

## *Editorial*

Glen's funeral, a joyful remembrance, took place in St Catharine's College, Cambridge, on 22nd November.

But we have another sadness: following Jacqueline, the departure of Max Peltier, by his own choice.

Beside the many tributes to Glen, a celebration of that great champion of the Powyses, George Steiner, who died on February 3rd. We have grateful memories of Max, and obituaries of other deceased members – of Liam Hanley (son of Tim) and of Pat Benham, musician and author of *The Avallonians*.

*News has just come that John Batten, former Hon. Secretary 1992-1997 and former Newsletter editor, 1997-2001, died at the end of February. He and his wife Eve were much-valued presences in the Society, especially at meetings in Powys territory, where they lived. It was John who instigated the Llewelyn Birthday Celebration in 1995 and he frequently joined in the walk. John Batten's funeral took place at Montacute on 17th March. There will be tributes in the July Newsletter.*

We have grateful memories of Max, and obituaries of other deceased members – of Liam Hanley (son of Tim) and of Pat Benham, musician and author of *The Avallonians*. JCP's special relationship with Dostoevsky was pursued at Pushkin House in London, on 1st December. Phyllis Playter's diary for 1932, with glimpses of JCP's, gives a revealing picture of their life together in Columbia County, upstate New York. Other contributions include a review of 'The Theology of Personification' in TFP, by Chris Danta (from Ray Crozier); happy news of the bells of St George's church, Fordington, as heard in *Maiden Castle*, now increased to a full eight (from Richard Betts); W.J. Keith's Powys companions giving encouraging help to Paul

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Cheshire; Michael Wood from Leeds investigating JCP's relationship with the natural world; a report by Jerry Bird on new-town building threatening the landscape of *Ducdame*; and (also from Ray Crozier) a memorial sculpture marking the burial place of Catrin Glyndwr (Catherine in JCP's novel) by the Tower of London where she and her surviving family were held until their deaths.

Our next *Newsletter* is no.100, and we are thinking of celebrating with repeats of selected favorite pieces from newsletters of the past half century. Would members like to make suggestions?

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### **Susan Rands: a clarification**

*JCP's description of his parents (continued from NL98, p.36)*

I would like to clarify the provenance of JCP's description of his parents published in NL 98, November 2019. Most of Malcolm Elwin's papers are indeed at Exeter University Special Collections Archive but the JCP/Elwin correspondence is at the Harry Ransom Centre in Austin, Texas, and was sold to them by my mother soon after Malcolm Elwin's death in 1973. Before the manuscripts were sent to HRC, photocopies were made of these documents. Among them was JCP's description of his parents as published. I do not have in my possession any original JCP manuscripts, and never have had.

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### **Max Peltier In Memoriam**

#### ***From Chris Thomas***

Jean-François (Jeff) Peltier, Jacqueline's son, who attended our conference in 2019, informed me of the death of Max: *Max fought vehemently the sadness of my mother's loss but did not succeed. He ended his life last Friday.* A few weeks before he passed away, on Friday 29 November 2019, Max sent me an email saying how much he appreciated all the tributes to Jacqueline which we had published in *Newsletter* 98. He said: *I was very grateful for and deeply touched by everything which various members of the Powys Society had to say about Jacqueline in NL98.* Over the several years I worked with Max I had many telephone conversations with him and found him very amiable and sympathetic. Unfortunately we never had a chance to meet in person. He was always cheerful, enthusiastic, good humoured and always wanted to talk about a range of different subjects from politics and current affairs to art and literature. Max did so much to support Jacqueline and help produce *la lettre powysienne* as well as many of Cecil Woolf's collections of JCP's letters.

*From Marcella Henderson-Peal*

This is a huge shock and more than anything so very sad. Dear heartbroken Max.

We were in touch regularly (lately I broke the news of Glen's death to him, then there was Jacqueline's birthday on October 1st) but not this last month.

Here is something he wrote to me back in August after the conference. Maybe his gesture last Friday was an attempt to look for a clue to the *miracle*:

*Dear Marcella,*

*I am very grateful for all the praise and memories of my lost Jacqueline and your mention of the still to me heart-breaking resemblances with Jeff and Arthur [Jacqueline's son and grandson] that you point out. Grateful: yes, but terribly sad. I will leave the subject with a quote from Powys "...a world from which something ... had been taken away, that could never — no! not even by a miracle — be given back."*

And so, back to the world of objective reality ...

\* \* \*

*A Meeting: Ely, Saturday 9 May 2020*

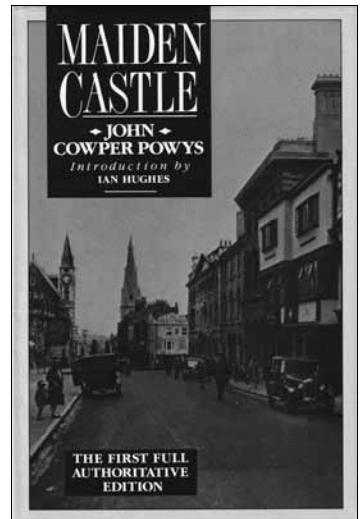
*The Old Fire Engine House, restaurant and art gallery, 25 St Mary's Street, Ely*

Discussion, led by our Chairman, Timothy Hyman, of Chapter Six of John Cowper Powys's novel *Maiden Castle*. **10.30am** for **welcome and coffee**, **11.00am start**, **lunch 12.00 – 13.00pm**, meeting continues in the afternoon.

All are welcome to attend the meeting. The event is free except for lunch which is optional. A contribution toward the cost of coffee and biscuits would be appreciated. If you plan to attend the discussion *please notify Hon. Secretary in advance*.

**Recommended texts:** new complete edition of *Maiden Castle* published by University of Wales Press, 1990, with introduction by Ian Hughes, pages 224-277 or restored complete edition published by the Overlook Press, 2001, pages 224-276.

JCP commenced writing *Maiden Castle* at Rat's Barn on Chaldon Down in 1934 immediately following his return to England from America. The novel was finished in Corwen in Wales in February



1936 and first published in the USA, with some editorial cuts, in 1936 and in the UK in 1937.

Wilson Knight described *Maiden Castle* as a fiery book made mainly from the fire of the intellect full of abysms of the mind as well as abysms below the earth. Chapter Six of *Maiden Castle* incorporates these ideas beginning with a discussion between Dud No-man and his father Urien Quirm on questions of the nature of reality. Dud wonders if Urien truly believes in the reality of supernatural influences and powers. Urien defends his core belief in a level of reality that can't be identified with concrete physical existence and condemns Dud's all or nothing attitude. Our discussion of Chapter Six will trace these conflicting opinions, and states of mind, which are played out in a psychic drama on the top of the earthwork Mai-Dun.

We will examine the relationship between Dud and Urien and consider the thematic significance of JCP's references to the struggle between the past, present and future, ancient Welsh texts, Welsh mythology, other dimensions, ghost scents, the reincarnation of the old gods and chthonic powers, Spengler, Communism and Christianity. Other questions remain unanswered at the conclusion of the chapter which ends on a note of irresolution with Dud No-man contemplating the prostrate body of Wizzie. Dud torments himself with the thought of losing her – *it was blighting desolation* – returning the reader to Wilson Knight's imagery of abysms of the mind. In a recent book about the novel, *John Cowper Powys and the Elements*, Harald Fawcner has however pointed to another powerful liberating aspect which he finds in JCP's celebration of the elements. Natural phenomena, especially the Mai-Dun wind, alongside descriptions of the flora and fauna of Maiden Castle, are vividly evoked throughout Chapter Six of *Maiden Castle*.

**Chris Thomas, Hon Secretary**

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### ***Committee Nominations 2020-2021***

Nominations are invited for **Honorary Officers and Members of the Powys Society committee** to take effect from **August 2020**.

All paid-up members, including Honorary members, are entitled to submit nominations for the committee. Nominations must include the name of the **Proposer** and the **Seconder** and should be submitted in writing, or by e-mail, including a statement confirming the **Nominee's agreement**.

Nominations should be sent to the Hon. Secretary by e-mail to [chris.d.thomas@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chris.d.thomas@hotmail.co.uk) or by post to: 87 Ledbury Road, London W11 2AG.

Nominations must be received **by Monday 1 June 2020.**

Current **Honorary Officers** of the Powys Society committee are:

<i>Chairman</i>	Timothy Hyman
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	David Goodway
<i>Secretary</i>	Chris Thomas
<i>Treasurer</i>	Robin Hickey

Nominations are sought for the **four** positions of the **Honorary Officers** from August 2020.

Current members of the Powys Society **committee** are: **Kate Kavanagh** (*Newsletter editor*), **Dawn Collins** (*social media manager*) and **Paul Cheshire** (*web editor*), (who have 1 year left to run of their three year term of office); **Louise de Bruin** (*Publications Manager and Conference organiser*) who has two years left to run of her three year term of service; and **John Hodgson**, **Michael Kowalewski** (*Collection Liaison Officer*) and **Kevin Taylor** (*eBook and Powys Journal production editor*), whose 3 year term of office expires in August 2020. **Anna Rosic** continues to serve as a co-opted committee member; and **Charles Lock** (editor of the *Powys Journal*) serves as *ex-officio* member of the committee.

Nominations are sought for **three** vacant positions for **membership of the committee** from August 2020.

**Chris Thomas, Hon. Secretary**

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### **AGM**

This gives notice that the **Annual General Meeting** of the Powys Society will be held at **12.15 pm on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August** at the Wessex Hotel in Street, nr Glastonbury.

All paid-up members of the Powys Society are eligible to participate in the AGM whether or not they are attending the conference.

**Chris Thomas, Hon Secretary**

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### ***New Members***

We are very pleased to welcome three new members to The Powys Society, who have joined since the last announcement published in *Newsletter* 98 in November 2019 (see Secretary's Report, p.5). New members are located in Australia, Rickmansworth and London. This brings the current total membership of the Society to **237**, including Honorary members, and allowing for other members who are deceased, or who have either resigned or not renewed their membership.

**Chris Thomas, Hon Secretary**

**The Powys Society Conference 2020**  
*The Wessex Hotel, Street, nr Glastonbury*  
*Friday 14 August to Sunday 16 August*

Glastonbury is surrounded by four hills with potent mythological and legendary associations. St Edmund's Hill, Chalice Hill, Wirral Hill and the Tor all feature prominently in *A Glastonbury Romance* and can all be easily reached from our conference venue.

St Edmund's Hill may once have been a prehistoric solar or lunar observatory but is now covered by a modern housing estate. In a key passage in *A Glastonbury Romance* Mr Evans sits on a heap of turnips in Edmund Hill Lane and obtains knowledge of the double natured First Cause. Chalice Hill overlooks the mythical burial place of the Holy Grail. As we discovered during previous conferences in Street, Wirral Hill offers visitors an excellent vantage point for a view of Glastonbury, the Abbey ruins, the Tor, the Somerset levels, and the surrounding landscape of *Insular Pomorum*. But the Holy Thorn on Wirral Hill, which John Crow in *A Glastonbury Romance* thinks is *the queerest dead tree I've ever seen* has now been removed leaving only a remnant of its damaged trunk. The Tor however remains a safe haven for an abundance of flora and fauna including butterflies, wildflowers, skylarks, swallows, swifts, badgers, rabbits and foxes and also offers panoramic views of the Avalonian landscape.

Our speakers will cover subjects concerned with the intersection of myth and mythmaking, the creative power of imagination, and what Jeremy Hooker calls *the life of place*. For John Cowper Powys, Welsh Celtic magic, Welsh places, and the Welsh landscape inspired his imagination all his life. When JCP moved to Snowdonia he believed he had actually been transported to a place where some of the events in the *Mabinogion* had occurred. **Felix Taylor** will investigate the links between JCP's self-identification with Wales and Celtic mythology and the *modus operandi* of his philosophy of life. He will examine JCP's references to Celtic myth, Arthurian legend and romance in his novels and trace how this became progressively connected to his knowledge and understanding of what he thought to be the secret of life. **Michael Grenfell** will explore the possible affinities and correspondences between JCP's writings and the poetry of William Blake. Both writers had a natural capacity for highly creative and imaginative thinking. *Man's imagination*, said JCP, *not God's will is what creates*. Blake declared his life's task was *to open the immortal Eyes of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought in the Human Imagination*. **Jeremy Hooker**, a *poet of place*, will reflect on his own personal journey and discovery of the works of JCP; he will explore the impact JCP's writing made on his own poetry and will consider JCP in the context of what he calls *earth rootedness* or what Llewelyn Powys referred to as *the poetry of existence*. **Charles Lock** will present a study on the subject of corners (enclosure, entrapment, and cover) in the works of T.F.Powys and

Sylvia Townsend Warner. **Paul Cheshire** will examine JCP's imaginative treatment of the theme of self-destruction in his novel *Rodmoor*, taking us from the fictional location of places in East Anglia, *a county peculiarly at the mercy of the elements* and a natural world of disintegration and decadence, to another place, beyond life, which JCP describes in the novel as *repulsive to our human senses*.

On our **free Saturday afternoon** there will be an opportunity to explore places in and around the environs of Glastonbury. There will also be an opportunity on **Saturday evening** for conference attendees to recall the achievements of our past President **Glen Cavaliero** in a tribute to his life and career and dedication to the Powyses. **Jeremy Hooker** will conclude the evening by reading some of his own poems. Our well stocked **book room** will be open again at selected times over the whole weekend. Members are invited to contribute their donations of books to the sale. Donations are much appreciated and all books are gratefully received.

