Editorial

Many voices in this one – a fair sample of the Society? Many contributors – many thanks.

Of Powyses themselves, Llewelyn and Louis, the 'honeysuckle rogues' of yore (LlP in 1936 now in Switzerland) as always look on the bright side of life, but take up arms for King Edward and Mrs Simpson in the Abdication crisis.

TFP in another of his early pieces looks on the shadow side of village life, but not unpleasantly.

The JCP scene is dominated by the launch in Paris of the two-way letters, in the 1950s, between JCP and Henry Miller, edited by Jacqueline Peltier (previously known only in French). A good time was had by all and the first edition has sold out. Also from the 1950s, and a link with Henry Miller, is one of the prefaces JCP wrote for poets whom he knew through letters, this one for Eric Barker, 'the best-loved poet of Big Sur'. Barker included a poem to JCP in a later collection (can the person who kindly sent this to Editor please make themselves known?) and this is nicely paired by one from Raymond Garlick, JCP's neighbour in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Susan Rands evokes a privileged childhood in her obituary for her sister Sally Conelly. Sonia Lewis describes the April meeting at Northwold, scene of the opening of *Glastonbury*. Charles Lock reviews Jeremy Hooker's latest philosophical-poetical diary, and Hooker reviews two other poets. Remoter Powys connections are with the Quantocks, proof-reading, the CIA, and postcards from Palestine.

Our next *Newsletter* no 83 (November), welcomes a Guest Editor, Chris Thomas.

ON OTHER PAGES

Chairman's Report, 2013–14

Early in June, The Powys Society's Collection was successfully shifted from Dorchester (Dorset County Museum) to Exeter University Library. The negotiations that preceded this co-operative move had been protracted, and often stressful; when your Committee sat down together a few days later, at KK's home in deepest Gloucestershire, a sense of relief – a collective 'PHEW!' – was shared by all. Now we can again give our energies to more Powysian activities. Our chief minder throughout the project, Secretary Chris Thomas, will make a full report at the Sherborne Conference, including future arrangements at Exeter, and the role of Michael Kowalewski as Collection Liaison Manager.

You'll find elsewhere in this newsletter (p.7) an account of the enjoyable Northwold day in April: meeting at Brandon (where *A Glastonbury Romance* begins) we had a wide-ranging discussion, led by Sonia Lewis, in which our President proved even more incisive than usual. And our visit to Northwold itself was crowned by a lovely walk to the River Wissey.

But this year's most exciting developments have occurred in France, with the launch on May 11th of the new publication, under the Society's imprint, of the Henry Miller / JCP correspondence edited by Jacqueline Peltier, at 'Shakespeare & Co.' on the Rive Gauche in Paris (see page 24). The ensuing social events were lively, and we hope the Society can help in enabling future follow-ups to that very happy occasion.

Work continues on the JCP Diary transcriptions; and Peter Foss's edition of Llewelyn's 1910 Clavadel diary – *The Conqueror Worm* – may be published soon, perhaps even in time for the Conference .

Timothy Hyman
June 2014

Powys group outside Paris bookshop (see page 14).

Hon. Treasurer's Report for 2013.

The Powys Society accounts for 2013 are set out below: they have been approved by the Society's Honorary Auditor, Jane Roberts of Hills and Burgess Accountants, Leighton Buzzard, and the Society is once again most grateful for her work and advice on behalf of the Society.

The paid up membership for 2013 was 261 members, which is 19 less than in 2012,

THE POWYS SOCIETY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2013

INCOME		£	£
Subscriptions		5,814.89	
Refund		18.50	5,796.39
Unidentified		26.09	26.09
Donations Conference Book Sales		365.35	365.35
Publication Sales		194.34	194.34
Conference	Registration Fees	7,031.04	
	Less payment to Hand Hotel	6,890.00	
	Less refunds	372.00	
	Less expenses	449.00	-679.96
Bank interest		18.01	18.01
TOTAL INCOME			5,720.22
EXPENDITURE			
Powys Journal xxxii	Cost of printing	2,295.44	2,295.44
Powys Newsletters 77-79	Printing costs	2,403.87	
	Expenses	1,235.47	3,639.34
Day Schools	Brandon house	50.00	
	Dorset County Museum	237.00	
	Hampstead	57.00	344.00
Alliance of Literary Societies		15.00	15.00
Expenses	Officers expenses	851.31	851.31
	Committee expenses	554.00	554.00
Letter purchase, M. Peale		352.00	352.00
Coutts library services		4.50	4.50
Purchase of photo from Carl van Vechten		99.24	99.24
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			8,154.83
2014 Conference deposit, Sherborne Hotel			500.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			8,654.83
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME			2,934.61
STATEMENT OF FUNDS AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2013			
Cash at bank 31st December 2013			19,936.93
Community Account £64.45, Instant Saver £2,838.28, Business Saver £17,034.20			

Cash turnover in 2013: total receipts £13,431.22. Total payments £16,365.83

Anna Powelka, Hon Treasurer

and I would ask members to encourage those interested in the work of the Powys family to join the Society.

Our income from subscriptions in 2013 was £5,796.39.

The cost of producing the *Journal* in 2013 was £2,295.44, and the *Newsletter* £3,639.34, making a total of £5,934.78, being an increase on the figure of £4,486.81 for 2012.

The cost of the three Day meetings at Brandon House, Dorchester and Hampstead amounted to £344.

Anna Pawelko

Committee Nominations 2014–2015

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

	Nomination	*Proposer*	*Seconder*
Chairman	**Timothy Hyman**	Peter Lazare	Sonia Lewis
Vice-Chairman	**David Goodway**	Timothy Hyman	Raymond Cox
Hon. Secretary	**Chris Thomas**	Chris Wilkinson	Anna Pawelko
Hon. Treasurer	**Anna Pawelko**	Louise de Bruin	Marcella H.-P.

For the Committee the following have been nominated by a Society member and have agreed to stand: [*with apologies to Marcella Henderson-Peal for abbreviation*]

Nomination	*Proposer*	*Seconder*
Michael Kowalewski (Coll. L. M.)	John Hodgson	Louise de Bruin
Shelagh Powys Hancox	Sonia Lewis	Marcella H.-P.
John Hodgson	Timothy Hyman	Chris Thomas
John Dunn	Anna Pawelko	Louise de Bruin

If these nominations are approved by members at the **AGM**, the Committee, from August 2014, will consist of those named above as well as **Kate Kavanagh** (*Newsletter* editor) and **Jeff Kwintner** (who have one year to run of their three-year term of office; and **Louise de Bruin** (Publications Manager and Conference Organiser), who has two years to run of her three-year term of office. **Charles Lock** (editor of *The Powys Journal* serves as *ex-officio* member.

All paid-up members of the Powys Society are invited to submit nominations for service on the Committee to commence **August 2015**, at any time during the course of the forthcoming year. The deadline for submission of nominations is **1 June 2015**.

Chris Thomas, Hon. Secretary

AGM 2014

The Annual General Meeting of The Powys Society will be held at the **Sherborne Hotel in Sherborne, Dorset, at 11.00am, on Sunday 17th August 2014.** All members of the Powys Society are invited to participate in the meeting whether or not they are attending the Conference.

AGENDA

1 Minutes of AGM 2013 as published in *Newsletter* 80, November 2013, and matters arising.
2 Nominations of Honorary Officers and Members of The Powys Society Committee for 2014–2015.
3 Hon. Treasurer's Report and presentation of annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2013.
4 Collection Manager's Report.
5 Hon. Secretary's Report.
6 Chairman's Report as published in *Newsletter* 82, July 2014.
7 Date and Venue of annual conference 2015.
8 AOB.

Chris Thomas, Hon. Secretary

Northwold: Powys visit to the former Rectory, John Hodgson reading *(see page 7)*.

The Powys Society Conference 2014

The Sherborne Hotel, Horsecastles Lane, Sherborne, Dorset
Friday 15th August to Sunday 17th August

'TO CHART THE POWYS WORLD'

Programme

Friday 15th August

16.00 Arrival
17.30 Reception
18.30 Dinner
20.00 **Timothy Hyman:** 'Remembering Wilson Knight'

Saturday 16th August

08.00 Breakfast
09.30 **Peter Foss**: 'The Conqueror Worm': Llewelyn Powys's diary for 1910
Coffee
11.15 **Marcella Henderson-Peal**: 'JCP and France: his reception and reputation in the 1930s and later decades'
13.00 Lunch
Free Afternoon: A visit to Weymouth or a guided walk to Wyke Farm Manor, Bradford Abbas, and other places associated with JCP's novel *Wolf Solent*
19.00 Dinner
20.30 **David Gervais**: 'The novellas of Theodore Francis Powys' followed by discussion with members

Sunday 17th August

08.00 Breakfast
09.30 **Jonathan Goodwin**: 'Style and character in JCP's late romances'
11.00 AGM
12.00 **Professor J Lawrence Mitchell** (Cushing Library & Archives, Texas A&M University): 'John Cowper Powys and Walt Whitman, the 'poet of passionate friendship': a talk on a portrait of Whitman, now in the Cushing Library archives, once owned by JCP and later owned by Katie Powys. Followed by discussion with members
13.00 Lunch
15.00 Departure

For details of speakers and presentations please see Newsletter *81, March 2014, page 7.*

A Visit to Brandon and Northwold
26th April 2014

Sonia Lewis: A Glastonbury Romance: the Norfolk chapters ('The Will' and 'The River')

Kenneth Hopkins said of J.C.P. that he wrote of personal experience that made it universal. I would like to focus on some of the personal thoughts in the two first chapters of *A Glastonbury Romance* and how they might affect the whole Romance.

At times in these two chapters thoughts seem particularly important as future reference points. Dave Spear in an agitated state tries to explain his theories after the reading of the Will. We are told that *Long afterwards John remembered that clumsy bucolic figure leaning forward over the shadowy unlit table and clutching that bread.* This seems to be saying, Take note of this – especially when with hindsight we know of the significance of the breaking of bread for Johnny Geard in particular.

On the other hand Mary, when on their way to the boat finds herself repeating *That's the best of a greatcoat on a hot day. Its pockets are so useful.* It seems as if this is just a refrain, something of no deeper relevance. But it is given space and earlier, when John Crow is beginning his walk to Northwold, we are told *Far nearer to the man's conscious and half-conscious feelings, as with his overcoat buttoned under his chin and his fingers tightening upon stick and bag ... were the vast, dreamy life-stirrings of the soul of the earth.* These accoutrements make up John's personality – it is all part of him – the greatcoat, the stick, the bag. Mary by using this refrain about the greatcoat is almost getting into it with him.

The use of refrain is again used like an echo of the past. The Crows are OF Norfolk, it is in their blood. John Crow recalls his past life in France: *He saw these things against the far grey horizon where as a child he had been so often told to look for the great towers of Ely Cathedral, visible across leagues and leagues of level fens.* Even John's errant psyche is earthed by this flat fen land – his feet are in its mud. Philip also has the surname Crow – But, and it is a big but. His grandmother, long dead, reiterates: *My Philip's son will be like his father – He'll be all me! He'll be a true Philip Devereux. He'll have no touch of the Dane in him.* Soon after this we are to be given a wonderful insight into just how different is Philip Crow/Devereux. Imagining how he might spend his money from the will on electricity in the Mendip Caves we are told that it would be hard to put into rational human speech. *I ... I ...riding on electricity ... I ... I ... I ...alone ... all-powerful ... dominating Nature.* Here is a man who most definitely not earthed and he is thinking of using electricity – how dangerous is that!

This Norfolk landscape is more than just a backdrop – like the greatcoat it will play its part. Glen points out in his book on the novels of J.C.P.: *Throughout* A.G.R. *Norfolk is continually recalled as a kind of touchstone of sanity and of a recalcitrant resistance to the dominance of the supernatural.*

* * * *

A group of sixteen Powysians met at Brandon House Hotel (on the Norfolk-Suffolk borderline) for a lively discussion. Like the Crows we had come from different

directions. A sense of excitement was heightened by a good Norfolk lunch and we then made our ways northwards to Northwold, the parish of the Powys grandfather where the young JCP and Littleton had blissful holidays.

The interior of the Church was rather a shock – renovation work was in progress and large areas were covered by bright orange-red plastic tarpaulins. However, looking back from the chancel to the belfry the tall graceful early English arch could still be enjoyed, and the remaining medieval carvings seen with difficulty. The outside West doorway is a marvel of flintwork. Across the street from the churchyard, an elegant village house is boarded up.

Northwold Rectory itself was resplendent, the garden now an immaculate park with modern sculptures. The present owner came in his wheelchair to chat, and John Hodgson's reading, from Littleton's *The Joy of It*, described the house and garden as they were.

More evocative was the walk down the track over the 'little river' bordering the garden, to the Wissey itself. To the east nothing had changed: cattle grazed, scots pines and willows bordered the river and we trod the Norfolk sod on a clear bright day.

Returning to Brandon for afternoon tea the group gradually dispersed, many to meet again in the West – not in Glastonbury, but for the Conference at Sherborne.

SL with KK

Visiting Northwold Church under repair.

Obituary

Sally Connely, 1931–2014

(*Step-daughter of Malcolm Elwin, she inherited from her mother the copyright of Llewelyn Powys.*)

From Susan Rands

My sister, Sarah Jane (Sally to most people, Sal to her family and intimate friends) was born fourteen months after me. She soon supplanted me being prettier, more loving, more sensitive, more amusing, and more talented. And somehow she was always more needy of love, comfort, wealth and above all of surroundings which satisfied her aesthetic sensibilities.

