

A N E W E D I T O R

Traditionally the Newsletter has been produced by the Secretary, but in the past year I have been assisting Griffin with this because he was busy with other time-consuming activities such as the new constitution, conference arrangements and charitable status.

We have made considerable changes in the format and size of the Newsletter and the changes seem generally to be appreciated. We have more and more members writing in, responding to articles, making suggestions for future society events. That interest and involvement is what every editor hopes for.

However, the Newsletter takes a tremendous amount of time, and we are delighted when Paul Roberts, the former Secretary and Newsletter editor, agreed to resume the burden. At its last meeting, the Committee formally approved the appointment.

We wish you good luck, Paul, and many "letters to the editor".

Morine Krissdottir
Chairman.

<p>Congratulations to Mr. Francis Powys, who celebrates his eightieth birthday on March 21st. On behalf of all members, we wish Mr. Powys a very happy birthday.</p>
--

THE 1989 ANNUAL WEEKEND CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

SEPTEMBER 15th - 17th 1989

The theme of this year's conference is The Powyses in The '90s. The emphasis will be on discussions and debates, with fewer formal lectures. It holds promise of being an exciting and provocative meeting of Powysian minds. Some details are as yet unconfirmed, but here are some highlights:

Powys Places: A miscellany of speakers, from poet to environmental psychologist, speaking about places that the Powys's wrote about or lived in. The audience will be invited to talk about a Powys place that has a particular resonance for them.

Lectures: by Jeremy Hooker, Charles Lock, Benjamin Stassen and Jeff Rodman.

Forum: entitled tentatively Taking the Powyses into the '90s. This will be chaired by Gerald Pollinger and will include four speakers who will state their views about what the next decade holds for the Powys's reputation. Tough questions from the floor will be welcomed!

The University of Sussex is half way between Brighton and Lewes. The campus is pleasant and all facilities are within easy walking distance. We have reserved one of the smaller residences for The Powys Society and the evening meals will be taken in a private dining room. We have also arranged for the two evening events to be held in the pleasant Senior Common Room with its own bar. Conference costs are escalating, unfortunately. This year the fee for the full two days will be in the vicinity of £80.00.

This conference is a little later than usual, and we hope that many members, both old and new, will come and join in the discussion.

P R O F I L E S

This issue of the Newsletter continues the popular series of Profiles with contributions from Margaret Eaton and Michael Everest. All members are warmly invited to send in no more than 200 words about themselves and their Powys interests. How did you first discover the Powyses? What has their work meant to you? We look forward to hearing from you!

Margaret Eaton: Born in the 1930s and brought up in the home counties, I was educated at two convent schools and entered the book business at the age of 18. I am married to my business partner and have two grown up daughters and two step-sons.

Through the 1960s John Cowper Powys ordered regularly from our catalogues and having been told by a mutual friend that I both read and collected his books and that we were frequently in Wales he invited us to visit him in Blaneau. By this time he was confined to the couch at the back of the downstairs room which was where we always saw him on subsequent visits. I continued to visit Phyllis after his death and still have one or two treasured gifts that she gave me.

Having seen the Society go through a phase when I feared it would be entirely taken over by academics I am happy that meetings now include a greater diversity of people again and feel that this would please J.C. too.

Michael Everest: I had the joy of growing up in Weymouth from age 9 to age 19, but didn't realize there was a Powys connection until I was 33, when somebody at work discovered a copy of Weymouth Sands on the public library shelves, and knew I would be interested. My earlier love had been Hardy, but not till well after studying The Trumpet Major at school. My present career in the Civil Service started at Sellafeld (!) as an Industrial Chemist, from whence, via the RAF, I became firstly a Plastics Chemist and then a Chemical Librarian at Woolwich Arsenal. I am currently with the European Space Agency's Information Retrieval Service, keeping track of nearly all publications in Science since the early sixties. I am the author of several scientific reports and an unpublished (of course) book on Ley Lines.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"The December issue of The Powys Society Newsletter which records the main points of the Annual General Meeting held at the 1988 Conference and the Committee meeting held on November 5th, raises two fundamentally important considerations with regard to the present position of the Society and its long-term future. One is the nature of the relationship between the Society and The Powys Review and the other is the Society's application for registration as a charity.