**Chris Thomas, Hon Secretary**

### *Programme*

#### **Friday 14 August**

16.00 Arrival

17.30 Reception

18.30 Dinner

20.00 **Felix Taylor**: 'Elements of the four branches of the *Mabinogi* in the novels of John Cowper Powys'

#### **Saturday 15 August**

08.00 Breakfast

09.30 **Michael Grenfell**: 'JCP and William Blake'

10.45 Coffee

11.15 **Jeremy Hooker**: 'Old Earth Men'

13.00 Lunch

*Afternoon free*

19.00 Dinner

20.30 Tributes to **Glen Cavaliero** followed by poetry readings by **Jeremy Hooker**

#### **Sunday 16 August**

08.00 Breakfast

09.30 **Charles Lock**: 'Writing in Corners: The Cloistered World of T.F.Powys and Sylvia Townsend Warner'

10.45 Coffee

11.00 **Paul Cheshire**: '*Rodmoor* and the quest for "what lies beyond life"'

12.15 **AGM**

13.00 Lunch

15.00 Departure

## Conference Speakers

**Felix Taylor** is a doctoral candidate in English at St Hugh's College, Oxford. In his lecture Felix will show how certain features of Welsh mythology in JCP's novels provided him with the necessary tools to further explore his personal mythology. Felix says that as JCP's philosophy developed during the early 1930s and the introspection of the 'ichthyosaurus-ego' became a component of his thinking, medieval Welsh literature also began to take a more prominent place in novels such as *A Glastonbury Romance* and *Maiden Castle*, and later, following his move to North Wales, in *Morywn* and *Owen Glendower*. On the one hand the myths and legends of the Welsh, in the form of Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the *Mabinogi*, and the antecedents of the Arthurian legend identified by Sir John Rhys in early Welsh literature, resembled a contradicting whole for JCP and an acknowledgement of the far extremes of human nature. It is a mythology, says Felix, quoting from G Wilson Knight's study of JCP's work, *The Saturnian Quest*, that displays an *ancient wisdom*, in which *seeming incompatibles, the opposites, of being and not-being, life and death, were somehow in alliance*. On the other hand Felix says it is also representative for JCP of the secret to life accessed through magical thinking and a 'return' to the pre-individuated mind, an idea which culminated in his final major novel *Porius*.

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**Michael Grenfell** was Chair of Education at Stirling University between 2013 and 2015. He has also held Chair positions at Trinity College, Dublin, and Southampton University Education School where he is now Emeritus Professor of Education. His background is in French Studies. He has a personal interest and involvement in a range of esoteric philosophical traditions and disciplines, and has worked closely with the ideas of J.G.Bennett (a follower of the guru of self-development G.I.Gurdjieff) and his associate connections. He was committee member of the William Blake Society of St James in London in the 1980s and 1990s when he was their Press and Publicity Officer. He also edited the *Blake Journal*. His special focus has been on *Blake and Gnosticism* [Gnosticism: the achievement of direct personal intuition of divine experience]. His books include *Pierre Bourdieu: Agent Provocateur* (Continuum, 2004), *Art Rules: Pierre Bourdieu and the Visual Arts* (with C. Hardy) (Berg, 2007) [Pierre Bourdieu was a French sociologist and anthropologist], *Parallel Lives: the Biographies of Ralph McTell* (Pomera Press, 2016). Michael's website can be found at: [www.michaelgrenfell.co.uk](http://www.michaelgrenfell.co.uk) Michael's talk will present elements of a personal lifelong odyssey involving the work of John Cowper Powys and William Blake. Unsure at first of quite what the connection between JCP and Blake was, Michael has since



played one off against the other in exploring to what extent their separate world views shared a common vision. Michael says that he cannot cover all the many and varied discipline-based interpretations of both JCP and Blake but by starting what they evidently did share by way of literary inspiration – Shakespeare, Dante, Milton – and then reviewing JCP’s own discussion of Blake, he hopes to develop common perspectives over issues such as authority, nature, time, and the human body. He will also make reference to other associative referents of JCP and elements of Hindu philosophy.

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**Jeremy Hooker** is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Glamorgan. Jeremy was a lecturer at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth in the 1970s and has held teaching posts at Groningen University in the Netherlands, Bath Spa University and at Le Moine University, New York. He has published numerous collections of poetry as well as books of literary criticism on writers such as Hardy, Edward Thomas and Richard Jefferies. He has written a monograph on JCP (1973) and included chapters about JCP in his books *Writers in a Landscape* (1996) and *The Poetry of Place* (1982). Jeremy has contributed articles and reviews to the *Powys Review* and the *Powys Journal*. Recent publications include a collection of poems, *Scattered Light* (2015), reviewed in the *Powys Journal*, Vol. XXVI, 2016; his book of essays *Ditch Vision* (2017) was reviewed in the *Powys Journal*, Vol. XXVIII, 2018; *Under the Quarry Woods* (2018) was reviewed in *Powys Society Newsletter*, July 2018 and the *Powys Journal* in 2018. He delivered a talk on The Writings of Gerard and Mary Casey at our conference in Llangollen in 2011. At this year’s conference Jeremy will present “a personal talk that revisits my ‘discovery’ of the Powyses in the period from 1969, when, initially in Llewelyn’s letters and essays, followed by JCP’s *Autobiography*, I found a ‘grounding’ in their work. It was their earth-rootedness in West Country landscapes that helped me to recover health and find myself as a poet, in *A Hambledon Sequence* and *Soliloquies of a Chalk Giant*. My talk reflects on this experience -- earthiness as antidote to neurasthenia -- and proceeds to ask critically about the nature of Powysian treatments of Wessex after Hardy, and renderings of what Keats called *the poetry of earth*.” Jeremy’s tribute to Glen is on page 11.

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**Charles Lock** is Professor of English at the University of Copenhagen. He is the editor of the *Powys Journal* and is *ex-officio* member of the Powys Society committee. He has been a regular contributor to Powys Society conferences since 1978 and last gave a lecture at our conference in Street in 2018. This lecture was published in the *Powys Journal*, Vol. XXIX, 2019, under the title: Diversions and

Digressions: What happens in the reading of *A Glastonbury Romance*. At this year's conference Charles will present a talk on the theme of corners (enclosure, entrapment, cover) in the works of T.F.Powys and Sylvia Townsend Warner including *Kindness in a Corner* (1930) and *The Corner that Held Them* (1948). This topic is prompted by the reissue of the latter in 2019, in an edition from the *New York Review of Books*.

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**Paul Cheshire** is the author of *William Gilbert and Esoteric Romanticism* (2018), and many of his articles on Coleridge, Wordsworth and their contemporaries have appeared in scholarly journals. Over the last five years he has turned his attention to John Cowper Powys, and is currently web-editor for [www.powys-society.org](http://www.powys-society.org) and serves on the Powys Society committee. Paul gave a talk at our conference in Street in 2016 which was published in the *Powys Journal*, Vol. XXVII, 2017 under the title 'Subhuman or superhuman consciousness in *A Glastonbury Romance*.' Paul has contributed other articles about JCP including 'John Cowper Powys and William Wordsworth' and his 'cerebral mystical passion for young women' in the *Powys Journal*, Vol. XXVI, 2016; and '*A Glastonbury Romance*, Cuts and Alterations to the UK Printed Texts, 1932-1955' in the *Powys Journal*, Vol. XXVII, 2017.

Paul's talk will focus on JCP's second published novel *Rodmoor* (1916) which is dedicated to 'the spirit of Emily Bronte'. Paul says that Adrian Sorio, the protagonist of *Rodmoor*, is writing a book to show 'how what every living thing really aims at is to escape from itself ... by the destruction of itself. He rages against philosophical systems based on 'self-assertion' and 'self-realization', in favour of a perverted interpretation of Spinoza's philosophy as a wish to annihilate nature.' JCP portrayed characters who engaged with this negative philosophy again and again in his fiction: Geard's embrace of death in the Glastonbury flood, and Merlin's *esplumeoir* in *Porius* are the most successful and balanced representations of this longing to go beyond. 'What lies beyond life' is usually represented in JCP's novels as an alternative non-human place of existence: a mythic or daemonic world. In *Rodmoor* JCP places particular emphasis on the destructive nature of this other world. The novel ends in death and madness. Susan Rands has recognised that *Rodmoor*'s epigraph, which is taken from 'Thomas the Rhymer', a ballad of faery abduction, is a key to the work as a whole. '*Rodmoor* is pervaded by allusions to ballads and poems about the dangers of faery or daemonic possession.'

CT

*The Funeral*  
*Glen Cavaliero, 7th June 1927 - 28th October 2019*

Glen's funeral on 22nd November took place in the chapel of St Catharine's college, Cambridge, of which he was a Fellow. St Catharine's, originally an offshoot of its great neighbour Kings, unlike other old colleges (including nearby Corpus) with their secretive entrance lodges, has a three-sided 'quad' with wrought-iron gates to the street; its surrounding buildings are in dignified 17th-century brick with many windows. The chapel (1704 with Victorian and recent modifications), has sober wood panelling, modern stained glass, at one end a fine organ with curly touches, at the other, above the altar, an encouraging SURSUM CORDA ('Lift up your hearts').

The service was traditional, the familiar Anglican words moving as ever, with *Ecclesiasticus* 'Let us now praise famous men', Donne's 'No man is an island' and *Corinthians* I.15 ('we shall not all sleep...'). Poems by Glen printed in the Order of Service were also read at the crematorium – 'A Redundant Church', 'An Encounter', 'Elegy for James Bazell'. A hymn-tune was by Vaughan Williams, a solo violin played 'The Lark Ascending'; a quartet of singers gave a beautiful rendering of Thomas Tallis (St Cats has a famous choir), and a recording of Vaughan Williams's 'Fantasia on a theme by Tallis' was the recessional. The Address was by Rev'd Dr Anthony Moore, and Glen was recalled by College and family members. Two Cavaliero cousins, Juliana and Anna, were present, and Juliana told of legends about Glen relayed by their father, his cousin and close ally. Paul Hartle, another Fellow (they planned the service together) spoke of the colourfulness of Glen's life (echoed in the bright flowers on the coffin) and ended his tribute with a vow to read *A Glastonbury Romance*.

The Powys Society was well represented and joined others for a substantial tea, surveyed by college portraits just a little less fearsome than the ones seen recently at Corpus. Glen's often mischievous humour and his patience were well remembered, beside his enthusiasm and all-embracing knowledge of English literature ('he had read everything'), with his sympathetic ability to pass it on.



**KK**

*St Catharine's Chapel*

## *At the Funeral*

**Paul Hartle**

### **A Eulogy for Glen Cavaliero**

When, some years ago, Glen asked me to be his executor, I thanked him for this ‘melancholy privilege’, and I am again privileged to offer this tribute to him. Although ‘tribute’ is appropriate, for much is owed, I prefer ‘eulogy’ – from the Greek ‘good words’, because Glen was not only deserving of them, but a master of them himself. And, while in one sense ‘melancholy’ is right, because we are all of us sad that Glen is absent from our conversation, the blackness in that word is not right, because Glen loved (and wore) bright and colourful things, and we have chosen to reflect that in the flowers in this Chapel and on his coffin.

Good words then, and when I invited Glen’s friends and pupils to provide me with some – and many have – I was struck by several responses suggesting that their best Glen stories might lack the gravity appropriate for the occasion; one promised: ‘I will try to remember one of Glen’s limericks suitable for an airing in the Chapel: I may be some time!’ This saintly verse has never appeared. Occasionally indeed, like Falstaff, Glen was ‘little better than one of the wicked’, in a strictly conversational context, delighting in the deflation of the pompous in spirit and the inexact in speech.

I knew him first as a teacher; when I came to the College he had already been here for several years, first as a mature undergraduate and then working towards his doctorate, and – like generations of St Catharine’s students – I was thrilled to be supervised in a real house – ‘beautiful but wholly impractical’ writes another alumnus – in Portugal Place. A now quite well-known BBC correspondent – let us call him ‘Trevor’ - when interviewed in recent years by *Varsity*, remembered his supervisions with ‘a poet who had two cats that would claw men’s soft parts during practical criticism’; the next day he received a postcard. ‘It said, economically, Dear Trevor, There was only one cat. Yours, Glen.’ Farewell, Victoria (she was the cat). A more attentive student writes that Glen’s supervisions were ‘the epitome of the Cambridge experience for me – learning and exposure to our beloved literature without the sense of feeling judged.’

But a proper reluctance to judge did not mean that Glen’s supervisions were in any way undemanding; I think of him as possessing a kindly astringency – an astringent kindness? – while a colleague notes that there was often a glint rather than a twinkle in the Cavaliero eye.

‘Looking back at all that generation’, writes one friend, ‘I really think Glen was one of the most imaginative and productive, and surely . . . had the most

beneficial influence'. Something which Glen's charm, warmth and humour could too easily make us forget, is that productivity and influence. Alongside his monographs on John Cowper Powys, E.M. Forster and Charles Williams, there are the three books which give a proper sense of his range: *The Rural Tradition in the English Novel*, *The Supernatural and English Fiction*, and *The Alchemy of Laughter: Comedy and English Fiction*. No other scholar could have written them; in the words of one of his oldest friends, 'Seldom has anybody known English fiction so thoroughly or so diversely, or been able to recall its details with such ready sharpness. On both my visits to Pinehurst this year . . . as proof against any suspicion I might have that his mental powers were fading, Glen offered to provide titles, name of publisher, date of publication, and plot summaries of all twenty-four of the novels of Bulwer-Lytton. When short term memory loss exasperated him, I would reassure him that his knowledge of novels must be stored somewhere else. Of course, he said, almost indignantly, 'I could never forget a novel.' One of his most recent students recalls a friend asking Glen if he'd read everything in the canon, and he said 'yes'; another shrewdly points out that Glen's range of reading made him a uniquely 'great recommender' of reading to others. And to his influential teaching and books we must add countless prefaces, introductions, and scholarly notes on figures as diverse as the Powys Family (where he was the acknowledged expert and President of the Powys Society since 1985) and Beatrix Potter.

So: the countryside, the numinous (I thank thee, Glen, for teaching me that word) and the comic, the three topics of his most ambitious books, and also the subjects of so much of his poetry across the forty years of its publication. The seven collections begin with *The Ancient People* in 1973 -- Glen met me coming out of Deighton Bell's bookshop in Trinity Street, clutching a copy which he instantly signed, and I think he valued my good taste and prudence ever since. My copy of the culmination of his work as a poet, the new and collected poems in *A Flash of Weathercocks*, is inscribed, 'the climax to the road to Deighton Bell'.

Poet, Scholar, Teacher – or 'inspirer of joy' to quote another student, and also Fellow Commoner of this College, an honour which brought with it the role of luncher ('commoner' meaning that he shared in fellows' commons [meals] not that he was in any sense less uncommon than the rest of us). Glen was proud that he had been elected into this role when it lacked any statute of limitation; mere fellows or even masters required re-election at intervals and so – under revised procedures – did more recently elected Fellow Commoners – he alone, *sui generis*, needed no act of renewal.

