Editorial

'Childhood' of writers should perhaps be distinguished from their 'juvenilia' — as JCP says somewhere, *little* children may trail clouds of glory, older ones can be threatening (or silly). Or as a teacher once put it, 'Youth can be tragic, or comic, but not interesting'. ('Discuss'?)

This newsletter presents some glimpses of youthful Powyses, from the at-a-guess nine-year old JCP's adventure story written for Theodore; lively letters home from JCP at the Prep and guarded ones from TF in Suffolk; to Llewelyn in his twenties commenting on local hostelries and unattainable girls. We have a report on the meeting to discuss *Wolf Solent*; an account of JCP's involvement with the anti-vivisection movement; and, appropriately for Sherborne, memories of Littleton with (for those who haven't read *The Joy of It* recently), his recipe for the ideal headmaster.

Littleton's *The Joy of It* and JCP's *Autobiography* are like the two sides of a coin. They and Llewelyn's essays must be the prime published source-books for the Powys's shared childhood and their separate young years, as translated by their maturer selves. The 'entertainment' at this year's Conference will draw on these as well as on letters and diaries, published and unpublished, with a special focus on Llewelyn.

Once again: thanks to all who helped and contributed.

KK

ON OTHER PAGES

Chairman's Report 2003–4

If 2002 (as I stated in my last report) was the year during which the Society once again found its feet, then 2003 was a period of useful consolidation.

Our main achievement was the holding of an extremely successful Conference in Llangollen, a venue to which we may well return another year. Our speakers included Dr David Goodway, Professor Harald Fawkner, Professor Charles Lock and Professor W. J. Keith; and once again our thanks go especially to Peter Foss and to Louise de Bruin for their excellent organisation.

We were delighted to have our President Glen Cavaliero with us, and he played a memorable part in 'Lost to the Common World', a dramatic set of readings devised by Chris Wilkinson and based on the triangular relationship between Llewelyn Powys, Gamel Woolsey and Alyse Gregory. This was one of the events whose filming was kindly arranged by Jeff Kwintner, and which can be bought through the Society Website at <www.powys-society.org>.

During the year further additions were made to the Website, which continues to attract new members to swell our ranks.

Your Chairman and Secretary also held at the Dorset County Museum, where the Society's papers are stored, the first of what we intend should be annual meetings with the excellent new curator Judy Lindsay with whom we had a valuable conversation.

The Dorset County Museum was also the setting for a delightful meeting, arranged, introduced and chaired by Dr David Gervais, in which we discussed one or two of the *Fables* by T. F. Powys. We produced a number of newsletters edited by Kate Kavanagh, and a Journal edited by Larry Mitchell. 2003 also saw the publication by the Society of a handsome edition of Llewelyn Powys's *Wessex Memories*, edited and illustrated by our Secretary Dr Peter Foss.

On the Committee we said good-bye in August to Sonia Lewis who had completed her term of office; and we co-opted Lorna Fisher and Michael Scaife d'Ingerthorpe.

During the autumn of 2003 it became clear from the analysis of our Treasurer Michael French that the Society could be heading to somewhat rocky financial ground. The measures to deal with this are already in hand, and will form an important part of the 2004 report.

In the meantime we continue to be guided by our founding principle, which is to establish the true literary status of the Powys family through promotion of the reading and discussion of their works.

Richard Perceval Graves

The Annual General Meeting of the Powys Society will be held in the Powell Theatre, Sherborne School, Sherborne, Dorset at 11.00 am on Sunday 29 August 2004

AGENDA

1 Minutes of the of the 2003 AGM – published in the November 2003 *Newsletter*.
2 Matters arising.
3 Report of the Hon. Secretary.
4 Report of the Hon. Treasurer and Audited Accounts, as published in the July 2004 *Newsletter*.
5 Report for 2003 by the Chairman, as published in the July 2004 *Newsletter*.
6 To note the election of the Officers and committee members for 2004–5.
7 Appointment of Hon. Auditor.
8 Date and location of 2005 Conference.
9 AOB.

Peter J. Foss, *Hon. Secretary*

Committee Nominations 2004

The following **Officers** have been nominated by Society members and have agreed to stand:

Position	*Nomination*	*Proposer*	*Seconder*
Chairman	**Richard P. Graves**	Timothy Hyman	David Goodway
Vice-Chairman	**David Gervais**	Kate Kavanagh	Peter Foss
Hon. Secretary	**Peter Lazare**	Sonia Lewis	Hilary Henderson *(née Scott-Maxwell)*
Hon. Treasurer	**Michael French**	Richard Graves	Peter Foss

The one member of the Committee who has come to the end of his three-year term, and has agreed to stand again, is **Timothy Hyman** (nominated by Cicely Hill, seconded by Louise de Bruin). **David Goodway** has agreed to be nominated for the Committee (nominated by Susan Rands, seconded by Peter Foss). **Michael Scaife d'Ingerthorpe** and **Lorna Fisher** were co-opted last year and have agreed to stand for the Committee this year (Michael Scaife d'Ingerthorpe nominated by Shelagh Hancox, seconded by Kate Kavanagh; Lorna Fisher nominated by Michael French, seconded by Richard Graves). **Kate Kavanagh, Jeff Kwintner and John Powys** continue with their three-year term.

Honorary Treasurer's Report for 2003

The accounts for 2003 are set out on the following two pages: they have been approved by the Society's Honorary Auditor, Stephen Allen, and once again we are most grateful to him for his work and advice on behalf of the Society.

Our paid up membership for 2003 was 279 (which is essentially the same as in 2002). With a tax refund under the *Gift Aid Scheme* of £483 (£513 in 2002), our total subscription income was £4,601, or 64.6% of our total income of £7,118. Again, this is virtually identical to 2002, when the subscription income of £4,454 represented 65.7% of our total income of £6,777.

As in previous years, the largest part of our expenditure was on our two regular publications, *The Powys Journal* and the three issues of the Society's *Newsletter.* The net cost of producing these, including distribution, was £5,418 or 118% of the subscription income. Even when the 'book' value of the 175 copies of the *Journal* taken into stock is taken into account, this still represents 105% of member's subscription income.

During the year, the Society published, under the editorship of our Secretary, Dr Peter Foss, *Wessex Memories*, a collection of essays by Llewelyn Powys. The cost of producing 400 copies of this book, including promotion expenses and distribution, was £2246. As at 31 December 2003, the Society had received £1,406 from sales of *Wessex Memories* and 126 copies had been taken into stock at a 'book' value of £630. The income and expenditure account for 2003 shows, therefore, a net loss of £210 from the publication of *Wessex Memories.* (Sales in future years of the copies taken into stock should, however, ensure that the Society 'breaks-even' from the publication of *Wessex Memories).*

Before taking into account the movement in publication stocks, the Society ended the year with an excess of expenditure over income of £1,503 and as a consequence, during the year the balances at the bank available for running the Society were reduced from £4,359 to £2,826. Overall, taking movements of publications stock into account, there was an excess of expenditure over income in 2003 of £999 and a reduction in Society's net worth from £6,968 to £5,969 in the course of the year.

Drafts of these accounts were considered by your Committee at both their November 2003 and February 2004 meetings. As reported in the April *Newsletter,* the committee felt that, whilst the financial situation of the Society was not yet critical, remedial action should be taken now to bring the income and expenditure of the Society into balance to avoid a critical situation arising in one or two years time. Additionally, the Committee felt that the publishing and promotional activities of the Society were very important and that these were being inhibited by the fact that the cost of producing the *Journal* and *Newsletter* were absorbing more than 100% of the subscription income from members. The Committee noted that the Society's annual subscription had remained unchanged since

1 January 1994 and they reluctantly agreed that, from 1 January 2005, the Society's annual subscription should be raised in line with inflation since 1994.

Michael J. French

Sherborne School

Annual Subscription 2005

At its meeting on 21 February 2004, the Committee reluctantly agreed that the annual subscription to the Society should be raised to avoid a critical financial situation being reached in one or two years time, and to promote the publishing and outreach activities of the Society. The Committee's reasons for this decision are set out more fully in my Annual Report as Treasurer for 2003 (above) and in the in the April 2004 issue of the Society's *Newsletter* ('Committee News').

The Society's annual subscription has remained unchanged since 1 January 1994 and since then the Government's retail price index has risen by about one-third. The Committee decided, therefore, to raise the annual subscription from 1 January 2005 in line with inflation to £18.50 for UK members, to £22.00 for international members and to £10.00 for students.

To facilitate payment from abroad it is also proposed to make this (within the current range of exchange rates) an equivalent round sum of US$40 or 33 euros. Although the present Committee cannot commit future Committees, it is certainly their expectation that the subscription will remain at these new levels for a considerable number of years.

Over two-thirds of members pay their annual subscription by Standing Order (for which the Society is grateful) but the rise in subscription will mean that those members will, regrettably, have to complete a new Standing Order for the revised amount. I will attempt to make this as painless as possible by writing individually to members later in the year with a new Standing Order form for completion. (Those members who pay by cheque during the year, should remember to send the revised amount from next January.)

MJF

THE POWYS SOCIETY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

		£	£	£	*2002*
INCOME [1]					
Subscriptions	In arrears (7 members)	143			
	Brought forward from 2002 (16 members)	258			
	For 2003 (263 members)	3,717			
	Honorary members (14)	–			
	Tax refund under Gift Aid [2]	483	**4,601**		*4,454*
Donations	Legacy	100			
	Conference book sales	240			
	Other [3]	65	**405**		*885*
Publication Sales	*Wessex Memories*	1,406			
	Stock publications	734	**2,140**		*864*
Conference	Registration fees	4,345			
	Less costs	4,396	**(51)**		*690*
Other	Bank interest		**23**		*33*
	TOTAL		**£ 7,118**	£	*6,926*
EXPENDITURE [1]					
Powys Journal xiii	Cost of printing [4, 5]	2,650		*2,266*	
	Cost of distribution	533	**3,183**	*301*	*2,567*
Powys Newsletters	Printing costs, Nos 48, 49, 50	1,742		*1,612*	
	Cost of distribution	493	**2,235**	*561*	*2,173*
Wessex Memories	Cost of Printing	2,081			
	Add promotion expenses and postage	165	**2,246**		–
T. F. Powys day			**30**		–
Powys Collection			**–**		*77*
Ballot on Constitution	Printing and distribution		**–**		*148*
Administrative	Web-site maintenance	70		*70*	
Expenses	Officers' expenses	345		*330*	
	Travel to Committee meetings [3]	512	**927**	*178*	*578*
	TOTAL		**8,621**		*5,543*
(DEFICIT)/ EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE			**(1,503)**		*1,383*
MOVEMENT IN PUBLICATION STOCKS					
Deduct	Cost of publications sold	167		*148*	
	Writing down of stock [6]	528		*550*	
Add	126 copies of *Wessex Memories* @ £5.00	630		–	
	175 copies of *The Powys Journal* xiii @ £3.25	569	**504**	*588*	*(110)*
(DEFICIT)/ EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE (taking stock movements into account)			**(999)**		*1,273*

THE POWYS SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF FUNDS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2003