The relationship between the Society and the Review can be discussed in connection with the aims of the Society, perhaps the most salient of which is contained in the amendment to the Object clause in the Society's constitution. The key phrase for consideration is the opening one which is to change from, 'The object of the Society is to promote the study and public recognition of the writings' to, 'The object of the Society is to promote public education and the public recognition of the writings' This broadening of aim is a subtle but nevertheless crucial shift of emphasis for it unequivocally places greater priority on disseminating knowledge of the Powys writings to a wider public than has hitherto been the case. Thus, if this is the declared aim of the Society, and not just a ruse to acquire charitable status for its own sake, then it is one I personally fully applaud and believe that this is the time to examine the means by which this can best be achieved.

I believe that the Society is in danger, not only of failing to sustain momentum, but of perpetuating attitudes of insularity and quasi-exclusivity. To put it plainly, the Society needs more members than it is attracting at present or has done in the recent past. And the Society will never achieve this until it takes an objective and realistic look at the manner in which it presents itself and the ways in which it fulfils the object clause in the Society's constitution.

The Review, notable for its scholarship and prestigious format, is generally taken as an indication that the body-corporate of the Society is in a healthy state. But in fact its appeal is limited. The Society should consider whether, in promoting an essentially academic view of the Powyses, it is best serving Powys interest. It might be argued that The Review - and thus the Powyses themselves - is primarily seen as a vehicle for academic advancement and contains little of interest to the 'non-academic' members of the Society and even less to the general reading public. By concentrating exclusively on the academic, the society may well be alienating 'the common reader' and marginalising the Powyses to the fringes of literary esoterism. This surely does nothing to advance the Powys cause.

A cursory survey of other literary societies suggests that the independence of The Review from the Society is probably unique. Whilst this relationship is indeed "one of peculiarly Powysian independence" and doubtless has certain advantages for both parties (as detailed in the Newsletter) there are demonstrably sound and practical reasons why this arrangement has not been emulated elsewhere. Funding The Review consumes just over eighty per cent of the Society's annual revenue derived almost entirely from membership subscriptions. Less than twenty per cent remains to produce and mail three Newsletters. The Society is left with next to nothing to fund other activities unless, of course, these are self-financing. If the stated aims of the Society are to be forwarded and its stated priorities recognised, significant changes in activities and policy - including financial policy - must obviously be made.

The Society must surely aim at a balance between the academic and the non-academic. If The Review were available by separate subscription, this would release funds to allow the Society to further its object. For example, the Society should consider setting up a separate publications department, issuing previously unpublished or uncollected essays, letters etc of which there is a great wealth. It should also consider publishing pamphlets and small books such as, An Introduction To The Powyses and Their Writings, aimed at the common reader or those who are merely curious. There are many possibilities and numerous options available.

We are all committed to bringing about a wider recognition and readership of and for the Powyses. The ways in which this can best be achieved are doubtless as numerous as there are members in the Society. I hope this letter acts as a catalyst for the friendly exchange of ideas and stimulates a full participation by all members in a useful and wide ranging debate on the issues raised.

Frank Kibblewhite

N U T S A N D B O L T S

The following items of society business will be of interest to members:-

Nominations for the Committee:

Under the new Constitution, a sub-committee is responsible for preparing a slate of candidates to fill vacancies on the Committee each year. This Committee on Nominations is comprised of the President, who is its Chair, one member of the Committee, and two members of the Society not on the Committee. The Chair, Glen Cavaliero, invites members to write him, before July 31st, with suggestions and nominations. The address is:-

Dr. Glen Cavaliero,
29, Portugal Place,
Cambridge, CB5 8AF.

Members may find it useful to be reminded of the current membership of the Committee:

Officers:

Chairman: Morine Krissdottir
Vice Chairman: Tim Hyman
General Secretary: Griffin Beale
Treasurer: Susan Rands

Committee Members:

Paul Roberts	Subi Swift
Stephen Powys Marks	Belinda Humfrey
Margaret Eaton	Susan Huxtable Selly
Michael Everest	

Co-opted to the Committee for 1989:

Penny Smith
Peter Foss

Overseas Representatives to the Committee for 1989:

Charles Lock
Marius Buning

Larry Mitchell
Jacqueline Peltier

Francis Feather

The Ballot:

In the December Newsletter members were invited to vote upon a proposed change to the Constitution which, if accepted by a majority of two-thirds of those members who actually voted, would enable us to apply to the Charity Commission for charitable status for The Powys Society. The Charity Commission had asked us to delete the word "study" from the Object Clause and replace it with the words "public education".