We grew up first in a house in Gloucester Place, London W1, looked after by an old-fashioned nanny who daily wheeled us in a double pram in Regent's Park or Hyde Park. Once, my mother told us of an occasion when she happened to be with us, which was rare, we were taken for the little princesses. 'Who did people think *you* were?' I asked.

When we were four and five we moved to a house on a hill by the Fair Mile at Henley-on-Thames, and the nanny was superseded by a series of 'nursery governesses'. These had a few hours off when the chauffeur, and occasionally our mother, took us to classes at Culham Court, the home of Cecil King the newspaper proprietor. When we were seven and eight we went as boarders to a little school at

Sally Connely, aged 22.

Ipsden. When we were eight and nine the headmistress was told to put us on the Oxford bus where our mother would meet us. And there she was, standing by my massive stepfather with his massive bull-mastiff sitting beside him.

My mother had left my father, the American biographer Willard Connely, for Malcolm Elwin. We spent the glorious hot summer of 1940 in the Toll Keeper's Cottage at Lee Bay near Lynton in Devon. Now unsupervised by nanny or governesses, and not much by mother, the Valley of Rocks belonged to us! In September we went as boarders to Badminton School which had been evacuated from Bristol to the Tors Hotel at Lynmouth. Our school walks were along the valley of the Lyn or up Lynton or Countisbury Hill, and on Saturday afternoon rides were over Exmoor.

I have always thought in retrospect that the headmistress, Miss B. M. Baker, was a remarkable educationalist. She liked to have at the school the daughters of broadminded literari, such as Val, whose mother was Naomi Mitchison. All of us were at least a little afraid of her but neither Sally nor I resented it. Unity Spencer was a special friend of Sally and her father, Stanley, and uncle Gilbert Spencer came several times to judge our art competitions. I still now, proudly, remember how Gilbert praised my picture of a boy cleaning out a rabbit hutch.

By the time we went home for our first Christmas holiday my mother and stepfather had moved to a small bungalow high on the hill above Woody Bay. Throughout the War this un-peopled wooded hillside and the bay below were our playground in the holidays and we both remembered these years as happy.

Malcolm was writing his life of Llewelyn and sometimes showed us the fat letters that came frequently from JCP. As schoolgirls with very neat handwriting ourselves we were unimpressed by his scrawl. The characters and setting of Malcolm's only published attempt at a detective novel, *The Little Hangman*, written some years later, were drawn from Woody Bay. Of this book JCP wrote to Malcolm on 25th February 1953: 'Phyllis and I keep thinking more and more of the Hangman as we go on reading it carefully and liesurely [*sic*] every night from 11 to 12.30. You sure have a firm and masterly hand over the background and the characters steadily grow on us. We are both rejoiced to hear that you have another work in mind and as your readers are bound to get attached to that particular stretch of land and sea you make use of they'll look forward as we do to the next being in the same district'. *The Little Hangman* was widely noticed, if only briefly, by a host of distinguished people, but as usual JCP was being as kind as possible. I know now what my sister meant when she called him 'cagey'.

After school Sally went to Heatherley's Art School in London and Julien's in Paris. She thoroughly enjoyed post-war London: she seems to have gone to every play and exhibition. Her interest in the theatre was intense. In 1953 she began to earn a sparse living as an artist but by 1957 she was very ill with chest ailments and was hospitalized for many weeks. The same thing happened in 1960 and 1961. From then on, apart from long stays with friends, she alternated her time between London and the parental home just above Putsborough Sands, a most beautiful place which she only

ever left reluctantly.

Sally always read widely and had a great knowledge of Victorian literature and of history. She could have been an academic and perhaps she should have been. From soon after Malcolm's death in 1973 she lived with our mother who relied greatly on her capable help with looking after numerous visitors. From 1973 she began to sort Malcolm's papers. She was very thorough but slow and never finished the job.

When Eve died in 1984 Sally inherited the house and Llewelyn's copyright; but she could not afford to stay at Sedgebanks and in 1987 she moved (with the archive) to a smaller house in Georgeham. She never got used to it, and never ceased to feel bitter, indeed broken-hearted, that she had had to leave Sedgebanks and the sea.

In January 2010 she moved to Belmont Care Home in Ilfracombe where she was content to lie in bed all day looking at a blank wall; she neither read nor listened to the radio, and certainly never, nor had she ever, except staying with other people, watched television. She had an excellent memory and replayed her life and circumstances in a Proustian manner.

She seemed a lonely person but she had many loving friends. People often thought that she had wasted her talents but I'm not so sure. She revelled in what she liked, especially the natural world, and rejected what she didn't. Of bathing at dusk on the deserted beach she wrote in her diary on 7th October 1986, 'happiness for me is these wonderful bathes in this divine place, sole occupant of Paradise, at one with this mighty element'.

The nurses at the home told me how much they loved her dry sense of humour and unique personality. She left copious letters and diaries, paintings, and poems which she never tried to publish. We scattered her ashes where the path from Sedgebanks joins the beach.

We owe many thanks to David Goodway, adviser to Sally, for launching Exeter University's interest in the Elwin archive, and to Professor Peter Thomson, a long-term friend of the Elwin family, for his hours of work sorting the papers and liaising with the archivist at Exeter.

Susan Rands

Sedgebanks, Devon, the Elwins' house.

Llewelyn and Louis, 1936-7

(with thanks to Anthony Head and Chris Wilkinson)

To Louis Wilkinson

Clavadel, Davos Platz, Switzerland
Dec 20th 1936

My dearest Louis, This is to wish you a happy Christmas with plenty of wine from the juice of the grape and no lack of that *other* wine which redeems all and radiates life with the brightest light – the star of Bethlehem – the Rose of Sharon!

We are well placed here. I remain in bed at present – but I *know* my chest is getting better and I am in good hope. The food is excellent and Lisaly our hostess is dedicated to our comforts[1] – You are right as to what you say about blocking up the passages down which worry sneaks and this I can do when I am getting better – which I see clearly is all that counts at present. God! what buggers to send the King off 'into the darkness' – They will never have a better … And the Bishops make me sick and I hate to think of them winning *all* just as easy as they piss.[2]

My love to you, Yours, Lulu

Twelve Months is now to be postponed for Twelve Months and this although it has already been allowed to go off half cocked – What a bugger!

To Llewelyn Powys

'*W.2.*' '*W.2.*'
LancasterStreet,
'*W.2.*' '*W.2.*'
London, *W.2.*

Your letter went all over London before it reached me.
There are other Lancaster Streets in London.
You MUST put 'W.2.'

Christmas Eve, 1936

Dearest Lulu, with great delight I hear that your hopes are now good, that your chest is indeed healing. Tomorrow at Chiswick Bernie and I will drink your for-long-to-be-assured health in ripe red Burgundy. I will not drink it in a brandy said to be of 1865 that George Moor[3] sent me for a birthday present, a greasy liquor that has had God knows what business tricks played with it. Those cheating tamperers are of the very breed that cheated us of our King. Never have I felt so passionately loyal, and indeed it is the surest test I ever knew between the good honest goats and the silly mean deceived deceitful sheep of our world. I am glad that not a single one of my friends and not a single one of my girls is minded otherwise than you and I are in this matter. All, all, are ashamed, indignant, angered. I enclose extracts from this 'news service' paper, 'The Week'. The forecast of their number of October 14th proves that everything was arranged beforehand, though indeed no proof of this was needed, and

George Moor and others felt sure it was so, at once. Enclosed, too, is a copy of a letter I wrote to Rebecca West after reading her letter in 'Time & Tide'. I have no answer yet: I don't suppose anything can be done. Maurice Browne went mad with rage and sent hundreds of telegrams. Joyce, in all her life, has felt nothing more bitterly – Carlos,[4] Moseley,[5] Ethel Mannin,[6] Bernie [O'Neill] (and Belle with him) everyone, everyone, is in the same fury and grief. But without doubt we are in a minority, because of this clever manoeuvring of the politicians. At first, the majority was with Edward, and so it would have continued. Loyalty to the throne has of course been enormously weakened. In Wales I found that. I hear that the Princess Royal had obtained King Edward's consent to her divorce from that bitter fox her husband and that there is now much concern in those inner circles on this matter – as to how it can be put to the public. I know one who was at a Conference to deal with this, and he says he thinks the divorce will go through, after delay. I am not so sure, I think she will be cozened into giving it up. How well justified I feel now in the choice of my circle – no test surer, none.

A merry Christmas, dear Lulu – 'merry Kiss-my-Arse', as the little Radley boys used to say ...

Great love from Louis

To Louis Wilkinson

[December 1936]

My dear Louis, ... I agree entirely with what you feel – and would help you in any possible way. I have already written to the Literary Guide an article – showing up the Bishops as best I could but whether they publish it I dont know – but truly I wish you could do these conventional rascals some shrewd mischief – I think a formidable list of literary names would make 'em uneasy. As soon as ever I heard the first whisper I wrote to Mrs. Simpson advising a complete apparent capitulation till after the coronation when Edward VIII popularity would be so established that he would be able to do anything – utterly confounding the plots of these communicants!

Do not let your enthusiasm flag! Plot and plan and we may yet do them a mischief!

I am still in bed and have a cold about me and pulse not sound and temperature not sound yet so do not let our hopes rise too high lest they fall as before.

Alyse is happy here. She does not feel the cold.

At dawn these mountain ridges edge the outline of the astral universe as though against a shark's jaw!

This good feasting will presently transfer my danger from chest to belly. ...

Bless you Louis, Yours, Lulu

To Louis Wilkinson [*Postcard*]

[4 Jan. 1937]

Would you be so good as to send me on a card the exact words of Shakespeare when he wrote 'Men have died and the maggots have eaten them, but not *for* love, but not

for love' together with exact punctuation.

My love and happy New Year to you. My article against the saucy bishops was returned.

Yrs, Lulu

To Llewelyn Powys

5th January, 1937

My dear Lulu, 'Men have died, and worms have eaten them, but not for love' is, I can swear, the exact quotation, although I have not looked it up.[7] There is no repetition of 'but not for love.'You are perhaps thinking of Hamlet's 'except my life, except my life, except my life.'

I am not surprised that your article about the bishops was refused. I wrote to the New Statesman about the Archbishop's abominable broadcast and they did not put my letter in, although they acknowledged it: whereas that Scotch cat Rebecca has not even acknowledged the letter of which I sent you a copy ... I doubt very much if anything can be done. Those sympathetic with Edward now take the line that he would wish his brother's reign undisturbed by talk of the past, and that (as Jack says Phyllis says in the enclosed) he is well out of it and would have never undertaken kingship had he gone by his own will. Whether there is truth in the report that an instrument of renunciation was drawn up before King George's death and that instrument renounced only because of pressure upon Edward from his mother and brothers and his father himself I do not know. But I heard this at the time of the death, not recently. None the less, I long for strong effective protest to be made, as it is most certainly made, undirectedly, far and wide, and I wish to God I could help it to be made. I have not given up.

I found George Moor and Carlos Grace even more emphatically on our side in this than I had supposed them from their letters. Carlos, as he rose at the playing of 'God Save the King' in some theatre, declared in firm tones 'I stand for Edward', and you know how little disposed he is to make himself known by public gesture. Theodore writes entirely like himself, 'What a state of affairs when a king may not marry a friendly loving lady and so help us to a friendliness with a rich nation like America.' ...

Diana[8] wrote to me and wants to see me. I am lunching with her tomorrow, but am entirely resolved that we shall not again live together. Nothing will change me here or lead me to sacrifice of the freedom and bounty that I have. But I have no reason to think that she wants to return: the tone of her letters is friendly and even affectionate and on the telephone she speaks in the same way, but she has been well established in a position as secretary in some English film-production agency, for over a year now and does not find the work distasteful, so it is not poverty or distress of mind that have led her to make these overtures ...

Great love, dearest Lulu, from Louis

Alyse (not you) will appreciate the Gallic tang of the Parisian comment, 'On ne

Baldwine pas avec l'amour'. (There is, I add as a footnote, a famous French play called 'On ne badine pas avec l'amour'.[9])

To Louis Wilkinson

[8] Jan. 1937

My dear Louis, Could you get a copy of the Welsh Ambassadors[10] at reduced author's rates and I will then pay. This is a scurvy trick which is sometimes played on me but I cannot afford to buy it full price.

I have a cold and this keeps me in bed. It is a bloody shame. The Dr. says my tuberculous lung is going on well and 'quieting down nicely' – This will be some luck if I skip free again. He finds my left lung still in pretty good order and is amazed that I have got through as I have. He examined my piss and found it normal. This was a great relief – for I have seen 'matter' in it – which he thinks means *nothing*.

God Lisaly is a good girl. She looks after us all day long and we could not be more comfortable. Alyse is writing again and I *feast* and *feast*.

Bless you dear Louis – I hope it is not too mean asking you to let me have the Welsh Ambassadors at cash price!

Yrs, Lulu

To Llewelyn Powys

5 Lancaster Street, London W.2

29th January, 1937

My dear Lulu, I sent you Welsh Ambassadors, posting my copy so as to save time. I sent it at once, but no word from you. It had been used very little, so is almost like new, if not quite. I shall get another. I think 8/4 is what they charge me. By the same post as I sent to you I sent also 'Impassioned Clay' (bought at full price at Foyle's)[11] as a gift to a girl. So meditate upon that. But of course I don't think you scurvy. I would have done the same myself if I had thought of it, and I will next time.