He was widely loved throughout the college; a visiting friend returned to

Pinehurst [Glen's later flat] to find him in a particularly cheerful temper: 'While you were out the telephone rang... Unusual hour.... It was from the Lodge. One of the porters. Who'd noticed I hadn't been in to lunch...He was calling to make sure I was all right. The next time I'm in College I shall want to give that porter a hug. Of course I won't. One doesn't do that. But OH! how GOOD they've all been to me....'

Glen also had a clear sense of the duties of a Fellow Commoner: the eating of lunch, certainly – 'my gravy meal', as he called it - but also never to pry into or advise on college business, even to a pupil turned Senior Tutor, but always to welcome and converse interestedly with new fellows – especially the younger and less self-assured – and with the College's guests, as well as with us, his daily sparring-partners.

But if we would not speak of college politics (as if there *were* such a thing), then of what? Well, of books of course; and of films – but only if they antedated the 1960s; and of music, preferably jazz and ideally involving one or other of the many divas whom he cherished. All visitors to the Pinehurst flat were greeted by the photograph of Mabel Mercer signed 'To Glen and my Cambridge admirers'.

The programme of music and readings we are sharing today is what Glen himself proposed last year, although more recently he suggested that Sinatra and 'You make me feel so young' might fit the bill. 'You make me feel there are songs to be sung / And a wonderful fling to be flung...'

Outside Glen's Pinehurst flat there is a poster, designed for the Cambridge Poetry Festival, of his poem, 'Hollywood the Golden' (first published in *Paradise Stairway*, 1977). In the *Flash of Weathercocks* collection, the poem is included in the section entitled 'Compensations: some counterbalance to the winter's dark':

'He is gone to the good place'. Thank you, Glen, for the good words – so many of them over so many years – and, yes, O great recommender, I promise I will try *again* to read *A Glastonbury Romance*.

*Dr Paul Hartle is Emeritus Fellow of English at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, and former senior tutor and lecturer in English at St Catharine's. He has held visiting Professorships in USA and Japan.*

\* \* \*

### **Juliana Cavaliero: A family memoir**

Glen was our father Roddy's cousin, but they were like brothers really. Both of them were only children who had lost an older brother to infant death. Their fathers were two of five Cavaliero brothers who had all fought in the first world war and survived. Glen and Roddy not only went to school together but they

spent countless school holidays together too, along with the gang of other Cavaliere cousins, mainly romping in the Kent countryside during the war years, running out to watch the bombs much to the fury of the adults. Glen, a fan of a cathedral from an early age, once built a very elaborate one out of bricks. Upon its completion he immediately ordered his cousins to bomb it!

Glen and Roddy, although close, were very different. Dad was probably considered quite a rough little boy whereas Glen was more sensitive. Dad had a strong memory of Glen shielding his toys in horror as Roddy bulldozed towards them. However they became firm friends and bonded over their love of books. 'Read faster' was Glen's regular demand. His own mother Wiv died when Glen was only 22, this was very tough for him but he had a special relationship with our Granny Valerie, becoming her confidante, as he was to be for so many people in his life.

So he was Uncle Glen really. I suppose our childhood memories of Glen mainly involved Christmas. He came most years. There were always the usual family tensions in our house at this time of year but as soon as Glen's beige Morris Minor turned into the driveway of 10 Lansdowne Rd, we all lit up and rushed out to greet him. He would arrive laden with presents for us to put under the tree. Who could forget the orange balaclava he gave Louisa one year? He was such an easy guest, he just fitted in, loved to chat and laugh and he appreciated everything. Our mother Mary adored him and he reduced her to hysterics, with his spot-on, irreverent humour. I'm sure as children we gave him countless hideous presents over the years but he would always say upon opening 'oh how lovely, and I know exactly where I am going to put it' and sure enough if we ever visited him at home, well there it always was. Our brother Rohan's present of 1970s telephone directory covers were still very much in use and in their allotted spot.

We all know Glen loved a 1930s movie but it wasn't just the films of Marlene Dietrich and Fred Astaire, he also loved a good horror film. Never having a telly of his own, Glen would love to catch up with some classics when he came to stay. I will never forget when Louisa was quite heavily pregnant with Anna and the 1932 film *Freaks* was on the telly late one night. You can imagine the subject if you haven't seen it, but suffice to say the title says it all and it's terrifying. Glen begged Louisa to go to bed and avoid being psychologically traumatised before her due date. We loved the fact that Glen had seen a ghost, it was thrilling and we would make him tell us the story again and again.

Of course we adored Glen as children but as we matured into adulthood we started to appreciate him in a different way. Basically he was absolutely fabulous to have around, he could make us laugh like no one else, his spot-on characterisations and observations of the human condition in general were

riveting as well as hilarious. His knowledge of literature without ever being stuffy about it, and his endearing neuroses made him the best company in the world, oh and of course his memory, what a memory he had! Oh darling Glen how we will miss you.

\* \* \*

**Richard Perceval Graves**  
*(Chairman 2001- 2005)*

Glen was a most remarkable man whom it is an honour to have known.

He combined profound scholarship with a gentle good humour enlivened by an occasional spark of the sharpest kind of wit. He was also a meticulous and extremely sensitive student of human nature and gave much wise advice very carefully tailored to what his listener was capable of hearing or learning from.

He hated any kind of confrontation and one could only feel sorry for him during the dark days of 2000/2001 I am glad to think that during the course of my Chairmanship I was able, with the help of many others, not least Glen, to steer the Society back into the calmer waters in which Glen continued his magnificent record of support.

Thank you Glen, with love and respect.



*Glen and Cicely Hill at the 2013 Powys Society Conference*



**John Hodgson**  
**(Chairman 2005-2010)**

**Glen Cavaliero – A Life in Literature**

I first met Glen at Cambridge in 1972, when he was appointed to supervise me for a long essay on John Cowper Powys. He had only recently arrived in Cambridge. In mid-life, he had set aside a career in the Anglican ministry for a very uncertain future in English literature. His gamble paid off. His PhD thesis was well-received, and he became a fellow-commoner at St. Catharine's College, where he taught for over forty years. I was one of the first of the privileged many to enter the charmed sitting room in Portugal Place, first as a student and later as a friend. Glen was not a guru and was hard even to consider as a mentor. More simply, he enjoyed sharing his immensely wide reading with others. Over the years I encountered an immense amount of literature through him. He could charm buried Victorians into life, rescue the unfairly relegated, and champion the unknown.

Glen was born in Eastbourne, and after school at Tonbridge read history at Oxford. He went on to Ely Theological College before being ordained in Canterbury Cathedral. So it was as a young clergyman that Glen visited John Cowper Powys and Phyllis Playter at Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1957. John Cowper would have been surprised and touched to learn that 'the Reverend Cavaliero' should become the tireless and dedicated advocate of his works for fifty years after his death.

At the time I met him, Glen was organising the conference to mark John Cowper Powys's centenary at Churchill College, which assembled many literary great guns, and gave the fledgling Powys Society, of which Glen was chairman, a mighty energising boost. Soon after, Glen published his book, *John Cowper Powys: Novelist*. Glen claimed that the title's echo of F.R. Leavis's book on D.H. Lawrence was unconscious, but Glen's book was subtly Leavisite in the most generous and open sense, in its belief that the truth of life is more vividly reflected in the art of fiction than in philosophy or doctrine. (Glen had little time for John Cowper's 'lay sermons'). Other books of criticism followed, notably *The Rural Tradition in the English Novel* (which also discusses T.F. Powys and Llewelyn), *A Reading of E.M. Forster*, and Glen's own favourite, his 'spook book' *The Supernatural and English Fiction*. His criticism was appreciative and celebratory, and much of it drew attention to neglected writers. Glen singlehandedly saved the uncanny and disturbing novels of Phyllis Paul from total oblivion.

Not long after Glen's arrival in Cambridge, the English Faculty was engulfed in bitter debate over 'literary theory.' Glen took no part in this, and his generous liberal humanism fell out of fashion. But he acquired gravitas as the world around

him became increasingly lightweight. The sheer breadth and depth of his reading commanded awe. He taught well into the present age when students assess their supervisors rather than the other way round, and announced to me, ‘My students say I give them the most demanding teaching they’ve ever experienced, and it’s just me rambling about books as usual.’

Glen began publishing his poetry shortly after he arrived in Cambridge. His poems are intricately wrought, with an exquisite sense of verbal sonority (the collected poems are dedicated to the memory of the cabaret singer Mabel Mercer). They are steeped in a spirit of place, or many different places, for Glen knew and loved almost every part of the British Isles, understanding local particulars of geology and architecture, history and literary association. Besides the Kent and Sussex of his youth, he evoked particularly the West Country and Wales of the Powyses, but also understated counties such as Huntingdonshire. His greatest love was perhaps for the Lake District, where he climbed peaks well into his eighties. There are many churches in his poems, instinct with meaning and often suggestive of the mystery of religious experience, for after his departure from the ministry Glen retained what I think of as an indirect and ambivalent attitude to faith. There are many tributes to friendship, poems dedicated to friends, tributes to hosts and visitors.

Glen was best visited at three thirty in the afternoon, which allowed for a very extended tea, served sacramentally in a cherished tea service, the gift of one of his close friends. His talk would range widely over the Powyses, forgotten Hollywood starlets, and Victorian church architecture, but also contemporary political life, to which he was closely tuned, even though he refused to compromise with the modern world in various principles: he never owned a television still less a computer. To drive with Glen on a church crawl was unforgettable, for there was not a tower or steeple in the remotest village with which he was not familiar. But the drive would require some organisation, because Glen refused to be taken on a motorway, or enter a pub with piped music.

His last years were made happy by his close association with St Catharine’s College, where he would walk each day to lunch. Entering the Senior Common Room, he could disconcert the younger dons, brooding over their grant applications and impact assessments, by announcing, ‘I’ve just been re-reading *Redgauntlet*.’ The college fellows and staff were touchingly attentive to him in his last months, and the college honoured him proudly at his funeral in the packed chapel. I remembered mentioning to Glen the shock of the stark *logos* in his poem ‘Memorial Services:’ ‘The sting of death is love.’ ‘Yes, that’s real, isn’t it,’ he said.

\* \* \*

*from Marcella Henderson-Peal*

I think we were all hoping Glen would recover enough to go home and enjoy his books and friends' conversation for a few months or a few more years but alas, this was not to be. However, Glen's last moments were apparently mercifully swift and such a gentle person moved out of our world in his gentle manner.

It's upsetting to know he is gone. He was important to us all in his special way. A few years ago, I spent a week in Cambridge cycling to Glen's home, Westberry Court, every afternoon to have tea with him and enjoy his extraordinarily effortless and such learned conversation, his recollections and his interest in the Powyses. He was also an outstanding poet. I have chosen one of his poems *The Brown Way* to be read at my own funeral (though the later the better!) Once, before that time, he kindly invited me to lunch at St Catharine's. My father, who is still alive, is an MA Cantab and went to Queens but he subsequently suffered from mental problems and to make a long story short, Glen fitted my fantasy of what my father would be like if he hadn't been ill

Last March's 50th anniversary of the Powys Society was a very special occasion and not to be missed; one of the highlights was Glen's reading of his diary. To see him was even more important because I always miss his presence at the annual Conference. I am so glad I was able to go to Cambridge as, as an extra treat, one to be treasured forever, I went to Glen's for the last time with a bottle of sherry and the twiggly savoury biscuits he favoured, and spent a true Powysian moment shared with Charles. Glen was as happy as a child at Christmas, going over the wonderful day celebrating the 50th anniversary. We arranged some daffodils for him in a vase and all sat contentedly without putting the lights on, chatting about this and that and his literary pursuits, with an audience of tall and beautiful English trees standing outside his bay-windows whilst the light receded till it was pitch dark in the room and only our happy voices were left animating the darkness.

I wrote to Max Peltier when I got the news of Glen's death and he told me how much Jacqueline respected and admired him though she did quote *Ecclesiastes* to him on quite an amusing occasion.\*

\* 'A time to keep silence, and a time to speak' (*Ecclesiastes III, 7*)

KK

\* \* \*

## Jeremy Hooker

### *Glen: a poet*

I first met Glen Cavaliero at the J.C.Powys Centenary Conference in Cambridge in 1972. My first impression was of a genial man of quiet authority who helped discussion groups to run smoothly. I saw the experienced teacher in him, and the man with a background in the Anglican priesthood who would say of himself, with ironic humour, ‘the vicar will arrange things properly’. I can’t say that I got to know Glen well – he was a man of hidden depths, who kept his private life private – but meetings over the years confirmed my initial sense that he was a truly gentle man, courteous, considerate, and endowed with social gifts. The Powys Society could not have wished for a better President.

Glen was a poet, and though not eccentric himself, a man tolerant of other people’s peculiarities. How else would he have become one of the primary champions and best critics of the Powyses! He was a first-rate literary critic. In a period dominated by theory in academic circles, he was an acute, appreciative reader. He re-discovered neglected writers of genius, and focused on unfashionable but vitally important themes, such as the supernatural and the metaphysical. He was independent of both metropolitan condescension and academic superiority, and appreciative of the rural and the traditional. He was a pioneer of the study of John Cowper Powys, and his other critical books included valuable studies of E. M. Forster and Charles Williams and the English rural novel. He contributed outstanding essays to *The Powys Review* and *The Powys Journal*. I think, for example, of his ‘Phoenix and Serpent: D.H. Lawrence and J. C. Powys’ in *The Powys Review* no. 2. Few if any could write of both subjects so knowledgeably and judiciously, so clearly and in such depth. What helped to make him such a good literary critic appears in his essay, ‘The Powys Family and Dorset’, in *The Powys Review* no.7, where he says ‘[Theodore] Powys is a writer whom one must not read in a hurry’, and, a little later, ‘The slower you read, the more you see’. A good book is waiting to be made from the essays Glen contributed to *The Powys Review* and *The Powys Journal*.

