

Editorial

The seventy-odd letters between Theodore and his sisters that have found their way into the Collection at Dorchester seem rather a random bunch, largely domestic and with several difficult to date, but they are enough to shed light on their writers. Theodore's letters, even in the well-worn coinage we use to relations (thanks for letters, thanks for presents, health concern, weather) almost always have something of a quirky twist; and in Editor's view (as with JCP's diaries) it is the dailiness of lives that sets off the personalities who live them. A second instalment of letters after the move to Mappowder will be in the November *Newsletter*.

Llewelyn reviewing David Garnett's *The Sailor's Return* continues the Chaldon connection. JCP takes part in a series on writers' religious or non-religious beliefs at the beginning of WW2, commissioned by the editor of *Tit-Bits* (definitely not to be confused with *Ally Sloper*); more prosaically he engages in diplomatic exchanges by letter with his publishers, Jonathan Cape. A perceptive review of *Porius* at its first appearance in 1951 is by the Irish poet Padraic Fallon. Finally, Stephen Powys Marks presents another twig from his family tree, with a cheery account in verse of what sounds a delightful boating excursion – despite trouble with swans, as depicted on our cover — on the Thames, in 1863.

KK

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Chairman's Report, 2010-11

In 2010, The Powys Society at last found a way to return to the West Country for its annual conference, held at Street, just outside Glastonbury, on August 20th–22nd. The Hotel proved perfect for our needs and we plan to return there in 2012. Many thanks to Louise de Bruin and Anna Pawelko for yet another brilliant feat of organisation. In the Conference itself, the contrasts were hilarious. Our first evening, a dose of strong-flavoured unfiltered local brew, by Glastonbury's resident guru, Paul Weston (who would also lead a guided walk up Wirral Hill); the next morning a fierce new *Glastonbury Romance* interpretation from our own Harald Fawcner; and, on the Sunday, a thoughtful, partly Wagnerian view of the novel by the philosopher Anthony O'Hear. In between we'd enjoyed an evening in Africa, as told by several sisters visiting Will Powys, their letters now dramatised by Chris Wilkinson and Louise de Bruin (that text, *The Untold Privilege*, will be published in the next *Powys Journal*). Stephen Powys Marks' antiquarian investigations into a very distant family member and the legendary – to me thoroughly off-putting – 1929 screen test, where JCP rehearses his defence of marriage in a strange sing-song delivery, provided further episodes. Glastonbury itself presides as a phenomenon – The Tor resonates, The Abbey remains a great monument (with one of the finest sculpted doors in Britain, strangely unsung); while the small town itself is now almost entirely given over to 'laboratories of lies', and, on the day I visited, pervaded by a strange mingled scent of joss-sticks and manure.

In the course of the AGM, John Hodgson handed over as Chairman to this nervous new incumbent, who will delegate all he can, and who relies heavily on his fellow officers, notably our gifted secretary, Chris Thomas, and our Treasurer, John Dunn. On 23rd October in Hampstead Chris led a lively discussion of JCP's *Ducdame*, and this novel supplied a substantial focus for our March *Newsletter* no 72, under Kate Kavanagh's ever-resourceful editorship. Our website, in the care of Frank Kibblewhite, continues to develop, and several new members have joined through it. The tragic illness and death of the Editor of *The Powys Journal*, Richard Maxwell, has left a gap heroically filled by the furiously-busy Charles Lock in Copenhagen, liaising with Louise de Bruin in Haarlem, Mappowder and Greece; both of them considering ways in which the *Journal* might now be renewed, in format and in function. Other reports will be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Early in March Secretary, Vice-Chairman and Chairman journeyed down to Dorchester, meeting up with our Curator, and sat down with the Dorset County Museums Director, Jon Murden, as well as Morine Krissdóttir, for another discussion of the collection housed there. We learnt just how starved the Museum is of both staff and funds; our way forward will be a topic at our forthcoming AGM.

On May 14th two Powys events were held in Brighton. I led a discussion with the philosopher Terry Diffey; and that evening as part of the Brighton Festival fringe, the composer Robert Carrington put together a programme 'John Cowper Powys in

Sussex', played by the Pastores Ensemble. On June 11th our Dorchester day included a talk on Llewelyn Powys by Peter Foss, focusing on Diary entries of a hundred years before; also another glimpse of earlier Powys connections from Stephen Powys Marks, in a verse souvenir of a boating trip in 1863. Due to sudden illness Frank Kibblewhite could not deliver his talk, but the day went well, ending with a visit to Wolfeton House, identified by Chris Thomas (in a useful leaflet) as the seat of the Ashovers in *Ducdame*.

Three meetings of the Committee have taken place in London. The surprising accumulation of over twenty thousand pounds in the Society's account does open up future opportunities. The fiftieth anniversary of JCP's death (the sixtieth of TFP's) falls in 2013, and this should provide some spur for new activity. Chris Thomas is leading a team of JCP diary-transcribers; others are at work on the earlier diary years. Peter Foss' proposal of a pictorial biography to be assembled collectively (provisional title *The Powyses and their World*) is under consideration and several other possibilities will be aired at the Llangollen AGM. In general then, another productive year. The Society's ship seems to be stable and powering forward in heavy seas, even if too many of us among its active crew are now rather aged.

Timothy Hyman



Chris Thomas, Terry Diffey and Timothy Hyman at Brighton.

Committee Nominations 2011–2012

The following Honorary Officers have been nominated and have agreed to stand:

	<i>Nomination</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconder</i>
<i>Chairman</i>	Timothy Hyman	Richard Graves	Peter Lazare
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Peter Foss	Louise de Bruin	Chris Wilkinson
<i>Hon. Secretary</i>	Chris Thomas	Anna Pawelko	Kate Kavanagh
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	John Dunn	Chris Thomas	John Hodgson

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

<i>Nomination</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconder</i>
Trevor Davies	Anna Pawelko	Chris Thomas
Shelagh Powys Hancox	Kate Kavanagh	Stephen Powys Marks
Michael Kowalewski	John Dunn	Raymond Cox
Stephen Powys Marks	Kate Kavanagh	Chris Thomas

If approved at the AGM. the Committee, from August 2011 will therefore consist of **Kate Kavanagh** (*Newsletter* Editor, one year to go of three-year term), **Louise de Bruin** (Conference Organiser, Publication Manager) and **Anna Pawelko** (Co-Conference Organiser) both two years to go; and (elected 2011) **Stephen Powys Marks**, **Michael Kowalewski** (Collections Curator), **Trevor Davies** (co-opted 2011), & **Shelagh Powys Hancox** (new member). Tim Blanchard will be standing down. **Charles Lock** (Editor of *The Powys Journal*) serves as *ex-officio* member of the Committee.

Members are invited to submit nominations for 2012 at any time until June next year.

AGM 2011

The Annual General Meeting of The Powys Society will be held at The Hand Hotel, Bridge Street, Llangollen, at 11.00 am on Sunday 21st August 2011. All members of The Powys Society are welcome to participate in the meeting whether or not they are attending the Conference.

AGENDA

- 1 Minutes of 2010 AGM – published in the November 2010 *Newsletter* – and matters arising.
- 2 Nomination of Honorary Officers and members of The Powys Society Committee 2011–2012.
- 3 Report of Hon. Treasure and presentation of Accounts (to be printed in the next *Newsletter*).
- 4 Hon. Secretary's Report.
- 5 Chairman's Report – published in July 2011 *Newsletter*
- 6 Date and venue of 2012 Conference.
- 7 AOB.

Chris Thomas Hon. Sec.

The Powys Society Annual Conference, 2011
The Hand Hotel, Llangollen
Friday 19th August – Sunday 21st August

CYMRU AND CIMMERIANS

*‘... that mysterious country of the underworld of which the Greek wanderer had
his vision, coming to it at last through those Cimmerian mists ...’*

Programme

Friday 19th August

- 16.00 Arrival – 5.30 Reception – 6.30 Dinner
20.00 **Stephen Batty: ‘Cold, silence, height: T. F. Powys & Friedrich
Nietzsche’**, Introduced by Louise de Bruin.

Saturday 20th August

- 08.00 Breakfast
09.30 **Jonas Aagaard: ‘Reading the Will’**, a focus on *A Glastonbury Romance*,
introduced by Charles Lock.
Coffee
11.15 **Jeremy Hooker: ‘The Writings of Gerard and Mary Casey’**,
introduced by Glen Cavaliero.
12.45 Lunch
Afternoon free for expeditions (NB: *Mr. Weston* rehearsal at 5.15 pm). **
19.00 Dinner
20.00 A reading of ***Mr. Weston’s Good Wine***
(adapted for Voices by Kate Kavanagh).

Sunday 21st August

- 20.00 Breakfast
09.30 **Patrick Wright: ‘Metal, Compost and Chalk; Reflections on English
Vision and the ground beneath Llewelyn’s feet’**,
introduced by Timothy Hyman.
11.00 **AGM**
12.00 **Discussion** (to be announced)
13.00 Lunch.
15.00 Departure.

For details of the Speakers see Newsletter 72, pages 6–7.

*** Mr Weston’s Good Wine may need a few more male readers. Anyone willing
to impersonate jovial Dorset pub-drinkers, or nasty young men, please contact Kate
Kavanagh. There will be a rehearsal at 5.15 on Saturday, before dinner at 7.*

The Collection

Two Donations

Edmund Hopkins, son of the poet, publisher and biographer of the Powyses, Kenneth Hopkins, has generously donated to the Powys Society Collection two objects, inherited from his father, which have potent Powysian associations:

a gnarled and rustic walking stick with a round handle worn smooth by constant use and once owned by JCP. Perhaps this is the same stick mentioned by JCP: “ ... my beautiful & suitable & large and strong & conveniently comfortable with a huge round handle Sycamore ...”

(See *Newsletter* 41 (July 2001), for a list and description of JCP’s favourite walking sticks referred to in his diary for 7 May 1941.)

and

‘a small maquette, in a resinous material, and mounted on a wooden stand, of the head of JCP, made by Oloff de Wet. The original bronze sculpture used to stand in Jeff Kwentner’s Village Bookshop in Regent Street in London. The maquette seems to be one of several others probably made after the bronze was created for commercial sale. Other small versions are also known to have been produced for sale.’ (Jerry Bird has one of these).

Images of portrait heads of JCP by various artists were reproduced in *Newsletter* 54 (April 2005), along with an edited version of ‘A Visit to John Cowper Powys’ by Oloff de Wet. See page 11 to compare the two.

Chris Thomas (Secretary)

From the Curator

The main thing to report is the inclusion of our Gertrude paintings in the new web site covering all publicly held oil paintings in the UK on a BBC hosted web site, the PCF (see *opposite*). The whole collection was photographed in Morine’s time so it has been a while in the making. All I have done is to fill in some templates including information on individual paintings and our collection as whole.

A Susan Fox in New York, a fan of Stephen Tomlin whose work she collects, asked me for a copy of *The Sin Eater* by Theodore which I duly sent and she was delighted with.

Sadly, Stephen Batty who was researching Theodore’s religion in the Collection did not get a scholarship to the USA to pursue his researches – he will try again next year.

On the future of the Collection, I am personally very happy with the current situation and to study proposals by the Museum and the Society as they arise.

Michael Kowalewski (Curator)

The Treasurer’s Report and the Accounts for 2010 will be printed in the next Newsletter.

Public Catalogue Foundation

The Public Catalogue Foundation was set up in 2003 to create a photographic record of all the oil paintings in public ownership in the UK (see <www.thepcf.org.uk>). Beautifully produced hard copy catalogues covering oil paintings located in each region and county of the UK have now been published including a volume covering the county of Dorset which contains all 15 paintings by Gertrude Powys in the Powys Society Collection as well as all the paintings owned by The Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society. For more information about the catalogue and reproductions of Gertrude's paintings visit our web site at <powys-society.org/The%20Powys%20Society%20Publishing%20News.htm>

On 23 June 2011 the second stage of this very worthwhile project was launched at the National Gallery in London with the introduction of an on-line version of the catalogues which can now be viewed at <www.bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings>. The site currently contains some 60,000 works by 15,000 artists from 860 collections. The PCF aims to include 200,000 works by the end of 2012. You can search the site by region, collection and artist which makes this an invaluable research and finding tool. To date the Powys Society Collection and Gertrude's paintings have not been transferred to the web site although you can search all the paintings of The Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society. We will report more details as soon as Gertrude's paintings can be accessed on-line.

Brighton Meeting, May 14th 2011

Timothy Hyman: Terry Diffey and JCP

Over several years the philosopher Terry Diffey made a valuable contribution to The Powys Society. His fine essay, 'Not In The Light Of Truth', was published in 1990 in *John Cowper Powys's Wolf Solent: Critical Studies* (University of Wales, Cardiff); and other substantial pieces appeared in *The Powys Review*, under the editorship of Belinda Humfrey. Dr Diffey taught at the University of Sussex, and for 17 years was Editor of the *British Journal of Aesthetics*; he was much better placed than most of us to grapple with JCP in his philosophic aspect. So when our secretary, Chris Thomas stumbled across those texts by that lost leader, he telephoned me to ask, 'what ever happened to Terry Diffey?' I had known Terry ever since the late 1970s, but we had fallen out of touch in the past decade. I was aware that he'd retired from the University, had embraced Buddhism, and now devoted much of his time as carer for his severely disabled wife. Chris's urging gave me a good reason to re-establish contact. We agreed to set up a dialogue.

Eleven of us assembled on a bright May afternoon at Brighton's Quaker Meeting House. After Chris Thomas's introduction, Terry Diffey's first task was to shuffle off

any notion that his approach would be ‘philosophic’ in any systematic sense. He is (like JCP) a kind of anti-philosopher; or rather, he subscribes to the definition of philosophy offered by Michael McGhee, as ‘what concerns our happiness’. He doesn’t make much distinction between JCP as novelist or philosopher or letter-writer: ‘I like the Powys voice, and I don’t mind where I find it.’ He spoke of his own early development, growing up on the Dorset-Hampshire borders, discovering Hardy’s Wessex. But Hardy’s vision proved, in some respects, constricting; JCP supplied a sense of amplitude and complexity – including sexual complexity. (Hardy was ‘too hetero’.) Powys became ‘a guru with whom to commune’. The preface to JCP’s first novel, *Wood and Stone* (dedicated to Hardy) promises a voice for ‘The Ill-Constituted’, while his so-called ‘philosophical’ works were really (as Phyllis Playter put it) ‘Sermons for Funny Ones’. And, Terry confessed, ‘I got some consolation from this’.