George Moor takes these photographs, one after another, when in company with his friends and they unaware. I send these four for you to see and to keep any you may want to keep, returning others to me, those that you don't like. ...

Next Friday is Gertrude's 'Private View'.[12] There is to be a tea-party that day – I shall be there ('Oscar Wilde, he was there – ') and Littleton and Mabel, too, it seems, and Jack, and Herbert [*Marks*] and Isobel , and Bernie, and perhaps others, Gertrude says. It will amuse you that I hear from the 'lozel girl'[13] whose drawings I showed you that Gertrude is now a frequent visitor at the place where she works – a place where frames are sold – and they engage in discussion on this matter of frames. But the girl has not told her she knows me, she said she had a feeling that it was better not to touch on that topic ...

Your loving Louis

Diana is friendly: says she is always fond of me and does not at all regret. But my resolve is the same – and she does not propose reunion. Indeed, I do not think she

wishes it – I hope she does not. She sent her love to you. ...
Overleaf is a broadsheet circulated widely here. A punning broadsheet – but it will give pain to Lang – to 'Cosmo Cantman' – I hope it will: I'm sure it will – for he wants to be popular.[14]

'My Lord Archbishop, what a scold you are!
And, when your man is down, how very bold you are!
Of human charity how oddly scant you are!
You Auld Lang Swine, how full of cant you are!'

To Louis Wilkinson

Candlemas [February 2nd 1937]

My dearest Louis, I have chosen two of these photographs – I would have liked to have taken them all. They are superlative and gave us great joy *as though you were in the room with us*. I was proud that I thought of such a trick *FIRST*. I beg you to congratulate George Moore [*sic*]. He has done all your friends a great service. Please would you return Diana's message. It was pretty of her to remember to send it and say we have always thought of her with appreciation and hoped for her content – I would have liked the Broadsheet to have been much longer – long one of Tom Deloney's ballads but it was good and I am glad it was written. It pleases me to think of you being present at the Exhibition tea. ...

All goes well so far – I eat drink and am merry as I have not been for many a year – and I put on one pound a week in weight regularly – and can walk a little way without inconvenience and the doctor says my lung is healing up in a remarkable way. *May it be so* – Alyse warns me against being to sanguine – but I feel as if I had a cock, with a shining hackle, crowing all day long through the window of my navel for joy to think I may be free for a few more years! The sudden death of my old doctor was a great blow.[15] Who knows? Who knows which mango the great ape will snatch at next???

My love, Lulu

P.S. I look with the greatest interest at your photograph I do not think I have ever seen in my life a human countenance more genial and at the same time with eyes that suggest more emphatically an utter 'lozel' attitude to every conceivable morality invented by the human race!

To Llewelyn Powys

9th February 1937

('What day is this? The ninth of February?
Give me my book there: ay, my Book of Psalms:
How says it of God's foes, they were afraid,
Where no fear was?'
– Darnley, in Swinburne's 'Bothwell'.)

Dearest Lulu! I am still enchanted by your letter. It delights me constantly that you

are indeed better, by so much – that you eat & drink right well, with a healing lung. *You will, I know, be wary still.* Then the cock will crow through your navel-window with louder & louder joy.

Littleton says he thinks the stimulus & new feeding power of these victuals, as well as the air, have done this for you. I love to think of you ravishing these trenchers. Littleton was charming to me at Gertrude's Private View. He talked with me in the most friendly manner, and at parting held my hand and pressed it to his side. I was delighted & amazed. What magnanimity! Gertrude & Katie are coming to my flat for a party on 21st February. The 'lozel' girl comes too – because Bernie is coming and he, after meeting her at a former party, is full of kind thoughts of her and desires much to meet her again. She drew some more pictures for me when we were last together, but I promised Bernie I would show them to him: you shall have them later...

Jack looked well and spoke of his new Anti-Vivisection novel with excitement.[16] It was a good meeting. I am having tea with Gertrude next Friday.

Great love from Louis

To Louis Wilkinson

[11 Feb 1937]

My dearest Louis, ... Your book is much appreciated here by Lisaly to whom I gave it. This fresh trout of the mountains is good – It gives me pleasure to contemplate the merry life you live. The fir trees on the mountains, firm rooted, are for ever piercing the sky! I wrote to cousin Jane about the Moilliets when Walter Shirley was on his death bed but Ralph gave me the address of another cousin and I have 4 different Cousins in Geneva. And Prequé Court at Geneva was bought from Josephine Buonaparte. We used to look at it when you came to Montacute hanging in the spare room when we were talking and laughing before family prayers!!![17]

With Love, Yrs, Lulu

To Llewelyn Powys

18th February 1937

(My father died on this day, 31 years ago. God, Time is a bugger.)

Dearest Lulu, ... Be better, still better, be *well.*

Your father's 'St John's Cloister Front' has been framed by the lozel girl, and well framed. It hangs by the roll-top desk that was in my room at John's. How I wish you could come here and see it.

I must chide you for that misquotation. 'Worms' in that sentence has more strength than 'maggots' – It is a bad misquotation and has shocked some judicious readers. God! and I took all the trouble to write & tell you it was not 'maggots' but 'worms'. Rosalind says it.

I met Gamel & Phyllis at tea at Gertrude's lodgings last week, and enjoyed the meeting. Both looked well. Though I feel very meanly treated by old Daddy Jack who,

so I learnt from Phyllis, was still in London, and made no attempt to come & see me here, the scurvy old churl! I saw him only at the Private View …

Great love & great hopes for you from Louis

I sometimes have Diana these days: but this is very private. I tell *no one*. How much more exciting to make love *without* cohabitation!

To Louis Wilkinson

[22 Feb 1937]

My dear Louis, I suffered the greatest anguish when I heard about the misquotation – My mind of course was diverted to the matter of the repetition of 'not for love' 'but not for love' which was the mistake you particularly stressed and I never so much as noticed the change from maggots to worms! It was a folly – but I can never hope to escape even blundering inattentions – and at any rate the sense was not altered – for we make Easter sweetmeats for both these lely creatures.[18]

The all important scrap of news in your letter was good news. I think it is piquant news and triumphant news – I like to hear of it and like to think of it. I am still getting better but my digestion is a trouble and I am back on a lean diet again. My feastings culminated in two bad headaches and overstrained my kidnies till I pissed blood and this has scared me – but my chest is fine and temperature down.

The wife of the Doctor here is a granddaughter of old Dr. Bongartner of Geneva whom father used to talk about and his mother was a Moilliet, the daughter of my great great grandfather John Lewis Moilliet of Abbely Hall in Worcester who bought Préque Court on the Lake of Geneva from Josephine Buonaparte. I said to her I have cousins in Geneva and showed her a letter from Ralph who had stayed in the Bongartner house with her uncle, a house they have had since the Reformation and where she was born. She was amazed and so was I – It was a *coincidence* that I should have shown the letter to her out of all the population of Switzerland!

Your loving Lulu

NOTES

1 Lisaly Guijer, with whom he had been friends twenty-five years ago when she was a patient herself, on his first visit to Clavadel. She not only fed and entertained him, but acted as his interpreter when he interviewed the local people for the articles that would eventually appear in *Swiss Essays*.

2 King Edward VIII's relationship with Mrs Simpson had been publicly aired in the American press since 1934. When the facts were finally forced into the open in Britain, decisions were rushed through with an unseemly haste. The King's abdication on 10th December split the country, with the older generation, as represented by Prime Minister Baldwin and the Archbishop of Canterbury, at odds with the younger generation and liberals, who considered the decision motivated by the worst kind of moral hypocrisy.

3 George Moor (1877–1941), a lifelong friend of Louis's. Five years older than Louis, Moor had been a pupil at the Wilkinson Prep School in Aldeburgh and had introduced Louis to the poetry of Byron, Browning and Whitman, amongst others, as well as to a taste for wine.

4 Carlos Grace (1882?–1946), Oxford contemporary of Louis and a lifelong friend.

5 Edwyn Moseley (1879–19?) was one of the Oxford undergraduates, members of the Yellow Tulip Club, sent down with Louis for blasphemy. He appears in *Swan's Milk* as 'Denis Morley'.

6 Ethel Mannin (1900–84), prolific writer of novels, short stories, essays, travel books and autobiography, and sometime lover of Louis. She was a member of the Independent Labour Party and also a staunch champion of sexual reform. Louis and Llewelyn are among the many writers mentioned in her *Confessions and Impressions* (1930) and *Privileged Spectator* (1939), the title of the latter coming from Llewelyn's Diary, as quoted by Louis in *Welsh Ambassadors* (1936): 'The art of living is to be fully aware of one's personal existence – to become a privileged spectator.'

7 Rosalind in *As You Like It* (Act 4, Scene 1): 'Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.'

8 Diana Perry (1912–2001), more than thirty years younger than Louis, later wrote under the name 'Diana Petre'. She was the illegitimate daughter of Roger Ackerley, the 'Banana King' who founded Elders & Fyffes in 1892. She had met Louis at a theatrical party, and became his third wife [*for about three years — see 'Living with Louis' in* The Powys Journal v.]

9 *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* ('There's no trifling with love') by Alfred de Musset was first performed in 1861.

10 *Welsh Ambassadors*, Louis's biographical study of the Powys brothers (by 'Louis Marlow'), was published in 1936. In it Louis describes his first visit to the Powyses at Montacute Vicarage in about 1903, when he and Llewelyn were at Cambridge.

11 *Impassioned Clay*, a philosophical essay by Llewelyn Powys, published in 1931.

12 At the Cooling Galleries in New Bond Street on 5th–19th February. Gertrude Powys had also exhibited at the *Salon de la Nationale* in Paris. Also expected were Francis Powys (Theodore's son), Maurice Browne and his 'adopted daughter' Molly, Belle O'Neill, and Donald and Joyce Gill.

13 Shakespeare uses the word 'lozel' in *A Winter's Tale* to mean a rogue or scoundrel, and Llewelyn made a note of it as early as 1914 in his Diary, recording it there as meaning 'a worthless fellow'. It seems an unusual word for Louis to apply as an adjective to a young woman of his acquaintance, being more in the way of insult than compliment if this were its intended meaning. It is elsewhere defined as a 'spendthrift', so by extension could perhaps imply someone who is profligate or wildly extravagant, particularly in a sexual sense ('wanton' is a favourite word of Llewelyn's in this regard). It was clearly a code word of some sort between Louis and Llewelyn. The lady in question is possibly Joan Lamburn, who later became Louis's fourth wife, but it is not certain; obviously the reference is to someone Louis would rather not identify by name at this time (perhaps lest his letters fall into other hands).

14 Cosmo Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, later Baron Lang of Lambeth, had begun a lifelong association with the Royal Family as a chaplain to Queen Victoria. His broadcast on the Abdication was widely criticised.

15 Dr Ernst Frey, the superintendent of the Clavadel Sanatorium who had treated Llewelyn on his first visit in 1909, died immediately after visiting him. 'I am so sorry for Dr. Frey,' Llewelyn wrote to Clifford Musgrave on 15th January. 'He was a very rare character and had lived richly and travelled widely and he looked after me with passionate devotion, listening at my ribs as a terrier listens for the movements of rats in a bottle of straw.'

16 *Morwyn* by John Cowper Powys (Cassell, London, September 1937).

17 One of Llewelyn's great-grandfathers on his father's side was John Lewis Moilliet, a banker who came from Geneva. Before Moilliet's daughter, Amelia, married Llewelyn's grandfather, the Rev. Littleton Charles Powys, she had been married to Samuel Knight. Her daughter, Philippa, from this first marriage, married Walter Waddington Shirley and they had five children, including Walter and Ralph. Llewelyn writes about his Swiss ancestors in 'The Swiss Family of Moilliet' in *Swiss Essays*. He refers there to the picture of the Geneva property, but calls it 'Pregny Court'. Also note, 'Bongartner' stands for related family 'Baumgartner', and 'Abbely Hall' should read 'Abberley Hall'.

18 'lely' is presumably, despite its adjectival usage, the Middle English adverb *leli*, *leili*, *leleli* (among variant spellings), meaning 'faithfully', 'sincerely', 'honourably' . It occurs in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*

and *Gawain and the Green Knight*, among other texts of the day, and is just the sort of homely mediaevalism Llewelyn would have in mind at a time when he is working again on *Love and Death*.

CW

from Anthony Head: Llewelyn on Marriage

Letter in *The Forum* of April 1930. In a column (presumably a regular one) titled 'Rostrum', this letter refers to a debate in the February issue on 'Should we leave Romance out of Marriage?' (This is presumably the American journal, given the inclusion of 'England' in Llewelyn's address as printed.)

The letter has been given the heading 'Down with Romance!'

> *To the Editor:*
>
> *I believe that any marriage that is based on the glamour that results from sexual attraction is in danger of being unsuccessful. If, however, the glamour has its origin in the indefinable attraction that one personality has for another, then the alliance is safe. It is far more important that a boy and girl should be happy in each other's company sitting over a fire or walking through a meadow than in moments of the delights of love-making. People can be more easily suited in the latter fortunate intervals of their lives than they can be in harmonious companionship. In my opinion, therefore, marriage should depend more on tested compatibility than on romance.*
>
> *Llewelyn Powys,*
> *Dorchester, England*

Louis Wilkinson & Llewelyn Powys (1912)

T.F.Powys

Evening Shadows

The unwise dog who dropped the substance in order to reach after the shadow, is not the only creature on the earth who would like to possess not the meat only, but its shadow too. Many shadows there are besides that of the fable, and when the sun is low even a humble poet may be permitted to make a jest of his own long legs. The poet who thus amused himself lived, as far as I can remember, in a part of the country where there are few, if any, hills, and therefore his own figure must have been as good a shadow maker as any object that he saw around him. With us, there are hills, and the evening shadows slowly move down till they cover our dwelling.