GENERAL FUND [7]	£	£	*2002*
Funds at 1 January 2003		**4,072**	*2,799*
(Deficit)/ Excess of income over expenditure		**(999)**	*1,273*
Transfer from Wilson Knight Benefactors Fund [8]		**896**	–
Funds at 31 December 2003		**3,969**	*4,072*
Represented by:			
Stock of *Powys Journal* and books			
(as written down at 1 January 2003)	2,639		
Add Stock movements as above	504		
Value of stock at 31 December 2003		**3,143**	*2,639*
Cash at Bank 31 Decembert 2003 [9]	1,039		
Less subscriptions received in advance [10]	213	**826**	*1,463*
		3,969	*4,072*
THE WILSON KNIGHT BENEFACTORS FUND [11]			
Funds at 1 January 2003		**2,896**	*2,896*
Transfer to General fund		**(896)**	–
Funds at 31 December 2003		**2,000**	*2,896*
Represented by			
Cash at bank		**2,000**	*2,896*

NOTES

1 Cash turnover in 2003: total receipts, £11,916; total payments, £13,500. After adjustments, relating to the cost of new publications stocked, existing publications sold, writing down of stock and subscriptions received in advance, the excess of expenditure over income was £999. (In 2002 income exceeded expenditure by £1,273.)
2 This figure includes refunds on subscriptions received since 5 April 2002, including those paid late for 2002.
3 In addition, Committee travelling costs of £371 were not claimed.
4 This figure does not include the cost of printing the family-tree insert in the *Journal*, which was met by a donation from a member.
5 This includes a charitable element of £1,157, calculated from the production costs (£2,782) less the value of 500 copies distributed or stocked at £3.25 per copy (£1,625).
6 Value of stock at 1 January 2003 written down by 20%. New stock in 2003 is not written down.
7 **Society's net worth at 31 December 2003, £5,969 (General Fund £3,969; Wilson Knight Bnefactors Fund £2,000).**
8 Contribution towards the cost of publishing *Wessex Memories*.
9 Community Account £64, Savings Account £2,975, *less* WKB Fund £2,000 = £1,039.
10 Subscriptions received in advance: from 2002 accounts; £48 [3 subscriptions for 2004]; from 2003 accounts: £123 [8 subscriptioins for 2004] and £42 [3 subscriptions for 2005].
11 All interest has been retained in the General Fund.

Michael J. French, Hon. Treasurer

AUDITOR'S REPORT TO MEMBERS OF THE POWYS SOCIETY

I have audited the financial statements in accordance with approved auditing standards. In my opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Charity's affairs at 31 December 2003 and of the surplus for the year then ended and comply with the Companies Act 1985.

J. S. Allen (Chartered Accountant), 24th May 2004

Committee News

The Committee met on 3rd July at Tim Hyman's house in London (again with thanks, especially as it coincided with a Wimbledon final). The Chairman's Powys text was taken from a discussion on JCP from the Yahoo internet site. There were apologies from Stephen Powys Marks (moving house), Lorna Fisher (busy with wedding arrangements) and Jeff Kwinter (unwell). The Chairman read his report for last year, and referred to matters raised in the February meeting (see the informal report in NL51). He hoped to arrange a meeting at the DCM later this year, to discuss the Collection. As requested in interests of economy, Larry Mitchell and Stephen Powys Marks have achieved a more compact *Journal*, of 168 pages. The *Newsletter* will bear in mind the £200+ saving if it can keep to 32 pages (but not this time). The Treasurer reported little change from his last report, with the overall membership numbers (minus about 15 from 'natural loss', plus about 11 new or rejoined) practically the same at around 280. *Wessex Memories* will probably cover its costs in the course of this year: thanks to Peter Foss for his work on it and in distributing it to bookshops. The increase in subscriptions is confirmed (see NL 51, and page 5). KK suggested that fixed overseas rates, in US dollars and euros, might be less trouble and more encouraging to potential new members.

KK also reported meeting members of the Powys Society of North America, in New York in March. Given that the PSNA is now virtually inactive, Nick Birns its secretary said he would write to its members and suggest they joined the British Powys Society. The Treasurer suggested we should think of employing the large numbers of spare back numbers of the *Journal* (currently stored in his attic) as promotional material, by offering sets to American university English departments. The Chairman proposed writing to the departments on the PSNA list. Once again, the small number of British libraries or institutions subscribing was regretted. Any personal contacts with institutions should be pursued.

The Chairman read his letter to David Solomon, thanking him for his past help in funding the DCM's care of the Powys Collection, and welcoming his offer to fund a future reprinting of book(s) by Llewelyn Powys. Tony Head would be advising on this. RPG said the Website would update the list of *Journal* contents. It was suggested, as we are now a member of the Alliance of Literary Societies, someone might offer an article to their journal *The Open Book*. Michael Scaife d'Ingerthorpe reported that addresses in the Powys Society entries in several literary reference books (e.g., the *Writers' and Artists' Yearbook*) are still not up to date. It was suggested that a PO box address for the Society would make this kind of thing easier to monitor.

No elections for the Committee will be required. The Chairman was very pleased that we have a nomination for a new Secretary and considers we have been extraordinarily lucky in this respect (as with our new Treasurer), which

gives hope for the Society's self-renewing powers in the future. David Gervais has agreed to act as Vice-Chairman, replacing David Goodway who will rejoin as a Committee member.

At the coming Conference numbers are likely to be about 45 members resident, much as last year, with more non-resident attendance. Looking ahead to the next conferences, a return to Llangollen was on balance favoured. It is hoped some Americans will be able to come, and David Goodway emphasised the importance of the conference date not conflicting with the American academic year. A Bank Holiday date has as always its pros and cons. For the future, suggestions in the South included Brighton and others in Sussex. More ideas perhaps from the AGM.

KK

(this is an informal account; Minutes can be seen once confirmed)

The Publications Manager Moves

Stephen Powys Marks has moved from Kilmersdon, where he has been responsible for the production of most of the Society's occasional publications (the most notable exception being *The Dorset Year*), as well as the *Newsletter* and *The Powys Journal*. He has been sending them out for more than twenty years from his home, with an ever-increasing stock taking up more and more of his (dry) garage on racks going ever higher and higher.

With his move to a smaller house, a large part of the stock has been moved to other members' houses, but he has kept all of the stock of many smaller items, and a working stock of all publications from which he can continue to fulfil orders, although the move may mean a little delay at first.

He will continue to be responsible for the production of publications. His address is on the inside back cover.

Obituary

Dr Bernard Jones died recently at the age of 79. His funeral was held on 27 April, 2004. Bernard Jones had a life-long interest in the writings of the Powys Brothers. A meticulous scholar, he wrote many of the pamphlets for the 'Dorset Worthies' series, including ones on Barnes, Hardy, John Cowper Powys, Llewelyn Powys and Theodore Powys. Published by the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, these useful booklets are still available from the Dorset County Museum.

MK

Sherborne Conference 2004

'CHILDHOOD AND THE SHERBORNE INFLUENCE'

Sherborne School, Dorset, Friday 27 August – Sunday 29 August 2004

PROGRAMME (titles of talks provisional)

Friday 27th

2.00–4.00: Committee meeting
4.00: Arrivals
5.30: Reception in foyer of Powell Theatre, with welcome by Chairman
6.30: Dinner
8.00: Professor John Williams: *'"Suffer Little Children to Come Unto Me": The Redemptive Landscape in T. F. Powys's Writings'*

Saturday 28th

8.00+: Breakfast
9.30: Professor Jeremy Hooker on ***John Cowper Powys's* Wolf Solent**
Coffee
11.15: A. N. Wilson on ***Vicarage Childhoods***
12.45: lunch
Free afternoon, with possibility of excursions
6.30: Dinner
8.00: *'The Unreturning Morning'*: the Powyses at Sherborne – a dramatised sequence in words and music, devised by Peter Foss, produced by Chris Wilkinson

Sunday 29th

8.00+ breakfast
9.30: Peter Tait, Headmaster of Sherborne Prep School, on ***Littleton Powys and the 'Prep'***
11.00: AGM followed by
Members' Discussion, moderated by the Committee, on the subject of **'Creative Schooldays'**
1.00: lunch
2.30: End of Conference and Departure

News and Notes

Tordis and Stephen Powys Marks have moved to 23 Cleveland Walk, Bath, BA2 6JW after 26 years at Hamilton's, Kilmersdon. We wish them all good health and happiness in their new home. The memory of the one they are leaving, filled with Powys associations and with its stunning view over the church tower and village below, will long remain with anyone who visited it.

****

August 13th is **Llewelyn's birthday** and friends are expected to drink his health at *The Sailor's Return*, East Chaldon.

****

David Gervais is to give a **talk** on **T. F. Powys, Fiction and Fable** at the **Dorset County Museum** on **5th October** at 5.30pm.

****

T. F. Powys, Selected Early Works edited by Elaine Mencher, 2 vols in a boxed set, contains 32 pieces by TFP (all of which look fascinating), illustrations and extensive editorial matter. Enquiries to The Brynmill Press Ltd, Pockthorpe Cottage, Denton, Harleston, Norfolk IP20 0AS. (*see leaflet with NL 50*)

****

Judith Stinton's new revised ***Chaldon Herring*** was warmly reviewed in the *TLS*. (Black Dog Books, 104 Trinity St, Norwich – see leaflet in April *Newsletter*).

****

A website devoted to **JCP in Sussex** is at http://www.kpmc.fsnet.co.uk/jcp. Kieran McCann who made it is a freelance translator and lives in Brighton. (kmccann@btopenworld.com).

****

Reflections on Derbyshire Villages recently published by Tom Bates (Neil David Lee-Atkin — email TomBates@white-peak.fsnet.co.uk , telephone 01629–650617), is an illustrated potted history, including Shirley and JCP 'its most famous son'. *Derbyshire People and Places*, with a chapter on the Powyses, is to follow in December.

****

Peter Tait, currently headmaster of Sherborne Prep, wrote on the Powys family connection with Sherborne and **Littleton Powys**'s influence on the school, in his recent article 'More of *The Joy Of It*' in 'Education in the County', supplement to *Dorset* magazine (www.dorsetmag.co.uk). We look forward to hearing more at the Conference.

****

The **Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York** is reportedly (via Yahoo, May 2004) planning an exhibit of 'Greenwich Village Victoriana'. According to this news item, the collection of **Marian Powys** who ran the Devonshire Lace Shop will be on loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum, and many of the pieces from her book ***Lace and Lace Making*** will be on display. 'Featured at the exhibit will be clothing of the late Isadora Duncan, HRH Queen Victoria, and a

vast collection of the 'Hive and Bee' bedding of Napoleon as pictured in Dame Powys's book ...'

****

The Spring number of ***La Lettre Powysienne*** (bilingual) includes David Gervais's essay on John Cowper's *Rabelais*, an illustrated essay by Jacqueline Peltier on JCP and Rabelais; and 'The King-Sense' by Lars-Gustav Andersson (on *All or Nothing*). Also a postcard sent by TFP in 1903 from Chinon, a Rabelais site.

****

Graham Carey tells of the death last year of the **Rev. John Dalby**, Vicar of Anstwick and a lifelong Powys enthusiast. Graham would also like to know if members can think of any references to prostitution in Powys writings (other than 'Lily' in *Autobiography)*, for his book in progress on the legal and moral aspects of this subject.