Glen was a prolific and versatile poet, as his *New and Collected Poems*, *The Flash of Weathercocks*, demonstrates. The title nicely combines his sense of the numinous (‘the flash’ of visionary moments) with his passion for traditional country life represented by weathercocks. His was a very English sensibility. Reading his poetry, one is sometimes mindful of Larkin and Betjeman, but rarely of Pound or Eliot, and he is always himself, with a memorably idiosyncratic

use of metaphor and image. His poetry found perceptive critics, such as Charles Lock and Peter Scupham, but he was too traditional, and too independent-minded, to be fashionable. Glen's poetry as a whole is nicely described by words K.E.Smith applied to the volume, *Steeple on a Hill* (1997): 'sense-refreshing, echoic and crafted'.

I can't leave this tribute without mentioning an episode in which I benefited from Glen's kindness and consideration. He offered me a bed in his home during the Cambridge International Poetry Festival in April 1983, and we went to the reception together. There I met Mieke for the first time, and, neglecting everyone else, stayed up talking with her all night, creeping back to Glen's house and going to bed at 6 on a grey, damp morning. Glen showed no sign of prurience or disapproval or irritation that I had abused his hospitality. I only knew he was happy for me, when, after a bad time, my life had changed utterly for the better. That was the way he was.



*St Catharine's Collage Gates*

**Glen's Contributions to / appearances in:  
the *Powys Review*, the *Powys Journal*, and the *Newsletter***

**Powys Review**

**Articles**

- No. 2, Winter 1977, D H Lawrence and John Cowper Powys Phoenix and Serpent
- No. 3, Summer 1978, D H Lawrence and John Cowper Powys, A Coda
- No. 4, Winter/Spring 1978/1979, Theodore Powys in Dorset (for Gerard Casey) [a poem]
- No. 5, Summer 1979, Sylvia Townsend Warner, An Appreciation
- No. 7, Winter 1980, Mary Casey: A Tribute; The Powys Family and Dorset
- No.10, Spring 1982, Tribute to Phyllis Playter
- No.14, 1984, The Novels of Phyllis Paul; Tribute to Derrick Stephens
- No.16, 1985, John Cowper Powys: Space Traveller
- No.18, 1986, The Comic Spirit in the Novels and Fantasies of John Cowper Powys
- No.20, 1987, Tribute to Lucy Penny

**Reviews**

- No. 3, Summer 1978, Kenneth White: *The Life-Technique of John Cowper Powys*
- No. 8, 1980/1981, J. C. Powys, *After My Fashion*
- No.21, 1987/1988, Mary Casey, *Kingfisher's Wing*
- No.25, 1990, J. C. Powys, *Maiden Castle* (new edition)

**The Powys Journal**

**Articles**

- Vol. I, 1991, Powys Retrospect: An Informal Commentary
- Vol. IX, 1999, *Maiden Castle* Revisited
- Vol. X, 2000, Commentary on 'The Entermores' by John Cowper Powys
- Vol. XI, 2001, An Interpretation of T. F. Powys
- Vol. XIX, 2009, That Goblin Race: the Powys Family Mystique

**Reviews**

- Vol. I, 1991, *The Market Bell* by T. F. Powys
- Vol. II, 1992, *Pipers Hill – Memories of a Country Childhood* by Oliver Holt
- Vol. III, 1993, *The Interior Castle. A Life of Gerald Brennan* by Jonathan Garthorne-Hardy
- Vol. IV, 1994, John Cowper Powys and the Aether
- Vol. V, 1995, *Sylvia and David: the Townsend/Garnett Letters*, selected and edited by Richard Garnett & *The Diary of Sylvia Townsend Warner*, edited by Claire Harman
- Vol. VII, 1997, *Jack and Frances: The Love Letters of John Cowper Powys*

and Frances Gregg, Vol.2 & Powys to Sea Eagle: *The Letters of John Cowper Powys to Philippa Powys*

- Vol. XVII, 2007, *The Market Bell* by T.F. Powys (2nd edition)

### **The Powys Society Newsletter**

*a selection of these are available online*

- NL46, Jul 2002 Review of poems *Ancestral Haunts* (2002) by P.J. Kavanagh.
- NL53, Nov 2004 Letter from GC: Revisiting his book *John Cowper Powys, Novelist*.
- NL54, Mar 2005 Obit G. Pollinger.
- NL55, Jul 2005 Obits F. Feather, C. Hentschel.
- NL58, Jul 2006 Ely meeting (*A Glastonbury Romance*, ch.17 ‘May Day’); note on Arnold Bennett.
- NL59, Nov 2006 Review of *The Diary of a Reluctant Teacher*, Llewelyn Powys’s Diary for 1908.
- NL60, Mar 2007 Obit Eve Batten.
- NL61, July 2007 80th birthday; review of poems *The Justice of the Night* by P. Shuttle.
- NL62, Nov 2007 Review of Morine Krissdóttir *Descents of Memory*.
- NL63, Mar 2008 Obit Marius Buning.
- NL65, Nov 2008 Powyses life-enhancers (talk at conference on family, “This Goblin Race”).
- NL66, Mar 2009 Obit Janet Pollock; review of *Red Die* by Roger Norman.
- NL67, Jul 2009 Reading poems at Little Gidding 20 June 2009.
- NL71, Nov 2010 Obit Margaret Eaton.
- NL72, Mar 2010 Discussing *Ducdame* at Hampstead.
- NL75, Mar 2012 Review of GC’s *Towards the Waiting Sun* (2011) by Jeremy Hooker.
- NL77, Nov 2012 A note on Evelyn Waugh’s reference to “that bugger” Littleton Powys.
- NL78, Mar 2013 Speaker at Ely, extracts from *JCP Novelist* on *Weymouth Sands*.
- NL80, Nov 2013 Talk at 2013 Conf, ‘Endurance and Enjoyment: the Pleasure of Powys’; and photo with Cicely Hill.
- NL85, Jul 2015 Obit David Gervais.
- NL88, Jul 2016 Extracts from *JCP Novelist*, on *Maiden Castle*.
- NL90, Mar 2017 Poem: ‘Theodore Powys Under Bulbarrow’; Review by John Hodgson of GC’s collected and new poems *The Flash of Weathercocks* (2013) + photo.
- NL91, Jul 2017 90th birthday tributes to GC: Richard Graves; Tony Head.
- NL97, Jul 2019 GC at the Cambridge 50th anniversary day; Tony Head’s tribute.

## News and Notes

From Kate Kavanagh:

### The Second Coming and T.F.Powys

A new TV drama serial on Netflix, *Messiah*, is about the appearance in modern times of an unidentified man in the Middle East who seems to be able to perform miracles and attracts a wide following. The review by Catherine Pepinster in the Catholic magazine *The Tablet* (11th January) makes a connection: *What would the second coming look like in the modern world? It's tricky to imagine – which may be why it is a subject most writers, for television or otherwise, steer clear of, despite its obvious dramatic potential. The novelist T.F.Powys had a go in 1927, imagining God visiting a village in Dorset in the guise of a wine merchant called Mr Weston ...*

\*

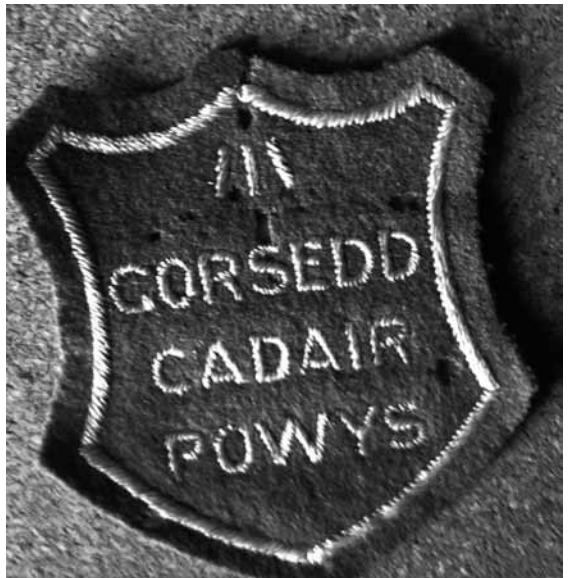
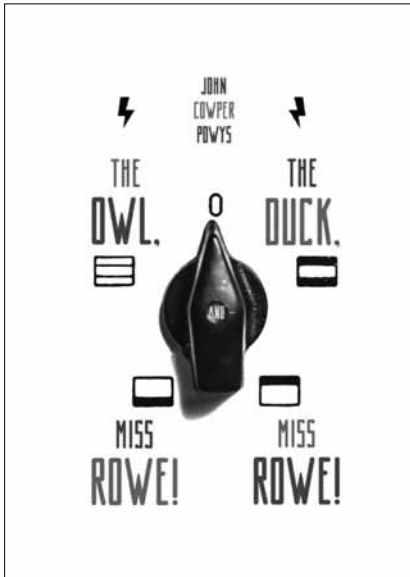
From Mike Walmer; Australia:

### Zephyr Books

I've taken up the world rights for JCP's story *The Owl, the Duck, and - Miss Rowe!* *Miss Rowe!* The title was published in November 2019. Here's the page on my website:

[www.michaelwalmer.com/the-owl-the-duck-and---miss-rowe-miss-rowe.html](http://www.michaelwalmer.com/the-owl-the-duck-and---miss-rowe-miss-rowe.html)

See cover image below (MW explains that the cover represents an oven switch which is described in the story.)





*From Chris Thomas:*

### **Glen Cavaliero's meetings with JCP**

In his booklet *The Powys Family: Some Records of a Friendship* (1999) for Cecil Woolf's 'Powys Heritage' series, pages 14-16, Glen describes his visits to Blaenau Ffestiniog to meet JCP. The first meeting occurred on Thursday 3rd July 1958 (Glen doesn't give this date but it is confirmed by an entry in JCP's diary). Glen says he was on a walking holiday and stayed at the North Western Hotel in Blaenau. He tried to make a second visit to JCP at the end of his walking tour a few days later, when Phyllis said he couldn't see JCP during the day because he was entertaining *a gentleman from Hamburg*, but could he please return in the evening. The Hamburg gentleman was of course Rolf Italiaander, who presented JCP with a bronze plaque of the Hamburg Free Academy of Arts. Glen had dinner with Italiaander who was also staying at the North Western hotel, and they both went to see JCP in the evening. This was on 7th July 1958. Glen visited JCP on several occasions in subsequent years, the last on 19th June 1960. JCP recorded Glen's visits in his diary: – *3 July 1958: We both liked the Rev Glen Cavaliero very very very much. He has eyebrows like Gilberto. 7 July 1958: Last night the Reverend Cavaliero came and talked till late with Rolf.* Glen read his own description of meeting JCP from his personal diary at our anniversary event in Cambridge last year – see NL97, July 2019, p.11.).

*[Any clues to Gilberto? Could he be Gilbert Turner, the librarian who secured books for JCP? – CT, KK]*

\*

### **A Powys Gorsedd badge**

Amanda Powys told me she had found, amongst John Powys's belongings, a badge presumably acquired by JCP at the Gorsedd in Corwen which he attended in 1936. This item has now been donated to the Corwen museum. See photo previous page.

\*

### **Kay Boyle (1902-1992)**

Kay Boyle was a novelist, poet and political activist, associated with the literary and artistic avant-garde in New York and Paris in the 1920s. Her book of memoirs about the American 'lost generation', *Being Geniuses Together* (1968) was based on 'An Autobiography', 1938, by the poet and publisher **Robert McAlmon** (1895-1956), founder of Contact Publishing and briefly married to the wealthy English patron, poet and novelist 'Bryher' (Annie Ellerman), who was also acquainted with Frances Gregg. In her book Kay Boyle mentions that her mother Katherine Evans counted among her circle writers such as Max Beerbohm, Clive Bell, George Santayana, Romain Rolland, George Bernard Shaw and John Cooper (*sic.*) Powys, but does not say how she became acquainted with JCP. In view of her mother's strong interest in

politics, literature and art, they probably met on one of his lecture visits to Cincinnati, where Kay Boyle grew up, or in New York where she and her mother often attended public lectures.

\*

### **News from Avalon**

The Glastonbury Antiquarian Society hosted a half day conference on 3rd July 2019 at St Benedict's church in Glastonbury, devoted to the life and work of Katherine Maltwood (1878-1961): artist, sculptor, occultist, psychic, pioneer of astro-archaeology, 'discoverer' of the so-called Glastonbury terrestrial zodiac and author of *A Guide to Glastonbury's Temple of the Stars* (1929). Tim Hopkinson Ball, Chair of the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society, gave a talk on 'The Mathematical Imagination: Frederick Bligh Bond and the Glastonbury Zodiacs'. Katherine Maltwood and JCP are mentioned together in *The Avalonians* by Patrick Benham, 1993, (see obituary of Pat Benham elsewhere in this Newsletter) and both shared an interest in what JCP in *Autobiography* called *the contents of the mystic Heathen Grail*. Perhaps Katherine Maltwood was one of the Avalonians JCP had in mind when in *A Glastonbury Romance* he said: *Everyone who came to this spot seemed to draw something from it, attracted by a magnetism too powerful for anyone to resist.*

\*

*from Sonia Lewis:*

### **JCP and book exhibition at the Parker Library, Corpus Christi College Cambridge**

On Tuesday 13th November 2019, I spent a wonderful morning in the Parker library -- what an exhibition of books! from early English manuscripts to Elizabethan plainsong and bawdy songs to JCP. JCP was in very good company -- poetry book open at his poem on the moon, alongside an article from *la lettre powysienne* and best of all an interesting letter from T.S.Eliot talking of his 'ambitious temerity' at a lecture he was going to give! I also spoke to the archivist Lucy Hughes who said how much she had enjoyed our day at Corpus in March. **Chris Thomas** adds: the exhibition included JCP's poem *Censorship* originally published in *Wolf's Bane*, 1916, and a copy of *la lettre powysienne*, No.31, Autumn 2016, page 22, 'A Poetic Interlude', showing a passage from Chapter 10 of *A Glastonbury Romance* in which JCP describes the healing influence of the moon on Mary Crow. We hope to add more Powys material to the Corpus archive.