Meanwhile, to have its share in this universal shadowing, our humble cottage hath thrown its shadow across the green, and even the smoke of our chimney darkens the grass.

Whoever ye be that pass through a village when the summer sun wanes, take note I pray thee of the cottage shadows. Do not — and I feel sure you will think with me — do not these gracious shadows verily presage kind hours of wholesome slumber? A time methinks of sweet dreams, when the tired haymaker may feel to the full the cool influence of the night's benediction, that throws a long shadow of silent prayer over the whole sleeping land. Note too as thou passeth with a quiet step, I pray thee, the shadow of the church tower, and also, if thou wilt pause where so many Silent Ones have paused before by the side of the churchyard gate, thou mayst see the shadows of the tombs. I would have thy thoughts mingle with these shadows, for in such company thou wilt find that even Melancholy hath in it a divine consolation. And after thou hast seen that vision, the most garish day that can come to thee will bear a shadow in its bosom that will be of more worth to thee than the brightest sunshine — the shadow of Eternity.

It is evening, and stranger though thou art, we welcome thee. A little child runs across the green, she turns and begins to skip, and her shadow skips too. The cottage shadows creep on, they have reached the stone that was the old mark of a god, and still they creep on.

The shadow of the old elm now nearly stretches out to the blacksmith forge. Let it be evening, let the noontide be past, we will watch our own shadows lengthen, for when our rest is near, our figures will cast a long shadow upon the grass. Tis the shadow of our lives that hath grown as our days have grown. All our former days are in that shadow, the sombre and the gay, the merry and the sad. Pass slowly, stranger, and do homage to our living shadows, for every place that is sometime covered by a human shadow is holy ground. Our life is all lived in the compass of a day, and each night the shadows show us the image of death.

It is thus that all simple people take the matter of a day's wayfaring, and trudge homeward to their thatched roofs with the same steadfast oneness of purpose as to a grave. Praise, stranger, if thou wilt the high festival of noon, in our cottage lives it is

the evening that we love, for tis to evensong that we would wend our way when the shadows deepen. We would then to where the holy bell doth knoll to prayers, and leave the merry day to its delights, taking rather the Shadow of the Cross for our guide, than the brightness of the sun. The sun at noon may be glorious, but the evenings are the best to love, they touch the truer note in our lives, and make the best music to our sorrows.

Neither is it to lose our sunlight that we grasp at the shadow, for the sunlight lasteth but for the day, while the shadows lead on toward Eternity. In the hour of Evensong all gentle thoughts reign supreme, it is the time of the change from labour to repose, it is the time of the good shadows. The sun in its grand wickedness shouts out its great cry at Dawn, but the shadows love to move silently, slowly, as old men move, to the sound of still music, that is heard only by him who watcheth for the longer night. Let the day perish, so long as the evening shadows are born. Stranger, I bid thee rest for a little minute beside this new-made stack of sweet smelling hay, in whose grateful shadow there is true and untroubled repose. So on now, if thou wilt, and leave me to my evening shadows, that will one day become eternal.

*

Notes and Queries

Another early 1900s prose-poem to the village of 'Cheriton' (others were in Newsletters 44 and 46) – Elaine Mencher in the Early Works *calls them 'seed pieces'. In this pastoral village the cruelty and depravity (and comedy) of TF's later country scenes have yet to appear. There are no human characters in this little homily, which begins with a touch of Francis Bacon, and ends with echoes of Charles Lamb.*

Like the others, it could be a hymn (an advertisement?) for Mr Weston's wine – the dark vintage.

Was it said of the Powys Mother that she preferred shadows to sunlight?

'Now the day is over, Night is drawing nigh; Shadows of the evening Steal across the sky …'

It was an evening service (Compline) in Mappowder church that TF enjoyed. "Lighten our darkness we beseech thee O Lord …"

In paragraph 1-2: Does the Chaldon cottage that TFP lived in face east? It is something you notice in the country, the way the sun and shadows move round during the year – south-east to north-east and back.

Paragraph 3: Pause by the churchyard gate (lych-gate): as coffins rest before a funeral.

The shadow of Eternity:

'There is in God, some say,
A deep but dazzling darkness, as men here
Say it is late and dusky, because they
See not all clear.
O for that Night! where I in Him
Might live invisible and dim!'
(Henry Vaughan, 'Night')

Paragraph 4: The stone that was the mark of a god. – A sundial? An old cross?

Paragraph 6: 'Knoll' – a nice 'portmanteau' word, 'knell' / 'toll'.

Powysians in Paris 11th May 2014

Chris Thomas on the launch in Paris of the Henry Miller -JCP letters, edited by Jacqueline Peltier

Rue de la Bûcherie is an old Parisian street, on the *rive gauche*, situated in the centre of the Latin Quarter, not far from the boulevard St. Michel, with a history that goes back as far as the medieval period. The street is mentioned in Baedeker's early-twentieth-century *Handbook for Travellers in Paris*, and also appears on the first page of Umberto Eco's recent novel, *The Prague Cemetery.* At no.37, rue de la Bûcherie, you will find the well known bookshop, *Shakespeare & Co,* founded by an American expatriate, George Whitman, in 1951, under the name *Librairie Mistral,* but which he later changed and named after the bookshop owned by Sylvia Beach (the original publisher of Joyce's *Ulysses* in book form) between 1922 and 1940. There are significant literary connections between the two establishments and today *Shakespeare & Co* still welcomes itinerant writers, offers accommodation, and holds writers' workshops and poetry readings. Jacqueline Peltier, editor of *la lettre powysienne*, while a student at the Sorbonne, worked here during the 1960s, when the bookshop was much smaller, knew George Whitman well, and remembers hearing Allen Ginsburg read from his collection *Howl.*

Shakespeare & Co was the venue for the launch, on Sunday 11th May 2014, of the latest title in the list of books published by The Powys Press. It was attended by members of The Powys Society from the UK, France, Switzerland and Belgium. ***Proteus and the Magician, the Letters of Henry Miller and John Cowper***

Chsis Thomas & Jacqueline Peltier browsing happily in the Paris bookshop of Shakespeare & Company.

Powys, has been edited by Jacqueline Peltier from copies of Henry Miller's original letters at the National Library of Wales. The book also reprints the letters from JCP to Miller, which were first published by Jeff Kwintner's Village Press in 1975. It includes a useful introduction and extensive notes as well as a helpful bibliography and index. Henry Miller's letters to JCP have only previously been available in a French translation by Nordine Haddad, published by Criterion in 1994. The great value of Jacqueline's book is that it brings together, for the first time in English, the joint correspondence between these two formidable (and *formidable*) writers, and enables us to appreciate the delightful sense of mutual enjoyment each of them derived from their exchange of letters.

Henry Miller memorials

We were proud to be associated with both *Shakespeare & Co* and the Henry Miller Memorial Library in Big Sur, California, which between 5-11 May organised a week-long festival of events at selected venues around Paris, devoted to Miller's connection with bohemian Paris, called '*Aller – Retour Paris*', including the performance of a play, '*Flush Game, or the Gospel According to Henry Miller*' by Corneliu Mitrache, a guided walk around places associated with Miller in Paris, '*Talk and a Walk Through Literary Paris*' with guide Thirza Vallois, readings from Henry Miller's own works, '*In his Own Words*', and '*How Henry Miller Can Change Your Life (Again)*', featuring Mary Duncan, Ida Theren, and Katy Masuga, and an evening of cocktails, music and short talks, marking the 80th anniversary of the publication in Paris, by the Obelisk Press, of Miller's autobiographical novel, *Tropic of Cancer*, about his life in Paris in the 1920s and early 1930s. Banned in the USA in 1934 on its first publication, *Tropic of Cancer* was however much admired and praised by JCP's friend, H. L Mencken, as well as by writers such as T. S. Eliot, Orwell and Beckett. Henry Miller's reaction against conventional morality and his philosophy of personal freedom is a theme that connects with JCP's own sense of exuberance, and self-liberation – a theme which characterises much of the correspondence between Miller and JCP. *Tropic of Cancer* was also the book that inspired another major writer of the twentieth century, Lawrence Durrell (to whom Miller sent a passionate letter extolling the extraordinary qualities of *A Glastonbury Romance* – see NL 81, p.30). Durrell told Miller that 'Tropic *opened a pit in my brain, it freed me immediately*'. Durrell's third novel, *The Black Book*, published by the Obelisk Press in 1938, and originally banned in the UK and USA, was also heavily influenced by Miller's *Black Spring*, a collection of reminiscences of growing up in Brooklyn, NY, published by the Obelisk Press in 1936.

At the festival there were also displays of other books by Henry Miller, as well as original manuscripts, documents and letters, musical performances and a dinner party, celebrating Miller's Parisian connections. Some of these events were recorded for a film, currently in production in America, about Miller's life in Paris. Henry Miller has a dedicated following and the festival, attended mostly by Americans

Paris, in the bookshop: Charles Lock, Dana Wentworth, Fawzia Assaad.

Dinner in Paris: Dana Wentworth, Charles Lock, Fawzia Assaad, Robert Misrahi.

Dinner in Paris: Prof. Robert Misrahi, Jaqueline Peltier, Chris Thomas.

living in Paris as well as some of Miller's French fans, demonstrated that his books are still highly regarded and appreciated by many readers and writers. We felt honoured and privileged to be allowed to bring JCP to the festival and help conclude the celebrations with the launch of Jacqueline's book.

A passionate sightseer

I arrived in Paris, travelling Eurostar, the day before the launch. The last time I had visited Paris by Eurostar was when the trains used to depart from the old Waterloo terminal; now of course they depart from St Pancras. Between Stratford (East) and Ebbsfleet International the route of HS1 crosses Rainham Marches – a wild, remote, and desolate-looking place bounded on one side by a landfill site, a housing estate and electricity pylons, and populated on the other side by a rich variety of wildlife – reedbeds, marsh frogs, voles, bitterns, lapwings, egrets and peregrines. This was a new experience, a strange prologue to Paris, although I suspect JCP would have been fascinated by that elemental landscape of flat estuarine wetlands.

There were many non-Powysian things I wanted to see in the city of light and culture – Baudelaire's cenotaph in the Cimetière du Montparnasse; Oscar Wilde's memorial at Père Lachaise; the reconstruction of Proust's bedroom at the musée Carnavalet; the exhibition of Augustan art, 'I, Augustus, Emperor of Rome', at the Grand Palais; the exhibition '*Van Gogh/Artaud: Le suicidé de la société*' at the Musée d'Orsay; 'The Imaginary Museum of Henri Langlois' at the Cinémathèque; 'Birth of a Museum – Louvre at Abu Dhabi' at the Louvre; and Brancusi's atelier at the Pompidou Centre. I began to feel a bit like Berenson's 'passionate sightseer'!

The launch

On Sunday evening I emerged from the metro station at *St-Michel* feeling a little nervous, wondering what to expect and how the launch would be received by Henry Miller's readers. I immediately detected the delicious aroma of French cuisine suspended in the air. Someone was smoking a *Gauloises* cigarette which reminded me of the sweet smell of newly opened packets of *Gitanes* which I associate with Paris and literary conversation. I thought of JCP's reference in *A Glastonbury Romance* to *the subtle smells of a Latin Quarter street.* Perhaps it was also somewhere near here that John Crow purchased a black crape armband and a black tie from Monsieur Teste to wear at Canon Crow's funeral. I joined the *mêlée* of pedestrians browsing in the *bouquinistes* on the embankment beside the Seine and a few minutes later arrived at *Shakespeare & Co.* The shop was already crowded. I was ushered upstairs to a small booklined room overlooking the Seine and Notre Dame. I needn't have worried about anything. I received a warm welcome from the assistants in the bookshop and especially from Mike Scutari, Assistant Director of the Henry Miller Memorial Library, who showed us examples of their Miller-related publications, including *Ping Pong*, the official Journal of the Library, explaining their work aimed at championing the wide range of Miller's writings and his other activity as an artist, preserving

original manuscript material, and providing a cultural centre for the local community in Big Sur.

Now more people gathered around us; we moved to the piano room, and amidst an atmosphere of anticipation, surrounded by a sympathetic audience, we discussed the relationship between Henry Miller and JCP: the intense admiration which Miller felt for JCP, Miller's many-sided character (hence the significance of *Proteus* in the title of the book), his role as sexologist, novelist, literary critic, painter and apologist of eastern religions, especially Zen Buddhism; also their differences – their contrasting attitudes to sex – and their similarities – shared literary passions, an unconventional and unacademic approach to literary criticism, a Dionysiac view of the human spirit, a vitalistic attitude to life, and a fearless and radical defence of free speech (JCP recorded in his diary, after meeting Miller in Wales in 1953, that Miller resembled him in his '*personal ways and peculiarities*').