At many points throughout our dialogue, general discussion broke out – at the different ways in which we each might read JCP in our youth, as against our re-reading in later years; or at the way in which JCP, in Diffey’s phrase, ‘gets out from under the class system’. The novels relocate the ‘aesthetic’ sensibility (so often identified with rarefied, upper-class milieus) into a more everyday world. (‘Walter Pater in the Co-op’, suggested John Hodgson). But I did also want to probe a little into why Terry had dropped out of The Powys Society. Loyalty to Belinda Humfrey may have been one factor, but the causes went deeper. ‘It was the whole tone of the thing. I felt it was becoming regimented, professionalised. It ought to be a Gathering of Free Spirits. Powys was a guru-figure for me, and not to be regarded as another Academic Person. Morine used to treat me as a kind of Expert ...’ And indeed the



Rob Timlin and Kieran McCann, readers at the concert at Brighton.

whole thrust of Terry Diffey's commentary was libertarian, especially in relation to environmental issues. He sees JCP as countering the seventeenth-century's 'Disenchantment'; Powys 'wants to preserve the magic of the world, against priests and professors'. By teatime, everyone had their say – had sung at least one aria. Not a stilted occasion, but a sense of our exploring together, under Dr Diffey's guidance, a rich territory that was still opening up to each of us – and a reminder, to me, of why I did still need to participate in this Society. **TH**

John Cowper Powys in Sussex: A Concert

The celebration in words and music of 'John Cowper Powys in Sussex' which took place last Saturday, May 14th, in Brighton as part of the Brighton Festival Fringe, was a memorable event. Attended by an attentive audience of about fifty people, it took place in the lecture room at the Friends Meeting House. *The Pastores Ensemble*, comprising five dedicated musicians – Domenica Lewkow, Marion Pilbeam, Jacques Ruijterman, Paul Neville and Robert Carrington – played string instruments, Bass and Tenor Viols, Lute and Cello, Mandolins and Guitar as well as the Cornemuse. After a brilliant overture composed by Robert, 'Mr Culpeper His Praeludium', Rob Timlin and Kieran McCann in turn read with gusto excerpts from chapters of *Autobiography* in which Southwick, Court House and Burpham were described. Each reading was followed by a musical interlude including among others pieces by sixteenth-century composers such as Antony Holborne, Clement Woodcock, Christopher Tye or Elway Beven, and pieces composed by Robert Carrington mostly inspired by JCP, some performed for the first time. The readings offered the pleasure of hearing the characteristic cadences of the Powysian style, enhanced by inspiring musical compositions. One new Carrington piece which the writer of these lines liked very much was *To the Ditchling Road* (taken from the 'Court House' chapter), superbly sung by soprano Sue Mileham. Sue also sang as a homage by Robert to Alfred de Kantzow a setting of one of his poems, *The Pantheist*. The evening ended with the bewitching première of Robert's 'Mr Culpeper His Goodnight'. The guest readers and musicians were enthusiastically and rightly applauded. It is to be hoped that some at least of the new-comers to Powys in the audience will now be tempted to turn to *Autobiography* or another of Powys's novels. Who knows?

Jacqueline Peltier

Powys Day, Dorchester, June 11th 2011

We met this time round the large table in the Library of the Dorset County Museum (the usual 'schoolroom' having been turned into a Tea room). At the last moment, Frank Kibblewhite our morning's speaker was struck down with food poisoning, so

obliged to cancel. Happily he has now recovered, and hopes to deliver his study of Theodore and Llewelyn on a later occasion. Fortunately, Peter Foss arrived in time to take his place with the talk on Llewelyn's 1911 Diary that had been planned for the afternoon.

Llewelyn's earlier diaries – of a Sherborne Schoolboy (1903), a Reluctant Teacher (1908), and 'The Immemorial Year' (1909) – all edited by Peter Foss in the Cecil Woolf Powys Heritage collection – contained up to a week of entries on one page. In 1910, at the sanatorium in Switzerland, he began the fuller journal that he thought might be his last testament, and this continued when he returned in 1911, the year of a famous heat-wave, the golden summer of unshadowed England before the First World War. After these two book-length diaries (which we hope to see printed) the entries are down-scaled, turning to practical notebooks after Llewelyn went to Africa. All his experiences were later distilled into stories and autobiography; this 1911 summer at Montacute was transmuted into *Skin for Skin* and into the romance of *Love and Death*. Nature, and desirable girls, are what he most describes in the 'Long Hot Edwardian Summer': he was 27 years old, sexually frustrated, attempting to cure his illness by walking in the lanes and water meadows – often in the midday sun. Llewelyn appears less as a 'character' in his diary than the older JCP does in his, but their descriptions of nature are equally alive and closely observed – the Powyses were trained to observe of nature from childhood, on walks with their father. Llewelyn also transcribed letters which have survived nowhere else, like the one from JCP in Liverpool, describing an erotic encounter arranged by Tom Jones. A selection from the 1911 Diary, from his two-month stay with Theodore at the end of the year, is in *Newsletter* 55 (July 2005, pages 32–37).

After lunch at the Number Six restaurant, Stephen Powys Marks followed his family tree downwards (or upwards) from Caroline Powys, the ancestress whose diaries were read at the Conference last year, to her great-grandchildren who took part in a happy boating excursion on the Thames in 1863. This eminently Victorian occasion was recorded in a leather-bound album, recently discovered by Stephen. A long mock-epic poem ('"Row brothers, row, the stream runs fast / Sang the Clan Powys's silver-voiced daughters ...') commemorated the group of three gallant young officers, a father as chaperone, and two sets of strong-minded sisters (one steering into an unfortunate punt 'to teach him next time to mind where he's going'). This 'log' was illustrated by drawings and photographs of riverside buildings, portraits in crinolines or holding top hats – and by the comic drawing on our cover. (See pages 54–56.)

Finally, in late afternoon sun a group was shown round Wolfeton House at Charminster, an ancient somewhat eccentric towered house, decayed and restored through many centuries, and the probable imagined setting of (or inspiration for) *Ducdame*. Chris Thomas's excellent leaflet matched passages from the novel with descriptions of the house.

KK

Sylphia

(John Cowper Powys in Sussex)

living incarnations of his ideal sylphs
those 'gairls' in airy dresses – train-loads
of tantalizing clubbing chicks purling
down the lanes to Brighton's night music

while, among friends, the man of the moment
spins words of his desire to stare and stare
in tune with mood music somewhat quieter –

more girlish than girls his quest
for provocative feminine forms – a mania
for limbs and ankles – for the loveliness
of imaginary sylphs: one once came to life
in a travelling pantomime scene . . .

crocodiling close by the pebbled shore
towards the surviving pier, sugar pink-skirted
black tee-shirted – their names pink-printed –
party hens swaying silver-boppered heads –

with legs supernaturally long, slender thighs,
boyish hips – ankles ravishingly perfected,
there she is at the rear – Sylvia! – but,
for one night only, *Sylphia* she shall be

Geoffrey Winch



*Head of John Cowper Powys, 1963 by Oloff de Wet (see NL 54),
with small maquette of the same (new donation).*

Theodore and his Sisters
Letters from the Powys Society Collection
part I 1902–1940

Gertrude to Theodore, 1902 [aged 25]

The Vicarage
Montacute
September 26th [?1902]

My dear Bob

Here is something for you to smell. I thought of you yesterday and I hope that you got on alright and have made such a name for yourself that all the schools in Brighton Eastbourne and Bexhill shall quarell [*sic*] for you and pay you £5 a lecture; so that you will be enabled to buy a large supply of books and a yacht.

I am by way of translating small Poems of Goethe. I have done about 4 - only I find it very hard to make them good English - here are two only the bad English spoils them -

The Wanderer's Night-Song

Oh you who of heaven are,
Stillling all the pain and sadness
Who the tired exile fills
With a wonderful refreshing.
Ah! I am of wandering tired
What are all the pain and joy?
Oh sweetest Peace,
Come, ah, come to my breast.

Hope

Allow, the Day's work of my hands
To be fulfilled, oh highest Fortune!
Let, oh let me not grow weary!
For it is not empty dreaming.
Only Continue, these flowers
Will give yet both fruits & shadows.

I am going away on Monday. I was going to Norwich - only Aunt Annie became very keen that I should go there, so I am going to Wetheringsett from Monday till Thursday. I shall miss you in the cast but I am very glad you don't live in Suffolk any more. Sussex is a very superior county. Write to me a long letter while I am there to refresh me while I am warring with the inhabitants of that part. I am going to stay at the Lower Close on Thursday. Aunt Etta will be at Lowestoft for a few days when I get there, and Aunt Dora says that we shall go there for the day. I am becoming very alarmed at the idea of suddenly meeting friend Reggie.

Very much love

your most loving sister

Gertrude M. Powys

Thanks very much for your letter.

∞

Katie to Theodore, 1902 [aged 16. Addressed to 5 Harmony Cottages, Studland, Wareham, Dorset]

Montacute Vic, Somerset

Dec 17th 1902

My dear Theodore

I am right, am I not? that you go down to Studland before you put your foot on Montacute soil. When you are down there could you be so good as to walk into your sitting room just

before you go up-stairs to pack to come here, walk straight to Book case and there stand and medetade [*sic*] which would be the nicest to take her, which one would she enjoy the most. And then hit upon one about animals and their foods. Please do. I shall now ask you in plain English.

Bring me one, another farming book I shall give you when you are here the "Soil". But I will keep for a little longer the "Crops". We are very busy this week with exams, poetry music and singing preparing the better ones for a small concert in the Schoolroom on Dec 22nd. I am glad we all are being home this Xmas. May now goes drives with me which is very nice. I drive some way, May the rest. It is very wet. I hope it will be drier during the holiday.

Good Bye

I am your loving

Catharine E. P. Powys

∞

Theodore to Katie?

[*Odd undated page with notes by Violet to 'May'.*]

Beth Car

I have just read your paper with much pleasure, how soon do you want it back, may I send it to Babe's Godmother to see, and then I will return it to you. This is better work than your story, but we ought not to compare. You think deeper here, and your own little self ways are out of sight, you ought to write out more lessons.

∞

Theodore to Gertrude, 1913-14

East Chaldon Dorchester

Oct 10th 1913

My dear Gertrude

I have a kind of idea that your birthday is about now but what day I don't know, anyhow we all wish you many happy returns of the day. Will you thank Mother and Lulu very much for their letters, we had an excellent letter from Katie a day or two ago. Tell Lulu that Room has a Motor Car, and he is going to bring it for us to admire one day. I don't here [*sic*] much of May now what is she doing? The poor New Age begun at a penny and has got to sixpence in a few weeks it will be a guinea. How is Lulu, I hope he is merry though he wrote me such a doleful letter, why should he give up his stories – I go on bravely, nothing happens, well, let nothing happen.

I have hurt my rib or side or something and can't dig or mend my railings. I believe that in God's wisdom he has fashioned and made me that I might beg and not dig. Selah. I just manage to break up sticks and walk. "I say nothing, But smile and pin the door". But whether this is better than being upside down in the air I don't know.

"Which is worse, to be ravished a hundred times by negro pirates, to have a buttock cut off, to run the gauntlet among the Bulgarians, to be whipped and hanged at an auto-da-fe, to be dissected, to row in the galleys – in short, to go through all miseries, or to stay here and have nothing to do?

"It is a great question", said Candide.

With Much love

Theodore

∞



Katie and Gertrude Powys in Chydyok, 1942.

Sep 12th 1914

Dearest Gertrude

Thank you very much for your letter and the cuttings, I read them all. I have taken up some of the potatoes this rain has stopped my doing any more. It is a good thing that Lulu is not here now, I expect he got well away from our climate before the weather changed. I hope our soldiers will keep their powder dry, and that the Germans will really begin to run away. Do you think those Russians have had something to do with their turning round. We all think Hardy's poem very fine, we are learning it by heart.

"Men who march away
Ere the barn-cocks say
Night is growing gray."

Very much love to you from us all. Love to Father
yours Theodore.

∞

[no address or date – 1914? – during WWI]

Dearest Gertrude

I have been to Dorchester to day [*sic*] to the Medical board and have been rejected as you said I would be, 1 card being like Herberts all the remarks being crossed out in red ink and only Rejected and therefore exempted from Military Service left.

So I suppose that settles it, and there is no need to go to any tribunal? The reason was Heart trouble. Dr Wingfield's letter only provoked mirth. The army doctors were very able men I should think, both doctors sounded me and they were very polite and so were the soldiers who attended.

Good by my dear Yours ever
Theodore

Love to Katie

∞

Theodore to Marian (May), 1916–17

East Chaldon
May 27th 1916

Dearest May,

I am glad you are to have a real rest for your back, what an unlucky fall that was, when I saw a great block of ice being taken out of a large covered cart and carried into a fish shop in Norwich I wondered if that was the very block of ice that so ill used you ... I do like to think of you and HIM together, what a time. Ah how you can whisper concerning 'The Great Good Place' about which the tender and alas dead Sant [*sic*] Henry writes.∞

You will no doubt be ready when HE walks by the side of the river.

"It was the same with the slow footsteps that always, within earshot, to the vague attention, marked the space and the leisure, seemed, in long, cool arcades, lightly, to fall and perpetually to recede".

Sometimes I have a letter from Lulu, I fear for him; his letters grow more nervous, less and

less like himself – I hate this damned rascal Cole that he lives with. And Bernie understands why I hate him. If only Willie had been able to stay to guide Lulu along safe paths.