A total of 53 members returned their ballot papers within the prescribed time limit. 52 members voted in favour of the change in the Constitution and one member did not indicate a preference. There were no votes against the amendment.

We are very grateful to all those members who voted. The vote represents just over 23% of all members. We now intend to submit our formal application for charitable status and we hope to have further news in the next Newsletter.

Griffin Beale.

The Data Protection Act 1984, Section 33 (3):

The Powys Society maintains computerised records of the names and addresses of members, which are used for the preparation of address labels for the mailing of the Newsletter and other notices. If any member objects to the holding of such personal data in this form about themselves by the Society, would they please inform the Secretary.

POWYS SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

An exciting range of activities related to the Powys family, their lives and works are now taking place. It is extremely encouraging to note that these have been organised by individual members of the Society, as well as by its officers. Here are reports of two such activities:

The Chaldon Walk:

The walk around Chaldon Herring on January 15th was a happy success, attracting nineteen intrepid souls. Many new members came, and were delighted to meet Francis and Sally Powys, and Isobel Powys Marks.

Perhaps the Society should plan more walks in future. One member has proposed several walks around Glastonbury and Montacute. Any other suggestions?

Powys Events in Lincolnshire:

Robert Carrington, a Society member of immense energy and imagination, writes the following account of his recent activities:

"With articles in various local papers, in the Lincolnshire and South Humberside Arts Diary and with two local exhibitions, I have tried to interest the local populace in the life and work of the Powys family. It is hoped that this will gather an audience for my afternoon school on March 11th (at Pilgrim College, South Square, Boston). At the moment it is difficult to forecast local interest to predict that this will indeed happen. Our local library has a display of books by John Cowper, Llewelyn and Theodore - in various languages - and a small biographical section with photographs of various Powysian haunts, together with a photocopy of one of JCP's letters.

The local bookshop (Kay Books) has let me put a display in one of their windows, including books by JCP and Theodore which are available inside. With artist friends Brian Quinton and Cathy Richards, a kind of Powysian environment has been created with twigs and natural objects set by the side of photographs and postcards related to Weymouth, Glastonbury etc. Copies of The Review and Powys Society leaflets have also been prominently displayed.

If the talk on March 11th is a success, I hope to organise a ten week course on JCP's writings as part of the University of Nottingham's Autumn programme. There is also the possibility of touring various local libraries to give readings of various Powys books."

Are you organising any local Powys activities? Is there something you feel ought to be organised? Why not share your ideas and let's get things moving!

Members may be interested to know that the Stable House and The Well House in East Chaldon, the former home and studio of Elizabeth Muntz is currently for sale. Details from G.A. Property Services, Weymouth. Telephone: 0305 761407.

LONDON MEETING - LONDON MEETING - LONDON MEETING

NAOMI MITCHISON

will speak on the Powys Brothers

at 2.30 pm on Saturday May 13th 1989

at Liddon House
South Audley Street
London W1

A unique opportunity to share the thoughts and recollections of Naomi Mitchison, an important and prolific writer, on the Powys brothers and their works. Don't rely on other people coming along - we need you to be there. Why not bring a friend?

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Magazines and Journals:

Why is it that the French can publish three important magazines featuring major pieces by and about John Cowper Powys in the space of a few months when British journals can barely bring themselves to print the name? Perhaps we should start a major campaign in which members flood every possible local and national publication with Powysian articles? Here are details of the recent French magazines:-

1) FILIGRANE: Question de Litterature. No. 2

contains: "John Cowper Powys ou l'imagination incandescente", by Elmar Schenkel : "John Cowper Powys et L'Amerique:un paysage interieur", by Benjamin Stassen and "Un Anglais dans l'arrier-pays americain", the first French translation of JCP's An Englishman Upstate, by Benjamin Stassen.