****

While in New York in March the Editor met two of the organisers of the **Powys Society of North America**, Richard Maxwell (from Yale) and Nicholas Birns (New York). The PSNA pioneered and added much to Powys studies over the years in its journals (latterly *Powys Notes*) but has not held a meeting for some time. PSNA members (around 40, chiefly from universities) are to be encouraged to join the British Powys Society. Meanwhile a few PSNA members have contacted our *Newsletter* and we hope will contribute news of their their continuing Powys interests. Among them are David A. Cook (University of Virginia and Professor at the Department of Film Studies, Emory Univ., Atlanta); Kate Nash (postgraduate at Univ. of Virginia); and Timothy Walsh (Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, author of *The Dark Matter of Words* which discusses JCP).

****

Roger Sheppard who (like not a few members) is 'downsizing' before a move, has a collection of about 40 works **by and about TFPowys** for sale, including signed limited editions, all in good collectable condition.. Write to him for a list (117 Kent House Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JJ) or email trigon@easynet.co.uk .

News from BBC

John Cowper Powys has had two recent mentions on **Radio 4.**

Firstly, on Sunday April 18th 2004, *A Glastonbury Romance* was chosen by **Bernard Cornwell,** bestselling author of the Sharpe military historical novels, as his book to take to the island with the Bible and Shakespeare on **'Desert Island Discs'.**

Sue Lawley: And then you get to take a book. We give you the complete works of Shakespeare; we give you the Bible but I daresay you don't want it.
Bernard Cornwell: Well, firelighters.
Lawley: So, go on. What is your book?
Cornwell: My book is *A Glastonbury Romance* by John Cowper Powys, and it's full of an exquisite sensibility and I've never really given it the time it deserves. So I want to take that.

Then, on Tuesday April 21st, 'Shop Talk' featured **book clubs**. The Ealing [London] Samaritans Reading Group (so named, it would seem, from where they meet, the local Samaritans' HQ), who evidently won the 2003 Penguin Orange Prize for reading groups, chose to read *A Glastonbury Romance* on the suggestion of one of their members.

M S d'I

It would be interesting to find out how all these readers got on with their choice. Any more pieces of broadcast news would be welcomed. ***KK***

News from a Saleroom

A few weeks ago a substantial quantity of Powys material went under the hammer at **Bloomsbury Auctions** in London.

The main item was a set of 60 letters, with 27 accompanying envelopes, from **JCP to Mrs Meech** who was his typist and friend for a number of years. The letters spanned the years 1944 to the early 1960s and were mostly written from Wales to Mrs Meech in Dorset. Powys referred to the progress of his writing (the last chapter of *Atlantis*), a Japanese translation of *Meaning of Culture*, and his work on a new story about travelling through space – 'a popular topic these days' (October 1958). There were also references to his family, to the illness of his only son (a Roman Catholic priest) and his affection for Weymouth – his 'real home' (August 1954).

The lot was estimated at £8,000 to £12,000 but after some lively bidding was eventually sold to the **National Library of Wales** for £14,000.

Another large lot of JCP first editions (38 in all) – including a signed numbered copy of *Lucifer* went for £300. A further small lot of 4 signed presentation copies of JCP first editions – including copies of *The Meaning of Culture* and *Morwyn*, both addressed to Mrs Meech – went for £170.

A set of 5 signed copies of **TFP first editions** went for £300. These included a presentation copy to Liam O'Flaherty of *What Lack I Yet?*. A larger lot of 23 TFP first editions – many signed by the author – went for £360.

A large lot of 28 **Llewelyn first editions** went for £200. These included nice jacketed copies of *Apples Be Ripe* and the American edition of *Love and Death* as well as a signed presentation copy of *Ebony and Ivory,* complete with a poem, from the author to Cecily Ingilby.

Finally, a quantity of predominantly **Littleton material** went to the National Library of Wales for £380. This included 3 letters to Mrs Meech mentioning the material to be typed, mostly letters written by Elizabeth Myers.

Michael Foss

Wolf Solent *Study Day*

This was held on 12th June in Cheltenham – with many thanks to Shelagh Powys Hancox for the hospitality of her beautiful library. A dozen members came, among them Richard Stone (from Wootton under Edge) and John Dunn (from Milton Keynes) – thanks to both of these for recording their impressions. We enjoyed lunch at a local Italian shop and talked through the afternoon.

David Gervais, who writes on English and Continental literature and art, and is an editor of the Cambridge Quarterly, *feels strongly that the novels of JCP ought to be considered in the context of literary tradition, not (as they often are) as special cases out on a limb – he sees no reason to accept that. For comparison, he passed round some short extracts from Wordsworth ('welcome fortitude') and from* Women in Love *(Birkin escaping from people into Nature).*

David Gervais's booklet on J. C. Powys, T. S. Eliot and French Literature *is a new addition to the Cecil Woolf 'Powys Heritage' series.*

KK

David Gervais writes:

The talk approached the novel less as a sacred book than as a work of literature within the complex and varied literary tradition indicated by JCP's own wide reading. It began by noticing how different a novel it is from any of Hardy's, notwithstanding their often similar settings and subject-matter. JCP was indebted to quite different novelists too (e.g., George Sand, Proust and, especially, Dostoievsky). The argument hinged on the chapters 'The Blackbird's Song' and 'Lenty Pond', on what might be called the novel's poetry rather than on its characterisation, themes, etc. Wolf's 'mythology' (not the same thing as character) was explored through such scenes as the one where he and Gerda watch the water-rats. (Not surprisingly, it proved easier in discussion to talk about plot and character – what becomes of Christie at the end? – than about this poetic dimension.) We also referred at some length to Wordsworth and to D. H. Lawrence, both so different from JCP and yet so close to him in many ways. These

comparisons and contrasts seemed well worth exploring further. Ditto JCP's debt to Dostoievsky (the greatest of all novelists in his view). In short, a case was made for *Wolf Solent* as a European as well as a post-Hardy English novel of rural life.

Readers of this will be glad to hear that no single line on the book prevailed, that no one felt able to 'explain' or categorise it and that it seemed as enigmatically powerful at the end of the day as at the beginning. We may not have reached any conclusions but we did not 'murder to dissect'.

DG

A Seminar

Stepping from the sunshine into the subdued hues of the library of Shelagh Hancox's Cheltenham home meant also entering the contented quiet of a group of members familiar enough with each other to accept silence. This did not mean that my newcomer's need for conversation went unfulfilled. On the contrary, the early pleasantries I exchanged with others quickly transformed into literary discussion across a variety subjects. Ahead of us was a seminar on John Cowper Powys's *Wolf Solent* and Dr David Gervais would provide the introductory talk and be our guide. The intention was for Chapter Five, 'The Blackbird's Song', to be given especial scrutiny, but discussion was not to be so easily contained. Exchanges ranged far and wide, across the whole novel and beyond, drawing comparisons between the central theme of *Wolf Solent* and those in works by writers as diverse as Wordsworth and D. H. Lawrence.

And that central theme? Loss of a personal mythology, an inner resource, an uncontaminated inner space, a place in which to retreat from the world, perhaps even Wolf's own 'Nowhere', a Utopia in a Morrisonian sense. We considered how, in place of his mythology, Wolf readjusted his vision to cope with complexity, resulting in a new realism, even a stoicism, bearing comparison with *'Not without hope we suffer and we mourn'* (Wordsworth, 'Elegiac Stanzas') and *'... we've got to take the world that's given – because there isn't any other'* (Lawrence, 'Excurse', *Women in Love*). The way left open to renewed mythic imagination in Wolf's 'Endure or escape' resolution and the brave, anti-climactic 'cup of tea' ending, all these things and more stimulated discussion. Stepping out into the sunshine again, I felt the satisfaction of knowing that new light had been thrown on my future readings and re-readings of this inexhaustibly great novel.

John Dunn

First-Timer

On this sunny day in Cheltenham I walked to the door of Shelagh Hancox's home feeling slightly nervous. This was not only the first organized Powys Society event that I had attended, it was also the first literary discussion I had ever been to. I was also three-quarters of the way through JCP's *Maiden Castle* and although I had re-

read 'The Blackbird's Song' from *Wolf Solent* – the main focus of the day's discussion – I was worried that I'd confuse my Quirms and Urquarts, my Gerdas and Thuellas, my Wizzies and Christies! However, my nervousness soon lessened when I was given a very warm welcome by Shelagh, who then introduced me to the other members and showed me into the library which is infinitely better equipped for enjoying a book than any public library I've been into. I was further heartened to learn that two other members were first-timers to a Powys Society event. After coffees and extended introductions and quick open-eyed perusals of the largest collection of Powys books I've ever seen we talked of where we might go for lunch. The place chosen could hardly have been better. Once through the unassuming frontage we found ourselves in a charming Italian shop/café filled with traditional fare. The Mediterranean food was perfect for such a hot afternoon.

On returning to the house we were soon into the main discussion. This began with an introduction by Dr David Gervais, which soon focused my mind on the main themes of *Wolf Solent* (and fortunately diverted it away from the adventures of *Maiden Castle*). I don't pretend to have understood all the implications of Dr Gervais's introductory talk, but his obviously well-considered ideas – which included showing interesting parallels between JCP and Dostoievsky as well as other non-English novelists – certainly gave rise to many varying opinions, eagerly and eloquently expressed, though I admit to being happy mainly just to listen and occasionally throw in my 'tuppence-worth'. The subject of Wolf's 'mythology' provided the richest area for debate and contrasting ideas and proved at least how subjective was each person's reading of the book – an inevitability with JCP?

We then adjourned briefly for afternoon tea in the garden. This was followed by a further discussion during which Dr Gervais asked us to compare selections from two of Wordsworth's poems and two passages from *Women In Love* by D. H. Lawrence with the ideas – especially elementarism – of JCP.

The afternoon as a whole was wonderfully stimulating and I now feel much more informed and much closer to understanding the underlying themes of the book than before – indeed, I look forward to re-reading it again with deeper insight. I look back on that day as a thoroughly enjoyable one during which I made new friends and gained better understanding of an intriguing book. I hope this little piece might encourage other members who might be nervous of attending these events to do so. I for one look forward to the future pleasure of unashamed hours discussing the inexhaustible legacy of JCP and his family with other enthusiasts. May I take this opportunity to thank Shelagh for providing such kind hospitality and giving me such a warm welcome.