Questions were asked: 'What was JCP's opinion of Miller's books?', 'Why isn't JCP better known as a writer?', 'Where can I buy JCP's books? Are they still in print?' Jacqueline Peltier answered questions about editing the book, transcribing the letters and JCP's career as a lecturer in America. Marcella Henderson-Peal introduced us to her network of French translators of Powys and her other contacts in France with interest in Powys. Charles Lock, editor of *The Powys Journal*, joined us, and answered questions about the Powys family.

JCP and Paris

It seemed appropriate that we should launch this book in Paris – not just because it was convenient to tie in our event with the Henry Miller Festival, but also because JCP himself knew Paris very well. He visited the city on several occasions: with Bernie O'Neill, with Arnold Shaw and his wife, and also with his younger brother Willy. In *Autobiography* he says that it was in Paris that he bought his wife Margaret a complete edition of *Jean Christophe*, by Romain Rolland, while he also *found pornography enough to satisfy* [*his*] *trembling knees and shaking hands* ..., indulged his appetite for what he called *gala-night places adapted to the grossest Anglo Saxon tastes* (he also frequented the Folies Bergères), and tells the story of the time he visited a bird shop and purchased a parrot in a cage that he called Sarah, which he took back to Burpham and which ever after repeated the words: '*Oh Dear! Oh Dear! Oh Dear*!'

In Paris JCP also experienced a strange vision of the past – a key moment – linked to the idea of eternal recurrence, the poetry of emotion and the magnetic vibrations of deep memory. He describes in *Autobiography* how the sudden glimpse of *a lovely sylph-like figure* leaning out of a high window from a Gothic-looking building in the neighbourhood of Les Halles (which has long since been demolished) produced a vivid sense of 'romance'. JCP's favourite place to stay in Paris was the Hôtel des Grands Hommes, situated opposite the Pantheon – *which I heartily trust still flourishes*, he said. Indeed it does still flourish. There is a reference to JCP's favourite Parisian hotel in *Nadja*, André Breton's great surrealist novel of *amour fou*, published in 1928,

with an accompanying photograph of the building.

Before we left Shakespeare & Co, copies of *Proteus and the Magician* were placed in a prominent position in the shop window. How JCP would have been amazed and delighted. This felt like a scene out of Proust – the sense of JCP bestowing some sort of approval on our activities suggested Proust's description, in *La Prisonnière*, of the death of the writer Bergotte, his posthumous fame, and the display of his books in the window of a bookshop: *...in the lighted shop windows, his books, arranged three by three, kept vigil, like angels, with outspread wings, and seemed, for him who was no more, the symbols of his resurrection.*

A celebratory dinner

We transferred to the restaurant next door, *Le Petit Châtelet*, for a dinner to celebrate JCP, the publication of Jacqueline's book and our shared Anglo-French endeavours to raise greater awareness of writings by all members of the Powys family.

Marcella and Jacqueline had organised a formidable guest list: Charles Lock (editor of *The Powys Journal*); Goulven Le Brech (author of *John Cowper Powys, une philosophie de la vie*); Fawzia Assaad who came to the book launch from her home in Geneva – (she was a fellow student with Robert Misrahi and a pupil of Jean Wahl, who introduced her to JCP, who named her Cleopatra – author of *Layla – an Egyptian Woman*, *Des enfants et des chats*, and *Prefigurations egyptiennes de la pensée de Nietzsche*); Liliane Ruf, who used to visit Powys Society conferences in the 1970s and met Phyllis in Blaenau; Diana Wentworth from Oxford, a relative of Phyllis Playter; Jean-Pierre De Waegenaere, a Powys Society member from Belgium; and Marie-Odile Fortier Masek (translator into French of books by JCP – *The Art of Happiness*, *The Art of Growing Old,* and *The Art of Forgetting the Unpleasant*, and of Henry Miller's letters to Maurice Nadeau (historian of the surrealist movement and defender of Miller against charges of obscenity), as well as of books by Tracy Chevalier, William Trevor, and Michael Ondaatje).

Our guest of honour, the philosophical elder-statesman Robert Misrahi, came to the dinner from his home in Normandy. Now aged 87, he is Emeritus Professor of ethical philosophy at the Sorbonne and author of books on Spinoza, Martin Buber, Marx, and the philosophy of happiness (*see NL81, pp.31–33*).

We toasted JCP and congratulated Jacqueline Peltier and Marcella Henderson-Peal on their extraordinarily industrious work establishing Powysian networks in France and making contact with others further afield across Europe, as well as Marcella's bringing to light an archive of documents relating to JCP's many translators, and his contact with intellectuals and writers in France in the 1930s. Some of the results of Marcella's research will be presented in her talk at this year's conference.

Fortified by bottles of fine wine the conversation buzzed excitedly around the table. We discussed the pleasure and difficulties of translating JCP's books into French. Jacqueline Peltier told us about her recent correspondence with Henry

Miller's daughter, Valentine, living in Salinas, California, who generously gave her full endorsement to the publication of her father's letters to JCP, and still vividly remembers how her father used to often talk about JCP with *glowing praise*, and how he enthusiastically recommended that she must read *A Glastonbury Romance* – a wonderful read, she told Jacqueline.

An English 'immortel'

Charles Lock described his invitation to a prestigious reception at the *Collège de France*, on 13th May, to honour the election to *l'Académie française* in 2013 of Michael Edwards (British poet, critic and Professor of Literary Creation at the *Collège de France*). Michael Edwards' numerous scholarly publications include studies of Racine, Shakespeare, Rimbaud and the contemporary poet Yves Bonnefoy. Charles told us that this is the first time that an Englishman (or Englishwoman) has ever achieved the distinction of joining 'les immortels', of whom there have been at any one time only 39 individuals. In the wake of this achievement Michael Edwards was given a knighthood in the New Year's Honours List, 2014, for services to UK/French relations.

Charles also said that he was on his way to America to deliver a lecture at the American Association of Literature conference in Washington DC on James Purdy and JCP, and whilst there hoped to interest colleagues in the correspondence between Miller and JCP (uphill work, he later reported). Fawzia Assaad discussed her book on Kierkegaard in Arabic. Robert Misrahi explained his interpretation of JCP's philosophy of happiness – which he summarised '*Live in the moment*' – and talked about his links to existentialism and other French philosophical traditions. Diana Wentworth told us about her family background and family connection with Phyllis Playter.

We all agreed that the event in Paris was a joyous occasion and testimony of a shared spirit of continuing Anglo-French Powysian collaboration and cooperation. My brief visit to Paris came to an end all too quickly but I returned to London with strong memories of an inspirational event and plans, already beginning to form in my mind, of another Parisian *soirée* in the near future.

Bravo Powysians! *Entente Cordiale*!

Chris Thomas

Copies of ***Proteus and the Magician*** (currently being reprinted) will be available for sale at the Conference in Sherborne and may also be ordered from the Hon. Secretary: **Chris Thomas**, Flat D, 87 Ledbury Road, London, W11 2AG, or by e-mail: < chris.d.thomas@hotmail.co.uk >

Miller and JCP, Corwen 1953

(from JCP's Diary)

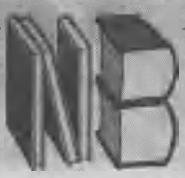
Monday 29th June 1953
Pryderi North-East Wind Gilbert
Very strong and very cold wind but warm bright sunshine ...
A LETTER from Henry Miller to say he is COMING tomorrow !!!!! so the T.T. is going to get a room for him and for his Eve at the "O.G."
A very very nice letter — in fact two letters from Old Littleton ...

Tuesday 30th June
Pryderi North-East Wind
A very disturbing letter from Gilbert [*Turner*?] who is mysteriously ill !
with Blood Dripping from some unknown Cause ...
I met Henry Miller and Eve at the Station
I saw my first Eglantine or Wild Rose
Last Bluebell
I have inscribed the Poems of Oliver Goldsmith
a very very very very early edition
if not if not if not a first
I heard a solitary Curlew
I [ ] lovely letter from Son looking forward to his visit
perhaps on August the First ...
It is at this moment 9.30 p.m.
Henry Miller is a writer
I really do pretty closely resemble in my
personal ways & peculiarities
He was suddenly overpowered by desire to go to bed
as I am myself so very very very very often !!
It came over him I was showing him things upstairs
in the Museum & so off they both went for EVE is a
perfect darling & humours her man in every way
just as the T.T. humours her man if you can call him a man !
But they will be up here by eleven
if they can stay until the 11.58 train
I gave Henry the Patteson Oliver Goldsmith

1st July 1953
I set out 7.12 got home at 9.30 2 hours
& 20 minutes is the usual time I take doing it.
We had a knock on the door at about 10 am
and lo ! & behold there was Henry & Eve & at 11.10 they said good-by
that gave them good time to get to Hotel & catch
the 12 noon train to LONDON
& early tomorrow Thursday to PARIS ...

The T.T. felt sad when they said goodbye
& went away & this is a queer & (so far)
a mysterious sadness
We discussed it and tried to analyze it
O so hard O so hard
Henry described the Alhambra at
Granada O O so splendidly !

TLS May 30 2014



Auntie John

In March 1950, Henry Miller, then living in Big Sur, CA, "poor in pocket" though the author of several famous books, introduced himself to John Cowper Powys in Wales: "I suddenly thought of you and the very great influence you had upon me years ago, when I was just a lad . . . I read everything of yours I could lay hands on". Miller asked Powys if there was anything he could send him from across the ocean. The older writer, delighted to receive this fan letter, replied graciously, "any books of yours, for though I have been snatching at fragments of your work for years & years I don't possess one single book".

Thus a pen-palship was born, which lasted till Powys's death in 1963. The book Miller sent was not one of the *Tropics*, or *Nexus*, *Sexus* or *Plexus* – the content of which he feared might alarm the elderly Englishman – but an anthology of milder writings, *Sunday After the War*. Powys enjoyed them: "I tell my friends over here & my brothers and sisters that my new friend is an Atlantean Heathen Primitive like myself".

Judging by the letters contained in *Proteus and the Magician*, a 160-page collection of the two authors' correspondence, Powys might have preferred something stronger. It was not the alleged fiend Miller who was eager to introduce sexual topics into the letters, but the Glastonbury romancer. He did so in an un-*Tropic*-like manner:

> For all my instinctive sex-vices my inherent sadism & masochism & spiritual & mental homo-sexuality (which is a weird sort of twice inverted Lesbianism when I really examine it) are vices that could easily exist in an extremely fastidious old maid . . . .

Powys contrasted his old maidishness with his correspondent's "possession of . . . nerves blood marrow flesh skin & magnetism – these overtones & undertones of "love" . . .". He signed off, "your old Auntie John o' Dreams".

Miller stuck to old-fashioned courtesies ("I am still just a mere lad, in writing to you"). Instead of taking the hint and mailing one of what Powys called his "volcanic" works – all selling well in France but banned in Britain and the US – he recommended that Powys seek out *The Spirit of Zen* by Alan Watts. "There is more to it than tea ceremonies." The old maid wrote back that he was "a Mansoleum of Man-Woman Secrets". Miller suggested *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse.

An unexpected actor in the drama is a young Londoner, Graham Ackroyd, who wrote audaciously to Powys: "About the book I'm doing on Miller – it will contain letters – so perhaps you will be kind enough to loan me any letters that Miller has written to you". Powys asked Miller what to do. With typical openness, Miller replied that while Ackroyd was not "ready" to write a book about him, Powys should let him have the letters anyway. A note tells us that Graham Ackroyd is the father of the novelist Peter and that the Miller book never got written. *Proteus and the Magician*, edited by Jacqueline Peltier, is published by the Powys Press at £10.

Review

Michael Holliday *highly recommends the Society's new publication*
Proteus and the Magician - The Letters of Henry Miller and John Cowper Powys
edited by Jacqueline Peltier, The Powys Press 2014.

Henry Miller (1891–1980) was brought up in a tough working-class area of Brooklyn, New York, which he soon left to follow an adventurous life of writing in Europe before settling back in the United States. In contrast, John Cowper Powys (1872–1963) was brought up in a genteel, bookish, family in the West Country which he soon left for a life of peripatetic lecturing and writing in America, before settling back in the United Kingdom. In March 1950 Miller, then living in California, wrote his first letter to Powys.

In his letter Miller explains that, whilst writing his latest book, (a book about books) he was reminded of the lectures given by Powys that he had attended in New York over thirty years earlier. Miller goes on to talk of how much he had been influenced by Powys's lectures and work '...of all I owe you ...' (p.21) and that he was including Powys's *Visions and Revisions* on a list of one hundred most influential books. Miller states that there is no need to reply to the letter but that he would be happy to be 'of some little service...' (p.22). Within a few weeks Powys had written in response; this was the beginning of a correspondence that would continue over the next 23 years until Powys's death.

Jacqueline Peltier has collated the correspondence, just over 50 letters from each writer, and presented it, together with an informative introduction, detailed and interesting footnotes, an extensive bibliography, sample manuscripts and a photograph or two, in this latest publication from The Powys Press: *Proteus and the Magician - The Letters of Henry Miller and John Cowper Powys*.

The initial letters are polite and inquisitive as Miller and Powys immediately recognise themselves as 'fellow spirits' (p.34), although Powys concludes that 'Of course really I am born a platform orator and an actor. I pine for the platform still! Writing is a second string with me. I am a born orator. You are a born writer...' [p.46] What begins as mutual admiration and praise soon develops into detailed and honest exchanges, often comparing their backgrounds; their lives; their interests; their work and works in progress.