\*

*The Blazing Indian Summer of John Cowper Powys: how living in Corwen inspired a great writer* is the title of a talk which was to be given by **Pat Quigley** in Corwen on 10th March 2020. Pat's talk has now been rescheduled for later in the year on a date to be confirmed.

**Chris Thomas**  
*In Memoriam Professor George Steiner, 1929-2020*

**George Steiner**, literary critic, multilingual scholar, and keen champion of JCP, died on Monday 3 February at the age of 90. In an essay in the *Sunday Times* in 1973, entitled *Neglected Giant*, he assessed JCP's place in world literature, calling him a major religious novelist and ranking him alongside Melville. Professor Steiner's declaration of JCP's stature as rival to Tolstoy is also often still quoted. Steiner's own work explored in great detail connections between literature, language, culture, morality and ethics, as well as connections between the power of creativity, thought and literary style. Amidst these connections Professor Steiner usually found space to honour the life and work of JCP, albeit sometimes very briefly. He continued to write about JCP throughout the 1960s and 1970s, always drawing attention to what he called the *decisive vitality* and *distinctive virtues* of JCP's books and pointing to him as an unsurpassed master of modern English fiction.

Professor Steiner participated in the JCP centenary conference at Churchill College, Cambridge, 8-10 September 1972. His contribution, 'The Difficulties of Reading John Cowper Powys', was published in the first issue of the *Powys Review*, Spring 1977. In his address to the conference Professor Steiner began by commenting on JCP's relevance for today and ended by noting the power of JCP's fiction *to penetrate far beyond speech into the quick of animal and stone. In one sense John Cowper Powys is our greatest Platonist, and like Plato, he seizes at the merest edge of transcendence in material things; but unlike Plato he never despises the husk, the quiddity of matter.* Professor Steiner was outspoken in his praise of JCP's work. Three years after the centenary conference, Steiner published a long review of JCP's *Letters to Iorwerth C. Peate, 1937-1954* (1974) in which he referred to *Wolf Solent* as *one of the very great novels in the language*, called the final *Glastonbury* chapters *like nothing else in our prose*, and referred to *Autobiography* as *a masterpiece, Coleridgean in its introspective scruple, but also of a lyric breadth, of a delight in the absurdities and wonder of self, which recall 'The Prelude'*.

Obituaries of Professor Steiner which have so far appeared (*New York Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, the *Times*, *Prospect Magazine*, the *Washington Post*, the *Times of Israel* and the *New Yorker*) all mention his extraordinary grasp of a wide range of ideas and his appreciation of many European writers, but none record his admiration for JCP. Perhaps this is not surprising for the reasons Professor Steiner describes in his references to JCP elsewhere, asserting that he lies outside the narrow confines of the traditional western canon. In 1989 however on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, the *Sunday Times* (23 April 1989) praised Steiner for his advocacy of JCP and tantalisingly mentioned his personal collection of Powys's books all

inscribed to him by the author and *eagerly displayed* at his home in Cambridge. It would be most interesting to view these inscriptions with their unique author-to-scholar association.

Professor Steiner was instrumental in establishing a small collection of original documents relating to JCP in the Churchill Archive at Churchill College, Cambridge, including a file of press cuttings donated by James D. Watson and a typescript of JCP's play of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*.

During his career George Steiner was the recipient of many honours, awards and fellowships. He was a Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University; Extraordinary Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge; Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard; Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Geneva University; and Lord Weidenfeld Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Oxford. He also held teaching positions at NYU, Princeton, Stanford and Yale Universities.

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### **A bibliography of books, articles and reviews in which Professor Steiner cites or discusses JCP:**

*Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, 1959 – discusses JCP's book *Dostoevsky*.

*Times Literary Supplement*, 13 October 1961 – editorial with reference to JCP as an important modern English novelist.

*Encounter*, March 1966 – a reference to *the sexual audacity of Wolf Solent and A Glastonbury Romance*

*Encounter*, May 1962 – brief reference to JCP as a novelist in an essay on F.R. Leavis.

BBC Welsh Home Service, 9 October 1962 – contribution to a tribute to JCP on the occasion of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Sunday Times*, 23 June 1963 – *The Titan of Blaenau Ffestiniog* -- obituary of JCP.

*Sunday Times*, 1 December 1963 – review of *Weymouth Sands*.

*Sunday Times*, 14 March 1965 – review of Wilson Knight's *Saturnian Quest*.

*Language and Silence*, 1967 – includes discussion of F.R. Leavis's failure to extend the reach of his criticism to JCP.

*Sunday Times*, 24 May 1968 – review of James Purdy's novel *Eustace Chisholm and the Works*, with a note on JCP.

*Sunday Times*, 9 December 1973 – *Neglected Giant*: an article on JCP .

*Times Literary Supplement*, 15 February 1974 – letter to the editor about JCP's reputation and the struggle to achieve recognition for his work.

*Times Literary Supplement*, 16 May 1975 – *The Problem of Powys*: a review of JCP's *Letters to Iorwerth C. Peate* which includes a tribute to Wilson Knight – *noblest of our critics* -- and includes many valuable insights into JCP's novels as well as a discussion of various disagreements in the critical judgement of JCP's work: *to some, Powys is beyond any question a genius, a teacher of moral and philosophic values unique in the modern context*. Steiner also points to JCP's weaknesses: *he could be garrulous, self-indulgent and rhetorical*.

*After Babel, Aspects of Language and Translation*, 1975 – reference to JCP in the first rank of English writers.

*On Difficulty and Other Essays*, 1978 – includes discussion of JCP's treatment of eroticism in relation to *economic and class conflicts*.

*No Passion Spent, Essays 1978-1996*, 1996 – briefly references JCP's vitality.

*My Unwritten Books*, 2008 – cites briefly JCP's endowment of *erotic self-address*.

*Reading George Steiner*, edited by Nathan A Scott and Ronald A Sharp, 1994 (a collection of essays providing a critical assessment of Steiner's work) includes a chapter *John Cowper Powys and George Steiner: A Relationship* by John Bayley.

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## ***PP and JCP at Phudd, Columbia County NY, 1932***

### ***From Phyllis Playter's Diary***

**Tuesday, January 5th 1932**

O what a rush before J- got off. I read the French MSS – until only about a half hour before Albert came [*Albert Krick, their handyman and helper*] – then got the things together as best I could. At the last moment – J's shoes suddenly were thought of – I had completely forgotten these in my fore-thought about the other articles of apparel. They were very battered and the shoelace broke – and we were putting in a new one when Albert came. J- only had one glass of milk in the confusion – and when would he have another one? O How will he get on? – It made me think of the old days after the rush of his getting off for lectures – O I pray we may never be separated for long again. I felt so awful – I imagined what it would be if he were gone forever and fell into a deep abyss of foreboding and knowledge of how little I could ever get on without him. But I hastened to think that it was foolish to make his absence worse than it actually was – on this occasion when he is only to be away until Friday –

William came – and was much disappointed to find J- gone. With his incredible complacency and density of proportion he said – I didn't think of his being gone, I like to run out – you know – and have a talk with him" – I felt the old Moon-in-the-Noonday Sun feeling once again. But how natural after all. Everyone feels excited and even I might say gets this kind of [*lines mixed*] genius indulgence and devotion [*inserted*] the Public has to Einstein – as to an Innocent or a Holy Man – you don't have to be [*?Sir* —] or even Hugh Handyman or William from the grocer's and Albert – and even Miss McNeill – EVEN [*crossing out*] only Carl Steitz and Mrs Hagen – and Mrs Hagen did toward the end I think. The Black would not eat his supper and stayed under couch all evening. How lovely it will be when J- gets back! But the Black is cut off from this anticipation – and is gloomy – gloomy as he was at first. He is not what you could call a *cheerful* companion in affliction.

## Thursday, January 7

Ah! What a lovely day this was! Clear mild – halcyon blue sky – every *shred* of snow gone – the brook higher than I have ever seen it – rushing almost even with the floor of the bridge and very wide. The entry where the Coal [hse is was flooded for the first time – the bricks wet – from the overflow down the hillside. It was such a lovely day – so like early Spring in my country. Here – it is always so chilly in Spring - and today it was not chilly – yet the wind was in the North. It was a mystery. I dissolved the rug cleaner and went at the rug when Miss Mc Neill came. She seemed as usual – and did not enter into the rug transaction at all – and went off very soon. It was hard work – but rather satisfactory since the colours leaped to life under the mixture and dried very soon fluffy – and quite perceptibly fresher – though all the spots were not gone. While I was doing this the front door was wide open. Next came Peter’s walk – and I conceived the daring notion of going to the Waggoner place. He started reluctantly because the sound of Radowitz voices acould be heard by the brink of the swollen brook under elms and willows below iron bridge. Twenty times he nearly pulled me back to the house with his alligator lunges. But I persevered when lo – behind the red barn suddenly appeared Fritz and an infinitesimal white poodle. The Black made a supreme lunge backward and out of my clumsy woolen gloved fingers slipped the string – and he was off like a bullet down the road home. I returned and got him and again set out pulled and yanked all the way to the Waggoner road and all the way up the hill side – muddy flowing with water - untangling the string – steep – The Black pulling me off my feet with his dashes in advance or nearly tripping me up with his sudden standstills. I tried to enjoy the lovely landscape – but it was a tour de force and there were No Mountains.

## Saturday, January 9, 1932

J got back – J got back!

The Black cavorted once again and ate his dinner with relish. O how nice it was – far more than New Year or Christmas – J- looked very well – whether due to his hair being sheared to his skull which always makes him look more rugged – or not – I scarcely know – but he seems to have got through the trip well – and so far shows no bad effects. He brought a little bag of strawberries and mushrooms – our old Cushman bread – and a silver cream pitcher – which I took exception to at first after being thrilled before I opened it – because of its shape. J- philosophically said “you were very pleased when you heard about it anyway, you got some pleasure out of it.” I felt ashamed all the time I was carping at it – but I could not seem to help it. Now however because of my remorse and the whole incident – the little pitcher has a peculiar significance for me and I would not be parted from it all the

rest of my life. J- had many exciting things to relate – his tea in the Inner Sanctum & Helen Rotkin's present career – and of the anticipated advent of a child of Isobel in May perhaps.

**from JCP's diary**

**Saturday 9th January** [...] *The T.T. did enjoy the mushrooms and strawberries & was amazed at their cheapness. At first she wish[ed] the silver milk jug was low & solid & with a wide open spout but she felt sorry for this queer little flimsy thing & liked it a tiny bit better as time went on & had cream in it at breakfast.*

*The Black gave a welcome to the Ogre of Phudd what did his heart good. Albert came & received a cheque for 3.50 for his work and for driving me in and out of the station. And what do [ ] suppose the Black actually came out and let Albert pat him on the head. This was a triumph for Albert. I find the T.T. has begun with intense delight a patchwork quilt but it is brown and brown is a hard colour to collect. There were two letters from Hamilton describing the death and funeral and cremation of M.G.'s Mother. There was an enormous amount to discuss & to criticise in the peculiar tone of these letters... for they lacked a certain sardonic awareness of Things. They did not come right out & utter the scandalous truth of the shameless difference between dying & not dying pain & not pain, starving and not starving !*

*The T.T. took Black to her Castle Rock up Stein Hill. She tells me how very very brave the Mees has been walking the long round in the wet snow. I have now to have an ENEMA. Took Black to Tony Stone where he came home for it was so dark. I find I have a tendency to feel a little bit worried over the destitution in New York City and this wicked hitch that has occurred in the relief Bureaus. O how I did however enjoy my tea and enjoy watching the T.T. making her patchwork .....*

**Friday, January 15th 1932**

I thought perhaps the lovely weather might last for the Third day – if no longer – since it seemed a kind of enchanted order of some kind and three is always the charmed number – And so it did in a way though I thought when I woke and after breakfast when the rain streamed against the windows – that it was over. For any change at this season is fatal. However about twenty past two or three when I took Peter up Mr Stein's field - a curious pinkish light overcast the whole landscape – and in the North west above the Waggoners place the grey clouds had parted on the horizon and below them and behind them was a sky of pure pale primrose gold – beautiful to behold. I went to the Kricks for eggs after dark and saw the moon in the deep water-filled ruts in the road – and the evening star very brilliant – but no longer in the point of the sloping field but hanging to the right over the pines of Phudd. I had not been in the Kricks' kitchen more than a few minutes when Albert came in and asked if I had noticed the

sky in the North – I went out – and great black swiftly moving Cavalcades of clouds were spreading in our area – over the sky. By the time I came back along the road everything was covered by them, the wind changed to the North was surging – the front door of our house had been blown open. I walked back and forth on the porch and felt this wild dark storm wind – It seemed like a deck.

### ***From JCP's diary***

#### ***Saturday 16th January***

[...] *I found a third LadyBird to add to my Hareem of these elegant pets – on the wall-flower in the stone steps outside kitchen. They drink milk with joy when the T.T. prepares it for them... One fell into my Medicine & took a deal of time to dry. It stuck out its wings behind it so uncomfortably. One of these pet Ladybirds suddenly walked across my spectacles ! [ ... ]*

#### **Monday, January 18, 1932**

When I went to the Kricks for eggs I found them churning with the most beautiful oval old old - wooden bowl – Very large with one edge worn thin as a new moon – from generations of working the butter in it - on the kitchen table. It looked like a miniature bark of a Primitive Man - cut out of a hollow tree – and quite large enough for one man to float and sail in. Albert mentioned something about Dreiser in the morning paper and in his tone - “If he thinks America should be Communistic like Russia I don’t agree with him.” I could tell - the Menace of Radicalism had entered the Arcadian relationship of ours with them. And I became eloquent and discoursed and tried to unite what we both share in our feelings - though they seem to be on such different sides of such questions – I was a little dazed and amazed by this out burst of mine when I had returned. I got the feeling from this the [*quite* sudden invasion to know whether They will [? – ] “Boissevain was a relative of Edna’s husband - and then - Is she dead? or divorced?” that City People like us are aliens in an alien land - in the country - and that the Draught is always there - if you are yourself. What is good in Country People is Themselves - - in people like us our ideas and opinions - we can discount their opinions - but alas they cannot ours – [*lines confused*] We are impressed by THEM - their selves [because] in that respect we are lacking - and they distrust and condemn us for what they lack, imaginative ideas.