Richard Stone

The Astonishing Adventures of a Zulu, a Welshman and an English Sailor

As narrated by the Welshman

With life portraits of the three worthies.

by J. C. Powys

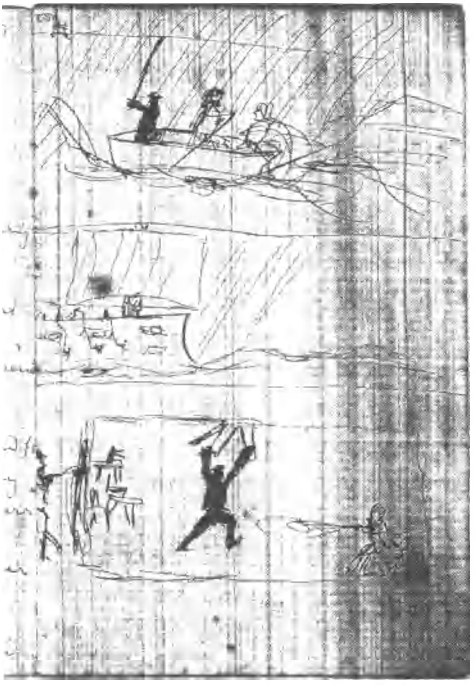
illustrated by the distinguished artist

Theodore Francis Powys

I am a Welshman. My name is Jones ab Gryfith Llewellyn, but I am generally called 'Jones' alone. My two friends, whose pictures you have already seen, and I, having determined to go to sea in search of treasure, started from Portsmouth at 4 o'clock in the morning. Our vessel was not a large one; merely an open boat; and it had in the bottom a hole which let in the water. Indeed before we could start we had to bale steadily for half an hour and stuff up the hole with brown paper. At last we did get underweigh, the Sailor, whose name is Bill, rowing, the Zulu, whose name is Ratamahatmeya Happ-ootella (shortened into 'Rat') sitting in the bows, and myself steering. As soon as we got out of the harbour and into the open sea, we began to feel our position growing slightly uncomfortable; for the waves were increasing considerably in size and threatened to engulph our small craft, the sky too, hitherto clear now turned a leaden color and the rain descended in torrents. At this moment to complete our misery the brown paper gave way and the water began to fill the boat. At last it became clear to me that we were sinking,

[page 2] and that there was no hope of escape. I said as much to the sailor but he only said "Bosh" and told e to hold my tongue for a blowed land-lubber! In despair I appealed to the Zulu but he only grunted and said 'Ugh'. It really was a bad case; I looked all round the horizon; not a sail in sight. And yet was not that something like smoke in the far distance? I pointed it out to Bill who was rowing desperately with a very red face down which the persperation trickled in streams. He looked for a moment; then gave vent to a long and loud 'hurrah' "A man-o'-war and coming with the wind; shout, lubbers!" And we shouted. Apparently the ship noticed us for she hove to and threw us a

rope we seized and sprung aboard, only just in time for at that moment our boat went down. On reaching the deck we were incountered by a short dapper-looking individual
[page 3] with a very big moustache; he said "Qui etes vous messieurs?" It then appeared to me that we were in the hands of the enemys of our country; for you must know that at this time England and France were at daggers drawn it also appeared to me that our present position was by no means a safe one; for the patriotic Bill was already muttering something not at all complimentary to Frenchmen in



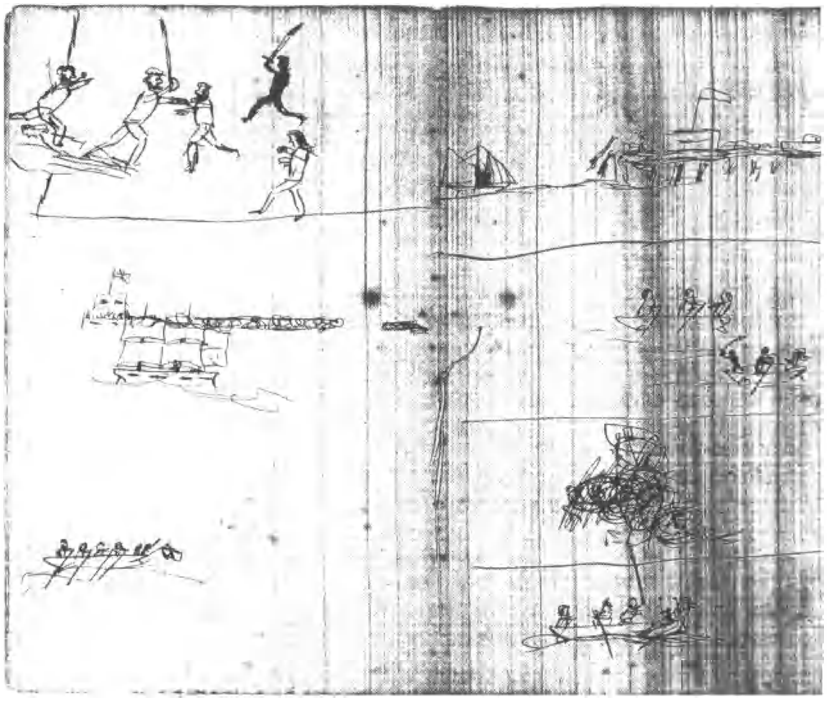
general. Receiving no answer the little man stamped his foot and asked rather angrily 'Parlez vous Francais' — I shook my head and pointed down my throat to signify that we would be glad of something to eat. Well it was that I did so for the little man was working himself up into a tremendous rage at our silence and his moustaches were curling in an alarming manner. To make a long story short, we were hospitably entertained by the French sailors and all would have gone on well if
[page 4] it had not been for the aggrieved feelings of Sailor Bill. Once or twice he nearly ruined us in his outbursts of fury against the 'frog eaters': Indeed I had to explain them away by saying that the big man with the red beard was often taken with fits of madness and during them was by no means safe!

One day when our breakfast was brought us by a French sailor, Bill burst out, he weren' a goin to be fed like a wild beast in a cage; he weren't agoin to be petted and ... by a pack of frog eating, brandy swilling, bucket kicking foreigners. The Frenchman only looked at him in a pitying manner which still more enraged the angry Briton. And when the foreigner actually winked

[page 5, 6–7 drawings, page 8 blank]

[page 9] at me and tapped his head with his first finger; I was in despair at seeing the ferocious Bill seize the little man by the throat and shake him till he was black in the face. At this sight (to complete my terror) the Zulu seemed to be seized with a longing for blood and brandishing his great wooden sword tipped with iron rushed to the door shouting hiswar cry. I saw that 'no time was [bridled?] to lost'. To pull back the Zulu and lock and double lock the massive door was the work of a moment. Bill (by this time as cool as a cucumber) left the half suffocated

Frenchman on the floor and helped me to pile up the furniture against the
[page 10] door; and only just in time. The Zulu's shouts had attracted the attention of the sentry on guard and soon we were summoned by a loud voice to open the door and surrender. Our answerwas a revolver shot which pierced the oak panelling and also apparently the man beyond for a loud shriek ensued and a great noise of men coming together and talking loudly. Soon shots were fired and we had to crouch into the corners of the room to avoid them. This went on for about ten minutes; their efforts to break open our door proving entirely ineffectual. Suddenly a remarkable thing occurred. A trap door just above our table but which we had not before seen began
[page 11] slowly to revolve on its hinges. Soon a man's legs appeared. Imagine our dismay! if once these rascals got in through the ceiling [it] would be all UP! None of us seemed to know what to do, we stood still and gazed weakly at the descending legs. Then a bright idea seized the Zulu. Grasping the unfortunate man by the heels he wrenched him from the opening and with one mighty heave hurled him axross the room. He fell heavily and lay insensible. Another would have followed but the Zulu slammed the trapdoor and pressing his mighty sword against it held it firm. At that moment there was a great crash in some part
[page 12] of the ship, followed by shreiks and cries of dismay. Then another and another. Surely they were cannon shots. We



c ould scarce restrain our joy: Our assailants ceased their attacks and presently answered with their heavy guns shaking our room like an earthquake. Some large ship was evidently attack[ing] the Frenchman perhaps an English man of war and we should be rescued, 'Hurrah' and our loud shouts increased the terror of the panicstricken French. In a word the ship was boarded our cabin door flew in followed by a band of bearded sailors who hugged and embraced
[page 13] their rescued brother, our freind Bill.

To cut a long story short we were transferred to the man of war, HMS Hercules and in it sailed for their destination, Portland harbour. Arrived there we were allowed to go on shore in one of the ship's boats. We then obtained lodgings in a row called Brunswick and had supper and went to bed. Next morning I was awake first and began to think of our situation. As I looked out on the sea, it seemed so calm and cool that I felt I must have a bathe before breakfast
[page 14] Now I have the misfortune of not being able to swim. But this fact I determined my companions should not find out and so hoped to get out without waking them. Vain hopes! no sooner had I reached the ground floor than I perceived the Sailor and Zulu armed with towels etc and just starting for a dip. 'Hullo' shouted Bill "be you a comin, thee dost want a wash, certainly" "Oh yes' said I ignoring his latter remark 'a fine day for a swim?" So off we started. Soon I began to think we had better bathe from the shore — 'From the shore' shouted Sailor and Zulu together Why that's no depth at all, no, we must header from the pier"...

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The story ends tantalisingly, just as it's getting more personal. Not knowing of any other evidence, I would estimate the ages of JCP and TFP as about 9 and 6 – just before JCP and Littleton went to school? – though the handwriting looks quite mature. The style seems fairly standard Treasure Island/Westward Ho *boys' adventure – with perhaps a dash of Edward Lear – in the boat with the brown paper.*

See Newsletter *45, page 23, for somewhat similar battle drawings from the Powys 'Uncle from India'.*

(From the Powys Collection; from photocopies of a fragile booklet of sewn pages. See back cover for title page.) **KK**

JCP — Early Letters (1883?–1890)
[aged 10–18]

[from P rep school]
My dear Mother,
I have written to grandmother to thank her for the stamp cases. I hope Nellie is quite well. I have sent Theodore some medals he can cut them out and give them to who he likes ask him if he has bought any raspberry noyau. It is very nice [...]

My dear Mother
Thank you very much for your nice letter. I am glad the cage has come. The weather is very fine here, has it been raining at Dorchester. I have got 3/9 left. How many stamps has aunt Dora put in my book. Tell Theodore that he may do what he likes to the ditch but must not touch the [*word forgotten*] and write and tell me if any harm comes to the fort. The cricket season is not quite ended but I suppose it will soon be. Do the Doves like the change from the hamper to the cage. I do not feel so unhappy now but I still miss you very much. Southcombe is much nicer this term.
I am your affec. son John Cowper Powys [*drawing here*]

My dear Mother,
I have sent you a little knife to send to aunt Annie, if you do not think it good enough do not send it and I will get her a better present another time. Get Emma to rub the blades with the paper she does the binder as they are rather rusty. There is a new matron come and she is much stricter than the last one, but she keeps our clothes in much better order. Her name is Mrs Taylor. My cold is not much better and I am afraid it will continue till Easter.
On Tuesday it will be only three weeks before we arrive by the 8.20 in Dorchester. In your next letter please ask me some questions because as I have a cough nothing happens to me worth telling ...

My dear Mother [*marked: Sir Theodore de Nervyn*]
I forgot to write to Maria, but give her my love.
It is only now 5 weeks before the Hollidays. I hope you got safely to Northwold. Yesterday I went in the belt and liked it very much. I have sent you a timetable of our lessons. Tell Theodore and Gertrude to remember to water our garden, when they come home from Norfolk.
I have a little cold in my head but it is better now. I always think of you when I am lying awake in the morning. Give my love to everybody at Northwould, you will be there in time for the strawberrys; be sure and be back in time to receive us back. This morning we begun learning the catechism.

