply from Powys-as-philosopher is in his powerful passages on the after-life."

This is a very rich book, one to marvel at. All of the essays are on central concerns in Powys for it does not avoid difficult questions as in "Sadism and the Seraphic". In "Powys as Humorist" we are presented with the text of Knight's lecture at Churchill College, Cambridge in 1972 which may appear to be lighter than the rest but is still vital.

The collection is edited by John D. Christie.

Francis Berry.

Powys To The Trovillions: The letters of John Cowper Powys to Hal W. and Violet Trovillion. Edited by Paul Roberts with an Introduction by Kenneth Hopkins. pp 121. Hardback. ISBN 0 900821 95 7. £14.95. Cecil Woolf. London.

Powys To A Japanese Friend: The letters of John Cowper Powys to Ichiro Hara. Edited by Anthony Head. pp160. Hardback. ISBN 0 900821 96 5. £14.95. Cecil Woolf. London.

Between them, these books contain over one hundred and seventy letters written by John Cowper Powys. Both volumes have been carefully and thoughtfully edited in a way which presents the letters and their writer to the best advantage. The letters to Hal and Violet Trovillion are prefaced by an introduction by Kenneth Hopkins (who knew both the writer and the recipient of this collection), and are accompanied by an extensive series of annotations provided by the editor, Paul Roberts. There is also an index, the value of which will be

appreciated by anyone who has tried to find their way around a similar collection of letters without one. The letters to Ichiro Hara are given similarly admirable treatment, and are printed with both an introduction by Anthony Head and a further introductory essay by Ichiro Hara. As with the Trovillion letters, these are also furnished with an admirably thorough range of notes and an index.

An added attraction of these books is the amount of elusive Powyseana they reprint. The letters to Ichiro Hara include the letter which was published in Japanese under the title *My Freemasonry* in Hara's magazine, *Sozo*. Also included as appendices are *Ode To The West Wind* by John Cowper's son Littleton A. Powys, and John Cowper's preface for the Japanese edition of *The Meaning Of Culture*. The Trovillion volume reprints Hal Trovillion's essay *A Visit With John Cowper Powys* from *Faces and Places Remembered*, a book previously available only in a small edition, printed by Trovillion's own press.

Given the fact that most readers of this *Newsletter* will be familiar with previous gatherings of John Cowper's correspondence, it seems hardly necessary to enlarge on the attractions collections of letters such as these contain. Suffice it to say that these letters are full of wisdom, insight, rebellious candour and the highly individual turn of mind which permeates his novels and other writings; admirers of previous collections of letters can turn to these volumes without disappointment.

Alan Howe

Papers On Language and Literatures: Volume 26, No. 3. Summer 1990. Southern Illinois University Press. Available from the editor at PLL, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Edwardsville, Illinois 62026-1434 at \$7.

The Summer 1990 edition of *Papers on Language and Literature* contains the most substantial tribute to Kenneth Hopkins to have appeared since his death in 1988. Paul Roberts, who writes as both a friend and a perceptive admirer of Hopkins and his work, contributes *Love, Death and Wit*, an essay which combines a biographical survey of Hopkins' life with an appreciation of his achievements as a writer.

This is followed by a previously unpublished autobiographical essay by Hopkins, *Amateur Professor*, which tells the story of his years as a "visiting professor" at Southern Illinois University, and is a fine example of the witty and felicitous manner which Hopkins often brought to his prose writing.

The third contribution is by Betty Richardson of Southern Illinois University, whose essay *Kenneth Hopkins: Writer, Critic, Publisher* gives an overview of Hopkins' work. Like Paul Roberts, she shows herself able to appreciate the unjustly neglected writings of Kenneth Hopkins at their true worth.

As I remarked earlier, this is the most substantial celebration of the life and writings of Kenneth Hopkins to have appeared so far; hopefully it is only one in an ever burgeoning series.

Alan Howe

A Note On Bill Degenhardt

Bill was elected General Secretary in 1983 at that awkward turn in the affairs of the Powys Society when Derrick Stephens, who had been Secretary for seventeen years, and Glen Cavaliero (Chairman) both relinquished their posts. He thus became my much-relied-upon partner. It was small wonder if, with such hard acts to follow, we sometimes had misgivings. Luckily, though past the normal age of retirement, Bill possessed a thrusting temperament. Degenhardt means "keen as a dagger" and, having tempered his blade in the hard school of commerce, he knew how to cut a swathe through red tape and unfussily deliver the goods.