Good bye my dear May, I hope your back will get quite well this summer.

yrs ever Theodore

∞ *Henry James had died in February 1916. Quotation from his story 'The Great Good Place'.*

∞

Oc 28 1917

East Chaldon

Dearest May

I was very delighted to have your letter. It was very good of you to write. I can still hardly believe that Jack really is better. It is too wonderful a great deal too wonderful to be true. However you can't be all this time inventing, you seem so much by your tone as you wrote about it to be in the presence of a miracle that I do believe you. I had so settled in my mind that the worst would happen – that the worst had to happen – that I can now hardly understand that it hasn't. Will you accept a little praise, a little worship for the way, the splendid way you have helped. And others too you say have been good and generous, let those others have their due too and be blessed!

Good bye

yours ever Theodore

∞

Theodore to Gertrude, 1922–3

East Chaldon

Jan 6th 1922

Dearest Gertrude

I have been thinking about you a good deal and should very much like to come next Friday the 13th and see how you are getting on. I don't know about the Lord Mayor's tea party. Will ordinary clothes do? Or will the party all be dressed. I should enjoy to go with you if I can go as I am. Because I have no dress clothes. And should be afraid to hire any. Perhaps you might ask the opinion of Councillor Oliver?

Will it do if I bring back your book on Friday. I am sorry I have kept it so long.

You had better keep the Mayor's card of invitation. I don't expect they will let me in unless you show it.

Violet thanks you so much for the cheese and oranges. I think all went off fairly well here – though of course Violet was rather tired. She has gone to Dorchester to day – to buy a coat for Francis and some collars &c.

I look forward very much to next Friday. We may have to put up Mrs Tomlin for a night or two next week but that won't make any difference to my coming to you.

Willie fairly scared me about Father's conduct to the Proud on the Front. I can't think how you can brave it all out.

yours ever

Theodore

Dicky and Francis send much love.

∞

[marked 1923]

Dearest Gertrude

I heard to day that Chatto & Windus hope to publish "Hester Dominy" the Left Leg & Abraham Men in Volume form 7/6. The Agent is out of this. After this is published they would like to look at Black Bryony again. I will show you the letter when you come. I do hope for all our sakes that this will come off.

I have had a sad letter from Jack he is lonely and says everything is so very difficult. He has to beg on his knees for money. I do wish I could get a little success and ease matters.

Goodbye \\\ Theodore

∞

East Chaldon Dorchester

Sunday [marked 1923?]

Dearest Gertrude

Chatto & Windus have written to say that alas, even though some of the reviews couldn't have been better, 'the left leg' has done very badly – only 14 copies having been sold since I showed you their last letter. I suppose the libraries as I feared have bought none at all.

But still which is very noble of them, the firm means to continue. And intend to bring out this autumn "Black Bryony" with woodcuts at 5s/ or 6s/ and "Mark Only" next spring at 6s/ or 7s/ without pictures but with a gay cover.

They are brave. All glory to Mr Prentice.

Mrs [Holben?] is going to Weymouth for the day on Tuesday next. Tuesday. Violet and I may go with her reaching No 3 Greenhill Terrace at about 1.15 – don't please get anything extra.

yrs Theodore I will bring the letter when I come about the books.

∞

Theodore to Katie, c.1923 ?

East Chaldon

Dorchester

Saturday [no date]

Dearest Katie

Thanks so much for your letter. I am so sorry that Mr Hodder's heifers got into your field. It is most unfortunate when anything like that happens. What do you suppose you ought to do about asking for any damages? Only I suppose Mr Hodder thinks nothing of it. I daresay he regards all cabbages as the property of his cows if only they can get at them. It is most fortunate that you have got your hay in. Mr Tod has nearly all his spread about in the fields. He spent all one morning in turning a field, just before the rain came down. So now he may as well begin again.

Tom Tomlin has cut his hand badly with one of his sharp tools. The blood spurted out like a fountain. So he knows now what Our Lord must have felt like. I daresay you have plenty of grass now – rather [?] perhaps but still grass – which is something.

Good by much love yrs ever Theodore

∞

East Chaldon
Wednesday [*no date*]

Dearest Katie,

Very many thanks for sending us a tin of Cream. It was very welcome as this morning there happened to be no cream at all in the house and hardly any milk.

I hope you were not too tired with your journey. Come down when you can. Much love to Gertrude we look forward to seeing her on Monday.

with love yrs

Theodore

[*note by Katie on back of paper*] The Beginning of Zola
or Sorrel Barn

Not Taken

Scene Montacute

∞

Gertrude to Theodore, 1923

Weymouth
Easter Tuesday 1923

Dearest Theodore

I heard from Jack this morning – here is his letter which you can return on Friday. I am glad, as it is, he is not going round the world. But what a sad thing Jessica is so unsatisfactory. Really I should have thought a manager or manageress should be engaged for a year & then you would be able to escape. As it is they seem to be like a leach [*sic*] or bird of prey. I had just sent off my letter to Lulu & to Jack. It makes you wish so much that some good business arrangement could be made so that Jack could not be cheated any more.

I hope you are getting on well this week & were not overtired by Dicky & me. I enjoyed my visit very much, it was delicious on the cliff. And I loved seeing you very much, & Violet, & it was excellent seeing Mr Tomlin again. I got home alright & so did Dicky 12 hrs later.

Tell Violet she must tell Mr Goult to call in on his way back on Friday with the eggs so that I can give you some rhubarb. Dicky says she & Francis may come by Goult. If so I shall be very pleased & will have some coffee ready for them to drink, before they go off to Dorchester, & while we wait for Dicky.

We very much look forward to seeing Francis on Sunday. Dicky now rather thinks of bicycling all the way to East Chaldon for Dinner on Sunday and then [*leaving*] his bicycle back with Francis by the stone circle – and back here in the late afternoon or early evening. They might have some buns to eat as they go - & I will have something ready for them here.

I am glad at least that Jack is comfortable in his hotel.

Best love yours ever Gertrude

∞

Theodore to Gertrude, 1923-4

East Chaldon
Dorchester
Nov 12th 1923

Dearest Gertrude

I was delighted to get your letter. I am so glad those two young men called. Angus liked you so much that he said to Tom Tomlin "Now that's a woman that I believe I really could Marry" .

Littleton says that Katie went off in very good spirits and very well able to take care of herself. I hope you will have a room with less noise and a stove that doesn't go out when you want to have tea .

It seems very strange your being away from Weymouth. I quite understand that you liked some of those quiet days with the sea so near. You are sure to feel the difference and to wonder a little at all the french noises after so great a quiet. I like that little hard working man, and perhaps he sees you as a lady who might one day give him a new broom so that he can sweep up the easier. Violet and Dicky have gone to Weymouth today in order to bring back what the New Tenant can spare of My Things. Mr Gault's hired on purpose. It is a wonderful day, I expect you can sit out in the road in Paris and watch the merry people walk by. I hope those gay men will not let you be lonely.

Goodbye yrs ever Theodore

The little brown box came safely it's in a drawer

∞

East Chaldon
Dorchester
Dec 20 1923

Dearest Gertrude

I thank you vey much for your letter and for the pretty cards. I am so very glad to hear that your painting is praised. I was sure it would be – and I knew that all you wanted was a time to yourself.

Tom Tomlin thinks that when you have had the experience of Paris you might try London. But I should say from our experience that living in London is very expensive.

I was glad to get home again though I think the visit was a success at least I hope so.

It's very cold again and I wish it wouldn't be.

My money is still in the bank. I am going to invest one or two sums in Mortgages. I expect I shall have about what I have always had because I shall keep on deposit what I require for Francis and I have quite a number of bills to pay off too.

I hope you don't find the cold too horrid.

Dorothy was very nice when Bertie wasn't there and Bertie was very nice when Dorothy wasn't there. That's how things went. And I am slowly recovering from it all.

I have had my prize money sent. I hope the letter wasn't lost when we were away.

All Mr Tod's sheep found their way into the garden while we were gone.

I hope Dicky is happy in the south Atlantic his ship left Las Palmas on the 14th.

much love

we miss you very much

yrs ever Theodore

I wish you a very happy Christmas xxx

∞

East Chaldon
Dorchester
Jan 8th 1924

Dearest Gertrude

I can't bear to think of you ill in Paris. I wish you would get hold of Katie's furniture [?] and set up in her castle. You would never get ill then and it would be perfectly adorable to have you so near.

I gave your letter to Henry [?] he's at Tommy's. He doesn't like Paris and he's sure that you would paint more wonderful pictures in England. Do think about it. Do think about coming back to England.

You could stay here to begin with Because all I want is my front room between 11 and 1 – and my late [mornings .] If you could bear those disadvantages for a little – and why not Katie's house [?] wh you could rule like Queen Mary. It's empty and dry and clean. And there's Katie's furniture. You've only to ask for it.

Thanks a thousand times for your [prints?] we will pay the bills. I shall enjoy those [? s]

Do write at once and say if you're better.

yrs e\\r Theodore

∞

East Chaldon
Dorchester
February 16 1924

Dearest Gertrude

I should certainly have a taxi from Wool. We had one when we came. They charge sometimes 8 and sometimes 9 shillings. Violet says there are always Cars waiting at Wool station when the trains come in so you needn't order one. But if by any chance here wasn't one you could ask a porter to go to the Bear for one. If the weather isn't very disagreeable I might come to meet you at Wool. I should like the walk and Seeing My Sister.

Send us word in good time a telegram – don't forget the slowness of our post. And I will meet you if possible. But you mustn't mind if I'm not there

\\Theodore.

∞

East Chaldon
Dorchester
February 23 1924

Dearest Gertrude

Thanks very much indeed for your letter.

I have had one of these unpleasant colds too, and my legs are uncertain and shaky, so don't expect me at Wool on Tuesday. I am extremely sorry. But Violet says all you need to do is to ask

a porter to get you a Taxi and then tell the driver to drive to East Chaldon to the first house on the left hand side past the church. I'm not laid up I go about the same, only I feel unstable and nervous and my legs give way.

"Black Bryony" has done a little better than "the left leg" – I think I have my enemies as well as my friends. I am a little disappointed about "Black Bryony". I hoped a thousand or two copies would have been sold here. But it may be doing better in America I hope that is so. Chatto & Windus propose to publish Mr Tasker in the spring of 1925 and "Innocent Birds" in the Autumn of 1925. I fear I shan't bring off the next so happily. I long to hear all your news.

Much love to all at Horsebridge.

yours ever Theodore

It only takes about 10 minutes to drive here from Wool in a Motor car.

I was delighted to get your telegram this morning.

5.55 is the time – as I read it – that you reach Wool.

We long to see you.

∞

Katie to Theodore, 1929

3 Sea View

Peasland

Sidmouth

April 24 1929

My dear Theodore,

I meant to write before this to you. I heard again from Lulu since I have been here – just a card – to say that he may not be here now until the middle of May – that is unless his health gives out again, & then he would be back earlier. I am anyway passing the key of the White Nore to you to keep until Gertrude returns. I found it really very harmonious up at White Nore; the first day in particular. It was enchanting to wake so near the sea: and I loved so much that little walk around the lookout for ten minutes before I made my breakfast. I lit up two fires & aired most of the bedding. I had a lovely bathe & picnic in the under cliff – I think there is nothing so nice as to wake up overlooking the sea –

I am happy to be back here at Sidmouth. There is very little doing regarding fishing. They've have [*sic*] caught one or two lobsters each morning & a couple of herrings in their [moor ?]-net: but as yet not a sign of a mackerel, being as yet so cold. Except for a little boating they would earn nothing. We varnished the boat – I [] been out when ever there's been a chance. Yesterday I rowed out two [*sic*]. I wish you were near for me to take you out to a first row slowly up & down ...

Much love to you dear brother. I hope Violet's alright. My love to her Doris. I believe Gertrude come[s] back this next Monday.

yrs affectly

Catharine E P Powys

∞

Theodore to Katie

East Chaldon
Dorchester
April 27th 1929

Dearest Katie

I thank you very much for your letter. I enjoyed having it. I wish I was at Sidmouth so that I might go out in your boat. I am sure you must be happy with it.

The key is quite safe, and I will give it to Gertrude when she comes. You say you think she comes on Monday.

Violet and I went out to day to Cole Hill if you know where that is. We picked cowslips behind the hedge of trees.

The glass is very low but still the rain keeps off. I see in the paper that in other places in England people have to buy water in buckets.

with much love

yours ever

Theodore.

∞

East Chaldon
Dorchester
July 3rd [no year]

Dearest Katie

By now I expect you are quite well at least mending. Violet and I were very troubled when we heard that you were ill, but almost anything can happen in a very few minutes in this world. One never knows. I wish you were both back safe at East Chaldon. You will be in a day or two I expect. No doubt I shall hear tomorrow that you are quite well again. Really you are wonderful when you are ill not to mind it more. But do you remember how annoyed you were when Mr Norman told you to be patient when you had influenza. You must be quiet for a day or two and then you will get better. Who is to ken [?] who destiny may not pounce upon next with its evil blows.

I saw John Jacobs leading your horse yesterday from the pasture to the stable. I pray heaven that all is well now. You will be glad to be home again

yrs evr

Theodore

∞

Katie to Theodore

39 Arcot [?] Park, Sidmouth
Aug 17th 19 [29?]

My dearest Theodore

I feel very ashamed of myself for not writing before but what with the weather & doing odds

& ends in the house the time seems to gallop & so I don't get through any letter writing & still less able to get on with my own story –

I hope you and Violet are alright. I hear of you from time to time from Gertrude.

I am probably returning home at the end of this week or early in the next week – I want to catch Mr Gould [*sic*] at Weymouth.

I wish badly I could get a little place of my own here & then live between this & Chydyok – but I am afraid my expence will never reach it.

x x x x from CEP Powys

∞

Theodore to Katie, 1929–30

East Chaldon
Dorchester
December 20th 1929

Dearest Katie

Your stick is the best of presents, and is likely to last if I do not lose it as long as I do. I thank you extremely. I was going to walk up this morning to thank you only the rain came. This rain is rather unfortunate because Mr [Miller?] is coming to sweep one of the chimneys to night and so there is only one room for us all.