I cannot think of any else to say, in your next letter ask some questions that I can answer. Goodbye. I remain you loving son, John Powys

My dear Theodore
Tell mother to send some eatables not only presents in my hamper if not the boys will laugh at me so.
Do not let the Volentias drop and get mother to let Victor come wednesday and then have a Volentia Parliment. I have written a note for you to give him when he comes. These are the arms I wish the Volentias to us
1. Double spear 2. Sword 3. Dagger 4. Dart 5. Stick
[*drawings here of these five lethal weapons*]
I am your affec general John C. Powys
PS I have sent you a stamp to take care of till I come back

[*to Theodore?*] My dear Sir Lady de Bouryn
Remember you are knights and Knights are very brave and drill well. I hope J. Brown's sprite won't worry the Volentias any more.
You need not answer this letter it is not long enough. If you do your music really I think I might perhaps give you some little present, for example a penny rattle.
This afternoon I am going out for a walk with Lyttleton.
I am your affec Brother J. C. Powys Give my love to Nellie, Bertie and May I hope they are all well and that May's cold is better.

[*marked:* For Nellie with love from Johnny]
My dear Nellie
The Saturday after next we shall come home and then we shall stay all Sunday and half of Monday.
Give Bertie and baby a kiss from me and tell Bertie that I will soon come home in the puff-puff. It will soon be springtime and last friday it was quite like summer.
I am going in to dessert after dinner with Mr and Mrs Blake.
There is a book called "the little Duke" in the library which I daresay mother has read to you.
I am your affec brother John Cowper Powys
PS I am sorry I have not sent you a Valentine but I have not enough money to buy one.

My dear Nellie
I am very soon coming home for the holidays.
There is at the top of this letter some beetles I hope they will not bite you. Next to them there is an eagle carrying me on its back to Dorchester who sees below him a carriage with you and Gertrude and father and mother in it.
It is now quite spring there are a lot of primroses about here.
This afternoon Lyttleton and I are going to get some flowers to give to Mrs Blake.

Give my love to Theo and Gertrude & Bertie & May. I hope Gertrude is better I am very sorry she was not well. Tell Theodore that I know a place for tadpoles here, and that I vote when we come home that we get some minnows and put them into the aquariam.
Ask mother if she will kindly get our nets ready for fishing.
Give my love to Kate, Emma, Emily and Charlotte.
I remain your affec brother John Cowper Powys
JCP

[*No date, but written when in Cambridge, ie 1890?*]
My dear Nellie
Thank you very much indeed for your letter and please thank old Bert for his. Tell him that great minds come to the same conclusion. Bob has sent me a box of the most lovely primroses, from Rendham I suppose.

Be good sweet maid and let who will be "clever" "pretty" or "gay".
Do noble deeds not dream them all day long
And so make life death and that vast forever one grand sweet song.

Love to dear old Gertie. Tell her to keep the calm face of duty but let it not be cold.
Read Wordsworth's lines about duty which begin

Stern Lawgiver who yet dost wear ...

The words "Nor know I anything so fair
as in the smile upon thy face"
are full of magnificent meaning.
Ever yr loving brother
J.C. Powys

TFP – Early Letters (1891–1901)
[*aged 16–26*]

Sunday, 25 of January [1891] Eaton House, Aldeburgh

My dear Mother
It is a lovely day. Yesterday I walked along the coast to a village and when I began to come back, it commenced to rain, and it rained in torrents, all the way back. I have not got my watch yet, will you mention it when you next write to Northwold. I thank you very much for sending the stamps. We might be going to have 3 weeks in the Easter Holidays, that would allow me longer time at Northwold. I hope this term, and next term, will go quickly. Give my love to Gertrude, Nell, and Bert.
I remain your loving son,
Theodore Francis Powys

Sunday, 15 of February Eaton House, Aldeburgh

My dear Mother
I thank you very much for your letter. It is a beautiful day and seems quite like spring. I hope you are all well. The sea is beautifully calm and looks lovely for a bath, but I expect it is very cold. There is a ship that had a collision, and only the funnel and two masts can be seen above the water. I expect that they will blow it up for it is in the way of other traffic. I read a book about New Zealand, and now am reading one about Australia, at least about a young man who goes there. I think New Zealand seems to be the best place, but I have not read a book about Canada yet. Give my love to all.
I remain your loving son
Theodore F. Powys

The White House, Sweffling Oc.3.95
[*first letter from Sweffling*]

My dear Mother
It was really very kind of you to send me so many presents. I have opened a great many Christmas boxes in my time but I dont think I ever opened one with more pleasure than I did that black trunk. I cannot have bought much more than half the linen that you sent me. My bedroom looks very nice. Mrs Nun is a splendid hand at arranging things. I think I shall be very comfortable here.
John wrote to me a little time ago but I have not had time to answer. Would you mind giving him my love when you write next.
Love to Father
I remain your loving son
Theodore F. Powys

The White House, Sweffling June 7th 1896

My dear Mother,
I shall be very pleased to see you and Father on the 15th. I think it would do you both good to get a little sea air. I could take you to Southwold a very pretty little place, with very nice walks round. Perhaps you would like to stay there a day or two, if you did as I am not very busy now just before hay cutting begins, I might stay with you and come back here when you go on to Norwich, if you like I will walk over to Southwold and hire rooms from thursday till monday, then you could go on to Norwich on Monday. I find this hot weather rather trying and cannot work in the hot sun. I don't want you to have any thing to think about

when you come here, I will manage everything.
I remain your loving son, Theodore F. Powys

The White House, Sweffling July 17th, 1901

My dear Mother,
I very much enjoyed receiving your letter at noon today. I have been reading some more of Crabbe with great interest.
He describes a workhouse very forcebly, and in a note it says "Those odious Houses of Industry, seen, thank God! only in Suffolk, near the first founder's residence etc" I always thought Suffolk was famous for something, now I know, it invented the Workhouse. Crabbe says

> "Here the good pauper, losing all the praise
> By worthy deeds acquired in better days,
> Breathes a few months, then to his chamber led,
> Expires, while strangers prattle round his bed
> .....
> Shall we not then contribute to their ease,
> In their old haunts, where ancient objects please?
> That, till their sight shall fail them, they may trace
> The well-known prospect and the long loved face."

I am sure Dr Johnson would have much admired the lines I have quoted.
Did you know that Carlyle wrote an essay upon Norfolk?
Please thank May for her letter. I received it with great pleasure. I hope to answer it to-morrow.
I think Louis Wilkinson is happy here, he is now writing a poem, but is generally preparing for what he calls The Nods. Perhaps Hamilton can tell you what that is.
I very much hope Katie's pain is better and Lucy's cold. Give them my love, and also give my love to Gertrude, May, Bertie and Hamilton if he is still with you.
I remain your loving son Theodore F. Powys

The White House, Sweffling, Saxmundham March 27 1901

My dear Katie,
We have had for the last two days very hard frosts. Last night I think there were ten degrees, so that we have not been able to continue our drilling till 10 o'clock in the morning, we shall to day I hope finish drilling beans and will begin putting in the Barley in a day or two. You would be surprised to feel how wet and cold the land is

still, and I expect the seed will be in the ground a long time before it germinates. Nunn is going to take a calf to Saxmundham Market this afternoon to sell, he will also buy a ton of Bran. (I use a great deal of Bran as I consider it very useful for keeping animals healthy.)
I myself shall scare rooks and see that the men are about their employment and that the bullock and young animals are not neglected.
Love to all
How is Bobby and Nip
Your loving Brother
Theodore

JCP — To Theodore
June 6th 1901

Ah! friend with whom I mow this lawn
While evening like a monarch dies,
What sorrows on thy brow are worn!
What deep despair is in thine eyes!

Because the banners of the Night
About the solemn woods are furled
Dost thou in transient loss of light
See the Destruction of the World?

Earth sleeps — the gods and stars conceal
From us their passion and their grief:
You, you alone, at once reveal
Your sorrows, and refuse relief.

Llewelyn's Inns

In a little-known article in the *Thomas Hardy Year Book* (1971), called 'Llewelyn Powys and "The Hole in the Wall"', (currently H77 in my *Bibliography*), J. Stevens Cox provides an old photograph of **The Little Swan** at Ilchester (known as **'The Hole-in-the-Wall'**) which was a frequent watering-place of the Powys brothers. The innkeepers at the time were the Yard family, of whom Mary Yard Llewelyn wrote about in his essay on 'Ilchester' (*Somerset Essays*, 77): 'It was a favourite haunt of mine, well-hidden and with a marvellous good hostess ... Many a time have Laurence Riley and I refreshed ourselves in her parlour.' What Stevens Cox didn't know is that much of the information in Llewelyn's articles on the area in *Somerset Essays* comes from his gleanings of his early diaries, especially the diary of 1911, which saw his return from Switzerland and his rediscovery of the countryside of his childhood, when he went out walking throughout north Dorset and south Somerset in that summer of the King's Coronation. These excursions also formed the basis of his loving re-creations in Chapters 5–8 of *Skin for Skin* and in much of *Love and Death* (1939).

Turning to the diary of 1911 we get further glimpses of Mrs Mary Yard at The Hole in the Wall – 'a very prim and dignified matron in a white cap', he says on 24 July 1911, when he was drinking stout there. On 4 August he was there again with Laurence Riley. Sitting in the sunshine in the yard: 'The precious moments took their tone from the russet-coloured cider and ultra-crimson geraniums'. Not so lucky a moment was that with his Cambridge friend Hodder (15 September 1911), when, drinking cider at the same pub, he recalled the misery on his face, tortured and drooping (Hodder was secretly in love with Gertrude). But The Hole-in-the-Wall wasn't the only pub in Ilchester. (And I don't believe it's there any more). There was also **The Dolphin** and **The Red Cow**. At the latter on 20 July Llewelyn met a tramp, an old ship's steward: 'The ends of his boots had been slit to make them easier for walking. He had started from Yeovil at 7 but had rested often in shady places. I bought a comb from him for half-a-crown.' Coming back home, Llewelyn 'picked flowering rush, arrowhead and skull-cap, sometimes as I stretched for them nearly slipping into the green water.'

Llewelyn's wanderings around the West Country in 1911 add up to a wonderful account of the English countryside before the First World War. He came back from Davos in early May, and feeling still very ill as he was, only gradually began his walks – first around the village of Montacute, sometimes to East Stoke, and then bit-by-bit spiralling out in a systematic series of longer and longer excursions throughout that summer. Among the pubs he stopped at – first drinking warmed milk (or 'scorched', if they got it wrong), a consumptive prescription, then later cider or cherry brandy (but rarely ale) – were, among many others mentioned, **The Half Moon** at Mudford, **The White Hart** at Petherton Bridge,

The Kings' Head at Martock, **The Carpenter's** at Chilthorne, **The Fawne** at Witcombe.

One of the nicest descriptions of a pub is that of **The Lopen Head**: 'The house is built of a warm red brick and very lofty; an old table and settle chest in the bar; wide flat steps lead up to it. Mop Ollamore might have piped here. As I looked out on the sunny road an old woman passed with a basket of blackberries (22 September 1911). Similarly idyllic was **The Crown** at Long Load, where he drank stout on 21 July 1911: 'An old settle lay along in front of the fireplace half way up to it; an irregular horizontal line, polished and coloured, was evidence, as it were a natural palimpsest, of the pressure of how many lively, well-rounded skulls balanced there in fine weather and foul for the last fifty years.' In contrast, **The Rising Sun** at Kingsbury was 'an old and filthy house crammed with dingy antiquities' (12 August 1911). On a very hot day at **The Portman Arms**, East Chinnock, he treated a postman to a glass of beer, though he himself stuck to milk: 'The horizons all around dun-coloured, the fields and lanes amorously passive under a fierce passionate sun. The world like a ravished girl motionless on her back, acquiescing at last.' (7 July 1911).