1984 was the year in which we thought not only of Orwell but of Llewelyn Powys. Bill's own contribution to the centenary celebrations was to meet a request for display material from the Yeovil Public Library. A projected commemorative trip to Davos (abandoned as too costly) would have given his planning abilities full scope. But Bill was not satisfied merely to organize the Society's meetings. He wished to leave things shipshape. I still have a card of his, sent from a motel at Heiligenroth ("thoroughly recommended"), in which he gleefully announced the completion "in apple-pie and alphabetical order" of a revised membership list.

Bill and I had certain affinities. From time to time we would exchange banter over the amusing juxtaposition of our Teutonic family names, conscious perhaps that a certain northern bluntness was not always well attuned to the mysteries of the Celtic Twilight. A clubbable companion, a lover of real ale and good wine, Bill conjured up, rather, the world of Belloc and Chesterton. Though impatient of academic affectation, his bookish interests ran deep; his occasional irreverences were like those affectionate sallies devoted Catholics aim at the Pope.

In September 1984 at the AGM in Exeter, Bill, who with uncalled-for modesty had never considered himself other than a stopgap, resigned to make way for Paul Roberts. He had taken his stand on that broad middle ground which the Powys Society must command if it is to represent more than a minority cult. I shall remember Bill as a complex and generous man whose brisk manner and sanguine mien were happily conjoined with touches of Powysian eccentricity.

Cedric Hentschel

The Montacute Walks

All Wessex members were invited to two Autumn walks in and around Montacute. Somewhat disappointing numbers were more than compensated for by the enthusiasm of the stalwarts and their friends who attended.

Our itinerary on the first walk took us to locations on the outskirts of the village which are associated with *Wood and Stone*, *Love and Death* and some of the essays. At each stop there were readings from John Cowper and Llewelyn.

The highlight of the afternoon was a visit to Pitt Pond (Auber Lake)) under the guidance of Jack Parker who spent eleven years on its restoration. The silted overgrown morass described at the end of Llewelyn's essay has been transformed to a scene of Powysian childhood. Our enjoyment of all we saw was greatly enhanced by the modest comments of this fascinating man who took great pleasure in meeting Isobel. It was as if a visit from that gracious member of the Powys family had set the seal on his remarkable achievement.

The second walk began with panoramic views from Batemore to Miles Hill and over St. Catherine's Church, the Elizabethan mansion and Abbey Farm with its medieval fishpond and dovecot, all bathed in early November sunshine. Each was, in due course, the subject of readings from J.C. P and Llewelyn, supported by contributions from Will and A.R.

Montacute has remained fundamentally unchanged since the First World War. Readings *in situ* therefore make minimal demands upon the imagination of the listener who can enjoy vistas and atmospheres made more vibrant and affecting by shafts of Powysian insight, poetry and humours. The final reading was from John Cowper's poem, *To Lulu*, in which he describes their relationship as being "Like spokes of the same wheel." The strength of that common identity and the part which Montacute played in it had emerged strongly from the readings and is, for us, an abiding impression created by two pleasurable afternoons.

John and Eve Batten

*Report of the Annual General Meeting:
The Royal Agricultural College,
Cirencester.
August 26th 1990.*

The meeting opened with the President, Glen Cavaliero, paying tributes to Frederick Davies and Bill Degenhardt who had died during the past year. The President also informed the A.G.M. of the sad news concerning the illness of a former President, Sir Angus Wilson.

The minutes of the 1989 A.G.M. were approved.

The Chairman's report highlighted three projects initiated by the Committee over the past year:

- a) a new members "joining pack",
- b) Frank Kibblewhite had volunteered to publicize the Society and had made a report to the Committee,
- c) a sub-committee (the Editorial Committee) had been appointed to consider and report upon the Society's publication needs.

The Secretary's report gave details of the four committee meetings since the last conference, the Mappowder Festival in August and two Powys walks organised by Tony Hallett earlier in the summer.