I have been more than pleased with the thought of your novel being accepted. I have the greatest hope for it.

with the best love
yours ever
Theodore.

∞

East Chaldon
Dorchester
May 12th 1930

My dear Katie,

Thank you very much indeed for sending me this book of yours. I am sure it is very good indeed. It has the quality of real grass and flowers of human beings who move in nature and respond to the influence about them – to the shadows of the trees – the red light in a blacksmith's shop and the sight of sea. I like the whole book very much. I am sure you deserve something to happen after all your labours. May all go well with you.

We are having such cold winds, and still have to have fires. And our weeping Ash tree is no more out than when you were here. Violet and Francis send you their very best love and I do too.

yours ever
Theodore

∞

East Chaldon
Dorchester
July 6th 1930

Dearest Katie,

Thank you very much for your letter. I do not think this hot weather is at all good for

writing, so I expect a little holiday is very good for you. You must have had some wonderful days. Lulu liked your cottage very much indeed and so did Alyse.

Thanks very much for the review. It is very good. And Gertrude tells me you have had some very good ones beside this. I congratulate you and hope that the book is going well.

Gertrude had Miss Harding staying with her, who talked so much that she talked Gertrude at a [lick attack ???] !

We had a funeral two days ago, Mrs Talbot and to day we have old Isaac's. The Church bell is getting used to tollings.

with much love yours ever

Theodore

∞

Gertrude to Theodore, 1931

Chydyok
East Chaldon
Dorchester
27 July 31

Dearest Theodore

I have just heard from Isobel that she is coming today to stay over the holidays with me. Mark[s] coming next week end – unless they both go to Lulworth for it but we'll see. Anyway I had better not come to tea tomorrow. But I have to walk down for milk etc then so if you come here or to the valley I will walk to Chaldon with you & back again only we must not walk round by the Lime Kiln as the big bull is there. It was in Tumble Down on Saturday eve when we were walking about! And on Sunday in this down but now it is in the long down between the round Pond & the Ashes. And the gate is closed.. I never knew it was near by yesterday.

Bernie comes here on Wednesday evening. Katie is not coming till next week. I am glad as she finds it tiring with the house full. Tell Violet how sorry I am not to come to tea.

How wet it was yesterday!

Very much love to you & to Violet.

your loving Gertrude

I gave Lulu your note.

∞

Chydyok E.Chaldon Dorchester
Sat.

Dearest Theodore

Lulu had not a too bad night. This morning he was sick but [] though he had blood spitting this morning – He has just told Alyse that his chest feels better. He hardly speaks. Bertie [?Bernie] will tell you all and how his [sic] has been this afternoon.

Very much love to you and Violet

from

Gertrude

∞

Theodore to Gertrude, 1931

East Chaldon
Dorchester
December 20. 1931

My dearest Gertrude

I was extremely pleased to hear on Saturday that you were better. I don't think I have ever seen you look worse than when I called in that evening. I really expected that you had some illness coming. You must be careful and not get these chills. Don't be tempted by the sun to have your dinner out of doors. Keep indoors when you eat.

Thank you very much indeed for Pascal's *Pensées*. I fear this is not Mr Pugh – "None is so happy as a true Christian, nor so reasonable, virtuous or amiable." I have never had this excellent book before. I think a lot of it. I certainly do see, with only a peep or two, the common kinship of this good man with Montaigne.

With very much love and many wishes that you won't look as ill as you did on Friday for a long while

yours ever

Theodore

∞

Theodore to Katie, 1931

East Chaldon
Dorchester
July 15th 1931

Dearest Katie,

Thank you very much for your letter and the reviews. They are very good. Mr Goult leaves Weymouth at different times. Sometimes at 3.30 and sometimes much later. It all depends what kind of load he has.

Mr Lahr sent you the little book. I was going to send you one when I had them from him. My own copies I mean – Only they have not come yet. So you have yours first.

With very much love from us all. I am glad you enjoyed Bernie's visit.

Good Bye \\\ Theodore

∞

Katie to Theodore, 1933

Kisima
Nanyuki
Kenya Colony
March 1933

My dearest Theodore

I am sure you would like this upper farm of Willie's. I always like it so much when Willie shows me anything in particularly [*sic*] what Theodore [=Dick?] did here on the lower farm regards the early improvements. Certainly Willie seems [to] able here to add field to field, in way which few could in England.

Personally I find this upper Farm far more pleasing to my body and soul – yet there is some uncommon & strangely romantic in the one below. The Native cows and calves a half bred are most intensively interesting to watch.

I wish I was [after?] you to talk about it. The native seem mostly very happy & if anything

does go right with the work they are doing generally treat as a great joke & roar with laughter. Unless this passion of [energy?] or jealousy intervenes, then they talk or laugh & wave their arms.

One of the men down at the Lower farm has 3 wives. He appears the most handsome of the Natives I have seen. He is tall and beautifully shaped in his limbs.

You would like the little house Willie has made down there thatched with local reed – It has a sitting room; a store room; a bedroom & a small bath room. It seems the most primitive I have ever slept in: like a Maberlulu only more in the open. There are some lovely trees and I liked walking as far as the bridge over the river which Willie built. But here there [] still better place : to walk to a really lovely winding path, under these forest trees, where I love better than any where to be in.

You can't think how happy I am to have at last in my possession that Zarathrustra of Garnett's. I read it a few verses of it at a time, like you would the Bible & under the life I am leading here it seems more & more like my rudder or my soul's life belt. I feel at moments it accuses one & yet it keeps me a-float above the filth that litters the water – I can't yet find how much it cost nor the edition of the other ones – but I myself feel like giving at least 10/- for it – for it is worth more than enough to me. It seems at this period of my life of more importance than even Walt Whitman – But there we will talk more of that when I return again.

Much love to you & Violet – who I guess is busy about Dick's [*i.e* Francis's] return.

I am sorry I never saw Jack again – but I am sure more & more you should not hang on one another but I am most grateful to him for what he has done about my story –

Very much love to Violet & to little Susie. Let me know how Francis is. Much love to Gertrude & to yourself. Tell me if you have been up to Chydyok lately.

Yours for ever my dear Brother from Catharine E P Powys
(a few relief nibs for me – I forgot them)

∞

Theodore to Katie, 1933 [difficult writing – bad pen? Guesses. Next letters as normal]

East Chaldon, Dorchester

July 21st 1933

Dearest Katie,

Thank you very much indeed for your letter and the Poem which I enjoyed reading. After all, happiness is within [with us?] [??-less or -en] or no[ne] where. Fear, is one of the things that clears all joy away. And fear of Death is the chief and Lord of all. By [but?] always doing any kind of labour all [or?] work this fear is drawn out by manifold tasks & toil. That's the way of getting rid of it.

Lulu has had his ups and down Gertrude is well. Susie is well, Violet has her ill health some times. I hope she will be better soon. We all live in Jeopardy.

May you be fed with joy and gladness.

Much love to Elizabeth and to Willie

Yours ever Theodore

Violet thanks you very much for your letter. May the little [fairy?] keep you in good health.
[See Katie's poem 'To T. F Powys' in Driftwood, page 42.]

∞

Theodore to Gertrude, 1933-5

East Chaldon
Dorchester
December 3rd 1933

Dearest Gertrude,

We are so sorry that you have been troubled with these colds. I do hope you are quite well by now. And that Aunt Etta's leg is better. My foot I think is a little stronger, but I have not ventured again to Chydyok yet. I am glad that Willie is going to have Sylvia's cottage. I hope he will be comfortable there. We had a great rain last night, but now it is cold again with a north wind blowing.

Augustus John began his long deferred portrait on Tuesday, he came over for one day, and hopes to come again and finish the picture another day if he gets a chance. He paints with extraordinary swiftness. Also who should turn up to day but David Garnett and Ray, and they hadn't been here more than half an hour, before Colonel Lawrence arrived. And so we had company, let alone Mr MacDonald who arrived in the morning, and the Baby had to go to sleep an hour later. And I've got a headache with seeing so many fine people. Mr MacDonald[^{s?}] baby boy is very well.

With much love to yourself and to dear Aunt Etta.

Yours ever Theodore

Augustus John thought a lot of Susie

∞

East Chaldon
Dorchester
February 16th 1934

Dearest Gertrude,

I am sending you a letter and an enclosed stamped envelope that I received yesterday; thinking that perhaps you might like to reply to the writer. I have no acquaintance with the lady or with the wonderful castle that she says may be entered for sixpence. If you do not care to reply throw the letter into the fire. The stamp may be useful to you.

Baby has another little sharp cold in her head. I hope it will be quickly over. I hope Lulu still continues to get stronger. Does he like this weather, I wonder what will come next?

Much love to Katie – and to yourself

Yours ever Theodore

∞

East Chaldon
Dorchester
December 25th 1935

Dearest Gertrude

I pray that you are better, this change of weather ought to be a good thing for you. We had so much looked forward to seeing you. Is not it bad luck. These colds strike one down in a moment. It's a great misfortune. I wonder if you are down stairs or in bed.

I wear these wonderful socks of yours and shall wear them until they have holes in the heels.

Perhaps they will never have holes.

The birds could hardly fly on Monday, any cat might have killed them, but to day they are quite well again. I don't know what to advise you to take unless it is some of Katie's Rum — with the greatest love

Yours ever

Theodore

∞

Gertrude to Theodore, 1937

Chez Mlle Top
Equihem Outreau
Pas de Calais
10 May 1937

Dearest Theodore

I hope you & Violet are well and that you won't be worried by too many people this Whitsun. and that the news from Chydyok is good. I thought last Friday was a bad day for the [books?] to come.

Tell Susie that if she were here and walked only a little way she would hear a great many nightingales singing in the day time. I never heard so many since I was at Sweffling — the woods and groves are full of them. Near every farm a dog barks which would not frighten Susie but frightens me.

When I was a few hours in London and saw Francis for a few minutes he looked well — sat in the middle of Foyles typing. He said very much love to Violet and to you & to Susie. Don't trouble to Answer this. I wanted to write & tell you I had seen Francis.

Always your loving Gertrude

∞

Theodore to Gertrude, 1937

East Chaldon
Dorchester
May 13th 1937

The cork soles sound most exciting. Ever so many thanks.

Dearest Gertrude

Very many thanks for your two letters. One to Violet and one to me. We are so glad that you are so happy in France. And wish you the best of luck in Switzerland. When you get there please give very much love from us three to Alyse and Lulu.

Francis was busy, anyhow I am glad he had a chair to rest upon. Susie and Violet went to see the children dress up which pleased Susie. Katie unfortunately has a cold I hope she is better now. She said it was a feverish cold that began with a sore throat. We feel very sorry for her. Please give our love and our very best wishes to your kind hostess. And a great deal of love to yourself.

Yours ever Theodore

you are in a lovely place. Sea and wood and sand.

∞

Theodore to Katie, 1937-? [addressed c/o Lucy, to forward]

East Chaldon
Dorchester
December 25th 1937

Dearest Katie,

A very great many thanks my dear, for this fine pair of glasses that Gertrude brought here today. They are the kind that last for years and are most welcome.

We are having mild fog and wet small rain. Uncomfortable weather, no stars no moon no sun – no wind, no hail, no snow.

I hope you are enjoying yourself. Please give my love to Dorothy and much to yourself –

Theodore

∞

[2 postcards, of Louvre old masters in sepia. Addressed to Chydyok, no dates. George VI stamps]

My dear

We all send you our love and hope that your Christmas and New Year may be full of joy and content

Theodore

∞

Mappowder

This is just to wish you a very happy New Year. Violet met Mrs Oram [?] the other day in Dorchester and Mr Oram. She was very pleased I hope your cough is gone Give my love to Mrs Lucas when you see her next in [her?] [??] & So much to You.

∞

Theodore to Gertrude, 1940

The Rectory Lodge
Mappowder
Sturminster Newton
July 13th 1940

Dearest Gertrude

Ever so many thanks for your letter. I am much the same now as when I was at Chaldon. Violet and Susie are quite well. We have had an air raid warning to day and yesterday. Every one acts at once here, whereas at Chaldon we never heard any warning at all. But I am glad to say that so far nothing else has happened except the warnings.

I am so sorry that I did not thank you all for your kindness in seeing us go as I should have done. To tell the truth I was rather bewildered at it all it seemed such a wrench that I hardly knew what I did. Will you tell Katie that I wish I had spoken more tenderly to her, I was all in a fluster, that I had no common politeness left in my head.

At first I did not sleep very well but now I am much the same as I used to be.

I don't think I ever thanked Alyse for being so good as to come all this journey with us. I hope she forgave me.

I have borrowed the Black Arrow to read to Susie and Butlers Analogy to read to Myself, beside [Hudibras?]. There are some excellent book[s] up there. And both the lady and Gentleman have been very attentive and friendly to us.

I am enclosing a part of the paper which tells us what will happen if we lose the war. I do not think the prospect of what will happen is very pleasant.