The letters discuss a wide range of books, both classic and modern, and Powys is happy to provide a testimony in support of the literary merits of Miller's two 'Tropics' books - the publication and/or importation of which were illegal in both America and England at the time. * Alternative, often oriental, philosophies (both Miller and Powys are fascinated by Zen and the Tao) are discussed as are families, relationships, sex and sexuality. Powys is most candid in explaining his unusual/ alternative approach to sex:

> I must be a weird "case", for I am anything but undersexed & yet all the protrusions & all the orifices of human bodies destroy all my sexual excitement!! Perhaps the greatest book in the world would be a revelation of the personal sex temptations of Buddha, Mahommet & Jesus. (p.124)

The letter is signed 'Yours as ever, Jack the Vampire & Corpse Lover.' Whilst never addressing his sexuality, Miller is equally candid in discussing his relationships:

> Some few days ago my wife up and left, to live with another man. I am going to keep the children. I surrendered the little boy to her temporarily until I find some good kind soul who will come and live with us and take care of things.' (p.83)

The letters also address the mundane, for example the state of their respective teeth or the lack of such.

The correspondence offers not only an insight into the minds of two of the greatest, yet insufficiently acknowledged, writers of the twentieth century but also provides a reading list, together with a series of signposts, for further exploration of the worlds of lesser known literature and philosophy. Highly recommended on both counts.

*Tropic of Cancer *(1934) and* Tropic of Capricorn *(1939), eventually published in the US in 1961 and subject to an obscenity trial which was finally settled in Miller's favour in 1964.*

Michael Holliday is the author of Making It New: John Cowper Powys and the Modernist Tradition *in the Cecil Woolf 'Powys Heritage' series (2005).*

***Henry Miller:** from* Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch, *1958, page 58*
(Part Two: Peace and Solitude: a potpourri. 2: The Anderson Creek Gang)

... Near the Little Sur River, in a windy cove—a bitch of a place! — Eric Barker, an English poet, works as caretaker for the owner of a large cattle ranch.* The pay is meagre, the task light, the hours are his own. In the morning he takes a dip in the icy canyon stream, in the afternoon in the sea. Between times he wards off fishermen, hunters, drunks — and rustlers, presumably. Sounds divine, if only the wind didn't blow steadily twenty-four hours of the day nine months of the year

Eric has been writing poetry, nothing but poetry, for twenty-five years. He is a good poet. A modest, humble one, who never pushes himself. Men like John Cowper Powys and Robinson Jeffers esteem his work. Not until a few months ago did Eric receive his first recognition, in the shape of an award. It may be another twenty-five years before he receives another award. Eric doesn't seem to mind. He knows how to live with himself and with his fellow-man. When he gets an inspiration he puts it down on paper. If he doesn't feel inspired he doesn't worry. He is a poet and he lives like a poet. Few writers can do it.

* Since I wrote the above he's been fired. H. M.

John Cowper Powys: The Poetry of Eric Barker

JCP was frequently asked to write introductions for lesser-known or aspiring poets, always managing to find something admirable or interesting in them, if no more than their wanting to write and to live in a poetic dimension..

Eric Barker (1905–73), came to California from England aged 16, and by the 1950s is described as 'Big Sur's best-known live-in poet'. He must have written to JCP in the early 1930s (his papers at Syracuse include letters from JCP, 1932–59, as well as several from Llewelyn Powys to Barker's wife the dancer Madelynne Greene). JCP's diary for Thursday 3rd May 1934 records 'Have sent my Homer to Eric Barker' (this at the time they were packing up Phudd Bottom ready to leave, with many books and other objects given away).

An introduction by JCP to Eric Barker's poems is printed (from ms) in Paul Roberts's Elusive America. *This shorter introduction is printed in Barker's* Directions in the Sun *(1955), together with others by Robinson Jeffers and Merle Armitage. (Henry Miller also wrote one to an earlier book of Barker's.) The quotation is from the shortest poem in the book (given below).*

It is not easy to evaluate a poet's work in a brief preface. But it may be said of almost any poet worthy of the name that there is present some prevailing characteristic in his poetry that discovers the inmost nature of the poet himself. That other aspects of his work will appeal to different readers goes without saying. In my own case it is a basically elemental quality in Eric Barker's poetry that is the lode-stone for my deepest sympathies. It is the motivating center around which nearly all his best poems revolve. At least so it seems to me, and it is this elemental consciousness so seldom absent from his work, this strange power of identifying himself with earth, air, fire and water, and his grave and singular empathy for the weatherworn surfaces of wood and stone that prove him for me a true and fascinating poet.

In the long history of poetic inspiration the Four Elements have never been interpreted quite in the same way. Attracted to the most imperishable of themes, the real poet is his own translator, revealing in his individual communication a clue to his own essential nature.

Daringly, and with astonishing verbal devices, Eric Barker moves in and throughout his favorite subject until he seems to become almost synonymous at times with the particular element that he writes about.

> This landscape like a forest undersea
> All wavers from the roots
> In wind like water
> That unmakes a stone.

How those few simple words, unerring as they are unpretentious, enter into the very spirit of the wind itself!

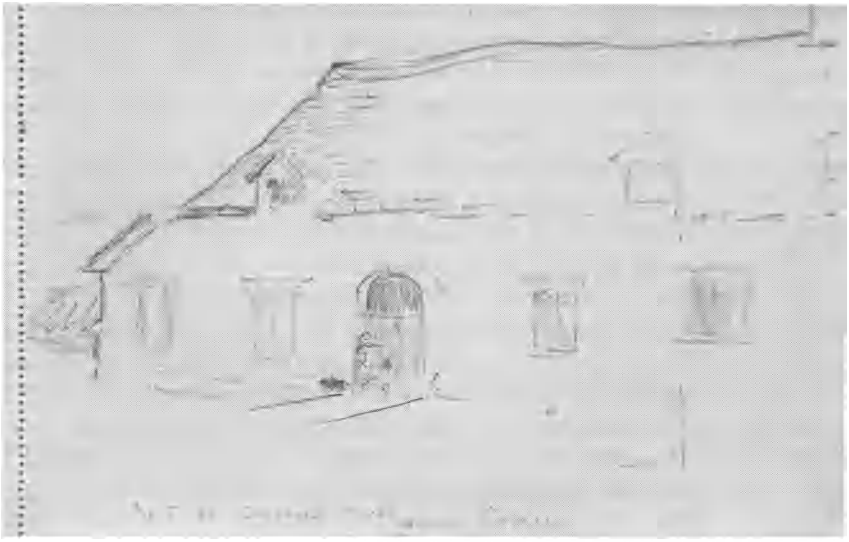
This poet's elemental inspiration is, in fact, of such a kind that he allows us, however deeply we are involved in the restraints and necessities of daily life, to escape and be caught up, even transmuted into the Four Elements until we become part of a mystery that always surrounds us and yet is wholly and entirely beyond our comprehension.

John Cowper Powys
North Wales, May 1955

In the Wind

by Eric Barker

Nothing is still —
Not even stones that wear
Such fluent shadows
From the flowing air
Themselves seem not composed
Of anything less volatile than light.
These lucent waves
Set charges to the hills,
Put trees, like clouds, to flight.
Nothing is still —
This landscape like a forest undersea
All wavers from the roots
In wind like water
That unmakes a stone.



'J.C.P. at ancient house near Corwen', *pencil sketch by G. M. Powys in late 1936 or early 1937 (paper size 4.4 by 6.8 inches). Peter Foss has stayed at a Landmark Trust property, Plas Uchaf in Denbighshire, which, though now much restored and repaired from a post-war derelict state, he thinks this must be (from sketchbook, SPM).*

Two poems to JCP

Eric Barker

In memory of John Cowper Powys
d. June, 1963 at Blaenau Ffestiniog, N. Wales.

When the black tongue
Of "Blenny's" highest bethel
(The hilltop one we looked to for the weather)
Tolled us the news of your death at ninety-one,
I walked through the rain to the Abbey Arms
And found the barmaid weeping at the window,
Remembering that other pouring day
When you came over the hills from Corwen
With your ash stick "Voodoo"
And your oak stick "Great Expectations"
And your boxes of books. Wet through,
You steamed in front of the fire
Singing "Men of Harlech"
While she held a hissing poker in the rum
To keep out the damp and cold.
One Waterloo Street was a house of echoes.
The children on their way to school
Looked up at your empty windows,
Their hearts filling with that absence.
Over Blaenau Ffestiniog
So quiet a mourning broke
The rain beat louder on the slates.
Inside the English language died.
They spoke of you with love in Cymric,
The music of Taliessin,
Words for the harp and the falling leaves
And their poets gone away.
Outside the gutters streamed.
The sheep smelled like wet rugs.
Morwyn and Big Morwyn
Wore their dark hoods—
It would rain for days.

From Under Orion *(Kayak Press, 1970)*

Barker revisited England in 1959. Did he also go to visit JCP?

Raymond Garlick

Poem for a Neighbour (For John Cowper Powys)

Sometimes in school the children say to me:
"We saw him walking with his mighty boots
And stick, down in Cwm Bowydd! And I see

the blind, incurious image of it climb
back to their eyes – a rare and long-legged bird
stalking the valley paths at breakfast time.

The parents whisper: 'Has he settled down?'
quite without faith that anyone could choose
to make his home in our cloud-cushioned town

(four-taverned, but with thirty six or seven
decaying Bethels, and no Sabbath trains
to tempt weak souls to Rhyl instead of heaven)

that anyone could want to perch in peace
upon our precipice, wrapped up in thought
and mist: unless pursued there by police.

Thus, darkly infidel and yet most proud,
heads are upturned towards the window square
that frames you writing, reading. Watch that crowd

of cheering children down below at play:
see them look up, waiting the fluttered hand
before they turn again and run away.

You make us pause, survey ourselves again –
catching a glimpse not merely of a town
notorious as the native place of rain,

but of a stage for human history
superb as the theatre of Pericles:
Poised amid peaks, we find our dignity.

From Dublin Magazine *xxxi, no.3, July-Sept 1956*
(thanks to Pat Quigley for providing this)

Raymond Garlick (1926–2011), poet and critic and teacher, was editor of the Anglo-Welsh Review. *He lived in Blaenau from 1954 to 1960, and his 'Powys in Gwynedd: the last years' is in* Essays on John Cowper Powys *ed. Belinda Humfrey (University of Wales Press, 1972).*

Review

Charles Lock

Jeremy Hooker *Openings: A European Journal*
(Shearsman, 2014), 291 pp.

Jeremy Hooker is a poet of substantial achievement who has in this *Journal* made a theme of his wanderings as he did in other volumes of his stayings and returnings. Place matters, and there are plenty of them here, within England and Wales, in Holland and elsewhere in Europe, as well as a visit to a kibbutz in Israel. Each of them elicits a historical sense, a sort of locational etymology or philology of the topos. There are some outbreaks of nostalgia but not of a sentimental kind: the poet is looking for those surroundings that correspond to self, or express self: that would be in some respect coherent with the observing body.

Odd that in trying to explain this we can use words such as environment, or surroundings, or atmosphere, or ambience, or ecology, or circumstances, or context, but that English holds not a single adequate word from its Anglo-Saxon horde, nothing remotely as concise and purposeful as the German *der Umwelt*, itself drawn *c.*1800 from the Danish *omverden*. In English writers of circumstantial and environmental concern – whether it be Jeremy Hooker or poets who matter to him such as Wendell Berry and Gary Snyder – there is a tension between an invoking of the rootedness of place and the unrootedness of the Latinate vocabulary that's all we have for our invokings: a troubling deracination of mind and tongue from the body that dwells. Berry disappoints Hooker because his idea of place is without a sense of 'history as displacement'. Displacement is good, exacting the terms by which a place is abandoned or left behind, yet we could hardly speak of what's around us, should we remain, as 'placement'.

Even place itself is not of Anglo-Saxon origin, though it comes early from Greek and Latin into Old English; like its negation or privation in displacement, the word we ought to have for place survives only when displaced: *instead.* (The Danish for place-name is *stednavn.*) Only those who pass their entire lives in one place truly deserve to be called steady. Jeremy Hooker's years in Holland have exposed him, not for the first time but by a further displacement, to that sense of what English holds in its crypt, the dead metaphors by which for a poet the language lives. As Hooker says of some of those he admires, David Jones, George Oppen, R. S. Thomas: 'Most poets work with words whose loss of meaning they are unaware of. True poets *start* from the gap between "word" and "world", and could not avoid it even if they would.' (33) Lexically exiled even from his own *stead*, the true poet is thus (in English) haunted by loss. In reading Vincent Sherry's study of Geoffrey Hill, Hooker comments that Hill never quite matches his language to the landscape: '*Are* the roots in England, everywhere in England, severed? Or is the idea of severance an ideological construct?' (240) This is an important point. If the difference between 'word' and 'world' is an ideological construction, is it not made possible only by forgetting the meaning that each word has lost? to be ignorant of the fact that every word now has a new meaning instead of its old one? Nobody has explained this more clearly than Owen Barfield in his brief essay 'The Meaning of "Literal"'; Barfield is a surprising absence from Hooker's diverse range of allusions and citations.