The Secretary reported that the membership as at 31st December 1989 stood at 254, with 22 new members since the last conference.

The Secretary encouraged members to pay their subscriptions by standing order and to covenant their subscriptions.

The Secretary gave a brief summary of the large number of new publications by and concerning the Powyses over the last twelve months and looked to the future with cautious optimism.

The Treasurer in his report gave details of the new presentation of the accounts, as published in the April and July *Newsletters*. The present financial position was also outlined and the Treasurer summarized the tax advantages to the Society of charitable status.

The report was accepted unanimously on a proposal by Charles Lock, which was seconded by Richard Graves.

A report on publicity by Frank Kibblewhite gave examples of various initiatives which individuals could take in order to publicize the Society and the Powyses, including writing to publishers asking for reprints, asking public libraries to stock new works, giving talks, mounting exhibitions, writing articles for publication and writing to Radio 4 asking for a reading from Powys books.

The 1991 Conference would take place at The Dorset Agricultural College, at Kingston

Muarward, near Dorchester over the first week-end in August.

The Chairman asked members to send suggestions for a central repository of Powys material to the Chairman or the Secretary.

Sven-Erik Tackmark gave details of the J.C. Powys exhibition being held at the University of Uppsala in November 1990. Gerald Pollinger gave details of the 1991 publication of Powys related books.

Griffin Beale

The Editorial Committee

On November 3, 1990, the Committee, as governing body of the Powys Society, gave formal approval to the Report of the editorial committee on the Publication Programme of the Society. The Report is printed in full in this issue of the *Newsletter*.

The emphasis of this Report is on the widening of efforts to achieve the public recognition of the Powyses and their circle. The guiding philosophy is that the more talented members there are involved in these future publishing projects, the more exciting and successful they will be.

A number of important recommendations were approved to implement these new initiatives. The Report stresses the importance of a team approach and the need for checks and balances so that the burdens as well as the satisfactions are shared. One recommendation in particular will mark the end of one tradition and the beginning of a new one: the proposal that the Society own its own learned journal. This decision arises out of two factors. First, a natural desire to be responsible for our own publications. That was the original intention of the Society when it began the Review in 1977, although after the fourth issue, the present editor, Belinda Humfrey, assumed ownership. In recent months both old members and new have indicated their willingness to devote time and talents to produce a scholarly journal owned by the Society. The second reason for the decision was the necessity to control production and costs. Since 1982, officers past and present have tried without success to find solutions to the financial and other difficulties the Review presented. It has become particularly clear in the past year that the present arrangement of buying for our members a publication over which the Society had no control was not satisfactory.

Although it had been agreed and expected that Issues 25 & 26 of the Review would appear in June and December, 1990, the Committee has now agreed to pay the owner and editor for copies for Society members provided both Issues appear before March 31, 1991. We hope that members will be patient a little longer.

It must be emphasized that while the Committee felt that the time had come to bring the arrangement with Belinda Humfrey to an end, it was not for lack of appreciation of the fine contribution she has made to the Society and to the Powys cause.

Please read the Publication Report. It represents months of effort and discussion. The Committee believes that it marks the beginning of an exciting and productive period in the history of the Powys Society.

Dr. Morine Krissdottir, Chairman.

A REPORT ON THE PUBLICATION PROGRAMME OF THE POWYS SOCIETY

On May 26, 1990, the Committee unanimously approved the establishment of a subcommittee to be called the editorial committee which is to be "responsible for the development and administration of [a] publication programme." In the past, what publishing was done, by or for the Society, was done on an ad-hoc basis, sometimes by the officers out of necessity, sometimes by committed individuals who wished to contribute something to the Society and to the Powyses. The Committee felt that the time was now right for the Society to do more to promote the recognition of the Powyses and their circle by means of a publication programme. There was also a growing awareness of the need to consider the Society's various publishing ventures--whether they were serving the Society well, how they might be improved, whether they should be expanded, by what means, and the structure for administering such a programme.

As its first task the Committee requested the editorial committee to submit for its approval a detailed report which would "include recommendations concerning materials suitable for publication, types of publications, editing responsibilities, methods of financing, and whatever other recommendations the editorial committee considers necessary for the effective implementation of a publication programme for the Society."