Sometimes in these descriptions we get interesting glimpses of Llewelyn's brothers, sisters and friends. Bernie, obviously, is drinking with Rabelaisian appreciation: 'time passes extraordinarly quickly in a tavern!' he quips at **The Railway Inn**, Martock, while Katie, more serious, at **The Freemason's Arms**, Montacute, speaks of the influence of the Number Three on her; 'Katherine, the Soul; Edith, the Mind; Phillippa, the Body.' When Llewelyn went down to East Chaldon to stay with Theodore, as he did in October 1911, the main port of call for drinks was the pub at **Osmington Mills**, gained by walking along the cliffs westward. Here Llewelyn and Theodore sat on a cold day in December 1911: 'Bob drank stout, I milk': On the way home we came upon an old thatched cottage, empty and deserted ... As we passed by a turnip field on the top of the downs, Theodore remarked upon the leaves washed so clean: "Nothing in Nature suggests freshness and purity as much as these turnips against the brown mould, leaves blown by the wind and each root so snug in the ground."'

In the early days many of his walks took him to and from Ham Hill, and it is here at **The Prince of Wales**, that many a conversational drama was played out among friends and brothers. When John and the Brights visited in June 1911, Llewelyn records that they sat at The Prince of Wales 'talking sodomy': 'Jack told us that he suffered from a strange and frightful sickness of the mind – diseased association of ideas.' (24 May 1911). On the 16th June Llewelyn sits in the pub reading John extracts from his diary with John exclaiming: 'It will certainly be published. How people in the future will curse my visits – a wild, ineffectual revolutionary bursting in upon your epicurean days!' A little later, Llewelyn records a party of them – Bertie, Dorothy, the young Isobel, John and he, enjoying cider, cherry brandy, sherry, lemonade and milk, and John pronouncing: 'To

Bertie I say – be self-conscious; to you, Lulu, be more self-conscious; develop yourself in all your entirety, your sensations, your intellectual grasp of things; be ever widening your sphere of possible pleasure, give expression to what has become natural to you, but beware of the debatable borderland towards which you are striving.'

An earlier entry at the same pub might be the kind of thing John had in mind: 'Just outside the front door gate [of the inn] I encountered two laughing dusty girls which put me in mind of the holidays and the blood tingling in my veins.' (5 June 1911) On later visits alone to The Prince of Wales he began to eye the young maidservant, much to the chagrin of the landlord, who more-or-less put a ban on him. But girls were always to be found in and around the pubs of Llewelyn's West Country, hanging out of windows or, bare-armed, scrubbing floors. This was, after all, Llewelyn's summer of ungratified desire: 'A lovely girl came to the door and looked at me. She had golden hair. Like a true epicure I passed on, so as to muse upon so perfect an impression. But another day I will return.' (30 November 1911)

Peter J. Foss

How many of these pubs survive? Any research reports would be interesting. ***KK***

Wessex Memories *Illustrations*

A number of people have asked me about the scraper-board illustrations in *Wessex Memories*, published last year, both as to whether they are available to buy, and what they depict. The answer to the former is – not at the moment, but if there was sufficient interest I would see to producing six of them as engraved blocks on art paper in a limited signed edition. As to the former, and because there was no explanation in the book itself, here is a brief description of their subject-matter.

page 9 View of Osmington Mills
12 A corner of the churchyard at East Chaldon
17 A caravan from a photograph in the archive of Oliver Wilkinson
20 From an old photograph of Welham's Mill, Montacute
23 The medieval tithe barn and fish-pond at Abbotsbury
27 View of East Lulworth as it was in the 1930s
31 Lodmoor from a painting by Gertrude M. Powys
35 Racedown House, Dorset
43 Starlings
48 Chesil Beach from Portland

52 A razorbill. The original article was also illustrated by an engraving of a razorbill, though not this one.
55 The stone circle on the downs above Poxwell
60 Hardy's cottage at Higher Bockhampton
73 Hedgehog!
76 View of Durdle Door from Swyre Head
79 View of the Five Marys from East Chaldon
84 Chydyok Cottage
86 From an old picture of Branscombe, Devon.
95 Elms in a meadow
99 Beechwoods on Hedgecock, Stoke-sub-Hamdon (the picture was unaccountably reversed in the book.)
104 Montacute Mill, now compleetly ruined
109 Otter
114 East Chaldon church from the south
118 Montacute Vicarage

Reading Littleton

Littleton Powys, in the role JCP casts him in, in *Autobiography*, you feel you can know pretty well, and see him as a kind of ground-bass (or safety-net) to his more adventurous (literarily speaking) brothers. He is the sensible, decorous, modest, decent, charitable, innocent, one, on good terms with the ways of conventional professional society and the middle-class tribe – the strong handsome physically excelling one, guardian of natural lore, of heritage and traditions religious, British, and Powysian – the reliable rock the brothers could unfailingly appreciate for what he was, knowing he too would support them even in their more unusual lives. One of those (to quote Betjeman) 'who never cheated and never doubted'. Between the lines, and in the brothers' letters, you can see this wasn't always so simple, or one-sided – all the brothers drew on each other's roles in each other's lives, with their differently acquired brands of wisdom.

So the unadventurous style of *The Joy of It* and its sequel come as no surprise (and these books have of course given delight to many who share Littleton's interests, and who would find any of the JC/TF/LL styles unapproachable, or indigestible). But Littleton's transparent good faith makes it clear that he was traditional, and resolutely optimistic, *by choice*; and in his own areas of enthusiasm (plant-naming, cricket scores) he is quite as uninhibited as his brothers are, in passing on undiluted what JCP would call his manias. Llewelyn's way with similes, or Theodore's with symbols, or John Cowper's with mythologizing connections, are not his; but many qualities in Littleton the brothers share. They

love old things because they are old. They respect what they admire in their siblings and avoid where they can't follow. They (even Theodore?) believe in the possibility of human goodness; and (even Theodore?) the possibility of human society improving, given the opportunity. Meanwhile *The Joy* is a matchless period piece, both in what its author, looking back from 1937, extols (braveness, effort, excellent principles, 'natural fashion', sound knowledge, encouragement, 'a man as good as he was handsome', 'good for the soul', 'the message of service') and more quaintly in details of school life during WW1 ('they willingly helped in many unusual ways; for a time they cleaned their own boots ...')

Littleton can't be said to have an exceptional way with words in describing things (and it would be a study to analyse what makes some 'nature writers' – Hudson for instance, or Edward Thomas – more memorable than others). He serves his ideals, chief among them Nature, straight. The names of things are often enough for him, but his descriptions of the delight he feels in experiencing those things comes across clearly enough. We don't hear what Elizabeth Myers looked like, but she comes to life (in *Still the Joy of It*) in her own words, and Littleton shines through her eyes. His charm was surely undeniable.

Littleton's large personality lent itself to 'mythologising'; indeed, immortalising. Louis MacNeice as a small boy literally looked up to him, as a *tower* – a tower striding, a walking belfry, its bell booming out good cheer and *naming things* ('*Ding*! a somethingorother Fritillary. *Dong*! a thisorthat orchis ...'). On St Cecilia's Day Littleton read Dryden's *Ode* to the whole school; on May Day Herrick's 'To Corinna going a-Maying', 'with such gusto, booming like a belfry, you felt you must rush out at once, jump over hedges ...' (MacNeice named his own daughter Corinna). Mr Powys 'remained rather the demi-god ... if he caught us ragging he would treat us like God the Father with Cain ... But he was so full of health and natural History, so handsome, a walking tower, and his voice so beautiful and bronze, we forgave him his disciplinarianising, his occasional sentimentalities. Powys was the first who thrilled me reading poetry ...' In later life, when Mabel was ill in London, Littleton and MacNeice spent an 'entertaining' afternoon at the Zoo, and later still he and Elizabeth visited MacNeice and his family; in *Still the Joy* Littleton included the lines from MacNeice's *Autumn Sequel* about their last meeting near Glastonbury.

KK

Littleton Powys, aged 8¼, 12?, 15?, 22?

Theodora Scutt: Uncle Littleton

I have heard Littleton Powys, Uncle Littleton as I always knew him, referred to as 'the conservative Powys' 'the only non-eccentric Powys', 'the only ordinary Powys'. I don't much care for any of these descriptions, they annoy me. Certainly I didn't know Uncle Littleton well, although he lived fairly near at hand; but I knew him better than the young ladies and gentlemen who so describe him, who never knew him at all. The career of a schoolmaster does *seem* to be conservative, but anyone can pursue any career of a type considered conservative, without themselves being conservative in the worse sense of that word. I wouldn't consider Uncle Littleton non-eccentric, although his eccentricities were of a gentle and inconspicuous kind; and nobody who knew him personally, however slightly, could possibly call him ordinary.

Like all his family, he was tall and well-built; even in old age he was slim and upright, classically handsome with a well-groomed head of thick silvery-white hair. By the time I knew him, he was a little deaf, and so his naturally deep and clear voice tended to come out a bit louder than necessary. He tended very much to see the sunny, the happy side of everything, even occurrences that were far from happy. I recollect that when he had the operation for cataract, as he knew that he would not be able to see for some weeks (six I think), with great good sense he learned by heart several long poems, meaning to spend his time repeating them to himself. But he didn't need to. As he lay in blindness in his hospital bed, without any attempt on his part all the beautiful scenes, all the lovely places that he had ever seen slowly unrolled themselves before him like a long film. He was so entranced by this (which continued until he could see again) that he completely forgot about the poems. He told Daddy – he told his brother Theodore – about this, in joy and gratitude to the Power that had given him such happiness. And when, for some reason that I've never understood – for surely he could have paid someone to look after him in his home in Sherborne? – he moved or was moved to West Pennard near Glastonbury, he still found great happiness in the somewhat different wild flowers that grow in the rather different soil, the slightly warmer climate there.

I don't think he ever set up to be an 'official' naturalist, but my word, he was as good as one. I shouldn't think there was a plant in Dorset – perhaps not in Wessex! – that he couldn't recognise, and tell one the complete genealogy of. He was nearly as good with birds, too, and insects; butterflies and moths anyway, I don't know about the creepycrawlies. Of course all the family (of that generation) knew about snakes, and wildlife in general; living between Somerset and Norfolk, in the days before the mixed blessing of the internal combustion engine, it would be hard for them not to, but it was Uncle Littleton who was passionately interested in such. Eventually I believe he became the Dorset representative of the R.S.P.C.A., which in those days hadn't tangled itself in politics and was a very

worthy institution. He was so anxious that horses and dogs should be kept comfortably as well as kindly that I can't imagine why he never had either; all the Powys children (of that generation) could ride after a fashion and they grew up with dogs, but Uncle Littleton never, to my knowledge, owned either. Perhaps it would have worried his wife. I honestly didn't know Aunt Mabel at all. She was pretty, and elegant, and courteous, but more than that I can't say.