Hooker's thoughts often revert to his life in Wales, where he recognizes both the convenience of not being Welsh, and the difficulty in being there the sort of poet he felt called to be: 'even though my sense of belonging was partial and complex … Wales did give me shared ground to stand on, and strongly affected my sense of purpose. … the only true relationship I could have with Wales was one of *difference*.' (247)

Such is the abiding concern that makes of this volume far more than a series of occasional jottings. George Oppen, echoed in the passage about Wales, has been cited earlier (32):

> The self is no mystery, the mystery is
> *That there is something for us to stand on.*

We are refreshed to find a diarist so little taken up by questioning his self. He dislikes systems and explanations and finely declares: 'This is a period in academic criticism of the dominance of the totalitarian mind.' (246) There are plenty of anecdotes about the poet's life, as lover and parent and teacher, each with its own set of displacements. Of particular interest is the narrative that shapes itself out of Hooker's friendship and then collaboration with the sculptor Lee Grandjean.

The Powys family is a focus of constant attention and admiration, and a point of reference in contemporary poetry. Hooker challenges Sherry's depiction of Geoffrey Hill as

> a veritable Lucifer of conceit and pride and cunning. What the figure lacks is the profound humility which is a feature of the Powysian magus .... The influence of Powys on Hill is, I think, significant, though virtually unacknowledged, and hard to specify.' (243)

That was written in 1987; since then, in *Oraclau* (2010), Hill has paid homage: 'to proclaim John Cowper/ Our buried giant of deep things improper'. (The stanza was reprinted as the epigraph to the *Powys Journal* xxii (2012).) We learn, incidentally (though in such a book as this there is only the incidental), that Hooker first became acquainted with any Powys through reading *Advice to a Young Poet* (Llewelyn's letters to Kenneth Hopkins), which had been lent to him by his tutor at the University of Southampton, F. T. Prince, himself a poet of stature too seldom read these days.

The title, *Openings*, is, we learn near the very end, drawn from George Fox's *Journal*: 'It is impossible not to admire such a fearless man, or to wonder at his absolute conviction.' (284) No such absolute convictions hold his admirer in their grip; among his most attractive qualities are a tentativeness towards almost everything, excepting love and the poet's vocation. But there is one moment worthy of Fox in Hooker's sudden and startling vision of the absolute emptiness and vanity of all material things, even of the worthlessness of the ground on which it is given us to stand. The subtitle, *A European Journal*, is justified less by Hooker's travels than by his deep concern for an idea of Europe as a place of value. The reader's feet might sense a tremor here, as of the ground opening to an abyss:

> ... And in Cologne the image of rubble from bomb damage haunts the cathedral, as the city is ghosted by its former devastation. No, it isn't only that, which is fairly common among European cities; it's also the sense that all this, all that this building stands for, didn't stop what happened in Hitler's Germany. This great hulk didn't make an iota of difference — it wasn't *this* that inspired and sustained the great courage of Bonhoeffer and those like him. (245)

The dash that follows 'difference' elides a deep and disturbing antithesis: not only did the great cathedrals of Europe do nothing to prevent the rise of Nazism, but neither – here's the shock syntactically absorbed – did they do anything to inspire those who resisted. If place is distinguished from an indifferent space only by acts of human building, and naming, and if the ground given us to stand on has been shaped by the builders and name-givers of the past, and if it can neither hinder the worst nor inspire the best, where are we? Or rather, and this is at the almost unworded core of Hooker's concern wherever he wanders, what matters it where we're placed? Bonhoeffer and those like him take their stand on principle, regardless of whatever ground they might be standing on.

A painter's eye

***Kate Kavanagh**: another view of* Openings

Openings is the edited diary of five years of Jeremy Hooker's life – 1983–88, his mid-forties. It's a time of uncertainty, worrying about publishers and employment, but also of happiness with his new home in Groningen, Holland, with his second wife, Mieke. He shuttles across the Channel, often visiting his parents in Hampshire where he lived as a child, opposite the Island (Wight).

Although it's a personal record, Hooker doesn't 'invite us in' very far to his own character, rather invites us to look outward with his eyes and think with his mind. The diary is a series of questionings and meditations, worrying about the state of England, the relation of 'poetry' to 'place' and of the individual to society, puzzling over 'rootedness' and the meaning of life. There are also travels ('openings') to other scenes: in Wales, East Anglia, France and Germany, Spain and Israel. It is a book of observations. Hooker has a painter's eye (his father was a painter) for colour and shape, texture and atmosphere: of southern England, its familiar woods and tidal shores, and of the meres and dykes of the Holland he comes to know. Everywhere he notices and absorbs flowers, birds, rock patterns, sun and shadow, water and wind, seasons and snow and above all clouds. He is a good companion. He relishes names of places and people. This is in effect prose-poetry, much of it to be refocussed later into verse. Two examples: one while staying with Gerard Casey, on a walk also favoured by Theodore Powys:

> Wind in the beeches, a sea-noise, wind-currents racing downhill in the grass, wind moulding great white cloud-towers over distant Hambledon, intermittent harsh calls of cock pheasants from undergrowth, and beech shadows long across fields in evening light ... As we walked back toward the car, blown sunlight filled the valley. [p.225]

and near Groningen, home of his wife Mieke:

> Grey dusk in north Holland: line of a dyke against the sky, or a church spire and a misty windmill seen far off across flat, hedgeless fields, here & there a long mound of beets ... clots of earth stuck to naked vegetable flesh, and in one place, where farmers were burning the leavings of a crop of maize, a fire, vividly animating a corner of the day, vibrant leaping red tongues licking at the mass of misty grey air. The strangely expectant look of unpicked cabbages, or a tumbrel of cabbage heads ... Yellow leaves, red flames, but over all greyness, beautiful and foreboding, like silt misting a great expanse of still water.

In towns he notices people with the eye of a Sickert, though often troubled by what he sees as increasing sordidness, the rise of inequality and discontent. He combats anger and disappointments with Blake ('Wisdom is sold in the desolate market where none come to buy ...' [150]), and with other fellow-spirits from his reading, both wide and deep .

But 'What matters is being alive in the world' – he shares much with JCP. Wonder and joy: truth and beauty even in simplest and most familiar things which we as

humans are blessedly able to receive. The book ends with a train from Bath running in quiet evening light, in flowering May .... A blackbird. Cowparsley. 'Sun setting gold, a molten drop over chalk ridge, sky a clear pale blue.' Scaffolding on a steeple — a new moon, a river – through the New Forest in the dark.

Jeremy Hooker's The Cut of the Light *(Collected Poems 1965–2005) was published by Enitharmon, 2006. Glen Cavaliero's review of* Welsh Journal *(2001) is in NL45.*

KK

News and Notes

JCP: Diary, October 1933

'I think I am the most scrupulous answerer of Letters there is! I answer everyone with all my wit and with all my mind & all my Soul.'

* * * *

Two more Powys mentions in the *TLS*: a semi-serious blurb for the Miller-JCP Letters on May 30th, on the 'NB' back page (see page 31) dedicated to amusing and curious literary matters, the other including JCP among the admirers of Simenon in Julian Barnes's lead article (May 9th).

* * * *

from Neil Lee-Atkin

The Dandelion Fellowship Annual Gathering will take place as usual on August 13th, commencing around noon at the *Sailor's Return* at East Chaldon, and lunch will be followed by the annual Llewelyn Birthday Walk which this year celebrates its 20th Anniversary!

Finally, I have completed the first draft of *Llewelyn Powys – The Man Behind the Myth* and the book should be completed and ready for submitting to a prospective publisher within the next three months.

* * * *

In the latest of Jeremy Bird's always interesting magazine *Merry Meet: Journal of Folklore & Pagan Heritage* (issue 52, Spring 2014), there is a long article by its editor on *A Glastonbury Romance*. For those who want to obtain a copy look at website:
< www.merrymeetmagazine.co.uk >

* * * *

Shelagh Hancox reminds us of the chapter on JCP in Peter Woodcock's *The Enchanted Isle, the Neo-Romantic Vision* (Glastonbury: Gothic Image, 2000), on landscape, the spirit of place and JCP as magician.

* * * *

from Marcella Henderson-Peal

In January an ichthyosaur skeleton was discovered on the Jurassic Coast in Dorset after part of the cliff fell away and revealed it. And a Bronze Age forest has been

uncovered in Wales under the peatbog along the coast! Wouldn't JCP have loved this news!

* * * *

J.C.P's *Suspended Judgments: Essays on Books and Sensations* (1916) can be downloaded as an e-book free, via google. This is one of his excellent collections – 10 French subjects, 6 English including Emily Bronte and Byron – that give a good idea of his famous lectures.

* * * *

Nicholas Birns has two Powys-related essays in *Hyperion* magazine that we hope to reprint soon. One is on the Hungarian writer Miklós Szentkuthy, an admirer of JCP, the other a review of the JCP-Purdy letters printed in the last *Powys Journal.*

* * * *

The latest *la lettre powysienne* (no 27, bilingual) contains continuations of W. J. Keith on JCP and Magic and David Stimpson on JCP and Isadora Duncan; also Jocelyn Brooke's essay on *Glastonbury*, and more on Frances Gregg's *Mystic Leeway*.

The Crowcombe connection

from Peter Lazare

The drawing [*our front cover*] is of Crowcombe Church, which is in the Quantocks, i.e. home soil of Matt Dekker, the clergyman in *A Glastonbury Romance*. I'd like to think this was part of Matt Dekker's inner landscape. His being a Quantock Man seems important in Glastonbury, or is it just because I'm one myself? I have looked, drawn and painted there before, and I shall be back soon. I used to go to that Church as a child; the pew ends include a Green Man and two men fighting a dragon.

The Quantocks rise from the edge of Sedgemoor between Taunton and Bridgwater, and curve away north west to the Bristol Channel, spreading from Nether Stowey to West Quantoxhead. Here it's only a couple of miles to Watchet, which claims to be the port of the Ancient Mariner. You know, I'm sure, that Coleridge and Wordsworth conceived the plan for *Lyrical Ballads* here. Roaming the hills, they were suspected of spying for the French.

East of Crowcombe is the Triscombe Quarry, now silent although in childhood I was fascinated by the massive, careless, diesel-scented lorries taking the chippings away. The quarry is cut into the side of a hill called Wills Neck, and up above is the triangulation stone from which you can see Wales, Exmoor, the radio mast above Wells and a little to the right and below there is Glastonbury, which always seems invisible unless by a lucky stroke of the sun. Whortleberries and heather grow in thin black stony soil on the highest ground. The berries are tiny and deep blue-red-black. Lovely to eat, they used to be harvested for dye as well.

The drawing's actual size is 420 x 594 mm [16.5 by 23.5 inches] and the medium is pastel, actually a home-made Vandyke Brown pastel about the size of a matchbox. I'm amazed at the richness of this when zoomed in at 100% and at the faces that increasingly appear.

Peter Lazare is exhibiting in Taunton through August – consult:
< www.thepastelsociety.org.uk >

Selwood Antiques across the road is said to be the pub where Philip enjoys his bath while Percy regrets their gross encounter.

Proofreading JCP for the Gutenberg Project

from Janet Fouli

The Project Gutenberg (PG) is an organization of volunteers who prepare books for online publication. I discovered them when I was finishing the translation of a biography of the prophet Muhammad, and my author concluded with a quotation from the Theogony of Leibniz. How was I, living in Tunisia, to find an English translation of this? It was Internet, and PG, that provided the solution. PG operates in a number of languages and, since its foundation in 1971 by Michael S. Hart, has created a vast number of eBooks for free online consultation. These books are of course free of copyright restrictions, and this explains why JCP is only just going through the process, with *Wood and Stone* (1915) and *Rodmoor* (1916) presently in "post-production". *Ducdame* will presumably follow in a year or two when its copyright expires.

PG invites its readers to volunteer as proofreaders. Their proofreading team is called Distributed Proofreaders (DP) and their website is called DP welcome. Their introductory page explains how the system works, and offers a trial run. I did this, and am now reading my way into the system. At first, one is asked to give a 'username' and a password. This allows readers to be anonymous; although one soon finds that everyone is very friendly. There are two main rules: 1. Never change what the author wrote and 2. Always be polite in one's dealings with other proofers. The system has its mentors and its Project Facilitators, Project Managers and those who see a book through the Post-Production stage, and each project has its Forum in which one can ask questions, point out problems or express frustrations.

The books chosen for PG are proposed by someone who has access to a copy, I suppose there is a committee that decides whether or not to accept the book. Its proposer becomes the Project Manager who will see the book through its proofing and formatting stages. First of all, the book is scanned by a process called Optical Character Recognition (OCR). The proofers are presented with a divided screen, one page at a time. At the top, they see the 'original' page, and the lower half gives the OCR text which frequently needs correcting. For instance, OCR often 'misreads' letters: h is read as b, u as n, or c as e; it may confuse the letter l and 1. It plays havoc with text in italics, and with punctuation marks. There are also proofreading conventions which have to be learnt and respected. But we do not alter what the author wrote, though we do consider and discuss what might be a misprint.

This reminds me of JCP's irritation with those who tried to correct his writing. In his Diary on Wednesday 23rd June 1937 he wrote: 'I like my slip-shod style. I deliberately use it.' He was referring to Dorothy Richardson's proofreading of *Morwyn* – which he had not asked for. However, I think JCP would have been happy with the PG policy of respect for what the author wrote. And he would have liked to be read with the care and attention that the proofreader applies. We tend to read too fast. Before I went to university I was sent a lengthy reading list, and when I arrived, I found that lecturers and tutors expected us to read further about their subjects – always more and more books. We were being trained to read fast. Indeed, as E. M. Forster wrote (referring to the reading of fiction) 'We are all like Sheherazade's husband, in that we want to know what happens next'. The proofreader, like the reader of poetry, or of scientific documents, doesn't turn the pages fast. Every word is given its full value for we are not allowed to be 'slip-shod' readers. One page at a time, read and re-read carefully before it is 'saved as done', gives the proofreader time to reflect on the words and their weight, and to appreciate their effect. This is particularly valuable in reading these early JCP novels, whose

pages are enhanced because they are revealed as poetry.