Copies available from Filigrane, 10 Rue de la Vacquerie, 75011, Paris.

2) LOCUS: No. 1, Automne-Hiver 88/89

contains "Rencontres et correspondances a la lecture de John Cowper Powys" by Carl-Erik af Geijerstam, as well as photographs by Benjamin Stassen with a text by Jean-Pierre Otte.

Available from Locus, 62 Rue Tiquetonne, 75 002, Paris.

3) PLEIN CHANT: (A double issue) No.s 42 - 43, Automne 1988

A huge and beautifully produced magazine of some 270 pages, containing essays by Benjamin Stassen, Jean-Pierre Otte, Cecile Miguel, Andre Miguel, Marc-Edouard Nabe, Belinda Humfrey, Elmar Schenkel, Sven-Erik Tackmark, Charles Lock, Ben Jones, Glen Cavaliero, T.J.Diffey, Paul Roberts, Penny Smith, Michael Ballin, Diane de Margerie, A. Thomas-Southwick, Peter Easingwood, Richard Maxwell and Peter G. Christiansen, together with essays, poems and letters by John Cowper Powys (many here translated for the first time) and a wealth of photographs.

Plein Chant, which has been entirely edited and translated by Benjamin Stassen, is a landmark in Powysian studies, a magnificent achievement and, no doubt, a future collectors item of considerable importance.

Available from: Bassac, 16120 Chateauneuf-sur-Charente,
France.

Benjamin Stassen, whose name is a common feature of all of the above publications, writes as follows:

"It took me almost two years of patient work to collect and translate the essays - at lunch-time, in the evenings, during the week-ends, as I am no professional translator. But if that proved possible, I would wish the Powys Society Newsletter to reflect my warmest gratitude to all contributors: I am thinking of the essayists but also of Catherine Lieutenant (who has displayed extraordinary energy in her work as a self-made publisher and translator of JCP's neglected works, among which Rabelais) and to Sven-Erik Tackmark (certainly one of the staunchest supporters of JCP!), both of whom are a living example of JCP's enthusiasm. Most of all, I would wish to stress our common debt to Belgian-born writer Jean-Pierre Otte; he is the very cornerstone of the Plein Chant volume as he paved all the way in publishing matters and was a constant source of exhilarating energy (however painstaking and unrewarding the work as a translator may seem to be).

It may be interesting for Powys members to know that Mr. Otte is currently completing a most original book on, or rather "after" John Cowper Powys. It is no objective essay but an intensely personal tribute to the inspiring power of the "Enchanter". As a novelist, Mr. Otte is mainly interested in celebrating the great Figure whose own works liberated him. This is why Mr. Otte has chosen to write in his own name, after his own fashion, and after reading the Ms., I feel definitely confident that Mr. Otte has been most faithful to J.C.Powys by being naturally attuned to "dithyrambic" fiction. This tribute should be published by the end of 1989."

Further Publications:

Larry Mitchell commissioned a broadsheet for the 1988 conference which features a previously unpublished sonnet

attributed to T.F.Powys, circa 1896, from a holograph manuscript in the collection of E.E.Bissell. The broadsheet also features a portrait of T.F.P. from a pen-and-ink drawing by Michael Gunkel. The broadsheet is printed on mould-made Arches paper in an edition of 100 numbered copies initialled by the artist. The price is £6.25 inclusive of postage and packing. This is a collector's item not to be missed and anyone wishing to receive a copy should send their cheque for £6.25, payable to The Powys Society, to the Secretary, Griffin Beale, 39, Church Street, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 5AT.

A further French publication of interest is the re-issue of Camp Retranche (Maiden Castle), in the collection Cahiers Rouges, published by Arasset in Paris.

Members will also be interested to learn that the National Portrait Gallery postcard featuring the 1920s photograph of JCP is still available. 100 cards would normally cost £20.00, but are available to Society members for £15.00. Small orders of say 5 - 20 cards are available at 20 pence per card, plus 20 pence postage per order.

Enquiries should be addressed to: Roger Sheppard, Publications and Marketing Manager, National Portrait Gallery, St. Martin's Place, London, WC2H 0HE. Tel: 01-930-1552. Suggestions for further postcards may also be sent to the above address.