Very very much love to you and Katie and Alyse.

yours ever

Theodore

[*in pencil*] I have almost finished The Wool

[*added*] This was written some days ago & I did not send it I am very sorry. love Violet

[*end of Part 1, 1902–1940. Letters from The Powys Society Collection in the Dorset County Museum. To be continued in NL 74, with 'Theodore and His Sisters, 1940–1952'.*]



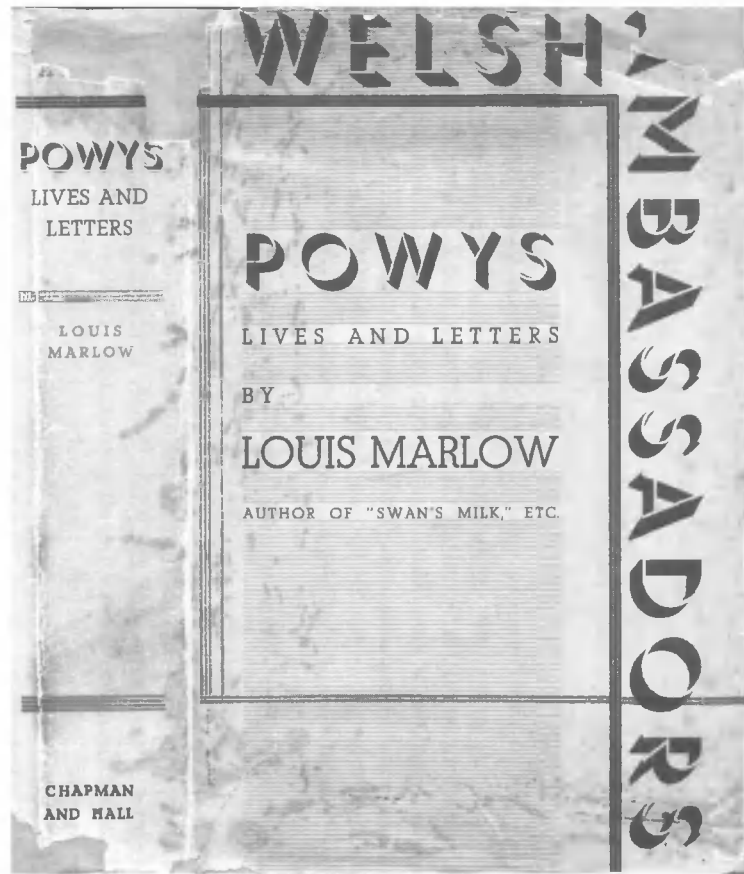
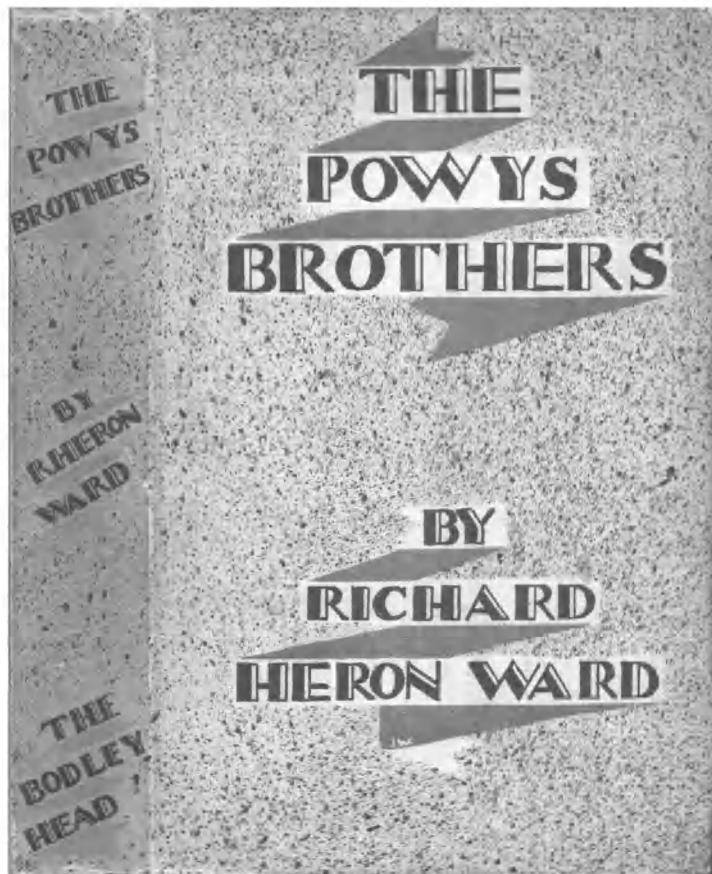
Dropping the pilot on the down

The pilot left the bus and took his gun.
Through Blandford Camp he'd brought us, kept us in.
The sub-machine gun wasn't used, thank God,
but would have been, no doubt, to at least scare
anyone who had tried to leave without
the necessary card—or wasn't known.

I don't think anyone got on the bus
inside the camp though there were bus stops there,
the reason for our call that afternoon.
They were not on the way—we left our road
to visit them—diversion from our course.

The bus came from the south to Salisbury town but
were there other gunmen on the downs who boarded
buses crossing army land? Dead villages are
scattered all around: perhaps ghost buses visit them
and call for corpses waiting still to go back home.

Michael Skaife d'Ingerthorpe



Two strikingly different dust-jacket designs appearing only a year apart, in 1935 and 1936, one with hand-drawn lettering, the other printed, for two very different kinds of book about the Powyses (both reduced from 8½ inches high).

Notes and Letters

*Congratulations to Timothy Hyman on being elected R.A. (Royal Academician).
Sympathy with Anthony Head and all who suffered in the Japanese earthquake.*

DVDs of the 2010 Conference, 'Grail Visions' are still available from Raymond Cox. Disc 1 contains the talks by Anthony O'Hear and Harald Fawcner, Disc 2 Stephen Powys Marks on 18th-century Caroline Powys, and *The Untold Privilege—with Will in Africa*; Disc 3 Paul Weston's 'personal approach' to Glastonbury, with views of the town. Three discs @ £6: from Raymond Cox, 4 Lulworth Close, Halesowen, B63 2UJ. (Cheques to R. E. Cox, not the Powys Society). For further information, e-mail <rymd.cox@gmail.com>

Tom Bates *aka* Neil Lee-Atkin writes: 'With **Llewelyn's birthday** falling on a Saturday this year we anticipate a bumper gathering at East Chaldon on August 13th. Five members of the Dandelion Club are coming down with me, and we've booked into the George Hotel in Weymouth for three nights from Thursday 11th; hoping to spend a couple of days exploring the White Nose, Undercliff, Rat's Barn, and old Llewelyn haunts along the coast – health permitting.' His new address is 1 Church Hill, Spridlington, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire LN8 2DX, 'phone 01673 860535 (e-mail address(es) remain the same).

la lettre powysienne 21 has a Russian theme, an interesting gathering of JCP's reading of Russian books and involvement with Russia in his lectures (this is the first of two parts). Alongside this is an essay by Llewelyn on Catherine the Great, and an examination by Michael Kowalewski of JCP's 'resacralisation of the secular' – 'the presence of that sacred cosmos that always supports his stories'. David Solomon reveals Llewelyn as a poet in prose through his essay 'A Pond' (included in the new collection *A Struggle for Life*).

Bob Bell has kindly sent another few family letters from his great-aunt **Phyllis Playter**. These are written from Corwen from the 1940s to the 1960s, addressed to her niece Marion and half-brother George.

Raymond Cox writes that 'looking at the **'Faber Finds'** website recently I see that they have published JCPs *Autobiography*. Is this an event which we have missed? There has been a wait of some years for Duckworth to publish this. (A new edition really is needed.) One curious thing is that Faber Finds states that there are 352 pages. The old paperback edition, Picador, I believe runs to over 600 [672, KK], so either it's a error, or the print is very small, or it's some kind of condensed edition. Hope it's not that.' [*Good news? or worrying: find out @£22. KK*]

John Hodgson finds **Porius** at **£9.95** for sale in the catalogue of

<www.academicbookcollection.com> The Overlook edition still retails at full price – is it the same?

Charles Lock remarks from a bookseller catalogue the connection of **Dennis Wheatley** (a noted book collector) with the Powyses, in a 1936 dedication from TFP to Wheatley in the first impression of TFP's *Soliloquies of a Hermit*. (See NL 49, and its back cover, for Wheatley's review of *Morwyn*, in his 'Library of the Occult'.)

Frank Kibblewhite and the **Sundial Press** continue to bring out unpublished works and reprints of Powys-connected books. *The Sailor's Return* (reviewed by Llewelyn Powys in 1925 (see page 37) was written by David Garnett while staying at the pub of the same name in East Chaldon, during one of his frequent visits to Theodore. The new edition has an introduction by **J. Lawrence Mitchell** and includes a previously omitted section of the novel as an appendix. Two unpublished novellas by Philippa (Katie) Powys, *Sorrel Barn* and *The Tragedy of Budvale* (in one volume), are scheduled for August (*special offer on page 39*). Forthcoming (copyright problems permitting) is *Patterns in the Sand*, an unknown novel by Gamel Woolsey. Frank also writes: 'Edmund Hopkins's recent decision to donate a small head of JCP which had belonged to his father to the Powys Collection in Dorchester (see page 6) arose from Sundial's contact with Edmund when seeking copyright permission to publish Gamel Woolsey. An example of mutually beneficial symbiosis!'

Another collection of **essays by Llewelyn Powys**, *A Struggle for Life* (Oneworld Classics, 2010), is reviewed on page 40.

There has been a request by Sergei Kostin to publish ***Wolf Solent in Russian***.

Pat Quigley is giving Ireland another taste of JCP in a lecture to a writers' group on the theme 'Wells of Creativity'. An earlier Irish vision of JCP is on page 46.

Roger Dobson has been sharing our tributes to **Janet (Machen) Pollock** with the Friends of Arthur Machen.

Bill Keith writes: '... It continues to amaze me how much significant unpublished or inaccessible material can still be found to deserve printing. Personally, however, I was most interested in the Faulkner review of *Ducdame* [in NL 72], which was unknown to me. ... I regret that I shan't be coming to the Conference this year. I'm still pretty well, and making good progress on my study of religion and the Powyses ...' (See page 48 for Keith on Faulkner on JCP.)

Michael Kowalewski writes: 'In an indescribably tedious piece by Martin Amis about his friend Christopher Hitchens (*The Observer*, Easter Sunday) ... Amis makes the following statement: "... agnosticism, I respectfully suggest, is a slightly more logical and decorous response [than atheism] to our situation – to the indecipherable

grandeur of what is now being (hesitantly) called **the multiverse**.” Can we see this as a Powysian idea getting into the mainstream, and of course unacknowledged?’ (Such a response to the ‘Multiverse’, in the speculative-scientific sense of (?) all possible permutations of everything multiplied to infinity, surely leaves out JCP’s vision of the intensely personal beings that inhabit and imagine it – Blake’s ‘One Thought Fills Immensity’. KK.) (See JCP’s 3rd paragraph, ‘Mystic Presence’ in Tit-Bits, page 43.)

Chris Thomas writes: ‘**Welsh Anarchists**, a title spotted on the internet, published by ‘Books LLC’ in the USA, includes a chapter on John Cowper Powys. The publication, however, does not seem to have an identifiable author or include any original subject matter. JCP appears in this anonymous booklet in unlikely company – other chapters are on Augustus John, Icons of Filth (an anarchist punk pop group based in Cardiff), Gerrion Jones, the modern Welsh poet Menna Elfyn, and Sam Mainwaring, a nineteenth-century Welsh political activist. The booklet illustrates a growing trend in electronic book publishing. Books LLC takes open-access and open-knowledge material, freely available on the internet, to produce print-on-demand books which are also republished by ‘Google Books’. This process can lead to the strange anomalies demonstrated by this booklet. A Google entry directs you to the book.’

Robert McCrum in *Observer* books (10th April 2011) writes: ‘**Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson** has long been one of the timeless figures on the London literary scene. He made his debut as an author in the 1970s with *Inglorious Rebellion*, wrote an admired book on Anglo-French relations (*That Sweet Enemy*); and subsequently, as an editor, published the early works of Paul Theroux, Jane Gardam, A. N. Wilson, Peter Ackroyd, and William Boyd. Lately he has been a publisher and literary agent. His eponymous imprint is now bowing out with the recent launch of Giles St Aubyn’s impressive study of Victorian faith, *Souls in Torment*, but he will continue as an old-style man of letters who refuses to be pigeonholed. According to one literary website “there are no categories or genres listed for this agent”. I wish him well in his busy retirement.’ *CSS continues as agent to JCP and TFP*.

Thanks to Jacqueline Peltier’s ‘Lannion’ website, contact has been made with a naturalist and ecologist in the area of upstate New York that includes Powys’s **Phudd Bottom**, his home with Phyllis Playter 1930–34 and celebrated in his Diaries. Conrad Vigo of Farmscape Ecology Program, Hawthorne Valley Farm (<www.hawthornevalleyfarm.org/fep>) illustrates nature walks with excellent photographs. A recent excursion around Phudd hill, taken with his family and Ruth Dufault, another local naturalist, is posted at <hvfarmscape.wordpress.com>. Quotations from JCP’s diaries (the two published years, 1930 and ’31, sent to him by JP), and from the nature books of Alan Devoe who succeeded JCP at Phudd, make interesting comparisons between then and now (much of the landscape has reverted to woodland). It’s hoped to interest the new local library in the Powys connection. Opposite is a drawing of Phudd by Ruth Default.

Janice Gregory, a great-niece of **Alyse Gregory** (Janice adopted the surname by coincidence – ‘There are a lot of Gregories in Connecticut’) contacted the Sundial Press to buy Alyse’s reprinted novels. Writing to Frank Kibblewhite, she talks of memories of Alyse while staying with her grandmother, Alyse’s sister. Aged five, she was cautioned not to disturb, but went for walks and sang songs with Alyse, and later had letters from her. She has now joined (or is going to, we hope) the Society. ‘It amazes me that I majored in English literature at Harvard University (admittedly a long time ago), yet I knew nothing about the Powys until recently. I feel I have discovered a treasure trove and hardly know which book to pick up first.’

Peter Judd has published an on-line Catalogue and Finding Aid to the **Elizabeth Wade White** papers at New York Public Library. The papers include correspondence from Gertrude and T. F. Powys to Elizabeth Wade White and related correspondence from Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland, which have references and notes on the Powyses. See entry in the Powysian Webliography on the Society’s web site and <www.books.google.com>. Peter Judd transcribed the letters from Katie Powys to Elizabeth Wade White (1938–1954) which were published in *The Powys Journal* VII (1997). Peter is now writing a book about Elizabeth Wade White and Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland, using unpublished material from the collection in New York Public Library – Katie, TFP, Alyse Gregory, Llewelyn, Chydyok and Rats Barn make frequent appearances.



Chydyok update

In the last year Llewelyn's cottage at Chydyok has been renovated by the Weld estate and made available for holiday letting. Neighbours David and Madeleine Simcox, who live next door in what was Katie and Gertrude's side, took on the lease in 2009 and administer the lettings. This was great good fortune, for David is tremendously sympathetic to the special character of the house and its important associations, and helped out with the renovations in such a way that this ambience has been preserved.