If one opts to 'save and proofread next page', one then gets a page that may or may not be the page following, as other people may be working simultaneously on the same book. But there is access to a complete book if one wants to read it. The books are proofread three times, after which there are two stages of formatting, and then the book goes through a final check before it is 'posted to PG'. There's an optional final stage called 'smoothreading' in which a volunteer reads the whole book and makes a final report. By this time there shouldn't be anything to correct, but there sometimes is. 'Of making many books there is no end'!

Wood and Stone and *Rodmoor* should soon be 'posted to PG' and available for all to read.

Thanks to Jacqueline Peltier for forwarding this.

JCP, espionage and the New Critics

from Charles Lock

The name of John Cowper Powys occurs in unlikely places, but in my experience of searchings and serendipitous findings now extending over some decades I have seldom been so surprised as to find him cited as the source of an epigraph in a biography of the infamous counter-intelligence chief James Jesus Angleton (1917–87). I was looking at Michael Holzman's *James Jesus Angleton: The CIA, and the Craft of Counterintelligence* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2008) not out of any great interest in Angleton, nor even in espionage, but for some pages on HD and her friendship with Norman Holmes Pearson (1909–75), distinguished librarian and professor of English at Yale, and spy. Angleton had been a student at Yale when Pearson selected him for work in London with the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) in 1941.

The biography has a thesis, that Angleton's instruction at Yale in analytical close reading as practised by the New Critics might be related to the development of a degree of suspicion in Angleton that was clinically close to paranoia, and led to politically catastrophic consequences. The thesis is not wholly unconvincing, and its presentation is full of interest. In war-time London the Yale graduate formed a close friendship with Kim Philby, in whom Angleton had a very high degree of trust. Philby's exposure might be a more plausible explanation of Angleton's mode of running operations from 1963 onwards. Indeed, the most obvious argument against the thesis that would hold the New Criticism to account is that Angleton never suspected Philby. Chapter Two of Holzman's biography is entitled 'Yale English' and its twenty-five pages can be recommended to anybody with an interest in the history of literary criticism. And its **epigraph** (on p.7), banal enough at the time, has acquired strong retrospective irony:

> Jan. 14, 1939
>
> Dear Mr. Angleton,
>
> I was so pleased to hear from you. I am very glad you have started writing on your own and I am sure I wish you a long and happy literary life.
>
> John Powys

That this is John Cowper is confirmed by Holzman's description in a long note (325–26) of the quite remarkable archive deposited by Angleton at Yale in the year of his graduation (and of his move to London), 1941. Not lacking in literary ambition, Angleton had cultivated the modern writers he most admired; the archive deposited when he was only 24 contains letters from,

among others, W. H. Auden, e.e.cummings, Lawrence Durrell, T. S. Eliot, William Empson, Louis MacNeice, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams – and John Cowper Powys.

Postcards from the Past

from Neil Lee-Atkin

Fellow bibliophiles and collectors of literary ephemera know well the feeling of awed expectation when a valued addition to a cherished collection arrives in the daily post; the senses quicken; the breath shortens with excitement; the fingers tremble in anticipation as they pluck and fumble at the wrappings to expose the hidden treasure within .... Thus was the case on Wednesday May 21st 2014 when the village postman pushed a book-shaped package through my letterbox, and completely ignoring the multitude of brown official-looking envelopes amongst a growing pile of European Election flyers I grabbed it, and clutching it closely to my bosom, carried it swiftly away to what I call my 'study', and what my wife calls my 'lair'. Once inside and with the door firmly closed, I set about the package with some purpose, removing first the outer layer of brown paper, followed by three sellotaped layers of bubble-wrap and a jiffy-bag, until eventually my prize was revealed – a hardback first edition of Gerald Brenan's *Personal Record 1920 –1972* in mint condition!

'Is that all?' you may well ask. Well no, it's not. The REAL prize, the cause of the excited anticipation lay hidden amongst the pages of the book, and I opened it to find inside five postcards which, though they had only just arrived, had originally been posted eight-five years ago!

The postcards, all sent by Alyse Gregory and addressed to 'Miss Hilda Parker, Holworth, Warmwell, Dorchester, Dorset, England' were discovered for sale on Ebay, purchased and kindly posted to me by Society member Jed Redman of Highbridge, Somerset. Apart from being gems of social history, and as such, quite collectable, the postcards are also very interesting fragments of Powysiana, for they represent tangible evidence of Llewelyn and Alyse's trip to the Holy Land in 1928–29, and because all but one are dated they provide a record of the time and progress of the journey, helping to fix and confirm the previously recorded biographical and autobiographical accounts.

Llewelyn had been commissioned by Harcourt Brace to write a 'travelogue' during his visit to Palestine in order to trace the origins of Christianity for a book he had planned, but he was taken seriously ill at Jerusalem, and spent the winter months convalescing on the island of Capri, where 'in a white-hot fever' he completed *The Cradle of God* (1929) in just eight weeks. The 'travelogue' was published two years later under the title of *A Pagan's Pilgrimage* and Alyse's postcards cover a six-month period of that journey, the earliest dating from October 1928 and the last from April 1929, three weeks before they arrived back home in Dorset.

The undated one, a French postcard depicting two native tribesmen and a camel standing amongst vast dunes and titled 'Les Grandes Dunes', is I believe the earliest. It is written aboard the SS Palacky, and reads:

> Dear Hilda, We have been on this boat now almost two weeks stopping at a different port every day. Today we took a long walk up a Syrian mountain side while the ship took on 2,000 sheep,

hoisting them up six at a time by the leg! Hope you are all well, Best remembrances, Alyse Gregory

The first dated one is from Nazareth, October 23rd 1928, and depicts women carrying water at Mary's Well:

Dear Hilda, This is the way women carry things here on their heads. They wear long trousers down to their ankles. Even the very little girls learn to carry heavy weights on their heads. This is the well where Mary, the mother of Jesus drew her water. Best wishes. A.G.

The next is dated November 5th 1928, and sent from 'Jerusalem, Palestine'. It is a photo-card depicting three young girls in native costume:

Dear Hilda, The girls here marry sometimes when they are twelve years old. The women wear long black veils to hide their faces. We leave here on 13th for Naples. Best wishes to the family, Alyse Gregory.

The third dated one is a 'panorama' postcard showing the entire Bay of Naples, from 'Poste Restante, Anacapri, Naples, November 22nd 1928'.

Dear Hilda, Look at the little island, then at the ink mark just above the highest point. That is where we shall be for a while. Sincerely, AG.

The final one is a vividly colourful and dramatic miniature painting of a spectacular moonlit scene with Vesuvius erupting above the Bay of Naples, and unlike the previous four is addressed to Mrs Parker, as opposed to Miss Hilda Parker, and begins 'Dear Mrs Parker' (as opposed to 'Dear Hilda'); it is written from 'Pensione Vebes. Piccola Marina, Capri, Italy, April 21st 1929'.

Dear Mrs Parker, We are still staying here until Mr Powys finishes his book and do not expect to be back in England until the first of May. I will write you a week in advance or wire from London. Mr Powys will settle for Hilda when we get back as well, Alyse Gregory.

Though I have yet to verify it I believe the recipient of four of the postcards, Miss Hilda Parker, was the daughter of Mr & Mrs Herbert Parker. At the time of the trip to the Holy Land, Llewelyn and Alyse were resident at the Coastguard's Cottages on the White Nose, and Herbert Parker, a local farm labourer was a neighbour and friend of theirs who lived nearby. I think it likely that Hilda had been engaged for some menial task while they were away, perhaps looking after the house and garden, and collecting the post to be forwarded on to them.

To many these postcards from the past may well seem merely commonplace objects, and indeed, I suppose they are, but to a select few they become treasured possessions because they represent a poignant, tangible link to times past, to stories told, and themselves become further additions to the story.

Reviews

Jeremy Hooker: Two Poets

P. J. Kavanagh: *New Selected Poems*
Carcanet Press, 2014, ISBN 978 1 84777 252 7

P. J. Kavanagh has been irritated, understandably, by a reviewer who, 'bored, of my selected// verses, calls them "quiet, true",/ a man who woos a rural muse'. This is probably the sort of lazy nonsense he has had to put up with more than once: pigeon-holing him as the clichéd idea of a pastoral poet, because he happens to live in rural Gloucestershire, and writes a number of poems with that setting. Derek Mahon is right when he says in his Foreword to this book: 'P. J. Kavanagh's poems elude the obvious categories'. (This excellent Foreword makes things difficult for a reviewer who doesn't want merely to repeat what Mahon says.)

I use the word 'setting' above. This, though, could be misleading, feeding the myth of Kavanagh as a gentle pastoralist. A better word would be 'life'. Kavanagh is a lyric poet who writes from his life-experience, responding to the death of his first wife, his relationship with his father (Ted Kavanagh, of ITMA fame), his second marriage, his children, his friendships, and both Gloucestershire and the wider world. Like most true lyric poets, he exists uneasily between two worlds.

I mean this in more than one sense. There is the tension between life around his rural home and the metropolis, TV, theatre, the 'mad machine'. Within his delight in nature, there is also a sense that nature is not enough. And he is drawn with sympathetic awareness to poets who have lost their mental balance – Robert Lowell, John Berryman, William Cowper, Ivor Gurney (whose *Collected Poems*, to our enduring gratitude, he has edited), while having had to deal with the most painful experience of loss. His control, therefore, comes with a keen sense of what threatens it. In his use of rhyme and various poetic forms he is a maker, and his making both expresses pleasure in exercising his craft and the need to maintain balance between opposing forces. A careful reading of any one of his poems reveals the emotional turbulence and spiritual discomfort, together with artistic delight, that makes him a poet. In 'Dome', for instance:

> My fingers rip off rusty seeds of docks.
> Hills stand around impassively as clocks.
> Inside the breeze a silence like a dome
> Is not homely but it is my home.

While he renders vividly the Gloucester country in which he lives, Kavanagh is a restlessly questioning, not a settled poet. 'Constitutional' begins:

> Setting off, with John Cowper Powys's walking-stick
> Towards Pen Hill (he attached magic
> To walking-sticks, I to him) there passes the cattle-truck
> Empty, which comes back, with a cheerful driver, full:
> 'Barren. They'll be prime beef Friday.'

Here we see a good example of Kavanagh's formal control in verse at once conversational and carefully shaped, and stamped with his personality. Word choice also exemplifies his realism: 'prime beef', the product of a working countryside. The reference to Powys and 'magic' represents something else. Kavanagh, like Powys, while realistic, is in some ways an exotic writer. He observes nature closely – there are many birds, beasts, and flowers in Kavanagh's poetry – but he has a liking for words and metaphors that have a slightly alienating

effect, suggesting a magical dimension in his English landscapes. In his earlier poems this may be ascribed to his experience of the Far East, and also to his acute sense of loss, reflected in a perception that this world is also an 'other' world. Indeed, this sense persists, and in later poems his perspective, as 'a cradle Catholic of Irish ancestry' (Mahon's words), makes his Gloucestershire a haunted realm. A consequent displacement within place creates an atmosphere of the uncanny, as in 'Natural history':

> These rain-slicked beech-boles know where they are,
> As I do not; at least, not the way out.
> I came to approve them, their top branches clattering,
> Now I can see they are more at home here than I am;

Later Kavanagh questions insistently the existence of a spirit-world. A late poem, 'Job', carries the epigraph: 'I am not at ease, neither am I quiet, neither have I rest'. Earlier, in 'Nine: "Domesticities"', he has written:

> 'Domesticities', which William Cowper made his Creed,
> 'The finest earth can show.'
> Never, divinely, quite enough (fine, though),
> As William Cowper also knew.

Kavanagh's 'place' is a border between worlds. There is a good deal of self-aware humour in his poems, but no complacency. Living in rural Gloucestershire, he remains unsettled, a man of 'baffled love', his mind restless, knowing the borderer's unease, which makes him a poet.

P.J. Kavanagh has made several contributions to Newsletters. Two pieces on JCP are in his collection of journalism People and Places *(1988).*

Neil Curry: *Some Letters Never Sent*
Enitharmon Press, £9. 99, ISBN 978–190758776–4

Neil Curry has had the ingenious idea of writing to people – and not only people – most of them long dead, who have been important to him. The book consists of a poem 'In Praise of Letters' and 30 verse letters, all addressed in the same correct form, for example, 'To: Mr Richard Jefferies, Coate Farm, Nr. Swindon'. Other addressees include Angela Carter, Emily Dickinson, The Venerable Bede, Vermeer, Job, Horace, The God, Mercury, and Timothy the Tortoise.

As this list suggests, Curry is a witty poet. The book is full of good humour, and both lighthearted and serious, respectful to addressees and carrying passages of direct or oblique autobiography. Curry is a classicist, translator of Euripides (who 'receives' a letter), and a lover of eighteenth-century literature, who has published studies of Pope and Smart. A poet with a modern sensibility, he writes with the clarity and civilized manners of the poets he admires. The book does not contain a letter to a Powys, but Curry's classicism, together with fraternal knowledge of literary tradition, calls the Powyses and their values to mind. I feel sure Powysians would delight in this book.