The Toucan Press has recently published a small pamphlet containing the synopsis of one of JCP's lecture syllabuses. No further details are available at present, but enquiries may be directed to: The Toucan Press, Mount Durand, St. Peter Port, Guernsey, C.I.

The Footprint Press is due to publish Singular Figures: Six Lectures by John Cowper Powys, edited by Paul Roberts in May 1989. It is hoped that copies will be available at the London meeting. All enquiries to John Wilkie, 22, Worcester Road, Colchester, Essex.

B O O K S F O R S A L E

Owen Glendower: first UK edition in very good condition with a very good dust-wrapper. Offers to: David Brown, 17, Ash Tree Dell, Kingsbury, London, NW9 0AG. £1.50 p&p extra. 10% of proceeds to be donated to The Powys Society.

Two new Powys catalogues are also available, or will shortly be issued:

1. from Steven Ferdinando, The Old Vicarage, Queen Camel, Nr. Yeovil, Somerset. Tel. 0935 850210.
2. from Hedley Morgan, 47, Bedford Road, Sandy, Beds, SG19 1ES

Do you have books for sale, or are there books for which you have been searching? Why not list them in the next Newsletter?

A POWYS MYSTERY

An extremely respectable Manchester book-seller recently told me that he had been offered paperback editions of works by JCP. These were similar in appearance to the Village Press editions (though they were not), but of a smaller and "odd" format. The books appeared to have been produced in Wales but carried no details of the publisher or the usual copyright details. We would be very grateful for any information which members may be able to supply which may explain this apparent mystery.

A TEN SHILLING POEM

On November 28th 1942, The New Statesman and Nation, published the results of their Competition No. 666 for which readers had been asked to submit a "tantalising fragment of a lost Elizabethan play", sixteen lines only of which were to have been "discovered".

The winner of the second prize was John Cowper Powys, who received ten shillings for the following poem. Powys used the prize money to buy a French edition of Rabelais, whose work he was then translating. We are extremely grateful to Alan Howe, a Powys Society member and inveterate seeker-out of literary obscurities, for sending in a copy of the piece and to Mr. Francis Powys and Gerald Pollinger for permission to quote:

Who's that? Is it Cecil? Clear the room, my
lord!

Are we alone? Hush ... stoop ... I'm
short of breath.

Closer ... God's Wounds! Deem'st thou I
stink already?

Lower, I say! Leicester would buss me dead
And rotten. While we've paps a man's beard
tickles.

Who said the whore had such a little neck?
Who said stars fell all night at Fotheringay?
I'll not be carrion for their Austrian crows
And Spanish daws. Are we alone, old friend?
Then send for him! Hell's fire, man, send for
him!

No, no! Not there! Under my head - the seal -
God's wounds! Lift up the pillow, man, and
send it -

The goodyears rot them! She the only one
Can hide a cradle underneath a crown?
Horses and ships! He'll ride the free salt flood
And I shall sleep in peace in Westminster.

copyright. Francis Powys. 1989.

The Powys Society Newsletter is your voice, the voice of all members of the Society. If you have a point of view you wish to express, news and ideas to share, books wanted or for sale, or if, like Alan Howe, you have discovered some little-known piece of Powysiana, we are waiting to hear from you.

All material for the Newsletter should be addressed to:

Paul Roberts,
29, St. Mary's Road,
Sale,
Cheshire,
M33 1SB.

Telephone: 061 969 2103

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Have you paid your subscriptions for 1989? Have you paid for 1988? Membership fees remain at last years rate of £10.00 for UK members and £12.00 abroad. If you have not yet paid for this year, please send your subscription as soon as possible to the Treasurer, address below.

THE POWYS SOCIETY

President: Glen Cavaliero

Chairman: Dr. Morine Krissdottir, The Limekiln, East Chaldon,
Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8DL. Tel: 0305 852 028

Secretary: Griffin Beale, 39 Church Street, Bridgwater,
Somerset, TA6 5AT. Tel: 0278 422008

Treasurer: Susan Rands, Victoria Farm, Bradley Lane, Nr.
Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 8LW. Tel: 0458 50509

The Newsletter is published by The Powys Society. Copyright is retained by all contributors. All other items are copyright of The Powys Society.