The editorial committee hopes that the following report will provide the basis for a reasoned, long-term, financially realistic and co-ordinated policy on publication for the Powys Society.

MATERIALS FOR PUBLICATION

There is an abundance of appropriate material available for possible publication by the Society. Materials can be divided into five categories: a) original material by the Powyses and their circle b) conference papers and other lectures c) other literary/critical material d) administrative material e) "ephemera".

A. The editorial committee believes that the publication or re- publication of original material

by the Powyses and their circle is its most important priority. Writings by all the Powyses and selected works by members of their circle should be considered but emphasis given to the work of the three brothers. Much original material remains unpublished or uncollected or in magazines, newspapers and books now not easily accessible. Among possible items for publication are poems, essays, letters, diaries of JCP, short stories of TFP, essays, letters of Llewelyn, journals and letters of other members of the family. The best of these should be published. An urgent task of the editorial committee should be to list all original material available and obtain copies of the material to be stored in a central place.

B. The best of the conference papers should be published. Ideally, copies of all conference papers should be available at cost to members who request them. The Society should seek first refusal from speakers to publish conference papers, and other lectures.

C. Other literary/critical/review material either submitted by members or reprinted from other sources, including articles published outside the U.K. if not easily available to members, might also be published. Another important source of material is the recollections of people still living who knew the Powyses.

D. The prime purpose of publishing administrative material is to keep all members informed of decisions, activities, and events. Some administrative material, such as notices of the A.G.M., the Annual Conference, and annual accounts must be published. A.G.M. proceedings, minutes of Committee meetings, reports of subcommittees should appear in condensed form. New stationery has been designed and an official pamphlet has already been published. A pack which would contain material helpful to new members is presently being put together.

E. We should also publish "ephemera" such as notices of walks, reports of public lectures by members, and more overseas news. An agenda of events should be published at the beginning of the year. Other kinds of material that the Society should consider publishing, partly to publicize the Powyses and the Society, and partly to raise funds for the publication programme are greeting cards, posters, postcards etc. which would draw on materials available to the Society.

TYPE OF PUBLICATION

The question of the appropriate vehicle for the materials listed above is next addressed. Types of publication should include newsletters, a journal, special publications, promotional material and occasional publications.

Newsletters: The editorial committee recommends that the Society should own and publish a newsletter which will appear three times a year at regular intervals. It should be of a size and

format that takes best advantage of printing and postal costs. It should contain information about Society activities, administrative reports, notices of new publications, short pieces of original material, and brief articles of general interest.

Journal: The editorial committee recommends that the Society should own and publish its own learned journal, to be called *The Powys Journal*, which would appear once a year. It should be printed to a high standard, and of a size and format that takes best advantage of printing and postal costs. It should contain selected conference papers, scholarly articles, original research, primary material of moderate length not published elsewhere by the Society, and critical reviews limited to publications by or about the Powyses and their immediate circle.

Special Publications: From time to time the Society should publish original material of the Powyses and their immediate circle which is not suitable for the newsletter or the journal, and which would not be considered economically viable by commercial publishers. The editorial committee expresses concern that the major texts of the Powys brothers should be in print but does not feel that the Society has the financial or technical means to undertake such a major publishing venture in the immediate future.

Promotional Material: Presently the Society publishes a membership pamphlet, subscription and covenanting forms. A new members pack which would contain a checklist of books on or by the Powyses and their circle, and how to obtain these books, as well as other useful material such as the constitution, Society-owned books for sale etc. should be published immediately. Eventually the Society should design and produce a "media-pack" for appropriate events such as local exhibitions, book fairs, lectures, and for display in libraries, museums, and possibly in selected tourist venues such as Montacute and Dorchester. Promotional material should be distributed as widely as possible at local lectures, booksellers and bookdealers, libraries etc. and put in any new book about or by the Powyses and their circle.

Occasional Material: The Society presently publishes greeting cards with sketches by Gertrude. Other possible materials, which would be produced specifically to raise money for the Society in general or for specific publishing projects, could include posters, postcards, single-subject booklets, facsimile letters or manuscript pages.