#### **Wednesday, January 20, 1932**

I felt better today - Thank Heaven - though why is one of those mysteries. After breakfast J- and I altered the passage in his book where Mary sees the New Moon - at ten or eleven at night! This was trying and difficult. As we finished Albert came with the two white horses to attack the corner back of the house so tangled with briars and heaped with old detris of Mr Miller’s - of Mr *Hollenbeck’s* even I think because of a pink china



*bottle* J- brought back that must be very old – and which I am going to use for ink at my desk. In a few hours Albert had the place entirely cleared out. It is a great improvement! But very hopeless still - to level - and keep the briars from coming up again.

There was a letter from Ruth Suckow in the mail - a very interesting letter. J- had just begun to read it, when to my horror I saw one of the Lady Birds in his ink bottle. I thought I saw it moving - but perhaps not. I poured the ink into an ashtray - but the lady bird did not come out. In a panic I tried to get it out with the handle of a spoon. Finally I smashed the bottle with a hammer and extricated it – black and wet with ink. First I put it in milk quickly and then water - and then I laid it on the *cover* of the table to dry. It did not Move. It never moved. I cannot say how sad this seemed to me. I kept watching it, hoping against hope since it has survived being drowned in milk when found quite motionless. But the antennae and little feet never stirred. I *almost* felt as if I ought to be able to bring it back to life - as if any human Being ought to have Power enough to Will - imagine - and [*restore*] life to a Lady Bird. Now there is only one left.

The Mies is *egarée* today - she makes piteous wailing calls - all day long outside and I fear will be out all night.

### **From JCP's diary**

*Wednesday 20th January. Late today. Got up at 8. Tapped Phudd Stone praying for the T.T. to be strong and happy & well and long lived ! & happy after my Death. ... It is an interesting moment when a person first of all writes down in black & white the words "after my death" or "my death" & feels an odd sensation but not at all a seriously disagreeable sensation !*

*A bit cooler but not really cold. Did chores, took Black round by Mail, Perdita Stone to which I signalled while he rolled and had that stretched out onanistic ecstasy that he always varies the rolling with when he feels especially happy going along on his belly with his tail erect – and Other Unknown Stone & Unknown Stone & Stump & Appletree & John's Stone & Saddle Stone & so home by the rails and Tony Stone. Had such a lovely breakfast – very quick – O how quick the T.T. got it ! I had to hurry to be ready for it just as I like - Last night tho' it was barely dark this lovely little Desirable – "Good at Divine Needlework" as Homer says – actually had got the table laid & at 5.45 by the clock when I hardly dared to hope for it there was the Supper & ready! – & now this morn 'twas the same with Breakfast.*

*And after breakfast what must this very clever girl do but discover that in my book I had made the absolutely New Moon be visible at ten o'clock at night so we had terrific alterations & argued & struggled & struggled over it so as to get rid of the word Crescent. Just think how Old Littleton and Llewelyn would have scolded if I had*

*made a New Moon be seen at ten o'clock. But so totally unscientific & in certain ways inobservant am I that I simply was ignorant of this great fact in astronomy.*

*Took the Black late over Field – all was grey and a soft warm wind – even the West wind came across Phudd & the clouds held rain but it fell not. The Black deserted me thinking it is too late, too dark, O my friend! He does [not?] know anything about the relation established between a dog & its Master. “Who is a Master?” thinks the Black. But I crossed 4 bar gate & got under rail at the top opening past the Post past the upper bullrush bed and visited the Mabinogion Pool having noted that long hedge standing up like bare spears into the grey twilight & O how grey was that pool with the dead tussocks of grass in it. On my return I listened in the dark to a dialogue between our waterfall under the Burchfield garden & the rapids under the Wohn Bridge. I heard the voices of Carl and Mrs. Steitz very far off.*

### **Wednesday, January 27, 1932**

The day of J's Terrible Enema – when Dr Nichols came. I shall never forget how J's head looked on the pillow – when the Doctor was about to begin his operations – and I thought there is nothing I can do to spare J- Now – whatever happens – he is handed over to the course of these terrible remedies. But it wasn't so unbearable – It was the worst before the Doctor came – with his “Compactions”. Those words – those words doctors use – to the Well People in attendance – for the screaming sickening sensations the sick one is experiencing – that bear as little relation to the word “Compactions” as fire does to water. Mrs Krick came to see J- after dinner with a lantern and was so kind. J- went to bed very miserable from the I suppose inevitable after effects of such an experience. I feel alone and lacking in these crises as Olwen well could. I know Nothing – simply Nothing – of what every Mother should and usually does know. The whole field is wrapped in an impenetrable white fog to me in which the next step – the first step are alike totally Blank.

A very nice letter came to J- from Littleton – telling of one of his whole days from the pot of tea to awaken him to the oranges before going to bed at 10 – with a glass of sherry before the [R—kist's fire in between a host of other things – all I supposed only occurring Now between the covers of novels of a long time ago in England.

### **Saturday, February 6, 1932**

I have felt wretched all day due to having gone to bed – again – again – in spite of resolutions and good sense at quarter past two last night. Each breath I drew seemed an incredible effort – and doing the work – feebly and draggily I felt as if my anatomy had been made from very old bones – of octogenarians collected from old grave yards and re-strung in new flesh – but very little flesh – When I had finally reached the point of going to the Kricks for eggs and milk – I played all the Pertroushka records – and

lay on the horsehair sofa in an ecstasy listening to them. Why is it I wonder – there is the sensation of the Music itself that I have – and there is also a quite distinct thrilling sensation I have with certain passages of orchestra music – that is an impression of the Prosceniums themselves where tier on tier the boxes and galleries mount up and surround my presence in the innumerable presences gathered there is silence – and from the concentrated stage with the lights burning over the music racks – the tones rise and hover over the enclosed space for a few seconds – and then disperse forever – this thrilling sensation has to do with the place – it seems to represent Berlin – Paris – Vienna – Life in intricate and subdued and long established backgrounds – and only in Cities – and I get a feeling of excitement in life – and subtlety and Pleasure.

Mr Krick gave me a picture of a new quilt pattern – a Fleur de Lis – and for 15 cents I am going round for it.

### **Sunday, February 7, 1932**

I got to bed at one o'clock last night and this made me wake in a far different state of spirits – I accomplished a lot more than I have for some time past – and was virtually through the rounds when Mrs Krick came to our door with a little glass dish of [—] - nuts completely taken out of the shell – and some Fudge she had made with these nuts – which J- and I have never seen – but which it seems we have a tree of on the field toward the brook. It was delicious Fudge. She came to invite us both to drive to Hudson with them this evening to hear a sermon in the Dutch Reform church on Why I am Not a Catholic. J- immediately got out of it – firmly and drastically but Not I – and afterward depression settled over me at the prospect. In desperation I put on my Spanish earrings when I was dressing and J- remarked it was a pity that there would be no one in Hudson to see them! wherewith I launched all my annoyance at the Approaching Fate of the Excursion on this ill-considered remark. It was not at all bad however – Mrs Steitz went with us. It was a beautiful old Meeting House church with white pillars and one old large elm behind the [— *grilling*] – on the way out I saw a card saying Flat to Rent – in a second storey window of an old brick house beside the church – and I told myself a story of living there in the Winters. J- had washed all the tea things when I came back !!!

### **Monday, February 8, 1932**

There was a lovely wind today – J- and I decided from the West – it was cool – but not cold. The snow melted – but there is still a lot on the ground – and J- finds this very heavy walking in his high rubber boots and it has made his ulcer worse. Worst of all he has lost all appetite for eggs – even the cheese omelette failed him tonight for tea – what can we do? The sun came out for a time today and the sky to the east was like a sky in a Watteau Voyage to Cytherae. I planted mignonette – stock – rose

coloured Viola cornuta and some Chinese forget me not. The seed catalogue came from [Burple's] and I enjoyed looking at that to-night. J- saw the New Moon and told me when I was getting tea – and we went out the coal shed door for me to see it but it had gone down. I opened the [Pierce bag? in order to be able to light some Candles once more and ironically enough they sent just 6 candles – [instead of] 6 sets of six as I had ordered – or thought I ordered. I must have written it wrong. 6 candles are Nothing. It is exasperating. The Norton Check came after all in the Mail to-night – Heaven be praised. Six hundred and eighty dollars. Now if I am not rash we shall be saved – I hope. I have made out the order for my Tickets for Chevalier and the Spanish Dancer to-night – to go on Friday. I don't know whether I really want to go enough to make such a fantastic effort or Not. I felt Not [just for the evening. It seems crazy – What I really want is Leisure with J- not entertainment.

### **Tuesday, February 23, 1932**

J- discovered a Lady Bird struggling in the new milk bottle last night after tea while reading aloud The Well-Beloved – and we got it out with a match – none the worse for the immersion. This morning however while J- was having his enema I found another one – or the same one – still – in the centre of it and when rescued and diluted in water in Bertie's tea caddy spoon and put on the copy of The [M-- to dry so far it has made no sign of life. The little stock seedlings in the pan are shooting & full of life and the first ones turning green now. They give me a feeling of gaiety and delight when I catch sight of them that is like what I feel when I hear the Strauss waltz on Aunt H's Victrola.

*Transcribed by KK. Doubtful readings in [italics]. With thanks to Amanda Powys and to Dawn Collins.*

*The original diary is bound in dark red leather, enclosing cuttings, samples of material, photographs, poems copied etc.*

*Amanda Powys found this diary amongst the belongings of John Powys, and has donated it to the Powys Society.*

*The National Library of Wales also has six originals of Phyllis's diary dated between 1930 and 1978.*

*JCP's 1932 diary was transcribed by Sally Powys. Excerpts are in Morine Krissdottir's Petrushka and the Dancer.*

### **JCP's Dostoeivsky (1946)**

The meeting on December 1st at a new site, Pushkin House in Bloomsbury Square, was an agreeable occasion. The quorum of a dozen sat three a side of a large square table, beside a library of Russian books. We missed John Hodgson, but Tim Hyman played his part and all contributed. There was of course a lot to draw on, opinions having differed widely on Dostoeivsky for 150 years and more. JCP, as ever unclassifiable, refers to the Russian all through his writing, and in this book lets it all hang out. The book was begun in mid-WW2 and completed just after it – the long first chapter seems possibly the earlier version with added extra chapters, more or less self-contained. JCP's typical 'spirals' of repetition are freely employed, as they are in the *Obstinate Cymric* essays of about the same time. He indulges in his typical lists and alliterations: 'rough, raw, rank, grating, jarring and primordially meaningless...' – 'disrupt, disturb, distort, disfigure the intellectual issues, obscure the moral conclusions, cloud the eternal horizons...' (a random sample from page 99 ). This reader finds these generally illuminating, on shades of meaning, though it crosses one's mind that he is thinking of the required number of pages.

It is a wild sort of book, more so than previous essays on Dostoeivsky like the one in *Visions and Revisions* (1915) – perhaps no wilder than his reported 1915 lecture (or those he describes in *Autobiography*), or the rapturous summary in *100 Best Books* (1916 – see NL 98). In *Pleasures of Literature* (1938) the essay on Dostoeivsky makes most of the same points as in the book five years later – the sense of hyper-reality, the absence of everyday work, his inspired artistry as a 'medium' for imagined personalities, his use of grotesque details, his sense of city pavements and of provincial mud, of Christian mystery, his likeness to Euripedes and the ancient Greek attitude to Fate, his insistence on human Will, his page-turning craft ... Added to this in the 1940s book are the heroic role of Russia in defeating Nazism, and the hopes for new and better times, free of dictatorships, racism and inequality and with benevolent international government – hopes that JCP believes that Dostoeivsky, despite his pro-Russian and anti-Europe bias, would have shared. JCP is writing before (or does not mention) the atom bomb, or full Cold War, but is aware of the perils of Communism.

Does JCP identify with Dostoeivsky's exploration of the 'nerves' (*souls*, minds, inner characters) of his creations? Does he find him uniquely qualified to view life by the dramas of his desperate experiences – the mock execution, Siberia in chains, desperate love, desperate poverty, addiction to gambling, deaths of wife and of children –? perhaps trusting this writer as a revered older brother, or as a non-combatant meeting someone back from the front line? Above all admiring

Dostoievsky's skill at making the most extreme things credible, making other novelists seem merely three-dimensional.

We need to grasp what JCP means with his recurring passwords: 'secret', 'life-illusion', 'stupid being', 'fourth dimension' and above all 'Nerves': all aspects of being human. Of course JCP's is a personal view: not everyone would accept Dostoevsky as the greatest novelist in the world, or share JCP's loathing of 'professors' (as in his father's ongoing fairytale) – 'these damned aesthetes, academic pimps...' (p.45). But the Dostoevsky he loves and admires is on the right side, of the heart and soul, uncaring of mockery.

Marc-Edouard Nabe ended his perceptive though somewhat mystified introduction to the French translation (2001 – see NL86), granting JCP his peculiarities but taking him seriously, ultimately none the wiser about Powys or his subject but seeing the book as 'a breath of love, and in these suffocating times anyone who loves love should read it, and breathe deeply.' We may disagree, and feel wiser – a deep attachment helps to understand both sides, and this book – even for JCP – is one of his most revealing.

KK



*Jean Pascal Ollivry and K. Taylor at  
Pushkin House*

## Ray Crozier

### *Catrin Glyndŵr Memorial, London*

After finishing reading *Owen Glendower* I was keen to visit the memorial to Glendower's daughter Catrin (Catharine in the novel), which is in a little garden off Cannon Street in the City of London. Catrin married Sir Edmund Mortimer, a potential claimant to the throne of England. She was captured in Harlech in 1409 and imprisoned in the Tower of London along with her mother Margaret Hanmer ('The Arglwyddes' in the novel), her son Lionel and two daughters. Catrin and her daughters died in the Tower in 1413 and were buried in St Swithin's churchyard. The burial is recorded in Exchequer documents, which notes that it cost one pound.

The 10 feet high sculpture in Gelligaer bluestone was designed by Nick Stradlyn-John, Richard Renshaw and Bryn Chegwidden and unveiled on September 16, 2001 by the actor Sian Phillips. An inscription on the flat paved area at the base of the sculpture adds that it was erected by public subscription and lists I.A. Monnington Taylor, Sir Julian Hodge and Hanson plc. The memorial is also dedicated to remembering the suffering of women and children in war.