The upgrading is excellent. It includes a new ceramic tiled floor through to the kitchen and a re-organisation of the kitchen to make a dining area, which fits very well. The old Belfast sink has been kept but re-located. A downstairs lavatory has also been installed in the cloakroom lobby, and the upstairs bathroom, whilst moved around, is still in character. The cottage was re-roofed with new slate and re-wired, and the old fireplace, the front of which was discovered to be only of the 1970s, was returned to its former state, and a wood-burner inserted. Llewelyn's doorstep with its initials and inscriptions is still in place, and the old sturdy back door, reinforced, is still there, together with the all-important iron latticed windows, against which Llewelyn was famously photographed. The pond is kept ('Good Hope Lies at the Bottom'), with irises sprouting magnificently from it. Some of Janet's little things have also been retained and incorporated.

The garden looks fine and trim, with better management of the terraces after some trees were thinned out. Llewelyn's shelter stands looked-after in the further part of the garden. For anyone who still wants to savour the unique ambience of Chydyok, they will not be disappointed, but one will have to pay more – the going rate! Contact David Simcox on <chydyokcottage@btinternet.com> or go to <www.cottageguide.co.uk> and scroll down to 'cottages in Dorset', where all information and rates can be found.

Peter Foss

Chaldon Literary Festival

Chaldon Literary Festival takes place on Saturday 6th August 2011. It offers three talks – on Chaldon Herring by Judith Stinton, on Sylvia Townsend Warner by Judith Bond, and on two Powys brothers in Chaldon by Frank Kibblewhite; a walk through the village visiting sites of interest in connection with the artists and writers who lived there; and cream tea at the church. The events start at 10.30. Coffee will be available from 10.00 am, lunch available at 'The Sailor's Return' (or bring a picnic to eat in 'God's Pocket'); last cream teas at 5.30 pm. Further details on The Powys Society's website. Tickets including refreshments (£20) should be booked in advance through the festival organiser, John Brewster: telephone 01305 852881 or e-mail <john.brewster@yahoo.co.uk>. All proceeds from the festival are in aid of the building work being carried out on Chaldon's fourteenth-century St Nicholas Church.

Llewelyn Powys

The Sailor's Return, by David Garnett. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Like a Clear Stream

One of Guy de Maupassant's short stories describes an old French peasant coming to a railway-station to meet his son and his son's sweetheart, only to make the startling discovery that his prospective daughter-in-law is a Negress. The happy pair get up into his farm cart and rattle away toward the family home, and the aged parent, watching their departure from the gate of the platform, is made to express his peasant's surprise at so anomalous an alliance, his peasant's discomfiture, his peasant's bewildered consternation, by the simple words, "Good luck to them!" It is just such an exclamation of a countryman's inarticulate outraged conservatism in the face of what is strange that might be taken as the keynote of Mr. David Garnett's latest story, which has to do with the sudden appearance in a Dorset village of William Targett, mariner, and his wife Tulip, a Negress from Africa.

Let it be acknowledged at once that no fault can be found with Mr. Garnett's manner of writing. It would seem to be impossible for this author to write badly. As in that incomparable little masterpiece "Lady Into Fox" and as in that less interesting, though none the less admirable fantasy "A Man in the Zoo", this young master never for a single moment departs from his high standard of simple but extremely lucid English. His power of making fiction appear to be fact he would seem to have inherited directly from Daniel Defoe. On my soul, I feel that he might be a bastard of that old ruffian, perhaps by one of those aristocratic Portuguese Ladies that Robinson Crusoe made merry with after he had escaped from his island. For if Defoe's imagination is the more sturdy, David Garnett's imagination is the more refined and subtle. It may lack, and I am of the opinion that it does lack, that deep inspira-

tion, like the music of waves breaking against blackened ledges or the sound of thunder in mountains, which characterizes the great passages of English prose. But on a more surface level the thing is unequaled in its flawless meanderings: like a clear stream, let us say, with sticklebacks and water boatmen casting shimmering shadows through silver ripples that are making their way by hedge-row and foot-bridge path, and thatched cottage, down and down, past meadowsweet and purple-tinted water mint, down to the beached margin of the sea.

But when I use the word "refined" or "subtle" or "aristocratic" in connection with Mr. Garnett's work I do not mean to imply that it has anything precious about it. Throughout these three books one feels that one is in the company of an honest writer, of a writer devoid of affectations and prejudice, of a writer who possesses the particular kinds of spiritual generosity and tolerance that belong to the best traditions of English literature. In every sentence one feels that his sympathies are in the right place – are where Henry Fielding's or Oliver Goldsmith's or Charles Dickens's sympathies would be under like circumstances.

The actual setting of this story is, one suspects, no other place than East Chaldon, where a hundred yards back from the village green a tavern stands displaying on a swinging signpost the title of this book. And to any one who knows this most beautiful and most hidden away of all Dorset villages certain passages of "The Sailor's Return" come to his ears with the actual cawing of the rooks of Maddar, with the actual clattering of the buckets of the old women at the well of Maddar, with the actual tip-tap, tip-tap of the dairy-house knocker, where one goes to fetch his milk each afternoon through summer and winter. These particular passages, I say, are

stored away in one's memory, together with his actual experience of the place, until, as can happen only with exceptional books, fact and fiction becomes mingled in one's mind.

Whenever David Garnett refers to the Negro something magnanimous in him is touched and he writes with the utmost delicacy. "William had called her Tulip because she had seemed to him like that brilliant flower, swaying upon its slender, green, cylindrical and sappy stalk," and again portraying her when she was disguised as a boy he says, "His savage bones were small and delicate; one might have fancied them light as a bird's, and, like a bird's bones, filled with air." The mere mention of Tulip brings from him tender sentences, just as the mere thought of the evil spite and meanness of the village public opinion, which he draws "so true to life", gives to his pages a new stinging quality, like nettles come upon unexpectedly among bluebells and pink-campions. "Young Mr. Stingo" (the brewer who had threatened to evict Targett from his public house because of his illicit relationship with Tulip) "was as much surprised as he was pleased when Mr. Cronk wrote and told him of the approaching marriage; for, though glad to keep his tenant, he had never known that vice could get such a hold on a man as to make him marry a coloured woman rather than part from her."

Think of selecting such a name as Cronk for the clergyman of the village! There is genius in that alone. The Rev. Adrian Cronk! And how truly humorous is the description of Mr. Cronk's hasty retreat into the ditch behind the cowshed!

"Good day, Targett," said the clergyman. William grinned again, turned and discovered Tulip, who had been eavesdropping, behind the door. There was in her face an expression of great alarm, mingled with relief, and, coming on her suddenly like that, William burst out laughing, caught her by both hands and whirled her out onto the doorsteps of the

inn. As he did so the parson turned and looked back, and Tulip, catching sight of him, gave a scream and ran into the house... William laughed and laughed again; he found he could not stop and leaned up again at the door-post weakly. While he laughed the Rev. Adrian Cronk looked about him in terror lest he should have been seen leaving the inn. People would think Targett was laughing at him. The parson didn't dare to walk into the village, and on the spur of the moment jumped down into the ditch and crawled behind the carrier's cartshed... anything was preferable to walking through the village with that sailor laughing at him, and he was always happiest when only the eye of God was looking... The reverend gentleman had, of course, been ob-



Cover of Sundial reprint.

served taking cover, but it did not surprise either of the old women who witnessed it. They put his retirement behind the cartshed down to another reason, one which may apply to every one, irrespective of the color of his cloth.

How, too, he hits off these villagers, these ignoble men and women who look upon anything out of the common, with the pale, vicious, "rafti" eyes of frightened carnivorous sheep! When Targett and Tulip came riding back together after their midnight bath at the foot of the White Nore "Tulip riding in front with her bare feet thrust into the leathers of Harry's stirrups, William's jacket hanging loosely in folds round her naked body, and her wet woolly head shining," the village people remain sullen to the sailor's cheerful greeting "until he turned towards them in the saddle." When Targett rides back unexpectedly to find an angry mob at the door of the inn demanding that Tulip shall be given up to them, and asks with his hunting crop in his hand what all the nonsense is about, "he found that the crowd seemed just as big as ever but it was composed of his friends."

The farm laborers in the hot cornfields had rejoiced at first to see each noble supplies of good liquor coming into the village, being drawn by stout horses of The Trade: "the horses were fat and shiny, and moved with that slightly tipsy, dancing gait which is the sign of all good brewery horses." Eventually the ominous thundercloud breaks and William Targett is murdered in a fight in his back orchard by an unscrupulous prize-ring "pug" hired to "beat him up."

There is real pathos in the words that the brave, heartbroken Tulip calls down to Targett's young brother from the upstairs room, "Tell the doctor William's skull is broken," she said. "I can feel the edges of the bone," just as there is authentic humor in the observation of the licensed retailer who succeeds Targett when he remarks in condoling with the Princess Gundemey of Dahomey, reduced now to a glasswasher called Two Lips, on the death of her husband: "A villain like that deserves no mercy – murdering a licensed man."

(from *New York Herald Tribune*, 1925)

Philippa Powys – A new publication

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Review

A Struggle for Life, by Llewelyn Powys

edited and introduced by Anthony Head

(London: Oneworld Classics, 2010. ISBN 978-1847491695. £9.99)

Previous selections of Llewelyn Powys's essays have grouped his work by theme or location – Africa, Switzerland, the West Country. This is the first collection since Kenneth Hopkins' *Llewelyn Powys: A Selection of His Writings* (1952) to provide an overview of his writing life as a whole. Anthony Head's selection is exceptionally coherent and judicious and provides an excellent entrance to Llewelyn's work for a newcomer. There are also plenty of *trouvailles* for seasoned Powysians, with nine of the twenty-eight items here collected for the first time in book form.

The collection is framed by two fine pieces in which Llewelyn describes his own struggle for life. The first, on the onset of his tuberculosis, is one of his best known essays; the last, the deeply moving 'Reflections of a Dying Man', will be unfamiliar, but provides a summation of Llewelyn's Epicurean philosophy, whose 'classical austerity' may be tempered by 'the fresh dew of natural goodness'. In between, almost every essay is marked in some way by an awareness of death and transience, yet without melancholy or morbidity, rather with a keen delight in 'the positive existence of the solid earth'.

If tuberculosis gave urgency and seriousness to Llewelyn's vocation as a writer, the 'terrible, sundrenched, bloodstained' country of Africa offered him a landscape in which the struggle for life was played out more ferociously than in the 'sweet meadowlands' of Europe. In effect, he takes up the challenge of Aldous Huxley's 'Wordsworth in the Tropics'. Llewelyn's vision of nature never lost this fierceness, and a memory of lions raiding a Kenyan cattle camp lies behind his description of a dying rat-mauled Dorset partridge. Memorably, he brings Africa and Dorset together in evoking the migration of a swallow from the kopjes of Natal 'through untraversed aerial levels' north to Portland Bill.

It is disconcerting to find Llewelyn shooting a hippopotamus, apparently without Orwellian shooting-an-elephant qualms, and writing of ostriches, 'They are very easy to shoot. If you hit them anywhere from bill to toe, they come toppling over.' This at a time when elder brother John was rescuing tadpoles from shallow ditches. But by 1936, Llewelyn was denouncing the 'Barbarians' of the hunting lobby, albeit as someone who understood that 'we are all of us the children of killing animals'.

Throughout his career, Llewelyn was also engaged in a more prosaic 'struggle for life' as a professional writer. It is in a way appropriate that these essays with their poetic evocations of transience should have been given such ephemeral publication, but this is not hackwork. Clearly, Llewelyn found the essay a perfect form for his individual talent, which was reflective and observational rather than psychological, and anecdotal rather than dramatic. The essay 'A Blackamoor! A Blackamoor!,'

published here for the first time, describing an encounter with a ‘repugnant’ bow-legged, presumably rachitic chimney-sweep in Bromsgrove, is unusual for Llewelyn for its thoroughly human subject and urban setting. But his vivid sketch of the tragically persecuted, traumatized artist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner shows that he could be as alertly observant of human beings as of the natural world.

Anthony Head in his introduction offers a nuanced appreciation of Llewelyn’s qualities as a writer, and he judges sensitively which aspects of his writing have best stood the test of time. He suggests that Llewelyn would not be at ease in the modern world, and indeed he was already at odds with the modernity of the ‘debased age’ in which he himself lived. He was conscious of ‘the romance of English history’ – rather robustly interpreted – and this occasionally led him into a kind of mock-Tudor, half-timbered prose that has not worn well, especially when he runs to Rabelais and Shakespeare to find literary and historical justification for the pleasures of drink and sex.

Head does not offer a wide selection of the autobiographical writing which possibly means most to those who are already Llewelyn enthusiasts. John Cowper would refer to Llewelyn’s nostalgic evocations of childhood and family life at Montacute as ‘Lulu-izing’. Here, the delightful ‘Weymouth in the Year of the Three



Eights’ is Lulu-izing of a very high order. The essay was written at about the same time as John Cowper’s *Weymouth Sands*, and it would be interesting to learn which came first. When Llewelyn writes, ‘A peculiar glamour hangs over my memories of Weymouth’ one thinks immediately of the ‘heathen glamour’ of John Cowper’s sands, and there is another jolt of recognition when we learn that the Powys’s Weymouth grandmother, ‘when the rising moon shone bright upon Weymouth Bay, would often declare that its path was paved with sheets of gold in preparation for her journey to heaven’.

Famously, Llewelyn would have nothing of such a vision of an afterlife. He is deeply sensitive to magical influences and intimations, to whose ‘sacramental quality’ he has a ‘poetic awareness’. Yet he is careful to rein in his descriptions of such phenomena just before they tip over into transcendence. To imagine another world is to denigrate the magic of this one. The eloquent praise of the physical universe with its stars and starshine in the essay ‘When I Consider Thy Heavens’ shows Llewelyn’s imaginative sweep at its broadest but also most sensitive.