EDITING RESPONSIBILITIES

According to the proposals passed by the Committee on May 26, 1990, the lines of authority in connection with publications are clear. The Committee appoints the members of the editorial committee. The editorial committee is responsible to the Committee, and should report to the Committee regularly. The editorial committee is "responsible for the development and administration of the publication programme."

The questions that the editorial committee addressed under the heading of responsibilities

were: what is the best organisational structure for an on-going programme, how should the various publishing activities be co-ordinated, how should the publications be produced and distributed, how should the editors be appointed, and what should be the relationship between the editors and the editorial committee.

A. The following organisational structure is recommended:

Powys Society Committee

Editorial committee

Editors. Publication Manager. Advertising. Distribution.

B. Co-ordination of Activities: The editorial committee should meet at least once a year to co-ordinate the activities of the various projects, determine the publishing agenda for the year and work out the budget, meet with the editors and to resolve problems that have arisen.

C. Production of Publications: The production and printing of the various publications should be the responsibility of a publication manager who will work in close consultation with the editors. The appropriate technique for each type of publication should be decided after consultation with editors and the editorial committee.

D. Appointment of Editors: The editorial committee should recommend the editors to the Committee for its approval. Editors should be appointed for a three year term, which may be renewed. The editorial committee can recommend to the Committee that an editor be replaced at any time if necessary.

E. Relationship of Editorial committee and editors: In consultation with each editor, the editorial committee should establish general guidelines such as the kinds of materials appropriate for each type of publication, approximate number of pages, budget, and publication dates. Within the above parameters the responsibility of the editors would be the selection and editing of the material. The editors should consult each other frequently to avoid overlap and duplication.

The editorial committee recommends that publications produced for the Society should first be approved by the editorial committee.

RESOURCES

An effective publishing programme that does not strain the resources of the Society is only possible if the editorial committee keeps close watch over budgets and actively seeks outside

sources of funding. Presently the four main sources of income for the Society are membership subscriptions, donations, sales of occasional material and the annual book auction.

The editorial committee recommends that only the newsletter, journal, administrative and promotional material be financed out of membership subscriptions. They should normally take a maximum of 90% of the membership fee.

Initial costs for publishing occasional material should be met by the Society if agreed by the editorial committee, but in principle these projects are fund-raisers.

Funding for Special Publications, particularly substantial works, should be by advance order and /or grants. A number of Societies fund special projects by inviting members and institutional bodies, such as public and university libraries, to subscribe beforehand.

Now that the Society is a registered charity, more members should be encouraged to make donations, or to become sponsors, possibly for specific publishing projects.

Grants should be sought from various private and public bodies.

Advertising should be actively sought for the journal and the newsletter.

The Committee should appoint a member to be responsible for seeking advertising, grants, and donations from Society members for the publications programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

committee makes the following recommendations to the Committee for its approval.

Motion One. That it approve the report of the editorial committee and the recommendations contained therein.

Motion Two: That it appoint Stephen Powys Marks as publication manager.

Motion Three: That it appoint Paul Roberts as Editor of the Newsletter for a term of three years.

Motion Four: That it appoint Peter Foss as Editor, Louise de Bruin as Deputy Editor, and Charles Lock as Contributing Editor of The Powys Journal each for a term of three years.

Motion Five: That the Society not renew the annual agreement to purchase the Powys Review for its members.

Motion Six: That the Society purchase at the agreed upon price the two issues of the Powys Review which the Committee ordered for its members for 1990 if they are published and

mailed before March 31, 1991. The Society will not purchase for its members any Powys Review published after March 31, 1991.

All six motions were formally approved by a meeting of the full Committee, November 3, 1990.

NOTICE

The Committee has appointed as editors of the new *Powys Journal*: Dr. Peter Foss, Editor
Mlle. Louise de Bruin, Deputy Editor Dr. Charles Lock, Contributing Editor .

The editors will be pleased to consider submissions of scholarly articles, original research, primary material and critical reviews. Please send to: The Powys Journal, c/o the Secretary, The Powys Society, Mr. Griffin Beale, 39 Church St., Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 5AT

Just as the Newsletter was going to press, news arrived that the
J.C.P. exhibition at Uppsala had been extended to January 31st
1991