Uncle Littleton was also elegant, very. He often wore 'plus-fours' (which my adoptive mother absolutely detested), but plus-fours or trousers, they were always excellently made and fitted, the material was just right, and the same could be said of the accompanying shirt, waistcoat and jacket. He always had a flower in his buttonhole. I never recollect seeing him with a hat, but that could have been because he'd take it off on getting out of the car (he drove himself as long as his eyesight allowed) and on coming into the Lodge he'd hang it in the tiny hall. Not many people went about without a hat in those days. It wasn't done.

From the little I can recollect of hearing 'Tom' (Uncle Littleton) and 'Bob' (TFP) talking, Uncle Littleton must have loved his work. He had the same interest in youngsters as he had in 'Mother Nature' as he would have called Her, and if one had to be under a schoolmaster I shouldn't think one could do better than Littleton Powys. He certainly didn't choose teaching because it was well paid or conventional, he chose it because it was what he wanted to do, and I believe his intense interest in his pupils continued long after they left school. I should think he would have been a very good father; it's a great pity he had no children.

He only wrote those two autobiographies, *The Joy of It*, and *Still The Joy of It* and I've only read *The Joy of It*. The English, as one would expect, is excellent, and a lot of the book is about my part of Dorset, so I'm not in a position to judge it as a book. It's probably at least as good as I think it is.

I think it's safe to say that Littleton Powys was honourable, loyal, kind and trustworthy. That makes him pretty unusual, then as now.

Littleton Powys: My Ideal Headmaster

1. My ideal Headmaster must be a man of refinement in voice and manner, and must have a personality that commands respect.
2. He should be genial, charitable and hospitable; friendly, sympathetic and considerate in his dealings with his assistant masters; he should be easy of approach; his relations with boys should be those happy relations which exist when a master is a natural disciplinarian; he should be scrupulously fair.
3. Intellectually he should be well equipped, so that all look up to him; a first-class degree would show this, but it should be remembered that many with

lower degrees, if they have been enthusiastic about their work, have had the opportunity of making up for lost time.

4. If possible he should have a classical degree.
5. Towards religious matters he should be broadminded and tolerant; he should hold no extreme views; he should especially emphasize righteousness and gentleness and service; his motto should be 'Faith without works is dead'.
6. In politics he should be progressive and liberal in his views, which he had better keep to himself.
7. He should be a lover of Nature. He should set a high value on literature, music and art. An interest in science would be in these days invaluable.
8. A sympathy with boys' games is very necessary.
9. Good health is absolutely essential.
10. He should be a capable organizer and have a sound idea of finance.
11. If he have a wife, she should be one who is at ease in all circumstances, and endeavours as far as in her lies to put others at their ease.
12. He should regard his profession as a sacred calling and pursue it with single-heartedness, enthusiasm and energy. he should have ambition and a determination to succeed.

from The Joy of It, *page 236 (59 in the reference reprint)*

Glimpses of Littleton

(1) **The Ethics of Hunting**

To the Editor of The Daily Telegraph [*typed, no date*]

Sir — Mr S.H.Burton's article on hunting Exmoor deer was merely an apologia for hunting the deer, so as to set at rest, as far as was possible, the consciences of some of those men and women who were engaged in making their last preparations for the opening of the season.

I imagine that with the majority of those who make up the field, conscience in this matter plays a very small, if any, part, and they simply look forward to joining their companions in galloping over the hills and the heather, making their way down in those lovely coombs and up again on the other side and away, enjoying the air and the sunshine and the beauty of it all without giving a thought to the feelings of the unfortunate animal the hounds and they are harrying.

Of course it is wrong: and no one with a real love of Exmoor would spoil his pleasure in this way. I have often felt that Cowper was right when he suggested

that, if there were no blood sports (and he would have been the first to bring them to an end), many of this particular company of people would no longer be found in the country at all, and there would be a greater possibility of enjoyment for those who really love it.

They love the country, and none else, who seek
For their own sakes its silence and its shade.

Yours faithfully, Littleton C. Powys (Glastonbury)

(Other miscellaneous pieces in the Collection are letters from Littleton on the prohibition of steel rabbit traps (1934) and the killing of badgers – he was Hon. Sec. of the N. Dorset RSPCA; also letters answering unfair hits from reviewers of Porius *and* The Inmates.)

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(2) *(a handwritten note, headed 'excerpt from letter to M.W. from Littleton C. Powys')* August 2nd 1955, Glastonbury

I agree with you about my pupil Louis MacNeice, a quaint, self-centred, not very easy pupil, he was; rather like my brother John he was happier playing games, even with bat and ball, if they were invented by him & not organised by the School Authorities. He was great for independence & I think all the members of the Kingdom [*MacNeice's poem – see Newsletter 51*] were like that — they did not depend on others.

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(3) *(This is attached to a note asking about contributions to 'Katharine's memorial', continuing:)* At present my mind is full of thoughts of Exmoor and my beloved little sparkling moorstreams which I connect with everything I like best — but last Friday they became ferocious torrents and combining caused havoc, Death and destruction all round the moor. How does man's power compare with Nature's.
yrs, Littleton.

(This perhaps refers to the Lynmouth flood disaster in August 1952.
Littleton died on 27th September 1955, MacNeice in 1963.)

John Cowper Powys — 'Vivisection and Moral Evolution'

The most important change produced by the Cosmic Process that we have come to call Evolution is a change in human nature itself; not a startling *outward* change, but, like all the most valuable developments in life, a subtle, delicate, and spiritual change. We have only to read of the appalling cruelties committed by human beings on one another in the past to recognize that there really has been evolved—though of course with many long and violent set-backs—a definite alteration in our human capacity *for sympathy with suffering.* Our nerves, using this newly-evolved sympathy for, or *feeling with*, the nerves of others, have grown definitely more discerning and sensitized.

This evolutionary change is by far the most important contribution to life or what we call "Civilization". It is in fact the only evidence we can produce of any progressive spiritualizing of human character. It alone is worth all the inventions and all the appliances of Civilization; and it alone counter-balances the evils of Civilization. Individually we are not wiser, or braver, or more formidable than our ancestors. In many ways we are less so. But we *are* more sympathetic and we *are* more sensitive. And this evolutionary change in our individual character has had a great effect upon Public Opinion. Certain atrocities, certain cruelties, certain injustices, inflicted by men upon men, and by men upon animals, are now *no longer tolerated* by Public Opinion. When they occur, as they do at intervals in individual cases, they arouse horror and disquiet. Abominable cruelties were formerly committed, not only by individuals, but for public reasons of Religion and State. Torture was tolerated by Public Opinion when the superstition of piety or the superstition of patriotism could be invoked by the torturers.

But Public Opinion, owing to the mysterious evolution of the human conscience, no longer tolerates these atrocities. We have ceased to torture heretics. We are slowly growing more humane in the treatment of prisoners. Unbelievers in our Religion are no longer burnt at the stake, and rebels against our Government are now no longer slaughtered wholesale in "Bloody Assizes". Religion and State have in fact—at any rate in England—ceased to be able to call upon the savagery of superstition in support of the worst kinds of cruelty.

But a new tyranny is now appearing among us, finding its support in a new superstition. I refer to the tyranny of Science. The old horrors are being brought back. Though we no longer torture in the name of God or in the name of the State, we torture in the name of Science. Just as we were formerly mesmerized into tolerating cruelty to men and women by reason of one widespread superstition, so we are being mesmerized into tolerating cruelty to animals by reason of another superstition. This new superstition is our unbounded awe and our obsequious respect for everything done in the name of Science.

Because Science, in certain obvious ways, has lessened human suffering and made life easier just as in former times Religion and Despotic Government

lessened human suffering and made life easier, we have come to acquire for its excesses and its abuses the same superstitious indulgence that we used to feel for the atrocities committed in those other names. Science has in fact usurped their place and we treat it accordingly. The worst of it is that while the cruelties inflicted by the older tyrannies were to a large extent *public cruelties*, the cruelties inflicted by this new tyranny *are done in secret* and done to the most helpless of all sentient creatures.

And it is not as if the evolutionary change in our attitude to the suffering of others excluded animals. On the contrary, the torturing of animals for food, the torturing of them for sport, the torturing of them for the luxuries of personal adornment, horrifies our present-day public opinion. In these matters we have grown unquestionably more humane, unquestionably more alive to the crimes we are committing. We no longer in these cases take the word of the torturer that the animal doesn't "feel". We just interfere and stop it. But the point is that the cruelty in these cases is unprivileged cruelty, unsupported cruelty. It has no widespread superstition behind it. Behind the cruelties of Science, on the contrary, you find all that vast weight of insensitive intelligence that used to be the great support of heretic-hunting and traitor-torturing. And yet if Evolution is to be regarded as implying any real progress, it seems hard to deny that the most precious result of this great cosmic Process must be looked for in the spiritualizing and sensitizing, not only of individual characters, but of public opinion.

Nevertheless, the new tyranny by which we are confronted today seems able, in its power and its secrecy, to defy this sensitiveness in our race. Modern Scientific men, in their biological Inquisitions and in their mechanical engines of destruction, have deliberately placed themselves *outside the human conscience*. What they are really doing is undermining the supreme achievement of Evolution, namely the spiritualizing and sensitizing of the general conscience. The most startling and by far the most dangerous symptom of modern life is the growth of man's scientific power *irrespective of his character and his conscience*.

It is Science used for the purposes of evil that has made modern war the catastrophe it has become. It will be Science used for purposes of destruction that will enable our Western Civilization to commit its final suicide. And it is Science that will make the next war a war primarily directed against the helpless, a war against the old, a war against women, a war against children and animals. And the scientific preparations for this wholesale destruction are *being made in secret*. That is the point. Science takes the power away from open tyranny in order to hand it over to an inhuman and secret tyranny. Thus it works out that as we are engaged in all countries today in perfecting engines of destruction to be applied to the most helpless of our own race, so in our scientific laboratories we are engaged in abominable experiments upon creatures still more helpless.

Ostensibly this is done to help the art of healing, but in reality it is done from

a perverted love of *experiment for its own sake*; done, as they so truly say, indicating their monstruous isolation from the nobler human values, "in the interests of pure science".

This expression of theirs alone shows the danger. There may be many individual vivisectionists who, apart from their non-moral passion for experiment, are kindly and well-conducted persons; but precisely the same thing could have been said of the "Sworn Tormentors" in the old mediaeval dungeons. Yes, this sinister phrase of theirs, "in the interests of science", ought to be enough to startle us, enough to rouse us to what is happening. These vivisectionists are assuming in their secret torture-chambers the right, formerly claimed by all fanatical despots, *of being above the ordinary human sense of right and wrong.*

Our spiritual sense of humane values which Evolution has at last, after so many desperate set-backs, finally evoked, is seriously threatened by the fanaticism of these Vivisectionists. Give them "carte blanche" with the animals, with the most sensitive of the animals, *and what next*? What will be their next move "in the interests of pure science"? I sometimes feel as if a really noble-hearted man or woman, if such were told that some Black Magician would give them extremest longevity if they allowed him to torture a million animals, would hesitate to accept the prolongation of life on these terms. But from the point of view of "pure Science" and the acceptance of the doctrine that you can do any evil thing if good follows, it is hard to see why it should stop with animals. With our growing Western sense of race-superiority can we not foresee the day when "in the pure interests of Science", ship-loads of "the inferior breeds" will assist dogs and monkeys in the prolongation of our ignoble lives?