The inscription also includes this beautiful poem carved in both Welsh and English (case of letters as in original). Menna Elfyn is a Welsh poet, novelist and biographer, co-editor of *The Bloodaxe Book of Modern Welsh Poetry*, 2003.

Catrin Glyndŵr

*GODRE TŴR – ADRE NID AETH*

*At the tower end, far away from home*

*ARIA EI RHYW YW HIRAETH*

*longing is a woman's song*

*alaw dawel yr alltud*

*An exile's silent song*

Menna Elfyn

St Swithin's church, also spelled St Swithun's, dates back at least to the 13th century. A new and larger church was built on the site in 1420 and was rebuilt by Christopher Wren after the Great Fire of London. It was bombed in the Second World War and demolished in 1962. The small raised garden we see today was created on the site of the



churchyard. I visited it in November, 2019. Although the garden is small – 0.023 hectares – and hemmed in by tall office blocks it proved straightforward to find: the entrance to Salters’ Hall Court (London EC4N 8AL) is almost opposite Cannon Street station. See also the *London Remembers* web-site, although the poem reproduced there is incomplete:

<https://www.londonremembers.com>memorials>catrin-glyndwr>

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**Richard Betts**

***When Eight Bells Toll***

Two of the most exquisite passages in *Maiden Castle* relate Dud No-man’s reverie at hearing the bells of St George’s Church, Fordington (pages 91/92 and 103/04, Overlook Press 2009 edition): *They had come to be curiously dear to him, these sounds*. They were dear to me too during my time as vicar of that church from 1997 to 2012.

Dud (and JCP) would have heard *six* bells. Three of those date from 1850. That was well into the incumbency of the legendary vicar Henry Moule, who knew Charles Francis Powys and whose son Charles Walter was one of JCP’s tutors at Corpus Christi. Another bell was re-cast in 1966 (I don’t know its original date), and the other two are 15th century.

All six bells were restored and re-hung in a larger frame in 1903 by Harry Stokes of Woodbury in Devon. Richard Grosvenor Bartelot came to St George’s as vicar soon after, in 1906. The church was substantially enlarged during his time and he hoped also to have two bells added to make eight, but when he left in 1936, the year that *Maiden Castle* was first published, there were still only six.

In 1998 Andrew Nicholson of Nicholson Engineering of Bridport told me St George’s could either spend £300 or so to replace one damaged clapper, and wait for the inexorable demise of the six bells; or have them all restored at a cost of around £20,000. The PCC opted for the latter. I sold it to them on the basis that the bells deserved it and might otherwise go on strike (that’s a pun) – each had been struck about 12 million times since 1903. Thus were there six healthy bells, but how they pined for two more. Finally, in 2005, Nicholson Engineering manufactured and installed seven and eight. The largest of the eight is the tenor, 41 inches diameter and 13 hundredweight, 1966 re-cast; the treble is the smallest at 24 inches and 3 hundredweight; 2005.

Around this time there came into my possession a letter which Richard Bartelot had written, addressed *to the vicar of the future*. Bartelot had deposited it under



the floor boards of the old vicarage in 1936 when it was being re-wired, just before he departed St. George's. It was discovered where it had been left in about 1984, when the building was again being renovated. In the letter Bartelot hoped this other vicar might be as happy at St. George's as he had been in his thirty years there. I was, and I think he would be happy that I helped finally to fulfil his aspiration for the two new bells.

Do read those two passages by JCP. They are beautiful, magnificent, written from another world; redolent of the haunting and ecstatic sound of church bells. I like to contrast JCP's words with the less happy reflections of Thomas Hardy (who had associations with St George's), John Keats and Louis MacNeice – in *No Bell-Ringing*, *Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition* and *Sunday Morning* respectively.

Though they have their sad moments, to empathise with ours, bells are such happy things...



*St George's Church, Fordington*

Paul Cheshire

***W.J. Keith: the Powys Readers' Companion***

Bill Keith, who died in 2018, was the subject of several eulogies in Newsletter 95 (November 2018). Unfortunately, I joined the Society too late to have met him, and to me he will always be known not familiarly as Bill, but as W.J. Keith, author of the *Readers Companions* to four of JCP's books. He turned me from someone who had read and loved *A Glastonbury Romance*, and then took (no – needed!) a five-year break before reading *Wolf Solent*, into a committed Powysian.

Reading my third JCP novel, *Porius*, in 2009, entranced by the book but unable to keep track of the unpronounceable names, the Welsh mythology, and the complex historical background, I tried a Google search and was saved by finding Keith's *Reader's Companion to Porius* (probably on Jacqueline Peltier's excellent powyslannion.net), which provided me with an authoritative and much-needed guide to the novel. I took this on holiday along with *Porius*, and became hooked. That the *Reader's Companion* was provided free online was one of the great blessings of the burgeoning world-wide-web. George Steiner had warned the Powys Society Conference in 1972 about the importance of providing introductory material for new readers, and for me Keith's *Readers' Companion* with its long appendix of works cited, its guide to pronunciation, its Porius family tree, was my key to this new kingdom. I became aware of the wealth of resources, and of the extent of writing and criticism both on Powys and on the mythological background to his ideas.

When I started reading Keith's *Ultimate Things* this year, I told Chris Thomas how much I owed to Keith's work, and how interesting I was finding this, his last Powys-related book. Chris invited me to write about it for the Newsletter. My enthusiasm was premature: I always reach a point early in a book – let's call this the Page 36 High – when (if it is congenial) I feel most enthusiastic about it. It's like having a first sniff and mouth-swirl of a new wine, finding it good, and rejoicing at the prospect of the full bottle before me. At page 36, if I like a book, I feel the urge to shower the author with extravagant praise. This was the point I had reached with *Ultimate Things*. Keith's introductory chapters laid the ground in his characteristic way: open-minded sifting of evidence, clear and level-headed style. I was on the way to the core of the Powyses' reflections on God, the Universe and The Meaning of Life, a.k.a. *Ultimate Things*.

I ended the book feeling differently. That the three brothers share a concern with ultimate things, I was happy to agree. But when these are set out as foreground, rather than as background to their writing, their views become curiously self-cancelling. Llewelyn's polemical declarations of atheism sit oddly alongside references to "the grace of God" (71). Theodore's worship of God as bringer of

Death (the capital D seems obligatory), is a dark personal vision at odds with his later Anglican church visiting. JCP contradicted everything he asserted, and claimed to have “no philosophy”. The Powyses’ beliefs and disbeliefs don’t survive a forensic presentation of this kind. Beliefs are the things they juggled with: and you don’t penetrate far into jugglers’ skills by analysing the objects in their juggling kit.

Llewelyn I have never entirely got on with, but both T.F. and JCP set their fictional characters within a haunting and resonant metaphysical arena. In this created world – where ideas are *entertained* by characters, or by narrator – ambiguity and contradiction are to be expected and can be contained: the reader does not have to sign up to any one point of view. This does not invalidate Keith’s book: he achieves the quest to find out what the Powyses ‘really’ thought, and however frustrating the result, this helps to advance the argument. I have learned from his book where (for me) their strength actually lies.

\* \* \*

**Ray Crozier**

***Review: Chris Danta: The Theology of Personification: Allegory and Nonhuman Agency in the Work of T. F. Powys. (MODERNISM/modernity, vol. 25, number 4, November 2018, pp. 709-728)***

Early in this intriguing article Danta, who is based at of the University of New South Wales in Sydney, makes the (familiar) point that T.F.Powys is unjustly neglected. He cites a 1939 critical work by Q. D. Leavis in which she lists Lawrence, Woolf, Joyce, T.F.Powys and Forster as major modernist writers and asks why Powys is not as highly regarded as are the others in her list. He suggests that a significant reason is that the writing of allegory and fable is out of date – is anachronistic – and that writing about nonhumans is also little regarded. Realism and autobiographical writing have achieved dominance in the canon: characters are expected to be psychologically complex and enter into entangled relationships. They tend to live in urban settings rather than in a small, isolated rural community like they do in the two Powys novels that Danta studies in the article, *Mr Weston’s Good Wine* and *Unclay*. He characterises Powys as a writer of ‘personification allegories’ and takes as examples God and death adopting human form as wine salesman and Death in the respective novels.

Why then might readers of a modernist literary journal be expected to find something of relevance and value in rediscovering Powys? Danta argues that personification allegory has the advantage of ‘enabling a modern novelist such as Powys to circumvent anthropomorphism by affirming the archaic kinship of the human with the non-human’ (p. 712). ‘Powys constantly unsettles the sovereignty of

the human self in his fiction' he adds (p. 713). This advantage is said to be consistent with posthumanism, which is a lens through which Danta scrutinises both novels. Posthumanism is a philosophical position that rejects core assumptions of humanism: that humans are objective investigators of nature, detached and superior to what they observe; that there is a clear distinction between human and nonhuman, whether in terms of language, symbol use, cognition, emotion, self-consciousness and capacity for shame. Danta argues for the relevance of Powys's use of personification to growing interest among scholars in this philosophical position.

In the remainder of the article Danta concentrates on Powys's engagement with religion, drawing upon the 'theology of personification' (p. 719) that Powys set out in *Soliloquy of a Hermit*. I found this a thoughtful and insightful account in posthuman terms of Theodore's approach to religion in the two novels. It is thoroughly researched and includes quotations from Theodore's letters to Theodora Scutt, Alyse Gregory and Valentine Ackland.

There is a passing reference to John Cowper's 'animistic understanding of place' (pp. 712-3) yet the goals of posthumanism surely relate to panpsychism, the philosophical approach that offers one solution to the problem of the relation of consciousness to matter, including states of the brain, by asserting that consciousness is a fundamental property of the material world. Panpsychism permeates John Cowper's writing – Taliesin Gore has provided a valuable panpsychist reading of *Wolf Solent* and *A Glastonbury Romance* at the 1918 Society Conference in Street and in the *Powys Journal*, Vol. XXIX, 2019.

\* \* \*

**Michael Wood**

***An ecological doctoral thesis***

My interest in the Powys family was sparked by T.F. Powys's short story, 'Lie Thee Down, Oddity', which, if memory serves, I believe I encountered in a Faber collection of short stories. Tracking down Powys tomes in second-hand bookshops became a minor obsession from that point – I remember excitedly encountering a relatively full run of major publications from John Cowper, Theodore, and Llewelyn in the Leeds Brotherton Library in my first week as an undergraduate.

Leeds itself has at least one significant Powys connection: G. Wilson Knight was a professor at the university, and his papers are still housed in the Brotherton Special Collections. I wrote my undergraduate and Masters dissertations on John Cowper Powys and D.H. Lawrence – both, arguably, modernists at the margins

– before embarking on a PhD under the supervision of Professor Fiona Becket, who has published widely on Lawrence and written at least one article on John Cowper Powys, published in the collection, *Eco-Joyce*.

My thesis might broadly be located within the ongoing ‘turn’ in modernist studies towards the ecological or environmental. One strand of this involves returning to familiar writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, or T.S. Eliot, and examining how their writing might be read differently once we are thinking consciously and critically about the relationships between literature, language, and the environment. A second involves emphasising forgotten or lesser-known writers and texts in order to broaden and nuance our understanding of modernism as a whole.

Powys is, arguably, one such writer. My thesis, therefore, participates in the work of a handful of contemporary critics who have been exploring the fascinating ways in which his writing engages thoughtfully with what we might call ‘nature’, the ‘environment’, or even the ‘non-human’.

One feature that is both fascinating and enjoyable about reading Powys, to my mind, is the way in which his relative failures demonstrate the character of his experimentation and thought as readily as his successes (as I try to show in my opening discussion of his discursive writings). As is evident in the novels, his writing can be naïve and unfocused in its treatment of ‘nature’, just as it can be disarmingly insightful; frequently, one encounters both modes operating within the space of a few paragraphs. The paradox itself speaks, perhaps, of the necessary condition of our engagement with so slippery and multifarious a concept as ‘nature’. However, what I argue for, throughout, is what I describe as Powys’s ‘ecological imagination’: a willingness to experiment artfully, playfully, and above all, ethically with the ways in which literature responds to and represents the non-human.

Consider, for example, the nightmarish vision in the opening chapter of *Wolf Solent*, whereby the ‘whole round earth’ is imagined as a ‘victimized’ and ‘vivisected’ frog. It is as timely an image as one is likely to come across in any modernist canon, and one that deserves to be read, re-read – one hesitates to say *dissected* – by generations of readers.

*Michael Wood joined the Powys Society in 2014. He successfully defended his doctoral thesis on JCP at Leeds University, School of English in 2017. The thesis is entitled ‘The Ecological Imagination of John Cowper Powys: Writing, Nature and the ‘Non-Human’’, and may be downloaded at: [etheses.whiterose.ac.uk](http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk).*

CT

**Chris Gostick**  
***Liam Powys Hanley***  
***4 April 1933 – 28 September 2019***

Liam Hanley died in September aged 86, and his funeral was held at St Dominic's Priory Hampstead on 15 October. He was born on 4 April 1933, the only child of novelist James Hanley and Dorothy Heathcote. John Cowper Powys became his Godfather and sent money he could barely afford from New York for the confinement to be in London, rather than their isolated cottage near Corwen. Their financial situation grew worse with the banning of Hanley's novel *Boy* in 1934. After some peripatetic years they settled at Llanfechain in mid-Wales in 1941. Liam became a boarder at St Michael's School, near Shrewsbury, moving to Wrekin College in 1946. He joined the Royal Marines in 1952 for his National Service, serving in Malta, Libya and Egypt, returning to Wales in 1953. Soon afterwards he talked himself into a junior reporter's job on the *Montgomeryshire County Times* in Welshpool, before moving to London in 1958.