This book makes a fine addition to the attractive and eclectic list of One World Classics, and offers a fine distillation of Llewelyn Powys’s distinctive genius.

John Hodgson

Tit-Bits

No. 3059 8th June 1940, p.7

What Has Religion To Say Now?

These are days of disillusion and heartache when there can be few who do not feel the need for spiritual comfort. The less "religious" we are the more difficult it is to find strength and comfort for the spirit, healing peace for the harassed mind.

The writers contributing this series of articles are men and women of diverse views, some conventional some unconventional; all are people of knowledge and experience of life in various phrases. May their thoughts help and inspire us to clearer knowledge and faith.

Previous articles were by Professor C.E.M. Joad, Miss Stella Gibbons, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., Mr. Louis Golding, Mr. Herbert S. Dean, K.C.S.G., Sybil, Lady Eden, the Rev. Geoffrey H. Woolley, V.C., M.C., and "Tit-Bits" Foreign Correspondent. Next Friday, "I Believe in the Future Life," by Ernest W. Oaten, Editor "The Two Worlds."

At the end of the series I shall invite you to send me your own views; it will give me pleasure to publish as many of your letters as possible. But please read all the articles before you write. You can order back copies of the last eight issues from a newsagent. — THE EDITOR [Tit-Bits]

I DON'T GOTO CHURCH BUT ...

by JOHN COWPER POWYS, LECTURER AND NOVELIST

Mr Powys is probably best known for his novel "A Glastonbury Romance."

It is certainly one of the most interesting things that any man or woman can do — especially in a world-crisis like this — to try to analyze, honestly and shamelessly, the attitude to Religion of one human personality, and this personality their own.

The interest evaporates, at least it does for me, the moment we begin to try to make our Confession a reasonable statement of what we would *like to think of ourselves* believing and feeling, or disbelieving and not feeling. It evaporates the moment we try to speak for others or the moment we try to use our statement as propaganda to influence others.

The whole sport of the game, if I may use such a phrase in this connection, lies in

TIT-BITS (*full title* Tit-Bits from all the interesting Books, Periodicals and Newspapers of the World) was a British weekly magazine founded in 1881, until 1984 when it was taken over by Associated Newspapers' Weekend; this too closed in 1989. It lost its hyphen in 1973. The magazine was a mass circulation publication with sales between 400 and 600 thousand, with emphasis on human interest stories, drama and sensation. The magazine name has survived as Titbits International. (From Wikipedia, 2011)

We have attempted to preserve the original lay-out.

Thanks to John Hodgson for finding this.

the attempt to explore and expose our real, actual thoughts and feelings, however inconsistent and self-contradictory they are, and however unworthy of an intelligent or educated person; and finally, I am compelled to add, however surprising to ourselves.

Childhood's Revolt

The passion most human beings have for feeling themselves to be exciting and striking intelligences, superior to the common run, begins in our revolt from the views of our parents.

Now the very first thing I find when I begin analyzing my religious attitude is simple contrariness. I was brought up in the Evangelical section of the Church of England, the section that is called Low Church and that is temperamentally akin, save for its love of the tone and style and temper of the English Prayer Book, to the sentiment of the Nonconformists.

I was brought up therefore to associate religion very closely with morality; in fact so closely that it would be hard to separate the two things. And what was the result? In order to enjoy the exquisite sensation of feeling, as the Americans say, "different," I endeavoured to force these things apart and to make the utmost of every grain of idolatry and superstition that I could find in me. And I found a great many.

Mystic "Presence"

I never go to church; but I have a mania — I can hardly call it less — for reading the Bible, especially the New Testament; and it is queer how some odd instinct, perhaps the same sort of superstition that makes me uneasy if I see the new moon through glass, or perhaps some ritualistic mandate, forces me to scramble hurriedly to my feet when in my reading I reach the Last Supper.

Or is it a pure aesthetic feeling, a dislike of *seeing myself* comfortably lolling on a couch while I read those magical words that the Rationalists of the Reformation parodied as *Hocus-Pocus*.

Many people like myself who have a tendency to worship the powers of Nature and never go to church are what is called mystics; that is they feel the presence of God, or of something corresponding to God, in Nature, and are conscious of wonderful ecstatic emotions wherein they "sink", so to speak, though the outward forms of Nature into some great Over-soul beyond.

This is a feeling I have not had for a single second. I have absolutely nothing of the mystic in me. And yet coldly and rationally I hold the view that it is extremely probable that there *is* such a thing as a great Soul of Nature, or Over-soul, who uses as its *antennæ*, or as its infinitely various mediums of experience, all living creatures and perhaps inanimate things, too, and who stores up those experiences, from those of a gnat to those of Shakespeare, in its cosmic consciousness.

I suppose it is that I am such a hopeless bookworm that just as I look at life second-hand through books, so I do with religion; and so while that pantheistic* feeling that

so thrilled Wordsworth never comes to me at all I can repeat with relish the great lines of his "Intimations" and thus get second-hand and through literature the magic of the pantheistic religion that in its direct essence leaves me entirely cold.

Heritage of Memory

I do not mean that I am devoid of the most thrilling feelings, and feelings, too, that go beyond the aesthetic, go beyond any sense of the beautiful in Nature. But these feelings always present themselves, when I enjoy them most, as what I might call vague pre-natal memories, reaching me from the sensations enjoyed by my ancestors, by all the generations that have gone before me. This especially happens when there is a wind, though it is a totally different thing from that *worship of the wind* to which reference has been made.

Whether due or not to the influence of the non-Christian poets, including the poetry of the Old Testament, I cannot find in myself the faintest stirring of a tendency to connect either my *conscience*, which is a restless and often troublesome influence in my life, or my *religion*, which is largely a bookish thing, with any thought of a future life.

I do not, as some do, dogmatically reject a future life; but, analyse as I can, I cannot discover that the idea of it or the possibility of it has the remotest influence on either my religious feeling or my rather simple moral code.

Nor, to confess the honest truth, has the idea of God. Both my religious life and the struggle of my conscience would go on just the same if some atheist could convince me — which will never happen, for I am too sceptical about the philosophical and scientific *alternatives* — that in no conceivable meaning of the term had God any existence.

Just as my favourite writers, including those of the Old Testament, encourage me to keep both the development of my conscience and the development of my religious sense independent of, and uninfluenced by, the idea of a future life, so also the pain and misery of the world, as I see it reflected in books as well as perceive it with my nerves and my imagination, discourages me in any belief in God.

Indeed if I must confess the whole truth and nothing but the truth, I am constantly tempted when I *am* driven by my distrust of the dogmas of science to think of God, to imagine Him as a Being partly good and partly evil; more good than evil, I admit, else the world couldn't go on, but certainly not entirely good.

As far as the New Testament is concerned, it is the profoundly psychological Christianity of St. Paul that chiefly interests me. This I confess has come to have a deep influence on my life; and as St. Paul gives to the sayings of Jesus his own peculiar twist, so, if I may say so without presumption, I find I can give to the sayings of St. Paul *my* own peculiar twist.

Secrets of St. Paul

What in the New Testament I like least are the Parables in the Gospels, for all for

these, except that beautiful and immortal story of the Good Samaritan, are concerned, and have their entire meaning and significance, in the double conception of a life after death and of an all-powerful, all-rewarding, all-punishing deity.

In fact, if I were pressed to say as nearly as I possibly could what it “was” in religion, I would say I was a devotee of St. Paul, with certain poetical reversions to the polytheism* of Homer. And if I were pressed to say what connection my rather touchy conscience has with my religion, I would say none at all!

What I have learned from St. Paul are certain psychological secrets that have deepened my life. What I have learned from Homer are certain poetical secrets that have heightened my life. Whence my conscience comes from I confess I cannot tell. Sometimes I am tempted to wish it had never come at all!

But it *has* come; and it would often have me believe it comes, as old Kant thought, from outside Time and Space.

* *PANTHEISM is the belief that God is everything, and everything is God. POLYTHEISM is the belief in many gods.*



Durdle Door, by Gertrude M. Powys (SPM).

The Old Gods

The Irish poet Padraic Fallon (1905-74) reviewed Porius when first published in its shorter version by Macdonalds, sixty years ago in 1951.

Mr. Powys is one of those Titan writers who loom in the background of a period, isolated, unwieldy, lost in some large sensibility, but with the earth-thrill and a might of presentation that seems to keep the Gods moving among men.

What the modern novel seems to be losing rapidly is the quality for plain and unadulterated physical sensation with which he presents his world, a world that is our world too, if we had the concentration to live exactly in the instant, that instant that is happening all the time.

All his people are just a bit outsize because of this awareness of things around them — a leaf underfoot, a wheaten straw tossed aside, the shape of a tree or a chimneypot, anything that happens to be around at the time an experience is shaping itself within.

Man and the earth, indeed, are a kind of tide of ebb and flow in sensibility. They are the instinct of experience. The world presents and man divines.

This augurs a certain belief in the ordering of things, an eternal affirmative to the creative gesture that began before time: and it has given Mr. Powys his philosophy, a philosophy that is a poetry of animism, something that has the poise of the Greek and the orgiastic impulse of the Phrygian, all refined through a massive God-sense and a sense of mythic history.

It is not the psyche of one revealed religion, it is a consciousness of many: so many gods, indeed, have died into

this Unconscious that it savours of a divine burial ground in which immortal longings are still active.

The End-piece

"Porius" would appear to be the culmination of Mr. Powys's literary life, and is a Titan offering in terms of myth. The story is of a mixed society of Roman-Brython-Goidel people and invading Saxons, and where there are still some remains of matriarchal rule and Druid-culture.

It is the time of the famous emperor, Arthur, and the magician, Merlin.

The story is simple. Under the pressure of the invasion, the old order is finally destroyed, the Druid killed, the matriarchal element eliminated. But as a very unobjective correlative, most of the characters are shadows thrown on history by the elder god-types.

Thus the Prince of Edeyrnion represents some sun deity — I think Odin, because of the ending "Nion", which means "ashtree"; Merlin, called by the author, Myrddin Wyllt, is an incarnation of Cronus or Bran or Saturn; Porius, the Prince's son, a giant boy, is probably an equivalent in time of the Titan family — and so on.

Three sisters, who have some royal rights among the forest peoples, represent the Earth Goddess in triad; the emperor's nephew some decayed shadow of Hades, and many others have non-representational bodies back in the mythologies.

But do not be put off by this elaborate shadow-show. Through it you can feel the earth turning over and labouring into a new sign. Through it, too, the earth can be heard living, clinging and living through its archetypes, who are the vast reception-images of human longings. And for all that, the story is human, or rather it is humanised; for I do not believe Mr. Powys can ever create a figure who is accepted as human in any current art-mode except his own.

He must always have the symbol, and his characters must throw long shadows backwards and forwards: but he has evolved such an antithetical and wayward method of telling a tale that the pegs on which he hangs his human feelings will some time or other take up their clothes and walk.

Never, I suppose, in any tall work of art like this, was there such a conglomeration of wooden figures to begin with. Not one fails to be grotesque; and still, when the convention makes itself accepted, his characters come to life and his world rounds itself, a world elaborate as Euripides and as trivial as Alice in Wonderland. It is a style that is a way of seeing, a vision of a poet as against the scrutiny of a commenting novelist.

What incidents there are — and some are entirely bloody and some tough and some very thoroughly nihilistic — seems to be absorbed into the psyche almost before they happen, as if, indeed, we were dreaming of them in advance. It is not the technique of the present day, which leave incident to speak for itself. Mr. Powys will talk around the incident, talk you up to it, walk you away from it to some triviality and then make it happen

while you screw round anxiously at it over your shoulder.

No other writer I know would wish to write like this; no other writer could possibly throw away what would seem to be big, spectacular displays of action or treat them as meanly as Powys will do; and yet the effect of them comes through to you as a psychological totality. If a style can prove anything here it proves that accumulation can be as eclectic as selection.

The Living World

The book is not everyman's meat. Like the world it is story in many weighty chapters. Yet I could not skip a page or a paragraph — and I am the world's most experienced skipper of paragraphs — without missing the gist of the story and having to go back over the road again. I will not admit, now, to any feeling of boredom, but I will confess that there were evenings when I did not look forward to picking up the book again.

It is merely a matter of energy. There are no vacant spaces in the story; there are merely elaborate lesions where nothing happens but scenery. The difference between Powys's elaborations and that of a smaller man, however, is that the scenery is a psychology and part of his interpretation of the earth. His trees speak an ancient alphabet. The concentration he bestows on the external world becomes almost a fetish, and it is as if he asked from vegetables and other phenomena some return in kind.

This sort of rapport, really, is what we demand of poetry. It is also the kind of interest in us we demand of the earth and of the world in our childhood. Alone, among modern novelists, Powys

demands this footstool to the Gods.

If we are interested in a strain in the cloth or the shape of a rock, a spade-handle or a child's toy in the hand, there must be some animistic interchange of feeling; what we throw out must come back subtly altered. We give the object a kind of life, and for a moment it breathes. We create it, if only for our-

selves.

In a feeling of that nature, "Porius" comes to life and there is no difficulty in accepting as creditable the old-time giants and gods. It is a world that stands on two believing footsoles and never thinks of blank space underfoot.

Padraic Fallon

Irish Times: 22/09/1951

Pat Quigley writes: 'Padraic Fallon (1905-74) was a major Irish writer of poems and verse plays whose work was influenced by native ancient Irish literature as were Synge and Yeats. He wrote for radio and for Irish newspapers and journals and was interested in the work of John Cowper Powys. He reviewed Jobber Skald in the 1930s. His son, Brian, remembers his father arguing over Powys with a sceptical Louis MacNiece.'

W. J. Keith

Some Thoughts on William Faulkner

In my view, the essential point that needs to be emphasized is the easily forgotten fact that, in 1925, JCP was already a known literary figure whereas Faulkner was, to all intents and purposes, unknown. He had published one modest volume of poems but no fiction at that time. Indeed, it is likely that he was in the process of writing his first novel at the time he produced the review of *Ducdame*.