There is only one ground to take in this matter; and that is the ground of simple conscience. The thing is cruel and abominable. Therefore it is wrong. That it *is* both cruel and wrong can be seen in the way that ordinary conscientous men and women *shrink from thinking about it.* They feel in their hearts that these fanatics of Science are doing something that they themselves would shudder to do. But their obsequious superstition in the presence of the new "Holy Office" shuts their mouth and drugs their conscience. There ought to be, for those among us who are still Christians, a new prayer added to the Litany. After praying "for women labouring with child, for sick persons, and for young children, and for all prisoners and captives", we ought to add a prayer to the Power who—through Evolution or Revelation—has taught us the difference between right and wrong: "and may'st thou have mercy upon all animals in the hands of vivisectionists"!

JCP was working on a 'Vivisection Book' (or 'Essay') at the same time as the 'laboratory' chapter in Weymouth Sands, *shortly before starting* Autobiography. *(It was the time of news of Llewelyn's severe haemorrage, and of their thinking of moving to Wales).*

This much-corrected ms from the Bissell collection is probably a condensed version he

thought of making in 1934 at Edgar Lee Masters's suggestion, for H.L. Mencken, editor of The American Mercury *(there is no record of it published); or possibly one of the other articles JCP wrote on the subject before and after* Morwyn, *'my anti-vivisection story'* (1936–7).

The Collection also contains 'Vivisection and Fascism', a short piece in The Abolitionist *(1, XLV (Jan/Feb 1944, 2); and 'The Inhumanity of Vivisection', a full page article in* Manchester Evening News *(Friday, Dec 2 1938 – see the entry for 17 Nov, 1938 in* Petrushka and the Dancer. *James Hanley got this for him when his finances were particularly low. Phyllis typed it for him and thought it carelessly written).*

JCP and Anti-Vivisection

15th March, 1933: I went up to Attic. There finished my 35 page essay on Vivisection. Where to send it?

6th May: Then I went up to Attic and worked. I am going on with my Vivisection Essay making it into a book. Then I worked at my Chapter XI about Magnus & Curly & presently about Gipsy May ...

27th May: I have made use of a passage about vivisection in the Times. About not allowing a dog to sleep—O damn them!

15th August: I have decided to begin on this lovely day ... my Autobiography... I shall also go on with my work against Vivisection making it an attack on all the ways & nasty dogmas of Modern Science ... Continued my Vivisection Book against this Atrocity & against Science. I shall also go on with my work against Vivisection making it an attack on all the ways & nasty dogmas of Modern Science. I shall begin my Autobiography out of whatever is most adamantine and iron-like and slate-like in my Nature ... Continued my Vivisection Book against this Atrocity & against Science.

16th August: I tried the experiment working in the Garden in the Deck Chair writing my Anti-Vivisection essay and my Autobiography seated in the centre of our lawn under the little apple-tree between the two flower beds .... There I sat and enjoyed several long moments of peace and content!

20th August: The Premier of Prussia has suppressed Vivisection.

11th September: [Edgar Lee Masters] wants me to write my article for Mencken out of my Vivisection Essay—attacking Science.

20th September: I think of trying to condense my Vivisection Article into an essay for Menchen but this may prove too much for me!

9th May, 1934 [*in New York*]: Then I went to Chelsea Hotel & had Beer with Old Masters. Then to the Anti-vivisection library.

30th May: Yesterday after our lunch with the Anti-Vivisection people the T.T. & I went to the Bank ...

23rd April, 1935 [*in Dorchester*]: I began an article on England Re-visited for Scribners. I have finished my Anti-Vivisection article for Whitehall No. 47 [*i.e.* The Abolitionist *magazine*]

30th November: I worked at my chapter and sent a pound for the T.T. to Anti-vivisection.

3rd March, 1936: A very good Anti-Vivisection article in "Armchair Science" by Leo Rodenhurst the Secretary of the Anti-Vivisection Society. Very Good.

4th March: O how hard I find all beginnings! Ends are easy things. Ends write themselves. But Beginnings are the Devil! And I now am confronted with no less than Three Beginnings. My Anti-Vivisection Story, my Article on Wales & my book on Reading to be called "Read to Live".

Phyllis and JCP were active members of both the American and British Anti-Vivisection societies. As soon as they arrived in England, they joined the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, and took their magazine. JCP much admired Leon Rodenhurst, the secretary, and the editor of The Abolitionist. *Two other prominent members were Evalyn and Charles Westacott, both of whom wrote numerous articles and books on the subject. Evalyn must have contacted JCP in Dorchester because he wrote her 14th February 1935, saying he was* 'very glad that you think of quoting any passage of mine in this cause because I feel very fiercely about it and would be thankful to assist in the contest. Good luck to you.' *This probably led to the article he was writing in April 1935 (see diary entry above)*

JCP spoke at a local meeting in Wrexham in 1937:

Wednesday 14th July, 1937: Anti-Vivisection in Wrexham ... black clouds in the offing but NO RAIN! ... That Crowe Book Shop will await us with all our books to sell in Wrexham. I am so pleased we will have the excellent Mayor in the chair at our Anti-Vivisection Meeting tonight. Will there be any "Heckling" I shall take the high moral tone & avoid Statistics! ... In Honour of Anti-Vivisection the little T.T. did clean & "black" & "shine" my Shoes—a proceeding contrary to American precedents. Well we got to Wrexham. Mr. Lewis is a very good driver. We didn't have any luck over selling our books at Crowes. But tho' there was only a handful of people they were so nice & the Mayor so nice that it did well seem worth it. Saw the Moon thro' glass! Well! Well! The drive back was lovely and a few drops of rain had fallen here ...

He actually went up to London to attend a rally in 1939.

30th June, 1939: The Meeting in Caxton Hall & the party afterwards in Lyon's Cafe. Up at 8.30 after Francis [*Powys*] had come into their Sitting Room (where I slept in luxury on their couch). Saw my Anti-Vivisection Headquarters with its shop-show of tortured animals—the Best Way of Advertising ... Then I found Caxton Hall & I took all the 2 hours from 5.30 to 7.30 drinking tea in A.B.C., pretending to drink tea in Lyons & visiting the Urinal. Found Mr. & Mrs. Rodenhurst, Secretary of the Society had been bullied by vicious, horrid & cantankerous & venomous ladies all day long. O dear! They are as nice and devoted as they could be, Mr. & Mrs.Rodenhurst—she from Gloucester—But the venomous cranks—damn them! Oh damn them!—were taking the heart out of them! There were too many side-issues in the speeches—side issues! side issues!—in place of concentrating on Vivisection compared with which "fox hunting" & "eating animals" are nothing! As for me I said a few fierce words in support of Mr. Rodenhurst & his excellent "Abolitionist" & in support of the Anti-Vivisection cause and to hell with side-issues.

[*With thanks to MK for material, information and help.*]

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In Autobiography, *vivisection recurs all through the book as a test and example of JCP's main themes. He tells us he first learnt about it while at Cambridge:*
I recollect two frightful shocks that I received at Corpus *(the other was about menstruation)* ... This ... piece of information, revealing the existence of an abominable crime against the only morality that is worth a fig, a crime committed not only against animals, but against everything that is noblest in ourselves, outraged—and continues to outrage—something in my deepest being. No excuse, make it as plausible as you please, justifies vivisection, especially the vivisection of dogs; and that governments are not forced to put a stop to it shows that the cruel curiosity of science is more artful in pulling wool over our eyes than our righteous indignation is passionate in its protest. Recently there has been founded in New York ... the first Library of Vivisection Investigation. This is certainly a move in the right direction. [*191–2*]

On his social 'irresponsibility' (as opposed to his extreme moral scruples):
Of course the real matter with me went far deeper ... I was, and am still, totally unable to understand the meaning of the word 'conviction'. My knowledge that the practise of vivisection, for example, is a crime against everything that is noblest in our race, is not a conviction, *it is my life*. Goethe cursed Eckermann once for asking him what was the main 'idea' in *Faust*. 'Do you suppose,' he cried, 'that a work into which I've put Imy life, would condescend to so poor a category of living value as a mere idea?' And I would say the same when people ask me for

proof that these miserable dogs suffer. 'With my whole being I *know*,' I answer them, 'that the vivisecting of dogs is evil!' That is really how we all know that all evil is evil. You can find reasons to defend anything. *[p.200]*

He sees his 'prophetic anger' against cruelty as 'the noblest emotion I possess', an essential element in his passionate lectures.
My intermittent stabs at the abominable wickedness of vivisection were, let us hope, not less effective for their spasmodic delivery, or from the fact that I always listen politely to the talk — diplomatically adopted to laymen — that these crafty torturers indulge in about anasthetics. In the same way I trust that my contempt for the shallowness of moralists was not rendered futile by my distrust of psychoanalytical psychiatry. My whole art of self-expression in lecturing was as a matter of fact based upon a certain kind of mental independence, an independence which I was always desperately trying to convey to others, for I regarded t — and do still regard it — as one of the most important elements in human happiness and by no means exclusive of the devotion of a scholar to the Past. *[p.522]*

His ritual practices of 'despatching angels' as a form of fiercely-willed prayer to help the suffering — worth it for the one chance in a million of it working — brings him to another outburst at the end of Autobiography, *on the lines of the essay printed above.*
This wickedness contradicts and cancels the one single advantage that our race has got from what is called evolution, namely the development of *our sense of right and wrong.* If vivisection... is allowed to go on unchecked — and it will go on unchecked until people feel as strongly about it as women did about women's suffrage — something that the mysterious forces of the Universe have themselves developed in us will soon have its spiritual throat cut to the bone... *[p.639-40]*

Brown Dog

JCP's horror of vivisection might have been sparked, or fuelled, by the 'Brown Dog' riots of 1906–10.

In the 1870s, complaints about cruel experiments in the University of Norwich had led to an act of Parliament regulating licenses for vivisection, with some restrictions, but in 1903 a libel case brought (and won) by a professor accused of illegal cruelty resulted in public outcry and political confrontation. The book containing the accusations was *The Shambles of Science* by Stephen Coleridge, and it referred particularly to repeated experiments (reported by two Swedish students) on one brown terrier. The Anti-Vivisection Society raised money to pay for damages, and a memorial fountain erected by the then Socialist-dominated

Battersea Council was unveiled by their Mayor in September 1906. It bore a provocative inscription: *In Memory of the Brown Terrier Dog done to Death in the Laboratories of University College in February 1903, after having endured Vivisection extending over more than two months and having been handed from one Vivisector to another till Death came to his Release. Also in Memory of the 232 dogs vivisected at the same place during the year 1902. Men and Women of England, how long shall these things be?*

'Toffs' from the medical schools attacked the statue; it was defended by anti-vivisectionists and 'the people' from Latchmere Estate; there were marches to Trafalgar Square and clashes in the streets. *The Times* and *The Daily News* led publicity for the opposing sides.

In 1911 Battersea Council changed and the statue disappeared overnight. In 1985 the National Anti-Vivisection Society and Ken Livingstone's GLC erected a replacement sculpture – smaller, but including the same plaque – that can still be seen in a shrubbery in Battersea Park.

(*with acknowledgements to the NAVS website*)