Liam was a successful journalist, becoming sub-editor on the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *News Chronicle* and *Daily Herald*, before joining Independent Television News in 1962. Although he loved journalism his main passion was always art, and although essentially self-taught, soon established a unique style. In 1962 he had a small exhibition at the Royal Society of Arts followed by another at the Mermaid Theatre. From 1971 he was regularly selected for the Royal Academy Summer Exhibitions. In 1975 he became fascinated by a group of fields near Royston, shaped and hollowed during the ice age, which increasingly featured in his work. He exhibited most recently at the Beardsmore in Kentish Town, and Crane Kalman in Knightsbridge. In May 2016 the Chappel Galleries held a major retrospective of his work, showing the full range of his achievement.

He married Hilary Rusconi in 1963, and their first child, Francesca, was born in 1965, followed by a son Dominic in 1966. Shortly after Liam's 2016 exhibition Francesca, who was a talented musician, died after a long struggle with cancer. It was a devastating blow from which he never fully recovered. In 2018 Liam received treatment for suspected lung



*Liam Hanley London 2018*

cancer and his health gradually deteriorated. He had one final exhibition in London in August this year and died peacefully at home on 28 September.

Liam was a man of infinite charm, with a mischievous sense of humour and an impish twinkle in his eye. He was a great companion and a wonderful raconteur, who relished a glass of wine and lively conversation. He had a profound sense of social justice and an enduring interest in politics, history, literature and art. He was always a great favourite with JCP and Phyllis, affectionately known as “Curley-Tops” by John Cowper because of his unruly shock of wiry hair! He always spoke of them both with great affection. I first met him in the mid-1990s while researching the relationship between his father and JCP, and we have met regularly ever since. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

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**Paul Ashdown**

***Patrick Benham (1940-2019): A Memoir***

Many will be saddened by the death of Pat Benham, who passed away on 16 May 2019. He had been suffering from motor neurone disease for some time. Those lucky enough to have known him personally will miss his kindness and sense of fun. He leaves a wife, a son, and four daughters. A highly regarded musician, he is also remembered as the author of *The Avalonians*, 1993, which saw a second, revised, edition in 2006. Taking its title from Dion Fortune, the ‘occultist’ and novelist who in 1934 contrasted the creative and mystical ‘Avalonians’ with the more prosaic ‘Glastonburians’, his was a seminal work in Glastonbury studies. It chronicled those romantics who, before the Second World War, created modern perceptions of Glastonbury as a world centre of ‘alternative’ spirituality. Although, with typical modesty, he would have been the first to point out that he was not an academic historian, his research was painstaking and thorough, and his work has stood the test of time.

Its gestation began in the 1970s when he edited the magazine *Torc*, devoted to Glastonbury’s mysteries. Besides including such comparatively well known figures as composer Rutland Boughton and novelist John Cowper Powys, his book was particularly notable for rescuing two significant but previously forgotten ‘Avalonians’ from obscurity. The first was Dr John Arthur Goodchild (1851-1914), who became interested in Celtic myth and women’s spirituality and acquired the so-called Blue Bowl, a little glass dish, in a shop in Italy. He hid it in a pool near Glastonbury where it was recovered in 1906 by a young woman, Katherine (‘Kitty’) Tudor Pole (1882-1986). Some thought it was the Holy Grail, and it is now revered at Glastonbury’s

Chalice Well. Hearing of his interest, Kitty contacted Pat and became an important source of information.

Pat's second key rediscovery was Mary Bond (1895-1968), daughter of architect Frederick Bligh Bond, who excavated at Glastonbury Abbey with what he regarded as psychic assistance from the memories of the former monks. Mary, or Maria Stella as she thought of herself, was an artist, sculptor and writer, whose remarkable 1924 novel *Avernus* has yet to find the recognition it deserves. Through contacts gained as an art student in Brighton, Pat had fortuitously become friends with Anthony Bates, who had been a close friend of Mary and had posthumously self-published some of her poems. Pat lent me Bates' letters when my own interest in Mary began, resulting in two articles. When the first edition of *Avalonians* prompted the sons of Dion Fortune's solicitor, Harold Rubinstein, to send him copies of rare surviving letters from her, with characteristic generosity he allowed me to publish them. His work on Glastonbury has become both a textbook and an inspiration to all those who have sought to follow in his footsteps, whom he was always eager to help. Many in Glastonbury will remember the afternoon of reminiscences and readings of writer, educationalist and Christian Socialist Alice Buckton (1867-1944) of Chalice Well which he organised in St John's Church, which brought together some who retained personal childhood memories of her.

His historical and biographical interests were not confined to Glastonbury. They included Victorian mystic Anna Kingsford, Scots symbolist painter John Duncan,



Pat Benham 2013

and writer Arthur Machen (whose 1915 short story *The Bowmen* gave rise to the Legend of the Angels of Mons) on whom he formerly edited a newsletter. His first love was music, however. Born in Hove, Sussex, on 9 February 1940, he took piano lessons and played recorder and harmonica as a child. Buying his first guitar aged 15, he took lessons from a local dance band guitarist and was soon playing with local jazz groups. After hearing Segovia perform, he studied Spanish classical guitar in London. Following three years studying art in Brighton, he worked in a Cheltenham drawing office before moving to Bristol in 1962. Having already started to compose for the instrument, he there joined the staff of the Spanish Guitar Centre. He was



commissioned by the BBC in the 1960s to compose and perform guitar music for television and radio, and he also performed live on HTV, BBC Radio Bristol, and on stage alongside writer Laurie Lee at a poetry recital. He became a leading jazz guitarist in the West Country. Trinity College London examination board have listed his compositions as among the most popular in their guitar exam syllabus. In 1969 he became guitar tutor at the prestigious Millfield School at Street, near Glastonbury, a post he held until his retirement in 2005.

He took a keen interest in my 2015 campaign which secured listing for period garden features at historic Chilton Priory, extended by Bligh Bond and once the home of sculptress Katherine Maltwood, another of Pat's 'Avalonians', from whose high tower she was inspired to imagine her Glastonbury Zodiac, a poetry of the Somerset landscape.

Some of his own musical 'West Country Sketches' for guitar are featured on the CD *Six Dancers* which he made with Brian Farrell. They include *On Cadbury*. Of this he noted: 'I actually wrote this piece in 1967 without any particular location in mind. Much later it hit me how perfectly it described Cadbury Camp, an earthwork hill in South Somerset which is reputed to have once been King Arthur's fortified headquarters.'

Pat Benham in himself became a link between the pre-war 'Avalonian' era, which in turn looked back to Arthur's mythic ream, and our world of today.

*Paul Ashdown M.A. read Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Early Celtic, and Archaeology and Anthropology, at Clare College, Cambridge, and has worked on prehistoric, Roman and medieval archaeological sites. He has lived in the Vales of Avalon for over thirty years, writing and lecturing extensively on the evolution of Glastonbury mythos. His acclaimed The Lord was at Glastonbury, Somerset and the Jesus Voyage Story was published in 2010. His annotated edition of Dion Fortune's Avalon of the Heart is awaiting publication.*

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## Jerry Bird

### *Preserving the landscape of Ducdame*

Developers aiming to build a housing estate only 300 yards from the Grade-1 listed Wolfeton House, west of Dorchester, have finally been defeated. Land Value Alliances had appealed against last year's decision by the former West Dorset District Council to refuse permission for 120 new houses on the fifteen-acre 'Strawberry Field' site south of Westleaze Road on the edge of Charminster (see NL94).

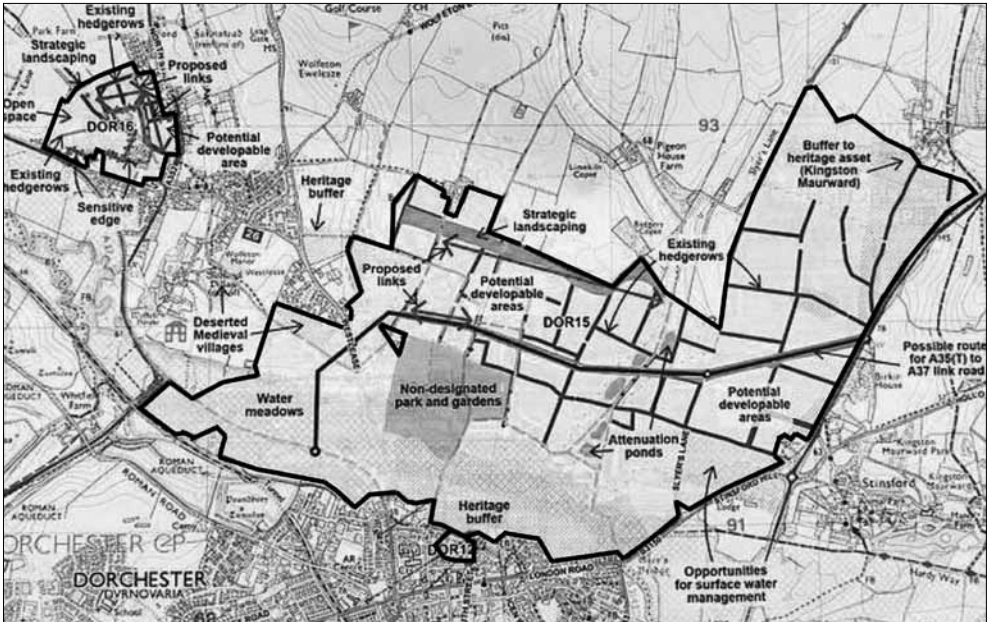
The Elizabethan manor house was used by Thomas Hardy as the setting for a short story 'The Lady Penelope' and the name of its former owners, the Henchards, provided the surname for the tragic Mayor of Casterbridge in the 1886 novel of the same name. More importantly, for Powysians, it was fictionalised by John Cowper Powys as Ashover Hall in his fourth novel, *Ducdame* (1925).

The site of the proposed development which, as the developers hinted, may eventually have doubled in size to 240 houses, would also have been adjacent to an important archaeological feature — the remains of the deserted medieval village of Wolfeton which are visible as distinct earthworks in the field alongside the public footpath from the Sun Inn, near Dorchester. Refusing the developers' appeal against the original decision, planning inspector Zoe Hill stated: 'the public benefits of the scheme do not outweigh the harm to the heritage assets in this case.'

At the close of the 24-page document, she said: 'I conclude that there would be permanent and persisting harm to the setting of Wolfeton House from the irreversible change of use of this agricultural land and from the visual intrusion caused by the proposed housing. Given the exceptional national importance of Wolfeton House, I am in no doubt that this is a matter of considerable importance and weight ... the proposal would not preserve the setting of Wolfeton House but would harm it. Added to that harm is the harm to Charminster Conservation Area and the non-designated deserted medieval village.'

So, the immediate landscape of *Ducdame* is, for the time being preserved. However, in 2018 West Dorset District Council announced a plan for new development on the north side of the Frome Valley which would completely ruin the setting of the town of Dorchester, which remains unspoilt since Hardy wrote *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and utterly destroy the landscape so beautifully evoked by John Cowper Powys in his 1935 novel *Maiden Castle*. It would also render the water meadows which Powys loved so well, and walked across daily with his dog 'The Old' during his year of living in the town, utterly unrecognisable. Gone would be the setting of 'Glyndes' in the novel, gone would be the Bluebell Lane, Lovers Lane, Badgers Copse and the five ancient trees he called 'the Quincunx' — all notable features of his daily walk which can still be followed today and recognised from his writing.

This massive new development, which was included in the strategic Local Plan despite opposition from Dorchester Town Council, would see vast swathes of



*The proposed development area north of the Frome between Charminster and Kingston Maurward*

precious countryside disappear beneath new development, from the A35 trunk road north of Stinsford roundabout in the east, almost to Charminster in the west. The development, which is now being promoted as a ‘Garden Village’, would effectively be a new town north of the river Frome — half as big again as the Duchy of Cornwall’s huge Poundbury development on Dorchester’s western edge, and would see 3,500 new houses, two ‘local centres’ with shops and other commercial premises, a school, and an ‘employment area’ (think industrial estate) close to Kingston Maurward. A new east-west link road would also run through the area from the A35 near Troytown to the A37 south of Lower Burton. What would remain of the water meadows would become a ‘leisure facility’ for the town with open spaces and a nature reserve — as if it wasn’t that already!

A protest group has been formed to oppose this abomination, with the acronym STAND (Save the Area North of Dorchester). The campaigners have demanded that Councillors think again and instead support the proposals by developers to build 4,000 new homes at Upper Woodsford near Crossways, south-east of Dorchester, largely on a brownfield site; they have also identified other brownfield sites in the county which could take over 16,000 houses. STAND have organised protest marches and other high-profile awareness-raising events and set up an online petition on [38degrees.co.uk](http://38degrees.co.uk) and a website at [stand-dorchester.net](http://stand-dorchester.net). They are a regular presence in Dorchester’s main shopping thoroughfare. The protestors are backed wholeheartedly by Dorset CPRE.



*The trees JCP called 'The Quincunx'*

Following local government reorganisation, former West Dorset District Councillors reluctantly agreed to leave the decision on the plan to the new (unitary authority) Dorset Council, but caused a furore when it was revealed last July that they had already applied for funding for the 'Garden Village' and were given a grant of £150,000 by central government to take the project forward. Garden Village developments effectively bypass the planning process, and the move was enthusiastically supported by the then local MP, Oliver Letwin, who said 'strong objections to any development of this location have already been expressed and there will, very properly, be a lively debate as the masterplan is developed'. His comments alarmed local Town Crier and STAND spokesperson Alistair Chisholm, who replied

to Letwin 'I interpret that to mean that the totally Conservative cabinet of the new Dorset Council has already agreed this regardless of any expression from the people of Dorchester, who will be most affected by this scheme. Why should our MP so clearly act in support of this particular site before the due process has even begun?'

This year the protagonists, who support developers Persimmon and Grainger, have been accused of dirty tricks — presenting online a letter in support of 'A' Garden Village (in principle) by the Town Clerk, Adrian Stuart, as actually supporting 'THE' Garden Village in question, now snappily codenamed 'DOR15'. The debate rolls on, and will continue to do so until this threat to Dorchester's historic literary and landscape heritage is ultimately removed. Let us all hope that that time will come sooner rather than later.

You can follow updates in Dorchester's community magazine, *Dorchester Voice*, at:

[www.dorchestervoice.co.uk](http://www.dorchestervoice.co.uk).



*STAND protestors marching across Blue Bridge*