In style, of course, the review [reprint in *Newslster* 72] in no way resembles that of his later fiction. He seems uncertain about the task of reviewing, and is not altogether coherent. It's interesting to remember that, though he attended the University of Mississippi, he left without a degree, and had failed hopelessly in English! It's also interesting to note that his early career as a novelist bears a remarkable similarity to JCP's. In both cases, they made their breakthrough success with their fourth published novels; in Faulkner's case, it was *The Sound and the Fury* which appeared, like *Wolf Solent*, in 1929.

Faulkner's claim that *Ducdame* would have been better in play-form is, given his own later work, extraordinary, and the minds boggles in hindsight at the idea of Faulkner, of all people, asking: 'Why is it that Americans don't seem to feel that part of the earth's surface in which their roots are?'

Unlike JCP, Faulkner took some time to realize where his own fictional concerns, and his abilities, lay. His first novel, *Soldiers' Pay* (1926), is set in Georgia rather than Mississippi (though Southern specialists have recognized elements in it which

Faulkner ultimately transmuted into his Jefferson, Yoknapatawpha County). Of his second novel, *Mosquitoes* (1927), my friend and colleague Michael Millgate, an authority on Faulkner as well as on Thomas Hardy, and to whom I am indebted for factual information, has written: 'The bulk of the book is taken up with heavy conversation about such topics as art, life, beauty, and sex'.¹ This sounds uncannily like what *Ducdame* might have been if JCP had omitted the action and atmosphere which Faulkner considered 'defeats its own ends'. *Mosquitoes*, as a result, is Faulkner's least characteristic novel.

Sartoris, WF's third novel, was published like its famous successor in 1929. Here, Jefferson and Yoknapatawpha appeared for the first time, and characters within it were destined to reappear and interweave in his subsequent work. Moreover, here as well as in *The Sound and the Fury* and the later *Absalom! Absalom!* (1932), the main themes consider continuity of inheritance (or, rather, *discontinuity*), and the falls of the Sartoris, Compson, and Sutpen families. Shades of *Ducdame* again.

Now it is true that, despite the melodramatic elements and actions in *Ducdame*, Faulkner's book contains more violence, and it is also true that the atmospheric quality of his fiction in general is achieved indirectly without the sheer amount of descriptive detail one finds in JCP. Yet Faulkner was later to observe in an interview: 'Beginning with *Sartoris*, I discovered my own little postage stamp of native soil'.² This sounds metaphorically like Jane Austen's famous 'little bit (four inches wide) of ivory', though this may be coincidental, since it's hard to imagine Faulkner reading Austen; but in terms of the larger patterns of fiction it fits remarkably well with JCP's and Hardy's alternative versions of Wessex.

It is, of course, dangerous to speculate from the evidence of a single, very minor piece of literary commentary, which gives signs of being written with excessive haste. Yet I like to think it at least *possible* that *Ducdame* had a delayed impact on Faulkner's consciousness. If so, it can have played a tiny but significant role in nudging him into finding his true métier.

W.J. Keith.

1 Michael Millgate, *William Faulkner* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), 21

2 *ibid.*, 9.

Susan Rands: "Going easy"

Letters from JCP to Wren Howard and Jonathan Cape (1930-44)

"Go easy with Wren Howard and you will be all right; when dealing with publishers you have to compromise", Arthur Calder-Marshall advised Julian Maclaren Ross.¹ Wren Howard was the partner of Jonathan Cape and in charge of all book productions, dealing with printers and binders. He was, according to the publisher Rupert Hart-Davis, who had also worked for Cape,²

a trim, spruce figure of military appearance, his cautious precision complemented Cape's rather more swash-buckling approach while re-inforcing his reluctance to part with more money than was absolutely necessary. He had a fine eye for design and it was largely due to him that Cape's books became highly esteemed for their good looks and high standards of production. Jonathan Cape may have felt little affection for his authors, Howard actively disliked them.

Early in 1929 JCP lunched with Cape and Simon & Schuster at the New York Piazza and it was decided that *Wolf Solent* should be published by both firms simultaneously on May 16th.³ Cape must have negotiated for further books also for on 1 January 1930 JCP wrote to Wren Howard:

4 Patchin Place
New York City
Jan 1st 1930

Dear Mr Wren Howard

Thanks for you letter of Dec 16th. Yes, I will be glad to keep you in touch with the progress of my next book which ought to be in Mr. Schuster's hands over here by March 1st anyway; ready for publication in the Autumn.

*I will certainly keep in mind what you say about a duplicate MSS and when I get it typed at the end of February I'll aim for a Carbon copy. The book is a rather wild and eccentric philosophical sketch; somewhat, if I may say so, à la Sartor Resartus. Its initial motive was to carry further (and in a less academic and less scholastic manner) certain among the points touched on both in *Wolf Solent* and the *Culture* book.*

At one time I thought of entitling it a "Defence of Sensuality" but this would in reality be a misleading name. So I shall let the title go for a bit, till I've finished the book. Its about a third through, I should say. Its an essay, you know, not fiction and not an orthodox philosophical treatise. Its a sort of stoic-epicurean Fantasia. I really don't know how to describe it.

Yours sincerely,

John Cowper Powys

No answer to this letter seems to exist,⁴ but on 6 March 1930 Howard wrote to John Cowper:

Dear Mr. Powys,

*We are publishing *The Meaning of Culture* on March 17th and six copies have gone forward to you this week. We all here think the book stands a good chance of a steady sale and we have great hope of its success.*

Yours very truly, G. Wren Howard

John Cowper replied on 7 April 1930:

My dear Mr Howard,

Many thanks for the books safely received. I like the look of the 'format' particularly. It has a scholarly and reserved look, very suitable I think.

I will keep you in touch with my activities. I have sent finished the MSS of my rather wild and fantastic philosophy-book wh. is I expect more poetical than scientific but I'll let you hear if Simon & Schuster accept it for publication in the fall. What on earth to name it I cannot think — but they may have some suggestions in the publishing office. We shall see. I seem bad at titles.

*I am now going to give up lecturing for a year & retire to a cottage 'up-state' (as they say here) in the Fenimore Cooper country where I have to launch out on another long romance like *Wolf Solent* only with Somersetshire instead of Dorset as the background.*

With all good respects to Mr. J. C & to yourself

yours sincerely,

John C. Powys

However, about the philosophical treatise Cape and Howard must have had second thoughts, when *Wolf Solent* and *The Meaning of Culture* did not do so well in England as they had in the States. *In Defence of Sensuality* was published by Gollancz in October 1930, reprinted five times in the same year and frequently since. This must have caused Cape to think yet again about publishing JCP's work, for although he rejected *A Glastonbury Romance* (and in the light of subsequent events was probably glad he had done so) he was evidently planning a new edition of *Wolf Solent*, for on 25 July 1933 JCP wrote to him from Hillsdale:

Dear Mr Cape

*I was so greatly interested in your letter and very pleased to learn of the new and cheaper edition of *Wolf*.*

Yes, I do indeed heartily congratulate you on that method of yours (old-fashioned or not, indeed all the better for it if it is!) of keeping books alive.

*I was delighted with that green jacket of the *Culture* book of mine in your *Life and Letter* series, and I was very pleased that you were so thoughtful as to send me two copies of that when it first came out. I am at this very moment beginning the Preface which you desire for the *Solitude* book and am so pleased to learn from you that this is coming out in the autumn.*

Yes, I have just posted to Simon and Schuster my new novel — which is about Weymouth — and which I trust I have placed in their hands in time for it to be published in America in October which in my view is the best time, over here, for a book to appear.

I appreciate deeply, Mr Cape, your interest in this new novel; but at the present moment I fear I am not in a position to handle directly and independently and 'off my own bat' the publication of this one, or of any other of my current writings (or those now under my hand) in England. It is impossible to speak for the future in these things — and in these business matters, as you know, things are always changing — but at the moment I'm not in a position to make my independent arrangements with English Publishers.

Nevertheless, Mr Cape, I am very pleased with your interest in this new Weymouth novel of mine which I certainly hope has reached S. and S's office in time to be published in October over here.

Yes, I heartily agree with you about the spelling; and indeed, as far as I can, I aim at English spelling even in American editions — tho' I suppose this ideal is not always maintained unimpaired! I was very pleased to get this letter of yours, Sir, even if at the moment I am not in a position to deal independently with publishers in England. Please remember me to Mr Howard.

Yours very sincerely

John Cowper Powys

P.S. This is now my permanent Up-State address, as above... I have got a little place in the hills near Hudson-on-Hudson and fairly near Albany.

P.P.S. I've given up Patchin Place though a friend of mine has my old room there and forwarded your letter to me but this is now my permanent dwelling: Hillsdale, New York State.

One more letter from JCP to Jonathan Cape exists, written from Corwen on 23 June 1944.

Dear Mr Cape,

I must just send you a brief personal note — that does not however need any reply for I am sure few men are more busy than you must be just now — to assure you of my lasting gratitude for the substantial help you gave me at what really was an extremely worrying crisis in my affairs — but with your excellent aid — both directly and indirectly exerted on my behalf I am now in the middle of the harbour of security -- I won't say resting on my oars, but rowing on, with easy strokes, and I trust the proper 'feathering' of the oars!

I recollect with great pleasure our meeting at that hotel near the entrance of Central Park in New York under the auspices of Mr Max Schuster and Richard Simon and I can even recall snatches of our conversation on that day!

Well, I can tell you, Mr Cape, I shall never forget your kindness to me at this juncture.

Ever yours gratefully

John Cowper Powys

This letter refers to Cape's help at the beginning of 1944 when John, on the advice of Louis Wilkinson, was considering applying for a grant from the Royal Literary Fund. John's letter to Louis of 28 February 1944 explains what happened:

February 28th, 1944

In Haste

Good News! my dear — from my point of view — for I'm spared any borrowing pro tem, or any Grant! Some excellent friend — either James Hanley or young Reginald Moore or yourself peradventure! or, finally possibly Mrs. Bisco⁵ — but I tend to think either yourself or James Hanley — went to see Pollinger my agent and must have stirred him up very successfully with the result that he went to see old J. Cape & stirred him up with equal success! with the result that I've just had a cheque for £90.0.0 — £100 less Mr. P's

commission — and have now rushed the cheque off to my Bank in Dorchester & am now settling down to finish my 'Rabelais' in ease comfort luxury & relief!

Subsequently he also applied for the grant and thanks to the efforts of Cape, and others, was successful in obtaining it.

NOTES

- 1 *Collected Memoirs of Julian Maclaren-Ross* (London: Black Spring Press, 2004), 276.
- 2 Philip Ziegler, *Rupert Hart-Davis* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2004), 88.
- 3 M. Elwin, ed. *Letters of John Cowper Powys to His Brother Llewelyn*, Vol II (London: Village Press, 1976), 94.
- 4 All unpublished letters to Howard and Cape are from University of Reading University Library in Jonathan Cape General Files.
- 5 Mrs Biscoe: 'Ann Temple' of the *Daily Mail*, who commuted from Corwen. See JCP, *Letters to Louis Wilkinson 1935–1956* (London: Macdonald, 1958 & Village Press, 1974), e.g., 139, 147, 357.



Framed photographs of the 'Etruscan profiles' of Philip Lybbe and Caroline Powys executed by Jacob Spornberg in Bath in 1807. They were the grand- and great-grandparents of the Powyses who rowed down the Thames in 1863, as recounted in the Log of the Marianne (see page 54). The photographs were taken shortly before 1899 when Passages from the Diaries of Mrs. Philip Lybbe Powys was published; these particular copies have the name 'Eleanor C. Powys' on the back, daughter of Constance and Cunliffe Powys, and mother of Molly Gambell through whom they came into my possession. SPM

A Powysian boating trip in 1863

In August 1863, William Cunliffe Powys ('Cunliffe') organised a five-day rowing trip down the Thames from Oxford to Kew; the evident purpose was to entertain his cousin Constance Ellen Powys; they were second cousins, great-grandchildren of Caroline and Philip Powys, and were married three years later.

Cunliffe must also have been the author of more than 400 lines of verse, and indeed the compiler of an elaborate leather-bound album, presented by Cunliffe to Constance later in the year. This album, 8½ inches high, contained studio photographs of the eight people who took part, six of them Powyses (the two principals shewn full-size here), and a 52-page booklet with the verses, *The Log of the Marianne*, commemorating the great excursion, interspersed with photos and drawings, many with elaborate pen-drawn borders and frames. One of the drawings, reproduced on the cover, portrays an awkward encounter with swans, with my great-great-grandfather, Bransby William Powys, at the sharp end.

Two of the party were daughters of Bransby, including Constance, and two other



William Cunliffe Powys.



Constance Ellen Powys.

3
All ye who know old Father Thames.
List while I sing to you.
The Voyage of the Marianne
From Oxford down to Kew,
Here everything of note ashore
That happened, and on board,
I'll do my best most faithfully
And truly to record

Lieutenant Cunliffe Powys. of
The 22nd Foot.

(A soldier every inch is he,
And oarsman strong to boot.)
At home or leave from foreign parts,
In August '63.

Lets make a voyage down the Thames
What fun "Says he" 'twill be!
"O yes & now I well can mind
"The promise I once made
To take my Cousin on the river
"Ere summer's glories fade -

The first page of text in the Log of the Marianne, verses composed and written out by
William Cunliffe Powys (paper 8 inches high).



girls were sisters of Constance's cousin Cunliffe, and then there were two family friends to make up the eightsome.

Constance's brother, Horace Annesley Powys, was the father of Dorothy Powys who married A. R. Powys in 1905; their daughter Isobel was born in 1906. One of Constance and Cunliffe's grandchildren was Molly Gambell (also born in 1906), with whom Isobel was very close. I met Molly quite often at Isobel's house. Molly died unmarried and a number of things came Isobel's way, then to myself and my sister. I had no idea of the existence of the album until June this year !

Stephen Powys Marks

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*Hardwick House, Oxon, the Powys family home:
photograph, probably taken by Bransby William Powys,
included in The Log of the Marianne, 1863.*